Barnes New Testament Notes

by

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Barnes New Testament Notes by Albert Barnes

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Notes

on the

New Testament

Explanatory and Practical

by

Albert Barnes

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Original Preface to the Notes on the Gospels

In the preparation of the following Notes, free use has been made of all the helps within the reach of the author. The works from which most assistance has been derived are, Walton's Polyglott; the Critici Sacri, particularly the Notes of Grotius; Lightfoot's Works; Macknight and Newcome's Harmony of the Gospels; Jahn's Archaeology; Horne's Introduction; Doddridge's Family Expositor; Calmet's Dictionary; Campbell on the Gospels; the Commentaries of Kuinoel, Rosenmuller Clarke, and Henry; Tittman's Meletamata Sacra on John; the Sacred Geography of Wells, and that prepared for the American Sunday School Union, by Messrs J. & J. W. Alexander. The object has been to express, in as few words as possible, the *real meaning* of the Gospels;—the *results* of their critical study, rather than the *process* by which these results were reached.

This work is designed to occupy a place, which is supposed to be unappropriated, in attempts to explain the New Testament. It was my wish to present to Sunday school teachers a plain and simple *explanation* of the more common difficulties of the book which it is their province to teach. This wish has given character to the work. If it should occur to any one that more minute explanations of *words, phrases, and customs*, have been attempted than might seem to them desirable, it will be recollected that many Sunday school teachers have little access to means of information, and that no small part of their success is dependent on the *minuteness and correctness* of the explanation which is given to children.

This work is designed also to be a *Harmony of the Gospels*. Particular attention has been bestowed, especially in the Notes on Matthew, to bring the different narratives of the evangelists together, and to show that, in their narration of the same events, there is no real contradiction. It will be recollected, that *the sacred narrative* of an event is what it is reported *to be by all the evangelists*. It will also be recollected, that the most plausible objections to the New Testament have been drawn from the apparent contradictions in the Gospels. The importance of meeting these difficulties, in the education of the young, and of showing that these objections are not well founded, will be apparent to all.

Particular attention has been paid to the *references* to parallel passages of Scripture. *In all instances, in these Notes, they are an essential part of the explanation of the text*. The authority of the Bible has been deemed the only authority that was necessary in such cases; and it is hoped that no one will condemn any explanation offered, without a candid examination of the *real* meaning of the passages referred to.

The main design of these Notes will be accomplished, if they furnish a just *explanation* of the text. Practical remarks could not have been more full without materially increasing the size of the book, and, as was supposed, without essentially limiting its circulation and its usefulness. All that has been attempted, therefore, in this part of the work, has been to furnish *leading thoughts*, or heads of practical remark, to be enlarged on at the discretion of the teacher.

These Notes have been prepared amidst the pressing and anxious cares of a responsible pastoral charge. Of their imperfections no one can be more sensible than the author. Of the time and patience indispensable in preparing even such brief Notes on the Bible, under the conviction that the opinions expressed *may* form the sentiments of the young on the subject of the Book of God, and determine their eternal destiny, no one can be sensible who has not made the experiment. The great truth is

becoming more and more impressed on the minds of this generation, that the Bible is the only authoritative source of religious belief; and if there is any institution pre-eminently calculated to deepen this impression, and fix it permanently in the minds of the coming age, it is the Sunday school. Every minister of the Gospel, every parent, every Christian, must therefore feel it important that *just views of interpretation* should be imbibed in these schools. I have felt more deeply than I have any other sentiment, the importance of inculcating on the young proper modes of explaining the sacred Scriptures. If I can be one of the instruments, however humble, in extending such views through the community, my wish in this work will be accomplished. I commit it, therefore, to the blessing of the God of the Bible, with the prayer that it may be one among many instruments of forming correct religious views, and promoting the practical love of God and man among the youth of this country.

ALBERT BARNES.
PHILADELPHIA, August 25th, 1832.

For INTRODUCTION to BARNES **See Barnes "Mt 1:2"**

PREFACE

TO THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

THE word Gospel means *good news*, or a *joyful message*. It commonly signifies the message itself. But it is here used to denote *the book* containing the record of the message. The title "saint," given to the sacred writers of the New Testament, is of Roman Catholic origin, and is of no authority.

It is now conceded pretty generally that Matthew wrote his gospel in his native tongue; that is, the language of Palestine. That language was not pure Hebrew, but a mixture of the Hebrew, Chaldaic, and Syraic, commonly called *Syro-Chaldaic*, or *Aramaean*. This language our Saviour undoubtedly used in his conversation; [see instances in Mr 7:34 Mt 27:46] and his disciples would naturally use this language also, unless there were good reasons why they should write in a foreign tongue. It is agreed that the remainder of the New Testament was written in Greek. The reason for this, in preference to the native language of the writers, was, that Greek was the language then generally spoken and understood throughout the eastern countries conquered by Alexander the Great, and particularly in Judea, and in the regions where the apostles first laboured.

The Christian Fathers, without any exception, assert that Matthew wrote his gospel for the use of the Christians in Palestine, and say that it was written in the Hebrew dialect. It should be remarked, however, that many modern critics of much eminence do not suppose the evidence that Matthew wrote in Hebrew to be decisive; and believe that there is sufficient proof that, like the other writers of the New Testament, Matthew wrote in Greek. See Lardher's works, vol. v. pp. 308-318, London edition, 1829.

The Gospel of Matthew exists now, however, only in Greek. The original Hebrew, or Syro-Chaldaic, if it was written in that language, has been designedly laid aside, or undesignedly lost. The question, then, naturally arises, who is the author of the *Greek* translation which we possess? and is it to be regarded as of Divine authority?

It has been conjectured by some that Matthew himself furnished a Greek translation of the Hebrew. This conjecture, in itself probable enough, wants human testimony to support it. Athanasius, one of the early Fathers, says that it was translated by "James, the brother of our Lord according to the flesh." Papias, another of the early Fathers, says, that "each one translated it as he was able." If James translated it, there can be no question about its inspiration and canonical authority. Nor does it affect the question of its inspiration, even if we are ignorant of the name of the translator. The proper inquiry is, whether it had such evidence of inspiration as to be satisfactory to the church in the times when they were under the direction of the apostles. That it *had* such evidence, none acquainted with ancient history will doubt.

Epiphanius says that the Gospel by Matthew was written while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome. This was about the year of our Lord 63, about the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. It is now generally supposed that this gospel was written about this time. There is very clear evidence *in* the gospel that it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem. The destruction of the holy city is clearly and minutely told; but there is not the slightest intimation in it that these predictions had been accomplished; a thing which we should naturally expect if the gospel was not written

until after these calamities came upon the Jews. Comp. Ac 11:28. It has been till lately uniformly regarded as having been written before either of the other evangelists. Some of late have, however, endeavoured to show that Luke was written first. All testimony, and all ancient arrangements of the books, are against the opinion; and when such is the fact, it is of little consequence to attend to other arguments. In all copies of the New Testament, and in all translations, this gospel has been placed first. This, it is probable, would not have been done, had not Matthew published his gospel before any other was written.

Matthew, the writer of this gospel, called also Levi, son of Alpheus, was a publican, or tax-gatherer, under the Romans. **See Barnes "Mt 9:9"**; **See Barnes** "Lu 5:27."

Of his life and death little is certainly known. Socrates, a writer of the fifth century, says that he went to Ethiopia, after the apostles were scattered abroad from Judea, and died a martyr in a city called Nadebbar; but by what kind of death is altogether uncertain. However, others speak of his preaching and dying in Parthia or Persia, and the diversity of their accounts seems to show that they are all without good foundation. See Lardher's works, vol. v. pp. 297, 297.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 1 - Verse 1

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW.

1. *The book of the generation.* This is the proper title of the chapter. It is the same as to say, "The account of the ancestry or family, or the genealogical table of Jesus Christ." The phrase is common in Jewish writings. Compare Ge 5:1, "This is the book of the generations of Adam," that is, the genealogical table of the family or descendants of Adam. See also Ge 6:9. The Jews, moreover, as we do, kept such tables of their own families, and it is probable that this was copied from the record of the family of Joseph.

Jesus. See Mt 1:21.

Christ. The word *Christ* is a Greek word, signifying *anointed*. The Hebrew word signifying the same is Messiah. Hence, Jesus is called either the *Messiah*, or the *Christ*, meaning the same thing. The Jews speak of the *Messiah*; Christians speak of him as the *Christ*. Anciently, when kings and priests were set apart to their office, they were *anointed with oil*, Le 4:3 6:20; Ex 28:41 29:7; 1Sa 9:16 15:1; 2Sa 23:1.

To *anoint*, therefore, means often the same as to *consecrate*, or set apart to any office. Thence those thus set apart are said to be anointed, or the anointed of God. It is for this reason that the name is given to the Lord Jesus, Da 9:24. He was set apart by God to be the King, and High Priest, and Prophet of his people. Anointing with oil was, moreover, supposed to be emblematic of the influences of the Holy Spirit; and as God gave him the Spirit *without measure*, (Joh 3:34) so he is called peculiarly the Anointed of God.

The Son of David, The word *son*, among the Jews, had a great variety of significations. It means, literally, a son; then a grandson; a descendant; an adopted son; a disciple, or one who is an object of tender affection—one who is to us *as a son*. In this place it means a *descendant* of David; or one who was of the *family* of David. It was important to trace the genealogy of Jesus up to David, because the promise had been made that the Messiah should be of his family, and all the Jews expected it would be so. It would be impossible, therefore, to convince a Jew that Jesus was the Messiah, unless it could be shown that he was descended from David. See Jer 23:5 Ps 132:10,11; compared with Ac 13:23, Joh 7:42.

The Son of Abraham. The descendant of Abraham. The promise was made to Abraham also. See Ge 12:3; Ge 21:12 ; comp. Heb 11:13; Ga 3:16. The Jews expected that the Messiah would be descended from him; and it was important, therefore, to trace the genealogy up to him also. Though Jesus was of humble birth, yet he was descended from most illustrious ancestors. Abraham, the father of the faithful—" the beauteous model of an eastern prince,"—and David, the sweet psalmist of Israel, the conqueror, the magnificent and victorious leader of the people of God, were both

among his ancestors. From these two persons, the most eminent for piety, and the most renowned for their excellencies of all the men of antiquity, sacred or profane, the Lord Jesus was descended; and though his birth and life were humble, yet they who regard an illustrious descent as of value, may find here all that is to be admired in piety, purity, patriotism, splendour, dignity, and renown.

{a} "generation of Jesus Christ" Lu 3:33 {b} "son of David" Ps 132:11 Mt 22:45; Ac 2:30

{c} "son of Abraham" Ge 22:18 Ga 3:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 1 - Verse 2

INTRODUCTION.

THE writings which are regarded by Christians as the sole standard of faith and practice, have been designated at various periods by different names. They are frequently called *The Scriptures*, to denote that they are the most important of all *writings; The Holy Scriptures*, because composed by persons divinely inspired, and containing sacred truth; and *The Canonical Scriptures*. The word *canon* means a rule; and it was applied by the Christian fathers to the books of the Bible because they were regarded as *an authoritative rule* of faith and practice; and also to distinguish them from certain *spurious or apocryphal* books, which, although some of them might be true as matter of history, or correct in doctrine, were not regarded as a *rule* of faith, and were therefore considered as not canonical.

But the most common appellation given now to these writings is *THE BIBLE*. This is a Greek word signifying *book*. It is given to the Scriptures by way of eminence, to denote that this is the Book of books, as being infinitely superior to every unassisted production of the human mind. In the same way, the name *Koran* or *reading* is given to the writings of Mohammed, denoting that they are the chief writings to be *read*, or eminently the *reading*.

The most common and general division of the Bible is into the Old and New Testaments. The word *testament*, with us, means a *will*; an instrument in writing, by which a person declares his *will* in relation to his property after his death. This is not, however, its meaning when applied to the Scriptures. It is taken from the Greek translation of the Hebrew word meaning *covenant, compact*, or *agreement*. The word is applied to the *covenant* or *compact* which God made with the Jews to be their God, and thus primarily denotes the agreement, the compact, the promises, the institutions, of the old dispensation, and then the *record* of that compact in the writings of Moses and the Prophets. The name" Old Testament," or" Old Covenant," therefore, denotes the books containing the records of God's compact with his people, or his dispensations under the Mosaic or Jewish state. The phrase New Covenant, or Testament, denotes the books which contain the record of his *new* covenant or compact With his people under the Messiah, or since Christ came. We find mention made of *the Book of the Covenant* in Ex 24:7, and in the New Testament the word is once used, (2Co 3:14,) with an undoubted reference to the sacred books of the Jews. By whom, or at what time, these terms were first used to designate the two divisions of the sacred Scriptures, is not certainly known. There can be no doubt, however, of the great antiquity of the application.

The Jews divided the Old Testament into three parts, called THE LAW, THE PROPHETS, and THE HAGIOGRAPHA, or the holy writings. This division is noticed by our Saviour in Lu 24:44. **See Barnes "Lu 24:44".**

"All things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me." Josephus, the Jewish historian, also makes mention of the same division. (*Against Apion*). "We have," says he, "only twenty-two books which are to be believed to be of Divine authority; of which five are the books of Moses. From the death of Moses to the reign of Artaxerxes, son of Xerxes, king of Persia, the prophets who were the successors of Moses have written in thirteen books. The remaining four books contain hymns to God and documents of life for the use of men." It is probable that precisely the same books were not always included in the same division; but there can be no doubt that the division itself was always retained. The division into twenty-two books was made partly, no doubt, for the convenience of the memory. This was the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet. The English Bible contains thirty-nine instead of twenty-two books in the Old Testament. The number which Josephus reckons may be accurately made out as follows:

The first division, comprehending the five books of Moses, or THE LAW.

The second, including,

1st, Joshua; 2nd, Judges, with Ruth; 3rd, Samuel; 4th, Kings; 5th, Isaiah; 6th, Jeremiah, with Lamentations; 7th, Ezekiel; 8th, Daniel; 9th, the twelve minor prophets; 10th, Job; 11th, Ezra, including Nehemiah; 12th, Esther; 13th, Chronicles:

these thirteen books were called THE PROPHETS. The four remaining will be Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. In regard to the second division, it is a fact well known, that the twelve smaller prophets, from Hosea to Malachi, were for convenience uniformly united in one volume; and that the small books of Ruth and Lamentations were attached to the larger works mentioned, and Ezra and Nehemiah were long reckoned as one book. The arrangement of the books of the Bible has not always been the same. The order followed in the English Bible is taken from the Greek translation called the Septuagint. Probably the best way to read the Bible is to read the books as nearly as possible in the order in which they were written. Thus Isaiah informs us, (Isa 1:1) that his prophecies were delivered in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah; and, to be correctly understood, should be read in connexion with the record of those reigns in Kings and Chronicles.

The names of most of the books in the Bible are taken from the Greek translation above mentioned. The books of the Bible were anciently written without any breaks, or divisions into chapters and verses. For convenience, the Jews early divided the Old Testament into greater and smaller sections. These sections in the law and prophets were read in the worship of the synagogues. The New Testament was also early divided in a similar manner.

The division into chapters and verses is of recent origin. It was first adopted in the 13th century by Cardinal Hugo, who wrote a celebrated commentary on the Scriptures. He divided the Latin Vulgate, the version used in the church of Rome, into chapters nearly the same as those which now exist in our English translation. These chapters he divided into smaller sections by placing the letters A, B, C, etc., at equal distances from each other in the margin.

The division into verses was not made until a still later period. The division of Cardinal Hugo into chapters became known to Rabbi Nathan, a distinguished Jew, who adopted it for the Hebrew

Bible, and placed the Hebrew letters, used also as numerals, in the margin. This was used by Rabbi Nathan in publishing a concordance, and adopted by Athias in a printed edition of the Hebrew Bible in 1661.

The verses into which the New Testament is divided are still more modern, and are an imitation of those used by Rabbi Nathan in the fifteenth century. This division was invented and first used by Stephens, in an edition of the New Testament printed in 1551. The division was made as an amusement while he was on a journey from Lyons to Paris, during the intervals in which he rested in travelling. It has been adopted in all the subsequent editions of the Bible.

In regard to this division into chapters and verses, it is clear that they are of no authority whatever. It has been doubted whether the sacred writers used *any* points or divisions of any kind. It is certain that they were wholly unacquainted with those now in use. It is further evident that, in all cases, these divisions have not been judiciously made. The sense is often interrupted by the close of a chapter, and still oftener by the break in the verses. In *reading* the Scriptures, little regard should be had to this division. It is of use now only for reference; and inaccurate as it is, it must evidently be substantially retained. All the books that have been printed for three hundred years, which refer to the Bible, have made their reference to these chapters and verses; and to attempt any change now would be to render almost useless a great part of the religious books in our language, and to introduce inextricable confusion in all attempts to quote the Bible.

The first translation of the Old Testament was made about the year 270 before the Christian era. It was made at Alexandria, in Egypt, into the Greek language, and probably for the use of the Jews, who were scattered among pagan nations. Ancient writers inform us, indeed, that it was made at the command of Ptolemy Philadelphus, to be deposited in the Library at Alexandria. It bears internal marks of having been made by different individuals, and no doubt at different times. It came to be extensively used in Judea, and no small part of the quotations in the New Testament were taken from it. There is no doubt that the apostles were familiar with it; and as it had obtained general currency, they chose to quote it rather than translate the Hebrew for themselves. It is called the Septuagint, or the version by the Seventy, from a tradition that seventy elders of Israel, deputed for that purpose, were employed in making the translation.

The language Spoken by our Saviour and his apostles was a corruption of the Hebrew, a mixture of that and the language spoken in Chaldee, called Syro-Chaldaic, or more commonly the Syriac. The reason why the New Testament was not written in this language was, that the Greek had become the common language used throughout the eastern nations subject to the Romans. This general use of the Greek language was produced by the invasion and conquest of those nations by Alexander the Great, about 330 years before Christ. The New Testament was, however, early translated into the Syriac language. A translation is now extant in that language, held in great veneration by Syrian Christians, said to have been made in the first century, or in the age of the apostles, and acknowledged by all to have been made before the close of the second century.

About the beginning of the fourth century, the Bible was translated into Latin by Jerome. This translation was made in consequence, as he says, of the incorrectness of a version then in use, called the *Italic*. The translation made by Jerome, now called the Latin Vulgate, is the authorized version of the church of Rome. [For an account of this version, **See Barnes on "Is 1:1".**]

The Bible was translated by Luther in the beginning of the Reformation. This translation has done much to fix the German language, and is now the received version among the Lutheran churches.

There have been many other translations of the Bible, and there are many more still in progress. More than one hundred and fifty translations of the whole Bible, or parts of it, have been made during the last half century. Those which have been mentioned, together with the English, have been, however, the principal, and are most relied on as faithful exhibitions of the meaning of the sacred Scriptures.

The English translation of the Bible now in use was made in the reign of James I. This translation was intended only as an improvement of those previously in existence. A short account of the translation of the Bible into our own language cannot fail to be interesting.

It is not easy to ascertain the precise time when the gospel was introduced into Britain, or when the inhabitants were first in possession of the Bible. The earliest version of which we have any account is a translation of the Psalms into the Saxon language, about the year 706. But the principal translation at that early period was made by the "venerable Bede," about the year 730. He translated the whole Bible into the Saxon language.

The first English translation of the Bible was executed about the year 1290 by some unknown individual. About the year 1380, John Wickliffe, the morning star of the Reformation, translated the entire Bible into English from the Latin. The great labour and expense of transcribing books, before the invention of printing, probably prevented a very extensive circulation of the Scriptures among the people. [So great was the expense of transcribing the Bible at that time, that the price of one of Wickliffe's New Testaments was not less than forty pounds sterling, or one hundred and seventy-six dollars and seventy- eight cents of our money. And it should be matter of devout gratitude to God that, by the art of printing, the New Testament can now be obtained for the trifling sum of ten cents, and the entire Bible for twenty-five]. Yet the translation of Wickliffe is known to have produced a vast effect on the minds of the people. Knowledge was beginning to be sought for with avidity. The eyes of the people were beginning to open to the abominations of the church of Rome; and the national mind was preparing for the great change which followed in the days of Luther. So deep was the impression made by Wickliffe's' translation, and so dangerous was it thought to be to the interest of the Romish religion, that a bill was brought into the House of Lords for the purpose of suppressing it. The bill was rejected through the influence of the Duke of Lancaster; and this gave encouragement to the friends of Wickliffe to publish a more correct translation of the Bible. At a convocation, however, held at Oxford, in 1408, it was decreed that no one should translate any text of the Holy Scripture into English, by way of a book, or little book, or tract; and that no book of this kind should be read that was composed in the time of John Wickliffe, or since his death. This decree led the way to a great persecution; and many persons were punished severely, and some even with death, for reading the Bible in English. The *Bible* translated by Wickliffe was never printed. Some years since the New Testament was printed in England.

For the first printed English translation of the Scriptures we are indebted to William Tindal. He printed this translation at Antwerp, in Flanders; and the copies were brought thence into England. So great was the opposition to this by the Roman Catholic clergy, that the Bishop of London endeavoured to buy up whole editions as fast as they were printed, to burn them. This effort, however, produced little effect. Copies of the New Testament were multiplied. It is said that, on one occasion, Sir Thomas More, then chancellor of England, asked how Tindal contrived to maintain himself abroad. To which it was replied that the Bishop of London supported him by purchasing the Scriptures as fast as they could be printed.

In 1535, the whole Bible, translated into English, was printed in folio, and dedicated to the king, by Miles Coverdale. This was the first English translation of the Bible allowed by royal authority.

Various editions and translations of the Scriptures, with various degrees of correctness, were printed in successive years, till, in 1568, the edition appeared which was called "the Bishop's Bible," or "the great English Bible." This was prepared by royal authority. It was the work of much care. Different learned men undertook to translate different parts of the Bible, and after these persons had been carefully compared, the whole was printed, and directed to be used as an authorized English translation of the Scriptures. This, after being reprinted many times, and after being in use for half an century, was succeeded by the translation at present in use.

* The following is a specimen of this translation:-

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Matthew, chap. v.—And Jhesus seynge the people, went up into an hil; and whanne he was sett, his disciplis camen to him. And he openyde his mouthe, and taughte them; and seide, Blessid be pore men in spirit; for the kyngdom of hevenes is hereun [theirs]. Blessid ben mylde men: for thei schulen weelde the erthe. Blessid ben thei that mournen: for thei schal be comfortid. Blessid be thei that hungten and thirsten rightwisnesse [Rightfulnesse, MS, plures]: for thei schal be fulfilled. Blessid ben merciful men: for thei schul gete mercy. Blessid ben thei that ben of clene herte: for thei schulen se god. Blessid ben pesible men: for thei schulen be clepid goddis children. Blessid ben thei that surften persecucioun for rightwisnesse: for the kyngdom of hevenes is hern. Ye schul be blessid whanne men schul curse you, and schul pursue you: and schul seye al yvel agens you liynge for me. Joie ye and be ye glade:for your meede is plenteous in hevenes: for so thei hah pursued also prophets that weren bifore you. Ye ben salt of the erthe, that if the salt vanishe awey wherynne schal it be salted? to nothing it is worth over, no but it be cast out, and be defoulid of men. Ye ben light of the world, a citee sett on an hil may not be hid. Ne me teendith not a lanterne and puttith it under a bushel; but on a candlesfik that it give light to alle that ben in the hous. So, schyne your light bifore men, that thei see youre gode workis, and glorifie your fadir that is in hevenes. Nyle ghe deme that I cam to undo the Lawe or the prophets, I cam not to undo the lawe but to fulfille. Forsothe I sey to you till hevene and erthe passe, oon lettre, or oon title, schal not passe fro the Lawe till alle thingis be don. Therefore he that brekith oon of these leeste maundementis, and techith thus men, sehal be clepid the Leest in the rewme of hevenes; but he that doth, and techith, schal be clepid greet in the kyngdom of hevenes.—Baber's Edition.

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As this is in many respects, the most important of all English translations of the sacred Scriptures, it is proper to dwell more fully . on the circumstances under which it was made.

It was undertaken by the authority of King James I. of England. He came to the throne in 1603. Several objections having been made to the "Bishop's Bible," then in general use, he ordered a new translation to be made. This work he committed to fifty-four men; but before the translation was commenced, seven of them had either died, or had declined the task, so that it was actually accomplished by forty-seven. All of them were eminently distinguished for their piety, and for their profound acquaintance with the original languages. This company of eminent men was divided into six classes, and to each class was allotted a distinct part of the Bible to be translated. "Ten

were to meet at Westminster, and to translate from Genesis to the end of the second book of Kings. Eight assembled at Cambridge, and were to translate the remaining historical books, the Psalms, Job, Canticles, and Ecclesiastes. At Oxford, seven were to translate the four greater Prophets, the Lamentations of Jeremiah, and the twelve minor Prophets. The four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Revelation, were assigned to another company of eight at Oxford; and the Epistles were allotted to a company of seven at Westminster. Lastly, another company at Cambridge were to translate the Apocrypha."

To these companies the king gave instructions to guide them in their work, of which the following is the substance:-

The Bishop's Bible, then used, to be followed, and to be altered as little as the original would permit.

The names of the sacred writers to be retained as they were commonly used.

When a word had different significations, that to be kept which hath been most commonly used by the fathers, and most eminent writers.

No alteration to be made in the chapters and verses. No marginal notes to be affixed, except to explain the Greek and Hebrew words that could not be briefly and fitly explained in the text. Reference to parallel places to be set down in the margin.

Each man of a company to take the same chapters, and translate them according to the best of his abilities; and when this was done, all were to meet together and compare their translations, and agree which should be regarded as correct.

Each book, when thus translated and approved, to be sent to every other company for their approbation.

Besides this, the translators were authorized, in cases of great difficulty, to send letters to any learned men in the kingdom to obtain their opinions.

In this manner the Bible was translated into English. In the first instance, each individual translated each book allotted to his company. Secondly, the readings to be adopted were agreed upon by that company assembled together. The book thus finished was sent to each of the other companies to be examined. At these meetings one read the English, and the rest held in their hands some Bible, of Hebrew, Greek, Latin, French, Spanish, etc. If they found any fault, says Selden, they spoke; if not, he read on.

The translation was commenced in 1607, and completed in about three years. At the end of that time, three copies of it were sent to London. Here a committee of six reviewed the work, which was afterwards reviewed by Dr. Smith, who wrote the preface, and by Dr. Bilson. It was first printed, in 1611, at London, by Robert Barker.

From this account, it is clear that no ordinary care was taken to furnish to English readers a correct translation of the sacred Scriptures. No translation of the Bible was ever made under more happy auspices; and it would now be impossible to furnish another translation in our language under circumstances so propitious. Whether we contemplate the number, the learning, or the piety of the men employed in it; the cool deliberation with which it was executed; the care taken that it should secure the approbation of the most learned men, in a country that embosomed a vast amount of literature; the harmony with which they conducted their work; or the comparative perfection of the translation, we see equal cause of gratitude to the great Author of the Bible that we have so pure a translation of his word.

From this time the English language became fixed. More than two hundred years have elapsed, and yet the simple and majestic purity and power of the English tongue is expressed in the English translation of the Bible, as clearly as when it was given to the world. It has become the standard of our language; and nowhere can the purity and expressive dignity of this language be so fully found as in the sacred Scriptures.

The friends of this translation have never claimed for it inspiration or infallibility. Yet it is the concurrent testimony of all who are competent to express an opinion, that no translation of the Bible into any language has preserved so faithfully the sense of the original as the English. Phrases there may be, and it is confessed there are, which modern criticism has shown not to express all the meaning of the original; but as a whole, it indubitably stands unrivalled. Nor is it probable that any translation can now supply its place, or improve upon its substantial correctness. The fact that it has, for two hundred years, poured light into the minds of millions, and guided the steps of generation after generation in the way to heaven, has given to it somewhat of the venerableness which appropriately belongs to a book of God. Successive ages may correct some of its few unimportant errors; may throw light on some of its obscure passages; but, to the consummation of all things, it must stand, wherever the English language is spoken, as the purest specimen of its power to give utterance to the meaning of ancient tongues, and of the simple and pure majesty of the language which we speak.

These remarks are made, because it is easy for men who dislike the plain doctrines of the Bible, and for those ignorant of the true history of its translation, to throw out insinuations of its unfaithfulness. From various quarters, from men opposed to the clear doctrines of the Scriptures, are often heard demands for a new translation.

We by no means assert the entire infallibility, much less the inspiration, of the English translation of the Bible. Yet, of its general faithfulness to the original there can be no doubt. It would be easy to multiply testimonies of the highest authority to this fact. But the general testimony of the world; the profound regard paid to it by men of the purest character and most extensive learning; the fact that it has warmed the hearts of the pious, ministered to the comforts of the wretched and the dying, and guided the steps of millions to glory, for two hundred years, and now commands the high regard of Christians of so many different denominations, evinces that it is, to no ordinary extent, faithful to the original, and has a claim on the continued regard of coming generations.

It is perfectly clear, also, that it would be impossible *now* to translate the Scriptures into the English language, under so favourable circumstances as attended the translation in the time of James I. No single set of men could so command the confidence of the Christian world; no convention who claim the Christian name could be formed, competent to the task, or if formed, could prosecute the work with harmony; no single denomination could make a translation that would secure the undisputed respect of others. The probability is, therefore, that while the English language is spoken, and as far as it is used, the English Bible Will continue to form their faith, and direct their lives; and that the words which now pour light into *our* minds will continue to illuminate the understandings, and mould the feelings, of unnumbered millions, in their park to immortal life.

Verses 2-16. **See Barnes on "Mt 1:3".**

Verse 2.

{d} "begat Isaac" Ge 21:2-5 {e} "begat Judah" Ge 25:26

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 1 - Verse 3

Matthew Verses 2-16

Verses 2-16. These verses contain the genealogy of Jesus. Luke also (Lu 3:1) gives a genealogy of the Messiah. No two passages of Scripture have caused more difficulty than these, and various attempts have been made to explain them. There are two sources of difficulty in these catalogues: first, many names that are found in the Old Testament are here omitted; and second, the tables of Matthew and Luke appear in many points to be different. From Adam to Abraham, Luke only has given the record. From Abraham to David the two tables are alike. Of course there is no difficulty in reconciling these two parts of the tables. The difficulty lies in that part of the genealogy from David to Christ. There they are entirely different. They are manifestly different lives. Not only are the names different, but Luke has mentioned, in this part of the genealogy, no less than forty-two names, while Matthew has recorded but twenty-seven.

Various ways have been proposed to explain this difficulty; and it must be admitted that none of them are perfectly satisfactory. It does not comport with the design of these Notes to enter minutely into an explanation of the perplexities of these passages. All that can be done is to suggest the various ways in which attempts have been made to explain them.

(1.) It is remarked that in nothing are mistakes more likely to occur than in such tables. From the similarity of names, and the various names by which the same person is often called, and from many other causes, errors would be more likely to creep into the text in genealogical tables than in other writings. Some of the difficulties may have possibly occurred front this cause.

(2.) Most interpreters have supposed that Matthew gives the genealogy of *Joseph*, and Luke that of *Mary*. They were both descended from David, but in different lines. This solution derives some plausibility from the fact that the promise was made to *David*; and as Jesus was not the son of Joseph, it was important to show that *Mary* was also descended from him. Though this solution is plausible, and *may* be true, yet it wants evidence. It cannot, however, be proved that this was *not* the design of Luke.

(3.) It has been said, also, that Joseph was the *legal* son and heir of *Heli*, though the *real* son of Jacob, and thus the two lines terminated in him. This was the ancient explanation of most of the fathers, and on the whole is the most satisfactory. It was a law of the Jews, that if a man died without children, his brother should marry his widow. Thus the two lines might have been intermingled. According to this solution, which was first proposed by Africanus, Matthan, descended from Solomon, married Estha, of whom was born Jacob. After Matthan's death, Matthat being of the same tribe, but of another family, remarried his widow, and of this marriage Heli was born. Jacob and Heli were therefore children of the same mother. Hell dying without children, his brother Jacob married his widow, and begat *Joseph*, who was thus the *legal* son of Heli. This is agreeable to the account in the two evangelists. Matthew says that *Jacob begat Joseph*; Luke says that Joseph was *the son of Heli*; that is, was his *legal* heir, or reckoned in law to be his son. This can be seen by the plan on the next page, showing the nature of the connexion.

Though these solutions may not seem to be entirely satisfactory, yet there are two additional considerations which should set the matter at rest, and lead to the conclusion that the narratives are not really inconsistent.

(1.) No difficulty was ever found, or alleged, in regard to them, by any of the early enemies of Christianity. There is no evidence that they ever adduced them as containing a contradiction. Many

of those enemies were acute, learned, and able; and they show by their writings that they were not *indisposed* to detect all the errors that could possibly be found in the sacred narrative. Now, it is to be remembered that the *Jews* were fully competent to show that these tables were incorrect, if they were really so; and it is clear that they were fully disposed, if possible, to do it. The fact, therefore, that it is not done, is clear evidence that *they* thought it to be correct. The same may be said of the acute pagans who wrote against Christianity. None of them have called in question the correctness of these tables. This is full proof that, in a time when it was easy to understand these tables, they were believed to be correct.

(2.) The evangelists are not responsible for the *correctness* of these tables. They are responsible only for what was their real and professed object to do. What was that object ? It was to prove, to the satisfaction of the *Jews*, that Jesus was descended from *David*, and therefore that there was no argument from his ancestry that he was not the promised Messiah. Now, to make this out it was not necessary, nor would it have conduced to their argument, to have formed a new table of genealogy. All that could be done was, to go to the *family records*—to the *Public tables*—and copy them as they were *actually* kept, and show that, *according to the records of the nation*, Jesus was descended from David. This, among the Jews, was full and decided testimony in the case. And this was doubtless done. In the same way, the records of a family among us, as they are kept by the family, are proof in courts of justice now, of the birth, names, etc., of individuals. Nor is it necessary or proper for a court to call them in question, or to attempt to correct them. So the tables here are good evidence to the only point that the writers wished to establish; that is, *to show to the Jews that Jesus of Nazareth was descended from David*. All that can be asked *now* is, whether they copied the tables of those families *correctly*. It is clear that no man can prove that they did *not* so copy them, and, therefore, that no one can adduce them as an argument against the correctness of the New Testament.

Footnotes for Verse 3.
{g} "Judas begat Phares" Ge 38:29,30 {h} "Phares begat Ersom" Ge 46:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 1 - Verse 4

Verse 4. No specific Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 1:3".
{k} "begat Naason" 1Ch 2:10 Nu 1:7 {l} "begat Salmon" Ru 4:20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 1 - Verse 5

Verse 5: No specific Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 1:3"

{m} "begat Booz of Rachab" Jos 6:25 Ru 4:21 {n} "begat Obed of Ruth" Ru 4:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 1 - Verse 6

Verse 6. No specific Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 1:3"

{o} "Jesse begat David the king" 1Sa 17:12 {p} "begat Solomon" 2Sa 12:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 1 - Verse 7

Verse 7. No specific Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 1:3"

{q} "Solomon begat Roboam" 1Ch 3:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 1 - Verse 8

Verse 8. No specific Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 1:3"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 1 - Verse 9

Verse 9. No specific Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 1:3"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 1 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No specific Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 1:3"

{r} "Ezekias begat Manasses" 2Ki 20:21 1Ch 3:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 1 - Verse 11

Verse 11. No specific Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 1:3"**
{1} "Josias begat Jechonias", some read "Josias begat Jakim, and
Jakim begat Jechonias"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 1 - Verse 12

Verse 12. No specific Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 1:3"

{s} "Jechonias begat Salathiel" 1Ch 3:17 {t} "Salathiel begat Zorobabel" Ne 12:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 1 - Verse 13

Verse 13. No specific Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 1:3"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 1 - Verse 14

Verse 14. No specific Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 1:3"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 1 - Verse 15

Verse 15. No specific Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 1:3"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 1 - Verse 16

Verse 16. No specific Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 1:3"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 1 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *All the generations*, etc. This division of the names in their genealogy was doubtless adopted for the purpose of aiding the memory. It was common among the Jews; and other similar instances are preserved. They were destitute of other books beside the Old Testament, and had but few copies of that among them, and those chiefly in their synagogues. They would, therefore, naturally devise plans to keep up the remembrance of the principal facts in their history. One method of doing this was to *divide* the tables of genealogy into portions of equal length, to be committed to memory. This greatly facilitated the remembrance of the names. A man who wished to commit to memory the names of a regiment of soldiers, would naturally divide it into companies and platoons, and this would greatly facilitate his work. This was doubtless the reason in the case before us. And though it is not strictly accurate, yet it was the *Jewish* way of keeping their records, and answered their purpose. There were three leading persons and events that nearly, or quite, divided their history into equal portions—Abraham, David, and the Babylonish captivity. From one to the other was *about* fourteen generations, and, by omitting a few names, it was sufficiently accurate to be made a general guide or directory in remembering their history.

In counting these divisions, however, it will be seen that there is some difficulty in making out the number *fourteen* in each division. This may be explained in the following manner. In the first division, Abraham is the first, and David the last, making together fourteen In the second series, David would naturally be placed first, and the fourteen was completed in *Josiah*, about the time of the captivity, as sufficiently near for the purpose of convenient computation, 2 Chron xxxv. In the third division, Josiah would naturally be placed first, and the number was completed in Joseph. So that David and Josiah would be reckoned twice. This may be shown by the following table of the names:

1st division.	2nd division.	3rd division.
Abraham	David	Josias
Isaac	Solomon	Jechonias
Jacob	Roboam	Salathiel
Judas	Abia	Zorobabel
Phares	Asa	Abiud
Esrom	Josaphat	Eliakim
Aram	Joram	Azor
Aminadab	Ozias	Sadoc
Naasson	Joatham	Achim
Salmon	Achaz	Eliud
Booz	Ezekias	Eleazar
Obed	Manasses	Matthan
Jesse	Amon	Jacob
David	Josias	Joseph
-14	-14	-14

Carrying away into Babylon. This refers to the captivity of Jerusalem, and the removal of the Jews to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, 588 years before Christ. See 2 Chron. xxxvi. Josiah was king when these calamities began to come upon the Jews; but the exact time of the seventy years of captivity did not commence until the eleventh year of Zedekiah's reign, or 32 years after the death of Josiah. Babylon was situated on the, Euphrates, and was encompassed with walls which were about 60 miles in circuit, 87 feet broad, and 350 feet high; and the city was entered by a hundred brazen gates, 25 on each side. It was the capital of a vast empire, and the Jews remained there for seventy years. **See Barnes "Is 13:1"** and following.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 1 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *On this wise*. Thus. In this manner.

Espoused. Betrothed, or engaged to be married. There was commonly an interval of ten or twelve months, among the Jews, between the contract of marriage and the celebration of the nuptials, see Ge 24:55; Jud 14:8, yet such was the nature of this engagement, that unfaithfulness to each other was deemed adultery. See De 22:25,28.

With child of the Holy Ghost. **See Barnes "Lu 1:35"**.

{u} "birth of Jesus" Lu 1:27 {*} "espoused to Joseph" "Fifth year before the account called A.D."

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 1 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Her husband*. The word in the original does not imply that they were married. It means here the man to whom she was espoused.

A just man. *Justice* consists in rendering to every man his own. Yet this is evidently not the character intended to be given here of Joseph. It means that he was kind, tender, merciful; so attached to Mary, that he was not willing that she should be exposed to public shame. He sought, therefore, secretly to dissolve the connexion, and to restore her to her friends without the punishment commonly inflicted on adultery. The word *just* has not unfrequently this meaning of mildness, or mercy. See 1Jo 1:9.

A public example. To expose her to public shame or infamy. Adultery has always been considered a crime of a very heinous nature. In Egypt it was punished by cutting off the nose of the adulteress; in Persia the nose and ears were cut off; in Judea the punishment was death by stoning, Le 20:10 Eze 16:38, 40 Joh 8:5.

This punishment was also inflicted where the person was not married, but betrothed, De 22:23 24. In this case, therefore, the regular punishment would have been death in this painful and ignominious manner. Yet Joseph was a religious man, mild and tender; and he was not willing to *complain* of her to the magistrate, and expose her to death, but sought to avoid the shame, and to put her away privately.

Put her away privily. The law of Moses gave the husband the power of divorce, De 24:1. It was customary, in a bill of divorce, to specify the causes for which the divorce was made, and witnesses were also present to testify to the divorce. But in this case, it seems, Joseph resolved to put her away *without specifying the cause*: for he was not willing to make her a public example. This is the meaning here of *privately*. Both to Joseph and Mary this must have been a great trial. Joseph was ardently attached to her, but her character was likely to be ruined, and he deemed it proper to separate her from him. Mary was innocent, but Joseph was not yet satisfied of her innocence. Yet we may learn how to put our trust in God. He will defend the innocent. Mary was in danger of being exposed to shame. Had she been connected with a cruel, passionate, and violent man, she would have died in disgrace. But God had so ordered it, that she was connected with a man mild, amiable, and tender; and, in due time, Joseph was apprized of the truth in the case, and took his faithful and beloved wife to his bosom. Thus our only aim should be to preserve a conscience void of offence, and God will guard our reputation. We may be assailed, or circumstances may be against us; but in due time God will take care to vindicate our character, and save us from ruin.

{v} "to put her away privily" De 24:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 1 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *He thought on these things*. He did not act hastily. He did not take the course which the law would have *permitted* him to do, if he had been hasty, violent, or unjust. It was a case deeply affecting his happiness, his character, and the reputation and character of his chosen companion. God will guide the thoughtful and the anxious. And when *we* have looked patiently at a perplexed subject, and know not what to do, then God, as in the case of Joseph, will interpose to lead us, and direct our way, Ps 25:9.

The angel of the Lord. The word *angel* literally means a *messenger*. It is applied chiefly in the Scriptures to those invisible holy beings who have not fallen into sin; who live in heaven, (1Ti 5:21, comp. Jude 1:6) and who are sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation, Heb 1:13 14; Da 9:21.

The word is sometimes applied to *men*, as messengers, (Lu 7:24 9:52; Jas 2:25) to the winds, (Ps 104:4); to the pestilence, (Ps 78:49); or to whatever is appointed to *make known*, or *to execute* the will of God. It is commonly applied, however, to the unfallen, happy spirits that are in heaven, whose only dignity and pleasure it is to do the will of God. Various ways were employed by them in making known the will of God, by dreams, visions, assuming a human appearance, etc.

In a dream. This was a common way of making known the will of God to the ancient prophets and people of God, Ge 20:3 31:10,11,24 37:5; Ge 41:1 1Ki 3:5; Da 7:1 Job 4:13-16.

In what way it was ascertained that these dreams were from God, cannot now be told. It is sufficient for us to know that in this way many of the prophecies were communicated; and to remark, that *now* there is no evidence that we are to put reliance on our dreams. Dreams are wild, irregular movements of the mind, when it is unshackled by reason, and it is mere superstition to suppose that God *now* makes known his will in this way. **See Barnes "Is 37:1"**.

Son of David. Descendant of David. See Mt 1:1. The angel put him in mind of his relation to David, perhaps, to prepare him for the intelligence that Mary was to be the mother of the Messiah—the promised heir of David.

Fear not. Do not hesitate, or have fears about her virtue and purity. Do not fear that she will be unworthy of you, or will disgrace you.

{w} "in a dream" Mt 1:16 {1} "conceived" or, "begotten"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 1 - Verse 21

Verse 21 *His name JESUS*. The name *Jesus* is the same as *Saviour*. It is derived from the verb signifying *to save*. In Hebrew it is the same as *Joshua*. In two places in the New Testament it is used where it means Joshua, the leader of the News into Canaan, and in our translation the name Joshua should have been retained, Ac 7:45 Heb 4:8. It was a very common name among the Jews.

He shall save. This expresses the same as the name, and on this account the name was given to him. He saves men by having died to redeem them; by giving the Spirit to renew them, (Joh 16:7 8) by his power in enabling them to overcome their spiritual enemies, in de- fending them from danger, in guiding them in the path of duty, in sustaining them in trials and in death; and he will raise them up at the last day, and exalt them to a world of purity and love.

His people. Those whom the Father has given to him. The Jews were called the people of God, because he had chosen them to himself, and regarded them as his peculiar and beloved people, separate from all the nations of the earth. Christians are called the people of Christ, because it was the purpose of the Father to give them to him, (Is 53:11 Joh 6:37) and because in due time he came to redeem them to himself, Tit 2:14 1Pe 1:2.

From their sins. This is the great business of Jesus in coming and dying. It is not to save men IN their sins, but FROM their sins. Sinners could not be happy in heaven. It would be a place of wretchedness to the guilty. The design of Jesus was, therefore, to save from sin;

1. by dying to make an atonement, (Tit 2:14); and,

2. by renewing the heart, and purifying the soul, and preparing his people for a pure and holy heaven. And from this we may learn,

(1.) that Jesus had a *design* in coming into the world—he came to save *his people*—and that design will surely be accomplished. It is impossible that in any part of it he should fail.

(2.) We have no evidence that we are his people, unless we are saved from the power and dominion of sin. A mere *profession* of being his people will not answer. Unless we give up our sins; unless we renounce the pride, pomp, and pleasure of the world, and all our lusts and crimes, we have no evidence that we are the children of God. It is impossible that we should be Christians if we indulge in

sin, and live in the practice of any known iniquity.

(3.) That all professing Christians should feel that there is no salvation unless it is *from sin*, and that they can never be admitted to a holy heaven hereafter, unless they are made pure, by the blood of Jesus, here.

{1} "JESUS" or, "saviour"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 1 - Verse 22

Verses 22, 23. The prophecy here quoted is recorded in Isa 7:14. It was delivered about 740 years before Christ, in the reign of Ahaz, king of Judah. The land of Judea was threatened with an invasion by the united armies of Syria and Israel, under the command of Rezin and Pekah. Ahaz was alarmed, and seems to have contemplated calling in aid from Assyria to defend him. Isaiah was directed in his consternation to go to Ahaz, and tell him to ask a sign from God, (Is 7:10 11); that is, to look to *God* rather than to Assyria for aid. This he refused to do. He had not confidence in God; but feared that the land would be overrun by the armies of Syria, (Isa 7:12) and relied only on the aid which he hoped to receive from Assyria. Isaiah answered that, in these circumstances, the Lord would himself give a sign, or a pledge, that the land should be delivered. The sign was, that a virgin should have a son, and before that son would arrive to years of discretion, the land would be forsaken by these hostile kings. The prophecy was, therefore, designed *originally* to denote to Ahaz that the land would certainly be delivered from its calamities and dangers, and that the deliverance would not be long delayed. The united land of Syria and Israel, united now in confederation, would be deprived of both their kings, and thus the land of Judah be freed from the threatening dangers. This appears to be the literal fulfillment of the passage in Isaiah.

Might be fulfilled. It is more difficult to know in what sense this could be said to be *fulfilled* in the birth of Christ. To understand this, it may be remarked that the word *fulfilled* is used in the Scriptures, and in other writings, in many senses, of which the following are some:

1st. When a thing is *clearly predicted*, and comes to pass: as the destruction of Babylon, foretold in Isa 13:19-22; and of Jerusalem, in Matthew 24.

2nd. When one thing is *testified* or shadowed forth by another, the type is said to be fulfilled. This was the case in regard to the types and sacrifices in the Old Testament, which were fulfilled by the coming of Christ. See Hebrews 9.

3rd. When prophecies of future events are expressed in language more elevated and full than the particular thing, at first denoted, demands. Or, when the language, though it may express one event, is also so full and rich as *appropriately* to express other events in similar circumstances, and of similar import. Thus, e.g., the last chapters of Isaiah, from the fortieth chapter, foretell the return of the Jews from Babylon; and every circumstance mentioned occurred in their return. But the language is more expanded and sublime than was necessary to express their return. It will also *express appropriately* a much more important and magnificent deliverance—that of the redeemed under the Messiah, and the return of the people of God to him, and the universal spread of the

gospel; and therefore it may be said *to be fulfilled* in the coming of Jesus, and the spread of the gospel. So, if there were any other magnificent and glorious events, still, in *similar circumstances*, and of like character, it might be said also that these prophecies were fulfilled in all of them. The language is so full and rich, and the promises so grand, that they appropriately express all these deliverances. This may be the sense in which the prophecy now under consideration may be said to have been fulfilled.

4th. Language is said to be fulfilled when though it was used to express one event, yet it may be used also to express another. Thus a *fable* may be said to be fulfilled when an event occurs similar to the one concerning which it was first spoken. A parable has its fulfillment in all the cases to which it is applicable; and so of a proverb, or a declaration respecting human nature. The declaration "there is none that doeth good," (Ps 14:3,) was at first spoken of a particular race of wicked men. Yet it is applicable to others, and in this sense may be said to have been fulfilled. See Ro 3:10. In this use of the word *fulfilled*, it means not that the passage was at first *intended* to apply *to this particular thing*, but that the words aptly or appropriately express the thing spoken of, and may be applied to it. We may say of this as was said of another thing, and thus the words express *both*, or *are fulfilled*. The writers of the New Testament seem occasionally to have used the word in this sense.

A virgin shall be with child. Matthew clearly understands this as applying literally *to a virgin*. Comp. Lu 1:34. It thus implies that the conception of Christ was entirely *miraculous*, or that the body of the Messiah was created directly by the power of God, agreeably to the declaration in Heb 10:5, "Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, *but a body hast thou prepared me*."

Immanuel. This is a Hebrew word, and means, literally, *God with us*. Matthew doubtless understands this word as denoting that the Messiah was really "God with us," or that the Divine nature was united to the human. He does not affirm that this was its meaning when used in reference to the child to whom it was first applied; but this was its meaning as applicable to the Messiah. *It was fitly expressive of his character*; and in this sense it was fulfilled. When *first* used by Isaiah, it denoted simply that the birth—of the child was a sign that God was with the Jews, to deliver them. The Hebrews often used the name of Jehovah, or God, in their proper names. Thus, Isaiah means "the salvation of Jehovah "Eleazer, "help of God;" Eli, "my God," etc. But Matthew evidently intends more than was denoted by the simple use of such names. He had just given an account of his miraculous conception; of his being begotten by the Holy Ghost. God was therefore his Father. He was Divine as well as human. His appropriate name was "God with us." And though the mere use of such a name would not prove that he had a Divine nature, yet, as *Matthew uses it*, and meant evidently to apply it, it *does* prove that Jesus was more than a man; that he was God as well as man. And it is this which gives glory to the plan of redemption. It is this which is the wonder of angels. It is this which makes the plan so vast, so grand, so full of instruction and comfort to Christians. See Php 2:6-8. It is this which sheds such peace and joy into the sinner's heart; which gives him such security of salvation; and renders the condescension of God in redemption so great, and his character so lovely.

"Till God in human flesh I see,
My thoughts no comfort find;
The holy, just, and sacred Three,
Are terror to my mind.

"But if IMMANUEL'S face appears,
My hope, my joy, begins;
His grace removes my slavish fears,
His blood removes my sins."

For a full examination of the passage, see **Barnes "Is 7:14"**.
{y} "saying" Is 7:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 1 - Verse 23

Ver 23. No specific Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 1:22"

{1} "Emmanuel" or, "his name shall be called" {z} "God with us" Joh 1:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 1 - Verse 24

Verse 24. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 1 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Knew her not*. The doctrine of the virginity of Mary *before* the birth of Jesus is a doctrine of the Scriptures, and very important to be believed. But the Scriptures do not affirm that she had no children afterwards. Indeed, all the accounts in the New Testament lead us to suppose that she had. **See Barnes "Mt 13:55,56"**.

The language here evidently implies that she lived as the wife of Joseph after the birth of Jesus.

Her firstborn son. Her eldest son, or he that by the law had the privilege of birthright. This does not *of necessity* imply that she had other children; though it seems probable. It was the name given to the son which was first born, whether there were others or not.

His name JESUS. This was given by Divine appointment, Mt 1:21. It was conferred on him on the eighth day, at the time of his circumcision, Lu 2:21.

{a} "firstborn" Ex 13:2 {b} "JESUS" Lu 2:21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 2 - Verse 1

MATTHEW Chapter 2

Verse 1. *When Jesus was born*. See the full account of his birth in Lu 2:1-20.

In Bethlehem of Judaea. Bethlehem, the birthplace of Christ, was a small town about six miles south of Jerusalem. The word *Bethlehem* denotes "house of bread"—-perhaps given to the place on account of its great fertility. It was also called *Ephratah*, a word supposed likewise to signify fertility, Ge 35:19 Ru 4:11; Ps 132:6.

It was called the city of David, (Lu 2:4) because it was the city of his nativity, 1Sa 16:1,18. It was called Bethlehem *of Judea*, to distinguish it from a town of the same name in Galilee, Jos 19:15. The soil of Bethlehem was noted for its fertility. Ancient travellers frequently spoke of its productions. The town is situated on an eminence, in the midst of hills and vales. At present it contains about 200 houses, inhabited chiefly by Christians and Mohammedans, who live together in peace. About 200 paces east of Bethlehem, the place is still shown where our Saviour is supposed to have been born. There is a church and a convent there; and beneath the church a subterranean chapel, which is lighted by thirty-two lamps, which is said to be the place where was the stable in which Jesus was born. No reliance is, however, to be placed on this tradition.

Herod the king. Judea, where our Saviour was born, was a province of the Roman empire. It was taken about sixty-three years before, by Pompey, and placed under tribute. Herod received his appointment from the Romans, and had reigned, at the time, of the birth of Jesus thirty-four years. Though he was permitted to be called *king*, yet he was in all respects dependent on the Roman emperor. He was commonly called Herod the Great, because he had distinguished himself in the wars with Antigonus, and his other enemies, and because he had evinced great talents, as well as great cruelties and crimes, in governing and defending his country; in repairing the temple; and in building and ornamenting the cities of his kingdom. At this time Augustus was emperor of Rome. The world was at peace. All the known nations of the earth were united under the Roman emperor. Intercourse between different nations was easy and safe. Similar laws prevailed. The use of the Greek language was general throughout the world. All these circumstances combined to render this a favourable time to introduce the gospel, and to spread it through the earth; and the Providence of God was remarkable in fitting the nations in this manner for the easy and rapid spread of the Christian religion among all nations.

Wise men. The original word here is *magoi* from which comes our word *magician*, now used in a bad sense, but not so in the original. The persons here denoted were philosophers, priests, or astronomers. They dwelt chiefly in Persia and Arabia. They were the learned men of the eastern nations, devoted to astronomy, to religion, and to medicine. They were held in high esteem by the Persian court, were admitted as counsellors, and followed the camps in war, to give advice.

From the east. It is unknown whether they came from Persia or Arabia. Both countries might be denoted by the word east—that is, east from Judea.

Jerusalem. The capital of Judea. As there is frequent reference in the New Testament to Jerusalem; as it was the place of the public worship of God; as it was the place where many important transactions in the life of the Saviour occurred, and the place where he died; and as no Sabbath-school teacher can intelligently explain the New Testament without some knowledge of that city, it seems desirable to present a brief description of it. A more full description may be seen in Calmet's

Dictionary, and in the common works or Jewish Antiquities. Jerusalem was the capital of the kingdom of Judah, and was built on the line dividing this tribe from the tribe of Benjamin. It was once called Salem, (Ge 14:18 Ps 76:2) and, in the days of Abraham, was the abode of Melchizedek. When the Israelites took possession of the promised land, they found this stronghold in the possession of the *Jebusites*, by whom it was called *Jehus* or *Jebusi*, Jos 18:28. The name *Jerusalem* was compounded probably of the two, by changing a single letter, and calling it, for the sake of the sound, *Jerusalem* instead of *Jebusalem*. The ancient Salem was probably built on Mount Moriah or Acra—the eastern and western mountains on which Jerusalem was subsequently built. When the Jebusites became masters of the place, they erected a fortress in the southern quarter of the city, which was subsequently called Mount Zion, but which they called *Jebus*; and although the Israelites took possession of the adjacent territory, (Jos 18:28) the Jebusites still held this fortress or upper town until the time of David, who wrested it from them, (2Sa 5:7-9,) and then removed his court from Hebron to Jerusalem, which was thenceforward known as the city of David, 2Sa 6:12; 1Ki 8:1. Jerusalem was built on several hills—Mount Zion on the south, Mount Moriah on the east—on which the temple was subsequently built, (**See Barnes "Mt 21:12"**) Mount Acra on the west, and Mount Betheza on the north. Mount Moriah and Mount Zion were separated by a valley called, by Josephus, the *Valley of Cheesemongers*, over which there was a bridge, or raised way, leading from the one to the other. On the south-east of Mount Moriah and between that and Mount Zion, there was a bluff or high rock, capable of strong fortification, called Ophel. The city was encompassed by hills. On the west there were hills which overlooked the city; on the south was the valley of Jehoshaphat, or the valley of Hinnom, (**See Barnes "Mt 5:22"**) separating it from what is called the *Mount of Corruption*; on the east was the valley or the brook Kedron, dividing the city from the Mount of Olives; and on the north the country was more level—though it was a broken or *rolling* country. To the south-east, the valleys of the Kedron and Jehoshaphat united, and the waters flowed through the broken mountains in a south-east direction to the Dead Sea, some fifteen miles distant. The city of Jerusalem stands in 30" 50' north latitude, and 35" 20' east longitude from Greenwich. It is thirty-four miles south-easterly from Jaffa, the ancient Joppa, (which is its seaport,) and one hundred and twenty miles south-westerly from Damascus. The best view of the city of Jerusalem is from Mount Olivet on the east, (**See Barnes "Mt 24:3"**) the mountains on the east being somewhat higher than those on the west. The city was anciently enclosed within walls, a part of which are still standing. The position of the walls has been at various times changed, as the city has been larger or smaller, or as it has extended in different directions. The wall on the south formerly included the whole of Mount Zion, though the modern wall runs over the summit, including about half of the mountain. In the time of the Saviour, the northern wall enclosed only Mounts Acra and Moriah north; though, after his death, Agrippa extended the wall so as to include Mount Bezetha on the north. About half of that is included in the present wall. The limits of the city on the east and the west, being more determined by the nature of the place, have been more fixed and permanent. The city was watered in part by the fountain of Siloam on the east, for a description of which **See Barnes "Lu 13:4"**

See Barnes "Lu 13:4, **See Barnes "Isa 7:3"**

and in part by the fountain of Gihon, on the west of the city, which flowed into the vale of Jehoshaphat; and in the time of Solomon by an aqueduct, part of which is still remaining, by which water was brought from the vicinity of Bethlehem. The "pools of Solomon," three in number, one rising above another, and adapted to hold a large quantity of water, are still remaining in the vicinity

of Bethlehem. The fountain of Siloam still flows freely, (**See Barnes "Isa 7:3"**) , though the fountain of Gihon is commonly dry. A reservoir or tank, however, remains at Gihon. Jerusalem had, perhaps, its highest splendour in the time of Solomon. About four hundred years after, it was wholly destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. It lay utterly desolate during the seventy years of the Jewish captivity. Then it was rebuilt, and restored to some degree of its former magnificence, and remained about six hundred years, when it was utterly destroyed by Titus, A.D. 70. In the reign of Adrian, the city was partly rebuilt under the name of AElia. The monuments of pagan idolatry were erected in it; and it remained under pagan jurisdiction until Helena, the mother of Constantine, overthrew the memorials of idolatry, and erected a magnificent church over the spot which was supposed to be the place of the Redeemer's sufferings and burial. Julian, the apostate, attempting to destroy the credit of the prophecy of the Saviour that the temple should remain in ruins, (Matthew 25.) endeavoured to rebuild the temple.

His own historian, Ammianus Marcellinus, (see Warburton's Divine Legation of Moses,) says that the workmen were impeded by balls of fire coming from the earth, and that he was compelled to abandon the undertaking. Jerusalem continued in the power of the eastern emperors till the reign of the caliph *Omar*, the third in succession from Mohammed, who reduced it under his control about the year 640. The Saracens continued masters of Jerusalem until the year 1099, when it was taken by the crusaders under Godfrey of Bouillon. They founded a new kingdom, of which Jerusalem was the capital, which lasted eighty-eight years under nine kings. At last this kingdom was utterly ruined by Saladin; and though the Christians once more obtained possession of the city, yet they were obliged again to relinquish it. In 1217 the Saracens were expelled by the Turks, who have ever since continued in possession of it. Jerusalem has been taken and pilaged seventeen times, and millions of men have been slaughtered within its walls. At present there is a splendid mosque—the mosque of Omar—on the site of the temple. It is a city containing a population variously estimated at from 15,000, to 50,000, (though probably not far from 20,000,) comprising Jews, Turks, Arabs, Armenians, Greeks, and Papists: The Jews have a number of synagogues. The Catholics have a convent, and have the control of the church of the Holy Sepulchre. The Greeks have twelve convents; the Armenians have three convents on Mount Zion, and one in the city; the Copts, Syrians, and Abyssinians have each of them one convent. The streets are narrow, and the houses are of stone, most of them low and irregular, with flat roofs or terraces, and with small windows only towards the street, usually protected by iron grates. The above description has been obtained from a great variety of sources, and it would be useless to refer to the works where the facts have been obtained. As a reference to Jerusalem often occurs in the New Testament, and as it is very important to possess a correct view of the site of the ancient and modern city, a view is annexed to the second vol. It is by Catherwood, and is probably the most exact view of the city that has been published.

{*} "Now when Jesus was born" "4th year before the account called A.D."

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 2 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Where is he*, etc. There was, at this time, a prevalent expectation that some remarkable personage was about to appear in Judea. The Jews were anxiously looking for the coming of the

Messiah. By computing the time mentioned by Daniel, (Da 9:25-27,) they knew that the period was approaching when the Messiah should appear. This personage, *they* supposed, would be a temporal prince, and they were expecting that he would deliver them from Roman bondage. It was natural that this expectation should spread into other countries. Many Jews, at that time, dwelt in Eypt, in Rome, and in Greece; many, also, had gone to eastern countries, and in every place they carried their Scriptures, and diffused the expectation that some remarkable person was about to appear. Suetonius, a Roman historian, speaking of this rumour, says :—"An ancient and settled persuasion prevailed throughout the East, that the Fates had decreed some one to proceed from Judea, who should attain universal empire." Tacitus, another Roman historian, says:—-

> "Many were persuaded that it was contained in the ancient books of their priests, that at that very time the East should prevail, and that some one should proceed from Judea and possess the dominion."

Josephus also, and Philo, two Jewish historians, make mention of the same expectation. The *fact* that such a person was expected is clearly attested. Under this expectation these wise men came to do him homage, and inquired anxiously *where he was born*?

His star. Among the ancients, the appearance of a star or comet was regarded as an omen of some remarkable event. Many such appearances are recorded by the Roman historians at the birth or death of distinguished men. Thus, they say, that at the death of Julius Caesar a comet appeared in the heavens, and shone seven days. These wise men also considered this as an evidence that the long-expected Prince was born. It is possible that they had been led to this belief by the prophecy of Balaam, Nu 24:17, "There shall come a *star* out of Jacob," etc. What this star was, is not known. There have been many conjectures respecting it, but nothing is revealed concerning it. We are not to suppose that it was what we commonly mean by a *star*. The stars are vast bodies fixed in the heavens, and it is absurd to suppose that one of them was sent to guide the wise men. It is most probable that it was a luminous appearance, or meteor, such as we now see sometimes shoot from the sky, or such as appear stationary, which the wise men saw, and which directed them to Jerusalem. It is possible that the same thing is meant which is mentioned by Lu 2:9—*"The glory of the Lord shone round about them,"* i.e., (**See Barnes "Lu 2:9"**

on this place) a great light appeared shining around them. That *light* might have been visible from afar, and have been seen by the wise men in the East.

In the East. This does not mean that they had seen the star to the east of themselves, but that, when *they* were in the East, they had seen this star. As this star was in the direction of Jerusalem, it must have been west of them. It might be translated, "We, being in the East, have seen his star." It is called *his* star, because they supposed it to be intended to indicate the time and place of his birth.

To worship him. This does not mean that they had come to pay him *religious* homage, or to adore him. They regarded him as the King of the Jews. There is no evidence that they supposed he would be Divine. They came to honour him as a prince, or a king, not as God. The original word implies no more than this. It meant to prostrate one's self before another; to fall down and pay homage to another. This was the mode in which homage was paid to earthly kings; and this they

wished to pay to the new-born King of the Jews. See the same meaning of the word in Mt 20:20 18:26; Ac 10:25 Lu 14:10.

The English word *worship* also meant, formerly, "to respect, to honour, to treat with civil reverence." (Webster.)

{*} "universal empire" Vespasian, chapter 4. {} "Josephus also" Annals, 5, 13 {c} "King of the Jews" Zec 9:9 {d} "his star" Nu 24:17 Isa 9:3 {e} "worship him" Joh 5:23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 2 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Had heard* these things. Had heard of their coming, and of the star, and of the design of their coming.

He was troubled. Herod had obtained the kingdom by great crimes, and by shedding much blood. He was, therefore, easily alarmed by any remarkable appearances; and the fact that this star appeared, and that it was regarded as proof that the King of the Jews was born, alarmed him. Besides, it was a common expectation that the Messiah was about to appear, and he feared that his reign was about to come to an end. He, therefore, began to inquire in what way he might secure his own safety, and the permanency of his government.

All Jerusalem. The people of Jerusalem, and particularly the friends of Herod. There were many waiting for the consolation of Israel, to whom the coming of the Messiah would be a matter of joy; but all of Herod's friends would doubtless be alarmed at his coming.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 2 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *The Chief Priests*. By the *chief priests* here are meant not only the high priest and his deputy, but also the heads or chiefs of the twenty-four classes into which David had divided the sacerdotal families, 1Ch 23:6 24:1; 2Ch 8:14 36:14; Ezr 8:24.

Scribes. By the *scribes*, in the New Testament, are meant learned men, men skilled in the law, and members of the great council. They were probably the learned men, or the lawyers of the nation. They kept the records of the court of justice, the registers of the synagogues, wrote their articles of contract and sale, their bills of divorce, &c. They were also called *lawyers*, Mt 22:35, and doctors of the law, Lu 5:17. They were called *scribes* from the fact of their writing the public records. They were not, however, a *religious* sect, but might be either Pharisees or Sadducees. By the chief priests and scribes here mentioned, is denoted the *sanhedrim*, or great council of the nation. This was composed of seventy-two men, who had the charge of the civil and religious affairs of the Jews. On this occasion, Herod, in alarm, called them together, professedly to make inquiry respecting the birth of the Messiah.

Demanded of them. Inquired, or asked of them. As they were the learned men of the nation, and as it was their business to study and explain the Old Testament, they were presumed to know what the prophecies had declared on that point. His object was to ascertain from prophecy *where*

he was born, that he might strike an effectual blow. He seems not to have had any doubt about the *time when* he should be born. He was satisfied that the time had come.

{f} "gathered" Ps 2:2.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 2 - Verse 5

Verses 5, 6. *By the prophet*. The sanhedrim answered without hesitation. It was settled by prophecy. This prophecy is found in Mic 5:2. In that prophecy, both the place of his birth and the character of the Messiah are so clearly set forth, that there was no room to doubt. It will be observed that there is a considerable difference between the passage as quoted by the sanhedrim, and as it stands in Micah The *main point*, however, is retained—the place of his birth. We are not concerned, therefore, in showing how these passages can be reconciled. Matthew is not responsible for the correctness of the quotation. He affirms only that *they gave this answer to Herod*, and that Herod was satisfied. Admitting that *they* did not quote the passage correctly, it does not prove that Matthew has not reported their answer as they gave it; and this is all that he pretends to give.

Art not the least. In Micah, "though thou be little." Though a small place so far as population is concerned, yet it shall *not* be small, or least, in honour; for the Messiah shall be born there. His birth gave the place an honour which could not be conferred on the larger cities by all their numbers, their splendour, and their wealth. The birth of a distinguished personage was always supposed to give honour and importance to a city or country. Thus seven cities contended for the honour of giving birth to Homer; Stratford-upon-Avon is distinguished as the birth-place of Shakespeare; and Corsica as the birth-place of Napoleon.

A Governor. A Ruler. This is one of the characters of the Messiah, who is the King of his people, Joh 18:37. The word *rule* here means to rule as a shepherd does his flock, in faithfulness and tenderness. Comp. Joh 10:11 Is 40:10,11 9:6.

{g} "by the prophet" Mic 5:2 Joh 7:42

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 2 - Verse 6

Verse 6. No specific Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes on "Mt 2:5"

{1} "rule" or, "feed" Isa 40:11 {h} "my people Israel" Re 2:27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 2 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Privily*. Secretly, privately. He did this to ascertain the *time* when Jesus was born.

Diligently. Accurately; exactly. He took pains to learn the precise time that the star appeared. He did this because he naturally concluded that the star appeared just at the time of his birth, and he wished to know precisely how old the child was.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 2 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Go, and search diligently*, etc. Herod took all possible means to obtain accurate information respecting the child, that he might be sure of destroying him. He not only ascertained the probable time of his birth, and the *place* where he would be born, but he sent the wise men that they might actually see him, and bring him word. All this might have looked suspicious if he had not clothed it with the appearance of religion. He said to them, therefore, that he did it that he might go and worship him also. From this we may learn,

(1.) that wicked men often cloak their evil designs under the appearance of religion. They attempt to deceive those who are really good, and to make them suppose that they have the same design. But God cannot be deceived, and he will bring them to punishment.

(2.) Wicked men often make use of the pious to advance their evil purposes. Men like Herod will stop at nothing if they can carry their ends. They endeavour to deceive the simple, allure the unsuspecting, and to beguile the weak, to answer their purposes of wickedness.

(3.) The plans of wicked men are often well laid. They occupy a long time; they make diligent inquiry; and all of it has the appearance of religion. But God sees the design; and though men are deceived, yet God cannot be, Pr 15:3.

{i} "and worship him also" Pr 26:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 2 - Verse 9

Verses 9,10. *The star—went before them*. From this it appears that the *star* was a luminous meteor, perhaps at no great distance from the ground. It is not unlikely that they lost sight of the star after they had commenced their journey from the East. It is probable that it appeared to them first in the direction of Jerusalem. They concluded that the expected King had been born, and immediately commenced their journey to Jerusalem. When they arrived there, it was important that they should be directed to the very place where he was, and the star again appeared. It was for this reason that they rejoiced, They felt assured that they were under a heavenly guidance, and would be conducted to the new-born King of the Jews. And this shows,

(1.) that the birth of Jesus was an event of great moment, worthy of the Divine direction of these men to find the place of his nativity.

(2.) God will guide those who are disposed to find the Saviour. Even if for a time the light should be withdrawn, yet it will again appear, and direct us in the way to the Redeemer.

(3.) Direction to Christ should fill us with joy. He is the way, the truth, and the life; the Saviour, the Friend, the all in all; there is no other way of life, and there is no peace to the soul till he is

found. When we are guided ta him, therefore, our hearts should overflow with joy and praise; and we should humbly and thankfully follow every direction that leads to the Son of God, Joh 12:35,36.

{k} "in the East" Mt 2:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 2 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No specific notes from Barnes on this verse.

See Barnes on "Mt 2:9"

{l} "rejoiced with exceeding joy" Ps 67:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 2 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *The house*. The place where he was born, or the place where they lived at that time.

Fell down. This was the usual way of showing respect or homage among the Jews, Es 8:3 Job 1:20; Da 3:7 Ps 72:11; Isa 46:6.

Worshipped him. Did him homage as King of the Jews. **See Barnes "Mt 2:2"**.

Had opened their treasures. The treasures which they had brought, or the boxes, etc., in which they had brought their gold, etc.

They presented unto him gifts. These were presented to him as King of the Jews, because they supposed he was to be a distinguished prince and conqueror. It was customary at the birth of a prince to show respect for him by making him presents or offerings of this kind. This custom is still common in the East; and it is everywhere there unusual to approach a person of distinguished rank without a valuable present. See Ge 23:14 43:11; 1Sa 10:27 1Ki 10:2; Ps 72:10-15.

Frankincense. This was a production of Arabia. It was a white resin or gum. It was obtained from a tree by making incisions in the bark, and suffering the gum to flow out. It was highly odoriferous or fragrant when burned, and was, therefore, used in worship, where it was burned as a pleasant offering to God. See Ex 30:8 Le 16:12. It is produced, also, in the East Indies, but chiefly in Arabia; and hence it has been supposed probable that the wise men came from Arabia.

Myrrh. This was also a production of Arabia, and was obtained from a tree in the same manner as frankincense. The name denotes *bitterness*, and was given to it on account of its great bitterness. It was used chiefly in embalming the dead, because it had the property of preserving them from putrefaction. Comp. Joh 19:39. It was much used in Egypt and in Judea. It was obtained from a thorny tree, which grows eight or nine feet high. It was at an early period an article of commerce, (Ge 37:25) and was an ingredient of the holy ointment, Ex 30:23. It was also used as an agreeable perfume, Es 2:12 Ps 45:8; Pr 7:17.

It was, also, sometimes mingled with wine to form an article of drink. Such a drink was given to our Saviour, when about to be crucified, as a stupefying potion, Mr 15:23. Comp. Mt 27:34. These offerings were made because they were the most valuable which their country produced. They were tokens of respect and homage which they paid to the new-born King of the Jews. They

evinced their high regard for him, and their belief that he was to be an illustrious prince; and the fact that their deed is recorded with approbation, shows us that we should offer our most valuable possessions, our all, to the Lord Jesus Christ. Wise men came from far to do him homage, and bowed down and presented their best gifts and offerings. It is right that we give to him, also, our hearts, our property, our all.

{m} "gifts" Ps 72:10 Is 40:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 2 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Warned of God*, etc. This was done, doubtless, because, if they had given Herod precise information where he was, it would have been easy for him to send forth and slay him. And from it we learn that God will watch over those whom he loves; that he knows how to foil the purposes of the wicked, and to deliver his own out of the hands of those who would destroy them.

In a dream. **See Barnes "Mt 1:20".**

{a} "in a dream" Mt 1:20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 2 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *The angel*. See Mt 1:20.

Flee into Egypt. Egypt is situated to the south-west of Judea, and is distant from Bethlehem perhaps about sixty miles. It was at this time a Roman province. The Greek language was spoken there. There were many Jews there, who had a temple and synagogues; and Joseph, therefore, would be among his own countrymen, and yet beyond the reach of Herod. The jurisdiction of Herod extended only to the river Sihon or river of Egypt, and of course, beyond that, Joseph was safe from his designs. For a description of Egypt, **See Barnes "Isa 19:1".**

It is remarkable that this is the only time in which our Saviour was out of Palestine, and that this was in the land where the children of Israel had suffered so much and so long under the oppression of the Egyptian kings. The very land which was the land of bondage and groaning for the Jews, became now the land of refuge and safety for the new-born King of Judea. God can overturn nations and kingdoms, so that those whom he loves shall be safe anywhere.

{b} "for Herod" Job 33:15,17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 2 - Verse 14

Verse 14. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 2 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *The death of Herod*. Herod died in the thirty-seventh year of his reign. It is not certainly known in what year he began his reign, and hence it is impossible to determine the time that Joseph remained in Egypt. The best chronologers have supposed that he died somewhere between two and four years after the birth of Christ; but at what particular time cannot now be determined. Nor can it be determined at what age Jesus was taken into Egypt. It seems probable that he was supposed to be a year old, (Mt 2:16) and of course the time that he remained in Egypt was not long. Herod died of a most painful and loathsome disease in Jericho. **See Barnes** "Mt 2:16; also Josephus, Ant. xvii. 10.

That it might be fulfilled, etc. This language is recorded in Ho 11:1. It there evidently speaks of God's calling his people out of Egypt under Moses. See Ex 4:22,23. It might be said to be fulfilled in his calling Jesus from Egypt, because the words in Hosea aptly expressed this also. The same love which led him to deliver his people Israel from the land of Egypt, now led him also to deliver his Son from that place. The words used by Hosea would express both events **See Barnes "Mt 1:22"**.

Perhaps, also, the place in Hosea became a proverb, to express any great deliverance from danger; and thus it could be said to be fulfilled in Christ, as other proverbs are in cases to which they are applicable. It cannot be supposed that the passage in Hosea was a prophecy of the Messiah, but was only used by Matthew appropriately to express the event.

{c} "Out of Egypt" Hos 11:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 2 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Mocked of the wise men*. When he saw that he had been deceived by them; that is, that they did not return as he had expected. It does not mean that they did it *for the purpose* of mocking or deriding him; but that he was *disappointed* in their not returning.

Exceeding wroth. Very angry. He had been disappointed and deceived. He expected to send an executioner and kill Jesus alone. But since he was disappointed in this, he thought he would accomplish the same thing, and be sure to destroy him, if he sent forth and put *all the children in the place* to death. This is an illustration of the power of anger. It stops at nothing. If it cannot accomplish just what it wishes, it does not hesitate to go much farther, and accomplish much more evil than it at first designed. He that has a wicked heart, and indulges in anger, knows not where it will end, and will commonly commit far more evil than he at first intended.

Slew all the children. That is, all the male children. This is implied in the original. The design of Herod was to cut off him that had been born *King* of the Jews. His purpose, therefore, did not require that he should slay all the female children; and though he was cruel, yet we have no right to think that he attempted here anything except what he thought to be for his own safety, and to secure himself from a rival.

In all the coasts thereof. The word *coast* is commonly applied now to the regions around the sea, as the sea coast. Here it means the adjacent places, the settlements or hamlets around Bethlehem—all that were in that neighbourhood. We do not know how large a place Bethlehem was; nor, of course, how many were slain. But it was not a large place, and the number could not

be very great. It is not probable that it contained more than one or two thousand inhabitants; and in this case the number of children slain was not probably over twenty or thirty.

From two years old and under. Some writers have said that this does not mean, in the principal, that they had *completed* two years; but that they had *entered* in the second year, or had completed about one year, and entered on the second. But the meaning of the word is doubtful. It is quite probable that they would not be particular about the exact age, but slew all that were about that age.

According to the time, etc. He had endeavoured to ascertain of the wise men the exact time of his birth. He supposed he knew the age of Jesus. He slew, therefore, all that were of his age; that is, all that were born *about* the time when the star appeared, perhaps from six months old to two years. There is no reason to think that he would command those to be slain who had been born after the star appeared.

This destruction of the infants is not mentioned by Josephus, but for this omission three reasons may be given:

(1.) Josephus, a Jewish historian, and a Jew, would not be likely to record anything that would appear to confirm the truth of Christianity.

(2.) This act of Herod was really so small compared with his other crimes, that the historian might not think it worthy of record. Bethlehem was a small and obscure village, and the other crimes of Herod were so great and so public, that it is not to be wondered at that the Jewish historian has passed over this.

(3.) The order was probably given in secret, and might not have been known to Josephus. It pertained to the Christian history; and if the evangelists had not written, it might have been unknown or forgotten. Besides, no argument can be drawn from the silence of the Jewish historian. No reason can be given why Matthew should not be considered to be as fully entitled to credit as Josephus. Yet there is no improbability in the account given by Matthew. Herod was an odious and bloody tyrant, and the facts of his reign prove that he was abundantly capable or this wickedness. The following bloody deeds will show that the slaying of the infants was in perfect accordance with his character. The account is taken from Josephus, as arranged by Dr. Lardnet. Aristobulus, brother of his wife Marianne, was murdered by his direction at eighteen years of age, because the people of Jerusalem had shown some affection for his person. In the seventh year of his reign he put to death Hyreanus, grandfather of Mariamne, then eighty years of age, and who had formerly saved Herod's life; a man who had, ill every revolution of fortune, shown a mild and peaceable disposition. His beloved and beautiful wife, Mariamnne, had a public execution, and her mother Alexandra followed soon after. Alexander and Aristobulus, his two sons by Mariamne were strangled in prison by his orders upon groundless suspicions, as it seems, when they were at man's estate, were married, and had children. In his last sickness, a little before he died, he sent orders throughout Judea, requiring the presence of all the chief men of the nation at Jericho. His orders were obeyed, for they were enforced with no less penalty than that of death. When they were come to Jericho, he had them all shut up in the circus; and calling for his sister Salome, and her husband Alexis, he told them—" My life is now short. I know the Jewish people, and nothing will please them better than my death. You have them now in your custody. As soon as the breath is out of my body, and before my death can be known, do you let in the soldiers upon them, and kill them. All Judea, then, and every family, will, though unwillingly, mourn at my death." Nay, Josephus says, that with tears in his eyes he conjured them, by their love to him and their fidelity to God, not to fail of doing him this honour.

What objection, after this account, can there be to the account of his murdering the infants at Bethlehem? Surely there could be no cruelty, barbarity, and horrid crime, which such a man was not capable of perpetrating.

{d} "diligently inquired" Mt 2:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 2 - Verse 17

Verses 17,18. *Jeremy*. Jeremiah. This quotation is taken from Jer 31:15. The word "fulfilled," here, is taken evidently in the sense that the words in Jeremiah *aptly express* the event which Matthew was recording. The original design of this prophecy was to describe the sorrowful departure of the people into captivity, after the conquest of Jerusalem by Nebuzaradan. The captives were assembled at Rama, Jeremiah himself being in chains, and there the fate of those who had escaped in the destruction of the city was decided at the will of the conqueror, Jer 40:1. The nobles had been slain, and the eyes of their king put out after the murder of his sons before his sight, and the people were then gathered at Rama in chains, whence they were to start on their mournful journey, slaves to a cruel monarch, leaving behind them all that was dear in life. The sadness of such a scene is well expressed in the language of the prophet, and no less beautifully and fitly applies to the melancholy event which the evangelist records; and there could be no impropriety in his using it as a quotation.

Rama was a small town in the tribe of Benjamin, not far from Bethlehem. Rachel was the mother of Benjamin, and was buried near to Bethlehem, Ge 35:16-19. Rama was about six miles north-west of Jerusalem, near Bethel. The name *Rama* signifies an eminence, and was given to the town because it was situated on a hill. Rama is commonly supposed to be the same as the Arimathea of the New Testament—the place where Joseph lived who begged the body of Jesus. See Mt 27:57. This is also the same place in which Samuel was born, where he resided, died, and was buried, and where he anointed Saul as king, 1Sa 1:1,19, 2:11 8:4, 19:18

1Sa 25:1. Mr. King, an American missionary, was at Rama —now called *Romba*—in 1824; and Mr. Whiting, another American missionary, was there in 1835. He says,

> "The situation is exceedingly beautiful. It is about two hours distant from Jerusalem to the north-west, on an eminence commanding a view of a wide extent of beautiful diversified country. Hills, plains, and valleys, highly cultivated fields of wheat and barley, vineyards and oliveyards, are spread out before you as on a map; and numerous villages are scattered here and there over the whole view. To the west and north-west, beyond the hill-country, appears the vast plain of Sharon, and farther still you look out upon the *great and wide sea*. It occurred to me as not improbable, that in the days of David and Solomon, this place may have been a favourite retreat during the heat of summer; and that here the former

may have often struck his sacred lyre. Some of the psalms,
or at least one of them, (see Ps 104:25) seem to have
been composed in some place which commanded a view of the
Mediterranean; and this is the only place, I believe,
in the vicinity of Jerusalem, that affords such a view."

Rama was once a strongly fortified city, but there is no city here at present. A half-ruined Mohammedan mosque, which was originally a Christian church, stands over the tomb of the prophet; besides which, a few miserable dwellings are the only buildings that remain on this once celebrated spot.

There is a town about thirty miles north-west of Jerusalem, on the road to Joppa, now called *Ramla*, or *Ramle*, which is described by many geographers, and some of the best maps, as the Rama of Samuel, and the Arimathea of Joseph. It commands a view of the whole valley of Sharon, from the mountains of Jerusalem to the sea, and from the foot of Carmel to the hills of Gaza.—*Un. Bib. Die*.

By a beautiful figure of speech, the prophet introduces the mother weeping over the tribe, her children, and with them weeping over the fallen destiny of Israel, and over the calamities about to come upon the land. Few images could be more striking than thus to introduce a mother, long dead, whose sepulchre was near, weeping bitterly over the terrible calamities that befell her descendants. The language and the image aptly and beautifully expressed the sorrows of the mothers in Bethlehem, when Herod slew their infant children. Under the cruelty of the tyrant, almost every family was a family of tears; and well might there be lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning.

We may remark here, that the sacred writers were cautious of speaking of the characters of wicked men. Here was one of the worst men in the world, committing one of the most awful crimes, and yet there is not a single mark of exclamation; not a single reference to any other part of his conduct; nothing that could lead to the knowledge that his other conduct was not upright. There is no wanton and malignant *dragging him* into the narrative, that they might gratify malice, in making free with a very bad character. What was to their purpose, they record; what was not, they left to others. This is the nature of religion. It does not speak evil of others except when necessary, nor then does it take pleasure in it.

{e} "Jeremey" Jer 31:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 2 - Verse 18

Verse 18. No specific Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 2:17"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 2 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Herod was dead*. **See Barnes "Mt 2:15".**

Herod left three sons, and the kingdom was at his death divided between them. To Archelaus was given Judea, Idumea, and Samaria; to Philip, Batanea, Trachonitis, etc.; to Antipas, Galllea and Perea. Each of these was also called Herod, and these are the individuals who are so frequently referred to in the New Testament during the ministry of the Saviour and the labours of the apostles. The following table will show at a glance the chief connexions of this family, as far as they are mentioned in the sacred history.

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THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 2 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *They are dead which sought*, etc. This either refers to Herod alone, as is not uncommon, using the plural number for the singular; or it may refer to Herod and his son *Antipater*. He was of the same cruel disposition as his father, and was put to death by his father about five days before his own death.

{f} "they are dead" Ex 4:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 2 - Verse 21

Verse 21. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 2 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *He heard that Archelaus did reign*. Archelaus possessed a cruel and tyrannical disposition similar to his father. At one of the passovers he caused three thousand of the people to be put to death in the temple and city. For his crimes, after he had reigned nine years, he was banished by Augustus, the Roman emperor, to Gaul, where he died. Knowing his character, and fearing that he would not be safe there, Joseph hesitated about going there, and was directed by God to go to Galilee, a place of safety.

The parts of Galilee. The country of Galilee. At this time the land of Palestine was divided into three parts: GALILEE, on the north; SAMARIA, in the middle; and Judea, on the south. Galilee was under the government of Herod Antipas, who was comparatively a mild prince; and in his dominions Joseph might find safety.

{g} "parts of Galilee" Mt 3:13 Lu 2:39

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 2 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Nazareth*. This was a small town, situated in Galilee, west of Capernaum, and not far from Cana. It was built partly in a valley, and partly on the declivity of a hill, Luke 4:29. A hill is yet pointed out, to the south of Nazareth, as the one from which the people of the place attempted to precipitate the Saviour. It was a place, at that time, proverbial for wickedness, Joh 1:46. It is now a large village, with a convent and two churches. One of the churches, called *the church of the Annunciation*, is the finest in the Holy Land, except that of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

A modern traveller describes Nazareth as situated upon the declivity of a hill, the vale which spreads out before it resembling a circular basin, encompassed by mountains. Fifteen mountains appear to meet to form an enclosure for this beautiful spot, around which they rise like the edge of a shell, to guard it against intrusion. It is a rich and beautiful field in the midst of barren mountains.

Another traveller speaks of the streets as narrow and steep; the houses, which are fiat-roofed, are about two hundred and fifty in number, and the inhabitants he estimates at 2000. The population of the place is variously stated, though the average estimate is 3000; of whom about five hundred are Turks, and the residue nominal Christians.

As all testimony to the truth and fidelity of the sacred narrative is important, we have thought ourselves justified in connecting with this article a passage from the journal of Mr. Jowett, an intelligent modern traveller; especially as it is so full an illustration of the passage of Luke already cited:

> "Nazareth is situated on the side, and extends nearly to the foot, of a hill, which, though not very high, is rather steep and overhanging. The eye naturally wanders over its summit, in quest of some point from which it might probably be that the men of this place endeavoured to east our Saviour down, (Lu 4:29) but in vain: no rock adapted to such an object appears here. At the foot of the hill is a modest, simple plain, surrounded by low hills, reaching in length nearly a mile; in breadth, near the city, a hundred and fifty yards; but farther south, about four hundred yards. On this plain there are a few olive and fig trees, sufficient, or rather scarcely sufficient, to make the spot picturesque. Then follows a ravine, which gradually grows deeper and narrower towards the south; till, after walking about another mile, you find yourself in an immense chasm, with steep rocks on either side, from whence you behold, as it were beneath your feet, and before you, the noble plain of Esdraelon. Nothing can be finer than the apparently immeasurable prospect of this plain, bounded on the south by the mountains of Samaria. The elevation of the hills on which the spectator stands in this ravine is very great; and the whole scene, when we saw it, was clothed in the most rich mountain-blue

colour that can be conceived. At this spot, on the right hand of the ravine, is shown the rock to which the men of Nazareth are supposed to have conducted our Lord, for the purpose of throwing him down. With the Testament in our hands, we endeavoured to examine the probabilities of the spot; and I confess there is nothing in it which excites a scruple of incredulity in my mind. The rock here is perpendicular for about fifty feet, down which space it would be easy to hurl a person who should be unawares brought to the summit; and his perishing would be a very certain consequence. That the spot might be at considerable distance from the city is an idea not inconsistent with St. Luke's account; for the expression, *thrusting Jesus out of the city, and leading him to the brow of the hill, on which their city was built*, gives fair scope for imagining, that in their rage and debate the Nazarenes might, without originally intending his murder, press upon him for a considerable distance after they had quitted the synagogue. The distance, as already noticed, from modern Nazareth to the spot, is scarcely two miles; a space which, in the fury of persecution, might soon be passed over. Or, should this appear too considerable, it is by no means certain but that Nazareth may at that time have extended through the principal part of the plain, which I have described as lying before the modern town. In this case, the distance passed over might not exceed a mile. I can see, therefore, no reason for thinking otherwise, than that this may be the real scene where our Divine Prophet, Jesus, received so great a dishonour from the men of his own country and of his own kindred."

Mr. Fisk, an American missionary, was at Nazareth in the autumn of 1823. His description Corresponds generally with that of Mr. Jowett. He estimates the population to be from 3000 to 5000, viz., Greeks, three hundred or four hundred families; Turks, two hundred; Catholics, one hundred; Greek Catholics, forty or fifty; Maronites, twenty or thirty; say in all seven hundred houses.

That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, etc. The words here are not found in any of the books of the Old Testament; and there has been much difficulty in ascertaining the meaning of this passage. Some have supposed that Matthew meant to refer to Jud 13:5, to Samson as a type of Christ; others that he refers to Isa 11:1, where the descendant of Jesse is called "a Branch;" in the Hebrew *Netzer*. Some have supposed that Matthew refers to some prophecy which was not recorded, but handed down by tradition. But these suppositions are not satisfactory. It is a great deal more probable that Matthew refers not to any particular place, but to the *leading characteristics* of the prophecies respecting him. The following remarks may make this clear:

1st. He does not say, "*by the prophet*, as in Mt 1:22 2:5,15; but "*by the prophets*," meaning no one particularly, but the general character of the prophecies.

2nd. The leading and most prominent prophecies respecting him were, that he was to be of humble life, to be despised, and rejected. See Isa 53:2,3,7-9,12 Ps 22:1.

3rd. The phrase "he shall be called," means the same as *he shall be*.

4th. The character of the people of Nazareth was such that they were proverbially despised and contemned, Joh 1:46 7:52. To come from Nazareth, therefore, or *to be a Nazarene*, was the same as to be despised, and esteemed of low birth; *to be a root out of dry ground, having no form or comeliness*. And this was the same as had been predicted by the prophets. When Matthew says, therefore, that the prophecies were fulfilled, it means, *that the predictions of the prophets that he should be of humble life, and rejected, were fully accomplished in his being an inhabitant of Nazareth, and despised as such*.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 3 - Verse 1

MATTHEW CHAPTER 3

Verse 1. *In those days*. The days here referred to cannot be those mentioned in the preceding chapter, for John was but six months older than Christ. Perhaps Matthew intended to extend his narrative to the *whole time* that Jesus dwelt at Nazareth; and the meaning is, "*in those days while Jesus still dwelt at Nazareth*." John began to preach. It is not probable that John began to baptize or preach long before the Saviour entered on his ministry; and, consequently, from the time that is mentioned at the close of the second chapter, to that mentioned in the beginning of the third, an interval of twenty-five or more years elapsed.

John the Baptist. Or, John *the baptizer*—so called from his principal office, that of baptizing. Baptism, or the application of water, was a rite well known to the Jews, and practised when they admitted proselytes to their religion from heathenism.—*Lightfoot*.

Preaching. The word rendered *to preach*, means, to proclaim in the manner of a public crier; to make proclamation. The discourses recorded in the New Testament are mostly brief, sometimes a single sentence. They were public proclamations of some great truth. Such appear to have been the discourses of John, calling men to repentance.

In the wilderness of Judea. This country was situated along the Jordan, and the Dead Sea, to the east of Jerusalem. The word translated *wilderness* does not denote, as with us, a place of boundless forests, entirely destitute of inhabitants; but a mountainous, rough, and thinly-settled country, covered, to some considerable extent, with forests and rocks, and better fitted for pasture than for tilling. There were inhabitants in those places, and even villages, but they were the comparatively unsettled portions of the country, 1Sa 25:1,2. In the time of Joshua there were six cities in what was then called a wilderness, Jos 15:61,62.

{l} "came John" Lu 3:2 Joh 1:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 3 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Repent ye*. Repentance implies sorrow for past offences, (2Co 7:10) a deep sense of the evil of sin as committed against God, (Ps 51:4) and a full purpose to turn from transgression and to lead a holy life. A true penitent has sorrow for sin, not only because it is ruinous to his soul, but chiefly because it is an offence against God, and is that abominable thing which he hates, Jer 44:4. It is produced by seeing the great danger and misery to which it exposes us; by seeing the justness and holiness of God, (Job 42:6) and by seeing that our sins have been committed against *Christ*, and were the cause of his death, Zec 12:10 Lu 22:61,62.

There are two words in the New Testament translated *repentance*— one of which denotes a *change of mind*, or a *reformation* of life; and the other, *sorrow or regret that sin has been committed*. The word used here is the former; calling the Jews to a change of life, or a *reformation* of conduct. In the time of John, the nation had become extremely wicked and corrupt, perhaps more so than at any preceding period, Hence both he and Christ began their ministry by calling to repentance.

The kingdom of heaven is at hand. The phrases, kingdom of heaven, kingdom of Christ, and kingdom of God, are of frequent occurrence in the Bible. They all refer to the same thing. The expectation of such a kingdom was taken from the Old Testament, and especially from Daniel, Da 7:13,14. The prophets had told of a successor to David that should sit on his throne, 1Ki 2:4 8:25; Jer 33:17.

The Jews expected a great national deliverer. They supposed that when the Messiah should appear, all the dead would be raised; that the judgment would take place; and that the enemies of the Jews would be destroyed, and themselves advanced to great national dignity and honour.

The *language* in which they were accustomed to describe this event was retained by our Saviour and his apostles. Yet they early attempted to correct the common notions respecting his reign. This was one design, doubtless, of John in preaching repentance. Instead of summoning them to *military exercises*, and collecting an army, which would have been in accordance with their expectations, he called them *to a change of life*; to the doctrine of repentance—a state of things far more accordant with the approach of a kingdom of purity.

The phrases, kingdom of God and kingdom of heaven, have been supposed to have a considerable variety of meaning. Some have thought that they refer to the state of things in heaven; others, to the personal reign of Christ on earth; others, that they mean the church, or the reign of Christ in the hearts of his people. There can be no doubt that there is reference in the words to the condition of things in heaven, after this life. But the church of God is a preparatory state to that beyond the grave; a state in which Christ pre-eminently rules and reigns; and there is no doubt that it sometimes refers to the state of things in the church; and it means, therefore, the state of things which the Messiah was to set up— *his spiritual reign began in the church on earth, and completed in heaven*.

The phrase would be best translated, "the *reign* of God draws near." We do not say commonly of a *kingdom* that it is *moveable*, or that it *approaches*. A *reign* may be said to be at hand; or the time when Christ should reign was at hand. In this sense it is meant that the time when Christ should *reign*, or set up his kingdom, or *begin* his dominion on earth, under the Christian economy, was

about to commence. The phrase, then, should not be confined to any period of that reign, but includes his whole dominion over his people on earth and in heaven.

In the passage here it clearly means that the coming of the Messiah was near; or that the time of the reign of God, which the Jews had expected, was coming.

The word *heaven*, or *heavens*, as it is in the original, means sometimes the *place*, so called; and sometimes is, by a figure of speech, put for the Great Being whose residence is there; as in Da 4:26, "the *heavens* do rule." See also Mr 11:30 Lu 15:18. As that kingdom was one of purity, it was proper that the people should prepare themselves for it by turning from their sins, and directing their minds to a suitable fitness for his reign.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 3 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *The prophet Esaias*. The prophet *Isaiah*. Esias is the Greek mode of writing the name. This passage is taken from Isa 40:3. It is here said to have been spoken in reference to John, the forerunner of Christ. The language is such as was familiar to the Jews, and such as they would understand. It was spoken at first with reference to the return from the captivity at Babylon. Anciently, it was customary in the march of armies to send messengers, or pioneers, before them, to proclaim their approach; to provide for them; to remove obstructions; to make roads, level hills, fill up valleys, etc. Isaiah, describing the return from Babylon, uses language taken from that custom. A crier, or herald is introduced. In the vast deserts that lay between Babylon and Judea, he is represented as lifting up his voice, and, with authority, commanding a public road to be made for the return of the captive Jews, with the Lord as their deliverer. "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight," says he; or, as Isaiah adds, Let the valleys be exalted, or filled up, and the hills be levelled, and a straight, level highway be prepared, that they may march with ease and safety. **See Barnes "Isa 40:3"**.

As applied to John, it means, that he was sent to remove obstructions, and to prepare the people for the coming of the Messiah; like a herald going before an army on the march, to make preparations for their coming.

{m} "by the prophet Esais" Isa 40:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 3 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *His raiment of camel's hair*. His clothing. This is not the fine hair of the camel from which our elegant cloth is made, called *eamlet*; nor the more elegant stuff, brought from the East Indies, under the name of camel's hair; but the long, shaggy hair of the camel, from which a coarse, cheap cloth is made, still worn by the poorer classes in the East, and by monks. This dress of the camel's hair, and a leathern girdle, it seems, was the common dress of the prophets, 2Ki 1:8 Zec 13:4.

His meat was locusts. His food. These constituted the food of the common people. Among the Greeks, the vilest of the people used to eat them; and the fact that John made his food of them is

significant of his great poverty and humble life. The Jews were allowed to eat them, Le 11:22. Locusts are flying insects, and are of various kinds. The green locusts are about two inches in length, and about the thickness of a man's finger. The common brown locust is about three inches long. The general form and appearance of the locust is not unlike the grasshopper They were one of the plagues of Egypt, Ex 10:1. In eastern countries they are very numerous. They appear in such quantities as to darken the sky, and devour in a short time every green thing. The whole earth is sometimes covered with them for many leagues, Joe 1:4 Isa 33:4.

"Some species of the locust are eaten at this day in eastern countries, and are even esteemed a delicacy when properly cooked. After tearing off the legs and wings, and taking out the entrails, they stick them in long rows upon wooden spits, roast them at the fire, and then proceed to devour them with great zest. There are also other ways of preparing them. For example: They cook them and dress them in oil; or, having dried them, they pulverize them, and when other food is scarce make bread of the meal. The Bedouins pack them with salt, in close masses, which they carry in their leathern sacks. From these they cut slices as they may need them. It is singular that even learned men have suffered themselves to hesitate about understanding these passages of the literal locust, when the fact that these are eaten by the orientals is so abundantly proved by the concurrent testimony of travellers. One of them says, they are brought to market on strings in all the cities of Arabia, and that he saw an Arab on Mount Sumara, who had collected a sack full of them. They are prepared in different ways. An Arab in Egypt, of whom he requested that he would immediately eat locusts in his presence, threw them upon the glowing coals; and after he supposed they were roasted enough, he took them by the legs and head, and devoured the remainder at one mouthful. When the Arabs have them in quantities, they roast or dry them in an oven, or boil them and eat them with salt. The Arabs in the kingdom of Morocco boil the locusts; and the Bedouins eat locusts, which are collected in great quantities in the beginning of April, when they are easily caught. After having been roasted a little upon the iron plate on which bread is baked, they are dried in the sun, and then put into large sacks, with the mixture of a little salt. They are never served up as a dish, but every one takes a handful of them when hungry. "
Un. Bib. Die

Wild honey. This was probably the honey that he found in the rocks of the wilderness. Palestine was often called the land flowing with milk and honey, Ex 3:8,17, 13:5.

Bees were kept with great care and great numbers of them abounded in the fissures of trees and the clefts of rocks. There is also a species of honey called wild-honey, or *wood-honey* 1Sa 14:27, or honey-dew, produced by certain little insects, and deposited on the leaves of trees, and flowing from them in great quantities to the ground. See 1Sa 14:24-27. This is said to be produced still in Arabia; and perhaps it was this which John lived upon.

{n} "raiment" 2Ki 1:8 Mt 11:8 {o} "locusts" Le 11:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 3 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Jerusalem*. The people of Jerusalem.

All Judea. Many people from Judea. It does not mean that literally *all* the people went, but that great multitudes went. It was general. Jerusalem was in the part of the country called Judea. Judea was situated on the west side of the Jordan. **See Barnes "Mt 2:1"**.

Region about Jordan. On the east and west side of the river; near to Jordan.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 3 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Were baptized*. The word baptize signifies originally to *tinge*, to *dye*, to *stain*, as those who dye clothes. It here means to cleanse or wash anything by the application of water. **See Barnes "Mr 7:4"**.

Washing, or ablution, was much in use among the Jews, as one of the rites of their religion, Nu 19:7 Heb 9:10. It was not customary, however, among them, to *baptize* those who were converted to the Jewish religion until after the Babylonish captivity. At the time of John, and for some time previous, they had been accustomed to administer a rite of *baptism*, or *washing*, to those who became proselytes to their religion; that is, who were converted from being Gentiles. This was done to signify that they renounced the errors and worship of the pagans, and as significant of their becoming pure by embracing a new religion. It was a solemn rite of *washing*, significant of cleansing from their former sins, and purifying them for the peculiar service of Jehovah. John found this custom in use; and as he was calling the Jews to a *new dispensation*, to a change in their form of religion, he administered this right of baptism, or washing, to signify the cleansing from their sins, and adopting the new dispensation, or the fitness rot the pure reign of the Messiah. They applied an old ordinance to a new purpose. As it was used by John it was a significant rite, or ceremony, intended to denote the putting away of impurity, and a purpose to be pure in heart and life. The Hebrew Word (*tabal*) which is rendered by the word baptize, occurs in the Old Testament in the following places, viz. :— Le 4:6 14:6,51 Nu 19:18; Ru 2:14 Ex 12:22; De 33:24 Eze 23:15

Job 9:31 Le 9:9; 1Sa 14:27 2Ki 5:14, 8:15 Ge 37:31; Jos 3:15.

It occurs in no other places; and from a careful examination of these passages, its meaning among the Jews is to be derived. From these passages, it will be seen that its radical meaning is not to sprinkle, or to immerse. It is to dip, commonly for the purpose of sprinkling, or for some other purpose. Thus, to dip the *finger*, i.e. a part of the finger, in blood—enough to sprinkle with, Le 4:6.

To dip a living bird, *and* cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop, in the blood of the bird that was killed, for the purpose of sprinkling; where it could *not* be that *all these* should be immersed in the blood of a single bird. To dip hyssop in the water, to sprinkle with, Nu 19:18. To dip a portion of bread in vinegar, Ru 2:14. To dip the feet in oil—an emblem of plenty, De 33:24. To *dye*, or stain, Eze 23:15. To plunge into a ditch, so as to defile the clothes, Job 9:31. To dip the end of a staff in honey, 1Sa 14:27. To dip in Jordan—a declaration respecting Naaman the Syrian, 2Ki 5:14. The direction of the prophet was to wash himself, 2Ki 5:10. This shows that he understood washing and baptizing to mean the same thing. To dip a *towel*, or *quilt*, so as to spread it on the face of a man to smother him, .

In none of these cases can it be shown that the meaning of the word is to *immerse* entirely. But in nearly all the cases, the notion of applying the water to a part only of the person or object, though it was by dipping, is necessarily to be supposed.

In the New Testament the word, in various forms, occurs eighty times; fifty-seven with reference to *persons*. Of these fifty-seven times, it is followed by "in" (*en*) eighteen times, as in water, in the desert, in Jordan; nine times by "into," (*eiv*,) as *into* the name, etc., *into* Christ; once it is followed by *epi* (Ac 2:38) and twice by "for," (*uper*) 1Co 15:29.

The following remarks may be made in view of the investigation of the meaning of this word.

1st. That in baptism it is possible, perhaps probable, that the notion of dipping would be the one that would occur to a Jew.

2nd. It would *not* occur to him that the word meant of necessity to dip entirely, or completely to immerse.

3rd. The notion of *washing* would be the one which would most readily occur as connected with a religious rite. See the cases of Naaman, and Mr 7:4, (Greek.)

4th. It cannot be proved from an examination of the passages in the Old and New Testaments, that the idea of a complete immersion *ever* was connected with the word, or that it *ever* in any case occurred. If they went into the water, still it is not proved by that, that the only *mode* of baptism was by immersion, as it might have been by *pouring*, though they were in the water.

5th. It is not positively enjoined anywhere in the New Testament that the only mode of baptism shall be by an entire submersion of the body under water. Without such a precept, it cannot be made obligatory on people of all ages, nations, and climes, even if it were probable that in the mild climate of Judea it was the usual mode.

The river Jordan is the eastern boundary of Palestine or Judea. It rises in Mount Lebanon, on the north of Palestine, and runs in a southerly direction, *under ground*, for thirteen miles, and then bursts forth with a great noise at Cesarea Philippi. It then unites with two small streams, and runs some miles farther, and empties into the lake *Merom*. From this small lake it flows thirteen miles, and then falls into the lake Gennesareth, otherwise called the sea of Tiberias, or the sea of Galilee. Through the middle of this lake, which is fifteen miles long and from six to nine broad, it flows undisturbed, and preserves a southerly direction for about seventy miles, and then falls into the Dead Sea.

The Jordan, at its entrance into the Dead Sea, is about ninety feet wide. It flows in many places with great rapidity; and when swollen by rains, pours like an impetuous torrent. It formerly regularly overflowed its banks in time of harvest, that is in March, in some places six hundred paces, Jos 3:15 1Ch 12:15. These banks are covered with small trees and shrubs, and afford a convenient

dwelling for wild beasts. Allusion is often made to these thickets in the sacred Scriptures, Jer 49:19 50:44,

{p} "confessing their sins" Ac 1:5 2:36, 19:4,5,16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 3 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Pharisees and Sadducees*. The Jews were divided into three great sects, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes. In addition to these, some smaller sects are mentioned in the New Testament, and by Josephus: the Herodians, probably political friends of Herod; the Galileans, a branch of the Pharisees; and the Therapeutae, a branch of the Essenes, but converts from the Greeks. The principal of these sects are supposed to have originated about 150 years before Christ, as they are mentioned by Josephus at about that time in his history. Of course nothing is said of them in the Old Testament, as that was finished about 400 years before the Christian era.

I. The PHARISEES were the most numerous and wealthy sect of the Jews. They derived their name from the Hebrew word *Pharash*, which signifies to set apart, or to separate, because they *separated* themselves from the rest of their countrymen, and professedly devoted themselves to peculiar strictness in religion. Their leading tenets were the following:— that the world was governed by fate, or by a fixed decree of God; that the souls of men were immortal, and were either eternally happy or miserable beyond the grave; that the dead would be raised; that there were angels, good and bad; that God was under obligation to bestow peculiar favour on the Jews; and that they were justified by the merits of Abraham, or by their own conformity to the law. They were proud, haughty, self-righteous, and held the common people in great disrespect, Joh 7:49. They sought the offices of the state, and affected great dignity. They were ostentatious in their religious worship, praying in the corners of the streets, and seeking publicity in the bestowment of alms. They sought principally external cleanliness; and dealt much in ceremonial ablutions and washing.

Some of the laws of Moses they maintained very strictly. In addition to the written laws, they held to a multitude which they maintained had come down from Moses by tradition. These they felt themselves as much bound to observe as the written law. Under the influence of these laws, they washed themselves before meals with great scrupulousness; they fasted twice a week—on Thursday, when they supposed Moses ascended Mount Sinai, and on Monday, when he descended; they wore broad phylacteries, and enlarged the fringe or borders of their garments; they loved the chief rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues. They were in general a corrupt, hypocritical, office-seeking, haughty class of men. There are, however, some honourable exceptions recorded, Ac 5:34. Perhaps, also, Mr 15:43 Lu 2:25, 23:51 Joh 19:38.

II. The SADDUCEES are supposed to have taken their name from Sadok, who flourished about 260 years before the Christian era. He was a pupil of Antigonus Sochaeus, president of the sanhedrim, or great council of the nation. He had taught the duty of serving God *disinterestedly*, without the hope of reward, or the fear of punishment Sadok, not properly understanding the doctrine of his master drew the inference that there was no future state of rewards or punishments and on this belief he founded the sect. The other notions which they held, all to be traced to this leading doctrine, were:—

1st. That there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit, (Mt 22:23 Ac 23:8) and that the soul of man perishes with the body.

2nd. They rejected the doctrine of fate.

3rd. They rejected all traditions, and professed to receive only the books of the Old Testament.

They were far less numerous than the Pharisees, but their want of numbers was compensated, in some degree, by their wealth and standing in society. Though they did not generally *seek* office, yet several of them were advanced to the high-priesthood.

III. The ESSENES, a third sect of the Jews, are not mentioned in the New Testament. They differed from both the Pharisees and Sadducees. They were Jewish monks, or hermits, passing their time little in society, but mostly in places of obscurity and retirement. It is not probable, therefore, that our Saviour often, if ever, encountered them; and this, it is supposed, is the reason why they are not mentioned in the New Testament.

They were a contemplative sect, having little to do with the common business of life. The property which they possessed they held *in common*. They denied themselves generally of the usual comforts of life, and were exceedingly strict in the observance of the duties of religion. They were generally more pure than the rest of the Jews, and appear to have been an unambitious, a modest, and retiring sort of people. The two sexes were not in company, except on the Sabbath, when they partook of their coarse fare, bread and salt only, together. They practised dancing in their worship. Few of them were married; they were opposed to oaths; and asserted that *slavery* was repugnant to nature. In regard to doctrine, they did not differ materially from the Pharisees, except that they objected to the sacrifices of slain animals, and of course did not visit the temple, and were not, therefore, likely to come into public contact with the Saviour. They perpetuated their sect by proselytes, and by taking orphan children to train up.

The other sects of the Jews were too insignificant to demand any particular notice here. It may be said of the Jews generally, that they possessed little of the spirit of religion; that they had corrupted some of the most important doctrines of the Bible; and that they were an ignorant, proud, ambitious, and sensual people. There was great propriety, therefore, in John's proclaiming the necessity of *repentance*.

Generation of vipers. Vipers are a species of serpents. They are from two to five feet in length, and about an inch thick, with a flat head. They are of an ash or yellowish colour, speckled with long brown spots. There is no serpent that is more poisonous than their bite; and the person bitten swells up almost immediately, and falls down dead. See Ac 28:6. The word *serpent*, or *viper*, is used to denote both cunning and malignancy. In the phrase, be ye wise as serpents, it means, be prudent, or wise, referring to the account in Ge 3:1-6. Among the Jews the serpent was regarded as the symbol of cunning, circumspection, and prudence. He was so regarded in the Egyptian hieroglyphics. In the phrase "-generation of vipers," Mt 12:34, the viper is the symbol of wickedness, of envenomed malice—a symbol drawn from the venom of the serpent. It is not quite certain in which of these senses the phrase is used in this place; probably to denote their malignancy and wickedness. See Mt 12:34 23:33.

Wrath to come. John expresses his astonishment that sinners so hardened and so hypocritical as they were should have been induced to flee from coming wrath. The wrath to come means the Divine indignation, or the punishment that will come on the guilty. See 1Th 1:10 2:16.

{q} "generation of vipers" Isa 59:5 Mt 12:34, 23:33 Lu 3:7

{r} "flee from the wrath" Jer 51:6 Ro 1:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 3 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Bring forth therefore fruits*, etc. That is, the proper fruits of reformation, the proper evidence that you are sincere. Do not bring your cunning and dissimulation to this work; carry not your hypocrisy into your professed repentance; but evince your sincerity by forsaking sins, and thus give evidence that this crowding to Jordan Is not some act of dissimulation. No discourse could have been more appropriate or more cutting.

Fruits. Conduct. See Mt 7:16-19.

Meet for repentance, Fit for repentance; appropriate to it—the proper expression of repentance.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 3 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *And think not to say*, etc. They regarded it, as sufficient righteousness that they were descended from so holy a man as Abraham. They deemed it as such an honour that it would go far to justify all his descendants, Joh 8:33-37, 53.

John assured them that this was a matter of small consequence in the sight of God. Of the very stones of the Jordan he could raise up children to Abraham. The meaning seems to be this: God, from these stones, could more easily raise up those who should be *worthy* children of Abraham, or be *like him*, than simply because you are descendants of Abraham make you, who are proud and hypocritical, subjects of the Messiah's kingdom. Or, mere *nativity*, or the privileges of birth, avail nothing where there is not righteousness of life. Some have supposed, however, that by these stones he meant the Roman soldiers, or the heathen, who might also have attended on his ministry; and that God could of them raise up children to Abraham.

{1} "of these stones" or, "answerable to amendment of life"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 3 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *The axe is laid unto the root of the trees*. Laying the axe at the root of a tree is intended to denote that the tree is to be cut down. It was not merely to be *trimmed*, to be cut *about the limbs*, but the very *tree* itself was to be struck. That is, a searching, trying kind of preaching has been commenced. A kingdom of justice is to be set, up. Principles and conduct are to be investigated. No art, no dissimulations, are to be successful. Men are to be tried by their lives, not by birth, or profession. They who are not found to bear this test, are to be rejected. The very *root* shall feel the blow, and the fruitless tree shall fall. This is a beautiful and very striking figure of speech, and a very direct threatening of future wrath. John regarded them as making a fair and promising profession, as trees do in *blossom*. But he told them, also, that they should bear *fruit* as well as *flowers*. Their *professions* of repentance were not enough. They should show, by a holy life, that their profession was genuine.

{s} "hewn" Joh 15:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 3 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Whose shoes I am not worthy to bear*. The word here translated shoes, has a signification different from what it has in our language. At first, in order to keep the feet from the sharp stones, or the burning sand, small pieces of wood were fastened to the soles of the feet, called *sandals*. Leather, or skins of beasts dressed, afterwards were used. The foot was not covered at all; but the sandal, or piece of leather or wood, was bound by thongs.

The wooden sandal is much worn in Arabia, Judea, and Egypt. It has a raised heel and toe, as represented in some of the preceding cuts; and, though often expensive and neat, it was usually a cheap, coarse, and very clumsy article.

The people put off these when they entered a house, and put them on when they left it. To loose and bind on sandals, on such occasions, was the business of the lowest servants; and their office was to loose and carry about their masters' sandals. The expression here, then, was an expression of great humility; and John says that he was not worthy to be the servant of Him who should come after him.

Shall baptize you. Shall send upon you the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God is frequently represented as being poured out upon his people, Pro 1:23 Is 44:3; Joe 2:28,29; Ac 2:17,18.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the same, therefore, as the sending of his influences to convert, purify, and guide the soul.

The Holy Ghost: The Third Person of the adorable Trinity, whose office it is to enlighten, renew, sanctify, and comfort the soul. He was promised by the Saviour to convince of sin, Joh 16:8. To enlighten or teach the disciples, Joh 14:26 16:13. To comfort them in the absence of the Saviour, Joh 14:18 16:7. To change the heart, Tit 3:5. To be baptized with the Holy Ghost means, that the Messiah would send upon the world a far more powerful and mighty influence than had attended the preaching of John. Many more would be converted. A mighty change would take place. His ministry would not affect the external life only, but *the heart, the motives, the soul*; and produce rapid and permanent changes in the lives of men. See Ac 2:17,18.

With fire. This expression has been very variously understood. Some have supposed that he refers to the afflictions and persecutions with which men would be tried under the gospel; others, that the word *fire* means *judgment* or wrath. A part of his hearers he would baptize with the Holy Ghost, but the wicked with fire and vengeance. Fire is a symbol of vengeance. See Is 5:24 61:2, 66:24.

If this be the meaning, as seems to be probable, then John says that the ministry of the Messiah would be far more powerful than his was. It would be more searching and trying; and they who were not fitted to abide the test, would be cast into eternal fire. Some have supposed, however, that by *fire*, here, he intends to denote that his ministry would be refining, powerful, purifying, as fire is sometimes an emblem of purity, Mal 3:2. It is difficult to ascertain the precise meaning, further than that his ministry would be very trying, purifying, searching. Multitudes would be converted; and those who were not true penitents should not be able to abide the trial, and should be driven away.

{u} "with the Holy Ghost" Ac 1:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 3 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *His fan*. It seems probable that this was some portable instrument, made light, so that it might be easily carried about. The fan is a well-known agricultural instrument which was used by the Jews, as it is at the present day, to separate grain from the chaff. The usual custom was to throw the grain in the air by means of a large shovel, and suffer the wind to drive the chaff away; but it is probable that the fan was often employed. **See Barnes "Isa 30:24"**.

His floor. The threshing-floor was an open space, or area, in the field, usually on an elevated part of the land, Ge 1:10. It had no covering or walls. It was a space of ground thirty or forty paces in diameter, and made smooth by rolling it, or treading it hard. A high place was selected for rite purpose of keeping it dry, and for the convenience of winnowing the grain by the wind. The grain was usually trodden out by oxen. Sometimes it was beaten with flails, as with us; and sometimes with a sharp threshing instrument, made to roll over the grain, and to cut the straw at the same time, Isa 41:15. After being threshed it was winnowed. The grain was then separated from the dirt and coarse chaff by a sieve, and then still farther cleansed by a fan, an instrument to produce an artificial wind. This method is still practised in eastern nations.

Shall purge. Shall cleanse, or purify. Shall remove the chaff, etc.

The garner. The granary or place to deposit the wheat.

Unquenchable fire. Fire that shall not be extinguished, that will utterly consume it. By the *floor*, here, is represented the Jewish people. By the *wheat*, the righteous, or the people of God. By the *chaff*, the wicked. They are often represented as being driven away like chaff before the wind, Job 21:18 Ps 1:4; Isa 17:13 Ho 13:13.

They are also represented as chaff which the fire consumes, Isa 5:24. This image is often used to express judgments. Isa 41:15, "Thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff." By the unquenchable fire is meant the eternal suffering of the wicked in hell, 2Th 1:8,9; Mr 9:48; Mt 25:41.

{w} "burn up the chaff" Ps 1:4 Mal 4:1; Mr 9:44

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 3 - Verse 13

Verse 13. No Barnes text on this verse.

{u} "to be baptized"

Mr 1:9 Lu 3:21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 3 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *John forbad him*.

I have need. It is more fit that *I* should be baptized with *thy* baptism, the Holy Ghost, than that thou shouldest be baptized in water by me. I am a sinner, and unworthy to administer this to the Messiah.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 3 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Thus it becometh us*. It is fit and proper. And though you may feel yourself unworthy, yet it is proper it should be done.

All righteousness. There was no particular precept in the Old Testament requiring this, but he chose to give the sanction of his example to the baptism of John, as to a Divine ordinance. The phrase "all righteousness," here, is the same as *a righteous institution or appointment*. Jesus had no sin. But he was about to enter on his great work. It was proper that he should be set apart by his forerunner, and show his connection with him, and give his approbation to what John had done. Also, he was baptized that occasion might be taken, at the commencement of his work, for God publicly to declare his approbation of him, and his solemn appointment to the office of Messiah.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 3 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Out of the water*. This shows that he had descended to the river. It literally means, "he went up directly FROM *the water*." The original does not imply that they had descended *into* the river.

The heavens were opened unto him. This was done while he was praying, Lu 3:21. The sacred ordinance of baptism he attended with prayer. The ordinances of religion will be commonly ineffectual without prayer. If in those ordinances we look to God, we may expect he will bless us; the heavens will be opened; light will shine upon our path; and we shall meet with the approbation of God. The expression "the heavens were opened," is one that commonly denotes the appearance of the clouds when it lightens. The heavens appear to open, or give way. Something of this kind probably appeared to John at this time. The same appearance took place at Stephen's death, Ac 7:56. The expression means, he was permitted to see far into the heavens beyond what the natural vision would allow.

To him. Some have referred this to Jesus, others to John. It probably refers to John. See Joh 1:33. It was a testimony given to John that this was the Messiah.

He saw. John saw.

The Spirit of God. See Mt 3:11. This was the Third Person of the Trinity, descending upon him in the form of a dove, Lu 3:22. The *dove*, among the Jews, was the symbol of purity or harmlessness, (Mt 10:16) and of softness, (Ps 55:7.) The form chosen here was doubtless an emblem of the innocence, meekness, and tenderness of the Saviour. The gift of the Holy Spirit, in this manner, was the public approbation of Jesus, (Joh 1:33,) and a sign of his being set apart to the office of the Messiah. We are not to suppose that there was any change wrought in the moral character of Jesus, but only that he was publicly set apart to his work, and solemnly approved by God in the office to which he was appointed.

{y} "Spirit of God" Isa 11:2 42:1, 61:1 Joh 3:34.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 3 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *A voice from heaven*". A voice from God. Probably this was heard by all who were present. This voice, or sound, was repeated on the mount of transfiguration, Mt 17:5 Lu 9:35,36 2Pe 1:17.

It was also heard just before his death, and was then supposed by many to be thunder, Joh 12:28-30. It was a public declaration that Jesus was the Messiah.

My beloved Son. This is the title which God himself gave to Jesus. It denotes the nearness of his relation to God, and the love of God for him, Heb 1:2. It implies that he was equal with God, Heb 1:5-8 Joh 9:29-33; Joh 19:7.

The term *Son* is expressive of love; of the nearness of his relation to God, and of his dignity and equality with God.

Am well pleased. Am ever delighted. It implies that he was constantly or uniformly well pleased with him; and in this solemn and public manner he expressed his approbation of him as the Redeemer of the world.

The baptism of Jesus has usually been considered a striking manifestation of the doctrine of the Trinity, or the doctrine that there are Three Persons in the Divine Nature.

(1.) There is the person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, baptized in the Jordan, elsewhere declared to be equal with God, Joh 10:30.

(2.) *The Holy Spirit*, descending in a bodily form upon the Saviour. The Holy Spirit is also equal with the Father, or is also God, Ac 5:3 4.

(3.) The *Father*, addressing the Son, and declaring that he was well pleased with him. It is impossible to explain this transaction consistently in any other way than by supposing that there are three equal Persons in the Divine Nature or Essence, and that each of these sustains important parts in the work of redeeming men.

In the preaching of John the Baptist, we are presented with an example of a faithful minister of God. Neither the wealth, dignity, nor power of his auditors, deterred him from fearlessly declaring the truth respecting their character. He called things by their right names. He did not apologize for their sin. He set it fairly before them, and denounced the appropriate curse. So should all ministers of the gospel. Rank, riches, and power, should have nothing to do in shaping and gauging their ministry. In respectful terms, but without shrinking, all the truths of the gospel must be spoken, or woe will follow the ambassador of Christ.

In John we have also an example of humility. Blessed with great success; attended by the great and noble, and with nothing but principle to keep him from turning it to his advantage, he still kept himself out of view, and pointed to a far greater personage at hand, So should every minister of Jesus, however successful, keep the Lamb of God in his eye, and be willing—nay, rejoice—to lay all his success and honours at his feet.

Everything about the work of Jesus was wonderful. No person had before come into the world under such circumstances. God would not have attended the commencement of his life with such wonderful events if it had not been of the greatest moment to our race, and if he had not possessed a dignity above all prophets, kings, and priests. He was the Redeemer of men, the mighty God, the Father of eternity, the Prince of peace, (Isa 9:8) and it was proper that a voice from heaven should declare it, that the angels should attend him, and the Holy Spirit signalize his baptism by his personal

presence. And it is proper that we, for whom he came, should give to him our undivided affections, our time, our influence, our hearts, and our lives.

{z} "Son, in whom" Psa 2:7 Lu 9:35; Eph 1:6 2Pe 1:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 4 - Verse 1

MATTHEW CHAPTER 4

Verse 1. *The wilderness*. **See Barnes "Mt 3:1"**.

The Spirit. Luke says, (Lu 4:1,) that Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit. It was by his influence, therefore, that Christ went into the desert.

To be tempted. The word *to tempt*, in the original, means to try, to endeavour, to attempt to do a thing; then, to try the nature of a thing, as metals by fire; then, to test moral qualities by *trying them*, to see how they will endure; then, to endeavour to draw men away from virtue by suggesting motives to evil. This is the meaning here, and this is now the established meaning of the word in the English language.

The devil. This word originally means an adversary, or an accuser; thence any one opposed; thence an enemy of any kind. It is given in the Scriptures, by way of eminence, to the leader of evil angels—a being characterized as full of subtlety, envy, art, and hatred of mankind. He is known, also, by the name of *Satan*, Job 1:6-12 Mt 12:26; *Beelzebub*, Mt 12:24; the *old Serpent*, Re 12:9; and the prince of the power of the air, Eph 2:2. The name is sometimes given to men and women. 2Ti 3:3 Truce-breakers, *slanderers*—in the original, devils. 1Ti 3:2: So must their wives be grave, not slanderers—in the original, devils.

{a} "led up of the Spirit" 1Ki 18:12 Eze 11:1,24 Ac 8:39

{b} "to be tempted" Mr 1:12 Lu 4:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 4 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Had fasted*. Abstained from food.

Forty days and forty nights. It has been questioned by some whether Christ abstained wholly from food, or only from bread and the food to which he was accustomed. Luke says, (Lu 4:2,) that he *ate nothing*. This settles the question. Mark says, Mr 1:13, that angels came and ministered unto him. At first view, this would seem to imply that he did eat during that time. But Mark does not mention the time when the angels performed the office of kindness; and we are at liberty to suppose that he meant to say that it was done at the close of the forty days; and the rather as Matthew, after giving an account of the temptation, says the same thing, Mr 4:2. There are other instances of persons fasting forty days, recorded in the Scriptures. Thus Moses fasted forty days, Ex 34:28.

Elijah also fasted the same length of time, 1Ki 19:8. In these cases, they were no doubt miraculously supported.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 4 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *The tempter*. The devil, or Satan. See Mt 4:1.

If thou be the Son of God. If thou art the Messiah—if God's own Son—then thou hast power to work a miracle; and here is a fit opportunity to try thy power, and show that thou art truly his Son.

Command that these stones, etc. The stones that were lying around him in the wilderness, No temptation could have been more plausible, or more likely to succeed, than this. He had just been declared to be the Son of God, (Mt 3:17) and here was an opportunity to show that he was really so. The circumstances were such as to make it appear plausible and proper to work this miracle. "Here you are," was the language of Satan, "hungry, cast out, alone, needy, poor, and yet the Son of God! If you have this power, how easy could you satisfy your wants! How foolish is it, then, for the Son of God, having all power, to be starving in this manner, when by a word he could show his power, and relieve his wants, and when in the thing itself there could be nothing wrong!"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 4 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *But he answered and said*, etc. In reply to this artful temptation, Christ answered by a quotation from the Old Testament. The place is found in De 8:3. In that place the discourse is respecting manna. Moses says that the Lord humbled the people, and fed them with manna, an unusual kind of food, that they might learn that man did not live by bread only, but that there were other things to support life, and that every thing which God had commanded was proper for this. The term "word," used in this place, means very often, in Hebrew, *thing*, and clearly in this place has that meaning. Neither Moses nor our Saviour had any reference to *spiritual food*, or to the doctrines necessary to support the faith of believers; but they simply meant that God could support life by other things than bread; that man was to live, not by that only, but by every other thing which proceeded out of his mouth; that is, which he chose to command men to eat. The substance of his answer, then, is:—"It is not so imperiously necessary that I should have *bread*, as to make a miracle proper to procure it. Life depends on the will of God. He can support it in other ways, as well as by bread. He has created other things to be eaten, and man may live by everything that his Maker has commanded." And from this temptation we may learn,

(1.) that Satan often takes advantage of our circumstances and wants to tempt us. The poor, and hungry, and naked, he often tempts to repine and complain, and to be dishonest in order to supply their necessities.

(2.) Satan's temptations are often the strongest immediately after we have been remarkably favoured. Jesus had just been called the Son of God, and Satan took this opportunity to try him. He often attempts to fill us with pride and vain self-conceit, when we have been favoured with any

peace of or any new view of God, and endeavours to urge us to do something which may bring us low, and lead us to sin.

(3.) His temptations are plausible. They often seem to be only urging us to do what is good and proper. They seem even to urge us to promote the glory of God, and to honour him. We are not to think, therefore, that because a thing *may seem to be good in itself*, that therefore it is to be done. Some of his most powerful temptations are when he seems to be urging us to do what shall be for the glory of God.

(4.) We are to meet the temptations of Satan, as the Saviour did, with the plain and positive declarations of Scripture. We are to inquire whether the thing is commanded, and whether, therefore, it is right to do it, and not trust to our own feelings, or even our wishes, in tho matter.

{c} "Man shall not live by bread" De 8:3.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 4 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Taketh him up*. This does not mean that he bore him through the air, or that he compelled him to go against his will, or that he wrought a miracle, in any way, to place him there. There is no evidence that Satan had power to do any of these things; and the word translated *taketh him up* does not imply any such thing. It means, to conduct one; to lead one; to attend or accompany one; or to induce one to go. It is used in the following places in the same sense. Numb. xxiii. 14: "And he (Balak) *brought him* (Balaam) into the field of Zophim," etc.; that is, *he led him*, or induced him to go there. Mt 17:1: "And after six days Jesus *taketh* Peter, James," etc.; i.e. led, or conducted them—not by any means implying that he bore them by force. Mt 20:17: "Jesus, going to Jerusalem, *took* the twelve disciples apart," etc. See also Mt 26:37 27:27; Mr 5:40.

From these passages, and many more, it appears that all that is meant here is, that Satan *conducted* Jesus, or accompanied him; but not that this was done against the will of Jesus.

The holy city. Jerusalem—called *holy* because the temple was there, and it was the place of religious solemnities.

Setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple. It is not perfectly certain to what part of the temple the sacred writer here refers. It has been supposed by some that he means the roof. But Josephus says that the roof was covered by spikes of gold, to prevent its being polluted by birds; and such a place would have been very inconvenient to stand upon. Others suppose that it was the top of the porch or entrance to the temple. But it is more than probable that the porch leading to the temple was not as high as the main building. It is more probable that he refers to a part of the sacred edifice sometimes called Solomon's porch. The temple was built on the top of Mount Moriah. The temple itself, together with the courts and porches, occupied a large space of ground. **See Barnes "Mt 21:12"**.

To secure a level spot sufficiently large, it was necessary to put up a high wall on the east. The temple was surrounded with porches or piazzas fifty-five feet broad, and seventy-five high. The porch on the south side was, however, sixty-seven feet broad, and one hundred and fifty high. From the top of this to the bottom of the valley below was more than seven hundred feet; and Josephus says that one could scarcely look down without dizziness. The word *pinnacle* does not quite express the force of the original. It is a word given usually to *birds*, and denotes *wings*, or anything in the

form of wings, and was given to the roof of this porch because it resembled a bird dropping its wings. It was on this place, doubtless, that Christ was placed.

Satan proposed that he should cast himself down thence; and, if he was the Son of God, he said it could do no harm. There was a promise that he should be protected. This promise was taken from Ps 91:11,12.

To this passage of Scripture Christ replied With another, which forbade the act. This is taken from De 6:16, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." That is, thou shalt not *try* him; or, thou shalt not, by throwing thyself into voluntary and uncommanded dangers, appeal to God for protection, or trifle with the promises made to those who are thrown into danger *by his providence*. It is true, indeed, that God aids those of his people who are placed *by him* in trial or danger; but it is *not* true that the promise was meant to extend to those who wantonly provoke him, and trifle with the promised help. Thus Satan, artfully using and perverting Scripture, was met and repelled by Scripture rightly applied.

{d} "up into the holy city" Ne 11:1 Mt 27:53

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 4 - Verse 6

Verse 6. No Barnes text on this verse.
{e} "for it is written"
Ps 91:11,12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 4 - Verse 7

Verse 7. No Barnes text on this verse.
{f} "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God"
De 6:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 4 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *An exceeding high mountain*. It is not known what mountain this was. It was probably some elevated place in the vicinity of Jerusalem, on the top of which could be seen no small part of the land of Palestine. The Abbe Mariti speaks of a mountain on which he was, which answers to the description here. "This part of the mountain," says he, "overlooks the mountains of Arabia, the country of Gilead, the country of the Arnorites, the plains of Moab, the plains of Jericho, the river Jordan, and the whole extent of the Dead Sea." So Moses, before he died, went up into Mount Nebo, and from it God showed him "all the land of Gilead, unto Dan, and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea, and the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar," De 34:1-3. This shows that there

were mountains from which no small part of the land of Canaan could be seen; and we must not suppose that there was any miracle when they were shown to the Saviour.

All the kingdoms of the world. It is not probable that anything more here is intended than the kingdoms of Palestine, or the land of Canaan, and those in the immediate vicinity. Judea was divided into three parts, and those parts were called *kingdoms*; and the sons of Herod, who presided over them, were called kings. The term *world* is often used in this limited scale to denote a part, or a large part of the world, particularly the land of Canaan. See Ro 4:13, where it means the land of Judah; also Lu 2:1, **See Barnes "Lu 2:1"**.

The glory of them. The riches, splendour, towns, cities, mountains, etc., of this beautiful land.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 4 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *All these things*, etc. All these kingdoms. All these dominions Satan claimed a right to bestow on whom he pleased, and with considerable justice. They were excessively wicked; and with no small degree of plausibility, therefore, he asserted his claim to give them away. This temptation had much plausibility. Satan regarded Jesus as the King of the Jews. As the Messiah, he supposed he had come to take possession of all that country. He was poor, and unarmed, and without followers or armies. Satan proposed to put him in possession of it at once, without any difficulty, if he would acknowledge him as the proper lord and disposer of that country; if he would trust to *him*, rather than to God.

Worship me. **See Barnes "Mt 2:2"**.

The word here seems to mean, to acknowledge Satan as having a right to give these kingdoms to him; to acknowledge his dependence on him rather than God; that is, really to render *religious* homage. We may be surprised at his boldness. But he had been twice foiled. He supposed it was an object dear to the heart of the Messiah and he seemed not to be asking too much, if he *gave* them to Jesus, that Jesus should be willing to *acknowledge* the gift, and express *gratitude* for it. So plausible are Satan's temptations, even when blasphemous; and so artfully does he present his allurements to the mind.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 4 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Get thee hence*. These temptations, and this one especially, our Saviour met with a decided rebuke. This was a bolder attack than any which had been offered. Others had been but an address to his necessities, and an offer of the protection of God in great danger; in both cases plausible, and in neither a direct violation of the law of God. Here was a higher attempt, a more decided and deadly thrust at the piety of the Saviour. It was a proposition that the Son of God should *worship* the devil, instead of honouring and adoring Him who made heaven and earth; that he should bow down before the prince of wickedness, and give him homage.

It is written. In De 6:13. Satan asked him to worship him. This was expressly forbidden. And Jesus therefore drove him from his presence.

{g} "Thou shalt worship" De 6:13 1Sa 7:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 4 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *The devil leaveth him*. The devil left him for a time, Lu 4:13. He intended to return again to the temptation, and if possible to seduce him yet from God.

And, behold, angels came and ministered. See Mt 1:20. They came and supplied his wants, and comforted him. From the whole of this we may learn,

(1.) That no one is so holy as to be free from temptation; for the pure Son of God was sorely tempted by the devil.

(2.) That when God permits a temptation or trial to come upon us, he will, if we look to him, give us grace to resist and overcome it, 1Co 10:3.

(3.) We see the art of the tempter. His temptations are adapted to times and circumstances. They are plausible. What could have been, more plausible than his suggestions to Christ? They were applicable to his circumstances. They had the appearance of much piety. They were backed by passages of Scripture—misapplied, but still most artfully presented. He never comes boldly and tempts men to sin, telling them that they are committing sin. Such a mode would defeat his design. It would put people on their guard. He commences, therefore, artfully, plausibly, and the real purpose does not appear till he has prepared the mind for it. This is the way with all temptation. No wicked man would at once tempt another to be profane, to be drunk, to be an infidel, or to commit adultery.. The *principles* are first corrupted; the confidence is secured; the affections are won; and then the allurement is by little and little presented, till the victim fails. How should every one be on his guard at the very *first appearance* of evil, at the first suggestion that may possibly lead to evil.

(4.) One of the best ways of meeting temptation is by applying Scripture. So our Saviour did, and they will always best succeed who best wield the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, Eph 6:17.

{h} "angels came and ministered" Heb 1:6,14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 4 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *John was cast into prison*. For an account of the imprisonment of John, see Mt 14:1-12.

He departed into Galilee. See Mt 2:22. The reasons why Jesus went then into Galilee were, probably, not that he might avoid danger— for he went directly into the dominions of Herod, and Jesus had nothing in particular to fear from Herod, as he had given him no cause of offence —but,

(1,) because the attention of the people had been much excited by John's preaching, and it was more favourable for his own ministry.

(2.) It seemed desirable to have some one to second John in the work of reformation.

(3.) It was less dangerous for him to commence his labours *there* than near Jerusalem. Judea was under the dominion of the scribes, and Pharisees, and priests. They would naturally look with

envy on any one who set up for a public teacher, and who should attract much attention there. It was important, therefore, that the work of Jesus should begin in Galilee, and become somewhat established and known before he went to Jerusalem.

{1} "Cast into prison" or, "delivered up"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 4 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Leaving Nazareth*. Because his townsmen cast him out, and rejected him. See Lu 4:14-30.

Came and dwelt in Capernaum. This was a city on the north-west corner of the sea of Tiberias. It is not mentioned in the Old Testament, but is repeatedly in the Gospels. Though it was once a city of renown, and the metropolis of all Galilee, the site it occupied is now uncertain. When Mr. Fisk, an American missionary, travelled in Syria in 1823, he found twenty or thirty uninhabited Arab huts, occupying what are supposed to be the ruins of the once exalted city of Capernaum.

In this place, and its neighbourhood, Jesus spent no small part of the three years of his public ministry. It is hence called *his own city*, Mt 9:1. Here he healed the nobleman's son, (Joh 4:47) Peter's wife's mother, (Mt 8:14) the centurion's servant, (Mt 8:5) and the ruler's daughter, (Mt 9:28-25.)

Upon the sea coast. The sea of Tiberius.

In the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim. These were two tribes of the children of Israel which were located in this part of the land of Canaan, and constituted, in the time of Christ, a part of Galilee. Comp. Ge 49:13 Jos 19:10,32.

The word borders here means boundaries. Jesus came and dwelt in the boundaries or regions of Zebulun and Naphtali.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 4 - Verse 14

Verses 14-16. *That it might be fulfilled*, etc. This place is recorded in Isa 9:1,2. Matthew has given the *sense*, but not the very words of the prophet.

By the way of the sea. Which is *near* to the sea, or in the vicinity of the sea.

Beyond Jordan. This does not mean to the east of Jordan, as the phrase sometimes denotes, but rather in the vicinity of the Jordan, or perhaps in the vicinity of the sources of the Jordan. See De 1:1 4:49.

Galilee of the Gentiles. Galilee was divided into *upper* and *lower* Galilee. Upper Galilee was called *Galilee of the Gentiles*, because it was occupied chiefly by Gentiles. It was in the neighbourhood of Tyre, Sidon, etc. The word *Gentiles* includes, in the Scriptures, all who are not Jews. It means the same as *nations*, or, as we should say, the *heathen nations*.

{i} "Esaias the prophet, saying" Is 9:1,2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 4 - Verse 15

Verse 15. No specific Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 4:14"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 4 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *The people which sat in darkness*. This is an expression denoting great ignorance. As in darkness or night we can see nothing, and know not where to go, so those who are ignorant of God, and their duty, are said to be in darkness. The instruction which removes this ignorance is called *light*. See Joh 3:19 1Pe 2:9; 1Jo 1:6; 1Jo 2:8. As ignorance is often connected with crime and vice, so darkness is sometimes used to denote sin, 1Th 5:5 Eph 5:11; Lu 22:53.

The region and shadow of death. This is a forcible and beautiful image, designed also to denote ignorance and sin. It is often used in the Bible, and is very expressive. A *shadow* is caused by an object coming between us and the sun. So the Hebrews imaged death as standing between us and the sun, and casting a long, dark, and baleful shadow abroad on the face of the nations, denoting their great ignorance, sin, and woe. It denotes a dismal, gloomy, and dreadful shade, where death and sin reign, like the chill damps, and horrors of the dwelling-place of the dead. See Job 10:21 16:16; Job 34:22 Ps 23:4 Jer 2:6.

These expressions denote that the country of Galilee was peculiarly ignorant and blind. We know that the people were proverbially so. They were distinguished for a coarse, outlandish manner of speech, (Mr 14:70) and are represented as having been distinguished by a general profligacy of morals and manners. It shows the great compassion of the Saviour, that he went to preach to such poor and despised sinners.

Instead of seeking the rich and the learned, he chose to minister to the needy, the ignorant, and the contemned. His office is to enlighten the ignorant; his delight to guide the wandering, and to raise up those that are in the shadow of death. In doing this, Jesus set an example for all his followers. It is their duty to seek out those who are sitting in the shadow of death, and to send the gospel to them. No small part of the world is still lying in wickedness, as wicked and wretched as was the land of Zebulun and Naphtali in the time of Jesus. The Lord Jesus is able to enlighten them also. And every Christian should conceive it a privilege, as well as a duty, to imitate his Saviour in this, and to be permitted to send to them the light of life. See Mt 28:19.

{k} "saw great light" Isa 42:6,7; Lu 2:32

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 4 - Verse 17

Verse 17. See Mt 3:2
{m} "for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" Mt 3:2 10:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 4 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Sea of Galilee*. This was also caned the sea of Tiberias, and the lake of Gennesareth, and also the sea of Chinnereth, Nu 34:11 De 3:17; Jos 12:3.

It is about fifteen miles in length, and from six to nine in width. There is no part of Palestine, it is said, which can be compared in beauty with the environs of this lake. Many populous cities once stood on its shores, such as Tiberias, Bethsaida, Capernaum, Chorazin, Hippo, etc. The shores are described by Josephus as a perfect paradise, producing every luxury under heaven, at all seasons of the year. The river Jordan flows directly through the lake, it is said, without mingling with its waters, so that the course of the Jordan can be distinctly seen. The waters of the lake are sweet and pleasant to the taste, and clear. The lake still abounds with fish, and gives employment, as it did in the time of our Saviour, to those who live on its shores. It is, however, stormy, owing probably to the high hills by which it is surrounded.

Simon called Peter. The name *Peter* means a rock; and is the same as Cephas. **See Barnes "Mt 16:18"**; also **See Barnes "Joh 1:42"**; **See Barnes** "1Co 15:5".

{n} "called Peter" Joh 1:42

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 4 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Fishers of men*. Ministers or preachers of the gospel, whose business it shall be to win souls to Christ.

{o} "fishers of men" Lu 5:10 1Co 9:20-22; 2Co 12:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 4 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Straightway*. Immediately—as all should do when the Lord Jesus calls them.

Left their *nets*. Their nets were the means of their living, perhaps all their property. By leaving them immediately, and following him, they gave every evidence of sincerity. They showed, what we should, that they were willing to forsake *all* fro the sake of Jesus, and to follow him wherever he should lead them. They went forth to persecution and death, for the sake of Jesus; but also to the honour of saving souls from death, and establishing a church that shall continue to the end of time. Little did they know what awaited them, when they left their unmended nets to rot on the beach, and followed the unknown and unhonoured Jesus of Nazareth. So we know not what awaits us, when we become his followers but we should cheerfully go, when our Saviour calls, willing to commit all into his hand—come honour or dishonour, sickness or health, riches or poverty, life or death. Be it ours to do our duty at once, and to commit the result to the great Redeemer who has call us. Comp. Mt 6:33 8:21,22

Joh 21:21,22.

Followed him. This is an expression denoting that they became his disciples, 2Ki 6:19.

{p} "their nets" Mr 10:28-31.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 4 - Verse 21

Verse 21. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 4 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Left their father*. This showed how willing they were to follow Jesus. They left their father. They showed us what we ought to do. If necessary, we should leave father, and mother, and every friend, Lu 14:26. If they will go with us, and be Christians, it is well; if not, yet they should not hinder us. We should be the followers of Jesus. And while, in doing it, we should treat our friends tenderly and kindly, yet we ought at all hazards to obey God, and do our duty to him. We may add, that many, very many children, since Sabbath schools have commenced, have been the means of their parents' conversion. Many children have spoken to their parents, or read the Bible to them, or other books, and prayed for them, and God has blessed them and converted them. Every child in a Sunday school ought to be a Christian; and then should strive and pray that God would convert his parents, and make them Christians too.

We see here, too, what humble instruments God makes use of to convert men. He chose fishermen to convert the world. He chooses the foolish to confound the wise. And it shows that religion is true, and is the power of God, when he makes use of such instruments to change the hearts of men, and save their souls. **See Barnes "1Co 1:26"**

and following.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 4 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *All Galilee*. See Mt 2:22.

Synagogues. Places of worship, or places where the people *assembled* together to worship God. The origin of synagogues is involved in much obscurity. The *sacrifices* of the Jews were appointed to be held in *one* place, at Jerusalem. But there was nothing to forbid the other services of religion to be performed at any place. Accordingly, the praises of God were sung in the schools of the prophets; and those who chose were assembled by the seers on the Sabbath, and the new-moons, for religious worship, 2Ki 4:23 1Sa 10:5-11. The people would soon see the necessity of providing convenient places for their services, to shelter them from storms and heat; and this was probably the origin of synagogues. At what tinge they were commenced is unknown. They are mentioned by Josephus a considerable time before the coming of Christ; and in his time they were multiplied, not only in Judea, but wherever there were Jews. There were no less than 480 in Jerusalem alone, before it was taken by the Romans.

The synagogues were built in elevated places—in any place where ten men were found who were willing to associate for the purpose; and were the regular customary places of worship. In them the law, i.e., the Old Testament, divided into suitable portions, was read, prayers were offered, and the Scriptures were expounded. The law was so divided, that the five books of Moses, and

portions of the prophets, could be read through each year. The Scriptures, after being read, were expounded. This was done, either by the officers of the synagogues, or by any person who might be invited to it by the officiating minister. Our Saviour and the apostles were in the habit of attending at those places constantly, and of speaking to the people, Lu 4:15-27 Ac 13:14,15.

The synagogues were built in imitation of the temple, with a centre building, supported by pillars, and a *court* surrounding it. **See Barnes "Mt 21:12"**.

In the centre building, or chapel, was a place prepared for the reading of the law. The law was kept in a chest, or ark, near to the pulpit. The uppermost seats, (Mt 23:6) were those nearest to the pulpit. The people sat round, facing the pulpit. When the law was read, the officiating person rose; when it was expounded, he was seated. Our Saviour imitated their example, and was commonly seated in addressing the people, Mt 5:1 13:1.

Teaching. Instructing the people, or explaining the gospel.

The Gospel of the kingdom. The good news respecting the kingdom which he was about to set up; or the good news respecting the coming of the Messiah and the nature of his kingdom.

Preaching. See Mt 3:1.

All manner of sickness. All kinds of sickness.

{r} "teaching" Mt 9:35 Lu 4:15,44

{s} "Gospel of the Kingdom" Mt 24:14 Mr 1:14 {t} "manner of disease" Ps 103:3 Mt 8:16,17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 4 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *And his fame went throughout all Syria*. It is not easy to fix the exact bounds of Syria in the time of our Saviour. It was, perhaps, the general name for the country lying between the Euphrates on the east, and the Mediterranean on the west; and between Mount Taurus on the north, and Arabia on the south. Through all this region his celebrity was spread by his power of working miracles; and, as might be expected, the sick from every quarter were brought to him, in the hope that he would give relief.

Those possessed with devils. Much difficulty exists, and much has been written, respecting those in the New Testament said to be possessed with the devil. It has been maintained by many, that the sacred writers meant only by this expression to denote those who were *melancholy* or *epileptic*, or afflicted with some other grievous disease. This opinion has been supported by arguments too long to be repeated here. On the other hand, it has been supposed that the persons so described were under the influence of evil spirits, who had complete possession of the faculties, and who produced many symptoms of disease not unlike melancholy, and madness, and epilepsy. That such was the fact, will appear from the following considerations:

1st. That Christ and the apostles spoke *to* them, and *of* them *as such*; that they addressed them, and managed them, precisely *as if* they were so possessed, leaving their hearers to infer beyond a doubt that such was their real opinion.

2nd. They spake, conversed, asked questions, gave answers, and expressed their knowledge of Christ, and their fear of him—things that certainly could not be said of diseases, Mt 8:29 Lu 8:28.

3rd. They are represented as going out of the persons possessed, and entering the bodies of others, Mt 8:32.

4th. Jesus spoke to them, and asked their name, and they answered him. He threatened them, commanded them to be silent, to depart, and not to return, Mr 1:25 5:8, 9:26.

5th. Those possessed are said *to know Christ; to be acquainted with the Son of God*, Lu 4:34 Mr 1:24. This could not be said of diseases.

6th. The early fathers of the church interpreted these passages in the same way. They derived their opinions probably from the apostles themselves, and their opinions are a fair interpretation of the apostles' sentiments.

7th. If it may be denied that Christ believed in such possessions, it does not appear why any other clear sentiment of his may not in the same way be disputed. There is, perhaps, no subject on which he expressed himself more clearly, or acted more uniformly, or which he left more clearly impressed on the minds of his disciples.

Nor is there any absurdity in the opinion that those persons were really under the influence of devils. For—

1st. It is no more absurd to suppose that an angel, or many angels, should have *fallen* and become wicked, than that so many men should.

2nd. It is no more absurd that Satan should have possession of the human faculties, or inflict diseases, than that *men* should do it—a thing which is done every day. What more frequent than for a wicked man to corrupt the morals of others, or by inducing them to become intemperate, to produce a state of body and mind quite as bad as to be possessed with the devil?

3rd. We still see a multitude of cases that no man can prove not to be produced by the presence of an evil spirit. Who would attempt to say that some evil being may not have much to do in the case of madmen?

4th. It afforded an opportunity for Christ to show his power over the enemies of himself and of man, and thus to evince himself qualified to meet every enemy of the race, and triumphantly to redeem his people. lie came to destroy the power of Satan, Ac 26:18 Ro 16:20.

Those which were lunatick. This name is given to the disease from the Latin name of the *moon*, (Luna.) It has the same origin in the Greek. It was given because it was formerly imagined that it was affected by the increase or the decrease of the moon. The name is still retained, although it is not certain that the moon has any effect on the disease. On this point physicians are not determined, but no harm arises from the use of the name. It is mentioned only in this place, and in Mt 17:15. It was probably the *falling sickness*, or the *epilepsy*, the same as the disease mentioned Mr 9:18-20; Lu 9:39,40.

And those that had the palsy. Many infirmities were included under the general name of palsy, in the New Testament.

1st. The paralytic shock, affecting the whole body.

2nd. The hemiplegy, affecting only one side of the body—the most frequent form of the disease.

3rd. The paraplegy, affecting all the system below the neck.

4th. The catalepsy. This is caused by a contraction of the muscles in the whole or a part of the body, and is very dangerous. The effects are very violent and fatal. For instance, if, when a person is struck, he happens to have his hand extended, he is unable to draw it back; if not extended, he is unable to stretch it out. It appears diminished in size, and dried up in appearance. Hence it was called the *withered* hand, Mt 12:10-13.

5th. The cramp. This, in eastern countries, is a fearful malady, and by no means unfrequent. It originates from chills in the night. The limbs, when seized with it, remain unmovable, and the

person afflicted with it resembles one undergoing a torture. This was probably the disease of the servant of the centurion, Mt 8:6 Lu 7:2. Death follows from this disease in a few days.

And he healed them. This was done evidently by a miraculous power. A miracle is an effect produced by Divine power above, or opposed to, what are regular effects of the laws of nature. It is not a violation of the laws of nature, but is a suspension of their usual operation, for some important purpose, for instance, the regular effect of death is, that the body returns to corruption. This effect is produced by the appointed laws of nature; or, in other words, God usually produces this effect when he suspends that regular effect, and gives life to a dead body for some important purpose, it is a miracle. Such an effect is clearly the result of Divine power. No other being but God can do it. When, therefore, Christ and the apostles exerted this power, it was clear evidence that God *approved* of their doctrines; that he had commissioned them; and that they were authorized to declare his will. He would not give this attestation to a false doctrine. Most or all of these diseases were incurable. When Christ cured them *by a word*, it was the clearest of all proofs that he was sent from heaven. This is one of the strong arguments for Christianity.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 4 - Verse 25

Verse 25. From *Decapolis*. *Decapolis* was the name of a region of country in the bounds of the half tribe of Manasseh, mainly on the east of Jordan. It was so called because it included *ten cities*—the meaning of the word Decapolis in Greek. Geographers generally agree that Scythopolis was the chief of these cities and was the only one of them west of the Jordan; that Hippo, (Hippos,) Gedara, Dion, (or Dios,) Pelea, (or Pella,) Gerasa, (or Gergesa,) Philadelphia and Raphana, (or Raphanae,) were seven of the remaining nine, and the other two were either Kanatha and Capitolias, or Damascus and Otopos. These cities were inhabited chiefly by foreigners (Greeks) in the days of our Saviour, and not by Jews. Hence the keeping of swine by the Gergesenes, (Mt 8:30-33,) which was forbidden by the Jewish law.

{u} "great multitudes" Lu 6:17,19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 1

MATTHEW CHAPTER V

Verse 1. *Seeing the multitudes* The great numbers that came to attend on his ministry. The substance of this discourse is recorded in the sixth chapter of Luke. It is commonly called the sermon on the mount. It is not improbable that it was repeated, in substance, on different occasions, and to different people. At those times, parts of it might have been omitted, and Luke may have recorded it as it was pronounced on one of these occasions. **See Barnes "Lu 6:17-20"**.

Went up into a mountain. This mountain, or hill, was somewhere in the vicinity of Capernaum, but where precisely is not mentioned. He ascended the hill, doubtless, because it was more convenient to address the multitude from an eminence, than on the same level with them. A hill or mountain is still shown a short distance to the northwest of the ancient site of Capernaum, which tradition reports to have been the place where this sermon was delivered, and which is called on the maps *the Mount of Beatitudes*. But there is no positive evidence that this is the place where this discourse was uttered.

And when he was set. This was the common mode of teaching among the Jews, Lu 4:20 5:3; Joh 8:2 Ac 13:14, 16:13.

His disciples came. The word disciples means learners; those who are taught. Here it is put for those who attended on the ministry of Jesus, and does not imply that they were all Christians. See Joh 6:66.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 2

Verse 2. No Barnes text on this verse.
{v} "taught them saying"
Lu 6:20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Blessed are the poor in spirit*. The word *blessed* means *happy*, referring to that which produces felicity, from whatever quarter it may come.

Poor in spirit. Luke says simply, *blessed are THE poor*. It has been disputed whether Christ meant the poor in reference to the things of this life, or the *humble*. The gospel is said to be preached to the poor, Lu 4:18 Mt 11:5. It was predicted that the Messiah should preach to the poor, Is 61:1. It is said that they have peculiar facilities for being saved, Mt 19:23 Lu 18:24. The state of such persons is therefore comparatively blessed, or happy. Riches produce care, anxiety, and dangers, and not the least is the danger of losing heaven by them. To be poor in spirit is to have a humble opinion of ourselves; to be sensible that we are sinners, and have no righteousness of our own; to be willing to be saved only by the rich grace and mercy of God; to be willing to be where God places us, to bear what he lays on us, to go where he bids us, and to die when he commands; to be willing to be in his hands, and to feel that we deserve no favour from him. It is opposed to pride, and vanity, and ambition. Such are happy:

(1.) Because there is more real enjoyment in thinking of ourselves *as we are*, than in being filled with pride and vanity.

(2.) Because such Jesus chooses to bless, and on them he confers his favours here.

(3.) Because theirs will be the kingdom of heaven hereafter. It is remarkable that Jesus began his ministry in this manner, so unlike all others. Other teachers had taught that happiness was to be found in honour, or riches, or splendour, or sensual pleasure. Jesus overlooked all those things,

and fixed his eye on the poor, and the humble, and said that happiness was to be found in the lowly vale of poverty, more than in the pomp and splendours of life.

Their's is the kingdom of heaven. That is, either they have peculiar facilities for entering the kingdom of heaven, and of *becoming Christians* here, or they shall enter heaven hereafter. Both these ideas are probably included. A state of poverty—a state where we are despised or unhonoured by men—is a state where men are most ready to seek the comforts of religion here, or a home in the heavens hereafter. **See Barnes "Mt 2:2".**

{w} "???????" Isa 57:15 66:2 {x} "poor in spirit" Jas 2:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Blessed are they that mourn*. This is capable of two meanings: either that those are blessed who are afflicted with the loss of friends or possessions; or that they who mourn over sin are blessed. As Christ came to preach repentance, to induce men to mourn over their sins, and to forsake them, it is probable that he had the latter particularly in view, 2Co 7:10. At the same time, it is true that the gospel only can give true comfort to those in affliction, Is 61:1-3 Lu 4:18. Other sources of consolation do not reach the deep sorrows of the soul. They may blunt the sensibilities of the mind; they may produce a sullen and reluctant submission to what we cannot help; but they do not point to the true source of comfort. In the God of mercy only; in the Saviour; in the peace that flows from the hope of a better world, and there only, is there comfort, 2Co 3:17,18, 5:1.

Those that mourn thus shall be comforted. So those that grieve over sin; that sorrow that they have committed it, and are afflicted and wounded that they have offended God, shall find comfort in the gospel. Through the merciful Saviour those sins may be forgiven. In him the weary and heavy-laden soul shall find peace, (Mt 11:28-30;) and the presence of the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, shall sustain us here, (Joh 14:26,27) and in heaven all tears shall be wiped away, Re 21:4.

{y} "mourn" Is 61:3 Eze 7:16 {z} "for they shall be comforted" Joh 16:20 2Co 1:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *The meek*. Meekness is patience in the reception of injuries. It is neither meanness, nor a surrender of our rights, nor cowardice; but it is the opposite of sudden anger, of malice, of long-harboured vengeance. Christ insisted on his right when he said,

"If I have done evil, bear witness of the evil; but if
well, why smitest thou me?"

Joh 18:23. Paul asserted his right when he said,
"They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans,
and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us
out privily; nay, verily, but let them come themselves,
and fetch us out,"

Ac 16:37. And yet Christ was the very model of meekness. It was one of his characteristics, "I am meek," Mt 11:29. So of Paul. No man endured more, and more patiently, than he. Yet they were not passionate. They bore it patiently. They did not harbour malice. They did not press their rights through thick and thin, and trample down the rights of others to secure their own.

Meekness is the reception of injuries with a belief that God will vindicate us. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord," Ro 12:19. It little becomes us to take his place, and to do what he has a right to do, and what he has promised to do.

Meekness produces peace. It is proof of true greatness of soul. It comes from a heart too great to be moved by little insults. It looks upon those who offer them with pity. He that is constantly ruffled, that suffers every little insult or injury to throw him off his guard, and to raise a storm of passion within, is at the mercy of every mortal that chooses to disturb him. He is like the troubled sea that cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.

They shall inherit the earth. This might have been translated *the land*. It is probable that here is a reference to the manner in which the Jews commonly expressed themselves to denote any great blessing. It was promised to them that they should inherit the land of Canaan. For a long time the patriarchs looked forward to this, Ge 15:7,8; Ex 32:13.

They regarded it as a great blessing, It was so spoken of in the journey in the wilderness; and their hopes were crowned when they took possession of the promised land, De 1:38 16:20. In the time of our Saviour they were in the constant habit of using the Old Testament, where this promise perpetually occurs, and they used it *as a proverbial expression to denote any great blessing, perhaps as the sum of all blessings*, Ps 37:20 Is 60:21. Our Saviour used it in this sense; and meant to say, not that the meek should own *great property* or have many lands, but that they should possess peculiar blessings. The Jews also considered the land of Canaan as a type of heaven, and of the blessings under the Messiah. To *inherit the land* became, therefore, an expression denoting those blessings. When our Saviour promises it here, he means that the meek shall be received into his kingdom, and partake of its blessings here, and of the glories of the heavenly Canaan hereafter. The value of *meekness*, even in regard to worldly property and success in life, is often exhibited in the Scriptures, Pr 22:24,25, 15:1 25:8 15.

It is also seen in common life that a meek, patient, mild man, is the most prospered. An impatient and quarrelsome man raises up enemies; often loses property in lawsuits; spends his time in disputes and broils, rather than in sober, honest industry; and is harassed, vexed, and unsuccessful in all that he does.

"Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise
of the life that now is, and of that which is to come"

1Ti 4:8 6:3-6,
{a} "shall inherit the earth" Ps 37:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Blessed are they that hunger*, etc. Hunger and thirst, here, are expressive of strong desire. Nothing would better express the strong desire which we ought to feel to obtain righteousness, than hunger and thirst. No wants are so keen, none so imperiously demand supply as these. They occur daily; and when long continued, as in case of those shipwrecked, and doomed to wander months or years over burning sands, with scarcely any drink or food, nothing is more distressing. An ardent desire for anything is often represented in the Scriptures by hunger and thirst, Ps 42:1,2, 63:1,2.

A desire for the blessings of pardon and peace; a deep sense of sin, and want, and wretchedness, is also represented by thirsting, Is 55:1,2. Those that are perishing for want of righteousness; that feel that they are lost sinners, and strongly desire to be holy, shall be filled. Never was there a desire to be *holy*, which God was not willing to gratify. And the gospel of Christ has made provision to satisfy all who truly desire to be holy. See Is 55:1-13 65:13; Joh 4:14 6:35, 7:37,38; Ps 17:15.

{b} "for they shall be filled" Ps 34:19 Is 65:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Blessed are the merciful*. That is, those who are so affected by the *sufferings* of others, as to be disposed to alleviate them. This is given as an evidence of piety; and it is said that they who show mercy to others shall obtain it. The same sentiment is found in Mt 10:42. Whosoever shall give a cup of cold water only unto one of these little ones, in the name of a disciple, shall not lose his reward. See also Mt 25:34-40. It should be done to glorify God; that is, in obedience to his commandments, and with a desire that he should be honoured; and feeling that we are benefiting one of his creatures. Then he will regard it as done *to him*, and will reward us. See the sentiment of this verse, that the merciful shall obtain mercy, more fully expressed in 2Sa 22:26,27; and in Ps 18:25,26.

Nowhere do we imitate God more than in showing mercy. In nothing does God more delight than in the exercise of mercy, Ex 34:6 Eze 33:11 1Ti 2:4 2Pe 3:9. To us, guilty sinners; to us, wretched, dying, and exposed to eternal woe, he has shown his mercy by giving his Son to die for us; by expressing his willingness to pardon and save us; and by sending his Spirit to renew and sanctify the heart. Each day of our life, each hour, and each moment, we partake of his undeserved mercy. All the blessings we enjoy are proofs of his mercy. If we also show mercy to the poor, the wretched, the guilty, it shows that we are like God; we have his spirit, and shall not lose our reward. And we have abundant opportunity to do it. Our world is full of guilt and woe, which we may help to relieve; and every day of our lives we have opportunity by helping the poor and wretched, and by forgiving those who injure us, to show that we are like God. **See Barnes "Mt 6:14"**.

{c} "for they shall obtain mercy" Ps 41:1,2.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Blessed are the pure in heart*. That is, whose minds, motives, and principles are pure. Who seek not only to have the *external actions* correct, but who desire to be holy in *heart*, and who *are so*. Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart.

They shall see God. There is a sense in which all shall see God, Re 1:7. That is, they shall behold him as a *Judge*, not as a *Friend*. In this place it is spoken of as a peculiar favour. So also in Re 22:4. And they shall *see his face*. To see the face of one, or to be in his presence, were, among the Jews, terms expressive of great favour. It was regarded as a high honour to be in the presence of kings and princes, and to be permitted to see them, Pr 22:29. He shall stand *before kings*, etc. See also 2Ki 25:19. "Those that stood in the king's presence ;" in the Hebrew, those that saw the *face* of the king; that is, who were his favourites and friends. So here, to see God, means to be his friends and favourites, and to dwell with him in his kingdom.

{d} "pure in heart" Ps 24:3,4; He 12:4 1Jn 3:2,3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Blessed are the peacemakers*. Those who strive to prevent contention, and strife, and war. Who use their influence to reconcile opposing parties, and to prevent lawsuits, and hostilities, in families and neighbourhoods. Every man may do *something* of this; and no man is more like God than he who does it. There ought not to be unlawful and officious interference in that which is none of our but, has business; without any danger of acquiring this character, every man many opportunities of reconciling opposing parties. Friends, neighbours, men of influence, lawyers, physicians, may do much to promote peace. And it should be taken in hand in the beginning. "The beginning of strife," says Solomon, "is like the letting out of water." "An ounce of prevention," says the English proverb, "is worth a pound of cure." Long and most deadly quarrels might be prevented by a little kind interference in the beginning. *Children of God*. Those who *resemble* God, or who manifest a spirit like his. He is the Author of peace, (1Co 14:33) and all those who endeavour to promote peace are *like* him, and are worthy to be called his children.

{e} "peacemakers" Ps 34:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Persecuted*. To *persecute*, means literally to pursue, follow after, as one does a flying enemy. Here it means to vex, or oppress one, on account of his religion. They persecute others who injure their names, reputation, property, or endanger or take their life, on account of their religious opinions.

For righteousness' sake. Because they are righteous, or are the friends of God. We are not to seek persecution. We are not to provoke it by strange sentiments or conduct, or by violating the laws of civil society, or by modes of speech that are unnecessarily offensive to others. But if, in the honest effort to be Christians, and to live the life of Christians, others persecute and revile us,

we are to consider this as a blessing. It is all evidence that we are the children of God, and that he will defend us. All that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution, 2Ti 3:12.

Their's is the kingdom of heaven. They have evidence that they are Christians, and shall be brought to heaven.

{f} "for righteousness's sake" 1Pe 3:13,14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Revile you*. Reproach you; call you by evil and contemptuous names; ridicule you because you are Christians. Thus they said of Jesus, that he was a Samaritan and had a devil; that he was mad; and thus they reviled and mocked him on the cross. But being reviled, he reviled not again, (1Pe 2:23) and thus being reviled, we should bless, (1Co 4:12) and thus, though the contempt of the world is not in itself desirable, yet it is blessed to tread in the footsteps of Jesus, to imitate his example, and even to suffer for his sake, Php 1:29.

All manner of evil—falsely. An emphasis should be laid on the word *falsely* in this passage. It is not blessed to have evil spoken of us if we deserve it; but if we deserve it not, then we should not consider it as a calamity. We should take it patiently, and show how much the Christian, under the consciousness of innocence, can bear, 1Pe 3:13-18.

For my sake. Because you are attached to me; because you are Christians. We are not to *seek* such things. We are not to do things to offend others; to treat them harshly or unkindly, and court revilings. We are not to say or do things, though they may be on the subject of religion, designed to disgust or offend. But if, in the faithful endeavour to be Christians, we are reviled, as our Master was, then we are to take it with patience, and to remember that thousands before us have been treated in like manner. When thus reviled, or persecuted, we are to be meek, patient, humble; not angry; not reviling again; but endeavouring to do good to our persecutors and slanderers, 2Ti 2:24,25. In this way, many have been convinced of the power and excellence of that religion which they were persecuting and reviling. They have seen that nothing else but Christianity could impart such patience and meekness to the persecuted; and have, by this means, been constrained to submit themselves to the gospel of Jesus. Long since, it became a proverb, "that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church."

{1} "falsely" or, "lying"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Rejoice*, etc. The reward of such suffering is great. To those who suffer most, God imparts the highest rewards. Hence the crown of martyrdom has been thought to be the brightest that any of the redeemed shall wear; and hence many of the early Christians *sought* to become martyrs, and threw themselves in the way of their persecutors, that they might be put to death. They literally rejoiced, and leaped for joy, at the prospect of death for the sake of Jesus. Though God does not require us to seek persecution, yet all this shows that there is something in religion to

sustain the soul, which the-world does not possess. Nothing but the consciousness of innocence, and the presence of God, could have borne them up in the midst of these trials; and the flame, therefore, kindled to consume the martyr, has also been a bright light, showing the truth and power of the gospel of Jesus.

The prophets, etc. The holy men who came to predict future events, and who were the religious teachers of the Jews. For an account of their persecutions, see the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

{g} "great is your reward" 2Co 4:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Ye are the salt of the earth*. Salt renders food pleasant and palatable, and preserves from putrefaction. So Christians, by their lives and instructions, are to keep the world from entire moral corruption. By bringing down, by their prayers, the blessing of God, and by their influence and example, they save the world from universal vice and crime.

Salt have lost his savour. That is, if it has become insipid, tasteless, or have lost its preserving properties. The salt used in this country is a chemical compound—muriate of soda— and if the saltness were lost, or it were to lose its savour, there would be nothing remaining. It enters into the very *nature* of the substance. In eastern countries, however, the salt used was impure, mingled with vegetable and earthy substances; so that it might lose the whole of its saltness, and a considerable quantity of earthy matter remain. This was good for nothing, except that it was used, as it is said, to place in paths, or walks, as we use gravel. This kind of salt is common still in that country. It is found in the earth in veins or layers, and when exposed to the sun and rain, loses its saltness entirely. Maundrell says,

"I broke a piece of it, of which that part that was exposed
to the rain, sun, and air, though it had the sparks and
particles of salt, yet it had perfectly lost its savour.
The inner part, which was connected to the rock, retained
its savour, as I found by proof."

{h} "salt of the earth" Mr 9:50

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *The light of the world*. The light of the world often denotes the *sun*, Joh 11:9. The sun renders objects visible, shows their form their nature, their beauties, and deformities. The term *light* is often applied to religious teachers. See Joh 1:4 8:12; Is 49:6.

It is pre-eminently applied to Jesus in these places; because he is, in the moral world, what the sun is in the natural world. The apostles, and Christian ministers, and all Christians, are lights of the world, because they, by their instructions and examples, show what God requires, what is the condition of man, what is the way of duty, peace, and happiness—the way that leads to heaven.

A city that is set on an hill, etc. Many of the cities of Judea were placed on the summits or sides of mountains, and could be seen from afar. This was the case with Jerusalem; and it is said by Maundrell, that near the place where our Saviour is supposed to have delivered his sermon, there is still such a town, called *Saphat*, anciently This can Bethesda. be seen far and near. Perhaps Jesus *pointed* to such a city, and told his disciples that they were like it. They were seen from far. Their actions could not be hid. The eyes of the World were upon them. They *must be seen*; and as this was the case, they ought to be holy, harmless, and undefiled.

{i} "light" Php 2:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Neither do men light a candle*, etc. Jesus proceeded here to show them that the very reason why they were enlightened was, that others might also see the light, and be benefited by it. When men light a candle, they do not conceal the light, but place it where it may be of use. So it is with religion. It is given that we may benefit others. It is not to be concealed, but suffered to show itself, and to shed light on a surrounding wicked world.

A bushel. *Greek*, a measure containing nearly a peck. It denotes anything, here, that might conceal the light.

{1} "bushel" or, "The word, in the original, signifieth a measuring containing about a pint less than a peck."

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Let your light so shine*, etc. Let your holy life, your pure conversation, and your faithful instruction, be everywhere seen and known, Always, in all societies, in all business, at home and abroad, in prosperity and adversity, let it be seen that you are real Christians.

That they may see your good works. This is not the *motive* to influence us, simply that we must be seen, (comp. Mt 6:1); but that our heavenly Father may be glorified. It is not right to do a thing merely to be seen by others, for this is pride and ostentation; but we are to do it that, being seen, God may be honoured. The Pharisees acted to be seen of men; true Christians act to glorify God, and care little what men may think of them, except as by their conduct others may be brought to honour God.

Glorify your Father. Praise, or honour God, or be led to worship him. Seeing in your lives the excellency of religion, the power and purity of the gospel, they may be won to be Christians also, and give praise and glory to God for his mercy to a lost world.

We learn here,

(1.) that religion, if it exists, cannot be concealed.

(2.) That where it is not manifest in the life, it does not exist.

(3.) That professors of religion, who live like other men, give evidence that they have never been renewed.

(4.) That to attempt to conceal or hide our Christian knowledge or experience is to betray our trust, and injure the cause of piety, and render our lives useless. And,

(5.) that good actions will be seen, and will lead men to honour God.

If we have no other way of doing good—if we are poor, and unlearned and unknown—yet we may do good by our lives. No sincere and humble Christian lives in vain. The feeblest light at midnight is of use.

"How far this little calldie throws his beams!"
So shines a good deed in a naughty world!"

{k} "glorify" 1Pe 2:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Think not that I am come*, etc. Our Saviour was just entering on his work. It was important for him to state what he came to do. By his setting up to be a teacher in opposition to the Scribes and Pharisees, some might charge him with an intention to destroy their law, and abolish the customs of the nation. He therefore told them that he did not come for that end, but really to *fulfil* or accomplish what was in the law and the prophets. *To destroy*. To abrogate; to deny their Divine authority; to set men free from the obligation to obey them.

The law. The five books of Moses, called the law. **See Barnes "Lu 24:44"**.

The prophets. The books which the prophets wrote. These two divisions here seem to comprehend the Old Testament; and Jesus says that he came not to do away or destroy the authority of the Old Testament.

But to fulfil. To complete the design; to fill up what was predicted; to accomplish what was intended in them. The word fulfil, also, means sometimes to *teach* or inculcate, Co 1:25. The law of Moses contained many sacrifices and rites which were designed to shadow forth the Messiah, Heb 9:1-28. These were fulfilled when he came and offered himself a sacrifice to God—

"A sacrifice of nobler name,
And richer blood than they."

The prophets contained many predictions respecting his coming and death. These were all to be fulfilled and fully accomplished by his life and his sufferings.

{l} "the law" Mt 3:15 {m} "the prophets" Is 42:21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Verily*. Truly, certainly. A word of strong affirmation.

Till heaven and earth pass. This expression denotes that the law *never should be destroyed* till it should be all fulfilled. It is the same as saying, everything else may change—the very earth and

heaven may pass away—but the law of God shall not be destroyed, till its whole design shall be accomplished.

One jot. The word jot, or yod—'—is the name of the Hebrew letter I, the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet.

One tittle. The Hebrew letters were written with small points or apices, as in the letter *Schin*—*** or *Sin* ***— which serve to distinguish one letter from another. To change a small point of one letter, therefore, might vary the meaning of a word, and destroy the sense. Hence the Jews were exceedingly cautious in writing these letters, and considered the *smallest change* or omission a reason for destroying the whole manuscript when they were transcribing the Old Testament. The expression, "one jot or tittle," became proverbial, and means that the *smallest part* of the law should not be destroyed.

The laws of the Jews are common!y divided into moral, ceremonial, and judicial. The moral laws are such as grow out of the *nature of things*, which cannot, therefore, be changed—such as the duty of loving God and his creatures. These cannot be abolished as it can never be made right to *hate* God, or to hate our fellow-men Of this kind are the ten commandments; and these our Saviour has neither abolished nor superseded. The ceremonial laws are such as are appointed to meet certain states of society, or to regulate the religious rites and ceremonies of a people. These can be changed when circumstances are changed, and yet the moral law be untouched. A general may command his soldiers to appear sometimes in a red coat, and sometimes in blue, or in yellow. This would be a *ceremonial* law, and might be changed as he pleased. The duty of obeying him, and of being faithful to his country, could not be changed. This is a moral law. A parent might suffer his children to have fifty different dresses at different times, and love them equally in all. The dress is a mere matter of ceremony, and may be changed. The child, in all these garments, is bound to *love* and *obey* his father. This is a moral law, and cannot be changed. So the laws of the Jews. Those to regulate mere matters of ceremony, and rites of worship, might be changed. Those requiring *love and obedience to God*, and love to men, could not be changed, and Christ did not attempt it, Mt 19:19 22:37-39; Lu 10:27 Ro 13:9.

A third species of law was the *judicial*, or those regulating courts of justice, contained in the Old Testament. These were of the nature of the ceremonial law, and might also be changed at pleasure. The *judicial* law regulated the courts of justice of the Jews. It was adapted to their own civil society. When the form of the Jewish polity was changed, this was of course no longer binding. The ceremonial law was *fulfilled* by the coming of Christ: the shadow was lost in the substance, and ceased to be binding. The *moral* law was confirmed and unchanged.

{o} "one jot or one tittle" Lu 16:17.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Shall break*. Shall violate, or disobey.

These least commandments. The Pharisees, it is probable, divided the precepts of the law into lesser and greater, teaching that they who violated the former were guilty of a trivial offence only. See Mt 23:23. Christ teaches that in his kingdom they who make this distinction, or who taught

that any laws of God might be violated with impunity, should be called least; while they should be held in high regard who observed all the laws of God without distinction.

Shall be called the least. That is, shall *be* least. The meaning of this passage seems to be this: "In the kingdom of heaven," that is, in the kingdom of the Messiah, or in the church which he is about to establish, (**See Barnes "Mt 3:2"**) he that breaks the least of these commandments shall be in no *esteem*, or shall not be regarded *as a proper religious teacher*. The Pharisees divided the law into *greater* and *lesser* precepts. They made no small part of it void by their traditions and divisions, Mt 23:23 15:3-6. Jesus says, that in his kingdom all this vain division and tradition should cease. Such divisions and distinctions should be a small matter. He that attempted it should be the *least* of all. Men would be engaged in yielding obedience to all the law of God, without any such vain distinctions.

Shall be called great, he that teaches that *all* the law of God is binding, and that all of it should be obeyed, without attempting to specify what is most important, shall be a teacher worthy of his office, shall teach the truth, and shall be called great. We learn hence,

(1.) that all the law of God is binding on Christians. Comp. Jas 2:10

(2.) That all the commands of God should be preached, in their proper place, by Christian ministers.

(3.) That they who pretend that there are any laws of God so small that they need not obey them, are unworthy of his kingdom. And,

(4.) that true piety has respect to all the commandments of God, and keeps them, Ps 119:6.

{p} "shall be called great" 1Sa 2:30

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Your righteousness*. Your holiness, your *views* of the nature or righteousness, and your conduct and lives. Unless you are more holy than they are, you cannot be saved.

Shall exceed. Shall excel, or *abound* more. This righteousness was *external*, and was not real holiness. The righteousness of true Christians is seated in the heart, and is therefore genuine. Jesus means, that unless they had more *real* holiness of character than the scribes, they could not be saved.

The righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees. **See Barnes "Mt 3:7"**.

Their righteousness consisted in outward observances of the ceremonial and traditional law. They offered sacrifices, fasted often, prayed much, were very punctilious about ablutions and tithes and the ceremonies of religion, but neglected justice, truth, purity, holiness of heart, and did not strive to be pure in their motives before God. See Mt 23:13-33.

The righteousness that Jesus required in his kingdom was purity, chastity, honesty, temperance, the fear of God, and the love of man. It is pure, eternal, teaching the motives, and making the life holy.

The Kingdom of heaven. See Mt 3:2. Shall not be a fit subject of his kingdom here, or saved in the world to come.

{q} "shall exceed the righteousness" Mt 23:23-28 Php 3:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Ye have heard*. Or, this is the common interpretation among the Jews. Jesus proceeds here to comment on some prevailing opinions among the Jews; to show that the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees was defective; and that men needed a better righteousness, or they could not be saved. He shows what he meant by that better righteousness, by showing that the common opinions of the scribes were erroneous.

By them of old time. This *might* be translated, *to the ancients*, referring to Moses and the prophets. But it is more probable that he here refers to the interpreters of the law and the prophets. Jesus did not set himself against the law of Moses, but against the false and pernicious interpretations of the law prevalent in his time.

Thou shalt not kill. See Ex 20:13. This literally denotes taking the life of another, with malice, or with intention to murder him. The Jews understood it as meaning no more. The comment of our Saviour shows that it was spiritual, and was designed to extend to the *thoughts* and *feelings*, as well as the external act.

Shall be in danger of. Shall be held guilty, and be punished by. The law of Moses declared that the murderer should be put to death, Le 24:21 Nu 35:16. It did not say, however, by whom this should be done, and it was left to the Jews to organize courts to have cognizance of such crimes, De 16:18.

The judgment. This was the tribunal that had cognizance of cases of murder, etc. It was a *court* that sat in each city or town, and consisted commonly of seven members. It was the lowest court among the Jews, and from it an appeal might be taken to the Sanhedrim.

{1} "by them" or, "to them" {r} "Thou shalt not kill" Ex 20:13 De 5:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *But I say unto you*. Jesus being God as well as man, (Joh 1:1) and, therefore, being the original Giver of the law, had a right to expound it, or change it as he pleased. Comp. Mt 12:6,8. He therefore spoke here and elsewhere as *having authority*, and not as the scribes. It may be added here, that no mere man ever spake as Jesus did, when explaining or enforcing the law. He did it as having a *right* to do it; and he that has a right to ordain and change laws in the government of God must be himself Divine.

Is angry without a cause. Anger, or that feeling which we have when we are injured, and which prompts us to defend ourselves when in danger, is a natural feeling, given to us,

(1.) as a natural expression of our disapprobation of a course of evil conduct; and,

(2.) that we may defend ourselves when suddenly attacked. When excited against sin, it is lawful. God is angry with the wicked. Jesus looked on the hypocritical Pharisees *with anger*, Mr 3:5. So it is said, Be ye angry, and sin not, Ep 4:26. This anger, or indignation against sin, is not what our Saviour speaks of here. That is anger *without a cause*; that is, unjustly, rashly, hastily, where no offence had been given or intended. In that case it is evil; and it is a violation of the sixth commandment, because *he that hateth his brother is a murderer*, 1Jo 3:15. He has a feeling which would lead him to commit murder if it were fully acted out.

His brother. By *a brother* here seems to be meant a neighbour, or perhaps any one with whom we may be associated. As all men are descended from one Father, and are all the creatures of the same God, so they are all brethren; and so every man should be regarded and treated as a brother.

Raca. This is a Syriac word, expressive of great contempt. It comes from a verb signifying to be *empty, vain*; and hence, as a word of contempt, denotes *senseless, stupid, shallow-brains*. Jesus teaches here, that to use such words is a violation of the sixth commandment. It is a violation of the spirit of that commandment, and, if indulged, may lead to a more open and dreadful infraction of that law. Children should learn that to use such words is highly offensive to God, for we must give an account of every *idle* word which we speak in the day of judgment.

In danger of the council. The word translated *council* is, in the original, *sanhedrim*, and there can be no doubt that he refers to the Jewish tribunal of that name. This was instituted in the time of the Maccabees, probably about 200 years before Christ. It was composed of seventy-two judges; the high priest was the president of this tribunal. The seventy-two members were made up of the chief priests and elders of the people, and the scribes. The chief priests were such as had discharged the office of the high priest, and those who were the *heads* of the twenty-four classes of priests, who were called in an honorary way *high* or *chief priests*. See Mt 2:4. The *elders* were the princes of the tribes, or heads of the family associations. It is not to be supposed that *all* the elders had a right to a seat here, but such only as were *elected* to the office. The *scribes* were learned men of the nation, elected to this tribunal, being neither of the rank of priests nor elders. This tribunal had cognizance of the great affairs of the nation. Till the time when Judea was subjected to the Romans, it had the power of life and death. It still retained the power of passing *sentence*, though the Roman magistrate held the right of execution. It usually sat in Jerusalem, in a room near the temple. It was before this tribunal that our Saviour was tried. It was then assembled in the palace of the high priest, Mt 26:3-57; Joh 18:24.

Thou fool. This term expressed *more* than want of wisdom. It was expressive of the highest guilt. It had been commonly used to denote those who were idolaters, (De 22:21) and also one who is guilty of great crimes, Jos 7:15 Ps 14:1.

Hellfire. The original of this is, "*the GEHENNA of ore*." The worn GEHENNA, commonly translated *hell*, is made up of two Hebrew words, and signifies the *valley of Hinnom*. This was formerly a pleasant valley, near to Jerusalem, on the south, [or south- east.] A small brook or torrent usually ran through this valley, and partly encompassed the city. This valley the idolatrous Israelites devoted formerly to the horrid worship of Moloch, 2Ki 16:3 2Ch 28:3. In that worship the ancient Jewish writers inform us that the idol of Moloch was of brass, adorned with a royal crown, having the head of a calf, and his arms extended, as if to embrace any one. When they offered children to him, they heated the statue within by a great fire; and when it was burning hot, they put the miserable child into his arms, where it was soon consumed by the heat; and, in order that the cries of the child might not be heard, they made a great noise with drums and other instruments about the idol. These drums were called Toph; and hence a common name of the place was TOPHET, Jer 7:31,32.

The following cut may furnish a useful illustration of this idol.

After the return of the Jews from captivity, this place was held in such abhorrence, that, by the example of Josiah, (2Ki 23:10) it was made the place where to throw all the dead carcases and filth of the city; and was not unfrequently the place of executions. It became, therefore, extremely offensive; the sight was terrific; the air was polluted and pestilential; and to preserve it in any manner pure, it was necessary to keep fires continually burning there. The extreme loathsomeness

of the place; the filth and putrefaction; the corruption of the atmosphere, and the lurid fires blazing by day and by night, made it one of the most appalling and terrific objects with which a Jew was acquainted. It was called the *GEHENNA of fire*; and was the image which our Saviour often employed to denote the future punishment of the wicked.

In this verse it denotes a degree of suffering higher than the punishment inflicted by the *court of seventy*, or the *sanhedrim*; and the whole verse may therefore mean, "He that hates his brother, without a cause, is guilty of a violation of the sixth commandment, and shall be punished with a severity similar to that inflicted by the *court of judgment*. He that shall suffer his passions to transport him to still greater extravagances, and shall make him an object of derision and contempt, shall be exposed to still severer punishment, corresponding to that which the *sanhedrim*, or *council*, inflicts. But he who shall load his brother with odious appellations and abusive language, shall incur the severest degree of punishment, represented by being burnt alive in the horrid and awful valley of Hinnom."

The amount, then, of this difficult and important verse is this: The Jews considered but one crime a violation of the sixth commandment, viz., actual murder, or wilful, unlawful, taking *life*. Jesus says that the commandment is much broader. It relates not only to the external act, but to the feelings and words. He specifies three forms of such violation:

(1.) Unjust *anger*.

(2.) Anger accompanied with an expression of *contempt*.

(3.) Anger, with an expression not only of contempt, but *wickedness*. Among the Jews there were three degrees of condemnation: that by the "judgment," the "council," and the "fire of Hinnom." Jesus says, likewise, there shall be grades of condemnation for the different ways of violating the sixth commandment. Not only *murder* shall be punished by God; but *anger*, and *contempt*, shall be regarded by him as a violation of the law, and punished according to the offence. As these offences were not actually cognizable before the Jewish tribunals, he must mean that they will be punished *hereafter*. And all these expressions relate to *degrees of punishment*, proportionate to crime, in the future world—the world of justice and of woe.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 23

Verses 23,24. *Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar*, etc. The Pharisees were intent only on the *external* act in worship. They looked not at all to the internal acts of the mind. If a man conformed to the external rites of religion, however much envy, and malice, and secret hatred he might have, they thought he was doing well. Our Saviour taught a different doctrine. It was of more consequence to have the *heart* right, than to perform the outward act. If therefore, says he, a man has gone so far as to bring his gift *to the very altar*, and should remember that any one had anything against him, it was his duty there to leave his offering, and go and be reconciled. While a difference of this nature existed, his offering could not be acceptable. He was not to *wait* till the offended brother should come to him; he was to *go* and seek him out, and be reconciled. So now, the worship of God will not be acceptable, however well performed *externally*, until we are at peace with those that we have injured. "To obey is better than sacrifice." He that comes to worship his Maker filled

with malice, and hatred, and envy, and *at war with his brethren*, is a hypocritical worshipper, and must meet with God's displeasure. God is not deceived; and he will not be mocked.

Thy gift. Thy sacrifice. What thou art about to devote to God as an offering. *To the altar*. The altar was situated in front of the temple, see the representation on following page and was the place on which sacrifices were made. **See Barnes "Mt 21:12"**.

To bring a gift to the altar, was expressive of worshipping God, for this was the way in which he was formerly worshipped.

Thy brother. Any man, especially any fellow-worshipper. Any one of the same religious society.

Hath aught. Is offended, or thinks he has been injured by you in any manner:

First be reconciled. This means to settle the difficulty; to make proper acknowledgment, or satisfaction, for the injury. If you have wronged him, make restitution. If you owe him a debt which ought to be paid, pay it. If you have injured his character, confess it, and seek pardon. If he is under an erroneous impression; if your conduct has been such as to *lead* him to suspect that you have injured him, make an explanation. Do all *in your power*, and all you *ought to do*, to have the matter settled. From this we learn,

(1.) that in order to worship God acceptably, we must do justice to our fellow-men.

(2.) Our worship will not be acceptable, unless we do all we can to live *peaceably* with others.

(3.) It is our duty to *seek* reconciliation with others when we have injured them.

(4.) This should be done before we attempt to worship God.

(5.) This is often the reason why God does not accept our offerings, and we go empty away from our devotions. We do not do what we ought to others; we cherish improper feelings, or refuse to make proper acknowledgments, and God *will not* accept such attempts to worship him.

{t} "thy gift" De 16:16,17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 24

Verse 24. No specific Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes on "Mt 5:23"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 25

Verses 25,26. *Agree with thine adversary quickly*. This is still an illustration of the sixth commandment. To be in hostility, to go to law, to be litigious, is a violation always, on one side or the other, of the law requiring us to love our neighbour; and our Saviour regards it as a violation of the sixth commandment. While you are in the *way* with him, says he, that is, while you are *going* to the court, *before the trial has taken place*, it is your duty, if possible, to come to an agreement. It is wrong to carry the contention to a court of law. See 1Co 6:6,7. The consequence of *not* being reconciled, he expresses in the language of courts. The adversary shall deliver thee to the judge, and he to the executioner, and he shall throw you into prison. He did not mean to say, that this would be *literally* the way with God; but that His dealings with those that harboured these feelings,

and would not be *reconciled* with their brethren, were represented by the punishment inflicted by human tribunals. That is, he would hold all such as violators of the sixth commandment, and would punish them accordingly.

There is no propriety in the use sometimes made of this verse, in regarding *God* as the "adversary" of the sinner, and urging him to be reconciled to God while in the way to judgment. Nor does the phrase, "thou shalt by no means come out thence till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing," refer to the *eternity* of future punishment. It is language taken from courts of justice, to illustrate the truth that God will *punish* men according to justice, for not being reconciled. It will be eternal, indeed, but this passage does not prove it.

Thine adversary. A man that is opposed to us in law. It here means a creditor; a man who has a just claim on us.

In the way with him. While you are going before the court. Before the trial comes on.

The officer. The executioner; or, as we should say, the sheriff.

The uttermost farthing. The last farthing. All that is due. The *farthing* was a small coin used in Judea, equal to two *mites*. It was equal to about seven mills of our money, [three halfpence.]

{u} "deliver thee" Pr 25:8 Lu 12:58,59

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 26

Verse 26. No specific Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes on "Mt 5:25"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 27

Verses 27,28. *Ye have heard—Thou shalt not commit adultery*. Our Saviour in these verses explains the seventh commandment. It is probable that the Pharisees had explained this commandment as they had the *sixth*, as extending only to the external act; and that they regarded evil thoughts and a wanton imagination as of little consequence, or as not forbidden by the law. Our Saviour assures them that the commandment did not regard the external act merely, but the secrets of the heart, and the movements of the *eye*. That they who indulged a wanton desire; that they who *looked* on a woman to increase their lust, have already, in the sight of God, violated the commandment, and committed adultery in the heart. Such was the guilt of David, whose deep and awful crime fully shows the danger of indulging in evil desires, and in the rovings of a wanton eye. See 2Sa 11:1-27 Ps 51:1-19. See also 2Pe 2:14. So exceeding strict and broad is the law of God! And so heinous in his sight are thoughts and feelings, which may be for ever concealed from the world!

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 28

Verse 28. No specific Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 5:27"

{v} "looketh on a woman" Job 31:1 Pr 6:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Thy right eye*. The Hebrews, like others, were accustomed to represent the affections of the mind by the members or parts of the body, Ro 7:23 6:13. Thus, the *bowels* denoted compassion; the heart, affection or feeling; the *reins*, understanding, secret purpose. An *evil eye* denotes sometimes *envy*, (Mt 20:15) sometimes an evil passion, or sin in general. Mr 7:21,22, "Out of the heart proceedeth an *evil eye*." In this place as in 2Pe 2:14 it is used to denote strong adulterous passion, unlawful desire and inclination. The *right* eye and hand are mentioned, because they are of most use to us, and denote that, however *strong* the passion may be, or difficult to part with, yet that we should do it.

Shall offend thee. The noun from which the verb "offend," in the original, is derived, commonly means a *stumbling-block*, or a *stone* placed in the way, over which one might fall. It also means a net, or a certain part of a net, against which, if a *bird* strikes, it springs the net, and is taken. It comes to signify, therefore, anything by which we fall, or are ensnared; and, applied to morals, means anything by which we fall into sin, or by which we are ensnared. The English word *offend* means now, commonly, to displease; to make angry; to affront. This is by no means the sense of the word in Scripture. It means, to cause to fall, or to allure, *into sin*. The eye does this, when it wantonly looks on a woman to lust after her.

Pluck it out, etc. It cannot be supposed that Christ intended this to be taken literally. His design was to teach that the dearest objects, if they caused us to sin, were to be abandoned; that, by all sacrifices and self-denials, we must overcome the evil propensities of our natures, and resist our wanton imaginations. Some of the Fathers, however, took this commandment literally. Our Saviour several times repeated this sentiment. See Mt 18:9 Mr 9:43-47. See also Co 3:5.

It is profitable for thee. It is better for thee. You will be a gainer by it.

One of the members perish. It is better to deny yourself the gratification of an evil passion here, however much it may cost you, than to go down to hell for ever.

Thy whole body be cast into hell. Thy body, with all its unsubdued and vicious propensities. This will constitute no small part of the misery of hell. The sinner will be sent there as he is, with every evil desire, every unsubdued propensity, every wicked and troublesome passion, and yet with no possibility of gratification. It constitutes our highest notions of misery, when we think of a man filled with anger, pride, malice, avarice, envy, and lust, and no opportunity of gratifying them for ever. This is all that is necessary to make an eternal hell.

{1} "offend thee" or, "cause to offend thee" {w} "cast into hell" Ro 8:13 1Co 9:27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 30

Verse 30. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 31

Verses 31,32. *It hath been said*, etc. That is, by Moses, De 24:1,2. The husband was directed, if he put his wife away, to give her a bill of divorce, that is, a certificate of the fact that she had been his wife, and that he had dissolved the marriage. There was considerable difference of opinion among the Jews for what causes the husband was permitted to do this. One of their famous schools maintained that it might be done for any cause, however *trivial*. The other, that *adultery* only could justify it. The truth was, however, that the husband exercised this right at pleasure; that he was judge in the case, and dismissed his wife when, and for what cause, he chose. And this seems to be agreeable to the law in Deuteronomy. Our Saviour, in Mr 10:1-12, says that this was permitted on account of the hardness of their hearts; but in the beginning it was not so. God made a single pair, and ordained marriage for life. But Moses found the people so much hardened, so long accustomed to the practice, and so rebellious, that, as a matter of *civil* appointment, he thought it best not to attempt any change. Our Saviour brought marriage back to its original institution, and declared that whosoever put away his wife henceforward should be guilty of adultery. But one offence, he declared, could justify divorce. This is now the law of God. This was the original institution. This is the only law that is productive of peace and good morals, and the due respect of a wife and the good of children. Nor has any man, or set of men, a right to interfere, and declare that divorces may be granted for any other cause. Whosoever, therefore, are divorced for any cause except the single one of adultery, if they marry again, are, according to the Scriptures, living in adultery. No earthly laws can trample down the laws of God, or make that right which he has solemnly pronounced *wrong*.

{x} "divorcement" De 24:1 Jer 3:1; Mr 10:2-9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 32

Verse 32. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 5:31"

{y} "put away his wife" Mt 19:9 1Co 7:10,11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *Thou shalt not forswear thyself*. Christ here proceeds to correct another false interpretation of the law. The *law* respecting oaths is found in Le 19:12 De 23:23. By those laws, men were forbid to perjure themselves, or to forswear, that is, swear falsely.

Perform unto the Lord. Perform literally, really, and religiously, what is promised in an oath.

Thine oaths. An oath is a solemn affirmation, or declaration, made with an appeal to God for the truth of what is affirmed, and imprecating his vengeance, and renouncing his favour, if what is affirmed is false. A false oath is called perjury; or, as in this place, *forswearing*.

It appears, however, from this passage, as well as from the ancient writings of the Jewish Rabbins, that while they professedly adhered to the law, they had introduced a number of oaths in *common conversation*, and oaths which they by no means considered as binding. For example, they would swear by the temple, by the head, by heaven, by the earth. So long as they kept from swearing by the name *Jehovah*, and so long as they observed the oaths *publicly* taken, they seemed to consider all others as allowable, and allowedly broken. This is the abuse which Christ wished to correct. *It was the practice of swearing in common conversation, and especially swearing by created things*. To do this, he said that they were mistaken in their views of the *sacredness* of such oaths. They were very closely connected with God; and to *trifle* with them was a species of trifling with God. Heaven is *his* throne; the earth *his* footstool; Jerusalem *his* peculiar abode; the head was made *by him*, and was so much under his control, that we could not make one hair white or black. To *swear* by these things, therefore, was to treat irreverently objects created by God; and could not be without guilt

Our Saviour here evidently had no reference to *judicial* oaths, or oaths taken in a court of justice. It was merely the foolish and wicked habit of swearing in private conversation; of swearing on every occasion, and by everything, that he condemned. This he *does* condemn in a most unqualified manner. He himself, however, did not refuse to take an oath in a court of law, Mt 26:63,64. So Paul often *called God to witness* his sincerity, which is all that is meant by an oath. See Ro 1:9 9:1; Ga 1:20 Heb 6:16.

Oaths were, moreover, prescribed in the law of Moses, and Christ did not come to repeal those laws. See Ex 22:11 Le 5:1; Nu 5:19

De 29:12,14.

{z} "not forswear thyself" Le 19:12 Nu 30:2; De 23:23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 34

Verses 34,35. *Swear not at all*. That is, in the manner which he proceeds to specify. Swear not in any of the common and profane ways customary at that time.

By Heaven; for it is God's throne. To swear by that was, if it meant anything, *to swear by Him that sitteth thereon*, Mt 23:22.

The earth; for it is his footstool. Swearing by that, therefore, is really swearing by God. Or perhaps it means,

(1.) we have no right to *pledge*, or swear by, what belongs to God; and,

(2.) that oaths by inanimate objects are unmeaning and wicked. If they are *real* oaths, they are by a living Being, who has power to take vengeance. A *footstool* is that on which the feet rest when

sitting. The term is applied *to the earth*, to denote how lowly and humble an object it is when compared with God.

Jerusalem. Mt 2:1.

City of the great King. That is, of God; called the great King because he was the King of the Israelites, and Jerusalem was the capital of the nation, and the place where he was peculiarly honoured as King.

{a} "neither by heaven" Mt 23:16-22 Jas 5:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 35

Verse 35. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

See Barnes on "Mt 5:34"

{b} "the city of the great King" Re 21:2,10.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *Thy head*. This was a common oath. The Gentiles also many of them used this oath. To swear *by the head* was the same as to *swear by the life*; or to say, I will forfeit my *life* if what I say is not true. God is the Author of the life, and to swear by *that*, therefore, is the same as to swear by him.

One hair, etc. You have no control or right over your own life. You cannot even change one single *hair*. God has all that control; and it is therefore improper and profane to pledge what is God's gift and God's property; and it is the same as swearing by God himself.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *Your communication*. Your *word*; what you say.

Be, Yea. Yes. This does not mean that we should always use the word *yea*, for it might as well have been translated *yes*. But it means that we should simply affirm, or declare that a thing is so.

More than these. More than these *affirmations*. Profane oaths come of evil.

Cometh of evil. Is evil. Proceeds from some evil disposition or purpose. And from this we may learn,

(1.) that profane swearing is always the evidence of a depraved heart. To trifle with the name of God, or with any of his works, is itself most decided proof of depravity.

(2.) That no man is believed any sooner in common conversation because he swears to a thing. When we hear a man swear to a thing, it is pretty good evidence that he knows what he is saying to be false, and we should be on our guard. He that will break the third commandment, will not hesitate to break the ninth also. And this explains the fact that profane swearers are seldom believed.

The man who is always believed, is he whose character is beyond suspicion in all things; who obeys *all* the laws of God; and whose simple declaration therefore is enough. A man that is truly a Christian, and leads a Christian life, does not need oaths and profaneness to make him believed.

(3.) It is no mark of a gentleman to swear. The most worthless and vile; the refuse of mankind; the drunkard and the prostitute, swear as well as the best dressed and educated *gentleman*. No particular endowments are requisite to give a *finish* to the art of cursing. The basest and meanest of mankind swear with as much tact and skill as the most refined; and he that wishes to degrade himself to the very lowest level of pollution and shame, should learn to be a common swearer. Any man has talents enough to learn to curse God, and his fellow-men, and to *pray*—for every man who swears, prays—that God would sink him and others into hell. No profane man knows but that God will *hear his prayer*, and send him to the regions of woe.

(4.) Profaneness does no man any good. No man is the richer, or wiser, or happier for it. It helps no one's education, or manners. It commends no one to any society. The profane man *must be*, of course, shut out from female society; and no refined intercourse can consist with it. It is disgusting to the refined; abominable to the good; insulting to those with whom we associate; degrading to the mind; unprofitable, needless, and injurious, in society; and awful in the sight of God.

(5.) God will not hold the profane swearer guiltless. Wantonly to profane his name; to call his vengeance down; to curse him on his throne; to invoke damnation, is perhaps of all offences the most awful. And there is not in the universe more cause of amazement at his forbearance, than that God does not rise in vengeance, and smite the profane swearer at once to hell. Verily, in a world like this, where his name is profaned every day, and hour, and moment, by thousands, God shows that he is slow to anger, and that his mercy is without bounds !

{c} "these cometh of evil" Jas 5:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 38

Verses 38-41. *An eye for an eye*, etc. This command is found in Ex 21:24 Le 24:20; De 19:21.

In these places it was given as a rule *to regulate the decisions of judges*. They were to take eye for eye, and tooth for tooth, and to inflict burning for a burning. As a *judicial rule* it is not unjust. Christ finds no fault with the rule as applied to *magistrates*, and does not take upon himself to repeal it. But, instead of confining it to magistrates, the Jews had extended it to *private* conduct, and made it the rule by which to take *revenge*. They considered themselves justified, by this rule, to inflict the same injury on others that they had received. Against this our Saviour remonstrates. He declares that the law had no reference to private revenge; that it was given only to regulate the magistrate; and that their private conduct was to be regulated by different principles. The general principle which he laid down was, that we are not *to resist evil*; that is, as it is in the Greek, not to set ourselves against an evil person who is injuring us. But even this general direction is not to be pressed too strictly. Christ did not intend to teach that we are to see our families murdered, or to be murdered ourselves, rather than to make resistance. The law of nature, and all laws, human and Divine, have justified self-defence, when *life* is in danger. It cannot surely be the intention to teach that a father should sit by coolly, and see his family butchered by savages, and not be allowed to defend them. Neither natural nor revealed religion ever did, or ever can, teach this doctrine. Our

Saviour immediately explains what *he* means by it. Had he intended to refer it to a case where life is in danger, he would most surely have mentioned it. Such a case was far more worthy of statement than those which he did mention. A doctrine so unusual, so unlike all that the world had believed, and that the best men had acted on, deserved to be formally stated. Instead of doing this, however, he confines himself to smaller matters, to things of comparatively trivial interest, and says, that in these we had better take wrong than to enter into strife and lawsuits. The first case is, where we are smitten on the cheek. Rather than contend and fight, we should take it patiently, and turn the other cheek. This does not, however, prevent our remonstrating firmly, yet mildly, on the injustice of the thing, and insisting that justice should be done us, as is evident from the example of the Saviour himself. See Joh 18:23. The second evil mentioned is, where a man is *litigious*, and determined to take all the advantage the law can give him; following us with vexatious and expensive lawsuits. Our Saviour directs us, rather than to imitate him—rather than to contend with a revengeful spirit in courts of justice, and to perpetual broils—so take a trifling injury, and yield to him. This is merely a question about property, and not about conscience and life.

Coat. The Jews wore two principal garments, an interior and an exterior. The *interior*, here called the "*coat*," or the tunic, was made commonly of linen, and encircled the whole body, extending down to the knees. Sometimes beneath this garment, as in the case of the priests, there was another garment, corresponding to pantaloons. The coat, or tunic, was extended to the neck, and had long or short sleeves. Over this was commonly worn an upper garment, here called "*cloak*," or mantle. It was made commonly nearly square, of different sizes, five or six cubits long, and as many broad, and wrapped around the body, and thrown off when labour was performed. This was the garment which is said to have been without *seam*, woven throughout, Joh 19:23. *If*, said Christ, an adversary wished to obtain, *at law, one* of these garments, rather than contend with him, let him have the other also. A reference to various articles of apparel occurs frequently in the New Testament, and it is desirable to have a correct view of the ancient mode of dress, in order to a correct understanding of the Bible. The Asiatic modes of dress are nearly the same from age to age; and hence it is not difficult to illustrate the passages where such a reference occurs. The ordinary dress consisted of the inner garment, the outer garment, the girdle, and the sandals. In regard to the sandals, **See Barnes "Mt 3:11"**.

The preceding cut will give a sufficiently accurate representation of the more simple and usual modes in which the garments were worn.

The following cuts will also show the usual form and use of the girdle. In the girdle was the place of the purse, (Mt 10:9) and to it the sword and dirk were commonly attached. Comp. 2Sa 20:8. In modern times, the pistols are also fastened to the girdle. It is the common place for the handkerchief, smoking materials, ink-horn, and in general the implements of one's profession. The girdle served to confine the loose flowing robe, or outer garment, to the body. It held the garment when it was tucked up, as it was usually in walking, or in labour. Thence, *to gird up the loins* became a significant figurative expression, denoting readiness for service, activity, labour, and watchfulness; and to *loose the loins*, denoted the giving way to repose and indolence, 2Ki 4:29 Job 38:3 Isa 5:27 Lu 12:35; Joh 21:7.

{d} "eye for an eye" Ex 21:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 39

Verse 39. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 5:38"

{e} "resist not evil" Pr 20:22 24:29; Ro 12:17-19
{f} "smite thee" Isa 1:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 40

Verse 40. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 5:38"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 41

Verse 41. *Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile*. The word translated *shall compel*, is of Persian origin. Post-offices were then unknown. In order that the royal commands might be delivered with safety and despatch in different parts of the empire, Cyrus stationed horsemen at proper intervals on all the great public highways. One of those delivered the message to another, and intelligence was thus rapidly and safely communicated. These heralds were permitted to *compel* any person, or to press any horse, boat, ship, or other vehicle that they might need, for the quick transmission of the king's commandments. It was to this custom that our Saviour refers. Rather, says he, than resist a public authority, requiring your attendance and aid for a certain distance, go peaceably twice the distance.

A mile. A Roman mile was a thousand paces.

Twain. Two.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 42

Verse 42. *Give to him that asketh thee*. This is the general rule. It is better to give sometimes to an undeserving person, than to turn away one really necessitous. It is good to be *in the habit* of giving. At the same time, the rule must be interpreted so as to be consistent with our duty to our families, (1Ti 5:8) and with other objects of justice and charity. It is seldom, perhaps never, good to give to a man that is able to work, 2Th 3:10. To give to such is to encourage laziness, and to support the idle at the expense of the industrious. If such a man is indeed hungry, feed him; if he wants anything farther, give him employment. If a widow, an orphan, a man of misfortune, or a man infirm, lame, or sick, is at your door, never send them away empty. See Heb 13:2 Mt 25:35-45. So of a poor and needy friend that wishes to borrow. We are not to turn away, or deny him. This

deserves, however, some limitation. It must be done in consistency with other duties. To lend to every worthless man, would be to throw away our property, encourage laziness and crime, and ruin our families. It should be done consistently, and of this every man is to be the judge. Perhaps our Saviour meant to teach that where there was a *deserving* friend or brother in want, we should *lend* to him, without usury, and without standing much about the security.

{g} "turn not thou away" De 15:7,11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 43

Verse 43. *Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy*. The command to love our neighbour was a law of God, Le 19:18. That we must, therefore, hate our enemy, was an inference drawn from it by the Jews. They supposed that if we loved the one, we must, of course, hate the other. They were total strangers to that great, peculiar law of religion, which requires us to love both. A *neighbour* is literally one that *lives* near to us; then, one that *is near* to us by acts of kindness and friendship. This is its meaning here. See also Lu 10:36.

{h} "Thou shalt love thy neighbour" De 23:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 44

Verse 44. *Love your enemies*. There are two kinds of love, involving the same general feeling, or springing from the same fountain of goodwill to all mankind, but differing still so far as to admit of separation in idea. The one is that feeling by which we *approve of the conduct* of another, commonly called *the love of complacency*; the other, by which we wish well to the *person* of another, though we cannot approve his conduct. This is *the love of benevolence*; and this love we are to bear towards our enemies. It is impossible to love the *conduct* of a man that curses and reviles us, and injures our person or property, or that violates all the laws of God; but though we may hate his conduct, and feel deeply that we are affected by it, yet we may still wish well *to* the person; we may pity his madness and folly; we may speak kindly *of* him, and to him; we may not return evil for evil; we may aid him in the time of trial; and seek to do him good here, and to promote his eternal welfare hereafter, Ro 12:17-20. This seems to be what is meant by loving our enemies; and this is a peculiar law of Christianity, and the highest possible test of piety, and probably the most difficult of all duties to be performed.

Bless them that curse you. The word bless here means to speak well of or to. Not to curse again, or to slander, but to speak of those things which we can *commend* in an enemy; or if there is nothing that we can commend, to say nothing about him. The word *bless*, spoken of God, means to regard with favour, or to confer benefits, as when God is said to bless his people. When we speak of our *blessing God*, it means to praise him, or give thanks to him. When we speak of blessing *men*, it unites the two meanings, and signifies to confer favour, to thank, or to speak well of.

Despitefully use you. The word thus translated means, first, to injure by prosecution in law; then, wantonly and unjustly to accuse, and to injure in any way. This seems to be its meaning here.

Persecute. See Mt 5:10.
{k} "pray for them" Lu 23:34 Ac 7:60

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 45

Verse 45. *That ye may be the children of your Father*. In Greek, the *sons* of your Father. The word son has a variety of significations. **See Barnes "Mt 1:1"**.

Christians were called the *sons* or *children* of God in several of these senses: as his offspring; as adopted; as his disciples; as imitators of him. In this passage, the word is used because, in doing good to enemies, they *resemble* God. *He* makes his sun to rise on the evil and good, and sends rain, without distinction, on the just and unjust. So his people should show that they imitate or resemble him, or possess his spirit by doing good in a similar way.
{l} "sun to rise" Job 25:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 46

Verse 46. *What reward have ye?*, The word reward seems to be used in the sense of *deserving of praise*, or *reward*. If you only love those that love you, you are selfish, you are not disinterested; it is not genuine love for the *character*, but love for the *benefit*; and you deserve no commendation. The very *publicans* would do the same.

The Publicans, The publicans were tax gatherers. Judea was a province of the Roman empire. The Jews bore this foreign yoke with great impatience, and paid their taxes with great reluctance. It happened, therefore, that those who were appointed to collect taxes were objects of great detestation. They were, beside, men who would be supposed to execute their office at all hazards; men who were willing to engage in an odious and hated employment; men often of abandoned characters, oppressive in their exactions, and dissolute in their lives. By the Jews they were associated in character with thieves, and adulterers, and those who were profane and dissolute. Christ says that even these wretched men would love their benefactors.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 47

Verse 47. *And if ye salute your brethren*, etc. The word *salute* here means to show the customary tokens of civility, or to treat with the common marks of friendship. **See Barnes "Lu 10:4"**.

He says that the *worst* men, the very publicans, would do this. Christians should do more; they should show that they had a different spirit; they should treat their enemies as well as wicked men did their friends. This should be done,

(1.) because it is *right*; it is the only really amiable spirit; and,

(2.) we should show that religion is not *selfish*, and is superior to all other principles of action.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 5 - Verse 48

Verse 48. *Be ye therefore perfect*, he concludes this part of the discourse by commanding his disciples to be *perfect*. This word commonly means finished, complete, pure, holy. Originally it is applied to a piece of mechanism, as a machine that is complete in its parts. Applied to men, it refers to completeness of parts, or *perfection*, when no part is defective or wanting. Thus Job (Job 1:1) is said to be perfect; that is, not holy as God, or sinless—for fault is afterwards found with him, (Job 9:20 42:6) but his piety was *proportionate*—had a completeness of parts—was consistent and regular, he exhibited his religion as a prince, a father, an individual, a benefactor of the poor. He was not merely a pious man in one place, but uniformly. He was consistent everywhere. This was the meaning in Matthew. Be not religious merely in loving your friends and neighbours, but let your piety be shown in loving your enemies; be perfect; imitate God; let the piety be *complete*, and *proportionate*, and *regular*. This every Christian *may be*; this every Christian must be.

{m} "Be ye therefore perfect" Ge 17:1 De 18:13; Lu 6:36,40; Co 1:28

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REMARKS on Chapter 5

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1. The gospel pronounces blessings on things far different from what the world has thought to be a source of happiness. Men suppose that happiness is to be found in mirth, in wealth, in honour, in esteem, in freedom from persecution. Christ says that it is to be sought in the reverse. Often men are most happy in poverty, in sickness, in persecution, when supported by the presence and promises of a merciful God. And if God appoints our station there, we should submit to it, and learn therewith to be content.

2. We may see the evil of anger. It is a species of murder If secretly cherished, or exhibited by contempt and injury, it must bring down the displeasure of God. It is a source of misery. True enjoyment is found in meekness, peace, calmness, and benevolence. In such a firmness, and steadiness, and dependence on God, as to keep the soul unruffled in the midst of provocation, is happiness. Such was Christ.

3. We see the evil of indelicacy of feeling and sentiment, and the extreme strictness and severity of the law respecting the intercourse of the sexes, (Mt 5:28.) And yet what law is more frequently violated? By obscene anecdotes and tales; by songs and jibes; by double meanings and innuendoes; by looks and gestures; by conversation, and obscene books and pictures, this law of our Saviour is perpetually violated. If there is any one sentiment of most value for the comfort, the character, the virtuous sociability of the young—one that will shed the greatest charm over society, and make it the most pure—it is that which inculcates *perfect delicacy* and *purity* in the intercourse of the sexes. Virtue of any kind never blooms when this is not cherished. Modesty and purity once gone, every flower that would diffuse its fragrance over life, withers and dies with it. There is no one sin that so withers and blights every virtue; none that so enfeebles and prostrates every ennobling feeling of the soul, as to indulge in a life of impurity. How should purity dwell in the heart; breathe from the lips; kindle in the eye; live in the imagination; and dwell in the intercourse of all the young! An eternal, avenging God is near to every wanton thought; marks every eye that kindles with impure desire; rolls the thunder of justice over every polluted soul; and is preparing woe for every violator of the laws of purity and chastity, Pr 7:22,23, 5:5 2:18.

4. Revenge is equally forbidden. Persecution, slander, wilful prosecution, anger, personal abuse, duelling, suicide, murder, are all violations of the law of God, and all must call down his vengeance.

5. We are bound to love our enemies, This is a law of Christianity, original and peculiar. No system but this has required it, and no act of Christian piety is more difficult. None shows more the power of the grace of God; none is more ornamental to the character; none more like God; and none furnishes better evidence of piety. He that can meet a man kindly who is seeking his hurt; who can speak well of one that is perpetually slandering and cursing him; that can pray for a man that abuses, injures, and wounds him; and that can seek heaven for him that wishes his damnation, is in the way to life. This is religion, beautiful as its native skies; pure like its Source; kind like its Author; fresh like the dews of the morning; clear and diffusive like the beams of the rising sun; and holy like the feelings and words that come from the bosom of the Son of God. He that can do this need not doubt that he is a Christian. He has caught the very spirit of the Saviour, and he must inherit eternal life.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 6 - Verse 1

MATTHEW Chapter 6

Verse 1. *Alms*. Liberality to the poor and needy. Anything given to them to supply their wants. Our Saviour, here, does not positively *command* his disciples to aid the poor, but supposes that they would do it of course, and gives them direction how to do it. It is the nature of religion to help those who are really poor and needy; and a real Christian does not wait to be *commanded* to do it, but only asks the opportunity. See Ga 2:10 Jas 1:27; Lu 19:8.

Before men, etc. Our Lord does not forbid us to give alms before men always, but only forbids our doing it *to be seen of them*, for the purpose of ostentation, and to seek their praise. To a person who is disposed to do good from a right motive, it matters little whether it be in public or in private. The only thing that renders it even desirable that our good deeds should be seen is, that God may be glorified. See Mt 5:16.

Otherwise. If your only motive for doing it is to be seen of men, God will not reward you. Take heed not to do it to be seen, *otherwise* God will not reward you.

{1} "?????" or, "righteousness" {2} "of your Father" or, "WITH your Father"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 6 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do*. The word *hypocrite* is taken from *stage-players*, who act the part of others, or speak not their own sentiments, but the sentiments of others. It means here, and in the New Testament generally, those who *dissemble* or hide their

real sentiments, and assume or express other feelings than their own; those who, for purposes of ostentation, or gain, or applause, put on the appearance of religion. It is probable that such persons, when they were about to bestow alms, caused a trumpet to be sounded, *professedly* to call the poor together to receive it, but *really* to call the people to attend to it, or perhaps it may mean that they should not make a great noise about it, like sounding a trumpet.

In the synagogues. The word *synagogue* commonly means the place of assembling for religious worship known by that name. **See Barnes "Mt 4:23"**.

It might mean, however, *any collection of people* for any purpose. And it is not improbable that it has that meaning here. It does not appear that they made a noise in bestowing charity in the *synagogues*, or that it was commonly bestowed there; but it was probably done on occasion of any great *assemblage*, in any place of concourse, and at the *corners of the streets*, where it could be seen by many.

They have their reward. That is, they obtain the applause they seek, the reputation of being charitable; and as this applause was *all* they wished, there is of course no further reward to be looked for or obtained.

{1} "sound a trumpet" or, "cause a trumpet to be sounded"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 6 - Verse 3

Verses 3,4. *Let not thy left hand know*, etc. This is a proverbial expression, signifying that the action should be done as secretly as possible. The Hebrews often attribute actions to *members* which properly belong to persons. The encouragement for doing this is, that it will be pleasing to God; that he will see the act, however secret it may be, and will openly reward it. If the reward is not greater in *this* life, it will be in the life to come. In multitudes of cases, however, alms given to the poor are "lent to the Lord," (Pr 19:17) and will be repaid in this life. Rarely, perhaps never, has it been found that the man who is liberal to the poor, has ever suffered by it in his worldly circumstances.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 6 - Verse 4

Verse 4. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 6:3"

{n} "reward thee openly" Lu 8:17 14:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 6 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And when thou prayest*, etc. Hypocrites manifested the same spirit about prayer as alms-giving: it was done in public places. The word *synagogues*, here, clearly means not the place

of worship of that name, but places where many were accustomed to assemble— near the markets, or courts, where they could be seen of many. Our Lord evidently could not mean to condemn prayers in the synagogues. It might be said that he condemned ostentatious prayer there, while they neglected secret prayer; but this does not appear to be his design. The Jews were much in the habit of praying in public places. At certain times of the day they always offered their prayers. Wherever they were, they suspended their employment, and paid their devotions. This is also practised now everywhere by the Mohammedans, and in many places by the Roman Catholics. It seems, also, that they *sought* publicity, and regarded it as proof of great piety.

{o} "they have their reward" Pr 16:5 Jas 4:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 6 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Enter into thy closet*. Every Jewish house had a place for secret devotion. The roofs of their houses were *flat* places for walking, conversation, and meditation, in the cool of the evening. **See Barnes "Mt 9:2"**.

Over the *porch*, or entrance of the house, was, however, a small room of the size of the porch, raised a story above the rest of the house, expressly appropriated for the place of retirement, in secrecy and solitude, the pious Jew might offer his prayers, unseen by any but the Searcher of hearts. To this place, or to some similar place, our Saviour directed his disciples to repair when they wished to hold communion with God. This is the place commonly mentioned in the New Testament as the *upper room*, or the place for secret prayer. The meaning of the Saviour is, that there should be some place where we may be in secret—where we may be alone with God. There should be some *place* to which we may resort where no ear will hear us but His ear, and no eye can see us but His eye. Unless there is such a place, secret prayer will not be long or strictly maintained. It is often said that we have no such place, and can secure none. We are away from home; we are travelling; we are among strangers; we are in stages and steam-boats, and how can we find such places of retirement? I answer, the *desire* to pray, and the love of prayer, will *create* such places in abundance. The Saviour had all the difficulties which we can have, but yet he lived in the practice of secret prayer. To be alone, he rose up "a great while before day," and went into a solitary place and prayed. With him, a grove, a mountain, a garden, furnished such a place; and though a traveller, and among strangers, and without a house, he lived in the habit of secret prayer. What excuse have they who have a home, and who spend the precious hours of the morning in sleep, and who will practise no self-denial that they may be alone with God? O Christian! thy Saviour would have broken in upon these hours, and would have trod his solitary way to the mountain or the grove, there he might pray. He *did* do it. He did it to pray for thee, too indolent and too unconcerned about thy own salvation and that of the world, to practise the least self-denial in order to commune with God! How can religion live thus ? How can such a soul be saved?

The Saviour does not specify the *times* when we should pray in secret. He does not say how *often* it should be done. The reasons may have been,

(1.) that he designed that his religion should be *voluntary*—and there is not a better test of true piety than a disposition to engage often in secret prayer. He designed to leave it to his people to show attachment to him by coming to God often—and as often as they chose.

(2.) An attempt to specify the times when this should be done would tend to make religion formal and heartless. Mohammed undertook to regulate this, and the consequence is a cold and formal prostration at the appointed hours of prayer all over the land where his religion has spread.

(3.) The periods are so numerous, and the seasons for secret prayer vary so much, that it would not be easy to fix rules when this should be done. Yet without giving rules—where the Saviour has given none—we may suggest the following as times when secret prayer is proper:

(1.) In the morning. Nothing can be more appropriate when we have been preserved through the night, and when we are about to enter upon the duties and dangers of another day, than to render him thanks, and to commit ourselves to his fatherly care.

(2.) In the evening. When the day has closed, what more natural than to render thanks and to implore forgiveness for what we have said or done amiss, and to pray for a blessing on the labours of the day; and when about to lie down again to sleep, not knowing but it may be our last sleep, and that we may awake in eternity, what more proper than to commend ourselves to the care of Him "who never slumbers nor sleeps."

(3.) We should pray in times of embarrassment and perplexity. Such times occur in every man's life, and it is then a privilege and a duty to go to God and seek his direction. In the most difficult and embarrassed time of the American revolution, Washington was seen to retire daily to a grove in the vicinity of the camp at Valley Forge. Curiosity led a man to observe him on one occasion, and the father of his country was seen on his knees supplicating the God of Hosts in prayer. Who can tell how much the liberty of this nation is owing to the answer to the secret prayer of Washington?

(4.) We should pray when we are beset with strong temptations. So the Saviour prayed in the garden of Gethsemane, (Comp. Heb 5:7,8) and so we should pray when we are tempted.

(5.) We should pray when the Spirit prompts us to pray; when we feel *just like praying*; when nothing can satisfy the soul but prayer. Such times occur in the life, of every Christian; and they are "spring- times" of piety—favourable gales to waft us on to heaven. Prayer to the Christian, at such times, is just as congenial as conversation with a friend when the bosom is filled with love; as the society of father, mother, sister, child is, when the heart glows with attachment; as the strains of sweet music are to the ear best attuned to the love of harmony; as the most exquisite poetry is to the heart enamoured with the muses; and as the most delicious banquet is to the hungry. Prayer, then, is the element of being; the breath; the vital air; and then the Christian must and should pray. He is the most eminent Christian who is most favoured with such strong emotions urging him to prayer. The heart is then full. The soul is tender. The sun of glory shines with unusual splendour. No cloud intervenes. The Christian rises from the earth, and pants for glory. *Then* we may go alone with God, We may enter the closet, and breathe forth our warm desires into the ever-open ear of God, and he who sees in secret will reward us openly.

In secret. Who is unseen.

Who seeth in secret. Who sees what the human eye cannot see; who sees the secret real designs and desires of the heart. Prayer should always be offered, remembering that God is acquainted with our real desires; and that it is those real desires, and not the words of prayer, that he will answer.

{p} "seeth in secret" Ps 34:15 Is 65:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 6 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Use not vain repetitions*. The original word here is supposed to be derived from the name of a Greek poet, who made long and weary verses, declaring, by many forms and endless repetitions, the same sentiment. Hence it means to repeat a thing often, to say the same thing in different words, or to repeat the same words, as though God did not hear at first. An example of this we have in 1Ki 18:26: "They Called on Baal from morning until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us;"*

The heathen do. The original word is one commonly translated *Gentile*. The world was divided into two parts, the Jews and the Gentiles; that is, in the original, the "nations," the nations destitute of the true religion. Christ does not fix the length of our prayers. He says that they should not repeat the same thing, as though God did not hear. And it is not improbable that he intended to condemn the practice of long prayers. His own supplications were remarkably short.

{q} "as the heathens do" Ec 5:2 {*} The following is a specimen of the vain repetitions of the Romans.

"Pious Antonine, the Gods preserve thee. Gentle Antonine, the Gods preserve thee. Gentle Antonine, the Gods preserve thee."

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 6 - Verse 8

Verse 8. No Barnes text on this verse.

{s} "Father knoweth"

Lu 12:30 Joh 16:23-27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 6 - Verse 9

Verses 9-13. This passage contains the Lord's prayer, a composition unequalled for comprehensiveness and for beauty. It is supposed that some of these petitions were taken from those in common use among the Jews. Indeed, some of them are still to be found in Jewish writings, but they did not exist in this beautiful combination. This prayer is given as a *model*. It is designed to express the manner in which we are to pray, evidently not the precise words or petitions which we are to use. The substance of the prayer is recorded by Lu 11:2-4. It, however, varies from the form given in Matthew, showing that he intended not to prescribe this as a *form* of prayer to be used always, but to express the *substance* of our petitions, to specify to his disciples what petitions it would be proper to present to God. That he did not intend to prescribe this as a *form* to be invariably used is farther evident from the fact, that there is no proof that either he or his disciples ever used exactly this form of prayer, but clear evidence that they prayed often in other language. See Mt 26:39-42,44; Lu 22:42 Joh 17:1-26; Ac 1:24.

{t} "Our" Lu 11:2 {u} "Father" Ro 8:15 {v} "which art in heaven" Ps 115:3 {w} "Hallowed be thy name" Ps 111:3 139:20

Verse 9. *Our Father*. God is called a Father,

(1.) as he is the Creator and the Great Parent of all.

(2.) The Preserver of the human family, and the Provider for their wants, Mt 5:45 6:32.

(3.) In a peculiar sense the Father of those who are adopted into his family, who put confidence in him, who are true followers of Christ, and made heirs of life, Ro 8:14-17.

Hallowed be thy name. The word hallowed means, to render or pronounce holy. God's name is essentially holy; and the meaning of this petition is, "Let thy name be celebrated, and venerated, and esteemed as holy everywhere, and receive of all men proper honours." It is thus the expression of a wish or desire, on the part of the worshipper, that the name of God, or God himself, should be held everywhere in proper veneration.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 6 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Thy kingdom come*. The word *kingdom* here means *reign*. **See Barnes "Mt 3:2"**.

The petition is the expression of a wish that God may reign everywhere; that his laws may be obeyed; and especially that the gospel of Christ may be advanced everywhere, till the world shall be filled with his glory.

Thy will be done. The *will* of God is, that men should obey his law, and be holy. The word *will*, here, has reference to his law, and to what would be *acceptable* to him; that is, *righteousness*. To pray, then, that his will may be done on earth as in heaven, is to pray that his *law*, his *revealed will*, may be obeyed and loved. His law is perfectly obeyed in heaven, and his true children most ardently desire and pray that it may also be done on the earth. The object of these three first petitions is that God's name should be glorified, and his kingdom established; and by being placed *first*, we learn that *his glory* and *kingdom* are of more consequence than our wants, and that these should be *first* in our hearts and petitions before a throne of grace. *

{*} The following clauses respecting this prayer are found in the writings of the Jews, and were doubtless familiar in the time of Christ: "That prayer," say the Rabbins, "in which there is no mention made of the kingdom of heaven, is *not* a prayer.' "What," say they, "is a short prayer? Ans. Do thy will in heaven, and give rest to the spirits fearing thee below." Give us this day, etc. The Jews had a prayer like this: "The necessities of thy people are many, and their knowledge small; so that they do not know how to make known their wants: let it be thy good pleasure to give to each one what is necessary for his sustenance," etc. Deliver us from evil. The Jews prayed, "Be it thy good pleasure to free us from an evil man, and an evil event; from evil affections, from an evil companion and neighbour, from Satan," etc. The prayers of the Jews were generally closed with a doxology, or ascription of praise, not unlike this in the Lord's prayer. The people, at the close of the prayer, generally responded, "Amen!"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 6 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Give us this day*, etc. The word bread here denotes, doubtless, everything necessary to sustain life, Mt 4:4 De 8:3. This petition implies our dependence on God for the supply of our wants. As we are dependent on him one day as much as another, it was evidently the intention of our Saviour that prayer should be offered every day. This is, moreover, expressed in the plural number— give us. It is evidently, therefore, intended to be used by more than one, or by some community of people. No community or congregation can meet every day for worship but families. It is therefore evident that this prayer is a strong implied command for daily family prayer. It can nowhere else be used so as fully to come up to the meaning of the original intention; and nowhere else can it be breathed forth with so much propriety and beauty as from the lips of a father, the venerable priest of his household, and the pleader with God for those rich blessings which a parental bosom desires on his beloved offspring.

{z} "daily bread" Pr 30:8 Is 33:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 6 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *And forgive us our debts*, etc. The word *debts* is here used figuratively. It does not mean *literally* that we are *debtors to God*, but that our sins have a resemblance to debts. Debtors are those who are bound to others for some claim in commercial transactions; for something which we have had, and for which we are bound to pay according to contract. *Literally*, there can be no such transaction between God and us. It must be used figuratively. We have not met the claims of law; we have violated its obligations; we are exposed to its penalty; we are guilty; and God only can forgive, in the same way, as none but a *creditor* can forgive a debtor. *Debts* here, therefore, mean *sins*, or offences against God— offences which none but God can forgive. The measure by which we may expect forgiveness is that which we use in reference to others. See Ps 18:25,26; Mt 18:28-35 Mr 11:25; Lu 11:4.

This is the invariable rule by which God dispenses pardon. He that comes before him unwilling to forgive, harbouring dark and revengeful thoughts, how can he expect that God will show him that mercy which he is unwilling to show to others? It is not, however, required that we should forgive *debts* in a pecuniary sense. To them we have a right, though they should not be pushed with an overbearing and oppressive spirit; not so as to sacrifice the feelings of mercy, in order to secure the claims of right. No man has a right to oppress; and when a debt cannot be paid, or when it would greatly distress a wife and children, a widow and an orphan, or when calamity has put it out of the power of an honest man to pay the debt, the spirit of Christianity requires that it should be forgiven. To such cases this petition in the Lord's prayer doubtless extends. But it was probably intended to refer principally to injuries of character or person, which we have received from others. If we cannot from the heart forgive them, we have the assurance that God will never forgive us.

{z} "forgive us our debts" Mt 18:21-35 Lu 7:40-48

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 6 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *And lead us not into temptation*. A petition similar to this is offered by David, Ps 141:4 "Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity." God tempts no man See Jas 1:13. This phrase, then, must be used in the sense of *permitting*. Do not *suffer* us, or *permit* us, to be tempted to sin. In this it is implied that God *has* such control over us and the tempter, as to save us from it if we call upon him. The word *temptation*, however, (**See Barnes "Mt 4:1"**) means sometimes *trial, affliction*, anything that tests our virtue. If this be the meaning here, as it may be, then the import of the prayer is, "Do not afflict or try us."

Deliver us from evil. The original, in this place, has the article— deliver us from *THE evil*—that is, as has been supposed, the evil one, or Satan. He is elsewhere called, by way of eminence, *the evil one*, Mt 13:19 1Jn 2:13,14 3:12.

Deliver us from his power, his snares, his arts, his temptations. He is supposed to be the great parent of evil, and to be delivered from him is to be safe. Or it may mean, deliver us from the various evils and trials which beset us, the heavy and oppressive calamities into which we are continually liable to fall.

Thine is the kingdom. That is, thine is the *reign* or *dominion*. Thou hast control over all these things, and canst so order them as to answer these petitions.

Thine is the power. Thou hast power to accomplish what we ask. *We* are weak, and cannot do it; but Thou art almighty, and all things are possible with thee.

Thine is the glory. That is, thine is the honour or praise. Not our honour; but thy glory, thy goodness, will be displayed in providing for our wants; thy power, in defending us; thy praise, in causing thy kingdom to spread through the earth.

This *doxology*, or ascription of praise, is connected with the prayer by the word "*for*," to signify that all these things—the reign, power, and glory of God—will be manifested by granting these petitions. It is not because *we* are to be benefited, but that God's name and perfections may be manifested. His glory is, then, the first and principal thing which we are to seek when we approach him. We are to suffer our concerns to be sunk and lost sight of in the superior glory and honour of his name and dominion. We are to seek temporal and eternal life, chiefly because the honour of our Maker will be promoted, and his name be more illustriously displayed to his creatures. He is to be "first, last, supremest, best," in our view; and all selfish and worldly views are to be absorbed in that one great desire of the soul that God may be "all in all." Approaching him with these feelings, our prayers will be answered, our devotions will rise like incense, and the lifting up our hands will be like the evening sacrifice.

Amen. This is a word of Hebrew origin, from a verb signifying *to be firm, secure, to be true and faithful*. It is a word expressing consent or strong approbation, a word of strong asseveration. It means *verily, certainly, so be it*. It is probable that this word was used by the people in the synagogue to signify their assent to the prayer that was uttered by the minister. And to some extent, it was probably so used in the Christian church. See 1Co 14:16. It may be proper to remark, that this doxology, "for thine is the kingdom," etc., is wanting in many manuscripts, and that its authenticity is doubtful.

{b} "from evil" Joh 17:15 {c} "For thine" Re 5:12,13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 6 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *If ye forgive* If ye pardon.

Trespasses. Offences, faults. If ye forgive others when they offend or injure you. This is constantly required in the Bible. Our Saviour says we should forgive even if the offence be committed seventy times seven times, Mt 18:22. By this is meant, that when a man asks forgiveness, we are cordially and for ever to pardon the offence; we are to declare our willingness to forgive him. If he does not ask forgiveness, yet we are still to treat him kindly; not to harbour malice; not to speak ill of him; to be ready to do him good; and be always prepared to declare him forgiven when he asks it.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 6 - Verse 15

Verse 15. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

{d} "forgive your trespasses"

Eph 4:31 Jas 2:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 6 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Moreover when ye fast*, etc. The word *fast* literally signifies to abstain from food and drink, whether from necessity or as a religious observance. It is, however, commonly applied in the Bible to the latter. It is, then, an expression of grief or sorrow. Such is the constitution of the body, that in a time of grief or sorrow we are not *disposed* to eat; or, we have no appetite. The grief of the *soul* is so absorbing as to destroy the natural appetites of the *body*. Men in deep affliction eat little, and often pine away and fall into sickness, because the body refuses, on account of the deep sorrow of the mind, to discharge the functions of health. *Fasting, then, is the natural expression of grief*. It is not arbitrary; it is what every person in sorrow naturally does. This is the foundation of its being applied to religion as a sacred rite. It is because the soul, when oppressed and burdened by a sense of sin, is so filled with grief, that the body refuses food. It is, therefore, appropriated always to scenes of penitence, of godly sorrow, of suffering, and to those facts connected with religion that are fitted to produce grief, as the prevalence of iniquity or some dark impending calamity, or storm, or tempest, pestilence, plague, or famine. It is also used to humble us, to bring us to reflection, to direct the thoughts away from the comforts of this world to the bliss of a better. It is not acceptable except it be the *real expression* of sorrow, the natural effect of feeling that we are burdened with crime.

The Jews fasted often. They had four *annual fasts*, in commemoration of the capture of Jerusalem, (Jer 52:7) of the burning of the temple, (Zec 7:3) in memory of the death of Gedaliah, (Jer 41:4,) and in memory of the commencement of the attack on Jerusalem, Zec 8:19. In addition to these, they had a multitude of occasional fasts. It was customary, also, for the Pharisees to fast twice a week, Lu 17:12.

Of a sad countenance. That is, sour, morose, assumed expressions of unfelt sorrow.

They disfigure their faces. That is, they do not anoint and wash themselves as usual; they are uncombed, filthy, squalid, and haggard. It is said that they were often in the habit of throwing *ashes* on their heads and faces; and this mixing with their tears, seemed still farther to disfigure their faces. So much pains will men take, and so much suffering will they undergo, and so much that is ridiculous will they assume, to impose on God and men. But they deceive neither. God sees through the flimsy veil. Human eyes can pierce a disguise so thin. Hypocrites overact their part. Not having the genuine principles of piety at heart, they know not its proper expression, and hence appear supremely contemptible and abominable. Never should men exhibit outwardly more than they feel; and never should they attempt to exhibit anything for the mere sake of ostentation.

{e} "appear unto men to fast" Isa 57:3,5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 6 - Verse 17

Verse 17. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint, etc. That is, appear as you do daily. Do not assume any new appearance, or change your visage or dress. The Jews and all neighbouring nations were much in the habit of washing and anointing their bodies. This washing was performed at every meal; and where it could be effected, the head, or other parts of the body, was daily anointed with sweet or olive oil. In a warm climate, exposed to the great heat of the sun, this practice conduced much to health, preserved the skin smooth and tender, and afforded a most grateful sensation and odour. See Mr 7:2,3; Jas 5:14

Mr 6:13 Joh 12:3. The meaning of this whole commandment is, when you regard it to be your duty to fast, do it as a thing expressing deep feeling, or sorrow for sin; not by assuming unfelt gravity and moroseness, but in your ordinary dress and appearance; not to attract attention, but as an expression of feeling towards God, and he will approve and reward it.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 6 - Verse 18

Verse 18. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 6 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Lay not up for yourselves treasures*, etc. Treasures, or wealth, among the ancients, consisted in clothes, or changes of raiment, as well as in gold, silver, gems, wine, lands, and oil. It meant an abundance of anything that was held to be conducive to the ornament or comfort of life. As the Orientalists delighted much in display, in splendid equipage, and costly garments, their treasures, in fact, consisted much in beautiful and richly ornamented articles of apparel. See Ge 45:22, where Joseph gave to his brethren *changes of raiment*; Jos 7:21, where Achan coveted and secreted *a goodly Babylonish garment*. See also Jud 14:12. This fact will account for the use of the

word *moth*. When *we* speak of *wealth*, we think at once of gold, and diver, and lands, and houses. When a Hebrew or an Orientalist spoke of wealth, he thought first of what would make *display*; and included, as an essential part; splendid articles of dress. The *moth* is a small insect that finds its way to clothes and garments, and destroys them. The *moth* would destroy their apparel, the *rust* their silver and gold; thus all their treasure would waste away.

{f} "upon earth" Pr 23:4 Lu 18:24,35 Heb 13:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 6 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Lay up treasures...in heaven*. That is, have provision made for your eternal felicity. Do not exhaust your strength, and spend your days, in providing for the life here, but let your *chief* anxiety be to be prepared for eternity. *There* nothing corrupts, nothing terminates, no enemies plunder or destroy. To have treasure in heaven is to possess evidence that its purity and joys will be ours. It is to be heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. The *heart*, or affections, will of course be fixed on the treasure. To *regulate* the heart, it is therefore important that the treasure, or object of attachment, should be right.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 6 - Verse 21

Verse 21. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 6 - Verse 22

Verses 22,23. *The light of the body*, etc. The sentiment stated in the preceding verses—the duty of fixing the affections on heavenly things—Jesus proceeds to illustrate by a reference to the *eye*. When the eye is directed singly and steadily towards an object, and is in health, or is single, everything is clear and plain. If it *vibrates*, flies to different objects, is fixed on no one singly, or is diseased, nothing is seen clearly. Everything is dim and confused. The man, therefore, is unsteady. The *eye* regulates the motion of the body. To have an object distinctly in view, is necessary to correct and regulate action, Rope-dancers, in order to steady themselves, fix the eye on some object on the wall, and look steadily at that. If they should look *down* on the rope or the people, they would become dizzy and fall. A man crossing a stream on a log, if he will look *across* at some object steadily, will be in little danger. If he looks down on the dashing and rolling waters, he will become dizzy, and fall. So Jesus says, in order that the conduct may be right, it is important to fix the affections on heaven. Having the affections there—having the eye of faith *single*, steady, unwavering—all the conduct will be correspondent.

Single. Steady, devoted to one object. Not confused, as persons' eyes are when they see *double*.

Thy whole body shall be full of light. Your conduct will be regular and steady. All that is needful to direct the *body* is that the *eye* be fixed right. No other *light* is required. So all that is needful to

direct the *soul* and the *conduct* is that the eye of *faith* be fixed on heaven, that the affections be there.

If therefore the light that is in thee, etc. The word *light*, here, signifies the mind, or principles of the soul. If this be dark, how great is that darkness! The meaning of this passage may be thus expressed: The light of the body, the guide and director, is the eye. All know how calamitous it is when that light is irregular or extinguished, as when the eye is diseased or lost. So the light that is in us is the soul. If that soul is debased by attending exclusively to earthly objects—if it is diseased, and not fixed on heaven—how much darker and more dreadful will it be than any darkness of the eye! Avarice darkens the mind, obscures the view, and brings in a dreadful and gloomy night over all the faculties.

{h} "is the eye" Lu 11:34,36

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 6 - Verse 23

Verse 23. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes on "Mt 6:22"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 6 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *No man can serve two masters*, etc. Christ proceeds to illustrate the necessity of laying up treasures in heaven from a well- known fact, that a servant cannot serve two masters at the same time. His affections and obedience would be divided, and he would fail altogether in his duty to one or the other. One he would love, and the other hate. To the interests of one he would adhere, the other he would neglect. This is a law of human nature. The supreme affections can be fixed on only one object. So, says Jesus, the servant of God cannot at the same time obey *him* and be avaricious, or seek treasures supremely on earth. One interferes with the other, and one *will* be, and *must* be surrendered.

Mammon. Mammon is a Syriac word, a name given to an idol worshipped as the god of riches. It has the same meaning as Plutus among the Greeks. It is not known that the Jews ever formally worshipped this idol, but they used the word to denote wealth. The meaning is, ye cannot serve the true God, and at the same time be supremely engaged in obtaining the riches of this world. One *must* interfere with the other. See Lu 16:9-11.

{i} "two masters" Lu 16:13 {k} "cannot serve God and mammon" Ga 1:10 2Ti 4:10; Jas 4:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 6 - Verse 25

Verses 25-34. *Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought*, etc. The general design of this paragraph, which closes the chapter, is to warn his disciples against avarice and anxiety about the supply of their wants. This he does by *four* arguments or considerations, expressing, by unequalled

beauty and force, the duty of depending for the things which we need on the providence of God. The *first* is stated in the 25th verse: "Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" In the beginning of the verse he charged his disciples to take *no thought*—that is, not to be *anxious*—about the supply of their wants. God will take care of these. He has given *life*, a far greater blessing than *meat*; he has created the *body*, of far more consequence than raiment. Shall not he, who has conferred the *greater* blessing, be willing to confer the *less*? Shall not he, who has formed the body so curiously, and made such a display of power and goodness, see that it is properly protected and clothed? He who has displayed so *great* goodness as to form the body, and breathe into it the breath of life, will surely *follow up* the blessing, and confer the smaller favour of providing that that body should be clothed, and that life preserved.

No thought. The word *thought*, when the Bible was translated, meant anxiety, and is so used frequently in old English authors. Thus Bacon says, "Haweis died with *thought* and anguish before his business came to an end." As such it is here used by our translators, and it answers exactly to the meaning of the original. Like many other words, it has since somewhat changed its signification, and would convey to most readers an improper idea. The word *anxiety* would now exactly express the sense, and is exactly the thing against which the Saviour would guard us. See Lu 8:14 21:34; Php 4:6.

Thought about the future is right; *anxiety, solicitude, trouble*, is wrong. There is a degree of *thinking* and industry about the things of this life which is proper. See 1Ti 5:8 2Th 3:10; Ro 12:11.

But it should not be our *supreme* concern; it should not lead to solicitude or anxiety; it should not take time that ought to be devoted to religion.

For your life. For what will *support* your life.

Meat. This word here means *food* in general, as it does commonly in the Bible. *We* confine it now to animal food, or the food of animals. When the Bible was translated, it denoted all kinds of food, and is so used in the old English writers. It is one of the words which has changed its meaning since the translation of the Bible was made.

Raiment. Clothing.

{l} "no thought for your life" 1Co 7:32 Php 4:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 6 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Behold the fowls of the air*. The second argument for confidence in the providence of God is derived from a beautiful reference to the fowls of heaven. See, said the Saviour, see the fowls of the air: they have no anxiety about the supply of their wants; they do not sow or reap; in innumerable flocks they fill the air; they fill the grove with music, and meet the coming light of the morning with their songs, and pour their notes on the zephyrs of the evening, unanxious about the supply of their wants; yet how few die with hunger! how regularly are they fed from the hand of God! how he ministers to their unnumbered wants. He sees their young "open wide their mouths, and seek their meat at his hand, and how cheerfully and regularly are their necessities supplied! You, said the Saviour to his disciples, you are of more consequence than they are; and shall God feed *them* in such numbers, and suffer you to want? It cannot be. Put confidence, then, in that Universal Parent that feeds all the fowls of the air, and fear not that he will also supply your wants.

Better than they. Of more consequence. Your lives are of more importance than theirs, and God will therefore provide for them.

{m} "Father feedeth" Job 38:41 Lu 12:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 6 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *Which of you by taking thought*. The third argument is taken from their extreme weakness and helplessness. With all your care you cannot increase your stature a single cubit. God has ordered your height. Beyond his appointment your powers are of no avail, and you can do nothing. So of raiment. He, by his providence, orders and arranges the circumstances of your life. *Beyond* that appointment of his providence, beyond *his* care for you, your efforts avail nothing. Seeing, then, that he alike orders your *growth*, and the supply of your wants, how obvious is the duty of *depending* on him, and of beginning all your efforts, feeling that He only can grant you the means of preserving life!

One cubit. The cubit was originally the length from the elbow to the end of the middle finger. The cubit of the Scriptures is not far from twenty-two inches. Terms of *length* are often applied to life; and it is thought by many to be so here. Thus, it is said, "Thou hast made my days as a handbreadth," Ps 39:5; "Teach me the MEASURE of my days," Ps 39:4. In this place it is used to denote a *small length*. You cannot increase your stature even a cubit, or in the smallest degree. Compare Lu 12:26.

Stature. This word means height. The original word, however, means oftener *age*, Joh 9:21,23. In these places it is translated *age*. If this be its meaning here, it denotes that a man cannot increase the length of his life at all. The utmost anxiety will not prolong it one hour beyond the time appointed for death.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 6 - Verse 28

Verses 28,29. The fourth consideration is taken from the lilies of the valley. Watch the growing of the lily. It toils not, and it spins not. Yet night and day it grows. With a beauty which the most splendid monarch of the East never knew, it expands its blossom and fills the air with fragrance. Yet this beauty is of short continuance. Soon it will fade, and the beautiful flower will be cut down and burned. God *so little* regards the bestowment of beauty and ornament as to give the highest adorning to this which is soon to perish. When he thus clothes a lily—a fair flower, soon to perish—will he be unmindful of his children? Shall *they*—dear to his heart and imbued with immortality—lack that which is proper for them, and shall they in vain trust the God that decks the lily of the valley? He will much more clothe you.

Even Solomon in all his glory, etc. The common dress of eastern kings was purple. But they sometimes wore white robes. See Es 8:15 Da 7:9. It is to this that Christ refers. Solomon, says he, the richest and most magnificent king of Israel, was not clothed in a robe *of so pure a white* as the lilly of the valley.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 6 - Verse 29

Verse 29. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 6:28"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 6 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *Is cast into the oven*. The Jews had different modes of baking. In early times they frequently baked in the sand, warmed with the heat of the sun. They constructed also moveable ovens, made of clay, brick, or plates of iron. But the most common kind, and the one here probably referred to; was made by excavating the earth two and a half feet in diameter, and from five to six feet deep. This kind of oven still exists in Persia. The bottom was paved with stones. It was heated by putting wood or dry grass into the oven; and when heated, the ashes were removed, and the bread was placed on the heated stones. More commonly, however, the oven was an earthen vessel, without a bottom, about three feet high, smeared outside and inside with clay, and placed upon a frame, or support. Fire was made within it, or below it. When the sides were sufficiently heated, thin patches of dough were spread on the inside, and the top was covered, without removing the fire as in the other cases; and the bread was quickly baked. The preceding representation of it is taken from Niebuhr.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 6 - Verse 31

Verse 31. No Barnes text on this verse.
{n} "no thought" Ps 37:3 55:22; 1Pe 5:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 6 - Verse 32

Verses 32-34. *For after all these things do the Gentiles seek*. That is, those destitute of the true doctrines of religion, unacquainted with proper dependence on Divine Providence, make it their *chief anxiety* thus to seek food and raiment. But *you*, who have a knowledge of your Father in heaven, who know that he will provide for your wants, should not be anxious. Seek first his kingdom; seek first to be righteous, and to become interested in his favour, and all necessary things will be added to you. God has control over all things, and he can give you that which you need. He *will* give you that which *he* deems best for you,

Take therefore no thought, etc. That is, no anxiety. Commit your way to God. The evil, the trouble, the anxiety of each day as it comes is sufficient, without perplexing the mind with restless cares about another day. It is wholly uncertain whether you live to see that day. If you do, it will bring its own trouble; and it will also bring the proper supply of your wants. God will be the same Father then as to-day, and will make then, as he does now, proper provision for your wants.

The morrow shall take thought. The morrow shall have anxieties and cares of its own, but it shall also bring the proper provision for those cares. Though you shall have wants, yet God will provide for them as they occur. Do not, therefore, increase the cares of *this day* by borrowing trouble respecting the future. Do your duty faithfully now, and depend on the mercy of God and his Divine help for the troubles which are yet to come.

REMARKS ON CHAPTER VI.

1. Christ has here forcibly taught the necessity of charity, of prayer, and of all religious duties.

2. We see the necessity of sincerity and honesty in our religious duties. They are not done to be seen of men. If they are, they cannot be performed acceptably. God looks on the heart, nor is it possible to deceive him. And of what avail is it to deceive men? How poor and pitiable is the reward of a hypocrite! How contemptible the praise of men when God is displeased! How awful the condition beyond the grave!

3. Christ has here, in a particular manner, urged the duty of prayer. He has given a model for prayer. Nothing can equal this composition in simplicity, beauty, and comprehensiveness. At the same time that it is so simple that it can be understood by a child, it contains the expression of all the wants of man at any age, and in every rank.

The duty of prayer is urged by every consideration. None but God can provide for us; none but he can forgive, and guide, and support us; none but he can bring us into heaven. He is ever ready to hear us. The humble he sends not empty away. Those who ask, receive; and they who seek, find. How natural and proper, then, is prayer! How strange that any can live, and not pour out their desires to God! How strange that any are willing to go to eternity with this sad reflection, "I have gone through this world, spent my probation, wasted my strength, and am dying, and have never prayed!" How awful will be the reflection of the soul through all eternity,"I was *offered* eternal life, but I never asked for it! I lived from day to day, and from year to year, in God's world; breathed his air, rioted in his beneficence, forgot his goodness, and never once asked him to save my soul!" Who will be to blame if the prayerless soul is lost?

Secret and family prayer should be daily. We daily have the same necessities, are exposed to the same dangers, tread on the borders of the same heaven or hell. How should the voice of praise and prayer go up as incense in the morning, and rise as a rich perfume in the shades of each evening! What more lovely object than one, in the bloom of health and the dew of youth, bending with reverence before the King of heaven, seeking forgiveness, peace, guidance, and life! And what a strange, misguided, and piteous object is a soul that never prays!

4. Forgiveness is essential in prayer. If we come to God harbouring malice, and unwilling to forgive, we have his solemn assurance that we shall not be ourselves forgiven.

5. *Avarice* is alike foolish, and an insult to God, Mt 6:19-24. It is the parent of many foolish and hurtful lusts. It alienates the affections from God, produces envy of another's prosperity, leads to fraud, deception, and crime to obtain wealth, and degrades the soul. Man is formed for nobler pursuits than the mere desire to be rich. He lives for eternity, where silver will not be needed, and where gold will be of no value. That eternity is near; and though we have wealth like Solomon, and though we be adorned as the lily, yet like Solomon we must soon die, and like the lily our beauty will soon fade. Death will lay us alike low; the rich and the poor will sleep together; and the worm will feed no more sweetly on the unfed and unclothed son of poverty, than on the man clothed in fine linen, and the daughter of beauty and pride. As avarice is, moreover, the parent of

discontent, he only that is contented with the allotments of Providence, and is not restless for a change, is happy. After all, this is the true source of enjoyment. Anxiety and care, perplexity and disappointment, find their way more readily to the mansions of the rich than the cottages of the poor. It is the *mind*, not mansions, and gold, and adorning, that gives ease. ,and he that is content with his situation will smile upon his stool, while Alexander weeps upon the throne of the world.

6. We see how comparatively valueless is *beauty*. How little it is regarded by God! He gives it to the lily, and in a day it fades and is gone. He gives it to the wings of the butterfly, and soon it dies and its beauty is forgotten. He gives it to the flowers of,the spring, soon to fall; to the leaves of the forest, soon to grow yellow and decay in the autumn. How many flowers, lilies, and roses, does he cause to blossom in solitude, where no man is, where they "waste their sweetness on the desert air!" How many streams ripple in the wilderness, and how many cataracts, age after age, have poured their thunders on the air, unheard and unseen by mortals! So little does God think of beauty. So the human form and "face divine." How soon is that beauty marred; and, like the lily, how soon is its last trace obliterated ! In the cold grave, among the undistinguished multitudes of the dead, who can tell which of all the mouldering host was blessed with a lovely "set of features or complexion.?" Alas! all has faded like the morning flower. How vain, then, to set the affections on so frail a treasure!

7. We see the duty and privilege of depending for our daily wants on the bounties of Providence. Satisfied with the troubles of today, let us not add to those troubles by anxieties about tomorrow. The heathen, and they who know not God, will be anxious about the future; but they who know him, and have caught the spirit of Jesus, may surely trust him for the supply of their wants. The young lions do roar, and seek their meat at the hand of God, Ps 104:21. The fowls of heaven are daily supplied. Shall man only, of all the creatures, vex himself, and be filled with anxious cares about the future? Rather, like the rest of the creation, let us depend on the aid of the universal Parent, and feel that HE who hears the young ravens which cry, will also supply our necessities.

8. Especially is the remark of value in reference to those in early life. Life is a stormy ocean. Over that ocean no being presides but God. He holds the winds in his hands, and can still their howlings, and calm the heaving billows. On that ocean the young have just launched their frail bark. Daily they will need protection; daily they will need supplies; daily be in danger, and exposed to the rolling of the billows, that may engulf them for ever. Ignorant, inexperienced, and in danger, how should they look to God to guide and aid them! Instead of vexing themselves with anxious cares about the future, how should they place humble reliance on God! Safe in his hand, we shall outride the storm, and come to a haven of peace. *He* will supply our wants if we *trust* him, as he does those of the songsters of the grove. He will be the guide of our youth, and the strength of our manhood. If we seek him, he will be found of us. If we forsake him, he will cast us off for ever, 1Ch 28:9.

9. From all this, how evident is the propriety of seeking *first* the kingdom of God! First in our affections, first in the objects of pursuit, first in the feelings and associations of each morning, be the desire and the aim for heaven. Having this, we have assurance of all we need. GoD, *our Father*, will then befriend us; and in life and death all will be well.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 6 - Verse 33

Verse 33. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 6:32"**

{o} "seek ye first" 1Ti 4:8 {p} "shall be added" Le 25:20,21; 1Ki 3:13 Ps 37:25; Mr 10:30

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 6 - Verse 34

Verse 34. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 6:32"

For Remarks on Chapter 6, **See Barnes** "Mt 6:34, end of verse.
{q} "the things of itself" De 23:25 Heb 13:5,6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 7 - Verse 1

MATTHEW CHAPTER 7

Verse 1. *Judge not*, etc. This command refers to rash, censorious, and unjust judgment. See Ro 2:1. Lu 6:37 explains it in the sense of *condemning*. Christ does not condemn judging as a magistrate, for that, when according to justice, is lawful and necessary. Nor does he condemn our forming an opinion of the conduct of others, for it is impossible *not* to form an opinion of conduct that we know to be evil. But what he refers to is a habit of forming a judgment hastily, harshly, and without an allowance for every palliating circumstance, and of *expressing* such an opinion harshly and unnecessarily when formed. It rather refers to *private* judgment than *judicial*, and perhaps primarily to the habits of the scribes and *Pharisees*.

{r} "Judge not" Lu 6:37 Ro 2:1; 1Co 4:5.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 7 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *With what judgment*, etc. This was a *proverb* among the Jews. It expressed a truth; and Christ did not hesitate to adopt it as conveying his own sentiments. It refers no less to the way in which men will judge of us, than to the rule by which God will judge us. See 2Sa 22:27 Mr 4:24; Jas 2:13.

Mete. Measure. You shall be judged by the same rule which you apply to others.

{s} "what measure ye mete" Jud 1:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 7 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And why beholdest thou the mote*, etc. A mote signifies any *light substance*, as dry chaff, or fine spires of grass or grain. It probably most usually signified the small *spiculae* or *beard* on a head of barley or wheat. It is thus placed in opposition to the word *beam*.

Beam. This word here signifies a large piece of squared timber. The one is an exceedingly small object, the other a large one. The meaning is, that *we are much more quick and acute to judge of small offences in others, than of much larger offences in ourselves*. Even a very *small* object that should hinder the vision of another, we should discern much more quickly than a much larger one in our own sight. This was also a proverb in frequent use among the Jews, and the same sentiment was common among the Greeks, and deserves to be expressed in every language.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 7 - Verse 4

Verse 4. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 7 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Thou hypocrite*, first cast out, etc. Christ directs us to the proper way of forming an opinion of others, and of reproving and correcting them. By first amending our own faults, or casting the beam out of our eye, we can *consistently* advance to correct the faults of others. There will then be no hypocrisy in our conduct. We shall also *see clearly* to do it. The beam, the thing that obscured our sight, will be removed; and we shall more clearly discern the *small* object that obscures the sight of our brother. The sentiment is, that the readiest way to judge of the imperfections of others is to be free from greater ones ourselves. This qualifies us for judging, makes us candid and consistent, and enables us to see things as they are, and to make proper allowances for frailty and imperfection.

{t} "cast out the beam" Ga 6:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 7 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Give not that which is holy*, etc. By some, the word *holy* has been supposed to mean *flesh offered in sacrifice*, made holy, or separated to a sacred use. But it probably means here *anything connected with religion*—admonition, precept, or doctrine. Pearls are precious stones

found in shell-fish, chiefly in India, in the waters that surround Ceylon. They are used to denote anything peculiarly precious, Re 17:4 18:12-16; Mt 13:46.

In this place they are used to denote the doctrines of the gospel. *Dogs* signify men who spurn, oppose, and abuse that doctrine; men of peculiar sourness and malignity of temper, who meet it like growling and quarrelsome curs, 2Pe 2:22 Re 22:15. *Swine* denote those who would trample the precepts under feet; men of impurity of life; corrupt, polluted, profane, obscene, and sensual; who would not know the value of the gospel, and who would tread it down as swine would pearls, 2Pe 2:22 Pr 11:22. The meaning of this proverb then is, do not offer your doctrine to those violent and abusive men, who would growl and curse you; nor to those peculiarly debased and profligate, who would not perceive its value, would trample it down, and abuse you. This verse furnishes a beautiful instance of the *introverted* parallelism. The usual mode of poetry among the Hebrews, and a common mode of expression in proverbs and apothegms, was by the parallelism, where one member of a sentence answered to another, or expressed substantially the same sense with some addition or modification. See my Introduction to Isaiah. Sometimes this was alternate, and sometimes it was introverted—where the first and fourth lines would correspond, and the second and third. This is the case here. The dogs would rend, and not the swine; the swine would trample the pearls under their feet, and not the dogs. It may be thus expressed:

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs.
Neither cast ye your pearls before swine,
Lest they trample them under their feet,
And turn again [that is, the dogs] and rend you.

{u} "neither cast ye your" Pr 9:7,8, 23:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 7 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Ask, and it shall be given you*, etc. There are here three different forms presented of seeking the things which we need from God—*asking, seeking, and knocking*. The latter is taken from the act of knocking at a door for admittance. See Lu 11:7 Re 3:20. The phrases signify to seek with earnestness, and diligence, and perseverance. The promise is, that what we seek shall be given us. It is of course implied that we seek with a proper spirit, with humility, sincerity, and perseverance. It is implied, also, that we ask the things which it may be consistent for God to give—that is, things which he has promised to give, and which would be best for us and his kingdom, 1Jn 5:14. Of that, God is to be the judge. And here there is the utmost latitude which a creature can ask. God is willing to provide for us, to forgive our sins, to save our souls, to befriend us in trial, to comfort us in death, to extend the gospel through the world. Man *can* ask no higher things of God; and these he *may* ask, assured that he is willing to grant them.

Christ encourages us to do this by the conduct of parents. No parent turns away his child with that which would be unsatisfactory or injurious. He would not give him a stone instead of bread, nor a serpent instead of a fish. God is better and kinder than the most tender earthly parents; and with what confidence, therefore, may we come as his children, and ask what we need! Parents, he

says, are evil; that is, are imperfect, often partial, blind, and sometimes passionate; but God is free from all this, and therefore is ready and willing to aid us.

Every one that asketh receiveth. That is, every one that asks aright, that prays in faith, and in submission to the will of God. He does not always give the very thing which we ask, but he gives what would be better. A parent will not always confer the very thing which a child asks, but he will seek the welfare of the child, and give what he thinks will be most for its good. Paul asked that the thorn from his flesh might be removed. God did not *literally* grant the request, but told him that his *grace* should be *sufficient* for him, 2Co 12:7-9.

A fish. A fish has some resemblance to a serpent. Yet no parent would attempt to deceive his child in this. So God will not give to us that which might appear to be of use, but which would be injurious.

{v} "shall be give you" Isa 55:6 Lu 18:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 7 - Verse 8

Verse 8. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 7:7"

{w} "asketh receiveth" Ps 81:10,16; Joh 14:13,14, 16:23,24; 1Jo 3:22
1Jo 5:14,15.
{x} "and he that seeketh" Pr 8:17 Jer 29:12,13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 7 - Verse 9

Verse 9. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 7:7"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 7 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 7:7"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 7 - Verse 11

Verse 11. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 7:7"

{y} "good gifts unto your children" Lu 11:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 7 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *All things whatsoever*, etc. This command has been usually called the *Saviour's golden rule*, a name given to it on account of its great value. All that you *expect* or *desire* of others in similar circumstances, do to them. Act not from selfishness or injustice, but put yourself in the place of the other, and ask what you would expect of him then. This would make you impartial, and candid, and just. It would destroy avarice, envy, treachery, unkindness, slander, theft, adultery, and murder. It has been well said, that this law is what the balance-wheel is to machinery. It would prevent all irregularity of movement in the moral world, as that does in a steam-engine. It is easily applied, its justice is seen by all men, and all must acknowledge its force and value.

This is the law and the prophets. That is, this is the sum or substance of the Old Testament. It is nowhere found in so many words, but it is a summary expression of all that the law required. The sentiment was in use among the Jews. Hillel, an ancient Rabbi, said to a man who wished to become a proselyte, and who asked him to teach him the whole law, "Whatever is hateful to you, do not do to another." Something of the same sentiment was found among the ancient Greeks and Romans.

{z} "do ye even so to them" Le 19:18 Ro 13:8-10; Ga 5:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 7 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Enter ye in at the strait gate*. Christ here compares the way to life to an entrance through a gate. The words *straight*, and *strait*, have very different meanings. The former means *not crooked*; the latter *pent up, narrow, difficult to be entered*. This is the word used here, and it means that the way to heaven is pent up, narrow, close, and not obviously entered. The way to death is open, broad, and thronged. The Saviour here referred probably to ancient cities. They were surrounded with walls, and entered through gates. Some of those, connected with the great avenues to the city, were broad, and admitted a throng. Others, for more private purposes, were narrow, and few would be seen entering them. So says Christ, is the path to heaven. It is narrow. It is not *the great highway* that men tread. Few go there. Here and. there one may be seen—- travelling in solitude and singularity. The way to death, on the other hand, is broad. Multitudes are in it. It is the great highway in which men go. They fall into it easily, and without effort, and go without thought. If they wish to *leave that*, and go by a narrow gate to the city, it would require effort and thought. So, says Christ, *diligence* is needed to enter into life. See Lu 13:24. None go of course. All must strive to obtain it; and so narrow, unfrequented, and solitary is it, that few find it. This sentiment has been beautifully versified by Watts :—- \-

"Broad is the road that leads to death,
And thousands walk together there;
But wisdom shows a narrower path,
With here and there a traveller."

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 7 - Verse 14

Verse 14. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 7:14"**

{1} "Because", or "how" {b} "few there be" Mt 20:16 25:1-12; Ro 9:27,29

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 7 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *False prophets*. The word prophet originally means, one who foretells future events. As prophets, however, were commonly regarded as public instructors on the subject of religion, the word came to denote all who were religious teachers. In this sense it is probably used here. A false prophet is a teacher of incorrect doctrine, or one falsely and unjustly laying claims to Divine inspiration. It probably had reference to the false teachers then among the Jews.

Which come to you in sheeps clothing. The sheep is an emblem of innocence, sincerity, and harmlessness. To come in sheep's clothing, is to assume the appearance of sanctity, and innocence, when the heart is evil.

Ravening wolves, Rapacious; or disposed to plunder. Applied to the false teachers, it means that they assumed the appearance of holiness, in order that they might the more readily get the *property* of the people. They were full of extortion and excess. See Mt 23:25.

{c} "false prophets" De 13:1-3 Jer 23:13-16; 1Jo 4:1

{d} "ravening wolves" Ac 20:29-31

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 7 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Ye shall know them by their fruits*. He gives the proper test of their character. Men do not judge of a tree by its leaves, or bark, or flowers, but by the fruit which it bears. The flowers may be handsome and fragrant; the foliage thick and green; but these are merely ornamental. It is the *fruit* that is of chief service to man; and he forms his opinion of the nature and value of the tree by their fruit. So of pretensions to religion. The profession may be fair; but the conduct—the fruit in the eye of the world—is to determine the nature of the principles.

{e} "by their fruits" Mt 12:33

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 7 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *A corrupt tree*. The word *corrupt* here does not signify, as our translation would seem to indicate, that the tree had been good, but had become *vitiated*; but that it was a tree of a useless character, of a nature that produces nothing beneficial.

{f} "good tree" Lu 6:43, 45

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 7 - Verse 18

Verse 18. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 7 - Verse 19

Verse 19. No Barnes text on this verse.
{f} "Every tree"
Mt 3:10 Joh 15:2,6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 7 - Verse 20

Verse 20. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 7 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Not every one that saith*, etc. He goes on to say that many, on the ground of that profession, will claim admittance into his kingdom. Many will plead that they had done miracles, and preached or prophesied much, and will demand an entrance into heaven. The power of working miracles had no necessary connexion with piety. God may as well, if he chooses, give the power of raising the dead to a wicked man, as the skill of healing to a wicked physician. A miracle is a display of *his own power* through the medium of another. An act of healing the sick is also a display of *his power* through the agency of another. In neither of these cases is there any necessary connexion with moral character. So of preaching, or prophesying. God may use the agency of a man of talents, though not pious, to carry forward his purposes. Saving power on the mind is the work of God; and he may convey it by any agency which he may choose. Accordingly, many may be found in the day of judgment who may have been endowed with powers of prophecy, or miracle, as Balaam, or the magicians of Egypt; in the same way as many men of distinguished talents may be found yet destitute of piety, and shut out of his kingdom. See Mr 9:38 Lu 9:49; 1Co 13:1-3.

In this last place, Paul says, that though he spoke with the tongue of angels, and had the gift of prophecy, and could remove mountains, and had not charity or love, all would be of no avail. **See Barnes "1Co 13:1-3".**

{h} "Lord, Lord" Is 48:1,2; Mt 25:11,12; Lu 6:46 13:25; Ro 2:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 7 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *In that day*. That is, in the last day, the day of judgment; the time when the principles of all pretenders to prophecy and piety shall be tried. \- {i} "prophesied in thy" Nu 24:4 1Ki 22:11; Jer 23:13 Ac 19:13-15

1Co 13:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 7 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Profess unto them*. Say unto them; plainly declare.

I never knew you. That is, I never approved, loved, or regarded you as my friends. See Ps 1:6 2Ti 2:19; 1Co 8:3.

This proves that, with all their pretensions, they had never been true followers of Christ. Jesus will not then say to false prophets and false professors of religion, that he had once known them, and then rejected them; that they had been once Christians and then had fallen away; that they had been pardoned, and then had apostatized; but that he had *never known them*—THEY HAD NEVER BEEN TRUE CHRISTIANS. Whatever might have been their pretended joys, their raptures, their hopes, their self-confidence, their visions, their zeal, they had never been regarded by the Saviour as his true friends. I know not a more decided proof that Christians do not fall away from grace than this text. It settles the question; and proves that whatever else such men had, they never had any true religion. See 1Jo 2:19.

{k} "from me" Ps 5:5 Mt 25:41; Re 22:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 7 - Verse 24

Verses 24-27. Jesus closes the sermon on the mount by a beautiful comparison, illustrating the benefit of attending to his words. It was not sufficient to *hear* them; they must be *obeyed*. He compares the man who should hear, and obey him, to a man who built his house on a rock. Palestine was, to a considerable extent, a land of hills and: mountains. Like other countries of that description, it was subject to sudden and violent rains. The Jordan, the principal stream, was annually swollen to a great extent, and became rapid and furious in its course. The streams which ran among the hills, whose channels might have been dry during some months of the year, became suddenly swollen with the rain, and would pour down impetuously into the plains below. Everything in the way of these torrents would be swept off. Even a house erected within the reach of these sudden inundations, and especially if founded on sand, or any unsolid basis, would not stand before them. The rising, bursting stream would shake it to its foundation; the rapid torrent would gradually wash away its base; it would totter and fall, and be swept away. Rocks in that country were common, and it was easy to secure for their houses a solid foundation. No comparison could, to a Jew, have been more striking. So tempests, and storms of affliction and persecution, beat around the soul. Suddenly, when we think we are in safety, the heavens may be overcast; the storm may lower; and calamity beat upon us. In a moment, health, friends, comforts, may be gone. How desirable then

to be possessed of something that the tempest cannot reach! Such is an interest in Christ; attention to his words; reliance on his promises; confidence in his protection; and a hope of heaven through his blood. Earthly calamities do not reach these; and, possessed of *religion*, all the storms and tempests of life may beat harmlessly around us.

There is another point in this comparison. The house built on the sand is beat upon by the floods and rains; its foundation gradually is worn away; it falls, and is borne down the stream, and is destroyed. So falls the slumber. The floods are wearing away his sandy foundation; and soon one tremendous storm shall beat upon him, and he and his hopes shall fall, for ever fall. Out of Christ, perhaps having heard his words from very childhood; perhaps having taught them to others in the Sunday-school; perhaps having been the means of laying the foundation on which others shall build for heaven, he has laid for himself no foundation; and soon an eternal tempest shall beat around his naked soul. How great will be that fall! What will be his emotions when sinking for ever in the flood, and destined for ever to live and writhe in the peltings of that ceaseless storm that shall beat when "God shall rain snares, fire, and a horrible tempest" upon the wicked!

{l} "Therefore" Lu 6:47 {m} "wise man" Ps 111:10 119:99,130

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 7 - Verse 25

Verse 25. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 7:24"

{n} "upon a rock" Ps 92:13-15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 7 - Verse 26

Verse 26. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 7:24"

{o} "a foolish man" 1Sa 2:30 Jer 8:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 7 - Verse 27

Verse 27. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 7:24"

{p} "winds blew" 1Co 3:13 {q} "great was the fall" Heb 10:26,27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 7 - Verse 28

Verse 28,29. *His doctrine*. His teaching.

As one having authority, and not as the Scribes. The scribes were the learned men and teachers of the Jewish nation, and were principally Pharisees. They taught chiefly the sentiments of their rabbins, and the traditions which had been delivered; they consumed much of their time in useless disputes, "vain jangling." Jesus was open, plain, grave, useful; delivering truth as *became* the oracles of God; not spending his time in trifling disputes, and debating questions of no importance; but confirming his doctrine by miracles and argument; teaching *as having power*, as it is in the original, and not in the vain and foolish manner of the Jewish doctors. He showed that he had authority to explain, enforce, and change the ceremonial laws of the Jews. He came with authority such as no man could have, and it is not remarkable that his explanations astonished them. From this chapter we may learn,

(1.) The evil of censorious judging, Mt 7:1-5. We cannot see the heart. We have ourselves possibly greater faults than the persons that we condemn. They may be of a different kind; but it is not strange for persons to be very censorious towards faults in others, which they have to much greater extent themselves.

(2.) We see how we are to treat men who are opposers of the gospel, Mt 7:6. We are not to present it to them when we know they will despise it, and abuse us. We should, however, be cautious in forming that opinion of them. Many men may be far more ready to hear the gospel than we imagine; and a word seasonably and kindly spoken may be the means of saving them, Pr 25:11 Ec 11:6. We should not meet violent and wicked opposers of the gospel with a harsh, overbearing, and lordly spirit; a spirit of dogmatizing and anger; nor should we violate the laws of social intercourse under the idea of *faithfulness*. Religion gains nothing by outraging the established laws of social life, 1Pe 3:8. If men will not hear us when we speak to them kindly and respectfully, we may be sure they will not when we abuse them, and become angry. We harden them against the truth, and confirm them in the opinion that religion is of no value. Our Saviour was always mild and kind; *and in not a single instance did he do violence to the laws of social intercourse, or faith in the respect due from one man to another*. When with harshness men speak to their superiors; when they abuse them with unkind words, and coarse epithets, and unfeeling denunciations; when children and youth forget their station, and speak in harsh, authoritative tones to the aged, they are violating the very first principles of the gospel— meekness, respect, and love. Give honour to whom honour is due, and be *kind*, be *courteous*.

(3.) Christ gives peculiar encouragement to prayer, Mt 7:7-11. Especially his remarks apply to the young. What child is there that would not go to his parent, and ask him for things which were necessary? What child doubts the willingness of a kind parent to give what he thinks will be best for him? But God is more willing to give than the *best* parent. We need of *him* gifts of far more importance than we ever can of an earthly father. None but God can forgive, enlighten, sanctify, and save us. How strange that many ask favours of an *earthly* parent daily and hourly, and never ask of the Great Universal Father a single blessing, for time or eternity!

(4.) The danger of losing the soul, Mt 7:13,14. The way to ruin is broad, the road to heaven is narrow. Men naturally and readily go in the former; they never go in the latter without design. When we enter on the journey of life, we naturally fall into the broad and thronged way to ruin. Our original propensity; our native depravity; our disinclination to God and religion, lead us to

that. And we never leave it without effort. How much more natural to tread in a way in which multitudes go, than in one where there are few travellers, and which requires an effort to find it! And how much danger is there that we shall continue to tread in that way, until it terminate in our ruin! No man is saved without effort. No man enters on the narrow way without design; no one by following his natural inclination and propensities. And yet how indisposed we are to effort; how unwilling to listen to the exhortations which would call us from the broad path to a narrower and less frequented course! How prone are men to feel that they are safe if they are with the many, and that the multitude that attend them constitute a safeguard from danger !

"Encompassed by a throng,
On numbers they depend;

They say so many can't be wrong,
And miss a happy end."

Yet, did God ever spare a guilty city because it was large? Did he spare the army of Sennacherib from the destroying angel because it was mighty? Does he hesitate to cut men down by the plague, the pestilence, and by famine, because they are numerous? Is he deterred from consigning men to the grave, because they swarm upon the earth, and because a mighty throng is going to death? So in the way to hell. Not numbers, nor power, nor might, nor talent in the road way, will deter him, or make that way safe; nor will the path to heaven be a dangerous road because few are seen travelling there. The Saviour knew and felt that men are in danger; and hence, with much solemnity, he warned them when he lived—and now warns us—to strive to enter into the strait gate.

(5.) The necessity of sincerity in religion, Mt 7:15-23. Profession is of no value without it. God sees the heart. And the day is near when he shall cut down and destroy all those who do not bring forth the fruits of righteousness in their lives. If in anything we should be honest and sincere, surely it should be in the things of religion. God is never deceived, Ga 6:7. And the things of eternity are of too much consequence to be lost by deluding ourselves or others. We may deceive our fellow-men, but we do not delude our Maker; and soon he will strip off our thin covering, and show us as we are to the universe. If anything is of prominent value in religion, it is *honesty*—honesty to ourselves, our fellow-men, and to God. Be willing to know the worst of your case. Be willing to be thought of, by God and men, *as you are*. Assume nothing which you do not possess; and pretend to nothing which you have not. Judge of yourselves as you do of others—not by words and promises, but by the *life*. Judge of yourselves as you do of trees—not by leaves and flowers, but by the *fruits*.

(6.) The importance of building our hopes of heaven on a firm foundation, Mt 7:24-27. No other can any man lay than that which is laid, which is Christ, 1Co 3:11. He is the tried Corner Stone, 1Pe 2:6 Eph 2:20. On an edifice raised on that foundation, the storms of persecution and calamity will beat in vain. Hopes thus reared sustain every adversity; are unshaken by the terrors of death; and secure us from the tempests of wrath that shall beat upon the guilty. How awful, in the day of judgment, will it be to have been deceived! How dreadful the shock to find then the house built on the sand! How dreadful the emotions, to see our hopes totter on the brink of ruin; to see sand after sand washed away, and the dwelling reel over the heaving deep, and fall into the abyss, to rise no more! Ruin, awful and eternal rum, awaits those who thus deceive themselves, and trust to a name to live, while they are dead.

(7.) Under what obligations are we for this *sermon on the mount*! In all languages there is not a discourse to be found that can be compared with it for purity, and truth, and beauty, and dignity. Were there no other evidence of the Divine mission of Christ, this alone would be sufficient to prove that he was sent from God. Were these doctrines obeyed and loved, how pure and peaceful would be the world! How would hypocrisy be abashed and confounded! How would impurity hang its head! How would peace reign in every family and nation! How would anger and wrath flee! And how would the race—the lost and benighted tribes of men, the poor, and needy, and sorrowful—bend themselves before their common Father, and seek peace and eternal life at the hands of a merciful and faithful God!

{r} "astonished" Jer 23:29 Mr 6:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 7 - Verse 29

Verse 29. No Barnes notes on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 7:28"

For a summary of Matthew Chapter 7, **See Barnes "Mt 7:28"**.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 8 - Verse 1

MATTHEW CHAPTER 8
Verse 1. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 8 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *There came a leper*. No disease with which the human family has been afflicted, has been more dreadful than that which is often mentioned in the Bible as *the leprosy*. It first exhibits itself on the surface of the skin. The appearance is not always the same, but it commonly resembles the spot made by the puncture of a pin, or the pustules of a ring-worm. The spots generally make their appearance very suddenly. Perhaps its appearance might be hastened by any sudden passion, as fear or anger. See Nu 12:10 2Ch 26:19. The spots commonly exhibit themselves, at first, on the face, about the nose and eyes, and increase in size a number of years, till they become as large as a pea or a bean. There are three kinds of leprosy, distinguished by the appearance of the spots—the white, the black, and the red leprosy. These spots, though few at first, gradually spread till they cover the whole body. But though the appearance of the disease is at first in the skin, yet it is deeply

seated in the bones, and marrow, and joints of the body. We have reason to suppose that, in children, it is concealed in the system for a number of years, till they arrive at the age of puberty; and in adults for three or four years, till at last it gives fearful indications on the skin of its having gained a well-rooted and permanent existence. A leprous person may live twenty, or thirty, or even fifty years, if he received the disease at his birth, but they will be years of indescribable misery. The bones and marrow are pervaded with the disease. The malady advances, from one stage to another, with slow and certain ruin. "Life still lingers amidst the desolation;" the joints, and hands, and feet, lose their power; and the body collapses, or falls together, in a form hideous and awful. There is a form of the disease in which it commences at the extremities: the joints separate; the fingers, toes, and other members, one by one, fall off; and the malady thus gradually approaches the seat of life. The wretched victim is thus doomed to see himself dying *piece-meal*, assured that no human power can arrest, for a moment, the silent and steady march of this foe to the seat of life. This disease is contagious and hereditary. It is easily communicated from one to another, and is transmitted to the third and fourth generation. The last generation that is afflicted with it commonly exhibits the symptoms by decayed teeth, and fetid breath, and diseased complexion.

Moses gave particular directions by which the real leprosy was to be distinguished from other diseases. See Le 13:1 and following. The leprous person was, in order to avoid contagion, very properly separated from the congregation. The inspection of the disease was committed to the priest; and a declaration, on his part, that the person was healed, was sufficient evidence to restore the afflicted man to the congregation. It was required, also, that the leprous person should bring an offering to the priest of two birds, commonly doves, one of which was slain, and the other dismissed. See Le 14:1 and following. In compliance with the laws of the land, Jesus directed the man that he had healed to make the customary offering, and to obtain the testimony of the priest that he was healed. The leprosy has once, and but once appeared in America. This loathsome and most painful disease has, in all other instances, been confined to the old world, and chiefly to the eastern nations. It is matter of profound gratitude to a benignant God, that this scourge has been permitted *but* once to visit the new world. That awful calamity was in the island of Guadaloupe, in the West Indies, about the year 1730; and is thus described by an eye witness, M. Peyssanel:

> "Its commencement is imperceptible. There appear only some few white spots on the skin. At first they are attended with no pain or inconvenience; but no means whatever will remove them. The disease imperceptibly increases for many years. The spots become larger, and spread over the whole body. When the disease advances, the upper part of the nose swells, the nostrils become enlarged, and the nose itself soft. Tumours appear on the jaws; the eyebrows swell; the ears become thick; the points of the fingers, as also the feet and the toes, swell; the nails become scaly; the *joints of the hands and feet separate, and drop off*. In the last stage of the disease the patient becomes a hideous spectacle, and falls to pieces."

Worshipped him. Bowed down before him, to show him respect. **See Barnes "Mt 2:2"**.

If thou wilt. This was an exhibition of great faith, and also an acknowledgment of his dependence on the will of Jesus, in order to be healed. So every sinner must come. He must feel that Jesus can save him. He must also feel that he has no claim on him; that it depends on his sovereign will; and must cast himself at his feet with the feelings of the leper:—

"I can but perish if I go;
I am resolved to try:
For if I stay away, I know
I shall for ever die."

Happily, no one ever came to Jesus with this feeling who was not received, and pardoned.

Make me clean. Heal me. The leprosy was regarded as an unclean and disgusting disease. To be *healed*, therefore, was expressed by being *cleansed* from it.

{s} "leper" Mr 1:40 Lu 5:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 8 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And Jesus—touched him*. It was an offence to the Jews to *touch* a leprous person, and was regarded as making him who did it ceremonially impure, Le 13:3. The act of putting forth his hand and *touching* him, therefore, expressed the intention of Jesus to cure him, and was a pledge that he was, in fact, already cured.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 8 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *See thou tell no man*. This command is to be understood as extending only to the time until he had made the proper representation to the priest. It was his duty to *hasten* to him immediately; not to delay by talking about it, but as the *first* thing to obey the laws of God, and make proper acknowledgments to him by an offering. The place where this cure was wrought was in Galilee, a distance of forty or fifty miles from Jerusalem; and it was his duty to make haste to the residence of the priest, and obtain his sanction to the reality of the cure. Perhaps, also, Christ was apprehensive that the report would go *before* the man, if he delayed, and the priest, through opposition to Jesus, might pronounce it an imposition.

A testimony unto them. Not to the *priest*, but to the people. Show thyself to the *priest*, and get his *testimony* to the reality of the cure, as a proof to the *people* that the healing is genuine. It was necessary that he should have that testimony before he could be received to the congregation, or allowed to mingle with the people. Having this, he would be, of course, restored to the privileges of social and religious life, and the proof of the *miracle*, to the people, would be put beyond a doubt.

{t} "See thou tell" Mt 9:30 Mr 5:43 {u} "Moses commanded" Le 14:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 8 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Capernaum*. **See Barnes "Mt 4:13"**.

There came unto him a centurion. A centurion was a commander of a *hundred men*, in the Roman armies. Judea was a Roman province, and garrisons were kept there to preserve the people in subjection. This man was probably by birth a pagan. See Mt 8:10.

{v} "a centurion" Lu 7:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 8 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Sick of the palsy*. **See Barnes "Mt 4:24"**.

The particular form which the palsy assumed is not mentioned. It seems it was a violent attack. Perhaps it was the painful form which produced violent *cramps*, and which immediately endangered his life.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 8 - Verse 7

Verse 7. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 8 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *I am not worthy*, etc. This was an expression of great humility. It refers doubtless to his view of his personal unworthiness, and not merely to the fact that he was a Gentile. It was the expression of a humble spirit; a conviction of the great dignity and power of the Saviour, and a belief that he was so unlike him, that he was not fit that the Son of God should come into his dwelling. So every truly penitent sinner feels—a feeling which is appropriate when he comes to Christ.

{w} "not worthy" Ps 10:17 Lu 15:19,21

{x} "the word only" Ps 33:9 107:20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 8 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *I am a man*, etc. He had full confidence in the ability of Jesus to heal his servant, and requested him simply to give the command. This request he presented in a manner appropriate to a soldier. I am a man, says he, under authority. That is, I am subject to the commands of others, and know how to obey. I have also under me soldiers who are accustomed to obedience. I say to one, go, and he goes; and to another, come, and he comes. I am *prepared*, therefore, to believe that your commands will be obeyed. As these obey me, so do diseases, storms, and seas obey you. If men obey me, who am an inferior officer, subject to another, how much more shall diseases obey

you—the original Source of power— having control over all things! He asked, therefore, simply that Christ would give commandment, and he felt assured he would be obeyed.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 8 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *I have not found so great faith*. The word *faith*, here, means *confidence*, or belief that Christ had power to heal his servant. It does not *of necessity* imply that he had saving faith; though from the connexion, and the spirit manifested, it seems probable that he had. If this was so, then he was the first Gentile convert to Christianity, and was a very early illustration of what was more dearly revealed afterwards, that the heathen were to be brought to the knowledge of the truth.

Jesus—-marvelled. Or *wondered* at his faith; or *deemed it remarkable*.

Not in Israel. Israel was a name given to *Jacob*, (Ge 32:28,29) because, as a prince, he had power with God; because he persevered in wrestling with the angel that met him, and obtained the blessing. The name is derived from two Hebrew words, signifying *Prince* and *God*. He was one of the patriarchs; a progenitor of the Jewish nation; and the names *Israel* and *Israelites* were given to them as the name Romans was in honour of Romulus; and the name *Americans* after *Americus Vespuccius*. It was given to the whole nation till the time of Jeroboam, when only the ten tribes that revolted received the name, probably because they were a majority of the nation. After the captivity of Babylon, it was given to all the Jews indiscriminately. See Mt 10:6 Ac 7:42; Heb 8:8 Mr 15:32. It here means, "I have not found such an instance of confidence among the Jews."

{y} "no, not in all Israel" Mt 15.28

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 8 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Many shall come from the east*, etc. Jesus takes occasion, from the faith of a Roman centurion, to state this conversion would not be solitary; that *many* pagans—many from the east and west— would be converted to the gospel, and be saved, as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were. The phrase "from the east and from the west," in the Scripture, is used to denote the *whole world*, Isa 45:6 59:19. The phrase, *shall sit down*, in the original, refers to the manner of sitting at meals, **See Barnes "Mt 23:6"**

and the enjoyments of heaven are described under the similitude of a feast or banquet—a very common manner of speaking of it, Mt 26:29 Lu 14:15, 22:30.

It is used here to denote *felicity, enjoyment, or honour*. To sit with those distinguished men was an honour, and would be expressive of great felicity.

{z} "many shall come" Is 2:2,3; Lu 13:29 Ac 11:18; Eph 3:6 Re 7:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 8 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *The children of the kingdom*. That is, the children, or the people, who *expected the kingdom*; or to whom it properly belonged; or, in other words, the Jews. They supposed themselves peculiarly the favourites of heaven. They thought the Messiah would, enlarge their nation, and spread the triumphs of *their* kingdom. They called themselves, therefore, the children of the members of the kingdom of God, to the exclusion of the Gentiles. Our Saviour used the manner of speech to which they were accustomed, and said that *many of the pagans would be saved, and many Jews lost*.

Shall be cast out into outer darkness, etc. This is an image of future punishment. It is not improbable that the image was taken from Roman dungeons or prisons. They were commonly constructed under-ground. They were shut out from the light of the sun. They were, of course, damp, dark, and unhealthy, and probably most filthy. Masters were in the habit of constructing such prisons for their slaves, where the unhappy prisoner, without light, or company, or comfort, spent his days and nights in weeping from grief, and in vainly gnashing his teeth from indignation. The image expresses the fact, that the wicked who are lost will be shut out from the light of heaven, and from peace, and joy; and hope; will be confined in gloomy darkness; will weep in hopeless grief; and gnash their teeth in indignation against God, and murmur against his justice. What a striking image of future woe! Go to a damp, dark, solitary, and squalid dungeon; see a miserable and enraged victim; add to *his* sufferings the idea of eternity, and then remember that this after all is but an *image*, a faint image, of hell! **See Barnes "Mt 22:13"**.

{a} "of the kingdom" Mt 7:22,23 {b} "be weeping" Mt 13:42,50

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 8 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *He was healed in that selfsame hour*. This showed decisively the goodness and power of Jesus. No miracle could be more complete. There could be no imposition, or deception.

This account, or one similar to this, is found in Lu 7:1-10. There has been a difference of opinion whether that was the *same* account, or whether a *second* centurion, encouraged by the success of the first, applied to our Saviour in a similar case and manner, and obtained the same success. In support of the supposition that they are different narratives, it is said that they disagree so far that it is impossible to reconcile them, and that it is not improbable that a similar occurrence might take place, and be attended with similar results. To a plain reader, however, the narratives appear to be the same. They agree in the character of the person, the place, and apparently the time; in the same substantial structure of the account, the expression of similar feelings, and the same answers, and the same result. It is very difficult to believe that all these circumstances would coincide in two different stories.

They differ, however. Matthew says, that the centurion *came himself*. Luke says, that he at first sent elders of the Jews, and then his particular friends. He also adds, that he was friendly to the Jews, and had built them a synagogue. An infidel will ask, whether there is not here a palpable contradiction? In explanation of this, let it be remarked,

(1.) that the fact that the centurion came himself is no evidence that others did not come also. It was in the city. The centurion was a great favourite, and had conferred on them many favours; and they would be anxious that the favour which he desired of Jesus should be granted. At his

suggestion, or of their own accord, they might apply to Jesus, and press the subject upon him, and be anxious to represent the case as favourably as possible. All this was probably done, as it would be in any other city, in considerable haste and apparent confusion; and one observer might fix strongly on one circumstance, and another on another. It is not at all improbable that the same representation and request might be made both by the centurion and his friends. Matthew might have fixed his eye very strongly on the fact that the centurion came *himself*, and been particularly struck with his deportment; and Luke on the remarkable zeal shown by the friends of a heathen, the interest they took in his welfare, and the circumstance that he had done much for them. Full of these interesting circumstances, he might comparatively have overlooked the centurion himself.

(2.) It was a maxim among the Jews, as it is now in law, *that what a man does by another, he does himself*. So Jesus is said to baptize, when he only baptized by his disciples. See Joh 4:1 Joh 19:1. Matthew was intent on the great leading facts of the cure. He was studious of brevity. He did not choose to explain the particular circumstances. He says that the centurion *made the application*, and received the answer, he does not say whether by himself, or by *an agent*. Luke explains particularly *how* it was done. There is no more contradiction, therefore, than there would be if it should be said of a man in a court of law, that he came and made application for a new trial, when the application was really made by his lawyer. Two men, narrating the fact, might exhibit the same variety that Matthew and Luke have done; and both be true. One thing is most clearly shown by this narrative, that this account was not *invented* by the evangelists for the sake of imposition. If it had been, they would have *agreed in all the circumstances*.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 8 - Verse 14

Verses 14,15. This account is contained also in Mr 1:29-31; and Lu 4:38,39. Mark adds that Simon and Andrew lived together, and that James and John went with them to the house. He adds, also, that *before* the miracle they spake to him about the sick person. The miracle was direct and complete. She was so completely restored as to attend them, and minister to them. The mention of "*Peter's wife's mother*," proves that Peter either then was or had been married. The fair and obvious interpretation is, that his wife was then living, comp. 1Co 9:5; and **See Barnes "1Co 9:15"**.

Peter is claimed by the Roman Catholics to be the head of the church; and the vicegerent of Christ. The pope, according to their view, is the successor of this apostle. On what pretence do they maintain that it is wrong for *priests* to marry? Why did not Christ at once reject Peter from being an apostle for having a wife? How remarkable that he should be set up as the head of the church, and an example and a model to all who were to succeed him. But all this is human law, and is contrary to the New Testament. That Peter had a wife was no objection to his being an apostle, and marriage has been expressly declared to be "honourable in ALL," Heb 13:4.

{c} "wife's mother laid" Mr 1:30,31; Lu 4:38,39

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 8 - Verse 15

Verse 15. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 8:14"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 8 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *When the even was come*, etc. The fame of the miracles of Jesus would probably draw together a crowd, and those who had friends that were afflicted would bring them. All that were brought to him he healed. This was proof of two things: first, his great benevolence; and, secondly, of his Divine mission. He might have established the latter by miracles that would do no good. None of his miracles were performed, however, merely to make a display of power, unless the cursing of the barren fig-tree be an exception comp. Mr 11:11-14. This was on the evening of the sabbath, Mr 1:21-32. The Jews kept the sabbath from evening to evening, Le 23:32. On the sabbath they would not even bring their sick to be healed, (Lu 13:14) but as soon as it was closed, on the evening of the same day, they came in multitudes to be cured.

Possessed with devils. **See Barnes "Mt 4:24"**.

With his word. By his command; by a word.

{d} "brought unto him many" Mr 1:32

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 8 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *That it might be fulfilled*, etc. This passage is found in Is 53:4. Our English translation of that important passage is, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows." The Greek in Matthew is an exact translation of the Hebrew, and the same translation should have been made in both places. In the fifty-third chapter, Isaiah fully states the doctrine of atonement, or that the Messiah was to suffer for sin. In the verse quoted here, however, he states the very truth which Matthew declares. The word translated *griefs*, in Isaiah, and *infirmities*, in Matthew, means properly, in the Hebrew and Greek, diseases of the body. In neither does it refer to the disease of the mind, or to sin. To bear those griefs, is clearly to bear them away, or to remove them. This was done by his miraculous power in healing the sick. The word rendered "sorrows," in Isaiah, and" sicknesses," in Matthew, means *pains, griefs, or anguish of mind*. To carry, then; is to sympathize with the sufferers; to make provision for alleviating those sorrows; and to take them away. This he did by his precepts, his example; and the cause of all sorrows—*sin*—he removed by his atonement. The passage in Isaiah and Matthew, therefore, mean precisely the same thing. See *Magee on Atonement*, and **See Barnes "Isa 53:1"**

and following.

{e} "Esaias the prophet" Isa 53:4 1Pe 2:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 8 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Unto the other side*. Jesus was now in Capernaum, a city at the north-west corner of the sea of Tiberias, or sea of Galilee. **See Barnes "Mt 4:18"**.

The country to which he purposed to go was the region on the east of the Sea of Tiberias.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 8 - Verse 19

Verses 19,20. *A certain scribe came*, etc. It is not improbable that this man, who had seen the miracles of Jesus, had formed an expectation that by following him he would obtain some considerable worldly advantage. Christ, in reply, proclaimed his own poverty, and dashed the hope of the avaricious scribe. The very foxes and birds, says he, have places of repose and shelter, but the Son of man has no home, and no pillow. He is a stranger in his own world; a wanderer and an outcast from the abodes of men. Comp. Joh 1:11.

Son of man. This means evidently Jesus himself. Not title is more frequently given to the Saviour than this; and yet there is much difficulty in explaining it. The word *son* is used in a great variety of significations. **See Barnes "Mt 1:1"**.

The name *Son of man* is given to Jesus only three times in the New Testament, (Ac 7:56 Re 1:13, 14:14) . The phrase *Son of God*, given to Christ, denotes *peculiar* connexion with God, Joh 10:36. The name *Son of man* probably denotes a corresponding *peculiar* connexion with man; his peculiar love and friendship for him; and his willingness to devote himself to the best interests of the race. It is sometimes, however, used as synonymous with *Messiah*, Mt 16:28 Joh 1:34 Ac 7:37; Joh 12:34.

{f} "Master, I" Lu 9:57,58

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 8 - Verse 20

Verse 20. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes on "Mt 8:19"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 8 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *And another of his disciples*, etc. The word disciple properly signifies *learner*; and was given to his followers because they received him as their teacher. **See Barnes "Mt 5:1"**.

It does not of necessity mean that a *disciple* was a pious man, but only one of the multitude, who, for various causes, might attend on his instructions. See Joh 6:66 9:28

{g} "Lord, suffer" 1Ki 19:20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 8 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Let the dead bury their dead*. The word dead is used in this passage in two different senses. It is apparently a paradox, but is fitted to convey his idea very distinctly to the mind. The Jews used the word *dead* often to express indifference towards a thing; or rather, to show that that thing has no *influence* over us. Thus, to be dead to the world; to be dead to the law Ro 7:4; to be dead to sin Ro 6:11; means that the world, law, and sin, have not influence or control over us; that we are free from them, and as *as though they were not*. A body in the grave is unaffected by the pomp and vanity, by the gaiety and revelry, by the ambition and splendour that may be near the tomb. So men of the world are dead to religion. They see not its beauty; hear not its voice; are not won by its loveliness. This is the class of men to which the Saviour referred here. Let men, says he, who are uninterested in my work, and who are *dead in sin*, (Eph 2:1,) take care of the dead. Your duty is now to follow me.

There may have been two reasons for this apparently rash direction. One was to *test* the character and attachment of the man. If he had proper love for Christ, he would be willing to leave his friends even in the most tender and trying circumstances.. This is required, Mt 10:27 Lu 14:26. A second reason might have been, that if he returned, *at that time*, his friends might ridicule or oppose him, or present plausible arguments, *in the afflictions of the family*, why he should not return to Christ. The thing to which he was called was moreover of more importance than any earthly consideration; and for that time, Christ chose to require of the man a very extraordinary sacrifice to show his sincere attachment to him. Or it may have been, that the Saviour saw that the effect of visiting his home at that time might have been to drive away all his serious impressions, and that he would return to him no more. These impressions might not have been deep enough, and his purpose to follow our Saviour may not have been strong enough to bear the trial to which he would be subjected. Strange as it may seem, there are few scenes better fitted to drive away serious impressions than those connected with a funeral. We should have supposed it would be otherwise. But facts show it to be so; and show that if this was one of the reasons which influenced the Saviour, he had a thorough knowledge of human nature. The arrangements for the funeral; the preparation of mounting apparel; and the depth of sorrow in such cases, divert the mind from its sins, and its personal need of a Saviour; and hence few persons are awakened or converted as the result of death in a family. The case here was a *strong* one. It was as strong as can well be conceived. And the Saviour meant to teach by this, that nothing is to be allowed to divert the mind from religion; nothing to be an excuse for not following him. Not even the death of a father, and the sorrows of an afflicted family, are to be suffered to lead a man to defer religion, or to put off the purpose to be a Christian. That is a fixed duty—a duty not to be deferred or neglected—whether in sickness or health, at home or abroad; whether surrounded by living and happy kindred, or whether a father, a mother, a child, or a sister, lies in our house dead.

It is the *regular* duty of children to obey their parents, and to show them kindness in affliction, and to evince proper care and respect for them when dead. Nor did our Saviour show himself insensible to these duties. He taught here, however, as he always taught, that a regard to friends, and ease, and comfit, should be *subordinate to the gospel*; and that we should always be ready to sacrifice these when duty to God requires it.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 8 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Into a ship*. This was on the sea of Tiberias. The *ship* in which they sailed was probably a small open boat, with sails, such as were commonly used for fishing on the lake.

His disciples. Not merely the apostles, but probably many others. There were many other ships in company with him, Mr 4:36. This circumstance would render the miracle much more striking and impressive.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 8 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *A great tempest*. A violent storm; or a wind so strong as to endanger their lives. This lake was subject to sudden squalls.

The ship was covered with the waves. The billows dashed against the ship, (Mr 4:37,) so that it was fast filling and in danger of sinking.

He was asleep. On the hinder part of the vessel, on a pillow, Mr 4:38. It was in the night, and Jesus had retired to rest. He was probably weary, and slept calmly and serenely, he apprehended no danger, and showed to his disciples how calmly one can sleep with a pure conscience, and who feels safe in the hands of God.

{h} "And, behold" Mr 4:37 Lu 8:23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 8 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Save us*. Save our lives.

We perish. We are in danger of perishing. This showed great confidence in the Saviour. It shows, also, where sinners and Christians should always go, who feel that they are in danger of perishing. There is none that can save from the storms of Divine wrath but the Son of God.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 8 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Why are ye fearful*. You should have remembered that the Son of God, the Messiah, was on board. You should not have forgotten that he had power to save, and that with him you are safe. So Christians should never fear danger, disease, or death. With Jesus they are safe. No enemy can reach him; and as *he* is safe, so they shall be also, Joh 14:19.

Rebuked the winds. Reproved them; or commanded them to be still. What a power was this! What irresistible proof that he was Divine! His word awed the tempest, and allayed the storm! There is not, anywhere, a sublimer description of a display of power. Nor could there be sublimer proof that he was truly the Son of God.

Great calm. The winds were still; and the sea ceased to dash against the vessel, and to endanger their lives.

{i} "rebuked" Job 38:11 Ps 89:9, 107:29

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 8 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *Men marvelled*. Wondered; or were amazed.

What manner of man. What personage. How unlike other men! What a vast, minute display of power; and how far exalted above mortals must he be I He spoke to the winds; rebuked their raging, and the sea was suddenly calm. The storm subsided; the ship glided smoothly; danger fled; and in amazement they stood in the presence of Him who controlled the tempests that God had raised: and they felt that *He* must be God himself. None but God could calm the heaving billows, and scatter the tempest. No scene could have been more grand than this display of the power of Jesus. The darkness; the dashing waves; the howling winds; the heaving and tossing ship; the fears and cries of the seamen; all by a single word hushed into calm repose; all present an image of power and divinity irresistibly grand and awful. So the tempest rolls and thickens over the head of the awakened sinner. So he trembles over immediate and awful destruction. So while the storm of wrath howls, and hell threatens to engulf him, he comes trembling to the Saviour. He hears; he rebukes the storm; and the sinner is safe. An indescribable peace takes possession of the soul; and he glides on a tranquil sea to the haven of eternal rest. See Isa 57:20,21; Ro 5:1 Php 4:7.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 8 - Verse 28

Verses 28-34. The same account of the demoniacs substantially is found in Mr 5:1-20; and Lu 8:26-39.

Verse 28. *The other side*. The other side of the sea of Tiberias.

Country of the Gergesenes. Mr 5:1 says, that he came into the country of the Gadarenes. This difference is only apparent. *Gadara* was a city not far from the lake Gennesareth; one of the ten cities that were called Decapolis. **See Barnes "Mt 4:25"**.

Gergesa was a city about twelve miles to the south-east of Gadara, and about twenty miles to the east of the Jordan. There is no contradiction, therefore, in the evangelists. He came into the region in which the two cities were situated, and one mentioned one, and the other another. It shows that the writers had not *agreed* to impose on the world; for if they had, they would have mentioned the *same* city; and it shows they were familiar with the country. No man would have written in this manner, but those who were acquainted with the facts. Impostors do not mention *places*, or *names*, if they can avoid it.

There met him two. Mark and Luke speak of only *one* that met him. "There met him out of the tombs a man," Mr 5:2. "There met him out of the city a certain man," etc., Lu 8:27. This difference of statement has given rise to considerable difficulty. It is to be observed, however, that neither Mark nor Luke say that there was *no more* than one. For particular reasons they might have been

led to fix the attention on one of them that was more notorious, and furious, and difficult to be managed. Had they denied plainly that there was more than one, and had Matthew affirmed that there were two, there would have been an irreconcilable contradiction. As it is, they relate the affair as other men would. It shows that they were honest witnesses. Had they been impostors; had Matthew and Luke *agreed* to write books to deceive the world, they would have agreed exactly in a case so easy as this. They would have told the story with the same circumstances. Witnesses in courts of law; often differ in unimportant matters; and, provided the main narrative coincides, their testimony is thought to be more valuable.

Luke has given us a hint why he recorded only the cure of *one* of them. He says, there met him "out of the city," a man, etc.; or, as it should be rendered, "a man of the city," a citizen. Yet the man did not dwell in the city; for he adds in the same verse, "neither abode he in any house, but in the tombs." The truth of the case was, that he was born and educated in the city; he had probably been a man of wealth and eminence; he was well known; and the people felt a deep interest in the case. Luke was, therefore, particularly struck with his case; and as *his* cure fully established the power of Jesus, he recorded it. The other that Matthew mentions was probably a stranger, or a person less notorious as a maniac, and he felt less interest in the cure. Let two persons go into a lunatic asylum, and meet two insane persons, one of whom should be exceedingly fierce and ungovernable, and well known as having been a man of worth and standing; let them converse with them; and let the more violent one attract the principal attention, and they would very likely give the same account that Matthew and Luke do; and no one would doubt the statement was correct.

Possessed with devils. **See Barnes "Mt 4:24"**.

Coming out of the tombs. Mark and Luke say that they dwelt in the tombs. The sepulchres of the Jews were commonly *caves*, beyond the walls of the cities in which they dwelt, or excavations made in the sides of hills, or sometimes in solid rocks. These caves, or excavations, were sometimes of great extent, They descended to them by flights of steps. These graves were not in the midst of cities, but in groves, and mountains, and solitudes. They afforded, therefore, to insane persons and demoniacs retreat and shelter. They delighted in these gloomy and melancholy recesses, as being congenial to the wretched state of their minds. Josephus, also, states that these sepulchres were the haunts and lurking-places of those desperate bands of robbers that infested Judea. The annexed cut will furnish an illustration of the nature of the sepulchres occurring in the east. A more full illustration may be seen by referring to **See Barnes "Isa 64:4"**.

{s} "And when" Mr 5:1 Lu 8:26

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 8 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *What have we to do with thee*. This might have been translated with great propriety, What hast thou to do with us? The meaning is, "Why dost thou trouble, or disturb us?" See 2Sa 16:10; 2Ki 9:18 Ezr 4:3.

Son of God. The title, *Son of God*, is often given to Christ. Men are sometimes called sons, or children of God, to denote their piety and adoption into his family, 1Jn 3:1. But the title given, to Christ denotes his superiority to the prophets, (Heb 1:1) to Moses the founder of the Jewish economy, (Heb 3:6) it denotes his peculiar and near relation to the Father, as evinced by his resurrection, (Ps

2:7 Ac 13:33) it denotes his peculiar relation to God from his miraculous conception, (Lu 1:35) and is equivalent to a declaration that he is Divine, or equal to the Father, Joh 10:36.

Art thou come hither to torment us, etc. By the time here mentioned is meant the day of judgment. The Bible reveals the doctrine that evil spirits are not now bound as they will be after that day; that they are permitted to tempt and afflict men; but that in the day of judgment *they* also will be condemned to everlasting punishment with all the wicked, 2Pe 2:4 Jude 1:6. These spirits seemed to be apprized of that, and alarmed lest the day that they had feared had come. They besought him, therefore, not to send them out of that country; not to consign them then to hell, but to put off the day of their final punishment. Mark and Luke say that Jesus inquired the name of the principal demoniac, and that he called his name *Legion, for they were many*. The name legion was given to a division in the Roman army. It did not always denote the same number; but, in the time of Christ, it consisted of six thousand—three thousand foot and three thousand horsemen. It came, therefore, to signify a *large number*, without specifying the exact amount.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 8 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *An herd of many swine*. The word *herd*, here applied to swine, is now commonly given to cattle. Formerly it signified any collection of beasts, or even of men. The number that composed this herd was two thousand, Mr 5:13.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 8 - Verse 31

Verse 31. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 8:28"

{k} "suffer us" Job 1:10-12 2:3-6 {l} "???" De 14:8 Isa 65:3,4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 8 - Verse 32

Verse 32. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 8:28"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 8 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *They that kept them fled*, etc. These swine were doubtless owned by the inhabitants of Gadara. Whether they were Jews or Gentiles is not certainly known. It was not properly in the territory of Judea; but as it was on its borders, it is probable that the inhabitants were a mixture of

Jews and Gentiles. Swine were to Jews unclean animals, and it was unlawful for them to eat them, Le 11:7. The Jews were forbidden by their own laws to keep them, even for the purpose of traffic. Either, therefore, they had expressly violated the law, or these swine were owned by the Gentiles.

The keepers fled in consternation. They were amazed at his power. Perhaps they feared a further destruction of property; or, more likely, they were acquainted with the laws of the Jews, and regarded this as a judgment of Heaven for keeping forbidden animals, and for tempting the Jews to violate the commands of God. They dreaded, perhaps, further punishment, and foolishly came and besought Jesus to depart from their country.

This is the only one of our Saviour's miracles, except the case of the fig-tree that he cursed, (Mt 21:18-20,) in which he caused any destruction of property. It is a striking proof of his benevolence, that his miracles tended directly to the comfort of mankind. It was a proof of goodness *added* to the direct purpose for which his miracles were wrought. That purpose was to confirm his Divine mission; and it might have been as fully done by splitting rocks, or removing mountains, or causing water to run up steep hills, as by any other display of power. See Ac 2:22. He chose to exhibit the proof of his Divine power, however, in such a way as to benefit mankind.

Infidels have objected to this whole narrative. They have said that this was a wanton and unauthorized violation of private rights in the destruction of property. They have said that the account of devils going into swine, and destroying them, was ridiculous. In regard to these objections, the narrative is easily vindicated.

1st. If Christ, as the Bible declares, be Divine as well as human—God as well as man—then he had an original right to that and all other property, and might dispose of it as he pleased, Ps 50:10-12. If God had destroyed them by pestilence, or by lightning, or by an inundation or earthquake, neither the owners, nor any one else, would have had reason to complain. No one now feels that he has a right to murmur if God destroys a thousand times the amount of this property, by overturning a city by an earthquake. Why, then, should complaints be brought against him if he should do the same thing in another way?

2nd. If this property was *held by the Jews*, it was a violation of their law, and it was right that they should suffer the loss;—if by the Gentiles, it was known also to be a violation of the law of the people among whom they lived; a temptation and a snare to them; and an abomination in their sight; and it was proper that the nuisance should be removed.

3rd. The cure of two men, one of whom was probably a man of distinction and property, was of far more consequence than the amount of property destroyed. To restore a *deranged* man now, of family and standing, would be an act for which *property* could not compensate, and which could not be measured in value by any pecuniary consideration. But,

4th. Jesus was not at all answerable for this destruction of property. He did not command, he only suffered or permitted the devils to *go into the swine*. He commanded them merely to come out of the man. They originated the purpose of destroying the property, doubtless for the sake of doing as much mischief as possible, and of destroying the effect of the miracle of Christ. In this they seem to have had most disastrous success; and they only are responsible.

5th. If it should be said that Christ permitted this, when he might have prevented it, we reply, that the difficulty does not stop there. He permits all the evil that exists, when he might prevent it. He permits *men* to do much evil, when he might prevent it. He permits one bad man to injure the person and property of another bad man. He permits the bad to injure the good. He often permits a wicked man to fire a city, or to plunder a dwelling, or to rob a traveller, destroying property of

many times the amount that was lost at Gadara. Why is it any more absurd to suffer a wicked spirit to do injury, than a wicked man? or to suffer a *legion of devils* to destroy a herd of swine, than for *legions of men* to desolate nations, and cover fields and towns with ruin and slaughter?

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 8 - Verse 34

Verse 34. The whole city came out. The people of the city probably came with a view of arresting him for the injury done to the property; but seeing him, and being awed by his presence, they only *besought* him to leave them.

Out of their coasts. Out of their country. This shows,

1st. that the design of Satan is to prejudice men against the Saviour; and even to make what Christ does an occasion why they should desire him to leave them.

2nd. The power of avarice. These men preferred their property to the Saviour. They loved it so much, that they were blind to the evidence of the miracle, and to the good he had done to the miserable men that he had healed. It is no uncommon thing for men to love the world so much; to love property, even like that owned by the people of Gadara, so much as to see no beauty in religion, and no excellence in the Saviour; and, rather than part with it, to beseech Jesus to withdraw from them. The most grovelling employment; the most abandoned sins; the most loathsome vices, are often loved more than the presence of Jesus, and more than all the blessings of his salvation.

{m} "depart" Job 21:24 Lu 5:18; Ac 16:39

REMARKS ON MATTHEW CHAPTER 8.

1st. The leprosy, the disease mentioned in this chapter, is an apt representation of the nature of sin. Like that, sin is loathsome; it is deep fixed in the frame; penetrating every part of the system; working its way to the surface imperceptibly, but surely; loosing the joints, and consuming the sinews of moral action; and adhering to the system, till it terminates in eternal death. It goes down from age to age. It shuts out men from the society of the pure in heaven, nor can man be elevated there, till God has cleansed the soul by his Spirit, and man is made pure and whole.

2nd. The case of the centurion is a strong instance of the nature and value of humility, Mt 8:6-10. He sustained a fair character, and had done much for the Jews. Yet he had no exalted conception of himself. Compared with the Saviour, he felt that he was unworthy that he should come to his dwelling. So feels every humble soul. *Humility is an estimate of ourselves as we are*. It is a willingness to be known, and talked of, and treated, just according to truth. It is a view of ourselves as lost, poor and wandering creatures. Compared with other men—-with angels, with Jesus, and with God—it is a feeling by which we regard ourselves as unworthy of notice. It is a readiness to occupy our appropriate station in the universe, and to put on humbleness of mind as our proper array, 1Pe 5:5.

3rd. We have here an equally beautiful exhibition of *faith*. The centurion had unwavering confidence in the power of Jesus. He did not doubt at all that Jesus was able to do for him just what *he needed, and what he wished him to do*. This is faith; and every man who has this trust or confidence in Christ for salvation, has saving faith.

4th. Humility and faith are always connected. The one prepares the mind for the other. Having a deep sense of our weakness and unworthiness, we are prepared to look to Him who *has* strength. Faith also produces humility. Jesus was humble; and believing on him, we catch his spirit, and learn of him, Mt 11:28-30. Compared with him, we see our unworthiness. Seeing HIS *strength*, we see OUR *feebleness*; seeing his strength exerted to save creatures, impure and ungrateful as we are, we sink away into an increased sense of our unfitness for his favour.

5th. We see the compassion and kindness of Jesus, Mt 8:16 17. He has borne our heavy griefs. He provides comfort for us in sickness, and sustains us in dying. But for his merciful arm, we should sink; and dying, we should die without hope. But he

"Can make a dying bed
Feel soft as downy pillows are;
Whilst on his breast we lean our head,
And breathe our life out sweetly there."

6th. We are forcibly struck with his condescension, Mt 8:19,20. Men of wickedness and crime dwell in splendid mansions, and stretch themselves on couches of ease; when afflicted, they recline on beds of down; but Jesus had no home, and no pillow. The birds that fill the air with music, and warble in the groves, nay, the very foxes, have homes and a shelter from the storms and elements; but He that made them, clothed in human flesh, was a wanderer, and had not where to lay his head. His sorrows he bore alone; his dwelling was in the mountains. In the palaces of the men for whom he toiled, and for whom he was about to bleed on a cross, he found no home, and no sympathy. Surely this was compassion worthy of a God.

7th. It is no disgrace to be poor. The Son of God was poor—and it is no dishonour to be like him. If our Maker, then, has cast our lot in poverty; if he takes away by sickness or calamity the fruits of our toils; if he clothes us in homely and coarse apparel; if he bids the winds of heaven to howl around our open and lonely dwellings, let us remember that the Redeemer of mankind trod the same humble path; and that it can be no dishonour to be likened to him who was the beloved Son of God.

8th. We should be willing to embrace the gospel without hope of earthly reward, Mt 8:19-23. Religion promises no earthly honours or wealth. It bids its disciples to look beyond the *grave* for its highest rewards. It requires men to love religion *for its own sake*; to love the Saviour, even when poor, and cast out, and suffering, *because he is worthy of love*; and to be willing to forsake all the allurements which the world holds out to us, for the sake of the purity and peace of the gospel.

9th. We learn the necessity of forsaking all for the sake of the gospel. Our first duty is to God, our Creator and Saviour; our second to friends, and relations and country, Mt 8:22. When *God* commands, we must follow him; nor should any consideration of ease, or safety, or imaginary duty, deter us. To us it is of no consequence what men say or think of us. Let the will of God be prayerfully ascertained, and then let it be done, though it carry us through ridicule, racks, and flames.

10th. Jesus can preserve us in the day of danger, Mt 8:23-27. He hushed the storm, and they were safe. *His* life was also in danger with *theirs*. Had the ship sunk, without a miracle, he would have perished with them. So in every storm of trial or persecution, in every heaving sea of calamity, he is united to his followers. His interest and theirs is the same. He feels for them; he is touched with their infirmities; and he will sustain them. "Because I live," says he, "ye shall live also." Never, never, then, shall man or devil pluck one of his faithful followers from his hand, Joh 10:27,28.

11th. All that can disturb or injure us is under the control of the Christian's Friend, Mt 8:28-32. The very inhabitants of hell are bound; and beyond his permission they can never injure us. In spite, then, of all the malice of malignant beings, the friends of Jesus are safe.

12th. It is no uncommon thing for men to desire Jesus to depart from them, Mt 8:34. Though he is ready to confer on them important favours, yet they hold his favours to be of far less consequence than some unimportant earthly possession. Sinners never love him, and always wish him away from their dwellings.

13th. It is no uncommon thing for Jesus to take men at their word, and leave them. He gives them over to worldly thoughts and pursuits; he suffers them to sink into crime, and they perish for ever! Alas, how many are there, like the dwellers in Gadara, that ask him to depart; that see him go without a sigh; and that never, never again behold him coming to bless them with salvation!

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 9 - Verse 1

MATTHEW CHAPTER 9

Verse 1. *And he entered into a ship*, etc. Jesus acceded to the request of the people of Gadara, recrossed the lake of Gennesareth, and returned to his own city. By *his own city* is meant Capernaum, (Mr 2:1) the city which was at that time his home, or where he had his dwelling, See Mt 4:13. This same account, with some additional circumstances, is contained in Mr 2:3-12, and Lu 5:18-26.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 9 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *A man sick of the palsy*. **See Barnes "Mt 4:24"**.

Lying on a bed. This was probably a mattress, or perhaps a mere blanket spread to lie on, so as to be easily borne. Being light, Jesus might with propriety command him to take it up and walk, Mt 9:6.

Mark says, "*they uncovered the roof*," Mt 2:4 Luke says, "*they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling*," Mt 5:19 To us it would appear that much injury must have been done to the house where Jesus was, and that they must be much incommoded by the removal of tiles and rafters, etc. An acquaintance, however, with the mode of building in the East removes every difficulty of this nature. Houses, in eastern countries, are commonly square in their form, and of a single story. On approaching them from the street, a single door is seen in the centre, and, usually, directly above it a single latticed window. This destitution of doors and lights from the streets, though it gives their dwellings a sombre appearance, is yet adapted to the habits of retirement and secrecy among the people of the East, where they are desirous of keeping their females from observation.

The annexed representation of an Arabian house shows the external appearance of an eastern dwelling, and the *upper chamber*, or "closet," rising above the main building. **See Barnes "Mt 6:6".**

On entering the only door in front, the first room is a small square room, surrounded with benches, called the *porch*. In this room the master of the family commonly transacts business, and, on private occasions, receives visits. Passing through the porch, you enter a large square room directly in the centre of the building, called the *court*. Luke says that the paralytic was let down "*into the midst*;" not in the midst of the people, but of the building—the middle place of the house. This court is paved commonly with marble; and, if possible, a *fountain* of water is formed in the centre, to give it beauty, and to diffuse a grateful coolness. This room is surrounded by a gallery, or covered walk on every side. From that covered walk, doors open into the other apartments of the house.

This centre room, or court, is commonly uncovered or open above. In wet weather, however, and in times of great heat of the sun, it is covered with an awning or canvass, stretched on cords, and capable of being easily removed or rolled up. This is what Mark means when he says *they uncovered the roof*. They *rolled up* or removed this awning.

From the court to the roof the ascent is by flights of stairs, either ill the covered walk or gallery, or in the porch. The roof is nearly flat. It is made of earth; or, in houses of the rich, is a firmly constructed flooring, made of coals, chalk, gypsum, and ashes, made hard by repeated blows. On those roofs, spears of grass, wheat, or barley sometimes spring up; but these are soon withered by the sun, Ps 129:6-8. The roof is a favourite place for walking, for repose in the, cool of the day, for conversation, and for devotion. **See Barnes "Mt 6:6".**

On such a roof Rahab concealed the spies, (Jos 2:6) Samuel talked with Saul, (1Sa 9:25;) David walked at eventide, (2Sa 11:2) and Peter went up to pray, (Ac 10:9.) The following cut represents the roof of a house, with the battlement, and a person viewing the neighbouring country. This roof was surrounded with a *balustrade*, or railing, breast high, on the sides; but where a house was contiguous to another, and of the same height, the railing was lower, so as to walk from one roof to another. In cities constructed in this manner, it was possible to walk through a considerable part of the city on the roofs of the houses. A breastwork or riding was of course built in the same manner around the *open space* in the centre, to prevent them from falling into the court below. This railing, or breastwork, is what Lu 5:19 says they let him down through. They removed it probably so that the couch could be conveniently let down with cords; and standing on the roof over the Saviour, they let the man down directly before him. The perseverance they had manifested was the *evidence* of their *faith* or *confidence* in his power to heal the sick man.

The cut on the next page exhibits the ground-plan of an eastern dwelling, and illustrates the account of the cure of the sick man. By looking at this it may be easily seen how the paralytic was presented to Jesus. Suppose the Saviour to be seated in the open court, say at G. The room was thronged. There was but one way of access, through a. It would be easy to ascend the stairs at F, and go round on the gallery till they came over Jesus, and remove a part of the balustrade, or breastwork, and let him down directly before him.

Be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. It may seem remarkable that, since the man came only to be *healed*, Jesus should have at first declared his sins forgiven. For this the following reasons may be suggested:

1st. The man might have brought on this affection of the palsy by a long course of vicious indulgence. Conscious of guilt, he may have feared that he was so great a sinner that Christ would

not regard him. He therefore assured him that his offences were pardoned, and that he might lay aside his fears.

2nd. Jesus might be willing to show his power to forgive sins. Had he stated it without any miracle, the Jews would not have believed it, and even his disciples might have been staggered. In proof of it, he worked a miracle; and no one, therefore, could doubt that he had the power. The miracle was wrought in *express attestation* of the assertion that he had the power to forgive sins. As God would not work a miracle to confirm a falsehood, or to deceive men, the miracle was a solemn confirmation, on the part of God, that Jesus had the power to forgive sins.

3rd. The Jews regarded disease as the effect of sin, Joh 9:2; Jas 5:14,15. There is a *real* connexion between sin and suffering, as in the case of gluttony, intemperate drinking, lewdness, debauchery. Jesus might be willing to direct the minds of the spectators to this fact; and by pointing them to a manifest instance of the effect of sin, to lead them to hate and forsake it. Diseases are sometimes the direct judgment of God for sin, 1Co 5:3-5 11:30; 2Sa 24:10-14.

This truth, also, Christ might have been desirous of impressing on the people.

{o} "Son, be of good cheer" Mr 5:34.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 9 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *This man blasphemeth*. The word *blaspheme* originally means to speak evil of any one, to injure by words, to blame unjustly. When applied to God, it means to speak of him unjustly, to ascribe to him acts and attributes which he does not possess, or to speak impiously or profanely. It also means to say or do anything by which his name or honour is insulted, or which conveys an impress on unfavourable to God. It means, also, to attempt to do or say a thing which belongs to him alone, or which he only can do. This is its meaning here. Christ was charged *with saying a thing in his own name, or attempting to do a thing which properly belonged to God*; thus assuming the *place* of God, and doing him injury, as the scribes supposed, by an invasion of his prerogatives. "None," said they, (see Mark and Luke,) "can forgive sins but God only" In this they reasoned correctly. See Is 43:25 44:22. None of the prophets had this power; and by saying that *he forgave sins*, Jesus was understood to affirm that he was Divine; and as he proved this by working a miracle *expressly* to confirm the claim, it follows that he is Divine, or equal with the Father.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 9 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Jesus knowing their thoughts*. Mark says, "Jesus perceived *in his spirit that they so reasoned*". The power of searching the hearts, and knowing the thoughts of men, belongs only to God, 1Ch 28:9 Ro 8:27; Re 2:23 Jer 17:10.

In claiming this, as Jesus did here, and often elsewhere, he gave clear proofs of his omniscience, Joh 2:24,25.

{p} "their thoughts said" Ps 139:2 Joh 2:24; Heb 4:12 Re 2:23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 9 - Verse 5

Verse 5. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 9 - Verse 6

Verse 6. No Barnes text on this verse.
{y} "forgive sins"
Mic 7:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 9 - Verse 7

Verse 7. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 9 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *They glorified God*. **See Barnes "Mt 5:16"**.

To *glorify* God, here, means to *praise* him, or to acknowledge his power. The expression, *which had given such power to men*, was a part of *their* praise. It expresses no sentiment of the evangelist about the nature of Christ, but is a record of their feelings and their praise.

{r} "glorified" Ac 4:21 Ga 1:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 9 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Sitting at the receipt of custom*. That is, at the place where *custom*, or *tribute*, was received; or, in other words, he was a *publican*, or tax-gatherer. **See Barnes "Mt 5:47"**.

This man was Matthew, the writer of this gospel. The same account is found in Mr 2:14 Lu 5:27,28.

Both those evangelists call him *Levi*. That it was the same man is known by the circumstances in which he was called being the same in all the evangelists, and by all concurring in the statement that our Saviour was present at a feast soon after he called him, and by the fact that Levi is not mentioned in the catalogue of the apostles. The Jews were in the habit of giving several names to the same person. Thus Peter was also called Simon and Cephas. It is worthy of remark, that Luke has mentioned a circumstance favourable to Matthew, which Matthew himself has omitted. Luke says, "*he left all*." Had Matthew said this, it would have been a commendation of himself, utterly unlike the evangelists. No men were ever farther from praising themselves than they were.

{s} "And as Jesus passed" Mr 2:14 Lu 5:27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 9 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house*. This feast was given to him by *Levi*, or *Matthew*, Lu 5:29. This is another circumstance favourable to Matthew, but omitted by him, and recorded by Luke; showing, also, that the apostles were averse to praising themselves. To receive Christ hospitably and kindly was a commendable act, and it strongly evinces Matthew's freedom from ostentation that he has supposed the fact. It thus illustrates the command of the Saviour, as recorded by himself, Mt 6:1-4.

At meat. At the table, at supper.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 9 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Why eateth and drinketh*, etc. To eat and drink with others denotes intimacy and familiarity. The Pharisees, by asking this question, accused him of seeking the society of such men, and of being the companion of the wicked. The inference which *they* would draw was, that he could not be himself righteous, since he delighted in the company of abandoned men.

{t} "and sinners" Mt 11:9 Lu 15:2; Heb 5:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 9 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *They that be whole*, etc. Jesus, in reply, said that the whole needed not a physician. Sick persons only needed his aid. A physician would not commonly be found with those that were in health. His proper place was among the sick. So, says he, "If you Pharisees are such as you think yourselves, already pure and holy, you do not need my aid. It would be of no use to you, and you would not thank me for it. With those persons who fed that they are sinners I may be useful; and there is my proper place." Or, the expression may mean, "I came on purpose to save sinners. My business is with them. There are none righteous; and as a physician is in his proper place with the sick, so am I with guilty and miserable sinners."

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 9 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *But go ye and learn*, etc. To reprove them, and to vindicate his own conduct, he appealed to a passage of Scripture with which they ought to have been acquainted: "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice," Ho 6:6. This is not a declaration on the part of God that he was opposed to *sacrifices* or *offerings for sin*; for he had appointed and commanded many, and had therefore expressed his approbation of them. It is a Hebrew mode of speaking, and means, *I prefer mercy to sacrifice*; or, *I am more pleased with acts of benevolence and kindness than with a mere external compliance with the duties of religion. Mercy*, here, means benevolence or kindness towards others.

Sacrifices were offerings made to God on account of sin, or as an expression of thanksgiving. They were commonly bloody offerings, or animals slain, signifying that the sinner offering them deserved to die himself, and pointing to the great sacrifice or offering which Christ was to make for the sins of the world. *Sacrifices* were the principal part of the worship of the Jews, and hence came to signify *external worship* in general. This is the meaning of the word here. The sense in which our Saviour applies it is this. You Pharisees are exceedingly tenacious of the *external* duties of religion; but God has declared that he prefers benevolence or mercy to those external duties. It is proper, therefore, that I should associate with sinners for the purpose of doing them good.

I am not come to call the righteous, etc. No human beings are by nature righteous, Ps 14:3; Ro 1:18-32, 3:10-18.

The Pharisees, however, *pretended* to be righteous. Christ might have meant, by this answer, that it was not the design of his coming to call such persons to repentance, knowing that they would spurn his efforts, and that, to a great extent, they would be vain; or, more probably, he meant to affirm that his proper and only business was to call to repentance such men as he was now with. He came to seek and save such, and it was his proper business, therefore, to associate with them.

Repentance. **See Barnes "Mt 3:2"**.

{u} "I will have" Pr 21:3 Ho 6:6; Mic 6:8 Mt 12:7

{v} "to repentence" Lu 24:47 Ac 5:31; 2Pe 3:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 9 - Verse 14

Verses 14,15. *Then came to him the disciples of John*, etc. See also Mr 2:18-22 Lu 5:33-39. That is, of John the Baptist. It is probable that they had understood that John was the forerunner of the Messiah; and if such was the case, they could not account for the fact that there was such a difference between them and the disciples of Jesus. The Pharisees fasted often, regularly twice a week, besides the great national days of fasting, Lu 18:12. **See Barnes "Mt 6:16-18"**.

This was the established custom of the land, and John did not feel himself authorized to make so great a change as to dispense with it. They were desirous of knowing, therefore, why Jesus had done it.

Besides, it is probable that this question was put to him when John was in prison; and his disciples, involved in deep grief on account of it, observed days of fasting. Fasting was the natural expression of sorrow, and they wondered that the followers of Jesus did not join with them in lamenting the captivity of him who was the forerunner and baptizer of their Lord.

Christ, in reply to them, used three illustrations, all of them going to establish the same thing, that *we should observe a fitness and propriety in things*. The first is taken from a marriage. The children of the bride-chamber—that is, the bridemen, or *men who had the special care of the bridal chamber*, and who were therefore his special friends—do not think of fasting while he is with them. With them it is a time of festivity and rejoicing; and mourning would not be appropriate. When he is removed, or taken away, *then* their festivity will be ended, and then will be the proper time of sorrow. So, says he, John, your friend and teacher, is in captivity. With you it is a time of deep grief, and it is *fit* that you should *fast*. I am *with* my disciples. It is, with them, a time of joy. It is not fit that they should use the tokens of grief, and fast now. When *I* am taken away, it will then

be proper that they should fast. For an account of the ceremonies of an eastern marriage, **See Barnes "Mt 25:1-13".**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 9 - Verse 15

Verse 15. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 9:14"**

{w} "bridegroom is with" Mt 25:1,10; Joh 3:29 Re 21:2
{x} "then shall they fast Isa 22:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 9 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *No man putteth a piece of new cloth*, etc. A second illustration was drawn from a well know fact, showing also that there was a *propriety or fitness of things*. None of you, says he, in mending an old garment, would take a piece of entire new cloth. There would be a waste in it. An old piece, or a piece *like* the garment, would be better. The word here treated *new*, in the original means *rude*, *undressed*, or *not fulled or cleansed* by the cloth-dresser. In this state, if applied to an old garment, and if wet, it would *contract* and draw off a part of the garment to which it was attached, and thus make the rent worse than it was. So, says he, my *new* doctrines do not *match* with the old rites of the Pharisees. There is a fitness of things. Their doctrines required much fasting. In my system it would be incongruous; and if my new doctrines were to be attached to their old ones, it would only make the matter worse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 9 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Neither do men put new wine*, etc. The third illustration was taken from wine put into bottles. Bottles, in eastern nations, were made, and are still, of skins of beasts. Generally the skin was taken entire from a sheep or a goat, and, properly prepared, was filled with wine or water. They are still used, because, in crossing deserts of sand, they have no other conveyances but camels, or other beasts of burden. It would be difficult for them to carry glass bottles or kegs on them. They therefore fill two skins, and fasten them together, and lay them across the back of a camel, and thus carry wine or water to a great distance. They were of course of different sizes, as the skins of kids, goats, or oxen might be used. Bruce describes particularly a bottle which he saw in Arabia, made in this manner, of an ox-skin, which would hold sixty gallons, and two of which were a load for a camel. By long usage, however, they of course became tender, and would be easily ruptured. New wine put into them would ferment, and swell and burst them open. New skins or bottles would *yield* to the fermenting wine, and be strong enough to hold it from bursting. So, says Christ, there is a *fitness* or propriety of things. It is not *fit* that my doctrine should be attached to, or connected with,

the old and corrupt doctrines of the Pharisees. New things should be put together, and made to *match*.

This account of eastern bottles may illustrate the following passages in the Bible. The Gibeonites took "wine bottles, old, and rent, and bound up," Jos 9:4. "My belly is ready to burst, like new bottles," Job 32:19. "I am become like a bottle in the smoke," Ps 119:83; i.e., like a bottle of skin hung up in a tent filled with smoke. The preceding cut is copied from a fragment of the Antiquities of Herculaneum, and represents a young woman pouring wine from a bottle into a cup.

{y} "else" Job 32:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 9 - Verse 18

Verses 18-26. The account contained in these verses is also recorded, with some additional circumstances, in Mr 5:22-43 Lu 8:41-56.

Verse 18. There came a certain ruler. Mark and Luke say that his name was Jairus, and that he was a *ruler of the synagogue*; that is, one of the elders to whom was committed the care of the synagogue. **See Barnes "Mt 4:23"**.

And worshipped him. That is, fell down before him, or expressed his respect for him by a token of profound regard. **See Barnes "Mt 2:2"**.

My daughter is even now dead. Luke says that this was his only daughter, and that she was twelve years of age. Mark and Luke say that she was at the point of death, and that information of her actual death was brought to him by one who was sent by the ruler of the synagogue, while Jesus was going. Matthew combined the two facts, and stated the representation which was made to Jesus, without stopping particularly to exhibit the manner in which it was done. In a summary way he says that the ruler communicated the information. Luke and Mark, dwelling more particularly on the circumstances, state at length the way in which it was done; that is, by himself stating, in a hurry, that she was *about to die*, or *dying*, and then in a few moments sending word that *she was dead*. The Greek word, rendered *is even now dead*, does not of necessity mean, as our translation would express, that she had actually expired, but only that she was *dying* or about to die. Compare Ge 48:21. It is likely that a father, in these circumstances, would use a word as nearly expressing actual death as would be consistent with the fact that she was alive. The passage may be expressed thus: "My daughter was so sick that she must be, by this time, dead."

Come and lay thy hand upon her. It was customary for the Jewish prophets, in conferring favours, to lay their hand on the person benefited. Jesus had probably done so also, and the ruler had probably witnessed the fact.

{z} "While he spake" Mr 5:22 Lu 8:41 {a} "shall live" Joh 9:22,25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 9 - Verse 19

Verse 19. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes on "Mt 9:18"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 9 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *And behold a woman*, etc. This disease was by the Jews reckoned unclean, (Le 15:25) and she was unwilling to make personal application to Jesus, or even to touch his person. The disease was regarded as incurable. She had expended all her property, and grew worse, Mr 5:26.

Touched the hem of his garment. This garment was probably the square garment which was thrown over the shoulders. **See Barnes "Mt 5:40"**.

This was surrounded by a border, or fringe; and this fringe, or the loose threads hanging down, is what is meant by the hem. The Jews were commanded to wear this ill order to distinguish them from other nations. See Nu 15:38,39; De 22:12.

Mark says that the woman, fearing and trembling, came and told him all the truth. Perhaps she feared that, from the impure nature of her disease, he would be offended that she touched him.

Be of good comfort. Jesus silenced her fears, commended her faith, and sent her away in peace. He used an endearing appellation, calling her *daughter*, a word of tenderness and affection, and dismissed her who had been twelve long and tedious years labouring under a weakening and offensive disease, now in an instant made whole. Her faith, her strong confidence in Jesus, had been the means of her restoration. It was the *power* of Jesus that cured her; but that power would not have been exerted but in connexion with faith. So in the salvation of a sinner. No one is saved who does not believe; but faith is the *instrument*, and not the power, that saves.

{b} "And, behold" Mr 5:25 Lu 8:43

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 9 - Verse 21

Verse 21. No Barnes text on this verse.

{c} "his garment"

Ac 19:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 9 - Verse 22

Verse 22. Mark says that *the woman, fearing and trembling*, came and told him all the truth. Perhaps she feared that, from the impure nature of her disease, he would be offended that she touched him.

Be of good comfort. Jesus silenced her fears, commended her faith, and sent her away in peace. He used an endearing appellation, calling her *daughter*, a word of tenderness and affection, and dismissed her who had been twelve long and tedious years labouring under a weakening and offensive disease, now in an instant made whole. Her faith, her strong confidence in Jesus had been the means of her restoration. It was the *power* of Jesus that cured her; but that power would not have been exerted but in connexion with faith. So in the salvation of a sinner. No one is saved who does not believe; but faith is the *instrument*, and not the *power* that saves.

{d} "thy faith" Lu 7:50 17:19, 18:42 Ac 14:9

{e} "that hour" Joh 4:53

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 9 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *And when Jesus came in*, etc. Jesus admitted only three of his disciples, Peter, James, and John the brother of James, and the father and mother of the damsel, to go in with him where the corpse lay, Mr 5:37-40. It was important that there should be *witnesses* of the miracle, and he chose a sufficient number. *Five* witnesses were enough to establish the fact. The witnesses were impartial. The fact that she was dead was established beyond a doubt. Of this the mourners, the parents, the messengers, the people were satisfied. If she was presented to the people alive, the proof of the miracle was complete. The presence of more than the *five* witnesses would have made the scene tumultuous, and have been less satisfactory evidence of the fact of the restoration of the child. Five sober witnesses are always better than the confused voices of a rabble. These were the same disciples that were with him in the mount of transfiguration and garden of Gethsemane, Mr 9:2 14:33; 2Pe 1:17,18.

He saw the minstrels and the people making a noise. *Minstrels* are persons who play on instruments of music. The people of the East used to bewail the dead by cutting the flesh, tearing the hair, and crying bitterly. See Jer 9:17 16:6,7 Eze 24:17.

The expressions of grief at the death of a friend, in eastern countries, are extreme. As soon as a person dies, all the females in the family set up a loud and doleful cry. They continue it as long as they can without taking breath, and the shriek of wailing dies away in a low sob. Nor do the relatives satisfy themselves with these expressions of violent grief: they hire persons of both sexes, whose employment it is to mourn for the dead in the like frantic manner. See Am 5:16 Jer 9:20. They sing the virtues of the deceased, recount his acts, dwell on his beauty, strength, or learning; on the comforts of his family and home, and in doleful strains ask him why he left his family and friends. To all this they add soft and melancholy music. They employ *minstrels* to aid their grief, and increase the expression of their sorrow. This violent grief continues, commonly, eight days. In the case of a king, or other very distinguished personage, it is prolonged through an entire month. This grief does not cease at the house; it is exhibited in the procession to the grave; and the air is rent with the wailings of real and of hired mourners.

The Jews were forbidden to tear their hair and cut their flesh. See Le 19:28 De 14:1. They showed *their* grief by howling, by music, by concealing the chin with their garment, by rending the outer garment, by refusing to wash or anoint themselves, or to converse with people, by scattering ashes or dust in the air, or by lying down in them, Job 1:20 2:12; 2Sa 1:2-4 14:2, 15:30 Mr 14:63.

The expressions of grief, therefore, mentioned on this occasion, though excessive and foolish, were yet strictly in accordance with eastern customs.

{f} "And when" Mr 5:36 Lu 8:51 {g} "the minstrels" 2Ch 35:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 9 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *The maid is not dead, but sleepeth*. It cannot be supposed that our Lord means *literally* to say that the child was not dead. Every possible evidence of her death had been given, and he acted on that himself, and conveyed to the people the idea that he raised her *from the dead*. He meant to speak in opposition to their opinions. It is not unlikely that Jarius and the people favoured the opinions of the Sadducees; and that *they* understood by her being dead that she had ceased to be, and that she would never be raised up again. In opposition to this he used the expression *she sleepeth*; affirming mildly both that the *body* was dead, and *implying* that *her spirit* still lived, and that she would be raised up again. A similar mode of speaking is seen in Joh 11:11: "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." The sacred writers, who hold the doctrine of the resurrection, often spoke of the dead as sleeping, 2Pe 3:4 Ac 7:60; 1Co 15:6,18

1Th 4:13-15. The meaning of this passage then is—the maid has not ceased to exist; but though her body is dead, yet her spirit lives, and she sleeps in the hope of the resurrection.

Laughed him to scorn. Derided him, ridiculed him.

{h} "is not dead" Ac 20:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 9 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *He went in*. With the father and mother, and three disciples, Mr 5:37-40.

The maid arose. She returned to life. There could be no deception here. Parents could not be imposed on in such a case. Nor could such a multitude be deceived. The power of Jesus was undoubtedly shown to be sufficient to raise the dead. If he can restore the body to life, he can also the soul. A word from him can restore the soul to immortal life, so that it shall never see death.

{i} "were put forth" 2Ki 4:33

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 9 - Verse 26

Verse 26. No Barnes text on this verse.

{1} "fame" or, "his fame"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 9 - Verse 27

Ver 27. *Son of David*. By the Son of David the Jews meant the Messiah. He was *the Son* or descendant of David by way of eminence, Is 9:7 Lu 1:32; Mt 1:1 Re 22:16.

{k} "Son of David" Mt 15:22 20:30,31

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 9 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *And when he was come into the house*. He went into a house probably to avoid the tumult and publicity of the street. He sought privacy, and was unwilling to make any commotion.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 9 - Verse 29

Verse 29. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 9 - Verse 30

Verse 30. No Barnes text on this verse.
{l} "know it" Isa 42:2 52:13; Mt 12:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 9 - Verse 31

Verse 31. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 9 - Verse 32

Verse 32. No Barnes text on this verse.
{m} "dumb man"
Mt 12:22 Lu 11:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 9 - Verse 33

Verse 33. No Barnes text on this verse.
{m} "dumb spake"
Isa 35:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 9 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *Prince of the devils*. That is, Beel-Zebub. **See Barnes "Mt 12:24"**.
{o} "He casteth" Mt 12:24 Mr 3:22; Lu 11:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 9 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *The Gospel of the kingdom*. That is, *the good news of the reign of God*, or the good news of the advent and reign of the Messiah, Mt 3:2.

{p} "And Jesus" Mt 4:23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 9 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *Because they fainted*. The word used here refers to the weariness and fatigue which results from labour and being burdened. He saw the people *burdened* with the rites of religion and the doctrines of the Pharisees; sinking down under their ignorance and traditions, and neglected by those who *ought* to have been enlightened teachers, *scattered* and driven out without care and attention. With great beauty, he compares them to sheep wandering without a shepherd. Judea was a land of flocks and herds. The faithful shepherd, by day and night, was with his flock, He defended it, led it to green pastures, and beside the still waters. Without his care they would stray away. They were in danger of wild beasts. They panted in the summer sun, and knew not where was the cooling shade and stream. So, said he, is it with this people. No wonder that the compassionate Redeemer Was moved with pity!

{1} "they fainted" or, "were tired and laid down" {q} "having no shepherd" Nu 27:17 1Ki 22:17; Eze 34:5 Zec 10:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 9 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *The harvest truly is plenteous*, etc. Another beautiful image. A waving field of golden grain invites many reapers, and demands haste. By the harvest here, he meant that the multitude of people that flocked to his ministry was great. The people expected the Messiah. They were prepared to receive the gospel. But the labourers were few. Few were engaged in instructing the multitude. He directed them, therefore, to pray to the Lord of the harvest to send forth reapers. *God* is the Proprietor of the great harvest of the world, and he only can send men to gather it in.

{r} "harvest" Lu 10:2 Joh 4:35

REMARKS ON MATTHEW CHAPTER NINE

1. We are presented with an instance of proper perseverance in coming to Christ, Mt 9:1,2. Nothing was suffered to prevent the purpose of presenting the helpless paralytic to the Saviour. So the poor helpless sinner should come. No obstacle should prevent him. He should lay himself at his feet, and feel that Jesus holds over him the power of life and death, and that no other being can save.

2. Jesus has the power to forgive sins, Mt 9:6. He claimed it, and worked a miracle to prove it. If he had it then, he has it still. To him, then, the lost sinner may come, with the assurance that as he freely then exerted that power, so he is ever the same, and will do it now.

3. Jesus Christ is Divine. Nothing could prove it more dearly than the power to pardon rebels. God only can pronounce what shall be done with transgressors of his law, Is 43:25. He that claims this right must be either an impostor or God. But no impostor ever yet worked a miracle. Jesus was therefore Divine. He can save to the uttermost all that come to God through him.

4. We see here the proper rule to be observed in mingling with the wicked, Mt 9:10-13. It should not be of choice, or for pleasure. We should not enter into their follies or vices. We should not seek enjoyment in their society. We should mingle with them simply to transact necessary business, and to do them good, and no further, Ps 1:1.

5. In the case of the ruler and the woman that was diseased, we have a strong instance of the nature of faith. They came not doubting his power—fully assured that he was able to heal. So all genuine believers come to him. They doubt not his power or willingness to save them. Poor, and lost, and ruined by sin, and in danger of eternal death, they come. His heart is open. He puts forth his power, and the soul is healed, and the sin and danger gone.

6. The young must die, and may die in early life, Mt 9:18. Very short graves are in every burying-ground. Thousands and millions, not more than twelve years of age, have died. Thousands and millions, not more than twelve years of age, are yet to die. Many of these may be taken from Sunday-schools. Their class, their teacher, their parents, sisters, and brothers, must be left, and the child be carried to the grave. Many children of that age, that have been in Sunday-schools, have died happy. They loved the Saviour, and they were ready to go. Jesus was near to them when they died, and they are now in heaven. Of every child we may ask, Are you ready also to go when God shah call you? Do you love the Lord Jesus so as to be willing to leave all your friends here, and go to him?

7. Jesus can raise up the dead, and he will raise up all that love him, Mt 9:25. Many little children will be raised up to meet him in the last great day. He shall come in the clouds. The angel shall sound a trumpet, and all the dead shall hear. All shall be raised up and go to meet him. All that loved him here will go to heaven. All that were wicked, and did not love him here, will go to everlasting suffering.

8. We see the duty of praying for the conversion of the world, Mt 9:37,38. The harvest is as plenteous as it was in the time of Christ. More than six hundred millions are still without the gospel; and there are not yet many labourers to go into the harvest. The world is full of wickedness, and God only can qualify those who shall go and preach the gospel to the dark nations of the earth. Without ceasing, we ought to entreat of God to pity the nations, and to send faithful men, who shall tell them of a dying Saviour.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 9 - Verse 38

Verse 38. No Barnes text on this verse.
{s} "send forth laborers"
Ps 48:11

For a Summary of Matthew Chapter Nine, **See Barnes "Mt 9:37".**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 1

MATTHEW CHAPTER 10

Verse 1. *And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples*, etc. This account of sending the apostles forth is recorded also in Mr 6:7-11 Lu 9:1-6. Mark says that he sent them out two and two. This was a kind arrangement, that each one might have a companion; and that they might visit more places, and accomplish more labour, than if they were all together. These twelve were the original number of apostles. The word *apostle* means one that is *sent*, and was given to them because they were sent forth to preach the gospel. They were ambassadors of Christ. To this number Matthias was afterwards added, to supply the place of Judas, Ac 1:26. And Paul was specially called to be an apostle to the Gentiles, Ro 1:1 1Co 15:8,9 Ga 1:1.

So that there were in all fourteen apostles.

In selecting *twelve* at first, it is probable that he was somewhat guided by the number of the tribes of Israel. Twelve was, with them, a well-known number, and it was natural that he should select one for every tribe. Their office was clearly made known. They were to heal the sick, raise the dead, preach the gospel, etc. They were to be with him, receive his instructions, learn the nature of his religion, be witnesses of his resurrection, and bear his gospel then around the globe. The number twelve was the best for these purposes that could be selected. It was sufficiently *large* to answer the purpose of testimony; and it was so *small* as not to be disorderly, or easily divided into parties or factions. They were not *learned* men, and could not be supposed to spread their religion by art or talents. They were not men of wealth, and could not *bribe* men to follow them. They were not men of rank and office, and could not compel men to believe. They were just such men as are always found the best witnesses in courts of justice—plain men, of good sense, of fair character, of great honesty, and with favourable opportunities of ascertaining the facts to which they bore witness. Such men everybody believes, and especially when they are willing to lay down their lives to prove their sincerity.

It was important that ho should choose them *early* in his ministry, that they might be fully acquainted with him; might treasure up his instructions, and observe his manner of life and his person, that by having been long acquainted with him they might be able to testify to his identity, and be competent witnesses of his resurrection. No witnesses were ever so well qualified to give testimony as they; and none ever gave so much evidence of their sincerity as they did. See Ac 1:21,22.

{1} "against" or, "over"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 2

Verse 2. The account which follows is more fully given in Mr 3:13-18 Lu 6:12-19. Both of those evangelists have recorded the circumstances of their appointment. They agree in saying it

was done on a mountain; and, according to Luke, it was done *before* the sermon on the mount was delivered, perhaps on the same mountain, near Capernaum. Luke adds, that the night previous had been spent in prayer to God. **See Barnes "Lu 6:12".**

Simon, who is called Peter. Peter means a rock. He was also called Cephas, Joh 1:42 1Co 1:12, 3:22 15:5; Ga 2:9.

This was a Syro-Chaldaic word, signifying the same as Peter. This name was given probably in reference to the *resoluteness* and *firmness* which he was to exhibit in preaching the gospel. *Before* the Saviour's death he was rash, impetuous, and unstable. Afterwards, as all history affirms, he was firm, zealous, steadfast, and immovable. He was crucified at Rome with his head downwards, thinking it too great an honour to die as his Master did. **See Barnes "Joh 21:18".**

James the son of Zebadee, and John his brother. This James was slain by Herod in a persecution, .

The other James, the son of Alpheus, was stationed at Jerusalem, and was the author of the epistle that bears his name. See Ga 1:19 2:9; Ac 15:13.

A James is mentioned, (Ga 1:19) as *the Lord's brother*. It has not been easy to ascertain why he was thus called. He is here called the son of *Alpheus*, that is, of Cleophas, Joh 19:25. Alpheus and Cleophas were but different ways of writing and pronouncing the same name. This Mary, called the mother of James and Joses, is called the wife of Cleophas, Joh 19:25.

{u} "names" Lu 6:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddeus*. These two words have the same signification in Hebrew. Luke calls him *Judas*, by a slight change from the name *Thaddaeus*. Such changes are common in all writings.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Simon the Canaanite*. Luke calls him Simon *Zelotes*, the zealous. It is probable that he was one of a small sect of the Jews called *Zealots*, on account of peculiar zeal in religion. His native place was probably Cana. Afterwards he might with propriety be called by either title.

Judas Iscariot. It is probable this name was given to him to designate his native place. *Carioth* was a small town in the tribe of Judah.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Into the way of the Gentiles*. That is, among the Gentiles, or nowhere but among the Jews. The full time for preaching the gospel to the Gentiles was not come. It was proper that it

should be *first* preached to the Jews, the ancient covenant people of God, and the people among whom the Messiah was born. He afterwards gave them a charge to go into all the world, Mt 28:19.

And into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not, The Samaritans occupied the country formerly belonging to the tribe of Ephraim and the half-tribe of Manasseh. This region was situated between Jerusalem and Galilee; so that in passing from the one to the other, it was a direct course to pass through Samaria. The capital of the country was Samaria, formerly a large and splendid city; It was situated about fifteen miles to the north-west of the city of Shechem or Sychar, **See Barnes** "Joh 4:6, and about forty miles to the north of Jerusalem. For a description of this city, **See Barnes "Is 28:1"**.

Sychar or Shechem was also a city in the limits of Samaria.

This people was formerly composed of a few of the ten tribes, and a mixture of foreigners. When the ten tribes were carried away into captivity to Babylon, the king of Assyria sent people from Cuthah, Ava, Hamath, and Sepharvaim, to inhabit their country, 2Ki 17:24 Ezr 4:2-11. These people at first worshipped the idols of their own nations. But being troubled with lions, which had increased greatly while the country remained uninhabited, they supposed it was because they had not honoured the *God of the country*. A Jewish priest was therefore sent to them from Babylon, to instruct them in the Jewish religion. They were instructed partially from the books of Moses; but still retained many of their old rites and idolatrous customs, and embraced a religion made up of Judaism and idolatry, 2Ki 17:26-28.

The grounds of difference between the two nations were the following :—

(1.) The Jews, after their return from Babylon, set about rebuilding their temple. The Samaritans offered to aid them. The Jews, however, perceiving that it was not from a love of true religion, but that they might obtain a part of the favors granted to the Jews by Cyrus, rejected their offer. The consequence was, that a state of long and bitter animosity arose between them and the Jews.

(2.) While Nehemiah was engaged in building the walls of Jerusalem, the Samaritans used every art to thwart him in his undertaking, Ne 6:1-14.

(3.) The Samaritans at length obtained leave of the Persian monarch to build a temple for themselves. This was erected on Mount *Gerizim*, and they strenuously contended that that was the place designated by Moses as the place where the nation should worship. Sanballat, the leader of the Samaritans, constituted his son-in-law, Manasses, high priest. The religion of the Samaritans thus became perpetuated, and an irreconcilable hatred arose between them and the Jews. **See Barnes "Joh 4:20"**.

(4.) Afterwards Samaria became a place of resort for all the outlaws of Judea. They received willingly all the Jewish criminals, and refugees from justice. The violators of the Jewish laws, and those who had been excommunicated, betook themselves for safety to Samaria, and greatly increased their numbers and the hatred which subsisted between the two nations.

(5.) The Samaritans received only the five books of Moses, and rejected the writings of the prophets, and all the Jewish traditions. From these causes arose an irreconcilable difference between them, so that the Jews regarded them as the worst of the human race, (Joh 8:48) and had no dealings with them, Joh 4:9.

Our Saviour, however, preached the gospel to them afterwards, (Joh 4:6-26) and the apostles imitated his example, Ac 8:25. The gospel was, however, first preached to the Jews.

{v} "Samaritans" 2Ki 17:24 Joh 4:5,9,20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *But go rather to the lost sheep*, etc. That is, to the Jews. He regarded them as wandering and lost, like sheep straying without a shepherd. They had been the chosen people of God; they had long looked for the Messiah; and it was proper that the gospel should be first offered to them.

{w} "go rather" Ac 13:46 {x} "lost sheep" Ps 119:176 Is 53:6; Jer 1:6,17; Eze 34:5,6,8 1Pe 2:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *The kingdom of heaven is at hand*. Or, more literally, the *reign* of heaven, or of God, draws near. **See Barnes "Mt 3:2"**.

{y} "saying" Mt 3:2 4:17; Lu 9:2 10:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Freely ye have received, freely give*. That is they were not to *sell* their favours of healing, preaching, etc. They were not to make a money-making business of it, to bargain specially to heal for so much, and to cast out devils for so much. This, however, neither then nor afterwards precluded them from receiving a competent support. See Lu 10:7 1Co 9:8-14; 1Ti 5:18.

{z} "cast out devils" Ac 8:18,20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 9

Verses 9-15. See also Mr 6:8-11 Lu 9:3-5. In both these places the *substance* of this account is given, though not so particularly as in Matthew. The general subject is, the instructions given to the apostles.

Verse 9. *Nor brass*. This prohibition of gold, silver, and brass, was designed to prevent their preparing *money* for their journey. Pieces of money of *small value* were made of brass.

In your purses. Literally, in your *girdles*. **See Barnes "Mt 5:38-41"**.

A girdle or sash was an indispensable part of the dress. This girdle was made hollow, and answered the purpose of a purse. It was convenient, easily borne, and safe.

{1} "Provide" or, "get" {a} "neither gold" Lu 22:35 1Co 9:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Neither scrip*. That is, *knapsack*. It was made of skin or coarse cloth, to carry provisions in. It was commonly hung around the neck. As they were to be provided for on their way, it was unnecessary to provide a store of provisions.

Neither two coats. **See Barnes "Mt 5:40"**.

Neither shoes. The original is the word commonly rendered *sandals*. **See Barnes "Mt 3:11"**.

Mark says, in recording this discourse, "*but be shod with sandals*." Between this and Matthew there is an apparent contradiction; but there is really no difference. According to Matthew, Jesus does not forbid their *wearing* the sandals, which they probably had on, but only forbids their *supplying themselves with more*, or with *superfluous* ones. Instead of making provision for their feet when their present shoes were worn out, they were to trust to Providence to be supplied, and go as they were. And the meaning of the two evangelists may be thus expressed: "Do not procure anything more for your journey than you have on. Go as you are, shod with sandals, without making any preparation."

Nor yet staves. In the margin, in all the ancient versions, and in the common Greek text, it is in the singular number, *nor yet A STAFF*. But Mark says that they might have a *staff*: "Jesus commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, *save a staff only*. To many this would appear to be a contradiction. Yet the spirit of the instruction, the main thing that the writer aims at, is the same. That was, that they were to go just as they were, to trust to Providence, and not to spend any time in making preparation for their journey. Some of them, probably, when he addressed them had staves, and some had not. To those who had he did not say that they should throw them away, as the instructions he was giving might seem to require, but suffered them to take them, (Mark.) To those who had not, he said they should not spend time in procuring them, (Matthew,) but all go just as they were.

The workman is worthy of his meat. This implies that they were to expect proper supply for their wants from those who were benefited. They were not to make *bargain and sale* of the power of working miracles, but they were to expect competent support from preaching the gospel; and that not merely as a gift, but because they were worthy of it, and had a right to it.

{2} "staves" "staff" {b} "for the workman" Lu 10:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Who in it is worthy*. That is, who fix it sustains a fair character will be able and disposed to show you hospitality, and will treat you kindly. This shows that they were not suddenly and needlessly to throw themselves in the way of *insult* or want.

And there abide. There remain; as Luke adds, "Go not from house to house." They were to content themselves with one house; not to wander about in the manner of vagrants and mendicants; not to appear to be men of idleness, and fond of change; not to seem dissatisfied with the hospitality of the people; but to show that they had regular, important business; to show that they valued their time, were disposed to give themselves to labour, prayer, and meditation; and to be intent only on the business for which he had sent them. If ministers of the gospel are useful, it will be by not spending their time in idle chitchat, and wandering about as if they had nothing to do; but in an

honest and laborious improvement of every moment in study, prayer, preaching, and religious visiting their people.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *And when ye come into an house, salute it*. The word *house*, here, evidently means family, as it does in the following verse. See also Mt 12:25 Joh 4:53, "And himself believed and *his whole house*." The apostles were directed to salute the family, to show them the customary tokens of respect, and to treat them with civility. Religion never requires or permits its friends to outrage the common rules of social intercourse. It demands of them to exhibit to all the customary and proper tokens of respect, according to their age and station, 1Pe 2:12-25 3:8-11; Php 4:8.

For the mode of salutation, **See Barnes** "Lu 10:4, **See Barnes "Lu 10:5"**.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *If the house be worthy*. That is, if the *family* be worthy, or be willing to receive you as my disciples.

Let your peace come upon it. That is, let the *peace* or happiness which you seek, or for which you pray, in saluting it, Lu 10:5 come upon it; or seek their peace and happiness by prayer, instruction, by remaining with them, and imparting to them the blessings of the gospel.

But if it be not worthy, etc. If the family be unwilling to receive you; if they show themselves unfriendly to you and your message, *let your peace return to you*. This is a Hebrew mode of saying that your peace should not come upon it, Ps 35:13. It is a mode of speaking derived from bestowing a gift. If people were willing to receive it, they derived the benefit from it; if not, then of course the present came back, or remained in the hand of the giver. So Christ *figuratively* speaks of the peace which their labour would confer. If received kindly and hospitably by the people, they would confer on them most valuable blessings. If rejected and persecuted, the blessings which they sought for others would come upon themselves. *They* would reap the benefit of being cast out and persecuted for their Master's sake, Mt 5:10.

{c} "return to you" Ps 35:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Shake off the dust of your feet*. The Jews taught uniformly that the dust of the Gentiles was impure, and was to be shaken off. To shake off the dust from the feet, therefore, was a significant act, denoting that they regarded them as impure, profane, and heathenish, and unworthy of their instruction, and that they declined all further connexion with them. It is recorded that this was actually done by some of the apostles. See Ac 13:51 18:6.

{d} "shake off the dust" Ne 5:13 Ac 13:51, 18:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *It shall be more tolerable for Sodom*, etc. The cities here mentioned, together with Admah and Zeboim, were destroyed by fire and brimstone, or by a volcanic eruption, on account of their great wickedness. They occupied the place afterwards covered by the Dead Sea, bounding Palestine on the south-east, Ge 19:24,25. Christ said that *their* punishment will be more *tolerable*—that is, more easily borne—than that of the people who reject his gospel, The reason is, that they were not favoured with so much light and instruction. See Mt 11:23,24; Lu 12:47,48.

Sodom and Gomorrah are often referred to as signal instances of Divine vengeance, and as sure proofs that the wicked shall not go unpunished. 2Pe 2:6 Jude 1:7

{e} "shall be more tolerable" Mt 11:22,24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *As sheep in the midst of wolves*. That is, I send you, inoffensive and harmless, into a cold, unfriendly, and cruel world. Your innocence will not be a protection.

Be wise as serpents, etc. Serpents have always been an emblem of wisdom and cunning, Ge 3:1. The Egyptians used the serpent in their hieroglyphics as a symbol of wisdom. Probably the thing in which Christ directed his followers here to imitate the serpent was in its caution in avoiding danger. No animal equals them in the rapidity and skill which they evince in escaping danger. So said Christ to his disciples, You need caution and wisdom, in the midst of a world that will seek your lives. He directs them also to be harmless, not to provoke danger, not to do injury, and thus make their fellow-men justly enraged against them. Doves are, and always have been, a striking emblem of innocence. Most men would foolishly destroy a serpent, be it ever so harmless; yet few are so hard-hearted as to kill a dove.

{f} "wise as serpents" Ro 16:19 Eph 5:15 {1} "harmless" or, "simple" {g} "as doves" Php 2:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *But beware of men*. That is, be on your guard against men who are like wolves, Mt 10:16. Do not run unnecessarily into danger. Use suitable prudence and caution, and do not unnecessarily endanger your lives.

Councils. The word here used commonly signifies the great council of the nation, the Sanhedrim. **See Barnes "Mt 5:22"**.

Here it seems to refer to any judicial tribunal, of which there were some in every village.

They will scourge you in their synagogues. Scourging, or *whipping*, is often mentioned in the New Testament as a part of punishment. The law of Moses directed that the number of stripes should not exceed forty, but might be any number less, at the discretion of the judge, De 25:2,3. The person who was sentenced to scourging was formerly laid upon the ground, and the blows inflicted on his back in the presence of the judge. Afterwards, the criminal was tied to a low post,

Scourging is still practised in the East; but the blows are commonly inflicted on the soles of the feet. It is called the *bastinddo*.

The instrument formerly used was a *rod*. Afterwards they employed thongs or lashes attached to the rod. To make the blows severe and more painful, they sometimes fastened sharp points of iron, or pieces of lead, in the thongs. These were called scorpions, 1Ki 12:11. The law was express that the number of stripes should not exceed forty. The Jews, to secure the greater accuracy in counting, used a scourge with three lashes, which inflicted three stripes at once. With this the criminal was struck thirteen times, making the number of blows thirty-nine. Paul was five times scourged in this way. See 2Co 11:24.

The Romans did not feel themselves bound by the law of the Jews in regard to the *number* of stripes, but inflicted them at pleasure. Thus our Saviour was scourged till he was so weak as not to be able to bear his cross. This was often done in the *synagogue*. See Mt 23:34 Ac 22:19, 26:11.

{h} "beware of men" Php 3:2 {i} "they will deliver you up" Mt 24:9 Mr 13:9 {k} "scourge you" Ac 5:40 2Co 11:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *And ye shall be brought*, etc. This prediction was completely and abundantly fulfilled, Ac 5:26 12:1-4, 23:33 16:1,28,30.

Peter is said to have been brought before Nero, John before Domitian, Roman emperors; and others before Parthian, Scythian, and Indian kings. They were to stand there to bear a testimony against them; or, as it might be rendered, to them. That is, they were to be witnesses to them of the great facts and doctrines of the Christian religion; and if they rejected Christianity they would be witnesses against them in the day of judgment. The fulfillment of this prophecy is a signal evidence that Christ possessed a knowledge of the future, few things were more improbable when this was uttered than that the fishermen of Galilee would stand before the illustrious and mighty monarchs of the East and the West.

{l} "And ye shall" Ac 24:1-25:27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 19

Verses 19,20. *Take no thought*. That is, be not anxious, or unduly solicitous. **See Barnes "Mt 6:26".**

God would inspire them. This was a full promise that they should be inspired, and was a most seasonable consolation. Poor, and ignorant, and obscure fishermen would naturally be solicitous what they should *say* before the great men of the earth. Eastern people regarded kings as raised far above common mortals: as approaching to divinity. How consoling, then, the assurance that God would aid them, and speak within them!

{m} "But when" Mr 13:11 Lu 12:11, 21:14,15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 20

Verse 20. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 10:19"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *And the brother shall deliver up the brother*, etc. Were there no evidence that this *had* been done, it could scarcely be *credible*. The ties which bind brothers and sisters, and parents and children together are so strong, that it could scarcely be believed that division of sentiment on religious subjects would cause them to forget these tender relations. Yet history assures us that this has been done. If this be so, then how inexpressibly awful must be the malignity of the human heart by nature against religion! Nothing else but this dreadful opposition to God, and his gospel, ever *has* induced, or ever *can* induce men to violate the most tender relations, and consign the best friends to torture, racks, and flames. It adds to the horrors of this, that those who were put to death in persecution were tormented in the most awful modes that human ingenuity could devise. They were crucified; were thrown into boiling oil; were burnt at the stake; were roasted slowly over coals; were compelled to drink melted lead; were torn in pieces by beasts of prey; were covered with pitch, and burned, to give light in the gardens of Nero. Yet dreadful as this prediction was, it was fulfilled; and incredible as it seems, parents and children, and husbands and wives, were found wicked enough to deliver up each other to these cruel modes of death on account of their attachment to the gospel. Such is the opposition of the heart of man to the gospel! That hostility which will overcome the strong ties of natural affection, and which will be satisfied with nothing else to show its power, can be no slight opposition to to the gospel of God.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Ye shall be hated of all* men. That is, of *all kinds* of men. The human heart would be opposed to them, because it is opposed to Christ.

But he that endureth to the end, etc. That is, to the end of life, be it longer or shorter. He that bears all these unspeakable sufferings, and who does not shrink and apostatize, will give decisive evidence of attachment to me, and shall enter into heaven. See Re 3:21,22.

{n} "but he that" Da 12:12,13; Re 2:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *When they persecute*, etc. They were not permitted to *throw away* their lives. Where they could preserve them, without denying their Lord, they were to do it. Yet all the commands of

Christ, as well as their conduct, show that they were rather to lay down their lives than deny their Saviour. We are to preserve our lives by all proper means; but rather *die* than save ourselves by doing anything wrong.

Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, etc. That is, in fleeing from persecutors, from one city to another, you shall not have gone to every city in Judea, till the destruction of Jerusalem, and the end of the Jewish economy. **See Barnes "Mt 24:28-30".**

By *the coming of the Son of man*, that is, of *Christ*, is probably meant the destruction of Jerusalem, which happened about thirty years after this was spoken. The words axe often used in this sense. See Mt 24:30 Mr 13:26; Lu 21:27-32.

{o} "flee ye into another" Ac 8:1 {1} "Ye shall not" or "end" or "finish"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 24

Verses 24,25. *The disciple is not above his Master*, etc. That is, you must expect the same treatment which I have received. They have called me, your Master and Teacher, Beelzebub, the prince of the devils, Mt 12:24 Lu 11:15; Joh 8:48) and you must expect that they will call all of the family by the same name. *Beelzebub*, or *Beelzebul*, was a god of the Eckronites. See 2Ki 1:2. The word literally means *the god of flies*, so called because this idol was supposed to protect them from the numerous swarms of flies with which that country is supposed to have abounded. The word also signified, among the Jews, *the god of filth*, and was esteemed as the most low and offensive of all the idol gods. Hence the name was given to the leader, or prince, of all the devils, Lu 11:15 Mr 3:22. By giving the name to Christ, they poured upon him the greatest possible abuse and contempt.

{p} "The disciple is not" Lu 6:40 Joh 13:16, 15:20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 25

Verse 25. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes on "Mt 10:24"

{q} "if they have called the master" Joh 8:48 {2} "Beel-Zebub" or "Beelzebul"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Fear them not*, etc. He encouraged them by the assurance that God would protect them, and that their truth and innocence should yet be vindicated. It is probable that the declaration, "There is nothing covered," etc., was a proverb among the Jews. By it our Saviour meant, that their *innocence*, their *principles*, and their *integrity*, though then the world might not acknowledge them, in due time would be revealed; or God would vindicate them, and the universe would do them

justice. They were, then, to be willing to be unknown, despised, persecuted, for a time, with the assurance that their true characters should yet be understood, and their sufferings appreciated.

{r} "for there is nothing" Mr 4:22 Lu 12:2,3 1Co 4:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *What I tell you in darkness*, etc. That is, in *secret*, in *private*, in *confidence*. The private instructions which I give you while with me, do you proclaim publicly, on the *house top*. The house top, the flat roof, was a public conspicuous place. See 2Sa 16:22. **See Barnes "Mt 9:2"**.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *Them which kill the body*. That is, *men*, who have no power to injure the soul, the immortal part. The *body* is a small matter, in comparison with the soul. Temporal death is a slight thing, compared with eternal death, he directs them, therefore, not to be alarmed at the prospect of temporal death; but to fear *God*, who can destroy both soul and body for ever. This passage proves that the bodies of the wicked will be raised up to be punished for ever.

In hell. **See Barnes "Mt 5:22"**.

{s} "And fear not" Is 8:12,13, 51:7,12; 1Pe 3:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 29

Verses 29-31. *Are not two sparrows*, etc. He encourages them not to fear by two striking considerations: first, that God took care of sparrows, the smallest and least valuable birds; and, secondly, by the fact, that God numbered even the very hairs of the head. The argument is, if he takes care of *birds* of the least value; if he regards so small a thing as the hair of the head, and numbers it, he will certainly protect and provide for you. You need not, therefore, fear what man can do to you.

Sparrows. Birds of very small kind and value, with a black throat, and brown temples. They were used for food among the Jews; and were an *image* of sorrow, solitude, and wretchedness. Ps 102:7. "I am as a sparrow alone upon the house top."

Farthing. **See Barnes "Mt 5:26"**.

Without your Father. That is, God your Father guides and directs its fall. It falls only with his permission, and where he chooses.

{1} "farthing" "halfpenny farthing, a 10th part of the Roman penny"
Mt 18:28

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *The hairs—are all numbered*. That is, each one has exercised the care and attention of God. He has fixed the number; and though of small importance, yet he does not think it beneath him to determine how few, or how many, they shall be. He will, therefore, take care of you.

{t} "But the very hairs" Ac 27:34

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 31

Verse 31. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 32

Verses 32,33. *Whosoever therefore shall confess me*, etc. The same word, in the original, is translated *confess* and *profess*, 1Ti 6:12,13; 2Jn 1:7 Ro 10:10.

It means, to acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ, and our dependence on him for salvation, and our attachment to him, *in every proper manner*. This profession may be made, in uniting with a church; at the communion; in conversation; and in conduct. The Scriptures mean, by a profession of religion, an exhibition of it in every circumstance of the life, and before all men. It is not merely in *one* act that we must do it, but in every act. We must be ashamed neither of the person, the character, the doctrines, nor the requirements of Christ. If we are; if we deny him in these things before men, or are unwilling to express our attachment to him in every way possible, then it is *right* that he should *disown all connexion with us*, or deny us, before God. And he *will* do it.

{u} "him will I confess" Re 3:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 33

Verse 33. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes on "Mt 10:32"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 34

Verses 34-36. *Think not that I am come*, etc. This is taken from Mic 7:6. Christ did not here mean to say that the *object* of his coming was to produce discord and contention, for he was the Prince of peace, Is 9:6 11:6; Lu 2:14; but he means to say that such would be one of the *effects* of his coming. One part of a family that was opposed to *him*, would set themselves against those who believed in him. The wickedness of men, and not the religion of the gospel, is the cause of this

hostility. It is unnecessary to say that no prophecy has been more strikingly fulfilled; and it will *continue* to be fulfilled, till all unite in obeying his commandments. Then his religion will produce universal peace.

But a sword. The sword is an instrument of death, and *to send* a sword is the same as to produce hostility and war.

{v} "whosoever" 2Ti 2:12 {w} "I cam not" Lu 12:49,55

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 35

Verse 35. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 10:34"

{x} "variance against" Mic 7:5,6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 36

Verse 36. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 10:34"

{y} "And a man's foes" Ps 41:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *He that loveth father or mother*, etc. The meaning of this is clear. Christ must be loved *supremely*, or he is not loved at all. If we are not willing to give up all earthly possessions, and forsake all earthly friends; and if we do not *obey* him rather than all others, we have no true attachment to him.

Is not worthy of me. Is not fit to be regarded as a follower of me; or is not a Christian.

{z} "He that loveth" Lu 14:26

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *And he that taketh not his cross*, etc. When persons were condemned to be crucified, a part of the sentence was, that they should carry the *cross* on which they were to die to the place of execution. Thus Christ carried his, till he fainted from fatigue and exhaustion. **See Barnes "Mt 27:31".**

The cross was usually composed of two rough beams of wood, united in the form of this figure. It was an instrument of death. **See Barnes "Mt 27:31,32".**

To carry it was burdensome, was disgraceful, was trying to the feelings, was an addition to the punishment. So, *to carry the cross* is a figurative expression, denoting that we must endure whatever is burdensome, or trying, or considered as disgraceful, in following Christ. It consists simply in doing our duty, let the world think of it or speak of it as they may. It does not consist in making trouble for ourselves, or doing things merely *to be opposed*; it is doing just what is required of us in the Scriptures, let it produce whatever shame, disgrace, or pain it may. This every follower of Jesus is required to do.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *He that findeth his life*, etc. The word *life* in this passage is used evidently in two senses. The meaning may be expressed thus: He that is anxious to save his *temporal* life, or his comfort and security here, shall lose *eternal* life; or shall fail of heaven. He that is willing to risk, or lose, his comfort and *life* here, for my sake, shall find life everlasting; or shall be saved. The manner of speaking is similar to that where he said, "Let the dead bury their dead."

{a} "He that findeth" Mt 16:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 40

Verses 40-42. *He that receiveth you*, etc. In all these three illustrations Christ meant to teach substantially the same thing, that he that would entertain kindly, or treat with hospitality himself, his disciples, a prophet, or a righteous man, would show that he approved their character, and should not fail of proper reward. To receive in the name *of* a prophet, is to receive *as* a prophet; to do proper honour to his character; and to evince attachment to the cause in which he was engaged.

{b} "He that receiveth" Mt 18:5 25:40,45 Joh 12:44

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 41

Verse 41. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes on "Mt 10:40"

{c} "He that receiveth a" 1Ki 17:10 He 6:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 10 - Verse 42

Verse 42. *These little ones*. By these are clearly meant his disciples. They are called *little ones*, to denote their want of wealth, rank, learning, and whatever the world calls *great*. They were little in the estimation of the world, and in their own estimation. They were *learners*, not yet teachers; and they made no pretensions to what attracts the admiration of mankind.

A cup of cold water only. Few would refuse a cup of cold water to any man, if thirsty and weary; and yet few would give it to such an one *because he was a Christian*, or to express attachment to the Lord Jesus. In bestowing it on a man because *he was a Christian*, he would show love to the Saviour himself; in the other case, he would give it from mere sympathy, or kindness, evincing no regard for the Christian, the Christian's Master, or His cause. In one case, he would show that he loved the cause of religion; in the other, not.

REMARKS ON MATTHEW CHAPTER 10

(1.) From the narrative in this chapter, in connexion with that in Luke, we are permitted to see the Savior's habits in regard to prayer. An important event was before him; an event on which, humanly speaking, depended the whole success of his religion—the choice of those who should be his messengers to mankind. He felt its importance; and even the Son of God sought the place of prayer, and during the night watches asked the direction of his Father. His example shows that we, in great and trying circumstances, should seek particularly the direction of God.

(2.) We see the benevolence of the gospel, Mt 10:7,8. The apostles were to confer the highest favours on mankind without reward. Like air, and sun-beams, and water—gifts of God—they are without price. The poor are welcome; the rich, unaided by their wealth, are welcome also; the wide world may freely come, and partake the rich blessings of the gospel of peace.

(3.) Ministers of the gospel, and all the followers of Jesus, should depend on the providence of God for support, and the supply of their wants, Mt 10:9,10. He sent his apostles into a cold, unfriendly world, and he took care of them. So all that trust him shall not want. The righteous shall not be forsaken. The God who has in his hand all the pearls of the ocean, the gold in the heart of the earth, and the cattle on a thousand hills, and that feeds the raven when it cries, will hear the cries of his children, and supply their wants.

(4.) We see the duty of treating kindly the messengers of salvation, Mt 10:11-13. Christ expected that in every city and town they would find some who would welcome them. He promised the reward of a prophet to those who should receive a prophet; and assured of his favour those who had nothing better to bestow than even a cup of cold water. The ministers of religion are sent to benefit the world. It is but right, that in that world they should be kindly received, and their wants supplied.

(5.) The guilt of rejecting the gospel, Mt 10:14,15. It is not a small matter to reject an offer of heaven. A palace, a throne, a mine of gold, might be rejected; and, compared with rejecting the gospel, it would be a trifle. But life eternal is not like thrones, and gold, and temples. This lost, all is lost. The gospel rejected, all is gone. Nor hope, nor happiness, awaits him that hath spurned this offer. God requires every one to believe the gospel; and woe, woe, a greater woe than befell the guilty cities of the plain, to him who rejects it.

(6.) Judgment will certainly overtake the guilty, Mt 10:15. It fell on Sodom, and it will fall on all transgressors. None shall escape. Damnation may slumber long over the wicked; and they may long mock the God of truth; but in due time their feet will slide, and all creation shall not be able to save them from woe. How dangerous, how awful is the condition of an impenitent sinner!

(7.) We are to take proper care of our lives, Mt 10:23. The apostles were to flee from danger, when they could do it without denying their Lord. So are we. He that throws away his life, when it might have been, and ought to have been preserved, is a self-murderer. He that exposes himself when *duty* does not require it, and whose life pays the forfeit, goes before God "rushing unbid into his Maker's presence," nor can he be held guiltless.

(8.) We are to persevere in our duty, through all trials, Mt 10:23. Neither the world, nor pain, poverty, persecution, nor death, is to appall us. He that endures to the end, shall be saved. We hate but one thing to do: to do the will of God; to *be the Christian everywhere*; and leave the event with him.

(9.) God exercises a particular providence, Mt 10:29,30. He watches the falling sparrow, numbers the hairs of the head, and for the same reason presides over all other things. "The Lord reigneth," says the Psalmist, "let the earth rejoice," Ps 97:1.

(10.) The duty of making a profession of religion, Mt 10:32,33. It must be done in the proper way, or Christ will disown us in the day of judgment. It is impossible to neglect it, and have evidence of piety. If ashamed of him, he will be of us.

(11.) Religion is easy, and easily tested, Mt 10:40-42. What more easy than to give a cup of water to a stranger; and what more easy than to know from what motive we do it! Yet how many are there who, while they would do the thing, would yet *lose eternal life*, rather than do it with a view of honouring Christ, or showing attachment to him! How dreadful is the opposition of the human heart to religion! How amazing that man will not do the slightest acts to secure an interest in the kingdom of God!

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 11 - Verse 1

MATTHEW CHAPTER 11

Verse 1. *And it came to pass*, etc. The directions to his apostles were given in the vicinity of Capernaum. He went from thence to preach in their cities; that is, in the cities in the vicinity of Capernaum, or in Galilee. He did not vet go into Judea.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 11 - Verse 2

Verse 2. The account contained in this chapter of Matthew to the 19th verse, is found, with no material variation, in Lu 7:18-35. John was in prison. Herod had thrown him into confinement, on account of John's faithfulness in reproving him for marrying his brother Philip's wife. See Mt 14:3,4.

It is not certainly known why John sent to Jesus. It might have been to satisfy his disciples that Jesus was the Messiah; or he might have been desirous of ascertaining for himself whether this

person of whom he heard so much was the same one whom he had baptized, and whom he knew to be the Messiah. See Joh 1:29.

{d} "Now when John" Lu 7:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 11 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Art thou he that should come.* That is, art thou the Messiah, or the Christ. The Jews expected a Saviour. His coming had been long foretold, Ge 49:10 Is 9:1-6, 11:1-5 35:4-6, 53:1-12 Da 9:24-27.

See also Joh 6:14. Comp. De 18:18,19. In Common language, therefore, he was familiarly described as *he that was to come*. Luke adds here, (Lu 7:21) that at the time when the messengers came to him, Jesus cured many of their infirmities, and plagues, and of evil spirits. An answer was, therefore, ready to the inquiries of John.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 11 - Verse 4

Verses 4,5. *Go and shew John again*, etc. Jesus referred them for an answer to these miracles. They were proof that he was the Messiah. Prophets had indeed wrought miracles, but no prophet had wrought so many, or any so important. Jesus, moreover, wrought them *in his own name*, and by his own power. Prophets had done it by the power of God. Jesus, therefore, performed the works which none but the Messiah could do; and John might easily *infer* that he was the Christ.

The poor have the Gospel preached to them. It was predicted of the Messiah, that he would preach good tidings to the meek, Is 41:1; or, as it is rendered in the New Testament, preach the gospel to the poor, Lu 4:18. By this therefore, also, John might infer that he was truly the Messiah. It adds to the force of this testimony, that the poor have always been overlooked by Pharisees and philosophers. No sect of philosophers had condescended to notice them before Christ; and no system of religion had attempted to instruct them, before the Christian religion. In all other schemes, the poor have been passed by as unworthy of notice.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 11 - Verse 5

Verse 5. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes on "Mt 11:4"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 11 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *And blessed is he*, etc. The word *offence* means a stumbling-block. **See Barnes "Mt 5:29".**

This verse might be rendered, "Happy is he to whom I shall not prove a stumbling-block!" That is, happy is he who shall not take offence at my poverty and lowliness of life, so as to reject me and my doctrine. Happy is he who can, notwithstanding that poverty and obscurity, see the evidence that I am the Messiah, and follow me. It is not improbable that John wished Jesus publicly to proclaim himself as the Christ, instead of seeking retirement. Jesus replied that he *gave* sufficient evidence of that by his *works*; that a man might discover it if he chose; and that he was blessed who would seek that evidence, and embrace him as the Christ, in spite of his humble manner of life.

{e} "not be offended in me" Is 8:14,15; 1Co 1:22,23; 1Pe 2:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 11 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *And as they departed*, etc. Jesus took occasion, form the inquiries made by John's disciples, to instruct the people respecting the true character of John. Multitudes had gone out to hear him, when he preached in the desert, (Matt. iii) and it is probable that many had been attracted by the novelty of his appearance or doctrines, and many had gone simply to see and hear a man of singular habits and opinions. Probably many who followed Christ had been of that number. He took occasion, therefore, by some striking questions, to examine the motives by which they had been drawn to his ministry.

A reed shaken with the wind? The region of country in which John preached, being overflowed annually by the Jordan, produced great quantities of *reeds*, or *canes*, of a light, fragile nature, easily shaken by the wind. They were therefore an image of a light, changing, inconstant man. John's sending to Christ to inquire his character, might have led some to suppose that he was changing and inconstant, like a reed. He had once acknowledged him to be the Messiah, and now, being in prison and sending to him to inquire into the fact, they might have supposed he had no firmness, or fixed principles. Jesus, by asking this question, declared, that notwithstanding this appearance, this was not the character of John.

{f} "What went ye" Lu 7:24-30 {g} "with the wind" Ep 4:14 Jas 1:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 11 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Clothed in soft raiment*. The kind of raiment here denoted was the light, thin clothing worn by effeminate persons. It was made commonly of fine linen, and was worn chiefly for ornament. Christ asks them whether they were attracted by anything like that. He says that the desert was not the place to expect it. In the palaces of kings, in the court of Herod, it might be expected; but not in the place where John was. This kind of clothing was an emblem of riches, splendour, effeminacy, feebleness of character. He meant to say that John was a man of a different stamp: coarse in exterior; hardy in his character; firm in his virtue; fitted to endure trials and privations, and thus qualified to be the forerunner of the toiling and Suffering Messiah.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 11 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *A prophet?*. He next asks whether they went to see a prophet? They *had* regarded him as such; and Jesus tells them that in this their apprehensions of him were correct.

More than a prophet. Sustaining a character more elevated and sacred than the most distinguished of the ancient prophets. Those had been regarded as the most eminent of the prophets who had most clearly predicted the Messiah. Isaiah had been distinguished above all others for the sublimity of his writings, and the clearness with which he had foretold the coming of Christ. Yet John surpassed even him. He lived in the time of the Christ. He predicted his coming with still more clearness. He was the instrument of introducing him to the nation. He was, therefore, first among the prophets.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 11 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *For this is he*, etc. The passage of Scripture here quoted is found in Mal 3:1. The substance of it is contained also in Isa 40:3.

Prepare thy way. That is, to prepare the people; to make them ready, by proper instructions, to receive the Messiah.

{h} "is written" Is 40:3 Mal 3:1; Lu 1:76

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 11 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Them that are born of women*. This is an emphatic way of saying that there *had never* been a greater man than John. See Job 14:1.

He that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. The phrase "kingdom of heaven" is used in many senses. **See Barnes "Mt 3:2"**.

It here probably means, *in preaching* the kingdom of God, or the gospel. It could hardly be affirmed of the obscurest and most ignorant Christian, that he had clearer views than Isaiah or John. But of the apostles of the Saviour, of the first preachers, who were with him, and who heard his instructions, it might be said, that they had more correct apprehensions than any of the ancient prophets, or John.

{k} "notwithstanding" Joh 1:15,27, 3:30

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 11 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *And from the days of John*, etc. That is, from the days when John began to preach. It is not known how long this was, but it was not probably more than a year. Our Saviour here simply states a fact. He says there was a great *rush*, or a *crowd* pressing to hear John. Multitudes went out to hear him, as if they were about to take the kingdom of heaven by force. See Mt 3:5. So, says he,

it has continued. Since *the kingdom of heaven*, or *the gospel*, has been preached, there has been a *rush* to it. Men have been *earnest* about it; they have come *pressing* to obtain the blessing, as if they would take it by violence. There is allusion here to the manner in which cities were taken. Besiegers *pressed* upon them with violence, and demolished the walls. With such *earnestness* and *violence*, he says, men had pressed around him and John, since they began to preach. There is no allusion here to the manner in which individual sinners seek salvation; but it is a simple record of the fact that multitudes had thronged around him and John to hear the gospel.

{1} "take it" or, "is gotten by force; and they that thrust men, take it." {l} "of heaven" Lu 16:16 Eph 6:11-13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 11 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *All the prophets*, etc. It is meant by this verse that John introduced a new dispensation; and that the *old* one, where the prophets and the law of Moses were the guide, was closed when he preached that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. By the *law* is meant the five books of Moses; by the prophets, the remainder of the books of the Old Testament.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 11 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *If ye will receive it*. This is a way of speaking implying that the doctrine which he was about to state was different from their common views; that he was about to state something which varied from the common expectation, and which, therefore, they might be disposed to reject.

This is Elias, etc. That is, *Elijah*. Elias is the *Greek* mode of writing the Hebrew word *Elijah*. An account of him is found in the first and second books of Kings. He was a distinguished prophet, and was taken up to heaven in a chariot of fire, 2Ki 2:11. The prophet Malachi, (Mal 4:5,6) predicted that *Elijah* should be sent before the coming of the Messiah, to prepare the way for him. By this was evidently meant, not that he should appear in person, but that one should appear with a striking resemblance to him; or, as Luke Lu 1:17 expresses it, "in the spirit and power of Elijah." But the Jews understood it differently. They expected that Elijah would appear in person. They also supposed that Jeremiah and some other of the prophets would appear also to usher in the promised Messiah, and to grace his advent. Mt 16:14 17:10; Joh 1:21.

This *expectation* was the reason why he used the words, *if ye will receive it*, implying that the affirmation that John was the promised Elijah, was a doctrine contrary to their expectation.

{m} "which was for" Mal 4:5 Mt 17:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 11 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *He that hath ears*, etc. This expression is frequently used by Christ. It is a proverbial expression, implying that the highest attention should be given to what was spoken. The doctrine

about John he regarded as of the greatest importance. He among you, says he, that has the faculty of understanding this, or that will believe that this is the Elijah spoken of, let him attend to it, and remember it.

{n} "He that hath" Re 2:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 11 - Verse 16

Verses 16-19. *But whereunto shall I liken*, etc. Christ proceeds to reprove the inconsistency and fickleness of that age of men. He says they were like children. Nothing pleased them. tie refers here to the *plays* or *sport* of children. Instrumental music, or piping, and dancing, were used in marriages and festivals, as a sign of joy. Children imitate their parents and others, and *act over* in play what they see done by others. Among their childish sports, therefore was probably an imitation of a wedding, or festival occasion. We have seen also, **See Barnes "Mt 9:23"**

that funerals were attended with mournful music, and lamentation, and howling. It is not improbable that children also, in play, imitated a mournful funeral procession. One part are represented as sullen and dissatisfied. They would not enter into the play. Nothing pleased them. The others complained of it. We have, said they, taken all pains to please you. We have piped to you, played lively tunes, and engaged in cheerful sports, but you would not join with us; and then we have played different games, and imitated the mourning at funerals, and you are equally sullen; *you have not lamented*; you have not joined with us. Nothing pleases you. So, said Christ, is this generation of men. *John* came one way; *neither eating nor drinking*, abstaining as a Nazarene, and you were not pleased with him. I, the Son of man, have come in a different manner, *eating and drinking*; not practicing any austerity, but living like other men, and you are equally dissatisfied. Nay, you are less pleased, You calumniate him, and abuse me for not doing the very thing which displeased you in John. Nothing pleases you. You are fickle, changeable, inconstant, and abusive.

Markets. Places to sell provisions; places of concourse, where also children flocked together for play.

We have piped. We have played on musical instruments. A pipe was a wind instrument of music, often used by shepherds.

Neither eating nor drinking. That is, abstaining from some kinds of food, and wine, as a Nazarene. It does not mean that he did not eat at all, but that he was remarkable for abstinence.

He hath a devil. He is actuated by a bad spirit. He is irregular, strange, and cannot be a good man.

The Son of man came eating and drinking. That is, living as others do; not practicing austerity; and they accuse him of being fond of excess, and seeking the society of the wicked.

Gluttonous. One given to excessive eating.

Wine-bibber. One who drinks much wine. A great drinker. Jesus undoubtedly lived according to the general customs of the people of his time. He did not affect singularity; he did not separate himself as a Nazarene; he did not practise severe austerities. He ate that which was common, and drank that which was common. As wine was a common article of beverage among the people, he drank it. It was the pure juice of the grape, and, for anything that can be proved, it was without fermentation, In regard to the kind of wine which was used, **See Barnes "Joh 2:10"**.

No one should plead this example, at any rate, in favour of making use of the wines that are commonly used in this country—wines, many of which are manufactured here, and without a particle of the pure juice of the grape, and most of which are mixed with brandy, or with noxious drugs, to give them colour and flavour.

Wisdom is justified of her children. The children of wisdom are the wise—those who understand. He means, that though that generation of Pharisees and fault-finders did not appreciate the conduct of John and himself, yet the wise, the candid—those who understood the reason of their conduct—would approve of, and do justice to it.

{o} "But whereunto" Lu 7:31

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 11 - Verse 17

Verse 17. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 11:16"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 11 - Verse 18

Verse 18. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 11:16"

{p} "hath a devil" Mt 10:25 Joh 7:20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 11 - Verse 19

Verse 19. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 11:16"

{q} "eating and drinking" Mt 9:10 Joh 2:2 {r} "Publicans" Lu 15:2 19:7 {s} "But wisdom" Ps 92:5,6; Pr 17:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 11 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Then began he to upbraid*, etc. That is, to reprove, rebuke, or denounce heavy judgment.

{t} "Then began" Lu 10:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 11 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Chorazin and Bethsaida*. These were towns not far from Capernaum, but the precise situation is unknown. Bethsaida means literally, a *house of hunting* or *of game*; and it was probably situated on the banks of the sea of Galilee, and supported itself by hunting or fishing. It was the residence of Philip, Andrew and Peter, Joh 1:44. It was enlarged by Philip the tetrarch, and called *Julia*, after the emperor's daughter.

Tyre and Sidon. These were cities of Phoenicia, formerly very opulent, and distinguished for merchandise. They were situated on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, and were on the western part of Judea. They were, therefore, well known to the Jews. Tyre is frequently mentioned in the Old Testament as being the place through which Solomon derived many of the materials for building the temple, 2Ch 2:11-16. It was also a place against which one of the most important and pointed prophecies of Isaiah was directed. **See Barnes "Isa 53:1"**

and following. Comp. Eze 26:4-14. Both these cities were very ancient. Sidon was situated within the bounds of the tribe of Asher Jos 19:28; but this tribe could never get possession of it, Jud 1:31. It was famous for its great trade and navigation. Its inhabitants were the first remarkable merchants in the world, and were much celebrated for their luxury. In the time of our Saviour it was probably a city of much splendour and extensive commerce. It is now called Seide, or Saide, and is far less populous and splendid than it was in the time of Christ. It was subdued successively by the Babylonians, Egyptians, and Romans, the latter of whom deprived it of its freedom.

Messrs. Fisk and King, American missionaries, passed through Sidon in the summer of 1823, and estimated the population, as others have estimated it, at eight or ten thousand; but Mr. Goodell, another American missionary, took up his residence there in June, 1824, for the purpose of studying the Armenian language with a bishop of the Armenian church who lives there, and of course had far better opportunities to know the statistics of the place. He tells us there are six Mohammedan mosques, a Jewish synagogue, a Maronite, Latin, and Greek church. The number of inhabitants may be estimated at three thousand, of whom one-half may be Muslims.

Tyre was situated about twenty miles south of Sidon. It was built partly on a small island, about seventy paces from the shore, and partly on the main land. It was a city of great extent and splendour, and extensive commerce. It abounded in luxury and wickedness. It was often besieged. It held out against Shalmanezer five years, and was taken by Nebuchadnezzar after a siege of *thirteen* years. It was afterwards rebuilt, and was at length taken by Alexander the Great, after a most obstinate siege of five months. There are no signs now of the ancient city. It is the residence only of a few miserable fishermen, and contains, amidst the ruins of its former magnificence, only a few huts. Thus was fulfilled the prophecy of Ezekiel: *Thou shalt be built no more*; *though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again*, Eze 26:21. For a description of Tyre as it was formerly, and as it is now, **See Barnes "Isa 23:1"**

and following.

In sackcloth and ashes. Sackcloth was a coarse cloth, like canvass, used for the dress of the poor, and for the more common articles of domestic economy. It was worn also as a sign of mourning. The Jews also frequently threw ashes on their heads, as expressive of grief, Job 1:20 2:12; Jer 6:26.

The meaning is, that they would have repented *with expressions of deep sorrow*. Like Nineveh, they would have seen their guilt and danger, and would have turned from their iniquity. Heathen cities would have received him better than the cities of the Jews, his native land.

{u} "woe unto thee" Joh 12:21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 11 - Verse 22

Verse 22. No Barnes text on this verse.

{v} "It shall be more tolerable"

Mt 10:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 11 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *And thou, Capernaum*. **See Barnes "Mt 4:13"**.

Which art exalted to heaven. This is an expression used to denote great privileges. He meant, that they were peculiarly favoured with instruction. The city was prosperous. It was successful in commerce. It was signally favoured by its wealth. Most of all, it was signally favoured by the presence, the preaching, and the miracles of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here he spent a large part of his time in the early part of his ministry; and in Capernaum and its neighbourhood he performed his chief miracles.

Shalt be brought down to hell. This does not mean that all the *people* should go to hell; but that the city which had flourished so prosperously, should lose its prosperity, and occupy the *lowest place* among cities. The word *hell* is used here, not to denote a place of punishment in the future world, but a state of *desolation* and destruction *as a city*. It stands in contrast with the word *heaven*. As their being exalted *to heaven* did not mean that the people would all be saved, or dwell in heaven, so their being brought down to *hell* refers to the desolation of the *city*. Their privileges, honours, wealth, etc., should be taken away, and they should sink as *low* among cities as they had been before exalted. This has been strictly fulfilled. In the wars between the Jews and the Romans, Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum, etc., were so completely desolated that it is difficult to determine their former situation. It is not to be denied, also, that he threatened future punishment on those who rejected him. The truth inculcated is, that those who are peculiarly favoured must be punished accordingly if they abuse their privileges.

If the mighty works—had been done in Sodom. **See Barnes "Mt 10:15"**.

Sodom was destroyed on account of its great wickedness. Christ says, if his miracles had been done there, they would have repented, and consequently the city would not have been destroyed. As it was, it would be better for Sodom in the day of judgment than for Capernaum, for its inhabitants would not be called to answer for the abuse of so great privileges.

{w} "exalted" Isa 14:13-15 La 2:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 11 - Verse 24

Verse 24. No Barnes text on this verse.
{x} "But I say"
Mt 11:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 11 - Verse 25

Verses 25,26. *From the wise and prudent*. That is, from those who *thought* themselves wise—*wise* according to the world's estimation of wisdom—the men of philosophy, and self-conceit, and science, falsely so called, 1Co 1:26,27.

Hast revealed them unto babes. To the poor, ignorant, and obscure; the teachable, simple, and humble. Such as his disciples were. He had reference here probably to proud and haughty scribes and Pharisees in Capernaum. They rejected his gospel; but it was the pleasure of God to reveal it to obscure and more humble men. The reason given, the only satisfactory reason is, that it so seemed good in the sight of God. In this the Saviour acquiesced, saying, *Even so, Father*: and in the dealings of God it is fit that all should acquiesce. *Such is the will of God*, is often the only explanation which can be offered in regard to the various events which happen to us on earth. Such is the will of God, is the only account which can be given of the reason of the dispensations of his grace. Our understanding is often confounded. We are stopped in all our efforts at explanation. Our philosophy fails, and all that we can say is, "Even so, Father: for so it seems good to thee." And this is enough. That GOD does a thing, is, after all, the best reason which we can have that it is right. It is a *security* that nothing wrong is done; and though now mysterious, yet light will hereafter shine upon it like the light of noon-day. I would have a better security that a thing was right if I could say that I knew such was the will of God, than I could to depend on my own reason. In the one case, I confide in the infallible and most perfect God; in the other, I rely on the reason of a frail and erring man. God never errs; but nothing is more common than for men to err.

{y} "At that time" Lu 10:21 {z} "revealed unto babes" Ps 8:2 Jer 1:7,8 1Co 1:27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 11 - Verse 26

Verse 26. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 11:25"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 11 - Verse 27

Verse 27. All things are delivered, etc. The same doctrine is clearly taught often in the New Testament. See Joh 3:35 6:46, 10:15

Co 1:16,17. It means that Christ has control over all things, for the good of his church; that the government of the universe is committed to him *as Mediator*, that he may redeem his people, and guide them to glory, Eph 1:20-22.

No man knoweth the Son. That is, such is the nature of the Son of God; such the mystery of the union between the Divine and human nature; such his exalted character as Divine, that no mortal can fully comprehend him. None but God *fully* knows him. Had he been a mere man, this language surely would not have been used of him.

Neither knoweth any man the Father, etc. In the original this is, neither knoweth *any one* the Father except the Son. That is, no one man or angel clearly comprehends the character of the infinite God, but the Son—the Lord Jesus—and he to whom he makes him known. This he does by *revealing* the character of God clearly, and more especially, by manifesting his character as a sin-forgiving God, to the soul that is weary and heavy laden, Joh 17:6.

{a} "All things" Mt 28:18 Lu 10:22; Joh 3:35 17:2; 1Co 15:27

{b} "neither knoweth" Joh 1:18 1Jn 5:20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 11 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *All ye that labour and are heavy laden*. He here, perhaps, refers primarily to the Jews, who groaned under the weight of their ceremonial laws, and the traditions of the ciders, Ac 15:10. He tells them, that by coming to him, and embracing the new system of religion; they would be freed from these burdensome rites and ceremonies. There can be no doubt, however, that he meant here chiefly to address the poor, lost, ruined sinner; the man *burdened* with a consciousness of his transgressions, trembling at his danger, and seeking deliverance. For such there *is* relief. Christ tells them to come to him, to believe in him, and to *trust* him, and him only, for salvation. Doing this he will give them rest—rest from their sins; from the alarms of conscience; from the terrors of the law; and from the fears of eternal death.

{c} "labour" Is 55:1-4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 11 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Take my yoke*. This is a figure taken from the use of oxen; and hence signifying to labour for one, or in the service of any one. The yoke is used in the Bible as an emblem

(1.) of bondage or slavery, Le 26:13

(2.) Of afflictions or crosses, La 3:27.

(3.) Of the punishment of sin, La 1:14.

(4.) Of the commandments of God, as in this place.

(5.) Of legal ceremonies, Ac 15:10 Ga 5:1. It refers here to the religion of the Redeemer; and means that they should embrace his system of religion and obey him. All virtue and all religion imply restraint— the restraint of our bad passions and inclinations—and subjection to laws; and the Saviour here means to say that the restraints and laws of his religion were mild, and gentle, and

easy. Let any one compare them with the burdensome and expensive ceremonies of the Jews, Ac 15:10, or with the religious rites of the heathen everywhere, or with the requirements of the Popish system, and he will see how true it is that *his* yoke is easy. And let his laws and requirements be compared with the laws which *sin* imposes on its votaries—the laws of fashion, and honour, and sensuality—and he will feel that religion is "freedom," Joh 8:36. "He is a freeman whom the truth maketh free, and all are slaves beside." It is *easier* to be a Christian than a sinner; and of all the yokes ever imposed on men, that of the Redeemer is the lightest.

For I am meek, etc. **See Barnes "Mt 5:5".**

This was eminently Christ's personal character. But this is not its meaning here. He is giving a reason why they should embrace his religion. That was, that he was not harsh, overbearing, and oppressive, like the Pharisees, but meek, mild, and gentle in his government. His laws were reasonable and tender; and it would be easy to obey him.

{d} "learn of me" Php 2:5-8 1Pe 2:21 {e} "lowly in heart" Zec 9:9 {f} "ye shall find" Jer 6:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 11 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *My yoke is easy*, etc. That is, the services that I shall require are easily rendered. They are not burdensome, like all other systems of religion. So the Christian always finds them. In coming to him, there is *a peace which passeth all understanding*; in believing in him, *joy*; in following him *through evil and good report*, a comfort *which the world giveth not*; in bearing trials, and in persecution, *the hope of glory*; and in keeping his commandments, *great reward*.

{g} "my yoke is easy" 1Jn 5:3

REMARKS ON MATTHEW CHAPTER 11

(1.) Anxiety about the person and works of Christ is peculiarly proper, Mt 11:2,3. John was solicitous to ascertain his true character; and nothing is of more importance for all, than to understand his true character and will. On him depends all the hope that man has of happiness beyond the grave. He saves, or man must perish. He will save, or we must die for ever. With what earnestness, therefore, should the old and the young inquire into his character and will! Our eternal all demands it; and while this is delayed, we are endangering our everlasting felicity.

(2.) Clear proof has been furnished that Jesus is the Christ, and can save us, Mt 11:4,5. If his miracles did not prove that he came from God, nothing can prove it. If he could open the eyes of the blind, then he can enlighten the sinner; if he could unstop the ears of the deaf, then he can cause us to hear and live; if he could heal the sick, and make the lame walk, then he can heal our spiritual maladies, and make us walk in the way of life; if he could raise the dead, then he can raise those dead in sin, and breathe into us the breath of eternal life. If he was willing to do all this for the body, which is soon to die, then he will be much more willing to do it for the soul, that never dies. Then the poor lost sinner may come and live.

(3.) We see, in this chapter, Christ's manner of praising or Complimenting men, Mt 11:7-15. He gave, in no measured terms, his exalted opinion of John; gave him praise which had been bestowed on no other mortal; ranked him far above the purest and sublimest of the prophets. But this was not, done in the presence of John; *nor was it done in the presence of those who would*

inform John of it. It was when the disciples of John had "departed," and his commendation of John was spoken to "the multitude," Mt 11:7. He waited till his disciples were gone, apprehending doubtless that they would be likely to report what he said in praise of their master, and then expressed his high opinion of his character. The practice of the *world* is to praise others to their faces, or in the presence of those who will be sure to inform them of it, and to speak evil of them when absent. Jesus delivered his unfavourable opinions of others to the men themselves, their excellences he took pains to commend where they would not be likely to hear of them. He did good to both; and in both prevented the existence of pride.

(4.) The wicked take much pains, and are often fickle and inconsistent, for the sake of abusing and calumniating religious men, Mt 11:18,19. They found much fault with our Saviour for doing the very same thing which they blamed John for not doing. So it is commonly with men who slander professors of religion. They risk their own characters to prove that others are hypocrites, or sinners. The object is not truth, but calumny, and opposition to religion; and hitherto no means have been too base, or too wicked, to pour contempt on the followers of Christ.

(5.) The purest characters may expect the shaft of calumny and malice; and often in proportion to their purity, Mt 11:19. Even the Saviour of the world was accused of being intemperate, and a glutton. If the only perfectly pure Being that ever trod the earth was thus accused, let not his followers think that any strange thing has happened to them, if they are falsely accused.

(6.) Judgments will overtake guilty men, and cities, and nations, Mt 11:21,22. They fell on Sodom, Tyre, Sidon, and Capernaum. They may long linger; but in due time the hand of God will fall on the wicked, and they will die, for ever die.

(7.) The wicked will suffer in proportion to their privileges, Mt 11:23,24. So it was with Capernaum. And if they of ancient days suffered thus; if more tremendous judgments fell on them than even on guilty Sodom, what shall be the doom of those who go down to hell from this day of light? The Saviour was indeed there a few days; he worked a few miracles: but they had not, as we have, all his instructions; they had not Sabbath-schools, and Bible-classes, and the stated preaching of the gospel; nor was the world blessed then as now with extensive and powerful revivals of religion. How awful must be the doom of those who are educated in the ways of religion; who are instructed from sabbath to sabbath; who grow up amidst the means of grace, and then are lost!

(8.) The poor and needy; the weary and heavy laden; the soul sick of sin and the world, conscious of guilt, and afraid to die, may come to Jesus Christ, and live, Mt 11:28-30. The invitation is wide as the world. The child and the old man may seek and find salvation at the feet of the same Saviour. No age is too young; no sinner is too old. Christ is *full* of mercy, and all who come shall find peace. Oh, how should we, in this sinful and miserable world, borne down with sin, and exposed each moment to death, how should we come and find the peace which he has promised to all! and take the yoke which all have found to be light!

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 1

MATTHEW CHAPTER 12

Verses 1-8. The account contained in these verses is also recorded in Mr 2:23-28 Lu 6:1-5.

Verse 1. *At that time*. Lu 6:1 fixes the time more particularly. He says that it was *the second Sabbath after the first*. To understand this, it is proper to remark, that the Passover was observed during the month Abib, or Nisan, answering to the latter part of March, and the first of April. The feast was held seven days, commencing on the fourteenth day of the month, Ex 12:1-28 23:15 on the second day of the paschal week. The law required that a sheaf of *barley* should be offered up, as the first fruits of the harvest, Le 23:10,11. From this day was reckoned seven weeks to the feast of *Pentecost*, Le 23:15,16 called also the feast of weeks, De 16:10 and the feast of the harvest, Ex 23:16. This second day in the feast of the passover, or of unleavened bread, was the *beginning*, therefore, from which they reckoned *towards* the pentecost. The sabbath in the week following would be the *second sabbath* after this first one in the reckoning; and this was doubtless the time mentioned when Christ went through the fields. It should be further mentioned that, in Judea, the barley harvest commences about the beginning of May, and both that and the wheat harvest are over by the twentieth. Barley is in full ear in the beginning of April. There is no improbability, therefore, in this narrative on account of the season of the year. This feast was always held at Jerusalem.

Through the corn. Through the *barley*, or *wheat*. The word *corn*, as used in our translation of the Bible, has no reference to *maize*, or *Indian corn*, as it has with us. Indian corn was unknown till the discovery of America, and it is scarcely probable that the translators knew anything of it. The word was applied, as it is still in England, to wheat, rye, oats, and barley. This explains the circumstance that *they rubbed it in their hands* Lu 6:1 to separate the grain from the chaff.

{h} "At that time" Mr 2:25 Lu 6:1 {i} "???" De 23:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Upon the sabbath day*. The Pharisees, doubtless desirous of finding fault with Christ, said that, in plucking the grain on the *sabbath day*, they had violated the commandment. Moses had commanded the Hebrews to abstain from all servile work on the sabbath, Ex 20:10 35:2,3 Nu 15:32-36.

On any other day this would have been clearly lawful, for it was permitted, De 23:25.

{k} "not lawful" Ex 31:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *But he said unto them*, etc. To vindicate his disciples, he referred them to a similar case, recorded in the Old Testament, and therefore one with which they *ought* to have been acquainted. This was the case of David. The law commanded that twelve loaves of bread should be laid on the table in the holy place in the tabernacle, to remain a week, and then to be eaten by

the *priests only*. Their place was supplied then by *fresh bread*. This was called the shew-bread, Le 24:5-9. David, fleeing before Saul, weary and hungry, had come to Ahimelech the priest; had found only this bread; had asked it of him, and had eaten it, contrary to the *letter* of the law, 1Sa 21:1-7. David, among the Jews, had high authority. This act had passed uncondemned. It proved that *in cases of necessity the laws did not bind a man*: a principle which all laws admit. So the *necessity* of the disciples justified them in doing on the sabbath what would have been otherwise unlawful.

{l} "David did" 1Sa 21:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 4

Verses 4,5. *House of God*. That was, the tabernacle; the temple not being then built.

In the law. In the law of Moses.

Profane the sabbath. He referred them to the conduct of the priests also. On the sabbath days they were engaged, as well as on other days, in killing beasts for sacrifice, Nu 28:9,10. Two lambs were killed on the sabbath, in addition to the daily sacrifice. The priests must be engaged in slaying them, and making fires to burn them in sacrifice; whereas to kindle a fire was expressly forbidden the Jews on the sabbath, (Ex 35:3) they were obliged to skin them, prepare them for sacrifice, and burn them, They did that which, for other persons to do, would have been *profaning* the sabbath. Yet they were blameless. They did what was necessary and commanded. This was done in the *very temple*, too, the place of holiness, where the law should be most strictly observed.

{m} "shewbread" Ex 25:30 {n} "only for priests" Ex 29:32,33

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 5

Verse 5. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes on "Mt 12:4"

{o} "in the law" Nu 28:9 {p} "in the temple" Joh 7:22,23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *One greater than the temple*. Here he refers to himself, and to his own dignity and power. "I have power over the laws: I can grant to my disciples a dispensation from the Jewish laws. An act which *I* command or permit them to do, is therefore right." This proves that he was Divine. None but God can authorize men to do a thing contrary to the Divine laws. He refers them again to a passage he had before quoted, **See Barnes "Mt 9:13"**

showing that God preferred acts of righteousness, rather than a precise observance of a ceremonial law.

Mark adds, Mr 2:27 "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." That is, the Sabbath was intended for the welfare of man; designed to promote his happiness; and not to produce misery, by harsh, unfeeling requirements. It is not to be so Interpreted as to produce suffering, by making the necessary supply of wants unlawful. Man was not made for the Sabbath. Man was created first, and then the Sabbath was appointed for his happiness, Ge 2:1-3. *His necessities*, his *real* comforts and wants, are not to bend to that which was made *for him*. The laws are to be interpreted favourably to his real wants and comforts. This authorizes works only of *real* necessity, not of imaginary wants, or amusement, or *common* business, and worldly employments.

To crown all, Christ says that he was Lord of the Sabbath. He had a right to direct the manner of its observance—undoubted proof that he is Divine.

{q} "greater than" 2Ch 6:18 Mal 3:1; Mt 23:17-21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 7

Verse 7. No Barnes text on this verse.

{r} "what this means"

Hos 6:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 8

Verse 8. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 9

Verses 9-13. The account contained in these verses is recorded also in

Mr 3:1-5 Lu 6:6-10.

{s} "And when he was" Mr 3:1 Lu 6:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *A man which had his hand withered*. This was probably one form of the palsy. **See Barnes "Mt 4:24".**

Mark and Luke have mentioned some circumstances omitted by Matthew. They say that Jesus addressed the man, and told him to stand forth in the midst. He then addressed the people. He asked them if it was lawful to do *good* on the Sabbath day? This was admitted by all their teachers, and it could not be denied. They were therefore silent. He then appealed to *them*, and drew an argument from their own conduct. A man that had a sheep that should fall into a pit on the Sabbath day would

exercise the common offices of humanity, and draw it out. If a man would save the life of a *sheep*, was it not proper to save the life of a man ? By a reference to their own conduct, he silenced them.

Mark adds, that he looked on them with anger; that is, with strong disapprobation of their conduct. Their envy and malignity excited feelings of holy indignation. **See Barnes "Mr 3:5"**.

{t} "Is it lawful" Lu 14:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 11

Verse 11. No Barnes text on this verse.

{u} "and if it fall"

De 22:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *A man better than a sheep*. Of more consequence, or value. If you would show an act of kindness to a brute beast on the Sabbath, how much more important is it to evince similar kindness to one made in the image of God! one for whom the Saviour came to die, and who may be raised up to everlasting life.

It is lawful to do well. This was universally allowed by the Jews in the abstract; and Jesus only showed them that the principle on which they acted in other things applied with more force to the case before him, and that the act which he was about to perform was, by their own confession, lawful.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *And he said, Stretch forth thine hand*. This was a remarkable commandment. The man *might* have said that he had no strength; that it was a thing which he could not do. Yet, *being commanded*, it was his duty to obey. He did so, and was healed. So the sinner; it is his duty to obey whatever God commands. He will give strength to those who attempt to do his will. It is not right to plead, when God commands us to do a thing, that we have no strength. God will give us strength, if there is a disposition to obey. At the same time, however, this passage should not be applied to the sinner, *as if* it proved that he has no more strength or ability than the man who had the withered hand. It proves no such thing. It has no reference to any such case. And it should not be used *as if* it proved any such thing. It may be used to prove that man should *instantly obey* the commands of God, without pausing to examine the question about his ability, and especially *without saying that he can do nothing*. What would the Saviour have said to this man, if he had objected that he *could not* stretch out his hand?

It was restored whole, Christ had before *claimed* Divine authority and power, Mt 13:6-9. He now showed that he possessed it. By his *own power* he healed him; thus evincing, by a miracle, that his claim of being Lord of the Sabbath was well founded.

These two cases determine what may be done on the Sabbath. The one was a case of *necessity*; the other of *mercy*. The example of the Saviour, and his explanations, show that these are a part of the proper duties of that holy day. Beyond an *honest* and *conscientious* discharge of these two duties, men may not devote the Sabbath to any secular purpose. If they do, they do it at their peril. They *go beyond* what *his* authority authorizes them to do. They do what he claimed the special right of doing, as being Lord of the Sabbath. They usurp *his* place; and act and legislate where God only has a right to act and legislate. Men may as well trample down any other law of the Bible, as that respecting the Sabbath.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 14

Verses 14-21. This account is found also in Mr 3:6-12.

Verse 14. *The Pharisees—held a council*, etc. Mark adds, that the *Herodians* also took a part in this plot. They were probably a *political* party, attached firmly to Herod. **See Barnes "Mt 3:7".**

The friends of Herod were opposed to Christ, and ever ready to join any plot against his life. They remembered, doubtless, the attempts of Herod the Great against him when he was the Babe of Bethlehem; and they were stung with the memory of the escape of Jesus from his bloody hands. The attempt against him now was the effect of *envy*. They were enraged also that he had foiled them in the argument; they hated his popularity; they were losing their influence; and they, therefore, resolved to take him out of the way.

{1} "council" or, "took counsel"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Jesus—withdrew himself*, etc. He knew the design against his life. He knew that his hour was not yet come; and he therefore sought security. By remaining, his presence would only have provoked them farther, and endangered his own life. He acted, therefore, the part of Christian prudence, and withdrew. **See Barnes "Mt 10:23".**

Mark adds, that he withdrew *to the sea*; that is, to the sea of Galilee, or Tiberius. He names, also, the places from which the multitude came; an important circumstance, as it throws light on the passage quoted by Matthew, Mt 13:21 "In his name shalt the Gentiles trust."

Pressed by the crowd, Mr 3:9 he went aboard a small vessel, or *boat*, called by Mark a *ship*. This he did for the convenience of being separated from them, and more easily addressing them. We are to suppose the lake still and calm; the multitudes, most of whom were sick and diseased, standing on the shore, and pressing to the water's edge; and Jesus thus healing their diseases, and preaching to them the good news of salvation. No scene could be more sub- lime than this.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *And he charged them*, etc. He was, *at this time*, desirous of concealment. He wished to avoid their plots, and to save his life.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *That it might be fulfilled*, etc. Matthew here quotes a passage from Isa 43:1-4, to show the *reason why he thus retired from his enemies, and sought concealment*. The Jews, and the disciples also, at first, expected that the Messiah would be a conqueror, and vindicate himself from all his enemies. When they saw him retiring before them, and instead of subduing them by force, seeking a place of concealment, it was contrary to all their previous notions of the Messiah. Matthew, by this quotation, shows that *their* conceptions of him had been wrong. Instead of a warrior and an earthly conqueror, he was predicted under a totally different character. Instead of shouting for battle, lifting up his voice in the streets, oppressing the feeble— *breaking bruised reeds, and quenching smoking flax*, as a conqueror—he would be peaceful, retiring, and strengthening the feeble, and cherishing the faintest desires of holiness. This appears to be the general meaning of this quotation here. Comp. **See Barnes "Isa 42:1"**

and following.

{v} "saying" Isa 42:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *My servant*. That is, the Messiah, the Lord Jesus, called a servant, from his taking the *form* of a servant, or his being born in a humble condition, Php 2:7 and from his obeying or serving God. See Heb 10:9.

Shall shew judgment to the Gentiles. The word *judgment* means, in the Hebrew, *law*, commands, etc., Ps 19:9 119:29,30.

It means the whole system of truth; the law of God in general; the purpose, plan, or judgment of God, about human duty and conduct. Here it means evidently the system of gospel truth, the Christian scheme.

Gentiles. All who were not Jews. This prophecy was fulfilled by the multitudes coming to him from Idumea and beyond Jordan, and Tyre and Sidon, as recorded by Mr 3:7,8.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *He shall not strive*, etc. He shall not shout, as a warrior. He shall be meek, and retiring, and peaceful. Streets were places of concourse. The meaning is, that he should not seek publicity and popularity.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *A bruised reed*, etc. The reed is an emblem of feebleness, as well as change, Mt 11:7. A bruised, broken reed, is an emblem of the poor and oppressed. It means that he would not oppress the feeble and poor, as victorious warriors and conquerors did. It is also an expressive emblem of the soul, broken and contrite on account of sin, weeping and mourning for transgression. He will not break it. That is, he will not be haughty, unforgiving, and cruel. He will heal it, pardon it, and give it strength.

Smoking flax. This refers to the wick of a lamp when the oil is exhausted—the dying, flickering flame and smoke that hang over it. It is an emblem, also, of feebleness and infirmity. He would not farther oppress it, and extinguish it. He would not be like the Jews, proud and overbearing, and trampling down the poor. It is expressive, also, of the languishing graces of the people of God. He will not treat them harshly or unkindly, but will cherish the feeble flame, minister the oil of grace, and kindle it into a blaze.

Till he send forth judgment unto victory. *Judgment* here means *truth* —the truth of God, the gospel. It shall be victorious. It shall not be vanquished. Though not *such* a conqueror as the Jews expected, ye he *shall* conquer. Though mild and retiring, yet his scheme shall be victorious.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *And in his name*, etc. The Hebrew in Isaiah is, "And the isles shall wait for his law." The idea is, however, the same. The isles denote the Gentiles, or a part of the Gentiles—those out of Judea. The meaning is, that the gospel should be preached to the Gentiles, and that they should receive it. **See Barnes** "Isa 41:1, for an explanation of the word *islands*, as it is used in the Bible.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 22

Verses 22-30. *One possessed with a devil*. **See Barnes "Mt 4:24"**.

The same account, substantially, is found in Mr 3:22-27 Lu 11:14-26.

{w} "Then was brought" Mr 3:11 Lu 11:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Is not this the Son of David*? That is, is not this the promised *descendant* of David, the Messiah? They were acquainted with the prophecy in Isa 35:5, "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped;" and they inferred that he must be the promised Messiah Who should be able to do this. This inference was drawn by the common people, and not by the proud and haughty Pharisees. It is not uncommon that men of plain common sense, though unlearned, see the true beauty and meaning of the Bible, while those who are filled with pride and science, falsely so called, are blinded.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *But when the Pharisees heard it*, etc. It was necessary for the Pharisees, who had determined to reject Jesus of Nazareth, to account in *some* way for the miracles he had wrought. Here was a manifest miracle, an exertion of power unquestionably superior to what *men* could do. The common people were fast drawing the proper inferences from it, and coming into the belief that this was the Messiah. The authority and power of the Pharisees were declining, and about to become extinct. Unless, therefore, some way should be devised of accounting for these facts, their influence would be at an end. Whatever way of accounting for them was adopted, it was necessary that they should acknowledge that there was *superhuman power*. The people were fully persuaded of this; and no man could deny it. They therefore ascribed it to the Prince of the devils —to Beelzebub. In this they had *two* objects:

1st. To concede to the people that here was a miracle, or a work above mere human power.

2nd. To throw all possible contempt on Jesus. Beelzebub was an opprobrious name, given to the worst and vilest even of the devils. See Mt 10:25. It denoted the god of flies, or the god of filth; and hence the god of idolatry, as being, in their view, filth and abomination.

{1} "Beelzebub" "Beelzebul"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *25. And Jesus knew their thoughts*, etc. To know the thoughts of the heart belongs only to God, Ps 139:2 Jer 17:10.

Every kingdom, etc. Their subtle and cunning device was completely foiled, and Jesus made their argument recoil on their own heads. A kingdom, or a family, can prosper only by living in harmony. The different parts and members must unite in promoting the same objects. If divided—if one part *undoes* what the other does—it must fall. So with the kingdom of Satan. It is your doctrine that Satan has *possessed* these whom *I have cured*. It is, also, your doctrine that he has helped me to cure them. If so, then he has helped me to undo what he had done. He has aided me to cast himself out—that is, to oppose and discomfit himself. At this rate, how can there be any stability in his kingdom? It must fall; and Satan must have less than human prudence.

{x} "thoughts" Ps 139:2 Joh 2:24,25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 26

Verse 26. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *By whom do your children*, etc. Christ was not satisfied by showing them the intrinsic absurdity of their argument. He showed them that it might as well be applied to them as to him. *Your* disciples, taught by you, and encouraged by you, pretend to cast out devils. If your argument be true that a man who casts out devils must be in league with the devil, then your disciples have made a covenant with him also. You must therefore either give up this argument, or admit that the working of miracles is proof of the assistance of God.

The words of Christ, here, do not prove that they had actually the power of casting out devils, but only that they *claimed* it, and practised magic or jugglery. See Ac 19:13.

Your children. Your disciples, or followers. **See Barnes "Mt 1:1"**.

They shall be your judges. They shall condemn you and your argument. They are conclusive witnesses against the force of your reasoning.

{y} "Beelzebub" Mt 13:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *But if I—by the Spirit of God*, etc. The Spirit of God, here, means the power of God—in Luke, by the *finger* of God. Compare Ex 8:19 Ps 8:3. If this work is not by the aid of Satan, then it is by the aid of God. Then his kingdom, or reign, is come, Mt 3:2. The *reign* of Satan over men, and the *reign* of God, are in opposition. If God expels Satan from his dominion over men, then *his reign* has come.

{z} "kingdom of God" Da 2:44 Mt 6:33; Lu 11:20 17:21; Ro 14:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Or else*, etc. He takes a new illustration to confute the Pharisees, drawn from breaking into a house. A man could not break into the house of a strong man, and take his property, unless he had rendered the man himself helpless. If he had taken his goods, it would therefore be sufficient proof that he had bound the man. So I, says he, have taken *this property—this possessed person*—from the dominion of Satan. It is clear proof that I have subdued *Satan* himself, the strong being that had him in possession. The words of *else*, mean *or how*. *How*, or *in what way*, can one, etc.

Spoil his goods. The word spoil commonly means now, to corrupt, injure, or destroy. Here it means to plunder, to take with violence, as it commonly does in the Bible. See Col 2:8,15; Ex 3:22.

{a} "spoil his goods" Is 49:24 53:12; Re 12:7-10 20:2,3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *He that is not with me*, etc. In addition to his other arguments, he urges this general principle that there could be but two parties in the universe. If any one did not act with him, he was against him. If he gathered not with him, he scattered. This is taken from the practice of persons in harvest, he that did not gather with him, or *aid* him, scattered abroad, or opposed him. The application of this was, "As I have not united with Satan, but opposed him, there can be no league between us." The charge, therefore, is a false one.

{b} "against me" 1Jo 2:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 31

Verses 31,32. In this place, and in Mr 3:28-30, Jesus states the awful nature of the sin of which they had been guilty. That sin was the sin against the Holy Ghost. It consisted in charging Jesus with being in league with the devil, or accusing him with working his miracles, not by the *spirit* or *power* of God, but by the aid of the prince of the devils. It was therefore a direct insult, abuse, or evil speaking, against the Holy Ghost—the Spirit by which Jesus worked his miracles. That this was what he intended by this sin, at that time, is clear from Mr 3:30, "Because they said he had an unclean spirit." All other sins—all speaking against the Saviour himself—might be remitted. But this sin was clearly against the Holy One; it was alleging that the highest displays of God's mercy and power were the work of the devil; and it argued, therefore, the highest depravity of mind. The sin of which he speaks is, then, clearly stated. It was accusing him of working miracles by the aid of the devil—thus dishonouring the Holy Ghost.

All manner of sin—shall be forgiven. That is, only on condition that men repent and believe. If they *continue* in this sin, they cannot be forgiven, Mr 16:16 Ro 2:6-9.

Blasphemy. Injurious or evil speaking of God. **See Barnes "Mt 9:3"**.

A word against the Son of man. The Jews were offended at the humble life and appearance of the Saviour. They reproached him as being a Nazarene—sprung from Nazareth, a place from which no good was expected to proceed; with being a Galilean, from Galilee, a place from which no prophet came, Joh 7:52. Jesus says that reproaches of this kind could be pardoned. Reflections on his poverty, his humble birth, and the lowliness of his human nature, might be forgiven. But for those which affected his Divine nature, accusing him of being in league with the devil, denying his divinity, and attributing the power which manifestly *implied* divinity, to the prince of fallen spirits, there could be no pardon. This sin was a very different thing from what is now often supposed to be the sin against the Holy Ghost. It was a wanton and blasphemous attack on the Divine power and nature of Christ. Such a sin God would not forgive.

Speaketh against the Holy Ghost. This probably refers to the Divine nature of Christ—the power by which he wrought his miracles. There is no evidence that it refers to the Third Person of the Trinity. The word ghost means spirit, and probably means the Divine nature or spirit with which the man Jesus was endowed. And the meaning of the whole passage may be—

"He that speaks against me as a man of Nazareth,
that speaks contemptuously of my humble birth, etc.,
may be pardoned; but he that reproaches my Divine
character, charging it as being in league with Satan,
and blaspheming the power of God manifestly displayed
by me, can never obtain forgiveness."

Neither in this world, neither in the world to come. That is, as Mark expresses it, hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation. This fixes the meaning of the phrase. It means, then, not the future age or dispensation, known among the Jews as the world to come; but it means that the guilt will be unpardoned for ever; that such is the purpose of God, that he *will* not forgive a sin so direct, presumptuous, and awful. It cannot be inferred from this that any sins will be forgiven in hell. He meant simply to say that there were no possible circumstances in which the offender could find forgiveness. He certainly did not say that any sin unpardoned here would be pardoned hereafter.

{c} "all manner" Mr 3:28 Lu 12:10 {d} "the *Holy Ghost*" He 10:29 1Jn 5:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 32

Verse 32. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 12:31"

{e} "it shall be" Lu 7:34 Joh 7:12; 1Ti 1:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *Either make*, etc. The fact asserted in this verse is, that a tree is known not by its leaves, or bark, or form, but by its fruit. The application to the argument is this: "You are to judge of man's being in league with Satan by his works. If my doctrines and works be properly the works of Satan, then I am corrupt; if not, then your charge is blasphemy. So, on the other hand, if, not withstanding your professions, your works are the works of the devil, and your doctrines be such as he would teach, it would prove respecting you that which you charge on me." In this indirect but powerful manner, he advances to the charge against them, which he urges in the following verses.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 34

Verses 34,35. *O generation of vipers*. Christ here applies the argument which he had suggested in the previous verse. They were a wicked race; like poisonous reptiles, with a corrupt and evil nature. They could not be *expected* to speak good things—that is, to speak favourably of *him* and his works. As the bad fruit of a tree was the proper effect of its *nature*, so were their *words* about him and his works the proper effects of *their* nature. The *abundance* or fulness of the heart produced the words of the lips.

Vipers. These are a poisonous kind of serpents, not often a yard long, and about an inch thick, having a flat head. The males have two large teeth, through which a most deadly poison is thrown into the wound made by the bite. They are an emblem of malignity and mischief. These were strong expressions to be used by the *meek and lowly Jesus*; but they were not the effect of anger and malice; they were a declaration of the true character of the men with whom he was conversing—a declaration most justly deserved. **See Barnes "Mt 3:7".**

{f} "generation" Mt 3:17 {g} "out of the" Lu 6:45

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 35

Verse 35. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes on "Mt 12:34"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *But I say unto you*, etc. Christ closes this address to his malignant and wicked hearers by a solemn declaration that for these things God would bring them into judgment. *They*, therefore, who had spoken so malignantly against him, could not escape.

Idle word. This literally means a vain, thoughtless, useless word, that accomplishes no good. Here it means, evidently, wicked and injurious, false and malicious; for such were the words which they had spoken.

{h} "give account" Ec 12:14 Eph 5:4,6 Jude 1:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *By thy words thou shalt be justified*, etc. That is, *words* shall be the indication of the true principles of the heart; by *words* the heart shall be known, as the tree is by its fruit. If they are true, proper, chaste, instructive, pious, they will prove that the heart is right. If false, envious, malignant, and impious, they will prove that the heart is *wrong*, and will therefore be among the causes of condemnation. It is not meant that words will be the *only thing* that will condemn man;

but that they will be all important *part* of the things for which he shall be condemned. See Jas 3:3-12.

{i} "thy words" Pr 13:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 38

Verses 38-42. *We would see a sign from thee*. See Lu 11:16 29-32.

A *sign* commonly signifies a miracle; that is, a *sign* that God was with the person, or had sent him. Comp. **See Barnes "Is 7:11"**.

Luke adds that this was done *tempting him* trying him, doubting if he had the power to do it. If these persons had been present with him for any considerable time, they had already seen sufficient proofs that he was what he pretended. They might have been, however, those who had recently come; and then the emphasis must be laid on "*we*." *We*, as well as the others, would see a proof that thou art the Christ. In either case it was a temptation. If they had not seen him work a miracle, yet they should have believed it by testimony. Comp. Joh 20:29. Perhaps the emphasis is to be laid on the words *from heaven*. They might profess not to doubt that his miracles were real, but they were not quite satisfactory. They were desirous of seeing something, therefore, that should clear up their doubts, where there could be no opportunity for dispute. A comet, or lightning, or thunder, or sudden darkness, or the gift of food raining upon them, they supposed would be decisive. Perhaps they referred in this to Moses. *He* had been with God amidst thunders and lightnings; and he had given them manna—bread from heaven— to eat. They wished Jesus to show some miracle equally undoubted.

{k} "sign from thee" Mt 16:1 1Co 1:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *An evil and adulterous generation*. The relation of the Jews to God was often represented as a marriage contract;—God as the husband, and the Jewish people as the wife. See Isa 57:3 Ho 3:1 Eze 16:15. Hence their apostasy and idolatry are often represented as adultery. This is the meaning, probably, here. They were evil, and unfaithful to the covenant or to the commandments of God—an apostate and corrupt people. There is, however, evidence that they were literally an adulterous people.

There shall no sign be given to it, etc. They sought some direct miracle from heaven. He replied that no such miracle should be given, He did not mean to say that he would work no more miracles, or give no more evidence that he was the Christ; but he would *give no such miracle* as they required. *He would give one that ought to be as satisfactory evidence to them that he was from God, as the miraculous preservation of Jonah was to the Ninevites that he was divinely commissioned*. As Jonah was preserved three days by miracle, and then restored alive, so He would be raised from the dead after three days. As on the ground of this preservation the Ninevites believed Jonah and repented,

so on the ground of his resurrection the men of an adulterous and wicked generation ought to repent, and believe that He was from God.

"The sign of the prophet Jonas," means the *sign* or *evidence* which was given to the people of Nineveh that he was from God—to wit, that he had been miraculously preserved, and was therefore divinely commissioned. The word *Jonas* is the Greek way of writing the Hebrew word *Jonah*, as *Elias* is for *Elijah*.

{l} "adulterous generation" Isa 57:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 40

Verse 40. *For as Jonas was three days*, etc. See Jon 1:17. This event took place in the Mediterranean Sea, somewhere between Joppa and Tarshish, when he was fleeing *from* Nineveh. It is said that the *whale* seldom passes into that sea, and that its throat is too small to admit a man. It is probable, therefore, that a fish of the *shark kind* is intended. Sharks have been known often to swallow a man entire. The fish in the book of Jonah is described merely as a *great fish*, without specifying the kind. It is well known that the Greek word translated *whale*, in the New Testament, does not of necessity mean a whale, but may denote a large fish of any kind.

Three days and three nights. It will be seen, in the account of the resurrection of Christ, that he was in the grave but two nights and a part of three days. See Mt 28:6. This computation is, however, strictly in accordance with the Jewish mode of reckoning. If it had not been, the Jews would have understood it, and would have charged our Saviour as being a false prophet; for it was well known to them that he had spoken this prophecy, Mt 27:63. Such a charge, however, was never made; and it is plain, therefore, that what was *meant* by the prediction was accomplished. It was a maxim, also, among the Jews, in computing time, that a part of a day was to be received as the whole. Many instances of this kind occur in both sacred and profane history. See 2Ch 10:5-12 Ge 42:17,18.

Comp. Es 4:16 with Es 5:1.

In the heart of the earth. The Jews used the word *heart* to denote the *interior* of a thing, or to speak of being in a thing. It means, here, to be in the grave or sepulchre.

{m} "as Jonas" Jon 1:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 41

Verse 41. *The men of Nineveh*. Nineveh was the capital of the Assyrian empire. It was founded by Ashur, Ge 10:11. It was situated on the banks of the river Tigris, to the north-east of Babylon. It is now so completely destroyed that geographers are unable to ascertain whether it was on the eastern or western bank. It was a city of vast extent, and of corresponding wickedness. It was forty-eight miles in circuit; its walls were one hundred feet high, and ten thick, and were defended by fifteen hundred towers, each two hundred feet in height. It contained in the time of Jonah, it is supposed, six hundred thousand inhabitants. The destruction of Nineveh, threatened by Jonah in forty days, was suspended, by their repentance, two hundred years. It was then overthrown by the

Babylonians, about six hundred years before Christ. During the siege, a mighty inundation of the river Tigris took place, which threw down a part of the walls, through which the enemy entered, and sacked and destroyed the city. This destruction had been foretold one hundred and fifteen years before, by Nahum, Na 1:8 "But with an overwhelming flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof." And Na 2:6: "The gates of the river shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved." The place is completely destroyed. The very situation is unknown. If it seem strange that ancient cities are so completely destroyed that no remains of brick or stone are to be found, it should be remembered that they were built of *clay* dried only in the sun, and not burned; that frequent rams softened the clay; and that the mighty walls and dwellings, in the lapse of ages, would sink down into an undistinguished heap of ruins.

Shall condemn it. That is, their conduct, in repenting at Jonah's prediction, shall condemn this generation. They, ignorant and wicked heathen, repented when threatened with *temporal* judgment by a mere man—Jonah; you, Jews, professing to be enlightened, though threatened for your great wickedness with eternal punishment *by the Son of God*—-a far greater Being than Jonah—repent not, and must therefore meet with a far heavier condemnation.

{n} "condemnation" Ro 2:27 {o} "at the preaching" Jon 3:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 42

Verse 42. *The queen of the south*. That is, the queen of Sheba, 1Ki 10:1. Sheba was probably a city of Arabia, situated to the south of Judea. Comp. **See Barnes "Isa 60:6"**.

From the uttermost parts of the earth. This means simply from the most distant parts of the hospitable world *then known*. See a similar expression in De 28:49. As the knowledge of geography was limited, the place was in fact by no means in the extreme parts of the earth. It means that she came from a remote country; and she would condemn that generation, for *she* came *a great distance* to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and the Jews of that age would not listen to the wisdom of One *much greater* than Solomon, *though present with them*.

{p} "queen" Lu 11:31 {q} "she came" 2Ch 9:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 43

Verses 43-45. *When the unclean spirit*, etc. The *general sentiment* which our Saviour here teaches is much more easily understood than the illustration which he uses. The Jews had asked a sign *from heaven* that should decisively prove that he was the Messiah, and satisfy their unbelief. He replies, that though he should give them such a sign—a proof conclusive and satisfactory; and though for a time they should profess to believe, and apparently reform—yet such was the obstinacy of their unbelief and wickedness, that they would soon return to them, and become worse and worse. Infidelity and wickedness, like an evil spirit in a possessed man, were appropriately at home in them. If driven out, they would find no other place so comfortable and undisturbed as their bosoms,

Everywhere they would be comparatively like an evil spirit going through deserts and lonely places, and finding no place of test. They would return, therefore, and dwell with them.

He walketh through dry places. That is, through *deserts*—regions of country unwatered, sandy, barren, desolate, That out Saviour here speaks according to the ancient opinions of the Jews, that evil spirits had their abodes in those desolate uninhabited regions, there can be no doubt. Nor can there be any doubt that the Bible gives countenance to the opinion. Thus Re 18:2: "Babylon—is become the habitation *of devils*, and the hold of *every foul spirit*;" that is, has become *desolate* —a place where evil spirits appropriately dwell. So Isa 13:21: "And *satyrs* shall dance there ;" i.e., according to the ancient Greek translation, "*devils*, or *demons*, shall dance there." See also Jer 50:39. **See Barnes "Isa 34:14".**

See Barnes "De 32:17".

Seeking rest, and findeth none, Thus desolate and dry regions are represented as uncomfortable habitations; so much so, that the dissatisfied spirit, better pleased with a dwelling in the bosoms of men, as affording an opportunity of doing evil, seeks a return there.

{r} "When the unclean" Lu 11:24 {s} "he walketh" Job 1:7 1Pe 5:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 44

Verse 44. *Then he saith, I will return into my house*, etc. The *man* is called his *house*, because he had been the place where the spirit had dwelt.

He findeth it empty, etc. There is here the continuance of the reference to the dwelling of the spirit in men. He was called his *house*. By the absence of the evil spirit, the house is represented as unoccupied, or empty, swept, and garnished; that is, while the evil spirit was away, the man was restored to his right mind, was freed from his wicked influence.

Garnished. Adorned, put in order, furnished. Applied to the *man*, it means that his mind was sane and regular when the evil spirit was gone; or, he had a *lucid interval*.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 45

Verse 45. *Then goeth he*, etc. Seeing the state of the man, dissatisfied with a lonely dwelling in the desert where he could do no evil, envious of the happiness of the individual, and supremely bent on evil, he resolved to increase his power of malignant influences, and return. He is therefore represented as taking seven other spirits still worse, and returning to his former habitation. Seven denotes a large but indefinite number. It was a favourite number with the Jews, and was used to denote completeness or perfection, or any finished or complete number. See 1Sa 2:5 Re 1:4. Here it means a sufficient number completely to occupy and harass his soul.

Even so shall it be with this generation. This shows the scope and design of this illustration. The state of that man was a representation of that generation of men. Much might be done to cure their unbelief; much to reform them externally; but such was the firm hold which the principles of infidelity and wickedness had taken of their minds *as their proper habitation*, that they would

return, after all the means used to reform them, and the people would be worse and worse. And this was literally accomplished. After all the instructions and miracles of the Saviour and his apostles; after all that had been done for them by holy men and prophets, and by the judgments and mercies of God; and after all their external temporary reformations—like the temporary departure of an evil spirit from a man possessed—yet such was their love of wickedness, that the nation became worse and worse. They increased in crime, like the sevenfold misery and wretchedness of the man into whose bosom the seven additional evil spirits came. They rejected God's messengers, abused his mercies, crucified his Son, and God gave their temple, and capital, and nation, into the hands of the Romans, and thousands of the people to destruction.

It is not *proved*, by this passage, that evil spirits actually *dwell* in deserts. It is proved only that such was the opinion of the Jews; that it was drawn from some expressions in the Bible; and that *such expressions were sufficiently clear to justify our Saviour in drawing an argument from them to confound those who firmly believed that such was the case*. Nor is there any absurdity in the opinion.

For

(1.) there are evil spirits. **See Barnes "Mt 8:33"**.

(2.) They must exist in *some place*.

(3.) There is as much propriety that they should be located about our earth as anywhere.

(4.) The clear doctrine of the Bible is, that many of them have much to do with our world.

(5.) It is as reasonable that they should dwell commonly in desolate and uninhabited regions as anywhere else.

{t} "worse than the first" Heb 6:4 10:26; 2Pe 2:20,22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 46

Verses 46-50. See also Mr 3:31-35 Lu 8:19-21.

His brethren. There has been some difference of opinion about the persons who were meant here; some supposing that they were children of Mary his mother, others that they were the children of Mary the wife of Cleophas or Alpheus his *cousins*, and called brethren according to the customs of the Jews. The natural and obvious meaning is, however, that they were the children of Mary his mother. See also Mr 6:3. To this opinion, moreover, there can be no valid objection.

{u} "his mother" Mr 3:31 Lu 8:19 {v} "brethren stood" Mt 13:55

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 47

Verse 47. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes on "Mt 12:46"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 48

Verse 48. *Who is my mother*? etc. There was no want of affection or respect in Jesus towards his mother, as is proved by his whole life. See especially Lu 2:51 Joh 19:25-27. This question was asked merely to *fix the attention* of the hearers, and to prepare them for the answer; that is, to show them who sustained towards him the nearest and most tender relation. To do this he pointed to his disciples: Dear and tender as were the ties which bound him to his mother and brethren, yet those which bound him to his disciples were more tender and sacred. How great was his love for his disciples, when it was more than even that for his mother! And what a bright illustration of his own doctrine, that we ought to forsake father, and mother, and friends, and-houses, and lands, to be his followers.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 49

Verse 49. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 12:46"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 12 - Verse 50

Verse 50. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 12:46"**

{w} "will of my Father" Mt 7:20 Joh 15:14; Ga 5:6 Heb 2:11; 1Jn 2:17.

REMARKS ON MATTHEW CHAPTER 12

(1.) Our Saviour has taught us the right use of the Sabbath, Mt 12:1-13. His conduct was an explanation of the meaning of the fourth commandment. By his example we may learn what may be done. He himself performed only those works on the Sabbath which were strictly necessary for life, and those which went to benefit the poor, the afflicted, and needy. Whatever work is done on the Sabbath that is not for these ends, must be wrong. All labour that can as well be done on another day; all which is not for the support of life, or to aid the ignorant, poor, and sick, must be wrong. This example justifies teaching the ignorant, supplying the wants of the poor, instructing children in the precepts of religion, teaching those to read in Sabbath-schools who have no other opportunity for learning, and visiting the sick, when we go not for formality, or *to save time on some other day*, but to do them good.

(2.) The Sabbath is of vast service to mankind. It was made for man, not for man to violate or profane, or to be merely idle, but to improve to his spiritual and eternal good. Where men are employed through six days in worldly occupations, it is kind towards them to give them one day particularly to prepare for eternity. Where there is no Sabbath there is no religion. There are no schools for instructing the poor. There are no means of enlightening the ignorant. This truth, from the history of the world, will bear to be recorded in letters of gold, *that the true religion will exist among men only when they strictly observe the Sabbath*. They, therefore, who do most to promote

the observance of the Sabbath, are doing most for religion and the welfare of man. In this respect, Sunday-school teachers may do more, perhaps, than all the world besides, for the best interests of the world.

(3.) In the conduct of Christ, Mt 12:14,15 we have an example of Christian prudence. Re did not throw himself needlessly into danger, he did not remain to provoke opposition. He felt that his time was not come, and that his life, by a prudent course, should be preserved. He therefore withdrew. Religion requires us to sacrifice our lives rather than deny the Saviour. To throw our lives away, when with good conscience they might be preserved, is self-murder.

(4.) The rejection of the gospel in one place is often the occasion of its being received elsewhere, Mt 12:15 Men may reject it to their own destruction; but somewhere it *will* be preached, and will be the power of God unto salvation. The wicked cannot drive it out of the world. They only secure their own ruin, and, against their will, benefit and save others. To reject it is like turning a beautiful and fertilizing stream from a man's own land. He does not, he cannot dry it up. *It will flow somewhere else*. He injures himself, and perhaps benefits multitudes. Men never commit so great foolishness and wickedness, and so completely fail in what they aim at, as in rejecting the gospel. A man, hating the light of the sun, might get into a cave or dungeon, and be in total darkness; but the sun will continue to shine, and millions, in spite of him, will be benefited by it. So it is with the gospel.

(5.) Christ was mild, still, retiring; not clamorous or noisy, Mt 12:19. So is all religion. There is no piety in noise; if there was, then thunder and artillery would be piety. Confusion and discord are not religion. Loud words and shouting axe not religion. Religion is love, reverence, fear, holiness, deep and awful regard for the presence of God, profound apprehensions of the solemnities of eternity, imitation of the Saviour. It is still. It is full of awe—an awe too great to strive, or cry, or lift up the voice in the streets. If men ever should be overawed, and filled with emotions *repressing* noise and clamour, it should be when they approach *the great God*. This great truth is the essence of religion, that we have most of it when we come nearest *in all things* to the Lord Jesus Christ.

(6.) The feeble may trust to Jesus, Mt 12:20. A child of any age, an ignorant person, the poorest man, may come, and he shall in no wise be cast out. It is a sense of our weakness that Jesus seeks. Where that is, *he* will strengthen us, and we shall not fail.

(7.) Grace shall not be extinguished, Mt 12:20. Jesus, where he finds it in the feeblest degree, will not destroy it. He will cherish it. He will kindle it to a flame. It shall burn brighter and brighter, till it "glows with the pure spirits above."

(8.) Men are greatly prone to ascribe all religion to the devil, Mt 12:24. Anything that is unusual, anything that confounds them, anything that troubles their consciences, they ascribe to fanaticism, overheated zeal, and Satan. It has always been so. It is sometimes an easy way to stifle their own convictions, and to bring religion into contempt. *Somehow or other*, like the Pharisees, infidels must account for revivals of religion, for striking instances of conversion, and for the great and undeniable effects which the gospel produces. How easy to *say* that it is *delusion*, and that it is the work of the devil! How easy to show at once the terrible opposition of their own hearts to God, and to boast themselves, in their own wisdom, in having found a *cause* so simple for all the effects which religion produces in the world! How much pains, also, men will take to secure their own perdition, rather, than to admit it to be possible that Christianity should be true!

(9.) We see the danger of blasphemy—the danger of trifling with the influences of the Holy Spirit, Mt 12:31,32. Even if we do not commit the unpardonable sin, yet we see that *all* trifling with the Holy Ghost is a sin very near to God, and attended with infinite danger. He that *laughs*

away the thoughts of death and eternity; he that seeks the society of the gay and trifling, Or of the sensual and profane, for the *express* purpose of driving away these thoughts; and he that struggles directly against his convictions, and is resolved that he *will not* submit to God, may be, for aught he knows, making his damnation sure. Why should God ever return, when he has once rejected the gospel? Who would be to blame if the sinner is then lost? Assuredly not God. None but himself. Children sometimes do this. Then is the time, the very time, when they should begin to love God and Jesus Christ. Then the Spirit also strives. Many have then given their hearts to him, and become Christians. Many more might have clone so, if they had not grieved away the Spirit of God.

(10.) We see the danger of rejecting Christ, Mt 12:38-42. All past ages, all the wicked and the good, the foolish and the wise, will rise up in the day of judgment, and condemn fit, if we do not believe the gospel. No people, heretofore, have seen so much light as we do in this age. And no people can be so awfully condemned as those who, in a land of light, of Sabbaths, and Sabbath-schools, reject Christ, and go to hell. Among the hundred and twenty thousand children of Nineveh, Jon 4:11 there was not one single Sunday- school. There was no one to tell them of God and the Saviour. They have died and gone to judgment. Children now living will die also, and go to meet them in the day of judgment. How will they condemn the children of this age, if they do not love the Lord Jesus Christ!

(11.) Sinners, when awakened, if they grieve away the Spirit of God, become worse than before, Mt 12:43-45. They are never as they were. Their hearts are hard, their consciences are seared, they hate religious men, and they plunge deeper and deeper into sin. Seven devils often dwell where one did; and God gives the man over to blindness of mind and hardness of heart. This shows, also, the great guilt and danger of grieving the Holy Ghost.

(12.) We see the love of Christ for his followers, Mt 12:46-50. Much as he loved his mother, yet he loved his disciples more. He still loves them. He will always love them. His heart is full of affection for them. And though poor, and despised, and unknown to the rich and mighty, yet to Jesus they are still clearer than mother, and sisters, and brothers.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 1

MATTHEW CHAPTER 13

Verses 1,2. *The sea side*. This was the sea of Tiberias. The multitude stood on the shore near to him, so that he could be easily heard. He went into a ship—that is, a boat—and sat down to address them. Few spectacles could be more interesting than a vast crowd, on the banks of a smooth and tranquil sea—an emblem of his instructions— and the Son of God addressing them on the great interests of eternity.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 2

Verse 2. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 13:1"**

{x} "into a ship" Lu 5:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 3

Verses 3-9. *In parables*. The word parable is derived from a Greek word signifying *to compare together*, and denotes a similitude taken from a natural object to illustrate a spiritual or moral subject. It is a narrative of some fictitious or real event, in order to illustrate more clearly some truth that the speaker wished to communicate. In early ages it was much used. Heathen writers, as AEsop, often employed it. In the time of Christ it was in common use. The prophets had used it, and Christ employed it often in teaching his disciples. It is not necessary to suppose that the narratives were strictly true. The main thing—*the inculcation of spiritual truth*—was gained equally, whether it was true, or was only a supposed case. Nor was there any dishonesty in this. It was well understood. No person was deceived. The speaker was not understood to affirm the thing *literally narrated*, but only to fix the attention more firmly on the moral truth that he presented. The design of speaking in parables was the following:

(1.) To convey truth in a more interesting manner to the mind; adding to the truth conveyed the beauty of a lovely image or narrative.

(2.) To teach spiritual truth so as to arrest the attention of ignorant people, making an appeal to them through the *senses*.

(3.) To convey some offensive truth, some pointed personal rebuke, in such a way as to bring it *home* to the conscience. Of this kind was the parable which Nathan delivered to David, 2Sa 12:1-7 and many of our Saviour's parables addressed to the Jews.

(4.) To *conceal* from one part of his audience truths which he intended others should understand. Thus Christ often, by this means, delivered truths to his disciples in the presence of the Jews, which he well knew the Jews would not understand; truths pertaining to them particularly, and which he was under no obligations to explain to the Jews. See Mr 4:33 Mt 13:13-16.

Our Saviour's parables are distinguished above all others for clearness, purity, chasteness, intelligibility, importance of instruction, and simplicity. They are taken mostly from the affairs of common life, and intelligible, therefore, to all men. They contain much of *himself* his doctrine, life, design in coming, and claims; and are therefore of importance to all men; and they are told in a style of native simplicity intelligible to the child, yet instructive to men of every rank and age. In his parables, as in all his instructions, he excelled all men in the purity, importance, and sublimity of Iris doctrine.

Verse 3. *A Sower went forth to sow*. The image here is taken from an employment known to all men, and therefore intelligible to all. Nor can there be a more striking illustration of preaching the gospel, than placing the seed in the ground to spring up hereafter, and bear fruit.

Sower. One who sows or scatters seed. A farmer. It is not improbable that one was near the Saviour when he spoke this parable.

{y} "sower" Mr 4:2 Lu 8:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Some seeds fell by the way side*. That is, the hard *path* or headland, which the plough had not touched, and where there was no opportunity for it to sink into the earth.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Stony places*. Where there was little earth, but where it was hard and rocky; so that the roots could not strike down into the earth for sufficient moisture to support the plant, When the sun became hot, they of course withered away. They sprang up the sooner because there was little earth to cover them.

Forthwith. Immediately. Not that they sprouted and grew any quicker or faster than the others, but they were not so long in reaching the surface. Having little root, they soon withered away.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 6

Verse 6. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Among thorns*. That is, in a part of the field where the thorns and shrubs had been imperfectly cleared away, and not destroyed. They grew with the grain, crowded it, shaded it, exhausted the earth, and thus choked it.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Into good ground*. The fertile and rich soil. In sowing, by far the largest proportion of seed will fall into the good soil; but Christ did not intend to teach that these proportions would be exactly the same among those who heard the gospel. Parables are designed to teach some *general* truth; and the circumstances should not be pressed too much in explaining them.

An hundredfold, etc. That is, a hundred, sixty, or thirty *grains*, for each one that was sowed—an increase by no means uncommon. Some grains of wheat will produce twelve or fifteen hundred

grains. The usual proportion on a field sown, however, is not more than twenty, fifty, or sixty bushels for one.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Who hath ears*, etc. This is a proverbial expression, implying that it was every man's duty to pay attention to what was spoken, Mt 11:15.

{z} "Who hath ears" Mt 11:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 10

Verses 10-17. Christ, in these verses, gives a *reason* why he used this manner of instruction. See also Mr 4:10-12 Lu 8:9,10.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *The mysteries of the kingdom*. The word *mystery*, in the Bible, properly means a thing that is *concealed*, or that *has been concealed*. It does not mean that the thing was *incomprehensible*, or even difficult to be understood. The thing might be *plain* enough if revealed, but it means simply that it *had* not been made known. Thus *the mysteries of the kingdom* do not mean any doctrines incomprehensible in themselves considered, but simply doctrines about the preaching of the *gospel*, and the establishment of the new kingdom of the Messiah which had not been understood, and which were *as yet* concealed from the great body of the Jews. See Ro 16:26 11:25; Eph 3:3,4,9.

Of this nature was the truth that the gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles, that the Jewish polity was to cease, that the Messiah was to die, etc. To the disciples it was given to know these truths. It was important for them, as they were to carry the gospel around the globe. To the others it was not *then* given. They were too gross, too earthly; they had too grovelling conceptions of the Messiah's kingdom to understand these truths, even if presented. They were not to preach it, and hence our Saviour was at particular pains to instruct his apostles. The Pharisees, and Jews generally, were not prepared for it, and would not have believed it, and therefore he purposely employed a kind of teaching that they did not understand.

{a} "to know" Mt 11:25 Mr 4:11; 1Co 2:10-14 Eph 1:9,18, 3:9

Col 1:26,27; 1Jn 2:27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Whosoever hath*, etc. This is a proverbial mode of speaking. It means that a man who improves what light, grace, and opportunities he has, shall have them increased. From him that improves them not, it is proper that they should be taken away. The Jews had many opportunities of learning the truth, and some light still lingered among them. But they were gross and sensual, and misimproved them, and it was a just judgment that they should be deprived of them. Superior knowledge was given to the disciples of Christ; they improved it, however slowly, and the promise was that it should be greatly increased.

{b} "For whosoever" Mt 25:29 Lu 9:26

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Because they seeing see not*. Mr 4:12 Lu 8:10 say, "That seeing, they may not see," etc. But there is no difference. Matthew simply states the fact, that though they saw the natural meaning of the story—though they literally understood the parable—yet they did not understand its spiritual signification. Mark and Luke do not state the fact, but affirm that he spoke with this intention—implying that such was the result. Nor was there any dishonesty in this, or any unfair disguise, He had truths to state which he wished *his disciples* particularly to understand. They were of great importance to their ministry. Had he clearly and fully stated them to the Jews, they would have taken his life long before they did. He therefore chose to state the doctrines so that if their *hearts* had been right, and if they had not been malignant and blind, *they might have understood them*. His doctrines he stated in the best possible way; and it was not *his* fault if they did not understand him. By little and little, in this way, he prepared many, even of the Jews, to receive the truth when it was proposed by the only possible way of ever gaining access to their minds. It was, moreover, entirely proper and right to impart instruction to his disciples, which he did not *intend* for others.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 14

Verses 14,15. *And in them is fulfilled*, etc. This place is quoted substantially from Isa 6:9,10. It was literally fulfilled in the time of Isaiah. In the time of Christ the people had the same character. Like them, they closed their eyes upon the truth, and rejected the Divine teaching. The words of Isaiah were, therefore, *as well fitted* to express the character of the people in the time of Christ, as in that of the prophet. In this sense they were *fulfilled*, or filled up, or *a case occurred that corresponded to their meaning*. **See Barnes "Mt 1:22"**.

It is not by any means intended that Isaiah, when he spoke these words, had any reference to the time of Christ. The meaning in both places is, that the people were so gross, sensual, and prejudiced, that they *would* not see the truth, or understand anything that was contrary to their

grovelling opinions and sensual desires; a case by no means uncommon in the world. See the passage more fully explained **See Barnes "Isa 6:1"**

and following.

Waxed gross. Literally, *has become fat*. It is commonly applied to the body, but is also used to denote one who is stupid and foolish in mind. Here it means that the people were so sensual and corrupt that they did not see or understand the pure spiritual principles of the gospel.

Lest—they should see, etc. Lest they should see their lost condition as sinners, and turn and live. The reason given here why they did not hear and understand the gospel is, that their heart was wrong. They would not attend to the things that make for their peace.

I should heal them. Should pardon, sanctify, and save them. Sin is often represented as a disease, and the pardon and recovery of the soul from sin as *healing*.

{c} "of Esias" Isa 6:9 {d} "By hearing" Eze 12:2 Joh 12:40; Ac 28:26,27; Ro 11:8 2Co 3:14,15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 15

Verse 15. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes on "Mt 13:14"

{e} "dull of hearing" Heb 5:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Blessed are your eyes*, etc. That is, you are happy that you are permitted to see *truth* which they *will* not see. You are permitted to understand the spiritual meaning of the parables, and in some degree the plan of salvation.

{f} "But blessed" Mt 16:17 Lu 10:23,24 Joh 20:29; 2Co 4:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Many prophets and righteous men*, etc. They wished to see the times of the Messiah. They looked to it as a time when the hopes of the world would be fulfilled, and the just be happy. See Joh 8:5,6, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad." See also 1Pe 1:10-12 Heb 11:13. So Isaiah and the prophets looked forward to the coming of the Messiah as the consummation of their wishes, and the end of the prophecies, Re 19:10. The object always dearest to the hearts of all righteous men is, to witness the coming and advancement of the kingdom of Christ.

{g} "that many" Eph 3:5,6; Heb 11:13 1Pe 1:10,11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 18

Verses 18-23. See also Mr 4:13-20 Lu 8:11-15. *Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower*. That is, hear the explanation, or spiritual meaning of the narrative given before. Mark adds, Mr 4:13, "Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?" By which it seems that he regarded this as one of the simplest and plainest of them, and gave an explanation of it that they might understand the general principles of interpreting them.

{h} "Hear ye" Mr 4:14 Lu 8:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *When any one heareth*, etc. The seed represents the word of God communicated in any manner to the minds of men, by the Scriptures, by preaching, by acts of providence, or by the direct influence of the Holy Spirit.

Then cometh the wicked one. That is, Satan, Mr 4:15 or the devil Lu 8:12 the one eminently *wicked*, the accuser, the tempter. He is represented by the fowls that came and picked up the seed by the way-side. The gospel is preached to men hardened in sin. It makes no impression. It lies like seed in the hard path; it is easily taken away, and never suffered to take root.

{i} "word of the kingdom" Mt 4:23 {k} "wicked *one*" 1Jo 2:13,14, 3:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 20

Verses 20-22. *Into stony places*. Jesus explains this as denoting those who hear the gospel; who are caught with it as something new or pleasing; who profess themselves greatly delighted with it, and who are full of zeal for it. Yet they have no root in themselves. They are not true Christians. Their hearts are not changed. They have not seen their guilt and danger, and the true excellency of Christ. They are not *really* attached to the gospel; and when they are tried and persecution comes, they *fall*—as the rootless grain withers before the scorching rays of the noon-day sun.

Anon. *Quickly*, or *readily*. They do not look at it coolly and as matter of *principle*.

Is offended. That is, stumbles and falls. Persecution and trial are placed in his path, and he falls as he would over a *stumbling-block*, he has not strength of principle enough—not confidence in God to carry him through them.

The thorns. These represent cares, anxieties, and the deceitful lure of riches, or the way in which a *desire* to be rich deceives us. They take the time and attention. They do not leave opportunity to think and examine the state of the soul. Besides, riches allure, and promise what they do not yield. They promise to make us happy; but, when gained, they do not do it. The soul is not satisfied. There is the same desire to possess more wealth. And to this there is no end—*but death*. In doing it, there is every temptation to be dishonest, to cheat, to take advantage of others, to oppress others, and to wring their hard earnings from the poor. Every evil passion is therefore cherished by the love of gain; and it is no wonder that the word is choked, and every good feeling destroyed, by this

"execrable love of gold." See 1Ti 6:7-11. How many, oh how many, thus foolishly drown themselves in destruction and perdition! How many more might reach heaven, if it were not for this deep-seated love of that which fills with care, deceives the soul, and finally leaves it naked, and guilty, and lost!
See Barnes on "Mt 13:18"

{l} "joy receiveth" Isa 58:2 Eze 33:31,32 Joh 5:35; Ga 4:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 21

Verse 21. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 13:20"; **See Barnes on "Mt 13:18"**

{m} "offended" Mt 24:10 26:31; 2Ti 4:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 22

Verse 22. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 13:18"; **See Barnes on "Mt 13:20"**

{n} "care of this world" Lu 14:16-24 {o} "choke the word" Mr 10:23 1Ti 6:9; 2Ti 4:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Into the good ground*. Those whose hearts are prepared by grace to receive it honestly, and to give it full opportunity to grow. In a rich and mellow soil— a heart that submits itself to the full influence of truth, unchecked by cares and anxieties; under the showers and summer suns of Divine grace; with the heart spread open, like a broad luxuriant field, to the rays of the morning, and to evening dews—the gospel takes deep root, and grows; it has full room, and then and there only shows what it is.
{p} "beareth fruit" Joh 15:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 24

Verses 24-30. *The kingdom of heaven is likened*, etc. That is, the gospel resembles. The kingdom of heaven, **See Barnes "Mt 3:2"**

means here the effect of the gospel by its being preached. The meaning of this parable is plain. The field represents the *world* in which the gospel is preached. The *good seed*, the truths preached by Christ and his apostles.

{q} "parable" Isa 28:10,13 {r} "good seed" 1Pe 1:23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *While men slept, his enemy came*, etc. That is, *in the night*, when it could be done without being seen, an enemy came and scattered bad seed on the new-ploughed field, perhaps before the good seed had been harrowed in. Satan thus sows false doctrine in darkness. In the very place where the truth is preached, and while the hearts of people are open to receive it, by false but plausible teachers, he takes care to inculcate false sentiments. Often it is one of his arts, in a revival of religion, to spread secretly dangerous notions of piety. Multitudes are persuaded that they are Christians, who are deceived. They are awakened, convicted, and alarmed. They take this for conversion. Or they find their burden gone; they fancy that they hear a voice; or a text of Scripture is *brought* to them, saying that their sins are forgiven; or they see Christ hanging on the cross in a vision; or they dream that their sins are pardoned, and they suppose they are Christians. But they are deceived. None of these things are any conclusive evidence of piety. All these *may* exist, and still there be no true love of God, or Christ, and no real hatred of sin, and change of heart. An enemy may do it to deceive them, and to bring dishonour on religion.

Sowed tares. By *tares* is probably meant a degenerate kind of wheat, or the darnel grass growing in Palestine. In its growth and form it has a strong resemblance to genuine wheat. But it either produces no grain, or that of a very inferior and hurtful kind. Probably it comes near to what we mean by *chess*. It was extremely difficult to separate it from the genuine wheat, on account of its similarity while growing. Thus it aptly represented hypocrites in the church. Strongly resembling Christians in their experience, and, in some respects, their lives, it is impossible to distinguish them from genuine Christians, nor can they be separated until it is done by the great Searcher of hearts at the day of judgment.: An enemy—the devil—hath done it. And nowhere has he shown profounder cunning, or done more to adulterate the purity of the gospel,

And went his way. There is something very expressive in this. He knew the soil; he knew how the seed would take root, and grow. He had only to sow the seed, and let alone. So Satan knows the soil in which he sows his doctrine. He knows that in the human heart it will take deep and rapid root. It needs but little culture. Grace needs constant attendance and care. Error, and sin, and hypocrisy, are the native products of the human heart; and, when left alone, start up with deadly luxuriancy.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Then appeared the tares also*. That is, then was first discovered the tares. They had grown with the wheat, but so much like it as not to be noticed, till the wheat began to ripen. So,

true piety and false hopes are not known by professions, by "blades," and leaves, and flowers, but *by the fruit*.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 27

Verse 27. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 28

Verse 28. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Ye root up also the wheat*. They so much resembled the true wheat, that even then it would be difficult to separate them. By gathering them, they would tread down the wheat, loosen and disturb the earth, and greatly injure the crop. In the harvest it could be done without injury.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *Let both grow together*. They would not spoil the true wheat; and in time of harvest it would be easy to separate them. Our Saviour teaches us here,

(1.) that hypocrites and deceived persons must be expected in the church.

(2.) That this is the work of the enemy of man. They are not the work of Christianity, any more than traitors are of patriotism, or counterfeiters are of the proper effect of legislating about money. They belong to the world; and hypocrisy is only one form of sin. The Christian religion never *made* a hypocrite; nor is there a hypocrite on the face of the earth whose principles and practice it does not condemn.

(3.) That all hope of removing them entirely would be vain.

(4.) That an attempt to remove them altogether would injure real Christianity, by causing excitements, discord, and hard feelings even among Christians.

(5.) That he will himself separate them at the proper time. There is no doubt that it is the duty of the church to attempt to keep itself pure, and to cut off gross and manifest offends, 1Co 5:4,5. He refers to those who may be suspected of hypocrisy, but against whom it cannot be proved; to those who so successfully imitate Christians as to make it difficult or impossible for man to distinguish them.

{s} "time of harvest" 1Ti 5:24 {t} "to burn them" Mal 4:1 {u} "wheat into my barn" Lu 3:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 31

Verses 31,32. See also Mr 4:30-32. *The kingdom of heaven*. **See Barnes "Mt 3:2"**.

It means here either piety in a renewed heart, or the church. In either case the commencement is small. In the heart, it is at first feeble, easily injured, and much exposed. In the church, there were few at first, ignorant, unknown, and un- honoured; yet soon it was to spread through the world.

Grain of mustard seed. The plant here described was very different from that which is known among us. It was several years before it bore fruit, and became properly a tree. Mustard, with us, is an annual plant; it is always small, and is properly an herb. The Hebrew writers speak of the mustard-tree as one on which they could *climb*, as on a fig-tree. Its size was much owing to the climate. All plants of that nature grow much larger in a warm climate, like that of Palestine, than in colder regions. The seeds of this tree were remarkably small:; so that they, with the great size of the plant, were an apt illustration of the progress of the church, and of the nature of faith, Mt 17:20.

Young converts often suppose they have much religion. It is not so. They are, indeed, in a new world. Their hearts glow with new affections. They have an elevation, an ecstasy of motion, which they may not have afterwards—like a blind man suddenly restored to sight, The sensation is new, and peculiarly vivid. Yet little is seen distinctly. His impressions are indeed more vivid and cheering than those of him who has long seen, and to whom objects are familiar. In a little time, too, the young convert will see more distinctly, will judge more intelligently, will love more strongly, though not with so much *new emotion*, and will be prepared to make more sacrifices for the cause of Christ.

{v} "grain of mustard seed" Mr 4:30

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 32

Verse 32. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes on "Mt 13:31"

{w} "becometh a tree" Eze 17:23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *The kingdom of heaven*. This, here, means the same as in the last parable, perhaps, however, intending to denote more properly the secret and hidden nature of piety in the soul. The other parable declared the fact that the gospel would greatly spread, and that piety in the heart would greatly increase. This declares the *way* or *mode* in which it would be done. It is secret, silent, steady; pervading all the faculties of the soul, and all the kingdoms of the world, as leaven, or yeast, though hidden in the flour, and though deposited only in one place, works silently till *all* the mass is brought under its influence.

Three measures. These were small measures, (see the margin) but the particular amount is of no consequence to the story. Nor is anything to be drawn from the fact that three are mentioned. It is mentioned as a circumstance giving interest to the parable, but designed to convey no spiritual instruction. The *measure* mentioned here probably contained about a peck and a half.

{1} "three measures" "The Greek word signifies a measure, (about a peck and a half, wanting a little more than a pint.)

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 34

Verses 34,35. *That it might be fulfilled*. This is taken from Ps 78:2,3. The *sense*, and the very words of the Psalm, are given. Christ taught as did that prophet—Asaph—in parables. The words of Asaph described the manner in which Christ taught, and in this sense it could be said that they were fulfilled. **See Barnes "Mt 1:22,23"**.

{x} "in parables" Mr 4:33

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 35

Verse 35. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes on "Mt 13:34"

{y} "by the prophet" Ps 78:2 {z} "kept secret" Lu 10:14 Ro 16:25,26 Col 1:26

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 36

Verses 36-43. *Declare unto us*. That is, explain the meaning of the parable. This was done in so plain a manner as to render comment unnecessary. The Son of man, the Lord Jesus, sows the good seed; that is, preaches the gospel. This he did personally, and does now by his ministers, his providence, and his Spirit, by all the means of conveying *truth* to the mind. This seed was, by various means, to be carried over all the world. It was to be confined to no particular nation or people. The good seed was the children of the kingdom; that is, of the kingdom of God, or Christians. For these the Saviour toiled and died. They are the fruit of his labours. Yet amidst them were wicked men; and all hypocrites and unbelievers in the church are the work of Satan. Yet they must remain together till the end; when they shall be separated, and the righteous saved, and the wicked lost. The one shall shine clear as the sun; the other be cast into a furnace of fire—a most expressive image of suffering. We have no idea of more acute suffering, than to be thrown into the fire, and to have our bodies made capable of bearing the burning heat, and living on in this burning heat for ever and for ever. It is not certain that our Saviour meant to teach here that hell is made up of *material* fire; but it is certain that he meant to teach that this would be a proper representation of those sufferings. We may be further assured that the Redeemer would not deceive, or use words to

torment and tantalize us. He would not talk of hell-fire which had no existence; nor would the God of truth hold out frightful images merely to terrify mankind. If *he* has spoken of hell, then there *is* a hell. If he meant to say that the wicked shall suffer, then they *will* suffer. If he did not mean to deceive mankind, then there is a hell; and then the wicked *will* suffer. The impenitent, therefore, should be alarmed. And the righteous, however much wickedness they may see, and however many hypocrites there may be in the church, should be cheered with the prospect that soon the just shall be separated from the unjust, and that *they* shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 37

Verse 37. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 13:36"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 38

Verse 38. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 13:36"**

{a} "the world" Ro 10:18 Col 1:6 {b} "of the kingdom" 1Pe 1:23 {c} "of the wicked" Joh 8:44 Ac 13:10; 1Jo 3:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 39

Verse 39. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 13:36"

{d} "end of the world" Joe 3:13 Re 14:15 {e} "the angels" Re 14:15-19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 40

Verse 40. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 13:36"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 41

Verse 41. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 13:36"

{1} "all things" or, "scandals" {g} "and them" Lu 13:27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 42

Verse 42. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 13:36"

{h} "And shall" Mt 3:12 Re 19:20, 20:10
{i} "there shall be wailing" Mt 13:50 8:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 43

Verse 43. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 13:36"

{k} "righteous shine" Da 12:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 44

Verse 44. *The kingdom of heaven*. The gospel. The new dispensation. The offer of eternal life. See Mt 3:2. He compares it to treasure hid in a field. That is, to money concealed; or, more likely, to a mine of silver or gold, that was undiscovered by others, and unknown to the owner of the field.

He hideth. That is, he conceals the fact that he has found it; he does not tell of it. With a view of obtaining this, he says that a man would go and sell his property, and buy the field. The conduct of the man would be *dishonest*. It would be his duty to inform the owner of the field of the discovery. He would be really endeavouring to gain property belonging to another at far less than its real value; and the principle of real integrity would require him to inform him of the discovery. But Christ does not intend to vindicate his conduct, he merely states the way in which men do *actually* manage to obtain wealth. He states a case, where a man *would* actually *sacrifice his property*, and practise diligence and watchfulness, to obtain it. The *point* of the parable lies in his *earnestness*, his anxiety, his care, and his obtaining it. The gospel is valuable as such a treasure, Ps 19:10 Pr 3:13-15. From most men it is hid. When a man sees it, and hears it, it is his duty to sacrifice all in the way to his obtaining it; and to seek it with the earnestness with which other men seek for gold. The truth often lies buried; it is like rich veins of ore in the sacred Scriptures; it must be searched out with diligence; and it will repay him for all his sacrifices, Lu 14:33 Php 3:8.

{l} "in a field" Pr 2:4,5 {m} "selleth all" Php 3:7,8 {n} "buyeth" Isa 45:1 Re 3:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 45

Verses 45,46. *The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man*. The meaning is, that the proper seeking for salvation, or the proper conduct in reference to religion, is like the conduct of a *merchantman*. In his searches he found one pearl of great value, and sold all his possessions to obtain it. So, says he, men seeking for happiness and finding the gospel—the pearl of great price—should be willing to lose all other things for this. Pearls are precious stones, found in the shells of oysters, chiefly in the East Indies, Mt 7:6. They are valuable on account of their beauty, and because they are rare. The value of them is greatly increased by their size. The meaning of this parable is nearly the same as the other. It is designed to represent the gospel as of more value than all other things, and to impress on us the duty of sacrificing all that we possess in order to obtain it.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 46

Verse 46. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 13:45"

{v} "one pearl" Pr 3:14,15, 8:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 47

Verses 47-50. *The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net*, etc. This parable does not differ in meaning from that of the tares. The gospel is compared to a net, dragging along on the bottom of the lake, and collecting all—good and bad. The gospel may be expected to do the same. But in the end of the world, when the net *is drawn in*, the bad will be separated from the good: the one will be lost, and the other saved. Our Saviour never fails to keep before our minds the great truth that there is to be a day of judgment, and that there will be a separation of the good and evil. He came to preach salvation; and it is a remarkable fact, also, that all the most striking accounts of hell, and of the sufferings of the damned, are from his lips. How does this agree with the representation of those who say that all will be saved?
{p} "of every kind" Mt 22:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 48

Verse 48. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 13:47"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 49

Verse 49. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 13:47"

{q} "sever" Mt 25:32

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 50

Verse 50. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 13:47"

{r} "And shall cast" Mt 13:42

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 51

Verse 51. Jesus kindly asked them whether they understood these things. If not, he was still willing to teach them. He enjoined on them their duty to make a proper use of this knowledge, by speaking another parable.

Every Scribe—instructed unto the kingdom of heaven. That is, every man that is acquainted with the gospel, or with the truth. A scribe was a learned man. As the disciples had said that *they* had understood the truth, he says that it should not be unemployed. They should bring it forth in due time, like a householder bringing out of his treasury, or place of deposit, what had been laid up there at any time, as it was needed.

Bringeth forth. As occasion demands; as sickness, or calamity, or the wants of his family, or the poor require.

Treasure. The word treasure here means a place of deposit, not for money merely, but for anything necessary for the comfort of a family. It is the same as *treasury*, or a place of deposit.

New and old. Things lately acquired, or things that had been laid up for a long time. *So*, said Christ, be you. This truth, new or old, which you have gained, keep it not laid up and hid, but bring it forth, in due season, and on proper occasions, to benefit others. Every preacher should be properly instructed. Christ for three years gave instructions to the apostles; and they who preach should be able to understand the gospel; to defend it; and to communicate its truth to others. Human learning alone is indeed of no value to a minister; but all learning that will enable him better to understand the Bible, and to communicate its truths, *is* valuable, and should, if possible, be gained. A minister should be like the father of a family: distributing to the church as it needs; and out of his treasures bringing forth truth to confirm the feeble, enlighten the ignorant, and guide those in danger of straying away.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 52

Verse 52. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 13:51"**

{r} "out of his treasure" Pr 10:21 15:7, 18:4
{s} "new and old" So 7:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 53

Verse 53. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 13:51"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 54

Verse 54. *Into his own country*. That is, into Nazareth. Mark, who has also recorded this, Mr 6:1-6, says that it took place on the Sabbath. It was common for our Saviour to speak in the synagogues. Any Jew had a right to address the people, if called on by the minister; and our Saviour often availed himself of the right to instruct the people, and declare his doctrines. See Mt 4:23.

{t} "And when" Mr 6:1 Lu 4:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 55

Verses 55,56. *Is not this the carpenter's son*? Mark says, "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?" Both these expressions would probably be used in the course of the conversation; and Matthew has recorded one, and Mark the other. The expression recorded by Mark is a strong, perhaps decisive, proof that he had worked at the business till he was thirty years of age. The people in the neighbourhood would understand well the nature of his early employments. It is, therefore, almost certain that this had been his manner of life. A useful employment is always honourable. Idleness is the parent of mischief. Our Saviour, therefore, spent the greatest part of his life in honest, useful industry. Till the age of thirty he did not choose to enter on his great work; and it was proper, before that time, that he should set an example to the world of honourable, thorough humble industry. Life is not wasted in such employments. They are appointed as the lot of man. And in fidelity in the relations of life, though obscure; in honest industry, however humble; in patient labour, if connected with a life of religion, we may be sure that God will approve our conduct. It was, moreover, the custom of the Jews to train all their children—even those of wealth and learning—to some trade, or manual occupation. Thus Paul was a tent-maker. Comp. Ac 18:3.

This was an example of great condescension and humility. It staggers the faith of man, that the Son of God should labour in an occupation so obscure and lowly. The infidel sneers at the idea that

He that made the worlds should live thirty years in humble life, as a poor and unknown mechanic. Yet the same infidel will loudly praise Peter the Great of Russia, because he laid aside his imperial dignity, and endured the British service as a ship-carpenter, that he might learn the art of building a navy. Was the purpose of Peter of more importance than that of the Son of God? If Peter, the heir to the throne of the Czars, might leave his elevated rank, and descend to a humble employment, and secure by it the applause of the world, why might not the King of kings, for an infinitely higher object?

His brethren, James, etc. The fair interpretation of this passage is, that these were the sons and daughters of Joseph and Mary. The people in the neighbourhood thought so, and spoke of them as such.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 56

Verse 56. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 13:55"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 57

Verse 57. *They were offended in him*. That is, they took offence at his humble birth; and at the indigent circumstances of his family. They were too proud to be taught by one who, in family connexions, they took to be their equal or inferior. Men always look with envy on those of their own rank who advance pretensions to uncommon wisdom or superior power.

A prophet is not without honour, etc. This seems to be a proverbial expression. He advances it as a general truth. There *might* be some exceptions to it, but *He* was not an exception. Everywhere else he had been more honoured than at home. There they knew his family; they had seen his humble life; they had been his companions; they were envious of his wisdom, and too proud to be taught by him. A case remarkably similar to this occurs in the history of the discovery of America. Columbus, a native of Genoa, had, by patient study, conceived the idea that there was a vast continent which might be reached by sailing to the west. Of this his countrymen had no belief. Learned men had long studied the science of geography, and they had never imagined that such a continent could exist; and they were indignant that he, an obscure man, should suppose that he "possessed wisdom superior to all the rest of mankind united." It is accordingly a fact, that out of his own country he was obliged to seek for patrons of his undertaking; that there he received his first honours; and that to other kingdoms the discoveries of the obscure Genoese gave their chief wealth and highest splendour.

{u} "offended" Isa 49:7 53:3; Joh 6:42

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 13 - Verse 58

Verse 58. *Did not many mighty works*. Miracles. This implies that he performed some miracles. Mark tells us what they were. He laid his hands on a few sick folk, and healed them.

Because of their unbelief. That is, it would have been useless to the great purposes of his mission to have worked miracles there. We are not to suppose that his *power* was limited by the belief, or unbelief, of men. But they were so *prejudiced*, so set against him, that they were not in a condition to *judge of evidence*, and to be convinced. They would have charged it to derangement, or sorcery, or the agency of the devil. Comp. Joh 10:20. It would have been of no use, therefore, in proving *to them* that he was from God, to have worked miracles. He did, therefore, only those things which were the proper work of benevolence, and which could not easily be charged on the devil. He gave *sufficient* proof of his mission, and left them in their chosen unbelief, without excuse. It is also true, in spiritual things, that the unbelief of a people prevents the influences of the Holy Spirit from being sent down to bless them. God requires faith. He hears only the prayers of faith. And when there is little true belief, and prayer is cold and formal, there the people sleep in spiritual death, and are unblessed.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 14 - Verse 1

MATTHEW CHAPTER 14

Verse 1. *Herod the tetrarch*. See also Mr 6:14-16; Lu 9:7-9. This was a son of Herod the Great. Herod the Great died probably in the first year after the birth of Christ, and left his kingdom to his three sons, of whom this *Herod Antipas* was one. He ruled over Galilee and Perea. **See Barnes "Mt 2:16"**.

The title *tetrarch* literally denotes one who rules over a fourth part of any country. In a remote signification, it means one who rules over a third, or even a half of a nation.

Heard of the fame of Jesus. Jesus had then been a considerable time: engaged in the work of the ministry, and it may seem remarkable that he had not before heard of him. Herod might have, however, been absent on some expedition to a remote part of the country. It is to be remembered, also, that he was a man of much dissoluteness of morals; and that he paid little attention to the affairs of the people. He might have *heard* of Jesus before, but it had not arrested his attention. He did not think it a matter worthy of much regard.

{v} "Herod" Mr 6:14 Lu 9:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 14 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *This is John the Baptist*. Herod feared John. His conscience smote him for his crimes. He remembered that he had wickedly put him to death. He knew him to be a distinguished prophet;

and he concluded that no other one was capable of working such miracles but he who had been distinguished in his life, and who had again risen from the dead, and entered the dominions of his murderer. The alarm in his court it seems was general. Herod's *conscience* told him that this was John. Others thought that it might be the expected Elijah, or one of the old prophets, Mr 6:15.

{1} "mighty" or, "are wrought by him"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 14 - Verse 3

Verses 3-5. *For Herod had laid hold on John*, etc. See .

This Herodias was a grand-daughter of Herod the Great. She was first married to Herod Philip, by whom she had a daughter, Salome, probably the one that danced and pleased Herod. Josephus says that this marriage of Herod Antipas with Herodias took place while he was on a journey to Rome. He stopped at his brother's; fell in love with his wife; agreed to put away his own wife, the daughter of Arteas, king of Petraea; and Herodias agreed to leave her own husband, and live with him. They were living, therefore, in adultery; and John in faithfulness, though at the risk of his life, had reproved them for their crimes. Herod was guilty of two crimes in this act:

(1) of adultery, as she was the wife of another man;

(2) of *incest*, as she was a near relation, and such marriages were expressly forbidden, Le 18:16.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 14 - Verse 4

Verse 4. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes on "Mt 14:3"

{w} "it is not lawful" Le 17:16 20:21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 14 - Verse 5

Verse 5. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes on "Mt 14:3"

{x} "a prophet" Mt 21:26 Lu 20:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 14 - Verse 6

Verses 6-13. See also Mr 6:21-29. *But when Herod's birthday was kept*. Kings were accustomed to observe the day of their birth with much pomp, and commonly also by giving a feast to their

principal nobility. See Ge 40:20. Mark adds, that this birthday was kept by making a supper to his "lords, high captains, and chief estates in Galilee." That is, to the chief men in office. *High captains* means, in the original, commanders of thousands, or of a division of a thousand men.

The daughter of Herodias. That is, *Salome*, her daughter by her former husband. This was a violation of all the rules of modesty and propriety. One great principle of all eastern nations is to keep their females from public view. For this purpose they are confined in a particular part of the house, called the *harem*. **See Barnes "Mt 9:2"**.

If they appear in public, it is always with a veil so closely drawn that their faces cannot be seen, No modest woman would have appeared in this manner before the court; and it is probable, therefore, that she partook of the dissolute principles of her mother. It is also probable that the *dance* was one well known in Greece, the lascivious and wanton dance of the *Ionics*.

{2} "danced before them" or, "in the midst"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 14 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *He promised with an oath*. This was a foolish and wicked oath. To please a wanton girl, the monarch called the eternal God to witness his willingness to give her half his kingdom. It seems also that he was willing to shed the holiest blood it contained. An oath like this it was not lawful to make, and it should have been broken. See Mt 14:9.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 14 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Being before instructed of her mother*. Not before she danced, but afterwards; and before she made the request of Herod. See Mr 6:24. The only *appearance* of what was right in the whole transaction was her *honouring* her mother, by consulting her; and in this she only intended to accomplish the purposes of wickedness more effectually.

In a charger. The original word means a large *platter*, on which food is placed. We should have supposed that she would have been struck with abhorrence at such a direction. But she seems to have been gratified. John, by his faithfulness, had offended the whole family; and here was ample opportunity for an adulterous mother and dissolute child to gratify their resentment. It was customary then for princes to require the *heads* of persons ordered for execution to be brought to them. For this there were two reasons:

(1.) To gratify their resentment—to feast their eyes on the proof that their enemy was dead; and,

(2.) to ascertain the fact that the sentence had been executed. There is a similar instance in Roman history of a woman requiring the head of an enemy to be brought to her. Agrippina, the mother of Nero, who was afterwards emperor, sent an officer to put to death Lollia Paulins, who had been her rival for the imperial dignity. When Lollia's head was brought to her, not knowing it at first, she examined it with her own hands, till she perceived some particular feature by which the lady was distinguished. *

{*} "Lardner's Credibility, Part i., book i., chap. i" {z} "???" Pr 29:10 {a} "???" Jud 11:31,35; Da 6:14-16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 14 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *And the king was sorry*. There might have been several reasons for this:

(1.) Herod had a high respect for John, and feared him. He knew that he was a holy man, and had "*observed* him," that is, regarded him with respect and veneration. He had done some things in obedience to John's precepts, Mr 6:20.

(2.) John was in high repute among the people, and Herod might have been afraid that his murder might excite commotion,

(3.) Herod, though a wicked man, does not appear to have been insensible to some of the common principles of human nature. Here was a great and most manifest crime proposed; no less than the *murder* of an acknowledged prophet of the Lord. It was deliberate. It was to gratify the malice of a wicked woman. It was the price of a few moments' entertainment. His *conscience*, though in feeble and dying accents, checked him. He would have preferred a request not so manifestly wicked, and that would not have involved him in so much difficulty.

For the oath's sake. Herod felt that he was bound by this oath. But he was not. The oath should not have been taken. But *being* taken, he could not be bound by it. No oath could justify a man in committing murder. The true principle is, that Herod was bound by a prior obligation, by the law of God, *not* to commit murder; and no act of his, be it an *oath*, or anything else, could free him from the obligation.

And them which sat with him at meat. This was the strongest reason why Herod murdered John. He had not firmness enough to obey the law of God, and to follow the dictates of conscience, against the opinions of wicked men. He was afraid of the charge of cowardice, and want of spirit; afraid of ridicule, and the contempt of the wicked. This is the principle of the *laws of honour*—this the foundation of *duelling*. It is not so much for his own sake that one man murders another in a duel, for the offence is often a mere trifle. It is a *word*, or *look*, that never would injure him. It is because *the men of honour*, as they call themselves, his companions, would consider him a coward, and laugh at him. Those companions may be unprincipled contemners of the laws of God and man. And yet the duellist, against his own conscience, against the laws of God, against the good opinions of the virtuous part of the world, and against the laws of his country, seeks by deadly aim to *murder* another, merely to gratify his dissolute companions. And this is the law of honour! This is the secret of duelling! This the source of that remorse that settles in awful blackness, and that thunders damnation around the duellist in his dying hours! It should be added, this is the source of all *youthful* guilt. We are led along by others. We have not firmness enough to follow the teachings of a father, and of the law of God. Young men are afraid of being called *mean* and *cowardly*, by the wicked; and they often sink low m wee, never to rise again.

At meat. That is, at supper. The word *meat*, at the time the Bible was translated, meant provisions of all kinds. It is now restricted to *flesh*, and does not convey a full idea of the original.

{b} "oath's sake" Jud 21:1 1Sa 14:28, 25:22 Ec 5:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 14 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *And he sent, and beheaded John*. For the sake of these wicked men, the bloody offering, the head of the slaughtered prophet, was brought and given as the reward to the daughter and mother. What an offering to a woman! Josephus says of her, that "she was a woman full of ambition and envy, having a mighty influence on Herod, *and able to persuade him to things he was not at all inclined to*." This is one of the many proofs that we have that the evangelists drew characters according to truth.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 14 - Verse 11

Verse 11. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 14:6"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 14 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *And his disciples*, etc. The *head* was with Herodias. The body, with pious care, they buried.

And went and told Jesus. This was done probably for the following reasons:

(1.) It was an important event, and one particularly connected with the work of Jesus. John was the forerunner; and it was important that he should be made acquainted with his death.

(2.) It is not unreasonable to suppose that in their affliction they came to him for consolation; nor is it improper in our affliction to follow their example, *and go and tell Jesus*.

(3.) Their master had been slain by a cruel king; Jesus was engaged in the same cause; and they probably supposed that *he* was in danger. They therefore came to warn him of it, and he Mt 14:13 sought a place of safety.

{c} "buried it" Ac 8:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 14 - Verse 13

Verses 13-21. A full narrative of the feeding the five thousand is given in each of the other evangelists: in Mr 6:32-44 Lu 9:10-17; Joh 6:1-14.

Verse 13. *When Jesus heard of it, he departed*, he went to a place of safety, he never threw himself unnecessarily into danger. It was proper that he should secure his life, till the time should come when it would be proper for him to die.

By a ship into a desert place. That is, he crossed the sea of Galilee. He went to the country east of the sea, into a place little inhabited. Luke says Lu 9:10 he went to a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida. **See Barnes "Mt 11:21"**.

A desert place means a place little cultivated, where there were few or no inhabitants. On the east of the sea of Galilee there was a large tract of country of this description—rough, uncultivated, and chiefly used to pasture flocks.

{d} "he departed" Mt 10:23 12:15; Mr 6:32 Lu 9:10; Joh 6:1,2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 14 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Was moved with compassion*. That is, pitied them. Mr 6:34 says he was moved with compassion because they were as sheep having no shepherd. A. shepherd is one who takes care of a flock. It was his duty to feed it, to defend it from wolves and other wild beasts; to take care of the young and feeble; to lead it by green pastures and still waters, Ps 23:1. In eastern countries this was a principal employment of the inhabitants. When Christ says the people were as sheep without a shepherd, he means that they had no *teachers* and *guides* who cared for them, and took pains to instruct them. The scribes and Pharisees were haughty and proud, and cared little for the common people; and when they did attempt to teach them, they led them astray. They therefore came in great multitudes to him who preached the gospel to the poor, Mt 11:5 and who was thus the good Shepherd, Joh 10:14.

See Barnes on "Mt 14:13"

{e} "saw a great multitude" Mt 9:36 15:32 {f} "with compassion" Heb 4:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 14 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *The time is now past*. That is, the day is passing away; it is near night; and it is proper to make some provision for the temporal wants of so many. Perhaps it may mean, it was past the usual time for refreshment.

See Barnes on "Mt 14:13"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 14 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Jesus said—They need not depart; give ye them to eat*. John adds, that previous to this, Jesus had addressed Philip, and asked, Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat? This he said *to prove him*; that is, to try his *faith*; to *test* the confidence of Philip in himself. Philip, it seems, had not the *kind* of confidence which he ought to have had. He immediately began to think of their ability to *purchase* food for them. Two hundred pennyworth of bread, said he, would not be enough. In the original it is two hundred *denarii*. These were Roman coins, amounting to about fourteen cents each, [seven pence,] The whole two hundred, therefore, would have been equal to about twenty-eight dollars. In the view of Philip, this was a great sum; a sum which twelve poor fishermen were by no means able to provide. It was this fact, and not any unwillingness to provide

for them, which led the disciples to request that they should be sent into the villages around, in order to obtain food. Jesus knew how much they had, and he required of them, as he does of all, implicit faith, and told them to give them to eat. He requires us to do what he commands; and we need not doubt that he will give us strength to accomplish it.

See Barnes on "Mt 14:13"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 14 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *We have here but five loaves*, etc. These loaves were in the possession of a lad, or young man, who was with them, and were made of barley, Joh 6:9. It is possible that this lad was one in attendance on the apostles to carry their food; but it is most probable he was one who had provision to sell among the multitude. Barley was a cheap kind of food, scarcely one-third the value of wheat, and was much used by poor people. A considerable part of the food of the people in that region was probably fish, as they lived on the borders of a lake that abounded in fish.

See Barnes on "Mt 14:13"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 14 - Verse 18

Verse 18. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes on "Mt 14:13"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 14 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *And he commanded the multitude to sit down*. In the original it is *to recline* on the grass, or to lie as they did at their meals. The Jews never sat, as we do at meals, but *reclined*, or lay at length. **See Barnes "Mt 23:6"**.

Mark and Luke add, that they reclined in companies, by hundreds, and by fifties.

And looking up to heaven, he blessed. Luke adds, he blessed *them*; that is, the loaves. The word *to bless* means, often, to give thanks; sometimes to pray for blessing; that is, to pray for the Divine favour and friendship; to pray that what we do may meet his approbation. In seeking a blessing on our food it means, to pray that it may be made nourishing to our bodies; that we may have proper gratitude to God, the Giver, for providing for our wants; and that we may remember the Creator, while we partake the bounties of his providence. Our Saviour *always* sought a blessing on his food. In this he was an example for us. What he did, we should do. It is right thus to seek the blessing of God. He provides for us; he daily opens his hand, and satisfieth our wants; and it is proper that we should render suitable acknowledgments for his goodness.

The custom, among the Jews, was universal. The form of prayer which they used in the time of Christ has been preserved by their writers, the Talmudists. It is this: "Blessed be thou, O Lord

our God, the King of the world, who hast produced this food and this drink, from the earth and the vine."

And brake. The loaves of Bread, among the Jews, were made thin and brittle, and were therefore broken and not cut.

See Barnes on "Mt 14:13"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 14 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *And they did all eat, and were filled*. This was an undoubted miracle. The quantity *must* have been greatly increased, to have supplied so many. He that could *increase* that small quantity so much, had the *power* of creation; and he that could do that, could create the world out of nothing, and had no less than Divine power.

Twelve baskets full. The size of these *baskets* is unknown. They were probably such as travellers carried their provisions in. They were used commonly by the Jews in their journeys. In travelling among the Gentiles, or Samaritans, a *Jew* could expect little hospitality. There were not, as now, public houses for the entertainment of strangers. At great distances there were *caravansaries*, but they were intended chiefly for lodging-places for the night, and not to provide *food* for travellers. Hence in journeying among strangers, or in deserts, they carried *baskets* of provisions; and this is the reason why they were furnished with them here. It is probable that each of the apostles had one, and they were all filled. Joh 6:12 says that Jesus *directed* them to gather up these fragments, that nothing be lost: an example of economy. God *creates* all food; it has, therefore, a kind of sacredness; it is all *needed* by some person or other, and none should be lost.

See Barnes on "Mt 14:13"

{f} "twelve baskets full" 2Ki 4:1-7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 14 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Five thousand men, beside*, etc. Probably the number might have been ten thousand. To feed so many was an act of great benevolence, and a stupendous miracle. The effect was such as might be expected. John says Joh 6:14 that they were convinced by it that he was that prophet that should come into the world; that is, the Messiah.

See Barnes on "Mt 14:13"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 14 - Verse 22

Verse 22,23. *And straightway Jesus constrained*, etc. See Mr 6:45-56 Joh 6:16-21. The word *straightway* means immediately; that is, as soon as the fragments were gathered up. To *constrain*, means to *compel*. It here means to command. There was no need of *compulsion*. They were at this

time on the east side of the lake of Gennesaret. He directed them to get into a ship, and cross over to the other side; that is, to Capernaum. Mark adds that he sent them to Bethsaida, Mr 6:45. Bethsaida was situated at the place where the Jordan empties into the lake, on the east side of the river. It is probable that he directed them to go in a ship or boat to *Bethsaida*, and remain there till he should dismiss the people, and that he would meet them there, and with them cross the lake. The effect of the miracle on the multitudes was so great, Joh 6:14,16 that they believed him to be that Prophet which should come into the world; that is, the *Messiah*, the *King* that they had expected, and they were about to take him by force and make him a king. To avoid this, Jesus got away from them as privately as possible, he went into a solitary mountain alone. In view of the temptation—when human honours were offered to him, and almost forced upon him—he retired for private prayer;—an example for all who are pressed with human honours and applause. Nothing is better to keep the mind humble and unambitious, than to seek some lonely place; to shut out the world, with all its honours; to realize that the great God, before whom all creatures and all honours sink to nothing, is round about us; and to ask him to keep us from pride and vain glory.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 14 - Verse 23

Verse 23. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 14:22"**

{h} "he went up" Mr 6:46

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 14 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *But the ship was now in the midst of the sea*. John says they had sailed about twenty-five or thirty furlongs. About seven and a half Jewish furlongs made a mile; so that the distance they had sailed was not more than about four miles. At no place was the sea of Tiberias more than ten miles in breadth, so that they were literally in the midst of the sea.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 14 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *And in the fourth watch of the night*. The Jews anciently divided the night into three divisions of four hours each. The *first* of these watches is mentioned in La 2:19; the *middle watch* in Jud 7:19 and the *morning watch* in Ex 14:24. In the time of our Saviour: they divided the night into four watches;the fourth having been introduced by the Romans. These watches consisted of three hours each. The first commenced at six, and continued till nine; the second from nine to twelve; the third from twelve to three; and the fourth from three to six. The first was called evening; the second, midnight; the third, cock-crowing; the fourth, morning, Mr 13:35. It is probable that the term *watch* was given to each of these divisions, from the practice of placing sentinels around the camp in time of war, or in cities, to *watch* or *guard* the camp or city, and that they were at first

relieved *three* times in the night, but under the Romans *four* times. It was in the last of these watches, or between three and six in the morning, that Jesus appeared to the disciples; so that he had spent most of the night alone on the mountain in prayer.

Walking on the sea. A manifest and wonderful miracle. It was a boisterous sea. It was in a dark night. The little boat was four or five miles from the shore, tossed by the billows.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 14 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *They were troubled*. They were afraid. The sight was remarkable. It was sufficient to awe them. In the dark night, amidst the tumultuous billows, appeared the form of a man. They thought it was a spirit—an apparition. It was a common belief among the ancients that the spirits of men after death frequently appeared to the living.

{i} "???" Job 9:8 Joh 6:19 {k} "were troubled" Lu 24:37

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 14 - Verse 27

Verse 27. No Barnes text on this verse.

{l} "of good cheer"

Ac 23:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 14 - Verse 28

Verses 28-31. *And Peter answered*, etc. Here is an instance of the characteristic ardour and rashness of Peter. He had less *real* faith than he supposed; more ardour than his faith would justify: he was rash, headlong, incautious, really attached to Jesus, but still easily daunted, and prone to fall. He was afraid, therefore, when in danger, and, sinking, cried again for help. Thus he was suffered to learn his own character, and his dependence on Jesus: a lesson which all Christians are permitted to learn by dear-bought experience.

{m} "if it be thou" Php 4:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 14 - Verse 29

Verse 29. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 14:28"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 14 - Verse 30

Verse 30. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 14:28"

{1} "boisterous" or, strong {n} "save me" Ps 19:1,2; La 3:57

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 14 - Verse 31

Verse 31. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 14:28"

{o} "immediately" Isa 53:12 {p} "doubt" Jas 1:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 14 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased*. Here was a new proof of the power of Jesus. He that has power over winds and waves has all power. John adds, Joh 6:21 that the ship was immediately at the land whither they went;—another proof, amidst this collection of wonders, that the Son of God was with them. They came, therefore, and worshipped him, acknowledging him to be the Son of God. That is, they gave him homage, or honoured him as the Son of God.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 14 - Verse 33

Verse 33. No Barnes text on this verse.
{r} "Son of God"
Da 3:25 Lu 4:41; Joh 1:49 6:69, 11:27 Ac 8:37; Ro 1:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 14 - Verse 34

Verses 34-36. *Land of Gennesaret*. This region was in Galilee, on the west side of the sea of Tiberias; and *in* this land was situated Capernaum, to which he had directed his disciples to go.

The hem of his garment. That is, the fringe or border on the outer garment. **See Barnes "Mt 9:20"**.

{s} "And when" Mr 6:53

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 14 - Verse 35

Verse 35. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 14:34"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 14 - Verse 36

Verse 36. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 14:34"

{t} "hem of his garment" Nu 15:38 Mt 9:20; Mr 3:10 Lu 6:19
Ac 19:12
{u} "as many" Joh 6:37

REMARKS ON MATTHEW 14

(1.) We learn from this chapter the power of conscience, Mt 14:1-4. Herod's guilt was the only reason why he thought John the Baptist had risen. At another time he would altogether have disbelieved it. Consciousness of guilt will at some period infallibly torment a man.

(2.) The duty of faithfulness, Mt 14:4. John reproved Herod at the hazard of his life. And he died for it. But he had the approbation of conscience and of God. So will all who do their duty. Here was an example of fidelity to all ministers of religion. They are not to fear the face of man, however rich, or mighty, or wicked.

(3.) The righteous will *command* the respect of the wicked. Herod was a wicked man, but he respected John, and feared him, Mr 6:20. The wicked profess to despise religion, and many really do. But their consciences tell them that religion is a good thing. In times of trial they will sooner trust Christians than others. In sickness and death they are often glad to see them, and hear them pray, and desire the comfort which *they* have; and, like Balaam, say, "Let me die the death of the righteous," Nu 23:10. No person, young or old, is ever the less really esteemed for being a Christian.

(4.) Men are often restrained from great sins by mere selfish motives—as Herod was—by the love of popularity, Mt 14:5. Herod would have put John to death long before, had it not been that he feared the people. His constantly desiring to do it was a kind of *prolonged murder*. God will hold men guilty for *desiring* to do evil; and will not justify them, if they are restrained, *not* by the fear of him, but by the fear of men.

(5.) We see the effect of what is called the principle of *honour*, Mt 14:9. It was in obedience to this that Herod committed murder. This is the principle of duelling and war. No principle is so foolish and wicked. The great mass of men disapprove it. The wise and good have always disapproved of it. This principle of honour is often the mere love of revenge. It is often the fear of being laughed at. It produces evil. God cannot and will not love it. The way to prevent duels and murders is to restrain the passions, and cultivate a spirit of meekness and forgiveness when young; that is, to come early under the full influence of the gospel.

(6.) Men should be cautious about promises, and especially about oaths. Herod made a foolish promise, and confirmed it by a wicked oath, Mt 14:9. Promises should not be made without *knowing* what is promised, and without *knowing* that it will be *right* to perform them. Oaths are always

wicked, except when made before a magistrate, and on occasions of real magnitude. The practice of profane and common swearing, like that of Herod, is always foolish and wicked, and sooner or later will bring men into difficulty.

(7.) Atonements are often attended with evil consequences, Mt 14:6-11. The dancing of a gay and profligate girl was the means of the death of one of the holiest of men. Dancing, balls, parties, and theatres, are by many thought innocent. But they are a profitless waste of time. They lead to forgetfulness of God. They nourish passion and sensual desires. They often lead to the seduction and ruin of the innocent. They are *unfit* for dying creatures. From the very midst of such scenes, the gay may go to the bar of God. How poor a preparation to die! How dreadful the judgment-seat to such !

(8.) Jesus will take care of the poor, Mt 14:14-21. He regarded the temporal as well as the spiritual wants of the people, Rather than see them suffer, he worked a miracle to feed them. So rather than see *us* suffer, God is daily doing what man *cannot do*. He causes the grain to grow; he fills the land, and seas, arid air, with living creatures; nay, he provides, in desert places, for the support of man. How soon would all men and beasts die, if he did not put forth continued power and goodness for the supply of our wants!

(9.) It is the duty of Christians to be solicitous about the temporal wants of the poor, Mt 14:15. They are with us. By regarding them, and providing for them, we have an opportunity of showing our attachment to Christ, and our resemblance to God, who continually does good.

(10.) A blessing should be sought in our enjoyments, Mt 14:19. It is always right to imitate Christ. It is right to acknowledge our dependence on God, and in the midst of mercies to pray that we may not forget the Giver.

(11.) We see the duty of economy. The Saviour, who had power to create worlds by a word, yet commanded to take up the fragments, that nothing might be lost, Joh 6:12. Nothing that *God* has created, and given to us, should be *wasted*.

(12.) It is proper to *make preparation* for private prayer. Jesus sent the people away, that he might be alone, Mt 14:22,23. So, Christians should *take pains* that they may have time and places for retirement. A grove, or a mountain, was the place where our Saviour sought to pray; and there too may we find and worship God.

(13.) In time of temptation, of prosperity, and honour, it is right to devote much time to secret prayer. Jesus, when the people were about to make him a king, retired to the mountain, and continued there till three o'clock in the morning, Joh 6:16.

(14.) When Christ commands us to do a thing, we should do it, Mt 14:22. Even if it should expose us to danger, it should be done.

(15.) In times of danger and. distress, Jesus will see us, and will come to our relief, Mt 14:25,26. Even in the tempest that howls, or on the waves of affliction that beat around us, he will come, and we shall be safe.

(16.) We should never be afraid of him. We should always have *good cheer* when we see him, Mt 14:27. When he says, "It is I;" he also says, "Be not afraid." He can still the waves, and conduct us safely to the port which we seek.

(17.) Nothing is too difficult for us, when we act under the command of Christ. Peter at his command leaves the ship, and walks on the billows, Mt 14:29.

(18.) Christ sometimes leaves his people to see their weakness and their need of strength. Without his continued aid, they would sink. Peter had no strength of his own to walk on the deep; and Christ suffered him to see his dependence, Mt 14:30.

(19.) The eye, in difficulty, should be fixed on Christ. As soon as Peter began to look at the waves and winds, rather than Christ, he began to sink, Mt 14:30. True courage, in difficulties, consists not in confidence in ourselves, but in confidence in Jesus, the Almighty Saviour and Friend.

(20.) Prayer may be instantly answered. When we are in immediate danger, and offer a prayer of faith, we may expect immediate aid, Mt 14:31.

(21.) Pride comes before a fall. Peter was self-confident and proud, and he fell. His confidence and rashness were the very means of showing the weakness of his faith, Mt 14:31.

(22.) It is proper to render homage to Jesus; and to worship him as the Son of God, Mt 14:33.

(23.) We should be desirous that all about us should partake of the benefits that Christ confers. When we *know* him, and have tested his goodness, we should take pains that all around us may also be brought to him, and be saved, Mt 14:35.

(24.) Jesus only can make us perfectly whole. No other being can save us. He that could heal the *body*, can save the soul. A word can save us. With what earnestness ought we to plead with him that we may obtain his saving, grace! Mt 14:36.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 15 - Verse 1

MATTHEW CHAPTER 15

Verse 1. See also Mr 7:1-9.

Then came to Jesus, etc. Mark says, that they saw the disciples of Jesus eating with hands unwashed.

{a} "Then came" Mr 7:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 15 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Transgress the tradition of the elders*, The word *elders* means, literally, *old men*. It here means the ancients, or their ancestors. *Tradition* means something handed down from one to another by memory: some precept or custom not commanded in the *written law*, but which they held themselves bound to observe. The Jews supposed that when Moses was on Mount Sinai, two sets of laws were delivered to him: one, they said, was recorded, and is that contained in the Old Testament; the other was handed down from father to son, and kept uncorrupted to their day. They believed that Moses before he died delivered this law to Joshua; he to the judges; they to the prophets; so that it was kept pure till it was recorded in the Talmuds. In these books these pretended

laws are now contained. They are exceedingly numerous, and very trifling. They are, however, regarded by the Jews as more important than either Moses or the prophets. One point in which the Pharisees differed from the Sadducees was in holding to these traditions. It seems, however, that in the particular traditions here mentioned all the Jews combined.

The Pharisees, and *all the Jews*, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, Mr 7:3. Mark has also added, that this custom of washing extended not merely to their hands before eating, but in coming from the market; and also to pots, and cups, and brazen vessels and tables, Mr 7:3,4. They did this professedly for the sake of *cleanliness*. So far it was well. But they made it a matter of superstition. They regarded *external* purity as of much more importance than the purity of the heart. They had many foolish rules about it: as, the quantity of water that was to be used; the way in which it should be applied; the number of times it should be changed; the number of those that might wash at a time, etc. These foolish rules our Saviour did not think it proper to regard; and this was the reason why they found fault with him.

See Barnes on "Mt 15:1"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 15 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *But he answered*, etc. They accused him of violating their traditions, as though they were obligatory. In his answer he *implied* that they were not bound to obey their traditions. They were invented by men. He said also that those traditions *could not* be binding, as they violated the commandments of God. He proceeds to specify a *case* where their tradition made void one of the plain laws of God. And if that was their character, then they could not blame him for not regarding them.

See Barnes on "Mt 15:1"

{b} "your tradition?" Col 2:8 23; Tit 1:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 15 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *For God commanded*, etc. That is, in the fifth commandment, Ex 20:12 21:17. To *honour* is to obey, to reverence, to speak kindly to, to speak and think well of. To *curse* is to disobey, to treat with irreverence, *to swear at*, to speak ill of, to think evil of in the heart, to meditate or do *any* evil to a parent. All this is included in the original word.

Let him die the death. This is a Hebrew phrase, the same as saying, *let him surely die*. The Jewish law punishes this crime with death. This duty of honouring and obeying a parent was what Christ said they had violated by their traditions. He proceeds to state the way in which it was done.

See Barnes on "Mt 15:1"

{c} "saying, Honour" Ex 20:12 De 5:16 {d} "He that curseth" Ex 21:17 Le 20:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 15 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *It is a gift*. In Mark it is *corban*. The word *corban* is a Hebrew word, denoting *a gift*. It here means a thing *dedicated to the service of God; and, therefore, not to be appropriated to any other use*. The Jews were in the habit of making such dedications. They devoted their property to him, for sacred uses, as they pleased. In doing this they used the word *corban*, or some similar word; saying this thing is *corban*, i.e., is a gift to God, or is sacred to him. The law required that when a dedication of this kind was made, it should be fulfilled. "Vow, and pay unto the Lord your God," Ps 76:11. See De 23:21. The law of God required that a son should *honour* his parent; i.e., among other things, provide for his wants when he was old, and in distress. Yet the Jewish teachers said that it was more important for a man to *dedicate his property to God* than to *provide for the wants of his parent*. If he had once devoted his property—once said it was *corban*, or a gift to God—it could not be appropriated even to the support of a parent. If a parent was needy and poor, and if he should apply to a son for assistance, and the son should reply, though in anger, "It is devoted to God—- this property which you need, *and by which you might be profited by me, is corban*, I give to God,"—the Jews said the property could not be recalled, and the son was not under obligation to aid a parent with it. He had done a more important thing, in giving it to God. The son was free. They would not suffer him to do anything for his father after that. Thus he might *in a moment* free himself from the obligation to obey his father or mother. In a sense somewhat similar to this the chiefs and priests of the Sandwich Islands had the power of devoting anything to the service of the gods, by saying that it was *tabu*, or *tabued*. That is, that it became consecrated to the service of religion; and no matter who had been the owner, it could then be appropriated to no other use. In this way they had complete power over all the possessions of the people, and could appropriate them to their own use under the pretence of devoting them to religion. They thus deprived the *people* of their property under the plea that it was consecrated to the gods; the Jewish son deprived his *parents* of a support under the plea that the property was devoted to the service of religion. The principle was the same and both systems were equally a violation of the rights of others.

Besides, the law said that a man should die that *cursed* his father; i.e., that refused to obey him, or to provide for him, or spoke in anger to him. Yet the *Jews* said, that though in anger, and in real *spite* and *hatred*, a son said to his father, "All that I have which could profit you, I have given to God," he should be free from blame. Thus the whole law was made void, or of no use, by what *appeared* to have the appearance of piety. *No man, according to their views, was bound to obey the fifth commandment, and support an aged and needy parent, if either from superstition or spite he chose to give his property to God, that is, to some religious use*.

Our Saviour did not mean to condemn the practice of giving to God, or to religious and charitable duties. This the law and the gospel equally required. He commended even a poor widow that gave all her living, Mr 12:44. But he meant to condemn the practice of giving to God, where it interfered with our duty to parents and relations: where it was done to get rid of the duty of aiding them; and where it was done out of a malignant and rebellious spirit, with the *semblance* of piety, to get clear of doing to them what God required.

See Barnes on "Mt 15:1"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 15 - Verse 6

Verse 6. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 15:1"

{e} "honour not" De 27:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 15 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Ye hypocrites*. **See Barnes "Mt 7:5"**.

Hypocrisy is the concealment of some base principle under the pretence of religion. Never was there a clearer instance of it than this—*an attempt to get rid of the duty of providing for needy parents under an appearance of piety towards God*.

Esaias, That is, *Isaiah*. This prophecy is found in Isa 29:13.

Prophesy of you. That is, he spoke of the people of his day—of the Jews, *as Jews*—in terms that apply to the whole people. He properly *characterized the nation* in calling them hypocrites. The words are applicable to the nation at all times, and they apply, therefore, to you. He did not mean particularly to speak of the nation in the time of Christ; but he spoke of them as having a national character of hypocrisy. See also Isa 1:4.

See Barnes on "Mt 15:1"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 15 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Draweth nigh unto me with their mouth*, etc. That is, they are regular in the forms of worship. They are strict in ceremonial observances, and keep the law outwardly; but God requires the heart, and that they have not rendered.

See Barnes on "Mt 15:1"

{f} "This people" Isa 29:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 15 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *In vain they do worship me*. That is, their attempts to worship are vain, or are not real worship—they are mere forms.

Teaching for doctrines, etc. The word *doctrines*, here, means the requirements of religion—things to be believed and practised in religion. God only has a right to declare what shall be done in his service; but they held their traditions to be superior to the written word of God, and taught them as doctrines binding the conscience.

See Barnes on "Mt 15:1"

{g} "for doctrines" Col 2:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 15 - Verse 10

Verses 10-14. See also Mr 7:15-17. *And he called the multitude*. In opposition to the doctrines of the Pharisees, the Saviour took occasion to show them that the great source of pollution was the *heart*. *They* supposed that external things chiefly defiled a man. On this all their doctrines about purification were founded. This opinion of the Jews it was of great importance to correct, he took occasion, therefore, to direct the people to the true source of defilement—their own hearts. He particularly directed them to it as of importance:—*Hear and understand*!

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 15 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Not that which goeth into the mouth*, The disciples were charged with being sinners for transgressing the tradition of the elders, in eating with unwashed hands. Christ replies, that what they should *eat* could not render them sinners. The *man*, the moral agent, the soul, could not be polluted by anything that was eaten. What proceeds from the man himself, from his *heart*, would defile him.

Defileth. To pollute, corrupt, to render sinful.

See Barnes on "Mt 15:10"

{h} "Not that" Ac 10:15 Ro 14:14,20 1Ti 4:4; Tit 1:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 15 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *The Pharisees were offended*. They were so zealous of their traditions that they could not endure that their absurdities should be exposed.

See Barnes on "Mt 15:10"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 15 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Every plant*, etc. Religious *doctrine* is not unaptly compared to a plant. See 1Co 3:6-8. It is *planted* in the mind for the purpose of producing fruit in the life, or *conduct*. Jesus here says that all those doctrines, of which his Father was not the Author, must be *rooted up*, or corrected. The false doctrines of the Pharisees, therefore, must be attacked; and it was no wonder if they were

indignant. It could not be helped. It was his duty to attack them. lie was not surprised that they were enraged. But, notwithstanding their opposition, their doctrines should be destroyed.

See Barnes on "Mt 15:10"

{i} "Every plant" Joh 15:2,6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 15 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Let them alone*. That is, do not be troubled at their rage. Be not anxious about it. The thing was to be expected. They were blind; they were in some respects sincere. They are greatly attached to their traditions, and you are not to wonder or interfere when they are indignant. They lead also the blind. They have a vast influence over the multitude, and it is to be expected that they will be enraged at any doctrines that go to lessen their authority or influence. By commanding them *to let them alone*, he does not mean to suffer them to remain in error, without any attempt to refute or correct them—for this *he* was doing then; but he meant to charge his disciples not to mind them, or to regard their opposition. It was to be expected.

If the blind lead the blind, etc. This was a plain proposition. A blind man, attempting to conduct blind men, would fall into every ditch that was in the way. So with religious teachers. If these Pharisees, themselves ignorant and blind, should be suffered to lead the ignorant multitude, both would be destroyed. This was another reason for confuting their errors, or for rooting up the plants which God had not planted. He wished, by doing it, to save the deluded multitude.

God often suffers one man to lead many to ruin. A rich and profligate man, an infidel, a man of learning, a politician, or a teacher, is allowed to sweep multitudes to ruin. This is not unjust, for those who are led are not compelled to follow such men. They are *free* in choosing such leaders, and they are answerable for being led to ruin.

See Barnes on "Mt 15:10"

{k} "they be blind" Mt 23:16 Lu 6:39

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 15 - Verse 15

Verses 15-20. See also Mr 7:17-23. *Then answered Peter—declare this parable*. **See Barnes "Mt 13:3".**

The word *parable* sometimes means a dark or obscure saying, Ps 78:2. Peter meant, Explain to us more fully this obscure and somewhat novel doctrine. To us, now, it is plain: to the disciples, just coming out of Judaism, taught by the Jewish teachers, the doctrine of Jesus was obscure. Mark says that the *disciples* asked him. There is no contradiction. The question was put by Peter *in the name* of the disciples; or several of them put the question, though Matthew has mentioned only one. An omission is not a contradiction.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 15 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Are ye also yet without understanding*? He appeals, in explaining this, to their common sense; and he wonders that they had not yet learned to judge the foolish traditions of the Jews by the decisions of common sense, and by his own instructions.

See Barnes on "Mt 15:15"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 15 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Do not ye yet understand*, etc. The meaning of this may be thus expressed: The food which is eaten does not affect the *mind*, and therefore cannot pollute it. The doctrine of the Pharisees, that neglect of washing and of similar observances defiles a man, cannot be true. Those things pertain to the *body* as much as food does, and they cannot affect the soul. That must be purified by something else than external washing; and it is polluted by other things than a neglect of mere outward ceremonies. The seat of corruption is *within*. It is the heart itself; and if men would be made pure, this must be cleansed. If that is corrupt, the whole man is corrupt.

{l} "mouth goeth" Lu 6:45 Jas 3:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 15 - Verse 18

Verses 18-20. Christ proceeds to state what *does* defile the man, or render him a sinner:

(1.) *Evil thoughts*. These are the first things. These are the fountains of all others. Thought precedes action. Thought, or purpose, or motive, gives its *character* to conduct. All evil thoughts are here intended. Though we labour to suppress them, yet they defile us. They leave pollution behind them.

(2.) *Murders*. Taking the life of others *with malice*. The malice has its seat in the *heart*, and the murder therefore proceeds from the heart, 1Jo 3:15.

(3.) *Adulteries, fornications*. See Mt 5:28.

(4.) *Thefts*. Theft is the taking and carrying away the goods of others without their knowledge or consent. They are produced by *coveting* the property of others. They proceed, therefore, from the heart, and violate at the same time two commandments—the *tenth* in thought, and the *eighth* in act.

(5.) *False witness*. Giving wrong testimony. *Concealing* the truth, or stating what we know to be false, contrary to the ninth commandment. It proceeds from a desire to injure others, to take away their character or property, or to do them injustice. It proceeds thus from the heart.

(6.) *Blasphemies*. **See Barnes "Mt 9:3"**.

Blasphemy proceeds from opposition to God, hatred of his character, Ro 8:7 and from a desire that there should be no God. It proceeds from the heart. See Ps 14:1. Mark adds,

(7.) *Covetousness*, always proceeding from the heart—the unlawful desire of what others possess.

(8.) *Wickedness*. The original here means *malice*, or a *desire of injuring others*, Ro 1:29.

(9.) *Deceit*; i.e. fraud, concealment, cheating, in trade. This proceeds from a desire to benefit ourselves by doing injustice to others, and thus proceeds from the heart.

(10.) *Lasciviousness*. Lust, obscenity, unbridled passion—a strong, evil desire of the heart.

(11.) *An evil eye*. That is, an eye sour, malignant, proud, devising or purposing evil. See Mt 5:28 20:15; 2Pe 2:14, "Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin."

(12.) *Pride*. An improper estimate of our own importance—thinking that we are of much more consequence than we really are—always the work of an evil heart.

(13.) *Foolishness*. Not want of intellect. Man is not to blame for that. But *moral folly*, consisting in choosing bad ends, and bad means of gaining them; or, in other words, sin and wickedness. All sin is folly. It is foolish for a man to disobey God; and foolish for any one to go to hell.

These are the things which defile a man. What an array of crimes to proceed from the heart of man! What a proof of guilt! What strictness is there in the law of God! How universal is depravity!

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 15 - Verse 19

Verse 19. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 15:18"**

{m} "out of the heart" Ge 6:5 8:21; Pr 6:14 24:9; Jer 17:9 Ro 3:10-19

Ga 5:19-21 Eph 2:3; Tit 3:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 15 - Verse 20

Verse 20. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 15:18"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 15 - Verse 21

Verses 21-28. This narrative is also found in Mr 7:24-30.

The coasts of Tyre and Sidon. These cities were on the *sea-coast* or shore of the Mediterranean. **See Barnes "Mt 11:21".**

He went there for the purpose of concealment, Mr 7:24 perhaps still to avoid Herod.

{n} "Then Jesus" Mr 7:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 15 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *A woman of Canaan*. This woman is called also a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth, Mr 7:26. Anciently the whole land, including Tyre and Sidon, was in the possession of the Canaanites, and called Canaan. The Phoenicians were descended from the Canaanites. The country, including Tyre and Sidon, was called Phoenicia, or Syro-Phoenicia. That country was taken by the Greeks under Alexander the Great, and those cities, in the time of Christ, were Greek cities. This woman was therefore a Gentile, living under the Greek government, and probably speaking the Greek language. She was by birth a Syro-Phoenician, born in that country, and descended, therefore, from the ancient Canaanites. All these names might with propriety be given to her.

Coasts. Regions, or countries.

Thou *Son of David*. Descendant of David. **See Barnes "Mt 1:1"**.

Meaning the Messiah.

Is grievously vexed with a devil. **See Barnes "Mt 4:24"**.

The woman showed great earnestness. She *cried* unto him, and fell at his feet, Mr 7:25.

{o} "Son of God" Lu 18:38,39

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 15 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *But he answered her not a word*. This was done to test her faith, and that there might be exhibited to the apostles an example of the effect of persevering supplication. The result shows that it was not unwillingness to aid her, or neglect of her. It was proper that the strength of her faith should be fully tried.

{p} "not a word" Ps 28:1 La 3:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 15 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *But he answered—-I am not sent*, etc. This answer was made to the woman, not to the disciples. *The lost sheep of the house of Israel* were the Jews. He came first to them. He came as their expected Messiah. He came to preach the gospel himself to the Jews only. Afterwards it was preached to the Gentiles; but the ministry of Jesus was confined almost entirely to the Jews.

{q} "I am not sent" Mt 10:5,6; Ac 3:26

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 15 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *She came and worshipped*. That is, bowed down to him, did him reverence. **See Barnes "Mt 8:2"**.

Lord, help me. A proper cry for a poor sinner, who needs the help of the Lord Jesus.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 15 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *But he answered and said, It is not meet*, etc. That is, it is not fit or proper.

Children's bread. The Jews considered themselves as the peculiar children of God. To all other nations they were accustomed to apply terms of contempt, of which *dogs* was the most common. The Mohammedans still apply the term *dogs* to Christians, and Christians and Jews to each other. It is designed as an expression of the highest contempt. The Saviour means to say that he was sent to the Jews. The woman was a Gentile. He meant, that it did not comport with the design of his personal ministry to apply benefits intended for the Jews to others.

Our Saviour did not intend to justify or sanction the use of such terms, or *calling names*. He meant to try her faith. As if he had said,

"You are a Gentile. I am a Jew. The Jews call themselves children of God. You they vilify, and abuse, calling you a *dog*. Are you willing to receive of a Jew, then, a favour? Are you willing to submit to these appellations, to receive a favour of one of that nation, and to acknowledge your dependence on a people that so despise you?"

It was a trial of her faith, and not lending his sanction to the propriety of the abusive term. *He* regarded her with a different feeling.

{r} "to dogs" Mt 7:6 Re 22:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 15 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *And she said, Truth, Lord*, etc: "What you say is true. Let it be that the best food should he given to the children. Let the Jews have the chief benefit of thy ministry. But the dogs, beneath the table, eat the crumbs. So let me be regarded as a dog, a heathen, as unworthy of everything. Yet grant *one* exertion of that almighty power, displayed so signally among the Jews, and heal the despised daughter of a despised heathen mother."

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 15 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *Great is thy faith*. That is, thy trust, confidence. The word here seems to include, also, the humility and perseverance manifested in pressing her suit. The daughter was healed then. Going home, she found her well and composed, Mr 7:30.

{s} "Then Jesus" Job 13:15 23:10; La 3:32

{t} "be it" Ps 145:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 15 - Verse 29

Verses 29-31. *Sea of Galilee*. That is, the lake of Gennesaret. For an account of the principal diseases mentioned here, **See Barnes "Mt 4:24"**.

Maimed. Those to whom a hand or foot was wanting. See Mt 18:8. To cure them—that is, to *restore* a hand or foot— was a direct act of creative power. It is no wonder, therefore, that the people wondered.

And they glorified the God of Israel. To glorify, here means to praise, to acknowledge his power and goodness. The God of Israel was the God that the Israelites or Jews worshipped.

{v} "And Jesus" Mr 7:31

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 15 - Verse 30

Verse 30. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 15:29"

{w} "he healed them" Ps 103:3 Is 35:5,6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 15 - Verse 31

Verse 31. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 15:29"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 15 - Verse 32

Verses 32-39. The miracle recorded here, the feeding of the four thousand, took place on a mountain, near the sea of Galilee. The same account is recorded in Mr 8:1-10. The circumstances of the miracle are so similar to the one recorded in Mt 14:14-21, as to need no particular explanation.

Verse 32. *Three days and have nothing to eat*. This is not, perhaps, to be taken literally, but only that during that time they had been deprived of their ordinary, regular food. They had had only a very scanty supply, and on the third day even that began to fail.

{x} "Then Jesus" Mr 7:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 15 - Verse 33

Verse 33. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 15:32"

{y} "his disciples" 2Ki 4:43,44

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 15 - Verse 34

Verse 34. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 15:32"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 15 - Verse 35

Verse 35. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 15:32"

{z} "And he commanded" Mt 14:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 15 - Verse 36

Verse 36. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 15:32"

{a} "and gave thanks" 1Sa 9:13 Lu 22:19, 24:30

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 15 - Verse 37

Verse 37. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 15:32"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 15 - Verse 38

Verse 38. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 15:32"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 15 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *Coasts of Magdala*. Mark says, "The parts of Dalmanutha"." These were probably small towns on the east side of the sea of Galilee, and near to each other. The evangelists do not say that he went to either of those towns, but only to the *coasts*, or *parts*, where they were situated.

{b} "and came into the coasts" Mr 8:10

REMARKS ON MATTHEW CHAPTER 15

We learn from this chapter,

(1.) That men are often far more attached to traditions, and the commandments of men, than the law of God, Mt 15:1-6.

(2.) That men are strongly disposed to explain away the law of God, if possible. It is too strict for them, and too spiritual. They dare not often attack it directly, but they will explain it and dilute it so as to make it mean nothing. Wicked men do not love God's law, Mt 15:4-6.

(3.) Men are prone to introduce foolish *rites* into religion. They do not love what God has commanded, and they attempt to compensate for not loving *his* doctrines by being great sticklers for their own, Mt 15:2 Mr 7:3,4.

(4.) All addition to the law of God is evil, Mt 15:3. All ceremonies in religion, which are not authorized by the New Testament, are wrong. Man has no right to ordain rites to bind the conscience, where God has commanded none, Co 2:23. Men come the nearest to that which is right when they live nearest to just what God has commanded in the Bible.

(5.) Hypocrites should be unmasked and detected, Mt 15:7. He does a great service to men who detects their hypocrisy. That close and faithful preaching which lays open the heart, and shows men what they are, is that which comes nearest to the example of Christ. It may pain them, but the wounds of a friend are faithful, Pr 27:6 and we should honour and love the man that, by the grace of God, can show us our heart. We always honour most the physician of the body that is most skilled in detecting and curing disease; and so should we the physician of the soul.

(6.) We should be exceedingly cautious of *formality* in worship, Mt 15:8,9. It is hypocrisy. God requires the heart. To render to him only the service of the lips is to mock him. Nothing can be acceptable but true piety, genuine love, and hearty obedience. Nothing more hateful than an appearance of worshipping God, while the heart is in sin and the world.

(7.) The duty of honouring parents, Mt 15:4-6. Nothing can explain away this duty. It is binding on all. Parents should be obeyed, loved, respected. God requires it, and we cannot be free from the duty. Under age, a child is bound always to obey a parent, where the parent does not command anything contrary to the Bible. But when the parent commands anything contrary to the Bible, the child is not bound to obey, Ac 5:29. *After* the child is of age he is to respect, love, and honour the parent; and if poor and needy, to provide for his wants till he dies. It is certainly proper that we do all we can to comfort those in old age, who did so much for us in childhood. A child can never repay a parent for his kindness to him.

(8.) We are not at liberty to give to anything else—not even to religious uses—what is *necessary* to render our parents comfortable, Mt 15:4-6. They have the first claim on us. And though it is our duty to do *much* in the cause of benevolence, yet our first duty should be to see that our parents do not suffer.

(9.) Men easily take offence when they are faithfully reproved, and especially when their hypocrisy is exposed; and especially if this exposure is about some *small matter*, on which they have greatly set their hearts—some ceremony in worship, or some foolish rite, Mt 5:12.

(10.) Every false doctrine is to be opposed, and shall be rooted up, Mt 15:13. It is to be opposed by arguments and candid investigation, and not by abuse and misrepresentation. Christ never *misrepresented* any man's doctrine. He always stated it just as it was, just as *they* held it; and then, by *argument* and the word of God, he showed it was wrong. This is the proper way to manage all controversies.

(11.) It is of great importance to search the heart, Mt 15:19,20. It is a fountain of evil. It is the source of all crime. External conduct is comparatively of little importance. In the sight of God the heart is of more importance; and if that were pure, all would be well.

(12.) The doctrine of man's depravity is true, Mt 15:19. If the *heart* produces all these things, it cannot be pure. And yet who is there from whose heart, at some time, these things have not proceeded? Alas! the world is *full* of instances where the heart produces evil thoughts, etc.

(13.) In our distress, and the distress of our children and friends, we should go to Jesus. We should, indeed, use all proper means to restore our friends; but we should feel that God only can grant returning health and life, Mt 15:22.

(14.) We should not be discouraged that our prayers are not immediately answered. God knows the proper time to answer them, and it may be of great importance to *us* that the answer should be deferred, Mt 15:23.

(15.) We should still persevere, Mt 15:24-27. We should not be discouraged. We should not be disheartened, even by the appearance of neglect or unkind treatment.

(16). Our prayers will be answered if we persevere, Mt 15:28. They that seek shall find. In due time—in the *best* and most proper time —a gracious God will lend an ear to our request, and grant the thing we need.

(17.) We should come with humility and faith, Mt 15:27. We can never think too little of ourselves, or too much of the mercy and faithfulness of Christ. Prayers of humility and faith only are answered.

(18.) Christ will take care of his poor and needy followers. We may be assured that he has *power* to give us all we need; and that in times of necessity he will supply our wants, Mt 15:32-38.

(19.) The great number of poor in the world is no reason why he should not supply them, Mt 15:38. He daily supplies the wants of nine hundred millions of human beings, besides countless numbers of the beasts of the field, of the fowls of heaven, and the fishes of the sea. It is a small thing to supply the wants of the few poor on the earth; and He who feeds the world will take care of *us* in the time of want.

(20.) We should be grateful to God for our daily food. We should render to him proper thanksgiving, Mt 15:36

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 16 - Verse 1

MATTHEW CHAPTER 16

Verses 1-4. See also Mr 8:11,12. *The Pharisees also with the Saducees*. **See Barnes** "Mt 3:7.

Tempting. That is, *trying him* —feigning a desire to see evidence that he was the Messiah, but with a real desire to see him make the attempt to work a miracle and fail, that they might betray and ruin him.

A sign from heaven. Some miraculous appearance in the sky. Such appearances had been given by the prophets; and they supposed, if he was the Messiah, that his miracles would not all be confined *to the earth*, but that he was able to give some signal miracle from heaven. Samuel had caused it to thunder, 1Sa 12:16-18. Isaiah had caused the shadow to go back ten degrees on the dial of Ahaz, Isa 38:8 and Moses had sent them manna from heaven, Ex 16:4 Joh 6:31. It is proper to say, that though Christ did not choose *then* to show such wonders, yet far more stupendous signs *from heaven* than these were exhibited at his death.

{c} "sign from heaven" Mt 12:38 Mr 8:11; Lu 11:16 12:54-56; 1Co 1:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 16 - Verse 2

Verses 2,3. *He answered*, etc. The meaning of this answer is, There are certain indications by which you judge about the weather. In the evening you think you can predict the weather tomorrow. You have evidence in the redness of the sky by which you judge. So there are sufficient indications on which you should judge concerning *me* and these times. My miracles, and the state of affairs in Judea, are an indication by which you should judge of these times.

Is red. Almost all nations have observed this as an indication of the weather.

In the morning—the sky is red and lowering. That is, there are threatening clouds in the sky, which are made red by the rays of the rising sun. This, in Judea, was a sign of a tempest. In other places, however, the signs of a storm may be different.

The face of the sky. The appearance of the sky.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 16 - Verse 3

Verse 3. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 16:2"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 16 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *A wicked and adulterous generation*, etc. **See Barnes "Mt 12:38-40"**.

Mark adds, Mr 8:12 *that he sighed deeply in spirit*, he did not say this without feeling, he was greatly affected with their perverseness and obstinacy, Mt 16:6-12. This account is recorded also in Mr 8:14-21.

{d} "prophet Jonas" Jon 1:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 16 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And when his disciples were come to the other side*. That is, to the other side of the sea of Galilee. Mark says that he entered into a ship again, and departed to the other side. The conversation with the Pharisees and Sadducees had been on the east of the sea of Galilee. They crossed from that side again to the west.

Had forgotten to take bread. That is, had forgotten to lay in a sufficient supply. They had, it seems, not more than one loaf, Mr 8:14.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 16 - Verse 6

Verses 6-8. *Take heed*, etc. That is, be cautious, be on your guard.

The leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. Leaven is used in making bread. Its use is to pass through the flour, and cause it to ferment or to swell, and become light. It passes secretly, silently, but certainly. None can see its progress. So it was with the doctrines of the Pharisees. They were insinuating, artful, plausible. They *concealed* the real tendency of their doctrines, they instilled them secretly into the mind, and they pervaded all the faculties, like leaven.

They reasoned, etc. The disciples did not understand him as referring to their doctrine, because the word *leaven* was not often used among the Jews to denote *doctrines*—no other instance of the use of the word occurring in the Scriptures. Besides, the Jews had many particular rules about the *leaven* which might be used in making bread. Many held that it was not lawful to eat bread made by the Gentiles; and the disciples, perhaps, supposed that he was cautioning them not to procure a supply from the Pharisees and Sadducees.

O ye of little faith. Jesus, in reply, said that they should not be so anxious about the supply of their wants. *They should not have supposed, after the miracles that he had wrought in feeding so many*, that HE would caution them to be *anxious* about procuring bread for their necessities. It was improper, then, for them to reason about a thing like that, but they should have supposed he referred to something more important. The miracles had been full proof that he could supply all their wants without such anxiety.

{e} "take them" Lu 12:1 {f} "???" 1Co 5:6-8 Ga 5:9; 2Ti 2:16,17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 16 - Verse 7

Verse 7. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 16:6"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 16 - Verse 8

Verse 8. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes on "Mt 16:6"

{g} "unto them" Mt 6:30 8:26, 14:31

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 16 - Verse 9

Verse 9. No Barnes text on this verse.
{h} "Five loaves"
Mt 14:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 16 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No Barnes text on this verse.
{i} "seven loaves"
Mt 15:34

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 16 - Verse 11

Verse 11. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 16 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Then understood they*, etc. After this explanation, they immediately saw that he referred to their doctrines. Erroneous doctrines are like leaven in the following respects:
(1.) They are, at first, slight and unimportant in appearance.
(2.) They are insinuated into the soul unawares and silently, and are difficult of detection.
(3.) They act gradually.
(4.) They act most certainly.
(5.) They will pervade all the soul, and bring in all the faculties under their control.
{k} "the doctrine" Mt 15:1-9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 16 - Verse 13

Verses 13-20. See also Mr 8:27-29 Lu 9:18-20. *Caesarea Philippi*: There were two cities in Judea called Caesarea. One was situated on the borders of the Mediterranean and the other was the

one mentioned here. It was also called *Paneas*, was greatly enlarged and ornamented by Philip the tetrarch, son of Herod, and called Caesarea in honour of the Roman emperor, Tiberius Caesar. To distinguish it from the other Caesarea, the name of Philip was added to it, and called *Caesarea Philippi*, or *Caesarea of Philip*. It was situated in the boundaries of the tribe of Naphtali, near Mount Lebanon, and was in the most northern part of Judea. It now contains about two hundred houses, and is inhabited chiefly by Turks.

When Jesus came. The original is, *when Jesus was coming*. Mark says Mr 8:27 that this conversation took place when they were *in the way*, and this idea should have been retained in translating Matthew. While in the way, Jesus took occasion to call their attention *to the truth that he was the Messiah*. This truth it was of much consequence that they should fully believe and understand; and it was important, therefore, that he should often learn their views, and establish them if right, and correct them if wrong. He began, therefore, by inquiring what was the common report respecting him.

Whom do men say, etc. This passage has been variously rendered. Some have translated it. "Whom do men say that I am? The Son of Man? Others. "Whom do men say that I am—*I*, who am the Son of man, i.e., the Messiah?" The meaning of all is nearly the same. He wished to obtain the sentiments of the people respecting himself.

{l} "Whom do" Mr 8:27 Lu 9:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 16 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *And they said*, etc. **See Barnes "Mt 11:14"**.

They supposed he might be John the Baptist, as Herod did, risen from the dead. See Mt 14:2. He performed many miracles, and strongly resembled John in his manner of life, and in the doctrines which he taught.

{m} "they said" Mt 14:2 Lu 9:7-9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 16 - Verse 15

Verse 15. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes on "16:13"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 16 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *And Simon Peter answered*, etc. Peter, expressing the views of the apostles, with characteristic forwardness, answered the question proposed to them by Jesus: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

The Christ. The Messiah, the Anointed of God. **See Barnes** "Mt 11:14.

The Son. That is, the Son by way of eminence, in a peculiar sense. **See Barnes "Mt 1:17"**.

This appellation was understood as implying Divinity, Joh 10:29-36.

Of the living God. The term *living*, was given to the true God, to distinguish him from *idols*, that are dead or lifeless—blocks and stones. He is also the Source of life—temporal, spiritual, and eternal. The term living is often given to him in the Old Testament, Jos 3:10 1Sa 17:26,36 Jer 10:9,10

etc. In this noble confession, Peter expressed the full belief of himself and his brethren that he was the long-expected Messiah. Other men have very different opinions of him, but *they* were satisfied, and were not ashamed to confess it.

{n} "and said" Ps 2:7 Mt 14:33; Joh 1:49 Ac 9:20; Heb 1:2,5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 16 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *And Jesus answered—Blessed art thou*, Simon Bar-jona is the same as Simon *son of* Jona. Bar is a Syriac word, signifying *son*. The father of Peter, therefore, was Jona, or Jonas, Joh 1:42 21:16,17.

Blessed. That is, happy, honoured, evincing a proper spirit, and entitled to the approbation of God.

For flesh and blood. This phrase commonly signifies man, (see Ga 1:16 Eph 6:12; and it has been commonly supposed that he meant to say that *man* had not revealed it. But Jesus seems rather to have referred to himself.

"This truth you have not learned from my lowly appearance,
from my human nature, from my apparent rank and standing
in the world. You, Jews, were expecting to know the Messiah
by his external splendour, his pomp and power as a man. But
you have not learned me in this manner. I have shown no
such indication of my Messiahship. Flesh and blood have
not shown it. In spite of my appearance—my lowly state—
my want of resemblance to what you have expected—you have
learned it, taught by God."

This they had been taught by his miracles, his instructions, and the direct teachings of God on their minds. To reveal is to make known, or communicate something that was unknown, or secret.

{o} "flesh and blood" 1Co 2:10 Ga 1:16; Eph 2:8

{p} "but my Father" 1Jo 4:15 5:20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 16 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter*. The word *Peter*, in Greek, means a rock. It was given to Simon by Christ when he called him to be a disciple, Joh 1:42. *Cephas* is a Syriac word, meaning the same as Peter—a rock, or stone. The meaning of this phrase may be thus expressed: "Thou, in saying that I am the Son of God, hast called me by a name expressive of my

true character. I, also, have given to thee a name expressive of your character. I have called you *Peter, a rock*, denoting firmness, solidity; and your confession has shown that the name is appropriate. I see that you are worthy of the name, and will be a distinguished support of my religion.

And upon this rock, etc. This passage has given rise to many different interpretations. Some have supposed that the word ROCK refers to Peter's *confession*; and that he meant to say, upon this rock— this *truth* that thou hast confessed, that I am the Messiah—and upon confessions of this from all believers, I will build my church. Confessions like this shall be the test of piety; and in such confessions shall my church stand amidst the flames of persecution—the fury of the *gates of hell*. Others have thought that he referred to himself. Christ is called a rock, Isa 28:16 1Pe 2:8. And it has been thought that he turned from Peter to himself, and said: "Upon this rock, this truth that I am the Messiah—*upon myself* as the Messiah—I will build my church." Both these interpretations, though plausible, seem forced upon the passage to avoid the main difficulty in it. Another interpretation is, that the word *rock* refers to Peter himself. This is the obvious meaning of the passage; and had it not been that the church of Rome has abused it, and applied it to what was never intended, no other would have been sought for. "Thou art a rock. Thou hast shown thyself firm in and fit for the work of laying the foundation of the church. Upon thee will I build it. Thou shalt be highly honoured; thou shalt be first in making known the gospel to both Jews and Gentiles." This was accomplished. See Ac 2:14-36, where he *first* preached to the Jews, and Ac 10:1 and following, where he preached the gospel to Cornelius and his neighbours, who were Gentiles. Peter had thus the honour of laying the foundation of the church among the Jews and Gentiles. And this is the plain meaning of this passage. See also Ga 2:9. But Christ did *not* mean, as the Roman Catholics say he did, to exalt Peter to supreme authority above all the other apostles, or to say that he was the only one on whom he would rear his church. See Acts 15, where the advice of James, and not of Peter, was followed. See also Ga 2:11, where Paul withstood Peter to his face, because he was to be blamed—a thing which could not have happened if Christ, as the Roman Catholics say, meant that Peter should be absolute and infallible. More than all, it is not said here or anywhere else in the Bible, that Peter should have infallible successors who should be the vicegerents of Christ, and the head of the church. The whole meaning of the passage is this:

"I will make you the honoured instrument of making known
my gospel first to Jews and Gentiles, and will make you
a firm and distinguished preacher in building my church."

Will build my Church. This refers to the custom of building, in Judea, on a *rock* or other very firm foundation. **See Barnes "Mt 7:24"**.

The word church means, literally, those called out, and often means *an assembly or congregation*. See Ac 19:32; Gr.; Ac 7:38. It is applied to Christians as being called out from the world. It means, sometimes, the whole body of believers, Ep 1:22 1Co 10:32. This is its meaning in this place. It means, also, a particular society of believers, worshipping in one place, Ac 8:1 9:31; 1Co 1:2, etc. Sometimes, also, a society in a single house, as Ro 16:5. In common language, it means the church *visible*—ie. all who *profess* religion; or *invisible*, i.e. all who are real Christians, professors or not.

And the gates of hell, etc. Ancient cities were surrounded by walls. In the *gates*, by which they were entered, were the principal places for holding courts, transacting business, and deliberating on public matters. **See Barnes "Mt 7:13"**.

The word *gates*, therefore, is used for *counsels, designs, machinations, evil purposes*. *Hell* means, here, the place of departed spirits, particularly evil spirits. And the meaning of the passage

is, that all the *plots, stratagems*, and *machinations*, of the enemies of the church, should not be able to overcome it—a promise that has been remarkably fulfilled.

{q} "Peter" Joh 1:42 {r} "and upon" Eph 2:20 Re 21:14 {s} "gates of hell" Psa 9:13 {t} "prevail against it" Isa 54:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 16 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *And I will give unto thee*, etc. A *key* is an instrument for opening a door. He that is in possession of it has the power of access, and has a general care and administration of a house. Hence, in the Bible, a *key* is used as a symbol of superintendence, an emblem of power and authority. See Isa 22:22; Re 1:18, 3:7.

The kingdom of heaven here means, doubtless, the church on earth, **See Barnes "Mt 3:2"**.

When he says, therefore, he will give him the keys of the kingdom of heaven, he means that he will make him the instrument of opening the door of faith to the world—the first to preach the gospel to both Jews and Gentiles. This was done, Ac 2:14-36, 10:1. The "power of the keys" was given to Peter alone *solely for this reason*; the power of "binding and loosing" on earth was given to the other apostles with him. See Mt 18:18. The only pre-eminence, then, that Peter had, was the honour of first opening the doors of the gospel to the world.

Whatsoever thou shalt bind, etc. The phrase *to bind* and *to loose* was often used by the Jews. It meant *to prohibit* and *to permit*. To *bind* a thing was to *forbid* it; to *loose* it, to *allow it to be done*. Thus they said about gathering wood on the sabbath day. "The school of Shammei binds it"—i, e. forbids it; "the school of Hillel looses it"—i. e. allows it. When Jesus gave this power to the apostles, he meant that whatsoever they *forbid* in the church should *have Divine authority*; whatever they *permitted*, or commanded, should also have Divine authority—that is, should be bound or loosed in heaven, or *meet the approbation of God*. They were to be guided infallibly in the organization of the church,

(1.) by the teaching of Christ, and

(2.) by the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

This does not refer to *persons*, but to *things*—"whatsoever," not *whosoever*. It refers to rites and ceremonies in the church. Such of the Jewish customs as they should forbid were to be forbidden; and such as they thought proper to permit were to be allowed. Such rites as they should appoint in the church were to have the force of Divine authority. Accordingly, they forbid circumcision and the eating of things offered to idols, and strangled, and blood, Ac 15:20. They founded the church, and ordained its rites, as of Divine authority.

{u} "whatsoever thou" Mt 18:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 16 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Then charged*, etc. That is, he then commanded them. Mark Mr 8:30 and Luke Lu 9:21 (Greek) that he *strictly* or *severely* charged them. He laid emphasis on it, as a matter of much

importance. The reason of this seems to be that his time had not fully come; he was not willing to rouse the Jewish malice, and to endanger his life, by having it proclaimed that he was the Messiah. The word Jesus is wanting in many manuscripts, and should probably be omitted. "Then he charged them strictly to tell no man that he was the Christ or Messiah."

{v} "Then charged" Mr 8:30

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 16 - Verse 21

Verses 21-23. See also Mr 7:31-33 Lu 9:22. *From that time forth*. This was the first intimation that he gave that he was to die in this cruel manner. He had taken much pains to convince them that he was the Messiah; he saw by the confession of Peter that *they* were convinced; and he *then* began to prepare theft minds for the awful event which was before him. Had he declared this when he first called them, they would never have followed him. Their minds were not prepared for it. They expected a temporal, triumphant prince, as the Messiah. He *first*, therefore, convinced them that *he* was the Christ; and then, with great prudence, began to correct their apprehensions of the proper character of the Messiah.

Elders. The men of the great council, or sanhedrim. **See Barnes "Mt 5:7"**.

Chief Priests and Scribes. **See Barnes "Mt 3:7"**.

{w} "From that time" Lu 9:22 18:31, 24:6,7; 1Co 15:3,4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 16 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Then Peter took him*. This may mean, either to interrupt him, or to take him aside, or *to take him by the hand*, as a friend. This latter is probably the true meaning. Peter was strongly attached to him. He could not bear to think of his death. He expected, moreover, that he would be the triumphant Messiah. He could not hear, therefore, that his death was so near. In his ardour, and confidence, and strong attachment, he seized him by the hand as a friend, and said, "Be it *far* from thee." This phrase might have been translated, "God be merciful to thee; this shall not be unto thee." It expressed Peter's strong desire that it *might* not be. The word *rebuke* here means to *admonish*, or *earnestly to entreat*, as in Lu 17:3. It does not mean that Peter assumed *authority* over Christ; but that he *earnestly expressed his wish that it might not be so*. Even this was improper. He should have been submissive, and not have interfered.

{1} "Be it far from them" or, "pity thyself"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 16 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Get thee behind me, Satan*. The word Satan means, literally, an adversary, or one that opposes us in the accomplishment of our designs. It is applied to the devil commonly, as the *opposer* or *adversary* of man. But there is no evidence that the Lord Jesus meant to apply this term to Peter,

as signifying that he was Satan or the devil, or that he used the term in anger. He may have used it in the *general* sense which the word bore, as an adversary or opposer; and the meaning may be, that such sentiments as Peter expressed then were *opposed* to him and his plans. His interference was improper. His views and feelings stood in the way of the accomplishment of the Saviour's designs. There was, undoubtedly, a *rebuke* in this language; for the conduct of Peter was improper; but the idea which is commonly attached to it, and which, perhaps, our translation conveys, implies a more severe and harsh rebuke than the Saviour intended, and than the language which he used would express.

Thou art an offence. That is, a stumbling-block: Your advice and wishes are in my way. If followed, they would prevent the very thing for which I came.

Thou savourest not. That is, thou *thinkest* not. *You* think that those things should not be done which *God* wishes to be done. You judge of this matter as *men* do, who are desirous of honour; and not as God, who sees it best that I should die, to promote the great interests of mankind.

{x} "Satan:" 2Sa 19:22 {y} "an offence" Ro 14:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 16 - Verse 24

Verse 24-28. This discourse is also recorded in Mr 8:34-38 9:1 and Lu 9:23-27

Let him deny himself. That is, let him surrender to God his will, affections, body, and soul. Let him not seek his own happiness as the supreme object, but be willing to renounce all, and lay down his life also, if required.

Take up his cross. **See Barnes "Mt 10:38"**.

{x} "any man" Mt 10:38 Mr 8:34; Lu 9:23 14:27; Ac 14:22 1Th 3:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 16 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Whosoever will save his life*, etc. **See Barnes "Mt 10:39"**

{a} "For whosoever" Joh 12:25 Es 4:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 16 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *For what is a man profited*, etc. To gain the whole world means to possess it as our own—all its riches, honours, and pleasures. *To lose his own soul* means to be cast away, to be shut out from heaven, to be sent to hell. Two things are implied by Christ in these questions:

1st, that they who are striving to gain the world, and are unwilling to give it up for the sake of religion, will lose their souls; and

2nd, that if the soul is lost, nothing can be given in exchange for it, or it can never after be saved. There is no redemption in hell.

{b} "or what" Ps 49:7,8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 16 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *For the Son of man*, etc. That is, the Lord Jesus Christ shall return to judge the world. He will come in glory—the glory of his Father—the majesty with which God is accustomed to appear, and which befits God. He will be attended by angels. He will judge all men.

Reward. The word *reward* means recompense, or do justice to. He will deal with them according to their character. The righteous he will reward in heaven, with glory and happiness. The wicked he will send to hell, as a *reward* or recompense for their evil works, This fact, *that he will come to judgment*, he gives as a reason why we should be willing to deny ourselves and follow him. Even though now it should be attended with contempt and suffering, yet *then* he will *reward* his followers for all their shame and sorrows, and receive them to his kingdom. He adds, Mr 8:38, that if we are ashamed of him here, he will be ashamed of us there. That is, if we reject and disown him here, he will reject and disown us there.

{c} "For the Son" Da 7:9,10; Zec 14:5 Jude 1:14

{d} "and then" Re 22:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 16 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *Verily I say unto you*, etc. To encourage them, he assured them that though his kingdom was now obscure and despised—though he was cast out and little known—yet the time was near when *he* should be regarded in a different manner, and his kingdom be established with great power. This cannot refer to the end of the world, and there is no need of referring it to the destruction of Jerusalem.

Taste of death. That is, *die*. Before they die they shall see this.

Son of man coming in his kingdom. Mark and Luke have explained this. Mr 9:1, "Until they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." Lu 9:27, "Till they see the kingdom of God." The meaning evidently is, till they should see my kingdom, that is, my church, now small, feeble, and despised, greatly enlarged, established, and spreading with great rapidity and extent. All this was accomplished. All these apostles, except Judas, lived to see the wonders of the day of Pentecost; some of them, John particularly, saw the Jewish nation scattered, the temple destroyed, the gospel established in Asia, Rome, Greece, and in a large part of the known world.

{e} "There be" Mr 9:1 {f} "taste of death" Heb 2:9

REMARKS ON MATTHEW CHAPTER 16

(1.) Men will often judge far more correctly about natural than spiritual things, Mt 16:1-3. About natural objects they are watchful. In them they feel a deep interest. And they watch for every *sign* that may affect their interest. They are too much concerned to judge falsely. But they feel no such interest in religious things. Hence it happens that men who have good sense, and much wisdom

in regard to worldly concerns, are exceedingly foolish in regard to religion. They often believe reports respecting religion, revivals, and missions, which they would despise on any other subject. They read and believe newspapers and other publications, which they would hold in contempt on any other topic but religion.

(2.) It is of importance to watch the signs of the times, Mt 16:3. days of Christ, it was the duty of the people to look at the evidence that he was the Messiah. It was plain. It is also important to look at the signs of the times in which we live. They are clear also. Much is doing; and the spread of the Bible, the labours among the heathen, the distribution of tracts, and, perhaps above all, the institution of Sabbath schools—all betoken an eventful age, and are an indication that brighter days are about to dawn on the world. We should watch these signs that we may rejoice, that we may pray with more fervour, and that we may do our part to advance the kingdom of God. Little children should grow up believing that they live in an important age, that they enjoy many peculiar privileges, and that they may and must do much to spread the gospel through the earth. Even when children, they should pray, and they should give to benefit others; and, most of all, they should give themselves to Christ, that they may benefit others with a right spirit.

(3.) Sinners should be addressed with deep feeling and faithfulness, Mr 8:12. Jesus *sighed deeply*. So should we. We should not be harsh, or sour, or without feeling. We should weep over them, and pray for them, and speak to them, not as if we were better than they, but with an earnest desire for their salvation. Comp. Ac 20:31 Php 3:18.

(4.) Men easily mistake plain instruction, Mt 16:7. And especially is this the case where there is any chance of giving a worldly turn to the instruction. If men's thoughts—even those of Christians— were more off from the world, and they thought less of the supply of their wants, they would understand the truths of religion much better than they do. No man can understand the doctrines of religion aright, whose principal concern is what he shall eat, and drink, and wear. Hence even Christians are often strangely ignorant of the plainest truths of religion. And hence the importance of teaching those truths to children before their thoughts become engrossed by the world. And hence, too, the importance of Sabbath schools.

(5.) We should not have undue anxiety about the supply of our wants. Christ supplied many thousands by a word, and he can easily supply us, Mt 16:9-12.

(6.) We should learn, from his past goodness, to trust him for the future, Mt 16:9-12.

(7.) We should be on our guard against error, Mt 16:11. It is sly, artful, plausible, working secretly, but effectually. We should always be cautious of what we believe, and examine it by the word of God. False doctrines are often made as much like the truth as possible, for the very purpose of deceiving. Satan is transformed into an angel of light.

(8.) It is important to ascertain our views of Christ, Mt 16:13-15. It is our all. If we do not think and feel right respecting him, we cannot be safe. We should often, then, ask ourselves—we should ask one another—what we think of Christ.

(9.) It is our duty to profess our attachment to Christ. It should be done boldly, and always, Mt 16:16. We should never be ashamed of him. And to do this we should always, in our own hearts, believe that he is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

(10.) We should esteem it a great happiness and honour to be enabled thus to show our attachment to him. The world may not honour us, but God will, and will pronounce us blessed, Mt 16:17.

(11.) God only reveals this to us, Mt 16:17. This he does by his word and Spirit. We should, then, search the Bible; and we should pray much that God would *reveal* his Son in us, and enable us boldly to confess him before men.

(12.) The church is safe, Mt 16:18. It may be small—it may be feeble—it may weep much—it may be much opposed and ridiculed —it may have mighty enemies—the rich and the great may set themselves against it—but it is safe. It is founded on a Rock. All its enemies shall not overcome it. Jesus has promised it; and in all ages he has shown that he has remembered his promise. It has not been extinct. It has been persecuted, opposed, ridiculed, and almost driven from the world; but a *few* have been found who have loved the Lord; and soon the flame has kindled, and the church has shone forth "fair as the sun, clear as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners." So it is still. Feeble churches may mourn much; anxiety may abound; and the few pious people may weep in secret places; but Jesus hears their groans, and counts their tears, and they and their church *are safe*. He is their Friend, and all the powers of hell shall not prevail against them.

(13.) The importance of prudence in delivering truth, Mt 16:21. It should be well-timed. It should be when people are prepared to receive it. Especially is this true of young converts. They have need of milk, and not of strong meat. They should not be surprised that many doctrines of the Bible are mysterious now. But they may fully comprehend them hereafter. Peter, a young convert, did not understand the plain doctrine that Jesus must die for sin. Yet it was afterwards clear to him, and most cordially he loved it.

(14.) It is highly wicked and improper to attempt to counsel God, or to think that we understand things better than he does, Mt 16:22,23. His plan is the best plan. And though it does not fall in with *our* views of wisdom, yet we should be still. It is all wise. And though what he does we know not now, yet we shall know hereafter.

(15.) We, see what religion requires, Mt 16:24. We must deny ourselves. We must submit to trials. We must do our duty. We must often suffer persecution. We must be, in all places, among all men, and in every employment, *Christians*. No matter what may happen. Come poverty, disease, persecution, death, it is ours to take up the cross, and do our duty. So apostles, and martyrs, and the Saviour himself, have gone before us. And we must follow in their steps.

"Shall I be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize,
And sailed through bloody seas?

"Sure I must fight, if I would reign:
Increase my courage, Lord,
To bear the cross, endure the shame,
Supported by thy word."

(16.) How foolish are the men of this world! Mt 16:26. In a little time, how worthless will be all their wealth! It is gained by anxiety, and toil, and tears. It never satisfies. It harasses them with constant care. It smoothes no wrinkles on theft brow, alleviates no pain when they are sick, saves no friend from death, gives no consolation in regard to the future, and may be left at any moment. Others will soon possess, and perhaps scatter in dissipation, what they have obtained by so much toil. See Ps 39:6. And while they scatter or enjoy it, where shall the soul of him be who spent all

his probation to obtain it? Alas! lost, lost, lost—for ever lost! And no wealth, no man, no devil, no angel, can redeem him, or be given *for* his soul. The harvest will be past, the summer ended, and he not saved. In *gaining* the world, he gained two things— disappointment and trouble here, and an eternity of woe hereafter. How foolish and wicked is man!

(17.) The righteous should rejoice that Jesus will come again to our world, He will reward them, Mt 16:27. He will come as their Friend, and they shall ascend with him to heaven.

(18.) The wicked should weep and Wail that Jesus will come again to our world, He will punish them for their crimes, Mt 16:27. They cannot escape. See Re 1:7.

(19.) It will not be long before he will come, Mt 16:28. At any rate, it will not be long before *we* shall meet him. Death is near. And then we must stand before him, and give an account of the deeds done in the body.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 17 - Verse 1

MATTHEW CHAPTER 17

Verses 1-9. See also Mr 9:2-10 Lu 9:28-36

Verse 1. *And after six days*. That is, six days from the conversation recorded in the last chapter. Luke Lu 9:28 says, about eight days after.

Matthew mentions the six days that intervened between the day of the conversation and the transfiguration. Luke *includes* both those days, and thus reckons eight. Besides, Luke does not pretend to fix the precise time. In the Greek it is "*about* eight days after."

Taketh Peter, James, and John. These three disciples were with him also in the garden of Gethsemane, Mr 14:33. He designed to fit them, in an eminent degree, for the work of the gospel ministry, by the previous manifestations of his glory, and of his patience in suffering.

Into an high mountain apart. That is, apart from the other disciples. It is commonly supposed that this was Mount Tabor, a high mountain in Galilee. The name of the mountain is not, however, mentioned in the New Testament. Luke adds, Lu 9:28 that he ascended there to pray. Our Saviour prayed much. When he did it, he chose to be alone. For this purpose he often ascended mountains, or went into the deserts. There is something in the solitude and deep and awful stillness of a lofty mountain favourable to devotion.

{g} "And after" Mr 9:2 Lu 9:28

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 17 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And was transfigured before them*. The word *transfigure* means, *to change the appearance or form*. It does not denote the change of the substance of a thing, but simply of its appearance. It puts on a new aspect. What this change was, we are expressly told.

(1.) His face shone as the sun; that is, with a peculiar brightness. A similar appearance is described respecting Moses when he came down from the mount, Ex 34:29,30. See also Heb 1:3, where Christ is called the brightness of the glory of God; in the original, the *splendour*, or *shining*, like the brightness of the sun.

(2.) The second change was that of his garments. They were white as the light. Mark says, white as snow, so as no fuller on earth could whiten them. The word "fuller" means, commonly, one who dresses cloth, or *fulls* it, so as to make it more thick and strong. Here it means one who *bleaches* cloth, or makes it white; one who cleanses garments, when by wearing they become soiled. Among the Greeks, that was a distinct trade. Luke says, white *and* glistering; that is, resplendent, shining, or a very bright white. There is no evidence here that what is commonly said of him is true, that his *body* was so changed as to show what his glorified body is. His body, so far as the sacred writers inform us, underwent no change. All this splendour and glory was a change *in appearance* only. The Scriptures should be taken just as they are, without any attempt to affix a meaning to them which the sacred writers did not intend.

Raiment. Clothing; apparel. John refers to this transfiguration in Joh 1:14; and Peter in his second Epistle, 2Pe 1:16,17.

{h} "as the sun" Re 1:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 17 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias*. Moses, a distinguished servant of God, by whom the *law* was given, and whose institutions typified the Messiah. It was particularly proper that *he* should appear, when his prophecies and types were about to be fulfilled, and his rites to be done away. Elias, or Elijah, a distinguished prophet, taken to heaven without seeing death. See 2Ki 2:11. Elijah had been honoured eminently by being thus translated, and still more by being made the *model* of the forerunner of the Messiah, Mt 11:14 Lu 1:17. They appeared "in glory," Lu 9:31 i.e., as they are *in heaven*—— with the glory which the redeemed have there.

Talking with him. Lu 9:31 informs us that they conversed about his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. To redeemed spirits, that death was an object of intense interest. By faith in that death they had been saved; and now that the Redeemer of mankind was about to die, it is no wonder that this was the burden of his and their thoughts.

Luke adds, Lu 9:32 that Peter and they who were with him were heavy with sleep. It is not improbable that this was in the night; that Jesus was engaged in prayer; and that he had *permitted* his weary followers to compose themselves to rest. It was after they were awaked that they saw this vision. Probably the sudden splendour, the bright shining, aroused them from sleep.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 17 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Let us make here three tabernacles*. A tabernacle is a tent. It was made commonly by fixing posts into the ground, and stretching on them cloth, fastened by cords. **See Barnes "Isa 33:20"**.

In some instances, they were made of branches of trees;—a temporary shelter from the sun and rain, not a permanent dwelling. Peter was rejoiced at the vision, and desirous of continuing it. He proposed, therefore, that they should prolong this interview, and dwell there. Mark adds, that they knew not what they said in proposing this. They were frightened, amazed, and rejoiced; and, in the ecstasy of the moment, they proposed to remain there.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 17 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *A bright cloud overshadowed them*. The word *overshadow* here means, rather, *to be diffused* or *spread* over them. It does not mean that it made *a shade*. A cloud was a symbol of the Divine Presence. Thus God went before the Israelites in a cloudy pillar—dark by day, and bright by night, (Ex 14:19,20) he appeared on Mount Sinai in a cloud bright by fire, (Ex 24:15-17) and a cloud, the symbol of the Divine Presence—called the *Shechinah*— dwelt continually in the Most Holy Place in the temple, 1Ki 8:10,11; Eze 1:4 10:4.

When, therefore, the disciples saw this cloud, they were prepared to hear the word of the Lord.

This is my beloved Son. This was the voice of God. This was the second time that, in a remarkable manner, he had declared this. See Mt 3:17. This was spoken to confirm the disciples; to declare their duty to hear Christ rather than any other, and to honour him more than Moses and Elijah; and to strengthen their faith in *him* when they should go forth to preach the gospel, after he was shamefully put to death. After this, it was impossible for them to doubt that he was truly the Son of God. See 2Pe 1:17,18.

{i} "voice" Mt 3:17 Mr 1:11; Lu 3:22 2Pe 1:17

{k} "in whom" Isa 42:1,21 {l} "hear ye" De 18:15,19; Ac 3:22,23; Heb 1:1,2, 2:1-3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 17 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *They fell on their face*. They entered into the cloud; or the cloud enveloped them, Lu 9:34. They were, therefore, afraid. They were awed at the presence of God; and their fears were removed only by the voice of their beloved Master. No man can see God and live. And it is only the glory of God, as it shines in the face of Christ, (see 2Co 4:6) that mortals can bear.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 17 - Verse 7

Verse 7. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

{m} "touched them"
Da 10:10,18; Re 1:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 17 - Verse 8

Verse 8. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 17 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Tell the vision to no man*. This vision was designed particularly to confirm them in the truth that he was the Messiah. While he was with them, it was unnecessary that they should relate what they had seen. When he was crucified, they would need this evidence that he was the Christ. Then they were to use it. There were three witnesses of it—as many as the law required; and the proof that he was the Messiah was clear. Besides, if they had told it then, it would have provoked the Jews and endangered his life. His time was not yet come.

Vision. Sight; appearance. What they had seen on the mount.

Charged them. Gave them a commandment.

The *sole* design of this transfiguration was to convince them that he was the Christ; that he was greater than the greatest of the prophets; that he was the Son of God.

Mark adds, Mr 9:10 they kept this saying, questioning what the rising of the dead should mean. The Pharisees believed that the dead would rise; and there is no doubt that the disciples believed it. But their views were not clear. And, in particular, they did not understand what he meant by *his* rising from the dead. They do not appear to have understood, though he had told them Mt 12:40 that he would rise after three days.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 17 - Verse 10

Verses 10-13. See also Mr 9:11-13. *Why then say the Scribes*, etc. The disciples appear to have been satisfied now, that he was the Messiah. The *transfiguration* had taken away all their doubts. But they recollected that it was a common doctrine among the Jews that *Elijah* should appear before the Messiah came; and they did not then recollect that he had appeared. To this difficulty the word *then* refers. "We are satisfied that thou art the Christ. But Elijah is not yet come, as was expected. What, 'then,' is the meaning of the common opinions of our learned men, the scribes? Were they right or wrong in their expectation of Elijah?" **See Barnes "Mt 11:14"**.

{n} "Why then" Mal 4:5,6; Mt 11:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 17 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things*, He did not mean by this that Elijah was yet to come for he directly tells them that *he had come*; but he meant to affirm that it was a true doctrine which the scribes taught, that Elijah *would* appear before the coming of the Messiah. *To restore*, means to put into the former situation. See Mt 12:13. Hence it means, to heal, to correct, to *put in proper order*. Here it means that Elijah would put things in a proper state; be the instrument of reforming the people; of restoring them, in some measure, to proper notions about the Messiah, and preparing them for his coming. Before the coming of John, their views were erroneous, their expectations worldly, and their conduct exceedingly depraved. He corrected many of their notions about the Messiah, Mt 3:1 and was the instrument of an extensive reformation; and thus *restored* them, in some degree, to correct notions of their own economy and of the Messiah, and to a preparation for his advent.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 17 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Elias is come*. That is, John the Baptist has come, in the spirit and power of Elias. See Lu 1:17.

They have done whatsoever they listed. The word *list* is an old English word, signifying to *choose*, to desire, to be inclined. See Joh 3:8. It means here, that they had done to John as they pleased; i.e., they had put him to death, Mt 14:10.

Mark adds, Mr 9:12, that Jesus told them that it was written of the Son of man that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought. This was written of him particularly in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. To be set at nought, is to be esteemed as worthless, or as nothing; to be cast out and despised. No prophecy was ever more strikingly fulfilled. See Lu 23:11.

{o} "suffer of them" Mt 16:21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 17 - Verse 13

Verse 13. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

See Barnes on "Mt 17:10"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 17 - Verse 14

Verses 14-21. This narrative, with some additions, is found in Mr 9:14-29 Lu 9:37-43.

Verse 14. *And when they were come to the multitude*. This took place on the day following the transfiguration, Lu 9:37. This multitude was probably composed of persons who had attended on his ministry, and many of whom were his real disciples. *With them*, as Mark Mr 9:14 informs us,

were scribes questioning with them. That is, they were probably *professedly* making inquiries about the Saviour, but *really* attempting to introduce their own sentiments, and to draw them off from him. They probably artfully asked them many questions about his birth, his family, his appearance, his manner of life, and his instructions, all which were contrary to the general expectation respecting the Messiah; and they intended, therefore, to insinuate that *such* a person could not be the Christ. The people were persuaded of it, and it would not have done to have attacked their opinions openly, but they attempted to gain the same point by sly insinuations. Error is always subtle, and often puts on the appearance of calm and honest inquiry. Well had he compared them to *leaven*, Mt 16:11,12. The multitude, seeing Jesus coming down, left the scribes, and ran to meet him, (Mark.) They were *amazed*, probably because they had not expected to see him there. In their joy at meeting him in this unexpected manner, they *saluted* him, (Mark;) i.e., they probably prostrated themselves before him, after the manner of salutation in eastern countries. **See Barnes "Lu 10:4"**.

Jesus, seeing the scribes and their artful design, reproved them by asking them *why* they questioned thus with his disciples? Mr 9:16. Conscious of their guilt and their base purpose, they returned no answer.

A certain man kneeling down to him. That is, saluting him, or showing high regard for him. **See Barnes "Lu 10:4"**.

It did not imply religious homage, but merely high respect and earnest entreaty.

{p} "And when" Mr 9:14 Lu 9:37

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 17 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Lord, have mercy*. The word Lord here means *Sir*, a title of civility, not implying Divinity.

My son. This was an only son, (Luke.) He was possessed with a devil. This calamity was attended with the following symptoms:—he was *lunatic*, **See Barnes "Mt 4:24"**; he was sore vexed, i.e., he suffered greatly, or was greatly afflicted; he fell often suddenly in the manner of persons having epileptic fits; he was dumb, that is, he was dumb except when the fit was *coming on him*; for Luke says, that when the spirit took him, he cried suddenly out; he foamed and gnashed with his teeth, and wasted away, or became poor and emaciated. It tore him, (Luke,) and scarcely departed from him, or he had only short intervals of reason; for so the passage in Luke, bruising him, hardly departeth from him," should be translated.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 17 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *And I brought him to thy disciples*, etc. That is, not to the apostles, for they had power over unclean spirits, Mt 10:8 but to others of his followers, who attempted to work miracles. It is probable that many of his disciples attempted this, who were not personal attendants on his ministry, Mr 9:38.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 17 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation*! *Perverse* means that which is twisted or turned from the proper direction; and is often used of the eyes, when one or both are turned from the natural position. Applied to a *generation*, or race of men, it means that they hold opinions turned or perverted from the truth, and that they were wicked in their conduct. He applied this probably to the Jews, and not to his real disciples.

How long shall I suffer you? That is, how long shall I bear with you? How long is it necessary to show such patience and forbearance with your unbelief and perversity? This was not an expression of impatience or complaint, so much as a proof that they were so slow to believe that he was the Messiah, notwithstanding his miracles, and that even his disciples so slowly learned to put the proper trust in him.

Mark adds, (Mr 9:20-22,) that when he that was possessed was brought, the spirit, by a last desperate struggle, threw him down, and tore him, and left him apparently dead. He adds farther, that the case had existed during the whole life of his son, from a child. This was a case of uncommon obstinacy. The affliction was fixed and lasting. The disciples, seeing the obstinacy of the case—seeing him dumb, wasted away, torn, and foaming—despaired of being able to cure him. They lacked the *faith* which was necessary; *doubted* whether they could cure him, and therefore could not.

Jesus said to the father, Mr 9:23 "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." That is, this cure shall be effected if you have faith. Not that *his* faith would give Jesus the power to heal him, but it would *render it proper* that he should exert that power in his favour. In this way, and in this only, are all things possible to believers. The man had faith, Mr 9:24. The father came, as a father *should* do, weeping, and praying that his faith might be increased, so as to make it *proper* that Jesus should interpose in his behalf, and save his child. "Help my unbelief," (Mr 9:24). This was an expression of humility. If my faith is defective, supply what is lacking. Help me to overcome my unbelief. Let not the defect of my faith be in the way of this blessing.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 17 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *And Jesus rebuked the devil*. The word *rebuke* has the combined force of *reproving* and *commanding*. He *reproved* him for having afflicted the child, and he *commanded* him to come out of him. Mr 9:25 has recorded the words which he used—words implying reproof and command: "Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him." And the spirit cried, and with a mighty convulsion came out, leaving him apparently dead. Jesus lifted him up by the hand, (Mark,) and gave him to his father, (Luke.)

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 17 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Then came the disciples*, etc. This inquiry was made in some house to which they retired near the place where the miracle was performed, (Mark) Jesus told them, in reply, that it was because of their unbelief that they had not been able to cast him out. They were appalled by the difficulty of the case, and the obstinacy of the disease. Their *faith* would not have made it more easy for God to work this miracle, but such was his will; such the way in which he worked miracles, that he required faith in those who were the instruments.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 17 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *As a grain of mustard seed*. **See Barnes "Mt 13:31,32"**.

The mustard seed was the smallest of all Seeds. It has been supposed by some, therefore, that he meant to say, if ye have the smallest or feeblest faith that is genuine, ye can do all things. The mustard seed produced the largest of all herbs. It has been supposed by others, therefore, to mean, If you have increasing, expanding, enlarged faith, growing and strengthening from small beginnings, you can perform the most difficult undertaking. There is a principle of vitality in the grain of seed, stretching forward to great results, which illustrates the nature of faith. Your faith should be *like* that. This is probably the true meaning.

Ye shall say unto this mountain, etc. Probably he pointed to a mountain near, to assure them, if they had such faith, they might accomplish the most difficult undertakings—things that at first would appear impossible.

{q} "unbelief" Heb 3:9 {r} "if ye have" Mt 21:21 Mr 11:23; Lu 17:6 1Co 13:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 17 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Howbeit this kind*, etc. This *kind* means this kind of devils; this species of possession. Where they have had long possession; where they produce such painful, and fixed, and alarming effects, they can be expelled only in connexion with prayer and fasting.

Goeth not out but by prayer and fasting. That is, in order to work miracles of this kind, to cast out devils in cases so obstinate and dreadful as this, faith of the highest kind is necessary. That faith is produced and kept vigorous only by much prayer, and by such abstinence from food as fits the mind for the highest exercises of religion, and leaves it free to hold communion with God.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 17 - Verse 22

Verses 22,23. See also Mr 9:30-33 Lu 9:43-45. *And while they abode in Galilee*. Galilee, the northern part of Palestine. **See Barnes "**Mt 2:22.

The Son of man shall be betrayed, etc. To betray, means to deliver up in a treacherous manner. This was done by Judas Iscariot, called for that the traitor, Mt 26:14-16,47-50.

A traitor, or betrayer, is one who makes use of confidence reposed in him for the purpose of delivering him up, who puts that confidence in him to the hands of enemies.

{s} "And while" Mt 16:21 20:17; Mr 8:31 9:30,31 10:33; Lu 9:22,44
Lu 18:31 24:6,26,46

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 17 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again*, See Mt 12:40. Mark and Luke add, that they understood not that saying, and it was hid from them, and they were afraid to ask him. The reasons of this may have been:

(1.) They were strongly attached to him, and were exceedingly sorry (Matthew) at any intimation that the was soon to leave them. They learned with great slowness and reluctance, therefore, that he was to be treated in this manner.

(2.) They were not willing to believe it. They knew he was the Messiah. But they supposed that he was to be a distinguished Prince, and was to restore the kingdom to Israel, Ac 1:6. But to be betrayed into the hands of his enemies, and be put to death, appeared to them to be frustrating all these expectations.

(3.) Though what he said was plain enough, yet they did not understand it; they could not see how he could be the Messiah, and yet be put to death in this manner. Nor did they understand it fully till after the resurrection.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 17 - Verse 24

Verses 24-27. *And when they were come to Capernaum*. **See Barnes "Mt 4:13".**

They that received tribute. In the original this is, they who received *the two drachms*. The *drachm* was a Grecian coin, worth about 12 1/2 cents [about 7d.] of our money. This *tribute*, consisting of these two drachms, was not paid to the Roman government, but to the Jewish collectors, for the use of the temple service. It was permitted in the law of Moses, (see Ex 30:11-16,) that in numbering the people, half a shekel should be received of each man for the services of religion. This was in addition to the *tithes* paid by the whole nation, and seems to have been considered as a voluntary offering. It was devoted to the purchase of animals for the daily sacrifice; wood, flour, salt, incense, etc., for the use of the temple. Two drachms were about equal to half a shekel.

Doth not your master pay tribute? This tribute was voluntary; and they therefore asked him whether he was in the habit of paying taxes for the support of the temple. Peter replied, that it was his custom to pay all the usual taxes of the nation.

{1} "tribute money" "Didrachma, in value about 15d. Ex 38:26

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 17 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Jesus prevented him*. That is, Jesus *commenced speaking before Peter*, or spoke before Peter had told him what he had said. This implies, that though not present with Peter when he gave the answer, yet Jesus was acquainted with what he had said. *Prevent* here means, to go before, or precede. It does not mean, as now with us, to *hinder*, or obstruct. See the same use of the word in Ps 59:10 79:8, 88:13 119:148; 1Th 4:15.

Of whom do the kings of the earth, etc. That is, earthly kings.

Their own brethren. Their sons; the members of the family.

Or of strangers? The word strangers does not mean foreigners, but those who were not their own sons, or members of their family. Peter replied, that tribute was collected of those *out* of their own family. Jesus answered, then are the children, or *sons* of *the kings*, *free*; i.e., taxes are not required of them. The meaning of this may be thus expressed: "Kings do not tax their own sons. This tribute money is taken up for the temple-service; i.e., the service of my Father. I, therefore, being *the Son of God*, for whom this is taken up, cannot be lawfully *required* to pay this tribute."

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 17 - Verse 26

Verse 26. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 17:24"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 17 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them*. That is, lest they should think that we despise the temple and its service, and thus provoke needless opposition, though we are not under *obligation* to pay it, yet it is best to pay it to them.

Go thou to the sea. This was at Capernaum, on the shore of the sea of Tiberias.

Thou shalt find a piece of money. In the original, thou shalt find a *stater*, a Roman silver coin of the value of four drachms, or one shekel, and of course sufficient to pay the tribute for two, himself and Peter. In whatever way this is regarded, it is proof that Jesus was possessed of Divine attributes. If he *knew* that the first fish that came up would have such a coin in his mouth, it was proof of omniscience. If he created the coin for the occasion, and placed it there, then it was proof of Divine power. The former is the most probable supposition. It is by no means absurd that a fish should have swallowed a silver coin. Many of them bite eagerly at anything bright, and would not hesitate, therefore, at swallowing a piece of money.

{t} "offend" Ro 14:21 15:1-3; 2Co 6:3

{2} "stater", "which was half an ounce of silver"

REMARKS ON MATTHEW CHAPTER 17

(1.) Secret prayer should be practised alone, or apart from others, Mt 17:1 Christ often went into deserts, and on mountains, that he might be by himself. This should be done,

1st, to avoid the appearance of ostentation;

2nd, pride is easily excited when we know that others hear us pray. Every one should have some place—some closet-to which he may retire daily, with the assurance that none sees him but God. **See Barnes "Mt 6:6"**.

(2.) In such seasons we shall meet God, Mt 17:2. It was in such season that the Divine favour was peculiarly shown to Christ.— Then the transfiguration took place—the brightest manifestation of his glory that ever occurred on earth. So the clearest and most precious manifestations of the love and glory of God will be made to us in prayer.

(3.) We see the great glory of Christ, Mt 17:2. No such favour had been granted to any prophet before him. We see the regard in which he was held by Moses and Elias—among the greatest of the prophets. We see the honour which God put on him, exalting him far above them both, Mt 17:5. The glory of heaven encompasses the Lord Jesus, and all its redeemed pay him reverence. In him the Divine nature shines illustriously; and of him and to him the Divinity speaks in glory, as the only begotten Son of God.

(4.) It is right to have particular affection for some Christians more than others, at the same time that we should love them all. Christ loved all his disciples; but he admitted some to peculiar friendship and favours, Mt 17:1. Some Christians may be more congenial to us in feeling, age, and education, than others; and it is proper, and may be greatly to our advantage, to admit them among our peculiar friends.

(5.) The death of Jesus is an object of great interest to the redeemed. Moses and Elias talked of it, Lu 9:30,31. Angels also desire to look into this great subject, 1Pe 1:12. By that death, all the redeemed are saved; and in that death the angels see the most signal display of the justice and love of God.

(6.) Christians should delight to be where God has manifested his glory. The feeling of Peter was natural, Mt 17:4: His love of the glorious presence of Christ and the redeemed was right. He erred only in the manner of manifesting that love. We should always love the house of prayer—the sanctuary—and the place where Christ has manifested himself as peculiarly glorious and precious to our souls, or as peculiarly our Friend and Deliverer.

(7.) We need not be afraid of the most awful displays of Deity, if Christ be with us, Mt 17:7. Were we alone, we should fear. None could see God and live; for he is a consuming fire, Heb 12:29. But with Jesus for our Friend we may go confidently down to death; we may meet him at his awful bar; we may dwell in the full splendours of his presence to all eternity.

(8.) Saints at death are taken to happiness, and live now in glory, Mt 17:3. Moses and Elias were not created anew, but came as they were. They came from heaven, and returned thither. The spirits of all men live, therefore, in happiness or woe after the body is dead.

(9.) It is not unreasonable to suppose that saints may have some knowledge of what is done here on earth. Moses and Elias appear to have been acquainted with the fact that Jesus was about to die at Jerusalem.

(10.) The Scriptures will be fulfilled. The fulfillment may take place when we little know it; or in events that we should not suppose were intended for a fulfillment, Mt 17:12.

(11.) Erroneous teachers will endeavour to draw us away from the truth, Mr 9:14. They will do it by art, and caution, and the appearance of calm inquiry. We should always be on our guard against any teachers appearing to call in question what Christ has plainly taught us.

(12.) Mr 9:15. Christ, in his word, and by his Spirit, is a safe Teacher. When men are suggesting plausible doubts about doctrine, or attempting to unsettle our minds by cavils and inquiry, we should

leave them, and apply by prayer, and by searching the Bible, to Christ, the great Prophet, who is the way, the *truth*, and the life.

(13.) Parents should be earnest for the welfare of their children, Mt 17:15. It is right for them to pray to God in times of sickness, that he would heal them. Miracles are not to be expected; but God only can bless the means which parents use for their sick and afflicted children.

(14.) Parents may do much by faith and prayer for their children. Here the faith of the parent was the means of saving the life of the child, Mt 17:14-18. So the faith of parents—a faith producing diligent instruction—a holy example, and much prayer, may be the means of saving their souls. God will not indeed save them on account of the faith of the parent; but the holy life of a father and mother may be the means of training up their children for heaven.

(15.) It is proper to pray to Jesus to increase our faith, Mr 9:24. We may be sensible of our unbelief; may feel that we deserve condemnation, and that we deserve no favour that is usually bestowed on faith; but we may come to him, and implore of him an increase of faith, and thus obtain the object of our desires.

(16.) Our unbelief hinders our doing much that we might do, Mt 17:20. We shrink from great difficulties, we fail in great duties, because we do not put confidence in God, who is able to help us. The proper way to live a life of religion and peace, is to do just what God requires of us, depending on his grace to aid us.

(17.) We see the proper way of increasing our faith, Mt 17:21. It is by much prayer, and self-denial, and fasting. Faith is a plant that never grows in an uncultivated soil, and is never luxuriant, unless it is often exposed to the beams of the Sun of righteousness.

(18.) It is right to weep and mourn over the death of Jesus, Mt 17:23. It was a cruel death; and we should mourn that our best Friend passed through such sufferings. Yet we should rather mourn that our sins were the cause of such bitter sorrows; and that but for our sins, and the sins of the rest of mankind, he might have been always happy.

'Twas you, my sins, my cruel sins,
His chief tormentors were;
Each of my crimes became a nail,
And unbelief the spear.

'Twas you that pulled the vengeance down
Upon his guiltless head.
Break, break, my heart! oh burst, mine eyes!
And let my sorrows bleed."

(19.) At the same time, we should rejoice that God made his death the source of the richest blessings that ever descended on mankind. He rose and brought life and immortality to light, Mt 17:23.

(20.) We should comply with all the requirements of the laws of the laid, if not contrary to the law of God. It is important that governments should be supported, Mt 17:26. See also Ro 13:1-7.

(21.) We should also be willing to contribute our just proportion to the support of the institutions of religion. The tribute which Jesus paid here by a miracle was for the support of religion in the temple, Mt 17:24-27. Jesus understood of how much value are the institutions of religion to the welfare of man. He worked a miracle, therefore, to make a voluntary offering to support religion.

Religion promotes the purity, peace, intelligence, and order of the community, and every man is therefore under obligation to do his part towards its support. If any man doubts this, he has only to go to the places where there is no religion—among scoffers, and thieves, and adulterers, and prostitutes, and pickpockets, and drunkards. No money is ever lost that goes in any way to suppress these vices.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 18 - Verse 1

MATTHEW CHAPTER 18

Verses 1-6. See also Mr 9:33-41 Lu 9:46-60. *Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven*? By the kingdom of heaven they meant the kingdom which they supposed he was about to set up— his kingdom as the Messiah. They asked the question because they supposed, in accordance with the common expectation of the Jews, that he was about to set up a temporal kingdom of great splendour; and they wished to know who should have the principal offices and posts of honour and profit. This was among them a frequent subject of inquiry and controversy. Mr 9:34 informs us that they had had a dispute on this subject in the way. Jesus, he says, inquired of them what they had been disputing about. Lu 9:47 says, that Jesus perceived the thought of their heart;—an act implying omniscience, for none can search the heart but God, Jer 17:10. The disciples, conscious that the subject of their dispute was known, requested Jesus to decide it, Mt 18:1. *They* were at first *silent* through shame, Mr 9:34 but perceiving that the subject of their dispute was known, they came, as Matthew states, and referred the matter to him for his opinion.

{u} "At the same" Mr 9:33 Lu 9:46, 22:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 18 - Verse 2

Verses 2-3. *Except ye be converted*. The word "converted," means *changed*, or turned. It means, to change or turn from one habit of life, or set of opinions, to another, Jas 5:19 Lu 22:32. See also Mt 7:6 16:23; Lu 7:9, etc., where the same word is used in the original. It is sometimes referred to that great change called the new birth, or regeneration, Ps 51:13 Isa 9:5; Ac 3:19 but not always. It is a *general* word, meaning any change. The word *regeneration* denotes a particular change—the passing from death to life. The phrase, "except ye be converted," does not imply of necessity that they were not Christians *before*, or had not been born again. It means, that their opinions and feelings about the kingdom of the Messiah must be *changed*. They had supposed that he was to be a temporal Prince. They expected that he would reign as other kings did. They supposed he would have his great officers of state, as other monarchs had. And they were ambitiously inquiring who should hold the highest offices, Jesus told them they were wrong in their views and expectations. No such

things would take place. From these notions they must be *turned*, *changed*, or *converted*, or they could have no part in his kingdom. These ideas did not fit at all the nature of his kingdom.

And become as little children. Children are, to a great extent, destitute of ambition, pride, and haughtiness. They are characteristically humble and teachable. By requiring his disciples to be like them, he did not intend to express any opinion about the native moral character of children, but simply that *in these respects* they should become like them. They should lay aside their ambitious views, and pride, and be willing to occupy their proper station—a very lowly one. Mr 9:35 says that Jesus, *before* he placed the little child in the midst of them, told them that "if any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all." That is, he shall be the most distinguished Christian who is the most humble, and who is willing to be esteemed least, and last of all. To esteem ourselves as God esteems us, is humility. And it cannot be degrading to think of ourselves *as we are*. But pride, or an attempt to be thought of more importance than we are, is foolish, wicked, and degrading.

{v} "ye be converted" Ps 51:10-13 Joh 3:3 {w} "little children" 1Co 14:20 1Pe 2:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 18 - Verse 3

Verse 3. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes on "Mt 18:2"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 18 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *The same is greatest*, etc. That is, shall be the most eminent Christian; shall have most of the *true spirit* of religion.

{x} "humble himself" Lu 14:11 Jas 4:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 18 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And whoso shall receive one such little child*. That is, whoso shall receive and love one with a spirit like this child—one who is humble, meek, unambitious, or a real Christian.

In my name. As a follower of me; or, because he is attached to me. Whoso receives one possessed of my spirit, and who, *because* he has that spirit, *loves* him, loves me also. The word "receive" means, to approve, love, or treat with kindness; to aid in the time of need. See Mt 25:35-40.

Mr 9:38 and Lu 9:49 add a conversation that took place on this occasion, that has been omitted by Matthew. John told him that they had seen one casting out devils in his name, and they forbade him, because he followed not with them. Jesus replied, that he should not have been forbidden, for there was no one who could work a miracle in his name that could lightly speak evil of him. That is, though he did not attend them, though he had not joined himself to their society, yet he could not *really* be opposed to him. Indeed they should have remembered, that the power to work a miracle

must always come from the same source, that is, God; and that he that had the ability given him to work a miracle, and that did it in the name of Christ, must be a real friend to him. It is probable from this, that the power of working miracles in the name of Christ was given to many who did not attend on his ministry.

{z} "shall offend" Mr 9:42 Lu 17:1,2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 18 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Whoso shall offend*. That is, cause to fall, or to sin; or who should place anything in their way to hinder their piety or happiness; **See Barnes "Mt 5:29"**.

These little ones. That is, Christians, manifesting the spirit of little children, 1Jo 2:1,12,18,28.

It were better for him that a millstone, etc. Mills anciently were either turned by hand, **See Barnes "Mt 24:41"**

or by beasts, chiefly by *mules*. These were of the larger kind; and the *original* words denote that it was this kind that was intended. This was one mode of capital punishment practised by the Greeks, Syrians, Romans, and by some other surrounding nations. The meaning is, it would be better for him to die before he had committed the sin. To injure, or to cause to sin, the feeblest Christian, will be regarded as a most serious offence, and will be punished accordingly.

{z} "shall offend" Mr 9:42 Lu 17:1,2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 18 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Woe unto the world because of offences*. That is, offences will be the cause of woe, or of suffering. *Offences*, here, mean things that will produce sin; that will cause us to sin, or temptations to induce others to sin. **See Barnes "Mt 5:29"**.

It must needs be, etc. That is, such is the depravity of man, that there will be always some attempting to make others sin; some men of wickedness endeavouring to lead Christians astray, and rejoicing when they have succeeded in causing them to fall. Such, also, is the strength of our native corruption, and the force of passion, that our *besetting sins* will lead us astray.

Woe to that man by whom the offence cometh. He who draws others into sin is awfully guilty. No man can be more guilty, life wickedness can be more deeply seated in the heart, than that which attempts to mar the peace, defile the purity, and destroy the souls of others. And yet, in all ages, there have been multitudes, who, by persecution, threats, arts, allurements, and persuasion, have endeavoured to seduce Christians from the faith, and to lead them into sin.

{a} "for it must" 1Co 11:19 Jude 1:4 {b} "but woe" Jude 1:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 18 - Verse 8

Verse 8,9. *If thy hand*, etc. **See Barnes "Mt 5:29,30"**.

The meaning of all these instances is the same. Temptations to sin, attachments, and employments of any kind that cannot be pursued without leading us into sin, be they ever so dear to us, must be abandoned, or the soul must be lost.

It is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed-with one eye, etc. It is not meant by this, that when the body shall be raised it will be maimed and disfigured in this manner. It will be perfect. See 1Co 15:42-44. But these things are said for the purpose of carrying out or making complete *the figure*, or the representation of cutting off the hands, etc. The meaning is, it is better to go to heaven, without enjoying the things that caused us to sin, than to enjoy them here, and then be lost.

Halt. Lame.

Maimed. With a loss of limbs.

Into hell fire. It is implied in all this, that if their beloved sins are not abandoned, the soul must go into everlasting fire. This is conclusive proof that the sufferings of the wicked will be eternal. **See Barnes** "Mr 9:44, **See Barnes** "Mr 9:46, **See Barnes "Mr 9:48"**.

{c} "Wherefore if thy hand" Mt 5:29,30; Mr 9:43,45

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 18 - Verse 9

Verse 9. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes on "Mt 18:8"

{d} "enter into life" Heb 4:11 {e} "two eyes" Lu 9:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 18 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones*, etc. That is, one who has become like little children—or, a Christian. Jesus then proceeds to state the reason why we should not despise his feeblest and obscurest follower. That reason is drawn from the *care* which God exercises over them. The first instance of that *care* is, that *in heaven their angels do always behold his face*. He does not mean, I suppose, to state that every good man has his guardian angel, as many of the Jews believed; but that the angels were, *in general*, the guards of his followers, and aided them, and watched over them, Heb 1:14.

Do always behold the face of my Father, etc. This is taken from the practice of earthly courts. To be admitted to the presence of a king; to be permitted to see his face continually; to have free access at all times, was deemed a mark of peculiar favour, 1Ki 10:8 Es 1:14 and was esteemed a security for his protection. So, says our Saviour, we should not despise the obscurest Christians, for they are ministered to by the highest and noblest of beings; beings who are always enjoying the favour and friendship of God.

{f} "angels do always" Ac 12:15 {g} "behold" Ps 17:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 18 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *For the Son of man*, etc. This is a second reason why we should not despise Christians, for the Son of man came to seek and save them. He came in search of them when lost; he found them; he saved them. It was the great object of his life; and though obscure and little in the eye of the world, yet that cannot be worthy of contempt which the Son of God sought by his toils and his death.

Son of man. **See Barnes "Mt 8:19,20"**.

That which was lost. Property is *lost* when it is consumed, mislaid, etc.—when we have no longer the use of it. Friends are lost when they die—we enjoy their society no longer. A wicked and profligate man is said to be lost to virtue and happiness. He is useless to society. So all men are lost. They are wicked, miserable wanderers from God. They are lost to piety, to happiness, and heaven. These Jesus came to save by giving his own life a ransom, and shedding his own blood that they might be recovered and saved.

{h} "save that" Mt 1:21 Lu 9:56, 19:10 Joh 3:17, 10:10 12:47
1Ti 1:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 18 - Verse 12

Verses 12-14. To show still farther the reason why we should not despise them, he introduced a parable showing the joy felt when a thing lost is found. Man rejoices over the recovery of one of his flock that had wandered, more than over all that remained. So God rejoices that man is restored, seeks his salvation, and wills that not one thus found should perish. If God thus loves and preserves the redeemed, then surely man should not despise them, See this passage farther explained in Lu 15:4-10.

{i} "if a man" Lu 15:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 18 - Verse 13

Verse 13. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 18:12"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 18 - Verse 14

Verse 14. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 18:12"

{k} "one of these" 2Pe 3:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 18 - Verse 15

Verses 15-20. *Moreover if thy brother*. The word *brother*, here, evidently means a fellow-professor of religion. Christians are called brethren because they belong to the same redeemed family—having a common Father, God, and because they are united in the same feelings, objects, and destiny.

Trespass against thee. That is, *injure* thee in any way, by words or conduct. The original word means, *sin* against thee. This may be done by injuring the character, person, or property.

Go and tell him his fault. This was required under the *law*, Le 19:17. In the original it is, "go and *reprove* him." Seek an explanation of his conduct; and if he has done wrong, administer a friendly and brotherly reproof. This is required to be done *alone*:

(1.) That he may have an opportunity of explaining it. In nine cases out of ten, where one supposes he has been injured, a little friendly conversation would set the matter right, and prevent difficulty.

(2.) That he may have opportunity of acknowledging his offence, or making reparation, if he has done wrong. Many would be glad of such an opportunity, and it is our duty to furnish it by calling on them.

(3.) That we may admonish them of their error, if they have done an injury to the cause of religion. This should not be blazoned abroad. It can do no good. It does injury. It is what the enemies of religion wish. Christ is often wounded in the house of his friends; and religion, as well as an injured brother, often suffers by spreading such faults before the world.

Thou hast gained thy brother. To *gain* means, sometimes, to *preserve*, or to save, 1Co 9:19. Here it means, thou hast preserved him, or restored him, to be a consistent Christian. Perhaps it may include the idea also, thou hast *reconciled* him—thou hast gained him as a Christian brother.

{l} "if thy brother" Le 19:17 Lu 17:3 {m} "if he shall hear thee" Jas 5:20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 18 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *If he will not hear thee*, etc. That is, if he spurns or abuses you, or will not be entreated by you, and will not reform.

Take one or two more. The design of taking them seems to be,

(1.) that he might be induced to listen to them, Mt 18:17. They should be persons of influence or authority; his personal friends, or those in whom he could put confidence.

(2.) That they might be witnesses of his conduct before the church, Mt 18:17. The law of Moses required two or three witnesses, De 19:15 2Co 13:1; Joh 8:17.

{n} "witnesses" De 19:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 18 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Tell it unto the Church*. **See Barnes "Mt 16:18"**.

The church may here mean the whole assembly of believers; or it may mean those who are authorized to try such cases—the representatives of the church, or those who act for them. In the Jewish synagogue there was a bench of elders, before whom trials of this kind were brought. It was to be brought to the church, in order that he might be admonished, entreated, and, if possible, reformed. This was, and is always to be, the first business in disciplining an offending brother.

If he neglect to hear the Church, let him be, etc. The Jews gave the name *heathen* or *Gentile* to all other nations but themselves. With them they had no religious intercourse or communion.

Publican. **See Barnes "Mt 5:47"**.

Publicans were men of abandoned character, and the Jews would have no intercourse with them. The meaning of this is, cease to have *religious* intercourse with him, to acknowledge him as a brother. Regard him as obstinate, self-willed, and guilty. It does not mean that we should cease to show kindness to him, and aid him in affliction or trial; for *this* is required towards all men; but it means that we should *disown* him as a Christian brother, and treat him as we do other men not connected with the church. This should not be done till all these steps are taken. This is the only way of kindness. This is the only way to preserve peace and purity in the church.

{o} "let him be unto" Ro 16:17 1Co 5:3-5; 2Th 3:6,14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 18 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Whatsoever ye shall bind*, **See Barnes "Mt 16:19"**.

These words were spoken to the apostles. He had used the same words to Peter, Mt 16:19. He used them here to signify that they *all* had *the same power*; that in ordering the affairs of the church he did not intend to give *Peter* any supremacy, or any exclusive right to regulate it. The meaning of this verse is, whatever you shall do in the discipline of the church shall be approved by God, or bound in heaven. This promise, therefore, cannot be understood as extending to all Christians or ministers; for all others but the apostles may err.

{p} "whatsoever ye shall bind" Mt 16:19 Joh 20:23; Ac 15:23-31

2Co 2:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 18 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Again I say unto you, That if two of you*, etc. This is connected with the previous verses. The connexion is this: The obstinate man is to be excluded from the church, Mt 18:17. The care of the church—the power of admitting or excluding members—of organizing and establishing it—is committed to you, the apostles, Mt 18:18. Yet there is not need of the whole to give validity to the transaction. When two of you agree, or have the same mind, feelings, and opinion, about the arrangement of affairs in the church, or about things desired for its welfare, and shall ask of God, it shall be done for them. See Ac 1:14-26 15:1-29. The promise *here* has respect to the apostles in organizing the church. It cannot, with any propriety, be applied to the ordinary prayers of believers.

Other promises are made to them, and it is true that the prayer of faith will be answered; *but that is not the truth taught here*.

{q} "it shall be done" Mr 11:24 Joh 16:24; 1Jn 5:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 18 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *For where two or three*, etc. This is a *general* assertion, made to support the *particular* promise made Mt 18:19 to his apostles. He affirms that *wherever* two or three are assembled together in his name he is in the midst of them.

In my name. That is,

(1.) *by my authority*, acting for me in my church. Joh 10:25; Joh 16:23

(2.) It may mean, for my service, in the place of prayer and praise, assembled in obedience to my command, and with a desire to promote my glory.

There am I in the midst of them. Nothing could more clearly prove that Jesus must be everywhere present, and, of course, be God. Every day, perhaps every hour, two or three, or many more, may be assembled in every city or village in the United States, in England, in Greenland, in Africa, in Ceylon, in the Sandwich Islands, in Russia, and in Judea—in almost every part of the world—and in the midst of them all is Jesus the Saviour. Millions thus at the same time, in every quarter of the globe, worship in his name, and experience the truth of the promise that he is present with them. It is impossible that he should be in all these places, and not be God.

{r} "gathered together" Joh 20:19 1Co 5:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 18 - Verse 21

Verses 21,22. *Then came Peter*, etc, The mention of the duty Mt 18:15 seeing a brother when he had offended us, implying that it was a duty to forgive him, led Peter to ask how often this was to be done.

Forgive him? To forgive is to treat as though the offence was not committed—to *declare* that we will not harbour malice, or treat unkindly, but that the matter shall be buried and forgotten.

Till seven times? The Jews taught that a man was to forgive another three times, but not the fourth. Peter more than doubled this, and asked whether forgiveness was to be exercised to so *great* an extent.

Until seventy times seven. The meaning is, that we are not to limit our forgiveness *to any fixed number* of times. See Ge 4:24. As often as a brother injures us, and asks forgiveness, we are to forgive him. It is his duty to ask forgiveness, Lu 17:4. If he does this, it is our duty to declare that we forgive him, and to treat him accordingly. If he does not ask us to forgive him, yet we are not at liberty to follow him with revenge and malice, but are still to treat him kindly, and to do him good, Lu 10:30-37.

{s} "forgive him" Mr 11:25 Lu 17:4; Col 3:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 18 - Verse 22

Verse 22. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 18:21"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 18 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened*, etc. This phrase has reference to the church, or to the way in which God will deal with his people. It shall be in my church as it was with a certain king; or, *God* will deal with the members of his church as a certain king did with his servants. **See Barnes "Mt 3:2".**

This *parable* Mt 13:3 is related to show the duty of forgiving others. It is not necessary to suppose that it was a *true* narrative, but only that it illustrated the truth which he was teaching. At the same time, it may be true that such an occurrence really took place.

Would take account of his servants. To take account means to reckon, to settle up the affairs. *Servants* here means, probably, *petty princes*, or, more likely, *collectors of the revenue* or *taxes*. Among the ancients, kings often *farmed out*, or sold for a certain sum, the taxes of a particular province. Thus, when Judea was subject to Egypt, or Rome, the kings frequently *sold* to the high priest the taxes to be raised from Judea, on condition of a much smaller sum being paid to them. This *secured* to them a *certain sum*, but it gave occasion to much oppression in the collection of the taxes. It is probable that some such persons are intended by the word servants.

{t} "take account" Ro 14:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 18 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Ten thousand talents*. A talent was a sum of money, or *weight* of silver or gold, amounting to three thousand shekels. A silver *shekel*was worth, after the captivity, not far from half a dollar of our money. A talent of silver was worth 1519 dollars, 23 cents, [or £342 3s. 9d.] of gold, 24,309 dollars, 88 cents, [or £5,475.] If these were silver talents, as is probable, then the sum owed by the servant was 16,180,000 dollars, [or about £8,421,876 sterling]; a sum which proves that he was not a domestic, but some tributary prince. The sum is used to show that the debt was immensely large, and that our sins are so great that they cannot be estimated or numbered. Compare Job 27:5.

{1} "thousand talents" "A talent is 750 ounces of silver, which, at 5s, the oz., is 187l. 10s."

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 18 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *His lord commanded him to be sold*, etc. By the laws of the Hebrews, they were permitted to sell debtors, with their wives and children, into servitude for a time sufficient to pay the debt. See 2Ki 4:1 Le 25:39-46; Am 8:6.

{u} "be sold" 2Ki 4:1 Is 1:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 18 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him*. This does not mean that he paid him *religious* homage, but that in a humble, and reverent, and earnest manner, he entreated him to have patience with him. He prostrated himself before his lord, as is customary in all eastern nations, when subjects are in the presence of their king. **See Barnes "Mt 2:2"**.

{1} "worshipped" or, "besought him"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 18 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *The lord of that servant was moved with compassion*, etc. He had pity on him. He saw his distressed condition. He pitied his family. He forgave him the whole debt. This represents the mercy of God to men. They had sinned. They owed to God more than could be paid. They were about to be cast off. But God has mercy on them, and in conexion with their prayers, forgives them. We are not to interpret the circumstances of a parable too strictly. The verse about selling the wife and children is not to be taken literally, as if *God* was about to punish them for the sins of their father; but it is a circumstance thrown in *to keep up the story*; to make it consistent; to explain why the servant was so anxious to obtain a *delay* of the time of payment.

{v} "loosed him" Ps 78:38

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 18 - Verse 28

Verses 28,29. *He found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence*. The Penny was a Roman coin, worth about fourteen cents [seven pence] of our money. Consequently, this debt was about fourteen dollars [three pounds three shillings]— a very small sum compared with what had been forgiven to the first servant. Perhaps our Saviour, by this, meant to teach that the offences which our fellow-men commit against us are very small and insignificant, compared with our offences against God. Since God has forgiven us so much, we ought to forgive each other the small offences which are committed.

Took him by the throat. Took him in a violent and rough manner; half choked, or *throttled* him. This was the more criminal and base, as he had himself been so kindly treated, and dealt so mildly with, by his Lord.

Besought. Entreated, pleaded with him.

{2} "Penny" "The Roman penny is the 8th part of an ounce, which at 5s, the ounce, is 7d. half-penny." Mt 20:2
{w} "saying" Mt 18:26

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 18 - Verse 29

Verse 29. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 18:28"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 18 - Verse 30

Verse 30. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 18 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *So when his fellowservants*, etc. This is a mere circumstance thrown into the story for the sake of *keeping*, or making a consistent narrative. It cannot be intended to teach that other Christians should go and tell God What a brother had done; for God well knows all the actions of his children, and does not need us, surely, to *inform* him of what is done. It is abusing the Bible, and departing from the design of parables, to press every circumstance, and to endeavour to extract, from it some spiritual meaning. Our Saviour, in this parable, designed most clearly to exhibit only *one great truth*—the duty of forgiving our brethren, and the great evil of *not* forgiving a brother when he offends us. The circumstances of the parable are intended only to make the story consistent with itself, and thus to impress the general truth more fully on the mind.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 18 - Verse 32

Verse 32. No Barnes text on this verse.
{x} "wicked servant" Lu 19:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 18 - Verse 33

Verse 33. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 18 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *Delivered him to the tormentors*. The word *tormentors*, here, probably means *keepers of the prison*. Torments were inflicted on *criminals*, not on debtors. They were inflicted by stretching the limbs, or pinching the flesh, or taking out the eyes, or taking off the skin while alive, etc. It is not probable that anything of this kind is intended, but only that the servant was punished by imprisonment till the debt should be paid.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 18 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *So likewise*, etc. This verse contains the sum or *moral* of the parable. When Christ has explained one of his own parables, we are to receive it just as he has explained it, and not attempt to draw spiritual instruction from any parts or circumstances which he has not explained. The following seems to be the particulars of the general truth which he meant to teach:

(1.) That our sins are great.

(2.) That God freely forgives them.

(3.) That the offences committed against us by our brethren are comparatively small.

(4.) That we should, therefore, most freely forgive them.

(5.) That if we do not, God will be justly angry with us, and punish us.

From your hearts. That is, not merely in words, but really and truly to feel and act towards him as if he had not offended us.

Trespasses. Offences, injuries. Remarks and actions designed to do us wrong.

{y} "So likewise" Pr 21:13 Mt 6:12; Jas 2:13

REMARKS ON MATTHEW CHAPTER 18

(1.) We see that it is possible to make a profession of religion an occasion of ambition, Mt 18:1. The apostles at first sought honour, and expected office in consequence of following Christ. So thousands have done since. Religion, notwithstanding all the opposition it has met with, *really* commands the confidence of mankind. To make a profession of it may be a way of access to that confidence; and thousands, it is to be feared, even yet enter the church merely to obtain some worldly benefit. Especially does this danger beset ministers of the gospel. There are few paths to the confidence of mankind so easily trod, as to enter the ministry. Every minister, of course, if at all worthy of his office, has access to the confidence of multitudes, and is never despised but by the worst and lowest of mankind. No way is so easy to step at once to public confidence. Other men toil long to establish influence by personal character. The minister has it by virtue of his office. Those who now enter the ministry are tempted far more in this respect than were the apostles; and how should they search their own hearts, to see that no such abominable motive has induced them to seek that office!

(2.) It is consummate wickedness thus to prostrate the most sacred of all offices to the worst of purposes. The apostles, at this time, were ignorant. They expected a kingdom where it would be right to seek distinction. But we labour under no such ignorance. We *know* that his kingdom is not

of this world, and woe to the man that acts *as though* it were. Deep and awful must be the lot of him who thus seeks the honours of the world, while he is professedly following the meek and lowly Jesus.

(3.) Humility is indispensable to religion, Mt 18:3. No man, who is not humble, can possibly be a Christian. He must be willing to esteem himself *as he is*, and to have others esteem him so also. This is humility. And humility is lovely. It is not meanness; it is not cowardice; it is not want of just self-esteem. It is a view of ourselves just as we are, and a willingness that God and all creatures should so esteem us. What can be more lovely than such an estimation of ourselves? And how foolish and wicked is it to be proud; that is, to think more of ourselves, and wish others to think so, than we really deserve! To put on appearances, and to magnify our own importance, and think that the affairs of the universe could not go on without us, and to be indignant when all the world does not bow down to do us homage— this is hypocrisy, as well as wickedness; and there *may be*, therefore, hypocrites out of the *church*, as well as in it.

(4.) Humility is the best evidence of piety, Mt 18:4. The most humble man is the most eminent Christian. He is *greatest* in the kingdom of heaven. The effect of sin is to produce pride. Religion overcomes it by producing a just sense of ourselves, of other men, of angels, and of God. We may, therefore, measure the advance of piety in our own souls by the increase of humility.

(5.) We see the danger of despising and doing injury to real Christians, and more especially the guilt of attempting to draw them into sin, Mt 18:6. God watches over them. He loves them. In the eye of the world they may be of little importance, but not so with God. The most obscure follower of Christ is dear, infinitely dear, to him; and he will take care of him. He that attempts to injure a Christian attempts to injure God; for God has redeemed him, and loves him.

(6.) Men will do much to draw others into sin, Mt 18:7. In all communities there are some who seem to live for this. They have often much wealth, or learning, or accomplishment, or address, or professional influence; and they employ it for the sake of seducing the unwary, and leading them into ruin. Hence offences come, and many of the young and thoughtless are led astray. But He who has all power has pronounced woe upon them, and judgment will not always linger. No class of men have a more fearful account to render to God than they who thus lead others into vice and infidelity.

(7.) We must forsake our dearest sins, Mt 18:8,9. We must do this, or go to hell-fire. There is no way of avoiding it. We cannot love and cherish those sins, and be saved.

(8.) The wicked—they who will not forsake their sins—must certainly go to eternal punishment, Mt 18:8,9. So said the compassionate Saviour. The fair and obvious meaning of his words is, that the sufferings of hell are eternal. And Christ did not use words without meaning. He did not mean to frighten us by bugbears, or to hold up imaginary fears. If *Christ* speaks of hell, then there is a hell; if he says it is eternal, then it is so. Of this we may be sure, that EVERY WORD which the God of mercy has spoken about the punishment of the wicked is Full OF MEANING.

(9.) Christians are protected, Mt 18:10. Angels are appointed as their friends and guardians. Those friends are very near to God. They enjoy his favour, and his children shall be safe.

(10.) Christians are safe, Mt 18:11-14. Jesus came to save them. He left the heavens for this end. God rejoices in their salvation. He secures it at great sacrifices, and none can pluck them out of his hand. After the coming of Jesus to save them—after all that he has done for that, and that only—after the joy of God and angels at their recovery—it is *impossible* that they should be wrested from him and destroyed. See Joh 10:27,28.

(11.) It is our duty to admonish our brethren when they injure us, Mt 18:15. We have no right to speak of the offence to any one else, not even to our best friends, until we have given an opportunity to explain.

(12.) The way to treat offending brethren is clearly pointed out, Mt 18:15-17. Nor have we a fight to take any other course. Infinite Wisdom—the *Prince of Peace*—has declared that this is the way to treat our brethren. No other can be right; and no other, therefore, can be so well adapted to promote the peace of the church And yet how different from this is the course commonly pursued! How few go honestly to an offending brother, and tell him his fault! Instead of this, every breeze bears the report—it is magnified— mole-hills swell to mountains, and a quarrel of years often succeeds what *might* have been settled at once. No robber is so cruel as he who steals away the *character* of another. Nothing can compensate for the loss of this. Wealth, health, mansions, and equipage, all are trifles compared with this. Especially is this true of a *Christian*. His reputation gone, he has lost his power of doing good; he has brought dishonour on the cause he most loved; he has lost his peace, and worlds cannot repay him.

'Who steals my purse, steals trash: 'tis something, nothing:
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands.
But he that filches from me my good name,
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed."

(13.) We have every encouragement to pray, Mt 18:20. We are poor, and sinful, and dying, and none can comfort us but God. At his throne we may find all that we want. We know not which is most wonderful, that God deigns to hear our prayers, or that men are so unwilling to use so simple and easy a way of obtaining what they so much need.

(14.) We should never be weary of forgiving our brethren, Mt 18:22. We should do it cheerfully. We should do it always. We are never better employed than when we are doing good to those who have injured us. Thus doing, we are most like God.

(15.) There will be a day in which we must give up our account, Mt 18:23. It may wait long; but God will *reckon* with us, and everything shall be brought into judgment.

(16.) We are greatly indebted to God—far, far beyond what we are able to pay, Mt 18:24. We have sinned, and *in no way* can we make atonement for past sins. But Jesus the Saviour *has* made atonement, and paid our debt, and we may be free.

(17.) It is right to pray to God when we feel that we have sinned, and are unable to pay the debt, Mt 18:26. We have no other way. Poor, and needy, and wretched, we must cast ourselves upon his mercy, or *die*—die for ever.

(18.) God will have compassion on those who do it, Mt 18:27. At *his feet*, in the attitude of prayer, the burdened sinner finds peace. We have nowhere else to go but to the very Being that we have offended. No being but He can save us from death.

(19.) From the kindness of God to us we should learn *not* to oppress others, Mt 18:28.

(20.) It is our true *interest*, as well as duty, to forgive those that offend us, Mt 18:34. God will take vengeance; and in due time we *must* suffer if we do not forgive others.

(21.) Christians are often great sufferers for harbouring malice. As a punishment, God withdraws the light of his countenance; they walk in darkness; they cannot enjoy religion; their conscience

smites them; and they are wretched. No man ever did, or ever can, enjoy religion, who did not from his heart forgive his brother his trespasses.

(22.) One reason why Christians ever walk in darkness is, that there is some such duty neglected. They think they have been injured, and very possibly they may have been. They think they are in the right, and possibly they are so. But mingled with a consciousness of this is an unforgiving spirit; and they cannot enjoy religion till that is subdued.

(23.) Forgiveness must not be in word merely, but from the heart, Mt 18:35. No other can be genuine; no other is like God.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 19 - Verse 1

MATTHEW CHAPTER 19

Verses 1-12. See also Mr 10:1-12.

Verse 1. *Coasts of Judea beyond Jordan*. Probably our Saviour was then going from Galilee up to Jerusalem, to one of the great feasts of the Jews. *Samaria* was between Galilee and Jerusalem; and, choosing not to go through it, he crossed the Jordan, and passed down on the east side of it, through Peraea, a region of country belonging to Judea, formerly a part of the tribes Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh. See the Map.

Coasts of Judea. Regions or parts of Judea. **See Barnes "Mt 2:16"**.

{a} "departed from Galilee" Mr 10:1 Joh 10:40

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 19 - Verse 2

Verse 2. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes on "Mt 19:1"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 19 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *The Pharisees also came*. **See Barnes "Mt 3:7"**.

Tempting him. This means, to get him, if possible, to express an opinion that should involve him in difficulty. There was the more art in this captious question which they proposed, as at that time the people were very much divided on the subject. A part, following the opinions of *Hillel*, said, that a man might divorce his wife for any offence, or any dislike he might have of her. **See Barnes "Mt 5:31"**.

Others, of the school of *Shammai*, maintained, that divorce was unlawful, except in case of adultery. Whatever opinion, therefore, Christ expressed, they expected that he would involve himself in difficulty with one of their parties.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 19 - Verse 4

Verses 4-6. *And he answered and said*, etc. Instead of referring to the opinions of either party, Jesus called their attention to the original design of marriage, to the authority of Moses—an authority acknowledged by them both.

Have ye not read. Ge 1:27 2:21,22.

And said, For this cause, etc. Ge 2:24. That is, God at the beginning made but one man and one woman; their posterity should learn that the original intention of marriage was, that a man should have but one wife.

Shall leave father and mother. This means, shall bind himself more strongly to his wife than he was to his father or mother. The marriage connexion is the most tender and endearing of all human relations; more tender than even that bond which unites us to a parent.

And shall cleave to his wife. The word *cleave* denotes a union of the firmest kind. It is, in the original, taken from *gluing*, and means so firmly to adhere together that nothing can separate them.

They twain shall be one flesh. That is, they two, or that were two, shall be united *as one*—one in law, in feeling, in interest, and in affection. They shall no longer have separate interests, but shall act in all things *as if* they were *one*—animated by one soul and one wish. The argument of Jesus here is, that since they are so intimately united as to be one, and since in the beginning God made but one woman for one man, it follows that they cannot be separated but by the authority of God. Man may *not* put away his wife for every cause. What *God* has joined together, man may not put asunder. In this decision he *really* decided in favour of one of the parties; and it shows that when it was proper, Jesus answered questions, from whatever cause they might have been proposed, and however much difficulty it might involve him in. Our Lord, in this, also showed consummate wisdom. He answered the question, not from Hillel or Shammai, their teachers, but from Moses, and thus defeated their malice.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 19 - Verse 5

Verse 5. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 19:4"**

{c} "For this cause" Ge 2:24 Eph 5:31

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 19 - Verse 6

Verse 6. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes on "Mt 19:4"

{d} "What therefore" 1Co 7:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 19 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Why did Moses*, etc. To this they objected that *Moses* had allowed such divorces, De 24:1 and if he had allowed them, they inferred that they could not be unlawful. **See Barnes "Mt 5:31"**.

{e} "Why did Moses" De 24:1 Isa 1:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 19 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *He saith unto them*, etc. Jesus *admits* that this was allowed; but still he contends that this was not the *original design* of marriage. It was only a temporary expedient, growing out of a peculiar state of things, and not designed to be perpetual. It was on account *of the hardness of their hearts*. Moses found the custom in use. He found a hard-hearted and rebellious people. In this state of things he did not deem it prudent to forbid a practice so universal: but it might be regulated; and, instead of suffering the husband to divorce his wife *in a passion*, he required him, in order that he might take time to consider the matter, and thus make it probable that divorces would be less frequent, to give her a writing; to sit down deliberately, to look at the matter, and probably also to bring the case before some *scribe* or learned man, to write a divorce in the legal form. Thus doing, there might be an opportunity for the matter to be reconciled, and the man to be persuaded not to divorce his wife. This, says our Saviour, was a permission growing out of a particular state of things, and designed to remedy a prevailing evil. But at first it was not so. God intended that marriage should be between one man and one woman, and that they were only to be separated by appointment of him who had formed the union.

Hardness of your hearts. He speaks here of his hearers as a part of the nation. The hardness of *you Jews*; as when we say, *we* fought with England, and gained our independence; that is, we the American people, though it was done by our fathers, lie does not mean to say, therefore, that this was done on account of the people that he addressed, but of the *national* hardness of heart—the cruelty of the Jewish people as a people.

{e} "Why did Moses" De 24:1 Isa 1:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 19 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *And I say unto you*. Emphasis should be laid here on the word *I*. This was the opinion of Jesus—this he proclaimed to be the law of his kingdom—this the command of God ever afterwards. Indulgence had been given by. the laws of Moses; but that indulgence was to cease, and the marriage relation *to be brought back to its original intention*. Only one offence was to make

divorce lawful. This is the law of God. And by the same law, all marriages which take place after divorce, where adultery is not the cause of divorce, are adulterous. Legislatures have no Sight to say that men may put away their wives for any other cause; and where they do, and where there is marriage afterwards, by the law of God such marriages are adulterous.

{f} "???" Mt 5:32 Lu 16:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 19 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *His disciples say*, etc. The disciples were full of Jewish notions. They thought that the privilege of divorcing a wife when there was a quarrelsome disposition, or anything else that rendered the marriage unhappy, was a great privilege; and that in such cases to be always *bound* to live with a wife was a great calamity. They said, therefore, that if such *was the case* in such the condition on which men married—it was better not to marry.

{g} "to marry" Pro 19:13 31:9,19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 19 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *All men cannot receive this saying*. The minds of men are not prepared for this. *This saying* evidently means what the disciples had just said, that it was *good for a man not to marry*. It might be good in certain circumstances, in times of persecution and trial, or for the sake of lab outing in the cause of religion, without the care and burden of a family. It might be good for many to live as some of the apostles did, without marriage, but it was not given to all men, 1Co 7:1,7,9.

To be married, or unmarried, might be lawful according to circumstances, 1Co 7:26.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 19 - Verse 12

Verse 12. Jesus proceeds to state that there were some who were able to receive that saying, and to remain in an married state. Some were so born; some made such by the cruelty of men; and some who voluntarily abstained from marriage *for the kingdom of heaven's sake*—that is, that they might devote themselves entirely to the proper business of religion. Perhaps he refers here to the ESSENES, a sect of the Jews **See Barnes "Mt 3:7"**

who held that marriage was unsuitable to their condition, who had no children of their own, but perpetuated their sect by adopting the poor children of others. Eunuchs were employed chiefly in attending on the females, or in the harem. They rose often to distinction, and hold important offices in the state. Hence the *word* sometimes denotes such an officer of state, Ac 8:27.

{h} "kingdom of heaven's sake" 1Co 7:32

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 19 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Then were there brought unto him little children*. See also Mr 10:13-16 Lu 18:16-17. Probably these were brought by some of his followers, who desired not only to devote themselves to Jesus, but all that they had—their children as well as themselves. All the Jews were accustomed to devote their children to God by circumcision. It was natural, therefore, under the new dispensation, that it should be done. Luke says, they were *infants*. They were undoubtedly those who were not old enough to come by choice, but their coming was an act of the parents.

Put his hands on them, and pray. It was customary among the Jews, when blessings were sought for others in prayer, to lay the hands on the head of the person prayed for, implying a kind of consecration to God. See Ge 48:14 Mt 9:18. They had also much confidence in the prayers of pious men; believing that those blessed by a saint or a prophet would be happy. See Nu 22:6 Lu 2:28.

The disciples rebuked them. That is, reproved them, or told them it was improper. This they did, probably, either

(1.) because they thought they were too young; or,

(2.) because they thought they would be troublesome to their Master.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 19 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *But Jesus said, Suffer little children*, etc. Mark adds, *he was much displeased* at what the disciples said. It was a thing highly gratifying to him, and which he earnestly sought, that children should be brought to him; and a case where it was very improper that they should interfere.

Of such is the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven evidently means, here, the church. **See Barnes "Mr 3:2".**

In Mark and Luke, it is said he immediately added, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall not enter therein." Whosoever shall not be humble, unambitious, and docile, shall not be a true follower of Christ, or a member of his kingdom. *Of such as these*—that is, of persons with such tempers as these—is the church to be composed. He does not say *of those* infants, but of such persons as resembled them, or were like them in temper, was the kingdom of heaven made up. It was proper, therefore, that he should pray for them; it was proper that they who possessed such a temper should be brought to him. The *disposition* itself—the humility, the teachableness, the want of ambition—was an ornament anywhere, and little children should therefore be brought to him. It is probable—it is greatly to be hoped—that all infants will be saved. No contrary doctrine is taught in the sacred Scriptures. But it does not appear to be the design of this passage to teach that all infants will be saved. It means simply, that they should be suffered to be brought to him as amiable, lovely, and uncorrupted by the world, and having traits of mind *resembling* those among real Christians.

{i} "???" Mr 10:14 Lu 18:16 {k} "such is" Mt 18:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 19 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *He laid his hands on them*. Mark says, *he blessed them*. That is, he pronounced or sought a blessing on them.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 19 - Verse 16

Verses 16-30. This account is found also in Mr 10:17-31; Lu 18:18-30.

Verse 16. *One came*. This was a *young* man, Mt 19:20. He was a *ruler*, (Luke;) probably a ruler in a synagogue, or of the great council of the nation; a place to which he was chosen on account of his unblemished character, and promising talents. He came *running*, (Mark;) evincing great earnestness and anxiety. He fell upon his knees, (Mark;) not to worship him, but to pay the customary respectful salutation; exhibiting the highest regard for Jesus as an extraordinary religious Teacher.

Good Master. The word *good* here means, doubtless, *most excellent*; referring not so much to the MORAL *character* of Jesus as to his *character as a religious Teacher*. It was probably a title which the Jews were in the habit of applying to their religious teachers. The word *Master* here means *Teacher*.

What good thing shall I do. He had attempted to keep all the commandments. He had been taught by his Jewish teachers that men were to be saved by *doing* something, or by their works; and he supposed that this was to be the way under every system of religion. He had lived externally a blameless life; but yet he was not at peace: he was anxious, and he came to ascertain what, in the view of Jesus, was to be done, that his righteousness might be complete. To *have eternal life* means, to be saved. The happiness of heaven is called *life*, in opposition to the pains of hell, called death, or an eternal dying, Re 2:2 20:14. The one is real *life*, answering the purposes of *living*—living to the honour of God, and in eternal happiness; the other is a failure of the great ends of existence—prolonged, eternal suffering—of which temporal *death* is but the feeble image.

{l} "what good" Mr 10:17 Lu 10:25, 18:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 19 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Why callest thou me good*? Why do you give to me a title that belongs only to God? *You* suppose me to be only a man. Yet you give me an appellation that belongs only to God. It is improper to use titles in this manner. As you Jews use them, they are unmeaning. And though the title may apply to me, yet you did not *intend* to use it in the sense in which it is proper, as denoting infinite perfection, or Divinity; but you *intended* to use it as a complimentary or a flattering title, applied to me as if I were a mere man—a title which belongs only to God. The *intention*, the *habit* of using mere titles, and applying *as compliment* terms belonging only to God, is wrong, Christ did not *intend* here to disclaim *Divinity*, or to say anything about *his own character*; but simply to reprove the intention and habit of the young man—a most severe reproof of a foolish habit of compliment and flattery, and seeking pompous title.

Keep the commandments. That is, do what God has commanded. He, in the next verses, informs him what he meant by the commandments. Jesus said this, doubtless, to try him, and to *convince him* that he had by no means kept the commandments; and that in supposing he *had*, he was altogether deceived. The young man *thought* he had kept them, and was relying on them for salvation. It was of great importance, therefore, to convince him that he was, after all, a sinner. Christ did not mean to say that any mail *would* be saved by the works of the law, for the Bible teaches plainly that such will not be the case, Ro 3:20,28 4:6 Gal 2:16; Eph 2:9 2Ti 1:9.

At the same time, however, [it is true that if a man perfectly complied with the requirements of the law, he would be saved...EDITOR'S NOTE; the preceding is utter nonsense, please refer to Ga 2:16] for there would be no reason why he should be condemned. Jesus, therefore, since he saw he was depending on his works, told him that if he would enter life he must keep the commandments; if he was *depending* on them, he must keep them *perfectly*; and if this was done, [he would be saved...EDITOR'S NOTE this is utter nonsense, I again refer the reader to Ga 2:16] The reasons why Christ gave him this direction were, probably,

1st. Because it was his duty to keep them.

2nd. Because the young man *depended* on them, and he ought to understand what was required if he did—that they should be kept perfectly, or that they were not kept at all.

3rd. Because he wanted to *test* him, to show him that he did *not* keep them, and thus to show him his need of a Saviour.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 19 - Verse 18

Verses 18,19. In reply to the inquiry of the young man, Jesus directed him to the sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, and fifth, Ex 20:12-16 as containing the substance of the whole—as containing particularly what he intended to show him that he had not kept. **See Barnes** "Mt 5:21, **See Barnes "Mt 5:27"**.

Not steal. To steal is to take the property of another without his knowledge or consent.

Bear false witness. Give testimony contrary to *truth*. This may be done in a court of justice, or by private or public slander. It means, to say things of another which are not true.

Honour thy father, etc. That is,

1st. *obey them*, keep their commands, Co 3:20 Eph 6:1,2,3.

2nd. *Respect them*, show them reverence.

3rd. Treat their *opinions* with regard—not despise them, or ridicule them.

4th. Treat their *habits* with respect. They may be different from ours; may be antiquated, and to us strange, odd, or whimsical; but they are the habits of a parent, and they are not to be ridiculed.

5th. Provide for them when sick, weary, old, and infirm. Bear with their weakness, comply with their wishes, speak to them kindly, and deny ourselves of rest, and sleep, and ease, to promote their welfare. To this he added another—the duty of loving our neighbour, Le 19:18.

This Christ declared to be the *second* great commandment of the law, Mt 22:39. A *neighbour* means,

1st, any person who lives near to us.

2nd. Any person with whom we have dealings.

3rd. A friend or relative, Mt 5:43.

4th. Any person—friend, relative, countryman, or foe, Mr 12:31. Any person who does us good, or confers a favour on us, Lu 10:27-37. This commandment means evidently,

1st. that we should not *injure* our neighbour in his person, property, or character.

2nd. That we should not be supremely selfish, and should seek to do him good.

3rd. That in a case of debt, difference, or debate, we should do what is *right*, regarding his interest *as much* as our own, and not being influenced by a love of self.

4th. That we should treat *his* character, property, etc., as we do our own, according to what is *right*.

5th. That in order to benefit him we should practise self-denial, or do as we would wish him to do to us, Mt 7:12. It does *not* mean,

1st. that the love of ourselves, *according to what we are*, or according to *truth*, is improper. The happiness of myself is of as much importance as that of any other man; and it is as proper that it should be sought.

2nd. It does not mean that I am to neglect *my own business* to take care of my neighbour's. *My* happiness, salvation, health, and family, are committed peculiarly to myself; and, provided I do not interfere with my neighbour's rights, or violate my obligations to him, it is my duty to seek the welfare of my own as my first duty, 1Ti 5:8; Tit 2:5.

Mark adds to these commandments, "Defraud not;" by which he meant, doubtless, to express the substance of this, to love our neighbour as ourself. It means, literally, to take away the property of another by violence, or by deceiving him: thus showing that he is not loved as we love ourselves.

{m} "shalt do" Ex 20:13 De 5:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 19 - Verse 19

Verse 19. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes on "Mt 19:18"

{n} "Thou shalt love" Le 19:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 19 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *All these*, etc. I have made these the rule of my life. I have endeavoured to obey them. Is there anything that I lack—any new commandments to be kept ? Do you, the Messiah, teach any new commands, besides those which I have learned from the law, and from the Jewish teachers, which it is proper for me to obey, in order to be saved?

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 19 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *If thou wilt be perfect*. The word *perfect* means *complete* in all its parts—-finished, having no part wanting. Thus a watch is perfect; or complete, when it has all its proper wheels, and hands, and movements in order. Job was said to be perfect, Job 1:1; not that he was sinless, for he is afterwards reproved by God himself, Job 38:1-40:4 but because his piety was proportioned, and had a completeness of parts, he was a pious father, a pious magistrate, a pious neighbour, a pious citizen. His religion was not confined to one thing, but extended to all. *Perfect* means, sometimes, the *filling up*, or *carrying out*, or expression of a principle of action. Thus, 1Jo 2:5, "Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God *perfected*." That is, the keeping of the commandments of God is the proper *expression, carrying out*, or *completion*, of the love of God. This is its meaning here. If thou wilt be *perfect*, complete, finished if thou wilt show the *proper expression* of this keeping of the commandments—go, etc. Make the obedience complete.

Mark says, (Mr 10:21) *Jesus beholding him loved him*. He was pleased with his amiableness, his correct character, his frankness, and ingenuousness. Jesus, as a man, was capable of all the emotions of most tender friendship. As a man, we may suppose that his disposition was tender and affectionate, mild and calm. Hence he loved with peculiar affection the disciple John, eminently endowed with these qualities. And hence he *was pleased* with the same traits in this young man. Still, with all this amiableness, there is reason to think he was not a Christian; and that the love of *mere amiable qualities* was all the affection that was ever bestowed on him by the Saviour.

One thing, adds Mark, *thou lackest*. There is one thing wanting. You are not *complete*. This done, you would show that your obedience lacked no essential part, but was *complete, finished, proportionate, perfect*.

Go and sell that thou hast, etc. The young man declared that he had kept the law. That law required, among other things, that he should love his neighbour as himself. It required also that he should love the Lord his God supremely; that is, more than all other objects. If he *had* that true love to God and man; if he loved his Maker and fellow-creatures more than he did his property, he would be willing to give up his wealth to the service of God and of man. Jesus commanded him to do this, therefore, to *test* his character, and to show him that he had not kept the law as he pretended; and thus to show him that he needed a better righteousness than his own.

Treasure in heaven. **See Barnes "Mt 6:20"**.

Follow me. To follow Jesus, *then* meant to be a personal attendant on his ministry; to go about with him from place to place, as well as to imitate and obey him. *Now* it means,

1st. to obey his commandments 2nd. to imitate his example, and to live like him.

{n} "go and sell" Lu 12:33 16:9; Ac 2:45 4:34,35 1Ti 6:18,19

{o} "follow me" Joh 12:26

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 19 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *He had great possessions*. He was very rich. He made an *idol* of them. He loved them more than God. *He had NOT kept the commandments from his youth up*; nor had he kept them at all. And rather than do good with his treasures, and seek his salvation by obeying God, this young man chose to turn away from the Saviour, and give over his inquiry about eternal life. He probably returned no more. Alas, how many lovely and amiable young persons follow his example!

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 19 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven*. Shall with difficulty be saved. He has much to struggle with; and it will require the greatest of human efforts to break away from his temptations, and idols, and secure his salvation.

{p} "That a rich man" 1Ti 6:9,10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 19 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *It is easier for a camel*, etc. This was a *proverb* in common use among the Jews, and still common among the Arabians. To denote that a thing was *impossible*, or *exceedingly difficult*, they said *camel* or an *elephant* might as soon walk through a needle's eye. In the use of such proverbs, it is not necessary to understand them *literally*, but only to denote the extreme difficulty of the case.

A camel. A beast of burden, much used in eastern countries. It is about the size of the largest ox, with one or two bunches on his back, with long neck and legs, no horns, and with feet adapted to the hot and dry sand. They are capable of carrying heavy burdens; will travel sometimes faster than the fleetest horse; and are provided with a stomach which they fill with water, by means of which they can live four or five days without drink. They are very mild and tame, and kneel down to receive and unload their burden. They are chiefly used in deserts and hot climates, where other beasts of burden are with difficulty kept alive.

A rich man. This rather means one who *loves* his riches, and makes an idol of them; or one who *supremely* desires to be rich. Mark says, "them that trust in riches." While he has this feeling, it is literally *impossible* that he should be a Christian. For religion is the love of God, rather than the world; the love of Jesus and his cause, more than gold. Still a man may have much *property*, and not have this feeling. He *may* have great wealth, and love God more; as a poor man may have little, and love that little more than God. The difficulties in the way of salvation for a rich man are,

1st. that riches engross the affections.

2nd. Men consider wealth as the *chief good*; and when this is obtained, think they have gained all.

3rd. They are proud of their wealth, and unwilling to be numbered with the poor and despised followers of Jesus.

4th. Riches engross the *time*, and fill the mind with cares and anxieties, and leave little for God.

5th. They often produce luxury, dissipation, and vice.

6th. It is difficult to obtain wealth without sin, or without avarice, and covetousness, and fraud, and oppression, 1Ti 6:9,10,17; Jas 5:1-6 Lu 12:16-21, 16:19-31.

Still Jesus says, Mt 19:26 all these may be overcome. God can give grace to do it. Though to *men* it may appear impossible, yet it is easy for God.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 19 - Verse 25

Verse 25. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 19 - Verse 26

Verse 26. No Barnes text on this verse.
{q} "but with God" Ps 3:8 42:11; Zec 8:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 19 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *We have forsaken all*. Probably nothing but their fishing-nets, small boats, and cottages. But they were their *all*; their *living*, their *home*. And, forsaking *them*, they had as really shown their sincerity, as though they had possessed the gold of Ophir, and dwelt in the palaces of kings.

What shall we have therefore? We have done as thou didst command this young man to do. What reward may we expect for it?

{r} "Then answered" Mr 10:28 Lu 18:28 {s} "forsaken all" Php 3:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 19 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *Verily I say unto you*. Jesus in this verse declares the reward which *they* would have. They were not to look for it *now*, but in a future period.

In the regeneration. This word occurs but once elsewhere in the New Testament, Tit 3:5. It literally means a new birth, or being born again. Applied to a man, it denotes the great change when the heart is renewed, or when the sinner begins to be a Christian. This is its meaning clearly in *Titus*. But this meaning cannot be applied here. Christ was not born again, and in no proper sense could it be said that they *had followed him in the new birth*. The word also means any great changes, or restoration of things to a former state, or to a better state. In this sense it is probably used here. It refers to that great revolution; that restoration of order in the universe; that universal *new birth* when the dead shall rise, and all human things shall be changed, and a new order of things shall start up out of the ruins of the old, when the Son of man shall come to judgment. The passage, then, should be read, "Ye which have followed me shall, as a reward in the great day of the resurrection of the dead, and of forming the new and eternal order of things—the day of judgment, the *regeneration*—be signally honoured and blessed."

When the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory. That is, to judge the world. *Throne of glory*, means *glorious throne*, or a splendid throne. It is not to be taken literally, but is used to denote his character as a King and Judge, and to signify the great dignity and majesty which will be displayed by him. See Mt 24:30 26:64; Ac 1:11 17:31.

Sit upon twelve thrones. This is figurative. To sit on a throne denotes power and honour; and means here that they should be distinguished above others, and be more highly honoured and rewarded.

Judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Jesus will be the Judge of quick and dead. He only is qualified for it; and the Father hath given all judgment to the Son, Joh 5:22. To *judge*, denotes rank, authority, power. The ancient *judges* of Israel were men of distinguished courage, patriotism, honour, and valour. Hence the word comes to denote, *not so much an actual exercise of the power of passing judgment*, as the *honour* attached to the office. And as earthly kings have those around them dignified with honours and office, counsellors and judges, so Christ says his apostles shall occupy the same *relative* station in the great day. They shall be honoured by him, and by all, *as* apostles; as having in the face of persecution left all; as having laid the foundations of his church, and endured all the maddened persecutions of the world.

The twelve tribes of Israel. This was the number of the ancient tribes. By *this name* the people of God were denoted. By *this name* Jesus here denotes *his redeemed people*. See also Jas 1:1, where Christians are called the twelve tribes. Here it also means not the *Jews*, not the *world*, not the *wicked*, not that the apostles are to pronounce sentence on the enemies of God; but *the people of God*, the redeemed. Among them Jesus says his apostles shall be *honoured* in the day of judgment, as earthly kings place in posts of office and honour the counsellors and judges of those who have signally served them. Comp. **See Barnes "1Co 6:2"**.

{t} "ye shall also" Mt 20:21 Lu 22:28-30; 1Co 6:2,3; Re 2:26

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 19 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Forsaken houses*, etc. In the days of Jesus, those who followed him were obliged generally to forsake houses and home, and to attend him. In our times it is not often required that we should *literally* leave them, except when the life is devoted to him among the heathen; but it is always required that we love them *less* than we do him; that we give up all that is inconsistent with religion, and be ready to give up all when he demands it.

For my name's sake. From attachment to me. Mark adds, "and the gospel's;" that is, from obedience to the requirements of the gospel, and love for the service of the gospel.

Shall receive an hundredfold. Mark says, "an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters," etc. *An hundredfold* means a hundred times as much. This is not to be understood *literally*, but that he will give what will be worth a hundred times as much, in the peace, and joy, and rewards of religion. It is also literally true, that no man's *temporal interest* is injured by the love of God. Marks adds, "with persecutions." These are not promised as a part of the reward; but amidst their trials and persecutions, they should find reward and peace.

{u} "And every one" Mr 10:29,30; Lu 18:29,30; 1Co 2:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 19 - Verse 30

Verse 30. This verse should have been connected with the following chapter. The parable there spoken is expressly to illustrate this sentiment. See its meaning, Mt 20:16.

{v} "But many that" Mt 20:16 21:31,32 Mr 10:31; Lu 13:30 Ga 5:7

Heb 4:1

REMARKS ON MATTHEW CHAPTER 19

(1.) We should not throw ourselves *unnecessarily* in the way of the enemies of religion, Mt 19:1. Jesus, to avoid the Samaritans, crossed the Jordan, and took a more distant route to Jerusalem. If *duty* calls us in the way of the enemies of religion, we should go. If we can do them good, we should go. If our presence will only provoke them to anger and bitterness, then we should turn aside. Comp. **See Barnes "Mt 10:23".**

(2.) Men will seek every occasion to ensnare Christians, Mt 19:3. Questions will be proposed with great art, and with an appearance of sincerity, only for the purpose of leading them into difficulty. Cunning men know well how to propose such questions, and triumph much when they have perplexed believers. This is often the boast of men of some standing, who think they accomplish the great purposes of their existence, if they can confound other men; and think it signal triumph if they can make others as miserable as themselves.

(3.) We should not refuse to answer such persons with mildness, when the Bible has settled the question, Mt 19:4-6. Jesus answered a captious question, proposed on purpose to ensnare him. We may often do much to confound the enemies of religion, and to recommend it, when without passion we hear their inquiries, and deliberately inform them that the question has been settled by God. We had better however, far better, say nothing in reply, than to answer in anger, or to show that we are irritated, All the object of the enemy is gained, if he can make us mad.

(4.) Men will search and pervert the Bible for authority to indulge their sins, and to perplex Christians, Mt 19:7. No device is more common than to produce a passage of Scripture, known to be misquoted or perverted, yet plausible, for the purpose of perplexing Christians. In such cases, the best way is often to say nothing. If unanswered, men will be ashamed of it; if answered, they gain their point, and are ready for debate and abuse.

(5.) We learn from this chapter that there is no union so intimate as the marriage connexion, Mt 19:6. Nothing is so tender and endearing as this union appointed by God for the welfare of man.

(6.) This union should not be entered into slightly or rashly. It involves all the happiness of this life, and *much* of that to come. The union demands,

(1.) congeniality of feeling and disposition;

(2.) of rank or standing in life;

(3.) of temper;

(4.) similarity of acquirements;

(5.) of age;

(6.) of talent;

(7.) intimate acquaintance. It should also be a union on religious feelings and opinions:

(1.) Because religion is more important than anything else.

(2.) Because it will give more happiness in the married life than anything else.

(3.) Because where one only is pious, there is danger that religion

will be obscured and blighted.

(4.) Because no prospect is so painful as that of eternal separation.

(5.) Because it is heathenish, brutal, and mad, to partake the gifts of God in a family, and offer no thanksgiving; and inexpressibly wicked to live from day to day as if there were no God, no heaven, no hell.

(6.) Because death is near, and nothing will soothe the pangs of parting but the hope of meeting in the resurrection of the just.

(7.) No human legislature has a right to declare divorces, except in one single case, Mt 19:9. If they do, they are accessaries to the crime that may follow, and presume to legislate where *God* has legislated before them.

(8.) Those *thus* divorced, or pretended to be divorced, and marrying again, are, by the declaration of Jesus Christ, living in adultery, Mt 19:9. It is no excuse to say that the law of the land divorced them. The law had no such right. If all the legislatures of the world were to say that it was lawful for a man to steal, and commit murder, it would not make it so; and in spite of human permission, God would hold a man answerable for theft and murder. So also of adultery.

(9.) The marriage union demands *kindness and love*, Mt 19:6. Husband and wife are one, Love to each other is love to a second self. Hatred, and anger, and quarrels, are against ourselves. And the evils and quarrels in married life will descend on ourselves, and be gall and wormwood in our own cup.

(10.) Infants may be brought to Jesus to receive his blessing, Mt 19:13-15. While on earth, Jesus admitted them to his presence, and blessed them with his prayers. If they might be brought *then*, they may be brought *now*. Their souls are as precious; their dangers are as great; their salvation is as important. A parent should require the most indubitable evidence that Jesus will *not* receive his offspring, and will be displeased if the offering is made, to deter him from this inestimable privilege.

(11.) If children *may* be brought, they *should* be brought. It is the solemn duty of a parent to seize upon all possible means of benefiting his children, and of presenting them to God, to implore his blessing. In family prayer, and in the sanctuary, the ordinance of baptism, the blessing of the Redeemer should be sought early and constantly on their precious and immortal souls.

(12.) Earnestness and deep anxiety are proper in seeking salvation, Mt 19:16. The young man came running; he kneeled. It was not form and ceremony; it was life and reality. Religion is a great subject. Salvation is beyond the power of utterance in importance. Eternity is near; and damnation thunders along the path of the guilty. The sinner must be saved soon, or die for ever. He cannot be too earnest. He cannot press with too great haste to Jesus. He should come running, and kneeling, and humbled, and lifting the agonizing cry, "What shall I do to be saved ?"

(13.) He should come young, Mt 19:20. He cannot come too young. God has the *first* claim on our affections. He made us; he keeps us; he provides for us; and it is right that we should give our first affections to him. No one who has become a Christian ever yet felt that he had become one too young. No young person that given his heart to the Redeemer ever yet regretted it. They may give up the gay world to do it; they may leave the circles of the dance and the song; they may be exposed to contempt and persecution, but no matter. He who becomes a true Christian, no matter of what age or rank, blesses God that he was inclined to do it, and the time never can come when

for one moment he will regret it. Why, then, will not the young give their hearts to the Saviour, and do that which they know they never can for one moment regret?

(14.) It is no dishonour for those who hold offices, and who are men of rank, to inquire on the subject of religion, Lu 18:18. Men of rank often suppose that it is only the *weak*, and *credulous*, and *ignorant*, that ever feel any anxiety about religion. Never was a greater mistake. It has been only profligate, and weak, and ignorant men, that have been thoughtless. Two-thirds of all the profound investigations of the world have been on this very subject. The wisest and best of the heathens have devoted their lives to inquire about God, and their own destiny. So in Christian lands. Were Bacon, Newton, Locke, Milton, Hale, and Boerhaave men of weak minds? Yet their deepest thoughts and most anxious inquiries were on this very subject. So in our own land. Were Washington, Ames, Henry, Jay, and Rush men of weak minds? Yet they were profound believers in revelation. And yet young men of rank, and wealth, and learning, often think they show great independence in refusing to think of what occupied the profound attention of these men, and fancy they are great only by refusing to tread in their steps. Never was a greater or more foolish mistake. If anything demands attention, it is surely the inquiry whether we are to be happy for ever, or wretched; whether there is a God and Saviour; or whether we are "in a forsaken and fatherless world."

(15.) It is as important for the *rich* to seek religion as the poor. They will as certainly die; they as much need religion. Without it, they *cannot* be happy, Riches will drive away no pain on a death-bed; they will not go with us; they will not save us.

(16.) It is of *special* importance that wealthy young persons should be Christians. They are exposed to many dangers. The world—the gay and flattering world—will lead them astray. Fond of fashion, dress, and amusement, they are exposed to a thousand follies, from which nothing but religion can secure them. Besides, they may do much good; and God will hold them answerable for all the good they *might* have done with their wealth.

(17.) The amiable, the lovely, the moral, need also an interest in Christ. If amiable, we should suppose they would be ready to embrace the Saviour. None was ever so moral, so lovely, so pure, as he. If we really *loved* amiableness, then we should come to him. We should love him. But alas! how many amiable young persons turn away from him, and refuse to follow him! Can they be really lovers of that which is pure and lovely? If so, then why turn away from the Lamb of God ?

(18.) The amiable and the lovely need a better righteousness than their own. With all this, they may make an idol of the world; they may be proud, sensual, selfish, prayerless, and thoughtless about dying. Externally they appear lovely; but oh, how far is the heart from God!

(19.) Inquirers about religion depend on their own works, Mt 19:16 They are not willing to trust to Jesus for salvation; and they ask what they shall do. This is always the case. And it is only when they find that they can do nothing—that they are poor, and helpless, and wretched—that they cast themselves on the mercy of God, and find peace.

(20.) Compliments and flattering titles are evil, Mt 19:17. They ascribe something to others which we know they do not possess. Often beauty is praised, where we know there is no beauty; accomplishment where there is no accomplishment; talent, where there is no talent. Such praises are *falsehood*. We know them to be such. We intend to deceive by them; and we know that they will produce pride and vanity. Often they are used for the purpose of destruction. If a man praises us too much, we should look to our purse, or our virtue. We should feel that we are in danger, and the next thing will be a dreadful blow, the heavier for all this flattery. They that use compliments

much, expect them from others; are galled and vexed when they are *not* obtained, and are in danger when they are.

(21.) If we are to be saved, we must do just what God commands us, Mt 19:17,18. This is all we have to do. We are not to invent anything of our own. God has marked out the course, and we must follow it.

(22.) We are easily deceived about keeping the law, Mt 19:17. We often *think* we observe it, when it is only the outward form that we have kept. The law is spiritual; and God requires the heart.

(23.) Riches are a blessing, if used aright; if not, they are deceitful, dangerous, ruinous, Mt 19:23,24. Thousands have lost their souls by the love of riches. None have ever been saved by them.

(24.) It is our duty to forsake all for Christ, Mt 19:27-29. Be it little or much, it is all the same to him. It is the *heart* that he looks at; and we may as well show our love by giving up a fishing. boat and net, as by a palace or a crown. If done in either case, it will be accepted.

(25.) Religion has its own rewards, Mt 19:28,29. It gives more than it takes. It more than compensates for all that we surrender. It gives peace, joy, comfort in trial and in death, and heaven beyond. This is the testimony of all Christians of all denominations; of all that *have* lived, and of all that do live, that they never knew true peace till they found it in the gospel. The testimony of so many must be true. They have tried the world in all its forms of gaiety, folly, and vice, and they come and say with one voice, here only is true peace. On any other subject they would be believed. Their testimony here must be true.

(26.) Those eminent for usefulness here, will be received to distinguished honours and rewards in heaven, Mt 19:28. They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as stars in the firmament for ever, Da 12:3.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 20 - Verse 1

MATTHEW CHAPTER 20.

Verse 1. *For the kingdom of heaven*, etc. The word "for" shows that this chapter should have been connected with the preceding. The parable was spoken expressly to illustrate the sentiment in the last verse of that chapter. The kingdom of heaven means here the church, including perhaps its state here and hereafter. **See Barnes "Mt 3:2"**.

It has reference to *rewards*; and the meaning may be thus expressed: "Rewards shalt be bestowed in my kingdom, or on my followers, in the same manner as they were by a certain householder, in such a way as that the last shall be equal to the first, and the first last."

An householder. A master of a family. One at the head of family affairs.

His vineyard. No inconsiderable part of Judea was employed in the culture of the grape. Vineyards are often used, therefore, to represent a fertile or well cultivated place; and hence the

church, denoting the care and culture that God has bestowed on it, Isa 5:7 Jer 12:10. For the manner of their construction, see **See Barnes "Mt 21:33"**.

{w} "householder" So 8:11,12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 20 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *A penny a day*. The coin here referred to was a Roman coin, equal in value to about 14 cents, [about 7d.] The original denotes the Roman denarius, *dhnariou* a silver coin, which was originally equivalent to *ten asses*, (a brass Roman coin,) whence its name The consular denarius bore on one side a head of Rome, and an X or a star to denote the value in asses, and a chariot with either two or four horses. At a later period the casts of different deities were on the obverse; and these were finally superseded by the heads of the Caesars. Many specimens of this coin have been preserved. The preceding cuts will show the usual appearance of the coins.

It was probably at that time the price of a day's labour. See Tobit v. 14. This was the common wages of a Roman soldier. In England, before the discovery of the mines of gold and silver of South America, and consequently before money was plenty, the price of labour was about in proportion. In 1351, the price of labour was regulated by law, and was a penny a day. But provisions were of course proportionally cheap; and the avails of a man's labour in articles of food were nearly as much as they are now.

{x} "penny" Mt 18:28

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 20 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *About the third hour*. The Jews divided their days into *twelve* equal parts, or hours, beginning at sunrise, and ending at sunset. This was, therefore, about nine o'clock in the morning.

Standing idle in the marketplace. A place where provisions are sold in towns. Of course many resort to such places; and it would be the readiest place to meet persons, and find employers. They were not, therefore, *disposed* to be idle, but were waiting in the proper place to find employers.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 20 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Whatever is right*. Whatsoever it shall appear you can earn. The contract with the first was definite; with this one it depended on tho judgment of the employer.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 20 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *The sixth and ninth hour*. That is, about twelve and three o'clock.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 20 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *The eleventh hour*. About five o'clock in the afternoon; or when there was but one working hour of the day left.

{y} "all the day idle" Pr 19:15 Eze 16:49; Ac 17:21 Heb 6:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 20 - Verse 7

Verse 7. No Barnes text on this verse.

{z} "unto them"

Ec 9:10 Joh 9:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 20 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *When even was come*. That is, when the twelfth hour was come; the day was ended, and the time of payment was come.

The steward. A *steward* is one who transacts business in the place of another. He was one who had the administration of affairs in the absence of the householder; who provided for the family; and who was entrusted with the payment of labourers and servants. He was commonly the most trusty and faithful of the servants, raised to that station as a reward for his fidelity.

Beginning from the last unto the first. It was immaterial where he *began* to pay, provided he dealt justly by them. In the parable, this order is mentioned to give opportunity for the remarks which follow. Had those first hired been first paid, they would have departed satisfied, and the point of the parable would have been lost.

{a} "and give" Lu 10:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 20 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *They received every man a penny*. There was no agreement how much they should receive, but merely that justice should be done, Mt 20:4,5,7.

The householder supposed they had earned it, or chose to make a present to them to compensate for the loss of the first part of the day, when they were willing to work but could not find employment.

{b} "eleventh hour" Lu 23:40-43

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 20 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *They supposed that they should have received more*. They had worked longer; they had been in the heat; they supposed that it was his intention to pay them, not according to contract, but according to the time of the labour.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 20 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Murmured*. Complained. Found fault with.

The good man of the house. The original here is the same word which, Mt 20:1, is translated *householder*, and should have been so translated here. It is the old English way of denoting the father of a family. It expresses no *moral* quality.

{c} "against the good man" Lu 15:29,30

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 20 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *The burden and the heat of the day*. The burden means the heavy labour, the severe toil. We have continued at that toil, in the heat of the day. The others had worked only a little while, and that in the cool of the evening, and when it was far more pleasant and much less fatiguing.

{1} "have wrought", or, "have continued one hour only"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 20 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Friend, I do thee no wrong*. I have fully complied with the contract. We had an agreement; I have paid it all. If I choose to give a penny to another man if he labours little or not at all; if I should choose to give *all* my property away to others, it would not affect this contract with *you*. It is fully met. And with my own— with that on which you have no further claim—may do as I please. So, if Christians are *just*, and pay their lawful debts, and injure no one, the world has no right to complain if they give the rest of their property to the poor, or devote it to send the gospel to the heathen, or to release the prisoner or the captive. It is their *own*. They have a right to do with it as they please. They are answerable not to men, but to God. And infidels, and worldly men, and cold professors in the church, have no right to interfere.

{d} "Friend" Mt 22:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 20 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Take* that *thine* is. Take what is justly *due* to you—what is properly your own.

{e} "go thy way" Joh 17:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 20 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Is thine eye evil because I am good*? The Hebrews used the word *evil*, when applied to the eye, to denote one envious and malicious, De 15:9 Pr 23:6. The eye is called *evil* in such cases, because envy and malice show themselves directly in the eye. No passions are so fully expressed by the eye as these. "Does *envy* show itself in the eye; is thine eye so soon turned to express envy and malice, because I have chosen to do good?"

{f} "Is it not" Ro 9:15-24 Jas 1:18 {g} "Is thine eye" Mt 19:30

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 20 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *So the last shall be first*, etc. This is the *moral* or *scope* of the parable. To teach this, it was spoken. Many that, in the *order of time*, shall be brought last into the kingdom, shall be first in the rewards. Higher *proportionate* rewards shall be given to them than to others. To all justice shall be done. To all to whom the rewards of heaven were promised, they shall be given. Nothing shall be withheld that was promised. If among this number who are called into the kingdom I choose to raise some to stations of distinguished usefulness, and to confer on them peculiar talents and higher rewards, I injure no other one. They shall enter heaven as was promised. If amidst the multitude of Christians, I choose to signalize such men as Paul, and Martyn, and Brainerd, and Spencer, and Summerfield—to appoint some of them to short labour, but to wide usefulness, and raise them to signal rewards—I injure not the great multitude of others who live long lives less useful, and less rewarded. All shall reach heaven, and all shall receive what I promise to the faithful.

Many be called, but few chosen. The meaning of this, in this connexion, I take to be simply this: "Many are called into my kingdom; they come and labour as I command them; they are comparatively unknown and obscure; yet they are real Christians, and shall receive the proper reward. A few I have chosen for higher stations in the church. I have endowed them with apostolic gifts, or superior talents, or wider usefulness. They may not be so long in the vineyard; their race may be sooner run; but I have chosen to honour them in this manner; and I have a right to do it. I injure no one; and have a right to do what I will with mine own." Thus explained, this parable has no reference to the call of the Gentiles; nor to the call of aged sinners; nor to the call of sinners out of the church at all. It is simply designed to teach that in the church, among the multitudes that shall be saved, Christ makes a difference. He makes some more useful than others, without regard to the *time* which they serve; and he will reward them accordingly. The parable teaches *one* truth, and *but* one. And where Jesus has explained it, we have no right to add to it, and say that it teaches anything else. It adds to the reason for this interpretation, that Christ was conversing about the rewards that should be given to his followers, and not about the numbers that should be called, or about the doctrine of election. **See Barnes "Mt 19:27-29".**

{h} "the last shall be first" Mt 19:30 {i} "for many" Mt 22:14 1Th 2:13; Jas 1:23-25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 20 - Verse 17

Verses 17-19. See also Mr 10:32-34 Lu 18:31-34. *And Jesus going up to Jerusalem*. That is, doubtless, to the passover. This journey was from Galilee, on the east side of Jordan, probably to avoid the Samaritans, Mt 19:1. At this time he was on this journey to Jerusalem, probably not far from Jericho. This was his last journey to Jerusalem. He was going up to die for the sins of the world.

Took the twelve disciples apart. All the *males* of the Jews were required to be at this feast, Ex 23:17. The roads, therefore, on such occasions, would probably be thronged. It is probable also, that they would travel in companies, or that whole neighbourhoods would go together. See Lu 2:44. By his *taking them apart* is meant his taking them aside from the company. He had something to communicate which he did not wish the others to hear. Mark adds, "And Jesus went before them: and they_were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid," Mt 10:32. He led the way, He had told them before, (Mt 17:22) that he should be betrayed into the hands of men, and be put to death. They began how to be afraid that this would happen, and to be solicitous for his life and for their own safety.

{k} "And Jesus" Mt 16:21 Mr 10:32; Lu 18:31 Joh 12:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 20 - Verse 18

Verses 18,19. *Behold, we go up to Jerusalem*. Jesus assured them that what they feared would come to pass. But he had in some measure prepared their minds for this state of suffering, by the promises which he had made to them, Mt 19:27-30 20:1-16. In all their sufferings they might be assured that eternal rewards were before them.

Shall be betrayed. See Mt 17:22.

Chief Priests and Scribes. The high priest, and the learned men who composed the Sanhedrim, or great council of the nation. He was thus betrayed by Judas, Mt 26:15. He *was* delivered to the chief priests and scribes, Mt 26:57.

And they shall condemn him to death. They had not power to *inflict* death, as that was taken away by the Romans; but they had the power of *expressing an opinion*, and of delivering him to the Romans to be put to death. This they did, Mt 26:66 27:2.

Shall deliver him to the Gentiles. That is, because they have not the right of inflicting capital punishment, they will deliver him to those who have—the Roman authority. *The Gentiles* here mean Pontius Pilate and the Roman soldiers. See Mt 27:2,27-30.

To mock, **See Barnes "Mt 2:16"**.

To scourge. That is, *to whip*. This was done with thongs, or a whip made on purpose; and this punishment was commonly inflicted upon criminals before crucifixion. **See Barnes "Mt 10:17"**.

To crucify him. That is, to put him to death on a cross, the com- mon punishment of slaves. See Mt 27:35.

The third day, etc. For the evidence that this was fulfilled, see Mt 28:1 and following. Mark and Luke say that he shall be spit upon. *Spitting* on another has always been considered an expression of the deepest contempt. Luke says, Lu 18:31, "All things that are written by the prophets concerning

the Son of man shall be accomplished." Among other things, he says he shall be "spitefully entreated;" that is, treated with *spite* or malice: malice implying contempt. These sufferings of our Saviour, and this treatment, and his death, had been predicted in many places. See Is 53:1-12 Da 9:26,27

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THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 20 - Verse 19

Verse 19. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 20:17"; **See Barnes on "Mt 20:18"**

{l} "And shall" Mt 27:2 Mr 15:1; Lu 23:1 Joh 18:28; Ac 3:13
1Co 15:3-7
{m} "to scourge" Isa 53:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 20 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children*, etc. This was probably Salome, Mr 15:40 16:1.

With her sons. The names of these were James and John, Mr 10:35. Mark says *they* came and made the request. That is, they made it through the medium of their mother; they requested *her* to ask it for them. It is not improbable that she was an ambitious woman, and was desirous to see her sons honoured.

Worshipping him. Showing him respect; respectfully saluting him. In the original, *kneeling*. **See Barnes "Mt 8:2"**.

{n} "Then came" Mr 10:35

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 20 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Grant that these my two sons may sit*, etc. They were still looking for a temporal kingdom. They expected that he would reign on the earth with great pomp and glory. They expected that he would conquer as a prince and a warrior. They wished to be distinguished in the day of his triumph. To sit on the right and left hand of a prince was a token of confidence, and the highest honour granted to his friends, 1Ki 2:19 Ps 110:1; 1Sa 20:25.

The disciples here had no reference to the kingdom of heaven, but only to the kingdom which they supposed he was about to set up on the earth.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 20 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Ye know not what ye ask*. You do not know the nature of your request, nor what would be involved in it. You suppose that it would be attended only with honour and happiness if the request was granted; whereas, it would require much suffering and trial.

Are ye able to drink of the cup, etc. To drink of a cup often, in the Scriptures, signifies *to be afflicted, or sometimes to be punished*, Isa 51:17,22; Ps 75:8.

The figure is taken from a *feast*, where the master of a feast extends a cup to those present. Thus God is represented as extending to his Son a cup filled with a bitter mixture —one causing deep sufferings, Joh 18:11. This was the cup to which he referred.

The baptism that I am baptized with. This is evidently a phrase denoting the same thing. Are ye able *to suffer* with me—-to endure the *trials* and *pains* which shall come upon you and me in endeavouring to build up my kingdom? Are you able to be plunged deep in afflictions, to have sorrows cover you like water, and to be sunk beneath calamities as floods, in the work of religion? Afflictions are often expressed by being sunk in the floods, and plunged in the deep waters, Ps 59:2 Is 43:2; Ps 124:4,5; La 3:54.

{o} "baptism" Lu 12:50

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 20 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Ye shall drink indeed of my cup*, etc. You are truly attached to me, you will follow me, and you will partake of my afflictions, and will suffer as *I* shall. This was fulfilled. James was slain with the sword by Herod, Ac 12:2. John lived many years. But he attended the Saviour through his sufferings, and was himself banished to Patmos, a solitary island, for the testimony of Jesus Christ —a companion of others in tribulation, Re 1:9.

Is not mine to give, etc. The translation of this place evidently does not express the sense of the original. The translation expresses the idea that Jesus has nothing to do in bestowing rewards on his followers. This is at variance with the uniform testimony of the Scriptures, Mt 25:31-40; Joh 5:22-30. The correct translation of the passage would be, "To sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, *except to those* for whom it is prepared of my Father." The passage thus declares that Christ would give rewards to his followers; but only to such as should be entitled to them according to *the purpose of his Father*. Much as he might be attached to these two disciples, yet he could not bestow any such signal favours on them out of the regular course of rewards. Rewards were prepared for his followers, and in due time they should be bestowed. *He* would bestow them according as they had been provided from eternity by God the Father, .

The correct sense is seen by leaving out that part of the verse *in Italics*; and this is one of the places in the Bible where the sense has been obscured or perverted by the introduction of words which have nothing to correspond with them in the original. See a similar instance in 1Jo 2:23.

{p} "Ye shall drink" Ac 12:2 Ro 8:17; 2Co 1:7 Re 1:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 20 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *The ten heard it*. That is, the ten other apostles.

They were moved with indignation. They were offended at their ambition, at their desire to be exalted above their brethren. The word "it" refers not to what Jesus said, but to their request. When the ten heard the request which they had made, they were indignant.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 20 - Verse 25

Verses 25-27. *But Jesus called them unto him*. That is, he called all the apostles to him, and stated the principles on which they were to act. The princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over *them*; that is, over their subjects. "You know that such honours are customary among nations. The kings of the earth raise their favourites to posts of trust and power. They give *authority* to some over others. But my kingdom is established in a different manner. There are to be no ranks; no places of dominion. All are to be on a level. The rich, the poor, the learned, the unlearned, the bond, the free, are to be equal. He will be the most distinguished that shows most humility, the deepest sense of his unworthiness, and the most earnest desire to promote the welfare of his brethren."

Gentiles. All who were not Jews—used here to denote the manner in which human governments are constituted.

Minister. A servant. The original word is *deacon*—a word meaning a servant of any kind; one especially who served at the table; and, in the New Testament, one who serves the church, Ac 6:1-4 1Ti 3:8. Preachers of the gospel are called ministers because they are the servants of God and the church, 1Co 3:6 4:1; 2Co 3:6 6:4; Eph 4:12; an office, therefore, which forbids them to lord it over God's heritage; which is the very opposite of a station of superiority, and which demands the very lowest degree of humility.

{q} "Ye know" Lu 22:25,26

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 20 - Verse 26

Verse 26. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes on "Mt 20:25"

{r} "be so" 1Pe 5:3 {s} "But whosoever" Mt 23:11 Mr 9:35, 10:43

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 20 - Verse 27

Verse 27. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes on "Mt 20:25"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 20 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *Even as the Son of man,* **See Barnes "Mt 8:20".**

Jesus points them to his own example. He was in the form of God in heaven, Php 2:6. He came to men in the form of a servant, Php 2:7. He came not with pomp and glory, but as a man in humble life. And since he came, he had not required them to minister to him. He laboured for them. He strove to do them good. He provided for their wants, fared as poorly as they did, went before them in dangers and sufferings, practised self-denial on their account, and for them was about to lay down his life. See Joh 13:4,5.

To give his life a ransom for many. The word *ransom* means, literally, a price paid for the redemption of captives. In war, when prisoners are taken by an enemy, the money demanded for their release is called a ransom. That is, it is the *means* by which they are set at liberty. So anything that releases any one from a state of punishment, or suffering, or sin, is called a ransom. Men are by nature captives to sin. They are sold under it. They are under condemnation, Eph 2:3 Ro 3:9-20,23 1Jn 5:19.

They are under a curse, Ga 3:10. They are in love with sin. They are under its withering dominion, and are exposed to death eternal, Eze 18:4 Ps 9:17; Ps 11:6 68:2, 139:19 Mt 25:46; Ro 2:6-9.

They must have perished unless there had been some way by which they could be rescued. This was done by *the death* of Jesus; by giving his life a ransom. The meaning is, that he died in the place of sinners, and that God was willing to *accept* the pains of *his death* in the place of the eternal suffering of the redeemed. The reasons why such a ransom was necessary are,

1st. that God had declared that the sinner should die—that is, that he would punish, or show his hatred to all sin.

2nd. That all men had sinned; and if justice was to take its regular course, all must perish.

3rd. That man could make no atonement for his own sins. All that he could do, were he holy would be only to do his duty, and would make no amends for the past. Repentance and future obedience would not blot away one sin.

4th. No man was pure, and no angel could make atonement. God was pleased, therefore, to appoint his only-begotten Son to make such a ransom. See Joh 16:10 1Jo 4:10; 1Pe 1:18,19; Re 13:8; Joh 1:29 Eph 5:2; Heb 7:27 Isa 53:1-12.

This is commonly called the *atonement*. **See Barnes "Ro 5:11".**

For many. See also Mt 26:28 Joh 10:16; 1Ti 2:6 1Jo 2:2

2Co 5:14,15; Heb 2:9.

{t} "but to minister" Lu 22:27 Joh 13:1-38, 4:14 Php 2:7

{u} "and to give" Isa 53:5,8,11 Da 9:24,26; 1Ti 2:6 Tit 2:14; Heb 9:28

1Pe 1:18,19; Re 1:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 20 - Verse 29

Verses 29-34. See Mr 10:40-52 Lu 18:36-43, 19:1

: where this account of his restoring to sight two blind men is also recorded. *And as they departed from Jericho*. This was a large town about eight miles west of the Jordan, and about nineteen miles north-east from Jerusalem. Near to this city the Israelites crossed the Jordan, when they entered into the land of Canaan, Jos 13:16. It was the first city taken by Joshua, who destroyed it to the foundation, and pronounced a curse on him who should rebuild it, Jos 6:20,21,26.

This curse was literally fulfilled in the days of Ahab—nearly five hundred years after, 1Ki 16:34. It afterwards became the place of the school of the prophets, 2Ki 2:6. In this place Elisha worked a signal miracle, greatly to the advantage of the inhabitants, by rendering the waters near it, that were before bitter, sweet, and wholesome, 2Ki 2:21. In point of size it was second only to Jerusalem. It was sometimes called the city of palm-trees, from the fact that there were many palms in the vicinity. A few of them are still remaining. 2Ch 28:15 Jud 1:16, 3:13.

At this place died Herod the Great, of a most wretched and foul disease. **See Barnes "Mt 2:10"**.

It is now a small village, wretched in its appearance, and inhabited by a very few persons, and called *Riha*, or *Rah*, situated on the ruins of the ancient city, (or, as some think, three or four miles east of it,) which a modern traveller describes as a poor, dirty village of the Arabs. There are perhaps fifty houses, of rough stone, with roofs of bushes and mud; and the population, two hundred or three hundred in number, is entirely Mohammedan. The road from Jerusalem to Jericho lies through what is called the *wilderness of Jericho*, and is described by modern travellers as the most dangerous and forbidding about Palestine. As lately as 1820, an English traveller, Sir Frederick Henniker, was attacked on this road by the Arabs, with fire-arms, who left him naked and severely wounded. **See Barnes** "Lu 10:30.

Jesus was going to Jerusalem. He had left Samaria, and crossed the Jordan, Mt 19:1. His regular journey was therefore through Jericho.

As they departed from Jericho. Luke says, "As he was come nigh unto Jericho." The original word used in Luke, translated *was come nigh*, commonly expresses *approach* to a place. But it does not of necessity mean that always. It may denote nearness to a place, whether going to it or from it. It would be here rendered correctly, "when they were near to Jericho," or when they were in the vicinity of it, without saying whether they were going to or from it. Matthew and Mark say they were going from it. The passage in Lu 19:1, "And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho," which seems to be mentioned as having taken place *after* the cure of the blind man, does not necessarily suppose that. That passage might be intended to be connected with the account of Zaccheus, and not to denote *the order of time* in which these events took place; but simply that, as he was passing through Jericho, Zaccheus sought to see him, and invited him to his house. Historians vary in the circumstances and order of events. The *main facts* of the narrative are observed. And such variations of circumstances and order, where there is no palpable contradiction, show the *honesty* of the writers; show that they did not *conspire together* to deceive, and are in all courts, of justice considered as confirmations of the truth of the testimony.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 20 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *Two blind men*. Mark and Luke mention but one. They do not say, however, that there was no more than one. They mention one because he was probably well known; perhaps the

son of a distinguished citizen reduced to poverty. His name was Bartimeus. *Bar* is a Syriac word, meaning *son*; and the name means, therefore, "the son of Timeus." Probably *Timeus* was a man of note; and as the case of his son attracted most attention, Mark and Luke recorded it particularly. Had they said there was *only* one healed, there would have been a contradiction. As it is, there is no more contradiction or difficulty than there is in the fact that the evangelists, like all other historians, often omit many facts which they do not choose to record.

Heard that Jesus passed by. They learned who he was by inquiring. They heard a name, and asked who it was, (Luke.) They had doubtless heard much of his fame, but had never before been where he was, and probably would not be again. They were therefore more earnest in calling upon him.

Son of David. That is, *Messiah*, or *Christ*. This was the name by which the Messiah was commonly known. He was the illustrious *descendant* of David, in whom the promises especially centered, Ps 132:11,12, 89:3,4.

It was the universal opinion of the Jews that the Messiah was to be the descendant of David. See Mt 22:42. On the use of the word *Son*, **See Barnes "Mt 1:1"**.

{v} "And, behold" Mt 9:27 Mr 10:46; Lu 18:35

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 20 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *And the multitude rebuked them, because*, etc. They chid or reproved them, and in a threatening manner told them to be silent.

They cried the more. Jesus standing still, ordered them to be brought to him, (Mark.) They *then* addressed the blind men, and told them that Jesus called. Mark adds, that Bartimeus cast away his garment, and rose and came to Jesus. The garment was not his only raiment, but was the *outer* garment, thrown loosely over him, and commonly laid aside when persons laboured or ran. **See Barnes "Mt 5:40"**.

His doing it denoted haste, and earnestness, in order to come to Jesus.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 20 - Verse 32

Verse 32. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 20:29"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 20 - Verse 33

Verse 33. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 20:29"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 20 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *And touched their eyes*. Mark and Luke say he added, "Thy faith hath saved thee," Thy *confidence*, or *belief* that I could cure, has been the means of obtaining this blessing. Faith had no power to open the eyes, but it led them to Jesus; it showed that they had just views of his power; it was connected with the cure. So *faith* has no power to save from sin, but it leads the poor, lost, blind sinner to him who has power; and in this sense it is said we are saved by faith. His *touching* their eyes was merely a sign that the power of healing proceeded from him.

Here was an undoubted miracle.

(1.) These blind men were well known. One, at least, had been long blind.

(2.) They were strangers to Jesus. They could not have, therefore, *feigned* themselves blind.

(3.) The miracle was in the presence of multitudes, who took a deep interest in it, and who could easily have detected the imposition, if there had been one.

(4.) The men followed him. They praised or *glorified* God, (Mark and Luke.) The people gave praise to God also, (Luke.) They were all satisfied that a real miracle was performed.

REMARKS ON MATTHEW CHAPTER 20

(1.) From the parable at the beginning of this chapter, Mt 20:1-16 we learn that it is not so much the *time* that we serve Christ, as the *manner*, that is to entitle us to high rewards in heaven. Some may be in the church many years, yet accomplish little; others in a few years may be more distinguished in the success of their labours and in their rewards.

(2.) God will do justice to all, Mt 20:13. He will give to all his followers all that he promised to give. He will give to him entitled to the least, everything which he has promised, and infinitely more than he has deserved.

(3.) On some he will bestow higher rewards than on others, Mt 20:16. There is no reason to think that the condition of men in heaven will be *equal*, any more than it is on earth. Difference of rank may run through all God's government, and still no one be degraded, or be deprived of his rights.

(4.) God does as he please's with his own, Mt 20:15. It is his right to do so—a right which *men* claim, and which God may claim. If he does injustice to *no one*, he has a right to bestow what favours on others he pleases.

(5.) In doing good to another man, he does no injury to me. He violated none of *my* rights by bestowing great talents on Newton, or great wealth on Solomon. He did not injure me by making Paul a man of distinguished talents and piety, or John a man of much meekness and love. What he gives me I should be thankful for, and improve; nor should I be envious or malignant, that he has given to others more than he has to me. Nay, I should rejoice that he has bestowed such favours on undeserving men at all; that *the race* is in possession of such talents and rewards, to whomsoever given; and should believe that in the hands of God such favours will be well bestowed. God is a sovereign; and the Judge of all the earth will do that which is right.

(6.) It is our duty to go into the vineyard and labour faithfully, whenever the Lord Jesus calls us, and till he calls us to receive our reward, Mt 20:1-16. He has a right to call us, and there are none who are not invited to labour for him.

(7.) Rewards are offered to all who will serve him, Mt 20:4. It is not that we *deserve* any favour, or that we shall not say at the end of life that we have been *unprofitable* servants; but he graciously

promises that our rewards shall be measured by our faithfulness in his cause. *He* will have the glory of bringing us into his kingdom and saving us, while he will bestow rewards on us according as we have been faithful in his service.

(8.) Men may be saved in old age, Mt 20:6. Old men are sometimes brought into the kingdom of Christ, and made holy. But it is rare. Few aged men are converted. They drop into the grave as they lived. And to a man who wastes his youth and his middle life in sin, and goes down into the vale of years a rebel against God, there is a dreadful probability that he will die as he lived. It will be found to be true, probably, that by far more than half who are saved are converted before they reach the age of twenty-five. Besides, it is foolish as well as wicked to spend the best of our days in the service of Satan, and to give to God only the poor remnant of our lives, that we can no longer use in the cause of wickedness. God should have our *first* and *best* days.

(9.) Neither this parable, nor any part of the Bible, should be abused, so as to lead us to put off the time of repentance to old age. It is *possible*, though not *probable*, that an old man may repent; but it is not probable that *we* shall live to be old. Few, few of all the world, live to old age. We may die in youth. Thousands die in childhood. The time, the accepted time to serve God, is in childhood. There are more reasons why a child should love the Saviour, than why he should love a parent. He has done much more for us than any parent. And there is no reason why he may not be *trained up* to love *him*, as well as his parents. And God will require it at the hands of parents and teachers, if they do not train up the children committed to them to love and obey him.

(10.) One reason why we do not understand the plain doctrines of the Bible is our prejudice, Mt 20:17-19. Our Saviour plainly told his disciples that he must die. He stated the manner of his death, and the principal circumstances. To us all this is plain; but *they* did not understand it, (Luke.) They had filled their heads with notions about his earthly glory and honour, and they were not willing to see the truth as he stated it. Never was there a juster proverb than that, "None are so blind as those who *will* not see." So to us the Bible might be plain enough. The doctrines of truth are revealed clear as a sunbeam, but we are filled with previous notions; we are determined to think differently; and the easiest way to gratify this is to say we do not *see* it so. The only correct principle of interpretation is, that the Bible is to be taken just *as it is*. The meaning that the sacred writers intended to teach is to be sought honestly; and where found, that and that only is religious truth.

(11.) Mothers should be cautious about seeking places of honour for their sons, Mt 20:20-22. Doing this, they seldom know what they ask. They may be seeking the ruin of their children. It is not posts of honour that secure happiness or salvation. Contentment and peace are found oftenest in the humble vale of honest and sober industry— in attempting to fill up our days with usefulness, in the situation where God has placed us. As the purest and loveliest streams often flow in the retired grove, far from the thundering cataract or the stormy ocean, so is the sweet peace of the soul; it dwells oftenest far from the bustle of public life, and the storms and tempests of ambition.

(12.) Ambition in the church is exceedingly improper, Mt 20:22. It is not the nature of religion to produce it. It is opposed to all the modest, retiring, and pure virtues that Christianity produces. An ambitious man will be destitute of religion just in proportion to his ambition; and piety may always be graduated by humility.

(13.) Our humility is the measure of our religion, Mt 20:26-28. Without humility we can have no religion, He that has the most lowly views of himself, and the highest of God—that is willing to stoop the lowest to aid his fellow-creatures, and to honour God— has the most genuine piety. Such was the example of our Saviour, and it can never be any dishonour to imitate the Son of God.

(14.) The case of the blind men is an expressive representation of the condition of the sinner, Mt 20:30-34.

1st. Men are blinded by reason of sin. They do not by nature see the truth of religion.

2nd. It is proper in this state of blindness to call upon Jesus to open our eyes. If we ever see, it will be by the grace of God. God is the fountain of light, and those in darkness should seek him.

3rd. Present opportunities should be improved. This was the first time that Jesus had been in Jericho. It was the last time he would be there. He was passing *through* it on his way to Jerusalem. So he passes among us by his ordinances. So it may be the last time that we shall have an opportunity to call upon him. While he is near, we should seek him.

4th. When people rebuke us and laugh at us, it should not deter us from calling on the Saviour. There is danger that they will laugh us out of our purpose to seek him, and we should cry the more earnestly to him. We should feel that our eternal all depends or our being heard.

5th. The persevering cry of those who seek the Saviour aright will not be in vain. They who cry to him sensible of their blindness, and sensible that he only can open their eyes, will be heard, He turns none away who thus cry to him.

6th. Sinners must "rise" and come to Jesus. They must cast away everything that hinders their coming. As the blind Bartimeus threw off his "garments," so sinners should throw away everything that hinders their going to him—everything that obstructs their progress—and cast themselves at his feet. No man will be saved while *sitting still*. The command is, "Strive to enter in;" and the promise is made to those. Only who "ask," and "seek}" and "knock."

7th. *Faith* is the only channel through which we shall receive mercy. According to our *faith*—that is, our *confidence* in Jesus—our trust and reliance on him—so will it be to us. Without that we shall perish.

8th. They who apply to Jesus thus will receive sight. Their eyes will be opened, and they will see clearly.

9th. They who are thus restored to sight should follow Jesus. They should follow him wherever he leads; they should follow him always; they should follow none else but him. He that can give sight to the blind cannot lead us astray. He that can shed light in the *beginning* of our faith, can enlighten our goings through all our pilgrimage, and down through the dark valley of the shadow of death.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 1

Verses 1-16. See also Mr 11:1-11 Lu 19:29-44

Verse 1. *And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem*. They were going up now from Jericho, Mt 20:29. The distance was about nineteen miles. The most of the way was a desert, or filled with caves, and rocks, and woods—a fit place for robbers. See Lu 10:30. The Mount of Olives, or *Olivet*, is on the east of Jerusalem. Between this and Jerusalem there runs a small stream called the brook

Kidron, or Cedron. It is dry in the hot seasons of the year, but swells to a considerable size in time of heavy rains. **See Barnes "Joh 8:1".**

The Mount of Olives was so called from its producing in abundance the olive. It was from Jerusalem about a Sabbath day's journey, Ac 1:12. On the west side of the mountain was the garden of Gethsemane, Lu 22:39 Mr 4:32. On the eastern declivity of the mountain, were the villages of Bethphage and Bethany. Mark and Luke say that he came near to both those places. He came nearest to Bethphage, and sent his disciples to the village over against them, *to Bethany, [Bethpage?]*. Bethany was the place where Lazarus dwelt whom he raised from the dead, (Joh 11:1) where Martha and Mary dwelt; and where Mary anointed him with ointment against the day of his burying, Joh 12:1-7. These circumstances are omitted by the three first evangelists, but supplied by John, who wrote after them. The Mount of Olives is about a mile in length, and about seven hundred feet in height, and overlooks Jerusalem; so that from its summit almost every part of the city can be seen. The mountain is composed of three peaks or summits. Our Saviour is supposed to have ascended from the middle one. The *olive* is a fruit well known among us as an article of commerce. The tree blooms in June, and bears white flowers. The fruit is small. It is first green, then pale, and, when fully ripe, black. It incloses a hard stone, in which are the seeds. The *wild olive* was common, and differed from the other only in being of a smaller size. There are two roads from Jerusalem to Bethany; one around the southern end of the Mount of Olives, and the other across the summit. The latter is considerably shorter, but more difficult; and it was probably along this road that the Saviour went.

{w} "And when they" Mr 11:1 Lu 19:29

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Go into the village over against you*. The village here meant was not far from Bethany, and about two miles east of Jerusalem, (Mark and Luke.) He had lodged at Bethphage [*Bethany*] the night before, and in the morning sent his disciples to the village over against them; that is, to Bethany, [*Bethphage*,] Joh 12:1-12.

Ye shall find an ass tied, etc. In Judea there were few horses, and those were chiefly used in war. Men seldom employed them in common life, and in ordinary journeys. The ass, the mule, and the camel, are still most used in eastern countries. To ride on a horse was sometimes an emblem of war; on a mule and an ass the emblem of peace. Kings and princes commonly rode on them in times of peace; and it is mentioned as a mark of rank and dignity to ride in that manner, Jud 10:4 12:14; 1Sa 25:20.

So Solomon, when he was inaugurated as king, rode on a *mule*, 1Ki 1:33. Riding in this manner, then, denoted neither poverty nor degradation, but was the appropriate way in which a king should ride, and in which, therefore, the King of Zion should enter into his capital—the city of Jerusalem.

Mark and Luke say, that he told them they should find "a colt tied." This they were directed to bring. They mention only the *colt*, because it was this on which he rode.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *The Lord hath need of them*. This means no more than the *master* has need of them. The word *lord* often means no more than *master* as opposed to *servant*, Mt 10:24 Eph 6:6; 1Pe 3:5,6.

The word is sometimes used in the Bible as applied to God, or as a translation of the name JEHOVAH. Its common use is a mere title of respect given by an inferior to a superior, by a servant to a master, by a disciple to a teacher. As a title of *high respect* it was given to Christ, or the Messiah. The persons to whom these disciples were sent were probably acquainted with the miracles of Jesus, and favourably disposed towards him. He had attracted great notice in that region particularly by raising Lazarus from the dead, and most of the people regarded him as the Messiah.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 4

Verses 4,5. *All this was done*, etc. The prophecy here quoted is found in Zec 9:9. It was always, by the Jews, applied to the Messiah.

Daughter of Zion. That is, *Jerusalem*. *Zion* was one of the hills on which the city of Jerusalem was built. On this stood the city of David and some strong fortresses. The names *daughter* and *virgin* were given to it often, in accordance with the oriental figurative manner of expression. **See Barnes "Isa 1:8"**; **See Barnes** "Am 5:2"; **See Barnes** "Ps 137:8; **See Barnes "Isa 47:1"**.

It was given to them as an expression of their beauty or comeliness.

Meek. **See Barnes "Mt 5:5"**.

The expression here rather denotes *peaceful*, not *warlike*; not with pomp, and state, and the ensigns of ambition. He came in the manner in which kings were accustomed to ride, but with none of their pride and ambitious feeling.

Sitting upon an ass, etc. He rode on the colt, (Mark and Luke.) This expression in Matthew is one which is common with all writers.

{x} "prophet" Zec 9:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 5

Verse 5. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes on "Mt 21:4"

{y} "daughter of Zion" Isa 62:11 Mr 11:4; Joh 12:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 6

Verse 6. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *And put on them their clothes*. This was done as a token of respect, 2Ki 9:13.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *And a very great multitude*, etc. Others showed the same respect by throwing their garments before him; others by cutting down branches of trees, and casting them in the way. This was the way in which conquerors and princes were often honoured. To cast flowers, or garlands, or evergreens, before a warrior returning from victory, or a king entering into his kingdom, was a common way of testifying joyful and triumphant feeling. Thus Josephus says, that Alexander and Agrippa were received at Jerusalem. So in our own land, some of the most acceptable tokens of rejoicing ever bestowed upon Washington were garlands of roses scattered in his path by children. So the path of Lafayette was often strewed with flowers, as a mark of respect and of a nation's gratitude. John says, Joh 12:13, that these branches were branches of the *palm-tree*. The palm was an emblem of *joy* and *victory*. It was used by the Roman soldiers as well as the Jews, as a symbol of peace. See 1 Mac. xiii. 51; 2 Mac. x. 6, 7; Re 7:9.

The palm-tree is common in warm climates, and was abundant in Palestine. The finest grew about Jericho and Engeddi. Hence Jericho was called the city of *palm-trees*. The palm has a long and straight body, a spreading-top, and an appearance of very great beauty. It produces an agreeable fruit, a pleasant shade, a kind of *honey* little inferior to the honey of bees, and from it was drawn a pleasant wine, much used in the east. On ancient coins the palm-tree is often a symbol of Judea. On coins, made after Jerusalem was taken, Judea is represented by a female sitting and weeping under a palm-tree. A reference to the palm-tree occurs often in the Bible, and its general form and uses are familiar to most readers. We give an, engraving of the tree, and add a description of it for the use of those to whom it is not familiar.

Strictly speaking, the palm-tree has no branches; but at the summit, from forty to eighty twigs, or leaf-stalks, spring forth, which are intended in Ne 8:15. The leaves are set around the trunk in circles of about six. The lower row is of great length, and the vast leaves bend themselves in a curve towards the earth; as the circle ascend, the leaves are shorter. In the month of February, there sprout from between the junctures of the lower stalks and the trunk little scales, which develop a kind of bud, the germ of the coming fruit. These germs are contained in a thick and tough skin, not unlike leather. According to the account of a modern traveller, a single tree in Barbary and Egypt bears from fifteen to twenty large clusters of dates, weighing from fifteen to twenty pounds each. The palm-tree lives more than two hundred years, and is most productive from the thirtieth until the eightieth year. The Arabs speak of two hundred and sixty uses to which the different parts of the palm-tree are applied.

The inhabitants of Egypt, Arabia, and Persia, depend much on the fruit of the palm-tree for their subsistence. Camels feed on the seed; and the leaves, branches, fibres, and sap, are all very valuable.

The "branches" referred to by John, (Joh 12:13,) refer to the long leaves which shoot out from the top of the tree, and which were often carried about as the symbol of victory. Comp. **See Barnes "Isa 3:26".**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Hosanna to the Son of David*\ etc. The word *hosanna* means, "Save now," or, "Save, I beseech thee." It is a Syriac word, and was the form of acclamation used among the Jews. It was probably used in the celebration of their great festivals. During those festivals they sang the 115th, 116th, 117th, and 118th psalms. In the chanting or singing of those psalms, the Jewish writers inform us, that the people responded frequently *hallelujah* or *hosanna*. Their use of it on this occasion was a joyful acclamation, and an invocation of a Divine blessing by the *Messiah*.

Son of David. The Messiah.

Blessed is *he*, etc. That is, blessed be the *Messiah*. This passage is taken from Ps 118:25,26. To come *in the name of the Lord*, is to come *by the authority* of the Lord; to come commissioned by him to reveal his will. The Jews had commonly applied this to the Messiah.

Hosanna in the highest. This may mean either "Hosanna in the highest, loftiest strains;" or it may mean a prayer to God, "Save now, O thou that dwellest in the highest heaven, or among the highest angels." Perhaps the whole song of hosanna may be a prayer to the Supreme God, as well as a note of triumphant acclamation: "Save now, O thou supremely great and glorious God; save by the Messiah that comes in thy name."

Mark adds, that they shouted "Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord." That is, the kingdom, promised to David, 1Ki 2:4 8:25. *Coming in the name of the Lord*, means coming according to the *promise* of the Lord. Its meaning may be thus expressed: "Prosperity to the reign of our father David, advancing now according to the promise made to him, and about to be established by the long-promised Messiah, his descendant." Luke adds,

"Lu 19:38

that they said, "Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest." The word *peace* is used here as significant of joy, triumph, exultation in heaven at this event. There will be increased peace and rejoicing from the succession of the redeemed: and let glory and praise be given to God *among the highest angels.*

There is no contradiction here among the evangelists. Among such a multitude the shouts of exultation and triumph would by no means be confined to the same words. Some would say one thing, and some another; and one evangelist recorded what was said by a part of the multitude, and another what was said by another part.

{z} "Blessed" Ps 118:26 Mt 23:39 {a} "in the highest" Lu 2:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved*. There was great excitement. The sight of such a multitude, the shouts of the people, and the triumphant procession through the city, excited much attention and inquiry.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 11

Verse 11. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 12

Verses 12-22. This paragraph contains the account of the barren fig-tree, and of the cleansing of the temple, See also Mr 11:12-19 Lu 19:45-48.

Verse 12. *And Jesus went into the temple of God*, etc. From Mr 11:11-15, it is probable that this cleansing of the temple did not take place on the day that he entered Jerusalem in triumph, but on the day following. He came and looked round upon all things, Mark says, and went out to Bethany with the twelve. On the day following, returning from Bethany, he saw the fig-tree. Entering into the temple, he purified it *on that day*; or, perhaps, he finished the work of purifying it on that day, which he commenced the day before. Matthew has mentioned the purifying of the temple, which was performed probably on two successive days; or has stated the *fact*, without being particular as to the order of events. Mark has stated them more particularly, and has *divided* what Matthew mentions together.

The temple of God, or the temple dedicated and devoted to the service of God, was built on Mount Moriah. The first temple was built by Solomon, about 1006 years before Christ, 1Ki 6:1. He was seven years in building it, 1Ki 6:38. David, his father, had contemplated the design of building it, and had prepared many materials for it, but was prevented, because he had been a man of war, 1Ch 22:1-9 1Ki 5:5. This temple, erected with great magnificence, remained till it was destroyed by the Chaldeans under Nebuchadnezzar, five hundred and eighty-four years before Christ, 2Ch 36:6,7,19.

After the Babylonish captivity, the temple was rebuilt by Zerubbabel, but with vastly inferior and diminished beauty. The aged men wept when they compared it with the glory of the former temple, Ezr 3:8,12. This was called the *second* temple. This temple was often defiled in the wars before the time of Christ. It had become much decayed and impaired. Herod the Great, being exceedingly unpopular among the Jews, on account of his cruelties, was desirous of doing something to obtain the favour of the people, and accordingly, about sixteen years before Christ, and in the eighteenth year of his reign, he commenced the work of repairing it. This he did, not by taking it down entirely at once, but by removing one part after another till it had become in fact a new temple, greatly surpassing the former in magnificence. It was still called by the Jews the *second* temple; and by Christ's coming to this temple thus repaired, was fulfilled the prophecy in Hag 2:9. On this

building Herod employed eighteen thousand men, and completed it so as to be fit for use in nine years, or about eight years before Christ. But additions continued to be made to it, and it continued increasing in splendour and magnificence, till ANNO DOMINI 64. John says, Joh 2:20, "forty and six years was this temple in building." Christ was then thirty years of age, which, added to the sixteen years occupied in repairing it before his birth, makes forty-six years.

The word *temple* was given, not merely to the sacred edifice, or house itself, but to all the numerous chambers, courts, and rooms connected with it, on the top of Mount Moriah. The temple itself was a small edifice, and was surrounded by courts and chambers half a mile in circumference. Into the sacred edifice itself our Saviour never went. The high priest only went into the holy of holies, and that but once a year; and none but priests were permitted to enter the holy place. Our Saviour was neither. He was of the tribe of Judah, and he consequently was allowed to enter no farther than the other Israelites into the temple. The works that he is said to have performed in the temple, therefore, are to be understood as having been performed in the *courts* surrounding the sacred edifice. These courts will now be described. The temple was erected on Mount Moriah. The space on the summit of the mount was not, however, large enough for the buildings necessary to be erected. It was therefore enlarged by building high walls, from the valley below, and filling up the space within. One of these walls was six hundred feet in height. The ascent to the temple was by high flights of steps. The entrance to the temple, or to the courts on the top of the mount, was by nine gates, all of them extremely splendid. On every side they were thickly coated with gold and silver. But there was one gate of peculiar magnificence. This was called the beautiful gate, Ac 3:2. It was on the east side, and was made of Corinthian brass, one of the most precious metals in ancient times. See the Introduction to 1 Corinthians, 1. This gate was fifty cubits, or seventy-five feet in height. The whole temple, with all its courts, was surrounded by a wall about twenty-five feet in height. This was built on the wall raised from the base to the top of the mountain; so that from the top of it to the bottom, in a perpendicular descent, was in some places not far from six hundred feet. This was particularly the case on the south-east corner; and it was here, probably, that Satan wished our Saviour to cast himself down. **See Barnes "Mt 4:6"**.

On the inside of this wall, between the gates, were piazzas, or covered porches. On the eastern, northern, and western sides there were two rows of these porches; on the south, three. These porches were covered walks, about twenty feet in width, paved with marble of different colours, with a flat roof of costly cedar, which was supported by pillars of solid marble, so large that three men could scarcely stretch their arms so as to meet around them. These walks or porches afforded a grateful shade and protection to the people in hot or stormy weather. The one on the east side was distinguished for its beauty, and was called Solomon's porch, Joh 10:23 Ac 3:11. It stood over the vast terrace or wall which Solomon had raised from the valley beneath, and which was the only thing of his work that remained in the sacred temple.

When a person entered any of the gates into this space within the wall, he saw the temple rising before him with great magnificence. But the space was not clear all the way up to it. Going forward, he came to another wall, inclosing considerable ground, considered more holy than the rest of the hill. The space between this first and second wall was called *the court of the Gentiles*. It was so called because Gentiles might come into it, but they could proceed no farther. On the second wall, and on the gates, were inscriptions in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, forbidding any Gentile or unclean person from proceeding farther on pain of death: This court was not of equal dimensions all the way round the temple. On the east, north, and west, it was quite narrow. On the south it was wide,

occupying nearly half of the whole surface of the hill. In this court the Gentiles might come. Here was the place where much secular business was transacted. This was the place occupied by the buyers, and sellers, and the money-changers, and which Jesus purified by casting them out.

The inclosure within the second wall was nearly twice as long from east to west as from north to south. This inclosure was also divided. The eastern part of it was called the court of the women; so called because women might advance thus far, but no farther. This court was square. It was entered by three gates: one on the north, one on the east directly opposite to the beautiful gate, and one on the south. In passing from the court of the Gentiles to that of the women, it was necessary to ascend about nine feet by steps. This court of the women was inclosed with a double wall, with a space between the walls about fifteen feet in width, paved with marble. The inner of these two walls was much higher than the one outside. The court of the women was paved with marble. In the corners of that court were different structures for the various uses of the temple. It was in *this* court that the Jews commonly worshipped. Here, probably, Peter and John, with others, went up to pray, Ac 3:1. Here, too, the Pharisee and publican prayed: the Pharisee near the gate that led forward to the temple, the publican standing far off on the other side or the court, Lu 18:9-14. Paul also was seized here, and charged with defiling the temple, by bringing the Gentiles into that holy place, Ac 21:26-30.

A high wall on the west side of the court of the women divided it from the court of the Israelites; so called because all the *males* of the Jews might advance there. To this court there was an ascent of fifteen steps. These steps were in the form of a half circle. The great gate to which these steps led was called the gate *Nicanor*. Besides this, there were three gates on each side, leading from the court of the women to the court of the Israelites.

Within the court of the *Israelites* was the court of the *priests*, separated by a wall about a foot and a half in height. Within that court was the altar of burnt offering, and the laver standing in front of it. Here the priests performed the daily service of the temple. In this place, also, were accommodations for the priests, when not engaged in conducting the service of the temple; and for the Levites, who conducted the music of the sanctuary.

The following is a view of the temple and its courts, as here described:

The temple, properly so called, stood within the court. It surpassed in splendour all the other buildings of the holy city; perhaps in magnificence unequalled in the world. It fronted the east, looking down through the gates Nicanor and the beautiful gate, and onward to the Mount of Olives. From the Mount of Olives on the east there was a beautiful and commanding view of the whole sacred edifice. It was there that our Saviour sat, when the disciples directed his attention to the goodly stones with which the temple was built, Mr 13:1. The entrance into the temple itself was from the *court of the priests*, by an ascent of twelve steps. The *porch* in front of the temple was a hundred and fifty feet high, and as many broad. The open space in this porch, through which the temple was entered, was one hundred and fifteen feet high, and thirty-seven broad, without doors of any sort. The appearance of this, built as it was with white marble, and decorated with plates of silver, from the Mount of Olives was exceedingly dazzling and splendid. Josephus says, that in the rising of the sun it reflected so strong and dazzling an effulgence, that the eye of the spectator was obliged to turn away. To strangers at a distance it appeared like a mountain covered with snow; for where it was not decorated with plates of silver, it was extremely white and glistening.

The temple itself was divided into two parts: the first, called the *sanctuary* or holy place, was sixty feet in length, sixty feet in height, and thirty feet in width. In this was the golden candlestick,

the table of shew-bread, and the a]tar of incense. The *holy of holies*, or the most holy place, was thirty feet each way. In the first temple, this contained the ark of the covenant, the tables of the law, and over the ark was the mercy-seat and the cherubim. Into this place no person entered but the high priest, and he but once in the year. These two apartments were separated only by a vail, very costly and curiously wrought. It was this rail which was rent from the top to the bottom when the Saviour died, Mt 27:51. Around the walls of the *temple*, properly so called, was a structure three stories high, containing chambers for the use of the officers of the temple. The temple was wholly rased to the ground by the Romans under Titus and Vespasian, and was wholly destroyed, according to the predictions of the Saviour. **See Barnes "Mt 24:2"**.

The site of it was made like a ploughed field. Julian the apostate attempted to rebuild it, but the workmen, according to his own historian, Ammianus Marcellinus, were prevented by balls of fire breaking out from the ground. See Warburton's Divine Legation of Moses. Its site is now occupied by the mosque of Omar, one of the most splendid specimens of Saracenic architecture in the World.

And cast out them that bought and sold in the temple. The place where this was done was not the temple itself, but the outer court, or *the court of the Gentiles*. This was esteemed the least sacred part of the temple; and the Jews, it seems, did not consider it profanation to appropriate this to any business in any way connected with the temple service. The things which they bought and sold were, at first, those pertaining to the sacrifices. It is not improbable, however, that the traffic afterwards extended to all kinds of merchandise. It gave rise to much confusion, noise, contention, and fraud, and was exceedingly improper in the temple of the Lord.

The tables of the money changers. Judea was subject to the Romans. The money hi current use was Roman coin. Yet the Jewish law required that every man should pay a tribute to the service of the sanctuary of *half a shekel*, Ex 30:11-16. This was a Jewish coin; and it was required o herald in that coin. It became therefore a matter of convenience to have a place where the Roman coin might be exchanged for the Jewish half-shekel. This was the *professed* business of these men. Of course they would demand a small sum for the exchange; and among so many thousands as came up to the great feasts, it would be a very profitable employment, and one easily giving rise to much fraud and oppression.

The seats of them that sold doves. Doves were required to be offered in sacrifice, Le 14:22 Lu 2:24. Yet it was difficult to bring them from the distant parts of Judea. It was found much easier to purchase them in Jerusalem. Hence it became a business to keep them to sell to those who were required to offer them.

Mark adds, Mr 11:16 that he would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple. That is, probably, any of the vessels or implements connected with the traffic in oil, incense, wine, etc., that were kept for sale in the temple.

{b} "Jesus went" Mr 11:11 Lu 19:45; Joh 2:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *And said—It is written*, etc. This is written in Is 56:7. The first part of this verse only is quoted from Isaiah. The rest, "but ye have made it a den of thieves," was added by Jesus, denoting their abuse of the temple. Thieves and robbers live in dens and caves. Judea was then much infested

with them. In their dens, thieves devise and practise iniquity. These buyers and sellers imitated them. They made the temple a place of gain; they cheated and defrauded; they took advantage of the poor, and by their being under a necessity of purchasing these articles for sacrifice, they robbed them, by selling what they had at an enormous price.

The following reasons may be given why this company of buyers and sellers obeyed Christ:

(1.) They were overawed by his authority; and struck with the consciousness that he had a right to command.

(2.) Their own consciences reproved them; they knew they were guilty, and dared make no resistance.

(3.) The people generally were then on the side of Jesus, believing him to be the Messiah.

(4.) It had always been the belief of the Jews that a *prophet* had a right to change, regulate, and order the various affairs relating to external worship, They supposed Jesus to be such, and they dared not resist him.

Mark and Luke add, that in consequence of this, the scribes and chief priests attempted to put him to death, Mr 11:18,10 Lu 19:47,48. This they did from envy, Mt 27:18. He drew off the people from them, and they envied and hated him. They were restrained then for fear of the people; and this was the reason why they plotted secretly to put him to death, and why they afterwards so gladly heard the proposals of the traitor, Mt 26:14,15.

{c} "is written" Is 56:7 {d} "den of thieves" Je 7:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 14

Verse 14. No Barnes text on this verse.

{e} "and he healed them"

Isa 35:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 15

Verses 15,16. *When the Chief Priests*. The chief men of the nation were envious of his popularity. They could not prevent it; but being determined to find fault, they took occasion to do so from the shouts of the children. Men often are offended that *children* have anything to do with religion, and deem it very improper that *they* should rejoice that the Saviour has come. Our Lord Jesus viewed this subject differently. He saw that it was proper that they should rejoice. *They* are interested in the concerns of religion; and then, before evil principles get fast hold of their minds, is a proper time to love and obey him. He confounded them by appealing to a text of their own Scriptures. This text is found in Ps 8:2. This quotation is not made directly from the Hebrew, but from the Greek translation. This, however, should create no difficulty. The *point* of the quotation was to prove that *children* might offer praise to God. This is expressed in both the Hebrew and the Greek.

{f} "Hosanna" Mt 21:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 16

Verse 16. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 21:15"

{g} "Out of the" Ps 8:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Bethany*. **See Barnes "Mt 21:1".**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 18

Verse 18. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *And when he saw a fig tree in the way*, etc. This tree was standing in the public road. It was therefore common property, and any one might lawfully use its fruit. Mark says, Mr 11:13, "Seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came," etc. That is, not far off *from the road*; but seeing it at a considerable distance, having leaves appearing healthy and luxuriant, they presumed that there would be fruit on it. Mark says, (Mr 11:13,) "He came, if haply he might find anything thereon." That is, judging from the *appearance* of the tree, it was *probable* that there would be fruit on it. We are not to suppose that our Lord was ignorant of the true condition of the tree, but he acted according to the appearance of things; being a man as well as Divine, he acted of course as men *do act* in such circumstances.

And found nothing thereon, but leaves only. Mark Mr 11:13 gives as a reason for this, that "the time of figs was not yet." That is, the time of gathering the figs was not yet, or had not passed. It was a time when figs were ripe, or fit to eat, or he would not have gone to it, expecting to find them. But the time of *gathering* them had not passed, and it was to be presumed that they were still on the tree. This took place on the week of the passover, or in the beginning of April. Figs in Palestine are commonly ripe at the passover. The summer in Palestine begins in March, and it is no uncommon thing that figs should be eatable in April. It is said that they sometimes produce fruit the year round.

Mr 11:12,13 says that this took place on the morning of the day on which he purified the temple. Matthew would lead us to suppose that it was on the day following. Matthew records *briefly* what Mark records more *fully*. Matthew states the fact that the fig-tree was barren and withered away, without regarding minutely the order, or the circumstances in which the event took place. There is no contradiction. For Matthew does not *affirm* that this took place on the morning *after* the temple

was cleansed, though he places it in that order. Nor does he say that a day did *not* elapse after the fig-tree was cursed before the disciples discovered that it was withered; though he does not affirm that it *was* so. Such circumstantial variations, where there is no *positive* contradiction, go greatly to confirm the truth of a narrative. They show that the writers were honest men, and did not conspire to deceive the world.

And said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee, etc. Mark calls this "cursing" the tree, Mr 11:21. The word *curse* does not imply here anger, or disappointment, or malice. It means only *devoting to this destruction*, or this withering away. All the *curse* that was pronounced, was in the words that no fruit should grow on it. The Jews used the word *curse*, not as always implying wrath, and anger, but to devote to *death*, or to any kind of destruction, Heb 6:8. It has been commonly thought that he did this to denote the sudden *withering away*, or destruction of the Jewish people. They, like the fig-tree, promised fair, That was full of leaves, and they full of professions. Yet both were equally barren. And as that was destroyed, so were they soon to be. It is certain that this would be a good *illustration* of the destruction of the Jewish people; but there is not the least evidence that our Saviour *intended* it as such; and without such evidence, we have no right to say that that was its meaning.

And presently the fig tree withered away. That is, before another day. See Mark. It is probable that they were passing directly onward, and did not stop then to consider it. Matthew does not affirm that it withered away *in their presence*, and Mark affirms that they made the discovery on the morning after it was "cursed."

{h} "when he saw" Mr 11:13 {1} "saw a fig tree", or "One fig tree" {i} "withered away" Jude 1:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *And when the disciples saw it*. That is, on the morning following that on which it was cursed, Mr 11:20.

They marvelled, saying, etc. Peter said this, Mr 11:21. Matthew means only to say that this was said to him; Mark tells us which one of them said it.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Jesus answered and said*, etc. Jesus took occasion from this to establish their faith in God, Mr 11:22. He told them that any difficulty could be removed by faith. To remove a mountain, denotes the power of overcoming any difficulty. The phrase was so used by the Jews. There is no doubt that this was *literally* true, that if they had the faith of miracles, they could remove the mountain before them the mount of Olives—for this was as easy for God to do by them as to heal the sick, or raise the dead. But he rather referred, probably, to the difficulties and trials which they would be called to endure in preaching the gospel.

{k} "If ye have faith" Mt 17:20 Lu 17:6; Jas 1:6

{l} "???" Mt 8:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *And all things*, etc. He adds an encouragement for them to pray, assuring them that they should have all things which they asked. *This* promise was evidently a *special* one, given to them in regard to working miracles. To them it was true. But it is manifest that we have no right to apply *this* promise to ourselves. It was designed specially for the apostles; nor have we a right to turn it from its original meaning.

{m} "in prayer" Mt 7:7 Mr 11:24; Jas 5:16 1Jo 3:22, 5:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 23

Verses 23-27. See also Mr 11:27-33 Lu 20:1-8.

Verse 23. *When he was come into the temple*. That is, probably, into the inner court; the court of the Israelites. They took this opportunity when he was not surrounded by the multitude.

By what authority, etc. There was a *show* of propriety in this question. He was making great changes in the affairs of the temple, and they claimed the right to know why this was done, contrary to their permission. He was not a *priest*; he had no civil or ecclesiastical authority as a Jew. It was *sufficient* authority indeed, that he came as a prophet, and worked miracles. But they professed not to be satisfied with that.

These things. The things which he had just done, in overturning the seats of those that were engaged in traffic, Mt 21:12.

{n} "And when" Mr 11:27 Lu 20:1 {o} "By what" Ex 2:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 24

Verses 24,25. *And Jesus answered* etc. Jesus was under no obligation to give them an answer. They well knew by what authority he did this. He had not concealed his power in working miracles, and had not kept back the knowledge that he was the Messiah. He therefore referred them to a similar case—that of John the Baptist He knew the estimation in which John was held by the people. He took the wise in their own craftiness. Whatever answer they gave, he knew they would convict themselves. And so they saw, when they looked at the question. They reasoned correctly. If they said, *From heaven*, he would directly ask why they did not believe him. They professed to hear all the prophets. If they said. *Of men*, their reputation was gone, for all the people believed that John was a prophet.

The baptism of John. For an account of this, see Matthew chapter 3. The word *baptism* here probably includes all his work. This was his principal employment; and hence he was called the Baptist, or the *Baptizer*. But our Saviour's question refers *to his whole ministry*.— "The *ministry*

of John, his baptism, preaching, prophecies—was it from God, or not?" If it *was*, then the inference was clear that Jesus was the Messiah; and then they might easily know by what authority he did those things.

From heaven. By Divine authority, or by the command of God.

Of men. By human authority.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 25

Verse 25. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 21:24"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *We fear the people*. They feared that the people would stone them, (Luke.) Such an unpopular sentiment as to profess that all that John did was *imposture*, would have probably ended in tumult, perhaps in their death.

{p} "for all held John" Mt 14:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *We cannot tell*. This was a direct falsehood. They could have told; and it should have been, we *will* not tell. There was no reason but that why they did not tell. The reason probably why they would not acknowledge that John was a prophet was that, if they did, they saw he could easily show them by *what authority* he did those things; i.e., as Messiah. John predicted *him*, pointed him out, baptized him, came as his forerunner, to fulfil the prophecies. If they acknowledged one, they must the other. In this way our Saviour was about to lead these crafty men to answer their own question, to their own confusion, about his authority. They saw this; and having given them a sufficient answer, there was no need of stating anything further.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 28

Verses 28-32. *But what think ye*? A way of speaking designed to direct them particularly to what he was saying, that they might be self-convicted.

Two sons. By those two sons our Lord intends to represent the conduct of the Jews, and that of the Publicans and sinners.

In my vineyard. **See Barnes "Mt 21:33"**.

To work in the vineyard here represents the work which God requires man to do.

I will not. This *had* been the language of the *Publicans* and wicked men. They refused at first, and did not *profess* to be willing to go.

Repented. Changed his mind. Afterwards, at the preaching of John and Christ, the publicans—the wicked—repented, and obeyed.

The second—said, I go, sir: and went not. This represented the conduct of the Scribes and Pharisees—*professing* to obey God; observing the external rites of religion; but opposed really to the kingdom of God, and about to put his Son to death.

Whether of them twain, etc. Which of the *two*.

They say unto him, The first. This answer was correct. But it is strange that they did not perceive that it condemned themselves.

Go into the kingdom of God. Become Christians, or more readily follow the Saviour. **See Barnes "Mt 3:2"**.

Before you. Rather than you. They are more *likely* to do it than you. You are self-righteous, self-willed, and obstinate. Many of them *had* believed, but you have not. *John came unto you in the way of righteousness*. That is, in the right way, or *teaching* the way to be righteous; to wit, by repentance. Publicans and harlots heard him, and *became* righteous, but *they* did not. They *saw* it, but, as in a thousand other cases, it did not produce the proper effect on them, and they would not repent.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 29

Verse 29. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 21:28"**

{r} "but afterward" 2Ch 33:12,13; 1Co 6:11 Eph 2:1-13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 30

Verse 30. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 21:28"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 31

Verse 31. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 21:28"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 32

Verse 32. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 21:28"

{s} "Publicans" Lu 3:12 {t} "harlots" Lu 7:37 {u} "repented not" Re 2:21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 33

Verses 33-46. *The parable of the vineyard*. This is also recorded in Mr 12:1-12 Lu 20:9-19.

Verse 33. *Hear another parable*. **See Barnes "Mt 13:3"**.

A certain householder. **See Barnes "Mt 20:1"**.

Planted a vineyard. A place for the cultivation of grapes. It is often used to represent the church of God, as a place *cultivated* and *valuable*. Judea was favourable to vines, and the figure is frequently used, therefore, in the sacred writers. See Mt 20:1. It is used here to represent the *Jewish people*; the people chosen of the Lord, cultivated with care, and signally favoured; or perhaps more definitely, *the city of Jerusalem*.

Hedged it round about. This means, he *inclosed it*, either with a fence of wood or stone, or more probably with *thorns*, thick set and growing—a common way of inclosing fields in Judea, as it is in England.

And digged a winepress in it. Mark says, "digged a place for the wine-vat." This should have been so rendered in Matthew. The original word does not mean the press in which the grapes were trodden, but the *vat*, or *large cistern* into which the wine ran. This was commonly made by digging into the side of a hill. The *wine-press* was made of two receptacles. The upper one, in Persia at present, is about eight feet square, and four feet high. In this the grapes are thrown, and *trodden* by men, and the juice runs into the large receptacle, or cistern below. **See Barnes "Is 63:2,3"**.

And built a tower. See also Isa 5:2. In eastern countries at present these towers are often eighty feet high, and thirty feet square. They were for the keepers who defended the vineyard from thieves and animals, especially foxes. So 1:6 2:16.

And let it out, etc. This was not an uncommon thing. Vineyards were often planted to be let out for profit.

Into a far country. This means, in the original, only that he departed from them. It does not mean that he went out of the *land*. Luke adds, "for a long time." That is, as appears, till the time of the fruit; perhaps for a year. This vineyard denotes doubtless the Jewish people, or Jerusalem. But these circumstances are not to be particularly explained. They serve to *keep up* the story. They denote in general that God had taken proper care of his vineyard, i.e. his people; but beyond that we cannot affirm that these *circumstances*, of building the tower, etc., mean any particular thing, for he has not told us that they do. And where he has not explained them, we have no right to attempt it.

{v} "planted" Ps 80:8-16 So 8:11,12 Is 5:1-7; Jer 2:21 Mr 12:1

Lu 20:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *And when the time of the fruit drew near*, etc. The time of gathering the fruit. The vineyard was let out, probably for a part of the fruit, and the owner sent to receive the part that was his.

Sent his servants. These doubtless represent the prophets sent to the Jewish people.

{w} "servants" 2Ki 17:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *And beat one*. The word here translated *beat*, properly means to *flay*, or to take off the skin. Hence to beat, or to whip, so that the skin in many places is taken off.

And killed another. Isaiah is said to have been put to death by sawing him asunder. See Lu 13:34 Heb 11:37; 1Sa 22:18 1Ki 19:10.

And stoned another. This was, among the Jews, a common way of punishment, De 13:10 17:7; Jos 7:26.

Especially was this the case in times of popular tumult, and of sudden indignation among the people, Ac 7:58 14:19; Joh 8:59 10:31.

This does not imply of necessity that those who were stoned *died*, but they might be only severely wounded. Mark says, "At him they cast stones, and wounded him in the head, and sent him away," etc.

There is a little variation in the circumstances, as mentioned by Matthew, and by Mark and Luke; but the substance is the same. Mark and Luke are more particular, and state *the order* in which the servants were sent one after another. They all denote the dealing of the people of Israel towards the prophets. All these things had been done to them. See Heb 11:37 Jer 44:4,5,6 2Ch 36:16 Ne 9:26; 2Ch 24:20,21.

{x} "And the husbandman" 2Ch 36:16 Ne 9:26; Jer 25:3-7 Mt 5:12

Mt 23:34-37 Ac 7:52; 1Th 2:15 Heb 11:36,37

Re 6:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 36

Verse 36. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *Last of all*, etc. Mark adds, that this was an only son, greatly beloved. This beautifully and most tenderly exhibits the love of God, in sending his only Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to die for men. Long had he sent the prophets, and they had been persecuted and slain. There was no use in sending any more prophets to the people. They had done all they could do. God had one only-begotten and well-beloved Son, whom he might send into the world, and whom the world ought to reverence, even as they should the Father, Joh 5:23. To *reverence*, denotes honour, esteem, deference—that feeling which we have in the presence of one greatly our superior;—to give such a person, in our feelings and by our deportment, the honour which is due to his rank and character. God is often represented in the Bible as giving his Son, his only-begotten and well-beloved Son, for a lost world, Joh 3:16,17; 1Jo 4:9,14; Ro 8:3,32; Ga 4:4.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *But when the husbandmen*, etc. They determined to kill him; and as he was the only son, they supposed they could easily seize on the property. It was rented to them, was in their possession, and they resolved to keep it. This circumstance has probably no reference to any particular conduct of the Jews, but is thrown in to keep up the story, and fill up the narrative. An *heir* is one who succeeds to an estate, commonly a son; an *inheritance* is what an heir receives.

{y} "heir" Heb 1:1,2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *And they caught him*, etc. This refers to the conduct of the Jews in putting the Saviour to death. So they understood it, Mt 21:45. The Jews put him to death, after they had persecuted and slain the prophets. This was done by giving him into the hands of the Romans, and seeking his crucifixion, Mt 27:20-25 Ac 2:23; Ac 7:51,52.

And cast him out of the vineyard. The vineyard in this parable may represent Jerusalem. Jesus was crucified out of Jerusalem, on Mount Calvary, Lu 23:33.

{z} "caught him" Ac 2:23 4:25-27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 40

Verse 40. *When the lord therefore*, etc. Jesus then asked them a question about the proper way of dealing with those men. The design of asking them this question was that they might condemn themselves, and admit the justice of the punishment that was soon coming upon them.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 41

Verse 41. *They say*, etc. They answered according as they knew men would, act and would act justly in doing it. He would take away their privileges, and confer them on others. This was the answer which Jesus wished. It was so clear, that they could not answer otherwise. He wished to show them the justice of taking away their national privileges, and punishing them in the destruction of their city and nation. Had he stated this at first, they would not have heard him. He, however, by a parable led them along to *state themselves* the very truth which he wished to communicate, and they had then nothing to answer, they did not, however, yet see the bearing of what they had admitted.

{a} "destroy" Ps 2:4,5,9 Zec 12:2

{b} "other husbandmen" Lu 21:24 Ro 9:26, 11:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 42

Verses 42,43. *Jesus saith*, etc. Jesus, having led them to admit the justice of the great principle on which God was about to act towards them, proceeds to apply it by a text of Scripture, declaring that this very thing which they admitted in the case of the *husbandmen*, had been predicted respecting themselves. This passage is found in Ps 118:22,23. It was first applicable to David; but no less to Jesus.

The stone. The figure is taken from building a house. The principal stone for size and beauty is that commonly laid as the corner stone.

Which the builders rejected. On account of its want of beauty, or size, it was laid aside, or deemed unfit to be a corner-stone. This represents the Lord Jesus, proposed to the Jews as the foundation, or corner-stone on which to build the church: rejected by them—the builders —on account of his want of comeliness or beauty; i.e., of what they esteemed to be comely or desirable, Isa 53:2,3.

The same is become, etc. Though rejected by *them*, yet *God* chose him, and made him the foundation of the church. Christ is often compared to a stone, a corner-stone, a *tried*, i.e. a *sure*, firm foundation—all in allusion to the custom of building, Ac 4:11; Ro 9:33 Eph 2:20; 1Pe 2:7.

Lord's doing. The appointment of Jesus of Nazareth to be the foundation of the church, is by miracle and prophecy *proved* to be the work of God.

Marvellous in our eyes. Wonderful in the sight of his people. An object of gratitude and admiration. That he should Select his only Son; that he should stoop so low, be despised, rejected, and put to death; that God should raise him up, and build a church on this foundation, embracing the Gentile as well as the Jew, and spreading through all the world, is a subject of wonder and praise to all the redeemed.

{c} "stone" Ps 118:22 Is 28:16; 1Pe 2:6,7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 43

Verse 43. *The kingdom of God*, etc. Jesus applies the parable to *them*—the Jews. They *had* been the children of the kingdom, or under the *reign* of God; having his law, and acknowledging him as King. They had been his chosen and peculiar people. But he says that now this privilege should be taken away, and they cease to be the peculiar people of God; and the blessing should be given to a nation who would bring forth the fruits thereof, *or be righteous*; that is, to the Gentiles, Ac 28:28.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 44

Verse 44. *Whosoever shall fall*, etc. There is an allusion here, doubtless, to Isa 8:14,15. Having made an allusion to himself *as a Stone*, or a Rock, Mt 21:42, he proceeds to state the consequences of coming in contact with it. He that falls upon it, shall be broken; he that *runs against it*—a corner-stone, standing out from the other parts of the foundation—shall be injured, or broken in his limbs or body. He that is offended with *my* being the foundation, or that opposes me, shall, by the act, injure himself; make himself miserable by so doing, even were there nothing farther, But there *is* something farther.

On whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. That is, in the original, will reduce him to dust, so that it may be scattered by the winds. There is an allusion here, doubtless, to the custom of *stoning* as a punishment among the Jews. A scaffold was erected, twice the height of the man to be stoned. Standing on its edge, he was violently struck off by one of the witnesses; if he died by the blow and the fall, nothing farther was done; if not, a heavy stone was thrown down on him, which at once killed him. So the Saviour speaks of the falling of the stone on his enemies. They who oppose him, reject him, and continue impenitent, shall be crushed by him in the day of judgment, and perish for ever.

{g} "it will grind" Heb 2:2,3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 45

Verse 45. They *at last* perceived that he spoke of them, and would have gratified their malice at once, but they feared the people.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 21 - Verse 46

Verse 46. No Barnes text on this verse.

{k} "took him for a prophet" Lu 7:16 Joh 7:40

REMARKS ON MATTHEW CHAPTER 21

(1.) Jesus is omniscient, and sees and knows all things, ver. 2. (2.) It is our duty to obey the Lord Jesus, and to do it at once, ver. 3. When he commands, there should be no delay, What he orders is right; and we should not hesitate or deliberate about it.

(3.) Especially is this the case where he is to be honoured, as he was on this occasion, vets. 7, 8. If it was for our interest or honour only that we obeyed him, it would be of less consequence. But our obedience will honour him; and we should seek that honour by any sacrifice or self-denial.

(4.) We should be willing to give up our property to honour the Lord Jesus, yet. 3. lie has a right to it. If given to spread the gospel, it goes as this did,.to increase "the triumphs of our King." We should be willing to give our wealth, that he might "gird on his sword," and "ride prosperously among the heathen."]{very one saved among the heathen, by sending the gospel to them, will be for the honour of Jesus. They will go to swell his train, when he shall enter triumphantly into his kingdom at the day of judgment

(5.) It is our duty to honour him, vers. 7—9. He is King of Zion He is Lord of all. tie reigns, and shall always reign. \-

"Sinners! whose love can ne'er forget.'
The wormwood and the gall,
Go spread your trophies at his feet,
And crown him Lord of all.

"Ye chosen seed of Israel's race,
Ye ransomed from the fall.
Hail him who saves you by his grace.
And crown him Lord of all.

"Let every kindred, every tribe,
On this terrestrial ball,
To him all majesty ascribe,
And crown himsLord of all." \-

(6.) Children should also honour him, and shout hosanna to him, ver. 15. The chief priests and scribes, in the time of our Saviour, were displeased that they did it; and many of the great, and many formal profeasts since, have been displeased that children should

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 1

MATTHEW CHAPTER 22
Verse 1. *Spake—by parables*. **See Barnes "Mt 13:3".**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *The kingdom of heaven*. **See Barnes "Mt 3:2"**.

The phrase here means, "God deals with man in his kingdom, or in regard to the dispensation of the gospel, as a certain king did," etc. This parable refers undoubtedly to the rejection ofthe Jews, and to the calling of the Gentiles. The gospel, with all its privileges, was offered to the Jewish people; but through their wickedness and pride they rejected it, and all its blessings were offered to the Gentiles, and accepted. This is the *general* truth. Many circumstances are thrown in to fill out the narrative, which cannot be particularly explained.

A marriage for his son. Rather, a *marriage feast*, or a feast on the occasion of the marriage of his son. The king here doubtless represents God, providing for the salvation of the world.

{i} "The kingdom" Lu 14:16 {k} "a marriage" Re 19:7,9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And sent forth his servants*. These represent the messengers that God has sent to invite men to his kingdom.

To call them that were bidden. That is, to give notice to those who had before been invited, that the feast was ready. It appears that there were two invitations, one considerably previous to the time, that they might have opportunity to prepare for it, and the other to give notice of the precise time when they were expected.

The wedding. The marriage feast. The same word in the original as in Mt 22:2.

They would not come. They *might* have come if they chose, but they would not. So all the difficulty that sinners ever labour under, in regard to salvation, is in the *will*. It is a fixed determination not to come and be saved.

{l} "And sent forth his servants" Ps 68:11 Jer 25:4, 35:15 Re 22:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Other servants*. Who might *press* it on their attention. So God repeats his message to sinners, when they reject it.

My dinner. This word literally denotes the meal taken about noon. It is also taken for a meal in general. As marriages were, among eastern nations, in the evening, it refers here to a meal taken at that time.

Fatlings. This word does not refer to any particular species of animals. It denotes any fat animals. As *oxen* are also mentioned, however, it refers here probably to lambs, or calves, 2Sa 6:13; 1Ch 15:26.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *But they made light of it*. Treated it with contempt, as a thing of no consequence: an exact representation of the conduct of sinners in regard to the gospel.

One to his farm, etc. So men are engaged so much in their worldly employment, that they pretend they have no time to attend to religion. The world is, in their view, of more value than God.

Merchandise. Traffic; trading.

{m} "light" Ps 106:24,25; Pr 1:24,25; Ac 24:25 Ro 2:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *And the remnant*, etc. That is, *a part* made light of it, and treated it with silent contempt, and coolly went about their business. The others were not satisfied with that, but showed positive malignity. Some sinners seem to be well satisfied by merely neglecting religion; while others proceed against it with open violence and bitter malice.

Entreated them spitefully. Used harsh and opprobrious words, reviled and abused them. This was done because they hated and despised the king. So sinners often abuse and calumniate ministers of religion because they hate God, and can in no way else show it so well.

{n} "entreated them" 1Th 2:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *But when the king heard*, etc. This doubtless refers to the Jews, and to Jerusalem. They were murderers, having slain the prophets; and God was about to send forth the armies of the Romans under his providential direction, and to burn up their city. **See Barnes "Mt 24:1"**

and following.

Wroth. Angry; displeased.

{o} "destroyed those murderers" Da 9:26 Lu 19:27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 8

Verse 8. No Barnes text on this verse.

{p} "were not worthy"

Mt 10:11,13; Ac 13:46 Re 3:4, 22:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *The highways*. Literally, the *exit* or *going out* of *the paths* or *roads*. It means the square, or principal street, into which a number of smaller streets enter; a place, therefore, of confluence, where many persons would be seen, and persons of all descriptions. By this is represented the offering of the gospel to the Gentiles. They were commonly regarded among the Jews as living in highways and hedges—cast out, poor, and despised.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Bad and good*. All descriptions of people. None are good by nature; if they were, they would not need the gospel. But some are worse than others; and they have special need of it. None can be saved without it.

{q} "together all" Mt 13:47

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *A man which had not on a wedding garment*. Anciently, kings and princes were accustomed to make presents of changes of raiment to their friends and favourites, to refuse to receive which was an expression of highest contempt, Ge 14:22 2Ki 10:22; Es 6:8 8:16.

It was, of course, expected that such garments would be worn when they came into the presence of the benefactor. The garments worn on festival occasions were chiefly long white robes; and it was the custom of the person who made the feast to prepare such robes to be worn by the guests. This renders the conduct of this man more inexcusable. He came in his common ordinary dress, as he was taken from the highway; and though he had not a garment of his own suitable for the occasion, yet one had been provided for him, if he had applied for it. His not doing it was expressive of the highest disrespect for the king. This beautifully represents the conduct of the hypocrite in the church. A garment of salvation might be his, wrought by the hands of the Saviour, and dyed in his blood. But the hypocrite chooses the filthy rags of his own righteousness, and thus offers the highest contempt for that provided in the gospel. He is to blame, not for being invited; not for coming, if he would come—for he is freely invited; but for offering the highest contempt to the King of Zion, in presenting himself with all his filth and rags, and in refusing to be saved in the way provided in the gospel.

{r} "to see" Zep 1:12 {s} "wedding garment" Ps 45:14 Isa 61:10; 2Co 5:3 Eph 4:24; Re 16:15

Re 19:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Friend*. Rather, *companion*. The word does not imply friendship.

He was speechless. He had no excuse. So it will be with all hypocrites.

{t} "was speechless" Jer 2:26

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Cast him into outer darkness*. **See Barnes "Mt 8:12".**
This, without doubt, refers to the future punishment of the hypocrite, Mt 23:23-33 24:51.
{u} "him away" Is 52:1 Re 21:27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Many are called, but few are chosen*. Our Saviour often uses this expression. It was probably proverbial. The Jews had been called, but few of them had been chosen to life. The great mass of the nation were wicked; and showed by their lives that they were not chosen to salvation. The Gentiles also were invited to be saved, Isa 45:22. Nation after nation has been called; but few, few have yet showed that they were real Christians, the elect of God. It is also true, that many who are in the church may prove to be without the wedding garment, and show at last that they were not the chosen of God. This remark in the 14th verse is the in reference from the *whole parable*, and not of the part about the man without the wedding garment. It does not mean, therefore, that the great mass in the church are simply called and not chosen, or are hypocrites; but the great mass *in the human family*, in the time of Christ, who had been called, had rejected the mercy of God.
{w} "Many are called" Mt 7:14 20:16; Lu 13:23,24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 15

Verses 15-22. *The Pharisees and Herodians endeavour to entangle Jesus*; This narrative is also found in Mr 12:13-17; Lu 20:20-26.
Verse 15. *Then went the Pharisees*. **See Barnes "Mt 3:7".**
How they might entangle him. To *entangle* means to ensnare, as birds are taken by a net. This is done secretly, by leading them within the compass of the net, and then suddenly springing it over them. So to entangle is artfully to lay a plan for enticing, to beguile by proposing a question, and by leading, if possible, to am incautious answer. This was the kind proposed here to Jesus.
In his talk. The word his is supplied here by the translators, perhaps improperly. It means in conversation, or by talking with him; not alluding to anything he had before said.
{y} "Then went" Mr 12:13 Lu 20:20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *The Herodians*. It is not certainly known who these were, it is probable that they took their name from Herod the Great. Perhaps they were first a political party, and were then distinguished for holding some of his peculiar opinions. Dr. Prideaux thinks that those opinions referred to two things: the first respecting subjection to a foreign power. The law of Moses was, that *a stranger should not be set over the Jews as a king*, De 17:15. Herod, who had received the kingdom of Judea by appointment of the Romans, held that the law of Moses referred only to a voluntary choice of a king, and did not refer to a necessary submission, where they had been overpowered by force. They supposed, therefore, that it was lawful in such cases to pay tribute to a foreign prince. This opinion was, however, extensively unpopular among the Jews; and particularly the Pharisees, who looked upon it as a violation of their law, and all the acts growing out of it as oppressive. Hence the difficulty of the question proposed by them. Whatever way he decided, they supposed he would be involved in difficulty. If he should say it was not lawful, the Herodians were ready to accuse him as being an enemy of Caesar; if he said it was lawful, the Pharisees were ready to accuse him to the people of holding an opinion extremely unpopular among them, and as being an enemy of their rights. The other opinion of Herod, which they seem to have followed, was, that when a people were subjugated by a foreign force, it was right to adopt the rites and customs of their religion. This was what was meant by the "leaven of Herod," Mr 8:15. The Herodians and Sadducees seem on most questions to have been united. Compare Mt 16:6 Mr 8:15.

We know that thou art true. A hypocritical compliment, not believed by them, but artfully said, as compliments often are, to conceal their true design.

Neither carest thou for any man. That is, thou art an independent teacher, delivering your sentiments without regard to the fear or favour of man. This was true, and probably they believed this. Whatever they might believe about him, they had no reason to doubt that he delivered his sentiments openly and freely.

For thou regardest not the person of men. Thou art not *partial*. Thou wilt decide according to truth, and not from any bias towards either party. To regard the person, or to respect the person, is in the Bible uniformly used to denote *partiality*; or being influenced in a decision, not by truth, but by previous attachment to a person, or one of the parties—by friendship, or bias, or prejudice, Le 19:15 Jude 1:16; De 16:19 2Sa 14:14; Ac 10:34 Jas 2:1,3,9 1Pe 1:17.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar*? Tribute was the tax paid to the Roman government.

Caesar. The Roman emperor. The name Caesar, after the time of Julius Caesar, became common to all the emperors, as Pharaoh was the common name of all the kings of Egypt. *The Caesar* that reigned at this time was *Tiberius*—a man distinguished for the grossest vices, and most disgusting and debasing sensuality.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Jesus perceived their wickedness*. This must have been done by his power of searching the heart, and proves that he was omniscient. No mere man has the power of discerning the motives of others.

Tempt ye me. Try me, or endeavour to lead me into difficulty by an insidious question.

Hypocrites. Dissemblers. Professing to be candid inquirers, when their only object is to lead into difficulty. **See Barnes "Mt 6:2"**.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *The tribute money*. The money in which the tribute was paid. This was a Roman coin. The tribute for the temple-service was paid in the Jewish shekel; that for the Roman government in foreign coin. Their having that coin about them, and using it, was proof that they themselves held it lawful to pay the tribute; and their pretensions, therefore, were mere hypocrisy.

A penny. A Roman denarius, worth about 14 cents, [sevenpence halfpenny.]

{1} "penny" or, "In value, *sevenpence halfpenny*

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *This image*. The likeness of the reigning prince was probably struck on the coins, as it is now on [English and] Spanish coins.

Superscription. The name and titles of the emperor.

{2} "superscription", or "inscription"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Render therefore unto Caesar*, etc. Caesar's image and name on the coin proved that it was his. It was proper, therefore, to give it back to him when he called for it. But while this was done, he took occasion to charge them also to give to God what he claimed. This may mean either

(1) the annual tribute due to the temple-service, implying that paying tribute to Caesar did not free them from the obligation to do that; or

(2) that they should give their hearts, lives, property, and influence, all to God, as his due.

{z} "Render" Mt 17:25,27; Ro 13:7

{a} "unto God" Mal 1:6-8 3:8-10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *They marvelled*. They had been foiled in their attempt. Though he had apparently decided in favour of the Herodians, yet his answer confounded both parties, and wholly prevented the use which they intended to make of it. It was so wise—it so clearly detected their wickedness, and foiled their aim—that they were confounded, and retired covered with shame.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 23

Verses 23-33. *Conversation of Jesus with the Sadducees respecting the resurrection*. See also Mr 12:18-27 Lu 20:27-38.

Verse 23. *The same day came to him the Sadducees*. For an account of the Sadducees, **See Barnes "Mt 3:7".**

No resurrection. The resurrection literally means the raising up the *body* to life after it is dead, Joh 11:24 5:29; 1Co 15:22.

But the Sadducees not only denied this, but also a future state, and the separate existence of the soul after death, as well as the existence of angels and spirits, Ac 23:8. Both these doctrines have commonly stood or fallen together, and the answer of our Saviour respects both; though it more distinctly refers *to the separate existence of the soul, and to a future state of rewards and punishments*, than to the resurrection of the body.

{b} "The same day" Mr 12:18 Lu 20:27 {c} "which say" Ac 23:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Saying, Master, Moses said*, etc. De 25:5,6. This law was given by Moses in order to keep the families and tribes of the Israelites distinct, and to perpetuate them.

Raise up seed unto his brother. That is, the children shall be reckoned in the genealogy of the deceased brother; or, to all civil purposes, shall be considered as his.

{d} "If a man die" De 25:5 Ru 1:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 25

Verses 25-28. *There were with us seven brethren*. It is probable that they stated a case as difficult as possible; and though no such case might have occurred, yet it was supposable, and in their view it presented a real difficulty. The difficulty arose from the fact that they supposed that substantially the same state of things takes place in the other world as here; that husbands and wives must be reunited; and they professed not to be able to see how *one* woman could be the wife of seven men.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 26

Verse 26. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 22:25"**

{1} "the seventh" or, "Seven"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 27

Verse 27. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 22:25"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 28

Verse 28. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 22:25"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Ye do err, not knowing*, etc. They had taken a wrong view of the doctrine of the resurrection. It was not taught that men would marry there. The *Scriptures*, here, mean the books of the Old Testament. By appealing to them, he showed that the doctrine of the future state was there, and that the Sadducees should have believed it as it was, and not have added the absurd doctrine to it that men must live there as they do here. The way in which the enemies of the truth attempt to make a doctrine of the Bible ridiculous is by adding to it, and then calling it absurd. He produced a passage from the books of Moses, Mt 22:32, because they had also appealed to his writings, Mt 22:24. Other places of the Old Testament asserted it more clearly, Da 12:2 Isa 26:19; but he wished to meet them on their own ground. None of those Scriptures asserted that men would live there as they do here, and therefore their reasoning was false.

Nor the power of God. They probably denied, as many have done since, that God could gather the scattered dust of the dead, and remould it into a body. On this ground they affirmed that the doctrine could not be true—opposing reason to revelation, and supporting that Infinite Power could not reorganize body that it had at first organized, and raise a body for its own dust which it had at first raised from nothing.

{e} "not knowing" Joh 20:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *Neither marry*, etc. This was a full answer to the objections of the Sadducees.

But are as the angels of God. That is, in the manner of their intercourse; in regard to marriage, and the mode of their existence, Luke adds, that they shall be "equal to the angels;" that is, they shall be elevated above the circumstances of mortality, and live in a manner, and in a kind of intercourse, equal to the angels. It does not imply that they shall be equal in intellect, but only *in the circumstances of their existence*, as that is distinguished from the way in which mortals live. He also adds, "Neither can they die any more: but are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection," Lu 20:36 or being accounted worthy to be raised up to life, and therefore *sons of God raised up to him*.

{f} "angels of God" Mt 18:10 1Jo 3:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 31

Verses 31,32. *As touching*, etc. That is, in proof that the dead are raised. The passage which he quotes is recorded in Ex 3:6,15. This was at the burning bush, (Mark and Luke.) Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had been long dead when Moses spoke this: Abraham 329 years, Isaac 224, and Jacob 198. Yet God spoke then as being still *their God*. They must, therefore, be still somewhere living; for God is not the God of the dead—i. e., it is absurd to say that God rules over those who are *extinct or annihilated*—but he is the God only of those who have an existence. Luke adds, "All live unto him." That is, all the righteous dead; all of whom he can be properly called their God, live unto his glory. This passage does not prove *directly* that the dead body would be raised, but only by consequence. It proves that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had an existence then, or that their souls were alive, This the Sadducees denied, Ac 23:8. And this was the main point in dispute. If this was admitted—if there was a state of rewards and punishments—then it would easily follow that the bodies of the dead would be raised.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 32

Verse 32. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 22:31"

{g} "I am the God" Ex 3:6,15,16 Heb 11:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 33

Verse 33. No Barnes text on this verse.
{h} "astonished at his doctrine"
Mt 7:28 Mr 12:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 34

Verses 34-40. *Jesus converses with a Pharisee respecting the law*. See also Mr 12:28-34.

Verse 34. *The Pharisees—were gathered together*. That is, either to rejoice that their great rivals, the Sadducees, had been so completely silenced, or to lay a new plan for ensnaring him, or perhaps both. They would rejoice that the Sadducees had been confounded, but they would not be the less desirous to involve Jesus in difficulty. They therefore endeavoured, probably, to find the most difficult question in dispute among themselves, and proposed it to him to perplex him.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *A Lawyer*. This does not mean one that *practised law*, as among us; but one learned or skilled in the law of Moses. Mark calls him "one of the scribes." This means the same thing. The scribes were men of learning; particularly men skilled in the law of Moses. He had heard him reasoning with the Sadducees, and perceived that he answered them well; and he was thought to be better qualified to hold a debate with him, (Mark.) This man was probably of a candid turn of mind; perhaps willing to know the truth; and not entering very fully into their malicious intentions, but acting as their agent, Mr 12:34.

Tempting him. Trying him. Proposing a question to test his knowledge of the law.

{i} "one of them" Lu 10:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *Which is the great commandment*? That is, the greatest commandment, or the one most important. The Jews are said to have divided the law into *greater* and *smaller*, commandments. Which was of the greatest importance they had not determined. Some held that it was the law respecting sacrifice; others, that respecting circumcision; others, that pertaining to washings and purifying, etc.

The law. The word *law* has a great variety of significations; it means, commonly, in the Bible, as it does here, *the law given by Moses*, recorded in the first five books of the Bible.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *Jesus said unto him*, etc. Mark says that he introduced this by referring to the doctrine of the unity of God—"Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord"—taken from De 6:4. This was said, probably, because all true obedience depends on the correct knowledge of God. None can keep his commandments who are not acquainted with his nature, his perfections, and his right to command.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, etc. The meaning of this is, thou shalt love him with all thy faculties or powers. Thou shalt love him supremely, more than all other beings and things, and with all the ardour possible. To love him with all the heart is to fix the affections supremely on him, more strongly than on anything else, and to be willing to give up all that we hold dear at his command.

With all thy soul. Or, with all thy *life*. This means, to be willing to give up the life to him, and to devote it all to his service; to live to him, and to be willing to die at his command.

With all thy mind. To submit the intellect to his will. To love his law and gospel more than we do the decisions of our own minds. To be willing to submit all our faculties to his teaching and guidance, and to devote to him all our intellectual attainments, and all the results of our intellectual efforts. *With all thy strength*, (Mark.) With all the faculties of soul and body. To labour and toil for his glory, and to make that the great object of all our efforts.

{k} "Thou shalt" De 6:5 10:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *This is the first and great commandment*. This commandment is found in De 6:5. It is the first and greatest of all; *first*, not in order of time, but of importance; greatest in dignity, in excellence, in extent, and duration. It is the fountain of all others. All beings are to be loved according to their excellence. As God is the most excellent and glorious of all beings, he is to be loved supremely. If He is loved aright, then our affections will be directed towards all created objects in a right manner.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *The second is like unto it*. Le 19:18. Resembles it in importance, dignity, purity, and usefulness. This had not been asked by the lawyer, but Jesus took occasion to acquaint him with the substance of the whole law. For its meaning, **See Barnes "Mt 19:19"**.

Comp. Ro 13:9. Mark adds, There is no greater commandment than these. None respecting circumcision or sacrifice is greater. They are the fountain of all.

{l} "like unto it" Le 19:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 40

Verse 40. *On these two commandments hang*, etc. That is, these comprehend the substance of what Moses in the law, and what the prophets have spoken. What they have said has been to endeavour to win men to the love of God and each other. Love to God and man comprehends the whole [of] religion; and to produce this has been the design of Moses, the prophets, the Saviour, and the apostles.

Mr 12:32-34 adds, that the scribe said, "Well, Master, thou hast said the truth:" and that he assented to what Jesus had said, and admitted that to love God and man in this manner was more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices; that is, was of more value or importance. Jesus, in reply, told him that he was "not far from the kingdom of God;" i.e., by his reply he had shown that he was almost prepared to receive the doctrines of the gospel. He had shown a real acquaintance with the law, which showed he was nearly prepared to receive the teachings of Jesus. **See Barnes "Mt 3:2".**

Mark and Luke say that this had such an effect on them that no man, after that, durst ask him any question, Lu 20:40 Mr 12:34. This does not mean that none of his disciples durst ask him any question, but none of the Jews. He had confounded all their sects: the Herodians, (Mt 22:15-22;) the Sadducees, (Mt 22:23-33;) and last, the Pharisees, (Mt 22:34-40.) All finding themselves unable to confound him, they gave up the attempt.

{m} "commandments hang" Ro 13:9 Jas 2:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 41

Verses 41-46. *Jesus proposes a question concerning the Messiah*. See also Mr 12:35-37 Lu 20:41-44.

Verse 41. *While the Pharisees*, etc. Jesus, having confounded the great sects of the Jews, proceeds in his turn to propose to them a question for their solution. This was done not for the purpose of vain parade and triumph, but,

1st. to show them how ignorant they were of their prophecies.

2nd. To humble them in view of their ignorance.

3rd. To bring to their attention the true doctrine respecting the Messiah —his being possessed of a character superior to that of David, the most mighty king of Israel—being his Lord, at the same time that he was his descendant.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 42

Verse 42. *What think ye Of Christ*? What are your views respecting THE MESSIAH, or *the Christ*, especially respecting his *genealogy*? He did not ask them their views respecting him in general, but only respecting his ancestry. The article should have been retained in the translation—*the* Christ, or *the* Messiah. He did not ask them their opinion respecting himself, his person, and work, as would seem in our translation; but their views respecting the Messiah whom they expected.

Whose son is he? Whose *descendant*? **See Barnes "Mt 1:1".**

The son *of David*. The descendant of David, according to the promise.

{n} "What think ye" Mr 12:35 Lu 20:41

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 43

Verse 43. *How then*, etc. How is this doctrine, that he is *descended* from David, consistent with what David said when he calls him *Lord*? How can your opinion be reconciled with that ? That is recorded in Ps 110:1. A *lord* or master is a superior. The word here does not necessarily imply Divinity, but only superiority. David calls him his superior, his Lord, his Master, his Lawgiver; and expresses his willingness to obey him. If the Messiah was to be merely a descendant of David, as other men descended from parents—if he was to have a human nature only, as you Jews suppose—if he did not exist when David wrote— with what propriety could he, then, call him his Lord?

In spirit. By the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. As a prophet, Ac 2:30 1:16; 2Sa 23:2.

{o} "call him Lord" Ps 110:1 Ac 2:34; Heb 1:13 10:12,13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 44

Verse 44. *The Lord said*, etc. This is the language of David. "Jehovah said unto my Lord"—*the Messiah*—" Sit thou," etc. This was a prediction respecting the exaltation of Christ. To be raised to the right hand of a king was significant of favor, trust, and power. **See Barnes "Mt 20:21"**.

This was done respecting Christ, Mr 16:19 Ac 7:55; Ro 8:34 Eph 1:20; Heb 1:3; Heb 8:1 10:12.

Thine enemies thy footstool. A footstool is that which is under the feet when we are sitting—implying that we have it under subjection, or at our control. So he shall put all enemies under his feet—all his spiritual foes—all that rise up against him, Ps 2:9,12 Heb 10:13 1Co 15:25.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 45

Verse 45. *If David*, etc. If he was, then, David's Lord; if he was his superior; if he had an existence at that time, how could he be descended from him ? They could not answer him. Nor is there any way of answering the question but by the admission that the Messiah was Divine as well as human; that he had an existence at the time of David, and was his Lord and Master, his God and King, and that as man he was descended from him.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 22 - Verse 46

Verse 46. No Barnes text on this verse.

{p} "And no man" Lu 14:6 {q} "neither durst" Mr 12:34 Lu 20:40

REMARKS ON MATTHEW CHAPTER 22

(1.) Multitudes of men, who are invited to be saved, reject the gospel,: and perish in their sins, Mt 22:3.

(2.) if they perish, they only will be to blame. The offer was freely made, the salvation, was provided, and the only reason why they were not saved was because they would not come, Mt 22:3.

(3.) Attention to the affairs of this life, the love of the world, will shut many out of the kingdom of heaven, Mt 22:6. Some attention to those things is necessary; but such as to lead to the loss of the soul never can be right.

(4.) It is treating God ungratefully to reject his gospel, Mt 22:3-5. He has sent his Son to die for us. He has entreated us to be saved, He has followed us with mercies. And to reject all these, and refuse to be saved, is to treat him with contempt, as well as to overwhelm ourselves in condemnation. *Man has no right to be damned*, He is under the most solemn obligations to be *saved*. And after what God has done for us, deep and awful woe will await us if we are so foolish and wicked as to be lost.

(5.) May of the poor and needy will. be saved, while the haughty and rich will perish for ever, Mt 22:9,10.

(6.) Let those who make a profession of religion look often to the great day when Christ will search them, Mt 22:11. There is a day coming that will try us. His eye will be upon us. He will read our hearts, and see whether we are clothed in his righteousness, or only the filthy rags of our own.

(7.) A profession of religion will not save us, Mt 22:11-13. It is foolish to deceive ourselves. It is vain to attempt to deceive God. Nothing but genuine piety, true faith in Jesus, and a holy life, will save us. God asks not profession merely, but the heart, he asks not mockery, but sincerity; not pretension, but reality.

(8.) The hypocrite must perish, Mt 22:13. It is right that he should perish. He knew his Master's will, and would not do it. He must perish with an awful, condemnation. No man sins amidst so much light; none with so high a hand. No sin is so awful as to attempt to deceive God, and to palm pretensions on him for reality.

(9.) Pretended friends are sometimes more dangerous than avowed enemies, Mt 22:16. Pretended friendship is often for the purpose of decoying us into evil. It throws us off our guard, and we are more easily taken.

(10.) The truth is often admitted by wicked men from mere hypocrisy, Mt 22:16. It is only for the purpose of deceiving and leading into sin.

(11.) Wicked men can decide correctly on the character of a public preacher, Mt 22:16. They often admit his claim in words, but for an evil purpose.

(12.) It may be right for us sometimes to attend to artful and captious questions, Mt 22:18. It may afford opportunity to do good, to confound the wicked, and to inculcate truth.

(13.) No cunning can overreach God, Mt 22:18. He knows the heart, and he will perceive the wickedness of all who attempt to deceive him.

(14.) It is right to obey the law of the land, Mt 22:21. *Conscientious Christians make the best citizens*.

(15.) We should give honour to civil rulers, Mt 22:21. We should pay respect to the *office*, whatever may be the character of the ruler. We should speak well of it, not abuse it, yield proper obedience to the requirements, and not rebel against it. Men may be wicked who hold an office, but the office is ordained by God, Ro 13:1,2. and for the sake of the office we must be patient, meek, submissive, and obedient, Mt 23:3.

(16.) Yet we are to obey civil rulers no farther than their commands are consistent with the law of God, Mt 22:21. God is to be obeyed rather than man. And when a civil ruler commands a thing contrary to the laws of the Bible and the dictates of our consciences, we may, we must resist it.

(17.) The objections of men to the doctrines of the Bible are founded on ignorance of what those doctrines are, and distrust of the power of God, Mt 22:29. Men often setup a notion which they call a doctrine of the Bible, and then fight a shadow, and think they have confuted the truth of God, while the truth was untouched. It is a totally different thing from what they supposed.

(18.) When men attack a doctrine, they should be certain that they understand it, Mt 22:29. The Sadducees did not understand the true doctrine of the resurrection. The inquiry which they should have made was, whether they had correct views of it. This is the inquiry which men ought always first to make when they approach a doctrine of the Bible.

(19.) We learn the glory and happiness of the state after the resurrection, Mt 22:30, (Luke.) We shall be in some respects equal to the angels. Like them we shall be free from sin, suffering, and death. Like them we shall be complete in knowledge and felicity. Like them we shall be secure of eternal joy. Happy are those, the good of all the earth, who shall have part in that resurrection of the just.

(20.) The dead shall be raised, Mt 22:31,32. There is a state of happiness hereafter. This the gospel has revealed; and it is the most consoling and cheering truth that has ever beamed upon the heart of man.

(21.) Our pious friends that have died are now happy, Mt 22:31,32. They are with God. God is still their God. A father, or mother, or sister, or friend, that may have left us, is there—there in perfect felicity. We should rejoice at that, nor should we wish them back to the poor comforts and the many sufferings of this world.

(22.) It is our duty to love God with all the heart, Mt 22:37. No half, formal, cold, and selfish affection comes up to the requirement. It must be full, entire, absolute. It must be pleasure in all his attributes—his justice, his power, his purposes, as well as his mercy and his goodness. God is to be loved just as he is. If man is not pleased with his whole character, he is not pleased with him at all.

(23.) God is worthy of love. He is perfect, He should be *early* loved. Children should love him more than they do father, or mother, or friends. Their first affections should be fixed on God, and fixed on him supremely, till they die.

(24.) We must love our neighbour, Mt 22:39. We must do to all as we would have them do to us. This is the law and the prophets. This is the way of justice, of peace, of kindness, of charity, and of benevolence. If all men obeyed these laws, the earth would be a paradise, and man would taste the bliss of heaven here below.

(25.) We may ask here of each one, what think you of Christ? Mt 22:42. What think you of the *necessity* of a Saviour? What think you of his nature. Is he God as well as man, or do, you regard him only as a man? What think you of his character? Do you see him to be lovely and pure, and is he such as to draw forth the warm affections of your heart? What think you of salvation by him? Do you depend on him, and trust in him, and expect heaven only on the ground of his merits? or do you reject and despise him, and would you have joined in putting him to death? Nothing more certainly tests the character, and shows what the feelings are, than the views which we entertain of Christ. Error, here, is fatal error; but he who has just views of the Redeemer, and right feelings towards him, is SURE OF SALVATION.

(26.) We have in this chapter an illustrious specimen of the wisdom of Jesus. He successfully met the snares of his mighty and crafty foes, and with infinite ease confounded them. No art of man could confound him. Never was wisdom more clear, never more triumphant!

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 23 - Verse 1

MATTHEW CHAPTER 23.
Verse 1. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 23 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Scribes and Pharisees*. **See Barnes "Mt 3:7"**.

Moses' seat, Moses was a legislator of the Jews. By him the law was given; and the office of explaining that law devolved on the scribes and Pharisees. In the synagogues they sat while expounding the law, and rose when they read it. By *sitting in the seat of Moses* we are to understand authority to teach the law. Or, as he taught the nation by giving the law, so they taught it by explaining it.

{r} "The Scribes" Mal 2:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 23 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *All therefore whatsoever*, etc, That is, all that they teach consistent with the law of Moses; all the commands of Moses which they read to you and properly explain. The word *all* could not be taken without such a restriction, for Christ himself accuses them of teaching many things contrary to that law, and of making it void by traditions, Mt 15:1-6.

They say, and do not. The interpretation they give to the law is in the main correct, but their lives do not correspond with their teaching. It is not the duty of men to imitate their teachers unless their lives are pure; but they are rather to obey the law of God than to frame their lives by the example of evil men.

{s} "for they say" Ro 2:21-23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 23 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *They bind heavy burdens*, etc. This phrase is derived from the custom of loading animals. The load or burden is bound up, and then laid on the beast. So the Pharisees appoint weighty burdens, or grievous and heavy precepts, and insist that the people should obey them, though they lent no assistance. The *heavy burdens* refer not here to the traditions and foolish customs of the Pharisees, for Jesus would not command the people to observe them; but they clearly mean the ceremonies and rites appointed by Moses, which Peter says "neither our fathers nor we were able to bear," Ac 15:10. Those rites were numerous, expensive, requiring much tune, much property, and laborious. The Pharisees were rigid in requiring that all the people should pay the taxes, give of their property, comply with every part of the law with the utmost rigour, yet indulged themselves, and bore as little of the expense and trouble as possible; so that, where they could avoid it, they would not lend the least aid to the people in the toils and expense of their religious rites.

With one of their fingers. In the least degree, They will not render the least aid.

{t} "burdens" Ac 15:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 23 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Their phylacteries*. The word phylactery comes from a word signifying to keep, preserve, or guard. The name was given because phylacteries were worn as amulets or charms, and were supposed to defend them from evil. They were small slips of parchment or vellum, on which were written certain portions of the Old Testament. The practice of using phylacteries was founded on a literal interpretation of that passage where God commands the Hebrews to have the law as a sign on their foreheads, and as frontlets between their eyes, Ex 13:16 Pr 3:1,3

Pr 6:21. One kind or phylactery was called a "frontlet," and was composed of four pieces of parchment; on the first of which was written, Ex 12:2-10; on the second, Ex 12:11-21; on the third, De 6:4-9; and on the fourth, De 11:18-21. These pieces of parchment, thus inscribed, they enclosed in a piece of tough skin, making a square, on one side of which is placed the Hebrew *W* letter *shin* —and bound them round their foreheads with a thong or riband, when they went to the synagogue. Some wore them evening and morning; and others only at the morning prayer.

As the token upon the hand was required, as well as the frontlets between the eyes, the Jews made two rolls of parchment, written in square letters, with an ink made on purpose, and with much care. They were rolled up to a point, and enclosed in a sort of case of black calfskin. They were put upon a square bit of the same leather, whence hung a thong of the same, of about a finger in breadth, and about two feet long. These rolls were placed at the bending of the left arm, and after one end of the thong had been made into a little knot in the form of the Hebrew letter *? yod*—it was wound about the arm in a spiral line, which ended at the top of the middle finger. The Pharisees enlarged them, or made them wider than other people, either that they might make the letters larger, or write more on them—to show, as they supposed, that they had peculiar reverence for the law.

Enlarge the borders of their garments. This refers to the loose threads which were attached to the borders of the outer garment as a fringe. This fringe was commanded in order to distinguish them from other nations, and that they might remember to keep the commandments of God, Nu 15:38-40 De 22:12. They made them broader than other people wore them, to show that they had peculiar respect for the law.

{u} "but all their works" Mt 6:1-16 {v} "phylacteries" Nu 15:38

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 23 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *The uppermost rooms at feasts*. The word *rooms*, here, by no means expresses the meaning of the original. It would be correctly rendered the uppermost places or couches at feasts. To understand this it is necessary to remark, that the custom among the Jews was not to eat sitting, as we do, but reclining on couches. The table was made by three tables, raised like ours, and placed so as to form a square, with a clear space in the midst, and one end quite open. On the sides; of them were placed cushions, capable of containing three or-more persons, On these the guests reclined, leaning on their left side with their feet extended from the table, and so lying that the head of one naturally reclined on the bosom of another. To recline near to one in this manner denoted intimacy, and was what was meant by lying *in the bosom* of another, Joh 13:23; Lu 16:22,23. As the feet were extended *from* the table, and as they reclined instead of sitting, it was easy to approach the feet behind, and even unperceived. Thus in Lu 7:37,38 while Jesus reclined in this manner, a woman that had been a sinner came to his feet *behind him*, and washed them with her tears, and wiped with the hairs of her head. She stood on the outside of the couches. So our Saviour washed the feet of his disciples as they reclined on a couch in this manner, Joh 13:4-12. Whenever we read in the New Testament of *sitting* at meals, it always means reclining in this manner, and never sitting as we do. The chief seat, or the *uppermost* one, was the middle couch at the upper end of the table. This the Pharisees loved, as a post of honour *or* distinction. The annexed cut will fully illustrate the custom.

Chief seats in the synagogues. The seats usually occupied by the elders of the synagogue, near the pulpit. They love a place of distinction. **See Barnes "Mt 4:23"**.

{w} "And love" Mr 12:36 Lu 11:43

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 23 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Greetings in the markets*. Marks of particular respect shown to them in public places. Markets were places where multitudes of people were assembled together. They were pleased with particular attention among the multitude, and desired that all should show them particular respect.

Greetings. Salutations. **See Barnes "Lu 10:4"**.

To be called—Rabbi, Rabbi. This word literally signifies *great*. It was a title given to eminent teachers of the law among the Jews; a title of honour and dignity, denoting their authority and ability to teach. They were gratified with such titles, and wished it given to themselves as denoting superiority. Every time it was given to them it implied their superiority to the persons who used it; and they were fond, therefore, of hearing it often applied to them. There were three titles in use among the Jews—Rab, Rabbi, and Rabban—denoting different degrees of learning and ability, as literary degrees do among us.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 23 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Be not ye*, etc. Jesus forbade his disciples to seek such titles of distinction. The reason he gave was, that he was himself their Master and Teacher. They were on a level; they were to be equal in authority; they were brethren; and they should neither covet nor receive a title which implied either an elevation of one above another, or which appeared to infringe on the absolute right of the Saviour to be their only Teacher and Master. The command here is an express command to his disciples not to *receive* such a title of distinction. They were not to covet it; they were not to seek it; they were not to do anything that implied a wish or a willingness that it should be appended to their names. Everything which would tend to make a distinction among them, or destroy their parity; everything which would lead the world to suppose that there were ranks and grades among them as ministers, they were to avoid. It is to be observed that the command is, that they were not to receive the title. "*Be not ye called Rabbi*." The Saviour did not forbid them giving the title to others when it was customary or not regarded as improper, (comp. Ac 26:25;) but *they* were not to receive it. It was to be unknown among them. This title corresponds with the title "*Doctor of Divinity*," as applied to ministers of the gospel; and so far as I can see, the spirit of the Saviour's command is violated by the reception of such a title, as it would have been by their being called Rabbi. It is a literary distinction. It does not appropriately pertain to office. It makes a distinction among ministers. It tends to engender pride, and a sense of superiority in those who obtain it, and envy and a sense of inferiority in those who do not; and the whole spirit and tendency of it is contrary to the "simplicity that is in Christ"

{x} "But be not" Jas 3:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 23 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *And call no man your father*, etc. This does not of course forbid us to apply the term to our real father. Religion requires all proper honour to be shown to him, Ex 20:12 Mt 15:4; Eph 6:1-3.

But the word *father* also denotes *authority, eminence, superiority, a right to command, and a claim to particular respect*. In this sense it is used here. In this sense it belongs eminently to God, and it is not right to give it to men. Christian brethren are equal. God only has supreme authority. He only has a right to give laws, to declare doctrines to bind the conscience, to punish disobedience. The Jewish teachers affected that title because they seem to have supposed that a teacher formed the man, or gave him real life, and sought therefore to be called father. Christ taught them that the source of all life and truth was God; and they ought not to seek or receive a title which properly belongs to him.

{y} "your Father" Mt 6:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 23 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Neither—masters. Leaders*. Those who go before others; who claim, therefore, the right to direct and control others. This was also a title conferred on Jewish teachers.

Neither of these commands forbid us to give proper titles of civil office to men, or to render them the honour belonging to their station, Mt 22:21 Ro 13:7; 1Pe 2:17.

They forbid the disciples of Jesus to seek or receive mere empty titles, producing distinctions among themselves, implying authority to control the opinions and conduct of others, and claiming that others should acknowledge them to be superior to them.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 23 - Verse 11

Verses 11,12. **See Barnes "Mt 20:26"**.

He that shall humble himself, etc. God will exalt or honour him that is humble, and that seeks a lowly place among men. That is true religion, and God will and God will reward it.

{y} "But he" Mt 20:26,27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 23 - Verse 12

Verse 12. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes on "Mt 23:11"

{a} "And whosoever" Pr 15:33 Jas 4:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 23 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Woe unto you*. You are guilty, and punishment will come unto you. tie proceeds to state wherein they were guilty. This most eloquent, most appalling, and most terrible of all discourses ever delivered to mortals, was pronounced hi the temple, in the presence of multitudes. Never was there more faithful dealing, more terrible reproof, more profound knowledge of the workings of hypocrisy, or more skillful in detecting the concealments of sin. This was the last of his public.discourses; and it is a most impressive summary of all he ever had said, or had to say, of a wicked and hypocritical generation.

Scribes and Pharisees. **See Barnes "Mt 3:7"**.

Hypocrites. **See Barnes "Mt 6:2"**.

Ye shut up the kingdom of heaven. **See Barnes "Mt 3:2"**.

They shut it up by their doctrines. By teaching false doctrines respecting the Messiah; by binding the people to an observance of their traditions; by opposing Jesus, and attempting to convince the people that he was an impostor, they prevented many from becoming his followers. Many were ready to embrace Jesus as the Messiah, and were about entering into the kingdom of heaven—i.e. the church—but they prevented it. Luke says Lu 11:52 they had taken away the key of knowledge,

and thus prevented their entering in. That is, they had taken away the right interpretation of the ancient prophecies respecting the Messiah, and thus had done all they could to prevent the people from receiving Jesus as the Redeemer.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 23 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Devour widows' houses*. The word *houses* is here used to denote *property or possessions* of any kind. You take away, or get possession of, by improper arts and pretences. This was done in two ways:

(1.) They pretended to a very exact knowledge of the law, and to the poor a perfect observance of it. They pretended to extraordinary justice to the poor, friendship for the distressed, and willingness to aid those who were in embarrassed circumstances. They thus induced *widows* and poor people to commit the management of their property to them, as guardians and executors, and then took advantage of them, and defrauded them.

(2.) By their long prayers they put on the appearance of great sanctity, and induced many weak women to give them much, under pretence of devoting it to religious purposes.

Long prayer. Their prayers are said to have been often three hours in length. One rule among them, says Lightfoot, was to meditate an hour, then pray an hour, and then meditate another hour—all of which was included in their *long prayers or devotions*.

Damnation. Condemnation. The word here probably refers to future punishment. It does not always, however. It means, frequently, no more than *condemnation*, or the Divine disapprobation of a certain course of conduct, as in 1Co 11:29: "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself." That is, he that eateth and drinketh in an unworthy manner—disorderly, not with reverence—is guilty, and his conduct will be disapproved or condemned by God: referring solely to the impropriety of the manner of partaking of the Lord's Supper, and not at all to the worthiness or unworthiness of the person. **See Barnes "1Co 11:29"**.

Comp. Ro 14:23.

For a pretence. For appearance or show; in order that they might the better defraud poor people. They would not be condemned for making long prayers, but because they did it with an evil design. Public prayers should, however, be short, and always to the point. A man praying in a Sunday-school should pray for the school, and usually not for everything else.

{b} "widow's houses" 2Ti 3:6 Tit 1:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 23 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Ye compass sea and land*. Ye take every means—spare no pains to gain proselytes.

Proselyte. One that comes over from a foreign nation, religion, or sect, to us; a convert. Among the Jews there were two kinds of proselytes:

(1.) *Proselytes of righteousness*, or those who wholly and fully embraced the Jewish religion, were baptized, circumcised, and who conformed to all the rites of the Mosaic institutions.

(2.) *Proselytes of the gate*, or those who approved of the Jewish religion, renounced the pagan superstitions, and conformed to some of the rites of the Jews, but were not circumcised or baptized.

Twofold more the child of hell. That is, twice as bad. To be a child of hell was a Hebrew phrase, signifying to be deserving of hell, to be awfully wicked. The Jewish writers themselves say that the proselytes were "scabs of Israel," and "hindered the coming of the Messiah" by their great wickedness. The Pharisees gained them either to swell their numbers, or to make gain by extorting their money under various pretences; and when they had accomplished that, they took no pains to instruct them, or to restrain them. They had renounced their superstitions, which had before somewhat restrained them. The Pharisees had given them no religion in its place to restrain them, and they were consequently left to the full indulgence of their vices.

{c} "child of hell" Joh 8:44 Ac 13:10; Eph 2:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 23 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Whosoever shall swear*, etc. **See Barnes "Mt 5:33-37".**

The temple. **See Barnes "Mt 21:12".**

It is nothing. It amounts to nothing. It is not binding.

The gold of the temple. Either the golden vessels in the temple, the candlestick, etc., or the gold with which the doors and other parts of the temple were covered; or the gold in the treasury. This, it seems, they considered far more sacred than any other part of the temple, but it is not known why.

He is a debtor. He is bound to keep his oath. He is guilty if he violates it.

{d} "ye blind guides" Mt 15:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 23 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *The temple that sanctifieth the gold*. To sanctify is to make holy. The gold had no holiness but what it derived from the temple. If in any other place, it would be no more holy than any other gold. It was foolish, then, to suppose that that was more holy than the temple from which it received all the sanctity which it possessed.

{e} "ye fools and blind" Psa 94:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 23 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *The altar*. The altar of burnt-offerings, in the court of the priests. **See Barnes "Mt 21:12".**

It was made of brass, about thirty feet in length and breadth, and fifteen feet in height, 2Ch 4:1. On this altar were offered all the beasts and bloody oblations of the temple.

The gift that is upon it. The gift or offering made to God, so called because it was devoted or given to him. The gift upon this altar was always beasts and birds.

{1} "is guilty" or, "debtor", or "bound"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 23 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *The altar that sanctifieth the gift*. The altar, dedicated to God, gave all the value or holiness to the offering, and must therefore be the greatest, or of the most importance. If, therefore, either bound to the fulfillment of an oath, it must be the altar.

{f} "sanctifieth the gift" Ex 29:37 30:29

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 23 - Verse 20

Verse 20. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 23 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Him that dwelleth therein*. That is, God. The temple was his house, his dwelling. In the first, or Solomon's temple, he dwelt between the cherubims, in the most holy place. He manifested himself there by a visible symbol, in the form of a cloud resting on the mercy-seat, 1Ki 8:10,13; Ps 80:1.

{g} "him that dwelleth" 2Ch 6:2 Ps 26:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 23 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *The throne of God*. Heaven is his throne, Mt 5:34. It is so called as being the place where he sits in glory. Jesus says, here, that all who swear at all, do in fact swear by God, or the oath is good for nothing. To swear by an altar, a gift, or a temple, is of no force, unless it be meant to appeal to God himself. The essential thing in an oath is calling God to witness our sincerity. If a real oath is taken, therefore, God is appealed to. If not, it is foolish and wicked to swear by anything else.

{h} "throne of God" Ps 11:4 Isa 66:1; Mt 5:34

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 23 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Ye pay tithe*. A tenth part. The law required the Jews to devote a tenth part of all their property to the support of the Levites, Nu 18:20-24. Another tenth part they paid for the service of

the sanctuary, commonly in cattle or grain; but where they lived far from the place of worship, they changed it to money; De 14:22-24 Besides these, there was to be every third year a tenth part given to the poor, to be eaten at their own dwellings, De 14:28,29. So that nearly one-third of the property of the Jews was devoted to religious services by law. This was beside the voluntary offerings which they made. How much more mild and gentle are the laws of Christianity under which we live!

Mint. A garden herb, in the original so called from its agreeable flavour. It was used to sprinkle the floors of their houses and synagogues, to produce a pleasant fragrance.

Anise. Known commonly among us as *dill*. It has a fine aromatic smell, and is used by confectioners and perfumers.

Cummin. A plant of the same genus, like *fennel*, and used for similar purposes. These were all herbs of little value. The law of Moses said that they should pay tithes of the fruits of the earth, De 14:22. It said nothing, however, about herbs. It was a question whether these should be tithed. The Pharisees maintained, in their extraordinary strictness, that they ought. Our Saviour says that they were precise in doing small matters, which the law had not expressly commanded, while they omitted the greater things which it had enjoined.

Judgment. Justice to others, as magistrates, neighbours, citizens. Giving to all their just dues.

Mercy. Compassion and kindness to the poor and miserable.

Faith. Piety towards God; confidence in him. Faith in God here means that we are to give to him what is his due; as mercy and justice mean to do to MEN, in all circumstances, what is right toward them.

These ought ye to have done. Attention to even the smallest points of the law of God is proper, but it should not interfere with the higher and more important parts of that law.

{i} "you pay tithe" Lu 11:42 {1} "anise" or, "dill" {k} "weightier matters" 1Sa 15:22 Jer 22:15,16 Hos 6:6; Mic 6:8

Mt 9:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 23 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Which strain at a gnat*, etc. This is a proverb. There is, however, a mistranslation or misprint here, which makes the verse unmeaning. *To strain AT a gnat* conveys no sense. It should have been, to strain OUT a gnat; and so it is printed in some of the earlier versions; and so it was undoubtedly rendered by the translators. The common reading is a *misprint*, and should be corrected. The Greek means, *to strain out* by a cloth or sieve.

A gnat. The gnat has its origin in the water, not in great rivers, but in pools and marshes. In the stagnant waters they appear in the form of small *grubs*, or *larvae*. These larvae retain their form about three weeks, after which they turn to chrysalids; and after three or four days they pass to the form of gnats. They are then distinguished by their well-known sharp sting. It is probable that the Saviour here refers to the insect as it exists in its *grub* or *larva* form, before it appears in the form of a gnat. Water is then its element, and those who were nice in their drink would take pains to strain it out. Hence the proverb. See Calmet's Dict., Art. *Gnat*. It is here used to denote a very small matter, as a camel is to denote a large object. "You, Jews, take great pains to avoid offence in very

small matters, superstitiously observing the smallest points of the law, like a man carefully straining out the animalculae from his wine; while you are at no pains to avoid great sins—hypocrisy, deceit, oppression, and lust—like a man who should swallow a camel." The Arabians have a similar proverb: "He eats an elephant, and is suffocated with a gnat." He is troubled with little things, but pays no attention to great matters.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 23 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *The cup and the platter*. The drinking cup, and the dish containing food. The Pharisees were diligent in observing all the washings and oblations required by their traditions.

Full of extortion and excess. The outside appeared well. The inside was filled with the fruit of extortion, oppression, and wickedness. The meaning is, that though they took much pains to appear well, yet they obtained a living by extortion and crime. Their cups, neat as they appeared outward, were filled not with the fruits of honest industry, but were extorted from the poor by wicked arts. Instead of *excess*, many manuscripts and editions of the Greek Testament read *wickedness*.

{l} "for ye make" Mr 7:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 23 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Cleanse first*, etc. Let them be filled with the fruits of honest industry, and then the outside and the inside will be really clean. By this allusion to the cup and platter, he taught them that it was necessary to cleanse the heart first, that the external conduct might be really pure and holy.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 23 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *Like unto whited sepulchres*. For the construction of sepulchres, **See Barnes "Mt 8:28"**.

Those tombs were annually white- washed, to prevent the people from accidentally coming in contact with them as they went up to Jerusalem, The law considered those persons unclean who had touched anything belonging to the dead, Nu 19:16. Sepulchres were therefore often whitewashed, that they might be distinctly seen. Thus "whited," they appeared beautiful; but within they contained the bones and corrupting bodies of the dead. So the Pharisees. Their outward conduct appeared well; but their hearts were full of hypocrisy, envy, pride, lust, and malice—fitly represented by the corruption within a whited tomb.

{m} "whited sepulchres" Lu 11:44 Ac 23:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 23 - Verse 28

Verse 28. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 23 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Ye build the tombs of the prophets*. That is, ye build sepulchres or tombs over the prophets that have been slain. This they did professedly from veneration, and respect for their character. This is often done in the East at the present day, and indeed elsewhere. Among the Mohammedans it is a common way of showing respect for any distinguished man to build a tomb for him. By doing this they profess respect for his character, and veneration for his memory. So the Pharisees, by building tombs in this manner, professedly approved of the character and conduct of the prophets, and disapproved of the conduct of their fathers in killing them.

And garnish, etc. That is, adorn or ornament. This was done by rebuilding them with more taste, decorating them, and keeping them neat and clean. The original word means, also, to show any proper honour to the memory of the dead; as by speaking well of them, praying near them, or rearing synagogues near to them, in honour of their memory.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 23 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *And say*, etc. This they professed to say by rebuilding their tombs. They also, probably, publicly expressed their disapprobation of the conduct of their fathers. All this, in building and ornamenting tombs, was a profession of extraordinary piety. Our Lord showed them it was a mere pretence.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 23 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *Ye be witnesses unto yourselves*. The emphasis, here, lies in the words "unto yourselves." It was an appeal to their conscience. It was not by their building the tombs that they were witnesses that they were the children of those who slew the prophets; but in spite of all this pretence to piety—under cloak of all this profession—they knew in their consciences, and were witnesses to themselves, that it was mere hypocrisy, and that they really approved the conduct of those who slew the prophets.

Children of them, etc. Resembling them; approving their conduct; inheriting their feelings. They not only showed that they were descended from them, but that they possessed their spirit, and in similar circumstances would have done as they did.

{n} "which killed" Ac 7:52 1Th 2:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 23 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *Fill ye up then*, etc. This is a prediction of what they were about to do. He would have them to act out their true spirit, and show what they were, and evince to all that they had the spirit of their fathers. This was done by putting him to death, and persecuting the apostles.

The measure. The full amount, so as to make it complete. By your slaying me, fill up what is lacking of the iniquity of your fathers till the measure is full, the national iniquity is complete, as much has been committed as God can possibly bear, and then shall come upon you all this blood, and you shall be destroyed, Mt 23:34,35.

{o} "Fill ye up" Ge 15:16 1Th 2:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 23 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *Ye serpents*. This name is given to them on account of their pretending to be pious, and very much devoted to God, but being secretly evil. At the heart, with all their pretensions, they were filled with evil designs, as the serpent was, Ge 3:1-5.

Generation of vipers. **See Barnes "Mt 12:34".**

Damnation of hell. This refers, beyond all question, to future punishment. So great was their wickedness and hypocrisy, that if they persevered in this course, it was impossible to escape the damnation that should come on the guilty. This is the sternest language that Jesus ever used to wicked men. But it by no means authorizes ministers to use such language to sinners now. Christ knew that this was true of them. He had an authority which none now have. It is not the province of ministers to denounce judgment, or to use severe names; least of all to do it on pretence of imitating Christ. He knew the hearts of men; we know them not. He had authority to declare certainly that those whom he addressed would be lost; we have no such authority. He addressed persons; we address characters.

{p} "generation of vipers" Mt 3:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 23 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *I send unto you prophets*, etc. He doubtless refers here to the apostles, and other teachers of religion. Prophets, wise men, and scribes, were the names by which the teachers of religion were known among the Jews; and he, therefore, used the same terms when speaking of the messengers which he would send. *I send* has the force of the future, I *will* send.

Some of them ye shall kill. As in the case of Stephen, Ac 7:59, and James, Ac 12:1,2.

Crucify. Punish with death on the cross. There are no cases of this mentioned; but few historical records of this age have come down to us. The Jews had not the power of crucifying, but they gave them into the hands of the Romans to do it.

Shall scourge. **See Barnes "Mt 10:17".**

This was done, Ac 22:19-24 2Co 11:24,25.

Persecute, etc. **See Barnes "Mt 5:10".**
This was fulfilled it the case of nearly all the apostles.
{q} "shall kill" Ac 7:59 {r} "ye scourge" Ac 5:40 2Co 11:24,25
{s} "city to city" Heb 11:37

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 23 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *That upon you may come*, etc. That is, the nation is guilty Your fathers were guilty. You have shown yourselves to be like them. You are about, by slaying the Messiah and his messengers, to fill up the iniquity of the land. The patience of God is exhausted; and the nation is about to be visited with signal vengeance. These national crimes deserve national judgments; and the proper judgments for all these crimes are about to come upon you in the destruction of your temple and city.

All the righteous blood. That is, all the judgments due for shedding that blood. God did not hold them guilty for what their fathers did; but temporal judgments descend on children in consequence of the wickedness of parents—as in the case of drunken and profligate parents. A drunken father wastes the property that his children might have possessed. A gambler reduces his children to poverty and want. An imprudent and foolish parent is the occasion of leading his sons into places of poverty, ignorance, and crime, materially affecting their character and destiny. **See Barnes "Ro 5:12, also** Ro 5:13-19. So of the Jews. The appropriate effects of their fathers' crimes were coming on the nation, and they would suffer.

Upon the earth. Upon the land of *Judea*. The word is often used with this limitation. See Mt 4:8.

Righteous Abel. Slain by Cain, his brother, Ge 4:8,9. *Zacharias son of Barschias*. It is not certainly known who this was. Some have thought it was the Zechariah whose death is recorded in 2Ch 24:20,21. He is there called the son of Jehoiada; but it is known that it was common among the Jews to have two names, as Matthew is called Levi; Lebbeus, Thaddeus; and Simon, Cephas. Others have thought he referred to Zechariah the prophet, who might have been massacred by the Jews, though no account of his death is recorded. It might have been known by tradition.

Whom ye slew. Whom you, Jews, slew. Whom your nation killed.

Between the temple and the altar. Between the temple, properly so called, the sanctuary, and the altar of burnt-offering in the court of the priests. See the plan of the temple, Mt 21:12.

{u} "Abel" Ge 4:8 {v} "Zacharias" 2Ch 24:20,21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 23 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *Upon this generation*. The destruction of Jerusalem took place about forty years after this was spoken. See the next chapter.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 23 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *O Jerusalem*, etc. **See Barnes** "Lu 19:41,42.
Would have gathered. Would have protected and saved.
Thy children. Thy people.
{x} "gathered thy children" De 32:11.12 Ps 91:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 23 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *Your house*. The temple. The house of worship of the Jews. The chief ornament of Jerusalem.

Desolate. About to be desolate, or destroyed. To be forsaken as a place of worship, and delivered into the hands of the Romans, and destroyed. **See Barnes "Mt 24:1"**

and following.

{y} "desolate" Zec 6:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 23 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *Ye shall not see me*, etc. The day of your mercy is gone by. I have offered you protection and salvation, and you have rejected it. You are about to crucify me, and your temple to be destroyed; and you, as a nation, be given up to long and dreadful suffering. You will not see me as a merciful Saviour, offering you redemption any more, till you have borne these heavy judgments. They must come upon you, and be borne, until you would be glad to hail a deliverer, and say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Blessed be he that comes as the Messiah, to bring deliverance. This has not been yet accomplished; but the days will come when the Jews, long cast out and rejected, will hail Jesus as the Messiah, and receive him whom their fathers slew, as the merciful Saviour, Ro 11:25-32.

{z} "shall say" Ps 118:26 Mt 21:9

REMARKS ON MATTHEW CHAPTER 23

(1.) Proper respect should always be shown to teachers and rulers, Mt 23:3.

(2.) We are not to copy the *example* of wicked men, Mt 23:3. We are to frame our conduct by the law of God, and not by the example of men.

(3.) Men are often very rigid in exacting of others what they fail altogether of performing themselves, Mt 23:4.

(4.) We are to obey God rather than man; not to seek human honours, Mt 23:8, nor to *give* flattering titles to others, nor to allow others to give them to us, Mt 28:9. Our highest honour is in humility; and he is most exalted who is most lowly, Mt 23:11,12.

(5.) In the descriptions of the Scribes and Pharisees in this chapter, we have a full-length portrait of the hypocrite.

1st. They shut up the kingdom of heaven against others, Mt 23:13. They made great pretensions to knowledge, but they neither entered in themselves nor suffered others.

2nd. They committed the grossest iniquity under a cloak of religion, Mt 23:14. They cheated widows out of their property, and made long prayers to hide their villany.

3rd. They showed great zeal in making proselytes; yet did it only for gain, and made them more wicked, Mt 23:15.

4th. They taught false doctrine—artful contrivances to destroy the force of oaths, and shut out the Creator from their view, Mt 23:16-22.

5th. They were superstitious, Mt 23:23. Small matters they were exact in; matters of real importance they cared little about.

6th. They were openly hypocritical. They took great pains to *appear* well, while they themselves knew that it was all deceit and falsehood, Mt 23:25-28.

7th. They professed great veneration for the memory of the pious dead, while at the same time they were conscious that they really approved the conduct of those who killed them, Mt 23:29-31.
Never, perhaps, was there a combination of more wicked feelings and hypocritical actions, than among them; and never was there more profound knowledge of the human heart, and more faithfulness, than in him who tore off the mask, and showed them what they were.

(6.) It is amazing with what power and authority our blessed Lord reproves this wicked people. It is wonderful that they ever waited for a mock trial, and did not kill him at once. But his time was not come; and they were restrained, and not suffered to act out the fury of their mad passions.

(7.) Jesus pities dying sinners, Mt 23:37. He seeks their salvation. He pleads with them to be saved. He would gather them to him, if they would come. The most hardened, even like the sinners of Jerusalem, he would save if they would come to him. But they not; they turn from him, and tread the road to death.

(8.) The reason why the wicked are not saved is in their obstinacy. They choose not to be saved, and they die. If they will not come to Christ, it is right that they should die. If they do not come, they must die.

(9.) The sinner shall be destroyed, Mt 23:38. The day will come when the mercy of God will be clean gone for ever, and the forbearance of God exhausted; and then the sinner must perish. When once God has given him over, he must die. No man, no parent, minister, or friend, no angel or archangel, can then save. Salvation is lost, for ever lost. Oh, how amazing is the folly of the wicked, that they weary out the forbearance of God, and perish in their sins!

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 1

MATTHEW CHAPTER 24

INTRO: *Jesus foretells the destruction of the temple, as he takes his final leave of it, and teaches what were the signs of his coming*. These predictions are also recorded in Mr 13:1-37; Lu 21:6-38.

Verse 1. *And Jesus went out*. He was going over to the Mount of Olives, Mt 24:3.

The buildings of the temple. The temple itself, with the surrounding courts, porches, and other edifices. **See Barnes** "Mt 21:12.

Mark says, that they particularly pointed out the stones of the temple, as well as the buildings. "In that temple," says Josephus, the Jewish historian, "were several stones which were forty-five cubits in length, five in height, and sixth in breadth;" that is, more than seventy feet long, ten wide, and eight high. These stones, of such enormous size, were principally used in building the high wall on the east side, from the base to the top of the mountain. They were also, it is said, beautifully painted with variegated colours.

{a} "And Jesus" Mr 13:1 Lu 21:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *There shall not be left here one stone upon another*. At the time this was spoken, no event was more improbable than this. The temple was vast, rich, splendid. It was the pride of the nation, and the nation was at peace. Yet in the short space of forty years all this was exactly accomplished. Jerusalem was taken by the Roman armies, under the command of Titus, x. D. 70. The account of the siege and destruction of the city is left us by Josephus, an historian of undoubted veracity and singular fidelity. He was a Jewish priest. In the wars of which he gives an account, he fell into the hands of the Romans, and remained with them during the siege and destruction of the city. Being a Jew, he would of course say nothing designed to confirm the prophecies of Jesus Christ. Yet his whole history appears-almost like a running commentary on these predictions respecting the destruction of the temple. The following particulars are given on his authority:

After the city was taken, Josephus says that Titus "gave orders that they should now *demolish the whole city and temple*, except three towers, which he reserved standing. But for the rest of the wall, it was laid so completely even with the ground by those who *dug it up from the foundation*, that there was nothing left to make those believe who came hither that it had ever been inhabited." Maimonides, a Jewish writer, has also recorded that "Terentius Rufus, an officer in the army of Titus, with a ploughshare tore up the foundations of the temple," that the prophecy might be fulfilled, "Zion shall be ploughed as a field," Mic 3:12. This was all done by the direction of Divine Providence. Titus was desirous of preserving the temple; and frequently sent Josephus to the Jews to induce them to surrender and save the temple and city. But the prediction of the Saviour had gone forth; and, notwithstanding the wish of the Roman general, the temple was to be destroyed.

The Jews themselves first set fire to the porticoes of the temple. One of the Roman soldiers, without any command, threw a burning firebrand into the golden window, and soon the temple was in flames. Titus gave orders to extinguish the fire; but, amidst the tumult, none of his orders were obeyed. The soldiers pressed to the temple, and neither fear, nor entreaties, nor stripes, could restrain them. Their hatred of the Jews urged them on to the work of destruction; and thus, says Josephus, the temple was burnt against the will of Caesar.—Jewish Wars, book vi., chap. iv. § 5, 6, 7.

{b} "there shall not" 1Ki 9:7 Jer 26:18; Lu 19:44

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *He sat upon the mount of Olives*. **See Barnes "Mt 21:1"**.

From that mount there was a magnificent view of the whole city.

The disciples came unto him privately. Not all of them, but Peter, James, John, and Andrew, Mr 13:3. The prediction that the temple would be destroyed, Mt 24:2 had been made in the presence of all the apostles. A *part* now came privately to know more particularly when this would be.

When shall these things be! There are three questions here:

1st. When those things should take place.

2nd. What should be the signs of his coming.

3rd. What should be the signs that the end of the world was near. To these questions he replies in this and the following chapters. This he does, not by noticing them distinctly, but by intermingling the descriptions of the destruction of Jerusalem, and of the end of the world; so that it is sometimes difficult to tell to what particular subject his remarks apply. The *principle* on which this combined description of two events was spoken appears to be, that *they could be described in the same words*, and, therefore, the accounts are intermingled. A similar use of language is found in some parts of Isaiah, where the same language will describe the return from the Babylonish captivity, and deliverance by the Messiah, and therefore was used by the prophet. **See Barnes "**Isa 1:1, paragraph 7.

Sign of thy coming. Evidence that thou art coming. By what token shall we know that thou art coming?

{c} "end of the world" 1Th 5:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 4

Verses 4,5. *Take heed*, etc. He first gives them a caution to beware of deception. They were to be constantly on their guard, as many would arise to deceive the people.

Many shall come in my name. Not in the name or by the authority of Jesus, but in the name of the *Messiah*, or claiming to be the Messiah.

I am Christ. I am the Messiah. **See Barnes "Mt 1:1"**.

The Messiah was expected at that time, Mt 2:1,2. Many would lay claims to being the Messiah, and, as he was universally expected, many would easily be led to believe in them. There is abundant

evidence that this was fully accomplished. Josephus informs us that there were many, who pretended to Divine inspiration, deceived the people, leading out numbers of them into the desert. "The land," says he, "was overrun with magicians, seducers, and impostors, who drew the people after them in multitudes into solitudes and deserts, to see the signs and miracles which they promised to show by the power of God."

Among these are mentioned particularly Dositheus, the Samaritan, who affirmed that he was Christ; Simon Magus, who said he appeared among the Jews as the Son of God; and Theudas, who persuaded many to go with him to the river Jordan, to see the waters divided. The names of *twenty-four* false Messiahs are recorded as having appeared between the time of the emperor Adrian and the year 1682.

{d} "take heed" Col 2:8 2Th 2:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 5

Verse 5. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes on "Mt 24:2"

{e} "in my name" Jer 14:14.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *And ye shall hear of wars*, etc. It is recorded in the history of Rome, that the most violent agitations prevailed in the Roman empire previous to the destruction of Jerusalem. Four emperors, Nero, Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, suffered violent deaths, in the short space of eighteen months. In consequence of these changes in the government, there were commotions throughout the empire, Parties were formed; and bloody and violent wars were the consequence of attachment to the particular emperors. This is the more remarkable, as at the time that the prophecy was made the empire was in a state of peace.

Rumours of wars. Wars declared, or threatened, but not carried into execution. Josephus says, that Bardanes, and after him Volageses, declared war against the Jews, but it was not carried into execution, Ant. 20,34. He also says that Vitellius, governor of Syria, declared war against Aretas, king of Arabia, and wished to lead his army through Palestine; but the death of Tiberius prevented the war, Ant. 18,5,3.

The end is not yet. The end of the Jewish economy; the destruction of Jerusalem will not *immediately* follow. Be not, therefore, alarmed when you hear of those commotions. Other signs will warn you when to be alarmed, and seek security.

{f} "hear of wars" Da 12:1 and following

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom*. At Caesarea, the Jews and Syrians contended about the right to the city, and twenty thousand of the Jews were slain. At this blow the whole nation of the Jews was exasperated, and carried war and desolation through the Syrian cities and villages. Sedition and civil war spread throughout Judea; Italy was also thrown into civil war, by the contests between Otho and Vitellius for the crown.

And there shall be famines. There was a famine foretold by Agabus, Ac 11:28, which is mentioned as having occurred, by Tacitus, Suetonius, and Eusebius; and which was so severe in Jerusalem, Josephus says, that many people perished for want of food, Ant. 20, 2. Four times in the reign of Claudius, (AD 41-54,) famine prevailed in Rome, Palestine, and Greece.

Pestilences. Raging, epidemic diseases. The plague, sweeping off multitudes of people at once. It is commonly the attendant of famine, and often produced by it. A pestilence is recorded as raging in Babylonia, AD 40, (Joseph. Ant. 18, 9, 8) in Italy, AD 66, (Tacitus, 16, 13.) Both of these took place before the destruction of Jerusalem.

Earthquakes. In prophetic language, earthquakes sometimes mean political commotions. Literally, they are tremors or shakings of the earth, and often shaking cities and towns to ruin. The earth opens, and houses and people sink indiscriminately to destruction. Many of these are mentioned as preceding the destruction of Jerusalem. Tacitus mentions one in the reign of Claudius, at Rome; and says that, in the reign of Nero, the cities of Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Colosse, were overthrown; and the celebrated Pompeii was overwhelmed, and almost destroyed by an earthquake, Annales, 15, 22. Others are mentioned as occurring at Smyrna, Miletus, Chios, and Samos. Luke adds, "And fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven," Lu 21:11. Josephus, who had probably never heard of this prophecy, and who certainly would have done nothing designedly to show its fulfillment, records the prodigies and signs which he says preceded the destruction of the city. A star, says he, resembling a sword, stood over the city, and a comet that continued a whole year. At the feast of unleavened bread, during the night, a bright light shone round the altar and the temple, so that it seemed to be bright day, for half an hour. The eastern gate of the temple, of solid brass, fastened with strong bolts and bars, and which had been shut with difficulty by twenty men, opened in the night of its own accord. A few days after that feast, he says, "before sunsetting, chariots and troops of soldiers in their armour were seen running about among the clouds, and surrounding of cities." A great noise, as of the sound of a multitude, was heard in the temple, saying, "LET US REMOVE HENCE." Four years before the war began, Jesus the son of Artanus, a plebeian and a husbandman, came to the feast of the tabernacles, when the city was in peace and prosperity, and began to cry aloud, "A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the holy house, a voice against the bridegroom and the brides, and a voice against this whole people!" He was scourged, and at every stroke of the whip he cried, "Woe, woe to Jerusalem!"—This cry he says, was continued every day for more than seven years, till he was killed in the siege of the city, exclaiming, "Woe, woe to myself also."—Jewish Wars, B. vi. ch. v. & 3.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *The beginning of sorrows*. Far heavier calamities are yet to come before the end.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *To be afflicted*. By persecution, imprisonment, scourging, etc. "They shall deliver you up to councils," Mr 13:9: to the great council, or sanhedrim—for this is the word in the original. **See Barnes "Mt 5:22"**.

This was fulfilled when Peter and John were brought before the council, Ac 4:5-7. Mark further adds, Mr 13:9 that they should be delivered to synagogues and to prisons to be beaten, and should be brought before rulers and kings for his name's sake. All this was remarkably fulfilled. Peter and John were imprisoned, Ac 4:3; Paul and Silas also, Ac 16:24. They were also beaten, (Ac 16:23.) Paul was brought before Gallio, Ac 18:12; before Felix, Ac 24:24; and before Agrippa, Ac 25:23.

And shall kill you. That is, shall kill some of you. Stephen was stoned, Ac 7:59; James was killed by Herod, Ac 12:2, and in addition to all that the sacred writers have told us, the persecution under Nero took place before the destruction of Jerusalem, in which were put to death, with many others, Peter and Paul. Most of the apostles, it is believed, died by persecution. When they were delivered up, Jesus told them not to premeditate what they should say, for he would give them a mouth of wisdom, which all their adversaries could not gainsay or resist, Lu 21:14,15. The fulfillment of this is recorded in the case of Stephen, Ac 6:10; and of Paul, who made Felix *tremble*, Ac 24:25.

Ye shall be hated of all nations. This was fulfilled then, and has been in all ages. It was judged to be a crime to be a Christian. Multitudes for this, and for nothing else, were put to death.

For my name's sake. On account of attachment to me; or because you bear my *name as Christians*.

{h} "Then shall" Lu 21:12 {i} "kill you" Joh 16:2 Ac 7:59

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Shall many be offended*. **See Barnes "Mt 5:29"**.

Many shall stumble, fall, apostatize, from a profession of religion. Many who professed to love me, shall then show that they had no real attachment to me; and in those trying times shall show that they knew nothing of genuine Christian love. See 1Jo 2:19.

Shall betray one another. Those who thus apostatize from professed attachment to me shall betray others who really love me. This they would do to secure their own safety, by revealing the names, habitations, or places of concealment of others.

Shall hate one another. Not that real Christians would do this, but those who had professed to be such, would then show that they were not, and would hate one another. Luke adds, that they should be betrayed, "by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends." They would break over the most tender ties to surrender Christians to punishment. So great would be their hatred of

Christianity, that it would overcome all the natural endearments of kindred and home. This, in the persecutions of Christians, has been often done; and nothing shows more fully the deep and deadly hatred of the human heart to the gospel.

{k} "offended" Mt 13:21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *And many false prophets*. Many men, pretending to be prophets, or foretellers of future events. This refers not to the false Messiahs of which he had spoken, Mt 24:6 but to prophets who should appear during the siege of the city. Of them Josephus says, "The tyrannical zealots who ruled the city suborned many false prophets to declare that aid would be given to the people from heaven. This was done to prevent them from attempting to desert, and to inspire confidence in God." See Jewish Wars, book vi., Chap. 5, & 2, 3.

{l} "And many false" 2Pe 2:1 1Jn 4:3 {m} "deceive many" 1Ti 4:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *And because iniquity*, etc. The word iniquity here seems to include the cruelty of the Jews and Romans in their persecutions; the betraying of Christians by those who professed to be such; and the pernicious errors of false prophets and others. The effect of all this would be, that the ardour of feeling of many Christians would be lessened. The word *wax* means to become. It is an old Saxon word, not used now in this sense, except in the Bible. The fear of death, and the deluding influence of false teachers, would lessen the zeal of many timid and weak professors; perhaps also of many real but feeble Christians.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *He that shall endure unto the end—shall be saved*. The word "end" here has by some been thought to mean the destruction of Jerusalem, or the end of the Jewish economy. And the meaning has been supposed to be, he that perseveres in bearing these persecutions to the end of the wars shall be safe. God will protect his people from harm, so that not a hair of the head shall perish. Others, with more probability, have referred this to final salvation, and refer the "end" to the close of life. He that bears afflictions and persecutions faithfully—that constantly adheres to his religion, and does not shrink till death—shall be saved, or shall enter heaven. So Lu 21:18 says, there should not a hair of the head perish; i.e. they should be saved. *A hair of the head*, or the smallest part or portion, is a proverbial expression, denoting the *certainty* and *completeness* of their salvation. Lu 21:19 farther adds, "In your patience possess ye your souls." That is, keep your souls *patient*; keep proper possession of patience as your own. It is a part of religion to teach it; and in these trying times let it not depart from you.

{o} "But he that" Re 2:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *And this gospel—shall be preached in all the world*. The evidence that this was done is to be chiefly derived from the New Testament, and there it is clear. Thus Paul declares that it was preached to every creature under heaven, Col 1:6,23 that the faith of the Romans was spoken of throughout rite whole world, Ro 1:8 that he preached in Arabia, Ga 1:17 and at Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, Ro 15:19. We know also that he travelled through Asia Minor, Greece, and Crete; that he was in Italy, and probably in Spain and Gaul, Ro 15:24-28. At the same time, the other apostles were not idle; and there is full proof that within thirty years after this prophecy was spoken, churches were established in all these regions.

For a witness unto all nations. This preaching the gospel indiscriminately to all the Gentiles shall be a *proof* to them, or a witness, that the division between the Jews and Gentiles was about to be broken down. Hitherto the blessings of revelation had been confined to the Jews. They were the peculiar people of God. His messages had been sent to them only. When, therefore, God sent the gospel to all other people, it was proof, or a witness unto them, that the peculiar Jewish economy was at an end.

Then shall the end come. The end of the Jewish economy. The destruction of the temple and city.

{p} "be preached" Mt 28:19 Ro 10:18; Re 14:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *The abomination of desolation*. This is a Hebrew expression, meaning an abominable or hateful destroyer. The Gentiles were all held in abomination by the Jews, Ac 10:28. The abomination of desolation means the Roman army; and is so explained by Lu 21:20. The Roman army is farther called the *abomination*, on account of the images of the emperor and the eagles, carried in front of the legions, and regarded by the Romans with divine honours.

Spoken of by Daniel the prophet. Da 9:26,27, 11:31 12:11.

Stand in the holy place. Mark says, "standing where it ought not," meaning the same thing. All Jerusalem was esteemed *holy*, Mt 4:5. The meaning of this is, when you see the Roman armies standing in the holy city, or encamped around the temple, or the Roman ensigns or standards in the temple. Josephus farther relates, that when the city was taken, the Romans brought their idols into the temple, and placed them over the eastern gate, and sacrificed to them there. Jewish Wars, book vi., chap. 6, 1.

Whoso readeth, etc. This seems to be a remark made by the evangelist, to direct the attention of the reader particularly to the meaning of the prophecy by Daniel.

{q} "spoken of" Da 9:27 12:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Then let them*, etc. Then Christians may know that the end is come, and should seek a place of safety. Destruction would not only visit the *city*, but would extend to the surrounding part of Judea.

The mountains. The mountains of Palestine abound in caves, a safe retreat for those pursued. In all ages these caves were the favourite places of robbers; and were also resorted to by those in danger, 1Sa 13:6 22:1; 2Sa 23:13 Jos 10:16.

In those mountains they would be safe.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Him which is on the housetop*. The roofs of the houses in eastern countries were made flat, so that they were favourable places for walking and retirement. **See Barnes "Mt 9:2"**.

The meaning here is, that he who should be on the house-top when this calamity came upon the city, *should flee without delay*; he should not even take time to secure any article of apparel from his house. So sudden would be the calamity, that by doing it he would endanger his life.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Return back to take his clothes*. His clothes which, in *working*, he had laid aside; or which in fleeing he should throw off as an incumbrance. *Clothes* here means the outer garment, commonly laid aside when men worked, or ran. **See Barnes "Mt 5:40"**.

These directions were followed. It is said that the Christians, warned by these predictions, fled from the city to Pella, and other places beyond Jordan; so that there is not evidence that a single *Christian* perished in Jerusalem. Eusebius, Hist. Eccl., lib. 3, ch. 6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 19

Verse 19. No Barnes text on this verse.

{r} "woe unto" Lu 23:29

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *But pray ye*, etc. The destruction was certainly coming. It could not be prevented. Yet it was right to pray for a mitigation of the circumstances, that it might be as mild as possible. So we know that calamity is before us; sickness, pain, and bereavement, and death, are in our path;

yet though we know that these things must come upon us, it is right to pray that they may come in as mild a manner as may be consistent with the will of God. We *must die*; but it is right to pray that the pains of our dying may be neither long nor severe.

In the winter. On account of the cold, storms, etc. To be turned, then from home, and compelled to take up all abode in caverns, would be a double calamity.

Neither on the sabbath day. Journeys were prohibited by the law on the sabbath, Ex 16:29. The law of Moses did not mention the distance to which persons *might* go on the sabbath; but most of the Jews maintained that it should not be more than two thousand cubits. Some supposed that it was seven furlongs, or nearly a mile. This distance was allowed, in order that they might go to their places of worship. Most of them held that it was not lawful to go farther, under any circumstances of war or affliction. Jesus teaches them to pray that it might not be on the sabbath, because if they should *not* go farther than a sabbath-day's journey, they would not be beyond the reach of danger; and if they did, they would be exposed to the charge of violating the law. It should be added, that it was almost impracticable to travel in Judea on that day, as the gates of the cities were usually closed, Ne 13:19-22.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *There shall be great tribulation*. The word tribulation means *calamity*, or *suffering*. Lu 21:24 has specified in what this tribulation should consist. "They shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled." That is, until the time allotted for the Gentiles to do it shall be fully accomplished; or as long as God is pleased to suffer them *to do it*.

The first thing mentioned by Luke is, that they should fall *by the edge of the sword*. That is, should be slain in war, as the sword was then principally used in war. This was most strikingly fulfilled. Josephus, in describing it, uses almost the very words of our Saviour. *All the calamities*, says he, *which had befallen any nation from the beginning of the world*, were but small in comparison with those of the Jews. Jewish Wars, book i., preface, § 4.

He has given the following account of one part of the massacre when the city was taken: "And now rushing into the city, they slew whomsoever they found, without distinction, and burnt the houses and all the people who had fled into them. And when they entered for the sake of plunder, they found whole families of dead persons, and houses full of carcasses destroyed by famine; then they came out with their hands empty. And though they thus pitied the dead, they had not the same emotion for the living, but killed all they met, whereby they filled the lanes with dead bodies. *The whole city ran with blood*, insomuch that many things which were burning were extinguished by the blood." Jewish Wars, book vi. chap. 8, § 5; chap. 9, § 2, 3. He adds, that in the siege of Jerusalem, not fewer than *eleven hundred thousand* perished (Jewish Wars, book vi., chap. 9, § 3)—a number almost as great as are in the whole city of London. In the adjacent provinces no fewer than *two hundred and fifty thousand* are reckoned to have been slain; making in all whose deaths were ascertained, the almost incredible number of *one million three hundred and fifty thousand*, who were put to death. These were not indeed all slain with the sword. Many were crucified. "Many hundreds," says he, (Jewish Wars, book vi. Chap. xi Chap. xi. §1) "were first whipped, then

tormented with various kinds of tortures, and finally crucified: the Roman soldiers nailing them (out of the wrath and hatred they bore to the Jews) one after one way, and another after another, to crosses, *by way of jest*, until at length the multitude became so great that room was wanting for crosses, and crosses for the bodies." So terribly was their imprecation fulfilled—" His blood be on us, and on our children," Mt 27:25. If it be asked how it was possible for so many people to be slain in a single city, it is answered, that the siege of Jerusalem commenced during the time of the passover, it is estimated that more than three millions were usually assembled. See Josephus, Jewish Wars, book vi., chap. ix., § 3, 4.

A horrible instance of the distress of Jerusalem is related by Josephus. The famine during the siege became so great that they ate what the most sordid animals refused to touch. A woman of distinguished rank, having been plundered by the soldiers, in hunger, rage, and despair, killed and roasted her babe, and had eaten one half of him before the deed was discovered. Jewish Wars, book vi., chap. 3, § 3, 4. This cruel and dreadful act was also in fulfillment of prophecy, De 28:53,56,57.

Another thing added by Luke Lu 21:24) was, that "they should be led captive into all nations." Josephus informs us that the captives taken during the whole war amounted to *ninety-seven thousand*. The tall and handsome young men Titus reserved for triumph; of the rest, many were distributed through the Roman provinces, to be destroyed by wild beasts in theatres; many were sent to the works in Egypt; many, especially those under seventeen years of age, were sold for slaves. Jewish Wars, book vi., chap. 9,. §2,3.

{s} "For then shall be" Da 12:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Except those days should be shortened*. If the calamities of the siege should be lengthened out. If famine and war should be suffered to rage.

No flesh be saved. None of the nations would be preserved alive. All the inhabitants of Judea would perish. The war, famine, and pestilence would entirely destroy them.

But for the elect's sake. The elect here doubtless means Christians. See 1Pe 1:2 Ro 1:7; Eph 1:4 1Th 1:4.

The word *elect* means to *choose*. It is given to Christians because they are "chosen to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth," 2Th 2:13. It is probable that in Jerusalem and the adjacent parts of Judea, there were many who were true followers of Christ. On their account—to preserve them alive, and to make them the instruments of spreading the gospel he said those days should not be lengthened out, and suffered to produce their destruction. It is related by Josephus, (Jewish Wars, book i. chap. 12, § 1,) that Titus at first resolved to reduce the city by famine, he therefore built a wall around it, to keep any provisions from being carried in, and any of the people from going out. The Jews, however, drew up their army near the walls, engaged in battle, and the Romans pursued them, provoked by their attempts, and broke into the city. The affairs of Rome also at that time demanded the presence of Titus there and, contrary to his original intention, he pressed the siege, and took the city by storm—thus *shortening* the time that would have been occupied in reducing it by famine. This was for the benefit of the "elect." So the designs

of wicked men, intended by them for the destruction of the people of God, are intended by God for the good of his chosen people. See Isa 10:7, and **See Barnes "Isa 10:7"**
on that verse.
{t} "for the elect's sake" Isa 65:8,9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Lo, here is Christ*. The Messiah. The Jews expected the Messiah to deliver them from Roman oppression. In the time of these great-calamities they would anxiously look for him, Many would claim *to be* the Messiah. Many would follow them. Many would rejoice to believe that he was come, and would call on others, Christians with the rest, to follow them.

Believe it not. You have evidence that the Messiah has come, and you are not to be deceived by the plausible pretensions of others.

{u} "Then if any" De 13:1-3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *False Christs*. Persons claiming to be the Messiah.

False prophets. Persons claiming to be the prophet spoken of by Moses, De 18:15 or persons pretending to declare the way of deliverance from the Romans, and calling the people to follow them. See Mt 24:5.

Shall shew great signs and wonders. That is, shall pretend to work miracles. Shall so nearly resemble prophets in their miraculous power as to render it difficult to detect the imposture. Josephus represents the false Christs and prophets that appeared, as *magicians* and *sorcerers*. He says they led the people out into the deserts, and promised to work miracles to deliver them. Ant., book xx., chap. 8, § 6.

If it were possible, they shall deceive, etc. So nearly would their pretended miracles resemble true miracles, as to render it difficult to detect the imposition; and so much so, that if it were possible they would persuade even true Christians that they were the Messiah. But this was not possible. They would be too firmly established in the belief that *Jesus* was the Christ, to be wholly led away by others. Christians may be sometimes led far astray; they may be in doubt about some great doctrines of religion; they may be perplexed by the cavils and cunning craftiness of those who do not love the truth; but they cannot be *wholly* deceived, and seduced from the Saviour. Our Saviour says, that if this were possible, it would be done then. But it was not possible.

{v} "For there shall" Mt 24:5,11 {w} "shall shew" 2Th 2:9-11 Re 13:13 {x} "if it were possible" Joh 10:28,29

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Behold*, etc. Mark adds, Mr 13:23 "Take ye heed." The reason why he told them before, was that they might be on their guard, and be prepared for those calamities.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Behold, he is in the desert*. The Jews had formed the expectation that the Messiah would appear suddenly, from some unexpected quarter. Hence many would be looking to the desert places, expecting that he would come from them. Accordingly, most of the impostors and pretended prophets led their people into the deserts.

Go not forth. Do not follow them. They will only deceive you.

In the secret chambers. Concealed in some house, or some retired part of the city. Many would, doubtless, pretend that the Messiah was *concealed* there; and, either for the purpose of encouraging or deceiving the people, would pretend that they had discovered him.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *For as the lightning cometh out of the east*, etc. This is not designed to denote the *quarter* from which he would come, but the *manner*. He does not mean to affirm that the *Son of man* will come from the *east*, but that he will come in a rapid and unexpected manner, like the lightning. Many would be looking for him in the desert; many in secret places. But, he said, it would be useless to be looking in that manner. It was useless to look to any particular part of the heavens, to know where the lightning would next flash. In a moment it would blaze in an unexpected part of the heavens, and shine at once to the other part. So rapidly, so unexpectedly, in so unlooked-for a quarter would be his coming. See Lu 10:18; Zec 9:14.

The coming of the Son of man. It has been doubted whether this refers to the destruction of Jerusalem, or to the coming at the day of judgment. For the solution of this doubt, let it be remarked,

(1.) that those two events are the principal scenes in which our Lord said he would come, either in person or in judgment.

(2.) That the destruction of Jerusalem is described as his coming, his act, for their great crimes.

(3.) That these events—the judgment of Jerusalem and the final judgment —in many respects greatly resemble each other.

(4.) That they will bear, therefore, to be described in the same language. And,

(5.) therefore, that the same words often include both events, as properly described by them. The words, therefore, had doubtless a primary reference to the destruction of Jerusalem, but such an amplitude of meaning as also to express his coming to judgment.

See Barnes "Isa 1:1, § 7, (3.)

{y} "the lightning" Zec 9:14 Lu 17:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *Wheresoever*, etc. The words in this verse are proverbial. Vultures and eagles easily ascertain where dead bodies are, and come to devour them. So with the Roman army. Jerusalem is like a dead and putrid corpse. Its life is gone, and it is ready to be devoured. The Roman armies will find it out, as the vultures do a dead carcass, and will come around it, to devour it. This proverb also teaches a universal truth. Wherever wicked men are, there will be assembled the instruments of their chastisement. The providence of God will direct them there, as the eagles are directed to a dead carcass.

This verse is connected with the preceding by the word "for," implying that this is a reason for what is said there, that the Son of man would *certainly* come to destroy the city, and that he would come *suddenly*. The meaning is, he would come by means of the Roman armies, as certainly, as suddenly, and as unexpectedly, as whole flocks of vultures and eagles, though unseen before, suddenly find their prey, see it at a great distance, and gather in multitudes around it. Travellers in the deserts of Arabia tell us that they sometimes witness a speck in the distant sky, which for a long time is scarcely visible. At length, it grows larger; it comes nearer; and they at last find that it is a vulture, that has from an immense distance seen a carcass lying on the sand. So keen is their vision, and so aptly does this represent the Roman armies, though at an immense distance, yet spying, as it were, Jerusalem, a putrid carcass, and hastening in multitudes to destroy it.

{x} "For wheresoever" Job 39:30

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Shall the sun be darkened*, etc. The images here used are not to be taken literally. They are often used by the sacred writers to denote any great calamities. As the darkening of the sun and moon, and the falling of the stars would be an inexpressible calamity, so any great catastrophe, any overturning of kingdoms or cities, or dethroning of kings and princes, is represented by the darkening of the sun and moon, and by some terrible convulsion in the elements. Thus the destruction of Babylon is foretold in similar terms, Isa 13:10; and of Tyre, Isa 24:23. The slaughter in Bozrah and Idumea is predicted in the same language, Isa 34:4. See also Isa 50:3 60:19,20 Eze 32:7; Joe 3:15.

To the description in Matthew, Luke has added, Lu 21:25 there should be "distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts falling them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming upon the earth." All these are figures of great and terrible calamity. The roaring of the waves of the sea denotes great tumult and affliction among the people, *Perplexity* means doubt, anxiety; not knowing what to do to escape. *Men's hearts failing them for fear*, or by reason of fear. Their fears would be so great as to take away their courage and strength.

{a} "shall be darkened" Isa 13:10 Eze 32:7; Am 5:20 Ac 2:20; Re 6:12

{b} "heavens shall be shaken" 2Pe 3:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *The sign of the Son of man*. The *evidence* that Christ is coming to destroy the city of Jerusalem. It is not to be denied, however, that this description is applicable also to his coming at the day of judgment. The disciples had asked him, Mt 24:3 what should be the sign of his coming, and *of the end of the world*. In his answer, he has reference to both events, and his language may be regarded as descriptive of both. At the destruction of Jerusalem, the sign or evidence of his coming was found in the fulfillment of these predictions. At the end of the world, the sign of his coming will be his personal approach with the glory of his Father and the holy angels, 1Th 4:16 Lu 21:27; Mt 26:64 Ac 1:11.

All the tribes of the earth mourn. This is, either all the *tribes* or *people* of the land of Judea shall mourn at the great calamities coming upon them, or all the nations of the world shall wail when He comes to judgment. All the wicked shall mourn at the prospect of their doom, Re 1:7. The cause of their wailing at the day of judgment shall be chiefly that they have pierced, killed, rejected the Saviour, and that they deserve the condemnation that is coming upon them, Joh 19:37 Zec 12:12.

And they shall see the Son of man. The Lord Jesus coming to judgment. Probably this refers more directly to his coming at the last day, though it may also mean that the evidence of his coming to destroy Jerusalem shall then be seen.

In the clouds of heaven. He ascended in a cloud, Ac 1:9. He shall return in like manner, Ac 1:11. *The clouds of heaven* denote not the clouds *in* heaven, but the clouds that appear to shut heaven, or the sky, from our view.

With power. Power, manifest in the destruction of Jerusalem, by the wonders that preceded it, and by the overturning of the temple and city. In the day of judgment, power manifest by consuming the material world, 2Pe 3:7,10,12

by raising the dead, Joh 5:29 30; 1Co 15:52

by changing those who may be alive when he shall come; that is, making their bodies like those who have died, and been raised up, 1Th 4:17 1Co 15:52 by bringing the affairs of the world to a close, receiving the righteous to heaven, Mt 25:34 1Co 15:57 and by sending the wicked, however numerous or however strong, down to hell, Mt 25:41,46; Joh 5:29.

Great glory. The word glory here means the visible display of his honour and majesty. This glory will be manifested by the manner of his coming, Mt 26:64 by the presence of the angels, Mt 25:31; and by the wonders that shall attend him down the sky.

{c} "of man in" Da 7:13 Re 1:7 {d} "and they shall" Mt 16:27 Mr 13:26; Lu 22:69

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *And he shall send his angels*. Angels signify, literally, *messengers*, Lu 7:24 9:52. The word is often applied to inanimate objects, or to anything that God employs to rescue his people from danger, Ps 104:4. But it most commonly refers to the race of intelligences more exalted than man, who are employed often in the work of man's rescue from ruin, and his salvation, Heb 1:14. In either of these senses, it *might* here refer to deliverance granted to his people in the calamities of Jerusalem. It is said that there is reason to believe that not one Christian perished in the destruction

of that city, God having in various ways secured their escape, so that they fled to Pella, where they dwelt when the city was destroyed. But the language seems to refer rather to the end of the world; and no doubt its principal application was intended to be to the gathering of his elect, at the day of judgment.

With a great sound of a trumpet. The Jewish assemblies used to be called together by the sound of a trumpet, as ours are by bells, Le 25:9 Nu 10:2; Jud 3:27.

Hence, when they spoke of convening an assembly, they spoke also of doing it by sounding a trumpet. Our Saviour, speaking to Jews, used language to which they were accustomed, and described the *assembling* of the people at the last day in language which they were accustomed to use in calling assemblies together. It is not certain, however, that he meant that this would be *literally* so, but only to indicate the certainty that the world would be assembled together. Similar language is often used, when speaking of the judgment, 1Th 4:16 1Co 15:52. *A trump*, or *trumpet* was a wind instrument, made at first of the horns of oxen, and afterwards of rams' horns, cut off at the smaller extremity. In some instances it was made of brass, in the form of a horn. The common trumpet was straight, made of brass or silver, a cubit in length, the larger extremity shaped so as to resemble a small bell. In times of peace, in assembling the people, this was sounded softly. In times of calamity, or war, or any great commotion, it was sounded *loud*. Perhaps this was referred to when our Saviour said, with a great sound of a trumpet.

They shall gather together his elect. Elect. **See Barnes "Mt 24:22"**.

The word means *Christians*—the chosen of God. If this refers to the destruction of Jerusalem, it means, God shall send forth his messengers—whatever he may choose to employ for that purpose—signs, wonders, human messengers, or the angels themselves—and gather Christians into a place of safety, so that they shall not be destroyed with the Jews. If it refers to the last judgment, as it doubtless in a primary or secondary sense does, then it means that he will send his angels to gather his chosen, his elect, together from all places, Mt 13:39,41-43.

This shall be done before the living shall be changed, 1Co 15:51,52; 1Th 4:16,17.

From the four winds. That is, from the four quarters of the globe—east, west, north, and south. The Jews expressed those quarters by the winds blowing from them. See Eze 37:9. See also Is 43:5,6.

From one end of heaven etc. Mark says, Mr 13:27 from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven." The expression denotes that they shall be gathered from all parts of the earth where they are scattered.

The word *heaven* is here used to denote the visible heavens or the sky, meaning that through the whole world he would gather them. See Ps 19:1-6 De 4:32.

{1} "angels" or, "with a trumpet and a great voice" {e} "sound" 1Th 4:16 {f} "his elect" Zec 14:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *Now learn a parable*. **See Barnes "Mt 13:3"**.

The word here means, rather, *an illustration*. Make a comparison, or judge of this as you do respecting a fig-tree.

Fig tree. This was spoken on the Mount of Olives, which produced not only olives, but figs. Possibly one was near when he spoke this.

When his branch, etc. When the juices return from the roots into the branches, and the buds swell and burst, *as if tender*, and too feeble to-contain the pressing and expanding leaves. When you see that, you judge that spring and summer are near.

{g} "learn" Lu 21:29

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *So likewise ye*, etc. In the same manner, when you see what I have predicted, the *signs* around Jerusalem, then know that its destruction is at hand.

Is near. Luke says, Lu 21:28 that "your redemption draweth nigh;" and, Lu 21:31 "the kingdom of God is nigh at hand." Your deliverance from the dangers that threaten the city approaches, and the kingdom of God will be set up in the earth; or your everlasting redemption from sin and death will come at the day of judgment, and his eternal kingdom is to be established in the heavens.

{1} "it" or, "He" {h} "even" Jas 5:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *This generation*, etc. This age; this race of men. A generation is about thirty or forty years. The destruction of Jerusalem took place about forty years after this was spoken. **See Barnes "Mt 16:28"**.

Till all these things, etc. Till these things shall receive a full accomplishment. Till events shall take place that shall be a complete fulfillment, if there were nothing farther intended. He does not mean to *exclude* here the reference to the judgment, but to say that the destruction of Jerusalem would be such as to make appropriate the words of the prediction, were there nothing beyond. So when death was threatened to Adam, the propriety of the threatening would have been seen, and the threatening would have been fulfilled, had men suffered only *temporal death*. At the same time, the threatening had *a fulness of meaning*, that would cover also, and justify, eternal death in hell. Thus the words of Christ, describing the destruction of Jerusalem, had a fulness of signification that would meet also the events of the judgment, and whose meaning would not be *filled up* till the world was closed.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *Heaven and earth shall pass away*, etc. You may sooner expect to see the heaven and earth pass away, and return to nothing, than my words to fail.

{i} "Heaven and earth" Ps 102 26 Isa 51:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *But of that day and hour*. Of the precise time of the fulfillment. The *general signs* of its coming have been given; as the budding of the fig-tree is a *certain* indication that summer is near. But the precise time is not indicated by these things. One part of their inquiry was, Mt 24:3 *when* those things should be. He now replies to them, by saying that the *precise* time would not be foretold.

Knoweth no man, no, not the angels. **See Barnes "Mr 13:32".**

{k} "But of that" Zec 14:7 1Th 5:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *Noe*. The Greek way of writing *Noah*. See Ge 6:1-9:29. The coming of the Son of man would be as it was in the days of Noah:

1st. In its being sudden and unexpected, the precise time not being made known, though the general indications had been given.

2nd. The world would be found as it was then.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *For as in the days*, etc. The things mentioned here denote attention to the affairs of this life, rather than to what was coming on them. It does not mean that these things were wrong, but only that such was their actual employment, and that they were regardless of what was coming upon them.

{l} "until the day" Ge 6:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *And knew not*. That is, they knew not the exact time, until it came upon them. *So*, says he, it shall be when the Son of man shah come. They shall not know *the precise time* until he comes, and then they shall be found engaged in the ordinary business of life unconcerned.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 40

Verse 40. *Then shall two be in the field*, etc. The calamity shall come suddenly. There shall be no escape for those whom it overtakes.

One shall be taken. The word *taken* may mean, either to be taken away from the danger, i.e. rescued, as Lot was, Lu 17:28,29 or to be taken away by death. Probably the latter is the meaning.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 41

Verse 41. *Two women*, etc. Grinding in the East was performed, as it is now, chiefly by hand. The mill-stones were about two feet in diameter, and half a foot in thickness. The lower one was fixed, and the upper one was turned by a handle, or crank. This was done by two persons, who sat opposite to each other. One took hold of the mill-handle, and turned it half way round; the other then seized it, and completed the revolution. This was done by women; by servants of the lowest order; and was a very laborious employment. See Ex 11:5 Job 31:10 Isa 47:2; Jud 16:21.

The meaning of this verse is similar to the former, of two persons sitting *near* to each other, one shall be taken, and the other left. The calamity would be sudden, and would come upon them before they were aware.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 42

Verse 42. *Watch*. Be looking for his coming. Be expecting it as near; as a great event; as coming in an unexpected manner. Watch the signs of his coming, and be ready.

{m} "therefore" Lu 12:39 Re 3:3, 16:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 43

Verse 43. *But know this*, etc. If a man knew the hour, or *about the hour*, when a robber would come, he would be ready for him. So you know not the exact hour, but you know it is near, when the Son of man will come. He will come suddenly, as a thief comes, without giving previous warning, 1Th 5:2 2Pe 3:10; Re 3:3 16:15.

Goodman. **See Barnes "Mt 20:11"**.

Thief. A robber. A thief, with us, means one who takes goods without doing violence —secretly, silently. The original word means one who does it by housebreaking, or by highway violence, Lu 10:30.

Broken up. Broken into—either by the doors or windows.

In what watch. In which of the four quarters of the night. **See Barnes "Mt 14:25"**.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 44

Verse 44. *Be ye also ready*. Lu 21:36 says, that he charged them to pray always, that they might be accounted worthy to escape those things—the judgments coming upon the wicked—and to stand before the Son of man—i. e. to stand there *approved* by him, or admitted to his favour. He also charged them Lu 21:34 to take heed, and not to suffer their hearts to be overcharged with surfeiting, or too much eating, or drunkenness, or the cares of this life, lest that day should come upon them unawares; things improper if there were no judgment— peculiarly mad and wicked when the judgment is near.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 45

Verses 45—51. This passage is in fact a parable, though it is not expressly so called. The design is to show that his disciples should act as if they were each moment expecting his return. This he illustrates by the conduct of a servant who did not expect his master soon to return, who acted with great impropriety, and who was accordingly punished.

Verse 45. *Who then is a faithful and wise servant*, etc. By the conduct of a faithful and wise servant he intends to denote a faithful Christian, a servant of God, or a teacher of religion.

Whom his lord. His master. It has no reference to God. It means the lord or master of the servant. Applied to Christian teachers, in the spiritual meaning of the parable, it refers to Christ, who has appointed them as teachers, and who is their Lord and Master, Joh 13:13,14.

Over his household. His family. Christian ministers are the servants of God appointed over the church, the family of Christ, 1Th 5:12,13; 1Co 3:5 4:1,2 12:28.

Meat in due season. The word *meat* here means food of all kinds. When the Bible was translated into English, it included, as the original does, all kinds of provisions requisite to support and nourish life.

In due season. At the proper time. As they need it, or in the accustomed times. This was the office of a steward. Among the ancients this office was often filled by a slave—one who had shown himself trusty and faithful. The duty was to have a general superintendence over the affairs of the family. Applied to Christian ministers, it means that they are to feed the flock of God, to minister to their wants, and to do it as they need it, Joh 21:15-17 Ac 20:28; 1Co 4:1,2.

{n} "meat" Jer 3:15 {o} "due season" Mt 13:52

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 46

Verse 46. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes on "Mt 25:45"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 47

Verse 47. *Shall make him ruler*, etc. Shall confirm his appointment over his household, and, as a reward, shall place him over all his property. This does not mean that ministers shall have a higher rank or office, but is a circumstance *of the parable* or story, designed to show the effect of faithfulness. Faithful servants of Christ shall be rewarded. This will be done by his approbation, and by the rewards of the heavenly world.

{p} "ruler over all his goods" Mt 25:21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 48

Verse 48. *That evil servant*. If that servant so appointed, having this office, should be evil or wicked.

Say in his heart. Secretly suppose.

Delayeth his coming. Will not return in a long time; or does not return as soon as was expected, and perhaps may not at all.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 49

Verse 49. *Smite his fellowservants*, etc. This is the conduct of a wicked servant, who, supposing he would not be called to account, and abusing his authority, gave himself up to oppression, carousing, and debauchery. It is designed to represent the conduct of ministers who are unfaithful, overbearing, and who abuse their trust in the church.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 50

Verse 50. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 24:45"**

{q} "in a day" 1Th 5:3 Re 3:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 24 - Verse 51

Verse 51. *Shall cut him asunder*. This kind of punishment was anciently practised. Sometimes it was done by the sword, sometimes by saws. It was practised among the Chaldeans, Da 2:5 3:29 and among the Hebrews, 2Sa 12:31 1Sa 15:33; 1Ki 3:25 Heb 11:37.

It was also practised by the Egyptians and Romans. It is not, perhaps, here to be taken literally, but signifies that the wicked servant should be severely punished.

Hypocrites. **See Barnes "Mt 6:2"**.

They are spoken of here as the worst of men.

Weeping and gnashing of teeth. **See Barnes "Mt 8:12,13"**.

The unfaithful and wicked minister of God, who lives without expectation or fear of judgment, shall suffer the severest punishment inflicted on sinners in the world of woe.

{r} "There shall" Mt 25.30

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 1

MATTHEW CHAPTER 25

Verse 1. *Then shall the kingdom of heaven*. **See Barnes "Mt 3:2"**.

The phrase here refers to his coming in the day of judgment.

Shall be likened. Or shall resemble. The meaning is, when the Son of man returns to judgment, it shall be as it was in the case of ten virgins in a marriage ceremony. The coming of Christ to receive his people to himself is often represented under the similitude of a marriage—the church being represented as his spouse or bride. The marriage relation is the most tender, firm, and endearing of any known on earth, and on this account it fitly represents the union of believers to Christ. See Mt 9:15 Joh 3:29; Re 19:7 21:9; Eph 5:25-32.

Ten virgins. These virgins, doubtless, represent the church—a name given to it because it is pure and holy. See 2Co 11:2 La 1:15, 2:13.

Which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. The *lamps* used on such occasions were rather *torches* or *flamebeaux*. They were made by winding rags around pieces of iron or earthenware, sometimes hollowed so as to contain oil, and fastened to handles of wood. These torches were dipped in oil, and gave a large light. Marriage ceremonies in the East were conducted with great pomp and Solemnity. The ceremony of marriage was performed commonly in the open air, on the banks of a stream. Both the bridegroom and bride were attended by friends; they were escorted in a *palanquin*, carried by four or more persons. After the ceremony of marriage succeeded a feast of seven days if the bride was a virgin, or three days if she was a widow. This feast was celebrated in her father's house. At the end of that time the bridegroom conducted the bride, with great pomp and splendour, to his own home. This was done in the evening, or at night, Jer 7:34 25:10, 33:11.

Many friends and relations attended them; and besides those who went with them from the house of the bride, there was another company that came out from the house of the bridegroom to meet them, and welcome them. These were probably female friends and relatives of the bridegroom, who went out to welcome him and his new companion to their home. These are the virgins mentioned in this parable. Not knowing precisely the time when the procession would come, they probably went out early, and waited by the way till they should see indications of its approach. In the celebration of marriages in the East at the present day, many of the peculiar customs of ancient times are observed. At a Hindoo marriage, says a modern missionary, "the procession of which I saw some years ago, the bridegroom came from a distance, and the bride lived at Serampore, to

which place the bridegroom was to come by water. After waiting two or three hours, at length, near midnight, it was announced, in the very words of Scripture, '*Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him*.' All the persons employed now lighted their lamps, and ran with them in their hands to fill up their stations in the procession; some of them had lost their lights, and were unprepared, but it was then too late to seek them, and the cavalcade moved forward to the house of the bride; at which place the company entered a large and splendidly illuminated area, before the house, covered with an awning, where a great multitude of friends, dressed in their best apparel, were seated upon mats. The bridegroom was carried in the arms of a friend, and placed in a superb seat in the midst of the company, where he sat a short time, and then went into the house, the door of which was immediately shut, and guarded by sepoys. I and others expostulated with the door-keepers, but in vain. Never was I so struck with our Lord's beautiful parable as at this moment—'*And the door was shut*.'"

The journal of one of the American missionaries in Greece contains an account of an Armenian wedding which she attended; and, after describing the dresses and previous ceremonies, she says, that at twelve o'clock at night, precisely, the cry was made by some of the attendants, *Behold, the bridegroom cometh*; and immediately five or six men set off to meet him.

Bridegroom. A man newly married.

{s} "virgins" Ps 45:14 So 6:8,9 2Co 11:2

{t} "bridegroom" Joh 3:29

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 2

Verses 2-4. *And five of them were wise*. The words *wise* and *foolish*, here, refer only to their conduct in regard to the oil. The one part was *wise* in taking oil, the other *foolish* in neglecting it. The conduct of those who were *wise* refers to those who are *prepared* for the coming of Christ—prepared by possessing real piety, and not merely profession. The conduct of those *without* oil expresses the conduct of those who *profess* to love him, but are destitute of true grace, and are unprepared to meet him. Nothing can be argued from the *number* here, in regard to the proportion of sincere Christians among professors. *Circumstances* in parables are not to be pressed literally. They are necessary to keep up the story, and we must look chiefly or entirely to the *scope* or *design* of the parable to understand its meaning. In this parable the scope is to teach us to *watch* or be ready, Mt 25:13. It is not to teach us the number of those who shall be saved, and those who shall not. In teaching us to *watch* and *be ready*, our Lord gives great additional interest by the circumstances of this narrative; but there is no authority for saying that he meant to teach that *just half* of professing Christians would be deceived. The probability is, that *nothing like* that number will be found to have been hypocrites.

Oil in their vessels. The five foolish virgins probably expected that the bridegroom would come immediately. They therefore provided for no delay, and no uncertainty. The wise virgins knew that the time of his coming was uncertain, and they therefore furnished themselves with oil. This was carried in vessels, so that it could be poured on the torch or flambeaux when it was necessary.

Vessels. Cups, cans, or anything to hold oil.

{u} "And five" Jer 24:2-9 Mt 22:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 3

Verse 3. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 25:2"

{v} "no oil" Isa 48:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 4

Verse 4. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 25:2"

{w} "oil in their vessels" 1Jo 2:20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *The bridegroom tarried*. That is, while they waited for him. It was uncertain at what time he would come. He delayed longer than they expected.

All slumbered and slept. Waiting till near midnight, they fell into repose. This circumstance is not to be pressed to prove that all *Christians* will be asleep, or cold and careless, when the Lord Jesus will come. It will not be true. *Many* may be so; but many also will be looking for his coming. This circumstance is designed simply to show more clearly the *duty of being ready*, Mt 25:13. It does not mean to affirm it as a fact that none will be ready.

{x} "slumbered" 1Th 5:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *At midnight*. Later than was the usual custom, and hence they had fallen asleep.

A cry made. Of those who were coming with the bridegroom.

{y} "midnight" Re 16:15 {z} "a cry made" 1Th 4:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Trimmed their lamps*. Burning till midnight, the oil was exhausted. They gave a dim and obscure light. They trimmed them by removing the burnt parts of the *linen* or the torch, so that they would burn clear. It was proper also to dip them again in oil, or to pour oil upon them. This strikingly represents the conduct of most men at the approach of death. They *then* begin to make

ready. they are alarmed, anxious, trembling, and asking the aid of others; and often when it is for ever too late.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 8

Verse 8. No Barnes text on this verse.
{1} "gone" or, "are going" {b} "out" Lu 12:35

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 9

Verse 9. No Barnes text on this verse.
{c} "rather"
Isa 4:1,6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Went in with him to the marriage*. The *marriage feast*. The *marriage ceremony* took place before the bride left her father's house; but a feast was given at the house of her husband, and which was also called the marriage, or a part of the marriage solemnities. This part of the parable doubtless represents the entrance of those who are ready, or prepared, into the kingdom of God, when the Son of man shall come. They will be ready who repent of their sins; who believe on the Lord Jesus; who live a holy life; and who wait for his coming. See Mr 16:16 Joh 5:24; Ac 3:19 Re 22:11; 2Pe 3:11,12; 1Ti 6:17-19 2Ti 4:6-8.

The door was shut. No more could be admitted to the marriage feast. So, when the truly righteous shall all be received into heaven, it will be closed against all others. There will be no room for preparation afterwards, Re 22:11 Ec 11:3, 9:10 Mt 25:46.

{d} "while they went" Am 8:12,13 {e} "was shut" Heb 3:18,19; Re 22:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Open to us*. This is not to be understood as implying that any will come after the righteous shall be admitted into the kingdom, and claim admission then. It is a part of the *parable* to illustrate the general truth inculcated, or to prepare the way for what is afterwards said, and keep up the narrative, and make it consistent.

{f} "saying, Lord" Mt 7:21-23 Heb 12:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *I know you not*. You were not in the company of those who attended me to the marriage feast, and are unknown to me. Applied to professing Christians, having *only* a profession of religion, but no real piety, it means I know, or *acknowledge* you not as Christians. I do not approve of you, or delight in you, or admit you to be my friends. The word know is often used in the sense of approving, loving, acknowledging as real friends and followers. See Mt 7:23 Psa 1:6 2Ti 2:19; 1Th 5:12.

{g} "I know you not" Hab 1:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Watch therefore*, etc. This is the scope or design of the whole parable. This is the great truth he wished to inculcate, and all parts of the parable are to be interpreted in reference to this admonition. Like the virgins, many are professedly going to meet the Bridegroom—the Lord Jesus Christ. Like the coming of the bridegroom, his advent will be sudden. It will be to many at an unexpected time. Many, even professing Christians, will be engaged the business of the world; thoughtless about eternity; not expecting his approach, and not prepared. They will only *profess* to know him, but in *works* they will deny him. So death will come. All approaches of the Son of God to judge men are *sudden*, and to many unexpected. So many, when they shall see him coming, at death or the judgment, will begin, like the foolish virgins, to be active, and to prepare to die. But it will be too late. They that are ready will enter-in, and heaven will be closed for ever against all others. The *coming* of the Saviour is certain. The precise time when he will come is not certain. As the virgins should all have watched and been ready, so should we. They who are Christians should be ever watchful; and they who are not should lose no time to be ready; for in such an hour as they think not the Son of man shall come.

The Son of man cometh. This refers, doubtless, to his coming in the day of judgment. The circumstances of the parable do not seem at all to apply to his coming to destroy Jerusalem, but are aptly expressive of his advent to judge the world.

{h} "therefore" Mt 24:42,44; Mr 13:33,35; Lu 21:36

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *For the kingdom of heaven*, etc. This *parable of the talents* was spoken still farther to illustrate the manner in which he would deal with men at his return to judgment, The words, *the kingdom of heaven*, are not in the original, but are very properly inserted by the translators. The design of the parable is to teach that those who improve their talents or faculties in the cause of religion— who improve them to their own salvation, and in doing good to others —shall be proportionally rewarded. But they who neglect their talents, and neither secure their own salvation

nor do good to others, will be punished. The kingdom of heaven is like such a man; that is, God deals with men, in his government, as such a man did.

His own servants. That is, such of them as he judged worthy [of] such a trust. These represent the apostles, Christian ministers, professing Christians, and perhaps all men. The going into a far country may represent the Lord Jesus going into heaven. He has given to all talents to improve, Eph 4:8.

His goods. His property-representing the offices, abilities, and opportunities for doing good, which he has given to his professed followers.

{i} "For the kingdom of heaven" Lu 19:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Five talents*. **See Barnes "Mt 18:24"**.

A talent of silver was worth about 1519 dollars, 23 cents, [or £342 3s. 9d.] It here denotes the highest abilities given to men; perhaps the highest offices in the church, and the greatest opportunity of doing good.

According to his several ability. According to the ability of each one. According as he saw each one was adapted to improve it. So in the church and the world. God gives men stations which he judges them adapted to fill, and requires them to fill them. So he makes distinctions among men in regard to abilities, and in the powers and opportunities of usefulness; requiring them only to occupy those stations, and discharge their duties there, 1Co 4:7.

{1} "talent" "A talent is 187l 10s." Mt 18:24 {k} "ability" Ro 12:6 1Co 12:4; Ep 4:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 16

Verses 16,17. The two who had received most employed their money in trade, and by honest industry doubled it before their master returned; representing the conduct of those who make a good improvement of their abilities, and employ them in doing good.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 17

Verse 17. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes on "Mt 25:16"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Digged in the earth*, etc. This represents the conduct of those who neglect the abilities that God has given, and fail to do what he has required. This is done often:

1st. On the plea that they do not occupy a high station.

2nd. That they have slender abilities, and can do little good.

3rd. As it was in this case, that God had not given them as much, as he did others, and they will therefore do nothing. These pleas are without foundation; for, first, God does not require us to do as much as those who have greater abilities; but this is not a reason why we should do nothing, 2Co 8:12. Second. That situation is honourable, and may be useful, where God has placed us; and though humble, yet in that we may do much good, 1Co 12:11-31. Third. Men of slender abilities may often do more good in the world than men of much greater talents. It is rather a *warm heart* than a *strong head* which is required to do good. A humble Christian, by his life, example, and conversation, may often do much more good than is done by those in more elevated stations, and with far greater gifts.

We are not to suppose by this, however, that our Saviour meant to teach that only those of feeble talents neglected their duty. The parable does not require us to do this; and the fact is, perhaps, that those most highly endowed are the farthest from properly improving their talents.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *After a long time*, etc. By the return of the lord of those servants to reckon with them, is denoted the return of Christ to call men to an account for the manner in which they have improved their talents. See Ro 14:12 2Co 5:10; 1Th 4:16 Ac 1:11, 17:31

Reckoneth with them. To reckon is to settle accounts. Here it means to inquire into their faithfulness, and to reward or punish them accordingly.

{l} "long time" Mt 24:48 {m} "reckoneth" Mt 18:23,24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *I have gained*. Gained by trading, Mt 25:16. By honest industry.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Ruler over many things*. I will promote thee to greater honours and more important trusts.

Joy of thy lord. In the mean time, share the pleasures and enjoyments of his palace; be his companion; and receive the rewards which he has promised thee. *The joy of his lord* may mean either the festivals and rejoicing at his return, or the rewards which his lord had prepared for his faithful servants. Applied to Christians, it means that they who rightly improve their talents shall,

at the return of Christ, be promoted to great honours in heaven, and be partakers of the joys of their Lord in the world of glory. See Mt 25:34 1Jo 2:28.

{n} "ruler" Lu 12:44 22:29; Re 3:21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 22

Verse 22. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 23

Verse 23. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *The one talent*. The design of this part of the parable is to show that no one is excused in indolence because he has few talents. God will require of him only according to his ability, 1Co 4:2; Lu 12:48 2Co 8:12.

An hard man. Of a sordid, griping disposition; taking advantage of the poor, and oppressing them.

Reaping, etc. This is indicative of an avaricious and overbearing disposition. Compelling the poor to sow for him, and reaping all the benefit himself.

Hast not strawed. The word *strew* means to scatter—as men scatter seed in sowing it. It may mean also to ventilate, or to fan by ventilating, or winnowing. As sowing the seed is mentioned just before, it may be that this refers to gathering grain fanned or winnowed by others, while he did nothing—indicating also a hard or sordid disposition.

{o} "hard man" Job 21:15 {p} "sown" Jer 2:31

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *I was afraid*. I feared, lest by some accident thy talent would be lost if I put it out to trade, and that I should be severely punished by a hard master. I therefore kept it laid up safely, and hid it where it could not be lost.

That is thine. There is what properly belongs to thee. There is the original talent that thou gavest me, and that is all that can be reasonably required. Observe here,

(1.) that this expresses exactly the feelings of all sinners. God, in their view, is hard, cruel, unjust.

(2.) All the excuses of sinners are excuses for indolence and sin, and to cheat themselves out of heaven. The effect of this excuse was to lose the reward; so of the excuses of sinners for not doing their duty.

(3.) Sinners grudge everything to God. They are never willing to be liberal towards him, but are stinted and close; and if they give, they do it with hard feelings, and say that *that* is all he can claim.

{q} "afraid"

@Pr 26:13 Re 21:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Slothful*. Indolent, lazy, who had done nothing. God will judge men, not merely for doing wrong, but for not doing right. See Mt 25:45. That servant was wicked, because he had such an opinion of his master; he had shown that he was slothful, by not making good use of the talent, Mt 25:27.

Thou knewest, etc. This should be understood, and might have been translated, as a question. If you knew he was such a man, you ought to have acted accordingly, so as to have escaped punishment. "Didst thou know that I reap, etc? Then thou shouldst have given my money to the exchangers," etc. This is not intended to *admit* that he was such a man, but to convict the slothful servant of guilt and folly in not having been prepared to meet him.

{r} "wicked and slothful" Job 15:5,6; Mt 18:32 Lu 19:22; Jude 1:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *The exchangers*. The exchangers were persons who were in the habit of borrowing money, Or receiving it on deposit at a low rate of interest, to be loaned to others at higher interest. They commonly sat by tables in the temple, with money ready to exchange or loan. See Mt 21:12. This money was left with the servant, not to exchange, nor to increase it by any such idle means, but by honest industry and merchandise; but since he was too indolent for that, he ought at least to have loaned it to the exchangers, that his master might have received some benefit from it.

With usury. With interest, increase, or gain. The word *usury*, in our language, has a bad signification, meaning unlawful or exorbitant interest. This was contrary to the law, Ex 22:25 Le 25:36. The original means *gain*, increase, or lawful interest.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 28

Verse 28. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *For unto every one that hath shall be given*. **See Barnes "Mt 13:12".**

This seems to be a proverbial expression. It means, whosoever rightly improves what is committed to him shall receive more, or shall be rewarded; but he that misimproves what is committed to him shall not be rewarded. In pecuniary matters—in the *literal* sense of this parable—they who improve their money by industry or merchandise, increase it; they who do not—who are indolent or vicious—lose what they did possess, and it goes into the hands of the faithful and industrious. In the spiritual sense of the parable, it means only that they who are faithful shall be rewarded —not, however, that anything shall be taken from the unfaithful and given to them; and that the unfaithful and indolent shall be taken away from their privileges and punished.

{s} "For unto" Mt 13:12 Mr 4:25; Lu 8:18 19:26

{t} "taken away" Lu 10:42

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *And cast*, etc. **See Barnes "Mt 8:12".**

The spiritual meaning of the parable may be thus summed up:

(1.) The servants of God are not all endowed with equal gifts and talents.

(2.) They are bound to employ their talents in promoting his honour, and in a proper improvement of them.

(3.) By employing their talents in a proper manner, they improve and strengthen them.

(4.) They will be judged according to the improvements they have made

(5.) All sinners look on God as a hard master, and as unreasonable and tyrannical.

(6.) They will be judged, not merely for *doing wrong*, but for *neglecting to do right*.

(7.) If the servant who kept the talent entire without injuring it, and who returned it to his master as he received it, was nevertheless judged, condemned, and cast away, what must they expect who abuse their talents, destroy by drunkenness and lust the noble faculties conferred on them, and squander the property that might be employed in advancing the interests of morals and religion!

{u} "there shall be" Mt 8:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *When the Son of man*, etc. This is in answer to the question which the disciples proposed to him respecting the end of the world, Mt 24:3. That this refers to the last judgment, and not, as some have supposed, to the destruction of Jerusalem, appears

(1.) from the fact that it was in answer to an express inquiry respecting *the end* of the world.

(2.) *All nations* were to be assembled—which did not take place at Jerusalem.

(3.) A separation was to take place between the righteous and the wicked —which was not done at Jerusalem.

(4.) The rewards and punishments are declared to be eternal. None of these things took place at the destruction of Jerusalem.

In his glory. In his own proper honour. With his glorified body, and as the Head and King of the universe, Ac 1:11 Ep 1:20-22; 1Th 4:16

1Co 15:24,25.

The throne of his glory. This means, in the language of the Hebrews, his glorious or splendid throne. It is not to be taken literally, as if there would be a material throne or seat of the King of Zion. It expresses the idea that he will come *as a King and Judge* to assemble his subjects before him, and to appoint them their rewards.

{v} "When" Da 7:13 Zec 14:5; Mt 16:27 19:28; Mr 8:38 Ac 1:11; 1Th 4:16

2Th 1:7 Jude 1:14; Re 1:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *And before him*, etc. At his coming to judgment, the world will be burned up and destroyed, 2Pe 3:10,12; Re 20:11.

The dead in Christ, i.e., all true Christians—shall be first raised up from their graves, 1Th 4:16. The living shall be changed —i.e., shall be made like the glorified bodies of those that are raised from the dead, 1Co 15:52-54 1Th 4:17. All the wicked shall rise and come forth to judgment, Joh 5:28,29; Da 12:2; Mt 13:41,42; Re 20:13.

Then shall the world be judged, the righteous saved, and the wicked punished.

And he shall separate, etc. Shall determine respecting their character, and shall appoint them their doom accordingly.

{w} "And before him" Ro 14:10 2Co 5:10; Re 20:12

{x} "separate them" Eze 20:38 Mt 13:49 {y} "shepherd divideth" Ps 78:52 Joh 10:14,27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *Shall set the sheep*, etc. By the sheep are denoted, here, the righteous. The name is given to them because the sheep is an emblem of innocence and harmlessness. See Joh 10:7 14-16 27; Ps 100:3 74:1, 23:1

On his right hand. The right hand is the place of honour, and denotes the situation of those who are honoured, or those who are virtuous. See Ec 10:2 Eph 1:20; Ps 110:1 Ac 2:25,33.

The goats. The wicked. See Eze 34:17.

The left. That is, the left hand. This was the place of dishonour, denoting condemnation. See Ec 10:2.

{z} "right hand" Heb 1:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *The King*. That is, the Lord Jesus, the King of Zion and of the universe, now acting as Judge, Lu 19:38 Joh 18:37; Re 17:14 19:16.

Blessed of my Father. Made happy, or raised to felicity by my Father. **See Barnes "Mt 5:3"**.

Inherit the kingdom. Receive as heirs the kingdom, or be received there as the sons of God. Christians are often called heirs of God, Ro 8:17 Ga 4:6,7 Heb 1:14; 1Jo 3:2.

Prepared for you, etc. That is, *designed* for you, or appointed for you. The phrase, *from the foundation of the world*, is used to denote that this was appointed for them in the beginning; that God has no new plan; that the rewards which he will now confer on them he always *intended* to confer. Christ says to the righteous that the kingdom was prepared for *them*. Of course God meant to confer it on them. They were individuals; and it follows that he intended to bestow his salvation on them as individuals. Accordingly, the salvation of his people is uniformly represented as the result of the free gift of God, according to his own pleasure, bestowed on individuals, and by a plan which is eternal, Ro 8:29,30; Eph 1:4 5 11 12 2Th 2:13; 1Pe 1:2 Joh 6:37. This is right and consistent with justice; for,

(1.) all men are by nature equally undeserving.

(2.) Bestowing favours on one does not do injustice to another, where neither deserves favour. Pardoning one criminal is not injuring another. Bestowing great talents on Locke, Newton, or Paul, did not injure me.

(3.) If it is right for God to give eternal life to his people, or to admit them to heaven, it was right to *determine* to do it, which is but another way of saying that God resolved from all eternity to *do right*. Those who perish *choose* the paths which lead to death, and will not be saved by the merits of Jesus. No blame can be charged on God if he does not save them against their will, Joh 5:40 Mr 16:15,16.

{a} "blessed of" Ps 115:15 {b} "inherit" Ro 8:17 1Pe 1:4 {c} "the kingdom" 1Th 2:12 Re 5:10 {d} "prepared" 1Co 2:9 Heb 11:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 35

Verses 35,36. *I was an hungred*. The union between Christ and his people is the most tender and endearing of all connexions. It is represented by the closest unions of which we have knowledge, Joh 15:4-6; Eph 5:23-32; 1Co 6:15.

This is a union not physical, but moral; a union of feelings, interests, plans, destiny; or, in other words, he and his people have similar feelings, love the same objects, share the same trials, and inherit the same blessedness, Joh 14:19 Re 3:5,21 Ro 8:17.

Hence he considers favours shown to his people as shown to himself, and will reward them accordingly, Mt 10:40 42. They show *attachment* to him, and love to his cause. By showing kindness to the poor, and needy, and sick, they show that they possess his spirit—for he did it when on earth; they evince attachment to him, for he was poor and needy; and they show that they have the proper spirit to fit them for heaven, 1Jo 3:14,17; Jas 2:1-5 Mr 9:41.

Was a stranger. The word *stranger* means a *foreigner*, or traveller; in our language, one unknown to us. To receive such to the rites of hospitality was, in eastern countries, where there were few or no public houses, a great virtue. See Ge 18:1-8 Heb 13:2.

Took me in. Into your house. Received me kindly.

Naked. Poorly clothed. Among the Jews they were called naked who were clad in poor raiment, or they who had on only the tunic or inner garment, without any outer garment. **See Barnes "Mt 5:40** Ac 19:16; Mr 14:51,52; Job 22:6 Isa 58:7.

{e} "For I was" Is 58:7 Eze 18:7 {f} "stranger" 1Pe 4:9 3Jo 1:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 36

Verse 36. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 25:35"

{g} "naked" Jas 2:15,16 {h} "ye visited" Jas 1:27 {i} "in prison" 2Ti 1:16 Heb 13:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 37

Verses 37-39. *Then shall the righteous*, etc. This answer is indicative of humility—a deep sense of their being unworthy such commendation. They will feel that their poor acts of kindness have come so far short of what they should have been, that they have no claim to praise or reward. It is not, however, to be supposed that in the day of judgment this will be actually said by the righteous, but that this would be a proper expression of their feelings.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 38

Verse 38. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 25:37"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 39

Verse 39. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 25:37"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 40

Verse 40. *One of the least of these*. One of the obscurest, least known, poorest, and most despised and afflicted.

My brethren. Either those who are Christians, whom he condescends to call brethren, or those who are afflicted, poor, and persecuted, who are his brethren and companions in suffering, and who suffer as he did on earth. See Heb 2:11 Mt 12:50. How great is the condescension and kindness of the Judge of the world, thus to reward our actions, and to consider what we have done to the poor as done to him!

{l} "Inasmuch" Pr 19:17 Mr 9:41; Heb 6:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 41

Verse 41. *On the left hand*. The wicked.

Ye cursed. That is, ye who are devoted to destruction, whose characters deserve everlasting punishment, and who are about to enter into it. To curse, is the opposite of to bless. It implies a negation of all the blessings of heaven, and a positive infliction of eternal sufferings.

Everlasting fire. Fire, here, is used to denote punishment. The image is employed to express extreme suffering, as a death by burning is one of the most horrible that call be conceived. The image was taken probably from the fires burning in the valley of Hinnom. **See Barnes "Mt 5:22"**.

It has been asked, whether the wicked will be burned in literal fire— and the common impression has been that they will be. Respecting that, however, it is to be observed,

(1.) that the main truth intended to be taught refers not to the manner of suffering, but to the *certainty* and *intensity* of it.

(2.) That the design, therefore, was to present an image of terrific and appalling suffering—an image well represented by fire.

(3.) That this image was well known to the Jews, Isa 66:24 and therefore expressed the idea in a very strong manner.

(4.) That all the truth that Christ intended to convey appears to be expressed in the certainty, intensity, and eternity of future torment.

(5.) That there is no distinct affirmation respecting the *mode* of that punishment, where the *mode* was the subject of discourse.

(6.) That to us it is a subject of comparatively little consequence what will be the mode of punishment. The fact that the wicked will be eternally punished, cursed of God, should awe every spirit, and lead every man to secure his salvation. As, however, the *body* will be raised, it is not unreasonable to suppose that a mode of punishment will be adopted suited to the body, perhaps bearing some analogy to suffering here, in its various forms of flames, and racks, and cold, and heat, and war, and disease, and ungratified desire, and remorse—perhaps the concentration of all earthly woes, all that makes man miserable here, poured upon the naked body and spirit of the wicked in hell, for ever and ever.

Prepared for the devil. The devil is the prince of evil spirits. This place of punishment was fitted for him when he rebelled against God, Jude 1:6 Re 12:8,9.

His angels. His messengers, his servants, or those angels that he drew off from heaven by his rebellion and whom he has employed as his messengers to do evil. The word *may* extend also to

all his followers —fallen angels or men. There is a remarkable difference between the manner in which the righteous shall be addressed, and the wicked. Christ will say to the one that the kingdom was prepared for *them*; to the other, that the fire was not prepared for *them*, but for another race of beings. They will inherit it because they have the same character as the devil, and therefore are fitted to the same place—not because it was originally fitted for them.

{m} "Depart" Lu 13:27 {n} "into everlasting fire" Mt 13:40,42; Re 14:11

{o} "prepared for the devil" Jude 1:6 Re 20:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 42

Verse 42. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 43

Verse 43. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 44

Verse 44. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 45

Verse 45. *Inasmuch as ye did it not*, etc. By not doing good to the followers of Christ, they showed that they had no real love to *him*. By not doing good to the poor and needy, to the stranger and the prisoner, they show that they have not his Spirit, and are not like him, and are unfit for his kingdom. Let it be observed here, that the public ground of their condemnation is the *neglect* of duty, or because *they did it not*. We are not to suppose that they will not also be condemned for their open and positive sins. See Ro 2:9 Ep 5:5; Co 3:5 6; 1Co 6:9 10; Re 21:8 Ps 9:17, but their neglect of charity, or of doing good to him and his people, may be the public reason of condemning them:

(1.) Because he wished to give *pre-eminence* to those virtues, to excite his followers to do them.

(2.) Men should be punished for *neglect* as well as positive sin. Sin is a violation of the law, or refusing to do what God commands.

(3.) Nothing better shows the true state of the heart than those duties, and the true character can be as well tested by them as by open crimes.

If it be asked how the heathen, who never heard of the name of Christ, can be justly condemned in this manner, it may be answered:

1st. That Christ acknowledges all the poor, and needy, and strangers of every land, as his brethren. See Mt 25:40.

2nd. That by neglecting the duties of charity they show that they have not his Spirit—are not like him.

3rd. That these duties are clearly made known by conscience, and the light of nature, as well as by revelation; and men may therefore be condemned for the neglect of them.

4th. That they are not condemned for not believing in Christ, of whom they have not heard, but for a wrong spirit, neglect of duty, open crime; for being *unlike* Christ, and therefore unfit for heaven.

One of the least of these. These on my right hand. My brethren. Those who are saved.

{p} "Inasmuch" Zec 2:8 Ac 9:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 25 - Verse 46

Verse 46. *And these*, etc. These *persons*. Many, holding the doctrine of universal salvation, have contended that God would punish *sin* only. Christ says that those on his left hand shall go away-not *sins*, but *sinners*. Besides, *sin*, as an abstract thing, cannot be punished. It is nothing but the acts of transgressors; and to be reached at all, must be reached by punishing the offenders.

Into everlasting punishment.The original word, here translated *punishment*, means torment, or suffering inflicted for crime. The noun is used but in one other place in the New Testament, 1Jo 4:18, "Fear hath torment." The verb from which the noun is derived is twice used, Ac 4:21 2Pe 2:9. In all these places it denotes anguish, suffering, punishment. It does not mean simply a *state* or *condition*, but absolute, positive suffering; and if this word does not teach it, no word could express the idea that the wicked would suffer. It has been contended that the sufferings of the wicked would not be *eternal*, or *without end*. It is not the purpose of these Notes to enter into debates of that kind farther than to fix the meaning of words. In regard to the meaning of the word *everlasting* in this place, it is to be observed:

1st. That the *literal* meaning of the word expresses absolute eternity— *always being*, Mt 18:8 19:16; Mr 3:29 Ro 2:7; Heb 5:9.

2nd. That the obvious, plain interpretation of the word demands this signification.

3rd. That admitting that it was the Saviour's design *ever* to teach his doctrine, this would be the very word to express it; and if this does not teach it, it *could not* be taught.

4th. That it is not taught in any plainer manner in any confession of faith on the globe; and if this may be explained away, all those may be

5th. That our Saviour knew that this would be so understood by nine-tenths of the world; and if he did not mean to teach it, he has knowingly led them into error, and his honesty cannot be vindicated.

6th. That he knew that the doctrine was calculated to produce *fear* and *terror*; and if he was benevolent, his conduct cannot be vindicated in exciting unnecessary fears.

7th. *That the word used here is the same in the original as that used to express the eternal life of the righteous*; if one can be proved to be limited in duration, the other can by the *same arguments.*

The proof that the righteous will be happy for ever is precisely the same, and no other than that the wicked will be miserable for ever.

8th. That it is confirmed by many other passages of Scripture, 2Th 1:7,8,9 Lu 16:26 Re 14:11; Ps 9:17 Is 33:14; Mr 16:16; Joh 3:36.

Life eternal. Man by sin has plunged himself into death—temporal, spiritual, eternal. Christ, by coming and dying, has abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light, 2Ti 1:10. *Life* is the opposite of death. It denotes, here, freedom from death, and positive holiness and happiness for ever.

{q} "And these" Da 12:2 Joh 5:29

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 1

MATTHEW CHAPTER 26

Verses 1-16. See also Mr 14:1-11 Lu 22:1-6; Joh 12:1-7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *After two days is* the feast *of the Passover*. **See Barnes "Mt 12:1-8"**.

The festival of the passover was celebrated to preserve among the Jews the memory of their liberation from Egyptian servitude, and of the safety of their firstborn in that night when the firstborn of the Egyptians perished, Ex 12:1. The name *passover* was given to the feast because the Lord *passed over* the houses of the Israelites without slaying their firstborn, while the Egyptians were cut off, Ex 12:13. It was celebrated seven days, viz., from the 15th to the 21st of the month ABIB, or NISAN, (April,) Ex 12:15-20. During all this period the people ate unleavened bread, and hence the festival was sometimes called *the feast of unleavened bread*, Ex 12:18 Le 23:6. On the evening of the fourteenth day, all the leaven or yeast in the family was removed with great care, as it is to the present time—a circumstance to which the apostle alludes in 1Co 5:7. On the 10th day of the month the master of a family separated a lamb or a goat of a year old from the flock, (Ex 12:1-6,) which he slew on the 14th day before the altar, De 16:2,5,6.

The lamb was commonly slain at about 3 o'clock, P.M . The blood of the paschal lamb was, in Egypt, sprinkled on the doorposts of the houses; afterwards it was poured by the priests at the foot of the altar, Ex 12:7. The lamb thus slain was roasted whole, with two spits thrust through it —-one lengthwise, and one transversely—crossing each other near the fore legs; so that the animal was, in a manner, crucified. Not a bone of it might be broken—a circumstance strongly representing the sufferings of our Lord Jesus, the Passover slain for us, Joh 19:36 1Co 5:7. Thus roasted, the lamb was served up with wild and bitter herbs. Not fewer than ten, nor more than twenty persons, were

admitted to these sacred feasts. At first it was observed with the loins girt about, with sandals on their feet, and with all the preparations for an immediate journey. This, in Egypt, was significant of the haste with which they were about to depart from the land of bondage. The custom was afterwards retained.

The order of the celebration of this feast was as follows: The ceremony commenced with drinking a cup of wine mingled with water, after having given thanks to God for it. This was the first cup. Then followed the washing of hands, with another short form of thanksgiving to God. The table was then supplied with the provisions, viz., the bitter salad, the unleavened bread, the lamb, and a thick sauce composed of dates, figs, raisins, vinegar, etc. They then took a small quantity of salad, with another thanksgiving, and ate it. After which, all the dishes were removed from the table, and a second cup of wine set before each guest as at first. The dishes were removed, it is said, to excite the curiosity of children, and to lead them to make inquiry into the cause of this observance. See Ex 12:26,27. The leading person at the feast then began and rehearsed the history of the servitude of the Jews in Egypt, the manner of their deliverance, and the reason of instituting the passover. The dishes were then returned to the table, and he said, "*This is the passover which we eat, because that the Lord passed over the houses of our fathers in Egypt*;" and then holding up the salad and the unleavened bread, he stated the *design*, viz., that the one represented the *bitterness* of the Egyptian bondage, and the other the suddenness of their deliverance. This done, he repeated the 113th and 114th Psalms, offered a short prayer, and all the company drank the wine that had been standing some time before them. This was the *second cup*. The hands were then again washed, and the meal then eaten, with the usual forms and solemnities. After which they washed the hands again, and then drank another cup of wine, called the cup of blessing, because the leader was accustomed in a particular manner, over that cup, to offer thanks to God for his goodness. This is the cup which our Saviour is supposed to have taken when he instituted the Lord's Supper, called by Paul *the cup of blessing*, 1Co 10:16. There was still another cup, which was drunk when they were about to separate, called the Hallel, because in connexion with it they were accustomed to repeat the lesser *Hallel*, or the 115th, 116th, 117th, 118th Psalms. In accordance with this, our Saviour and his disciples sang a hymn, as they were about to go to the Mount of Olives, Mt 26:30. It is probable that our Saviour complied with these rites according to the custom of the Jews. While doing it, he signified that the *typical* reference of the passover was about to be accomplished, and he instituted in place of it *the Supper*—the communion—and of course the obligation to keep the passover then ceased.

The Son of man is betrayed. Will be betrayed. He did not mean to say that they then knew that he would be betrayed, for it does not appear that they had been informed of the precise time. But they knew that the passover was at hand, and he then informed them that he would be betrayed.

To be crucified. To be put to death on the cross. **See Barnes "Mt 27:35".**

{r} "Ye know" Mr 14:1 Lu 22:1; Joh 13:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Then assembled*, etc. This was a meeting of the great council or sanhedrim. **See Barnes "Mt 5:22".**

The palace. The original word properly denotes the *hall* or large area in the centre of the dwelling, called the court. **See Barnes "Mt 9:2"**.

It may be understood, however, as referring to the palace itself.

The High Priest. Holding the office that was first conferred on Aaron, Ex 28:1 and following. The office was at first hereditary, descending on the eldest son Nu 3:10. Antiochus Epiphanes, (B. C. 160) when he had possession of Judea, sold the office to the highest bidder. In the year 152 B.C., Alexander, king of Syria, conferred the office on JONATHAN, 1Mac 10:18-20, whose brother Simon was afterwards created by the Jews both prince and high priest, 1Mac 14:35-47. His posterity, who at the same time sustained the office of kings, occupied the station of high priest till the time of Herod, who changed the incumbents of the office at pleasure: a liberty which the Romans ever afterwards exercised without any restraint. The office was never more fluctuating than in the time of our Saviour. Hence it is said that Caiaphas was high priest for *that year*, Joh 11:51. Persons who had been high priests, and had been removed from office, still retained the name. Hence more than one high priest is sometimes mentioned, though strictly there was but one who held the office.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *By subtilty*. By guile, deceit, or in some secret manner, so that the people would not know it. Jesus was regarded by the people as a distinguished prophet, and by most of them probably, as the Messiah; and the sanhedrim did not dare to take him away openly, lest the people should rise and rescue him. They were probably aware that he had gone out to Bethany, or to some of the places adjacent to the city; and as he passed his nights there, and not in the city, there was need of guile to ascertain the place where he remained, and to take him.

{v} "And consulted" Ps 2:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Not on the feast day*. Not during the feast. The feast lasted seven days. A vast multitude attended from all parts of Judea. Jerusalem is said to have contained at such times *three millions of people*. Amidst such a multitude there were frequent tumults and seditions; and the sanhedrim was justly apprehensive there *would* be now, if in open day, and in the temple, they took away a teacher so popular as Jesus, and put him to death. They therefore sought how they might do it secretly, and by guile.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *In Bethany*. **See Barnes "Mt 21:1"**.

Simon the leper Simon who *had been a leper*.

Leper. **See Barnes "Mt 8:2"**.

It was unlawful to eat with persons that *had* the leprosy; and it is more than probable, therefore, that this Simon had been healed—perhaps by our Lord himself. Mt 12:1 says, that this was the house where Lazarus was, who had been raised from the dead. Probably Lazarus was a relative of Simon's, and was living with him. He farther says that they made Jesus a supper, and that Martha served. John says that this was six days before the passover. From the order in which Matthew and Mark mention it, it would have been supposed that it was but two days before the passover, and after the cleansing of the temple. But it is to be observed,

(1.) that Matthew and Mark often neglect the exact order of the events that they record.

(2.) That they do not *affirm* at what time this was. They leave it indefinite, saying that *while* Jesus was in Bethany he was anointed by Mary.

(3.) That Matthew introduced it here for the purpose of giving a *connected* account of the conduct of *Judas*. Judas murmured at the waste of the ointment, Joh 12;4

and one of the *effects* of his indignation, it seems, was to betray his Lord.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *There came unto him a woman*. This woman was Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha, Joh 12:3.

Having an alabaster box. The alabaster is a species of marble, distinguished for being light, and of a beautiful white colour, almost transparent. It was much used by the ancients for the purpose of preserving various kinds of ointment in.

Of very precious ointment. That is, of ointment *of much value*; that was rare, and difficult to be obtained. Mark (Mr 14:3) and John (Joh 12:3) say, that it was ointment of spikenard. In the original it is *nard*. It was procured from an herb growing in the Indies, chiefly obtained from the root—though sometimes also from the bark. It was liquid, so as easily to flow when the box or phial was open, and was distinguished particularly for an agreeable smell. See So 1:12. The ancients were much in the habit of *anointing* or *perfuming* their bodies, and the *nard* was esteemed one of the most precious perfumes. John says there was a *pound* of this, (Joh 12:3.) The *pound* in use among them was the Roman, of twelve ounces, answering to our Troy weight. That there was a large quantity is farther evident from the fact that Judas says it might have been sold for three hundred pence, (forty dollars,) [or £9,] and that the house was filled with the odour of the ointment, (John.)

And poured it on his head. They were accustomed chiefly to anoint the head, or hair. John says (Joh 12:3) that she poured it on the feet of Jesus, and wiped them with her hair. There is, however, no contradiction. She probably poured it *both* on his head and his feet. Matthew and Mark having recorded the former, John, who wrote his gospel in part to record events omitted by them, relates that the ointment was also poured on the feet of the Saviour. To pour ointment on the *head* was common. To pour it on the *feet* was an act of distinguished humility and attachment to the Saviour, and therefore deserved to be particularly recorded.

As he sat at meat. That is, at supper. In the original, as he *reclined* at supper. The ancients did not *sit* at their meals, but reclined at length on couches. **See Barnes "Mt 23:6"**.

She came up, therefore, *behind him*, as he lay reclined at the table; and bending down over the couch, poured the ointment on his head and his feet; and probably kneeling at his feet, wiped them with her hair.

{t} "Then came" Joh 11:1,2, 12:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *They had indignation*. John says that Judas expressed indignation. Probably some of the others *felt* indignation, but Judas only gave vent to his feelings. The reason why Judas was indignant was that he had the *bag*, (Joh 12:6;) i.e., the *purse*, or repository of articles given to the disciples and to the Saviour. He was a thief; and was in the habit, it seems, of taking out and putting to his own use what was put in for them in common. The leading trait of Judas' character was *avarice*; and no opportunity was suffered to pass without attempting by base and wicked means, to make money. In his example, an avaricious man may learn the true nature and the effect of that grovelling and wicked passion. It led him to commit the enormous crime of betraying his Lord to death; and it will always lead its possessor to guilt. No small part of the sins of the men of the world can be traced to avarice; and many and many a time since the days of Judas has the Lord Jesus been betrayed among his professed friends by the same base propensity.

Is this waste. This loss or destruction of property. They could see no use in it, and they therefore supposed it was lost.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Sold for much*. Mark and John say for 300 pence; that is, for about 40 dollars, [about £ 9.] This, to them, was a large sum. Mark says, they murmured against her. There was also an implied murmuring against the Saviour for suffering it to be done. The murmuring was, however, without cause. It was the property of Mary. She had a right to dispose of it as she pleased, answerable not to them, but to God. They had no right over it, and no cause of complaint ff it had been wasted. So Christians now are at liberty to dispose of their property as they please, either in distributing the Bible, in supporting the gospel, in sending it to heathen nations, or in aiding the poor. The world, like Judas, esteems it to be wasted. Like Judas, they are indignant. They say it might be disposed of in a better way. Yet, like Judas, they are interfering in that which concerns them not. Like other men, Christians have a right to dispose of their property as they please, answerable only to God. And though an avaricious world esteems it to be *waste*, yet if their Lord commands it, it will be found to be the *only way* in which it was *right* for them to dispose of that property, and will be found not to have been in vain.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Trouble ye the woman*. That is disturb her mind by insinuations, as if she had done wrong.

A good work upon me. She has done it with a mind grateful, and full of love to me. The work was *good*, also, as it was preparative to his death, Mt 26:12.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *For ye have the poor*, etc. Mark adds, "Whensoever ye will ye may do them good." It was right that they should regard the poor. It was a plain precept of religion, (see Ps 41:1 Pr 14:21; Pr 29:7; Ga 2:10,) and our Saviour would not prohibit it, but do all that was possible to excite his followers to the duty. But every duty should be done in its place, and the duty then incumbent was that which Mary had performed. They would afterwards have abundant occasion to show their regard for the poor.

Me ye have not always. He alludes here to his dying, and his going away to heaven. He would be their Friend and their Saviour, but he would not be *bodily* present with them always, so that they could show kindness *in this way to him*.

{u} "For ye have the poor" De 15:11 {v} "me ye have not" Joh 14:19 17:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *She did it for my burial*. It is not to be supposed that Mary understood clearly that he was *then* about to die, for the apostles, it seems, did not fully comprehend it, or that she *intended* it for his burial; but she had done it as an act of kindness and love, to show her regard for her Lord. *He* said that it was a *proper preparation* for his burial. Anciently, bodies were anointed and embalmed for the purpose of the sepulchre. Jesus said that this was *really* a preparation for that burial, as fitting him in a proper manner for the tomb.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *A memorial*. Anything to produce *remembrance*. This should be told to her honour and credit, as a memorial of her piety and self-denial; and it is right that the good deeds of the pious should be recorded and had in recollection.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Then one of the twelve*, etc. Luke says that Satan entered into Judas. That is, Satan *tempted* or instigated him to do it. Probably he tempted Judas by appealing to his avarice, his ruling

passion, and by suggesting that now was a favourable opportunity to make money rapidly, by selling his Lord.

Judas Iscariot. **See Barnes "Mt 10:4".**

Unto the Chief Priests. The high priest, and those who *had* been high priests. The ruling men of the sanhedrim. Luke adds, that he went also to *the captains*, (Mt 22:4.) It was necessary, on account of the great wealth deposited there, and its great sacredness, to guard the temple by night. Accordingly, men were stationed around it, whose leaders or commanders were caned captains, Ac 4:1. These men were commonly of the tribe of the Levites, were closely connected with the priests, were men of influence; and Judas went to them, therefore, as well as to the priests, to offer himself as a traitor. Probably his object was to get as much money as possible; and he might therefore have attempted to make a bargain with several of them apart from each other.

{w} "of the twelve" Mt 10:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *And they covenanted with him*. Made a bargain with him. Agreed to give him. Mark says they *promised* to give him money. They did not pay it to him *then*, lest he should deceive them. When the deed was done, and before he was made sensible of its guilt, they paid him. See Mt 27:3 Ac 1:18.

Thirty pieces of silver. Mark and Luke do not mention the sum. They say that they promised him *money*—in the original, *silver*. In Matthew, in the original, it is thirty *silvers*, or *silverlings*. This was the price *of a slave*. See Ex 21:32. And it is not unlikely that this sum was fixed on by them to show their contempt of Jesus, and that they regarded him as of little value. There is no doubt, also, that they understood that such was the anxiety of Judas to obtain money, that he would betray his Lord for any sum. The money usually denoted by pieces of silver, when the precise sum is not mentioned, is a shekel —a silver Jewish coin, amounting to about fifty cents, [or 2s. 3d.] The whole sum, therefore, for which Judas committed this crime, was fifteen dollars, [or 3l 7s. 6d.]

{x} "covenanted" Zec 11:12,13; Mt 27:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Sought opportunity to betray him*. Luke adds, "in the absence of the multitude." This was the chief difficulty, to deliver him into the hands of the priests so as not to have it known by the people, or so as not to excite tumult. The *opportunity* which he sought, therefore, was one in which the multitude *would* not see him, or *could* not rescue the Saviour.

To betray him. The word means to deliver into the hands of an enemy by treachery or breach of trust; to do it while friendship or faithfulness is *professed*. All this took place in the case of Judas. But the word in the original does not necessarily imply this. It means simply to deliver up, or to give into their hands. He sought opportunity *how he might deliver him up to them*, agreeably to the contract.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 17

Verses 17-19. See also Mr 14:12-16 Lu 22:7-13

Verse 17. *The first day*, etc. The feast continued eight days, including the day on which the paschal lamb was killed and eaten, Ex 12:15. That was the fourteenth day of the month Abib, answering to parts of our March and April.

Of unleavened bread. Called so because, during those eight days, no bread made with yeast or leaven was allowed to be eaten. Luke says, "when the Passover must be killed." That is, in which the *paschal lamb*, or the lamb eaten on the occasion, must be killed. The word in the original, translated passover, commonly means, not the feast itself, but the lamb that was killed on the occasion.

See Ex 12:43 Nu 9:11; Joh 18:28 1Co 5:7, where Christ *our Passover*, is said to be slain for us; i.e. our Paschal Lamb, so called on account of his innocence, and his being offered as a victim, or *sacrifice*, for our sins.

{y} "Now the first day" Ex 12:6,18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Go into the city to such a man*. That is, Jerusalem, called the city, by way of eminence. Luke says that the disciples whom he sent were Peter and John. The man to whom they were to go, it seems, he did not mention by name, but he told them that when they came into the city, a man would meet them bearing a pitcher of water. See Mark and Luke. Him they were to follow, and in the house which he entered they would find a room prepared. The name of the man was not mentioned. The *house* in which they were to keep the passover was not mentioned. The reason of this probably was, that Christ was desirous of concealing from *Judas* the place where they would keep the passover. He was acquainted with the design of Judas to betray him. He knew that if Judas was acquainted with the place *beforehand*, he could easily give information to the chief priests, and it would give them a favourable opportunity to surprise them, and apprehend *him* without making a tumult. Though it was certain that he would not be delivered up before the time appointed by the Father, yet it was proper *to use the means* to prevent it. There can be but little doubt that Jesus was acquainted with this man, and that he was a disciple. The direction which he gave his disciples most clearly proves that he was omniscient. Amidst so great a multitude going at that time into the city, it was impossible to know that *a particular man would be met* a man bearing a pitcher of water—unless Jesus had all knowledge, and was therefore Divine.

The Master saith. This was the name by which Jesus was probably known among the disciples, and one which he directed them to give him. See Mt 23:8,10. It means, literally, *the teacher*, as opposed to the *disciple*, or learner; not the *master*, as opposed to the *servant* or *slave*. The fact that they used this name *as if* the man would know whom they meant, and the fact that he understood them, and made no inquiries about him, shows that he was acquainted with Jesus, and was probably himself a disciple.

My time is at hand. That is, is *near*. By *his time* here may be meant, either his time to eat the passover, or the time of his death. It has been supposed by many, that Jesus, in accordance with a

part of the Jews who rejected traditions, anticipated the usual observance of the passover, or kept it one day sooner. The Pharisees had devised many forms of ascertaining when the month commenced. They placed witnesses around the heights of the temple to observe the first appearance of the new moon; they examined the witnesses with much formality, and endeavoured also to obtain the exact time by astronomical calculations. Others held that the month properly commenced when the moon was *visible*. Thus it is said a difference arose between them about the time of the passover, and that Jesus kept it one day sooner than most of the people. The foundation of the opinion that Jesus anticipated the usual time of keeping the passover is the following:

(1.) In Joh 18:28, it is said that on the day on which our Lord was crucified, and of course the *day after* he had eaten the passover, the chief priests would not go into the judgment-hall, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the passover, evidently meaning that it was to be eaten that day.

(2.) In Joh 19:14, the day on which he was crucified is called the *preparation of the passover*; that is, the day on which it was prepared to be eaten in the evening.

(3.) In John 19:31, the day in which our Lord lay in the grave was called the great day of the Sabbath, "an high day." That is, the day after the passover was killed, the Sabbath occurring on the first day of the feast properly, and therefore a day of peculiar solemnity. Yet our Saviour had partaken of it *two* days before, and therefore the *day before* the body of the people. If this opinion be true, then the phrase "my time is at hand" means, *my* time for keeping the passover is near. Whether the opinion be true or not, there may be a reference also to *his death*. This was probably a disciple of his, though perhaps a secret one. Jesus might purpose to keep the passover at his house, that he might inform him more particularly respecting his death, and prepare him for it. He sent therefore to him, and said, "I will keep the passover *at thy house*."

Mark and Luke add, that he would show them "a large upper room, furnished and prepared." Ancient writers remark, that at the time of the great feasts the houses in Jerusalem were all open to receive guests; that the houses were in a manner common to the people of Judea; and there is no doubt, therefore, that the master of a house would have it ready on such occasions for company. It is possible also that there might have been an agreement between this man and our Lord, that he would prepare his house for him, though this was unknown to the disciples. The word rendered *furnished* means, literally, *spread*; that is, *spread* with carpets, and with couches, on which to recline as the table, after the manner of the East. **See Barnes "Mt 23:6"**.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *They made ready the Passover*. That is, they procured a *paschal lamb*, multitudes of which were kept for sale in the temple; they procured it to be killed and flayed by the priests, and the blood to be poured at the altar; they roasted the lamb, and prepared the bitter herbs, the sauce, and the unleavened bread. This was done, it seems, while our Lord was absent, by the two disciples.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *When the even was come*. The lamb was killed *between the evenings*, Ex 12:6, (Hebrew) that is, between three o'clock P.M. and nine in the evening. The Jews reckoned two evenings, one from three o'clock P.M. to sunset, the other from sunset to the close of the first watch in the night, or nine o'clock. The paschal supper was commonly eaten *after* the setting of the sun, and often in the night, Ex 12:8.

He sat down. At first, the supper was eaten standing, with the loins girded and their staff in their hand, denoting the haste with which they were about to flee from Egypt. Afterwards, however, they introduced the practice, it seems, of partaking of this as they did of their ordinary meals. The original word is, *he reclined*; i.e., he placed himself on the couch in a reclining posture, in the usual manner in which they partook of their meals. **See Barnes "Mt 23:6".**

While sitting there at the supper, the disciples had a dispute which should be the greatest. **See Barnes "Lu 22:24"**

and Lu 22:25-30. At this time also, before the institution of the Lord's Supper, Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, to teach them humility. **See Barnes "Joh 13:1"**

and Joh 13:2-20.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 21

Verses 21-24. *As they did eat*, etc. The account contained in these verses is also recorded in Mr 14:18-21 Lu 22:21-23; Joh 13:21-22.

John xiii. 21, 22. John says, that before Jesus declared that one of them should betray him, *he was troubled in spirit*, and testified. That is, he *felt deeply* the greatness of the crime that Judas was about to commit, and anticipated with much feeling the sufferings that he was to endure.

He testified. He bore witness, or he *declared*.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *They were exceeding sorrowful*. John says, they looked on one another, like men in anxiety, conscious each one, except Judas, of no such intention, and each one beginning to examine himself, to find whether he was the person intended. This showed their innocence, and their attachment to Jesus. It showed how *sensitive* they were to the least suspicion of the kind. It showed that they were willing to know themselves; thus evincing the spirit of the true Christian. Judas only was silent, and was the last to make the inquiry, and that after he had been plainly indicated, Mt 26:25. Thus showing,

(1.) that guilt is slow to suspect itself;

(2.) that it shrinks from the light;

(3.) that it was his purpose to conceal his intention; and,

(4.) that nothing but the consciousness that his Lord knew it could induce him to make inquiry. The guilty would, if possible, always conceal their crimes. The innocent are ready to suspect that they may have done wrong. Their feelings are tender, and they inquire with solicitude whether there may not be something in their bosoms unknown to themselves, that may be a departure from right feeling.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish*. The Jews, at the observance of this ordinance, used a bitter *sauce*, made of bunches of raisins, mixed with vinegar and other seasoning of the like kind, which they said represented the clay which their fathers were compelled to use in Egypt, in making brick; thus reminding them of their bitter bondage there. This was probably the *dish* to which reference is made here. It is not improbable that Judas reclined near to our Saviour at the feast; and by his saying it was one that dipped with him in the dish, he meant one that was near to him, designating him more particularly than he had done before. John adds, (Joh 13:23-30); **See Barnes "Joh 13:23"**

and following, that a disciple (i.e. John himself) was reclining on Jesus' bosom; that Simon Peter beckoned to him to ask Jesus more particularly who it was; that Jesus signified who it was, by giving *Judas a sop*; i.e., a piece of bread or meat, dipped in the thick sauce; and that Judas, having received it, went out to accomplish his wicked design of betraying him. Judas was not, therefore, present at the institution of the Lord's Supper.

{z} "He that" Ps 41:9 55:12-15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *The Son of man goeth*. That is, the Messiah; the Christ. **See Barnes** "Mt 8:20.

Goeth. Dies, or will die. The Hebrews often spoke in this manner of death, Ps 39:13 Ge 15:2.

As it is written of him. That is, as it is *written* or prophesied of him in the Old Testament. Compare Ps 41:9, with Joh 13:18. See also Da 9:26,27; Isa 53:4-9.

Luke Lu 22:22 says, "as it was determined." In the Greek, as it was *marked out by a boundary*; that is, in the Divine purpose. It was the previous *intention* of God to give him up to die for sin, or it could not have been certainly predicted. It is also declared to have been by his "determinate counsel and foreknowledge," Ac 2:23.

Woe unto that man, etc. The crime is great and awful, and he will be punished accordingly. He states the greatness of his misery in the phrase following.

It had been good, etc. That is, it would have been better for him if he had not been born; or it would be better now for him if he was to be as if he had not been born, or if he was annihilated. This was a proverbial mode of speaking among the Jews in frequent use. In relation to Judas it proves the following things:

(1.) that the crime which he was about to commit was exceedingly great;

(2.) that the misery or punishment *due to it* would *certainly* come upon him;

(3.) that he would certainly *deserve* that misery, or it would not be threatened or inflicted; and,

(4.) that his punishment would be *eternal*. If there should be any period when the sufferings of Judas should *end*, and he be restored and raised to heaven, the blessings of that *happiness without end* would infinitely overbalance all the sufferings he will endure in a limited time; and consequently it would *not* be true that it would be better for him not to have been born. Existence to him would be a blessing. It follows that, in relation to *one* wicked man, the sufferings of hell will be eternal. If of *one*, then it is equally certain and proper that all the wicked will perish for ever.

If it be asked how this crime of Judas could be so great, or could be a crime at all, when it was determined beforehand that the Saviour should be betrayed and die in this manner, it may be answered:

(1.) That the crime was what it was *in itself*, apart from any determination of God. It was a violation of all the duties he owed to God, and to the Lord Jesus; awful ingratitude, detestable covetousness, and most base treachery. As such it *deserved* to be punished.

(2.) The previous purpose of God did not *force* Judas to do this. In it he acted freely. He did just what his wicked heart prompted him to do.

(3.) A previous *knowledge* of a thing, or a previous purpose to permit a thing, does not alter its nature, or cause it to be a different thing from what it is.

(4.) God, who is the best judge of the nature of crime, holds all that was done in crucifying the Saviour, though it was by his determinate counsel and foreknowledge, "to be by wicked hands,"

"Ac 2:23".

This punishment of Judas proves also that sinners cannot take shelter for their sins in the decrees of God, or plead them as an excuse. God will punish crimes for what they are in themselves. His own deep and inscrutable purposes in regard to human actions will not change *the nature* of those actions, or screen the sinner from the punishment which he deserves.

{a} "written of him" Ps 22:1 and following; Isa 53:1-12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Thou hast said*. That is, thou hast said the truth. It is so. Thou art the man. Compare Mt 26:64, with Mr 14:62.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 26

Verses 26-30. See also Mr 14:22-26 Lu 22:15-20; 1Co 11:23-25

Verse 26. As they were eating. As they were eating the paschal supper, near the close of the meal. Luke adds, that he said, just before instituting the sacramental Supper, "With desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." This is a Hebrew manner of expression, signifying, *I have greatly desired*, he had desired it, doubtless,

(1.) that he might institute the Supper, to be a perpetual memorial of him;

(2.) that he might strengthen them for their approaching trials;

(3.) that he might explain to them the true nature of the passover; and,

(4.) that he might spend another season with them in the duties of religion, of worship. Every *Christian* about to die will also seek opportunities of drawing specially near to God, and of holding communion with him, and with his people.

Jesus took bread. That is, the unleavened bread which they used at the celebration of the passover, made into thin cakes, easily broken and distributed.

And blessed it. Or sought a blessing on it; or gave thanks to God for it. The word rendered *blessed* not unfrequently means, *to give thanks*. Compare Lu 9:16 Joh 6:11. It is also to be remarked, that some manuscripts have the word rendered *gave thanks*, instead of the one translated *blessed*. It appears, from the writings of Philo and the Rabbins, that the Jews were never accustomed to eat without giving thanks to God, and seeking his blessing. This was especially the case in both the bread and the wine used at the passover.

And brake it. This *breaking* of the bread represented the sufferings of Jesus about to take place—his body *broken* or wounded for sin. Hence Paul 1Co 11:24 adds, "This is my body, which is *broken* for you." That is, which is *about* to be broken for you by death, or wounded, pierced, bruised, to make atonement for your sins.

This is my body. This *represents* my body. This broken bread shows the manner in which my body will be broken; or this will serve to call my dying sufferings to your remembrance. It is not meant that his body would be literally broken as the bread was, but that the bread would be a significant emblem or symbol to recall to their remembrance his sufferings. It is not improbable that our Lord pointed to the broken bread, or laid his hands on it, as if he had said, "Lo, my body! or, Behold my body! that which *represents* my broken body to you." This *could not* be intended to mean, that that bread was literally his body. It was not. His body was then before them living. And there is no greater absurdity than to imagine his *living body* there changed at once to *death*, and then the *bread* to be changed into that dead body, and all the while the *living* body of Jesus was before them. Yet this is the absurd and impossible doctrine of the Roman Catholics, holding that the *bread* and *wine* were literally changed into the *body* and *blood* of our Lord. This was a common mode of speaking among the Jews, and exactly similar to that used by Moses at the institution of the passover, (Ex 12:11) "It," i.e., the lamb, "is the Lord's passover." That is, the lamb and the feast *represent* the Lord's passing over the houses of the Israelites. It serves to *remind* you of it. It surely cannot be meant that that lamb was the literal *passing over* their houses a palpable absurdity—but that it *represented* it. So Paul and Luke say of the bread, "This is my body, which is broken for you: *this do* IN REMEMBRANCE *of me*." This expresses the whole design of the sacramental bread. It is to call to remembrance in a vivid manner the dying sufferings of our Lord. The sacred writers, moreover, often denote that one thing is *represented* by another by using the word *is*. See Mt 13:37: He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; i.e., represents the Son of man. Ge 41:26: The seven good kine ARE seven years; i.e., *represent* or signify seven years. See also Joh 15:1,5; Ge 17:10.

The meaning of this important passage may be thus expressed: "As I give this broken bread to you, to eat, *so* will I deliver my body to be afflicted and slain for your sins."

{b} "And as they" 1Co 11:23 {1} "blessed it", "Many Greek copies have *gave thanks*.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *And he took the cup*. That is, the cup of wine which they used at the feast of the passover, called the cup of *Hallel*, or praise, because they commenced then repeating the psalms with which they closed the passover. See Mt 26:30. This cup, Luke says, he took *after supper*. That is, after they had finished the ordinary celebration of *eating* the passover. The *bread* was taken *while* they were eating, the cup after they had done eating.

And gave thanks. **See Barnes "Mt 26:26".**

Drink ye all of it. That is, "all of you, disciples, drink of it ;" not, "drink *all* the wine."

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *For this is my blood*. This *represents* my blood: as the bread did his body. Luke and Paul vary the expression, adding what Matthew and Mark have omitted. "This cup is the new testament in my blood." By this *cup*, he meant the wine in the cup, and not the cup itself. Pointing to it, probably, he said, "This—*wine* represents my blood about to be shed." The phrase, "new testament," should have been rendered *new covenant*, referring to the *covenant* or *compact* that God was about to make with men through a Redeemer. The *old* covenant was that which was made with the Jews by the sprinkled of the blood of sacrifices. See Ex 24:8. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you, etc. In allusion to that, Jesus says, this cup is the NEW *covenant* in my blood; that is, *ratified*, or *sealed* and *sanctioned* by *my blood*. Anciently, covenants or contracts were ratified by slaying an animal; by the shedding of its blood; imprecating similar vengeance if either party failed in the compact. So Jesus says the covenant which God is about to form with men, the new covenant, or the gospel economy, is sealed or ratified with his blood.

Which is shed for many for the remission of sins. In order that sins may be remitted, or forgiven. That is, this is the appointed way by which God will pardon transgressions. That blood is efficacious for the pardon of sin:

(1.) Because it is *the life* of Jesus; the *blood* being used by the sacred writers as representing *life itself*, or as containing the elements of life, Ge 9:4 Le 17:14. It was forbidden, therefore, to eat blood, because it contained the life, or was the life, of the animal. When, therefore, Jesus says his blood was shed for many, it is the same as saying that *his life* was given for many. **See Barnes "Ro 3:25".**

(2.) His life was given for sinners, or he died in the place of sinners, as their substitute. By his death on the cross, the death or punishment due to them in hell may be removed, and their souls be saved. He endured *so much suffering*, bore so much agony, that God was pleased to accept it in the place of the eternal torments of all the redeemed. The interests of justice, the honour and stability of his government, would be as secure in saving them in this manner, as if the suffering were inflicted on them personally in hell. God, by giving his Son to die for sinners, has shown his infinite abhorrence of sin: since, according to his view, and therefore according to *truth*, nothing else would show its evil nature, but the awful sufferings of his own Son. That he died in the stead or place of

sinners, is abundantly clear from the following passages of Scripture: Joh 1:29 Ep 5:2; Heb 7:27 1Jo 2:2, 4:10; Isa 53:10 Ro 8:32; 2Co 5:15.

{c} "new testament" Jer 31:31

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *But I say unto you*, etc. That is, the observance of the passover, and of the rites shadowing forth future things, here end. I am about to die. The design of all these types and shadows is about to be accomplished. This is the last time that I shall partake of them with you. Hereafter, when my Father's kingdom is established in heaven, we will partake together of the thing represented by these *types* and *ceremonial observances*; the blessings and triumphs of redemption.

Fruit of the vine. *Wine*, the fruit or produce of the vine, made of the grapes of the vine.

Until that day. Probably the time when they should be received to heaven. It does not mean here on earth, farther than that they would partake with him in the happiness of spreading the gospel, and the triumphs of his kingdom.

When I drink it new with you. Not that he would partake with them of *literal* wine there, but in the thing represented by it. Wine was an important part of the feast of the passover, and of all feasts. The kingdom of heaven is often represented under the image of a feast. It means that he will partake of joy with them in heaven; that they will share together the honours and happiness of the heavenly world.

New. In a new manner; or, perhaps, *afresh*.

In my Father's kingdom. In heaven. The place where God shah reign in a kingdom fully established and pure.

{d} "my Father's kingdom" Isa 25:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *And when they had sung an hymn*. The passover was observed by the Jews by singing, or *chanting*, the 113th, 114th, 115th, 116th, 117th, and 118th psalms. These they divided into two parts. The 118th and 114th psalms they sung during the observance of the passover, and the others at the close. There can be no doubt that our Saviour, and the apostles also, used the same psalms in their observance of the passover. The word rendered *sung a hymn*, is a particle, literally meaning *hymning*, not confined to a single hymn, but admitting many.

Mount of Olives. **See Barnes "Mt 21:1"**.

{1} "hymn" or, "Psalm"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 31

Verses 31-35. *Jesus foretells the fall of Peter*. This is also recorded in Mr 14:27-31 Lu 21:31-34; Joh 13:36-38.

Verse 31. *Then saith Jesus unto them*, etc. The occasion of his saying this was Peter's bold affirmation that that he was ready to *die* with him, Joh 13:37. Jesus had told them that he was going away; i.e., was about to die. Peter asked him whither he was going. Jesus replied, that he could not follow then, but should afterwards. Peter, not satisfied with that, said that he was ready to lay down his life for him. Jesus then distinctly informed them that all of them would leave him that night.

All ye shall be offended because of me. **See Barnes "Mt 5:29"**.

It means, here, you will all *stumble* at my being taken, abused, and set at naught; you will be *ashamed* to own me as a teacher, and to acknowledge yourselves as my disciples. Or, my being betrayed will prove a snare to you all, so that you shall be guilty of the sin of forsaking me, and by your conduct of denying me.

For it is written, etc. See Zec 13:7. This is affirmed here to have reference to the Saviour, and to be fulfilled in him.

I will smite. This is the language of God the Father. *I* will smite, means either that I will give him up to be smitten, (compare Ex 4:21 8:16, etc.,), or that *I* will do it myself. Both of thrum things were done. God gave him up to the Jews and Romans, to be smitten for the sins of the world, (Ro 8:32;) and he himself *left* him to deep and awful sorrows, to bear "the burden of the world's atonement" alone. See Mr 15:34.

The shepherd. The Lord Jesus—the Shepherd of his people, Joh 10:11,14; comp. **See Barnes "Isa 11:11"**.

The sheep. This means here particularly the apostles. It also refers sometimes to all the followers of Jesus, the friends of God, Joh 10:16; Ps 100:3.

Shall be scattered abroad. This refers to their *fleeing*, and was fulfilled in that. See Mt 26:66.

{e} "is written" Zec 13:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *But after I am risen*, etc. This promise was given them to encourage and support them, and also to give them an indication where he might be found. He did not mean that he would first appear to some of them, but that he would meet them all in Galilee. This was done. See Mr 16:7 Mt 28:16.

Galilee. **See Barnes "Mt 2:22"**.

{f} "I will go before you" Mt 28:7,10,16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *Peter answered—though all*, etc. The word *men* is improperly inserted here by the translators. Peter meant only to affirm this of *the disciples*. This confidence of Peter was entirely

characteristic. He was ardent, sincere, and really attached to his Master. Yet this declaration was made, evidently:

(1.) From true love to Jesus.

(2.) From too much reliance on his own strength.

(3.) From ignorance of himself, and of the trials which he was soon to pass through. And it most impressively teaches us: \-

(1.) That no strength of attachment to Jesus can justify such confident promises of fidelity, made without dependence on him.

(2.) That all promises to adhere to him, should be made relying on him for aid.

(3.) That we little know how feeble we are, till we are tried.

(4.) That Christians *may be left* to great and disgraceful sins to show them their weakness. Luke adds, that Jesus said to Peter, that Satan had desired to have him, that he might sift him as wheat; that he might thoroughly try him. But Jesus says that he had prayed for him, that his faith should not fail, and charged him when he was *converted*, i.e., when he was turned from this sin, to strengthen his brethren, i.e., by teaching them to take warning by his example.

See Barnes "Lu 22:31-33".

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *This night*. This was in the evening when this was spoken, after the observance of the passover, and we may suppose near nine o'clock.

Before the cock crow. Mark and Luke add, before the cock crow *twice*. The cock is accustomed to crow twice, once at midnight, and once in the morning, at break of day. The latter was commonly called cock-crowing. See Mr 13:35. This was the time familiarly known as the cock-crowing; and of this Matthew and John speak, without referring to the other. Mark and Luke speak of the *second* crowing, and mean the same time; so that there is no contradiction between them.

Deny me thrice. That is, as Luke adds, deny that *thou knowest me*. See Mt 26:74.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *Will I not deny thee*. Will not deny my connexion with thee, or that I knew thee. *All* the disciples said the same thing, and all fled at the approach of danger, forsaking their Master and Friend, and practically denying that they knew him, Mt 26:56.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 36

Verses 36-45. *Jesus' agony in Gethsemane*. This account is also recorded in Mr 14:32-42; Lu 22:39-46; Joh 18:1.

Verse 36. *Then cometh*, etc. After the institution of the Supper, in the early part of the night, he went out to the Mount of Olives. In his journey he passed over the brook Cedron, (Joh 18:1,) which bounded Jerusalem on the east.

Unto a place. John calls this a garden. This garden was evidently on the western side of the Mount of Olives, a short distance from Jerusalem, and commanding a full view of the city. It is doubted whether the word rendered *garden* means a *villa* or *country seat*, or a *garden*, properly so called. It is probable that it might include both: a cluster of houses, or a small village in which was a garden. The word here means not properly a garden for the cultivation of vegetables, but a place planted with the olive and other trees, perhaps with a fountain of waters, and with walks and groves—a proper place of refreshment in a hot climate, and of retirement from the noise of the adjacent city. Such places were doubtless common in the vicinity of Jerusalem. Messrs. Fisk and King, American missionaries, were there in 1823. They tell us that the garden is about a stone's cast from the brook of Cedron; that it now contains eight large and venerable-looking olives, whose trunks show their great antiquity. The spot is sandy and barren, and appears like a forsaken place. A low broken wall surrounds it. Mr. K. sat down beneath one of the trees, and read Isa 53:1-12, and also the gospel history of our Redeemer's sorrow during that memorable night in which he was there betrayed; and the interest of the association was heightened by the passing through the place of a party of Bedouins, armed with spears and swords. Jesus, in the silence of the night, free from interruption, made it a place of retirement and prayer.

Luke says, he went as he was wont, i.e., accustomed, to the Mount of Olives. Probably he had been in the habit of retiring from Jerusalem to that place for meditation and prayer; thus enforcing by his example what he had so often done by his precepts, the duty of retiring from the noise and bustle of the world to hold communion with God.

Gethsemane. This word is made up either of two Hebrew words, signifying *valley of fatness*, i.e., a fertile valley; or of two words, signifying *an olive press*, given to it probably because the place was filled with olives.

Sit ye here. That is, in one part of the garden, to which they first came.

While I go and pray yonder. That is, at the distance of a stone's cast, Lu 22:41. Luke adds, that when he came to the garden, he charged them to pray that they might not enter into temptation—i, e., into deep *trials and afflictions*—or, more probably, into scenes and dangers that would tempt them to deny him.

{g} "Then cometh Jesus" Mr 14:32 Lu 22:39; Joh 18:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee*. That is, James and John, Mt 10:2. On two other occasions he had favoured these disciples in a particular manner, suffering

them to go with him to witness his power and glory, viz., at the healing of the ruler's daughter, (Lu 8:51,) and at his transfiguration on the mount, Mt 17:1.

Sorrowful. Affected with grief.

Very heavy. The word in the original is much stronger than the one translated *sorrowful*. It means, to be pressed down, or overwhelmed with great anguish. This was produced, doubtless, by a foresight of his great sufferings on the cross in making an atonement for the sins of men.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *My soul is exceeding sorrowful*. His human nature-his soul- -was much and deeply affected and pressed down.

Even unto death. This denotes extreme sorrow and agony. The sufferings of death are the greatest of which we have any knowledge; they are the most feared and dreaded by man; and those sufferings are, therefore, put for extreme and indescribable anguish. The meaning may be thus expressed: My sorrows are so great, that under their burden I am ready to die; such is the anxiety of mind, that I seem to bear the pains of death!

Tarry ye here, and watch with me. The word rendered watch, means, literally, to abstain from sleep; then to be vigilant—to guard against danger. Here it seems to mean, to sympathize with him; to unite with him in seeking Divine support; and to prepare themselves for approaching dangers.

{h} "My soul" Ps 116:3 Is 53:3,10 Joh 12:27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *And he went a little farther*. That is, at the distance that a man could conveniently cast a stone, (Luke.)

Fell on his face. Luke says, he "kneeled doom." He did both. He first kneeled, and then in the fervency of his prayer, and the depth of his sorrow, he fell with his face on the ground, denoting the deepest anguish, and the most earnest entreaty. This was the usual posture of prayer in times of great earnestness. See Nu 16:22 2Ch 20:18; Ne 8:6.

If it be possible. That is, if the world can be redeemed; if it be consistent with justice, and with maintaining the government of the universe, that men should be saved without this extremity of sorrow, let it be done. There is no doubt that if it had been possible, it would have been done; and the fact that these sufferings were not removed, that the Saviour went forward and bore them without mitigation, shows that it was not consistent with the justice of God, and with the welfare of the universe, that men should be saved without the awful sufferings of *such an atonement*.

Let this cup. These bitter sufferings. These approaching trials. The word cup is often used in this sense, denoting sufferings. **See Barnes "Mt 20:22"**.

Not as I will, but as thou wilt. As Jesus was man, as well as God, there is nothing inconsistent in supposing that, like a man, he was deeply affected in view of these sorrows. When he speaks of his will, he expresses what *human nature*, in view of such great sufferings, would desire. It naturally

shrunk from them, and sought deliverance. Yet he sought to do the will of God. He chose rather that the high purpose of God should be done, than that *that* purpose should be abandoned, and regard be shown to the fears of *his* human nature. In this he has left a model of prayer in all times of affliction. It is *right*, in times of calamity, to seek deliverance. Like the Saviour also, in such seasons, we should, we must submit cheerfully to the will of God, confident that, in all these trials, he is wise, and merciful, and good.

{i} "and prayed" Heb 5:7 {k} "let this cup" Mt 20:22 {l} "nevertheless" Joh 5:30 6:38; Ro 15:3 Php 2:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 40

Verse 40. *And findeth them asleep*. It may seem remarkable that, in such circumstances, with a suffering, pleading Redeemer near, surrounded by danger, and having received a special charge to watch, i.e., not to sleep, they should so soon have fallen asleep. It is frequently supposed that this was proof of wonderful stupidity, and indifference to their Lard's sufferings. The truth is, however, that it was just the reverse; *it was proof of their great attachment, and their deep sympathy in his sorrows*. Luke has added, *that he found them sleeping FOR SORROW*. That is, on account of their sorrow: their grief was so great that they naturally fell asleep. Multitudes of facts might be brought to show that is in accordance with the regular effects of grief: Dr. Bush says, "There is another symptom of grief, which is not often noticed, and that is profound sleep. I have often witnessed it even in mothers, immediately after the death of a child. Criminals; we are told by Mr. Akerman, the keeper of Newgate in London, often sleep soundly the night before their execution. The son of General Custine slept nine hours the night before he was led to the guillotine in Paris." *Diseases of the Mind*, p. 319.

Saith unto Peter, etc. This reproof was administered to Peter particularly, in account of his warm professions, his rash zeal, and his self-confidence. If he could not keep awake and watch with the Saviour for one hour, how little probability was there that he would adhere to him in all the trials through which he was soon to pass!

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 41

Verse 41. *Watch*. See Mt 26:38. Greater trials are coming on. It is necessary, therefore, still to be on your guard.

And pray. Seek aid from God by supplication in view of the thickening calamities.

That ye enter not into temptation. That ye be not *overcome* and *oppressed* with these trials of your faith, so as to deny me. The word *temptation* here properly means, what would try their faith in the approaching calamities his rejection and death. It would *try* their faith, because though they supposed he was the Messiah, they were not very clearly aware of the necessity of his death; they did not fully understand that he was to rise again. They had cherished the belief that he was to establish a kingdom *while he lived*. When they should see him, therefore rejected, tried, crucified,

dead; when they should see him submit to all this, *as if* he had not power to deliver himself, then would be the trial of their faith; and in view of it, he exhorted them to pray that they might not so enter temptation as to be overcome by it, and fall.

The spirit indeed is willing, etc. The mind, the disposition is ready, and disposed to bear these trials; but *the flesh*, the natural feelings, through the fear of danger, is weak, and will be likely to lead you astray when the trial comes. Though you may have strong faith, and believe now that you will not deny me, yet human nature is weak, shrinks at trials, and you should, therefore seek strength from on high. This was not intended for an apology for their sleeping, but to excite them, notwithstanding he knew that they loved him, to be on guard, lest the weakness of human nature should be insufficient to sustain them in the hour of their temptation.

{m} "Watch" Mr 13:33 14:38; Lu 22:40 Eph 6:18; Re 16:15

{n} "ye enter" Pr 4:14,15 {o} "into temptation" Re 3:10 {p} "spirit indeed" Isa 26:8,9; Ro 7:18-25 Ga 5:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 42

Verses 42-44. It is probable that our Lord spent considerable time in prayer, and that the evangelists have recorded rather the substance of his petitions than the very *words*. He returned repeatedly to his disciples, doubtless to caution them against danger; to show the deep interest which he had in their welfare; and to show them the extent of his sufferings on their behalf. Each time that he returned, these sorrows deepened. Again he sought the place of prayer; and as his approaching sufferings overwhelmed him, this was the burden of his prayer, and he prayed the same words. Luke adds, that amidst, his agonies an angel appeared from heaven, strengthening him. His human nature began to sink, as unequal to his sufferings, and a messenger from heaven appeared, to support him in these heavy trials. It may seem strange, that since Jesus was Divine, (Joh 1:1,) the *Divine nature* did not minister strength to the human, and that he that was *God* should receive strength from an angel. But it should be remembered that Jesus came in his human nature, not only to make an atonement, but to be a perfect example of a holy man; that as such, it was necessary to submit to the *common conditions* of humanity, that he should live as other men, be sustained as other men, suffer as other men, and be strengthened as other men; that he should, so to speak, take no advantage in favour of his piety from his Divinity, but submit, in all things, to the common lot of pious men. Hence he supplied his wants, not by his being Divine, but in the ordinary way of human life. Hence he preserved himself from danger, not *as God*, but by seeking the usual ways of human prudence and precaution. Hence he met trials as a man; he received comfort as a man; and there is no absurdity in supposing that, in accordance with the condition of his people, his-human nature should be strengthened, as they are, by those who are set forth to be ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation, Heb 1:14.

Luke farther adds, (Mt 22:44) that being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground. The word agony is taken from the anxiety, fear, effort, and strong emotion of the wrestlers in the Greek games, about to engage in a mighty struggle. Here it denotes the extreme anguish of mind; the strong conflict produced between sinking human nature and the prospect of deep and overwhelming calamities.

Great drops of blood, Lu 22:44. The word here rendered *great drops* does not mean drops gently falling on the ground, but rather thick and clammy masses of gore, pressed by inward agony through the skin, and, mixing with the sweat, falling thus to the ground. It has been doubted, by some, whether the sacred writer meant to say that there was actually *blood* in this sweat, or only that the sweat was *in the form* of great drops. The natural meaning is, doubtless, that the blood was mingled with his sweat; that it fell profusely—falling masses of gore; that it was pressed out by his inward anguish; and that this was caused in some way in view of his approaching death. This effect of extreme sufferings—of mental anguish—has been known in several other instances. Bloody sweats have been mentioned by many writers as caused by extreme suffering. Dr. Doddridge says, (Note on Luke 22:44,) that "Aristotle and Diodorus Siculus both mention bloody sweats, as attending some extraordinary agony of mind; and I find Loti, in his life of Pope Sextus V, and Sir John Chardin, in his history of Persia, mentioning a like phenomenon, to which Dr. Jackson adds another from Thuanus. It has been objected to this account, that it is improbable, and that such an event could not occur. The instances, however, which are referred to by Doddridge and others, show sufficiently that the objection is unfounded. In addition to these, I may observe, that Voltaire has himself narrated a fact which ought for ever to stop the mouths of infidels. Speaking of Charles IX, of France, in his Universal History, he says, "He died in his thirty-fifth year; his disorder was of a very remarkable kind; the blood oozed out of all his pores. This malady, of which there have been other instances, was owing to either excessive fear, or violent agitation, or to a feverish and melancholy temperament."

Various opinions have been given of the probable causes of these sorrows of the Saviour. Some have thought it was a strong shrinking from the manner of dying on the cross, or from an apprehension of being *forsaken* there by the Father; others that Satan was permitted in a peculiar manner to try him, and to fill his mind with horrors, having departed from him at the beginning of his ministry for a season, (Luke 4:13) only to renew his temptations in a more dreadful manner now; and others that these sufferings were sent upon him as the wrath of God manifested against sin, that God *inflicted* them directly upon him by his own hand, to show his abhorrence of the sins of men, for which he was about to die. Where the Scriptures are silent *about the cause*, it does not become us confidently to express an opinion. We may suppose, perhaps, without presumption, that a part or all these things were *combined* to produce this awful suffering. There is no need of supposing that there was a *single* thing that produced it; but it is rather probable that this was a *rush* of feeling from every quarter— his situation, his approaching death, the temptations of the enemy, and the awful suffering on account of men's sins, and God's hatred of it about to be manifested in his own death—all coming upon his soul at once—sorrow flowing in from every quarter at the *concentration* of the sufferings of the atonement pouring together upon him, and filling him with unspeakable anguish.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 43

Verse 43. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 26:42"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 44

Verse 44. No Barnes text on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 26:42"**

{q} "the third" 2Co 12:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 45

Verse 45. *Sleep on now, and take your rest*. Most interpreters have supposed that this should be translated as a *question*, rather than a command. "Do you sleep now, and take your rest? Is this a time, amidst so much danger, and so many enemies, to give yourselves to sleep?" This construction is strongly countenanced by Luke, Lu 22:46,) where the expression, "Why sleep ye?" evidently refers to the same point of time. There is no doubt that the Greek will bear this construction; and in this way the apparent inconsistency will be removed between this command, *to sleep*, and that in the next verse, *to rise* and be going. Others suppose that, his agony being over, and the necessity of watching with him being now passed, he kindly *permitted* them to seek repose till they should be roused by the coming of the traitor; that, while they slept, Jesus continued still awake; that some considerable time elapsed between what was spoken here and in the next verse; and that Jesus suffered them to sleep until he saw Judas coming, and then aroused them. Others have supposed that he spoke this in irony: "Sleep on now, if you can; take rest, if possible, in such dangers, and at such a time." But this supposition is unworthy of the Saviour and the occasion. Mark adds, "It is enough." That is, sufficient time has been given to sleep. It is time to arise and be going.

The hour is at hand. The *time* when the Son of man is to be betrayed is near.

Sinners. Judas, the Roman soldiers, and the Jews.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 46

Verse 46. *Rise, let us be going*. That is, probably, *with them*. Let us go wheresoever they shall lead us. The time when *I must die* is come. It is no longer proper to attempt an escape.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 47

Verses 47-57. The account of Jesus' being betrayed by Judas is recorded by all the evangelists. See Mr 14:43-52 Lu 22:47-53; Joh 18:2-12.

Verse 47. *Judas, one of the twelve, came*. This was done while he was addressing his disciples. John informs us that Judas knew the place, because Jesus was in the habit of going there with his disciples. Judas had passed the time, after he left Jesus and the other disciples at the passover, in

arranging matters with the Jews, collecting the band, and preparing to go. Perhaps, also, on this occasion they gave him the money which they had promised.

A great multitude with swords and staves. John says, that he had received *a band of men and officers* from the chief priests, etc. Josephus says, (Ant. xx. ch. iv.) that at the festival of the Passover, when a great multitude of people came to observe the feast, lest there should be any disorder, a band of men was commanded to keep watch at the porches of the temple, to repress a tumult, if any should be excited. This *band*, or guard, was at the disposal of the chief priests, Mt 27:65. It was composed of Roman soldiers, and was stationed chiefly at the tower of Antonia, at the north-west side of the temple. In addition to this, they had *constant* guards stationed around the temple, composed of Levites. The Roman soldiers were armed with *swords*. The other persons that went out carried probably whatever was accessible as a weapon. These were the persons sent by the priests to apprehend Jesus. Perhaps other desperate men might have joined them.

Staves. In the original, "*wood*;" used here in the plural number. It means rather *clubs* or *sticks*, than spears. It does not mean *staves*. Probably it means any weapon at hand, such as a mob can conveniently collect. John says, that they had *lanterns* and *torches*. The passover was celebrated at the *full moon*. But this night might have been cloudy. The place to which they were going was also shaded with trees; and lights, therefore, might be necessary.

{r} "Judas" Ac 1:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 48

Verse 48. *Gave them a sign*. That is, told them of a way by which they might know whom to apprehend, i.e., by his kissing him. It was night. Jesus was, besides, probably personally unknown to the *Romans*,perhaps to the others also. Judas, therefore, being well acquainted with him, to prevent the possibility of mistake, agreed to designate him by one of the tokens of friendship.

John tells us, that Jesus, knowing all things that should come upon him, when they approached him, asked them whom they sought? and that they replied, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus informed them that he was the person they sought. They, when they heard it, overawed by his presence, and smitten with the consciousness of guilt, went backward, and fell to the ground. He again asked them whom they sought. They made the same declaration—Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus then, since they *professed* to seek only him, claimed the right that his disciples should be suffered to escape;— "that the saying might be fulfilled which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none," Joh 18:9. See also Joh 17:12.

{s} "saying" Ps 38:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 49

Verse 49. *Hail, Master*. The word translated *hail*, here means, to *rejoice*, to have joy; and also to have cause of joy. It thus expresses the joy which one friend has when he meets another, especially

after an absence. It was used by the Jews and Greeks as a mode of salutation among friends. It would here seem to express the *joy* of Judas at finding his Master, and again being *with him*.

Master. In the original, *Rabbi*. **See Barnes "Mt 23:7"**.

Kissed him. Gave him the common salutation of friends, when meeting after absence. This mode of salutation was more common among eastern nations than with us.

{t} "kissed him" 2Sa 3:27 20:9; Ps 28:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 50

Verse 50. *And Jesus said unto him, Friend*. It seems strange to us that Jesus should give the endeared name *friend* to a man that he knew was his enemy, and that was about to betray him. It should be remarked, however, that this is the fault of our language, not of the original. In the Greek there are two words which our translators have rendered *friend*: one implying affection and regard, the other not. One is properly rendered friend, the other expresses more nearly what we mean by *companion*. It is this latter word which is given to the disaffected labourer in the vineyard: "*Friend*, I do thee no wrong," (Mt 20:13) to the guest which had not on the wedding garment, in the parable of the marriage feast, (Mt 22:12) and to Judas in this place.

Wherefore art thou come? This was said, not because he was ignorant why he had come, but probably to fill the mind of Judas with the consciousness of his crime, and by a striking question to compel him to think of what he was doing.

{u} "Friend" Ps 41:9 55:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 51

Verse 51. *One of them which were with Jesus*. John informs us that this was *Peter*. The other evangelists concealed the name, probably because they wrote while Peter was living, and it might have endangered Peter to have it known.

And drew his sword. The apostles were not commonly armed. On this occasion they had provided two swords, Lu 22:38. In seasons of danger, when travelling through the country, they were under the necessity of providing means of defending themselves against the robbers that infested the country. This will account for their having any swords in their possession. **See Barnes "Lu 10:30"**.

These swords, Josephus informs us, the people were accustomed to carry under their garments, as they went up to Jerusalem.

A servant of the High Priest's. His name, John informs us, was *Malchus*. Luke adds, that Jesus touched the ear, and healed it; thus showing his benevolence to his foes when they sought his life, and giving them proof that they were attacking Him that was sent from heaven.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 52

Verse 52. *Thy sword into his place*. Into the sheath.

For all they that take the sword, etc. This passage is capable of different significations.

(1.) They who resist by the sword the civil magistrate, shall be punished; and it is dangerous, therefore, to oppose those who come with the authority of the civil ruler.

(2.) These men, Jews and Romans, who have taken the sword against the innocent, shall perish by the sword. God will take vengeance on them. But,

(3.) the most satisfactory interpretation is that which regards it as a *caution* to Peter. Peter was rash. Alone he had attacked the whole band. Jesus told him that his unseasonable and imprudent defence might be the occasion of his own destruction. In doing it, he would endanger his life, for they who took the sword perished by it. This was probably a proverb, denoting that they who engaged in wars commonly perished there.

{v} Ge 9:6 Eze 35:5,6 Re 13:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 53

Verse 53. *Thinkest thou*, etc. Jesus says, that not only would Peter endanger himself, but his resistance implied a distrust of the protection of God, and was an improper resistance of his will. If it had been proper that they should be rescued, God could easily have furnished far more efficient aid than that of Peter—a mighty host of angels.

Twelve legions. A legion was a division of the Roman army amounting to more than six thousand men. **See Barnes "Mt 8:29"**.

The number *twelve* was mentioned, perhaps, in reference to the number of his apostles, and himself. Judas being away, but eleven disciples remained. God could guard him, and each disciple, with a legion of angels; that is, God could easily protect him, if he should pray to him, and if it was his will.

{w} "angels" 2Ki 6:17 Da 7:10; Mt 4:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 54

Verse 54: *But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled*, etc. That is, the scriptures which foretold of his dying for the world. In *some way* that must be accomplished; and the time had come when, having finished the work which the Father gave him to do, it was proper that he should submit to a cruel death. This was said doubtless to comfort his disciples; to show them that his death was not a matter of surprise or disappointment to him; and that *they*, therefore, should not be offended and forsake him.

{x} "that thus" Lu 24:26,46

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 55

Verse 55. *Against a thief*. Rather, a *robber*. This was *the manner* in which they would have sought to take a highwayman of desperate character, and armed to defend his life. It adds not a little to the depth of his humiliation, that he consented to be *hunted down* thus by wicked men, and to be treated as if he had been the worst of mankind.

Daily with you teaching in the temple. For many days before the passover, as recorded in the previous chapter.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 56

Verse 56. *Scriptures of the prophets*. The writings of the prophets— for this is the meaning of the word *scriptures*. He alludes to those parts of the prophets which foretold his sufferings and death.

Then all the disciples, etc. Overcome with fear, when they saw their Master actually taken; alarmed with the terrific appearance of armed men, and torches in a dark night; and forgetting their promises not to forsake him, they all left their Saviour to go *alone*. Alas! how many, when attachment to Christ would lead them to danger, leave him, and also flee! Mark adds, that after the disciples had fled, a young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body, attempted to follow him. Probably he was the *owner* of the garden, and a friend of Jesus. Aroused by the noise from his repose, he came to defend the Saviour. He cast, in his hurry, a garment at hand round his body, and came to him. The young men among the Romans and Jews attempted to secure him also; but he escaped from them, and fled. **See Barnes** "Mr 14:50,51.

{y} "Scriptures" Ge 3:15 Ps 22:1-31, 69:1-36 Isa 53:1-12; La 4:20

Da 9:24,26; Zec 13:7 Ac 1:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 57

Verses 57-75. The trial of our Lord before the council, and the denial of Peter happening at the same time, might be related one before the other, according to the evangelists' pleasure. Accordingly, Matthew and Mark relate the *trial* first, and Peter's denial afterwards; Luke mentions the denial first, and John has probably observed the natural order. The parallel places are recorded in Mr 14:53-72 Lu 22:54-71; Joh 18:13-27.

Verse 57. *To Caiaphas*. John says, that they led him first to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas. This was done, probably, as a mark of respect, he having been high priest, and perhaps distinguished for prudence, and capable of advising his son-in-law in a difficult case; and the Saviour was *detained* there probably until the chief priests and elders were assembled.

The High Priest. **See Barnes "Mt 26:3"**.

John says, he was high priest for that year. Annas had been high priest some years before, in the time of our Saviour the office was frequently changed by the civil ruler. This Caiaphas had prophesied that it was expedient that one should die for the people. **See Barnes** "Joh 11:49,50.

The Scribes and the elders. The men composing the great council of the nation or sanhedrim. **See Barnes** "Mt 5:22.

It is not probable that they could be immediately assembled; and some part of the transaction respecting the denial of Peter probably took place while they were collecting.

{z} "And they" Mr 14:53 Lu 22:54; Joh 18:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 58

Verse 58. *Peter followed him afar off*. By this he evinced two things:

1st. Real attachment to his Master; a desire to be near him, and to witness his trial.

2nd. Fear respecting his personal safety. He therefore kept so far off as to be out of danger, and yet so near as that he might witness the transactions respecting his Master. Perhaps he expected to be lost and unobserved in the crowd. Many, in this, Imitate Peter. They are afraid to follow the Saviour closely. They fear danger, ridicule, or persecution. They *follow him*—but it is at a great distance; *so far* that it is difficult to discern that they are in the train, and are his friends at all. Religion requires us to be near to Christ. We may measure our piety by our desire to be with him; to be like him; and by our willingness to follow him always—through trials, contempt, persecution, and death. John says, that another disciple went with Peter. By that other disciple is commonly supposed, as he did not mention his name, that he meant himself. He was acquainted with the high priest, and went immediately into the hall.

Unto the High Priest's palace. The word rendered *palace*, means rather the *hall*, or middle court or *area* of his house. It was situated in the centre of the palace, and was commonly uncovered. **See Barnes "Mt 9:2"**.

And went in. John informs us that he did not go immediately in. But the other disciple, being known to the high priest, went in first, while Peter remained at the *gate*, or entrance. The other disciple then went out, and brought in Peter. Matthew, Mark, and Luke have omitted this circumstance. John recorded it, probably, *because* they had omitted it, and because he was the "other disciple" concerned in it.

Sat with the servants, to see the end. That is, the end of the trial; or to see how it would go with his Master. The other evangelists say, that he stood with the servants warming himself. John says; it being cold, they had made a fire of coals, and warmed themselves. It was then probably not far from midnight. The place where they were was uncovered; and travellers say, that though the *days* are warm in Judea at that season of the year, yet that the nights are often uncomfortably cold. This fire was made *in the hall*, (Luke:) The fire was not in *a fireplace*, as we commonly suppose, but was probably made of coals laid on the pavement. At this place and time was Peter's first denial of his Lord, as is recorded afterwards. See Mt 26:69.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 59

Verse 59. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

See Barnes on "Mt 26:57"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 60

Verse 60. *False witnesses*. Witnesses that would accuse him of crime; of violation of the laws of the land or of God. We are not to suppose that *they wished* them to be *false* witnesses. They were indifferent, probably, whether they were true or false, if they could succeed in condemning him. *The evangelist* calls it false testimony, Before these witnesses were sought, we learn from Joh 18:19-23 that the high priest asked Jesus of his disciples, and his doctrine. Jesus replied, that he had taught openly in the temple, and in secret had said nothing; that is, he had no *secret doctrines* which he had not been willing openly to teach, and he referred them to those who had heard him. In a firm, dignified manner, he put himself on trial, and insisted on his rights. "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?" This conversation took place probably before the council was assembled, and during this time the denials by Peter occurred. Luke informs us, Lu 22:66 that the council came together as soon as it was day; that is, probably near the morning, or not far from break of day—after Peter had denied him, and gone out.

Found they none. That is, they found none on whose testimony they could with any show of reason convict him. The reason was, as Mark says, Mr 14:56 that "their witness agreed not together." They differed about facts, times, and circumstances, as all false witnesses do. Two witnesses were required by their law, and they did not *dare* to condemn him without conforming, *in appearance* at least, to the requirements of the law.

{a} "the last" Ps 27:12 35:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 61

Verse 61. *And said*, This fellow said, etc. Mark has recorded this testimony differently. According to him, they said, "We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands." Probably both forms of giving in the testimony were used on the trial, and Matthew has recorded it as it was given at one time, and Mark at another; so that there is no contradiction. Mark adds, "But neither so did their witness agree together." That which they *attempted* to accuse him of, is what he had said respecting his body, and their destroying it. Joh 2:19, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." This he spoke of his body; they perverted it, endeavouring to show that he meant the temple at Jerusalem. They neither stated it as it was, nor did they state correctly its meaning: nor did they agree about the words used. It was, therefore, very little to their purpose.

{b} "I am able" Joh 2:19-21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 62

Verses 62,63. *Jesus held his peace*. Was silent. He knew that the evidence did not even appear to amount to anything worth a reply. He knew that they were aware of that, and that feeling that, the high priest attempted to draw something from him, on which they could condemn him.

I adjure thee by the living God. I put thee upon thy oath before God. This was the usual form of putting an oath among the Jews. It implies, calling God to witness the truth of what was said. The law respecting witnesses also made it a violation of an oath to conceal any part of the truth; and though our Saviour might have felt that such a question, put in such a manner, was very improper, or was unlawful, yet he also knew that to be silent would be construed into a denial of his being the Christ. The question was probably put in anger. They had utterly failed in their proof. They had no way left to accomplish their purpose of condemning him, but to draw it from his own lips. This cunning question was therefore proposed. The difficulty of the question consisted in this: If he *confessed* that he was the Son of God, they stood ready to condemn him for *blasphemy*; if he *denied it*, they were prepared to condemn him for being an impostor, for deluding the people under the pretence of being the Messiah.

The living God. Jehovah is called the living God, in opposition to idols, which were without life.

The Christ. The Messiah, the Anointed. **See Barnes "Mt 1:1"**.

The Son of God. The Jews uniformly expected that the Messiah would be the Son of God. In their view it denoted also that he would be *Divine*, or equal to the Father, Joh 10:31-36. To claim that title was, therefore, in their view, *blasphemy*; and as they had determined beforehand, in their own minds, that he was *not* the Messiah, they were ready at once to accuse him of blasphemy.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 63

Verse 63. No notes from Barnes on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 26:62"**

{e} "But Jesus" Isa 53:7 Mt 27:12,14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 64

Verse 64. *Thou hast said*. This is a form of *assenting* or affirming. Thou hast said the *truth*; or, as Lu 22:70 has it, "Ye say that I am." This was not, however, said *immediately*. Before Jesus acknowledged himself to be the Messiah, he said to them, Lu 22:67-69 "If I tell you, ye will not believe: and if I also ask you" —i.e., propose the proofs of my mission, and require you to give your opinion of them—" ye will not answer me, nor let me go."

Nevertheless. This word should have been translated *moreover*, or *furthermore*. What follows is designed to explain and give confirmation to what he had said.

Sitting on the right hand of power. That is, of God, called here the Power; equivalent to the *Mighty*, or *the Almighty*. It denotes dignity and majesty; for, to sit at the right hand of a prince was the chief place of honour. **See Barnes "Mt 20:21"**.

Coming in the clouds of heaven. See Barnes Mt 24, Mt 25. The meaning of this is, You shall see *the sign from heaven* which you have so often demanded; even the Messiah returning himself *as the sign*, with great glory, to destroy your city, and to judge the world.

{f} "shall ye" Da 7:13 Joh 1:51; 1Th 4:16 Re 1:7

{g} "hand of power" Ps 110:1 Ac 7:55

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 65

Verse 65. *Then the High Priest rent his clothes*. The Jews were accustomed to rend their clothes, as a token of grief. This was done often as a matter of form, and consisted in tearing a particular part of the garment reserved for this purpose. It was not lawful for the high priest to rend his clothes, Le 10:6 21:10. By that was probably intended the robes of his priestly office. The garment which he *now* rent was probably his ordinary garment, or the garments which he wore as president of the sanhedrim—not those in which he officiated as high priest in the things of religion. This was done on this occasion to denote the *great grief* of the high priest, that so great a sin as blasphemy had been committed in his presence.

He hath spoken blasphemy. That is, he has, under oath, arrogated to himself what belongs to God. In claiming to be the Messiah; in asserting that he was the Son of God, and therefore equal in dignity with the Father; and that he would yet sit at His right hand—he has claimed what belongs to no *man*, and what is therefore an invasion of the Divine prerogative. If he had not been the *Messiah*, the charge would have been true. But the question was, whether he had not given evidence that he *was* the Messiah, and that therefore his claims were just. This point, the only *proper* point of inquiry, they never examined. They *assumed* that he was an impostor; and that point being assumed, everything like a pretension to being the Messiah was, in their view, proof that he deserved to die.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 66

Verse 66. *What think ye*? What is your *opinion*? What *sentence* do you pronounce? As president of the sanhedrim he demanded their judgment.

He is guilty of death. This was the form which was used when criminal was condemned to die. The meaning is, he is found guilty of a crime to which the law annexes death. This sentence was used before the Jews became subject to the Romans, when they had the power of inflicting death. After they were subject to the Romans, though the *power* of inflicting capital punishment was taken away, yet they retained the form, when they expressed their opinion of the guilt of an offender. The law under which they condemned him was that recorded in Le 24:10-16, which sentenced him that was guilty of blasphemy to death by *stoning*. The chief priests, however, were unwilling to excite a popular tumult by stoning him, and they therefore consulted to deliver him to the Romans to be crucified, *under the authority of the Roman name*, and thus to prevent say excitement among the people.

{h} "death" Le 24:16 Joh 19:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 67

Verse 67. *They spit in his face*. This, among the Jews, as among us, was significant of the highest contempt and insult, Nu 12:14; Isa 1:6 Job 30:10.

And buffeted him. That is, they struck him with their hands closed, or with the fist.

Others smote him with the palms of their hands. The word used in the original here means, literally to strike with *rods*. It also means, to strike *the mouth* with the open hand, as if to prevent a person's speaking, or to evince abhorrence of what he had spoken.

{i} "Then did" Isa 1:6 {1} "with the palms" or "rods"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 68

Verse 68. *Saying, Prophesy unto us*, etc. Mark informs us, that before they said this they had blindfolded him. Having prevented his seeing, they ridiculed his pretensions of being the Messiah. If he was the Christ, they supposed he could tell who smote him. As he bore it patiently, and did not answer, they doubtless supposed they had discovered another reason to think he was an impostor; The word prophesy does not mean only to foretell future events—although that is the proper meaning of the word; but also to declare anything that is unknown, or anything which cannot be known by natural knowledge, or without revelation. Luke adds, "And many other things blasphemously spake they against him." There is something very remarkable in this expression. They had charged *him* with *blasphemy* in claiming to be the Son of God. This charge they were not able to prove, But the evangelist *fixes* the charge of *blasphemy* on them, because he really was the Son of God, and they denied it.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 69

Verse 69. *Now Peter sat without in the palace*. Mark says, the first denial took place while Peter was "beneath in the palace." This *palace* was the large *hall* or court belonging to the residence of the high priest. The part of it where Jesus and the council were was *elevated*, probably, above the rest, for a tribunal. Peter was *beneath*, or in the lower part of the hall, with the servants, at the fire. Yet, as Matthew says, he sat *without* in the palace—i.e., *out* of the palace where they were trying Jesus—to wit, in the lower part of the hall with the servants—both narratives are therefore consistent.

And a damsel came unto him. Joh 18:17 says, that this damsel was one that kept the door.

Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. Probably she suspected him from his being in company with John. This was in the early part of the trial of Jesus.

{k} "Now Peter" Mr 14:66 Lu 22:55; Joh 18:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 70

Verse 70. *But he denied before them all*, etc. He denied that he was a disciple; he denied that he knew Jesus; he denied (Mark) that he understood what was meant—-i. e., he did not see any reason why this question was asked. All this was palpable falsehood; and Peter must have known that it was such. This is remarkable, because Peter had just before been so confident. It is more remarkable, because the edge of the charge was taken off by the insinuation that *John* was known to be a disciple—thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 71

Verse 71. *When he was gone out into the porch*. The entrances or the small apartment between the outer door and the large hall in the centre of the building. See plan of a house, **See Barnes "Mt 9:2"**.

Peter was embarrassed and confused by the question; and to save his confusion attracting notice, he went away from the fire into the porch, where he expected to be unobserved. Yet in vain. By the very movement to avoid detection, he came into contact with another who knew him, and repeated the charge. How clearly does it prove that our Lord was omniscient, that all these things were foreseen!

Another maid saw him. Mark simply says that a maid saw him, From Luke, it would appear that *a man* spoke to him, Lu 22:58. The truth probably is, that both were done. When he first went out, a maid charged him with being a follower of Jesus. He was probably there a considerable time. To this charge he might have been silent, thinking, perhaps, that he was concealed, and there was no need of denying Jesus then. Yet it is very likely that the charge would he repeated. A *man* also might have repeated it; and Peter, irritated, provoked, perhaps thinking that he was in danger, *then* denied his Master the second time. This denial was in a stronger manner, and with an oath. While in the porch, Mark says, the cock crew; that is, the first crowing, or not far from midnight.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 72

Verse 72. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 73

Verse 73. *And after a while*. That is, about an hour after, (Luke.) Peter, by this time, had returned into the palace or hall, and stood warming himself by the fire, Joh 18:25.

Thy speech betrayeth thee. Your language makes it manifest that you are of his company. That is, as Mark adds, he was *a Galilean*; and in this way his speech betrayed him. It is probable that

the Galileans were distinguished for some peculiarity of pronunciation, perhaps some peculiar rusticity or coarseness in their manner of speaking, that distinguished them from the refinement of the capital, Jerusalem. This charge, John says, Joh 18:26 was supported by the express affirmation of a kinsman of Malchus, the servant of the high priest, that he had seen him in the garden.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 74

Verse 74. *Then began he to curse*, etc. Peter was now irritated beyond endurance. He could no longer resist the evidence that he was known. It had been repeatedly charged on him. His language had betrayed him, and there was a positive witness who had seen him. He felt it necessary, therefore, to be still more decided; and he accordingly added to the sin of denying his Lord, the deep aggravation of profane cursing and swearing; affirming, what he must have known was false, that he knew not the man. Immediately then the cock crew; that is, the second crowing, or not far from three in the morning.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 26 - Verse 75

Verse 75. *And Peter remembered the word of Jesus*, etc. Luke has mentioned a beautiful and touching circumstance omitted by the other evangelists, that when the cock crew "Jesus turned and looked upon Peter," and that then he remembered his words. They were in the same room—Jesus at the upper end of the hall, elevated for a tribunal, and Peter below with the servants; so that Jesus could look down upon Peter standing near the fire. By a tender and compassionate look—a single glance of his eye—the injured Saviour brought to remembrance all Peter's promises, his own predictions, and the great guilt of the disciple; he overwhelmed him with the remembrance of his sin, and pierced his heart through with many sorrows. The consciousness of deep and awful guilt rushed over Peter's soul; he flew from the palace, he went alone in the darkness of the night, and *wept bitterly*.

The fall of Peter is one of the most melancholy instances of depravity ever committed in our world. But a little while before so confident; seated at the table of the Lord; distinguished, throughout the ministry of Christ, with peculiar favours; cautioned against this very thing; yet so soon denying him, forgetting his promises; and profanely calling on God to witness what he knew to be false, that he did not know him! Had it been but *once*, it would have been awful guilt—guilt deeply piercing the Redeemer's soul in the day of trial; but it was three times repeated, and at last with profane cursing and swearing. Yet, while we weep over Peter's fall, and seek not to palliate his crime, we should draw from it important practical uses:

1st. The danger of self-confidence. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." True Christian confidence is that which relies on God for strength, and feels safety only in the belief that He is able and willing to keep from temptation.

2nd. The highest favours, the most exalted privileges, do not secure us from the danger of falling into sin. Few men were ever so highly favoured as Peter; few ever so dreadfully departed from the Saviour, and brought so deep a scandal on religion.

3rd. When a man begins to sin, his fall from one act to another is easy—perhaps almost certain. At first Peter's sin was only simple denial; then it increased to more violent affirmation, and ended with open profaneness. So the downward road of crime is easy. When sin is once indulged, the way is open for a whole deluge of crime; nor is the course easily stayed till the soul is overwhelmed in awful guilt.

4th. True repentance is deep, thorough, bitter. Peter wept bitterly. It was sincere sorrow—sorrow proportioned to the nature of the offence he had committed.

5th. A look from Jesus—a look of mingled affection, pity, and reproof— produces bitter sorrow for sin. *Him* we injure by our crimes, and *his* tender look, when we err, pierces the soul through with many sorrows, opens fountains of tears in the bosom, and leads us to weep with bitterness over our transgressions.

6th. When we sin—when we fall into temptation—let us retire from the world, seek the place of solitude, and pour out our sorrows before God. He will mark our groans; he will hear our sighs; he will pity his children; and he will receive them; like weeping Peter, to his arms again.

7th. Real Christians may be suffered to go far astray. To show them their weakness, to check self-confidence, and to produce dependence on Jesus Christ, they may be able to show how weak, and feeble, and rash they are. Peter was a real believer. Jesus had prayed for him that his faith should fail not, Lu 22:32. Jesus was *always* heard in his prayer, Joh 11:42. He was heard, therefore, then. Peter's faith did not fail; that is, his belief in Jesus, his real piety, his *true* attachment to Jesus. He *knew*, during the whole transaction, that Jesus was the Messiah, and that *he himself* was well acquainted with him. But he was suffered to declare that which he knew was not true. And in *this* consisted his sin. Yet,

8th. though a Christian *may* be suffered to go astray—-may fall into sin—yet he who should, from this example of Peter, think he might lawfully do it, or who should resolve to do it, thinking that he might, like Peter, weep and repent, would give evidence that he knew nothing of the grace of God. He that *resolves* to sin under the expectation of repenting hereafter, *cannot be a Christian*.

It is worthy of further remark, that the fact that the fall of Peter is recorded by *all* the evangelists is high proof of their *honesty*. They were willing to tell the truth as it was; to conceal no fact, even if it made much against themselves; and to make mention of their own faults without attempting to *appear* to be better than they were. And it is worthy of special observation, that *Mark* has recorded this with *all* the circumstances of aggravation, perhaps even more so than the others. Yet, by the universal belief of antiquity, the Gospel of *Mark* was written under *Peter's* direction, and every part of it submitted to him for examination. Higher proof of the *honesty* and *candour* of the evangelists could not be demanded.

{l} "word of Jesus" Mt 26:34 Lu 22:31-34

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 1

MATTHEW CHAPTER 27

Verses 1,2. *Jesus is brought before Pilate*. See also Mr 15:1, Lu 23:1 Joh 18:28, etc.

Verse 1. *When the morning was come*. This was not long after he had been condemned by the sanhedrim. Peter's last denial was probably not far from three o'clock, or near the break of day. As soon as it was light, they consulted together for the purpose of taking his life. The sun rose at that season of the year, in Judea, not far from five o'clock; and the time when they assembled was not long after Peter's denial.

The Chief Priests—took counsel. They had agreed that he deserved to die, *on a charge of blasphemy*. Yet they did not *dare* to put him to death by stoning, as they did afterwards Stephen, Ac 7:1 and as the law commanded in case of blasphemy, for they feared the people. They therefore *consulted*, or took counsel together, to determine on what pretence they could deliver him to the Roman emperor, or to fix some charge of a civil nature, by which Pilate might be induced to condemn him. The charge which they fixed on was not that on which they had tried him, and on which they had determined he ought to die, Mt 26:66; but that of "perverting the nation," and of "forbidding to give tribute to Caesar," Lu 23:2. On *this* accusation, if made out, they supposed Pilate could be induced to condemn Jesus. On a charge of *blasphemy* they knew he could not, as that was not an offence against the Roman laws, and over which, therefore, Pilate claimed no jurisdiction.

To put him to death. To devise some way by which he might be put to death under the authority of the Roman governor.

{m} "counsel" Ps 2:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And when they had bound him*. He was *bound* when they took him in the garden, Joh 18:12. Probably when he was tried before the sanhedrim, in the palace of Caiaphas, he had been loosed from his bonds—being there surrounded by multitudes, and supposed to be safe. As they were about to lead him to another part of the city now, they again bound him. The binding consisted, probably, in nothing more than tying his hands.

Pontius Pilate the governor. The governor, appointed by the Romans, over Judea. The governor commonly resided at Caesarea; but he came up to Jerusalem usually at the great feasts, when most of the Jews were assembled, to administer justice, and to suppress tumults, if any should arise. The *title* which Pilate received was that of *governor*, or *procurator*. The duties of the office were chiefly to collect the revenues due to the Roman emperor, and, in certain cases, to administer justice. Pilate was appointed governor of Judea by Tiberius, then emperor of Rome. John says Joh 18:28 that they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the hall of judgment—that is, to the part of the *praetorium*, or governor's palace, where justice was administered. The Jews did not, however, enter in themselves, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the passover. In Nu 19:22, it is said, that whosoever touched an unclean thing should be unclean, For this reason they would not enter into the house of

a *heathen*, lest they should contract some defilement that would render them unfit to keep the passover.

{n} "him to" Mt 20:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Then Judas—when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself*. This shows that Judas did not suppose that the affair would have results in this calamitous manner. He probably expected that Jesus would have worked a miracle to deliver himself, and not have suffered this condemnation to come upon him. When he saw him taken, bound, tried, and condemned; when he saw that all probability that he would deliver himself was taken away, he was overwhelmed with disappointment, sorrow, and remorse of conscience. The word rendered *repented himself*, it has been observed, does not of necessity denote a change *for the better*, but *any* change of views and feelings. Here it evidently means no other change than that produced by the horrors of a guilty conscience, and by deep remorse, for crime at its unexpected results. It was not saving repentance; that leads to a holy life: this led to an increase of crime in his own death. True repentance leads the sinner to the Saviour: this led *away* from the Saviour to the gallows. Judas, if he had been a true penitent, would have come then to Jesus, confessed his crime at his feet, and sought for pardon there. But, overwhelmed with remorse, and the conviction of vast guilt, he was not willing to come into his presence, and added to the crime of a *traitor* that of *self-murder*. Assuredly, such a man could not be a true penitent.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *I have sinned*, I have been guilty. I have done wrong.

In that I have betrayed the innocent blood. That is, in betraying an innocent being to death. *Blood* is put here for *life*, or for the *man*. The meaning is, that he knew and felt that Jesus was innocent. This confession is a remarkable proof that Jesus *was* innocent. Judas had been with him three years, he had seen him in public and private; he had heard his public teaching and his private views; he had seen him in all circumstances; and if he *had* done anything evil, or advanced anything against the Roman emperor, Judas was competent to testify it. Had he *known* any such thing, he would have stated it. He would have appeared to vindicate himself. *His* testimony, being a disciple of Jesus, would have been, to the chief priests, far more-valuable than that of any other man; and he might not only have escaped the horrors of a troubled conscience, and an awful death, but have looked for an ample reward. That he did not make such a charge—that he fully and frankly confessed that Jesus was innocent—and that he gave up the ill-gotten price of *treason*—is full proof that, in the belief of Judas, the Saviour was free from crime, and even the *suspicion of crime*.

What is that to us? This form of speaking denoted that they had nothing to do with his remorse of conscience, and his belief that Jesus was innocent. *They* had secured what they wanted, the person of Jesus, and they cared little now for the feelings of the traitor, So all wicked men, who

make use of the agency of others for the accomplishment of crime, or the gratification of passion, will care little for the effect on the instrument. They will soon cast him off and despise him; and, in thousands of instances, them instruments of villainy, and the panders to the pleasures of others, are abandoned to remorse, wretchedness, crime, and death.

{o} "innocent blood" 2Ki 24:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And he cast down*, etc, This was an evidence of his remorse of conscience for his crime. His ill-gotten gain now did him no good. It would not produce relief to his agonized mind. He *attempted*, therefore, to obtain relief by throwing back the price of treason. But he attempted it in vain. The consciousness of guilt was fastened to his soul; and Judas found, as all win find, that to cast away or abandon ill-gotten wealth will not alleviate the guilty conscience.

In the temple, It is not quite certain what part of the temple is here meant. Some have thought it was the place where the sanhedrim was accustomed to sit; others, the treasury; others, the part where the priests offered sacrifice. It is probable that Judas cared little, or thought little, to what particular part of the temple he went. In his deep remorse he hurried to the temple, and probably cast the money down in the most convenient place, and fled to some situation where he might take his life.

And went and hanged himself. The word used in the original, here, has given rise to much discussion, whether it means that he was suffocated or strangled by his great grief, or whether he took his life by suspending himself. It is acknowledged on all hands, however, that the latter is its most usual meaning, and it is certainly the most obvious meaning. Peter says, in giving an account of the death of Jesus, Ac 1:18 that Judas, "falling headlong, burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out." There has been supposed to be some difficulty in reconciling these two accounts, but there is really no necessary difference. Both accounts are true. Matthew records the *mode* in which Judas *attempted* his death by hanging. Peter speaks of the result. Judas probably passed out of the temple in great haste and perturbation of mind. He sought a place where he might perpetrate this crime. He would not, probably, be very careful about the fitness of the means he used. In his anguish, his haste, his desire to die, he seized upon a rope and suspended himself; and it is not at all remarkable, or indeed unusual, that the rope might prove too weak, and break. Falling headlong—that is, on his, face—he burst asunder, and in awful horrors died—a double death, with double pains and double horrors—the reward of his aggravated guilt.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *It is not lawful*, etc. It was forbidden De 18:18 to take what was esteemed as an abomination, and to offer it to God. The price of blood—that is, of the life of a man—they justly considered as an improper and unlawful offering.

The treasury. The *treasury* was kept in the court of the women. See plan of the temple, **See Barnes "Mt 21:12"**.

It was composed of a number of small *chests* placed in different parts of the courts to receive the voluntary offerings of the people, as well as the half-shekel required of every Jew. The original word, here rendered *treasury*, contains the notion of *an offering to God*. What was given there was considered as an offering made to Him.

The price of blood. The life is in the blood. The word *blood*, here, means the same as *life*. The price of blood, means the price by which the life of a man has been purchased. This was an acknowledgment that in their view Jesus was innocent. They had bought him, not condemned him justly. It is remarkable that they were so scrupulous now about so small a matter comparatively as putting this money in the treasury, when they had no remorse about murdering an innocent being, and crucifying him who had given full evidence that he was the Messiah. Men are often very scrupulous in *small matters*, who stick not at great crimes.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *And they took counsel*, etc. They consulted among themselves about the proper way to dispose of this money.

And bought with them. In Ac 1:18, it is said of Judas that *he* "purchased a field with the reward of iniquity." By the passage in the Acts is meant no more than that *he furnished the means*, or was the occasion of purchasing the field. It is not of necessity implied that Judas actually made the contract, and paid down the money to buy a field to bury strangers in—a thing which would be in itself very improbable; but that it was by his means that the field was purchased. It is very frequent in the Scriptures, as well as in other writings, to represent a man as doing that which he is only the cause or occasion of another's doing. See Ac 2:23 Joh 19:1; Mt 27:59,60.

The potter's field. Probably this was some, field well known by that name, which was used for the purpose of making earthen vessels. The price paid for a field so near Jerusalem may appear to be very small; but it is not improbable that it had been worked till the clay was exhausted, and was neither fit for that business nor for tillage, and was therefore considered as of little value.

To bury strangers in. Jews, who came up from other parts of the world to attend the great feasts at Jerusalem. The high priests, who regarded the Gentiles as abominable, would not be inclined to provide a burial-place for them.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *The field of blood*. The field purchased by the price of blood. The name by which this field was called was *Aceldama*, Ac 1:19. It was just without the walls of Jerusalem, on the south of Mount Zion. It is now used as a burying-place by the Armenian Christians in Jerusalem, who have a magnificent convent on Mount Zion. *Miss. Herald*, 1824, p. 66. See the map of Jerusalem, and ch. ii. 1.

Unto this day. That is, to the day when Matthew wrote this gospel, about thirty years after the field was purchased.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Spoken by Jeremy the prophet*. The words quoted here are not to be found in the prophecy of Jeremiah. Words similar to these are recorded in Zec 11:12,13, and from that place this quotation has been doubtless made. Much difficulty has been experienced in explaining this quotation. Anciently, according to the Jewish writers, *Jeremiah* was reckoned the first of the prophets, and was placed first in the Book of the Prophets: thus Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and the twelve minor prophets. Some have thought that Matthew, quoting this place, quoted the *Book of the Prophets* under the name of that which had the first place in the book—i, e., Jeremiah; and though the words are those of Zechariah, yet they are quoted correctly as the words of the Book of the Prophets, the first of which was Jeremiah. Others have thought that there was a mistake made by ancient transcribers, writing the name *Jeremiah* instead of Zechariah; and it is observed that this might be done by the change of only a single letter. It was often the custom to *abridge* words in writing them, Thus, instead of writing the name of Jeremiah in full, it would be written in Greek *Iriou*. So Zechariah would be written *Zriou*. By the mere change of *Z* into *I*, therefore, the mistake might easily be made. Probably this is the correct explanation. Others have supposed that the words were *spoken* by Jeremiah, and that *Zechariah* recorded them; and that Matthew quoted them as they were, the words of Jeremiah. The passage is not quoted literally; and by its being *fulfilled* is meant, probably, that the language used by Zechariah on a similar occasion would *express* also this event. It was language appropriate to this occasion.

The price of him that was valued. That is, the price of him on whom a value was set. The word rendered "valued," here, does not, as often in our language, mean to esteem, but to estimate; not to love, approve, or regard, but to fix a *price on*, to *estimate the value of*. This they considered to be thirty pieces of silver, *the common price of a slave*.

They of the children of Israel did value. Some of the Jews, the leaders or priests, acting in the name of the nation.

Did value. Did estimate, or fix a price on.

{q} "spoken" Zec 11:12,13 {1} "valued" or, "whom they bought of the children of Israel."

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *And gave them*. In Zechariah it is *I* gave them. Here it is represented as being given by the priests. The meaning is not, however, different. It is, that this price *was given* for the potter's field.

As the Lord appointed me. That is, commanded me. The meaning of the place in Zechariah is this: He was directed to go to the Jews as a prophet—a pastor of the people. They treated him, as they had done others, with great contempt. He asks them to give him *his price*— i.e., the price

which they thought he and his pastoral labours were worth, or to show their estimate of his office. If they thought it of value, they were to pay him accordingly; if not, they were to "forbear"— that is, to give nothing. To show their *great contempt* of him and his office, and of God who had sent him, they gave him thirty pieces of silver, *the price of a slave*. This God commanded, or appointed him to give to the potter, or to throw into the pottery—to throw away. So in the time of Jesus the same thing was substantially repeated. Jesus came as the Messiah. They hated and rejected him. To show their contempt of him and his cause, they valued him at the price of a slave. This was thrown down in the temple, taken by the priests, and appropriated to the purchase of a field owned by a *potter*, worn out, and of little or no value; *all* showing at how low a price, through the whole transaction, the Son of God was estimated. Though the words quoted here are not *precisely* like those in Zechariah, yet the *sense* and *general* structure are the same.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *And Jesus stood before the governor*. Many things are omitted by Matthew in the account of this trial, which are recorded by the other evangelists. A much more full account is found in Joh 18:28-40.

And the governor asked him, etc. This question was asked on account of the *charge* which the Jews brought against Jesus, of "perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar," Lu 23:2. It was on *this* charge that, after consultation, they had agreed to arraign him before Pilate. *They* had condemned him for *blasphemy*; but they well knew that Pilate would altogether disregard an accusation of that kind. They therefore attempted to substitute a totally different accusation from that on which they had professed to find him guilty; to excite the jealousy of the Roman governor, and to procure his death on a false charge of treason against the Roman emperor.

Thou sayest. That is, thou sayest right, or thou sayest the truth. We may wonder why the Jews, if they heard this confession, did not press it upon the attention of Pilate as a full confession of his guilt. It was what they had accused him of. But it might be doubtful whether, in the confusion, they heard the confession; or, if they did, Jesus took away all occasion of triumph by *explaining* to Pilate the *nature* of his kingdom, Joh 18:36. Though he acknowledged that he was a king, yet he stated fully that *his kingdom was not of this world*, and that therefore it could not be alleged against him as treason against the Roman emperor. This was done *in the palace*, apart from the Jews; and fully satisfied Pilate of his innocence, Joh 18:38.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *When he was accused*, etc. To wit, of perverting the nation, and of forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, Lu 23:2,5. Probably this was done in a tumultuous manner, and in every variety of form.

He answered nothing. He was conscious of his innocence. He knew that they could not prove these charges. They offered no testimony to prove them; and, in conscious innocence, he was silent.

{r} "answered nothing" Mt 26:63

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *They witness against thee*. This means, rather, that they *accused* him. They were not *witnesses*, but accusers. These accusations were repeated and pressed. They charged him with exciting the people, teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee to Jerusalem, and exciting them to sedition, Lu 23:6.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *To never a word*. That is, not at all. He said nothing. This is a way of speaking, denoting that it was remarkable. It is an *emphatic* way of saying that he answered nothing. There was no *need* of his replying. He was innocent, and they offered no proof of guilt. Besides, his *appearance* was full evidence in his favour. He was poor, unarmed, without powerful friends, and alone. His life had been public, and his sentiments were well known; and the charge had on the face of it the aspect of absurdity. It deserved, therefore, no answer.

Marvelled greatly. Wondered exceedingly, or was much surprised. He was probably more surprised that he bore this *so meekly*, and did not return railing for railing, than that he did not set up a defence. The latter was unnecessary. The former was unusual. The governor was not accustomed to see it, and was therefore greatly amazed.

It was at this time that Pilate, having heard them speak of Galilee, Lu 23:5 asked if he was a Galilean. Having ascertained that he was, and probably desirous of freeing himself from any farther trouble in the affair, under pretence that he belonged to Herod's Jurisdiction, he sent Jesus to Herod, who was then at Jerusalem, attending the feast of the Passover, Lu 23:6-12. Herod having examined him, and finding no cause of death in him, sent him back to Pilate. Pleased with the respect which had been shown him, Herod laid aside his enmity against Pilate, and they became friends. The cause of their friendship does not appear to be at all that they were united in opposing the claims of Jesus to be the Messiah, but the respect which Pilate had shown in sending Jesus to him.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 15

Verses 15-23. See also the parallel places in Mr 15:6-14 Lu 23:17-23 Joh 18:39,40.

Verse 15. *At that feast*. The feast of the passover.

The governor was wont to release, etc. Was accustomed to release. From what this custom arose, or by whom it was introduced, is not known. It was probably adopted to secure popularity among the Jews, and to render the government of the Romans less odious. Any little indulgence granted to the Jews, during the heavy oppression of the Romans, would serve to conciliate their favour, and to keep the nation from sedition. It might happen often, that when persons were arraigned

before the Romans, on charge of sedition, some peculiar favourite of the people, or some leader, might be among the number. It is evident that if they had the privilege of recovering such a person, it would serve much to allay their feelings, and make tolerable the yoke under which they groaned.

{s} "Now at that feast" Mr 15:6 Lu 23:17; Joh 18:39

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *A notable prisoner*. The word notable means one that is *distinguished* in any way, either for great virtues, or great crimes. In this place, it evidently means the latter. He was perhaps a leader of a band who had been guilty of sedition, and had committed murder in an insurrection, Lu 23:19.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Whom will ye that I release*, etc. Pilate was satisfied of the innocence of Jesus, Lu 23:13-16 he was therefore desirous of releasing him. He expected to release one to the people. He knew that Jesus, though condemned by the chief priests, was yet popular among the *people*. He therefore attempted in this manner to rescue him from the hands of the priests, and expected that the *people* would prefer him to an odious and infamous robber and murderer. Had the people been left to themselves, it would probably have been done.

Jesus which is called Christ. That is, Jesus who claims to be the Messiah. Pilate probably did not believe it, or care much for it. He used the name which Jesus had acquired among the people. Perhaps, also, he thought that they would be more likely to ask him to be released, if he was presented to them as the Messiah. Mark Mr 15:9 adds, that he asked them whether they would that he should release "the King of the Jews?" It is probable that he asked the question in both ways. Perhaps it was several times repeated; and Matthew has recorded one way in which it was asked, and Mark another. He asked them whether they would demand him who *was called the Christ*—expecting that they would be moved by the claims of the Messiah, claims which, when he entered Jerusalem in triumph, and in the temple, they had acknowledged. He asked them whether they would have the *King of the Jews*—probably to ridicule the priests who had delivered him on that charge. He did it to show the *people* how absurd the accusation was. There he stood, apparently a poor, inoffensive, unarmed, and despised man. Herod set him at naught, and scourged him, and sent him back. The charge, therefore, of the priests, that he was a king opposed to the Roman emperor, was supremely ridiculous; and Pilate expecting the people would see it so, hoped also that they would ask him to be released.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *For he knew that for envy*, etc. This was envy at his popularity. He drew away the people from them. This Pilate understood probably from his knowledge of the pride and ambition of the rulers, and from the fact that no danger *could* arise from a person that appeared like Jesus. If Pilate *knew* this, he was bound to release him himself. As a governor and judge, he was bound to protect the innocent, and should, in spite of all the opposition of the Jews, at once have set him at liberty. But the Scriptures could not then have been fulfilled. It was necessary, in order that an atonement should be made, that Jesus should be condemned to die. At the same time, it shows the wisdom of the overruling providence of God, that he was condemned by a man who was satisfied of his innocence, and who proclaimed before his accusers his full belief that there was no fault in him.

{t} "envy" Pr 27:4 Ec 4:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Have thou nothing to do*, etc. That is, do not condemn him. Perhaps she was afraid that the vengeance of heaven would follow her husband and family, if he condemned the innocent.

That just man. The word *just* here has the sense of *innocent*; or not guilty. She might have been satisfied of his innocence from other sources, as well as from the dream. It is possible that the woman might have been a worshipper of the true God, and that she might therefore have desired that the Messiah should be released.

I have suffered many things, etc. Dreams were occasionally considered as indications of the Divine will; and, among the Romans and Greeks, as well as the Jews, great reliance was placed on them. Her mind— probably agitated with the subject; satisfied of the innocence of Jesus; and knowing that the Jews would make every effort to secure his condemnation—was also excited during her sleep, perhaps with a frightful prospect of the judgments that would descend on the family of Pilate if Jesus was condemned. She therefore sent to him to secure if possible his release.

{u} "that just man" Isa 53:11 Zec 9:9; Lu 23:47 1Pe 2:22; 1Jn 2:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Persuaded the multitude*. The release of a prisoner was to be to the *people*, not to the *rulers*. The rulers therefore, in order to secure the condemnation of Jesus, urged on the people to demand Barabbas. The people were greatly under the influence of the priests. Galileans among the citizens of Jerusalem were held in contempt. The priests turned the pretensions of Jesus into ridicule. Hence in a popular tumult, among a flexible and changing multitude, they easily excited them, who but a little before had cried hosanna, to cry crucify him.

{v} "Barabbas" Ac 3:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Whether of the twain*? Which of the two, Jesus or Barabbas?

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 22

Verse 22. No notes from Barnes on this verse. **See Barnes on "Mt 27:15"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *And the governor said, Why*? Luke informs us that Pilate put this question to them *three times*, so anxious was he to release him. He affirmed that he had found no cause of death in him. He said, therefore, that he would chastise him, and let him go. He expected probably, by causing him to be publicly whipped, to excite their compassion, to satisfy *them*, and thus to evade the demands of the priests, and to set him at liberty with the consent of the people. So weak and irresolute was this Roman governor! Satisfied of his innocence, he should at once have preferred justice to popularity, and acted as became a magistrate in acquitting the innocent.

Let him be crucified. **See Barnes "Mt 27:39"**.

Luke says they were instant with loud voices demanding this. They *urged* it. They demanded it with a popular clamour.

{w} "Let him be crucified" Mt 21:38,39

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *He took water*, etc. The Jews were accustomed to wash their hands when they wished to show that they were innocent of a crime committed by others. See De 21:6 Ps 26:6. They often used *signs* to represent their meaning. Pilate, in doing this, meant to denote that they were guilty of his death, but that he was innocent. But the mere washing of his hands did not free him from guilt, he was *bound* as a magistrate to free an innocent man; and whatever might be the clamour of the Jews, *he* was guilty at the bar of God for suffering the holy Saviour to be led to execution, to gratify the malice of enraged priests, and the clamours of a tumultuous populace.

See ye to it. That is, take it upon yourselves. Ye are responsible for it, if ye put him to death.

{x} "his hands" De 21:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *His blood be on us*, etc. That is, let the guilt of putting him to death, if there be any, be on us and our children. We will be answerable for it, and will consent to bear the punishment for it. It is remarked by writers, that among the Athenians, if any one accused another of a capital crime, he devoted himself and children to the same punishment, if the accused was afterwards found innocent. So in all countries the conduct of the parent involves also the children in the consequences of his conduct, The Jews had no *right* to call down this vengeance on their children, but in the righteous judgment of God it has come upon them. In less than forty years their city and temple were overthrown and destroyed. More than a million of people perished in the siege. Thousands died by famine; thousands by disease; thousands by the sword; and their blood ran down the streets like water, so that, Josephus says, it extinguished things that were burning in the city, Thousands were *crucified*— suffering the same punishment that they had inflicted on the Messiah. So great was the number of those who were crucified, that, Josephus says, they were obliged to cease from it, "room being wanting for the crosses, and crosses for the men." To this day, also, the curse has remained. They have been a nation scattered and peeled; persecuted almost everywhere, and a hissing and a by-word among men. No single nation probably has suffered so much; and yet they have been preserved. All classes of men; all the governments of the earth, have conspired to overwhelm them with calamity, and yet they still live as monuments of the justice of God, and as proofs, going down from age to age, that the Christian religion is true— standing demonstrations of the crime of their fathers in putting the Messiah to death, and in calling down vengeance on their heads.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *And when he had scourged Jesus*. **See Barnes "Mt 10:17".**

Among the Romans, it was customary to scourge, or whip, a slave before he was crucified. This was done to inflict a greater suffering than crucifixion would be alone; and to add to the horrors of the punishment. Our Lord, being about to be put to death, after the manner of a *slave*, was also treated as a slave; as one of the lowest and most despised of mankind,

He delivered him, etc. Not merely he gave him up to *them* to crucify him, as if *they* only were answerable, but he gave him up as a *judge* when he ought to have saved his life, and might have done it. Crucifixion was a Roman punishment; it was performed by Roman soldiers; Pilate pronounced the sentence from the tribunal, and Pilate affixed the title to the cross. Pilate, therefore, as well as the Jews, was answerable to God for the death of the Saviour of the world.

{z} "scourged Jesus" Isa 53:5 Lu 18:33

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 27

Verses 27-31. See also Mr 15:15-20 Joh 19:1-3.

Verse 27. *Into the common hall*. Tho original word here means, rather, the governor's palace, or dwelling. The trial of Jesus had taken place out of the palace. The Jews would not enter in; and

it is probable that courts were held often in a larger and more public place than would be a room in his dwelling. Jesus, being condemned, was led by the soldiers away from the Jews, *within* this palace, and subjected to their profane mockery and sport.

The whole band. The *band* or cohort was a tenth part of a Roman legion, and consisted of from four hundred to six hundred men, according to the size of the legion.

{1} "common hall" or, "governor's house"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *And they stripped him*. That is, they either took off all his upper garments, or removed all his clothing, probably the former.

A scarlet robe. Mark says they clothed him in purple. The scarlet colour was obtained from a species of fruit; *purple* from shell-fish. The ancients gave the name purple to any colour that had a mixture of red in it, and consequently these different colours might be some- times called by the same name. The robe here used was the kind worn by Roman generals, and other distinguished officers of the Roman army, and also by the Roman governors. It was made so as to be placed on the shoulders, and was bound around the body so as to leave the right arm at liberty. As we cannot suppose that Pilate would array him in a new and splendid robe, we must suppose that this was one which had been worn and cast off as useless, and was now used to array the Son of God as an object of ridicule and scorn!

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Had platted*. The word *platted* here means *woven together*, or having made a *wreath* of a thorn-bush.

A crown. Or perhaps, rather, *a wreath*. A crown was worn by kings, commonly made of gold, and precious stones. To ridicule the pretensions of Jesus, that he was a king, they probably plucked up a thorn-bush growing near, made it into something resembling, in shape, a royal crown, so as to correspond with the old purple, and to complete the mockery.

Of thorns. What is the precise species of shrub denoted here is not certainly known. It was, however, doubtless one of that species that has sharp points of very hard wood. They could therefore be easily pressed into the skin, and cause considerable pain. Probably they seized upon the first thing in their way that could be made into a crown, and this happened to be a thorn: thus increasing the sufferings of the meek Redeemer.

And a reed in his right hand. A *reed* is a straight slender herb, growing in marshy places, and abundant on the banks of the Jordan. It was often used for the purpose of making staves for walking; and it is not improbable that this was such a staff in the possession of some person present. The word is several times thus used. See 2Ki 18:21; Isa 36:6 Eze 29:6. Kings commonly carried a sceptre, made of ivory or gold, as a sign of their office or rank, Es 4:11 8:4. This *reed* or *staff* they put in his hand, in imitation of a *sceptre*, to deride also his pretensions of being a king.

And they bowed the knee. This was done for mockery. It was an act of pretended homage. It was to ridicule his saying that he was a king. The common mode of showing respect or homage for kings was by kneeling or prostration. It shows amazing forbearance on the part of Jesus, that he thus consented to be ridiculed, and set at naught. No mere *human* being would have borne it. None but Him who loved us unto death, and who saw the grand results that would come from this scene of sufferings, could have endured such cruel mockery.

Hail, king of the Jews! The term *hail* was a common mode of salutation to a king, or even to a friend. It implies, commonly, the highest respect for office, as well as the person, and is an invocation of blessings on the person. Here it was used to carry on what they thought to be the *farce* of his being a king; to ridicule in every possible way the pretensions of a poor, unattended, unarmed man of Nazareth, as if he had been a weak impostor, or had been deranged.

{a} "mocked him" Ps 69:19,20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *And they spit upon him*. This was a token of the deepest contempt and insult. **See Barnes "Mt 26:67".**

And took the reed. The cane, probably so large as to inflict a heavy blow.

And smote him on the head. Not merely to injure him by the force of the blow, but to press the thorns into his head, and thus to add cruelty to insult.

{b} "spit" Is 49:7 50:6, 53:3,7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 31

Verses 31,32. *As they came out*. That is, out of the governor's palace, where he had been treated with such cruelty and contempt, or out of the gates of the city, to crucify him.

A man of Cyrene. Cyrene was a city of Libya, in Africa, lying west of Egypt. There were many Jews there, and they were in the habit, like others, of going frequently to Jerusalem.

Him they compelled to bear his cross. John says, Joh 19:17 that Jesus went forth "bearing his cross." Luke says, Lu 23:26, that they laid the cross on Simon, that he might bear it after Jesus. There is no contradiction in these accounts. It was a part of the usual punishment of those who were crucified, that they should bear their own cross to the place of execution. It was accordingly laid at first on Jesus, and he went forth, as John says, bearing it. Weak, however, and exhausted by suffering and watchfulness, he probably sunk under,the heavy burden, and they laid hold of Simon that he might bear *one end* of the cross, as Luke says, *after Jesus*. The cross was composed of two pieces of wood, one of which was placed upright in the earth, and the other crossed it, after the form of the figure t. The upright part was commonly so high that the feet of the person crucified were two or three feet from the ground. On the middle of that upright part there was a projection, or seat, on which the person crucified sat, or, as it were, *rode*. This was necessary, as the hands were not alone strong enough to bear the weight of the body; as the body was left exposed often

many days, and not unfrequently suffered to remain till the flesh had been devoured by vultures, or putrefied in the sun. The feet were fastened to this upright piece, either by nailing them with large spikes driven through the tender part, or by being lashed by cords. To the cross-piece at the top, the hands, being extended, were also fastened, either by spikes or by cords, or perhaps in some cases by both. The hands and feet of our Saviour were both fastened by spikes. Crosses were also sometimes made in the form of the letter X, the limbs of the person crucified being extended to the four parts, and he suffered to die a lingering death in this cruel manner. The cross used in the crucifixion of Christ appears to have been the former. The mention of the cross often occurs in the New Testament. It was the instrument on which the Saviour made atonement for the sins of the world. The whole of the Christian's hope of heaven, and all his peace and consolation in trial and in death, depend on the sacrifice there made for sin, and on just views and feelings in regard to the fact and the design of the Redeemer's death. The following cuts are, therefore, inserted as an illustration of the usual form of the cross, and common method of crucifixion. The annexed cut shows the simplest form of the cross. the usual mode of crucifixion is illustrated by the first cut :—

Other modes of crucifixion are illustrated by the second cut. It was in one of these modes, probably, that Peter was crucified. **See Barnes "Joh 21:18"**.

{c} "led him" Nu 15:35 1Ki 21:10,13 Ac 7:58; Heb 13:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 32

Verse 32. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes on "Mt 27:27"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *Golgotha*. This is the Hebrew word signifying the place of a skull, This is the word which in Luke is called *Calvary*. In the original, there also, it is *a skull*. The word *calvary* is a Latin word meaning *skull*, or *place of skulls*. It is not known certainly why this name was given to this place. Some have supposed that it was because the mount resembled in shape a human skull. The most probable opinion, however, is that it was a place of execution; that malefactors were beheaded there, or otherwise put to death, and that their bones remained unburied or unburned. Mount Calvary was a small eminence, usually supposed to have been on the northwest of Jerusalem, without the walls of the city, but at a short distance. Jesus was put to death out of the city, because capital punishments were not allowed within the walls. See Nu 15:35,36; 1Ki 21:13.

This was a law among the Romans, as well as the Jews. He also died there, because the bodies of the beasts slain in sacrifice, as typical of him, were burned without the camp. He also, as the antitype, suffered without the gate, Heb 13:11,12. The place which is shown as Calvary now is within the city, and must also have been within the ancient walls; and there is no reason to suppose that it is the place where the Saviour was put to death.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *They gave him vinegar*, etc. Mark says that "*they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh*." The two evangelists mean the same thing. Vinegar was made of light wine rendered acid, and was the common drink of the Roman soldiers; and this might be called either vinegar or wine, in common language. *Myrrh* is a bitter substance, produced in Arabia, but is used often to denote anything bitter. The meaning of the name is *bitterness*. **See Barnes "Mt 2:11"**.

Gall is, properly, a bitter secretion from the liver; but the word is also used to denote anything exceedingly *bitter*, as wormwood, etc. The drink, therefore, was vinegar or wine, rendered *bitter* by the infusion of wormwood, or some other very bitter substance. The effect of this, it is said, was to stupify the senses. It was often given to those crucified, to render them insensible to the pains of death. Our Lord knowing this, when he had tasted it, refused to drink, he was unwilling to blunt the pains of dying. The *cup* which his Father gave him he rather chose to drink, He came to suffer. His sorrows were necessary for the work of the atonement; and he gave himself up to the unmitigated sufferings of the cross. This was presented to him in the early part of his sufferings, or when he was about to be suspended on the cross. *Afterward*, when he was on the cross, and just before his death, vinegar was offered to him without the myrrh —the vinegar which the soldiers usually drank—and of this he received. See Mt 27:49 Joh 19:28-30. Where Matthew and Mark say that he "would not drink," they refer to a different thing and a different time from John, and there is no contradiction.

{d} "gall" Ps 69:21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *And they crucified him*. To crucify, means to put to death on a cross. The cross has been described at Mt 27:32. The *manner* of the crucifixion was as follows: After the criminal had carried the cross, attended with every possible jibe and insult, to the place of execution, a hole was dug in the earth to receive the foot of it. The cross was laid on the ground; the person condemned to suffer was stripped, and was extended on it, and the soldiers fastened the hands and feet either by nails or thongs. After they had fixed the nails deeply in the wood, they elevated the cross with the agonizing sufferer on it; and, in order to fix it more firmly in the earth, they let it fall violently into the hole which they had dug to receive it; This sudden fall must have given to the person that was nailed to it a most violent and convulsive shock, and greatly increased his sufferings. The crucified person was then suffered to hang, commonly, till pain, exhaustion, thirst, and hunger ended his life. Sometimes the sufferings continued for days; and when friendly death terminated the life, the body was often suffered to remain—a loathsome object, putrefying in the sun, or devoured by the birds.

This punishment was deemed the most disgraceful and ignominious that was practised among the Romans. It was the way in which slaves, robbers, and the most notorious and abandoned wretches, were commonly put to death. It was this, among other things, that exposed those who preached the gospel to so much shame and contempt among the Greeks and Romans. They despised everything that was connected with the death of one who had died as a slave and an outlaw.

As it was the most ignominious punishment known, so it was the most painful. The following circumstances make it a death of peculiar pain:

(1.) The position of the arms and the body was unnatural, the arms being extended back and almost immovable. The least motion gave violent pain in the hands and feet, and in the back, which was lacerated with stripes.

(2.) The nails, being driven through the parts of the hands and feet which abound with *nerves* and *tendons*, created the most exquisite anguish.

(3.) The exposure of so many wounds to the air brought on a violent inflammation, which greatly increased the poignancy of the suffering.

(4.) The free circulation of the blood was prevented. More blood was carried out in the arteries than could be returned by the veins. The consequence was, that there was a great increase in the veins of the head, producing an intense pressure and violent pain. The same was true of other parts of the body. This intense pressure in the blood vessels was the source of inexpressible misery.

(5.) The pain gradually increased. There was no relaxation, and no rest. There was no prospect but death. The sufferer was commonly able to endure it till the third, and sometimes even to the seventh day. The intense sufferings of the Saviour, however, were sooner terminated. This was caused perhaps, in some measure, by his previous fatigue and exhaustion, but still more by the intense sufferings of His soul, his bearing our griefs, and carrying our sorrows; in making an atonement for the sins of the world. **See Barnes "Mr 15:44"**.

And parted his garments. It was customary to crucify a person naked. The clothes of the sufferer belonged to those who were executioners. John says Joh 19:23 that they divided his garments into four parts, to each soldier a part; but for his coat they cast lots. **See Barnes "John 19:23"**.

When Matthew says, therefore, that they parted his garments, casting lots, it is to be understood that they *divided* one part of them, and for the other part of them they cast lots.

That it might be fulfilled, etc. The words here quoted are found in Ps 22:18. The whole psalm is usually referred to Christ, and is a most striking description of his sufferings and death.

{e} "crucified" Ps 22:16 Mr 15:24; Lu 23:34 Joh 19:24

{f} "spoken by the prophets" Ps 22:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *They watched him there*. That is, the four soldiers who had crucified him. They watched him lest his friends should come and release him.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *And set up over his head*. John says Joh 19:19 that Pilate wrote the title, and put it upon the cross. Probably Pilate wrote it, or caused it to be written, and directed the soldiers to set it up. A man is often said to do what he directs others to do. It was customary to set up over the heads of persons crucified, the crime for which they suffered, and the name of the sufferer. The

accusation on which Jesus had been condemned by Pilate, was his claiming to be the King of the Jews.

This is Jesus the King of the Jews. The evangelists differ in the account of this title. Mark Mr 15:26 says it was "the King of the Jews." Luke says, Lu 23:38 this is the King of the Jews." John, Joh 19:19, "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews." But the difficulty may be easily removed. John says, that the title was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. It is not at all improbable that the inscription varied in these languages. One evangelist may have translated it from the Hebrew; another from the Greek; a third from the Latin; and a fourth have translated one of the inscriptions a little differently from another. Besides, the evangelists all agree, in the main point of the inscription, viz., that he was the King of the Jews.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *Two thieves crucified*, etc. Rather, two *robbers*. Pilate did not reside in Jerusalem, When he came there on the great feasts, or at other times, it was, in part, to hold courts for the trial of criminals. These robbers had been probably condemned at that time; and to show greater contempt for Jesus, he was crucified between men of that abandoned character, and on a cross that *should* have been occupied by their companion and leader, *Barabbas*.

{g} "crucified" Isa 53:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *Wagging their heads*. In token of derision and insult. See Job 16:4 Ps 109:25.

{h} "wagging" Ps 22:7 109:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 40

Verse 40. *Thou that destroyest the temple*, etc. Meaning, thou that didst boast that thou couldest do it. This was one of the things that had been falsely charged on him. It was intended for painful sarcasm and derision. If he could destroy the *temple*, they thought he might easily come down from the cross.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 41

Verse 41. No Barnes text on this verse.

{i} "mocking him" Job 13:9 Ps 35:16; Is 28:22 Lu 18:32

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 42

Verses 42,43. *He saved others*. It does not seem probable that they meant to admit that he had actually saved others, but only that he *pretended* to save them from death by miracles, or that he claimed to be the Messiah and thus affirmed that he *could* save them. This is therefore, cutting irony.

If he be the King of Israel etc. It may seem strange to some that Jesus did not vindicate by a great miracle his claims to be the Messiah, and come down from the cross. But the time had come for him to make atonement. He *had* given full and sufficient proof that he was the Christ. The people would have been as little satisfied that he was, if he had come down from the cross. They said this for the purpose of insult; and Jesus chose rather to suffer though his character was assailed, than to work a new miracle for their gratification. He had foretold his death, and the time had come; and now, amidst revilings, and jibes, and curses, and the severe sarcasms of an angry and apparently triumphant priesthood, he chose to die for the sins of the world. To this they added *insult* to God, profanely calling upon him to interpose by miracle, and save him, if he was his friend. And all this, when their prophets had foretold this very scene, and when they were fulfilling the predictions of their own Scriptures. So wonderful is the way by which God causes his word to be fulfilled.

{k} "let him" Ps 3:2 22:8, 42:10 71:11

{l} "he said I" Joh 5:17,18, 10:30,36

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 43

Verse 43. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes on "Mt 27:42"

{k} "let him" Ps 3:2 22:8, 42:10 71:11

{l} "he said I" Joh 5:17,18, 10:30,36

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 44

Verse 44. *The thieves also*. The robbers, or highwaymen. Luke says Lu 23:39 that one of them aid it, and that the other reproved him and was penitent. The account in Luke may, however, easily be reconciled with that in Matthew, by supposing that, *at first, both* of them reviled the Saviour, and that it is of this fact that Matthew speaks. Afterwards one of them relented, and became penitent— perhaps from witnessing the patient sufferings of Christ. It is of this particularly that Luke speaks. Or it may be, that what is true of one of the malefactors, is by Matthew attributed to both. The evangelists, when for the sake of brevity they avoid particularizing, often attribute to many what is said or done by single persons, meaning no more than that it was done by some one or more of them, without specifying the one. Compare Mr 7:17, with Mt 15:15; Mr 5:31, with Lu 8:45; Lu 9:13, with Joh 6:8,9.

Cast the same in his teeth. This is a most unhappy translation. It means in the original, simply, they upbraided him, or reproached him in the same manner.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 45

Verse 45. *Now from the sixth hour*. That is, from our twelve o'clock. The Jews divided their day into twelve hours, beginning to count at sunrise.

There was darkness. This could not have been an eclipse of the sun, for the passover was celebrated at the time of the full moon, when the moon is opposite to the sun. Luke says, Lu 23:45, that "the sun was darkened;" but it was not by an eclipse, but, perhaps, by the vapours and clouds that preceded the earthquake. The only cause of this was the interposing power of God—furnishing testimony to the dignity of the Sufferer, and causing the elements to sympathize with the pains of his dying Son. It was also peculiarly proper to furnish this testimony when the *Sun of Righteousness* was withdrawing his beams for a time, and the Redeemer of men was expiring. A dark, thick cloud, shutting out the light of day, and clothing every object with the darkness of midnight, was the appropriate drapery with which the world should be clad when the Son of God expired, This darkness was noticed by one at least of the pagan writers. *Phlegon*, a Roman astronomer, speaking of the fourteenth year of the reign of Tiberius, which is supposed to be that in which our Saviour died, says, that "the greatest eclipse of the sun that was ever known happened then, for the day was so turned into night that the stars appeared."

Over all the land, That is, probably over the whole land of Judea, and perhaps some of the adjacent countries. The extent of the darkness is not known.

The ninth hour. Till about three o'clock in the afternoon, at which time the Saviour is supposed to have died.

{m} "darkness" Am 8:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 46

Verse 46. *Eli, Eli*, etc. This language is not pure Hebrew, nor Syriac, but a mixture of both, called commonly *Syro-Chaldaic*. This was probably the language which he commonly spoke. The words are taken from Ps 22:1.

My God, my God, etc. This expression is one denoting intense suffering. It has been difficult to understand in what sense he was *forsaken by God*. It is certain that God *approved* his work. It is certain that Jesus was innocent. He had done nothing to forfeit the favour of God. As his own Son: holy, harmless, undefiled, and obedient— God still loved him. In either of these senses, God could not have forsaken him. But the expression was probably used in reference to the following circumstances, viz.:

(1.) His great bodily sufferings on the cross, greatly aggravated by his previous scourging, and by the want of sympathy, and by the revilings of his enemies on the cross. A person suffering thus, might address God as if he was forsaken, or given up to extreme anguish,

(2.) He himself said that this was "the power of darkness," Lu 22:53. The time when his enemies, including the Jews and Satan, were suffered to do their utmost. It was said of the serpent, that he should bruise the heel of the seed of the woman, Ge 3:15. By that has been commonly understood to be meant, that though the Messiah should finally crush and destroy the power of Satan, yet he should himself suffer *through the power of the devil*. When he was tempted, Lu 4:1 it was said that the tempter "departed from him for a season." There is no improbability in supposing that he might be permitted to return at the time of his death, and exercise his power in increasing the sufferings of the Lord Jesus. In what way this might be done, can be only conjectured. It might be by horrid thoughts; by temptation to despair, or to distrust God, who thus permitted his innocent Son to suffer; or by an increased horror of the pains of dying.

(3.) There might have been *withheld* from the Saviour those strong religious consolations; those clear views of the justice and goodness of God, which would have blunted his pains, and soothed his agonies. Martyrs, under the influence of strong religious feeling have gone triumphantly to the stake; but it is possible that those views might have been withheld from the Redeemer when he came to die. His sufferings were accumulated sufferings: and the design of the atonement seemed to require that he should suffer all that human nature *could be made to endure* in so short a time. Yet,

(4.) we have reason to think that there was still something more than all this that produced this exclamation. Had there been no deeper and more awful sufferings, it would be difficult to see why Jesus should have shrunk from these sorrows, and used such a remarkable expression. Isaiah tells us, Isa 53:4,5 "He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." He hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, Ga 3:13 he was made a sin-offering, 2Co 5:21 he died *in our place*, on *our* account, that he might bring us near to God. It was this, doubtless, which caused his intense sufferings. It was the manifestation of God's hatred of sin to his soul, in some way which he has not explained, that he experienced in that dread hour. It was suffering, endured by *him*, that was due to *us*; and suffering by which, and by which alone, we can be saved from eternal death.

{n} "to say" Ps 22:1 Isa 53:10; La 1:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 47

Verse 47. *This man calleth for Elias*. This was done purposely to deride him and his pretentions to be the Messiah. The words Eli, Eli, they might easily pretend that they understood to mean Elias, or so pervert them. The taunt would be more cutting, because it was the universal belief of the Jews, as well as the doctrine of Christ, that *Elias* would come before the Messiah. They derided him now, as calling upon *Elias*, when *God* would not help him; still keeping up the pretensions to being the Messiah, and invoking *Elijah* to come from the dead to aid him. Or it is possible that this might have been said by some bystanders, who did not understand the language in which he spoke, or who might not have been near enough to hear him distinctly.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 48

Verse 48. *One of them ran*. John Joh 19:28 says, that this was in consequence of Jesus saying, "I thirst." One of the effects of crucifixion was excessive thirst.

Took a spunge. A sponge is a well-known porous substance, that easily absorbs water. It was used in this case because, Jesus being elevated, it was difficult to convey a cup to his lips.

Filled it with vinegar. This was the common drink of Roman soldiers. It was a light wine, turned sour, and mixed with water. John says, Joh 19:29 there was a vessel set full of vinegar, probably for the use of the soldiers who watched his crucifixion.

And put it on a reed. John says, it was put upon *hyssop*. The hyssop was a shrub, growing so large sometimes as to be called a tree, 1Ki 4:33. The *stalk* of this was what Matthew calls a *reed*. The sponge fastened to this could easily be *extended* to reach the mouth of Jesus. This vinegar Jesus drank, for it was not intended to stupify him, or blunt his sense of pain like the *wine and myrrh*.

{o} "with vinegar" Ps 69:21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 49

Verse 49. *The rest said*, etc. Still deriding his sufferings, and refusing to allow even the poor consolation of a drink, to assuage the thirst of the Saviour of the world in his dying agonies.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 50

Verse 50. *Cried again with a loud voice*. He cried, "It is finished," Joh 19:30. It was in the height of his agony, probably attended with deep groaning, and uttered amidst sorrows which were never else experienced in our world. It finished the work of atonement; made the way of salvation possible; rolled away the curse from guilty men; and opened the kingdom of heaven to all true believers.

Yielded up the ghost. This, though a literal translation, is unhappy. It means, resigned his spirit, or *expired*. The same phrase is used by the Seventy in describing the death of Rachel, Ge 35:18.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 51

Verse 51. *The veil of the temple*. This was doubtless the veil, curiously wrought, which separated the holy from the most holy place, dividing the temple into two apartments, Ex 26:31-33.

In twain. In two pieces, or parts. This was the time of day when the priest was burning incense in the holy place, and it is probable that he witnessed it. The most holy place has been usually considered as a type of heaven, and the rending of the veil to signify that the way to heaven was now open to all— the great high Priest, the Lord Jesus, being about to enter in as the Forerunner

of his people. However, about the *design* of the rending of the veil the Scriptures are silent, and conjecture is useless.

And the earth did quake. Or shook, Earthquakes are violent convulsions of the ground, caused commonly by confined and rarefied air. This was probably, however, a miraculous convulsion of the earth, in attestation of the truth that the Sufferer was the Messiah, the Son of God; and as an exhibition of his *wrath* at the crimes of those who put him to death. It was not confined to Judea, but was felt in other countries. It is mentioned by Roman writers.

The rocks rent. That is, were torn asunder. Rocks are still seen at Mount Calvary thus rent asunder, which are *said* to be the ones that were convulsed when the Saviour died.

{p} "veil" Ex 26:31 Le 16:2,15 21:23; 2Ch 3:14

{q} "rent in twain" Isa 25:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 52

Verse 52. *And the graves were opened*. *Graves*, or sepulchres, were most commonly made, among the Jews, in solid rocks, or in caves of rocks. The rending of the rocks, therefore, would lay them open. The graves were *opened* by this earthquake, but the dead in them did not rise till after his resurrection.

And many bodies of the saints—arose. Of course it is not known who these were, nor what became of them. It is probable that they were persons who had recently died, and they appear to have been known in Jerusalem. At least, had the ancient saints risen, they would not have been known, and would not so soon have been credited as those who had recently died.

Which slept. Which had died. The death of saints is often called *sleep*, Da 12:2 1Co 15:18; 1Th 4:15.

{r} "And the graves" Isa 25:8 26:19; Hos 13:14 Joh 5:25,28

{s} "which slept" Da 12:2 1Th 4:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 53

Verse 53. *And came out of the graves after his resurrection*. The narrative of Matthew does not determine whether they came to life *before* Jesus rose, and remained in the tombs, or came to life *after* he died. The latter is the probable opinion. There is nothing said of the reason why they were raised. It is not improbable to suppose that it was, amidst the other wonders attending the death of Jesus, to convince the Jews that he was the Messiah. Perhaps some who had been his open friends were raised up now as an attestation, that he in whom they had believed was the Christ. What became of them after they had entered into the city—whether they again died, or ascended to heaven—is not revealed, and conjecture is vain.

The holy city. Jerusalem, called holy because the temple was there; because it was devoted to God, and was the place of their religious solemnities.

{t} "the graves" 1Co 15:20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 54

Verse 54. *Now when the centurion*, etc. Centurion, a captain of a hundred soldiers. He was here placed over the band that attended the crucifixion.

They feared greatly. They regarded these things as proof that God was angry, and they were terrified at the prospect that vengeance was coming on them.

Truly this was the Son of God. They had heard, probably, that before Pilate he professed to be the Son of God. Seeing these wonders, they believed that he was true, and that God was now attesting the truth of his professions. The centurion was a heathen, and had probably no very distinct notions of the phrase *the Son of God*; perhaps understanding by it only that he was like the heathen heroes who had been deified; but he certainly regarded these wonders as proof that he was *what he professed to be*. In the original it is, "A son of a god;" an expression perfectly suitable to a polytheist, who believed in the existence of many gods. Mr 15:39 says, that they affirmed that "this man was the Son of God." Luke, Lu 23:47 that they said, "Certainly this was a righteous man." These things were said by *different persons*, or at different periods of his sufferings—one evangelist having recorded one saying, and another another.

{u} "Now when" Mr 15:39 Lu 23:47

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 55

Verse 55. *Beholding afar off*. They were probably not suffered to come near the cross, because it was surrounded by soldiers. They witnessed, with intense feelings, his sufferings from some convenient place as near as they could approach.

Ministering unto him. Attending him, and providing for his wants. While multitudes of men joined in the cry, Crucify him, and forsook him in his trying moments, it does not appear that any of his *female* followers were thus unfaithful. In the midst of all his trials, and all the contempt poured upon him, they adhered to their Redeemer. Never did female constancy shine more brightly, and never was a happier example set for all who should afterwards believe on him.

{v} "which followed" Lu 8:2,3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 56

Verse 56. *Mary Magdalene*. Mary of Magdala. She had peculiar cause of attachment to the Saviour, having been relieved by him of a most dreadful calamity, and restored to her right mind, after being possessed by seven devils, Mr 16:9. *And the mother of Zebedee's children*. That is, of James and John, Mt 10:2. Her name was Salome, Mr 15:40.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 57

Verse 57. *When the even was come*. That is, some time after three o'clock in the afternoon. Before this, the Jews had besought Pilate that the legs of those who were crucified might be broken, and the bodies be taken down, that they might not remain on the cross during the sabbath. The soldiers coming to Jesus, for that purpose, found that he was already dead, contrary to their expectation. A soldier, however, thrust a spear into his side, and there was furnished the fullest proof that he had expired. **See Barnes "Joh 19:31"**

through verse 37.

A rich man of Arimathaea. It is uncertain where Arimathaea was. There were several cities of that name in Judea. It is commonly supposed to be the same as Rama. **See Barnes "Mt 2:18"**.

Luke says that this was a" city of the Jews ;" and it is probable, therefore, that it was in the tribe of Benjamin, and but a short distance from Jerusalem. This man sustained a high character. He was an "honourable counsellor," Mr 15:43; he "waited for the kingdom of God;" he was "a good man, and a just;" he had nobly set himself against the wicked purposes of the sanhedrim, Lu 23:51; he was a disciple of Jesus, though he was not openly his follower, because he feared the Jews, Joh 19:38.

{w} "When the even" Mr 15:42 Lu 23:50; Joh 19:38

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 58

Verse 58. *He went to Pilate*. Because no one had a right to remove the body but the magistrate, he was condemned to be crucified—usually a long and most bitter death; and, in common cases, it would have been unlawful to have removed the body so soon.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 59

Verse 59. *He wrapped it in a clean linen cloth*. John adds, that this was done with spices, Joh 19:40. The Jews were accustomed to use myrrh, aloes, and other aromatics, in large quantities, when they buried their dead. When they were not regularly embalmed, which was a long and tedious process, they enclosed the spices in the folds of the linen, or wrapped the body in it. Spices were sometimes used in such quantities as to form a heap or bed, on which the dead body was laid. Thus it is said of Asa, (2Ch 16:14,) they "laid him in the bed which was filled with sweet odours and spices," etc. There not being time properly to embalm the body of Jesus, he was buried in this manner. The women who attended him, either not being aware of this or desirous of showing a farther regard for him, returned from the sepulchre on the first day of the week, and prepared other spices with which to embalm him, Lu 23:56 24:1.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 60

Verse 60. *In his own new tomb*. John says, (Joh 19:41), that this was in a garden that was in or near the place where he was crucified. This tomb Joseph had prepared for himself, as was not uncommon among the Jews. In this tomb Luke and John inform us that no man had been laid. This was so ordered in the providence of God, doubtless, that there might be no suspicion about his identity when he rose; that it might not be alleged that another person had risen; or that he was raised by touching the bones of some prophet, as happened to the corpse that touched the bones of Elisha, 2Ki 13:21. Farther, by being buried here, an important prophecy was remarkably fulfilled, (Isa 53:9) "he made his grave—with the rich in his death." The fulfillment of this is the more remarkable, because during his life he associated with the poor, and was himself poor.

Which he had hewn out in the rock. This was a common way of constructing tombs in Judea. **See Barnes "Mt 8:28"**.

Being cut out of a rock, there was no way by which the disciples could have access to it but by the entrance, at which the guard was placed, and consequently it was impossible for them to steal him away. The sepulchre, thus secure, was rendered more so by rolling a great stone at its entrance; all possible precautions thus being used, in the providence of God, against imposition and deceit.

{x} "and laid" Isa 53:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 61

Verse 61. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 62

Verse 62. *Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation*. The first day of the feast of the passover was called the day of preparation, because all things were on that day got in readiness for the observances of the paschal week. The Jewish day closed at sunset, and the sabbath at that time commenced. The *next day* mentioned here does not mean the following day in our acceptation of the word, or the following morning, but the next day in the Jewish way of speaking; that is, after the next day had commenced, or after sundown. To suppose them to have waited till the next morning would be absurd; as the disciples would be as likely to steal him away the first night as the second.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 63

Verse 63. *We remember*. They had either heard him say this, or, more probably, had understood that this was one of his doctrines.

That deceiver. One of the charges against him was, that he deceived the people. By this title they still chose to designate him, thinking that his death had fully confirmed the truth of the charges against him.

{y} "deceiver" Joh 7:12,47; 2Co 6:8

{z} "After three" Mt 16:21 17:23, 20:19 Lu 24:6,7 Joh 2:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 64

Verse 64. *Until the third day*. That is, during two nights and the intervening day. This proves, that when the Jews spoke of *three days*, they did not of necessity mean three *whole days*, but *parts* of three days, as was the case in our Saviour's lying in the grave.

The last error shall be worse than the first. That is, the last *deception*, or taking him from the tomb, pretending that he rose, shall have a wider influence among the people than the first, or his pretending to be the Messiah.

{a} "steal" Mt 28:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 65

Verse 65. *Ye have a watch*. The Jews had a guard or watch of Roman soldiers, who kept watch in the tower of Antonia, on the north-west of the temple. Pilate either referred to these, or to the watch that attended the crucifixion: the whole *band* that had been appointed for that. As the torments of crucifixion sometimes lasted many days, the band had been probably granted to them during that time, and they were, therefore, still at the direction of the chief priests.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 27 - Verse 66

Verse 66. *Sealing the stone*. The sepulchre was made sure, by affixing the large stone to the entrance in such a way that it could not be removed without detection. It was sealed. In what way this was done cannot now be certainly told. The cave in which Daniel was cast was fastened in the same manner, and sealed with the king's signet, (Da 6:17) perhaps by fastening the stone in its place with cords, and bringing them together and uniting them with wax, and impressing on that the seal of the king. In this way letters and books were anciently sealed. Possibly on the sepulchre of Jesus was impressed in this manner the seal of Pilate—the seal of office— making it doubly sure. Or it may be, that the stone was fitted into the tomb with clay or cement, and on that was impressed the seal of Pilate.

Setting a watch. That is, as large a number of soldiers as they judged necessary to secure the tomb.

We cannot but be struck with the wisdom of God, in ordering the circumstances of the Saviour's burial in such a manner as to avoid the possibility of deception. Had all this been done by his *friends*,

it might have been said that they only pretended to secure the tomb, and only pretended that he was dead. But he was adjudged to be dead *by the Jews themselves*; Pilate was satisfied that that was the fact they had their own way about his burial; he was buried alone; the place of his sepulchre was made sure—*expressly to prevent his being removed*; and they placed around him a guard, in their own judgment, large enough to prevent his being taken away by force or strength. His very enemies, therefore, took every possible precaution to place his resurrection beyond the possibility of suspicion of fraud and imposture, and were the very means of furnishing the most striking proof that his death, burial, and resurrection were not impositions, but most affecting, awful, and yet cheering realities.

{b} "sealing" Da 6:27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 28

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 28 - Verse 1

MATTHEW CHAPTER 28

Verse 1. *In the end of the sabbath*. The word *end* here means the same as after the sabbath; i.e., after the sabbath was fully completed, or finished, and may be expressed in this manner:" In the night following the sabbath, for the sabbath closed at sunset, as it began to dawn," etc.

As it began to dawn toward the first day of the week. The word *dawn* is not of necessity in the original. The word there properly means, as the first day *approached*, or drew on, without specifying the precise time. Mark says, Mr 16:1,2,

that it was after "the sabbath was past, and very early in the morning, at the rising of the sun;" i.e., not that the sun *was risen*, but that it was about to rise, or at the early break of day. Luke says, Lu 24:1 that it was very early; in the Greek, *deep twilight*, or when there was scarcely any light. John (Joh 20:1) says, it was "early, when it was yet dark;" that is, it was not yet full daylight, or the sun had not yet risen. The time when they came, therefore, was at the break of day, when the sun was about to rise, but while it was yet so dark as to render objects obscure, or not distinctly visible.

The first day of the week. The day which is observed by Christians as the Sabbath. The Jews observed the seventh day of the week, or our Saturday. During that day our Saviour was in the grave. As he rose on the morning of the first day, it has always been observed, in commemoration of so glorious an event.

Came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary. From Mary Magdalene Christ had cast out seven devils. Grateful for his great mercy, she was one of his firmest and most faithful followers, and was first at the sepulchre, and was first permitted to see her risen Lord. The *other Mary* was not the mother of Jesus, but the mother of James and Joses, Mr 16:1. Mark says that Salome attended them. Salome was the wife of Zebedee, and the mother of James and John. From Luke, (Lu 24:10,) it appears that Joanna, wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, (Lu 8:3,) was with them. These four women, Mark says, having brought sweet spices, came to anoint him. They had prepared a part of them on

the evening before the Sabbath, Lu 23:56. They now *completed* the preparation, and bought more: or it may be that it means merely that having bought sweet spices, without specifying the time when, they came now to embalm him. John mentions only Mary Magdalene. He does this probably because his object was to give a particular account of her interview with the risen Saviour. There is no contradiction among the evangelists; for, while one mentions only the names of a part only who were there, he does not deny that *others* were present also. It is an old maxim, that "he who mentions a few, does not deny that there are more."

To see the sepulchre. To see whether it was as is had been left on the evening when he was laid there. To see if the stone was still there, by which they would know that he had not been removed. Mark and Luke say that the design of their coming was to anoint him with the sweet spices which they had prepared. Matthew does not mention that, but he does not deny that that was the ultimate design of their coming. It is not improbable that they might have known the manner in which he was buried, with a large quantity of myrrh and aloes. But that was done in haste; it was done by depositing the myrrh and aloes, without mixture or preparation, in the grave-clothes. *They* came, that they might embalm his body more deliberately, or at least that they might *anoint the bandages*, and complete the work of embalming.

{c} "In the end" Mr 16:1 Lu 24:1; Joh 20:1

{d} "Mary Magdalene" Mt 27:56

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 28 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *There was a great earthquake*. Rather, there *had been*. It does not mean that this was while they were there, or while they were going, but that there *had been* so violent a commotion as to remove the stone. The word here rendered *earthquake* does not of necessity mean that the convulsion extended to the earth, but only that there had been such a concussion as to remove the stone.

And sat upon it. Sat upon it when the keepers saw him. It is not said that he was sitting when he appeared to the women: from Luke it would rather appear that he was standing.

{1} "there was" or "there had been"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 28 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *His countenance*. In our language, the word *countenance* refers to the *face only*. In the original, it refers to his *whole person*. His *general aspect*, or *the appearance of the angel himself*, was, etc.

Like lightning. Peculiarly bright and shining.

His raiment white as snow. Celestial beings are usually represented as clothed in white, Ac 1:10 Da 7:9; Re 3:4 6, 4:4 7:13 14.

White, among the Jews, was the symbol of purity, or innocence.

{e} "countenance" Ps 104:4 Eze 1:4-14; Da 10:6 Re 1:14-15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 28 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *The keepers did shake*. It was night. The appearance was sudden and unexpected, and to them terrific. The stone was probably suddenly removed. At the noise, the light, the suddenness of the appearance, they were affrighted.

And became as dead men. Probably by terror they fainted, or were thrown into a swoon. At this time it is probable that the Lord Jesus arose; and hence he was not seen by them when he came forth. At what *precise time* of the night this was, we are not certainly informed. The narrative, however, leads us to suppose that it was not long before the women came to the sepulchre, or near the break of day.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 28 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And the angel answered and said*, etc. This was not on the *outside* of the tomb, for Matthew does not say that the angel appeared to the women then, but only to the keepers. Mark says, "entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment," Mr 16:6. Luke says, (Lu 24:3,4) "They entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And as they were much perplexed thereabout behold, two men stood by them in shining garments." Seeing the stone rolled away, and the sepulchre open, they of course anxiously entered into it, to see if the body was there. They did not find it, and *there* they saw the vision of the angels, who gave them information respecting his resurrection. Infidels have objected that there are three inconsistencies. in the accounts by Mark and Luke:

(1.) That Mark says the angel was sitting, and Luke says they were standing. *Answer*. The word in Luke does not of necessity mean that they stood, but only that they were present. Or it may be that the one that Mark mentions was sitting when they entered, and then arose.

(2.) It is objected that Luke mentions two, but Mark and Matthew one. *Answer*. Mark mentions the one who spoke; for it cannot be supposed they both spake the same thing. He does not *deny* that another was present with him. Luke affirms that there was. This way of speaking is not unfrequent. Thus Mark and Luke mention only one demoniac who was cured at Gadara. Matthew mentions two. In like manner, Mark and Luke speak of only one blind man who was cured at Jericho, while from Matthew it is certain that two were there. The fact that but one is mentioned—where it is not *denied* that there were others—does not prove that there could not be others.

(3.) Matthew calls this an *angel*; Mark and Luke a *man*. *Answer*. Angels, in the Scriptures, from *appearing* in the form of men, are often called as they *appear*, and are mentioned as *men*. See Ge 18:2,16,22 19:1,5.

Fear not ye. The cause of their fear was doubtless the appearance of the angels; or the word *fear* may be taken in a wider sense, and mean *agitated or troubled*. Thus, Be not agitated, or troubled, that you do not find the body of the Saviour. I know that ye seek him, and are troubled that he is removed; but you need not *fear* that he has been stolen. You will see him again in Galilee.

{f} "angel" Heb 1:14 {g} "for I know" Ps 105:3,4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 28 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *He is risen, as he said*. He had often predicted that he would rise, but the disciples did not understand it, and consequently did not expect it, Mt 16:21 20:19.

The place where the Lord lay. The place where a body was deposited in a sepulchre was commonly a *niche* cut in the wall of the *sepulchre*. The sepulchre was usually large; that of David was more than a hundred feet in length, cut out of solid rock under ground, and separated into various apartments. All round the sides of those apartments were niches for the dead; or they were ranged around the sides, in places cut in the solid rock just large enough to contain the body. In such a place our Lord lay.

{h} "he said" Mt 27:63

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 28 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Tell his disciples*. Mark adds particularly, tell "Peter." This was a kind message to Peter, who had so recently denied his Lord. It would serve to cheer him in his despondency, and to assure him that his sin had been forgiven; and it shows the tender love and remembrance of Jesus—even for his unfaithful friends.

{i} Lu 24:34 1Co 15:4 {k} Mt 28:16,17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 28 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *And they departed quickly*. Joyful at the news, and wishing to impart it to all, they fled to find the disciples, and tell them that the Lord was risen.

With fear and great joy. Fear

(1) at the wonderful scenes which they had witnessed—the stone rolled away, and the presence of an angel;

(2) a confused state of mind, apprehensive, perhaps, that it might not after all be true. The news was too good to be credited at once. Yet they had sufficient belief in it to fill them with great and unexpected joy. Perhaps no language could better express the state of their minds—the mingled awe and rejoicing—than that which is here used.

And did run, etc. They ran to announce what they had seen to the disciples. The city, where the disciples were, was half a mile or more from the place.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 28 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *And as they went—Jesus met them*. This was when they left the sepulchre the second time. Jesus *first* appeared to Mary Magdalene, when alone, Joh 20:14. *Afterwards* he appeared to

the other women, as related by Matthew. See the accounts of the resurrection harmonized, at the end of this chapter.

All hail. This is a term of salutation. The word "all" has been supplied by the translators. It is not in the original. The meaning of the world "hail" here, is *rejoice*; a term of salutation connected with the idea of joy—joy at his resurrection, and at meeting them again.

Held him by the feet. Or threw themselves prostrate before him. This was the usual posture of supplication. See 2Ki 4:37. It does not mean that they took hold of his feet, but only that they cast themselves down before him.

And worshipped him. **See Barnes "Mt 8:2".**

In this place the word worship seems to denote the homage due to the Messiah risen from the dead; regarded by them now in a proper light, and entitled to the honour which was due to God, agreeably to Joh 5:23.

{l} "All hail" Joh 20:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 28 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Be not afraid*. The ancients, when in the presence of a heavenly being—an angel, or one who was supposed to be possessed of Divine power—were commonly struck with great *fear*, as well as a great sense of their unworthiness. See Lu 5:8 Jud 6:22,23 13:21,22.

The women were in like manner alarmed when they saw Jesus, believing him now peculiarly to be a Divine Being; seeing him returning from the regions of the dead; and doubtless impressed with a new consciousness that they were unworthy of being in his presence. Jesus comforted them. He was the *same Jesus* with whom they had been before his death; and they had no reason now to fear him.

Go tell my brethren. There is something exceedingly tender in the appellation here used, "my brethren." Though he was risen from the dead—though about to be exalted to heaven—yet he did not disdain to call his disciples his brethren. This was calculated still farther to silence the fears of the women, and inspire them with confidence.

Into Galilee. Galilee was the northern part of the land. There the Saviour commenced his ministry; and there, away from the noise and confusion of the city, he purposed again to meet them, in retirement and quietness, to satisfy them of his resurrection, and to commission them to go forth and preach the everlasting gospel.

{m} "brethren" Heb 2:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 28 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *When they were going*. Or, when they had gone from the tomb.

Some of the watch. Some of the guard that had been set around the tomb to keep it safe. Probably the leaders, or officers, came to give a true account of what had happened.

Shewed unto the Chief Priests. To Annas and Caiaphas.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 28 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *And when they were assembled*, etc. They deemed the matter of so much importance as to justify the calling together of the great council of the nation. Notwithstanding all their caution, it was plain that the body of Jesus was gone. It was farther plain that the disciples would affirm that he was raised. It was not improbable that Jesus would himself appear, and convince multitudes that he was the Messiah; and that the guilt of putting him to death would, after all their caution and cunning, be charged on them. They had been at great pains to procure his death. They had convinced Pilate that he was dead. They had placed a guard for the express purpose of preventing his being taken. It would be in vain, after this, to *pretend* that he was not dead; that he was in a swoon; that he died in appearance only. They had shut themselves out from this, which would have been the most plausible plea; and whatever course they might now adopt, they were *obliged* to proceed on the admission that he had been *really dead*, and that all proper measures had been taken to prevent his being stolen. They concluded, after consultation, that but one way was left—to bribe the soldiers, to induce them to tell a falsehood, and to attempt to convince the world that Jesus, in spite of themselves, and in the face of all probability, and been really stolen.

Large money. Much money. This was given to bribe them; to induce them to conceal the truth; and to affirm what they knew was false.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 28 - Verse 13

Verse 13. No Barnes text on this verse.

{n} "stole him away" Mt 26:64

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 28 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *The governor's ears*. To Pilate. If it is reported to him that Jesus was stolen while you slept.

We will persuade him. We will convince, or satisfy him, so that he shall not punish you. This they might promise with safety. For,

(1.) they knew from the character of Pilate that he could be easily bribed.

(2.) Pilate, after the feast of the passover, was accustomed to return to Caesarea. He had not been inclined at all to interfere in anything concerning the Saviour, until it was urged upon him by the Jews. He would not be disposed *of himself* to take any farther trouble about the matter. He would feel that all that could be demanded of him had been done, and would not be disposed farther to interfere, unless the sanhedrim should demand it. This of course they would not do.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 28 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *This saying is—reported*. This account of the disappearance of the body of Jesus from the sepulchre is commonly given.

Until this day. The time when Matthew wrote this gospel, i.e., about thirty years after the resurrection.

The resurrection of the Lord Jesus, of which an account is given in this chapter, is one of the most important doctrines of the Christian religion, and is attested by the strongest evidence that can be adduced in favour of any ancient fact. Let it be considered,

(1.) that he had often foretold his own death and resurrection. See Mt 12:40 16:21, 20:19.

(2.) There was no doubt that he was really dead. Of this the Jews, the Romans, and the disciples, were all equally well satisfied.

(3.) Every proper precaution was taken to prevent his removal by stealth. A guard, usually consisting of sixty men, was placed there for the express purpose of keeping him, and the sepulchre was secured by a large stone, and by a seal.

(4.) On the third day the body was missing. In this all were agreed. The high priest did not dare to call that in question. They laboured, therefore, to account for it. The disciples affirmed that he was alive. The Jews hired the Roman soldiers to affirm that he was stolen while they slept, and succeeded in making many of the people believe it. This account of the Jews is attended with the following difficulties and absurdities: \-

(1.) The Roman guard was composed usually of sixty men, and they were stationed there for the express purpose of guarding the body of Jesus.

(2.) The punishment of sleeping while on guard in the Roman army was *death*, and it is perfectly incredible that they should expose themselves in this manner to death.

(3.) The disciples were few in number, unarmed, weak, and timid. They had just fled before those who took Jesus in the garden, and how can it be believed that in so short a time they would dare to *attempt* to take away from a Roman guard of armed men what they were expressly set to defend ?

(4.) How could the disciples *presume* that they would find them asleep; or, if they should, how was it possible to remove the stone and the body, without awaking one of their number?

(5.) The *regularity* and *order* of the grave-clothes (Joh 20:6,7) show that the body had not been stolen. When men rob graves of the bodies of the dead, they do not wait coolly to fold up the grave-clothes, and lay them carefully by themselves.

(6.) If the soldiers were *asleep*, how did they, or how could they know that the disciples stole the body away? If they were awake, why

did they suffer it ? The whole account, therefore, was intrinsically absurd. On the other hand, the account given by the disciples was perfectly natural.

(1.) They account for the reason why the soldiers did not see the Saviour when he rose. Terrified at the vision of an angel, they became as dead men.

(2.) They affirmed that they saw him. All the apostles affirmed this, and many others.

(3.) They affirmed it in Jerusalem, in the presence of the Jews, before the high priest and the people. See the Acts of the Apostles. If the Jews really believed the account which they themselves had given, why did they not apprehend the apostles, and prove them guilty of the theft, and of falsehood: things which they never attempted, and which show, therefore, that they did not credit their own report.

(4.) in regard to the Saviour, they could not be deceived. They had been with him three years. They knew him as a friend. They again ate and drank with him; they put their fingers into his hands and side; they conversed with him; they were with him forty days. There were *enough* of them to bear witness. Law commonly requires not more than one or two competent witnesses; but here were *twelve* plain, honest men, who affirmed in all places, and at all times, that they had seen him. Can it be possible that they could be deceived? Then all faith in testimony must be given up.

(5.) They gave every possible evidence of their sincerity. They were persecuted, ridiculed, scourged, and put to death for affirming this. Yet not one of them ever ex- pressed the least doubt of its truth. They bore everything rather than to deny that they had seen him. They had no motive in doing this, but the love of truth. They obtained no wealth by it; no honour; no pleasure. They gave themselves up to great and unparalleled sufferings: going, from land to land; crossing almost every sea; and enduring the dangers, toils, and privations of almost every clime, for the simple object of affirming everywhere that a Saviour died and rose. If they knew this was an imposition—and if it had been, they would have known it—in what way is this remarkable conduct to be accounted for? Do men conduct in this way for naught? and especially in a *plain case*, where all that can be required is the testimony of the senses?

(6.) The world believed them. Three thousand of the Jews themselves believed in the risen Saviour, on the day of Pentecost, but fifty days after his resurrection, Ac 2:41. Multitudes of other Jews believed during the lives of the apostles. Thousands of Gentiles believed also, and in three hundred years the belief that Jesus rose had spread over and changed the whole Roman empire. *Had* the apostles been deceivers, that was the age in which they could most easily have been detected. Yet that was the age when converts were most rapidly multiplied, and God affixed his seal to their testimony that it was true.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 28 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Then the eleven disciples*. Judas was dead, leaving but eleven of the original number of the apostles.

Into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. This *appointment* is recorded in Mt 26:32. On what particular mountain this was is not known. It is probable that Jesus, when he made the appointment, specified the place, which has been omitted by the evangelists. Matthew has omitted

many appearances which Jesus made to his disciples, which have been recorded by Luke, John, and Paul. See the harmony of the resurrection at the end of the chapter.

{o} "Then the eleven" Mt 26:32

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 28 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *They worshipped him*. Paid him honour as the Messiah.

But some doubted. As, for example, Thomas, (Joh 20:25.) The disciples had not expected his resurrection; they were therefore slow to believe. The mention of their doubting shows that they were honest men—that they were not easily imposed on—that they had not previously agreed to affirm that he had risen—that they were convinced only by the strength of the evidence. Their caution in examining the evidence; their slowness to believe; and their firm conviction after all their doubts, and their willingness to show their conviction, even by their death, is most conclusive proof that they were not deceived in regard to the fact of his resurrection.

{p} "they saw him" Mt 16:28

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 28 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth*. The *Son of God, as Creator*, had an original right to all things, to control them and dispose of them. See Joh 1:3 Col 1:16,17 Heb 1:8.

But the universe is put under him more particularly as Mediator, that he might redeem his people, that he might gather a church, that he might defend his chosen, that he might subdue all their enemies, and bring them off conquerors, and more than conquerors, Eph 1:20-23 1Co 15:25-27; Joh 5:22,23; Php 2:6-11.

It is in reference to *this*, doubtless, that he speaks here—power or *authority* committed to him over all things, that he might redeem, defend, and save the church purchased with his own blood. His mediatorial government extends, therefore, over the material world, over angels, over devils, over wicked men, and over his own people.

{q} "power" Ps 2:6 89:19, 110:1-3 Is 9:6,7 Da 7:14; Mt 11:27 Lu 1:32

Joh 17:2 Ro 14:9; Eph 1:20,21; He 2:8 1Pe 3:22; Re 11:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 28 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Go ye therefore. Because* all power is mine, go. I can defend you. The world is placed under my control. It is redeemed. It is given me in promise by my Father, as the purchase of my death. Though you are weak, yet I am strong. Though you will encounter many troubles and dangers, yet I can defend you. Though *you* die, yet *I* live, and the work shall be accomplished.

Teach all nations. The word rendered *teach*, here, is not the one that is usually so translated in the New Testament. This word properly means *disciple*, or *make disciples of*, all nations. This was to be done, however, by teaching them, and by administering the rite of baptism. *All nations*. The gracious commission was the foundation of the authority to go to the Gentiles. The Jews had expected that the offers of life, under the Messiah, would be confined to their own nation. Jesus broke down the partition wall, and commissioned his disciples to go everywhere, and bring the *world* to the knowledge of himself.

Baptizing them. Applying to them water, as an emblem of the purifying influences of the Christian religion through the Holy Spirit, and solemnly devoting them to God.

In the name, etc. This phrase does not mean, here, by *the authority* of the Father, etc. To be baptized in the name of the Father, etc., is the same as to be baptized *unto* the Father; as to believe on the name of Christ is the same as to believe *on Christ*. Joh 1:12 2:23, 3:18 1Co 1:13.

To be baptized *unto* anyone is publicly to receive and adopt him as a religious teacher or lawgiver; to receive his system of religion. Thus the Jews were baptized "unto Moses" 1Co 10:2. That is, they received the system that he taught; they acknowledged him as their lawgiver and teacher. So Paul asks, (1Co 1:13) "Were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" —i.e., Were you devoted to Paul by this rite? Did you bind yourselves to him, and give yourselves away to him, or to God? So to be baptized in the name of the Father, etc., means publicly, by a significant rite, to receive the system of religion, to bind the soul to obey his laws; to be devoted to him; to receive, as the guide and comforter of the life, his system of religion; to obey his laws, and trust to his promises. To be baptized unto the Son, in like manner, is to receive him as the Messiah—our Prophet, Priest, and King; to submit to his laws, and to receive him as the Saviour of the soul. To be baptized unto the Holy Ghost is to receive him publicly as the Sanctifier, Comforter, and Guide of the soul. The meaning, then, may be thus expressed: Baptizing them unto the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, by a solemn profession of the only true religion, and by a solemn devotion to the service of the sacred Trinity.

The union of these three names in the form of baptism proves that the Son and Holy Ghost are *equal* with the Father. Nothing would be more absurd or blasphemous than to unite the name of a creature —a man or an angel—with the name of the ever-living God, in this solemn rite. If Jesus was a mere man or an angel, as is held by many who deny his Divinity; and if the Holy Ghost was a mere *attribute* of God; then it would have been the height of absurdity to use a form like this, or to direct the apostles to baptize men unto them. How absurd would be the direction—nay, now blasphemous to have said, "Baptize them unto God, and unto Paul, and unto the *wisdom* or *power* of God!" Can we believe that our Saviour would have given a direction so absurd as this? Yet, unless he himself was Divine, and the Holy Spirit was Divine, Jesus gave a direction substantially the same as this. The form of baptism, therefore, has been always understood as an irrefragable argument for the doctrine of the Trinity, or that the Son and Holy Spirit are equal with the Father.

{r} "Go ye" Mr 16:15 {1} "teach" or, "make disciples", or "Christians" of all nations {s} "all nations" Isa 52:10 Ro 10:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW - Chapter 28 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Lo, I am with you*. That is, by my Spirit, my providence, my attending counsel and guidance. I will strengthen, assist, and guide you. This also proves that Christ is Divine. If a mere man, or a creature of the highest order, how could he promise to be *with* his disciples *always*—or at all? They would be scattered far and wide. His disciples would greatly increase. If he was *with them* always, he was God; for no finite creature could thus be present with many men scattered in different parts of the world.

Unto the end of the world. The word rendered *world*, here, sometimes means *age* or *state*; and by some it has been supposed to mean, I will be with you until the end of this age, or during the continuance of the Jewish state, to the destruction of Jerusalem. But as the presence of Christ was no less necessary after that than before, there seems to be no propriety in limiting the promise to his own age. It may, therefore, be considered as a gracious promise to aid, strengthen, guide, and defend all his disciples, but more especially his ministers, to the end of time.

{t} "Teaching" Ac 2:42 1Co 11:2 {u} "I am with" Mt 18:20 Re 1:18 \-

HARMONY OF THE ACCOUNTS
OF THE

RESURRECTION, APPEARANCES, AND ASCENSION
OF CHRIST.

I. THE RESURRECTION. \-

As there has been much difficulty felt in reconciling the accounts of the different evangelists respecting the resurrection of Christ, and as infidels have maintained that they are utterly irreconcilable, it may be proper, in closing the Notes on Matthew, to give these accounts at one view. One thing should always be borne in mind by all who read the gospels, viz.: *that the sacred narrative of an event is what it is declared to be by ALL the evangelists*. That a thing is omitted by *one* does not prove that another is false because he has declared it; for the very object of the different gospels was to give the testimony of independent witnesses to the great facts of the life and death of Jesus. Nor does it prove that there is a contradiction because one relates facts in a different *order* from another; for neither of them *professes* to relate facts in the *precise order* in which they occurred. The object was to relate the *facts themselves*. With these principles in view, which are conceded to profane historians always, let us look at the accounts which are presented in the *sacred narrative* respecting the resurrection, appearance, and ascension of Christ.

1. Jesus was laid in the tomb on Friday evening, having been wrapped in linen with myrrh and aloes, in a hurried manner, Joh 19:39,40. The *women*, not apprized of that, or desiring to testify their regard *farther*, prepared spices on the same evening to embalm him, Lu 23:56. As it was too late that night to complete the preparation, they deferred it till the first day of the week, resting on the sabbath, Lu 23:56.

2. On the first day of the week, early, the women completed their preparation—purchased more spices, and properly mixed them to make an *unguent* to anoint the bandages in which the body was rolled, Mr 16:1. Or this may refer to the same purchase as is mentioned by Luke. They *had* bought them—i.e., on Friday evening.

3. They came to the sepulchre just as the day began to dawn, or just as the light appeared in the east, yet so *dark* as to render objects indistinct. It was "in the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week," Mt 28:1. "Very early in the morning, at the rising of the sun;" or

as the sun was about to rise, Mr 16:2. "Very early in the morning," Lu 24:1. "Early, when it was yet dark," Joh 20:1.

4. The persons who came were Mary Magdalene, (Mt 28:1 Joh 20:1); Mary, the mother of James and John, (Mt 28:1 Lu 24:10; Mr 15:40) ; Salome, the wife of Zebedee, and mother of James and John, (compare Mt 27:56 Mr 15:40; Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, (compare Lu 24:10 8:3) and certain others not specified, (Lu 24:1,10.)

5. The object of their coming:

(1.) To see the sepulchre, Mt 28:1.

(2.) To embalm him, or to *finish* embalming him, Mr 16:1 Lu 24:1.

6. While on the way, they inquired who should roll away the stone for them, that they might have access to the body of Jesus, Mr 16:3.

7. When they arrived, they found there *had been* an earthquake, or shaking of the tomb, so that the stone was rolled away, Mt 28:2 Mr 16:4.

8. The angel, who rolled the stone away, *had* sat down on it, and appeared to the *keepers*, and frightened them; though he did not appear in this place to the *women*, but only to the keepers, Mt 28:2-4. At that time probably our Saviour had risen—how long before the women came there, is not known, and cannot be ascertained.

9. When they came there, *Mary Magdalene*, greatly agitated with the appearance, and probably supposing that the body had been stolen, left the other women, and ran to the city, at the distance of half a mile, to inform the disciples, Joh 20:2.

10. While Mary was gone, the others probably looked round the garden in search of the body, and then came and examined the sepulchre to see if it was not there. The tomb was large, and they entered *into* it. There the angel spake unto them, Mt 28:5. "They saw a young man"—i. e. an angel in the appearance of a young martin,, sitting on the right side," Mr 16:5. When they entered he was sitting; as they entered he rose and stood, Lu 24:4. Luke adds that there was another with him, Lu 24:4; this *other one* was not seen when they entered into the sepulchre, at the time mentioned by Mark; but was seen when they had fully entered in, as mentioned by Luke.

11. The angel charged them to go and tell the disciples and Peter, (Mt 28:7 Mr 16:7) and to assure them that he would see them in Galilee. The angel also reminded them of what Jesus had said when they were in Galilee, Lu 24:6,7.

12. They went immediately towards the city, yet taking a different way from the one Mary had taken, or going in such a way that they did not meet her when she was returning from the city with Peter and John, Mt 28:8 Mr 16:8. "Neither said they anything to any man," Lu 24:9,10. In Lu 24:10, it is said that it was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, that told these things to the disciples. Not that Luke affirms that they were *together* when they told them, but that the information was given *by them*, though perhaps at different times.

13. While they were gone, Mary Magdalene returned to the sepulchre, following Peter and John, who came running, Joh 20:2-9. They examined the sepulchre, and found that the body was really gone; but as yet they did not know the reason, not having seen the other women to whom the angel had told the cause, and Mary Magdalene having left the women before the angel had spoken to them. As yet, therefore, *she* was ignorant of the reason of his removal.

14. Peter and John then left the sepulchre, returned home, and left Mary alone, Joh 20:10.

15. While Mary was there alone, she looked into the sepulchre, and saw two angels, probably the same that had appeared to the other women, Joh 20:11-13.

16. Jesus appeared to Mary while she was alone at the sepulchre, Joh 20:14-18. Thus, according to Mark, (Mr 16:9,); he appeared to Mary Magdalene "*first*."

17. Mary then went to tell the disciples that she had seen him, but they did not fully believe her, Joh 20:18 Mr 16:10,11.

18. *Afterwards* Jesus appeared to the other women, Mt 28:9. "As they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail." This would *seem*, in Matthew, to be immediately after they left the sepulchre the first time. But many critics observe, that the words "to tell his disciples" are wanting in many manuscripts, and of doubtful authority. It may be farther said, that the words "as they were going" might have been rendered, "*after* they were gone." They do not imply, of necessity, that the appearance took place *immediately*, but only *after* they were gone, without specifying the time. Probably it was not long after he had appeared to Mary Magdalene. They would probably return to the garden after they had informed the disciples, and linger around there that they might ascertain what had become of him, or learn whether he had been seen by any one. It was then, probably *after* they had been away and returned, and *after* he had been seen by Mary, that they saw him.

II. APPEARANCES OF JESUS AFTER THE RESURRECTION. \-

1. To Mary Magdalene, Joh 20:14 Mr 16:9.
2. To the other women, Mt 28:9.
3. To Peter, 1Co 15:5 Lu 24:34.
4. To two disciples as they were going to Emmaus, Mr 16:12.
   Lu 24:13-32.
5. The same day at evening, to the apostles, in the absence of
   Thomas, 1Co 15:5 Mr 16:14; Lu 24:36 Joh 20:19,24.
6. To the apostles when Thomas was present, Joh 20:24-29.
7. In Galilee, at the sea of Tiberias, to Peter, Thomas, Nathanael,
   James, and John, and two others, Joh 21:1-14. This is said to
   be the third time that he showed himself to the disciples—i.e., to
   the apostles—when they were assembled together, Joh 21:14.
8. To the disciples on a mountain in Galilee, Mt 28:16.
9. To more than five hundred brethren at once, 1Co 15:6. 10. To James, one of the apostles,
   1Co 15:7. 11. To all the apostles assembled together, 1Co 15:7. He was
   seen by them forty days after he rose—probably conversing with
   them familiarly. 12. To the apostles at his ascension, Lu 24:50,51; Ac 1:9,10.

13. To Paul, 1Co 15:8 Ac 9:3,4,5 22:6-10.

III THE ASCENSION.

1. It was forty days after his resurrection, Ac 1:3.
2. He ascended from the Mount of Olives, near Bethany,
Lu 24:50 Ac 1:12
3. It was in the presence of all the apostles, Lu 24:50
Ac 1:9,10
4. He was received into a cloud, and ascended to heaven,

Ac 1:9,11; Lu 24:51 Eph 1:20-22.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

PREFACE

Of Mark, the writer of this gospel, little is certainly known. He is commonly supposed to be the same that is several times mentioned in the New Testament. He was not an apostle, or companion of the Lord Jesus, during his ministry, though some of the Fathers affirm that he was one of the seventy disciples. This is improbable, as he is mentioned by Peter (1Pe 5:13) as his son; from which it is supposed that he was converted by the instrumentality of Peter.

From the New Testament, we learn that he was sister's son to Barnabas, (Col 4:10;) and that his mother's name was Mary, a pious woman in Jerusalem, at whose house the apostles and primitive Christians often assembled, Ac 12:12.

His Hebrew name was John, (Ac 12:12,) and it is probable that he adopted a name better known, or more familiar, when he visited the Gentiles, a practice not uncommon in that age. He was at first the companion of Paul and Barnabas, in their journeys to propagate Christianity, Ac 13:5. He chose not to attend them through their whole journey, but left them in Pamphylia, and probably returned to Jerusalem, Ac 15:38. Probably at this time he was the companion of Peter, and travelled with him to Babylon, 1Pe 5:13. Afterwards he went with Barnabas to Cyprus, Ac 15:39. Subsequently he went to Rome, at the express desire of Paul, in company with Timothy, 2Ti 4:11. He remained at Rome while Paul was a captive there, but how long is uncertain, Col 4:10; Phm 1:24. From Eusebius, Epiphanius, and Jerome, we hear that Mark went from Rome to Alexandria, in Egypt, where he planted a church, and died and was buried in the eighth year of the reign of Nero, A.D. 64.

The time when this gospel was written is not certainly known. It is supposed to have been between the years 56 and 63. It is allowed by all that it was written at Rome; of course, it was during the latter years of his life, after the apostles had left Judea, Mr 16:20. Mark was, for a considerable time, the companion of Peter. Though he had not himself been with the Saviour in his ministry, yet, from his long acquaintance with *Peter*, he was familiar with the events of his life, and with his instructions. The uniform testimony of the Fathers is, that he was the *interpreter* of Peter, and that he wrote this Gospel under the eye of Peter, and with his approbation. It has come down to us, therefore, with the sanction of Peter's authority. Its right to a place among the inspired books has never been questioned. That it was written by Mark; that it was with Peter's approbation; that it was a record of the *facts* which Peter stated in his ministry; and that it was, therefore, an inspired book has never been questioned.

MARK CHAPTER 1

Verse 1. *The beginning of the Gospel*. The word *gospel* literally signifies good tidings, and particularly the good tidings respecting the way of salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ. Some have understood the word *gospel* here to mean, *history* or *life—the beginning of the history*, etc. But Mark says nothing of the early life of the Saviour. It has reference rather to the preaching of John, an account of which immediately follows, and means the beginning of the good news, or annunciation, respecting the Messiah. It was very customary thus to prefix a title to a book.

The Son of God. This title was used here to attract attention, and secure the respect of those who should read this gospel. It is no common history. It does not recount the deeds of man—of a hero, or philosopher— but the doctrines and doings of THE SON OF GOD. The history, therefore, *commands* respect.

{a} "the Son of God" Heb 1:1,2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 2

Verses 2,3 *As it is written in the prophets*. He mentions *prophets*, here, without specifying which. The places are found in Mal 3:1; and in Isa 40:3. **See Barnes "Mt 3:3"**.

{b} "in the prophets" Mal 3:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 3

Verse 3. No Barnes text on this verse.

{c} "The voice"

Isa 40:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 4

Verse 4. No Barnes text on this verse.

{d} "John did"

Mt 3:1 Lu 3:3; Joh 3:23

{1} "baptism of repentance" or, "unto repentance" {e} "remission of sins" Ac 22:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 5

Verse 5. No Barnes text on this verse.

{f} "confessing their sins."

Le 26:40-42 Ps 32:5; Pr 28:13

1Jo 1:8-10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 6

Verse 6. No Barnes text on this verse.
{g} "locusts"
Le 11:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 7

Verse 7. No Barnes text on this verse.
{h} "There cometh"
Mt 3:11 Joh 1:27; Ac 13:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 8

Verse 8. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes "Mt 3:3, also Mt 3:4-6,11.
{i} "baptize you with" Joe 2:28 Ac 1:5, 2:4 10:45, 11:15,16; 1Co 12:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 9

Verse 9. No Barnes text on this verse.
{k} "baptized of John"
Mt 3:13 Lu 3:21
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THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No Barnes text on this verse.
{1} "opened" or, "cloven", or "rent"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 11

Verse 11. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes "Mt 3:13, also Mt 3:14-17
{m} "my beloved Son" Psa 2:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 12

Verses 12,13. Mark here relates concisely what Matthew has recorded, more at length in Mt 4.

The spirit driveth. The word *driveth* does not mean that he was compelled forcibly against his will to go there, but that he was inclined to go there by the Spirit, or was led there. The Spirit of God, for important purposes, *caused* him to go. Comp. Mt 9:25, where the same word is used in the original: "But when the people were put forth"— in Greek, *all driven out*.

And was with the wild beasts. This is added to show the desolation and danger of his dwelling there. In this place, surrounded by such dangers, the temptations offered by Satan were the stronger. Amidst want, and perils, Satan might suppose he would be more easily seduced from God. But he trusted in his Father, and was alike delivered from dangers, from the wild beasts, and from the power of temptation: thus teaching us what to do in the day of danger and trial.

And the angels ministered unto him. From Lu 4:2, we learn that in those days he did eat nothing. When Mark says, therefore, that the angels ministered to him, it means after the days of temptation had expired, as is said by Matthew, Mt 4:11.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 13

Verse 13. No Barnes text on this verse.
{n} "And he was"
Mt 4:1 Lu 4:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Now after that John*, etc. John was imprisoned by Herod, Mt 14:3.

Jesus came into Galilee. He left Judea, and went into the more retired country of Galilee. He supposed that if he remained in Judea, Herod would also persecute him, and attempt his life. His time of death had not come; and he therefore prudently sought safety in retirement, hence we may learn, that when we have great duties to perform for the church of God, we are not wantonly to endanger our lives. When we can secure them without a sacrifice of principle, we are to do it. See Mt 24:16.

{o} "Jesus came" Mt 4:23 {p} "The Gospel" Lu 8:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *The time is fulfilled*. That is, the time for the appearance of the Messiah. The time, so long foretold, has come.

The kingdom of God is at hand. **See Barnes "Mt 3:2"**.

Repent ye. Exercise sorrow for sins, and turn from them. *And believe the Gospel*. Literally, trust in the gospel, or believe the good tidings—to wit, respecting salvation. **See Barnes "Mt 4:17"**.

{q} "time is" Da 2:44 9:25; Ga 4:4 Eph 1:10

{r} "repent ye" Ac 2:38 {s} "believe" Ro 16:26

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 16

Verse 16. No Barnes text on this verse.

{t} "Now as he"

Mt 4:18 Lu 5:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 17

Verse 17. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 18

Verse 18. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 19

Verse 19. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 20

Verse 20. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 21

Verses 21-27. See
Lu 4:31-37

Verse 21. *And they went into Capernaum*. For the situation of Capernaum, see Mt 4:13.
Straightway. Immediately. On the following Sabbath.
The synagogue. **See Barnes "Mt 4:23"**.
And taught. In the synagogue, the presiding elder, after reading the Scriptures, invited any who chose to address the people, Ac 13:15. Though our Saviour was not a priest of the Levitical order, or an officer of the synagogue, yet we find him often availing himself of this privilege, and delivering his doctrines to the Jews.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *He taught them as one that had authority*, etc. **See Barnes "Mt 7:29"**.
{u} "And they" Mt 7:26

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *A man with an unclean spirit*. See Mt 4:24. It is probable that this man had lucid intervals, or he would not have been admitted into the synagogue. While there, one of his fits came on, and he suddenly cried out.
{v} "And there was" Lu 4:33.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Let us alone*. Though but one impure spirit is mentioned as possessing this man, yet that spirit speaks also in the name of others. They were leagued together in the work of evil, and this one knew that if *he* was punished, others would also share the same fate.
What have we to do with thee? This seems to mean, "Have we injured thee?" or, We have done nothing to injure thee. See
"1Ki 17:18".
By this the spirit meant to say, that if Jesus cast him out, he would use an improper interference. But this was untrue. The possession of the man was a direct assault on God and his works. Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil, and he had a right, therefore, to liberate the captive, and to punish him who had possessed him. So Satan still considers it an infringement of his rights, when

God frees a *sinner* from bondage, and destroys his influence over the soul. So he still pleads to be let alone, and to be suffered to lead men captive at his will.

Art thou come to destroy us? Implying that this could not be the intention of the *benevolent* Messiah; that to be cast out of that man would, in fact, be his destruction, and that therefore he might be suffered still to remain. Or implying, as in Mt 8:29, that the time of their destruction had not come, and that he ought not to destroy them before that.

I know thee, etc. Evil spirits seem to have been acquainted at once with the Messiah. Besides, they had learned from his miracles that he was the Messiah, and had power over them.

The Holy One of God. The Messiah. See Da 9:24. He is called the Holy One of God, because,

1st, he was eminently pure;

2nd, because he was the only begotten Son of God—equal with the Father; and,

3rd, because he was anointed, or set apart to the work of the Messiah, the Mediator between God and man.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *And Jesus rebuked him*. Chode him, or commanded him, with a threatening, to be still. This was not the *man* that he rebuked, but the *spirit*, for he instantly commanded the same being to come out of the man. In all this Jesus did not once *address the man*. His conversation was with *evil spirit*; proving conclusively that it was not a mere disease, or derangement—-for how could the Son of God hold converse with *disease*, or *delirium*?—but that he conversed with *a being*, who also conversed, reasoned, cavilled, felt, resisted, and knew him. There *are*, therefore, evil spirits; and those spirits have taken possession of men.

Hold thy peace. Greek, *Be muzzled*. Restrain thyself. Cease from complaints, and come out of the man. This was a very signal proof of the power of Jesus, to be able by a word to silence an evil angel, and, against his will, to compel him to leave a man whom he delighted to torment.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *And when the unclean spirit*, etc. Still malignant, though doomed to obey—submitting because he was obliged to, not because he chose—he exerted his last power, inflicted all the pain he could, and then bowed to the Son of God, and came out. This is the nature of an evil disposition. Though compelled to obey, though prevented by the command and Providence of God from doing what it *would*, yet, in seeming to obey, it does all the ill it can, and makes even the appearance of obedience the occasion for increased crime and mischief.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 27

Verses 27,28. *And they were all amazed*, etc. The power of casting out devils was to them new. It was done by a word. He did it in his own name, and by his own authority. This proved that he was superior to all the unclean spirits. In consequence, his fame spread throughout all the country, and the impression became prevalent that he was the Messiah.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 28

Verse 28. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 29

Verses 29-31. See Mt 8:14,15
{w} "And forthwith" Mt 8:14 Lu 4:38

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 30

Verse 30. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 31

Verse 31. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 32

Verses 32-34. See
Mt 8:16,17.
And at even, when the sun did set. **See Barnes** "Mt 8:1, etc.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *All the city*. A great part of the city. A great multitude from the city.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *And suffered not the devils to speak,* because they knew him. They knew that he was the Messiah. If they had spoken, they would have made that known to the people. Jesus was not desirous, at that time, that that should be publicly known, or his name be blazoned abroad. The time had not come when he wished it to be promulgated, and he therefore imposed silence on the evil Spirits.

{1} "because they knew him" or, "to say that they knew him"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 35

Verses 35-37. And in the morning, rising up a great while before day. Luke says, (Lu 4:42,) it was day. The passage in Mark means, in the original, not literally *a great while before day*, but very early, or while there was yet *much appearance of night*. The place in Luke means, *at daybreak*, at the beginning of day. Then, also, there is much appearance of night; and Luke and Mark, therefore, refer to the same time—before it was fully light, or just at daybreak.

And departed into a solitary place, and there prayed. Here observe,

(1.) that the Saviour, though perfectly holy, regarded the duty of secret prayer as of great importance.

(2.) That he sought a solitary place for it—far away from the world, and even his disciples.

(3.) That it was early in the morning—the first thing after rising— always the *best* time, and a time when it should not be omitted.

(4.) If Jesus prayed, how much more important is it for us! If he did it in the morning, how much more important is it for us, before the world gets possession of our thoughts; before Satan fills us with unholy feelings; when we rise fresh from beds of repose, and while the world around us is still! David also thus prayed, Ps 5:3. He that wishes to enjoy religion will seek a place of secret prayer in the morning. If that is omitted, all will go wrong. Our piety will wither. The world will fill our thoughts. Temptations will be strong. And through the day we shall find it impossible to raise our feelings to a state of proper devotion. This will be found to be true, universally, *that the religious enjoyment through the day will be according to the state of the heart in the morning; and can, therefore be measured by our faithfulness in early secret prayer*, how different, too, was the conduct of the Saviour from those who spend the precious hours of the morning in sleep! He knew the value of the morning hours; he rose while the world was still; he saw when the light spread abroad in the east with fresh tokens of his Father's presence, and joined with the universal creation in offering praise to the everywhere present God.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *And Simon*. Simon Peter.

They that were with him. The other disciples.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *All men seek for thee*. That is, many men, or multitudes. The inquiry after him was general. They told him this evidently with a view to induce him to leave his place of retirement, and to prevail upon him to appear publicly, to instruct the multitudes.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *And he said unto them*, etc. This was said in answer to their *implied* request, that he would go and meet the multitudes. "Since the anxiety to hear the truth is so great; since such multitudes are waiting to hear the word, let us go into the next towns," etc.

Next towns. Towns in the neighbourhood or vicinity of Capernaum. He proposed to carry the gospel to them, rather than that multitudes should leave their homes and attend him in his ministry.

Towns. The word here rendered *towns* denotes places in size between cities and *villages*, or large places, but without walls.

For therefore came I forth. That is, came forth from God, or was sent by God. Luke says, (Lu 4:43) "for therefore am I sent." Compare Joh 16:28. "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world." The meaning of this verse therefore is—Since multitudes press to hear the word, let us not remain here, but go into the neighbouring towns also, for I was sent by God not to preach at Capernaum only, but throughout Judea, and it is therefore improper to confine my labours to this place.

{x} "therefore" Isa 61:1,2; Joh 17:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *And he preached in their synagogues*. See Mt 4:23.

All Galilee. See Mt 2:22.

And cast out devils. **See Barnes "Mt 8:1-4"**.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 40

Verses 40-45. *And there came a leper*, etc. **See Barnes "Mt 8:1, and** Mt 8:1.

Kneeling down to him. He kneeled, and inclined his face to the ground, in token of deep humiliation, and earnest entreaty. Compare Lu 5:12.

If thou wilt. There was an acknowledgment of the almighty power of Jesus, and an appeal to his benevolence.

Make me clean. Canst heal me of this loathsome and offensive disease—in the eye of the law justly regarded as unclean—and render me *legally* clean, and restore me to the privileges of the congregation.

And Jesus—touched him. It was by the law considered as unclean to touch a leprous man. See Nu 5:2. The fact that Jesus *touched* him was evidence that the requisite power had been already put forth to heal him; that Jesus regarded him as already clean.

I will. Here was a most manifest proof of his Divine power. None but God can work a miracle. Yet Jesus does it by his *own will* —by an exertion of his own power. He was, therefore, Divine.

See thou say nothing to any man. The law of Moses required that the man who was healed of the leprosy should be pronounced clean by the priest, before he could be admitted again to the privileges of the congregation, Le 19:1, etc. Christ, though he had cleansed him, yet required him to be obedient to the law of the land; to go at once to the priest, and not to make delay by stopping to converse about his being healed. It was also possible, that if he did not go at once, evil-minded men would go before him and prejudice the priest, and prevent his declaring the healing to be thorough because it was done by Jesus. It was further of importance that *the priest* should pronounce it to be a genuine cure, that there might be no cavils among the Jews against its being a real miracle.

Offer—those things, etc. Two birds, and cedar-wood, and scarlet, and hyssop. And after eight days, two he-lambs, without blemish, and one ewe-lamb, and fine flour, and oil, Le 14:4,10.

For a testimony unto them. Not to the priest, but to the people, that they may have evidence that it is a real cure. The testimony of the priest on the subject would be decisive.

{a} "those things" Le 14:2-32 {b} "testimony" Ro 15:4 1Co 10:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 41

Verse 41. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 42

Verse 42. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 43

Verse 43. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 44

Verse 44. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 1 - Verse 45

Verse 45. *Began to publish it much*. That is, the subject of his own cure. He was so deeply affected with it, and so much rejoiced, that he followed the natural dictates of his own feelings, rather than the command of the Saviour.

Jesus could no more openly enter into the city. The word *could*, here, does not refer to any natural inability, or to any physical obstacle in his way, but only denotes that there was difficulty, or inconvenience, or impropriety, in his doing it then; that he judged it best not then to enter into the city. The difficulty was, probably, that his being in the city drew such crowds of people as rendered it difficult to accommodate them, or so as to excite the opposition of civil rulers.

The city. The city, or large town, where the leper was cured. The same reason for not entering that city applied also to others; so that he remained in the deserts, where the multitudes could come to him without any difficulty or opposition.

{c} "began to publish" Ps 77:11,12; Tit 1:10

{c} "and they came to him" Mr 2:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 2 - Verse 1

MARK CHAPTER 2

Verse 1. *Into Capernaum*. **See Barnes "Mt 4:13"**.

After some days. The number of days is not known. Probably he remained long enough in the desert to heal the sick that were brought to him, and to give instructions to the multitudes that attended his preaching. Capernaum was not *the city* mentioned in Mr 1:45, and it is probable that there was no difficulty in his remaining there and preaching.

And it was noised, etc. He entered the city, doubtless, privately; but his being there was soon known; and so great had his popularity become, that multitudes pressed to hear him.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 2 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *So much as about the door*. In the court or yard before the door. They could not get near enough to hear him.

Preached the word unto them. The word of God; the revelation or doctrine which he came to deliver, called *the word*; and *the word of God*, because it was spoken or revealed by God. Compare Ac 6:2-7.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 2 - Verse 3

Verses 3-12. **See Barnes "Mt 9:2, also** Mt 9:3-8.
Borne of four. Borne on a couch. Mt 9:2 by four men.
{f} "And they come" Mt 9:1 Lu 5:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 2 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *The press*. The crowd, the multitude of people. Jesus was probably in the large open area, or hall, in the centre of the house. **See Barnes "Mt 9:2"**.

The people pressed into that area, and blocked up the door, so that they could not have access to him.

They uncovered the roof where he was. **See Barnes "Mt 9:2"**.

Houses were flat. In cities they joined each other, and the roofs constituted an agreeable place for walking. It is not improbable that they ascended a neighbouring house, and came over the hall, where Jesus was. They removed the curtain or awning, drawn over the area, where Jesus was, so that they might let the man down before him.

When they had broken it up. When they had removed the awning, and a part of the banisters, so that they could let the man down.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 2 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Their faith*. Their confidence, or belief, that he could heal him.

Son. Literally, *child*. The Hebrews used the words *son* and *child* with a great latitude of signification. They were applied to children, to grandchildren, to adopted children, to any descendants, to disciples, followers, young people, and to dependents. **See Barnes "Mt 1:1"**.

In this place, it denotes affection, or kindness. It was a word of consolation:—an endearing appellation, applied by the Saviour to the sick man, to show his *compassion*, to inspire confidence, and to assure him that he would heal him.

{g} "saw their faith" Ac 14:9 Eph 2:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 2 - Verse 6

Verse 6. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 2 - Verse 7

Verse 7. No Barnes text on this verse.
{h} "forgive sins"
Isa 43:25 Da 9:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 2 - Verse 8

Verse 8. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 2 - Verse 9

Verse 9. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 2 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No Barnes text on this verse.
{i} "power on earth"
Ac 5:31"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 2 - Verse 11

Verse 11. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 2 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *We never saw it on this fashion*. Literally, "we never saw it so." We never saw anything like this.
{k} "We never" Joh 7:31 9:32

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 2 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *By the sea side*. That is, by the sea of Tiberias, on the shore of which Capernaum was situated. **See Barnes "Mt 4:13"**.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 2 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Levi the* son *of Alpheus*. The same, undoubtedly, as *Matthew* the writer of the Gospel. It was not uncommon among the Jews to have two names.

The receipt of custom. **See Barnes "Mt 9:9"**.

{l} "And as" Mt 9:9 {1} "sitting at" or, "at the place where the custom was received"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 2 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Sat at meat in his house*. The words "at meat" are not in the original. The phrase means, as he reclined at his meal "—or "as he was eating." This feast was made by Matthew, in honour of the Saviour. See Lu 5:29.

Publicans. **See Barnes "Mt 5:47"**.

Sinners. Sinners of abandoned character—of the same character that publicans commonly sustained—fit companions of publicans—great sinners.

There were many. That is, many *disciples*. Their following him, leaving their homes, and going with him from place to place, was proof of their attachment to him, There is no doubt that our Saviour, in the early part of his ministry, was extremely popular. Multitudes of the common people attended him, and gave conclusive evidence that they were his real disciples, And it was only after much opposition and ridicule from the rich, and the great, that he ever became unpopular among the people. Perhaps no preacher has ever attracted so universal attention, and produced so decisive effects on mankind, as our Lord did in his personal ministry.

{m} "And it came to pass" Mt 9:10 {n} "Publicans" Lu 15:1-5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 2 - Verse 16

Verse 16,17. Mt 9:12,13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 2 - Verse 17

Verse 17. No Barnes text on this verse.

{o} "They that are whole"

Mt 9:12,13; Lu 5:31,32

{p} "sinners" Isa 1:18 55:7; Mt 18:11 Lu 19:10; 1Co 6:9-11 1Ti 1:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 2 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast*. Were accustomed often to fast. Compare Lu 5:33 18:12.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 2 - Verse 19

Verses 19-22. See Mt 9:15-17
{q} "the bridegroom is with" Mt 25:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 2 - Verse 20

Verse 20. No Barnes text on this verse.
{r} "then shall"
Ac 13:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 2 - Verse 21

Verse 21. No Barnes text on this verse.
{1} "of new cloth" or, "raw", or "unwrought"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 2 - Verse 22

Verse 22. No Barnes text on this verse.
{s} "be marred"
Job 32:19 Ps 119:80,83

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 2 - Verse 23

Verses 23-28. See Mt 12:1-8. *The corn fields*. The fields sown with grain, wheat, or barley. The word *corn*, in the Bible, refers only to grain of that kind, and never to *maize* or *Indian corn*.

To pluck the ears of corn. They were hungry, (Matthew.) They therefore gathered the wheat, or barley, as they walked, and rubbed it in their hands to shell it, and thus to satisfy their appetite. Though our Lord was with them, and though he had all things at his control, yet he suffered them to resort to this method to supply their wants. When Jesus, thus *with* his disciples, suffered them to be poor, we may learn that poverty is not disgraceful; that God often suffers it for the good of his people; and that he will take care, in some way, that their wants shall be supplied. It was *lawful*

for them thus to supply their wants. Though the property belonged to another, yet the law of Moses allowed the poor to satisfy theft wants when hungry. See De 23:25.

{t} "And it came" Mt 12:1 Lu 6:1 {u} "to pluck" De 23:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 2 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *That which is not lawful*. That is, that which they esteemed to be unlawful *on the sabbath day*. It was made lawful by Moses, without any distinction of days; but they had denied its lawfulness on the sabbath. Christ shows them, from their own law, that it was *not* unlawful.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 2 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Have ye never read*, etc. **See Barnes "Mt 12:3"**.

{v} "what David did" 1Sa 21:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 2 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Abiathar the priest*. From 1Sa 21:1, it appears that Ahimelech was high priest at the time here referred to. And from 1Sa 23:6, it appears that *Abiathar* was the son of *Ahimelech*. Some difficulty has been felt in reconciling these accounts. The probable reason why Mark says it was in the days of *Abiathar*, is that Abiathar was better known than Ahimelech. The son of the high priest was regarded as his successor, and was often associated with him in the duties of his office. It was not improper, therefore, to designate him as high priest, even during the life of his father, especially as that was the name by which he was afterwards known. *Abiathar*, moreover, in the calamitous times when David came to the throne, left the interest of Saul, and fled to David, bringing with him the ephod, one of the peculiar garments of the high priest. For a long time, during David's reign, he was high priest, and it became natural, therefore, to associate *his* name with that of David; to speak of David as king, and Abiathar the high priest of his time. This will account for the fact that he was spoken of, rather than his father. At the same time this was strictly true, that this was done in the days of Abiathar, who was afterwards high priest, and was familiarly spoken of as such; as we say that General Washington was present at the defeat of Braddock, and saved his army; though the title of *general* did not belong to him till many years afterwards.

Shewbread. **See Barnes "Mt 12:4"**.

{w} "shewbread" Ex 29:32,33; Le 24:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 2 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *The sabbath was made for man*. For his rest from toil, his rest from the cares and anxieties of the world, to give an opportunity to call off his attention from earthly concerns, and to direct it to the affairs of eternity. It was a kind provision for man that he might refresh his body by relaxing his labours; that he might have undisturbed time to seek the consolations of religion to cheer him in the anxieties and sorrows of a troubled world; and that he might render to God that homage which is most justly due to him as the Creator, Preserver, Benefactor, and Redeemer of the world. And it is easily capable of proof, that no institution has been more signally blessed to man's welfare than the Christian Sabbath. To that we owe, more than to anything else, the peace and older of a civilized community. Where there is no Sabbath, there is ignorance, vice, disorder, and crime. On that holy day, the poor, and the ignorant, as well as the learned, have undisturbed time to learn the requirements of religion, the nature of morals, the law of God, and the way of salvation. On that day, man may offer his praises to the Great Giver of all good, and in the sanctuary seek the blessing of him whose favour is life. Where that day is observed in any manner as it should be, order prevails, morals are promoted, the poor are elevated in their condition, vice flies away, and the community puts on the appearance of neatness, industry, morality, and religion. The Sabbath was, therefore, pre-eminently intended for man's welfare, and the best interests of mankind demand that it should be sacredly regarded as an appointment of merciful heaven, intended for our best good; and, where improved aright, infallibly resulting in our temporal and eternal peace.

Not man for the sabbath. Man was made *first*, and then the Sabbath was appointed for his welfare, Ge 2:1-3. The Sabbath was not *first* made or contemplated, and then the man made with reference to that. Since, therefore, the Sabbath was intended for man's *real good*, the law respecting it must not be interpreted so as to oppose his real welfare. It must be explained in consistency with a proper attention to the duties of mercy to the poor and the sick, and to those in peril. It must be, however, in accordance with man's *real good on the whole*, and with the law of God. The law of God contemplate *man's real good on the whole*; and we have no right, under the plea that the Sabbath was made for man, to do anything contrary to what the law of God admits. It would not be for our *real good*, but for our real and eternal injury, to devote the Sabbath to vice, to labour, or to amusement.

{x} "for man" Ne 9:14 Isa 58:13; Eze 20:12,20

{y} "Therefore" Col 2:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 2 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *Therefore the Son of man*, etc. **See Barnes "Mt 12:8".**

{z} "Therefore the Son" Joh 9:14 Eph 1:22; Re 1:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 3 - Verse 1

MARK CHAPTER 3
Verses 1-5. See this explained in Mt 12:9-13.
{a} "And he entered" Mt 12:9 Lu 6:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 3 - Verse 2

Verse 2. No Barnes text on this verse.
{b} "watched him"
Lu 14:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 3 - Verse 3

Verse 3. No Barnes text on this verse.
{1} "Stand forth" or, "Arise, in the midst"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 3 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Or to do evil? to saw life, or to kill?*. It seems to have been a maxim with the Jews, that *not* to do good, when we have an opportunity, was to do evil; *not* to save life was to kill, or to be guilty of murder. If a man has an opportunity of saving a man's life when he is in danger, and does not do it, he is evidently guilty of his death. On this principle our Saviour puts this question to the Jews, whether it was better for him, having the *power* to heal this man, to do it, or to suffer him to remain in this suffering condition. And he illustrates it by an example, showing that in a matter of much less importance—that respecting their cattle—they would do on the Sabbath just as *he* would if he should heal this man. The same remark may apply to all opportunities of doing good. "The ability to do good imposes an *obligation* to do it."—*Cotton Mather*. He that has the means of feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked, and instructing the ignorant, and sending the gospel to the destitute, and that does it not, is guilty; for he is practically doing evil; he is suffering evils to exist which he might remove, So the wicked will be condemned in the day of judgment, because "they did it not," Mt 25:45. If this be true, what an obligation rests on the rich to do good!
{c} "to save life" Ho 6:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 3 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *With anger*. With a severe and stern countenance; with indignation at their hypocrisy and hardness of heart. This was not, however, a spiteful or revengeful passion; it was caused by excessive *grief* at their state. It was not sudden and tumultuous hatred of the *men* whose hearts were so hard; it was hatred of the sin which they exhibited, joined with the extreme *grief* that neither his teaching, nor the law of God, nor any means which could be used, overcame their confirmed wickedness. Such anger is not unlawful, Eph 4:26. And, in this instance, our Lord has taught us that anger is never lawful, except when it is tempered with grief or compassion for those who have offended.

Hardness of their hearts. The heart—figuratively the seat of feeling, or affection is said to be tender when it is easily affected by the sufferings of others; by our own sin and danger; by the love and commands of God;—when we are easily made to *feel* on the great subjects pertaining to our interest, Eze 11:19,20. It is hard, when nothing moves it; when a man is alike insensible to the sufferings of others, the dangers of his own condition, and the commands, the love, and the threatenings of God. It is most tender in youth, or when we have committed fewest crimes. It is *made* hard by indulgence in sin; by long resisting the offers of life; or by opposing any great and affecting appeals which God may make to us by his Spirit or Providence, by affliction, or by a revival of religion. Hence it is that the most favourable period for securing an interest in Christ, or for becoming a Christian, is in youth; the first, the tenderest, and the best days of life. Nay, in the days of childhood—in the Sabbath-school—God may be found, and the soul prepared to die.

{1} "hardness" or, "blindness"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 3 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Straightway*. Immediately; or, as soon as possible.

Took counsel. Laid a plan, Consulted with them. Literally, "made a consultation."

The Herodians. **See Barnes "Mt 22:16"**.

How they might destroy him. They hated him for his holiness; because he reproved them; because he laid open their hypocrisy; and because he won the hearts of the people, and lessened their influence. They therefore determined to remove him, if possible, and thus avoid his reproofs. Sinners would often rather put to death the man that reproves them, than to forsake their sins. The Pharisees had rather commit any crime, even to the murder of the Messiah, than forsake the sins of which he rebuked them.

{d} "the Herodians" Mt 22:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 3 - Verse 7

Verses 7,8. *To the sea*. The sea of Galilee. Or, to the desert and lonely regions which surrounded the sea, where he might be in obscurity, and avoid their designs against his life. His time had not yet come, and he prudently took care of his life; thus showing that we are not needlessly to throw ourselves into danger.

Galilee. See Mt 2:22.

Judea. See Mt 2:1.

Jerusalem. Jerusalem was in Judaea. It is mentioned particularly to show that not only the people of the surrounding country came, but also many from the capital, the place of wealth, and honour, and power.

Idumaea. The country formerly inhabited by the *Edomites*; in the time of the Saviour, the most southern part of the land of Canaan. The word *Idumaea* is a Greek word, made from the Hebrew *Edom*. It signifies the land of Edom, a name given to Esau, one of the sons of Isaac, Ge 25:30. The word signifies *red*, and was given to him because he sought of Jacob red pottage, as the price of his birthright. He settled in Mount Seir, (De 2:6,) on the south of the land of Canaan, and the country of Idumaea was bounded by Palestine on the north. During the Babylonish captivity, the Edomites spread themselves into the country of Judaea, and occupied a considerable part of the south of Palestine. They had, however, submitted to the rite of circumcision, and were incorporated with the Jews. From them sprang Herod the Great.

From beyond Jordan. From the east coast of the river Jordan. The sacred writers lived on the *west* side of Jordan ; and by the country *beyond Jordan*, they meant that on the east side.

Tyre and Sidon. **See Barnes "Mt 11:21".**

{e} "great multitude" Lu 6:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 3 - Verse 8

Verse 8. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 3 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *A small ship*. Rather, a *boat*. There were, properly speaking; no *ships* on the sea of Tiberias. This was probably a small boat that belonged to his disciples, in which he could sit, off from the shore, and teach the people, without being pressed by them.

Lest they should throng him. They pressed upon him in great numbers. He had healed many; and those who were still diseased pressed or crowded on him, so as to endanger his life. He therefore withdrew from the multitude, and sought a situation where he might be free from danger.

As many as had plagues. As many as had diseases, or maladies of body or mind. The word *plague*, now confined to the pestilence, does not express the meaning of the original, and tends to mislead.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 3 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No Barnes text on this verse.

{f} "healed many" Mt 12:15 14:14 {1} "they pressed upon him" or, "rushed"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 3 - Verse 11

Verses 11,12. *Unclean spirits*. Persons who were possessed of evil spirits.

Thou art the Son of God. The Son of God, by way of eminence. In this place it is equivalent to the Messiah, who was, among the Jews, called the Son of God. Hence they were charged not to make him known, because he was not desirous that it should be blazoned abroad that he claimed to be the Messiah. He had not yet done what he wished to establish his claims to the Messiahship; he was poor and unhonoured, and the claim would be treated as that of an impostor, as it was afterwards, and would endanger his life. *For the present*, therefore, he did not wish that it should be proclaimed abroad that he was the Messiah.

This circumstance proves the existence of evil spirits. If these were merely diseased or deranged persons, then it is strange that they should be endowed with knowledge so much superior to those in health. If they were under the influence of an order of spirits superior to man—whose appropriate habitation was in another world—then it is not strange that they should know him, even in the midst of his poverty, to be the Messiah, the Son of God.

{g} "and unclean" Mr 1:24 Mt 14:33; Lu 4:41 Jas 2:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 3 - Verse 12

Verse 12. No Barnes text on this verse.

{h} "him known"

Mr 1:25,34

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 3 - Verse 13

Verse 13. For an account of the appointment of the apostles, see Mt 10:1-4.

And calleth unto him *whom he would*. Those whom he chose; whom he was about to appoint to the apostleship.

{i} "And he goeth" Mt 10:1 {k} "he would" Mr 1:25,34

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 3 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *He ordained twelve*. The word rendered *ordained*, here, does not express our notion of ordination to the ministry. It means, literally, "he made," or he *appointed* twelve to be with him.

Twelve. The reason why *twelve* were chosen was, probably, that such a number would be deemed competent witnesses of what they saw; that so many could not be supposed to be imposed upon; that they could not be easily charged with being excited by sympathy, or being deluded, as a multitude might; and that, being destined to go into all the world, a considerable number seemed

indispensable. Perhaps, also, there was some reference to the fact that *twelve* was the number of the tribes of Israel.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 3 - Verse 15

Verse 15. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 3 - Verse 16

Verse 16. No Barnes text on this verse.
{l} "Simon" Joh 1:42

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 3 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Boanerges*. This word is made up of two Hebrew words, signifying *sons of thunder*; meaning that they, on some accounts. *resembled* thunder. **See Barnes "Mt 1:1"**.

It is not known why this name was given to James and John. They are nowhere else called by it. Some suppose it was because they wished to call down fire from heaven, and consume a certain village of the Samaritans, Lu 9:54. It is, however, more probable that it was on account of something fervid, and glowing, and powerful, in their genius and eloquence.

{m} "thunder" Isa 58:1 Jer 23:29

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 3 - Verse 18

Verse 18. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 3 - Verse 19

Verse 19. No Barnes text on this verse.
{1} "they went into a home" or, "home"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 3 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *They could not so much as eat bread*. Their time and attention were so occupied, that they were obliged to forego their regular meals. The affairs of religion *may* so occupy the attention of ministers, and others, as to destroy their relish for the ordinary comforts and employments of life, and prevent their engaging in their customary pursuits. Religion is all-important—far more important than the ordinary business of this life; and there is nothing unreasonable if our temporal affairs sometimes give way to the higher interests of our own souls, and the souls of others. At the same time, it is true that religion is ordinarily consistent with a close attention to worldly business, It promotes industry, economy, order, neatness, and punctuality—all indispensable to worldly prosperity. Of these there has been no more illustrious example than that of our Saviour himself.

{o} "so that they" Mr 6:31

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 3 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *When his friends*. Greek, "They who were of him." Not the apostles, but his relatives, his friends, who were in the place of his nativity.

Heard of it. Heard of his conduct; his preaching; his appointing the apostles; his drawing such a multitude to his preaching. This shows, that by "his friends" were not meant the apostles, but those at a distance who *heard* of his conduct.

They went out to lay hold on him. To take him away from the multitude, and to remove him to his home, that he might be treated as a maniac, and, by absence from the *causes* of excitement, might be restored to his right mind.

They said. That is, common report said. Or, his friends said, for they did not believe on him, Joh 7:5. Probably the enemies of Jesus raised the report, and his relatives were persuaded to believe it to be true.

He is beside himself. He is delirious, or deranged, The reason why this report gained any belief was, probably, that our Lord had lived among them as a carpenter; that he was poor, and unknown; and that now, at thirty years of age, he broke off from his occupations, abandoned his common employment, spent much time in the deserts, denied himself the common comforts of life, and set up his claims to be the Messiah, who was expected by all the people to come with great pomp and splendour. The charge of *derangement* on account of attention to religion has not been confined to our Saviour. Let a man be made deeply sensible of his sins, and spend much of his time in prayer, and have no relish for the ordinary amusements or business of life; or let a Christian be much impressed with his obligation to devote himself to God, and act as if he believed there was an eternity, and warn his neighbours of their danger; or let a minister show uncommon zeal, and waste his strength in the service of his Master, and the world is not slow to call it derangement. And none will be more ready to originate or believe the charge than an ungodly and infidel parent or brother; a self-righteous Pharisee or professor in the church. At the same time, men may endanger themselves on the bosom of the deep, or in the bowels of the earth, for wealth; or may plunge into the vortex of fashion, and folly, and vice, and break in upon the hours of repose, and neglect their duties to their family, and the demands of business, and in the view of the world it is wisdom, and proof of a sane mind! Such is the consistency of boasted reason; such the wisdom and prudence of worldly men!

{2} "his friends" or, "kinsmen" {p} "beside himself" Ho 9:7 Joh 10:20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 3 - Verse 22

Verses 22-30. *And the Scribes*, etc. **See Barnes "Mt 12:24-32"**.

The occasion of their saying this was, that he had healed a man possessed with a devil. the scribes, who came from Jerusalem to watch his conduct, charged it on a compact or agreement between him and the prince of the devils.

{q} "He hath Beelzebub" Mt 9:34 10:25, 12:24 Lu 11:15; Joh 7:20

Joh 8:48,52.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 3 - Verse 23

Verse 23. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 3 - Verse 24

Verse 24. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 3 - Verse 25

Verse 25. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 3 - Verse 26

Verse 26. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 3 - Verse 27

Verse 27. No Barnes text on this verse.

{r} "No man"

Isa 49:24,26, 61:1 Mt 12:29

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 3 - Verse 28

Verse 28. No Barnes text on this verse.
{s} "All sins"
Mt 12:31 Lu 12:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 3 - Verse 29

Verse 29. No Barnes text on this verse.
{t} "Holy Ghost"
Heb 10:29
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THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 3 - Verse 30

Verse 30. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 3 - Verse 31

Verse 31.
See Barnes "Mt 12:46-50".
{u} "There came" Mt 12:46-48 Lu 8:19-21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 3 - Verse 32

Verse 32. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 3 - Verse 33

Verse 33. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 3 - Verse 34

Verse 34. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 3 - Verse 35

Verse 35. No Barnes text on this verse.
{v} "whosoever shall do"
Jas 1:25 1Jo 2:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 1

MARK CHAPTER 4
Verses 1-9. See the parable of the sower **See Barnes** "Mt 13:1-9.
{w} "And he began again" Mt 13:1 Lu 8:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 2

Verse 2. No Barnes text on this verse.
{x} "by parables"
Ps 78:2 Mr 4:34

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 3

Verse 3. No Barnes text on this verse.
{y} "Hearken"
Mr 4:9,23, 7:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 4

Verse 4. No Barnes text on this verse.
{z} "fowls"
Ge 15:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 5

Verse 5. No Barnes text on this verse.
{a} "stony"
Eze 11:19 36:26

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 6

Verse 6. No Barnes text on this verse.
{b} "and because it"
Ps 1:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 7

Verse 7. No Barnes text on this verse.
{c} "among thorns"
Jer 4:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 8

Verse 8. No Barnes text on this verse.
{d} "good ground"
Heb 6:7,8
{e} "yield fruit" Col 1:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 9

Verse 9. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 10

Verses 10-12.

See Barnes "Mt 13:10, and Mt 13:11-17, particularly **See Barnes "Joh 12:39"; See Barnes** "Joh 12:40".

When he was alone. That is, separate from the multitude, When he withdrew from the multitude, a few followed him for the purpose of farther instruction.

{f} "And when" Mt 13:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 11

Verse 11. No Barnes text on this verse.

{g} "Unto you"

Eph 1:9

{h} "are without" Col 4:5 1Th 4:12; 1Ti 3:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 12

Verse 12. No Barnes text on this verse.

{i} "That seeing"

Isa 6:9,10; Joh 12:40 Ac 28:26,27 Ro 11:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Know ye not this parable?* This which is so plain and obvious.

How then will ye know all parables? Those which are more difficult and obscure. As they were themselves to be *teachers*, it was important that they should be acquainted with the whole system of religion —of much more importance for them at that time, than for the mass of the people.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 14

Verses 14-20. See Mt 13:18-23.

{k} "sower" Isa 32:20 1Pe 1:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 15

Verse 15. No Barnes text on this verse.

{l} "Satan cometh"

1Pe 5:8 Re 12:9

{m} "away the word" Heb 2:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 16

Verse 16. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 17

Verse 17. No Barnes text on this verse.
{n} "no root"
Job 19:28
{o} "but for a time" Job 27:10 {p} "immediately" 2Ti 1:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 18

Verse 18. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 19

Verse 19. No Barnes text on this verse.
{q} "cares"
Lu 14:18-20 1Ti 6:9,17 2Ti 4:10
{r} "deceitfulness" Pr 23:5 {s} "lusts" 1Jo 2:16,17 {t} "unfruitful" Isa 5:2,4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 20

Verse 20. No Barnes text on this verse.
{u} "fruit"
Ro 7:4 Col 1:10; 2Pe 1:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Is a candle brought*, etc. A candle is not lit up to be put immediately under a measure, or a bed, where it can give no light. Its design is to give light. So my preaching by parables is not designed to obscure the truth, but to throw light on it. You should understand those parables; and, understanding them, should impart the truth to others also, as a candle throws its beams upon a dark world.

Bushel. In the original, a measure for grain, containing about twelve quarts.

Bed. A couch, either to sleep on at night, or to recline on at their meals. Probably the latter is here meant, and is equivalent to our saying, a candle is not brought to be put under the table, but on it. **See Barnes "Mt 23:6"**.

{1} "bushel" **See Barnes "Mt 5:15"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *There is nothing hid*, etc. **See Barnes "Mt 10:26"**.

{v} "For there is" Ec 12:14 Mt 10:26; Lu 12:2 1Co 4:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 23

Verse 23. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Take heed what ye hear*. Or, consider well what you hear Make a good improvement of it.

With what measure ye mete, etc. You shall be treated according to the use you make of your opportunities of learning. If you consider it well, and make a good improvement of what you hear, you shall be well rewarded. If not, your reward shall be small. This is a proverbial expression. **See Barnes "Mt 7:1,2"**.

Mete. Measure. With what measure ye measure.

Unto you that hear. To you who are attentive, and who improve what you hear.

{w} "what ye hear" 1Pe 2:2 {x} "with what measure" Mt 7:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *For he that hath*, **See Barnes "Mt 13:12"**.

The meaning here seems to be—He that diligently attends to my words, shall increase more and more in the knowledge of the truth; but he that neglects them, and is inattentive, shall become more ignorant; the few things which he had learned he will forget, and his trifling knowledge will be diminished.

Hath not. Does not improve what he possessed; or does not make proper use of his means of learning.

That which he hath. That which he had already learned. By this we are taught the indispensable necessity of giving attention to the means of instruction. The attention must be continued. It is not sufficient that we have learned some things, or appear to have learned much. All will be in vain unless we go forward, and improve every opportunity of learning the will of God, and the way of salvation. So what children are taught will be of little use unless they follow it up, and endeavour to improve themselves.

{b} "from him" Lu 8:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *So is the kingdom of God*. The gospel, or religion in the soul, may be compared to this. See Mt 3:2.

{c} "So" Mt 13:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *And should sleep, and rise night and day*. Should sleep in the night, and rise by day, for so the expression is to be understood. That is, should live in his usual way, without exerting any influence over the growing grain. By this we are not to infer that men are to use no diligence in the obtainment and growth of piety; but the illustration shows this, and this only, that as we cannot tell *how* grain grows, so we cannot tell the *mode* in which piety increases in the heart.

He knoweth not how. This is still true. After all the researches of philosophers, not one has been able to tell the way in which grain grows. They can observe one fact after another; they can see the changes; they can see the necessity of rains and suns, of care and shelter, but beyond this they cannot go. So in religion. We can mark the change; we can see the need of prayer, and examination, and searching the Scriptures, and the ordinances of religion, but we cannot tell *in what way* the religious principle is strengthened. As God unseen, yet by the use of proper means, makes the grass to flourish, so God unseen, but by proper means, nourishes the soul, and the plants of piety spring up, and bloom, and bear fruit. See Joh 3:8.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself*. That is, it is done without the power of man. It is done while man is engaged in other things. The scope of the place does not require us to suppose that our Saviour meant to say that the earth had any productive power of itself, but only that it produced its fruits not by the power of man. God gives it its power. It has no power of its own. So religion in the heart is not by the *power* of man. It grows he cannot tell how; and of course he cannot, without Divine aid, control it. It is by the power of God. At the same time, as without industry man would have no harvest, so without active effort he would have no religion. Both are

connected with his effort; both are to be measured commonly by his effort, (Php 2:12) both grow he cannot tell how; both increase when the proper means are used; and both depend on God for increase.

First the blade. The green, tender shoot, that first starts out of the earth, before the stalk is formed.

Then the ear. The original means, the *stalk* or *spire* of wheat or barley, as well as the ear.

The full corn. The ripe wheat. The grain swollen to its proper size. By this is denoted, undoubtedly, that grace or religion in the heart is of gradual growth. It is at first tender, feeble, perhaps almost imperceptible, like the first shootings of the grain in the earth. Perhaps also, like grain, it often lies long in the earth before there are signs of life. Like the tender grain, also, it needs care, kindness, and culture. A light frost, a cold storm, or a burning sun, alike injure it. So tender piety, in the heart of a child, needs care, kindness, culture. It needs shelter from the frosts and storms of a cold, unfeeling world. It needs the genial dews and mild suns of heaven. In other words, it needs instruction, prayer, and friendly counsel from parents, teachers, ministers, and experienced Christians, that it may grow, and bring forth the full fruits of holiness. Like the grain also, in due time, it will grow strong; it will produce its appropriate fruit—a full and rich harvest, to the praise of God.

{d} "fruit of herself" Ge 1:11,12 {e} "first" Ec 3:1,11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Immediately he putteth in the sickle*. This is the way with the husbandman. As soon as the grain is ripe, it is cut down. So it is often with the Christian. As soon as he is prepared for heaven, he is taken there. But we are not to press this part of the parable, as if it meant that *all* are removed as soon as they are fit for heaven. Every parable contains circumstances thrown in to fill up the story, which cannot be literally interpreted. In this, the circumstance of *sleeping and rising* cannot be applied to Christ; and in like manner the harvest, I suppose, is not to be literally interpreted. Perhaps the whole parable may be differently interpreted. The seed sown may mean the gospel which he was preaching. In Judea its beginnings were small. Yet he would leave it; commit it to his disciples; and return to his Father. The gospel in the meantime, left by him, would take root, spring up, and produce an abundant harvest. In due time he would return, send forth the angels, and gather in the harvest, and save his people for ever.

{1} "brought forth" or, "ripe" {f} "putteth in the sickle" Re 14:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *Whereunto shall we liken*, etc. This shows the great solicitude which Jesus had to adapt his instructions to the capacity of his disciples, he sought out the most plain and striking illustrations— an example which should be followed by all the ministers of the gospel. At the same time that the instructions of the pulpit should be dignified—as our Saviour's always were—they

should be plain, adapted to the capacity of the audience, and easily understood. To do this, the following things are necessary in a minister:

(1.) *Humility*. A freedom from a desire to shine, and astonish the world by the splendour of his talents, and by his learning and eloquence.

(2.) *Good sense*. A satisfaction in being understood.

(3.) Acquaintance with the habits of thought and manner of speaking among the people. To do this, frequent intercourse with them is necessary.

(4.) *A good, sound education*. It is the men of ignorance, with some smattering of learning, and with a desire to confound and astonish men by the use of unintelligible words, and by the introduction of matter that is wholly unconnected with the subject, that most often shoot over the heads of the people. Preachers of humility; good sense, and education, are content with being understood, and free from the affectation of saying things to amaze and confound their auditors.

The kingdom of God. **See Barnes "Mt 3:2"**.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 31

Verse 31. **See Barnes "Mt 13:31,32"**

{g} "It is like" Mt 13:31,32; Lu 13:18,19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 32

Verse 32. No Barnes text on this verse.

{h} "becometh greater"

Pr 4:18 Isa 11:9; Da 2:44 Mal 1:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *Spake he the word*. The word of God. The doctrines of his gospel.

As they were able to hear it. As they could comprehend it. They were like children; and he was obliged to lead them along cautiously, and by degrees, to a full understanding of the plan of salvation.

{h} "greater than all herbs" Pr 4:18 Isa 11:9; Da 11:44 Mal 1:11

{i} "as they were able" Joh 16:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *Without a parable spake he not unto them*. That is, the things pertaining to his kingdom. On other subjects he spake without parables. On these, such was their prejudice, so many notions had they contrary to the nature of his kingdom, and so liable would plain instructions have been to give offence, that he employed this method to insinuate truth gradually into their minds, and to prepare them fully to understand the nature of his kingdom.

They were alone. His disciples.

He expounded. Explained. Showed them more at length the spiritual meaning of the parables.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 35

Verses 35-41. See Mt 8:18-27.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *Even as he was in the ship*. They took him without making any preparation for the voyage; without providing any food or raiment. He was sitting in a ship, or boat, instructing the people. In the same boat, probably ill-fitted to encounter a storm on the lake, they sailed. This would render their danger more imminent, and the miracle more striking.

There were also with him other little ships. Belonging probably to the people, who, seeing him sail, resolved to follow him.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 37

Verse 37. No Barnes text on this verse.

{k} "And there arose" Mt 8:24 Lu 8:23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 38

Verse 38. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *Peace, be still*. There is something exceedingly authoritative and majestic in this command of our Lord. Standing amidst the howling tempest, on the heaving sea, and in the darkness of the night, by his own power he stills the waves, and bids the storm subside. None but the God

of the storms and the billows could awe, by a word, the troubled elements, and send a universal peace and stillness among the winds and waves. He *must*, therefore, be Divine.

{m} "And the wind" Ps 89:9 La 3:31,32

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 40

Verse 40. No Barnes text on this verse.
{n} "so fearful"
Ps 46:1,2; Isa 43:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 4 - Verse 41

Verse 41. No Barnes text on this verse.
{o} "feared exceedingly"
Jon 1:10,16
{p} "the sea" Job 38:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 1

Verses 1-20. See this account of the demoniacs fully explained in Barnes Notes on Mt 8:28-34.
{q} "And they came" Mt 8:28 Lu 8:26

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 2

Verse 2. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 3

Verse 3. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{r} "his dwelling"
Isa 65:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 4

Verse 4. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 5

Verse 5. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Worshipped him*. Bowed down before him; rendered him homage. This was an acknowledgment of his power, and of his control over fallen spirits.
{s} "worshipped" Ps 72:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 7

Verse 7. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 8

Verse 8. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{t} "Come out of him"
Ac 16:18 Heb 2:14; 1Jo 3:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *My name is Legion.* **See Barnes "Mt 8:29"**.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 11

Verse 11. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{x} "swine feeding" Le 11:7,8; De 14:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 12

Verse 12. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{y} "besought him"
Job 1:10,12, 2:5,6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 13

Verse 13. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{z} "gave them leave"
Re 13:7 1Pe 3:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 14

Verse 14. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind*. There could be no doubt of the reality of this miracle. The man had been well known. He had long dwelt among the tombs, an object of terror and alarm. To see him all at once peaceful, and calm, and rational, was proof that it was the power of God only that had done it.

They were afraid. They were awed, as in the presence of God. The word does not mean here that they feared that any *evil* would happen to them, but that they were affected with awe; they felt that God was there; they were struck with astonishment at what Jesus had done.

{a} "devil, and had" Isa 49:25 Col 1:13 {b} "they were afraid" Job 13:11 Psa 14:5; 2Ti 1:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 16

Verse 16. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 17

Verse 17. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{c} "depart"
Job 21:14 Lu 5:8; Ac 16:39

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 18

Verse 18. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Jesus suffered him not*. Various reasons have been conjectured why Jesus did not suffer this malt to go with him. It might be, that he wished to leave him among the people, as a conclusive evidence of his power to work miracles. It might be that the man feared that if Jesus left him the devils would return, and that Jesus told him to remain to show to him that the cure was complete and that he had power over the devils when absent, as well as when present. But the probable reason is, that he desired to restore him to his family and friends. He was probably a man of influence, and Jesus was unwilling to delay the joy of his friends, and prolong their anxiety, by suffering him to remain away from them.
{d} "and tell them" Ps 66:16 Isa 38:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *In Decapolis*. **See Barnes "Mt 4:25"**.
How great things, etc. This was the natural expression of right feeling at being cured of such a calamity. So the desire of sinners freed from sin is to honour Jesus; to ascribe all to his power; and to invite the world to participate in the same salvation, and to join them in doing honour to the Son of God. Compare Ps 66:16.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 21

Verse 21. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 22

Verses 22-43. See the account of the raising of Jairus' daughter, and the healing of the woman with an issue of blood, fully explained
See Barnes "Mt 9:18"
and Mt 9:19-26.
{e} "And behold" Mt 9:18 Lu 8:41

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Lieth at the point of death*. Is dying; in the last agonies.
{f} "point of death" Ps 107:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 24

Verse 24. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 25

Verse 25. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{g} "an issue of blood"
Lev 15:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Had suffered many things*. Had resorted to many things painful, by the direction of the physicians, in order to be healed.
{h} "nothing bettered" Job 13:4 Ps 108:12; Jer 30:12,13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *Came in the press behind*. In the crowd that pressed upon him. This was done to avoid being noticed. It was an act of faith. She was full of confidence that Jesus was *able* to heal: but she trembled on account of her conscious unworthiness, thus illustrating the humility and confidence of a sinner coming ta God for pardon and life.

{i} "touched his garment" 2Ki 13:21 Mt 14:30; Ac 5:15 19:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 28

Verse 28. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 29

Verse 29. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *Virtue had gone out of him* Power to heal. The word in the original means *power*.

Who touched my clothes? This he said, not to obtain information, for he had healed her, and must have known on whom the blessing was conferred; but he did it, that the woman might herself make a confession of the whole matter, by which the power of her faith and the greatness of the miracle might be manifested, to the praise of God.

{k} "virtue" Lu 6:19.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 31

Verse 31. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 32

Verse 32. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 33

Verse 33. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *Daughter*. A word of kindness, tending to inspire confidence, and to dissipate her fears.

Be whole. That is, *continue* to be whole; for she was already cured.

Of thy plague. Thy disease; literally, thy *scourge*. So a word from Jesus heals the moral malady of the sinner.

{m} "faith hath made" Mr 10:52 Ac 14:9 {n} "go in peace" 1Sa 1:17 20:42; 2Ki 5:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 35

Verses 35,36. *Why troublest thou*, etc. It seems that the people had not yet confidence that Jesus could raise the dead. He had not yet done it; and as the child was now dead, and as they supposed that his power over her was at an end, they wished no farther to trouble him. Jesus kindly set the fears of the ruler at rest, and assured him that he had equal power over the dead as the living, and could as easily raise those who had expired as those who were expiring.

{o} "is dead" Joh 5:25 11:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 36

Verse 36. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

{p} "only believe"

2Ch 20:20 Joh 11:40

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 37

Verse 37. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

{q} "save Peter"

Mr 9:2 14:33

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *The tumult*. The confusion and weeping of the assembled people.

Wailed. Making inarticulate, mournful sounds, howling for the dead.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *This ado*. This tumult, this bustle, or confusion.
And weep. Weep in this inordinate and improper manner.
But sleepeth. See Mt 9:24.
{r} "sleepeth" Joh 11:11-13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 40

Verse 40. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 41

Verse 41. *Talitha cumi*. This is the language which our Saviour commonly spoke. It is a mixture of Syriac and Chaldee, called Syro-Chaldaic. The proper translation is given by the evangelist—- "Damsel, arise."
{r} "arise" Ac 9:40

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 42

Verse 42. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 5 - Verse 43

Verse 43. *Something should be given her to eat*. "He had raised her by *extraordinary* power, but he willed that she should be sustained by *ordinary means*." He also in this gave full evidence that she was really restored to life and health. The changes were great, sudden, and certain. There could be no illusion. So when the Saviour had risen, he gave evidence of his own resurrection, by eating with his disciples, Joh 21:1-13.
{s} "charged" Mt 8:4 12:16-18; Mr 3:12 Lu 5:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 1

MARK CHAPTER 6
Verses 1-6. See this passage explained **See Barnes "Mt 13:54"**
and Mt 13:55-58.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 2

Verse 2. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{t} "And when the sabbath"
@Mt 13:54 Lu 4:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 3

Verse 3. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{v} "brother of James"
Joh 6:42
{w} "were offended" Mt 11:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 4

Verse 4. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{x} "unto them"
Mt 13:57 Joh 4:44

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 5

Verse 5. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{y} "And he could there"
Ge 19:22 Mr 9:23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 6

Verse 6. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

{z} "And he marvelled"
Isa 59:16 Jer 2:11
{a} "And he went" Mt 9:35 Lu 13:22; Ac 10:38

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *By two and two*. In order that they might support and encourage each other in their work. Amidst the trials and opposition which they would meet with, mutual counsel and aid would greatly lighten their burdens, and alleviate their calamities. Mutual counsel might also contribute to their success, and lead to *united* plans to advance the kingdom of the Redeemer. Jesus here, as in all the work of religion, consulted at the same time the *happiness* and *usefulness* of his disciples. Nor are they ever separated. Whatever contributes to the *usefulness* of the people, produces also their happiness; or, in other words, the secret of being happy, is to be *useful*.
{b} "And he called unto him" Mt 10:1 Mr 3:13; Lu 9:1 10:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 8

Verses 8-11. **See Barnes "Mt 10:9"**
and Mt 10:10-15. In Mt 10:5, they were commanded not to go among the Gentiles or Samaritans. Mark omits that direction, perhaps, because he was writing for the *Gentiles*, and the direction might create unnecessary difficulty or offence. Perhaps he omits it also because the command was given for a temporary purpose, and was not in force at tile time of his writing.
{1} "no money" or, "The word signifies a piece of brass money, in value somewhat less than a farthing" Lu 9:3.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 9

Verse 9. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{c} "shod"
Eph 6:15
{d} "sandals" Ac 12:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 11

Verse 11. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{e} "shake"
Ne 5:15 Ac 13:51
{2} "Sodom and Gomorrha" "or"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Preached that men should repent*. See the nature of repentance explained in Mt 3:2. They were now called upon to repent, and reform their lives, because sin was evil; because the Messiah had come to preach forgiveness to the penitent; and because at his presence it was fit that the nation should turn from its sins, and prepare to receive him.
{f} "repent" Lu 24:47 Ac 2:28, 3:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Cast out many devils*. **See Barnes "Mt 4:24"**.
And anointed with oil, etc. Anointing with oil was in common use among the Jews in cases of sickness. It was supposed to have a mild, soothing, and alleviating effect on the body. In Jas 5:14, the elders of the church, in connexion with prayers, were directed also to anoint the sick with oil. It was also used in wounds. The good Samaritan poured in *oil* and wine into the wounds of the waylaid Jew, Lu 10:34. Josephus says, that in the last sickness of Herod, his physicians commanded him to be anointed with oil. It need not be supposed, however, that the apostles used oil for mere *medical* purposes. It was used, probably, like the imposition of hands, or like our Saviour's anointing the eyes of the blind with clay, merely as a sign, in expectation of imparting that aid and comfort from God which was sought, and which was *represented* by the natural, soothing, and gentle effect of oil.
{g} "many devils" Lu 10:17 {h} "oil" Jas 5:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 14

Verses 14-20. See this account of the death of John the Baptist fully explained in Mt 14:1-12.
{g} "King Herod" Mt 14:1 Lu 9:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 15

Verse 15. No Barnes text on this verse.
{h} "said"
Mt 16:14 Mr 8:28

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 16

Verse 16. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 17

Verse 17. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 18

Verse 18. No Barnes text on this verse.
{i} "lawful"
Le 18:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 19

Verse 19. No Barnes text on this verse.
{1} "had a quarrel" or, "an inward grudge"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *He did many things*. But he did not do the thing which was demanded of him—to break off from his sins. He attempted to make a compromise with his conscience. He still loved his sins, and did other things which he supposed might be accepted, in the place of putting away, as he ought, the wife of his brother—the polluted and adulterous woman with whom he lived. Perhaps he treated John kindly, or spoke well of him, or aided him in his wants; and attempted in this way to silence his rebukes, and destroy his faithfulness. This was probably before John was imprisoned. So sinners often treat ministers kindly, and do much to make them comfortable, and hear them gladly, while they are still unwilling to do *the thing* which is demanded of them, to repent and believe the gospel. They expect that their kind attentions will be accepted in the place of what God demands—repentance and the forsaking of their sins.

{k} "feared" Ex 11:3 Eze 2:5-7 {2} "observed him" or, "kept him", or "saved him"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 21

Verse 21. No Barnes text on this verse.
{l} "???"
Ge 40:20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 22

Verse 22. No Barnes text on this verse.
{m} "and danced"
Isa 3:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 23

Verse 23. No Barnes text on this verse.
{n} "Whatsoever"
Es 5:3,6, 7:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 24

Verse 24. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 25

Verse 25. No Barnes text on this verse.
{o} "head of John"
Ps 37:12,14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 26

Verse 26. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 27

Verse 27. No Barnes text on this verse.
{3} "executioner" or, "one of his guard"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 28

Verse 28. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 29

Verse 29. No Barnes text on this verse.
{p} "they came"
Ac 8:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *And the apostles gathered themselves together*. That is, those whom he had sent out two and two, Mr 6:7. Having travelled around the country, they returned and met the Saviour at Capernaum.
{q} "And the apostles" Lu 9:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *A desert place*. A retired place, across the sea from Capernaum, where they would he free from interruption.
Coming and going. Coming to be healed and retiring, or coming to hear him preach. It means that they were thronged, that there was a vast multitude attending his preaching.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 32

Verses 32-44. **See Barnes "Mt 14:13"**
and Mt 14:14-21
Verse 32. *By ship*. By a boat, a small vessel.

Privately. Without making their plan known. They *intended* to go privately. It appears, however, that their intention became known, and multitudes followed them.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *Afoot thither*. On foot to the place where they saw them going.
Out of all cities. All cities or large towns in the neighbourhood.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *Much people—as sheep*, etc. They had no one to teach them, and guide them. The priests and scribes were proud, corrupt, and despised the common people and neglected them.
{r} "because they were" 1Ki 22:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *The time is far passed*. The day is almost gone. It is drawing near night.
{s} "And when the day" Mt 14:15 Lu 9:12; Joh 6:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 36

Verse 36. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *Two hundred pennyworth of bread*. About 27 dollars, [or £6 sterling.] As the disciples had a common purse in which they carried their little property, consisting of the donations of their friends, and money to be given to the poor, (compare Joh 12:6; Mt 26:8,9; Lu 8:30

it is not improbable that they had, at this time, about this sum in their possession. Philip—for it was he who asked the question, (Joh 6:7)—asked, with a mixture of wonder and agitation, whether they should take *all* their little property, and spend it on a single meal? And even if we should, said he, it would not be sufficient to satisfy such a multitude. It was implied in this, that in *his* view they could not provide for them if they wished to, and that it would be better to send them away than to attempt it.
{t} "Shall we go" Nu 11:13,22; 2Ki 4:43

{1} "two hundred" **See Barnes "Mt 18:28"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 38

Verse 38. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 39

Verse 39. No Barnes text on this verse.
{u} "commanded" Mt 15:35 Mr 8:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 40

Verse 40. *In ranks*. Literally, in the form of square beds in a garden. By square, regularly formed companies.

By hundreds, and by fifties. Some companies had a hundred in, and some fifty. We need not suppose that these were *exactly* formed, or arranged; but that this was *about* the number. The expression indicates a *multitude*. There were so many, that they sat down, by *hundreds* and by *fifties*, in separate companies, on the green grass.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 41

Verse 41. No Barnes text on this verse.
{v} "and blessed" 1Sa 9:13 Mt 26:26; Lu 24:30

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 42

Verse 42. No Barnes text on this verse.
{w} "And they did"
De 8:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 43

Verse 43. *Twelve baskets*. Baskets belonging to the disciples, in which they carried their provisions, or, perhaps, belonging to some of the multitude.

Fragments. Broken pieces of the bread that remained.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 44

Verse 44. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 45

Verses 45-56. **See Barnes "Mt 14:22"**

and Mt 23:1-26:75

{x} "And straightway" Mt 14:22 Joh 6:17 {2} "before unto Bethsaida" or, "over against Bethsaida"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 46

Verse 46. No Barnes text on this verse.

{y} "he departed"

Mt 6:6 Mr 1:35; Lu 6:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 47

Verse 47. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 48

Verse 48. No Barnes text on this verse.

{z} "toiling in rowing"

Jon 1:13

{a} "have passed" Lu 24:28

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 49

Verse 49. No Barnes text on this verse.
{b} "they saw him"
Job 9:8
{c} "they supposed it" Lu 24:37

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 50

Verse 50. No Barnes text on this verse.
{d} "Be of good cheer"
Isa 43:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 51

Verse 51. No Barnes text on this verse.
{e} "and the wind"
Ps 93:3,4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 52

Verse 52. *They considered not* the miracle *of the loaves*. They did not remember or call to mind the *power* which Jesus had shown in feeding the five thousand by a miracle, and that, having done that, he had power also to save them from the storm.

Their heart was hardened. Their *mind* was dull to perceive it. This does not mean that they were *opposed* to Jesus, or that they had what we denominate *hardness of heart*, but simply, that they were slow to perceive his power; they did not quickly learn, as they ought to have done, that he had *all* power, and could therefore allay the storm. The word *heart* is frequently used in this sense. See Eph 1:18, in Greek; Ro 1:21 2:15; 2Co 4:6.

{f} "hardened" Isa 43:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 53

Verse 53. No Barnes text on this verse.
{g} "And when"
Mt 14:34

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 54

Verse 54. *they knew him*. They *recollected* him, for he had been there before, and worked miracles.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 55

Verse 55. No Barnes text on this verse.
{h} "And ran" Mt 4:24 Mr 2:1-3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 6 - Verse 56

Verse 56. *The border of his garment*. **See Barnes "Mt 9:20"**.
{i} "touch" Mt 9:20 Mr 5:27,28 Ac 19:12
{k} "border" Nu 15:38,39 {1} "touched him" or, "it"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 7 - Verse 1

MARK CHAPTER 7
Verses 1-23. See this passage explained in the Barnes Notes on
Mt 15:1-20.
See Barnes "Mt 15:1"
and Mt 15:2-20.
Verse 1. *Came from Jerusalem*. Probably to observe his conduct, and to find matter of accusation against him.
{l} "Then came together" Mt 15:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 7 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Defiled hands*. The hands were considered defiled, or polluted, unless they were washed previous to every meal.
{2} "defiled" or, "common"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 7 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Except they wash their hands oft*. The word *oft* means frequently, often. The word translated *oft* has been rendered various ways. Some have said that it means "up to the wrist;" unless they wash their hands up to the wrist. Others have said, "up to the elbow." There is evidence that the Pharisees had some such foolish rule as this about washing, and it is likely that they practised it faithfully, But the word probably means, *diligently*, *accurately*, *carefully*. Unless they wash their hands carefully, or according to rule, etc.

The tradition. What had been handed down, not what was delivered *by writing* in the law of Moses, but what had been communicated from father to son, as being proper and binding. *The elders*. The ancients, not the old men then living, but those who had lived formerly.

{1} "hands oft" or, "diligently" "Gr. with the fist" Theophylact, "up to the elbow"

{m} "tradition" Ga 1:14 Col 2:8,22,23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 7 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Market*. This word means either the place where provisions were sold, or the place where men were convened for any purpose. In this place it probably means the former.

Except they wash. In the original, "Except they *baptize*." In this place it does not mean to immerse the whole body, but the hands only. There is no evidence that the Jews washed their whole bodies every time they came from market. It is probable they washed *as a mere ceremony*; and often, doubtless, with the use of a very small quantity of water.

The washing of cups. In the Greek, *the baptism of cups*.

Cups. Drinking vessels. Those used at their meals.

Pots. Measures of *liquids*. Vessels made of wood, used to hold wine, vinegar, etc.

Brasen vessels. Vessels made of brass, used in cooking or otherwise. These, if much polluted, were commonly passed through the fire; if slightly polluted, they were washed. Earthen vessels, if defiled, were usually broken.

Tables. This word means, in the original, *beds* or *couches*. It refers not to the *tables* on which they ate, but to the couches on which they reclined at their meals. **See Barnes "Mt 23:6"**.

These were supposed to be defiled when any unclean or polluted person had reclined on them; and they deemed it necessary to purify them with water. The word *baptism* is here used—in the original, the *baptism of tables*; but as it cannot be supposed that *couches* were entirely *immersed* in water, the word *baptism*, here, must denote some other application of water, by sprinkling or otherwise, and shows that the term is used in the sense of washing in any way. If the word *here* is used, as is clear, to denote anything except entire immersion, it may be elsewhere; and baptism is lawfully performed without immersing the whole body in water.

{n} "except they wash" Job 9:30,31 {2} "and pots" "Sexatarius is about a pint and a half" {3} "of tables" or, "tables"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 7 - Verse 5

Verse 5. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 7 - Verse 6

Verse 6. No Barnes text on this verse.
{o} "Esaias"
Isa 29:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 7 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *For doctrines*. For commands of God binding on the conscience. Imposing *your* traditions as equal in authority to the commands of God.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 7 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Laying aside*. Rejecting, or making it give place to traditions; considering the traditions as superior in authority to the Divine law. This was the uniform doctrine of the Pharisees. See Mt 15:1-9.

The tradition of men. What has been handed down by men, or what rests solely on their authority.
{p} "For laying aside" Isa 1:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 7 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Full well*. These words are capable of different interpretations. Some read them as a question: "Do ye do *well* in rejecting?" etc. Others suppose they mean *skilfully, cunningly*. "You show great cunning, or art, in laying aside God's commands, and substituting in their place those of men." Others suppose them to be ironical. "How nobly you act! From conscientious attachment to your traditions, you have made void the law of God;" meaning to intimate by it, that they had acted wickedly and basely.
{1} "reject" or, "frustrate"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 7 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No Barnes text on this verse.
{q} "Honour thy father" Ex 20:12 De 5:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 7 - Verse 11

Verse 11. No Barnes text on this verse.
{r} "Whoso curses"
Ex 21:17 Le 20:9; Pr 20:20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 7 - Verse 12

Verse 12. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 7 - Verse 13

Verse 13. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 7 - Verse 14

Verse 14. No Barnes text on this verse.
{t} "and understand"
Pr 8:5 Isa 6:9; Ac 8:30

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 7 - Verse 15

Verse 15. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 7 - Verse 16

Verse 16. No Barnes text on this verse.
{u} "If any man"
Mt 11:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 7 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *The parable*. The *obscure* and difficult remarks which he had made in Mr 7:15. The word *parable*, here, means *obscure* and *difficult saying*. They could not understand it. They had probably imbibed many of the popular notions of the Pharisees, and they could not understand why a man was not defiled by external things. It was, moreover, a doctrine of the law, that men were ceremonially polluted by contact with dead bodies, etc., and they could not understand how it could be otherwise.

{v} "And when" Mt 15:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 7 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Cannot defile him*. Cannot render his *soul* polluted; cannot make him a *sinner*, so as to need this purifying as a *religious* observance.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 7 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Entereth not into his heart*. Does not reach or affect the mind, the soul, and consequently cannot pollute it. Even if it should affect the body, yet it cannot the soul, and consequently cannot need to be cleansed by a religious ordinance. The notions of the Pharisees, therefore, are not founded in reason, but are mere superstition.

The draught. The sink, the vault.

Purging all meats, The word *purging*, here, means to purify, to cleanse. What is thrown out of the body is the innutrious part of the food taken into the stomach, and leaving only that which is proper for the support of life; and it cannot, therefore, defile the soul.

All meats. All food; all that is taken into the body to support life. The meaning is, that the economy or process by which life is supported, *purifies* or *renders nutritious* all kinds of food. The unwholesome parts are separated, and the wholesome only are taken into the system. This agrees with all that has since been discovered of the process of digestion, and of the support of life. The food taken into the stomach is, by the gastric juice, converted into a thick pulp, called chyme. The nutritious part of this is conveyed into small vessels and changed into a milky substance called *chyle*. This is changed into blood, and the blood conveys nutriment and support to all parts of the system. The useless parts of the food are thrown off.

{w} "but into" 1Co 6:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 7 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *That which cometh out of the man*. His words; the expression of his thoughts and feelings; his conduct, as the expression of in- ward malice, anger, covetousness, lust, etc.

Defileth the man. Is really polluted, or offensive in the sight of God. They render the soul corrupt and abominable in the sight of God. See Mt 15:18-20.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 7 - Verse 21

Verse 21. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

{x} "For from within"

Ge 6:5 Ps 14:1,3 53:1,3 Jer 17:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 7 - Verse 22

Verse 22. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

{1} "covetousness, wickedness" "wickednesses"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 7 - Verse 23

Verse 23. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 7 - Verse 24

Verses 24-30. See this miracle explained in

Mt 15:21-28.

Verse 24. *Would have no man know it*. To avoid the designs of the Pharisees, he wished to be retired.

{y} "And from thence" Mt 15:21 {z} "but he could not be hid" Mr 2:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 7 - Verse 25

Verse 25. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 7 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *A Greek*. The Jews called all persons Greeks who were not of their nation. Compare Ro 1:14. The whole world was considered as divided into Jews and Greeks. Though she might not have been strictly a Greek, yet she came under this general appellation.
{1} "Greek" or, "Gentile"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 7 - Verse 27

Verse 27. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{a} "for it is not"
Mt 7:6 10:5,6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 7 - Verse 28

Verse 28. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{b} "yet the dogs"
Ro 15:8,9; Eph 2:12-14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 7 - Verse 29

Verse 29. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{c} "For this saying"
Isa 66:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 7 - Verse 30

Verse 30. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{d} "the devil gone out"
1Jo 3:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 7 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *Departing from the coasts*. The country, or regions of Tyre.
Came unto the sea of Galilee. The sea of Tiberias.

Decapolis. See Mt 4:25. He did not go immediately into Capernaum, or any city where he was known, but into the retired regions around the sea of Galilee. This was done to avoid the designs of the Pharisees who sought his life.

{e} "And again" Mt 15:29

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 7 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *They bring*. That is, his friends brought, or the people brought.

One that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech. Not entirely dumb, but who spoke indistinctly or with difficulty. His deafness might not have been of long standing; and his speech, therefore, not entirely ruined.

To put his hand upon him. That is, to cure him. Blessings were commonly imparted by laying on the hands.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 7 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *And he took him aside from the multitude*. Why this was done we have no means of information. It might have been to conceal from the multitude everything respecting the *manner* of cure, in order that none might attempt to cure in a similar way.

And put his fingers into his ears, etc. Why this was done it has been found exceedingly difficult to explain. Our Lord had power at once to open his ears and loose his tongue, but for some cause he chose to accompany it with a sign. It was intended, probably, simply as a sign that the power of healing came from Jesus; to satisfy the man by the touch that he had this power, and that it could come from no other quarter. Our Saviour often used signs in this way to denote his power to heal. See Mr 8:23 Joh 9:6.

{f} "and he spit" Mr 8:23 Joh 9:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 7 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *Looking up to heaven*. To lift up the eyes to heaven is an act imploring aid from God, and denotes an attitude of prayer, Ps 121:1,2; Mr 6:41 Joh 11:41.

He sighed. Pitying the sufferings of the man who stood before him,

Ephphatha. This word is Syriac, the language which our Lord used in addressing the man, and means, "Be opened."

{g} "And looking up to heaven" Mr 6:41 Joh 11:41, 17:1

{h} "he sighed" Joh 11:33,38

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 7 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *The string of his tongue was loosed*. The difficulty in his speaking was removed.
{i} "straightway" Isa 35:5,6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 7 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *Tell no man*. Do not noise it abroad. He was not ambitious of being known; and he knew that if much was said of his cures, it would excite the jealousy of the Pharisees, and endanger his life.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 7 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *Beyond measure*. Exceedingly; very much. In the Greek, "Very abundantly."
He hath done all things well. All things in a remarkable manner; or, he has perfectly effected the cure of the deaf and the dumb.
{k} "saying" Ps 139:14 Ac 14:11 {l} "maketh both the deaf" Ex 4:10,11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 8 - Verse 1

MARK CHAPTER 8
Verses 1-9. See this passage explained in Mt 15:32-39.
Verse 1. *In those days*. While in the wilderness, where he had cured the deaf and dumb man.
Having nothing to eat. Having come unprovided, or having consumed what they had brought.
{m} "In those days" Mt 15:32

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 8 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *I have compassion*. I pity their condition. I am disposed to relieve them.
{n} "compassion" Ps 145:8,15; Heb 5:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 8 - Verse 3

Verse 3. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 8 - Verse 4

Verse 4. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{o} "From whence"
Mr 6:36,37

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 8 - Verse 5

Verse 5. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 8 - Verse 6

Verse 6. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 8 - Verse 7

Verse 7. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{p} "he blessed"
Mt 14:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 8 - Verse 8

Verse 8. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{q} "and were filled"
Ps 107:5,6, 145:16
{r} "and they took" 1Ki 17:14-16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 8 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Four thousand*. Four thousand *men*, besides women and children. See Mt 15:38.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 8 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Dalmanutha*. In Mt 15:39, it is said that he came into the coasts of *Magdala*. **See Barnes "Mt 15:39".**

{s} "straightway" Mt 15:39

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 8 - Verse 11

Verses 11-21. See this passage explained in Mt 16:1-12.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 8 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Sighed deeply in his spirit*. His soul, his heart, was deeply affected at their wickedness and hypocrisy. The word *spirit*, here, means human soul. He drew groans deeply from his breast.

No sign be given. That is, no such sign as they asked—to wit, a sign *from heaven*. He said a sign should be given, the same as was furnished by Jonas, Mt 16:1. But this was not what they asked, nor would it be given because they asked it.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 8 - Verse 13

Verse 13. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 8 - Verse 14

Verse 14. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 8 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees*. See Mt 16:6. Of the Herodians—of Herod and his followers. Matthew, instead of "Herod," has "the Sadducees." It is not improbable that he cautioned them against them all. The Pharisees sought his life, and were exceedingly corrupt in

their doctrine and practice; the Sadducees denied some of the essential doctrines of religion; and the Herodians, it is supposed, maintained the opinion that it was lawful for the Jews to acknowledge a foreign prince, and join equally with the Pharisees and Sadducees in opposing the claims of Jesus. Matthew has recorded his caution to avoid the Pharisees and Sadducees, and Mark has added, what Matthew had omitted, the caution likewise to beware of the Herodians. Thus the evangelists speak the same thing.

{u} "beware of the" Pr 19:27 Lu 12:1 {v} "leaven of the" Ex 12:20 Le 2:11; 1Co 5:6-8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 8 - Verse 16

Verse 16. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 8 - Verse 17

Verse 17. No Barnes text on this verse.
{w} "perceive"
Mr 6:52
{x} "ye your heart" Mr 3:5 16:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 8 - Verse 18

Verse 18. No Barnes text on this verse.
{y} "Having ears"
Isa 44:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 8 - Verse 19

Verse 19. No Barnes text on this verse.
{a} "five loaves"
Mr 6:38,44; Mt 14:17-21 Lu 9:12-17; Joh 6:5-13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 8 - Verse 20

Verse 20. No Barnes text on this verse.
{b} "seven among"

Mr 8:1-9 Mt 15:34-38

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 8 - Verse 21

Verse 21. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 8 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *To Bethsaida*. **See Barnes "Mt 11:21"**.

Besought him to touch him. That is, to heal him; for they believed that his touch would restore his sight.

{c} "to touch him" Isa 35:5,6; Mt 11:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 8 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Led him out of the town*. Why this was done the sacred writers have not told us. It *might* have been to avoid the collecting of a multitude, and thus to have escaped the designs of the Pharisees who were attempting to take his life, and chiefly on a charge of sedition, and of exciting the people. On this account Jesus chose to perform the miracle alone; thus showing, that while he did good he desired to do it in such a way as to avoid the *appearance* of evil, and to prevent, at the same time, ostentation, and the malice of his enemies.

Spit on his eyes. Why this was done is not known. It was evidently not intended to perform the cure by any natural effect of the spittle. It was to the man a *sign*, an evidence, that it was the power of Jesus. The eyes were probably closed. They were perhaps "gummed," or united together by a secretion that had become hard. To apply spittle to them— to wet them would be a sign, a natural expression of removing the obstruction and opening them. The power was not in the spittle, but it attended the application of it.

Saw ought. Saw anything.

{d} "spit" Mr 7:33

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 8 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *I see men as trees, walking*. I see men walking; but see them so indistinctly, that but for their *motion* I could not distinguish them from trees. I cannot distinctly see their shapes and features. Probably our Lord did not at once restore him fully to sight, that he might strengthen his faith. Seeing that Jesus had *partially* restored him, it was evidence that he could *wholly*, and it led him to exercise faith anew in him, and to feel more strikingly his dependence on him.

{e} "and said" Jud 9:36 Isa 29:18; 1Co 13:11,12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 8 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Every man clearly*. Could see their form and features. His sight was completely restored. Though our Lord did not by this, probably, intend to teach any lesson in regard to the way in which the mind of a sinner is enlightened, yet it affords a striking illustration of it. Sinners are by nature blind, 2Co 4:4 1Jo 2:11; Joh 9:39. The effect of religion, or of the influence of the Holy Spirit, is to open the eyes, to show the sinner his condition and his danger, and to lead him to *look* on him whom he has pierced. Yet at first he sees indistinctly. He does not soon learn to distinguish objects. When converted, he is in a new world. Light is shed on every object, and he sees the Scriptures, the Saviour, and the works of creation, the sun, and stars, and hills, and vales, in a new light. He sees the beauty of the plan of salvation, and wonders that he has not seen it before. Yet he sees at first indistinctly. It is only by repeated applications to the Source of Light that he sees all things clearly. At first, religion may appear full of mysteries. Doctrines and facts appear on every hand that he cannot fully comprehend. His mind is still perplexed, and he may doubt whether he has ever seen aught, or has been ever renewed. Yet let him not despair. Light, in due time, will be shed on these obscure and mysterious truths. Faithful and repeated application to the Father of Lights in prayer, and in searching the Scriptures, and in the ordinances of religion, will dissipate all these doubts, and he will see all things clearly, and the universe will appear to be filled with one broad flood of light.

{f} "saw every man" Pr 4:18 Isa 32:3; 1Pe 2:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 8 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *The town*. The town of Bethsaida.

Nor tell it, etc. Lest it excite the jealousy of the Pharisees, and produce commotion and danger.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 8 - Verse 27

Verses 27-38. See this passage illustrated in Mt 16:13-28.

{f} "And Jesus" Mt 16:13 Lu 9:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 8 - Verse 28

Verse 28. No Barnes text on this verse.

{g} "John"

Mt 14:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 8 - Verse 29

Verse 29. No Barnes text on this verse.
{h} "Thou art"
Joh 1:41-49 6:69, 11:27 Ac 8:37; 1Jo 5:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 8 - Verse 30

Verse 30. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 8 - Verse 31

Verse 31. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 8 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *He spake that saying openly*; With boldness or confidence, or without parables or figures; so that there could be no possibility, of misunderstanding him.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 8 - Verse 33

Verse 33. No Barnes text on this verse.
{i} "rebuked Peter" Re 3:19 {k} "Satan" 1Co 5:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 8 - Verse 34

Verse 34. No Barnes text on this verse.
{l} "Whosoever"
Mt 10:38 16:24; Lu 9:23 14:27; Tit 2:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 8 - Verse 35

Verse 35. No Barnes text on this verse.
{m} "For whosoever"
Es 4:14 Mt 10:39, 16:25 Lu 9:24, 17:33
Joh 12:25 2Ti 2:11, 4:6,8; Re 2:10 7:14-17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 8 - Verse 36

Verse 36. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 8 - Verse 37

Verse 37. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 8 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *Ashamed of me*. Ashamed to own attachment to me on account of my lowly appearance, and my poverty, contempt, and sufferings.

And of my words. My doctrines, my instructions.

This adulterous and sinful generation. This age given to wickedness, particularly to adultery.

In the glory of his Father. In the day of judgment. **See Barnes "Mt 25:31"**.

The meaning of this verse is, whosoever shall refuse, through pride or wickedness, to acknowledge and serve Christ here, shall be excluded from his kingdom hereafter. He was lowly, meek, and despised. Yet there was an inimitable beauty in his character even then. But he will come again in awful grandeur;—not as the babe of Bethlehem; not as the Man of Nazareth; but as the Son of God, in majesty and glory. They that would not acknowledge him *here* must be rejected by him *there*; they that would not serve him *always*, will *never* enjoy him; they that would cast *him* out and despise him, must be cast out *by* him, and consigned to eternal, hopeless sorrows.

{n} "Whosoever" Lu 12:9 2Ti 1:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 1

Verse 1. *Verily I say*, etc. **See Barnes "Mt 16:28"**.

This verse properly belongs to the preceding chapter, and the preceding discourse.
{o} "Verily" Mt 16:28 Lu 9:27 {p} "not taste" Joh 8:52 Heb 2:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 2

Verses 2-10. *And after six days*, etc. See this passage explained; **See Barnes "Mt 17:1-9"**.
{q} "And after six days" Mt 17:1 Lu 9:28

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *No fuller*. Rather, no *scourer*. The office of the person here mentioned was to *scour* or *whiten* cloth; not to *full* it, or to render it thicker.
{r} "exceeding white" Da 7:9 Mt 28:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 4

Verse 4. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 5

Verse 5. No Barnes text on this verse.
{s}
Ps 63:2 84:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *He wist not.* He *knew* not. He was desirous of saying something, and he knew not what would be proper.
{t} "wist not" Da 10:15 Re 1:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 7

Verse 7. No Barnes text on this verse.

{u} "This is my"
Ps 2:7 Mt 3:17; 2Pe 1:17
{v} "hear him" De 18:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 8

Verse 8. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 9

Verse 9. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No Barnes text on this verse.
{w} "should mean"
Ac 17:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 11

Verses 11-13. *Why say the Scribes*, etc. **See Barnes "Mt 17:10"**
and Mt 17:11-13.
{x} "Elias" Mal 4:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 12

Verse 12. No Barnes text on this verse.
{y} "written of the Son"
Ps 22:1 Isa 53:1
{z} "be set" Ps 74:22 Lu 23:11; Php 2:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 13

Verse 13. No Barnes text on this verse.
{a} "That Elias"
Mt 11:14 Lu 1:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 14

Verses 14-29. **See Barnes "Mt 17:14"**
and Mt 17:15-21
Verse 14. *Questioning with them*. Debating with the disciples, and attempting to confound them. This he saw as he came down from the mount. In his absence they had taken occasion to attempt to perplex and confound his followers.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Were greatly amazed*. Were astonished and surprised at his sudden appearance among them.
Saluted him. Received him with the customary marks of affection and respect. It is probable that this was not by any formal manner of salutation, but by the rush of the multitude, and by hailing him as the Messiah.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *What question ye?* What is the subject of your inquiry or debate with the disciples?
{1} "question ye" or, "among yourselves"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *A dumb spirit*. A spirit which deprived his *son* of the power of speaking.
{b} "a dumb spirit" Mt 12:22 Lu 11:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *And wheresoever*. In whatever place, at home or abroad, alone or in public.
He teareth him. He rends, distracts, or throws into convulsions.

He foameth. At the mouth, like a mad animal. Among us, these would all be considered as marks of violent derangement or madness.

And pineth away. Becomes thin, haggard, and emaciated. This was the effect of the violence of his struggles, and perhaps of the want of food.

{1} "teareth" or, "dasheth" {c} "foameth" Jude 1:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 19

Verse 19. No Barnes text on this verse.

{d} "faithless"

De 32:20 Ps 78:8; Heb 3:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 20

Verse 20. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 21

Verse 21. No Barnes text on this verse.

{e} "of a child"

Job 5:7 Ps 51:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *If thou canst do any thing*. I have brought him to the disciples, and they could not help him. If THOU canst do anything, have compassion, etc.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *If thou canst believe*. This was an answer to the request; and there was a reference in the answer to the *doubt* in the man's mind about the power of Jesus. *I* can help him. If THOU *canst believe*, it shall be done. Jesus here demanded *faith* or confidence in his power of healing. So he demands faith of every sinner that comes to him; and none that come without *confidence* in him can obtain the blessing.

All things are possible to him that believeth. All things can be effected or accomplished—to wit, by God—in favour of him that believes; and if thou canst believe, this will be done. God will do nothing in our favour without faith. It is right that we should *have* confidence in him; and if we *have* confidence, it is easy for him to help us, and he willingly does it. In our weakness, then, we should go to God our Saviour; and though we have no strength, yet *he* can aid us, and he will make all things easy for us.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Said with tears*. The man felt the implied rebuke in the Saviour's language. And feeling grieved that he should be thought to be destitute of faith, and feeling deeply for the welfare of his afflicted son, he wept. Nothing can be more touching or natural than this. An anxious father distressed at the condition of his son; having applied to the disciples in vain, now coming to the Saviour, and not having full confidence that he had the proper qualification to be aided, he wept. Any man would have wept in his condition, nor would the Saviour turn the weeping suppliant away.

I believe. I have faith. I do put confidence in thee; though I know that my faith is not as strong as it should be.

Lord. This word, here, signifies merely master, or sir, as it does often in the New Testament. We have no evidence that he had any knowledge of the Divine nature of our Saviour and he applied the word, probably, as he would have done to any other teacher or worker of miracles.

Help thou mine unbelief. Supply thou the defects of my faith. Give me strength and grace to put entire confidence in thee. Every one who comes to the Saviour for help has need of offering this prayer. In our unbelief and our doubts we need his aid, nor can we ever put sufficient reliance on him without his gracious help.

{g} "tears" Ps 126:5 {h} "help thou" Heb 12:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 25

Verse 25. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 26

Verse 26. No Barnes text on this verse.

{i} "rent him sore"

Re 12:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 27

Verse 27. No Barnes text on this verse.
{k} "by the hand"
Isa 41:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 28

Verse 28. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 29

Verse 29. No Barnes text on this verse.
{l} "by prayer"
Eph 6:18
{m} "and fasting" 1Co 9:27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 30

Verses 30-32. Mt 17:22,23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *Is delivered*. Is given to me to make atonement by his sufferings and death, and will in due time be taken and killed.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 32

Verse 32. No Barnes text on this verse.
{n} "ask him" Joh 16:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 33

Verse 33. **See Barnes "Mt 18:1, and Mt 18:2-6"**

{o} "And he came" Mt 18:1 Lu 9:46, 22:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 34

Verse 34. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 35

Verse 35. No Barnes text on this verse.
{p} "If amy man"
Mt 20:26 Mr 10:43

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 36

Verse 36. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 37

Verse 37. No Barnes text on this verse.
{q} "Whosoever"
Lu 9:48

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *We saw one*, etc. There is no improbability in supposing that this might have been one of the disciples of John, or one of the seventy whom Jesus had sent out, and who, though he did not *personally* attend on Jesus, yet had the power of working miracles. There is no evidence that he was merely an *exorcist*, or that he used the name of Jesus merely as a pretence.

{r} "we saw one" Nu 11:26-28

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *Forbid him not*. Do not prevent his doing good. If he can work a miracle in my name, it is sufficient proof of attachment to me, and he should not be prevented.

Can lightly speak evil of me. The word here rendered *lightly*, means *quickly*, or *immediately*. The meaning of the passage is, that he to whom God gave the power of working a miracle, by that gave evidence that he could not soon be found among the enemies of Jesus. He ought not, therefore, to be prevented from doing it. There is no reason to think, here, that John had any improper designs in opposing the man. He thought that it was evidence that he could not be right, because he did not Join them and follow the Saviour. Our Lord thought differently. He opposed no one who gave evidence that he loved him. Wherever he might be, or whatever his work, yet, if he did it in the name of Jesus, and with the approbation of God, it was evidence sufficient that he was right. Christians should rejoice in good done by their brethren of any denomination. There are men calling themselves Christians who seem to look with doubt and suspicion on all that is done by those who do not walk with them. They undervalue their labours, attempt to lessen the evidences of their success, and to diminish their influence. True likeness to the Saviour would lead us to rejoice in *all* the good accomplished, by whomsoever it may be done; and to rejoice that the kingdom of Christ is advanced, whether by a Presbyterian, an Episcopalian, a Baptist, or a Methodist. Compare Php 1:18.

{s} "there is no man" 1Co 12:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 40

Verse 40. No Barnes text on this verse.

{t} "For he that"

Mt 12:30

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 41

Verse 41. *Whosoever shall give you a cup*, etc. How easy it is to be a Christian! What is easier than to give a cup of cold water to a thirsty disciple of Jesus! But it must be in his name—that is, because he is a Christian, and therefore from love to the Saviour. This is very different from giving it from a mere motive of common kindness. If done from love to Christ, it will be rewarded; and hence we learn that the humblest acts of Christians, the lowest service that is rendered, will be graciously noticed by Jesus, and rewarded. None are so humble in his kingdom as not to be able to do good; and none so poor that, in his circumstances, may not show attach merit to him. Their feeblest service will be accepted; and acts of love, that may be forgotten by man, will be remembered by *him*, and rewarded in heaven.

{u} "for whosoever" Mt 10:42 25:40

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 42

Verses 42-50. See Mt 18:7-9. *Millstone*. See Mt 18:6.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 43

Verse 43. No Barnes text on this verse.
{w} "And if thine hand"
De 13:6
{1} "offend" or, "cause thee to offend"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 44

Verses 44,46. *Their worm*. This figure is clearly taken from Isa 66:24. In describing the great prosperity of the kingdom of the Messiah, Isaiah says, that the people of God shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of men who have transgressed against God. Their enemies Shall be overcome. They shall be slain. The people of God shall triumph. The figure is taken from heaps of the dead slain in battle; and the prophet says, that the number shall be so great, that their worm—the worm feeding on the dead—shall not die, shall live long—as long as there are carcasses to be devoured; and that the fire which was used to burn the bodies of the dead shall continue long to burn, and shall not be extinguished till they are consumed. The figure, therefore, denotes great misery, and certain and terrible destruction. In these verses it is applied to the state beyond the grave, and is intended to denote that the destruction of the wicked will be awful, wide-spread, and eternal. It is not to be supposed that there will be any real worm in hell—perhaps no *material* fire. Nor can it be told what was particularly intended by the undying worm. There is no authority for applying it, as is often done, to remorse of conscience, any more than to any other of the pains and reflections of hell. It is a mere image of loathsome, dreadful, and *eternal* sufferings. In what that suffering will consist, it is probably beyond the power of any living mortal to imagine. The word "their," in the phrase "their worm," is used merely to keep up the *image* or *figure*. Dead bodies, putrefying in that valley, would be overrun with worms, while the *fire* was not confined to them, but spread to other objects, kindled by combustibles through all the valley. It is *not* meant, therefore, that every particular sufferer has a peculiar worm, or has particular sins that cause remorse of conscience. That is a truth; but it does not appear that it is intended to be taught here.

{x} "Where their worm" Isa 66:24 Re 14:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 45

Verse 45. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 46

Verse 46. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 47

Verse 47.
See Barnes "Mr 9:43".
{3} "offend" Mr 9:43

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 48

Verse 48. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 49

Verse 49. *Every one shall be salted with fire*. PERHAPS NO PASSAGE IN THE New Testament has given more perplexity to commentators than this; and it may be impossible now to fix its precise meaning. The common meaning affixed to it has been, that as salt preserves from putrefaction, so fire, applied to the wicked in hell, shall have the property of preserving them in existence, or they shall *be* preserved amidst the sprinkling of fire, to be continually, in their sufferings, a sacrifice to the justice of God. But this meaning is not quite satisfactory. Another opinion has been, that as salt is sprinkled on the victim preparatory to its being devoted to God, (Le 2:13) so should *the apostles*, by trials, calamities, etc., represented here by *fire* be prepared as a sacrifice and offering to God. Probably the passage has not reference at all to future punishment; and the difficulty of interpreting it has arisen from supposing it connected with the 48th verse, or given as a *reason* for what is said in *that* verse, rather than considering it as designed to illustrate the *general design* of the passage. The main scope of the passage was not to discourse of future punishment. That is brought in incidentally. The chief object of the passage was,

(1st) to teach them that other men, not with them, might be true Christians, Mr 9:38,39.

(2nd.) That they should be disposed to look favourably upon the slightest evidence that they *might be*, Mr 9:41

(3rd.) That they ought to avoid giving offence to such feeble and obscure Christians, Mr 9:42.

(4th.) That *everything* calculated to give offence, or to dishonour religion, should be removed, Mr 9:43. And,

(5th.) that everything which would endanger their salvation should be sacrificed; that they should *deny* themselves and practise all self-denials, in order to obtain eternal life. In this way they would be *preserved* to eternal life. The word "fire" here, therefore, denotes self-denials, sacrifices,

trials, in keeping ourselves from the gratification of the flesh. As if he had said: "Look at the sacrifice on the altar. It is an offering to God, about to be presented to him. It is sprinkled with *salt, emblematic of PURITY, of PRESERVATION*, and of *fitting it, therefore, for a sacrifice*. So *you* are devoted to God. YOU are sacrifices, victims, offerings, to him in his service. To make you *acceptable* offerings, everything must be done to preserve you from sin, to *purify* you, and to make you fit offerings. Self-denials, subduing the lusts, enduring trials, removing offences, are the proper *preservatives* in the service of God. Doing this, you will be acceptable offerings, and be saved; without this, you will be *unfit* for his eternal service, and will be lost."

{z} "sacrifice" Le 2:13 Eze 43:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 9 - Verse 50

Verse 50. *Lost his saltness*, etc. **See Barnes "Mt 5:13"**.

Have salt in yourselves. Have the preserving, purifying principle always; the principles of denying yourselves of suppressing pride, ambition, contention, etc., and thus you will be an acceptable offering to God.

Have peace. Avoid contention and quarrelling, struggling for places, honours, and office, and seek each other's welfare, and religion will be honoured and preserved in the world.

{a} "salt have lost" Mt 5:13 Lu 14:34 {b} "salt in yourselves" Col 4:6 {c} "have peace one" Ps 34:14 2Co 13:11; Heb 12:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 1

MARK CHAPTER 10

Verses 1-12. See this question about divorce explained in **See Barnes "Mt 19:3, and** Mt 19:4-12

{d} "And he arose" Mt 19:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 2

Verse 2. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 3

Verse 3. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 4

Verse 4. No Barnes text on this verse.
{e} "Moses suffered"
De 24:1 Mt 5:31

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 5

Verse 5. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 6

Verse 6. No Barnes text on this verse.
{f} "God made them"
Ge 1:27 5:2; Mal 2:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 7

Verse 7. No Barnes text on this verse.
{g} "For this cause"
Ge 11:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 8

Verse 8. No Barnes text on this verse.
{h} "one flesh"
1Co 6:16 Eph 5:31

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 9

Verse 9. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 11

Verse 11. No Barnes text on this verse.
{i} "Whosoever shall"
#Mt 5.32 19:9 Lu 16:18 Ro 7:3; 1Co 7:10,11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 12

Verse 12. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 13

Verses 13-16.
See Barnes "Mt 19:13"
and Mt 19:14-15
Verse 13. *Should touch them*. That is, should lay his hands on them, and pray for them, and bless them. Compare Mt 19:13. It was common to lay the hands on the head of a person for whom a blessing was asked. See the case of Jacob, Ge 48:14.
{k} "And they" Mt 19:13 Lu 18:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Saw it*. Saw the conduct of his disciples.
Was much displeased. Because, first, it was a pleasure *to him* to receive and bless little children; and, secondly, they were doing what they were not commanded to do—interfering in a case where it was evidently improper.
{l} "much displease" Eph 4:26 {m} "of such is" Mt 18:10 1Co 14:20; 1Pe 2:2 Re 14:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Whosoever shall not receive*. Whosoever shall not manifest the spirit of a little child.

The kingdom of God. The gospel. The new dispensation by the Messiah, or the reign of God through a Mediator. **See Barnes "Mt 3:2"**.

As a little child. With the temper and spirit of a child teachable, mild, humble, and free from prejudice and obstinacy.

Shall not enter therein. Shall not be a Christian; shall not be a *real* member of the family of Christ on earth, though he may be a *professor*; and shall never enter heaven.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Took them up in his arms*. These were small children.

Blessed them. Prayed for them, sought a blessing on them, or gave them the assurance of his favour as the Messiah.

How happy would it be if all parents thus felt it to be their privilege to present their children to Christ! The question with a parent should be, not whether he *ought* to present them by prayer, but whether he may do it. And so, too, the question respecting infant baptism is not so much whether a parent OUGHT to devote his children to God in this ordinance, as whether he MAY do it. It is an inestimable privilege to do it; not a matter of mere stern and iron-handed duty; and a parent with right feelings will come to God with his children in *every way*, and seek his blessing on them in the beginning of their journey of life. Our children are given to us but for a little time. They are in a world of danger, sin, and woe. They are exposed to temptation on every hand. If God be not their Friend, they have no friend that can aid them in the day of adversity, or keep them from the snares of the destroyer. If *He* is their Friend, they have nothing to fear. The *proper expression, then, of parental feeling*, is to come and offer them early to God. A parent should ask only the *privilege* of doing it. He should seek *God's favour* as the best inheritance of his children; and if a parent *may* devote his offspring to God if he may daily seek his blessing on them by prayer—it is all that he should ask. With proper feelings, he will rush to the throne of grace, and daily seek the protection and guidance of God for his children amidst the temptations and snares of an ungodly world, and implore *Him* to be their guide when the parent shall be laid in the silent grave.

So, children who have been devoted to God; who have been the daily objects of a father's prayers and a mother's tears; who have been again and again presented to Jesus in infancy and childhood; are under the most sacred obligations to live to God. They should never forget that a parent sought the favour of God as the chief blessing; and having been offered to *Jesus* by prayer and baptism in their first days on earth, they should make it their great aim to be prepared to meet *him* when he shall come in the clouds of heaven.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 17

Verses 17-31. **See Barnes "See Barnes** "Mt 19:16, and Mt 19:17-30.

Verse 17. *Gone forth*. From the place where he had been teaching.

Into the way. Into the road or path on his journey.

Running. Thus showing the intensity with which he desired to know the way of life. Zeal to know the way to be saved is proper; nor is it possible to be too intense, if well directed. Nothing else is so important, and nothing demands, therefore, so much effort and haste.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 18

Verse 18. No Barnes text on this verse.
{o} "one" Ps 86:5 119:68

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Defraud not*. Do not take away your neighbour's property by fraud or dishonesty. To *cheat* or *defraud* supposes a covetous desire of a neighbour's property, and is usually attended with *falsehood or false witness* against a neighbour in obtaining it. It is thus a violation of the ninth and tenth commandments; and our Saviour very properly, therefore, *condensed* the two, and expressed their substance in this—not to defraud. It is, besides, expressly forbidden in Le 19:13—"Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour."
{p} "commandments" Ex 20:1; Ro 13:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 20

Verse 20. No Barnes text on this verse.
{q} "all these"
Isa 58:2 Eze 33:31,32 Mal 3:8; Ro 7:9 Php 3:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Jesus—loved him*. What occurred afterwards showed that the young man did not love the Saviour, or was not a true disciple. So that this expression denotes, simply, natural affection; or means that Jesus was pleased with his amiableness, his morality, and his *external* regard for the law of God. At the same time, this was entirely consistent with deep sorrow that he would not give his heart to God, and with deep abhorrence of such a love of the world as to blind the mind to the beauty of true religion, and to lead to the rejection of the Messiah, and the destruction of the soul.

One thing thou lackest. When the young man came to Jesus, he asked him, "What lack I yet?" Mt 19:20. This question Mark has omitted, but he has retained the answer. The answer means—There is *one thing* yet wanting. Though all that you have said should be *true* yet to make the system complete, or to show that you *really* are disposed to keep the commands of God, go and sell your

property. See whether you love God more than you do your *wealth*. By doing that, you will show that your love of God is supreme; that your obedience is not merely *external* and *formal*, but sincere and real; the thing, now *lacking*, will be made up.

{r} "One thing" Jas 2:10 {s} "treasure" Mt 6:19,20; Lu 12:33 16:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 22

Verse 22. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 23

Verse 23. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Children*. An expression of affection, perhaps also implying a reproof that their slowness of understanding was like children. When they should have seen at once the truth of what he said, they were slow to learn it. It became necessary, therefore, to repeat what he had said.

How hard. With how much difficulty.

{t} "trust in riches" Job 31:24 Ps 52:7, 62:10 Hab 2:9; 1Ti 6:17

Re 3:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 25

Verse 25. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Out of measure*. Very much, or exceedingly. The Greek means no more than this.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 27

Verse 27. No Barnes text on this verse.

{u} "with God" Gen 18:14 Job 42:2; Jer 32:17 Lu 1:37

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 28

Verse 28. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 29

Verse 29. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *An hundredfold*. A hundred times as much.

In this time. In this life. In the *time* that he forsakes all.

Houses, etc. This cannot be taken literally, as promising a hundred times as many *mothers, sisters*, etc. It means, evidently, that the loss shall be a hundred times *compensated* or made up; or that, in the possession of religion, we have a hundred times the *value* of all that we forsake. This consists in the pardon of sin, in the favour of God, in peace of conscience, in support in trials and in death, and in raising up friends in the place of those who are left—*spiritual brethren, and sisters, and mothers*, etc. And this corresponds to the experience of all who ever became Christians. At the same time, it is true that godliness is profitable *for all things*, having the promise of the life that is, as well as of that which is to come. *The favour of God* is the security for every blessing. Obedience to his law secures industry, temperance, chastity, economy, prudence, health, and the confidence of the world—all indispensable to success in life, and all connected, commonly, with success. Though the wicked *sometimes* prosper, yet the *surest* way of prosperity is to fear God and keep his commandments. Thus will all *needed* blessings descend on us *here*, and *eternal* blessings hereafter.

With persecutions. Persecutions, or the contempt of the world, and bodily sufferings on account of their religion, they *must* meet. Jesus did not conceal this. But he consoled them. He assured them that *amidst* these, or perhaps it should be rendered "*after*" these, they should find friends and comfort. It is well to bear trial if *God* be our friend. With the promises of the Bible in oar hand, we may hail persecutions, and thank God that, amidst so many sorrows, he has furnished such superabundant consolations.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 31

Verse 31. No Barnes text on this verse.

{u} "But many" Mt 20:16 Lu 13:30

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 32

Verses 32-34. See Mt 20:17-19

Verse 32. *Jesus went before them*. In the manner of an intrepid, fearless leader and guide, exposing himself to danger and death rather than his followers.

And they were amazed, etc. They were afraid that evil would befall him in the city; that the scribes and Pharisees, who had so often sought to kill him, would then do it. Their fear and *amazement* were increased when he told them what would befall him there. They were amazed that, when he knew so well what would happen, he should still persevere in going up to the city.

{v} "But many" Mt 20:17 Lu 18:31

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 33

Verse 33. No Barnes text on this verse.

{w} "we go up"

Ac 20:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 34

Verse 34. No Barnes text on this verse.

{x} "and they shall mock"

Ps 22:6,7,13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 35

Verse 35-45. **See Barnes "Mt 20:20-28".**

Verse 35. *And James and John—come unto him*. They did this through the instrumentality of their mother. They did not come in *person*, but they got their mother to make the request for them. Comp. Matthew.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 36

Verse 36. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 37

Verse 37. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 38

Verse 38. No Barnes text on this verse.
{y} "Ye know not what you ask" Jas 4:3 {z} "baptism" Lu 12:50

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 39

Verse 39. No Barnes text on this verse.
{a} "Ye shall"
Mt 10:25 Joh 17:14
{b} "cup that I drink" Mr 14:36

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 40

Verse 40. No Barnes text on this verse.
{c} "it is prepared"
Mt 25:34 Heb 11:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 41

Verse 41. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 42

Verse 42. No Barnes text on this verse.
{d} "Ye know"
Lu 22:25
{1} "which are accounted" or, "think good"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 43

Verse 43. No Barnes text on this verse.
{e} "but whosoever"
Mt 20:26,28; Mr 9:35 Lu 9:48

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 44

Verse 44. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 45

Verse 45. No Barnes text on this verse.
{f} "but to minister"
Joh 13:14 Php 2:7
{g} "to give his" Isa 53:11,12; Da 9:26 2Co 5:21; Gal 3:13 1Ti 2:6
Tit 2:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 46

Verses 46-52. **See Barnes "Mt 20:29,** Mt 20:30-34.

Verse 46. *Blind Bartimaeus*. Matthew says there were two. Mark mentions but one, though he does not deny that there was another. He mentions this man because he was well known—Bartimaeus, THE *blind man*.

{h} "And they came" Mt 20:29 Lu 18:35

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 47

Verse 47. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 48

Verse 48. No Barnes text on this verse.
{k} "the more a great"
Jer 29:13

{l} "mercy on me" Ps 62:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 49

Verse 49. No Barnes text on this verse.
{m} "he calleth thee"
Joh 11:28

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 50

Verse 50. *Casting away his garment*. That is, his *outer* garment; the one that was thrown loosely over him. See Mt 5:40. He threw it off, full of joy at the prospect of being healed, and that he might run without impediment to Jesus. This may be used to illustrate— though it had no such original reference—the manner in which a sinner should come to Jesus. He should throw away the garments of his own righteousness—he should rise speedily—should run with joy—should have full faith in the rower of Jesus, and cast himself entirely upon his mercy.
{n} "casting" Php 3:7-9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 51

Verse 51. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 10 - Verse 52

Verse 52. No Barnes text on this verse.
{o} "thy faith"
Mt 9:22 Mr 5:34
{2} "made thee whole" or, "saved thee"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 11 - Verse 1

MARK CHAPTER 11.
Verses 1-10. See this passage illustrated in Mt 21:1-16
{p} "And when they came nigh" Mt 21:1 Lu 19:29; Joh 12:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 11 - Verse 2

Verse 2. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 11 - Verse 3

Verse 3. No Barnes text on this verse.
{q} "need of him"
Ac 17:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 11 - Verse 4

Verse 4. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 11 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *What do ye, loosing the colt?*. Or, why do ye do this? What authority have you for doing it?

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 11 - Verse 6

Verse 6. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 11 - Verse 7

Verse 7. No Barnes text on this verse.
{r} "and he sat" Zec 9:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 11 - Verse 8

Verse 8. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 11 - Verse 9

Verse 9. No Barnes text on this verse.
{s} "Blessed is"
#Ps 118.26

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 11 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No Barnes text on this verse.
{u} "kingdom"
Ps 148:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 11 - Verse 11

Verse 11-26. **See Barnes "Mt 21:18"**
and Mt 21:19-22

Verse 11. *Into the temple*. Not into the edifice properly called the temple, but into the *courts* which surrounded the principal edifice. Our Saviour, not being of the tribe of Levi, was not permitted to enter into the holy or most holy place; and when, therefore, it is said that he went into the temple, it is always to be understood of the courts surrounding the temple. See Mt 21:12.

And when he had looked round about upon all. Having seen or examined everything. He saw the abominations and abuses which he afterwards corrected. It may be wondered at, that he did not *at once* correct them, instead of waiting to another day. But it may be observed that God is slow to anger, that he does not *at once* smite the guilty, but waits patiently before he rebukes and chastises.

The eventide. The evening; the time after three o'clock, P.M. It is very probable that this was before sunset. The religious services of the temple closed, without the offering of the evening sacrifice, at three o'clock, P. M., and Jesus probably soon left the city.

{v} "and when" Zep 1:12 Eze 8:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 11 - Verse 12

Verse 12. No Barnes text on this verse.
{w} "And on the morrow"

Mt 21:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 11 - Verse 13

Verses 13,14. *Afar off*. **See Barnes "Mt 21:19"**

{x} "nothing but leaves" Isa 5:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 11 - Verse 14

Verse 14. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 11 - Verse 15

Verse 15.
See Barnes "Mt 21:12, also Mt 21:13-15
{y} "And they came" Mt 21:12 Lu 19:45; Joh 2:14
{z} "moneychangers" De 14:25,26

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 11 - Verse 16

Verse 16. Any *vessel*. Any vessel used in cooking, or connected with the sale of their articles or merchandise.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 11 - Verse 17

Verse 17. No Barnes text on this verse.
{a} "Is it not written" Isa 61:7 {1} "called" or, "an house of prayer for all nations" {b} "den of thieves" Jer 7:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 11 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *All the people was astonished*. He became popular among them. The Pharisees saw that their authority was lessened, or destroyed. They were therefore envious of him, and sought his life.

His doctrine. His teaching. He taught with power and authority so great that the multitudes were awed, and were constrained to obey.

{c} "astonished" Mt 7:28 Mr 1:22; Lu 4:32

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 11 - Verse 19

Verse 19. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 11 - Verse 20

Verse 20. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 11 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Thou cursedst*. To curse means to devote to destruction. This is the meaning here. It does not, in this place, imply blame; but simply that it should be destroyed.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 11 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Have faith in God.* Literally, "Have the faith of God." This may mean, Have strong faith. or have confidence in God; a strong belief that he is able to accomplish things that appear most difficult with infinite ease, as the fig-tree was made to wither away by a word.

{2} "Have faith in God" or, "Have the faith of God"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 11 - Verse 23

Verse 23. No Barnes text on this verse.

{d} "whosoever" Mt 17:20 Lu 17:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 11 - Verse 24

Verse 24. No Barnes text on this verse.
{e} "What things soever"
Mt 7:7 Lu 11:9, 17:1 Joh 14:13, 15:7 16:24
Jas 1:5,6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 11 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *And when ye stand praying*. When ye pray. It seems that the posture in prayer was sometimes standing and sometimes kneeling. God looks upon *the heart* rather than upon our position in worship; and if the heart be right, any posture may be proper. It cannot be doubted, however, that in private, in the family, and wherever it can be conveniently done, the kneeling posture is more proper, as expressing more humility and reverence, and more in accordance with Scripture examples, Compare Ps 95:6 2Ch 6:13; Da 6:10 Lu 22:41; Ac 7:60 9:40.

Yet a subject like this may be regarded as of too much consequence, and we should be careful that anxiety about a mere *form* should not exclude anxiety about a far more important matter—the state of the soul.

Forgive, etc. **See Barnes "Mt 6:12,15"**.
{f} "forgive" Mt 6:14 Col 3:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 11 - Verse 26

Verse 26. No Barnes text on this verse.
{g} "But if ye do"
Mt 18:35

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 11 - Verse 27

Verse 27. No Barnes text on this verse.
{h} "and as he was walking"
Mt 21:23 Lu 20:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 11 - Verse 28

Verse 28. No Barnes text on this verse.
{i} "say unto him"

Nu 16:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 11 - Verse 29

Verse 29. No Barnes text on this verse.
{1} "one question" or "one thing"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 11 - Verse 30

Verse 30. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 11 - Verse 31

Verse 31. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 11 - Verse 32

Verse 32. No Barnes text on this verse.
{k} "for all men counted John"
Mt 3:5,6, 14:5 Mr 6:20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 11 - Verse 33

Verse 33. No Barnes text on this verse.
{l} "We cannot tell"
Isa 1:3 29:14; Jer 8:7 Ho 4:6
{m} "Neither do I tell" Lu 10:21,22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 1

MARK CHAPTER 12
Verses 1-12. See this parable explained in Barnes Notes on
Mt 21:33-46

{n} "A certain man" Mt 21:33 Lu 20:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 2

Verse 2. No Barnes text on this verse.
{o} "fruit"
So 8:11 Mic 7:1; Lu 12:48 Joh 15:1-8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 3

Verse 3. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 4

Verse 4. No Barnes text on this verse.
{p} "cast stones"
Heb 11:37

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 5

Verse 5. No Barnes text on this verse.
{q} "and many others"
Ne 9:30 Jer 7:25
{r} "killing some" Mt 23:37

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 6

Verse 6. No Barnes text on this verse.
{s} "he sent"
Heb 13:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 7

Verse 7. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 8

Verse 8. No Barnes text on this verse.
{t} "cast him out"
Heb 13:12 9:26

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 9

Verse 9. No Barnes text on this verse.
{u} "and destroy"
Pr 1:24-31
{v} "will give" Jer 17:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No Barnes text on this verse.
{w} "stone which"
#Ps 118.22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 11

Verse 11. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 12

Verse 12. No Barnes text on this verse.
{x} "And they sought"
Mr 11:18 Joh 7:30

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 13

Verses 13-17. **See Barnes "Mt 22:15"**
and Mt 22:16-22
Verse 13. No Barnes text on this verse.
{y} "And they send"
Mt 22:15 Lu 20:20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 14

Verse 14. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 15

Verse 15. No Barnes text on this verse.
{1} "penny" or "Valuing of our money, seven pence halfpenny, as
Mt 22:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 16

Verse 16. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 17

Verse 17. No Barnes text on this verse.
{z} "to Caesar"
Mt 17:25-27 Ro 13:7; 1Pe 2:17
{a} "to God" Ec 5:4,5; Mal 1:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 18

Verses 18-27. See this passage fully explained in Mt 22:23-33.
Verse 18. No Barnes text on this verse.
{b} "Then come unto him"
Mt 22:23 Lu 20:27

{c} "say there is" Ac 23:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 19

Verse 19. No Barnes text on this verse.
{d} "wrote unto us"
De 25:5
{e} "his brother should" Ru 1:11,13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 20

Verse 20. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 21

Verse 21. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 22

Verse 22. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 23

Verse 23. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 24

Verse 24. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Are as the angels*. That is, as the angels in respect to connexions and relations. What that may be we know not; but this passage teaches that the peculiar relation of *marriage* will not exist. It does not affirm, however, that there will be no recollection of former marriages, or no recognition of each other as having existed in this tender relation.

{f} "but are" 1Co 15:42-53

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *How in the bush*. At the burning bush. See Ex 3:6. In that part of the book of Exodus which contains the account of the burning bush. When there were no chapters and verses, it was the easiest way of quoting a book of the Old Testament by the subject, and in this way it was often done by the Jews. Mr 12:28-34. See Mt 22:34-40.

{g} "saying, I am" Ex 3:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 27

Verse 27. No Barnes text on this verse.

{h} "ye do therefore"

Mr 12:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 28

Verses 28-34. See Mt 22:34-40.

Verse 28. *Perceiving that he answered them well*. That is, with wisdom, and with a proper understanding of the law. In this case the opinion of the Saviour corresponded with that of the Pharisees; and this question seems to have been one of the very few candid inquiries made of him by the Jews, for the purpose of obtaining information. Jesus answered it in like spirit of kindness, and commend the conduct of the man.

{i} "And one of the Scribes" Mt 22:35

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Hear, O Israel*. This was said to call the attention of the to the great importance of the truth about to be proclaimed. See De 6:4,6.

The Lord our God, etc. Literally, "Jehovah, our God, is one Jehovah." The other nations worshipped many gods, but the God of the Jews was one, and one only. Jehovah was undivided; and this great truth it was the design of the separation of the Jewish people from other nations to

keep in mind. This was the peculiar truth which was communicated to the Jews, and this they were required to keep and remember for ever.

{k} "commandments is" De 6:4,5; Lu 10:27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *And thou shalt love*. If Jehovah was the *only* God, then they ought not to love any other being supremely. Then they might not bow down before any idol. They were required to love God above all other beings or things, and with all the faculties of their minds.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 31

Verse 31. No Barnes text on this verse.

{l} "Thou shalt love" Le 19:18 Mt 22:39; Ro 13:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 32

Verses 32-34. This answer of the scribe is not found in Matthew.

Verse 32. *Is more than all*. Is of more importance and value.

Discreetly. Wisely, according to truth.

Not far from the kingdom of God. Thou who dost prefer the internal to the external worship of God—who hast so just a view of the requirements of the law—canst easily become a follower of me, and art almost fit to be numbered among my disciples. This shows that a proper understanding of the Old Testament, of its laws and requirements, would prepare the mind for Christianity, and fit a man at once to embrace it when presented. One system is grafted on the other, agreeably to Ga 3:24.

No man durst ask him any question. That is, no one of the scribes, the Pharisees, or the Sadducees, durst ask him a question for the purpose of *tempting* him, or entangling him. He had completely silenced them. It does not appear, however, but that his *disciples* dared to ask him questions for the purpose of information.

{m} "and there is" De 4:39 Isa 45:5,6,14 46:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 33

Verse 33. No Barnes text on this verse.

{n} "is more than"

1Sa 15:22 Ho 6:6; Mic 6:6-8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 34

Verse 34. No Barnes text on this verse.
{o} "ask him any question"
Mt 22:46

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 35

Verses 35-37. See Mt 22:41-46
Verse 35. No Barnes text on this verse.
{p} "And Jesus"
Mt 22:41 Lu 20:41

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 36

Verse 36. No Barnes text on this verse.
{q} "by the Holy Ghost"
2Sa 23:2 2Ti 3:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *The common people heard him gladly*. The success of our Saviour in his preaching was chiefly among the common or the poorer class of people. The rich and the mighty were too proud to listen to his instructions. So it is still. The chief success of the gospel is there, and there it pours down its chief blessings. This is not the fault of *the gospel*. It would bless the rich and the mighty as well as the poor, if they came with like humble hearts. God knows no distinctions of men in conferring his favours; and wherever there is a poor, contrite, and humble spirit—be it clothed in rags or in purple—be it on a throne or a dunghill—there he confers the blessings of salvation.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *In his doctrine*. In his *teaching*, for so it should be rendered.

Beware of the Scribes. Be on your guard, Be cautious about hearing them, or following them.

Scribes. The learned men of the Jewish nation.

Which love to go in long clothing. In long flowing robes, as significant of their consequence, leisure, and learning.

Salutations, etc. See Mt 23:6,7.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 39

Verse 39. No Barnes text on this verse.
{u} "chief seats"
Lu 11:43

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 40

Verse 40. *Which devour widows' houses*. Which devour the families of widows, or the means of supporting their families. This they did under pretence of counselling them in the knowledge of the law, and in the management of their estates. They took advantage of their ignorance and unprotected state, and either extorted large sums for their counsel, or perverted the property to their own use. No wonder that our Saviour denounced them! If there is any sin of peculiar enormity, it is thus taking advantage of the circumstances of the poor, the needy, and the helpless, and wronging them out of the pittance on which they depend to support their families. And as God is the Friend of the widow and the fatherless, it may be expected that such will be visited with heavy condemnation.

For a pretence. For show, or *pretending* great devotion.

{v} "widow's houses" 2Ti 3:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 41

Verse 41. *Sat over against*. Opposite to, in full sight of.

The treasury. This was in the court of the women. See Mt 21:12. In that court there were fixed a number of places or coffers, made with a large open mouth, in the shape of a trumpet, for the purpose of receiving the offerings of the people; and the money thus contributed was devoted to the service of the temple—to incense, sacrifice, etc.

{w} "And Jesus sat" Lu 21:3 {1} "cast money" "A piece of brass money;" see Mt 10:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 42

Verse 42. *Two mites*. The word translated *mite* denotes a small coin made of brass, the smallest in use among the Jews. The precise value cannot now be easily estimated. It was much less than any coin we have, as the *farthing* was less than an English farthing. It was in value about three mills and a half, or one third of a cent.

{2} "two mites" "7th part of that piece of brass money"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 43

Verse 43. *This poor widow hath cast more in*, etc. That is, more in proportion to her means, and therefore more that was acceptable to God. He does not mean that this was more in value than all which the others had put in, but it showed more love to the sacred cause, more self-denial, and of course more sincerity in what she did. This is the rule by which God will reward us. Compare 2Co 8:12.

{x} "this poor widow" 2Co 8:2,12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 12 - Verse 44

Verse 44. *Of their abundance*. Of their superfluous store. They have given what they did not need. They could afford it as well as not; and in doing it they have shown no self-denial.

She of her want. Of her poverty.

All her living. All that she had to live on. She trusted in God to supply her wants, and devoted her little property entirely to him. From this passage we may learn:

(1.) That God is pleased with offerings made to him and his cause.

(2.) That it is our duty to devote our property to God. We received it from him; and we shall not employ it in a proper manner unless we feel that we are stewards, and ask of him what we shall do with it. Jesus approved the conduct of all who had given money to the treasury.

(3.) That the highest evidence of love to the cause of religion is not the amount given, but the *amount* compared with our means.

(4.) That it *may be* proper to give *all* our property to God, and to depend on his Providence for the supply of our wants.

(5.) That God does not despise the humblest offering, if made in sincerity, He loves a cheerful giver.

(6.) That there are none who may not in this way show their love to the cause of religion. There are few, very few scholars in all our Sabbath schools, who may not give as much to the cause of religion as this poor widow; and Jesus would be as ready to approve their offerings as he was hers, and the time to *begin* to be benevolent and to do good is in early life, in childhood.

(7.) That it is every man's duty to make inquiry, not how much he gives, but how much compared with what he *has*; how much self-denial he practises, and what is the *motive* with which it is done.

(8.) We may remark that few practise self-denial for the purposes of charity. Most give of their abundance—that is, what they can spare without feeling it—and many feel that this is the same as throwing it away. Among all the thousands who give to these objects, how few deny themselves of *one* comfort, even the least, that they may advance the kingdom of Christ!

{y} "abundance" 1Ch 29:3,17; 2Ch 24:10

{z} "even all her living" De 24:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 13 - Verse 1

MARK Chapter 13.

Verse 1. The principal things in this chapter are fully explained in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew.

1. *What manner of stones*. The stones here referred to were those used in the building of the temple, and the walls on the sides of Mount Moriah on which the temple stood. The temple was constructed of white marble, and the blocks were of a prodigious size. Josephus says that these stones were some of them fifty feet long, twenty-four broad, and sixteen in thickness.

{a} "And as he went out" Mt 24:1, etc.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 13 - Verse 2

Verse 2. No Barnes text on this verse.

{b} "great buildings"

Lu 19:44

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 13 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Upon the mount of Olives over against the temple.* The Mount of Olives was directly east of Jerusalem, and from it there was a fine view of the temple.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 13 - Verse 4

Verse 4. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 13 - Verse 5

Verse 5. No Barnes text on this verse.

{c} "Take heed" Jer 29:8 Eph 5:6; 2Th 2:3 Re 20:7,8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 13 - Verse 6

Verse 6. No Barnes text on this verse.
{d} "come in my name"
Ac 5:36-39 1Jo 4:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 13 - Verse 7

Verse 7. No Barnes text on this verse.
{e} "be ye not troubled"
Ps 27:3 46:1,2 Pr 3:25; Joh 14:1,27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 13 - Verse 8

Verse 8. No Barnes text on this verse.
{1} "beginning of sorrows" "The word in the original importeth" *the pains of a woman in travail*.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 13 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Take heed to yourselves*. Be cautious that no man deceive you; or, take care of your lives, not to run into unnecessary danger.

To councils. The higher ecclesiastical courts of the Jews, including the Sanhedrim, or great council of the nation.

Rulers and kings. Referring to Roman officers.

For a testimony against them. Rather, *to* bear testimony to them; or to be witnesses before them of the truth. This was for the sake of Jesus, or because they were attached to him; and God would overrule it so that at the same time they should bear witness to the rulers of the truth, as was the case with Peter and John, Ac 4; iv.; with Stephen, Ac 6, Ac 7; and with Paul, Ac 23; Ac 24:24,25.

{f} "they shall deliver" Mt 10:17 Re 2:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 13 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No Barnes text on this verse.
{g} "And the Gospel"
Mt 28:19 Re 14:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 13 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Neither do ye premeditate*. Do not think beforehand, or *prepare* an answer. You know not what the accusations will be; and God will furnish you with a reply that shall be adapted to the occasion.

Not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost. This is a full promise that they should be inspired; and consequently their defences recorded in the Acts of the Apostles are the words of the Holy Ghost. There could be no more explicit promise that they should be under an infallible guidance; and we are not left to doubt that they were taught of God. At the same time, this was a most desirable and gracious aid. They were illiterate, unknown, without power. They were unfit of themselves to make the important statements of religion which were requisite. But God gave them power, and they spake with a wisdom, fearlessness, pungency, and ability, which no other men have ever manifested—full proof that these illiterate fishermen were under the influence of the Holy Ghost.

{h} "Holy Ghost" Ac 2:4 4:8,31 6:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 13 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *The brother shall betray*, etc. The brother shall give up in a treacherous manner his brother to be put to death, on account of his attachment to Jesus. Through fear, in the hope of reward and the hatred of the gospel, he will overcome all the natural ties of brotherhood, and give up his own kindred to be burnt or crucified. Perhaps nothing could more clearly show the dreadful evil of those times, as well as the natural opposition of the heart to the religion of Christ.

{i} "brother" Mic 7:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 13 - Verse 13

Verse 13. No Barnes text on this verse.

{k} "hated"

Lu 6:22 Joh 17:14

{l} "but he that shall endure" Da 12:12 Re 2:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 13 - Verse 14

Verse 14. No Barnes text on this verse.

{m} "of by Daniel"

Da 9:27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 13 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *On the housetop*. See Mt 9:1-8.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 13 - Verse 16

Verse 16. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 13 - Verse 17

Verse 17. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 13 - Verse 18

Verse 18. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 13 - Verse 19

Verse 19. No Barnes text on this verse.
{n} "For in those days"
Da 12:1 Joe 2:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 13 - Verse 20

Verse 20. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 13 - Verse 21

Verse 21. No Barnes text on this verse.
{o} "Lo, here is"
Lu 17:23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 13 - Verse 22

Verse 22. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 13 - Verse 23

Verse 23. No Barnes text on this verse.
{p} "take ye heed"
2Pe 3:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 13 - Verse 24

Verse 24. No Barnes text on this verse.
{q} "tribulation"
Da 12:1 Zep 1:15-17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 13 - Verse 25

Verse 25. No Barnes text on this verse.
{r} "the stars of heaven"
Isa 13:10 24:20,23 Jer 4:28; 2Pe 3:10,12
Re 6:12-14 20:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 13 - Verse 26

Verse 26. No Barnes text on this verse.
{s} "and then"
Da 7:9-14 Mt 16:27, 24:30 Mr 14:62; Ac 1:11 1Th 4:16
2Th 1:7,10; Re 1:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 13 - Verse 27

Verse 27. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 13 - Verse 28

Verse 28. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 13 - Verse 29

Verse 29. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 13 - Verse 30

Verse 30. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 13 - Verse 31

Verse 31. No Barnes text on this verse.
{t} "but my words"
Isa 40:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 13 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *Neither the Son*. This text has always presented serious difficulties. It has been asked, If Jesus had a Divine nature, how could he say he knew not the day and hour of a future event? In reply, it has been said that the passage was wanting, according to Ambrose, in some Greek manuscripts. But it is now found in all, and there can be little doubt that the passage is genuine. Others have said that the verb rendered "knoweth," means sometimes to *make* known, or to reveal; and that the passage means, "That day and hour none makes known, neither the angels, nor the Son, but the Father." It is true, the word has sometimes that meaning, as in 1Co 2:2; but then it is natural to ask where has the *Father* made it known? In what place did he reveal it? After all, the passage has no more difficulty than that in Lu 2:52, where it is said that Jesus increased in wisdom and stature. He had a human nature. He grew as a man in knowledge. As a man, his knowledge must be finite, for the faculties of the human soul are not infinite. As a man, he often spoke, reasoned, inquired, felt, feared, read, learned, ate, drank, and walked. Why are not all these, which imply that he was *a man*—that, as *a man*, he was not infinite —why are not these as difficult as the want of knowledge respecting the particular time of a future event; especially when that time must be made known by God, and when he chose that the man, Christ Jesus, should grow and think, and speak *as a man*?

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 13 - Verse 33

Verse 33. No Barnes text on this verse.
{u} "Take ye heed" Mt 24:42 25:13; Lu 12:40 21:34; Ro 13:11,12
1Th 5:6 Re 16:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 13 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *Who left his house*. The word house often means family. Our Saviour here represents himself as going away, leaving his household the Church, assigning to the apostles and all his servants their duty, and leaving it uncertain when he would return. As his return was a matter of vast consequence—and as the affairs of his kingdom were entrusted to them, just as the affairs of a house are to servants, when the master is absent—-so it was of Vast importance that they should be faithful at their post, defend the house from danger, and be ready for his return.

The porter. The door-keeper. To the janitor or door-keeper was entrusted, particularly, the faithful care of the house, whose duty it was to attend faithfully on those who came, and those who left the house.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 13 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *Watch ye*. Be diligent, faithful, and waiting for the return of your Lord, who will come at an unexpected hour.

Master of the house. Denoting here the Lord Jesus.

At even, or at midnight or, at etc.: This refers to the four divisions into which the Jews divided the night.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 13 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *Find you sleeping*. Inattentive to your post, neglecting your duty, and unprepared for his coming.
{v} "sleeping" Mt 25:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 13 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *All, Watch*. This command was proper, not only for those who were expecting the calamities that were soon to come upon the Jews, but for all who are soon to die, and to go to the judgment. We know not the time of our death. We know not how soon we shall be called to the

judgment. The Son of man may come at any moment, and we should, therefore, be ready. If we are his friends— if we have been renewed and pardoned—if we have repented of our sins, and have believed on him, and are leading a holy life—we are ready. If not, we are unprepared; and soon, probably while we are not expecting it, the cold hand of death will be laid on us, and we shall be hurried to the place where is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. Oh, how important it is to be ready, and to escape the awful sufferings of an ETERNAL HELL!

{w} "Watch" Mr 13:33,35

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 1

MARK CHAPTER 14

Verses 1-11. See this passage explained in Mt 26:1-16

Verse 1. *And of unleavened bread*. So called because that at that feast no other bread was used but that which had been made without leaven or yeast.

By craft. By subtilty, (Matt.;) that is, by some secret plan that would secure possession of him without exciting the opposition of the people.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 2

Verse 2. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Ointment*. This word does not convey quite the proper meaning. This was a perfume: it was used only to give a pleasant odour, and was liquid.

Of spikenard. The *nard*, from which this perfume was made, is a plant of the East Indies, with a small slender stalk, and a heavy, thick root. The best perfume is obtained from the root, though the stalk and fruit are used for that purpose.

And she brake the box. This may mean no more than that she broke the *seal* of the box. so that it could be poured out. Boxes of perfumes are often sealed, or made fast with wax, to prevent the perfume from escaping. It was not likely that she would break the box itself when it was unnecessary; and when the unguent, being liquid, would have been wasted, when it was very precious. Nor from a broken box or phial, could she easily have *poured it* on his head.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 4

Verse 4. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Three hundred pence*. About 41 dollars 40 cents.
{1} "three hundred pence" Mt 18:28

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 6

Verse 6. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 7

Verse 7. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{y} "For ye"
De 15:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *She hath done what she could*. She has showed the highest attachment in her power; and it was, as it is now, a sufficient argument against there being any *real waste*, that it was done for the honour of Christ.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 9

Verse 9. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{z} "Judas Iscariot" Mt 16:14 Lu 22:3 {a} "betray him" Joh 13:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 11

Verse 11. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{b} "him money"
1Ki 21:20 Pr 1:10-16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 12

Verses 12-16. See Mt 16:17-19

Verses 12,13. *They killed the passover*. The *paschal lamb*, which was slain in keeping the passover.

Go and prepare. Go and prepare a lamb, have it roasted, and properly prepared with the usual things to eat with it.

The city. The city of Jerusalem. They were now in Bethany, about two miles from the city.

A man bearing a pitcher of water. This could have been known only by the infinite knowledge of Christ. Such a thing could not have been conjectured, nor was there any concert between him and the man, that at that time he should be in a particular place to meet them, for the *disciples* themselves proposed the inquiry. If Jesus knew a circumstance like that, then he, in the same way, must have known all things. Then he sees *all* the actions of man; hears every word, and marks every thought. Then the righteous are under his care; and the wicked, much as they may wish to be unseen, cannot escape the notice of his eye.

{d} "unleavened bread" Ex 12:8 {1} "killed" or "sacrificed"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 13

Verse 13. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{e} "Go ye"
Mr 11:2,3,3 Heb 4:13.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *The goodman of the house*. This signifies simply the master of the house. The original word expresses nothing respecting his character, whether it was good or bad.

The guestchamber. A chamber for guests or friends—an unoccupied room.

{f} "Master saith" Joh 11:28 13:13 {g} "shall eat" Re 3:20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *A large upper room*. The word used here denotes the upper room devoted to purposes of prayer, repose, and often of eating. **See Barnes "Mt 9:2"**.

Furnished and prepared. Literally, spread and ready. Spread with a carpet, or with couches, such as were used in eating. **See Barnes "Mt 23:6"**.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 16

Verse 16. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{h} "found as" Joh 16:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 17

Verses 17-31. **See Barnes "Mt 26:20"**
and Mt 26:21-35.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 18

Verse 18. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 19

Verse 19. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 20

Verse 20. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 21

Verse 21. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{k} "good were it"

Mt 18:6,7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 22

Verse 22. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{l} "as they did eat"
Mt 26:26 Lu 22:19; 1Co 11:23
{m} "Take, eat" Joh 6:48-58

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 23

Verse 23. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 24

Verse 24. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{n} "This is my blood"
1Co 10:16 Joh 6:53

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 25

Verse 25. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{o} "it new"
Joe 3:18 Am 9:13,14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 26

Verse 26. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{2} "hymn" or "psalm"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 27

Verse 27. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

{p} "it is written"
Zec 13:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 28

Verse 28. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{q} "But after that I am"
Mr 16:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 29

Verse 29. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{r} "But Peter"
Mt 26:33,34; Lu 22:33,34; Joh 13:37,38

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 30

Verse 30. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *More vehemently*. More earnestly, more confidently.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 32

Verses 32-42. **See Barnes "Mt 26:36-46"**

{s} "And they came" Mt 26:36 Lu 22:39; Joh 18:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 33

Verse 33. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 34

Verse 34. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{t} "soul is"
Joh 12:27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 35

Verse 35. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{u} "prayed"
Heb 5:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *Abba*. This word denotes *father*. It is a Syriac word, and is used by our Saviour as a word denoting filial affection and tenderness. See Ro 8:15.

{v} "Said, Abba" Ro 8:15 Ga 4:6 {w} "nevertheless, not" Ps 40:8 Joh 4:34, 5:30 6:38,39 18:11; Php 2:8

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THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 37

Verse 37. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 38

Verse 38. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{x} "spirit truly"
Ro 7:18-25 Ga 5:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 39

Verse 39. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 40

Verse 40. *Neither wist they*, etc. Neither *knew* they. They were so conscious of the impropriety of sleeping at that time, that they could not find any answer to give to the inquiry why they had done it.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 41

Verse 41. *It is enough*. There has been much difficulty in determining the meaning of this phrase. Campbell translates it, "All is over;" i.e., the time when you could have been of service to me is gone by. They might have aided him by watching for him, when they were sleeping; but now the time was past, and he was already, as it were, in the hands of his enemies. It is not improbable, however, that *after* his agony some time elapsed before Judas came. He had required them to watch, i. e., to keep awake, during that season of agony. After that, they might have been suffered to sleep, while Jesus watched alone. As he saw Judas approach, he probably roused them, saying, It is sufficient—as much repose has been taken as is allowable—the enemy is near, and the Son of man is about to be betrayed.

{y} "hour is come" Joh 7:30 8:20, 13:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 42

Verse 42. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 43

Verses 43-52.
See Barnes "Mt 26:47, Mt 26:48-56".
{z} "immediately" Mt 26:47 Lu 22:47; Joh 18:3
{a} "multitude with" Ps 2:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 44

Verse 44. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{c} "kiss"
2Sa 20:9 Ps 55:21; Pr 27:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 45

Verse 45. *Master, master.* As if expressing great joy that he had found him again.
{d} "Master" Ps 22:1 Isa 53:1-12; Lu 24:44

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 46

Verse 46. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 47

Verse 47. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 48

Verse 48. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 49

Verse 49. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{e} "Scriptures"
Ps 22:1; Isa 53:1-12; Lu 24:44

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 50

Verse 50. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{f} "And they all"
Mr 14:27 Ps 88:8; Isa 63:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 51

Verse 51. *A certain young man*. Who this was, we have no means of determining. That he was not one of the apostles is dear. It is probable that he was of one of the neighbouring villages or

houses, and was roused from sleep by the noise made by the rabble, and came to see what was doing; nor is it known why this circumstance is recorded by Mark. It is omitted by all the other evangelists. It may have been recorded to show that the conspirators had instructions to take the *apostles* as well as Jesus; and supposing *him* to be one of them, they laid hold of him to take him before the high priest.

A linen cloth cast about his naked body. He was roused from sleep, and probably threw around him what was most convenient. They slept in linen bedclothes commonly, and he seized a part of the clothes, and hastily threw it round him.

The young men. The Roman soldiers, They were called young men because they were made up chiefly of youth originally. This was a Jewish mode of speaking. See Ge 14:24 2Sa 2:14; Isa 13:18.

Laid hold on him. Supposing him to be one of the apostles.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 52

Verse 52. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{g} "left the linen" Mr 13:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 53

Verse 53. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{h} "And they led"
Mt 26:57 Lu 22:54; Joh 18:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 54

Verse 54. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 55

Verse 55. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 56

Verse 56. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

{i} "For many bare"
Ps 35:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 57

Verse 57. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 58

Verse 58. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{k} "I will"
Mr 15:29 Joh 2:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 59

Verse 59. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 60

Verse 60. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{l} "against thee"
Mt 26:62

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 61

Verse 61. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{m} "But he held"
Ps 39:9 Isa 53:7; 1Pe 2:23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 62

Verse 62. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{n} "and ye shall"

Da 7:13 Mt 24:30, 26:64 Lu 22:69; Mr 15:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 63

Verse 63. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{o} "rent his"
Isa 58:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 64

Verse 64. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 65

Verse 65. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{p} "spit on him"
Isa 1:6 Mr 15:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 66

Verse 66. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{q} "And as Peter"
Mt 26:69 Lu 22:55; Joh 18:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 67

Verse 67. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 68

Verse 68. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{r} "denied, saying"
2Ti 2:12,13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 69

Verse 69. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 70

Verse 70. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{s} "Galilean"
Ac 2:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 71

Verse 71. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 14 - Verse 72

Verse 72. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 1

MARK Chapter 15.
Verses 1-15. See the principal events in this chapter explained in
Mt 27.
{u} "consultation" Ps 2:2 Mt 27:1; Lu 23:1 Joh 18:28; Ac 3:13 4:26

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 2

Verse 2. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 3

Verse 3. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 4

Verse 4. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 5

Verse 5. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{v} "But Jesus"
Isa 53:7 Joh 19:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 6

Verse 6. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{w} "Now, at that"
Mt 27:15 Lu 23:17; Joh 18:39

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 7

Verse 7. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 8

Verse 8. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 9

Verse 9. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{x} "envy"
Pr 27:4 Ec 4:4; Ac 13:45 Tit 3:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 11

Verse 11. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{y} "release Barabbas"
Ac 3:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 12

Verse 12. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{z} "King of the Jews"
Ps 2:6 Jer 23:5; Ac 5:31

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 13

Verse 13. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 14

Verse 14. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{a} "what evil"
Isa 53:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 15

Verse 15. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Called Praetorium*. The hall of the *praetor*, or Roman governor, where he sat to administer justice.

Whole band. **See Barnes "Mt 27:27"**.

{b} "the soldiers" Mt 27:27 Joh 18:28,33 19:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *With purple*. Matthew says *scarlet*. **See Barnes "Mt 27:28"**.

About his head. In the form of a garland, or diadem. The whole head was not covered, but it was placed in a circle round the temples.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 18

Verse 18. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Worshipped him*. Mocked him with the *appearance* of homage. The word worship here denotes only the respect and honour done to princes and kings. It does not refer to any *religious* homage. They regarded him as foolishly and madly claiming to be a *king*—not as claiming to be Divine.

{c} "spit upon him" Mr 14:65

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 20

Verse 20. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 21

Verse 21. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 22

Verse 22. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{e} "And they brang"
Mt 27:33 Lu 23:33; Joh 19:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Wine mingled*, etc. Matthew says, *vinegar*. It was probably wine soured, so that it might be called either. This was the common drink of the Roman soldiers.

Myrrh. **See Barnes "Mt 27:34".**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 24

Verse 24. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{f} "they parted" Ps 22:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *And it was the third hour*, etc. In Joh 19:14, it is said, "And it was the preparation of the Passover, and about the sixth hour," etc. Much difficulty has been felt in reconciling these passages; and infidels have usually adduced them to prove that the evangelists have contradicted themselves. In reconciling them the following remarks may perhaps make the matter clear.

(1.) The Jews divided both the night and the day into four equal parts of three hours each. **See Barnes "Mt 14:25".**

The first division of the day commenced at six o'clock in the morning, and ended at nine; the second commenced at nine, and ended at twelve, etc. The *third* hour, mentioned by Mark, would therefore correspond with our nine o'clock; the *sixth* hour, mentioned by John, would correspond with our twelve, or noon.

(2.) Mark professes to give the time accurately; John does not. He says "it was *about* the sixth hour," without affirming that this was exactly the time.

(3.) A mistake in *numbers* is easily made; and if it should be admitted that such an error had crept into the text here, it would be nothing more than has occurred in many ancient writings. It has been proved, moreover, that it was common not to write the *words* indicating numbers *at length*, but to use *letters*. The Greeks designated numbers by the letters of the alphabet; and this mode of computation is found in ancient manuscripts, For example, the Cambridge Ms. of the New Testament has in this very place in Mark not the word *third* written at length, but the letter *g*, Gamma, the usual notation for third. Now, it is well known that it would be easy to mistake this for the mark

denoting *six*, *6*. All error of this kind in an early MS might be extensively propagated, and might have led to the present reading of the text. Such an error is actually known to exist in the "Chronicon" of Paschal, where Otho is said to have reigned *6* (six) months; whereas it is known that he reigned but three; and in this place therefore the *g*, three, was mistaken for *6*, six.

(4.) There is some external authority for reading "third" in Joh 19:14. The Cambridge MS has this reading. Nonnus, who lived in the fifth century, says that this was the true reading. (*Wetstein*.) Peter of Alexandria, in a fragment concerning the passover, as quoted by Usher, says, "It was the preparation of the passover, and about the *third* hour, as," he adds, "the most accurate copies of the Bible have it; and this was the handwriting of the Evangelist (John) which is kept, by the grace of God, in his most holy church at Ephesus." (Mill.) It is to be admitted, however, that no great reliance is to be placed on this account. That a mistake might have occurred in the early MSS. is not improbable. No man can prove that it did not so occur; and as long as this cannot be proved, the passages should not be adduced as conclusive proof of contradiction.

After all, perhaps the whole difficulty may be removed by the following statements:

(1.) Calvary was *without* the walls of Jerusalem. It was a considerable distance from the place where Jesus was tried and condemned. Some time—more or less—would be occupied in going there, and in the preparatory measures for crucifying him.

(2.) It is not necessary to understand *Mark* as saying that it was precisely nine o'clock, according to our expression. With the Jews, it was six until seven; it was the third hour until the fourth commenced; it was the ninth until it was the tenth. They *included* in the third hour the whole time from the third to the fourth. The same mode they adopted in regard to their days. **See Barnes "Mt 12:40".**

(3.) It is not unduly pressing the matter to suppose that Mark spoke of the time when the process for crucifixion commenced; i. e., when he was condemned; when they entered upon it; when they made the preparation. Between that and the time when he was taken *out* of Jerusalem to Mount Calvary, and when he was actually nailed to the tree, there is no improbability in supposing that there might have been an interval of more than an hour. Indeed, the presumption is, that considerably more time than that would elapse.

(4.) John does not profess, as has been remarked, to be strictly accurate. He says, "it was *about* the sixth hour," etc.

(5.) Now suppose that John meant to indicate the tune when he was *actually* suspended on the cross; that he spoke of the *crucifixion* denoting the *act of suspension*, as it struck him, and there is no difficulty. Any other two men—many witnesses might give just such an account now. One man would speak of the time when the process for an execution commenced, another perhaps of the very *act* of the execution, and would *both* speak of it in general terms, and say that a man was executed at such a time. And the circumstantial variation would *prove* that there was no collusion—no agreement to *impose* on a court—that they were honest witnesses. That is prosed here,

(6.) That this is the true account of the matter is clear from the evangelists themselves; and *especially* from *Mark*. The three first evangelists concur in stating that there was a remarkable darkness over the whole land from the sixth to the ninth hour, Mt 27:45; Mr 15:33; Lu 23:44. This fact would seem to indicate that the actual crucifixion continued only during that time—that he was, in fact, *suspended* at about the sixth hour, though the preparations for crucifying him had been going on (Mark) for two hours before. The fact, that Mark (Mr 15:33) mentions this darkness as

commencing at the *sixth* and not at the *third* hour, is one of the circumstances undesignedly occurring that seems to signify that the crucifixion then had *actually* taken place—though the various arrangements for it (Mr 15:26) had been going on from the *third* hour.

One thing is conclusively proved by this, that the evangelists did not *conspire together* to impose on the world. They are independent witnesses; and they were honest men. And the circumstance adverted to here is one that is allowed to be of great value in testimony in courts of justice—*circumstantial variation with essential agreement*.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *The superscription* The writing over his head on the cross.
The King of the Jews. **See Barnes "Mt 27:37".**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 27

Verse 27. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *And the Scripture was fulfilled*, etc. This passage of Scripture is found in Isa 53:12. This does not mean that he was a transgressor, but simply, that in dying, he had a place with transgressors. Nor does it mean that God regarded him as a sinner; but that, at his death, in popular estimation, or by the sentence of the judge, he was regarded as a transgressor, and was treated in the same manner as the others put to death for their transgressions. Jesus died, "the just for the unjust," and in his death, as well as in his life, he was "holy, harmless, undefiled."

{g} "Scripture" Isa 53:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 29

Verse 29. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{h} "And they"
Ps 22:7
.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 30

Verse 30. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 31

Verse 31. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 32

Verse 32. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{k} "may see and"
Ro 3:3 2Ti 2:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 33

Verse 33. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{l} "And when"
Mt 27:45 Lu 23:44

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 34

Verse 34. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{m} "saying"
Ps 22:1
{n} "forsaken me" Ps 42:9 71:11; La 1:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 35

Verse 35. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 36

Verse 36. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{o} "and gave"
Ps 69:21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 37

Verse 37. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{p} "And Jesus"
Mt 27:50 Lu 23:46; Joh 19:30

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 38

Verse 39. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 39

Verse 39. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 40

Verse 40. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{q} "afar off"
Ps 38:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 41

Verse 41. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{r} "ministered"
Lu 8:2,3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 42

Verse 42. *The even*. The time after three o'clock in the afternoon.

The preparation, etc. The following day was to be a day of peculiar solemnity, called the *great day* of the feast. More than ordinary preparation was, therefore, made for *that* sabbath on the day before. Hence the day was known as a day of preparation. This preparation consisted in food, etc., to be used on the sabbath.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 43

Verse 43. *Joseph—an honourable counsellor*. A distinguished man, who probably held a high office among the Jews, as one of their great council or a Jewish senator. The word *honourable* here is not a mere title of *office*, but is given in reference to his personal character, as being a man of integrity and blameless life.

Waited for the kingdom of God. Waited for, or expected, the coming of the Messiah. But this expression means more than an *indefinite* expectation that the Messiah *would* come, for all the Jews expected that. It implies that he believed Jesus to be the Messiah, and that he had waited for him to build up the kingdom of God; and this agrees with what John says, Joh 19:38 that he was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews. He had retained his *secret* belief in the hope that Jesus would be proclaimed and treated as the Messiah, and then he probably proposed openly to acknowledge his attachment to him. But God called him to a public profession of attachment in a different manner, and gave this distinguished man grace to evince it. So men often delay a profession of attachment to Christ. They cherish a secret love; they indulge a hope in the mercy of God; but they conceal it for fear of man. Whereas God requires that the attachment should be made known. "He that is ashamed of me," said the Saviour, "and of my words before men, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed when he shall come in the glory of his Father and of the holy angels." Those who love the Saviour have no right to hide their light under a bushel. As soon as they have evidence, satisfactory to their own mind, that they are Christians, or have a *prevalent* belief, after faithful examination, that they truly love God, and depend on the Lord Jesus for salvation, so soon are they bound to profess Christ before men. This is the command of God, and this is the way of peace. None have the prospect of *comfort* in religion, who do not have respect to all of the commandments of God.

Went in boldly unto Pilate. God had raised up this distinguished counsellor and secret disciple for a special and most important vocation. The disciples of Jesus had fled; and if they had not, they had no influence with Pilate. Unless there had been a special application to Pilate in behalf of Jesus, his body would have been buried *that night* in the common grave with the malefactors: for it was a law of the Jews that the body of an executed man should not remain on the cross on the sabbath. At this critical juncture, God called forward this secret disciple—this friend of Jesus, though unknown as such to the world, and gave him confidence; he dared to express sympathy for the Saviour; he went in boldly, and begged the body of Jesus. It needed no small measure of courage to do this. Jesus had just been condemned, mocked, spit on, crucified—the death of a slave, or the most guilty wretch. To avow attachment for him now was proof of sincere affection; and the Holy Spirit has thought this worthy of special notice; and has set down this bold attachment of a senator for Jesus, for our imitation.

Craved the body. Begged, or asked.

{s} "also waited" Lu 2:25,38

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 44

Verse 44. *And Pilate marvelled if*, etc. Wondered if he was dead; or wondered that he was so soon dead. It was not common for persons crucified to expire under two or three days, sometimes not until the sixth or seventh. Joseph had asked for the *body*, implying that he was dead. That he *was* had been ascertained by the soldiers. See Joh 19:33.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 45

Verse 45. *When he knew it of the centurion*. Being informed by the centurion of the fact that he was dead. The centurion had charge of the soldiers who watched him, and could therefore give correct information.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 46

Verse 46. No Barnes text on this verse.
{t} "a stone" Mr 16:3,4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 15 - Verse 47

Verse 47. *Beheld where he was laid*. The affection of these pious females never forsook them, in all the trials and sufferings of their Lord. With true love they followed him to the cross; they came as near to him as they were permitted to come, in his last moments; they followed him when taken down and laid in the tomb. The strong, the mighty, the youthful, had fled; but female love never forsook him, even in his deepest humiliation. This is the nature of true love. It is strongest in such scenes. While *professed* attachment will abound in prosperity, and live most in sunshine, it is only genuine love that will go into the dark shades of adversity, and flourish there. In scenes of poverty, want, affliction, and death, it shows its genuineness. That which lives there is genuine; that which turns away from such scenes is spurious.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 16 - Verse 1

MARK Chapter 16

Verses 1-8. See this passage explained on Mt 28:1-8

Verse 1. *Sweet spices*. Aromatics. Substances used in embalming. The idea of sweetness is not, however, implied in the original, Many of the substances used for embalming were *bitter*; as, e.g., myrrh, and none of them perhaps could properly be called *sweet*. The word *spices* expresses all that there is in the original.

Anoint him. Embalm him. Or, apply these spices to his body to keep it from putrefaction. This is proof that they did not suppose he would rise again. And the fact that they did not expect he would rise gives more strength to the evidence for his resurrection.

{u} "And when the" Mt 28:1 Lu 24:1; Joh 20:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 16 - Verse 2

Verse 2. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 16 - Verse 3

Verse 3. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 16 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *It was very great*. These words belong to the third verse: "Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? for," the evangelist adds, "it was very great."

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 16 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Sitting on the right side*. As they entered. The sepulchre was large enough to admit persons to go into it; not unlike, in that respect, our vaults.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 16 - Verse 6

Verse 6. No Barnes text on this verse.

{w} "he is risen" Ps 71:20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 16 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *And Peter*. It is remarkable that Peter is singled out for special notice. It was proof of the kindness and mercy of the Lord Jesus. Peter, just before the death of Jesus, had denied him. He had brought dishonour on his profession of attachment to him. He had been brought to see the crime, and to weep bitterly. It would have been right if the Lord Jesus had from that moment cast him off, and noticed him no more. But he loved him still. Having loved him once, he loved unto the end, Joh 13:1. As a proof that he forgave him, and still loved him, he sent him this *special* message—-the assurance that though he had denied him, and had done much to aggravate his sufferings, yet he had risen, and was still his Lord and Redeemer. We are not to infer, because the angel said, "Tell his disciples *and* Peter," that Peter was not still a disciple. The meaning is, "Tell his disciples, and especially Peter:" sending to him a particular message. Peter was still a disciple. Before his fall, Jesus had prayed for him that his faith should not fail, (Lu 22:32;) and as the prayer of Jesus was *always* heard, Joh 11:42, so it follows that Peter still retained faith sufficient to be a disciple though, like other disciples, he was suffered to fall into sin.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 16 - Verse 8

Verse 8. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 16 - Verse 9

Verse 9. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 16 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 16 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Believed not*. This is proof that they did not *expect* his resurrection; proof that they were not easily deceived; and that nothing but the clearest evidence could undeceive them.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 16 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *He appeared in another form*. In a form unlike his ordinary appearance, so much so that they did not at first know him. **See Barnes "Lu 24:13"**

and Lu 24:14-31.

As they walked, and went into the country. To Emmaus, Lu 24:13.

{x} "two of them" Lu 24:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 16 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *The residue*. The remainder. Those who remained at Jerusalem.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 16 - Verse 14

Verse 14. **See Barnes "Mt 28:16"**

and Mt 28:17-20.

As they sat at meat. The word *meat* here means food, or meals. As they were reclining at their meals.

And upbraided them, etc. Rebuked them, or reproached them. This was done because, after all the evidence they had had of his resurrection, still they did not believe. This is a most important circumstance in the history of our Lord's resurrection. Never were men more difficult to be convinced of anything, than *they* were of that fact. And this shows, conclusively, that they had not conspired to impose on the world; that they had given up all for lost when he died; that they did not expect his resurrection; and all this is the strongest proof that he truly rose. *They* were not convinced, until it was impossible for them longer to deny it. Had they expected it, they would have caught easily at the slightest evidence, and even turned every circumstance in favour of such an event. It may be added, that it was impossible that eleven men of good natural understanding should have been deceived in so plain a case. They had been with Jesus three years; they perfectly knew his features, voice, manner. And it was impossible that they should have been deceived by any one who might have pretended to have been the Lord Jesus.

{y} "Afterward" Lu 24:36 1Co 15:5 {1} "sat" or "together" {z} "unbelief" Lu 24:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 16 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Into all the world*. To the Gentiles as well as the Jews. This was contrary to the opinions of the Jews, that the Gentiles should be admitted to the privileges of the Messiah's kingdom, or that the partition wall between them should be broken down. See Ac 22:21,22. It was long before the disciples could be trained to the belief that the gospel was to be preached to all men; and it was

only by special revelation, even *after* this command, that Peter preached to the Gentile centurion, Ac 10:1. Jesus has graciously ordered that the preaching of the gospel shall be stopped by no barriers. Wherever there is man, there it is to be proclaimed. To every sinner he offers life; and all the world is included in the message of mercy, and every child of Adam offered eternal salvation.

Preach. Proclaim: make known: offer. To do this to every creature, is to offer pardon and eternal life to him on the terms of the plan of mercy—through repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus.

The Gospel. The good news. The tidings of salvation. The assurance that the Messiah is come, and that sin may be forgiven, and the soul saved.

To every creature. To the whole creation. That is, to every human being. Man has no right to limit this offer to any class of men. God commands his servants to offer the salvation to all men. If *they* reject it, it is at their peril. God is not to blame if they do not choose to be saved. His mercy is manifest; his grace is boundless in offering life to a creature so guilty as man.

{b} "creature" Ro 10:18 Col 1:23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 16 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *He that believeth*. That is, believeth the gospel. *Credits it to be true, and acts as if it were true*. This is the whole of faith. Man is a sinner, he should act on the belief of this truth, and repent. There is a God. Man should believe it, and fear and love him, and seek his favour. The Lord Jesus died to save him. To have faith in him, is to believe that this is true, and to act accordingly; i.e., to trust him, to rely on him, to love him, to feel that we have no merit, and to cast our all upon him. There is a heaven and a hell. To believe this, is to credit the account, and act as if it were true; to seek the one, and avoid the other. We are to die. To believe this, is to act as if this were so; to be in readiness for it, and to expect it daily and hourly. In one word, faith is feeling and acting as if there were a God, a Saviour, a heaven, a hell; as ff we were sinners, and must die; as if we deserved eternal death, and were in danger of it; and, in view of all, casting our eternal interests on the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. To do this, is to be a Christian; not to do it, is to be an infidel.

Is baptized. Is initiated into the church by the application of water, as significant that he is a sinner, and needs the purifying influences of the Holy Ghost. It is worthy of remark, that Jesus has made baptism of so much importance, he did not say, indeed, that a man *could not* be saved without baptism, but he has strongly implied that where this is neglected, knowing it to be a command of the Saviour, it endangers the salvation of the soul. *Faith* and *baptism* are the beginnings of a Christian life: the one the beginning of piety in the soul, the other of its manifestation before men, or of a profession of religion. And every man endangers his eternal interest by being ashamed of Christ before men. See Mr 8:38.

Shall be saved. Saved from sin, (Mt 1:21,) and from eternal death, (Joh 5:24; Joh 3:36,) and raised to eternal life in heaven, Joh 5:28,29; Joh 17:2,24.

Shall be damned. That is, condemned by God, and cast off from his presence, 2Th 1:6-9. It implies that they will be adjudged to be guilty by God in the day of judgment, Ro 2:12,16; Mt 25:41; that they will deserve to die for ever, (Ro 2:6,8) and that they will be cast out into a place of woe to all eternity, Mt 25:46. It may be asked how it can be *just* in God to condemn men for ever for not believing the gospel. I answer:

(1.) God has a right to appoint his own terms of mercy.
(2.) Man has no claim on him for heaven
(3.) The sinner rejects the terms of salvation knowingly, deliberately, and perseveringly.
(4.) He has a special disregard and contempt for the gospel.
(5.) His unbelief is produced by the love of sin.
(6.) He shows by this that he has no love for God, and his law, and for eternity.
(7.) He slights the objects dearest to God, and most like him; and,
(8.) he *must* be miserable. A creature who has no confidence in God, who does not believe that he is true or worthy of his regard, and who never seeks his favour, must be wretched. He rejects God, and he must go into eternity without a Father and without a God. And he has no source of comfort in himself, and must die for ever. There is no being in eternity *but* God that can make man happy; and without his favour the sinner *must* be wretched.

{c} "he that believeth" Joh 3:18,36; Ac 16:31-33 Ro 10:9; 1Pe 3:21

{d} "but he" Joh 12:48 2Th 2:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 16 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *And these signs*. These miracles. These *evidences* that they are sent from God.

Them that believe. The apostles and those in the primitive age who were endowed with like power. The promise is fulfilled if it can be shown that these signs followed in the case of *any* who believed, and it is not necessary to suppose that they would follow in the case of all. The meaning is, that they should be the result of *faith*, or of the belief of the gospel. It is true that they were. They were shown in the case of the apostles and early Christians. The infidel cannot say that the promise has not been fulfilled, unless he can show that it never occurred; the Christian should be satisfied that the promise was fulfilled if these miracles were ever actually wrought, though they do not occur now; and the believer now should not expect a miracle in his case. Miracles were necessary for the establishment of religion in the world; they are not necessary now.

In my name. By my authority, and using the power that would in such cases, if bodily present. This was done: and in this they differed essentially from the manner in which Jesus himself wrought miracles, He did it *in his own name*. He did it as possessing original, underived authority. See the account of his stilling the sea, (Mt 8:26, etc.) of his healing the sick, Mt 9:5,6; of his raising Lazarus, Joh 11:1. The prophets spoke *in the name of the Lord*. The apostles did likewise, Ac 3:6, etc. There was, therefore, an important difference between Jesus and all the other messengers that God has sent into the world, He acted in his own name; they in the name of another, he wielded his *own power*; they were the instruments by which God put forth the omnipotence of his arm to save. *He* was, therefore, God; they were men of like passions as other men, Ac 14:15.

Shall they cast out devils. **See Barnes "Mt 4:24"**.

Comp. Ac 16:16-18.

Shall speak with new tongues. Shall speak other languages than their native language. This was remarkably fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, Ac 2:4-11. It existed also in other places. See 1Co 12:10,18.

{e} "in my name" Lu 10:17 Ac 5:16, 8:7, 16:18, 19:12

{f} "speak with new" Ac 2:4 10:46; 1Co 12:10,28

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 16 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *They shall take up serpents*. When it is necessary for the sake of establishing religion, they shall handle poisonous reptiles without injury: thus showing that *God* was with him, to keep them from harm. This was literally fulfilled when Paul shook the viper from his hand. See Ac 28:5,6.

Any deadly thing. Any poison usually causing death.

Shall not hurt them. There is a similar promise in Isa 43:2.

They shall lay hands on the sick, etc. See instances of this in the Acts of the Apostles, Ac 3:6,7, 5:15, etc.

{g} "serpents" Lu 10:19 Ac 28:5 {h} "they shall lay" Ac 5:15,16, 28:8 Jas 5:14,15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 16 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *He was received up into heaven*. In a cloud from the Mount of Olives. See Ac 1:9.

The right hand of God. We are not to suppose that God has hands, or that Jesus sits in any particular direction from God. This phrase is taken from the manner of speaking among men, and means that he was exalted to honour and power in the heavens. It was esteemed the place of the highest honour to be seated at the right hand of a prince. So, to be seated at the right hand of God, means only that Jesus is exalted to the highest honor of the universe. Compare Eph 1:20-22.

{i} "so then" Ac 1:2,3; Lu 24:51

{k} "on the right hand" Ps 110:1 1Pe 3:22; Re 3:21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK - Chapter 16 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *They went forth*. The apostles.

Every where. In all parts of the world. See the account in the Acts and the Epistles.

The Lord working with them. By miracles; by removing obstacles; by supporting them, and by giving the gospel success, and making it effectual to saving men.

Confirming the word. Showing it to be the word of God, or a revelation from heaven.

With signs following. By attending miracles. By raising the dead, healing the sick, etc., as signs that God was with them, and had sent them forth to preach.

Amen. Truly, verily. So be it. This word here is of no authority. There is no reason to think that it was added by Mark.

Mark is more concise than any other of the evangelists. In most instances he coincides with Matthew, though he has added some circumstances which Matthew had omitted. There is no evidence, however, that he copied from Matthew. The last chapter in Mark contains some things

omitted in Matthew, and some things of fearful import. We learn from it that the gospel is to be preached to all mankind. Every man is to be offered eternal life; and he rejects it at his peril. The condition of the man who *will* not believe is fearfully awful. The Son of God has solemnly declared that he shall be damned. *He* will judge the world; and there is none that can deliver out of his hand. No excuse will be allowed for *not believing*. Unless a man has faith, he *must* be lost for ever. This is the solemn assurance of the whole Bible, and in view of this awful declaration of the *merciful* Redeemer, how sad is the condition of him who has no confidence in Jesus, and who has never looked to him for eternal life! And how important that without delay he should make his peace with God, and possess that faith which is connected with eternal life!

{l} "the Lord" Ac 5:12 14:3; Heb 2:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 1

PREFACE

TO THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE.

Little is *certainly* known concerning the time and place of writing this Gospel, or concerning the author. The first time we have any mention of the author is in his own history, Ac 16:10,11. He was then the companion of Paul in his travel, and it is evident that he often attended Paul in his journeys, comp. Ac 16:11-17; Ac 21:1-6.

In each of these places the author of "the Acts" speaks of his being in company with Paul. That the same person was the writer of this Gospel is also clear from Ac 1:1.

From this circumstance the ancients regarded this Gospel as in fact the Gospel which Paul had preached. They affirm that Luke recorded what the apostle preached. Thus Irenaeus says,

> "Luke, the companion of Paul, put down in a book the gospel preached by him."

He also says,

> "Luke was not only a companion, but also a fellow-labourer of the apostles, especially of Paul."

Origen, speaking of the Gospels, says,

> "The third is that according to Luke, the gospel commended by Paul, published for the sake of the Gentile converts."

The testimony of the fathers is uniform that it was written by Luke, the companion of Paul, and was therefore regarded by them as really the gospel which Paul preached.

It is not known *where* it was written. Jerome says it was composed in Achaia. There seems to be some probability that it was written to persons that were well acquainted with Jewish manners, as the author does not stop to explain the peculiar customs of the Jews, as some of the other evangelists have done. Respecting the time *when* it was written nothing very definite is known. All that can with certainty be ascertained is that it was written before the death of Paul (A.D. 65), for it was written before the Acts (Ac 1:1), and that book only brings down the life of Paul to his imprisonment at Rome, and previous to his going into Spain.

It has been made a matter of inquiry whether Luke was a Gentile or a Jew. On this subject there is no positive testimony. Jerome and others of the fathers say that he was a Syrian, and born at Antioch. The most probable opinion seems to be that he was a proselyte to the Jewish religion,

though descended from Gentile parents. For this opinion two reasons may be assigned of some weight. 1st. He was intimately acquainted, as appears by the Gospel and the Acts, with the Jewish rites, customs, opinions, and prejudices; and he wrote in their *dialect*, that is, with much of the Hebrew phraseology, in a style similar to the other evangelists, from which it appears that he was accustomed to the Jewish religion, and was, therefore, probably a proselyte. Yet the *preface* to his Gospel, as critics have remarked, is pure classic Greek, unlike the Greek that was used by native Jews; from which it seems not improbable that he was by birth and education a Gentile.

2nd. In Ac 21:27, it is said that the Asiatic Jews excited the multitude against Paul because he had introduced *Gentiles* into the temple, thus defiling it. In Ac 21:28 it is said that the Gentile to whom they had reference was *Trophimus*, an Ephesian. Yet *Luke* was also at that time with Paul. If he had been regarded as a *Gentile* it is probable that they would have made complaint respecting him as well as Trophimus; from which it is supposed that he was a Jewish proselyte.

But again, in the Epistle to the Colossians, Co 4:9-11, we find Paul saying that Aristarchus, and Marcus, and Barnabas, and Justus saluted them, "who are," he adds, "*of the circumcision*," that is, Jews by birth. In Co 4:14 he says that Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas also saluted them; from which it is inferred that they were *not of the circumcision*, but were by birth Gentiles.

Most writers suppose that Luke, the writer of this Gospel, was intended in the above place in Colossians. If so, his profession was that of *a physician*; and it has been remarked that his descriptions of diseases are more accurate and circumstantial, and have more of *technical* correctness than those of the other evangelists.

Luke does not profess to have been an eye-witness of what he recorded. See Lu 1:2,3. It is clear, therefore, that he was not one of the seventy disciples, nor one of the two who went to Emmaus, as has been sometimes supposed. Nor was he an apostle. By the fathers he is uniformly called the *companion* of the apostles, and especially of Paul.

If he was not one of the apostles, and if he was not one of those expressly commissioned by our Lord to whom the promise of the infallible teaching of the Holy Ghost was given, the question arises by what authority his Gospel and the Acts have a place in the sacred canon, or what evidence is there that he was divinely inspired?

In regard to this question the following considerations may give satisfaction:

1st. They were received by all the churches on the same footing as the first three Gospels. There is not a dissenting voice in regard to their authenticity and authority. The value of this argument is this—that if they had been spurious, or without authority, the fathers were the proper persons to know it.

2nd. They were published during the lives of the apostles Peter, Paul, and John, and were received *during* their lives as books of sacred authority. If the writings of Luke were not inspired, and had no authority, those apostles could easily have destroyed their credit, and we have reason to think it would have been done.

3rd. It is the united testimony of the fathers that this Gospel was submitted to Paul, and received his express approbation. It was regarded as the substance of his preaching, and if it received his approbation it comes to *us* on the authority of his name. Indeed, if this be the case, it rests on the same authority as the epistles of Paul himself.

4th. It bears the same marks of inspiration as the other books. It is simple, pure, yet sublime; there is nothing unworthy of God; and it is elevated far above the writings of any uninspired man.

5th. If he was *not* inspired—if, as we suppose, he was a Gentile by birth—and if, as is most clear, he was not an eyewitness witness of what he records, it is inconceivable that he did not contradict the other evangelists. That he did not *borrow* from them is clear. Nor is it possible to conceive that he could write a book varying in the order of its *arrangement* so much, and adding so many new facts, and repeating so many recorded also by the others, without *often* having contradicted what was written by them. Let any man compare this Gospel with the spurious gospels of the following centuries, and he will be struck with the force of this remark.

6th. If it be objected that, not being an apostle, he did not come within the *promise* of inspiration (Joh 14:26 16:13,14) made to the apostles, it may be replied that this was also the case with Paul; yet no small part of the New Testament is composed of his writings. The evidence of the inspiration of the writings of Luke and Paul is to be judged, not only by that *promise*, but by the early reception of the churches; by the testimony of the fathers as to the judgment of *inspired men* when living, and by the internal character of the works. Luke has all these equally with the other evangelists.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

CHAPTER 1

Verse 1. *Forasmuch as many*. It has been doubted who are referred to here by the word *many*. It seems clear that it could not be the other evangelists, for the gospel by *John* was not yet written, and the word *many* denotes clearly more than *two*. Besides, it is said that they undertook to record what the *eye-witnesses* had delivered to them, so that the writers did not pretend to be eye-witnesses themselves. It is clear, therefore, that other writings are meant than the gospels which we now have, but what they were is a matter of conjecture. What are now known as spurious gospels were written long after Luke wrote his. It is probable that Luke refers to *fragments* of history, or to narratives of *detached* sayings, acts, or parables of our Lord, which had been made and circulated among the disciples and others. His doctrines were original, bold, pure, and authoritative. His miracles had been extraordinary, clear, and awful. His life and death had been peculiar; and it is not improbable—indeed it is highly probable—that such broken accounts and narratives of detached facts would be preserved. That this is what Luke means appears farther from Lu 1:3 where *he* professes to give a regular, full, and systematic account from the very beginning—

"having had perfect understanding of *all things from the very first*."

The records of the others —the "many"—were broken and incomplete. His were to be regular and full.

Taken in hand. Undertaken, attempted.

To set forth in order. To compose a narrative. It does not refer to the *order* or *arrangement*, but means simply to give a narrative. The word rendered here *in order* is different from that in the third verse, which *has* reference *to order*, or to a full and fair arrangement of the principal facts, &c., in the history of our Lord.

A declaration. A narrative — an account of.

Which are most surely believed among us. Among Christians — among *all* the Christians then living. Here we may remark — 1st. That Christians of *that* day had the best of all opportunities for

knowing whether those things were true. Many had seen them, and all others had had the account from those who had witnessed them.

2nd. That infidels now cannot *possibly* be as good judges in the matter as those who lived at the time, and who were thus competent to determine whether these things were true or false.

3rd. That all Christians do *most surely believe* the truth of the gospel. It is their life, their hope, their all. Nor can they doubt that their Saviour lived, bled, died, rose, and still lives; that he was their atoning sacrifice, and that he is God over all, blessed for ever.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 2

Verse 2. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *It seemed good*. I thought it best; or, I have also determined. It seemed *to be called for* that there should be a full, authentic, and accurate account of these matters.

Having had perfect understanding, &c. The literal translation of the original here would be,

"having exactly traced everything from the first;"
or,

"having, by diligent and careful investigation, *followed up* everything to the source, to obtain an accurate account of the matter."

This much better expresses the idea. Luke did not profess to have seen these things, and this expression is designed to show how he acquired his information. It was by *tracing up* every account till he became satisfied of its truth. Here observe, 1st. That in religion God does not set aside our natural faculties. He calls us to look at evidence; to examine accounts; to make up our own minds. Nor will any man be convinced of the truth of religion who does *not* make investigation and set himself seriously to the task.

2nd. We see the nature of Luke's inspiration. It was consistent with his using his natural faculties or his own powers of mind in investigating the truth. God, by his Holy Spirit, presided over his faculties, directed them, and kept him from error.

In order. {c} This word does not indicate that the exact order of time would be observed, for that is not the way in which he writes; but it means *distinctly, particularly*, in opposition to the confused and broken accounts to which he had referred before.

Most excellent Theophilus. {d} The word Theophilus means *a friend of God*, or a pious man; and it has been supposed by some that Luke did not refer to any particular *individual*, but to any man that loved God; but there is no reason for this opinion. Significant names were very common, and there is no good reason to doubt that this was some individual known to Luke. The application

of the title "most excellent" farther proves it. It would not be given to an unknown man. The title *most excellent* has by some been supposed to be given to express his *character*, but it is rather to be considered as denoting *rank or office*. It occurs only in three other places in the New Testament, and is there given to men in *office* — to Felix and Festus, Ac 23:26; Ac 24:3; 26:25.

These titles express no quality of the men, but belong to the office; and we may hence learn that it is not improper for Christians, in giving honour to whom honour is due, to address men in office by their customary titles, even if their moral character be altogether unworthy of it. Who *Theophilus* was is unknown. It is probable that he was some distinguished Roman or Greek who had been converted, who was a friend of Luke, and who had requested an account of these things. It is possible that this *preface* might have been sent to him as a *private* letter *with* the gospel, and Theophilus chose to have them published together.

{c} Ac 11:4 {d} Ac 1:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 4

Verse 4. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 5

Verse 5. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 6

Verse 6. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 7

Verse 7. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 8

Verse 8.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 9

Verse 9. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Shall be great*. {q} Shall be eminent, or distinguished as a preacher.

In the sight of the Lord. Greek, *before the Lord*. That is, shall be *really* or *truly* great. God shall regard him as such.

Shall drink neither wine. The kind of wine commonly used in Judea was a light wine, often not stronger than cider in this country. It was the common drink of all classes of the people. **See Barnes on "Joh 2:11".**

The use of wine was forbidden only to the Nazarite, Nu 6:3. It was because John sustained this character that he abstained from the use of wine.

Strong drink. {r} It is not easy to ascertain precisely what is meant by this word, but we are certain that it does not mean strong drink in *our* sense of the term. Distilled spirits were not then known. The art of distilling was discovered by an Arabian chemist in the ninth or tenth century; but distilled liquors are not used by Arabians. They banished them at once, as if sensible of their pernicious influence; nor are they used in Eastern nations at all. Europe and America have been the places where this poison has been most extensively used, and there it has beggared and ruined millions, and is yearly sweeping thousands unprepared into a wretched eternity. The *strong drink* among the Jews was probably nothing more than fermented liquors, or a drink obtained from fermented dates, figs, and the juice of the palm, or the lees of wine, mingled with sugar, and having the property of producing intoxication. Many of the Jewish writers say that by the word here translated *strong drink* was meant nothing more than *old wine*, which probably had the power of producing intoxication. **See Barnes on "Isa 5:11".**

Shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, {s} &c. Shall be divinely designated or appointed to this office, and qualified for it by all needful communications of the Holy Spirit. To be *filled* with the Holy Spirit is to be illuminated, sanctified, and guided by his influence. In this place it refers —

1st. To the divine intention that he should be set apart to this work, as God designed that Paul should be an apostle from his mother's womb, Ga 1:15.

2nd. It refers to an actual fitting for the work from the birth by the influence of the Holy Spirit, as was the case with Jeremiah (Jer 1:5), and with the Messiah himself, Ps 22:9,10.

{q} Lu 7:28 {r} Nu 6:3 {s} Jer 1:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Children of Israel.* Jews. Descendants of Israel or Jacob.

Shall he turn. By repentance. He shall call them from their sins, and persuade them to forsake them, and to seek the Lord their God.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Shall go before him*. {t} Before the Messiah. The connection here leads us to suppose that the word him refers to the "Lord their God" in the previous verse. If so, then it will follow that the Messiah was the Lord God of Israel— a character abundantly given him in other parts of the New Testament.

In the spirit and power of Elias.

See Barnes on "Mt 11:14"

To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children. In the time of John the Jews were divided into a number of different sects. **See Barnes on "Mt 3:7"**.

They were opposed violently to each other, and pursued their opposition with great animosity. It was impossible but that this opposition should find its way into *families*, and divide parents and children from each other. John came that he might allay these animosities and produce better feeling. By directing them *all* to *one Master*, the Messiah, he would divert their attention from the causes of their difference and bring them to union. He would restore peace to their families, and reconcile those parents and children who had chosen different sects, and who had suffered their attachment *to sect* to interrupt the harmony of their households. The effect of true religion on a family will always be to produce harmony. It attaches all the family to *one* great Master, and by attachment to *him* all minor causes of difference are forgotten.

And the disobedient to the wisdom of the just. The *disobedient* here are the unbelieving, and hence the impious, the wicked. These he would turn to the wisdom of the just, or to such wisdom as the just or pious manifest— that is, to true wisdom.

To make ready a people {v}, &c. To prepare them for his coming by announcing that the Messiah was about to appear, and by calling them to repentance. God has always required men to be pure in a special manner when he was about to appear among them. Thus the Israelites were required to purify themselves for three days when he was about to come down on Mount Sinai, Ex 19:14,15. And so, when God the Son was about to appear as the Redeemer, he required that men should *prepare* themselves for his coming. So in view of the future judgment—the second coming of the Son of man—he requires that men should repent, believe, and be pure, 1Pe 4:7 2Pe 3:11,12.

{t} Mal 4:5,6; Mt 11:14 Mr 9:12,13

{u} Ps 111:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Whereby shall I know this*? {w} The thing was improbable, and he desired *evidence* that it would take place. The testimony of an *angel*, and in such a place, should have been proof enough; but men are slow to believe the testimony of heavenly messengers. As a consequence of not believing, he was struck dumb.

{w} Ge 17:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *I am Gabriel*. The word *Gabriel* is made up of two Hebrew words, and signifies *man of God*. This angel is mentioned as having been deputed to inform *Daniel* that his prayers were heard. **See Barnes on "Da 8:16 9:21"**.

That stand in the presence of God. To stand in the presence of one is a phrase denoting *honour or favour*. To be admitted to the presence of a king, or to be with him, was a token of favour. So to stand before God signifies merely that he was honoured or favoured by God. He was permitted to come near him, and to see much of his glory. Comp. 1Ki 10:8; 1Ki 12:6; 17:1; Pr 22:29.

And am sent, &c. The angels are "*ministering spirits* sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation," {y} Heb 1:7,14. They delight to do the will of God, and one way of doing that will is by aiding his children here, by succouring the afflicted, and by defending those who are in danger. There is no more absurdity or impropriety in supposing that *angels* may render such aid, than there is in supposing that good men may assist one another; and there can be no doubt that it affords high pleasure to the angels of God to be *permitted* to aid those who are treading the dangerous and trying path which leads to eternity. Holiness is the same as benevolence, and holy beings seek and love opportunities to do good to their fellow-creatures. In the eye of holy beings all God's creatures are parts of one great family, and whenever they can do them good they rejoice in the opportunity, at any sacrifice.

These glad tidings. This good news respecting the birth of a son.

{y} Heb 1:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Because thou believest not {z}* , &c. This was both a sign and a judgment— a sign that he had come from God, and that the thing would be fulfilled; and a judgment for not giving credit to what he had said. There is no sin in the sight of God more aggravated than unbelief. When GOD speaks, man should believe; nor can he that will not believe escape punishment. God speaks only truth, and we should believe him. God speaks only what is for our good, and it is right that we should suffer if we do not credit what he says.

{z} Eze 3:26

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *The people waited*. That is, beyond the usual time.

Marvelled. Wondered. The priest, it is said, was not accustomed to remain in the temple more than half an hour commonly. Having remained on this occasion a longer time, the people became apprehensive of his safety, and wondered what had happened to him.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Had seen a vision*. The word vision means sight, appearance, or spectre, and is commonly applied to spirits, or to beings from another world. When he came out of the temple, it is probable that they *suspected* that something of this nature had detained him there, and that, on inquiry of him, he signified by a nod that this was the case. He was unable to speak, and they had no way of "perceiving" it but by such a sign. On the word *vision*, **See Barnes on "Isa 1:1"**.

For he beckoned unto them. That is, by beckoning unto them, or by a sign, he informed them of what he had seen.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 23

23. *As soon as the days of his ministration*, &c.

As soon as he had fulfilled the duties of the week. It might have been supposed that the extraordinary occurrence in the temple, together with his own calamity, would have induced him at once to leave this place and return home; but his duty was in the temple. His piety prompted him to remain there in the service of God. He was not unfitted for burning incense by his dumbness, and it was not proper for him to leave his post. It is the duty of ministers of religion to re- main at their work until they are unfitted for it, and unable to serve God in their profession. Then they must retire. But until that time, he that for trifling causes forsakes his post is guilty of unfaithfulness to his Master.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Hid herself*. Did not go forth into public, and concealed her condition. This might have been done that she might spend her time more entirely. in giving praise to God for his mercies, and that she might have the fullest proof of the accomplishment of the promise before she appeared in public or spoke of the mercies of God.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Thus*. In this merciful manner.

To take away my reproach {a}. Among the Jews, a family of children was counted a signal blessing, an evidence of the favour of God, Ps 113:9 128:3; Isa 4:1 44:3,4 Le 26:9.

To be *barren*, therefore, or to be destitute of children, was considered a *reproach* or a disgrace, 1Sa 1:6.

{a} Ge 30:23 1Sa 1:6; Isa 54:1,4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *In the sixth month*. The sixth month after Elisabeth's conception.

A city of Galilee, named Nazareth.

See Barnes on "Mt 2:22,23".

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *To a virgin {b} espoused*, &c. **See Barnes on "Mt 1:18"**

See Barnes on "Mt 1:19"

See Barnes on "Is 7:14"

House of David. Family of David, or descendants of David.

{b} Mt 1:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *Hail {c}* . This word of salutation is equivalent to *Peace be with thee*, or *Joy be with thee*; a form of speech implying that she was signally favoured, and expressing joy at meeting her.

Highly favoured {2}. By being the mother of the long-expected Messiah—the mother of the Redeemer of mankind. Long had he been predicted; long had the eyes of the nation been turned to him, and long had his coming been an object of intense desire. To be reckoned among his *ancestors* was accounted sufficient honour for even Abraham and David. But now the happy individual was designated who was to be his mother; and on Mary, a poor virgin of Nazareth, was to come this honour, which would have rendered infinitely illustrious any of the daughters of Adam—the honour of giving birth to the world's Redeemer and the Son of God.

The Lord is with thee {d} . The word *is* is not in the original, and the passage may be rendered either "the Lord *is* with thee," or "the Lord *be* with thee," implying the prayer of the angel that all blessings from God might descend and rest upon her.

Blessed art thou among women. This passage is equivalent to saying "thou art the most happy of women."

{c} Da 9:23 {2} or *graciously accepted*, or *much graced* {d} Jud 6:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Troubled at his saying*. Disturbed or perplexed at what he said. It was so unexpected, so sudden, so extraordinary, and was so high an honour, that she was filled with anxious thoughts, and did not know what to make of it.

Cast in her mind. Thought, or revolved in her mind.

What manner of salutation. What this salutation could mean.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *Fear not, Mary*. Do not be alarmed at this appearance of an angel. He only comes to announce to you good tidings. Similar language was addressed by an angel to Joseph.

See Barnes on "Mt 1:20".

Thou hast found favour with God. Eminent favour or mercy in being selected to be the mother of the Messiah.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *And, behold, {e} thou shalt conceive in thy womb*.

See Barnes on "Isa 7:14".

And shalt call his name Jesus. A Saviour.

See Barnes on "Mt 1:21".

All this was announced, also, by an angel to Joseph, *after* this visitation to Mary.

See Barnes on "Mt 1:20,21".

{e} Is 7:14 Mt 1:21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *He shall be {f} great*. There is undoubted reference in this passage to Isa 9:6,7. By his being *great* is meant he shall be distinguished or illustrious; great in power, in wisdom, in dominion, on earth and in heaven.

Shall be {g} called. This is the same as to say he *shall be* the Son, &c. The Hebrews often used this form of speech. Mt 21:13.

The {h} Highest. God, who is infinitely exalted; called *the* Highest, because he is exalted over all his creatures on earth and in heaven. Mr 5:7.

The throne. The kingdom; or shall appoint him as the lineal successor of David in the kingdom.

His father David. David is called his father because Jesus was lineally descended from him. Mt 1:1. The promise to David was, that there *should not fail a man to sit on his throne*, or that his throne should be perpetual, and the promise was fulfilled by exalting Jesus to be a Prince and a Saviour, and the perpetual King of his people.

{f} Mt 1:21 {g} He 1:2-8 {h} 2Sa 7:11,12; Isa 9:6,7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *Over the house of Jacob*. The *house* of Jacob means the same thing as the *family* of Jacob, or the descendants of Jacob—that is, the children of Israel. This was the name by which the ancient people of God were known, and it is the same as saying that he would reign over his own church and people for ever. This he does by giving them laws, by defending them, and by guiding them; and this he will do for ever in the kingdom of his glory.

{i} Of his kingdom there shall be no end. He shall reign among his people on earth until the end of time, and be their king for ever in heaven. *His* is the only kingdom that shall never have an end; *He* the only King that shall never lay aside his diadem and robes, and that shall never die. *He* the only King that can defend us from all our enemies, sustain us in death, and reward us in eternity. O how important, then, to have an interest in his kingdom! and how unimportant, compared with his favour, is the favour of all earthly monarchs!

{i} Da 7:14,27; Mi 4:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 34

Verse 34. **See Barnes on "Lu 1:35".**
No material from Barnes on this particular verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee*. Mt 1:20.

The power of the Highest, &c. This evidently means that the body of Jesus would be created by the direct power of God. It was not by ordinary generation; but, as the Messiah came to redeem sinners—to make atonement for *others*, and not for himself—it was necessary that his human nature should be pure, and free from the corruption of the fall. God therefore prepared him a body by direct creation that should be pure and holy. See He 10:5.

That holy thing, &c. That holy progeny or child.

Shall be called {k} the Son of God. This is spoken in reference to the human nature of Christ, and this passage proves, beyond controversy, that one reason why Jesus was called the Son of God was because he was begotten in a supernatural manner. He is also called the Son of God on account of his resurrection, Ro 1:4; Ac 13:33; Ps 2:7.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *Thy cousin Elisabeth*, &c. The case of Elisabeth is mentioned to inspire Mary with confidence, and to assure her that what was now promised would be fulfilled. It was almost as improbable that Elisabeth should have a child at her time of life, as it was that Mary should under the circumstances promised.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 37

Verse 37. No Barnes text on this verse.
{l} "For with God" Mt 19:26 Ro 4:21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *And Mary said, Behold the handmaid {m}*, &c. This was an expression of resignation to the will of God, and of faith in the promise. To be the *hand-maid of the Lord* is to be submissive

and obedient, and is the same as saying, "I fully credit all that is said, and am perfectly ready to obey all the commands of the Lord."

{m} Ps 116:16 {n} "according to thy word" Ps 119:38

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *And Mary arose*. The word *arose* here is equivalent to *setting out*, or starting on a journey.

The hill country. The region in the vicinity of Jerusalem, commonly called the hill country of Judea.

City of Juda. What city is meant is not known. Some have supposed it to be Jerusalem, others Hebron; but all is conjecture. It was probably a Levitical city, and the residence of Zacharias when he was not employed in the temple.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 40

Verse 40. *Saluted Elisabeth*. Expressed great joy and gratification at seeing her, and used the customary tokens of affectionate salutation.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 41

Verse 41. *Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost*. The meaning of this seems to be that she was filled with joy; with a disposition to praise God; with a prophetic spirit, or a knowledge of the character of the child that should be born of her. All these were produced by the Holy Ghost.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 42

Verse 42.*{p} Blessed art thou among women*. She here repeated nearly the words of the angel to Mary, esteeming it to be the highest honour among mothers to be the mother of the Messiah. **See Barnes on "Lu 1:28"**

{p} Jud 5:24 Lu 1:28

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 43

Verse 43. *And whence is this to me*? An expression of humility. Why is it that the mother of my Lord {q} should come to me, as if to honour me?

Mother of my Lord. The word *Lord* sometimes denotes divinity, and sometimes superior, master, teacher, or governor. It was given by the Jews to their expected Messiah; but whether they understood it as denoting divinity cannot now be ascertained. It is clear only that Elisabeth used it as denoting great dignity and honour.

{q} Joh 13:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 44

Verse 44. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 45

Verse 45. *Blessed* is *she {3} that believed*. That is, *Mary*, who believed what the angel spoke to her. She was blessed not only in the act of believing, but because the thing promised would certainly be fulfilled.

From these expressions of Elisabeth we may learn—

1st. That the spirit of prophecy had not entirely ceased among the Jews.

2nd. That the Holy Ghost is the source of light, comfort, and joy.

3rd. That everything about the birth of Jesus was remarkable, and that he must have been more than a mere man.

4th. That the prospect of the coming of the Messiah was one of great joy and rejoicing to ancient saints; and,

5th. That it was a high honour to be the mother of him that should redeem mankind. It is from that honour that the Roman Catholics have determined that it is right to worship the Virgin Mary and to offer prayers to her—an act of worship as idolatrous as any that could be offered to a creature. For— \-

1st. It is not anywhere commanded in the Bible.

2nd. It is expressly forbidden to worship any being but God,
Ex 34:14 20:4,5 De 6:13,14 Isa 45:20.

3rd. It is idolatry to worship or pray to a creature.

4th. It is absurd to suppose that the Virgin Mary can be in all
places at the same time to hear the prayers of thousands
at once, or to aid them. There is no idolatry more gross,
and of course more wicked, than to worship the creature
more than the Creator, Ro 1:25. \- {3} or, *which believed that there shall be*

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 46

Verse 46. *{r} My soul doth magnify the Lord*. To *magnify* means to *make great*, and then to *extol*, to *praise*, to *celebrate*. It does not mean here strictly to *make great*, but to increase *in our estimation* —that is, to praise or extol. See Ps 34:3; 2Sa 7:26.

{r} 1Sa 2:1 Ps 34:2,3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 47

Verse 47. *In God my Saviour*. God is called *Saviour*, as he saves people from sin and death. He was *Mary's* Saviour, as he had redeemed her soul and given her a title to eternal life; and she rejoiced {s} for that, and especially for his mercy in honouring her by her being made the mother of the Messiah.

{s} Ps 35:9 Hab 3:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 48

Verse 48. *He hath regarded the {t} low estate of his handmaid*. Literally, he has looked upon the low or humble condition of his handmaid. That is, notwithstanding her humble rank and poverty, he has shown her favour. And this example abundantly teaches what is elsewhere fully taught in the Bible, that God is not a respecter of persons; that he is not influenced, in conferring favours, by wealth, honour, or office, Ro 2:11; Ro 10:11,12.

He seeks the humble and the contrite; he imparts his rich blessings to those who feel that they need them, and who will bless him for them, Ps 138:6; Is 57:15.

From henceforth. Hereafter, or in consequence of this.

All generations. All men. All posterity.

{u} Call me blessed. Pronounce me highly favoured or happy in being the mother of the Messiah. It is therefore right to consider her as highly favoured or happy; but this certainly does not warrant us to worship her or to pray to her. Abraham was blessed in being the father of the faithful; Paul in being the apostle to the Gentiles; Peter in first preaching the gospel to them; but who would think of worshipping or praying to Abraham, Paul, or Peter?

{t} Ps 136:23 {u} Mal 3:12 Lu 11:27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 49

Verse 49. *He that is {v} mighty*. God.

Hath done to me {w} great things. Hath conferred on me great favours and distinguished mercies.

And holy {x} is his name. This is an expression of Mary's feelings, desiring to bestow on God all honour and praise. As the highest honour, she declared that his *name* was *holy*—that is, that God was free from sin, injustice, and impurity. The "name" of God is often put for God himself. The proper name of God is Jehovah, a word expressive of his essential being, derived from the word *to be*, Ex 3:14; Ex 6:3; Ps 83:18.

That name is holy; is to be regarded as holy; and to make a common or profane use of it is solemnly forbidden, Ex 20:7.

{v} Ge 17:1 {w} Ps 71:21 126:2,3 Eph 3:20

{x} Ps 111:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 50

Verse 50. *His {y} mercy*. Favour shown to the miserable and the guilty.

Is *on them*. Is shown or manifested to them.

That fear him. That reverence or honour him. One kind of fear is that which a servant has of a cruel master, or which a man has of a precipice, the plague, or death. This is not the *fear* which we ought to have toward God. It is the fear which a dutiful child has of a kind and virtuous father — a fear of injuring his feelings; of dishonouring him by our life; of doing anything which he would disapprove. It is on those who have such fear of God that his mercy descends. This is the fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom, Ps 111:10 Job 28:28.

From generation to generation. From one age to another —that is, it is unceasing; it continues and abounds. But it means also more than this. It means that God's mercy will descend on the children and children's children of those that fear him and keep his commandments, Ex 20:6. In this respect it is an unspeakable privilege to be descended from pious parents; to have been the subject of their prayers, and to have received their blessing. It is also a matter of vast guilt *not* to copy their example and to walk in their steps. If God is disposed to show mercy to thousands of generations, how heavy will be the condemnation if the children of pious parents do not avail themselves of it and early seek his favour!

{y} Ge 17:17 Ex 20:6; Ps 103:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 51

Verse 51. *{z} Hath showed strength with his arm*. The arm is the symbol of strength. The expression in this and the subsequent verses has no particular reference to his mercy to *Mary*. From a contemplation of his goodness to *her*, she enlarges her views to a contemplation of his goodness and power *in general*, and to a celebration of the praises of God for *all* that he has done to all men. This is the nature of true piety. It does not terminate in thinking of God's mercy toward ourselves. It thinks of *others*, and praises God that others also are made partakers of his mercy, and that his goodness is manifested to all his works.

He {a} scattereth the proud. He hath often done it in time of battle and war. When the proud Assyrian, Egyptian, or Babylonian had come against the people of God, he had often scattered them and driven away their armies.

In the imagination of their hearts. Those who were lifted up or exalted in their own view. Those who thought themselves to be superior to other men.

{z} Ps 98:1 Is 51.9 52:10 63:5

{a} 1Sa 2:9 Da 4:37

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 52

Verse 52. *Hath put down the mighty {b}*. The mighty here denotes princes, kings, or conquerors. See Is 14:12-14.

Their *seats*. Their *thrones*, or the places where they sat in pomp and power.

Exalted them. Raised them up, or placed them in the seats of those who had been removed.

Low degree. Low or humble birth and condition in life. This probably has reference to the case of her ancestor David. Mary was celebrating the mercies of God *to herself*, to her *family*, and of course to her ancestors. It was natural to allude to that great event in their history when Saul was overcome in battle, and when *David* was taken from the sheepfold and placed on the throne. The origin of illustrious families is often obscure. Men are often raised by industry, talent, and the favour of God, from very humble stations —from the farm or mechanic's shop— to places of great trust in the church and state. They who are thus elevated, if imbued with right feelings, will not despise their former employments nor their former companions, nor will they esteem their parents or friends the less *because* they still remain in the same rank in life. No conduct is more odious and unchristian than to be ashamed of our birth or the humble circumstances of our friends.

{b} Job 5:11 Lu 18:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 53

Verse 53. *He hath {c} filled the hungry with good things*. This is a celebration of the general mercy of God. He hath daily fed the poor, the needy, and those who came to him with humble hearts.

The rich he hath sent, &c. While the poor come to him for a supply of their daily wants, the rich come not that their necessities should be supplied, but come with lofty hearts, and insatiable desires that their riches may be increased. When this is the case, God not unfrequently not only *withholds* what they ask, but he takes their riches away by fire, or flood, or disappointments, and sends them away empty, Pr 23:5. It is better to be poor and go to God for our daily bread, than to be rich and forget our dependence on him, and to seek only a great increase of our property.

{c} 1Sa 2:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 54

Verse 54. *Hath holpen*. Hath helped or assisted. The word rendered "holpen" denotes properly, *to take hold of one, to help him up when he is in danger of falling*, and here means that God had succoured his people when they were feeble, and were in danger of falling or being overthrown.

His servant Israel. His people the Israelites, or those who truly feared him and kept his commandments. See Isa 41:8,9; Ho 11:1.

In remembrance {d} of his mercy. Or that his mercy may be remembered.

{d} Ps 98:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 55

Verse 55. *As he spake {e} to our fathers*, &c. That is, he has dealt mercifully with the children of Israel, according as he promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The promise particularly here referred to is that respecting the Messiah which was now about to be fulfilled; but there is no doubt that there was also included the promises respecting all the other mercies which had been conferred on the children of Israel. See Ge 22:17,18.

For ever. These words are to be referred to the preceding verse— "in remembrance of his mercy *for ever*, to Abraham and to his seed for ever.

{e} Ge 17:19 Ps 132:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 56

Verse 56. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 57

Verse 57. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 58

Verse 58. No Barnes text on this verse."

{f} "rejoiced" {f}

Lu 1:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 59

Verse 59. *On the eighth day*. This was the day on which it was required to circumcise children, Ge 21:4.

And they called him Zacharias. The name of the child was commonly given at the time of the circumcision, Ge 21:3,4. The name *commonly* given to the eldest son was that of the father.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 60

Verse 60. *Shall be called John*. This was the name which the angel had said should be given to him, of which Zacharias had probably informed Elisabeth by writing.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 61

Verse 61. *There is none of thy kindred*, &c. The Jewish tribes and families were kept distinct. To do this, and to avoid confusion in their genealogical tables, they probably gave only those names which were found among their ancestors. Another reason for this, common to all people, is the respect which is felt for honoured parents and ancestors.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 62

Verse 62. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 63

Verse 63. *He asked*. That is, by signs.

A writing table. The table denoted by this word was usually made of wood and covered with wax. The ancients used to write on such tables, as they had not the use of paper. The instrument used for writing was an iron pen or *style*, by which they marked on the wax which covered the table. Sometimes the writing-table was made entirely of lead.

{g} "John" Lu 1:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 64

Verse 64. *His mouth {h} was opened*, &c. That is, he was enabled to speak. For nine months he had been dumb, and it is probable that they supposed that he had been afflicted with a paralytic affection, and that he would not recover. Hence their amazement when he spoke. For one act of disbelief all this calamity had come upon him, and it had not come without effect. With true gratitude he offered praise to God for the birth of a son, and for his restoration to the blessings of speech.

{h} Lu 1:20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 65

Verse 65. *And fear came*, &c. The word fear often denotes *religious reverence*. The remarkable circumstances attending the birth of John, and the fact that Zacharias was suddenly restored to speech, convinced them that God was there, and filled their minds with awe and veneration.

{4} "sayings" or "things"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 66

Verse 66. *What manner of child*, &c. Such were the remarkable circumstances of his birth that they apprehended that he would be distinguished as a prophet, or that great events would result from his life.

The hand {k} of the Lord was with him. The word *hand* is used to denote *aid, protection, favour*. We stretch out the hand to aid those whom we wish to help. The expression here means that God *aided* him, *protected* him, or showed him *favour*. Some think that these words are a part of the speech of the neighbours — "What manner of child shall this be? God is so evidently with him!"

{i} "laid them up" Lu 2:19,51 {k} Ps 80:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 67

Verse 67. *Filled with the Holy Ghost*. See Lu 1:15.

And prophesied. The word prophesy means —

1st. To foretell future events.

2nd. To celebrate the praises of God (see 1Sa 10:5,6; 1Ki 18:29) ; then to,

3rd. Teach or preach the gospel, &c. **See Barnes on "Ro 12:6"**.

This song of Zacharias partakes of all. It is principally employed in the praises of god, but it also predicts the future character and preaching of John.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 68

Verse 68.

Blessed.

{l} **See Barnes on "Mt 5:3".**

Hath visited. The word here rendered *visited* means properly *to look upon*; then to look upon in order to *know the state of anyone*; then to visit for the purposed of *aiding those who need aid*, or alleviating misery. Comp. Mt 25:43. In this sense it is used here. God *looked upon* the world— he saw it miserable— he came to relieve it, and brought salvation.

And redeemed. That is, was *about to redeem*, or had given the pledge that he *would redeem*. This was spoken under the belief that the Messiah, *the Redeemer*, was about to appear, and would certainly accomplish his work. The literal translation of this passage is, "He hath made a *ransom* for his people." A *ransom* was the *price* paid to deliver a captive taken in war. A is a prisoner taken in war by B. B has a right to detain him as a prisoner by the laws of war, but C offers B a *price* if he will release A and suffer him to go at liberty. The price which he pays, and which must be *satisfactory* to B—that is, be a reason to B why he should release him—is called *a price or ransom*. Men are sinners. They are bound over to just punishment by the law. The law is holy, and God, as a just governor, must see that the law is honoured and the wicked punished; but if anything can be done which will have the same *good effect* as the punishment of the sinner, or which will be an equivalent for it—that is, be of equal value to the universe—God may consistently release him. If he can show the same hatred of sin, and deter others from sinning, and secure the purity of the sinner, the sinner may be released. Whatever will accomplish *this* is called a *ransom*, because it is, in the eye of God, a sufficient reason, why the sinner should not be punished; it is an *equivalent* for his sufferings, and God is satisfied. The *blood of Jesus* — that is, his death in the place of sinners—constitutes such a ransom. It is in their stead. It is for them. It is equivalent to their punishment. It is not itself a *punishment*, for that always supposes *personal crime*, but it is what God is pleased *to accept* in the place of the eternal sufferings of the sinner. The king of the *Locrians* made a law that an adulterer should be punished with the loss of his eyes. His *son* was the first offender, and the father decreed that his son should lose *one* eye, and *he himself* one also. This was the *ransom*. He showed his *love*, his regard for the honour of his law, and the determination that the guilty should not escape. So God gave his Son *a ransom* to show his love, his regard to justice, and his willingness to save men; and his Son, in his death, was a ransom. He is often so called in the New Testament, Mt 20:28; Mr 10:45; Tit 2:14; Heb 9:12.

For a fuller view of the nature of a *ransom*, **see Barnes "Ro 3:24,25".**

{l} Ps 72:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 69

Verse 69. *And hath raised up a horn*. A horn is a symbol of strength. The figure is taken from the fact that in horned animals the strength lies in the *horn*. Particularly, the great power of the rhinoceros or unicorn is manifested by the use of a single horn of great strength, placed on the head

near the end of the nose. When the sacred writers, therefore, speak of great *strength* they often use the word *horn*, Ps 148:14; De 33:17; Da 7:7,8; Da 8:21.

The word *salvation*, connected here with the word *horn*, means that this *strength*, or this mighty Redeemer, was able to save. It is possible that this whole figure may be taken from the Jewish *altar*. On each of the four corners of the altar there was an eminence or small projection called a *horn*. To this persons might flee for safety when in danger, and be safe, 1Ki 1:50; 1Ki 2:28.

Comp. **See Barnes on "Lu 1:11".**

So the Redeemer *may be* called the "horn of salvation," because those who flee to him are safe.

In the house. In the *family*, or among the *descendants* of David.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 70

Verse 70. *His holy prophets*, &c. All the prophets are said to have referred to the Messiah, from the beginning of the world. The most striking of these were Jacob (Ge 49:10); Moses (De 18:15); Isaiah (Isa 9:6,7, 53:1-12) .

Since the world began. This is not to be taken literally, for there were no prophets immediately after the creation. It is merely a general expression, designed to denote that all the prophets had predicted the coming of the Messiah. Comp. **See Barnes on "Lu 24:27"**

See Barnes on "Re 19:10"

{n} "spake" Jer 23:5,6; Da 9:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 71

Verse 71. *{o} Saved from our enemies*. The enemies of man are his sins, his carnal propensities, his lusts, and the great adversary Satan and his angels, who continually seek to destroy him. From these the Messiah came to save us. Comp. Ge 3:15; Mt 1:21.

The hand. The power; or to save us from them.

{o} Isa 54:7-17 Jer 30:10,11

{p} Le 26:42 Ps 105:8-10; Eze 16:60

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 72

Verse 72. *To perform the mercy*. To show the mercy promised. The expression in the *original* is, "To make mercy with our fathers "— that is, to show kindness to our fathers; and the propriety of it is founded on the fact that mercy to *children* is regarded as kindness to the parent. Blessing the *children* was blessing the nation; was fulfilling the promises made to the fathers, and showing that he regarded them in mercy.

His holy covenant. The word *covenant* means compact or agreement. This is in use among men. It implies equality in the parties; freedom from constraint; freedom from previous obligation to do the thing now covenanted; and freedom from obligation to enter into a compact, unless a man chooses so to do. Such a transaction evidently can never take place between man and God, for they are not equal. Man is not at *liberty* to decline what God proposes, and he is under obligation to *do* all that God commands. When the word covenant, therefore, is used in the Bible, it means sometimes a *command*; sometimes a *promise*; sometimes a *regular law* — as the covenant of the day and night; and sometimes the way in which God dispenses mercy—that is, by the old and new covenants. In the place before us it means *the promise* made to Abraham, as the following verses clearly show.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 73

Verse 73. *The oath {q}*. This oath is recorded in Ge 22:16,17. It was an oath in which God swore by himself (because he could swear by no greater, Heb 6:13,14) that he would surely bless Abraham and his posterity. That promise was now to be entirely fulfilled by the coming of the Messiah.

{q} Ge 22:16,17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 74

Verse 74. *Might serve him*. Might obey, honour, and worship him. This was regarded as a *favour*. This was what was promised, and for this Zacharias praised God.

Without fear. Fear of death, of spiritual enemies, or of external foes. In the sure hope of God's *eternal* favour beyond the grave.

{r} "might serve him without fear" Ro 6:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 75

Verse 75. *In holiness*, &c. In piety and strict justice.

Before him. In the presence of God. Performed as in his presence, and with the full consciousness that he sees the heart. The *holiness* was not to be merely *external*, but spiritual, internal, pure, such as God would see and approve.

All the days {t} of our life. To death. True religion increases and expands till death.

{t} Re 2:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 76

Verse 76. *And thou, child*, &c. Zacharias predicts in this and the following verses the dignity, the employment, and the success of John. He declares what would be the subject of his preaching, and what his success.

Prophet of the Highest. Prophet of God; a prophet *appointed by God to declare his will*, and to prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah.

The face of the Lord. The Lord Jesus, the Messiah, that was about to appear. To go before *the face of one* is the same as to go *immediately* before one, or to be *immediately* followed by another.

To prepare his ways. This is taken from Isa 40:3 **See Barnes on "Mt 3:3"**

See Barnes on "Isa 40:3"

{u} "go before the face" Mal 3:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 77

Verse 77. *To give knowledge of salvation*. Knowledge of the way of salvation; that it was provided, and that the author of salvation was about to appear.

By the remission {v} of their sins. The word remission means pardon or forgiveness. It implies that God will treat the sinner *as if* he had not committed the sin. The idea here is, that the *salvation* about to be offered was that which was connected with the pardon of sin. There can be no other. God cannot treat men as his friends unless they come to him by repentance and obtain forgiveness. When that is obtained, which he is always disposed to grant, they can be treated with kindness and mercy.

{5} "by" or "for" {v} Ac 5:31

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 78

Verse 78. *Whereby the dayspring*, &c. The word *dayspring {7}* means the morning light, the aurora, the rising of the sun. It is called the dayspring *from on high* because the light of the gospel shines forth from heaven. God is its author, and through his mercy it shines on men. There is here, doubtless, a reference to Isa 40:1,2; indeed, almost the very words of that place are quoted. Comp. also Re 22:16.

{6} "tender mercy" or "bowels of the mercy" {7} "dayspring" or "sunrising" or "branch" Isa 11:1 Zec 3:8, 6:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 79

Verse 79. *To give light {w}* , &c.

See Barnes on "Mt 4:16, guide our feet, &c. The figure in these verses is taken from travellers, who, being overtaken by night, know not what to do, and who wait patiently for the morning light,

that they may know which way to go. So man wandered. So he became benighted. So he sat in the shadow of death. So he knew not which way to go until the Sun of righteousness arose, and then the light shone brightly on his way, and the road was open to the promised land of rest—to heaven.

This song of Zacharias is exceedingly beautiful. It expresses with elegance the great points of the plan of redemption, and the mercy of God in providing that plan. That mercy *is great*. It is worthy of praise—of our highest, loftiest songs of thanksgiving; for we were in the shadow of death—sinful, wretched, wandering—and the light arose, the gospel came, and men may rejoice in hope of eternal life.

{w} Isa 9:2 49:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 1 - Verse 80

Verse 80. *Waxed strong in spirit*. That is, in courage, understanding, and purposes of good, fitting him for his future work. The word *wax* means to *increase, to grow*, from an old Saxon word.

In the deserts. In Hebron, and in the hill country where his father resided. He dwelt in obscurity, and was not known publicly by the people.

Until the day of his showing. Until he entered on his public ministry, as recorded in Mt 3; —that is, probably, until he was about thirty years of age. See Lu 3.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 1

LUKE

CHAPTER II.

Verse 1. *In those days*. About the time of the birth of John and of Christ.

A decree. A law commanding a thing to be done.

Caesar Augustus. This was the Roman emperor. His first name was Octavianus. He was the nephew of Julius Caesar, and obtained the empire after his death. He took the name *Augustus* — *i.e. august*, or honourable— as a compliment to his own greatness; and from him the month August, which was before called *Sextilis*, received its name.

That all the world. There has been much difficulty respecting this passage, from the fact that no such taxing *of all the world* is mentioned by ancient writers. It should have been rendered *the whole land*—that is, the whole land of Palestine. The *whole land* is mentioned to show that it was not *Judea* only, but that it included also *Galilee*, the place where Joseph and Mary dwelt. That the passage refers only to the land of Palestine, and not to the whole world, or to all the Roman empire, is clear from the following considerations:

1st. The fact that no such taxing is mentioned as pertaining to any other country.

2nd. The account of Luke demands only that it should be understood of Palestine, or the country where the Saviour was born.

3rd. The words *world* and *whole world* are not unfrequently used in this limited sense as confined to a single country. See Mt 4:8, where Satan is said to have shown to Christ all the kingdoms *of the world*, that is, of the land of Judea. See also Jos 2:3 Lu 4:25 (Lu 4:25 Greek) Lu 21:26; Ac 11:28.

Should be taxed. Our word *tax* means to levy and raise money for the use of the government. This is not the meaning of the original word here. It means rather to *enroll*, or take a *list* of the citizens, with their employments, the amount of their property, &c., equivalent to what was meant by census. Judea was at that time tributary to Rome. It paid taxes to the Roman emperor; and, though Herod was *king*, yet he held his appointment under the Roman emperor, and was subject in most matters to him. Farther, as this *enrolment* was merely to ascertain the numbers and property of the Jews, it is probable that they were very willing to be enrolled in this manner; and hence we hear that they went willingly, without tumult— contrary to the common way when they were to be taxed.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And this taxing was first made*, &c. This verse has given as much perplexity, perhaps, as any one in the New Testament. The difficulty consists in the fact that *Cyrenius*, or *Quirinius*, was not governor of Syria until twelve or fifteen years after the birth of Jesus. Jesus was born during the reign of Herod. At that time *Varus* was president of Syria. Herod was succeeded by *Archelaus*, who reigned eight or nine years; and after he was removed, Judea was annexed to the province of Syria, and Cyrenius was sent as the governor (Josephus, Ant., b. xvii. § 5). The difficulty has been to reconcile this account with that in Luke. Various attempts have been made to do this. The one that seems most satisfactory is that proposed by Dr. Lardher. According to his view, the passage here means, "This was the *first* census of Cyrenius, governor of Syria." It is called the first to distinguish it from one afterward taken by Cyrenius, Ac 5:37. It is said to be the census taken by Cyrenius, governor of Syria; not that he was then governor, but that it was taken by him who was afterward familiarly known as governor. *Cyrenius, governor of Syria*, was the name by which the man was known when Luke wrote his gospel, and it was not improper to say that the taxing was made by *Cyrenius, the governor of Syria*, though he might not have been actually governor for many years afterward. Thus Herodian says that "to Marcus *the emperor* were born several daughters and two sons," though several of those children were born to him *before* he was *emperor*. Thus it is not improper to say that General Washington saved Braddock's army, or was engaged in the old French war, though he was not actually made *general* till many years afterward. According to this Augustus sent Cyrenius, an active, enterprising man, to take the census. At that time he was a Roman senator. Afterward he was made governor of the same country, and received the title which Luke gives him.

Syria. The region of country north of Palestine, and lying between the Mediterranean and the Euphrates. *Syria*, called in the Hebrew *Aram*, from a son of Shem (Ge 10:22), in its largest acceptation extended from the Mediterranean and the river Cydnus to the Euphrates, and from

Mount Taurus on the north to Arabia and the border of Egypt on the south. It was divided into *Syria Palestine*, including Canaan and Phoenicia; *Coele-Syria*, the tract of country lying between two ridges of Mount Lebanon and *Upper Syria*. The last was known as *Syria* in the restricted sense, or as the term was commonly used.

The leading features in the physical aspect of Syria consist of the great mountainous chains of Lebanon, or Libanus and Anti-Libanus, extending from north to south, and the great desert lying on the south-east and east. The valleys are of great fertility, and yield abundance of grain, vines, mulberries, tobacco, olives, excellent fruits, as oranges, figs, pistachios, &c. The climate in the inhabited parts is exceedingly fine. Syria is inhabited by various descriptions of people, but Turks and Greeks form the basis of the population in the cities. The only tribes that can be considered as peculiar to Syria are the tenants of the heights of Lebanon. The most remarkable of these are the Druses and Maronites. The general language is Arabic; the soldiers and officers of government speak Turkish. Of the old Syriac language no traces now exist.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 3

Verse 3. No entries in BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *The city of David*. Bethlehem, called the city of David because it was the place of his birth. **See Barnes on "Mt 2:2"**.

Because he Was of the house. Of the family.

And lineage. The lineage denotes that he was descended from David as his father or ancestor. In taking a Jewish census, families were kept distinct; hence all went to the *place* where their family had resided. Joseph was of the *family* of David, and hence he went up to the city of David. It is not improbable that he might also have had a small paternal estate in Bethlehem that rendered his presence there more desirable.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 5

Verse 5. No entries in BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 6

Verse 6. No entries in BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Her first-born son*. Whether Mary had any other children or not has been a matter of controversy. The obvious meaning of the Bible is that she had; and if this be the case, the word *first-born* is here to be taken in its common signification.

Swaddling clothes. When a child among the Hebrews was born, it was washed in water, rubbed in salt, and then wrapped in swaddling clothes; that is, not garments regularly made, as with us, but bands or blankets that confined the limbs closely, Eze 16:4. There was nothing peculiar in the manner in which the infant Jesus was treated.

Laid him in a manger. The word rendered "inn" in this verse means simply a place of halting, a lodging-place; in modern terms, a khan or caravanserai (Robinson's *Bib. Res. in Palest*., iii. 431). The word rendered "manger" means simply a crib or place where cattle were fed. "Inns," in our sense of the term, were anciently unknown in the East, and now they are not common. Hospitality was generally practised, so that a traveller had little difficulty in obtaining shelter and food when necessary. As travelling became more frequent, however, khans or caravanserais were erected for public use—large structures where the traveller might freely repair and find lodging for himself and his beast, he himself providing food and forage. Many such khans were placed at regular intervals in Persia. To such a place it was, though already crowded, that Joseph and Mary resorted at Bethlehem. Instead of finding a place in the "inn," or the part of the caravanserai where the travellers themselves found a place of repose, they were obliged to be contented in one of the stalls or recesses appropriated to the beasts on which they rode.

The following description of an Eastern inn or caravanserai, by Dr. Kitto, will well illustrate this passage:

> "It presents an external appearance which suggests to
> a European traveller the idea of a fortress, being
> an extensive square pile of strong and lofty walls,
> mostly of brick upon a basement of stone, with a
> grand archway entrance. This leads . . . to a large
> open area, with a well in the middle, and surrounded
> on three or four sides with a kind of piazza
> raised upon a platform 3 or 4 feet high, in the wall
> behind which are small doors leading to the cells or
> oblong chambers which form the lodgings. The cell, with
> the space on the platform in front of it, forms the
> domain of each individual traveller, where he is
> completely secluded, as the apparent piazza is not
> open, but is composed of the front arches of each
> compartment. There is, however, in the centre of
> one or more of the sides a large arched hall quite
> open in front. . . The cells are completely unfurnished,
> and have generally no light but from the door, and the
> traveller is generally seen in the recess in front of
> his apartment except during the heat of the day ....

> Many of these caravanserais have no stables, the cattle of the travellers being accommodated in the open area; but in the more complete establishments . . . there are . . . spacious stables, formed of covered avenues extending between the back wall of the lodging apartments and the outer wall of the whole building, the entrance being at one or more of the corners of the inner quadrangle. The stable is on the same level with the court, and thus below the level of the tenements which stand on the raised platform. Nevertheless, this platform is allowed to project behind into the stable, so as to form a bench .... It also often happens that not only this bench exists in the stable, forming a more or less narrow platform along its extent, but also recesses corresponding to these in front of the cells toward the open area, and formed, in fact, by the side-walls of these cells being allowed to project behind to the boundary of the platform. These, though small and shallow, form convenient retreats for servants and muleteers in bad weather.
>
> . . . Such a recess we conceive that Joseph and Mary occupied, with their ass or mule—if they had one, as they perhaps had—tethered in front .... it might be rendered quite private by a cloth being stretched across the lower part."

It may be remarked that the fact that Joseph and Mary were in that place, and under a necessity of taking up their lodgings there, was in itself no proof of poverty; it was a simple matter of necessity-there was *no room* at the inn. Yet it is worthy of our consideration that Jesus was born *poor*. He did not inherit a princely estate. He was not cradled, as many are, in a palace. He had no rich friends. He had virtuous, pious parents, of more value to a child than many riches. And in this we are shown that it is no dishonour to be poor. Happy is that child who, whether his parents be rich or poor, has a *pious* father and mother. It is no matter if he has not as much wealth, as fine clothes, or as splendid a house as another. It is enough for him to be as Jesus was, and God will bless him.

No room at the inn. Many people assembled to be *enrolled*, and the tavern was filled before Joseph and Mary arrived.

{a} "brought forth" Mt 1:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *The same country*. Round about Bethlehem.

Shepherds. Men who tended flocks of sheep.

Abiding in the field. Remaining out of doors, under the open sky, with their flocks. This was commonly done. The climate was mild, and, to keep their flocks from straying, they spent the night with them. It is also a fact that the Jews sent out their flocks into the mountainous and desert regions during the summer months, and took them up in the latter part of October or the first of November, when the cold weather commenced. While away in these deserts and mountainous regions, it was proper that there should be some one to attend them to keep them from straying, and from the ravages of wolves and other wild beasts. It is probable from this that our Saviour was born before the 25th of December, or before what we call Christmas. At that time it is cold, and especially in the high and mountainous regions about Bethlehem. But the exact time of his birth is unknown; there is no way to ascertain it. By different learned men it has been fixed at each month in the year. Nor is it of consequence to *know* the time; if it were, God would have preserved the record of it. Matters of moment are clearly revealed; those which he regards as of no importance are concealed.

Keeping watch {2}, &c. More literally, "tending their flocks by turns through the night watches."

{2} "watch" or "the night watches"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *The glory of the Lord*. This is the same as a great glory—that is, a splendid appearance or light. The word *glory* is often the same as light, 1Co 15:41; Lu 9:31; Ac 22:11.

The words *Lord* and *God* are often used to denote *greatness or intensity*. Thus, *trees of God* mean great trees; *hills of God*, high or lofty hills, &c. So *the glory of the Lord* here means an exceedingly great or bright luminous appearance—perhaps not unlike what Paul saw on the way to Damascus.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 11

Verse 11. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 12

Verse. 12. *This shall be a sign*, &c. The evidence by which you shall know the child is that you will find him wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 13

No entry from BARNES for this verse.
{c} "with the angel a multitude" Ps 103:21 1Pe 1:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Glory to God*. Praise be to God, or honour be to God. That is, the praise of redeeming man is due to God. The plan of redemption will bring glory to God, and is designed to express his glory. This it does by evincing his love to men, his mercy, his condescension, and his regard to the honour of his law and the stability of his own government. It is the highest expression of his love and mercy. Nowhere, so far as *we* can see, could his glory be more strikingly exhibited than in giving his only-begotten Son to die for men.

In the highest. This is capable of several meanings:

1st. In the highest *strains*, or in the highest possible manner.

2nd. *Among* the highest—that is, among the angels of God; indicating that they felt a deep interest in this work, and were called on to praise God for the redemption of man.

3rd. In the highest *heavens* —indicating that the praise of redemption should not be confined to the earth, but should spread throughout the universe.

4th. The words "God in the highest" may be equivalent to *the most high God*, and be the same as saying, "Let the most high God be praised for his love and mercy to men." Which of these meanings is the true one it is difficult to determine; but in this they all agree, that high praise is to be given to God for his love in redeeming men. O that not only *angels*, but *men*, would join universally in this song of praise!

On earth peace {d}. That is, the gospel will bring peace. The Saviour was predicted as the Prince of peace, Isa 9:6. The world is at war with God; sinners are at enmity against their Maker and against each other. There is no peace to the wicked. But Jesus came to make peace; and this he did,

1st. By reconciling the world to God by his atonement.

2nd. By bringing the sinner to a state of peace with his Maker; inducing him to lay down the weapons of rebellion and to submit his soul to God, thus giving him the peace which passeth all understanding.

3rd. By diffusing in the heart universal good-will to men—disposing men to lay aside their differences, to love one another, to seek each other's welfare, and to banish envy, malice, pride,

lust, passion, and covetousness —in all ages the most fruitful causes of difference among men. And,

4th. By diffusing the principles of universal peace among nations. If the gospel of Jesus should universally prevail, there would be an end of war. In the days of the millennium there will be universal peace; all the causes of war will have ceased; men will love each other and do justly; all nations will be brought under the influence of the gospel. O how should each one toil and pray that the great object of the gospel should be universally accomplished, and the world be filled with peace!

Good will toward men. The gift of the Saviour is an expression of good-will or love to men, and therefore God is to be praised. The work of redemption is uniformly represented as the fruit of the love of God, Joh 3:16 Eph 5:2; 1Jo 4:10 Re 1:5.

No words can express the greatness of that love. It can only be measured by the misery, helplessness, and danger of man; by the extent of his sufferings here and in the world of woe if he had not been saved; by the condescension, sufferings, and death of Jesus; and by the eternal honour and happiness to which he will raise his people. All these are beyond our full comprehension. Yet how little does man feel it! and how many turn away from the highest love of God, and treat the expression of that love with contempt! Surely, if God so loved us first, we ought also to love him, 1Jo 4:19.

{d} Is 57:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 15

Verse 15. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Unto Bethlehem*. The city of David, where the angel had told them they would find the Saviour. These shepherds appear to have been pious men. They were waiting for the coming of the Messiah. On the first intimation that he had actually appeared they went with haste to find him. So all men should without delay seek the Saviour. When told of him by the servants of God, they should, like these shepherds, forsake all, and give no rest to their eyes until they have found him. We may always find him. We need not travel to Bethlehem. We have only to cast our eyes to heaven; to look to him and to believe on him, and we shall find him ever near to us, and for ever our Saviour and friend.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *When they had seen* it. When they had satisfied themselves of the truth of the coming of the Messiah, and had ascertained that they could not have been mistaken in the appearance of

the angels. There was evidence enough to satisfy *them* that what the angels said was true, or they would not have gone to Bethlehem. Having seen the child themselves, they had now evidence that would satisfy others; and accordingly they became the first preachers of the *gospel*, and went and proclaimed to others that the Messiah had come. One of the first duties of those who are newly converted to God, and a duty in which they delight, is to proclaim to others what they have seen and felt. It should be done in a proper way and at the proper time; but nothing can or should prevent a Christian recently converted from telling his feelings and views to others—to his friends, to his parents, to his brothers, and to his old companions. And it may be remarked that often more good may be done then than during any other period of their life. Entreaties then make an impression; nor can a sinner well resist the appeals made to him by one who was just now with him in the way to ruin, but who now treads the way to heaven.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 18

Verse 18. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Mary kept all these things*. All that happened, and all that was said respecting her child. She *remembered* what the angel had said to *her*; what had happened to Elisabeth and to the shepherds—-all the extraordinary circumstances which had attended the birth of her son. Here is a delicate and beautiful expression of the feelings of a mother. A *mother* forgets none of those things which occur respecting her children. Everything they do or suffer —everything that is said of them, is treasured up in her mind; and often, often, she thinks of those things, and anxiously seeks what they may indicate respecting the future character and welfare of her child.

Pondered. Weighed. This is the original meaning of the word *weighed*. She kept them; she revolved them; she weighed them in her mind, giving to each circumstance its just importance, and anxiously seeking what it might indicate respecting her child.

In her heart. In her mind. She *thought* of these things often and anxiously.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *The shepherds returned*. To their flocks.

Glorifying, &c. Giving honour to God, and celebrating his praises.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Eight {e} days*, &c. This was the regular time for performing the rite of circumcision, Ge 17:12.

Called Jesus.

See Barnes on "Mt 1:21".

{e} Le 12:3 {f} "so named of the angel" Mt 1:21 Lu 1:31

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Days {g} of her purification*. Among the Hebrews a mother was required to remain at home for about forty days after the birth of a male child and about eighty for a female, and during that time she was reckoned as *impure* —that is, she was not permitted to go to the temple or to engage in religious services with the congregation, Le 12:3,4.

To Jerusalem. The place where the temple was, and where the ordinances of religion were celebrated.

To present him to the Lord. Every first-born male child among the Jews was regarded as *holy* to the Lord, Ex 13:2. By their being *holy unto the Lord* was meant that unto them belonged the office of *priests*. It was theirs to be set apart to the service of God — to offer sacrifice, and to perform the duties of religion. It is probable that at first the duties of religion devolved on the *father*, and that, when he became infirm or died, that duty devolved on the eldest son; and it is still manifestly proper that where the father is infirm or has deceased, the duty of conducting family worship should be performed by the eldest son. Afterward God chose *the tribe of Levi in the place* to serve him in the sanctuary, Nu 8:13-18. Yet still it was proper to present the child to God, and it was required that it should be done with an offering.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *As it is written*, &c., Ex 13:2

{h} "Every male that openeth the womb" Ex 13:12 22:29; Nu 8:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *And to offer a sacrifice*, &c. Those who were able on such an occasion were required to offer a lamb for a burnt-offering, and a pigeon or a turtle-dove for a sin-offering. If not able to bring a *lamb*, then they were permitted to bring two turtle-doves or two young pigeons, Le 12:6,8.

Turtle-doves. Doves distinguished for having a plaintive and tender voice. By Mary's making this offering she showed her poverty; and our Saviour, by coming in a state of poverty, has shown

that it is not dishonourable to be poor. No station is dishonourable where *God* places us. He knows what is best for us, and he often makes a state of poverty an occasion of the highest blessings. If *with* poverty he grants us, as is often the case, peace, contentment, and religion, it is worth far more than all the jewels of Golconda or the gold of Mexico. If it be asked why, since the Saviour was pure from any moral defilement in his conception and birth, it was necessary to offer such a sacrifice; why was it necessary that he should be circumcised, since he had no sin, it may be answered —

1st. That it was proper to fulfil all righteousness, and to show obedience to the law, Mt 3:15.

2nd. It was necessary for the future usefulness of Christ. Unless he had been circumcised, he could not have been admitted to any synagogue or to the temple. He would have had no access to the people, and could not have been regarded as the Messiah. Both he and Mary, therefore, yielded obedience to the laws of the land, and thus set us an example that we should walk in their steps. Comp. **See Barnes on "Mt 3:15"**.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Whose name was Simeon*. Some have supposed that this Simeon was a son of the famous *Hillel*, a distinguished teacher in Jerusalem, and president of the Sanhedrim; but nothing is certainly known of him but what is here related. He was an aged man, of distinguished piety and reputation, and was anxiously expecting the coming of the Messiah. Such an *old age* is peculiarly honourable. No spectacle is more sublime than an old man of piety and high character looking for the appearing of the Lord, and patiently waiting for the time to come when he may be blessed with the sight of his Redeemer.

Just. Righteous before God and man; approved by God as a righteous man, and discharging faithfully his duty to man.

Devout {i} . This word means *a religious man*, or a *pious* man. The original expresses the idea of *good reputation, well received*, or of high standing among the people.

Waiting for the consolation {k} of Israel. That is, waiting for the *Messiah*, who is called the consolation of Israel because he would give comfort to them by his appearing. This term was often applied to the Messiah before he actually appeared. It was common to swear, also, by "the consolation of Israel "—that is, by the Messiah about to come. See Lightfoot on this place.

The Holy Ghost, &c. He was a holy man, and was divinely inspired respecting the Messiah about to appear.

{i} Mr 15:43 Lu 2:38 {k} Isa 40:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *And it was revealed unto him*. In what way this was done we are not informed. Sometimes a revelation was made by a dream, at others by a voice, and at others by silent suggestion. All we know of this is that it was by the Holy Ghost.

Not see death {l}. Should not die. To *see* death and to *taste* of death, was a common way among the Hebrews of expressing death itself. Comp. Ps 89:48.

The Lord's Christ. Rather *the Lord's Anointed*. The word *Christ* means *anointed*, and it would have been better to use that word here. To an aged man who had been long waiting for the Messiah, how grateful must have been this revelation—this solemn assurance that the Messiah was near! But this revelation is now given to every man, that he need not taste of death till, by the eye of faith, he may see the Christ of God. He is offered freely. He has come. He waits to manifest himself to the world, and he is not willing that any should die for ever. To us also it will be as great a privilege in our dying hours to have seen Christ by faith as it was to Simeon. It will be the only thing that can support us then—the only thing that will enable us to depart in peace.

{l} Ps 89:48 Heb 11:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *By the Spirit*. By the direction of the Spirit.

Into the temple. Into that part of the temple where the public worship was chiefly performed—into the court of the women. **See Barnes on "Mt 21:12"**.

The custom of the law. That is, to make an offering for purification, and to present him to God.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *Blessed God*. Thanked or praised God.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *{m} Now lettest*. Now thou *dost* let or permit. This word is in the indicative mood, and signifies that God *was permitting* him to die in peace {n}, by having relieved his anxieties, allayed his fears, fulfilled the promises, and having, by the appearing of the Messiah, removed every reason why he should live any longer, and every wish to live.

Depart. Die.

According to thy word. Thy promise made by revelation. God never disappoints. To many it might have appeared improbable, when such a promise was made to an old man, that it should be fulfilled. But God fulfills all his word, keeps all his promises, and NEVER disappoints those who trust in him.

{m} Ge 46:30 {n} Isa 57:2 Re 14:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *Thy salvation*. Him who is to procure salvation for his people; or, the Saviour.
{o} "seen" Isa 52:10 Lu 3:6; Ac 4:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *Before the face of all people*. Whom thou hast provided for all people, or whom thou dost design to reveal to all people.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *A light to lighten the Gentiles {p}*. This is in accordance with the prophecies in the Old Testament, Isa 49:1-26 9:6,7

Ps 98:3 Mal 4:2. The Gentiles are represented as sitting in darkness—that is, in ignorance and sin. Christ is a *light* to them, as by him they will be made acquainted with the character of the true God, his law, and the plan of redemption. As the darkness rolls away when the sun arises, so ignorance and error flee away when Jesus gives light to the mind. Nations shall come to his light, and kings to the brightness of his rising, Isa 60:3.

And the glory, &c. The first offer of salvation was made to the Jews, Joh 4:22; Lu 24:47. Jesus was born among the Jews; to them had been given the prophecies respecting him, and his first ministry was among them. Hence he was their glory, their honour, their light. But it is a subject of special gratitude to us that the Saviour was given also for the Gentiles; for,

1. We are Gentiles, and if he had not come we should have been shut out from the blessings of redemption.

2. It is he only that now
"Can make our dying bed
Feel soft as downy pillows are,
While on his breast we lean our head,
And breathe our life out sweetly there."

Thus our departure may be like that of Simeon. Thus we may die in peace. Thus it will be a blessing to die. But,

3. In order to do this, our life must be like that of Simeon. We must *wait* for the consolation of Israel. We must look for his coming. We must be holy, harmless, undefiled, loving the Saviour. Then death to us, like death to Simeon, will have no terror; we shall depart in peace, and in heaven see the salvation of God, 2Pe 3:11,12. But,

4. Children, as well as the hoary-headed Simeon, may look for the coming of Christ. They too must die; and their death will be happy only as they depend on the Lord Jesus, and are prepared to meet him.

{p} Isa 42:6 49:6, 60:3 Ac 13:47,48

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 33

Verse 33. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *Simeon blessed them*. Joseph and Mary. On them he sought the blessing of God.

Is set. Is appointed or constituted for that, or such will be he effect of his coming.

The fall. The word *fall* here denotes *misery, suffering, disappointment*, or *ruin*. There is a plain reference to the passage where it is said that he should be *a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence*, Isa 8:14,15. Many expected a temporal prince, and in this they were disappointed. They loved darkness rather than light, and rejected him, and *fell* unto destruction. Many that were proud were brought low by his preaching. They *fell* from the vain and giddy height of their own self-righteousness, and were humbled before God, and then, through him, rose again to a better righteousness and to better hopes. The nation also rejected him and put him to death, and, as a judgment, *fell* into the hands of the Romans. Thousands were led into captivity, and thousands perished. The nation rushed into ruin, the temple was destroyed, and the people were scattered into all the nations. See Ro 9:32,33; 1Pe 2:8; 1Co 1:23,24.

And rising again. The word "again" is not expressed in the Greek. It seems to be supposed, in our translation, that the *same persons* would fall and rise again; but this is not the meaning of the passage. It denotes that many would be ruined by his coming, and that many *others* would be made happy or be saved. Many of the poor and humble, that were *willing* to receive him, would obtain pardon of sin and peace—would *rise* from their sins and sorrows here, and finally ascend to eternal life.

And for a sign, &c. The word *sign* here denotes a conspicuous or distinguished object, and the Lord Jesus was such an object of contempt and rejection by all the people. He was despised, and his religion has been the common *mark* or *sign* for all the wicked, the profligate, and the profane, to curse, and ridicule, and oppose. Comp. Isa 8:18 Ac 28:22. Never was a prophecy more exactly fulfilled than this. Thousands have rejected the gospel and fallen into ruin; thousands are still falling of those who are ashamed of Jesus; thousands blaspheme him, deny him, speak all manner of evil against him, and would crucify him again if he were in their hands; but thousands also *by* him are renewed, justified, and raised up to life and peace.

{q} "fall" Isa 8:14 Ro 9:32,33 1Co 1:23,24 2Co 2:16; 1Pe 2:7,8

{r} "spoken against" Ac 28:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *Yea, a sword {s}* , &c. The sufferings and death of thy Son shall deeply afflict thy soul. And if Mary had not been thus forewarned and sustained by strong faith, she could not have

borne the trials which came upon her Son; but God prepared her for it, and the holy mother of the dying Saviour was sustained.

That the thoughts, &c. This is connected with the preceding verse: "He shall be a sign, a conspicuous object to be spoken against, that the thoughts of many hearts may be made manifest"—that is, that they *might show* how much they hated holiness. Nothing so brings out the feelings of sinners as to tell them of Jesus Christ. Many treat him with silent contempt; many are ready to gnash their teeth; many curse him; all show how much by nature the heart is opposed to religion, and thus are really, in spite of themselves, fulfilling the Scriptures and the prophecies. So true is it that "none can say that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Ghost," 1Co 12:3.

{s} Joh 19:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *Of the tribe of Aser*. The tribe of Aser, or Asher, dwelt in the northern part of the land of Canaan. Why Anna was called a prophetess is not known. It might be because she had been the wife of a prophet, or because she was employed in celebrating the praises of God (comp. 1Ch 25:1,2,4 1Sa 10:5) , or because she herself foretold future events, being inspired.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *And she was a widow of about four-score and four years*. That is, she was about eighty-four years of age. It does not mean that she had been a widow for that long time.

Fastings and prayers {u} Constant religious service. Spending her time in prayer, and in all the ordinances of religion.

Night and day. Continually—that is, at the usual times of public worship and in private. When it is said that she departed not from the temple, it is meant that she was constant and regular in all the public services at the temple, or was never absent from those services. God blesses those who wait at his temple gates.

{u} Ac 26:7 1Ti 5:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 38

Verse 38. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

{v} "looked for redemption" Lu 2:25 {4} "in Jerusalem", or "Israel"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *They returned into Galilee*. Not *immediately*, but after a time. Luke has omitted the flight into Egypt recorded by Matthew; but he has not denied it, nor are his words to be pressed as if he meant to affirm that they went immediately to Nazareth. A parallel case we have in the life of Paul. When he was converted it is said that he came to Jerusalem, as if he had gone there immediately after his conversion (Ac 9:26); yet we learn in another place that this was after an interval of three years, Ga 1:17,18. In the case before us there is no improbability in supposing that they returned to Bethlehem, then went to Egypt, and then to Galilee.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 40

Verse 40. *Strong in spirit*. In mind, intellect, understanding. Jesus had a human soul, and *that* soul was subject to all the proper laws of a human spirit. It therefore increased in knowledge, strength, and character. Nor is it any more inconsistent with his being God to say that his soul expanded, than to say that his body grew.

Filled with wisdom. Eminent for wisdom when a child—that is, exhibiting an extraordinary understanding, and wise to flee from everything sinful and evil.

And the grace of God, &c. The word *grace* in the New Testament commonly means unmerited favour shown *to sinners*. Here it means no more than *favour*. God showed him *favour*, or was pleased with him and blessed him. It is remarkable that this is all that is recorded of the infancy of Jesus; and this, with the short account that follows of his going to Jerusalem, is all that we know of him for thirty years of his life. The design of the evangelists was to give an account of his *public ministry*, and not his private life. Hence they say little of him in regard to his first years. What they *do* say, however, corresponds entirely with what we might expect. He was wise, pure, pleasing God, and deeply skilled in the knowledge of the divine law. He set a lovely example for all children; was subject to his parents, and increased in favour with God and man.

{w} "filled with wisdom" Isa 11:2,3; Lu 2:52

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 41

Verse 41. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

{x} "every year at the feast of the passover" Ex 23:15 De 16:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 42

Verse 42. *Twelve years old*. All males among the Hebrews were required to appear three times a year before God, to attend on the ordinances of religion in the temple, and it is probable that this was the age at which they first went up to Jerusalem, Ex 23:14-17; De 16:16.

To Jerusalem. Where the feasts of the Jews were all held. This was a journey from Nazareth of about 70 miles.

After the custom of the feast. According to the usual manner of the feast.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 43

Verse 43. *Had fulfilled the days*. The days of the Passover. These were eight days in all—one day for killing the paschal lamb, and seven days for the observance of the feast of unleavened bread, Ex 12:15; Le 23:5,6.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 44

Verse 44. *Supposing him to have been in the company*. It may seem very remarkable that parents should not have been more attentive to their only son, and that they should not have been assured of his presence with them when they left Jerusalem; but the difficulty may be explained by the following considerations:

1. In going to these great feasts, families and neighbours would join together, and form a large collection.

2. It is not improbable that Jesus was with them when they were about to start from Jerusalem and were making preparations. Seeing him then, they might have been certain as to his presence.

3. A part of the company might have left before the others, and Joseph and Mary may have supposed that he was with them, until they overtook them at night and ascertained their mistake.

Kinsfolk. Relatives.

Acquaintances. Neighbours who had gone up with them in the same company to Jerusalem.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 45

Verse 45. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 46

Verse 46. *After three days*. This means, probably, on the third day after they had left Jerusalem — that is, the first day they went toward Galilee, on the second they returned to Jerusalem, and on the third they found him. Comp. Mt 27:63 Mr 8:31.

In the temple. In the court of the temple, for Jesus, not being a Levitical priest, could not enter into the temple itself. See Mt 21:12.

In the midst of the doctors. The *teachers*, the *Rabbins*, who were the instructors of the people in matters of religion.

Asking them questions. Proposing questions to them respecting the law and the prophets. There is no reason to suppose that this was for the purpose of perplexing or confounding them. The questions were doubtless proposed in a respectful manner, and the answers listened to with proper deference to their age and rank. Jesus was a child, and religion does not teach a child to be rude or uncivil, even though he may really know much more than more aged persons. Religion teaches all, and especially the young, to treat others with respect, to show them the honour that is due, to venerate age, and to speak kindly to all, 1Pe 2:17; 1Pe 3:8,9 Ex 20:12 Mt 23:3; Ro 13:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 47

Verse 47. No entry from BARNES for this verse.
{y} "understanding and answers" Ps 119:99 Mt 7:28; Mr 1:22

Lu 4:22,32; Joh 7:15,46

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 48

Verse 48. *Why hast thou thus dealt with us*? Why hast thou given us all this trouble and anxiety, in going so far and returning with so much solicitude?

Thy father. Joseph was not the real father of Jesus, but he was legally so; and as the secret of his birth was not commonly known, he was called his father. Mary, in accordance with that usage, also called him so.

Sorrowing. Anxious, lest in the multitude he might not be found, or lest some accident might have happened to him.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 49

Verse 49. *How is it*, &c. Why have ye sought me with so much anxiety? *Mary* should have known that the Son of God was safe; that his heavenly Father would take care of him, and that he *could* do nothing amiss.

Wist ye not. *Know* ye not. You had reason to know. You knew my design in coming into the world, and that design was *superior* to the duty of obeying earthly parents, and they should be willing always to give me up to the proper business for which I live.

My Father's business. Some think that this should be translated "in my Father's house" — that is, in the temple. Jesus reminded them here that he came down from heaven; that he had a higher Father than an earthly parent; and that, even in early life, it was proper that he should be engaged

in the work for which he came. He did not enter, indeed, upon his public work for eighteen years after this; yet still the work of God was his work, and always, even in childhood, it was proper for him to be engaged in the great business for which he came down from heaven.

{z} Joh 5:17 9:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 50

Verse 50. *They understood not*, &c. It is remarkable that they did not understand Jesus in this, but it shows how slow persons are to believe. Even his parents, after all that had taken place, did not seem to comprehend that *he* was to be the Saviour of men, or if they did, they understood it in a very imperfect manner.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 51

Verse 51. *Went down with them*. Down from Jerusalem, which was in a high, mountainous region.

Was subject unto them. Performed the duty of a faithful and obedient child, and not improbably was engaged in the trade of Joseph—- that of a carpenter. Every Jew was required to learn some trade, and there is every reason to think that our Saviour followed that of his reputed father. And from this we learn—

1. That obedience to parents is a duty. Jesus has set an example in this that all children should follow. Though he was the Son of God, and on proper occasions was engaged in the great work of redemption, yet he was also the *son* of *Mary*, and he loved and obeyed his mother, and was *subject* to her.

2. It is no dishonour to be a mechanic, or to be brought up in an obscure employment. Jesus has conferred honour on virtuous industry, and no man should be ashamed of industrious parents, though poor, or of a condition of life that is far from ease and affluence. Industry is honourable, and virtuous poverty should not be regarded as a matter of reproach. The only thing to be ashamed of, in regard to this matter, is when men are idle, or when children are too proud to hear or speak of the occupation of their parents, or to *follow* the same occupation.

{a} "his mother kept all these sayings" Da 7:28 Lu 2:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 2 - Verse 52

Verse 52. *In favour with God*. That is, in proportion to his advance in wisdom. This does not imply that he ever lacked the favour of God, but that God regarded him with favour in proportion as he showed an understanding and spirit like his own. Happy are those children who imitate the example of Jesus—who are obedient to parents—who increase in wisdom—who are sober, temperate, and industrious, and who thus increase in favour with God and men.

{b} "increased in wisdom" 1Sa 2:26 Lu 2:40 {5} "stature", or "age"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 3 - Verse 1

LUKE CHAPTER III.

Verse 1. *Now in the fifteenth year*. This was the thirteenth year of his being sole emperor. He was two years joint emperor with Augustus, and Luke reckons from the time when he was admitted to share the empire with Augustus Caesar. See Lardner's *Credibility*, vol. i.

Tiberius Caesar. Tiberius succeeded Augustus in the empire, and began his sole reign Aug. 19, A.D. 14. He was a most infamous character — a scourge to the Roman people. He reigned twenty-three years, and was succeeded by Caius Caligula, whom he appointed his successor on account of his notorious wickedness, and that he might be, as he expressed it, a serpent to the Romans.

Pontius Pilate. Herod the Great left his kingdom to three sons. **See Barnes "Mt 2:22"**.

To *Archelaus* he left *Judea*. *Archelaus* reigned *nine* years, when, on account of his crimes, he was banished into Vienne, and Judea was made a Roman province, and placed entirely under Roman governors or procurators, and became completely tributary to Rome. Pontius Pilate was the *fifth* governor that had been sent, and of course had been in Judea but a short time. See the chronological table at the end of the volume.

Herod being tetrarch of Galilee. This was *Herod Antipas*, son of Herod the Great, to whom Galilee had been left as his part of his father's kingdom. The word *tetrarch* properly denotes one who presides over a *fourth part* of a country or province; but it also came to be a general title, denoting one who reigned over any part—a, third, a half, &c. In this case Herod had a *third* of the dominions of his father, but he was called tetrarch. It was this Herod who imprisoned John the Baptist, and to whom our Saviour, when arraigned, was sent by Pilate.

And his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea. *Iturea* was so called from *Jetur*, one of the sons of Ishmael, Ge 25:15 1Ch 1:31. It was situated on the east side of the Jordan, and was taken from the descendants of Jetur by the tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh, 1Ch 5:19.

Region of Trachonitis. This region was also on the east of the Jordan, and extended northward to the district of Damascus and eastward to the deserts of Arabia. It was bounded on the west by Gaulonitis and south by the city of Bostra. Philip had obtained this region from the Romans on condition that he would extirpate the robbers.

Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene. Abilene was so called from *Abila*, its chief city. It was situated in Syria, north-west of Damascus and south-east of Mount Lebanon, and was adjacent to Galilee.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 3 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Annas {a} and Caiaphas being high-priests*. There was, properly speaking, but *one* high-priest of the Jews; yet the *name* of high-priest continued to be given to those who had been in that office, and especially when they still possessed some civil office after they had left the high-priesthood. In this case it appears that *Caiaphas* was high-priest, and Annas *had been*, but had been dismissed from the office. It is highly probable that he still held an office under the Romans, and was perhaps president of the Sanhedrim. He is mentioned before *Caiaphas* because he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, and probably was the eldest, and had been longest in office. Instances similar to this may be found in Josephus.

There is one remark to be made here about the manner in which the gospels are written. They have every mark of openness and honesty. An impostor does not mention names, and times, and places particularly. If he did, it would be easy to ascertain that he was an impostor. But the sacred writers describe objects and men as if they were perfectly familiar with them. They never appear to be *guarding* themselves. They speak of things most minutely. If, therefore, they had been impostors, it would have been easy to detect them. If, for example, John did *not* begin to preach in the fifteenth year of Tiberius—if Philip was *not* tetrarch of Iturea—if Pontius Pilate was *not* governor of Judea, how easy would it have been to detect them in falsehood! Yet it was never done. Nay, we have evidence of that age, in Josephus, that these descriptions are strictly true; and, consequently, the gospels must have been written by men who were personally acquainted with what they wrote, who were not impostors, and who were *honest* men. If they were *honest*, then the Christian religion is true.

{a} Joh 11:49,51, 18:13 Ac 4:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 3 - Verse 3

Verse 3. On the baptism of John, **See Barnes on "Mt 3:1"**.

{b} "And" Mt 3:1 Mr 1:4 {c} "baptism of repentance" Lu 1:77

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 3 - Verse 4

Verse 4. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

{d} "The voice of one crying in the wilderness" Isa 40:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 3 - Verse 5

Verse 5. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 3 - Verse 6

Verse 6. No entry from BARNES for this verse.
{e} "And all flesh" Ps 98:2 Isa 40:5, 52:10 Ro 10:12,18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 3 - Verse 7

Verse 7. No entry from BARNES for this verse.
{f} "O generation of vipers" Mt 3:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 3 - Verse 8

Verse 8. No entry from BARNES for this verse.
{1} "fruits worthy of repentance", or "meet for"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 3 - Verse 9

Verse 9. No entry from BARNES for this verse.
{g} "every tree" Mt 7:19 Lu 13:7,9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 3 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *What shall we do, then*? John had told them to bring forth fruits appropriate to repentance, or to lead a life which showed that their repentance was genuine. They very properly, therefore, asked how it should be done, or what *would* be such a life.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 3 - Verse 11

Verse 11.*He {h} that hath two coats*, &c. Or, in other words, aid the poor according to your ability; be benevolent, and you will thus show that your repentance is genuine. It is remarkable that one of the *first* demands of religion is to do good, and it is in this way that it may be shown that the repentance is not feigned.

For 1st. The nature of religion is to do good.

2nd. This requires self-denial, and none will deny themselves who are not attached to God. And

3rd. This is to imitate Jesus Christ, who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor.

Coats **See Barnes on "Mt 5:40".**
Meat. Provision of any kind.
{h} Lu 11:41 2Co 8:14; 1Jo 3:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 3 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *The publicans {i}* .
See Barnes on "Mt 5:47".
There is reason to think that the *publicans* or *tax-gatherers* were peculiarly oppressive and hard in their dealings with the people; and that, as they had every opportunity of exacting more than they ought, so they often did it, and thus enriched themselves. The evidence of repentance in them would be to break off their sins in this respect, and to deal justly.
{i} Mt 21:32 Lu 7:29

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 3 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Exact {k}*. Demand, or take, no more.
Than that which is appointed. That is, by the government. John does not condemn the office, or say that the employment should be forsaken. Though it was hated by the people—though often abused and therefore unpopular —yet *the office itself* was not dishonourable. If there is a government, it must be supported; and of course there must be men whose duty it is to collect taxes, as the means of the proper support of the government; and as such a support of the government is necessary, so the people should pay cheerfully the just apportionment of their rulers, and regard favourably those who are authorized to collect it. See Ro 13:1-6.
{k} Lu 19:8 1Co 6:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 3 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *The soldiers likewise*. It seems that they also came to his baptism. Whether these were Jews or Romans cannot be ascertained. It is not improbable that, as Judea was a Roman province, they were Jews or Jewish proselytes in the service of Herod Antipas or Philip, and so were really in the Roman service.
Do violence {2}, &c. Do not take the property of any by unlawful force, or do not use unjust force against the person or property of any individual. It is probable that many of them were oppressive, or prone to violence, rapine, or theft, and burdensome even in times of peace to the inhabitants.
Neither accuse any falsely. It is probable that when they wished the property of others and could not obtain it by violence, or when there was no pretext for violence, they often attempted the same-thing in another way, and falsely accused the persons of crime. The word rendered falsely

accused is the one from which our word *sycophant* is derived. The proper meaning of the word *sycophant* was this: There was a law in Athens which prohibited the importation of figs. The *sycophant* (literally the man who made figs to appear, or who showed them) was one who made complaint to the magistrate of persons who had imported figs contrary to law, or who was an *informer*; and then the word came to be used in a general sense to denote *any* complainer — a calumniator—an accuser —an informer. As such persons were usually cringing and fawning, and looked for a reward, the word came to be used also to denote a fawner or flatterer. It is always used in a bad sense. It is correctly rendered here, "do not accuse any falsely."

Be content, &c. Do not murmur or complain, or take unlawful means to increase your wages.

Wages. This word means not only the *money* which was paid them, but also their *rations* or daily allowance of food. By this they were to show that their repentance was genuine; that it had a practical influence; that it produced a *real* reformation of life; and it is clear that *no other* repentance would be genuine. Every profession of repentance which is not attended with a change of life is mere hypocrisy. It did not condemn their profession, or say that it was unlawful to be a soldier, or that they must abandon the business in order to be true penitents. It was possible to be a good man and yet a soldier. What was required was that in their profession they should show that they were really upright, and did not commit the crimes which were often practised in that calling. It is lawful to defend one's self, one's family, or one's country, and hence it is lawful to be a soldier. Man everywhere, in all professions, should be a Christian, and then he will do honour to his profession, and his profession, if it is not a direct violation of the law of God, will be honourable.

{2} "Do violence" or "Put no man in fear"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 3 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *In expectation*. Expecting the Messiah. Marg. *suspense*. That is, they were not certain whether John was not himself the Messiah. They confidently *expected* his appearing, and there minds were in *suspense*, or they were in a state of doubt whether he had not already come, and whether John was not the Messiah.

Mused in their hearts of John. Thought of his character, his preaching, and his success, and anxiously inquired whether he did not do the things which were expected of the Messiah.

{4} "in expectation" or "in suspense" {5} "mused" or "reasoned" or "debated"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 3 - Verse 16

Verse 16. **See Barnes on "Mt 11:11"**; **See Barnes on** "Mt 11:12"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 3 - Verse 17

Verse 17. **See Barnes on "Mt 11:11"**
See Barnes on "Mt 11:12"

{n} "fan" Jer 15:7 {o} "will gather" Mic 4:12 Mt 13:30 {p} "chaff" Ps 1:4 {q} "burn with fire unquenchable" Ps 21:9 Mr 9:44,48

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 3 - Verse 18

Verse 18. **See Barnes on "Mt 11:11"**
See Barnes on "Mt 11:12"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 3 - Verse 19

Verse 19. **See Barnes on "Mt 14:1"**
See Barnes on "Mt 14:2"
See Barnes on "Mt 14:3"; See Barnes on "Mt 14:4"
See Barnes on "Mt 14:5"; See Barnes on "Mt 14:6"
See Barnes on "Mt 14:7"; See Barnes on "Mt 14:8"
See Barnes on "Mt 14:9"; See Barnes on "Mt 14:10"
See Barnes on "Mt 14:11"; See Barnes on "Mt 14:12"
See Barnes on "Mt 14:13"

Added this above all, To all his former crimes he added this; not implying that this was the *worst* of his acts, but that this was *one* of his deeds, of like character as the others. The event here mentioned did not take place until some time after this, but it is mentioned here to show what was the end of John's preaching, or to fill out the account concerning him.

{r} "Herod the tetrarch" Mt 14:3 Mr 6:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 3 - Verse 20

Verse 20. **See Barnes on "Mt 14:1"**
See Barnes on "Mt 14:2"
See Barnes on "Mt 14:3"; See Barnes on "Mt 14:4"
See Barnes on "Mt 14:5"; See Barnes on "Mt 14:6"
See Barnes on "Mt 14:7"; See Barnes on "Mt 14:8"
See Barnes on "Mt 14:9"; See Barnes on "Mt 14:10"

See Barnes on "Mt 14:11"; See Barnes on "Mt 14:12"
See Barnes on "Mt 14:13"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 3 - Verse 21

Verse 21. **See Barnes on "Mt 3:13"; See Barnes on** "Mt 3:14"
See Barnes on "Mt 3:15"; See Barnes on "Mt 3:16"
See Barnes on "Mt 3:17"

Jesus being baptized; or, Jesus *having been* baptized. This took place after the baptism, and not during its administration, Mt 3:16.

Praying. This circumstance is omitted by the other evangelists; and it shows,

1st. That Jesus was in the habit of prayer.

2nd. That it is proper to offer up special prayer at the administration of the ordinances of religion.

3rd. That it is possible to pray in the midst of a great multitude, yet in secret. The prayer consisted, doubtless, in lifting up the heart silently to God. So *we* may do it anywhere—about our daily toil—in the midst of multitudes, and thus may pray always.

{s} "it came to pass" Mt 3:13 Joh 1:32

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 3 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *In a bodily shape*. This was a real visible appearance, and was doubtless seen by the people. The dove is an emblem of purity and harmlessness, and the form of the dove was assumed on this occasion to signify, probably, that the spirit with which Jesus would be endowed would be one of purity and innocence. The *Holy Spirit*, when he assumes a visible form, assumes that which will be emblematic of the thing to be represented. Thus he assumed the form of *tongues*, to signify the miraculous powers of language with which the apostles would be endowed; the appearance of fire, to denote their power, &c., Ac 2:3.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 3 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Jesus began to be*, &c. This was the age at which the priests entered on their office, Nu 4:3,47; but it is not evident that Jesus had any reference to that in delaying his work to his thirtieth year. He was not subjected to the Levitical law in regard to the priesthood, and it does not appear that prophets and teachers did not commence their work before that age.

As was supposed. As was commonly thought, or perhaps being levitically reckoned as his son.

{t} "son of Joseph" Mt 13:55 Joh 6:42

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 3 - Verse 24

Verse 24. **See Barnes on "Mt 1:1-16"**

See, on this genealogy, **See Barnes "Mt 1:1"**
also Mt 1:2-16.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 3 - Verse 25

Verse 25. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 3 - Verse 26

Verse 26. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 3 - Verse 27

Verse 27. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 3 - Verse 28

Verse 28. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 3 - Verse 29

Verse 29. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 3 - Verse 30

Verse 30. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 3 - Verse 31

Verse 31. No entry from BARNES for this verse.
{u} "Nathan" Zec 12:12 2Sa 5:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 3 - Verse 32

Verse 32. No entry from BARNES for this verse.
{v} "Jesse" Ru 4:18,22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 3 - Verse 33

Verse 33. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 3 - Verse 34

Verse 34. No entry from BARNES for this verse.
{w} "Abraham" Ge 11:24-26

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 3 - Verse 35

Verse 35. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 3 - Verse 36

Verse 36. No entry from BARNES for this verse.
{x} "Arphaxad" Ge 11:12 {y} "Lamech" Ge 5:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 3 - Verse 37

Verse 37. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 3 - Verse 38

Verse 38. No entry from BARNES for this verse.
{z} "the son of God" Ge 1:26 2:7; Isa 64:8 1Co 15:45,47

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 1

LUKE CHAPTER IV.
Verses 1-14. On the temptation of Jesus **See Barnes on "Mt 4:1"**

{a} "And Jesus" Mt 4:1 Mr 1:2; Lu 4:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Being forty days tempted*. That is, through forty days he was tried in various ways by the devil. The temptations, however, which are recorded by Matthew and Luke did not take place until the forty days were finished. See Mt 4:2,3.

He did eat nothing. He was sustained by the power of God during this season of extraordinary fasting.

{b} "in those days" Ex 34:28 1Ki 19:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 3

Verse 3. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 4

Verse 4. No entry from BARNES for this verse.
{c} "It is written" De 8:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 5

Verse 5. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 6

Verse 6. No entry from BARNES for this verse.
{d} "for that is delivered to me"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 7

Verse 7. No entry from BARNES for this verse.
{1} "wilt worship me" or "fall down before me"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 8

Verse 8. No entry from BARNES for this verse.
{e} "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God" De 6:13 10:20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 9

Verse 9. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No entry from BARNES for this verse.
{f} "He shall give his angels charge over thee" Ps 91:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 11

Verse 11. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 12

Verse 12. No entry from BARNES for this verse.
{g} "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" De 6:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Departed for a season*. For a time. From this it appears that our Saviour was afterward subjected to temptations by Satan, but no particular temptations are recorded after this. From Joh 14:30, it seems that the devil tried or tempted him in the agony in Gethsemane. Comp. **See Barnes on "Heb 12:4"**.

It is more than probable, also, that Satan did much to excite the Pharisees and Sadducees to endeavour to *entangle him*, and the priests and rulers to oppose him; yet out of all his temptations God delivered him; and so he will make a way to escape for *all* that are tempted, and will not suffer them to be tempted above that which they are able to bear, 1Co 10:13.

{h} "all the temptation" Heb 4:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *In the power of the Spirit*. By the influence or direction of the Spirit.
A fame. A report. See Mt 4:24
{i} "returned in the power of the Spirit" Joh 4:43 Ac 10:37

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Glorified of all*. Praised by all; or, all were pleased with his instructions, and admired his wisdom.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *And, as his custom was, he went {l}*, &c. From this it appears that the Saviour regularly attended the service of the synagogue. In that service the Scriptures of the Old Testament were read, prayers were offered, and the Word of God was explained. **See Barnes on "Mt 4:23"**.

There was great corruption in doctrine and practice at that time, but Christ did not on that account keep away from the place of public worship. From this we may learn—

1st. That it is our duty *regularly* to attend public worship.

2nd. That it is better to attend a place of worship which is not entirely pure, or where just such doctrines are not delivered as we would wish, than not attend at all. It is of vast importance that the public worship of God should be maintained; and it is our duty to assist in maintaining it, to show by our example that we love it, and to win others also to love it. See Heb 10:25. At the same time, this remark should not be construed as enjoining it as our duty to attend where the true God is not worshipped, or where he is worshipped by pagan rites and pagan prayers. If, therefore, the Unitarian does not worship the true God, and if the Roman Catholic worships God in a manner forbidden, and offers homage to the creatures of God, thus being guilty of idolatry, it cannot be a duty to attend on such a place of worship.

The synagogue. See Mt 4:23.

Stood up for to read. The books of Moses were so divided that they could be read through in the synagogues once in a year. To these were added portions out of the prophets, so that no small part of them was read also once a year. It is not known whether our Saviour read the lesson which was the regular one for that day, though it might seem probable that he would not depart from the usual custom. Yet, as the eyes of all were fixed on him; as he deliberately looked out a place; and as the people were evidently surprised at what he did, it seems to be intimated that he selected a lesson which was not the regular one for that day. The same ceremonies in regard to conducting public worship which are here described are observed at Jerusalem by the Jews at the present time. Professor Hackett (*Illustrations of Scripture*, p. 232) says:

"I attended the Jewish worship at Jerusalem,
and was struck with the accordance of the ceremonies
with those mentioned in the New Testament. The sacred
roll was brought from the chest or closet where it was
kept; it was handed by an attendant to the reader; a
portion of it was rehearsed; the congregation rose and
stood while it was read, whereas the speaker, as well
as the others present, sat during the delivery of the
address which formed a part of the service."

{k} "Nazareth" Mt 2:23 {l} Mt 13:54 Joh 18:20; Ac 13:14 17:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *There was delivered unto him*. By the minister of the synagogue, or the keeper of the sacred books. They were kept in an ark or chest, not far from the pulpit, and the minister gave them to whomsoever he chose, to read them publicly.

The book. The volume contained the prophecy of Isaiah. It would seem, from this, that the books were kept separate, and not united into one as with us.

When he had opened the book. Literally, when he had unrolled the book. Books, among the ancients, were written on parchments or vellum that is, skins of beasts, and were rolled together on two rollers, beginning at each end, so that while reading they rolled off from one to the other. Different forms of books were indeed used, but this was the most common. When used the reader

unrolled the MS as far as the place which he wished to find, and kept before him just so much as he would read. When the roller was done with, it was carefully deposited in a case.

The place where it was written. Isa 61:1,2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *The Spirit {m} of the Lord is upon me*. Or, I speak by divine appointment. I am divinely inspired to speak. There can be no doubt that the passage in Isaiah had a principal reference to the Messiah. Our Saviour directly applies it to himself, and it is not easily applicable to any other prophet. Its first application might have been to the restoration of the Jews from Babylon; but the language of prophecy is often applicable to two similar events, and the secondary event is often the most important. In this case the prophet uses most striking poetic images to depict the return from Babylon, but the same images also describe the appropriate work of the Son of God.

Hath anointed me. Anciently kings and prophets and the high-priest were set apart to their work by anointing with oil, 1Ki 19:15,16; Ex 29:7; 1Sa 9:16, &c. This oil or ointment was made of various substances, and it was forbidden to imitate it, Ex 30:34-38. Hence those who were set apart to the work of God as king, prophet, or priest, were called the Lord's anointed, 1Sa 16:6; Ps 84:9; Isa 45:1.

Hence the Son of God is called the *Messiah*, a Hebrew word signifying the *Anointed*, or the *Christ*, a Greek word signifying the same thing. And by his being anointed is not meant that he was literally anointed, for he was never set apart in that manner, but that God had set him apart for this work; that he had constituted or appointed him to be the prophet, priest, and king of his people. **See Barnes on "Mt 1:1"**.

To preach the gospel to the poor. The English word *gospel* is derived from two words—*God* or *good*, and *spell*, an old Saxon word meaning *history, relation, narration, word*, or *speech*, and the word therefore means a good communication or message. This corresponds exactly with the meaning of the Greek word — *a good or joyful message—glad tidings*. By the poor are meant all those who are destitute of the comforts of this life, and who therefore may be more readily disposed to seek treasures in heaven; all those who are sensible of their sins, or are poor in spirit (Mt 5:3); and all the miserable and the afflicted, Isa 58:7. Our Saviour gave it as one proof that he was the Messiah, or was from God, that he preached to the poor, Mt 11:5. The Pharisees and Sadducees despised the poor; ancient philosophers neglected them; but the gospel seeks to bless them—to give comfort where it is felt to be needed, and where it will be received with gratitude. Riches fill the mind with pride, with self-complacency, and with a feeling that the gospel is not needed. The poor *feel* their need of some sources of comfort that the world cannot give, and accordingly our Saviour met with his greatest success among the poor; and there also, since, the gospel has shed its richest blessings and its purest joys. It is also one proof that the gospel is true. If it had been of men, it would have sought the rich and mighty; but it pours contempt on all human greatness, and seeks, like God, to do good to those whom the world overlooks or despises. **See Barnes on "1Co 1:26"**.

To heal the brokenhearted. To console those who are deeply afflicted, or whose hearts are broken by external calamities or by a sense of their sinfulness.

Deliverance to the captives. This is a figure originally applicable to those who were in captivity in Babylon. They were miserable. To grant deliverance to *them* and restore them to their country — to grant deliverance to those who are in prison and restore them to their families—to give liberty to the slave and restore him to freedom, was to confer the highest benefit and impart the richest favour. In this manner the gospel imparts favour. It does not, indeed, *literally* open the doors of prisons, but it releases the *mind* captive under sin; it gives comfort to the prisoner, and it will finally open all prison doors and break off all the chains of slavery, and, by preventing *crime*, prevent also the sufferings that are the consequence of crime.

Sight to the blind. This was often literally fulfilled, Mt 1:5; Joh 9:11; Mt 9:30, &c.

To set at liberty them that are bruised. The word *bruised*, here, evidently has the same *general* signification as broken- hearted or the contrite. It means those who are *pressed down* by great calamity, or whose hearts are *pressed* or *bruised* by the consciousness of sin. To set them *at liberty* is the same as to free them from this pressure, or to give them consolation.

{m} Isa 61:1 {n} "heal" 2Ch 34:27 Ps 34:18, 51:17 147:3; Isa 57:15

{o} "recovering" Ps 146:8 Is 29:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *To preach the acceptable {q} year of the Lord*. The time when God is willing to accept of men, or to receive sinners coming to him. The gospel assures us that the guilty *may* return, and that God will graciously receive them. There is, perhaps, here, an allusion to the year of jubilee—the fiftieth year, when the trumpet was blown, and through the whole land proclamation was made of the liberty of Hebrew slaves, of the remission of debts, and of the restoration of possessions to their original families, Le 25:8-13. The phrase "the acceptable year" means the time when it would be acceptable to God to proclaim such a message, or agreeable to him—-to wit, under the gospel.

{q} Isa 61:2 63:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *And he closed the book*. That is, he rolled it up again. **See Barnes "Lu 4:17"**.

And he gave it again to the minister. That is, to the one in the synagogue who had charge of the books. The word means servant, and the office was not much unlike that of a sexton now. It was his duty, among other things, to take charge of the books, to hand them to the reader of the law, and then return them to their place.

And sat down. This was usual in speaking in their synagogues. **See Barnes on "Mt 5:1"**.

Were fastened on him. Were intently fixed on him, waiting to see what explanation he would give of the words.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *This scripture*. This writing, or this part of the Scriptures.

Fulfilled. It is coming to pass; the thing originally intended by it is about to be accomplished.

In your ears. In your *hearing*; or you *hear*, in my preaching, the fulfillment of this prophecy. It is probable that he said much more than is here recorded, but Luke has preserved only the *substance* of his discourse. This was the amount or sum of his sermon, or his explanation of the passage, that it was now receiving its accomplishment.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *All bare him witness*. All were witnesses of the power and truth of what he said. Their reason and conscience approved of it, and they were constrained to admit the force and propriety of it, and on this account they wondered.

They wondered. They were struck with the truth and force of his words; and especially when they remembered that he was a native of their own place, and that they had been long acquainted with him, and that he should now claim to be the Messiah, and give so much evidence that he was the Christ.

The gracious {r} words. The words of grace or favour; the kind, affectionate, and tender exposition of the words, and explanation of the design of his coming, and the nature of the plan of redemption. It was so different from the harsh and unfeeling mode of the Pharisees; so different from all their expectations respecting the Messiah, who they supposed to be a prince and a bloody conqueror, that they were filled with astonishment and awe.

{r} Ps 45:2 Isa 50:4; Mt 13:54 Mr 6:2; Lu 2:47

{s} "Is not this Joseph's son" Joh 6:42

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Physician, heal thyself*. This proverb was probably in common use at that time. The meaning is this: Suppose that a man should attempt to heal another when he was himself diseased in the same manner; it would be natural to ask him *first* to cure himself, and thus to render it manifest that he was worthy of confidence. The connection of this proverb, here, is this: "You profess to be the Messiah. You have wrought miracles at Capernaum. You profess to be able to deliver us from our maladies, our sins, our afflictions. Show that you have the power, that you are worthy of our confidence, by working miracles *here*, as you profess to have done at Capernaum." It does not refer, therefore, to any purification of his own, or imply any reflection on him for setting up to teach them. It was only a demand that he would show the proper evidence by miracles why they should trust in him, and he proceeds to show them why he would not give them this evidence.

Whatsoever we have heard done. Whatsoever we have heard that thou hast done. It would seem, from this, that Christ had before this wrought miracles in Capernaum, though the evangelist has not recorded them.

In Capernaum. Capernaum was on the north-west corner of the Sea of Tiberias, and was not far from Nazareth. It is not improbable that some of those who then heard him might have been present and witnessed some of his miracles at Capernaum. **See Barnes on "Mt 4:13".**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *No {u} prophet is accepted*. Has honour, or is acknowledged as a prophet.
See Barnes on "Mt 13:57".
{u} Mt 13:57 Joh 4:44

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Of a truth*. Truly, and therefore worthy of your credit. He calls attention to two cases where *acknowledged* prophets had so little honour in their own nation that they bestowed their favours on foreigners. So, says he, such is the want of faith in my own country, that I shall work no miracles here, but shall give the evidence of my divine mission to others.

In Israel. In the land of Israel, or Judea. It was therefore the more remarkable, since there were so many in his own country whom he *might* have helped, that the prophet should have gone to a heathen city and aided a poor widow there.

The days of Elias. The days of Elijah. See the account of this in 1Ki 17:8-24.

Three years and six months. From 1Ki 18:1,45, it would seem that the rain fell on the *third year*—that is, at the end of the third year after the rain had ceased to fall at the usual time. There were two seasons of the year when rains fell in Judea—in October and April, called the *early* and *latter* rain; consequently there was an interval between them of six months. To the three years, therefore, when rain was withheld at the usual times, are to be added the previous six months, when no rain fell as a matter of course, and consequently three years and six months elapsed without rain.

A great famine. A great want of food, from long-continued and distressing drought.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Save unto Sarepta*. Sarepta was a town between Tyre and Sidon, near the Mediterranean Sea. It was not a Jewish city, but a Sidonian, and therefore a *Gentile* town. The word "save" in this verse does not express the meaning of the original. It would seem to imply that the city was Jewish. The meaning of the verse is this: "He was sent to none of the widows in Israel.

He was not sent except to Sarepta, to a woman that was a Sidonian." Dr. Thomson (*The Land and the Book*, vol. i. p. 232-236) regards Sarepta as the modern Sarafend. He says that the ruins have been frequently dug over for stone to build the barracks at Betrout, and that the broken columns, marble slabs, sarcophagi, and other ruins indicate that it was once a flourishing city. A large town was built there in the time of the Crusades.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *Many {x} lepers*. For an account of the leprosy **See Barnes on "Mt 8:1"**.

Time of Eliseus. Time of Elisha. The word *Eliseus* is the Greek way of writing the word Elisha, as Elias is of Elijah.

Saving Naaman the Syrian. The account of his cure is contained in 2Ki 5:1-27.

{x} 2Ki 5:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *Filled with wrath*. They were enraged, probably, for the following reasons:

1st. They saw that the cases applied to themselves, because they would not receive the miraculous evidences of his mission.

2nd. That he would direct his attention to others, and not to them.

3rd. That the Gentiles were objects of compassion with God, and that God often showed more favour to a single Gentile than to multitudes of Jews in the same circumstances.

4th. That they might be worse than the Gentiles. And,

5th. That it was a part of his design to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, and not confine his labours to them only. On these accounts their favour was soon turned to wrath, and the whole transaction shows us —

1st. That popular applause is of little value.

2nd. That the slightest circumstances may soon turn the warmest professed friendship to hatred. And,

3rd. That men are exceedingly unreasonable in being unwilling to hear the truth and profit by it.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *The brow {2} of the hill whereon*, &c. The region in which Nazareth was is hilly, though Nazareth was situated between two hills, or in a vale among mountains. The place to which they led the Saviour is still shown, and is called the *Mount of Precipitation*. It is at a short distance to the south of Nazareth.

See BARNES on "Mt 2:23".

Cast him down. This was the effect of a popular tumult. They had no legal right to take life on any occasion, and least of all in this furious and irregular manner. The whole transaction shows—

1st. That the character given of the Galileans elsewhere as being peculiarly wicked was a just one.

2nd. To what extremities the wickedness of the heart will lead men when it is acted out. And,

3rd. That men are opposed to the truth, and that they would do anything, if not restrained, to manifest their opposition.

{2} or "edge" {y} "that they might cast him down" Ps 37:32,33

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *Passing through the midst of them, went his way*. This escape was very remarkable. It is remarkable that he should escape out of their hands when their very object was to destroy him, and that he should escape in so peaceful a manner, without violence or conflict. A similar case is recorded in Joh 8:59. There are but two ways of accounting for this:

1st. That *other* Nazarenes, who had not been present in the synagogue, heard what was doing and came to rescue him, and in the contest that rose between the two parties Jesus silently escaped.

2nd. More probably that Jesus by divine power, by the force of a word or look, stilled their passions, arrested-their purposes, and passed silently through them. That he *had* such a power over the spirits of men we learn from the occurrence in Gethsemane, when he said, "I am he; and they went backward and fell to the ground," Joh 18:6.

{a} "passing through the midst" Joh 8:59 10:39

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 31

Verse 31. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

See Barnes on "Mt 1:21"

through Mt 1:39

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 32

Verse 32. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

{a} "for his word" Jer 23:29 Mt 7:28,29 Tit 2:15; Heb 4:1,2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 33

Verse 33. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

{b} "in the synagogue" Mr 1:23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 34

Verse 34. No entry from BARNES for this verse.
{3} "Let *us* alone" or "away" {c} "What have we to do with thee" Jas 2:19 {d} "I know thee" Lu 4:41 {e} "the Holy One of God" Ps 16:10 Da 9:24; Lu 1:35 Ac 3:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 35

Verse 35. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 36

Verse 36. No entry from BARNES for this verse.
{f} "and they came out" 1Pe 3:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 37

Verse 37. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 38

Verse 38. No entry from BARNES for this verse.
{g} "And Simon's wife's" Mt 8:14 Mr 1:29

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 39

Verse 39. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 40

Verse 40. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 41

Verse 41. No entry from BARNES for this verse.
{4} "suffered them not to speak", or "to say that they knew him to be"
"Christ"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 42

Verse 42. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 43

Verse 43. No entry from BARNES for this verse.
{h} "therefore am I sent" Mr 1:38

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 4 - Verse 44

Verse 44. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 5 - Verse 1

LUKE CHAPTER V.

Verse 1. *The people pressed upon him*. Multitudes came to hear. There were times in the life of our Saviour when thousands were anxious to hear him, and when many, as we have no reason to doubt, became his true followers. Indeed, it is not possible to tell what *might* have been his success, had not the Pharisees and scribes, and those who were in Office, opposed him, and taken measures to draw the people away from his ministry; *for the common people heard him gladly*, Mr 12:37.

The Lake of Gennesaret. Called also the Sea of Galilee and the Sea of Tiberias.

"Gennesaret was the more ancient name of the lake,
taken from a small territory or plain of that name
on its western borders. See Nu 34:11; Jos 19:35,
where, after the Hebrew orthography, it is called
Chinnereth" (Owen).

The plain lying between Capernaum and Tiberias is said by Dr. Thomson (*The Land and the Book*, vol. i. p. 536) to be a little longer than thirty, and not quite twenty furlongs in breadth. It is described by Josephus as being, in his time, universally fertile.

"Its nature is wonderful as well as its beauty. Its soil
is so fruitful that all sorts of trees can grow upon it,
and the inhabitants accordingly plant all sorts of
trees there; for the temperature of the air is so
well mixed that it agrees very well with these several
sorts; particularly walnuts, which require the
coldest air, flourish there in vast plenty. One may
call this the ambition of Nature, where it forces
those plants which are naturally enemies to one another
to agree together. It is a happy conjunction of the
seasons, as if every one laid claim to this country;
for it not only nourishes different sorts of autumnal
fruits beyond men's expectations, but preserves them a
great while. It supplies men with the principal
fruits; with grapes and figs continually during ten
months of the year, and the rest of the fruits, as they
become ripe, through the whole year; for, besides the
good temperature of the air, it is also watered from a
most fertile fountain."

Dr. Thomson describes it now as "preeminently fruitful in thorns." This was the region of the early toils of our Redeemer. Here he performed some of his first and most amazing miracles; here he selected his disciples; and here, on the shores of this little and retired lake, among people of poverty and inured to the privations of fishermen, he laid the foundation of a religion which is yet to spread through all the world, and which *has* already blessed millions of guilty and miserable men, and translated them to heaven.

{a} "And it came to pass" Mt 4:18 Mr 1:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 5 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Two ships*. The skips used on so small a lake were probably no more than fishing-boats without decks, and easily drawn up on the beach. Josephus says there were 230 of them on the lake, attended by four or five men each. That they were small is also clear from the account commonly given of them. A single large draught of fishes endangered them and came near sinking them.

Standing by the lake. Anchored by the lake, or drawn up upon the beach.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 5 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Which was Simon's*. Simon Peter's.

Prayed him. Asked him.

He sat down. This was the common posture of Jewish teachers. They seldom or never spoke to the people *standing*. Comp. Mt 5:1. It may be somewhat difficult to conceive why Jesus should go into a boat and put off from the shore in order to speak to the multitude; but it is probable that this was a small bay or cove, and that when he was *in* the boat, the people on the shore stood round him in the form of an amphitheatre. It is not improbable that the lake was still; that scarcely a breeze passed over it; that all was silence on the shore, and that there was nothing to disturb his voice. In such a situation he could be heard by multitudes; and no spectacle could be more sublime than that of the Son of God—the Redeemer of the world—thus speaking from the bosom of a placid lake—the emblem of the peaceful influence of his own doctrines —to the poor, the ignorant, and the attentive multitudes assembled on the shore. Oh how much *more* effect may we suppose the gospel would have in such circumstances, than when pro- claimed among the proud, the gay, the honoured, even when assembled in the most splendid edifice that wealth and art could finish!

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 5 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Launch {b} out*. Go out with your vessels.

Into the deep. Into the sea; at a distance from the shore.

For a draught. A draught of fish; or let down your nets for the *taking* of fish.

{b} Joh 21:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 5 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Master*. This is the first time that the word here translated *Master {c}* occurs in the New Testament, and it is used only by Luke. The other evangelists call him Rabbi, or Lord. The word here used means a prefect, or one placed over others, and hence it comes to mean teacher or guide.

At thy word. At thy command. Though it seemed so improbable that they would take anything after having in vain toiled all night, yet he was willing to trust the *word* of Jesus and make the trial. This was a remarkable instance of *faith*. Peter, as it appears, knew little then of Jesus. He was not then a chosen apostle. Jesus came to these fishermen almost a stranger and unknown, and yet at his command Peter resolved to make another trial, and go once more out into the deep. Oh, if *all* would as readily obey him, all would be in like manner blessed. If sinners would thus obey him, they would find *all* his promises sure. He never disappoints. He asks only that we have *confidence* in him, and he will give to us every needful blessing.

{c} Ps 127:1,2; Eze 37:11,12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 5 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Their net brake*. Or their net *began*, to break, or was about to break. This is all that is implied in the Greek word. If their nets had actually *broken*, as our English word seems to suppose, the fish would have escaped; but no more is meant than that there was such a multitude of fishes that their net was *on the point* of being rent asunder.

{d} "And when they" Ec 11:6 Ga 6:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 5 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *They beckoned*. They gave signs. Perhaps they were at a considerable distance, so that they could not be easily heard.

Their partners. James and John. See Lu 5:10. The following remarks of Dr. Thomson (*The Land and the Book*, vol. it. p. 80,81) will furnish a good illustration of this passage. After describing the mode of fishing with the "hand-net" and the "drag-net," he adds:

> "Again, there is the bag-net and basket-net, of various kinds, which are so constructed and worked as to enclose the fish out in deep water. I have seen them of almost every conceivable size and pattern. It was with some one of this sort, I suppose, that Simon had toiled all night without catching anything, but which, when let down at the command of Jesus, enclosed so great a multitude that the net brake, and they filled two ships with the fish until they began to sink. Peter here speaks of toiling all night; and there are certain kinds of fishing always carried on at night. It is a beautiful sight. With blazing torch the boat glides over the flashing sea, and the men stand gazing keenly into it until their prey is sighted, when, quick as lightning, they fling their net or fly their spear; and often you see the tired fishermen come sullenly into harbour in the morning, having toiled all night in vain. Indeed, every kind of fishing is uncertain. A dozen times the angler jerks out a naked hook; the hand-net closes down on nothing; the drag-net brings in only weeds; the bag comes up empty. And then again, every throw is successful—every net is full; and frequently without any other apparent reason than that of throwing it on the right side of the ship instead of the left, as it happened to the disciples here at Tiberias."

{e} Ex 23:5 Ga 6:2; Pr 18:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 5 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *When Simon Peter saw it*. Saw the great amount of fishes; the remarkable success of letting down the net.

He fell down at Jesus' knees. This was a common posture of *supplication*. He had no doubt now of the power and knowledge of Jesus. In amazement, wonder, and gratitude, and not doubting that he was in the presence of some divine being, he prostrated himself to the earth, trembling and afraid. So should sinful men always throw themselves at the feet of Jesus at the proofs of his power; so should they humble themselves before him at the manifestations of his goodness.

Depart from me. This is an expression of Peter's humility, and of his consciousness of his unworthiness. It was not from want of love to Jesus; it did not show that he would not be pleased with his favour and presence; but it was the result of being convinced that Jesus was a messenger from God — a high and holy being; and he felt that *he* was unworthy to be in his presence. In his deep consciousness of sin, therefore, he requested that Jesus would depart from him and his little vessel. Peter's feeling was not unnatural, though it was not proper to request Jesus to leave him. It was an involuntary, sudden request, and arose from ignorance of the character of Jesus. We *are* not worthy to be with him, to be reckoned among his friends, or to dwell in heaven with him; but he came to seek the lost and to save the impure. He graciously condescends to dwell with those who are humble and contrite, though they are conscious that they are not worthy of his presence; and we may therefore come boldly to him, and ask him to receive us to his home—to an eternal dwelling with him in the heavens.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 5 - Verse 9

Verse 9. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 5 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Fear* not. He calmed their fears. With mildness and tenderness he stilled all their troubled feelings, and to their surprise announced that henceforward they should be appointed as heralds of salvation.

From henceforth. Hereafter.

Shalt catch men. Thou shalt be a minister of the gospel, and thy business shall be to win men to the truth that they may be saved.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 5 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Forsook {h} all*. It was not much that they left — a couple of small boats and their nets; but it was all they had, even all their living. But this showed their love of Jesus, and their willingness to deny themselves, as really as if they had forsaken palaces and gold. All that Jesus asks is that we should leave *all* we have for him; that we should love him more than we do whatever friends or property we may possess, and be willing to give them all up when he requires it.

{h} Mt 4:20 19:27; Php 3:7,8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 5 - Verse 12

Verse 12. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

See Barnes on "Mt 8:2"

through Mt 8:4 {i} "it came to pass" Mt 8:2 Mr 1:40

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 5 - Verse 13

Verse 13. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

{k} "I will; be thou clean" 2Ki 5:10,14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 5 - Verse 14

Verse 14. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

{l} "as Moses commanded Le 14:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 5 - Verse 15

Verse 15. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

{m} "and great multitudes" Mt 4:25 Mr 3:7; Joh 6:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 5 - Verse 16

Verse 16. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

{n} "And he withdrew" Mt 14:23 Mr 3:7; Joh 6:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 5 - Verse 17

Verse 17. See this passage explained in **Barnes "Mt 9:1"**
through Mt 9:7.
On a certain day. The time and place are not particularly mentioned here, but from Mt 9:1 it seems it was at Capernaum.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 5 - Verse 18

Verse 18. No entry from BARNES for this verse.
{p} "And, behold" Mt 9:2 Mr 2:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 5 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *The tiling* **See Barnes on "Mt 9:1"**
also Mt 9:2-7.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 5 - Verse 20

Verse 20. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 5 - Verse 21

Verse 21. No entry from BARNES for this verse.
{q} "who can forgive" Ps 22:5 103:3, 130:4 Is 1:18, 43:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 5 - Verse 22

Verse 22. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 5 - Verse 23

Verse 23. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 5 - Verse 24

Verse 24. No entry from BARNES for this verse.
{r} "take up thy couch" Joh 5:8,12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 5 - Verse 25

Verse 25. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 5 - Verse 26

Verse 26. No entry from BARNES for this verse.
{s} "glorified God" Ac 4:21 Ga 1:24 {t} "were filled with fear" Lu 5:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 5 - Verse 27

Verse 27. No entry from BARNES for this verse.
See Barnes on "Mt 9:9"
through Mt 9:13
{u} "And after these things" Mt 9:9 Mr 2:13
Verses 27-32. **See Barnes on "Mt 9:9"**
through Mt 9:13.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 5 - Verse 28

Verse 28. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 5 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Made him a great feast*. This circumstance Matthew, or Levi as he is here called, has omitted in his own gospel. This fact shows how little inclined the evangelists are to say anything in favour of themselves or to praise themselves. True religion does not seek to commend itself, or to speak of what it does, even when it is done for the Son of God. It seeks retirement; it delights rather in the *consciousness* of doing well than in its being known; and it leaves its good deeds to be spoken of, if spoken of at all, by others. This is agreeable to the direction of Solomon (Pr 27:2):

"Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth." This feast was made expressly for our Lord, and was attended by many publicans, probably men of wicked character; and it is not improbable that Matthew got them together for the purpose of bringing them into contact with our Lord to do them good. Our Saviour did not refuse to go, and to go, too, at the risk of being accused of being a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners, Mt 11:19. But his motives were pure. In the thing itself there was no harm. It afforded an opportunity of doing good, and we have no reason to doubt that the opportunity was improved by the Lord Jesus. Happy would it be if all the *great feasts* that are made were made in honour of our Lord; happy if *he* would be a welcome guest there; and happy if ministers and pious people who attend them demeaned themselves as the Lord Jesus did, and they were always made the means of advancing his kingdom. But, alas! there are few places where our Lord would be so unwelcome as at great feasts, and few places that serve so much to render the mind gross, dissipated, and irreligious.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 5 - Verse 30

Verse 30. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 5 - Verse 31

Verse 31. No entry from BARNES for this verse.
{w} "physician" Jer 8:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 5 - Verse 32

Verse 32. No entry from BARNES for this verse.
{x} "sinners to repentance" Lu 15:7,10; 1Co 6:9-11 1Ti 1:15; 2Pe 3:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 5 - Verse 33

Verse 33. See this passage illustrated in **Barnes on** "Mt 9:14, also Mt 9:15-17.
{y} "but thine eat and drink" Lu 7:34,35

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 5 - Verse 34

Verse 34. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 5 - Verse 35

Verse 35. No entry from BARNES for this verse.
{z} "fast in those days" Isa 22:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 5 - Verse 36

Verse 36. No entry from BARNES for this verse.
{a} "And he spake a parable" Mt 9:16,17; Mr 2:21,22
{b} "agreeth" Le 19:19 De 22:11; 2Co 6:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 5 - Verse 37

Verse 37. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 5 - Verse 38

Verse 38. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 5 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *Having drunk old wine*, &c. Wine increases its strength and flavour, and its mildness and mellowness, by age, and the old is therefore preferable. They who had tasted such mild and mellow wine would not readily drink the comparatively sour and astringent juice of the grape as it came from the press. The meaning of this proverb in this place seems to be this: You Pharisees wish to draw my disciples to the *austere* and *rigid* duties of the ceremonial law—to fasting and painful rites; but they have come under a milder system. They have tasted the gentle and tender blessings of the gospel; they have no *relish* for your stern and harsh requirements. To insist now on their observing them would be like telling a man who had tasted of good, ripe, and mild wine to partake of that which is sour and unpalatable. At the proper time all the sterner duties of religion will be properly regarded; but *at* present, to teach them to fast when they see no occasion for it—when they are full of joy at the presence of their Master—would be like putting a piece of new cloth on an old garment, or new wine into old bottles, or drinking unpleasant wine after one had tasted that which was pleasanter. It would be ill-timed, inappropriate, and incongruous.

{z} "The old is better" Jer 6:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 1

LUKE CHAPTER VI.

Verses 1-11. See this passage explained: **See Barnes on "Mt 12:1, also** Mt 12:2-13.

1. *Second sabbath after the first*. **See Barnes on "Mt 12:1"**.

This phrase has given great perplexity to commentators. A *literal* translation would be,

"on the sabbath called *second first*,"

or second first Sabbath. The word occurs nowhere else. It is therefore exceedingly difficult of interpretation. The most natural and easy explanation is that proposed by Scaliger. The *second* day of the Passover was a great festival, on which the wave-sheaf was offered, Le 23:11. From *that day* they reckoned *seven weeks*, or seven *Sabbaths*, to the day of Pentecost. The *first* Sabbath after that *second* day was called the *second first*, or the *first* from the second day of the feast. The *second* Sabbath was called the *second second*, or the second Sabbath from the second day of the feast; the third the *third second*, &c. This day, therefore, on which the Saviour went through the fields, was the first Sabbath that occurred after the second day of the feast.

Rubbing them *in their hands*. The word *corn* here means wheat or barley, and not maize, as in America. They *rubbed* it in their hands to separate the grain from the chaff. This was common and allowable. Dr. Thomson (*The Land and the Book*, vol. it. p. 510, 511) says:

"I have often seen my muleteers, as we passed along
the wheat-fields, pluck off ears, rub them in their
hands, and eat the grains, unroasted, just as the
apostles are said to have done. This also is
allowable. The Pharisees did not object to the thing
itself, only to the time when it was done. They said
it was not lawful to do this on the Sabbath-day. It
was work forbidden by those who, through their
traditions, had made man for the Sabbath, not the
Sabbath for man."

So Professor Hackett (*Illustrations of Scripture*, p. 176, 177) says:

"The incident of plucking the ears of wheat, rubbing
out the kernels in their hands, and eating them
(Lu 6:1), is one which the traveller sees often
at present who is in Palestine at the time of the
gathering of the harvest. Dr. Robinson relates the
following case: `Our Arabs were an hungered, and,
going into the fields, they plucked the ears of
corn and did eat, rubbing them in their hands. On
being questioned, they said this was an old custom,
and no one would speak against it; they were supposed

to be hungry, and it was allowed as a charity.'*

The Pharisees complained of the disciples for violating
the Sabbath and not any rights of property."
{*} Biblical Researches, vol. ii. p. 192. {a} "And it came to pass" Mt 12:1 Mr 2:23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 2

Verse 2. No entry from BARNES for this verse.
{b} "that which is not lawful" Ex 20:10 Is 58:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 3

Verse 3. No entry from BARNES for this verse.
{c} "what David did" 1Sa 21:6.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 4

Verse 4. No entry from BARNES for this verse.
{d} "which it is not lawful" Le 24:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 5

Verse 5. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 6

Verse 6. No entry from BARNES for this verse.
{e} "And it came to pass" Mt 12:10 Mr 3:1; Lu 13:14 14:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 7

Verse 7. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

{f} "heal on the Sabbath day" Joh 9:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *But he knew their thoughts*. He knew their thoughts—their dark, malicious designs—by the *question* which they proposed to him, whether it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath-days (Matthew). In reply to their question, Jesus asked them whether they would not release a *sheep* on the Sabbath-day if it was fallen into a pit, and also asked them whether it was better to do good than to do evil on that day, implying that to omit to do good was, in fact, doing evil.

{g} "But he knew their thoughts" Job 42:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 9

Verse 9. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

{h} "Is it lawful on the sabbath days" Ex 20:10 Lu 14:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No entry from BARNES for this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Were filled with madness*. Probably —

1st. Because he had shown his *power* to work a miracle.

2nd. Because he had shown his power to do it *contrary* to what *they* thought was right.

3rd. Because by doing it he had shown that he was from God, and that they were therefore wrong in their views of the Sabbath. And,

4th. Because he had shown no respect to *their views* of what the law of God demanded. Pride, obstinacy, malice, and disappointed self- confidence were *all* combined, therefore, in producing madness. Nor were they alone. Men are often enraged because others do good in a way which they do not approve of. God gives success to others; and because he has not accommodated himself to their views of what is right, and done it in the way which *they* would have prescribed, they are enraged, and filled with envy at men more successful than themselves.

Communed one with another. Spoke together, or laid a plan.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *And it came to pass in those days*. The designation of the time here is very general. It means *about* the time when the events occurred which had been just narrated.

He went out into a mountain. Jesus was accustomed to resort to such places to hold communion with God, Mr 6:46. He did it because it was retired, free from interruption, and fitted by impressiveness and grandeur to raise the thoughts to the God that had formed the high hills and the deep-shaded groves,

And continued all night in prayer to God. There has been a difference of opinion about this passage, whether it means that he spent the night in the act of *praying* to God, or in a *place of* prayer. The Jews had places of prayer, called *oratories*, built *out* of their cities or towns, where they could retire from the bustle of a city and hold communion with God. They were built on the banks of rivers (comp. Ac 16:13), in groves, or on hills. They were rude enclosures, made by building a rough wall of stone around a level piece of ground, and capable of accommodating a small number who might resort thither to pray. But the more probable opinion is that he spent the whole night in supplication; for —

1st. This is the obvious meaning of the passage.

2nd. The object for which he went out, was *to pray*.

3rd. It was an occasion of great importance. He was about to send out his apostles —to lay the foundation of his religion —and he therefore set apart this time specially to seek the divine blessing.

4th. It was no unusual thing for Jesus to spend much time in prayer, and we are not to wonder that he passed an entire night in supplication. If it be asked why Jesus should pray *at all* if he was divine, it may be replied that he was also *a man* — a man subject to the same sufferings as others, and, as a man, needing the divine blessing. There was no more inconsistency in his *praying* than there was in his *eating*. Both were means employed for an end, and both were equally consistent with his being divine. But Jesus was also *Mediator*, and as such it was proper to seek the divine direction and blessing. In this case he has set us an example that we should follow. In great emergencies, when we have important duties, or are about to encounter special difficulties, we should seek the divine blessing and direction by *prayer*. We should set apart an unusual portion of time for supplication. Nay, if we pass the whole night in prayer, it should not be charged as enthusiasm. Our Saviour did it. Men of the world often pass whole nights in plans of gain or in dissipation, and shall it be esteemed strange that Christians should spend an equal portion of time in the far more important business of religion?

{l} "And it came to pass" Mt 14:23 {m} "into a mountain to pray" Mt 6:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 13

Verse 13. **See Barnes on "Mt 10:1"; See Barnes on** "Mt 10:2"
See Barnes on "Mt 10:3"; See Barnes on "Mt 10:4"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 14

Verse 14. **See Barnes on "Mt 10:1"**; **See Barnes on** "Mt 10:2"
See Barnes on "Mt 10:3"; **See Barnes on** "Mt 10:4"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 15

Verse 15. **See Barnes on "Mt 10:1"**; **See Barnes on** "Mt 10:2"

See Barnes on "Mt 10:3"; See Barnes on "Mt 10:4"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 16

Verse 16. **See Barnes on "Mt 10:1"**; **See Barnes on** "Mt 10:2"

See Barnes on "Mt 10:3"; See Barnes on "Mt 10:4"

{p} "Judas, *the brother*" Jude 1:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *And stood in the plain*. It is not affirmed, however, that he stood in the plain when he delivered the following discourse. There has been some doubt whether the following discourse is the same as that recorded in the 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters of Matthew, or whether the Saviour *repeated* the substance of that discourse, and that Luke recorded it as he repeated it. The reasons which have led many to sup- pose that they refer to the same are —

1st. That the beginning and the close are alike.

2nd. That the *substance* of each is the same. And,

3rd. That *after* the discourse was delivered, both affirm that Jesus went to Capernaum and healed the servant of the centurion, Mt 8:5-13 Lu 7:1-10. On the other hand, *Matthew* says that the sermon was delivered on the *mountain* (Mt 5:1); it is thought to be implied that Luke affirms that it was in the *plain*. Matthew says that he *sat*; Luke, that he *stood*. Yet there is no reason to suppose that there is a difference in the evangelists. Jesus spent the night on the mountain in prayer. In the morning he descended into the open plain and healed many. While there, as Luke says, he *"stood"* and received those who came to him, and healed their diseases. There is no impropriety in supposing that, being pressed by multitudes, he retired into the mountain again, or to an eminence in the plain, or to the side of the mountain, where the people might be more conveniently arranged and seated to hear him. There he *sat*, as recorded by Matthew, and delivered the discourse; for it is to be

observed that Luke does *not* say that he delivered the sermon *on the plain*, but only that he healed the sick there.

Tyre and Sidon. **See Barnes on "Mt 11:21".**

{q} "great multitude", Mt 4:25 Mr 3:7 {r} "to be healed", Ps 103:3 107:17-20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Vexed*. The word *vex* with us means to provoke, irritate, by petty provocations. Here it means, however, *to afflict*, to *torment* — denoting deep and heavy trials.

Unclean spirits. Demons that Were impure and unholy, having a delight in tormenting, and in inflicting painful and loathsome diseases.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Virtue* Healing power.

See Barnes on "Mr 5.30".

{s} "touch him", Nu 21:8,9; Mt 14:36 Joh 3:14,15

{t} "there went virtue out of him", Mr 5:30 Lu 8:46

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 20

Verses 20-49. See this passage fully illustrated in the sermon on the mount, in the 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters of Matthew.

{u} "he lifted up his eyes", Mt 5:2 {v} "ye that weep", Jas 2:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *That hunger now*. Matthew has it, "that hunger and thirst after righteousness." Matthew has expressed *more fully* what Luke has briefly, but there is no contradiction.

{w} "that hunger now", Is 55:1 {x} "shall be filled", Ps 107:9 {y} "that weep now", Is 61:3 Re 21:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 22

Verse 22. No Barnes text for this verse.

{z} "hate you",
Joh 17:14
{a} "separate you", 1Pe 2:19,20, 3:14 4:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 23

Verse 23. No Barnes text for this verse.
{b} "Rejoice ye in that day",
Ac 5:41 Col 1:24; Jas 1:2
{c} "for in the like manner", Hab 2:9 Jas 5:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 24

Verses 24-26. These verses have been omitted by Matthew. They seem to have been spoken to the Pharisees.

Verse 24. *Who are rich*. In this world's goods. They loved them; they had sought for them; they found their consolation in them. It implies, farther, that they would not seek or receive consolation from the gospel. They were proud, and would not seek it; satisfied, and did not desire it; filled with cares, and had no time or disposition to attend to it. All the consolation which they had reason to expect they *had received*. Alas! how poor and worthless is such consolation, compared with that which the gospel would give!

Woe unto you that are full! Not hungry. Satisfied with their wealth, and not feeling their need of anything better than earthly wealth can give. Many, alas! are thus *full*. They profess to be satisfied. They desire nothing but wealth, and a sufficiency to satisfy the wants of the body. They have no anxiety for the riches that shall endure for ever.

Ye shall hunger. Your property shall be taken away, or you shall see that it is of little value; and then you shall see the need of something better. You shall feel your want and wretchedness, and shall *hunger* for something to satisfy the desires of a dying, sinful soul.

That laugh now. Are happy, or thoughtless, or gay, or filled with levity.

Shall mourn and weep. The time is coming when you shall sorrow deeply. In sickness, in calamity, in the prospect of death, in the fear of eternity, your laughter shall be turned into sorrow. *There is* a place where you cannot laugh, and there you will see the folly of having passed *the proper time* of preparing for such scenes in levity and folly. Alas! how many thus spend their youth ! and how many weep when it is too late! God gives them over, and *laughs at THEIR calamity*, and mocks when their fear comes, Pr 1:26. To be happy in such scenes, it is necessary to be sober, humble, pious in early life. *Then* we need not weep in the day of calamity; then there will be no terror in death; then there will be nothing to fear in the grave.

{d} "you that are rich", Hab 2.9 Jas 5:1
{e} "ye have received", Lu 16:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 25

Verse 25. No Barnes text for this verse.
{f} "you that are full",
Is 28:7 65:13
{g} "laugh now", Pr 14:13 Eph 5:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 26

Verses 24-26. These verses have been omitted by Matthew. They seem to have been spoken to the Pharisees.

Who are rich. In this world's goods. They loved them; they had sought for them; they found their consolation in them. It implies, farther, that they would not seek or receive consolation from the gospel. They were proud, and would not seek it; satisfied, and did not desire it; filled with cares, and had no time or disposition to attend to it. All the consolation which they had reason to expect they *had received*. Alas! how poor and worthless is such consolation, compared with that which the gospel would give!

Woe unto you that are full! Not hungry. Satisfied with their wealth, and not feeling their need of anything better than earthly wealth can give. Many, alas! are thus *full*. They profess to be satisfied. They desire nothing but wealth, and a sufficiency to satisfy the wants of the body. They have no anxiety for the riches that shall endure for ever.

Ye shall hunger. Your property shall be taken away, or you shall see that it is of little value; and then you shall see the need of something better. You shall feel your want and wretchedness, and shall *hunger* for something to satisfy the desires of a dying, sinful soul.

That laugh now. Are happy, or thoughtless, or gay, or filled with levity.

Shall mourn and weep. The time is coming when you shall sorrow deeply. In sickness, in calamity, in the prospect of death, in the fear of eternity, your laughter shall be turned into sorrow. *There is* a place where you cannot laugh, and there you will see the folly of having passed *the proper time* of preparing for such scenes in levity and folly. Alas! how many thus spend their youth! and how many weep when it is too late! God gives them over, and *laughs at THEIR calamity*, and mocks when their fear comes, Pr 1:26. To be happy in such scenes, it is necessary to be sober, humble, pious in early life. *Then* we need not weep in the day of calamity; then there will be no terror in death; then there will be nothing to fear in the grave.

{d} "you that are rich", Hab 2.9 Jas 5:1
{e} "ye have received", Lu 16:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 27

Verse 27. **See Barnes "Mt 5:44,45"**

{i} "Love you enemies", Joh 4:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 28

Verse 28. **See Barnes "Mt 5:44,45"**

{k} "pray for them" Ex 23:4,5; Pr 25:21 Mt 5:44; Lu 6:35 Ro 12:20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 29

Verse 29. **See Barnes "Mt 5:39"**

{l} "and unto him that smiteth thee on *one cheek*" Mt 5:39 {m} "And him that taketh away thy cloak" 1Co 6:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 30

Verse 30. **See Barnes "Mt 5:42"**

{n} "Give to every man" De 15:7,8,10 Pr 19:17 21:26; Mt 5:42

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 31

Verse 31. **See Barnes** Mt 7:12

{o} "And as you would that men" Mt 7:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 32

Verses 32-36. **See Barnes "Mt 5:46-48"**

{p} "love ye your enemies" Lu 6:37 {q} "lend" Ps 37:26 112:5 {r} "ye shall be the children" Mt 5:45

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 33

Verse 33. **See Barnes "Mt 5:46-48"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 34

Verse 34. **See Barnes "Mt 5:46-48"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 35

Verse 35. **See Barnes "Mt 5:46-48"**

{p} "love ye your enemies" Lu 6:27 {q} "lend" Ps 37:26 112:5 {r} "ye shall be the children" Mt 5:45

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 36

Verse 36. **See Barnes "Mt 5:46-48"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 37

Verses 37-42. **See Barnes "Mt 7:1-9"**

{s} "judge not" Mt 7:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *Good measure*. They shall give you good measure, or *full* measure.
Pressed down. As figs or grapes might be, and thus many more might be put into the measure.
Shaken together. To make it more compact, and thus to give more.
Running over. So full that the measure would overflow.
Shall men give. This is said to be the reward of giving to the poor and needy; and the meaning is that the man who is liberal will find others liberal to him in dealing with them, and when he is also in circumstances of want. A man who is himself kind to the poor—who has that *character*

established—will find many who are ready to help *him* abundantly when he is in want. He that is parsimonious, close, niggardly, will find few or none who will aid him.

Into your bosom. That is, to you. The word *bosom* here has reference to a custom among Oriental nations of making the bosom or front part of their garments *large*, so that articles could be carried in them, answering the purpose of our pockets. Comp. Ex 4:6,7; Pr 6:27 Ru 3:15.

{t} "and it shall be given unto you" Pr 19:17 Mt 10:42 {u} "shall men give into your bosom" Ps 79:12 {v} "for with the same measure" Mt 7:2 Mr 4:24; Jas 2:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *A parable*. A proverb or similitude.

Can the blind lead the blind? **See Barnes on** "Mt 15:14.

{w} "Can the blind" Mt 15:14.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 40

Verse 40. *The disciple is not*, &c. The learner is not above his teacher, does not know more, and must expect to fare no better. This seems to have been spoken to show them that they were not to expect that their disciples would go *beyond them* in attainments; that if *they* were blind, their followers would be also; and that therefore it was important for them to understand fully the doctrines of the gospel, and not to be blind leaders of the blind.

Every one that is perfect. The word rendered *is perfect* means sometimes to *repair* or *mend*, and is thus applied to mending *nets*, Mt 4:21 Mr 1:19. Hence it means to repair or amend in a moral sense, or to make whole or complete. Here it means, evidently, *thoroughly instructed or informed*. The Christian should be *like his master* —holy, harmless, and undefiled, and separate from sinners. He should copy his example, and grow into the likeness of his Redeemer. Nor can any other be a Christian.

{x} "The disciple" Mt 10:24 Joh 13:16, 15:20

{1} "that is perfect" \\or *shall be perfected as his master*

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THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 41

Verses 41, 42. **See Barnes** "Mt 7:3, **See Barnes on "Mt 7:4"**

See Barnes on "Mt 7:5".

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 42

Verse 42. **See Barnes on "Mt 7:3"; See Barnes on "Mt 7:4"; See Barnes on "Mt 7:5".**
{y} "cast out",
Pr 18:17 Ro 2:1,21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 43

Verse 43. **See Barnes "Mt 7:16"; See Barnes "Mt 7:17"; See Barnes "Mt 7:18".**
{z} "a good tree"
Mt 7:16,17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 44

Verse 44. **See Barnes** "Mt 7:16; **See Barnes "Mt 7:17"; See Barnes "Mt 7:18".**
{a} "every tree"
Mt 12:33\\ {2} "grapes" or, "*a grape*"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 45

Verse 45. This verse is not found in the sermon on the mount as recorded by Matthew, but is recorded by him in Mt 12:35. **See Barnes on "Mt 12:35".**
{b} "A good man" Mt 12:35.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 46

Verse 46. **See Barnes on "Mt 7:21"; See Barnes on "Mt 7:22"; See Barnes on "Mt 7:23"; See Barnes on "Mt 7:24"; See Barnes on "Mt 7:25"; See Barnes on "Mt 7:26"; See Barnes on "Mt 7:27".**
{c} "call ye me good" Mal 1:6 Mt 7:21, 25:11 Lu 13:25; Ga 6:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 47

Verse 47. **See Barnes on "Mt 7:21"; See Barnes on "Mt 7:22"; See Barnes on "Mt 7:23"; See Barnes on "Mt 7:24"; See Barnes on "Mt 7:25"; See Barnes on "Mt 7:26"; See Barnes on "Mt 7:27".**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 48

Verse 48. **See Barnes on "Mt 7:21"; See Barnes on** "Mt 7:22"; **See Barnes on "Mt 7:23"; See Barnes on** "Mt 7:24"; **See Barnes on "Mt 7:25"; See Barnes on** "Mt 7:26"; **See Barnes on "Mt 7:27".**

{d} "is like a man" Mt 7:25,26 {e} "could not shake it" 2Pe 1:10 Jude 1:24 {f} "founded upon a rock" Ps 46:1-3 62:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 6 - Verse 49

Verse 49. **See Barnes on "Mt 7:21"; See Barnes on** "Mt 7:22"; **See Barnes on "Mt 7:23"; See Barnes on** "Mt 7:24"; **See Barnes on "Mt 7:25"; See Barnes on** "Mt 7:26"; **See Barnes on "Mt 7:27".**

{g} "heareth" Jas 1:24-26 {h} "it fell" Pr 28:18 Hos 4:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 1

Verses 1-10. **See Barnes "Mt 8:5"; See Barnes** "Mt 8:6"; **See Barnes "Mt 8:7"; See Barnes** "Mt 8:8"; **See Barnes "Mt 8:9"; See Barnes** "Mt 8:10"; **See Barnes "Mt 8:11"; See Barnes** "Mt 8:12"

' **See Barnes "Mt 8:13"**

Verse 1. *In the audience of the people*. In the hearing of the people.

{a} "Now when he had ended" Mt 8:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Who was dear unto him*. That is, he was valuable, trusty, and honoured.

{b} "dear" Job 31:15 Pr 29:21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 3

Verse 3. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *They besought him instantly*. Urgently or earnestly.

He was worthy. The centurion. He had showed favour to the Jews, and it was not improper to show him a kindness.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 5

Verse 5. No note by Barnes on this verse.

{c} "loveth our nation" 1Ki 5:1 Ga 5:6; 1Jo 3:14 5:1,2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 6

Verse 6. No notes by Barnes on this verse.

{d} "trouble not thyself"

Lu 8:49

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 7

Verse 7. No notes by Barnes on this verse.

{e} "say in a word"

Ps 107:20.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 8

Verse 8. No notes by Barnes on this verse.

{1} "one" or, "this man"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 9

Verse 9. No notes on this verse by Barnes.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No notes by Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *A city called Nain*. This city was in Galilee, in the boundaries of the tribe of Issachar. It was about two miles south of Mount Tabor, and not far from Capernaum. It is now a small village inhabited by Jews, Mohammedans, and Christians. Dr. Thomson (*The Land and the Book, vol. ii. p. 158*) locates it on the north-west corner of a mount now called Jebel ed Duhy, one hour's ride from the foot of Mount Tabor. Of this place he says:

> "This mount is now called Jebel ed Duhy, and that small hamlet on the north-west comer of it is Nain, famous for the restoration of the widow's son to life. It was once a place of considerable extent, but is now little more than a cluster of ruins, among which dwell a few families of fanatical Moslems. It is in keeping with the one historic incident that renders it dear to the Christian, that its only antiquities are tombs. These are situated mainly on the east of the village, and it was in that direction, I presume, that the widow's son was being carried on that memorable occasion. It took me just an hour to ride from the foot of Tabor to Nain."

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *The gate of the city*. Cities were surrounded by walls, to defend them from their enemies. They were entered through gates placed at convenient distances from each other. In most cities it was not allowed to bury the dead within the walls; hence they were borne to some convenient burial-place in the vicinity of the city.

A dead man carried out. A funeral procession. Anciently no Jews were buried within the walls of the city, except the kings and distinguished persons, 1Sa 28:3;2Ki 21:18. The custom of burying within cities, and especially within the walls of churches or in their vicinity, had its origin among Christians very early; yet perhaps few customs are more deleterious to health than burials within large cities, especially within the walls of frequented buildings. The effluvia from dead bodies is excessively unwholesome. Burial places should be in situations of retirement, far from the tread of the gay and busy world, where all the feelings may be still and calm, and where there can be no injury to health from the mouldering bodies of the dead.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 13

Verse 13. No notes by Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 14

Verse 14. No notes by Barnes on this verse.
{2} "bier" or, "coffin" {f} "Arise"
Lu 8:54 Ac 9:40; Ro 4:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 15

Verse 15. No notes by Barnes on this verse.
{g} "sat up"
2Ki 4:32-37 Lu 13:21; Joh 11:44

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Came a fear on all*. An awe or solemnity at the presence of one who had power to raise the dead, and at the miracle which had been performed.

Glorified God. Praised or honoured God that he had sent such a prophet.

And, That God hath visited his people. Some said one thing and some another, but all expressing their belief that God had showed peculiar favour to the people.

Hath visited. **See Barnes "Lu 1:68"**.

The raising of this young man was one of the most decisive and instructive of our Lord's miracles. There was no doubt that he was dead. There could be no delusion, and no agreement to impose on the people. He came near to the city with no reference to this young man; he met the funeral procession, as it were, by accident, and by a word he restored him to life. All those who had the best opportunity of judging-the mother, the friends— believed him to be dead, and were about to bury him. The evidence that he came to life was decisive. He sat up, he spake, and all were impressed with the full assurance that God had raised him to life. Many witnesses were present, and none doubted that Jesus by a word had restored him to his weeping mother.

The whole scene was affecting. Here was a widowed mother who was following her only son, her stay and hope, to the grave. He was borne along—one in the prime of life and the only comfort of his parent—impressive proof that the young, the useful, the vigorous, and the lovely may die. Jesus met them, apparently a stranger. He approached the procession as if he had something important to say; he touched the bier, and the procession stood still. He was full of compassion for the weeping parent, and by a word restored the youth, stretched upon the bier, to life. He sat up, and spake. Jesus

therefore had power over the dead. He also has power to raise sinners, dead in trespasses and sins, to life. He can speak the word, and, though in their death of sin they are borne along toward ruin, he can open their eyes, and raise them up, and restore them revived to *real* life or to their friends. Often he raises up children in this manner, and gives them, converted to God, to their friends, imparting as *real* joy as he gave to the widow of Nain by raising her son from the dead. And every child should remember, if he has pious parents, that there is *no way* in which he can give so much joy to them as embracing Him who is the resurrection and the life, and resolving to live to his glory.

{h} "great prophet" Lu 24:19 {i} "God hath visited" Lu 1:68

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 17

Verse 17. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 18

Verse 18. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 19

Verses 19-35.
See Barnes on "Mt 11:2" **through** Matthew 11:19.
Verse 19. No specific Barnes text on this verse.
{k} "And John, calling"
Mt 11:2
.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 20

Verse 20. No Barnes notes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 21

Verse 21. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 22

Verse 22. No Barnes text on this verse.
{m} "tell John"
Joh 1:46
{n} "the blind see" Is 35:5,6 {o} "to the poor the gospel is preached" Lu 4:18 Jas 2:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 23

Verse 23. No Barnes text on this verse.
{p} "offended in me."
Is 8:14-15 Mt 11:6, 13:57 Lu 2:34; Joh 6:66

1Co 1:21-28

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 24

Verse 24. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 25

Verse 25. No Barnes text on this verse.
{q} "in kings' courts"
2Sa 19:35 Es 1:3,11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 26

Verse 26. No Barnes text on this verse.
{r} "A prophet"
Lu 1:76

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 27

Verse 27. No Barnes text on this verse.
{s} "Behold, I sold"

Mal 3:1 Lu 1:15-17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 28

Verse 28. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *The people*. The common people.

That heard him. That heard John.

The publicans. The tax-gatherers, the worst kind of people, who had, however, been converted.

Justified God. Considered God as *just or right* in the counsel which he gave by John —to wit, in calling men to repentance, and in denouncing future wrath on the impenitent. Comp. Mt 11:19.

Being baptized, &c. They *showed* that they approved of the message of God by submitting to the ordinance which he commanded—the ordinance of baptism. This verse and the following are not to be considered as the words of Luke, but the continuation of the discourse of our Lord. He is saying what took place in regard to John. Among the common people he was approved and obeyed; among the rich and learned he was despised.

{t} "justified" Ps 51:4 Ro 3:4 {u} "baptized" Mt 3:5,6; Lu 3:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected*, &c. It appears from Mt 3:7 that some of the Pharisees came to John to be baptized; but still this is entirely consistent with the supposition that the great mass of Pharisees and lawyers rejected him.

The counsel of God. The *counsel of God* toward them was the solemn admonition by John to repent and be baptized, and be prepared to receive the Messiah. This was the command or revealed will of God in relation to them. When it is said that they *rejected* the counsel of God, it does not mean that they could frustrate his purposes, but merely that they violated his commands. Men cannot frustrate the real purposes of God, but they can contemn his messages, they can violate his commands, and thus they can reject the counsel which he gives them, and treat with contempt the desire which he manifests for their welfare.

Against themselves. To their own hurt or detriment. God is wise and good. He knows what is best for us. He, therefore, that rejects what God commands, rejects it to his own injury. It cannot be *well* for any mortal to despise what God commands him to do.

{3} "rejected" or, "frustrated" {v} "counsel of God" Ac 20:27 {4} "against themselves" or, "within themselves"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 31

Verse 31. See this passage explained in the Notes on Mt. 11:16-19. **See Barnes on "Mt 11:16"**; **See Barnes on** "Mt 11:17"; **See Barnes on "Mt 11:18"**; **See Barnes on** "Mt 11:19".

{w} "Whereunto then shall I" Mt 3:4 Mr 1:6; Lu 1:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 32

Verse 32. See this passage explained in the Notes on Mt. 11:16-19. **See Barnes on "Mt 11:16"**; **See Barnes on** "Mt 11:17"; **See Barnes on "Mt 11:18"**; **See Barnes on** "Mt 11:19".

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 33

Verse 33. See this passage explained in the Notes on Mt. 11:16-19. **See Barnes on "Mt 11:16"**; **See Barnes on** "Mt 11:17"; **See Barnes on "Mt 11:18"**; **See Barnes on** "Mt 11:19".

{x} "came neither eating bread" Mt 3:4 Mr 1:6; Lu 1:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 34

Verse 34. See this passage explained in the Notes on Mt. 11:16-19. **See Barnes on "Mt 11:16"**; **See Barnes on** "Mt 11:17"; **See Barnes on "Mt 11:18"**; **See Barnes on** "Mt 11:19".

{y} "Son of man" Joh 2:2 12:2; Lu 7:36

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *And the Lord said.* This clause is wanting in almost all the manuscripts, and is omitted by the best critics.

{z} "Wisdom is justified" Pr 8:32-36 17:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *One of the Pharisees*. His name was Simon, Lu 7:10. Nothing more is known of him. It is not improbable, however, from what follows (Lu 7:40-47), that he had been healed by the Saviour of some afflictive disease, and made this feast to show his gratitude.

Sat down to meat. The original word here means only that he placed himself or reclined at the table. The notion of *sitting* at meals is taken from modern customs, and was not practised by the Jews. **See Barnes "Mt 23:6".**

Meat. Supper. Food of any kind. Sat down to eat.

{a} "one of the Pharisees" Mt 26:6 Mr 14:3; Joh 11:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *In the city*. What city is meant is unknown. Some have supposed it was Nain; some Capernaum; some Magdala; and some Jerusalem.

Which was a sinner. Who was depraved or wicked. This woman, it seems, was known to be a sinner—perhaps an abandoned woman or a prostitute. It is certain that she had much to be forgiven, and she had probably passed her life in crime. There is no evidence that this was the woman commonly called Mary Magdalene.

An alabaster-box, &c. **See Barnes "Mr 14:3".**

{b} "a sinner" Lu 5:32 Lu 7:34; 1Ti 1:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *Stood at his feet behind him*. They reclined, at their meals, on their left side, and their feet, therefore, were extended *from* the table, so that persons could easily approach them. **See Barnes "Mt 23:6".**

Began to wash his feet. The Jews wore sandals. These were taken off when they entered a house. It was an act of hospitality and kindness to wash the feet of a guest. *She* therefore began to show her love for the Saviour, and at the same time her humility and penitence, by pouring forth a flood of tears, and washing his feet in the manner of a servant.

Kissed his feet. The kiss was an emblem of love and affection. In this manner she testified her love for the Lord Jesus, and at the same time her humility and sense of sin by kissing his feet, There could be few expressions of penitence more deep and tender than were these. A sense of all her sins rushed over her mind; her heart burst at the remembrance of them, and at the presence of the pure Redeemer; with deep sorrow she humbled herself and sought forgiveness. She showed her love for him by a kiss of affection; her humility, by bathing his feet; her veneration, by breaking a costly box—perhaps procured by a guilty life—and anointing his feet. In this way we should all come, embracing him as the loved Redeemer, humbled at his feet, and offering *all* we have—all that we have gained in lives of sin, in our professions, by merchandise and toil, while we were sinners—offering *all* to his service. Thus shall we show the sincerity of our repentance, and thus shall we hear his gracious voice pronounce our sins forgiven.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *He spake within himself.* Thought.

If he were a prophet. The word *prophet* here means, not one who predicts future events, but one who knows the hearts of men. If Jesus had been sent from God as a prophet, he supposed that he would have known the character of the woman and would have rebuked her.

Would have known, etc. Because Jesus did not rebuke her and drive her from his presence, he inferred that he could not be acquainted with her character. The Pharisees considered it improper to hold communion with those who were notorious sinners.

They judged our Saviour by their own rules, and supposed that *he* would act in the same way; and Simon therefore concluded that he did not know her character and could not be a prophet. Jesus did not refuse the society of the guilty. He came to save the lost; and no person ever came to him so sure of finding a friend, as those who came conscious that they were deeply depraved, and mourning on account of their crimes.

That toucheth him. The touch of a Gentile, or a person singularly wicked, they supposed to be polluting, and the Pharisees avoided it. See Mt 9:11.

{c} "This man" Joh 9:24 {d} "she is a sinner" Lu 15:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 40

Verse 40. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 41

Verse 41. *A certain creditor*. A man who had lent money or sold property, the payment for which was yet due.

Five hundred pence. About 69 dollars 26 cents, or £14, 11s. 8d. **See Barnes "Mt 18:28"**.

Fifty. About 7 dollars, or £1, 9s. 2d

{5} "pence" **See Barnes "Mt 18:28"**.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 42

Verse 42. *Frankly forgave*. Freely forgave, or forgave entirely without any compensation. This is not designed to express anything about the way in which God forgives sinners. He forgives—forgives freely, but it is in connection with the *atonement* made by the Lord Jesus. If it was a mere *debt* which we owed to God, he might forgive, as this creditor did, without any equivalent. But it is crime which he forgives. He pardons as a moral governor. A parent might forgive a *debt* without *any* equivalent; but he cannot pardon an offending child without regarding his own *character* as a

parent, the *truth* of his threatenings, the good order of his house, and the maintenance of his authority. So our sins against God, though they are called *debts*, are called so *figuratively*. It is not an affair of *money*, and God cannot forgive us without maintaining his word, the honour of his government, and law—in other words, without an *atonement*. It is clear that by the *creditor* here our Saviour meant to designate GOD, and by the *debtors*, sinners and the woman present. Simon, whose life had been comparatively upright, was denoted by the one that owed *fifty pence*; the woman, who had been an open and shameless sinner, was represented by the one that owed *five hundred*. Yet *neither* could pay. Both must be forgiven or perish. So, however much difference there is among men, all need the pardoning mercy of God, and all, without that, must perish.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 43

Verse 43. *I suppose*, &c. He saw not the point of our Lord's parable. By thus saying, therefore, he condemned himself, and prepared the way for our Lord's reproof.

{f} {rightly judged} Ps 116:16-18 1Co 15:9; 1Ti 1:13-16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 44

Verse 44. *Seest thou this woman*? You see what this woman has done to me, compared with what you have done. *She* has shown me expressions of regard which you, in your own house, have not shown.

I entered into thine house. I came at your invitation, where I might expect all the usual rites of hospitality.

Thou gavest me no water for my feet. Among Eastern people it was customary, before eating, to wash the feet; and to do this, or to bring water for it, was one of the rites of hospitality. See Ge 18:4 Jud 19:21. The reasons for this were, that they wore *sandals*, which covered only the bottom of the feet, and that when they ate they reclined on couches or sofas. It became therefore necessary that the feet should be often washed.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 45

Verse 45. *Thou gavest me no kiss*. The kiss was a token of affection or a common mode of salutation, and Simon had even neglected this mark or welcoming him to his house. It was often used among men as a sign of salutation. Comp. Ge 33:4 Ex 18:7; Mt 26:49.

Hath not ceased to kiss my feet. How striking the difference between the conduct of Simon and this woman! *He*, with all the richness of a splendid preparation, had omitted the common marks of regard and affection. *She*, in humility, had bowed at his feet, had watered them with tears, and had not ceased to kiss them. The most splendid entertainments do not always express the greatest welcome. There may be in such entertainments much insincerity—much seeking of popularity or

some other motive; but no such motive could have operated in inducing a broken-hearted sinner to wash the Saviour's feet with tears.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 46

Verse 46. *My head with oil*. The custom of pouring *oil* upon the head was universal among the Jews. The oil used was sweet oil or oil of olives, prepared in such a way as to give an agreeable smell. It was also used to render the hair more smooth and elegant. Ru 3:3; 2Sa 12:20; 2Sa 14:2 Ps 23:5.

With ointment. This *ointment* was a mixture of various aromatics, and was therefore far more costly and precious than the *oil* commonly used for anointing the head. Her conduct, compared with that of Simon, was therefore more striking. *He* did not give even the common oil *for his head* used on such occasions. *She* had applied to his feet a far more precious and valuable unguent. *He*, therefore, showed comparatively *little love*. *She* showed *much*.

{g} "My head" Ps 23:5.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 47

Verse 47. *Wherefore I say unto thee*. As the result of this, or because she has done this; meaning by this that she had given *evidence* that her sins had been forgiven. The inquiry with Simon was whether it was proper for Jesus to *touch her* or to allow her to touch him, because she was such a sinner, Lu 7:39. Jesus said, in substance, to Simon,

"Grant that she has been as great a sinner as you affirm,
and even grant that if she had *continued so* it might be
improper to suffer her to touch me, yet her *conduct* shows
that her sins have been forgiven. She has evinced so much
love for me as to show that she is no longer *such a sinner*
as you suppose, and it is not, therefore, improper that she
should be suffered to come near me."

For she loved much. In our translation this would seem to be given as a reason why her sins had been forgiven—that she had loved much *before* they were pardoned; but this is clearly not the meaning. This would be contrary to the whole New Testament, which supposes that love *succeeds*, not *precedes* forgiveness; and which nowhere supposes that sins are forgiven *because* we love God. It would be also contrary to the design of the Saviour here. It was not to show *why* her sins had been forgiven, but to show that she had given evidence that they actually *had* been, and that it was proper, therefore, that she should come near to him and manifest this love. The meaning may be thus expressed:

"That her sins, so many and aggravated, have been
forgiven—that she is no longer such a sinner as you

suppose, is manifest from her conduct. She shows deep
gratitude, penitence, love. Her conduct is the
proper expression of that love. While you have
shown comparatively little evidence that you felt that
your sins were great, and comparatively little
love at their being forgiven, *she* has shown that
she *felt* hers to be great, and has loved much."

To whom little is forgiven. He who feels that little has been forgiven—that his sins were not as great as those of others. A man's love to God will be in proportion to the obligation he *feels* to him for forgiveness. God is to be loved for his perfections, apart from what he has *done* for us. But still it is proper that our love should be increased by a consideration of his goodness; and they who feel—as Christians do—that they are *the chief of sinners*,will feel under infinite obligation to love God and their Redeemer, and that no *expression* of attachment to him can be *beyond* what is due.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 48

Verse 48. *Thy sins are forgiven*. What a gracious assurance to the weeping, loving, penitent! How that voice, spoken to the troubled sinner, stills his anguish, allays his troubled feelings, and produces peace to the soul! And how manifest is it that he that could say thus *must* be God! No man has a *right* to forgive sin. No man *can* speak peace to the soul, and give assurance that its transgressions are pardoned. Here, then, Jesus gave indubitable proof that he was God as well as man; that he was Lord of the conscience as well as the pitying friend; and that he was as able to read the heart and give peace there, as he was to witness the external expression of sorrow for sin.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 49

Verse 49. *Who is this*, &c. A very pertinent question. Who *could* he be but God? Man could not do it, and there is no wonder that they were amazed.

{h} {Who is this that forgiveth sins.} Mt 9:2,3; Mr 2:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 7 - Verse 50

Verse 50. *Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace*. **See Barnes on "Mr 5:34"**.

{i} "Thy faith" Hab 2:4 Mt 9:22; Mr 5:34 10:52; Lu 8:48 18:42; Eph 2:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 1

Verse 1. *Every city and village*. Of Galilee.

Preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God.

That the kingdom of God was about to come, or that his reign in the gospel was about to be set up over men. **See Barnes "Mt 3:2"**.

The twelve. The twelve apostles.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Infirmities*. Sickness.

Mary called Magdalene. So called from Magdala, the place of her residence. It was situated on the Sea of Galilee, south of Capernaum. To this place Jesus retired after feeding the four thousand. **See Barnes "Mt 15:39"**.

Out of whom went. By the power of Jesus.

Seven devils. The word seven is often used for an indefinite number, and may signify merely *many* devils.

The expression is used to signify that she was grievously tormented, and rendered, doubtless, insane by the power of evil spirits. **See Barnes "Mt 4:24"**.

It has been commonly supposed that Mary Magdalene was a woman of abandoned character, but of this there is not the least evidence. All that we know of her is that she was formerly grievously afflicted by the presence of those evil spirits, that she was perfectly cured by Jesus, and that afterward she became one of his most faithful and humble followers. She was at his crucifixion (Joh 19:25) and burial (Mr 15:47), and she was among those who had prepared the materials to embalm him (Mr 16:1), and who first went to the sepulchre after the resurrection; and what is particularly interesting in her history, she was the first to whom the risen Redeemer appeared (Mr 16:9), and his conversation with her is exceeded in interest and pathos by no massage of history, sacred or profane, Joh 20:11-18.

{a} "certain woman" Mt 27:55 {b} "out of whom went seven devils" Mr 16:9 Lu 8:30

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Herod's Steward*. Herod Antipas, who reigned in Galilee. He was a son of Herod the Great. The word *steward* means one who has charge of the domestic affairs of a family, to provide for it. This office was generally held by a *slave* who was esteemed the most faithful, and was often conferred as a reward of fidelity.

Ministered. Gave for his support.

Of their substance. Their property; their possessions. Christians then believed, when they professed to follow christ, that it was proper to give *all* up to him—that is, to commit all that we have to his disposal; to be willing to part with it for the promotion of his glory, and to leave it when he calls us away from it.

{c} "ministered" 2Co 8:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 4

Verses 4-15. See the parable of the Sower explained in Barnes Notes on Mt 13:1-23.

See Barnes on "Mt 13:1, and following.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 5

Verse 5. No Barnes text on this verse.

{d} "sower" Mt 13:3 Mr 4:3 {e} "trodden down" Ps 119:118 Mt 5:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 6

Verse 6. No Barnes text on this verse.

{f} "rock"

Jer 5:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 7

Verse 7. No Barnes text on this verse.

{???} "among thorns"

Jer 4:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 8

Verse 8. No Barnes text on this verse.

{h} "an hundred fold"

Ge 26:12

{l} "He that hath ears to hear" Mt 13:18 Mr 4:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 9

Verse 9. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No Barnes text on this verse.
{k} "seeing they might not see"
Is 6:9
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THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 11

Verse 11. No Barnes text on this verse.
{l} "Now, the parable is this:"
Mt 13:18 Mr 4:14
{m} "seed" 1Pe 1:23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 12

Verse 12. No Barnes text on this verse.
{n} "taketh"
Pr 4:5 Isa 65:11; Jas 1:23,24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 13

Verse 13. No Barnes text on this verse.
{o} "receive the word with joy"
Ps 106:12,13; Is 58:2 Ga 3:1,4 4:15
{p} "have no root" Pr 12:3 Hos 6:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 14

Verse 14. No Barnes text on this verse.
{q} "are choked"

1Ti 6:9,10; 2Ti 4:10 1Jo 2:15-17
{r} "bring no fruit" Joh 15:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 15

Verse 15. No Barnes text on this verse.
{s} "honest"
Jer 32:39
{t} "patience" He 10:36 Jas 1:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 16

Verse 16. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes "Mr 4:21, and Mr 4:22-25
{u} "No man" Mt 5:15 Mr 4:21; Lu 11:23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 17

Verse 17. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes "Mr 4:21, and Mr 4:22-25
{v} "nothing is secret" Ec 12:4 Mt 10:26

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 18

Verse 18. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes "Mr 4:21, and Mr 4:22-25
{w} "take heed" Jas 1:21-25 {x} "whosoever hath" Mt 13:12 25:29; Lu 19:26
{1} "seemeth to have", or "thinketh that he hath"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 19

Verse 19. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes "Mt 12:46, and Mt 12:47-50
{y} "Then came to him" Mt 12:46 Mr 3:32

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 20

Verse 20. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 21

Verse 21. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 22

Verses 22-39. See this passage explained in the Barnes Notes on
See Barnes "Mt 8:23"
See Barnes "Mt 8:24
See Barnes "Mr 5:1, also Mr 5:2-20.
Verse 22. No Barnes text on this verse.
{z} "Now it came to pass"
Mt 8:23 Mr 4:35

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 23

Verse 23. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 24

Verse 24. No Barnes text on this verse.
{a} "and awoke him"
Ps 44:23 Is 51:9,10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 25

Verse 25. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 26

Verse 26. No Barnes text on this verse.
{b} "And they arrived"
Mt 8:28 Mr 5:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 27

Verse 27. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 28

Verse 28. No Barnes text on this verse.
{c} "torment me not"
Is 27:1 Jas 2:19; Re 20:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 29

Verse 29. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 30

Verse 30. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 31

Verse 31. No Barnes text on this verse.
{d} "out into the deep"
Re 20:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 32

Verse 32. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 33

Verse 33. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 34

Verse 34. No Barnes text on this verse.
{e} "they fled"
Ac 19:16,17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 35

Verse 35. No Barnes text on this verse.
{f} "right mind"
Ps 51:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 36

Verse 36. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 37

Verse 37. No Barnes text on this verse.
{g} "besought him to depart"
Ac 16:39

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 38

Verse 38. No Barnes text on this verse.

{h} "besought him"
De 10:20,21; Ps 116:12,16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 39

Verse 39. No Barnes text on this verse.
{k} "great things"
Ps 126:2,3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 40

Verses 40-56. See this passage explained in the Notes on Mt 9:18-26 and Mr 5:21-43.
See Barnes "Mt 9:18, and Mt 9:19-26 **See Barnes "Mr 5:21, and** Mr 5:22-43
Verse 40. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 41

Verse 41. No Barnes text on this verse.
{l} "there came a man named Jarius" Mt 9:13 Mr 5:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 42

Verse 42. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 43

Verse 43. No Barnes text on this verse.
{m} "had spent"
2Ch 16:12 Is 55:2
{n} "physicians" Lu 6:19 1Pe 2:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 44

Verse 44. No Barnes text on this verse.
{o} "immediately"
Mt 8:3 Lu 13:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 45

Verse 45. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 46

Verse 46. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 47

Verse 47. No Barnes text on this verse.
{q} "she was not hid"
Ps 38:9 Ho 5:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 48

Verse 48. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 49

Verse 49. No Barnes text on this verse.
{s} "while she yet spoke"
Mt 9:23 Mr 5:35
{t} "ruler of the synagogue" Lu 8:41,42

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 50

Verse 50. No Barnes text on this verse.
{u} "Fear not"

Joh 11:25 Ro 4:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 51

Verse 51. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 52

Verse 52. No Barnes text on this verse.
{v} "sleepeth"
Joh 11:11,13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 53

Verse 53. No Barnes text on this verse.
{w} "laughed"
Ps 22:7 Lu 16:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 54

Verse 54. No Barnes text on this verse.
{x} "arise"
Lu 7:14 Joh 11:43

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 55

Verse 55. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 8 - Verse 56

Verse 56. No Barnes text on this verse.
{y} "charged them"
Mt 8:4 9:30; Mr 5:43

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 1

Verses 1-6. **See Barnes "Mt 10:1, and Barnes on** Mt 10:2-14
Verse 1. No Barnes text on this verse.
{a} "Then he called"
Mt 10:1 Mr 3:13, 6:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 2

Verse 2. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 3

Verse 3. No Barnes text on this verse.
{b} "Take nothing"
Lu 10:4 12:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 4

Verse 4. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 5

Verse 5. No Barnes text on this verse.
{c} "shake off"
Ne 5:13 Ac 13:51, 18:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 6

Verse 6. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 7

Verse 7. No Barnes text on this verse.
{d} "Herod"
Mt 14:1 Mr 6:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 8

Verse 8. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 9

Verse 9. No Barnes text on this verse.
{e} "desired to see him"
Lu 23:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 10

Verses 10-17. **See Barnes "Mt 14:13, also** Mt 14:14-21.
Verse 10. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 11

Verse 11. No Barnes text on this verse.
{f} "when they knew it"
Ro 10:14,17
{g} "he received them" Joh 6:37 {h} "kingdom of God" Ac 28:31

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 12

Verse 12. No Barnes text on this verse.
{k} "And when the day"
Mt 14:15
{l} "desert place" Ps 78:19,20; Eze 34:25 Ho 13:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 13

Verse 13. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 14

Verse 14. No Barnes text on this verse.
{m} "Make them sit down"
1Co 14:40

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 15

Verse 15. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 16

Verse 16. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 17

Verse 17. No Barnes text on this verse.
{n} "were all filled"
Ps 107:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 18

Verses 18-26. **See Barnes "Mt 16:13, and Barnes on** Mt 16:14-27 **See Barnes "Mr 8:27, and Barnes on** Mr 28-38.
Verse 18. No Barnes text on this verse.
{o} "it came to pass"
Mt 16:13 Mr 8:27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 19

Verse 19. No Barnes text on this verse.
{p} "John the Baptist"
Mt 14:2 Lu 9:7,8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *The Christ of God*. The *Anointed* of God. The *Messiah* appointed by God, and who had been long promised by him. **See Barnes "Mt 1:1"**.
{q} "Peter answering" Joh 6:69

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 21

Verse 21. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 22

Verse 22. No Barnes text on this verse.
{r} "The Son of man"
Mt 16:21 17:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 23

Verse 23. No Barnes text on this verse.
{s} "If any man"
Mt 10:38 16:24; Mr 8:34 Lu 14:27; Ro 8:13 Col 3:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 24

Verse 24. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 25

Verse 25. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 26

Verse 26. No Barnes text on this verse.
{t} "For whosoever shall"
Mt 10:33 Mr 8:38; 2Ti 2:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 27

Verse 27. No Barnes text on this verse.
{u} "But I tell you a truth"
Mt 16:28 Mr 9:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 28

Verses 28-36. See an account of the transfiguration in Mt 17:1-13 Mr 9:23.
Verse 28. No Barnes text on this verse.
{w} "And it came to pass"
Mt 17:1 9:2
{1} "sayings", or "things"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *The fashion*. The appearance. Glistering. Shining like lightning—of a bright, dazzling whiteness. As Mark says, "more white than any fuller could make it."

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 30

Verse 30. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *In glory*. Of a glorious appearance. Of an appearance like that which the saints have in heaven.

His decease. Literally his *exit* or *departure*. The word translated here *decease*—that is, *exit*, or *going out*—is elsewhere used to denote death. **See Barnes "2Pe 1:15"**.

Death is a departure or going out from this life. In *this* word there may be an allusion to the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt. As that was going out from *bondage*, pain, and humiliation, so death, to a saint, is but going forth from a land of captivity and thraldom to one of plenty and freedom; to the land of promise, the Canaan in the skies.

He should accomplish. Which was about to take place.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *Heavy with sleep*. Borne down with sleep—oppressed, overcome with sleep. It may seem remarkable that they should fall asleep on such an occasion; but we are to bear in mind that this may have been in the night, and that they were weary with the toils of the day. Besides, they did not *fall asleep* while the transfiguration lasted. While Jesus was praying, or perhaps after he closed, they fell asleep. *While* they were sleeping his countenance was changed, and Moses and Elias appeared. The first that *they* saw of it was after they awoke, having been probably awakened by the shining of the light around them.

{x} "heavy with sleep" Da 8:18 10:9 {y} "they saw his glory" Joh 1:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 33

Verse 33. No Barnes text on this verse.

{z} "It is good for us to be here"

Ps 27:4 73:28

{a} "not knowing what he said" Mr 10:38

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 34

Verse 34. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 35

Verse 35. No Barnes text on this verse.

{c} "hear him"
De 18:15 Ac 3:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *Jesus was found alone*. That is, the two men had left him. In respect to *them* he was alone.
{d} "told no man" Ec 3:7.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 37

Verses 37-43. See this passage explained in the Notes on Mt 17:14-21, and Mr 9:14-29. **See Barnes "Mt 17:14, and** Mt 17:15-21. **See Barnes "Mr 9:14, and** Mr 9:15-29.
Verse 37. No Barnes text on this verse.
{e} "it came to pass"
Mt 17:14 Mr 9:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 38

Verse 38. No Barnes text on this verse.
{f} "only child"
Zec 12:10
.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 39

Verse 39. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 40

Verse 40. No Barnes text on this verse.
{g} "they could not"
Ac 19:13-16
.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 41

Verse 41. No Barnes text on this verse.
{h} "faithless"
Joh 20:27 Heb 4:2
{i} "perverse" De 32:5 Ps 78:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 42

Verse 42. No Barnes text on this verse.
{k} "rebuked"
Mr 1:27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 43

Verse 43. No Barnes text on this verse.
{l} "amazed"
Ps 139:14 Zec 8:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 44

Verse 44. *Let these sayings*. Probably this refers to the *sayings of the people*, who had seen his miracles, and who on that account had praised and glorified God. On that ground they had acknowledged him to be the Christ. As if he had said, "I am about to die. *You* will then be disconsolate, and perhaps doubtful about my being the Christ. *Then* do you remember these miracles, and the confessions of the people—the evidence which I gave you that I was from God." Or it may mean, "Remember that I am about to die, and let my sayings in regard to that sink down into your hearts, for it is a most important event; and you will have need of remembering, when it takes place, that I told you of it." This last interpretation, however, does not agree as well with the Greek as the former.

{m} "for the Son of man" Mt 17:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 45

Verse 45. *It was hid from them*. They had imbibed the common notions of the Jews that he was to be a prince and a conqueror, to deliver the nation. They could not understand how that could be, if he was soon to be delivered into the hands of his enemies to die. In this way it was hid from

them—not by God, but by their previous false belief. And from this we may learn that the plainest truths of the Bible are unintelligible to many because they have embraced some belief or opinion before which is erroneous, and which they are unwilling to abandon. The proper way of reading the Bible is to lay aside all previous opinions and submit entirely to God. The apostles should have supposed that their previous notions of the Messiah were wrong, and should have renounced them. They should have believed that what Jesus *then* said was consistent with his being the Christ. So *we* should believe that *all* that God says is consistent with truth, and should forsake all other opinions.

{o} "But they understood not" Mar 9:32 Lu 2:50, 18:34

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 46

Verses 46-50. **See Barnes "Mt 18:1, and** Mt 18:2-5. Comp. Mr 9:33-38.
{p} "Then there arose" Mt 18:1 Mr 9:34

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 47

Verse 47. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 48

Verse 48. No Barnes text on this verse.
{q} "Whosoever shall receive"
Mt 23:11,12; Lu 14:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 49

Verse 49. No Barnes text on this verse.
{a} "we saw one casting"
Nu 11:27-29

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 50

Verse 50. No Barnes text on this verse.
{t} "for he that is not against us"
Mt 12:30 Lu 16:13.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 51

Verse 51. Should be received up. The word here translated "received up" means literally a removal from a lower to a higher place, and here it refers evidently to the solemn ascension of Jesus to heaven. It is often used to describe that great event. See Ac 1:11,22; Mr 16:19, 1Ti 3:16. The time appointed for him to remain on the earth was about expiring, and he resolved to go to Jerusalem and die. And from this we learn that Jesus made a *voluntary* sacrifice; that he *chose* to give his life for the sins of men. Humanly speaking, had he remained in Galilee he would have been safe; but that it might appear that he did not shun danger, and that he was really a *voluntary* sacrifice— that no man had power over his life except as he was *permitted* (Joh 19:11)—he chose to put himself in the way of danger, and even to go into scenes which he knew would end in his death.

He steadfastly set his face. He determined to go to Jerusalem, or he set out resolutely. When a man goes toward an object, he may be said to set his face toward it. The expression here means only that he *resolved* to go, and it implies that he was not appalled by the dangers—that he was determined to brave all, and go up into the midst of his enemies— to die.

{u} "received up" Mr 16:19 Ac 1:2.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 52

Verse 52. *Sent messengers*. In the original the word is *angels*; and the use of that word here shows that the word *angel* in the Bible does not always mean heavenly beings.

To make ready. To prepare a place, lodgings, refreshments. He had no reason to expect that he would experience any kind treatment from the Samaritans if he came suddenly among them, and if they saw that he was going to Jerusalem. He therefore made provision beforehand, and thus has shown us that it is not *improper* to look out beforehand for the supply of our wants, and to guard against want and poverty.

Samaritans, **See Barnes "Mt 10:5"**

{v} "Samaritans" Joh 4:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 53

Verse 53. *They did not receive him*. Did not entertain him hospitably, or receive him with kindness.

Because his face was, &c. Because they ascertained that he was going to Jerusalem. One of the subjects of dispute between the Jews and Samaritans pertained to the proper situation of the temple. The Jews contended that it should be at Jerusalem; the Samaritans, on Mount Gerizim, and accordingly they had built one there. They had probably heard of the miracles of Jesus, and that he claimed to be the Messiah. Perhaps they had hoped that he would decide that *they* were right in regard to the building of the temple. Had he decided the question in that way, they would have

received him as the Messiah gladly; but when they saw that he was going among the Jews— that *by going* he would decide in their favour, they resolved to have nothing to do with him, and they rejected him. And from this we may learn—-

1st. That men wish all the teachers of religion to fall in with their own views.

2nd. That if a doctrine does not accord with their selfish desires, they are very apt to reject it.

3rd. That if a religious teacher or a doctrine favours a rival sect, it is commonly rejected without examination. And,

4th. That men, from a regard to their own views and selfishness, often reject the true religion, as the Samaritans did the Son of God, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 54

Verse 54. *James and John*. They were called *Boanerges* —sons of thunder—probably on account of their energy and power in preaching the gospel, or of their vehement and rash zeal—a remarkable example of which we have in this instance, Mr 3:17.

Wilt thou, &c. The insult had been offered to Jesus, their friend, and they felt it; but their zeal was rash and their spirit bad. Vengeance belongs to God: it was not theirs to attempt it,

Fire from heaven. Lightning, to consume them.

As Elias did. By this they wished to justify their zeal. Perhaps, while they were speaking, they saw Jesus look at them with disapprobation, and to vindicate themselves they referred to the case of Elijah. The case is recorded in 2Ki 1:10-12.

{w} "as Elias did" 2Ki 1:10,12.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 55

Verse 55. *Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of*. You suppose that you are actuated by a proper love for me; but you know not yourselves. It is rather a love of revenge; rather revengeful feelings toward the *Samaritans* than proper feelings toward *me*. We learn here—

1st. That *apparent* zeal for God may be only improper opposition toward our fellow-men.

2nd. That men, when they wish to honour God, should examine their spirit, and see if there is not lying at the bottom of their professed zeal for God some bad feeling toward their fellow-men.

3rd. That the highest opposition which Jesus met with was not inconsistent with his loving those who opposed him, and with his seeking to do them good.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 56

Verse 56. *For the Son of man*, &c. You should imitate, in your spirit, the Son of man. *He* came not to destroy. If he had come for that purpose, he would have destroyed these Samaritans; but he

came to save. He is not soon angry. *He* bears patiently opposition to himself, and *you* should bear opposition to him. You should catch his spirit; temper your zeal like his; seek to do good to those who injure you and him; be mild, kind, patient, and forgiving.

{x} "For the Son of man" Joh 3:17 12:47

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 57

Verses 57-60. **See Barnes on "Mt 8:19, and** Mt 8:20-22.

Verse 57. No Barnes text on this verse.

{y} "And it came to pass"

Mt 8:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 58

Verse 58. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 59

Verse 59. No Barnes text on this verse.

{z} "Lord, suffer me first"

1Ki 19:20.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 60

Verse 60. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 61

Verse 61. *Bid them farewell*. To take leave, inform them of the design, and set things at home in order. Jesus did not suffer this, because he probably saw that he would be influenced by a love of his friends, or by their persuasions, not to return to him. The purpose to be a Christian requires *decision*. Men should not tamper with the world. They should not consult earthly friends about it. They should not even allow worldly friends to give them *advice* whether to be Christians or not. God is to be obeyed rather than man, and they should come forth boldly, and resolve at once to give themselves to his service.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 9 - Verse 62

Verse 62. *No man, having put his hand*, &c. To put one's hand to a plough is a proverbial expression to signify undertaking any business. In order that a ploughman may accomplish his work, it is necessary to look onward—to be intent on his employment—not to be looking back with regret that he undertook it. So in religion. He that enters on it must do it with his whole heart. He that comes still loving the world—still looking with regret on its pleasures, its wealth, and its honours—that has not *wholly* forsaken them as his portion, cannot be a Christian, and is not fit for the kingdom of God. How searching is this test to those who profess to be Christians! And how solemn the duty of all men to renounce all earthly objects, and to be not only *almost*, but *altogether*, followers of the Son of God! It is perilous to tamper with the world —to look at its pleasures or to seek its society. He that would enter heaven must come with a heart full of love to God; giving *all* into his hands, and prepared always to give up all his property, his health, his friends, his body, his soul to God, when he demands them, or he cannot be a Christian. Religion is everything or nothing. He that is not willing to sacrifice *everything* for the cause of God, is really willing to sacrifice nothing.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 1

Verse 1. *After these things*. After the appointment of the twelve apostles, and the transactions recorded in the previous chapters.

Verse 1. *Other seventy*. Seventy others besides the apostles. They were appointed for a different purpose from the apostles. The apostles were to be with him; to hear his instructions; to be witnesses of his miracles, his sufferings, his death, his resurrection and ascension, that they might there go and proclaim all these things to the world. The seventy were sent out to preach immediately, and chiefly where he himself was about to come. They were appointed for a temporary object. They were to go into the villages and towns, and prepare the way for his coming. The number *seventy* was a favourite number among the Jews. Thus the family of Jacob that came into Egypt consisted of seventy, Ge 46:27. The number of elders that Moses appointed to aid him was the same, Nu 11:16,25. The number which composed the great Sanhedrim, or council of the nation, was the same. It is not improbable that our Saviour appointed this *number* with reference to the fact that it so often occurred among the Jews, or after the example of Moses, who appointed seventy to aid him in his work; but it is evident that the office was *temporary*—that it had a specific design —and of course that it would be improper to attempt to find now a *continuation*, of it, or a parallel to it, in the Christian ministry.

Two and two. There was much wisdom in sending them in this manner. It was done, doubtless, that they might aid one another by mutual counsel, and that they might sustain and comfort one another in their persecutions and trials. Our Lord in this showed the propriety of having *a religious friend*, who would be a confidant and help. Every Christian, and especially every Christian minister,

needs such a friend, and should seek some one to whom he can unbosom himself, and with whom he can mingle his feelings and prayers.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 2

Verse 2. **See Barnes "Mt 9:36"**; **See Barnes** "Mt 9:37"

{b} "The harvest truly is great" Mt 9:37 Joh 4:35 {c} "the labourers are few" 1Co 3:9 1Ti 5:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 3

Verse 3. **See Barnes "Mt 10:16"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Purse—scrip—shoes*. **See Barnes on "Mt 10:10"**.

Salute no man by the way. Salutations among the Orientals did not consist, as among us, of a slight bow or an extension of the hand, but was performed by many embraces and inclinations, and even prostrations of the body on the ground. All this required much time; and as the business on which the seventy were sent was urgent, they were required not to *delay* their journey by long and formal salutations of the persons whom they met.

"If two Arabs of equal rank meet each other, they extend
to each other the right hand, and having clasped,
they elevate them as if to kiss them. Each one then
draws back his hand and kisses it instead of his friend's,
and then places it upon his forehead. The parties then
continue the salutation by kissing each other's beard.
They give thanks to God that they are once more
permitted to see their friend—they pray to the Almighty
in his behalf. Sometimes they repeat not less than ten
times the ceremony of grasping hands and kissing."

It may also be added, in the language of Dr. Thomson (*The Land and the Book*, vol. i. p. 534), that

"there is such an amount of insincerity, flattery, and
falsehood in the terms of salutation prescribed by
etiquette, that our Lord, who is truth itself, desired
his representatives to dispense with them as far as
possible, perhaps tacitly to rebuke them. These

'instructions' were also intended to reprove another propensity which an Oriental can scarcely resist, no matter how urgent his business. If he meets an acquaintance, he must stop and make an endless number of inquiries and answer as many. If they come upon men making a bargain or discussing any other matter, they must pause and intrude their own ideas, and enter keenly into the business, though it in no wise concerns them; and more especially, an Oriental can never resist the temptation to assist *where accounts are being settled or money counted out*. The clink of coin has a positive fascination to them. Now the command of our Saviour strictly forbade all such loiterings. They would waste time, distract attention, and in many ways hinder the prompt and faithful discharge of their important mission."

The salutation of friends, therefore, was a ceremony which consumed much time; and it was on this account that our Lord on this occasion forbade them to delay their journey to greet others. A similar direction is found in 2Ki 4:29.

{d} "Carry neither" Lu 9:3 {e} "salute no man" Ge 24:33,56; 2Ki 4:29 Pr 4:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 5

Verse 5. **See Barnes on "Mt 10:13"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *The son of peace* That is, if the *house* or *family* be *worthy*, or be disposed to receive you in *peace* and kindness. Mt 10:13. *The son of peace* means one *disposed* to peace, or peaceful and kind in his disposition. Comp. Mt 1:1.

{f} "son of peace" Is 9:6 {g} "your peace shall rest" Ge 24:33,65; 2Ki 4:29 Pr 4:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 7

Verse 7. **See Barnes on "Mt 10:11"**.

On this passage Dr. Thomson (*The Land and the Book*, vol. i. p. 534) remarks:

"The reason [for the command, 'Go not from house to house']
is very obvious to one acquainted with Oriental customs.
When a stranger arrives in a village or an encampment,

the neighbours, one after another, must invite him to
eat with them. There is a strict etiquette about it,
involving much ostentation and hypocrisy, and a failure
in the due observance of this system of hospitality is
violently resented, and often leads to alienations and
feuds among neighbours; it also consumes much time,
causes unusual distraction of mind, leads to levity,
and every way counteracts the success of a spiritual
mission."
{h} "the labourer is" 1Co 9:4-14 1Ti 5:18 {i} "Go not from house" 1Ti 5:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 8

Verses 8-12. **See Barnes** "Mt 10:14, **See Barnes "Mt 10:15"**.
Verse 8. No Barnes text on this verse.
{k} "eat such things as are set before you" 1Co 10:27.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 9

Verses 8-12. **See Barnes** "Mt 10:14, **See Barnes "Mt 10:15"**.
Verse 9. No Barnes text on this verse.
{l} "The kingdom of God" Mt 3:2.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 10

Verses 8-12. **See Barnes** "Mt 10:14, **See Barnes "Mt 10:15"**.
Verse 10. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 11

Verses 8-12. **See Barnes** "Mt 10:14, **See Barnes "Mt 10:15"**.
Verse 11. No Barnes text on this verse.
{m} "the very dust of your city" Lu 9:5.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 12

Verses 8-12. **See Barnes** "Mt 10:14, **See Barnes "Mt 10:15"**.
Verse 12. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 13

Verses 13-15. **See Barnes on "Mt 11:21"; See Barnes on** "Mt 11:22"
See Barnes on "Mt 11:23".
Verse 13. No Barnes text on this verse.
{n} "Woe" Mt 11:21 {o} "if the mighty works" Eze 3:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 14

Verses 13-15. **See Barnes on "Mt 11:21"; See Barnes on** "Mt 11:22"
See Barnes on "Mt 11:23".
Verse 14. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 15

Verses 13-15. **See Barnes on "Mt 11:21"; See Barnes on** "Mt 11:22"
See Barnes on "Mt 11:23".
Verse 15. No Barnes text on this verse.
{p} "which are exalted to heaven" Eze 26:20 31:18 {r} "shalt be thrust down to hell" Joh 13:20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 16

Verse 16. **See Barnes on "Mt 10:40"**.
No Barnes text on this verse.
{r} "He that heareth you" Joh 13:20 {s} "he that despiseth you" Ac 5:4 {t} "he that despiseth me" Joh 5:23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *The devils are subject unto us*. The devils obey us. We have been able to cast them out.

Through thy name.When commanded in thy name to come out of those who are possessed.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *I beheld Satan*, &c. *Satan* here denotes evidently the prince of the devils who had been cast out by the seventy disciples, for the discourse was respecting their power over evil spirits. *Lightening* is an image of *rapidity* or *quickness*. I saw Satan fall *quickly* or rapidly—as quick as lightning. The phrase "from heaven" is to be referred to the lightning, and does not mean that he saw *Satan* fall *from heaven*, but that he fell as quick as lightning from heaven or from the clouds. The whole expression then may mean,

"I saw at your command devils immediately depart, as
quick as the flash of lightning. I gave you this power—
I saw it put forth—and I give also now, in addition
to this, the power to tread on serpents," &c.

{u} "Satan as lightning" Re 12:8,9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *To tread on serpents*. Preservation from danger. If you tread on a poisonous reptile that would otherwise injure you, *I* will keep you from danger. If you go among bitter and malignant enemies that would seek your life, *I* will preserve you. **See Barnes "Mr 16:18"**.

Scorpions. The scorpion is an animal with eight feet, eight eyes, and a long jointed tail, ending in a pointed weapon or sting. It is found in tropical climates, and seldom exceeds 4 inches in length. Its sting is extremely poisonous, and it is sometimes fatal to life. It is in Scripture the emblem of malicious and crafty men. When rolled up it has some resemblance to an egg, Lu 12:12; Eze 2:6. The annexed cut will give an idea of its usual form and appearance.

The enemy. Satan. The meaning of this verse is, that Jesus would preserve them from the power of Satan and all his emissaries—from all wicked and crafty men; and this shows that he had divine power. He that can control Satan and his hosts—that can be present to guard from all their machinations, see all their plans, and destroy all their designs, must be clothed with no less than almighty power.

{v} "tread on serpents" Mr 16:18 Ac 28:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Rather rejoice*, &c. Though it was an honour to work miracles, though it is an honour to be endowed with talents, and influence, and learning, yet it is a subject of chief joy that we are numbered among the people of God, and have a title to everlasting life.

Names are written in heaven. The names of citizens of a city or state were accustomed to be written in a book or register, from which they were blotted out when they became unworthy, or forfeited the favour of their country. Comp. Ps 69:28; Ex 32:32; De 9:14; Re 3:5.

That their *names were written in heaven* means that they were *citizens* of heaven; that they were friends of God and *approved* by him, and would be permitted to dwell with him. This was of far more value than all *earthly* honour, power, or wealth, and in this men should rejoice more than in eminent endowments of influence, learning, talents, or possessions.

{w} "your names are written" Ex 32:32 Ps 69:28; Is 4:3 Da 12:1
Php 4:3 Heb 12:23; Re 13:8 20:12, 21:27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 21

Verses 21-22. **See Barnes** "Mt 11:25; **See Barnes "Mt 11:26"; See Barnes** "Mt 11:27.
{1} "All things", Many ancient copies add, "And turning to his disciples, he said"
{x} "things" Mt 28:18 Joh 3:35

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 22

Verses 21-22. **See Barnes** "Mt 11:25; **See Barnes "Mt 11:26"; See Barnes** "Mt 11:27.
Verse 22. No Barnes text on this verse.
{y} "no man knoweth who the Son is" Joh 6:44,46

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 23

Verses 23-24. **See Barnes "Mt 13:16"; See Barnes** "Mt 13:17".
No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 24

Verse 23-24. **See Barnes "Mt 13:16"; See Barnes** "Mt 13:17".
{z} "many prophets and kings" 1Pe 1:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *A certain lawyer*. One who professed to be well skilled in the laws of Moses; and whose business it was to explain them.

Stood up. Rose—came forward to address him.

Tempted him. Feigned a desire to be instructed, but did it to perplex him, or to lead him, if possible, to contradict some of the maxims of the law.

Inherit eternal life. Be saved. This was the common inquiry among the Jews. *They* had said that man must keep the commandments—the written and oral law.

{a} "what shall I do" Ac 16:30,31 {b} "to inherit eternal" Ga 3:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *What is written*, &c. Jesus referred him to the *law* as a safe rule, and asked him what was said there. The lawyer was doubtless endeavouring to justify himself by obeying the law. He trusted to his own works. To bring him off from that ground—to make him feel that it was an unsafe foundation, Jesus showed him what the law *required*, and thus showed him that he needed a better righteousness than his own. This is the proper use of the law. By comparing ourselves with *that* we see our own defects, and are thus prepared to welcome a better righteousness than our own that of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus the law becomes a schoolmaster to lead us to him, Ga 3:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 27

Verses 27-28. **See Barnes "Mt 22:37"**; **See Barnes** "Mt 22:38"; **See Barnes "Mt 22:39"**; **See Barnes** "Mt 22:40".

Verse 27. No Barnes text on this verse.

{c} "Thou shalt love" De 6:5 {d} "thy neighbour as" Le 19:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 28

Verses 27-28. **See Barnes "Mt 22:37"**; **See Barnes** "Mt 22:38"; **See Barnes "Mt 22:39"**; **See Barnes** "Mt 22:40".

Verse 28. No Barnes text on this verse.

{e} "This do" Le 18:5 Ne 9:29; Eze 20:11,21; Ro 10:6 Ga 3:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *To justify himself*. Desirous to appear blameless, or to vindicate himself, and show that he had kept the law. Jesus wished to lead him to a proper view of his own sinfulness, and his real departure from the law. The man was desirous of showing that he had kept the law; or perhaps he was desirous of justifying himself for asking the question; of showing that it could not be so easily settled; that a mere reference to the *words* of the law did not determine it. It was still a question what was meant by *neighbour*. The Pharisees held that the Jews only were to be regarded as such, and that the obligation did not extend at all to the Gentiles. The lawyer was probably ready to affirm that he had discharged faithfully his duty to his countrymen, and had thus kept the law, and could justify himself. Every sinner is desirous of *justifying himself*. He seeks to do it by his own works. For this purpose he perverts the meaning of the law, destroys its spirituality, and brings down the law to his standard, rather than attempt to frame his life by *its* requirements.

{f} "justify" Job 32:2 Lu 16:15; Ro 4:2 Ga 3:11; Jas 2:24

{g} "neighbour" Mt 5:43,44

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *Jesus answering*. Jesus answered him in a very different manner from what he expected. By one of the most tender and affecting narratives to be found anywhere, he made the lawyer his own judge in the case, and constrained him to admit what at first he would probably have denied. He compelled him to acknowledge that a *Samaritan*—of a race most hated of all people by the Jews—had shown the kindness of a neighbour, while a priest and a Levite had denied it to their own countrymen.

From Jerusalem to Jericho. Jericho was situated about 15 miles to the north-east of Jerusalem, and about 8 west of the river Jordan. **See Barnes "Mt 20:29"**.

Fell among thieves. Fell among robbers. The word *thieves* means those who merely take property. These were highwaymen, and not merely took the property, but endangered the life. They were *robbers*. From Jerusalem to Jericho the country was rocky and mountainous, and in some parts scarcely inhabited. It afforded, therefore, among the rocks and fastnesses, a convenient place for highwaymen. This was also a very frequented road. Jericho was a large place, and there was much travelling to Jerusalem. At this time, also, Judea abounded with robbers. Josephus says that at one time Herod the Great dismissed forty thousand men who had been employed in building the temple, a large part of whom became highwaymen (Josephus' Antiquities, xv. 7). The following remarks of Professor Hackett, who visited Palestine in 1852, will furnish a good illustration of the scene of this parable. It is remarkable that a parable uttered more than eighteen hundred years ago might still be appropriately located in this region. Professor Hackett (*Illustrations of Scripture*, p. 215, 216) says of this region:

"It is famous at the present day as the haunt of thieves
and robbers. No part of the traveller's journey is so
dangerous as the expedition to Jericho and the Dead Sea.
The Oriental pilgrims who repair to the Jordan have the
protection of an escort of Turkish soldiers; and others
who would make the same journey must either go in company

with them, or provide for their safety by procuring a special guard. I was so fortunate as to be able to accompany the great caravan at the time of the annual pilgrimage. Yet, in spite of every precaution, hardly a season passes in which some luckless wayfarer is not killed or robbed in 'going down from Jerusalem to Jericho.' The place derives its hostile character from its terrible wildness and desolation. If we might conceive of the ocean as being suddenly congealed and petrified when its waves are tossed mountain high, and dashing in wild confusion against each other, we should then have some idea of the aspect of the desert in which the Saviour has placed so truthfully the parable of the good Samaritan. The ravines, the almost inaccessible cliffs, the caverns, furnish admirable lurking-places for robbers. They can rush forth unexpectedly upon their victims, and escape as soon almost beyond the possibility of pursuit.

Every circumstance in this parable, therefore, was full of significance to those who heard it. The Saviour delivered it near Bethany, on the border of the frightful desert, Lu 10:25,38. Jericho was a sacerdotal city. The passing of priests and Levites between that place and Jerusalem was an everyday occurrence. The idea of a caravanserai or 'inn' on the way was not invented, probably, for the sake of the allegory, but borrowed from the landscape. There are the ruins now of such a shelter for the benighted or unfortunate on one of the heights which overlook the infested road. Thus it is that the instructions of our Lord derive often the form and much of their pertinence from the accidental connections of time and place."

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *By chance*. Accidentally, or as it happened. It means that he did not do it with a design to aid the man that was wounded.

A certain priest. It is said that not less than twelve thousand priests and Levites dwelt at Jericho; and as their business was at Jerusalem, of course there would be many of them constantly travelling on that road.

When he saw him. He saw him lie, but came not near him.

Passed by on the other side. On the farther side of the way. Did not turn out of his course even to come and see him.

{h} "passed by on the other side" Ps 38:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *A Levite*. The Levites, as well as the priests, were of the tribe of Levi, and were set apart to the duties of religion. The peculiar duty of the priest was *to offer sacrifice* at the temple; to present incense; to conduct the morning and evening services of the temple, &c. The office or duty of the *Levites* was to render assistance to the priests in their services. In the journey of the Israelites through the wilderness, it was their duty to transport the various parts of the tabernacle and the sacred utensils. It was their duty to see that the tabernacle and the temple were kept clean; to prepare supplies for the sanctuary, such as oil, incense, wine, &c. They had also the care of the sacred revenues, and after the time of David they conducted the sacred *music* of the temple service, Nu 8:5-22; 1Ch 23:3-5,24-32; 24:27-31.

Came and looked on him. It is remarked by critics, here, that the expression used does not denote, as in the case of the priest, that he accidentally saw him and took no farther notice of him, but that he *came and looked on him more attentively*, but still did nothing to relieve him.

{i} "came and looked on him" Ps 109:25 Pr 27:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *A certain Samaritan*. The Samaritans were the most inveterate foes of the Jews. They had no dealings with each other. **See Barnes "Mt 10:5"**.

It was this fact which rendered the conduct of this good man so striking, and which was thus set in strong contrast with the conduct of the priest and the Levite. They would not help their own afflicted and wounded countryman. He, who could not be expected to aid a Jew, overcame all the usual hostility between the people; saw in the wounded man a neighbour, a brother, one who needed aid; and kindly denied himself to show kindness to the stranger.

{k} "Samaritan" Joh 4:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *Pouring in oil and wine*. These were often used in medicine to heal wounds. Probably they were mingled together, and had a highly sanative quality. How strikingly is his conduct contrasted with the priest and Levite! and how particularly as well as beautifully by this does our Saviour show what we ought to do to those who are in circumstances of need! He does not merely say *in general* that he showed him kindness, but he told how it was done. He stopped—came where he was —pitied him—bound up his wounds— set him on his own beast—conducted him to a

tavern—passed the night with him, and then secured the kind attendances of the landlord, promising him to pay him for his trouble—and all this without desiring or expecting any reward. If this had been by a Jew, it would have been signal kindness; if it had been by a *Gentile*, it would also have been great kindness; but it was by a *Samaritan* —a man of a nation most hateful to the Jews, and therefore it most strikingly shows what we are to do to friends and foes when they are in distress.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *Two pence*. About 27 cents, or 1s. 2d. This may seem a small sum, but we are to remember that that sum was probably ten times as valuable then as now—that is, that it would purchase ten times as much food and the common necessaries of life as the same sum would now. Besides, it is probable that all the man wanted was *attention* and kindness, and for all these it was the purpose of the Samaritan to *pay* when he returned.

The host. The innkeeper.
{n} "I will repay thee" Pr 19:17 Lu 14:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *Was neighbour*. Showed the kindness of a neighbour, or evinced the proper feelings of a neighbour. The lawyer had asked him who was his neighbour? Jesus in this beautiful narrative showed him who and what a neighbour was, and he did this in a way that disarmed his prejudice, deeply affected him in regard to his own duty, and evinced the beauty of religion. Had he at first told him that a Samaritan might be a neighbour to a Jew and deserve his kindness, he would have been at once revolted at it; but when, by a beautiful and affecting narrative, he brought *the man himself* to see that it might be, he was constrained to admit it. Here we see the beauty of a parable and its use. It disarmed prejudice, fixed the attention, took the mind gently yet irresistibly, and prevented the possibility of cavil or objection. Compare, also, the address of Nathan to David, 2Sa 12:1-7.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *He that showed mercy*. His *Jewish* prejudice would not permit him *to name* the Samaritan, but there was no impropriety, even in his view, in saying that the man who showed so much mercy was really the neighbour to the afflicted, and not he who *professed* to be his neighbour, but who would do nothing for his welfare.

Go, and do thou likewise. Show the same kindness to *all*—to friend and foe—and *then* you will have evidence that you keep the law, and not till then. Of this man we know nothing farther; but from this inimitably beautiful parable we may learn—

1. That the knowledge of the law is useful to make us acquainted with our own sinfulness and need of a Saviour.

2. That it is not he who *professes* most kindness that really loves us most, but he who will most deny himself that he may do us good in times of want.

3. That religion requires us to do good to *all* men, however accidentally we may become acquainted with their calamities.

4. That we should do good to our enemies. Real love to them will lead us to deny ourselves, and to sacrifice our own welfare, that we may help them in times of distress and alleviate their wants.

5. That he is really our neighbour who does us the most good— who helps us in our necessities, and especially if he does this when there has been a *controversy or difference* between us and him.

6. We hence see the beauty of religion. Nothing else will induce men to surmount their prejudices, to overcome opposition, and to do good to those who are at enmity with them. True religion teaches us to regard every man as our neighbour; prompts us to do good to all, to forget all national or sectional distinctions, and to aid all those who are in circumstances of poverty and want. If religion were valuable for nothing *but this*, it would be the most lovely and desirable principle on earth, and all, especially in their early years, should seek it. Nothing that a young person can gain will be so valuable as the feeling that regards all the world as one great family, and to learn early to to do good TO ALL.

7. The difference between the Jew and the Samaritan was a difference in *religion* and *religious opinion*; and from the example of the latter we may learn that, while men differ in *opinions* on subjects of religion, and while they are zealous for what they hold to be the truth, still they should treat each other kindly; that they should aid each other in necessity; and that they should thus show that religion is a principle superior to the love of sect, and that the cord which binds man to man is one that is to be sundered by no difference of opinion, that Christian kindness is to be marred by no forms of Worship, and by no bigoted attachment for what we esteem the doctrines of the gospel.

{o} "He that showed mercy" Pr 14:21 Ho 6:6; Mic 6:8 Mt 23:23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *A certain village*. Bethany. See Joh 11:1. It was on the eastern declivity of the Mount of Olives. **See Barnes "Mt 21:1"**.

Received him. Received him kindly and hospitably. From this it would seem that *Martha* was properly the mistress of the house. Possibly she was a widow, and her brother Lazarus and younger sister Mary lived with her; and as she had the care of the household, this will also show why she was so diligently employed about domestic affairs.

{p} "Martha" Joh 11:1 12:2,3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *Sat at Jesus' feet*. This was the ancient posture of disciples or learners. They sat at the *feet* of their teachers— that is, beneath them, in a humble place. Hence Paul is represented as having been brought up at the *feet* of Gamaliel, Ac 22:3. When it is said that Mary sat at Jesus' feet, it means that she was *a disciple* of his; that she listened attentively to his instructions, and was anxious to learn his doctrine.

{q} "sat at Jesus' feet" Lu 8:35 Ac 22:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 40

Verse 40. *Martha was cumbered about much serving*. Was much distracted with the cares of the family, and providing suitably to entertain the Saviour. It should be said here that there is no evidence that Martha had a worldly or covetous disposition. Her anxiety was to pro- vide suitable entertainment for the Lord Jesus. As mistress of the family, this care properly devolved on her; and the only fault which can be charged on her was too earnest a desire to make such entertainment, when she might have sat with Mary at his feet, and, perhaps, too much haste and fretfulness in speaking to Jesus about Mary.

Dost thou not care, &c. This was an improper reproof of our Lord, as if *he* encouraged Mary in neglecting her duty. Or perhaps Martha supposed that Mary was sitting there to show him the proper expressions of courtesy and kindness, and that she would not think it proper to leave him without his direction and permission. She therefore hinted to Jesus her busy employments, her need of the aid of her sister, and requested that he would signify his wish that Mary should assist her.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 41

Verse 41. *Thou art careful*. Thou art *anxious*.

Troubled. Disturbed, distracted, very solicitous.

Many things. The many objects which excite your attention in the family. This was probably designed as a slight reproof, or a tender hint that she was improperly anxious about those things, and that she should, with Mary, rather choose to hear the discourses of heavenly wisdom.

{r} "thou art" Mr 4:19 Lu 21:34; 1Co 7:32,35

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 10 - Verse 42

Verse 42. *But one thing is needful*. That is, religion, or piety. This is eminently and peculiarly needful. Other things are of little importance. This should be secured first, and then all other things will be added. See 1Ti 4:8; Mt 6:33.

That good part. The portion of the gospel; the love of God, and an interest in his kingdom. She had chosen to be a Christian, and to give up her time and affections to God.

Which shall not be taken away. *God* will not take away his grace from his people, neither shall any man pluck them out of his hand, Joh 10:28,29.

From this interesting narrative we learn—

1st. That the cares of this life are dangerous, even when they seem to be most lawful and commendable. Nothing of a worldly nature could have been more proper than to provide for the Lord Jesus and supply his wants. Yet even *for this*, because it too much engrossed her mind, the Lord Jesus gently reproved Martha. So a care for our families may be the means of our neglecting religion and losing our souls.

2nd. It is of more importance to attend to the instructions of the Lord Jesus than to be engaged in the affairs of the world. The one will abide for ever; the other will be but for a little time.

3rd. There *are* times when it is proper to suspend worldly employments, and to attend to the affairs of the soul. It was proper for Mary to do it. It would have been proper for Martha to have done it. It is proper for *all*—on the Sabbath and at other occasional seasons —seasons of prayer and for searching the word of God—to suspend worldly concerns and to attend to religion.

4th. If attention to religion be omitted at *the proper time*, it will always be omitted. If Mary had neglected to hear Jesus *then*, she might never have heard him.

5th. Piety is the chief thing needed. Other things will perish. We shall soon die, All that we can gain we must leave. But the *soul* will live. There is a judgment-seat; there is a heaven; there is a hell; and *all* that is needful to prepare us to die, and to make us happy forever, is to be a friend of Jesus, and to listen to his teaching:

6th. Piety is the chief ornament in a female. It sweetens every other virtue; adorns every other grace; gives new loveliness to the tenderness, mildness, and grace of the female character. Nothing is more lovely than a female sitting at the feet of the meek and lowly Jesus, like Mary; nothing more unlovely than entire absorption in the affairs of the world, like Martha. The most lovely female is she who has most of the spirit of Jesus; the least amiable, she who neglects her soul—who is proud, gay, thoughtless, envious, and unlike the meek and lowly Redeemer. At his feet are peace, purity, joy. Everywhere else an alluring and wicked world steals the affections and renders us vain, gay, wicked, proud, and unwilling to die.

{s} "one thing" Ps 27:4 Ec 12:13; Mr 8:36 Lu 18:22; 1Co 13:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 1

Verse 1. *As he was praying*. Luke has taken notice of our Saviour's praying often. Thus, at his baptism Lu 3:21; in the wilderness (Lu 5:16); before the appointment of the apostles, he continued all night in prayer (Lu 6:12); he was alone praying (Lu 9:18); his transfiguration also took place when he went up to pray Lu 9:28,29.

Teach us to Pray. Probably they had been struck with the excellency and fervour of his prayers, and, recollecting that John had taught his disciples to pray, they asked him also to teach them. We learn, therefore—

1st. That the gifts and graces of others should lead us to desire the same.

2nd. That the true method of praying can be learned only by our being properly taught. Indeed, we cannot pray acceptably at all unless God shall teach us how to pray.

3rd. That it is proper for us to meditate beforehand what we are to ask of God, and to arrange our thoughts, that we may not come thoughtlessly into his presence.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 2

Verses 2-4. **See Barnes "Mt 6:9"**; **See Barnes** "Mt 6:10"; **See Barnes "Mt 6:11"**; **See Barnes** "Mt 6:12"; **See Barnes "Mt 6:13"**

Verse 2. No Barnes text on this verse.

{a} "Our Father" Mt 6:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 3

Verse 3. **See Barnes "Mt 6:9"**; **See Barnes** "Mt 6:10"; **See Barnes "Mt 6:11"**; **See Barnes** "Mt 6:12"; **See Barnes "Mt 6:13"**

No Barnes text on this verse.

{1} "day by day" or, "for the day"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *For we also forgive*, &c. This is somewhat different from the expression in Matthew, though the sense is the same. The idea is, that unless we forgive others, God will not forgive us; and unless we come to him *really* forgiving all others, we cannot expect pardon. It does not mean that by forgiving others we *deserve* forgiveness ourselves, or *merit it*, but that this is a disposition or state of mind without which God cannot consistently pardon us.

Everyone that is indebted to us. Every one that has *injured* us. This does not refer to pecuniary transactions, but to offences similar to those which we have committed against God, and for which we ask forgiveness. Besides the variations in the *expressions* in this prayer, Luke has omitted the doxology, or close, altogether; and this shows that Jesus did not intend that we should always use just this *form*, but that it was a general direction how to pray; or, rather, that we were to pray for these *things*, though not always using the same words.

{b} "for we also forgive everyone" Mr 11:25,26.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 5

Verses 5-7. *And he said unto them*, &c. Jesus proceeds to show that, in order to obtain the blessing, it was necessary to persevere in asking for it. For this purpose he introduces the case of a friend's asking bread of another for one who had come to him unexpectedly. His design is solely to show the necessity of being *importunate* or persevering in prayer to God.

At midnight. A time when it would be most inconvenient for his friend to help him; an hour when he would naturally be in bed and his house shut.

Three loaves. There is nothing particularly denoted by the number three in this place. Jesus often threw in such particulars merely to fill up the story, or to preserve the consistency of it.

My children are with me in bed. This does not necessarily mean that they were in the same bed with him, but that they were all in bed, the house was still, the door was shut, and it was troublesome for him to rise at that time of night to accommodate him. It should be observed, however, that the customs of Orientals differ in this respect from our own. Among them it is not uncommon—indeed it is the common practice—for a whole family—parents, children, and servants—to sleep in the same room. See (*The Land and the Book*, vol. i. p. 180). This is *not* to be applied to God, as if it were troublesome to him to be sought unto, or as if he would ever reply to a sinner in that manner. All that is to be applied to God in this parable is simply that it is proper to *persevere* in prayer. As a *man* often gives because the request is *repeated*, and as one is not discouraged because the favour that he asks of his neighbour is *delayed*, so God often answers us after long and importunate requests.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 6

Verse 6. No Barnes text on this verse.

{2} "in his journey", or "out of his way"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 7

Verse 7. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *I tell you*. The Latin Vulgate here adds, "if he shall continue knocking." Though this is not in the Greek, yet it is indispensable that it should be understood in order to the sense. Knocking *once* would not denote *importunity*, but it was because he *continued* knocking.

His importunity. His troublesome perseverance; his continuing to disturb the man, and refusing to take any denial. The word *importunity* denotes perseverance in an object, without any regard to time, place, or circumstances—an improper perseverance. By this the man was influenced. Rather

than be disturbed, he would rise and give what was asked. This is to be applied to God in no other sense than that he often hears prayers and grants blessings even *long after* they appear to be unanswered or withheld. He does not promise to give blessings *at once*. He promises only that he will do it, or will answer prayer. But he often causes his people long to wait. He tries their faith. He leaves them to persevere for months or years, until they feel *entirely* their dependence on him, until they see that they can obtain the blessing in no other way, and until they are *prepared* to receive it. Often they are not *prepared* to receive it when they ask it at first. They may be proud, or have no just sense of their dependence, or they would not value the blessing, or it may at that time not be best for them to obtain it. But let no one despair. If the thing is for *our* good, and if it is proper that it *should* be granted, God will give it. Let us first ask aright; let us see that our minds are in a proper state; let us feel our need of the blessing; let us inquire whether God has *promised* such a blessing, and *then* let us persevere until God gives it. Again: men, when they ask anything of God, often give over seeking. They go *once*, and if it is not granted they are discouraged. It is not so when we ask anything of men. *Then* we persevere; we take no denial; we go again, and *press* the matter till we obtain it. So we should of God. We should go again and again, until the prayer is heard, and God grants what we ask of him.

{c} "yet, because of his importunity" Lu 18:1-8.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 9

Verses 9-12. **See Barnes** "Mt 7:7, **See Barnes** "Mt 7:8, **See Barnes** "Mt 7:9, **See Barnes** "Mt 7:10, **See Barnes "Mt 7:11"**

Verse 9. No Barnes text on this verse.

{d} "Ask, and it shall" Mt 7:7 21:22; Joh 15:7 Jas 1:5; Joh 3:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 10

Verses 9-12. **See Barnes** "Mt 7:7, **See Barnes** "Mt 7:8, **See Barnes** "Mt 7:9, **See Barnes** "Mt 7:10, **See Barnes "Mt 7:11"**

Verse 10. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 11

Verses 9-12. **See Barnes** "Mt 7:7, **See Barnes** "Mt 7:8, **See Barnes** "Mt 7:9, **See Barnes** "Mt 7:10, **See Barnes "Mt 7:11"**

Verse 11. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 12

Verses 9-12. **See Barnes** "Mt 7:7, **See Barnes** "Mt 7:8, **See Barnes** "Mt 7:9, **See Barnes** "Mt 7:10, **See Barnes "Mt 7:11"**

Verse 12. *A scorpion*. **See Barnes "Lu 10:19"**.
Dr. Thomson (*The Land and the Book*, vol. i. p. 379) says:
"There is no imaginable likeness between an egg and
the ordinary black scorpion of this country, neither
in colour nor size, nor, when the tail is extended,
in shape; but old writers speak of a white scorpion,
and such a one, with the tail folded up, as in
specimens of fossil trilobites, would not look unlike
a small egg. Perhaps the contrast, however, refers
only to the different properties of the egg and the
scorpion, which is sufficiently emphatic."
Pliny (*N. H.*, xi. 25) says that in Judea the scorpions are about the size of an egg, and not unlike one in shape.
{3} "offer" or, "give"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 13

Verse 13. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 14

Verses 14-23. **See Barnes "Mt 12:22"**
and Mt 12:23-30
Verse 14. No Barnes text on this verse.
{e} "he was casting"
Mt 9:32 12:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 15

Verses 14-23. **See Barnes "Mt 12:22"**
and Mt 12:23-30
Verse 15. No Barnes text on this verse.
{4} "Beelzebub"

Lu 11:18,19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 16

Verses 14-23. **See Barnes "Mt 12:22"**
and Mt 12:23-30
Verse 16. No Barnes text on this verse.
{f} "tempting *him*" Mt 12:38 16:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 17

Verses 14-23. **See Barnes "Mt 12:22"**
and Mt 12:23-30
Verse 17. No Barnes text on this verse.
{g} "knowing their thoughts"
Joh 2:25
{h} "Every kingdom divided" Mt 12:25 Mr 3:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 18

Verses 14-23. **See Barnes "Mt 12:22"**
and Mt 12:23-30
Verse 18. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 19

Verses 14-23.
See Barnes "Mt 12:22"
and Mt 12:23-30
Verse 19. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 20

Verses 14-23.
See Barnes "Mt 12:22"

and Mt 12:23-30
Verse 20. No Barnes text on this verse.
{i} "finger of God"
Ex 8:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 21

Verses 14-23. **See Barnes "Mt 12:22"**
and Mt 12:23-30
Verse 21. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 22

Verses 14-23.
See Barnes "Mt 12:22"
and Mt 12:23-30
Verse 22. No Barnes text on this verse.
{k} "stronger than he"
Is 53:12 Col 2:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 23

Verses 14-23. **See Barnes "Mt 12:22"**
and Mt 12:23-30
Verse 23. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 24

Verses 24-26.
See Barnes "Mt 12:43"
and Mt 12:44,45
Verse 24. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 25

Verses 24-26.
See Barnes "Mt 12:43"
and Mt 12:44,45
Verse 25. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 26

Verses 24-26.
See Barnes "Mt 12:43"
and Mt 12:44,45
Verse 26. No Barnes text on this verse.
{l} "worse than the first"
Joh 5:14 Heb 6:4, 10:26,27; 2Pe 2:20,21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 27

Verses 27,28. *A certain woman*. One of the crowd.

Verse 27. *Blessed is the womb*, &c. She thought that the *mother* of such a person must be peculiarly happy in having such a son.

Yea, rather blessed, c. Jesus admits that she was happy — it was an honour to be his mother, but he say that the chief happiness, the highest honour, was to obey the word of God. Compared with this, all earthly distinctions and honours are as nothing. Man's greatest dignity is in keeping the holy commandments of God, and in being prepared for heaven. **See Barnes "Lu 10:20"**.

{m} "Blessed" Lu 1:28,48

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 28

Verses 27,28. *A certain woman*. One of the crowd.
Verse 28. No Barnes text on this verse.
{n} "Yea" Ps 119:1,2; Mt 7:21 Lu 8:21; Jas 1:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 29

Verses 29-32. **See Barnes "Mt 12:38, also** Mt 12:39-42
Verse 29. No Barnes text on this verse.
{o} "there shall be no sign given"
Mt 12:40 Mr 8:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 30

Verses 29-32. **See Barnes "Mt 12:38, also** Mt 12:39-42
Verse 30. No Barnes text on this verse.
{p} "Jonas"
Jon 1:17 2:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 31

Verses 29-32. **See Barnes "Mt 12:38, also** Mt 12:39-42
Verse 31. No Barnes text on this verse.
{q} "queen of the south"
1Ki 10:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 32

Verses 29-32. **See Barnes "Mt 12:38, also** Mt 12:39-42
Verse 32. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 33

Verses 33-36. These verses are found in Matthew, but in a different connection.
See Barnes "Mt 5:15, **See Barnes** "Mt 6:22, **See Barnes "Mt 6:23"**.
Verse 33. No Barnes text on this verse.
{s} "No man" Mt 5:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 34

Verses 33-36. These verses are found in Matthew, but in a different connection. **See Barnes** "Mt 5:15, **See Barnes** "Mt 6:22, **See Barnes "Mt 6:23"**.
Verse 34. No Barnes text on this verse.
{t} "light of the body" Mt 6:22 {u} "*thine eye* is evil" Pr 28:22 Mr 7:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 35

Verses 33-36. These verses are found in Matthew, but in a different connection. **See Barnes** "Mt 5:15, **See Barnes** "Mt 6:22, **See Barnes "Mt 6:23"**.

Verse 35. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 36

Verses 33-36. These verses are found in Matthew, but in a different connection. **See Barnes** "Mt 5:15, **See Barnes** "Mt 6:22, **See Barnes "Mt 6:23"**.

Verse 36. No Barnes text on this verse.

{v} "full of light" Ps 119:105 Pr 6:23; Is 8:20 2Co 4:6

{5} "the" or "a candle by its bright shining" {w} "bright shining" Pr 14:18 20:27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *And as he spake*. While he was addressing the people, and particularly while he was reproving that generation and declaring its crimes.

A certain Pharisee. The Pharisees had been particularly referred to in the discourse of the Saviour recorded in the previous verses. This one, perhaps, having felt particularly the force of the remarks of Jesus, and being desirous of being alone with him, invited him to go home with him. There is little doubt that this was for the purpose of drawing him away from the people; that he did it with a malignant intention, perhaps with a design to confute Jesus in private, or to reprove him for thus condemning the whole nation as he did. He might have seen that those who attacked Jesus *publicly* were commonly unsuccessful, and he desired, probably, to encounter him more privately.

Besought him. Asked him.

To dine with him. The Jews, as well as the Greeks and Romans, had but two principal meals. The first was a slight repast, and was taken about ten or eleven o'clock of our time, and consisted chiefly of fruit, milk, cheese, &c. The second meal was partaken of about three o'clock P.M., and was their principal meal. The *first* is the one here intended.

He went in. Though he knew the evil design of the Pharisee, yet he did not decline the invitation. He knew that it might afford him an opportunity to do good. These two things are to be observed in regard to our Saviour's conduct in such matters:

1st. That he did not decline an invitation to dine with a man simply because he was a Pharisee, or because he was a wicked man. Hence he was charged with being gluttonous, and a friend of publicans and sinners, Mt 11:19.

2nd. He seized upon all occasions to do good. He never shrank from declaring the truth, and making such occasions of spreading the gospel. If Christians and Christian ministers would follow the example of the Saviour always, they would avoid all scandal, and might do even in such places a vast amount of good.

Sat down. Reclined at the table. **See Barnes "Mt 23:6"**.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *Saw it*. Saw that he sat immediately down without washing.

Marvelled. Wondered. Was amazed. It was so unusual, and in his view so improper.

Had not first washed. He wondered particularly, as he had been among a mixed multitude, and they esteemed the *touch* of such persons polluting. They never ate, therefore, without such washing. The origin of the custom of washing with so much formality *before* they partook of their meals was that they did not use, as we do, knives and forks, but used their hands only. Hence, as their hands would be often in a dish on the table, it was esteemed proper that they should be washed clean before eating. Nor was their impropriety in the thing itself, but the Pharisees made it a matter of ceremony; they placed no small part of their religion in such ceremonies; and it was right, therefore, that our Lord should take occasion to reprove them for it. Comp. Mr 7:4.

{x} "when the Pharisees" Mr 7:3.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 39

Verse 39. See Mt 23:25. *Ravening*. Robbery, plunder. Here the sense is that the cup and platter were filled with what had been unjustly taken from others. That is, they lived by their wickedness; their food was procured by dishonesty and extortion. This was a most terrible charge; and as it was applied, among others, to the man who had invited the Saviour to dine with him, it shows that nothing would prevent his dealing faithfully with the souls of men. Even in the Pharisee's own house, and when expressly invited to partake of his hospitality, he loved his soul so much that he faithfully warned him of his crimes.

{z} "but your inward part" Tit 1:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 40

Verse 40. Ye *fools*. How unwise and wicked is your conduct! The word denotes not only want of wisdoms, but also wickedness. Comp. Ps 14:1; Pr 13:19; Pr 14:9.

Your conduct is not merely foolish, but it is a cloak for sin—designed to countenance wickedness.

Did not he, &c. Did not God, who made the body, make also the soul? You Pharisees take great pains to cleanse the body, under a pretence of pleasing God. Did he not also make the mind? and is it not of as much importance that that should be pure, as that the body should?

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 41

Verse 41. *Alms*. Charity. Benefactions to the poor.

Such things as ye have. Your property; though it has been gained unjustly: though you have lived by rapine, and have amassed wealth in an improper manner, yet, *since you have it*, it is your duty to make the best of it and do good. By giving to the poor, you may show your repentance for your crimes in amassing money in this manner. You may show that you disapprove of your former course of life, and are disposed henceforward to live honestly. If this be the meaning of this passage, then it shows what is the duty of those who have by unjust gains become wealthy, and who are *then* converted to God. It may not be possible for them in every case to make exact restitution to those whom they have injured; thousands of instances of wrong they may have forgotten; many persons whom they have injured may have died; but still they may show, by giving to others, that they do not think their gains acquired honestly, and that they truly repent. They may devote their property to God; distribute it to the poor; or give it to send the gospel to the heathen world. Thus may they show that they disapprove of their former conduct; and thus may be seen one great principle of God's government —that good finally comes out of evil.

And behold, &c. Doing this will show that you are a true penitent, and the remainder of your property you will enjoy with a feeling that you have done your duty, and no longer be smitten with the consciousness of hoarding unjust gains. The object of the Saviour here seems to have been to bring the Pharisee to repentance. Repentance consists in sorrow for sin, and in forsaking it. This he endeavoured to produce by showing him—

1st, the *evil* and hypocrisy of his conduct; and,

2nd, by exhorting him to *forsake* his sins, and to show this by doing good. Thus doing, he would evince that the *mind* was clean as well the *body*; the *inside* as well as the *outside*.

{a} "rather give alms" Is 58:7 Lu 12:22 {6} "alms" or, "as you are able"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 42

Verse 42. See Mt 23:23.

Rue. This is a small garden plant, and is used as a medicine. It has a rosy flower, a bitter, penetrating taste, and a strong smell.

{b} "woe unto you" Mt 23:23,27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 43

Verses 43,44. See Mt 23:6,27

Verse 43. No Barnes text on this verse.

{c} "for ye love"

Mt 23:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 44

Verses 43,44. See Mt 23:6,27
Verse 44. No Barnes text on this verse.
{d} "as graves which appear not"
Ps 5:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 45

Verse 45. *Lawyers*. Men learned in the law; but it is not known in what way the lawyers differed from the *scribes*, or whether they were Pharisees or Sadducees.

Thus saying, thou, &c. He felt that the remarks of Jesus about loving the chief seats, &c., applied to them as well as to the Pharisees. His conscience told him that if *they* were to blame, *he* was also, and he therefore applied the discourse to himself.

Reproachest. Accusest. Dost calumniate or blame us, for we do the same things. Sinners often consider faithfulness as reproach—they know not how to separate them. Jesus did *not* reproach or abuse them. He dealt faithfully with them; reproved them; told them the unvarnished truth. Such faithfulness is rare; but when it is used, we must expect that men will flinch, perhaps be enraged. Though their consciences tell them they are guilty, still they will consider it as abuse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 46

Verse 46. **See Barnes "Mt 23:4".**
No Barnes text on this verse.
{e} "touch not the burdens" Is 58:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 47

Verse 47. **See Barnes "Mt 23:29".**
Also Mt 23:30-36.
No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 48

Verse 48.
See Barnes "Mt 23:29".
Also Mt 23:30-36.
No Barnes text on this verse.
{f} "ye allow"

Eze 18:19
{g} "they indeed killed" He 11:35,37

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 49

Verse 49. **See Barnes "Mt 23:29"**.
Also Mt 23:30-36.
The wisdom of God. By the *wisdom of God*, here, is undoubtedly meant the Saviour himself. What he immediately says is not written in the Old Testament. Jesus is called *the word of God* (Joh 1:1), because he is the medium by which God *speaks* or makes his will known. He is called *the wisdom of God*, because by him God makes his wisdom known in creation (Co 1:13-18) and in redemption (1Co 1:30). Many have also thought that the Messiah was referred to in the 8th chapter of Proverbs, under the name of Wisdom.
I will send, &c. See Lu 10:3; Mt 10:16.
Shall slay, &c. Comp. Joh 16:2; Ac 7:52,59; Jas 5:10; Ac 12:2 22:19; 2Co 11:24,25; 2Ch 36:15,16.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 50

Verse 50. **See Barnes "Mt 23:29"**.
Also Mt 23:30-36.
No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 51

Verse 51.
See Barnes "Mt 23:29".
Also Mt 23:30-36.
No Barnes text on this verse.
{i} "Abel"
Ge 4:8
{k} "Zacharias" 2Ch 24:20 {l} "required" Jer 7:28,29

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 52

Verse 52. *Woe unto you, lawyers!* **See Barnes** "Mt 23:13.

The key of knowledge. A key is made to open a lock or door. By their false interpretation of the Old Testament they had taken away the true key or method of understanding it. They had hindered the people from understanding it aright.

"You endeavour to prevent the people also from
understanding the Scriptures respecting the Messiah,
and those who were coming to *me* ye hindered."

If there is any sin of peculiar magnitude, it is that of keeping the people in ignorance; and few men are so guilty as they who by false instructions prevent them from coming to a knowledge of the truth, and embracing it as it is in Jesus.

{m} "key of knowledge" Mal 1:2,7 {7} "hindered" or, "forbade"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 53

Verse 53. *To urge him vehemently*. To press upon him *violently*. They were enraged against him. They therefore pressed upon him; asked him many questions; sought to entrap him, that they might accuse him.

Provoke him, &c. This means that they put many questions to him about various matters, without giving him proper time to answer. They proposed questions as fast as possible, and about as many things as possible, that they might get him, in the hurry, to say something that would be wrong, that they might thus accuse him. This was a remarkable instance of their cunning, malignity, and unfairness.

{n} "provoke" 1Co 13:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 11 - Verse 54

Verse 54. *Laying wait for him*. Or, rather, laying *snares* for him. It means that they endeavoured to entangle him in his talk; that they did as men do who catch birds—who lay snares, and deceive them, and take them unawares.

That they might accuse him. Before the Sanhedrim, or great council of the nation, and thus secure his being put to death.

From this we may learn—

1st. That faithful reproofs must be expected to excite opposition and hatred. Though the *conscience* may be roused, and may testify against the man that is reproved, yet that does not prevent his hating the reproof and the reprover.

2nd. We see here the manner in which wicked men endeavour to escape the reproofs of conscience. Instead of repenting, they seek vengeance, and resolve to put the reprover to shame or to death.

3rd. We see the exceeding malignity which men have against the Lord Jesus. Well was it said that he was set for the fall of many in Israel, that thereby the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed! Lu 2:34,35. Men, *now*, are not by nature less opposed to Jesus than they were then.

4th. We see the wisdom, purity, and firmness of the Saviour. To their souls he had been faithful. He had boldly reproved them for their sins. They sought his life. Multitudes of the artful and learned gathered around him, to endeavour to draw out something of which they might accuse him, yet in vain. Not a word fell from his lips of which they could accuse him. Everything that he said was calm, mild, peaceful, wise, and lovely. Even his cunning and bitter adversaries were always confounded, and retired in shame and confusion. Here, surely, must have been something more than man. None but *God manifest in the flesh* could have known all their designs, seen all their wickedness and their wiles and escaped the cunning stratagems that were laid to confound and entangle him in his conversation.

5th. The same infinitely wise Saviour can still meet and confound all his own enemies and those of his people, and deliver all his followers, as he did himself, from all the snares laid by a wicked world to lead them to sin and death.

{o} "and seeking" Mr 12:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 1

Verse 1. *In the mean time*. While he was discoursing with the scribes and Pharisees, as recorded in the last chapter.

An innumerable multitude. The original word is *myriads*, or ten thousands. It is used here to signify that there was a great crowd or collection of people, who were anxious to hear him. Multitudes were attracted to the Saviour's ministry, and it is worthy of remark that he never had more to hear him than when he was most faithful and severe in his reproofs of sinners. Men's consciences are on the side of the faithful reprover of their sins; and though they deeply feel the reproof, yet they will still respect and hear him that reproves.

To his disciples, first of all. This does not mean that his disciples were, before all others, to avoid hypocrisy, but that this was the first or chief thing of which they were to beware. The meaning is this:

"He said to his disciples, *Above all things beware*," &c.

The leaven. **See Barnes "Mt 16:6"**.

Which is hypocrisy. **See Barnes "Mt 7:5"**.

Hypocrisy is like leaven or yeast, because—

1st. It may exist without being immediately detected. Leaven mixed in flour is not known until it produces its effects.

2nd. It is insinuating. Leaven will soon pervade the whole mass. So hypocrisy will, if undetected and unremoved, soon pervade all our exercises and feelings.

3rd. It is swelling. It puffs us up, and fills us with pride and vanity. No man is more proud than the hypocrite, and none is more odious to God. When Jesus cautions them to beware of *the leaven of the Pharisees*, he means that they should be cautious about imbibing their spirit and becoming like them. The religion of Jesus is one of sincerity, of humility, of an entire want of disguise. The humblest man is the best Christian, and he who has the least disguise is most like his Master.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 2

Verses 2-9. **See Barnes on "Mt 10:26".**
Also Mt 10:27-32.
Verse 2. No Barnes text on this verse.
{b} "for there is nothing"
Mt 10:26 Mr 8:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 3

Verses 2-9. **See Barnes on "Mt 10:26".**
Also Mt 10:27-32.
Verse 3. *Shall be proclaimed upon the housetops*. **See Barnes on "Mt 20:27".**
The custom of making proclamation from the tops or roofs of houses still prevails in the East. Dr. Thomson (*The Land and the Book*, vol. i. p. 51, 52) says: \-

"At the present day, local governors in country
districts cause their commands thus to be published.
Their proclamations are generally made in the evening,
after the people have returned from their labours in
the field. The public crier ascends the highest
roof at hand, and lifts up his voice in a long-drawn
call upon all faithful subjects to give ear and obey.
He then proceeds to announce, in a set form,
the will of their master, and demand obedience thereto."

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 4

Verses 2-9. **See Barnes on "Mt 10:26".**
Also Mt 10:27-32.
Verse 4. No Barnes text on this verse.
{c} "my friend"

Joh 15:14
{d} "Be not afraid" Is 51:7-13 Mt 10:28

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 5

Verses 2-9. **See Barnes on "Mt 10:26".**
Also Mt 10:27-32.
Verse 5. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 6

Verses 2-9.
See Barnes on "Mt 10:26".
Also Mt 10:27-32.
Verse 6. No Barnes text on this verse.
{1} "farthings"
Mt 10:29

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 7

Verses 2-9. **See Barnes on "Mt 10:26".**
Also Mt 10:27-32.
Verse 7. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 8

Verses 2-9.
See Barnes on "Mt 10:26".
Also Mt 10:27-32.
Verse 8. No Barnes text on this verse.
{e} "Whosoever"
1Sa 2:30 Ps 119:46; 2Ti 2:12 Re 2:10
{f} "confess" Jude 1:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 9

Verses 2-9. **See Barnes on "Mt 10:26".**
Also Mt 10:27-32.
Verse 9. No Barnes text on this verse.
{g} "denieth me"
Ac 3:13,14
{h} "denied" Mt 25:31

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 10

Verse 10. **See Barnes on "Mt 12:32".**
{i} "it shall not be forgiven" Mt 12:31 1Jo 5:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 11

Verses 11,12. **See Barnes "Mt 10:17, Also** Mt 10:18-20
Verse 11. No Barnes text on this verse.
{k} "take ye no thought"
Mt 10:19 Mr 13:11; Lu 21:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 12

Verses 11,12. **See Barnes "Mt 10:17, Also** Mt 10:18-20
Verse 12. No Barnes text on this verse.
{l} "the Holy Ghost"
Ac 6:10 26:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *One of the company*. One of the multitude. This man had probably had a dispute with his brother, supposing that his brother had refused to do him justice. Conceiving that Jesus had power over the people—that what he said must be performed—he endeavoured to secure him on his side of the dispute and gain his point. From the parable which follows, it would appear that he had no just claim on the inheritance, but was influenced by covetousness. Besides, if he had any just claim, it might have been secured by the laws of the land.

Speak to my brother. Command my brother.

Divide the inheritance. An inheritance is the property which is left by a father to his children. Among the Jews the older brother had two shares, or twice as much as any other child, De 21:17. The remainder was then equally divided among all the children.

{m} "Master, speak to my brother" Eze 33:31

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Who made me a judge*? It is not my business to settle controversies of this kind. They are to be settled by the magistrate. Jesus came for another purpose—to preach the gospel, and so to bring men to a *willingness to do right*. Civil affairs are to be left to the magistrate. There is no doubt that Jesus could have told him what was right in this case, but then it would have been interfering with the proper office of the magistrates; it might have led him into controversy with the Jews; and it was, besides, evidently apart from the proper business of his life. We may remark, also, that the appropriate business of ministers of the gospel is to attend to spiritual concerns. They should have little to do with the temporal matters of the people. If they can persuade men who are at variance to be reconciled, it is right; but they have no power to take the place of a magistrate, and to settle contentions in a legal way.

{n} "Man, who made me a judge" Joh 18:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Beware of covetousness*. One of these brothers, no doubt, was guilty of this sin; and our Saviour, as was his custom, took occasion to warn his disciples of its danger.

Covetousness. An unlawful desire of the property of another; also a desire of gain or riches beyond what is necessary for our wants. It is a violation of the tenth commandment (Ex 20:17), and is expressly called idolatry (Col 3:5). Compare, also, Eph 5:3 Heb 13:5.

A man's life. The word *life* is sometimes taken in the sense of happiness or felicity, and some have supposed this to be the meaning here, and that Jesus meant to say that a man's comfort does not depend on affluence—that is, on more than is necessary for his daily wants; but this meaning does not suit the parable following, which is designed to show that property will not lengthen out a man's life, and therefore is not too ardently to be sought, and is of little value. The word *life*, therefore, is to be taken *literally*.

Consisteth not. Rather, dependeth not on his possessions. His possessions will not prolong it. The passage, then, means: Be not anxious about obtaining wealth, for, however much you may obtain, it will not prolong your life. That depends on the will of God, and it requires something besides wealth to make us ready to meet him. This sentiment he proceeds to illustrate by a beautiful parable.

{o} "Take heed" 1Ti 6:7-10 {p} "life consisteth" Job 2:4 Mt 6:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *A parable*. **See Barnes** Mt 13:3.

Plentifully. His land was fertile, and produced even beyond his expectations, and beyond what he had provided for.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *He thought within himself*. He reasoned or inquired. He was anxious and perplexed. Riches increase thought and perplexity. Indeed, this is almost their only effect—to engross the thoughts and steal the heart away from better things, in order to take care of the useless wealth.

No room. Everything was full.

To bestow. To place, to hoard, to collect.

My fruits. Our word *fruits* is not applied to *grain*; but the Greek word is applied to all the produce of the earth—not only *fruit*, but also grain. This is likewise the old meaning of the English word, especially in the plural number.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *I will pull down my barns*. The word *barns*, here, properly means, *granaries*, or places exclusively designed to put wheat, barley, &c. They were commonly made, by the ancients, underground, where grain could be kept a long time more safe from thieves and from vermin. If it be asked why he did not let the old ones remain and build new ones, it may be answered that it would be easier to enlarge those already excavated in the earth than to dig new ones.

{q} "this will I do" Jas 4:15,16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Much goods*. Much property. Enough to last a long while, so that there is no need of anxiety or labour.

Take thine ease. Be free from care about the future. Have no anxiety about coming to want.

Eat, drink, and be merry. This was just the doctrine of the ancient Epicureans and atheists, and it is, alas! too often the doctrine of those who are rich. They think that all that is valuable in life is to eat, and drink, and be cheerful or merry. Hence their chief anxiety is to obtain the "delicacies of the season"— the luxuries of the world; to secure the productions of every clime at any expense, and to be distinguished for splendid repasts and a magnificent style of living. What a portion is this for an immortal soul! What folly to think that all that a man lives for is to satisfy his sensual appetites; to forget that he has an intellect to be cultivated, a heart to be purified, a soul to be saved!

{r} "Soul" Ps 49:18 {s} "take thine ease" Ex 11:9 1Co 15:32; Jas 5:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Thou fool*. If there is any supreme folly, it is this. As though riches could prolong life, or avert for a moment the approach of pain and death.

This night, &c. What an awful sentence to a man who, as he thought, had got just ready to live and enjoy himself! In a single moment all his hopes were blasted, and his soul summoned to the bar of his long-forgotten God. So, many are surprised as suddenly and as unprepared. They are snatched from their pleasures, and hurried to a world where there is no pleasure, and where all their wealth cannot purchase one moment's ease from the gnawings of the worm that never dies.

Shall be required of thee. Thou shalt be required to die, to go to God, and to give up your account.

Then whose, &c. Whose they may be is of little consequence to the man that lost his soul to gain them; but they are often left to heirs that dissipate them much sooner than the father procured them, and thus they secure their ruin as well as his own. Ps 39:6 Ec 2:18,19.

{t} "this night" Job 20:20-23 27:8; Ps 52:7 Jas 4:14

{2} "thy soul" or, "do they require thy soul."

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *So is he*. This is the portion or the doom.

Layeth up treasure for himself. Acquires riches for his own use—for *himself*. This is the characteristic of the covetous man. It is all for himself. His plans terminate there. He lives only for himself, and acts only with regard to his own interest.

Rich toward God. Has no inheritance in the kingdom of God—no riches laid up in heaven. His affections are all fixed on this world, and he has none for God.

From this instructive parable we learn—

1st. That wicked men are often signally prospered—their ground brings forth plentifully. God gives them their desire, but sends leanness into their souls.

2nd. That riches bring with them always an increasing load of cares and anxieties.

3rd. That they steal away the affections from God—are sly, insinuating, and dangerous to the soul.

4th. That the anxiety of a covetous man is not what good he may do with his wealth, but where he may hoard it, and keep it secure from doing any good.

5th. That riches cannot secure their haughty owners from the grave. Death will come upon them suddenly, unexpectedly, awfully. In the very midst of the brightest anticipations—in a moment—in the twinkling of an eye— it may come, and all the wealth that has been accumulated cannot alleviate one pang, or drive away one fear, or prolong life for one moment.

6th. That the man who is trusting to his riches in this manner is a fool in the sight of God. Soon, also, he will be a fool in his own sight, and will go to hell with the consciousness that his life has been one of eminent folly.

7th. That the path of true wisdom is to seek first the kingdom of God, and to be ready to die; and *then* it matters little what is our portion here, or how suddenly or soon we are called away to meet our Judge. If our affections are not fixed on our riches, we shall leave them without regret. If our treasures are laid up in heaven, death will be but *going home*, and happy will be that moment when we are called to our rest.

{v} "layeth up treasure" Hab 2:9 {w} "is not rich toward God" 1Ti 6:18 Jas 2:5; Lu 12:33

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 22

Verses 22-31. **See Barnes "Mt 6:25".**
See also Mt 6:26-6:33.
Verse 22. No Barnes text on this verse.
{x} "Take no thought for your life"
Mt 6:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 23

Verses 22-31. **See Barnes "Mt 6:25".**
See also Mt 6:26-6:33.
Verse 23. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 24

Verses 22-31.
See Barnes "Mt 6:25".
See also Mt 6:26-6:33.
Verse 24. No Barnes text on this verse.
{y} "ravens"
Job 38:41 Ps 147:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 25

Verse 25. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 26

Verses 22-31.
See Barnes "Mt 6:25".
See also Mt 6:26-6:33.
Verse 26. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 27

Verses 22-31.
See Barnes "Mt 6:25".
See also Mt 6:26-6:33.
Verse 27. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 28

Verses 22-31.
See Barnes "Mt 6:25".
See also Mt 6:26-6:33.
Verse 28. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 29

Verses 22-31.
See Barnes "Mt 6:25".
See also Mt 6:26-6:33.
Verse 29. No Barnes text on this verse.
{3} "or what you shall drink" or "live not in careful suspense"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 30

Verses 22-31.
See Barnes "Mt 6:25".
See also Mt 6:26-6:33.
Verse 30. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 31

Verses 22-31.
See Barnes "Mt 6:25".
See also Mt 6:26-6:33.
Verse 31. No Barnes text on this verse.
{z} "But, rather seek"
Mt 6:33
{a} "all these things shall" Ps 34:10 Isa 33:16; Ro 8:31,32

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *Little flock*. Our Saviour often represents himself as a shepherd, and his followers as a flock or as sheep. The figure was beautiful. In Judea it was a common employment to attend flocks. The shepherd was with them, defended them, provided for them, led them to green pastures and beside still waters. In all these things Jesus was and is eminently the Good Shepherd. His flock was small. Few *really* followed him, compared with the multitude who professed to love him. But, though small in number, they were not to fear. God was their Friend. He would provide for them. It was his *purpose* to give them the kingdom, and they had nothing to fear, see Mt 6:19-21.
{b} "little flock" Is 40:11 Joh 10:27,28
{c} "it is the father's good pleasure" Mt 25:34 Joh 18:36; Heb 12:28

Jas 2:5 2Pe 1:11; Re 1:6 22:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *Sell that ye have*. Sell your property. Exchange it for that which you can use in distributing charity. This was the condition of their being disciples. Their property they gave up; they forsook it, or they put it into common stock, for the sake of giving alms to the poor, Ac 2:44 4:32; Joh 12:6 Ac 5:2.
Bags which wax not old. The word *bags*, here, means purses, or the bags attached to their girdles, in which they carried their money. **See Barnes "Mt 5:38"**.
By bags which wax not old Jesus means that we should lay up treasure in heaven; that our aim should be to be prepared to enter there, where all our wants will be for ever provided for. Purses, here, grow old and useless. Wealth takes to itself wings. Riches are easily scattered, or we must soon leave them; but that wealth which is in heaven abides for ever. It never is corrupted; never flies away; never is to be left.
Wax. This word is from an old Saxon word, and in the Bible means *to grow*.
{d} "Sell" Mt 19:21 Ac 2:45, 4:34
{e} "treasure" Mt 6:20 1Ti 6:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 34

Verse 34. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 35

Verses 35,36. *Let your loins*, &c. This alludes to the ancient manner of dress. They wore a long flowing robe as their outer garment. **See Barnes** Mt 5:38-41.

When they laboured, or walked, or ran, it was necessary to *gird* or tie this up by a *sash* or girdle about the body, that it might not impede their progress. Hence, to gird up the loins means to be *ready*, to be active, to be diligent. Comp. 2Ki 4:29; 2Ki 9:1; Jer 1:17; Ac 12:8.

Your lights burning. This expresses the same meaning. Be ready at all times to leave the world and enter into rest, when your Lord shall call you. Let every obstacle be out of the way; let every earthly care be removed, and be prepared to follow him into his rest. Servants were expected to be ready for the coming of their lord. If in the night, they were expected to keep their lights trimmed and burning. When their master was away in attendance on a wedding, as they knew not the hour when he would return, they were to be continually ready. So we, as we know not the hour when God shall call us, should be always *ready* to die. Comp. **See Barnes "Mt 25:1"**

and Mt 25:2-13.

{f} "Let your loins" Eph 6:14 1Pe 1:13 {g} "your lights burning" Mt 25:1,13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 36

Verse 36. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *Shall gird himself*. Shall take the place of the servant himself. Servants who waited on the table were girded in the manner described above.

Shall make them sit, &c. Shall place them at his table and feast them. This evidently means that if we are faithful to Christ, and are ready to meet him when he returns, he will receive us into heaven — will admit us to all its blessings, and make us happy there—as if *he* should serve us and minister to our wants. It will be as if a master, instead of sitting down at the table himself, should place his faithful servants there, and be himself the servant. This shows the exceeding kindness and condescension of our Lord. For us, poor and guilty sinners, he denied himself, took the form of a servant (Php 2:7), and ministered to our wants. In our nature he has wrought out salvation, and he has done it in one of the humblest conditions of the children of men. How should our bosoms burn with gratitude to him, and how should we be willing to serve one another] **See Barnes "Joh 13:1".**

Also, see Joh 13:2-17.
{h} "Blessed are" Mt 24:46

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 38

Verses 38-46. **See Barnes "Mt 24:42".**
Also see Mt 24:43-51.
Verse 38. *Second watch*. **See Barnes "Mt 14:25".**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 39

Verse 39. No Barnes text on this verse.
{i} "the thief" 1Th 5:2 2Pe 3:10; Re 3:3 16:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 40

Verse 40. No Barnes text on this verse.
{k} "Be ye therefore ready"
Lu 21:34,36

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 41

Verse 41. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 42

Verse 42. No Barnes text on this verse.
{l} "faithful and wise steward"
1Co 4:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 43

Verse 43. No Barnes text on this verse.

{m} "Blessed"
Lu 12:37
.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 44

Verse 44. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 45

Verse 45. No Barnes text on this verse.
{n} "beat the men-servants"
Mt 22:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 46

Verse 46. No Barnes text on this verse.
{o} "will"
Ps 37:9 94:14
{4} "cut him asunder", or "cut him off"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 47

Verse 47. *Which knew his lord's will*. Who knew what his master wished him to do. He that knows what God commands and requires.

Many stripes. Shall be severely and justly punished. They who have many privileges, who are often warned, who have the gospel, and do not repent and believe, shall be far more severely punished than others. They who are early taught in Sunday-schools, or by pious parents, or in other ways, and who grow up in sin and impenitence, will have much more to answer for than those who have no such privileges.

{p} "which knew his lord's will" Jas 4:17 {q} "shall be beaten with many stripes" Ac 17:30

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 48

Verse 48. *Few stripes*. The Jews never inflicted more than forty stripes for one offence, De 25:3. For smaller offences they inflicted only four, five, six, &c., according to the nature of the crime. In allusion to this, our Lord says that *he that knew not* — that is, he who had comparatively little knowledge—would suffer a punishment proportionally light. He refers, doubtless, to those who have fewer opportunities, smaller gifts, or fewer teachers.

Much is given. They who have much committed to their disposal, as stewards, &c. See the parable of the talents in Mt 25:14-30. **See Barnes "Mt 25:14, also** Mt 25:15-30.

{r} "he that knew not" Ac 17:30 {s} "For unto whomsoever" Le 5:17 Joh 15:22; 1Ti 1:13

{t} "committed much" 1Ti 6:20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 49

Verse 49. *I am come*, &c. The result of my coming will be that there will be divisions and contentions. He does not mean that he came *for* that purpose, or that he *sought* and *desired* it; but that such was the state of the human heart, and such the opposition of men to the truth, that that would be the effect of his coming. **See Barnes "Mt 10:34"**.

Fire. Fire, here, is the emblem of discord and contention, and consequently of calamities. Thus it is used in Ps 66:12 Is 43:2. *And what will I*, &c. This passage might be better expressed in this manner:

"And what would I, but that it were kindled. Since it is
necessary for the advancement of religion that
such divisions should take place; since the gospel
cannot be established without conflicts, and strifes,
and hatreds, I am even desirous that they should come.
Since the greatest blessing which mankind can receive
must be attended with such unhappy divisions, I am
willing, nay, desirous that they should come."

He did not wish evil in itself; but, as it was the occasion of good, he was desirous, if it *must* take place, that it should take place soon. From this we learn—

1st. That the promotion of religion may be expected to produce many contests and bitter feelings.

2nd. That the heart of man must be exceedingly wicked, or it would not oppose a work like the Christian religion.

3rd. That though God cannot look on evil with approbation, yet, for the sake of the benefit which may grow out of it, he is willing to permit it, and suffer it to come into the world.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 50

Verse 50. *A baptism*. **See Barnes "Mt 20:22"**.

Am I straitened. How do I earnestly desire that it were passed! Since these sufferings must be endured, how anxious am I that the time should come! Such were the feelings of the Redeemer in view of his approaching dying hour. We may learn from this—

1st. That it is not improper to *feel deeply* at the prospect of dying. It is a sad, awful, terrible event; and it is impossible that we should look at it aright without feeling —scarcely without trembling.

2nd. It is not improper to desire that the time should come, and that the day of our release should draw nigh, Php 1:23. To the Christian, death is but the entrance to life; and since the pains of death must be endured, and since they lead to heaven, it matters little how soon he passes through these sorrows, and rises to his eternal rest.

{5} "straitened", or "pained"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 51

Verses 51-53. **See Barnes "Mt 10:34, See also** Mt 10:35-36.
Verse 51. No Barnes text on this verse.
{u} "ye that I am come"
Mt 10:34

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 52

Verses 51-53. **See Barnes "Mt 10:34, See also** Mt 10:35-36.
Verse 52. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 53

Verse 51-53.
See Barnes "Mt 10:34, See also Mt 10:35-36.
Verse 53. No Barnes text on this verse.
{v} "The father shall be divided"
Mi 7:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 54

Verses 54-57. **See Barnes "Mt 16:2"**
See Barnes "Mt 16:3".
Verse 54. No Barnes text on this verse.

{w} "When you see" Mt 16:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 55

Verses 54-57. **See Barnes "Mt 16:2"**
See Barnes "Mt 16:3".

Verse 55. *South wind*. To the south and southwest of Judea were situated Arabia, Egypt, and Ethiopia, all warm or hot regions, and consequently the air that came from those quarters was greatly heated.

How is it that ye do not discern this time? You see a cloud rise, and predict a shower; a south wind, and expect heat. These are regular events. So you see my miracles; you hear my preaching; you have the predictions of me in the prophets; why do you not, in like manner, infer that *this is the time* when the Messiah should appear?

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 56

Verses 54-57. **See Barnes** "Mt 16:2,
See Barnes "16:3".

Verse 56. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 57

Verse 57. **See Barnes** "Mt 16:2, **See Barnes "Mt 16:3"**

{x} "even of yourselves judge ye not" Mt 5:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 58

Verses 58,59. **See Barnes "Mt 5:25".**
See Barnes "Mt 5:26".

Verse 58. No Barnes text on this verse.

{y} "When thou goest" Mt 5:25 {z} "as thou art in the way" Isa 55:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 12 - Verse 59

Verses 58,59. **See Barnes "Mt 5:25".**
See Barnes "Mt 5:26".
Verse 59. No Barnes text on this verse.
{6} "mite" Mr 12:42

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 13 - Verse 1

Verse 1. *There were present*. That is, some persons who were present, and who had heard his discourse recorded in the previous chapter. There was probably a pause in his discourse, when they mentioned what had been done by Pilate to the Galileans.

At that season. At that time—that is the time mentioned in the last chapter. At what period of our Lord's ministry this was, it is not easy to determine.

Some that told him. This was doubtless an event of recent occurrence. Jesus, it is probable, had not before heard of it. Why they told him of it can only be a matter of conjecture. It might be from the desire to get him to express an opinion respecting the conduct of Pilate, and thus to involve him in difficulty with the reigning powers of Judea. It might be as a mere matter of news. But, from the answer of Jesus, it would appear that they supposed that the Galileans *deserved* it, and that they meant to pass a judgment on the character of those men, a thing of which they were exceedingly fond. The answer of Jesus is a reproof of their habit of hastily judging the character of others.

Galileans. People who lived in Galilee. **See Barnes "Mt 2:22".**

They were not under the jurisdiction of Pilate, but of Herod. The Galileans, in the time of Christ, were very wicked.

Whose blood Pilate had mingled, &c. That is, while they were sacrificing at Jerusalem, Pilate came suddenly upon them and slew them, and their blood was mingled with the blood of the animals that they were slaying for sacrifice. It does not mean that Pilate *offered* their blood in sacrifice, but only that as they were sacrificing he slew them. The fact is not mentioned by Josephus, and nothing more is known of it than what is here recorded. We learn, however, from Josephus that the Galileans were very wicked, and that they were much disposed to broils and seditions. It appears, also, that Pilate and Herod had a quarrel with each other (Lu 23:12), and it is not improbable that Pilate might feel a particular enmity to the subjects of Herod. It is likely that the Galileans excited a tumult in the temple, and that Pilate took occasion to come suddenly upon them, and show his opposition to them and Herod by slaying them.

Pilate. The Roman governor of Judea. **See Barnes "Mt 27:2".**

{a} "Galileans" Ac 5:37 {b} "mingled" La 2:20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 13 - Verse 2

Verses 2,3. *Suppose ye*, &c. From this answer it would appear that they supposed that the fact that these men had been slain in this manner proved that they were very great sinners.

I tell you, Nay. Jesus assured them that it was not right to draw such a conclusion respecting these men. The fact that men come to a sudden and violent death is not proof that they are peculiarly wicked.

Except ye repent. Except you forsake your sins and turn to God. Jesus took occasion, contrary to their expectation, to make a practical use of that fact, and to warn them of their own danger. He never suffered a suitable occasion to pass without warning the wicked, and entreating them to forsake their evil ways. The subject of religion was always present to his mind. He introduced it easily, freely, fully. In this he showed his love for the souls of men, and in this he set us an example that we should walk in his steps.

Ye shall all likewise perish. You shall all be destroyed in a similar manner. Here he had reference, no doubt, to the calamities that were coming upon them, when thousands of the people perished. Perhaps there was never any reproof more delicate and yet more severe than this. They came to him believing that these men who had perished were peculiarly wicked. He did not tell them that they were as bad as the Galileans, but left them to infer it, for if they did not repent, they must soon likewise be destroyed. This was remarkably fulfilled. Many of the Jews were slain in the temple; many while offering sacrifice; thousands perished in a way very similar to the Galileans. Comp. **See Barnes "Mt 24:1"**

and following. From this account of the Galileans we may learn—

(1.) That men are very prone to infer, when any great calamity happens to others, that they are peculiarly guilty. See the Book of Job, and the reasonings of his three "friends."

(2.) That that conclusion; in the way in which it is usually drawn, is erroneous. If we see a man bloated, and haggard, and poor, who is in the habit of intoxication, we may infer openly that he is guilty, and that God hates his sin and punishes it. So we may infer of the effects of licentiousness. But we should not thus infer when a man's house is burned down, or when his children die, or when he is visited with a loss of health; nor should we infer it of the nations that are afflicted with famine, or the plague, or with the ravages of war; nor should we infer it when a man is killed by lightning, or when he perishes by the blowing up of a steamboat. Those who thus perish may be far more virtuous than many that live.

(3.) This is not a world of retribution. Good and evil are mingled; the good and the bad suffer, and all are exposed here to calamity.

(4.) There is another world—a future state—a world where the good will be happy and the wicked punished. There all that is irregular on earth will be regulated; all that appears unequal will be made equal; all that is chaotic will be reduced to order.

(5.) When men are disposed to speak about the great guilt of others, and the calamities that come upon them, they should inquire about *themselves*. What is *their* character? what is *their condition?*. It may be that they are in quite as much danger of perishing as those are whom they regard as so wicked.

(6.) WE MUST REPENT. We must ALL repent or we shall perish. No matter what befalls others, we are sinners; we are to die; we shall be lost unless we repent. Let us, then, think of *ourselves* rather than of *others*; and when we hear of any signal calamity happening to others, let us remember that there is calamity in another world as well as here; and that while our fellow-sinners are exposed

to trials *here*, we may be exposed to more awful woes *there*. Woe *there* is eternal; here, a calamity like that produced by a failing tower is soon over.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 13 - Verse 3

Verse 3. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 13 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Or those eighteen*. Jesus himself adds another similar case, to warn them —a case which had probably occurred not long before, and which it is likely they judged in the same manner.

Upon whom the tower in Siloam fell. The name Siloah or Siloam is found only three times in the Bible as applied to water—once in Is 8:6, who speaks of it as running water; once as a pool near to the king's garden, in Ne 3:15; and once as a pool, in the account of the Saviour's healing the man born blind, in Joh 9:7-11. Josephus mentions the fountain of Siloam frequently as situated at the mouth of the Valley of Tyropoeon, or the Valley of Cheese-mongers, where the fountain long indicated as that fountain is still found. It is on the south side of Mount Moriah, and between that and the Valley of Jehoshaphat. The water at present flows out of a small artificial basin under the cliff, and is received into a large reservoir 53 feet in length by 18 in breadth. The small upper basin or fountain excavated in the rock is merely the entrance, or rather the termination of a long and narrow subterranean passage beyond, by which the water comes from the Fountain of the Virgin. For what purpose the tower here referred to was erected is not known; nor is it known at what time the event here referred to occurred. It is probable that it was not far from the time when the Saviour made use of the illustration, for the manner in which he refers to it implies that it was fresh in the recollection of those to whom he spoke.

{1} "sinners above", or "debtors"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 13 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *I tell you, Nay*. It is improper to suppose that those on whom heavy judgments fall in this world are the worst of men. This is not a world of retribution. Often the most wicked are suffered to prosper here, and their punishment is reserved for another world; while the righteous are called to suffer much, and *appear* to be under the sore displeasure of God, Ps 73:1, and following. This only we know, that the wicked will not always escape; that God is just; and that none who do suffer here or hereafter, suffer more than they deserve. In the future world, all that seems to be un equal here will be made equal and plain.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 13 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *This parable*. **See Barnes "Mt 13:3"**.

Vineyard. A place where vines were planted. It was not common to plant fig-trees in them, but our Lord represents it as having been sometimes done.

{d} "A certain man" Is 5:1 Mt 21:19 {e} "sought fruit thereon" Joh 15:16 Ga 5:22; Phi 4:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 13 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *The dresser of his vineyard*. The man whose duty it was to trim the vines and take care of his vineyard.

These three years. These words are not to be referred to the time which Christ had been preaching the gospel, as if he meant to specify the exact period. They mean, as applicable to the vineyard, that the owner had been a long time expecting fruit on the tree. For three successive years he had been disappointed. In his view it was long enough to show that the tree was barren and would yield no fruit, and that therefore it should be cut down.

Why cumbereth it the ground? The word *cumber* here means to render barren or sterile. By taking up the juices of the earth, this useless tree rendered the ground sterile, and prevented the growth of the neighbouring vines. It was not merely useless, but was doing mischief, which may be said of all sinners and all hypocritical professors of religion. Dr. Thomson (*The Land and the Book*, vol. i. p. 539) says of the barren fig-tree:

> "There are many such trees now; and if the ground is
> not properly cultivated, especially when the trees
> are young—as the one of the parable was, for only
> three years are mentioned-they do not bear at all;
> and even when full grown they quickly fail, and
> wither away if neglected. Those who expect to gather
> good crops of well-favoured figs are particularly
> attentive to their culture—not only plough and dig
> about them frequently, and manure them plentifully, but
> they carefully gather out the stones from the orchards,
> contrary to their general slovenly habits."

This parable is to be taken in connection with what goes before, and with our Saviour's calling the Jewish nation to repentance. It was spoken to illustrate the dealings of God with them, and their own wickedness under all his kindness, and we may understand the different parts of the parable as designed to represent—

1st. God, by the man who owned the vineyard.

2nd. The vineyard as the Jewish people.

3rd. The coming of the owner for fruit, the desire of God that they should produce good works.

4th. The barrenness of the tree, the wickedness of the people.

5th. The dresser was perhaps intended to denote the Saviour and the other messengers of God, pleading that God would spare the Jews, and save them from their enemies that stood ready to destroy them, as soon as God should permit.

6th. His waiting denotes the delay of vengeance, to give them an opportunity of repentance. And,

7th. The remark of the dresser that he might *then* cut it down, denotes the acquiescence of all in the belief that such a judgment would be just.

We may also remark that God treats sinners in this manner now; that he spares them long; that he gives them opportunities of repentance; that many live but to cumber the ground; that they are not only useless to the church, but pernicious to the world; that in due time, when they are fairly tried, they shall be cut down; and that the universe will bow to the awful decree of God, and say that their damnation is just.

{f} "cut it down" Ex 32:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 13 - Verse 8

Verse 8. No Barnes text on this verse.

{g} "let it alone"

Ps 106:23 2Pe 3:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 13 - Verse 9

Verse 9. No Barnes text on this verse.

{h} "and if not, then"

Joh 15:2 Heb 6:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 13 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 13 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *There was a woman which lead a spirit of infirmity*. Was infirm, or was weak and afflicted. This was produced by Satan, Lu 13:16.

Eighteen years. This affliction had continued a long time. This shows that the miracle was real; that the disease was not feigned. Though thus afflicted, yet it seems she was regular in attending the worship of God in the synagogue. There in the sanctuary, is the place where the afflicted find

consolation; and there it was that the Saviour met her and restored her to health. It is in the sanctuary and on the Sabbath, also, that he commonly meets his people, and gives them the joys of his salvation.

{i} "spirit of infirmity" Ps 6:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 13 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Thou art loosed from thine infirmity*. This was a remarkable declaration. It does not appear that the woman applied to him for a cure; yet Jesus addressed her, and the disease departed. How clear would be the proofs from such a case that he was the Messiah! And how mighty the power of him that by a word could restore her to health!

{k} "thou art loosed from" Joe 3:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 13 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Glorified God*. Praised God. Gave thanks to him for healing her. They who are restored to health from sickness owe it to God; and they should devote their lives to his service, as expressive of their sense of gratitude to him who has spared them.

{l} "he laid his hands" Mr 16:18 Ac 9:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 13 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Answered with indignation, because*, &c, He considered this a violation of the Sabbath, doing work contrary to the fourth commandment. If he had reasoned aright, he would have seen that he who could perform such a miracle could not be a violator of the law of God. From this conduct of the ruler we learn—

1st. That men are often opposed to good being done, because it is not done *in their own way* and *according to their own views*.

2nd. That they are more apt to look at what they consider a violation of the law in others, than at the good which others may do.

3rd. That this opposition is manifested not only against those who *do good*, but also against those who are *benefited*. The ruler of the synagogue seemed particularly indignant that the people would come to Christ to be healed.

4th. That this conduct is often the result of envy. In this case it was rather hatred that the people should follow Christ instead of the Jewish rulers, and therefore envy at the popularity of Jesus, than any real regard for religion.

5th. That opposition to the work of Jesus may put on the appearance of great professed regard for religion. Many men oppose revivals, missions, Bible societies, and Sunday-schools—strange as it may seem —from professed regard to the purity of religion. They, like the ruler here, have

formed their notions of religion as consisting in something very different from doing good, and they oppose those who are attempting to spread the gospel throughout the world.

{m} "healed on the sabath-day" Mt 12:10 Mr 3:2; Lu 6:7 14:3; Joh 5:16

{n} "There are six days" Ex 20:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 13 - Verse 15

Verse 15. Thou *hypocrite*. You condemn *me* for an action, and yet you perform one exactly similar. You condemn me for doing to a woman what you do to a beast. To her I have done good on the Sabbath; you provide for your cattle, and yet blame me for working a miracle to relieve a sufferer on that day.

Stall. A place where cattle are kept to be fed, and sheltered from the weather.

{o} "*Thou hypocrite!*" Pr 11:9 Mt 7:5, 23:13,28; Lu 12:1

{p} "on the sabbath" Lu 14:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 13 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *A daughter of Abraham*. A descendant of Abraham. **See Barnes "Mt 1:1"**.

She was therefore a Jewess; and the ruler of the synagogue, professing a peculiar regard for the Jewish people, considering them as peculiarly favoured of God, should have rejoiced that she was loosed from this infirmity.

Whom Satan hath bound. Satan is the name given to the prince or leader of evil spirits, called also the devil, Beelzebub, and the old serpent., Mt 12:24 Re 12:9, 20:2.

By his *binding* her is meant that he had inflicted this disease upon her. It was not properly a possession of the devil, for that commonly produced derangement; but God had suffered him to afflict her in this manner, similar to the way in which he was permitted to try Job. **See Barnes "Job 1:12 2:6,7"**.

It is no more *improbable* that God would suffer *Satan* to inflict pain, than that he would suffer a wicked *man* to do it; yet nothing is more common than for one *man* to be the occasion of bringing on a disease in another which may terminate only with the life. He that seduces a virtuous man and leads him to intemperance, or he that wounds him or strikes him, may disable him as much as Satan did this woman. If God permits it in one case, he may, for the same reason, in another.

{q} "daughter of Abraham" Lu 19:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 13 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Adversaries*. The ruler of the synagogue, and those who felt as he did.

All the people. The persons who attended the synagogue, and who had witnessed the miracle. It is to be remarked—

1st. That those who opposed Christ were chiefly the *rulers*. They had an interest in doing it. Their popularity was at stake. They were afraid that he would draw off the people from them.

2nd. The common people heard him gladly. Many of them believed in him. The condition of the poor, and of those in humble life, is by far the most favourable for religion, and most of the disciples of Jesus have been found there.

{r} "all his adversaries" Is 45:24 1Pe 3:16 {s} "glorious things" Ex 15:11 Ps 111:3; Is 4:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 13 - Verse 18

Verses 18-21. See these parables explained **See Barnes "Mt 13:31"**
See Barnes "Mt 13:32".
Verse 18. No Barnes text on this verse.
{t} "Unto what is the kingdom" Mt 13:31 Mr 4:30

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 13 - Verse 19

Verses 18-21. See these parables explained **See Barnes "Mt 13:31"**
See Barnes "Mt 13:32".
Verse 19. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 13 - Verse 20

Verses 18-21. See these parables explained **See Barnes "Mt 13:31"**
See Barnes "Mt 13:32".
Verse 20. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 13 - Verse 21

Verses 18-21. See these parables explained **See Barnes "Mt 13:31"**
See Barnes "Mt 13:32".
Verse 21. No Barnes text on this verse.
{2} "three measures of meal" **See Barnes "Mt 13:33"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 13 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Cities and villages*. Chiefly of Galilee, and those which were between Galilee and Jerusalem.

Teaching and journeying. This evinces the diligence of our Lord. Though on a journey, yet he remembered his work. He did not excuse himself on the plea that he was in haste. Christians and Christian ministers should remember that when their Master travelled he did not *conceal* his character, or think that he was then freed from obligation to do good.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 13 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Then said one*. Who this was does not appear. It is probable that he was not one of the disciples, but one of the Jews, who came either to perplex him, or to involve him in a controversy with the Pharisees.

Are there few that be saved? It was the prevalent opinion among the Jews that few would enter heaven. As but two of all the hosts that came out of Egypt entered into the land of Canaan, so some of them maintained that a proportionally small number would enter into heaven (Lightfoot). On this subject the man wished the Opinion of Jesus. It was a question of idle curiosity. The answer to it would have done little good. It was far more important for the man to secure his own salvation, than to indulge in such idle inquiries and vain speculations. Our Lord therefore advised *him*, as he does all, to strive to enter into heaven.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 13 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Strive*. Literally, *agonize*. The word is taken from the Grecian Games. In their races, and wrestlings, and various athletic exercises, they *strove* or agonized, or put forth all their powers to gain the victory. Thousands witnessed them. They were long trained for the conflict, and the honour of victory was one of the highest honours among the people. So Jesus says that we should strive to enter in; and he means by it that we should be diligent, be active, be earnest; that we should make it our first and chief business to overcome our sinful propensities, and to endeavour to enter into heaven. This same figure or allusion to the Grecian games is often used in the New Testament, 1Co 9:24-26; Phi 2:16; Heb 12:1.

Strait gate. **See Barnes "Mt 7:13,14"**.

Dr. Thomson (*The Land and the Book*, vol. i. p. 32) says:

> "I have seen these strait gates and narrow ways, 'with here and there a traveller.' They are in retired corners, and must be sought for, and are opened only to those who knock; and when the sun goes down and the night comes on, they are shut and locked. It is then too late."

Will seek to enter in. Many in various ways manifest some desire to be saved. They seek it, but do not agonize for it, and hence they are shut out. But a more probable meaning of this passage is that which refers this *seeking* to a time that shall be *too late*; to the time when the master has risen up, &c. In this life they neglect religion, and are engaged about other things. At death, or at the judgment, they will seek to enter in; but it will be too late—the door will be shut; and because they did not make religion the chief business of their life, they cannot then enter in.

Shall not be able. This is not designed to affirm anything respecting the inability of the sinner, provided he seeks salvation in a proper time and manner. It means that at the time when many *will* seek—when the door is shut—they will not be able *then* to enter in, agreeable to Mt 7:22. In the proper time, when the day of grace was lengthened out, they *might* have entered in; but there will be a time when it will be too late. The day of mercy will be ended, and death will come, and the doors of heaven barred against them. How important, then, to strive to enter in while we have opportunity, and before it shall be too late!

{u} "Strive" Mt 7:13 {v} "for many, I say unto you" Joh 7:34 8:21; Ro 9:31

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 13 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *When once the master*, &c. The figure here used is taken from the conduct of a housekeeper, who is willing to see his friends, and who at the proper time keeps his doors open. But there is a proper time for closing them, when he will not see his guests. At night it would be improper and vain to seek an entrance—the house would be shut. So there is a proper time to seek an entrance into heaven; but there will be a time when it will be too late. At death the time will have passed by, and God will be no longer gracious to the sinner's soul.

{w} "When once the master" Ps 32:6 Is 55:6 {x} "hath shut the door" Mt 25:10 {y} "Lord, Lord open to us" Lu 6:46

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 13 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *We have eaten*, &c. Comp. Mt 7:22,23. To have eaten with one is evidence of acquaintanceship or friendship. So the sinner may allege that he was a professed follower of Jesus, and had some evidence that Jesus was his friend. There is no allusion here, how- ever, to the sacrament. The figure is taken from the customs of men, and means simply that they had professed attachment, and perhaps supposed that Jesus was their friend.

In thy presence. With thee—as one friend does with another.

Thou hast taught. Thou didst favour us, as though thou didst love us. Thou didst not turn away from us, and we did not drive thee away. All this is alleged as proof of friendship. It shows us—

1st. On how slight evidence men will suppose themselves ready to die. How slender is the preparation which even many professed friends of Jesus have for death! How easily they are satisfied about their own piety! A profession of religion, attendance on the preaching of the word or at the

sacraments, or a decent external life, is all they have and all they seek. With this they go quietly on to eternity—go to disappointment, wretchedness, and woe!

2nd. None of these things will avail in the day of judgment. It will be only true love to God, a real change of heart, and a life of piety, that can save the soul from death. And oh! how important it is that all should search themselves and see what is the real foundation of their hope that they shall enter into heaven.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 13 - Verse 27

Verse 27. **See Barnes "Mt 7:23".**
{z} "But he shall say" Mt 7:22,23, 25:12,41
{a} "ye workers" Ps 6:8 101:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 13 - Verse 28

Verses 28-30. **See Barnes** "Mt 8:11, **See Barnes "Mt 8:12".**
Verse 28. No Barnes text on this verse.
{b} "shall be weeping" Mt 8:12 13:42, 24:51

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 13 - Verse 29

Verses 28-30. **See Barnes** "Mt 8:11, **See Barnes "Mt 8:12".**
Verse 29. No Barnes text on this verse.
{c} "they shall come from the east" Re 7:9,10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 13 - Verse 30

Verses 28-30. **See Barnes** "Mt 8:11, **See Barnes "Mt 8:12".**
Verse 30. No Barnes text on this verse.
{d} "there are last which shall be first" Mt 19:30

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 13 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *Came certain of the Pharisees*. Their coming to him in this manner would have the appearance of friendship, as if they had conjectured or secretly learned that it was Herod's intention to kill him. Their suggestion had much appearance of probability. Herod had killed John. He knew that Jesus made many disciples, and was drawing away many of the people. He was a wicked man, and he might be supposed to fear the presence of one who had so strong a resemblance to John, whom he had slain. It might seem probable; therefore, that he intended to take the life of Jesus, and this might appear as a friendly hint to escape him. Yet it is more than possible that Herod might have sent these Pharisees to Jesus. Jesus was eminently popular, and Herod might not dare openly to put him to death; yet he desired his removal, and for this purpose he sent these men, as if in a friendly way, to advise him to retire. This was probably the reason why Jesus called him a fox.

Herod. Herod Antipas, a son of Herod the Great. He ruled over Galilee and Perea, and wished Jesus to retire beyond these regions. **See Barnes "Lu 3:1"**.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 13 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *Tell that fox*. A fox is an emblem of slyness, of cunning, and of artful mischief. The word is also used to denote a dissembler. Herod was a wicked man, but the *particular thing* to which Jesus here alludes is not his vices, but his cunning, his artifice, in endeavouring to remove him out of his territory. He had endeavoured to do it by stratagem—by sending these men who pretended great friendship for his life.

Behold, I cast out devils, &c. Announce to him the fact that I am working miracles in his territory, and that I shall continue to do it. I am not afraid of his art or his enmity. I am engaged in my appropriate work, and shall continue to be as long as is proper, in spite of his arts and his threats.

Today and tomorrow. A little time. The words seem here to be used not strictly, but proverbially—to denote a short space of time. Let not Herod be uneasy. I am doing no evil; I am not violating the laws. I only cure the sick, &c. In a little time this part of my work will be done, and I shall retire from his dominions.

The third day. After a little time. Perhaps, however, he meant *literally* that he would depart on that day for Jerusalem; that for two or three days more he would remain in the villages of Galilee, and then go on his way to Jerusalem.

I shall be perfected. Rather, I shall have ended my course here; I shall have *perfected* what I purpose to do in Galilee. It does not refer to his personal perfection, for he was always perfect, but it means that he would have finished or completed what he purposed to do in the regions of Herod. He would have completed his work, and would be ready then to go.

{e} "that fox" Zep 3:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 13 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *I must walk*, &c. I must remain here this short time. These three days I must do cures here, and then I shall depart, though not for fear of Herod. It will be because my time will have come, and I shall go up to Jerusalem to die.

For it cannot be that a prophet should perish out of Jerusalem. I have no fear that *Herod* will put me to death in Galilee. I shall not depart on that account. *Jerusalem* is the place where the prophets die, and where I am to die. I am not at all alarmed, therefore, at any threats of *Herod*, for my life is safe until I arrive at Jerusalem. Go and tell him, therefore, that I fear him not. I shall work here as long as it is proper, and shall then go up to Jerusalem to die. The reason why he said that a prophet could not perish elsewhere than in Jerusalem might be—

1st. That he knew that he would be tried on a charge of blasphemy, and no other court could have cognizance of that crime but the great council or Sanhedrim, and so he was not afraid of any threats of Herod.

2nd. It *had been* the fact that the prophets had been chiefly slain there. The meaning is,

"It cannot easily be done elsewhere; it is
not usually done. Prophets have generally perished
there, and there *I* am to die. I am safe,
therefore, from the fear of Herod, and shall not
take the advice given and leave his territory."

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 13 - Verse 34

Verses 34,35. **See Barnes "Mt 23:37, also see** Mt 23:38-39.

Verse 34. From the message which Jesus sent to Herod we may learn—

1st. That our lives are safe in the hands of God, and that wicked men can do no more to injure us than he shall permit, Compare Joh 19:11.

2nd. That we should go on fearlessly in doing our duty, and especially if we are doing good. We should not regard the threats of men. God is to be obeyed; and even if obedience *should* involve us in difficulty and trials, still we should not hesitate to commit our cause to God and go forward.

3rd. We should be on our guard against crafty and unprincipled men. They often profess to seek our good when they are only plotting our ruin. Even those professedly coming from our enemies to caution us are often also our enemies, and are secretly plotting our ruin or endeavouring to prevent our doing good.

4th. We see here the nature of religion. It shrinks at nothing which is duty. It goes forward trusting in God. It comes out boldly and faces the world. And,

5th. How beautiful and consistent is the example of Christ! How wise was he to detect the arts of his foes! how fearless in going forward, in spite of all their machinations, to do what God had appointed for him to do!

{g} "O Jerusalem" Mt 23:37

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 13 - Verse 35

Verses 34,35. **See Barnes "Mt 23:37, also see** Mt 23:38-39.
Verse 35. No Barnes text on this verse.
{h} "your house is left"
Le 26:31,32; Ps 69:25 Isa 1:7, 5:5,6; Da 9:27
Mic 3:12
{i} "Blessed is he that" Lu 19:38 Joh 12:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 14 - Verse 1

Verse 1. *It came to pass*. It so happened or occurred.

As he went, &c. It is probable that he was invited to go, being in the neighbourhood (Lu 14:12); and it is also probable that the Pharisee invited him for the purpose of getting him to say something that would involve him in difficulty.

One of the chief Pharisees. One of the Pharisees who were *rulers*, or members of the great council or the Sanhedrim. **See Barnes "Mt 5:22"**.

It does not mean that he was the head of the sect of the Pharisees, but one of those who happened to be a member of the Sanhedrim. He was therefore a man of influence and reputation.

To eat bread. To dine. To partake of the hospitalities of his house.

On the sabbath-day. It may seem strange that our Saviour should have gone to dine with a man who was a stranger on the Sabbath; but we are to remember—

1st. That he was travelling, having no home of his own, and that it was no more improper to go there than to any other place.

2nd. That he did not go there for the purpose of feasting and amusement, but to do good.

3rd. That as several of that class of persons were together, it gave him an opportunity to address them on the subject of religion, and to reprove their vices. If, therefore, the example of Jesus should be pled to authorize accepting an invitation to dine on the Sabbath, it should be pled JUST AS IT WAS. If we can go *just as he did*, it is right. If when away from home; if we go to do good; if we make it an occasion to discourse on the subject of religion and to persuade men to repent, then it is not improper. Farther than this we cannot plead the example of Christ. And surely this should be the last instance in the world to be adduced to justify dinner-parties, and scenes of riot and gluttony on the Sabbath.

They watched him. They malignantly fixed their eyes on him, to see if he did anything on which they could lay hold to accuse him.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 14 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *A certain man before him*. In what way he came there we know not. He might have been one of the Pharisee's family, or might have been placed there by the Pharisees to see whether he would heal him. This last supposition is not improbable, since it is said in Lu 14:1 that they watched him.

The dropsy. A disease produced by the accumulation of water in various parts of the body; very distressing, and commonly incurable.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 14 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Jesus, answering*. To *answer*, in the Scriptures, does not always imply, as among us, that anything had been said before. It means often merely to begin or to take up a subject, or, as here, to remark on the case that was present.

Is it lawful, &c. He knew that they were watching him. If he healed the man at once, they would accuse him. He therefore proposed the question to them, and when it was asked, they could not say that it was not lawful.

{b} "Is it lawful" Lu 13:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 14 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *They held their peace*. They were silent. They *could* not say it was not lawful, for the law did not forbid it. If it had they would have said it. Here was the time for them to make objections if they had any, and not after the man was healed; and as they *made* no objection *then*, they could not with consistency afterward. They were therefore effectually silenced and confounded by the Saviour.

He took him. Took hold of the man, or perhaps took him apart into another room. By taking hold of him, or touching him, he showed that the power of healing went forth from himself.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 14 - Verse 5

Verses 5,6. **See Barnes "Mt 12:11"**.

Verse 5. *Which of you*, &c. In this way Jesus refuted the notion of the Pharisees. If it was lawful to save an ox on the Sabbath, it was also to save the life of a man. To this the Jews had nothing to answer.

{c} "Which of you" Lu 13:15.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 14 - Verse 6

Verses 5,6. **See Barnes "Mt 12:11"**.
Verse 6. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 14 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *A parable*. The word parable, here, means rather a *precept*, an injunction. He gave a *rule or precept* about the proper manner of attending a feast, or about the humility which ought to be manifested on such occasions.

That were bidden. That were invited by the Pharisee. It seems that he had invited his friends to dine with him on that day.

When he marked. When he observed or saw.

Chief rooms. The word rooms here does not express the meaning of the original. It does not mean apartments, but the higher places at the table; those which were nearest the head of the table and to him who had invited them. **See Barnes "Mt 23:6"**.

That this was the common character of the Pharisees appears from Mt 23:6.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 14 - Verse 8

Verses 8,9. *Art bidden*. Art invited.

Verse 8. *Art bidden*. Art invited.

To a wedding. A wedding was commonly attended with a feast or banquet.

The highest room. The seat at the table nearest the head.

A more honourable man. A more aged man, or a man of higher rank. It is to be remarked that our Saviour did not consider the courtesies of life to be beneath his notice. His chief design here was, no doubt, to reprove the pride and ambition of the Pharisees; but, in doing it, he teaches us that religion does not violate the courtesies of life. It does not teach us to be rude, forward, pert, assuming, and despising the proprieties of refined intercourse. It teaches humility and kindness, and a desire to make all happy, and a willingness to occupy our appropriate situation and rank in life; and this is true *politeness*, for true politeness is a desire to make all others happy, and a readiness to do whatever is necessary to make them so. They have utterly mistaken the nature of religion who suppose that because they are professed Christians, they must be rude and uncivil, and violate all the distinctions in society. The example and precepts of Jesus Christ were utterly unlike such conduct. He teaches us to be kind, and to treat men according to their rank and character. Comp. Mt 22:21; Ro 13:7; 1Pe 2:17.

{d} "When thou art" Pr 25:6,7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 14 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *The lowest room*. The lowest seat at the table; showing that you are not desirous of distinctions, or greedy of that honour which may properly belong to you.

Shalt have worship. The word *worship* here means honour. They who are sitting with you shall treat you with respect. They will learn your rank by your being invited nearer to the head of the table, and it will be better to learn it thus than by putting yourself forward. They will do you honour because you have shown a humble spirit.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 14 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Whosoever exalteth*, &c. This is universal among men, and it is also the way in which God will deal with men. Men will perpetually endeavour to bring down those who endeavour to exalt themselves; and it is a part of God's regular plan to abase the proud, to bring down the lofty, to raise up those that be bowed down, and show his favours to those who are poor and needy.

{e} "For, whosoever" 1Sa 15:17 Job 22:29; Ps 18:27 Pr 15:33, 29:23

Mt 28:12 Lu 18:14; Jas 4:6 1Pe 5:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 14 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Call not thy friends*, &c. This is not to be understood as commanding us not to entertain *at all* our relatives and friends; but we are to remember the *design* with which our Lord spoke. He intended, doubtless, to reprove those who sought the society of the wealthy, and particularly rich relatives, and those who claimed to be intimate with the great and honourable, and who, to show their intimacy, were in the habit of *seeking* their society, and making for them expensive entertainments. He meant, also, to commend charity shown to the poor. The passage means, therefore, call *not only* your friends, but call also the poor, &c. Comp. Ex 16:8 1Sa 15:22; Jer 7:22,23

Mt 9:13.

Thy kinsmen. Thy relations.

A recompense. Lest they feel themselves bound to treat you with the same kindness, and, in so doing, neither you nor they will show any kind spirit, or any disposition to do good beyond what is repaid.

{f} "nor *thy* rich" Pr 22:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 14 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *The poor*. Those who are destitute of comfortable food.

The maimed. Those who are deprived of any member of their body, as an arm or a leg, or who have not the use of them so that they can labour for their own support.

{g} "call the poor" Ne 8:10,12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 14 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Shalt be blessed*. Blessed in the act of doing good, which furnishes more happiness than riches can give, and blessed or rewarded *by God* in the day of judgment.

They cannot recompense thee. They cannot invite you again, and thus pay you; and by inviting them you show that you have a disposition to do good.

The resurrection of the just. When the just or holy shall be raised from the dead. Then God shall reward those who have done good to the poor and needy from love to the Lord Jesus Christ, Mt 10:42; Mt 25:34-36.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 14 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.*

The kingdom of God here means the kingdom which the Messiah was to set up. **See Barnes "Mt 3:2"**.

The Jews supposed that he would be a temporal prince, and that his reign would be one of great magnificence and splendour. They supposed that the Jews then would be delivered from all their oppressions, and that, from being a degraded people, they would become the most distinguished and happy nation of the earth. To that period they looked forward as one of great happiness. There is some reason to think that they supposed that the ancient just men would then be raised up to enjoy the blessings of the reign of the Messiah. Our Saviour having mentioned *the resurrection of the just*, this man understood it in the common way of the Jews, and spoke of the peculiar happiness which they expected at that time. The Jews only, he expected, would partake of those blessings. Those notions the Saviour corrects in the parable which follows.

{h} "Blessed is he that shall" Re 19:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 14 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *A great supper*. Or great feast. It is said to be great on account of the number who were invited.

Bade many. Invited many beforehand. There is little difficulty in understanding this parable. The man who made the supper is, without doubt, designed to represent God; the supper, the provisions which he has made for the salvation of men; and the invitation, the offers which he made

to men, particularly to the Jews, of salvation. See a similar parable explained **See Barnes "Mt 22:1, also** Mt 22:2-13.

{i} "A certain man" Mt 22:2 {k} "great supper" Is 25:6,7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 14 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Sent his servant*. An invitation had been sent before, but this servant was sent at the time that the supper was ready. From this it would seem that it was the custom to announce to those invited just the time when the feast was prepared. The custom here referred to still prevails in Palestine. Dr. Thomson (*The Land and the Book*, vol. i. p. 178) says

> "If a sheikh, beg, or emeer invites, he always sends
> a servant to call you at the proper time. This servant
> often repeats the very formula mentioned in Lu 14:17:
> Tefuddulu, el asha hader—Come, for the supper is ready.
> The fact that this custom is mainly confined to the
> wealthy and to the nobility is in strict agreement
> with the parable, where the certain man who made the
> great supper and bade many is supposed to be of this
> class. It is true now, as then, that to refuse is a
> high insult to the maker of the feast, nor would such
> excuses as those in the parable be more acceptable
> to a Druse emeer than they were to the lord of this
> great supper."

{l} "Come, for all" Pr 9:2,5; So 5:1 Isa 55:1,2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 14 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *I have bought a piece of ground*. Perhaps he had purchased it on condition that he found it as good as it had been represented to him.

I must needs go. I have necessity, or am obliged to go and see it; possibly pleading a contract or an agreement that he would go soon and examine it. However, we may learn from this that sinners sometimes plead that they are under a necessity to neglect the affairs of religion. The affairs of the world, they pretend, are so pressing that they cannot find time to attend to their souls. They have no time to pray, or read the Scriptures, or keep up the worship of God. In this way many lose their souls. God cannot regard such an excuse for neglecting religion with approbation. He commands us to seek *first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness, nor can he approve any excuse that men may make for not doing it.

{m} "first" Lu 8:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 14 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *I go to prove them*. To try them, to see if he had made a good bargain. It is worthy of remark that this excuse was very trifling. He could as easily have tried them at any other time as then, and his whole conduct shows that he was more disposed to gratify himself than to accept the invitation of his friend. He was selfish; just as all sinners are, who, to gratify their own worldliness and sins, refuse to accept the offers of the gospel.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 14 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *I have married a wife*, &c. Our Saviour here doubtless intends to teach us that the love of earthly relatives and friends often takes off the affections from God, and prevents our accepting the blessings which he would bestow on us. This was the most trifling excuse of all; and we cannot but be amazed that such excuses are suffered to interfere with our salvation, and that men can be satisfied for such reasons to exclude themselves from the kingdom of God.

{n} "I have married a wife" Lu 14:26 1Co 7:33

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 14 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Showed his lord*. Told his master of the excuses of those who had been invited. Their conduct was remarkable, and it was his duty to acquaint him with the manner in which his invitation had been received.

Being angry. Being angry at the men who had slighted his invitation; who had so insulted him by neglecting his feast, and preferring for such reasons their own gratification to his friendship and hospitality. So it is no wonder that God is angry with the wicked every day. So foolish as well as wicked is the conduct of the sinner, so trifling is his excuse for not repenting and turning to God, that it is no wonder if God cannot look upon their conduct but with abhorrence.

Go out quickly. The feast is ready. There is no time to lose. They who partake of it must do it soon. So the gospel is ready; time flies; and they who partake of the gospel must do it soon, and they who preach it must give diligence to proclaim it to their fellow-men.

The streets and lanes of the city. The places where the poor, &c., would be found. Those first invited were the rich, who dwelt at ease in their own houses. By these the Jews were intended; by those who were in the streets, the Gentiles. Our Lord delivered this parable to show the Jews that the Gentiles would be called into the kingdom of God. They despised the Gentiles, and considered them cast out and worthless, as they did those who were in the lanes of the city.

The maimed, &c. **See Barnes "Mt 14:13"**.

{o} "being angry" Ps 2:12 {p} "into the streets" Re 22:17 {q} "poor" 1Sa 2:8 Ps 113:7,8

{r} "halt" Ps 38:7 Is 33:23, 35:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 14 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Yet there is room*. He went out and invited all he found in the lanes, and yet the table was not fall. This he also reported to his master. *There is room*. What a glorious declaration is this in regard to the gospel! There yet is room. Millions have been saved, but there yet is room. Millions have been invited, and have come, and have gone to heaven, but heaven is not yet full. There is a banquet there which no number can exhaust; there are fountains which no number can drink dry; there are harps there which other hands may strike; and there are seats there which others may occupy. Heaven is not full, and there yet is room. The Sabbath-school teacher may say to his class, there yet is room; the parent may say to his children, there yet is room; the minister of the gospel may go and say to the wide world, there yet is room. The mercy of God is not exhausted; the blood of the atonement has not lost its efficacy; heaven is not full. What a sad message it *would* be if we were compelled to go and say,

"There is no more room—heaven is full —not another
one can be saved. No matter what their prayers, or
tears, or sighs, they cannot be saved. Every place
is filled; every seat is occupied."

But, thanks be to God, this is not the message which we are to bear; and if there yet is room, come, sinners, young and old, and enter into heaven. Fill up that room, that heaven may be full of the happy and the blessed. If any part of the universe is to be vacant, O let it be the dark world of woe!

{s} "yet there is room" Ps 103:6 130:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 14 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Go out into the highways*. Since enough had not been found in the lanes and streets, he commands the servant to go into the roads—the public highways out of the city, as well as to the streets in it—and invite them also.

Hedges. A hedge is the inclosure around a field or vineyard. It was commonly made of thorns, which were planted thick, and which kept the cattle out of the vineyard.

"A common plant for this purpose is the prickly pear,
a species of cactus, which grows several feet high,
and as thick as a man's body, armed with sharp thorns,
and thus forming an almost impervious defence"

(Professor Hackett, *Scripture Illustrations*, p. 174). Those in the hedges were poor labourers employed in planting them or trimming them— men of the lowest class and of great poverty. By

his directing them to go first into the streets of the city and then into the highways, we are not to understand our Saviour as referring to different classes of men, but only as denoting the earnestness with which God offers salvation to men, and his willingness that the most despised should come and live. Some parts of parables are thrown in for the sake of keeping, and they should not be pressed or forced to obtain any obscure or fanciful signification. The great point in this parable was, that God would call in the Gentiles after the Jews had rejected the gospel. This should be kept always in view in interpreting all the parts of the parable.

Compel them. That is, urge them, press them earnestly, one and all. Do not hear their excuses on account of their poverty and low rank of life, but urge them so as to overcome their objections and lead them to the feast. This expresses the earnestness of the man; his anxiety that his table should be filled, and his purpose not to reject any on account of their poverty, or ignorance, or want of apparel. So God is earnest in regard to the most polluted and vile. He commands his servants, his ministers, to urge them to come, to press on them the salvation of the gospel, and to use ALL the means in their power to bring into heaven poor and needy sinners.

{t} "compel" Ps 110:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 14 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *For I say unto you*. These may be considered as the words of Jesus, making an application of the parable to the Pharisees before him.

None of these men. This cannot be understood as meaning that no Jews would be saved, but that none of those who had *treated him in that manner*—none who had so decidedly rejected the offer of the gospel—would be saved. We may here see how dangerous it is once to reject the gospel; how dangerous to grieve away the Holy Spirit. How often God forsakes for ever the sinner who has been once awakened, and who grieves the Holy Spirit. The invitation is full and free; but when it is rejected, and men turn wilfully away from it, God leaves them to their chosen way, and they are drowned in destruction and perdition. How important, then, is it to embrace the gospel at once; to accept the gracious invitation, and enter without delay the path that conducts to heaven!

{u} "that none of these men" Pr 1:24 Mt 21:43; He 12:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 14 - Verse 25

Verses 25-27. **See Barnes** "Mt 10:37, **See Barnes "Mt 10:38"**.

Verse 25. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 14 - Verse 26

Verses 25-27. **See Barnes "Mt 10:37"**; **See Barnes** "Mt 10:38".

Verse 26. *And hate not*. The word *hate*, here, means simply to *love less*. See the meaning of the verse in **See Barnes** "Mt 10:37.

It may be thus expressed:

"He that comes after me, and does not love his
father less than he loves me, &c., cannot be
my disciple."

We are not at liberty literally to hate our parents. This would be expressly contrary to the fifth commandment. See also Eph 6:1-3; Co 3:20. But we are to love them less than we love Christ; we are to obey Christ rather than them; we are to be willing to forsake them if he calls us to go and preach his gospel; and we are to submit, without a murmur, to him when he takes them away from us. This is not an uncommon meaning of the word *hate* in the Scriptures. Comp. Mal 1:2,3; Ge 29:30,31; De 21:15-17.

{v} "and hate not his father" De 33:9 Mt 10:37 {w} "his own life" Ac 20:24 Re 12:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 14 - Verse 27

Verses 25-27. **See Barnes "Mt 10:37"; See Barnes** "Mt 10:38".

Verse 27. No Barnes text on this verse.

{x} "whosoever doth not" Mt 16:24 Mr 8:34, 9:23 2Ti 3:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 14 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *Intending to build a tower*. See Mt 21:33. A tower was a place of defence or observation, erected on high places or in vineyards, to guard against enemies. It was made high, so as to enable one to see an enemy when he approached; and strong, so that it could not be easily taken.

Counteth the cost. Makes a calculation how much it will cost to build it.

{y} "intending to build a tower" Pr 24:27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 14 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Haply*. Perhaps.

To mock him. To ridicule him. To laugh at him.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 14 - Verse 30

Verse 30. No Barnes text on this verse.
{z} "was not able to finish" Heb 7:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 14 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *With ten thousand to meet*, &c. Whether he will be able, with the forces which he has, to meet his enemy. Christ here perhaps intends to denote that the enemies which we have to encounter in following him are many and strong, and that our strength is comparatively feeble.

To meet him. To contend with him. To gain a victory over him.

{a} "consulteth whether" Pr 20:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 14 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *Or else*. If he is not able. If he is satisfied that he would be defeated.

An ambassage. Persons to treat with an enemy and propose terms of peace. These expressions are not to be improperly pressed in order to obtain from them a spiritual signification. The general scope of the parable is to be learned from the connection, and may be thus expressed:

1st. Every man who becomes a follower of Jesus should calmly and deliberately look at all the consequences of such an act and be prepared to meet them.

2nd. Men in other things act with prudence and forethought. They do not begin to build without a reasonable prospect of being able to finish. They do not go to war when there is every prospect that they will be defeated.

3rd. Religion is a work of soberness, of thought, of calm and fixed purpose, and no man can properly enter on it who does not resolve by the grace of God to fulfil all its requirements and make it the business of his life.

4th. We are to expect difficulties in religion. It will cost us the mortification of our sins, and a life of self-denial, and a conflict with our lusts, and the enmity and ridicule of the world. Perhaps it may cost us our reputation, or possibly our lives and liberties, and all that is dear to us; but we must cheerfully undertake all this, and be prepared for it all.

5th. If we do not deliberately resolve to leave all things, to suffer all things that may be laid on us, and to persevere to the end of our days in the service of Christ, we cannot be his disciples. No man can be a Christian who, when he makes a profession, is resolved after a while to turn back to the world; nor can he be a true Christian if he expects that he will turn back. If he comes not with a full purpose always to be a Christian; if he means not to persevere, by the grace of God, through all hazards, and trials, and temptations; if he is not willing to bear his cross, and meet contempt, and poverty, and pain, and death, without turning back, he cannot be a disciple of the Lord Jesus.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 14 - Verse 33

Verse 33. No Barnes text on this verse.
{b} "forsaketh not all" Php 3:7,8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 14 - Verse 34

Verses 34,35. **See Barnes "Mt 5:13"**; **See Barnes** "Mr 9:49,50".
Salt is good. It is useful. It is good to preserve life and health, and to keep from putrefaction.
His savour. Its saltness. It becomes tasteless or insipid.
Be seasoned. Be salted again.
Fit for the land. Rather, it is not fit for land—-that is, it will not bear fruit of itself. You cannot sow or plant on it.
Nor for the dunghill. It is not good for manure. It will not enrich the land.
Cast it out. They throw it away as useless.
He that hath ears, &c. See Mt 11:15. You are to understand that he that has not grace in his heart; who merely makes a profession of religion, and who sustains the same relation to true piety that this insipid and useless mass does to good salt, is useless in the church, and will be rejected. Real piety, true religion, is of vast value in the world. It keeps it pure, and saves it from corruption, as salt does meat; but a mere profession of religion is fit for nothing, it does no good. It is a mere encumbrance, and all such professors are fit only to be cast out and rejected. All such must be rejected by the Son of God, and cast into a world of wretchedness and despair. Comp. Mt 7:22,23; Mt 8:12; 23:30; 25:30; Re 3:16; Job 8:13; Job 26:13.
{d} "but men cast it out" Joh 15:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 14 - Verse 35

Verse 35. **See Barnes on "Lu 14:34"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 15 - Verse 1

Verse 1. *Publicans and sinners*. **See Barnes "Mt 9:10"**.
{a} "drew near unto him" Mt 9:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 15 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Murmured*. They affected to suppose that if Jesus treated sinners kindly he must be fond of their society, and be a man of similar character. They considered it disgraceful to be with them or to eat with them, and they therefore brought a charge against him for it. They would not suppose that he admitted them to his society for the purpose of doing them good; nor did they remember that the very object of his coming was to call the wicked from their ways and to save them from death.

Receiveth sinners. Receives them in a tender manner; treats them with kindness; does not drive them from his presence.

And eateth with them. Contrary to the received maxims of the scribes. By eating with them he showed that he did not despise or overlook them.

{b} "murmured" Ac 11:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 15 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *This parable*. **See Barnes "Mt 17:12,13"**.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 15 - Verse 4

Verses 4-6. **See Barnes "Mt 18:12,13"**.

{c} "man" Mt 18:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 15 - Verse 5

Verses 4-6. **See Barnes "Mt 18:12,13"**.

Verse 5. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 15 - Verse 6

Verses 4-6. **See Barnes "Mt 18:12,13"**.

Verse 6. No Barnes text on this verse.

{d} "for I have found" Ps 119:176

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 15 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Likewise joy*, &c. It is a principle of human nature that the *recovery* of an object in danger of being lost, affords much more intense joy than the quiet *possession* of many that are safe. This our Saviour illustrated by the case of the lost sheep and of the piece of silver. It might also be illustrated by many other things. Thus we rejoice most in our health when we recover from a dangerous disease; we rejoice over a child rescued from danger or disease more than over those who are in health or safety. We rejoice that property is saved from conflagration or the tempest more than over much more that has not been in danger. This feeling our Lord represents as existing in heaven. *Likewise*, in like manner, or on the same principle, there is joy.

In heaven. Among the angels of God. Comp. Lu 15:10. Heavenly beings are thus represented as rejoicing over those who repent on earth. They see the guilt and danger of men; they know what God has done for the race, and they rejoice at the recovery of any from the guilt and ruins of sin.

One sinner. One rebel against God, however great may be his sins or however small. If a sinner, he must perish unless he repents; and they rejoice at his repentance because it recovers him back to the love of God, and because it will save him from eternal death.

That repenteth. **See Barnes "Mt 9:13"**.

Just persons. The word *persons* is not in the original. It means simply *just ones*, or those who have not sinned. The word may refer to angels as well as to men. There are no *just* men on earth who need no repentance, Ec 7:20; Ps 14:2,3; Ro 3:10-18.

Our Saviour did not mean to imply that there were any such. He was speaking of what took place *in heaven*, or among *angels*, and of *their* emotions when they contemplate the creatures of God; and he says that *they* rejoiced in the repentance of one *sinner* more than in the holiness of many who had not fallen. We are not to suppose that he meant to teach that there were just ninety-nine holy angels to one sinner. He means merely that they rejoice more over the *repentance* of one sinner than they do over many who have not fallen. By this he vindicated his own conduct. The Jews did not deny the existence of angels. They would not deny that their feelings were proper. If *they* rejoiced in this manner, it was not improper for *him* to show similar joy, and especially to seek their conversion and salvation. If they rejoice also, it shows how desirable is the repentance of a sinner. They know of how much value is an immortal soul. They see what is meant by eternal death; and they do not feel *too much*, or have *too much anxiety* about the soul that can never die. Oh that men saw it as they see it! and oh that they would make an effort, such as angels see to be proper, to save their own souls, and the souls of others from eternal death!

{c} "need no repentance" Lu 5:32

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 15 - Verse 8

Verses 8-10.

Verse 8. *Ten pieces* of silver. In the original, ten *drachmas*. The drachma was about the value of fifteen cents, and consequently the whole sum was about a dollar and a half, or six shillings. The sum was small, but it was all she had. The loss of one piece, therefore, was severely felt.

There is joy in the presence, &c. Jesus in this parable expresses the same sentiment which he did in the preceding. A woman would have more immediate, present joy at finding a lost piece, than she would in the possession of those which had not been lost. So, says Christ, there is joy among the angels at the recovery of a single sinner.

{1} "pieces of silver" *Drachma* here translated *a piece of silver* is the eighth part of an ounce, which cometh to sevenpence halfpenny. **See Barnes "Mt 18:28".**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 15 - Verse 9

Verse 9. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 15 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No Barnes text on this verse.

{f} "there is joy" Eze 18:23,32, 33:11 Ac 11:18; Phm 1:15,16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 15 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *And he said*. Jesus, to illustrate still farther the sentiment which he had uttered, and to show that it was proper to rejoice over repenting sinners, proceeds to show it by a most beautiful and instructive parable. We shall see its beauty and propriety by remembering that the *design* of it was simply to *justify his conduct in receiving sinners*, and to show that to rejoice over their return was proper. This he shows by the feelings of a *father* rejoicing over the *return* of an ungrateful and dissipated son.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 15 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *And the younger of them said*. By this younger son we are to understand the publicans and sinners to be represented. By the elder, the Pharisees and scribes.

Give me the portion. The part.

Of goods. Of property.

That falleth to me. That is properly my share. There is no impropriety in supposing that he was of age; and, as he chose to leave his father's house, it was proper that his father should, if he chose, give him the part of the estate which would be his.

He divided unto them his living. His property, or means of living. The division of property among the Jews gave the elder son twice as much as the younger. In this case it seems the younger

son received only money or movable property, and the elder chose to remain with his father and dwell on the paternal estate. The lands and fixed property remained in their possession. Among the ancient Romans and Syrophoenicians, it was customary, when a son came to the years of maturity, if he demanded his part of the inheritance, for the father to give it to him. This the son might claim by law. It is possible that such a custom may have prevailed among the Jews, and that our Saviour refers to some such demand made by the young man.

{g} "And he divided unto them" Mr 12:44

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 15 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Gathered all together*. Collected his property. If he had received flocks or grain, he sold them and converted them into money. As soon as this arrangement had been made he left his father's house.

Took his journey. Went, or travelled.

Into a far country. A country far off from his father's house. He went probably to trade or to seek his fortune, and in his wanderings came at last to this dissipated place, where his property was soon expended.

Wasted his substance. Spent his property.

In riotous living. Literally,

"Living without saving anything."

He lived extravagantly, and in the most dissolute company. Lu 15:30. By his wandering away we may understand that sinners wander far away from God; that they fall into dissolute and wicked company; and that their wandering so far off is the reason why they fall into such company, and are so soon and so easily destroyed.

{h} "famine" Am 8:11,12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 15 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *A mighty famine*. Famines were common in Eastern nations. They were caused by the failure of the crops—by a want of timely rains, a genial sun, or sometimes by the prevalence of the plague or of the pestilence, which swept off numbers of the inhabitants. In this case it is very naturally connected with the luxury, the indolence, and the dissipation of the people in that land.

{h} "mighty famine" Am 8:11,12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 15 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Joined himself*. Entered the service of that citizen. Hired himself out to him. It would seem that he engaged to do any kind of work, even of the lowest kind.

A citizen. One of the inhabitants of one of the cities or towns of that region, probably a man of property.

Into the fields. Out of the city where the owner lived.

To feed swine. This was a very low employment, and particularly so to a Jew. It was forbidden to the Jews to eat swine, and of course it was unlawful to keep them. To be compelled, therefore, to engage in such an employment was the deepest conceivable degradation. The object of this image, as used by the Saviour in the parable, is to show the loathsome employments and the deep degradation to which sin leads men, and no circumstance could possibly illustrate it in a more striking manner than he has done here. Sin and its results everywhere have the same relation to that which is noble and great, which the feeding of swine had, in the estimation of a Jew, to an honourable and dignified employment.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 15 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *He would fain*. He would gladly. He desired to do it.

The husks. The word husks with us denotes the outward covering of corn. In this there is little nourishment, and it is evident that this is not intended here; but the word used here denotes not only *husks*, but also leguminous plants, as beans, &c. It is also used to denote the fruit of a tree called the *carob* or *kharub-tree*, which is common in Ionia, Syria, and Rhodes. The tree is more bushy and thick-set than the apple-tree, and the leaves are larger and of a much darker green. The following is Dr. Thomson's description of the fruit of this tree (*The Land and the Book*, vol. i.p. 22):

> "The husks— a mistranslation—are fleshy pods,
> somewhat like those of the locust-tree, from
> six to ten inches long and one broad, laid inside
> with a gelatinous substance, not wholly unpleasant
> to the taste when thoroughly ripe. I have seen
> large orchards of this kharub in Cyprus, where it is
> still the food which the swine do eat. The kharub is
> often called St. John's Bread, and also Locust-tree,
> from a mistaken idea about the food of the Baptist in
> the wilderness."

The cut will give an idea of these *pods*, or *husks* as they are called in our translation.

No man gave unto him. Some have understood this as meaning "no one gave him anything — any bread or provisions;" but the connection requires us to understand it of the "husks." He did not go a begging —his master was bound to provide for his wants; but the provision which he made for him was so poor that he would have preferred the food of the swine. He desired a portion of *their* food, but that was not given him. A certain quantity was measured out for them, and he was not at liberty to eat it himself. Nothing could more strikingly show the evil of his condition, or the deep degradation, and pollution, and wretchedness of sin.

{i} "filled" Is 44:20 Ho 12:1 {k} "the swine did eat" Ps 73:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 15 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *He came to himself*. This is a very expressive phrase. It is commonly applied to one who has been *deranged*, and when he recovers we say he has *come to himself*. In this place it denotes that the folly of the young man was a kind of derangement—that he was insane. So it is of every sinner. Madness is in their hearts (Ec 9:3); they are estranged from God, and led, by the influence of evil passions, contrary to their better judgment and the decisions of a sound mind.

Hired servants. Those in a low condition of life—those who were not born to wealth, and who had no friends to provide for them.

I perish. I, who had property and a kind father, and who might have been provided for and happy.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 15 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *I will arise*. This is a common expression among the Hebrews to denote entering on a piece of business. It does not imply that he was sitting, but that he meant immediately to return. This should be the feeling of every sinner who is conscious of his guilt and danger.

To my father. To his father, although he had offended him, and treated him unkindly, and had provoked him, and dishonoured him by his course of conduct. So the sinner. He has nowhere else to go but to God. He has offended him, but he may trust in his kindness. If God does not save him he cannot be saved. There is no other being that has an arm strong enough to deliver from sin; and though it is painful for a man to go to one whom he has offended—though he cannot go but with shame and confusion of face—yet, unless the sinner is willing to go to *God* and confess his faults, he can never be saved.

I have sinned. I have been wicked, dissipated, ungrateful, and rebellious.

Against heaven. The word heaven here, as it is often elsewhere, is put for God. I have sinned against God. See Mt 21:25. It is also to be observed that one evidence of the genuineness of repentance is the feeling that our sins have been committed chiefly against *God*. Commonly we think most of our offences as committed against man; but when the sinner sees the true character of his sins, he sees that they have been aimed chiefly against God, and that the sins against man are of little consequence compared with those against God. So David, even after committing the crimes of adultery and murder—after having inflicted the deepest injury on man—yet felt that the sin as committed against *God* shut every other consideration out of view: *Against thee, thee ONLY, have I sinned*, &c., Ps 51:4.

Before thee. This means the same as against thee. The offences had been committed mainly *against God*, but they were to be regarded, also, as sins against his *father*, in wasting property which he had given him, in neglecting his counsels, and in plunging himself into ruin. He felt that he had *disgraced* such a father. A sinner will be sensible of his sins against his relatives and friends as well as against God. A true penitent will be as ready to *acknowledge* his offences against his fellow-men as those against his Maker.

{l} "I will arise" Ps 39:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 15 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *No more worthy*, &c.
"Such has been my conduct that I have been a disgrace to my father. I am not fit to be honoured by being called the son of a man so kind and virtuous."

Make me as one, &c.
"Treat me as a servant. Let me come again into your family, but I do not ask to be treated as a son. I am willing to come in if you will give me only the support that you give to a servant."

This evinced,

1st. Deep humility-such as a sinner should have.

2nd. Love for his father's house—such as all penitents should have toward God's dwelling-place in heaven.

3rd. Confidence in his father that he would treat him kindly, even if he treated him as a servant. Such confidence all returning penitents feel in God. They are assured that God will treat them kindly—that *whatever* he gives them will be more than they deserve, and they are therefore willing to be in his hands. Yet,

4th. He had no adequate sense of his father's kindness. He did not fully appreciate his character. He was far more kind than he had dared to hope he would be; just as all sinners undervalue the character of God, and find him always more kind than they had supposed. No sinner comes to God with a just and adequate view of his character, but always finds him more merciful than he had dared to hope.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 15 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *He arose, and came*. Was coming. But here is no indication of *haste*. He did not run, but came driven by his wants, and, as we may suppose, filled with shame, and even with some doubts whether his father would receive him.

A great way off. This is a beautiful description—the image of his father's happening to see him clad in rags, poor, and emaciated, and yet he recognized *his son*, and all the feelings of a father prompted him to go and embrace him.

Had compassion. Pitied him. Saw his condition—his poverty and his wretched appearance—and was moved with compassion and love.

And ran. This is opposed to the manner in which the son came. The beauty of the picture is greatly heightened by these circumstances. The son came slowly— the father *ran*. The love and joy of the old man were so great that he hastened to meet him and welcome him to his home.

Fell on his neck. Threw his arms around his neck and embraced him.

And kissed him. This was a sign at once of affection and reconciliation. This must at once have dissipated every doubt of the son about the willingness of his father to forgive and receive him. A kiss is a sign of affection, 1Sa 10:1 Ge 29:13. This is evidently designed to denote the *readiness of God* to pity and pardon returning sinners. In this verse of inimitable beauty is contained the point of the parable, which was uttered by the Saviour to vindicate *his own conduct* in receiving sinners kindly. Who could *blame* this father for thus receiving his repenting son? Not even a Pharisee could blame him; and our Saviour thus showed them, so that they could not resist it, that God received returning sinners, and that it was right for him also to receive them and treat them with attention.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 15 - Verse 21

Verse 21. No Barnes text on this verse.

{n} "I have sinned" Ps 51:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 15 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *The best robe*. The son was probably in rags. The joy of the father is expressed by clothing him in the best raiment, that he might appear well. The *robe* here mentioned is probably the outer garment; and the father told them to put on him the best one that was in the house—one reserved for festival occasions. See Ge 27:15.

A ring on his hand. To wear a ring on the hand was one mark of wealth and dignity. The rich and those in office commonly wore them. Comp. Jas 2:2. To give a ring was a mark of favour, or of affection, or of conferring office. Comp. Ge 41:42 Es 8:2. Here it was expressive of the favour and affection of the father.

Shoes on his feet. Servants, probably, did not usually wear shoes. The son returned, doubtless, without shoes—a condition very unlike that in which he was when he left home. When, therefore, the father commanded them to put shoes on him, it expressed his wish that he should not be treated *as a servant*, but *as a son*. The word *shoes* here, however, means no more than *sandals*, such as were commonly worn. And the meaning of all these images is the same— *that God will treat those who return to him with kindness and affection*. These images should not be attempted to be spiritualized. They are beautifully thrown in to fill up the narrative, and to express with more force the *general* truth that God will treat returning penitents with mercy and with love. To dress up the son in this manner was a proof of the father's affection. So God will bestow on sinners the marks of his confidence and regard.

{o} "Bring forth the best robe" Zec 3:3,5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 15 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Be merry*. Literally, "eating, let us rejoice." The word *merry* does not quite express the meaning of the Greek. Merriment denotes a light, playful, jovial mirth. The Greek denotes simply *joy*—let us be happy, or joyful.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 15 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Was dead*. This is capable of two significations:

1st. *I supposed* that he was dead, but I know now that he is alive.

2nd. He was *dead to virtue*—he was sunk in pleasure and vice. The word is not unfrequently thus used. See 1Ti 5:6 Mt 8:22; Ro 6:13.

Hence to be restored to *virtue* is said to be restored to life, Ro 6:13 Re 3:1; Eph 2:1.

It is probable that this latter is the meaning here. See Lu 15:31.

Was lost. Had wandered away from home, and we knew not where he was.

{p} "For" Lu 15:32 {q} "was dead" Eph 2:1 5:14; Re 3:1

{r} "is alive again" Ro 6:11,13 {s} "was lost" Eze 34:4,16; Lu 19:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 15 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *In the field*. At work. This eldest son is designed to represent the Pharisees who had found fault with the Saviour. Their conduct is likened to that of this envious and unnatural brother.

Music and dancing. Dancing was not uncommon among the Hebrews, and was used on various occasions. Thus Miriam celebrated the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt in dances as well as songs, Ex 15:20. David danced before the ark, 2Sa 6:14. It was common at Jewish feasts (Jud 21:19-21) and in public triumphs (Jud 11:34), and at all seasons of mirth and rejoicings, Ps 30:11 Jer 31:4,13.

It was also used in religious services by the idolaters (Ex 32:19), and also by the Jews, at times, in their religious services, Ps 149:3 150:4. In this case it was an expression of rejoicing. Our Lord expresses no opinion about its propriety. He simply states the fact, nor was there occasion for comment on it. His mentioning it cannot be pleaded for its lawfulness or *propriety*, any more than his mentioning the vice of the younger son, or the wickedness of the Pharisees, can be pleaded to justify their conduct. It is an expressive image, used in accordance with the known customs of the country, to express joy. It is farther to be remarked, that if the example of persons in Scripture be pleaded for dancing, it can be *only for just such dances as they practised* —for sacred or triumphal occasions.

{t} "music and dancing" Ps 30:11 126:1,2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 15 - Verse 26

Verses 26-28. *Safe and sound*. In health.
Verse 26. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 15 - Verse 27

Verse 27. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 15 - Verse 28

Verse 28. No Barnes text on this verse.
{u} "angry" Jon 4:1-3 Ro 10:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 15 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *A kid*. A young goat. This was of less value than the calf; and he complains that while his father had never given *him* a thing of so little value as a kid, he had now given his other son the fatted calf.

Make merry with. Entertain them—give them a feast. This complaint was unreasonable, for his father had divided his property, and he might have had his portion, and his father had uniformly treated him with kindness. But it serves to illustrate the conduct of the scribes and Pharisees, and the folly of their complaint.

{v} "do I serve thee" Is 65:5 Lu 18:11 {w} "neither transgressed I" Phi 3:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 15 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *This thy son*. This son of *thine*. This is an expression of great contempt. He did not call him his brother, but his father's son, to show at once his contempt for his younger brother, and for his father for having received him as he did. Never was there a more striking instance of petty malice, or more unjustifiable disregard of a father's conduct and will.

Thy living. Thy property. This is still designed to irritate the father, and set him against his younger son. It was true that the younger son had been guilty, and foolish, and ungrateful; but he was penitent, and that was of more consequence to the father than all his property; and in the joy that he was penitent and was safe, he forgot his ingratitude and folly. So should the elder son have done.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 15 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *All I have is thine*. The property was divided. What remained was in reality the elder son's. He was heir to it all, and had a right, if he chose, to use it. He had therefore no right to complain.

This instructive and beautiful parable was designed to vindicate the conduct of Jesus—to show that it was right to receive sinners, and that the conduct of the Pharisees was unreasonable. The elder son represents the Pharisees; the younger, the returning sinner, whether Jew or Gentile; and the father, God, who is willing to receive them. The parable had the designed effect. It silenced the adversaries of Jesus and vindicated his own conduct. There is not, perhaps, anywhere to be found a more beautiful and touching narrative than this. Every circumstance is tender and happily chosen; every word has a meaning; every image is beautiful; and the narrative closes just where it is fitted to make the deepest impression. In addition to what has been suggested, we may learn from this parable the following lessons :-

1st. That the disposition of a sinner is selfish. He desires to get all that he can, and is impatient of delay, Lu 15:12.

2nd. Sinners waste their blessings, and reduce themselves to a state of want and wretchedness, Lu 15:13. A life of sin brings on spiritual want and misery. It destroys the faculties, benumbs the mind, hardens the heart, abuses the beneficence of God, and makes us careless of him who gave us all that we have, and indifferent to the consequences of our own conduct.

3rd. Sinners disregard the future woes that will come upon them. The young man cared not for any calamities that might be the result of his conduct. He went on heedlessly—like every sinner-to enjoy himself, and to squander what the toils of his father had procured for him.

4th. Afflictions are often the means of bringing sinners to reflection, Lu 15:14. While his property lasted the prodigal cared little about his father. When that was gone, and he was in the midst of a famine, he thought of his ways. When sinners are in prosperity they think little about God. When he takes away their mercies, and they are called to pass through afflictions, then they think of their ways, and remember that God can give them comfort.

5th. We have here an impressive exhibition of the wants and woes of a sinner.

1st. He had spent all. He had nothing. So the sinner. He has no righteousness, no comfort.

2nd. He was far from God, away from his father, and in a land of strangers. The sinner has wandered, and has no friend. His miseries came upon him because he was so far away from God.

3rd. His condition was wretched. He was needy, in famine, and without a friend. So the sinner. His condition is aptly denoted by that of the prodigal, who would gladly have partaken of the food of the swine. The sinner has taken the world for his portion, and it neither supplies the wants of his soul, nor gives him comfort when he is far away from his Father's home and from God.

6th. The sinner in this situation often applies to the wrong source for comfort, Lu 15:15. The prodigal should at once have returned to his father, but he rather chose to become a servant of a citizen of that region. The sinner, when sensible of his sins, should return at once to God; but he often continues still to wander. He tries new objects. He seeks new pleasures and new friends, and finds them equally unsatisfactory. He engages in new pursuits, but all in vain. He is still comfortless, and in a strange, a famished land.

7th. The repentance required in the gospel is a return to a right mind, Lu 15:17. Before his conversion the sinner was alienated from God. He was spiritually deranged. He saw not things as they are. Now he looks on the world as vain and unsatisfactory, and comes to himself. He thinks aright of God, of heaven, of eternity, and resolves to seek his happiness there. No man regards things as they are but he who sees the world to be vain, and eternity to be near and awful; and none acts with a sane mind but he who acts on the belief that he must soon die; that there is a God and a Saviour—a heaven and a hell.

8th. When the sinner returns he becomes sensible of the following things:

1st. That he is in danger of perishing, and must soon
die but for relief—" I perish with hunger."

2nd. That God is willing and able to save him—"How
many hired servants have bread enough *and to spare*."
There is abundance of mercy for all, and all may come.

3rd. He begins to cherish a hope that this may be his.
God is willing, and he feels that all that is needful
is for him to go to him.

4th. He resolves to go to God—"I will arise and go."

5th. He comes to him willing to confess all his sins, and
desirous of concealing none— "I will say, Father, I
have sinned."

9th. True repentance is a voluntary act. It is not forced. It is the resolution of the sinner to go, and he cheerfully and cordially arises and goes, Lu 15:18.

10th. A real penitent feels that his sins have been committed against GOD, Lu 15:18.

11th. A true penitent also is willing to acknowledge his offences against his parents, brothers, friends, and all men, Lu 15:18.

12th. A real penitent is humble, Lu 15:18. He has no wish to conceal anything, or to be thought more highly of than he ought to be.

13th. God is willing to receive the true penitent, and has made the richest provision for his return and for his comfort. None need to hesitate to go. All who go, feeling that they are poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked, will find God willing to receive them, and none will be sent empty away.

14th. The joy at the return of sinners is great. Angels rejoice over it, and all holy beings are glad.

15th. We should not be envious at any favours that God may be pleased to bestow on others, Lu 15:32. He has given us more than we deserve; and if, by the sovereignty of his grace, he is pleased to endow others with more grace, or to give them greater talents, or to make them more useful, we have no cause to complain. We should rather rejoice that he is pleased to give such mercies to any of our race, and should praise him for the manifestation of his goodness, whether made to us or to other men.

16th. The sensible joy when the sinner returns to God is often greater than that which may be felt after the return, and yet the real cause of rejoicing be no greater. In times of revival, the sensible joy of Christians may be greater than in ordinary seasons. Their graces are quickened, their zeal kindled, and their hopes strengthened.

17th. If God is willing to receive sinners, if all holy beings rejoice, then how should Christians strive for their conversion, and seek for their return!

18th. If God is willing to receive sinners *now*, then all should at once return. There will be a time when he will not be willing to receive them. The day of mercy will be ended; and from the misery and want of this wretched world, they will go down to the deeper miseries and wants of a world of despair—where hope never comes; from whence the sinner can never return; and where the cheering thought can never enter the mind that in his Father's house there is bread enough and to spare, or where he must feel that if there is, it will be for ever untasted by the wretched prodigal in the land of eternal famine and death.

{x} "Son" Ro 9:4 11:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 15 - Verse 32

Verse 32. No Barnes text on this verse.

{y} "meet"

Jon 4:10,11

{z} "make merry" Ps 51:8 Isa 35:10 {a} "for this" Lu 15:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 16 - Verse 1

Verse 1. *His disciples*. The word *disciples*, here, is not to be restricted to the twelve apostles or to the seventy. The parable appears to have been addressed to all the professed followers of the Saviour who were present when it was delivered. It is connected with that in the preceding chapter. Jesus had there been discoursing with the scribes and Pharisees, and vindicating his conduct in receiving kindly publicans and sinners. These publicans and sinners are here particularly referred

to by the word *disciples*. It was with reference to them that the whole discourse had arisen. After Jesus had shown the Pharisees, in the preceding chapter, the propriety of his conduct, it was natural that he should turn and address his disciples. Among them there might have been some who were wealthy. The *publicans* were engaged in receiving taxes, in collecting money, and their chief danger arose from that quarter—from covetousness or dishonesty. Jesus always adapted his instructions to the circumstances of his hearers, and it was proper, therefore, that he should give *these disciples* instructions about their *peculiar* duties and dangers. He related this parable, therefore, to show them *the danger of the love of money*; the guilt it would lead to (Lu 16:1); the perplexities and shifts to which it would drive a man when once he had been dishonest (Lu 16:3-7); the necessity of using money aright, since it was their chief business (Lu 16:9); and the fact that if they would serve God aright they must give up supreme attachment to money (Lu 16:13); and that the first duty of religion demanded that they should resolve to serve God, and be honest in the use of the wealth intrusted to them. This parable has given great perplexity, and many ways have been devised to explain it. The above solution is the most simple of any; and if these plain principles are kept in view, it will not be difficult to give a consistent explanation of its particular parts. It should be borne in mind, however, that in this, as well as in other parables, we are not to endeavour to spiritualize every circumstance or allusion. We are to keep in view the great moral truth taught in it, that we cannot serve God and mammon, and that all attempts to do this will involve us in difficulty and sin.

A steward. One who has charge of the affairs of a family or household; whose duty it is to provide for the family, to purchase provisions, &c. This is, of course, an office of trust and confidence. It affords great opportunity for dishonesty and waste, and for embezzling property. The master's eye cannot always be on the steward, and he may therefore squander the property, or hoard it up for his own use. It was an office commonly conferred on a slave as a reward for fidelity, and of course was given to him that, in long service, had shown himself most trustworthy. By the *rich man*, here, is doubtless represented God. By the steward, those who are his professed followers, particularly the *publicans* who were with the Saviour, and whose chief danger arose from the temptations to the improper use of the money intrusted to them.

Was accused. Complaint was made.

Had wasted. Had squandered or scattered it; had not been prudent and saving.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 16 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Give an account*. Give a statement of your expenses and of your conduct while you have been steward. This is not to be referred to the day of judgment. It is a circumstance thrown into the parable to prepare the way for what follows. It is true that all will be called to give an account at the day of judgment, but we are not to derive that doctrine from such passages as this, nor are we to interpret this as teaching that our conscience, or the law, or any beings will accuse us in the day of judgment. All that will be indeed true, but it is not the truth that is taught in this passage.

{a} "give an account" Lu 12:42 1Co 4:2; 1Ti 4:14 1Pe 4:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 16 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Said within himself*. Thought, or considered.

My lord. My master, my employer.

I cannot dig. This may mean either that his employment had been such that he could not engage in agriculture, not having been acquainted with the business, or that he was *unwilling* to stoop to so low an employment as to work daily for his support. *To dig*, here, is the same as to till the earth, to work at daily labour.

To beg. These were the only two ways that presented themselves for a living— either to work for it, or to beg.

I am ashamed. He was too proud for that. Besides, he was in good health and strength, and there was no good reason why he should beg—nothing which he could give as a cause for it. It is proper for the sick, the lame, and the feeble to beg; but it is not well for the able-bodied to do it, nor is it well to aid them, except by giving them employment, and compelling them to work for a living. He does a beggar who is able to work the most real kindness who sets him to work, and, as a general rule, we should *not* aid an able-bodied man or woman in any other way. Set them to work, and pay them a fair compensation, and you do them good in two ways, for the habit of labour may be of more value to them than the price you pay them.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 16 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *I am resolved*. He thought of his condition. He looked at the plans which occurred to him. He had been dishonest, and knew that he must lose his place. It would have been better to have *considered before this*, and resolved on a proper course of life, and to be faithful to his trust; and his perplexity here teaches us that dishonesty will sooner or later lead us into difficulty, and that the path of honesty is not only the right path, but is the path that is filled with most comfort and peace.

When I am put out, &c. When I lose my place, and have no home and means of support.

They may receive me, &c. Those who are now under me, and whom I am resolved now to favour. He had been dishonest to his master, and, having *commenced* a course of dishonesty, he did not shrink from pursuing it. Having injured his master, and being now detected, he was willing still farther to injure him, to take revenge on him for removing him from his place, and to secure his own interest still at his expense. He was resolved to lay these persons under such obligations, and to show them so much kindness, that they could not well refuse to return the kindness to him and give him a support. We may learn here,

1st. That one sin leads on to another, and that one act of dishonesty will be followed by many more, if there is opportunity.

2nd. Men who commit one sin cannot get along consistently without committing many more. One lie will demand many more to make it appear like the truth, and one act of cheating will demand many more to avoid detection. The beginning of sin is like the letting out of waters, and no man knows, if he indulges in one sin, where it will end.

3rd. Sinners are selfish. They care more about themselves than they do either about God or truth. If they seek salvation, it is only for selfish ends, and because they desire a comfortable abode in the future world rather than because they have any regard to God or his cause.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 16 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Called every one*. As he was steward, he had the management of all the affairs, and, of course, debts were to be paid to him.

Debtors. Those who owed his master, or perhaps *tenants*; those who rented land of his master.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 16 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *An hundred measures*. The measure here mentioned is the *bath*, which contained, according to Dr. Arbuthnot's tables, 7 1/2 gallons, or, according to the marginal note, about 9 gallons and 3 quarts.

Oil. Oil of olives, or sweet oil. It was much used for lamps, as an article of food (Ex 29:2), and also for anointing, and, of course, as an article of commerce, 1Ki 5:11. These were persons, doubtless, who had rented land of the rich man, and who were to give him a certain proportion of the produce.

Thy bill. The contract, obligation, or *lease*. It was probably written as a *promise* by the debtor and signed by the steward, and thus became binding. Thus he had power to alter it, without supposing that his master would detect it. The bill or contract was in the hands of the steward, and he gave it back to him to write a new one.

Quickly. He supposed that his master would soon remove him, and he was therefore in haste to have all things secure beforehand. It is worthy of remark, also, that *all* this was wrong. His master had called for the account; but, instead of rendering it, he engaged in other business, disobeyed his lord still, and, in contempt of his commands, sought his own interest. All sinners would be slow to give in their account to God if they could do it; and it is only because, when God calls them by death, they *cannot but go*, that they do not engage still in their own business and disobey him.

{1} "Measures of oil" = "The measure *Batos*, in the original,
contained nine gallons and three quarts. See Eze 45:10-14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 16 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Measures of wheat*. The measure here mentioned—the *kor*, or homer—contained, according to the tables of Dr. Arbuthnot, about 32 pecks, or 8 bushels; or, according to the marginal note, about 14 bushels and a *pottle*. A pottle is 4 pints. The Hebrew *kor*, ^hebrew^—or homer, ^hebrew^—was equal to 10 baths or 70 gallons, and the actual amount of the measure, according

to this, was not far from 8 gallons. Robinson (Lex.), however, supposes that the bath was 11 1/2 gallons, and the kor or homer 14.45 bushels. The amount is not material to the proper understanding of the parable.

Fourscore. Eighty.

{2} "measures" = "The measure here indicated contained about
fourteen bushels and a pottle"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 16 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *The lord commended*. Praised, or expressed admiration at his wisdom. These are not the words of Jesus, as commending him, but a part of the narrative or parable. His *master* commended him—saw that he was wise and considerate, though he was dishonest.

The unjust steward. It is not said that his master commended him because he was unjust, but because he was wise. This is the only thing in his conduct of which there is any approbation expressed, and this approbation was expressed by *his master*. This passage cannot be brought, therefore, to prove that Jesus meant to commend his dishonesty It was a commendation of his *shrewdness* or *forethought*; but the master could no more approve of his conduct as a moral act than he could the first act of cheating him.

The children of this world. Those who are devoted to this world; who live for this world only; who are careful only to obtain property, and to provide for their temporal necessities. It does not mean that they are peculiarly wicked and profligate, but only that they are *worldly*, and anxious about earthly things. See Mt 13:22 2Ti 4:10.

Are wiser. More prudent, cunning, and anxious about their particular business. They show more skill, study more plans, contrive more ways to provide for themselves, than the children of light do to promote the interests of religion.

In their generation. Some have thought that this means in *their manner of living*, or *in managing their affairs*. The word *generation* sometimes denotes the manner of life, Ge 6:9 37:2. Others suppose that it means *toward or among the men of their own age*. They are more prudent and wise than Christians in regard to the people of their own time; they turn their connection with them to good account, and make it subserve their worldly interests, while Christians fail much more to use the world in such a manner as to subserve their spiritual interests.

Children of light. Those who have been enlightened from above—who are Christians. This may be considered as the application of the parable. It does not mean that it is more wise to be a worldly man than to be a child of light, but that those who are worldly show much prudence in providing for themselves; seize occasions for making good bargains; are active and industrious; try to turn everything to the best account, and thus exert themselves to the utmost to advance their interests; while Christians often suffer opportunities of doing good to pass unimproved; are less steady, firm, and anxious about eternal things, and thus show less wisdom. Alas! this is too true; and we cannot but reflect here how different the world would be if all Christians were as anxious, and diligent, and prudent in religious matters as others are in worldly things.

{b} "children of light" Joh 12:36 Eph 5:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 16 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *I say unto you*. I, Jesus, say to you, my disciples.

Make to yourselves friends. Some have understood the word *friends*, here, as referring to the poor; others, to holy angels; and others, to God. Perhaps, however, the word should not be considered as referring to any particular *persons*, but is used in accordance with the preceding parable; for in the application our Saviour uses the *language* appropriated to the conduct of the steward to express the *general* truth that we are to make a proper use of riches. The steward had so managed his pecuniary affairs as to secure future comfort for himself, or so as to find friends that would take care of him beyond the time when he was put out of the office. That is, he would not be destitute, or cast off, or without comfort, when he was removed from his office. So, says our Saviour to the publicans and those who had property, so use your property as to *secure* happiness and comfort beyond the time when you shall be removed from the present life. Have reference, in the use of your money, to the future. Do not use it so that it shall not avail you anything hereafter; but so employ it that, as the steward found friends, comfort, and a home by his wisdom in the use of it, so *you* may, after you are removed to another world, find friends, comfort, and a home—that is, may be happy in heaven. Jesus, here, does not say that we should do it *in the same way* that the steward did, for that was unjust; but only that we should *secure the result*. This may be done by using our riches as we should do; that is, by not suffering them to entangle us in cares and perplexities dangerous to the soul, engrossing the time, and stealing away the affections; by employing them in works of mercy and benevolence, aiding the poor, contributing to the advance of the gospel, bestowing them where they will do good, and in such a manner that God will *approve the deed*, and will bless us for it. Commonly riches are a hindrance to piety. To many they are snares; and, instead of positively benefitting the possessor, they are an injury, as they engross the time and the affections, and do not contribute at all to the eternal welfare of the soul. Everything may, by a proper use, be made to contribute to our welfare in heaven. Health, wealth, talents, and influence may be so employed; and this is what our Saviour doubtless means here.

Of the mammon. By means of the mammon.

Mammon. A Syriac word meaning riches. It is used, also, as an idol—the god of riches.

Of unrighteousness. These words are an Hebrew expression for *unrighteous mammon*, the noun being used for an adjective, as is common in the New Testament. The word *unrighteous*, here, stands opposed to "the true riches" in Lu 16:11, and means *deceitful, false, not to be trusted*. It has this meaning often. See 1Ti 6:17 Lu 12:33; Mt 6:19 19:21.

It does not signify, therefore, that they had acquired the property *unjustly*, but that property was deceitful and not to be trusted. The wealth of the steward was deceitful; he could not rely on its continuance; it was liable to be taken away at any moment. So the wealth of the world is deceitful. We cannot calculate on its continuance. It may give us support or comfort now, but it may be soon removed, or we taken from it, and we should therefore so use it as to derive benefit from it hereafter.

When ye fail. When ye *are left*, or when ye die. The expression is derived from the parable as referring to the discharge of the steward; but it refers to death, as if God then discharged his people, or took them from their stewardship and called them to account.

They may receive you. This is a form of expression denoting merely *that you may be received*. The plural form is used because it was used in the corresponding place in the parable, Lu 16:4. The direction is, so to use our worldly goods that we may be received into heaven when we die. God

will receive us there, and we are to employ our property so that he will not cast us off for abusing it.

Everlasting habitations. Heaven, the eternal home of the righteous, where all our wants will be supplied, and where there can be no more anxiety, and no more removal from enjoyments, 2Co 5:1.

{3} "mammon of unrighteousness" "riches"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 16 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *He that is faithful*, &c. This is a maxim which will almost universally hold true. A man that shows fidelity in small matters will also in large; and he that will cheat and defraud in little things will also in those involving more trust and responsibility. Fidelity is required in small matters as well as in those of more importance.

{d} "He that is faithful" Mt 25:21,23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 16 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Who will commit*, &c. If you are not faithful in the small matters pertaining to this world, if you do not use aright your property and influence, you cannot expect that God will commit to you the true riches of his grace. Men who are dishonest and worldly, and who do not employ the deceitful mammon as they ought, cannot expect to grow in grace. God does not confer grace upon them, and their being unfaithful in earthly matters is evidence that they *would be* also in much greater affairs, and would likewise misimprove the true riches.

True riches. The graces of the gospel; the influences of the Spirit; eternal life, or religion. The riches of this world are false, deceitful, not to be trusted (Lu 16:9); the treasures of heaven are *true*, faithful, never-failing, Mt 6:19,20.

{4} "mammon" = "riches"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 16 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Another man's*. The word *man's* is not in the original. It is, "If ye have been unfaithful managers *for another*." It refers, doubtless, to *God*. The wealth of the world is *his*. It is committed to us as his stewards. It is uncertain and deceitful, and at any moment he can take it away from us. It is still *his*; and if, while intrusted with this, we are unfaithful, we cannot expect that he will confer on us the rewards of heaven.

That which is your own. The riches of heaven, which, if once given to us, may be considered as *ours* that is, it will be permanent and fixed, and will not be taken away *as if* at the pleasure of another. We may calculate on it, and look forward with the assurance that it will continue to be ours for ever, and will not be taken away like the riches of this world, as if they were not ours. The

meaning of the whole parable is therefore thus expressed: If we do not use the things of this world as we ought—with honesty, truth, wisdom, and integrity, we cannot have evidence of piety, and shall not be received into heaven. If we are true to that which is least, it is an evidence that we are the children of God, and he will commit to our trust that which is of infinite importance, even the eternal riches and glory of heaven.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 16 - Verse 13

Verse 13. **See Barnes "Mt 6:24".**
No Barnes text on this verse.
{e} "No servant" Jos 24:15 Mt 6:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 16 - Verse 14

Verses 14,15. *They derided him*. The fact that they were "covetous" is here stated as the reason why they derided him, or, as it is literally, "they turned up the nose at him." They contemned or despised the doctrine which he had laid down, probably because it showed them that with their love of money they could not be the true friends of God, or that their profession of religion was really false and hollow. They were *attempting* to serve God and mammon, and they therefore looked upon his doctrine with contempt and scorn.

Justify yourselves. *Attempt* to appear just; or, you aim to appear righteous in the sight of men, and do not regard the heart.

That which is highly esteemed. That is, mere external works, or actions performed merely to appear to be righteous.

Is abomination. Is abominable, or hateful. The word used here is the one that in the Old Testament is commonly given *to idols*, and denotes God's *abhorrence* of such conduct. These words are to be applied *chiefly* to what Jesus was discoursing about. There are many things esteemed among men which are not abomination in the sight of God; as, for example, truth, parental and filial affection, industry, &c. But many things, much sought and admired, are hateful in his sight. The love of wealth and show, ambition and pride, gay and splendid vices, and all the wickedness that men contrive to *gild* and to make appear like virtue—external acts that appear well while the heart is evil—are abominable in the sight of God, and should be in the sight of men. Comp. Lu 18:11-14 1Sa 16:7.

{f} "Pharisees also" Mt 23:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 16 - Verse 15

Verse 15. No Barnes text on this verse.

{g} "justify"
Lu 10:29
{h} "God knoweth" Ps 7:9 Jer 17:10 {i} "esteemed" Pr 16:5 Mal 3:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 16 - Verse 16

Verse 16. **See Barnes "Mt 11:12-14".**
Every man. Many men, or multitudes. This is an expression that is very common, as when we say everybody is engaged in a piece of business, meaning that it occupies general attention.
{k} "The law" Mt 11:12,13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 16 - Verse 17

Verse 17. **See Barnes "Mt 5:18".**
{l} "it is easier" Ps 102:26 Is 40:8, 51:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 16 - Verse 18

Verse 18. **See Barnes "Mt 5:32".**
These verses occur in Matthew in a different order, and it is not improbable that they were spoken by our Saviour at different times. The design, here, seems to be to reprove the Pharisees for not observing the law of Moses, notwithstanding their great pretensions to external righteousness, and to show them that they had *really* departed from the law.
{m} "putteth away his wife" Mt 5:32 1Co 7:10,11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 16 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *There was a certain rich man*. Many have supposed that our Lord here refers to a *real history*, and gives an account of some man who *had* lived in this manner; but of this there is no evidence. The probability is that this narrative is to be considered as a parable, referring not to any particular case which had actually happened, but teaching that such cases might happen. The design of the narrative is to be collected from the previous conversation. He had taught the danger of the love of money (Lu 16:1,2); the deceitful and treacherous nature of riches (Lu 16:9-11); that what was in high esteem on earth was hateful to God (Lu 16:15); that men who did not use their property aright could not be received into heaven (Lu 16:11,12); that they ought to listen to Moses and the prophets (Lu 16:16,17); and that it was the duty of men to show kindness to the poor. The design of the parable was to impress all these truths more vividly on the mind, and to show the

Pharisees that, with all their boasted righteousness and their external correctness of character, they might be lost. Accordingly he speaks of no great fault in the rich man —no external, degrading vice—no open breach of the law; and leaves us to infer that *the mere possession of wealth* may be dangerous to the soul, and that a man surrounded with every temporal blessing may perish for ever. It is remarkable that he gave no name to this rich man, though the poor man is mentioned by name. If this was a parable, it shows us how unwilling he was to fix suspicion on anyone. If it was not a parable, it shows also that he would not drag out wicked men before the public, but would conceal as much as possible all that had any connection with them. The good he would speak well of by name; the evil he would not injure by exposing them to public view.

Clothed in purple. A purple robe or garment. This colour was expensive as well as splendid, and was chiefly worn by princes, nobles, and those who were very wealthy. Comp. Mt 27:28. **See Barnes "Isa 1:18".**

Fine linen. This linen was chiefly produced of the flax that grew on the banks of the Nile, in Egypt, Pr 7:16 Eze 27:7. It was peculiarly soft and white, and was therefore much sought as an article of luxury, and was so expensive that it could be worn only by princes, by priests, or by those who were very rich, Ge 41:42 1Ch 15:27; Ex 28:5.

Fared sumptuously. Feasted or lived in a splendid manner.

Every day. Not merely occasionally, but constantly. This was a mark of great wealth, and, in the view of the world, evidence of great happiness. It is worthy of remark that Jesus did not charge on him any crime. He did not say that he had acquired this property by dishonesty, or even that he was unkind or uncharitable; but simply that he was a rich man, and that his riches did not secure him from death and perdition.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 16 - Verse 20

Verses 20,21. *Beggar*. Poor man. The original word does not mean *beggar*, but simply that he was *poor*. It should have been so translated to keep up the contrast with the *rich man*.

Named Lazarus. The word Lazarus is Hebrew, and means a man destitute of help, a needy, poor man. It is a name given, therefore, to denote his needy condition.

Laid at his gate. At the door of the rich man, in order that he might obtain aid.

Full of sores. Covered with ulcers; afflicted not only with poverty, but with loathsome and offensive ulcers, such as often are the accompaniments of poverty and want. These circumstances are designed to show how different was his condition from that of the rich man. *He* was clothed in purple; the poor man was covered with sores; he fared sumptuously; the poor man was dependent even for the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table.

The dogs came. Such was his miserable condition that even the dogs, as if moved by pity, came and licked his sores in kindness to him. These circumstances of his misery are very touching, and his condition, contrasted with that of the rich man, is very striking. It is not affirmed that the rich man was unkind to him, or drove him away, or refused to aid him. The narrative is designed simply to show that the possession of wealth, and all the blessings of this life, could not exempt from death and misery, and that the lowest condition among mortals may be connected with, life and happiness beyond the grave. There was no provision made for the helpless poor in those days, and consequently

they were often laid at the gates of the rich, and in places of public resort, for charity. See Ac 3:2. The gospel has been the means of all the public charity now made for the needy, as it has of providing hospitals for those who are sick and afflicted. No pagan nation ever had a hospital or an alms house for the needy, the aged, the blind, the insane. Many heathen nations, as the Hindoos and the Sandwich Islanders, destroyed their aged people; and *all* left their poor to the miseries of public begging, and their sick to the care of their friends or to private charity.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 16 - Verse 21

Verse 21. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 16 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Was carried by the angels*. The Jews held the opinion that the spirits of the righteous were conveyed by angels to heaven at their death. Our Saviour speaks in accordance with this opinion; and as he expressly affirms the fact, it seems as proper that it should be taken literally, as when it is said the rich man died and was buried. Angels are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to those who are heirs of salvation (He 1:14), and there is no more improbability in the supposition that they attend departing spirits to heaven, than that they attend them while on earth.

Abraham's bosom. This is a phrase taken from the practice of reclining at meals, where the head of one lay on the bosom of another, and the phrase therefore denotes intimacy and friendship. **See Barnes "Mt 23:6".**

See Barnes "Joh 13:23".

See Barnes "Joh 21:20".

The Jews had no doubt that Abraham was in paradise. To say that Lazarus was in his bosom was therefore the same as to say that he was admitted to heaven and made happy there. The Jews, moreover, boasted very much of being the friends of Abraham and of being his descendants, Mt 3:9. To be his friend was, in their view, the highest honour and happiness. Our Saviour therefore showed them that this poor and afflicted man might be raised to the highest happiness, while the rich, who prided themselves on their being descended from Abraham, might be cast away and lost for ever.

Was buried. This is not said of the poor man. Burial was thought to be an honour, and funerals were, as they are now, often expensive, splendid, and ostentatious. This is said of the rich man to show that he had *every* earthly honour, and all that the world calls happy and desirable.

{n} "Abraham's bosom" Mt 8:11 {o} "rich man also died" Pr 14:32

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 16 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *In hell*. The word here translated *hell* (Hades) means literally a dark, obscure place; the place where departed spirits go, but especially the place where wicked spirits go. **See Barnes "Job 10:21"**

also Job 10:22 Isa 14:9".

The following circumstances are related of it in this parable:

1st. It is far off from the abodes of the righteous. Lazarus was seen afar off.

2nd. It is a place of torment.

3rd. There is a great gulf fixed between that and heaven, Lu 16:26.

4th. The suffering is great. It is represented by torment in a flame, Lu 16:24.

5th. There will be no escape from it, Lu 16:26. The word hell here means, therefore, that dark, obscure, and miserable place, far from heaven, where the wicked shall be punished for ever.

He lifted up his eyes. A phrase in common use among the Hebrews, meaning *he looked*, Ge 13:10 18:2, 31:10 Da 8:3; Lu 6:20.

Being in torment. The word torment means pain, anguish (Mt 4:24); particularly the pain inflicted by the ancients in order to induce men to make confession of their crimes. These torments or tortures were the keenest that they could inflict, such as the rack, or scourging, or burning; and the use of the word here denotes that the sufferings of the wicked can be represented only by the extremest forms of human suffering.

And seeth Abraham, &c. This was an aggravation of his misery. One of the first things that occurred in hell was to look up, and see the poor man that lay at his gate completely happy. What a contrast! Just now he was rolling in wealth, and the poor man was at his gate. He had no expectation of these sufferings' now they have come upon him, and Lazarus is happy and for ever fixed in the paradise of God. It is more, perhaps, than we are authorized to infer, that the wicked will see those who are in paradise. That they will *know* that they are there is certain; but we are not to suppose that they will be so near together as to be seen, or as to make conversation possible. These circumstances mean that there will be a separation, and that the wicked in hell will be conscious that the righteous, though on earth they were poor or despised, will be in heaven. Heaven and hell will be far from each other, and it will be no small part of the misery of the one that it is far and for ever removed from the other.

{r} "tormented" Re 14:10,11.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 16 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Father Abraham*. The Jews considered it a signal honour that Abraham was their *father*—that is, that they were descendants from him. Though this man was now in misery, yet he seems not to have abandoned the idea of his relation to the father of the faithful. The Jews supposed that departed spirits might know and converse with each other. See Lightfoot on this place. Our Saviour speaks in conformity with that prevailing opinion; and as it was not easy to convey ideas about the spiritual world without some such representation, he therefore speaks in the language which was usual in his time. We are not, however, to suppose that this was *literally* true, but only that it was designed to represent more clearly the sufferings of the rich man in hell.

Have mercy on me. Pity me. The rich man is not represented as calling on God. The mercy of God will be at an end when the soul is lost. Nor did he ask to be released from that place. Lost spirits know that their sufferings will have no end, and that it would be in vain to ask to escape the place of torment. Nor does he ask to be admitted where Lazarus was. He had no desire to be in a holy place, and he well knew that there was no restoration to those who once sink down to hell.

Send Lazarus. This shows how low he was reduced, and how the circumstances of men change when they die. Just before, Lazarus was laid at his gate full of sores; now he is happy in heaven. Just before, he had nothing to give, and the rich man could expect to derive no benefit from him; now he asks, as the highest favour, that he might come and render him relief. Soon the poorest man on earth, if he is a friend of God, will have mercies which the rich, if unprepared to die, can never obtain. The rich will no longer despise such men; they would then be glad of their friendship, and would beg for the slightest favour at their hands.

Dip the tip, &c. This was a small favour to ask, and it shows the greatness of his distress when so small a thing would be considered a great relief.

Cool my tongue. The effect of great *heat* on the body is to produce almost insupportable thirst. Those who travel in burning deserts thus suffer inexpressibly when they are deprived of water. So *pain* of any kind produces thirst, and particularly of connected with fever. The sufferings of the rich man are therefore represented as producing burning *thirst*, so much that even a drop of water would be refreshing to his tongue. We can scarce form an idea of more distress and misery than where this is continued from one day to another without relief. We are not to suppose that he had been guilty of any particular wickedness with his tongue as the cause of this. It is simply an idea to represent the natural effect of great suffering, and especially suffering in the midst of great heat.

I am tormented. I am in anguish—in insupportable distress.

In this flame. The lost are often represented as suffering *in flames*, because fire is an image of the severest pain that we know. It is not certain, however, that the wicked will be doomed to suffer in material fire. **See Barnes "Mr 9:44"**.

{r} "tormented in this flame" Is 66:24 Mr 9:44

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 16 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Son*. This is a representation designed to correspond with the word father. He was a descendant of Abraham—a Jew—and Abraham is represented as calling this thing to his remembrance. It would not lessen his sorrows to remember that he was a son of Abraham, and that he ought to have lived worthy of that relation to him.

Remember. This is a cutting word in this place. One of the chief torments of hell will be the *remembrance* of what was enjoyed and of what was done in this world. Nor will it be any mitigation of the suffering to spend an eternity where there will be nothing else to do, day or night, but to remember what urns done, and what might have been, if the life had been right.

Thy good things. That is, property, splendour, honour.

Evil things. Poverty, contempt, and disease.

But now, &c. How changed the scene! How different the condition! And how much *better* was the portion of Lazarus, after all, than that of the rich man! It is probable that Lazarus had the most

real happiness in the land of the living, for riches without the love of God can never confer happiness like the favour of God, even in poverty. But the comforts of the rich man are now gone for ever, and the joys of Lazarus have just commenced. *One* is to be comforted, and the *other* to be tormented, to all eternity. How much better, therefore, is poverty, with the friendship of God, than riches, with all that the world can bestow! And how foolish to seek our chief pleasures only in this life!

{s} "in thy lifetime" Job 21:13 Ps 73:12-19; Lu 6:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 16 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *A great gulf*. The word translated *gulf* means chasm, or the broad, yawning space between two elevated objects. In this place it means that there is no way of passing from one to the other.

Fixed. Strengthened—made firm or immovable. It is so established that it will never be movable or passable. It will for ever divide heaven and hell.

Which would pass. We are not to press this passage literally, as if those who are in heaven would *desire* to go and visit the wicked in the world of woe. The simple meaning of the statement is, that there can be no communication between the one and the other —there can be no passing from one to the other. It is impossible to conceive that the righteous would desire to leave their abodes in glory to go and dwell in the world of woe; nor can we suppose that they would wish to go for any reason unless it were possible to furnish relief. That will be out of the question. Not even a drop of water will be furnished as a relief to the sufferer.

Neither can they pass to us, &c. There can be no doubt that the wicked will desire to pass the gulf that divides them from heaven. They would be glad to be in a state of happiness; but all such wishes will be vain. How, in the face of the solemn statement of the Saviour here, can men believe that there will be a *restoration* of all the wicked to heaven? He solemnly assures us that there can be no passage from that world of woe to the abodes of the blessed; yet, in the face of this, many Universalists hold that hell will yet be vacated of its guilty millions, and that all its miserable inhabitants will be received to heaven! Who shall conduct them across this gulf, when Jesus Christ says it cannot be passed? Who shall build a bridge over that yawning chasm which he says is "fixed?" No: if there is anything certain from the Scripture, it is that they who enter hell return no more; they who sink there sink for ever.

{t} "neither can they pass to us" Eze 28:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 16 - Verse 27

Verses 27,28. *Five brethren*. The number five is mentioned merely to preserve the appearance of verisimilitude in the story. It is not to be spiritualized, nor are we to suppose that it has any hidden or inscrutable meaning.

May testify unto them. May bear witness to them, or may inform them of what is my situation, and the dreadful consequences of the life that I have led. It is remarkable that he did not ask to go

himself. He knew that he could not be released, even for so short a time. His condition was fixed. Yet he had no wish that his friends should suffer, and he supposed that if one went from the dead they would hear him.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 16 - Verse 28

Verse 28. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 16 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *They have Moses*. The writings of Moses. The first five books of the Bible.

The prophets. The remainder of the Old Testament. What the prophets had written.

Hear them. Hear them speak in the Scriptures. Read them, or hear them read in the synagogues, and attend to what they have delivered.

{u} "They have Moses and the prophets" Is 34:16 Joh 5:39

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 16 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *Nay*. No. They will not hear Moses and the prophets. They have heard them so long in vain, that there is no prospect now that they will attend to the message; but if one should go to them directly from the eternal world they would hear him. The novelty of the message would attract their attention, and they would listen to what he would say.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 16 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *Be persuaded*. Be convinced of the truth; of the danger and folly of their way; of the certainty of their suffering hereafter, and be induced to turn from sin to holiness, and from Satan unto God.

From this impressive and instructive parable we may learn—

1st. That the souls of men do not die with their bodies.

2nd. That the soul is conscious after death; that it does not sleep, as some have supposed, till the morning of the resurrection.

3rd. That the righteous are taken to a place of happiness immediately at death, and the wicked consigned at once to misery.

4th. That wealth does not secure from death.

"How vain are riches to secure
Their haughty owners from the grave !"

The rich, the beautiful, the gay, as well as the poor, go down to the grave. All their pomp and apparel, all their honours, their palaces, and their gold cannot save them. Death can as easily find his way into the splendid mansions of the rich as into the cottages of the poor; and the rich shall turn to the same corruption, and soon, like the poor, be undistinguished from common dust and be unknown.

5th. We should not envy the condition of the rich.

"On slippery rocks I see them stand,
And fiery billows roll below.

"Now let them boast how tall they rise,
I'll never envy them again;
There they may stand with haughty eyes,
Till they plunge deep in endless pain.

"Their fancied joys how fast they flee!
Like dreams, as fleeting and as vain;
Their songs of softest harmony
Are but a prelude to their pain."

6th. We should strive for a better inheritance than can be possessed in this life.

"Now I esteem their mirth and wine
Too dear to purchase with my blood:
Lord, 'tis enough that thou art mine—
My life, my portion, and my God."

7th. The sufferings of the wicked in hell will be indescribably great. Think what is represented by torment; by burning flame; by insupportable thirst; by that state where a single drop of water would afford relief. Remember that all this is but a representation of the pains of the damned, and that this will have no intermission day or night, but will continue from year to year, and age to age, without any end, and you have a faint view of the sufferings of those who are in hell.

8th. There is a place of sufferings beyond the grave—a hell. If there is not, then this parable has no meaning. It is impossible to make anything of it unless it be designed to teach that.

9th. There will never be any escape from those gloomy regions. There is a gulf fixed-:*fixed*, not movable. Nor can any of the damned beat a pathway across this gulf to the world of holiness.

10th. We see the amazing folly of those who suppose there may be an *end* to the sufferings of the wicked, and who, on that supposition, seem willing to go down to hell to suffer a long time, rather than go at once to heaven. If man were to suffer but a thousand years, or even one year, why should he be so foolish as to choose that suffering rather than go at once to heaven, and be happy at once when he dies?

11th. God gives us sufficient warning to prepare for death. He has sent his Word, his servants, his Son; he warns us by his Spirit and his providence; by the entreaties of our friends and by the death of sinners; he offers us heaven, and he threatens hell. If all this will not move sinners, what *would* do it? There is *nothing* that would.

12th. God will give us nothing farther to warn us. No dead man will come to life to tell us of what he has seen. If he *did*, we would not believe him. Religion appeals to man not by ghosts and

frightful apparitions. It appeals to their reason, their conscience, their hopes, their fears. It sets life and death soberly before men, and if they will not choose the former, they must die. If you will not hear the Son of God and the warnings of the Scriptures, there is nothing which you will or can hear. You will never be persuaded, and will never escape the place of torment.

{v} "If they hear not" 2Co 4:3 {w} "neither will they be persuaded" Joh 12:10,11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 17 - Verse 1

Verses 1,2. *It is impossible*. It cannot but happen. Such is the state of things that it will be. See these verses explained in **See Barnes "Mt 18:6"**.

See Barnes "Mt 18:7".

{a} "It is impossible" Mt 18:6,7; Mr 9:42

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 17 - Verse 2

Verse 2. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 17 - Verse 3

Verses 3,4.

See Barnes "Mt 18:5, **See Barnes** "Mt 18:21, **See Barnes "Mt 18:22"**.

Trespass against thee. Sin against thee, or does anything that gives you an offence or does you an injury.

Rebuke. Reprove. Go and tell him his fault, and seek an explanation. Acquaint him with what has been the effect of his conduct, and the state of your feelings, that he may acknowledge his error and repent.

{b} "rebuke him" Le 19:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 17 - Verse 4

Verse 4. No Barnes text on this verse.

{c} "thou shalt forgive him"

Mt 6:12,14; Col 3:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 17 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Increase our faith*. This duty of forgiving offences seemed so difficult to the disciples that they strongly felt the need of an increase of faith. They felt that they were prone themselves to harbour resentments, and that it required an additional increase of true religion to enable them to comply with the requirements of Jesus. We may learn from this—

1st. That Jesus has the power of increasing the faith of his people. Strength comes from him, and especially strength to believe the gospel. Hence he is called the Author and Finisher of our faith, He 12:2.

2nd. The duty of forgiving offences is one of the most difficult duties of the Christian religion. It is so contrary to our natural feelings; it implies such elevation above the petty feelings of malice and revenge, and is so contrary to the received maxims of the world, which teach us to *cherish* rather than to forgive the memory of offences; that it is no wonder our Saviour dwells much on this duty, and so strenuously insists on it in order to our having evidence that our hearts have been changed. Some have thought that this prayer that he would increase their faith refers to the power of working miracles, and especially to the case recorded in Mt 17:16-20.

{d} "Increase our faith" He 12:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 17 - Verse 6

Verse 6. **See Barnes "Mt 17:20"**.

Sycamine-tree. This name, as well as sycamore, is given, among us, to the large tree commonly called the buttonwood; but the tree here mentioned is different. The Latin Vulgate and the Syriac versions translate it mulberry-tree. It is said to have been a tree that commonly grew in Egypt, of the size and appearance of a mulberry-tree, but bearing a species of figs. This tree was common in Palestine. It is probable that our Lord was standing by one as he addressed these words to his disciples. Dr. Thomson (*The Land and the Book*, vol. i.p. 22-24) says of this tree : \-

"It is generally planted by the wayside, in the open space where several paths meet." [Comp. Lu 19:4] This sycamore is a remarkable tree. It not only bears several crops of figs during the year, but these figs grow on short stems along the trunk and large branches, and not at the end of twigs, as in other fruit-bearing trees.

The figs are small, and of a greenish-yellow colour. At Gaza and Askelon I saw them of a purple tinge, and much larger than they are in this part of the country. They were carried to market in large quantities, and appeared to be more valued there than with us. Still, they are, at best, very insipid, and none but the poorer classes eat them. It is easily propagated, merely by planting

a stout branch in the ground, and watering it until it has struck its roots into the soil. This it does with great rapidity and to a vast depth. It was with reference to this latter fact that our Lord selected it to illustrate the power of faith. Now, look at this tree—its ample girth, its wide-spread arms branching off from the parent trunk only a few feet from the ground; then examine its enormous roots, as thick, as numerous, and as wide-spread into the deep soil below as the branches extend into the air above—the very best type of invincible steadfastness. What power on earth can pluck up such a tree ? Heaven's thunderbolt may strike it down, the wild tornado may tear it to fragments, but nothing short of miraculous power can fairly pluck it up by the roots."

{e} "If ye had faith" Mt 17:20 21:21; Mr 9:23 11:23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 17 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Having a servant*, &c. This parable appears to have been spoken with reference to the rewards which the disciples were expecting in the kingdom of the Messiah. The occasion on which it was spoken cannot be ascertained. It does not seem to have any particular connection with what goes before. It may be supposed that the disciples were somewhat impatient to have the kingdom restored to Israel (Ac 1:6)—that is, Israel that he would assume his kingly power, and that they were impatient of the *delay*, and anxious to enter on *the rewards* which they expected, and which they not improbably were expecting in consequence of their devotedness to him. In answer to these expectations, Jesus spoke this parable, showing them,

1st. That they should be rewarded as a servant would be provided for; but,

2nd. That this was not the first thing; that there was a proper order of things, and that thus the reward might be delayed, as a servant would be provided for, but at the proper time, and at the pleasure of the master; and,

3rd. That this reward was not to be expected as a matter of merit, but would be given at the good pleasure of God, for they were but un- profitable servants.

By and by. This should have been translated *immediately*. He would not, as the first thing, or as soon as he returned from the field, direct him to eat and drink. Hungry and weary he might be, yet it would be proper for him first to attend upon his master. So the apostles were not to be *impatient* because they did not at once receive the reward for which they were looking.

To meat. To eat; or, rather, place thyself at the table.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 17 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *I may sup*. Make ready my supper.
Gird thyself. **See Barnes "Lu 12:37"**.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 17 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *I trow not*. I *think* not; or I *suppose* not.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 17 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Are unprofitable servants*. We have conferred no favour. We have *merited* nothing. We have not benefited God, or laid him under *obligation*. If he rewards us, it will be matter of unmerited favour. This is true in relation to Christians in the following respects:

1st. Our services are not *profitable* to God (Job 22:2); he *needs* not our aid, and his essential happiness will not be increased by our efforts.

2nd. The grace to do his will comes from him only, and all the praise of that will be due to him.

3rd. All that we do is what is our *duty*; we cannot lay claim to having rendered any service that will *bind* him to show us favour; and

4th. Our best services are mingled with imperfections. We come short of his glory (Ro 3:23); we do not serve him as sincerely, and cheerfully, and faithfully as we ought; we are far, very far from the example set us by the Saviour; and if we are saved and rewarded, it will be because God will be merciful to our unrighteousness, and will remember our iniquities no more, Heb 8:12.

{f} "unprofitable" Job 22:3 Ps 16:2,3 Is 64:6; Ro 11:35 1Co 9:16,17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 17 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *The midst of Samaria and Galilee*. He went from Galilee, and probably travelled through the chief villages and towns in it and then left it; and as Samaria was situated *between* Galilee and Jerusalem, it was necessary to pass through it; or it may mean that he passed along on the borders of each toward the river Jordan, and so passed in the midst, *i.e. between Galilee and Samaria*. This is rendered more probable from the circumstance that as he went from Galilee, there would have been no occasion for saying that he passed *through* it, unless it be meant through the confines or borders of it, or at least it would have been mentioned before Samaria.

{g} "Samaria" Lu 9:51,52; Joh 4:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 17 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *There met him*. They were in his way, or in his path, as he was entering the village. They were not allowed to enter the village while they were afflicted with the leprosy, Le 13:46 Nu 5:2,3

Lepers. **See Barnes "Mt 8:2"**.

Stood afar off. At a distance, as they were required by law. They were unclean, and it was not lawful for them to come near to those who were in health. As Jesus was travelling, they were also walking in the contrary way, and seeing him, and knowing that they were unclean, they stopped or turned aside, so that they might not expose others to the contagion.

{h} "stood afar off" Le 13:46

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 17 - Verse 13

Verse 13. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 17 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Go show yourselves*, &c. **See Barnes "Mt 8:4"**.

By this command he gave them an implied assurance that they would be healed; for the *design* for which they were to go was to exhibit the *evidence* that they were restored, and to obtain permission from the priest to mingle again in society. It may also be observed that this required no small measure of *faith* on their part, for he did not *first* heal them, and then tell them to go; he told them to go without expressly assuring them that they would be healed, and without, as yet, any evidence to show to the priest. So sinners, defiled with the leprosy of sin, should put faith in the Lord Jesus and obey his commands, with the fullest confidence that he is able to heal them, and that he will do it if they follow his directions; and that in due time they shall have the fullest evidence that their peace is made with God, and that their souls shall by him be declared free from the defilement of sin.

Were cleansed. Were cured, or made whole.

{i} "Go show yourselves" Le 13:2 14:3 Mt 8.4 Lu 5:14

{k} "as they went" 2Ki 5:14 Isa 65:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 17 - Verse 15

Verses 15,16. *One of them*, &c. This man, sensible of the power of God and grateful for his mercies, returned to express his gratitude to God for his goodness. Instead of obeying *at once* the

letter of the command, he *first* expressed his thanks to God and to his Great Benefactor. There is no evidence, however, that he did not, *after* he had given thanks to God, and had poured out his joy at the feet of Jesus, go to the priest as he was directed; indeed, he could not have been restored to society without doing it; but he *first* poured out his thanks to God, and gave him praise for his wonderful recovery. The first duty of sinners, after they have been forgiven and have the hope of eternal life, is to prostrate themselves at the feet of their Great Benefactor, and to consecrate themselves to his service. *Then* let them go and show to others the evidence that they are cleansed. Let them go and mingle, like a restored leper, with their families and friends, and show by the purity and holiness of their lives how great is the mercy that has cleansed them.

He was a Samaritan. **See Barnes "Mt 10:5".**

This rendered his conduct more remarkable and striking in the sight of the Jews. *They* considered the Samaritans as peculiarly wicked, and themselves as peculiarly holy. This example showed them, like the parable of the good Samaritan, that in this they were mistaken; and one design of this seems to have been to break down the opposition between the Jews and Samaritans, and to bring the former to more charitable judgments respecting the latter.

{l} "glorified" Ps 30:1,2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 17 - Verse 16

Verse 16. No Barnes text on this verse.

{m} "Samaritan"

Joh 4:39-42

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 17 - Verse 17

Verses 17,18. *Where are the nine*? Jesus had commanded them to go to the priest, and they were probably *literally* obeying the commandment. They were impatient to be healed and *selfish* in wishing it, and had no gratitude to God or their Benefactor. Jesus did not *forbid* their expressing gratitude to him for his mercy; he rather seems to reprove them for *not* doing it. One of the first feelings of the sinner cleansed from sin is a desire to praise his Great Benefactor; and a *real* willingness to obey his commandments is not inconsistent with a wish to render thanks to him for his mercy. With what singular propriety may this question now be asked, *Where are the nine*? And what a striking illustration is this of human nature, and of the ingratitude of man! One had come back to give thanks for the favour bestowed on him; the others were heard of no more. So now. When men are restored from dangerous sickness, here and there one comes to give thanks to God; but "where are the nine?" When men are defended from danger; when they are recovered from the perils of the sea; when a steamboat is destroyed, and a large part of crew and passengers perish, here and there one of those who are saved acknowledges the goodness of God and renders him praise; but where is the mass of them? They give no thanks; they offer no praise. They go about

their usual employments, to mingle in the scenes of pleasure and of sin as if nothing had occurred. Few, few of all who have been rescued from "threatening graves" feel their obligation to God, or ever express it. They forget their Great Benefactor; perhaps the mention of his name is unpleasant, and they scorn the idea that they are under any obligations to him. Such, alas! is man, ungrateful man!

This stranger. This foreigner; or, rather, this alien, or this man of another tribe. In the *Syraic* version, "this one who is of a foreign people." This man, who might have been least expected to express gratitude to God. The most unlikely characters are often found to be most consistent and grateful. Men from whom we would expect *least* in religion, are often so entirely changed as to disappoint all our expectations, and to put to shame those who have been most highly favoured. The poor often thus put to shame the rich; the ignorant the learned; the young the aged.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 17 - Verse 18

Verse 18. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 17 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Go thy way*. To the *priest*; for without his certificate he could not again be restored to the society of his friends, or to the public worship of God. Having now appropriately expressed your gratitude, go to the priest and obey the law of God. Renewed sinners, while their hearts overflow with gratitude to Jesus, *express* that gratitude by obeying God, and by engaging in the appropriate duties of their calling and of religion.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 17 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Was demanded*. Was asked.

Of the Pharisees. This was a matter of much importance to them, and they had taught that it would come with parade and pomp. It is not unlikely that they asked this merely in contempt, and for the purpose of drawing out something that would expose him to ridicule.

The kingdom of God. The *reign of God*; or the dispensation under the Messiah. **See Barnes "Mt 3:2"**.

With observation. With scrupulous and attentive looking for it, or with such an appearance as to *attract* observation—that is, with pomp, majesty, splendour. He did not deny that, according to their views, the time was drawing near; but he denied that his kingdom would come in the *manner* in which they expected. The Messiah would not come with pomp like an earthly prince; perhaps not in such a manner as to be *discerned* by the eyes of sagacious and artful men, who were expecting him in a way agreeable to their own feelings. The kingdom of God is within men, and it makes its way, not by pomp and noise, but by silence, decency, and order, 1Co 14:40.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 17 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Lo here! or, Lo there!* When an earthly prince visits different parts of his territories, he does it with pomp. His movements attract observation, and become the common topic of conversation. The inquiry is, Where is he? which way will he go? and it is a matter of important *news* to be able to say where he is. Jesus says that the Messiah would not come in that manner. It would not be with such pomp and public attention. It would be silent, obscure, and attracting comparatively little notice. Or the passage may have reference to the custom of the *pretended* Messiahs, who appeared in this manner. They said that in this place or in that, in this mountain or that desert, they would show signs that would convince the people that they were the Messiah. Comp. **See Barnes "Ac 5:36,37"**.

Is within you. This is capable of two interpretations.

1st. The reign of God is *in the heart*. It does not come with pomp and splendour, like the reign of temporal kings, merely to control the external *actions* and strike the senses of men with awe, but it reigns in the heart by the law of God; it sets up its dominion over the passions, and brings every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

2nd. It may mean the new dispensation is *even now among YOU*. The Messiah has come. John has ushered in the kingdom of God, and you are not to expect the appearance of the Messiah with great pomp and splendour, for he is now among you. Most critics at present incline to this latter interpretation. The ancient versions chiefly follow the former.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 17 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *The days will come*. He here takes occasion to direct the minds of his disciples to the days of vengeance which were about to fall on the Jewish nation. Heavy calamities will befall the Jewish people, and you will desire a deliverer.

Ye shall desire. You who now number yourselves among my disciples.

One of the days of the Son of man. The Son of man here means the Messiah, without affirming that he was the Messiah. Such will be the calamities of those times, so great will be the afflictions and persecutions, that you will greatly desire a *deliverer*—one who shall come to you in the character in which you have expected the Messiah would come, and who would deliver you from the power of your enemies; and at that time, in the midst of these calamities, men shall rise up pretending to be the Messiah, and to be able to deliver you. In view of this, he takes occasion to caution them against being led astray by them.

Ye shall not see it. You shall not see such a day of deliverance— such a Messiah as the nation has expected, and such an interposition as you would desire.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 17 - Verse 23

Verses 23,24. *And they shall say*, &c. Many false Christs, according to Josephus, appeared about that time, attempting to lead away the people. **See Barnes "Mt 24:23"; also** Mt 24:24-27.

{r} "they shall say to you" Mt 24:23 Mr 13:21.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 17 - Verse 24

Verse 24. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 17 - Verse 25

Verse 25.
See Barnes "Mr 8:31".
{s} "But first" Mr 8:31 Lu 9:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 17 - Verse 26

Verses 26,27. **See Barnes "Mt 24:37"**
also Mt 24:38-39
{t} "in the days" Ge 7:11,23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 17 - Verse 27

Verse 27. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 17 - Verse 28

Verse 28-30. *They did eat*, &c. They were busy in the affairs of this life, as if nothing were about to happen.

The same day, &c. **See Barnes "Ge 19:23-25".**

It rained. The word here used might have been rendered he rained. In Genesis it is said that the Lord did it.

Fire and brimstone. God destroyed Sodom on account of its great wickedness. He took vengeance on it for its sins; and the example of Sodom is set before men to deter them from committing great transgressions, and as a *full proof* that God will punish the guilty. See Jude 1:7 Isa 1:10; Jer 23:14.

Yet, in overthrowing it, he used natural means. He is not to be supposed to have *created* fire and brimstone for the occasion, but *to have directed* the natural means at his disposal for their overthrow; as he did not create the waters to drown the world, but merely broke up the fountains of the great deep and opened the windows of heaven. Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim (De 29:23), were four great cities, on a plain where is now the Dead Sea, at the south-east of Palestine, and into which the river Jordan flows. They were built on ground which abounded, doubtless, as all that region now does, in *bitumen* or *naphtha*, which is easily kindled, and which burns with great intensity. The phrase "fire and brim stone" is a Hebrew form of expression, denoting sulphurous fire, or fire having the smell of sulphur; and may denote a volcanic eruption, or any burning like that of naphtha. There is no improbability in supposing either that this destruction was accomplished by lightning, which ignited the naphtha, or that it was a volcanic eruption, which, by direction of God, overthrew the wicked cities.

From heaven. By command of God, or from the sky. To the people of Sodom it had *the appearance* of coming from heaven, as all volcanic eruptions would have. Hundreds of towns have been overthrown in this way, and all by the agency of God. He rules the elements, and makes them his instruments, at his pleasure, in accomplishing the destruction of the wicked.

{u} "Lot went out of Sodom" Ge 19:23,24 {v} "When the Son of Man" 2Th 1:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 17 - Verse 29

Verse 29. No Barnes text on this verse.

{u} "Lot went out of Sodom"

Ge 19:23,24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 17 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *Even thus*, &c. Destruction came upon the old world, and upon Sodom, suddenly; when they were engaged in other things, and little expecting this. So suddenly and unexpectedly, says he, shall destruction come upon the Jewish people. **See Barnes "Mt 24:31"**

See Barnes "Mt 24:17,18".

{v} "when the Son" 2Th 1:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 17 - Verse 31

Verse 31. **See Barnes "Ge 19:26"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 17 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *Remember Lot's wife*. **See Barnes "Ge 19:26".**

She looked back—she delayed —perhaps she desired to take something with her, and God made her a monument of his displeasure. Jesus directed his disciples, when they saw the calamities coming upon the Jews, to flee to the mountains, Mt 24:16. He here charges them to be in haste—not to look back—no!; to delay—but to escape quickly, and to remember that by delaying, the wife of Lot lost her life.

{w} Ge 19:26

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 17 - Verse 33

Verse 33. **See Barnes "Mt 10:39"**

{x} "shall seek to save" Mt 16:25 Mr 8:35; Lu 9:24 Joh 12:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 17 - Verse 34

Verses 34-36. **See Barnes "Mt 24:40"**
See Barnes "Mt 24:41"

{y} "Whosoever shall seek" Mt 24:40,41

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 17 - Verse 35

Verse 35. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 17 - Verse 36

Verse 36. No Barnes text on this verse.

{3} Verse 36 is wanting in most Greek copies.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 17 - Verse 37

Verse 37.

See Barnes "Mt 24:26".

Where, Lord? Where, or in what direction, shall these calamities come? The answer implies that it would be where there is the most guilt and wickedness. Eagles flock where there is prey. So, said he, these armies will flock to the place where there is the most wickedness; and by this their thoughts were directed at once to Jerusalem, the place of eminent wickedness, and the place, therefore, where these calamities might be expected to begin.

{z} "Wheresoever the body is" Job 39:30 Mt 24:28

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 1

Verse 1. *A parable*. **See Barnes "Mt 13:3"**.

To this end. To show this.

Always. At all times. That is, we must not neglect regular stated seasons of prayer; we must seize on occasions of remarkable providences—as afflictions or signal blessings—to seek God in prayer; we must *always* maintain a spirit of prayer, or be in a proper frame to lift up our hearts to God for his blessing, and we must not grow weary though our prayer seems not to be answered.

Not to faint. Not to grow weary or give over. The parable is de- signed to teach us that, though our prayers should long appear to be unanswered, we should persevere, and not grow weary in supplication to God.

{a} "that men" Ps 65:2 102:17; Lu 11:8 21:36; Ro 12:12 Eph 6:18

Php 4:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *A judge which feared not God*. One appointed by law to determine causes brought before him. This judge had no reverence for God, and consequently no regard for the rights of man. These two things go together. He that has no regard for God can be expected to have none for man; and our Lord has here indirectly taught us what ought to be the character of a judge—that he should fear God and regard the rights of man. Comp. De 1:16,17.

Regarded man. Cared not for man. Had no respect for the opinions or the rights of man.

{1} "city" = "in a certain city"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *A widow*. This is a circumstance that gives increasing interest to the parable. Judges were bound to show peculiar attention to widows, Isa 1:17 Jer 22:3. The reason of this was that they were defenseless, were commonly poor, and were liable to be oppressed by those in power.

Avenge me. This would have been better translated, "Do me justice against my adversary, or vindicate me from him." It does not denote vengeance or revenge, but simply that she wished to have *justice* done her—a thing which this judge was bound to do, but which it seems he had no disposition to do.

Adversary. One opposed in law. In this case it seems that the judge was unwilling to do justice, and probably took advantage of her condition to oppress her.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 4

Verses 4,5. *For a while*. Probably this means for a *considerable* time. It was his duty to attend to the claims of justice, but this was long delayed.

Within himself. He thought, or came to a conclusion.

Though I fear not, &c. This contains the reason why he attended to the case at all. It was not from any regard to justice, or to the duties of his office. It was simply to avoid *trouble*. And yet his conduct in this case might have appeared very upright, and possibly might have been strictly according to law and to justice, How many actions are performed that *appear well*, when the doers of those actions know that they are mere hypocrisy! and how many actions are performed from the basest and lowest motives of *selfishness*, that have the appearance of external propriety and even of goodness!

She weary me. The word used here, in the original, is that which was employed to denote the wounds and bruises caused by *boxers*, who beat each other, and blacken their eyes, and disable them. **See Barnes "1Co 9:27".**

Hence it means any vexatious and troublesome importunity that takes the time, and disables from other employment.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 5

Verse 5. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Hear*, &c. Give attention to this, and derive from it practical instruction.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Shall not God avenge*, &c. We are not to suppose that the character of God is at all represented by this judge, or that his principles of conduct are at *all* like those of the judge. This parable shows us conclusively that many circumstances of a parable are not to be interpreted closely: they are mere appendages to the narrative. The great truth which our Saviour *designed* to teach is what we ought to endeavour to find. In this case there can be no doubt what that truth is. He has himself told us that it is, that *men ought always to pray and not to faint*. This he teaches by the example in the parable; and the argument which it implies is this:

1st. A poor widow, by her perseverance only, obtained from an unjust man what otherwise she would not have obtained.

2nd. God is not unjust. He is good, and disposed to do justice and to bestow mercy. If, therefore, this *wicked man* by persevering prayer was induced to do justice, how much more shall God, who is good, and who is not actuated by any such selfish and base principles, do justice to them who apply to him!

Avenge. Do justice to or vindicate them. This may have a twofold reference,

1st. To the disciples in the time of Jesus, who were about to be oppressed and persecuted, and over whom calamities were about to come, as *if* God did not regard their cries and had forsaken them. To them Jesus gives the assurance that God *would* hear their petitions and come forth to vindicate them; and that, notwithstanding all these calamities, he would yet appear for their deliverance.

2nd. It may have a more *general* meaning. The people of God are often oppressed, calumniated, persecuted. They are few in number and feeble. They seem to be almost forsaken and cast down, and their enemies triumph. Yet in due time God will hear their prayers, and will come forth for their vindication. And even if it should not be in *this life*, yet he will do it in the day of judgment, when he will pronounce them blessed, and receive them for ever to himself.

His own elect. People of God, saints, Christians; so called because God has *chosen* them to be his. The term is usually given in the Scriptures to the true followers of God, and is a term of affection, denoting his great and peculiar love in choosing them out of a world of sinners, and conferring on them grace, and mercy, and eternal life. **See Barnes "1Th 1:4"**

See Barnes "Col 3:12"

See Barnes "1Pe 1:2"

See Barnes "Eph 1:4".

It signifies here that they are peculiarly dear to him; that he feels a deep interest in their welfare, and that he will therefore be ready to come forth to their aid. The judge felt no special interest in that widow, yet he heard her; God feels a particular regard, a tender love for his elect, and therefore he will hear and save.

Which cry day and night. This expresses one striking characteristic of the elect of God; they pray, and pray constantly. No one can have evidence that he is chosen of God who is not a man of prayer. One of the best marks by which the electing love of God is known is that it disposes us to pray. This passage supposes that when the elect of God are in trouble and pressed down with calamities, they *will* cry unto him; and it affirms that if they do, he will hear their cries and answer their requests.

Though he bear long with them. This passage has been variously interpreted, and there is some variety of reading in the manuscripts. Some read, "Will not God avenge his elect? Will he linger in their cause?" But the most natural meaning is, "Although he defers long to avenge them, and greatly tries their patience, yet he will avenge them." He tries their faith; he suffers their persecutions and trials to continue a long time; and it almost appears as if he would not interpose. Yet he will do it, and will save them.

{c} "he will avenge" Ps 46:5 He 10:37; 2Pe 3:8,9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Speedily*. Suddenly, unexpectedly. He will surely vindicate them, and that at a time, perhaps, when they were nearly ready to give over and to sink into despair. This may refer to the deliverance of the disciples from their approaching trials and persecutions among the Jews; or, in general, to the fact that God will interpose and aid his people.

Nevertheless. But. Notwithstanding this. Though this is true that God will avenge his elect, yet will he find his elect *faithful*? The danger is not that God will be unfaithful—he will surely be true to his promises; but the danger is that his elect—his afflicted people—will be discouraged; will not persevere in prayer; will not continue to have confidence in him; and will, under heavy trials, sink into despondency. The sole meaning of this phrase, therefore, is, that *there is more danger that his people would grow weary, than that God would be found unfaithful and fail to avenge his elect*. For this cause Christ spoke the parable, and by the design of the parable this passage is to be interpreted.

Son of man cometh. This probably refers to the approaching destruction of Jerusalem—the coming of the Messiah, by his mighty power, to abolish the ancient dispensation and to set up the new.

Faith. The word *faith* is sometimes taken to denote the whole of religion, and it has been understood in this sense here; but there is a close connection in what Christ says, and it should be understood as referring to what he said before. The truth that he had been teaching was, that God would deliver his people from their calamities and save them, though he suffered them to be long tried. He asks them here whether, when he came, he should find *this faith*, or a belief of this truth, among his followers? Would they be found persevering in prayer, and believing that God would yet avenge them; or would they cease to pray *always*, and *faint*? This is not to be understood, therefore, as affirming that when Christ comes to judgment there will be few Christians on the earth, and that the world will be overrun with wickedness. That *may* be true, but it is not the truth taught here.

The earth. The land—referring particularly to the land of Judea. The discussion had particular reference to their trials and persecutions in that land. This question implies that in those trials many professed disciples might faint and turn back, and many of his *real* followers almost lose sight of this great truth, and begin to inquire whether God would interpose to save them. The same question may be asked respecting any other remarkable visitation of the Son of God in affliction. When tried and persecuted, do we believe that God will avenge us ? Do we pray always and not faint ? Have we faith to believe that, though clouds and darkness are round about him, yet righteousness and

judgment are the habitation of his throne ? And when storms of persecution assail us, can we go to God and confidently commit our cause to him, and believe that he will bring forth our righteousness as the light, and our judgment as the noon-day?

{d} "shall he find faith" Mt 24:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Unto certain*. Unto some.

Which trusted in themselves. Who confided in themselves, or who supposed that they were righteous. They did not trust to God or the Messiah for righteousness, but to their own works. They vainly supposed they had themselves complied with the demands of the law of God.

Despised others. Others who were not as externally righteous as themselves. This was the character of the Pharisees. They trusted in their outward conformity to the ceremonies of the law. They considered all who did not do that as sinners. This, moreover, is the true character of self-righteousness. Men of that stamp always despise all others.

They think they are far above them in holiness, and are disposed to say to them, Stand by thyself, for I am holier than thou, Is 65:5. True religion, on the contrary, is humble. Those who trust in Christ for righteousness feel that they are, in themselves, poor, and miserable, and guilty, and they are willing to admit that others may be much better than themselves. Certain it is, they despise no one. They love all men; they regard them, however vile, as the creatures of God and as going to eternity, and are disposed to treat them well, and to aid them in their journey toward another world.

{e} "which trusted in themselves" Lu 10:29 {2} "that they were righteous" or "as being righteous"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *The temple*. Into one of the courts of the temple—the court where prayer was commonly offered. **See Barnes "Mt 21:12"**.

A Pharisee. **See Barnes "Mt 3:7"**.

Publican. **See Barnes** "Mt 5:46

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Stood and prayed thus with himself*. Some have proposed to render this, "stood by himself" and prayed. In this way it would be characteristic of the sect of the Pharisees, who dreaded the contact of others as polluting, and who were disposed to say to all, Stand by yourselves. The Syraic so renders it, but it is doubtful whether the Greek will allow this construction. If not, it means, he said over to himself what he had done, and what was the ground on which he expected the favour of God.

God, I thank thee. There was still in the prayer of the Pharisee an *appearance* of real religion. He did not profess to claim that he had made himself better than others. He was willing to acknowledge that God had done it for him, and that he had a right to his gratitude for it. Hypocrites are often the most orthodox in opinion of any class of men. They know the truth, and admit it. They use it frequently in their prayers and conversation. They will even persecute those who happen to differ from them in opinion, and who may be really wrong. We are not to judge of the piety of men by the fact that they admit the truth, or even that they use it often in their prayers. It is, however, not wrong to thank God that he has kept us from the gross sins which other men commit; but it should not be done in an ostentatious manner, nor should it be done forgetting still that we are great sinners and need pardon. These were the faults of the Pharisees.

Extortioners. Rapacious; avaricious; who take away the goods of others by force and violence. It means, also, those who take advantage of the necessities of others, the poor and the oppressed, and extort their property.

Unjust. They who are not fair and honest in their dealings; who get the property of others by *fraud*. They are distinguished from extortioners because they who are unjust may have the appearance of honesty; in the other case there is not.

{f} "not as other men *are*" Is 65:5 Re 3:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *I fast twice*, &c. This was probably the Jewish custom. The Pharisees are said to have fasted regularly on the second and fifth days of every week in private. This was *in addition* to the public days of fasting required in the law of Moses, and they therefore made more a matter of *merit* of it be cause it was voluntary.

I give tithes. A tithe means the tenth part of a thing. A tenth part of the possessions of the Jews was required for the support of the Levites, Nu 18:21. In addition to the tithes required strictly by law, the Pharisees had tithed everything which they possessed—even the smallest matters—as mint, anise, cummin, &c., Lu 11:42. It was *this*, probably, on which he so particularly prided himself. As this could not be proved to be strictly required in the law, it had more the appearance of great piety, and therefore he particularly dwelt on it.

I possess. This may mean either all which I have, or all which I pain or acquire. It is not material which meaning be considered the true one. The religion of the Pharisee, therefore, not seeking a religion that should dwell in the heart and regulate the feelings; and in making public and ostentatious professions of his own goodness. Most of all was this abominable in the sight of God, who looks into the heart, and who sees wickedness there when the external actions may be blameless. We may learn from the case of the Pharisee —

1st. That it is not the man who has the most orthodox belief that has, of course, the most piety;

2nd. That men may be externally moral, and not be righteous in the sight of God;

3rd. That they may be very exact in the external duties of religion, and even go beyond the strict letter of the law; that they may assume a great appearance of sanctity, and still be strangers to true piety; and

4th. That ostentation in religion, or a *boasting* before God of what we are and of what we have done, is abominable in his sight. This spoils everything, even if the life should be tolerably blameless, and if there should be real piety.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Standing afar off.* Afar off from the *temple*. The place where prayer was offered in the temple was the court of women. The Pharisee advanced to the side of the court nearest to the *temple*, or near as he could; the publican stood on the other side of the same court if he was a Jew, or in the court of the Gentiles if he was a pagan, as far as possible from the temple, being conscious of his unworthiness to approach the sacred place where God had his holy habitation.

So much as his eyes, &c. Conscious of his guilt. He felt that he was a sinner, and shame and sorrow prevented his looking up. Men who are conscious of guilt always fix their eyes on the ground.

Smote upon his breast. An expression of grief and anguish in view of his sins. It is a sign of grief among almost all nations.

God be merciful, &c. The prayer of the publican was totally different from that of the Pharisee. He made no boast of his own righteousness toward God or man. He felt that he was a sinner, and, feeling it, was willing to acknowledge it. This is the kind of prayer that will be acceptable to God. When we are willing to confess and forsake our sins, we shall find mercy, Pr 28:13. The publican was willing to do this in any place; in the presence of any persons; amid the multitudes of the temple, or alone. He felt most that *God* was a witness of his actions, and he was willing, therefore, to confess his sins before him. While we should not *seek* to do this *publicly*, yet we should be willing at all times "to confess our manifold transgressions, to the end that we may obtain forgiveness of the same by God's infinite goodness and mercy." It is not dishonourable to make acknowledgment when we have done wrong. No man is so much dishonoured as he who is a sinner and is not willing to confess it; as he who has done wrong and yet attempts to conceal the fault, thus adding hypocrisy to his other crimes.

{g} "smote upon his breast" Jer 31:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *I tell you*. The Pharisees would have said that the first man here was approved. Jesus assures them that they judged erroneously. God judges of this differently from men.

Justified. Accepted or approved of God. The word *justify* means to declare or treat as righteous. In this case it means that in their prayers the one was approved and the other not; the one went down with the favour of God in answer to his petitions, the other not.

For every one, &;c. **See Barnes "Lu 14:11"**;

{h} "for everyone that exalteth" Job 22:29 Mt 23:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 15

Verses 15-30. **See Barnes "Mt 19:13"; See also** Mt 19:14-19:30
{i} "And they brought" Mt 19:13 Mr 10:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 16

Verse 16. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 17

Verse 17. No Barnes text on this verse.
{k} "as a little child"
Ps 131:2 Mr 10:15; 1Pe 1:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 18

Verse 18. No Barnes text on this verse.
{l} "a certain ruler"
Mt 19:16 Mr 10:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 19

Verse 19. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 20

Verse 20. No Barnes text on this verse.
{m} "Thou knowest"
Ex 20:12-16 De 5:16-20; Ro 13:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 21

Verse 21. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 22

Verse 22. No Barnes text on this verse.
{n} "treasure in heaven"
Mt 6:19,20; 1Ti 6:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 23

Verse 23. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 24

Verse 24. No Barnes text on this verse.
{o} "How hardly shall they"
Pr 11:22 1Ti 6:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 25

Verse 25. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 26

Verse 26. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 27

Verse 27. No Barnes text on this verse.
{p}
Jer 32:17 Zec 8:6; Lu 1:37

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 28

Verse 28. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 29

Verse 29. No Barnes text on this verse.
{q} "hath left house"
De 33:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 30

Verse 30. No Barnes text on this verse.
{r} "life everlasting"
Re 2:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 31

Verses 31-33. **See Barnes "Mt 20:17-19".**

By the prophets. Those who foretold the coming of the Messiah, and whose predictions are recorded in the Old Testament.

Son of man. The Messiah. They predicted that certain things would take place respecting the Messiah that was to come. **See Barnes "Da 9:25, also** Da 9:26-27; **See Barnes "Isa 53:1".**

These things, Jesus said, would be accomplished in him, he being the Son of man, or the Messiah.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 32

Verse 32. No Barnes text on this verse.
{t} "delivered" Mt 27:2 Lu 23:1; Joh 18:28 Ac 3:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 33

Verse 33. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *Understood none of these things*. Though they were plainly revealed, yet such were their prejudices and their unwillingness to believe them that they did not understand them. They expected that he would be a temporal prince and a conqueror, and they were not willing to believe that he would be delivered into the hands of his enemies. They did not see how that could be consistent with the prophecies. To us now these things appear plain, and we may hence learn that those things which to us appear most mysterious may yet appear perfectly plain; and we should learn to trust in God, and believe just what he has spoken. **See Barnes "Mt 16:21"**;

{u} "they understood none of these things" Joh 18:28

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 35

Verses 35-43. See this passage explained **See Barnes** "Mt 20:29, also Mt 20:30-34

{v} "and it came to pass" Mt 20.29 Mr 10:46

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 36

Verse 36. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 37

Verse 37. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 38

Verse 38. No Barnes text on this verse.

{w} "have mercy on me"

Ps 62:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 39

Verse 39. No Barnes text on this verse.

{x} "cried so much the more"

Ps 141:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 40

Verse 40. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 41

Verse 41. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 42

Verse 42. No Barnes text on this verse.
{y} "thy faith hath saved thee"
Lu 17:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 18 - Verse 43

Verse 43. No Barnes text on this verse.
{z} "received"
Ps 30:2
{a} "glorified" Lu 5:26 Ac 4:21, 11:18 Ga 1:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 1

Verse 1. *And* Jesus *entered*, &c. **See Barnes "Mt 20:29"**.

This means, perhaps, *he was passing* through Jericho when Zaccheus saw him. His house was *in* Jerico.

{b} "Jericho" Jos 6:26 1Ki 16:34

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *A man named Zaccheus*. The name Zaccheus is Hebrew, and shows that this man was a *Jew*. The Hebrew name properly means *pure*, and is the same as Zacchai in Ezr 2:9 Ne 7:14. The publicans, therefore, were not all foreigners.

Chief among the publicans. Who presided over other tax-gatherers, or who received their collections and transmitted them to the Roman government

He was rich. Though this class of men was despised and often infamous, yet it seems that they were sometimes wealthy. They sustained, however, the general character of sinners, because they were particularly odious in the eyes of the Jews. **See Barnes "Lu 19:7"**.

The evangelist has thought it worthy of record that he was rich, perhaps, because it was so unlikely that a *rich man* should follow so poor and despised a personage as Jesus of Nazareth, and because it was so unusual a thing during his personal ministry. Not many rich were called, but God chiefly chose the poor of this world. Compare 1Co 1:26-29.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Who he was*. Rather *what sort of person* he was, or how he appeared. He had that curiosity which is natural to men to see one of whom they have heard much. It would seem, also, that in this case mere *curiosity* led to his conversion and that of his family. Comp. 1Co 14:23-25. God makes use of every principle—of curiosity, or sympathy, or affection, or hope, or fear —to lead men in the way of salvation, and to impress truth on the minds of sinners.

The press. The crowd; the multitude that surrounded Jesus. Earthly princes are often borne in splendid equipages, or even carried, as in Eastern nations, in palanquins on the shoulders of men. Jesus mingled with the multitude, not seeking distinctions of that sort, and perhaps, in appearance, not distinguished from thousands that followed him.

Little of stature. Short. Not a tall man.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *A sycamore-tree*. **See Barnes "Lu 17:6"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 5

Verse 5.*Abide at thy house*. Remain there, or put up with him. This was an honour which Zaccheus did not expect. The utmost, it seems, which he aimed at was to *see* Jesus; but, instead of that, Jesus proposed to remain with him, and to give him the benefit of his personal instruction. It is but one among a thousand instances where the Saviour goes, in bestowing mercies, far beyond the desert, the desire, or the expectation of men; and it is not improper to learn from this example that solicitude to behold the Saviour will not pass unnoticed by him, but will meet with his warm approbation, and be connected with his blessing. Jesus was willing to encourage efforts to come

to him, and his benevolence prompted him to gratify the desires of the man who was solicitous to see him. He does not disdain the mansions of the rich any more than he does the dwelling-places of the poor, provided there be a humble heart; and he did not suppose there was less need of his presence in order to save in the house of the rich man than among the poor. He set an example to all his ministers, and was not afraid or ashamed to proclaim his gospel amid wealth. He was not awed by external splendour or grandeur.

{b} "saw him" Ps 139:1-3 {c} "abide at thy house" Joh 14:23 Re 3:20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 6

Verse 6. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Murmured*. Found fault, complained.

To be a guest. To remain with, or to be entertained by.

A man that is a sinner. All publicans they regarded as great sinners, and the chief of the publicans, therefore, they regarded as peculiarly wicked. It would appear also from Zaccheus' confession that his character *had been* that of an oppressive man. But the people seemed to forget that he might be a penitent, and that the Messiah came to save that which was lost.

{d} "That he was gone" Mt 9:11 Lu 5:30

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *The half of my goods I give to the poor*. It is not necessary to understand this as affirming that this had been his practice, or that he said this in the way of proclaiming his own righteousness. It may be understood rather as a purpose which he then formed under the teaching of Christ. He seems to have been sensible that he was a sinner. Of this he was convinced, as we may suppose, by the presence and discourse of Jesus. At first, attracted only by curiosity, or, it may be, by partial conviction that this was the Messiah, he had sought to see the Saviour; but his presence and conversation convinced him of his guilt, and he stood and openly confessed his sins, and expressed his purpose to give half his ill-gotten property to the poor. This was not a proclamation of his own righteousness, nor the ground of his righteousness, but it was the evidence of the sincerity of his repentance, and the confession which with the mouth is made unto salvation, Ro 10:10.

And if I have taken. His office gave him the power of oppressing the people, and it seems that he did not deny that it had been done.

By false accusation. This is the same word which in Lu 3:14 is rendered "neither accuse any falsely." The accusation seems to have been so made that the person accused was obliged to pay

much greater taxes, or so that his property came into the hands of the informer. There are many ways in which this might be done, but we do not know the exact manner.

I restore him. We cannot suppose that this had been always his practice, for no man would wantonly extort money from another, and then restore him at once four times as much; but it means that he was made sensible of his guilt; perhaps that his mind had been a considerable time perplexed in the matter, and that now he was resolved to make the restoration. This was the *evidence* of his penitence and conversion. And here it may be remarked that this is *always* an indisputable evidence of a man's conversion to God. A man who has hoarded ill-gotten gold, if he becomes a Christian, will be disposed to do good with it. A man who has injured others—who has cheated them or defrauded them, even by *due forms of law*, must, if he be a Christian, be willing, as far as possible, to make restoration. Zaceheus, for anything that appears to the contrary, may have obtained this property by the decisions of courts of justice, but he now felt that it was wrong; and though the defrauded men could not *legally* recover it, yet his conscience told him that, in order to his being a true penitent, he must make restitution. One of the best evidences of true conversion is when it produces this result; and one of the surest evidences that a professed penitent is not a true one, is when he is not disposed to follow the example of this son of Abraham and make proper restitution.

Four-fold. Four times as much as had been unjustly taken. This was the amount that was required in the Jewish law when a sheep had been stolen, and a man was convicted of the theft by trial at law, Ex 22:1. If he confessed it himself, without being detected and tried, he had only to restore what was stolen, and add to it a fifth part of its value, Nu 5:6,7. The sincerity of Zaccheus' repentance was manifest by his being willing to make restoration as great as if it had been proved against him, evincing his sense of the wrong, and his purpose to make full restitution. The Jews were allowed to take *no interest* of their brethren (Le 25:35,36), and this is the reason why that is not mentioned as the measure of the restitution. When injury of this kind is done in other places, the least that is proper is to restore the principal and interest; for the injured person has a right *to all* that his property would have procured him if it had not been unjustly taken away.

{e} "I give to the poor" Ps 41:1 {f} "by false accusation" Ex 20:16 Lu 3:14 {g} "restore *him* four-fold" Ex 22:1 2Sa 12:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Salvation is come to this house*. This family. They have this day received the blessings of the gospel, and become interested in the Messiah's kingdom. Salvation *commences* when men truly receive Christ and their sins are pardoned; it is *completed* when the soul is sanctified and received up into heaven.

Forasmuch. Because. For he has given evidence that he is a new man, and is disposed to forsake his sins and receive the gospel.

The son of Abraham. Hitherto, although a Jew, yet he has been a sinner, and a great sinner. He was not worthy to be called a son of Abraham. Now, by repentance, and by receiving the Christ whose day Abraham saw and was glad (Joh 8:56), he has shown himself to be worthy to be called his son. Abraham was an example of distinguished piety; the father of the faithful (Ro 4:11), as

well as the ancestor of the Jews. They were called his sons who were descended from him, and particularly they who *resembled* him. In this place the phrase is used in both senses.

{h} "son of Abraham" Lu 13:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 10

Verse. 10 **See Barnes "Mt 18:11"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *He spake a parable*. This parable has in some respects a resemblance to the parable of the *talents* in Mt 25:14-28, but it is not the same. They differ in the following respects: That was spoken *after* he had entered Jerusalem; this, while on his way there. That was delivered on the Mount of Olives; this, in the house of Zaccheus. That was delivered to teach them the necessity of *improving* the talents committed to them; this was for a different design. He was now near Jerusalem. A great multitude attended him. His disciples regarded him as the Messiah, and by this they understood a temporal prince who should deliver them from the dominion of the Romans and set them at liberty. They were anxious for that, and supposed that the time was at hand, and that *now*, as soon as he entered Jerusalem, he would assume the appearance of such a prince and set up his kingdom. To *correct that notion* seems to have been the main design of this parable. To do that, he tells them of a man who had a right to the kingdom, yet who, *before* taking possession of it, went into another kingdom to receive a confirmation of his title, thus intimating that *he* would also go away before he would completely set up his kingdom (Lu 19:12); he tells them that this nobleman left to his servants *property* to be improved in his absence, as he would leave to his disciples *talents* to be used in his service (Lu 19:12,13); he tells them that this nobleman was rejected by his own citizens (Lu 19:14), as *he* would be by the Jews; and that he received the kingdom and called them to an account, as he also would his own disciples.

Because he was nigh to Jerusalem. The capital of the country, and where they supposed he would probably set up his kingdom.

The kingdom of God should immediately appear. That the reign of the Messiah would immediately commence. He spake the parable to *correct* that expectation.

{i} "because they thought that" Mt 18:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *A certain nobleman*. A prince; a man descended from kings, and having a title, therefore, to succeed in the kingdom.

Went into a far country, &c. This expression is derived from the state of things in Judea in the time of the Saviour. Judea was subject to the Romans, having been conquered by Pompey about

sixty years before Christ. It was, however, governed by *Jews*, who held the government under the Romans. It was necessary that the prince or king should receive a recognition of his right to the kingdom by the Roman emperor, and, in order to this, that he should go to Rome; or, as it is said here, that he might receive to himself a kingdom. This actually occurred several times. Archelaus, a son of Herod the Great, about the time of the birth of Jesus, went to Rome to obtain a confirmation of the title which his father had left him, and succeeded in doing it. Herod the Great, his father, had done the same thing before to secure the aid and countenance of Antony. Agrippa the younger, grandson of Herod the Great, went to Rome also to obtain the favour of Tiberius, and to be confirmed in his government. Such instances, having frequently occurred, would make this parable perfectly intelligible to those to whom it was addressed. By the nobleman, here, is undoubtedly represented the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ; by his going into a far country is denoted his going to heaven, to the right hand of his Father, *before* he should *fully* set up his kingdom and establish his reign among men.

{m} "A certain nobleman" Mt 25:14 Mr 13:34

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Ten servants*. Nothing in particular is denoted by the number *ten*. It is a circumstance intended to keep up the narrative. In general, by these servants our Saviour denotes his disciples, and intends to teach us that talents are given us to be improved, for which we must give an account at his return.

Ten pounds. The word translated *pound* here denotes the Hebrew *minah*, which was equal to about 15 dollars, or £3. The pounds here denote the talents which God has given to his servants on earth to improve, and for which they must give an account in the day of judgment.

Occupy till I come. The word occupy here means not merely to *possess*, as it often does in our language, but to improve, to employ *in business*, for the purpose of increasing it or of making *profit on it*. The direction was to use this money so as to gain more against his return. So Jesus commands his disciples to *improve* their talents; to make the most of them; to increase their capability of doing good, and to do it *until* he comes to call us hence, by death, to meet him. See 1Co 12:7 Eph 4:7.

{1} "Mina" translated here a *pound* is 12 ounces and a half, which, at 5 shillings the ounce, is £3, 2s. 6d.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *But his citizens*. His *subjects*, or the people whom he was desirous of ruling.

Hated him. On account of his character, and their fear of oppression. This was, in fact, the case with regard to Archelaus, the Jewish prince, who went to Rome to be confirmed in his kingdom.

Sent a message, saying, &c. His discontented subjects, fearing what would be the character of his reign, sent an embassy to remonstrate against his being appointed as the ruler. This actually took place. Archelaus went to Rome to obtain from Augustus a confirmation of his title to reign

over that part of Judea which had been left him by his father, Herod the Great. The Jews, knowing his character (comp. Mt 2:22 sent an embassy of fifty to Rome, to prevail on Augustus *not* to confer the title on him, but they could not succeed. He *received* the kingdom, and reigned in Judea in the place of his father. As this fact was fresh in the memory of the Jews, it makes this parable much more striking. By this part of it Christ designed to denote that the Jews would reject him —the Messiah, and would say that they did not desire him to reign over them. See Joh 1:11. So it is true of all sinners that they do not *wish* Jesus to reign over them, and, if it were possible, would cast him off, and never submit to his reign.

{n} "his citizens" Joh 1:11 15:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 15

Verse 15. **See Barnes "Mt 25:19"**.

{2} "money" "silver" and so, Lu 19:23.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 16

Verses 16-19. **See Barnes "Mt 25:20,21"**.

Ten cities. We are not to suppose that this will be literally fulfilled in heaven. Christ teaches here that our reward in heaven will be in proportion to our faithfulness in improving our talents on earth.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 17

Verse 17. No Barnes text on this verse.

{o} "faithful" Lu 16:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 18

Verse 18. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 19

Verse 19. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *A napkin*. A towel. He means by it that he had not wasted it nor thrown it by carelessly, but had been *very careful* of it; so much so as to be at the pains to tie it up in a towel and put it in a safe place, as if he had been *very faithful* to his trust. So many men employ their talents, their learning, their property, their influence. They have them; they keep them; but they never use them in the service of the Lord Jesus; and, in regard to their influence on the church or the world, it would be the same if God had never conferred on them these talents.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *An austere man*. Hard, severe, oppressive. The word is commonly applied to unripe fruit, and means sour, unpleasant, harsh. In this case it means that the man was taking every advantage, and, while *he* lived in idleness, was making his living out of the toils of others.

Thou takest up, &c. Thou dost exact of others what thou didst not give. The phrase is applied to a man who *finds* what has been lost by another, and keeps it himself, and refuses to return it to the owner. All this is designed to show the sinner's view of God. He regards him as unjust, demanding more than man has *power* to render, and more, therefore, than God has a *right* to demand. **See Barnes "Mt 25:24".**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Out of thine own mouth*. By your own statement, or your own views of my character. If you *knew* that this was my character, and *knew* that I would be rigid, firm, and even severe, it would have been the part of wisdom in you to have made the best use of the money in your power; but as you *knew* my character beforehand, and was well acquainted with the fact that I should demand a strict compliance with your obligation, you have no right to complain if you are condemned accordingly.

We are not to suppose that God is *unjust* or *austere*; but what we are to learn from this is, that as men know that God will be just, and will call them to a strict account in the day of judgment, they ought to be prepared to meet him, and that they cannot then complain if God should condemn them.

{p} "Out of thine" 2Sa 1:16 Job 15:6; Mt 12:37 22:12; Ro 3:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *The bank*. The treasury, or the place of exchange. Why did you not loan it out, that it might be increased?

Usury. Interest.
{q} "Wherefore" Ro 2:4,5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 24

Verse 24. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *And they said unto him*. Those standing around him said.

He hath, &c. This was probably an observation made by some of the by-standers, as if surprised at such a decision. "He has already ten pounds. Why take away this one, and add to what he already possesses? Why should his property be increased at the expense of this man, who has but one pound?" The answer to this is given in the following verse, that every one that hath, to him shall be given; every man who is faithful, and improves what God gives him, shall receive much more.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 26

Verses 26,27. *For I say*, &c. These are the words of the *nobleman* declaring the principles on which he would distribute the rewards of his kingdom.

But those mine enemies. By the punishment of those who would not that he should reign over them is denoted the ruin that was to come upon the Jewish nation for rejecting the Messiah, and also upon all sinners for not receiving him as their king. See Barnes on the parable of the talents in **See Barnes "Mt 25:14"**
and following.
{r} "That unto everyone that hath" Mt 13:12 25:29; Mr 4:25 Lu 8:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 27

Verse 27. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 28

Verses 28-39.
See Barnes "Mt 21:1, also Mt 21:2-16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 29

Verses 28-39. **See Barnes "Mt 21:1, also** Mt 21:2-16
{t} "came to pass" Mt 21:1 Mr 11:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 30

Verses 28-39. **See Barnes "Mt 21:1, also** Mt 21:2-16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 31

Verses 28-39. **See Barnes "Mt 21:1, also** Mt 21:2-16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 32

Verses 28-39. **See Barnes "Mt 21:1, also** Mt 21:2-16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 33

Verses 28-39. **See Barnes "Mt 21:1, also** Mt 21:2-16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 34

Verses 28-39. **See Barnes "Mt 21:1, also** Mt 21:2-16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 35

Verses 28-39. **See Barnes "Mt 21:1, also** Mt 21:2-16
{v} "they cast their garments" 2Ki 9:13 {w} "set Jesus thereon" Joh 12:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 36

Verses 28-39. **See Barnes "Mt 21:1, also** Mt 21:2-16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 37

Verses 28-39. **See Barnes "Mt 21:1, also** Mt 21:2-16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 38

Verses 28-39. **See Barnes "Mt 21:1, also** Mt 21:2-16
{x} "Blessed be the king" Ps 118:26 Lu 13:35 {y} "peace in heaven" Lu 2:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 39

Verses 28-39. **See Barnes "Mt 21:1, also** Mt 21:2-16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 40

Verse 40. *The stones would—cry out*. It is *proper* that they should celebrate my coming. Their acclamations *ought* not to be suppressed. So joyful is the event which they celebrate—the coming of the Messiah—that it is not fit that I should attempt to impose silence on them. The expression here seems to be *proverbial*, and is not to be taken literally. Proverbs are designed to express the truth strongly, but are not to be taken to signify as much as if they were to be interpreted literally. The sense is, that his coming was an event of so much importance that it *ought* to be celebrated in some way, and *would* be celebrated. It would be impossible to restrain the people, and improper to attempt it. The language here is strong proverbial language to denote that fact. We are not to suppose, therefore, that our Saviour meant to say that the stones were *conscious* of his coming, or that God would *make* them speak, but only that there was *great joy* among the people; that it was *proper* that they should express it in this manner, and that it was not fit that he should attempt to repress it.

{z} "the stones would cry out" Hab 2:11 Mt 3:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 41

Verses 41-44. *He wept over it*. Showing his compassion for the guilty city, and his strong sense of the evils that were about to come upon it. **See Barnes "Mt 23:37, also** Mt 23:38-39. As he entered the city he passed over the Mount of Olives. From that mountain there was a full and magnificent view of the city. **See Barnes "Mt 21:1"**.

the view of the splendid capital—the knowledge of its crimes— the remembrance of the mercies of god toward it— the certainty that it might have been spared if had received the prophets and himself—the knowledge that it was about to put *him*, their long-expected Messiah, to death, and for that to be given up to utter desolation —affected his heart, and the triumphant King and Lord of Zion wept! Amid all *his* prosperity, and all the acclamations of the multitude, the heart of the Redeemer of the world was turned from the tokens of rejoicing to the miseries about to come on a guilty people. Yet they *might* have been saved. If thou hadst known, says he, even thou, with all thy guilt, the things that make for thy peace; if thou hadst repented, had been righteous, and had received the Messiah; if thou hadst not stained thy hands with the blood of the prophets, and shouldst not with that of the Son of God, then these terrible calamities would not come upon thee. But it is too late. The national wickedness is too great; the cup is full; mercy is exhausted; and Jerusalem, with all her pride and splendour, the glow of her temple, and the pomp of her service, must perish!

For the days shall come, &c. This took place under Titus, the Roman general, A.D. 70, about thirty years after this was spoken.

Cast a trench about thee. The word *trench* now means commonly a pit or ditch. When the Bible was translated, it meant also *earth thrown up to defend a camp* (Johnson's Dictionary). This is the meaning of the original here. It is not a pit or large *ditch*, but a pile of earth, stones, or wood thrown up to guard a camp, and to defend it from the approach of an enemy. This was done at the siege of Jerusalem. Josephus informs us that Titus, in order that he might compel the city to surrender by famine, built a wall around the whole circumference of the city. This wall was nearly 5 miles in length, and was furnished with thirteen castles or towers. This work was completed with incredible labour in ten days. The professed design of this wall was *to keep* the city in on every side. Never was a prophecy more strikingly accomplished.

Shall lay thee even with the ground, &c. This was literally done. Titus caused a plough to pass over the place where the temple stood. **See Barnes** "Mt 24:1, and following. All this was done, says Christ, because Jerusalem knew not the time of its visitation—that is, did not know, and would not know, that the Messiah had come. *His coming* was the time of their merciful visitation. That time had been predicted, and invaluable blessings promised as the result of his advent; but they would not know it. They rejected him, they put him to death, and it was just that they should be destroyed.

{a} "wept over it" Ps 119:36 Jer 9:1, 13:17 Joh 11:35

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 42

Verse 42. No Barnes text on this verse.

{b} "this, thy day"

Ps 85:7,8; He 3:7,13,15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 43

Verse 43. No Barnes text on this verse.
{c} "cast a trench around thee"
Is 29:2,3; Jer 6:5,6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 44

Verse 44. No Barnes text on this verse.
{d} "shall lay thee even"
1Ki 9:7,8; Mi 3:12 Mt 23:37,38 Lu 13:34,35
{e} "they shall not leave" Mt 24:2 Mr 13:2 {f} "thou knowest not the time" La 1:8 1Pe 2:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 45

Verses 45, 46. **See Barnes "Mt 21:12,13"**

{g} "went into the temple" Mt 21:12,13; Mr 11:15-17 Joh 2:15,17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 46

Verse 46. No Barnes text on this verse.
{h} "My house"
Is 56:7
{i} "den of thieves" Jer 7:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 47

Verse 47. *Daily in the temple*. That is, for five or six days before his crucifixion.
{k} "taught daily" Joh 18:20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 19 - Verse 48

Verse 48. *Could not find*, &c. Were not able to accomplish their purpose; they did not know how to bring it about.

Very attentive. Literally, *hung upon him* to hear him. The word denotes an anxious desire, a fixed attention, a cleaving to him, and an unwillingness to leave him, so that they might hear his words. This is always the case when men become anxious about their salvation. They manifest it by hanging on the preaching of the gospel; by fixed attention; and by an unwillingness to leave the place where the word of God is preached. In view of the fact that the Lord Jesus wept over Jerusalem, we may remark:

(1.) It was on account of the sins and danger of the inhabitants, and of the fact that they had rejected offered mercy.

(2.) There was *occasion* for weeping. Jesus would not have wept had there been no cause for it. If they were in no danger, if there was no punishment in the future world, why should he have wept? When the Lord Jesus weeps over sinners, it is the fullest proof that they are in danger,

(3.) Sinners are in the same danger now. They reject Christ as sinners did then. They despise the gospel as they did then. They refuse now to come to him as the inhabitants of Jerusalem did. Why are they not then in the same danger?

(4.) Deep feeling, gushing emotions, lively affections, are proper in religion. If the Saviour wept, it is *not* improper for us to weep—it is right. Nay, can it be right not to weep over the condition of lost man.

(5.) Religion is tenderness and love. It led the Saviour to weep, and it teaches us to sympathize and to feel deeply. Sin hardens the heart, and makes it insensible to every pure and noble emotion; but religion teaches us to feel "for others' woes," and to sympathize in the danger of others.

(6.) Christians and Christian ministers should weep over lost sinners. They have souls just as precious as they had then; they are in the same danger; they are going to the judgment-bar; they are wholly insensible to their danger and their duty.

"Did Christ o'er sinners weep?
And shall our cheeks be dry?
Let floods of penitential grief
Burst forth from every eye.

"The Son of God in tears,
Angels with wonder see!
Be thou astonished, O my soul;
He shed those tears for thee.

"He wept that we might weep;
Each sin demands a tear;
In heaven alone no sin is found,
And there's no weeping there."

{3} "were very attentive" or, "hanged on him"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 1

Verses 1-9. See this passage explained in the Notes on Mt 21:23-27.
See Barnes "Mt 21:23, also Mt 21:24-27.
{a} "And it came to pass" Mt 21:23 Mr 11:27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 2

Verse 2. No Barnes text on this verse.
{b} "by what authority"
Ac 4:7-10 7:27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 3

Verse 3. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 4

Verse 4. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 5

Verse 5. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 6

Verse 6. No Barnes text on this verse.
{c} "for they be persuaded"
Mt 14:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 7

Verse 7. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 8

Verse 8. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 9

Verses 9-19.
See Barnes "Mt 21:33, also Mt 21:34-45.
{d} "A certain man" Mt 21:33 Mr 12:1 {e} "planted a vineyard" So 8:11,12; Is 5:1-7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No Barnes text on this verse.
{f} "fruit"
Joh 15:16 Ro 7:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 11

Verse 11. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 12

Verse 12. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 13

Verse 13. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 14

Verse 14. No Barnes text on this verse.
{g} "the heir"
Ps 2:8 Ro 8:17; He 1:2
{h} "let us kill him" Mt 27:21-25 Ac 2:23, 3:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 15

Verse 15. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 16

Verse 16. No Barnes text on this verse.
{g} "give the vineyard to others"
Ne 9:36,37

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 17

Verse 17. No Barnes text on this verse.
{k} "The stone"
Ps 118:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 18

Verse 18. No Barnes text on this verse.
{l} "but on whomsoever"
Da 2:34,35

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 19

Verse 19. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 20

Verses 20-38.
See Barnes "Mt 22:15, also Mt 22:16-33 **See Barnes "Mr 12:13, also** Mr 12:14-27.
Verse 20. No Barnes text on this verse.
{m} "that they might take"
Mt 22:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 21

Verse 21. No Barnes text on this verse.
{1} "truly" or, "of a truth"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 22

Verse 22. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 23

Verse 23. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 24

Verse 24. No Barnes text on this verse.
{2} "penny"
Mt 18:28

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 25

Verse 25. No Barnes text on this verse.
{n} "Render, therefore"
#Ro 13.7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 26

Verse 26. No Barnes text on this verse.
{o} "held their peace"
Tit 1:10,11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 27

Verse 27. No Barnes text on this verse.
{p} "then came to him"
Mt 22:23 Mr 12:18
{q} "Sadducees" Ac 23:6,8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 28

Verse 28. No Barnes text on this verse.
{r} "If any man's brother"
De 25:5-8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 29

Verse 29. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 30

Verse 30. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 31

Verse 31. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 32

Verse 32. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 33

Verse 33. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 34

Verse 34. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 35

Verse 35. No Barnes text on this verse.
{s} "accounted worthy"
Lu 21:36 Re 3:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 36

Verse 36. No Barnes text on this verse.
{t} "Neither can they die"
Re 21:4
{u} "equal unto the angels" 1Co 15:49,52; 1Jo 3:2
{v} "the children of God" Ro 8:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 37

Verse 37. No Barnes text on this verse.
{w} "showed at the bush"
Ex 3:2-6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 38

Verse 38. No Barnes text on this verse.

{x} "for all live unto him"
Ro 14:8,9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 39

Verse 39. **See Barnes "Mr 12:32".**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 40

Verses 40-44. **See Barnes "Mt 22:41, also** Mt 22:42-46
Verse 40. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 41

Verse 41. No Barnes text on this verse.
{y} "And he said unto them"
Mt 22:42 Mr 12:35

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 42

Verse 42. No Barnes text on this verse.
{z} "The Lord said unto my Lord"
Ps 110:1 Ac 2:34

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 43

Verse 43. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 44

Verse 44. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 45

Verses 45-47.
Verse 45. No Barnes text on this verse.
{a} "of all the people"
1Ti 5:20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 46

Verse 46. No Barnes text on this verse.
{b} "Beware of the scribes"
Mr 12:23
{c} "greetings" Lu 11:43

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 20 - Verse 47

Verse 47. No Barnes text on this verse.
{d} "devour widow's houses"
Isa 10:2 Mt 23:14; 2Ti 3:6
{e} "a show" 1Th 2:5 {f} "receive greater damnation" Lu 10:12,14; Jas 3:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 21 - Verse 1

Verses 1-4. **See Barnes "Mr 12:41, also** Mr 12:42-44
Verse 1. No Barnes text on this verse.
{a} "and saw the rich men"
Mr 12:41

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 21 - Verse 2

Verse 2. No Barnes text on this verse.
{1} "mites"
See Barnes "Mr 12:42"
{b} "more than they all" 2Co 8:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 21 - Verse 3

Verse 3. No Barnes text on this verse.
{b} "more than they all"
2Co 8:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 21 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Penury*. Poverty.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 21 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Goodly stones*. Beautiful stones. Either referring to the large, square, and well-finished stones of which the eastern wall was built, or to the precious stones which might have been used in decorating the temple itself. **See Barnes "Mr 13:1"**.

Gifts. This word properly denotes anything devoted or dedicated to God. Anciently warriors dedicated to their gods the spoils of war—the shields, and helmets, and armour, and garments of those slain in battle. These were suspended in the temples. It would seem that something of this kind had occurred in the temple of Jerusalem, and that the people, to express their gratitude to God, had suspended on the pillars and porches of the temple gifts and offerings. Josephus mentions particularly a golden *vine* with which Herod the Great had adorned the columns of the temple (Antiq. xiii. 8). See also 2 Mac. v. 16; ix. 16.

{c} "And as some spake" Mt 24:1 Mr 13:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 21 - Verse 6

Verse 6. **See Barnes "Mt 24:2"**.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 21 - Verse 7

Verses 7-36. The account of the destruction of Jerusalem contained in this chapter has been fully considered in **See Barnes** "Mt 24:1, and following. All that will be necessary here will be an explanation of a few words that did not occur in that chapter.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 21 - Verse 8

Verse 8. No Barnes text on this verse.
{e} "Take heed that ye" 2Th 2:3,9,10 1Jo 4:1 2Jo 1:7
{f} "and the time draweth near" Re 1:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 21 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Commotions*. Insurrections. Subjects rising against their rulers.
{g} "be not terrified" Pr 3:25,26

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 21 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No Barnes text on this verse.
{h} "Nation shall rise"
Hag 2:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 21 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Fearful sights*.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 21 - Verse 12

Verses 12-13. *Synagogues, and into prisons*. **See Barnes** "Mr 13:9, **See Barnes "Mr 13:10"**

{i} "into prisons" Ac 4:3 5:18, 12:4 16:24; Re 2:10
{k} "brought before kings" Ac 25:23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 21 - Verse 13

Verse 13. No Barnes text on this verse.
{l} "And it shall turn to"
Php 1:28 2Th 1:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 21 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Settle it therefore in your hearts*. Fix it firmly in your minds—so firmly as to become a settled principle—that you are always to depend on God for aid in all your trials. Mr 13:11.

{m} "not to meditate" Mr 13:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 21 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *A mouth*. Eloquence, ability to speak as the case may demand. Comp. Ex 4:11.

Gainsay. Speak against. They will not be able to *reply* to it, or to *resist* the force of what you shall say.

{n} "not be able" Ac 6:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 21 - Verse 16

Verse 16. No Barnes text on this verse.

{o} "ye shall be betrayed"

Mic 7:5,6

{p} "and some of you" Ac 7:59 12:2, 26:10 Re 2:13, 6:9 12:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 21 - Verse 17

Verse 17. No Barnes text on this verse.

{q} "hated of all *men*." Joh 17:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 21 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *A hair of your head perish*. This is a proverbial expression, denoting that they should not suffer any essential injury. This was strikingly fulfilled in the fact that in the calamities of Jerusalem there is reason to believe that no Christian suffered. Before those calamities came on the city they had fled to *Pella*, a city on the east of the Jordan. **See Barnes "Mt 24:18"**.

{r} "But there shall not" Mt 10:30

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 21 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *In your patience*. Rather by your perseverance. The word *patience* here means constancy or perseverance in sustaining afflictions.

Possess ye your souls. Some read here the *future* instead of the *present* of the verb rendered possess. The word *possess* means here to preserve or keep, and the word *souls* means *lives*. This passage may be thus translated: By persevering in bearing these trials you *will* save your lives, or you will be safe; or, by persevering *preserve* your lives, that is, do not yield to these calamities, but bear up under them, for he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved. Comp. Mt 24:13.

{s} "In your patience" Ro 5:3 He 10:36; Jas 1:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 21 - Verse 20

Verse 20. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 21 - Verse 21

Verse 21. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 21 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *All things which are written may be fulfilled*. Judgment had been threatened by almost all the prophets against that wicked city. They had spoken of its crimes and threatened its ruin. Once God had destroyed Jerusalem and carried the people to Babylon; but their crimes had been repeated when they returned, and God had again threatened their ruin. Particularly was this very destruction foretold by Daniel, Da 9:26,27.

"And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah
be cut off, but not for himself; and the people
of the prince that shall come shall destroy the
city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall
be with a flood, and unto the end of the war
desolations are determined."

See Barnes "Da 9:26, **See Barnes "Da 9:27"**.

{t} "all things which" De 28:25,48; Da 9:26,27; Zec 11:6 14:1,2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 21 - Verse 23

Verse 23. No Barnes text on this verse.

{u} "But woe unto them"

La 4:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 21 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Shall fall*, &c. No less than one million one hundred thousand perished in the siege of Jerusalem.

Shall be led away captive. More than ninety thousand were led into captivity. **See Barnes** "Mt 24:1, and following.

Shall be trodden down by the Gentiles. Shall be in posses sion of the Gentiles, or be subject to them. The expression also implies that it would be an *oppressive* subjection, as when a captive in war is trodden down under the feet of the conqueror. Anciently conquerors trod on the necks of those who were subdued by them, Jos 10:24; 2Sa 22:41 Eze 21:29. The bondage of Jerusalem has been long and very oppressive. It was for a long time under the dominion of the Romans, then of the Saracens, and is now of the Turks, and is aptly represented by a captive stretched on the ground whose neck is trodden by the foot of the conqueror.

Until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. This passage has been understood very differently by different expositors. Some refer it to the time which the Romans who conquered it had dominion over it, as signifying that they should keep possession of it until a part of the pagans should be converted, when it should be rebuilt. Thus it was rebuilt by the Emperor Adrian. Others suppose that it refers to the end of the world, when all the Gentiles shall be converted, and they shall cease to be Gentiles by becoming Christians, meaning that it should always be desolate. Others, that Christ meant to say that in the times of the millennium, when the gospel should spread universally, he would reign personally on the earth, and that the Jews would return and rebuild Jerusalem and the temple. This is the opinion of the Jews and of many Christians. The meaning of the passage clearly is,

1st. That Jerusalem would be completely destroyed.

2nd. That this would be done by Gentiles—that is, by the Roman armies.

3rd. That this desolation would continue as long as God should judge it proper in a fit manner to express his abhorrence of the crimes of the nation—that is, until the times allotted to *them* by God for this desolation should be accomplished, without specifying how long that would be, or what would occur to the city after that. It *may* be rebuilt, and inhabited by converted Jews. Such a thing is possible, and the Jews naturally seek that as their home; but whether this be so or not, the time when the Gentiles, as such, shall have dominion over the city is limited. Like all other cities on the earth, it will yet be brought under the influence of the gospel, and will be inhabited by the true friends of God. Pagan, infidel, anti-Christian dominion shall cease there, and it will be again a place where God will be worshipped in sincerity—a place even then of peculiar interest from the recollection of the events which have occurred there. How long it is to be before this occurs is known only to Him "who hath put the times and seasons in his own power," Ac 1:7.

{w} "until the times of the Gentiles" Ro 11:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 21 - Verse 25

Verse 25. **See Barnes "Mt 24:29".**

Upon the earth distress of nations. Some have proposed to render the word *earth* by *land*, confining it to Judea. It often has this meaning, and there seems some propriety in so using it here. The word translated *distress* denotes anxiety of mind—such an anxiety as men have when they do not know what to do to free themselves from calamities; and it means here that the calamities would be so great and overwhelming that they would not know what to do to escape. There would be a want of counsel, and deep anxiety at the impending evils.

With perplexity. Rather on account of their perplexity, or the desperate state of their affairs. The Syriac has it, "perplexity or *wringing of hands*," which is a sign of deep distress and horror.

The sea and the waves roaring. This is not to be understood literally, but as an image of great distress. Probably it is designed to denote that these calamities would come upon them like a deluge. As when in a storm the ocean roars, and wave rolls on wave and dashes against the shore, and each succeeding surge is more violent than the one that preceded it, so would the calamities come upon Judea. They would roll over the whole land, and each wave of trouble would be more violent than the one that preceded it, until the whole country would be desolate. The same image is also used in Is 8:7,8; Re 18:15.

{x} "Distress of nations" Da 12:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 21 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Men's hearts failing them*. This is an expression denoting the highest terror. The word rendered *failing* commonly denotes *to die*, and here it means that the terror would be so great that men would faint and be ready to die in view of the approaching calamities. And if this was true in respect to the judgments about to come upon Judea, how much more so will it be in the day of judgment, when the wicked will be arraigned before the Son of God, and when they shall have before them the prospect of the awful sufferings of hell —the pains and woes which shall continue for ever! It will be no wonder, then, if they call on the rocks and mountains to hide them from the face of God, and if their hearts sink within them at the prospect of eternal suffering.

{y} "powers of heaven" 2Pe 3:10-12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 21 - Verse 27

Verse 27. No Barnes text on this verse.

{z} "distress of nations"

Da 12:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 21 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *Your redemption draweth nigh*. **See Barnes "Mt 24:33"**.

This is expressed in the 31st verse thus: "the kingdom of God is nigh at hand"—that is, from that time God will signally build up his kingdom. It shall be fully established when the Jewish policy shall come to an end; when the temple shall be destroyed, and the Jews scattered abroad. Then the power of the Jews shall be at an end; they shall no longer be able to persecute you, and you shall be completely delivered from all these trials and calamities in Judea.

{a} "your redemption draweth nigh" Ro 8:23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 21 - Verse 29

Verse 29. No Barnes text on this verse.

{b} "And he spake"

Mt 24:32 Mr 13:28"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 21 - Verse 30

Verse 30. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 21 - Verse 31

Verse 31. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 21 - Verse 32

Verse 32. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 21 - Verse 33

Verse 33. No Barnes text on this verse.

{c} "Heaven and earth"

Is 40:8 51:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 21 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *Lest at any time your hearts be overcharged*, &c. The meaning of this verse is,
"Be continually expecting these things. Do not forget
them, and do not be secure and satisfied with this
life and the good things which it furnishes. Do not
suffer yourselves to be drawn into the fashions of
the world; to be conformed to its customs; to partake
of its feasts and revelry; and so these calamities
shall come upon you when you least expect them."

And from this we may learn—what alas! we may from the *lives* of many professing Christians—that there is need of cautioning the disciples of Jesus now that they do not indulge in the festivities of this life, and *forget* that they are to die and come to judgment. How many, alas! who bear the Christian name, have forgotten this caution of the Saviour, and live as if their lives were secure; as if they feared not death; as if there were no heaven and no judgment! Christians should feel that they are soon to die, and that their portion is not in this life; and, feeling this, they should be *looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God*.

Overcharged. Literally, *be made heavy*, as is the case with those who have eaten and drunken too much.

Surfeiting. Excessive eating and drinking, so as to oppress the body; indulgence in the pleasures of the table. This word does not include *intoxication*, but merely indulgence in food and drink, though the food and drink should be in themselves lawful.

Drunkenness. Intoxication, intemperance in drinking. The ancients were not acquainted with the poison that we chiefly use on which to become drunk. They had no distilled spirits. They became intoxicated on wine, and strong drink made of a mixture of dates, honey, &c. All nations have contrived some way to become intoxicated—to bring in folly, and disease, and poverty, and death, by drunkenness; and in nothing is the depravity of men more manifest than in thus endeavouring to hasten the ravages of crime and death.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 21 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *As a snare*. In Matthew and Mark Jesus compares the suddenness with which these calamities would come to the deluge coming in the days of Noah. Here he likens it to a snare. Birds are caught by a snare or net. It is sprung on them quickly, and when they are not expecting it. So, says he, shall these troubles come upon Judea. The figure is often used to denote the suddenness of calamities, Ps 69:22 Re 11:9; Ps 124:7 Is 24:17.

{f} "For as a snare" 1Th 5:2 2Pe 3:10; Re 16:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 21 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *To stand before the Son of man*. These approaching calamities are represented as the *coming of the Son of man* to judge Jerusalem for its crimes. Its inhabitants were so wicked that they were not worthy to stand before him and would be condemned, and the city would be overthrown. To *stand before him* here denotes approbation, acquittal, favour, and is equivalent to saying that *they* would be free from these calamities, while they should come upon others. Ro 14:4 Ps 1:5, 130:3 Re 6:17.

Perhaps, also, there is a reference here to the day of judgment. **See Barnes** "Mt 24:1, and following.

{g} "Watch ye" Mt 25:13 {h} "accounted" Lu 20:35 {i} "to stand" Ps 1:5 {k} "before the Son of man" Jude 1:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 21 - Verse 37

Verses 37-38.
See Barnes Mt "21:17"

Came early in the morning. He returned early from the Mount Of Olives, and taught in the temple. Our Saviour did not waste his mornings in idleness or sleep. He rose early and repaired to the temple. The people, also, flocked to the sanctuary to hear him. This example is at once an encouragement to early rising and to the early worship of God. It is a reproof of those who spend the part of the day best fitted for devotion in unnecessary sleep; and it shows the propriety, where it can be done, of assembling early in the morning for prayer and the worship of God. Early prayer-meetings have the countenance of the Saviour, and will be found to be eminently conducive to the promotion of religion. The whole example of Jesus goes to show the importance of beginning the day with God, and of lifting up the heart to him for direction, for the supply of our wants, and for preservation from temptation, before the mind is engrossed by the cares, and distracted by the perplexities, and led away by the temptations of this life. Commencing the day with God is like arresting evil at the fountain; prayer at any other time, without this, is an attempt to arrest it when it has swollen to a stream and rolls on like a torrent. Let the day be begun with God, and the work of piety is easy. Let the world have the ascendancy in the morning, and it will be likely to have it also at noonday and at evening.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 21 - Verse 38

Verse 38. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 1

Verses 1-2. **See Barnes "Mt 26:1"**
See Barnes "Mt 26:2"

Verse 1. No Barnes text on this verse.
{a} "feast of unleavened bread" Mt 26:2 Mr 14:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 2

Verse 2. No Barnes text on this verse.
{b} "And the chief priests"
Ps 2:2 Ac 4:27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Then entered Satan into Judas*. It is not necessary to suppose that Satan entered personally into the body of Judas, but only that he brought him under his influence; he filled his mind with an evil passion, and led him on to betray his Master. The particular passion of which Satan made use was *avarice*—probably the besetting sin of Judas. To show its exceeding evil and baseness, it is only necessary to say that when it produced its *appropriate* effect in this case, it led to the betraying and crucifixion of the Son of God. We may learn, also, that when Satan *tempts* men, he commonly does it by exciting and raising to the highest pitch their native passions. He does not make them act contrary to their nature, but leads them on to *act out* their proper disposition.

Satan. This word properly means an adversary or an accuser. It is the name which in the Scriptures is commonly given to the prince or leader of evil spirits, and is given to him because he is the *accuser* or *calumniator* of the righteous (see Re 12:10; comp. Job 1:6-9), as well as because he is the *adversary of God*.

Being of the number of the twelve. One of the twelve apostles. This greatly aggravated his crime. He should have been bound by most tender ties to Jesus. He was one of his family—long with him, and treated by him with every mark of kindness and confidence; and nothing could more enhance his guilt than thus to make use of this confidence for the commission of one of the basest crimes.

{c} "entered Satan" Mt 26:14 Mr 14:10; Joh 13:2,27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 4

Verses 4-6.
Verse 4. *Chief priests and captains*. **See Barnes "Mt 26:14"**.

See the account of the bargain which Judas made with them explained in **See Barnes "Mt 26:14"**
See Barnes "Mt 26:15"
See Barnes "Mt 26:16"
Barnes "Mr 14:10"
See Barnes "Mr 14:11".

Absence of the multitude. The multitude, *the people*, were then favourable to Jesus. He had preached in the temple, and many of them believed that he was the Messiah. It was a hazardous thing, therefore, to take him by force, and in their presence, as they might rise and rescue him. Hence they sought to take him when *he* was away from the multitude; and as Judas,knew of a place where he could be found *alone*, they were glad of the opportunity of so easily securing him.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 5

Verse 5. No Barnes text on this verse.
{d} "and covenanted to" Zec 11:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 6

Verse 6. No Barnes text on this verse.
{1} "in the absence of the multitude" or, "without tumult"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 7

Verses 7-13.
See Barnes "Mt 26:17"
See Barnes "Mt 26:18"
See Barnes "Mt 26:19"
See Barnes "Mr 14:12"
See Barnes "Mr 14:13"
See Barnes "Mr 14:14"
See Barnes "Mr 14:15"
See Barnes "Mr 14:16"

Verse 7. No Barnes text on this verse.
{e} "day of unleavened bread" Ex 12:1 and following.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 8

Verse 8. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 9

Verse 9. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 11

Verse 11. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 12

Verse 12. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 13

Verse 13. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *When the hour was come*. The hour of eating the paschal lamb, which was in the evening. **See Barnes "Mt 26:20"**

{f} "And when the hour was come" Mt 26:20 Mr 14:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *With desire I have desired*. This is a Hebrew form of expression, and means *I have greatly desired*. The reasons why he desired this we may suppose to have been—

1st. That, as he was about to leave them, he was desirous once of seeing them together, and of partaking with them of one of the religious privileges of the Jewish dispensation. Jesus was *man* as well as God, and he never undervalued the religious rites of his country, or the blessings of social and religious intercourse; and there is no impropriety in supposing that even he might feel that his human nature might be prepared by the service of religion for his great and terrible sufferings.

2nd. He doubtless wished to take an opportunity to prepare *them* for his sufferings, and to impress upon them more fully the certainty that he was about to leave them, that they might be prepared for it.

3rd. We may also suppose that he particularly desired it that he might institute for *their* use, and for the edification of all Christians, the supper which is called by his name—*the Lord's Supper*. All his sufferings were the expression of love to his people, and he was desirous of testifying *always* his regard for their comfort and welfare.

Before I suffer.

{2} "With desire I have desired", or "I have heartily desired"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Until it be fulfilled*. **See Barnes "Mt 26:29"**.

{g} "until" Lu 14:15 1Co 5:7,8 Re 19:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *And he took the cup and gave thanks*. This was not the *sacramental* cup, for that was taken after supper, Lu 22:20. This was one of the cups which were usually taken during the celebration of the Passover, and pertained to that observance. *After* he had kept this in the usual manner, he instituted the supper which bears his name, using the bread and wine which had been prepared for the Passover, and thus ingrafted the Lord's Supper on the Passover, or superseded the Passover by another ordinance, which was intended to be perpetual.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 18

Verse 18. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 19

Verses 19,20. **See Barnes "Mt 26:26, also** Mt 26:27,28
Verse 19. No Barnes text on this verse.
{h} "And he took bread"
1Co 10:16 11:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 20

Verse 20. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 21

Verses 21-23.
See Barnes "Mt 26:21, also Mt 26:22-25.
Verse 21. No Barnes text on this verse.
{i} "is with me"
Ps 41:9 Joh 13:26

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 22

Verse 22. No Barnes text on this verse.
{k} "as it was determined"
Lu 24:46 Ac 2:23, 4:28 1Co 15:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 23

Verse 23. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *A strife*. A contention or debate.

Which of them should be the greatest. The apostles, in common with the Jews generally, had supposed that the Messiah would come as a temporal prince, and in the manner of other princes of the earth—of course, that he would have officers of his government, ministers of state, &c. Their

contention was founded on this expectation, and they were disputing which of them should be raised to the highest office. They had before had a similar contention. See Mt 18:1 20:20-28. Nothing can be more humiliating than that the disciples should have had *such* contentions, and in such a time and place. That just as Jesus was contemplating his own death, and labouring to prepare them for it, they should strive and contend about office and rank, shows how deeply seated is the love of power; how ambition will find its way into the most secret and sacred places; and how even the disciples of the meek and lowly Jesus are sometimes actuated by this most base and wicked feeling.

{l} "And there was also" Mr 9:34 Lu 9:46

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *The kings of the Gentiles*. The kings of the *nations*, or of the earth. They do this, and it is to be expected of them, and it is right. Our Lord does not mean to say that it was wrong that there should be such authority, but that his kingdom was to be of a different character, and they were not to expect it there.

Over them. That is, over the *nations*.

Are called benefactors. The word *benefactor* is applied to one who bestows favour on another. It was applied to kings by way of *compliment* or *flattery*. Some of them might have been truly benefactors of their people, but this was by no means true of *all*. Yet it was applied to all, and especially to the Roman emperors. It is found applied to them often in the writings of Josephus and Philo.

{m} "The kings of the Gentiles" Mt 20:25 Mr 10:42

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 26

Verses 26,27. *But ye shall not be so*. Christ here takes occasion to explain the nature of his kingdom. He assures them that it is established on different principles from those of the world; that his subjects were not to expect titles, and power, and offices of pomp in his kingdom. He that would be most advanced in *his* kingdom would be he that was most humble; and in order to show them this, he took a towel and girded himself after the manner of a servant, and washed their feet, to show them what ought to be their feelings toward each other. See Joh 13:4-17.

He that sitteth at meat. The master of the feast, or one of his guests.

But I am among you, &c. This was said in connection with his washing their feet. He showed them how they ought to feel and act toward each other. *They* ought, therefore, not to aim at office and power, but to be humble, and serve and aid one another.

{n} "ye shall not be so" 1Pe 5:3 3Jo 1:9,10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 27

Verse 27. No Barnes text on this verse.
{o} "but I am among you"
Joh 13:13,14; Php 2:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *My temptations*. My trials, my humiliations, and my assaults from the power of Satan and a wicked world.

And I appoint unto you a kingdom. He assures them here that they should *have* a kingdom—their expectations would be realized. They had continued with him; they had seen how *he* had lived, and to what trials he had been subjected; they had all along expected a kingdom, and he assures them that they should not be disappointed.

As my Father, &c. They had seen how God had appointed a kingdom to *him*. It was not with pomp, and splendour, and external glory, but it was in poverty, want, persecution, and trial. So would *he* appoint to them a kingdom. They should *surely* possess it; but it would be not with external splendour, but by poverty and toil. The original word *appoint* has the force of a *covenant* or compact, and means that it should be surely or certainly done, or that he pledged himself to do it. All Christians must enter into the kingdom of heaven after the manner of their Lord—through much tribulation; but, though it must be, as it was with him, by many tears and sorrows, yet they shall surely reach the place of their rest and the reward of heaven, for it is secured to them by the covenant pledge and faithfulness of their Lord and King.

{p} "my temptations" He 4:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 29

Verse 29. No Barnes text on this verse.
{q} "a kingdom"
Mt 25:34 Lu 12:32; 1Co 9:25 1Pe 5:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 30

Verse 30. **See Barnes "Mt 19:28"**

{r} "that ye may eat and drink" Re 19:9 {s} "judging the twelve tribes" Mt 19:28 1Co 6:2; Re 3:21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *Simon*. Peter. Jesus, foreseeing the danger of Peter, and knowing that he was about to deny him, took occasion to forewarn him and put him on his guard, and also to furnish him with a solace when he should be brought to repentance.

Satan hath desired. Satan is the prince of evil. One of his works is to try the faith of believers—to place temptations and trials in their way, that they may be tested. Thus God gave Job into his hands, that it might be seen whether he would be found faithful, or would apostatize. **See Barnes "Job 1:7, also** Job 1:8-12. So Satan desired to have Peter in his hands, that he might also try him.

May sift you *as wheat*. Grain was agitated or shaken in a kind of fan or sieve. The grain remained in the fan, and the chaff and dust were thrown off. So Christ says that Satan desired to try Peter; to place trials and temptations before him; to *agitate him*; to see whether anything of faith would remain, or whether all would not be found to be chaff—mere natural ardour and false professions.

{t} "Satan" 1Pe 5:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *That thy faith fail not*. The word *faith*, here, seems to be used in the sense of religion, or attachment to Christ, and the words *fail not* mean *utterly fail* or fail altogether—that is, apostatize. It is true that the *courage* of Peter failed; it is true that he had not that immediate confidence in Jesus and reliance on him which he had before had; but the prayer of Jesus was that he might not altogether apostatize from the faith. God heard Jesus *always* (Joh 11:42); it follows, therefore, that every prayer which he ever offered was answered; and it follows, as he asked here for a specific thing, that that thing was granted; and as he prayed that Peter's faith might not utterly fail, so it follows that there was no time in which Peter was not really a pious man. Far as he wandered, and grievously as he sinned, yet he well knew that Jesus was the Messiah. He did know the man; and though his fears overcame him and led him to aggravated sin, yet the prayer of Christ was prevalent, and he was brought to true repentance.

When thou art converted. The word *converted* means turned, changed, recovered. The meaning is, when thou art turned from this sin, when thou art recovered from this heinous offence, then use your experience to warn and strengthen those who are in danger of like sins. A man may be converted or turned from any sin, or any evil course. He is regenerated but once—at the beginning of his Christian life; he may be converted as often as he fails into sin.

Strengthen thy brethren. Confirm them, warn them, encourage them. They are in continual danger, also, of sinning. Use your experience to warn them of their danger, and to comfort and sustain them in their temptations. And from this we learn—

1st. That one design of permitting Christians to fall into sin is to show their own weakness and dependence on God; and,

2nd. That they who have been overtaken in this manner should make use of their experience to warn and preserve others from the same path. The two epistles of Peter, and his whole life, show that *he* was attentive to this command of Jesus; and in his death he manifested his deep abhorrence

of this act of dreadful guilt in denying his blessed Lord, by requesting to be crucified with his head downward, as unworthy to suffer in the same manner that Christ did.

See Barnes "Joh 21:18".

{v} "I have prayed for thee" Joh 17:9,15; He 7:25 1Jo 2:1

{w} "strengthen" Ps 51:13 Joh 21:15-17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 33

Verses 33,34. **See Barnes "Mt 26:33, also** Mt 26:34-35

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 34

Verse 34. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *When I sent you*, &c. **See Barnes "Mt 10:9"**

See Barnes "Mt 10:10".

Lacked ye, &c. Did you want anything? Did not God fully provide for you? He refers to this to convince them that his words were true; that their past experience should lead them to put confidence in him and in God.

{x} "Lacked" Lu 9:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *But now*. The Saviour says the times are changed. Before, he sent them out only for a little time. They were in their own country. Their journeys would be short, and there was no need that they should make preparation for a long absence, or for encountering great dangers. But *now* they were to go into the wide world, among strangers, trials, dangers, and wants. And as the time was near; as he was about to die; as these dangers pressed on, it was proper that they should make provision for what was before them.

A purse. **See Barnes "Mt 10:9".**

He intimates that they should now take money, as it would be necessary to provide for their wants in travelling.

Scrip. **See Barnes "Mt 10:10".**

And he that hath no sword. There has been much difficulty in understanding why Jesus directed his disciples to arm themselves, as if it was his purpose to make a defence. It is certain that the

spirit of his religion is against the use of the sword, and that it was not his purpose to defend himself against Judas. But it should be remembered that these directions about the purse, the scrip, and the sword were not made with reference to his *being taken* in the garden, but with reference to their future life. The time of the trial in Gethsemane was just at hand; nor was there time then, if no other reason existed, to go and make the purchase. It altogether refers to their future life. They were going into the midst of dangers. The country was infested with robbers and wild beasts. It was customary to go armed. He tells them of those dangers-of the necessity of being prepared in the usual way to meet them. This, then, is not to be considered as a specific, positive *command* to procure a sword, but an intimation that great dangers were before them; that their manner of life would be changed, and that they would need the provisions *appropriate to that kind of life*. The common preparation for that manner of life consisted in money, provisions, and arms; and he foretells them of that manner of life by giving them directions commonly understood to be appropriate to it. It amounts, then, to a prediction that they would soon leave the places which they had been accustomed to, and go into scenes of poverty, want, and danger, where they would feel the necessity of money, provisions, and the means of defence. All, therefore, that the passage justifies is—

1st. That it is proper for men to provide beforehand for their wants, and for ministers and missionaries as well as any others.

2nd. That self-defence is lawful. Men encompassed with danger may lawfully defend their lives. It does not prove that it is lawful to make offensive war on a nation or an individual.

Let him, sell his garment. His mantle or his outer garment. **See Barnes "Mt 5:40"**.

The meaning is, let him procure one at any expense, even if he is obliged to sell his clothes for it—intimating that the danger would be very great and pressing.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *This that is written*. **See Barnes "Is 53:12"**.

Was reckoned among the transgressors. Not reckoned as a transgressor, but among or with them—that is, he was treated as transgressors are. He was put to death in their company, and as he *would have been* if he had been a transgressor. He was innocent, holy, harmless, and undefiled, He 7:26. God knew this always, and could not think of him, or make him to be otherwise than he was; yet it pleased him to bruise him, and to give him into the hands of men who did reckon him as a transgressor, and who treated him accordingly.

Have an end. This may either mean, "shall be surely accomplished," or "they are *about* to be fulfilled," or "are *now* fulfilled." The former is probably the meaning, denoting that every prophecy in regard to him would certainly be accomplished.

{y} "reckoned with transgressors" Is 53:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *Are two swords*. The Galileans, it is said, often went armed. The Essenes did so also. The reason was that the country was full of robbers and wild beasts, and it was necessary to carry, in their travels, some means of defence. It seems that the disciples followed the customs of the country, and had with *them* them some means of defence, though they had but two swords among the twelve.

It is enough. It is difficult to understand this. Some suppose that it is spoken *ironically*; as if he had said, "You are bravely armed indeed, with two swords among twelve men, and to meet such a host!" Others, that he meant to reprove them for understanding him *literally*, as if he meant that they were then to procure swords for immediate battle. As if he had said, "This is absurd, or a perversion of my meaning. I did not *intend this*, but merely to foretell you of impending dangers after my death." It is to be observed that he did not say "*the two swords* are enough," but "*it* is enough;" perhaps meaning simply, enough has been said. Other matters press on, and you will yet understand what I mean.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 39

Verses 39-46. **See Barnes "Mt 26:30"**
through Mt 26:31-46. **See Barnes "Mr 14:26"**
through Mr 14:27-42.
Verse 39. No Barnes text on this verse.
{z} "He went out"
Mt 26:36 Mr 14:32; Joh 18:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 40

Verse 40. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 41

Verse 41. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 42

Verse 42. No Barnes text on this verse.
{3} "Remove this cup" or "willing to remove"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 43

Verse 43. *Strengthening him*. His human nature, to sustain the great burden that was upon his soul. Some have supposed from this that he was not divine as well as human; for if he was *God*, how could an angel give any strength or comfort? and why did not the *divine* nature alone sustain the human? But the fact that he was *divine* does not affect the case at all. It might be asked with the same propriety, If he was, as all admit, the friend of God, and beloved of God, and holy, why, if he was a mere man, did not God sustain him alone, without an angel's intervening ? But the objection in neither case would have any force. The man, Christ Jesus, was suffering. His human nature was in agony, and it is the manner of God to sustain the afflicted by the intervention of others; nor was there any more unfitness in sustaining the human nature of his Son in this manner than any other sufferer.

{a} "angel" Mt 4:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 44

Verse 44. *In an agony*. **See Barnes** "Mt 26:42, also Mt 26:43-44

{b} "agony" La 1:12 Joh 12:27; He 5:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 45

Verse 45. *Sleeping for sorrow*. On account of the greatness of their sorrow. **See Barnes "Mt 26:40".**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 46

Verse 46. No Barnes text on this verse.

{c} "pray" Lu 22:40

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 47

Verses 47-53. **See Barnes "Mt 26:48, also** Mt 26:49-56

{d} "behold" Mt 26:47 Mr 14:43; Joh 18:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 48

Verse 48. *Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss*? By *the Son of man* was evidently meant the Messiah. Judas had had the most satisfactory evidence of that, and did not doubt it. A kiss was the sign of affection. By that slight artifice Judas thought to conceal his base purpose. Jesus with severity reproaches him for it. Every word is emphatic. *Betrayest* thou—dost thou violate all thy obligations of fidelity, and deliver thy Master up to death? Betrayest *thou*— thou, so long with him, so much favoured, so sure that this is the Messiah? Betrayest thou the *Son of man*—the Messiah, the hope of the nations, the desire of all people, the world's Redeemer? Betrayest thou the Son of man *with a kiss*—the sign of friendship and affection employed in a base and wicked purpose, intending to add deceit, disguise, and the prostitution of a mark of affection to the crime of treason? Every word of this must have gone to the very soul of Judas. Perhaps few reproofs of crime more resemble the awful searchings of the souls of the wicked in the day of judgment.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 49

Verse 49. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 50

Verse 50. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 51

Verse 51. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 52

Verse 52. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 53

Verse 53. No Barnes text on this verse.
{e} "but this is your hour" Job 20:5 Joh 12:27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 54

Verses 54-62. **See Barnes "Mt 26:57, also** Mt 26:58-75
Verse 54. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 55

Verse 55. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 56

Verse 56. No Barnes text on this verse.
{f} "a certain maid"
Mt 26:69 Mr 14:66,69 Joh 18:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 57

Verse 57. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 58

Verse 58. No Barnes text on this verse.
{g} "And after a little while"
Mt 26:71 Mr 14:69; Joh 18:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 59

Verse 59. No Barnes text on this verse.
{h} "another confidently"
Mt 26:73 Mr 14:70; Joh 18:26

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 60

Verse 60. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 61

Verse 61. No Barnes text on this verse.
{i} "And Peter"
Mt 26:75 Mr 14:72
{k} "Before the cock crow" Lu 22:34

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 62

Verse 62. No Barnes text on this verse.
{l} "And Peter"
Ps 130:1-4 143:1-4; Jer 31:18 Eze 7:16; 1Co 10:12
2Co 7:10,11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 63

Verse 63. No Barnes text on this verse.
{m} "And the men"
Mt 26:67,68; Mr 14:65

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 64

Verse 64. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 65

Verse 65. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 66

Verse 66. No Barnes text on this verse.

{n} "And as soon as it was day"
Mt 27:1 Ac 4:26-28

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 67

Verse 67. No Barnes text on this verse.
{o} "Art thou the Christ"
Mt 26:63 Mr 14:65

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 68

Verse 68. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 69

Verse 69. No Barnes text on this verse.
{p} "right hand"
He 1:3 8:1; Re 3:21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 70

Verse 70. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 22 - Verse 71

Verse 71. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 1

Verse 1.

See Barnes "Mt 27:1,2".
{a} "the whole multitude" Mt 27:2,11; Mr 15:1 Joh 18:28

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *This fellow*. The word *fellow* is not in the original. It conveys a notion of contempt, which no doubt they felt, but which is not expressed in the *Greek*, and which it is not proper should be expressed in the translation. It might be translated, "We found this man."

Perverting the nation. That is, exciting them to sedition and tumults. This was a mere wanton accusation, but it was plausible before a Roman magistrate; for,

1st. The Galileans, as Josephus testifies, were prone to seditions and tumults.

2nd. Jesus drew multitudes after him, and they thought it was easy to show that this was itself promoting tumults and seditions.

Forbidding, &c. About their charges they were very cautious and cunning. They did not say that he *taught* that men should not give tribute—that would have been too gross a charge, and would have been easily refuted; but it was an *inference* which they drew. They said it *followed* from his doctrine. He professed to be a king. They *inferred*, therefore, if *he* was a king, that he must hold that it was not right to acknowledge allegiance to any foreign prince; and if they could make *this* out, they supposed that Pilate must condemn him of course.

Tribute. Taxes.

Caesar. The Roman emperor, called also Tiberius. The name Caesar was common to the Roman emperors, as Pharaoh was to the Egyptian kings. *All* the kings of Egypt were called Pharaoh, or *the* Pharaoh; so all the Roman emperors were called *Caesar*.

{b} "accuse him" Zec 11:8 {c} "We found this fellow" Lu 23:5 Ac 16:20,21 17:6,7
{d} "forbidding to give tribute" Mt 17:27 22:21; Mar 12:17
{e} "he himself is Christ a king" Joh 18:36 19:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 3

Verse 3. **See Barnes "Mt 27:11"**

{f} "And he answered" 1Ti 6:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *I find no fault*. I see no evidence that he is guilty of what you charge him with. This was *after* Pilate had taken Jesus into the judgment-hall by himself and examined him *privately*, and had been satisfied in regard to the nature of his kingdom. See Joh 18:33-38. He was then satisfied

that though he claimed to be a king, yet his kingdom was not of this world, and that his claims did not interfere with those of Caesar.

{g} "I find no fault" Joh 18:38 19:4; He 7:26 1Pe 2:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *The more fierce*. The more urgent and pressing. They saw that there was a prospect of losing their cause, and they attempted to press on Pilate the point that would be most likely now to affect him. Pilate had, in fact, acquitted him of the charge of being an enemy to Caesar, and they therefore urged the other point more vehemently.

Stirreth up the people. Excites them to tumult and sedition.

All Jewry. All Judea.

From Galilee to this place. To Jerusalem-that is, throughout the whole country. It is not merely in one place, but from one end of the land to the other.

{h} "more fierce" Ps 57:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Whether he were a Galilean*. He asked this because, if he was, he properly belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, who reigned over Galilee.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Herod's jurisdiction*. Herod Antipas, a son of Herod the Great. This was the same Herod that put John the Baptist to death. Jesus had passed the most of his life in the part of the country where he ruled, and it was therefore considered that he belonged to his jurisdiction—that is, that it belonged to Herod, not to Pilate, to try this cause.

{i} "Herod's jurisdiction" Lu 3:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 8

Verse 8. No Barnes text on this verse.

{k} "for he was desirous"

Lu 9:9

{l} "because he had heard" Mt 14:1 Mr 6:14 {m} "and he hoped" 2Ki 5:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 9

Verse 9. No Barnes text on this verse.
{n} "but he answered"
Ps 38:13,14, 39:1,9; Is 53:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Vehemently accused him*. Violently or unjustly accused him, endeavouring to make it appear that he had been guilty of sedition in Herod's province.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Herod with his men of war*. With his soldiers, or his bodyguard. It is probable that in travelling he had a guard to attend him constantly.

Set him at nought. Treated him with contempt and ridicule.

A gorgeous robe. A white or shining robe, for this is the meaning of the original. The Roman princes wore *purple* robes, and Pilate therefore put such a robe on Jesus. The Jewish kings wore a white robe, which was often rendered very shining or gorgeous by much tinsel or silver interwoven. Josephus says that the robe which Agrippa wore was so bright with silver that when the sun shone on it, it so dazzled the eyes that it was difficult to look on it. The Jews and Romans therefore decked him in the manner appropriate to their own country, for purposes of mockery. All this was unlawful and malicious, as there was not the least evidence of his guilt.

Sent him to Pilate. It was by the interchange of these civilities that they were made friends. It would seem that Pilate sent him to Herod as a token of civility and respect, and with a design, perhaps, of putting an end to their quarrel. Herod returned the civility, and it resulted in their reconciliation.

{o} "set him at nought" Is 49:7 53:3 {p} "gorgeous robe" Joh 19:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Made friends together*, &c. What had been the cause of their quarrel is unknown. It is Commonly supposed that it was Pilate's slaying the Galileans in Jerusalem, as related in Lu 13:1,2. The occasion of their reconciliation seems to have been the civility and respect which Pilate showed to Herod in this case. It was not because they were united in *hating* Jesus, as is often the case with wicked men, for Pilate was certainly desirous of releasing him, and both considered him merely as an object of ridicule and sport. It is true, however, that wicked men, at variance in other things, are often united in opposing and ridiculing Christ and his followers; and that enmities of

long standing are sometimes made up, and the most opposite characters brought together, simply to oppose religion. Comp. Ps 83:5-7.

{q} "friends" Ac 4:27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 13

Verse 13. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 14

Verse 14. No Barnes text on this verse.

{r} "behold, I"

Lu 23:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Nothing worthy of death is done unto him*. Deserving of death. The charges are not proved against him. They had had every opportunity of proving them, first before Pilate and then before Herod, unjustly subjecting him to trial before *two* men in succession, and thus giving them a double opportunity of condemning him, and yet, after all, he was declared by both to be innocent. There could be no better evidence that he was innocent.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *I will therefore chastise him*. The word chastise here means to *scourge* or to whip. This was usually done before capital punishment, to increase the sufferings of the man condemned. It is not easy to see the reason why, if Pilate supposed Jesus to be *innocent*, he should propose publicly to scourge him. It was as *really* unjust to do that as it was to crucify him. But probably he expected by this to conciliate the minds of his accusers; to show them that he was willing to gratify them if it could be done with propriety; and perhaps he expected that by seeing him whipped and disgraced, and condemned to ridicule, to contempt, and to suffering, they would be satisfied. It is farther remarked that among the Romans it was competent for a magistrate to inflict a slight punishment on a man when a charge of gross offence was not fully made out, or where there was not sufficient testimony to substantiate the precise charge alleged. All this shows,

1st. the palpable *injustice* of our Lord's condemnation;

2nd. the persevering malice and obstinacy of the Jews; and,

3rd. the want of firmness in Pilate. He should have released him at once; but the love of popularity led him to the murder of the Son of God. Man should do his duty in all situations; and he that, like Pilate, seeks only for public favour and popularity, will assuredly be led into crime.

{s} "chastise" Is 53:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 17

Verse 17. **See Barnes "Mt 27:15"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 18

Verses 18-23. **See Barnes "Mt 27:20, also** Mt 27:21-23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 19

Verse 19. No Barnes text on this verse.

{t} "for murder"

Ac 3:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 20

Verse 20. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 21

Verse 21. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 22

Verse 22. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 23

Verses 23-25.
See Barnes "Mt 27:26"

{u} "were instant" Ps 22:12 Lu 23:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 24

Verse 24. No Barnes text on this verse.
{1} "gave sentence", or "assented" {v} "as they required"
Ex 23:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 25

Verse 25. No Barnes text on this verse.
{w} "released unto them"
Ac 3:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 26

Verse 26. **See Barnes "Mt 27:32".**
After Jesus. Probably to bear one end of the cross. Jesus was feeble and unable to bear it alone, and they compelled Simon to help him.
{x} "as they led him away" Mt 27:32 Mr 15:21; Joh 19:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 27

Verse 27. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *Daughters of Jerusalem*. Women of Jerusalem. This was a common mode of speaking among the Hebrews.

Weep for yourselves, &c. This refers to the calamities that were about to come upon them in the desolation of their city by the Romans.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 29

Verse 29. No Barnes text on this verse.
{y} "behold, the days" Mt 24:19 Lu 21:23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *To the mountains, Fall on us*, &c. This is an image of great calamities and judgments. So great will be the calamities that they will seek for shelter from the storm, and will call on the hills to protect them. The same figure is used respecting the wicked in the day of judgment in Re 6:16,17. Compare also Is 2:21
{z} "Then shall they begin" Isa 2:19 Ho 10:8; Re 16:6 9:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *For if they do these things in a green tree*, & c. This seems to be a proverbial expression. A *green* tree is not easily set on fire; a dry one is easily kindled and burns rapidly; and the meaning of the passage is—

"If they, the Romans, do these things to *me*, who am innocent and blameless; if they punish me in this manner in the face of justice, what will they not do in relation to this guilty nation? What security have *they* that heavier judgments will not come upon them? What desolations and woes may not be expected when injustice and oppression have taken the place of justice, and have set up a rule over this wicked people?"

Our Lord alludes, evidently, to the calamities that would come upon them by the Romans in the destruction of their city and temple. The passage may be applied, however, without impropriety, and with great beauty and force, to the punishment of the wicked in the future world. Thus applied, it means that the sufferings of the Saviour, as compared with the sufferings of the guilty, were like the burning of a green tree as compared with the burning of one that is dry. A green tree is not adapted to burn; a dry one is. So the Saviour —innocent, pure, and holy—stood in relation to suffering. There were sufferings which an innocent being could not endure. There was remorse of conscience, the sense of guilt, punishment properly so called, and the eternity of woes. He had the

consciousness of innocence, and he would not suffer for ever. He had no passions to be enkindled that would rage and ruin the soul. The *sinner* is adapted to sufferings, like a dry tree to the fire. He is guilty, and will suffer all the horrors of remorse of conscience. He will be punished literally. He has raging and impetuous passions, and they will be enkindled in hell, and will rage for ever and ever. The meaning is, that if the innocent Saviour suffered so much, the sufferings of the sinner for ever in hell must be more unspeakably dreadful. Yet Who could endure the sufferings of the Redeemer on the cross for a single day? Who could bear them for ever and ever, aggravated by all the horrors of a guilty conscience, and all the terrors of unrestrained anger, and hate, and fear, and wrath? *Why WILL the wicked die*?

{a} "For if they" Pr 11:31 Jer 25:29; Eze 20:47 21:4; 1Pe 4:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 32

Verses 32,33. **See Barnes "Mt 27:35"**
See Barnes "Mt 27:38"

Verse 32. No Barnes text on this verse.
{b} "malefactors" Is 53:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 33

Verse 33. No Barnes text on this verse.
{2} "Calvary", or "the place of a skull"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *Father, forgive them*. This is a fulfillment of the prophecy in Isa 53:12: He made intercession for the transgressors. The prayer was offered for those who were guilty of putting him to death. It is not quite certain whether he referred to the *Jews* or to the *Roman soldiers*. Perhaps he referred to both. The Romans knew not what they did, as they were really ignorant that he was the Son of God, and as they were merely obeying the command of their rulers. The Jews knew, indeed, that he was *innocent*, and they had evidence, if they would have looked at it, that he was the Messiah; but they did not know what would be the effect of their guilt; they did not know what judgments and calamities they were bringing down upon their country. It may be added, also, that, though they had abundant evidence, if they would look at it, that he was the Messiah, and enough to leave them without excuse, yet they did not, *in fact*, believe that he was the Saviour promised by the prophets, and had not, in fact, any proper sense of his rank and dignity as "the Lord of glory." If they had had, they would not have crucified him, as we cannot suppose that they would knowingly

put to death their own Messiah, the hope of the nation, and him who had been so long promised to the fathers. **See Barnes "1Co 2:8".**

We may learn from this prayer—

1st. The duty of praying for our enemies, even when they are endeavouring most to injure us.

2nd. The thing for which we should pray for them is that *God* would pardon them and give them better minds.

3rd. The power and excellence of the Christian religion. No other religion *teaches* men to pray for the forgiveness of enemies; no other *disposes* them to do it. Men of the world seek for revenge; the Christian bears reproaches and persecutions with patience, and prays that God would pardon those who injure them, and save them from their sins.

4th. The greatest sinners, through the intercession of Jesus, may obtain pardon. God heard him, and still hears him *always*, and there is no reason to doubt that many of his enemies and murderers obtained forgiveness and life. Comp. Ac 2:37 42 43 7:7 14:1.

They know not what they do. It was done through ignorance, Ac 3:17. Paul says that,

"had they known it, they would not have crucified

the Lord of glory,"

1Co 2:8. Ignorance does not excuse altogether a crime if the ignorance be wilful, but it diminishes its guilt. They *had* evidence; they *might* have learned his character; they *might* have known what they were doing, and they *might* be held answerable for all this. But Jesus here shows the compassion of his heart, and as they were *really* ignorant, whatever might have been the cause of their ignorance, he implores God to pardon them. He even urges it as a reason why they should be pardoned, that they were ignorant of what they were doing; and though men are often guilty for their ignorance, yet God often in compassion overlooks it, averts his anger, and grants them the blessings of pardon and life. So he forgave Paul, for he

"did it in ignorance, in unbelief,"

1Ti 1:13. So God *winked* at the ignorance of the Gentiles, Ac 17:30. Yet this is no excuse, and no evidence of safety, for those who in our day contemptuously put away from them and their children the means of instruction.

{c} "Father, forgive them" Mt 5:44 Ac 7:60; 1Co 4:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 35

Verses 35-39. **See Barnes "Mt 27:41, also** Mt 27:42-44

Verse 35. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 36

Verse 36. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 37

Verse 37. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *In letters of Greek*, &c. **See Barnes "Mt 27:37"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *One of the malefactors*. Mt 27:44 says "the thieves— cast the same in his teeth." See the apparent contradiction in these statements reconciled in the Notes on that place.

If thou be Christ. If thou art the Messiah; if thou art what thou dost pretend to be. This is a taunt or reproach of the same kind as that of the priests in Lu 23:35.

Save thyself and us. Save our lives. Deliver us from the cross. This man did not seek for salvation truly; he asked not to be delivered from his sins; if he had, Jesus would also have heard him. Men often, in sickness and affliction, call upon God. They are earnest in prayer. They ask of God to save them, but it is only to save them from temporal death. It is not to be saved from their sins, and the consequence is, that when God does raise them up, they forget their promises, and live as they did before, as this robber would have done if Jesus had heard his prayer and delivered him from the cross.

{e} "one of the malefactors" Lu 17:34-36

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 40

Verse 40. *Dost not thou fear God*, &c. You are condemned to die as well as he. It is improper for you to rail on him as the rulers and Romans do. God is just, and you are hastening to his bar, and you should therefore fear him, and fear that he will punish you for railing on this innocent man.

Same condemnation. Condemnation to death; not death for the same thing, but the same kind of death.

{f} "Dost not thou" Ps 36:1 {g} "thou art in the same condition" Jer 5:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 41

Verse 41. *Due reward for our deeds*. The proper punishment for our crimes. They had been highwaymen, and it was just that they should die.

{h} "hath done nothing amiss" 1Pe 1:19.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 42

Verse 42. *Remember me*. This is a phrase praying for favour, or asking him to grant him an *interest* in his kingdom, or to acknowledge him as one of his followers. It implied that he believed that Jesus was what he claimed to be—the Messiah; that, though he was dying with them, yet he would set up his kingdom; and that he had full power to bless him, though about to expire. It is possible that this man might have heard him preach before his crucifixion, and have learned there the nature of his kingdom; or it may have been that while on the cross Jesus had taken occasion to acquaint them with the nature of his kingdom. While he might have been doing this, one of the malefactors may have continued to rail on him while the other became truly penitent. Such a result of preaching the gospel would not have been unlike what has often occurred since, where, while the gospel has been proclaimed, one has been "taken and another left;" one has been melted to repentance, another has been more hardened in guilt. The promise which follows shows that this prayer was answered. This was a case of repentance in the last hour, the trying hour of death; and it has been remarked that *one* was brought to repentance there, to show that no one should despair on a dying bed; and but *one*, that none should be presumptuous and *delay* repentance to that awful moment.

When thou comest, &c. It is impossible now to fix the precise idea which this robber had of Christ's coming. Whether it was that he expected that he would rise from the dead, as some of the Jews supposed the Messiah would; or whether he referred to the day of judgment; or whether to an immediate translation to his kingdom in the heavens, we cannot tell. All that we know is, that he fully believed him to be the Messiah, and that he desired to obtain an interest in that kingdom which he knew he would establish.

{i} "Lord" Ps 106:4,5; Ro 10:9,10; 1Co 6:10,11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 43

Verse 43. *Today*, &c. It is not probable that the dying thief expected that his prayer would be so soon answeyed. It is rather to be supposed that he looked to some *future* period when the Messiah would rise or would return; but Jesus told him that his prayer would be answered that very day, implying, evidently, that it would be *immediately* at death. This is the more remarkable, as those who were crucified commonly lingered for several days on the cross before they died; but Jesus foresaw that measures would be taken to *hasten* their death, and assured him that that day he should receive an answer to his prayer and be with him in his kingdom.

Paradise. This is a word of Persian origin, and means *a garden*, particularly a garden of pleasure, filled with trees, and shrubs, and fountains, and flowers. In hot climates such gardens were peculiarly pleasant, and hence they were attached to the mansions of the rich and to the palaces of princes. The word came thus to denote any place of happiness, and was used particularly to denotes the abodes of the blessed in another world. The Romans spoke of their Elysium, and the Greeks of the gardens of Hesperides, where the trees bore golden fruit. The garden of Eden means, also, the garden of *pleasure*, and in Ge 2:8 the Septuagint renders the word *Eden* by *Paradise*. Hence this

name in the Scriptures comes to denote the abodes of the blessed in the other world. **See Barnes "2Co 12:4".**

The Jews supposed that the souls of the righteous would be received into such a place, and those of the wicked cast down to Gehenna until the time of the judgment. They had many fables about this state which it is unnecessary to repeat. The plain meaning of the passage is,

"To-day thou shalt be made happy, or be received to a
state of blessedness with me after death."

It is to be remarked that Christ says nothing about the p1ace where it should be, nor of the condition of those there, excepting that it is a place of blessedness, and that its happiness is to commence immediately after death (see also Php 1:23); but from the narrative we may learn—

1st. That the soul will exist separately from the body; for, while the thief and the Saviour would be in Paradise, their *bodies* would be on the cross or in the grave.

2nd. That immediately after death—the same day—the souls of the righteous will be made happy. They will feel that they are secure; they will be received among the just; and they will have the assurance of a glorious immortality.

3rd. That state will differ from the condition of the wicked. The promise was made to but one on the cross, and there is no evidence whatever that the other entered there. See also the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, Lu 16:19-31.

4th. It is the chief glory of this state and of heaven to be permitted to see Jesus Christ and to be with him: "Thou shalt be *with me*." "I desire to depart and *to be with Christ*," Php 1:23 Re 21:23, 5:9-14.

{k} "verily" Ro 5:20,21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 44

Verses 44-46. **See Barnes "Mt 27:45, also** Mt 27:46-50.

Verse 44. No Barnes text on this verse.

{3} "darkness over all the earth" or, "land"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 45

Verse 45. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 46

Verse 46. No Barnes text on this verse.

{m} "Father, into"

Ps 31:5 1Pe 2:23

{n} "and having said thus" Mt 27:50 Mr 15:37; Joh 19:30

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 47

Verses 47-49. **See Barnes "Mt 27:52, also** Mt 27:53-55
Verse 47. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 48

Verse 48. *The things which were done*. The earthquake, the darkness, and the sufferings of Jesus.

Smote their breasts. In token of alarm, fear, and anguish. They saw the judgments of God; they saw the guilt of the rulers; and they feared the further displeasure of the Almighty.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 49

Verse 49. No Barnes text on this verse.
{o} "stood afar off" Ps 38:11 142:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 50

Verse 50. **See Barnes "Mt 27:57, also** Mt 27:58-61 **See Barnes "Mr 15:42, also** Mr 15:43-47.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 51

Verse 51. No Barnes text on this verse.
{p} "who also himself"
Mr 15:43 Lu 2:25,38

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 52

Verse 52. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 53

Verse 53. No Barnes text on this verse.
{q} "laid it in"
Is 53:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 54

Verse 54. No Barnes text on this verse.
{r} "the preparation"
Mt 27:62

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 55

Verse 55. No Barnes text on this verse.
{s} "women also"
Lu 8:2 Lu 23:49

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 23 - Verse 56

Verse 56. No Barnes text on this verse.
{t} "prepared spices"
Mar 16:1
{u} "according to" Ex 20:8-10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 1

Verses 1-12. **See Barnes "Mt 28:1, also** Mt 28:2-11.
Verse 1. No Barnes text on this verse.
{a} "Now, upon"
Mt 28:1 Mr 16:2; Joh 20:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 2

Verse 2. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 3

Verse 3. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 4

Verse 4. No Barnes text on this verse.
{b} "two men"
Joh 20:12 Ac 1:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 5

Verse 5. No Barnes text on this verse.
{1} "the living", or "him that liveth"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 6

Verse 6. No Barnes text on this verse.
{c} "spake unto you"
Mt 16:21 17:23; Mr 8:31 Lu 9:22; Joh 2:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 7

Verse 7. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 8

Verse 8. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 9

Verse 9. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No Barnes text on this verse.
{d} "Joanna"
Lu 8:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 11

Verse 11. No Barnes text on this verse.
{e} "seemed to them"
Ge 19:14 2Ki 7:2; Job 9:16 Ps 126:1; Ac 12:9,15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 12

Verse 12. No Barnes text on this verse.
{f} "Then arose Peter"
Joh 20:3,6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Two of them*. Two of the disciples. The name of one of them was Cleopas, Lu 24:18. Many have supposed that the other was Luke, and that he omitted his own name from modesty. Others have supposed that it was Peter. See Lu 24:34 1Co 15:5 There is no evidence to guide us here. Dr. Lightfoot has shown that *Cleopas* is the same name as *Alpheus*, who was the father of the apostle James, Mt 10:3.

Emmaus. In regard to the locality of Emmaus, it seems quite probable that it is the same village which is referred to by Josephus (Jewish Wars, vii. 6, § 6), who states that, after the destruction of Jerusalem, Titus gave Emmaus, distant from Jerusalem threescore furlongs, to eight hundred of his troops, whom he had dismissed from his army, for their habitation. Dr. Thomson (*The Land and the Book*, vol. it. p. 307, 540) regards it as the present Kuriet el 'Aineb, which Dr. Robinson identifies with Kirjath-jearim. Of this place he says:

"Kuriet el 'Aineb itself would be the proper distance
from Jerusalem, and being on the road to Jaffa, and on

the dividing ridge between the plain and the mountains,
the Roman emperor might have deemed it an advantageous
post for a colony made up of his disbanded soldiers,
who could keep in check the surrounding country. Certain
it is that in these later ages the occupants of this
place have controlled the whole adjacent region, and
for many a generation exercised their lawless tyranny
upon helpless pilgrims.

"It took just three hours' moderate riding from Kuriet
el 'Aineb to Jerusalem: first, a long descent into
Wady Hanina, which passes between it and Soba; then a
similar ascent, succeeded by a very steep pass, and a
very slippery path down to Kulonia. At this place
are some heavy foundations of church, convent, or
castle by the road-side, which may be of almost any
age, and also gardens of fruit-trees, irrigated by
a fountain of excellent water. Kulonia is on a hill
north of the road, and appears in a fair way to
become a ruin itself before long. The path then winds
up a valley, and stretches over a dreary waste of bare
rocks until within a mile of the city, when the view
opens upon its naked ramparts and the mysterious
regions toward the Dead Sea."

Threescore furlongs. Sixty furlongs, or about seven or eight miles. It is not certain that these were apostles, but the contrary seems to be implied in Lu 24:33. **See Barnes on "Lu 24:33"**.

If they were not, it is probable that they were intimate disciples, who may have been much with the Saviour during the latter part of his ministry and the closing scenes of his life. But it is wholly unknown why they were going to Emmaus. It may have been that this was their native place, or that they had friends in the vicinity. They seem to have given up all for lost, and to have come to the conclusion that Jesus was not the Messiah, though they naturally conversed about it, and there were many things which they could not explain. Their Master had been crucified contrary to their expectation, their hopes dashed, their anticipation disappointed, and they were now returning in sadness, and very naturally conversed, in the way, of the things which had happened in Jerusalem.

{g} "two of them" Mr 16:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 14

Verse 14. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Communed together*. Talked together.

And reasoned. They reasoned, doubtless, about the probability or improbability that Jesus was the Messiah; about the evidence of his resurrection; about what was to be done in the present state of things.

Jesus himself drew near, &c. The disciples were properly employed. Their minds were anxious about the state of things, and they endeavoured to arrive at the truth. In this state of things Jesus came to solve their doubts, and to establish them in the belief that he was the Christ; and we may learn from this that Christ will guide those who are sincerely endeavouring to know the truth. They who candidly and seriously endeavour to ascertain what is true and right he will direct; and often in an unexpected manner he will appear, to dissipate their doubts and to scatter all their perplexities. Our duty is sincerely to strive to ascertain the truth, and to do his will; and if his people do this, he will not leave them to perplexity and wandering.

{h} "communed" Mal 3:16 Mt 18:20; Lu 24:36

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Their eyes were holden*. This expression is used merely to denote that they did not know who he was. It does not appear that there was anything supernatural or miraculous in it, or that God used any power to blind them. It may easily be accounted for without any such supposition; for,

1st. Jesus appeared *in another form* (Mr 16:12)—that is, different from his usual appearance.

2nd. They were not expecting to see him—indeed, they did not suppose that he was alive and it required the strongest evidence to convince them that he was really risen from the dead.

{i} "holden" Joh 20:14,15, 21:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *What manner of communications*, &c. What is the subject of your conversation? What is it that has so much affected your minds? They were deeply affected in the recollection of the death of Jesus; and, as became all Christians, they were conversing about him, and were sad at the overwhelming events that had come upon them.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Art thou only a stranger*? &c. This is an expression of surprise that he should be unacquainted with an affair that had made so much noise, and that had been attended with so

remarkable circumstances. The word *stranger* here denotes one who had come to reside at a place only for a *time*, not a permanent inhabitant. Many Jews came up from all parts of the world to Jerusalem, to keep the Passover there. They appear to have taken Jesus to be such a stranger or foreigner. The meaning of this verse may be thus expressed:

"The affair concerning which we are sad has been well
known, and has made a great talk and noise, so that all,
even the strangers who have come up to remain there but
a little time, are well acquainted with it. Art thou the
only one of them who has not heard it? Is everybody so
well acquainted with it, and thou hast not heard of it?
It is a matter of surprise, and we cannot account for it."

{k} "Cleopas" Joh 19:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *A prophet*. A teacher sent from God. They did not now call him the Messiah, for his death had led them to doubt that, but they had no doubt that he was a distinguished prophet. The evidence of that was so clear that they *could* not call it in question.

Mighty in deed. Powerful in working miracles, in raising the dead, healing the sick, &c.

In word. In teaching.

Before God and all the people. Manifestly; publicly. So that God owned him, and the people regarded him as a distinguished teacher.

{l} "prophet" Lu 7:16 Joh 3:2; Ac 2:22

{m} "mighty" Ac 7:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 20

Verse 20. **See Barnes "Mt 26:59, also** Mt 26:60-66

{n} "now" Lu 23:1 Ac 13:27,28

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *We trusted*. We hoped and expected.

Should have redeemed Israel. That he was the Messiah, who would have delivered the nation from the Romans.

Besides all this. It is to be observed that Cleopas states things just as they occurred to his own mind. There is little connection. His mind is confused and distracted. There were so many things that were remarkable in Jesus; there was so much evidence that he was the Messiah; their hopes had been so suddenly dashed by his death, and the succeeding events had been so wonderful, that

his mind was confused, and he knew not what to think. The things which he now stated served to increase his perplexity. The expressions here are perfectly natural. They bespeak an agitated mind. They are simple touches of nature, which show that the book was not forged. If the book had been the work of imposture, this artless and perplexed narrative would not have been thought of.

Today is the third day, &c. Jesus had foretold them that he would rise on the third day. This they did not understand; but it is not improbable that they looked to this day expecting something wonderful, and that the visit to the sepulchre had called it to their recollection, and they were more and more amazed when they put all these things together. As if they had said,

"The third day is come, and we have not seen him. Yet
we begin to remember his promise—the angels have
informed us that he is alive—but we do not know
how to put these things together, or what to make
of them."

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 22

Verses 22,23. *Certain women*. See Mt 28:1-7; Joh 20:12
A vision of angels. An appearance of angels, or they had seen angels. See Joh 20:12.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 23

Verse 23. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Certain of them which were with us*. Peter and John. See Joh 20:2-9.
{q} "Certain" He 5:11,12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *O fools*. The word *fool* sometimes is a term of reproach denoting wickedness. In this sense we are forbidden to employ it in addressing another, Mt 5:22. That, however, is a different word in the Greek from the one which occurs here. The one there used implies contempt, but the one employed in this place denotes *weakness* or *dulness*. He reproached them for not seeing what he had himself so clearly predicted, and what had been foretold by the prophets. The word used in the original does not imply as much *reproach* as the word *fool* does among us. It was not an

expression of *contempt*; it was an expression denoting merely that they were thoughtless, and that they did not properly attend to the evidence that he must die and rise again.

Slow of heart to believe. Not quick to perceive. Dull of learning. They had suffered their previous opinions and prejudices to prevent their seeing the evidence that he must die and rise from the dead.

All that the prophets have spoken. Respecting the character and sufferings of the Messiah. **See Barnes "Lu 24:27".**

{r} "O, fools" He 5:11,12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Ought not Christ*, &c. Ought not the *Messiah*. Was there not evidence that he would do it? and was it not indispensable that he should, in order to fulfil the prophecies? The *necessity* of his suffering these things referred to *here* was that it was foretold that he *would*. The reason why it was predicted, and why it was necessary that it should occur, was that it was proper that God should manifest his justice, and do honour to his law, and secure the due regard for his government, while he pardoned the guilty.

{s} Lu 24:46 Ac 17:3; He 9:22,23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *Beginning at Moses*. At the *writings* of Moses, or at the beginning of the Old Testament; or rather the word *beginning* should be separated from what follows, denoting simply that he commenced his discourse, and not that he began at the prophets as well as at Moses; thus, "And commencing his discourse, or replying to them, he expounded from Moses and the prophets," &c.

All the prophets. The books of the Old Testament generally.

He expounded. He explained or interpreted it to them. Probably he showed them that *their* notions of the Messiah were not according to the Scriptures. *They* expected a temporal prince; they were perplexed because Jesus had not assumed the regal power, but had been put to death. He showed them that according to the prophecies he ought to suffer, and that his death, therefore, was no argument that he was not the Messiah.

In all the scriptures. In all the *writings* of the Old Testament. They were called scriptures because they were written, the art of printing being then unknown.

The things concerning himself. Concerning the Messiah. It does not appear that he *applied* them to himself, but left them, probably, to make the application. He showed what the Scriptures foretold, and *they* saw that these things applied to Jesus of Nazareth, and began to be satisfied that he was the Messiah. The most striking passages foretelling the character and sufferings of Christ are the following, which we may suppose it possible our Saviour dwelt upon to convince them that, though he was crucified, yet he was the Christ: Ge 3:15 De 18:15; Ge 49:10 Nu 21:8-9; Is 53:1-12 Da 9:25-27; Is 9:6,7; Ps 110:1-7 Ps 16:1-11; Ps 22:1-31 Mal 4:2-6

{u} "Moses" Lu 24:44 Ac 3:22 {v} "the prophets" Ac 10:43 26:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *He made as though he would have gone further*. He did not say he would go farther, but he kept on as if it was not his intention to stop, and doubtless he *would* have gone on if they had not constrained him to tarry.

{w} "and he made as though" Ge 32:26 Mr 6:48

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Constrained him*. They urged him, or pressingly invited him. They did not yet perceive that it was Jesus, but they had been charmed and delighted with his discourse, and they wished to hear him farther. Christians are delighted with communion with the Saviour. They seek it as the chief object of their desire, and they find their chief pleasure in fellowship with him. The two disciples felt it a privilege to entertain the stranger, as they supposed, who had so charmed them with his discourse; and so those to whom the gospel is preached, and who love it, feel it a privilege, and not a burden, to show kindness to those who bear to them the message of salvation.

Abide with us. Remain with us, or pass the night in our house.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *Sat at meat*. Reclined at the table, or while he was at supper.

He took bread and blessed it, &c. This was the office of the master of a feast, and perhaps this first attracted particularly their attention. Though he was in *their* house, yet he acted as *master* of the feast, as he used to do with them before his death. Perhaps, also, as he *gave* them the bread, they observed the prints in his hands, and they knew that it was Jesus. This was not a *sacramental*, but a common supper; yet our Saviour sought a blessing on the food, and thus set an example to all his followers to acknowledge God in their daily gifts, and to seek his benediction in all their enjoyments.

{2} "vanished" or, "ceased to be seen of them"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *Their eyes were opened*. The obscurity was removed. They saw him to be the Messiah. Their doubts were gone, and they saw clearly that he was risen, and was truly, as they had long

hoped, the Saviour of men. It is not meant that they were before blind, but that they did not know till then who he was.

He vanished out of their sight. He suddenly departed. It does not appear that there was anything miraculous in this, but, during their surprise, he took the opportunity suddenly to withdraw from them.

{2} "vanished" or, "ceased to be seen of them"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *Our heart burn within us*. This is an expression denoting the deep interest and pleasure which they had felt in his discourse before they knew who he was. They now recalled his instruction; they remembered how his words reached the heart as he spoke to them; how convincingly he had showed them that the Messiah ought to suffer, and how, while he talked to them of the Christ that they so much loved, their hearts glowed with intense love. This feeling was not confined to them alone. All the followers of Jesus know how precious and tender are the communications of the Saviour, and how the heart glows with love as they think or hear of his life, and sufferings, and death.

He opened to us. He *explained* to us the Scriptures. See Lu 24:27. This narrative shows us,

1st. How blind men may be to the plainest doctrines of the Scriptures until they are explained to them. These disciples had often read or heard the Scriptures, but never, till then, did they fully understand that the Messiah must suffer.

2nd. It is proper there should be those whose office it is to explain the Scriptures. Jesus did it while on earth; he does it now by his Spirit; and he has appointed his ministers, whose business it is to explain them.

3rd. If men attempt to explain the Bible, they should themselves understand it. They should give their time and talents to a suitable preparation to understand the sacred volume. Preaching should consist in *real*, and not *fancied* explanations of the Scriptures; the real doctrines which *God* has taught in his word, and not the doctrines that *men* have taught in their systems.

4th. Here was convincing evidence that Jesus was the Messiah. This was but one of many instances where Jesus convinced his disciples, contrary to their previous belief. In this case the evidence was abundant. He first satisfied them from the Old Testament that the very things which had happened were foretold; he then dissipated every doubt by showing *himself* to them and convincing them that he was truly the Christ. There was no chance here for deception and juggling. Who would have met them and talked with them in this way but the real Saviour? Who would have thought of writing this narrative to help an imposture? What impostor would have recorded the dulness of the disciples as to the plain declarations of the Old Testament, and *then* have thought of this device to prop up the narrative? Everything about this narrative—its simplicity—its tenderness—its particularity—its perfect nature—its freedom from all appearance of trick—shows that it was taken from real life; and if so, then the Christian religion is true, for here is evidence that Jesus rose from the dead.

{y} "burn" Ps 39:3 Jer 20:9, 23:29

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *The same hour*. Though it was late, and they had stopped, as they thought, for the night, yet such was their joy that they hastened to tell it to their companions and friends. This was natural and proper, and it shows how quick and ready they who have found the Saviour are to tell it to others. Comp. Joh 1:41-45. Young converts to Christ should hasten to tell their joy, and should not shrink at self-denial to proclaim to others what God hath done for the soul, Ps 66:16.

"My lips and cheerful heart, prepare
To make his mercies known:
Come, ye that fear my God, and hear
The wonders he hath done.

"When on my head huge sorrows fell,
I sought his heavenly aid;
He saved my sinking soul from hell,
And death's eternal shade."

The eleven. The eleven apostles. Judas was now dead. This shows that the two that went to Emmaus were not apostles.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *Saying*. The eleven said this.

Hath appeared to Simon. To Peter. It is not known precisely when this happened, as the time and place are not mentioned. Paul has referred to it in 1Co 15:5, from which it appears that he appeared to *Cephas* or *Peter* before he did to any other of the apostles. This was a mark of special love and favour, and particularly, after Peter's denial, it showed how ready he was to pardon, and how willing to impart comfort to those who are penitent, though their sins are great.

{z} "hath appeared" 1Co 15:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 35

Verse 35. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 36

Verses 36,37. *Jesus stood in the midst of them*. This was when the apostles were assembled, and when they had closed the doors for fear of the Jews, Joh 20:19. It was this fact, as well as his

sudden and unexpected appearance, that alarmed them. The doors were shut, and the suddenness of his appearance led them to suppose they had seen a spirit.

Peace be unto you. This was a form of salutation among the Hebrews denoting a wish of peace and prosperity. See Ge 43:23. It was peculiarly appropriate for Jesus, as he had said before his death that he left his peace with them as their inheritance (Joh 14:27), and as they were now alarmed and fearful at their state, and trembling for fear of the Jews, Joh 20:19

{a} "And as they thus spake" Mr 16:14 Joh 20:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 37

Verse 37. No Barnes text on this verse.

{b} "supposed they had"

Mr 6:49

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *Why are ye troubled*? Why are you alarmed or frightened?

And why do thoughts, &c. The word *thoughts* here means *doubts* or suspicions. It is used in this sense also in 1Ti 2:8. The doubts which they had were whether he was the Christ. He reproves them for doubting this; for,

1st. The Scriptures had foretold his death;

2nd. He had himself repeatedly done it; and,

3rd. They had now the testimony of Peter that he had seen Jesus alive, and of the angels that he was risen. After all this evidence, Jesus reproves them for doubting whether he was truly the Messiah.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 39

Verses 39-43. *Behold my hands*, &c. Jesus proceeds to give them evidence that he was truly the same person that had been crucified. He first showed them his hands and his feet—still pierced, and with the wounds made by the nails still open. Comp. Joh 20:27. He told them to handle him and see him. He ate before them. All this was to satisfy them that be was not, as they supposed, a spirit. Nor could better evidence have been given. He appealed to their senses, and performed acts which a disembodied spirit could not do.

Handle me. Or touch me; feel of me. Comp. Joh 20:27.

And see. Be convinced, for you could not thus handle a spirit. The object here was to convince them that his body had really come to life.

For a spirit, &c. He appeals here to what they well knew; and this implies that the spirit may exist separate from the body. That was the view of the apostles, and our Saviour distinctly countenances that belief.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 40

Verse 40. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 41

Verse 41. *Believed not for joy*. Their joy was so great, and his appearance was so sudden and unexpected, that they were bewildered, and still sought more evidence of the truth of what they *wished* to believe. This is nature. We have similar expressions in our language. *The news is too good to be true*; or, *I cannot believe it*; *it is too much for me*.

Any meat. This word does not mean *meat* in our sense of it, but in the old English sense, denoting *anything to eat*.

{c} "believed" Ge 45:26 {d} "Have ye" Joh 21:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 42

Verse 42. *Honey-comb*. Honey abounded in Palestine, and was a very common article of food. Bees lived in caves of the rocks, in the hollows of trees, and were also kept as with us. The disciples gave, probably, just what was their own common fare, and what was ready at the time.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 43

Verse 43. No Barnes text on this verse.

{e} "did eat" Ac 10:41

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 44

Verse 44. *These are the words*. Or this is the fulfilment of what I before told you respecting my death. See Lu 18:33 Mr 10:33.

While I was yet with you. Before my death. While I was with you as a teacher and guide.

In the law of Moses. The five books of Moses— Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. Among the Jews this was the first division of the Old Testament, and was called the law.

The prophets. This was the second and largest part of the Hebrew Scriptures. It comprehended the books of Joshua, Judges, 1st and 2nd Samuel, 1st and 2nd Kings, which were called the *former* prophets; and Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve smaller books from Daniel to Malachi, which were called the *latter* prophets.

The psalms. The word here used probably means what were comprehended under the name of *Hagiographa*, or holy writings. This consisted of the Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, and the two books of Chronicles. This division of the Old Testament was in use long before the time of Christ, and was what he referred to here; and he meant to say that in *each of* these divisions of the Old Testament there were prophecies respecting himself. The *particular* subject before them was his *resurrection from the dead*. A most striking prediction of this is contained in Ps 16:9-11. Compare it with Ac 2:24-32 13:35-37.

{f} "These are" Mt 16:21 {g} "that all things" Lu 21:22 Ac 3:18, 13:27,33

{h} "in the prophets" Lu 24:27 {i} "in the *Psalms*" Ps 22:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 45

Verse 45. *Opened he their understanding*. Enabled them fully to comprehend the meaning of the prophecies which foretold his death and resurrection. They had seen him die, they now saw him risen. Their prejudices were now, by his instructions, and by the facts which they could no longer call in question, removed, and they no longer doubted that he was the Messiah, and that all the *facts* in the case which had before confounded them could be easily accounted for. Hence we may learn-

1st. That *facts*, or the farther disclosure of truth, will yet remove the *mysteries* that we now see in religion.

2nd. That our prejudices and our preconceived opinions are one cause of our seeing so many mysteries in the Bible. If a man is willing to take the plain declarations of the Bible, he will commonly be little perplexed with mysteries.

3rd. That God only can open the mind so as fully to comprehend the Scriptures. He only can overcome our prejudices, open our hearts, and dispose us to receive the ingrafted word with meekness, and with the simplicity of a child. See Ac 16:14 Jas 1:21; Mr 10:15.

4th. The design of God's opening the understanding is that we may be acquainted with the Scriptures. It is not that we may be made wise above what is written, but that we may submit ourselves wholly to the Word of God.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 46

Verse 46. *It behoved* It became proper or necessary that the Messiah should thus suffer. It was predicted of him, and all things have happened as it was foretold.

{k} "it behoved" Isa 53:3,5; Ac 4:12

{l} "to rise" 1Pe 1:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 47

Verse 47. *Repentance*. Sorrow for sin and forsaking of it. It was proper that the necessity of repentance should be preached among all nations, for all were sinners. See Ac 17:30.

Remission of sins. Pardon or forgiveness of sins. It should be proclaimed that all men should repent, and that those who are penitent may be pardoned.

In my name. By my command it should be proclaimed that men should repent, and by my merit that they may be pardoned. Pardon is offered by the authority of Christ to ALL nations, and this is a sufficient warrant to offer the gospel to *every man*.

Beginning at Jerusalem. This was the dwelling of his murderers, and it shows his readiness to forgive the vilest sinners. It was the holy place of the temple, the habitation of God, the place of the solemnities of the ancient dispensation, and it was proper that pardon should be first proclaimed there. This was done—the gospel was first preached there. See Ac 2:1 and following. Paul also, in his travels, preached the gospel *first* to the Jews, the ancient people of God, offering them pardon through their own Messiah; and, when *they* rejected it, turned to the Gentiles, Ac 13:46.

{m} "repentance" Ac 5:31 13:38

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 48

Verse 48. *Are witnesses of these things*. Of my life, my sufferings, my death, and my resurrection. How solemn was their office—to *testify* these things to the world, and, in the face of suffering and death, to and proclaim them to all nations! In manner, like *all* Christians are witnesses for Christ. They are the evidences of his mercy and his love, and they should so live that others may be brought to see and love the Saviour.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 49

Verse 49. *The promise of my Father*. The promise which the Father had made to them *through* the Saviour. See Mt 10:19 Joh 14:16,17,26.

The promise was, that they should be aided by the power of the Holy Ghost. He also doubtless referred to the promise of God, made in the days of Joel, respecting the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. See Joe 2:28,29, compared with Ac 2:16-21.

Endued with power from on high. The power which would be given them by the descent of the Holy Ghost —the power of speaking with tongues, of working miracles, and of preaching the gospel

with the attending blessing and aid of the Holy Ghost. This was accomplished in the gift of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. See Ac 2:1 and following.

{o} "endue" Isa 44:3 Joe 2:28; Ac 2:1-21 1:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 50

Verses 50,51. *To Bethany*. **See Barnes "Mr 16:19".**

Bethany was on the eastern declivity of the Mount of Olives, from which our Lord was taken up to heaven, Ac 1:12. Bethany was a favoured place. It was the abode of Martha, and Mary, and Lazarus, and our Saviour delighted to be there. From this place, also, he ascended to his Father and our Father, and to his God and our God.

While he blessed them. While he commanded his benediction to rest upon them; while he assured them of his favour, and commended them to the protection and guidance of God, in the dangers, trials, and conflicts which they were to meet in a sinful and miserable world.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 51

Verse 51. No Barnes text on this verse.

{p} "carried up" Ac 1:9 Heb 4:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 52

Verse 52. *They worshipped him*. The word *worship* does not always denote religious homage. **See Barnes "Mt 2:11".**

Comp. Lu 14:10. But here it is to be remarked,

1st. That they offered this worship to an *absent* Saviour. It was *after* he left them and had vanished out of their sight. It was therefore an act of religion, and was the *first* religious homage that was paid to Jesus after he had left the world.

2nd. If *they* worshipped an absent Saviour—a Saviour unseen by the bodily eye, it is right for *us* to do it. It was an example which we *may* and *should* follow.

3rd. If worship may be rendered to Jesus, he is divine. See Ex 20:4,5

{q} "worshipped him" Mt 28:9,17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE - Chapter 24 - Verse 53

Verse 53. *Were continually in the temple*. Until the day of Pentecost—that is, about ten days after. See Ac 2:1-47.

Praising and blessing God. Chiefly for the full proof that the Messiah had come; had redeemed them, and had ascended to heaven. "Thus the days of their mourning were ended." They were filled with happiness at the assurance of redemption, and expressed what every Christian should feel—fulness of joy at the glad tidings that a Saviour has died, and risen, and ascended to God; and an earnest desire to pour forth in the sanctuary prayers and thanksgivings to the God of grace for his mercy to a lost and ruined world.

{r} "praising" Ac 2:46,47, 5:42

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 1

PREFACE

TO THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN.

John, the writer of this Gospel, was the son of Zebedee and Salome; compare Mt 27:56 with Mr 15:40,41. His father was a fisherman of Galilee, though it would appear that he was not destitute of property, and was not in the lowest condition of life. He had hired men in his employ, Mr 1:20. *Salome* is described as one who attended our Saviour in his travels, and ministered to his wants, Mt 27:55 Mr 15:41. Jesus commended his own mother Mary, on the cross, to John, and he took her to his own home (Joh 19:26,27), with whom, history informs us, she lived until her death, about fifteen years after the crucifixion of Christ; and John was known to Caiaphas, the high-priest, Joh 18:15. From all this it would seem not improbable that John had some property, and was better known than any of the other apostles.

He was the youngest of the apostles when called, and lived to the greatest age, and is the only one who is supposed to have died a peaceful death. He was called to be a follower of Jesus while engaged with his father and his elder brother James mending their nets at the Sea of Tiberias, Mt 4:21 Mr 1:19; Lu 5:10.

John was admitted by our Saviour to peculiar favour and friendship. One of the ancient fathers (Theophylact) says that he was related to him.

"Joseph," he says, "had seven children by a former
wife, four sons and three daughters, Martha, Esther,
and *Salome*, whose son John was; therefore Salome was
reckoned our Lord's sister, and John was his nephew."

If this was the case it may explain the reason why James and John sought and expected the first places in his kingdom, Mt 20:20,21. These may also possibly be the persons who were called our Lord's "brethren" and "sisters," Mt 13:55,56. This may also explain the reason why our Saviour committed his mother to the care of John on the cross, Joh 19:27. The two brothers, James and John, with Peter, were several times admitted to peculiar favours by our Lord. They were the only disciples that were permitted to be present at the raising of the daughter of Jairus, Mr 5:37 Lu 8:51; they only were permitted to attend the Saviour to the mount where he was transfigured, Mt 17:1 Mr 9:2. The same three were permitted to be present at his sufferings in the garden of Gethsemane, Mt 26:36-45; Mr 14:32-42. And it was to *these* disciples, together with Andrew, to whom the Saviour specially addressed himself when he made known the desolations that were coming upon Jerusalem and Judea; compare Mt 24:12 Mr 13:3,4.

John was also admitted to *peculiar* friendship with the Lord Jesus. Hence he is mentioned as "that disciple whom Jesus loved" (Joh 19:26), and he is represented (Joh 13:23) as leaning on his bosom at the institution of the Lord's Supper-an evidence of peculiar friendship. **See Barnes "Joh 13:23".**

Though the Redeemer was attached to *all* his disciples, yet there is no improbability in supposing that *his* disposition was congenial with that of the meek and amiable John—thus authorizing and setting the example of special friendships among Christians.

To John was committed the care of Mary, the mother of Jesus. After the ascension of Christ he remained some time at Jerusalem, Ac 1:14 3:1, 4:13.

John is also mentioned as having been sent down to Samaria to preach the gospel there with Peter (Ac 8:14-25); and from Acts chapter 15 it appears that he was present at the council at Jerusalem, A.D. 49 or 50. All this agrees with what is said by Eusebius, that he lived at Jerusalem till the death of Mary, fifteen years after the crucifixion of Christ. Till this time it is probable that he had not been engaged in preaching the gospel among the Gentiles.

At what time he went first among the Gentiles to preach the gospel is not certainly known. It has commonly been supposed that he resided in Judea and the neighbourhood until the war broke out with the Romans, and that he came into Asia Minor about the year 69 or 70. It is clear that he was not at Ephesus at the time that Paul visited those regions, as in all the travels of Paul and Luke there is no mention made of John.

Ecclesiastical history informs us that he spent the latter part of his life in Asia Minor, and that he resided chiefly at Ephesus, the chief city of that country. Of his residence there little is certainly known. In the latter part of his life he was banished to Patmos, a small desolate island in the AEgean Sea, about twenty miles in circumference. This is commonly supposed to have been during the persecution of Domitian, i.n the latter part of his reign. Domitian died A.D. 96. It is probable that he returned soon after that, in the reign of the Emperor Trajan. In that island he wrote the book of Revelation. **See Barnes "Re 1:9".**

After his return from Patmos he lived peaceably at Ephesus until his death, which is supposed to have occurred not long after. He was buried at Ephesus; and it has been commonly thought that he was the only one of the apostles who did not suffer martyrdom. It is evident that he lived to a very advanced period of life. We know not his age, indeed, when Christ called him to follow him, but we cannot suppose it was less than twenty-five or thirty. If so, he must have been not far from one hundred years old when he died.

Many anecdotes are related of him while he remained at Ephesus, but there is no sufficient evidence of their truth. Some have said that he was taken to Rome in a time of persecution and thrown into a caldron of boiling oil, and came out uninjured. It has been said also that, going into a bath one day at Ephesus, he perceived *Cerinthus*, who denied the divinity of the Saviour, and that he fled from him hastily, to express his disapprobation of his doctrine. It is also said, and of this there can be no doubt, that during his latter years he was not able to make a long discourse. He was carried to the church, and was accustomed to say nothing but this, "Little children, love one another." At length his disciples asked him why he always dwelt upon the same thing. He replied, "Because it is the Lord's command; and if this be done, it is sufficient."

Learned men have been much divided about the *time* when this Gospel was written. Wetstein supposed it was written just after our Saviour's ascension; Mill and Le Clerc, that it was written in 97; Dr. Lardner, that it was about the year 68, just before the destruction of Jerusalem. The common

opinion is that it was written at Ephesus after his return from Patmos, and of course as late as the year 97 or 98. Nothing can be determined with certainty on the subject, and it is a matter of very little consequence.

There is no doubt that it was written by John. This is abundantly confirmed by the ancient fathers, and was not questioned by Celsus, Porphyry, or Julian, the acutest enemies of revelation in the early ages. It has never been extensively questioned to have been the work of John, and is one of the books of the New Testament whose canonical authority was never disputed. See Lardner, or Paley's *Evidences*.

The design of writing it John himself states, Joh 20:31. It was to show that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, and that those who believed might have life through his name. *This design is kept in view through the whole Gospel, and should be remembered in our attempts to explain it*. Various attempts have been made to show that he wrote it to confute the followers of Cerinthus and the Gnostics, but no satisfactory evidence of such a design has been furnished.

As he wrote after the other evangelists, he has recorded many things which they omitted. He dwells much more fully than they do on the *divine character* of Jesus; relates many things pertaining to the early part of his ministry which they had omitted; records many more of his discourses than they have done, and particularly the interesting discourse at the institution of the Supper. See chapters 14-17.

It has been remarked that there are evidences in this Gospel that it was not written for the Jews. The author explains words and customs which to a Jew would have needed no explanation. See Joh 1:38,41 Joh 5:1,2, 7:2 4:9.

The style in the Greek indicates that he was an unlearned man. It is simple, plain, unpolished, such as we should *suppose* would be used by one in his circumstances. At the same time it is dignified, containing pure and profound sentiments, and is on many accounts the most difficult of all the books of the New Testament to interpret. It contains more about *Christ*, his person, design, and work, than any of the other Gospels. The other evangelists were employed more in recording the *miracles*, and giving *external* evidence of the divine mission of Jesus. John is employed chiefly in telling us what he was, and what was his peculiar doctrine. His aim was to show,

1st. That Jesus was the Messiah.

2nd. To show, *from the words of Jesus himself*, what the Messiah was. The other evangelists record his parables, his miracles, his debates with the Scribes and Pharisees; John records chiefly his discourses about *himself*. If anyone wishes to learn the true doctrine respecting the *Messiah, the Son of God*, expressed in simple language, but with most sublime conceptions; to learn the true nature and character of God, and the way of approach to his mercy-seat; to see the true nature of Christian piety, or the source and character of religious consolation; to have perpetually before him the purest model of character the world has seen, and to contemplate the purest precepts that have ever been delivered to man, he cannot better do it than by a prayerful study of the Gospel by John. It may be added that this Gospel is of itself proof that cannot be overthrown of the truth of revelation. John was a fisherman, unhonoured and unlearned, Ac 4:13. What man in that rank of life now could compose a book like this? Can it be conceived that any man of that rank, unless under the influence of inspiration, could conceive so sublime notions of God, could present so pure views of morals, and could draw a character so inimitably lovely and pure as that of Jesus Christ? To ask these questions is to answer them. And this Gospel will stand to the end of time as an unanswerable demonstration that the fisherman who wrote it was under a more than human guidance, and was,

according to the promise that he has recorded (Joh 16:13 comp. Joh 14:26), *guided into all truth*. It will also remain as an unanswerable proof that the character which he has described—the character of the Lord Jesus—was real. It is a perfect character. It has not a flaw. How has this happened? The attempt has often been made to draw a perfect character—and as often, in every other instance, failed. How is it, when Homer and Virgil, and the ancient historians, have all failed to describe a perfect character, with the purest models before them, and with all the aid of imagination, that in every instance they have failed? How is it that this has at last been accomplished only by a Jewish fisherman? The difficulty is vastly increased if another idea is borne in mind. John describes one who he believed had a divine nature, Joh 1:1. It is an attempt to describe *God in human nature*, or to show how the Divine Being acts when united with man, or when appearing in human form. And the description is complete. There is not a word expressed by the Lord Jesus, or an emotion ascribed to him, inconsistent with such a supposition. But this same attempt was often made, and as often failed. Homer and Virgil, and all the ancient poets, have undertaken to show what the gods would be if they came down and conversed with man. And what were they? What were Jupiter, and Juno, and Venus, and Mars, and Vulcan? Beings of lust, and envy, and contention, and blood. How has it happened that the only successful account which has been given of the divine nature united with the human, and of living and acting as became such a union, has been given by a Jewish fisherman? How, unless the character was real, and the writer under a guidance far superior to the genius of Homer and the imagination of Virgil—the guidance of the Holy Spirit?

THE

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN.

Verse 1. *In the beginning*. This expression is used also in Ge 1:1. To that place John evidently has allusion here, and means to apply to "the Word" an expression which is there applied *to God*. In both places it clearly means "before creation," "before the world was made," "when as yet there was nothing." The meaning is, that the *Word* had an existence before the world was created. This is not spoken of the *man* Jesus, but of that which *became* a man, or was incarnate, Joh 1:14. The Hebrews, by expressions like this, commonly denoted eternity. Thus the eternity of God is described (Ps 90:2): *Before the mountains were brought forth*, &c.; and eternity is commonly expressed by the phrase, *before the foundation of the world*. Whatever is meant by the term "Word," it is clear that it had an existence before *creations*. It is not, then, a *creature* or created being, and must be, therefore, uncreated and eternal. There is but *one* Being that is uncreated, and Jesus must be therefore divine. Compare the Saviour's own declarations respecting himself in the following places: Joh 8:58 17:5, 6:62 3:13 6:46 8:14 16:28.

Was the Word. Greek, "was the *Logos*." This name is given to him who afterward became *flesh*, or was incarnate (Joh 1:14)—that is, to the Messiah. Whatever is meant by it, therefore, is applicable to the Lord Jesus Christ. There have been many opinions about the reason why this name was given to the Son of God. Those opinions it is unnecessary to repeat. The opinion which seems most plausible may be expressed as follows:

1st. A *word* is that by which we communicate our will; by which we convey our thoughts;

2nd. The Son of God may be called "the Word," because he is the medium by which God promulgates his will and issues his commandments. See Heb 1:1-3.

3rd. This term was in use before the time of John.

(a) It was used in the Chaldee translation of the Old Testament, as, e.g., Is 45:12: "I have made the earth, and created man upon it." In the Chaldee it is, "I, *by my word*, have made," &c. Isa 48:13: "Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth." In the Chaldee, "*By my word* I have founded the earth." And so in many other places.

(b) This term was used by the Jews as applicable to the Messiah. In their writings he was commonly known by the term "Mimra "—that is, "Word;" and no small part of the interpositions of God in defence of the Jewish nation were declared to be by "the Word of God." Thus, in their Targum on De 26:17,18, it is said, "Ye have appointed THE WORD OF GOD a king over you this day, that he may be your God."

(c) The term was used by the Jews who were scattered among the Gentiles, and especially those who were conversant with the Greek philosophy.

(d) The term was used by the followers of Plato among the Greeks, to denote the second person of the *Trinity*. The term *nous*, or *mind*, was commonly given to this second person, but it was said that this *nous* was *the word* or *reason* of the first person. The term was therefore extensively in use among the Jews and Gentiles before John wrote his Gospel, and it was certain that it would be applied to the second person of the Trinity by Christians, whether converted from Judaism or Paganism. It was important, therefore, that the *meaning* of the term should be settled by an inspired man, and accordingly John, in the commencement of his Gospel, is at much pains to state clearly what is the true doctrine respecting the Logos, or Word. It is *possible*, also, that the doctrines of the Gnostics had begun to spread in the time of John. They were an Oriental sect, and held that the *Logos* or *Word* was one of the *AEons* that had been created, and that this one had been united to the man Jesus. If that doctrine had begun then to prevail, it was of the more importance for John to settle the truth in regard to the rank of the Logos or Word. This he has done in such a way that there need be no doubt about its meaning.

Was with God. This expression denotes friendship or intimacy. Comp. Mr 9:19. John affirms that he was *with God* in the beginning— that is, before the world was made. It implies, therefore, that he was partaker of the divine glory; that he was blessed and happy with God. It proves that he was intimately united with the Father, so as to partake of his glory and to be appropriately called by the name God. He has himself explained it. See Joh 17:5: *And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was*. See also Joh 1:18: *No man hath seen God at any time, the only-begotten Son, which IS IN THE BOSOM OF THE FATHER, he hath declared him*. See also Joh 3:13: *The Son of man, which is in heaven*. Comp. Php 2:6,7.

Was God. In the previous phrase John had said that the Word was *with God*. Lest it should be supposed that he was a different and *inferior* being, he here states that *he was God*. There is no more unequivocal declaration in the Bible than this, and there *could* be no stronger proof that the sacred writer meant to affirm that the Son of God was equal with the Father; for,

1st. There is no doubt that by the *Logos* is meant Jesus Christ.

2nd. This is not an *attribute* or quality of God, but is a real subsistence, for it is said that the Logos was made *flesh*—that is, became a man.

3rd. There is no variation here in the manuscripts, and critics have observed that the Greek will bear no other construction than what is expressed in our translation-that the Word *was God*.

4th. There is no evidence that John intended to use the word *God* in an *inferior* sense. It is not "the Word was *a god*," or "the Word was *like God*," but the Word *was God*. He had just used the

word *God* as evidently applicable to Jehovah, the true God; and it is absurd to suppose that the would *in the same verse*, and without any indication that he was using the word in an inferior sense, employ it to denote a being altogether inferior to the true God.

5th. The name *God* is elsewhere given to him, showing that he is the supreme God. See Ro 9:5 Heb 1:8,9,10-12 1Jo 5:20 Joh 20:28.

The meaning of this important verse may then be thus summed up:

1st. The name Logos, or Word, is given to Christ in reference to his becoming the Teacher or Instructor of mankind; the medium of communication between God and man.

2nd. The name was in use at the time of John, and it was his design to state the correct doctrine respecting the Logos.

3rd. The *Word*, or Logos, existed *before creation*—of course was not a *creature*, and must have been, therefore, from eternity.

4th. He was *with God*—that is, he was united to him in a most intimate and close union *before* the creation; and, as it could not be said that God was *with himself*, it follows that the Logos was in some sense *distinct* from God, or that there was a *distinction* between the Father and the Son. When we say that one is *with another*, we imply that there is some sort of distinction between them.

5th. Yet, lest it should be supposed that he was a different and inferior being—a creature—he affirms that he was God—that is, was equal with the Father. This is the foundation of the doctrine of the Trinity:

1. That the second person is in some sense distinct from the first.

2. That he is intimately united with the first person in essence, so that there are not two or more Gods.

3. That the second person may be called by the same name; has the same attributes; performs the same works; and is entitled to the same honours with the first, and that therefore he is "the same in substance, and equal in power and glory," with God.

{a} "In the beginning" Pr 8:22-31 Col 1:16,17 1Jo 1:1

{b} "the Word" Re 19:13 {c} "with God" Joh 17:5 {d} "was God" Php 2:6 Heb 1:8-13; 1Jo 5:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *The same*. The Word, or the Logos,

Was in the beginning with God. This seems to be a repetition of what was said in the first verse; but it is stated over again *to guard the doctrine*, and to prevent the possibility of a mistake. John had said that he existed before the creation, and that he was *with God*; but he had not said in the first verse *that the union with God existed in the beginning*. He now expresses that idea, and assures us that that union was not one which was commenced *in time*, and which might be, therefore, a mere union of *feeling*, or a *compact*, like that between any other beings, but was one which existed in *eternity*, and which was therefore a union of *nature or essence*.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *All things*. The universe. The expression cannot be limited to any part of the universe. It appropriately expresses everything which exists—all the vast masses of material worlds, and all the animals and things, great or small, that compose those worlds. See Re 4:11 Heb 1:2; Col 1:16.

Were made. The original word is from the verb *to be*, and signifies "*were*" by him; but it expresses the idea of creation here. It does not alter the sense whether it is said "*were* by him," or "were *created* by him." The word is often used in the sense of *creating*, or forming from nothing. See Jas 3:9 Ge 2:4 Isa 48:7, in the Septuagint.

By him. In this place it is affirmed that creation was effected by the *Word*, or the Son of God. In Ge 1:1, it is said that the Being who created the heavens and the earth was God. In Ps 102:25-28, this work is ascribed to Jehovah. The Word, or the Son of God, is therefore appropriately called *God*. The work of creation is uniformly ascribed in the Scriptures to the second person of the Trinity. See Col 1:16 Heb 1:2,10.

By this is meant, evidently, that he was the agent, or the efficient cause, by which the universe was made. There is no higher proof of *omnipotence* than the work of *creation*; and hence God often appeals to that work to prove that he is the *true* God, in opposition to idols. See Isa 40:18-28 Jer 10:3-16 Ps 24:2, 39:11 Pr 3:19.

It is absurd to say that God can invest a creature with *omnipotence*. If he can make a creature omnipotent, he can make him *omniscient*, and can in the same way make him omnipresent, and infinitely wise and good; that is, he can invest a creature with all his own attributes, or make another being like himself, or, which is the same thing, there could be two Gods, or as many Gods as he should choose to make. But this is absurd. The Being, therefore, that *created* all things must be divine; and as this work is ascribed to Jesus Christ, and as it is uniformly in the Scriptures declared to be the work of God, Jesus Christ is therefore *equal* with the Father.

Without him. Without his agency; his notice; the exertion of his power. Comp. Mt 10:29. This is a strong way of speaking, designed to confirm, beyond the possibility of doubt, what he had just said. He says, therefore, in general, that all things were made by Christ. In this part of the verse he shuts out all doubt, and affirms that there was *no exceptions*; that there was not a single thing, however minute or unimportant, which was not made by him. In this way he confirms what he said in the first verse. Christ was not merely *called* God, but he did the *works* of God, and therefore the name is used in its proper sense as implying supreme divinity. To this same test Jesus himself appealed as proving that he was divine. Joh 10:37: *If I do not THE WORKS of my Father, believe me not*. Joh 5:17: *MY FATHER worketh hitherto, and I work*.

{e} "All things" Ps 33:6 Eph 3:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *In him was life*. The evangelist had just affirmed Joh 1:3 that by the *Logos* or *Word* the world was originally created. One part of that creation consisted in *breathing into man the breath of life*, Ge 2:7. God is declared to be *life*, or the *living* God, because he is the source or fountain of life. This attribute is here ascribed to Jesus Christ. He not merely made the *material*

worlds, but he also gave *life*. He was the agent by which the *vegetable* world became animated; by which *brutes* live; and by which *man* became a living soul, or was endowed with immortality. This was a *higher* proof that the "Word was God," than the creation of the material worlds; but there is another sense in which he was *life*. The *new creation*, or the renovation of man and his restoration from a state of sin, is often compared with the *first creation*; and as the Logos was the source of *life* then, so, in a similar but higher sense, he is the source of life to the soul dead in trespasses and sins, Eph 2:1. And it is probably in reference to this that he is so often called *life* in the writings of John. "For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself," Joh 5:26; "He giveth life unto the world," Joh 6:33; "I am the resurrection and the life," Joh 11:25; "This is the true God and eternal life," 1Jo 5:20. See also 1Jo 1:1,2, 5:11 Ac 3:15; Col 3:4.

The meaning is, that he is the source or the fountain of both natural and spiritual life. Of course he has the attributes of God.

The life was the light of men. *Light* is that by which we see objects distinctly. The light of the sun enables us to discern the form, the distance, the magnitude, and the relation of objects, and prevents the perplexities and dangers which result from a state of darkness. Light is in all languages, therefore, put for *knowledge* —for whatever enables us to discern our duty, and that saves us from the evils of ignorance and error. "Whatsoever doth make manifest is light," Eph 5:13. See Isa 8:20 9:2. The Messiah was predicted as the *light* of the world, Isa 9:2, compared with Mt 4:15,16; Isa 60:1. See Joh 8:12, "I am the light of the world;" Joh 12:35 36 46

"I am come a light into the world." The meaning is, that the Logos or Word of God is the *instructor* or *teacher* of man-kind. This was done before his advent by his direct agency in giving man reason or understanding, and in giving his law, for the "law was ordained by angels *in the hand of a mediator*" (Ga 3:19); after his advent by his personal ministry when on earth, by his Spirit (Joh 14:16,26), and by his ministers since, Eph 4:11 1Co 12:28.

{f} "In him was life" Joh 5:26 1Jo 5:11 {g} "the light of men" Joh 8:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *The light shineth in darkness*. Darkness, in the Bible, commonly denotes ignorance, guilt, or misery. See Is 9:1 2, Mt 4:16 Ac 26:18; Eph 5:8 11; Re 13:12.

It refers here to a wicked and ignorant people. When it is said that "the light shineth in darkness," it is meant that the Lord Jesus came to teach an ignorant, benighted, and wicked world: This has always been the case. It was so when he sent his prophets; so during his own ministry; and so in every age since. His efforts to enlighten and save men have been like light struggling to penetrate a thick, dense cloud; and though a few rays may pierce the gloom, yet the great mass is still an impenetrable shade.

Comprehended it not. This word means *admitted* it not, or *received* it not. The word *comprehend*, with us, means to *understand*. This is not the meaning of the original. The darkness did not *receive* or *admit* the rays of light; the shades were so thick that the light could not penetrate them; or, to drop the figure, men were so ignorant, so guilty, so debased, that they did not appreciate the value of his instructions; they despised and rejected him. And so it is still. The great mass of men, sunk in sin, will not receive his teachings, and be enlightened and saved by him. Sin always blinds the

mind to the beauty and excellency of the character of the Lord Jesus. It indisposes the mind to receive his instructions, just as *darkness* has no affinity for *light*; and if the one exists, the other must be displaced.

{light shineth in darkness} Joh 3:19 {comprehendeth it not} 1Co 2:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *A man sent from God*. See Matthew, Chapter 3. The evangelist proceeds now to show that John the Baptist was not the Messiah, and to state the true nature of his office. Many had supposed that he was the Christ, but this opinion he corrects; yet he admits that he was *sent from God*—that he was divinely commissioned. Though he denied that he was the *Messiah*, yet he did not deny that he was sent from or by heaven on an important errand to men. Some have supposed that the sole design of this gospel was to show that John the Baptist was not the Messiah. Though there is no foundation for this opinion, yet there is no doubt that *one* object was to show this. The *main* design was to show that *Jesus was the Christ*, Joh 20:31. To do this, it was proper, in the beginning, to prove that John was not the Messiah; and this might have been at that time an important object. John made many disciples, Mt 3:5. Many persons supposed that he might be the Messiah, Lu 3:15 Joh 1:19. *Many of these disciples of John remained AT EPHESUS, the very place where John is supposed to have written this gospel, long after the ascension of Jesus*, Ac 19:1-3. It is not improbable that there might have been many others who adhered to John, and perhaps many who supposed that he was the Messiah. On these accounts it was important for the evangelist to show that John *was not the Christ*, and to show, also, that he, who was extensively admitted to be a prophet, was an important witness to prove that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ. The evangelist in the first four verses stated that "the Word" was divine; he now proceeds to state the proof that he was *a man*, and was the Messiah. The *first* evidence adduced is the testimony of John the Baptist.

{k} "man sent from God" Lu 3:2,3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 7

Verses 7, 8. *For a witness*. To give testimony. He came to prepare the minds of the people to receive him (Mt. 3; Lu. 3.); to lead them by repentance to God; and to point out the Messiah to Israel when he came, Joh 1:31.

Of the Light. That is, of the Messiah. Comp. Isa 60:1.

That all men, &c. It was the object of John's testimony that all men might believe. He designed to prepare them for it; to announce that the Messiah was about to come, to direct the minds of men to him, and thus to fit them to believe on him when he came. Thus he baptized them, saying "That they should believe on him who should come after him" (Ac 19:4), and thus he produced a very general expectation that the Messiah was about to come. The testimony of John was peculiarly valuable on the following accounts:

1st. It was made when he had no *personal* acquaintance with Jesus of Nazareth, and of course there could have been no *collusion* or agreement to deceive them, Joh 1:31.

2nd. It was sufficiently long before he came to excite general attention, and to fix the mind on it.

3rd. It was that of a man acknowledged by all to be a prophet of God—"for all men held John to be a prophet," Mt 21:26.

4th. It was *for the express purpose* of declaring beforehand that he was about to appear.

5th. It was *disinterested*. He was himself extremely popular. Many were disposed to receive him as the Messiah. It was evidently in his *power* to form a large party, and to be regarded extensively as the Christ. This was the highest honour to which a Jew could aspire; and it shows the value of John's testimony, that he was willing to lay all his honours at the feet of Jesus, and to acknowledge that he was unworthy to perform for him the office of the humblest servant, Mt 3:11.

Through him. Through John, or by means of his testimony.

Was not that Light. Was not *the Messiah*. This is an explicit declaration designed to satisfy the disciples of John. The evidence that he was not the Messiah he states in the following verses.

From the conduct of John here we may learn,

1st. The duty of laying all our honours at the feet of Jesus.

2nd. As John came that all might believe, so it is no less true of the ministry of Jesus himself. He came for a similar purpose, and we may ALL, therefore, trust in him for salvation.

3rd. We should not rely too much on ministers of the gospel. They cannot save us any more than John could; and *their* office, as *his* was, is simply to direct men *to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world*.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 8

Verse 8. No Barnes text on this verse.

{l} "He was not" Ac 19:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 9

Verse 9. That *was the true Light*. Not John, but the Messiah. He was not a false, uncertain, dangerous guide, but was one that was true, real, steady, and worthy of confidence. A false light is one that leads to danger or error, as a false beacon on the shores of the ocean may lead ships to quicksands or rocks; or an *ignis fatuus* to fens, and precipices, and death. A true light is one that does not deceive us, as the true beacon may guide us into port or warn us of danger. Christ does not lead astray. All false teachers do.

That lighteth. That enlightens. He removes darkness, error, ignorance, from the mind.

Every man. This is an expression denoting, in general, the whole human race—Jews and Gentiles. John preached to the Jews. Jesus came *to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, as well as to be the glory of the people of Israel*, Lu 2:32.

That cometh into the world. The phrase in the original is ambiguous. The word translated "that cometh" may either refer to the *light*, or to the word *man*; so that it may mean either "this true *light that cometh* into the world enlightens all," or "it enlightens every *man that cometh* into the world." Many critics, and, among the fathers, Cyril and Augustine, have preferred the former, and translated, "The true light was he who, coming into the world, enlightened every man." The principal reasons for this are,

1st. That the Messiah is often spoken of as he that cometh into the world. See Joh 6:14 18:37.

2nd. He is often distinguished as "*the light that cometh into the world*." Joh 3:19: "This is the condemnation, that *light* is come into the world." Joh 12:46: "I am come *a light* into the world." Christ may be said to do what is accomplished by his command or appointment. This passage means, therefore, that by his own personal ministry, and by his Spirit and apostles, light or teaching is afforded to all. It does not mean that every individual of the human family is enlightened with the knowledge *of the gospel*, for this never yet has been; but it means,

1st. That this light is not confined to the Jews, but is extended to *all*—Jews and Gentiles.

2nd. That it is provided for all and offered to all.

3rd. It is not affirmed that at the time that John wrote all *were actually enlightened*, but the word "lighteth" has the form of the *future*. *This is that light so long expected and predicted, which, as the result its coming into the world, will ultimately enlighten all nations*.

{m} "true light" Isa 49:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *He was in the world*. This refers, probably, not to his pre-existence, but to the fact that he became incarnate; that he dwelt among men.

And the world was made by him. This is a repetition of what is said in Joh 1:3. Not only *men*, but all material things, were made by him. These facts are mentioned here to make what is said immediately after more striking, to wit, that men did not receive him. The proofs which he furnished that they *ought* to receive him were,

1st. Those given while he was *in the world*—the miracles that he wrought and his instructions; and,

2nd. The fact that the *world was made by him*, It was remarkable that the world did not know or approve its own maker.

The world knew him not. The word knew is sometimes used in the sense of *approving* or *loving*, Ps 1:6 Mt 7:23. In this sense it may be used here. The world did not love or approve him, but rejected him and put him to death. Or it may mean that they did not understand or know that he was the Messiah; for had the Jews *known and believed* that he was the Messiah, they would not have put him to death, 1Co 2:8: "Had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." Yet they *might* have known it, and therefore they were not the less to blame.

{m} "and the world knew him not" Joh 1:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *He came unto his own*. His own *land* or *country*. It was called *his* land because it was the place of his birth, and also because it was the chosen land where God delighted to dwell and to manifest his favour. See Isa 5:1-7. Over that land the laws of God had been extended, and that land had been regarded as peculiarly his, Ps 147:19,20.

His own. His own *people*. There is a distinction here in the original words which is not preserved in the translation. It may be thus expressed: "He came to his own *land* and his own people received him not." They were \@his\ @people, *because God had chosen them to be his above all other nations; had given to them his laws; and had signally protected and favoured them,* De 7:6 14:2.

Received him not. *Did not acknowledge him to be the Messiah. They rejected him and put him to death, agreeably to the prophecy,* Isa 53:3,4.

From this we learn,

1st. That it is reasonable to expect that those who have been peculiarly favoured should welcome the message of God. God had a right to expect, after all that had been done for the Jews, that they would receive the message of eternal life. So he has a right to expect that we should embrace him and be saved. Yet

2nd. It is not the abundance of mercies that incline men to seek God. The Jews had been signally favoured, but they rejected him. So, many in Christian lands live and die rejecting the Lord Jesus.

3rd. Men are alike in every age. All would reject the Saviour if left to themselves. All men are by nature wicked. There is no more certain and universal proof of this than the universal rejection of the Lord Jesus.

{o} "He came unto his own" Ac 3:26 13:46

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *To as many as received him*. The great mass; the people; the scribes and Pharisees rejected him. A few in his lifetime received him, and many more after his death. To *receive him*, here, means to believe on him. This is expressed at the end of the verse.

Gave he power. *This is more appropriately rendered in the margin by the word* right *or* privilege. *Comp.* Ac 1:7 5:4; Ro 9:21; 1Co 7:37 8:9, 9:4,5.

Sons of God. *Children of God by adoption.* See Barnes "Mt 1:1".

Christians are called sons of God—

1st. Because they are adopted by him, 1Jo 3:1.

2nd. Because they are

like him

; they resemble him and have his spirit.

3rd. They are united to the Lord Jesus, the Son of God—are regarded by

him *as his brethren (*Mt 25:40) , and are therefore regarded as the children of the Most High.

On his name. *This is another way of saying believeth in* him. *The name of a person is often put for the person himself,* Joh 2:23

Joh 2:18 1Jo 5:13. From this verse we learn,

1st. That to be a child of God is a privilege-far more so than to be the child of any man, though in the highest degree rich, or learned, or honoured. Christians are therefore more honoured than any other men.

2nd. God

gave *them this privilege. It is not by their own works or deserts; it is because God chose to impart this blessing to them,* Eph 2:8 Joh 15:16.

3rd. This favour is given only to those who believe on him. All others are the children of the wicked one, and no one who has not

confidence in God *can be regarded as his child. No parent would acknowledge one for his child, or approve of him, who had no* confidence *in him, who* doubted

or denied all he said, and who despised his character. Yet this the sinner constantly does toward God, and he cannot, therefore, be called his son.

{p} "as many as received him" Isa 56:4,5; Ro 8:15 1Jo 3:1

{1} "power to become" or, "*the right* or *privilege*

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 13

Verse 13.

Which were born. *This doubtless refers to the* new birth, *or to the great change in the sinner's mind called regeneration or conversion. It means that they did not become the children of God in virtue of their natural birth, or because they were the children of* Jews, *or because they were descended from pious parents. The term "to be born" is often used to denote this change. Comp.* Joh 3:3-8

1Jo 2:29. It illustrates clearly and beautifully this great change. The natural birth introduces us to life. The new birth is the beginning of spiritual life. Before, the sinner is dead in sins (Eph 2:1); now he begins truly to live. And as the natural birth is the beginning of life, so to be born of God is to be introduced to real life, to light, to happiness, and to the favour of God. The term expresses at once the

greatness *and the* nature

of the change.

Not of blood. *The Greek word is plural; not of* bloods—*that is, not of man. Comp.* Mt 27:4.

The Jews prided themselves on being the descendants of Abraham, Mt 3:9. They supposed that it was proof of the favour of God to be descended from such an illustrious ancestry. In this passage this notion is corrected. It is not because men are descended from an illustrious or pious parentage that they are entitled to the favour of God; or perhaps the meaning may be, not because there is a

union *of illustrious lines of ancestry or bloods in them. The law of Christ's kingdom is different from what the Jews supposed. Comp.* 1Pe 1:23.

It was necessary to be

born of God *by regeneration. Possibly, however, it may mean that they did not become children of God by the bloody rite of* circumcision, *as many of the Jews supposed they did. This is agreeable to the declaration of Paul in* Ro 2:28,29.

Nor of the will of the flesh

. Not by natural generation.

Nor of the will of man. *This* may *refer, perhaps, to the will of man in* adopting *a child, as the former phrases do to the natural birth; and the design of using these three phrases may have been to say that they became the children of God neither in virtue of their descent from illustrious parents like Abraham, nor by their natural birth, nor by being* adopted *by a pious man. None of the ways by which we become entitled to the privileges of* children

among men can give us a title to be called the sons of God. It is not by human power or agency that men become children of the Most High.

But of God. *That is, God produces the change, and confers the privilege of being called his children. The heart is changed by his power. No unaided effort of man, no works of ours, can produce this change. At the same time, it is true that no man is renewed who does not himself* desire *and* will *to be a believer; for the effect of the change is on his* will *(*Ps 110:3) , and no one is changed who does not strive to enter in at the strait gate, Php 2:12. This important verse, therefore, teaches us,

1st. That if men are saved they must be born again.

2nd. That their salvation is not the result of their birth, or of any honourable or pious parentage.

3rd. That the children of the rich and the noble, as well as of the poor, must be born of God if they will be saved.

4th. That the children of pious parents must be born again, or they cannot be saved. None will go to heaven simply because their

parents

are Christians.

5th. That this work is the work of God, and no man can do it for us.

6th. That we should forsake all human dependence, cast off all confidence in the flesh, and go at once to the throne of-grace, and beseech of God to adopt us into his family and save our souls from death.

{r} "born, not of blood" Jas 1:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 14

Verse 14.

And the Word was made flesh. *The word* flesh, *here, is evidently used to denote* human nature *or* man. *See* Mt 16:17 19:5, 24:22 Lu 3:6; Ro 1:3 9:5.

The "Word" was made

man. *This is commonly expressed by saying that he became* incarnate. *When we say that a being becomes incarnate, we mean that one of a higher order than man, and of a different nature, assumes the appearance of man or becomes a man. Here it is meant that "the Word," or the second person of the Trinity, whom John had just proved to be equal with God, became a man, or was united with the man Jesus of Nazareth, so that it might be said that he* was made flesh

.

Was made. *This is the same word that is used in* Joh 1:3.

"All things were made by him." It is not simply affirmed that he

was *flesh, but that he was* made *flesh, implying that he had pre-existence, agreeably to* Joh 1:1.

This is in accordance with the doctrine of the Scriptures elsewhere. Heb 10:5: "A

body *hast thou prepared me."* Heb 2:14

: "As the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same." 1Jo 4:2. "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh." See also 1Ti 3:16 Php 2:6; 2Co 8:9

Lu 1:35. The expression, then, means that he became a man, and that he became such by the power of God providing for him a body. It cannot mean that the divine nature was changed into the human, for that could not be; but it means that the Logos, or "Word," became so intimately united to Jesus that it might be said that the Logos, or "Word" became or was a man, as the

soul *becomes so* united *to the body that we may say that it is* one person *or a* man

.

And dwelt among us. *The word in the original denotes "dwelt as in a tabernacle or tent;" and some have supposed that John means to say that the human body was a tabernacle or tent for the Logos to abide in, in allusion to the tabernacle among the Jews, in which the Shechinah, or visible symbol of God, dwelt; but it is not necessary to suppose this. The object of John was to prove that "the Word" became* incarnate. *To do this he appeals to various evidences. One was that he* dwelt *among them; sojourned with them; ate, drank, slept, and was with them for years, so that they saw him with their eyes, they looked upon him, and their hands handled him,* 1Jo 1:1.

To

dwell *in a tent with one is the same as to be in his family; and when John says he* tabernacled *with them, he means that he was with them as a friend and as one of a family, so that they had full opportunity of becoming familiarly acquainted with him, and could not be mistaken in supposing that* he was really a man

.

We beheld his glory. *This is a new proof of what he was affirming*- that THE WORD OF GOD became man. *The first was, that they had seen him as* a man. *He now adds that they had seen him in his proper glory* as God and man united in one person, *constituting him the unequalled Son of the Father. There is no doubt that there is reference here to the transfiguration on the holy mount. See* Mt 18:1-9.

To this same evidence Peter also appeals, 2Pe 1:16-18. John was one of the witnesses of that scene, and hence he says, "WE beheld his glory," Mr 9:2. The word

glory

here means majesty, dignity, splendour.

The glory as of the only-begotten of the Father

. The dignity which was appropriate to the only-begotten Son of God; such glory or splendour as could belong to no other, and as properly expressed his rank and character. This glory was seen eminently on the mount of transfiguration. It was also seen in his miracles, his doctrine, his resurrection, his ascension; all of which were such as to illustrate the perfections, and manifest the glory that belongs only to the Son of God.

Only-begotten. *This term is never applied by John to any but Jesus Christ. It is applied by him five times to the Saviour,* Joh 1:14,18, 3:16,18; 1Jo 4:9.

It means literally an only child. Then, as an only child is peculiarly dear to a parent, it means one that is especially beloved. Comp. Ge 22:2 12 16 Jer 6:26 Zec 12:10.

On

both

these accounts it is bestowed on the Saviour.

1st. As he was eminently the Son of God, sustaining a peculiar relation to him in his divine nature, exalted above all men and angels, and thus worthy to be called, by way of eminence, his only Son. Saints are called his sons or children, because they are born of his Spirit, or are like him; but the Lord Jesus is exalted far above all, and deserves eminently to be called his only-begotten Son.

2nd. He was peculiarly dear to God, and therefore this appellation, implying tender affection, is bestowed on him.

Full of grace and truth. *The word* full *here refers to the Word made flesh, which is declared to be full of grace and truth. The word* grace *means favours, gifts, acts of beneficence. He was kind, merciful, gracious, doing good to all, and seeking man's welfare by great sacrifices and love; so much so, that it might be said to be characteristic of him, or he* abounded *in favours to mankind. He was also* full of truth. *He declared the truth. In him was no falsehood. He was not like the false prophets and false Messiahs, who were wholly impostors; nor was he like the emblems and shadows of the old dispensation, which were only types of the true; but he was truth itself. He* represented things as they are, *and thus became the* truth *as well as* the way and the life

.

{s} "Word" Lu 1:35 1Ti 3:16 {t} "and we beheld" 2Pe 1:17 1Jo 1:1,2

{u} "full of grace and truth" Ps 45:2 Col 2:3,9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 15

Verse 15.

John bare witness of him

. The evangelist now returns to the testimony of John the Baptist. He had stated that the Word became incarnate, and he now appeals to the testimony of John to show that, thus incarnate, he was the Messiah.

He that cometh after me. *He of whom I am the forerunner, or whose way I am come to prepare.* See Barnes "Mt 3:3".

Is preferred before me. *Is superior to me. Most critics have supposed that the words translated "is preferred" relate to* time, *and not to* dignity*; meaning that though he came* after

him publicly, being six months younger than John, as well as entering on his work after John, yet that he had existed long before him. Most, however, have understood it more correctly, as our translators seem to have done, as meaning, He was worthy of more honour than I am.

He was before me. *This can refer to nothing but his preexistence, and can be explained only on the supposition that he* existed *before John, or, as the evangelist had before shown, from the beginning. He came* after *John in his public ministry and in his human nature, but in his divine nature he had existed long before John had a being—from eternity. We may learn here that it is one mark of the true spirit of a minister of Christ to desire and feel that Christ is always to be preferred to ourselves. We should keep ourselves out of view. The great object is to hold up the Saviour; and however much ministers may be honoured or blessed, yet they should lay all at the feet of Jesus, and direct all men to him as the undivided object of affection and honour. It is the business of every Christian, as well as of every Christian minister, to be a* witness

for Christ, and to endeavour to convince the world that he is worthy of confidence and love.

{v} "John bare witness of him" Mt 3:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 16

Verse 16.

Of his fullness. *In* Joh 1:14

the evangelist has said that Christ was

full of grace and truth. *Of that* fulness *he now says that all the disciples had received; that is, they derived from his abundant truth and mercy grace to understand the plan of salvation, to preach the gospel, to live lives of holiness; they* partook *of the numerous blessings which he came to impart by his instructions and his death. These are undoubtedly not the words of John the Baptist, but of the evangelist John, the writer of this gospel. They are a continuation of what he was saying in the 14th verse, the 15th verse being evidently thrown in as a parenthesis. The declaration had not exclusive reference, probably, to the apostles, but it is extended to all Christians, for all believers have received of the* fulness of grace and truth *that is in Christ. Comp.* Eph 1:23 3:19; Col 1:19 2:9.

In all these places our Saviour is represented as the fulness of God—as

abounding

in mercy, as exhibiting the divine attributes, and as possessing in himself all that is necessary to fill his people with truth, and grace, and love.

Grace for grace

. Many interpretations of this phrase have been proposed. The chief are briefly the following:
1st. "We have received, under the gospel, grace or favour,
instead
of those granted under the law; and God has added by the gospel important favours to those which he gave under the law." This was first proposed by Chrysostom.
2nd. "We, Christians, have received grace
answering to, *or corresponding to that which is in Jesus Christ. We are* like
him in meekness, humility," &c.
3rd. "We have received grace
as grace—*that is, freely. We have not purchased it nor deserved it, but God has conferred it on us* freely
" (Grotius).
4th. The meaning is, probably, simply that we have received through him
abundance *of grace or favour. The Hebrews, in expressing the him. He knew him intima superlative degree of comparison, used simply to repeat the word—thus, "pits, pits," meaning many pits (Hebrew in* Ge 14:10) . So here grace for grace may mean
much
grace; superlative favours bestowed on man; favours superior to all that had been under the law—superior to all other things that God can confer on men. These favours consist in pardon, redemption, protection, sanctification, peace here, and heaven hereafter.
{w} "fulness" Joh 3:34

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 17

Verse 17.
The law was given
. The Old Testament economy. The institutions under which the Jews lived.

By Moses. *By Moses, as the servant of God. He was the great legislator of the Jews, by whom, under God, their polity was formed. The* law *worketh wrath (*Ro 4:15) ; it was attended with many burdensome rites and ceremonies (Ac 15:10); it was preparatory to another state of things. The gospel succeeded that and took its place, and thus showed the
greatness
of the gospel economy, as well as its grace and truth.

Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. *A system of religion full of favours, and the* true *system, was revealed by him. The old system was one of* law, *and* shadows, *and* burdensome rites; this
was full of mercy to mankind, and was true in all things. We may learn from these verses—
1st. That all our mercies come from Jesus Christ.
2nd. "All true believers receive from Christ's fulness the best and greatest saints cannot live without him, the meanest and weakest may live by him. This excludes proud boasting that we have nothing but

we have received it, *and silenceth perplexing fears that we want nothing but* we may receive it

."

{x} "grace and truth" Ps 85:10 Ro 5:21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 18

Verse 18.

No man hath seen God at any time. *This declaration is probably made to show the superiority of the revelation of Jesus above that of any previous dispensation. It is said, therefore, that Jesus* had an intimate knowledge of God, *which neither Moses nor any of the ancient prophets had possessed. God is invisible; no human eyes have seen him; but Christ had a knowledge of God which might be expressed to our apprehension by saying that he* saw *him intimately and completely, and was therefore fitted to make a fuller manifestation of him. See* Joh 5:37 6:46; 1Jo 4:12 Ex 33:20; Joh 14:9.

This passage is not meant to deny that men had witnessed

manifestations *of God, as when he appeared to Moses and the prophets (comp.* Nu 12:8 Is 6:1-13) ; but it is meant that no one has seen the essence of God, or has

fully known *God. The prophets delivered what they* heard *God speak; Jesus what he* knew of God as his equal

, and as understanding fully his nature.

The only-begotten Son. See Barnes "Joh 1:14".

This verse shows John's sense of the meaning of that phrase, as denoting an intimate and full knowledge of God.

In the bosom of the Father. *This expression is taken from the custom among the Orientals of reclining at their meals.* See Barnes "Mt 23:6".

It denotes intimacy, friendship, affection. Here it means that Jesus had a knowledge of God such as one friend has of another— knowledge of his character, designs, and nature which no other one possesses, and which renders him, therefore, qualified above all others to make him known.

Hath declared him. *Hath fully revealed him or made him known. Comp.* Heb 1:1,4.

This verse proves that, Jesus had a knowledge of God above that which any of the ancient prophets had, and that the fullest revelations of his character are to be expected in the gospel. By his Word and Spirit he can enlighten and guide us, and lead us to the true knowledge of God; and there is no true and full knowledge of God which is not obtained through his Son. Comp. Joh 14:6 1Jo 2:22,23.

{y} "No man hath seen" Ex 33:20 1Ti 6:16 {z} "The only-begotten" 1Jo 4:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 19

Verse 19.

This is the record. *The word* record *here means* testimony, *in whatever way given. The word* record *now commonly refers to* written

evidence. This is not its meaning here. John's testimony was given without writing.

When the Jews sent. *John's fame was great. See* Mt 3:5.

It spread from the region of Galilee to Jerusalem, and the nation seemed to suppose, from the character of his preaching, that he was the Messiah, Lu 3:15. The great council of the nation, or the Sanhedrim, had, among other things, the charge of religion. They felt it to be their duty, therefore, to inquire into the character and claims of John, and to learn whether he was the Messiah. It is not improbable that they

wished

that he might be the long-expected Christ, and were prepared to regard him as such.

When the Jews sent priests and Levites. See Barnes "Lu 10:31,32".

These were probably members of the Sanhedrim.

{a} "the record of John" Lu 3:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 20

Verse 20.

I am not the Christ. *This confession proves that John was not an impostor. He had a wide reputation. The nation was expecting that the Messiah was about to come, and multitudes were ready to believe that John was he,* Lu 3:15.

If John had been an impostor he would have taken advantage of this excited state of public feeling, proclaimed himself to be the Messiah, and formed a large party in his favour. The fact that he did not do it is full proof that he did not intend to impose on men, but came only as the forerunner of Christ; and his example shows that all Christians, and especially all Christian ministers, however much they may be honoured and blessed, should be willing to lay all their honours at the feet of Jesus; to keep themselves back and to hold up before the world only the Son of God. To do this is one eminent mark of the true spirit of a minister of the gospel.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 21

Verse 21.

Art thou Elias*? This is the Greek way of writing Elijah. The Jews expected that Elijah would appear before the Messiah came.* See Barnes "Mt 11:14".

They supposed that it would be the real Elijah returned from heaven. In this sense John denied that he was Elijah; but he did not deny that he was the Elias or Elijah which the prophet intended (Mt 3:3), for he immediately proceeds to state (Joh 1:23) that he was sent, as it was predicted that Elijah would be, to prepare the way of the Lord; so that, while he corrected their false notions about Elijah, he so clearly stated to them his true character that they might understand that he was really the one predicted as Elijah.

That prophet. *It is possible that the Jews supposed that not only Elijah would reappear before the coming of the Messiah, but also* Jeremiah. See Barnes "Mt 16:14".

Some have supposed, however, that this question has reference to the prediction of Moses in De 18:15.

{2} "that prophet" or, "a prophet"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 22

Verse 22. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 23

Verse 23.

I am the voice, *&c.* See Barnes "Mt 3:3"

{b} "He said" Mt 3:3 Mr 1:3; Lu 3:4 Joh 3:28

{c} "prophet Esias" Isa 40:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 24

Verse 24.

Were of the Pharisees. *For an account of this sect,* See Barnes "Mt 3:7".

Why

they *are particularly mentioned is not certainly known. Many of the* Sadducees *came to his baptism (*Mt 3:7) , but it seems that they did not join in sending to him to know what was the design of John. This circumstance is one of those incidental and delicate allusions which would occur to no impostor in forging a book, and which show that the writers of the New Testament were honest men and knew what they affirmed. For,

1st. The Pharisees composed a great part of the Sanhedrim, Ac 23:6. It is probable that a deputation from the Sanhedrim would be of that party.

2nd. The Pharisees were very tenacious of rites and customs, of traditions and ceremonies. They observed many. They believed that they were lawful, Mr 7:3,4. Of course, they believed that those

rites might be increased, but they did not suppose that it could be done except by the authority of a prophet or of the Messiah. When, therefore, John came

baptizing—*adding a rite to be observed by his followers— baptizing not only* Gentiles, *but also* Jews—*the question was whether he had* authority

to institute a new rite; whether it was to be received among the ceremonies of religion. In this question the Sadducees felt no interest, for they rejected all such rites at once; but the Pharisees thought it was worth inquiry, and it was a question on which they felt themselves specially called on to act as the guardians of the ceremonies of religion.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 25

Verse 25.

Why baptizest thou then, *&c. Baptism on receiving a proselyte from* heathenism *was common before the time of John, but it was not customary to baptize a Jew. John had changed the custom. He baptized* all, *and they were desirous of knowing by what authority he made such a change in the religious customs of the nation. They presumed, from the fact that he* introduced *that change, that he claimed to be a prophet or the Christ. They supposed that no one would attempt it without* pretending

, at least, authority from heaven. As he disclaimed the character of Christ and of the prophet Elijah, they asked whence he derived his authority. As he had just before applied to himself a prediction that they all considered as belonging to the forerunner of Christ, they might have understood why he did it; but they were blind, and manifested, as all sinners do, a remarkable slowness in understanding the plainest truths in religion.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 26

Verse 26.

I baptize. *He did not deny it; nor did he condescend to state his authority.* That *he had given. He* admitted *that he had introduced an important* change *in the rites of religion, and he goes on to tell them that* this *was not all. Greater and more important changes would soon take place without* their *authority. The Messiah was about to come, and the* power

was about to depart from their hands.

There standeth one. *There* is

one.

Among you. *In the midst of you. He is undistinguished among the multitude. The Messiah had already come, and was about to be manifested to the people. It was not until the next day (*Joh 1:29) that Jesus was manifested or proclaimed as the Messiah; but it is not improbable that he was then among the people that were assembled near the Jordan, and mingled with them, though he was

undistinguished. He had gone there, probably, with the multitudes that had been drawn thither by the fame of John, and had gone without attracting attention, though his real object was to receive baptism in this public manner, and to be exhibited and proclaimed as the Messiah.

Whom ye know not

. Jesus was not yet declared publicly to be the Christ. Though it is probable that he was then among the multitude, yet he was not known as the Messiah. We may hence learn,

1st. That there is often great excellency in the world that is obscure, undistinguished, and unknown. Jesus was

near

to all that people, but they were not conscious of his presence, for he was retired and obscure. Though the greatest person- age ever in the world, yet he was not externally distinguished from others.

2nd. Jesus may be near to men of the world, and yet they know him not. He is everywhere by his Spirit, yet few know it, and few are desirous of knowing it.

{d} "there standeth" Mal 3:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 27

Verse 27.

Whose shoe's latchet. See Barnes "Mt 3:11".

The

latchet

of sandals was the string or thong by which they were fastened to the feet. To unloose them was the office of a servant, and John means, therefore, that he was unworthy to perform the lowest office for the Messiah. This was remarkable humility. John was well known; he was highly honoured; thousands came to hear him. Jesus was at that time unknown; but John says that he was unworthy to perform the humblest office for Jesus. So we all should be willing to lay all that we have at the feet of Christ, and feel that we are unworthy to be his lowest servants.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 28

Verse 28.

In Bethabara. *Almost all the ancient manuscripts and versions, instead of* Bethabara *here, have* Bethany, *and this is doubtless the true reading. There was a Bethany about 2 miles east of Jerusalem, but there is said also to have been another in the tribe of Reuben, on the east side of the river Jordan, and in this place, probably, John was baptizing. It is about 12 miles above Jericho. The word* Bethabara *means* house or place of a ford. *The reading* Bethabara, *instead of* Bethany, *seems to have arisen from the conjecture of Origen, who found in his day no such place as Bethany, but*

saw a town called Bethabara, where John was said to have baptized, and therefore took the liberty of changing the former reading.—Rob., Lex

.

Beyond Jordan

. On the east side of the river Jordan.

{e} "in Bethabara" Jud 7:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 29

Verse 29.

The next day

. The day after the Jews made inquiry whether he was the Christ.

Behold the Lamb of God. *A* lamb, *among the Jews, was killed and eaten at the Passover to commemorate their deliverance from Egypt,* Ex 12:3-11.

A lamb was offered in the tabernacle, and afterward in the temple, every morning and evening, as a part of the daily worship, Ex 29:38,39. The Messiah was predicted as a lamb led to the slaughter, to show his patience in his sufferings, and readiness to die for man, Isa 53:7. A lamb, among the Jews, was also an emblem of patience, meekness, gentleness. On

all *these accounts, rather than on any one of them alone, Jesus was called the Lamb. He was innocent (*1Pe 2:23-25) ; he was a sacrifice for sin—the substance represented by the daily offering of the lamb, and slain at the usual time of the evening sacrifice (Lu 23:44-46); and he was what was represented by the Passover, turning away the anger of God, and saving sinners by his blood from vengeance and eternal death, 1Co 5:7.

Of God. *Appointed by God, approved by God, and most dear to him; the sacrifice which he* chose

, and which he approves to save men from death.

Which taketh away. *This denotes his bearing the sins of the world, or the sufferings which made an atonement for sin. Comp.* Isa 53:4 1Jo 3:5; 1Pe 2:24.

He takes away sin by

bearing *in his own body the sufferings which God appointed to show his sense of the evil of sin, thus magnifying the law, and rendering it consistent for him to pardon.* See Barnes "Ro 3:24, **See Barnes "Ro 3:25".**

Of the world. *Of all mankind, Jew and Gentile. His work was not to be confined to the Jew, but was also to benefit the Gentile' it was not confined to any one part of the world, but was designed to open the way of pardon to all men. He was the propitiation for the sins of the whole world,* 1Jo 2:2.

See Barnes "2Co 5:15".

{f} "Lamb of God" Ex 12:3 Isa 53:7,11 Re 5:6
{g} "which" Ac 13:39 1Pe 2:24; Re 1:5
{3} "taketh" or, "beareth" Heb 9:28

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 30

Verse 30. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 31

Verse 31.
I knew him not. *John was not* personally *acquainted with Jesus. Though they were remotely related to each other, yet it seems that they had had heretofore no personal acquaintance. John had lived chiefly in the hill country of Judea. Jesus had been employed with Joseph at Nazareth. Until Jesus came to be baptized (*Mt 3:13,14) , it seems that John had no acquaintance with him. He understood that he was to announce that the Messiah was about to appear. He was sent to proclaim his coming, but he did not personally know Jesus, or that
he *was to be the Messiah. This proves that there could have been no* collusion *or* agreement
between them to impose on the people.

Should be made manifest
. That the Messiah should be exhibited, or made known. He came to prepare the way for the Messiah, and it now appeared that the Messiah was Jesus of Nazareth.

To Israel
. To the Jews.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 32

Verse 32.
Bare record
. Gave testimony.

I saw the Spirit, *&c.* See Barnes "Mt 3:16,17"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 33

Verses 33, 34.

The same said, *&c. This was the sign by which he was to know the Messiah. He was to see the Spirit descending like a dove and abiding on him. It does not follow, however, that he had no* intimation *before this that Jesus was the Christ, but it means that by this he should* infallibly know it. *From* Mt 3:13,14, it seems that John supposed, before the baptism of Jesus, that he

claimed *to be the Messiah, and that he believed it; but the* infallible, certain

, testimony in the case was the descent of the Holy Spirit on him at his baptism.

That this is the Son of God. *This was distinctly declared by a voice from heaven at his baptism,* Mt 3:17.

This John heard, and he testified that he had heard it.

{h} "descending and remaining" Joh 3:34 {i} "baptizeth" Ac 1:5 2:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 34

Verse 34. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 35

Verse 35.

The next day

. The day after his remarkable testimony that Jesus was the Son of God. This testimony of John is reported because it was the main design of this evangelist to show that Jesus was the Messiah. See the Introduction. To do this, he adduces the decided and repeated testimony of John the Baptist. This was impartial evidence in the case, and hence he so particularly dwells upon it.

John stood

. Or was standing. This was probably apart from the multitude.

Two of his disciples. *One of these was Andrew (*Joh 1:40) , and it is not improbable that the other was the writer of this gospel.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 36

Verse 36.

Looking upon Jesus

, &c. Fixing his eyes intently upon him. Singling him out and regarding him with special attention. Contemplating him as the long-expected Messiah and Deliverer of the world. In this way should all ministers fix the eye on the Son of God, and direct all others to him.

As he walked
. While Jesus was walking.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 37

Verse 37.

They followed Jesus. *They had been the disciples of John. His office was to point out the Messiah. When that was done, they left at once their master and teacher, John, and followed the long-expected Messiah. This shows that John was sincere; that he was not desirous of forming a party or of building up a sect; that he was willing that all those whom he had attracted to himself by his ministry should become followers of Christ. The object of ministers should* not *be to build up their own interests or to extend their own fame. It is to point men to the Saviour. Ministers, however popular or successful, should be willing that their disciples should look to Christ rather than to them; nay, should* forget *them and look away from them, to tread in the footsteps of the Son of God; and the conduct of these disciples shows us that we should forsake* all *and follow Jesus when he is pointed out to us as the Messiah. We should not delay nor debate the matter, but leave at once all our old teachers, guides and companions, and follow the Lamb of God. And we should do that, too, though* to the world *the Lord Jesus may appear, as he did to the multitude of the Jews, as poor, unknown, and despised. Reader, have* you

left all and followed him? Have you forsaken the guides of false philosophy and deceit, of sin and infidelity, and committed yourself to the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 38

Verse 38.

What seek ye*? This was not asked to obtain information. Comp.* Joh 1:48.

It was not a harsh reproof, forbidding them to follow him. Comp. Mt 11:28-30. It was a kind inquiry respecting their desires; an invitation to lay open their minds, to state their wishes, and to express all their feelings respecting the Messiah and their own salvation. We may learn,

1st. That Jesus regards the first inclinations of the soul to follow him. He
turned
toward these disciples, and he will incline his ear to all who begin to approach him for salvation.

2nd. Jesus is ready to hear their requests and to answer them.

3rd. Ministers of the gospel, and all other Christians, should be accessible, kind, and tender toward all who are inquiring the way to life. In conformity with their Master, they should be willing to aid all those who look to them for guidance and help in the great work of their salvation.

Rabbi. *This was a Jewish title conferred somewhat as literary degrees now are, and meaning literally* a great one*, and was applied to a teacher or master in the Jewish schools. It corresponded*

with the title Doctor. *Our Saviour solemnly forbade his disciples to wear that title.* See Barnes "Mt 23:8".

The fact that John

interpreted

this word shows that he wrote his gospel not for the Jews only, but for those who did not understand the Hebrew language. It is supposed to have been written at Ephesus.

Where dwellest thou*? This question they probably asked him in order to signify their wish to be with him and to be instructed by him. They desired more fully to listen to him than they could now by the wayside. They were unwilling to interrupt him in his travelling. Religion teaches men true politeness, or a disposition to consult the convenience of others, and not improperly to molest them, or to break in upon them when engaged. It also teaches us* to desire to be with Christ*; to seek every opportunity of coremration with him, and chiefly to desire* to be with him where he is *when we leave this world. Comp.* Php 1:23.

{5} "tenth hour" or,

that was two hours before night

.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 39

Verse 39.

Come and see

. This was a kind and gracious answer. He did not put them off to some future period. Then, as now, he was willing that they should come at once and enjoy the full opportunity which they desired of his conversation. Jesus is ever ready to admit those who seek him to his presence and favour.

Abode with him

. Remained with him. This was probably the dwelling of some friend of Jesus. His usual home was at Nazareth.

The tenth hour

. The Jews divided their day into twelve equal parts, beginning at sun-rise. If John used their mode of computation, this was about four o'clock P.M. The Romans divided time as we do, beginning at midnight. If John used their mode, it was about ten o'clock in the forenoon. It is not certain which he used.

{5} "tenth hour" or, "That was about two hours before night"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 40

Verse 40. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 41

Verse 41.
He first findeth *He found him* and told him about Jesus
before he brought him to Jesus.

We have found the Messias. *They had learned from the testimony of John, and now had been more fully convinced from conversation with Jesus, that he was the Messiah. The word Messiah, or Messias, is Hebrew, and means the same as the Greek word Christ,* anointed. See Barnes "Mt 1:1".

From the conduct of Andrew we may learn that it is the nature of religion to desire that others may possess it. It does not lead us to monopolize it or to hide it under a bushel, but it seeks that others also may be brought to the Saviour. It does not

wait *for them to come, but it goes* for *them; it seeks them out, and tells them that a Saviour is found. Young converts should* seek

their friends and neighbours, and tell them of a Saviour; and not only their relatives, but all others as far as possible, that all may come to Jesus and be saved.

{6} "the Christ" or, "
the anointed
.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 42

Verse 42.
Cephas. *This is a Syriac word, meaning the same as the Greek word Peter, a stone.* See Peter "Mt 16:17".

The stone, or rock, is a symbol of firmness and steadiness of character—a trait in Peter's character

after *the ascension of Jesus that was very remarkable. Before the death of Jesus he was rash, headlong, variable; and it is one proof of the omniscience of Jesus that he saw that Peter* would *possess a character that would be expressed appropriately by the word* stone *or* rock. *The word* Jonas *is a Hebrew word, whose original signification is a* dove

. It may be that Jesus had respect to that when he gave Simon the name Peter. "You now bear a name emblematic of timidity and inconstancy. You shall be called by a name denoting firmness and constancy."

{k} "thou shalt be called Cephas" Mt 16:18 {7} "A Stone" or, "Peter"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 43

Verse 43.
Would go forth

.

Into Galilee
. He was now in Judea, where he went to be baptized by John. He was now about to return to his native country.

Findeth Philip. *This does not refer to his calling these disciples to be apostles, for that took place at the Sea of Tiberias (*Mt 4:18) , but it refers to their being convinced that he was the Christ. This is the object of this evangelist, to show how and when they were convinced of this. Matthew states the time and occasion in which they were called to be
apostles
; John, the time in which they first became acquainted with Jesus, and were convinced that he was the Messiah. There is, therefore, no contradiction in the evangelists.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 44

Verse 44.
Of Bethsaida. See Barnes "Mt 11:21".

The city of
. The place where Andrew and Peter dwelt.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 45

Verse 45.
Moses, in the law. *Moses, in that part of the Old Testament which he wrote, called by the Jews the law. See* De 18:15,18
Ge 49:10 3:15. And the prophets, Isa 53:1-12 9:6,7 Da 9:24-27; Jer 13:5,6; &c.

Jesus of Nazareth
, &c. They spoke according to common apprehension. They spoke of him as the son of Joseph because he was commonly supposed to be. They spoke of him as dwelling at Nazareth, though they might not have been ignorant that he was born at Bethlehem.
{l} "Moses in the law" Lu 24:27,44

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 46

Verse 46.

Can any good thing, *&c. The character of Nazareth was proverbially bad. To be a Galilean or a Nazarene was an expression of decided contempt,* Joh 7:52.

See Barnes "Mt 2:23".

Nathanael asked, therefore, whether it was possible that the Messiah should come from a place proverbially wicked. This was a mode of judging in the case not uncommon. It is not by examining evidence, but by prejudice. Many persons suffer their minds to be filled with prejudice against religion, and then pronounce at once without examination. They refuse to examine the subject, for they have set it down that it

cannot

be true. It matters not where a teacher comes from, or what is the place of his birth, provided he be authorized of God and qualified for his work.

Come and see. *This was the best way to answer Nathanael. He did not sit down to* reason *with him, or speculate about the possibility that a good thing could come from Nazareth; but he asked him to go and examine for himself, to see the Lord Jesus, to hear him converse, to lay aside his prejudice, and to judge from a fair and candid personal inquiry. So we should beseech sinners to lay aside their prejudices against religion, and* to be Christians, *and thus make trial for themselves. If men can be persuaded to come to Jesus, all their petty and foolish objections against religion will vanish. They will be satisfied from their* own experience

that it is true, and in this way only will they ever be satisfied.

{m} "Can there be any good thing" Joh 7:41

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 47

Verse 47.

An Israelite indeed. *One who is really an Israelite—not by birth only, but one worthy of the name. One who possesses the spirit, the piety, and the integrity which become a man who is really a Jew, who fears God and obeys his law. Comp.* Ro 9:6 2:28,29.

No guile

. No deceit, no fraud, no hypocrisy. He is really what he professes to be—a Jew, a descendant of the patriarch Jacob, fearing and serving God. He makes no profession which he does not live up to. He does not say that Nathanael was without guilt or sin, but that he had no disguise, no trick, no deceit—he was sincere and upright. This was a most honourable testimony. How happy would it be if he, who knows the hearts of all as he did that of Nathanael, could bear the same testimony of all who profess the religion of the gospel!

{n} "Behold" Ps 32:2 Ro 2:28,29

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 48

Verse 48.

Whence knowest thou me

? Nathanael was not yet acquainted with the divinity of Christ, and supposed that he had been a stranger to him. Hearing him express a favourable opinion of him, he naturally inquired by what means he had any knowledge of him. His conscience testified to the truth of what Jesus said—that he had no guile, and he was anxious to know whence he had learned his character.

Before that Philip called thee. *See* Joh 1:45.

When thou wast under the fig tree. *It is evident that it was from something that had occurred under the fig-tree that Jesus judged of his character. What that was is not recorded. It is not improbable that Nathanael was accustomed to retire to the shade of a certain tree, perhaps in his garden or in a grove, for the purpose of meditation and prayer. The Jews were much in the habit of selecting such places for private devotion, and in such scenes of stillness and retirement there is something peculiarly favourable for meditation and prayer. Our Saviour also worshipped in such places. Comp.* Joh 18:2 Lu 6:12.

In that place of retirement it is not improbable that Nathanael was engaged in private devotion.

I saw thee

. It is clear, from the narrative, that Jesus did not mean to say that he was bodily present with Nathanael and saw him; but he knew his thoughts, his desires, his secret feelings and wishes. In this sense Nathanael understood him. We may learn—

1st. That Jesus sees what is done in secret, and is therefore divine.

2nd. That he sees us when we little think of it.

3rd. That he sees us especially in our private devotions, hears our prayers, and marks our meditations. And

4th. That he judges of our

character *chiefly by our private devotions. Those are secret; the world sees them not; and in our closets we show what we are. How does it become us, therefore, that our secret prayers and meditations should be without* guile

and hypocrisy, and such as Jesus will approve!

{o} "I saw thee" Ps 139:1,2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 49

Verse 49.

Rabbi. *Master. Applied appropriately to Jesus, and to no one else,* Mt 23:10.

The Son of God

. By this title he doubtless meant that he was the Messiah. His conscience told him that he had judged right of his character, and that therefore he must know the heart and the desires of the mind. If so, he could not be a mere man, but must be the long-expected Messiah.

The King of Israel. *This was one of the titles by which the Messiah was expected, and this was the title which was affixed to his cross,* Joh 19:18.

This case of Nathanael John adduces as another evidence that Jesus was the Christ. The great object he had in view in writing this gospel was to collect the evidence that he was the Messiah, Mt 20:31. A case, therefore, where Jesus searched the heart, and where his knowledge of the heart convinced a pious Jew that he was the Christ, is very properly adduced as important testimony.

{p} "the Son" Mt 14:33 Joh 20:28,29

{q} "the King of Israel" Mt 21:5 27:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 50

Verse 50.

Greater things

. Fuller proof of his Messiahship, particularly what is mentioned in the following verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 51

Verse 51.

Verily, verily. *In the Greek,* Amen, amen. *The word* amen

means truly, certainly, so be it—from the verb to confirm, to establish, to be true. It is often used in this gospel. When repeated it expresses the speaker's sense of the importance of what he is saying, and the certainty that it is as he affirms.

Ye shall see

. Not, perhaps, with the bodily eyes, but you shall have evidence that it is so. The thing shall take place, and you shall be a witness of it.

Heaven open. *This is a figurative expression, denoting the conferring of favours.* Ps 78:23,24

: "He opened the doors of heaven, and had rained down manna." It also denotes that God was about to work a miracle in attestation of a particular thing. See Mt 3:16. In the language, here, there is an evident allusion to the ladder that Jacob saw in a dream, and to the angels ascending and descending on it, Ge 18:12. It is not probable that Jesus referred to any particular instance in which Nathanael should literally see the heavens opened, The baptism of Jesus had taken place, and no other instance occurred in his life in which it is said that the

heavens were

opened.

Angels of God. *Those pure and holy beings that dwell in heaven, and that are employed as ministering spirits to our world*, Heb 1:14.

Good men are represented in the Scriptures as being under their protection, Ps 91:11,12; Ge 28:12.

They are the agents by which God often expressed his will to men, Heb 2:2 Ga 3:19. They are represented as strengthening the Lord Jesus, and ministering unto him. Thus they aided him in the wilderness (Mr 1:13), and in the garden (Lu 22:43), and they were present when he rose from the dead, Mt 28:2-4 Joh 20:12,13.

By their ascending and descending upon him it is probable that he meant that Nathanael would have evidence that they came to his aid, and that he would have

the *KIND of protection and assistance from God which would show* more fully that he was the Messiah

. Thus his life, his many deliverances from dangers, his wisdom to confute his skilled and cunning adversaries, the scenes of his death, and the attendance of angels at his resurrection, may all be represented by the angels descending upon him, and all would show to Nathanael and the other disciples most clearly that he was the Son of God.

The Son of man. *A term by which he often describes himself. It shows his humility, his love for man, his willingness to be esteemed* as a man, Php 2:6,7.

From this interview with Nathanael we may learn,

1st. That Jesus searches the heart.

2nd. That he was truly the Messiah.

3rd. That he was under the protection of God.

4th. That if we have faith in Jesus, it will be continually strengthened—the evidence will grow brighter and brighter.

5th. That if we believe his

word

, we shall yet see full proof that his word is true.

6th. As Jesus was under the protection of God, so will all his friends be. God will defend and save us also if we put our trust in him.

7th. Jesus applied to himself terms expressive of humility. He was not solicitous even to be called by titles which he

might *claim. So we should not be ambitious of titles and honours. Ministers of the gospel must resemble him when they seek for the fewest titles, and do not aim at distinctions from each other or their brethren.* See Barnes "Mt 23:8".

{r} "heaven open" Eze 1:1 {s} "the angels of God" Ge 28:12 Da 7:9,10 Ac 1:10,11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 1

Verse 1.
And the third day
. On the third day after his conversation with Nathanael.

Cana\@. This was a small town about 15 miles north-west of Tiberias and 6 miles north-east of Nazareth. It is now called Kefr Kenna, is under the government of a Turkish officer, and contains perhaps three hundred inhabitants, chiefly Catholics. The natives still pretend to show the place where the water was turned into wine, and even one of the large stone water-pots.

"A Greek church," says Professor Hackett
(*Illustrations of Scripture*, p. 322),
"stands at the entrance of the town, deriving its
special sanctity, as I understood, from its
being supposed to occupy the site of the house in which
the marriage was celebrated to which Jesus and his
friends were invited. A priest to whom we were referred
as the custodian soon arrived, in obedience to our call,
and unlocked the doors of the church. It is a low stone
building, wretchedly neglected and out of repair."

"The houses," says Dr. Thomson (*The Land and the Book*,
vol. 2. p. 126),

"were built of limestone, cut and laid up after the fashion
still common in this region, and some of them may have been
inhabited within the last fifty years. There are many
ancient cisterns about it, and fragments of water-jars
in abundance, and both reminded us of the beginning
of miracles. Some of my companions gathered bits of
these water-jars as mementoes—witnesses they could
hardly be, for those of the narrative were of *stone*,
while these were baked earth."

"The place is now quite deserted. Dr. Thomson (ibid.) says:
"There is not now a habitable house in the humble village
where our blessed Lord sanctioned, by his presence and
miraculous assistance, the all-important and world-wide
institution of marriage."

It was called *Cana of Galilee* to distinguish it from another Cana in the tribe of Ephraim, Jos 16:9. This was the native place of Nathanael, Joh 21:2.

The mother of Jesus. Mary. It is not improbable that she was a relative of the family where the marriage took place.

{a} "Cana of Galilee" Jos 19:28 Joh 4:46

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *His disciples*. Those that he had made when in Judea. These were Peter, Andrew, Philip, and Nathanael. They were not yet called to be *apostles*, but they believed that he was the Messiah. The miracle wrought here was doubtless to convince them more fully that he was the Christ.

{b} "the marriage" Heb 13:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *When they wanted wine*. A marriage feast among the Jews was commonly observed for seven or eight days. It is not probable that there would be a want of wine at the marriage itself, and it is possible, therefore, that Jesus came there some time during the marriage feast.

They have no wine. It is not known why Mary told this to Jesus. It would seem that she had a belief that he was able to supply it, though he had as yet worked no miracle.

{c} "And when they wanted wine" Ec 10:19 Isa 24:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Woman*. This term, as used here, seems to imply reproof, as if she was interfering in that which did not properly concern her; but it is evident that no such reproof or disrespect was intended by the use of the term *woman* instead of *mother*. It is the same term by which he tenderly addressed Mary Magdalene after his resurrection (Joh 20:15), and his mother when he was on the cross, Joh 19:26. Comp. also Mt 15:28 Joh 4:21; 1Co 7:16.

What have I to do with thee? **See Barnes "Mt 8:29"**.

This expression is sometimes used to denote indignation or contempt. See Jud 11:12 2Sa 16 1Ki 17:18.

But it is not probable that it denoted either in this place; if it did, it was a mild reproof of Mary for attempting to control or direct him in his power of working miracles. Most of the ancients supposed this to be the intention of Jesus. The words sound to us harsh, but they might have been spoken in a *tender* manner, and not have been intended as a reproof. It is clear that he did not intend to *refuse* to provide wine, but only to delay it a little; and the design was, therefore, to compose the anxiety of Mary, and to prevent her being solicitous about it. It may, then, be thus expressed:

"My mother, be not anxious. To you and to me this
should not be a matter of solicitude. The proper
time of my interfering has not yet come. When that
is come I will furnish a supply, and in the
meantime neither you nor I should be solicitous."

Thus understood, it is so far from being a harsh reproof, that it was a mild exhortation for her to dismiss her fears and to put proper trust in him.

Mine hour, &c. My time. The proper time for my interposing. Perhaps the wine was not yet entirely exhausted. The wine had begun to fail, but he would not work a miracle until it was entirely gone, that the miracle might be free from all possibility of suspicion. It does not mean that the proper time for his working a miracle, or entering on his public work had not come, but that the proper time for his interposing there had not arrived.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *His mother saith*, &c. It is evident from this verse that his mother did not understand what he had said as a harsh reproof and repulse, but as an indication of his willingness at the proper time to furnish wine. In all this transaction he evinced the appropriate feelings of a son toward a mother.

{d} "Whatsoever he sayeth" Lu 5:5,6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Six water-pots of stone*. Made of stone; or, as we should say, stoneware.

After the manner. After the usual custom.

Of the purifying. Of the washings or ablutions of the Jews. They were for the purpose of washing the hands before and after eating (Mt 15:2), and for the formal washing of vessels, and even articles of furniture, Lu 11:39 Mr 7:3,4.

Two or three firkins. It is not quite certain what is meant here by the word *firkins*. It is probable that the measure intended is the Hebrew *bath*, containing about 7« gallons.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *With water*. This was done by the servants employed at the feast. It was done by them, so that there might be no opportunity of saying that the disciples of Jesus had filled them with wine to produce the *appearance* of a miracle. In this case there could be no deception. The quantity was very considerable. The servants would know whether the wine or water had been put in these vessels. It could not be believed that *they* had either the power or the disposition to impose on others in this manner, and the way was therefore clear for the proof that Jesus had really changed what was known to be *water* into *wine*.

To the brim. To the top. So full that no wine could be *poured in* to give the *appearance* of a mixture. Farther, vessels were used for this miracle in which wine had not been kept. These pots were never used to put wine in, but simply to keep *water* in for the various purposes of ablution. A large number was used on this occasion, because there were many guests.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Draw out now*. This command was given to the servants. It showed that the miracle had been *immediately* wrought. As soon as they were filled the servants were directed to take to the governor of the feast. Jesus made no parade about it, and it does not even appear that he approached the water-pots. He willed it, and it was done. This was a clear exertion of divine power, and made in such a manner as to leave no doubt of its reality.

The governor. One who presided on the occasion. The one who stood at the head or upper end of the table. He had the charge of the entertainment, provided the food, gave directions to the servants, etc.

{e} "Draw out" Ec 9:7 {f} "governor of the feast" Ro 13.7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *And knew not whence it was*. This is said, probably, to indicate that his judgment was not biased by any favour, or any *want* of favour, toward Jesus. Had he known what was done, he would have been less likely to have judged impartially. As it is, we have his testimony that this was *real* wine, and of so fine a body and flavour as to surpass that which had been provided for the occasion. Everything in this miracle shows that there was no collusion or understanding between Jesus and any of the persons at the feast.

{g} "servants" Ps 119:100 Joh 7:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Every man*. It is customary, or it is generally done.

When men have well drunk. This word does not of necessity mean that they were *intoxicated*, though it is usually employed in that sense. It may mean when they have drunk sufficient, or to satiety; or have drunk so much as to produce hilarity, and to destroy the keenness of their taste, so that they could not readily distinguish the good from that which was worse. But this cannot be adduced in favour of drunkenness, even if it means to be intoxicated; for,

1st. It is not said of those who were present at that feast, but of what generally occurred. For anything that appears, at that feast all were perfectly temperate and sober.

2nd. It is not the saying of Jesus that is here recorded, but of the governor of the feast, who is declaring what usually occurred as a fact.

3rd. There is not any expression of opinion in regard to its *propriety*, or in approval of it, even by that governor.

4th. It does not appear that our Saviour even *heard* the observation.

5th. Still less is there any evidence that he *approved* such a state of things, or that he designed that it should take place here. Farther, the word translated "*well drunk*" cannot be shown to mean intoxication; but it *may* mean when they had drunk as much as they judged proper or as they desired,

then the other was presented. It is clear that neither our Saviour, nor the sacred writer, nor the speaker here expresses any *approbation* of intemperance, nor is there the least evidence that anything of the kind occurred here. It is not proof that we approve of intemperance when we mention, as this man did, what occurs usually among men at feasts.

Is worse. Is of an inferior quality.

The good wine. This shows that this had all the qualities of real wine. We should not be deceived by the phrase "*good wine*." We often use the phrase to denote that it is good in proportion to its strength and its power to intoxicate; but no such sense is to be attached to the word here. Pliny, Plutarch, and Horace describe wine as good, or mention that as the best wine, which was *harmless* or *innocent*—poculo vini *innocentis*. The most useful wine — *utilissimum vinum*— was that which had little strength; and the most wholesome wine— *saluberrimum vinum*— was that which had not been adulterated by "the addition of anything to the *must* or juice." Pliny expressly says that a "good wine" was one that was destitute of spirit (lib. iv. c. 13). It should not be assumed, therefore, that the "good wine" was *stronger* than the other: it is rather to be presumed that it was milder. The wine referred to here was doubtless such as was commonly drunk in Palestine. That was the pure juice of the grape. It was not brandied wine, nor drugged wine, nor wine compounded of various substances, such as we drink in this land. The common wine drunk in Palestine was that which was the simple juice of the grape. We use the word *wine* now to denote the kind of liquid which passes under that name in this country—always containing a considerable portion of alcohol —not only the alcohol produced by fermentation, but alcohol *added* to keep it or make it stronger. But we have no right to take that sense of the word, and go with it to the interpretation of the Scriptures. We should endeavour to place ourselves in the exact circumstances of those times, ascertain precisely what idea the word would convey to those who used it then, and apply *that* sense to the word in the interpretation of the Bible; and there is not the slightest evidence that the word so used would have conveyed any idea but that of the pure juice of the grape, nor the slightest circumstance mentioned in this account that would not be fully met by such a supposition. No man should adduce *this* instance in favour of drinking wine unless he can prove that the wine made in the" water-pots" of Cana was *just like* the wine which he proposes to drink. The Saviour's example may be always pleaded JUST AS IT WAS; but it is a matter of obvious and simple justice that we should find out exactly what the example was before we plead it. There is, moreover, no evidence that any other part of the water was converted into wine than that which was *drawn out* of the water-casks for the use of the guests. On this supposition, certainly, all the circumstances of the case are met, and the miracle would be more striking. All that was needed was to furnish a *supply* when the wine that had been prepared was nearly exhausted. The object was not to furnish a large quantity for future use. The miracle, too, would in this way be more apparent and impressive. On this supposition, the casks would *appear* to be filled with water *only*; as it was drawn out, it was pure wine. Who could doubt, then, that there was the exertion of miraculous power? All, therefore, that has been said about the Redeemer's furnishing a large quantity of wine for the newly-married pair, and about his benevolence in doing it, is wholly gratuitous. There is no evidence of it whatever; and it is not necessary to suppose it in order to an explanation of the circumstances of the case.

{h} "kept" Ps 104:15 Pr 9:2,5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *This beginning of miracles*. This his first public miracle. This is declared by the sacred writer to be a miracle— that is, an exertion of divine power, producing a change of the substance of water into wine, which no human power could do.

Manifested forth. Showed; exhibited.

His glory. His power, and proper character as the Messiah; showed that he had divine power, and that God had certainly commissioned him. This is shown to be a real miracle by the following considerations: 1st. Real water was placed in the vessels. This the servants believed, and there was no possibility of deception.

2nd. The water was placed where it was not *customary* to keep wine. It could not be *pretended* that it was merely a mixture of water and wine.

3rd. It was judged to be wine without knowing whence it came. There was no agreement between Jesus and the governor of the feast to impose on the guests.

4th. It was a change which nothing but divine power could effect. He that can change water into a substance like the juice of the grape must be clothed with divine power.

Believed on him. This does not mean that they did not *before* believe on him, but that their faith was confirmed or strengthened. They saw a miracle, and it satisfied them that he was the Messiah. *Before* this they believed on the testimony of John, and from conversation with Jesus (Joh 1:35-51); *now* they saw that he was invested with almighty power, and their faith was established. From this narrative we may learn,

1st. That marriage is honourable, and that Jesus, if sought, will not refuse his presence and blessing on such an occasion.

2nd. On such an occasion the presence and approbation of Christ should be sought. No compact formed on earth is more important; none enters so deeply into our comfort in this world; perhaps none will so much affect our destiny in the world to come. It should be entered into, then, in the fear of God.

3rd. On all such occasions our conduct should be such that the presence of Jesus would be no interruption or disturbance. He is holy. He is always present in every place; and on all festival occasions our deportment should be such as that we should welcome the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. *That is not a proper state of feeling or employment which would be interrupted by the presence of the Saviour*.

4th. Jesus delighted to do good. In the very beginning of his ministry he worked a miracle to show his benevolence. This was the appropriate commencement of a life in which he was to go about doing good. He seized every opportunity of doing it; and at a marriage feast, as well as among the sick and poor, he showed the character which he always sustained —that of a benefactor of mankind.

5th. An argument cannot be drawn from this instance in favour of intemperate drinking. There is no evidence that any who were present on that occasion drank too freely.

6th. Nor can an argument be drawn from this case in favour even of drinking wine such as we have. The common wine of Judea was the pure juice of the grape, without any mixture of alcohol, and was harmless. It was the common drink of the people, and did not tend to produce intoxication. *Our* wines are a *mixture* of the juice of the grape and of brandy, and often of infusions of various substances to give it colour and taste, and the appearance of wine. Those wines are little less injurious

than brandy, and the habit of drinking them should be classed with the drinking of all other liquid fires.

The following table will show the danger of drinking the wines that are in common use :

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Brandy has fifty-three parts and 39 hundredths in a hundred of
alcohol; or .........................53.39 per cent.
 Rum ................................53.68   "
 Whisky, Scotch .....................54.32   "
 Holland Gin ........................51.60   "
 Port Wine, highest kind ............25.83   "
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lowest .....21.40 "

Madeira, highest ..... 29.42 "

lowest ..... 19.34 " Lisbon .....18.94 " Malaga .....17.26 " Red Champagne .....11.30 " White " ..... 12.80 " Currant Wine .....20.25 "

It follows that a man who drinks two glasses of most of the wines used has taken as much alcohol as if he had taken one glass of brandy or whisky, and why should he not as well drink the alcohol in the brandy as in the Wine? What difference can it make in morals? What difference in its effects on his system? The experience of the world has shown that water, pure water, is the most wholesome, safe, and invigorating drink for man.

{i} "manifested forth his glory" Joh 1:14 {k} "and his disciples" Joh 5:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *To Capernaum*. **See Barnes "Mt 4:13"**.

Not many days. The reason why he remained there no longer was that the Passover was near, and they went up to Jerusalem to attend it.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *The Jews' passover*. The feast among the Jews called the Passover. **See Barnes "Mt 26:2, also** Mt 26:3-17.

And Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Every male among the Jews was required to appear at this feast. Jesus, in obedience to the law, went up to observe it. This is the *first* Passover on which he attended after he entered on the work of the ministry. It is commonly supposed that he observed three others— one recorded Lu 6:1, another Joh 6:4, and the last one on the night before he was crucified, Joh 11:55. As his baptism when he entered on his ministry had taken place some time before this —probably not far from six months— it follows that the period of his ministry was not far from three years and a half, agreeably to the prophecy in Da 9:27.

{l} "passover" Ex 12:14 {m} "Jesus" Joh 2:23 5:1, 6:4 11:55

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Found in the temple*, &c. The transaction here recorded is in almost all respects similar to that which has been explained in the **See Barnes "Mt 21:12"**.

This took place at the *commencement* of his public ministry; that *at the close*. On each occasion he showed that his great regard was for the *pure worship* of his Father; and one great design of his coming was to reform the abuses which had crept into that worship, and to bring man to a proper regard for the glory of God. If it be asked how it was that those engaged in this traffic so *readily* yielded to Jesus of Nazareth, and that they left their gains and their property, and fled from the temple at the command of one so obscure as he was, it may be replied,

1st. That their *consciences* reproved them for their impiety, and they could not set up the *appearance* of self-defence.

2nd. It was customary in the nation to cherish a profound regard for the authority of a prophet; and the appearance and manner of Jesus—so fearless, so decided, so authoritative—led them to suppose *he* was a prophet, and they were afraid to resist him.

3rd. He *had* even then a wide reputation among the people, and it is not improbable that many supposed him to be the Messiah.

4th. Jesus on all occasions had a most wonderful control over men. None could resist him. There was something in his manner, as well as in his doctrine, that awed men, and made them tremble at his presence. Comp. Joh 18:5,6. On this occasion he had the *manner* of a prophet, the authority of God, and the testimony of their own consciences, and they could not, therefore, resist the authority by which he spoke.

Though Jesus thus purified the temple at the commencement of his ministry, yet in three years the same scene was to be repeated. See Mt 21:12. And from this we may learn,

1st. How soon men forget the most solemn reproofs, and return to evil practices.

2nd. That no sacredness of time or place will guard them from sin. In the very temple, under the very eye of God, these men soon returned to practices for which their consciences reproved them, and which they knew God disapproved.

3rd. We see here how strong is the love of gain—the ruling passion of mankind. Not even the sacredness of the temple, the presence of God, the awful ceremonials of religion, deterred them from this unholy traffic. So wicked men and hypocrites will always turn *religion*, if possible, into gain; and not even the sanctuary, the Sabbath, or the most awful and sacred scenes, will deter them from schemes of gain. Comp. Am 8:5. So strong is this grovelling passion, and so deep is that depravity which fears not God, and regards not his Sabbaths, his sanctuary, or his law.

{n} "And found in the temple" Mt 21:12 Mr 11:15; Lu 19:45

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *A scourge*. A whip.

Of small cords. This whip was made as an emblem of authority, and also for the purpose of driving from the temple the cattle which had been brought there for sale. There is no evidence that he used any violence to the men engaged in that unhallowed traffic. The original word implies that these *cords* were made of twisted *rushes* or *reeds*— probably the ancient material for making ropes.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 16

Verse 16. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *It was written*, &c. This is recorded in Ps 69:9. Its meaning is, that he was affected with great zeal or concern for the pure worship of God.

The zeal of thine house. Zeal is intense ardour in reference to any object. The zeal of thine house means extraordinary concern for the temple of God; intense solicitude that the worship there should be pure, and such as God would approve.

Hath eaten me up. Hath absorbed me, or engaged my entire attention and affection; hath surpassed all other feelings, so that it may be said to be the one great absorbing affection and desire of the mind. Here is an example set for ministers and for all Christians. In Jesus this was the great commanding sentiment of his life. In us it should be also. In this manifestation of zeal he began and ended his ministry. In this we should begin and end our lives. We learn, also, that ministers of religion should aim to purify the church of God. Wicked men, conscience-smitten, will tremble when they see proper zeal in the ministers of Jesus Christ; and there is no combination of wicked men, and no form of depravity, that can stand before the faithful, zealous, pure preaching of the gospel. The preaching of every minister should be such that wicked men will feel that they must either become Christians or leave the house of God, or spend their lives there in the consciousness of guilt and the fear of hell.

{o} "The zeal" Ps 69:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *What sign*, &c. What *miracle* dost thou work? He assumed the character of a prophet. He was reforming, by his authority, the temple. It was natural to ask by what *authority* this was done; and as they had been accustomed to miracles in the life of Moses, and Elijah, and the other prophets, so they demanded evidence that *he* had authority thus to cleanse the house of God.

Seeing that thou doest. Rather "by what *title or authority* thou doest these things." Our translation is ambiguous. They wished to know *by what miracle* he had shown, or could show, his right to do those things.

{p} "What sign" Mt 12:38 Joh 6:30

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Destroy this temple*. The evangelist informs us (Joh 2:21) that by *temple*, here, he meant his body. It is not improbable that he pointed with his finger to his body as he spoke. The word *destroy*, used here in the imperative, has rather the force of the *future*. Its meaning may thus be expressed:

"You are now profaners of the temple of God. You have
defiled the sanctuary; you have made it a place of
traffic. You have also despised my authority, and
been unmoved by the miracles which I have already
wrought. But your wickedness will not end here.
You will oppose me more and more; you will reject
and despise me, until in your wickedness you will
take my life and destroy my body."

Here was therefore a distinct prediction both of his death and the cause of it. The word *temple*, or *dwelling*, was not unfrequently used by the Jews to denote the body as being the residence of the spirit, 2Co 5:1. Christians are not unfrequently called the temple of God, as being those in whom the Holy Spirit dwells on earth, 1Co 3:16,17; 1Co 6:19 2Co 6:16. Our Saviour called his body a temple in accordance with the common use of language, and more particularly because in him the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily, Col 2:9. The temple at Jerusalem was the appropriate dwelling-place of God. His visible presence was there peculiarly manifested, 2Ch 36:15 Ps 76:2. As the Lord Jesus was divine—as the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him—so his body might be called a temple.

In three days I will raise it up. The Jews had asked a miracle of him in proof of his authority—that is, a proof that he was the Messiah. He tells them that a full and decided proof of that would be his *resurrection from the dead*. Though they would not be satisfied by any other miracle, yet by this they ought to be convinced that he came from heaven, and was the long-expected Messiah. To the same evidence that he was the Christ he refers them on other occasions. See Mt 12:38,39. Thus early did he foretell his death and resurrection, for at the beginning of his work he had a clear foresight of all that was to take place. This knowledge shows clearly that he came from heaven, and it evinces, also, the extent of his love—that he was *willing* to come to save us, knowing clearly what it would cost him. Had he come *without* such an expectation of suffering, his love might have been far less; but when he fully knew all that was before him, when he saw that it would involve him in contempt and death, it shows compassion "worthy of a God" that he was willing to endure the load of all our sorrows, and die to save us from death everlasting. When Jesus says, "*I* will raise it up," it is proof, also, of divine power. A mere man could not say this. No deceased man

can have such power over his body; and there must have been, therefore, in the person of Jesus a nature superior to human to which the term "I" could be applied, and which had power to raise the dead—that is, which was divine.

{q} "Destroy this temple" Mt 26:61 27:40

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Then said the Jews*, &c. The Jews, either from the ambiguity of his language, or more probably from a design to cavil, understood him as speaking of the temple at Jerusalem. What he said here is all the evidence that they could adduce on his trial (Mt 26:61 Mr 14:58), and they reproached him with it when on the cross, Mt 27:40. The Jews frequently perverted our Saviour's meaning. The language which he used was often that of parables or metaphor; and as they sought to misunderstand him and pervert his language, so he often left them to their own delusions, as he himself says, "that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand," Mt 13:13. This was a case which they *might*, if they had been disposed, have easily understood. They were in the temple; the conversation was about the temple; and though he probably pointed to his body, or designated it in some plain way, yet they chose to understand him as referring to the temple itself; and as it appeared so improbable that he could raise up that in three days, they sought to pervert his words and pour ridicule on his pretensions.

Forty and six years, &c. The temple in which they then were was that which was commonly called the *second temple*, built after the return of the Jews from Babylon. **See Barnes "Mt 21:12"**.

This temple Herod the Great commenced repairing, or began to rebuild, in the eighteenth year of his reign—that is, *sixteen years* before the birth of Christ (Jos. Ant., b. xv. 1). The main body of the temple he completed in *nine years and a half* (Jos. Ant., xv. 5, 6), yet the temple, with its outbuildings, was not entirely complete in the time of our Saviour. Herod continued to ornament it and to perfect it even till the time of Agrippa (Jos. Ant., b. xx. ch. viii. § 11). As Herod began to rebuild the temple sixteen years before the birth of Jesus, and as what is here mentioned happened in the thirtieth year of the age of Jesus, so the time which had been occupied in it was *forty-six years*. This circumstance is one of the many in the New Testament which show the accuracy of the evangelists, and which prove that they were well acquainted with what they recorded. It demonstrates that their narration is true. Impostors do not trouble themselves to be very accurate about names and dates, and there is nothing in which they are more liable to make mistakes.

Wilt thou, &c. This is an expression of contempt. Herod, with all his wealth and power, had been engaged in this work almost half a century. Can you, an obscure and unknown Galilean, accomplish it in three days? The thing, in their judgment, was ridiculous, and showed, as they supposed, that he had no authority to do what he had done in the temple.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 21

Verse 21. No Barnes text on this verse.

{r} "temple" Eph 2:21,22; Col 2:9 He 8:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *When he was risen from the dead*, &c. This saying of our Saviour at that time seemed obscure and difficult. The disciples did not understand it, but they treasured it up in their memory, and the event showed what was its true meaning. Many prophecies are obscure when spoken which are perfectly plain when the event takes place. We learn from this, also, the importance of treasuring up the truths of the Bible *now*, though we may not perfectly understand them. Hereafter they may be plain to us. It is therefore important that *children* should learn the truths of the sacred Scriptures. Treasured up in their memory, they may not be understood *now*, but hereafter they may be clear to them. Every one engaged in teaching a Sunday-school, therefore, may be imparting instruction which may be understood, and may impart comfort, long after the teacher has gone to eternity.

They believed. That is, after he rose from the dead.

The scripture. The Old Testament, which predicted his resurrection. Reference here must be made to Ps 16:10, comp. Ac 2:27-32, Ac 13:35-37 Ps 2:7, comp. Ac 13:33. They understood those Scriptures in a sense different from what they did before.

The word which Jesus had said. The prediction which he had made respecting his resurrection in this place and on other occasions. See Mt 20:19 Lu 18:32,33.

{s} "his disciples" Lu 24:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Feast-day*. Feast. During the celebration of the Passover, which continued eight days.

Miracles which he did. These miracles are not particularly recorded. Jesus took occasion to work miracles, and to preach at that time, for a great multitude were present from all parts of Judea. It was a favourable opportunity for making known his doctrines and showing the evidence that he was the Christ, and he embraced it. We should always seek and embrace opportunities of doing good, and we should not be deterred, but rather excited, by the multitude around us to make known our real sentiments on the subject of religion.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Did not commit himself*. The word translated *commit* here is the same which in Joh 2:23 is translated *believed*. It means to put *trust* or *confidence in*. Jesus did not put trust or reliance in them. He did not leave himself in their hands. He acted cautiously and prudently. The proper time for him to die had not come, and he secured his own safety. The reason why he did not commit himself to them is that he knew all men. He knew the inconstancy and fickleness of the multitude.

He knew how easily they might be turned against him by the Jewish leaders, and how unsafe he would be if they should be moved to sedition and tumult.

{t} "he knew all men" 1Sa 16:7 1Ch 28:9, 29:17 Jer 17:9,10 Mt 9:4
Lu 16:30 Ac 1:24; Re 2:23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Should testify of man*. Should give him the character of any man.

He knew what was in man. This he did because he had made all Joh 1:3, and because he was God, Joh 1:1. There can be no higher evidence than this that he was omniscient, and was therefore divine. To search the heart is the prerogative of God alone (Jer 17:10); and as Jesus knew what was in these disciples, and as it is expressly said that he knew what was in man—that is, in all men—so it follows that he must be equal with God. As he knows *all*, he is acquainted with the *false* pretentions and professions of hypocrites. None can deceive him. He also knows the wants and desires of all his real friends. He hears their groans, he sees their sighs, he counts their tears, and in the day of need will come to their relief.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 1

Verse 1. *A man of the Pharisees*. A Pharisee. **See Barnes "Mt 3:3"**.

Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. One of the *Sanhedrim*, or great council of the nation. He is twice mentioned after this as being friendly to our Saviour; in the first instance as advocating his cause, and defending him against the unjust suspicion of the Jews Joh 7:50, and in the second instance as one who came to aid in embalming his body, Joh 19:39. It will be recollected that the design of *John* in writing this gospel was to show that Jesus was the Messiah. To do this he here adduces the testimony of one of the *rulers* of the Jews, who early became convinced of it, and who retained the belief of it until the death of Jesus.

{a} "Nicodemus" Joh 7:50,51, 19:39

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *The same came to Jesus*. The design of his coming seems to have been to inquire more fully of Jesus what was the doctrine which he came to teach. He seems to have been convinced that he was the Messiah, and desired to be farther instructed *in private* respecting his doctrine. It was not usual for a man of rank, power, and riches to come to inquire of Jesus in this manner; yet we may learn that the most favourable opportunity for teaching such men the nature of personal religion

is when they are alone. Scarcely any man, of any rank, will refuse to converse on this subject when addressed respectfully and tenderly *in private*. In the midst of their companions, or engaged in business, they may refuse to listen or may cavil. When alone, they will hear the voice of entreaty and persuasion, and be willing to converse on the great subjects of judgment and eternity. Thus Paul says (Ga 2:2), "*privately to them which are of reputations*;" evincing his consummate prudence, and his profound knowledge of human nature.

By night. It is not mentioned why he came by night. It might have been that, being a member of the Sanhedrim, he was engaged all the day; or it may have been because the Lord Jesus was occupied all the day in teaching publicly and in working miracles, and that there was no opportunity for conversing with him as freely as he desired; or it may have been that he was afraid of the ridicule and contempt of those in power, and fearful that it might involve him in danger if publicly known; or it may have been that he was afraid that if it were publicly known that he was disposed to favour the Lord Jesus, it might provoke more opposition against *him* and endanger his life. As no *bad* motive is imputed to him, it is most in accordance with Christian charity to suppose that his motives were such as God would approve, especially as the Saviour did not reprove him. We should not be disposed to blame men where Jesus did not, and we should desire to find *goodness* in every man rather than be ever on the search for evil motives. 1Co 13:4-7. We may learn here,

1st. That our Saviour, though engaged during the day, did not refuse to converse with an inquiring sinner at night. Ministers of the gospel at all times should welcome those who are asking the way to life.

2nd. That it is *proper* for men, even those of elevated rank, to *inquire* on the subject of religion. Nothing is so important as religion, and no temper of mind is more lovely than a disposition to ask the way to heaven. *At all times* men should seek the way of salvation, and especially in times of great religious excitement they should make inquiry. At Jerusalem, at the time referred to here, there was great solicitude. Many believed on Jesus. He wrought miracles, and preached, and many were converted. There was what would now be called *a revival off religion*, having all the features of a work of grace. At such a season it was proper, as it is now, that not only the poor, but the rich and great, should inquire the path to life.

Rabbi. This was a title of respect conferred on distinguished Jewish teachers, somewhat in the way that the title *doctor of divinity* is now conferred. **See Barnes "Joh 1:38".**

Our Saviour forbade his disciples to wear that title (**See Barnes "Joh 1:38"**) , though it was proper for him to do it, as being the great Teacher of mankind. It literally signifies great, and was given by Nicodemus, doubtless, because Jesus gave distinguished proofs that he came as a teacher from God.

We know. I know, and those with whom I am connected. Perhaps he was acquainted with some of the Pharisees who entertained the same opinion about Jesus that he did, and *he* came to be more fully confirmed in the belief.

Come from God. Sent by God. This implies his readiness to hear him, and his desire to be instructed. He acknowledges the divine mission of Jesus, and delicately asks him to instruct him in the truth of religion. When we read the words of Jesus in the Bible, it should be with a belief that he came from God, and was therefore qualified and authorized to teach us the way of life.

These miracles. The miracles which he wrought in the temple and at Jerusalem, Joh 2:23.

Except God be with him. Except God *aid* him, and except his instructions are approved by God. Miracles show that a prophet or religious teacher comes from God, because God would not work

a miracle in attestation of a falsehood or to give countenance to a false teacher. If God gives a man power to work a miracle, it is proof that he approves the teaching of that man, and the miracle is the proof or the credential that he came from God.

{b} "for no man" Joh 9:16,33; Ac 2:22

{c} "God be with him" Ac 10:38

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Verily, verily*. An expression of strong affirmation, denoting the *certainty* and the *importance* of what he was about to say. Jesus proceeds to state one of the fundamental and indispensable doctrines of his religion. It may seem remarkable that he should introduce this subject in this manner; but it should be remembered that Nicodemus acknowledged that he was a teacher come from God; that he implied by that his readiness and desire to receive instruction; and that it is not wonderful, therefore, that Jesus should *commence* with one of the fundamental truths of his religion. It is no part of Christianity to *conceal* anything. Jesus declared to every man, high or low, rich or poor, the most humbling truths of the gospel. Nothing was kept back for fear of offending men of wealth or power; and for them, as well as the most poor and lowly, it was declared to be indispensable to experience, as the first thing in religion, a change of heart and of life.

Except a man. This is a universal form of expression designed to include all mankind. Of *each and every man* it is certain that unless he is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. It includes, therefore, men of every character and rank, and nation, moral and immoral, rich and poor, in office and out of office, old and young, bond and free, the slave and his master, Jew and Gentile. It is clear that our Saviour intended to convey to *Nicodemus* the idea, also, that *he* must be born again. It was not sufficient to be a Jew, or to acknowledge him to be a teacher sent by God—that is, the Messiah; it was necessary, in addition to this, to experience in his own soul that great change called the *new birth* or regeneration.

Be born again. The word translated here *again* means also *from above*, and is so rendered in the margin. It is evident, however, that Nicodemus understood it not as referring to a birth from above, for if he had he would not have asked the question in Joh 3:4. It is probable that in the language which he used there was not the same ambiguity that there is in the Greek. The ancient versions all understood it as meaning again, or the *second time*. Our natural birth introduces us to light, is the commencement of life, throws us amid the works of God, and is the beginning of our existence; but it also introduces us to a world of sin. We early go astray. All men transgress. The imagination of the thoughts of the heart is evil from the youth up. We are conceived in sin and brought forth in iniquity, and there is none that doeth good, no, not one. The carnal mind is enmity against God, and by nature we are dead in trespasses and sins, Ge 8:21 Ps 14:2,3; Ps 51:5 Ro 1:29-32, 3:10-20 8:7.

All sin exposes men to misery here and hereafter. To escape from sin, to be happy in the world to come, it is necessary that man should be changed in his principles, his feelings, and his manner of life. This change, or the beginning of this new life, is called the *new birth*, or regeneration. It is so called because in many respects it has a striking analogy to the natural birth. It is the beginning of spiritual life. It introduces us to the light of the gospel. It is the moment when we really begin

to live to any purpose. It is the moment when God reveals himself to us as our reconciled Father, and we are adopted into his family as his sons. And as every man is a sinner, it is necessary that each one should experience this change, or he cannot be happy or saved. This doctrine was not unknown to the Jews, and was particularly predicted as a doctrine that would be taught in the times of the Messiah. See De 10:16 Jer 4:4, 31:4,33; Eze 11:19 36:25

Ps 51:12. The change in the New Testament is elsewhere called the *new creation* (2Co 5:17 Ga 6:15), and *life from the dead*, or a resurrection, Eph 2:1 Joh 5:21,24.

He cannot see. To *see*, here, is put evidently for enjoying —-or he cannot be fitted for it and partake of it.

The kingdom of God. Either in this world or in that which is to come—that is, heaven. **See Barnes "Mt 3:2".**

The meaning is, that the kingdom which Jesus was about to set up was so pure and holy that it was indispensable that every man should experience this change, or he could not partake of its blessings. This is solemnly declared by the Son of God by an affirmation equivalent to an oath, and there can be no possibility, therefore, of entering heaven without experiencing the change which the Saviour contemplated by the *new birth*. And it becomes every man, as in the presence of a holy God before whom he must soon appear, to ask himself whether he has experienced this change, and if he has not, to give no rest to his eyes until he has sought the mercy of God, and implored the aid of his Spirit that his heart may be renewed.

{d} "Except" Joh 1:13 Ga 6:15; Eph 2:1 Tit 3:5; Jas 1:18 1Pe 1:23

1Jo 2:29 3:9

{1} "born again" or, "from above"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *How can a man*, &c. It may seem remarkable that Nicodemus understood the Saviour *literally*, when the expression *to be born again* was in common use among the Jews to denote a change from *Gentilism* to *Judaism* by becoming a proselyte by *baptism*. The word with them meant a change from the state of a heathen to that of a Jew. But they never used it as applicable to a Jew, because they supposed that by his birth every Jew was entitled to all the privileges of the people of God. When, therefore, our Saviour used it of a Jew, when he affirmed its necessity of *every man*, Nicodemus supposed that there was an absurdity in the doctrine, or something that surpassed his comprehension, and he therefore asked whether it was possible that Jesus could teach so absurd a doctrine—as he could conceive no other sense as applicable to a Jew—as that he should, when old, enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born. And we may learn from this—

1st. That prejudice leads men to misunderstand the plainest doctrines of religion.

2nd. That things which are at first incomprehensible or apparently absurd, may, when explained, become clear. The doctrine of regeneration, so difficult to Nicodemus, is plain to a *child* that is born of the Spirit.

3rd. Those in high rank in life, and who are learned, are often most ignorant about the plainest matters of religion. It is often wonderful that they exhibit so little acquaintance with the most simple subjects pertaining to the soul, and so much absurdity in their views.

4th. A doctrine is not to be *rejected* because the rich and the great do not believe or understand it. The doctrine of regeneration was not false because Nicodemus did not comprehend it.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Be born of water*. By *water*, here, is evidently signified *baptism*. Thus the word is used in Eph 5:26 Tit 3:5. Baptism was practised by the Jews in receiving a Gentile as a proselyte. It was practised by John among the Jews; and Jesus here says that it is an ordinance of his religion, and the sign and seal of the renewing influences of his Spirit. So he said (Mr 16:16), "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." It is clear from these places, and from the example of the apostles (Ac 2:38,41, 8:12 13 36 38 9:18

Ac 10:47 48, 16:15 33 18:8 22:16 Ga 3:27) , that they considered this ordinance as binding on all who professed to love the Lord Jesus. And though it cannot be said that none who are not baptized can be saved, yet Jesus meant, undoubtedly, to be understood as affirming that this was to be the regular and uniform way of entering into his church; that it was the appropriate mode of making a profession of religion; and that a man who neglected this, when the duty was made known to him, neglected a plain command of God. It is clear, also, that any other command of God might as well be neglected or violated as this, and that it is the duty of everyone not only to love the Saviour, but to make an acknowledgment of that love by being baptized, and by devoting himself thus to his service. But, lest Nicodemus should suppose that this was all that was meant, he added that it was necessary that he should *be born of the Spirit also*. This was predicted of the Saviour, that he should *baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire*, Mt 3:11. By this is clearly intended that the heart must be changed by the agency of the Holy Spirit; that the love of sin must be abandoned; that man must repent of crime and turn to God; that he must renounce all his evil propensities, and give himself to a life of prayer and holiness, of meekness, purity, and benevolence. This great change is in the Scripture ascribed uniformly to the Holy Spirit, Tit 3:5 1Th 1:6 Ro 5:5 1Pe 1:22.

Cannot enter into. This is the way, the appropriate way, of entering into the kingdom of the Messiah here and hereafter. He cannot enter into the true church here, or into heaven in the world to come, except in connection with a change of heart, and by the proper expression of that change in the ordinances appointed by the Saviour.

{e} "water" Mr 16:16 Ac 2:38 {f} "of the Spirit" Ro 8:2 1Co 2:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *That which is born of the flesh*. To show the necessity of this change, the Saviour directs the attention of Nicodemus to the natural condition of man. By that which is born of the flesh he evidently intends man as he is by nature, in the circumstances of his natural birth. Perhaps, also, he alludes to the question asked by Nicodemus, whether a man could be born when he was old? Jesus tells him that if this could be, it would not answer any valuable purpose; he would still have the same propensities and passions. Another change was therefore indispensable.

Is flesh. Partakes of the nature of the parent. Comp. Ge 5:3. As the parents are corrupt and sinful, so will be their descendants. See Job 14:4. And as the parents are *wholly* corrupt by nature, so their children will be the same. The word *flesh* here is used as meaning *corrupt, defiled, sinful*. The flesh in the Scriptures is often used to denote the sinful propensities and passions of our nature, as those propensities are supposed to have their seat in the animal nature.

"The works of the flesh are manifest, which are these:
adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness," &c.,
Ga 5:19,20. See also Eph 2:3 1Pe 3:21, 2:18 1Jo 2:16; Re 8:5

Is born of the Spirit. Of the Spirit of God, or by the agency of the Holy Ghost.

Is spirit. Is spiritual, like the spirit, that is, holy, pure. Here we learn,

1st. That all men are by nature sinful.

2nd. That none are renewed but by the Spirit of God. If man did the work himself, it would be still carnal and impure.

3rd. That the effect of the new birth is to make men holy. And,

4th. That no man can have evidence that he is born again who is not holy, and just in proportion as he becomes pure in his life will be the evidence that he is born of the Spirit.

{g} "That which is born of the Spirit" 1Co 15:47-49 2Co 5:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Marvel not*. Wonder not. It is possible that Nicodemus in some way still expressed a doubt of the doctrine, and Jesus took occasion in a very striking manner to illustrate it.

{2} "born again" or, "from above"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *The wind bloweth*, &c. Nicodemus had objected to the doctrine because he did not understand how *it could be*. Jesus shows him that he ought not to reject it on that account, for he constantly believed things quite as difficult. It might appear incomprehensible, but it was to be judged of by its *effects*. As in this case of the wind, the *effects* were seen, the sound was heard, important changes were produced by it, trees and clouds were moved, yet the wind is *not seen*, nor do we know whence it comes, nor by what laws it is governed; so it is with the operations of the Spirit. We see the changes produced, Men just now sinful become holy; the thoughtless become serious; the licentious become pure; the vicious, moral; the moral, religious; the prayerless, prayerful; the rebellious and obstinate, meek, and mild, and gentle. When we see such changes, we ought no more to doubt that they are produced by some *cause*—by some mighty agent, than when we see the trees moved, or the waters of the ocean piled on heaps, or feel the cooling effects of a summer's breeze. In those cases we attribute it to the *wind*, though we see it not, and though we do not understand its operations. We may learn, hence,

1st. That the proper evidence of conversion is the *effect* on the life.

2nd. That we are not too curiously to search for the *cause* or *manner* of the change.

3rd. That God has power over the most hardened sinner to change him, as he has power over the loftiest oak, to bring it down by a sweeping blast.

4th. That there may be great *variety* in the modes of the operation of the Spirit. As the wind sometimes sweeps with a tempest, and prostrates all before it, and sometimes breathes upon us in a mild evening zephyr, so it is with the operations of the Spirit. The sinner sometimes trembles and is prostrate before the truth, and sometimes is sweetly and gently drawn to the cross of Jesus.

Where it listeth. Where it *wills* or pleases. *So is every one*, &c. Every one that is born of the Spirit is, in some respects, like the effects of the wind. You see it not, you cannot discern its laws, but you see *its effects*, and you know therefore that it does exist and operate. Nicodemus's objection was, that he could not *see* this change, or perceive *how* it could be. Jesus tells him that he should not reject a doctrine merely because he could not understand it. Neither could the *wind* be seen, but its effects were well known, and no one doubted the existence or the power of the agent. Comp. Ec 11:5.

{h} "so is every one" 1Co 2:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *How can these things be?* Nicodemus was still unwilling to admit the doctrine unless he understood it; and we have here an instance of a man of rank stumbling at one of the plainest doctrines of religion, and unwilling to admit a truth because he could not understand *how* it could be, when he daily admitted the truth of facts in other things which he could as little comprehend. And we may learn,

1st. That men will often admit facts on other subjects, and be greatly perplexed by similar facts in religion.

2nd. That no small part of men's difficulties are because they cannot understand *how* or *why* a thing is.

3rd. That men of rank and learning are as likely to be perplexed by these things as those in the obscurest and humblest walks of life.

4th. That this is one reason why such men, particularly, so often reject the truths of the gospel. And,

5th. That this is a very *unwise* treatment of truth, and a way which they do not apply to other things. If the wind cools and refreshes me in summer—if it prostrates the oak or lashes the sea into foam—if it destroys my house or my grain, it matters little *how* it does this; and so of the Spirit. If it renews my heart, humbles my pride, subdues my sin, and comforts my soul, it is a matter of little importance how it does all this. Sufficient for me is it to know that it is done, and to taste the blessings which flow from the renewing and sanctifying grace of God.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *A master of Israel*. A *teacher* of Israel; the same word that in the second verse is translated *teacher*. As such a *teacher* he ought to have understood this doctrine. It was not *new*, but was clearly taught in the Old Testament. See particularly Ps 51:10 16 17 Eze 11:19 36:26.

It may seem surprising that a man whose business it was to teach the people should be a stranger to so plain and important a doctrine; but when worldly-minded men are placed in offices of religion—when they seek those offices for the sake of ease or reputation, it is no wonder that they are strangers to the plain truths of the Bible; and there have been many, and there are still, who are in the ministry itself, to whom the plainest doctrines of the gospel are obscure. No man can understand the Bible fully unless he is a humble Christian, and the easiest way to comprehend the truths of religion is to give the heart to God and live to his glory. A child thus may have more real knowledge of the way of salvation than many who are pretended masters and teachers of Israel, Joh 7:17 Mt 11:25; Ps 8:2

compared with Mt 21:16.

Of Israel. Of the Jews; of the Jewish nation.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *We speak*. Jesus here speaks in the plural number, including himself and those engaged with him in preaching the gospel. Nicodemus had said (Joh 3:2), "We know that thou art," &c., including himself and those with whom he acted. Jesus in reply said, We, who are engaged in spreading the new doctrines about which you have come to inquire, speak what we know. We do not deliver doctrines which we do not *practically* understand. This is a positive affirmation of Jesus, which he had a right to make about his new doctrine. *He* knew its truth, and those who came into his kingdom knew it also. We learn here,

1st. That the Pharisees taught doctrines which they did not practically understand. They taught much truth (Mt 23:2), but they were deplorably ignorant of the plainest matters in their practical application.

2nd. Every minister of the gospel ought to be able to appeal to his own experience, and to say that he knows the truth which he is communicating to others.

3rd. Every Sunday-school teacher should be able to say, "I *know* what I am communicating; I have experienced what is meant by the new birth, and the love of God, and the religion which I am teaching."

Testify. Bear witness to.

That we have seen. Jesus had seen by his omniscient eye all the operations of the Spirit on the hearts of men. His ministers have seen its effects as we see the effects of the wind, and, having seen men changed from sin to holiness, they are qualified to bear witness to the truth and reality of the change. Every successful minister of the gospel thus becomes a witness of the saving power of the gospel.

Ye receive not. Ye Pharisees. Though we give evidence of the truth of the new religion; though miracles axe wrought, and proof is given that this doctrine came from heaven, yet you reject it.

Our witness. Our testimony. The *evidence* which is furnished by miracles and by the saving power of the gospel. Men reject revelation though it is attested by the strongest evidence, and though it is constantly producing the most desirable changes in the hearts and lives of men.

{i} "We speak that we do know" 1Jo 1:1-8.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *If I have told you earthly things*. Things which occur on earth. Not *sensual* or *worldly* things, for Jesus had said nothing of these; but he had told him of *operations of the Spirit* which had occurred *on earth*, whose effects were visible, and which *might be*, therefore, believed. These were the *plainest* and most obvious of the doctrines of religion.

How shall ye believe. How *will* you believe. Is there any probability that you will understand them?

Heavenly things. Things pertaining to the government of God and his doings in the heavens; things which are removed from human view, and which cannot be subjected to human sight; the more profound and inscrutable things pertaining to the redemption of men. Learn hence,

1st. The height and depth of the doctrines of religion. There is much that we cannot yet understand.

2nd. The feebleness of our understandings and the corruptions of our hearts are the real causes why doctrines of religion are so little understood by us.

3rd. There is before us a vast eternity, and there are profound wonders of God's government, to be the study of the righteous, and to be seen and admired by them for ever and ever.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *And no man hath ascended into heaven*. No man, therefore, is qualified to speak of heavenly things, Joh 3:12. To speak of those things requires intimate acquaintance with them—demands that we have seen them; and as no one has ascended into heaven and returned, so no one is qualified to speak of them but He who came down from heaven. This does not mean that no one had *gone* to heaven or had been saved, for Enoch and Elijah had been borne there (Ge 5:24; comp. Heb 11:5 2Ki 2:11), and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and others were there; but it means that no one had ascended and *returned*, so as to be qualified to speak of the things there.

But he that came down, &c. The Lord Jesus. He is represented as coming down, because, being equal with God, he took upon himself our nature, Joh 1:14 Php 2:6,7.

He is represented as *sent* by the Father, Joh 3:17 34; Ga 4:4 1Jo 4:9,10.

The Son of man. Called thus from his being *a man*; from his interest in man; and as expressive of his regard for man. It is a favourite title which the Lord Jesus gives to himself.

Which is in heaven. This is a very remarkable expression. Jesus, the Son of man, was then bodily on earth conversing with Nicodemus; yet he declares that he is *at the same time* in heaven. This can be understood only as referring to the fact that he had two natures—that his *divine nature*

was in heaven, and his *human nature* on earth. Our Saviour is frequently spoken of in this manner. Comp. Joh 6:62; Joh 6:62 17:5; 2Co 8:9.

As Jesus was *in* heaven—as his proper abode was there—he was fitted to speak of heavenly things, and to declare the will of God to man. And we may learn,

1st. That the truth about the deep things of God is not to be learned of *men*. No one has ascended to heaven and returned to tell us what is there; and no infidel, no mere man, no prophet, is qualified of himself to speak of them.

2nd. That all the light which we are to expect on those subjects is to be sought in the Scriptures. It is only Jesus and his inspired apostles and evangelists that can speak of those things.

3rd. It is not wonderful that some things in the Scriptures are mysterious. They are about things which we have not seen, and we must receive them on the *testimony* of one who *has* seen them.

4th. The Lord Jesus is divine. He was in heaven while on earth. He had, therefore, a nature far above the human, and is equal with the Father, Joh 1:1.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *And as Moses*. Jesus proceeds in this and the following verses to state the reason why he came into the world; and, in order to this, he illustrates his design, and the efficacy of his coming, by a reference to the case of the brazen serpent, recorded in Nu 21:8,9. The people were bitten by flying fiery serpents. There was no cure for the bite. Moses was directed to make an *image* of the serpent, and place it in sight of the people, that they might look on it and be healed. There is no evidence that this was intended to be a *type* of the Messiah, but it is used by Jesus as strikingly *illustrating* his work. Men are sinners. There is no cure by human means for the maladies of the soul; and as the people who were bitten might look on the image of the serpent and be healed, so may sinners look to the Saviour and be cured of the moral maladies of our nature.

Lifted up. Erected on a pole. Placed on high, so that it might be seen by the people.

The serpent. The *image* of a serpent made of brass.

In the wilderness. Near the land of Edom. In the desert and desolate country to the south of Mount Hor, Nu 21:4.

Even so. In a similar manner and with a similar design. He here refers, doubtless, to his own death. Comp. Joh 12:32 8:28. The points of resemblance between his being lifted up and that of the brazen serpent seem to be these:

1st. In each case those who are to/be benefited can be aided in no other way. The bite of the serpent was deadly, and could be healed only by looking on the brazen serpent; and sin is deadly in its nature, and can be removed only by looking on the cross.

2nd. The mode of their being lifted up. The brazen serpent was in the sight of the people, So Jesus was exalted from the earth—raised on a tree or cross.

3rd. The design was similar. The one was to save the life, the other the soul; the one to save from temporal, the other from eternal death.

4th. The manner of the cure was similar. The people of Israel were to look on the serpent and be healed, and so sinners are to look on the Lord Jesus that they may be saved.

Must. It is proper; necessary; indispensable, if men are saved. Comp. Lu 24:26 22:42.

The Son of man. The Messiah.
{l} "as Moses" Nu 21:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *That whosoever*. This shows the fulness and freeness of the gospel. All may come and be saved.

Believeth in him. Whosoever puts *confidence* in him as able and willing to save. All who feel that they are sinners, that they have no righteousness of their own, and are willing to look to him as their only Saviour.

Should not perish. They are in danger, by nature, of perishing—that is, of sinking down to the pains of hell; of "being *punished with everlasting destruction* from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power," 2Th 1:9. All who believe on Jesus shall be saved from this condemnation and be raised up to eternal life. And from this we learn,

1st. That there is salvation in no other.

2nd. That salvation is here full and free for all who will come.

3rd. That it is easy. What was more easy for a poor, wounded, dying Israelite, bitten by a poisonous serpent, than to *look up* to a brazen serpent? So with the poor, lost, dying sinner. And what more foolish than for such a wounded, dying man to *refuse* to look on a remedy so easy and effectual? So nothing is more foolish than for a lost and dying sinner to refuse to look on God's only Son, exalted on a cross to die for the sins of men, and able to save to the uttermost all who come to God by him.

{m} "That whosoever" Joh 3:36 Heb 7:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *For God so loved*. This does not mean that God *approved* the conduct of men, but that he had *benevolent* feelings toward them, or was *earnestly desirous* of their happiness. God hates wickedness, but he still desires the happiness of those who are sinful. *He hates the sin, but loves the sinner*. A parent may love his child and desire his welfare, and yet be strongly opposed to the conduct of that child. When we approve the *conduct* of another, this is the love of *complacency*; when we desire simply their *happiness*, this is the love of *benevolence*.

The world. All mankind. It does not mean any particular *part* of the world, but *man as man*—the race that had rebelled and that deserved to die. See Joh 6:33 17:21. His love for the world, or for all mankind, in giving his Son, was shown by these circumstances:

1st. All the world was in ruin, and exposed to the wrath of God.

2nd. All men were in a hopeless condition.

3rd. God *gave* his Son. Man had no *claim* on him; it was a gift—an undeserved gift.

4th. He gave him up to extreme sufferings, even the bitter pains of death on the cross.

5th. It was for all the world. He tasted "death for every man," He 2:9. He "died for all," 2Co 5:15. "He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world," 1Jo 2:2.

That he gave. It was a free and unmerited gift. Man had no claim; and when there was no eye to pity or arm to save, it pleased God to give his Son into the hands of men to die in their stead, Ga 1:4; Ro 8:32 Lu 22:19. It was the mere movement of love; the expression of eternal compassion, and of a desire that sinners should not perish forever.

His only-begotten Son. **See Barnes "Joh 1:14".**

This is the highest expression of love of which we can conceive. A parent who should give up his only son to die for others who are guilty—if this could or might be done—would show higher love than could be manifested in any other way. So it shows the depth of the love of God, that he was willing to give his only Son into the hands of sinful men that he might be slain, and thus redeem them from eternal sorrow.

{n} "For God" 1Jo 4:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *To condemn the world*. Not to *judge*, or pronounce sentence on mankind. God *might* justly have sent him for this. Man deserved condemnation, and it would have been right to have pronounced it; but God was willing that there should be an offer of pardon, and the sentence of condemnation was delayed. But, although Jesus did not come *then* to condemn mankind, yet the time is coming when he will return to judge the living and the dead, Ac 17:31 2Co 5:10; Mt 25:31-46.

{o} "For God" Lu 9:56

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *He that believeth*. He that has confidence in him; that relies on him; that trusts to his merits and promises for salvation. To believe on him is to *feel* and *act* according to truth—that is, to go as lost sinners, and act toward him as a Saviour from sins; relying on him, and looking to him *only* for salvation. **See Barnes "Mr 16:16".**

Is not condemned. God pardons sin, and delivers us from deserved punishment, *because* we believe on him. Jesus died in our stead; he suffered for us, and by his sufferings our sins are expiated, and it is consistent for God to forgive. When a sinner, therefore, believes on Jesus, he trusts in him as having died in his place, and God having accepted the offering which Christ made in our stead, as being an equivalent for *our* sufferings in hell, there is now no farther condemnation, Ro 8:1.

He that believeth not. All who do not believe, whether the gospel has come to them or not. All men by nature.

Is condemned already. By conscience, by law, and in the judgment of God. God disapproves of their character, and this feeling of disapprobation, and the expression of it, is the condemnation. There is no condemnation so terrible as this—that *God disapproves* our conduct, and that he will

express his disapprobation. He will judge according to truth, and woe to that man whose conduct God *cannot* approve.

Because. This word does not imply that the *ground* or *reason* of their condemnation is that they have not believed, or that they are condemned *because* they do not believe on him, for there are millions of sinners who have never heard of him; but the meaning is this: There is but *one* way by which men can be freed from condemnation. All men without the gospel are condemned. They who do not believe are still under this condemnation, not having embraced the *only way* by which they can be delivered from it. The verse may be thus paraphrased:

"All men are by nature condemned. There is but one way of
being delivered from this state—by believing on the Son
of God. They who do not believe or remain in that state
are still condemned, FOR they have not embraced the only
way in which they can be freed from it."

Nevertheless, those to whom the gospel comes greatly heighten their guilt and condemnation by rejecting the offers of mercy, and trampling under foot the blood of the Son of God, Lu 12:47 Mt 11:23; Heb 10:29

Pr 1:24-30. And there are thousands going to eternity under this double condemnation—

1st. For positive, open sin; and,

2nd. For rejecting God's mercy, and despising the gospel of his Son. This it is which will make the doom of sinners in Christian lands so terrible.

{p} "He that believeth" Joh 6:40,47

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *This is the condemnation*. This is the *cause* of condemnation; or this is the reason why men are punished.

That light is come. Light often denotes instruction, teaching, doctrine, as that by which we see clearly the path of duty. *All* the instruction that God gives us by conscience, reason, or revelation may thus be called light; but this word is used peculiarly to denote the Messiah or the Christ, who is often spoken of as the *light*. See Isa 60:1 9:2. Compare Mt 4:16; also **See Barnes "Joh 1:4"**.

It was doubtless this light to which Jesus had particular reference here.

Men loved darkness. Darkness is the emblem of ignorance, iniquity, error, superstition—whatever is opposite to truth and piety. Men are said to love darkness more than they do light when they are better pleased with error than truth, with sin than holiness, with Belial than Christ.

Because their deeds are evil. Men who commit crime commonly choose to do it in the night, so as to escape detection. So men who are wicked prefer false doctrine and error to the truth. Thus the Pharisees cloaked their crimes under the errors of their system; and, amid their false doctrines and superstitions, they attempted to convince others that they had great zeal for God.

Deeds. Works; actions.

{q} "light is come into the world" Joh 1:4,9-11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *That doeth evil*. Every wicked man.

Hateth the light. This is true of all wicked men. They choose to practise their deeds of wickedness in darkness. They are afraid of the light, because they could be easily detected. Hence most crimes are committed in the night. So with the sinner against God. He hates the gospel, for it condemns his conduct, and his conscience would trouble him if it were enlightened.

His deeds should be reproved. To *reprove* here means not only to *detect* or make manifest, but also includes the idea of condemnation when his deeds are detected. The gospel would make his wickedness manifest, and his conscience would condemn him. We learn from this verse,

1st. That one design of the gospel is *to reprove men*. It convicts them of sin in order that it may afford consolation.

2nd. That men by nature *hate* the gospel. No man who is a sinner loves it; and no man by nature is disposed to come to it, any more than an adulterer or thief is disposed to come to the daylight, and do his deeds of wickedness there.

3rd. The reason why the gospel is hated is that men are sinners. "Christ is hated because sin is loved."

4th. The sinner must be convicted or convinced of sin. If it be not in this world, it will be in the next. There is no escape for him; and the only way to avoid condemnation in the world to come is to come humbly and acknowledge sin here, and seek for pardon.

{r} "neither cometh to the light" Job 24:23,17; Pr 4:18,19

{3} "reproved" or, "discovered"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *He that doeth truth*. He who does right, or he that *obeys* the truth. *Truth* here is opposed to error and to evil. The sinner acts from falsehood and error. The good man acts according to truth. The sinner believes a lie that God will not punish, or that there is no God, or that there is no eternity and no hell. The Christian believes all these, and acts as if they were true. This is the difference between a Christian and a sinner.

Cometh to the light. Loves the truth, and seeks it more and more. By prayer and searching the Scriptures he endeavours to as certain the truth, and yield his mind to it.

May be made manifest. May be made clear or plain; or that it may be made plain that his deeds are wrought in God. He searches for truth and light that he may have evidence that his actions are right.

Wrought in God. That they are performed according to the will of God, or perhaps by the assistance of God, and are such as God will approve. The actions of good men are performed by the influence and aid of God, Php 2:12. Of course, if they are performed by his aid, they are such as he will approve. Here is presented the character of a good man and a sincere Christian. We learn respecting that character,

1st. He does truth. He loves it, seeks it, follows it.

2nd. He comes to the light. He does not attempt to deceive himself or others.

3rd. He is willing to know himself, and aims to do it. He desires to know the true state of his heart before God.

4th. An especial object of his efforts is that his deeds may be wrought in God. He desires to be a good man; to receive continual aid from God, and to perform such actions as he will approve. This is the close of our Lord's discourse with Nicodemus—a discourse condensing the gospel, giving the most striking exhibition and illustration of truth, and representing especially the fundamental doctrine of regeneration and the evidence of the change. It is clear that the Saviour regarded this as lying at the foundation of religion. Without it we cannot possibly be saved. And now it becomes every reader, as in the presence of God, and in view of the judgment-seat of Christ, solemnly to ask himself whether he has experienced this change? whether he knows by experience what it is to be born of that Spirit? If he does he will be saved. If not, he is in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity, and should give no sleep to his eyes till he has made his peace with God.

{s} "doeth truth" 1Jo 1:6 {t} "they are wrought" 3Jo 1:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Land of Judea*. The region round about Jerusalem.

And baptized. Jesus did not himself administer the ordinance of baptism, but his disciples did it by his direction and authority, Joh 4:2.

{u} "and baptized" Joh 4:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *In Enon*. The word *Enon*, or *AEnon*, means a *fountain*, and was doubtless given to this place because of the fountains there. On the situation of the place nothing certain has been determined. Eusebius places it 8 Roman miles south of Scythopolis or Bethshen, and 53 north-east of Jerusalem.

Near to Salim. It would seem from this that Salim was better known then than Enon, but nothing can be determined now respecting its site. These places are believed to have been on the west side of the Jordan.

Because there was much water there. John's preaching attracted great multitudes. It appears that they remained with him probably many days. In many parts of that country, particularly in the hilly region near where John preached, it was difficult to find water to accommodate the necessities of the people, and perhaps, also, of the camels with which those from a distance would come. To meet their necessities, as well as for the purpose of baptizing, he selected a spot that was well watered, probably, with springs and rivulets. Whether the ordinance of baptism was performed by immersion or in any other mode, the selection of a place well watered was proper and necessary. The mention of the fact that there was much water there, and that John selected that as a convenient place to perform his office as a baptizer, proves nothing in regard to the *mode* in which the ordinance

was administered, since he would naturally select such a place, whatever was the mode. Where numbers of people came together to remain any time, it is necessary to select such a place, whatever their employment. An encampment of soldiers is made on the same principles, and in every camp-meeting that I have ever seen, a place is selected where there is a good supply of water, though not one person should be *immersed* during the whole services. As all the facts in the case are fully met by the supposition that John might have baptized in some other way besides immersion, and as it is easy to conceive *another* reason that is sufficient to account for the fact that such a place was selected, *this* passage certainly should not be adduced to prove that he performed baptism only in that manner.

{v} "Salim" 1Sa 9:4 {w} "and they came there" Mt 3:5,6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *For John was not yet cast into prison*. See Lu 3:20. The mention of this shows that John was not imprisoned till some time after our Lord entered on his ministry. The design of John was to call men to repentance, and to prepare them for the Messiah, and this he continued to do after our Saviour commenced *his* work. It shows that a minister of religion should be industrious to the day of his death. John still toiled in his work not the *less* because the Messiah had come. So ministers should not labour less when Christ appears by his Spirit, and takes the work into his own hands, and turns many to himself.

{x} "For John was" Mt 14:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *A question*. Rather a controversy —a dispute.

John's disciples. Those who had been baptized by him, and who attached great efficacy and importance to the teaching of their master. Comp. **See Barnes "Ac 19:1, also** Ac 19:2-5.

And the Jews. Many manuscripts, some of the fathers, and the ancient Syriac version, read this in the singular number— "with a *Jew*," one who, it is commonly supposed, had been baptized by the disciples of Jesus.

About purifying. What the precise subject of this dispute was we do not know. From what follows, it would seem probable that it was about the comparative value and efficacy of the baptism performed by John and by the disciples of Jesus. The word *purifying* may be applied to baptism, as it was an emblem of repentance and purity, and was thus used by the Jews, by John, and by Jesus. About this subject it seems that a dispute arose, and was carried to such a length that complaint was made to John. From this we may learn,

1st. That even in the time of Jesus, when the gospel began to be preached, there was witnessed—what has been ever since —unhappy disputings on the subject of religion. Even young converts may, by overheated zeal and ignorance, fall into angry discussion.

2nd. That such discussions are commonly about some unimportant matter of religion—something which they may not yet be qualified to understand, and which does not materially affect them if they could.

3rd. That such disputes are often connected with a spirit of proselytism— with boasting of the superior excellence of the sect with which *we* are connected, or in connection with whom *we* have been converted, and often with a desire to persuade others to join with us.

4th. That such a spirit is eminently improper on such occasions. Love should characterize the feelings of young converts; a disposition to *inquire* and not to *dispute*; a willingness that all should follow the dictates of their own consciences, and not a desire to *proselyte* them to *our* way of thinking or to our church. It may be added that there is scarcely anything which so certainly and effectually arrests a revival of religion as such a disposition to *dispute*, and to make proselytes to particular modes of faith, and of administering the ordinances of the gospel.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Came unto John*. Came to him with their complaint; envious and jealous at the success of Jesus, and evidently irritated from the discussion, as if their master was about to lose his popularity.

Rabbi. Master. **See Barnes "Mt 23:7".**

Acknowledging him as their master and teacher.

That was with thee. Who was baptized by thee.

Thou barest witness. See Joh 1:29-35.

All men come to him. This was the source of their difficulty. It was that Jesus was gaining popularity; that the people flocked to him; that they feared that John would be forsaken, and his followers be diminished in numbers and influence. Thus many love their sect more than they do Christ, and would be more rejoiced that a man became a Presbyterian, a Methodist, a Baptist, than that he became a sincere and humble Christian. This is not the spirit of the gospel. True piety teaches us to rejoice that sinners turn to Christ and become holy, whether they follow us or not. See Mr 9:38,39. Let Jesus be exalted, and let men turn to him, is the language of religion, whatever denomination they may feel it their duty to follow.

{y} "to whom thou barest witness" Joh 1:7,15 {z} "all *men* come to him" Ps 65:2 Isa 45:23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *John answered*, &c. John did not enter into their feelings or sympathize with their love of party. He came to honour Jesus, not to build up a sect. He rejoiced at the success of the Messiah, and began to teach them to rejoice in it also.

A man can receive nothing, &c. All success is from heaven. All my success was from God. All the success of Jesus is from God. As success comes from the same source, we ought not to be envious. It is designed to answer the same end, and, by whomsoever accomplished, the hand of

God is in it, and we should rejoice. If Jesus and his disciples are successful, if all men flee to him, it is proof that God favours him, and you should rejoice.

{a} "A man" 1Co 2:12-14 4:7; Heb 5:4 Jas 1:17

{4} "receive nothing" or, "take unto himself"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *Bear me witness*. You remember that at first I told you I was not the Messiah. As he had been *witness* to Jesus—as he came for no other end but to point him out to the Jews, they ought not to suppose that he was his superior. It was but reasonable to expect that Christ himself would be more successful than his forerunner. "I came, not to form a *separate party*, a peculiar sect, but to prepare the way that *he* might be more successful, and that the people might be ready for his coming, and that he might have the success which he has actually met with. You should rejoice, therefore, at that success, and not enter it, for *his success* is the best proof of the greatness of *my* word, and of *its success* also."

{b} "I am not the Christ" Joh 1:20,27 {c} "I am sent before him" Lu 1:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *He that hath the bride*, &c. This is an illustration drawn from marriage. The bride belongs to her husband. So the church, the bride of the Messiah, belongs to him. It *is to be expected*, therefore, and *desired*, that the people should flock to him.

But the friend of the bridegroom. He whose office it is to attend him on the marriage occasion. This was commonly the nearest friend, and was a high honour.

Rejoiceth greatly. Esteems himself highly honoured by the proof of friendship.

The bridegroom's voice. His commands, requests, or conversation.

This is my joy, &c.

"I sustain to the Messiah the relation which a
groomsman does to the groom. The chief honour and
the chief joy is not mine, but his. It is to be
expected, therefore, that the people will come to
him, and that his success will be great."

The relation of Christ to the church is often compared with the marriage relation, denoting the tenderness of the union, and his great love for his people. Comp. Isa 62:5 Re 21:2,9 22:17; Eph 5:26,27,32

2Co 11:2.

{d} "bride" So 4:8-12 Jer 2:2; Eze 16:8 Hos 2:19,20 Mt 22:2

2Co 11:2 Eph 5:25,27 Re 21:9

{e} "friend of the bridegroom" Joh 6:33 8:23; Eph 1:20,21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *He must increase*. His authority and influence among the people must grow. *His* doctrine shall continue to spread till it extends through all the earth.

I must decrease.

"The purpose of my ministry is to point men to him.
When that is done my work is done. I came not to
form a party of my own, nor to set up a religion
of my own; and my teaching must cease when he is
fully established, as the light of the morning
star fades away and is lost in the beams of the
rising sun."

This evinced John's humility and willingness to be esteemed as nothing if he could honour Christ. It shows us, also, that it is sufficient honour for man if he may be permitted to point sinners to the Lord Jesus Christ. No work is so honourable and joyful as the ministry of the gospel; none are so highly honoured as those who are permitted to stand near the Son of God, to hear his voice, and to lead perishing men to his cross. Comp. Da 12:3.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *He that cometh from above*. The Messiah, represented as coming down from heaven. See Joh 3:13 6:33, 8:23.

It has been doubted whether the remainder of this chapter contains the words of *John the Baptist* or of the *evangelist*. The former is the more probable opinion, but it is difficult to decide it, and it is of very little consequence.

Is above all. In nature, rank, and authority. *Is superior to all prophets* (Heb 1:1,2); *to all angels* (Heb 1:4-14), *and is over all the universe as its sovereign Lord*, Re 9:5; Eph 1:21 22; Col 1:15-19 1Co 15:25.

He that is of the earth. He who has no higher nature than the human nature. The prophets, apostles, and John were men like others, born in the same way, and sinking, like others, to the dust. See Ac 14:15. Jesus had a nature superior to man, and ought, therefore, to be exalted above all.

Is earthly. Is human. Is *inferior* to him who comes from heaven. Partakes of his *origin*, which is inferior and corrupt.

Speaketh of the earth. His teaching is inferior to that of him who comes from heaven. It is comparatively obscure and imperfect, not full and clear, like the teaching of him who is from above. This was the case with all the prophets, and even with John the Baptist, as compared with the teaching of Christ.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *And what he hath seen*, &c. See Joh 3:11.

No man receiveth his testimony. The words *no man* are here to be under stood in the sense of *few*. Though his doctrine is pure, plain, sublime, yet few, comparatively, received it in faith. Though multitudes came to him, drawn by various motives (Joh 6:26), yet few became his real disciples, Mt 26:56 7:22.

His testimony. His doctrine. The truth to which he bears *witness* as having seen and known it, Joh 3:11. Often many persons *appear* for a time to become the followers of Christ, who in the end are seen to have known nothing of religion, Mt 13:6; Lu 8:13.

{h} "no man" Joh 1:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *He that hath received his testimony*. Hath received and fully believed his doctrine. Hath yielded his heart to its influence.

Hath set to his seal. To seal an instrument is to make it sure; to acknowledge it as ours; to pledge our veracity that it is true and binding, as when a man seals a bond, a deed, or a will. Believing a doctrine, therefore, in the heart, is expressed by *sealing* it, or by believing it we express our firm conviction that it is true, and that God who has spoken it is true. We vouch for the veracity of God, and assume as our own the proposition that it is the truth of God.

God is true. Is faithful; is the author of the system of doctrines, and will fulfil all that he has promised. We learn here,

1st. That to be a true believer is something more than to hold a mere speculative belief of the truth.

2nd. That to be a believer is to *pledge ourselves* for the truth, to seal it as our own, to adopt it, to choose it, and solemnly assent to it, as a man does in regard to an instrument of writing that is to convey his property, or that is to dispose of it when he dies.

3rd. Every Christian is a witness for God, and it is his business to show by his life that he believes that God is true to his threatenings and to his promises. **Barnes "Is 43:10"**.

4th. It is a solemn act to become a Christian. It is a surrender of all to God, or giving away body, soul, and spirit to him, with a belief that he is *true*, and alone is able to save.

5th. The man that does not do this— that is not willing to pledge his belief that God is true, sets to *his* seal that God is a liar and unworthy of confidence, 1Jo 5:10.

{i} "set to his seal" 1Jo 5:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *Whom God hath sent*. The Messiah.

Speaketh the words of God. The truth, or commands of God.

For God giveth not the Spirit. The Spirit of God. Though Jesus was God as well as man, yet, as *Mediator*, God anointed him, or endowed him with the influences of his Spirit, so as to be completely qualified for his great work.

By measure. Not in a small degree, but fully, completely. The prophets were inspired on particular occasions to deliver special messages. The Messiah was continually filled with the Spirit of God. "The Spirit dwelt in him, not as a vessel, but as in a fountain, as in a bottomless ocean" (Henry),

{k} "For he whom God" Joh 7:16 {l} "Fro God giveth" Ps 45:7 Isa 11:2, 59:21 1:16; Col 1:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *Loveth the Son*. Loves him eminently, above all the prophets and all the other messengers of God.

Hath given all things into his hand. **See Barnes "Mt 28:18"**.

{m} "The Father" Mt 28:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *Hath everlasting life*. Has or is in possession of that which is a recovery from spiritual death, and which will result in eternal life in heaven. Piety here is the same that it will be there, except that it will be expanded, matured, purified, made more glorious. It is here life begun—the first breathings and pantings of the soul for immortality; yet it is life, though at first feeble and faint, which is eternal in its nature, and which shall be matured in the full and perfect bliss of heaven. The Christian here has a foretaste of the world of glory, and enjoys the same *kind* of felicity, though not the same *degree*, that he will there.

Shall not see life. Shall neither enjoy true *life* or happiness here nor in the world to come. Shall never enter heaven.

The wrath of God. The anger of God for sin. His opposition to sin, and its terrible effects in this world and the next.

Abideth on him. This implies that he is now under the wrath of God, or under condemnation. It implies, also, that it will *continue* to remain on him. It will *abide* or *dwell* there as its appropriate habitation. As there is no way of escaping the wrath of God but by the Lord Jesus Christ, so those who will not believe must go to eternity *as they are*, and bear alone and unpitied all that God may choose to inflict as the expression of *his* sense of sin. Such is the miserable condition of the sinner! Yet thousands choose to remain in this state, and to encounter *alone* all that is terrible in the wrath of Almighty God, rather than come to Jesus, who has borne their sins in his own body on the tree, and who is willing to bless them with the peace, and purity, and joy of immortal life.

{n} "He that believeth" Heb 2:4 Joh 3:15,16

{o} "wrath of God" Ro 1:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 1

Verse 1. *The Lord knew*. When Jesus knew. *How* he knew this we are not informed; whether by that power of omniscience by which he knew all things, or whether some person had informed him of it.

How the Pharisees had heard. The *Pharisees*, here, seem to denote either the members of the Sanhedrim or those who were in authority. They claimed the authority to regulate the rites and ceremonies of religion, and hence they supposed they had a right to inquire into the conduct of both John and our Lord. They had on a former occasion sent to inquire of John to know by what authority he had introduced such a rite into the religion of the Jewish people. **See Barnes "Joh 1:25".**

More disciples than John. Though many of the Pharisees came to his baptism-(Matthew Chapter 3.), yet those who were in authority were displeased with the success of John, Joh 1:25. The reasons of this were, probably, the severity and justness of his reproofs Mt 3:7, and the fact that by drawing many after him he weakened their authority and influence. As they were displeased with *John*, so they were with *Jesus*, who was doing the same thing on a larger scale—not only making disciples, but *baptizing* also without their authority, and drawing away the people after him.

{a} "baptized" Joh 3:22,26

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Though Jesus himself baptized not*. The reason why Jesus did not baptize was probably because, if he had baptized, it might have made unhappy divisions among his followers: those might have considered themselves most worthy or honoured who had been baptized by *him*. Comp. 1Co 1:17.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *He left Judea*. The envy and malice of the Pharisees he might have known were growing so rapidly as to endanger his life. As his time to die had not yet come, he retired to Galilee, a country farther from Jerusalem, and much less under their control than Judea. See Mr 2:22 Lu 3:1. Though he feared not death and did not shrink from suffering, yet he did not *needlessly* throw himself into danger or provoke opposition. He could do as much *good* in Galilee, probably, as in Judea, and he therefore withdrew himself from immediate danger.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And he must needs go through Samaria*. Samaria was between Judea and Galilee. The direct and usual way was to pass through Samaria. Sometimes, however, the Jews took a circuitous route on the east side of the Jordan, **See Barnes "Mt 2:22"**.

{b} "must needs go" Lu 2:49

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Sychar*. This city stood about eight miles south-east of the city called Samaria, between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim. It was one of the oldest cities of Palestine, and was formerly known by the name of *Shechem*, or Sichem, Ge 33:18 12:6. The city was in the tribe of Ephraim, Jos 21:21. It was at this place that Joshua assembled the people before his death, and here they renewed their covenant with the Lord, Joshua chapter 24. After the death of Gideon it became a place of idolatrous worship, the people worshipping *Baal-berith*, Jud 9:46. It was destroyed by Abimelech, who beat down the city and sowed it with salt, Jud 9:45. It was afterward rebuilt, and became the residence of Jeroboam, the King of Israel, 1Ki 12:25. It was called by the Romans *Flavia Neapolis*, and this has been corrupted by the Arabs into *Nablus*, its present name. It is still a considerable place, and its site is remarkably pleasant and productive.

The parcel of ground. The *piece* of ground; or the land, &c.

That Jacob gave, &c. Jacob bought one piece of ground near to Shalem, a city of Shechem, of the children of Hamor, the father of Shechem, for an hundred pieces of silver, Ge 33:19. In this place the bones of Joseph were buried when they were brought up from Egypt, Jos 24:32. He also gave to Joseph an additional piece of ground which he took from the hand of the Arnorite by his own valour, "with his sword and his bow," as a portion above that which was given to his brethren, Ge 48:22. Possibly these pieces of ground lay near together, and were a part of the *homestead* of Jacob. The well was "near" to this. There is now, the Rev. E. Smith mentioned to me in conversation, a place near this well called *Shalem*.

{c} "gave to his son Joseph" Ge 38:19 48:22; Jos 24:32

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Jacob's well*. This is not mentioned in the Old Testament. It was called *Jacob's well*, probably, either because it was handed down by tradition that he dug it, or because it was near to the land which he gave to Joseph. There is still a well a few miles to the east of Nablus, which is said by the people there to be the same. The Rev. Eli Smith, missionary to Syria, stated to me that he had visited this well. It is about 100 feet deep. It is cut through solid rock of limestone. It is now dry, probably from having been partly filled with rubbish, or perhaps because the water has been diverted by earthquakes. The well is covered with a large stone, which has a hole in the centre large enough to admit a man. It is at the foot of Mount Gerizim, and has a plain on the east.

Sat thus. Jesus was weary, and, being thus weary, sat down on the well. The word translated *on* here may denote also *by*—he sat down by the well, or near it.

The sixth hour. About twelve o'clock. This was the common time of the Jewish meal, and this was the reason why his disciples were gone away to buy food.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Of Samaria*. Not of the city of Samaria, for this was at a distance of 8 miles, but a woman who was a Samaritan, and doubtless from the city of Sychar.

Give me to drink. This was in the heat of the day, and when Jesus was weary with his journey. The request was also made that it might give him occasion to discourse with her on the subject of religion, and in this instance we have a specimen of the remarkably happy manner in which he could lead on a conversation so as to introduce the subject of religion.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Buy meat*. Buy food.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *No dealings with the Samaritans*. For an account of the Samaritans, and of the differences between them and the Jews, **See Barnes "Mt 10:5"**.

{d} "for the Jews" Ac 10:28

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *The gift of God*. The word *gift*, here denotes *favour*. It may refer to Jesus *himself*, as the *gift* of God to the world, given to save men from death Joh 3:16 2Co 9:15 or it may refer to the opportunity then afforded her of seeking salvation. If thou knewest how favourable an opportunity God now gives thee to gain a knowledge of himself, &c. *And who it is*, &c. If thou knewest that the Messiah was speaking.

Living water. The Jews used the expression *living water* to denote springs, fountains, or running streams, in opposition to dead and stagnant water. Jesus here means to denote by it his doctrine, or his grace and religion, in opposition to the impure and dead notions of the Jews and the Samaritans. Joh 4:14. This was one of the many instances in which he took occasion from common topics of conversation to introduce religious discourse. None ever did it so happily as he did, but, by studying his example and manner, we may learn also to do it. One way to acquire the art is to have the mind

full of the subject; to make religion our first and main thing; to carry it with us into all employments and into all society; to look upon everything in a religious light, and out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak, Mt 12:34.

{e} "the gift of God" Eph 2:8 {f} "living water" Isa 12:3 41:17,18 Jer 2:13; Zec 13:1 14:8; Re 22:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Hast nothing to draw with*. It seems that there were no means of drawing water *affixed* to the well, as with us. Probably each one took a pail or pitcher and a cord for the purpose. In travelling this was indispensable. The woman, seeing that Jesus had no means of drawing water, and not yet understanding his design, naturally inquired whence he could obtain the water.

The well is deep. If the same one that is there now, it was about 100 feet deep.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Art thou greater*? Art thou wiser, or better able to find water, than Jacob was? It seems that she supposed that he meant that he could direct her to some living spring, or to some better well in that region, and that this implied more knowledge or skill than Jacob had. To find water and to furnish a good well was doubtless considered a matter of signal skill and success. It was a subject of great importance in that region. This shows how ready sinners are to misunderstand the words of Christ, and to pervert the doctrines of religion. If she had had any proper anxiety about her soul, she would at least have *suspected* that he meant to direct her thoughts to spiritual objects.

Our father Jacob. The Samaritans were composed partly of the remnant of the ten tribes, and partly of people sent from Chaldea; still, they considered themselves descendants of Jacob.

Which gave us. This was doubtless the tradition, though there is no evidence that it was true.

And drank thereof, &c. This was added in commendation of the water of the well. A well from which Jacob, and his sons, and cattle had drank must be pure, and wholesome, and honoured, and quite as valuable as any that Jesus could furnish. Men like to commend that which their ancestors used as superior to anything else. The world over, people love to speak of that which their ancestors have done, and boast of titles and honours that have been handed down from them, even if it is nothing better than existed here—because Jacob's cattle had drunk of the water.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Shall thirst again*. Jesus did not directly answer her question, or say that he was *greater* than Jacob, but he gave her an answer by which she might infer that he was. He did not despise or undervalue Jacob or his gifts; but, however great might be the value of that well, the water could not altogether remove thirst.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *The water that I shall give him*. Jesus here refers, without doubt, to his own teaching, his grace, his spirit, and to the benefits which come into the soul that embraces his gospel. It is a striking image, and especially in Eastern countries, where there are vast deserts, and often a great want of water. The soul by nature is like such a desert, or like a traveller wandering through such a desert. It is thirsting for happiness, and seeking it everywhere, and finds it not. It looks in all directions and tries all objects, but in vain. Nothing meets its desires. Though a sinner seeks for joy in wealth and pleasures, yet he is not satisfied. He still thirsts for more, and seeks still for happiness in some new enjoyment. To such a weary and unsatisfied sinner the grace of Christ is *as cold waters to a thirsty soul*.

Shall never thirst. He shall be *satisfied* with this, and will not have a sense of want, a distressing feeling that it is not adapted to him. He who drinks this will not wish to seek for happiness in other objects. *Satisfied* with the grace of Christ, he will not desire the pleasures and amusements of this world. And this will be for ever—in this world and the world to come. *Whosoever* drinketh of this—all who partake of the gospel—shall be *for ever* satisfied with its pure and rich joys.

Shall be in him. The grace of Christ shall be in his heart; or the principles of religion shall abide with him.

A well of water. There shall be a constant supply, an unfailing fountain; or religion shall *live* constantly with him.

Springing up. This is a beautiful image. It shall bubble or spring up like a fountain. It is not like a stagnant pool—not like a deep well, but like an ever-living fountain, that flows at all seasons of the year, in heat and cold, and in all external circumstances of weather, whether foul or fair, wet or dry. So religion always lives; and, amid all changes of external circumstances—in heat and cold, hunger and thirst, prosperity and adversity, life, persecution, contempt, or death—it still lives on, and refreshes and cheers the soul.

Into everlasting life. It is not temporary, like the supply of our natural wants; it is not changing in its nature; it is not like a natural fountain or spring of water, to play a while and then die away, as all natural springs will at the end of the world. It is eternal in its nature and supply, and will continue to live on for ever. We may learn here—

1st. That the Christian has a never-failing source of consolation adapted to all times and circumstances.

2nd. That religion has its seat in the heart, and that it should constantly *live* there.

3rd. That it sheds its blessings on a world of sin, and is manifest by a continual *life* of piety, like a constant flowing spring.

4th. That its end is everlasting life. It will continue for ever; and *whosoever drinks of this shall never thirst*, but his piety shall be in his heart a pure fountain *springing up to eternal joy*.

{g} "whosoever drinketh" Joh 6:35,58 {h} "I shall give him" Joh 17:2,3; Ro 6:23

{i} "in him a well" Joh 7:38

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *The woman said*, &c. It may seem strange that the woman did not yet understand him, but it shows how slow sinners are to understand the doctrines of religion.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Go call thy husband*. We may admire the manner which our Saviour took to lead her to perceive that he was the Christ. His instructions she did not understand. He therefore proceeded to show her that he was acquainted with her life and with her sins. His object, here, was to lead her to consider her own state and sinfulness—a delicate and yet pungent way of making her see that she was a sinner. By showing her, also, that he knew her life, though a stranger to her, he convinced her that he was qualified to teach her the way to heaven, and thus prepared her to admit that he was the Messiah, Joh 4:29.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *I have no husband*. This was said, evidently, to evade the subject. Perhaps she feared that if she came there with the man that she lived with, the truth might be exposed. It is not improbable that by this time she began to suspect that Jesus was a prophet.

Hast well said. Hast said the truth.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Hast had five husbands*. Who have either died; or who, on account of your improper conduct, have divorced you; or whom you have left improperly, without legal divorce. Either of these might have been the case.

Is not thy husband. You are not lawfully married to him. Either she might have left a former husband without divorce, and thus her marriage with this man was unlawful, or she was living with him without the form of marriage, in open guilt.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *A prophet*. One sent from God, and who understood her life. The word here does not denote one who *foretells future events*, but one who knew her heart and life, and who must therefore have come from God. She did not yet suppose him to be the Messiah, Joh 4:25. Believing him now to be a man sent from God, she proposed to him a question respecting the proper place of worship. This point had been long a matter of dispute between the Samaritans and the Jews. She submitted it to him because she thought he could settle the question, and perhaps because she wished to divert

the conversation from the unpleasant topic respecting her husbands. The conversation about her manner of life was a very unpleasant topic to her—as it is always unpleasant to sinners to talk about their lives and the necessity of religion—and she was glad to *turn the conversation* to something else. Nothing is more common than for sinners to *change* the conversation when it begins to bear too hard upon their consciences; and no way of doing it is more common than to direct it to some *speculative* inquiry having some sort of connection with religion, as if to show that they are willing to talk about religion, and do not wish to appear to be opposed to it. Sinners do not love direct religious conversation, but many are too well-bred to refuse altogether to talk to consider her own state and sinfulness—a delicate and yet pungent way of making her see that she was a sinner. By showing her, also, that he knew her life, though a stranger to her, he convinced her that he was qualified to teach her the way to heaven, and thus prepared her to admit that he was the Messiah, Joh 4:29.

{k} "perceive" Joh 1:48,49

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Our fathers*. The Samaritans; perhaps also meaning to intimate that the patriarchs had done it also. See Ge 12:6 33:20.

Worshipped. Had a place of worship.

In this mountain. *Mount Gerizim*, but a little way from Sychar. On this mountain they had built a temple somewhat similar to the one in Jerusalem. This was one of the main subjects of controversy between them and the Jews. The old Samaritan Pentateuch, or five books of Moses, has the word *Gerizim* instead of *Ebal* in De 27:4. On this account, as well as because the patriarchs are mentioned as having worshipped in Shethem, they supposed that that was the proper place on which to erect the temple.

Ye say. Ye Jews.

In Jerusalem. The place where the temple was built. This was built in accordance with the promise and command of God, De 12:5,11. In building this, David and Solomon were under the divine direction, 2Sa 7:2, 3, 131Ki 5:5 12, 8:15-22.

As it was contemplated in the law of Moses that there should be but *one* place to offer sacrifice and to hold the great feasts, so it followed that the Samaritans were in error in supposing that *their* temple was the place. Accordingly, our Saviour decided in favour of the Jews, yet in such a manner as to show the woman that the question was of much *less* consequence than *they* supposed it to be.

{l} "this mountain" Jud 9:7 {m} "in Jerusalem" De 12:5-11 1Ki 9:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Believe me*. As she had professed to believe that he was a prophet, it was right to require her to put faith in what he was about to utter. It also shows the importance of what he was about to say.

The hour cometh. The *time* is coming, or is near.

When neither in this mountains, &c. Hitherto the public solemn worship of God has been confined to one place. It has been a matter of dispute whether that place should be Jerusalem or Mount Gerizim. That controversy is to be of much less importance than you have supposed. The old dispensation is about to pass away. The *peculiar* rites of the Jews are to cease. The worship of God, so long confined to a single place, is soon to be celebrated everywhere, and with as much acceptance in one place as in another. He does not say that there would be no worship of God in that place or in Jerusalem, but that the worship of God would not be *confined* there. He would be worshipped in other places as well as there.

{n} "when ye shall neither" Mal 1:11 Mt 18:20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Ye worship ye know not what*. This probably refers to the comparative ignorance and corruption of the Samaritan worship. Though they received the five books of Moses, yet they rejected the prophets, and of course all that the prophets had said respecting the true God. Originally, also, they had joined the worship of idols to that of the true God. See 2Ki 17:26-34. They had, moreover, *no authority* for building their temple and conducting public worship by sacrifices there. On all these accounts they were acting in an unauthorized manner. They were not obeying the true God, nor offering the worship which he had commanded or would approve. Jesus thus *indirectly* settled the question which she had proposed to him, yet in such a way as to show her that it was of much less importance than she had supposed.

We know. We Jews. This they knew because God had commanded it; because they worshipped in a place appointed by God, and because they did it in accordance with the direction and teaching of the prophets.

Salvation is of the Jews. They have the true religion and the true form of worship; and the *Messiah*, who will bring salvation, is to proceed from them. See Lu 2:30 3:6. Jesus thus affirms that the Jews had the true form of the worship of God. At the same time he was sensible how much they had corrupted it, and on various occasions reproved them for it.

{o} "Ye worship" 2Ki 17:29 {p} "for salvation" Isa 2:3 Ro 9:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *But the hour cometh, and now is*. The old dispensation is about to pass away, and the new one to commence. *Already* there is so much light that God may be worshipped acceptably in any place.

The true worshippers. All who truly and sincerely worship God. They who do it with the heart, and not merely *in form*.

In spirit. The word *spirit*, here, stands opposed to rites and ceremonies, and to the pomp of external worship. It refers to the *mind*, the *soul*, the *heart*. They shall worship God with a sincere

mind; with the simple offering of gratitude and prayer; with a desire to glorify him, and without external pomp and splendour. *Spiritual* worship is that where the *heart* is offered to God, and where we do not depend on external forms for acceptance.

In truth. Not through the medium of shadows and types, not by means of sacrifices and bloody offerings, but in the manner represented or typified by all these, Heb 9:9,24. In the *true* way of direct access to God through Jesus Christ.

For the Father seeketh, &c. Jesus gives two reasons why this kind of worship should take place. *One* is that God *sought* it, or desired it. He had appointed the old mode, but he did it because he sought to lead the mind to himself even *by those forms*, and to prepare the people for the purer system of the gospel, and *now* he sought or *desired* that those who worshipped him should worship him in that manner. He intimated his will by Jesus Christ.

{q} "in spirit" Php 3:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *God is a spirit*. This is the *second* reason why men should worship him in spirit and in truth. By this is meant that God is without a body; that he is not material or composed of parts; that he is invisible, in every place, pure and holy. This is one of the first truths of religion, and one of the sublimest ever presented to the mind of man. Almost all nations have had some idea of God as gross or material, but the Bible declares that he is a pure spirit. As he is such a spirit, he dwells not in temples made with hands (Ac 7:48), neither is worshipped with men's hands as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things, Ac 17:25. A pure, a holy, a spiritual worship, therefore, is such as he seeks—the offering of the *soul* rather than the formal offering of *the body*—the homage of the *heart* rather than that of the *lips*.

{r} "is a spirit" Php 3:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *I know that Messias cometh*. As the Samaritans acknowledged the five books of Moses, so they expected, also, the coming of the Messiah.

Which is called Christ. These are probably the words of the evangelist, as it is not likely that the woman would explain the name on such an occasion.

Will tell us all things. Jesus had decided the question proposed to him (Joh 4:20) in favour of the Jews. The woman does not seem to have been satisfied with this answer, and said that the Messiah would tell them all about this question. Probably she was expecting that he would soon appear.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *I that speak unto thee am he*. I am the Messiah. This was the first time that he openly professed it. He did not do it yet to the Jews, for it would have excited envy and opposition. But nothing could be apprehended in Samaria; and as the woman seemed reluctant to listen to him as a prophet, and professed her willingness to listen to the Messiah, he openly declared that he was the Christ, that by some means he might save her soul. From this we may learn,

1st. The great wisdom of the Lord Jesus in leading the thoughts along to the subject of practical personal religion.

2nd. His knowledge of the heart and of the life. He must be therefore divine.

3rd. He gave evidence here that he was the Messiah. This was the design of John in writing this gospel. He has therefore recorded this narrative, which was omitted by the other evangelists.

4th. We see *our* duty. It is to seize on all occasions to lead sinners to the belief that Jesus is the Christ, and to make use of all topics of conversation to teach them the nature of religion. There never was a model of so much wisdom in this as the Saviour, and we shall be successful only as we diligently study his character.

5th. We see the nature of religion. It does not consist merely in external forms. It is pure, spiritual, active, an ever-bubbling fountain. It is the worship of a pure and holy God, where the *heart* is offered, and where the desires of an humble soul are breathed out for salvation.

{s} "I that speak" Joh 9:37

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *Upon this*. At this time.

Marvelled. Wondered. They wondered because the Jews had no intercourse with the Samaritans, and they were surprised that Jesus was engaged with her in conversation.

Yet no man said. No one of the disciples. They had such respect and reverence for him that they did not dare to ask him the reason of his conduct, or even to appear to reprove him. We should be confident that Jesus is right, even if we cannot fully understand all that he does.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *Left her water-pot*. Her mind was greatly excited. She was disturbed, and hastened to the city in great agitation to make this known. She seems to have been convinced that he was the Messiah, and went immediately to make it known to others. Our first business, when we have found the Saviour, should be to make him known also to others.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Is not this the Christ*? Though she probably believed it, yet she proposed it modestly, lest she should appear to dictate in a case which was so important, and which demanded so much

attention. The evidence on which *she* was satisfied that he was the Messiah was that he had told her all things that she had done—perhaps much more than is here recorded. The question which she submitted to them was whether this was not satisfactory proof that he was the Messiah.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *They went out of the city*. The men of the city left it and went to Jesus, to hear and examine for themselves.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *Prayed him*. Asked him.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *I have meat to eat*. **See Barnes "Joh 4:34".**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *Hath any man brought him*, &c. This is one of the many instances in which the disciples were slow to understand the Saviour.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *My meat*, &c. Jesus here explains what he said in Joh 4:32. His great object—the great design of his life—was to do the will of God. He came to that place weary and thirsty, and at the usual time of meals, probably an hungered; yet an opportunity of doing good presented itself, and he forgot his fatigue and hunger, and found comfort and joy in doing good—in seeking to save a soul. This one great object absorbed all his powers, and made him forget his weariness and the wants of nature. The mind may be so absorbed in doing the will of God as to forget all other things. Intent on this, we may rise above fatigue, and hardship, and want, and bear all with pleasure in seeing the work of God advance. See Job 23:12: "I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food." We may learn, also, that the main business of life is not to avoid fatigue or to seek the supply of our temporal wants, but to do the will of God. The mere supply of our

temporal necessities, though most men make it an object of their chief solicitude, is a small consideration in the sight of him who has just views of the great design of human life.

The will of him that sent me. The will of God in regard to the salvation of men. See Joh 6:38.

To finish his work. To *complete* or fully to do the work which he has commanded in regard to the salvation of men. It is *his* work to provide salvation, and his to redeem, and his to apply the salvation to the heart. Jesus came to *do it* by teaching, by his example, and by his death as an expiation for sin. And he shows us that we should be diligent. If *he* was so diligent for our welfare, if he bore fatigue and want to benefit us, then we should be diligent, also, in regard to our own salvation, and also in seeking the salvation of others.

{t} "My meat" Job 23:12 Joh 6:38 {u} "finish his work" Joh 17:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *Say not ye*. This seems to have been a proverb. Ye say—that is, men say.

Four months and, &c. The common time from sowing the seed to the harvest, in Judea, was about *four months*. The meaning of this passage may be thus expressed:

"The husband-man, when he sows his seed, is
compelled to wait a considerable period before it
produces a crop. He is encouraged in sowing it; he
expects fruit; his labour is lightened by that
expectation; but it is not immediate—it is remote.
But it is not so with my preaching. The seed has
already sprung up. Scarce was it sown before it
produced an abundant harvest. The gospel was just
preached to a woman, and see how many of the
Samaritans come to hear it also. There is therefore
more encouragement to labour in this field than
the farmer has to sow his grain."

Lift your eyes. See the Samaritans coming to hear the gospel.

They are white. Grain, when ripe, turns from a green to a yellow or light colour, indicating that it is time to reap it. So here were indications that the gospel was effectual, and that the harvest was to be gathered in. Hence we may learn,

1st. That there is as much encouragement to attempt to save souls as the farmer has to raise a crop.

2nd. That the gospel is fitted to make an *immediate impression* on the minds of men. We are to expect that it will. We are not to *wait* to some future period, as if we could not expect immediate results. This wicked and ignorant people—little likely, apparently, to be affected—turned to God, heard the voice of the Saviour, and came in multitudes to him.

3rd. We are to expect *revivals* of religion. Here was one instance of it under the Saviour's own preaching. Multitudes were excited, moved, and came to learn the way of life.

4th. We know not how much good may be done by conversation with even a single individual. This conversation with a woman resulted in a deep interest felt throughout the city, and in the

conversion of many of them to God. So a single individual may often be the means, in the hand of God, of leading many to the cross of Jesus.

5th. What evils may follow from *neglecting* to do our duty! How easily might Jesus have alleged, if he had been like many of his professed disciples, that he was weary, that he was hungry, that it was esteemed improper to converse with a woman alone, that she was an abandoned character, and there could be little hope of doing her good! How many consciences of ministers and Christians would have been satisfied with reasoning like this? Yet Jesus, in spite of his fatigue and thirst, and all the difficulties of the case, seriously set about seeking the conversion of this woman. And behold what a glorious result! The city was moved, and a great harvest was found ready to be gathered in! *Let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not*.

{v} "white already" Mt 9:37

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *He that reapeth*. He that gathers the harvest, or he who so preaches that souls are converted to Christ.

Receiveth wages. The labourer in the harvest receives his hire. Jesus says it shall be thus with those who labour in the ministry—he will not suffer them to go unrewarded. See Da 12:3 Mt 19:28.

Gathereth fruit unto life eternal. Converts souls, who shall inherit eternal life. The harvest is not temporary, like gathering grain, but shall result in eternal life.

That both he that soweth, &c. It is a united work. It matters little whether we sow the seed or whether we reap the harvest. It is part of the same work, and whatever part we may do, we should rejoice. God gives the increase, while Paul may plant and Apollos water. The teacher in the Sunday-school, who sows the seed in early life, shall rejoice with the minister of the gospel who may gather in the harvest, and both join in giving all the praise to God.

{w} "gathereth" Ro 6:22 {x} "both he that soweth" 1Co 3:5-9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *That saying*. That proverb. This proverb is found in some of the *Greek* writers (Grotius). Similar proverbs were in use among the Jews. See Isa 65:21 22; Le 26:16 Mic 6:15.

One soweth, &c. One man may preach the gospel, and with little apparent effect; another, succeeding him, may be crowned with eminent success. The seed, long buried, may spring up in an abundant harvest.

{y} "one soweth" Mic 6:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *I sent you*. In the commission given you to preach the gospel. You have not labored or toiled in preparing the way for the great harvest which is now to be gathered in.

Other men labored.

(1.) The prophets, who long labored to prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah.

(2.) The teachers among the Jews, who have read and explained the law and taught the people.

(3.) John the Baptist, who came to prepare the way. And,

(4.) The Saviour himself, who by his personal ministry taught the people, and prepared them for the success which was to attend the preaching of the apostles. Especially did Jesus lay the foundation for the rapid and extensive spread of the gospel. *He* saw comparatively little fruit of his ministry. He confined his labours to Judea, and even there he was occupied in sowing seed which chiefly sprang up after his death. From this we may learn,

1st. That the man who is crowned with eminent success has no cause of *boasting* over others, any more than the man who *reaps* a field of grain should boast over the man who sowed it. The labour of both is equally necessary, and the labour of both would be useless if GOD did not give the increase. Comp. 1Co 3:6.

2nd. We should not be discouraged if we do not meet with immediate success. The man that *sows* is not disheartened because he does not see the harvest *immediately* spring up. We are to sow our seed in the morning, and in the evening we are not to withhold our hand, for we know not whether shall prosper, this or that; and we are to go forth bearing precious seed, though *weeping*, knowing that we shall come again rejoicing, bearing our sheaves with us, Ec 11:4 Ps 126:6

3rd. Every part of the work of the ministry and of teaching men is needful, and we should rejoice that we are permitted to bear any part, however humble, in bringing sinners to the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, 1Co 12:21-24.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 39

Verses 39-42. *And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him*, &c. There is seldom an instance of so remarkable success as this. From a single conversation, in Circumstances, in a place, and with an individual little likely to be attended with such results, many sinners were converted; many believed on the testimony of the woman; many more came to hear, and believed because they heard him themselves. We should never despair of doing good in the most unpromising circumstances, and we should seize upon every opportunity to converse with sinners on the great subject of their souls' salvation.

{a} "for the testimony" Joh 4:29

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 40

Verse 40. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 41

Verse 41. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 42

Verse 42. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 43

Verse 43. *Into Galilee* Into some of the parts of Galilee, though evidently not into Nazareth, but probably direct to *Cana*, Joh 4:46.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 44

Verse 44. *For Jesus himself testified*, &c. **See Barnes "Mt 13:57"**.

The connection of this verse with the preceding may be thus explained: "Jesus went to Galilee, but not to Nazareth, for he testified," &c. Or, "Jesus went to Galilee, *although* he had said that a prophet had no honour in his own country; yet, because he foreknew that the Galileans would many of them believe on him, he went at this time."

{c} "a prophet" Mt 13:57 Mr 6:4; Lu 4:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 45

Verse 45. *Received him*. Received him kindly, or as a messenger of God. They had seen his miracles, and believed on him.

{d} "having seen" Joh 2:23 {e} "for they also went" De 16:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 46

A certain nobleman. One who was of the royal family, connected by birth with Herod Antipas; or one of the officers of the court, whether by birth allied to him or not. It seems that his ordinary residence was at Capernaum. Capernaum was about a day's journey from Cana, where Jesus then was.

{f} "he made the water wine" Joh 2:1,11 {1} "nobleman" or, "courtier" or, "ruler"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 47

Verse 47. *He went unto him*. Though high in office, yet he did not refuse to go personally to Jesus to ask his aid. He felt as a father; and believing, after all that Jesus had done, that he could cure his son, he travelled to meet him. If men receive benefits of Christ, they must come in the same manner. The rich and the poor, the high and the low, must come personally as humble suppliants, and must be willing to bear all the reproach that may be cast on them for thus coming to him. This man showed strong faith in being willing thus to *go* to Jesus, but he erred in supposing that Jesus could heal only by his being present with his son.

Would come down. It is probable that the miracles of Jesus heretofore had been performed only on those who were present with him, and this nobleman seems to have thought that this was necessary. One design of Jesus in working this miracle was to show him that this was not necessary. Hence he did not go down to Capernaum, but healed him where he was.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 48

Verse 48. *Except ye see signs*, &c. This was spoken not to the nobleman only, but to the Galileans generally. The Samaritans had believed without any miracle. The Galileans, he said, were less disposed to believe him than even they were; and though he had wrought miracles *enough* to convince them, yet, unless they continually saw them, they would not believe.

{g} "signs and wonders" 1Co 1:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 49

Verse 49. *Come down*, &c. The earnestness of the nobleman evinces the deep and tender anxiety of a father. So anxious was he for his son that he was not willing that Jesus should delay a moment —not even to address the people. He still seems to have supposed that Jesus had no power to heal his son except he was *present* with him.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 50

Verse 50. *Go thy way*. This was a kind and tender address. It was designed to convince him that he could word a miracle though not personally present.

Thy son liveth. Thy son shall recover; or he shall be restored to health, according to thy request.

The man believed. The manner in which Jesus spoke it, and the assurance which he gave, convinced the man that he could heal him there as well as to go to Capernaum to do it. This is an instance of the power of Jesus to convince the mind, to soothe doubts, to confirm faith, and to meet our desires. He blesses not always in the *manner* in which we ask, but he grants us our *main* wish.

The father wished his son healed by Jesus *going down* to Capernaum. Jesus healed him, but not in *the way* in which he asked it to be done. God will hear our prayers and grant our requests, but often not in the precise *manner* in which we ask it. It is *his* to judge of the best way of doing us good.

{h} "Go thy way" Mt 8:13 Mr 7:29,30 Lu 17:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 51

Verse 51. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 52

Verse 52. *The seventh hour*. About one o'clock in the afternoon.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 53

Verse 53. *The same hour*. The very time when Jesus spoke.

The fever left him. It seems that it left him suddenly and entirely; so much so that his friends went to inform the father, and to comfort him, and also, doubtless, to apprise him that it was not necessary to ask aid from Jesus. From this miracle we may learn,

1st. That Jesus has an intimate knowledge of all things. He knew the case of this son-the extent of his disease—where he was—and thus had power to heal him.

2nd. That Jesus has almighty power. Nothing else could have healed this child. Nor could it be pretended that he did it by any natural means. He was far away from him, and the child knew not the source of the power that healed him. It could not be pretended that there was any collusion or jugglery. The father came in deep anxiety. The servants saw the cure. Jesus was at a distance. Everything in the case bears the mark of being the simple energy of God—put forth with equal ease to heal, whether far or near. Thus he can save the sinner.

3rd. We see the benevolence of Jesus. Ever ready to aid, to heal, or to save, he may be called on at all times, and will never be called on in vain.

Himself believed. This miracle removed all his doubts, and he became a real disciple and friend of Jesus.

His whole house. His whole family. We may learn from this,

1st. That sickness or any deep affliction is often the means of great good. Here the sickness of the son resulted in the faith of all the family. God often takes away earthly blessings that he may impart rich spiritual mercies.

2nd. The father of a family may be the means of the salvation of his children. Here the effort of a parent resulted in their conversion to Christ.

3rd. There is great beauty and propriety when sickness thus results in piety. For that it is sent. God does not willingly grieve or afflict the children of men; and when afflictions thus terminate, it will be cause of eternal joy, of ceaseless praise.

4th. There is a peculiar charm when piety thus comes into the families of the rich and the noble. It is so unusual; their example and influence go so far; it overcomes so many temptations, and affords opportunities of doing so much good, that there is no wonder that the evangelist selected this instance as one of the effects of the power and of the preaching of the Lord Jesus Christ.

{i} "the same hour" Ps 107:20 {k} "and himself believed" Ac 16:34 18:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 54

Verse 54. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 1

Verse 1. *A feast*. Probably the Passover, though it is not certain. There were two other feasts—the Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles—at which all the males were required to be present, and it might have been one of them. It is of no consequence, however, which of them is intended.

{a} "A feast" Le 23:2 De 16:16; Joh 2:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *The sheep*-market. This might have been rendered the *sheep-gate*, or the gate through which the sheep were taken into the city for sacrifice. The marginal rendering is *gate*, and the word "*market*" is not in the original, nor is a "*sheep-market*" mentioned in the Scriptures or in any of the Jewish writings. A *sheep-gate* is repeatedly mentioned by Nehemiah (Ne 3:1,32, 12:39) being that by which sheep and oxen were brought into the city. As these were brought mainly for sacrifice, the gate was doubtless near the temple, and near the present place which is shown as the pool of Bethesda.

A pool. This word may either mean a small lake or pond in which one can swim, or a place for fish, or any waters collected for bathing or washing.

Hebrew tongue. Hebrew language. The language then spoken, which did not differ essentially from the ancient Hebrew.

Bethesda. The house of mercy. It was so called on account of its strong healing properties—the property of restoring health to the sick and infirm.

Five porches. The word *porch* commonly means a covered place surrounding a building, in which people can walk or sit in hot or wet weather. Here it probably means that there were five covered places, or apartments, in which the sick could remain, from each one of which they could have access to the water. This "pool" is thus described by Professor Hackett (*Illustrations of Scripture*, p. 291, 292)

"Just to the east of the Turkish garrison, and under
the northern wall of the mosque, is a deep excavation,
supposed by many to be the ancient pool of Bethesda,
into which the sick descended `after the troubling of
the water,' and were healed, Joh 5:1, sq. It is
360 feet long, 130 feet wide, and 75 deep. The evangelist
says that this pool was near the sheep-gate, as the
Greek probably signifies, rather than sheep-market, as
rendered in the English version. That gate, according to
Ne 3:1, sq., was on the north side of the temple,
and hence the situation of this reservoir would agree
with that of Bethesda. The present name, Birket Israil,
Pool of Israil, indicates the opinion of the native
inhabitants in regard to the object of the excavation.
The general opinion of the most accurate travellers
is that the so-called pool was originally part of a
trench or fosse which protected the temple on the
north. Though it contains no water at present except
a little which trickles through the stones at the
west end, it has evidently been used at some period
as a reservoir. It is lined with cement, and adapted
in other respects to hold water."

Dr. Robinson established by personal inspection the fact of the subterranean connection of the pool of *Siloam* with the *Fountain of the Virgin*, and made it probable that the fountain under the mosque of Omar is connected with them. This spring is, as he himself witnessed, an *intermittent one*, and there may have been some artificially constructed basin in connection with this spring to which was given the name of *Bethesda*. He supposes, however, that there is not the slightest evidence that the place or reservoir now pointed out as *Bethesda* was the Bethesda of the New Testament (*Bib. Res., i. 501,506, 509*). In the time of Sandys (1611) the spring was found running, but in small quantities; in the time of Maundrell (1697) the stream did not run. Probably in his time, as now, the water which had formerly filtered through the rocks was dammed up by the rubbish.

{1} "sheep-*market*", or "gate", Ne 3:1 12:39

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Impotent folk*. Sick people; or people who were *weak* and feeble by long disease. The word means those who were *feeble* rather than those who were afflicted with acute disease.

Halt. Lame.

Withered. Those who were afflicted with one form of the palsy that withered or dried up the part affected. **See Barnes "Mt 4:24"**.

Moving of the water. It appears that this pool had medicinal properties only when it was *agitated* or *stirred*. It is probable that at regular times or intervals the fountain put forth an unusual quantity of water, or water of peculiar properties, and that about these times the people assembled in multitudes who were to be healed.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *An angel*. It is not affirmed that the angel did this *visibly*, or that they saw him do it. They judged by the *effect*, and when they saw the waters agitated, they concluded that they had healing properties, and descended to them. The Jews were in the habit of attributing all favours to the minis try of the angels of God, Ge 19:15 Heb 1:14; Mt 4:11 18:10; Lu 16:22 Ac 7:53; Ga 3:19; Ac 12:11. This fountain, it seems, had strong medicinal properties. Like many other waters, it had the property of healing certain diseases that were incurable by any other means. Thus the waters of Bath, of Saratoga, &c., are found to be highly medicinal, and to heal diseases that are otherwise incurable. In the case of the waters of Bethesda there does not appear to have been anything *miraculous*, but the waters seem to have been endued with strong medicinal properties, especially after a periodical agitation. All that is peculiar about them in the record is that this was produced by the ministry of an angel. This was m accordance with the common sentiment of the Jews, the common doctrine of the Bible, and the belief of the sacred writers. Nor can it be shown to be absurd or improbable that such blessings should be imparted to man by the ministry of an angel. There is no more absurdity in the belief that a pure spirit or holy angel should aid man, than that a physician or a parent should; and no more absurdity in supposing that the healing properties of such a fountain should be produced by his aid, than that any other blessing should be, Heb 1:12. What man can prove that all his temporal blessings do not come to him through the medium of others—of parents, of teachers, of friends, of *angels*? And who can prove that it is unworthy the *benevolence* of angels to minister to the wants of the poor, the needy, and the afflicted, when man does it, and Jesus Christ did it, and God himself does it daily?

Went down. Descended to the pool.

At a certain season. At a certain time; periodically. The people knew about the time when this was done, and assembled in multitudes to partake of the benefits. Many medicinal springs are more strongly impregnated at some seasons of the year than others.

Troubled the water. Stirred or *agitated* the water. There was probably an increase, and a bubbling and agitation produced by the admission of a fresh quantity.

Whosoever then first. This does not mean that but *one* was healed, and that the *first* one, but that those who first descended into the pool were healed. The strong medicinal properties of the waters soon subsided, and those who could not at first enter into the pool were obliged to wait for the return of the agitation.

Stepped in. Went in.

Was made whole. Was healed. It is not implied that this was done instantaneously or by a miracle. The water had such properties that he was healed, though probably gradually. It is not less the gift of God to suppose that this fountain restored gradually, and in accordance with what commonly occurs, than to suppose, what is not affirmed, that it was done at once and in a miraculous manner.

In regard to this passage, it should be remarked that the account of the angel in the 4th verse is wanting in many manuscripts, and has been by many supposed to be spurious. There is not conclusive evidence, however, that it is not a part of the genuine text, and the best critics suppose that it should not be rejected. One difficulty has been that no such place as this spring is mentioned by Josephus. But John is as good a historian, and as worthy to be believed as Josephus. Besides, it is known that many important places and events have not been mentioned by the Jewish historian, and it is no evidence that there was no such place as this because *he* did not mention it. When this fountain was discovered, or how long its healing properties continued to be known, it is impossible now to ascertain. All that we know of it is what is mentioned here, and conjecture would be useless. We may remark, however, that *such* a place anywhere is an evidence of the great goodness of God. Springs or fountains having healing properties abound on earth, and nowhere more than in our own country. Diseases are often healed in such places which no human skill could remove. The Jews regarded such a provision as proof of the mercy of God. They gave this healing spring the name of a "house of mercy." They regarded it as under the care of an angel. And there is no place where man should be more sensible of the goodness of God, or be more disposed to render him praise as in a "house of mercy," than when at such a healing fountain. And yet how lamentable is it that such places—watering places—should be mere places of gaiety and thoughtlessness, of balls, and gambling, and dissipation! How melancholy that amid the very places where there is most evidence of the goodness of God, and of the misery of the poor, the sick, the afflicted, men should forget all the goodness of their Maker, and spend their time in scenes of dissipation, folly, and vice!

{b} "first after" Pr 8:17 Ec 9:10; Mt 11:12

{c} "was made whole" Eze 47:8,9; Zec 13:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *An infirmity* A weakness. We know not what his disease was. We know only that it disabled him from walking, and that it was of very long standing. It was doubtless regarded as incurable.

{d} "had an infirmity" Lu 8:43 13:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 6

Verse 6. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Sir, I have no man*, &c. The answer of the man implied that he did wish it, but, in addition to all his other trials, he had no friend to aid him. This is an additional circumstance that heightened his affliction.

{f} "I have no man" De 32:36 Ps 72:12, 142:4 Ro 5:6; 2Co 1:9,10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Rise, take up*, &c. Jesus not only restored him to health, but he gave evidence to those around him that this was a real miracle, and that he was really healed. For almost forty years he had been afflicted. He was not even able to walk. Jesus commanded him not only to *walk*, but to take up his *bed* also, and carry that as proof that he was truly made whole. In regard to this we may observe,

1st. That it was a remarkable command. The poor man had been long infirm, and it does not appear that he expected to be healed except by being put into the waters. Yet Jesus, when he gives a commandment, can give strength to obey it.

2nd. It is our business to obey the commands of Jesus, however feeble we feel ourselves to be. His grace will be sufficient for us, and his burden will be light.

3rd. The weak and helpless sinner should put forth his efforts in obedience to the command of Jesus. Never was a sinner more *helpless* than was this man. If God gave *him* strength to do his will, so he can all others; and the plea that we can do nothing could have been urged with far more propriety by this man than it can be by any impenitent sinner.

4th. This narrative should not be *abused*. It should not be supposed as intended to teach that a sinner should delay repentance, as if *waiting for God*. The narrative neither teaches nor implies any such thing. It is a simple record of a fact in regard to a man who had no power to heal himself, and who was under no obligation to heal himself. There is no reference in the narrative to the difficulties of a sinner— no intimation that it was intended to refer to his condition; and to make this example an excuse for *delay*, or an argument for *waiting*, is to abuse and pervert the Bible. Seldom is more mischief done than by attempting to draw from the Bible what it was not intended to teach, and by an effort to make that convey spiritual instruction which God has not declared designed for that purpose.

Thy bed. Thy couch; or the mattress or clothes on which he lay.

{g} "Rise" Mt 9:6 Mr 2:11; Lu 5:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *The Sabbath*. To carry burdens on the Sabbath was forbidden in the Old Testament, Jer 17:21 Ne 13:15; Ex 20:8-10.

If it be asked, then, why Jesus commanded a man to do on the Sabbath what was understood to be a violation of the day, it may be answered,

1st. That the Son of man was Lord of the Sabbath, and had a right to declare what might be done, and even to dispense with a positive law of the Jews, Mt 12:8 Joh 5:17.

2nd. This was a poor man, and Jesus directed him to secure his property.

3rd. The Jews extended the obligation of the Sabbath beyond what was intended by the appointment. They observed it superstitiously, and Jesus took every opportunity to convince them of their error, and to restore the day to its proper observance, Mt 12:6-11 Lu 6:9; Lu 13:14 14:5. This method he took to show them what the law of God really *permitted* on that day, and that works of necessity and mercy were lawful.

{h} "and on the same day" Joh 9:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Not lawful*. It was forbidden, they supposed, in the Old Testament. The Jews were very strenuous in the observation of the external duties of religion.

{i} "It is the sabbath day" Jer 17:21 Mt 12:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *He that made me whole*. The man reasoned correctly. If Jesus had power to work so signal a miracle, he had a right to explain the law. If he had conferred so great a favour on him, he had a right to expect obedience; and we may learn that the mercy of God in pardoning our sins, or in bestowing any signal blessing, imposes the obligation to obey him. We should yield obedience to him according to what we know to be his will, whatever may be the opinions of men, or whatever interpretation *they* may put on the law of God. *Our* business is a simple, hearty, child-like obedience, let the men of the world say or think of us as they choose.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *What man is he*, &c. In this verse there is a remarkable instance of the *perverseness* of men, of their want of candour, and of the manner in which they often look at a subject. Instead of looking at the miracle, and at the man's statement of the manner in which he was healed, they look only at what they thought to be a violation of the law. They assumed it as certain that nothing could make his conduct, in carrying his bed on the Sabbath-day, proper; and they meditated vengeance, not only on the man who was carrying his bed, but on him, also, who had told him to do it. Thus men often assume that a certain course or opinion is proper, and when anyone differs from them they look only *at the difference*, but not *at the reasons for it*. One great source of dispute among men is that they look only at the points in which they *differ*, but are unwilling to listen to

the reasons why others do not believe as they do. It is always enough to condemn one in the eyes of a bigot that he differs from *him*, and he looks upon him who holds a different opinion, as the Jews did at this man, as *certainly wrong*; and such a bigot looks at the reasons why others differ from him just as the Jews did at the reason why this man bore his bed on the Sabbath—as not worth regarding or hearing, or as if they could not possibly be right.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Wist not*. Knew not.

Had conveyed himself away. Was lost in the crowd. He had silently mingled with the multitude, or had passed on with the crowd unobserved, and the man had been so rejoiced at his cure that he had not even inquired the name of his benefactor.

{l} "for Jesus" Lu 4:30 {2} "a multitude" or, "from the multitude that was"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Findeth him*. Fell in with him, or saw him.

In the temple. The man seems to have gone at once to the temple—perhaps a privilege of which he had been long deprived. They who are healed from sickness should seek the sanctuary of God and give him thanks for his mercy. Comp. **See Barnes "Is 38:20"**.

There is nothing more improper, when we are raised up from a bed of pain, than to forget God our benefactor, and neglect to praise him for his mercies.

Thou art made whole. Jesus calls to his remembrance the fact that he was healed, in order that he might admonish him not to sin again.

Sin no more. By this expression it was implied that the infirmity of this man was caused by sin—perhaps by vice in his youth. His crime or dissipation had brought on him this long and distressing affliction. Jesus shows him that he knew the cause of his sickness, and takes occasion to warn him not to repeat it. No man who indulges in vice can tell what may be its consequences. It must always end in evil, and not unfrequently it results in loss of health, and in long and painful disease. This is always the case with intemperance and all gross pleasures. Sooner or later, sin will always result in misery.

Sin no more. Do not repeat the vice. You have had dear-bought experience, and if repeated it will be worse. When a man has been restored from the effects of sin, he should learn to avoid the very appearance of evil. He should shun the place of temptation; he should not mingle again with his old companions; he should touch not, taste not, handle not. God visits with heavier judgment those who have been once restored from the ways of sin and who return again to it. The drunkard that has been reformed, and that returns to his habits of drinking, becomes more beastly; the man that professes to have experienced a change of heart, and who then indulges in sin, sinks deeper into pollution, and is seldom restored. The only way of safety in all such cases is to *sin no more*; not to be in the way of temptation; not to expose ourselves; not to touch or approach that which

came near to working our ruin. The man who has been intemperate and is reformed, if he tastes the poison *at all*, may expect to sink deeper than ever into drunkenness and pollution.

A worse thing. A more grievous disease, or the pains of hell. "The doom of apostates is a worse thing than thirty-eight years' lameness" (Henry).

{m} "sin no more" Joh 8:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 15

Verse 15. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Persecuted Jesus*. They opposed him; attempted to ruin his character; to destroy his popularity; and probably held him up before the people as a violator of the law of God. Instead of making inquiry whether he had not given proof that he was the Messiah, they *assumed* that he must be wrong, and ought to be punished. Thus every bigot and persecutor does in regard to those who differ from them.

To slay him. To put him to death. This they attempted to do because it was directed in the law of Moses, Ex 31:15 35:2; Lu 6:7 11, 13:14.

We see here,

1st. How full of enmity and how bloody was the purpose of the Jews. All that Jesus had done was to restore an infirm man to health—a thing which they would have done for their cattle (Lu 6:7 13:14), and yet they sought his life because he had done it for a sick man.

2nd. Men are often extremely envious because good is done by others, especially if it is not done according to the way of *their* denomination or party.

3rd. Here was an instance of the common feelings of a hypocrite. He often covers his enmity against the *power* of religion by great zeal for the form of it. He hates and persecutes those who do good, who seek the conversion of sinners, who love revivals of religion and the spread of the gospel, because it is not according to some matter of form which has been established, and on which he supposes the whole safety of the church to hang. There was nothing that Jesus was more opposed to than hypocrisy, and nothing that he set himself more against than those who suppose all goodness to consist in *forms*, and all piety in the *shibboleths* of a party.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *My Father*. God.

Worketh hitherto. Worketh *until now*, or till this time. God has not ceased to work on the Sabbath. He makes the sun to rise; he rolls the stars; he causes the grass, the tree, the flower to grow. He has not suspended his operations on the Sabbath, and the obligation to *rest* on the Sabbath

does not extend to him. He *created* the world in six days, and ceased the work of creations; but he has not ceased to *govern* it, and to carry forward, by his providence, his great plans on the Sabbath.

And I work. "As God does good on that day; as he is not bound by the law which requires his creatures to rest on that day, so I do the same. The law on that subject may be dispensed with, also, in my case, for the Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath." In this reply it is implied that he was equal with God from two circumstances:

1st. Because he called God his Father, Joh 5:18.

2nd. Because he claimed the same *exemption* from law which God did, asserting that the law of the Sabbath did not bind him or his Father, thus showing that he had a right to impose and repeal laws in the same manner as God. He that has a right to do this must be God.

{n} "My father" Joh 9:4 14:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *The more to kill him*. The answer of Jesus was fitted greatly to irritate them. He did not *deny* what he had done, but he *added* to that what he well knew would highly, offend them. That he should claim the right of *dispensing* with the law, and affirm that, in regard to its observance, he was in the same condition with God, was eminently fitted to enrage them, and he doubtless knew that it might endanger his life. We may learn from his answer, That we are not to keep back truth because it may endanger us.

2nd. That we are not to keep back truth because it will irritate and enrage sinners. The fault is not in the *truth*, but in the sinner.

3rd. That when any one portion of truth enrages hypocrites, they will be enraged the more they hear.

Had broken the sabbath. They supposed he had broken it.

Making himself equal with God. This shows that, in the view of the Jews, the name Son of God, or that calling God his Father, implied equality with God. The Jews were the best interpreters of their own language, and as Jesus did not deny the correctness of their interpretations, it follows that he meant to be so understood. See Joh 10:29-38. The interpretation of the Jews was a very natural and just one. He not only said that God was his Father, but he said that he had the same right to work on the Sabbath that God had; that by the same authority, and in the same manner, he could dispense with the obligation of the day. They had now *two* pretences for seeking to kill him—one for making himself equal with God, which they considered blasphemy, and the other for violating the Sabbath. For each of these the law denounced death, Nu 15:35 Le 24:11-14.

{p} "making himself equal with God" Zec 13.7 Joh 10:30,33; Php 2:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *The Son can do nothing of himself*. Jesus, having stated the *extent* of his authority, proceeds here to show its *source and nature*, and *to prove* to them that what he had said was true.

The first explanation which he gives is in these words: *The Son*—whom he had just impliedly affirmed to be equal with God— did nothing *of himself*; that is, nothing without the appointment of the Father; nothing contrary to the Father, as he immediately explains it. When it is said that he CAN *do nothing* OF HIMSELF, it is meant that such is the union subsisting between the Father and the Son that he can do nothing independently or separate from the Father. Such is the nature of this union that he can do nothing which has not the concurrence of the Father, and which he does not command. In all things he must, from the necessity of his nature, act in accordance with the nature and will of God. Such is the intimacy of the union, that the fact that *he* does anything is proof that it is by the concurring agency of God. There is no separate action—no separate existence; but, alike in being and in action, there is the most perfect oneness between him and the Father. Comp. Joh 10:30; Joh 17:21.

What he seeth the Father do. In the works of creation and providence, in making laws, and in the government of the universe. There is a peculiar force in the word seeth here. No man can see God acting in his works; but the word here implies that the Son sees him act, as we see our fellow-men act, and that he has a knowledge of him, therefore, which no mere mortal could possess.

What things soever. In the works of creation and of providence, and in the government of the worlds. The word is without limit—ALL that the Father does the Son likewise does. This is as high an assertion as possible of his being *equal* with God. If one does all that another does or can do, then there must be equality. If the Son does all that the Father does, then, like him, he must be almighty, omniscient, omnipresent, and infinite in every perfection; or, in other words, he must be God. If he had this *power*, then he had authority, also, to do on the Sabbath-day what God did.

{q} "The Son can do nothing of himself" Joh 5:30

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *The Father loveth the Son*. This authority he traces to the love which the Father has for him—that peculiar, ineffable, infinite love which God has for his only-begotten Son, feebly and dimly illustrated by the love which an earthly parent has for an only child.

Showeth him. Makes him acquainted with. Conceals nothing from him. From apostles, prophets, and philosophers no small part of the doings of God are concealed. From the *Son* nothing is. And as God shows him *all* that he does, he must be possessed of omniscience, for to no finite mind could be imparted a knowledge of all the works of God.

Will show Him. Will appoint and direct him to do greater works than these.

Greater works than these. Than healing the impotent man, and commanding him to carry his bed on the Sabbath-day. The greater works to which he refers are those which he proceeds to specify—he will raise the dead and judge the world, &c.

May marvel. May wonder, or be amazed.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *As the Father raiseth up the dead*. God has power to raise the dead. By his power it had been done in at least two instances—by the prophet Elijah, in the case of the son of the widow of Sarepta (1Ki 17:22), and by the prophet Elisha, in the case of the Shunamite's son, 2Ki 4:32-35. The Jews did not doubt that God had power to raise the dead. Jesus here expressly affirms it, and says he has the same power.

Quickeneth them. Gives them *life*. This is the sense of the word *quickeneth* throughout the Bible.

Even so. In the same manner. By the same authority and power. The power of raising the dead must be one of the highest attributes of the divinity. As Jesus affirms that he has the power to do this *in the same manner* as the Father, so it follows that he must be equal with God.

The Son quickeneth. Gives life to. This may either refer to his raising the dead from their graves, or to his giving spiritual life to those who are dead in trespasses and sins. The former he did in the case of Lazarus and the widow's son at Nain, Joh 11:43,44; Lu 7:14,15. The latter he did in the case of all those who were converted by his power, and still does it in any instance of conversion. *Whom he will*. It was in the power of Jesus to raise up any of the dead as well as Lazarus. It depended on his will whether Lazarus and the widow's son should come to life. So it depends on his will whether sinners shall live. He has power to renew them, and the renewing of the heart is as much the result of his *will* as the raising of the dead.

{s} "the Son quickeneth" Lu 8:54 Joh 11:25, 17:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Judgeth no man*. Jesus in these verses is showing his *equality with God*. He affirmed (Joh 5:17) that he had the same power over the Sabbath that his Father had; in Joh 5:19 that he did the same things as the Father; in Joh 5:21 particularly that he had the same power to raise the dead. He now adds that God has given him the authority to *judge* men. The Father pronounces judgment on no one. This office he has committed to the Son. The power of judging the world implies ability to search the heart, and omniscience to understand the motives of all actions. This is a work which none but a divine being can do, and it shows, therefore, that the Son is equal to the Father.

Hath committed, Hath appointed him to be the judge of the world. In the previous verse he had said that he had power to raise the dead; he here adds that it will be his, also, to judge them when they are raised. See Mt 25:31-46 Ac 17:31.

{t} "hath committed" Mt 11:27 Ac 17:31; 2Co 5:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *That all men should honour*, &c. To honour is to esteem, reverence, praise, do homage to. We honour one when we ascribe to him in our hearts, and words, and actions the praise and obedience which are due to him. We honour God when we obey him and worship him aright. We honour the Son when we esteem him to be as he is; when we have right views and feelings toward him. As he is declared to be God (Joh 1:1), as he here says he has power and authority equal with

God, so we honour him when we regard him as such. The primitive Christians are described by Pliny, in a letter to the Emperor Trajan, as meeting together to sing hymns to Christ *as God*. So we honour him aright when we regard him as possessed of wisdom, goodness, power, eternity, omniscience — equal with God.

Even as. To the same extent; in the same manner. Since the Son is to be honoured EVEN AS the Father, it follows that he must be equal with the Father. To *honour the Father* must denote religious homage, or the rendering of that honour which is due to God; so to honour the Son must also denote *religious* homage. If our Saviour here did not intend to teach that he ought to be worshipped, and to be esteemed as *equal* with God, it would be difficult to teach it by any language which we could use.

He that honoureth not the Son. He that does not believe on him, and render to him the homage which is his due as the equal of God.

Honoureth not the Father. Does not worship and obey the Father, the first person of the Trinity—that is, does not worship *God*. He may imagine that he worships God, but there *is* no God but the God subsisting as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. He that withholds proper homage from one, withholds it from all. He that should refuse to honour *the Father*, could not be said to honour *God*; and in the like manner, he that honoureth not the *Son*, honoureth not the *Father*. This appears farther from the following considerations:—

1st. The Father wills that the Son should be honoured. He that refuses to do it disobeys the Father.

2nd. They are equal. He that denies the one denies also the other.

3rd. The same feeling that leads us to honour the *Father* will also lead us to honour the Son, for he is "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person," Heb 1:3.

4th. The evidence of the existence of the Son is the same as that of the Father. He has the same wisdom, goodness, omnipresence, truth, power.

And from these verses we may learn —

1st. That those who do not render proper homage to Jesus Christ do not worship the true God.

2nd. There is no such God as the infidel professes to believe in. There can be but one God; and if the God of the Bible be the true God, then all other gods are false gods.

3rd. Those who withhold proper homage from Jesus Christ, who do not honour him EVEN AS they honour the Father, cannot be Christians.

4th. One evidence of piety is when we are willing to render proper praise and homage to Jesus Christ —to love him, and serve and obey him, with all our hearts.

5th. As *a matter of fact*, it may be added that they who do not honour the Son do not worship God at all. The infidel has no form of worship; he has no place of secret prayer, no temple of worship, no family altar. Who ever yet heard of an infidel that prayed? Where do such men build houses of worship? Where do they meet to praise God? Nowhere. As certainly as we hear the name infidel, we are certain at once that we hear the name of a man who has no form of religion in his family, who never prays in secret, and who will do nothing to maintain the public worship of God. Account for it as men may, it is a fact that no one can dispute, that it is only they who do honour to the Lord Jesus that have any form of the worship of God, or that honour him; *and their veneration for God is just in proportion to their love for the Redeemer—just as they honour him*.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *He that heareth my word*. To hear, in this place, evidently denotes not the outward act of hearing, but to receive in a proper manner; to suffer it to make its proper impression on the mind; to obey. The word *hear* is often used in this sense, Mt 11:15 Joh 8:47; Ac 3:23.

Many persons outwardly hear the gospel who neither understand nor obey it.

My word. My doctrine, my teaching. All that Jesus taught about *himself*, as well as about the Father.

On him that sent me. On the Father, who, in the plan of redemption, is represented as *sending* his Son to save men. See Joh 3:17. Faith in God, who sent his Son, is here represented as being connected with everlasting life; but there can be no faith in him who *sent* his Son, without faith also in him who is *sent*. The belief of *one* of the true doctrines of religion is connected with, and will lead to, the belief of *all*.

Hath everlasting life. The state of man by nature is represented as death in sin, Eph 2:1. Religion is the opposite of this, or is *life*. The *dead* regard not anything. They are unaffected by the cares, pleasures, amusements of the world. They hear neither the voice of merriment nor the tread of the living over their graves. So with sinners. They are unmoved with the things of religion. They hear not the voice of God; they see not his loveliness; they care not for his threatenings. But religion is *life*. The Christian lives with God, and feels and acts as if there was a God. Religion, and its blessings here and hereafter, are one and the same. The happiness of heaven is *living* unto God—being sensible of his presence, and glory, and power—and rejoicing in that. There shall be no more *death* there, Re 21:4. This *life*, or this religion, whether on earth or in heaven, is the same—the same joys extended and expanded for ever. Hence, when a man is converted, it is said that he *has* everlasting life; not merely *shall have*, but is already *in possession* of that life or happiness which shall be everlasting. It is life begun, expanded, ripening for the skies. He has already entered on his inheritance—that inheritance which is everlasting.

Shall not come into condemnation. He was by nature under condemnation. See Joh 3:18. Here it is declared that he shall not return to that state, or he will not be again condemned. This promise is sure; it is made by the Son of God, and there is no one that can pluck them out of his hand, Joh 10:28. Comp. **See Barnes "Re 8:1"**.

But is passed from death unto life. Has *passed over* from a state of spiritual death to the life of the Christian. The word translated *is passed* would be better expressed by *has passed*. It implies that he has done it voluntarily; that none compelled him; and that the passage is made unto *everlasting* life. Because Christ is the *author* of this life in the soul, he is called the *life* (Joh 1:4); and as he has always existed, and is the source of *all life*, he is called the *eternal* life, 1Jo 5:20.

{v} "passed from death" 1Jo 3:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *The hour*. The time.

Is coming. Under the preaching of the gospel, as well as in the resurrection of the dead.

Now is. It is now taking place. Sinners were converted under his ministry and brought to spiritual life.

The dead. Either the dead in sins, or those that are in their graves. The words of the Saviour will apply to either. Language, in the Scriptures, is often so used as to describe two similar events. Thus the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world are described by Jesus in the same language, Matthew 24 and 25. The return of the Jews from Babylon, and the coming of the Messiah, and the spread of his gospel, are described in the same language by Isaiah, Isaiah 40-41. Comp. **See Barnes "Is 7:14".**

The renewal of the heart, and the raising of the dead at the judgment, are here also described in similar language, because they so far resemble each other that the same language will apply to both.

The voice of the Son of God. The voice is that by which we give command. Jesus raised up the dead by his command, or by his authority. When he did it he spoke, or, commanded it to be done. Mr 5:41, "He took the damsel by the hand, and said, `Talitha cumi.'" Lu 7:14: "And he came and touched the bier, and said, `Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.'" Joh 11:43: "He cried with a loud voice, `Lazarus, come forth.'" So it is by his command that those who are dead in sins are quickened or made alive, Joh 5:21. And so at the day of judgment the dead will be raised by his command or voice, though there is no reason to think that his voice will be audibly heard, Joh 5:28.

Shall live. Shall be restored to life.

{w} "the dead shall hear" Joh 5:28 Eph 2:1.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *As the Father hath life*. God is the source of all life. He is thence called the *living* God, in opposition to idols which have no life. Ac 14:15: "We preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities (idols) *unto the living God*," Jos 3:10 1Sa 17:26; Jer 10:10. See also Isa 40:18-31.

In himself. This means that life in God, or existence, is not *derived* from any other being. *Our* life is derived from God. Ge 2:7: God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul"—that is, a living being. All other creatures derive their life from him. Ps 104:29 30: "Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created; thou takest away their breath, they die and return to their dust." But God is underived. He always existed as he is. Ps 90:2 "From everlasting to everlasting thou art God." He is unchangeably the same, Jas 1:17. It cannot be said that he is *self-existent*, because that is an absurdity; no being can originate or create himself; but he is not dependent on any other for *life*. Of course, no being can take away his existence; and of course, also, no being can take away his *happiness*. He has in himself infinite sources of happiness, and no other being, no change in his universe can destroy that happiness.

So. In a manner like his. It corresponds to the first "as," implying that one is the same as the other; life in the one is the same, and possessed in the *same manner*, as in the other.

Hath he given. This shows that the power or authority here spoken of was *given* or committed to the Lord Jesus. This evidently does not refer to the manner in which the second person of the Trinity exists, for the power and authority of which Christ here speaks is that which he exercises as *Mediator*. It is the power of raising the dead and judging the world. In regard to his divine nature,

it is not affirmed here that it is in any manner derived; nor does the fact that God is said to have given him this power prove that he was inferior in his nature or that his existence was derived. For,

1st. It has reference merely *to office*. As Mediator, he may be said to have been appointed by the Father.

2nd. Appointment to office does not prove that the one who is appointed is inferior in nature to him who appoints him. A son may be appointed to a particular work by a parent, and yet, in regard to talents and every other qualification, may be equal or superior to the father. He sustains the relation of a son, and in this relation there is an official inferiority. General Washington was not inferior in nature and talents to the men who commissioned him. He simply derived *authority* from them to do what he was otherwise fully able to do. So the Son, as Mediator, is subject to the Father; yet this proves nothing about his nature.

To have life. That is, the right or authority of imparting life to others, whether dead in their graves or in their sins.

In himself. There is much that is remarkable in this expression. It is IN *him* as it is IN *God*. He has the control of it, and can exercise it as he will. The prophets and apostles are never represented as having such power in themselves. They were dependent; they performed miracles in the name of God and of Jesus Christ (Ac 3:6 4:30, 16:18) ; but Jesus did it by his own name, authority, and power. He had but to speak, and it was done, Mr 5:41 Lu 7:14; Joh 11:43.

This wonderful commission he bore from God to raise up the dead as he pleased; to convert sinners when and where he chose; and finally to raise up *all* the dead, and pronounce on them an eternal doom according to the deeds done in the body. None could do this but he who had the power of creation—equal in omnipotence to the Father, and the power of searching all hearts—equal in omniscience to God.

{x} "life in himself" 1Co 15:45

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *Hath given him authority*. Hath appointed him to do this. Has made him to be judge of all. This is represented as being the appointment of the Father, Ac 17:31. The word *authority* here (commonly rendered *power*) implies all that is necessary to execute judgment—all the physical power to raise the dead, and to investigate the actions and thoughts of the life; and all the *moral right* or authority to sit in judgment on the creatures of God, and to pronounce their doom.

To execute judgment. To *do* judgment—that is, to judge. He has appointment to do justice; to see that the universe suffers no wrong, either by the escape of the guilty or by the punishment of the innocent.

Because he is the Son of man. The phrase *Son of man* here seems to be used in the sense of "because he is a man," or because he has human nature. The term is one which Jesus often gives to himself, to show his union with man and his interest in man. **See Barnes "Mt 8:19,20"**.

It is to be remarked here that the word *son* has not the article before it in the original: "Because he is *a* Son of man"—that is, because he is a man. It would seem from this that there is a propriety that one in our nature should judge us. What this propriety is we do not certainly know. It may be,

1st. Because one who has experienced our infirmities, and who possesses our nature, may be supposed by those *who are judged* to be better qualified than one in a different nature.

2nd. Because he is to decide between *man* and *God*, and it is proper that *our* feelings, and nature, and views should be represented in the judge, as well as those of God.

3rd. Because Jesus has all the feelings of compassion we could ask—all the benevolence we could desire in a judge; because he has *shown* his disposition to defend us by giving his life, and it can never be alleged by those who are condemned that their judge was a distant, cold, and unfriendly being. Some have supposed that the expression *Son of man* here means the same as *Messiah* Da 7:13,14, and that the meaning is that God hath made him judge because he was the Messiah. Some of the ancient versions and fathers connected this with the following verse, thus: "Marvel not because I am a man, or because this great work is committed to a man apparently in humble life. You shall see greater things than these." Thus the Syriac version reads it, and Chrysostom, Theophylact, and some others among the fathers.

{y} "authority" Joh 5:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *Marvel not*. Do not wonder or be astonished at this.

The hour is coming. The time is approaching or will be.

All that are in the graves. All the dead, of every age and nation. They are described as in the graves. Though many have turned to their native dust and perished from human view, yet God sees them, and can regather their remains and raise them up to life. The phrase *all that are in the graves* does not prove that the same particles of matter will be raised up, but it is equivalent to saying *all the dead*. **See Barnes "1Co 15:35-38"**.

Shall hear his voice. He will restore them to life, and command them to appear before him. This is a most sublime description, and this will be a wonderful display of almighty power. None but God can *see* all the dead, none but he could remould their frames, and none else could command them to return to life.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Shall come forth*. Shall come out of their graves. This was the language which he used when he raised up Lazarus, Joh 11:43,4.

They that have done good. That is, they who are righteous, or they who have by their good works shown that they were the friends of Christ. See Mt 25:34-36.

Resurrection of life. Religion is often called life, and everlasting life. **See Barnes "Joh 5:24"**.

In the resurrection the righteous will be raised up to the full enjoyment and perpetual security of that life. It is also called the resurrection of life, because there shall be no more *death*, Re 21:4. The enjoyment of God himself and of his works; of the society of the angels and of the redeemed; freedom from sickness, and sin, and dying, will constitute the life of the just in the resurrection.

The resurrection is also called the resurrection of the just (Lu 14:14), and the first resurrection, Re 20:5,6.

The resurrection of damnation. The word *damnation* means the sentence passed on one by a judge—judgment or condemnation. The word, as we use it, applies only to the judgment pronounced by God on the wicked; but this is not its meaning always in the Bible. Here it has, however, that meaning. Those who have done evil will be raised up to be *condemned* or *damned*. This will be the object in raising them up—this the sole design. It is elsewhere said that they shall then be condemned to everlasting punishment (Mt 25:46), and that they shall be punished with everlasting destruction (2Th 1:8,9); and it is said of the unjust that they are reserved unto the day of judgment to be punished, 2Pe 2:9. That this refers to the future judgment—to the resurrection then, and not to anything that takes place in this life— is clear from the following considerations:

1st. Jesus had just spoken of what would be done in this life—of the power of the gospel, Joh 5:25. He adds here that something still more wonderful—something *beyond* this—would take place. *All that are in the graves* shall hear his voice.

2nd. He speaks of those who are in their graves, evidently referring to the dead. Sinners are sometimes said to be dead in sin. This is applied in the Scriptures only to those who are deceased.

3rd. The language used here of the *righteous* cannot be applied to anything in this life. When God converts men, it is not because they *have been good*.

4th. Nor is the language employed of the evil applicable to anything here. In what condition among men can it be said, with any appearance of sense, that they are brought forth from their graves to the resurrection of damnation? The doctrine of those Universalists who hold that all men will be saved immediately at death, therefore, cannot be true. This passage proves that at the day of judgment the wicked will be condemned. Let it be added that if *then* condemned they will be lost for ever. Thus (Mt 25:46) it is said to be *everlasting* punishment; 2Th 1:8,9, it is called *everlasting* destruction. There is no account of redemption in hell—no Saviour, no Holy Spirit, no offer of mercy there.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *Of mine own self*. See Joh 5:19. The Messiah, the Mediator, does nothing without the concurrence and the authority of God. Whatever he does, he does according to the will of God.

As I hear I judge. To *hear* expresses the condition of one who is commissioned or instructed. Thus (Joh 8:26), "I speak to the world those things which I have *heard* of him;" Joh 8:18, "As the father hath taught me, I speak those things." Jesus here represents himself as commissioned, taught, or sent of God. When he says, "as I *hear*," he refers to those things which the Father had *showed* him Joh 5:20—that is, he came to communicate the will of God; to show to man what God wished man to know.

I judge. I determine or decide. This was true respecting the institutions and doctrines of religion, and it will be true respecting the sentence which he will pass on mankind at the day of judgment. He will decide their destiny according to what the Father will and wishes—that is, according to justice.

Because I seek, &c. This does not imply that his own judgment would be wrong if he sought his own will, but that he had no *private* ends, no selfish views, no improper bias. He came not to aggrandize himself, or to promote his own views, but he came to do the will of God. Of course his decision would be impartial and unbiased, and there is every security that it will be according to truth. See Lu 22:42 where he gave a memorable instance, in the agony of the garden, of his submission to his Father's will.

{c} "the will of the Father" Ps 40:7,8; Mt 26:39 Joh 4:34, 6:38

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *If I bear witness of myself*. If I have no other evidence than my own testimony about myself.

My witness. My testimony; my evidence, The proof would not be decisive.

Is not true. The word *true*. here, means worthy of belief, or established by suitable evidence. See Mt 22:16: "We *know* that thou art *true*"—that is, worthy of confidence, or that thou hast been truly sent from God, Lu 20:21; Joh 8:13,17.

The law did not admit a man to testify in his own case, but required *two* witnesses, De 17:6. Though what Jesus said *true* Joh 8:13,17, yet he admitted it was not sufficient testimony *alone* to claim their belief. They had a right to expect that his statement that he came from God would be confirmed by other evidence. This evidence he gave in the miracles which he wrought as proof that God had sent him.

{d} "If I bear witness" Ps 27:2 Joh 8:14; Re 3:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *There is another*. That is, God. See Joh 5:36.

{e} "another" Joh 8:18 Ac 10:43; 1Jo 5:7-9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *Ye sent unto John*. See Joh 1:19.

He bare witness, &c. This testimony of John *ought* to have satisfied them. John was an eminent man; many of the Pharisees believed on him; he was candid, unambitious, sincere, and his evidence was impartial. On this Jesus *might* have rested the proof that he was the Messiah, but he was willing, also, to adduce evidence of a higher order.

{f} "he bare witness" Joh 1:7,32

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *I receive not testimony from men*. I do not depend for proof of my Messiahship on the testimony of men, nor do I pride myself on the commendations or flattery of men.

But these thing, &c. "This testimony of John I adduce that you might be convinced. It was evidence of your own seeking. It was clear, full, explicit. You *sent* to make inquiry, and he gave you a candid and satisfactory answer. Had you believed that, you would have believed in the Messiah and been saved."

Men are often dissatisfied with the very evidence of the truth of religion which they sought, and on which they professed themselves willing to rely.

{g} "but these things" Joh 20:31 Ro 3:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *He was*. It is probable that John had been cast into prison before this, Hence his public ministry had ceased, and our Saviour says he *was* such a light.

Light. The word in the original properly means a *lamp*, and is not the same which in Joh 1:4,5 is translated *light*. That is a word commonly applied to the sun, the fountain of light; this means a *lamp*, or a light that is lit up or kindled artificially from oil or tallow. A teacher is often called a *light*, because he guides or illuminates the minds of others. Ro 2:19. "Thou art confident that thou art a guide of the blind, *a light* of them that sit in darkness;" Joh 8:12 12:46; Mt 5:14.

A burning. A lamp lit up that burns with a steady lustre.

Shining. Not dim, not indistinct. The expression means that he was an eminent teacher; that his doctrines were clear, distinct, consistent.

Ye were willing. You willed, or you chose; you went out voluntarily. This shows that some of those whom Jesus was now addressing were among the great multitudes of Pharisees that came unto John in the wilderness, Mt 3:7. As *they* had at one time admitted John to be a prophet, so Jesus might with great propriety adduce his testimony in his favour.

For a season. In the original, for an *hour*—denoting only a short time. They did it, as many others do, while he was popular, and it was the *fashion* to follow him.

To rejoice in his light. To rejoice in his doctrines, and in admitting that he was a distinguished prophet; perhaps, also, to rejoice that he professed to be sent to introduce the Messiah, until they found that he bore testimony to Jesus of Nazareth.

{h} "ye were willing" Mt 21:26 Mr 6:20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *Greater witness*. Stronger, more decisive evidence.

The works. The miracles—healing the sick and raising the dead.

Hath given me. Hath committed to me, or appointed me to do. Certain things he intrusted in his hands to accomplish.

To finish. To do or to perform until the task is completed. the word is applied to the *termination* of anything, as we say a task is *ended* or a work is completed. So Jesus said, when he expired, It is "*finished*," Joh 19:30. From this it appears that Jesus came to *accomplish* a certain work; and hence we see the reason why he so often guarded his life and sought his safety until the task was fully completed. These works or miracles bore witness of him; that is, they showed that he was sent from god, because none but God could perform them, and because God would not give such power to any whose life and doctrines he did not approve. They were more decisive proof than the testimony of John, because,

1st. John worked no miracles Joh 10:41

2nd. It was possible that *a man* might be deceived or be an imposter. It was *not* possible for *God* to deceive.

3rd. The miracles which Jesus wrought were such as no *man* could work, and no angel. He that could raise the dead must have all power, and he who commissioned Jesus, therefore, must be God.

{i} "the works" Joh 10:25 15:24; Ac 2:22

{k} "the Father" Mt 3:17 17:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *The Father himself—hath borne witness of me*. This God had done,

1st. By the miracles which Jesus had wrought, and of which he was conversing.

2nd. At the baptism of Jesus, where he said, "This is my beloved Son," Mt 3:17.

3rd. In the prophecies of the Old Testament. It is not easy to say here to which of these he refers. Perhaps he has reference to all.

Ye have neither heard his voice. This difficult passage has been interpreted in various ways. The main design of it seems to be clear—to reprove the Jews for not believing the evidence that he was the Messiah. In doing this he says that they were indisposed to listen to the testimony of God. He affirmed that God had given sufficient evidence of his divine mission, but they had disregarded it. The *first* thing that he notices is that they had not heard his voice. The word *hear*, in this place, is to be understood in the sense of *obey* or listen to. **See Barnes "Joh 5:25"**.

The voice of God means his *commands* or his declarations, however made; and the Saviour said that it had been the *characteristic* of the Jews that they had not listened to the voice or command of God. As this had been their general characteristic, it was not wonderful that they disregarded now his testimony in regard to the Messiah. The voice of God had been literally heard on the mount. See De 4:12: "Ye heard the voice of the words." *At any time*. This has been the uniform characteristic of the nation that they have disregarded and perverted the testimony of God, and it was as true of that generation as of their fathers.

Nor seen his shape. No man hath seen God at any time, Joh 1:18. But the word *shape*, here, does not mean God himself. It refers to the visible *manifestation* of himself; to the *appearance* which he assumed. It is applied in the Septuagint to his manifesting himself to Moses, Nu 12:8: "With him will I speak mouth to mouth, *even apparently*;" in Greek, *in a form or shape*—the word

used here. It is applied to the visible symbol of God that appeared in the cloud and that rested on the tabernacle, Nu 9:15,16. It is the same word that is applied to the Holy Spirit appearing in bodily *shape* like a dove, Lu 3:22. Jesus does not here deny that God had *appeared* in this manner, but he says they had not seen—that is, had not *paid attention to*, or *regarded*, the appearance of God. He had manifested himself, but they disregarded it, and, in particular, they had disregarded his manifestations in attestation of the Messiah. As the word *hear* means to obey, to listen to, so the word see means to pay attention to, to regard (2Jo 1:8 1Jo 3:6), and thus throws light on Joh 14:9: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." "I am a *manifestation* of God—God appearing in human flesh, as he appeared formerly in the symbol of the cloud; and he that *regards me*, or attends to me, regards the Father."

{m} "Ye have neither heard" De 4:12 1Ti 6:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *His word abiding in you*. His law does not abide in you—that is, you do not regard or obey it. This was the *third* thing that he charged them with.

1st. They had not obeyed the command of God.

2nd. They had not regarded his manifestations, either in the times of the old dispensation, or now through the Messiah.

3rd. They did not yield to what he had said in the revelation of the Old Testament.

For whom he hath sent. God had foretold that the Messiah would come. He had now given evidence that Jesus was he; but now they rejected him, and this was proof that they did not regard the word of God.

{n} "And you have not" 1Jo 2:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *Search the scriptures*. The word translated *search* here means to *search diligently* or *anxiously*. It is applied to miners, who search for precious metals—who look anxiously for the *bed* of the ore with an intensity or anxiety proportionate to *their sense* of the value of the metal. Comp. **See Barnes "Job 28:3".**

It is applied by Homer to a lioness robbed of her whelps, and who *searches* the plain to *trace out* the footsteps of the man who has robbed her. It is also applied by him to dogs tracing their game by searching them out by the scent of the foot. It means a diligent, faithful, anxious investigation. The word *may* be either in the indicative or imperative mood. In our translation it is in the imperative, as if Jesus *commanded* them to search the Scriptures, Cyril, Erasmus, Beza, Bengel, Kuinoel, Tholuck, De Wette, and others, give it as in the indicative; Chrysostom, Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Wetstein, Stier, Alford, and others, regard it as in the imperative, or as a command. It is impossible to determine which is the true interpretation. Either of them makes good sense, and it is proper to

use the passage in either signification. There is abundant evidence that the Jews *did* search the books of the Old Testament. It is equally clear that all men *ought* to do it.

The scriptures. The writings or books of the Old Testament, for those were all the books of revelation that they then possessed.

In them ye think ye have eternal life. The meaning of this is: "Ye think that by studying the Scriptures you will obtain eternal life. You suppose that they teach the way to future blessedness, and that by diligently studying them you will attain it." We see by this—

1. That the Jews in the time of Jesus were expecting a future state.

2. The Scriptures teach the way of life, and it is our duty to study them. The Bereans are commended for searching the Scriptures (Ac 17:11); and Timothy is said from a child to have "known the holy scriptures, which are able to make us wise unto salvation," 2Ti 3:15. Early life is the proper time to search the Bible, for they who seek the Lord early shall find him.

They are they, &c. They bear witness to the Messiah. They predict his coming, and the manner of his life and death, Isa 53:1-12; Da 9:26,27, &c. **See Barnes "Lu 24:27"**.

{p} "they are" Lu 24:27 1Pe 1:10,11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 40

Verse 40. *And ye will not come*, &c. Though the Old Testament bears evidence that I am the Messiah; though you professedly search it to learn the way to life, and though my works prove it, yet you will not come to me to obtain life. From this we may learn,

1st. That life is to be obtained in Christ. He is the way, the truth, and the life, and he only can save us.

2nd. That, in order to do that, we must *come to him*—that is, must come in the way appointed, as lost sinners, and be willing to be saved by him alone.

3rd. That the reason why sinners are not saved lies in the will. "The only reason why sinners die is because they *will not come* to Christ for life and happiness: it is not because they *cannot*, but because they *will not*" (Henry).

4th. Sinners have a particular opposition to going to Jesus Christ for eternal life. They would prefer any other way, and it is commonly not until all other means are tried that they are willing to submit to him.

{q} "ye will not come to me" Joh 3:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 41

Verses 41,42. *I receive not honour*, &c. "I do not say these things because I am desirous of human applause, but to account for the fact that you do not believe on me. The reason is, that you have not the love of God in you." In this passage we see,

1st. That we should not seek for human applause. It is of very little value, and it often keeps men from the approbation of God, Joh 5:44.

2nd. They who will not believe on Jesus Christ give evidence that they have no love for God.

3rd. The reason why they do not believe on him is because they have no regard for his character, wishes, or law.

Love of God. Love to God.

In you. In your hearts. You do not love God.

{r} "honour from men" Joh 5:34 1Th 2:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 42

Verse 42. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 43

Verse 43. *I am come in my Father's name*. By the authority of God; or giving proof that I am sent by him.

If another shall come in his own name. A false teacher setting up himself, and not even pretending to have a divine commission. The Jews were much accustomed to receive and follow particular teachers. In the time of Christ they were greatly divided between the schools of Hillel and Shammai, two famous teachers.

Ye will receive. You will follow, or obey him as a teacher.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 44

Verse 44. *Which receive honour one of another*. Who are studious of praise, and live for pride, ambition, and vainglory. This desire, Jesus says, was the great reason, why they would not believe on him. They were unwilling to renounce their worldly honours, and become the followers of one so humble and unostentatious as he was. They expected a Messiah of pomp and splendour, and would not submit to one so despised and of so lowly a rank. Had the Messiah come, as they expected, with pomp and power, it would have been an honour, in their view, to follow him; as it was, they despised and rejected him. The great reason why multitudes do not believe is their attachment to human honours, or their pride, and vanity, and ambition. These are so strong, that while they continue they cannot and will not believe. They might, however, renounce these things, and then, the obstacles being removed, they would believe. Learn,

1. A man *cannot* believe the gospel while he is wholly under the influence of ambition. The two are not compatible. The religion of the gospel is humility, and a man who has not that cannot be a Christian.

2. Great numbers are deterred from being Christians by pride and ambition. Probably there is no single thing that prevents so many young men from becoming Christians as this passion. The proud and ambitious heart refuses to bow to the humiliating terms of the gospel.

3. Though while a man is under this governing principle he *cannot* believe the gospel, yet this proves nothing about his *ability* to lay that aside, and to yield to truth. *That* is another question. A child CANNOT open a trunk when he gets on the lid and attempts to raise his own weight and the cover of the trunk too; but that settles nothing about the inquiry whether he might not get off and then open it. The true question is whether a man can or cannot lay aside his ambition and pride, and about that there ought not to be any dispute. No one doubts that it may be done; and if that can be done, he can become a Christian.

Seek not the honour. The praise, the glory, the approbation of God. The honour which comes from men is their praise, flattery, commendation; the honour that comes from God is his approbation for doing his will. God alone can confer the honours of heaven—the reward of having done our duty here. That we should seek, and if we seek that, we shall come to Christ, who is the way and the life.

{t} "seek not the honour" Ro 2:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 45

Verses 45,46. *Do not think that I will accuse you*. Do not suppose that I intend to follow your example. They had accused Jesus of breaking the law of God, Joh 5:16. He says that he will not imitate their example, though he implies that he *might* accuse them.

To the Father. To God.

There is one that accuseth you. Moses might be said to accuse or reprove them. He wrote of the Messiah, clearly foretold his coming, and commanded them to hear him. As they did *not* do it, it might be said that they had disregarded his command; and as Moses was divinely commissioned and had a right to be obeyed, so his command reproved them: they were disobedient and rebellious.

He wrote of me. He wrote of the Messiah, and I am the Messiah, Ge 3:15 12:3; comp. Joh 8:56 Ge 49:10; De 18:15

{u} "there is *one*" Ro 2:12.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 46

Verse 46. No Barnes text on this verse.

{v} "he wrote of me"

Ge 3:15 22:18; De 18:15 18; Ac 26:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 47

Verse 47. *If ye believe not his writings*. If you do not credit what he has written which you profess to believe, it is not to be expected that you will believe my declarations. And from this we may learn,

1st. That many men who *profess* to believe the Bible have really no regard for it when it crosses their own views and inclinations.

2nd. It is our duty to study the Bible, that we may be established in the belief that Jesus is the Messiah.

3rd. The prophecies of the Old Testament are conclusive proofs of the truth of the Christian religion.

4th. He that rejects one part of the Bible, will, for the same reason, reject all.

5th. The Saviour acknowledged the truth of the writings of Moses, built his religion upon them, appealed to them to prove that he was the Messiah, and commanded men to search them. We have the testimony of Jesus, therefore, that the Old Testament is a revelation from God. He that rejects his testimony on *this* subject must reject his authority altogether; and it is vain for any man to profess to believe in the New Testament, or in the Lord Jesus, without also acknowledging the authority of the Old Testament and of Moses.

We have in this chapter an instance of the profound and masterly manner in which Jesus could meet and silence his enemies. There is not anywhere a more conclusive argument, or a more triumphant meeting of the charges which they had brought against him. No one can read this without being struck with his profound wisdom; and it is scarcely possible to conceive that there could be a more distinct declaration and proof that he was equal with God.

{w} "if you believe not" Lu 16:31

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 1

Verse 1. *Jesus went over*. Went to the east side of the sea. The place to which he went was Bethsaida, Lu 9:10. The account of this miracle of feeding the five thousand is recorded also in Mt 14:13-21; Mr 6:32-44 Lu 9:10-17. John has added a few circumstances omitted by the other evangelists.

{a} "after these things" Mt 14:15 Mr 6:34; Lu 9:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Because they saw his miracles*, &c. They saw that he had the power to supply their wants, and they therefore followed him. See Joh 6:26. Comp. also Mt 14:14.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 3

Verse 3. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *The passover*. **See Barnes "Mt 26:2 17".**

A feast of the Jews. This is one of the circumstances of explanation thrown in by John which show that he wrote for those who were unacquainted with Jewish customs.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 5

Verse 5. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *To prove him*. To try him; to see if he had faith, or if he would show that he believed that Jesus had power to supply them.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 7

Verse 7. No Barnes text on this verse.

{b} "Two hundred pennyworth" Nu 11:21,22; 2Ki 4:43

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 8

Verse 8. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 9

Verse 9. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 11

Verse 11. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Gather up the fragments*. This command is omitted by the other evangelists. It shows the care of Jesus that there should be no waste. Though he had power to provide any quantity of God, yet he has here taught us that the bounties of Providence are not to be squandered. In all things the Saviour set us an example of frugality, though he had an infinite supply at his disposal; he was himself economical, though he was Lord of all. If *he* was thus saving, it becomes us dependent creatures not to waste the bounties of a beneficent Providence. And it especially becomes the rich not to squander the bounties of Providence. They often *feel* that they are rich. They have enough. They have no fear of want, and they do not feel the necessity of studying economy. Yet let them remember that what they have is the gift of God—just as certainly as the loaves and fishes created by the Saviour were his gift. It is not given them to waste, nor to spend in riot, nor to be the means of injuring their health or of shortening life. It is given to sustain life, to excite gratitude, to fit for the active service of God. Everything should be applied to its appropriate end, and nothing should be squandered or lost.

{c} "When the were filled" Ne 9:25 {d} "that nothing be lost" Ne 8:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 13

Verse 13. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *That Prophet*, &c. The Messiah. The power to work the miracle, and the benevolence manifested in it, showed that he was the long- expected Messiah.

{e} "that Prophet" Ge 49:10 De 18:15-18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *When Jesus perceived*, &c. They were satisfied by the miracle that he was the Messiah. They supposed that the Messiah was to be a temporal prince. They saw that Jesus was retiring, unambitious, and indisposed to assume the ensigns of office. They thought, therefore, that they would proclaim him as the long-expected king, and constrain him to assume the character and titles of an earthly prince. Men often attempt to dictate to God, and suppose that they understand what is right better than he does. They are fond of pomp and power, but Jesus sought retirement, and evinced profound humility. Though he had *claims* to the honour and gratitude of the nation, yet he sought it not in this way; nor did it evince a proper spirit in his followers when they sought to advance him to a place of external splendour and regal authority.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 16

Verses 16-21. See this miracle of walking on the sea explained in **See Barnes "Mt 14:22, also** Mt 14:23-33. Comp. Mr 6:45-52.

{f} "And when even was now come" Mt 14:23 Mr 6:47

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 17

Verse 17. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 18

Verse 18. No Barnes text on this verse.

{g} "the sea arose"

Ps 107:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 19

Verse 19. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 20

Verse 20. No Barnes text on this verse.

{h} "It is I"
Ps 35:3 Isa 43:1,2 Re 1:17,18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Immediately*. Quickly. Before a long time. How far they were from the land we know not, but there is no evidence that there was a *miracle* in the case. The word translated *immediately* does not of necessity imply that there was no interval of time, but that there was not a long interval. Thus in Mt 13:5, in the parable of the sower, "and forthwith (the same word in Greek) they sprung up," &c., Mr 4:17 Mt 24:29; 3Jo 1:14.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *The people which stood on the other side of the sea*. That is, on the east side, or on the same side with Jesus. The country was called the region beyond or on the other side of the sea, because the writer and the people lived on the west side.

Jesus went not with his disciples. He had gone into a mountain to pray alone, Joh 6:15. Comp. Mr 6:46.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *There came other boats*. After the disciples had departed. This is added because, from what follows, it appears that they supposed that he had entered one of those boats and gone to Capernaum after his disciples had departed.

From Tiberias. This town stood on the western borders of the lake, not far from where the miracle had been wrought. It was so called in honour of the Emperor Tiberius. It was built by Herod Antipas, and was made by him the capital of Galilee. The city afterward became a celebrated seat of Jewish learning. It is now called *Tabaria*, and is a considerable place. It is occupied chiefly by Turks, and is very hot and unhealthy. Mr. Fisk, an American missionary, was at Tiberias (Tabaria) in 1823. The old town is surrounded by a wall, but within it is very ruinous, and the plain for a mile or two south is strewed with ruins. The Jordan, where it issues from the lake, was so shallow that cattle and asses forded it easily. Mr. Fisk was shown a house called the house of Peter, which is used as the Greek Catholic church, and is the only church in the place. The number of Christian families is thirty or forty, all Greek Catholics. There were two sects of Jews, each of whom had a synagogue. The Jewish population was estimated at about one thousand. On the 1st of January, 1837, Tiberias was destroyed by an earthquake. Dr. Thomson (*The Land and the Book*, vol. it. p. 76, 77) says of this city: \-

"Ever since the destruction of Jerusalem, it has been
chiefly celebrated in connection with the Jews, and

was for a long time the chief seat of rabbinical
learning. It is still one of their four holy cities.
Among the Christians it also early rose to
distinction, and the old church, built upon the spot
where our Lord gave his last charge to Peter, is a
choice bit of ecclesiastical antiquity. The present
city is situated on the shore, at the north-east
corner of this small plain. The walls inclose an
irregular parallelogram, about 100 rods from north
to south, and in breadth not more than 40.
They were strengthened by ten round towers on the west,
five on the north, and eight on the south. There were
also two or three towers along the shore to protect the
city from attack by sea. Not much more than one-half of
this small area is occupied by buildings of any kind,
and the north end, which is a rocky hill, has nothing
but the ruins of the old palace. The earthquake of
1837 prostrated a large part of the walls, and they
have not yet been repaired, and perhaps never will be.
There is no town in Syria so utterly filthy as Tiberias,
or so little to be desired as a residence. Being 600 feet
below the level of the ocean, and overhung on the west
by a high mountain, which effectually shuts off the
Mediterranean breezes, it is fearfully hot in summer.
The last time I was encamped at the Baths the
thermometer stood at 100 at midnight, and a steam
went up from the surface of the lake as from some
huge smouldering volcano. Of course it swarms with
all sorts of vermin. What can induce human beings
to settle down in such a place? And yet some two
thousand of our race make it their chosen abode.
They are chiefly Jews, attracted hither either to
cleanse their leprous bodies in her baths, or to
purify their unclean spirits by contact with her
traditionary and ceremonial holiness."
{i} "nigh unto the place" Joh 6:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Took shipping*. Went into the boats.

Came to Capernaum. This was the ordinary place of the residence of Jesus, and they therefore expected to find him there.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 25

Verse 25. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Ye seek me, not because*, &c. The miracles which Jesus wrought were proofs that he came from God. To seek him because they had seen them, and were convinced by them that he was the Messiah, would have been proper; but to follow him simply because their wants were supplied was mere selfishness of a gross kind. Yet, alas! many seek religion from no better motive than this. They suppose that it will add to their earthly happiness, or they seek *only* to escape from suffering or from the convictions of conscience, or they seek for heaven *only* as a place of enjoyment, and regard religion as valuable only for this. All this is mere selfishness. Religion does not forbid our regarding our own happiness, or seeking it in any proper way; but when this is the only or the prevailing motive, it is evident that we have never yet sought God aright. We are aiming at the loaves and fishes, and not at the honour of God and the good of his kingdom; and if this is the only or the main motive of our entering the church, we cannot be Christians.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *Labour not*. This does not mean that we are to make *no effort* for the supply of our wants (comp. 1Ti 5:1 2Th 3:10), but that we are not to manifest anxiety, we are not to make this the main or supreme object of our desire. **See Barnes "Mt 6:25"**.

The meat that perisheth. The food for the supply of your natural wants. It perishes. The strength you derive from it is soon exhausted, and your wasted powers need to be reinvigorated.

That meat which endureth. The supply of your spiritual wants; that which supports, and nourishes, and strengthens the soul; the doctrines of the gospel, that are to a weak and guilty soul what needful food is to the weary and decaying body.

To everlastingly life. The strength derived from the doctrines of the gospel is not exhausted. It endures without wasting away. It nourishes the soul to everlasting life. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint," Isa 40:31.

Him hath God the Father sealed. To *seal* is to confirm or approve as ours. This is done when we set our seal to a compact, or deed, or testament, by which we ratify it as *our act*. So God the Father, by the *miracles* which had been wrought by Jesus, had shown that he had sent him, that he approved his doctrines, and ratified his works. The *miracles* were to his doctrine what a *seal* is to a written instrument. **See Barnes "Joh 3:33"**.

{1} "Labour" or, "Work not" {k} "that meat which endureth" Jer 15:16 Joh 4:14; Joh 6:54 58

{l} "him hath God" Ps 2:7 40:7; Isa 42:1 Joh 8:18; Ac 2:22 2Pe 1:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *What shall we do, that we might work the world's of God?* That is, such things as God will approve. This was the earnest inquiry of men who were seeking to be saved. They had crossed the Sea of Tiberias to seek him; they supposed him to be the Messiah, and they sincerely desired to be taught the way of life; yet it is observable that they expected to find that way as other sinners commonly do—by *their works*. The idea of doing something. to merit salvation is one of the last that the sinner ever surrenders.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *This is the work of God*. This is the thing that will be acceptable to God, or which you are to do in order to be saved. Jesus did not tell them they had *nothing to do*, or that they were to sit down and wait, but that there was a work to perform, and that was a duty that was imperative. It was to believe on the Messiah. This is the work which sinners are to do; and doing this they will be saved, for Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth, Ro 10:4.

{m} "This is the work of God" 1Jo 3:23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *What sign showest thou*? On the word *sign* compare **See Barnes "Is 7:14".**

What miracle dost thou work to prove that thou art the Messiah? They had just seen the miracle of the loaves in the desert, which was sufficient to show that he was the Messiah, and it would seem from the preceding narrative that those who crossed the lake to see him supposed that he was the Christ. It seems wonderful that they should so soon ask for farther evidence that he was sent from God; but it is not improbable that this question was put by *other Jews*, rulers of the synagogue, who happened to be present, and who had not witnessed his miracles. Those men were continually asking for *signs* and proofs that he was the Messiah. See Mt 12:38,39; Mr 8:11 Lu 9:29.

As Jesus claimed the right of teaching them, and as it was manifest that he would teach them differently from what *they* supposed Moses to teach, it was natural to ask him by what authority he claimed the right to be heard.

{n} "sign?" Mt 12:38 1Co 1:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *Our fathers*. The Jews who were led by Moses through the wilderness.

Did eat manna. This was the name given by the Jews to the food which was furnished to them by God in their journey. It means literally, "What is this?" and was the question which they asked

when they first saw it, Ex 16:14,15. It was small like frost, and of the size of coriander-seed, and had a sweetish taste like honey. It fell in great quantities, and was regarded by the Jews as proof of a continued miracle during forty years, and was incontestable evidence of the interposition of God in favour of their fathers. The manna which is sold in the shops of druggists is a different substance from this. It is obtained from the bark of certain trees in Armenia, Georgia, Persia, and Arabia. It is procured, as resin is, by making an incision in the bark, and it flows out or distils from the tree.

As it is written. The substance of this is written in Ps 78:24,25.

He gave them. This was regarded as a miraculous interference in their behalf, and an attestation of the divine mission of Moses, and hence they said familiarly that *Moses* gave it to them.

Bread from heaven. The word *heaven*, in the Scriptures, denotes often the region of the air, the atmosphere, or that region in which the clouds are. See Mt 16:3. "The sky (heaven) is red and lowering." Also Mt 3:16 Lu 4:15, 5:18.

The Jews, as appears from their writings (see Lightfoot), expected that the Messiah would provide his followers with plenty of delicious food; and as *Moses* had provided for the Jews in the wilderness, so they supposed that Christ would make provision for the temporal wants of his friends. This was the sign, probably, which they were now desirous of seeing.

{q} "my Father" Ga 4:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *Moses gave you not that bread from heaven*. This might be translated, "Moses gave you not *the* bread of heaven." The word "that," which makes some difference in the sense, is not necessary to express the meaning of the original. It does not appear that Jesus intended to call in question the fact that their fathers were fed by the instrumentality of Moses, but to state that he did not give them the true bread that was adapted to the wants of the *soul*. He fed the body, although his food did not keep the body alive (Joh 6:59), but he did not give that which would preserve the soul from death. God gave, in his Son Jesus, the true bread from heaven which was fitted to man, and of far more value than any supply of their temporal wants, He tells them, therefore, that they are not to seek from him any such supply of their temporal wants as they had supposed. A better gift had been furnished in his being given for the life of the world.

My father giveth you. In the gospel; in the gift of his Son.

The true bread. The *true* or *real* support which is needed to keep the soul from death. It is not false, deceitful, or perishing. Christ is called *bread*, because, as bread supports life, so his doctrine supports, preserves, and saves the soul from death. He is the *true* support, not only in opposition to the mere supply of *temporal* wants such as Moses furnished, but also in opposition to all false religion which deceives and destroys the soul.

{q} "my Father" Ga 4:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *The bread of God*. The means of support which God furnishes. That which, in his view, in needful for man.

Is he, &c. Is the Messiah who has come from heaven.

And giveth life, &c. **See Barnes "Joh 1:4".**

{r} "bread" Joh 6:48,58

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *I am the bread of life*. I am the support of spiritual life; or my doctrines will give life and peace to the soul.

Shall never hunger. **See Barnes "Joh 4:14".**

{s} "he that cometh to me" Re 7:16 {t} "he that believeth on me" Joh 4:14 7:38

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *But I said unto you*. This he said, not in so many words, but in substance, in Joh 6:26. Though they saw him, and had full proof of his divine mission, yet they did not believe. Jesus then proceeds to state that, although they did not believe on him, yet his work would not be in vain, for others would come to him and be saved.

{u} "That ye also have seen me" Joh 6:64

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *All*. The original word is in the neuter gender, but it is used, doubtless, for the masculine, or perhaps refers to his people considered as a *mass* or *body*, and means that every individual that the Father had given him should come to him.

The Father giveth me. We here learn that those who come to Christ, and who will be saved, are *given* to him by God.

1st. God promised him that he should see of the travail of his soul—that is, "the fruit of his wearisome toil" (Lowth), and should be satisfied, Isa 53:11.

2nd. All men are sinners, and none have any claim to mercy, and he may therefore bestow salvation on whom he pleases.

3rd. All men of themselves are disposed to reject the gospel, Joh 5:40.

4th. God enables those who do believe to do it. He draws them to him by his Word and Spirit; he opens their hearts to understand the Scriptures (Ac 16:14); and he grants to them repentance, Ac 11:18; 2Ti 2:25.

5th. All those who become Christians may therefore be said to be *given* to Jesus as the reward of his sufferings, for his death was the price by which they were redeemed. Paul says (Eph 1:4,5) that, "he hath chosen us in him (that is, in Christ) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will."

Shall come to me. This is an expression denoting that they would *believe* on him. To come to one implies our need of help, our confidence that he can aid us, and our readiness to trust to him. The sinner comes to Jesus feeling that he is poor, and needy, and wretched, and casts himself on his mercy, believing that he alone can save him. This expression also proves that men are not *compelled* to believe on Christ. Though they who believe are *given* to him, and though his Spirit works in them faith and repentance, yet they are made willing in the day of his power, Ps 110:3. No man is compelled to go to heaven against his will, and no man is compelled to go to hell against his will. The Spirit of God inclines the will of one, and he comes freely as a moral agent. The other chooses the way to death; and, though God is constantly using means to save him, yet he prefers the path that leads down to woe.

Him that cometh. Every one that comes—that is, every one that comes in a proper manner, feeling that he is a lost and ruined sinner. This invitation is wide, and full, and free. It shows the unbounded mercy of God; and it shows, also, that the reason, and the only reason, why men are not saved, is that they will not come to Christ. Of any sinner it may be said that if he had been willing to come to Christ he *might* have come and been saved. As he chooses not to come, he cannot blame God because he saves others who are willing, no matter from what cause, and who thus are made partakers of everlasting life.

In no wise. In no manner, or at no time. The original is simply, "I will not cast out."

Cast out. Reject, or refuse to save. This expression does not refer to the doctrine of perseverance of the saints, but to the fact that Jesus will not *reject* or *refuse* any sinner who comes to him.

{w} "him who comes" Ps 102:17 Isa 1:18, 55:7 Mt 11:28; Lu 23:42,43

1Ti 1:15,16; Re 22:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *For I came down*, &c. This verse shows that he came for a specific purpose, which he states in the next verse, and means that, as he came to do his Father's will, he would be faithful to the trust. Though his hearers should reject him, yet the will of God would be accomplished in the salvation of some who should come to him.

Mine own will. **See Barnes "Joh 5:30".**

{x} "but the will" Ps 40:7 Joh 5:30

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *Father's will*. His purpose; desire; intention. As this is the Father's will, and Jesus came to execute his will, we have the highest security that it will be done. God's will is always right, and he has power to execute it. Jesus was always faithful, and all power was given to him in heaven and on earth, and he will therefore most certainly accomplish the will of God.

Of all which. That is, of every one who believes on him, or of all who become Christians. See Joh 6:37.

I should lose nothing. Literally, "I should not *destroy*." He affirms here that he will keep it to life eternal; that, though the Christian will die, and his body return to corruption, yet he will not be *destroyed*. The Redeemer will watch over him, though in his grave, and keep him to the resurrection of the just. This is affirmed of all who are given to him by the Father; or, as in the next verse, "*Every one* that believeth on him shall have everlasting life."

At the last day. At the day of judgment. The Jews supposed that the righteous would be raised up at the appearing of the Messiah. See Lightfoot. Jesus directs them to a *future* resurrection, and declares to them that they will be raised at the *last* day—the day of judgment. It is also supposed and affirmed by some Jewish writers that they did not believe that the *wicked* would be raised. Hence, to speak of being raised up in the last day was the some as to say that one was righteous, or it was spoken of as the peculiar privilege of the righteous. In accordance with this, Paul says, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead," Php 3:11.

{y} "Father's will" Mt 18:14 Joh 10:28, 17:12 18:9; 2Ti 2:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 40

Verse 40. *Everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on him*. It was not sufficient to see him and hear him, but it was necessary, also, to *believe on him*. Many of the Jews had seen him, but few believed on him. Jesus had said in the previous verse that all that the Father *had given him* should be saved. But he never left a doctrine so that men *must* misunderstand it. Lest it should be supposed that if a man was given to him this was all that was needful, and lest anyone should say, "If I am to be saved I shall be, and my efforts will be useless," he states here that it is necessary that a man should *believe* on him. This would be the *evidence* that he was given to God, and this would be evidence conclusive that he would be saved. If this explanation of the Saviour had always been attended to, the doctrine of election would not have been abused as it has been. Sinners would not sit down in unconcern, saying that if they are given to Christ all will be well. They would have arisen like the prodigal, and would have gone to God; and, having *believed* on the Saviour, they would then have had evidence that they were given to him—the evidence resulting from an humble, penitent, believing heart—and then they might rejoice in the assurance that Jesus would lose none that were given to him, but would raise it up at the last day. All the doctrines of Jesus, as *he* preached them, are safe, and pure, and consistent; as *men* preach them, they are, unhappily, often inconsistent and open to objection, and are either fitted to produce despair on the one hand, or presumptuous self-confidence on the other. Jesus teaches men to strive to enter heaven, as if they could do the work themselves; and yet to depend on the help of God, and give the glory to him, as if he had done it all.

{z} "him that sent me" Joh 6:47,54, 3:15,16

{a} "I will raise him up" Joh 11:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 41

Verse 41. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 42

Verse 42. No Barnes text on this verse.
{b} "Is not this"
Mt 13:55 Mr 6:3; Lu 4:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 43

Verse 43. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 44

Verse 44. *No man can come to me*. This was spoken by Jesus to reprove their murmurings—"Murmur not among yourselves." They objected to his doctrine, or murmured against it, because he claimed to be greater than Moses, and because they supposed him to be a mere man, and that what he said was impossible. Jesus does not deny that these things appeared difficult, and hence he said that if any man believed, it was proof that God had inclined him. It was not to be expected that *of themselves* they would embrace the doctrine. If any man believed, it would be because he had been influenced by God. When we inquire what the reasons were why they did not believe, they appear to have been—

1st. Their improper regard for Moses, as if no one could be superior to him.

2nd. Their unwillingness to believe that Jesus, whom they knew to be the reputed son of a carpenter, should be superior to Moses.

3rd. The difficulty was explained by Jesus (Joh 5:40) as consisting in the opposition of their will; and (Joh 5:44) when he said that their love of *honour* prevented their believing on him. The difficulty in the case was not, therefore, a want of natural faculties, or of power to do their duty, but erroneous opinions, pride, obstinacy, self-conceit, and a deep-felt contempt for Jesus. The word "*cannot*" is often used to denote a strong and violent opposition of the *will*. Thus we say a man is so great a liar that he cannot speak the truth, or he is so profane that he cannot but swear. We mean by it that he is so wicked that while he has that disposition the other effects will follow, but we do not mean to say that he could not break off from the habit. Thus it is said (Ge 37:4) of the brethren

of Joseph that they *hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him*. Thus (Mt 12:34), "How can, ye, being evil, speak good things?" See Lu 14:33 1Sa 16:2.

Come to me. The same as believe on me.

Draw him. This word is used here, evidently, to denote such an influence from God as to secure the result, or as to incline the mind to believe; yet the manner in which this is done is not determined by the use of the word. It is used in the New Testament six times. Once it is applied to a compulsory drawing of Paul and Silas to the market-place, Ac 16:19. Twice it is used to denote the drawing of a net, Joh 21:6,11. Once to the drawing of a sword (Joh 18:10); and once in a sense similar to its use here (Joh 12:32): "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will *draw* all men unto me." What is its meaning here must be determined by the facts about the sinner's conversion. **See Barnes "Joh 6:40".**

In the conversion of the sinner God enlightens the mind (Joh 6:45), he inclines the will (Ps 110:3), and he influences the soul by motives, by just views of his law, by his love, his commands, and his threatenings; by a desire of happiness, and a consciousness of danger; by the Holy Spirit applying truth to the mind, and urging him to yield himself to the Saviour. So that, while God inclines him, and will have all the glory, man yields without compulsion; the obstacles are removed, and he becomes a willing servant of God.

{c} "draw him" So 1:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 45

Verse 45. *In the prophets*. Isa 54:13. A similar sentiment is found in Mic 4:1-4 Jer 31:34; but by the *prophets*, here, is meant *the book of the prophets*, and it is probable that Jesus had reference only to the place in Isaiah, as this was the usual way of quoting the prophets.

Shall be all taught of God. This explains the preceding verse. It is by the *teaching* of his Word and Spirit that men are *drawn* to God. This shows that it is not *compulsory*, and that there is no obstacle in the way but a strong voluntary ignorance and unwillingness.

{d} "in the prophets" Isa 54:13 Jer 31:34; Mic 4:2

{e} "Every man" Mt 11:27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 46

Verse 46. *Not that any man hath seen the Father*. Jesus added this, evidently, to guard against mistake. He had said that all who came to him were *taught* of God. The *teacher* was commonly *seen* and *heard* by the pupil; but, lest it should be supposed that he meant to say that a man to come to him must *see* and *hear* God, visibly and audibly, he adds that he did not intend to affirm this. It was still true that no man had seen God at any time. They were not, therefore, to *expect* to see God, and his words were not to be *perverted* as if he meant to teach that.

Save he which is of God. Jesus here evidently refers to himself as the Son of God. He had just said that no *man* had seen the Father. When he affirms that *he* has seen the Father, it implies that

he is more than man. He is the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, Joh 1:18; the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, Heb 1:3; God over all, blessed for ever, Re 9:5. By his being *of God* is meant that he is the only-begotten Son of God, and sent as the Messiah into the world.

Hath seen. Hath intimately known or perceived him. He knows his nature, character, plans. This is a claim to knowledge superior to what man possesses, and it cannot be understood except by supposing that Jesus is equal with God.

{f} "Not that any" Joh 5:37 {g} "save he which is of the God" Lu 10:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 47

Verse 47. No Barnes text on this verse.

{h} "He that believeth"

Joh 6:40

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 48

Verse 48. *I am that bread of life*. My doctrines and the benefits of my mediation are that real support of spiritual life of which the manna in the wilderness was the faint emblem. See Joh 6:32 33.

{i} "I am that bread" Joh 6:33,35,51

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 49

Verse 49. *Your fathers did eat manna*. There was a real miracle wrought in their behalf; there was a perpetual interposition of God which showed that they were his chosen people.

And are dead. The bread which they ate could not save them from death. Though God interfered in their behalf, yet they died. We may learn,

1st. That that is not the most valuable of God's gifts which merely satisfies the temporal wants.

2nd. That the most distinguished temporal blessings will not save from death. Wealth, friends, food, raiment, will not preserve life.

3rd. There is need of something better than mere earthly blessings; there is need of that bread which cometh down from heaven, and which giveth life to the world.

{k} "and are dead" Zec 1:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 50

Verse 50. No Barnes text on this verse.
{l} "not die"
Joh 3:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 51

Verse 51. *The bread that I will give is my flesh*. That is, his body would be offered as a sacrifice for sin, agreeably to his declaration when he instituted the Supper: "This is my body which is broken for you," 1Co 11:24.

Life of the world. That sinners might, by his atoning sacrifice, be recovered from spiritual death, and be brought to eternal life. The use of the word *world* here shows that the sacrifice of Christ was full, free, ample, and designed for all men, as it is said in 1Jo 2:2, "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." In this verse Jesus introduces the subject of his *death* and atonement. It may be remarked that in the language which he used the transition from *bread* to his flesh would appear more easy than it does in our language. The same word which in Hebrew means *bread*, in the Syriac and Arabic means also *flesh*.

{m} "my flesh" He 10:5,10,20
{n} "the life of the world" Joh 3:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 52

Verse 52. No Barnes text on this verse.
{o} "saying, How"
Joh 3:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 53

Verses 53-55. In these verses Jesus repeats what he had in substance said before.

Except ye eat the flesh, &c. He did not mean that this should be understood *literally*, for it was never done, and it is absurd to suppose that it was intended to be so understood. Nothing can *possibly* be more absurd than to suppose that when he instituted the Supper, and gave the bread and wine to his disciples, they literally ate his flesh and drank his blood. Who *can* believe this? There he stood, a living man—his body yet alive, his blood flowing in his veins; and how can it be believed that this body was eaten and this blood drunk? Yet this absurdity must be held by those who hold that the bread and wine at the communion are "changed into the body, blood, and *divinity* of our Lord." So it is taught in the decrees of the Council of Trent; and to such absurdities are men driven when they depart from the simple meaning of the Scriptures and from common sense. It may be added that if the bread and wine used in the Lord's Supper were not changed into his literal body and blood when it was first instituted, they have never been since. The Lord Jesus would institute

it just as he meant it should be observed, and there is nothing *now* in that ordinance which there was not when the Saviour first appointed it. His body was offered on the cross, and was raised up from the dead and received into heaven. Besides, there is no evidence that he had any reference in this passage to the Lord's Supper. That was not yet instituted, and in that there was no literal eating of his flesh and drinking of his blood. The plain meaning of the passage is, that by his bloody death—his body and his blood offered in sacrifice for sin—he would procure pardon and life for man; that they who partook of that, or had an interest in that, should obtain eternal life. He uses the figure of eating and drinking because that was the subject of discourse; because the Jews prided themselves much on the fact that their fathers had eaten *manna*; and because, as he had said that he was the *bread* of life, it was natural and easy, especially in the language which he used, to *carry out the figure*, and say that bread must be eaten in order to be of any avail in supporting and saving men. To eat and to drink, among the Jews, was also expressive of *sharing in* or *partaking of* the privileges of friendship. The happiness of heaven and all spiritual blessings are often represented under this image, Mt 8:11 26:29; Lu 14:15, &c.

{p} "Except ye eat" Mt 26:26,28

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 54

Verse 54. No Barnes text on this verse.

{q} "eateth"

Joh 6:40

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 55

Verse 55. *Is meat indeed*. Is truly food. My doctrine is truly that which will give life to the soul.

{r} "meat indeed" Ps 4:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 56

Verse 56. *Dwelleth in me*. Is truly and intimately connected with me. To dwell or abide in him is to remain in the belief of his doctrine, and in the participation of the benefits of his death. Comp. Joh 15:1-6 17:21-23.

I in him. Jesus dwells in believers by his Spirit and doctrine. When his Spirit is given them to sanctify them; when his temper, his meekness, his humility, and his love pervade their hearts; when his doctrine is received by them and influences their life, and when they are supported by the consolations of the gospel, it may be said that he *abides* or dwells in them.

{t} "dwelleth" Joh 15:4 1Jo 3:24, 4:15,16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 57

Verse 57. *I live by the Father*. **See Barnes "Joh 5:26"**.
{u} "so he that eateth me" 1Co 15:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 58

Verse 58. *This is that bread*, &c. This is *the* true bread that came down. The word "that" should not be in the translation.

Shall live for ever. Not on the earth, but in the enjoyments of a better world.
{v} "not as your fathers" Joh 6:49-51.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 59

Verse 59. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 60

Verse 60. *Many of his disciples*. The word *disciple* means *learner*. It was applied to the followers of Christ because they were taught by him. It does not imply, of necessity, that those to whom it was given were real Christians, but simply that they were under his teaching, and were professed learners in his school. See Mt 17:16"; Mr 2:18 Joh 9:28; Mt 10:24.

It is doubtless used in this sense here. It is, however, often applied to those who are real Christians.

This is an hard saying. The word *hard* here means *offensive, disagreeable* —that which they could not bear. Some have understood it to mean "difficult to be understood," but this meaning does not suit the connection. The doctrine which he delivered was opposed to their prejudices; it seemed to be absurd, and they therefore rejected it.

Saying. Rather *doctrine* or *speech*—Greek, *logos*. It does not refer to any *particular part* of the discourse, but includes the whole.

Who can hear it? That is, who can hear it *patiently*—who can stay and listen to such doctrine or believe it. The effect of this is stated in Joh 6:66. The doctrines which Jesus taught that were so offensive appear to have been,

1st. That he was superior to Moses.

2nd. That God would save all that he had chosen, and those only.

3rd. That he said he was the bread that came from heaven.

4th. That it was necessary to partake of that; or that it was necessary that an *atonement* should be made, and that they should be saved by that. These doctrines have always been among the most

offensive that men have been called on to believe, and many, rather than trust in them, have chosen to draw back to perdition.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 61

Verse 61. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 62

Verse 62. What *and if*, &c. Jesus does not say that those who were then present would see him ascend, but he implies that he would ascend. They had taken offence because he said he came down from heaven. Instead of explaining that away, he proceeds to state another doctrine quite as offensive to them—that he would reascend to heaven. The apostles only were present at his ascension, Ac 1:9. As Jesus was to ascend to heaven, it was clear that he could not have intended literally that they should eat his flesh.

{w} "ascend" Joh 3:13 Mr 16:19; Eph 4:8-10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 63

Verse 63. *It is the Spirit that quickeneth*. These words have been understood in different ways. The word "Spirit," here, evidently does not refer to the Holy Ghost, for he adds, "The words that I speak unto you, they are *spirit*." He refers here, probably, to the doctrine which he had been teaching in opposition to their notions and desires. "*My* doctrine is spiritual; it is fitted to quicken and nourish the soul. It is from heaven. Your doctrine or your views are *earthly*, and may be called *flesh*, or fleshly, as pertaining only to the support of the body. You place a great value on the doctrine that Moses fed the *body*; yet that did not permanently profit, for your fathers are dead. You seek also food from me, but your views and desires are gross and earthly."

Quickeneth. Gives life. **See Barnes "Joh 5:21"**.

The flesh. Your carnal views and desires, and the *literal* understanding of my doctrine. By this Jesus shows them that he did not intend that his words should be taken literally.

Profiteth nothing. Would not avail to the *real* wants of man. The bread that Moses gave, the food which you seek, would not be of real value to man's highest wants.

They *are spirit*. They are spiritual. They are not to be understood *literally*, as if you were really to eat my flesh, but they are to be understood as denoting the need of that provision for the soul which God has made by my coming into the world.

Are life. Are fitted to produce or give life to the soul dead in sins.

{x} "It is the Spirit" 2Co 3:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 64

Verse 64. *Jesus knew from the beginning*, &c. As this implied a knowledge of the heart, and of the secret principles and motives of men, it shows that he must have been omniscient.

{y} "knew" Ro 8:29 2Ti 2:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 65

Verse 65. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 66

Verse 66. *Many of his disciples*. Many who had followed him professedly as his disciples and as desirous of learning of him. **See Barnes "Joh 6:60"**.

Went back. Turned away from him and left him. From this we may learn,

1st. Not to wonder at the apostasy of many who profess to be followers of Christ. Many are induced to become his professed followers by the prospect of some temporal benefit, or under some public excitement, as these were; and when that temporal benefit is not obtained, or that excitement is over, they fall away.

2nd. Many may be expected to be offended by the doctrines of the gospel. Having no spirituality of mind, and really understanding nothing of the gospel, they may be expected to take offence and turn back. The best way to understand the doctrines of the Bible is to be a sincere Christian, and aim to do the will of God, Joh 7:17.

3rd. We should examine ourselves. We should honestly inquire whether we have been led to make a profession of religion by the hope of any temporal advantage, by any selfish principle, or by mere excited animal feeling. If we have it will profit us nothing, and we shall either *fall away* of ourselves, or be cast away in the great day of judgment.

{a} "went" Zep 1:6 Lu 9:62; He 10:38

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 67

Verse 67. *The twelve*. The twelve apostles.

Will ye also go away? Many apostatized, and it was natural now for Jesus to submit the question to the twelve. "Will *you*, whom I have chosen, on whom I have bestowed the apostleship, and who have seen the evidence of my Messiahship, will you now also leave me?" This was the time to try them; and it is always a time to try *real* Christians when many professed disciples become cold and turn back; and *then* we may suppose Jesus addressing *us*, and saying, Will ye ALSO go away? Observe here, it was submitted to their choice. God compels none to remain with him against their

will, and the question in such trying times is submitted to every man whether he will or will not go away.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 68

Verse 68. *Simon Peter answered him*. With characteristic ardour and promptness. Peter was probably one of the oldest of the apostles, and it was his character to be *first* and most ardent in his professions.

To whom shall we go? This implied their firm conviction that Jesus was the Messiah, and that he alone was able to save them. It is one of Peter's noble confessions—the instinctive promptings of a pious heart and of ardent love. There was no one else who could teach them. The Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the scribes were corrupt, and unable to guide them aright; and, though the doctrines of Jesus were mysterious, yet they were the only doctrines that could instruct and save them.

Thou hast, &c. The meaning of this is, *thou teachest the doctrines which lead to eternal life*. And from this we may learn,

1st. That we are to expect that some of the doctrines of the Bible will be mysterious.

2nd. That, though they are difficult to be understood, yet we should not therefore reject them.

3rd. That nothing would be *gained* by rejecting them. The atheist, the infidel—nay, the philosopher, believes, or professes to believe, propositions quite as mysterious as any in the Bible.

4th. That poor, lost, sinful man has nowhere else to go but to Jesus. He is the way, the truth, and the life, and if the sinner betakes himself to any other way he will wander and die.

5th. We should, therefore, on no account forsake the teachings of the Son of God. The words that he speaks are spirit and are life.

{b} "the words of eternal" Ac 5:20 7:38

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 69

Verse 69. *We are sure*, &c. See a similar confession of Peter in Mt 16:16, and **See Barnes "Mt 16:16"**.

Peter says *we* are sure, in the name of the whole of the apostles. Jesus immediately cautions him, as he did on other occasions, not to be too confident, for *one* of them actually had no such feelings, but was a traitor.

{c} "we believe" Mt 16:16 Joh 1:29, 11:27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 70

Verse 70. *Have not I chosen you twelve*? There is much emphasis in these words. Have not *I*—I, the Saviour, the Messiah, chosen you in mercy and in love, and therefore it will be a greater

sin to betray me? *Chosen*. Chosen to the apostolic office; conferred on you marks of peculiar favour, and treason is therefore the greater sin. *You twelve*. So small a number. Out of such a multitude as follow for the loaves and fishes, it is to be expected there should be apostates; but when the number is so small, chosen in such a manner, then it becomes every one, however confident he. may be, to be on his guard and examine his heart.

Is a devil. Has the spirit, the envy, the malice, and the treasonable designs of a devil. The word *devil* here is used in the sense of an *enemy*, or one hostile to him.

{d} "a devil" Joh 13:27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 6 - Verse 71

Verse 71. *He spake of Judas*, &c. There is no evidence that Jesus *designated* Judas so that the disciples *then* understood that it was he. It does not appear that the apostles even suspected Judas, as they continued to treat him afterward with the same confidence, for he carried the *bag*, or the purse containing their little property (Joh 12:6 13:29); and at the table, when Jesus said that one of them would betray him, the rest did not suspect Judas until Jesus pointed him out particularly, Joh 13:26. Jesus spoke of *one*, to put them on their guard, to check their confidence, and to lead them to self-examination. So in every church, or company of professing Christians, we may know that it is probable that there may be some one or more deceived; but we may not know who it may be, and should therefore inquire prayerfully and honestly, "Lord, is it *I*?"

Should betray. Would betray. If it be asked why Jesus called a man to be an apostle who he knew had no love for him, who would betray him, and who had from the beginning the spirit of a "devil," we may reply,

1st. It was that Judas might be an important witness for the innocence of Jesus, and for the fact that he was not an impostor. Judas was with him more than three years. He was treated with the same confidence as the others, and in some respects even with superior confidence, as he had "the bag" (Joh 12:6), or was the treasurer. He saw the Saviour in public and in private, heard his public discourses and his private conversation, and he would have been just the witness which the high-priests and Pharisees would have desired, if he had known any reason why he should be condemned. Yet he alleged nothing against him. Though he betrayed him, yet he afterward said that he was innocent, and, under the convictions of conscience, committed suicide. If Judas had known anything *against* the Saviour he would have alleged it. If he had known that he was an impostor, and had alleged it, he would have saved his own life and been rewarded. If Jesus was an impostor, he *ought* to have made it known, and to have been rewarded for it.

2nd. It *may* have been, also, with a foresight of the necessity of having such a man among his disciples, in order that his own death might be brought about in the manner in which it was predicted. There were several prophecies which would have been unfulfilled had there been no such man among the apostles.

3rd. It showed the knowledge which the Saviour had of the human heart, that he could thus discern character before it was developed, and was able so distinctly to predict that he would betray him.

4th. We may add, what benevolence did the Saviour evince—what patience and forbearance-that he had with him for more than three years a man who he knew hated him at heart, and who would yet betray him to be put to death on a cross, and that during all that time he treated him with the utmost kindness!

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 1

Verse 1. *After these things*. After the transactions which are recorded in the last chapters had taken place, and after the offence he had given the Jews. See Joh 5:18.

Jesus walked. Or Jesus *lived*, or *taught*. He travelled around Galilee teaching.

In Jewry. In Judea, the southern division of Palestine. Comp. **See Barnes on "Joh 4:3"**.

The Jews sought. That is, the rulers of the Jews. It does not appear that the common people ever attempted to take his life.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *The Jews' feast of tabernacles*. Or the feast of *tents*. This feast was celebrated on the fifteenth day of the month Tisri, answering to the last half of our month September and the first half of October, Nu 29:12 De 16:13-15. It was so called from the *tents* or tabernacles which on that occasion were erected in and about Jerusalem, and was designed to commemorate their dwelling in *tents* in the wilderness, Ne 8:16-18. During the continuance of this feast they dwelt in booths or tents, as their fathers did in the wilderness, Le 23:42,43. The feast was continued *eight* days, and the eighth or last day was the most distinguished, and was called the *great day* of the feast, Joh 7:37 Nu 29:35. The Jews on this occasion not only dwelt in *booths*, but they carried about the branches of palms, willows, and other trees which bore a thick foliage, and also branches of the olive-tree, myrtle, &c., Ne 8:15. Many sacrifices were offered on this occasion (Nu 29:12-39 De 16:14-16), and it was a time of general joy. It is called by Josephus and Philo the *greatest* feast, and was one of the three feasts which every male among the Jews was obliged to attend.

{a} "feast of Tabernacles" Le 23:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *His brethren*. **See Barnes "Mt 12:47"**.

Thy disciples. The disciples which he had made when he was before in Judea, Joh 4:1-3.

The works. The miracles.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 4

Verses 4,5. *For there is no man*, &c. The brethren of Jesus supposed that he was influenced as others are. As it is a common thing among men to seek popularity, so they supposed that he would also seek it; and as a great multitude would be assembled at Jerusalem at this feast, they supposed it would be a favourable time to make himself known. What follows shows that this was said, probably, not in sincerity, but in derision; and to the other sufferings of our Lord was to be added, what is so common to Christians, *derision* from his relatives and friends on account of his pretensions. If our Saviour was derided, we also may expect to be by our relatives; and, having his example, we should be content to bear it.

If thou do, &c. It appears from this that they did not really believe that he wrought miracles; or, if they *did* believe it, they did not suppose that he was the Christ. Yet it seems hardly credible that they could suppose that his miracles were *real*, and yet not admit that he was the Messiah. Besides, there is no evidence that these relatives had been present at any of his miracles, and all that they knew of them might have been from report. **See Barnes "Mr 3:21".**

On the word *brethren* in Joh 7:5, **See Barnes "Mt 13:55"**

See Barnes "Ga 1:19".

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 5

Verse 5. No Barnes text on this verse.

{b} "his brethren" Mr 3:21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *My time*, &c. The proper time for my going up to the feast. We know not *why* it was not yet a proper time for him to go. It might be because if he went *then*, in their company, while multitudes were going, it would have too much the appearance of parade and ostentation; it might excite too much notice, and be more likely to expose him to the envy and opposition of the rulers.

Your time, &c. It makes no difference to you when you go up. Your going will excite no tumult or opposition; it will not attract attention, and will not endanger your lives. Jesus therefore chose to go up more privately, and to remain until the multitude had gone. They commonly travelled to those feasts in large companies, made up of most of the families in the neighbourhood. **See Barnes "Lu 2:44".**

{c} "My time"

@Joh 2:4 8:20, 7:8,30

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *The world cannot hate you*. You profess no principles in opposition to the world. You do not excite its envy, or rouse against you the civil rulers. As you possess the same spirit and principles with the men of the world, they cannot be expected to hate you.

I testify of it. I bear witness against it. This was the main cause of the opposition which was made to him. He proclaimed that men were depraved, and the result was that they hated him. We may expect that all who preach faith- fully against the wickedness of men will excite opposition. Yet this is not to deter us from doing our duty, and, after the example of Jesus, from proclaiming to men their sins, whatever may be the result.

{d} "the world" Joh 15:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *I go not up yet*. Jesus remained until about the middle of the feast, Joh 7:14. That is, he remained about four days after his brethren had departed, or until the mass of the people had gone up, so that his going might excite no attention, and that it might not be said he chose such a time to excite a tumult. We have here a signal instance of our Lord's prudence and opposition to parade. Though it would have been *lawful* for him to go up at that time, and though it would have been a favourable period to make himself known, yet he chose to forego these advantages rather than to afford an occasion of envy and jealousy to the rulers, or to appear even to excite a tumult among the people.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 9

Verse 9. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 11

Verse 11. No Barnes text on this verse.

{e} "Then the Jews" Joh 11:56

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Murmuring*. Contention, disputing.

He deceiveth the people. That is, he is deluding them, or drawing them away by pretending to be the Messiah.

{f} "there was much murmuring" Joh 9:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Spake openly of him*. The word translated *openly*, here, is commonly rendered *boldly*. This refers, doubtless, to those who really believed on him. His enemies were not silent; but his friends had not confidence to speak of him *openly* or *boldly*—that is, to speak what they really thought. Many supposed that he was the Messiah, yet even this they did not dare to profess. All that they could say in his favour was that he *was a good man*. There are always many such friends of Jesus in the world who are desirous of saying *something* good about him, but who, from fear or shame, refuse to make a full acknowledgement of him. Many will praise his *morals*, his *precepts*, and his *holy life*, while they are ashamed to speak of his *divinity* or his *atonement*, and still more to acknowledge that they are dependent on him for salvation.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *About the midst*. Or about the middle of the feast. It continued eight days.

The temple. **See Barnes "Mt 21:12"**

And taught. Great multitudes were assembled in and around the temple, and it was a favourable time and place to make known his doctrine.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Knoweth this man letters*. The Jewish *letters* or science consisted in the knowledge of their Scriptures and traditions. Jesus exhibited in his discourses such a profound acquaintance with the Old Testament as to excite their amazement and admiration.

Having never learned. The Jews taught their law and tradition in celebrated schools. As Jesus had not been instructed in those schools, they were amazed at his learning. What early human teaching the Saviour had we have no means of ascertaining, farther than that it was customary for the Jews to teach their children to read the Scriptures. 2Ti 3:15: "From a child thou (Timothy) hast known the holy scriptures."

{1} "letters" or, "learning"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *My doctrine*. My *teaching*, or what I teach. This is the proper meaning of the word *doctrine*. It is what is *taught* us, and, as applied to religion, it is what is taught us by God in the holy Scriptures.

Is not mine. It is not *originated by me*. Though I have not learned in your schools, yet you are not to infer that the doctrine which I teach is devised or invented by me. I teach nothing that is contrary to the will of God, and which he has not ap- pointed me to teach.

His that sent me. God's. It is such as he approves, and such as he has commissioned me to teach. The doctrine is divine in its origin and in its nature.

{h} "not mine" Joh 8:28 12:49

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *If any man will do his will*. Literally, if any man *wills* or is *willing* to do the will of God. If there is a disposition in anyone to do that will, though he should not be able perfectly to keep his commandments. To do the will of God is to obey his commandments; to yield our hearts and lives to his requirements. A disposition to do his will is a readiness to yield our intellects, our feelings, and all that we have entirely to him, to be governed according to his pleasure.

He shall know. He shall have *evidence*, in the very attempt to do the will of God, of the truth of the doctrine. This evidence is internal, and to the individual it is satisfactory and conclusive. It is of two kinds.

1st. He will find that the doctrines which Jesus taught are such as commend themselves to his reason and conscience, and such as are consistent with all that we know of the perfections of God. His doctrines commend themselves to us as fitted to make us pure and happy, and of course they are such as must be from God.

2nd. An honest desire to obey God will lead a man to embrace the great doctrines of the Bible. He will find that his heart is depraved and inclined to evil, and he will see and feel the truth of the doctrine of *depravity*; he will find that he is a sinner and needs to be born again; he will learn his own weakness, and see his need of a Saviour, of an atonement, and of pardoning mercy; he will feel that he is polluted, and needs the purifying influence of the Holy Spirit. Thus we may learn,

1st. That an honest effort to obey God is the easiest way to become acquainted with the doctrines of the Bible.

2nd. Those who make such an effort will not cavil at any of the doctrines of the Scriptures.

3rd. This is evidence of the truth of revelation which every man can apply to his own case.

4th. It is such evidence as to lead to *certainty*. No man who has

ever made an honest effort to live a pious life, and to do all the will of God, has ever had any doubt of the truth of the Saviour's doctrines, or any doubt that his religion is true and is fitted to the nature of man. They only doubt the truth of religion who wish to live in sin.

5th. We see the goodness of God in giving us evidence of his truth that may be within every man's reach. It does not require great learning to be a Christian, and to be convinced of the truth of the Bible. It requires an honest heart, and a willingness to obey God.

Whether it be of God. Whether it be *divine*.

Or whether *I speak of myself*. Of myself without being commissioned or directed by God.

{i} "if any man do his will" Joh 8:43

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *That speaketh of himself*. This does not mean about or concerning himself, but he that speaks by his own authority, without being sent by God, as mere human teachers do.

Seeketh his own glory. His own *praise*, or seeks for reputation and applause. This is the case with mere human teachers, and as Jesus in his discourses manifestly sought to honour God, they ought to have supposed that he was sent by him.

No unrighteousness. This word here means, evidently, there is no falsehood, no deception in him. He is not an impostor. It is used in the same sense in 2Th 2:10-12. It is true that there was no unrighteousness, no sin in Jesus Christ, but that is not the truth taught here. It is that he was not an *impostor*, and the evidence of this was that he sought not his own glory, but the honour of God. This evidence was furnished,

1st. In his retiring, unobtrusive disposition; in his not seeking the applause of men.

2nd. In his teaching such doctrines as tended to exalt God and humble man.

3rd. In his ascribing all glory and praise to God.

{l} "but he that seeketh" Pr 25:27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Did not Moses give you the law*? This they admitted, and on this they prided themselves. Every violation of that law they considered as deserving of death. They had accused Jesus of violating it because he had healed a man on the Sabbath, and for that they had sought his life, Joh 5:10-16. He here recalls that charge to their recollection, and shows them that, though they pretended great reverence for that law, yet they were really its violators in having sought his life.

None of you, &c. None of you Jews. They had sought to kill him. This was a pointed and severe charge, and shows the great faithfulness with which he was accustomed to proclaim the truth.

Why go ye about to kill me? Why do ye *seek* to kill me? See Joh 5:16.

{m} "Moses" Joh 1:17 Ga 3:19 {n} "none of you" Ro 3:10-19 {o} "to kill me" Mt 12:14 Joh 5:16,18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *The people*. Perhaps some of the people who were not aware of the designs of the rulers.

Thou hast a devil. Thou art deranged or mad. See Joh 10:20. As they saw no effort to kill him, and as they were ignorant of the designs of the rulers, they supposed that this was the effect of derangement.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *One work*. The healing of the man on the Sabbath, John chapter 5.

Ye all marvel. You all wonder or are amazed, and particularly that it was done on the Sabbath. This was the *particular* ground of astonishment, that he should dare to do what they esteemed a violation of the Sabbath.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision*. Moses commanded you to circumcise your children, Le 12:3. The word "therefore" in this place—literally "*on account of this*"—means, "Moses *on this account* gave you circumcision, not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;" that is, the reason was not that he himself appointed it as a new institution, but he found it already in existence, and incorporated it in his institutions and laws.

Not because, &c. Not *that* it is of Moses. Though Jesus spoke in accordance with the custom of the Jews, who ascribed the appointment of circumcision to Moses, yet he is careful to remind them that it was in observance long before Moses. So, also, the *Sabbath* was kept before Moses, and alike in the one case and the other they ought to keep in mind the *design* of the appointment.

Of the fathers. Of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Ge 17:10.

Ye on the sabbath-day, &c. The law required that the child should be circumcised on the *eighth* day. If that day happened to be the *Sabbath*, yet they held that he was to be circumcised, as there was a positive law to that effect; and as this was *commanded*, they did not consider it a breach of the Sabbath.

A man. Not an *adult* man, but a man-child. See Joh 16:21: "She remembereth no more the anguish for joy that *a man* is born into the world."

{q} "Moses" Le 12:3 {r} "but of the fathers" Ge 17:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *That the law of Moses' should not be broken*. In order that the law requiring it to be done at a specified time, though that might occur on the Sabbath, should be kept.

Are ye angry, &c. The argument of Jesus is this:
"You yourselves, in interpreting the law about the
Sabbath, allow a work of necessity to be done. You
do that which is necessary as an ordinance of religion
denoting *separation* from other nations, or external
purity. As you allow this, you ought also, for the
same reason, to allow that a man should be completely
restored to health—that a work of much more importance
should be done."

We may learn here that it would be happy for all if they would not condemn others in that thing which they allow. Men often accuse others of doing things which they themselves do in other ways.

Every whit whole. Literally, "I have restored the whole man to health," implying that the man's *whole body* was diseased, and that he had been *entirely* restored to health.

{2} "that the law of Moses" or, "without breaking the law of Moses"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Judge not according to the appearance*. Not as a thing first offers itself to you, without reflection or candour. In *appearance*, to circumcise a child on the Sabbath might be a violation of the law; yet you do it, and it is right. So, to appearance, it might be a violation of the Sabbath to heal a man, yet it is right to do works of necessity and mercy.

Judge righteous judgment. Candidly; looking at the law, and inquiring what its spirit really requires.

{t} "judge" De 1:16,17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 25

Verse 25. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Do the rulers know indeed*, &c. It seems from this that they supposed that the *rulers* had been convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, but that from some cause they were not willing yet to make it known to the people. The reasons of this opinion were these:

1st. They knew that they *had* attempted to kill him.

2nd. They now saw him speaking boldly to the people without interruption from the rulers. They concluded, therefore, that some change had taken place in the sentiments of the rulers in regard to him, though they had not yet made it public.

The rulers. The members of the *Sanhedrim*, or great council of the nation, who had charge of religious affairs.

Indeed. Truly; certainly. Have they certain evidence, as would appear from their suffering him to speak without interruption?

The very Christ. Is *truly or really* the Messiah.

{u} "Do the rulers" Joh 7:48

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *Howbeit*. But. They proceeded to state a reason why *they* supposed that he could not be the Messiah, whatever the rulers might think.

We know this man whence he is. We know the place of his birth and residence.

No man knoweth whence he is. From Mt 2:5, it appears that the common expectation of the Jews was that the Messiah would be born at Bethlehem; but they had also reigned that after his birth he would be *hidden* or taken away in some mysterious manner, and appear again from some unexpected quarter. We find allusions to this expectation in the New Testament, where our Saviour *corrects* their common notions, Mt 24:23: "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe it not." And again (Mt 24:26), "If they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert, go not forth; behold, he is in the secret chambers, believe it not." The following extracts from Jewish writings show that this was the common expectation: "The Redeemer shall manifest himself, and afterward be hid. So it was in the redemption from Egypt. Moses showed himself and then was hidden." So on the passage, So 2:9— "My beloved is like a roe or a young hart"—they say: "A roe appears and then is hid; so the Redeemer shall first appear and then be concealed, and then again be concealed and then again appear." "So the Redeemer shall first appear and then be hid, and then, at the end of forty-five days, shall reappear, and cause *manna* to descend." See Lightfoot. Whatever may have been the source of this opinion, it explains the passage, and shows that the writer of this gospel was well acquainted with the opinions of the Jews, however improbable those opinions were.

{v} "Howbeit" Mt 13:55

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *Ye know whence I am*. You have sufficient evidence of my divine mission, and that I am the Messiah.

Is true. Is worthy to be believed. He has given evidence that I came from him, and he is worthy to be believed. Many read this as a question—Do ye know me, and know whence I am? I am not come of myself, &c.

{w} "and I am not come" Joh 5:43 {x} "he that sent" Ro 3:4 {y} "whom ye know now" Joh 1:18 8:55

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 29

Verse 29. No Barnes text on this verse.

{z} "But I know him"

Mt 11:27 Joh 10:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *Then they sought to take him*. The rulers and their friends. They did this —

1st. Because of his reproof; and,

2nd. For professing to be the Messiah.

His hour. The proper and the appointed time for his death. See Mt 21:46.

{a} "Then" Mr 11:18 Lu 20:19; Joh 8:37

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *Will he do more miracles*? It was a common expectation that the Messiah would work many miracles. This opinion was founded on such passages as Isa 35:5,6, &c.: "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped; then shall the lame man leap as an hart," &c. Jesus had given abundant evidence of his power to work such miracles, and they therefore believed that he was the Messiah.

{b} "many of the people" Joh 4:39

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *The people murmured such things*. That is, that the question was agitated whether he was the Messiah; that it excited debate and contention; and that the consequence was, he made many friends. They chose, therefore, if possible, to remove him from them.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *Yet a little while am I with you*. It will not be long before my death. This is supposed to have been about six months before his death. This speech of Jesus is full of tenderness. They were seeking his life. He tells them that he is fully aware of it; that he will not be long with them; and *implies* that they should be diligent to seek him while he was yet with them. He was about to die, but they might now seek his favour and find it. When we remember that this was said to his persecutors and murderers; that it was said even while they were seeking his life, we see the peculiar tenderness of his love. Enmity, and hate, and persecution did not prevent his offering salvation to them.

I go unto him that sent me. This is one of the intimations that he gave that he would ascend to God. Comp. Joh 6:62.

{c} "Yet a little while" Joh 13:33 16:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *Ye shall seek me*. This probably means simply, Ye shall seek *the Messiah*. Such will be your troubles, such the calamities that will come on the nation, that you will earnestly desire the coming of the Messiah. You will seek for a deliverer, and will look for *him*, that he may bring deliverance. This does not mean that they would seek for Jesus and not be able to find him, but that they would desire the aid and comfort of *the Messiah*, and would be disappointed. Jesus speaks of himself as the Messiah, and his own name as synonymous with the Messiah. **See Barnes "Mt 23:39"**.

Shall not find me. Shall not find the Messiah. He will not come, according to your expectations, to aid you. **See Barnes "Mt 24:1"**

and following.

Where I am. This whole clause is to be understood as future, though the words "am" and "cannot" are both in the present tense. The meaning is, Where I shall be you will not be able to come. That is, he, the Messiah, would be in heaven; and though they would earnestly desire his presence and aid to save the city and nation from the Romans, yet they would not be able to obtain it—represented here by their not being able to *come to him*. This does not refer to their individual salvation, but to the deliverance of their nation. It is not true of individual sinners that they seek Christ in a proper manner and are not able to find him; but it was true of the Jewish nation that they looked for the Messiah, and sought his coming to deliver them, but he did not do it.

{d} "Ye shall seek me" Ho 5:6 Joh 8:21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *The dispersed among the Gentiles*. To the *Jews* scattered among the Gentiles, or living in distant parts of the earth. It is well known that at that time there were Jews dwelling in almost every land. There were multitudes in Egypt, in Asia Minor, in Greece, in Rome, &c., and

in all these places they had synagogues. The question which they asked was whether he would leave an ungrateful country, and go into those distant nations and teach them.

Gentiles. In the original, *Greeks*. All those who were not *Jews* were called *Greeks*, because they were chiefly acquainted with those heathens only who spake the Greek language. It is remark able that Jesus returned no answer to these inquiries. He rather chose to turn off their minds from a speculation about the place to which he was going, to the great affairs of their own personal salvation.

{e} "dispersed" Isa 11:12 Jas 1:1; 1Pe 1:1

{3} "Gentiles" or, "Greeks"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 36

Verse 36. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *In the last day*. The eighth day of the festival.

That great day. The day of the holy convocation or solemn assembly, Le 23:36. This seems to have been called the *great* day,

1st. Because of the solemn assembly, and because it was the closing scene.

2nd. Because, according to their traditions, on the previous days they offered sacrifices for the *heathen* nations as well as for themselves, but on this day for the Jews only (Lightfoot).

3rd. Because on this day they abstained from all servile labour (Le 23:39), and regarded it as a holy day.

4th. On this day they finished the reading of the law, which they commenced at the beginning of the feast.

5th. Because on this day probably occurred the ceremony of drawing water from the pool of Siloam. On the last day of the feast it was customary to perform a solemn ceremony in this manner: The priest filled a golden vial with water from the fount of Siloam (**See Barnes "Joh 9:7"**) , which was borne with great solemnity, attended with the clangour of trumpets, through the gate of the temple, and being mixed with wine, was poured on the sacrifice on the altar. What was the origin of this custom is unknown. Some suppose, and not improbably, that it arose from an improper understanding of the passage in Isa 12:3: "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." It is certain that no such ceremony is commanded by Moses. It is supposed to be probable that Jesus stood and cried while they were performing this ceremony, that he might,

1st. illustrate the nature of his doctrine by this; and

2nd. call off their attention from a rite that was uncommanded, and that could not confer eternal life.

Jesus stood. In the temple, in the midst of thousands of the people.

If any man thirst. Spiritually. If any man feels his need of salvation. See Joh 4:13,14; Mt 5:6 Re 22:17.

The invitation is full and free to all.

Let him come unto me, &c. Instead of depending on *this* ceremony of drawing water let him come to me, the Messiah, and he shall find an ever-abundant supply for all the wants of his soul.

{f} "last day" Le 23:36 {g} "If any man thirst" Isa 55:1 Re 22:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *He that believeth* on me. He that acknowledges me as the Messiah, and trusts in me for salvation.

As the scripture hath said. This is a difficult expression, from the fact that no such expression as follows is to be found literally in the Old Testament. Some have proposed to connect it with what precedes—"He that believeth on me, as the Old Testament has *commanded* or required"—but to this there are many objections. The natural and obvious meaning here is, doubtless, the true one; and Jesus probably intended to say, not that there was any *particular* place in the Old Testament that affirmed this in so many words, but that this was the *substance* of what the Scriptures taught, or this was the spirit of their declarations. Hence the *Syriac* translates it in the plural—*the Scriptures*. Probably there is a reference more particularly to Isa 58:11, than to any other single passage: "Thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters fail not." See also Isa 44:3,4; Joe 3:18.

Out of his belly. Out of his midst, or out of his heart. The word *belly* is often put for the midst of a thing, the centre, and the heart, Mt 12:40. It means here that from the man shall flow; that is, his piety shall be of such a nature that it will extend its blessings to others. It shall be like a running fountain— perhaps in allusion to statues or ornamented reservoirs in gardens, in which pipes were placed from which water was continually flowing. The Jews used the same figure: "His two reins are like fountains of water, from which the law flows." And again: "When a man turns himself to the Lord, he shall be as a fountain filled with living water, and his streams shall flow to all the nations and tribes of men" (Kuinoel).

Rivers. This word is used to express abundance, or a full supply. It means here that those who are Christians shall diffuse large, and liberal, and constant blessings on their fellow-men; or, as Jesus immediately explains it, that they shall be the *instruments* by which the Holy Spirit shall be poured down on the world.

Living water. Fountains, ever-flowing streams. That is, the gospel shall be constant and life-giving in its blessings. We learn here,

1st. That it is the nature of Christian piety to be diffusive.

2nd. That no man can believe on Jesus who does not desire that others should also, and who will not seek it.

3rd. That the desire is large and liberal—that the Christian desires the salvation of all the world.

4th. That the *faith* of the believer is to be connected with the influence of the Holy Spirit, and *in that way* Christians are to be like rivers of living water.

{h} "out if his belly" Pr 18:4 Isa 58:11; Joh 4:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *Of the Spirit*. Of the Holy Spirit, that should be sent down to attend their preaching and to convert sinners.

For the Holy Ghost was not yet given. Was not given in such full and large measures as should be after Jesus had ascended to heaven. Certain measures of the influences of the Spirit had been always given in the conversion and sanctification of the ancient saints and prophets; but that abundant and full effusion which the apostles were permitted afterward to behold had not yet been given. See Ac 2:1-12 10:44,45.

Jesus was not yet glorified. Jesus had not yet ascended to heaven—to the glory and honour that awaited him there. It was a part of the arrangement in the work of redemption that the influences of the Holy Spirit should descend chiefly after the death of Jesus, as that death was the procuring cause of this great blessing. Hence he said (Joh 16:7), "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send him unto you." See also Joh 16:8-12 14:15,16,26.

Comp. Eph 4:8-11.

{i} "the Spirit" Isa 44:3 Joe 2:28; Joh 16:7 Ac 2:17,33

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 40

Verse 40. *The Prophet*. That is, the prophet whom they expected to precede the coming of the Messiah—either Elijah or Jeremiah. See Mt 16:14.

{k} "the prophet" De 18:15 Joh 6:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 41

Verses 41,42. **See Barnes** "Mt 2:4, and following.

Where David was 1Sa 16:1-4.

{l} "This is the" Joh 4:42 6:69 {m} "Shall Christ come out of Galilee?" Joh 1:46 7:52

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 42

Verse 42. No Barnes text on this verse.

{n} "Christ cometh"

Ps 132:11

{o} "town of Bethlehem" Mic 5:2 Lu 2:4 {p} "where David was" 1Sa 16:1,4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 43

Verse 43. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 44

Verse 44. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 45

Verses 45,46. *The officers*. Those who had been appointed (Joh 7:32) to take him. It seems that Jesus was in the midst of the people addressing them, and that they happened to come at the very time when he was speaking. They were so impressed and awed with what he said that they dared not take him. There have been few instances of eloquence like this. His speaking had so much evidence of truth, so much proof that he was from God, and was so impressive and persuasive, that they were convinced of his innocence, and they *dared* not touch him to execute their commission. We have here,

1st. A remarkable testimony to the commanding eloquence of Jesus.

2nd. Wicked men may be awed and restrained by the presence of a good man, and by the evidence that he speaks that which is true.

3rd. God can preserve his friends. Here were men sent for a particular purpose. They were armed with power. They were commissioned by the highest authority of the nation. On the other hand, Jesus was without arms or armies, and without external protection. Yet, in a manner which the officers and the high-priests would have little expected, he was preserved. So, in ways which we little expect, God will defend and deliver us when in the midst of danger.

4th. No prophet, apostle, or minister has ever spoken the truth with as much power, grace, and beauty as Jesus. It should be *ours*, therefore, to listen to his words, and to sit at his feet and learn heavenly wisdom.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 46

Verse 46. No Barnes text on this verse.

{q} "Never man spake like this man" Lu 4:22.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 47

Verse 47. *Are ye also deceived*? They set down the claims of Jesus as of course an imposture. They did not examine, but were, like thousands, determined to believe that he was a deceiver. Hence they did not ask them whether they were *convinced*, or had seen evidence that he was the Messiah; but, with mingled contempt, envy, and anger, they asked if they were also *deluded*. Thus many assume religion to be an imposture; and when one becomes a Christian, they assume at once that he is deceived, that he is the victim of foolish credulity or superstition, and treat him with ridicule or scorn. Candour would require them to inquire whether such changes were not proof of the power and truth of the gospel, as candour in the case of the rulers required them to inquire whether Jesus had not given them evidence that he was from God.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 48

Verse 48. *The rulers*. The members of the Sanhedrim, who were supposed to have control over the religious rites and doctrines of the nation.

The Pharisees. The sect possessing wealth, and office, and power. The name *Pharisees* sometimes denotes those who were high in honour and authority.

Believed on him. Is there any instance in which those who are high in rank or in office have embraced him as the Messiah? This shows the rule by which they judged of religion.

1st. They claimed the right of regulating the doctrines and rites of religion.

2nd. They repressed the liberty of private judgment, stifled investigation, assumed that a *new* doctrine *must* be heresy, and laboured to keep the people in inglorious bondage.

3rd. They treated the new doctrine of Jesus with *contempt*, and thus attempted to put it down, not by argument, but by *contempt*, and especially because it was embraced by the common people. This is the way in which doctrines contrary to the truth of God have been uniformly supported in the world; this is the way in which new views of truth are met; and this the way in which those in ecclesiastical power often attempt to *lord it over God's heritage*, and to repress the investigation of the Bible.

{r} "any of the rulers" Jer 5:4,5; Joh 12:42 1Co 1:26

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 49

Verse 49. *This people*. The word here translated *people* is the one commonly rendered *the multitude*. It is a word expressive of contempt, or, as we would say, *the rabble*. It denotes the scorn which they felt that the *people* should presume to judge for themselves in a case pertaining to their own salvation.

Who knoweth not the law. Who have not been *instructed* in the schools of the Pharisees, and been taught to interpret the Old Testament as they had. They supposed that any who believed on the humble and despised Jesus must be, of course, ignorant of the true doctrines of the Old Testament, as they held that a very *different* Messiah from him was foretold. Many instances are preserved in the writings of the Jews of the great contempt in which the Pharisees held the common people. It

may here be remarked that Christianity is the only system of religion ever presented to man that in a proper manner regards the poor, the ignorant, and the needy. Philosophers and Pharisees, in all ages, have looked on them with contempt.

Are cursed. Are execrable; are of no account; are worthy only of contempt and perdition. Some suppose that there is reference here to their being worthy to be cut off from the people for believing on him, worthy to be put out of the synagogue (See Joh 9:22); but it seems to be an expression only of *contempt*; a declaration that they were a rabble, ignorant, unworthy of notice, and going to ruin. Observe, however,

1st. That of this despised people were chosen most of those who became Christians.

2nd. That if the people were ignorant, it was the fault of the Pharisees and rulers. It was their business to see that they were taught.

3rd. There is no way so common of attempting to oppose Christianity as by ridiculing its friends as poor, ignorant, and weak, and credulous. As well night food, and raiment, and friendship, and patriotism be held in contempt because the poor need the one or possess the other.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 50

Verse 50. *Nicodemus*. See Joh 3:1.

One of them. That is, one of the great council or Sanhedrim. God often places one or more pious men in legislative assemblies to vindicate his honour and his law; and he often gives a man grace on such occasions boldly to defend his cause; to put men *upon their proof*, and to confound the proud and the domineering. We see in this case, also, that a man, at one time timid and fearful (comp.) Joh 3:1), may on other occasions be bold, and fearlessly defend the truth as it is in Jesus. This example should lead every man intrusted with authority or office fearlessly to defend the truth of God, and, when the rich and the mighty are pouring contempt on Jesus and his cause, to stand forth as its fearless defender.

{s} "he that came" Joh 3:2 {4} "to Jesus", "to him"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 51

Verse 51. *Doth our law*, &c. The law required *justice* to be done, and gave every man the right to claim a fair and impartial trial, Le 19:15,16; Ex 23:1,2; De 19:15,18.

Their condemnation of Jesus was a violation of every rule of right. He was not arraigned; he was not heard in self-defence, and not a single witness was adduced. Nicodemus demanded that *justice* should be done, and that he should not be condemned until he had had a fair trial. Every man should be presumed innocent until he is proved to be guilty. This is a maxim of law, and a most just and proper precept in our judgments in private life.

{t} "Doth our law" De 17:8 Pr 18:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 52

Verse 52. *Art thou also of Galilee?* Here is another expression of contempt. To be a *Galilean* was a term of the highest reproach. They knew well that he was not of Galilee, but they meant to ask whether *he* also had become a follower of the despised Galilean. Ridicule is not argument, and there is no demonstration in a gibe; but, unhappily, this is the only weapon which the proud and haughty often used in opposing religion.

Ariseth no prophet. That is, there is no prediction that any prophet should come out of Galilee, and especially no prophet that was to attend or precede the Messiah. Comp. Joh 1:46. They assumed, therefore, that Jesus could not be the Christ.

{u} "Out of Galilee" Isa 9:1,2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 7 - Verse 53

Verse 53. *And every man went unto his own house*. There is every mark of confusion and disorder in this breaking up of the Sanhedrim. It is possible that some of the Sadducees might have joined Nicodemus in opposing the Pharisees, and thus increased the disorder. It is a most instructive and melancholy exhibition of the influence of pride, envy, contempt, and anger, when brought to bear on an inquiry, and when they are manifestly opposed to candour, to argument, and to truth. So wild and furious are the passions of men when they oppose the person and claims of the Son of God! It is remarkable, too, how God accomplishes his purposes. *They* wished to destroy Jesus. God suffered their passions to be excited, a tumult to ensue, the assembly thus to break up in disorder, and Jesus to be safe, for his time had not yet come. "The wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain," Ps 76:10.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 1

Verse 1. *Mount of Olives*. The mountain about a mile directly east of Jerusalem. **See Barnes "Mt 21:1".**

This was the place in which he probably often passed the night when attending the feasts at Jerusalem. The Garden of Gethsemane, to which he was accustomed to resort (Joh 18:2), was on the western side of that mountain, and Bethany, the abode of Martha and Mary, on its east side, Joh 11:1.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 2

Verse 2. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 3

Verse 3. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 4

Verse 4. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Moses in the law*, &c. The punishment of adultery commanded by Moses was death, Le 20:10 De 22:22. The particular manner of the death was not specified in the law. The Jews had themselves, in the time of Christ, determined that it should be by stoning. See this described in **See Barnes "Mt 21:35".**

See Barnes "Mt 21:44".

The punishment for adultery varied. In some cases it was strangling. In the time of Ezekiel Eze 16:38-40 it was stoning and being thrust through with a sword. If the adulteress was the daughter of a priest, the punishment was being burned to death.

{a} "Now Moses" Le 20:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Tempting him*. Trying him, or laying a plan that they might have occasion to accuse him. If he decided the case, they expected to be able to bring an accusation against him; for if he decided that she ought to die, they might accuse him of claiming power which belonged to the Romans—the power of life and death. They might allege that it was not the giving an opinion about an abstract case, but that she was formally before him, that he decided her case *judicially*, and that without authority or form of trial. If he decided otherwise, they would have alleged that he denied the authority of the law, and that it was his intention to abrogate it. They had had a controversy with him about the authority of the Sabbath, and they perhaps supposed that he would decide this case as he did that—against them. It may be farther added that they knew that Jesus admitted publicans and sinners to eat with him; that one of their charges was that he was friendly to sinners (see Lu 15:2); and they wished, doubtless, to make it appear that he was *gluttonous*, and a

wine-bibber, and *a friend of sinners*, and disposed to relax all the laws of morality, even in the case of adultery. Seldom was there a plan more artfully laid, and never was more wisdom and knowledge of human nature displayed than in the manner in which it was met.

Wrote on the ground. This took place in the *temple*. The "ground," here, means the pavement, or the dust on the pavement. By this Jesus showed them clearly that he was not *solicitous* to pronounce an opinion in the case, and that it was not his wish or intention to intermeddle with the civil affairs of the nation.

As though he heard them not. This is added by the translators. It is not in the original, and should not have been added. There is no intimation in the original, as it seems to be implied by this addition, that the object was to convey the impression that he did not hear them. What was his object is unknown, and conjecture is useless. The most probable reason seems to be that he did not wish to intermeddle; that he designed to show no solicitude to decide the case; and that he did not mean to decide it unless he was *constrained* to.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *They continued asking him*. They pressed the question upon him. They were determined to extort an answer from him, and showed a perseverance in evil which has been unhappily often imitated.

Is without sin. That is, without this particular sin; he who has not himself been guilty of this very crime—for in this place the connection evidently demands this meaning.

Let him first cast a stone at her. In the punishment by death, one of the witnesses threw the culprit from the scaffold, and the other threw the first stone, or rolled down a stone to crush him. See De 17:6,7. This was in order that the witness might feel his responsibility in giving evidence, as he was also to be the executioner. Jesus therefore put them to the test. Without pronouncing on her case, he directed them, if any of them were innocent, to perform the office of executioner. This was said, evidently, well knowing their guilt, and well knowing that no one would dare to do it.

{b} "He that is" De 17:7 Ro 2:1,2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 8

Verse 8. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Beginning at the eldest*. As being conscious of more sins, and, therefore, being desirous to leave the Lord Jesus. The word *eldest* here probably refers not to age, but to *honour*—from those who were in highest reputation to the lowest in rank. This consciousness of crime showed that the

state of the public morals was exceedingly corrupt, and justified the declaration of Jesus that it was an *adulterous and wicked generation*, Mt 16:4.

Alone. Jesus only was left with the woman, &c.

In the midst. Her *accusers* had gone out, and left Jesus and the woman; but it is by no means probable that the people had left them; and, as this was in the temple on a public occasion, they were doubtless surrounded still by many. This is evident from the fact that Jesus immediately (Joh 8:12) addressed a discourse to the people present.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Hath no man condemned thee*? Jesus had directed them, if innocent, to cast a stone, thus *to condemn her*, or to use the power which he gave them to condemn her. No one of them had done that. They had *accused her*, but they had not proceeded to the act expressive of *judicial condemnation*.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Neither do I condemn thee*. This is evidently to be taken in the sense of *judicial* condemnation, or of passing sentence as a *magistrate*, for this was what they had arraigned her for. It was not to obtain his opinion about adultery, but to obtain the *condemnation* of the woman. As he claimed no *civil* authority, he said that he did not exercise it, and should not *condemn her to die*. In this sense the word is used in the previous verse, and this is the only sense which the passage demands. Besides, what follows shows that this was his meaning.

Go, and sin no more. You have sinned. You have been detected and accused. The sin is great. But I do not claim power to condemn you to die, and, as your *accusers* have left you, my direction to you is that you *sin* no more. This passage therefore teaches us,

1st. That Jesus claimed no civil authority.

2nd. That he regarded the action of which they accused her as sin.

3rd. That he knew the *hearts* and *lives* of men.

4th. That men are often very zealous in accusing others of that of which they themselves are guilty. And,

5th. That Jesus was endowed with wonderful wisdom in meeting the devices of his enemies, and eluding their deep-laid plans to involve him in ruin. It should be added that this passage, together with the last verse of the preceding chapter, has been by many critics thought to be spurious. It is wanting in many of the ancient manuscripts and versions, and has been rejected by Erasmus, Calvin, Beza, Grotius, Wetstein, Tittman, Knapp, and many others. It is not easy to decide the question whether it be a genuine part of the New Testament or not. Some have supposed that it was not *written* by the evangelists, but was often *related* by them, and that after a time it was recorded and introduced by Papias into the sacred text.

{c} "Neither do I condemn" Joh 3:17 {d} "and sin no more" Joh 5:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *I am the light of the world*. **See Barnes "Joh 1:4"**
See Barnes "Joh 1:9"

{e} "I am the light of the world" Joh 1:4 9:5 {f} "He that followeth" Joh 12:35,46

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Thou bearest record of thyself*. Thou art a *witness* for thyself, or in thy own case. See Joh 5:31. The law required two witnesses in a criminal case, and they alleged that as the only evidence which Jesus had was his own assertion, it could not be entitle to belief.

Is not true. Is not worthy of belief, or is not substantiated by sufficient evidence.

{g} "Thou bearest record" Joh 5:31

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Jesus answered*, &c. To this objection Jesus replied by saying, first, that the case was such that his testimony alone ought to be received; and, secondly, that he had the evidence given him by his Father. Though, in common life, in courts, and in mere human transactions, it was true that a man ought not to give evidence in his own case, yet in this instance, such was the nature of the case that his word was worthy to be believed.

My record. My evidence, my testimony.

Is true. Is worthy to be believed.

For I know whence I came—but ye, &c. I know by what authority I act; I know by whom I am sent, and what commands were given me; but you cannot determine this, for you do not know these unless *I* bear witness of them to you. We are to remember that Jesus came not of himself (Joh 6:38); that he came not to do his own will, but the will of his Father. He came as a *witness* of those things which he had seen and known (Joh 3:11), and no man could judge *of those things*, for no man had seen them. As he came from heaven; as he knew his Father's will; as he had seen the eternal world, and known the counsels of his Father, so his testimony was worthy of confidence. As *they* had not seen and known these things, they were not qualified to judge. An ambassador from a foreign court knows the will and purposes of the sovereign who sent him, and is competent to bear witness of it. The court to which he is sent has no way of judging but by his testimony, and he is therefore competent to testify in the case. All that can be demanded is that he give *his* credentials that he is appointed, and this Jesus had done both by the nature of his doctrine and his miracles.

{h} "but you cannot tell" Joh 7:28 9:29,30

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *After the flesh.* According to appearance; according to your carnal and corrupt mode; not according to the spiritual nature of the doctrines. By your preconceived opinions and prejudices you are determined not to believe that I am the Messiah.

I judge no man. Jesus came not to condemn the world, Joh 3:17. They were in the habit of judging rashly and harshly of all; but this was not the purpose or disposition of the Saviour. This expression is to be understood as meaning that he judged no one *after their manner*; he did not come to censure and condemn men after the appearance, or in a harsh, biased, and unkind manner.

{i} "I judge no man" Joh 3:17 12:47

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *And yet, if I judge*. If I should express my judgment of men or things. He was not *limited*, nor forbidden to do it, nor restrained by any fear that his judgment would be erroneous.

My judgment is true. Is worthy to be regarded.

For I am not alone. I concur with the Father who hath sent me. His judgment *you* admit would be right, and *my* judgment would accord with his. He was commissioned by his Father, and his judgment would coincide with all that God had purposed or revealed. This was shown by the evidence that God gave that he had sent him into the world.

{k} "my judgment" 1Sa 16:7 Ps 45:6,7 72:2

{i} "for I am not alone" Joh 8:29 16:32

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *In your law*. De 17:6 19:15. Comp. Mt 18:16. This related to cases in which the life of an individual was involved. Jesus says that if, in such a case, the testimony of two men were sufficient to *establish* a fact, his own testimony and that of his Father ought to be esteemed ample evidence in the case of religious doctrine.

Two men.. If two men could confirm a case, the evidence of Jesus and of God ought not to be deemed insufficient.

Is true. In Deuteronomy, "established." This means the same thing. It is confirmed; is worthy of belief.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *I am one that bear witness of myself*. In human courts a man is not allowed to bear witness of himself, because he has a personal interest in the case, and the court could have no proof

of the *impartiality* of the evidence; but in the case of Jesus it was otherwise. When one has no party ends to serve; when he is willing to deny himself; when he makes great sacrifices; and when, by his life, he gives every evidence of sincerity, his own testimony may be admitted in evidence of his motives and designs. This was the case with Jesus and his apostles. And though in a legal or criminal case such testimony would not be admitted, yet, in an argument on moral subjects, about the will and purpose of him who sent him, it would not be right to reject the testimony of one who gave so many proofs that he came from God.

The Father—beareth witness of me. By the voice from heaven at his baptism (Mt 3:17), and by the miracles which Jesus wrought, as well as by the prophecies of the Old Testament. We may here remark,

1st. That there is a distinction between the Father and the Son. They are both represented as bearing testimony; yet,

2nd. They are not divided. They are not different beings. They bear testimony to the same thing, and are *one* in counsel, in plan, in essence, and in glory.

{n} "the Father" Joh 5:37

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Where is thy Father*? This question was asked, doubtless, in derision. Jesus had often given them to understand that by his Father he meant God, Joh 5:1-6:71. They *professed* to be ignorant of this, and probably looked round in contempt for his Father, that he might adduce him as a witness in the case.

If ye had known me, &c. If you had listened to my instructions, and had received me as the Messiah, you would also, at the same time, have been acquainted with God. We may here observe,

1st. The *manner* in which Jesus answered them. He gave no heed to their cavil; he was not *irritated* by their contempt; he preserved his *dignity*, and gave them an answer worthy of the Son of God.

2nd. We should meet the *cavils* and sneers of sinners in the same manner. We should not render railing for railing, but "in meekness instruct those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth," 2Ti 2:25.

3rd. The way to know God is to know Jesus Christ. "No man hath seen God at any time. The only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath *declared* him," Joh 1:18. No sinner can have just views of God but in Jesus Christ, 2Co 4:6.

{o} "Jesus answered" Joh 8:55 16:3, 17:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *The treasury*. **See Barnes "Mt 21:12"**.

His hour was not yet come. The time for him to die had not yet arrived, and God restrained them, and kept his life. This proves that God has power over wicked men to control them, and to make them accomplish his own purposes.

{q} "treasury" Mr 12:41 {r} "for his hour" Joh 7:30

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *I go my way*. **See Barnes "Joh 7:33".**

Ye shall die in your sins. That is, you will seek the Messiah; you will desire his coming, but the Messiah that *you* expect will not come; and, as you have rejected me, and there is no other Saviour, you must die in your sins. You will die unpardoned, and as you did not seek me where you might find me, you cannot come where I shall be. Observe,

1st. All those who reject the Lord Jesus must die unforgiven. There is no way of pardon but by him. **See Barnes "Ac 4:12".**

2nd. There will be a time when sinners will seek for a Saviour but will find none. Often this is done too late, in a dying moment, and in the future world they may seek a deliverer, but not be able to find one.

3rd. Those who reject the Lord Jesus must perish. Where he is they cannot come. Where he is is heaven. Where he is not, with his favour and mercy, there is hell; and the sinner that has no Saviour must be wretched for ever.

{s} "ye shall seek me" Joh 7:34 {t} "and shall die" Job 20:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Will he kill himself*? It is difficult to know whether this question was asked from ignorance or malice. Self-murder was esteemed then, as it is now, as one of the greatest crimes; and it is not improbable that they asked this question with mingled hatred and contempt. "He is a *deceiver*; he has broken the law of Moses; he is mad, and it is probable he *will* go on and kill himself." If this was their meaning, we see the wonderful patience of Jesus in enduring the contradiction of sinners; and as *he* bore contempt without rendering railing for railing, so should we.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Ye are from bequeath*. The expression *from beneath*, here, is opposed to the phrase from above. It means, You are *of the earth*, or are influenced by earthly, sensual, and corrupt passions. You are governed by the-lowest and vilest views and feelings, such as are opposed to heaven, and such as have their origin in earth or in hell.

I am from above. From heaven. My views are heavenly, and my words should have been so interpreted.

Ye are of this world. You think and act like the corrupt men of this world.

I am not of this world. My views are above these earthly and corrupt notions. The meaning of the verse is:

"Your reference to self-murder shows that you are
earthly and corrupt in your views. You are governed
by the mad passions of men, and can think only of these."

We see here how difficult it is to excite wicked men to the contemplation of heavenly things. They interpret all things in a low and corrupt sense, and suppose all others to be governed as they are themselves.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *That I am*. That I am the Messiah.

{v} "I said" Joh 8:21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Who art thou*? As Jesus did not expressly say in the previous verse that he was the Messiah, they professed still not to understand him. In great contempt, therefore, they asked him who *he was*. As if they had said, "Who art thou that undertakest to threaten us in this manner?" When we remember that they regarded him as a mere pretender from Galilee; that he was poor and without friends; and that he was persecuted by those in authority, we cannot but admire the patience with which all this was borne, and the coolness with which he answered them.

Even the same, &c. What he had professed to them was that he was the light of the world; that he was the bread that came down from heaven; that he was sent by his Father, &c. From all this they might easily gather that he claimed to be the Messiah. He assumed no *new* character; he made no *change* in his professions; he is the same yesterday, today, and for ever; and as he had once professed to be the light of the world, so, in the face of contempt, persecution, and death, he adhered to the profession.

The beginning. From his first discourse with them, or uniformly.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *I have many things to say*. There are many things which I *might* say to reprove and expose your pride and hypocrisy. By this he implied that he understood *well* their character, and that he was able to expose it. This, indeed, he had shown them in his conversations with them.

And to judge of you. To reprove in you. There are many things in you which I might condemn.

But he that sent me is true. Is worthy to be believed, and his declarations about men are to be credited. The meaning of this verse may be thus expressed:

"I have indeed many things to say blaming or
condemning you. I have already said many such things,
and there are many more that I might say; but I
speak only those things which God has commanded. I
speak not of myself I come to execute his commission,
and he is worthy to be heard and feared. Let it not be
thought, therefore, that my judgment is rash or harsh.
It is such as is commanded by God."

{x} "he that sent me" Joh 7:28

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *They understood not*. They knew not, or they were unwilling to receive him as a messenger from God. They doubtless understood that he *meant* to speak of God, but they were unwilling to acknowledge that he really came from God.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *When ye have lifted up*. When you have crucified. **See Barnes** "Joh 3:14, **See Barnes "Joh 12:32"**.

The Son of man. **See Barnes "Mt 8:19,20"**.

Then shall ye know. Then shall you have evidence or proof.

That I am he. Am the Messiah, which I have professed to be.

And that I do nothing of myself. That is, you shall have proof that God has sent me; that I am the Messiah; and that God concurs with me and approves my doctrine. This proof was furnished by the miracles that attended the death of Jesus —the earthquake and darkness; but chiefly by his resurrection from the dead, which proved, beyond a doubt, that he was what he affirmed he was—the Messiah.

{y} "lifted up" Joh 3:14 12:32

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Is with me*. In working miracles, &c.

Hath not left me alone. Though men had forsaken and rejected him, yet God attended him.

Those things that please him. See Mt 3:17: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," Php 2:8 Isa 53:10-12; 2Pe 1:17 Lu 3:22; Mt 17:5.

His *undertaking* the work of redemption was pleasing to God, and he had the consciousness that in *executing* it he did those things which God approved. It is a small matter to have men opposed to us, if we have a conscience void of offence, and evidence that we please God. Comp. Heb 11:5 "Enoch —before his translation had this testimony that he pleased God." See also 1Co 4:3.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *Many believed on him*. Such was the convincing nature and force of the truths which he presented, that they believed he was the Messiah and received his doctrine. While there were many that became more obstinate and hardened under his preaching, there were many, also, who by the same truth were made penitent and believing. "The same sun that hardens the clay, softens the wax" (Clarke).

{z} "many believed on him" Joh 10:42

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *If ye continue in my word*. If you continue to obey my commandments and to receive my doctrines.

Then are ye, &c. This is the true test of Christian character. Joh 14:21. "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." See 1Jo 2:4 3:24; 2Jo 1:6.

In this place Jesus cautions them against *too much confidence from their present feelings*. They were just converted—converted under a single sermon. They had had no time to test their faith. Jesus assures them that if their faith should abide the test, if it should produce obedience to his commandments and a holy life, it would be proof that their faith was genuine, for the tree is known by its fruit. So we may say to all new converts, Do not repress your love or your joy, but do not be too confident. Your faith has not yet been tried, and if it does not produce a holy life it is vain, Jas 2:17-26.

{a} "continue" Ro 2:7 Col 1:23; Heb 10:38,39

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *Shall know the truth*. **See Barnes "Joh 7:17".**

The truth shall make you free. The *truth* here means the Christian religion. Comp. Ga 3:1 Col 1:6. The doctrines of the true religion shall make you free—that is, it will free you from the *slavery* of evil passions, corrupt propensities, and grovelling views. The condition of a sinner is that of a *captive* or a *slave* to sin. He is one who serves and obeys the dictates of an evil heart and the promptings of an evil nature, Ro 6:16,17: "Ye were the *servants* of sin;" Ro 6:19: "Ye have yielded your members servants unto iniquity; Ro 6:20 7:6,8,11 8:21 Ac 8:23.

"Thou art in the —bond of iniquity;" Ga 4:3,9. The effect of the gospel is to break this hard bondage to sin and to set the sinner free. We learn from this that religion is not slavery or oppression. It is true freedom.

"He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves beside." —Cowper.

The service of God is freedom from degrading vices and carnal propensities; from the slavery of passion and inordinate desires. It is a cheerful and delightful surrender of ourselves to Him whose yoke is easy and whose burden is light.

{b} "know the truth" Ho 6:3 {c} "the truth" Ps 119:45 Joh 17:17; Ro 6:14,18,22 Jas 1:25 2:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *They answered him*. Not those who believed on him, but some who stood by and heard him.

We be Abraham's seed. We are the children or descendants of Abraham. Abraham was not a slave, and they pretended that they were his real descendants, inheriting his freedom as well as his spirit. They meant that they were the direct descendants of Abraham by Isaac, his heir. Ishmael, also Abraham's son, was the son of a bond-woman (Ga 4:21-23), but *they* were descended in a direct line from the acknowledged heir of Abraham.

Were never in bondage to any man. This is a most remarkable declaration, and one evidently false. Their fathers had been slaves in Egypt; their nation had been enslaved in Babylon; it had repeatedly been subject to the Assyrians; it was enslaved by Herod the Great; and was, at the very time they spoke, groaning under the grievous and insupportable bondage of the Romans. But we see here,

1st. That Jesus was right when he said (Joh 8:44), "Ye are of your father the devil; he is a liar, and the father of it."

2nd. Men will say anything, however false or ridiculous, to avoid and oppose the truth.

3rd. Men groaning under the most oppressive bondage are often unwilling to acknowledge it in any manner, and are indignant at being charged with it. This is the case with all sinners.

4th. Sin, and the bondage to sin, produces passion, irritation, and a troubled soul; and a man under the influence of passion regards little what he says, and is often a liar.

5th. There is need of the gospel. That only can make men free, calm, collected, meek, and lovers of truth; and as every man is by nature the servant of sin, he should without delay seek an interest in that gospel which can alone make him free.

{d} "never in bondage" Le 25:42

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *Whosoever committeth sin*, &c. In this passage Jesus shows them that he did not refer to *political* bondage, but to the slavery of the soul to evil passions and desires.

Is the servant. Is the *slave* of sin. He is bound to it as a slave is to his master.

{e} "Whosever committeth sin" Ro 6:16,20; 2Pe 2:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *The servant abideth not*, &c. The servant does not, of course, remain for ever, or till his death, with his master. If he is disobedient and wicked, the master sells him or turns him away. He is not the heir, and may at any time be expelled from the house of his master. But a son is the heir. He cannot be in this manner cast off or sold. Pie is privileged with the right of remaining in the family. This takes place in common life. So said the Saviour to the Jews: "You, if you are disobedient and rebellious, may at any time be rejected from being the people of God, and be deprived of your peculiar privileges as a nation. You are in the condition of servants, and unless you are made *free* by the gospel, and become entitled to the privilege of the sons of God, you will be cast off like an unfaithful slave." Comp. He 3:5,6.

Abideth not. Remains not, or has not the legal right to remain. He may at any time be rejected or sold.

In the house. In the family of his master.

For ever. During the whole time of his life.

The Son. The heir. He remains, and cannot be sold or cast off.

Ever. Continually. Till the day of his death. This is the privilege of a son, to inherit and dispose of the property.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *If the Son*, &c. The Son of God —heir of all things—who is for ever with God, and who has therefore the right and power to liberate men from their thraldom.

Shall make you free. Shall deliver you from the bondage and dominion of sin.

Free indeed. Truly and really free. You shall be blessed with the most valuable freedom; not from the chains and oppressions of earthly masters and monarchs, but from the bondage of sin.

{g} "the Son" Ga 4:30 {h} "ye shall be free" Isa 61:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *I know*, &c. I admit that you are the descendants of Abraham. Jesus did not wish to call that in question, but he endeavoured to show them that they might be his descendants and still lack entirely his spirit. **See Barnes "Mt 3:9"**.

Ye seek to kill me. Joh 5:16 7:32.

Because my word. My *doctrine*; the principles of my religion. You have not the spirit of my doctrine; you hate it, and you therefore seek to kill me.

Hath no place. That is, you do not embrace my doctrine, or it exerts no influence over you. The original word conveys the notion that there was *no room* for his doctrine in their minds. It met with *obstructions*, and did not penetrate into their hearts. They were so filled with pride, and prejudice, and false notions, that they would not receive his truth; and as they had not his truth or spirit, and could not bear it, they sought to kill him.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *I speak*, &c. Joh 3:11-13.

My Father. God.

Your father. The devil. See Joh 8:44. To see here means to learn of. They had learned of or been taught by the devil, and imitated him.

{i} "I speak that" Joh 14:10,24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *Abraham is our father*. We are descended from Abraham. Of this the Jews boasted much, as being descended from such an illustrious man. **See Barnes "Mt 3:9"**.

As Jesus did not expressly say who he meant (Joh 8:38) when he said they did the works of their father, they obstinately persisted in pretending not to understand him, as if they had said, "We acknowledge no other father but Abraham, and to charge us with being the offspring of another is slander and calumny."

If ye were Abraham's children. The words *sons* and *children* are often used to denote those who imitate another or who have his spirit. **See Barnes "Mt 1:1"**.

Here it means, "if you were worthy to be called the children of Abraham, or if you had his spirit."

{k} "Abraham" Mt 3:9 {l} "If ye were" Ro 2:28,29, 9:7 Ga 3:7,29

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 40

Verse 40. *Ye seek to kill me*. See Joh 8:37.

This did not Abraham. Or such things Abraham did not do. There are two things noted here in which they differed from Abraham:

1st. In seeking to kill him, or in possessing a murderous and bloody purpose.

2nd. In rejecting the truth as God revealed it. Abraham was distinguished for love to man as well as God. He liberated the captives (Ge 14:14-16); was distinguished for hospitality to strangers (Ge 18:1-8); and received the revelations of God to him, however mysterious, or however trying

their observance, Ge 12:1-4 15:4-6; Ge 22:1-24. It was for these things that he is so much commended in the New Testament (Ro 4:9 9:9; Ga 3:6) ; and, as the Jews sought to kill Jesus instead of treating him hospitably and kindly, they showed that they had none of the spirit of Abraham.

{m} "this did not Abraham" Ro 4:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 41

Verse 41. *The deeds of your father*. See Joh 8:38. Jesus repeats the charge, and yet repeats it as if unwilling to name Satan as their father. He chose that they should *infer* whom he meant, rather than bring a charge so direct and repelling. When the Saviour delivered an awful or an offensive truth, he always approached the mind so that the truth might make the deepest impression.

We be not born of fornication. The people still professed not to understand him; and since Jesus had denied that they were the children of *Abraham*, they affected to suppose that he meant they were a mixed, spurious race; that they had no right to the covenant privileges of the Jews; that they were not worshippers of the true God. Hence they said, We are not thus descended. We have the evidence of our genealogy. We are worshippers of the true God, descended from those who acknowledged him, and we acknowledge no other God and Father than him. To be *children of fornication* is an expression denoting in the Scriptures idolatry, or the worship of other gods than the true God, Isa 1:21 57:3; Ho 1:2 2:4.

This they denied. They affirmed that they acknowledged no God for their Father but the true God.

{n} "we have one Father" Isa 63:16 64:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 42

Verse 42. *If God were your Father*. If you had the spirit of God, or love to him, or were worthy to be called his children.

Ye would love me. Jesus was "the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person," Heb 1:3. "Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him," 1Jo 5:1. From this we see,

1st. That all who truly love God, love his Son Jesus Christ.

2nd. That men that pretend that they love God, and reject his Son, have no evidence that they are the friends of God.

3rd. That those who reject the Bible cannot be the friends of God. If they loved God, they would love Him who came from him, and who bears his image.

{o} "If God" Joh 17:8,25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 43

Verse 43. *Why do ye not*. My meaning is clear, if you were disposed to understand me.

Even *because ye cannot hear my word*. The word "hear" in this place is to be understood in the sense of *bear* or *tolerate*, as in Joh 6:60. His doctrine was offensive to them. They hated it, and hence they perverted his meaning, and were resolved *not* to understand him. Their pride, vanity, and wickedness opposed it. The reason why sinners do not understand the Bible and its doctrines is because they cannot *bear* them. They hate them, and their hatred produces want of candour, a disposition to cavil and to pervert the truth, and an obstinate purpose that it *shall not* be applied to their case. Hence they embrace every form of false doctrine, and choose error rather than truth, and darkness rather than light. A *disposition to believe God* is one of the best helps for understanding the Bible.

{q} "even because" Isa 6:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 44

Verse 44. *Ye are of your father the devil*. That is, you have the temper, disposition, or spirit of the devil. You are influenced by him, you imitate him, and ought therefore to be called his children. See also 1Jo 3:8-10 Ac 13:10: "Thou child of the devil."

The devil. **See Barnes "Mt 4:1"**.

The lusts. The desires or the wishes. You do what pleases him. *Ye will do*. The word *will*, here, is not an auxiliary verb. It does not simply express *futurity*, or that such a thing will take place, but it implies an act of volition. This you *will* or *choose* to do. The same mode of speech occurs in Joh 5:40. In what respects they showed that they were the children of the devil he proceeds to state:

1st. in their murderous disposition;

2nd. in rejecting the truth;

3rd. in being favourable to falsehood and error.

He was a murderer from the beginning. That is, from the beginning of the world, or in the first records of him he is thus represented. This refers to the seduction of Adam and Eve. Death was denounced against sin, Ge 2:17. The devil deceived our first parents, and they became subject to death, Ge 3:1-24. As he was the cause why death came into the world, he may be said to have been a murderer in that act, or from the beginning. We see here that the tempter mentioned in Ge 3:1 was Satan or the devil, who is here declared to have been the murderer. Comp. Re 5:12 12:9:

"And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent
called the devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the
whole world."

Besides, Satan has in all ages *deceived* men, and been the cause of their spiritual and eternal death. His work has been to destroy, and in the worst sense of the word he may be said to have been a *murderer*. It was by his instigation, also, that Cain killed his brother, 1Jo 3:12: "Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother." As the Jews endeavoured to kill the Saviour, so they showed that they had the spirit of the devil.

Abode not in the truth. He departed from the truth, or was false and a liar.

No truth in him. That is, he is a liar. It is his nature and his work to deceive.

He speaketh of his own. The word "own" is in the plural number, and means of the things that are appropriate to him, or that belong to his nature. His speaking falsehood is originated by his own propensities or disposition; he utters the expressions of his genuine character.

He is a liar. As when he deceived Adam, and in his deceiving, as far as possible, the world, and dragging man down to perdition.

The father of it. The father or *originator of falsehood*. The word "it" refers to *lie* or *falsehood* understood. From him falsehood first proceeded, and all liars possess his spirit and are under his influence. As the Jews refused to hear the truth which Jesus spoke, so they showed that they were the children of the father of lies.

{r} "Ye are" Mt 13:38 1Jo 3:8 {s} "abode not in the truth" Jude 1:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 45

Verse 45. No Barnes text on this verse.

{t} "because I tell you"

Ga 4:16 2Th 2:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 46

Verse 46. *Which of you convinceth me*? To *convince*, with us, means to satisfy a *man's own mind* of the truth of anything; but this, is not its meaning here. It rather means to *convict*. Which of you can *prove* that I am guilty of sin.

Of sin. The word *sin* here evidently means *error, falsehood*, or *imposture*. It stands opposed to *truth*. The argument of the Saviour is this: A doctrine might be rejected if it could be proved that he that delivered it was an *impostor*; but as you cannot prove this of me, you are bound to receive my words.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 47

Verse 47. *He that is of God*. He that loves, fears, and honours God.

Heareth God's words. Listens to, or attends to the doctrines or commandments of God, as a child who loves his parent will regard and obey his commandments. This is an evidence of true piety. A willingness to receive all that God teaches us, and to obey all his commandments, is an undoubted proof that we are his friends, Joh 14:21 1Jo 2:4, 3:24.

As the Jews did *not* show a readiness to obey the commands of God, it proved that they were not of him, and to this was owing their rejection of the Lord Jesus.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 48

Verse 48. *Say we not well*. Say we not *truly*.

Thou art a Samaritan. This was a term of contempt and reproach. **See Barnes "Joh 4:9"**.

It had the force of charging him with being a *heretic* or a *schismatic*, because the Samaritans were regarded as such.

And hast a devil. See Joh 7:20. This charge they brought against him because he had said that they were not of God, or were not the friends of God. This they regarded as the same as taking sides with the Samaritans, for the question between the Jews and Samaritans was, which of them worshipped God aright, Joh 4:20. As Jesus affirmed that the *Jews* were not of God, and as he, contrary to all *their* views, had gone and preached to the Samaritans (John 4), they regarded it as a proof that he was disposed to take part with them. They also regarded it as evidence that he had a devil. The *devil* was an *accuser* or *calumniator*; and as Jesus charged them with being opposed to God, they considered it as proof that he was influenced by such an evil spirit.

Devil. In the original, *demon*. Not the prince or chief of the devils, but an evil spirit.

{v} "hast not a devil"

@Joh 7:20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 49

Verse 49. *I have not a devil*. To the first part of the charge, that he was a Samaritan, he did not reply. To the other part he replied by saying that he *honoured his Father*. He taught the doctrines that tended to exalt God. He taught that he was holy and true. He sought that men should love him and obey him. All his teaching proved this. An evil spirit would not do this, and this was sufficient proof that he was not influenced by such a spirit.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 50

Verse 50. *Mine own glory*. My own praise or honour. In all his teaching this was true. He did not seek to exalt or to vindicate himself. He was willing to lie under reproach and to be despised. He regarded little, therefore, their taunts and accusations; and even now, he says, he would not seek to vindicate himself.

There is one that seeketh and judgeth. God will take care of my reputation. He seeks my welfare and honour, and I may commit my cause into his hands without attempting my own vindication. From these verses (Joh 8:46-50) we may learn—

1st. That where men have no sound arguments, they attempt to overwhelm their adversaries by calling odious and reproachful names. Accusations of heresy and schism, and the use of reproachful terms, are commonly proof that men are not only under the influence of unchristian feeling, but that they have no sound reasons to support their cause.

2nd. It is right to vindicate ourselves from such charges, but it should not be done by rendering railing for railing.

"In meekness we should instruct those that oppose
themselves, if God peradventure will give them
repentance to the acknowledging of the truth,"
2Ti 2:25.

3rd. We should not regard it as necessarily dishonourable if we lie under reproach. If we have a good conscience, if we have examined for ourselves, if we are conscious that we are seeking the glory of God, we Should be willing, as Jesus was, to bear reproach, believing that God will in due time avenge us, and bring forth our righteousness as the light, and our judgment as the noon-day, Ps 37:6.

{w} "I seek not" Joh 5:41

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 51

Verse 51. *If a man keep my saying*. If he believes on me and obeys my commandments.

He shall never see death. To *see death*, or to *taste of death*, is the same as *to die*, Lu 2:26 Mt 16:28; Mr 9:1.

The sense of this passage is, "He shall obtain eternal life, or he shall be raised up to that life where there shall be no death." See Joh 6:49,50, 3:36 5:24, 11:25,26.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 52

Verse 52. *Hast a devil*. Art deranged. Because he affirmed a thing which they supposed to be contrary to all experience, and to be impossible.

{x} "Abraham is dead" Zec 1:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 53

Verse 53. *Whom makest thou thyself*? Or, who dost thou pretend to be? Although the greatest of the prophets have died, yet *thou*—a Nazarene, a Samaritan, and a devil—pretendest that thou canst keep thy followers from dying! It would have been scarcely possible to ask a question implying more contempt and scorn.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 54

Verse 54. *If I honour myself*. If I commend or praise myself. If I had no other honour and sought no other honour than that which proceeds from a desire to glorify myself.

My honour is nothing. My commendation or praise of myself would be of no value. **See Barnes "Joh 5:31".**

{y} "If I honour" Joh 5:31,41 {z} "it is my Father" Joh 17:1.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 55

Verse 55. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 56

Verse 56. *Your father Abraham*. The testimony of Abraham is adduced by Jesus because the Jews considered it to be a signal honour to be his descendants, Joh 8:39. As they regarded the sayings and deeds of Abraham as peculiarly illustrious and worthy of their imitation, so they were bound, in consistency, to listen to what he had said of the Messiah.

Rejoiced. This word includes the notion of *desire* as well as *rejoicing*. It denotes that act when, impelled with strong desire for an object, we *leap forward* toward its attainment with joy; and it expresses —

1st. The fact that this was an object that filled the heart of Abraham with joy; and

2nd. That he *earnestly* desired to see it. We have no single word which expresses the meaning of the original.

In Mt 5:12 it is rendered "be exceeding glad."

To see. Rather, he earnestly and joyfully desired *that he might see*. To see here means to have a view or distinct conceptions of. It does not imply that Abraham *expected* that the Messiah would appear during his life, but that he might have a representation of, or a clear description and foresight of the times of the Messiah.

My day. The day of the Messiah. The word "day," here, is used to denote the *time*, the appearance, the advent, and the manner of life of the Messiah. Lu 17:26: "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man." See Joh 9:4 Mt 11:12. The day of judgment is also called *the day* of the Son of man, because it will be a remarkable time of his manifestation. Or perhaps in both those cases it is called HIS day because he will act the most conspicuous part; his person and work will characterize the times; as we speak of the days of Noah, &c., because he was the most conspicuous person of the age.

He saw it. See Heb 11:13: "These all died in faith, not having received (obtained the fulfillment of) the promises, *but having seen them afar off*, and were persuaded of them," &c. Though Abraham was not permitted to live to see the times of the Messiah, yet he was permitted to have prophetic view of him, and also of the design of his coming; for,

1st. God foretold his advent clearly to him, Ge 12:3 18:18 Comp. Ga 3:16: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ."

2nd. Abraham was permitted to have a view of the death of the Messiah as a sacrifice for sin, represented by the command to offer Isaac, Ge 22:1-13. Comp. Heb 11:19. The death of the Messiah as a sacrifice for the sins of men was that which characterized his work— which distinguished his times and his advent, and this was represented to Abraham clearly by the command to offer his son. From this arose the proverb among the Jews (Ge 22:14), "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen," or it shall be provided for; a proverb evidently referring to the offering of the Messiah on the mount for the sins of men. By this event Abraham was impressively told that a parent would not be required to offer in sacrifice his sons for the sins of his soul—a thing which has often been done by heathen; but that God would provide a victim, and in due time an offering would be made for the world.

Was glad. Was glad in view of the promise, and that he was permitted so distinctly to see it represented. If the father of the faithful rejoiced so much to see him afar off, how should we rejoice that he has come; that we are not required to look into a distant futurity, but know that he has appeared; that we may learn clearly the manner of his coming, his doctrine, and the design of his death! Well might the eyes of a patriarch rejoice to be permitted to look in any manner on the sublime and glorious scene of the Son of God dying for the sins of men. And our chief honour and happiness is to contemplate the amazing scene of man's redemption, where the Saviour groaned and died to save a lost and ruined race.

{a} "he saw *it* and was glad" Ge 22:13,14; Heb 11:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 57

Verse 57. *Fifty years old*. Jesus is supposed to have been at this time about thirty-three. It is remarkable that when he was so young they should have mentioned the number fifty, but they probably designed to prevent the possibility of a reply. Had they said *forty* they might have apprehended a reply, or could not be so certain that they were correct.

Hast thou seen Abraham? It is remarkable, also, that they perverted his words. His affirmation was not that he had seen Abraham, but that Abraham had seen his day. The design of Jesus was to show that he was greater than Abraham, Joh 8:53. To do this, he says that Abraham, great as he was, earnestly desired to see his time, thus acknowledging his inferiority to the Messiah. The Jews perverted this, and affirmed that it was impossible that he and Abraham should have seen each other.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 58

Verse 58. *Verily, verily*. This is an expression used only in John. It is a strong affirmation denoting particularly the great importance of what was about to be affirmed. **See Barnes "Joh 3:5"**.

Before Abraham was. Before Abraham lived.

I am. The expression I *am*, though in the *present* tense, is clearly designed to refer to a past time. Thus, in Ps 90:2, "From everlasting to everlasting thou *art* God." Applied to God, it denotes continued existence without respect to time, so far as he is concerned. We divide time into the past, the present, and the future. The expression, applied to God, denotes that he does not measure his existence in this manner, but that the word by which we express the present denotes his continued and unchanging existence. Hence he assumes it as his name, "I AM," and "I AM THAT I AM," Ex 3:14. Comp. Isa 44:6 47:8. There is a remarkable similarity between the expression employed by Jesus in this place and that used in Exodus to denote the name of God. The *manner* in which Jesus used it would strikingly suggest the application of the same language to God. The question here was about his pre-existence. The objection of the Jews was that he was not fifty years old, and could not, therefore, have seen Abraham. Jesus replied to that that he existed before Abraham. As in his human nature he was not yet fifty years old, and could not, as a man, have *existed before Abraham*, this declaration must be referred to another nature; and the passage proves that, while he was a man, he was also endowed with *another nature* existing before Abraham, and to which he applied the term (familiar to the Jews as expressive of the existence of God) I AM; and this declaration corresponds to the affirmation of John (Joh 1:1), that he was in the beginning with God, and was God. This affirmation of Jesus is one of the proofs on which John relies to prove that he was the Messiah (Joh 20:31), to establish which was the design of writing this book.

{b} "I am" Ex 3:14 Is 43:13; Joh 1:1,2; Col 1:17 Re 1:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 8 - Verse 59

Verse 59. *Then took they up stones*. It seems they understood him as blaspheming, and proceeded, even without a form of trial, to stone him as such, because this was the punishment prescribed in the law for blasphemy, Le 24:16. See Joh 10:31. The fact that the *Jews* understood him in this sense is strong proof that his words *naturally* conveyed the idea that he was divine. This was in the temple. Herod the Great had not yet completed its repairs, and Dr. Lightfoot has remarked that stones would be lying around the temple in repairing it, which the people could easily use in their indignation.

Jesus hid himself. See Lu 4:30. That is, he either by a miracle rendered himself invisible, or he so mixed with the multitude that he was concealed from them and escaped. Which is the meaning cannot be determined.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 1

Verse 1. *As Jesus passed by*. As he was leaving the temple, Joh 8:59. This man was in the way in which Jesus was going to escape from the Jews.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Master, who did sin*? &c. It was a universal opinion among the Jews that *calamities* of all kinds were the effects of sin. **See Barnes "Lu 13:1-4"**.

The case, however, of this man was that of one that was blind from his *birth*, and it was a question which the disciples could not determine whether it was *his* fault or that of his parents. Many of the Jews, as it appears from their writings (see Lightfoot), believed in the doctrine of the *transmigration*, of souls; or that the soul of a man, in consequence of sin, might be compelled to pass into other bodies, and be punished there. They also believed that an infant might sin before it was born (see Lightfoot), and that consequently this blindness might have come upon the child as a consequence of that. It was also a doctrine with many that the crime of the parent might be the cause of deformity in the child, particularly the violation of the command in Le 20:18.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Neither hath this man sinned*, &c. That is, his blindness is not the effect of his sin, or that of his parents. Jesus did not, evidently, mean to affirm that he or his parents were without any sin, but that this blindness was not the effect of sin. This answer is to be interpreted by the nature of the question submitted to him. The sense is, "his blindness is not to be traced to any fault of his or of his parents."

But that the works of God. This thing has happened that it might appear how great and wonderful are the works of God. By *the works of God*, here, is evidently intended the miraculous power which God would put forth to heal the man, or rather, perhaps, the *whole* that happened to him in the course of divine providence—first his blindness, as an act of his providence, and then his *healing* him, as an act of mercy and power. It has *all* happened, not by the fault of his parents or of himself, but by the wise arrangement of God, that it *might be seen* in what way calamities come, and in what way God meets and relieves them. And from this we may learn,

1st. To pity and not to despise and blame those who are afflicted with any natural deformity or calamity. While the Jews regarded it as the effect of sin, they looked upon it without compassion. Jesus tells us that it is not the fault of man, but proceeds from the wise arrangement of God.

2nd. All suffering in the world is not the effect of sin. In this case it is expressly so declared; and there may be many modes of suffering that cannot be traced to any particular transgression. We should be cautious, therefore, in affirming that there can be no calamity in the universe but by transgression.

3rd. We see the wise and wonderful arrangement of Divine Providence. It is a part of his great plan to adapt his mercies to the woes of men; and often calamity, want, poverty, and sickness are permitted, that he may show the provisions of his mercy, that he may teach us to prize his blessings, and that deep-felt gratitude for deliverance may bind us to him.

4th. Those who are afflicted with blindness, deafness, or any deformity, should be submissive to God. It is his appointment, and is right and best. God does no wrong, and the universe will, when *all* his works are seen, feel and know that he is just.

{a} "that the works of God" Joh 11:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *The works of him*, &c. The works of beneficence and mercy which God has commissioned me to do, and which are expressive of his goodness and power. This was on the Sabbath-day (Joh 9:14); and though Jesus had endangered his life (Joh 5:1-16) by working a similar miracle on the Sabbath, yet he knew that this was the will of God that he should do good, and that he would take care of his life.

While it is day. The *day* is the proper time for work— night is not. This is the general, the universal sentiment. While the day lasts it is proper to labour. The term *day* here refers to the *life* of Jesus, and to the opportunity thus afforded of working miracles. His life was drawing to a close. It was probably but about six months after this when he was put to death. The meaning is, My life is near its close. While it continues I must employ it in doing the works which God has appointed.

The night cometh. *Night* here represents death. It was drawing near, and he must therefore do what he had to do soon. It is not improbable, also, that this took place near the close of the Sabbath, as the sun was declining, and the shades of evening about to appear. This supposition will give increased beauty to the language which follows.

No man can work. It is literally true that *day* is the appropriate time for toil, and that the *night of death* is a time when nothing can be done. Ec 9:10: "There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave." From this we may learn,

1st. That it is our duty to employ all our time in doing the will of God.

2nd. That we should seek for opportunities of doing good, and suffer none to pass without improving it. *We go but once through the world, and we cannot return to correct errors, and recall neglected opportunities of doing our duty*.

3rd. We should be especially diligent in doing our Lord's work from the fact that the night of death is coming. This applies to the aged, for they must soon die; and to the young, for they *may* soon be called away from this world to eternity.

{b} "I am the light" Joh 1:5,9, 8:12 12:35,46

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *As long as I am in the world*, &c. As the sun is the natural light of the world, even while it sinks away to the west, so am I, although my days are drawing to a close, the light of the spiritual world. What a sublime description is this! Jesus occupied the same place, filled the same space, shed his beams as far, in the moral world, as the sun does on natural objects; and as all is dark when that sun sinks to the west, so when he withdraws from the souls of men all is midnight and gloom. When we look on the sun in the firmament or in the west, let us remember that such is the great Sun of Righteousness in regard to our souls; that his shining is as necessary, and his beams as mild and lovely on the soul, as is the shining of the natural sun to illumine the material creation. **See Barnes "Joh 1:4".**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *And made clay*, &c. Two reasons may be assigned for making this clay, and anointing the eyes with it. One is, that the Jews regarded *spittle* as medicinal to the eyes when diseased, and that they forbade the use of medicines on the Sabbath. They regarded the Sabbath so strictly that they considered the preparation and use of medicines as contrary to the law. Especially it was particularly forbidden among them to use spittle on that day to heal diseased eyes. See instances in Lightfoot. Jesus, therefore, by making this spittle, showed them that their manner of keeping the day was superstitious, and that he dared to do a thing which they esteemed unlawful. He showed that *their* interpretation of the law of the Sabbath was contrary to the intention of God, and that his disciples were not bound by their notions of the sacredness of that day. Another reason may have been that it was common for prophets to use some symbolical or expressive action in working miracles. Thus Elisha commanded his staff to be laid on the face of the child that he was about to restore to life, 2Ki 4:29. **See Barnes "Isa 8:18"**.

In such instances the prophet showed that the miracle was wrought by power communicated through *him*; so, in this case, Jesus by this act showed to the blind man that the power of *healing* came from him who anointed his eyes. He could not see him, and the act of anointing convinced him of what might have been known without such an act, could he have *seen* him— that Jesus had power to give sight to the blind.

{c} "he spat on the ground" Mr 8:23 {1} "anointed", or "spread the clay upon the eyes of the blind man"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Wash in the pool*. In the *fountain*.

Of Siloam. **See Barnes "Lu 13:4"**.

By interpretation, Sent. From the Hebrew verb *to send*—perhaps because it was regarded as a blessing *sent* or given by God. *Why* Jesus sent him to wash there is not known. It is clear that the waters had no efficacy themselves to open the eyes of a blind man, but it is probable that he directed him to go there to *test his obedience*, and to see whether he was disposed to obey him in a case where he could not see the reason of it. An instance somewhat similar occurs in the case of Naaman, the Syrian leper, 2Ki 5:10. The proud Syrian despised the direction; the humble blind man obeyed and was healed. This case shows us that we should obey the commands of God, however unmeaning or mysterious they may appear. God has always a reason for all that he directs us to do, and our faith and willingness to obey him are often tried when we can see little of the reason of his requirements. In the first edition of these Notes it was remarked that the word "Siloam" is from the same verb as *Shiloh* in Ge 49:10. "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah—until Shiloh (that is, the Sent of God; the Messiah) come," and that John in this remark probably had reference to this prophecy. This was incorrect; and there is no evidence that John in this passage had reference to that prophecy, or that this fountain was emblematic of the Messiah. The original words Siloam and Shiloh are from different roots and mean different things. The former, Siloam (^greek^), is derived from ^greek^ (*to send*); the latter, *Shiloh* (^greek^), means *rest* or *quiet*, and was given to the

Messiah, probably, because he would bring *rest*—that is, he would be the "prince of peace." Comp. Isa 9:6.

{d} "pool of Siloam" Ne 3:15 {e} "He went his way" 2Ki 5:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *The neighbours*, &c. This man seems to have been one who attracted considerable attention. The number of persons totally blind in any community is very small, and it is possible that this was the on]y blind beggar in Jerusalem. The case was one, therefore, likely to attract attention, and one where there could be no imposture, as he was generally known.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 9

Verse 9. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 11

Verse 11. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

{f} "A man that is called Jesus" Joh 9:6,7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 12

Verse 12. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *To the Pharisees*. To the members of the Sanhedrim. They did this, doubtless, to accuse Jesus of having violated the Sabbath, and not, as they ought to have done, to examine into the evidence that he was from God.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 14

Verse 14. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *The Pharisees asked him how*, &c. The proper question to have been asked in the case was whether he had *in fact* done it, and not in *what way*. The question, also, about a sinner's conversion is whether in fact it has been done, and not about the *mode* or *manner* in which it is effected; yet it is remarkable that no small part of the disputes and inquiries among men are about the *mode* in which the Spirit renews the heart, and not about the evidence that it is done.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *This man is not of God*. Is not *sent* by God, or cannot be a *friend* of God.

Because he keepeth not the sabbath-day. They assumed that *their views* of the Sabbath were correct, and by *those views* they judged others. It did not occur to them to inquire whether the interpretation which they put on the law might not be erroneous. Men often assume their own interpretations of the Scriptures to be infallible, and then judge and condemn all others by those interpretations.

A sinner. A deceiver; an impostor. They reasoned conclusively that God would not give the power of working such miracles to an impostor. The miracles were such as could not be denied, nor did even the enemies of Jesus attempt to deny them or to explain them away. They were open, public, frequent. And this shows that they *could* not deny their reality. Had it been possible, they would have done it; but the reality and power of those miracles had already made a party in favour of Jesus, even in the Sanhedrim (Joh 7:50 12:42), and those opposed to them *could* not deny their *reality*. It may be added that the early opponents of Christianity never denied the reality of the miracles performed by the Saviour and his apostles. Celsus, Porphyry, and Julianas acute foes of the gospel as perhaps have ever lived—never call this in question. They attempted to show that it was by some evil influence, or to account for the miracles in some other way than by admitting the divine origin of the Christian religion, but about the *facts* they had no question. Were they not as well qualified to judge about those *facts* as men are now? They lived near the time; had every opportunity to examine the evidence; were skilful and talented disputants; and if they *could* have denied the reality of the miracles they would have done it. It is scarcely possible to conceive of more conclusive proof that those miracles were really performed, and, if so, then the Lord Jesus was sent by God.

A division. Greek, "A schism." A separation into two parties.

{g} "How can a man" Joh 9:31 3:2 {h} "And there was a division" Joh 7:12,43

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *What sayest thou of him*? &c. The translation here expresses the sense obscurely. The meaning is, "What sayest thou of him for giving thee sight ?" (Campbell); or, "What opinion of him hath this work of power and mercy to thee wrought in thee?" (Hammond).

He is a prophet. That is, "I think that the power to work such a miracle proves that he is sent from God. And though this has been done on the Sabbath, yet it proves that he must have been sent by God, for such a power could never have proceeded from man." We see here,

1st. A noble confession made by the man who was healed, in the face of the rulers of the people, and when he doubtless knew that they were opposed to Jesus. We should never be ashamed, before any class of men, to acknowledge the favours which we have received from Christ, and to express our belief of his power and of the truth of his doctrine.

2nd. The works of Jesus were such as to prove that he came from God, however much he may have appeared to oppose the previous notions of men, the interpretation of the law by the Pharisees, or the deductions of reason. Men should *yield* their own views of religion to the teachings of God, and believe that he that could open the eyes of the blind and raise the dead was fitted to declare his will.

{i} "He is a prophet" Joh 4:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 18

Verses 18,19. *Is this your son*? &c. The Pharisees proposed *three* questions to the parents, by which they hoped to convict the man of falsehood.

1st. Whether he was their son?

2nd. Whether they would affirm that he was *born* blind? and,

3rd. Whether they knew by what means he now saw? They evidently intended to intimidate the parents, so that they might give an answer to one of these questions that would convict the man of deception. We see here the art to which men will resort rather than admit the truth. Had they been half as much disposed to believe on Jesus as they were to disbelieve, there would have been no difficulty in the case. And so with all men: were they as much *inclined* to embrace the truth as they are to reject it, there would soon be an end of cavils.

{k} "did not believe" Isa 26:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 19

Verse 19. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 20

Verses 20-22. *His parents answered*, &c. To the first *two* questions they answered without hesitation. They knew that he was their son, and that he was born blind. The third question they *could not* positively answer, as they had not witnessed the means of the cure, and were afraid to express their belief. It appears that they had themselves no doubt, but they were not eye-witnesses, and could not be therefore legal evidence.

He is of age. He is of sufficient age to give testimony. Among the Jews this age was fixed at thirteen years.

If any man did confess that he was Christ. Did acknowledge that he was the Messiah. They had prejudged the case, and were determined to put down all free inquiry, and not to be convinced by any means.

Put out of the synagogue. This took place in the *temple*, or near the temple. It does not refer, therefore, to any *immediate* and violent putting forth from the place where they were. It refers to *excommunication* from the synagogue. Among the Jews there were two grades of excommunication; the one for lighter offences, of which they mentioned twenty-four causes; the other for greater offences. The first excluded a man for thirty days from the privilege of entering a synagogue, and from coming nearer to his wife or friends than 4 cubits. The other was a solemn exclusion for ever from the worship of the synagogue, attended with awful maledictions and curses, and an exclusion from all intercourse with the people. This was called the *curse*, and so thoroughly excluded the person from all communion whatever with his countrymen, that they were not allowed to sell to him anything, even the necessaries of life (Buxtorf). It is probable that this *latter* punishment was what they intended to inflict if anyone should confess that Jesus was the Messiah; and it was the fear of this terrible punishment that deterred his parents from expressing their opinion.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 21

Verse 21. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 22

Verse 22. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{l} "they feared the Jews" Pr 29:25 Joh 7:13, 12:42
{m} "he should be put out of the synagogue" Joh 9:34 16:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 23

Verse 23. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Give God the praise*. This expression seems to be a form of administering an oath. It is used in Jos 7:19, when Achan was put on his oath and entreated to confess his guilt. Joshua said, "My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel (in the Greek of the Septuagint, the very expression used in John, `Give God the praise'), and make confession unto him." It is equivalent to an adjuration in the presence of God to acknowledge the truth; as the truth would be giving God praise, confessing the case before him, and trusting to his mercy. Comp. 1Sa 6:5. The meaning here is not "give God praise for healing you," for they were not willing to admit that *he had been cured* (Joh 9:18), but *confess* that there is imposture in the case; that you have declared to us a falsehood, that you have endeavoured to impose on us; and by thus confessing your sin, give praise and honour to God, who condemns all imposture and false-hood, and whom you will thus acknowledge to be *right* in your condemnation. To induce him to do this, they added that they *knew*, or were satisfied that Jesus was a sinner. As they considered *that point* settled, they urged him to confess that he had attempted to impose on them.

We know. We have settled that. He has broken the Sabbath, and that leaves no doubt.

A sinner. A violator of the law respecting the Sabbath, and an impostor. Joh 9:16.

{n} "Give God the praise" Jos 7:19 Ps 50:14,15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not*. The man had just said that he believed Jesus to be *a prophet*, Joh 9:17. By his saying that he did not know whether he was a sinner *may be* meant that *though* he might be a prophet, yet that he might not be perfect; or that it did not become him, being an obscure and unlearned man, to attempt to determine that question. What follows shows that he did not believe that he was a sinner, and these words were probably spoken in irony to deride the Pharisees. They were perverse and full of cavils, and were determined not to believe. The man reminded them that the question was not whether Jesus was a sinner; that, though that *might* be, yet it did not settle the other question about opening his eyes, which was the chief point of the inquiry.

One thing I know, &c. About this *he* could have no doubt. He disregarded, therefore, their cavils. We may learn, also, here,

1st. That this declaration may be made by every converted sinner. He may not be able to meet the cavils of others. He may not be able to tell *how* he was converted. It is enough if he can say, "I *was* a sinner, but now love God; I *was* in darkness, but have now been brought to the light of truth."

2nd. We should not be *ashamed* of the fact that we are made to see by the Son of God. No cavil or derision of men should deter us from such an avowal.

3rd. Sinners are perpetually shifting the *real* point of inquiry. They do not inquire into *the facts*. They *assume* that a thing cannot be true, and then argue as if that was a conceded point. The proper way in religion is first to inquire *into the facts*, and then account for them as we can.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *How opened he thine eyes*? The reason why they asked this so often was doubtless to attempt to draw him into a contradiction; either to intimidate him, or throw him off his guard, so that he might be detected in denying what he had before affirmed. But God gave to this poor man grace and strength to make a bold confession of the truth, and sufficient common sense completely to confound his proud and subtle examiners.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 27

Verse 27. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *Thou art his disciple*. This they cast at him as a reproach. His defence of Jesus they regarded as proof that he was his follower, and this they now attempted to show was inconsistent with being a friend of Moses and his law. Moses had given the law respecting tho Sabbath; Jesus had healed a man contrary, in *their* view, to the law of Moses. They therefore held Jesus to be a violater and contemner of the law of Moses, and of course that his followers were also.

We are Moses' disciples. We acknowledge the authority of the law of Moses, which they alleged Jesus has broken by healing on that day.

{o} "reviled" 1Pe 2:23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *We know*, &c. We know that God commanded Moses to deliver the law. In that they were correct; but they assumed *their* interpretation of the law to be infallible, and hence condemned Jesus.

As for *this* fellow. The word *fellow* is not in the original. It is simply "this." The word *fellow* implies contempt, which it cannot be proved they intended to express.

Whence he is. We know not his origin, his family, or his home. The contrast with the preceding member of the sentence shows that they intended to express their belief that he was not from God. They knew not whether he was mad, whether he was instigated by the devil, or whether he spoke of himself. See Joh 7:27 8:48-52.

{p} "We know" Ps 103:7 Heb 3:5 {q} "we know not" Joh 8:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *A marvellous thing*. This is wonderful and amazing.

Know not from whence he is. That you cannot perceive that he who has wrought such a miracle must be from God.

{r} "Why, herein" Joh 3:10 {s} "yet he hath" Ps 119:18 Isa 29:18,19 35:5; 2Co 4:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *Now we know*. That is, it is an admitted or conceded point. No one calls it into question.

God heareth not. When a miracle was performed it was customary to invoke the aid of God. Jesus often did this himself, and it was by his power only that prophets and apostles could perform miracles. The word "heareth" in this place is to be understood as referring to such cases. God will not "hear"—that is, answer.

Sinners. Impostors. False prophets and pretenders to divine revelation. See Joh 9:24. The meaning of this verse is, therefore, "It is well understood that God will not give miraculous aid to impostors and false prophets," We may remark here,

1st. That the passage has no reference to the prayers which sinners make for salvation.

2nd. If it had it would not be of course true. It was the mere opinion of this man, in accordance with the common sentiment of the Jews, and there is no evidence that he was inspired.

3rd. The only prayers which God will not hear are those which are offered in mockery, or when the man loves his sins and is un- willing to give them up. Such prayers God will not hear, Ps 66:18: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me;" Isa 1:14,15; Job 27:9 Jer 11:11; Eze 8:18 Mic 3:4; Zec 8:13.

A worshipper. A sincere worshipper; one who fears, loves, and adores him.

Doeth his will. Obeys his commandments. This is infallibly true. The Scripture abounds with promises to such that God will hear their prayer. See Ps 34:15 Mt 7:7,8.

{t} "God heareth not sinners" Job 27:9 Ps 66:18; Pr 28:9 Isa 1:15
Jer 11:11 Eze 8:18; Mic 3:4 Zec 7:13

{u} "but if any man" Ps 34:15 Pr 15:29

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *Since the world began*. Neither Moses nor any of the prophets had ever done this. No instance of this kind is recorded in the Old Testament. As this was a miracle which had never been performed, the man argued justly that he who had done it must be from God. As Jesus did it not by surgical operations, but by *clay*, it showed that he had power of working miracles by any means. It may be also remarked that the restoration of sight to the blind by surgical operations was never performed until the year 1728. Dr. Cheselden, an English surgeon, was the first who attempted

it successfully, who was enabled to remove a *cataract* from the eye of a young man, and to restore sight. This fact shows the difficulty of the operation when the most skilful natural means are employed, and the greatness of the miracle performed by the Saviour.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *Could do nothing*. Could do no such work as this. This reasoning was conclusive. The fact that Jesus could perform miracles like this was full proof that never has been and never can be refuted. One such miracle proves that he was from God. But Jesus gave *many* similar proofs, and thus put his divine mission beyond the possibility of doubt.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *Wast born in sins*. That is, thou wast born in a state of blindness—a state which proved that either thou or thy parents had sinned, and that this was the punishment for it. See Joh 9:2. Thou wast cursed by God with blindness for crime, and yet thou dost set up for a religious teacher! When men have no arguments, they attempt to supply their place by revilings. When they are pressed by argument, they reproach their adversaries with crime, and especially with being *blind, perverse, heretical, disposed to speculation, and regardless of the authority of God*. And especially do they consider it great presumption that one of an inferior age or rank should presume to advance an argument in opposition to prevailing opinions.

They cast him out. Out of the synagogue. They *excommunicated* him. **See Barnes "Joh 9:22"**.

{v} "Thou was altogether" Joh 9:2 {w} "they" Isa 66:5 {2} "cast out", or "excommunicated"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *Dost thou believe on the Son of God*? Hitherto he had understood little of the true character of Jesus. He believed that he had *power* to heal him, and he *inferred* that he must be a prophet, Joh 9:17. He believed according to the *light he had*, and he *now* showed that he was prepared to believe all that Jesus said. This is the nature of true faith. It believes all that God has made known, and it is *prepared* to receive all that he *will* teach. The phrase *Son of God* here is equivalent to *the Messiah*. **See Barnes "Mt 8:29"**.

{x} "believe" 1Jo 5:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *Who is he*? It is probable that the man did not know that ho who now addressed him was the same who had healed him. He had not yet *seen him* (Joh 9:7), but he was prepared to acknowledge him when he did see him. He inquired, therefore, *who* the person was, or wished that he might be pointed out to him, that he *might* see him. This passage shows that he was *disposed* to believe, and had a strong desire to see and hear the Son of God.

Lord. This word here, as in many other instances in the New Testament, means "Sir." It is clear that the man did not know that it was the Lord Jesus that addressed him, and he therefore replied to him in the common language of respect, and asked him to point out to him the Son of God. The word translated "Lord" here is rendered "Sir" in Joh 4:11 Joh 20:15 12:21; Ac 16:30 Mt 27:63.

It should have been also here, and in many other places.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 37

Verse 37. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *I believe*. This was the overflowing expression of gratitude and faith.

And he worshipped him. He did homage to him as the Messiah and as his gracious benefactor. **See Barnes "Mt 2:2"**.

This shows,

1st. That it is right and natural to express thanks and praise for mercies.

2nd. All blessings should lead us to pour out our gratitude to Jesus, for it is from him that we receive them.

3rd. Especially is this true when the *mind* has been enlightened, when our spiritual eyes have been opened, and we are permitted to see the glories of the heavenly world.

4th. It is right to pay homage or worship to Jesus. He forbade it not. He received it on earth, and for all mercies of providence and redemption we should pay to him the tribute of humble and grateful hearts. The Syriac renders the phrase, "he worshipped him," thus: "and, casting himself down, he adored him." The Persic, "and he bowed down and adored Christ." The Arabic, "and he adored him." The Latin Vulgate, "and, falling down, he adored him."

{a} "For judgment" Joh 5:22,27, 12:47

{b} "they which see not" 1Pe 2:9 {c} "they which see might" Mt 14:33

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *For judgment*. The word *judgment*, here, has been by some understood in the sense of condemnation— "The effect of my coming is to condemn the world." But this meaning does not

agree with those places where Jesus says that he came not to condemn the world, Joh 3:17 12:47, 5:45.

To *judge* is to express *an opinion in a judicial manner*, and also to express any sentiment about any person or thing, Joh 7:24 5:30; Lu 8:43.

The meaning here may be thus expressed:

"I came to *declare the condition of men*; to show them
their duty and danger. My coming will have this effect,
that some will be reformed and saved, and some more
deeply condemned."

That they, &c. The Saviour does not affirm that this was the *design* of his coming, but that such would be the effect or result. He came to declare the truth, and the effect *would be*, &c. Similar instances of expression frequently occur. Comp. Mt 11:25 10:34: "I came not to send peace, but a sword "—that is, such will be the effect of my coming.

That they which see not. Jesus took this illustration, as he commonly did, from the case before him; but it is evident that he meant it to be taken in a *spiritual sense*. He refers to those who are blind and ignorant by sin; whose minds have been darkened, but who are desirous of seeing.

Might see. Might discern the path of truth, of duty, and of salvation, Joh 10:9.

They which see. They who suppose they see; who are proud, self-confident, and despisers of the truth. Such were evidently the Pharisees.

Might be made blind. Such would be the *effect* of his preaching.

It would exasperate them, and their pride and opposition to him would confirm them more and more in their erroneous views. This is always the effect of truth. Where it does not *soften* it *hardens* the heart; where it does not convert, it sinks into deeper blindness and condemnation.

{a} "For judgment" Joh 5:22,27, 12:47

{b} "they which see not" 1Pe 2:9 {c} "they which see" Mt 13:13 Joh 3:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 40

Verse 40. No Barnes text on this verse.

{d} "Are we blind also"

Ro 2:19 Re 3:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 9 - Verse 41

Verse 41. *If ye were blind*. If you were *really* blind—had had no *opportunities* of learning the truth. If you were truly ignorant, and were willing to confess it, and to come to me for instruction.

No sin. You would not be guilty. Sin is measured by the *capacities* or *ability* of men, and by their opportunities of knowing the truth. If men had no *ability* to do the will of God, they could

incur no blame. If they have all proper *ability*, and no *disposition*, God holds them to be guilty. This passage teaches conclusively,

1st. That men are not condemned for what they cannot do.

2nd. That the reason why they are condemned is that they are not disposed to receive the truth.

3rd. That pride and self-confidence are the sources of condemnation.

4th. That if men are condemned, they, and not God, will be to blame.

We see. We have knowledge of the law of God. This they had pretended when they professed to understand the law respecting the Sabbath better than Jesus, and had condemned him for healing on that day.

Your sin remaineth. You *are* guilty, and your sin is unpardoned. Men's sins will always be unpardoned while they are proud, and self-sufficient, and confident of their own wisdom. If they will come with humble hearts and confess their ignorance, God will forgive, enlighten, and guide them in the path to heaven.

{e} "If ye were blind" Joh 15:22,24 {f} "therefore" Isa 5:21 Lu 18:14; 1Jo 1:8-10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 1

Verse 1. *Verily, verily*. **See Barnes "Joh 3:3"**.

I say unto you. Some have supposed that what follows here was delivered on some other occasion than the one mentioned in the last chapter; but the expression *verily, verily*, is one which is not used at the *commencement* of a discourse, and the discourse itself seems to be a continuation of what was said before. The Pharisees professed to be the *guides or shepherds* of the people. Jesus, in the close of the last chapter, had charged them with being *blind*, and of course of being unqualified to lead the people. He proceeds here to state the character of a *true* shepherd, to show what was a hireling, and to declare that *he* was the true shepherd and guide of his people. This is called (Joh 10:6) *a parable*, and it is an eminently beautiful illustration of the office of the Messiah, drawn from an employment well known in Judea. The Messiah was predicted under the image of a *shepherd*, Eze 34:23 37:24; Zec 13:7.

Hence at the close of the discourse they asked him whether he were the Messiah, Joh 10:24.

Into the sheepfold. The sheepfold was an inclosure made in fields where the sheep were collected by night to defend them from robbers, wolves, &c. It was not commonly covered, as the seasons in Judea were mild. By the figure here we are to understand the Jewish people, or the church of God, which is often likened to a flock, Eze 34:1-19 Jer 23:1-4 Zec 13:1. By the *door*, here, is meant the Lord Jesus Christ, Joh 10:7,9. He is"the way, the truth, and the life," Joh 14:6. And, as the only proper way of entering the fold was by the door, so the only way of entering the church of God is by believing on him and obeying his commandments. The particular application of this place, however, is to *religious teachers*, who cannot enter properly on the duties of teaching and guarding the flock except by the Lord Jesus—that is, in the way which he has appointed. The Pharisees claimed to be *pastors*, but not under his appointment. They entered some other way. The true *pastors*

of the church are those who enter by the influences of the Spirit of Jesus, and in the manner which he has appointed.

Some other way. Either at a window or over the wall.

A thief. One who silently and secretly takes away the property of another.

A robber. One who does it by *violence* or *bloodshed*. Jesus here designates those pastors or ministers of religion who are influenced not by love to *him*, but who seek the office from ambition, or the love of power, or wealth, or ease; who come, not to promote the welfare of the church, but to promote their own interests. Alas! in all churches there have been many—many who for no better ends have sought the pastoral office. To all such Jesus gives the names of *thieves* and *robbers*.

{a} "He that entereth not" Ro 10:15 Heb 5:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *He that entereth by the door*. This was the way in which a shepherd had access to his flock. In Joh 10:7 Jesus says he is the door. In this place he refers to those who *by him*—that is, in accordance with his spirit and law—become ministers of religion.

Is the shepherd of the sheep. Christ does not here refer to himself, for he is the way or door by which *others* enter; but he refers to all the ministers of the gospel who have access to the church *by* him. In the original, the article "the" is wanting before the word shepherd—"is a *shepherd*." By his entering in this manner he shows that he is a shepherd— one who cares for his flock, and does not come to kill and destroy.

{b} "the door is the shepherd" Joh 10:7,9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *To him the porter openeth*. The porter is the doorkeeper. It seems that the more wealthy Jews who owned flocks employed some person to take charge of the flock. At first *all* shepherds attended their flocks personally by day and by night, and this continued to be commonly the practice, but not always.

The sheep hear his voice. The voice of the shepherd. A flock will readily discern the well-known voice of one who is accustomed to attend them. The meaning is, that the people of God will be found disposed to listen to the instructions of those who are appointed by Christ, who preach his pure doctrines, and who show a real love for the church of God. There is scarcely any better test of fidelity in the pastoral office than the approbation of the humble and obscure people of God, when they discern in the preacher the very manner and spirit of the doctrines of the Bible.

He calleth his own sheep by name. It was customary, and is still, we are told by travellers, for shepherds to give particular *names* to their sheep, by which they soon learned to regard the voice of the shepherd. By this our Saviour indicates, doubtless, that it is the duty of a minister of religion to seek an intimate and personal acquaintance with the people of his charge; to feel an interest in

them as *individuals*, and not merely to address them *together*; to learn their private wants; to meet them in their individual trials, and to administer to them personally the consolations of the gospel.

Leadeth them out. He leads them from the fold to pasture or to water. Perhaps there is here intended the care of a faithful pastor to provide suitable instruction for the people of his charge, and to feed them with the bread of life. See a beautiful and touching description of the care of the Great Shepherd in Ps 23:1-6.

{c} "To him" Re 3:20 {d} "calleth his own sheep" Eze 34:11 Ro 8:30 {e} "leadeth them out" Eze 34:11 Ro 8:30

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *He putteth forth*. Or leads them out of the fold.

He goeth before them. He leads them, and guides them, and does not leave them. A shepherd spent his time with his flocks. He went before them to seek the best pastures and watering- places, and to defend them from danger. In this is beautifully represented the tender care of him who watches for souls as one that must give account.

{f} "they know his voice" So 2:8 5:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *A stranger*, &c. This was literally true of a flock. Accustomed to the voice and presence of a kind shepherd, they would not regard the command of a stranger. It is also true spiritually. Jesus by this indicates that the true people of God will not follow false teachers— those who are proud, haughty, and self-seeking, as were the Pharisees. Many *may* follow such, but humble and devoted Christians seek those who have the mild and self-denying spirit of their Master and Great Shepherd. It is also true in reference to those who are *pastors* in the churches. They have an influence which no stranger or wandering minister can have. A church learns to put confidence in a pastor; he knows the wants of his people, sees their danger, and can adapt his instructions to them. A stranger, however eloquent, pious, or learned, can have few of these commit the churches to the care of wandering strangers, of those who have no permanent relation to the church, than it would be for a flock to be committed to a foreigner who knew nothing of it, and who had no particular interest in it. The pastoral office is one of the wisest institutions of heaven. The following extract from *The Land and the Book* (Thomson) will show how strikingly this whole passage accords with what actually occurs at this day in Palestine:

"This is true to the letter. They are so tame
and so trained that they follow their keeper with the
utmost docility. He leads them forth from the fold, or
from their houses in the villages, just where he
pleases. As there are many flocks in such a place

as this, each one takes a different path, and it is his business to find pasture for them. It is necessary, therefore, that they should be taught to follow, and not to stray away into the unfenced fields of corn which lie so temptingly on either side. Any one that thus wanders is sure to get into trouble. The shepherd calls sharply from time to time to remind them of his presence. They know his voice and follow on; but if a stranger call, they stop short, lift up their heads in alarm, and, if it is repeated, they turn and flee, because they know not the voice of a stranger. This is not the fanciful costume of a parable; it is simple fact. I have made the experiment repeatedly. The shepherd goes before, not merely to point out the way, but to see that it is practicable and safe. He is armed in order to defend his charge, and in this he is very courageous. Many adventures with wild beasts occur not unlike that recounted by David, and in these very mountains; for, though there are now no lions here, there are wolves in abundance; and leopards and panthers, exceedingly fierce, prowl about these wild wadies. They not unfrequently attack the flock in the very presence of the shepherd, and he must be ready to do battle at a moment's warning. I have listened with intense interest to their graphic descriptions of downright and desperate fights with these savage beasts. And when the thief and the robber come (and come they do), the faithful shepherd has often to put his life in his hand to defend his flock. I have known more than one case in which he had literally to lay it down in the contest. A poor faithful fellow last spring, between Tiberias and Tabor, instead of fleeing, actually fought three Bedouin robbers until he was hacked to pieces with their khanjars, and died among the sheep he was defending."

{g} "but will flee from him" 2Ti 3:5 Re 2:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *This parable*. **See Barnes "Mt 13:3"**.
They understood not, &c. They did not understand the meaning or design of the illustration.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *I am the door*. I am the way by which ministers and people enter the true church. It is by his merits, his intercession, his aid, and his appointment that they enter.

Of the sheep. Of the church.

{h} "I am the door of the sheep" Eph 2:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *All that ever came before me*. This does not refer to the prophets, but to those who came *pretending* to be the pastors or guides of the people. Some have supposed that he referred to those who pretended to be the Messiah before him; but there is not evidence that *any* such person appeared before the coming of Jesus. It is probable that he rather refers to the scribes and Pharisees, who claimed to be instructors of the people, who claimed the right to regulate the affairs of religion, and whose only aim was to aggrandize themselves and to oppress the people. **See Barnes "Joh 1:18".**

When the Saviour says that "*all*" were thieves, he speaks in a popular sense, using the word "all" as it is often used in the New Testament, to denote the great mass or the majority.

Thieves and robbers. See Joh 10:1 Jer 23:1: "Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture;" Eze 24:2,3: "Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed; but ye feed not the flock." This had been the *general* character of the Pharisees and scribes. They sought wealth, office, ease at the expense of the people, and thus deserved the character of thieves and robbers. They insinuated themselves slyly as a thief, and they oppressed and spared not, like a robber.

The sheep. The people of God—the pious and humble portion of the Jewish nation. Though the great mass of the people were corrupted, yet there were always some who were the humble and devoted people of God. Comp. Ro 11:3,4. So it will be always. Though the great mass of teachers may be corrupt, yet the true friends of God will mourn in secret places, and refuse to "listen to the instruction that causeth to err."

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *By me*. By my instruction and merits.

Shall be saved. See Joh 5:24.

Shall go in and out, &c. This is language applied commonly to flocks. It meant that he shall be well supplied, and defended, and led "beside the still waters of salvation."

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *The thief cometh not*, &c. The thief has no other design in coming but to plunder. So false teachers have no other end in view but to enrich or aggrandize themselves.

I am come that they might have life. **See Barnes "Joh 5:24".**

Might have it more abundantly. Literally, that they may have *abundance*, or that which abounds. The word denotes that which is not absolutely essential to *life*, but which is superadded to make life happy. They shall not merely have *life*—simple, bare *existence*— but they shall have all those superadded things which are needful to make that life eminently blessed and happy. It would be vast mercy to keep men merely from annihilation or hell; but Jesus will give them eternal joy, peace, the society of the blessed, and all those exalted means of felicity which are prepared for them in the world of glory.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *The good shepherd*. The faithful and true shepherd, willing to do *all* that is necessary to defend and save the flock.

Giveth his life. A shepherd that regarded his flock would hazard his own life to defend them. When the wolf comes, he would still remain to protect them. To *give his life*, here, means the same as not to fly, or to forsake his flock; to be willing to expose his life, if necessary, to defend them. Comp. Jud 12:3 "I put my life in my hands and passed over," &c.; 1Sa 19:5 28:21. See Joh 10:15. The Messiah was often predicted under the character of a shepherd.

{i} "I am the good shepherd" Heb 13:20 1Pe 2:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *A hireling*. A man employed to take care of the sheep, to whom wages is paid. As he does not *own* the sheep, and guards them merely for pay, rather than risk his life he would leave the flock to the ravages of wild beasts. The word translated *hireling* is often employed in a good sense; but here it denotes one who is unfaithful to his trust; and especially those ministers who preach *only* for support, and who are unwilling to encounter any danger or to practise any self-denial for the welfare of the church of God. They are those who have no boldness in the cause of their Master, but who, rather than lose their reputation or place, would see the church corrupted and wasted by its spiritual foes.

Whose own the sheep are not. Who does not own the sheep.

{k} "leaveth the sheep" Eze 34:2-6 Zec 11:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Because he is a hireling*. Because he regards only his wages. He feels no special interest in the flock.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Know my sheep*. Know my people, or my church. The word *know* here is used in the sense of *affectionate regard* or *love*. It implies such a knowledge of their wants, their dangers, and their characters, as to result in *a deep interest in their welfare*. Thus the word "knoweth," in Joh 10:15, is in Joh 10:17 explained by the word "loveth." Jesus *knows* the hearts, the dangers, and the wants of his people, and his kindness as their shepherd prompts him to defend and aid them.

Am known of mine. That is, he is known and loved as their Saviour and Friend. They have seen their sins, and dangers, and wants; they have felt their need of a Saviour; they have come to him, and they have found him and his doctrines to be such as they need, and they have loved him. And as a flock follows and obeys its kind shepherd, so they follow and obey him who leads them beside the still waters, and makes them to lie down in green pastures.

{l} "know my sheep" 2Ti 2:19 {m} "and am known of mine" 1Jo 5:20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *As the Father knoweth me*, &c. **See Barnes "Mt 11:27"**

See Barnes "Lu 10:22".

I lay down my life for the sheep. That is, I give my life as an atoning sacrifice for their sins. I die in their place, to redeem them from sin, and danger, and death. See Joh 10:17,18.

{n} "As the Father" Mt 11:27 {o} "I lay down" Joh 15:13 Isa 53:4,5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Other sheep*. There are others who shall be members of my redeemed church.

I have. This does not imply that they were *then* his friends, but that they *would* be. There were others whom it was his *purpose* and *intention* to call to the blessings of the gospel and salvation. The purpose was so sure, and the fact that they would believe on him so certain, that he could use the present tense as if they were already his own. This purpose was in accordance with the promise (Isa 53:11), "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." An instance of a parallel expression occurs in Ac 18:10 "I *have much people* in this city" (Corinth). That is, it was the *purpose* of God to bless the preaching of Paul, and give him many souls as the seals of his ministry. It was so *certain* that they would believe in the Saviour, that it could be spoken of as if it were already done. This certainty could have existed only in consequence of the *intention* of God that it *should be* so. It did not consist in any disposition to embrace the gospel which was foreseen, for they were the most corrupt and licentious people of antiquity, and it must have been because God *meant* that it should be so. Declarations like these are full proof that God has a *plan* in regard to the salvation of men, and that the number is known and determined by him. Learn—

1. That it is not a question of chance or uncertainty whether men shall be saved.

2. That there is encouragement for preaching the gospel. There are those whom God means to save, and if he intends to do it it will be done.

Not of this fold. Not Jews. This is a distinct intimation that the gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles—a doctrine extremely offensive to the Jews. This prediction of the Saviour has been strikingly confirmed in the conversion of millions of the Gentiles to the gospel.

Them also I must bring. Bring into the church and kingdom of heaven. This was to be done, not by his personal ministry, but by the labour of his apostles and other ministers.

One fold. One church; there shall be no distinction, no peculiar national privileges. The partition between the Jews and the Gentiles shall be broken down, and there shall be no pre-eminence of rank or honour, Eph 2:14: "Christ hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;" Ro 10:12: "There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek."

One shepherd. That is, the Lord Jesus—the common Saviour, deliverer, and friend of all true believers, in whatever land they were born and whatever tongue they may speak. This shows that Christians of all denominations and countries should feel that they are *one*—redeemed by the same blood, and going to the same eternal home. Comp. 1Co 12:13 Ga 3:28; Col 3:11 Ac 17:26.

{p} "And other" Isa 49:6 56:8 {q} "And there shall be one fold" Eze 37:22 Eph 2:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *I lay down my life*. I give myself to die for my people, in Jewish and pagan lands. I offer myself a sacrifice to show the willingness of my Father to save them; to provide an atonement, and thus to open the way for their salvation. This proves that the salvation of man was an object dear to God, and that it was a source of peculiar gratification to him that his Son was *willing* to lay down his life to accomplish his great purposes of benevolence.

That I might take it again. Be raised up from the dead, and glorified, and still carry on the work of redemption. See this same sentiment sublimely expressed in Php 2:5-11.

{r} "because I lay down" Isa 53:7-12 He 2:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *No man taketh it from me*. That is, no one could take it by force, or unless I was willing to yield myself into his hands. He had power to preserve his life, as he showed by so often escaping from the Pharisees; he voluntarily went up to Jerusalem, knowing that he would die; he knew the approach of Judas to betray him; and he expressly told Pilate at his bar that he could have no power at all against him except it were given him by his Father, Joh 19:11. Jesus had a right to lay down his life for the good of men. The patriot dies for his country on the field of battle; the merchant exposes his life for gain; and the Son of God had a right to put himself in the way of danger and of death, when a dying world *needed* such an atoning sacrifice. This shows the peculiar love of Jesus. His death was voluntary. His *coming* was voluntary-the fruit of love. His death was the fruit of love. He was permitted to choose the *time* and *mode* of his death. He did. He chose the

most painful, lingering, ignominious manner of death then known to man, and THUS showed his love.

I have power. This word often means authority. It includes all necessary power in the case, and the commission or authority of his Father to do it.

Power to take it again. This shows that he was divine. A *dead* man has no power to raise himself from the grave. And as Jesus had this power *after* he was deceased, it proves that there was some other nature than that which had expired, to which the term "I" might be still applied. None but God can raise the dead; and as Jesus had this power over his own body it proves that he was divine.

This commandment. My Father has appointed this, and commissioned me to do it.

{s} "I lay it down" Php 2:6-8 {t} "I have power" Joh 2:19 {u} "This commandment" Joh 6:38

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 19

Verse 19. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *He hath a devil*. Joh 7:20.

Is mad. Is deranged, or a maniac. His words are incoherent and unintelligible.

{v} "He hath a devil" Joh 7:20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Not the words*, &c. His words are sober, grave, pious, full of wisdom. The preaching of Jesus always produced effect. It made bitter enemies or decided friends. So will all faithful preaching. It is not the fault of the gospel that there are divisions, but of the unbelief and mad passions of men.

{w} "open the eyes of the blind" Joh 9:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *The feast of the dedication*. Literally, the feast of the *renewing*, or of the renovation. This feast was instituted by Judas Maccabaeus, in the year 164 B.C. The temple and city were taken by Antiochus Epiphanes in the year 167 B.C. He slew forty thousand inhabitants, and sold forty thousand more as slaves. In addition to this, he sacrificed a sow on the altar of burnt-offerings, and a broth being made of this, he sprinkled it all over the temple. The city and temple were recovered three years afterward by Judas Maccabaeus, and the temple was *purified* with great pomp and

solemnity. The ceremony of purification continued through eight days, during which Judas presented magnificent victims, and celebrated the praise of God with hymns and psalms (Josephus, Ant., b. xii. ch. 11). "They decked, also, the forefront of the temple with crowns of gold and with shields, and the gates and chambers they *renewed* and hanged doors upon them," 1 Mac. iv. 52-59. On this account it was called the feast of renovation or dedication. Josephus calls it the feast of *lights*, because the city was illuminated, as expressive of joy. The feast began on the twenty-fifth day of *Chisleu*, answering to the fifteenth day of December. The festival continued for eight days, with continued demonstrations of joy.

It was winter. The feast was celebrated in the winter. The word here implies that it was cold and inclement, and it is given as a reason why he walked in Solomon's porch.

Solomon's porch. The porch or covered way on the east of the temple. **See Barnes "Mt 21:12"**.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 23

Verse 23. No Barnes text on this verse.

{x} "Solomon's porch" Ac 3:11 5:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Tell us plainly*. The Messiah was predicted as a *shepherd*. Jesus had applied that prediction to himself. They supposed that that was an evidence that he claimed to be the Messiah. He also wrought miracles, which they considered as evidence that he was the Christ, Joh 7:31. Yet the rulers made a difficulty. They alleged that he was from Galilee, and that the Messiah could not come from thence, Joh 7:52. He was poor and despised. He came contrary to the common expectation. A splendid prince and conqueror had been expected. In this perplexity they came to him for a plain and positive declaration that he was the Messiah.

{1} "make us to doubt", or, "hold us in suspense"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *I told you*. It is not recorded that Jesus had told them in so many words that he was the Christ, but he had used expressions designed to convey the same truth, and which many of them understood as claiming to be the Messiah. See Joh 5:19 8:36,56 10:1.

The expression "the Son of God" they understood to be equivalent to the Messiah. This he had often used of himself in a sense not to be mistaken.

The works. The miracles, such as restoring the blind, curing the sick, &c.

In my Father's name. By the power and command of God. Jesus was either the Messiah or an impostor. The Pharisees charged him with being the latter (Mt 26:60,61, 27:63 Joh 4:36) ; but God

would not give such power to an impostor. The power of working miracles is an attestation of God to what is taught. **See Barnes "Mt 4:24".**

{y} "the works that I do" Joh 5:36

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Are not of my sheep*. Are not my people, my followers. You do not possess the spirit of meek and humble disciples. Were it not for pride, and prejudice, and vainglory—for your false notions of the Messiah, and from a determination not to believe, you would have learned from my declarations and works that I am the Christ.

As I said unto you. Comp. Joh 8:47.

{z} "ye believe not" Joh 8:47 1Jo 4:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *My sheep*. My church, my people, those who have the true spirit of my followers. The name is given to his people because it was an illustration which would be well understood in a country abounding in flocks. There is also a striking resemblance, which he proceeds to state, between them.

Hear my voice. See Joh 10:3,4. Applied to Christians, it means that they hear and obey his commandments.

I know them. See Joh 10:14.

They follow me. A flock follows its shepherd to pastures and streams, Joh 10:3. Christians not only *obey* Christ, but they *imitate* him; they go where his Spirit and providence lead them; they yield themselves to his guidance, and seek to be led by him. When Jesus was upon earth many of his disciples *followed* or *attended* him from place to place. Hence Christians are called his *followers*, and in Re 14:4 they are described as "they that follow the Lamb."

{a} "My sheep hear my voice" Joh 10:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *I give unto them eternal life*. See Joh 5:24.

Shall never perish. To *perish* here means to be destroyed, or to be punished in hell. Mt 10:28: "Which is able to destroy (the same word) both soul and body in hell."

Mt 18:14: "It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should *perish*." Joh 3:15: "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish." Ro 2:12: "They who have sinned without law shall also *perish* without law." Joh 17:12 1Co 1:18. In all these places the word refers to *future punishment*, and the declaration of the Saviour is that his followers, his true disciples, shall never be cast away. The original is expressed with remarkable strength: "They shall not be

destroyed for ever." Syriac: "They shall not perish to eternity." This is spoken of all Christians—that is, of all who ever possess the character of true followers of Christ, and who can be called his flock.

Shall any. The word *any* refers to any power that might attempt it. It will apply either to men or to devils. It is an affirmation that no man, however eloquent in error, or persuasive in infidelity, or cunning in argument, or mighty in rank; and that no devil with all his malice, power, cunning, or allurements, shall be able to pluck them from his hand.

Pluck them. In the original to *rob*; to seize and bear away as a robber does his prey. Jesus holds them so secure and so certainly that no foe can surprise him as a robber does, or overcome him by force.

My hand. The *hand* is that by which we *hold* or *secure* an object. It means that Jesus has them safely in his own care and keeping. Comp. Ro 8:38,39.

{b} "they shall never perish" Joh 17:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Which gave them me*. See Joh 6:37.

Is greater. Is more powerful.

Than all. Than all others—men, angels, devils. The word includes *everything*—everything that could *attempt* to pluck them away from God; in other words, it means that God is *supreme*. It implies, farther, that God will keep them, and will so control *all* other beings and things that they shall be safe.

None is able. None has power to do it. In these two verses we are taught the following important truths:

1st. That Christians are *given* by God the Father to Christ.

2nd. That Jesus gives to them eternal life, or *procures* by his death and intercession, and imparts to them by his Spirit, that religion which shall result in eternal life.

3rd. That both the Father and the Son are pledged to keep them so that they shall never fall away and perish. It would be impossible for any language to teach more explicitly that the saints will persevere.

4th. That there is no power in man or devils to defeat the purpose of the Redeemer to save his people. We also see our safety, if we truly, humbly, cordially, and *daily* commit ourselves to God the Saviour. In no other way can we have evidence that we are his people than by such a persevering resignation of ourselves to him, to obey his law, and to follow him through evil report or good report. If we do that we are safe. If we do not that we have no evidence of piety, and are not, cannot be safe.

{d} "gave them me" Joh 17:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *I and my Father are one*. The word translated "one" is not in the *masculine*, but in the *neuter* gender. It expresses *union*, but not the precise nature of the union. It *may* express any union, and the particular kind intended is to be inferred from the connection. In the previous verse he had said that he and his Father were *united* in the same object—that is, in redeeming and preserving his people. It was *this* that gave occasion for this remark. Many interpreters have understood this as referring to union of design and of plan. The words may bear this construction. In this way they were understood by Erasmus, Calvin, Bucer, and others. Most of the Christian fathers understood them, however, as referring to the *oneness* or *unity of nature* between the Father and the Son; and that this was the design of Christ appears probable from the following considerations:

1st. The question in debate was not about his being united with the Father in *plan* and *counsel*, but in *power*. He affirmed that he was able to rescue and keep his people from *all* enemies, or that he had *power* superior to men and devils—that is, that he had *supreme* power over all creation. He affirmed the same of his Father. *In this*, therefore, they were *united*. But this was an attribute only of God, and they thus understood him as claiming equality to God in regard to *omnipotence*.

2nd. The Jews understood him as affirming his equality with God, for they took up stones to punish him for blasphemy (Joh 10:31,33), and they said *to him* that they understood him as affirming that he was God, Joh 10:33.

3rd. Jesus did not *deny* that it was his intention to be so understood. **See Barnes "Joh 10:34, also on** Mt 10:35-37.

4th. He *immediately made another* declaration implying the same thing, leaving the same impression, and which they attempted to punish in the same manner, Joh 10:37-39. If Jesus had not *intended* so to be understood, it cannot be easily reconciled with moral honesty that he did not distinctly *disavow* that such was his intention. The Jews were well acquainted with their own language. They understood him in this manner, and he left this impression on their minds.

{e} "I and *my* father" Joh 17:11,22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *The Jews took up stones*. Stoning was the punishment of a blasphemer, Le 24:14-16. They considered him guilty of blasphemy because he made himself equal with God, Joh 10:33.

Again. They had before plotted against his life (Joh 5:16,18) and once at least they had taken up stones to destroy him, Joh 8:59.

{f} "The Jews" Joh 8:59

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *Many good works*. Many miracles of benevolence—healing the sick, &c. His miracles were *good works*, as they tended to promote the happiness of men, and were proofs of his benevolence. He had performed no other works than those of benevolence; he knew that they could

charge him with no other, and he confidently appealed to *them* as witnesses of that. Happy would it be if all, when they are opposed and persecuted, could appeal even to their persecutors in proof of their own innocence.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *For blasphemy*. **See Barnes "Mt 9:3"**.
Makest thyself God. **See Barnes "Joh 5:18"**.
This shows how *they* understood what he had said.
Makest thyself. Dost *claim* to be God, or thy language implies this.
{g} "and because" Joh 5:16 10:30; Ps 82:6 Ro 13:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 34

Verses 34-38. *Jesus answered them*. The answer of Jesus consists of two parts. The first (Joh 10:34-36) shows that *they* ought not to object to his use of the word God, *even* if he were no more than a man. The second (Joh 10:37,38) repeats substantially what he had before said, left the same impression, and in proof of it he appealed to his works.

Verse 34. *In your law*. Ps 82:6. The word *law* here, is used to include the Old Testament.

I said. The Psalmist said, or God said by the Psalmist.

Ye are gods. This was said of *magistrates* on account of the dignity and honour of their office, and it shows that the word translated "god" in that place *might* be applied to man. Such a use of the word is, however, rare. See instances in Ex 7:1 4:16.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *Unto whom the word of God came*. That is, who were his servants, or who received their dignity and honour only because the law of God was intrusted to them. The *word of God* here means the command of God; his commission to them to do justice.

The scripture cannot be broken. See Mt 5:19. The authority of the Scripture is final; it *cannot be set aside*. The meaning is, \-

"If, therefore, the Scripture uses the word god as applied to magistrates, it settles the question that it is *right* to apply the term to those in office and authority. If applied to *them*, it may be to others in similar offices. It can not, therefore, be *blasphemy* to use this word as applicable to a personage so much more exalted than mere magistrates as the Messiah."

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *Whom the Father hath sanctified*. The word *sanctify* with us means to *make holy*; but this is not its meaning here, for the Son of God was always holy. The original word means to set apart from a common to a sacred use; to devote to a sacred purpose, and to designate or consecrate to a holy office. This is the meaning here. God has *consecrated* or appointed his Son to be his Messenger or Messiah to mankind. See Ex 28:41 Le 8:30.

And sent into the world. As the Messiah, an office far more exalted than that of magistrates. *I am the Son of God*. This the Jews evidently understood as the same as saying that he was equal with God. This expression he had often applied to himself. The meaning of this place may be thus expressed:

"You charge me with blasphemy. The foundation of that
charge is the use of the name *God*, or the
Son of God, applied to myself; yet that same term
is applied in the Scriptures to magistrates. The use
of it there shows that it is *right* to apply it to
those who sustain important offices. And especially
you, Jews, ought not to attempt to found a charge
of blasphemy on the application of a word to the
Messiah which in your own Scriptures is applied to
all magistrates."

And we may remark here,

1st. That Jesus did not deny that he meant to apply the term to himself.

2nd. He did not deny that it was *properly* applied to him.

3rd. He did not deny that it implied that he was God. He affirmed only that *they* were *inconsistent*, and *were not authorized* to bring a charge of blasphemy for the application of the *name* to himself.

{h} "hath sanctified" Isa 11:2,3, 49:1,3; Joh 6:27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *The works of my Father*. The very works that my Father does. See Joh 5:17: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." **See Barnes "Joh 5:17"**.

The works of his Father are those which God only can do. As Jesus *did them*, it shows that the name "*Son of God*," implying *equality* with God, was properly applied to him. This shows conclusively that he meant to be understood as claiming to be equal with God. So the Jews naturally understood him Joh 10:39 and they were left with this impression on their minds.

{k} "If I do not the works" Joh 14:10,11, 15:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *Believe the works*. Though you do not credit *me*, yet consider my *works*, for they prove that I came from God. No one could do them unless he was sent of God.

Father is in me, &c. Most intimately connected. See Joh 5:36. This expression denotes most intimate union—such as can exist in no other case. See Mt 11:27. **See Barnes "Joh 17:21".**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *Sought again to take him*. They evidently understood him as still claiming equality with God, and under this impression Jesus left them. Nor can it be doubted that he *intended* to leave them with this impression; and if so, then he is divine.

He escaped. See Joh 8:59.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 40

Verse 40. *Where John at first baptized*. At Bethabara, or Bethany, Joh 1:28.

{l} "the place where John at first baptized" Joh 1:28

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 41

Verse 41. *No miracle*. He did not confirm his mission by working *miracles*, but he showed that he was a *prophet* by foretelling the character and success of Jesus. Either miracle or prophecy is conclusive proof of a divine mission, for no man can foretell a future event, or work a miracle, except by the special aid of God. It may be remarked that the people of that place were properly prepared by the ministry of John for the preaching of Jesus. The persecution of the Jews was the occasion of his going there, and thus the wrath of man was made to praise him. It has commonly happened that the opposition of the wicked has resulted in the increased success of the cause which they have persecuted. God takes the wise in their own craftiness, and brings glory to himself and salvation to sinners out of the pride, and passions, and rage of wicked men.

{m} "all things that John" Joh 3:30-36

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 10 - Verse 42

Verse 42. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 1

Verse 1. *A certain* man *was sick*. The resurrection of Lazarus has been recorded only by John. Various reasons have been conjectured why the other evangelists did not mention so signal a miracle. The most probable is, that at the time they wrote Lazarus was still living. The miracle was well known, and yet to have recorded it might have exposed Lazarus to opposition and persecution from the Jews. See Joh 12:10,11. Besides, John wrote for Christians who were out of Palestine. The other gospels were written chiefly for those who were in Judea. There was the more need, therefore, that he should enter minutely into the account of the miracle, while the others did not deem it necessary or proper to record an event so well known.

Bethany. A village on the eastern declivity of the Mount of Olives. **See Barnes "Mt 21:1"**.

The town of Mary. The place where she lived. At that place also lived Simon the leper (Mt 26:6), and there our Lord spent considerable part of his time when he was in Judea. The transaction recorded in this chapter occurred nearly four months after those mentioned in the previous chapter. Those occurred in December, and these at the approach of the Passover in April.

{a} "Mary, and her sister Martha" Lu 10:38,39

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *It was that Mary*, &c. **See Barnes** "Mt 26:6, **See Barnes "Lu 7:36, also on** Lu 7:37-50

{b} "which anointed the Lord" Mr 14:3 Joh 12:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Whom thou lovest*, Joh 11:5. The members of this family were among the few peculiar and intimate friends of our Lord. He was much with them, and showed them marks of special friendship Lu 10:38-42, and they bestowed upon him peculiar proof of affection in return. This shows that *special* attachments are lawful for Christians, and that those friendships are peculiarly lovely which are tempered and sweetened with the spirit of Christ. *Friendships* should always be cemented by religion, and one main end of those attachments should be to aid one another in the great business of preparing to die.

Sent unto him. They believed that he had power to heal him (Joh 11:21), though they did not *then* seem to suppose that he could raise him if he died. Perhaps there were two reasons why they sent for him; one, because they supposed he would be desirous of seeing his friend; the other, because they supposed he could restore him. In sickness we should implore the aid and presence of Jesus. He only can restore us and our friends; he only can perform for us the office of a friend when all other friends fail; and he only can cheer us with the hope of a blessed resurrection.

{c} "whom thou lovest" Heb 12:6 Re 3:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *This sickness is not unto death*. The word *death* here is equivalent to *remaining render death*, Ro 6:23: "The wages of sin is *death*"—-permanent or unchanging death, opposed to eternal life. Jesus evidently did not intend to deny that he would die. The words which he immediately adds show that he would expire, and that he would raise him up to show forth the power and glory of God. Comp. Joh 11:11. Those words cannot be understood on any other supposition than that he *expected* to raise him up. The Saviour often used expressions similar to this to fix the attention on what he was about to say in explanation. The sense may be thus expressed: "His sickness is not fatal. It is not designed for his death, but to furnish an opportunity for a signal display of the glory of God, and to furnish a standing proof of the truth of religion. It is intended to exhibit the power of the Son of God, and to be a proof at once of the truth of his mission; of his friendship for this family; of his mild, tender, peculiar love as a man; of his power and glory as the Messiah; and of the great doctrine that the dead will rise."

For the glory of God. That God may be honoured See Joh 9:3.

That the Son of God, &c. The glory of God and of his Son is the same. That which promotes the one promotes also the other. Few things could do it more than the miracle which follows, evincing at once the lovely and tender character of Jesus as a man and a friend, and his power as the equal with God.

{d} "for the glory of God" Joh 9:3 11:40

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 5

Verse 5. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *He abode two days*. Probably Lazarus died soon after the messengers left him. Jesus knew that (Joh 11:11) and did not hasten to Judea, but remained two days longer where he was, that there might not be the possibility of doubt that he was dead, so that when he came there he had been dead four days, Joh 11:39. This shows, moreover, that he *intended* to raise him up. If he had not, it could hardly be reconciled with friendship thus to remain, without any reason, away from an afflicted family.

Where he was. At Bethabara (Joh 1:28 10:40), about 30 miles from Bethany. This was about a day's journey, and it renders it probable that Lazarus died soon after the message was sent. One day would be occupied before the message came to him; two days he remained; one day would be

occupied by him in going to Bethany; so that Lazarus had been dead four days (Joh 11:39) when he arrived.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 7

Verse 7. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Of late*. About four months before, Joh 10:31
{e} "of late" Joh 10:31 {f} "goest thou thither again" Ac 20:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 9

Verses 9,10. *Twelve hours*. The Jews divided and the day from sunrise to sunset into twelve equal parts. A similar illustration our Saviour uses in Joh 9:4,5. **See Barnes "Joh 9:4"**.

If any man walk. If any man *travels*. The illustration here is taken from a traveller. The conversation was respecting a *journey* into Judea, and our Lord, as was his custom, took the illustration from the case before him.

He stumbleth not. He is able, having light, to make his journey safely. He sees the obstacles or dangers and can avoid them.

The light of this world. The light by which the world is illuminated —that is, the light of the sun.

In the night. In darkness he is unable to see danger or obstacles, and to avoid them. His journey is unsafe and perilous, or, in other words, it is not a proper time to travel.

No light in him. He sees no light. It is dark; his eyes admit no light within him to direct his way. This description is figurative, and it is difficult to fix the meaning. Probably the intention was the following:

1st. Jesus meant to say that there was an allotted or appointed time for him to live and do his Father's will, represented here by the *twelve hours of the day*.

2nd. Though his life was nearly spent, yet it was not entirely; a remnant of it was left.

3rd. A traveller journeyed on till night. It was as proper for him to travel the *twelfth hour* as any other.

4th. So it was proper for Jesus to labour until the close. It was the proper time for him to work. The night of death was coming, and no work could then be done.

5th. God would defend him in this until the appointed time of his death. He had nothing to fear, therefore, in Judea from the Jews, until it was the will of God that he should die. He was safe in his hand, and he went fearlessly into the midst of his foes, trusting in him. This passage teaches us that we should be diligent to the end of life; fearless of enemies when we that God requires us to

labour, confidently committing ourselves to Him who is able to shield us, and in whose hand, if we have a conscience void of offence, we are safe.

{g} "any man walk in the day" Joh 12:35

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No Barnes text on this verse.

{h} "walk in the night"

Ec 2:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Lazarus sleepeth*. Is dead. The word *sleep* is applied to death,

1st. Because of the *resemblance* between them, as sleep is the "kinsman of death." In this sense it is often used by pagan writers. But,

2nd. In the Scriptures it is used to intimate that death will not be *final*: that there will be an awaking out of this sleep, or a resurrection. It is a beautiful and tender expression, removing all that is dreadful in death, and filling the mind with the idea of calm repose after a life of toil, with a reference to a future resurrection in increased rigour and renovated powers. In this sense it is applied in the Scriptures usually to the saints, 1Co 11:30 15:51; 1Th 4:14 5:10; Mt 9:24.

{i} "sleepeth" De 31:16 Ac 7:60; 1Co 15:18,51

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *If he sleep, he shall do well*. Sleep was regarded by the Jews, in sickness, as a favourable symptom; hence it was said among them, "Sleep in sickness is a sign of recovery, because it shows that the violence of the disease has abated" (Lightfoot.) This seems to have been the meaning of the disciples. They intimated that if had *this* symptom, there was no need of his going into Judea to restore him.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 13

Verse 13. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 14

Verse 14. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *I am glad*, &c. The meaning of this verse may be thus expressed:
"If I had been there during his sickness, the
entreaties of his sisters and friends would have
prevailed with me to restore him to health. I
could not have refused them without appearing
to be unkind. Though a restoration to *health*
would have been a miracle, and sufficient to
convince you, yet the miracle of raising him
after four days dead will be far more impressive, and
on that account I rejoice that an opportunity is
thus given so strikingly to confirm your faith."

To the intent. To furnish you *evidence* on which you might be established in the belief that I am the Messiah.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Thomas, which is called Didymus*. These names express the same thing. One is Hebrew and the other Greek. The name means *a twin*.

Die with him. It has been much doubted by critics whether the word *him* refers to Lazarus or to Jesus. They who refer it to Lazarus suppose this to be the meaning:
"Let us go and die, for what have we to hope for
if Jesus returns into Judea? Lately they attempted
to stone him, and now they will put him to death,
and we also, like Lazarus, shall be dead."

This expression is supposed to be added by John to show the slowness with which Thomas believed, and his readiness to doubt without the fullest evidence. See Joh 20:25. Others suppose, probably more correctly, that it refers to Jesus:
"He is about to throw himself into danger. The Jews
lately sought his life, and will again. They will
put him to death. But let us not forsake him. Let
us attend him and die with him."

It may be remarked that this, not less than the other mode of interpretation, expresses the doubts of Thomas about the miracle which Jesus was about to work.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *In the grave*. It was sometimes the custom to *embalm* the dead, but in this case it does not seem to have been done. He was probably buried soon after death.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Nigh unto Jerusalem*. This is added to show that it was easy for many of the Jews to come to the place. The news that Jesus was there, and the account of the miracle, would also be easily carried to the Sanhedrim.

Fifteen furlongs. Nearly two miles. It was directly east from Jerusalem. Dr. Thompson (*The Land and the Book*, vol. 2. p. 599) says of Bethany:

"It took half an hour to walk over Olivet to Bethany
this morning, and the distance from the city,
therefore, must be about two miles. This agrees with
what John says: 'Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem,
about fifteen furlongs off.' The village is small,
and appears never to have been large, but it is
pleasantly situated near the south-eastern base of
the mount, and has many fine trees about and above it.
We, of course, looked at the remains of those old
edifices which may have been built in the age of
Constantine, and repaired or changed to a convent
in the time of the Crusades. By the dim light of a
taper we also descended very cautiously, by
twenty-five slippery steps, to the reputed sepulchre
of Lazarus, or El Azariyeh, as both tomb and village
are now called. But I have no description of it to
give, and no questions about it to ask. It is a
wretched cavern, every way unsatisfactory, and
almost disgusting."

{1} "about fifteen furlongs" or "about two miles"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Many of the Jews*. Probably their distant relatives or their friends.

To comfort. These visits of consolation were commonly extended to seven days (Grotius; Lightfoot).

{k} "comfort" 1Ch 7:22 Job 2:11, 42:11 Ro 12:15; 1Th 4:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Then Martha*, &c. To Martha was intrusted the management of the affairs of the family, Lu 10:40. It is probable that she first heard of his coming, and, without waiting to inform her sister, went immediately out to meet him. See Joh 11:28.

Sat still in the house. The word *still* is not in the original. It means that she remained sitting in the house. The common posture of grief among the Jews was that of sitting, Job 2:8 Eze 8:14. Often this grief was so excessive as to fix the person in astonishment, and render him immovable, or prevent his being affected by any external objects. It is possible that the evangelist meant to intimate this of Mary's grief. Comp. Ezr 9:3,4; Ne 1:4 Is 47:1.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 21

Verse 21. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Whatsoever thou wilt ask of God*. Whatever is necessary to our consolation that thou will ask, thou canst obtain. It is possible that she meant gently to intimate that he could raise him up and restore him again to them.

{l} "whatsoever thou wilt ask" Joh 9:31

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Thy brother shall rise again*. Martha had spoken of the power of Jesus. He said nothing of himself in reply. It was not customary for him to speak of himself, unless it was demanded by necessity. It cannot be doubted that by *rising again*, here, Jesus referred to the act which he was about to perform; but as Martha understood it, referring to the future resurrection, it was full of consolation. The idea that departed friends shall rise to glory is one that fills the mind with joy, and one which we owe only to the religion of Christ.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *At the last day*. The day of judgment. Of this Martha was fully convinced; but this was not all which she desired. She in this manner delicately hinted what she did not presume expressly to declare— her wish that Jesus might even *now* raise him up.

{m} "in the resurrection" Joh 5:29

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *I am the resurrection*. I am the *author* or the *cause* of the resurrection. It so depends on my power and will, that it may be said that I *am* the resurrection itself. This is a most expressive way of saying that the whole doctrine of the resurrection came from him, and the whole power to effect it was his. In a similar manner he is said to be made of God unto us "*wisdom, and righteousness*, and *sanctifcation, and redemption*," 1Co 1:30.

And the life. Joh 1:4. As the resurrection of

all

depends on him, he intimated that it was not indispensable that it should be deferred to the *last day*. He had power to do it now as well as then.

Though he were dead. Faith does not save from *temporal* death; but although the believer, as others, will die a temporal@\ death, yet he will hereafter have life. *Even if he dies, he shall hereafter live*.

Shall he live. Shall be restored to life in the resurrection.

{n} "the resurrection" Joh 5:29 {o} "the life" Isa 38:16 Joh 14:6; 1Jo 1:2

{p} "though he were dead" Job 19:26 Isa 26:19; Ro 4:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Whosoever liveth*. He had just spoken of the prospects of the pious dead. He now says that the same prospects are before the living who have like faith. Greek, "Every one living and believing on me."

Shall never die. As the dead, though dead, shall yet *live*, so the living shall have the same kind of life. They shall never come into eternal death. See Joh 6:50,51,54,58.

Greek, "shall by no means die forever."

Believest thou this? This question was doubtless asked because it implied that he was then able to raise up Lazarus, and because it was a proper time for her to test her own faith. The time of affliction is a favourable period to try ourselves to ascertain whether we have faith. If we still have confidence in God, if we look to him for comfort in such seasons, it is good evidence that we are his friends. He that loves God when he takes away his comforts, has the best evidence possible of true attachment to him.

{q} "whosoever" Joh 3:15 4:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 27

Verse 27. Yea, Lord. this was a noble confession. It showed her full confidence in him as the Messiah, and her full belief that all that he said was true. See Mt 16:16.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *She went her way*. Jesus probably directed her to go, though the evangelist has not recorded it, for she said to Mary, *The Master calleth for thee.*

Secretly. Privately. So that the others did not hear her. This was done, perhaps, to avoid confusion, or because it was probably that if they knew Jesus was coming they would have made opposition. Perhaps she doubted whether Jesus desired it to be known that he had come.

The Master is come. This appears to have been the appellation by which he was known to the family. It means literally, *teacher*, and was a title which he claimed for himself, "One is you Master, even Christ," Mt 22:8,10. The Syriac has it, "Our Master."

{r} "called Mary" Joh 21:7 {s} "The Master" Joh 13:13 {t} "calleth for thee" Mr 10:49

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 29

Verse 29. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 30

Verse 30. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *Saying, She goeth, unto the grave*. Syriac, "They *thought* that she went to weep." They had not heard Martha call her. The first days of mourning among the Jews were observed with great solemnity and many ceremonies of grief.

{u} "The Jews" Joh 11:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 32

Verse 32. No Barnes text on this verse.

{v} "Lord, if thou"
Joh 4:49 11:21,37

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *He groaned in the spirit*. The word rendered *groaned*, here, commonly denotes to be angry or indignant, or to reprove severely, denoting violent agitation of mind. Here it also evidently denotes violent agitation—not from anger, but from *grief*. He saw the sorrow of others, and he was also moved with sympathy and love. The word *groan* usually, with us, denotes an expression of internal sorrow by a peculiar sound. The word here, however, does not mean that *utterance* was given to the internal emotion, but that it was deep and agitating, though internal.

In the spirit. In the mind. See Ac 19:21: "Paul purposed in the spirit "—that is, in his mind, Mt 5:3.

Was troubled. Was affected with grief. Perhaps this expression denotes that his countenance was troubled, or gave indications of sorrow (Grotius).

{2} "was troubled" or, "he troubled himself"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *Where have ye laid him*? Jesus spoke as a man. In all this transaction he manifested the deep sympathies of a man; and though he who could raise the dead man up could also know where he was, yet he chose to lead them to the grave by inducing them to point the way, and hence he asked this question.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *Jesus wept*. It has been remarked that this is the shortest verse in the Bible; but it is exceedingly important and tender. It shows the Lord Jesus as a friend, a tender friend, and evinces his character as a man. And from this we learn,

1st. That the most tender personal friendship is not inconsistent with the most pure religion. Piety binds stronger the ties of friendship, makes more tender the emotions of love, and seals and sanctifies the affections of friends.

2nd. It is right, it is natural, it is indispensable for the Christian to sympathize with others in their afflictions. Ro 12:15: "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep."

3rd. Sorrow at the death of friends is not improper. It is right to weep. It is the expression of nature, and religion does not forbid or condemn it. All that religion does in the case is to *temper* and chasten our grief; to teach us to mourn with submission to God; to weep without murmuring, and to seek to banish tears, not by *hardening the heart* or forgetting the friend, but by bringing the

soul, made tender by grief, to receive the sweet influences of religion, and to find calmness and peace in the God of all consolation.

4th. We have here an instance of the tenderness of the character of Jesus. The same Saviour wept over Jerusalem, and felt deeply for poor dying sinners. To the same tender and compassionate Saviour Christians may now come (Heb 4:15); and to him the penitent sinner may also come, knowing that he will not cast him away.

{w} "wept" Isa 63:9 Lu 19:41; Heb 2:16,17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 36

Verse 36. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 37

Verse 37. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *It was a cave*. This was a common mode of burial. **See Barnes "Mt 8:28"**.

A stone lay upon it. Over the mouth of the cave. See Mt 27:60.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *Four days*. This proves that there could be no deception, for it could not have been a case of suspended animation. All these circumstances are mentioned to show that there was no imposture. Impostors do not mention minute *circumstances* like these. They deal in *generals* only. Every part of this narrative bears the marks of truth.

{y} "Take ye away the stone" Mr 16:3 {z} "by this time he stinketh" Ps 49:7,9; Ac 2:27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 40

Verse 40. *Said I not unto thee*. This was implied in what he had said about the resurrection of her brother, Joh 11:23-25. There would be a manifestation of the glory of God in raising him up which *she* would be permitted, with all others, to behold.

The glory of God. The power and goodness displayed in the resurrection. It is probable that Martha did not really expect that Jesus would raise him up, but supposed that he went there merely to see the corpse. Hence, when he directed them to take away the stone, she suggested that by that time the body was offensive.

{a} "Said I not unto thee" Joh 11:4,23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 41

Verse 41. *Lifted up his eyes*. In an attitude of prayer. See Lu 18:13 Mt 14:19.

I thank thee that thou hast heard me. It is possible that John has recorded only the sum or substance of the prayer on this occasion. The thanks which Jesus renders here are evidently in view of the fact that power had been committed to him to raise up Lazarus. On account of the people, and the signal proof which would be furnished of the truth of his mission, he expressed his thanks to God. In all his doings he recognized his union to the Father, and his dependence on him as Mediator.

{b} "Father" Joh 12:28-30

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 42

Verse 42. *And I knew*. "As for me. So far as I am concerned. I had no anxiety, no doubt as to myself, that I should always be heard; but the particular ground of gratitude is the benefit that will result to those who are witnesses." Jesus never prayed in vain. He never attempted to work a miracle in vain; and in all his miracles the ground of his joy was, not that *he* was to be praised or honoured, but that *others* were to be benefited and God glorified.

{b} "Father" Joh 12:28-30

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 43

Verse 43. *A loud voice*. Greek, "A *great* voice." Syriac, "A *high* voice." This was distinctly asserting *his* power. He uttered a distinct, audible voice, that there might be no suspicion of charm or incantation. The ancient magicians and jugglers performed their wonders by whispering and muttering. **See Barnes "Isa 8:19"**.

Jesus spake openly and audibly, and asserted thus his power. So, also, in the day of judgment he will call the dead with a great sound of a trumpet, Mt 24:31 1Th 4:16.

Lazarus, come forth. Here we may remark,

1st. That Jesus did this by his own power.

2nd. The power of raising the dead is the highest of which we can conceive. The ancient heathen declared it to be even beyond the power of God. It implies not merely giving life to the deceased body, but the power of entering the world of spirits, of recalling the departed soul, and of reuniting

it with the body. He that could do this must be omniscient as well as omnipotent; and if Jesus did it by his own power, it proves that he was divine.

3rd. This is a striking illustration of the general resurrection. In the same manner Jesus will raise *all* the dead. This miracle shows that it is possible; shows the way in which it will be done—by the voice of the Son of God; and demonstrates the certainty that he will do it. Oh how important it is that we be prepared for that moment when his voice shall be heard in our silent tombs, and he shall call us forth again to life!

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 44

Verse 44. *He that was dead*. The same man, body and soul.

Bound hand and foot. It is not certain whether the whole body and limbs were bound together, or each limb separately. When they embalmed a person, the whole body and limbs were *swathed* or bound together by strips of linen, involved around it to keep together the aromatics with which the body was embalmed. This is the condition of Egyptian mummies. See Ac 5:6. But it is not certain that this was always the mode. Perhaps the body was simply involved in a winding-sheet. The custom still exists in western Asia. No coffins being used, the body itself is more carefully and elaborately wrapped and swathed than is common or desirable where coffins are used. In this method the body is stretched out and the arms laid straight by the sides, after which the whole body, from head to foot, is wrapped round tightly in many folds of linen or cotton cloth; or, to be more precise, a great length of cloth is taken and rolled around the body until the whole is enveloped, and every part is covered with several folds of the cloth. The ends are then sewed, to keep the whole firm and compact; or else a narrow bandage is wound over the whole, forming, ultimately, the exterior surface. The body, when thus enfolded and swathed, retains the profile of the human form; but, as in the Egyptian mummies, the legs are not folded separately, but together; and the arms also are not distinguished, but confined to the sides in the general envelope. Hence it would be clearly impossible for a person thus treated to move his arms or legs, if restored to existence.

The word rendered "grave-clothes" denotes also the bands or clothes in which new-born infants are involved. He went forth, but his walking was impeded by the bands or clothes in which he was involved.

And his face, &c. This was a common thing when they buried their dead. See Joh 20:7. It is not known whether the whole face was covered in this manner, or only the forehead. In the Egyptian mummies it is only the forehead that is thus bound.

Loose him. Remove the bandages, so that he may walk freely. The effect of this miracle is said to have been that many believed on him. It may be remarked in regard to it that there could not be a more striking proof of the divine mission and power of Jesus. There could be here no possibility of deception.

1st. The friends of Lazarus *believed* him to be dead. In this they could not be deceived. There *could* have been among them no design to deceive.

2nd. He was four days dead. It could not be a case, therefore, of suspended animation.

3rd. Jesus was at a distance at the time of his death. There was, therefore, no *agreement* to attempt to impose on others.

4th. No higher power can be conceived than that of raising the dead.

5th. It was not *possible* to impose on his sisters, and to convince them that he was restored to life, if it was not really so.

6th. There were *many* present who were convinced also. God had so ordered it in his providence that to this miracle there should be many witnesses. There was no concealment, no jugglery, no secrecy. It was done publicly, in open day, and was witnessed by many who followed them to the grave, Joh 11:31.

7th. Others, who saw it, and did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah, went and told it to the Pharisees. But they did not *deny* that Jesus had raised up Lazarus. They could not deny it. The very ground of their alarm—the very *reason* why they went—was that he had *actually done it*.

Nor did the Pharisees dare to call the fact in question. If they *could* have done it, they would. But it was not possible; for,

8th. Lazarus was yet alive (Joh 12:10), and the fact of his resurrection could not be denied. Every circumstance in this account is plain, simple, consistent, bearing all the marks of truth. But if Jesus performed this miracle his religion is true. God would not give such power to an impostor; and unless it can be *proved* that this account is false, the Christian religion *must be* from God.

{c} "he that was dead" 1Ki 17:22 2Ki 4:34,35 Lu 7:14,15 Ac 20:9-12.

{d} "his face" Joh 20:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 45

Verse 45. No Barnes text on this verse.

{e} "and had seen"

Joh 2:23 10:41,42 12:11,18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 46

Verse 46. *Some of them*, &c. We see here the different effect which the word and works of God will have on different individuals. Some are converted and others are hardened; yet the *evidence* of this miracle was as clear to the one as the other. But they *would not* be convinced.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 47

Verse 47. *A council*. A meeting of the Sanhedrim, or great council of the nation. **See Barnes "Mt 2:4"**.

They claimed the right of regulating all the affairs of religion. **See Barnes "Joh 1:19"**.

What do we? What measures are we taking to arrest the progress of his sentiments?

For this man doeth many miracles. If they admitted that he performed *miracles*, it was clear what they ought to do. They should have received him as the Messiah. It may be asked, If they

really believed that he worked miracles, why did they not believe on him? To this it may be replied that they did not doubt that impostors might work miracles. See Mt 24:24. To this opinion they were led, probably, by the wonders which the magicians performed in Egypt (Exodus chapters 7 & 8), and by the passage in De 13:1. As they regarded the tendency of the doctrines of Jesus to draw off the people from the worship of God, and from keeping his law (Joh 9:16), they did not suppose themselves bound to follow him, even *if he did* work miracles.

{f} "gathered" Ps 2:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 48

Verse 48. *All men*. That is, all men among the Jews. The whole nation.

And the Romans shall come. They were then subject to the Romans—tributary and dependent. Whatever privileges they had they held at the will of the Roman emperor. They believed, or feigned to believe, that Jesus was intending to set up a *temporal* kingdom. As he claimed to be the Messiah, so they supposed, of course, that he designed to be a temporal prince, and they professed to believe that this claim was, *in fact*, hostility to the Roman emperor. They supposed that it would involve the nation in war if he was not arrested, and that the effect would be that they would be vanquished and destroyed. It was on this charge that they at last arraigned him before Pilate, Lu 23:2,3.

Will take away. This expression means to *destroy*, to ruin, to overthrow, Lu 8:12 Ac 6:13,14.

Our place. This probably refers to the *temple*, Ac 6:13,14. It was called "the place" by way of eminence, as being the chief or principal place on earth—being the seat of the peculiar worship of God. This place was utterly destroyed by the Romans. **See Barnes** Mt 24:1, and following.

And nation. The nation or *people* of the Jews.

{h} "all men" Joh 12:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 49

Verse 49. *Caiaphas*. **See Barnes "Lu 3:2"**.

Being high-priest that same year. It is probable that the office of high-priest was at first for life, if there was no conduct that rendered the person unworthy the office. In that case the incumbent was removed. Thus Abiathar was removed by Solomon, 1Ki 2:27. Subsequently the kings, and especially the conquerors of Judea, claimed and exercised the right of removing the high-priest at pleasure, so that, in the time of the Romans, the office was held but a short time. (See the Chronological Table at the end of this volume.) Caiaphas held the office about ten years.

Ye know nothing at all. That is, you know nothing respecting the subject under consideration. You are fools to *hesitate* about so plain a case. It is probable that there was a party, even in the Sanhedrim, that was secretly in favour of Jesus as the Messiah. Of that party Nicodemus was certainly one. See Joh 3:1 7:50,51 11:45, 12:42.

"Among the chief rulers, also, many believed on him," &c.

{i} "named Caiphas" Lu 3:3 Joh 18:14; Ac 1:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 50

Verse 50. *It is expedient for us*. It *is better* for us. Literally, "It is *profitable* for us."

That one man should die. Jesus they regarded as promoting sedition, and as exposing the nation, if he was successful, to the vengeance of the Romans, Joh 11:48. If *he* was put to death they supposed the people would be safe. This is all, doubtless, that he meant by his dying for the people. He did not *himself* intend to speak of his dying as an *atonement* or a sacrifice; but his words might also express that, and, though he was unconscious of it, he was expressing a *real truth*. In the sense in which he intended it there was no truth in the observation, nor occasion for it, but in the sense which the words *might convey* there was real and most important truth. It was expedient, it was infinitely desirable, that Jesus should die for that people, and for all others, to save them from perishing.

{k} "it is expedient" Lu 24:46

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 51

Verse 51. *Not of himself*. Though he uttered what proved to be a *true prophecy*, yet it was accomplished in a way which he did not intend. He had a wicked design. He was plotting murder and crime. Yet, wicked as he was, and little as he intended it, God so ordered it that he delivered a most precious truth respecting the atonement. Remark,

1st. God may fulfil the words of the wicked in a manner which they do not wish or intend.

2nd. He may make even *their* malice and wicked plots the very means of accomplishing his purposes. What they regard as the fulfillment of *their* plans God may make the fulfillment of *his*, yet so as directly to overthrow their designs, and prostrate them in ruin.

3rd. Sinners should tremble and be afraid when they lay plans against God, or seek to do unjustly to others.

Being high-priest that year. It is not to be supposed that Caiaphas was a *true prophet*, or was conscious of the meaning which John has affixed to his words; but his words *express* the truth about the atonement of Jesus, and John records it *as a remarkable circumstance* that the high-priest of the nation should unwittingly deliver a sentiment which turned out to be the truth about the death of Jesus. Great importance was attached to the opinion of the high-priest by the Jews, because it was by him that the judgment by Urim and Thummim was formerly declared in cases of importance and difficulty, Nu 27:21. It is not certain or probable that the high-priest ever was endowed with the gift of prophecy; but he sustained a high office, the authority of his name was great, and it was thence remarkable that he uttered a declaration which the result showed to be true, though not in the sense that he intended.

He prophesied. He uttered words which proved to be prophetic; or he expressed at that time a sentiment which turned out to be true. It does not mean that he was inspired, or that he deserved to be ranked among the true prophets; but his words were such that they accurately expressed a future event. The word *prophecy* is to be taken here not in the strict sense, but in a sense which is not uncommon in the sacred writers. Ac 21:9: "And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy." **See Barnes "Re 12:6"**

See Barnes "1Co 14:1, comp. **See Barnes "Mt 26:68"**; **See Barnes** "Lu 22:64,

That Jesus should die. Die in the *place* of men, or as an atonement for sinners. This is evidently the meaning which John attaches to the words.

For that nation. For the Jews. As a sacrifice for their sins. In no other sense whatever could it be said that he died for them. His death, so far from *saving* them in the sense in which the high-priest understood it, was the very occasion of their destruction. They invoked the vengeance of God when they said, "His blood be on us and on our children" (Mt 27:25), and all these calamities came upon them because they would not come to him and be saved—that is, because they rejected him and put him to death, Mt 23:37-39

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 52

Verse 52. *Should gather together in one*. All his chosen among the Jews and Gentiles. See Joh 10:16.

The children of God. This is spoken not of those who *were then* Christians, but of all whom God should bring to him; all who *would be*, in the mercy of God, called, chosen, sanctified among all nations, Joh 10:16.

{l} "not for that nation only" Isa 49:6 Ro 3:29; 1Jo 2:2

{m} "scattered abroad" Joh 10:16 Eph 2:14-17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 53

Verse 53. *They took counsel*. The judgment of the high-priest silenced opposition, and they began to devise measures to put him to death without exciting tumult among the people. Comp. Mt 26:5.

{n} "they took counsel" Ps 109:4,5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 54

Verse 54. *No more openly*. No more publicly, in the cities and towns. Jesus never exposed his life unnecessarily to hazard. Although the time of his death was determined in the counsel of God, yet this did not prevent his using proper means to preserve his life.

The wilderness. **See Barnes "Mt 3:1".**

A city called Ephraim. This was probably a small town in the tribe of Ephraim, about five miles west of Jericho.

{p} "Ephraim" 2Sa 13:23 2Ch 13:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 55

Verse 55. *Jews' passover*. **See Barnes "Mt 26:2, also** Mt 26:3-17.

Its being called the *Jews'* Passover shows that John wrote this gospel among people who were not Jews, and to whom it was necessary, therefore to explain their customs.

To purify themselves. This purifying consisted in preparing themselves for the proper observation of the Passover, according to the commands of the law. If any were defiled in any manner by contact with the dead or by any other ceremonial uncleanness, they were required to take the prescribed measures for purification, Le 22:1-6. For want of this, great inconvenience was sometimes experienced. See 2Ch 30:17,18. Different periods were necessary in order to be cleansed from ceremonial pollution. For example, one who had been polluted by the touch of a dead body, of a sepulchre, or by the bones of the dead, was sprinkled on the third and seventh days, by a clean person, with hyssop dipped in water mixed in the ashes of the red heifer. After washing his body and clothes he was then clean. These persons who went up *before* the Passover were doubtless those who had in some manner been ceremonially polluted.

{q} "the Jews' Passover" Joh 2:13 5:1, 6:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 56

Verse 56. *Will not come to the feast?* They doubted whether he would come. On the one hand, it was required by law that all males should come. On the other, his coming was attended with great danger. This was the cause of their doubting. It was in this situation that our Saviour, like many of his followers, was called to act. Danger was on the one hand, and duty on the other. He chose, as all should, to do his duty, and leave the event with God. He preferred to do it, though he knew that death was to be the consequence; and we should not shrink, when we have reason to apprehend danger, persecution, or death, from an honest attempt to observe all the commandments of God.

{r} "Then sought they for Jesus" Joh 5:16,18; Joh 11:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 11 - Verse 57

Verse 57. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 1

Verse 1. *Then Jesus came to Bethany*. This was near to Jerusalem, and it was from this place that he made his triumphant entry into the city. **See Barnes "Mt 21:1"**
and following.
{a} "Lazarus" Joh 11:1,43

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 2

Verses 2-8. See this passage explained **See Barnes** "Mt 26:3, also Mt 26:4-16.
Verse 2. *A supper*. At the house of Simon the leper, Mt 26:6.
Lazarus was, &c. The names of Martha and Lazarus are mentioned because it was not in their own house, but in that of Simon. Lazarus is particularly mentioned, since it was so remarkable that one who had been once dead should be enjoying again the endearments of friendship. This shows, also, that his resurrection was no illusion—that he was *really* restored to the blessings of life and friendship. Calmet thinks that this was about two months after his resurrection, and it is the last that we hear of him. How long he lived is unknown, nor is it recorded that he made any communication about the world of spirits. It is remarkable that none who have been restored to life from the dead have made any communications respecting that world. See Lu 16:31, and **See Barnes "2Co 12:4".**
{b} "Martha served" Lu 10:38-42

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 3

Verse 3. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Which should betray him*. Greek, "who was to betray him" that is, who *would* do it.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Three hundred pence*. About forty dollars, or £8, 10s.
And given to the poor. The *avails* or value of it given to the poor.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Had the bag*. The word translated *bag* is compounded of two words, meaning "tongue," and "to keep or preserve." It was used to denote the bag in which musicians used to keep the tongues or reeds of their pipes when travelling. Hence it came to mean any bag or purse in which travellers put their money or their most precious articles. The disciples appear to have had such a bag or purse in common, in which they put whatever money they had, and which was designed especially for the poor, Lu 8:3 Mt 27:55; Ac 2:44.

The keeping of this, it seems, was intrusted to Judas; and it is remarkable that the only one among them who appears to have been naturally avaricious should have received this appointment. It shows us that every man is tried according to his native propensity. This is the object of trial—to bring out man's native character; and every man will find *opportunity* to do evil according to his native disposition, if he is inclined to it.

And bare, &c. The word translated *bare* means literally to carry as a burden. Then it means to *carry away*, as in Joh 20:15: "If thou hast borne him hence." Hence it means to carry away *as a thief does*, and this is evidently its meaning here. It has this sense often in classic writers. Judas was a thief, and stole what was put into the bag. The money he desired to be intrusted to him, that he might secretly enrich himself. It is clear, however, that the disciples did not at this time know that this was his character, or they would have remonstrated against him. They learned it afterward. We may learn here,

1st. That it is not a new thing for members of the church to be covetous. Judas was so before them.

2nd. That such members will be those who complain of the *great waste* in spreading the gospel.

3rd. That this deadly, mean, and grovelling passion will work all evil in a church. It brought down the curse of God on the children of Israel in the case of Achan (Jos 7:1), and it betrayed our Lord to death. It has often since brought blighting on the church; and many a time it has *betrayed* the cause of Christ, and drowned men in destruction and perdition, 1Ti 6:9.

{d} "he was a thief" 2Ki 5:20-27 Ps 50:18 {e} "had the bag" Joh 13:29

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 7

Verse 7. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 8

Verse 8. No Barnes text on this verse.

{f} "For the poor"

De 15:11 Mt 26:11; Mr 14:7

{g} "me you have not" So 5:6 Joh 8:21, 12:35 13:33, 16:5-7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 9

Verse 9. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *That they might put Lazarus also to death*. When men are determined not to believe the gospel, there is no end to the crimes to which they are driven. Lazarus was alive, and the evidence of his resurrection was so clear that they could not resist it. They could neither deny it, nor prevent its effect on the people. As it was determined to kill Jesus, so they consulted about the propriety of removing Lazarus first, that the number of his followers might be lessened, and that the death of Jesus might make less commotion. Unbelief stops at no crime. Lazarus was innocent; they could bring no charge against him; but they deliberately plotted murder rather than believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

{h} "put Lazarus to death" Mt 21:8 Mr 11:8; Lu 19:36

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 11

Verse 11. No Barnes text on this verse.

{i} "that by reason"

Joh 11:45 12:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 12

Verses 12-19. See this passage explained in **See Barnes** "Mt 21:1, also Mt 21:2-16, also **See Barnes** "**Mr 11:1,** Mr 11:2-11, **See Barnes** "**Lu 19:29, also** Lu 19:30-44.

{k} "the next day" Mt 21:8 Mr 11:8; Lu 19:36

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 13

Verse 13. No Barnes text on this verse.

{l} "Hosanah"

Ps 118:25,26

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 14

Verse 14. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 15

Verse 15. No Barnes text on this verse.
{m} "Fear not"
Zec 9:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Was glorified*. Was raised from the dead, and had ascended to heaven.
{n} "These things" Lu 18:34

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Bare record*. Testified that he had raised him, and, as was natural, spread the report through the city. This excited much attention, and the people came out in multitudes to me one who had power to work such miracles.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 18

Verse 18. No Barnes text on this verse.
{q} "For this cause" Joh 12:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Prevail nothing*. All your efforts are ineffectual to stop the progress of his opinions, and to prevent the people from believing on him.

The world. As we should say, "Everybody—all the city has gone out." The fact that he met with such success induced them to hasten their design of putting him to death, Joh 11:53.

{r} "Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing" Joh 11:47,48

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Certain Greeks*. In the original, "some Hellenists"— the name commonly given to the Greeks. The same name was commonly used by the Jews to denote *all* the pagan nations, because most of those whom they knew spoke the Greek language, Joh 7:34 Ro 1:16, 2:9,10, 3:9

"Jews and Greeks." The Syriac translates this place, "Some of the Gentiles." There are three opinions in regard to these persons:

1st. That they were Jews who spoke the Greek language, and dwelt in some of the Greek cities. It is known that Jews were scattered in Asia Minor, Greece, Macedonia, Egypt, &c., in all which places they had synagogues. **See Barnes "Joh 7:35"**.

2nd. That they were *proselytes* from the Greeks.

3rd. That they were still Gentiles and idolaters, who came to bring offerings to Jehovah to be deposited in the temple. Lightfoot has shown that the surrounding pagans were accustomed not only to send presents, sacrifices, and offerings to the temple, but that they also frequently attended the great feasts of the Jews. Hence the outer court of the temple was called the *court of the Gentiles*. Which of these opinions is the correct one cannot be determined.

{s} "certain Greeks" Ac 17:4 Ro 1:16 {t} "them that came up" 1Ki 8:41,42

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Bethsaida of Galilee*. **See Barnes "Joh 1:44"**.

Would see Jesus. It is probable that the word see, here, implies also a desire to converse with him, or to hear his doctrine about the nature of his kingdom. They had seen or heard of his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and, either by curiosity or a desire to be instructed, they came and interceded with his disciples that they might be permitted to see him. In this there was nothing wrong. Christ made the *curiosity* of Zaccheus the means of his conversion, Lu 19:1-9. If we wish to find the Saviour, we must seek for him and take the proper means.

{u} "to Philip" Joh 1:44

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Telleth Andrew*. Why he did not at once tell Jesus is not known. Possibly he was doubtful whether Jesus would wish to converse with *Gentiles*, and chose to consult with Andrew about it.

Tell Jesus. Whether the Greeks were with them cannot be determined. From the following discourse it would seem probable that they were, or at least that Jesus admitted them to his presence and delivered the discourse to them.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 23

Verse 21. *The hour is come*. The *time* is come. The word *hour* commonly means a definite part or a division of a day; but it also is used to denote a brief period, and a *fixed, definite, determined* time. It is used in this sense here. The appointed, fixed time is come—that is, is so near at hand that it may be said *to be come*.

The Son of man. This is the favourite title which Jesus gives to himself, denoting his union with man, and the interest he felt in his welfare. The title is used here rather than "The Son of God," because as a *man* he had been humble, poor, and despised; but the time had come when, as a man, he was to receive the appropriate honours of the Messiah.

Be glorified. Be honoured in an appropriate way—that is, by the testimony which God would give to him at his death, by his resurrection, and by his ascension to glory. See Joh 7:39.

{v} "The hour is come" Joh 13:32 17:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Verily, verily*. An expression denoting the great importance of what he was about to say. We cannot but admire the wisdom by which he introduces the subject of his death. They had seen his triumph. They supposed that he was about to establish his kingdom. He told them that the time *had* come in which he was to be glorified, but not in the manner in which they expected. It was to be by his death. But as they would not at once see how this could be, as it would appear to dash their hopes, he takes occasion to illustrate it by a beautiful comparison. All the beauty and richness of the *harvest* results from the fact that the grain had *died*. If it had not died it would never have germinated or produced the glory of the yellow harvest. So with him. By this he still keeps before them the truth that he was to be glorified, but he delicately and beautifully introduces the idea still that he *must die*.

A corn. A grain.

Of wheat. Any kind of grain —wheat, barley, &c. The word includes all grain of this kind.

Into the ground. Be buried in the earth, so as to be accessible by the proper moisture.

And die The whole *body* or substance of the grain, except the germ, dies in the earth or is decomposed, and this decomposed substance constitutes the first nourishment of the tender germ—a nutriment wonderfully adapted to it, and fitted to nourish it until it becomes vigorous enough to derive its support entirely from the ground. In this God has shown his wisdom and goodness. No one thing could be more *evidently* fitted for another than this provision made in the grain itself for the future wants of the tender germ.

Abideth alone. Produces no fruit. It remains without producing the rich and beautiful harvest. So Jesus intimates that it was only by his death that he would be glorified in the salvation of men, and in the honours and rewards of heaven, Heb 2:9: "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels *for the suffering of death*, crowned with glory and honour." Php 2:8,9: "He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; wherefore God also hath highly exalted him," Heb 12:2: "Who, *for the joy* that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." See also Eph 1:20-23.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *He that loveth his life*, &c. This was a favorite principle, a sort of *axiom* with the Lord Jesus, which he applied to himself as well as to his followers. **See Barnes "Mt 10:39".**

See Barnes "Lu 9:24".

{x} "loveth his life" Mt 10:39 16:25; Mr 8:35 Lu 9:24, 17:33

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Serve me*. Will be my disciple, or will be a Christian. Perhaps this was said to inform the Greeks (Joh 12:20) of the nature of his religion.

Let him follow me. Let him imitate me; do what I do, bear what I bear, and love what I love. He is discoursing here particularly of his own sufferings and death, and this passage has reference, therefore, to calamity and persecution.

"You see me triumph—you see me enter Jerusalem, and
you supposed that my kingdom was to be set up without
opposition or calamity; but it is not. I am to die;
and if you will serve me, you must follow me even in
these scenes of calamity; be willing to endure trial
and to bear shame, looking for future reward."

Where I am. See Joh 14:3 17:24. That is, he shall be in heaven, where the Son of God then *was* in his divine nature, and where he would be as the glorified Messiah. **See Barnes "Joh 3:13".**

The natural and obvious meaning of the expression "I am" implies that he was then in heaven. The design of this verse is to comfort them in the midst of persecution and trial. They were to follow him to any calamity; but, as he was to be glorified as the result of his sufferings, so they also were to look for their reward in the kingdom of heaven, Re 3:21: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne."

{y} "If any man serve" Lu 6:46 Joh 14:15; 1Jo 5:3

{z} "Where I am" Joh 14:3 17:24; 1Th 4:17

{a} "if any man serve" 1Sa 2:30 Pr 27:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *Now is my soul troubled*. The mention of his death brought before him its approaching horrors, its pains, its darkness, its unparalleled woes. Jesus was full of acute sensibility, and his human nature shrunk from the scenes through which he was to pass. See Lu 23:41-44.

What shall I say? This is an expression denoting intense anxiety and perplexity. *As if* it were a subject of debate whether he *could* bear those sufferings; or whether the work of man's redemption should be abandoned, and he should call upon God to save him. Blessed be his name that he was

willing to endure these sorrows, and did not forsake man when he was *so near* being redeemed! On the decision of that moment—the fixed and unwavering purpose of the Son of God — depended man's salvation. If Jesus had forsaken his purpose then, all would have been lost.

Father, save me. This ought undoubtedly to have been read as a question—"Shall I say, Father, save me?" Shall I apply to God to rescue me? or shall I go forward to bear these trials ? As it is in our translation, it represents him as actually offering the prayer, and then checking himself. The Greek will bear either interpretation. The whole verse is full of deep feeling and anxiety. Comp. Mt 26:38 Lu 12:50.

This hour. These *calamities*. The word hour, here, doubtless has reference to his approaching sufferings—the appointed hour for him to suffer. Shall I ask my Father to save me from this *hour* —that is, from these approaching sufferings? That it *might* have been done, see Mt 26:53.

But for this cause. That is, to suffer and die. As this was the *design* of his coming—as he did it deliberately—as the salvation of the world depended on it, he felt that it would not be proper to pray to be delivered from it. He came to suffer, and he submitted to it. See Lu 23:42.

{c} "but for this reason" Joh 18:37

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *Glorify thy name*. The meaning of this expression in this connection is this: "I am willing to bear any trials; I will not shrink from any sufferings. Let thy name be honoured. Let thy character, wisdom, goodness, and plans of mercy be manifested and promoted, whatever sufferings it may cost me." Thus Jesus showed us that *God's glory* is to be the great end of our conduct, and that we are to seek that, whatever sufferings it may cost us.

I have both glorified it. The word *it* is not here in the original, but it is not improperly supplied by the translators. There can be no doubt that when God says here that he had glorified his name, he refers to what had been done by Christ, and that this was to be understood as an *attestation* that he attended him and approved his work. See Joh 12:30. He *had* honoured his name, or had glorified *him*, by the pure instructions which he had given to man through him; by the power displayed in his miracles; by proclaiming his mercy through him; by appointing him to be the Messiah, &c.

Will glorify it *again*. By the death, the resurrection, and ascension of his Son, and by extending the blessings of the gospel among all nations. It was thus that he sustained his Son in view of approaching trials; and we may learn,

1st. That God will minister grace to us in the prospect of suffering.

2nd. That the fact that God will be honoured by our afflictions should make us willing to bear them.

3rd. That whatever was done by Christ tended to honour the name of God. This was what he had in view. He lived and suffered, not for himself, but to glorify God in the salvation of men.

{d} "a voice" Mt 3:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *The people*. A part of the people.

It thundered. The unexpected sound of the voice would confound and amaze them; and though there is no reason to doubt that the words were spoken distinctly (Mt 3:17), yet some of the people, either from amazement or envy, would suppose that this was a mere natural phenomenon.

An angel spake. It was the opinion of many of the Jews that God did not speak to men except by the ministry of angels, Heb 2:2: "The word spoken *by angels*;" Ga 3:19: "It was ordained *by angels* in the hand of a mediator."

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *Came not because of me*. Not to strengthen or confirm me; not that I had any doubts about my course, or any apprehension that God would *not* approve me and glorify his name.

For your sakes. To give you a striking and indubitable proof that I am the Messiah; that you may remember it when I am departed, and be *yourselves* comforted, supported, and saved.

{e} "but for your sakes" Joh 11:42

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *Now is the judgment of this world*. Greek, "crisis." This expression, doubtless, has reference to his approaching death, and whatever he means by *judgment* here relates to something that was to be accomplished *by* that death. It cannot mean that then was to be the time in which the world was to be finally judged, for he says that he did not come then to judge the world (Joh 12:47 8:15), and he has clearly declared that there shall be a *future* day when he will judge all mankind. The meaning of it may be thus expressed:

> "Now is approaching the decisive scene, the eventful period—the crisis—when it shall be determined who shall rule this world. There has been a long conflict between the powers of light and darkness—between God and the devil. Satan has so effectually ruled that he may be said to be the prince of this world; but my approaching death will destroy his kingdom, will break down his power, and will be the means of setting up the kingdom of God over man."

The death of Christ was to be the most grand and effectual of all means that could be used to establish the authority of the law and the government of God, Ro 8:3,4. This it did by showing the regard which God had for his law; by showing his hatred of sin, and presenting the strongest motives

to induce man to leave the service of Satan; by securing the influences of the Holy Spirit, and by his putting forth his own direct power in the cause of virtue and of God. The death of Jesus was the determining cause, the grand crisis, the concentration of all that God had ever done, or ever will do, to break down the kingdom of Satan, and set up his power over man. Thus was fulfilled the prediction (Ge 3:15),

"I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and
between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy
head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

Now shall the prince of this world. Satan, or the devil, Joh 14:30 16:11. He is also called the god of this world, 2Co 4:4 Eph 6:12: "The rulers of the darkness of this world "—that is, the rulers of this dark world—a well-known Hebraism. He is also called "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience," Eph 2:2. All these names are given him from the influence or power which he has over the men of this world, because the great mass of men have been under his control and subject to his will.

Be cast out. His kingdom shall be destroyed; his empire shall come to an end. It does not mean that his reign over all men would entirely cease then, but that then would be the *crisis*, the grand conflict in which *he* would be vanquished, and from that time his kingdom begin to decline, until it would finally cease, and then be free altogether from his dominion. See Lu 10:18 Col 1:18-20; Ac 26:18; 1Co 15:25,26; Re 20:14.

{f} "the prince of this world" Lu 10:18 Joh 16:11; Ac 26:18 Eph 2:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *Be lifted up*. See Joh 3:14 8:28.

Will draw. Joh 6:44. The same word is used in both places.

All men. I will incline all kinds of men; or will make the way open by the cross, so that all men may come. I will provide a way which shall present a strong motive or inducement—the strongest that *can* be presented—to all men to come to me.

{g} "lifted up" Joh 8:28 {h} "will draw all *men*" Ro 5:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 33

Verse 33. No Barnes text on this verse.

{i} "signifying what death"

Ro 5:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *We have heard out of the law*. Out of the Old Testament; or rather we have been so taught by those who have interpreted the law to us.

That Christ. That *the* Messiah.

Abideth for ever. Will *remain* for ever, or will live for ever. The doctrine of many of them certainly was that the Messiah would not die; that he would reign as a prince for ever over the people. This opinion was founded on such passages of Scripture as these: Ps 110:4, "Thou art a priest for ever;" Da 2:44 8:13,14.

In the interpretation of these passages they had overlooked such places as Isa 53:1-12; nor did they understand how the fact that he would reign for ever could be reconciled with the idea of his death. To us, who understand that his reign does not refer to a *temporal*, an earthly kingdom, it is easy.

How sayest thou, &c. We have understood by the title "the Son of man" the same as the Messiah, and that he is to reign for ever. How can he be put to death?

Who is this Son of man? "The Son of man *we* understand to be the Messiah spoken of by Daniel, who is to reign for ever. To *him*, therefore, you cannot refer when you say that he must be lifted up, or must die. Who is it—what *other Son of man* is referred to but the *Messiah*? Either ignorantly or wilfully, they supposed he referred to some one else than the Messiah.

{k} "We have heard" Ps 89:36,37, 110:4 Isa 9:7

{l} "out of the law" Ro 5:18 Ps 72:17-19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *Yet a little while is the light with you*. Jesus did not reply directly to may their question. He saw that they were offended by the mention of his death, and he endeavoured to arrive at the same thing *indirectly*. He tells them, therefore, that the light would be with them a little while, and that they ought to improve the opportunity while they had it to listen to his instructions, to inquire with candour, and thus to forsake their false notions respecting the Messiah.

The light. Joh 1:4. It is probable that they understood this as denoting the Messiah. See Joh 8:12 "I am the light of the world;" Joh 9:4

Walk, &c. Joh 11:9. Whatever you have to do, do it while you enjoy this light. Make good use of your privileges before they are removed. That is, while the Messiah is with you, avail yourselves of his instructions and learn the way to life.

Lest darkness. Lest God should take away all your mercies, remove all light and instruction from you, and leave you to ignorance, blindness, and woe. This was true that darkness and calamity were to come upon the Jewish people when the Messiah was removed; and it is also true that God leaves a sinner to darkness and misery when he has long rejected the gospel.

For he, &c. See Joh 11:10.

{m} "the light" Joh 8:32 {n} "with you" Jer 13:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *While ye have light.* This implied two things:

1st. That *he* was the light, or was the Messiah.

2nd. That he was soon to be taken away by death. In this manner he answered their question—not *directly*, but in a way to convey the truth to their minds, and at the same time to administer to them a useful admonition. Jesus never aroused the prejudices of men unnecessarily, yet he never shrank from declaring to them the truth *in some way*, however unpalatable it might be.

Believe in the light. That is, in the Messiah, who is the light of the world.

That ye may be the children, &c. That ye may the friends and followers of the Messiah. **See Barnes "Mt 1:1".**

Comp. Joh 8:12 Eph 5:8: "Now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light."

Did hide himself from them. Joh 8:59. He went out to Bethany, where he commonly passed the night, Lu 21:37.

{p} "be the children of light" Eph 5:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *So many miracles*. This does not refer to any miracles wrought on this occasion, but to all his miracles wrought in view of the nation, in healing the sick, opening the eyes of the blind, raising the dead, &c. John here gives the *summary* or the result of all his works. Though Jesus had given the most undeniable proof of his being the Messiah, yet the nation did not believe on him.

Before them. Before the Jewish nation. Not in the presence of the people whom he was then addressing, but before the Jewish people.

They believed not. The Jewish nation did not believe *as a nation*, but rejected him.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *The saying* The *word* of Isaiah, or that which Isaiah predicted. This occurs in Isa 53:1.

Might be fulfilled. That the same effect should occur which occurred in the time of Isaiah. This does not mean that the Pharisees rejected Christ *in order* that the prophecy of Isaiah should be fulfilled, but that *by* their rejection of him the same thing had occurred which took place in the time of Isaiah. *His* message was despised by the nation, and he himself put to death. And it was also true—by the same causes, by the same nation—that the same gospel message was rejected by the Jews in the time of Christ. The same language of the prophet would express *both* events, and no doubt it was *intended* by the Holy Spirit to mark both events. In this Way it was completely fulfilled. **See Barnes on "Is 53:1".**

Our report. Literally, by *report* is meant "what is heard." Our speech, our message. That is, few or none have received the message. The form of the question is an emphatic way of saying that it was rejected.

The arm of the Lord. The *arm* is a symbol of power, as it is the instrument by which we execute our purposes. It is put for the power of God, Isa 51:9 52:10. Thus he is said to have brought out the children of Israel from Egypt with *a high arm*—that is, with great power. It hence means God's power in defending his people, in overcoming his enemies, and in saving the soul. In this place it clearly denotes the power displayed by the miracles of Christ.

Revealed. Made known, seen, understood. Though the power of God was displayed, yet the people did not see and understand it.

{q} "Lord, who hath believed our report" Isa 53:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *They could not believe*. See Mr 6:5. "He could there do no mighty works," &c. The words *can* and *could* are often used in the Bible to denote the existence of such obstacles as to make a result certain, or as affirming that while one thing exists another thing cannot follow. Thus, Joh 5:44: "How *can* ye believe which receive honour one of another." That is, while this propensity to seek for honour exists, it will effectually prevent your believing. Thus (Ge 37:4) it is said of the brethren of Joseph that they "*could* not speak peaceably unto him." That is, while their hatred continued so strong, the other result would follow. See also Mt 12:34 Ro 8:7; Joh 6:60 Am 3:3.

In this case it means that there was some obstacle or difficulty that made it certain that while it existed they would not believe. What that was is stated in the next verse; and while that blindness of mind and that hardness of heart existed, it was impossible that they should believe, for the two things were incompatible. But this determines nothing about their power of *removing that blindness*, or of yielding their heart to the gospel. It simply affirms that while one exists the other cannot follow. Chrysostom and Augustine understand this of a *moral inability*, and not of any natural want of power. "They could not, because they would not" (Chrysostom *in loco*). So on Jer 13:23, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin," &c., he says, "he does not say it is impossible for a wicked man to do well, but, BECAUSE *they will not, therefore they cannot*." Augustine says on this place: "If I be asked why they could not believe, I answer without hesitation, because they *would not*: because God foresaw their *evil will*, and he announced it beforehand by the prophet."

Said again, Isa 6:9,10.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 40

Verse 40. *He hath blinded their eyes*. The expression in Isaiah is, "Go, make the heart of this people fat, and shut their eyes." That is, go and proclaim truth to them—truth that will *result* in blinding their eyes. Go and proclaim the law and the will of God, and the *effect will be*, owing to the hardness of their heart, that their eyes will be blinded and their hearts hardened. As God knew

that this would be the result—as it was to be the effect of the message, his commanding Isaiah to go and proclaim it was the same *in effect*, or in the *result*, as if he had commanded him to blind their eyes and harden their hearts. It is this *effect* or *result* to which the evangelist refers in this place. He states that God did it—that is, he did it in the manner mentioned in Isaiah, for we are limited to that in our interpretation of the passage. In that case it is clear that the mode specified is not a *direct* agency on the part of God in blinding the mind—which we cannot reconcile with any just notions of the divine character—but *in suffering the truth to produce a regular effect on sinful minds, without putting forth any positive supernatural influence to prevent it*. The effect of truth on such minds is to irritate, to enrage, and to harden, unless counteracted by the grace of God. See Ro 7:8,9,11; 2Co 2:15 16.

And as God *knew* this, and, knowing it, still sent the message, and suffered it to produce the *regular* effect, the evangelist says "*he* hath blinded their minds," thus retaining the *substance* of the passage in Isaiah without quoting the precise language; but in proclaiming the truth there was nothing *wrong* on the part of God or of Isaiah, nor is there any indication that God was unwilling that they should believe and be saved.

That they should not see, &c. This does not mean that it was the *design* of God that they should not be converted, but that it was the *effect* of their rejecting the message.

See Barnes "Mt 13:14, **See Barnes "Mt 13:15"**.

{r} "hath blinded" Isa 6:9,10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 41

Verse 41. *When he saw his glory*, Isa 6:1-10. Isaiah saw the LORD (in Hebrew, JEHOVAH) sitting on a throne and surrounded with the seraphim. This is perhaps the only instance in the Bible in which Jehovah is said to have been seen by man, and *for* this the Jews affirm that Isaiah was put to death. God had said (Ex 33:20), "No man shall see me and live;" and as Isaiah affirmed that he had seen Jehovah, the Jews, for that and other reasons, put him to death by sawing him asunder. **See Barnes "Is 1:1"**.

In the prophecy Isaiah is said expressly to have seen JEHOVAH (Isa 6:1); and in Isa 6:5, "Mine eyes have seen the King JEHOVAH of hosts." By his *glory* is meant the manifestation of him—the *shechinah*, or visible cloud that was a representation of God, and that rested over the mercy-seat. This was regarded as equivalent to seeing God, and John here expressly applies this to the Lord Jesus Christ; for he is not affirming that the people did not believe in God, but is assigning the reason why they believed not on Jesus Christ as the Messiah. The whole discourse has respect to the Lord Jesus, and the natural construction of the passage requires us to refer it to him. John affirms that it was the glory *of the Messiah* that Isaiah saw, and yet Isaiah affirms that it was JEHOVAH; and from this the inference is irresistible that John regarded Jesus as the Jehovah whom Isaiah saw. The name Jehovah is never, in the Scriptures, applied to a man, or an angel, or to any creature. It is the peculiar, incommunicable name of God. So great was the reverence of the Jews for that name that they would not even pronounce it. This passage is therefore conclusive proof that Christ is equal with the Father.

Spake of him. Of the Messiah. The connection requires this interpretation.

{s} "Said Esias when he saw his glory" Isa 6:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 42

Verse 42. *The chief rulers*. Members of the Sanhedrim — Nicodemus, Joseph, and others like them.

Because of the Pharisees. The Pharisees were a majority of the council.

Put out of the synagogue. Excommunicated. **See Barnes "Joh 9:22,23"**.

{t} "because of the Pharisees" Joh 9:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 43

Verse 43. *The praise of men*. The approbation of men. It does not appear that they had a living, active faith, but that they were convinced in their understanding that he was the Messiah. They had that kind of faith which is so common among men—a speculative acknowledgment that religion is true, but an acknowledgment which leads to no self-denial, which shrinks from the active duties of piety, and fears man more than God. True faith is active. It overcomes the fear of man; it prompts to self-denying duties, Heb 11:1. Nevertheless, it was no unimportant proof that Jesus was the Messiah, that *any part* of the great council of the Jews were even speculatively convinced of it: and it shows that the evidence could not have been slight when it overcame their prejudices and pride, and constrained them to admit that the lowly and poor man of Nazareth was the long- expected Messiah of their nation.

Did not confess him. Did not openly avow their belief that he was the Messiah. Two of them, however, did afterward evince their attachment to him. These were Joseph and Nicodemus, Joh 19:38,39. That Joseph was one of them appears from Mr 15:43 Lu 23:50,51.

{u} "For they loved the praise" Joh 5:44 Ro 2:29

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 44

Verse 44. *Jesus cried and said*. John does not say *where* or *when* this was; it is probable, however, that it was a continuation of the discourse recorded in Joh 12:30-36. Jesus saw their unbelief, and proceeded to state the consequence of believing on him, and of rejecting him and his message.

Believeth not on me. That is, not on me *alone*, or his faith does not terminate on *me*. Comp. Mt 10:20 Mr 9:37. It *involves*, also, belief in him that sent me. Jesus uniformly represents the union between himself and God as so intimate that there could not be faith in *him* unless there was also faith in God. *He* did the same works (Joh 5:17 20 36 10:25 37) , and taught the very doctrine which God had commissioned him to do, Joh 8:38 5:30 20-23.

{v} "He that believeth" Joh 1:5 3:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 45

Verse 45. *Seeth me*. This verse is a strong confirmation of his equality with god. In no other way can it be true that he who saw Jesus saw him that sent him, unless he were the same in essence. Of no *man* could it be affirmed that he who saw him saw God. To say this of Paul or Isaiah would have been blasphemy. And yet Jesus uses this language familiarly and constantly. It shows that he had a consciousness that he was divine and that it was the *natural* and proper way of speaking when speaking of himself.

Comp. Joh 5:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 46

Verse 46. *A light unto the world*. Joh 13:12 1:9, 3:19.

Walk in darkness. In gross and dangerous errors. Darkness is put for error as well as for sin Joh 3:19 1Jo 1:5. It is also used to denote the state when the *comforts* of religion are withdrawn from the soul Isa 8:22 Joe 2:2; Is 59:9 Joh 8:12.

{w} "I am come a light" Joh 1:5 3:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 47

Verse 47. *I judge him not*, &c. Joh 8:15. It was not his *present* purpose to condemn men. He would come to *condemn* the guilty at a future time. At present he came to save them. hence he did not now even pronounce decisively on the condition of those who rejected him, but still gave them an opportunity to be saved.

{x} "for I came not to judge the world" Joh 3:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 48

Verse 48. *He that rejecteth me*. Lu 10:16. The word *reject* means to *despise*, or to refuse to receive him.

Hath one. That is, he needs not my voice to condemn him. He will carry his own condemnation with him, even should I be silent. His own conscience will condemn him. The words which I have spoken will be remembered and will condemn him, if there were nothing farther. From this we learn,

1st. That a guilty conscience needs no accuser.

2nd. That the words of Christ, and the messages of mercy which the sinner has rejected, will be remembered by him.

3rd. That this will be the source of his condemnation. This will make him miserable, and there will be no possibility of his being happy.

4th. That the conscience of the sinner will *concur* with the sentence of Christ in the great day, and that he will go to eternity *self-condemned*. It is this which will make the pains of hell so intolerable to the sinner.

5th. The word that Christ has spoken, the doctrines of his gospel, and the messages of mercy, will be that by which the sinner will be judged in the last day. Every man will be judged by that message, and the sinner will be punished according to the frequency and clearness with which the rejected message has been presented to his mind, Mt 12:41.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 49

Verse 49. *Of myself*. Joh 7:16-18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 12 - Verse 50

Verse 50. *Is life everlasting*. Is the *cause* or *source* of everlasting life. He that *obeys* the commandment of God shall obtain everlasting life; and this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his only-begotten Son, 1Jo 3:22. We see here the reason of the earnestness and fidelity of the Lord Jesus. It was because he saw that *eternal life* depended on the faithful preaching of the message of God. He therefore proclaimed it in the face of all opposition, contempt, and persecution. And we see also,

1st. That every minister of religion should have a deep and abiding conviction that he delivers a message that is to be connected with the eternal welfare of his hearers. And,

2nd. Under the influence of this belief, he should fearlessly deliver his message in the face of bonds, poverty, contempt, persecution, and death.

It may not be improper to remark here that this is the close of the public preaching of Christ. The rest of his ministry was employed in the private instruction of his apostles, and in preparing them for his approaching death. It is such a close as all his ministers should desire to make—a solemn, deliberate, firm exhibition of the truth of God, under a belief that on it was depending the eternal salvation of his hearers, and uttering without fear the solemn message of the Most High to a lost world.

{z} "his commandments" 1Jo 3:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 13 - Verse 1

Verse 1. *The feast of the passover*. **See Barnes** "Mt 26:2, **See Barnes "Mt 26:17"**.

His hour was come. The hour appointed in the purpose of God for him to die, Joh 12:27. *Having loved his own*. Having given to them decisive and constant proofs of his love. This was done by his calling them to follow him; by patiently teaching them; by bearing with their errors and weaknesses; and by making them the heralds of his truth and the heirs of eternal life.

He loved them unto the end. That is, he *continued* the proofs of his love until he was taken away from them by death. Instances of that love John proceeds immediately to record in his washing their feet and in the institution of the Supper. We may remark that Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and for ever. He does not change; he always loves the same traits of character; nor does he *withdraw* his love from the soul. If his people walk in darkness and wander from him, the fault is theirs, not his. His is the character of a friend that never leaves or forsakes us; a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. Ps 37:28: "The Lord forsaketh not his saints." Isa 49:14-17 Pr 18:24.

{a} "Now before the feast" Mt 26:2 {b} "his hour was come" Joh 17:1,11 {c} "having loved his own" Jer 31:3 Eph 5:2; 1Jo 4:12 Re 1:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 13 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Supper being ended*. This translation expresses too much. The original means *while they were at supper*; and that this is the meaning is clear from the fact that we find them still eating after this. The Arabic and Persic translations give it this meaning. The Latin Vulgate renders it like the English.

The devil. The leader or prince of evil spirits.

Having now put it into the heart. Literally, having *cast* it into the heart. Comp. Eph 6:16: "The fiery darts of the wicked." See Ac 5:3 Lu 22:3. The meaning of this passage is that Satan inclined the mind of Judas to do this, or he tempted him to betray his Master. We know not precisely how this was done, but we know that it was by means of his *avarice*. Satan *could* tempt no one unless there was some inclination of the mind, some natural or depraved propensity that he could make use of. He presents objects in alluring forms fitted to that propensity, and under the influence of a strong or a corrupt inclination the soul yields to sin. In the case of Judas it was the love of money; and it was necessary to present to him only the possibility of obtaining money, and it found him ready for any crime.

{d} "the devil" Lu 22:3,53; Joh 6:70

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 13 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Jesus knowing*, &c. With the full understanding of his dignity and elevation of character, he yet condescended to wash their feet. The evangelist introduces his washing their feet by saying that he was fully conscious of his elevation above them, as being intrusted with all things, and this made his humiliation the more striking and remarkable. Had he been a mere human teacher or a

prophet, it would have been remarkable; but when we remember the dignity of his nature, it shows how low he would stoop to teach and save his people.

Had given all things, &c. **See Barnes "Mt 28:18"**.

Was come from God. **See Barnes "Joh 8:42"**.

Went to God. Was about to return to heaven. See Joh 6:61,62.

{e} "knowing that the Father" Mt 28:18 He 2:8 {f} "he was come from God" Joh 17:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 13 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *He riseth from supper*. Evidently while they were eating. See Joh 13:2.

Laid aside his garments. His outer garment. **See Barnes "Mt 5:40"**.

This was his *mantle* or robe, which is said to have been without seam. It was customary to lay this aside when they worked or ran, or in the heat of summer.

Took a towel and girded himself. This was the manner of a servant or slave. **See Barnes "Lu 17:8"**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 13 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Began to wash*, &c. It was uniformly the office of a servant to wash the feet of guests, 1Sa 25:41. It became a matter of necessity where they travelled without shoes, and where they reclined on couches at meals. It should be remembered here that the disciples were not *sitting* at the table, as we do, but were lying with their feet extended from the table, so that Jesus could easily have access to them. **See Barnes "Mt 23:6"**.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 13 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Dost thou wash my feet*? Every word here is emphatic. Dost *thou*— the Son of God, the Messiah—perform the humble *office of a servant*—toward me, a sinner? This was an expression of Peter's humility, of his reverence for Jesus, and also a refusal to allow him to do it. It is *possible*, though not certain from the text, that he came to Simon Peter first.

{1} "Peter", or "he" {g} "dost thou wash my feet" Mt 3:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 13 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Thou knowest not now*. Though he saw the action of Jesus, yet he did not fully understand the *design* of it. It was a symbolical action, inculcating a lesson of humility, and intended to teach it to them in such a manner that it would be impossible for them ever to forget it. Had he

simply *commanded* them to be humble, it would have been far less forcible and impressive than when they saw him actually performing the office of a servant.

Shalt know hereafter. Jesus at that time partially explained it (Joh 13:14,15); but he was teaching them by this expressive act a lesson which they would continue to learn all their lives. Every day they would see more and more the necessity of humility and of kindness to each other, and would see that *they* were the servants of Christ and of the church, and ought not to aspire to honours and offices, but to be willing to perform the humblest service to benefit the world. And we may remark here that God often does things which we do not fully understand now, but which we may hereafter. He often afflicts us; he disappoints us; he frustrates our plans. Why it is we do not know now, but we yet shall learn that it was for our good, and designed to teach us some important lesson of humility and piety. So he will, in heaven, scatter all doubts, remove all difficulties, and show us the reason of the whole of his mysterious dealings in his leading us in the way to our future rest. We ought also, in view of this, to submit ourselves to him; to hush every murmur, and to believe that he does all things well. It is one evidence of piety when we are willing to receive affliction at the hand of God, the *reason* of which we cannot see, content with the belief that we *may* see it hereafter; or, even if we never do, still having so much confidence in God as to believe that WHAT HE DOES IS RIGHT.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 13 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Thou shalt never wash my feet*. This was a decided and firm expression of his reverence for his Mater, and yet it was improper. Jesus had just declared that it had a meaning, and that he ought to submit to it. We should yield to all the plain and positive requirements of God, even if we cannot now see how obedience would promote his glory.

If I wash thee not. This had *immediate* reference to the act of washing his feet; and it denotes that if Peter had not so much confidence in him as to believe that an act which he performed was proper, though he could not see its propriety—if he was not willing to submit *his* will to that of Christ and implicitly obey him, he had no evidence of piety. As Christ, however, was accustomed to pass from temporal and sensible objects to those which were spiritual, and to draw instruction from whatever was before him, some have supposed that he here took occasion to state to Peter that if his soul was not made pure by him he could not be his follower. Washing is often thus put as an emblem of moral purification, 1Co 6:11 Tit 3:5, 6.

This is the meaning, also, of baptism. If this was the sense in which Jesus used these words, it denotes that unless Christ should purify Peter, he could have no evidence that he was his disciple. "Unless by my doctrine and spirit I shall purify you, and remove your *pride* (Mt 26:33), your want of constant watchfulness (Mt 26:40), your anger (Mt 26:51), your timidity and fear (Mt 26:70,74), you can have no part in me" (Grotius).

Hast no part with me. Nothing *in common* with me. No evidence of possessing my spirit, of being interested in my work, and no participation in my glory:

{h} "If I wash thee not" 1Co 6:11 Eph 5:26; Tit 3:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 13 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Not my feet only*, &c. Peter, with characteristic readiness and ardour, saw now that everything depended on this. His whole salvation, the entire question of his attachment to his Master, was involved. If to refuse to have his feet washed was to be regarded as evidence that he had no part with Jesus, he was not only *willing*, but *desirous* that it should be done; not only anxious that his feet should be cleansed, but his hands and his head—that is, that he should be cleansed *entirely*, *thoroughly*. Perhaps he saw the spiritual meaning of the Saviour, and expressed his ardent wish that his whole soul might be made pure by the work of Christ. A true Christian is desirous of being cleansed from all sin. He has no reserve. He wishes not merely that *one* evil propensity should be removed, but all; *that every thought should be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ (*2Co 10:5) ; and that his whole body, soul, and spirit

should be sanctified wholly and be preserved blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, 1Th 5:23. His intellect, his will, his affections, his fancy, memory, judgment, he desires should be all brought under the influence of the gospel, and every power of the body and mind be consecrated unto God.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 13 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *He that is washed*. This is a difficult passage, and interpreters have been divided about its meaning. Some have supposed that it was customary to *bathe* before eating the paschal supper, and that the apostles did it; Jesus having said, "he that hath bathed his body is clean except in regard to his *feet*—to the dirt contracted in returning from the bath, and that there was need only that the feet should be washed in order to prepare them properly to receive the supper." They suppose, also, that the lesson which Jesus meant to teach was that they were really pure (Joh 15:3); that they were qualified to partake of the ordinances of religion, and needed only to be purified from *occasional* blemishes and impurities (Grotius). Others say that there is not evidence that the Jews *bathed* before partaking of the paschal supper, but that reference is made to the custom of washing their *hands* and their *face*. It is known that this was practised. **See Barnes "Mt 15:2"**.

See Barnes "Mr 7:3".

See Barnes "Mr 7:4".

Peter had requested him to wash his hands and his head. Jesus told him that as that had been done, it was unnecessary to repeat it; but to wash the feet was an act of hospitality, the office of a servant, and that all that was needed now was for him to show this condescension and humility. Probably reference is had here to *internal purity*, as Jesus was fond of drawing illustrations from every quarter to teach them spiritual doctrine; as if he had said, "You are clean by my word and ministry Joh 15:3; you are my followers, and are prepared for the scene before you. But one thing remains. And as, when we come to this rite, having washed, there remains no need of washing except to wash the feet, so there is now nothing remaining but for *me* to show you an example that you will always remember, and that shall *complete* my public instructions to you."

Is clean. This word may apply to the body or the soul.

Every whit. Altogether, wholly.

Ye are clean. Here the word has doubtless reference to the mind and heart.
But not all. You are not all my true followers, and fitted for the ordinance before us.
{i} "For he knew" Joh 6:64

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 13 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Who should betray him*. Greek, "He knew him who was about to betray him."
{i} "For, he knew" Joh 6:64

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 13 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Know ye what*, &c. Do you know the *meaning* or *design* of what I have done unto you?

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 13 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Ye call me Master*. Teacher.
And Lord. This word is applied to one who *rules*, and is often given to God as being the *Proprietor* and *Ruler* of all things. It is given to Christ many hundred times in the New Testament,
Ye say well, &c. Mt 23:8,10.
So *I am*. That is, he was their *Teacher* and Instructor, and he was their Sovereign and King.
{k} "call me Master and Lord" Mt 23:8-10 Php 2:11.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 13 - Verse 14

Verses 14,15. *Ye also ought to wash*, &c. Some have understood this *literally as instituting a religious rite* which we ought to observe; but this was evidently not the design; for,
1st. There is not evidence that Jesus intended it as a *religious* observance, like the Lord's Supper or the ordinance of baptism.
2nd. It was not observed by the apostles or the primitive Christians as a religious rite.
3rd. It was a rite of hospitality among the Jews, a common, well-know thing, and performed by servants.
4th. it is the manifest design of humility; to teach them by his example that they ought to condescend to the most humble offices for the benefit of others. They ought not to be proud, and vain, but to regard themselves as the servants of each other in every way. And especially as they were to be founders of the church, and to be greatly honoured, he took this occasion of warning

them against the dangers of ambitions, and of teaching them, by an example that they *could not forget*, the duty of humility.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 13 - Verse 15

Verse 15. No Barnes text on this verse.
{l} "For I have given you" 1Pe 2:21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 13 - Verse 16

Verses 16,17. *The servant is not*. This was universally true, and this they were to remember always, that *they* were to manifest the same spirit that he did, and that they were to expect the same treatment from the world. **See Barnes "Mt 10:24"; See Barnes "Mt 10:25"**.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 13 - Verse 17

Verse 17. No Barnes text on this verse.
{m} "If ye know these things" Jas 1:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 13 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *I speak not of you all*. That is, in addressing you as *clean*, I do not mean to say that you *all* possess this character.

I know whom I have chosen. He here means evidently to say that he had not chosen them all, implying that Judas had not been chosen. As, however, this word is applied to Judas in one place (Joh 6:70), "Have not I *chosen* you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" it must have a different meaning here from that which it has there. *There* it evidently refers to the *apostleship*. Jesus *had* chosen him to be an *apostle*, and had treated him as such. *Here* is refers to purity *of heart*, and Jesus implies that, though Judas had been chosen to the office of apostleship, yet he had not been chosen to purity of heart and life. The remaining eleven had been, and would be saved. It was not, however, the fault of Jesus that Judas was not saved, for he was admitted to the same teaching, the same familiarity, and the same office; but his execrable love of gold gained the ascendency, and rendered vain all the means used for his conversion.

But that the scripture, &c. These things have occurred in order that the prophecies may receive their completion. It does not mean that Judas was *compelled* to this course in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, but that this was foretold, and that by this the prophecy did receive a completion.

The scripture. This is written in Ps 41:9. It is commonly understood of Ahithophel, and of the enemies of David who had been admitted to his friendship, and who had now proved ungrateful to him.

May be fulfilled. **See Barnes "Mt 1:22"**.

It is difficult to tell whether this prophecy had a primary reference to Judas, or whether it be meant that it received a more complete fulfillment in his case than in the time of David. The cases were similar; the same words would describe both events, for there was an exhibition of similar ingratitude and baseness in both cases, so that the same words would fitly describe both events.

He that eateth bread with me. To eat with one was a proof of friendship. See 2Sa 9:11 Mt 9:11; Ge 43:32.

This means that Judas had been admitted to all the privileges of friendship, and had partaken of the usual evidences of affection. It was this which greatly aggravated his offence. It was base ingratitude as well as murder.

Hath lifted up his heel. Suidas says that this figure is taken from those who are running in a race, when one attempts to trip the other up and make him fall. It was a base and ungrateful return for kindness to which the Lord Jesus referred, and it means that he who had been admitted to the intimacies of friendship had ungratefully and maliciously injured him. Some suppose the expression means to lay *snares* for one; others, to kick or injure a man after he is cast down (Calvin on Ps 41:9). It is clear that it denotes great injury, and injury aggravated by the fact of professed friendship. It was not merely the common people, the open enemies, the Jewish nation that did it, but one who had received all the usual proofs of kindness. It was this which greatly aggravated our Saviour's sufferings.

{n} "He that eateth bread" Ps 41:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 13 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Now I tell you before it come*, &c. They would see by that that he had a knowledge of the heart and the power of foretelling future events, and must therefore have been sent by God. This does not imply that they had no faith before this, but that their faith would be increased and strengthened by it.

{2} "Now", or "From henceforth" {o} "I tell you" Joh 14:29 16:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 13 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *He that receiveth*, &c. This sentiment is found in the instructions which Jesus gave to his disciples in Mt 10:40. Why he repeats it at this time cannot now be known. It is certain that it is not closely connected with the subject of his conversation. Perhaps, however, it was to show how intimately united he, his Father, his apostles, and all who received them were. They who received *them* received *him*, and they who received *him* received *God*. So he who betrayed *him*, betrayed, for the same reason, *God*. Hence Judas, who was about to betray *him*, was also about to

betray the cause of religion in the world, and to betray God and his cause. Everything pertaining to religion is connected together. A man cannot do dishonour to one of the institutions of religion without injuring *all*; he cannot dishonour its ministers or the Saviour without dishonouring God. And this shows that one prominent ground of the Saviour's solicitude was that his Father might be honoured, and one source of his deep grief at the treason of Judas was that it would bring injury upon the whole cause of religion in the world.

{p} "He that receiveth" Mt 10:40

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 13 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Trouble in spirit*. See Joh 12:27. The reason of his trouble here was that Judas, a professed friend, was about to betray him. He doubtless foresaw the deep and dreadful sorrows of his approaching death, and was also deeply affected with the ingratitude and wickedness of a professed friend. Jesus was *man* as well as *God*, and he felt like other men. His human nature shrank from suffering, and his tender sensibilities were affected not less deeply than would be those of other men by baseness and treason.

Testified. He bore witness to the truth; openly declared what he had before intimated — that one of them would betray him.

{q} "When Jesus had thus said" Mt 26:21 Mr 14:18; Lu 22:21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 13 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Doubting of whom*, &c. The word translated *doubting* denotes that kind of anxiety which a man feels when he is in perplexity, and knows not what to say or do. We should say they were at a loss. **See Barnes "Mt 26:22"**.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 13 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Leaning on Jesus' bosom*. This does not mean that he was at that time *actually* lying on his bosom, but that he occupied a situation *next* to him at the table, so that his head naturally fell back on his bosom when he spoke to him. **See Barnes "Mt 23:6"**.

Whom Jesus loved. This was doubtless John himself. The evangelists are not accustomed to mention their own *names* when any mark of favour or any good deed is recorded. They did not seek publicity or notoriety. In this case the appellation is more tender and honourable than any mere *name*. John was admitted to peculiar friendship, perhaps, because the natural disposition of our Saviour was more nearly *like* the amiableness and mildness of John than any of the other disciples (Robert Hall). The highest honour that can be conferred on any man is to say that Jesus *loved him*. Yet this is an honour which *all may* possess, but which none *can* inherit without his spirit and without loving him. It is an honour which cannot be won by wealth or learning, by beauty

or accomplishments, by rank or earthly honours, but only by the possession of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price, 1Pe 3:4; comp. Re 8:9.

{r} "one of his disciples" Joh 20:2 21:7,20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 13 - Verse 24

Verse 24. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 13 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *He then lying on Jesus' breast*. This a different word from the one rendered Joh 13:23 *leaning*. It means *falling back* or *laid his head back* on the bosom of Jesus, so that he could speak to him privately without being heard by the others.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 13 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Jesus answered*. That is, he answered *John*. It does not appear that either Judas or the other apostles heard him.

Shall give a sop. The word translated *sop* means a *morsel*, a piece of bread, or anything else eaten—as much as we are accustomed to take at a mouthful. Jesus was about to dip it in the sauce which was used at the Passover. The word *dip*, in the original, is that from which is derived the word *baptize*. It means here that Jesus would dip it into the sauce as we do a piece of bread. It is probable that it was not an unusual thing for the master of a feast to help others in this way, as it does not appear to have attracted the attention of the others as at all remarkable. It was an indication to *John* who the betrayer was, and a hint which *Judas* also probably understood.

{3} "sop" or, "morsel"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 13 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *After the sop*. After he had taken and probably eaten it. By this Judas saw that Jesus knew his design, and that he could not conceal his plan. He saw, also, that the other disciples would be acquainted with it; and, aroused by sudden anger, or with the apprehension that he should lose his reward, or that Jesus might escape, he resolved on executing his plan at once.

Satan entered into him. The devil had *before* this put it into his heart to betray Jesus (Joh 13:2), but he now excited him to a more decided purpose. See Lu 22:3 Ac 5:3. "Why hath Satan filled thine heart," &c.

What thou doest, do quickly. This showed to Judas that Jesus was acquainted with his design. He did not *command* him to betray him, but he left him to his own purpose. He had used means enough to reclaim him and lead him to a holy life, and now he brought him to a decision. He gave him to understand that he was acquainted with his plan, and submitted it to the *conscience* of Judas to do quickly what he would do. If he relented, he called on him to do it at once. If he could still pursue his wicked plan, could go forward when he was conscious that the Saviour knew his design, he was to do it at once. God adopts all means to bring men to a decision. He calls upon them to act decisively, firmly, immediately. He does not allow them the privilege to *deliberate* about wicked deeds, but calls on them to act at once, and to show whether they will obey or disobey him; whether they will serve him, or whether they will betray his cause. He knows *all* their plans, as Jesus did that of Judas, and he calls on men to act under the full conviction that *he* knows all their soul. Sin thus is a vast evil. When men can sin knowing that God sees it all, it shows that the heart is *fully* set in them to do evil, and that there is nothing that *will* restrain them.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 13 - Verse 28

Verses 28,29. *No man at the table knew*. This shows that Jesus had signified to *John* only who it was that should betray him.

The bag. The travelling-bag in which they put their common property. **See Barnes "Joh 12:6"**.

Have need of against the feast. The feast continued seven days, and they supposed that Jesus had directed him to make preparation for their wants on those days.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 13 - Verse 29

Verse 29. No Barnes text on this verse.

{t} "Judas" Joh 12:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 13 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *If was night*. It was in the evening, or early part of the night. What is recorded in the following chapters took place in the same night.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 13 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *Now is the Son of man glorified*. The last deed is done that was necessary to secure the death of the Son of man, the glory that shall result to him from that death, the wonderful success

of the gospel, the exaltation of the Messiah, and the public and striking attestation of God to him in the view of the universe. **See Barnes "Joh 12:32".**

{u} "Now is the Son" Joh 12:23 17:1-6 {v} "God is glorified in him" Joh 14:13 1Pe 4:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 13 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *If God be glorified in him*. If God be honoured by him. If the life and death of the Messiah be such as to lead to the honour of God, such as shall manifest its perfections, and show his goodness, truth, and justice, then he will *show* that he thus approves his work.

God shall also glorify him. He will honour the Messiah. He will not suffer him to go without a proper attestation of his acceptance, and of the honour that God puts on him. Jesus here confidently anticipated that the Father *would* show that he was pleased with what he had done. He did it in the miracles that attended his death, in his resurrection, ascension, exaltation, and in the success of the gospel. We may remark that God *will always*, in the proper time and way, *manifest* his approbation of those who live so as to promote the honour of his name.

In himself Or *by* himself; by a direct and public expression of his approbation. Not by the ministry of *angels* or by any other *subordinate* attestation, but by an expression that shall be *direct* from him. This was done by his direct interposition in his resurrection and ascension to heaven.

Shall straightway. Immediately, or without delay. This refers to the fact that the time when God would put this honour on him was at hand. His death, resurrection, and ascension were near.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 13 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *Little children*. An expression of great tenderness, denoting his deep interest in their welfare. As he was about to leave them, he endeavours to mitigate their grief by the most tender expressions of attachment, showing that he felt for them the deep interest in their welfare which a parent feels for his children. The word *children* is often given to Christians as implying—

1st. That God is their Father, and that they sustain toward him that endearing relation, Ro 8:14,15.

2nd. As denoting their need of teaching and guidance, as children need the aid and counsel of a father. See the corresponding term *babes* used in 1Co 3:1 1Pe 2:2

3rd. It is used, as it is here, as an expression of tenderness and affection. See Ga 4:19 1Jo 2:1,12 28 3:7 18 4:4 5:21.

Yet a little while I am with you. He did not conceal the fact that he was soon to leave them. There is something exceedingly tender in this address. It shows that he loved them to the end; that as their friend and guide, *as a man*, he felt deeply at the thoughts of parting from them, and leaving them to a cold and unfeeling world. A parting scene at death is always one of tenderness; and it is well when, like this, there is the presence of the Saviour to break the agony of the parting pang, and to console us with the words of his grace.

As I said unto the Jews. See Joh 7:34.

So now I say to you. That is, they could not follow him *then*, Joh 13:36 14:2. He was about to die and return to God, and for a time they must be willing to be separated from him. But he consoled them (Joh 13:36) with the assurance that the separation would be only temporary, and that they should afterward follow him.

{w} "as I said unto the Jews" Joh 7:34 8:21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 13 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *A new commandment*. This command he gave them as he was about to leave them, to be a *badge* of discipleship, by which they might be known as his friends and followers, and by which they might be *distinguished* from all others. It is called *new*, not because there was no command before which required men to love their fellow-men, for one great precept of the law was that they should love their neighbour as themselves (Le 19:18); but it was *new* because it had never before been made that by which any class or body of men had been *known and distinguished*. The *Jew* was known by his external rites, by his peculiarity of dress, &c.; the philosopher by some other mark of distinction; the military man by another, &c. In none of these cases had love *for each other* been the distinguishing and peculiar badge by which they were known. But in the case of Christians they were not to be known by distinctions of wealth, or learning, or fame; they were not to aspire to earthly honours; they were not to adopt any peculiar style of dress or *badge*, but they were to be distinguished by tender and constant attachment to each other. This was to surmount all distinction of country, of colour, of rank, of office, of sect. Here they were to feel that they were on a level, that they had common wants, were redeemed by the same sacred blood, and were going to the same heaven. They were to befriend each other in trials; be careful of each other's feelings and reputation; deny themselves to promote each other's welfare. See 1Jo 3:23 1Th 4:9; 1Pe 1:22 2Th 1:3; Ga 6:2 2Pe 1:7. In all these places the command of Jesus is repeated or referred to, and it shows that the first disciples considered this indeed as the peculiar law of Christ. This command or law was, moreover, *new* in regard to the *extent* to which this love was to be carried; for he immediately adds, "*As I have loved you, that ye also love one another*." His love for them was strong, continued, unremitting, and he was now about to show his love for them in death. Joh 15:13, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." So in 1Jo 3:16 it is said that "we ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren." This was a *new* expression of love; and it showed the strength of attachment which we ought to have for Christians, and how ready we should be to endure hardships, to encounter dangers, and to practise self-denial, to benefit those for whom the Son of God laid down his life.

{x} "new commandment" Le 19:18 Joh 15:12,17 Eph 5:2; 1Th 4:9
Jas 2:8 1Pe 1:22; 1Jo 2:7,8, 3:11,23, 4:20,21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 13 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *By this shall all men*, &c. That is, your love for each other shall be so decisive evidence that you are like the Saviour, that all men shall see and know it. It shall be the thing by which you shall be known among all men. You shall not be known by peculiar rites or habits; not by a peculiar form of dress or manner of speech; not by peculiar austerities and unusual customs, like the Pharisees, the Essenes, or the scribes, but by deep, genuine, and tender affection. And it is well known it was this which eminently distinguished the first Christians, and was the subject of remark by the surrounding pagans. "See," said the heathen, "see how they love one another! They are ready to lay down their lives for each other." Alas! how changed is the spirit of the Christian world since then! Perhaps, of all the commands of Jesus, the observance of this is that which is least apparent to a surrounding world. It is not so much that they are divided into different sects, for this *may* be consistent with love for each other; but it is the want of deep-felt, genuine love toward Christians even of our own denomination; the absence of genuine self-denial; the pride of rank and wealth; and the fact that professed Christians are often known by anything else rather than by true attachment to those who bear the same Christian name and image. The true Christian loves religion wherever it is found—equally in a prince or in a slave, in the mansion of wealth or in the cottage of poverty, on the throne or in the hut of want. He overlooks the distinction of sect, of colour, and of nations; and wherever he finds a man who bears the Christian *name* and *manifests the Christian spirit*, he loves him. And this, more and more as the millennium draws near, will be the peculiar badge of the professed children of God. Christians will love their own denominations *less* than they love the spirit and temper of *the Christian*, wherever it may be found.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 13 - Verse 36

Verse 36. No Barnes text on this verse.
{y} "but thou shalt follow me" Joh 21:18 2Pe 1:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 13 - Verse 37

Verse 37. No Barnes text on this verse.
{z} "I will lay down my life"
Mt 26:33 Mr 14:29; Lu 22:33

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 13 - Verse 38

Verse 38. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 14 - Verse 1

Verse 1. *Let not your heart be troubled*. The disciples had been greatly distressed at what Jesus had said about leaving them. Comp. Joh 16:6 22. Perhaps they had indicated their distress to him in some manner by their countenance or their expressions, and he proceeds now to administer to them such consolations as their circumstances made proper. The discourse in this chapter was delivered, doubtless, while they were sitting at the table partaking of the Supper (Joh 16:33); that in the two following chapters, and the prayer in the 17th chapter, were while they were on their way to the Mount of Olives. There is nowhere to be found a discourse so beautiful, so tender, so full of weighty thoughts, and so adapted to produce comfort, as that which occurs in these three chapters of John. It is the consolatory part of our religion, where Christ brings to bear on the mind full of anxiety, and perplexity, and care, the tender and inimitably beautiful truths of his gospel—truths fitted to allay every fear, silence every murmur, and give every needed consolation to the soul. In the case of the disciples there *was* much to *trouble* them. They were about to part with their beloved, tender friend. They were to be left alone to meet persecutions and trials. They were without wealth, without friends, without honours. And it is not improbable that they felt that *his death* would demolish all their schemes, for they had not yet fully learned the doctrine that the Messiah must suffer and die, Lu 24:21.

Ye believe in God. This may be read either in the indicative mood or the imperative. Probably it should be read in the imperative—"Believe on God, and believe on me." If there were no other reason for it, this is sufficient, that there was no more evidence that they *did* believe in God than that they believed in Jesus. All the ancient versions except the Latin read it thus. The Saviour told them that their consolation was to be found at this time in confidence in God and in him; and he intimated what he had so often told them and the Jews, that there was an *indissoluble union* between him and the Father. This union he takes occasion to explain to them more fully, Joh 13:7-12.

Believe in. Put confidence in, rely on for support and consolation.

{a} "Let not" Isa 43:1,2, 14:27 2Th 2:2

{b} "believe also" Isa 12:2,3; Eph 1:12,13; 1Pe 1:21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 14 - Verse 2

Verses 2,3. *In my Father's house*. Most interpreters understand this of heaven, as the peculiar dwelling-place or *palace* of God; but it *may* include the *universe*, as the abode of the omnipresent God.

Are many mansions. The word rendered *mansions* means either the *act* of dwelling in any place (Joh 14:23), "we will make our abode with him"), or it means *the place* where one dwells. It is taken from the verb *to remain*, and signifies the place where one dwells or remains. It is applied by the Greek writers to the *tents* or temporary habitations which soldiers pitch in their marches. It denotes a dwelling of less *permanency* than the word *house*. It is commonly understood as affirming

that in heaven there is *ample room* to receive all who will come; that therefore the disciples might be sure that they would not be excluded. Some have understood it as affirming that there will be different *grades* in the joys of heaven; that some of the mansions of the saints will be nearer to God than others, agreeably to 1Co 15:40,41. But perhaps this passage may have a meaning which has not occurred to interpreters. Jesus was consoling his disciples, who were affected with grief at the idea of his separation. To comfort them he addresses them in this language:

> "The universe is the dwelling-place of my Father. All is his *house*. Whether on earth or in heaven, we are still in his habitation. In that vast abode of God there are many mansions. The earth is one of them, heaven is another. Whether here or there, we are still in the house, in one of the mansions of our Father, in one of the *apartments* of his vast abode. This we ought continually to feel, and to rejoice that we are permitted to occupy *any part* of his dwelling-place. Nor does it differ much whether we are in *this* mansion or another. It should not be a matter of grief when we are called to pass from one part of this vast habitation of God to another. I am indeed about to leave you, but I am going only to another part of the vast dwelling-place of God. I shall still be in the same universal habitation with you; still in the house of the same God; and am going for an important purpose—to fit up another abode for your eternal dwelling."

If this be the meaning, then there is in the discourse true consolation. We see that the *death* of a Christian is not to be dreaded, nor is it an event over which we should immoderately weep. It is but removing from *one apartment* of God's universal dwelling—place to another—one where we shall still be in his house, and still feel the same interest in all that pertains to his kingdom. And especially the removal of the Saviour from the earth was an event over which Christians should rejoice, for he is still in the house of God, and still preparing mansions of rest for his people.

If it were *not* so, &c.

> "I have concealed from you no truth. You have been cherishing this hope of a future abode with God. Had it been ill founded I would have told you plainly, as I have told you other things. Had any of you been deceived, as Judas was, I would have made it known to you, as I did to him."

I go to prepare a place for you. By his *going* is meant his death and ascent to heaven. The figure here is taken from one who is on a journey, who goes before his companions to provide a place to lodge in, and to make the necessary preparations for their entertainment. It evidently means that

he, by the work he was yet to perform in heaven, would secure their admission there, and obtain for them the blessings of eternal life. That work would consist mainly in his *intercession*, Heb 10:12-13 19-22 7:25-27 4:14 16.

That where I am. This language could be used by no one who was not then in the place of which he was speaking, and it is just such language as one would naturally use who was both God and man —in reference to his human nature, speaking of his *going* to his Father; and in reference to his divine nature, speaking as if he was *then* with God.

Ye may be also. This was language eminently fitted to comfort them. Though about to leave them, yet he would not *always* be absent. He would come again at the day of judgment and gather all his friends to himself, and they should be ever with him, He 9:28. So shall *all* Christians be with him. And so, when we part with a beloved Christian friend by death, we may feel assured that the separation will not be *eternal*. We shall meet again, and dwell in a place where there shall be no more separation and no more tears.

{c} "I go" He 6:20 9:8,24 Re 21:2

{d} "prepare a place for you" He 9:28 {e} "where I am" Joh 12:26 17:24; 1Th 4:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 14 - Verse 3

Verse 3. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 14 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Whither I go ye know*. He had so often told them that he was to die, and rise, and ascend to heaven, that they could not but understand it, Mt 16:21 Lu 9:22, 18:31 32.

The way ye know. That is, the way that leads to the dwelling-place to which he was going. The way which they were to tread was to obey his precepts, imitate his example, and follow him, Joh 14:6.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 14 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *We know not whither thou goest*. Though Jesus had so often told them of his approaching death and resurrection, yet it seems they did not understand him, nor did they fully comprehend him until after his resurrection. See Lu 24:21. They entertained the common notions of a *temporal kingdom*; they supposed still that he was to be an earthly prince and leader, and they did not comprehend the reason why he should die. Thomas confessed his ignorance, and the Saviour again patiently explained his meaning. All this shows the difficulty of believing when the mind is full of prejudice and of contrary opinions. Had Thomas *laid aside* his previous opinions—had he been willing to receive the truth as Jesus plainly spoke it, there would have been no difficulty. Faith would have been an easy and natural exercise of the mind. And so with the sinner. If he were *willing*

to receive the plain and unequivocal doctrines of the Bible, there would be no difficulty; but his mind is full of opposite opinions and plans, occupied with errors and vanities, and these are the reasons, and the only reasons, why he is not a Christian. Yet who would say that, after the plain instructions of Jesus, Thomas *might* not have understood him? And who will dare to say that any sinner *may not* lay aside his prejudices and improper views, and receive the plain and simple teaching of the Bible?

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 14 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *I am the way*. See Isa 35:8. By this is meant, doubtless, that they and all others were to have access to God only by obeying the instructions, imitating the example, and depending on the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was the *leader* in the road, the guide to the wandering, the teacher of the ignorant, and the example to all. See Joh 6:68: "Thou hast the words of eternal life;" 1Pe 2:21. "Christ—suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps;" Heb 9:8 9.

The truth. The source of truth, or he who originates and communicates truth for the salvation of men. Truth is a representation of things as they are. The life, the purity, and the teaching of Jesus Christ was the most complete and perfect representation of the things of the eternal world that has been or can be presented to man. The ceremonies of the Jews were shadows; the life of Jesus was the truth. The opinions of men are fancy, but the doctrines of Jesus were nothing more than a representation of *facts* as they exist in the government of God. It is implied in this, also, that Jesus was the fountain of all truth; that by his inspiration the prophets spoke, and that by him all truth is communicated to men. **See Barnes "Joh 1:17"**.

The life. See Joh 11:25, **See Barnes "Joh 1:4"**.

No man cometh to the Father but by me. To come to the Father is to obtain his favour, to have access to his throne by prayer, and finally to enter his kingdom. No man can obtain any of these things except by the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ. By coming *by him* is meant coming in his name and depending on his merits. We are ignorant, and he alone can guide us. We are sinful, and it is only by his merits that we can be pardoned. We are blind, and he only can enlighten us. God has appointed him as the Mediator, and has ordained that all blessings shall descend to this world through him. Hence he has put the world under his control; has given the affairs of men into his hand, and has appointed him to dispense whatever may be necessary for our peace, pardon, and salvation, Ac 4:22 5:31.

{f} "the way" Isa 35:8,9; Joh 10:9 Heb 10:19,20

{g} "the truth" Joh 1:17 15:1 {h} "the life" Joh 1:4 11:25 {i} "no man" Ac 4:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 14 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *If ye had known me*. By this Jesus does not intend to say that they were not truly his disciples, but that they had not a *full* and *accurate* knowledge of his character and designs. They

still retained, to a large extent, the Jewish notions respecting a temporal Messiah, and did not fully understand that he was to die and be raised from the dead.

Ye should have known my Father also. You would have known the counsels and designs of my Father respecting my death and resurrection. If you had been divested of your Jewish prejudices about the Messiah, if you had understood that it was proper for me to die, you would also have understood the purposes and plans of God in my death; and, *knowing that*, you would have seen that it was wise and best. We see here that a correct knowledge of the character and work of Christ is the same as a correct knowledge of the counsels and plans of God; and we see, also, that the reasons why we have not such a knowledge are our previous prejudices and erroneous views.

From henceforth. From this time. From my death and resurrection you shall understand the plans and counsels of God.

Ye know him. You shall have just views of his plans and designs.

Have seen him. That is, they had seen Jesus Christ, his image, and the brightness of his glory (Heb 1:3), which was the same as having seen the Father, Joh 14:9.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 14 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Lord, show us the Father*. Philip here referred to some outward and visible manifestation of God. God had manifested himself in various ways to the prophets and saints of old, and Philip affirmed that if some such manifestation should be made to them they would be satisfied. It was right to desire evidence that Jesus was the Messiah, but such evidence had been afforded abundantly in the miracles and teaching of Jesus, and that should have sufficed them.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 14 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *So long time*. For more than three years Jesus had been with them. He had raised the dead, cast out devils, healed the sick, done those things which no one could have done who had not come from God. In that time they had had full opportunity to learn his character and his mission from God. Nor was it needful, after so many proofs of his divine mission, that God should *visibly manifest* himself to them in order that they might be convinced that he came from him.

He that hath seen me. He that has seen my works, heard my doctrines, and understood my character. He that has given *proper attention* to the proofs that I have afforded that I came from God.

Hath seen the Father. The word *Father* in these passages seems to be used with reference to the divine nature, or to God represented *as a Father*, and not particularly to the distinction in the Trinity of Father and Son. The idea is that God, as God, or *as a Father*, had been manifested in the incarnation, the works, and the teachings of Christ, so that they who had seen and heard him might be said to have had a real view of God. When Jesus says, "hath *seen* the Father," this cannot refer to the *essence* or *substance* of God, for he is invisible, and in that respect no man has seen God at any time. All that is meant when it is said that *God is seen*, is that some manifestation of him has

been made, or some such *exhibition* as that we may learn his *character*, his *will*, and his *plans*. In this case it cannot mean that he that had seen Jesus with the bodily eyes had *in the same sense* seen God; but he that had been a witness of his miracles and of his transfiguration—that had heard his doctrines and studied his character —had had full evidence of his divine mission, and of *the will and purpose* of the Father in sending him. The knowledge of the Son was itself, of course, the knowledge of the Father. There was such an intimate *union* in their nature and design that he who understood the one understood also the other. **See Barnes "Mt 11:27"**

See Barnes "Lu 10:22"; **See Barnes** "Joh 1:18".

{k} "he that hath seen me" Col 1:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 14 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *I am in the Father*. **See Barnes "Joh 10:38"**.

The words that I speak, &c. **See Barnes "Joh 7:16"**

See Barnes "Joh 7:17".

The Father that dwelleth in me. Literally, "The Father *remaining* in me." This denotes most *intimate union*, so that the works which Jesus did might be said to be done by the Father. It implies a more intimate union than can subsist between a mere man and God. Had Jesus been a mere man, like the prophets, he would have said, "The Father who *sent* or *commissioned* me doeth the works;" but here there is reference, doubtless, to that mysterious and peculiar union which subsists between the Father and the Son.

He doeth the works. The miracles which had been wrought by Jesus. The Father could be said to do them on account of the intimate union between him and the Son. See Joh 5:17 19 36 10: 30.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 14 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Believe me*, &c. Believe my declarations that I am in the Father, &c. There were two grounds on which they might believe; one was his *own testimony*, the other was *his works*.

Or else. If credit is not given to my *words*, let there be to my miracles.

For the very works' sake. On account of the works; or, be convinced by the miracles themselves. Either his own testimony was sufficient to convince them, or the many miracles which he had wrought in healing the sick, raising the dead, &c.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 14 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *He that believeth on me*. This promise had doubtless peculiar reference to the apostles themselves. They were full of grief at his departure, and Jesus, in order to console them directed them to the great honour which was to be conferred on them, and to the assurance that God would not leave them, but would attend them in their ministry with the demonstrations of his mighty

power. It cannot be understood of *all* his followers, for the circumstances of the promise do not require us to understand it thus, and it has not been a matter of fact that *all* Christians have possessed power to do greater works than the Lord Jesus. It is a general promise that greater works than he performed should be done by his followers, without specifying that *all* his followers would be instrumental in doing them.

The works that I do. The miracles of healing the sick, raising the dead, &c. This was done by the apostles in many instances. See Ac 5:15 19:12, 13:11 5:1-10.

Greater works than these shall he do. Interpreters have been at a loss in what way to understand this. The most probable meaning of the passage is the following: The word "greater" cannot refer to the miracles themselves, for the works of the apostles did not exceed those of Jesus in *power*. No higher exertion of power was put forth, or could be, than raising the dead. But, though not greater *in themselves considered*, yet they were greater *in their effects*. They made a deeper impression on mankind. They were attended with more extensive results. They were the means of the conversion of more sinners. The works of Jesus were confined to Judea. They were seen by few. The works of the apostles were witnessed by many nations, and the effect of their miracles and preaching was that thousands from among the Jews and Gentiles were converted to the Christian faith. The word *greater* here is used, therefore, not to denote the *absolute exertion* of power, but the effect which the miracles would have on mankind. The word "works" here probably denotes not merely miracles, but *all things that the apostles did* that made an impression on mankind, including their travels, their labours, their doctrine, &c.

Because I go unto my Father. He would there intercede for them, and especially by his going to the Father the Holy Spirit would be sent down to attend them in their ministry, Joh 14:26 28, 16:7-14.

See Mt 28:18. By his going to the Father is particularly denoted his exaltation to heaven, and his being placed as head over all things to his church, Eph 1:20-23 Php 2:9-11. By his being exalted there the Holy Spirit was given (Joh 16:7), and by his power thus put forth the Gentiles were brought to hear and obey the gospel.

{l} "He that believeth on me" Mt 21:21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 14 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Whatsoever ye shall ask*. This promise referred particularly to the apostles in their work of spreading the gospel; it is, however, true of all Christians, if what they ask is in *faith*, and according to the will of God, Jas 1:6 1Jo 5:14.

In my name. This is equivalent to saying *on my account*, or for my sake. If a man who has money in a bank authorizes us to draw it, we are said to do it in his name. If a son authorizes us to apply to his father for aid because we are his friends, we do it in the name of the son, and the favour will be bestowed on us from the regard which the parent has to his son, and through him to all his friends. So we are permitted to apply to God in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, because God is in him well pleased (Mt 3:17), and because we are the friends of his Son he answers our requests. Though we are undeserving, yet he loves us on account of his Son, and because he sees in us his

image. No privilege is greater than that of approaching God in the name of his Son; no blessings of salvation can be conferred on any who do not come in his name.

That will I do. Being exalted, he will be possessed of all power in heaven and earth (Mt 28:18), and he therefore could fulfil all their desires.

That the Father may be glorified in the Son.

See Barnes "Mt 13:31"

{m} "And whatsoever" 1Jo 5:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 14 - Verse 14

Verse 14. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 14 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *If ye love me*. Do not show your love by grief at my departure merely, or by profession, but by obedience.

Keep my commandments. This is the only proper evidence of love to Jesus, for mere profession is no proof of love; but that love for him which leads us to do all his will, to love each other, to deny ourselves, to take up our cross, and to follow him through evil report and through good report, is true attachment. The evidence which we have that a child loves its parents is when that child is willing, without hesitation, gainsaying, or murmuring, to do *all* that the parent requires him to do. So the disciples of Christ are required to show that they are attached to him supremely by yielding to all his requirements, and by patiently doing his will in the face of ridicule and opposition, 1Jo 5:2,3.

{n} "If ye love me" Joh 15:10,14, 14:21,23; 1Jo 5:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 14 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *I will pray the Father*. This refers to his intercession after his death and ascension to heaven, for this prayer was to be connected with their keeping his commandments. In what *way* he makes *intercession* in heaven for his people we do not know. The *fact*, however, is clearly made known, Ro 8:34 Heb 4:14,15 7:25.

It is as the result of his intercession in heaven that we obtain all our blessings, and it is through him that our prayers are to be presented and made efficacious before God.

Another Comforter. Jesus had been to them a counsellor, a guide, a friend, while he was with them. He had instructed them, had borne with their prejudices and ignorance, and had administered consolation to them in the times of despondency. But he was about to leave them now to go alone into an unfriendly world. The *other* Comforter was to be given as a compensation for his absence,

or to perform the offices toward them which he would have done if he had remained personally with them. And from this we may learn, in part, what is the office of the Spirit. *It is to furnish to all Christians the instruction and consolation which would be given by the personal presence of Jesus*, Joh 16:14. To the apostles it was particularly to inspire them with the knowledge of all truth, Joh 14:26 15:26. Besides this, he came to convince men of sin. **See Barnes "Joh 16:8-11".**

It was proper that such an agent should be sent into the world—

1st. Because it was a part of the plan that Jesus should ascend to heaven after his death.

2nd. Unless some heavenly agent should be sent to carry forward the work of salvation, man would reject it and perish.

3rd. Jesus could not be personally and bodily present in all places with the vast multitudes who should believe on him. The Holy Spirit is omnipresent, and can reach them all. **See Barnes "Joh 16:7".**

4th. It was manifestly a part of the plan of redemption that each of the persons of the Trinity should perform his appropriate work—the Father in sending his Son, the Son in making atonement and interceding, and the Spirit in applying the work to the hearts of men.

The word translated *Comforter* is used in the New Testament five times. In four instances it is applied to the Holy Spirit— Joh 14:16 26, 15:26 16:7.

In the other instance it is applied to the Lord Jesus—1Jo 2:1: "We have an *advocate* (Paraclete — Comforter) with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

It is used, therefore, only by John. The verb from which it is taken has many significations. Its proper meaning is to *call one* to us (Ac 27:20); then to call one *to aid us*, as an advocate in a court; then to exhort or entreat, to pray or implore, as an advocate does, and to comfort or console, by suggesting *reasons* or *arguments* for consolation. The word "comforter" is frequently used by Greek writers to denote *an advocate* in a court; one who intercedes; a monitor, a teacher, an assistant, a helper. It is somewhat difficult, therefore, to fix the precise meaning of the word. It may be translated either advocate, monitor, teacher, or helper. What the office of the Holy Spirit in this respect is, is to be learned from what we are elsewhere told he does. We learn particularly from the accounts that our Saviour gives of his work that that office was,

1st. To comfort the disciples; to be with them in his absence and to supply his place; and this is properly expressed by the word *Comforter*.

2nd. To *teach them*, or remind them of truth; and this might be expressed by the word *monitor* or *teacher*, Joh 14:26 Joh 15:26, 27.

3rd. To aid them in their work; to advocate their cause, or to assist them in advocating the cause of religion in the world, and in bringing sinners to repentance; and this may be expressed by the word *advocate*, Joh 16:7-13. It was also by the Spirit that they were enabled to stand before kings and magistrates, and boldly to speak in the name of Jesus, Mt 10:20. These seem to comprise all the meanings of the word in the New Testament, but no *single* word in our language expresses fully the sense of the original.

That he may abide with you for ever. Not that he should remain with you for a few years, as I have done, and then leave you, but be with you in all places to the close of your life. He shall be your constant guide and attendant.

{o} "another Comforter" Joh 15:26

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 14 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *The Spirit of truth*. He is thus called here because he would teach them the truth, or would guide them into all truth, Joh 16:13. He would keep them from all error, and teach them the truth, which, either by writing or preaching, they were to communicate to others.

The world. The term world is often used to denote all who are entirely under the influence of the things of this world —pride, ambition, and pleasure; all who are not Christians, and especially all who are addicted to gross vices and pursuits, 1Co 1:21 11:32; Joh 12:31 2Co 4:4.

Cannot receive. Cannot admit as a teacher or comforter, or cannot receive in his offices of enlightening and purifying. The reason why they could not do this is immediately added.

Because it seeth him not. The men of the world are under the influence of the senses. They walk by sight, and not by faith. Hence what they cannot perceive by their senses, what does not gratify their sight, or taste, or feeling, makes no impression on them. As they cannot *see* the operations of the Spirit (Joh 3:8), they judge that all that is said of his influence is delusive, and hence they cannot receive him. They have an erroneous mode of judging of what is for the welfare of man.

Neither knoweth him. To *know*, in the Scriptures, often means more than the act of the mind in simply *understanding a* thing. It denotes *every* act or *emotion* of the mind that is requisite in receiving the proper *impression* of a truth. Hence it often includes the idea of *approbation*, of *love*, of *cordial feeling*, Ps 1:6; Ps 37:18 138:6; Na 1:7 2Ti 2:19.

In this place it means the approbation of the heart; and as the people of the world do not *approve* of or *desire* the aid of the Spirit, so it is said they cannot receive him. They have no love for him, and they reject him. Men often consider his work in the conversion of sinners and in revivals as delusion. They love the world so much that they cannot understand his work or embrace him.

He dwelleth in you. The Spirit dwells in Christians by his sacred influences. There is no personal union, no physical indwelling, for God is essentially present in one place as much as in another; but he works in us repentance, peace, joy, meekness, &c. He teaches us, guides us, and comforts us. **See Barnes "Ga 5:22-24"**.

Thus he is said to *dwell in us* when we are made pure, peaceable, holy, humble; when we become *like him*, and cherish his sacred influences. The word "dwelleth" means to *remain* with them. Jesus was to be taken away, but the Spirit would remain. It is also implied that they would know his presence, and have assurance that they were under his guidance. This was true of the apostles as *inspired men*, and it is true of all Christians that by ascertaining that they have the *graces of the Spirits*—joy, peace, long-suffering, &c.—they *know* that they are the children of God, 1Jo 3:24 5:10.

{q} "and shall be in you" Ro 8:9 1Jo 2:27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 14 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Comfortless*. Greek, *orphans*. Jesus here addresses them as children, Joh 13:33. He says that he would show them the kindness of a *parent*, and, though he was going away, he would provide for their future welfare. And even while *he* was absent, yet they would sustain to him *still* the relation of children. Though he was to die, yet he would live again; though absent in body, yet

he would be present with them by his Spirit; though he was to go away to heaven, yet he would return again to them. See Joh 14:3.

{1} "comfortless" or, "orphans" {r} "I will come to you" Joh 14:3,28.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 14 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *A little while*. This was the day before his death.

Seeth me no more. No more until the day of judgment. The men of the world would not see him visibly, and they had not the eye of faith to discern him.

But ye see me. Ye shall continue to see me by faith, even when the world cannot. You will continue to see me by the eye of faith as still your gracious Saviour and Friend.

Because I live. Though the Saviour was about to die, yet was he also about to be raised from the dead. He was to *continue* to live, and though absent from them, yet he would feel the same interest in their welfare as when he was with them on earth. This expression does not refer *particularly* to his *resurrection*, but his *continuing to live*. He had a nature which could not die. As Mediator also he would be raised and continue to live; and he would have both power and inclination to give them also life, to defend them, and bring them with him.

Ye shall live also. This doubtless refers to their future life. And we learn from this,

1st. That the life of the Christian depends on that of Christ, They are united; and if they were separated, the Christian could neither enjoy spiritual life here nor eternal joy hereafter.

2nd. The fact that Jesus lives is a pledge that all who believe in him shall be saved. He has power over all our spiritual foes, and he can deliver us from the hands of our enemies, and from all temptations and trials.

{s} "because I live" Heb 7:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 14 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *At that day*. In the time when my life shall be fully manifested to you, and you shall receive the assurance that I live. This refers to the time *after* his resurrection, and to the manifestations which in various ways he would make that he was alive.

That I am in my Father, &c. That we are most intimately and indissolubly united. **See Barnes "Joh 10:38"**.

Ye in me. That there is a union between us which can never be severed. **See Barnes "Joh 15:1, also** Joh 15:2-7.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 14 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *He that hath*, &c. This intimate union is farther manifested by these facts:

1st. That true love to Jesus will produce obedience. See Joh 14:15.

2nd. That those who love *him* will be loved of the *Father*, showing that there is a union between the Father and the Son.

3rd. That Jesus also will love them, evincing still the same union. Religion is love. The love of one holy being or object is the love of all. The kingdom of God is one. His people, though called by different names, are one. They are united to each other and to God, and the bond which unites the whole kingdom in one is love.

Will manifest myself to him. To *manifest* is to show, to make appear, to place before the eyes so that an object may be seen. This means that Jesus would so *show* himself to his followers that they should *see* and *know* that he was their Saviour. In what way this is done, see Joh 14:23.

{t} "He that hath" Joh 14:15,23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 14 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Judas saith unto him*. This was the same as Lebbeus or Thaddeus. See Mt 10:3. He was the brother of James, and the author of the Epistle of Jude.

How is it, &c. Probably Judas thought that he spake only of his resurrection, and he did not readily see how it could be that he could show himself to them, and not be seen also by others.

{u} Lu 6:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 14 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Will keep my words*. See Joh 14:15.

We will come to him. We will come to him with the manifestation of pardon, peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost. It means that God will manifest himself to the soul as a Father and Friend; that Jesus will manifest himself as a Saviour; that is, that there will be shed abroad in the heart just views and proper feelings toward God and Christ. The Christian will rejoice in the perfections of God and of Christ, and will delight to contemplate the glories of a present Saviour. The condition of a sinner is represented as one who has gone astray from God, and from whom God has withdrawn, Ps 58:3 Pr 27:10 Eze 14:11. He is *alienated* from God, Eph 2:12 Is 1:4; Eph 4:18

Col 1:21. Religion is represented as God returning to the soul, and manifesting himself as reconciled through Jesus Christ, 2Co 5:18; Col 1:21.

Make our abode. This is a figurative expression implying that God and Christ would *manifest* themselves in no temporary way, but that it would be the privilege of Christians to enjoy their presence continually. They would take up their residence in the heart as their dwelling-place, as a temple fit for their abode. See 1Co 3:16: "Ye are the temple of God;" Joh 14:19: "Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost;" 2Co 6:16: "Ye are the temple of the living God." This does not mean that there is any personal union between Christians and God—that there is any peculiar indwelling of the *essence* of God in us— for God is essentially present in all places in the same way; but it is a figurative mode of speaking, denoting that the Christian is under the influence of God; that he

rejoices in his presence, and that he has the views, the feelings, the joys which God produces in a redeemed soul, and with which he is pleased.

{v} "and we will come into him" 1Jo 2:24 Re 3:20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 14 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *The word which you hear is not mine*. **See Barnes on** "Joh 5:19, **See Barnes on "Joh 7:16"**.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 14 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Have I spoken*. For your consolation and guidance. But, though he had said so many things to console them, yet the Spirit would be given also as their Comforter and Guide.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 14 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Will send in my name*. On my account. To perfect my work. To execute it as I would in applying it to the hearts of men. See Joh 14:13.

Shall teach you all things. All things which it was needful for them to understand in the apostolic office, and particularly those things which they were not prepared then to hear or could not then understand. See Joh 16:12. Comp. **See Barnes** "Mt 10:19, **See Barnes "Mt 10:20"**.

This was a full promise that they would be inspired, and that in organizing the church, and in recording the truths necessary for its edification, they would be under the infallible guidance of the Holy Ghost.

Bring all things to your remembrance. This probably refers to two things:

1st. He would seasonably remind them of the sayings of Jesus, which they might otherwise have forgotten. In the organization of the church, and in composing the sacred history, he would preside over their *memories*, and recall such truths and doctrines as were necessary either for their comfort or the edification of his people. Amid the multitude of things which Jesus spake during a ministry of more than three years, it was to be expected that many things which he had uttered, that would be important for the edification of the church, would be forgotten. We see, hence, the nature of their inspiration. The Holy Spirit made use of their *memories*, and doubtless of all their natural faculties. He so presided over their memories as to recall what they had forgotten, and *then* it was recorded as a thing which they distinctly remembered, in the same way as we remember a thing which would have been forgotten had not some friend recalled it to our recollection.

2nd. The Holy Spirit would teach them the *meaning* of those things which the Saviour had spoken. Thus they did not understand that he ought to be put to death till after his resurrection, though he had repeatedly told them of it, Lu 24:21, 25, 26.

So they did not till then understand that the gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles, though this was also declared before. Comp. Mt 4:15,16; Mt 12:21, with Ac 10:44-48.

{w} "but the Comforter" Joh 16:23 1Jo 2:20,27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 14 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *Peace I leave with you*. This was a common form of benediction among the Jews. **See Barnes "Mt 10:13"**.

It is the invocation of the blessings of peace and happiness. In this place it was, however, much more than a mere form or an empty wish. It came from Him who had power to make peace and to confer it on all, Eph 2:15. It refers here particularly to the consolations which he gave to his disciples in view of his approaching death. He had exhorted them not to be troubled (Joh 14:1), and he had stated *reasons* why they should not be. He explained to them why he was about to leave them; he promised them that he would return; he assured them that the Holy Ghost would come to comfort, teach, and guide them. By all these truths and promises he provided for their peace in the time of his approaching departure. But the expression refers also, doubtless, to the *peace* which is given to all who love the Saviour. They are by nature enmity against God, Ro 7:7. Their minds are like the troubled sea, which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt, Isa 57:20. They were at war with conscience, with the law and perfections of God, and with all the truths of religion. Their state after conversion is described as a state *of peace*. They are *reconciled to God*; they acquiesce in all his claims; and they have a joy which the world knows not in the word, the promises, the law, and the perfections of God, in the plan of salvation, and in the hopes of eternal life. See Ro 1:7 5:1, 8:6 14:7; Ga 5:22 Eph 2:17, 6:15 Php 4:7; Col 3:15.

My peace. Such as I only can impart. The peculiar peace which my religion is fitted to impart.

Not as the world.

1st. Not as the objects which men commonly pursue— pleasure, fame, wealth. They leave care, anxiety, remorse. They do not meet the desires of the immortal mind, and they are incapable of affording that peace which the soul needs.

2nd. Not as the men of the world give. They salute you with empty and flattering words, but their professed friendship is often feigned and has no sincerity. You cannot be sure that they are sincere, but I am.

3rd. Not as systems of philosophy and false religion give. They profess to give peace, but it is not real. It does not still the voice of conscience; it does not take away sin; it does not reconcile the soul to God.

4th. My peace is such as meets all the wants of the soul, silences the alarms of conscience, is fixed and sure amid all external changes, and will abide in the hour of death and for ever. How desirable, in a world of anxiety and care, to possess this peace! and how should all who have it not, seek that which the world can neither give nor take away!

Neither let it be afraid. Of any pain, persecutions, or trials. You have a Friend who will never leave you; a peace that shall always attend you. See Joh 14:1.

{y} "Peace" Eph 2:14-17 Php 4:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 14 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *Ye have heard*, &c. Joh 14:2,3.

If ye loved me. The expression is not to be construed as if they had then no love to him, for they evidently had; but they had also low views of him as the Messiah; they had many Jewish prejudices, and they were slow to believe his plain and positive declarations. This is the slight and tender reproof of a friend, meaning manifestly if you had *proper* love for me; if you had the *highest* views of my character and work; if you would lay aside your Jewish prejudices, and put *entire*, *implicit* confidence in what I say.

Ye would rejoice. Instead of grieving, you would rejoice in the completion of the plan which requires me to return to heaven, that greater blessings may descend on you by the influences of the Holy Spirit.

Unto the Father. To heaven; to the immediate presence of God, from whom all the blessings of redemption are to descend.

For my Father is greater than I. The object of Jesus here is not to compare his *nature* with that of the Father, but his *condition*. Ye would rejoice that I am to leave this state of suffering and humiliation, and resume that glory which I had with the Father before the world was. You ought to rejoice at my exaltation to bliss and glory with the Father (Professor Stuart). The object of this expression is to *console* the disciples in view of his absence. This he does by saying that *if* he goes away, the Holy Spirit will descend, and great success will attend the preaching of the gospel, Joh 16:7-10. In the plan of salvation the Father is represented as giving the Son, the Holy Spirit, and the various blessings of the gospel. As the *Appointer*, the *Giver*, the *Originator*, he may be represented as in office superior to the Son and the Holy Spirit. The discourse has no reference, manifestly, to the *nature* of Christ, and cannot therefore be adduced to prove that he is not divine. Its whole connection demands that we interpret it as relating solely to the imparting of the blessings connected with redemption, in which the Son is represented all along as having been *sent* or *given*, and in this respect as sustaining a relation subordinate to the Father.

{z} "I go to the Father" Joh 14:12 {a} "for my Father is greater" 1Co 15:27,28

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 14 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Before it come to pass*. Before my death, resurrection, and ascension.

Ye might believe. Ye might be confirmed or strengthened in faith by the evidence which I gave that I came from God—the power of foretelling future events.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 14 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *Will not talk much*. The time of my death draws nigh. It occurred the next day.

The prince of this world. **See Barnes "Joh 12:31"**.

Cometh. Satan is represented as approaching him to try him in his sufferings, and it is commonly supposed that no small part of the pain endured in the garden of Gethsemane was from some dreadful conflict with the great enemy of man. See Lu 22:53: "This is your hour *and the power of darkness*." Comp. Lu 4:13.

Hath nothing in me. There is in me no principle or feeling that accords with his, and nothing, therefore, by which he can prevail. Temptation has only power because there are some principles in us which accord with the designs of the tempter, and which may be *excited* by presenting corresponding objects till our virtue be overcome. Where there is no such propensity, temptation has no power. As the principles of Jesus were wholly on the side of virtue, the meaning here may be that, though he had the natural appetites of man, his virtue was so supreme that Satan "had nothing in him" which could constitute any danger that he would be led into sin, and that there was no fear of the result of the conflict before him.

{b} "prince of this world" Joh 16:11 Eph 2:2 {c} "hath nothing in me" 2Co 5:21 He 4:15; 1Jo 3:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 14 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *That the world may know that I love the Father*. That it might not be alleged that his virtue had not been subjected to *trial*. It *was* subjected. He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin, Heb 4:15. He passed through the severest forms of temptation, that it might be seen and known that his holiness was proof to *all* trial, and that human nature *might be* so pure as to resist all forms of temptation. This *will* be the case with all the saints in heaven, and it was the case with Jesus on earth.

Even so I do. In all things he obeyed; and he showed that, in the face of calamities, persecutions, and temptations, he was still disposed to obey his Father. This he did that the world might know that he loved the Father. So should we bear trials and resist temptation; and so, through persecution and calamity, should we show that we are actuated by the love of God.

Arise, let us go hence. It has been commonly supposed that Jesus and the apostles now rose from the paschal supper and went to the Mount of Olives, and that the remainder of the discourse in chapters 15-16, together with the prayer in chapter 17, was delivered while on the way to the garden of Gethsemane; but some have supposed that they merely rose from the table, and that the discourse was finished before they left the room. The former is the more correct opinion. It was now probably toward midnight, and the moon was at the full, and the scene was one, therefore, of great interest and tenderness. Jesus, with a little band, was himself about to die, and he went forth in the stillness of the night, counselling his little company in regard to their duties and dangers, and invoking the protection and blessing of God his Father to attend, to sanctify, and guide them in the arduous labours, the toils, and the persecutions they were yet to endure, chapter 17.

{d} "as the Father gave me commandment" Ps 40:8 Php 2:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 15 - Verse 1

Verse 1. *I am the true vine*. Some have supposed that this discourse was delivered in the room where the Lord's Supper was instituted, and that, as they had made use of *wine*, Jesus took occasion from that to say that he was the true vine, and to intimate that his blood was the real wine that was to give strength to the soul. Others have supposed that it was delivered in the temple, the entrance to which was adorned with a golden vine (Josephus), and that Jesus took occasion thence to say that he was the *true* vine; but it is most probable that it was spoken while they were going from the paschal supper to the Mount of Olives. Whether it was suggested by the sight of *vines* by the way, or by the wine of which they had just partaken, cannot now be determined. The comparison was frequent among Jews, for Palestine abounded in vineyards, and the illustration was very striking. Thus the Jewish people are compared to a vine which God had planted, Isa 5:1-7 Ps 80:8-16; Joe 1:7 Jer 2:21; Eze 19:10.

When Jesus says he was the true vine, perhaps allusion is had to Jer 2:21. The word *true*, here, is used in the sense of *real, genuine*. He really and truly gives what is emblematically represented by a vine. The point of the comparison or the meaning of the figure is this: A *vine* yields proper juice and nourishment to all the branches, whether these are large or small. All the nourishment of each branch and tendril passes through the main stalk, or the vine, that springs from the earth. So Jesus is the source of all real strength and grace to his disciples. He is their leader and teacher, and imparts to them, as they need, grace and strength to bear the fruits of holiness.

And my Father is the husbandman. The word *vine-dresser* more properly expresses the sense of the original word than husbandman. It means one who has the care of a vineyard; whose office it is to nurture, trim, and defend the vine, and who of course feels a deep interest in its growth and welfare. **See Barnes "Mt 21:33"**.

The figure means that God gave, or appointed his Son *to be*, the source of blessings to man; that all grace descends *through* him; and that God takes care of all the branches of this vine—that is, of all who are by faith united to the Lord Jesus Christ. In Jesus and all his church he feels the deepest interest, and it is an object of great solicitude that his church *should* receive these blessings and bear much fruit.

{a} "true vine" Isa 4:2 {b} "husbandman" So 8:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 15 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Every branch in me*. Every one that is a true follower of me, that is united to me by faith, and that truly derives grace and strength from me, as the branch does from the vine. The word *branch* includes all the boughs, and the smallest tendrils that shoot out from the parent stalk. Jesus here says that he sustains the same relation to his disciples that a parent stalk does to the branches; but this does not denote any *physical* or incomprehensible union. It is a union formed by *believing* on him; resulting from our feeling our dependence on him and our need of him; from embracing

him as our Saviour, Redeemer, and Friend. We become united to him in all our interests, and have common feelings, common desires, and a common destiny with him. We seek the same objects, are willing to encounter the same trials, contempt, persecution, and want, and are desirous that his God shall be ours, and his eternal abode ours. It is a union of friendship, of love, and of dependence; a union of weakness with strength; of imperfection with perfection; of a dying nature with a living Saviour; of a lost sinner with an unchanging Friend and Redeemer. It is the most tender and interesting of all relations, but not more mysterious or more *physical* than the union of parent and child, of husband and wife (Eph 5:23), or friend and friend.

That beareth not fruit. As the vinedresser will remove all branches that are dead or that bear no fruit, so will God take from his church all professed Christians who give no evidence by their lives that they are truly united to the Lord Jesus. He here refers to such cases as that of Judas, the apostatizing disciples, and all false and merely *nominal Christians* (Dr. Adam Clarke).

He taketh away. The vine-dresser cuts it off. God removes such in various ways:

1st. By the discipline of the church.

2nd. By suffering them to fall into temptation.

3rd. By persecution and tribulation, by the deceitfulness of riches, and by the cares of the world (Mt 13:21,22); by suffering the man to be placed in such circumstances as Judas, Achan, and Ananias were—such as to show what *they were*, to bring their characters *fairly out*, and to let it be seen that they had no true love to God.

4th. By death, for God has power thus at any moment to remove unprofitable branches from the church.

Every branch *that beareth fruit*. That is, all true Christians, for all such bear fruit. To *bear fruit* is to show by our lives that we are under the influence of the religion of Christ, and that that religion produces in us its appropriate effects, Ga 5:22,23. **See Barnes "Mt 7:16-20"**.

It is also to live so as to be useful to others. As a vineyard is worthless unless it bears fruit that may promote the happiness or subsistence of man, so the Christian principle would be worthless unless Christians should live so that others may be made holy and happy by their example and labours, and so that the *world* may be brought to the cross of the Saviour.

He purgeth it. Or rather he *prunes* it, or cleanses it by pruning. There is a use of words here —a paronomasia - in the original which cannot be retained in the translation. It may be imperfectly seen by retaining the Greek words—"Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he *taketh away (airei)*; every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it (*kathairei*); now ye *are clean (katharoi*)," &c. The same Greek word in different forms is still retained. God purifies all true Christians so that they may be more useful. He takes away that which hindered their usefulness; teaches them; quickens them; revives them; makes them more pure in motive and in life. This he does by the regular influences of his Spirit in sanctifying them, purifying their motives, teaching them the beauty of holiness, and inducing them to devote themselves more to him. He does it by taking away what opposes their usefulness, however much they may be attached to it, or however painful to part with it; as a vine-dresser will often feel himself compelled to lop off a branch that is large, apparently thrifty, and handsome, but which bears no fruit, and which *shades* or injures those which do. So God often takes away the *property* of his people, their children, or other idols. He removes the objects which bind their affections, and which render them inactive. He takes away the things around man, as he did the valued gourds of Jonah (Joh 4:5-11), so that he may feel his dependence, and live more to the honour of God, and bring forth more proof of humble and active piety.

{c} "Every branch" Mt 15:13 {d} "that beareth" Heb 12:15 Re 3:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 15 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Now ye are clean*. Still keeping up the figure (*katharoi*). It does not mean that they were *perfect*, but that they had been under a process of purifying by his instructions all the time he had been with them. He had removed their erroneous notions of the Messiah; he had gradually reclaimed them from their fond and foolish views respecting earthly honours; he had taught them to be willing to forsake all things; and he had so trained and disciplined them that immediately after his death they would be ready to go and bear fruit among all nations to the honour of his name. In addition to this, Judas had been removed from their number, and they were now all true followers of the Saviour. **See Barnes "Joh 13:10".**

Through the word. By means of the *teachings* of Jesus while he had been with them.

{e} "Now, you are clean" Joh 17:17 Eph 5:26; 1Pe 1:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 15 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Abide in me*. Remain united to me by a living faith. Live a life of dependence on me, and obey my doctrines, imitate my example, and constantly exercise faith in me.

And I in you. That is, if you remain attached to me, I will remain with you, and will teach, guide, and comfort you. This he proceeds to illustrate by a reference to the vine. If the branch should be cut off an instant, it would die and be fruitless. As long as it is in the vine, from the nature of the case, the parent stock imparts its juices, and furnishes a constant circulation of sap adapted to the growth and fruitfulness of the branch. So our piety, if we should be separate from Christ, or if we cease to feel our union to him and dependence on him, withers and droops. While we are united to him by a living faith, *from the nature of the case*, strength flows from him to us, and we receive help as we need. Piety then, manifested in good works, in love, and self-denial, is as natural, as easy, as unconstrained, and as lovely as the vine covered with fruitful branches is at once useful and enticing.

{f} "abide in me" Joh 2:6 {g} "As the branch" Hos 14:8 Ga 2:20; Php 1:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 15 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *I am the vine*, Joh 15:1

Without me ye can do nothing. The expression "without me" denotes the same as *separate from me*. As the branches, if separated from the parent stock, could produce no fruit, but would immediately wither and die, so Christians, if separate from Christ, could do nothing. The expression is one, therefore, strongly implying dependence. The Son of God was the original source of life,

Joh 1:4. He also, by his work as Mediator, gives life to the world (Joh 6:33), and it is by the same grace and agency that it is continued in the Christian. We see hence,

1st. That to him is due all the praise for all the good works the Christian performs.

2nd. That they will perform good works just in proportion as they feel their dependence on him and look to him. And

3rd. That the reason why others fail of being holy is because they are unwilling to look to him, and seek grace and strength from him who alone is able to give it.

{1} "without me", or "severed from me"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 15 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *If a man abide not in me*. See Joh 15:4. If a man is not truly united to him by faith, and does not live with a continual sense of his dependence on him. This doubtless refers to those who are professors of religion, but who have never known anything of true and real connection with him.

Is cast forth. **See Barnes "Joh 15:2"**.

See Barnes "Mt 8:12, Also **See Barnes "Mt 22:13"**.

Is withered. Is dried up. A branch cut off withers. So of a soul unconnected with Christ, however fair it may have appeared, and however flourishing when a profession of religion was first made, yet when it is tried, and it is seen that there was no true grace, everything withers and dies. The zeal languishes, the professed love is gone, prayer is neglected, the sanctuary is forsaken, and the soul becomes like a withered branch reserved for the fire of the last great day. See a beautiful illustration of this in Eze 15:1-8.

Men gather them. The word men is not in the original, and should not have been in the translation. The Greek is "they gather them," a form of expression denoting simply they are gathered, without specifying by whom it is done. From Mt 13:40-42, it seems that it will be done by the angels. The expression means, as the withered and useless branches of trees are gathered for fuel, so shall it be with all hypocrites and false professors of religion.

Are burned. See Mt 13:42.

{h} "If a man abide" Mt 3:10 7:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 15 - Verse 7

Verse 15. *My words*. My doctrine; my commandments.

Abide in you. Not only are *remembered*, but are suffered to remain in you as a living principle, to regulate your affections and life.

Ye shall ask, &c. See Joh 14:13. This promise had particular reference to the apostles. It is applicable to other Christians only so far as they are in circumstances similar to the apostles, and only so far as they possess their spirit. We learn from it that it is only when we keep the commandments of Christ—only when we live by faith in him, and his words are suffered to control

our conduct and affections, that our prayers will be heard. Were we *perfect* in all things, he would always hear us, and we should be kept from making an improper petition; but just so far as men regard iniquity in their heart, the Lord will not hear them, Ps 66:18.

{i} "Ye shall ask" Joh 16:23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 15 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Herein*. In this—to wit, in your bearing much fruit.

Glorified. Honoured.

Bear much fruit. Are fruitful in good works; are faithful, zealous, humble, devoted, always abounding in the work of the Lord. This honours God,

1st. Because it shows the excellence of his law which requires it.

2nd. Because it shows the power of his gospel, and of that grace which can overcome the evil propensities of the heart and *produce* it.

3rd. Because the Christian is restored to the divine image, and it shows how excellent is the character after which they are formed. They imitate God, and the world sees that the whole tendency of the divine administration and character is to make man holy; to produce in us that which is lovely, and true, and honest, and of good report. Comp. Mt 7:20 Php 4:8.

So. That is, in doing this.

Shall ye be my disciples. This is a true test of character. It is not by profession, but it is by a holy life, that the character is tried. This is a test which it is easy to apply, and one which decides the case. It is worthy of remark that the Saviour says that those who bear MUCH *fruit* are they who are his disciples. The design and tendency of his religion is to excite men to do much good, and to call forth *all* their strength, and time, and talents in the work for which the Saviour laid down his life. Nor should anyone take comfort in the belief that he is a Christian who does not aim to do *much* good, and who does not devote to God all that he has in an honest effort to glorify his name, and to benefit a dying world. The apostles obeyed this command of the Saviour, and went forth preaching the gospel everywhere, and aiming to bring all men to the knowledge of the truth; and it is this spirit only, manifested in a proper manner, which can constitute any certain evidence of piety.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 15 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *As the Father hath loved me*. The love of the Father toward his only-begotten Son is the highest affection of which we can conceive. Comp. Mt 3:17 17:5. It is the love of God toward his coequal Son, who is like him in all things, who always pleased him, and who was willing to endure the greatest sacrifices and toils to accomplish his purpose of mercy. Yet this love is adduced to illustrate the tender affection which the Lord Jesus has for all his friends.

So have I loved you. Not to the same degree, for this was impossible, but with the same kind of love—deep, tender, unchanging; love prompting to self-denials, toils, and sacrifices to secure their welfare.

Continue ye. The reason which he gives for their doing this is the *strength* of the love which he had shown for them. His love was so great for them that he was about to lay down his life. This constitutes a strong reason why we should continue in his love.

1st. Because the love which he shows for us is unchanging.

2nd. It is the love of our best friend—love whose strength was expressed by toils, and groans, and blood.

3rd. As he is unchanging in the character and strength of his affection, so should we be. Thus only can we properly express our gratitude; thus only show that we are his true friends.

4th. Our happiness here and for ever depends altogether on our *continuing* in the love of Christ. We have no source of permanent joy but in that love.

In my love. In love to me. Thus it is expressed in the Greek in the next verse. The connection also demands that we understand it of our love to him, and not of his love to us. The latter cannot be the subject of a command; the former may. See also Lu 11:42 1Jo 2:5 Jude 1:21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 15 - Verse 10

Verse 10. See Joh 14:23,24

{k} "If ye keep my commandments" Joh 14:21,23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 15 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *These things*. The discourse in this and the previous chapter. This discourse was designed to comfort them by the promise of the Holy Spirit and of eternal life, and to direct them in the discharge of their duty.

My joy. This expression probably denotes the happiness which Jesus had, and would continue to have, by their obedience, love, and fidelity. Their obedience was to him a source of joy. It was that which he sought and for which he had laboured. He now clearly taught them the path of duty, and encouraged them to persevere, notwithstanding he was about to leave them. If they obeyed him, it would continue to him to be a source of joy. Christ rejoices in the obedience of all his friends; and, though his happiness is not dependent on them, yet their fidelity is an object which he desires and in which he finds delight. The same sentiment is expressed in Joh 17:13.

Your joy might be full. That you might be delivered from your despondency and grief at my departure; that you might see the reason why I leave you, be comforted by the Holy Spirit, and be sustained in the arduous trials of your ministry. See 1Jo 1:4 2Jo 1:12. This promise of the Saviour was abundantly fulfilled. The apostles with great frequency speak of the fulness of their joy—joy produced in just the manner promised by the Saviour— by the presence of the Holy Spirit. And it showed his great love, that he promised such joy; his infinite knowledge, that, in the midst of their

many trials and persecutions, he knew that they would possess it; and the glorious power and loveliness of his gospel, that it could impart such joy amid so many tribulations. See instances of this joy in Ac 13:52; Re 14:17 2Co 2:3; Ga 5:22 1Th 1:6, 2:19 20 3:9 1Pe 1:8 Ro 5:11

2Co 7:4.

{l} "that your joy" Joh 16:24 17:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 15 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *This is my commandment*. The peculiar law of Christianity, called hence the *new* commandment. **See Barnes "Joh 13:34".**

As I have loved you. That is, with the same tender affection, willing to endure trials, to practise self-denials, and, if need be, to lay down your lives for each other, 1Jo 3:16.

{m} "This is my commandment" Joh 13:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 15 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Greater love hath*, &c. No higher expression of love could be given. Life is the most valuable object we possess; and when a man is willing to lay that down for his friends or his country, it shows the utmost extent of love. Even this love for friends has been rarely witnessed. A *very few cases*—like that of Damon and Pythias—have occurred where a man was willing to save the life of his friend by giving his own. It greatly enhances the love of Christ, that while the instances of those who have been willing to die for *friends* have been so rare, he was willing to die for *enemies*—bitter foes, who rejected his reign, persecuted him, reviled him, scorned him, and sought his life, 1Jo 4:10 Re 5:6,10.

It also shows us the extent of his love that he gave himself up, not to common sufferings, but to the most bitter, painful, and protracted sorrows, not for himself, not for friends, but for a thoughtless and unbelieving world.

"O Lamb of God, was ever *pain*,
Was ever LOVE like thine!"

{n} "greater love" Ro 5:7,8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 15 - Verse 14

Verse 14. No Barnes text on this verse.

{n} "Greater love"

Joh 15:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 15 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *I call you not servants*. This had been the *common* title by which he addressed them (Mt 10:24,25; Joh 12:26 13:13) ; but he had also before this, on one occasion, called them *friends* (Lu 12:4), and on one occasion after this he called them servants, Joh 15:20. He here means that the *ordinary* title by which he would henceforth address them would be that of friends.

The servant knoweth not, &c. He receives the command of his master without knowing the reason why this or that thing is ordered. It is one of the conditions of slavery not to be let into the counsels and plans of the master. It is the privilege of friendship to be made acquainted with the plans, wishes, and wants of the friend. This instance of friendship Jesus had given them by making them acquainted with the reasons why he was about to leave them, and with his secret wishes in regard to them. As he had given them this *proof* of friendship, it was proper that he should not withhold from them the title of friends.

His lord. His master.

I have called you friends. I have given you the name of friends. He does not mean that the usual appellation which he had given them had been than of friends, but that such was the title which he had now given them.

For all things, &c. The reason why he called them friends was that he had now treated them as friends. He had opened to them his mind; made known his plans; acquainted them with the design of his coming, his death, his resurrection, and ascension; and, having thus given them the clearest *proof* of friendship, it was proper that he should give them the *name*.

That I have heard, &c. Jesus frequently represents himself as commissioned or sent by God to accomplish an important work, and as being instructed by him in regard to the nature of that work. **See Barnes "Joh 5:30"**.

By what he had *heard of the Father*, he doubtless refers to the *design* of God in his coming and his death. This he had made known to them.

{p} "friends" Jas 2:23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 15 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Ye have not chosen me*. The word here translated *chosen* is that from which is derived the word *elect*, and means the same thing. It is frequently thus translated, Mr 13:20 Mt 24:22,24 31; Col 3:12. It refers here, doubtless, to his choosing or electing them to be apostles. He says that it was not because *they* had chosen *him* to be their teacher and guide, but because *he* had designated them to be his apostles. **See Barnes "Joh 6:70"**; **See Barnes "Mt 4:18, also** Mt 4:19-22. He thus shows them that his love for them was pure and disinterested; that it commenced when they had no affection for him; that it was not a matter of obligation on his part, and that therefore it placed them under more tender and sacred obligations to be entirely devoted to his service. The same may be said of all who are endowed with talents of any kind, or raised to any office in the church or the state. It is not that they have originated these talents, or laid God under obligation. What they have they owe to his sovereign goodness, and they are bound to devote all to his service. Equally true is this of all Christians. It was not that by nature they were more *inclined* than others to seek God, or that

they had any native goodness to recommend them to him, but it was because he graciously inclined them by his Holy Spirit to seek him; because, in the language of-the Episcopal and Methodist articles of religion, "The grace of Christ PREVENTED them;" that is, *went before them*, *commenced* the work of their personal salvation, and thus God in sovereign mercy chose them as his own. Whatever Christians, then, possess, they owe to God, and by the most tender and sacred ties they are bound to be his followers.

I have chosen you. To be apostles. Yet all whom he now addressed were true disciples. Judas had left them; and when Jesus says he had chosen them to *bear fruit*, it may mean, also, that he had "chosen them to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth," 2Th 2:13.

Ordained you. Literally, I have *placed you*, appointed you, set you apart. It does not mean that he had done this by any formal public act of the imposition of hands, as we now use the word, but that he had *designated* or appointed them to this work, Lu 6:13-16; Mt 10:2-5.

Bring forth fruit. That you should be rich in good works; faithful and successful in spreading my gospel. This was the great business to which they were set apart, and this they faithfully accomplished. It may be added that this is the great end for which Christians are chosen. It is not to be idle, or useless, or simply to seek enjoyment. It is to do good, and to spread as far as possible the rich temporal and spiritual blessings which the gospel is fitted to confer on mankind.

Your fruit should remain This probably means,

1st. That the effect of their labours would be *permanent* on mankind. Their efforts were not to be like those of false teachers, the result of whose labours soon vanish away (Ac 5:38,39), but their gospel was to spread—was to take a deep and permanent hold on men, and was ultimately to fill the world, Mt 16:18. The Saviour knew this, and never was a prediction more cheering for man or more certain in its fulfillment.

2nd. There is included, also, in this declaration the idea that their labours were to be *unremitted*. They were sent forth to be diligent in their work, and untiring in their efforts to spread the gospel, until the day of their death. Thus their fruit, the continued *product* or *growth* of religion in their souls, was to remain, or to be continually produced, until God should call them from their work. The Christian, and especially the Christian minister, is devoted to the Saviour for life. He is to toil without intermission, and without being weary of his work, till God shall call him home. The Saviour never called a disciple to serve him merely for a part of his life, nor to feel himself at liberty to relax his endeavours, nor to suppose himself to be a Christian when his religion produced no fruit. He that enlists under the banners of the Son of God does it for life. He that *expects* or *desires* to grow weary and cease to serve him, has never yet put on the Christian armour, or known anything of the grace of God. See Lu 9:62.

That whosoever, &c. See Joh 15:7.

{q} "Ye have not chosen me" 1Jo 4:10,19 {r} "ordained you" Eph 2:10 {s} "whatsoever you shall ask" Joh 15:7 14:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 15 - Verse 17

Verse 17. No Barnes text on this verse.

{r} "These things"

Joh 15:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 15 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *If the world hate you*. The friendship of the world they were not to expect, but they were not to be deterred from their work by its hatred. They had seen the example of Jesus. No opposition of the proud, the wealthy, the learned, or the men of power, no persecution or gibes, had deterred him from his work. Remembering this, and having his example steadily in the eye, they were to labour not less because wicked men should oppose and deride them. It is enough for the disciple to be as his Master, and the servant as his Lord, Mt 10:25.

{u} "If the world hate you" 1Jo 3:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 15 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *If ye were of the world*. If you were actuated by the principles of the world. If, like them, you were vain, earthly, sensual, given to pleasure, wealth, ambition, they would not oppose you.

Because ye are not of the world. Because you are influenced by different principles from men of the world. You are actuated by the love of God and holiness; they by the love of sin.

I have chosen you out of the world. I have, by choosing you to be my followers, separated you from their society, and placed you under the government of my holy laws.

Therefore, &c. A Christian may esteem it as one evidence of his piety that he is hated by wicked men. Often most decided evidence is given that a man is the friend of God by the opposition excited against him by the profane, by Sabbath-breakers, and by the dissolute, 1Jo 3:13 Joh 7:7.

{v} "therefore the world hateth you" Joh 17:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 15 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Remember the word that I said*, &c. At their first appointment to the apostolic office. See Mt 10:24 25.

{w} "Remember" Mt 10:24 Lu 6:40; Joh 13:16

{x} "if they have kept" Eze 3:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 15 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *My name's sake*. On my account. Because you are my followers and possess my spirit. **See Barnes "Joh 14:13".**

Because they know not him that sent me. They will not believe that God has sent me. They do not so understand his character, his justice, or his law, as to see that it was fit that he should send his Son to die. They are so opposed to it, so filled with pride and opposition to a plan of salvation that is so humbling to men, as to be resolved not to believe it, and thus they persecute me, and will also you.

{y} "But all these things" Mt 10:22 24:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 15 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *And spoken unto them*. Declared unto them the will of God, and made known his requirements. Jesus had not less certainly shown by his own *arguments* that he was the Messiah than by his miracles. By *both* these kinds of proof their guilt was to be measured. See Joh 16:26. No small part of the gospel of John consists of arguments used by the Saviour to convince the Jews that he came from God. He here says if he had not used these arguments, and proved to them his divine mission, they had not had sin.

Had not had sin. This is evidently to be understood of the particular sin of persecuting and rejecting him. Of this he was speaking; and though, if he had not come, they would have been guilty of many other sins, yet of this, their great crowning sin, they would not have been guilty. We may understand this, then, as teaching,

1st. That they would not have been guilty of this *kind of sin*. They would not have been chargeable with rejecting the signal grace of God if Jesus had not come and made an offer of mercy to them.

2nd. They would not have been guilty of the same *degree of sin*. The rejection of the Messiah was the crowning act of rebellion which brought down the vengeance of God, and led on their peculiar national calamities. By way of eminence, therefore, this might be called *the sin*—the peculiar sin of their age and nation. Comp. Mt 23:34-39 27:25. And this shows us, what is so often taught in the Scriptures, that our guilt will be in proportion to the light that we possess and the mercies that we reject, Mt 11:20-24 Lu 12:47,48.

If it was such a crime to reject the Saviour then, it is a crime now; and if the rejection of the Son of God brought such calamities on the Jewish nation, the same rejection will involve the sinner now in woe, and vengeance, and despair.

No cloak. No covering, no excuse. The proof has been so clear that they cannot plead ignorance; it has been so often presented that they cannot allege that they had no opportunity of knowing it. It is still so with all sinners.

{z} "If I had not come" Joh 9:41 {a} "but now " Jas 4:17 {2} "cloak" or, "excuse"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 15 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *He that hateth me*, &c. To show them that this was no slight crime, he reminds them that a rejection of himself is also a rejection of God. Such is the *union* between them, that no one can hate the one without also hating the other. See Joh 5:19,20 Joh 14:7,9.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 15 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *The works which none other man did*. The miracles of Jesus surpassed those of Moses and the prophets—

1st. In their number. He healed great multitudes, and no small part of his life was occupied in doing good by miraculous power.

2nd. In their nature. They involved a greater exertion of power. He healed *all* forms of disease. He showed that his power was superior to all kinds of pain. He raised Lazarus after he had been four days dead. He probably refers also to the fact that he had performed miracles of a different *kind* from all the prophets.

3rd. He did all this by his *own power*; Moses and the prophets by the invoked power of God. Jesus spake and it was done, showing that he had power of himself to do more than all the ancient prophets had done. It may be added that his miracles were done in a short time. They were constant, rapid, continued, in all places. Wherever he was, he showed that he had this power, and in the short space of three years and a half it is probable that he wrought *more* miracles than are recorded of Moses and Elijah, and all the prophets put together.

{b} "the works" Joh 7:31

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 15 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *In their law*, Ps 35:19. All the Old Testament was sometimes called the law. The meaning here is that the same thing happened to him which did to the psalmist. The same words which David used respecting his enemies would express, also, the conduct of the Jews and their treatment of the Messiah. In both cases it was without cause. Jesus had broken no law, he had done no injury to his country or to any individual. It is still true that sinners hate him in the same way. He injures no one, but, amid all their hatred, he seeks their welfare; and, while they reject him in a manner for which they *can give no reason in the day of judgment*, he still follows them with mercies and entreats them to return to him. Who has ever had any reason to *hate* the Lord Jesus? What injury has he ever done to any one of the human race? What evil has he ever said or thought of any one of them? What cause or reason had the Jews for putting him to death? What reason has the sinner for hating him now? What reason for neglecting him? No one can give a reason for it that will satisfy his own conscience, none that has the least show of plausibility. Yet no being on earth has ever been more hated, despised, or neglected, and in every instance it has been "without a cause." Reader, do *you* hate him? If so, I ask you WHY? Wherein has he injured you? or why should you think or speak reproachfully of the benevolent and pure Redeemer?

{c} "They hated me without cause" Ps 35:19 69:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 15 - Verse 26

Verse 26. No Barnes text on this verse.
{d} "Comforter is come"
Joh 14:17
{e} "he shall testify of me" 1Jo 5:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 15 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *Ye also shall bear witness*. You shall be witnesses to the world to urge on them the evidences that the Lord Jesus is the Messiah.

Have been with me. They had for more than three years seen his works, and were therefore qualified to bear witness of his character and doctrines.

From the beginning. From his entrance on the public work of the ministry, Mt 4:17-22. Comp. Ac 1:21,22.

{f} "And ye also shall bear witness" Lu 24:48 Ac 2:32, 4:20,33
2Pe 1:16
{g} "ye have been with me from the beginning" 1Jo 1:2.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 16 - Verse 1

Verse 1. *These things*. The things spoken in the two previous chapters, promising them divine aid and directing them in the path of duty.

Be offended. For the meaning of the word *offend*, **See Barnes "Mt 5:29"**.

It means here the same as to *stumble* or *fall* —that is to apostatize. He proceeds immediately to tell them, what he had often apprised them of, that they would be subject to great persecutions and trials. He was also himself about to be removed by death. They were to go into an unfriendly world. All these things were in themselves greatly fitted to shake their faith, and to expose them to the danger of apostasy. Comp. Lu 24:21. If they had not been apprise of this, if they had not known *why* Jesus was about to die, and if they had not been encouraged with the promised aid of the Holy Ghost, they would have sunk under these trials, and forsaken him and his cause. And we may learn hence,

1st. That if Christians were left to themselves they would fall away and perish.

2nd. That God affords means and helps *beforehand* to keep them in the path of duty.

3rd. That the instructions of the Bible and the help of the Holy Spirit are all granted to keep them from apostasy.

4th. That Jesus beforehand *secured* the fidelity and made certain the continuance in faith of his apostles, seeing all their danger and knowing all their enemies. And, in like manner, we should be persuaded that "he is able to keep that which we commit to him against that day," 2Ti 1:2 12.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 16 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Out of the synagogues*. **See Barnes "Joh 9:22"**.

They would *excommunicate* them from their religious assemblies. This was often done. Comp. Ac 6:13 14, 9:23 24 17:5 21:27-31.

Whosoever killeth you. This refers principally to the Jews. It is also true of the Gentiles, that in their persecution of Christians they supposed they were rendering acceptable service to their gods.

God service. The Jews who persecuted the apostles regarded them as blasphemers, and as seeking to overthrow the temple service, and the system of religion which God had established. Thus they supposed they were rendering service to God in putting them to death, Ac 6:13 14; Ac 21:28-31. Sinners, especially hypocrites, often cloak enormous crimes under the pretence of great zeal for religion. Men often suppose, or profess to suppose, that they are rendering God service when they persecute others; and, under the pretence of great zeal for truth and purity, evince all possible bigotry, pride, malice, and uncharitableness. The people of God have suffered most from those who have been *conscientious persecutors* and some of the most malignant foes which true Christians have ever had have been *in* the church, and have been professed ministers of the gospel, persecuting them under pretence of great zeal for the cause of purity and religion. It is no evidence of piety that a man is full of zeal against those whom he supposes to be heretics; and it is one of the best proofs that a man knows nothing of the religion of Jesus when he is eminent for self-conceit in his own views of orthodoxy, and firmly fixed in the opinion that all who differ from him and his sect must of course be wrong.

{a} "whosoever killeth you" Ac 26 9-11.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 16 - Verse 3

Verse 3. See Joh 15:21

{b} "And these things" Joh 15:21 {c} "they have not known" 1Co 2:8 1Ti 1:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 16 - Verse 4

Verse 4. These things which are about to happen, Joh 16:1,2. He had foretold then that they would take place.

Ye may remember, &c. By calling to mind that he had foretold these things they would perceive that he was omniscient, and would remember, also, the consolations which he had afforded them and the instructions which he had given them. Had these calamities come upon them without their

having been foretold, their faith might have failed; they might have been tempted to suppose that Jesus was not aware of them, and of course that he was not the Messiah. God does not suffer his people to fall into trials without giving them sufficient warning, and without giving all the grace that is needful to bear them.

At the beginning. In the early part of the ministry of Jesus. The expression *these things* here refers, probably, to *all* the topics contained in these chapters. He had, in the early part of his ministry, forewarned them of calamities and persecutions (Mt 10:16 5:10-12; Mt 9:15), but he had not so fully acquainted them with the nature, and design, and sources of their trials; he had not so fully apprised them of the fact, the circumstances, and the object of his death and of his ascension to heaven; he had not revealed to them so clearly that the Holy Spirit would descend, and sanctify, and guide them; and especially he had not, in one continued discourse, *grouped* all these things together, and placed their sorrows and consolations so fully before their minds. All these are included, it is supposed, in the expression "these things."

Because I was with you. This is the reason which he gives why he had not at *first* made known to them clearly the certainty of their calamities and their joys; and it implies,

1st. That it was not needful to do it at once, as he was to be with them for more than three years, and could have abundant opportunity *gradually* to teach these things, and to prepare them for the more full announcement when he was about to leave them.

2nd. That while he was with them he would go before them, and the weight of calamities would fall on *him*, and consequently they did not so much then need the presence and aid of the Holy Spirit as they would when he was gone.

3rd. That his presence was to them what the presence of the Holy Spirit would be after his death, Joh 16.7.

He could teach them all needful truth. He could console and guide them. Now that he was to leave them, he fully apprised them of what was before them, and of the descent of the Holy Spirit to do for them what he had done when with them.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 16 - Verse 5

Verses 5,6. *Now I go my way*. Now I am about to die and leave you, and it is proper to announce all these things to you.

None of you asketh me, &c. They gave themselves up to grief instead of inquiring why he was about to leave them. Had they made the inquiry, he was ready to answer them and to comfort them. When we are afflicted we should not yield ourselves to excessive grief. We should inquire why it is that God thus tries us; and we should never doubt that if we come to him, and spread out our sorrows before him, he will give us consolation.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 16 - Verse 6

Verse 6. No Barnes text on this verse.

{d} "sorrow hath filled" Joh 16:21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 16 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *It is expedient for you*, &c. The reason why it was expedient for them that he should go away, he states to be, that in this way only would the Comforter be granted to them. Still, it may be asked why the presence of the Holy Spirit was more valuable to them than that of the Saviour himself? To this it may be answered,

1st. That by his departure, his death, and ascension—by having these great *facts* before their eyes—they would be led by the Holy Spirit to see more fully the design of his coming than they would by his presence. While he was with them, notwithstanding the plainest teaching, their minds were filled with prejudice and error. They still adhered to the expectation of a temporal kingdom, and were unwilling to believe that he was to die. When he should have actually left them they could no longer doubt on this subject, and would be *prepared* to understand why he came. And this was done. See the Acts of the Apostles everywhere. It is often needful that God should visit us with severe affliction before our pride will be humbled and we are willing to understand the plainest truths.

2nd. While on the earth the Lord Jesus could be bodily present but in one place at one time. Yet, in order to secure the great design of saving men, it was needful that there should be some agent who could be in all places, who could attend all ministers, and who could, at the same time, apply the work of Christ to men in all parts of the earth.

3rd. It was an evident arrangement in the great plan of redemption that each of the persons of the Trinity should perform a part. As it was not the work of the Spirit to make an atonement, so it was not the work of the Saviour to apply it. And until the Lord Jesus had performed this great work, the way was not open for the Holy Spirit to descend to perform his part of the great plan yet, when the Saviour had completed *his* portion of the work and had left the earth, the Spirit would carry forward the same plan and apply it to men.

4th. It was to be expected that far more signal success would attend the preaching of the gospel when the atonement was actually made than before. It was the office of the Spirit to carry forward the work only when the Saviour had died and ascended; and this was actually the case. See Acts chapter 2. Hence it was expedient that the Lord Jesus should go away, that the Spirit might descend and apply the work to sinners. The departure of the Lord Jesus was to the apostles a source of deep affliction, but had they seen *the whole case* they would not have been thus afflicted. So God often takes away from us one blessing that he may bestow a greater. All affliction, if received in a proper manner, is of this description; and could the afflicted people of God always *see the whole case* as God sees it, they would think and feel, as he does, that it was best for them to be thus afflicted.

It is expedient. It is *better* for you.

The Comforter. **See Barnes "Joh 14:16"**.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 16 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *He will reprove*. The word translated *reprove* means commonly to demonstrate by argument, to prove, to persuade anyone to do a thing by presenting reasons, It hence means also to *convince* of anything, and particularly to *convince of crime*. This is its meaning here. He will *convince* or *convict* the world of sin. That is, he will so apply the truths of God to men's own minds as to *convince* them by fair and sufficient arguments that they are sinners, and cause them to *feel* this. This is the nature of conviction always.

The world. Sinners. The men of the world. All men are by nature sinners, and the term *the world* may be applied to them all, Joh 1:10 12:31; 1Jo 5:19.

{1} "reprove" or, "convince" Ac 2:37

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 16 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Of sin*. The first thing specified of which the world would be convinced is sin. Sin, in general, is any violation of a law of God, but the particular sin of which men are here said to be convinced is that of rejecting the Lord Jesus. This is placed *first*, and is deemed the sin of chief magnitude, as it is the principal one of which men are guilty. This was particularly true of the Jews who had rejected him and crucified him; and it was the great crime which, when brought home to their consciences by the preaching of the apostles, overwhelmed them with confusion, and filled their hearts with remorse. It was their rejection of the Son of God that was made the great truth that was instrumental of their conversion, Ac 2:22 23 37 3:13-15 4:10 26-28; comp. Joh 16:31-33. It is also true of other sinners. Sinners, when awakened, often feel that it has been the great crowning sin of their lives that they have rejected the tender mercy of God, and trampled on the blood of his Son; and that they have for months and years refused to submit to him, saying that they would not have him to reign over them. Thus is fulfilled what is spoken by Zechariah, Zec 3:10: "And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and mourn." Throughout the New Testament this is regarded as the sin that is pre-eminently offensive to God, and which, if unrepented of, will certainly lead to perdition, Mr 16:16 Joh 3:36. Hence it is placed *first* in those sins of which the Spirit will convince men; and hence, if we have not yet been brought to see *our* guilt in rejecting God's tender mercy through his Son, we are yet in the gall of bitterness and under the bond of iniquity.

{e} "of sin" Ro 3:20 7:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 16 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Of righteousness*. This seems clearly to refer to the righteousness or innocence of Jesus himself. He was now persecuted. He was soon to be arraigned on heavy charges, and condemned by the highest authority of the nation as guilty. Yet, though condemned, he says that the Holy Spirit would descend and *convince* the world that he was innocent.

Because I go to my Father. That is, the amazing miracle of his resurrection and ascension to God would be a demonstration of his innocence that would satisfy the Jews and Gentiles. God would not raise up an impostor. If he had been truly *guilty*, as the Jews who condemned him pretended, God would not have set his seal to the imposture by raising him from the dead; but when he did raise him up and exalt him to his own right hand, he gave his attestation to his *innocence*; he showed that he approved his work, and gave evidence conclusive that Jesus was sent from God. To this proof of the *innocence* of Jesus the apostles often refer, Ac 2:22-24 17:31 Ro 1 4 1Co 15:14 1Ti 3:16.

This same proof of the innocence or righteousness of the Saviour is as satisfactory now as it was then. One of the deepest feelings which an awakened sinner has, is his conviction of the righteousness of Jesus Christ. He sees that he is holy; that his own opposition to him has been unprovoked, unjust, and base; and it is this which so often overwhelms his soul with the conviction of his own unworthiness, and with earnest desires to obtain a better righteousness than his own.

And ye see me no more. That is, he was to be taken away from them, and they would not see him till his return to judgment; yet this source of grief to them would be the means of establishing his religion and greatly blessing others.

{f} "righteousness" Isa 42:21 Re 1:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 16 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Of judgment*. That God is just, and will execute judgment. This is proved by what he immediately states.

The prince of this world. Satan. **See Barnes "Joh 12:31"**.

The death of Christ was a judgment or a condemnation of Satan. In this struggle Jesus gained the victory and subdued the great enemy of man. This proves that God will execute judgment or justice on all his foes. If he vanquished his great enemy who had so long triumphed in this world, he will subdue all others in due time. All sinners in like manner may expect to be condemned. Of this great truth Jesus says the Holy Spirit will convince men. God showed himself to be *just* in subduing his great enemy. He showed that he was resolved to vanquish his foes, and that *all* his enemies in like manner must be subdued. This is deeply felt by the convicted sinner. He knows that he is guilty. He learns that God is just. He fears that he will condemn him, and trembles in the apprehension of approaching condemnation. From this state of alarm there is no refuge but to flee to Him who subdued the great enemy of man, and who is able to deliver him from the vengeance due to his sins. Convinced, then, of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and of his ability and willingness to save him, he flees to his cross, and seeks in him a refuge from the coming storm of wrath.

In these verses we have a condensed and most striking view of the work of the Holy Spirit. These three things comprise the whole of his agency in the conversion of sinful men; and in the accomplishment of this work he still awakens, convinces, and renews. He attends the preaching of the gospel, and blesses the means of grace, and manifests his power in revivals of religion. He thus imparts to man the blessings purchased by the death of Jesus, carries forward and extends the same plan of mercy, and will yet apply it to all the kingdoms and tribes of men. Have *we* ever felt his

power, and been brought by his influence to mourn over our sins, and seek the mercy of a dying Saviour?

{g} "judgment" Ac 17:31 Ro 2:2; Re 20:12,13

{h} "the prince of this world is judged" Joh 12:31

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 16 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *I have yet many things to say*, &c. There were many things pertaining to the work of the Spirit and the establishment of religion which might be said. Jesus had given them the outline; he had presented to them the great doctrines of the system, but he had not gone into details. These were things which they could not then bear. They were still full of Jewish prejudices, and were not prepared for a full development of his plans. Probably he refers here to the great *changes* which were to take place in the Jewish system—the abolition of sacrifices and the priest-hood, the change of the Sabbath, the rejection of the Jewish nation, &c. For these doctrines they were not prepared, but they would in due time be taught them by the Holy Spirit.

{i} "ye cannot bear them now" Heb 5:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 16 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *The Spirit of truth*. So called because he would teach them all needful truth.

Will guide you into all truth. That is, truth which pertained to the establishment of the Christian system, which they were not then prepared to hear. We may here remark that this is a full promise that they would be inspired and guided in founding the new church; and we may observe that the plan of the Saviour was replete with wisdom. Though they had been long with him, yet they were not prepared *then* to hear of the changes that were to occur; but his death would open their eyes, and the Holy Spirit, making use of the striking and impressive scenes of his death and ascension, would carry forward with vast rapidity their views of the nature of the Christian scheme. Perhaps in the few days that elapsed, of which we have a record in the first and second chapters of the Acts of the Apostles, they learned more of the true nature of the Christian plan than they would have done in months or years even under the teaching of Jesus himself. The more we study the plan of Christ, the more shall we admire the profound wisdom of the Christian scheme, and see that it was eminently fitted to the great design of its Founder —to introduce it in such a manner as to make on man the deepest impression of its wisdom and its truth.

Not speak of himself. Not as *prompted* by himself. He shall declare what is communicated to him. **See Barnes "Joh 7:18"**.

Whatsoever he shall hear. What he shall receive of the Father and the Son; represented by hearing, because in this way instruction is commonly received. **See Barnes "Joh 5:30"**.

Things to come. Probably this means *the meaning of things* which were to take place *after* the time when he was speaking to them —to wit, the design of his death, and the nature of the changes which were to take place in the Jewish nation. It is also true that the apostles were inspired by the

Holy Spirit to predict future events which would take place in the church and the world. See Ac 11:28; Ac 20:29 21:11; 1Ti 4:1-3; 2Ti 3:1; 2Pe 1:14; and the whole book of Revelation.

{k} "guide you into all truth" Joh 14:26 {l} "he will show you things to come" Re 1:1,19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 16 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Shall glorify me*. Shall honour me. The nature of his influence shall be such as to exalt my character and work in view of the mind.

Shall receive of mine. Literally, "shall take of or from me." He shall receive his commission and instructions as an ambassador from me, to do my will and complete my work.

Shall show it. Shall announce or communicate it to you. This is always the work of the Spirit. All serious impressions produced by him lead to the Lord Jesus (1Co 12:3), and by this we may easily test our feelings. If we have been truly convicted of sin and renewed by the Holy Ghost, the tendency of all his influences has been to lead us to the Saviour; to show us our need of him; to reveal to us the loveliness of his character, and the fitness of his work to our wants; and to incline us to cast our eternal interests on his almighty arm, and commit all to his hands.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 16 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *All things*, &c. See Mt 28:18 11:27. No one could have said this who was not equal with the Father. The union was so intimate, though mysterious, that it might with propriety be said that whatever was done in relation to the Son, was also done in regard to the Father. See Joh 14:9.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 16 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *A little while* His death would occur in a short time. It took place the next day. See Joh 16:19.

Ye shall not see me. That is, he would be concealed from their view in the tomb.

And again a little while. After three days he would rise again and appear to their view.

Because I go, &c. Because it is a part of the plan that I should ascend to God, it is necessary that I should rise from the grave, and then you will see me, and have evidence that I am still your Friend. Comp. Joh 7:33. Here are three important events foretold for the consolation of the disciples, yet they were stated in such a manner that, in their circumstances and with their prejudices, it appeared difficult to understand him.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 16 - Verse 17

Verse 17. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 16 - Verse 18

Verse 18. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 16 - Verse 19

Verse 19. No Barnes text on this verse.
{m} "Now Jesus"
Joh 2:24,25
{n} "A little while" Joh 16:16 7:33, 13:33 14:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 16 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Ye shall weep*, &c. At my crucifixion, sufferings, and death. Comp. Lu 23:27.

The world. Wicked men. The term *world* is frequently used in this sense. See Joh 16:8. It refers particularly, here, to the Jews who sought his death, and who would rejoice that their object was obtained. ¶

Shall be turned into joy. You will not only rejoice at my resurrection, but even my death, now the object of so much grief to you, will be to you a source of unspeakable joy. It will procure for you peace and pardon in this life, and eternal joy in the world to come. Thus their greatest apparent calamity would be to them, finally, the source of their highest comfort; and though *then* they could not see *how* it could be, yet if they had known *the whole case* they would have seen that they might rejoice. As it was, they were to be consoled by the assurance of the Saviour that it would be for their good. And thus, in our afflictions, if we could see the whole case, we should rejoice. As it is, when they appear dark and mysterious, we may trust in the promise of God that they will be for our welfare. We may also remark here that the apparent triumphs of the wicked, though they may produce grief at present in the minds of Christians, will be yet overruled for good. *Their* joy shall be turned into mourning, and the mourning of Christians into joy; and wicked men may be doing the very thing—as they were in the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus—that shall yet be made the means of promoting the glory of God and the good of his people, Ps 76:10.

{o} "ye shall weep and lament" Lu 24:17,21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 16 - Verse 21

Verse 21. No Barnes text on this verse.

{p} "A woman when she has travail"
Isa 26:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 16 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *I will see you again*. After my resurrection.

Your joy no man taketh from you. You shall be so firmly persuaded that I have risen and that I am the Messiah, that neither the threats nor persecutions of men shall ever be able to shake your faith and produce doubt or unbelief, and thus take away your joy. This prediction was remarkably fulfilled. It is evident that after his ascension not one of the apostles ever doubted for a moment that he had risen from the dead. No persecution or trial was able to shake their faith; and thus, amid all their afflictions, they had an unshaken source of joy.

{q} "you now therefore have sorrow" Joh 16:6 {r} "But I shall see you again" Lu 24:41,52; Joh 20:20

{s} "and your joy" 1Pe 1:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 16 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *In that day*. After my resurrection and ascension.

Ye shall ask me nothing. The word rendered *ask* here may have two significations, one to ask by way of inquiry, the other to ask for assistance. Perhaps there is reference here to both these senses. While he was with them they had been accustomed to depend on him for the supply of their wants, and in a great degree to propose their trials to him, expecting his aid. See Mt 8:25 Joh 11:3. They were also dependent on his personal instructions to explain to them the mysteries of his religion, and to remove their perplexities on the subject of his doctrines. They had not sought to God through him *as the Mediator*, but they had directly applied to the Saviour himself. He now tells them that henceforward their requests were to be made to God in his name, and that he, by the influences of his Spirit, would make known to them what Jesus would himself do if bodily present. The emphasis in this verse is to be placed on the word "*me*." Their requests were not to be made to him, but to the Father.

Whatsoever ye shall ask, &c. See Joh 14:13.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 16 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Hitherto*. During his ministry, and while he was with them.

Have ye asked, &c. From the evangelists, as well as from this declaration, it seems that they had presented their requests for instruction and aid to Jesus himself. If they had prayed to God, it is probable that they had not done it in his name. This great truth—that we must approach God in the name of the Mediator—was reserved for the last that the Saviour was to communicate to them.

It was to be presented at the close of his ministry. Then they were prepared in some degree to understand it; and then, amid trials, and wants, and a sense of their weakness and unworthiness, they would see its preciousness, and rejoice in the privilege of being thus permitted to draw near to God. Though he would be bodily absent, yet their blessings would still be given through the same unchanging Friend.

Ask, &c. Now they had the assurance that they might approach God in his name; and, amid all their trials, they, as well as all Christians since, might draw near to God, knowing that he would hear and answer their prayers.

That your joy, See Joh 15:11.

{t} "ask, and you shall receive" Mt 7:7,8; Jas 4:2,3

{u} "that your joy may be full" Joh 15:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 16 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *In proverbs*. In a manner that appears obscure, enigmatical, and difficult to be understood. It is worthy of remark, that though his declarations in these chapters about his death and resurrection appear to us to be plain, yet to the apostles, filled with Jewish prejudices, and unwilling to believe that he was about to die, they would appear exceedingly obscure and perplexed. The plainest declarations to them on the subject would appear to be involved in mystery.

The time cometh. This refers, doubtless, to the time *after* his ascension to heaven, when he would send the Holy Spirit to teach them the great truths of religion. It does not appear that he himself, after his resurrection, gave them any more clear or full instruction than he had done before.

I shall show you plainly. As Jesus said that he would send the Holy Spirit (Joh 16:7) and as he came to carry forward the work of Christ, so it may be said that the teachings of the Holy Spirit were the teachings of Christ himself.

Of the Father. *Concerning* the will and plan of the Father; particularly his plan in the establishment and spread of the Christian religion, and in organizing the church. See Ac 10:26.

{2} "proverbs" or, parables

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 16 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *I say not unto you that I will pray*, &c. In Joh 14:16, Jesus says that he would pray the Father, and that he would send the Comforter. In chapter 17, he offered a memorable prayer for them. In Heb 7:25, it is said that Jesus ever liveth to make intercession for us; and it is constantly represented in the New Testament that it is by his intercession in heaven now that we obtain the blessings of pardon, peace, strength, and salvation. Comp. Heb 9:24. This declaration of Jesus, then, does not mean that he *would not* intercede for them, but that there was no need then of his mentioning it to them again. They knew that; and, in *addition* to that, he told them that God was ready and willing to confer on them all needful blessings.

{v} "At that day" Joh 16:23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 16 - Verse 27

Verse 27. See Joh 14:21,23
{w} "For the Father himself loveth" Joh 14:21,23 {x} "I came out from God" Joh 16:30 17:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 16 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *I came forth from the Father*. I came sent by the Father.
And am come into the world. See Joh 3:19 6:14,62 9:39.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 16 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Now speakest thou plainly*. What he had said that perplexed them was that which is contained in Joh 16:16. Comp. Joh 16:17-19: "A little while and ye shall not see me," &c. This he had now explained by saying (Joh 16:28), "Again, *I leave the world*, and go to the Father." In this there was no ambiguity, and they expressed themselves satisfied with this explanation.
{3} "proverb" or, parable

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 16 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *Now are we sure that thou knowest*, &c. Their difficulty had been to understand what was the meaning of his declaration in Joh 16:16. About this they conversed among themselves, Joh 16:17-19. It is evident that they had not mentioned their difficulty to him, and that he had not even heard their conversation among themselves, Joh 16:19. When, therefore, by his answers to them (Joh 16:20-28), he showed that he clearly understood their doubts; and when he gave them an answer so satisfactory without their having *inquired* of him, it satisfied them that he knew the heart, and that he assuredly came from God. They were convinced that there was *no need that any man should ask him*, or propose his difficulties to him, since he knew them all and could answer them.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 16 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *Do ye now believe*? Do you truly and really believe? This question was evidently asked to put them on a full examination of their hearts. Though they supposed that they had unshaken faith—faith that would endure every trial, yet he told them that they were about to go through scenes that would test them, and where they would need all their confidence in God. When we feel strong in the faith we should examine ourselves. It may be that we are deceived; and it may be that God may even then be preparing trials for us that will shake our faith to its foundation. The Syriac

and Arabic read this in the indicative as an affirmation—"Ye do now believe." The sense is not affected by this reading.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 16 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *The hour cometh*. To wit, on the next day, when he was crucified.

Ye shall be scattered. See Mt 26:31.

Every man to his own. That is, as in the margin, to his own home. You shall see me die, and suppose that my work is defeated, and return to your own dwellings. It is probable that the two disciples going to Emmaus were on their way to their dwellings, Luke, chapter 24. After his death all the disciples retired into Galilee, and were engaged in their common employment of fishing, Joh 21:1-14; Mt 28:7.

Leave me alone. Leave me to die without human sympathy or compassion. **See Barnes** "Mt 26:31, **See Barnes "Mt 26:56"**.

Because the Father is with me. His Father was his friend. He had all along trusted in God. In the prospect of his sufferings he could still look to him for support. And though in his dying moments he suffered so much as to use the language, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" yet it was language addressed to him still as *his* God—"*My* God, *my* God." Even then he had confidence in God—confidence so strong and unwavering that he could say, "Into *thy* hands I commend my spirit," Lu 23:46. In all these sufferings he had the assurance that God was his friend, that he was doing his will, that he was promoting his glory, and that he looked on him with approbation. It matters little who else forsakes us if God be with us in the hour of pain and of death; and though poor, forsaken, or despised, yet, if we have the consciousness of his presence and his favour, then we may fear no evil. His rod and his staff, they will comfort us. Without his favour then, death will be full of horrors, though we be surrounded by weeping relatives, and by all the honour, and splendour, and wealth which the world can bestow. The Christian can die saying, I am not alone, because the Father is with me. The sinner dies without a friend that can alleviate his sufferings —without one source of real joy.

{a} "in me ye might have peace" Joh 14:27 Ro 5:1; Eph 2:14

{b} "In the world" Joh 15:19-21 2Ti 3:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 16 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *In me*. In my presence, and in the aid which I shall render you by the Holy Spirit.

In the world. Among the men to whom you are going. You must expect to be persecuted, afflicted, tormented.

I have overcome the world. He overcame the prince of this world by his death, Joh 12:31. He vanquished the great foe of man, and triumphed over all that would work our ruin. He brought down aid and strength from above by his death; and by procuring for us the friendship of God and the influence of the Spirit; by his own instructions and example; by revealing to us the glories of

heaven, and opening our eyes to see the excellence of heavenly things, he has furnished us with the means of overcoming all our enemies, and of triumphing in all our temptations. **See Barnes "Joh 14:19"**; **See Barnes** "Ro 8:34, also Ro 8:35-37, **See Barnes** "1Jo 4:4, **See Barnes** "1Jo 5:4, **See Barnes "Re 12:11"**.

Luther said of this verse "that it was worthy to be carried from Rome to Jerusalem upon one's knees." The world is a vanquished enemy; Satan is a humbled foe; and all that believers have to do is to put their trust in the Captain of their salvation, putting on the whole armour of God, assured that the victory is theirs, and that the church shall yet shine forth fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners, So 6:10.

{a} "in me you might have peace" Joh 14:27 Ro 5:1; Eph 2:14

{b} "In the world" Joh 15:19-21 2Ti 3:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 17 - Verse 1

Verse 1. *These words*. The words addressed to them in the preceding chapters. They were proceeding to the garden of Gethsemane. It adds much to the interest of this prayer that it was offered in the stillness of the night, in the open air, and in the peculiarly tender circumstances in which Jesus and his apostles were. It is the *longest* prayer recorded in the New Testament. It was offered on the most tender and solemn occasion that has ever occurred in our world, and it is perhaps the most sublime composition to be found anywhere. Jesus was about to die. Having expressed his love to his disciples, and made known to them his last desires, he now commends them to the protection and blessing of the God of grace. This prayer is moreover a specimen of the manner of his *intercession*, and evinces the interest which he felt in behalf of all who should become his followers in all ages of the world.

Lifted up his eyes. This was the common attitude of prayer. Comp. Lu 18:13.

The hour is come. That is, the appointed time for his sufferings and death. Comp. **See Barnes "Lu 12:27"**.

Glorify thy Son. Honour thy Son. See Joh 11:4. Give to the world demonstration that I am thy Son. So sustain me, and so manifest thy power in my death, resurrection, and ascension, as to afford indubitable evidence that I am the Son of God.

That thy Son also may glorify thee. This refers clearly to the manifestation of the honour of God which would be made by the spread of the gospel among men, Joh 17:2. Jesus prayed that God would so honour him in his death that striking proof might be furnished that he was the Messiah, and men thus be brought to honour God. By his death the law, the truth, and the mercy of God were honoured. By the spread of his gospel and the conversion of sinners; by all that Christ will do, now that he is glorified, to spread his gospel, God will be honoured. The conversion of a single sinner honours God; a revival of religion is an eminent means of promoting his honour; and the spread of the gospel among all nations shall yet do more than all other things to promote the honour of God

among men. Whatever honours the Saviour honours God. Just as he is exalted in view of the mind, so will God be honoured and obeyed.

{a} "the hour is come" Joh 12:28 13:32

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 17 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *As thou hast given him power*. It was on the ground of this power given to Christ that the apostles were commanded to go and teach all nations. **See Barnes "Mt 28:18,19".**

All flesh. All men, Mt 24:22 Lu 3:6.

That he should give eternal life. **See Barnes "Joh 5:24".**

To as many as thou hast given him. **See Barnes "Joh 10:16 6:37".**

To all on whom the Father has purposed to bestow the blessings of redemption through his Son. God has a plan in all he does, extending to men as well as to other objects. One part of his plan was that the atonement of Christ should not be in vain. Hence he promised him that he should see of the travail of his soul and should be satisfied (Isa 53:11); and hence the Saviour had the assurance that the Father had given him a portion of the human family, and would apply this great work to them. It is to be observed here that the Saviour in this prayer makes an important distinction between "all flesh" and those who were "given him." He has power over all. He can control, direct, restrain them. Wicked men are so far under his universal dominion, and so far restrained by his power, that they will not be *able* to prevent his bestowing redemption on those were given him—that is, all who will believe on him. Long ago, if they had been able, they would have banished religion from the world; but they are under the power of Christ, and it is his purpose that there shall be "a seed to serve him," and that "the gates of hell shall not prevail" against his church. Men who oppose the gospel should therefore feel that they *cannot* prevent the salvation of Christians, and should be alarmed lest they be found "fighting against God."

{b} "that he should give" Joh 5:27 16:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 17 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *This is life eternal*. This is the source of eternal life; or it is in this manner that it is to be obtained. The knowledge of God and of his Son Jesus Christ is itself a source of unspeakable and eternal joy. Comp. Joh 11:25 6:63, 12:50.

Might know thee. The word *know* here, as in other places, expresses more than a mere speculative acquaintance with the character and perfections of God. *It includes all the impressions on the mind and life which a just view of God and of the Saviour is fitted to produce*. It includes, of course, love, reverence, obedience, honour, gratitude, supreme affection. To *know* God as he is is to know and regard him as a lawgiver, a sovereign, a parent, a friend. It is to yield the whole soul to him, and strive to obey his law.

The only true God. The only God, in opposition to all false gods. What is said here is in opposition to idols, not to Jesus himself, who, in 1Jo 5:20, is called "the true God and eternal life."

And Jesus Christ. To know Jesus Christ is to have a practical impression of him *as he is* that is, to suffer his character and work to make their due impression on the heart and life. Simply to have *heard* that there is a Saviour is not to *know it*. To have been taught in childhood and trained up in the belief of it is not to know it. To know him is to have a just, practical view of him in all his perfections—as God and man; as a mediator; as a prophet, a priest, and a king. It is to feel our need of such a Saviour, to see that we are sinners, and to yield the whole soul to him, *knowing* that he is a Saviour fitted to our wants, and that in his hands our souls are safe. Comp. Eph 3:19 Tit 1:16; Php 3:10 1Jo 5:20.

In this verse is contained the sum and essence of the Christian religion, as it is distinguished from all the schemes of idolatry and philosophy, and all the false plans on which men have sought to obtain eternal life. The Gentiles worshipped many gods; the Christian worships one —the living and the true God; the Jew, the Deist, the Mohammedan, the Socinian, profess to acknowledge one God, without any atoning sacrifice and Mediator; the true Christian approaches him through the great Mediator, equal with the Father, who for us became incarnate, and died that he might reconcile us to God.

{c} "this is life eternal" 1Jo 5:11 {d} "know thee" Jer 9:23,24 {e} "the only true God" 1Th 1:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 17 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Have glorified thee*. In my instructions and life. See his discourses everywhere, the whole tendency of which is to put honour on God.

I have finished the work. Comp. Joh 19:30. When he says "I *have* finished," he probably means to include also his death. All the *preparations* for that death were made. He had preached to the Jews; he had given them full proof that he was the Messiah; he had collected his disciples; he had taught them the nature of his religion; he had given them his parting counsel, and there was nothing remaining to be done but to return to God. We see here that Jesus was careful that his great and important work should be done *before* his dying hour. He did not postpone it to be performed just as he was leaving the world. So completely had he done his work, that even *before* his death he could say, "*I have finished* the work." How happy would it be if men would imitate his example, and not leave their great work of life to be done on a dying bed! Christians should have their work accomplished, and when that hour approaches, have nothing to do but to die, and return to their Father in heaven.

{g} "I have glorified" Joh 14:13 {h} "I have finished" Joh 19:30 2Ti 4:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 17 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *With thine own self*. In heaven, granting me a participation of the same honour which the Father has. He had just said that he *had* glorified God *on the earth*; he now prays that God would glorify him *in heaven*.

With the glory. With the honour. This word also includes the notion of happiness, or everything which could render the condition blessed.

Before the world was. There could not be a more distinct and clear declaration of the pre-existence of Christ than this. It means before the creation of the world; before there was any world. Of course, the speaker here must have existed then, and this is equivalent to saying that he existed from eternity. See Joh 1:1,2, 6:62 3:13

Joh 16:28. The glory which he had then was that which was proper to the Son of God, represented by the expression *being in the bosom of the Father* (Joh 1:18), denoting intimacy, friendship, united felicity. The Son of God, by becoming incarnate, is represented as *humbling himself* (Greek, he "emptied himself"), Php 2:8. He laid aside for a time the external aspect of honour, and consented to become despised, and to assume the form of a servant. He now prays that God would raise him up to the dignity and honour which he had before his incarnation. This is the state to which he is now exalted, with the *additional* honour of having made atonement for sin, and having opened the way to save a race of rebels from eternal death. The lowest condition on earth is frequently connected with the highest honours of heaven. Man looks on the outward appearance. God looks to him that is humble and of a contrite spirit.

{i} "with the glory" Joh 1:1,2; Php 2:6 He 1:3,10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 17 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Have manifested thy name*. The word *name* here includes the attributes or character of God. Jesus had made known his character, his law, his will, his plan of mercy—or, in other words, he had revealed GOD to them. The word *name* is often used to designate the person, Joh 15:21 Mt 10:22; Ro 2:24 1Ti 6:1.

Which thou gavest me. God gave them to him in his purpose. He gave them by his providence. He so ordered affairs that they heard him preach and saw his miracles; and he gave them by disposing them to follow him when he called them.

Thine they were. All men are God's by creation and by preservation, and he has a right to do with them as seemeth good in his sight. These men he chose to designate to be the apostles of the Saviour; and he committed them to him to be taught, and then commissioned them to carry his gospel, though amid persecutions, to the ends of the world. God has a right to the services of all; and he has a right to appoint us to any labour, however humble, or hazardous, or wearisome, where we may promote his glory and honour his name.

{k} "manifested" Ps 22:22 Joh 17:26 {l} "the men which thou gavest" Ro 8:30 Joh 17:2,9,11

{m} "they have kept thy word" Heb 3:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 17 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *They have known*. They have been *taught* that and have believed it.

Hast given me. This refers, doubtless, to the doctrine of Christ, Joh 17:8. They are assured that all my instructions are of God.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 17 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *The words*. The doctrines. Christ often represented himself as *instructed* and sent to teach certain great truths to men. Those he taught, and no others. **See Barnes "Joh 5:30"**.

{n} "the words thou givest me" Joh 6:68 14:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 17 - Verse 9

Verses 9,10. *I pray for them*. In view of their dangers and trials, he sought the protection and blessing of God on them. His prayer was always answered.

Not for the world. The term *world* here, as elsewhere, refers to wicked, rebellious, vicious men. The meaning of this expression here seems to be this: Jesus is praying for his disciples. As a *reason* why God should bless them, he says that they were not of the world; that they had been taken out of the world; that they belonged unto God. The petition was not offered for wicked, perverse, rebellious men, but for those who were the friends of God and were disposed to receive his favours. This passage, then, settles nothing about the question whether Christ prayed for sinners. He *then* prayed for his disciples, who were not those who hated him and disregarded his favours. He *afterward* extended the prayer for all who should become Christians, Joh 17:20. When on the cross he prayed for his crucifiers and murderers, Lu 23:34.

For they are thine. This is urged as a reason why God should protect and guide them. His honour was concerned in keeping them; and we may always *fill our mouths with* such *arguments* when we come before God, and plead that his honour will be advanced by keeping *us* from evil, and granting us all needful grace.

I am glorified in them. I am honoured by their preaching and lives. The sense of this passage is, "Those who are my disciples are thine. That which promotes my honour will also promote thine. I pray, therefore, that they may have needful grace to honour my gospel, and to proclaim it among men."

{o} "I pray not for the world" 1Jo 5:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 17 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No Barnes text on this verse.

{p} "all mine are thine"

Joh 16:15

{q} "I am glorified in them" Ga 1:24 1Pe 2:9

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 17 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *I am no more in the world*. I have finished my work among men, and am about to leave the world. See Joh 17:4.

These are in the world. They will be among wicked men and malignant foes. They will be subject to trials and persecutions. They will *need* the same protection which I could give them if I were with them.

Keep. Preserve, defend, sustain them in trials, and save them from apostasy.

Through thine own name. Our translators seem to have understood this expression as meaning "keep by thy power," but this probably is not its meaning. It is literally "keep *in* thy name." And if the term *name* be taken to denote God himself and his perfections (**See Barnes "Joh 17:6"**) , it means "keep in the knowledge of thyself. Preserve them in obedience to thee and to thy cause. Suffer them not to fall away from thee and to become apostates."

That they may be one. That they may be united.

As we are. This refers not to a union of *nature*, but of feeling, plan, purpose. Any other union between Christians is impossible; but a union *of affection* is what the Saviour sought, and this he desired might be so strong as to be an illustration of the unchanging love between the Father and the Son. See Joh 17:21-23.

{r} "keep through" 1Pe 1:5 Jude 1:24 {s} "thine own name" Pr 18:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 17 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *While I was with them in the world*. While I was engaged with them among other men—surrounded by the people and the temptations of the world. Jesus had now finished his work among the men of the world, and was performing his last offices with his disciples.

I kept them. By my example, instructions, and miracles. I preserved them from apostasy.

In thy name. In the knowledge and worship of thee. Joh 17:6-11.

Those that thou gavest me, &c. The word "gavest" is evidently used by the Saviour to denote not only to give to him to be his real followers, but also as apostles, It is here used, probably, in the sense of giving as apostles. God had so ordered it by his providence that they had been given to him to be his apostles and followers; but the terms "thou gavest me" do not of necessity prove that they were true believers. Of Judas Jesus knew that he was a deceiver and a devil, Joh 6:70: "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" Judas is there represented as having been *chosen* by the Saviour to the apostleship, and this is equivalent to saying that he was given to him for this work; yet at the same time he knew his character, and understood that he had never been renewed. *None of them*. None of those chosen to the apostolic office.

But the son of perdition. **See Barnes "Mt 1:1"**.

The term *son* was given by the Hebrews to those who possessed the character described by the word or name following. Thus, sons of Belial-those who possessed his character; children of wisdom -those who were wise, Mt 11:19. Thus Judas is called a son of perdition because he had the character of a *destroyer*. He was a traitor and a murderer. And this shows that he who knew the heart regarded his character as that of a wicked man—one whose appropriate name was that of a son of perdition.

That the scripture, &c. **See Barnes "Joh 13:18".**
Comp. Ps 41:9.
{t} "that the scripture might be fulfilled" Ps 109:8 Ac 1:20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 17 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *My joy fulfilled*, &c. **See Barnes "Joh 15:11".**
The expression "my joy" here probably refers to the joy of the apostles respecting the Saviour—the joy which would result from his resurrection, ascension, and intercession in heaven.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 17 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *I have given them* &c. See Joh 17:18.
The world hath hated them. Joh 15:18-21.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 17 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *That thou shouldest take them out of the world*. Though they were going into trials and persecutions, yet Jesus did not pray that they might be removed soon from them. It was better that they should endure them, and thus spread abroad the knowledge of his name. It would be easy for God to remove his people at once to heaven, but it is better for them to remain, and show the power of religion in supporting the soul in the midst of trial, and to spread his gospel among men.
Shouldest keep them, from the evil. This may mean either from the evil one—that is, the devil, or from evil in general—that is, from apostasy, from sinking in temptation. Preserve them from that evil, or give them such grace that they may endure all trials and be sustained amid them. **See Barnes "Mt 16:13".**
It matters little how long we are in this world if we are kept in this manner.
{v} "that thou shouldest" Ga 1:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 17 - Verse 16

Verse 16. See Joh 15:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 17 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Sanctify them*. This word means to render pure, or to cleanse from sins, 1Th 5:20 1Co 6:11. Sanctification in the heart of a Christian is progressive. It consists in his becoming more like God and less attached to the world; in his getting the ascendancy over evil thoughts, and passions, and impure desires; and in his becoming more and more weaned from earthly objects, and attached to those things which are unseen and eternal. The word also means to *consecrate*, to set apart to a holy office or purpose. See Joh 17:19; also **See Barnes "Joh 10:36"**.

When Jesus prayed here that God would sanctify them, he probably included both these ideas, that they might be made personally more holy, and might be truly consecrated to God as the ministers of his religion. Ministers of the gospel will be *really* devoted to the service of God just in proportion as they are personally pure.

Through thy truth. Truth is a representation of things as they are. The Saviour prayed that through those just views of God and of themselves they might be made holy. To see things as they are is to see God to be infinitely lovely and pure; his commands to be reasonable and just; heaven to be holy and desirable; his service to be easy, and religion pleasant, and sin odious; to see that life is short, that death is near; that the pride, pomp, pleasures, wealth, and honours of this world are of little value, and that it is of infinite importance to be prepared to enter on the eternal state of being. He that sees all this, or *that looks on things as they are*, will desire to be holy. He will make it his great object to live near to God and to glorify his name. In the sanctification of the soul God makes use of *all truth*, or of everything fitted to make a representation of things as they are to the mind. His Word states that and no more; his Spirit and his providence do it. The earth and the heavens, the seasons, the sunshine and the rain, are all fitted to teach us his goodness and power, and lead us to him. His daily mercies tend to the same end, and afflictions have the same design. Our own sickness teaches us that we are soon to die. The death of a friend teaches us the instability of all earthly comforts, and the necessity of seeking better joys. All these things are fitted to make *just representations* to the mind, and thus to sanctify the soul. As the Christian is constantly amid these objects, so he should be constantly growing in grace, and daily and hourly gaining new and deeper impressions of the great truths of religion.

Thy word is truth. All that thou hast spoken—that is, all that is contained in the Bible. All the commands and promises of God; his representations of his own character and that of man; his account of the mission and death of his Son; of the grave, the resurrection, judgment, and eternity, all tend to *represent things as they are*, and are thus fitted to sanctify the soul. We have here also the testimony of the Saviour that the revelation which God has given is true. *All* that God has spoken is true, and the Christian should rejoice and the sinner should tremble. See Ps 19:7-14.

{w} "Sanctify" Ac 15:9 Eph 5:26; 2Th 2:13

{x} "thy word is truth" Ps 119:151

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 17 - Verse 18

Verse 18. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 17 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *I sanctify myself*. I consecrate myself exclusively to the service of God. The word *sanctify* does not refer here to personal sanctification, for he had no sin, but to setting himself apart entirely to the work of redemption.

That they also, &c.

1st. That they might have an *example* of the proper manner of labouring in the ministry, and might learn of me how to discharge its duties. Ministers will understand their work best when they most faithfully study the example of their great model, the Son of God.

2nd. That they might be made pure by the *effect* of my sanctifying myself—that is, that they might be made pure by the shedding *of that blood which cleanses from all sin*. By this only can men be made holy; and it was because the Saviour so sanctified himself, or set himself to this work so unreservedly as to shed his own blood, that any soul can be made pure and fit for the kingdom of God.

{y} "And for their sakes" 1Co 1:2,30 {1} "sanctified", or "truly sanctified"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 17 - Verse 20

Verses 20,21. *Neither pray I for these alone*, &c. Not for the apostles only, but for all who shall be converted under the preaching of the gospel. They will all need similar grace and be exposed to similar trials. It is a matter of unspeakable joy that *each* Christian, however humble or unknown to men—however poor, unlearned, or despised, can reflect that he was remembered in prayer by *him whom God heareth always*. We value the prayers of pious friends. How much more should we value this petition of the Son of God! To that single prayer we who are Christians owe infinitely more real benefits than the world can ever bestow; and in the midst of any trials we may remember that the Son of God *prayed for us*, and that the prayer was assuredly heard, and will be answered in reference to all who truly believe.

All may be one. May be united as brethren. Christians are all redeemed by the same blood, and are going to the same heaven. They have the same wants, the same enemies, the same joys. Though they are divided into different denominations, yet they will meet at last in the same abodes of glory. Hence they *should* feel that they belong to the same family, and are children of the same God and Father. There are no ties so tender as those which bind us in the gospel. There is no friendship so pure and enduring as that which results from having the same attachment to the Lord Jesus. Hence Christians, in the New Testament, are represented as being indissolubly united—parts of the same body, and members of the same family, Ac 4:32-35. 1Co 12:4-31 Eph 2:20-22; Ro 12:5.

On the ground of this union they are exhorted to love one another, to bear one another's burdens, and to study the things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another, Eph 4:3 Ro 12:5-16.

As thou, Father, art in me. See Joh 14:10 This does not affirm that the union between Christians should be *in all respects* like that between the Father and the Son, but only in the points in which they are capable of being compared. It is not the union of *nature* which is referred to, but the union

of plan, of counsel, of purpose—seeking the same objects, and manifesting attachment to the same things, and a desire to promote the same ends.

That they also may be one in us. To be *in* God and *in* Christ is to be *united to* God and Christ. The expression is common in the New Testament. The phrase here used *denotes a union among all Christians founded on and resulting from a union to the same God and Saviour*.

That the world may believe, &c. That the world, so full of animosities and fightings, may see the power of Christian principle in overcoming the sources of contention and producing love, and may thus see that a religion that could produce this *must* be from heaven. **See Barnes "Joh 13:34".**

This was done. Such was the attachment of the early Christians to each other, that a heathen was constrained to say, "See how these Christians love one another!"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 17 - Verse 21

Verse 21. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

{z} "That they all may be one" Ro 12:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 17 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *And the glory*, &c. The *honour* which thou hast conferred on *me* by admitting me to *union* with thee, the same honour I have conferred on them by admitting them to *like union* with me.

May be one, even as we are one. Not in *nature*, or in the mode of existence-for this was not the subject of discourse, and would be impossible—but in feeling, in principle, in purpose. Evincing, as the Father and the Son had always done, the same great aim and plan; not pursuing different interests, or counteracting each other's purposes, or forming parties, but seeking the same ends by the same means. This is the union between the Father and the Son. Always, in the creation, preservation, and redemption of the world, the Father and the Son have sought the same object, and this is to be the model on which Christians should act.

{a} "And the glory which thou gavest" 2Co 3:15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 17 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *May be made perfect in one*. That their union may be complete. That there may be no jars, discords, or contentions. A machine is perfect or complete when it has all its parts and is in good order—when there is no portion of it wanting. So the union of Christians, for which the Saviour prayed, would be complete or perfect if there were no controversies, no envyings, no contentions, and no heart-burnings and jealousies. It is worthy of remark here how entirely *the union of his people* occupied the mind of Jesus as he drew near to death. He saw the danger of strifes and contentions in the church. He knew the imperfections of even the best of men. He saw

how prone they would be to passion and ambition; how ready to mistake love of sect or party for zeal for pure religion; how selfish and worldly men in the church might divide his followers, and produce unholy feeling and contention; and he saw, also, how much this would do to dishonour religion. Hence he took occasion, when he was about to die, to impress the importance of union on his disciples. By solemn admonition, and by most tender and affecting appeals to God in supplication, he showed his sense of the value of this union. He used the most sublime and impressive illustration; he adverted to the eternal union between the Father and himself; he reminded them of his love, and of the effect that their union would have on the world, to fix it more deeply in their hearts. The effect has shown the infinite wisdom of the Saviour. The contentions and strifes of Christians have shown his knowledge in foreseeing it. The effect of all this on religion has shown that *he* understood the value of union. Christians have contended long enough. It is time that they should hear the parting admonitions of their Redeemer, and go unitedly against their common foe. The world still lies in wickedness; and the friends of Jesus, bound by the cords of eternal love, should advance together against the common enemy, and spread the triumphs of the gospel around the globe. All that is needful now, under the blessing of God, to convince the world that *God sent the Lord Jesus, is that very union among all Christians for which he prayed*; and when that union of feeling, and purpose, and action shall take place, the task of sending the gospel to all nations will be soon accomplished, and the morning of the millennial glory will dawn upon the world.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 17 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *I will*. This expression, though it commonly denotes *command*, is here only expressive of *desire*. It is used in *prayer*, and it was not the custom of the Saviour to use language of *command* when addressing God. It is often used to express *strong* and *earnest* desire, or a pressing and importunate *wish*, such as we are exceedingly anxious should not be denied, Mr 6:25 10:35; Mt 12:38 15:28.

Where I am. In heaven. The Son of God was still in the bosom of the Father, Joh 1:18. **See Barnes "Joh 7:34"**.

Probably the expression here means where *I shall be*.

My glory. My honour and dignity when exalted to the right hand of God. The word "behold" implies more than simply seeing; it means also to participate, to enjoy. **See Barnes** "Joh 3:3, **See Barnes "Mt 5:8"**.

Thou lovedst me, &c. This is another of the numerous passages which prove that the Lord Jesus existed before the creation of the world. It is not possible to explain it on any other supposition.

{b} "be with me where I am" 1Th 4:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 17 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Hath not known thee*. **See Barnes "Joh 17:3"**.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 17 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Thy name*. **See Barnes "Joh 17:6".**

And will declare it. After my resurrection, and by the influence of the Holy Spirit, Lu 24:45 Ac 1:3.

I in them. By my doctrines and the influences of my Spirit. That my religion may show its power, and produce its proper fruits in their minds, Ga 4:19. The discourse in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth chapters is the most tender and sublime that was ever pronounced in our world. No composition can be found anywhere so fitted to sustain the soul in trial or to support it in death. This sublime and beautiful discourse is appropriately closed by a solemn and most affecting prayer—a prayer at once expressive of the profoundest reverence for God and the tenderest love for men—simple, grave, tender, sublime, and full of consolation. It is the model for our prayers, and with like reverence, faith, and love we should come before God. This prayer for the church will yet be fully answered; and he who loves the church and the world cannot but cast his eyes onward to that time when all believers shall be one; when contentions, bigotry, strife, and anger shall cease; and when, in perpetual union and love, Christians shall show forth the power and purity of that holy gospel with which the Saviour came to bless mankind. Soon may that happy day arise!

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18 - Verse 1

Verse 1. *The brook Cedron*. This was a small stream that flowed to the east of Jerusalem, through the valley of Jehoshaphat, and divided the city from the Mount of Olives. It was also called *Kidron* and *Kedron*. In summer it is almost dry. The word used here by the evangelist—*ceimarrou* denotes properly a water-stream (from *ceima shower* or *water*, and *rew*, *rodv*, to *flow*, *flowing*), and the idea is that of a stream that was swollen by rain or by the melting of the snow (Passow, Lex.). This small rivulet runs along on the east of Jerusalem till it is joined by the water of the pool of Siloam, and the water that flows down on the west side of the city through the valley of Jehoshaphat, and then goes off in a south-east direction to the Dead Sea. (See the Map of the Environs of Jerusalem in vol. i.) Over this brook David passed when he fled from Absalom, 2Sa 15:23. It is often mentioned in the Old Testament, 1Ki 15:13; 2Ch 15:16; 2Ch 30:14; 2Ki 23:6,12.

Where was a garden. On the west side of the Mount of Olives. This was called *Gethsemane*. **See Barnes "Mt 26:36".**

It is probable that this was the property of some wealthy man in Jerusalem—perhaps some friend of the Saviour. It was customary for the rich in great cities to have country-seats in the vicinity. This, it seems, was so accessible that Jesus was accustomed to visit it, and yet so retired as to be a suitable place for devotion.

{a} "Cedron" 2Sa 15:23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Jesus ofttimes resorted thither*. For what purpose he went there is not declared, but it is probable that it was for retirement and prayer. He had no home in the city, and he sought this place, away from the bustle and confusion of the capital, for private communion with God. Every Christian should have some place—be it a grove, a room, or a garden—where he may be alone and offer his devotions to God. We are not told much of the private habits of Jesus, but we are permitted to know so much of him as to be assured that he was accustomed to seek for a place of retirement, and during the great feasts of the Jews the Mount of Olives was the place which he chose, Lu 21:37 Mt 21:17; Joh 8:1.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *A band*. **See Barnes "Mt 26:47"**

See Barnes "Mt 27:27"; John passes over the agony of Jesus in the garden, probably because it was so fully described by the other evangelists.

Lanterns, &c. This was the time of the full moon, but it might have been cloudy, and their taking lights with them shows their determination to find him.

{b} "Judas, then" Mt 26:47 Mr 14:43; Lu 22:47

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18 - Verse 4

Verse 4. No Barnes text on this verse.

{c} "knowing all things that should"

Joh 10:17,18; Ac 2:28

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18 - Verse 5

Verse 5. No Barnes text on this verse.

{d} "Jesus of Nazareth"

Mt 2:23 Joh 19:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *They went backward*, &c. The *cause* of their retiring in this manner is not mentioned. Various things might have produced it. The frank, open, and fearless *manner* in which Jesus addressed them may have convinced them of his innocence, and deterred them from prosecuting

their wicked attempt. His disclosure of himself was sudden and unexpected; and while they perhaps anticipated that he would make an effort to escape, they were amazed at his open and bold profession. Their consciences reproved them for their crimes, and probably the firm, decided, and yet mild manner in which Jesus addressed them, the expression of his unequalled power in knowing how to find the way to the consciences of men, made them feel that they were in the presence of more than mortal man. There is no proof that there was here any miraculous power, any mere physical force, and to suppose that there was greatly detracts from the moral sublimity of the scene.

{e} "they went backward"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18 - Verse 7

Verse 7. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Let these go their way*. These apostles. This shows his care and love even in the hour of danger. He expected to die. *They were* to carry the news of his death to the ends of the earth. Hence he, the faithful Captain of salvation, went foremost into trials; he, the Good Shepherd, secured the safety of the flock, and went before them into danger. By the *question* which he asked those who came out against him, he had secured the safety of his apostles. He was answered that they sought for *him*. He demanded that, agreeably to their declaration, they should take him only, and leave his followers at liberty. The wisdom, caution, and prudence of Jesus forsook him in no peril, however sudden, and in no circumstances, however difficult or trying.

{f} "I am he" Isa 53:6 Eph 5:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *The saying*. Joh 17:12. As he had kept them for more than three years, so he still sought their welfare, even when his death was near.

{g} "Of them which thou gavest" Joh 17:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18 - Verse 10

Verses 10,11. **See Barnes** "Mt 26:51, **See Barnes "Mt 26:52"**.

The servant's name was Malchus. His name is mentioned by neither of the other evangelists, nor is it said by the other evangelists who was the disciple that gave the blow. It is probable that both Peter and the servant were alive when the other gospels were written.

{h} "Then Simon Peter" Mt 26:51 Mr 14:47; Lu 22:49,50

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18 - Verse 11

Verse 11. No Barnes text on this verse.
{i} "the cup which my Father"
Mt 20:22 26:39,42

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18 - Verse 12

Verse 12. See Mt 26:50.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *To Annas first*. Probably his house was nearest to them, and he had great authority and influence in the Jewish nation. He had been himself a long time high-priest; he had had five sons who had successively enjoyed the office of high-priest, and that office was now filled by his son-in-law. It was of importance, therefore, to obtain his sanction and counsel in their work of evil.

That same year. Joh 11:14.

{k} "Annas" Lu 3:2 {1} "that same year" "And Annas send Christ bound unto Caiphas, the high priest," Joh 18:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Which gave counsel*, &c. Joh 11:49,50. This is referred to her, probably, to show how little prospect there was that Jesus would have *justice* done him in the hands of a man who had already pronounced on the case.

{l} "gave counsel to the Jews. Joh 11:49,50

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18 - Verse 15

Verses 15-18. **See Barnes** "Mt 26:57, **See Barnes "Mt 26:58"**.

Another disciple. Not improbably John. Some critics, however, have supposed that this disciple was one who dwelt at Jerusalem, and who, not being a Galilean, could enter the palace without suspicion. John, however, mentions the circumstance of his being *known* to them, to show why it

was that he was not questioned as Peter was. It is not probable that any danger resulted from its being known that he was a follower of Jesus, or that any harm was meditated on *them* for this. The questions asked *Peter* were not asked by those in authority, and his apprehensions which led to his denial were groundless.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18 - Verse 16

Verse 16. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18 - Verse 17

Verse 17. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18 - Verse 18

Verse 18. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *The high-priest then asked Jesus of his disciples*. To ascertain their number and power. The charge on which they wished to arraign him was that of sedition, or of rebellion against Caesar. To make that plausible, it was necessary to show that he had made *so many* disciples as to form a strong and dangerous faction; but, as they had no direct proof of that, the high-priest insidiously and improperly attempted to draw the Saviour into a confession. Of this he was aware, and referred him to the proper source of evidence—his open, undisguised conduct before the world.

His doctrine. His teaching. The sentiments that he inculcated. The object was doubtless to convict him of teaching sentiments that tended to subvert the Mosaic institutions, or that were treasonable against the Roman government. Either would have answered the design of the Jews, and they doubtless expected that he—an unarmed and despised Galilean, now completely in their power—would easily be drawn into confessions which art and malice could use to procure his condemnation.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Openly to the world*. If his doctrine had tended to excite sedition and tumult, if he had aimed to overthrow the government, he would have trained his friends in secret; he would have retired from public view, and would have laid his plans in private. This is the case with all who attempt to subvert existing establishments. Instead of that, he had proclaimed his views to all. He had done it in every place of public concourse—in the synagogue and in the temple. He here speaks the language of one conscious of innocence and determined to insist on his rights.

Always resort. Constantly assemble. They were required to assemble there three times in a year, and great multitudes were there constantly.

In secret, &c. He had taught no private or concealed doctrine. He had taught nothing to his disciples which he had not himself taught in public and commanded them to do, Mt 10:27 Lu 12:3.

{n} "I spoke openly to the world" Lu 4:15 Joh 7:14,26,28 8:2

{o} "in secret have I said nothing" Ac 26:26

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Why askest thou me*? Ask them, &c. Jesus here insisted on his rights, and reproves the high-priest for his unjust and illegal manner of extorting a confession from him. If he had done wrong, or taught erroneous and seditious doctrines, it was easy to prove it, and the course which he had a right to demand was that they should establish the charge by fair and incontrovertible evidence. We may here learn,

1st. That, though Jesus was willing to be reviled and persecuted, yet he also insisted that *justice* should be done him.

2nd. He was conscious of innocence, and he had been so open in his conduct that he could appeal to the vast multitudes which had heard him as witnesses in his favour.

3rd. It is proper for us, when persecuted and reviled, meekly but firmly to insist on our rights, and to demand that justice shall be done us. Laws are made to *protect* the innocent as well as to condemn the guilty.

4th. Christians, like their Saviour, should so live that they may confidently appeal to all who have known them as witnesses of the sincerity, purity, and rectitude of their lives, 1Pe 4:13-16.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *One of the officers*. One of the *inferior* officers, or those who attended on the court.

With the palm of his hand. This may mean, wave him a blow either with the open hand or with a rod"—the Greek does not determine which. In whatever way it was done, it was a violation of all law and justice. Jesus had showed no disrespect for the office of the high-priest, and if he had, *this* was not the proper way to punish it. The Syriac reads thus: "Smote the *cheek* of Jesus." The Vulgate and Arabic: "Gave him a blow."

{2} "with the palm of his hand" or, "with a rod"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Spoken evil*. In my answer to the high-priest. If there was any disrespect to the office, and want of regard for the law which appointed him, then testify to the fact, and let punishment be inflicted according to the law; comp. Ex 22:28.

But if well, an accused person is on trial he is under the protection of the court, and has a right to *demand* that all *legal* measures shall be taken to secure his rights. On this right Jesus insisted, and thus showed that, though he had no disposition to take revenge, yet he claimed that, when arraigned, strict justice should be done. This shows that his precept that *when we are smitten on one cheek we should turn the other* (Mt 5:39), is consistent with a firm demand that justice should be done us. That precept refers, besides, rather to *private* matters than to judicial proceedings. It does not demand that, when we are unjustly arraigned or assaulted, and when the law is in our favour, we should sacrifice our rights to the malignant accuser. Such a surrender would be injustice to the law and to the community, and be giving *legal* triumph to the wicked, and destroying the very *end* of all law. In private matters this effect would not follow, and we should there bear injuries without reviling or seeking for vengeance.

{q} "but if well" 1Pe 2:19-23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18 - Verse 24

Verse 24. Comp. Joh 18:13 with Mt 26:57.

{3} "Now Annas" Joh 18:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18 - Verse 25

Verses 25,26. **See Barnes "Mt 27:1,2"**.

See Barnes "Mt 26:72, also Mt 26:73-74.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18 - Verse 26

Verse 26. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18 - Verse 27

Verse 27. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18 - Verse 28

Verse 28. See
Mt 27:1,2.

Hall of judgment. The *praetorium*—the same word that in Mt 27:27, is translated common hall. **See Barnes "Mt 27:27".**

It was the place where the Roman *praetor*, or governor, heard and decided cases brought before him. Jesus had been condemned by the Sanhedrim, and pronounced guilty of death (Mt 26:66); but they had not power to carry their sentence into execution (Joh 18:31), and they therefore sought that he might be condemned and executed by Pilate.

Lest they should be defiled. They considered the touch of a Gentile to be a defilement, and on this occasion, at least, seemed to regard it as a pollution to enter the *house* of a Gentile. They took care, therefore, to guard themselves against what they considered ceremonial pollution, while they were wholly unconcerned at the enormous crime of putting the innocent Saviour to death, and imbruing their hands in their Messiah's blood. Probably there is not anywhere to be found among men another such instance of petty regard to the mere ceremonies of the law and attempting to keep from pollution, at the same time that their hearts were filled with malice, and they were meditating the most enormous of all crimes. But it shows us how much more concerned men will be at the violation of the mere *forms* and *ceremonies* of religion than at real crime, and how they endeavour to keep their consciences at ease amid their deeds of wickedness by the observance of some of the outward ceremonies of religion—by mere sanctimoniousness.

That they might eat the passover. **See Barnes "**Mt 26:2, **See Barnes "Mt 26:17".**

This defilement, produced by contact with a Gentile, they considered as equivalent to that of the contact of a dead body (Le 22:4-6; Nu 5:2), and as disqualifying them to partake of the passover in a proper manner. The word translated *passover* means properly the paschal lamb which was slain and eaten on the observance of this feast. This rite Jesus had observed with his disciples the day before this. It has been supposed by many that he *anticipated* the usual time of observing it one day, and was crucified on the day on which the Jews observed it; but this opinion is improbable. The *very day* of keeping the ordinance was specified in the law of Moses, and it is not probable that the Saviour departed from the commandment. All the circumstances, also, lead us to suppose that he observed it at the usual time and manner, Mt 26:17,19. The only passage which has led to a contrary opinion is this in John; but here the word *passover* does not, of necessity, mean the *paschal* lamb. It probably refers to the feast which followed the sacrifice of the lamb, and which continued seven days. Comp. Nu 28:16,17. *The whole feast* was called the Passover, and they were unwilling to defile themselves, even though the paschal lamb had been killed, because it would disqualify them for participating in the remainder of the ceremonies (Lightfoot).

{s} "Then led they Jesus" Mt 27:2 Mr 15:1; Lu 23:1

{4} "the hall of judgment" or, "Pilate's house" {t} "lest they should be defiled" Ac 10:28

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18 - Verse 29

Verse 29. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *If he were not a malefactor*. A violator of the law. If we had not *determined* that he was such, and was worthy of death, Mt 26:66. From this it appears that they did not deliver him up to be *tried*, but hoped that Pilate would *at once* give sentence that he should be executed according to their request. It is probable that in ordinary cases the Roman governor was not accustomed to make very strict inquiry into the justice of the sentence. The Jewish Sanhedrim tried causes and pronounced sentence, and the sentence was usually approved by the governor; but in this case Pilate, evidently contrary to their expectations, proceeded *himself* to rehear and retry the cause. He had doubtless heard of the miracles of Jesus. He seems to have been strongly prepossessed with the belief of his innocence. He knew that they had delivered him from mere envy (Mt 27:18), and hence he inquired of them the nature of the case, and the kind of charge which they expected to substantiate against him.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *Judge him*, &c. The Jews had not directly *informed* him that they *had* judged him and pronounced him worthy of death. Pilate therefore tells them to inquire into the case; to ascertain the proof of his guilt, and to decide on what the law of Moses pronounced. It has been doubted whether this gave them the power of putting him to death, or whether it was not rather a direction to them to inquire into the case, and inflict on him, if they judged him guilty, the mild punishment which they were yet at liberty to inflict on criminals. Probably the former is intended. As they had already determined that in their view this case demanded the punishment of death, so in their answer to Pilate they *implied* that they *had* pronounced on it, and that he ought to die. They *still*, therefore, *pressed* it on his attention, and refused to obey his injunction to judge him.

It is not lawful, &c. The Jews were accustomed to put persons to death still in a popular tumult (Ac 7:59,60), but they had not the power to do it in any case in a regular way of justice. When they first laid the plan of arresting the Saviour, they did it *to kill him* (Mt 26:4); but whether they intended to do this secretly, or in a tumult, or by the concurrence of the Roman governor, is uncertain. The Jews themselves say that the power of inflicting capital punishment was taken away about forty years before the destruction of the temple; but still it is probable that in the time of Christ they had the power of determining on capital cases in instances that pertained to religion (Josephus, Antiq., b. xiv. ch. 10, 2; comp. *Jewish Wars*, b. vt. ch. 2, § 4). In this case, however, it is supposed that their sentence was to be *confirmed* by the Roman governor. But it is admitted on all hands that they had *not* this power in the case of seditions, tumults, or treason against the Roman government. If they had this power in the case of blasphemy and irreligion, they did not dare to exert it here, because they were afraid of tumult among the people (Mt 26:5); hence they sought to bring in the authority of Pilate. To do this, they endeavoured to make it appear that it was a case of *sedition* and *treason*, and one which therefore *demanded* the interference of the Roman governor. Hence it was on *this charge* that they arraigned him, Lu 23:2. Thus a tumult might be avoided, and the *odium* of putting him to death they expected would fall, not on themselves, but on Pilate.

{u} "It is not lawful" Ge 49:10 Eze 21:27

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *That the saying of Jesus*, &c. To wit, that he would be delivered into the hands of the *Gentiles* and be *crucified*, Mt 20:19. Neither of these things would have happened if he had been put to death in the way that the Jews first contemplated, Mt 26:4. Though it should be admitted that they had the power, in *religious cases*, to do this, yet in such a case it would not have been done, as Jesus predicted, by the Gentiles; and even if it should be admitted that they had the right to take life, yet they had not the right to do it by *crucifixion*. This was particularly a Roman punishment. And thus it was ordered, in the providence of God, that the prediction of Jesus in both these respects was fulfilled.

{v} "That the saying of Jesus" Mt 20:19 Lu 18:32,33

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *Art thou the King of the Jews?* This was *after* they had accused him of perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, Lu 23:2,3.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *Of thyself*. From any conviction of your own mind, or any apprehension of danger. During all the time in which you have been praetor, have you seen anything in me that has led you to apprehend sedition or danger to the Roman power? This evidently was intended to remind Pilate that nothing was proved against him, and to caution him against being influenced by the malicious accusations of others. Jesus demanded a just trial, and claimed that Pilate should not be influenced by any *reports* that he might have heard of him.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *Am I a Jew*? Am l likely to be influenced by Jewish prejudices and partialities? Am not I, being a Roman, likely to judge impartially, and to decide on the accusations without being biassed by the malignant charges of the accusers?

Thine own nation &c. In this Pilate denies that it was from anything thing that *he* had observed that Jesus was arraigned. He admits that it was from the accusation of others; but then he tells the Saviour that the charge was one of moment, and worthy of the deepest attention. It had come from the *very nation* of Jesus, from his own countrymen, and from the highest authority among the people. As such it demanded consideration, and Pilate besought him to tell him *what he had done*—that is, what there had been in his conduct that had given occasion for this charge.

{w} "own nation" Joh 19:11 Ac 3:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *My kingdom*, &c. The charge on which Jesus was arraigned was that of laying claim to the office of a king. He here substantially admits that he *did* claim to be a king, but not in the sense in which the Jews understood it. *They* charged him with attempting to set up an *earthly* kingdom, and of exciting sedition against Caesar. In reply to this, Jesus says that *his kingdom is not of this world*—that is, it is not of the same nature as earthly kingdoms. It was not originated for the same purpose, or conducted on the same plan. He immediately adds a circumstance in which they differ. The kingdoms of the world are defended by arms; they maintain armies and engage in wars. If the kingdom of Jesus had been of this *kind*, he would have excited the multitudes that followed him to prepare for battle. He would have armed the hosts that attended him to Jerusalem. He would not have been alone and unarmed in the garden of Gethsemane. But though he *was* a king, yet his dominion was over the heart, subduing evil passions and corrupt desires, and bringing the soul to the love of peace and unity.

Not from hence. That is, not from this world.

{x} "answered" 1Ti 6:13 {y} "My kingdom" Ps 45:3,6; Isa 9:6,7; Da 2:44 7:14; Zec 9:9 Lu 12:14

Joh 6:15 Ro 14:17; Col 1:13

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *Art thou a king then*? Dost thou *admit* the charge in any sense, or dost thou lay claim to a kingdom of any kind?

Thou sayest, &c. This is a form of expression denoting *affirmation*. It is equivalent to *yes*.

That I am a king. This does not mean simply that Pilate *affirmed* that he was a king; it does not appear that he had done this; but it means, "Thou affirmest the truth; thou declarest what is correct, for I am, a king." I *am* a king in a certain sense, and do not deny it.

To this end, &c. Comp. Joh 3:11,12, &c. Jesus does not here affirm that he was born to *reign*, or that this was the design of his coming; but it was to bear witness to and to exhibit the truth. By this he showed what was the *nature* of his kingdom. It was not to assert power; not to collect armies; not to subdue nations in battle. It was simply to present *truth* to men, and to exercise dominion only *by* the truth. Hence the only power put forth in restraining the wicked, in convincing the sinner, in converting the heart, in guiding and leading his people, and in sanctifying them, is that which is produced by applying truth to the mind. Men are not *forced* or *compelled* to be Christians. They are made to *see* that they are sinners, that God is merciful, that they need a Redeemer, and that the Lord Jesus is fitted to their case, and yield themselves then wholly to his reign. This is all the power ever used in the kingdom of Christ, and no men in his church have a right to use any other. Alas! how little have persecutors remembered this! And how often, under the pretence of great regard for the kingdom of Jesus, have bigots attempted by force and flames to make all men think as *they* do! We see here the importance which Jesus attached to *truth*. It was his sole business in coming

into the world, He had no other end than to establish it. *We* therefore should value it, and seek for it as for hid treasures, Pr 23:23.

Every one, &c. See Joh 8:47.

{z} "I should bear witness" Isa 55:4 Re 1:5, 3:14

{a} "Every one that is of the truth" Joh 8:47 1Jo 4:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *What is truth*? This question was probably asked in *contempt*, and hence Jesus did not answer it. Had the question been sincere, and had Pilate *really* sought it as Nicodemus had done (Joh 3:1), Jesus would not have hesitated to explain to him the nature of his kingdom. They were now alone in the judgment-hall (Joh 18:33), and as soon as Pilate had asked the question, without waiting for an answer, he went out. It is evident that he was satisfied, from the answer of Jesus (Joh 18:36,37), that he was not a king in the sense in which the Jews accused him; that he would not endanger the Roman government, and consequently that he was *innocent* of the charge alleged against him. He regarded him, clearly, as a fanatic—poor, ignorant, and deluded, but innocent and not dangerous. Hence he sought to release him; and hence, in *contempt*, he asked him this question, and immediately went out, not expecting an answer. This question had long agitated the world. It was the great subject of inquiry in all the schools of the Greeks. Different sects of philosophers had held different opinions, and Pilate now, in derision, asked him, whom *he* esteemed an ignorant fanatic, whether he could solve this long-agitated question. He *might* have had an answer. Had he patiently waited in sincerity, Jesus would have told him what it was. Thousands ask the question in the same way. They have a fixed contempt for the Bible; they deride the instructions of religion; they are unwilling to *investigate* and to wait at the gates of wisdom; and hence, like Pilate, they remain ignorant of the great Source of truth, and die in darkness and in error. *All might* find truth if they would seek it; none ever *will* find it if they do not apply for it to the great source of light—the God of truth, and seek it patiently in the way in which he has chosen to communicate it to mankind. How highly should we prize the Bible! And how patiently and prayerfully should we *search* the Scriptures, that we may not err and die for ever! **See Barnes "Joh 14:6"**.

I find in him no fault. See Lu 23:4.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18 - Verse 39

Verses 39-40. **See Barnes "Mt 27:15"; also** Mt 27:16-21.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 18 - Verse 40

Verse 40. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 1

Verses 1-3.
See Barnes "Mt 27:26, also Mt 27:27-30.
{a} "Then Pilate" Mt 27:26 Mr 15:15 {b} "scourged him" Isa 53:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 2

Verse 2. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 3

Verse 3. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Behold, I bring him forth*, &c. Pilate, after examining Jesus, had gone forth and *declared* to the Jews that he found no fault in him, Joh 18:38. At that time Jesus remained in the judgment-hall. The Jews were not satisfied with that, but demanded still that he should be put to death, Joh 18:39,40. Pilate, disposed to gratify the Jews, returned to Jesus and ordered him to be scourged, as if preparatory to death, Joh 19:1. The patience and meekness with which Jesus bore this seem to have convinced him still more that he was innocent, and he *again* went forth to *declare* his conviction of this; and, to do it more effectually, he said, "Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know," &c.—that they might themselves *see*, and be satisfied, as he had been, of his innocence. All this shows his anxiety to release him, and also shows that the meekness, purity, and sincerity of Jesus had power to convince a Roman governor that he was not guilty. Thus the highest evidence was given that the charges were false, even when he was condemned to die.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Behold the man*. It is probable that Pilate *pointed* to the Saviour, and his object evidently was to move them to compassion, and to convince them, by a sight of the Saviour himself, that he was innocent. Hence he brought him forth with the crown of thorns, and the purple robe, and with

the marks of scourging. Amid all this Jesus was meek, patient, and calm, giving evident proofs of innocence. The conduct of Pilate was as if he had said, \-

"See! The man whom you accuse is arrayed in a gorgeous robe, as if a king. He has been scourged and mocked. All this he has borne with patience. See! How calm and peaceful! Behold his countenance! How mild ! His body scourged, his heard pierced with thorns! Yet in all this he is meek and patient. This is the man that you accuse; and he is now brought forth, that you may see that he is not guilty."

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *They cried out, saying, Crucify* him, &c. The view of the Saviour's meekness only exasperated them the more. They had *resolved* on his death; and as they saw Pilate disposed to acquit him, they redoubled their cries, and endeavoured to gain by tumult, and clamour, and terror, what they saw they could not obtain by justice. When men are *determined* on evil, they cannot be reasoned with. Every *argument* tends to defeat their plans, and they press on in iniquity with the more earnestness in proportion as sound reasons are urged to stay their course. Thus sinners go in the way of wickedness down to death. They make up in firmness of purpose what they lack in reason. They are more fixed in their plans in proportion as God faithfully warns them and their friends admonish them.

Take ye him, &c. These are evidently the words of a man *weary* with their importunity and with the subject, and yet resolved not to sanction their conduct. It was not the act of a *judge* delivering him up according to the forms of the law, for they did not understand it so. It was equivalent to this:

"I am satisfied of his innocence, and shall not pronounce the sentence of death. If *you* are bent on his ruin—if you are determined to put to death an innocent man—if *my* judgment does not satisfy you—take him and put him to death *on your own responsibility*, and take the consequences. It cannot be done with my consent, nor in the due form of law; and if done, it must be by you, without authority, and in the face of justice."

See Mt 27:24.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *We have a law*. The law respecting blasphemy, Le 24:16; De 13:1-5. They had arraigned Jesus on that charge before the Sanhedrim, and condemned him for it, Mt 26:63-65. But *this* was not the charge on which they had arraigned him before Pilate. They had accused him of *sedition*, Lu 23:2. On *this charge* they were now convinced that they could not get Pilate to condemn him. He declared him innocent. Still bent on his ruin, and resolved to gain their purpose, they now, contrary to their first intention, adduced the *original* accusation on which they had already pronounced him guilty. If they could not obtain his condemnation as *a rebel*, they now sought it as a *blasphemer*, and they appealed to Pilate to sanction what they believed was required in their law. Thus to Pilate himself it became more manifest that he was innocent, that they had attempted to *deceive* HIM, and that the charge on which they had arraigned him was a mere pretence to obtain *his* sanction to their wicked design.

Made himself. Declared himself, or claimed to be.

The Son of God. The law did not forbid this, but it forbade *blasphemy*, and they considered the assumption of this title as the same as blasphemy (Joh 10:30,33,36) , and therefore condemned him.

{d} "We have a law" Le 24:16 {e} "because he made himself" Joh 5:18 10:33

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *When Pilate therefore heard that saying*. That they had accused him of blasphemy. As this was not the charge on which they had arraigned him before his bar, he had not before heard it, and it now convinced him more of their malignity and wickedness.

He was the more afraid. What was the ground of his fear is not declared by the evangelist. It was probably, however, the alarm of his *conscience*, and the fear of vengeance if he suffered such an act of injustice to be done as to put an innocent man to death. He was convinced of his innocence. He saw more and more clearly the design of the Jews; and it is not improbable that a *heathen*, who believed that the gods often manifested themselves to men, dreaded their *vengeance* if he suffered one who claimed to be divine, and who *might* be, to be put to death. It is clear that Pilate was convinced that Jesus was innocent; and in this state of agitation between the convictions of his own conscience, and the clamours of the Jews, and the fear of vengeance, and the certainty that he would do wrong if he gave him up, he was thrown into this state of alarm, and resolved again to question Jesus, that he might obtain satisfaction on the subjects that agitated his mind.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Whence art thou*? **See Barnes "Joh 7:27".**

Pilate knew that he was a Galilean, but this question was asked to ascertain whether he claimed to be the Son of God—whether a mere man, or whether divine.

Jesus gave him no answer. Probably for the following reasons:

1st. He had already told him his design, and the nature of his kingdom, Joh 18:36,37.

2nd. He had said enough to satisfy him of his innocence. Of that Pilate was convinced. His duty was clear, and if he had had firmness to do it, he would not have asked this. Jesus, by his silence, there- fore *rebuked* him for his want of firmness, and his unwillingness to do what his conscience told him was right.

3rd. It is not probable that Pilate would have understood him if he had declared to him the truth about his origin, and about his being the Son of God.

4th. After what had been done —after he had satisfied Pilate of his innocence, and then had been beaten and mocked by his permission—he had no reason to expect justice at his hands, and therefore properly declined to make any farther defence. By this the prophecy Isa 53:7 was remarkably fulfilled.

{f} "Jesus gave him no" Ps 33:13 Isa 53:7; Mt 27:12,14; Php 1:28

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Speakest thou not*, &c. This is the expression of a man of pride. He was not accustomed to be met with silence like this. He endeavoured, therefore, to address the *fears* of Jesus, and to appall him with the declaration that his life was at his disposal, and that his safety depended on his favour. This arrogance called forth the reply of the Saviour, and he told him that he had *no* power except what was given him from above. Jesus was not, therefore, to be intimidated by any claim of *power* in Pilate. His life was not in his hands, and he could not stoop to ask the *favour* of a *man*.

{g} "I have power to crucify" Da 3:14,15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *No power*. No such power as you claim. You have not *originated* the power which you have. You have just as much as is *given*, and your ability ex tends no farther.

Except it were given thee. It has been conceded or granted to you. God has ordered your life, your circumstances, and the extent of your dominion. This was a reproof of a proud man in office, who was forgetful of the great Source of his authority, and who supposed that by his own talents or fortune he had risen to his present place. Alas! how many men *in office* forget that God gives them their rank, and vainly think that it is owing to their own talents or merits that they have risen to such an elevation. Men of office and talent, as well as others, should remember that *God* gives them what they have, and that they have no influence except as it is conceded to them from on high.

From above. From God, or by his direction, and by the arrangements of his providence. Ro 13:1: "There is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God." The words "from above" often refer to *God* or to *heaven*, Jas 1:17; Jas 3:15,17 Joh 3:3

(in the Greek). The providence of God was remarkable in so ordering affairs that a man, flexible and yielding like Pilate, should be intrusted with power in Judea. Had it been a man firm and unyielding in his duty—one who could not be terrified or awed by the multitude— Jesus would

not have been delivered to be crucified, Ac 2:23. God thus brings about his wise ends; and while Pilate was *free*, and *acted out his nature* without compulsion, yet the purposes of God, long before predicted, were fulfilled, and Jesus made an atonement for the sins of the world. Thus God overrules the wickedness and folly of men. He so orders affairs that the *true character* of men shall be *brought out*, and makes use of that character to advance his own great purposes.

Therefore. On this account.

"You are a magistrate. Your power, as such, is given you by God. You are not, indeed, guilty for *accusing* me, or malignantly arraigning me; but you have power *intrusted* to you over my life; and the Jews, who knew this, and who knew that the power of a magistrate was given to him by God, have the *greater sin* for seeking my condemnation before a tribunal appointed by God, and for endeavouring to obtain so solemn a sanction to their own malignant and wicked purposes. They have endeavoured to avail themselves of the civil power, the sacred appointment of God, and *on this account* their sin is greater."

This does not mean that their sin was greater than that of Pilate, though that was true; but their sin was greater *on account* of the fact that they perseveringly and malignantly endeavoured to obtain the sanction of the magistrate to their wicked proceedings. Nor does it mean, because God had *purposed* his death (Ac 2:23), and given power to Pilate, that *therefore* their sin was greater, for *God's purpose* in the case made it neither more nor less. It did not change the nature of their free acts. This passage teaches no such doctrine, but that their sin was *aggravated* by malignantly endeavouring to obtain the sanction of a magistrate who was invested with authority *by God*, and who wielded the power that *God* gave him. By this Pilate *ought* to have been convinced, and *was* convinced, of their wickedness, and hence he sought more and more to release him.

He that delivered me. The singular here is put for the plural, including Judas, the high-priests, and the Sanhedrim.

{h} "thou couldest have no power" Lu 22:53 Joh 7:30 {i} "except" Ps 39:9 {k} "he that delivered me" Mr 14:44 Joh 18:3 {l} "the greater sin" He 6:4-8 Jas 4:17

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Sought to release him*. He was more and more convinced of his innocence, and more unwilling to yield him to mere malice and envy in the face of justice.

But the Jews cried out, &c. This moved Pilate to deliver Jesus into their hands. He feared that he would be accused of unfaithfulness to the interests of the Roman emperor if he did not condemn a man whom *his own nation* had accused of sedition. The Roman emperor then on the throne was exceedingly jealous and tyrannical, and the *fear* of losing his favour induced Pilate to deliver Jesus into their hands.

Caesar's friend. The friend of the Roman emperor. The name of the reigning emperor was Tiberius. After the time of Julius Caesar all the emperors were called *Caesar*, as all the kings of Egypt were called *Pharaoh*. This emperor was, during the latter part of his reign, the most cruel, jealous, and wicked that ever sat on the Roman throne.

{m} "whosoever maketh himself" Lu 23:2 Ac 17:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Judgment-seat*. The tribunal or place of pronouncing sentence. He came here to deliver him, in due form of law, into the hands of the Jews.

Pavement. This was an area or room of the judgment-hall whose floor was made of small square stones of various colours. This was common in palaces and houses of wealth and splendour. **See Barnes "Mt 9:2".**

Gabbatha. This word is not elsewhere used. It comes from a word signifying to be elevated. The name given to the place by the Hebrews was conferred from its being the place of the tribunal, as an elevated place.

{n} "When Pilate therefore heard" Pr 29:25 Ac 4:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *The preparation of the passover*. **See Barnes "Mr 15:42".**

The sixth hour. Twelve o'clock. Mark says (Mr 15:25) that it was the third hour. See the difficulty explained in the Notes on that place. **See Barnes "Mr 15:42".**

{o} "it was the preparation" Mt 27:62

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 15

Verse 15. No Barnes text on this verse.

{p} "We have no king"

Ge 49:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 16

Verses 16-22. **See Barnes "Mt 27:32"; also** Mt 27:33-37.

{q} "delivered him" Mt 27:26 Mr 15:15; Lu 23:24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 17

Verse 17. No Barnes text on this verse.
{r} "went forth"
Nu 15:36 He 13:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 18

Verse 18. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 19

Verse 19. No Barnes text on this verse.
{s} "Pilate wrote a title"
Mt 27:37 Mr 15:26; Lu 23:38

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 20

Verse 20. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 21

Verse 21. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *What I have written*, &c. This declaration implied that he would make no change. He was impatient, and weary of their solicitations. He had yielded to them contrary to the convictions of his own conscience, and he now declared his purpose to yield no farther.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *His garments*. The plural here is used to denote the *outer garment*. It was made, commonly, so as to be easily thrown on or off, and when they laboured or walked it was girded about the loins. **See Barnes "Mt 5:40"**.

Four parts. It seems, from this, that there were four soldiers employed as his executioners.

His coat. His under garment, called the *tunic*.

Was without seam. Josephus (Antiq., b. iii. ch. 8, 4) says of the garment or coat of the high-priest that

"this vesture was not composed of two pieces, nor was
it sewed together upon the shoulders and the sides;
but it was one long vestment, so woven as to have
an aperture for the neck. It was also parted where
the hands were to come out."

It seems that the Lord Jesus, the great High-priest of his people, had also a coat made in a similar manner. Comp. Ex 39:22.

{1} "woven" or, "wrought" {t} "from the top throughout" Ex 39:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Let us not rend it*. It would then have been useless. The *outer* garment, being composed of several parts—fringes, borders. &c. De 12:12 could be easily divided.

That the scripture Ps 22:18.

{u} "They parted my raiment" Ps 22:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 25

Verse 25. No Barnes text on this verse.

{2} "Cleophas" or, "Clopas" {v} "and Mary Magdalene"

Lu 24:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *The disciple—whom he loved*. See Joh 13:23.

Woman. This appellation certainly implied no disrespect. **See Barnes "Joh 2:4"**.

Behold thy son! This refers to *John*, not to Jesus himself. Behold, my beloved disciple shall be to you *a son*, and provide for you, and discharge toward you the duties of an affectionate child. Mary was poor. It would even seem that now she had no home. Jesus, in his dying moments, filled with tender regard for his mother, secured for her an adopted son, obtained for her a home, and consoled her grief by the prospect of attention from him who was the most beloved of all the

apostles. What an example of filial attention! What a model to all children! And how lovely appears the dying Saviour, thus remembering his afflicted mother, and making her welfare one of his last cares on the cross, and even when making atonement for the sins of the world!

{x} "Woman" Joh 13:23

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *Behold thy mother*! One who is to be to thee as a mother. The fact that she was the mother of Jesus would secure the kindness of John, and the fact that she was now intrusted to him demanded of him affectionate regard and tender care.

From that hour, &c. John seems to have been in better circumstances than the other apostles. See Joh 18:16. Tradition says that she continued to live with him in Judea till the time of her death, which occurred about fifteen years after the death of Christ.

{y} "thy mother" 1Ti 5:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 28

Verses 28-30. **See Barnes "Mt 27:46, also** Mt 27:47-50.

That the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. See Ps 69:21. Thirst was one of the most distressing circumstances attending the crucifixion. The wounds were highly inflamed, and a raging fever was caused, usually, by the sufferings on the cross, and this was accompanied by insupportable thirst. **See Barnes "Mt 27:35".**

A Mameluke, or Turkish officer, was crucified, it is said in an Arabic manuscript recently translated, on the banks of the river Barads, under the castle of Damascus. He was nailed to the cross on Friday, and remained till Sunday noon, when he died. After giving an account of the crucifixion, the narrator proceeds:

> "I have heard this from one who witnessed it; and he thus remained till he died, patient and silent, without wailing, but looking around him to the right and the left, upon the people. But he begged for water, and none was given him; and the hearts of the people were melted with compassion for him, and with pity on one of God's creatures, who, yet a boy, was suffering under so grievous a trial. In the meantime the water was flowing around him, and he gazed upon it, and longed for one drop of it; and he complained of thirst all the first day, after which he was silent, for God gave him strength."

—Wiseman's Lectures, p. 164, 165, ed. Andover.
{a} "scripture might be fulfilled" Ps 69:21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 29

Verse 29. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *It is finished*. The sufferings and agonies in redeeming man are over. The work long contemplated, long promised, long expected by prophets and saints, is done. The toils in the ministry, the persecutions and mockeries, and the pangs of the garden and the cross, are ended, and man is redeemed. What a wonderful declaration was this! How full of consolation to man! And how should this dying declaration of the Saviour reach every heart and affect every soul!
{b} "It is finished" Joh 17:4 {c} "gave up the ghost" Isa 53:10,12; Heb 2:14,15

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *The preparation*. See Joh 19:4. The law required that the bodies of those who were hung should not remain suspended during the night. See De 21:22,23. That law was made when the punishment by crucifixion was unknown, and when those who were suspended would almost immediately expire. In the punishment by crucifixion, life was lengthened out for four, five, or eight days. The Jews therefore requested that their death might be hastened, and that the land might not be polluted by their bodies remaining suspended on the Sabbath-day.
Was an high day. It was,
1st. The Sabbath.
2nd. It was the day on which the paschal feast properly commenced. It was called a *high day* because that year the feast of the Passover commenced on the Sabbath. Greek, "Great day."
Their legs might be broken. To hasten their death. The effect of this, while they were suspended on the cross, would be to increase their pain by the act of breaking them, and to deprive their body of the support which it received from the feet, and to throw the whole weight on the hands. By this increased torment their lives were soon ended. Lactantius says that this was commonly done by the Romans to persons who were crucified. The common period to which persons crucified would live was several days. To *compensate* for those *lingering* agonies, so that the full amount of suffering might be endure, they *increased* their sufferings by breaking their limbs, and thus hastening their death.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 32

Verse 32. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *Saw that he was dead*. Saw by the indications of death on his person, and perhaps by the testimony of the centurion, Mt 27:54. The death of Jesus was doubtless hastened by the intense agony of the garden, and the peculiar sufferings endured as an atonement for sin on the cross. Comp. Mt 27:46.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *One of the soldiers*. One of those appointed to watch the bodies till they were dead. This man appears to have doubted whether he was dead, and, in order to see whether he was not yet sensible, he pierced him with his spear. The Jews designed that his legs should be broken, but this was prevented by the providence of God; yet in another way more satisfactory proof was obtained of his death than would have been by the breaking of his legs. This was so ordered, no doubt, that there might be the *fullest proof* that he was truly dead; that it could not be pretended that he had swooned away and revived, and so, therefore, that there could not be the least doubt of his resurrection to life.

With a spear. The common spear which soldiers used in war. There can be no doubt that such a stroke from the strong arm of a Roman soldier would have caused death, if he had not been already dead; and it was, doubtless, to furnish this conclusive proof that he was *actually dead*, and that an atonement had thus been made for mankind, that John mentions so particularly this fact. Let the following circumstances be remembered, showing that death *must* have ensued from such a wound:

1st. The Saviour was elevated but a little from the ground, so as to be easily reached by the spear of a soldier.

2nd. The wound must have been *transversely upward*, so as to have penetrated into the body, as he could not have stood directly under him.

3rd. It was probably made with a strong arm and with violence.

4th. The spear of the Roman soldier was a lance which tapered very gently to a point, and would penetrate easily.

5th. The wound was comparatively a *large* wound. It was so large *as to admit the hand* (Joh 20:27); but for a lance thus tapering to have made a wound so wide as to admit the hand, it must have been *at least* four or five inches in depth, and must have been such as to have made death certain. If it be remembered that this blow was *probably* in the left side, the conclusion is inevitable that death would have been the consequence of such a blow. To make out this fact was of special importance, probably, in the time of John, as the reality of the death of Jesus was denied by the Gnostics, many of whom maintained that he died *in appearance only*.

Pierced his side. Which side is not mentioned, nor can it be certainly known. The common opinion is that it was the left side. Car. Frid. Gruner (*Commentatio Anti-guavia Medica de Jesu Christi Morte, p. 30-36*) has attempted to show that it must have been the left side. See Wise-man's *Lectures*, p. 161,162, and Kuinoel on Joh 19:34, where the arguments of Gruner are fully stated. It is clear that the spear pierced to the region of the heart.

And forthwith came, &c. This was evidently a natural effect of thus piercing the side. Such a flowing of blood and water makes it probable that the spear reached the heart, and if Jesus had not before been dead, this would have closed his life. The heart is surrounded by a membrane called the *pericardium*. This membrane contains a serous matter or liquor resembling water, which prevents the surface of the heart from becoming dry by its continual motion (Webster). It was this which was pierced and from which the water flowed. The point of the spear also reached one of the ventricles of the heart, and the blood, yet warm, rushed forth, either mingled with or followed by the water of the pericardium, so as to *appear* to John to be blood and water flowing together. This was a natural effect, and would follow in any other case. Commentators have almost uniformly supposed that this was significant; as, for example, that the blood was an emblem of the eucharist, and the water of baptism, or that the blood denoted justification, and the water sanctification; but that this was the design there is not the slightest evidence. It was strictly a natural result, adduced by John to establish *one* fact on which the whole of Christianity turns —*that he was truly dead*. On this depends the doctrine of the atonement, of his resurrection, and all the prominent doctrines of religion. This fact it was of importance to prove, that it might not be pretended that he had only suffered a *syncope*, or had fainted. This John establishes. He shows that those who were sent to hasten his death *believed* that he had expired; that then a soldier inflicted a wound which *would* have terminated life if he had not been already dead; and that the infliction of this wound was followed by the fullest proof that he had truly expired. On this *fact* he dwells with the interest which became a subject of so much importance to the world, and thus laid the foundation for undoubted assurance that the Lord Jesus *died* for the sins of men.

{g} "blood" Heb 9:22,23; 1Jo 5:6,8

{h} "water" 1Pe 3:21.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *He that saw it*. John himself. He is accustomed to speak of himself in the third person.

His record is true. His testimony is true. Such was the *known* character of this writer, such his sacred regard for truth, that he could appeal to that with full assurance that all would put confidence in him. He often appeals thus to the fact that his testimony was *known* to be true. It would be well if *all* Christians had such a character that their *word* would be assuredly believed.

{i} "And he that saw" Joh 1:1-3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *That the scripture should be fulfilled*. See Ex 12:46. John here regards the paschal lamb as an emblem of Christ; and as in the law it was commanded that a bone of that lamb should not be broken, so, in the providence of God, it was ordered that a bone of the Saviour should not be broken. The Scripture thus received a complete fulfillment respecting both the type and the antitype. Some have supposed, however, that John referred to Ps 34:20.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *Another scripture*, Zec 12:10. We must here be struck with the wonderful providence of God, that so *many* scriptures were fulfilled in his death. All these things happened without any such *design* on the part of the men engaged in these scenes; but whatever was done by Jew or Gentile tended to the fulfillment of prophecies long on record, and with which the Jews themselves ought to have been familiar. Little did they suppose, when delivering him to Pilate—when he was mocked—when they parted his garments—when they pierced him—that they were fulfilling ancient predictions, But in this way God had so ordered it that the firmest foundation should be laid for the belief that he was the true Messiah, and that the designs of wicked men should all be overruled to the fulfillment of the great plans which God had in sending his Son.

{l} "another scripture" Ps 22:16 Zec 12:10; Re 1:7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 38

Verses 38-42. **See Barnes "Mt 27:57, also** Mt 27:58-61.

{m} "for fear of the Jews" Joh 9:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 39

Verse 39. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

{n} "Nicodemus"

Joh 3:1,2, 7:50

{o} "brought a mixture" 2Ch 16:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 40

Verse 40. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

{p} "wound it in linen"

Ac 5:6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 41

Verse 41. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 19 - Verse 42

Verse 42. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{q} "laid they Jesus"
Isa 53:9 1Co 15:4
{r} "because of the Jew's" Joh 19:31

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 20 - Verse 1

Verses 1-12. For an account of the resurrection of Christ, See Barnes Notes on Matthew 27.
{a} "first day of week"
Mt 28:1 Mr 16:1; Lu 24:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 20 - Verse 2

Verse 2. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{b} "other disciple"
Joh 13:23 19:26, 21:7,24

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 20 - Verse 3

Verse 3. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{c} "Peter"
Lu 24:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 20 - Verse 4

Verse 4. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

{d} "did outrun"
Lu 13:30

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 20 - Verse 5

Verse 5. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{e} "the linen clothes"
Joh 19:40

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 20 - Verse 6

Verse 6. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 20 - Verse 7

Verse 7. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{f} "napkin"
Joh 11:44

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 20 - Verse 8

Verse 8. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 20 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *The scripture*. See Lu 24:26,46. The sense or meaning of the various predictions that foretold his death, as, for example, Ps 2:7, compare Ac 13:33; Ps 16:9,10, compare Ac 2:25-32 Ps 110:1 compare Ac 2:34,35.
{g} "the scripture" Ps 16:10 Ac 2:25-31, 13:34,35

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 20 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 20 - Verse 11

Verse 11. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{h} "and looked"
Mr 16:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 20 - Verse 12

Verse 12. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 20 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *They have taken away*. That is, the disciples or friends of Jesus who had laid him there. Perhaps it was understood that the body was deposited there only to remain over the Sabbath, with an intention then of removing it to some other place of burial. Hence they hastened *early* in the morning to make preparation, and Mary supposed they had arrived before her and had taken him away.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 20 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Knew not that it was Jesus*. She was not expecting to see him. It was yet also twilight, and she could not see distinctly.
{i} "saw Jesus standing" Mt 28:9 Mr 16:9 {k} "knew not that" Lu 24:16,31; Joh 21:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 20 - Verse 15

Verse 15. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{l} "and I will take him away"
So 3:2

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 20 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Jesus saith unto her, Mary*. This was spoken, doubtless, in a tone of voice that at once recalled him to her recollection.

Rabboni. This is a Hebrew word denoting, literally,*my great master*. It was one of the titles given to Jewish teachers. This title was given under three forms: (a) *Rab*, or master—the lowest degree of honour. (b) *Rabbi*, my master—a title of higher dignity. (c) *Rabboni*, my great master —the most honourable of all. This title, among the Jews, was only given to seven persons, all persons of great eminence. As given by Mary to the Saviour, it was at once an expression of her joy, and an acknowledgment of him as her Lord and Master. It is not improbable that she, filled with joy, was about to cast herself at his feet.

{m} "Mary" Is 43:1 Joh 10:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 20 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Touch me not*, &c. This passage has given rise to a variety of interpretations. Jesus required Thomas to touch him (Joh 20:27), and it has been difficult to ascertain why he forbade this now to Mary. The reason why he directed Thomas to do this was, that he doubted whether he had been restored to life. Mary did not doubt that. The reason why he forbade her to touch him now is to be sought in the circumstances of the case. Mary, filled with joy and gratitude, was about to prostrate herself at his feet, disposed to *remain* with him, and offer him there her homage as her risen Lord. This is probably included in the word *touch* in this place; and the language of Jesus may mean this: "Do not approach me *now* for this purpose. Do not *delay* here. Other opportunities will yet be afforded to see me. I have not yet ascended— that is, I am not *about* to ascend *immediately*, but shall remain yet on earth to afford opportunity to my disciples to enjoy my presence." From Mt 28:9, it appears that the women, when they met Jesus, *held him by the feet and worshipped him*. This species of adoration it was probably the intention of Mary to offer, and this, *at that time*, Jesus forbade, and directed her to go at once and give his disciples notice that he had risen.

My brethren. See Joh 15:15.

My Father and your Father, &c. Nothing was better fitted to afford them consolation than this assurance that *his* God was *theirs*, and that, though he had been slain, they were still indissolubly united in attachment to the same Father and God.

{o} "my brethren" Ps 22:22 Ro 8:29; Heb 2:11

{p} "I ascend" Joh 16:28 {q} "your Father" Ro 8:14,15; 2Co 6:18 Ga 3:26, 4:6,7

{r} "my God" Eph 1:17 {s} "your God" Ge 17:7,8; Ps 43:4,5, 48:14 Isa 41:10; Jer 31:33

Eze 36:28 Zec 13:9; Heb 11:16 Re 21:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 20 - Verse 18

Verse 18. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

{t} "Mary Magdalene"

Mt 28:10

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 20 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *The same day at evening*. On the first day of the week, the day of the resurrection of Christ.

When the doors were shut. This does not mean that the doors were *fastened*, though that might have been the case, but only that they were closed. Jesus had been taken from them, and it was natural that they should apprehend that the Jews would next attempt to wreak their vengeance on his followers. Hence they met in the evening, and with closed doors, lest the Jews should bring against them the same charge of sedition that they had against the Lord Jesus. It is not certainly said what was the *object* of their assembling, but it is not unreasonable to suppose that it was to talk over the events which had just occurred, to deliberate about their condition, and to engage in acts of worship. Their minds were doubtless much agitated. They had seen their Master taken away and put to death; but a part of their number also had affirmed that they had seen him alive. In this state of things they naturally came together in a time and place of safety. It was not uncommon for the early Christians to hold their meetings for worship in the *night*. In times of persecution they were forbidden to assemble during the day, and hence they were compelled to meet in the night. Pliny the younger, writing to Trajan, the Roman emperor, and giving an account of Christians, says that "they were wont to meet together on a stated day before it was light, and sing among themselves alternately a hymn to Christ as God." True Christians will love to meet together for worship. Nothing will prevent this; and one of the evidences of piety is a desire to assemble to hear the Word of God, and to offer to him prayer and praise. It is worthy of remark that this is the first assembly that was convened for worship on the Lord's day, and in that assembly Jesus was present. Since that time, the day has been observed in the church as the Christian Sabbath, particularly to commemorate the resurrection of Christ.

Came Jesus, &c. There is no evidence that he came into their assembly in any *miraculous* manner. For anything that appears to the contrary, Jesus entered in the usual way and manner, though *his* sudden appearance alarmed them.

Peace be unto you. The *sudden* manner of his appearance, and the fact that most of them had not before seen him since his resurrection, tended to alarm them. Hence he addressed them in the usual form of salutation to allay their fears, and to assure them that it was their own Saviour and Friend.

{u} "The same day at evening" Mr 16:14 Lu 24:36; 1Co 15:5

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 20 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *He showed unto them his hands*, &c. In this manner he gave them indubitable proofs of his identity. He showed them that he was the *same* Being who had suffered; that he had truly risen from the dead, and had come forth with the same body. That body had not yet put on its glorified form. It was necessary *first* to establish the proof of his resurrection, and that could be done *only* by his appearing as he was when he died.

{v} "Then were his disciples" Joh 16:22

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 20 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *As my Father hath sent me*. As God sent me to preach, to be persecuted, and to suffer; to make known his will, and to offer pardon to men, so I send you. This is the design and the extent of the commission of the ministers of the Lord Jesus. He is their model; and they will be successful only as they *study HIS character* and imitate his example. This commission he proceeds to confirm by endowing them all with the gift of the Holy Ghost.

{w} "Peace be unto you" Joh 14:27 {x} "so send I you" Mt 28:19 Joh 17:18; 2Ti 2:2 Heb 3:1

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 20 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *He breathed on* them. It was customary for the prophets to use some significant act to *represent* the nature of their message. See Jeremiah chapters 13 and 18, etc. In this case the act of *breathing* was used to represent the nature of the influence that would come upon them, and the *source* of that influence. When man was created, God *breathed* into him the breath of life, Ge 2:7. The word rendered *spirit* in the Scriptures denotes *wind, air, breath*, as well as Spirit. Hence the operations of the Holy Spirit are compared to the wind, Joh 3:8 Ac 2:2.

Receive ye the Holy Ghost. His breathing on them was a certain sign or pledge that they would be endowed with the influences of the Holy Spirit. Comp. Ac 1:4, John chapter 2.

{y} "Receive ye" Ac 2:4,33

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 20 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Whose soever sins*, &c. **See Barnes "Mt 16:19"**

See Barnes "Mt 18:18".

It is worthy of remark here that Jesus confers the same power on *all* the apostles. He gives to no one of them any peculiar authority. If *Peter*, as the Papists pretend, had been appointed to any peculiar authority, it is wonderful that the Saviour did not here hint at any such pre-eminence. This passage conclusively proves that they were invested with equal power in organizing and governing the church. The authority which he had given Peter to preach the gospel *first* to the Jews and the Gentiles, does not militate against this. **See Barnes** "Mt 16:18, **See Barnes "Mt 16:19"**.

This authority given them was full proof that they were inspired. The meaning of the passage is not that *man* can forgive sins—that belongs only to God (Isa 43:23), but that they should be *inspired*; that in founding the church, and in declaring the will of God, they should be taught by the Holy Ghost to *declare on what terms, to what characters, and to what temper of mind* God would extend forgiveness of sins. It was not authority to *forgive individuals*, but to establish in all the churches the *terms* and *conditions* on which men might be pardoned, with a promise that God would *confirm* all that they taught; that all might have assurance of forgiveness who would comply with those terms; and that those who did not comply should not be forgiven, but that their sins

should be retained. This commission is *as far as possible* from the authority which the Roman Catholic claims of remitting sin and of pronouncing pardon.

{z} "Whose soever" Mt 16:19 18:18

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 20 - Verse 24

Verse 24. No Barnes text on this verse.

{a} "Thomas"

Joh 11:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 20 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Except I shall see*, &c. It is not known what was the ground of the incredulity of Thomas. It is probable, however, that it was, in part, at least, the effect of deep grief, and of that despondency which fills the mind when a long-cherished hope is taken away. In such a case it requires proof of uncommon clearness and strength to over- come the despondency, and to convince us that we *may* obtain the object of our desires. Thomas has been much blamed by expositors, but he asked only for proof that would be satisfactory in his circumstances. The testimony of *ten* disciples *should* have been indeed sufficient, but an opportunity was thus given to the Saviour to convince the last of them of the truth of his resurrection. This incident shows, what all the conduct of the apostles proves, that they had not *conspired* together to impose on the world. Even they were slow to believe, and one of them refused to rely even on the testimony of *ten* of his brethren. How unlike this to the conduct of men who *agree* to impose a story on mankind! Many are like Thomas. Many *now* are unwilling to believe because they do not *see* the Lord Jesus, and with just as little reason as Thomas had. The *testimony* of those eleven men—including Thomas— who saw him alive after he was crucified; who were willing to lay down their lives to attest that they had seen him alive; who had nothing to gain by imposture, and whose conduct was removed as far as possible from the appearance of imposture, should be regarded as ample proof of the fact that he rose from the dead.

{b} "But he said unto them" Ps 78:11,32

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 20 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *And after eight days again*. That is, on the return of the first day of the week. From this it appears that they thus early set apart this day for assembling together, and Jesus countenanced it by appearing twice with them. It was *natural* that the apostles should observe this day, but not probable that they would do it without the sanction of the Lord Jesus. His repeated presence gave such a sanction, and the historical fact is indisputable that from this time this day was observed as the Christian Sabbath. See Ac 20:7; 1Co 16:2 Re 1:10.

{c} "Peace be unto you" Isa 26:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 20 - Verse 27

Verse 27. No Barnes text on this verse.
{d} "hand"
1Jo 1:1
{e} "be not faithless" 1Ti 1:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 20 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *My Lord and my God*. In this passage the name *God* is expressly given to Christ, in his own presence and by one of his own apostles. This declaration has been considered as a clear proof of the divinity of Christ, for the following reasons:

1st. There is no evidence that this was a mere expression, as some have supposed, of surprise or astonishment.

2nd. The language was addressed to Jesus himself— "*Thomas— said UNTO HIM*."

3rd. The Saviour did not *reprove* him or *check* him as using any improper language. If he had not been divine, it is impossible to reconcile it with his *honesty* that he did not rebuke the disciple. No *pious man* would have allowed such language to be ad dressed to him. Comp. Ac 14:13-15 Re 22:8,9.

4th. The Saviour proceeds immediately to *commend* Thomas for believing; but what was the *evidence* of his believing? It was this declaration, and this only. If this was a mere exclamation of *surprise*, what proof was it that Thomas believed? Before this he doubted. Now he believed, and gave utterance to his belief, *that Jesus was his Lord and his God*.

5th. If this was not the meaning of Thomas, then his exclamation was a mere act of profaneness, and the Saviour would not have commended him for taking the name of the Lord his God in vain. The passage proves, therefore, that it is proper to apply to Christ the name *Lord* and GOD, and thus accords with what John affirmed in Joh 1:1, and which is established throughout this gospel.

{f} "My Lord and my God." Ps 118:28 Joh 5:23; 1Ti 3:16

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 20 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Because thou hast seen me*. Because you have looked upon my body, and seen the proofs that I am the same Saviour that was crucified. Jesus here *approves* the faith of Thomas, but more highly commends the faith of those who should believe without having seen.

Blessed. Happy, or worthy of the divine approbation. The word has here the force of the comparative degree, signifying that they would be in some respects *more* blessed than Thomas. They would evince higher faith.

That have not seen, &c. Those who should be convinced by the testimony of the apostles, and by the influences of the Spirit. They would evince *stronger faith*. *All faith* is of things not seen; and God blesses those most who most implicitly rely on his word.

{g} "blessed are they" 1Pe 1:8

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 20 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *Other signs*. Other miracles. Many were recorded by the other evangelists, and many which he performed were never recorded. Joh 21:25,

{h} "And many other signs" Joh 21:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 20 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *These are written*. Those recorded in this *gospel*.

That ye might believe, &c. This is a clue to the design which John had in view in writing this *gospel*. The whole *scope* or *end* of the book is to accomplish two objects:

1st. To prove that Jesus was the Messiah; and,

2nd. That they who looked at the proof might be convinced and have eternal life. This design is kept in view throughout the book. The miracles, facts, arguments, instructions, and conversations of our Lord all tend to this. This point had not been kept in view so directly by either of the other evangelists, and it was reserved for the last of the apostles to collect those arguments, and make out a connected demonstration *that Jesus was the Messiah*. If this design of John is kept steadily in view, it will throw much light on the book, and the argument is unanswerable, framed after the strictest rules of reasoning, infinitely beyond the skill of man, and having throughout the clearest evidence of demonstration.

{i} "But these are written" Lu 1:4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 21 - Verse 1

Verse 1. *The sea of Tiberias*. Called also the Sea of Galilee, being situated in Galilee. **See Barnes "Mt 4:18"**.

In this place Jesus had promised to meet them, Mr 14:28 16:7; Mt 26:32 28:10.

This interview of Jesus is but just mentioned by Matthew (Mt 28:16), and is omitted by both Mark and Luke. This is the reason why John relates so particularly what occurred there. Galilee was a retired place where they would be free from danger, and was therefore a safe and convenient situation for Jesus to meet them, in order to give them his last instructions.

On this wise. Thus. In this manner.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 21 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *There were together*. Probably residing in the same place. While they were waiting for the promise of the Holy Spirit, they still found it proper to be usefully employed. Their Master had been taken away by death, and the promised Spirit had not descended on them. In the interval—-before the promised Spirit was poured upon them— they chose not to be idle, and therefore returned to their former employment. It is to be remarked, also, that they had no other means of support. While with Jesus, they were commonly supplied by the kindness of the people; but now, when the Saviour had died, they were cut off from this means of support, and returned to the honest labour of their early lives. Moreover, they had been directed by the Saviour to repair to a mountain in Galilee, where he would meet them, Mt 28:10. This was probably not far from the Sea of Galilee, so that, until he came to them, they would naturally be engaged in their old employment. Ministers of the gospel should be willing to labour, if necessary, for their own support, and should not esteem such labour dishonourable. God has made *employment* indispensable to man, and if the field of labour is not open in one way, they should seek it in another. If at any time the people withhold the supply of their wants, they should be able and willing to seek support in some other honest occupation.

{a} "Nathanael of Cana" Joh 1:45 {b} "the *sons* of Zebedee" Mt 4:21

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 21 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *That night they caught nothing*. This was so ordered in the providence of God that the miracle which was wrought might appear more remarkable.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 21 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Knew not that it was Jesus*. Probably it was yet twilight, and in the distance they could not distinctly recognize him.

{c} "knew not that it was Jesus" Joh 20:14

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 21 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Children*. A term of affection and friendship, 1Jo 2:18.

Any meat. This word (Greek) means anything eaten with bread. It was used by the Greeks especially to denote *fish* (Schleusner)

{d} "Jesus saith unto them" Lu 24:41 {1} "Children" or, "Sirs"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 21 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *On the right side*. Why the *right* side is mentioned is not known. Grotius supposes that it was the side nearest the shore, where there was *less* probability of taking fish. It does not appear that they yet recognized the Lord Jesus but from some cause they had sufficient confidence in him to make another trial. Perhaps they judged that he was one skilled in that employment, and knew where there was the greatest probability of success.

{e} "Cast the net on the right" Lu 5:4-7

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 21 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved*. Joh 13:23.

It is the Lord. He was convinced, perhaps, by the apparent miracle, and by looking more attentively on the person of one who had been the means of such unexpected and remarkable success.

His fisher's coat. His upper or outer garment or tunic, in distinction from the inner garment or tunic which was worn next the skin. In the case of Peter it may have been made of coarse materials such as fishermen commonly wore, or such as Peter usually wore when he was engaged in this employment. Such garments are common with men of this occupation. This outer garment he probably had laid aside.

He was naked. He was *undressed*, with nothing on but the under garment or tunic. The word does not require us to suppose a greater degree of nakedness than this. **See Barnes** "Mr 14:51, **See Barnes "1Sa 19:24"**.

Did cast himself into the sea. With characteristic ardour, desirous of meeting again his Lord, and showing his affection for him.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 21 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Two hundred cubits*. About 350 feet, or a little more than 20 rods.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 21 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *They saw a fire*, &c. We have no knowledge whence this was produced— whether it was, as Grotius supposes, by a miracle, or whether it was a place occupied by other fishermen,

where *they* also might cook the fish which they had caught. As no miracle is mentioned, however, there is no reason for supposing that any existed in the case.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 21 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 21 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *An hundred and fifty and three*. The number is mentioned because it seems to have been a very unusual draught, and it was particularly gratifying and striking to them after they had spent the whole night and had caught *nothing*. This convinced them that it was no other than the same Saviour who had so often worked wonders before them that was now with them.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 21 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Come and dine*. The word in the original means the meal which is taken in the *morning*, or breakfast.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 21 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Jesus then cometh*, and taketh bread, &c. It is not said that Jesus himself *ate* with them, but he gave them food. The design of this interview seems to have been to convince them that he had truly risen from the dead. Hence he performed a miracle *before* they suspected that it was he, that there might be no room to say that they had ascribed to him the power of the miracle through friendship and collusion with him. The miracle was such as to satisfy them of its truth, and was, in accordance with all his works, not for mere display, but for utility. He remained with them, was with them at their meal, conversed with them, and thus convinced them that he was the same Friend who had died.

{f} "Jesus then cometh" Ac 10:41

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 21 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *The third time*. See the "Harmony of the Accounts of the Resurrection of Jesus" at the end of Matthew.

{g} "This is now the third time" Joh 20:19,26

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 21 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Lovest thou me more than these*? There is a slight ambiguity here in the original, as there is in our translation. The word *these* may be in the neuter gender, and refer to these *things*—his boat, his fishing utensils, and his employments; or it may be in the masculine, and refer to the apostles. In the former sense it would mean, "Lovest thou me more than thou lovest these objects? Art thou now willing, from love to me, to forsake all these, and go and preach my gospel to the nations of the earth?" In the other sense, which is probably the true sense, it would mean, "Lovest thou me more than these other apostles love me?" In this question Jesus refers to the profession of superior attachment to him which Peter had made before his death (Mt 26:33): "Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended." Comp. Joh 13:37. Jesus here slightly reproves him for that confident assertion, reminds him of his sad and painful denial, and now puts this direct and pointed question to him to know what was the *present* state of his feelings. After all that Peter had had to humble him, the Saviour inquired of him what had been the *effect* on his mind, and whether it had tended to prepare him for the arduous toils in which he was about to engage. This question we should all put to ourselves. It is a matter of much importance that we should ourselves know what is the effect of the dealings of divine Providence on our hearts, and what is our *present* state of feeling toward the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thou knowest that I love thee. Peter now made no pretensions to love superior to his brethren. His sad denial had convinced him of the folly of that claim; but still he could appeal to the Searcher of the heart, and say that he *knew* that he loved him. Here is the expression of a humbled soul—a soul made sensible of its weakness and need of strength, yet with evidence of true attachment to the Saviour. It is not the most confident pretensions that constitute the highest proof of love to Christ; and the happiest and best state of feeling is when we can with humility, yet with confidence, look to the Lord Jesus and say, "Thou *knowest* that I love thee."

Feed my lambs. The word *here* rendered *feed* means the care afforded by furnishing *nutriment* for the flock. In the next verse there is a change in the Greek, and the word rendered *feed* denotes rather the *care, guidance, and protection* which a shepherd extends to his flock. By the use of both these words, it is supposed that our Saviour intended that a shepherd was both to offer the proper food for his flock and to govern it; or, as we express it, to exercise the office of a pastor. The expression is taken from the office of a *shepherd*, with which the office of a minister of the gospel is frequently compared. It means, as a good shepherd provides for the wants of his flock, so the pastor in the church is to furnish food for the soul, or so to exhibit truth that the faith of believers may be strengthened and their hope confirmed.

My lambs. The church is often compared to a flock. See Joh 10:1-16. Here the expression *my lambs* undoubtedly refers to the *tender* and the *young* in the Christian church; to those who are young in years and in Christian experience. The Lord Jesus saw, what has been confirmed in the experience of the church, that the success of the gospel among men depended on the care which the ministry would extend to those in early life. It is in obedience to this command that Sunday-schools have been established, and no means of fulfilling this command of the Saviour

have been found so effectual as to extend patronage to those schools. It is not merely, therefore, the *privilege*, it is the solemn *duty* of ministers of the gospel to countenance and patronize those schools.

{h} "more than these" Mt 26:33,35 {i} "Feed my lambs" Isa 40:11 Jer 3:15; Eze 34:2-10 Ac 20:28

1Pe 5:2,4

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 21 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Feed my sheep*. The word here rendered *feed*, as has been remarked, is different from the word in the previous verse. It has the sense of *governing, caring for, guiding, protecting* —the kind of faithful vigilance which a shepherd uses to guide his flock, and to make provision against their wants and dangers. It *may* be implied here that the care needed for the young in the church is to *instruct* them, and for those in advanced years both to instruct and govern them.

My sheep. This term commonly denotes the church in general, without respect to age, John, chapter 10.

{k} "Feed my sheep" Heb 13:20 1Pe 2:25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 21 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *The third time*. It is probable that Jesus proposed this question three times because Peter had thrice denied him. Thus he tenderly admonished him of his fault and reminded him of his sin, while he solemnly charged him to be faithful and vigilant in the discharge of the duties of the pastoral office. The reason why the Saviour addressed Peter in this manner was doubtless because he had just denied him—had given a most melancholy instance of the instability and weakness of his faith, and of his liability to fall. As he had thus been prominent in forsaking him, he took this occasion to give to him a *special* charge, and to *secure* his future obedience. Hence he so administered the charge as to remind him of his fault; and he made him so prominent as to show the solicitude of the Saviour that henceforward he might not be left to dishonour his high calling. This same charge, in substance, he had on other occasions given to the apostles (Mt 18:18), and there is not the slightest evidence here that Christ intended, as the Papists pretend, to give Peter any *peculiar* primacy or eminence in the church. The charge to Peter arose, manifestly, from his prominent and melancholy act in denying him, and was the kind and tender means used by a faithful Saviour to keep him from similar acts in the future dangers and trials of life. It is worthy of remark that the admonition was effectual. Henceforward Peter was one of the most firm and unwavering of all the apostles, and thus fully justified the appellation of a *rock*, which the Saviour by anticipation had given him. **See Barnes "Joh 1:42".**

{m} "thou knowest all things" Joh 16:30

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 21 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *When thou wast young*. When in early life thou didst gird *thyself* &c. The Jews, in walking or running, girded their outer garments around them, that they might not be impeded. **See Barnes "Mt 5:38-41".**

Thou girdedst. The expression here denotes *freedom*. He did as he pleased—he girded himself or not—he went or remained, as he chose. Perhaps the expression refers rather *to that time* than to the previous period of Peter's life. "Thou being young or in the rigour of life, hast just girded thyself and come freely to the shore." In either case the Saviour intimates that at the end of his life he would not be thus free.

When thou shalt be old. Ancient writers say that Peter was put to death about thirty-four years after this. His precise age at that time is not known.

Thou shalt stretch forth thy hands. When Peter was put to death, we are told that he requested that he might be crucified with his head downward, saying that he who had denied his Lord as he had done was not *worthy* to die as he did. This expression of Christ may intimate the *readiness* of Peter thus to die. Though he was not at liberty as when he was young, though bound by others, yet he *freely* stretched out his hands on the cross, and was ready to give up his life.

Another shall gird thee. Another shall *bind* thee. The limbs of persons crucified were often *bound* instead of being *nailed*, and even the *body* was sometimes girded to the cross, **See Barnes "Mt 27:35".**

Carry thee, &c. Shall *bear* thee, or shall *compel* thee to go to prison and to death, This is not said to intimate that Peter would be unwilling to suffer martyrdom, but it stands opposed to the freedom of his early life. Though willing when compelled to do it, yet he would not *seek it*; and though he would not needlessly expose himself to it, yet he would not shrink from it when it was the will of God.

{n} "When thou was young" Joh 13:36 Ac 12:3,4

{o} "shall gird thee" Ac 21:11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 21 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *By what death*, &c. In these words two things are implied:

1st. That Peter would die a violent death; and,

2nd. That his death would be such as to honour God.

The ancients say that Peter was crucified at Rome, about thirty-four years after this, with his head downward. Clemens says that he was led to the crucifixion with his wife, and sustained her in her sufferings by exhorting her to remember the example of her Lord. He also adds that he died, not as the philosophers did, but with a firm hope of heaven, and patiently endured the pangs of the cross (*Strom*. vii.). This declaration of the Saviour was doubtless continually before the mind of Peter, and to the hour of his death he maintained the utmost constancy and fidelity in his cause, thus justifying the appellation which the Lord Jesus gave him—a rock.

{p} "what death" 2Pe 1:14 {q} "Follow me" Nu 14:24 1Sa 12:20; Mt 19:28 Joh 12:26

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 21 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Which also leaned*, &c. See Joh 13:24,25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 21 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *What shall this man do*? This question probably means, "What death shall he die?" But it is impossible to ascertain certainly why Peter asked this question. John was a favourite disciple, and *perhaps* Peter suspected that he would have a happier lot, and not be put to death in this manner. Peter was *grieved* at the question of Jesus; he was probably deeply affected with the account of his own approaching sufferings; and, with *perhaps* a mixture of grief and *envy*, he asked what would be his lot. But it is *possible*, also, that it was from *kindness* to John—a deep solicitude about him, and a wish that he might not die in the same manner as one who had denied his Lord. Whatever the motive was, it was a curiosity which the Lord Jesus did not choose to gratify.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 21 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *That he tarry*. That he *live*. The same word is used to express life in Php 1:24,25; 1Co 15:6.

Till I come. Some have supposed this to refer to the destruction of Jerusalem; others to the day of judgment; others to signify that he would not die a violent death; but the plain meaning is, "If I will that he should not *die at all*, it is nothing to thee." In this way the apostles evidently understood it, and hence raised a report that he would *not* die. It is remarkable that John was the last of the apostles; that he lived to nearly the close of the first century, and then died a peaceful death at Ephesus, being the only one, as is supposed, of the apostles who did not suffer martyrdom. The testimony of antiquity is clear on this point; and though there have been many idle *conjectures* about this passage and about the fate of John, yet no fact of history is better attested than that John died and was buried at Ephesus.

What is that to thee? From this passage we learn,

1st. That our main business is to follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

2nd. That there are many subjects of religion on which a vain and impertinent curiosity is exercised. All such curiosity Jesus here reproves.

3rd. That Jesus will take care of all his true disciples, and that we should not be unduly solicitous about them.

4th. That we should go forward to whatever he calls us—to persecution or death—not envying the lot of any other man, and anxious only to do the will of God.

{r} "till I come" Mt 25:31 Re 1:7, 22:20

{s} "Follow thou me" Joh 21:19

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 21 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Then went this saying*, &c. This mistake arose very naturally—

1st. From the *words* of Jesus, which might be easily misunderstood to mean that he should not die; and,

2nd. It was probably confirmed when it was seen that John survived *all* the other apostles, had escaped all the dangers of persecution, and was leading a peaceful life at Ephesus. This mistake John deemed it proper to correct before he died, and has thus left on record what Jesus *said* and what he *meant*.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 21 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *This is the disciple*, &c. This proves that the beloved disciple was John.

We know. That is, *it is known*; it is universally admitted. It was so decidedly his character that he always declared the truth, that it had become known, and was unquestioned, so that *he himself* might appeal to the universal testimony in his behalf. In this case, therefore, we have the testimony of a man whose character for nearly a *century* was that of a man of truth—-so much so that it had become, in a manner, proverbial, and was put beyond a doubt. It is impossible to believe that such a man would sit down deliberately to impose on mankind, or to write a book which was false; and if not, then this book is true, and that is the same as saying that Christianity is a religion from heaven.

{t} "and we know" Joh 19:35 3Jo 1:12

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - Chapter 21 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Many other things*. Many miracles, Joh 20:30. Many discourses delivered, &c.

I suppose, &c. This is evidently the figure of speech called a *hyperbole*. It is a mode of speech where the *words* express more or less than is *literally* true. It is common among all writers; and as the sacred writers, in recording a revelation to men, used human language, it was proper that they should express themselves as men ordinarily do if they wished to be understood. This figure of speech is commonly the effect of *surprise*, or having the mind *full* of some object, and not having words to express the ideas: at the same time, the words convey no *falsehood*. The statement is to be taken as it would be understood among the persons to whom it is addressed; and as no one *supposes* that the author means to be understood *literally*, so there is no deception in the case, and consequently no impeachment of his veracity or inspiration. Thus, when Longinus said of a man that "he was the owner of a piece of ground not larger than a Lacedaemonian letter," no one understood him literally. He meant, evidently, a *very small* piece of land, and no one would be deceived. So Virgil says of a man, "he was so tall as to reach the stars," and means only that he was *very tall*. So when John says that the world could not contain the books that would be written if *all* the deeds and sayings of Jesus were recorded, he clearly intends nothing more than that a

great many books would be required, or that it would be extremely difficult to record them all; intimating that his life was active, that his discourses were numerous, and that he had not *pretended* to give them all, but only such as would go to establish the main point for which he wrote—that he was the Messiah, Joh 20:30,31. The figure which John uses here is not uncommon in the Scriptures, Ge 11:4 15:5; Nu 13:33 Da 4:20.

This gospel contains in itself the clearest proof of inspiration. It is the work of a fisherman of Galilee, without any proof that he had any unusual advantages. It is a connected, clear, and satisfactory argument to establish the great truth that Jesus was the Messiah. It was written many years after the ascension of Jesus. It contains the record of the Saviour's profoundest discourses, of his most convincing arguments with the Jews, and of his declarations respecting himself and God. It contains the purest and most elevated views of God to be found anywhere, as far exceeding all the speculations of philosophers as the sun does the blaze of a taper. It is in the highest degree absurd to suppose that an unlettered fisherman could have *originated* this book. Anyone may be convinced of this by comparing it with what would be the production of a man in that rank of life now. But if John has preserved the record of what has occurred so many years before, then it shows that he was under the divine guidance, and is himself a proof, a full and standing proof, of the fulfillment of the promise which he has recorded— that the Holy Spirit would guide the apostles into all truth, Joh 14:26. Of this book we may, in conclusion, apply the words spoken by John respecting his vision of the future events of the church: "Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this book, and keep those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand," Re 1:3.

{u} "And there are also" Joh 20:30 {v} "the world could not contain" Am 7:10

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 1

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 1 - Verse 1

Introduction to THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

There is no evidence that the title, "The Acts of The Apostles," affixed to this book, was given by Divine authority, or by the writer himself. It is a title, however, which, with a little variation, has been given to it by the Christian church at all times. The term "Acts" is not used, as it is sometimes with us, to denote *decrees* or *laws*, but it denotes the *doings* of the apostles. It is a record of what the apostles *did* in founding and establishing the Christian church. It is worthy of remark, however, that it contains a record of the *doings* of Peter and Paul. Peter was commissioned to open the doors of the Christian church to both Jews and Gentiles, **See Barnes "Mt 16:18,19"**; and Paul was chosen to bear the gospel especially to the pagan world. As these two apostles were the most prominent and distinguished in founding and organizing the Christian church, it was deemed proper that a special and permanent record should be made of their labours. At the same time, occasional notices are given of the other apostles; but of their labours elsewhere than in Judea, and of their death, except that of James, Ac 12:2, the sacred writers have given no information.

All antiquity is unanimous in ascribing this book to Luke as its author. It is repeatedly mentioned and quoted by the early Christian writers, and without a dissenting voice is mentioned as the work of Luke. The same thing is clear from the book itself. It professes to have been written by the same person who wrote the Gospel of Luke, Ac 1:1; was addressed to the same person, (comp. Ac 1:1 with Lu 1:3; and bears manifest marks of being from the same pen. It is designed evidently as a continuation of his Gospel, as in this book he has taken up the history at the very time where he left it in the Gospel, Ac 1:1,2.

Where, or at what time, this book was written is not certainly known. As the history, however, is continued to the second year of the residence of Paul at Rome, Ac 28:30, it was evidently written about as late as the year 62; and as it makes not mention of the further dealings with Paul, or of any other event of history, it seems clear that it was not written much *after* that time. It has been common, therefore, to fix the date of the book at about A. D. 63. it is also probable that it was written at Rome. In Ac 28:16, Luke mentions *his* arrival at Rome with Paul. As he does not mention his departure from this city, it is to be presumed that it was written there. Some have supposed that it was written at Alexandria in Egypt, but of that there is no sufficient evidence.

The canonical authority of this book rests on the same foundation as that of the Gospel by the same author. Its authenticity has not been called in question at any time in the church.

This book has commonly been regarded as a history of the Christian church, and of course the first ecclesiastical history that was written. But it cannot have been designed as a general history of the church. Many important transactions have been omitted. It gives no account of the church at Jerusalem after the conversion of Paul; it omits his journey into Arabia, Ga 1:17; gives no account

of the propagation of the gospel in Egypt, or in Babylon, 1Pe 5:13; of the foundation of the church at Rome; of many of Paul's voyages and shipwrecks, 2Co 11:25; and omits to record the labours of most of the apostles, and confines the narrative chiefly to the transactions of Peter and Paul.

The design and importance of this history may be learned from the following particulars:

1. It contains *a record of the promised descent and operations of the Holy Spirit.* The Lord Jesus promised that, after he had departed to heaven, he would send the Holy Ghost to carry forward the great work of redemption, Joh 14:16,17, 15:26 16:7-14.

The apostles were directed to tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high, Lu 24:49. the four Gospels contained a record of the life, instruction, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. But it is clear that he contemplated that the most signal triumphs of the gospel should take place after his ascension to heaven, and under the influence of the Holy Spirit. The descent of the Spirit, and his influence on the souls of men, was a most important part of the work of redemption. Without an authentic, and inspired record of that, the account of the operations of God the Father, Son, and Spirit, in the work of redemption, would not have been complete. The purposes of *the Father* in regard to that plan were made known clearly in the Old Testament; the record of what *the Son* did in accomplishing it, was contained in the Gospels; and some book was needful that should contain a record of the *doings* of the Holy Spirit. As the Gospels, therefore, may be regarded as a record of the work of Christ to save men, so may the Acts of the Apostles be considered the record of the *doings* of the Holy Spirit in the same great work. Without that, the way in which the Spirit operates to renew and save would have been very imperfectly known.

2. This book is *an inspired account of the character of true revivals of religion*. It records the first revivals that occurred in the Christian church. The scene on the day of Pentecost was one of the most remarkable displays of Divine power and mercy that the world has ever known. It was the commencement of a series of stupendous movements in the world to recover men. It was the true mode of a revival of religion, and a perpetual demonstration that such scenes as have characterized our own age and nation especially, are strictly in accordance with the Spirit of the New Testament. The entire book of the Acts of the Apostles records the effect of the gospel when it comes fairly in contact with the minds of men. The gospel was addressed to every class. It met the Jew and the Gentile, the bond and the free, the learned and the ignorant, the rich and the poor; and showed its power everywhere in subduing the mind to itself. It was proper that some record should be preserved of the displays of that power; and that record we have in this book. And it was especially proper that there should be given, by an inspired man, an account of the descent of the Holy Spirit, *a record of a true revival of religion*. It was certain that the gospel would produce excitement. The human mind, as all experience shows, is prone to enthusiasm and fanaticism; and men might be disposed to pervert the gospel to scenes of wildfire, disorder, and tumult. That the gospel *would* produce excitement, was well known to its Author. It was well, therefore, that there should be some record to which the church might always appeal as an infallible account of the proper effects of the gospel; some inspired standard to which might be brought all excitements on the subject of religion. If they are in accordance with the first triumphs of the gospel, they are genuine; if not, they are false.

3. It may be further remarked, that this book shows that *revivals religion are to be expected in the church*. If they existed in the best and purest days of Christianity, they are to be expected now. If by means of revivals the Holy Spirit chose at first to bless the preaching of the truth, the same

thing is to be expected still. If in this way the gospel was at first spread among the nations, then we are to infer that this will be the mode in which it will finally spread and triumph in the world.

4. The Acts of the Apostles contains a record of the organization of the Christian church. That church was founded simply by the preaching of the truth, and chiefly by a simple statement of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The "Acts of the Apostles" contains the highest models of preaching, and the purest specimens of that simple, direct, and pungent manner of addressing men, which may be expected to be attended with the influences of the Holy Spirit. It contains some of the most tender, powerful, and eloquent appeals to be found in any language. If a man wishes to learn how to preach well, he can probably acquire it nowhere else so readily as by giving himself to the prayerful and profound study of the specimens contained in this book. At the same time, we have here a view of the *character* of the true church of Christ. The *simplicity* of this church must strike every reader of "the Acts." Religion is represented as a work of the heart; the pure and proper effect of *truth* on the mind. It is free from pomp and splendour, and from costly and magnificent ceremonies. There is no apparatus to impress the senses, no splendour to dazzle, no external rite or parade adapted to draw the affections from the pure and spiritual worship of God. How unlike to the pomp and parade of pagan worship! How unlike the vain and pompous ceremonies which have since, alas! crept into no small part of the Christian church!

5. In this book we have many striking and impressive illustrations of what the gospel is fitted to produce, to make men self-denying and benevolent. The apostles engaged in the great enterprise of converting the world. To secure that, they cheerfully forsook all. Paul became a convert to the Christian faith; and cheerfully for that gave up all his hopes of preferment and honour, and welcomed toil and privation in foreign lands. The early converts had all things in common, Ac 2:44 those "which used curious arts," and were gaining property by a course of iniquity, forsook their schemes of ill-gotten gain; and burned their books publicly, Ac 19:19; Ananias and Sapphira were punished for attempting to impose of the apostles by hypocritical professed self- denials, Ac 5:1-10; and throughout the book there occur constant instances of sacrifices and toil to spread the gospel around the globe. Indeed, these great truths had manifestly seized upon the early Christians: *that the gospel was to be preached to all nations; and that whatever stood in the way of that was to be sacrificed; whatever toils and dangers were necessary, were to be borne; and even death itself was cheerfully to be met, it would promote the spread of true religion.* This was *then* genuine Christianity; this is *still* the spirit of the gospel of Christ.

6. This book throws important light on *the Epistles*. It is a connecting link between the Gospels and the other parts of the New Testament. Instances of this will be noticed in the Notes. One of the most clear and satisfactory evidences of the genuineness of the books of the New Testament is to be found in the *undesigned coincidences* between the Acts and the Epistles. This argument was first clearly stated and illustrated by Dr. Paley. His little work illustrating it, the *Hora Paulinae*, is one of the most unanswerable proofs which have yet been furnished of the truth of the Christian religion.

7. This book contains unanswerable evidence of the truth of the Christian religion. It is a record of the early triumphs of Christianity. Within the space of *thirty years* after the death of Christ, the gospel had been carried to all parts of the civilized, and to no small portion of the uncivilized world. Its progress and its triumphs were not concealed. Its great transactions were not "done in a corner." It had been preached in the most splendid, powerful, and corrupt cities; churches were already founded in Jerusalem, Antioch, Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, and at Rome. The gospel had spread in

Arabia, Asia Minor, Greece, Macedon, Italy, and Africa. It had assailed the most mighty existing institutions; it had made its way over the most formidable barriers; it had encountered the most deadly and malignant opposition; it had travelled to the capital, and had secured such a hold, even in the imperial city, as to make it certain that it would finally overturn the established religion, and seat itself on the ruins of paganism. Within thirty years it had settled the point that it would overturn every bloody altar; close every pagan temple; and that "banners of the faith would soon stream from the palaces of the Caesars." All this would be accomplished by the instrumentality of the Jews—of fishermen—of Nazarenes. The had neither wealth, armies, nor allies. With the exception of Paul, there were men without learning. They were taught only by the Holy Ghost; armed only with the power of God; victorious only because he was their Captain; and the world acknowledged the presence of the messengers of the Highest, and the power of the Christian religion. Its success never has been, and never can be, accounted for by any other supposition than that God attended it. And if the Christian religion be not true, the change wrought by the twelve apostles is the most inexplicable, mysterious, and wonderful event that has ever been witnessed in this world. Their success to the end of time will stand as an argument of the truth of the scheme, that shall confound the infidel, and sustain the Christian with the assured belief that *this* is a religion which has proceeded from the almighty and infinitely benevolent God.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Chapter 1

Verse 1. *The former treatise*. The former book. The Gospel by Luke is here evidently intended. Greek, "the former *logos*," meaning a discourse, or a narrative.

O Theophilus. **See Barnes "Lu 1:3"**.

As this book was written to the same individual as the former, it was evidently written with the same design—to furnish an authentic and full narrative of events concerning which there would be many imperfect and exaggerated accounts given. See Lu 1:1-4. As these events pertained to the descent of the Spirit, to the spread of the gospel, to the organization of the church by inspired authority, to the kind of preaching by which the church was collected and organized; and as those events were a full proof of the truth and power of the Christian religion, and would be a model for ministers and the church in all future times, it was of great importance that a fair and full narrative of them should be preserved. Luke was the companion of Paul in his travels, and was an eye-witness of no small part of the transactions recorded in this book. See Ac 16:10,17, 20:1-6 27 28.

As an eye-witness, he was well qualified to make a record of the leading events of the primitive church. And as he was the companion of Paul, he had every opportunity of obtaining information about the great events of the gospel of Christ.

Of all. That is, of the principal, or most important parts of the life and doctrines of Christ. It cannot mean that he recorded *all* that Jesus did, as he has omitted many things that have been preserved by the other evangelists. The word *all* is frequently thus used to denote the most important or material facts. See Ac 13:10 1Ti 1:16; Jas 1:2 Mt 2:3, 3:5 Ac 2:5; Ro 11:26 Col 1:6.

In each of these places the word here translated "all" occurs in the original, and means *many, a large part, the principal portion*. It has the same use in all languages. "This word often signifies, indefinitely, a large portion or number, or a great part." Webster.

That Jesus. The Syriac version adds, "Jesus our Messiah."—This version was probably made in the second century.

Began both to do, etc. This is a Hebrew form of expression, meaning the same thing as that Jesus *did* and *taught*. See Ge 9:20, "Noah *began* to be an husbandman," i.e. *was* an husbandman. Ge 12:3, in the Septuagint: "Which God began to create and make;" in the Hebrew, "which God created and made." Mr 6:7, "*Began* to send them forth by two and two," i.e. sent them forth. See also Mr 10:32 14:65, "And some *began* to spit on him;" in the parallel place in Mt 26:67, "they *did* spit in his face."

To do. This refers to his miracles and his acts of benevolence, including all that he did for man's salvation. It probably includes, therefore, his sufferings, death, and resurrection, as a part of what he has *done* to save men.

To teach. His doctrines. He had given an account of what the Lord Jesus did, so he was now about to give a narrative of what his apostles did in the same cause, that thus the world might be in possession of an inspired record respecting the redemption and establishment of the Christian church. The history of these events is one of the greatest blessings that God has conferred on mankind; and one of the highest privileges which men can enjoy is that which has been conferred so abundantly on this age in the possession and extension of the word of God.

No men could be imposed upon and made to believe that they really saw, talked with, and ate with, a friend whom they had known so long and familiarity, unless it was real.

(3.) There were enough of them to avoid the possibility of deception. Though it might be pretended that one man could be imposed on, yet it could not be that an imposition could be practised for forty days on eleven, who were all at first incredulous.

(4.) He was with them sufficient time to give evidence. It might be pretended, if they had seen him but once, that they were deceived. But they saw him often, and for the space of more than a month,

(5.) They saw him in various places and times where there could be no deception. If they had pretended that they saw him rise, or saw him at twilight in the morning when he rose, it might have been said that they were deluded by some remarkable appearance. Or it might have been said that, expecting, to see him rise, their hopes and agitations would have deceived them, and they would easily have fancied that they saw him. But it is not pretended by the sacred writers that they saw him rise. An impostor would have affirmed this, and would ,wt have omitted it.

But the sacred writers affirmed that they saw him after he was risen; when they were free from agitation; when they could judge coolly: in Jerusalem; in their company when at worship; when journeying to Emmaus; when in Galilee; when he went with them to Mount Olivet; and when he ascended to heaven.

(6.) He appeared to them as he had always done; as a friend, companion, and benefactor; he ate with them; wrought a miracle before them; was engaged in the same work as he was before he suffered; renewed the same promise of the Holy Spirit; and gave them his Commands respecting the work which he had died to establish and promote. In all these circumstances it was impossible that they should be deceived.

Being seen of them forty days. There are no less than THIRTEEN different appearances of Jesus to his disciples recorded. For an account of them, see the Note at the end of the Gospel of Matthew.

Speaking to them, etc. He was not only seen by them, but he continued the same topics of discourse as before his sufferings; thus showing that he was the same person that had suffered, and

that his heart was still intent on the same great work. Our Saviour's heart was filled with the same design in his life and death, and when he rose; thus showing us that we should aim at the same great work in all the circumstances of our being. Afflictions, persecutions, and death never turned him from this great plan; nor should they be allowed to divert our minds from the great work of redemption.

The things pertaining to the kingdom of God. For an explanation of this phrase, *the kingdom of God*, **See Barnes "Mt 3:2".**

The meaning is, Jesus gave them instructions about the organization, spread, and edification of his church.

{a} "the former treatise" Lu 1:1-4

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 1 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Until the day*. The fortieth day after his resurrection, Ac 1:3 Lu 24:51.

In which he was taken up. In which he ascended to heaven. He was taken up into a cloud, and is represented as having been borne or carried to heaven, Ac 1:9.

After that, etc. This whole passage has been variously rendered. The Syriac renders it, "After he had given commandment unto the apostles whom he had chosen by the Holy Spirit." So also the Ethiopic version. Others have joined the words "through the 'Holy Ghost" to the phrase "was taken up," making it mean that he was taken up by the Holy Ghost. But the most natural and correct translation seems to be that which is in our version.

Through the Holy Ghost. To understand this, it is necessary to call to mind the promise that Jesus made before his death, that after his departure, the Holy Ghost would descend to be a guide to his apostles. See Joh 16:7-11, **See Barnes "Joh 16:7".**

It was to be *his* office to carry forward the work of redemption in applying it to the hearts of men. Whatever was done, therefore, *after* the atonement and resurrection of Jesus, *after* he had finished his great work, was to be regarded as under the peculiar influence and direction of the Holy Ghost. Even the instructions of Jesus, his commission to the apostles, etc., were to be regarded as coming within the department of the sacred Spirit, within the province of *his* peculiar work. The instructions were given by Divine authority, by infallible guidance, and as a part of the work which the Holy Spirit designed. Under that Spirit the apostles were to go forth; by *his* aid they were to convert the world, to organize the church, to establish its order and its doctrines. And hence the entire work was declared to be by his direction. Though in his larger and more mighty influences, the Spirit did not descend until the day of Pentecost, Lu 24:49; comp. Ac 2 yet in *some measure* his influence was imparted to them before the ascension of Christ, Joh 20:22.

Had given commandments. Particularly the command to preach the gospel to all nations, Mt 28:19 Mr 16:15-19. It may be worthy of remark, that the word *commandments*, as a noun in the plural number, does not occur in the original. The single word which is translated "had given commandments" is a *participle*, and means simply *having commanded*. There is no need, therefore, of supposing that there is reference here to any other command than to that great and glorious injunction to preach the gospel to every creature. That was a command of so much importance as

to be worthy of a distinct record, as constituting the sum of all that the Saviour taught them after his resurrection.

The apostles. The eleven that remained after the treason and death of Judas.

Whom he had chosen. Mt 10; Lu 6:12-16.

{b} "Until the day" Ac 1:9 Lu 24:51; 1Ti 3:16

{c} "commandments unto the apostles" Mt 28:19 Mr 16:15-19

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 1 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *He shewed himself*. The *resurrection* of Jesus was the great fact on which the truth of the gospel was to be established. Hence the sacred writers so often refer to it, and establish it by so many arguments. As that *truth* lay at the foundation of all that Luke was about to record in his history, it was of importance that he should state clearly the sum of the evidence of it in the beginning of his work.

After his passion. After he *suffered*, referring particularly to his death, as the consummation of his sufferings. The word *passion*, with us, means commonly excitement, or agitation of mind; as love, hope, fear, anger, etc. In the original the word means to *suffer*. The word *passion*, applied to the Saviour, denotes his last sufferings. Thus in the Litany of the Episcopal church, it is beautifully said, "By thine agony and bloody sweat; by thy cross and *passion*, good Lord, deliver us." The Greek word of the same derivation is rendered *sufferings* in 1Pe 1:11 4:13; Col 1:24.

By many infallible proofs. The word here rendered *infallible proofs*, does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. In Greek authors it denotes an infallible sign or argument by which anything can be certainly known.—*Schleusner*. Here it means the same—evidence that he was alive which could not deceive, or in which they could not be mistaken. That evidence consisted in his eating with them, conversing with them, meeting them at various times and places, working miracles, (Joh 21:6,7); and uniformly showing himself to be the same Friend with whom they had been familiar for more than three years. This evidence was infallible,

(1.) because it was to them unexpected. They had manifestly not believed that he would rise again, Joh 20:25; Lu 24. There was therefore no *delusion* resulting from any *expectation* of seeing him, or from a *design* to impose on men.

(2.) It was impossible that they could have been *deceived* in relation to one with whom they had been familiar for more than three years. No men could be imposed upon and made to believe that they really saw, talked with, and ate with, a friend whom they had known so long and familiarly, unless it was real.

(3.) There were *enough* of them to avoid the possibility of deception. Though it might be pretended that *one* man could be imposed on, yet it could not be that an imposition could be practised for forty days on eleven, who were all at first incredulous.

(4.) He was with them sufficient *time* to give evidence. It might be pretended, if they had seen him but once, that they were deceived. But they saw him often, and for the space of more than a month,

(5.) They saw him in *various places* and times where there could be no deception. If they had pretended that they saw him rise, or saw him at twilight in the morning when he rose, it might have

been said that they were deluded by some remarkable appearance. Or it might have been said that, *expecting* to see him rise, their hopes and agitations would have deceived them, and they would easily have *fancied* that they saw him. But it is not pretended by the sacred writers that *they* saw him *rise*. An impostor would have affirmed this, and *would not have omitted it*. But the sacred writers affirmed that they saw him *after* he was risen; when they were free from agitation; when they could judge coolly: in Jerusalem; in their company when at worship; when journeying to Emmaus; when in Galilee; when he went with them to Mount Olivet; and when he ascended to heaven.

(6.) He appeared to them as he had always done; as a friend, companion, and benefactor; he ate with them; wrought a miracle before them; was engaged in the same work as he was before he suffered; renewed the same promise of the Holy Spirit; and gave them his Commands respecting the work which he had died to establish and promote. In all these circumstances it was impossible that they should be deceived.

Being seen of them forty days. There are no less than THIRTEEN different appearances of Jesus to his disciples recorded. For an account of them, **See Barnes "Mt 28:20"**.

Speaking to them, etc. He was not only *seen* by them, but he *continued the same topics of discourse* as before his sufferings; thus showing that he was the same person that had suffered, and that his heart was still intent on the same great work. Our Saviour's heart was filled with the same design in his life and death, and when he rose; thus showing us that we should aim at the same great work in all the circumstances of our being. Afflictions, persecutions, and death never turned him from this great plan; nor should they be allowed to divert our minds from the great work of redemption.

The things pertaining to the kingdom of God. For an explanation of this phrase, the kingdom of God, **See Barnes "Mt 3:2"**.

The meaning is, Jesus gave them instructions about the organization, spread, and edification of his church.

{d} "many infallible proofs" Lu 24:15 Joh 20:1-21:25.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 1 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And being assembled together*. Margin, "or, *eating together*." This sense is given to this place in the Latin Vulgate, the Ethiopic, and the Syriac versions. But the Greek word has not properly this sense. It has the meaning of *congregating*, or *assembling*. It should have been, however, translated in the *active* sense, "and *having assembled them together*." The apostles were scattered after his death. But this passage denotes that *he* had assembled them together by his authority, for the purpose of giving them a charge respecting their conduct when he should have left them. *When* this occurred does not appear from the narrative; but it is probable that it was not long before his ascension; and it is clear that the *place* where they were assembled was *Jerusalem*.

But wait for the promise of the Father. For the *fulfillment* of the promise respecting the descent of the Holy Spirit, made by the Father.

Which ye have heard of me. Which I have made to you. See Joh 14:16,26, 15:26 16:7-13.

{1} "being assembled", or "eating together" {a} "commanded" Lu 24:40 {b} "ye have heard of me" Joh 14:1-16:33

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 1 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *For John truly baptized*, etc. These are the words of Jesus to his apostles; and he evidently has reference to what was said of John's baptism compared with his own in Mt 3:11 Joh 1:33. In those verses John is represented as baptizing with water, but the Messiah who was to come as baptizing with the Holy Ghost and with fire. This promise respecting the Messiah was now about to be fulfilled in a remarkable manner. See Ac 2.

Not many days hence. This was probably spoken not long before his ascension, and of course not many days before the day of Pentecost.

{c} "John truly" Mt 3:11 {+} "truly", or "indeed" {++} "Ghost", or "Spirit" {d} "Holy Ghost" Ac 2:4 10:45, 11:15

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 1 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *When they therefore were come together*. At the Mount of Olives. See Ac 1:9,12.

Wilt thou at this time, etc. The apostles had entertained the common opinions of the Jews about the *temporal* dominion of the Messiah. They expected that he would reign as a prince and conqueror, and free them from the bondage of the Romans. Many instances of this expectation occur in the Gospels, notwithstanding all the efforts which the Lord Jesus made to explain to them the true nature of his kingdom. This expectation was checked, and almost destroyed by his death, Lu 24:21. And it is clear that *his death* was the only means which could effectually check and change their opinions respecting the nature of his kingdom. Even his own instructions would not do it; and only his being taken from them could direct their minds effectually to the true nature of his kingdom. Yet, though his death checked their expectations, and appeared to thwart their plans, yet his return to life excited them again. They beheld him with them; they were assured it was the same Saviour; they saw now that his enemies had no power over him; that a Being who could rise from the dead, could easily accomplish all his plans. And as they did not doubt now that he *would* restore the kingdom to Israel, they asked whether he would do it *at this time*? They did not ask whether he would do it at all, or whether they had correct views of his kingdom; but taking that for granted, they asked him whether *that was the time* in which he would do it. The emphasis of the inquiry lies in the expression, "*at this time*," and hence the answer of the Saviour refers solely *to the point of their inquiry*, and not to the correctness or incorrectness of their opinions. From these expectations of the apostles we may learn,

(1.) that there is nothing so difficult to be removed from the mind as *prejudice in favour of erroneous opinions*.

(2.) That such prejudice will survive the plainest proofs to the contrary.

(3.) That it will often manifest itself even after all proper means have been taken to subdue it. Erroneous opinions thus maintain a secret ascendancy in a man's mind, and are revived by the slightest circumstances, even long after we supposed they were overcome; and even in the face of the plainest proofs of reason or of Scripture.

Restore. Bring back; put into its former situation. Judea was formerly governed by its own kings and laws; now it was subject to the Romans. This bondage was grievous, and the nation sighed for deliverance. The inquiry of the apostles evidently was, whether he would now free them from the bondage of the Romans, and restore them to their former state of freedom and prosperity, as in the times of David and Solomon. See Isa 1:26. The word" restore" also may include more than a reducing it to its former state. It may mean, Wilt thou now *bestow* the kingdom and dominion to Israel, according to the prediction in Da 7:27?

The kingdom. The dominion; the empire; the reign. The expectation was that the Messiah—the King of Israel—would reign over men, and thus the nation of the Jews extend their empire over all the earth.

To Israel. To the Jews, and particularly to the Jewish followers of the Messiah. Lightfoot thinks that this question was asked in indignation against the Jews. "Wilt thou confer dominion on a nation which has just put thee to death?" But the answer of the Saviour shows that this was not the design of the question.

{e} "wilt thou" Mt 24:3,4 {f} "restore again" Isa 1:26 Da 7:27

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 1 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *It is not for you to know*. The question of the apostles respected the time of the restoration; it was not whether he *would* do it. Accordingly, his answer meets precisely their inquiry; and he tells them *in general* that the time of the great events of God's kingdom was not to be understood by them. A similar question they had asked in Mt 24:3, "Tell us when shall these things be?"

Jesus answered them *then* by showing them certain signs which should precede his coming, and by saying, (Mt 24:36) "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." God has uniformly reproved a vain curiosity on such points, 1Th 5:1,2; 2Pe 3:10 Lu 12:39,40.

The times or the seasons. The difference between these words is, that the former denotes any time or period indefinite, or uncertain; the latter denotes a fixed, definite, or appropriate time. They seem to be used here to denote the periods of all classes of future events.

The Father hath put, etc. So much had the Father reserved the knowledge of these, that it is said, that even the Son did not know them. See Mr 13:32. **See Barnes "Mr 13:32"**.

In his own power. That is, he has fixed them by his own authority; he will bring them about in his own time and way; and therefore it is not proper for men anxiously to inquire into them. All prophecy is remarkably *obscure* in regard to the time of its fulfillment. The reasons are,

(1.) to excite men to watch for the events that are to come, as the time is uncertain, and they will come "like a thief in the night."

(2.) As they are to be brought about by human agency, they are so arranged as to call forth that agency. If men knew *just when* an event was to come to pass, they might be remiss, and feel that their effort was not needed.

(3.) The knowledge of future scenes—of the exact *time*, might alarm men, and absorb their thoughts entirely, and prevent attendance to the present duties of life. Duty is ours now; God will provide for future scenes.

(4.) Promises sufficiently clear and full are therefore given us to encourage us; but not full enough to excite a vain and idle curiosity. All this is eminently true of our own death—one of the most important future scenes through which we are to pass. It is *certainly* before us; it is *near*; it *cannot* be long avoided; it *may come* at any moment. God has fixed the time, but will not inform us when it shall be. He does not gratify a vain curiosity, or terrify us, by announcing to us the day or the hour when we are to die, as we do a man that is to be executed. This would be to make our lives like that of a criminal sentenced to die, and we should through all our life, through fear of death, be subject to bondage, Heb 2:15. He has made *enough* known to excite us to prepare, and to be always ready, having our loins girt about, and our lamps trimmed and burning, Lu 12:35.

{g} "It is not for" Mt 24:36 1Th 5:1,2

{*} "power", or "disposal"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 1 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *But ye shall receive power*, etc. Literally, as it is translated in the margin, "ye shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you." This was said to them to console them. Though they could not know the *times* which God reserved in his own appointment, yet they should receive the promised Guide and Comforter. The word *power* here refers to all the help or aid which the Holy Spirit would grant; the power of speaking with new tongues; of preaching the gospel with great effect; of enduring great trials, etc. See Mr 16:17,18. The apostles had *impatiently* asked him if he was *then* about to restore the kingdom to Israel. Jesus by this answer rebuked their impatience; taught them to repress their ill-timed ardour; and assured them again of the coming of the Holy Ghost.

Ye shall be witnesses. For this purpose they were appointed; and for this design they had been with him for more than three years. They had seen his manner of life, his miracles, his meekness, his sufferings; they had listened to his instructions, had conversed and eaten with him as a friend; they had seen him after he was risen, and were about to see him ascend to heaven; and they were *qualified* to bear witness to all these things in all parts of the earth, They were so numerous, that it could not be pretended that they were deceived; they had been so intimate with him and his plans, that they could testify of him; and there was no motive but conviction of the truth, that could lead them to all these sacrifices in making known the Saviour. The original word here is (*marturev*)—*martyrs*. From this word the name *martyrs* has been given to those who suffered in times of persecution. The reason why this name was given to them was that they bore witness to the life, instructions, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, even in the midst of persecution and death. It is commonly supposed that nearly all of the apostles thus *bore witness* to the Lord Jesus: of this, however, there is not clear proof. See Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, vol. i., pp. 55, p56.

Still the word here does not necessarily mean that they should be *martyrs*, or be put to death in bearing witness to the Lord Jesus; but that they should everywhere testify to what they knew of him. The fact that this was the design of their appointment, and that they actually bore such testimony, is abundantly confirmed in the Acts of the Apostles, Ac 1:22 5:32, 10:39,42, 22:16.

In Jerusalem. In the capital of the nation. See Ac 2. The great work of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost occurred there. Most of the disciples remained in Jerusalem until the persecution that arose about the death of Stephen, Ac 8:1,4. The apostles remained there till Herod put James to death. Comp. Ac 8:1, with Ac 12:1,2. This was about eight years. During this time, however, Paul was called to the apostleship, and Peter had preached the gospel to Cornelius, Philip to the eunuch, etc.

In all Judea. Judea was the southern division of the Holy Land, and included Jerusalem as the capital. **See Barnes "Mt 2:22"; See Barnes "Ac 8:1"**.

And in Samaria. This was the *middle* portion of Palestine. **See Barnes "Mt 2:22"**.

This was fulfilled by his disciples. See Ac 8:1, "And they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, (Ac 1:4,) everywhere preaching the word;" Ac 8:15, "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them " Ac 1:14 9:31.

And unto the uttermost part of the earth. The word *earth*, or *land*, is sometimes taken to denote only the land of Palestine. But here there does not seem to be a necessity for limiting it thus. If Christ had intended that, he would have mentioned *Galilee*, as being the only remaining division. But as he had expressly directed them to preach the gospel to all nations, the expression here is clearly to be considered as including the Gentile lands as well as the Jewish. The evidence that they did this is found in the subsequent parts of this book, and in the history of the church. In this way Jesus replied to their question. Though he did not tell them the time when it was to be done, nor did he affirm that he would restore the kingdom to *Israel*, yet he gave them an answer that implied that the work should advance—should advance much farther than the land of Israel; and that *they* would have *much to do* in promoting it. All the commands of God, and all his communications are such as to call up our energy, and teach us that we have much to do. The uttermost parts of the earth have been given to the Saviour, (Ps 2:8) and churches should not rest until He whose right it is shall come and reign, Eze 21:27.

{1} "power" or "the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you" {a} "ye shall be witnesses" Mt 28:19 Lu 24:47-49

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 1 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *While they beheld*. While they *saw him*. It was of importance to state that circumstance, and to state it distinctly. It is not affirmed in the New Testament that they *saw him rise* from the dead; because the evidence of that fact could be better established by their seeing him *after* he was risen. But the truth of his *ascension to heaven* could not be confirmed in that manner. Hence it was so arranged as that he should ascend in open day; in the presence of his apostles; and that not when they were asleep, or indifferent, but when they were engaged in a conversation that should fix the attention, and when they were looking upon him. Had Jesus vanished secretly, or in the night, the apostles would have been amazed and confounded; perhaps they would even have doubted whether

they had not been deceived. But when they *saw* him leave them in this manner, they could not doubt that he had risen; and when they saw him ascend *to heaven*, they could not doubt that his work was approved, and that God would carry it onward. This event was exceedingly important.

(1.) It was a confirmation of the truth of the Christian religion.

(2.) It enabled the apostles to state distinctly *where* the Lord Jesus was, and *at once* directed their affections and their thoughts away from the earth, and opened their eyes on the glory of the scheme of religion they were to establish. If their Saviour was in *heaven*, it settled the question about the *nature* of his kingdom. It was clear that it was not designed to be a temporal kingdom. The *reasons* why it was proper that the Lord Jesus should ascend to heaven rather than remain on earth, were,

(1,) that he had *finished* the work which God gave him to do on the earth, Joh 17:24 19:30 and it was proper that he should be received back to the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, Joh 17:4,15; Php 2:6,9,10.

(2.) It was proper that *he* should ascend, that the Holy Spirit might come down and perform *his* part of the work of redemption. Jesus, by his *personal* ministry, as a man, could be but in one place; the Holy Spirit could be in all places, and be present at all times, and could apply the work to all men. **See Barnes "Joh 16:7".**

(3.) A *part* of the work of Christ was yet to be performed in heaven. That was the work of *intercession*. The high priest of the Jews not only made an atonement, but also presented the blood of sacrifice before the mercy-seat, as the priest of the people, Le 16:11-14. This was done to typify the entrance of the great High Priest of our profession into the heavens, Heb 9:7,8,11,12.

The work which he performs there is the work of *intercession*, Heb 7:25. This is properly the work which an advocate performs in a court of justice for his client. It means that Christ, our great High Priest, still pleads and manages our cause in heaven; secures our interests; obtains for us grace and mercy. It consists in his appearing in the presence of God for us, Heb 9:24; in his presenting the merits of his blood, Heb 9:12,14 and in securing the continuance of the mercy which has been bestowed on us, and which is still needful for our welfare. The Lord Jesus also ascended that he might assume and exercise the office of *King* in the immediate seat of power. All worlds were subject to him for the welfare of the church; and it was needful that he should be solemnly invested with that power in the presence of God, as the reward of his earthly toils. 1Co 15:25, "He must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet." Eph 1:20-22; Php 2:6-11.

A cloud received him. He entered into the region of the clouds, and was hid from their view. But *two* others of our race have been taken bodily from earth to heaven. Enoch was translated, (Ge 5:24; comp. Heb 11:5) and Elijah was taken by a whirlwind to heaven, 2Ki 2:11. It is remarkable that when the *return* of the Saviour is mentioned, it is uniformly said that he will return *in the clouds*, Ac 1:11; Mt 24:30, 26:64 Mr 13:26; Re 1:7 Da 7:13.

The clouds are an emblem of sublimity and grandeur, and perhaps this is all that is intended by these expressions. De 4:11 2Sa 12:12; Ps 97:2 104:3.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 1 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Looked steadfastly*. They fixed their eyes, or gazed intently toward heaven. Lu 4:20, "And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue *were fastened* (Greek, the same word as here) on him." It means the intense gaze when we are deeply interested, and wish to see clearly and distinctly. Here, they were amazed and confounded; the thing was unlooked-for; and they were even *then* inquiring whether he would not restore the kingdom to Israel. With this mingled amazement, and disappointment, and curiosity; and with the earnest desire to catch the last glimpse of their beloved Master, they naturally continued to gaze on the distant clouds where he had mysteriously disappeared from their view. Never was a scene more impressive, grand, and solemn than this.

Toward heaven. Toward the distant clouds or sky which had received him.

As he went up. Literally, "*The ascending, or going up*." Doubtless they continued to gaze after he had departed from their view.

Two men. From the raiment of these "men" and the nature of their message, it seems clear that they were angelic beings, who were sent to meet and comfort the disciples on this occasion. They appeared in *human form*, and Luke describes them as they appeared. Angels are not unfrequently called men. Lu 24:4, "Two *men* stood by them in shining garments," etc. Comp. Joh 20:12 Mt 28:5. As *two* angels are mentioned only as addressing the apostles after the resurrection of Jesus, (Joh 20:12; Lu 24:4) it is no unnatural supposition that these were the same who had been designated to the honourable office of bearing witness to his resurrection, and of giving them all the information about that resurrection, and of his ascension, which their circumstances needed.

In white apparel. Angels are commonly represented as clothed in white. **See Barnes** "Joh 20:12; **See Barnes** "Mt 28:3; **See Barnes "Mr 16:5"**.

It is an emblem of purity; and the worshippers of heaven are represented as clothed in this manner. Re 3:4, "They shall walk with me in white ;" Re 3:5, "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment " Re 4:4 7:9,13,14.

{*} "steadfastly" or, "earnestly" {a} "two men" Joh 20:12

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 1 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Ye men of Galilee*. Galilee was the place of their former residence; and this was the name by which they were commonly known. There is no evidence that the angel intended this name in any way to reproach them.

Why stand ye, etc. There is doubtless a *slight degree* of censure implied in this, as well as a design to call their attention away from a vain attempt to see the departed Saviour. The impropriety *may* have been,

(1.) in the feeling of disappointment, as if he would *not* restore the kingdom to Israel.

(2.) Possibly they were expecting that he would again soon appear; though he had often foretold them that he would ascend to heaven.

(3.) There might have been an impropriety in their earnest desire for the mere bodily presence of the Lord Jesus, when it was more important that it should be in heaven. We may see here, also, that it is our duty not to stand in idleness, and to gaze even towards heaven. We, as well as the apostles, have a great work to do, and we should actively engage in it without delay.

Gazing up. Looking up.

This same Jesus. This was said to comfort them. The *same* tried Friend, who had been so faithful to them, would return. They ought not, therefore, to look with despondency at his departure.

Into heaven. This expression denotes into the immediate presence of God; or into the place of perpetual purity and happiness, where God peculiarly manifests his favour. The same thing is frequently designated by his sitting on the right hand of God, as emblematic of power, honour, and favour. **See Barnes** "Mr 16:19

See Barnes "Mr 14:62"

See Barnes "Heb 1:3"

See Barnes "Heb 8:1

See Barnes "Ac 7:55; **See Barnes "Ro 8:34** Eph 1:20.

Shall so come. At the day of judgment. Joh 14:3, "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again," etc.

In like manner, etc. In clouds, as he ascended. **See Barnes "Ac 1:9"**; **See Barnes** "1Th 4:16".

This address was designed to comfort the disciples. Though their Master and Friend was taken from them, yet he was not removed for ever. He would come again with similar majesty and glory, for the vindication of his people, and to tread all his enemies under his feet. The *design* for which he will come, will be to judge the world, Mt 25. There will be an evident fitness and propriety in his coming.

(1.) Because his appropriate work in heaven as Mediator shall be accomplished; his people shall have been saved; the enemy subdued; death shall have been conquered; and the gospel shall have shown its power in subduing *all forms* of wickedness; in removing the effects of sin, in establishing the law, in vindicating the honour of God; and shall thus have done all that will be needful to be done to establish the authority of God throughout the universe. It will be proper, therefore, that this mysterious order of things shall be *wound up*, and the *results* become a matter of record in the history of the universe. It will be better than it would be to suffer an *eternal* millennium on the earth, while the saints should many of them slumber, and the wicked still be in their graves.

(2.) It is proper that he should come to vindicate his people, and raise them up to glory. Here they have been persecuted, oppressed, put to death. Their character is assailed; they are poor; and the world despises them. It is fit that God should show himself to be their Friend; that he should do justice to their injured names and motives; that he should bring out hidden and obscure virtue, and vindicate it; that he should enter every grave and bring forth his friends to life.

(3.) It is proper that he should show his hatred of sin. Here it triumphs. The wicked are rich, and honoured, and mighty, and say, "Where is the promise of his coming?" 2Pe 3:4. It is right that he should defend his cause. Hence the Lord Jesus will come to guard the avenues to heaven, and to see *that the universe suffers no wrong*, by the admission of an improper person to the skies.

(4.) The great transactions of redemption have been public, open, often grand. The apostasy was public, in the face of angels and of the universe. Sin has been open, public, high,handed. Misery has been public, and has rolled its deep and turbid waves in the face of the universe. Death has been public; all worlds have seen the race cut down and moulder. The death of Jesus was public; the angels saw it; the heavens were clothed with mourning; the earth shook; and the dead arose. The angels have desired to look into these things, (1Pe 1:12,) and have felt an intense solicitude about men. Jesus was publicly whipped, cursed, crucified; and it is proper that he should publicly

triumph, that all heaven rejoicing, and all hell at length humbled, should *see* his public victory. Hence he will come with clouds—with angels—with fire—and will raise the dead, and exhibit to all the universe the amazing close of the scheme of redemption.

(5.) We are in these verses presented with the most grand and wonderful events that this world has ever known—the ascension and return of the Lord Jesus. Here is consolation for the Christian; and here is a source of ceaseless alarm to the sinner.

{b} "Ye men of Galilee" Ac 2:7 13:31 {c} "shall so come" Joh 14:3 1Th 4:16

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 1 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Then returned they unto Jerusalem*. In Lu 24:52, we are told that they *worshipped* Jesus before they returned. And it is probable that the act of worship to which he refers, was that which is mentioned in this chapter—their gazing intently on their departing Lord.

From the mount called Olivet. From the Mount of Olives. **See Barnes "Mt 21:1"**.

The *part* of the mountain from which he ascended was the eastern declivity, where stood the little village of Bethany, Lu 24:50.

A sabbath day's journey. As far as might be lawfully travelled by a Jew on the Sabbath. This was two thousand paces or cubits; or seven furlongs and a half—not quite one mile. **See Barnes "Mt 24:20"**.

The distance of a lawful journey on the Sabbath was not determined by the laws of Moses, but the Jewish teachers had fixed it at two thousand paces. This measure was determined on because it was a tradition, that in the camp of the Israelites when coming from Egypt, no part of the camp was more than two thousand paces from the tabernacle; and over this space, therefore, they were permitted to travel for worship. Perhaps, also, some countenance was given to this from the fact that this was the extent of the suburbs of the Levitical cities, Nu 35:5. Mount Olivet was but *five* furlongs from Jerusalem, and Bethany was fifteen furlongs. But on the eastern declivity of the mountain the *tract* of country was called, for a considerable space, the region of Bethany; and it was from this place that the Lord Jesus ascended.

{d} "Then returned they" Lu 24:52.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 1 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Were come in*. To Jerusalem.

They went up into an upper room. The word—*uperwon*—here translated *upper room*, occurs but four times in the New Testament. Ac 9:37, "She (Dorcas) was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in *an upper chamber*," Ac 9:39 20:8, "And there were many lights in *the upper chamber*, where they were gathered together." The room so designated was an upper chamber used for devotion; or to place the dead before burial; or occasionally for conversation, etc. Here it evidently means the place where they were assembled for devotion. Lu 24:53 says they were continually *in the temple* praising and blessing God. And some have supposed that the upper room

here designated was one of the rooms in the temple. But there is no evidence of that; and it is not very probable. Such a room was a part of every house, especially in Jerusalem; and they probably selected one where they might be together, and yet so retired that they might be safe from the Jews.

Where abode. Where were remaining. This does not mean that this was their permanent habitation; but they remained there waiting for the descent of the Holy Spirit.

Peter, etc. All the apostles were there which Jesus had at first chosen, except Judas, Lu 6:13-16.

{a} "Peter and James" Lu 6:13-16

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 1 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *These all continued*, etc. The word *continued* denotes persevering and constant attention. The main business was devotion. Ac 6:4, "We will give ourselves continually—to the ministry of the word." Ro 12:12, "Continuing instant in prayer:" Ro 13:6, "Attending continually upon this very thing." It is their *main* and *constant* employment, Col 4:2.

With one accord. With one mind; unitedly; unanimously. There were no schisms, no divided interests, no discordant purposes. This is a beautiful picture of devotion, and a specimen of what social worship ought now to be, and a beautiful illustration of Ps 133. The apostles felt that they had one great object; and their deep grief at the loss of their Master, their doubts and perplexities, led them, as all afflictions ought to lead us, to the throne of grace.

In prayer and supplication. These words are nearly synonymous, and are often interchanged. They express, here, petitions to God for blessings, and prayer to avert impending evils.

With the women. The women that had followed the Lord Jesus from Galilee, Lu 8:2,3, 23:49,55, 24:10 Mt 27:55.

The women particularly mentioned are Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, the mother of Zebedee's children, Joanna the wife of Chuza, and Susanna. Besides these, there were others whose names are not mentioned. Most of them were relatives of the apostles or of our Saviour; and it is not improbable that some of them were wives of the apostles. Peter is known to have been married, (Mt 8:14,) and had his wife in attendance, (1Co 9:5;) and the same was doubtless true of some of the other apostles, (1Co 9:5.) Mary is here particularly mentioned, the mother of Jesus; showing that she now cast in her lot with the apostles. She had, besides, been particularly entrusted to the care of John, (Joh 19:26,27,) and had no other home. This is the last time she is mentioned in the New Testament.

And with his brethren. **See Barnes "Mt 12:46"**.

At first they had been unbelieving about the claims of Jesus, (Joh 7:5;) but it seems that they had been subsequently converted.

{*} "accord" or, "one mind" {b} "the women" Lu 23:49,55, 24:10

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 1 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *In those days*. On one of the days intervening between the ascension of Jesus and the day of Pentecost.

Peter stood up. Peter *standing up*, or rising. This is a customary expression in the Scriptures when one begins to do a thing, Lu 15:18. The reason why Peter did this may be seen in the Note **See Barnes "Mt 16:16,17".**

It is not improbable, besides, that Peter was the most aged of the apostles; and from his uniform conduct we know that he was the most ardent. It was perfectly characteristic, therefore, for him to introduce the business of the election of a new apostle.

The disciples. This was the name which was given to them as being learners in the school of Christ. **See Barnes** "Mt 5:1.

The number of the names. The number of the *persons*, or *individuals*. The word *name* is often used to denote the person, Re 3:4 Ac 4:12, 18:15 Eph 1:21.

In Syriac it is, "the assembly of men was about an hundred and twenty." This was the first assembly convened to transact the business of the church; and it is not a little remarkable that the vote in so important a matter as electing an apostle was by the entire church. It settles the question that the election of a minister and pastor should be by the church, and not be imposed on them by any right or presentation by individuals, or by any ecclesiastical body. If a case could ever occur where a minister should be chosen by the ministry only, such a case was here in the election of another apostle. And yet in this the entire church had a voice. Whether this was *all* the true church at this time, does not appear from the history. This expression cannot mean that there were no more Christians, but that these were all that had convened in the upper room. It is almost certain that our Saviour had, by his own ministry, brought many others to be his true followers.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 1 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Men and brethren*. This is a customary mode of address, implying affection and respect, Ac 13:26. The Syriac has it more appropriately than by the introduction of the conjunction "and"— "Men, our brethren."

This Scripture. This portion or prediction contained in the writings of the Old Testament. *Scripture*, writing. **See Barnes "Joh 5:39".**

The passage to which Peter refers is commonly supposed to be that recorded in Ps 41:9, "Yea, mine own familiar friend—hath lifted up his heel against me." This is expressly applied to Judas by our Saviour, in Joh 13:18. But it seems clear that the reference is not to the 41st Psalm, but to the passage which Peter proceeds to quote in Ac 1:20.

Must needs have been fulfilled. It would certainly happen that it would be fulfilled. Not that there was any physical necessity, or any compulsion; but it could not but occur that a prediction of God should be fulfilled. This makes no affirmation about the *freedom* of Judas in doing it. A man will be just as free in wickedness if it be *foretold* that he will be wicked, as if it had never been known to any other being.

The Holy Ghost, etc. This is a strong attestation to the inspiration of David, and accords with the uniform testimony of the New Testament, that the sacred writer spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, 2Pe 1:21.

Concerning Judas. In what respect this was concerning Judas, see Ac 1:20.
Which was guide, etc. Mt 26:47 Joh 18:3.
{c} "which the Holy Ghost" Ps 41:9 Joh 13:18 {d} "guide to them" Mt 26:47 Joh 18:3

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 1 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *He was numbered with us*. He was chosen as an apostle by the Lord Jesus, Lu 6:13-16, This does not mean that he was a true Christian, but that he was reckoned among the apostles. Jesus knew that he never loved him. Long before he betrayed him, he declared that he was a devil, Joh 6:70. He knew his whole character when he chose him, Joh 2:25. If it be asked why he chose *such* a man to be an apostle—why he was made the *treasurer* of the apostles, and was admitted to the fullest confidence—we may reply, that a most important object was gained in having such a man —*a spy*—among them. It might be pretended when the apostles bore testimony to the purity of life, of doctrine, and of purpose, of the Lord Jesus, that they were interested and partial friends; that they might be disposed to *suppress* some of his real sentiments, and represent him in a light more favourable than the truth. Hence the testimony of such a man as Judas, if favourable, must be invaluable. It would be free from the charge of partiality. If Judas *knew* anything unfavourable to the character of Jesus, he would have communicated it to the sanhedrim. If he knew of any secret plot against the government, or seditious purpose, he had every inducement to declare it. He had every opportunity to know it: he was with him; heard him converse; was a member of his family, and admitted to terms of familiarity. Yet *even* Judas could not be bought, or bribed, to testify against the moral character of the Saviour. If he *had* done it, or *could* have done it, it would have preserved him from the charge of treason; entitled him to the reputation of a public benefactor in discovering secret sedition; and have saved him from the pangs of remorse, and from self-murder. Judas *would* have done it if he could. But he alleged no such charge; he did not even dare to lisp a word against the pure designs of the Lord Jesus; and his own pangs and death are the highest proof that can be desired of his conviction that the betrayed Redeemer was innocent. Judas would have been just the witness which the Jews desired of the treasonable purposes of Jesus. But *that* could not be had, even by gold; and they were compelled to *suborn* other men to testify against the Son of God, Mt 26:60. We may just add here, that the introduction of such a character as that of Judas Iscariot into the number of the apostles, and the *use* to be made of his testimony, would never have occurred to an impostor. An impostor would have said that they were *all* the true friends of the Lord Jesus. To have *invented* such a character as that of Judas, and to make him perform such a part in the plan as the sacred writers do, would have required too much art and cunning, was too refined and subtle a device to have been thought of, unless it had actually occurred.
{e} "he was numbered with us" Lu 6:16

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 1 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Now this man*, etc. The money which was given for betraying the Lord Jesus was thrown down in the temple, and the field was purchased with it by the Jewish priests. See Mt 27:5,10, **See Barnes** "Mt 27:5, **See Barnes "Mt 27:5"**.

A man is said often to do a thing, when he furnished *means* for doing it.

The reward of iniquity. The price which he had for that deed of stupendous wickedness—the betraying of the Lord Jesus.

And falling headlong. He first hanged himself, and then fell and was burst asunder, Mt 27:5.

{a} "this man" Mt 27:5-10 {b} "reward of iniquity" 2Pe 2:15 {*} "purchased a field" or, "Caused a field to be purchased"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 1 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *It was known*, etc. Mt 27:8. The scene in the temple, the acts of the priests in purchasing the field, etc., would make it known; and the *name* of the field would preserve the memory of the guilt of Judas.

Their proper tongue. The language spoken by the Jews—the Syro-Chaldaic.

Aceldama. This is composed of two Syro-Chaldaic words, and means, literally, "the field of blood."

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 1 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *For it is written*, etc. See Ps 69:26. This is the prediction, doubtless, to which Peter refers in Ac 1:16. The intermediate passage in Ac 1:18,19, is probably a parenthesis; the words of Luke, not of Peter. It is not probable that Peter would introduce a narrative like this, with which they were all familiar, in an address to the disciples, The Hebrew in the Psalm is, "Let their habitation (Heb., *fold, enclosure for cattle; tower, or palace*) be desolate, and let none dwell in their tents." This quotation is not made literally from the Hebrew, nor from the Septuagint. The *plural* is changed to the *singular*, and there are some other slight variations. The Hebrew says, "Let no men dwell in their *tents*." The reference to the *tents* is omitted in the quotation. The term *habitation*, in the Psalm, means evidently the dwelling-place of the enemies of the writer of the Psalm. It is an image expressive of their overthrow and defeat by a just God: "Let their families be scattered, and the places where they have dwelt be without an inhabitant, as a reward for their crimes." If the Psalm was originally composed with reference to the Messiah and his sufferings, the expression here was not intended to denote Judas *in particular*, but *one* of his foes, who was to meet the just punishment of rejecting, and betraying, and murdering him. The change, therefore, which Peter made from the plural to the singular, and the application to Judas especially, *as one of those enemies*, accords with the design of the Psalm, and is such a change as the circumstances of the case justified and required. It is an image, therefore, expressive of judgment and desolation coming upon his betrayer—an image to be literally fulfilled in relation to his habitation, drawn from the desolation when a man is discomfited, overthrown, and his dwelling-place given up to desolation. It is not a little remarkable

that this Psalm is repeatedly quoted as referring to the Messiah. Ps 69:9, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up," expressly applied to Christ in Joh 2:17. Ps 69:21, "They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." The thing which was done to Jesus on the cross, Mt 27:34. The whole Psalm is expressive of deep sorrow—of persecution, contempt, weeping, being forsaken, and is throughout applicable to the Messiah; with what is remarkable, not a single expression to be, of necessity, limited to David. It is not easy to ascertain whether the ancient Jews referred this Psalm to the Messiah. A part of the *title* to the Psalm in the *Syriac* version is, "It is called a prophecy concerning those things which Christ suffered, and concerning the casting away of the Jews." The prophecy in Ps 69:25 is not to be understood of *Judas alone, but of the enemies of the Messiah in general, of which Judas war one*. On this principle the application to Judas of the passage by Peter is to be defended.

And, His bishopric let another take. This is quoted from Ps 109:8: "Let his days be few; and let another take his office." This is called "a Psalm of David," and is of the same class as Psalms 6, 22, 25, 38, and 42. This *class* of Psalms is commonly supposed to have expressed David's feelings in the calamitous times of the persecution by Saul, the rebellion of Absalom, etc. They are all also expressive of the condition of a suffering and persecuted Messiah; and are many of them applied to him in the New Testament. The *general principle* on which most of them are applicable, is not that David *personated or typified* the Messiah, which is nowhere affirmed, and which can be true in no intelligible sense; but that he was placed in circumstances similar to the Messiah; encompassed with like enemies; persecuted in the same manner. They are expressive of high rank, office, dignity, and piety, cast down, waylaid, and encompassed with enemies. In this way they express general sentiments as much applicable to the case of the Messiah as to David. They were placed in similar circumstances. The same help was needed. The same expressions would convey their feelings. The same treatment was proper for their enemies. On this principle it was that *David* deemed his enemy, whoever he was, unworthy of his office; and desired that it should be given to another. In like manner, Judas had rendered *himself* unworthy of his office, and there was the *same propriety* that it should be given to another. And as the office had now become vacant by the death of Judas, according to *one* declaration in the Psalms, so, according to another, it was proper that it should be conferred on some other person. The word rendered "office" in the Psalm, means the *care, charge, business, oversight* of anything. It is a word applicable to *magistrates*, whose care it is to see the laws executed; to military men who have charge of an army, or a part of an army. In Job 10:12, it is rendered "thy visitation"—thy care; in Nu 4:16, "and to the office of Eleazar," etc.; 2Ki 11:18. In the case of David it refers to those who were entrusted with military or other offices, and who had treacherously perverted them to persecute and oppose him; and thus shown themselves unworthy of the office. The Greek word which is used here—*episkophn*—is taken from the Septuagint, and means the same thing as the Hebrew. It is well rendered in the margin, "office, or charge." It means charge of any kind, or office, without in itself specifying of what kind. It is the *concrete* of the noun —*episkopov*—, commonly translated "bishop," and means *his* office, charge, or duty, That word designates simply *having the oversight of anything*; and as applied to the officers of the New Testament, it denotes merely *their having charge of the affairs of the church*, without specifying the nature or the extent of their jurisdiction. Hence it is often interchanged with presbyter, or elder, and expresses the discharge of the duties of the same office. Ac 20:28, "Take heed (presbyters or elders, Ac 1:17) therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made *you overseers*"—*episkopouv*—bishops." Heb 12:15, "Looking diligently," etc.—*episkopountev*

Php 1:1, "with the bishops and deacons." "Paul called presbyters, bishops; for they had at that time the same name."—Theodoret, as quoted by Schleusner. 1Pe 5:2, "Feed the flock of God, (i.e., you who are elders, or presbyters, 1Pe 5:1;) *taking the oversight thereof*,"—*episkopountev*. These passages show that the term in the New Testament designates the supervision or care which was exercised over the church, by whomsoever performed, without specifying the nature or extent of the jurisdiction. It is scarcely necessary to add that Peter here did not intend to affirm that Judas sustained any office corresponding to what is now commonly understood by the term "bishop."

{c} "Let his habitation" Ps 69:25 {d} "and, His bishophoric" Ps 109:8 {1} "bishoporic" or, "office"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 1 - Verse 21

Verses 21, 22. *Wherefore of these* men. Of those who had witnessed the life and works of Christ, and who were therefore qualified to discharge the duties of the office from which Judas fell. Probably Peter refers to the seventy disciples, Lu 10:1,2.

Went in and out. A phrase signifying that he was their constant companion. It expresses, in general, all the actions of the life, Ps 121:8 De 28:19, 31:2.

Beginning from the baptism of John. The words "beginning from," in the original, refer to the Lord Jesus. The meaning may be thus expressed: "During all the time in which the Lord Jesus, beginning (his ministry) at the time when he was baptized by John, went in and out among us, until the time when he was taken up," etc. From those who had during that time been the constant companions of the Lord Jesus must one be taken, who would thus be a witness of *his whole ministry*.

Must one be ordained. It is fit or proper that one should be ordained. The reason of this was, that Jesus had originally chosen the number twelve for this work, and as *one* of them had fallen, it was proper that the breach should be filled by some person equally qualified for the office, The reason why it was proper that he should be taken from the seventy disciples was, that *they* had been particularly distinguished by Jesus himself, and commanded to preach, and endowed with various powers, and had been witnesses of most of his public life, Lu 10:1-16. The word *ordained*, with us, has a fixed and definite meaning. It denotes to set apart to a sacred office with the proper form and solemnities, commonly by the imposition of hands. But this is not, of necessity, the meaning of this passage. The Greek word usually denoting *ordination* is not used here. The expression is, literally, must one *be*, or *become*—*genesyai*—a witness with us of his resurrection." The expression does not imply that he must be set apart in any particular manner, but simply that one should be designated, or appointed for this specific purpose, *to be a witness* of the resurrection of Christ.

{e} "of these men" Lu 10:1,2; Joh 15:27

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 1 - Verse 22

Verse 22. No Barnes text on this verse.

{*} "ordained" or, "Appointed"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 1 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *And they appointed two*. They proposed, or, as we should say, nominated two. Literally, they *placed* two, or made them to stand forth, as persons do who are candidates for office. These two were probably more distinguished by prudence, wisdom, piety, and age, than the others; and were so nearly equal in qualifications, that they could not determine which was the best fitted for the office.

Joseph called Barsabas, etc. It is not certainly known what the name *Barsabas* denotes. The Syriac word *bar* means *son*, and the word *sabas* has been translated *an oath, rest, quiet, or captivity*. Why the name was given to Joseph is not known; but probably it was the family name—*Joseph son, of Sabas*. Some have conjectured that this was the same man who, in Ac 4:36, is called Barnabas. But of this there is no proof. Lightfoot supposes that he was the son of Alpheus, and brother of James the Less, and that he was chosen on account Of his relationship to the family of the Lord Jesus.

Was surnamed Justus. Who was *called* Justus. This is a Latin name, meaning *just*, and was probably given him on account of his distinguished integrity. It was not uncommon among the Jews for a man to have several names, Mt 10:3.

And Matthias. Nothing is known of the family of this man, or of his character, further than that he was numbered with the apostles, and shared their lot in the toils, and persecutions, and honours of preaching the gospel to mankind.

{a} "Barsabas" Ac 15:22

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 1 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *And they prayed*. As they could not *agree* on the individual, they invoked the-direction of God in their choice—an example which should be followed in every selection of an individual to exercise the duties of the sacred office of the ministry.

Which knowest the hearts of all men. This is often declared to be the peculiar prerogative of God. Jer 17:10, "I, Jehovah, search the heart," etc.; Ps 139:1,23; 1Ch 28:9.

Yet this attribute is also expressly ascribed to Jesus Christ. Re 2:18,23, "These things saith the Son of God—I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts." Joh 2:25 6:64, 16:19.

There are strong reasons for supposing that the apostles on this occasion addressed this prayer to the Lord Jesus Christ.

(1.) The name *Lord* is the common appellation which they gave to him, Ac 2:36 7:59,60 10:36; 1Co 2:8 Php 2:11; Re 11:8, etc.

(2.) We are told that they *worshipped him*, or rendered him divine honours after his ascension, Lu 24:52.

(3.) The disciples were accustomed to address him after his crucifixion by the names Lord or God indifferently, Ac 1:6 Joh 20:28; Ac 7:59.

(4.) This was a matter pertaining especially to the church which the Lord Jesus had redeemed, and *to his own arrangement* in regard to it. He had chosen the apostles; *he* had given their commission; *he* had fixed their number; and what is worthy of special remark here, *he* had been

the companion of the very men, and knew their qualifications for their work. If the apostles *ever* called on the Lord Jesus after his ascension, this was the case in which they would be likely to do it. That it *was* done is clear from the account of the death of Stephen, Ac 7:59,60. And in this important matter of ordaining a new apostle to be a witness for Jesus Christ, nothing was more natural than that they should address *him*, though bodily absent, as they would assuredly have done if he were present. And if on this occasion they *did* actually address Christ, then two things clearly follow. First, that it is proper to render him Divine homage, agreeably to the uniform declarations of the Scriptures. Joh 5:23, "That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." Heb 1:6, "And let all the angels of God worship him." Php 2:10,11; Re 5:8-14 1Th 3:11,12.

Secondly, he must be Divine. To none other but God can religious homage be rendered; and none other can be described as *knowing the hearts of all men*. The reason why they appealed to him on this occasion as *the Searcher of the heart*, was doubtless the great importance of the work to which the successor of Judas was to be called. One apostle of fair external character had proved a traitor; and with this fact full before them, they appealed to the Saviour himself, to select one who would be true to him, and not bring dishonour on his cause.

Shew whether, etc. Show *which* of them.

Thou hast chosen. Not by any public declaration, but which of the two thou hast judged to be best qualified for the work, and hast fitted for it.

{b} "knowest the hearts" Jer 17:10 Re 2:23

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 1 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *That he may take part of this ministry*. The word rendered —*klhron*—is the same which in the next verse is rendered *lots*. It properly means a lot, or portion; the portion divided to a man, or assigned to him by casting lots; and also the instrument or means by which the lot is made. The former is its meaning here; the *office*, or portion of apostolic work which would fall to him by taking the place of Judas.

Ministry and apostleship. This is an instance of the figure of speech *hendiadys*, when two words are used to express one thing. It means *the apostolic ministry*. See instances in Ga 1:14, "Let them be for signs, and for seasons," i.e., signs of seasons. Ac 23:6, "Hope *and* resurrection of the dead," i.e., hope of the resurrection of the dead.

That he might go to his own place. These words by different interpreters have been referred both to Matthias and Judas. Those who refer them to Matthias say that they mean, that Judas fell that Matthias might go to his own place, that is, to a place for which he was fitted, or well qualified. But to this there are many objections.

(1.) The apostolic office could with no propriety be called, in reference to Matthias, *his own place*, until it was actually conferred on him.

(2.) There is no instance m which the expression, *to go to his own place*, is applied to a successor in office.

(3.) It is not true that the design or reason why Judas fell was to make way for another. He fell by his crimes; his avarice, his voluntary and enormous wickedness.

(4.) The former part of the sentence contains this sentiment: "Another must be appointed to this office which the death of Judas has made vacant. "If this expression, "that he might go," etc., refers to the successor of Judas, it expresses the same sentiment, but more obscurely.

(5.) The obvious and natural meaning of the phrase is to refer it to Judas. But those who suppose it to refer to Judas differ greatly about its meaning. Some suppose it refers to his own house; that he left the apostolic office to return to his own house; and they appeal to Nu 24:25.

But it is not true that Judas did this; nor is there the least proof that it was his design. Others refer it to the grave, as the *place* of man, where all must lie; and particularly as an ignominious place where Judas should lie. But there is no example of the word *place* being used in this sense; nor is there an instance where a man by being buried is said to return to his own, or proper place. Others have supposed that the manner of his death, by hanging, is referred to, as his own or his proper place. But this interpretation is evidently an unnatural and forced one. The word *place* cannot be applied to an *act* of self-murder. It denotes habitation, abode, situation in which to remain; not an *act*. These are the only interpretations which can be suggested of the passage, except the common and obvious one of referring it to the future abode of Judas in the world of woe. This might be said to be his *own*, as it was adapted to him; as he had prepared himself for it; and as it was proper that he who had betrayed his Lord should remain there. This interpretation may be defended by the following considerations:

(1.) It is the obvious and natural meaning of the words. It commends itself by its simplicity, and its evident connexion with the context. It has in all ages been the common interpretation; nor has any other been adopted unless there was a theory to be defended about future punishment. Unless men had previously made up their minds *not to believe in future punishment*, no one would ever have thought of any other interpretation. This fact alone throws strong light on the meaning of the passage.

(2.) It accords with the crimes of Judas, and with all that we know of him. The *future doom* of Judas was not unknown to the apostles. Jesus Christ had expressly declared this: "it had been good for that man if he had not been born;" a declaration which *could* not be true if, after any *limited* period of suffering, he were at last admitted to eternal happiness. See Mt 26:24, and **See Barnes** "Mt 26:24.

This declaration was made in the presence of the eleven apostles, at the institution of the Lord's Supper, at a time when their attention was absorbed in deep interest in what Christ said; and it was therefore a declaration which they would not be likely to forget. As they *knew* the fate of Judas, nothing was more natural for them than to speak of it familiarly as a thing which *had* actually occurred when he betrayed his Lord, hung himself, and went to his own place.

(3.) The expression, to "go to his own place," is one which is used by the ancient writers to denote going to the eternal destiny. Thus the Jewish tract, *Baal Turim*, on Nu 24:25, says, "Balaam went to his own place, i.e., to Gehenna," to hell. Thus the Targum, or Chaldee Paraphrase on Ec 6:6, says, "Although the days of a man's life were two thousand years, and he did not study the law, and do justice, in the day of his death his soul shall descend to hell, to the one place where all sinners go." Thus Ignatius in the Epistle to the Magnesians says, "Because all things have an end, the two things death and life shall lie down together, *and each one shall go to his own place*." The phrase *his own* place, means the place or abode which is fitted for him, which is his appropriate home. Judas was not in a place which befitted his character when he was an apostle; he was not in such a place in the church; he would not be in heaven. Hell was the only place which was fitted to

the man of avarice and of treason. And if this be the true interpretation of this passage, then it follows,

(1,) that there will be such a thing as future, eternal punishment. One such man there certainly is in hell, and ever will be. If there is *one* there, for the same reason there may be others. All objections to the doctrine are removed by this single fact; and it cannot be true that *all* men will be saved.

(2.) Each individual in eternity will find his own proper place. Hell is not an arbitrary appointment. Every man will go to the place for which his character is fitted. The hypocrite is not fitted for heaven. The man of pride, and avarice, and pollution, and falsehood, is not fitted for heaven. The place *adapted* to such men is hell; and the design of the judgment will be to assign to each individual *his proper abode* in the eternal world.

(3.) The design of the judgment of the great day will be to assign to all the inhabitants of this world *their proper place*. It would not be fit that the holy and pure should dwell for ever in the same place with the unholy and impure; and the Lord Jesus will come to assign to each his appropriate eternal habitation.

(4.) The sinner will have no cause of complaint. If he is assigned to his *proper place*, he cannot complain. If he is *unfit* for heaven, he cannot complain that he is excluded. And if his character and feelings are such as make it *proper* that he should find his eternal abode among the enemies of God, then he must expect that a God of justice and equity will assign him such a doom. But

(5) this will not alleviate his pain; it will *deepen* his woe. He will have the eternal consciousness that that, and that only, is *his* place—the doom for which he is fitted. The prison is no less dreadful because a man is conscious that he deserves it. The gallows is not the less terrible, because the man knows that he *deserves* to die. And the eternal consciousness of the sinner that he is *unfit* for heaven; that there is not a solitary soul there with whom he could have sympathy or friendship; that he is fit for hell, and hell only, will be an ingredient of eternal bitterness in the cup of woe that awaits him. Let not the sinner, then, hope to escape; for God will assuredly appoint his residence in that world to which his character here is adapted.

The character and end of Judas is one of the most important and instructive in history. It teaches us,

(1.) that Christ may employ wicked men for important purposes in his kingdom. **See Barnes "Ac 1:17".**

He does no violence to their freedom, suffers them to act as they please, but brings important ends out of their conduct. One of the most conclusive arguments for the pure character of Jesus Christ is drawn from the silent testimony of Judas.

(2.) The character of Judas was eminently base and wicked. He was influenced by one of the worst human passions; and yet he cloaked it from all the apostles. It was remarkable that any man should have *thought* of making money in such a band of men; but avarice will show itself everywhere.

(3.) We see the effects of avarice in the church. It led to the betraying of Jesus Christ, and to his death; and it has often betrayed the cause of pure religion since. There is no single human passion that has done so much evil in the church of God as this. It *may be* consistent with external decency and order; it is that on which the world acts, and which it approves; and it may therefore be indulged without disgrace, while open and acknowledged vices would expose their possessors

to shame and ruin. And yet it paralyzes and betrays religion probably more than any single propensity, of man.

(4.) The character of an avaricious man in the church will be developed. Opportunities will occur when it will be seen and known by what principle the man is influenced. So it was with Achan, (Jos 7:21;) so it was with Judas; and so it will be with all. Occasions will occur which will *test* the character, and show what manner of spirit a man is of. Every appeal to a man's benevolence, every call upon his charity, shows what spirit influences him, and whether he is actuated by the love of gold, or by the love of Jesus Christ and his cause.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 1 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *And they gave forth their lots*. Some have supposed that this means they voted. But to this interpretation there are insuperable objections.

(1.) The word *lots—klhrouv*—is not used to express votes, or suffrage.

(2.) The expression; "the lot fell upon," is not consistent with the notion of voting. It is commonly expressive of casting lots.

(3.) Casting lots was common among the Jews on important and difficult occasions, and it was natural that the apostles should resort to it in this. Thus David divided the priests by lot, 1Ch 24:5. The land of Canaan was divided by lot, Nu 26:55; Jos 15:1-17:18. Jonathan, son of Saul, was detected as having violated his father's command, and as bringing calamity on the Israelites, by lot, 1Sa 14:41,42. Achan was detected by lot, Jos 7:16-18. In these cases the use of the lot was regarded as a solemn appeal to God, for his direct interference in cases which they could not themselves decide. Pr 16:33, "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." The choice of an apostle was an event of the same kind, and was regarded as a solemn appeal to God for his direction and guidance in a case which the apostles could not determine. The *manner* in which this was done is not certainly known. The common mode of casting lots, was to write the names of the *persons* on pieces of stone, wood, etc., and put them in one urn; and the name of the office, portion, etc., on others. These were then placed in an urn with other pieces of stone, etc., which were blank. The names were then drawn at random, and also the other pieces, and this determined the case. The casting of a lot is determined by laws of nature, as regularly as anything else. There is properly no chance in it. We do not know how a die may turn up; but this does not imply that it will turn up without any regard to rule, or at haphazard. We cannot trace the influences which may determine either this or that side to come up; but still it is done by regular and proper laws, and according to the circumstances of position, force, etc., in which it is cast. Still although it does not imply any special or miraculous interposition of Providence; though it may not be absolutely wrong, in cases which cannot otherwise be determined, to use the lot, yet it does not follow that it is proper often to make this appeal. Almost all cases of doubt can be determined more satisfactorily in some other way than by the lot. The habit of appealing to it engenders the love of hazards and of games; leads to heart- burnings, to jealousies, to envy, to strife, and to dishonesty. Still less does the example of the apostles authorize *games* of hazard, or lotteries, which are positively evil, and attended with ruinous consequences, apart from any inquiry about the lawfulness of the lot. They either originate in, or promote, covetousness, neglect of regular industry, envy, jealousy,

disappointment, dissipation, bankruptcy, falsehood, and despair. What is gained by one is lost by another, and both the gain and the loss promote some of the worst passions of man: boasting, triumph, self-confidence, indolence, dissipation, on the one hand; and envy, disappointment, sullenness, desire of revenge, remorse, and ruin, on the other. God intended that man should live by sober toil. All departures from this great law of our social existence lead to ruin.

Their lots. The lots which were to decide *their* case. They are called, *theirs*, because they were to determine which of them should be called to the apostolic office.

The lot fell. This is an expression applicable to casting lots, not to voting.

He was numbered. By the casting of the lot—*sugkateqhfisyh*—. This word is from —*qhfov*—*a calculus, or pebble*, by which votes were given, or lots were cast. It means, that *by the result of the lot* he was reckoned as an apostle. Nothing further is related of Matthias in the New Testament. Where he laboured, and when and where he died, is unknown; nor is there any tradition on which reliance is to be placed. The election of Matthias throws some light on the organization of the church.

(1.) He was chosen to fill the place vacated by Judas, and, for a specific purpose, to be *a witness* of the resurrection of Christ. There is no mention of any other design. It was not to ordain men exclusively, or to rule over the churches, but to be a witness to an important fact.

(2.) There is no intimation here that it was designed that there should be *successors* to the apostles in the *peculiar* duties of the apostolic office. The election was for a definite object, and was therefore temporary. It was to fill up the *number* originally appointed by Christ. When the purpose for which he was appointed was accomplished, the peculiar part of the apostolic work ceased, of course.

(3.) There could be no succession in our times to the peculiar apostolic office. They were to be witnesses of the work of Christ. For this they were sent forth. And when the desired effect resulting from such a witnessing was accomplished, the office itself would cease. Hence there is no record that after this the church even pretended to appoint successors to the apostles to discharge their *peculiar* work. And hence no minister of the gospel can now pretend to be their successors in the *peculiar* and *original* design of the appointment of the apostles.

(4.) The only other apostle mentioned in the New Testament is the apostle Paul, not appointed as the successor of the others, not with any peculiar design except to be an apostle to the Gentiles, as the others were to the Jews, and appointed for the same end, to testify that Jesus Christ was alive, and that *he had seen him* after he rose, 1Co 15:8 9:1 Ac 22:8,9,14,15 9:15 26:17,18.

The ministers of religion, therefore, are successors of the apostles, not in their peculiar office as witnesses, but as preachers of the word, and as appointed to establish, to organize, and to edify and rule the churches. The *peculiar* Work of the apostleship ceased with their death. The ordinary work of the ministry, which they held in common with all others who preach the gospel, will continue to the end of time.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 1

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES CHAPTER 2

Verse 1. *And when the day of Pentecost*. The word Pentecost is a Greek word, signifying the *fiftieth* part of a thing; or the fiftieth in order. Among the Jews it was applied to one of their three great feasts which began on *the fiftieth* day after the Passover. This feast was reckoned from the sixteenth day of the month ABIB, or April, or the *second day* of the Passover. The paschal lamb was slain on the fourteenth of the month at even, (Le 23:5); on the fifteenth of the month was a holy convocation—the proper beginning of the feast; on the sixteenth was the offering of the first-fruits of harvest, and from that day they were to reckon *seven weeks*, i.e., forty-nine days to the feast called the feast of Pentecost, so that it occurred *fifty* days after the first day of the feast of the Passover. This feast was also called *the feast of weeks*, from the circumstance that it followed a succession of weeks, Ex 34:22 Nu 28:26; De 16:10.

It was also a harvest festival, and was accordingly called the feast of harvest. And it was for this reason that two loaves made of new meal were offered on this occasion as first-fruits, Le 23:17,20 Nu 28:27-31.

Was fully come. When the day had arrived. The word means here simply, *had come*. Comp. Mr 1:15 Lu 1:57. This fact is mentioned, that the time of the Pentecost had come, or fully arrived, to account for what is related afterwards, that there were so many strangers and foreigners present. The promised influences of the Spirit were withheld until the greatest possible numbers of Jews should be present at Jerusalem at the same time, and thus an opportunity be afforded of preaching the gospel to vast multitudes in the very place where the Lord Jesus was crucified, and also an opportunity be afforded of sending the gospel by them into distant parts of the earth.

They were all. Probably not only the apostles, but also the one hundred and twenty mentioned in Ac 1:15.

With one accord. See Ac 1:14. It is probable they had continued together until this time, and given themselves entirely to the business of devotion.

In one place. Where this was cannot be known, Commentators have been much divided in their conjectures about it. Some have supposed it was in the upper room mentioned, (Ac 1:13;) others that it was a room in the temple; others that it was in a synagogue; others that it was in the promiscuous multitude that assembled for devotion in the courts of the temple. See Ac 2:2. It has by many been supposed that this took place on the first day of the week, that is, on the Christian Sabbath. But there is a difficulty in establishing this. There was probably a difference among the Jews themselves on this subject. The law said that they should reckon seven Sabbaths, that is, seven weeks, "from the morrow after the Sabbath," Le 23:15. By this Sabbath the Pharisees understood the *second day* of the Passover, on whatever day of the week it occurred, which was kept as a holy assembly, and might be called a Sabbath. But the Caraite Jews, or those who insisted on a literal interpretation of the Scriptures, maintained that by the *Sabbath* here was meant the *usual Sabbath*, the seventh day of the week. Consequently *with them* the day of Pentecost *always* occurred on the *first day* of the week; and if the apostles fell in with their views, the day was fully come on what is now the Christian Sabbath. But if the views of the Pharisees were followed, and the Lord Jesus had with them kept the Passover on *Thursday*, as many have supposed, then the day of Pentecost would have occurred on the Jewish Sabbath, that is, on *Saturday*.—Kuinoel; Lightfoot. It is

impossible to determine the truth on this subject. Nor is it of much importance. The day of Pentecost was kept by the Jews also as a festival to commemorate the giving of the law on Mount Sinai.

{a} "the day of Pentecost" Le 23:15 {b} "they were all in one accord" Ac 1:14 {*} "accord" or, "consent"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And suddenly*. It burst upon them at once. Though they were waiting for the descent of the Spirit, yet it is not probable that they expected it in this manner. As this was an important event, and one on which the welfare of the church depended, it was proper that the gift of the Holy Spirit should take place in some *striking* and *sensible* manner, so as to convince their own minds that the promise was fulfilled, and so as deeply to impress others with the greatness and importance of the event.

There came a sound. *hcov*. This word is applied to any noise or report. Heb 12:19, "The sound of a trumpet." Lu 4:37, "The *fame* of him," etc. Comp. Mr 1:28.

From heaven. Appearing to rush down from the sky. It was fitted, therefore, to attract their attention no less from the *direction* from which it came, than on account of its *suddenness and violence*. Tempests blow, commonly, horizontally. This appeared to come from above; and this is all that is meant by the expression, "from heaven."

As of a rushing mighty wind. Literally, "as of a violent wind or gale," borne along—*feromenhv*—, *sweeping along like a tempest*. Such a wind is sometimes borne along so violently, and with such a noise, as to make it difficult even to hear the thunder in the gale. Such appears to have been the sound of this remarkable phenomenon. It does not appear that there was any wind; all might have been still; but the sudden sound was *like* such a sweeping tempest. It may be remarked, however, that the *wind* in the sacred Scriptures is often put as an emblem of a Divine influence. It is *invisible, yet mighty*; and thus represents the agency of the Holy Spirit. The same word in Hebrew, (

Hebrew,) and in Greek, *pneuma* is used to denote both. The mighty power of God may be denoted also by the violence of a mighty tempest, 1Ki 19:11 Ps 29 104:3 18:10.

And thus Jesus by *his breath* indicated to the apostles the conferring of the Holy Ghost, Joh 20:22. In this place *the sound* as of a gale was emblematic of the mighty *power* of the Spirit, and of the great effects which his coming would accomplish among men.

And it filled. Not the *wind* filled, but the *sound*. This is evident,

(1.) because there is no affirmation that there was any wind.

(2.) The grammatical structure of the sentence will admit no other construction. The word "filled" has no nominative case but "the sound." And suddenly there was a sound as *of* a wind, and (the sound) filled the house. In the Greek, the word "wind" is in the genitive or possessive case. It may be remarked here, that this miracle was *really* far more striking than the common supposition makes it to have been. A *tempest* might have been terrific. A mighty *wind* might have alarmed them. But there would have been nothing unusual or remarkable in it. Such things often occurred; and the thoughts would have been directed of course to the *storm* as an ordinary, though perhaps alarming occurrence. But when all was still—when there was no storm, no wind, no rain, no thunder,

such a rushing sound must have arrested their attention; and directed all minds to so unusual and unaccountable an occurrence.

All the house. Some have supposed that this was a room in or near the temple. But as the *temple* is not expressly mentioned, this is improbable. it was probably the private dwelling mentioned in Ac 1:12. If it be said that such a dwelling could not contain so large a multitude as soon assembled, it may be replied that their houses had large central courts, **See Barnes** "Mt 9:2, and that it is not affirmed that the transaction recorded in this chapter occurred *in* the room which they occupied. It is probable that it took place in the court and around the house.

{c} "it filled all the house" Ac 4:31

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And there appeared unto them*. There were *seen by them*, or they saw. They were first seen by them in the room before they rested on the heads of the disciples. Perhaps the fire appeared at first as scintillations or coruscations, until it became fixed on their heads.

Tongues. *glwssai*. The word *tongue* occurs often in the Scriptures to denote the member which is the instrument of taste and speech, and also to denote *language* or speech itself. It is also used, as with us, to denote that which *in shape* resembles the tongue. Thus Jos 7:21,24, (in Hebrew,) "a tongue of gold," i.e., *a wedge* of gold; Jos 10:5 18:19; Isa 11:15, "The tongue of the sea," i.e., a bay or gulf. Thus also we say a tongue of land. The phrase "tongue of fire" occurs once, and once only, in the Old Testament: Isa 5:24, "Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble (Heb., *tongue of fire*,) and the flame consumeth," etc. In this place the name tongue is given from the *resemblance* of a pointed flame to the human tongue. Anything long, narrow, and tending to a point, is thus in the Hebrew called *a tongue*. The word here means, therefore, slender and pointed appearances of flame; perhaps at first moving irregularly around the room.

Cloven. Divided, separated. *diamerizomenai*, from the verb to *divide*, or *distribute into parts*. Mt 27:35, "They *parted* his garments." Lu 22:17, "Take this, (the cup,) and *divide* it among yourselves." Probably the common opinion is that these *tongues* or flames were, *each one* of them, split, or forked, or cloven. But this is not the sense of the expression. It means that they were separated or divided *one from another*; not one great flame, but broken up, or cloven into many parts; and probably moving without order in the room. In the Syriac it is, "And there appeared unto them tongues which divided themselves, like fire, and sat upon each of them." The old Ethiopic version reads it, "And *fire*, as it were, appeared to them, and sat on them."

And it sat upon each of them. Or rested, in the form of a lambent or gentle flame, upon the head of each one. This evinced that the prodigy was directed to *them*, and was a very significant emblem of the promised descent of the Holy Spirit. After the rushing sound, and the appearance of the flames, they could not doubt that here was some remarkable interposition of God. The appearance of *fire*, or *flame*, has always been regarded as a most striking emblem of the Divinity. Thus, (Ex 3:2,3) God is said to have manifested himself to Moses in a bush which was *burning*, yet not consumed. Thus, (Ex 19:16-20,) God descended on Mount Sinai in the midst of thunders, and lightnings, and smoke, and *fire*—striking emblems of his presence and power. See also Ge 15:17. Thus, (De 4:24,) God is said to be "a consuming fire." Comp. Heb 12:29 Eze 1:4; Ps 18:12-14.

The classic reader will also instantly recall the beautiful description in Virgil.—AEniad, b. ii. 680—691. Other instances of a similar prodigy are also recorded in profane writers.—Pliny, H. N. 2, 37; Livy, i. 39. These appearances to the apostles were emblematic, doubtless,

(1.) of the promised Holy Spirit, as a Spirit of *purity and of power*. The prediction of John the Baptist, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire," (Mt 3:11,) would probably be recalled at once to their memory.

(2.) The *peculiar* appearance, that of *tongues*, was an emblem of the diversity of languages which they were about to be able to utter. Any *form* of fire would have denoted the presence and power of God; but a *form* was adopted expressive of the case. Thus, *any appearance* at the baptism of Jesus might have denoted the presence and approbation of God; but the form chosen was that of a *dove* descending; expressive of the mild and gentle virtues with which he was to be imbued. So in Eze 1:4, any *form* of flame might have expressed the presence of God; but the appearance *actually* was emblematical of his Providence. In the same way the appearance here expressed their peculiar endowments for entering on their great work—the ability to speak *powerfully* with new tongues.

{*} "cloven" or, "divided"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Were all filled with the Holy Ghost*. Were entirely under his sacred influence and power. **See Barnes** "Lu 1:41,67.

To be *filled* with anything is a phrase denoting that all the faculties are pervaded by it, engaged in it, or under its influence. Ac 3:10, "Were *filled* with wonder and amazement;" Ac 5:17, "Filled with indignation;" Ac 13:45, "Filled with envy;" Ac 13:52, "Filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost."

Began to speak with other tongues. In other languages than their native tongue. The languages which they spoke are specified in

@Ac 2:9-11.

As the Spirit gave them utterance. As the Spirit gave them power to speak. This language implies plainly that they were now endued with a faculty of speaking languages which they had not before learned. Their native tongue was that of Galilee, a somewhat barbarous dialect of the common language used in Judea, *the Syro-Chaldaic*. It is possible that some of them might have been partially acquainted with the Greek and Latin, as both of them were spoken among the Jews to some extent; but there is not the slightest evidence that they were acquainted with the languages of the different nations afterwards specified. Various attempts have been made to account for this remarkable phenomenon, without supposing it to be a miracle. But the natural and obvious meaning of the passage is, that they were endowed by the miraculous power of the Holy Ghost with ability to speak foreign languages, and languages to them before unknown. It does not appear that *each one* had the power of speaking *all* the languages which are specified, (Ac 2:9-11,) but that this ability was among them, and that together they could speak these languages; probably some one, and some another. The following remarks may perhaps throw some light on this remarkable occurrence:

(1.) This ability was predicted in the Old Testament, (Isa 28:11), "With another tongue will he speak to this people." Comp. 1Co 14:21, where this passage is expressly applied to the power of speaking foreign languages under the gospel.

(2.) It was predicted by the Lord Jesus that they should have this power. Mr 16:17, "These signs shall follow them that believe—they shall speak with *new tongues*."

(3.) The ability to do it existed extensively and long in the church. 1Co 12:10,11, "To another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit;" 1Co 12:28, "God hath set in the church— diversities of tongues;" 1Co 12:30 14:2,4,5,6,9,13,14,18,19,22,23, 1Co 14:27,39. From this it appears that the power was well known in the church, and was not confined to the apostles. This also may show that, in the case in the Acts, the power was conferred on other members of the church as well as the apostles.

(4.) It was very important that they should be endowed with this power in their great work. They were going forth to preach to all nations; and though the Greek and Roman tongues were extensively spoken, yet their use was not universal; nor is it known that the apostles were skilled in those languages. To preach to all nations, it was indispensable that they should be able to understand their language. And it was necessary that they should be endowed with ability to speak them without the slow process of being compelled to learn them.

(5.) One design was to establish the gospel by means of miracles. Yet no miracle could be more striking than the power of conveying their sentiments at once into all the languages of the earth. When it is remembered what a slow and toilsome process it is to learn a foreign tongue, this would be regarded by the heathen as one of the most striking miracles which were ever wrought in the establishment of the Christian faith, 1Co 14:22,24,25.

(6.) The *reality* and *certainty* of this miracle is strongly attested by the early triumphs of the gospel. That the gospel was early spread over all the world, and that, too, by the apostles of Jesus Christ, by men of Galilee, is the clear testimony of all history. They preached it in Arabia, Greece, Syria, Asia, Persia, Africa, and Rome. Yet how *could* this have been effected without a miraculous power of speaking the languages used in all those places? *Now*, it requires the toil of many years to speak in foreign languages; and the *recorded success* of the gospel is one of the most striking attestations to the fact of the miracle that could be conceived.

(7.) The corruption of language was one of the most decided effects of sin, of pride and ambition, and the source of endless embarrassments and difficulties, Ge 11. It is not to be regarded as wonderful if one of the effects of the plan of recovering men should be to show the power of God over *all* evil; and thus to furnish striking evidence that the gospel *could* meet all the crimes and calamities of men. And we may add,

(8.) that from this we see the necessity now of *training* men who are to be the missionaries to other lands. The gift of miracles is withdrawn. The apostles, by that miracle, simply were *empowered* to speak other languages. That power must still be had if the gospel is to be preached. But it is now to be obtained, not by miracle, but by slow and careful study and toil. If possessed, men must be taught it. They must labour for it. And as the church is bound (Mt 28:19) to send the gospel to all nations, so it is bound to provide that the *teachers* who shall be sent forth shall be qualified for their work. Hence *one* of the reasons of the importance of training men for the holy ministry.

{a} "were all filled" Ac 1:5 {b} "began to speak with" Mr 16:17 Ac 10:46 {+} "tongues" or, "in other languages"

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THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *There were dwelling at Jerusalem*. The word rendered *katoikountev* properly means to have a fixed and permanent habitation, in distinction from another word, *paroikountev*, which means to have a *temporary and transient* residence in a place. But it is not always confined, to this signification; and it is not improbable that many wealthy foreign Jews had a permanent residence in Jerusalem for the convenience of being near the temple. This was the more probable, as about that time the Messiah was expected to appear, Mt 2.

Jews. Jews by birth; of Jewish descent and religion.

Devout men. *andrev eulabeiv*. Literally, men of cautious and circumspect lives, who lived in a prudent manner. The term is applied to men who were cautious about offending God; who were careful to observe his commandments. It hence is a general expression to denote pious or religious men. Ac 8:2, "And *devout* men carried Stephen to his burial." Lu 2:25, "And the same man (Simeon) was just and devout." The word *devout* means, "yielding a solemn and reverential attention to God in religious exercises, particularly in prayer, pious, sincere, solemn," (*Webster*,) and very well expresses the force of the original.

Out of every nation under heaven. A general expression, meaning from all parts of the earth. The countries from which they came are more particularly specified in Ac 2:9-11. The Jews at that time were scattered into almost all nations, and in all places had synagogues. **See Barnes "Joh 7:35"**.

Still they would naturally desire to be present as often as possible at the great feasts of the nation in Jerusalem. Many would seek a residence there for the convenience of being present at the religious solemnities. Many who came up to the feast of the Passover would remain to the feast of the Pentecost. And the consequence was, that on such occasions the city would be full of strangers. We are told, that when Titus besieged Jerusalem at about the feast of the Passover, there were no less than three millions of people in the city, and this great multitude greatly deepened the calamities arising from the siege. Josephus also mentions an instance where great multitudes of Jews from other nations were present at the feast of Pentecost.—Jewish Wars, b. ii. chap. iii. & 1.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *When this was noised abroad*. When the rumour of this remarkable transaction was spread, as it naturally would be without delay.

Were confounded. *sunecuyh*. Were violently moved and agitated; were amazed, and astonished at the remarkable occurrence.

Every man heard them speak, etc. Though the multitude spoke different tongues, yet they now heard *Galilaeans* use the language which *they* had learned in foreign nations.

His own language. His own dialect—*dialektw*. His own *idiom*, whether it was a foreign language, or whether it was a modification of the Hebrew. The word may mean either; but it is probable that the foreign Jews would greatly modify the Hebrew, or conform almost entirely to the language spoken in the country where they lived. We may remark here, that *this* effect on the first descent of the Holy Ghost was not peculiar to that time. A work of grace on the hearts of men in a revival of religion will always be *noised abroad*. A multitude will come together, and God often, as he did

here, makes use of this motive to bring them under the influence of religion. *Curiosity* was the motive here, and it was the occasion of their being brought under the influence of the truth, and of the conversion. In thousands of cases, this has occurred since. The *effect* of what they saw was to confound them. They made no complaint at first of the *irregularity* of what was done, but were all amazed and overwhelmed. So the effect of a revival of religion is often to convince the multitude that it is indeed a work of the Holy One; to amaze them by the display of his power; and to silence opposition and cavil by the manifest presence and the power of God. A *few* afterwards began to cavil, (Ac 2:13,) as some will always do in a revival; but the mass were convinced, as will be the case always, that this was a mighty display of the power of God.

{1} "Now when" "When this voice was made" {*} "abroad" "The report was spread" {2} "confounded" "troubled in mind"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Galilaeans*. Inhabitants of Galilee. It was remarkable that they should speak in this manner, because

(1) they were proverbially ignorant, rude, and uncivilized, Joh 1:46. Hence the term *Galilaeans* was used as an expression of the deepest reproach and contempt, Mr 14:70; Joh 7:52.

(2.) Their dialect was proverbially barbarous and corrupt, Mr 14:70 Mt 26:73. They were regarded as an outlandish people, unacquainted with other nations and languages, and hence the amazement that they could address them in the refined language of other people. Their native ignorance was the occasion of making the miracle more striking. The native *weakness* and inability of Christian ministers makes the grace and glory of God more remarkable in the success of the gospel. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us," 2Co 4:7. The *success* which God often grants to those who are of slender endowments and of little learning, though blessed with a humble and pious heart, is often amazing to the men of the world. "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise," 1Co 1:27. This should teach us that no talent or attainment *is too humble* to be employed for mighty purposes, in its proper sphere, in the kingdom of Christ, and that pious effort may accomplish much, may awe and amaze the world, and then burn in heaven with increasing lustre for ever; while pride, and learning, and talent may blaze uselessly among men, or kindle up the worst passions of our nature, and then be extinguished in eternal night.

{a} "Galilaeans" Ac 1:11

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Wherein we were born*. That is, as we say, in our *native* language; that which is spoken where we were born.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Parthians*, etc. To show the surprising extent and power of this miracle, Luke enumerates the different nations that were represented then at Jerusalem. In this way the number of *languages* which the apostles spoke, and the extent of the miracle, can be ascertained. The enumeration of these nations begins at the east, and proceeds to the west. *Parthians* mean those Jews, or proselytes, who dwelt in *Parthi*. This country was a part of Persia, and was situated between the Persian Gulf and the Tigris on the west, and the river Indus on the east. To the south it was bounded by the desert of Caramania, and it had Media on the north. Their empire lasted about four hundred years, and they were much distinguished for their manner of fighting. They usually fought on horseback; and when appearing to retreat, discharged their arrows with great execution behind them. They were a part of the vast Scythian horde of Asia, and disputed the empire of the east with the Romans. The language spoken there was that of *Persia*; and, in ancient writers, *Parthis and Persia* often mean the same country.

Medes. Inhabitants of *Media*. This country was situated north of Parthis, and south of the Caspian Sea. It was about the size of Spain, and was one of the richest parts of Asia. In the Scriptures it is called *Madai*, Ge 10:2. The *Medes* are often mentioned, frequently in connexion with the Persians, with whom they were often connected under the same government, 2Ki 17:6 18:11; Es 1:3,14,18,19 Jer 25:25 Da 5:28, 6:8 8:20, 9:1.

The language spoken here was also that of Persia. In his whole region many Jews remained after the Babylonish captivity, who chose not to return with their brethren to the land of their fathers. From the descendants of these probably were those who were now assembled from those places at Jerusalem.

Elamites. Elam is often mentioned in the Old Testament. The nation was descended from *Elam*, the son of Shem, Ge 10:22. It is mentioned as being in alliance with Axnraphel, the king of Shinar, and Arioch, king of Ellasar, and Tidal, king of nations, Ge 14:1. Of these nations in alliance, Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, was the chief, Ge 14:4. See also Ezr 2:7 8:7; Ne 7:12 34; Isa 11:11 21:2, 22:6; etc. They are mentioned as a part of the Persian empire, and Daniel is said to have resided "at Shushan, which is in the province of Elam," Da 8:2. The Greeks and Romans gave to this country the name of *Elymais*. It is now called *Kusistan*. It was bounded by Persia on the east, by Media on the north, by Babylonia on the west, and by the Persian Gulf on the south. The Elamites were a warlike people, and celebrated for the use of the bow, Isa 22:6; Jer 49:35. The language of this people was of course the Persian. Its capital Shusan, called by the Greeks *Susa*, was much celebrated. It is said to have been fifteen miles in circumference; and was adorned with the celebrated palace of Ahasuerus. The inhabitants still pretend to show there the tomb of the prophet Daniel.

Mesopotamia. This name, which is Greek, signifies *between the rivers*; that is, the region lying between the rivers *Euphrates and Tigris*. In Hebrew it was called *Aram-Naharaim*; that is, Aram, or Syria *of tho two rivers*. It was also called Padam Aram, the plain of Syria. In this region were situated some important places mentioned in the Bible:—*Ur of the Chaldees* the birthplace of Abraham, Ge 11:27,28; *Haran* where *Terah* stopped on his journey and died, Ge 11:31,32; *Charchemish*, 2Ch 35:20; *Hena*, 2Ki 19:13; *Sepharvaim*, 2Ki 17:24. This region, known as Mesopotamia, extended between the two rivers from their sources to Babylon on the south. It had on the north, Armenia; on the west, Syria; on the east, Persia; and on the south, Babylonia. It was

an extensive, level, and fertile country. The language spoken here was probably the *Syriac*, with perhaps a mixture of the *Chaldee*.

In Judea. This expression has greatly perplexed commentators. It has been thought difficult to see why *Judaea* should be mentioned, as if it were a matter of surprise that they could speak in this language. Some have supposed an error in the manuscripts, and have proposed to read *Armenia, or India, or Lydia, or Idumea*, etc. But all this has been without any authority. Others have supposed that the language of Galilee was so different from that of the other parts of Judea, as to render it remarkable that they could speak that dialect. But this is an idle supposition. This is one of the many instances in which commentators have perplexed themselves to very little purpose. Luke recorded this as any other historian would have done. In running over the languages which they spoke, he enumerated this as a matter of course; not that it was remarkable simply that they should speak the language of *Judea*, but that they should speak *so many*, meaning about the same by it as if he had said they spoke every language in the world. Just as if a similar miracle were to occur at this time among an assembly of native Englishmen and foreigners. In describing it, nothing would be more natural than to say, they spoke French, and German, and Spanish, and *English*, and Italian, etc. In this there would be nothing remarkable, except that they spoke *so many languages*.

Cappadocia. This was a region of Asia Minor, and was bounded on the east by Armenia, on the north by Pontus and the Euxine Sea, west by Lycaonia, and south by Cilicia. The language which was spoken here is not certainly known. It was probably, however, a mixed dialect made up of Greek and Syriac, perhaps the same as their neighbours, the Lycaonians, Ac 14:11. This place was formerly celebrated for iniquity, and is mentioned in Greek writers as one of the three eminently wicked places, whose name began with "C". The others were *Crete* (Comp. Tit 1:12) and *Cilicia*. After its conversion to the Christian religion, however, it produced many eminent men, among whom were Gregory Nyssen, and Basil the Great. It was one of the places to which Peter directed an epistle, 1Pe 1:1.

In Pontus. This was another province of Asia Minor, and was situated north of Cappadocia, and was bounded west by Paphlagonia. Pontus and Cappadocia under the Romans constituted one province. This was one of the places to which the apostle Peter directed his epistle, 1Pe 1:1. This was the birthplace of Aquila, one of the companions of Paul, Ac 18:2,18,26 Ro 16:3 1Co 16:19; 2Ti 4:19.

And Asia. Pontus, and Cappadocia, etc., were *parts* of Asia. But the word *Asia* is doubtless used here to denote the regions or provinces west of these, which are not particularly enumerated. Thus it is used, Ac 6:9 16:6, 20:16.

The capital of this region was Ephesus. See also 1Pe 1:1. This region was frequently called *Ionia*, and was afterwards the seat of the seven churches in Asia, Re 1:4.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Phrygia, and Pamphylia*. These were also two provinces of Asia Minor. Phrygia was surrounded by Galatia, Cappadocia, and Pisidia. Pamphylia was on the Mediterranean, and was bounded north by Pisidia. The language of all these places was doubtless the *Greek*, more or less pure.

In Egypt. This was that extensive country, well known, on the south of the Mediterranean, watered by the Nile. It extends 600 miles from north to south, and from 100 to 120 east and west. The language used there was the *Coptic*. At present the Arabic is spoken. Vast numbers of Jews dwelt in Egypt; and many from that country would be present at the great feasts at Jerusalem. In this country the first translation of the Old Testament was made, which is now called the Septuagint.

In the parts of Libya. Libya is a general name for Africa. It *properly* denoted the region which was near to Egypt; but the Greeks gave the name to all Africa.

About Cyrene. This was a region about 500 miles west of Alexandria in Egypt. It was also called *Pentapolis*, because there were in it five celebrated cities. This country now belongs to *Tripoli*. Great numbers of Jews resided here. A Jew of this place, Simon by name, was compelled to bear Our Saviour's cross after him to the place of crucifixion, Mt 27:32 Lu 23:26. Some of the Cyrenians are mentioned among the earliest Christians, Ac 11:20 13:1. The language which they spoke is not certainly known.

Strangers of Rome. This literally means, "Romans dwelling, or tarrying;" i.e., at Jerusalem. It may mean either that they were *permanently* fixed, or only tarrying at Jerusalem—*oi epidhmountev Pwmaioi*—. They were doubtless Jews who had taken up their residence in Italy, and had come to Jerusalem to attend the great feasts. The language which they spoke was the Latin. Great numbers of Jews were at that time dwelling at Rome. Josephus says, that there were eight synagogues there. The Jews are often mentioned by the Roman writers. There was a Jewish colony across the Tiber from Rome. When Judea was conquered, about sixty years before Christ, vast numbers of Jews were taken captive and carried to Rome. But they had much difficulty in managing them as slaves. They pertinaciously adhered to their religion, observed the Sabbath, and refused to join in the idolatrous rites of the Romans. Hence they were freed, and lived by themselves across the Tiber.

Jews. Native born Jews, or descendants of Jewish families.

Proselytes. Those who had been converted to the Jewish religion from among the Gentiles. The great zeal of the Jews to make proselytes is mentioned by our Saviour as one of the peculiar characteristics of the Pharisees, Mt 23:15. Some have supposed that the expression, *Jews and proselytes*, refers to the Romans only. But it is more probable that reference is made to *all* those that are mentioned. It has the appearance of a hurried enumeration; and the writer evidently mentioned them as they occurred to his mind, just as we would in giving a rapid account of so many different nations.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Cretes*. *Crete*, now called *Candia*, is an island in the Mediterranean, about 200 miles in length and 50 in breadth, about 500 miles south-west of Constantinople, and about the same distance west of Syria or Palestine. The climate is mild and delightful, the sky unclouded and serene. By some this island is supposed to be the *Caphtorim* of the Hebrews, Ge 10:14. It is mentioned in the Acts as the place touched at by Paul, Ac 27:7,8,13.

This was the residence of Titus, who was left there by Paul to "set in order the things that were wanting," etc., Tit 1:5. The Cretians among the Greeks were famous for deceit and falsehood, Tit 1:12,13. The language spoken there was probably the Greek.

Arabians. Arabia is the great peninsula which is bounded north by part of Syria, east by the Euphrates and the Persian Gulf, south by the Indian Ocean, and west by the Red Sea. It is often mentioned in the Scriptures; and there were doubtless there many Jews. The language spoken there was the *Arabic*.

In our tongues. The languages spoken by the apostles could not have been less than seven or eight, besides different dialects of the same languages. It is not certain that the Jews present from foreign nations spoke those languages perfectly; but they had doubtless so used them as to make them the common tongue in which they conversed. No miracle could be more decided than this. There was no way in which the apostles could impose on them, and make them *suppose* they spoke foreign languages, if they really did not; for these foreigners were abundantly able to determine that. It may be remarked, that this miracle had most important effects besides that witnessed on the day of Pentecost. The gospel would be carried by those who were converted to all these places; and the way would be prepared for the labours of the apostles there. Accordingly, most of these places became afterwards celebrated by the establishment of Christian churches, and the conversion of great multitudes to the Christian faith.

The wonderful works of God. *ta megaleia tou yeou*. The *great things* of God; that is, the great things that God had done, in the gift of his Son; in his raising him from the dead; in his miracles, ascension, etc. Comp. Lu 1:49 Ps 71:19, 26:7 66:3, 92:6 104:24, etc.

{*} "tongues" "Our own languages" {a} "the wonderful works of God" 1Co 12:10,28

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Were in doubt*. This expression—*dihporoun*— denotes a state of *hesitancy or anxiety* about an event. It is applied to those who are travelling, and are ignorant of the way, or who hesitate about the road. They were *all* astonished at this; they did not know how to understand it or explain it, until some of them supposed it was merely the effect of new wine.

{b} "What meaneth this" Ac 17:20

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Others mocking said*. The word rendered "mocking" means *to cavil, to deride*. It occurs in the New Testament but in one other place: Ac 17:32, "And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked." This was an effect that was not confined to the day of Pentecost. There has been seldom a revival of religion, a remarkable manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit, that has not given occasion for profane mockery and merriment. One characteristic of wicked men is to deride those things which are done to promote their own welfare. Hence the Saviour himself was mocked; and the efforts of Christians to save others have been the subject of derision. *Derision*, and *mockery*, and *a jeer*, have been far more effectual in deterring men from becoming Christians than any attempts at sober argument. God will treat men as they treat him, Ps 18:26. And hence he says to the wicked, "Because I have called, and ye refused— but ye have set

at nought all my counsel—I also will laugh at your calamity; I will *mock* when your fear cometh," Pr 1:24-26.

These men are full of new wine. These men are drunk. In such times men will have some way of accounting for the effects of the gospel; and the way is commonly about as wise and rational as this. "To escape the absurdity of acknowledging their own ignorance, they adopted the theory *that strong drink can teach languages*."—Dr. McLelland. In modern times it has been usual to denominate such scenes fanaticism, or wildfire, or enthusiasm. When men fail in argument, it is common to attempt to confute a doctrine, or bring reproach upon a transaction, by "giving it an ill name." Hence the names Puritan, Quaker, Methodist, etc., were at first given in derision, to account for some remarkable effect of religion on the world. Comp. Mt 11:19 Joh 7:20, 8:48.

And thus men endeavour to trace revivals to ungoverned and heated passions; and they are regarded by many as the mere offspring of fanaticism. The friends of revivals should not be discouraged by this; but should remember that the very first revival of religion was by many supposed to be *the effect of a drunken frolic*.

New wine. *gleukouv*. This word properly means the juice of the grape which distils before a pressure is applied, and called *must*. It was *sweet* wine; and hence the word in Greek meaning *sweet* was given to it. The ancients, it is said, had the art of preserving their new wine with the peculiar flavour before fermentation for a considerable time, and were in the habit of drinking it in the morning. See Horace, Sat. b. ii. iv. *Sweet wine*, which was probably the same as that mentioned here, is also mentioned in the Old Testament, Isa 49:26; Am 9:13.

{+} "mocking" or "Scoffing"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *But Peter*. This was in accordance with the natural temperament of Peter. He was bold, forward, ardent; and he rose now to defend the apostles of Jesus Christ, and Christ himself, from an injurious charge. Not daunted by ridicule or opposition, he felt that now was the time for preaching the gospel to the crowd that had been assembled by curiosity. No ridicule should deter Christians from an honest avowal of their opinions, and a defence of the operations of the Holy Spirit.

With the eleven. Matthias was now one of the apostles, and now appeared as one of the witnesses for the truth. They probably all arose, and took part in the discourse. Possibly Peter *began* to discourse, and either all spoke together in different languages, or one succeeded another.

Ye men of Judea. Men who are Jews; that is, Jews by birth. The original does not mean that they were permanent dwellers in Judea, but that they were Jews, of Jewish families. Literally, "men, Jews."

And all ye that dwell, etc. All others besides native-born Jews, whether proselytes or strangers, who were abiding at Jerusalem. This comprised, of course, the whole assembly, and was a respectful and conciliatory introduction to his discourse. Though they had mocked them, yet he treated them with respect, and did not render railing for railing, (1Pe 3:9,) but sought to *convince* them of their error.

Be this known, etc. Peter did not intimate that this was a doubtful matter, or one that could not be explained. His address was respectful, yet firm. He proceeded calmly to *show* them their error. When the enemies of religion deride us or the gospel, we should answer them kindly and respectfully, yet firmly. We should *reason* with them coolly, and convince them of their error, Pr 15:1. In this case Peter acted on the principle which he afterwards enjoined on all. 1Pe 3:15, "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." The design of Peter was to *vindicate* the conduct of the apostles from the reproach of intoxication, to show that this could be no other than the work of God; and to make an application of the truth to his hearers. This he did,

(1.) by showing that this could not be reasonably supposed to be the effect of new wine, Ac 2:15.

(2.) That it had been expressly predicted in the writings of the Jewish prophets, Ac 2:16-21.

(3.) By a calm argument, proving the resurrection and ascension of Christ, and showing that this also was in accordance with the Jewish Scriptures, Ac 2:22-35. We are not to suppose that this was the *whole* of Peter's discourse, but that these were the topics on which he insisted, and the main points of his argument.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *For these are not drunken*, etc. The word *these* here includes Peter himself, as well as the others. The charge doubtless extended to all.

The third hour of the day. The Jews divided their day into twelve equal parts, reckoning from sunrise to sunset. Of course the hours were longer in the summer than in the winter. The *third* hour would answer to our nine o'clock in the morning. The reasons why it was so improbable that they should be drunk at that time were the following:

(1.) It was the hour of morning worship, or sacrifice. It was highly improbable, that at that early hour they would be intoxicated.

(2.) It was not usual for even drunkards to become drunk in the daytime. 1Th 5:7, "They that be drunken are drunken in the night."

(3.) The charge was, that they had become drunk with wine. Ardent spirits, or alcohol, that curse of our times, was unknown. It was very improbable that so much of the weak wine commonly used in Judea should have been taken at that early hour as to produce intoxication.

(4.) It was a regular practice with the Jews, not to eat or drink *anything* until after the third hour of the day, especially on the Sabbath, and on all festival occasions. Sometimes this abstinence was maintained until noon. So universal was this custom, that the apostle could appeal to it with confidence, as a full refutation of the charge of drunkenness at that hour. Even the intemperate were not accustomed to drink before that hour. The following testimonies on this subject from Jewish writers, are from Lightfoot. "This was the custom of pious people in ancient times, that each one should offer his morning prayers with additions in the synagogue, and then return home and take refreshment." (*Maimonides, Shabb*.chap. 30.) "They remained in the synagogue until the sixth hour and a half, and then each one offered the prayer of the Mincha, before he returned home, and then he ate." "The fourth is the hour of repast, when all eat." One of the Jewish writers says, that

the difference between thieves and honest men might be known by the fact that the *former* might be seen in the morning at the fourth hour, eating and sleeping, and holding a cup in his hand. But for those who made pretensions to religion, as the apostles did, such a thing was altogether improbable.

{a} "seeing it is but the third" 1Th 5:7

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *This is that.* This is the *fulfillment* of that, or this was predicted. This was the *second* part of Peter's argument to show that this was in accordance with the predictions in their own Scriptures.

By the prophet Joel. Joe 2:28-32. This is not quoted *literally* either from the Hebrew or from the Septuagint. The substance, however, is preserved.

{b} "was spoken by the prophet Joel" Joe 2:25-32

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *It shall come to pass*. It shall happen, or shall occur.

In the last days. Hebrew, Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic, *after these things, or afterwards*. The expression *the last days*, however, occurs frequently in the Old Testament. Ge 49:1, Jacob called his sons, that he might tell them what should happen to them in *the last days*; that is, in future times. Hebrew, *in after times*. Mi 4:1, "*In the last days*, (Heb. in after times,) the mountain of the house of the Lord," etc. Isa 2:2, "*In the last days*, the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains," etc. The expression then properly denoted *the future times* in general; but, as the coming of the Messiah was to the eye of a Jew the most important event in the coming ages, the great, glorious, and crowning scene in all that vast futurity, the phrase came to be regarded as properly expressive of that. And they spoke of future times, and of the last times, as the glad period which should be crowned and honoured with the presence and triumphs of the Messiah. It stood in opposition to the usual denomination of earlier times. It was a phrase in contrast with the days of the patriarchs, the kings, the prophets, etc. The *last days*, or the closing period of the world, were the days of the Messiah. It does not appear from this, and it certainly is not implied in the expression, that they supposed the world would then come to an end. Their views were just the contrary. They anticipated a long and glorious time, under the dominion of the Messiah, and to this expectation they were led by the promise that his kingdom should be for ever; that of the increase of his government there should be no end, etc. This expression was understood by the writers of the New Testament as referring undoubtedly to the times of the gospel. And hence they often used it as denoting that the time of the expected Messiah had come, but *not* to imply that the world was drawing near to an end. Heb 1:2, God "hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." 1Pe 1:20, "Was manifest in these last times for you." 2Pe 3:3 1Pe 1:5; 1Jo 2:18, "Little children, it is the last

time," etc. Jude 1:18. The expression, *the last day*, is applied by our Saviour to the resurrection and the day of judgment, Joh 6:39,40,44,54 11:24 12:48.

Here the expression means simply *in those future times, when the Messiah shall have come*.

I will pour out of my Spirit. The expression in Hebrew is, "I will pour out my Spirit." The word *pour* is commonly applied to *water*, or to blood, to pour it out, or to shed it, Isa 57:6; to *tears*, to pour them out, that is, to weep, etc., Ps 42:4 1Sa 1:15. It is applied to water, to wine, or to blood, in the New Testament, Mt 9:17 Re 16:1; Ac 22:20, "The blood of thy martyr Stephen *was shed*." It conveys also the idea of *communicating largely*, or *freely*, as water is poured freely from a fountain. Tit 3:5,6, "The renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he *shed on us abundantly*." Thus Job 36:27, "They (the clouds) pour down rain according to the vapour thereof." Isa 44:3, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty." Isa 45:8, "Let the skies pour down righteousness." Mal 3:10, "Will I pour you out a blessing." It is also applied to *fury* and *anger*, when God intends to say that he will not spare, but will signally punish. Ps 69:24 Jer 10:2,5.

It is not unfrequently applied *to the Spirit*, Pr 1:23 Isa 44:3 Zec 12:10. And then it means that he will bestow large measures of spiritual influences. As the *Spirit* renews and sanctifies men, so to pour out the Spirit is to grant freely his influences to renew and sanctify the soul.

My Spirit. The *Spirit* here denotes the Third Person of the Trinity, promised by the Saviour, and sent to finish his work, and apply it to men. The Holy Spirit is regarded as the source, or *conveyer* of all the blessings which Christians experience. Hence he renews the heart, Joh 3:5,6. He is the Source of all proper feelings and principles in Christians, or he produces the Christian graces, Ga 5:22-25 Tit 3:5-7. The spread and success of the gospel are attributed to him, Isa 32:15,16. Miraculous gifts are traced to him; especially the various gifts with which the early Christians were endowed, 1Co 12:4-10. The promise that he would pour out his Spirit, means that he would, in the time of the Messiah, impart a large measure of those influences, which it was his peculiar province to communicate to men. A *part* of them were communicated on the day of Pentecost, in the miraculous endowment of the power of speaking foreign languages, in the wisdom of the apostles, and in the conversion of the three thousand.

Upon all flesh. The word *flesh* here means *persons*, or *men*. **See Barnes "Ro 1:3"**.

The word *all*, here, does not mean every individual, but every *class* or *rank* of men. It is to be limited to the cases specified immediately. The influences were not to be confined to any class, but to be communicated to all kinds of persons, old men, youth, servants, etc. Comp. 1Ti 2:1-4.

And your sons and your daughters. Your children. It would seem, however, that females shared in the remarkable influences of the Holy Spirit. Philip, the evangelist, had four daughters which did prophesy, Ac 21:9. It is probable also that the females of the church of Corinth partook of this gift, though they were forbidden to exercise it in public, 1Co 14:34. The office of prophesying, whatever was meant by that, was not confined to the *men* among the Jews. Ex 15:20, "Miriam, the prophetess, took a timbrel," etc. Jud 4:4, "Deborah, a prophetess, judged Israel." 2Ki 22:14. See also Lu 2:36, "There was one Anna, a prophetess," etc.

Shall prophesy. The word *prophesy* is used in a great variety of senses.

(1.) It means to *predict, or foretell* future events, Mt 11:13 15:7.

(2.) To divine, to conjecture, to declare as a prophet might. Mt 26:68, "Prophesy, Who is he that smote thee."

(3.) To celebrate the praises of God, being under a Divine influence, Lu 1:67. This seems to have been a considerable part of the employment in the ancient schools of the prophets, 1Sa 10:5 19:20 1Sa 30:15.

(4.) To *teach*—as no small part of the office of the prophets was to teach the doctrines of religion. Mt 7:22, "Have we not prophesied in thy name?"

(5.) It denotes then, in general, *to speak under a Divine influence*, whether in foretelling future events; in celebrating the praises of God; in instructing others in the duties of religion; or *in speaking foreign languages under that influence*. In this last sense, the word is used in the New Testament to denote those who were miraculously endowed with the power of speaking foreign languages, Ac 19:6. The word is also used to denote *teaching*, or speaking in intelligible language, in *opposition* to speaking a foreign tongue, 1Co 14:1-5. In this place it means that they should speak under a Divine influence, and is specially applied to the power of speaking in a foreign tongue.

Your young men shall see visions. The will of God in former times was communicated to the prophets in various ways. One was by *visions*; and hence one of the most usual names of the prophets was *seers*. The name *seer* was first given to that class of men, and was superseded by the name *prophet*. 1Sa 9:9, "He that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a *Seer*. 1Sa 9:11,18,19 2Sa 24:11 1Ch 29:29, etc. This name was given from the manner in which the Divine will was communicated, which seems to have been by throwing the prophet into an ecstacy, and then by causing the *vision*, or the *appearance* of the objects or events to pass before the mind. The prophet looked upon the passing scene, the often splendid diorama as it actually occurred, and recorded it as it appeared to his mind. Hence he recorded rather the *succession* of images than the times in which they would occur. These visions occurred sometimes when they were *asleep*, and sometimes during a prophetic ecstacy, Da 2:28 7:1,2,15 7:2 Eze 11:24; Ge 15:1 Nu 12:6; Job 4:13 7:14; Eze 1:1 8:3.

Often the prophet seemed to be transferred, or translated to another place from where he was; and the scene in a distant *land* or age passed before the mind, Eze 8:3 40:2, 11:24 Da 8:2.

In this case, the distant scene or time passed before the prophet, and he recollected it as it appeared to him. That this did not cease before the times of the gospel is evident. Ac 9:10, "To Ananias said the Lord *in a vision*," Ac 9:12, "And hath seen (i.e. Paul) *in a vision* a man named Ananias," etc., i.e. Paul hath seen Ananias represented to him, though absent; he has had an image of him coming in to him. Ac 10:3, Cornelius "saw in a vision evidently an angel of God coming in to him," etc. This was one of the modes by which in former times God made known his will; and the language of the Jews came to express a revelation in this manner. Though there were strictly no *visions* on the day of Pentecost, yet that was one scene under the great economy of the Messiah, under which God would make known his will in a manner as clear as he did to the ancient Jews.

Your old men shall dream dreams. The will of God, in former times, was made known often in this manner; and there are several instances recorded in which it was done under the gospel. God informed Abimelech in a dream that Sarah was the wife of Abraham, Ge 20:3. He spoke to Jacob in a dream, Ge 31:11; to Laban, Ge 31:24; to Joseph, Ge 37:5; to the butler and baker, Ge 40:5; to Pharaoh, Ge 41:1-7; to Solomon, 1Ki 3:5; to Daniel, Da 2:3 7:1. It was prophesied by Moses that in this way God would make known his will, Nu 12:6. It occurred even in the times of the gospel, Mt 1:20. Joseph was warned in a dream, Mt 2:12,13,19,22.

Pilate's wife was also troubled in this manner about the conduct of the Jews to Christ, Mt 27:19. As this was one way in which the will of God was made known formerly to men, so the expression

here denotes simply that his will should be made known; that it should be one characteristic of the times of the gospel that God would reveal himself to man. The ancients probably had some mode of determining whether their dreams were Divine communications, or whether they were, as they are now, the mere erratic wanderings of the mind when unrestrained and unchecked by the will. At present no confidence is to be put in dreams.

{a} "pour out my Spirit" Isa 44:3 Eze 36:27

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *And on my servants*. The Hebrew in Joel is, "upon *the* servants." The Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate, however, render it "on *my* servants." In Joel, the prophet would seem to be enumerating the different conditions and ranks of society. The influences of the Spirit would be confined to no class; they would descend on old and young, and even on servants and handmaids. So the Chaldee Paraphrase understood it. But the Septuagint and Peter evidently understood it in the sense of *servants of God*; as the worshippers of God are often called servants in the Scriptures. See Ro 1:1. It is possible, however, that the Hebrew intended to refer to the servants of God. It is not "upon *your* servants," etc., as in the former expression, "*your* sons," etc.; but the form is changed, "upon *servants* and handmaids." The language, therefore, will admit the construction of the Septuagint and of Peter; and it was this variation in the Hebrew which suggested, doubtless, the mention of "my servants," etc., instead of *your* servants.

And on my handmaidens. Female servants. The name is several times given to pious women, Ps 86:16 116:16; Lu 1:38,48.

The meaning of this verse does not materially differ from the former. In the times of the gospel, those who were brought under its influence should be remarkably endowed with ability to declare the will of God.

{b} "and they shall prophesy" Ac 16:4,9,10 1Co 12:10

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 19

Verse 19, 20. *I will shew wonders*. Literally, "I will give signs." *dwsw terata*. The word in the Hebrew—

HEBREW

—*mophethim*, means, properly, *prodigies*; wonderful occurrences; miracles wrought by God or his messengers, Ex 4:21 7:3,9 11:9; De 4:34, etc. It is the common word to denote a *miracle*, in the Old Testament. Here it means, however, a *portentous appearance, a prodigy, a remarkable occurrence*. It is commonly joined in the New Testament with the word *signs*, "signs and wonders," Mt 24:24 Mr 13:22; Joh 4:48.

In these places it does not of necessity mean *miracles*, but unusual and remarkable appearances. Here it is fixed to mean great and striking changes in the sky, the sun, moon, etc. The Hebrew is, "I will give signs in the heaven, and upon the earth." Peter has quoted it according to the sense, and

not according to the letter. The Septuagint is here a literal translation of the Hebrew; and this is one of the instances where the New Testament writers did not quote from either.

Much of the difficulty of interpreting these verses consists in fixing the proper meaning to the expression, "that great and notable day of the Lord." If it be limited to the day of Pentecost, it is certain that no such events occurred at that time. But there is, it is believed, no propriety in confining it to that time. The description here pertains to "the last days," (Ac 2:17) that is, to the *whole* of that period of duration, however long, which was known by the prophets as the *last times*. That period might be extended through many centuries; and *during* that period all these events would take place. The *day of the Lord* is the day when God shall *manifest himself* in a peculiar manner; a day when he shall so strikingly be seen in his wonders and his judgments, that it may be called *his* day. Thus it is applied to the day of judgment, as *the day of the Son of man*; the day in which *he* will be the great attractive object, and will be signally glorified, Lu 17:24 1Th 5:2; Php 1:6; 2Pe 3:12. If, as I suppose, "that notable day of the Lord" here denotes that future time when God shall manifest himself in judgment, then we are not to suppose that Peter meant to say that these "wonders" should take place on the day of Pentecost, or had their fulfillment then; *but would occur under that indefinite period called "the last days," the days of the Messiah, and BEFORE that period was closed by the great day of the Lord*. The gift of tongues was a *partial* fulfillment of the general prophecy pertaining to those times. And as the prophecy was thus *partially* fulfilled, it was a pledge that it would be *entirely*; and thus there was laid a foundation for the necessity of repentance, and for calling on the Lord in order to be saved.

Blood. *Blood* is commonly used as an emblem of slaughter, or of battle.

Fire. Fire is also an image of war, or the conflagration of towns and dwellings in time of war.

Vapour of smoke. The word *vapour—atmiv*—means, commonly, an exhalation from the earth, etc., easily moved from one place to another, here it means (Heb. Joel) *rising columns, or pillars of smoke*; and is another image of the calamities of war, the smoke rising from burning towns. It has almost always been customary in war to burn the towns of an enemy, and to render him as helpless as possible, Hence the calamities denoted here are those *represented* by such scenes. To what *particular* scenes there is reference here, it may be impossible now to say. It may be remarked, however, that scenes of this kind occurred before the destruction of Jerusalem; and there is a striking resemblance between the description in Joel, and that by which our Saviour foretells the destruction of Jerusalem. **See Barnes "Mt 24:21-24"**.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *The sun shall be turned into darkness*. **See Barnes "Mt 24:29"**.

The same images used here with reference to the sun and moon, are used also there. They occur not unfrequently, Mr 13:24 2Pe 3:7,10.

The shining of the sun is an emblem of prosperity; the withdrawing, or eclipse, or setting of the sun is an emblem of calamity, and is often thus used in the Scriptures, Isa 60:20 Jer 15:9; Eze 32:7 Am 8:9; Re 6:12 8:12, 9:2 16:8.

To say that the sun is darkened, or turned into darkness, is an image of calamity, and especially of the calamities of war; when the smoke of burning cities rises to heaven, and obscures his light.

This is not, therefore, to be taken literally, nor does it afford any indication of what will be at the end of the world in regard to the sun.

The moon into blood. The word *blood* here means that obscure, sanguinary colour which the moon has when the atmosphere is filled with smoke and vapour; and especially the lurid and alarming appearance which it assumes when smoke and flames are thrown up by earthquakes and fiery eruptions. Re 6:12, "And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood., Re 8:8. In this place it denotes great calamities. The figures used are indicative of wars, and conflagrations, and unusual prodigies of earthquakes. As these things are (Mt 24) applied to the destruction of Jerusalem; as they actually occurred previous to that event, **See Barnes "Mt 24:1"**

it may be supposed that the prophecy in Joel had an immediate reference to that. The meaning of the quotation by Peter in this place therefore is, that what occurred on the day of Pentecost *was the beginning of the series of wonders that were to take place during the times of the Messiah*. It is not intimated that those scenes were to close, or to be exhausted in that age. They may precede that great day of the Lord which is yet to come in view of the whole earth.

That great and notable day of the Lord. This is called the *great* day of the Lord, because on that day he will be signally manifested, more impressively-and strikingly than on other times. The word *notable*, *epifanh*, means signal, illustrious, distinguished. In Joel the word is *terrible, or fearful*; a word applicable to days of calamity, and trial, and judgment. The Greek word here rendered *notable* is also in the Septuagint frequently used to denote calamity, or times of judgment, De 10:21 2Sa 7:23. This will apply to *any* day in which God signally manifests himself; but particularly to a day when he shall come forth to punish men, as at the destruction of Jerusalem, or at the day of judgment. The meaning is, that those wonders should take place *before* that distinguished day should arrive when God should come forth in judgment.

{a} "The sun shall be turned into darkness" Mr 13:24 2Pe 3:7,10

{*} "notable" "Signal"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Whosoever shall call*. In the midst of these wonders and dangers, whosoever should call on the Lord should be delivered, (Joel.) The *name* of the Lord is the same as the Lord himself. It is a Hebraism, signifying to call on the Lord, Ps 79:6 Zec 13:9.

Shall be saved. In Hebrew, shall be *delivered*, i.e. from impending calamities. When they threaten, and God is coming forth to judge them, it shall be that those who are characterized as those who call on the Lord shall be delivered. This is equally true at all times. It is remarkable that no Christians perished in the siege of Jerusalem. Though more than a million of Jews perished, yet the followers of Christ who were there, having been warned by him, when they saw the signs of the Romans approaching, with- drew to *AElia*, and were preserved. So it shall be in the day of judgment. All whose character it has been that *they called on God*, will then be saved. While the wicked shall then call on the rocks and the mountains to shelter them *from* the Lord, those who *have* invoked his *favour* and *mercy* shall then find deliverance. The use which Peter makes of this passage is this: Calamities were about to come; the day of judgment was approaching; they were

passing through *the last days* of the earth's history; and therefore it became them to call on the name of the Lord, and to obtain deliverance from the dangers which impended over the guilty. There can be little doubt that Peter intended to apply this to the Messiah, and that by the name of the Lord he meant the Lord Jesus. See 1Co 1:2. Paul makes the same use of the passage, expressly applying it to the Lord Jesus Christ, Ro 10:13,14. In Joel, the word translated *Lord* is *JEHOVAH*, the incommunicable and peculiar name of God; and the use of the passage before us, in the New Testament, shows how the apostles regarded the Lord Jesus Christ; and proves that they had no hesitation in applying to him names and attributes which could belong to no one but God.

This verse teaches us,

(1.) that in prospect of the judgments of God which are to come, we should make preparation. We shall be called to pass through the closing scene of this earth; the time when the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, and when the great day of the Lord shah come.

(2.) It is easy to be saved. All that God requires of us is to call upon him, to pray to him, to ask him, and he will answer and save. If men will not do so easy a thing as to call on God, and *ask* him for salvation, it is obviously proper that they should be cast off. The terms of salvation could not be made plainer or easier. The offer is wide, free, universal, and there is no obstacle but what exists in the heart of the sinner. And from this part of Peter's vindication of the scene on the day of Pentecost, we may learn also,

(1.) that revivals of religion are to be expected as a part of the history of the Christian church. He speaks of God's pouring out his Spirit, etc., as what was to take place *in the last days*, i.e. in the indefinite and large tract of time which was to come under the administration of the Messiah. His remarks are by no means limited to the day of Pentecost. They are as applicable to future periods as to that time; and we are to expect it *as a part of Christian history*, that the Holy Spirit will be sent down to awaken and convert men.

(2.) This will also vindicate revivals from all the charges which have ever been brought against them. All the objections of irregularity, extravagance, wildfire, enthusiasm, disorder, etc., which have been alleged against revivals in modern times, *might* have been brought with equal propriety against the scene on the day of Pentecost. Yet an apostle showed that that was in accordance with the predictions of the Old Testament, and was an undoubted work of the Holy Spirit. If that work could be vindicated, then modern revivals may be. If *that* was really liable to no objections on these accounts, then modern works of grace should not be objected to for the same things. And if that excited deep interest in the apostles; if they felt deep concern to vindicate it from the charge brought against it, then Christians and Christian ministers now should feel similar solicitude to defend revivals, and not be found among their revilers, their calumniators, or their foes. There will be enemies enough of the work of the Holy Spirit without the aid of professed Christians; and that man possesses no enviable feelings or character who is found with the enemies of God and his Christ, in opposing the mighty work of the Holy Spirit on the human heart.

{b} "shall call on the name" 1Co 1:2 Heb 4:16

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Ye men of Israel*. Descendants of Israel, or Jacob, i.e. Jews. Peter proceeds now to the third part of his argument, to show that Jesus Christ had been raised up; and that the scene which had occurred was in accordance with his promise, was proof of his resurrection, and of his exaltation to be the Messiah; and that therefore they should repent for their great sin in having put their own Messiah to death.

A man approved of God. A man who was *shown or demonstrated* to have the approbation of God, or to have been sent by him.

By miracles and wonders and signs. The first of these words properly means the displays of power which Jesus made; the second, the unusual or remarkable events which attended him; the third, the *signs or proofs* that he was from God. Together, they denote the *array or series* of remarkable works—raising the dead, healing the sick, etc., which showed that Jesus was sent from God. The *proof* which they furnished that he was from God was this—that God would not confer such power on an impostor, and that therefore he was what he pretended to be.

Which God did by him. The Lord Jesus himself often traced his power to do these things to his commission from the Father; but he did it in such a way as to show that he was closely united to him, Joh 5:19,30. Peter here says that God did these works *by* Jesus Christ, to show that Jesus was truly sent by him, and that therefore he had the seal and attestation of God. The same thing Jesus himself said: Joh 5:36, "The works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." The great works which God has wrought in creation, as well as in redemption, he is represented as having done by his Son. Heb 1:2, "By whom also he made the worlds." Joh 1:3 Col 1:15-19.

In the midst of you. In your own land. It is also probable that many of the persons present had been witnesses of his miracles.

As ye yourselves also know. They knew it either by having witnessed them, or by the evidence which everywhere abounded of the truth that he had wrought them. The Jews, even in the time of Christ, did not dare to call his miracles in question, Joh 15:24. While they admitted the miracle, they attempted to trace it to the influence of Beelzebub, Mt 9:34 Mr 3:22. So decided and numerous were the miracles of Jesus, that Peter here appeals to them as having been known by the Jews themselves to have been performed, and with a confidence that even *they* could not deny it. On this he proceeds to rear his argument for the truth of his Messiahship.

{*} "approved" "manifested" {a} "miracles and wonders and signs" Joh 14:10,11; Heb 2:4

{b} "ye yourselves know" Joh 15:24

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Him being delivered, ekdoton*. This word, *delivered*, is used commonly of those who are *surrendered* or delivered into the hands of enemies or adversaries. It means that Jesus was surrendered, or given up to his enemies, by those who should have been his protectors. Thus he was delivered to the chief priests, Mr 10:33. Pilate released Barabbas, and *delivered* Jesus to their will, Mr 15:15 Lu 23:25; he was delivered unto the Gentiles, Lu 18:32; the chief priests delivered him to Pilate, Mt 27:2; and Pilate delivered him to be crucified, Mt 27:26 Joh 19:16. In this manner was the death of Jesus accomplished, by being *surrendered* from one tribunal to another, and one

demand of his countrymen, to another, until they succeeded in procuring his death. It may also be implied here, that he was given or surrendered by God to the hands of men. Thus he is represented to have been given by God, Joh 3:16 1Jo 4:9,10.

The Syriac translates this, "Him, who was destined to this by the foreknowledge and will of God, *you delivered* into the hands of wicked men," etc. The Arabic, "Him, delivered *to you* by the hands of the wicked, you received, and after you had mocked him, you slew him."

By the determinate counsel. The word translated *determinate —th wrismenh—* means, properly, that which is *defined, marked out, or bounded*; as, to mark out or define the boundary of a field, etc. See \Ro 1:1,4. In Ac 10:42, it is translated *ordained* of God; denoting *his purpose that it should be so*, i.e. that Jesus should be the Judge of quick and dead. Lu 22:22, "The Son of man goeth, as it w*as determined*," i.e. as God has purposed or determined beforehand that he should go. Ac 11:29, "The disciples—*determined* to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea," i.e. they resolved or purposed beforehand to do it. Ac 17:26, "God— *hath determined* the times before appointed," etc. In all these places there is the idea of a *purpose*, or *intention*, or *plan* implying *intention*, and marking out or fixing the boundaries to some future action or event. The word implies that the death of Jesus was resolved on by God before it took place. And this truth is established by all the predictions made in the Old Testament, and by the Saviour himself. God was not *compelled* to give up his Son. There was no *claim* on him for it. And he had a right, therefore, to determine when and how it should be done. The fact, moreover, that this was *predicted*, shows that it was fixed or resolved on. No event can be *foretold*, evidently, unless it be *certain* that it will take place. The event, therefore, must in some way be fixed or resolved on beforehand.

Counsel. *boulh*. This word properly denotes purpose, decree, *will*. It expresses the act of the mind in *willing*, or the purpose or design which is formed. Here it means the purpose or will of God; it was his plan or decree that Jesus should be delivered. Ac 4:28, "For to do whatsoever thy hand and *thy counsel h boulh sou* determined before to be done." Eph 1:11, "Who worketh all things after *the counsel* of his own will." Heb 6:17, "God, willing to show the immutability of *his counsel*." See Ac 20:27 1Co 4:5; Lu 23:51.

The word here, therefore, proves that Jesus was delivered by the deliberate purpose of God; that it was according to his previous intention and design. The reason why this was insisted on by Peter, was, that he might convince the Jews that Jesus was not delivered by *weakness*, or because he was unable to rescue himself. Such an opinion would have been inconsistent with the belief that he was the Messiah. It was important, then, to assert the *dignity* of Jesus, and to show that his death was in accordance with the fixed design of God; and, therefore, that it did not interfere in the least with his claims to be the Messiah. The same thing our Saviour has himself expressly affirmed, Joh 19:10,11, 10:18 Mt 26:53.

Foreknowledge. This word denotes the seeing beforehand of an event yet to take place. It implies,

(1.) omniscience; and,

(2.) that the event is fixed and certain. To foresee a contingent event, that is, to foresee that an event will take place, when it may or may not take place, is an absurdity. Foreknowledge, therefore, implies that for some reason the event *will certainly* take place. What that reason is, the word itself does not determine. As, however, *God* is represented in the Scriptures as purposing or determining future events; as they could not be *foreseen* by him unless he had so determined, so the word sometimes is used in the sense of determining beforehand, or as synonymous with decreeing, Ro

8:29 11:2. In this place the word is used to denote that the delivering up of Jesus was something more than a bare or naked decree. It implies that God did it according to his *foresight* of what would be the best time, and place, and manner of its being done. It was not the result merely of *will*; it was will directed by a wise foreknowledge of what would be best. And this is the case with all the decrees of God. It follows from this, that the conduct of the Jews was foreknown. God was not disappointed in anything respecting their treatment of his Son. Nor will he be disappointed in any of the doings of men. Notwithstanding the wickedness of the world, his counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure, Isa 46:10.

Ye have taken. See Mt 26:57. Ye *Jews* have taken. It is possible that some were present on this occasion who had been personally concerned in taking Jesus; and many who had joined in the cry, "Crucify him," Lu 23:18-21. It was, at any rate, the act *of the Jewish people* by which this had been done. This was a striking instance of the fidelity of that preaching which says, as Nathan did to David, "Thou art the man !" Peter, once so timid that he denied his Lord, now charged this atrocious crime on his countrymen, regardless of their anger and his own danger. He did not deal in *general* accusations, but brought the charges home, and declared that *they* were the men who had been concerned in this amazing crime. No preaching can be successful that does not charge on men their personal guilt; and that does not fearlessly proclaim their ruin and danger.

By wicked hands. Greek, "through or by the hands of the lawless, or wicked." This refers, doubtless, to Pilate and the Roman soldiers, through whose instrumentality this had been done. The reasons for supposing that this is the true interpretation of the passage are these:

(1.) The Jews had not the power of inflicting death themselves.

(2.) The term used here—*wicked,anomwn* was not applicable to the *Jews*, but to the Romans. It properly means *lawless*, or those who had not the law, and is often applied to the heathen, Ro 2:12,14; 1Co 9:21.

(3.) The punishment which was inflicted was a Roman punishment.

(4.) It was a matter of fact, that the Jews, though they had *condemned* him, yet had not put him to death themselves, but had demanded it of the Romans. But though they had employed the Romans to do it, still they were the prime-movers in the deed; they had plotted, and compassed, and demanded his death; and they were therefore not the less guilty. The maxim of the common law, and of common sense, is, "he who does a deed by the instrumentality of another is responsible for it." It was from no merit of the Jews that they had not put him to death themselves. It was simply because the power was taken away from them.

Have crucified. Greek, "having affixed him to the cross, ye have put him to death." Peter here charges the crime fully on them. Their guilt was not diminished because they had employed others to do it. From this we may remark,

(1.) that this was one of the most amazing and awful crimes that could be charged on any men. It was malice, and treason, and hatred, and murder combined. Nor was it any common murder. It was *their own Messiah* whom they had put to death; the hope of their fathers; he who had been long promised by God, and the prospect of whose coming had so long cheered and animated the nation. They had now imbrued their hands in his blood, and stood charged with the awful crime of having murdered the Prince of peace.

(2.) It is no mitigation of guilt that we do it by the instrumentality of others. It is often, if not always, a deepening and extending of the crime.

(3.) We have here a striking and clear instance of the doctrine that the decrees of God do not interfere with the free agency of men. This event was certainly *determined* beforehand. Nothing is clearer than this. It is here expressly asserted; and it had been foretold with undeviating certainty by the prophets. God had, for wise and gracious purposes, purposed or decreed in his own mind that his Son should die at the time, and in the manner in which he did; for all the circumstances of his *death*, as well as of his birth and his life, were foretold. And yet, in this, the Jews and the Romans never supposed or alleged that they were compelled or cramped in what they did. They *did what they chose*. If in this case the decrees of God were not inconsistent with human freedom, neither can they be in any case. Between those decrees and the freedom of man there is no inconsistency, unless it could be shown—what never can be—that God *compels* men to act contrary to their own will. In that case there could be no freedom. But that is *not* the case with regard to the decrees of God. An act is what it is *in itself*; it can be contemplated and measured by itself. That it was *foreseen, foreknown, or purposed*, does not alter its nature, any more than it does that it be *remembered* after it is performed. The *memory* of what we have done does not destroy our freedom. *Our own purposes* in relation to our conduct do not destroy our freedom; nor can the purposes or designs of any other being violate one free moral action, unless he compels us to do a thing against our will.

(4.) We have here a proof that the decree of God does not take away *the moral character* of an action. It does not prove that an action is *innocent* if it is shown that it is a part of the wise plan of God to permit it. Never was there a more atrocious *crime* than the crucifixion of the Son of God. And yet it was determined on in the Divine counsels. So with all the deeds of human guilt. The purpose of God to *permit* them does not destroy their nature, or make them innocent. They are what they are in themselves. The purpose of God does not change their character; and if it is *right* to punish them *in fact*, they will be punished. If it is right for God to punish them, it was right to *resolve* to do it. And the sinner must answer for *his sins*, not for the plans of his Maker; nor can he take shelter in the day of wrath, against *what he deserves*, in the plea that God has determined future events. If any men could have done it, it would have been those whom Peter addressed; yet neither he nor they felt that their guilt was in the least diminished by the fact that Jesus was "delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God."

(5.) If this event was predetermined; if that act of amazing wickedness, when the Son of God was put to death, was fixed by the determinate counsel of God, then all the events leading to it, and the circumstances attending it, were also a part of the decree. The one could not be determined without the other.

(6.) If *that* event was determined, then others may be also consistently with human freedom and responsibility. There can be no deed of wickedness that shall surpass that of crucifying the Son of God. And if the acts of his murderers were a part of the wise counsel of God, then on the same principle are we to suppose that all events are under his direction, and ordered by a purpose infinitely wise and good.

(7.) If the Jews could not take shelter from the charge of wickedness under the plea that it was foreordained, then no sinners can do it. This was as clear a case as can ever occur; and yet the apostle did not intimate that an excuse or mitigation for their sin could be pleaded from this cause. This case, therefore, meets *all* the excuses of sinners from this plea, and *proves* that those excuses will not avail them or save them in the day of judgment.

{c} "delivered by the determinate" Lu 22:22 24:44; Ac 3:18

{d} "ye have taken" Ac 5:30 {e} "and by wicked hands" Mt 27:1

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Whom God hath raised up*. This was the main point, in this part of his argument, which Peter wished to establish. He could not but admit that the Messiah had been in an ignominious manner put to death. But he now shows them that *God* had also raised him up; had thus given his attestation to his doctrine; and had sent down his Spirit according to the promise which the Lord Jesus made before his death.

Having loosed the pains of death. The word *loosed*, *lusav*, is opposed *to bind*, and is properly applied to a *cord*, or to anything which is *bound*. See Mt 21:2 Mr 1:7. Hence it means to *free*, or to *liberate*, Luke 13:16 1Co 7:27. It is used in this sense here; though the idea of *untying* or loosing a band is retained, because the word translated *pains* often means a *cord* or *band*.

The pains of death. *wdinav tou yanatou*. The word translated *pains* denotes, properly, the extreme sufferings of parturition, and then any severe or excruciating pangs. Hence it is applied also to *death*, as being a state of extreme suffering. A very frequent meaning of the Hebrew word, of which this is the translation, is *cord*, or *band*. This perhaps was the *original* idea of the word; and the Hebrews expressed any extreme agony under the idea of *bands* or *cords* closely drawn, binding and constricting the limbs, and producing severe pain. Thus death was represented under this image of a band that confined men; that pressed closely on them; that prevented escape; and produced severe suffering. For this use of the word

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It is applied to death, (Ps 18:5,) "The *snares* of death prevented me;" answering to the word *sorrows* in the previous part of the verse. Ps 116:3, "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the *pains* of hell (*hades or sheol*, the cords or pains that were *binding me down* to the grave) gat hold upon me." We are not to infer from this that our Lord suffered anything *after* death. It means simply that he could not be held by the grave, but that God loosed the bonds which had held him there; and that he now set him free who had been encompassed by these pains or bonds, until they had brought him down to the grave. Pain, mighty pain, will encompass us all like the constrictions and bindings of a cord which we cannot loose, and will fasten our limbs and bodies in the grave. Those bands begin to be thrown around us in early life, and they are drawn closer and closer, until we lie panting under the stricture on a bed of pain, and then are still and immovable in the grave; subdued in a manner not a little resembling the mortal agonies of the tiger in the convolutions of the boa constrictor; or like Laocoon and his sons in the folds of the serpents from the island of Tenedos.

It was not possible. This does not refer to any *natural* impossibility, or to any inherent efficacy or power in the *body* of Jesus itself; but simply means that, *in the circumstances of the case, such an event could not be*. *Why* it could not be, he proceeds at once to show. It could not be consistently with the promises of the Scriptures. Jesus was the *Prince of life*, (Ac 3:15,) and had life in himself, (Joh 1:4 5:26) and had power to lay down his life, and to take it again, (Joh 10:18;) and it was indispensable that he should rise. He came, also, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, (Heb 2:14;) and as it was his purpose to gain this victory, he could not be defeated in it by being confined to the grave.

{a} "Whom God" Lu 24:1 Ac 13:30,34 1Co 6:14; Eph 1:20 Col 2:12

1Th 1:10 Heb 13:10; 1Pe 1:21

{*} "pains" "Bands" {b} "not possible that" Joh 10:18

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 25

Verses 25-28. *For David speaketh*, etc. This doctrine that the Messiah must rise from the dead, Peter proceeds to prove by a quotation from the Old Testament. This passage is taken from Ps 16:8-11. It is made from the Greek version of the Septuagint, with only one slight and unimportant change. Nor is there any material change, as will be seen, from the Hebrew. In what sense this Psalm Can be applied to Christ will be seen after we have examined the expressions which Peter alleges.

I foresaw the Lord. This is an unhappy translation. To *foresee* the Lord always *before* us conveys no idea, though it may be a literal translation of the passage. The word means to *foresee*, and then to *see before us*, that is, as *present* with us, to *regard* as being near. It thus implies to put *confidence* in one; to rely on him, or expect assistance from him. This is its meaning here. The Hebrew is, *I expected*, or *waited for*. It thus expresses the petition of one who is helpless and dependent, who *waits* for help from God. It is often thus used in the Old Testament.

Always before my face. As being always present to help me, and to deliver me out of all my troubles.

He is on my right hand. To be *at hand* is to be *near* to afford help. The *right* hand is mentioned because that was the place of dignity and honour. And David did not design simply to say that he was near to help him, but that he had the place of honour, the highest place in his affections, Ps 109:31. In our dependence on God, we should *exalt* him. We should not merely regard him as our *help*, but should at the same time give him the highest place in our affections.

That I should not be moved. That is, that no great evil or calamity should happen to me, that I may stand firm. The phrase denotes to sink into calamities, or to fall into the power of enemies, Ps 62:2,6. This expresses the confidence of one who is in danger of great calamities, and who puts his trust in the help of God alone.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Therefore*. Peter ascribes these expressions to the Messiah. The *reason* why he would exult or rejoice was, that he would be preserved amidst the sorrows that were coming on him, and could look forward to the triumph that awaited him. Thus Paul says, (Heb 12:2) that "Jesus—*for the joy that was set before him*, endured the cross, despising the shame," etc. And throughout the New Testament, the shame and sorrow of his sufferings were regarded as connected with his glory and his triumph, Lu 24:26 Php 2:6-9; Eph 1:20,21. In this, our Saviour has left us an example, that we should walk in his steps. The prospect of future glory and triumph should sustain us amid all afflictions, and make us ready, like him, to lie down amid even the corruptions of the grave.

Did my heart rejoice. In the Hebrew this is in the present tense, "my heart rejoices." The word *heart* here expresses the person, and is the same as saying I rejoice. The Hebrews used the different members to express the person. And thus we say, "every *soul* perished; the vessel had forty *hands*; wise *heads* do not think so; *hearts* of steel will not flinch," etc.—Prof. Stuart on Ps 16. The meaning is, because God is near me in time of calamity, and will support and deliver me, I will not be agitated or fear, but will exult in the prospect of the future, in view of the "joy that is set before me."

My tongue was glad. Hebrew, My *glory*, or my *honour* exults. The word is used to denote majesty, splendour, dignity, honour. It is also used to express the heart or soul, either because that is the chief source of man's dignity, or because the word is also expressive of the liver, regarded by the Hebrews as the seat of the affections. Ge 49:6, "Unto their assembly, *mine honour*," i.e. my soul, or myself, "be not thou united." Ps 57:8, "Awake up, my glory, etc. Ps 108:1, "I will sing—even with *my glory*." This word the Septuagint translated *tongue*. The Arabic and Latin Vulgate have also done the same. Why they thus use the word is not clear. It may be because the tongue, or the gift of speech, was that which chiefly contributes to the honour of man, or distinguishes him from the brutal creation. The word *glory* is used expressly for tongue in Ps 30:12, "To the end that my *glory* may sing praise to thee, and not be silent."

Moreover also. Truly; in addition to this.

My flesh. My body. See Ac 2:31 1Co 5:5. It means here, properly, the body separate from the soul; the dead body.

Shall rest. Shall rest or repose in the grave, free from corruption.

In hope. In confident expectation of a resurrection. The Hebrew word rather expresses *confidence* than *hope*. The passage means, My body will I commit to the grave, with a confident expectation of the future, that is, with a firm belief that it will not see corruption, but be raised up." It thus expresses the feelings of the dying Messiah; the assured confidence which he had that his repose in the grave would not be long, and would certainly come to an end. The death of Christians is also, in the New Testament, represented as a sleep, and as repose, (Ac 7:60 1Co 15:6,18 1Th 4:13,15 2Pe 3:4) and they may also, after the example of their Lord, commit their bodies to the dust, *in hope*. They shall lie in the grave under the assurance of a happy resurrection; and though their bodies, unlike his, shall moulder to their native dust, yet this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality, 1Co 15:53.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *Thou wilt not leave my soul*. The word *soul*, with us, means the *thinking*, the *immortal* part of man, and is applied to it whether existing in connexion with the body, or whether separate from it. The Hebrew word translated *soul* here—

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naphsli however, may mean, My spirit, my mind, my life; and may denote here nothing more than *me*, or *myself*. It means, properly, breath; then life, or the vital principle, a living being; then the soul, the spirit, the thinking part. Instances where it is put for the individual himself, meaning "me," or "myself," may be seen in Ps 11:1 35:3,7 Job 9:21.

There is no clear instance in which it is applied to the soul in its *separate* state, or disjoined from the body. In this place it must be explained in part by the meaning of the word *hell*. If that means grave, then this word probably means "me;" thou wilt not leave *me* in the grave. The meaning probably is, "Thou wilt not leave *me* in *sheol*, neither," etc. The word *leave* here means, "Thou wilt not *resign me* to, or wilt not give me over to it, to be held under its power.

In hell. *eiv adou*. The word *hell*, in English, now commonly denotes the place of the future eternal punishment of the wicked. This sense it has acquired by long usage. It is a Saxon word,

derived from *helan*, to cover; and denotes, literally, a covered or deep place, (*Webster*;) then the dark and dismal abode of departed spirits; and then the place of torment. As the word is used now by us, it by no means expresses the force of the original; and if with this idea we read a passage like the one before us, it would convey an erroneous meaning altogether; although formally the English word perhaps expressed no more than the original. The Greek word *hades* means, literally, a place devoid of light; a dark, obscure abode; and in Greek writers was applied to the dark and obscure regions where disembodied spirits were supposed to dwell. It occurs but eleven times in the New Testament. In this place it is the translation of the Hebrew, *sheol*. In Re 20:13,14, it is connected with *death*. "And death and hell (*hades*) delivered up the dead which were in them." "And death and hell (*hades*) were cast into the lake of fire.' See also Re 6:8 1:18, "I have the keys of hell and of death." In 1Co 15:55, it means the grave. "O *grave (hades)*, where is thy victory?" In Mt 11:23 it means a deep, profound place, opposed to an exalted one; a condition of calamity and degradation opposed to former great prosperity. "Thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to *hell, (hades.)* In Lu 16:23, it is applied to the place where the rich man was after death, in a state of punishment: "In hell *(hades)* he lifted up his eyes, being *in torments*." In this place it is connected with the idea of suffering; and undoubtedly denotes a place of punishment. The Septuagint has used this word commonly to translate the word *sheol*. Once it is used as a translation of the phrase, "the stones of the pit, (Isa 14:19); twice to express silence, particularly the silence of the grave, (Ps 94:17; Ps 115:17) ; once to express the Hebrew for "the shadow of death," (Job 38:17;) and *sixty* times to translate the word *sheol*. It is remarkable that it is *never* used in the Old Testament to denote the word *keber*,

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which properly denotes a grave or sepulchre. The idea which was conveyed by the word *sheol*, or *hades*, was not properly a *grave* or *sepulchre*, but that dark, unknown state, *including the grave*, which constituted the dominions of the dead. What idea the Hebrews had of the future world, it is now difficult to explain, and is not necessary in the case before us. The word originally denoting simply the state of the dead, the insatiable demands of the grave, came at last to be extended in its meaning, in proportion as they received new revelations, or formed new opinions about the future world. Perhaps the following may be the process of thought by which the word came to have the peculiar meanings which it is found to have in the Old Testament.

(1.) The word *death*, and the *grave, (keber,)* would express the abode of a deceased body in the earth.

(2.) Man has a soul, a thinking principle; and the inquiry must arise, what will be its state? Will it die also? The Hebrews never appear to have believed that. Will it ascend to heaven at once? On that subject they had at first no knowledge. Will it go at once to a place of torment? Of that also they had no information at first. Yet they supposed it would live; and the word *sheol* expressed just this state—the dark, unknown regions of the dead; the abode of spirits, whether good or bad; the residence of departed men, whether fixed in a permanent habitation, or whether wandering about. As they were ignorant of the size and spherical structure of the earth, they seem to have supposed this region to be situated *in the earth*, far below us; and hence it is put in opposition to heaven. Ps 139:8: "If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, (*sheol*,) behold, thou art there." Am 9:2. The most *common* meaning of the word is, therefore, to express those dark regions, *the lower world*, the regions of ghosts, etc. Instances of this, almost without number, might be given. See a most striking and sublime instance of this in Isa 14:9: "Hell from beneath is moved

for thee," etc.; where the assembled dead are represented as being agitated in all their vast regions at the death of the king of Babylon.

(3.) The inquiry could not but arise, whether all these beings were happy? This point revelation decided; and it was decided in the Old Testament. Yet this word would better express the state of the wicked dead, than the righteous. It conveyed the idea of darkness, gloom, wandering; the idea of a sad and unfixed abode, unlike heaven. Hence the word *sometimes* expresses the idea of a place of punishment. Ps 9:17: "The wicked shall be turned into *hell*," etc.; Pr 15:11; Pr 23:14 17:20 Job 26:6, While, therefore, the word does not mean properly *a grave* or a sepulchre, yet it does mean often *the state of the dead*, without designating whether in happiness or woe, but implying the continued existence of the soul. In this sense it is often used in the Old Testament, where the Hebrew word is *sheol*, and the Greek *hades*. Ge 37:35: "I will go down into the grave *unto my son mourning*." I will go down to the dead, to *death*, to my son, still there existing. Ge 42:38 44:29: "Ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave;" Nu 16:30,33; 1Ki 2:6,9, etc., etc. In the place before us, therefore, the meaning is simply, *thou wilt not leave me AMONG THE DEAD*. This conveys all the idea. It does not mean literally the *grave* or the *sepulchre*; that relates only to the body. This expression refers to the *deceased Messiah*. Thou wilt not leave *him* among the dead; thou wilt raise him up. It is from this Message, perhaps, aided by two others, (Ro 10:7 1Pe 3:19) the doctrine originated, that Christ "descended," as it is expressed in the creed, "*into hell*;" and many have invented strange opinions about his going among lost spirits. The doctrine of the Roman Catholic church has been, that he went to *purgatory*, to deliver the spirits confined there. But if the interpretation now given be correct, then it will follow,

(1.) that nothing is affirmed here about the destination of the human *soul* of Christ after his death. That *he* went to the region of the dead is implied, but nothing further.

(2.) It may be remarked, that the Scriptures affirm nothing about the state of his *soul* in that time which intervened between his death and resurrection. The only intimation which occurs on the subject is such as to leave us to suppose that he was in a state of happiness. To the dying thief Jesus said, "*To-day* shalt thou be with me in paradise," Lu 23:43. When Jesus died he said, "It is finished ;" and he doubtless meant by that, that his sufferings and toils for man's redemption were at an end. All suppositions of any toils or pains after his death are fables, and without the slightest warrant in the New Testament.

Thine Holy One. The word in the Hebrew which is translated here *holy one*, properly denotes one who is tenderly and piously devoted to another; and answers to the expression used in the New Testament, "my *beloved* Son." It is also used as it is here by the Septuagint, and by Peter, to denote one that is *holy*, that is set apart to God. In this sense it is applied to Christ, either as being set apart to this office, or as so pure as to make it proper to designate him by way of eminence *the Holy One*, or the *Holy One of God*. It is several times used as the well-known designation of the Messiah. Mr 1:24: "I know thee who thou art, *the Holy One of God*." Lu 4:34 Ac 3:14: "But ye denied the Holy One and the Just," etc. See also Lu 1:35: "That *holy thing* which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

To see corruption. To *see* corruption is to experience it, to be made partakers of it. The Hebrews often expressed the idea of experiencing anything by the use of words pertaining to the senses; as, to *taste* of death, to *see* death, etc. *Corruption* here means putrefaction in the grave. The word which is used in the Psalm—

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—*shahath*, is thus used in Job 17:14: "I have said to corruption, Thou art my father," etc. The Greek word thus used properly denotes this. Thus it is used in Ac 13:34-37. This meaning would be properly suggested by the Hebrew word; and thus the ancient versions understood it. The meaning *implied* in the expression is, that he of whom the Psalm was written should be restored to life again; and this meaning Peter proceeds to show that the words must have.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *Thou hast made known*, etc. The Hebrew is, "Thou *wilt* make known to me," etc. In relation to the Messiah, it means, Thou wilt *restore* me to life.

The ways of life. This properly means the path to life; as we say, the road to preferment or honour; the path to happiness; the highway to ruin, etc. See Pr 7:25,27. It means, Thou wilt make known to me *life itself*, i.e. thou wilt restore me to life. The expressions in the Psalm are capable of this interpretation without doing any violence to the text; and if the preceding verses refer to the death and burial of the Messiah, then the natural and proper meaning of this is, that he would be restored to life again.

Thou shalt make me full of joy. This expresses the feelings of the Messiah in view of the favour that would thus be showed him; the resurrection from the dead, and the elevation to the right hand of God. It was this which is represented as sustaining him—the prospect of the joy that was before him, in heaven, Heb 12:2 Eph 1:20-22.

With thy countenance. Literally, "with thy face," that is, in thy presence. The words *countenance* and *presence* mean the same thing; and denote *favour*, or the honour and happiness provided by being admitted to the presence of God. The prospect of the honour that would be bestowed on the Messiah, was that which sustained him. And this proves that the person contemplated in the Psalm *expected* to be raised from the dead, and exalted to the presence of God. That expectation is now fulfilled; and the Messiah is now filled with joy in his exaltation to the throne of the universe. He has "ascended to his Father and our Father;" he is "seated at the right hand of God ;" he has entered on that "joy which was set before him;" he is "crowned with glory and honour;" and all things are put under his feet." In view of this, we may remark,

(1.) that the Messiah had full and confident expectation that he would rise from the dead. This the Lord Jesus always evinced, and often declared it to his disciples.

(2.) If the Saviour *rejoiced* in view of the glories before him, we should also. We should anticipate with joy an everlasting dwelling in the presence of God, and the high honour of sitting "with him on *his* throne, as he overcame, and is set down with the Father on his throne."

(3.) The prospect of this should sustain us, as it did him, in the midst of persecution, calamity, and trials. They will soon be ended; and if we are his friends, we shall "overcome," as he did, and be admitted to "the fulness of joy" above, and to the "right hand" of God, where "are pleasures for evermore."

{*} "countenance", or "Presence"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Men and brethren*. This passage of the Psalms Peter now proves could not relate to David, but must have reference to the Messiah. He begins his argument in a respectful manner, addressing them as his *brethren*, though they had just charged him and the others with intoxication. Christians should use the usual respectful forms of salutation, whatever contempt and reproaches they may meet with from opposers.

Let me freely speak. That is, "It is lawful or proper to speak with boldness, or openly, respecting David." Though he was eminently a pious man; though venerated by us all as a king; yet it is proper to say of him, that *he* is dead, and has returned to corruption. This was a delicate way of expressing high respect for the monarch whom they all honoured; and yet evincing boldness in examining a passage of Scripture which probably many supposed to have reference solely to him.

Of the patriarch David. The word *patriarch* properly means the head or ruler of a family; and then the *founder* of a family, or an illustrious ancestor. It was commonly applied to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, etc., by way of eminence; the illustrious founders of the Jewish nation, Heb 7:4 Ac 7:8,9.

It was also applied to the heads of the families, or the chief men of the tribes of Israel, 1Ch 24:31; 2Ch 19:8, etc. It was thus a title of honour, denoting high respect. Applied to David, it means that he was the illustrious head or founder of the royal family, and implies Peter's intention not to say anything disrespectful of such a king; at the same time, that he freely canvassed a passage of Scripture which had been supposed to refer to him.

Dead and buried. The record of that fact they had in the Old Testament. There had been no pretence that he had risen, and therefore the Psalm could not apply to him.

His sepulchre is with us. Is in the city of Jerusalem. Sepulchres were commonly situated without the walls of cities and the limits of villages. The custom of burying in towns was not commonly practised. This was true of other ancient nations as well as the Hebrews, and is still in eastern countries, except in the case of kings and very distinguished men, whose ashes are permitted to repose within the walls of a city. 1Sa 28:3, "Samuel was dead—and Israel buried him in Ramah, even in his own city." 2Ki 21:18, "Manasseh was buried in the garden of his own house." 2Ch 16:14. Asa was buried in the city of David. 2Ki 14:20. The sepulchres of the Hebrew kings were on Mount Zion, 2Ch 21:20 24:25, 28:27 32:33 24:16 2Ki 14:20.

David was buried in the city of David, (1Ki 2:10,) with his fathers, that is, on mount Zion, where he built a city called after his name, 2Sa 5:7. Of what form the tombs of the kings were made is not certainly known. It is almost certain, however, that they would be constructed in a magnificent manner. The tombs were commonly excavations from rocks, or natural caves; and sepulchres cut out of the solid rock, of vast extent, are known to have existed. The following account of the tomb called "the sepulchre of the kings" is abridged from Maundrell: "The approach is through an entrance cut out of a solid rock, which admits you into an open court about forty paces square, cut down into the rock. On the south side is a portico nine paces long and four broad, hewn likewise out of the solid rock. At the end of the portico is the descent to the sepulchres. The descent is into a room about seven or eight yards square, cut out of the natural rock. From this room there are passages into six more, all of the same fabric with the first. In every one of these rooms, except the first, were coffins placed in niches in the sides of the chamber," etc. (Maundrell's Travels, p. 76.) If the tombs of the kings were of this form, it is clear that they were works of great labour and expense.

Probably also there were, as there are now, costly and splendid monuments erected to the memory of the mighty dead.

Unto this day. That the sepulchre of David was well known and honoured, is clear from Josephus. Antiq., b. vii., c. xv., 3. "He (David) was buried by his son Solomon *in Jerusalem* with great magnificence, and with all the other funeral pomps with which kings used to be buried. Moreover, he had immense wealth buried with him: for a thousand and three hundred years afterwards, Hyrcanus, the high priest, when he was besieged by Antiochus, and was desirous of giving him money to raise the siege, opened one room of David's sepulchre, and took out three thousand talents. Herod, many years afterward, opened another room, and took away a great deal of money," etc. See also Antiq., b. xiii., c. viii., % 4. The tomb of a monarch like David would be well known and had in reverence. Peter might, then, confidently appeal to *their own belief* and knowledge, that David had not been raised from the dead. No Jew *believed or supposed it*. All, by their care of his sepulchre, and by the honour with which they regarded his grave, believed that he had returned to corruption. The Psalm, therefore, *could* not apply to him.

{1} "let me speak freely" or, "I may"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *Therefore*. As David was dead and buried, it was clear that he could not have referred to himself it. this remarkable declaration. It followed that he must have had reference to some other one.

Being a prophet. One who foretold future events. That David was inspired, is clear, 2Sa 23:2. Many of the prophecies relating to the Messiah are found in the Psalms of David. Ps 22:1, comp. Mt 27:46 Lu 24:44; Ps 22:18, comp. Mt 27:35 Ps 69:21, comp. Mt 27:34,48; Ps 69:26, comp. Ac 1:20.

And knowing. Knowing by what God had said to him respecting his posterity.

Had sworn with an oath. The places which speak of God as having sworn to David are found in Ps 89:3,4, "I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish," etc. And Ps 132:11, "The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne." Ps 89:35,36. The promise to which reference is made in all these places is in 2Sa 7:11-16.

Of the fruit of his loins. Of his descendants. See 2Sa 7:12; Ge 35:11 46:26; 1Ki 8:19, etc.

According to the flesh. That is, so far as the human nature of the Messiah was concerned, he would be descended from David. Expressions like these are very remarkable. If the Messiah was only a *man*, they would be unmeaning. They are *never* used in relation to a mere man; and they imply that the speaker or writer supposed that there pertained to the Messiah a nature which was not according to the flesh. See Ro 1:3,4.

He would raise up Christ. That is, the Messiah. To *raise up seed*, or descendants, is to give them to him. The promises made to David in all these places had immediate reference to Solomon, and to his descendants. But it is clear that the New Testament writers understood them as referring to the Messiah. And it is no less clear that the Jews understood that the Messiah was to be descended from David, Mt 12:23 21:9, 22:42,45; Mr 11:10 Joh 7:42, etc. In what way these promises that

were made to David were understood as applying to the Messiah, it may not be easy to determine. The *fact*, however, is clear. The following remarks may throw some light on the subject. The kingdom which was promised to David was to have no end; it was to be established for ever. Yet his descendants died, and all other kingdoms changed. The promise likewise stood *by itself*; it was not made to any other of the Jewish kings; nor were similar declarations made of surrounding kingdoms and nations. It came, therefore, gradually to be applied to that future King and kingdom which was the hope of the nation; and their eyes were anxiously fixed on the long-expected Messiah. At the time that he came, it had become the settled doctrine of the Jews that he was to descend from David, and that his kingdom was to be perpetual. On this belief of the prophecy the apostles argued; and the opinions of the Jews furnished a strong point by which they could convince them that Jesus was the Messiah. Peter affirms that David was *aware* of this, and that he so understood the promise as referring not only to Solomon, but in a far more important sense to the Messiah. Happily, we have a commentary of David himself, also, as expressing his own views of that promise. That comment is found particularly in Psalms 2, 22, 69, and 16. In these Psalms there can be no doubt that David looked forward to the coming of the Messiah; and there can be as little that he regarded the promise made to him as extending to his coming and his reign.

It may be remarked, that there are some important variations in the manuscripts in regard to this verse. The expression "according to the flesh" is omitted in many MSS., and is now left out by Griesbach in his New Testament. It is omitted also by the ancient Syriac and Ethiopic versions, and by the Latin Vulgate.

To sit on his throne. To be his successor in his kingdom. Saul was the first of the kings of Israel. The kingdom was taken away from him and his posterity, and conferred on David and his descendants. It was determined that it should be continued in the family of David, and no more go out of his family, as it had from the family of Saul. The peculiar characteristic of David as king, or that which distinguished him from the other kings of the earth, was, that *he reigned over the people of God*. Israel was his chosen people; and the kingdom was over that nation. Hence he that should reign over the people of God, though in a manner somewhat different from David, would be regarded as occupying his *throne*, and as being his successor. The form of the administration might be varied, but it would still retain its prime characteristic, as being a reign *over the people of God*. In this sense the Messiah sits on the throne of David. He is his descendant and successor. He has an empire over *all the friends of the Most High*. And as that kingdom is destined to fill the earth, and to be eternal in the heavens, so it may be said that it is a kingdom which shall have no end. It is spiritual, but not the less real; defended not with carnal weapons, but not the less really defended; advanced not by the sword and the din of arms, but not the less really advanced against principalities, and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places; not under a visible head and earthly monarch, but not less really under the Captain of salvation, and the King of kings.

{a} "being a prophet" 2Sa 23:2 {b} "sworn with an oath" 2Sa 7:12,13; Ps 132:11

{c} "oath to him" Heb 6:17

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *He seeing this before*, etc. By the spirit of prophecy. From this it. appears that David had distract views of the great doctrines pertaining to the Messiah.

Spake, etc. See Ps 16.

That his soul, etc. **See Barnes "Ac 2:27".**

{*} "before" or, "Forseeing" {a} "spake of the resurrection" 1Pe 1:11,12

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *This Jesus*. Peter, having shown that it was *predicted* that the Messiah would rise, now affirms that it was done in the case of Jesus. If it were a matter of prophecy, all objection to the truth of the doctrine was taken away, and the only question was, whether there was *evidence* that this had been done. The proof of this Peter now alleges, and offers his own testimony, and that of his brethren, to the truth of this great and glorious fact.

We all are witnesses. It seems probable that Peter refers here to the whole one hundred and twenty who were present, and who were ready to attest it in any manner. The matter which was to be proved was, that Jesus was seen alive after he had been put to death. The apostles were appointed to bear witness of this. And we are told by Paul, (1Co 15:6,) that he was seen by more than five hundred brethren, that is, Christians, at one time. The hundred and twenty assembled on this occasion were doubtless part of the number, and were ready to attest this. This was the proof that Peter alleged; and the strength of this proof was, and should have been, perfectly irresistible.

(1.) They had *seen* him themselves. They did not conjecture it, or reason about it; but they had the evidence on which men act every day, and which must be regarded as satisfactory—the evidence of their own senses.

(2.) The *number* was such that they could not be imposed on. If one hundred and twenty persons could not prove a plain matter of fact, nothing could be established by testimony; there could be no way of arriving at any facts.

(3.) The thing to be established was a plain matter. It was not that they *saw him rise*. That they never pretended. Impostors *would* have done thus. But it was that they saw him, talked, walked, ate, drank with him, *being alive AFTER* he had been crucified. The fact of his death was matter of Jewish record; and no one called it in question. The only fact for Christianity to make out was that he was seen *alive* afterwards; and this was attested by many witnesses.

(4.) They had no interest in deceiving the world in this thing. There was no prospect of pleasure, wealth, or honour in doing it.

(5.) They offered themselves now as ready to endure any sufferings, or to die, in attestation of the truth of this event.

{b} "This Jesus" Ac 2:24 {c} "We are all witnesses" Lu 24:48

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *Therefore being by the right hand*. The *right hand* among the Hebrews was often used to denote *power*; and the expression here means, not that he was exalted to the right hand of God, but *by* his power. He was raised from the dead by his power, and borne to heaven, triumphant over all his enemies. The use of the word right hand to denote *power* is common in the Scriptures. Job 40:14, "Thine own right hand can save thee." Ps 17:7, "Thou savest by thy right hand them which put their trust *in thee*." Ps 18:35; Ps 20:6 21:8, 44:3 60:5, etc.

Exalted. Constituted King and Messiah in heaven. Raised up from his condition of humiliation to the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, Joh 17:5.

And having received, etc. The Holy Ghost was promised to the disciples before his death, Joh 14:26 15:26, 16:13-15.

It was expressly declared,

(1.) that the Holy Ghost would not be given except the Lord Jesus should return to heaven, (Joh 16:7) and

(2.) that this gift was in the power of the Father, and that *he* would send him, Joh 14:26 15:26. This promise was now fulfilled; and those who witnessed the extraordinary scene before them could not doubt that it was the effect of Divine power.

Hath shed forth this, etc. This power of speaking different languages, and declaring the truth of the gospel. In this way Peter accounts for the remarkable events before them. It could not be produced by new wine, Ac 2:15. It was expressly foretold, Ac 2:16-21. It was predicted that Jesus would rise, Ac 2:22-31. The apostles were witnesses that he *had* risen, and that he had promised that the Holy Spirit should descend; and the fulfillment of this promise was a rational way of accounting for the scene before them. It was unanswerable; and the effect on those who witnessed it was such as might be expected.

{d} "Therefore being by the" Ac 5:31 Php 2:9 {e} "having received" Joh 16:7,13; Ac 1:4

{f} "hath shed forth this" Ac 10:45 Eph 4:8

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 34

Verses 34, 35. *For David is not ascended into the heavens*. That is, David has not risen from the dead, and ascended to heaven. This further shows that Ps 16 could not refer to David, but must refer to the Messiah. Great as they esteemed David, and much as they were accustomed to apply these expressions of the Scripture to him, yet they could not be applicable to him. They *must* refer to some other being; and especially that passage which Peter now proceeds to quote. It was of great importance to show that these expressions could not apply to David, and also that David bore testimony to the exalted character and dignity of the Messiah. Hence Peter here adduces David himself as affirming that the Messiah was to be exalted to a dignity far above his own. This does not affirm that David was not saved, or that his spirit had not ascended to heaven, but that he had not been *exalted* in the heavens in the sense in which Peter was speaking of the Messiah.

But he saith himself. Ps 110:1.

The Lord. The small capitals used in translating the word LORD in the Bible, denote that the original word is *Jehovah*. The Hebrews regarded this as the *peculiar* name of God, a name incommunicable to any other being. It is not applied to any being but God in the Scriptures. The

Jews had such a reverence for it that they never pronounced it; but when it occurred in the Scriptures they pronounced another name, *Adoni*. Here it means, *Jehovah* said, etc.

My Lord. This is a different word in the Hebrew: it is *Adoni* —

HEBREW.

It properly is applied by a servant to his master, or a subject to his sovereign, or is used as a title of respect by an inferior to a superior. It means here, "Jehovah said to him whom I, David, acknowledge to be *my* superior and sovereign. Thus, though he regarded him as his descendant according to the flesh, yet he regarded him also as his superior and Lord. By reference to this passage our Saviour confounded the Pharisees, Mt 22:42-46. That the passage in this Psalm refers to the Messiah is clear. Our Saviour, in Mt 22:42-46, expressly applied it thus, and in such a manner as to show that this was the well-understood doctrine of the Jews. **See Barnes** "Mt 22:42, etc.

{g} "The Lord" Ps 110:1 Mt 22:44

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 35

Verse 35. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *Therefore let all*, etc. "Convinced by the prophecies, by our testimony, and by the remarkable scene exhibited on the day of Pentecost, let all be convinced that the true Messiah has come, and has been exalted to heaven."

House of Israel. The word *house* often means *family*; let all the family of Israel, i.e. all the nation of the Jews, know this.

Know assuredly. Be assured, or know without any hesitation, or possibility of mistake. This is the sum of his argument, or his discourse, he had established the points which he purposed to prove; and he now applies it to his hearers.

God hath made. God hath appointed, or constituted. See Ac 5:31.

That same Jesus. The very person who had suffered, He was raised with the same body, and had the same soul; was the same being, as distinguished from all others. So Christians, in the resurrection, will be the same beings that they were before they died.

Whom ye have crucified. See Ac 2:23. There was nothing better fitted to show them the guilt of having done this than the argument which Peter used. He showed them that God had sent him; that he was the Messiah; that God had showed his love for him, in raising him from the dead. The Son of God, and the hope of their nation, they had put to death, He was not an impostor; nor a man sowing sedition; nor a blasphemer; but the Messiah of God; and they had imbrued their hands in his blood. There is nothing better fitted to make sinners fear and tremble, than to show them that in rejecting Christ, they have rejected God; in refusing to serve him, they have refused to serve God. The crime of sinners has a double malignity, as committed against a kind and lovely Saviour, and against the God who loved him, and appointed him to save men. Comp. Ac 3:14,15.

Both Lord. The word *lord* properly denotes *proprietor*, *master*, or *sovereign*, here it means clearly that God had exalted him to be the King so long expected; and that he had given him dominion in the heavens; or, as we should say, ruler of all things. The extent of this dominion may be seen in Joh 17:2 Eph 1:20-22, etc. In the exercise of this office, he now rules in heaven and on earth; and will yet come to judge the world. This truth was particularly fitted to excite their fear. They had murdered their Sovereign, now shown to be raised from the dead, and entrusted with infinite power. They had reason, therefore, to fear that he would come forth in vengeance, and punish them for their crimes. Sinners, opposing the Saviour, are at war with their living and mighty Sovereign and Lord. He has all power; and it is not safe to contend against the Judge of the living and the dead.

And Christ. Messiah. They had thus crucified the hope of their nation; imbrued their hands in the blood of Him to whom the prophets had looked, and put to death that Holy One, the prospect of whose coming had sustained the most holy men of the world in affliction, and cheered them when they looked on to future years. That hope of their fathers had come, and they had put him to death; and it is no wonder that the consciousness of this, that a sense of guilt, and shame, and confusion, should overwhelm their minds, and lead them to ask in deep distress what they should do.

{h} "house of Israel" Zec 13:1 {i} "God hath made that" Ac 5:31 {k} "both Lord" Joh 3:35 {l} "and Christ" Ps 2:2,6-8

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *Now when they heard this*. When they heard this declaration of Peter, and this *proof* that Jesus was the Messiah. There was no fanaticism in his discourse; it was cool, close, pungent reasoning. He proved to them the truth of what he was saying, and thus prepared the way for this effect.

They were pricked in their heart. The word translated *were pricked*, *katenughsan*, is not used elsewhere in the New Testament. It properly denotes to *pierce* or *penetrate* with a needle, lancet, or sharp instrument; and then to pierce with grief, or acute pain of any kind. It answers precisely to our word *compunction*. It implies also the idea of *sudden* as well as *acute* grief. In this case it means that they were *suddenly* and *deeply* affected with anguish and alarm at what Peter had said. The causes of their grief may have been these:

(1.) Their *sorrow* that the Messiah had been put to death by his own countrymen.

(2.) Their deep sense of guilt in having clone this. There would be mingled here a remembrance of ingratitude, and a consciousness that they had been guilty of *murder* of the most aggravated and horrid kind, that of having killed their own Messiah.

(3.) The fear of his wrath. He was still alive, exalted to be their *Lord*, and entrusted with all power. They were afraid of his vengeance; they were conscious that they deserved it; and they supposed that they were exposed to it.

(4.) What they had done could not be undone. The guilt remained; they could not wash it out. They had imbrued their hands in the blood of innocence; and the guilt of that oppressed their souls. This expresses the usual feelings which sinners have when they are convicted of sin.

Men and brethren. This was an expression denoting affectionate earnestness. Just before this they mocked the disciples, and charged them with being filled with new wine, Ac 2:13. They now treated them with respect and confidence. The views which sinners have of Christians and Christian ministers are greatly changed when they are under conviction for sin. Before that, they may deride and oppose them; then, they are glad to be taught by the obscurest Christian—and even cling to a minister of the gospel as if he could save them by his own power.

What shall we do? What shall we do to avoid the wrath of this crucified and exalted Messiah? They were apprehensive of his vengeance, and they wished to know how to avoid it. Never was a more important question asked than this. It is the question which all convicted sinners ask. It implies an apprehension of danger; a sense of guilt, and a readiness to *yield the will* to the claims of God. This was the same question asked by Paul, (Ac 9:6,) "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" and by the jailer, (Ac 16:29,30,) "He came trembling—and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" The state of mind in this case—the case of a convicted sinner—consists in

(1.) a deep sense of the evil of the past life; remembrance of a thousand crimes perhaps before forgotten; a pervading and deepening conviction that the heart, and conversation, and life has been evil, and deserves condemnation.

(2.) apprehension about the justice of God; alarm when the mind looks upward to him, or onward to the day of death and judgment.

(3.) An earnest wish, amounting sometimes to agony, to be delivered from this sense of condemnation, and this apprehension of the future.

(4.) a readiness to sacrifice all to the will of God, to surrender the governing purpose of the mind, and to do what he requires. In this state the soul is prepared to receive the offers of eternal life; and *when* the sinner comes to this, the offers of mercy meet his case, and he yields himself to the Lord Jesus, and finds peace.

In regard to this discourse of Peter, and this remarkable result, we may observe,

(1.) that this is the first discourse which was preached after the ascension of Christ, and is a model which the ministers of religion should imitate.

(2.) It is a clear and close argument. There is no ranting, no declamation, nothing but *truth* presented in a clear and striking manner. It abounds with *proof* of his main point; and supposes that his hearers were rational beings, and capable of being influenced by truth. Ministers have no right to address men as incapable of reason and thought; nor to imagine that because they are speaking on religious subjects, that therefore they are at liberty to speak nonsense.

(3.) Though these were eminent sinners, and had added to the crime of murdering the Messiah that of deriding the Holy Ghost and the ministers of the gospel, yet Peter *reasoned* with them coolly, and endeavoured to convince them of their guilt. Men should be treated as endowed with *reason*, and as capable of seeing the force and beauty of the great truths of religion.

(4.) The arguments of Peter were *adapted* to make this impression on their minds, and to impress them deeply with the sense of their guilt. He *proved* to them that they had been guilty of putting the Messiah to death; that God had raised him up; and that they were now in the midst of the scenes which established one strong proof of the truth of what he was saying. No class of truths could have been so well adapted to make an impression of their guilt as these.

(5.) Conviction for sin is a rational process on a sinner's mind. It is the *proper* state produced by a view of the past sins. It is *suffering* truth to make an appropriate impression; suffering the mind to feel as it *ought* to feel. The man who is guilty, ought to be willing to see and confess it. It

is no disgrace to confess an error, or to feel deeply when we know we are guilty. Disgrace consists in a hypocritical desire to conceal crime; in the *pride* that is unwilling to avow it; in the *falsehood* which denies it. To feel it, and to acknowledge it, is the mark of an open and ingenuous mind.

(6.) These same truths are adapted still to produce conviction for sin. The sinner's treatment of the Messiah should produce grief and alarm. He did not murder him—but he has rejected him; he did not crown him with thorns—but he has despised him; he did not insult him when hanging on the cross— but he has a thousand times insulted him since; he did not pierce his side with the spear—but he has pierced his heart by rejecting him, and contemning his mercy. *For these things he* should weep. In the Saviour's resurrection he has also a deep interest. He rose as the pledge that we may rise: and when the sinner looks forward, he should remember that he *must* meet the ascended Son of God, The Saviour reigns; he lives, Lord of all. The sinner's deeds now are aimed at his throne, and his heart, and his crown. All his crimes are seen by his Sovereign; and it is not safe to mock the Son of God on his throne, or to despise Him who will soon come to judgment. When the sinner feels these truths, he *should* tremble, and cry out, What shall I do?

(7.) We see here *how* the Spirit operates in producing conviction of sin. It is not in an arbitrary manner; it is in accordance with *truth*, and by the *truth*. Nor have we a right to expect that he will convict and convert men, except as the truth is presented to their minds. They who desire success in the gospel should present clear, striking, and impressive truth; for such only God is accustomed to bless.

(8.) We have, in the conduct of Peter and the other apostles, a striking instance of the power of the gospel. Just before, Peter, trembling and afraid, had denied his Master with an oath. Now, in the presence of the murderers of the Son of God, he boldly charged them with their crime, and dared their fury. Just before, all the disciples forsook the Lord Jesus, and fled. Now, in the presence of his murderers, they lifted their voice, and proclaimed their guilt and danger, even in the city where he had been just arraigned and put to death. What could have produced this change but the power of God! And is there not proof here that a religion which produces such changes came from heaven?

{a} "pricked in their heart" Eze 7:16 Zec 12:10 {b} "what shall we do" Ac 9:6 16:30

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *Then Peter said unto them*. Peter had been the chief speaker, though others had also addressed them. He now, in the name of all, directed the multitude what to do.

Repent. **See Barnes "Mt 3:2".**

Repentance implies sorrow for sin as committed against God, with a purpose to forsake it. It is not merely a fear of the *consequences*, or of the wrath of God in hell. It is such a view of sin as evil in itself, as to lead the mind to hate it and forsake it. Laying aside all view of the *punishment* of sin, the true penitent hates it. Even if sin was the means of procuring him happiness; if it would promote his gratification, and be unattended with any future punishment, he would hate it and turn from it. The mere fact that it is evil, and that *God* hates it, is a sufficient reason why those who are truly penitent should hate and forsake it. False repentance dreads the consequences of sin; true repentance dreads *sin itself*. These persons whom Peter addressed had been merely *alarmed*; they

were afraid of wrath, and especially of the wrath of the Messiah. They had no true sense of sin as an evil, but were simply afraid of punishment. This *alarm* Peter did not regard as by any means genuine repentance. Such conviction for sin would soon wear off, unless *repentance* became thorough and complete. Hence he told them to *repent*, to turn from sin, to exercise sorrow, for it is an evil and bitter thing, and to *express* their sorrow in the proper manner. We may learn here,

(1.) that there is no safety in *mere conviction* for sin: it may soon pass off, and leave the soul as thoughtless as before.

(2.) There is no *goodness* or *holiness* in mere alarm or conviction. The devils tremble. A man may fear, who yet has a firm purpose to do evil if he can do it with impunity.

(3.) Many are greatly troubled and alarmed who yet never repent. There is no situation where souls are so easily deceived as here. *Alarm* is taken for repentance; trembling for godly sorrow; and the fear of wrath is taken to be the true fear of God.

(4.) True repentance is the only thing in such a state of mind that can give any relief. An ingenuous confession of sin, a solemn purpose to forsake it, and a true *hatred* of it, is the only thing that can give the mind true composure. Such is the constitution of the mind, that nothing else will furnish relief. But the moment we are willing to make an open confession of guilt, the mind is delivered of its burden, and the convicted soul finds peace. Till this is done, and the *hold on sin* is broken, there can be no peace.

(5.) We see here what direction is to be given to a convicted sinner. We are not to direct him to wait; nor to suppose that he is in a good way; nor to continue to seek; nor to call him a mourner; nor to take sides with him, as if God were wrong and harsh; nor to tell him to read, and search, and postpone the subject to a future time. We are to direct him to repent; to mourn over his sins, and to forsake them. Religion demands that he should at once surrender himself to God by genuine repentance; by confession that God is right, and that he was wrong; and by a firm purpose to live a life of holiness.

Be baptized. **See Barnes "Mt 3:6"**.

The direction which Christ gave to his apostles was, that they should baptize all who believed, Mt 28:19 Mr 16:16. The Jews had not been baptized; and a baptism now would be a profession of the religion of Christ, or a declaration made before the world that they embraced Jesus as their Messiah. It was equivalent to saying that they should *publicly* and *professedly* embrace Jesus Christ as their Saviour. The gospel requires such a profession; and no one is at liberty to withhold it. And a similar declaration is to be made to all who are inquiring the way to life. They are to exercise repentance; and then, without any unnecessary delay, to evince it in the ordinances of the gospel. If men are unwilling to profess religion, they have none. If they will not, in the proper way, show that they are truly attached to Christ, it is proof that they have no such attachment. Baptism is the application of water, as expressive of the need of purification, and as emblematic of the influences from God that can alone cleanse the soul. It is also a form of dedication to the service of God.

In the name of Jerua Christ. Not *eiv*, but *epi*. The usual form of baptism is *into* the name of the Father, etc., *eiv*. Here it does not mean to be baptized *by the authority* of Jesus Christ; but it means to be baptized *for* him and his service; to be consecrated in this way, and by this public profession, *to* him, and to his cause. The *name* of Jesus Christ means the same as Jesus Christ himself. To be baptized to his *name* is to be devoted to him. The word *name* is often thus used. And the profession which they were to make amounted to this: A confession of sins; a hearty purpose to turn from them; a reception of Jesus as the *Messiah*, and as *their Saviour*; and a determination to become his

followers, and to be devoted to his service. Thus, (1Co 10:2) to be "baptized unto Moses," means to take him as the leader and guide. It does not follow that in administering the ordinance of baptism they used only the name of Jesus Christ. It is much more probable that they used the form prescribed by the Saviour himself, (Mt 28:19;) though as the peculiar mark of a *Christian* is that he receives and honours Jesus Christ, this name is used here as implying the whole. The same thing occurs in Ac 19:5.

For the remission of sins. Not merely the sin of crucifying the Messiah, but of all sins. There is nothing in *baptism itself* that can wash away sin. That can be done only by the pardoning mercy of God through the atonement of Christ. But baptism is expressive of a willingness to be pardoned in that way; and a solemn declaration of our conviction that there is no other way of remission. He who comes to be baptized, comes with a *professed* conviction that he is a sinner, that there is no other way of mercy but in the gospel, and with a professed willingness to comply with the terms of salvation, and receive it as it is offered through Jesus Christ.

And ye shall receive, etc. The gift of the Holy Ghost here does not mean his *extraordinary gifts*, or the power of working miracles; but it simply means, you shall partake of the influences of the Holy Ghost *as far as they may be adapted to your case*, as far as may be needful for your comfort, and peace, and sanctification. There is no evidence that they were all endowed with the power of working miracles; nor does the connexion of the passage require us thus to understand it. Nor does it mean that they had not been awakened *by his influences*. All true conviction is from him, Joh 16:8-10. But it is also the office of the Spirit to comfort, to enlighten, to give peace, and thus to give evidence that the soul is born again. To this, probably, Peter refers; and this all who are born again, and profess faith in Christ, possess. There is peace, calmness, joy; there is *evidence* of piety, and that evidence is the product of the influences of the Spirit. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace," etc., Ga 5:22,24.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *For the promise*. That is, the promise respecting the particular thing of which he was speaking—the influences of the Holy Ghost. This promise he had adduced in the beginning of his discourse, (Ac 2:17,) and he now applies it to them. As the Spirit was promised to descend on Jews and their sons and daughters, it was applicable to them in the circumstances in which they then were. The only hope of lost sinners is in the promises of God; and the only thing that can give comfort to a soul that is convicted of sin, is the hope that God will pardon and save.

To you. To you Jews, even though you have crucified the Messiah. The promise had especial reference to the Jewish people.

To your children. In Joel, to their sons and daughters, who should, nevertheless, be old enough to prophesy. Similar promises occur in Isa 44:3, "I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring," and Isa 59:21. In these and similar places, their *descendants or posterity* are denoted. It does not refer to children *as children*, and should not be adduced to establish the propriety of infant baptism, or as applicable particularly to infants. It is a promise, indeed, to parents, that the blessings of salvation shall not be confined to parents, but shall be extended also to their posterity. Under this promise parents may be encouraged to train up their children for God;

to devote them to his service; believing that it is the gracious purpose of God to perpetuate the blessings of salvation from age to age.

To all. To the whole race; not limited to Jews.

Afar off. To those in other lands. It is probable that Peter here referred to the *Jews* who were scattered in other nations; for he does not seem yet to have understood that the gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles. See Ac 10. Yet the promise was equally applicable to the Gentiles as the Jews; and the apostles were afterwards brought to understand it, Ac 10; Ro 10:12,14-20, Ro 11. The Gentiles are sometimes clearly indicated by the expression "afar off," Eph 2:13,17; and they are represented as having been brought *nigh* by the blood of Christ. The phrase is equally applicable to those who have been far off from God by their sins and their evil affections. To them also the promise is extended if they will return.

Even as many, etc. The promise is not to those who do not hear the gospel, nor to those who do not obey it; but it is to those to whom God, in his gracious Providence, shall send it. He has the power and right to pardon. The meaning of Peter is, that the promise is ample, full, free; that it is fitted to all, and may be applied to all; that there is no defect or want in the provisions or promises; but that God may extend it to whomsoever he pleases. We see here how ample and full are the offers of mercy. God is not limited in the provisions of his grace; but the plan is *applicable* to all mankind. It is also the purpose of God to send it to all men; and he has given a solemn charge to his church to do it. We can not reflect but with deep pain on the fact that these provisions have been made, fully made; that they are adapted to all men; and yet that by his people they have been extended to so small a portion of the human family. If the promise of life is to all, it is the duty of the church to send to all the message of eternal mercy.

{a} "promise is unto you" Joe 2:28 {b} "and to all that are afar" Eph 2:13,17

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 40

Verse 40. *Many other words*, This discourse, though one of the longest in the New Testament, is but an outline. It contains, however, the substance of the plan of mercy; and is admirably arranged to obtain its object.

Testify. Bear witness to. He bore witness to the promises of Christianity; to the truths pertaining to the danger of sinners; and to the truth respecting the character of that generation.

Exhort. He entreated them by arguments and promises.

Save yourselves. This expression here denotes—Preserve yourselves from the influence, opinions, and fate of this generation. It implies that they were to use diligence and effort to deliver themselves. God deals with men as free agents. He calls upon them to put forth their own power and effort to be saved. Unless men put forth their own strength and exertion, they will never be saved. When they are saved, they will ascribe to God the praise for having inclined them to seek him, and for the grace whereby they are saved.

This generation. This age or race of men, the Jews then living. They were not to apprehend danger *from* them from which they were to deliver themselves, but they were to apprehend danger from being with them, united in their plans, designs, and feelings. From the influence of their opinions, etc., they were to escape. That generation was signally corrupt and wicked. See Mt

23:12,39, 16:4; Mr 8:38. They had crucified the Messiah; and they were for their sins soon to be destroyed.

Untoward. "Perverse, refractory, not easily guided or taught."— (*Webster*.) The same character our Saviour had given of that generation in Mt 11:16-19. This character they had shown uniformly. They were smooth, cunning, plausible; but they were corrupt in principle, and wicked in conduct. The Pharisees had a vast hold on the people. To break away from them was to set at defiance all their power and doctrines; to alienate themselves from their teachers and friends; to brave the power of those in office, and those who had long claimed the right of teaching and guiding the nation. The chief danger of those who were now awakened was from this generation; that they would deride, or denounce, or persecute them, and induce them to abandon their seriousness, and turn back to their sins. And hence Peter exhorted them at once to break off from them, and give themselves to Christ. We may hence learn,

(1.) that if sinners will be saved, they must make an effort. There is no promise to any unless they will exert themselves.

(2.) The principal danger which besets those who are awakened arises from their former companions. They are often wicked, cunning, rich, and mighty. They may be their kindred, and will seek to drive off their serious impressions by derision, or argument, or persecution. They have a mighty hold on the affections; and they will seek to use it to prevent those who are awakened from becoming Christians.

(3.) Those who are awakened should resolve at once to break off from their evil companions, and unite themselves to Christ and his people. There may be no other way in which this can be done than by resolving to forsake the society of those who are infidels, and scoffers, and profane. They should forsake the world, and give themselves up to God, and resolve to have only so much intercourse With the world as may be required by duty, and as may be consistent with a supreme purpose to live to the honour of God.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 41

Verse 41. *They that gladly received*. The word rendered *gladly* means *freely*, cheerfully, joyfully. It implies that they did it without compulsion, and with joy. Religion is not compulsion, They who become Christians do it cheerfully; and do it rejoicing in the *privilege* of becoming reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. Though so many received his word and were baptized, yet it is implied that there were others who did not. It is probable that there were multitudes assembled who were alarmed, but who did *not* receive the word with joy. In all revivals there are many who become alarmed, who are anxious about their souls, but who refuse the gospel, and again become thoughtless, and are ruined.

His word. The message which Peter had spoken respecting the pardon of sins through Jesus Christ.

Were baptized. That is, those who professed a readiness to embrace the offers of salvation. The narrative plainly implies that this was done the same day. Their conversion was instantaneous. The demand on them was to yield themselves at once to God. And their profession was made, and the ordinance which sealed their profession administered without delay.

And the same day. The discourse of Peter commenced at nine o'clock in the morning, Ac 2:15. How long it continued it is not said; but the Ceremony of admitting them to the church and of baptizing them was evidently performed on the same day. The mode in which this is done is not mentioned; but it is highly improbable that in the midst of the city of Jerusalem three thousand persons were wholly immersed in one day. The whole narrative supposes that it was all done in the city; and yet there is no probability that there were conveniences there for *immersing* so many persons in a single day. Besides, in the ordinary way of administering baptism by immersion, it is difficult to conceive that *so many persons* could have been immersed in so short a time. There is, indeed, here no positive *proof* that they were not immersed; but the narrative is one of those incidental circumstances, often much more satisfactory than philological discussion, that show the extreme improbability that all this was done by wholly immersing them in water. It may be further remarked, that here is an example of very quick admission to the church. It was the first great work of grace under the gospel. It was the model of all revivals of religion. And it was doubtless intended that this should be a specimen of the manner in which the ministers of religion should conduct in regard to admissions to the Christian church. Prudence is indeed required; but this example furnishes no warrant for advising persons who profess their willingness to obey Jesus Christ, to delay uniting with the church. If persons give evidence of piety, of true hatred of sin, and of attachment to the Lord Jesus, they should unite themselves to his people without delay.

There were added. To the company of disciples, or to the followers of Christ.

Souls. Persons, Comp. 1Pe 3:20 Ge 12:5. It is not affirmed that all this took place in one part of Jerusalem, or that it was all done at once; but it is probable that this was what was afterwards ascertained to be the fruit of this day's labour, the result of this revival of religion. This was the first effusion of the Holy Spirit under the preaching of the gospel; and it shows that such scenes are to be expected in the church, and that the gospel is fitted to work a rapid and mighty change in the hearts of men.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 42

Verse 42. *And they continued stedfastly*. They persevered in, or they adhered to. This is the inspired record of the result. That any of these apostatized is nowhere recorded, and is not to be presumed. Though they had been suddenly converted, though suddenly admitted to the church, though exposed to much persecution and contempt, and many trials, yet the record is that they adhered to the doctrines and duties of the Christian religion. The word rendered *continued stedfastly*, *proskarterountev*, means attending one, remaining by his side, not leaving or forsaking him.

The apostles' doctrine. This does not mean that they held or believed the *doctrines* of the apostles, though that was true; but it means that they adhered to, or attended on, their teaching or instruction. The word doctrine has now a technical sense, and means a collection and arrangement of abstract views supposed to be contained in the Bible. In the Scriptures the word means simply teaching; and the expression here denotes that they continued to attend on their instructions. One evidence of conversion is a desire to be instructed in the doctrines and duties of religion, and a willingness to attend on the preaching of the gospel.

And fellowship. The word rendered *fellowship*, *koinwnia* is often rendered *communion*. It properly denotes having things in common, or participation, society, friendship. It may apply to anything which may be possessed in common, or in which all may partake. Thus all Christians have the same hope of heaven; the same joys; the same hatred of sin; the same enemies to contend with. Thus they have the same subjects of conversation, of feeling, and of prayer; or they have communion in these things. And thus the early Christians had their property in common. The word here may apply to either or to all—to their conversation, their prayers, their dangers, or their property; and means that they were united to the apostles, and participated with them in whatever befell them. It may be added, that the effect of a revival of religion is to unite Christians more and more, and to bring those who were before separated to union and love. Christians feel that they are a band of brethren, and that however much they were separated *before* they became Christians, now they have great and important interests in common; united in feelings, in interest, in dangers, in conflicts, in opinions, and in the hopes of a blessed immortality.

Breaking of bread. The Syriac renders this "the Eucharist," or the Lord's Supper. It cannot, however, be determined whether this refers to their partaking of their ordinary food together, or to feasts of charity, or to the Lord's Supper. The bread of the Hebrews was made commonly into cakes, thin, hard, and brittle, so that it was broken instead of being cut. Hence, to denote intimacy or friendship, the phrase to *break bread together* would be very expressive, in the same way as the Greeks denoted it by *drinking together*, *sumposion*. From the expression used in Ac 2:44, comp. with Ac 2:46, that they had all things common, it would rather seem to be implied that this referred to the participation of their ordinary meals. The action of *breaking bread* was commonly performed by the master or head of a family, immediately after asking a blessing.—(Lightfoot.)

In prayers. This was one *effect* of the influence of the, Spirit, and an evidence of their change. A genuine revival will be always followed by a love of prayer.

{a} "continued stedfastly" 1Co 11:2 Heb 10:25

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 43

Verse 43. *And fear came*. That is, there was great reverence or awe. The multitude had just before derided them, (Ac 2:13;) but so striking and manifest was the power of God on this occasion, that it silenced all clamours, and produced a general veneration and awe. The effect of a great work of God's grace is commonly to produce an unusual seriousness and solemnity in a community, even among those who are not convicted. It restrains, subdues, and silences opposition.

Every soul. Every person, or individual; that is, upon the people generally; not only on those who became Christians, but upon the multitudes who witnessed these things. All things were fitted to produce this fear: the recent crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth; the wonders that attended that event; the events of the day of Pentecost; and the miracles performed by the apostles, were all fitted to diffuse solemnity, and thought, and anxiety through the community.

Many wonders and signs. **See Barnes "Ac 2:22"**.

This was promised by the Saviour Mr 16:17. Some of the miracles which they wrought are specified in the following chapters.

{a} "many wonders and signs" Mr 16:17

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 44

Verse 44. *All that believed*. That is, that believed that Jesus was the Messiah; for that was the distinguishing point by which they were known from others.

Were together—epi to auto—. Were united; were joined in the same thing. It does not mean that they *lived* in the same house, but they were *united in the same community*; or engaged in the same thing. They were doubtless often together in the same place for prayer and praise. One of the best means for strengthening the faith of young converts is for them *often* to meet together for prayer, conversation, and praise.

Had all things common. That is, all their *property* or *possessions*. See Ac 4:32-37 5:1-10. The apostles, in the time of the Saviour, evidently had all their property in common stock, and Judas was made their treasurer. They regarded themselves as one family, having common wants; and there was no use or propriety in their possessing extensive property by themselves. Yet even then it is probable that *some* of them retained an interest in their property which was not supposed to be necessary to be devoted to the common use. It is evident that *John* thus possessed property which he retained, Joh 19:27. And it is clear that the Saviour did not *command* them to give up their property into a common stock; nor did the apostles enjoin it. Ac 5:4: "Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?" It was therefore perfectly voluntary; and was evidently adapted to the peculiar circumstances of the early converts. Many of them came from abroad. They were from Parthia, and Media, and Arabia, and Rome, and Africa, etc. It is probable, also, that they now remained longer in Jerusalem than they had at first proposed. And it is not at all improbable that they would be denied now the usual hospitalities of the Jews, and excluded from their customary kindness, because they had embraced Jesus of Nazareth, who had been just put to death. In these circumstances, it was natural and proper at they should share together their property while they remained together.

{b} "had all things common" Ac 4:32,34

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 45

Verse 45. *And sold*. That is, they sold as much as was necessary in order to procure the means of providing for the wants of each other.

Possessions. Property, particularly real estate. This word *kthmata* refers, properly, to their *fixed* property, as lands, houses, vineyards, etc. The word rendered *goods*, *uparxeiv*, refers to their personal or movable property.

And parted them to all. They *distributed* them to supply the wants of their poorer brethren, according to their necessities.

As every man had need. This expression *limits* and fixes the meaning of what is said before. The passage does not mean that they sold *all* their possessions, or that they relinquished their title to all their property; but that they so far regarded all as common as to be willing to part with it IF it was needful to supply the wants of the others. Hence the property was laid at the disposal of the apostles, and they were desired to distribute it freely to meet the wants of the poor, Ac 4:34,35.

This was an important incident in the early propagation of religion; and it may suggest many useful reflections.

(1.) We see the effect of religion. The love of property is one of the strongest affections which men have. There is nothing that will overcome it but religion. That will; and one of the *first* effects of the gospel was to loosen the hold of Christians on property.

(2.) It is the duty of the church to provide for the wants of its poor and needy members. There can be no doubt that property should now be regarded as *so far* common as that the wants of the poor should be supplied by those who are rich. Comp. Mt 26:11.

(3.) If it be asked *why* the early disciples evinced this readiness to part with their property in this manner, it may be replied,

1st, that the apostles had done it before them. The family of the Saviour had all things common.

2nd. It was the nature of religion to do it.

3rd. The circumstances of the persons assembled on this occasion were such as to require it. There were many of them from distant regions; and probably many of them of the poorer class of the people in Jerusalem. In this they evinced what should be done in behalf of the poor in the church at all times.

(4.) If it be asked whether this was done *commonly* among the early Christians, it may be replied, that there is no evidence that it was. It is mentioned here, and in Ac 4:32-37 5:1-4. It does not appear that it was done even by *all* who were afterwards converted in Judea; and there is no evidence that it was done in Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, Philippi, Rome, etc. That the effect of religion was to make men liberal, and willing to provide for the poor, there can be no doubt. See 2Co 8:19 9:2; 1Co 16:2 Ga 2:10.

But there is not proof that it was *common* to part with their possessions, and to lay it at the feet of the apostles. Religion does not contemplate, evidently, that men should break up all the arrangements in society; but it contemplates that those who *have* property should be ready and willing to part with it for the help of the poor and needy.

(5.) If it be asked whether all the arrangements of property should be broken up now, and believers have all things in common, we a prepared to answer—*No*. For,

1st, this was an extraordinary case.

2nd. It was not even enjoined by the apostles on them.

3rd. It was practised nowhere else.

4th. It would be impracticable. No community where all things were in common has long prospered. It has been attempted often, by pagans, by infidels, and by fanatic sects of Christians. It ends soon in anarchy, and licentiousness, idleness, and profligacy; or the more cunning secure the mass of property, and control the whole. Till all men are *made alike*, there could be no hope of such a community; and if there could be, it would not be desirable. God evidently intended that men should be excited to industry by the hope of gain; and *then* he demands that their gains should be devoted to *his* service. Still, this was a noble instance of Christian generosity, and evinces the power of religion in loosing the hold which men commonly have on the world. It rebukes also those professors of religion—of whom, alas! there are many—who *give* nothing to benefit either the souls or bodies of their fellow-men.

{*} "goods" or, "Substance" {c} "parted them" Isa 58:7 2Co 9:1,9 1Jo 3:17

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 46

Verse 46. *With one accord*. Comp. Ac 1:14 2:1.

In the temple. This was the public place of worship; and the disciples were not disposed to leave the place where their fathers had so long worshipped God. This does not mean that they were *constantly* in the temple, but only at the customary hours of prayer; at nine o'clock in the morning, and at three in the afternoon.

And breaking bread. **See Barnes "Ac 2:42".**

From house to house. In the margin, "at home." So the Syriac and Arabic. The common interpretation, however, is that they did it in their various houses; now in this, and now in that, as might be convenient. If it refers to their ordinary meals, then it means that they partook in common of what they possessed. And the expression in this verse, "did eat their meat," seems to imply that this refers to their common meals, and not to the Lord's Supper.

Did eat their meat. Did partake of their food. The word *meat*, with us, is applied to *flesh*. In the Bible, and in old English authors, it is applied to provision of any kind. Here it means all kinds of sustenance; that which nourished them—*trofhv*— and the use of this word *proves* that it does not refer to the Lord's Supper; for that ordinance is nowhere represented as designed for an ordinary meal, or to nourish the *body*. Comp. 1Co 11:33,34.

With gladness. With rejoicing. This is one of the effects of religion. It is far from gloom; it diffuses joy over the mind; and it bestows additional joy in the participation of even our ordinary pleasures.

Singleness of heart. This means with a *sincere* and pure heart. They were satisfied and thankful. They were not perplexed or anxious; nor were they solicitious for the luxurious living, or aspiring after the vain objects of the men of the world. Comp. Ro 12:8 2Co 1:12 Eph 6:5.

{1} "breaking bread from house to house" or, "at home" {+} "their meat with gladness" "Consent"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 2 - Verse 47

Verse 47. *Praising God*. See Lu 24:53.

And having favour. See Lu 2:52.

With all the people. That is, with the great mass of the people; with the people generally. It does not mean that all the people had become reconciled to Christianity; but their humble, serious, and devoted lives won the favour of the great mass of the community, and silenced opposition and cavil. This was a remarkable effect; but God has power to silence opposition; and there is nothing so well fitted to do this as the humble and consistent lives of his friends.

And the Lord added. See Ac 5:14 11:24, etc. It was *the Lord* who did this. There was no power in man to do it; and the Christian loves to trace *all* increase of the church to the grace of God.

Added. Caused, or inclined them to be joined to the church.

The Church. To the *assembly* of the followers of Christ-*th ekklhsia*, The word *church* properly means those who are *called out*, and is applied to Christians as being called out, or separated from the world. It is used but three times in the Gospels, Mt 16:18 18:17. It occurs frequently in other

parts of the New Testament, and usually as applied to the followers of Christ. Comp. Ac 5:11 7:38, 8:1,3, 9:31 11:22,26; Ac 12:1,5. It is used in classic writers to denote an *assembly* of any kind, and is twice thus used in the New Testament, Ac 19:39,41, where it is translated "assembly."

Such as should be saved. This whole phrase is a translation of a participle, *touv swzomenouv*. It does not express any *purpose* that they *should* be saved, but simply *the fact* that they were those who *would be*, or who were about to be saved. It is clear, however, from this expression, that those who became members of the church, were those who continued to adorn their profession, or who gave proof that they were sincere Christians. It is implied here, also, that those who are to be saved will join themselves to the church of God. This is everywhere required; and it constitutes *one* evidence of piety when they are willing to face the world, and give themselves at once to the service of the Lord Jesus. Two remarks may be made on the last verse of this chapter: one is, that the effect of a consistent Christian life will be to command the *respect* of the world; and the other is, that the effect will be continually to increase the number of those who shall be saved. In this case they were *daily* added to it; the church was constantly increasing: and the same result may be expected in all cases where there is similar zeal, self-denial, consistency, and prayer.

We have now contemplated the foundation of the Christian church; and the first glorious revival of religion. This chapter deserves to be profoundly studied by all the ministers of the gospel, and by all who pray for the prosperity of the kingdom of God. It should excite our fervent gratitude that God has left this record of the first great work of grace; and our fervent prayers that he would multiply and extend such scenes until the earth shall be filled with his glory.

{a} "favour" Lu 2:52 Ro 14:18 {b} "And the Lord" Ac 5:14 11:24 {c} "should be saved" "As were saved"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 3

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 3 - Verse 1

CHAPTER 3

Verse 1. *Peter and John went up*, etc. In Lu 24:53, it is said that the apostles were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. From Ac 2:46, it is clear that all the disciples were accustomed daily to resort to the temple for devotion. Whether they joined in the *sacrifices* of the temple-service is not said; but the thing is not improbable. This was the place and the manner in which they and their fathers had worshipped. They came slowly to the conclusion that they were to leave the *temple*; and they would naturally resort there with their countrymen to worship the God of their fathers. In the previous chapter, (Ac 2:43,) we are told *in general* that many wonders and signs were done by the hands of the apostles. From the many miracles which were performed, Luke selects one, of which he gives a more full account; and especially as it gives him occasion to record another of the addresses of Peter to the Jews. An impostor would have been satisfied with the *general* statement that many miracles *were* performed. The sacred writers descend to particulars,

and tell us where, and in relation to whom, they were performed. This is a proof that they were honest men, and did not intend to deceive.

Into the temple. Not into the edifice properly called the temple, but into the court of the temple, where prayer was accustomed to be made. **See Barnes "Mt 21:12"**.

At the hour of prayer, etc. The Jewish day was divided into twelve equal parts; of course the ninth hour would be about three o'clock, P.M. This was the hour of evening prayer. Morning prayer was offered at nine o'clock. Comp. Ps 55:17 Da 6:10.

{c} "the hour of prayer" Ps 55:17 Da 6:10

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 3 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Lame*, etc. The mention of this shows that there was no deception in the case. The man had been always lame; he was obliged to be carried; and he was well known to the Jews.

Whom they laid daily. That is, his friends laid him there *daily*. He would therefore be well known to those who were in the habit of entering the temple. Among the ancients there were no hospitals for the afflicted; and no alms-houses for the poor. The poor were dependent, therefore, on the charity of those who were in better circumstances. It became an important matter for them to be placed where they would see many people. Hence it was customary to place them at the gates of rich men, (Lu 16:20;) and they also sat by the side of the highway to beg where many persons would pass, Mr 10:46 Lu 18:35; Joh 9:1-8.

The entrance to the *temple* would be a favourable place for begging; for,

(1.) great multitudes were accustomed to enter there; and,

(2.) when going up for the purposes of religion, they would be more inclined to give alms than at other times; and especially was this true of the Pharisees, who were particularly desirous of *publicity* in bestowing charity. It is recorded by Martial, (i. 112,) that this custom prevailed among the Romans, of placing the poor by the gates of the temples; and the custom was also observed a long time in the Christian churches.

At the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful. In regard to this gate there have been two opinions; one of which supposes that this was the gate commonly called *Nicanor*, which led from the court of the Gentiles to the court of the women, **See Barnes "Mt 21:12"**; and the other, that it was the gate at the eastern entrance of the temple, commonly called *Suzan*. It is not easy to determine which is intended; though from the fact that it occurred near Solomon's porch, (Ac 3:11); comp. plan of the temple, Mt 21:12, it seems probable that the latter was intended. This gate was large and splendid. It was made of Corinthian brass, a most valuable metal, and made a magnificent appearance.—*Josephus, Jewish War*, b. v., chap. v., & 3.

To ask alms. Charity.

{d} "gate of the temple" Joh 9:8

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 3 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Who seeing Peter*. There is no evidence that he was acquainted with them, or knew who they were. He asked of them as he was accustomed to do of the multitude that entered the temple.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 3 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Fastening his eyes*. The word used here denotes to look *intently*, or with fixed attention. It is one of the peculiar words which *Luke* uses, Lu 4:20 22:56; Ac 1:10 3:12, 6:15 7:55 10:4, etc., in all twelve times. It is used by no other writer in the New Testament, except by Paul twice, 2Co 3:7,13.

Look on us. All this was done to fix the attention. He wished to call the attention of the man distinctly to himself, and to what he was about to do. It was also done that the man might be fully apprised that his restoration to health came from him.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 3 - Verse 5

Verse 5. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 3 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Silver and gold have I none*. The man had asked for money; Peter assures him that he had not that to give; it was done, however, in such a way as to show his *willingness* to aid him, if he had possessed it.

Such as I have. Such as is in my power. It is not to be supposed that he meant to say that he originated this power himself, but only that it was entrusted to him. He immediately adds, that it was derived solely from the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the name. Comp. Ac 4:10. In Mr 16:17,18, it is said, "These signs shall follow them that believe; *In my name* shall they cast out devils, etc.—they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." The expression means, *by his authority, or in virtue of power derived from him*. We are here struck with a remarkable difference between the manner in which the Lord Jesus wrought miracles, and that in which it was done by his apostles. *He* did it in his *own name*, and by virtue of his own power. He claimed dominion over disease and death. The apostles never attempted to perform a miracle by their *own power*. It was only in the name of Jesus; and this circumstance alone shows that there was a radical difference between Christ and all other prophets and teachers.

Of Nazareth. This was the name by which he was commonly known. By this name he had been designated among the Jews, and on the cross. It is by no means improbable that the man had heard of him by this name; and it was important that he should understand that it was by the authority of him who had been crucified as an impostor.

Rise up and walk. To do this would be evidence of signal power. It is remarkable that, in cases like this, they were commanded to do the thing at once. See similar cases in Joh 5:8 Mt 9:6, 12:13.

It would have been easy to allege that they had *no power*, that they were lame, or sick, or palsied, and could do nothing until God should give them strength. But the command was *to do the thing*; nor did the Saviour or the apostles stop to convince them that they *could* do nothing. They did not doubt that, if it were done, they would ascribe the power to God. Precisely like this is the condition of the sinner. God commands him *to do the thing*; to repent, and believe, and lead a holy life. It is not merely to attempt to do it; to make use of means; or to wait on him; but it is *actually to repent and believe the gospel*. Where he may obtain power to do it is another question. It is easy for him to involve himself in difficulty, as it would have been in these cases. But the command of God is positive, and must be obeyed. If not obeyed, men must perish; just as this man would have been always lame if he had put forth no effort of his own. When done, a convicted sinner will do just as this man did, *instinctively give all the praise to God*, Ac 3:8.

{e} "in the name of Jesus" Ac 4:10

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 3 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *And he took him*. He took hold of his hand. To take hold of the hand in such a case was an offer of aid, an indication that Peter was sincere, and was an inducement to him to make an effort. This may be employed as a beautiful illustration of the manner of God when he commands men to repent and believe, He does not leave them alone; he extends help, and aids their efforts. If they tremble, and feel that they are weak, and needy, and helpless, his hand is stretched out, and his power exerted to impart strength and grace.

His feet and ancle bones. The fact that strength was immediately imparted; that the feet, long lame, were now made strong, was a full and clear proof of miraculous power.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 3 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *And he leaping up*. This was a natural expression of joy; and it was a striking fulfillment of the prophecy in Isa 35:6: "Then shall the lame man leap as an hart." The account here given is one that is perfectly natural. The man would be filled with joy, and would express it in this manner. He had been lame from a child; he had never walked; and there was more in the miracle than merely giving *strength*. The act of walking is one that is acquired by long practice. Children learn slowly. *Casper Hauser*, lately discovered in one of the cities of Germany, who had been confined in prison from a child, was unable to walk in an easy way when released, but stumbled in a very awkward manner. (See his Life.) When, therefore, this man was able at once to walk, it was clear proof of a miracle.

Praising God. This was the natural and appropriate expression of his feelings on this occasion. His heart would be full; and he could have no doubt that this blessing had come from God alone. It is remarkable that he did not even express his gratitude to Peter and John. They had not pretended

to restore him in their own name; and he would feel that man could not do it. It is remarkable that he praised God without being *taught* or entreated to do it. It was instinctive— the natural feeling of the heart. So a sinner. His first feelings when renewed, will be to ascribe the praise to God. While he may and will feel regard for the ministry by whose instrumentality he has received the blessing, yet his main expression of gratitude will be to God. And this he will do instinctively; he needs no prompter; he knows that no power of man is equal to the work of converting the soul, and will rejoice, and give all the praise to the God of grace.

{a} "leaping up" Isa 35:6

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 3 - Verse 9

Verses 9, 10. *And all the people*, etc. The people who had been accustomed to see him sit in a public place.

And they knew, etc. In this they could not be deceived; they had seen him a long time, and now they saw the same man expressing his praise to God for complete recovery. The particulars in this miracle are the following; and they are as far as possible from any appearance of imposture.

(1.) The man had been afflicted from a child. This was known to all the people. At this time he was forty years of age, Ac 4:22.

(2.) He was not an impostor. If he had *pretended* lameness, it is wonderful that he had not been detected before, and not have been suffered to occupy a place thus in the temple.

(3.) The apostles had no agency in placing him there. They had not seen him before. There was manifestly no *collusion or agreement* with him to attempt to impose on the people. The man himself was convinced of the miracle; and did not doubt that the power by which he had been healed was of God.

(5.) The *people* were convinced of the same thing. They saw the effects; they had known him well; they had had every opportunity to know that he was diseased; and they were now satisfied that he was restored. There was no possibility of deception in the case. It was not merely the *friends* of Jesus that saw this; not those who had an *interest* in the miracle, but those who had been his enemies, and who had just before been engaged in putting him to death. Let this miracle be compared, in these particulars, with those *pretended* miracles which have been affirmed to have been wrought in defence of other systems of religion, and it will be seen at once that here is every appearance of sincerity, honesty, and truth; and in them every mark of deception, fraud, and imposition. (See Paley's Evidences of Christianity, Proposition ii., chap. ii.)

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 3 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 3 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Held Peter and John*. The word *held* means, he adhered to them; he joined himself to them; he was desirous of remaining with them, and participating with them.

All the people, etc. Excited by curiosity, they came together. The fact of the cure, and the conduct of the man, would soon draw together a crowd, and thus furnish a favourable opportunity for preaching to them the gospel.

In the porch, etc. This porch was a covered way or passage on the east side of the temple. It was distinguished for its magnificence. See the plan and description of the temple, **See Barnes "Mt 21:12".**

{*} "healed" "cured" {b} "porch that is called Solomon's" Joh 10:23 Ac 5:12

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 3 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *When Peter saw it*. Saw the people assembling in such multitudes, and wondering at the miracle.

He answered. The word answer, With us, implies that a question had been asked, or that some subject had been proposed for consideration. But the word is used in a different sense in the Bible. It is often used when no question was asked; but when *an occasion* was offered for remarks, or where an opportunity was presented to make a statement. It is the same as replying *to a thing*, or making a *statement* in regard to some subject, Da 2:26 Ac 5:8.

Ye men of Israel. Jews. Comp. Ac 2:14.

Why marvel ye at this? The particular thing which he intended to reprove here, was not that they *wondered*, for that was proper; but that they *looked on Peter and John* as if they had been the authors of this healing. They ought to have understood it. The Jews were sufficiently acquainted with miracles to interpret them, and to know whence they proceeded; and they ought not, therefore, to ascribe them to man, but to inquire why they had been wrought *by God*.

Why look ye, etc. Why do ye fix the eyes with amazement on us, as though we could do this? Why not look at once to God?

By our own power. By any *art of healing*, or by any medicine, we had done this.

Or holiness. Piety. As if God had bestowed this oh us on account of our personal and eminent piety. It may be remarked, that here was ample opportunity for them to establish a reputation of their own. The people were disposed to pay them honours; they *might* at once have laid claim to vast authority over them; but they refused all such personal honours, and ascribed all to the Lord Jesus. Whatever success may attend the ministers of the gospel, or however much the world may be disposed to do them honour, they should disclaim all power in themselves, and ascribe it to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not by the talents or personal holiness of ministers, valuable as these are, that men are saved; it is only by the power of God, designed to honour his Son. See 2Co 3:5,6.

{+} "answered" "said" {++} "marvel" "wonder" {c} "power" 2Co 3:5 {+++} "holiness" "Godliness"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 3 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *The God of Abraham*. He is called the God of Abraham be- cause Abraham *acknowledged* him as his God, and because God showed himself to be his Friend. Comp. Mt 22:32 Ex 3:6,15 Ge 28:13, 26:24.

It was important to show that it was the same God who had done this that had been acknowledged by their fathers; and that they were not about to introduce the worship of any other God. And it was especially important, because the promise had been made to Abraham, that in his seed should all the families of the earth be blessed, Ge 12:3. Comp. Ga 3:16.

Hath glorified. Has honoured. *You* denied, despised, and murdered him; but God has exalted and honoured him. This miracle was done in the name of Jesus, Ac 3:6. It was the power of God that had restored him; and by putting forth this power God had shown that he approved the work of his Son, and was disposed to honour him in the view of men. Comp. Joh 17:1 Eph 1:20-22; Php 2:9-11

Heb 2:9 Re 1:5-18.

Ye delivered up. That is, you delivered him to the Romans to be put to death. **See Barnes "Ac 2:23"**.

And denied him in the presence of Pilate. Denied that he was the Messiah. Were unwilling to own him as your long-expected King, Joh 19:15.

When he was determined, etc. Mt 27:17-25 Lu 23:16-23. Pilate was satisfied of his innocence; but he was weak, and timid, and irresolute, and yielded to their wishes. The fact that *Pilate* regarded him as innocent was a strong aggravation of their crime. They should have regarded him as innocent; but they urged on his condemnation, against the deliberate judgment of him before whom they had arraigned him; and thus showed how obstinately they were resolved on his death.

{a} "God of Abraham" Mt 22:32 {b} "hath glorified" Ac 5:30,31 {c} "his son Jesus" Joh 17:1 Eph 1:20-22; Php 2:9-11 Heb 2:9

Re 1:5,18 {d} "denied him" Joh 19:15 {*} "let him go" "Release him"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 3 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *The Holy One*, etc. See Ps 16:10. Comp. **See Barnes "Ac 2:27"**.

And the Just. The word *just* here denotes *innocent*, or one who was free from crime. It properly is used in reference to *law*, and denotes one who stands upright in the view of the law, or who is not chargeable with crime. In this sense the Lord Jesus was not only *personally* innocent, but even before his judges he stood unconvicted of any crime. The crime charged on him at first was blasphemy, Mt 26:65; and on this charge the sanhedrim had condemned him, without proof. But of this charge Pilate would not take cognizance, and hence *before him* they charged him with sedition, Lu 23:2. Neither of these charges were made out; and, of course, in the eye of the law he was innocent and just. It greatly aggravated their crime that they demanded his death still, even after it was ascertained that they could prove nothing against him; thus showing that it was mere hatred and malice that led them to seek his death.

And desired a murderer. Mt 27:21.
{f} "Holy One" Mt 17:17-25 Lu 23:15-23 {g} "Just" Ac 7:52 22:14

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 3 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *And killed the Prince of life*. The word rendered prince denotes, properly, *a military leader* or commander. Hence, in Heb 2:10, it is translated *captain*: "It became him—to make the *captain of their salvation* perfect through sufferings." As a captain or commander leads on to victory, and is said to obtain it, so the word comes to denote one who is the *cause, the author, the procurer*, etc. In this sense it is used: Ac 5:31, "Him hath God exalted to be a *Prince* and a *Saviour*, for to give repentance to Israel," etc. In Heb 12:2, it is properly rendered *author*: "Looking unto Jesus, the *author* and finisher of our faith." The word *author*, or giver, would express the meaning of the word here. It also implies that he has *dominion* over life; an idea, indeed, which is essentially connected with that of his being the author of it. The word *life* here is used in a large sense, as denoting all manner of life. In this sense it is used in reference to Christ in Joh 1:4, "In him was *life*," etc. Comp. Joh 5:26 1Jo 5:11; 1Co 15:45.

Jesus is here called the *Prince of life* in contrast with him whom the Jews demanded in his place, Barabbas. He was a *murderer*, Lu 23:19; Mr 15:7, one who had *destroyed life*; and yet they demanded that he whose character it was *to destroy life* should be released, and *the Author of life* be put to death.

Whom God hath raised, etc., Ac 2:24,32.
{h} "raised from the dead" Mt 28:2-6 Eph 1:20 {i} "whereof we are witnesses" Ac 2:32

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 3 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *And his name*. The *name of Jesus* is here put for Jesus himself; and it is the same as saying, "and *he*," etc. In this way the word *name* is often used by the Hebrews, especially when speaking of God, Ac 1:15 4:12; Eph 1:21 Re 3:4.

It does not mean that there was any efficacy in the mere *name* of Jesus that should heal the man, but that it was done by his authority and power.

Through faith in his name. By means of faith in him; that is, by the faith which Peter and John had in Jesus. It does not refer to any faith that the man had himself, for there is no evidence that he believed in him; but it was by means of the faith which the apostles exercised in him that the miracle was wrought, and was thus a fulfillment of the declaration in Mt 17:20, "If ye have faith—ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence," etc. This truth Peter repeats two or three times in the verse, to impress it more distinctly on the minds of his hearers.

Whom ye see and know. There could, therefore, be no mistake. He was well known to them. There was no doubt about the truth of the miracle, Ac 4:16, and the only inquiry was in what way it had been done. This Peter affirms to have been accomplished only by the power of the Lord Jesus.

Perfect soundness. *oloklhrian*. This word is not used elsewhere in the New Testament. It denotes *integrity of parts, freedom from any defect*; and it here means that the cure was perfect and entire, or that he was completely restored to the use of his limbs.

In the presence of you all. You are all witnesses of it, and can judge for yourselves. This shows how confident the apostles were that a real miracle had been performed. They were willing that it should be examined; and this is conclusive proof that there was no attempt at imposture. A deceiver, or one who pretended to work miracles, would have been cautious of exposing the subject to the danger of detection.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 3 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *And now, brethren*. Though they had been guilty of a crime so enormous, yet Peter shows the tenderness of his heart in addressing them still as his *brethren*. He regarded them as of the same nation with himself, as having the same hopes, and as being entitled to the same privileges. The expression also shows that he was not disposed to exalt himself as being by nature more holy than they. This verse is a remarkable instance of *tenderness* in appealing to sinners. It would have been easy to have reproached them for their enormous crimes; but it was not the way to reach the heart. He had indeed stated and *proved* their wickedness. The object now was to bring them to repentance for it; and this was to be done by *tenderness*, and *kindness*, and *love*. Men are melted to contrition, not by reproaches, but by love.

I wot. I know; I am well apprized of it. I know you will affirm it; and I admit that it was so. Still the enormous deed has been done. It cannot be recalled; and it cannot be innocent. It remains, therefore, that you should repent of it, and seek for pardon.

That through ignorance, etc. Peter does not mean to affirm that they were innocent in having put him to death, for he had just proved the contrary; and he immediately proceeds to exhort them to repentance. But he means to say that that offence was *mitigated* by the fact that they were ignorant that he was the Messiah. The same thing the Saviour himself affirmed when dying. Lu 23:34, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Comp. Ac 13:27 1Co 2:8. The same thing the apostle Paul affirmed in relation to himself, as one of the reasons why he obtained pardon from the enormous crime of persecution, 1Ti 1:13. In cases like these, though crime might be *mitigated*, yet it was not taken entirely away. They were guilty of demanding a man to be murdered who was declared innocent; they were urged on with ungovernable fury; they did it from contempt and malice; and the crime of *murder* remained, though they were ignorant that he was the Messiah. It is plainly implied, that if they had put him to death *knowing* that he was the Messiah, and *as the Messiah*, there would have been no forgiveness. Comp. Heb 10:26-29. Ignorance, therefore, is a circumstance which must always be taken into view in an estimate of crime. It is at the same time true, that they had opportunity to know that he was the Messiah; but the *mere fact* that they were ignorant of it was still a mitigating circumstance in the estimate of their crime. There can be no doubt that the mass of the people had no fixed belief that he was the Messiah.

As did also your rulers. Comp. 1Co 2:8, where the apostle says that none of the princes of this world knew the wisdom of the gospel, for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. It is certain that the *leading* scribes and Pharisees were urged on by the most

ungovernable fury and rage to put Jesus to death, even when they had abundant opportunity to know his true character. This was particularly the case with the high priest. But yet it was true that they did not *believe* that he was the Messiah. Their minds had been prejudiced. They had expected a prince and a conqueror. All their views of the Messiah were different from the character which Jesus manifested. And though they *might* have known that he was the Messiah; though he had given abundant proof of the fact, yet it is clear that they did not believe it. It is not credible that they *would* have put to death one whom they *really* believed to be the Christ. He was the hope, the only hope of their nation; and they would not have dared to imbrue their hands in the blood of him whom they really believed to be the illustrious personage so long promised, and expected by their fathers. It was also probably true, that no small part of the sanhedrim was urged on by the zeal and fury of the chief priests. They had not courage to resist them; and yet they *might* not have entered heartily into this work of persecution and death. Comp. Joh 7:50-53. The speech of Peter, however, is not intended to free them entirely from blame; nor should it be pressed to show that they were innocent. It is a mitigating circumstance thrown in to show them that there was still *hope of mercy*.

{+} "wot" "know" {k} "ignorance" Lu 23:34 Joh 16:3; 1Co 2:8

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 3 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *But those things*. To wit, those things that did actually occur, pertaining to the life and death of the Messiah.

Had shewed. Had announced, or foretold.

By the mouth of all his prophets.

That is, by the prophets in general, without affirming that each individual prophet had a distinct prediction respecting this. The prophets *taken together*, or the prophecies as a whole, had declared this. The word all is not unfrequently used in this somewhat limited sense, Mr 1:37 Joh 3:26. In regard to the prophecies respecting Christ, **See Barnes "Lu 24:27"**.

Hath so fulfilled. He has caused to be fulfilled in this manner; that is, by the rejection, denial, and wickedness of the rulers. It has *turned out* to be in strict accordance with the prophecy. This fact Peter uses in exhorting them to repentance; but it is not to be regarded as an excuse for their sins. The mere fact that all this was foretold, that it was in accordance with the purposes and predictions of God, does not take away the *guilt* of it, or constitute an excuse for it. In regard to this, we may remark:

(1.) The prediction did not change the *nature* of the act. The mere fact that it was *foretold*, or foreknown, did not change its character. **See Barnes "Ac 2:23"**.

(2.) Peter still regarded them as guilty. He did not urge the fact that this was foreknown as an excuse for their sin, but to show them that since all this happened according to the prediction and the purpose of God, they had hope in his mercy. The plan was that the Messiah should die to make a way for pardon; and, therefore, they *might* have hope in his mercy.

(3.) This was a signal instance of the power and mercy of God in overruling the wicked conduct of men, to further his purposes and plans.

(4.) All the other sins of men *may* thus be overruled, and thus the wrath of man may be made to praise him. But,

(5.) this will constitute no excuse for the sinner. It is no part of his *intention* to honour God, or to advance his purposes; and there is no direct *tendency* in his crimes to advance his glory. The direct tendency of his deeds is counteracted and overruled; and God brings good out of the evil. But this surely constitutes no excuse for the stoner.

If it be asked why Peter insisted on this, if he did not mean that it should be regarded as an excuse for their sin, I reply, that it was his design to prove that *Jesus was the Messiah*; and having proved this, he could assure them that there was mercy. Not because they had not been guilty; not because they *deserved* favour; but because *the fact* that the Messiah had come was an argument that *any* sinners might obtain mercy, as he immediately proceeds to show them.

{a} "those things" Lu 24:44 Ac 26:22,23

{*} "showed" or, "Foreshowed"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 3 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Repent ye*. Note, Mt 3:2.

Therefore. *Because* of your sin in putting Jesus to death; and *because* he is the Messiah, and God through him is willing to show mercy to the chief of sinners.

And be converted. This expression conveys an idea not at all to be found in the original. It conveys the idea of *passivity—BE converted* —as if they were to yield to some foreign influence that they were now resisting. But the idea of being passive in this, is not conveyed by the original word. The word means, properly, to turn; to return to a path from which one has gone astray; and then to turn away from sins, or to forsake them. It is a word used in a general sense to denote the whole turning to God. That the form of the word here *epistreqate* does not denote *passivity* may be clearly seen by referring to the following places, where the same form of the word is used: Mt 24:18 Mr 13:16; Lu 17:31 1Th 1:9.

The expression, therefore, would have been more appropriately rendered, "*Repent*, and *turn*, that your sins," etc. *To be converted* cannot be a matter of obligation; but to turn to God is the duty of every sinner. The crimes of which he exhorted them to repent were those pertaining to the death of the Lord Jesus, as well as all the past sins of their life. They were to turn from the course of wickedness in which they and the nation had been so long walking.

That your sins, etc. *In order* that your sins *may be* forgiven. Sin *cannot* be pardoned *before* man repents of it. In the order of the work of grace, repentance must always precede pardon. Of course, no man can have evidence that his sin is pardoned until he repents. Comp. Isa 1:16-20 Joe 2:13.

May be blotted out. May be forgiven, or pardoned. The expression, *to blot out sins*, occurs also in Isa 43:25 Ps 51:1,9

Jer 18:23 Ne 4:5; Isa 44:22.

The expression, *to blot out a name*, is applied to expunging it from a *roll, or catalogue, or list*, as of an army, etc., Ex 32:32,33; De 9:14 25:19, 29:20, etc. The expression, *to blot out sins*, is taken from the practice of creditors charging their debtors, and when the debt was paid, cancelling it, or wholly removing the record. The word used here *properly* refers to the practice of writing on tables covered with wax, and then by inverting the stylus, or instrument of writing, smoothing the wax again, and thus removing *every trace* of the record. This more entirely expresses the idea of

pardoning than *blotting* does. It means wholly *to remove* the record, the charge, and every trace of the account against us. In this way *God* forgives sins.

When the times, etc. The word *opwv*, rendered "when," is commonly rendered *that*, and denotes the *final cause*, or the reason why a thing is done, Mt 2:23 5:16,45, etc. By many it has been supposed to have this sense here, and to mean "repent—*in order that* the times of refreshing may come," etc. Thus Kuinoel, Grotius, Lightfoot, the Syriac version, etc. If used in this sense, it means that their repentance and forgiveness would be the means of introducing peace and joy. Others have rendered it in accordance with our translation, "when," meaning that they might find peace in the day when Christ should return to judgment; which return would be to them a day of rest, though of terror to the wicked. Thus Calvin, Beza, the Latin Vulgate, Schleusner, etc. The *grammatical* construction will admit of either, though the former is more in accordance with the usual use of the word. The objection to the former is, that it is not easy to see how their repenting, etc., should be the *means* of introducing the times of refreshing. And this, also, corresponds very little with the *design* of Peter in this discourse. That was to *encourage them* to repentance; to adduce arguments why they should repent, and why they might hope in his mercy. To do this, it was needful only to assure them that they were living under the times graciously promised by God, the times of refreshing, when pardon might be obtained. The main inquiry therefore is, what did Peter refer to by *the times of refreshing*, and by *the restitution of all things*? Did he refer to any particular manifestation to be made then; or to the influence of the gospel on the earth; or to the future state, when the Lord Jesus shall come to judgment? The idea which I suppose Peter intended to convey was this: "Repent, and be converted. You have been great sinners, and are in danger. Turn from your ways, that your sins may be forgiven." But then, what encouragement would there be for this? or why should it be done? Answer—" You are living under the times of the gospel, the reign of the Messiah, the times of refreshing. This happy, glorious period has been long anticipated, and is to continue to the close of the world; the period *including* the restitution of all things, and the return of Christ to judgment, has come; and is, therefore, the period when you *may* find mercy, and when you *should* seek it, to be prepared for his return." In this sense the passage refers to the fact that this time, this dispensation, this economy, *including all this*, had come, and they were living under it, and *might* and should seek for mercy. It expresses, therefore, *the common belief of the Jews* that such a time *should* come, and the comment of Peter about its nature and continuance. The belief of the Jews was that such times *should* come. Peter affirms that the belief of such a period was well founded—a time when mercy may be obtained. That time *has come*. The doctrine that it *should* come was *well founded*, and has been fulfilled. This was a reason why they should repent, and hope in the mercy of God. Peter goes on, then, to state further *characteristics* of that period. It should include the restitution of all things, the return of Christ to judgment, etc. And *all this* was an additional consideration why they should repent, and turn from their sins, and seek for forgiveness. The meaning of the passage may, therefore, be thus summed up: "Repent, *since* such times *shall* come; they are clearly predicted; they were to be expected; and you are now living under them. *In these times*; in this dispensation, also, God shall send his Son again to judge the world; and all things shall be closed and settled for ever. Since you live under this period, you may seek for mercy; and you should seek to avoid the vengeance due to the wicked, and to be admitted to heaven when the Lord Jesus shall return." *Times of refreshing*. The word rendered *refreshing—anaquxewv*—means, properly, the *breathing*, or *refreshment*, after being *heated* with *labour, running*, etc. It hence denotes any kind of refreshment—as rest, or deliverance from evils of any kind. It is used nowhere else in the New

Testament, except that the *verb* is used in 2Ti 1:16, "Onesiphorus oft *refreshed* me, and was not ashamed of my chain." He administered comfort to me in my trials. It is used by the LXX. in the Old Testament nine times: Ex 8:15, "But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite," i.e. cessation or rest from the plagues; Hos 12:8 Jer 49:31; Ps 69:11, etc. In no place in the Old Testament is the word applied to the terms of the gospel. The *idea*, however, that the times of the Messiah would be times of rest, and ease, and prosperity, was a favourite one among the Jews, and was countenanced in the Old Testament. See Isa 28:12, "To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing," etc. They anticipated the times of the gospel as a period when they should have rest from their enemies; a respite from the evils of oppression and war, and a period of great national prosperity and peace. Under the idea that the *happy times of the Messiah* had come, Peter now addresses them, and assures them that they might obtain pardon and peace.

Shall come. This does not mean that this period was *still future*, for it had come; but that the expectation of the Jews that such a Messiah should come was well founded. A remarkably similar construction we have concerning Elijah, (Mt 17:11,) "And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly *shall first come*, and restore," etc.; that is, the doctrine that Elijah should come was true; though he immediately adds that it had already taken place, Mt 17:12. **See Barnes** "Mt 17:12.

From the presence of the Lord. Greek, "from *the face* of the Lord." The expression means that God was its author. From the face of the Lord, means from *the Lord himself*. Mr 1:2, "I send my messenger *before thy face*," i.e. before *thee*. Comp. Mal 3:1 Lu 1:76, 2:31.

{b} "Repent ye" Ac 2:38 {c} "that your sins" Isa 1:16-20 Joe 2:13 {d} "blotted out" Isa 43:25 {e} "times of refreshing" Zep 3:14-20 Re 21:4

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 3 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *And he shall send*, etc. Ac 1:11. *Under this economy of things*, he shall send Jesus Christ, i.e. the Messiah, to teach men; to redeem them; to save them; to judge the world; to gather his people to himself; and to condemn the wicked. Under *this* economy they were then. *This*, therefore, was an argument why they should repent and turn to God, that they might escape in the day of judgment.

Which before was preached, etc. Who has been proclaimed as the Messiah, The name *Jesus Christ* is equivalent here to *the Messiah*. The *Messiah* had been proclaimed to the Jews as about to come. In his time was to be the period of refreshing. He had come; and they were under the economy in which the blessings of the Messiah were to be enjoyed. This does not refer to his personal ministry, or to the preaching of the apostles; but to the fact that the Messiah had been a long time *announced* to them by the prophets as about to come. All the prophets had *preached* him, as the hope of the nation. It may be remarked, however, that there is here a difference in the manuscripts. A large majority of them read *prokeceirismenon*—who was *designated* or *appointed*—instead of who was preached. This reading is approved by Griesbach, Knapp, Bengel, etc. It was followed in the ancient Syriac, the Arabic, etc., and is undoubtedly the true reading.

21. Whom the heaven must receive. The common belief of the Jews was, that the Messiah would reign on the earth for ever, John xii. 34. On this account they would object that Jesus could not be the Messiah, and hence it became so important for the apostles to

establish the fact that he had ascended to heaven. The evidence which they adduced was the fact that they saw him ascend, Acts i. 9. The meaning of the expression, "whom the heaven MUST receive," is that it was fit or proper (*dei*) that he should ascend. One reason of that fitness or propriety he himself stated in John xvi. 7; comp. xvii. 2. It was also fit or expedient that he should do it, to direct the affairs of the universe for the welfare of the church, (Eph. i. 20—22,) and that he should exercise there his office as a Priest in interceding for his people, 1 John ii. 1, 2; Heb. vii. 25; ix. 24; Rom. viii. 34, etc. It is remarkable that Peter did not adduce any passage of Scripture on this subject; but it was one of the points on which there was no clear revelation. Obscure intimations of it might be found in Psa. cx. 16, etc., but the fact that he should ascend to heaven was not made prominent in the Old Testament. The words, "whom the heaven must receive," also convey the idea of exaltation and power; and Peter doubtless intended to say that he was clothed with power, and exalted to honour in the presence of God. See Psa. cxv. 3; comp. 1 Pet. iii. 22, "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him." Note, Acts ii. 33. ¶ Until. This word implies that he would then return to the earth; but it does not imply that he would not again ascend to heaven. ¶ The times of restitution of all things. The noun rendered restitution—*apokatastasewv* does does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. The verb from which it is derived occurs eight times. It means, properly, to restore a thing to its former situation, as restoring a sprained or dislocated limb to its former soundness. Hence it is used to restore, or to heal, in the New Testament. Matt. xii. 13, "And it (the hand) was restored whole, like as the other," Mark iii. 5; Luke vi. 10. And hence it is applied to the preparation or fitness for the coming of the Messiah which was to attend the preaching of John in the character of Elias, Matt. xvii. 11; Mark ix. 12. Thus in Josephus, (Antiq. ii. 3, 8,) the word is used to denote the return of the Jews from the captivity of Babylon, and their restoration to their former state and privileges. The word has also the idea of consummation, completion, or filling up. Thus it is used in Philo, Hesyehius, Phavorinus, and by the Greek classics. (See Lightfoot and Kuinoel.) Thus it is used here by the Syriac. "Until the complement or filling up of the times ;" that is, of all the events fore- told by the prophets, etc. Thus the Arabic, "Until the times which shall establish the perfection or completion of all the predictions of the prophets," etc. In this sense the passage means, that the heavens must receive the Lord Jesus until all things spoken by the prophets in relation to his work, his reign, the spread of the gospel, the triumph of religion, etc., shall have been fulfilled. It also conveys the idea of the predicted recovery of the world from sin, and the restoration of peace and order; the consummation of the work of the Messiah, now begun, but not yet complete; slow it may be in its advances, but triumphant and certain ill its progress and its close. ¶ All things. All things which have been foretold by the prophets. The expression is limited by the connexion to this; and of course it does not mean that all men shall be saved, or that all the evils of sin can be repaired or remedied. This can never be, for the mischief is done, and cannot be undone; but everything which the prophets have foretold shall receive their completion and fulfillment. Which God hath spoken. Which have been revealed, and are recorded in the Old Testament. Of all his holy prophets. This does not mean that each one of

the prophets had spoken of these things; but that all which had been spoken should be fulfilled. Since the world began. This is an expression denoting the same as from the beginning, meaning to affirm with emphasis that all the prophecies should be fulfilled. The apostles were desirous to show that they, as well as the Jews, held entirely to the prophets, and taught no doctrine which they had not taught before them.

22. For Moses truly said. The authority of Moses among the Jews was absolute and final. It was of great importance, therefore,

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 3 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Whom the heaven must receive*. The common belief of the Jews was, that the Messiah would reign on the earth for ever, Joh 12:34. On this account they would object that Jesus could not be the Messiah, and hence it became so important for the apostles to establish the fact that he had ascended to heaven. The evidence which they adduced was the fact that they saw him ascend, Ac 1:9. The meaning of the expression, "whom the heaven MUST receive," is that it was *fit or proper dei* that he should ascend. *One* reason of that fitness or propriety he himself stated in Joh 16:7; comp. Joh 17:2. It was also *fit* or expedient that he should do it, to direct the affairs of the universe for the welfare of the church, Eph 1:20-22, and that he should exercise there his office as a Priest in interceding for his people, 1Jo 2:1,2; Heb 7:25 9:24

Ro 8:34, etc. It is remarkable that Peter did not adduce any passage of Scripture on this subject; but it was one of the points on which there was no clear revelation. Obscure intimations of it might be found in Psalm and Psalm 16, etc., but the fact that he should *ascend* to heaven was not made prominent in the Old Testament. The words, "whom the heaven must receive," also convey the idea of *exaltation* and *power*; and Peter doubtless intended to say that he was clothed with power, and exalted to honour in the presence of God. See Ps 115:3; comp. 1Pe 3:22, "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him." Note, Ac 2:33.

Until. This word implies that he would then return to the earth; but it does not imply that he would not again ascend to heaven.

The times of restitution of all things. The noun rendered *restitution—apokatastasewv*—does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. The *verb* from which it is derived occurs eight times. It means, properly, *to restore a thing to its former situation*, as restoring a *sprained or dislocated* limb to its former soundness. Hence it is used to restore, or *to heal*, in the New Testament. Mt 12:13, "And it (the hand) was *restored whole*, like as the other," Mr 3:5 Lu 6:10. And hence it is applied to the *preparation* or *fitness* for the coming of the Messiah which was to attend the preaching of John in the character of Elias, Mt 17:11 Mr 9:12. Thus in Josephus, (Antiq. ii. 3, 8,) the word is used to denote the return of the Jews from the captivity of Babylon, and their restoration to their former state and privileges. The word has also the idea of *consummation, completion, or filling up*. Thus it is used in Philo, Hesychius, Phavorinus, and by the Greek classics. (See Lightfoot and Kuinoel.) Thus it is used here by the Syriac. "Until the *complement or filling up* of the times;" that is, of all the events foretold by the prophets, etc. Thus the Arabic, "Until the times which shall establish the perfection or completion of all the predictions of the prophets," etc. In this sense the

passage means, that the heavens must receive the Lord Jesus until all things spoken by the prophets in relation to his work, his reign, the spread of the gospel, the triumph of religion, etc., shall have been fulfilled. It also conveys the idea of the predicted recovery of the world from sin, and the restoration of peace and order; the *consummation* of the work of the Messiah, now begun, but not yet complete; slow it may be in its advances, but triumphant and certain ill its progress and its close.

All things. All things which *have been foretold by the prophets*. The expression is limited by the connexion to this; and of course it does not mean that all men shall be saved, or that all the evils of sin can be repaired or remedied. This can never be, for the mischief is done, and cannot be undone; but everything which the prophets have foretold shall receive their completion and fulfillment.

Which God hath spoken. Which have been revealed, and are recorded in the Old Testament.

Of all his holy prophets. This does not mean that *each* one of the prophets had spoken of these things; but that all which *had been spoken* should be fulfilled.

Since the world began. This is an expression denoting the same as *from the beginning*, meaning to affirm with emphasis that *all* the prophecies should be fulfilled. The apostles were desirous to show that they, as well as the Jews, held entirely to the prophets, and taught no doctrine which they had not taught before them.

{b} "times of restitution" Mt 17:11 {*} "of restitution" "of the Completion" {c} "hath spoken" Lu 1:70

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 3 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *For Moses truly said*. The authority of Moses among the Jews was absolute and final. It was of great importance, therefore, to show not only that they were not departing from his law, but that he had actually *foretold* these very things. The object of the passage is not to prove that the heavens must receive him, but that he was truly the Messiah.

Unto the fathers. To their ancestors, or the founders of the nation. See De 18:16-19.

A prophet. Literally, one who foretells future events. But it is also used to denote a religious teacher in general. See Ro 12:6. In De 18, it is evidently used in a large sense, to denote one who should infallibly guide and direct the nation in its religious affairs; one who should be commissioned by *God* to do this, in opposition to the diviners Ac 3:14 on which other nations relied. The meaning of this passage in Deuteronomy is apparent from the connexion. Moses is stating to them Ac 3:11-18 the duty and office of the priests and Levites. He then cautions them against conforming to the surrounding nations, particularly on the subject of religious instruction and guidance. They, said he, consult, in times of perplexity, with enchanters, and charmers, and necromancers, and wizards, etc., Ac 3:11-14 but it shall not be so with you. You shall not be *left* to this false and uncertain guidance in times of perplexity and danger; for the Lord will raise up, from time to time, a *prophet*, a man directly commissioned in an extraordinary manner from heaven, like me, who shall direct and counsel you. The promise, therefore, pertains to *the series of prophets* which God would raise up; or it is a promise that God would send his prophets, as occasion might demand, to instruct and counsel the nation. The *design* was to keep them from consulting with diviners, etc., and to preserve them from following the pretended and false religious teachers of surrounding idolatrous people.

In this interpretation most commentators agree. See particularly *Calvin* on this place. Thus explained, the prophecy had no *exclusive* or even *direct* reference to the Messiah, and there is no evidence that the Jews understood it to have any such reference, except as *one of the series* of prophets that God would raise up and send to instruct the nation. If then it be asked *on what principle* Peter appealed to this, we may reply,

(1.) that the Messiah was to sustain the character of a prophet, and the prophecy had reference to him as *one* of the teachers that God would raise up to instruct the nation.

(2.) It would apply to him *by way of eminence*, as the *greatest* of the messengers that God would send to instruct the people. In this sense it is probable that the Jews would understand it.

(3.) This was one of those *emergencies* in the history of the nation when they might expect such an intervention. The prophecy implied that, in times of perplexity and danger, God would raise up such a prophet. Such a time then existed. The nation was corrupt, distracted, subjected to a foreign power, and *needed* such a teacher and guide. If it be asked *why* Peter appealed to this, rather than to *explicit* prophecies of the Messiah, we may remark,

(1.) that his main object was to show their *guilt* in having rejected him and put him to death, Ac 3:14,15.

(2.) That in order to do this, he sets before them clearly the *obligation* to *obey* him; and in doing this, appeals to the express command of Moses. He shows them that, according to Moses, whoever would not obey such a prophet should be cut off from among the people. In refusing, therefore, to hear this great prophet, and putting him to death, they had violated the express command of their own lawgiver. But it was possible *still* to obey him, for he still *lived* in heaven; and all the authority of Moses, therefore, made it a matter of obligation for them still to hear and obey him. The Jews were accustomed to apply the name *prophet* to the Messiah, Joh 1:21 6:14, 7:40 Mt 21:11; Lu 4:24; and it has been shown, from the writings of the Jewish Rabbins, that they believed the Messiah would be the greatest of the prophets, even greater than Moses. **See Barnes "Joh 1:21"**.

The Lord your God. In the Hebrew, "Jehovah, thy God."

Raise up unto you. Appoint, or commission to come to you.

Of your brethren. Among yourselves; of your own countrymen; so that you shall not be dependent on foreigners, or on teachers of other nations. All the prophets were native-born Jews. And it was particularly true of the Messiah that he was to be a Jew, descended from Abraham, and raised up from the midst of his brethren, Heb 2:11,16,17.

On this account it was to be presumed that they would feel a deeper interest in him, and listen more attentively to his instructions.

Like unto me. Not in all things, but only in the point which was under discussion. He was to resemble him in being able to make known to them the will of God, and thus preventing the necessity of looking to other teachers. The idea of *resemblance* between Moses and the prophet is not very strictly expressed in the Greek, except in the mere circumstance of being *raised up*. God shall raise up to you a prophet, *as he has raised up me—wv eme*. The resemblance between Moses and the Messiah should not be pressed too far. The Scriptures have not traced it farther than to the fact that *both* were raised up by God to communicate his will to the Jewish people; and therefore one should be heard as well as the other.

Him shall ye hear. That is, him shall you *obey*, or you shall receive his instructions as a communication from God.

In all things whatsoever, etc. These words are not quoted *literally* from the Hebrew, but they express the sense of what is said in De 18:15,18.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 3 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *And it shall come to pass*. It shall be or shall occur. This is not the usual word rendered "it shall come to pass." It is a word commonly expressing *futurity*, but here it conveys the notion of *obligation*. In this verse Peter has not quoted the passage in Deuteronomy *literally*, but he has given the sense.

Every soul. Every person, or individual. Soul is often put for the whole man by the Hebrews, Ac 7:14 Jos 10:28.

Hear that prophet. That is, *obey* his instructions. He shall have authority to declare the will of God; and he that does not obey him refuses to obey God. Comp. Lu 10:16 Joh 13:20.

Shall be destroyed. This quotation, is made according to the sense, and not *literally*. In the Hebrew the expression is, (De 18:19,) "l will require it of him," i.e. I will hold him *answerable*, or *responsible* for it; I will *punish* him. This expression the LXX. have rendered by "I will take vengeance on him." The idea of the passage is, therefore, that God would *punish* the man that would not hear the prophet, without specifying the particular way in which it should be done. The *usual mode* of punishing such offences was by *cutting the offender off from among the people*, Ex 30:33 12:15,19; Ex 31:14; Nu 15:31 19:13; Le 7:20,21,25,27, etc. The sense is, that he should be punished in the usual manner; i.e. by *excision*, or by being *destroyed* from among the people. The word translated *shall be destroyed* means, properly, *to exterminate*; wholly to devote to ruin, as of a wicked people, a wicked man whose life is taken, etc. To be destroyed *from among the people* means, however, to be *excommunicated*, or to be deprived of the *privileges* of a people. Among the Jews this was probably the most severe punishment, that could be inflicted. It involved the idea of being cut off from the privileges of sacrifice and worship in the temple and in the synagogue, etc., and of being regarded as a *heathen* and an outcast. The idea which Peter expressed here, was that the Jews had exposed themselves to the severest punishment in rejecting and crucifying the Lord Jesus, and that they should, therefore, repent of this great sin, and seek for mercy. The same remark is applicable still to men. The Scriptures abundantly declare the truth, that if sinners will not hear the Lord Jesus, they shall be destroyed. And it becomes each individual to inquire with honesty whether he listens to *his* instructions, and obeys his law, or whether he is rejecting him and following the devices and desires of his own heart.

{*} "soul" "every one"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 3 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *All the prophets*. That is, the prophets in general. It may be said of the prophets *generally*, or of all of them, that they have foretold these things. This expression is not to be pressed

as if we were to look for distinct predictions of the Messiah in each one of the prophets. The use of language does not require so strict an interpretation.

From Samuel. In the previous verse, (Ac 3:22,) *Moses* was mentioned as the *first* in order. The next in order was *Samuel*. The same mention of *Moses* and *Samuel* occurs in Ps 99:6. The reason why *Samuel* is mentioned here is, probably, that he was the first prophet after Moses who recorded a prediction respecting the times of the Messiah. The Jews, in their divisions of the books of the Old Testament, reckoned the book of Joshua as the first of *the prophets*. But in Joshua and Judges there does not occur any distinct prediction of the Messiah. The prophecy in Samuel, to which Peter probably had reference, is in 2Sa 7:16. From the time of Moses to Samuel, also, it is probable that no prophet arose. God was consulted by *Urim* and *Thummim*, (Ex 28:30 Nu 27:21); and consequently no extraordinary messenger was sent to instruct the nation.

As many as have spoken. Whosoever has declared the will of God. This is to be taken in a *general* sense.

The meaning is, that the prophets had *concurred* in foretelling these days. They not merely concurred in foretelling a happy future period, but they foretold *distinctly* the very things which had actually occurred respecting Jesus of Nazareth; and the Jews, therefore, should listen to the voice of their own prophets.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 3 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Ye are the children of the prophets*. Greek, "Ye are the sons of the prophets." The meaning is, not that they were literally the *descendants* of the prophets, but that they were their *disciples, pupils, followers*. They professed to follow the prophets as their *teachers and guides*. Teachers among the Jews were often spoken of under the appellation of *fathers*, and disciples as *sons*, Mt 12:27. **See Barnes "Mt 1:1"**.

As they were the professed disciples of the prophets, they should listen to them. As they lived among the people to whom the prophets were sent, and to whom the promises were made, they should avail themselves of the offer of mercy, and embrace the Messiah.

And of the covenant. Ye are the *sons* of the covenant; that is, you are of the posterity of Abraham, with whom the covenant was made. The word "sons" was often thus used to denote those to whom any favour appertained, whether by inheritance, or in any other way. Thus, Mt 8:12, "the children (sons) of the kingdom." Joh 17:12: "The son of perdition." The word *covenant* denotes, properly, a compact or agreement between equals, or those who have a right to make such a compact, and to choose or refuse the terms. When applied to God and man, it denotes a *firm promise* on the part of God; a pledge to be regarded with all the sacredness of a compact, that he will do certain things on certain conditions. It is called a *covenant* only to designate its sacredness and the certainty of its fulfillment; not that *man* had any *right to reject* any of the terms or stipulations. As man has no such right—as he is bound to receive all that his Maker proposes—so, strictly and literally, there has been no *compact* or *covenant* between God and man. The *promise* to which Peter refers in the passage before us is in Ge 22:18 12:3.

In thy seed. Thy posterity. See Ro 4:13,16. This promise, the apostle Paul affirms, had express reference to the Messiah, Ga 3:16. The word *seed* is used sometimes to denote an individual, Ge

4:25 and the apostle Ga 3:16 affirms that there was special reference to Christ in the promise made to Abraham.

All the kindreds. The word translated *kindreds patriai* denotes those who have a common *father* or *ancestor*, and is applied to *families*. It is also referred to those larger communities which descended from the same ancestor, and thus refers to nations, Eph 3:15. Here it evidently refers to *all nations*.

Be blessed. Be made happy.

{a} "are the children" Ro 9:4 15:8 {*} "children" "sons" {b} "in thy seed" Ge 22:18

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 3 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Unto you first*. To you who are Jews. This was the direction that the gospel should be first preached to the Jews, beginning at Jerusalem, Lu 24:47. Jesus himself also confined his ministry entirely to the Jews.

Having raised up. This expression does not refer to his having raised him from the dead, but is used in the same sense as in Ac 3:22, where God promised that he would raise up a prophet, and send him to teach the people. Peter means that God had appointed his Son Jesus, or had commissioned him to go and preach to the people to turn them away from their sins.

To bless you. To make you happy; to fulfil the promise made to Abraham.

In turning away. That is, by his preaching, example, death, etc. The highest blessing that can be conferred on men is to be turned from sin. It is the source of all woes; and if men are turned from that, they will be happy. Christ blesses no one in sin, or while loving sin, but by turning them from sin. This was the object which he had in view in coming, Isa 59:20 Mt 1:21. The design of Peter in these remarks was to show them that the Messiah had come, and that now they might look for happiness, pardon, and mercy through him. As the Jews might, so may all; and as Jesus while living sought to turn away men from their sins, so he does still, and still designs to bless *all nations* by the gospel which he had himself preached, and to establish which he died. All may therefore come and be blessed; and all may rejoice in the prospect that these blessings shall yet be bestowed on all the kindreds of the earth. May the happy day soon come!

{c} "Unto you first" Mt 10:5 Lu 24:47 {d} "turning away every one" Isa 59:20 Tit 2:11-14

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 4

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 4 - Verse 1

CHAPTER 4

Verse 1. *The Priests*. It is probable that these *priests* were a part of the sanhedrim, or great council of the nation. It is evident that they claimed some authority for preventing the preaching

of the apostles. And the whole transaction seems to show that they did not come upon them in a tumultuous manner, but as keepers of the peace.

The captain of the temple. **See Barnes "Mt 26:47".**

See Barnes "Lu 22:4".

This was the commander of the guard stationed chiefly in the tower *Antonia*, especially during the great feasts; and it was their duty to preserve order, and prevent any tumult. The captain of the temple came at this time to prevent a tumult or suppress a riot, as it was supposed that the teaching of the apostles, and the crowd collected by the healing of the lame man, would lead to a tumult.

And the Sadducees. **See Barnes "Mt 3:7".**

One of the doctrines which the Sadducees maintained was, that there was no resurrection of the dead. Hence they were particularly opposed to the apostles for preaching it, and because they gave so clear proof that Jesus had risen, and were thus spreading the doctrine of the resurrection among the people.

Came upon them. This expression implies that they came in a sudden and violent manner. See Lu 20:1.

{1} "Captain of the temple" "ruler" {e} "came upon them" Mt 22:23 Ac 23:8

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 4 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Being grieved*. The word thus translated occurs but in one other place in the New Testament, Ac 16:18. It implies more than simple *sorrow*; it was a mingled emotion of indignation and anger. They did not *grieve* because they thought it a public calamity, but because it interfered with their authority, and opposed their doctrine. It means that it was *painful* to them, or they *could not bear it*. It is often the case that bigots, and men in authority, have this kind of *grief* at the zeal of men in spreading the truth, and thus undermining their influence and authority.

That they taught the people. The ground of their grief was as much *the fact* that they should presume to instruct the people, as the matter which they taught them. They were offended that unlearned Galileans, in no way connected with the priestly office, and unauthorized by *them*, should presume to set themselves up as religious teachers. *They* claimed the right to watch over the interests of the people, and to declare who was authorized to instruct the nation. It has been no unusual thing for men in ecclesiastical stations to take exceptions to the ministry of those who have not been commissioned by themselves. Men easily fancy that all power to instruct others is lodged in their hands; and they oppose others simply from the fact that they have not derived their authority from *them*. The true question in this case was, whether these Galileans gave proof that they were sent by God. The fact of the miracle in this case should have been satisfactory. We have here, also, a striking instance of the fact that men may turn away from evidence, and from most important points, and fix on something that opposes their prejudices, and which may be a matter of very little moment. No inquiry was made whether the *miracle* had been really wrought; but the only inquiry was, whether they had conformed to their views of doctrine and order.

And preached through Jesus, etc. The Sadducees would be particularly opposed to this. They denied the doctrine of the resurrection, and they were troubled that the apostles adduced proof of it so strong as the resurrection of Jesus. It was perceived that this doctrine was becoming established

among the people; multitudes believed that he had *risen*; and if he had been raised up, it followed also that others would rise. The Sadducees, therefore, felt that their cause was in danger; and they joined with the priests in endeavouring to arrest its spread among the people. This is the account of the first opposition that was made to the gospel as it was preached by the apostles. It is worthy of remark, that it excited so much and so speedily the enmity of those in power; and that the apostles were so soon called to test the sincerity of their attachment to their Master. They who but a few days before had fled at the approach of danger, were called to meet this opposition, and to show their attachment to a risen Redeemer; and they did it without shrinking. They showed now that they were indeed the true friends of the crucified Saviour: and this remarkable change in their conduct is one among the many proofs that they were influenced from above.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 4 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Put* them *in hold*. That is, they took them into *custody*, or into safe keeping. Probably they committed them to the care of a guard.

Eventide. Evening. It was not convenient to assemble the council at night. This was, moreover, the time for the evening prayer or sacrifice, and it was not usual to assemble the sanhedrim at that hour.

{*} "put them in hold" "In prison" {+} "eventide" "Evening"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 4 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Howbeit*. But; notwithstanding.

Many of them, etc. This was one of the instances which has since been so often repeated, in which *persecution* has only had a tendency to extend and establish the faith which it was designed to destroy. It finally came to be a proverb, that "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church ;" and there is no lesson which men have been so slow to learn, as that to *oppose* and persecute men is the very way to *confirm* them in their opinions, and to spread their doctrines. It was supposed here that the disciples were few, that they were without power, wealth, and influence, and that it was easy to crush them at once. But God made their persecution the means of extending, in a signal manner, the truths of the gospel and the triumphs of his word. And so in all ages it has been, and so it ever will be.

And the number, etc. It seems probable that in this number of five thousand there were included the one hundred and twenty who are mentioned in Ac 1:15, and the three thousand who were converted on the day of Pentecost, Ac 2:41. It does not appear probable that five thousand should have been assembled and converted in *Solomon's porch*, (Ac 3:11,) on occasion of the cure of the lame man. Luke, doubtless, means to say that, up to this time, the number of persons who had joined themselves to the apostles was about five thousand. On this supposition, the work of religion must have made a very rapid advance. How long this was after the day of Pentecost is not mentioned;

but it is clear that it was at no very distant period; and the accession of near *two thousand* to the number of believers was a very striking proof of the power and presence of the Holy Spirit.

Of the men. Of the *persons*. The word *men* is often used without reference to sex, Lu 11:31 Ro 4:8, 11:4.

{+} "Howbeit" "Nevertheless" {a} "many of them" Ac 28:24

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 4 - Verse 5

Verses 5, 6. *Their rulers*. The rulers of the Jews; doubtless the members of the *sanhedrim, or great council of the nation*. Comp. Ac 4:15. **See Barnes "Mt 2:4 5:22"**.

The expression their rulers, looks as if this book was written for the Gentiles, or Luke would have said our rulers.

Elders. Presbyters; or those who were chosen from among the people to sit in the sanhedrim. It is probable that the rulers were those who held also some other office, but were also authorized to sit in the great council.

Scribes. **See Barnes "Mt 2:4"**.

And Annas, etc. **See Barnes "Joh 18:13"**.

It is by no means certain that *Annas was at that time* the high priest, but he had been, and doubtless retained the title. He was father-in-law to Caiaphas the high priest; and from this fact, together with his former dignity, he is mentioned first.

Caiaphas. Son-in-law of Annas, and now exercising the office of the high priest, Joh 18:13.

John, and Alexander, etc. Of these persons nothing more is known. It is clear that they were members of the great council, and the mention of their names shows that the men of chief authority and influence were assembled to silence the apostles. Annas and Caiaphas had been concerned in the condemnation of Jesus, and they would now feel a special interest in arresting the progress of the gospel among the people. All the success of the gospel reflected back light upon the wickedness of the act of condemning the Lord Jesus. And this fact may serve, in part, to account for their strong desire to silence the apostles.

At Jerusalem. *eiv*. This was the usual place of assembling the sanhedrim. But the Jewish writers (see Lightfoot on this place) say, that forty years before the destruction of the city, on account of the great increase of crime, etc., the sanhedrim was removed from place to place. The declaration of Luke, that they were now assembled *in Jerusalem*, seems to imply that they sometimes met in other places. It is probable that the members of the sanhedrim were not in the city at the time mentioned in , and this was the reason why the trial was deferred to the next day.

{b} "Annas the High Priest" Joh 18:13

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 4 - Verse 6

Verse 6. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 4 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *In the midst*. In the presence of the great council.

By what power, etc. A similar question was put to Christ in the temple, Mt 21:23.

By what name. That is, by whose authority. It is very probable that they expected to intimidate the apostles by this question. *They* claimed the right of regulating the religious affairs of the nation. They had vast power with the people. They assumed that all power to instruct the people should originate with them; and they expected that the apostles would be confounded, as having violated the established usage of the nation. It did not seem to occur to them to enter into an investigation of the question, whether this *acknowledged* miracle did not prove that they were sent by God; but they assumed that they were impostors, and attempted to silence them by authority. It has been usual with the enemies of religion to attempt to *intimidate* its friends, and, when argument falls, to attempt to silence Christians by appealing to their fears.

{c} "By what power" Mt 21:23

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 4 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Filled with the Holy Ghost*. **See Barnes "Ac 2:4"**.

Ye rulers, etc. Peter addressed the sanhedrim with perfect respect. He did not call in question their authority to propose this question. He seemed to regard this as a favourable opportunity to declare the truth, and state the evidence of the Christian religion. In this he acted on the principle of the injunction which he himself afterwards gave, 1Pe 3:15, "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." Innocence is willing to be questioned; and a believer in the truth will rejoice in any opportunity to state the evidence of what is believed. It is remarkable, also, that this was before the great council of the nation; the body that was clothed with the highest authority. And Peter could not have forgotten that before this very council, and these very men, his Master had been arraigned and condemned. Nor could he have forgotten that in the very room where this same council was convened to try his Lord, *he had himself* shrunk from an honest avowal of attachment to him, and shamefully and profanely denied him. That he was now able to stand boldly before this same tribunal evinced a remarkable *change* in his feelings, and was a most clear and impressive proof of the genuineness of his repentance when he went out and wept bitterly. Comp. Lu 22:54-62. And we may remark here, that one of the most clear evidences of the sincerity of repentance is when it leads to a result like this. So deeply was the heart of Peter affected by his sin, Lu 22:62, and so genuine was his sorrow, that he doubtless remembered his crime on this occasion; and the memory of it inspired him with boldness. It may be further remarked, that one evidence of the genuineness of repentance is a desire to repair the evil which is done by crime. Peter had done dishonour to his Master and his cause, in the presence of the great council of the nation. Nothing, on such an occasion, would be more likely to do injury to the cause than for one of the disciples of the Saviour to deny him—one of his followers to be guilty of *profaneness* and *falsehood*. But here was an opportunity, in some degree at least, to repair the evil. Before the same council and the same men, in the same city, and in the presence of the same people, it is not an unnatural supposition that Peter rejoiced that he

might have opportunity to bear his testimony to the Divine mission of the Saviour whom he had before denied. By using the customary language of respect applied to the great council, Peter also has shown us that it is proper to evince respect for office, and for those in power. Religion requires us to render this homage, and to treat men in office with deference, Mt 22:21 Ro 13:7; 1Pe 2:13-17.

{d} "filled with the Holy Ghost" Ac 7:55 {+} "Holy Ghost" "Spirit"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 4 - Verse 9

Verse 9. No Barnes text on this verse.

{+} "impotent man" "Infirm" {&} "whole" "Hath been restored"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 4 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Be it known*, etc. Peter might have evaded the question, or he might have resorted to many excuses and subterfuges, (*Calvin*,) if he had been desirous of avoiding this inquiry. But it was a noble opportunity for vindicating the honour of his Lord and Master. It was a noble opportunity also for repairing the evil which he had done by his guilty denial of his Lord. Although, therefore, this frank and open avowal was attended with danger, and although it was in the presence of the great and the mighty, yet he chose to state fully and clearly his conviction of the truth. Never was there an instance of greater boldness; and never could there be a more striking illustration of the fitness of the name which the Lord Jesus gave him, that of a *rock*, Joh 1:42 Mt 16:17,18.

The timid, trembling, yielding, and vacillating Simon, he who just before was terrified by a servant girl, and who on the lake was afraid of sinking, is now transformed into the manly, decided, and firm *Cephas*, fearless before the great council of the nation, and in an unwavering tone asserting the authority of Him whom *he* had just before denied, and whom *they* had just before put to death. It is not possible to account for this change except on the supposition that this religion is true. Peter had no worldly motive to actuate him. He had no prospect of wealth or fame by this. Even the hopes of honour and preferment which they had cherished before the death of Jesus, and which *might* have been supposed to influence them then, were now abandoned by the apostles. Their Master had died; and all their hopes of human honour and power had been buried in his grave. Nothing but the conviction of the *truth* could have wrought this change, and transformed this timid disciple to a bold and uncompromising apostle.

By the name. By the authority or power, Ac 3:6.

Of Jesus Christ. The union of these two names would be particularly offensive to the sanhedrim. They *denied* that Jesus was the Christ, or the Messiah; Peter, by the use of the word *Christ*, affirmed that he was. In the language then used, it would be, "By the name of Jesus, *the Messiah*."

Of Nazareth. Lest there should be any mistake about his meaning, he specified that he referred to the despised *Nazarene*; to him who had just been put to death, as they supposed, covered with infamy. Christians little regard the epithets of opprobrium which may be affixed to themselves or to their religion.

Whom ye crucified. There is emphasis in all the expressions that Peter uses. He had before charged the people with the crime of having put him to death, Ac 2:23 3:14,15; but he now had the opportunity, contrary to all expectation, of urging the charge with still greater force on the *rulers themselves*, on the very council which had condemned him and delivered him to Pilate. It was a remarkable providence that an opportunity was thus afforded of urging this charge in the presence of the sanhedrim, and of proclaiming *to them* the necessity of repentance. Little did *they* imagine, when they condemned the Lord Jesus, that this charge would be so soon urged. This is one of the instances in which God takes the wise in their own craftiness, Job 5:13. *They* had arraigned the apostles; they demanded their authority for what they had done; and thus they had directly opened the way, and invited them to the serious and solemn charge which Peter here urges against them.

{a} "that by the name" Ac 3:6,16 {*} "whole" "well"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 4 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *This is the stone*. This passage is found in Ps 118:22. It is quoted also by our Saviour, as applicable to himself. **See Barnes "Mt 21:42"**.

The ancient Jews applied this to David. In the Targum on Ps 118:22, this passage is rendered, "The child who was among the sons of Jesse, and was worthy to be constituted King, the builders rejected." The New Testament writers, however, apply it without any doubt to the Messiah. Comp. Isa 28:16 Ro 9:33; Eph 2:20.

And from this passage we may learn, that God will overrule the devices and plans of wicked men, to accomplish his own purposes. What men despise and set at nought, he esteems of inestimable value in his kingdom. What the great and the mighty contemn, he regards as the very foundation and corner-stone of the edifice which he designs to rear. Nothing has been more remarkable than this in the history of man; and in nothing is more contempt thrown on the proud projects of men, than that what they have rejected he has made the very basis of his schemes.

{b} "the stone" Ps 118:22 Isa 28:16; Mt 21:42

{+} "at nought" "rejected"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 4 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Neither is there salvation*. The word *salvation* properly denotes any preservation, or keeping anything in a safe state; a preserving it from harm. It signifies, also, deliverance from *any* evil of body or mind; from pain, sickness, danger, etc., Ac 7:25. But it is in the New Testament applied particularly to the work which the Messiah came to do, "to seek and to save that which was lost," Lu 19:10. This work refers primarily to a deliverance of the soul *from* sin, Mt 1:21 Ac 5:31; Lu 4:18 Ro 8:21; Ga 5:1.

It then denotes, *as a consequence* of freedom from sin, freedom from all the ills to which sin exposes man, and the attainment of that perfect peace and joy which shall be bestowed on the children of God in the heavens. The reasons why Peter introduces this subject here seem to be these:

(1.) He was discoursing of the *deliverance* of the man that was healed—his *salvation* from a long and painful calamity. This deliverance had been accomplished by the power of Jesus. The mention of this suggested that *greater* and more important *salvation* from sin and death which it was the object of the Lord Jesus to effect. As it was by *his* power that this man had been healed, so it was by *his* power only that men could be saved from death and hell. Deliverance from any temporal calamity should lead the thoughts to that higher redemption which the Lord Jesus contemplates in regard to the soul.

(2.) This was a favourable opportunity to introduce the doctrines of the gospel to the notice of the great council of the nation. The occasion invited to it; the mention of a *part* of the work of Jesus invited to a contemplation of his *whole* work. Peter would not have done justice to the character and work of Christ, if he had not introduced that great design which he had in view to save men from death and hell. It is probable, also, that he advanced a sentiment in which he expected they would immediately *concur*, and which accorded with their well-known opinions, that salvation was to be obtained only by the Messiah. Thus Paul Ac 26:22,23 says that he taught nothing else than what was delivered by Moses and the prophets, etc. Comp. Ac 23:6 26:6. The apostles did not *pretend* to proclaim any doctrine which was not delivered by Moses and the prophets, and which did not in fact constitute a part of the *creed* of the Jewish nation.

In any other. Any other person. He does not mean to say that God is not able to save, but that the salvation of the human family is entrusted to the hands of Jesus the Messiah.

For there is none other name. This is an explanation of what he had said in the previous part of the verse. The word *name* here is used to denote the person himself; there is no other *being*, or *person*. As we should say, there is *no one* who can save but Jesus Christ. The word *name* is often used in this sense. **See Barnes "Ac 3:6,16"**.

That there is no *other* Saviour, or Mediator between God and man, is abundantly taught in the New Testament; and it is indeed the main design of revelation to prove this. See 1Ti 2:5,6; Ac 10:43.

Under heaven. This expression does not materially differ from the one immediately following, "among men." They are designed to express with emphasis the sentiment that salvation is to be obtained in *Christ alone*, and not in any patriarch, or prophet, or teacher, or king, or in any false Messiah.

Given. In this word it is implied that *salvation* has its origin in God; that a Saviour for men must be *given* by him; and that salvation cannot be originated by any power among men. The Lord Jesus is thus uniformly represented as given, or appointed by God for this great purpose, Joh 3:16 17:4; 1Co 3:5 Ga 1:4, 2:20 Eph 1:22, 5:25; 1Ti 2:6 Ro 5:15-18, 6:23

and hence Christ is called the "unspeakable gift" of God, 2Co 9:15.

Whereby we must be saved. By which it is *fit*, or proper —*dei*— that we should be saved. There is no other way of salvation that is *adapted* to the great object contemplated; and therefore, if saved, it must be in this way, and by this plan. All other schemes by men's own devices are *not adapted* to the purpose, and therefore cannot save. The doctrine that men can be saved *only* by Jesus Christ is abundantly taught in the Scriptures. To show the failure of all other schemes of religion was the great design of the first part of the Epistle to the Romans. By a laboured argument Paul there shows Ro 1 that the *Gentiles* had failed in their attempt to justify themselves; and in Ro 2, Ro 3, that the same thing was true also of the Jews. If *both* these schemes failed, then there was need of some

other plan; and that plan was that of salvation by Jesus Christ. If it be asked, then, whether this affirmation of Peter is to be understood as having respect to *infants* and the *heathen*, we may remark,

(1.) that his design was primarily to address the Jews, "Whereby we must be saved." But

(2) the same thing is doubtless true of others. If, as Christians generally believe, infants are saved, there is no absurdity in supposing that it is by the merits of the atonement. *But* for that, there would have been no promise of salvation. No offer has been made except by the Mediator; and to him doubtless is to be ascribed all the glory of raising up even those in infancy to eternal life. If any of the heathen are to be saved, as most Christians suppose, and as seems in accordance with the mercy of God, it is no less certain that it will be in consequence of the intervention of Christ. Those who will be brought to heaven will sing one song, Re 5:9, and be prepared for eternal union in the service of God in the skies. Still, the Scriptures have *not* declared that *great numbers* of the heathen will be saved, who have not the gospel. The contrary is more than implied in the New Testament, Ro 2:12. Neither has the Scripture affirmed that *all* the heathen shall certainly be cut off. It has been discovered by missionaries among the heathen that individuals have, in a remarkable way, been convinced of the folly of idolatry, and were seeking a better religion; that their minds were in a serious, thoughtful, inquiring state, and that they *at once* embraced the gospel when it was offered to them, as *exactly* adapted to their state of mind, and meeting their inquiries. Such was extensively the case in the Sandwich Islands; and the following instance recently occurred in this country: "The Flat-head Indians living west of the Rocky Mountains, recently sent a deputation to the white settlements to inquire after the Bible. The circumstance that led to this singular movement is as follows: It appears that a white man (Mr. Catlin) had penetrated into their country, and happened to be a spectator at one of their religious ceremonies. He informed them that their mode of worshipping the Supreme Being was radically wrong, and that the people away towards the rising of the sun had been put in possession of the true mode of worshipping the Great Spirit. On receiving this information, they called a national council to take this subject into consideration. Some said, If this be true, it is certainly high time we were put in possession of this mode. They accordingly deputed four of the chiefs to proceed to St. Louis, to see their great father, general Clark, to inquire of him the truth of this matter. They were cordially received by the general, who gave them a succinct history of Revelation, and the necessary instruction relative to their important mission. Two of them sunk under the severe toils attending a journey of three thousand miles. The remaining two, after acquiring what knowledge they could of the Bible, its institutions and precepts, returned to carry back those few rays of Divine light to their benighted countrymen." In *what way* their minds were led to this state we cannot say; or how this *preparation* for the gospel was connected with the *agency* and *merits* of Christ, we perhaps cannot understand. But we know that the affairs of *this entire world* are placed under the control of Christ, Joh 17:2 Eph 1:21,22, and that the arrangements of events by which they were brought to this state of mind are in his hands. Another remark may here be made: it is, that it often occurs that blessings come upon us *from benefactors whom we do not see, and from sources which we cannot trace*. On this principle we receive many of the mercies of life; and from anything that appears, in this way many blessings of salvation may be conferred on the world, and possibly many of the heathen be saved. Still, this view does not interfere with the command of Christ to preach the gospel, Mr 16:15. *The great mass of the heathen* are not in this state: and this fact, so far as it goes, is an encouragement to preach the gospel to the entire world. If *Christ* thus prepares the way; if he extensively fits the minds of the heathen for the reception of the gospel; if he shows them the evil and folly of their own system, and leads them to

desire a better, then this should operate not to produce indolence, but activity, and zeal, and encouragement to enter into the field white for the harvest, and to toil that *all* who seek the truth, and are *prepared* to embrace the gospel, may be brought to the light of the Sun of righteousness.

{c} "for there is" Ac 10:43 1Ti 2:5,6

{d} "other name" Ps 45:17

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 4 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Boldness*. This word properly denotes *openness* or *confidence in speaking*. It stands opposed to *hesitancy*, and to *equivocation* in declaring our sentiments. Here it means that, in spite of danger and opposition, they avowed their doctrines without any attempt to conceal or disguise them.

Peter and John. It was they only who had been concerned in the healing of the lame man, Ac 3:1.

And perceived. When they knew that they were unlearned. This might have been ascertained either by report or by the manner of their speaking.

Unlearned. This word properly denotes those who were not acquainted with *letters*, or who had not had the benefit of an education.

Ignorant men—idiwtai—. This word properly denotes those who live in private, in contradistinction from those who are engaged in *public* life, or in office. As this class of persons is commonly also supposed to be less learned, talented, and refined than those in office, it comes to denote those who are rude and illiterate. The idea intended to be conveyed here is, that these men had not had opportunities of education, (comp. Mt 4:18-21,) and had not been accustomed to public speaking, and hence they were surprised at their boldness. This same character is uniformly attributed to the early preachers of Christianity. Comp. 1Co 1:27 Mt 11:25. The Galileans were regarded by the Jews as particularly rude and uncultivated, Mt 26:73 Mr 14:70.

They marvelled. They *wondered* that men who had not been educated in the schools of the Rabbins, and accustomed to speak, should declare their sentiments with so much boldness.

And they took knowledge. This expression means simply that they knew, or that they obtained evidence, or proof, that they had been with Jesus. It is not said *in what way* they obtained this evidence; but the connexion leads us to suppose it was by the miracle which they had wrought; by their firm and bold declaration of the doctrines of Jesus; and perhaps by the irresistible conviction that none *would* be thus bold who had not been personally with him, and who had not the firmest conviction that he was the Messiah. They had not been trained in their schools, and their boldness could not be attributed to the arts of rhetoric, but was the native, ingenuous, and manly exhibition of deep conviction of the truth of what they spoke; and that conviction could have been obtained only by their having been with him, and having been satisfied that he was the Messiah. Such conviction is of far more value in preaching than all the mere teachings of the schools; and *without* such a conviction, all preaching will be frigid, hypocritical, and useless.

Had been with Jesus. Had been his followers, and had attended personally on his ministry. They gave evidence that they had seen him, been with him, heard him, and were convinced that he was the Messiah. We may learn here,

(1.) that if men wish to be successful in preaching, it must be based on deep and thorough conviction of the truth of that which they deliver.

(2.) They who preach should give evidence that they are acquainted with the Lord Jesus Christ; that they have imbibed his Spirit, pondered his instructions, studied the evidences of his Divine mission, and are thoroughly convinced that he was from God.

(3.) Boldness and success in the ministry, as well as in everything else, will depend far more on honest, genuine, thorough conviction of the truth, than on all the endowments of talent and learning, and all the arts and skill of eloquence. No man should attempt to preach without such a thorough conviction of truth; and no man who has it will preach in vain.

(4.) God often employs the ignorant and unlearned to confound the wise, 1Co 1:27,28. But it is not *by* their ignorance. It was not the ignorance of Peter and John that convinced the sanhedrim. It was done *in spite* of their ignorance. It was their *boldness*, and their honest conviction of truth. Besides, though not learned in the schools of the Jews, they had been under a far more important training, under the personal direction of Christ himself for three years; and now they were directly endowed by the Holy Ghost with the power of speaking with tongues. Though not taught in the schools, yet there was an important sense in which they were not unlearned and ignorant men. Their example should not, therefore, be pleaded in favour of an unlearned ministry. Christ himself expressed his opposition to an unlearned ministry, by *teaching them himself*, and then by bestowing on them miraculous endowments which no learning at present can furnish. It may be remarked, further, that in the single selection which *he* made of an apostle after his ascension to heaven, when he came to choose one who had not been under his personal teaching, he chose *a learned man*, the apostle Paul, and thus evinced his purpose that there should be *training* or *education*, in those who are invested with the sacred office.

(5.) Yet in the case before us there is a striking proof of the truth and power of religion. These men had not acquired their boldness in the schools; they were not trained for argument among the Jews; they did not meet them by cunning sophistry; but they came with the honest conviction that what they were saying was true. Were they deceived? Were they not competent to bear witness? Had they any motive to attempt to palm a falsehood on men? Infidelity must answer *many* such questions as these before the apostles can be convicted of imposture.

{a} "unlearned" Mt 11:25 1co 1:27 {*} "ignorant" or, "obscure"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 4 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *They could say nothing*, etc. The presence of the man that was healed was an unanswerable fact in proof of the truth of what the apostles alleged. The miracle was so public, clear, and decisive; the man that was healed was so well known, that there was no evasion or subterfuge by which they could escape the conclusion to which the apostles were conducting them. It evinced no little gratitude in the man that was healed that he was present on this occasion, and showed that he was deeply interested in what befell his benefactors. The miracles of Jesus and his apostles were such that they could not be denied; and hence the Jews did not *attempt* to deny that they wrought them. Comp. Mt 12:24 Joh 11:45,46; Ac 19:36.

{+} "healed" or "cured" {b} "say nothing" Ac 19:36

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 4 - Verse 15

Verses 15-18. *What shall we do to these men*? The *object* which they had in view was evidently to prevent their preaching. The miracle was wrought; and was believed by the people to have been wrought. This they could not expect to be able successfully to deny. Their only object, therefore, was to prevent the apostles from making the use which they saw they would, to convince the people that Jesus was the Messiah. The question therefore was, in what way they should *prevent* this; whether by putting them to death, by imprisoning them, or by scourging them; or whether by simply exerting their *authority* and forbidding them. From the former they were deterred, doubtless, by fear of the multitude. And they therefore adopted the latter, and seemed to suppose that the mere exertion of their authority would be sufficient to deter them from this in future.

The council. Greek, The *sanhedrim*. This body was composed of seventy-one or seventy-two persons, and was entrusted with the principal affairs of the nation. It was a body of vast influence and power; and hence they supposed that their command might be sufficient to restrain ignorant Galileans from speaking. Before this same body, and probably the same men, our Saviour was arraigned; and by them condemned before he was delivered to the Roman governor, Mt 26:59, etc. And before this same body, and in the presence of the same men, Peter had just before denied his Lord, Mt 26:70, etc. The fact that the disciples had fled on a former occasion, and that Peter had denied his Saviour, may have operated to induce them to believe that they would be terrified by their threats, and deterred from preaching publicly in the name of Jesus.

A notable miracle. A known, undeniable miracle.

That it spread. That the knowledge of it may not spread among them any further.

Let us straitly threaten them. Greek, *Let us threaten them with a threat*. This is a *Hebraism*, expressing *intensity*, *certainty*, etc. The *threat* was a *command* Ac 4:18 not to teach, implying their displeasure if they did do it. This threat, however, was not effectual. On the next occasion, which occurred soon after, Ac 5:40, they added *beating* to their threats, in order to deter them from preaching in the name of Jesus.

{*} "out of the council" "Withdraw from"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 4 - Verse 16

Verse 16. No Barnes text on this verse.

{a} "What shall we do to" Joh 11:47 {+} "notable miracle" "Signal"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 4 - Verse 17

Verse 17. No Barnes text on this verse.

{&} "straitly threaten" "Strictly" {b} "they speak henceforth"

Ac 5:40

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 4 - Verse 18

Verse 18. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 4 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Whether it be right*, etc. The apostles abated nothing of their boldness when threatened. They openly appealed to their judges whether their command could be right. And in doing this, they expressed their full conviction of the truth of what they had said, and their deliberate purpose not to regard their command, but still to proclaim to the people the truth that Jesus was the Messiah.

In the sight of God. That is, whether God will judge this to be right. The grand question was, how God would regard it. If *he* disapproved it, it was wrong. It was not merely a question pertaining to their reputation, safety, or life; but it was a question of conscience before God. And we have here a striking instance of the principle on which Christians act. It is to lay their safety, reputation, and life out of view, and to bring everything to this test, WHETHER IT WILL PLEASE GOD. If it will, it is right; if it will not, it is wrong.

To hearken. To *hear* and to *hearken* are often used to denote *to obey*, Joh 5:24 8:47, etc.

Judge ye. This was an appeal to them directly as judges, and as men. And it may be presumed that it was an appeal which they could not resist. The sanhedrim acknowledged itself to have been appointed by God; and to have no authority which was not derived from his appointment. Of course God could modify, supersede, or repeal their authority; and the abstract principle, that it was better to obey God than man, they could not call in question. The only inquiry was, whether they had evidence that God had issued any command in the case. Of that the apostles were satisfied; and that the rulers could not deny. It may be remarked, that this is one of the first and most bold appeals on record in favour of the right of private judgment and the liberty of conscience. That liberty was supposed in all the Jewish religion. It was admitted that the authority of God in all matters was superior to that of man. And the same spirit manifested itself thus early in the Christian church against all dominion over the conscience, and in favour of the right to follow the dictates of the conscience and the will of God. As a mere historical fact, therefore, it is interesting to contemplate this; and still more interesting in its important bearings on human liberty and human happiness. The doctrine is still more explicitly stated in Ac 5:29—"We ought to obey God rather than men."

{c} "hearken unto you more" Ac 5:29

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 4 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *For*, etc. This is given as a reason why they should obey God rather than man. They had had so clear evidence that God had sent the Messiah, and they had received so direct and solemn a command (Mr 16:15) to preach the gospel, that they could not be restrained. There was a necessity laid on them to preach the gospel. See 1Co 9:16; comp. Jer 20:9 Ac 18:5; Job 32:18,19; Ps 39:1-3.

It has already been remarked, that these two verses contain an important *principle* in favour of religious *liberty* —the liberty of conscience, and of private judgment. They contain the *great principle* of the Christian, and of the *Protestant religion*, that the responsibility of men for their religious opinions is direct to God, and that other men have no power of control. The opposite of this is tyranny and oppression. It may be proper, in addition, to present some further remarks, involved in the principle here stated.

(1.) Religion, from the commencement, has been favourable to *liberty*. There was no principle more sacred among the Jews, than that they were to be independent of other nations. Perhaps no people have ever been so restive under a foreign yoke, so prone to rebel, and so difficult to be broken down by oppression and by arms, as were the Jews. So true was this, that it appeared to other nations to be mere obstinacy. They were often subdued, but they rose against their oppressors, and threw off the yoke. No people has been found who were so difficult to be reduced to slavery. It is well known that the Romans were accustomed to subject the captives taken in war to perpetual servitude; and *commonly* the spirit of the captive was broken, and he remained quietly in bondage. But not so the Jew. Nothing ever tamed his spirit. No bribes, or threats, or chains could induce him to violate the laws of his religion. Even in captivity, we are told that the Jewish slaves at Rome *would* observe the Sabbath, would keep the feasts of their nation, and never would conform to the customs of an idolatrous people. To the Romans this appeared to be mere obstinacy. But it was the genius of their religion. The right of liberty of thought was one which they would not surrender. The spirit of the patriarchs was favourable to liberty, and implied responsibility only to God. Familiarity with the sacred books had taught them these lessons; and neither time nor distance could obliterate them. In the time of Christ, the great mass of the nation were evidently *opposed* to the tax paid to the Roman nation, and sighed under this burden, until they rose and attempted to assert their rights; and their city, and temple, and land were sacrificed, rather than *yield* this great principle.

(2.) This same principle was evinced by the apostles and by the early Christians. With this doctrine fresh upon their hearts, they went forth to other lands. They maintained it at the expense of their blood; and thousands fell as martyrs in the cause of liberty and of private judgment in religion. No men evermore firmly defended liberty than the early martyrs; and each one that died, died in defence of a principle which is now the acknowledged right of all men.

(3.) The designs of tyranny and superstition have been to destroy this principle. This was the aim of the sanhedrim; and yet, when Peter and John appealed to their *consciences*, they did not dare to avow their purpose. This has been the aim of all tyrants; and this the effect of all superstition. Hence the church of Rome has taken away the Scriptures from the people; and has thus furnished incontestable evidence that in its view the Bible is favourable to liberty. For centuries tyranny reigned in one black night over Europe; nor was the darkness dispelled until the Bible, that taught men the principles of freedom, was restored to them.

(4.) The effect of the principle avowed by the apostles has been uniform. Luther began the Reformation by finding in a monastery a copy of the Bible, when himself more than twenty years of age—a book which till that time he had never seen. The effect on the liberties of Europe was immediately seen. Hume admitted, that whatever liberty England possessed was to be traced to the Puritans. Our own land is a striking instance of the effect of this great principle, and of its influence on the rights of man. And just in proportion as the New Testament is spread abroad will men seek for freedom, and break the chains of oppression. The best way to promote universal liberty is to

spread the Bible to the ends of the earth. There is not a precept in it that is not favourable to freedom. It tends to enlarge and liberalize the mind; to teach men their rights; to put an end to *ignorance*, the universal stronghold of superstition and tyranny; and to diffuse the love of justice, truth and order. It shows man that he is responsible to God, and that no one has a right to ordain anything which contravenes the liberty of his fellow.

If it be asked here what the principle is, I answer,

(1.) that men have a right to their private judgment in matters of religion, subject only to God. The *only* restraint which, it is now settled, can be imposed on this is, that no man has a right, under pretence of conscience, to injure or molest his fellow-men, or to disturb the peace and harmony of society.

(2.) No magistrate, church, council, or parent has a right to *impose* a creed on others, and to demand subscription to it by mere authority.

(3.) No magistrate, church, or parent has a right to *control* the free exercise of private judgment in this case. The power of a *parent* is to teach, advise, and entreat. The duty of a child is to listen with respect, to examine with candour, to pray over the subject, and to be deliberate and calm, not rash, hasty, impetuous, and self-willed. But when the child is thus convinced that his duty to God requires a particular course, then here is a *higher* obligation than any earthly law and he must obey God rather than man, even a father or a mother, Mt 10:37,38.

(4.) Every man is responsible to God for his opinions and his conduct. Man may not control him, but God may and will. The great question before every man is, *What is right in the sight of God*? It is not what is expedient, or safe, or pleasurable, or honourable among men; but what is right in the sight of God. Neither in their opinions nor their conduct are men free from responsibility. From this whole subject we see the duty of spreading the Bible. If we love liberty; if we hate tyranny and superstition; if we wish to extend the knowledge of the rights of man, and break every arm of oppression, let us spread far and wide the Book of God, and place in every palace and every cottage on the globe a copy of the sacred Scriptures.

{d} "For we can not but speak" Jer 20:9 {e} "which we have seen and heard" Ac 22:15 1Jo 1:1,3

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 4 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Finding nothing*, etc. That is, not being able to devise any way, of punishing them, without exciting a tumult among the people, and endangering their own authority. The sanhedrim was frequently influenced by this fear; and it shows that their own authority was much dependent on the caprice of the multitude. Comp. Mt 21:26.

All men. That is, the great mass or body of the people.

Glorified God. *Praised* God for the miracle. This implies,

(1.) that they believed that the miracle was genuine.

(2.) That they were grateful to God for so signal a mercy in conferring health and comfort on a man who had been long afflicted. We may add further, that here is the highest evidence of the reality of the miracle. Even the sanhedrim, with all their prejudice and opposition, did not call it in question. And the common people, who had doubtless been acquainted with this man for years,

were convinced that it was real. It would have been impossible to *impose* on keen-sighted and jealous adversaries in this manner, if this had been an imposture.

{a} "because of the people" Mt 21:25 Ac 5:26

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 4 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *For the man*, etc. The *age* of the man is mentioned to show the certainty and greatness of the miracle. If it had been a man who had been lame but a few years, or if it had been a child or a very young man, the case would not have been so remarkable. But, after a continuance of forty years, all hope of healing him by any ordinary means must have been abandoned; and all pretence that this was jugglery or deception must have been absurd.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 4 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Their own company*. They joined the other apostles and Christians, Ac 2:44,45.

And reported, etc. It doubtless became a subject of interesting inquiry, what they should do in this case. They had been *threatened* by the highest authority of the nation, and *commanded* not to preach again in the name of Jesus. Whether they should obey them and be silent, or whether they should leave Jerusalem and preach elsewhere, could not but be an interesting subject of inquiry; and they very properly sought the counsel of their brethren, and looked to God for direction; an example which all should follow who are exposed to persecution, or who are in any perplexity about the path of duty.

{b} "went to their own company" Ac 2:44-46

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 4 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *They lifted up their voice*. To lift up the voice, among the Hebrews, was a phrase denoting either an address to the people, Jud 9:7, or a phrase expressive of weeping, Ge 29:11; Jud 2:4 Ru 1:9; 1Sa 24:16, or was expressive of *prayer*. To lift up the voice *to God means*, simply, they *prayed* to him.

With one accord. Unitedly. Properly with one mind, or purpose. **See Barnes "Ac 1:14"**.

The *union* of the early Christians is often noticed in the Acts of the Apostles. Thus far there was no jar or dissension in their society, and everything has the appearance of the most entire affection and confidence.

Lord. Greek, *despota*. From this word is derived the word *despot*.

This is not the usual word employed by which to address God. The word commonly translated *Lord* is *Kuriov*. The word here used denotes one who rules over others, and was applied to the highest magistrate or officer. It denotes authority, power, *absoluteness* in ruling. It is a word denoting

more authority in *ruling* than the other. That more commonly denotes a *property* in a thing; this denotes absolute rule. It is applied *to God*, in Lu 2:29 Re 6:10; Jude 1:4

to Jesus Christ, 2Pe 2:1; to masters, 1Ti 6:1 Tit 2:9; 1Pe 2:18; *to husbands*, 1Pe 3:6; and *to a possessor or owner*, 2Ti 2:21.

Thou art *God*. This ascription of praise seems to have been designed to denote *their* sense of his *power* to deliver them; and his *right* to dispose of them. They were employed in his service; they were encompassed with dangers; and they acknowledged him as *their* God, who had made all things, and who had an entire right to direct, and to dispose of them for his own glory, in times of danger and perplexity we should remember that God has a right to do with us as he pleases; and we should go cheerfully and commit ourselves into his hands.

Which hast made, etc. Ge 1. This passage is taken directly from Ps 146:6; comp. Re 14:7.

{c} "Lord, thou art God" 2Ki 19:15

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 4 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Who by the mouth*, etc. Ps 2:1,2. This is a strong, solemn testimony to the inspiration of David. It is a declaration of the apostles made in solemn prayer, that *God* spake himself by the mouth of David. This is the *second* part of their prayer. In the first, they acknowledge the right of God to rule; in this, they appeal to a prophecy. They plead that this was a thing foretold; and as *God* had foreseen it and foretold it, they appealed to him to protect them. The times of tumult and opposition which had been foreseen, as about to attend the introduction of the gospel, had now come. They inferred, therefore, that Jesus was the Messiah; and as God had designed to establish his kingdom, they appealed to him to aid and protect them in this great work. This passage is taken from Ps 2:1,2, and is an exact quotation from the Septuagint. This proves that the Psalm had reference to *the Messiah*. Thus it was manifestly understood by the Jews; and the authority of the apostles settles the question. The Psalm was composed by David; on what occasion is not known; nor is it material to our present purpose. It has been a matter of inquiry whether it referred to the Messiah *primarily*, or only in a *secondary* sense. Grotius supposes that it was composed by David when exposed to the hostility of the Assyrians, the Moabites, Philistines, Amalekites, etc.; and that, in the midst of his dangers, he sought consolation in the *purpose* of God to establish him and his kingdom. But the more probable opinion is, that it referred *directly* and *solely* to the Messiah.

Why did the heathen. The nations which were not Jews. This refers, doubtless, to the opposition which would be made to the spread of Christianity; and not merely to the opposition made to the Messiah himself, and to the act of putting him to death.

Rage. This word refers to the excitement and tumult of a *multitude*; not a settled *plan*, but rather the heated and disorderly conduct of a *mob*. It means, that the progress of the gospel would encounter tumultuous opposition; and that the excited nations would rush violently to put it down and destroy it.

And the people. The expression, "the people," does not refer to a class of men different essentially from the heathen. The "heathen"— Hebrew and Greek, "*the nations*" —refer to men as *organized* into communities; the expression, *the people*, is used to denote the same persons without respect to their being so organized. The Hebrews were in the habit, in their poetry, of expressing the same

idea essentially in parallel members of a sentence; or the last member of a sentence or verse expressed the same idea, with some slight variation, as the former. (See Lowth on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews.)

Imagine. The word *imagine* does not express quite the force of the original. The Hebrew and the Greek both convey the idea of *meditating, thinking, purposing*. It means that they employed *thought, plan, purpose*, in opposing the Messiah.

Vain things. The word here used *kena* is a literal translation of the Hebrew—

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—and means usually *empty*, as a vessel which is not filled; then *useless*, or that which amounts to nothing, etc. Here it means that they devised a plan which *turned out* to be vain, or ineffectual. They attempted an opposition to the Messiah which could not succeed. God would establish his kingdom in spite of their plans to oppose it. *Their* efforts were vain, because they were not strong enough to oppose God; because he had purposed to establish the kingdom of his Son; and he could overrule even their opposition to advance his cause.

{d} "Why did the heathen rage" Ps 2:1,2

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 4 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *The kings of the earth*. The Psalmist specifies more particularly that *kings* and *rulers* would be opposed to the Messiah. This had occurred already by the opposition made to the Messiah by the rulers of the Jewish people; and it would be still more evinced by princes and kings, as the gospel should spread among the nations.

Stood up. The word here used *paristhmi* commonly means, to present one's self, or to stand forth, for the purpose of aiding, counselling, etc. But here it means that they *rose*, or *presented themselves*, to evince their opposition. They stood opposed to the Messiah, and offered resistance to him.

The rulers. This is another instance of the Hebrew *parallelism*. The word does not denote another class of men from kings, but expresses the same idea in another form, or in a more general manner, meaning that all classes of persons in authority would be opposed to the gospel.

Were gathered together. Hebrew, *consulted together*; were *united* in a consultation. The Greek implies that they were *assembled* for the purpose of consultation.

Against the Lord. In the Hebrew, "against *Jehovah*." This is the peculiar name which is given in the Scriptures to God. They rose against his plan of appointing a Messiah, and against the Messiah whom he had chosen.

Against his Christ. Hebrew, against his *Messiah*, or his Anointed.

See Barnes "Mt 1;1".

This is one of the places where the word *Messiah* is used in the Old Testament. The word occurs in about forty places, and is commonly translated *his anointed*, and is applied to kings. The *direct* reference of the word to the Messiah in the Old Testament is not frequent. This passage implies that opposition to the *Messiah* is opposition to *Jehovah*. And this is uniformly supposed in the sacred Scriptures. He that is opposed to Christ is opposed to God. He that neglects him neglects

God. He that despises him despises God, Mt 10:40 18:5; Joh 12:44,45; Lu 10:16, "He that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me." The reasons of this are,

(1.) that the Messiah is "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his" subsistence, Heb 1:3.

(2.) He is equal with the Father, possessing the same attributes, and the same power, Joh 1:1 Php 2:6, etc. To despise him, therefore, is to despise God.

(3.) He is *appointed* by God to this great work of saving men. To despise him, or to oppose him, is to despise and oppose him who appointed him to this work, to contemn his counsels, and to set him at nought.

(4.) His work is dear to God. It has engaged his thoughts. It has been approved by him. His mission has been confirmed by the miraculous power of the Father, and by every possible manifestation of his approbation and love. To oppose the Messiah is, therefore, to oppose that which is dear to the heart of God, and which has long been the object of his tender solicitude. It follows from this, that they who neglect the Christian religion are exposing themselves to the sore displeasure of God, and endangering their everlasting interests. No man is safe who opposes God; and no man can have evidence that God will approve him, who does not embrace the Messiah whom he has appointed to redeem the world.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 4 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *For of a truth*. Truly; in reality.

Thy holy child Jesus. The word *child* is commonly applied to infants, or to sons and daughters in very early life. The word which is used here *paiv* is different from that which is commonly applied to the Lord Jesus, *uiov*. The latter expresses sonship, without respect to age. The word which is here used also sometimes expresses sonship without any regard to age; and the word son would have been a more happy translation. Thus the same word is translated in Ac 3:13,26. In Ac 20:12, it is translated "young man."

Both Herod, etc. Lu 23:1-12.

With the Gentiles. The Romans, to whom he was delivered to be crucified.

The people of Israel. The Jews, who were excited to this by the rulers, Mt 27:20.

{a} "both Herod, and Pontus Pilate" Lu 23:1-8 {+} "together" "combined"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 4 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *For to do*, etc. **See Barnes "Ac 2:23"**; **See Barnes "**Ac 3:18.

The facts which are brought to view in these verses are among the most remarkable on record. They are briefly these:

(1.) That the Jewish rulers were opposed to the Messiah, and slew him.

(2.) That the very people to whom he came, and for whose benefit he laboured, joined in the opposition, so that it became the act of a united people.

(3.) That the Romans who were there, as a sort of representation of all pagan nations, were easily prevailed on to join in the persecution, and to become the executioners.

(4.) That thus opposite factions, and dissimilar and prejudiced people, became united in opposing the Messiah.

(5.) That the rulers of the Roman people, the emperors, and statesmen, and philosophers, and the rulers of other nations, united to oppose the gospel, and brought all the power of persecution to stay its progress.

(6.) That the *people* of the empire, the *mass* of men, were easily prevailed upon to join in the persecution, and endeavour to arrest its progress. And,

(7.) that the gospel has encountered similar difficulties and opposition wherever it has been faithfully presented to the attention of men. It has become a very serious question *why* this has been; or on what pretence this opposition has been vindicated; or how it can be accounted for. A question which it is of as much importance for the infidel as for the Christian to settle. We know that accusations of the corrupt lives of the early Christians were freely circulated, and the most gross accounts given of their scandalous conduct were propagated by those who chose to persecute them. (See Lardher's Credibility.) But such accounts are not now believed; and it is not certain that they were *ever* seriously believed by the rulers of the pagan people. It is certain that it was not on *this* account that the first opposition arose to Christ and his religion.

It is not proper here to enter into an examination of the causes of this opposition. We may state the outlines, however, in few words.

(1.) The Jewish *rulers* were mortified, humbled, and moved with envy, that one so poor and despised should claim to be the Messiah. They had expected a different monarch; and all their prejudices rose at once against his claims to this high office, Mt 27:18 Mr 15:10.

(2.) The common people, disposed extensively to acknowledge his claims, were urged on by the enraged and vindictive priests to demand his death, Mt 27:20.

(3.) Pilate was pressed on against his will by the impetuous and enraged multitude to deliver one whom he regarded as innocent.

(4.) The Christian religion in its advances struck at once at the whole fabric of superstition in the Roman empire, and throughout the world. It did not, like other religions, ask a place amidst the religions already existing. It was *exclusive* in its claims. It denounced *all* other systems as idolatry or superstition, and sought to overthrow them. Those religions were interwoven With all the habits of the people; they were connected with all the departments of the state; they gave occupation to a vast number of priests and other officers, who obtained their livelihood by the existing superstitions, and who brought, of course, all the supposed sacredness of their character to support them. A religion which attempted to overthrow the whole fabric, therefore, at once excited all their malice. The monarchs, whose thrones were based on the existing state of things; and the people, who venerated the religion of their ancestors, would be opposed to the new system.

(5.) Christianity was despised. It was regarded as one form of the superstition of the Jews. And there was no people who were regarded with so much contempt by all other nations as the Jews. The writings of the Romans, on this point, are full proof.

(6.) The new religion was opposed to all the *crimes* of the world. It began its career in a time of eminent wickedness. It plunged at once into the midst of this wickedness; sought the great cities where crimes and pollutions were condensed; and boldly reproved every form of prevailing impiety. At Athens, at Corinth, at Ephesus, at Rome itself, it denounced the judgment of God against every

form of guilt. Whatever may be charged on the apostles, it will *not* be alleged that they were *timid* in denouncing the sins of the world. From all these causes, it is not wonderful that the early Christians were persecuted. If it be asked

(7.) why the same religion meets with opposition now in lands that are nominally Christian, it may be remarked,

(a) that the human heart is the same that it always was, opposed to truth and righteousness;

(b) that religion encounters still a host of sins that are opposed to it—pride, envy, malice, passion, the love of the world, and shame of acknowledging God;

(e) that there has always been a peculiar opposition in the human heart to receiving salvation as the gift of God through a crucified Redeemer; and

(d) that all the forms of vice, and lust, and profaneness that exist in the world, are opposed, and ever will be, to a religion of purity, and self-denial, and love.

On the whole, We may remark here,

(1.) that the fact that Christianity has been thus opposed, and has triumphed, is no small proof of its Divine origin. It has been *fairly tried*, and still survives and flourishes. It was well to put it to the test, and to bring to bear on it everything which had a tendency to crush it, and thus to furnish the highest proof that it is from God.

(2.) This religion cannot be destroyed; it will triumph; opposition to it is vain; it will make its way throughout the world; and the path of safety is *not* to oppose that which God is intending to establish in the earth. Sinners who stand opposed to the gospel should tremble and be afraid; for sooner or later they *must* fall before its triumphant advances. It is not SAFE to oppose that which has already been opposed by kings and rulers in every form, and yet has triumphed. It is not wise to risk one's eternal welfare on the question of successful opposition to that which God has, in so many ages and ways, pledged himself to protect; and when God has solemnly declared that the Son, the Messiah, whom he would set on his holy hill of Zion, should "break" his enemies "with a rod of iron," and "dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel," Ps 2:9.

{b} "For to do whatsoever" Ac 3:18 {c} "determined before to be done" Pr 21:30 Isa 46:10, 53:10

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 4 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Behold their threatenings*. So look upon them as to grant us deliverance. They did not purpose to abandon their undertaking; they resolved to persevere; and they expected that this purpose would involve them in danger. With this purpose they implored the protection of God; they asked that he would not suffer them to be deterred from speaking boldly; and they sought that constant additional proof might be granted of the presence and power of God to confirm the truth of their message.

And grant, etc. This is an instance of heroic boldness, and a determination to persevere in doing their duty to God. When we are assailed by those ill power, when we are persecuted and in danger, we should commit our way unto God, and seek his aid, that we may not be deterred from the path of duty.

{a} "boldness" Ac 4:13,21, 14:3 28:31; Eph 6:19

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 4 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *By stretching forth thine hand*, etc. The apostles not only desired boldness to speak, but they asked that God would continue to work miracles, and thus furnish to them, and to the people, evidence of the truth of what they delivered. They did not even ask that he would preserve their lives, or keep them from danger. They were intent on their work, and they confidently committed their way to God, making it their great object to promote the knowledge of the truth, and seeking that God would glorify himself by establishing his kingdom among men.

Signs and wonders. Miracles. **See Barnes "Ac 2:43"**.

{b} "Signs and wonders" Ac 2:43 5:12 {c} "child" "son"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 4 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *And when they had prayed*. The event which followed was regarded by them as an evidence that God heard their prayer.

The place was shaken. The word which is translated "was shaken," commonly denotes violent agitation, as the raging of the sea, the convulsion of an earthquake, or trees shaken by the wind, Mt 11:7 Ac 16:26; Heb 12:26.

The language here is fitted to express the idea of an earthquake. Whether the motion was confined to the house where they were, is not said. They probably regarded this as an answer to their prayer, or as an evidence that God would be with them,

(1.) because it was sudden and violent, and was not produced by any natural causes;

(2.) because it occurred *immediately*, while they were seeking Divine direction;

(3.) because it was an exhibition of great *power*, and was an evidence that God could protect them; and

(4) because a convulsion so great, sudden, and mighty, was fitted at that time to awe them with a proof of the presence and power of God. A similar instance of an answer to prayer by an earthquake is recorded in Ac 16:25,26. Comp. Ac 2:1,2. It may be added, that among the Jews an *earthquake* was very properly regarded as a striking and impressive proof of the presence of Jehovah, Isa 29:6 Ps 68:8, "The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God: even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel." See also the sublime description in Hab 3:6-11. Comp. Mt 27:54. Among the heathen, an earthquake was regarded as proof of the presence and favour of the deity. (See Virgil, AENid 3.89.)

They were all filled, etc. **See Barnes "Ac 2:4"**.

Their being filled with the Holy Ghost, here, rather denotes their being inspired with confidence or boldness, than being endowed with new powers, as in Ac 2:4.

{c} "had prayed" Ac 2:2,4, 16:26

{+} "Holy Ghost", "Spirit" {d} "they spake the word" Ac 4:29

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 4 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *And the multitude*. The number of believers at this tune had become large. In Ac 4:4, it is said that it was five thousand; and the number was constantly increasing.

One heart. This expression denotes tender union. They *felt* alike, or were attached to the same things, and this preserved them from jars and dissensions.

One soul. This phrase also denotes close and tender union. No expression could denote it more strikingly than to say of friends they have *one soul*. Plutarch cites an ancient verse in his life of Cato of Utica, with this very expression, "Two friends, one soul." (*Grotius*.) Thus Diogenes Laertius also (5 i. 11) says respecting Aristotle, that "being asked what was a friend, answered, that it was one soul dwelling in two bodies." (*Kuinoel*.) The Hebrews spake of two friends as being "one man." There can be no more striking demonstration of *union* and *love* than to say of more than five thousand suddenly drawn together, that they had one soul! And this union they evinced in every way possible; in their conduct, in their prayers, and in their property. How different would have been the aspect of the church, if the union had continued to the present time!

Neither said, etc. That is, they did not regard it as their own, but to be used for the benefit of the whole society. **See Barnes "Ac 2:44"**.

{e} "one heart" Ro 15:5,6; 2Co 13:11 Php 2:2; 1Pe 3:8

{f} "but they" Ac 1:8

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 4 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *And with great power*. See Ac 1:8. The word *power* here denotes *efficacy*; and means that they had *ability* given them to bear witness of the resurrection of the Saviour. It refers, therefore, rather to their preaching, than to their miracles.

Gave the apostles witness, etc. The apostles bore testimony to *the resurrection of the Lord Jesus*. This was the main point to be established. If it was proved that the Lord Jesus *came to life again* after having been put to death, it established all that he taught, and was a demonstration that he was sent from God. They exerted, therefore, all their powers to prove this; and their success was such as might have been expected. Multitudes were converted to the Christian faith.

And great grace, etc. The word *grace* means *favour*. **See Barnes "Joh 1:16"**.

And the expression here may mean either that the favour *of God* was remarkably shown to them, or that they had great favour in the sight of the people. It does not refer, as the expression now does commonly, to the internal blessings of religion on a man's own soul; to their personal advancement in the Christian *graces* of humility, etc.; but to the *favour* or success that attended their preaching. The meaning probably is, that the *favour* of the *people* towards them was great; or that great success attended their ministry among them. Thus the same word *grace* (Greek) is used in Ac 2:47. If this is its meaning, then here is an instance of the power of the testimony of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus to impress the minds of men. But this is not all, nor probably is it the main idea. It is that their union, their benevolence, their liberality in supplying the wants of the needy, was a means of opening the hearts of the people, and of winning them to the Saviour. If we wish to incline others to our opinions, or to bring them to be Christians, nothing is better adapted

to it than to show them kindness, and even to minister to their temporal wants. Benevolence towards them softens the heart, and inclines them to listen to us. It disarms their prejudices, and disposes them to the exercise of the mild and amiable feelings of religion. Hence our Saviour was engaged in healing the diseases, and supplying the wants of the people. He drew around him the poor, the needy, and the diseased, and supplied their necessities, and *thus* prepared them to receive his message of truth. Thus God is love, and is constantly doing good, that his *goodness* may lead men to repentance, Ro 2:4. And hence no persons have better opportunities to spread the true sentiments of religion, or are clothed with higher responsibilities, than those who have it in their power to do good; or than those who are habitually engaged in bestowing favours. Thus physicians have access to the hearts of men which other persons have not. Thus *parents* have an easy access to the minds of children, for they are constantly doing them good. And thus Sunday-school teachers, whose whole work is a work of benevolence, have direct and most efficient access to the hearts of the children committed to their care.

{g} "power" Ac 1:8 {h} "witness of the resurrection" Lu 1:48,49; Ac 1:22

{i} "great grace" Joh 1:16

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 4 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *That lacked*. That was in want; or whose wants were not supplied by the others.

As many as, etc. The word used here is employed in a large, indefinite sense; but it would be improper to press it so as to suppose that every individual that became a Christian sold at once all his property. The sense doubtless is, that this was done *when it was necessary*; they parted with whatever property was needful to supply the wants of their poor brethren. That it was by no means considered a matter of *obligation*, or enjoined by the apostles, is apparent from the case of *Ananias*, Ac 5:4. The fact that *Joses* is particularly mentioned, Ac 4:36, shows that it was by no means a universal practice thus to part with all their possessions. He was *one* instance in which it was done. Perhaps there were many other similar instances; but all that the passage requires us to believe is, that they parted with whatever was *needful* to supply the wants of the poor. This was an eminent and instructive instance of Christian liberality, and of the power of the gospel in overcoming one of the strongest passions that ever exist in the human bosom—the love of money. Many of the early Christians were poor. They were collected from the lower orders of the people. But *all* were not so. Some of them, it seems, were men of affluence. The effect of religion was to bring them all, in regard to feeling at least, on a level. They felt that they were members of one family; belonging to the same Redeemer; and they therefore imparted their property cheerfully to their brethren. Besides this, they were about to go to other lands to preach the gospel. They were to leave their native country; and they cheerfully parted with their lands, that they might go and proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ. **See Barnes "Ac 2:44"**.

{*} "lacked" "wanted"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 4 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *And laid them down*, etc. That is, they committed the money received for their property to the disposal of the apostles, to distribute it as was necessary among the poor. This soon became a burdensome and inconvenient office, and they therefore appointed men who had especial charge of it, Ac 6:1,2, etc.

{a} "laid them down" Ac 4:37 {b} "distribution" Ac 2:45 6:1

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 4 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *And Joses*. Many manuscripts, instead of *Joses*, here read *Joseph*. The reasons why this individual is selected and specified particularly were, doubtless, because he was a foreigner; because it was a remarkable instance of liberality; and because he subsequently distinguished himself in the work of the ministry. He gave himself, his property, his all, to the service of the Lord Jesus, and went forth to the self-denying labours of the gospel. He is elsewhere mentioned with honour in the New Testament, Ac 11:24,30; and usually as the companion of the apostle Paul. The occasion on which he became connected with Paul in the ministry was, when he himself was sent forth by the church at Jerusalem to Antioch. There, it seems, he heard of the fame of Paul, and went to Tarsus to seek him, and brought him with him to Antioch, Ac 11:22-26. Before this, he had been acquainted with him, and had introduced him to the other apostles at a time when they were afraid of Paul, and unwilling to acknowledge him as an apostle, Ac 9:26,27. At Antioch, Barnabas was led into dissimulation by Peter in regard to the Gentiles, and was reproved by his friend and companion Paul, Ga 2:13. He and Paul continued to travel in fellowship until a dispute arose at Antioch about Mark; and they separated, Paul going with Silas through Syria and Cilicia, and Barnabas with Mark sailing for his native place, Cyprus, Ac 15:35-41. See the following places for particulars of his history: Ac 11:22,25,30 12:25; Ac 13:1,2,50 14:12 15:12 1Co 9:6 Ga 2:1,9.

Who by the apostles was surnamed, etc. This name was doubtless given by the apostles. The practice of giving surnames, as expressive of character, was not uncommon. Thus Simon was called Peter, or Cephas, Joh 1:42; and thus James and John were surnamed Boanerges, Mr 3:17.

Barnabas, which is, etc. This word properly denotes *the son of prophecy*. It is compounded of two Syriac words, the one meaning *son*, and the other *prophecy*. The Greek word which is used to interpret this, *paraklhsewv*, translated *consolation*, means properly also, exhortation, entreaty, petition, or advocacy. It also means *consolation*, or *solace*; and from *this* meaning the interpretation has been given to the word *Barnabas*, but with evident impropriety. It does not appear that the name was bestowed on account of this; though it is probable that he possessed it in an eminent degree; but on account of his talent for *speaking*, or *exhorting* the people to holiness, and his success in preaching. Comp. Ac 11:23,24.

A Levite. One of the descendants of Levi, employed in the lower services of the temple. The whole tribe of *Levi* was set apart to the service of religion. It was divided into Priests and Levites. The three sons of Levi were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. Of the family of *Kohath*. Aaron was descended, who was the first high priest, His eldest son succeeded him, and the remainder of his sons were *priests*.

All the others of the tribe of Levi were called *Levites*, and were employed in the work of the temple, in assisting the priests in performing sacred music, etc., Nu 3; De 12:18,19, 18:6-8; 1Ch 23:24.

Of the country of Cyprus. Cyprus is the largest island in the Mediterranean; an island extremely fertile, abounding in wine, honey, oil, wool, etc. It is mentioned in Ac 13:4 15:39. The island is near to Cilicia, and is not far from the Jewish coast. It is mentioned by Dion Cassius, (lib. 68, 69,) that the Jews were very numerous in that island.—*Clark*.

Barnabas afterwards became, with Paul, a distinguished preacher to the Gentiles. It is worthy of remark, that *both* were born in heathen countries, though by descent Jews; and as they were trained in heathen lands, they were better fitted for their peculiar work. The case of Barnabas is that of a man who had property, who entered the ministry, and gave up all for the Lord Jesus. The great mass of ministers, like very many who have been distinguished in other professions, have been taken from the poor, and from humble ranks in life. But all have not been. Many have been wealthy, and have devoted all to Christ; and in regard to others, it is to be remarked, that a very considerable proportion of them could have gained more wealth in some other profession than they do in the ministry. The ministry is a work of self-denial; and none should enter it who are not prepared to devote all to the service of the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 4 - Verse 37

Verse 37. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 1

CHAPTER 5

Verse 1. *But a certain man*. In the previous chapter, the historian had given an account of the eminent liberality and sincerity of the mass of early Christians, in being willing to give up their property to provide for the poor, and had mentioned the case of Barnabas as worthy of special attention. In this chapter he proceeds to mention a case, quite as striking, of insincerity and hypocrisy, and of the just judgment of God on those who were guilty of it. The case is a remarkable instance of the nature of *hypocrisy*, and goes to illustrate the art and cunning of the enemy of souls in attempting to corrupt the church, and to pervert the religion of the gospel. Hypocrisy consists in an attempt to *imitate* the people of God, or to assume the *appearance* of religion, in whatever form it may be manifested. In this case religion had been manifested by great self-denial and benevolence. The hypocrisy of Ananias consisted in *attempting* to imitate this appearance, and to impose in this way on the early Christians and on God.

With Sapphira his wife. With her concurrence, or consent. It was a matter of *agreement* between them, Ac 5:2,9.

Sold a possession. The word here used *kthma* does not indicate whether this was *land* or some other property. In Ac 5:3, however, we learn that it was *land* that was sold; and the word here translated *possession*, is translated in the Syriac, Arabic, and the Latin Vulgate, *land*. The *pretence* for which this was sold was doubtless to have the appearance of religion. That it was sold could be easily known by the Christian society, but it might not be so easily known for how much it was sold. Hence the attempt to impose on the apostles. It is clear that they were not under obligation to sell their property. But *having* sold it for the purposes of religion, it became their duty, if they professed to devote the avails of it to God, to do it entirely, and without any reservation.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And kept back*. The word here used means, properly, *to separate, to part*; and then it means to *separate surreptitiously or clandestinely for our own use* a part of public property, as taxes, etc. It is used ut three times in the New Testament, Ac 5:3 Tit 2:10, where it is rendered *purloining*. Here it means that they *secretly* kept back a part, while *professedly* devoting all to God.

His wife also being privy to it. His wife *knowing it*, and evidently concurring in it.

And laid it *at the apostles' feet*. This was evidently an act *professedly* of devoting all to God. Comp. Ac 4:37, 5:8,9.

That this was his *profession*, or *pretence*, is further implied in the fact that Peter charges him with having *lied* unto God, Ac 5:3,4.

{a} "brought a certain part" Ac 4:34,37

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *But Peter said*, etc. Peter could have known this only by revelation. It was the manifest design of Ananias to deceive; nor was there any way of detecting him but by its being revealed to him by the Spirit of God. As it was an instance of enormous wickedness, and as it was very important to detect and punish the crime, it was made known to Peter directly by God.

Why hath Satan. Great deeds of wickedness in the Scripture are traced to the influence and temptation of Satan. Compare Lu 22:3; Joh 13:27. Especially is Satan called the *father of lies*, Joh 8:44,55. Comp. Ge 3:1-5. As this was an act of *falsehood*, or an attempt to deceive, it is with great propriety traced to the influence of Satan. The sin of Ananias consisted in his *yielding* to the temptation. Nowhere in the Bible are men supposed to be free from guilt, from the fact that they have been *tempted* to commit it. God requires them *to resist* temptation; and if they yield to it, they must be punished.

Filled thine heart. A man's *heart or mind is full* of a thing when he is *intent on it*; when he is strongly impelled to it; or when he is fully occupied with it. The expression here means, that he was *strongly impelled or excited* by Satan to this crime.

To lie to. To attempt to deceive. The deception which he meant to practise was to keep back a *part* of the price, while he *pretended* to bring the whole of it; thus *tempting* God, and supposing that he could not detect the fraud.

The Holy Ghost. *to pneuma to agion*. The main inquiry here is, whether the apostle Peter intended to designate in this place the *Third Person* of the Trinity; or whether he meant to speak of God as *God*, without any reference to the distinction of persons; or to the *Divine influence* which inspired the apostles, without reference to the peculiar offices which are commonly ascribed to the Holy Spirit. Or, in other words, is there a *distinction* here recognised between the *Father* and the *Holy Spirit*? That there *is* will be apparent from the following considerations:

(1.) If no such distinction is *intended*, it is remarkable that Peter did not use the usual and customary *name* of God. It does not appear why he guarded it so carefully as to denote that this offence was committed against the *Holy Ghost*, and the *Spirit of the Lord*, Ac 5:9.

(2.) The name here used is the one employed in the Scriptures to designate the Third Person of the Trinity, as implying a distinction from the Father. See Mt 3:16 1:18,20 3:11, 12:32 28:19 Mr 1:8; Mr 3:29 12:36; Lu 12:10 Joh 14:26, 7:39 20:22; Ac 4:8 5:32, etc.

(3.) Peter intended, doubtless, to designate an offence as committed particularly against the Person, or Influence, by which he and the other apostles were inspired. Ananias supposed that he could escape detection: and the offence was one, therefore, against the Inspirer of the apostles. Yet that was the Holy Ghost as *distinct from the Father*. See Joh 14:16,17,26 15:26 16:7-11 20:22.

Comp. Ac 5:32. The offence, therefore, beeing against Him who was sent by the Father, who was appointed to a particular work, clearly supposes that the Holy Spirit is distinct from the Father.

(4.) A farther incidental proof of this may be found in the fact that the sin here committed was one of peculiar magnitude; so great as to be deemed worthy of the immediate and signal vengeance of God. Yet the sin against the Holy Ghost is uniformly represented to be of this description. Comp. Mt 12:31,32; Mr 3:28,29.

As these sins evidently coincide in enormity, it is clear that the same class of sins is referred to in both places; or, in other words, the sin of Ananias was against the Third Person of the Trinity. Two remarks may be made here.

(1.) The Holy Ghost is a distinct Person from the Father and the Son; or, in other words, there is a distinction of some kind in the Divine Nature that may be denominated by the word *person*. This is clear from the fact that sin is said to have been committed against him; a sin which it was supposed could not be detected. *Sin* cannot be committed against an *attribute* of God, or an *influence* from God. We cannot *lie unto* an attribute, or against wisdom, or power, or goodness; nor can we *lie unto an influence*, merely, of the Most High. Sin is committed against a *being*, not against an attribute; and as a sin is here charged on Ananias against the *Holy Ghost*, it follows that the Holy Ghost has a *personal* existence; or there is such a distinction in the Divine Essence as that it may be proper to *specify* a sin as committed particularly against him. In the same way sin may be represented as committed peculiarly against the *Father*, when his *name* is blasphemed; when his dominion is denied; when his mercy in sending his Son is called in question. Sin may be represented as committed against *the Son*, when his atonement is denied, his Divinity assailed, his character derided, or his invitations slighted. And thus sin may be represented as committed against *the Holy Ghost*, when his office of renewing the heart, or sanctifying the soul, is called in question, or when his work is ascribed to some malign or other influence. See Mr 3:22-30. And as sin against the Son

proves that he is in some sense distinct from *the Father*, so does sin against the Holy Ghost prove that in some sense he is distinct from the Father and the Son.

(2.) The Holy Ghost is Divine. This is proved, because he is represented here as being able to search the heart, and to detect insincerity and hypocrisy. Comp. Jer 17:10 1Ch 28:9; 1Co 2:10, "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God;" Re 2:23. And he is expressly called God. **See Barnes "Ac 5:4"**.

{b} "filled thine heart" Lu 22:3 {1} "to lie", "to deceive" {c} "to lie", Ac 5:9 {d} "keep back" Nu 30:2 De 23:21; Ec 5:4

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 4

Verse 9. *Whiles it remained*. As long as it remained unsold. This place proves that there was an *obligation* imposed on the disciples to *sell* their property. They who did it, did it voluntarily; and it does not appear that it was done by all, or expected to be done by all.

And after it was sold, etc. Even after the property was *sold*, and Ananias had the money, still there was no obligation on him to de- vote it in this way. He had the disposal of it still. The apostle mentions this to show him that his offence was peculiarly aggravated. He was not *compelled* to sell his property; and he had not even the poor pretence that he was obliged to dispose of it, and was *tempted* to withhold it for his own use. It was *all* his, and might have been retained if he had chosen.

Thou hast not lied unto men. Unto men *only*; or, it is not your *main* and *chief* offence that you have attempted to deceive men. It is true that Ananias had attempted to deceive the apostles, and it is true also that this was a crime; but still, the principal magnitude of the offence was that he had attempted to deceive *God*. So small was his crime as committed against men, that it was lost sight of by the apostles; and the great, crowning sin of attempting to deceive God was brought fully into view. Thus David also saw his sin as committed against *God* to be so enormous, that he lost sight of it as an offence to man, and said, "Against thee, *thee ONLY*, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight," Ps 51:4.

But unto God. It has been *particularly and eminently* against God. This is true, because

(1.) he had professedly *devoted* it to God. The act, therefore, had express and direct reference to him.

(2.) It was an attempt to deceive him. It implied the belief of Ananias that God would not detect the crime, or see the motives of the heart.

(3.) It is the prerogative of God to judge Of sincerity and hypocrisy; and this was a case, therefore, which came under his special notice. Comp. Ps 139:1-4. The word *God* here is evidently used in its plain and obvious sense, as denoting the *supreme Divinity*; and the use of the word here shows that the Holy Ghost is *Divine*; and the whole passage demonstrates, therefore, one of the important doctrines of the Christian religion, that the Holy Ghost is distinct from the Father and the Son, and yet is Divine.

{e} "unto God" Ps 139:4

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *An Ananias hearing these words*, etc. Seeing that his guilt was known; and being charged with the enormous crime of attempting to deceive God. he had not expected to be thus exposed; and it is clear that the exposure and the charge came upon him unexpectedly and terribly, like a bolt of thunder.

Fell down. Greek, Having fallen down.

Gave up the ghost. This is an unhappy translation. The original means simply, *he expired*, or *he died*. **See Barnes "Mt 27:50"**.

This remarkable fact may be accounted for in this way:

(1.) It is evidently to be regarded as a *judgment* of God for the sin of Ananias and his wife. It was not the act of Peter, but of God; and was clearly designed to show his abhorrence of this sin. **See Barnes "Ac 5:11"**.

(2.) Though it was the act of God, yet it does not follow that it was not in connexion with the usual laws by which he governs men, or that he did not make use of natural means to do it. The sin was one of great aggravation. It was suddenly and unexpectedly detected. The fact that it was known—the solemn charge that he had *lied unto God* —struck him with horror, His conscience would reprove him for the enormity of his crime, and overwhelm him at the memory of his act of wickedness. These circumstances may be sufficient to account for this remarkable event. It has occurred in other cases that the consciousness of crime, or the fact of being suddenly detected, has given such a shock to the frame that it has never recovered from it. The effect *commonly* is that the memory of guilt preys secretly and silently upon the frame, until, worn out with the want of rest and peace, it sinks exhausted into the grave. But there have not been wanting instances where the shock has been so great as to destroy the vital powers at once, and plunge the wretched man, like Ananias, into eternity. It is not at all improbable that the shock in the case of Ananias was so great as at once to take his life.

Great fear came, etc. Such a striking and awful judgment on insincerity and hypocrisy was fitted to excite awful emotions among the people. Sudden death always does it; but sudden death in immediate connexion with crime is fitted much more deeply to affect the mind.

{f} "these words" Ac 5:10,11 {*} "gave up the ghost" "died" {a} "great fear" Ps 64:9

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *And the young men*. The youth of the congregation; very probably young men who were in attendance as *servants*, or those whose business it was to attend on the congregation, and perform various offices when Christians celebrated their worship, (*Mosheim*.) The word used here sometimes denotes a servant. It is used also Ac 5:10, to denote *soldiers*, as they were commonly enlisted of the vigorous and young. The fact that they took up Ananias voluntarily, implies that they were accustomed to perform offices of servitude to the congregation.

Wound him up. It was the usual custom with the Jews to wind the body up in many folds of linen before it was buried; commonly also with spices, to preserve it from putrefaction. **See Barnes "Joh 11:44"**.

It may be asked why he was so soon buried; and especially *why* he was hurried away without giving information to his wife. In reply to this, it may be remarked,

(1.) that it does not appear from the narrative that it was known that Sapphira was privy to the transaction, or was near at hand, or even that he had a wife. Ananias came *himself* and offered the money; and the judgment fell at once on him.

(2.) It was customary among the ancient Persians to bury the body almost immediately after death, (*Jahn*;) and it seems probable that the Jews, when the body was not embalmed, imitated the custom. It would also appear that this was an ancient custom among the Jews. See Ge 23:19 25:9, 35:29 48:7; 1Ki 13:30.

Different nations differ in their customs in burying the dead; and there is no impropriety in committing a body soon after death to the tomb.

(3.) There might have been some danger of an excitement and tumult in regard to this scene, if the corpse had not soon been removed; and as no valuable purpose could be answered by delaying the burial, the body was decently committed to the dust.

{b} "wound him" Joh 19:40

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *And it was about the space*, etc. As Sapphira had been no less guilty than her husband, so it was ordered, in the Providence of God, that the same judgment should come upon both.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *For so much*. That is, for the sum which Ananias had presented. This was true, that this sum had been received for it; but it was also true that a larger sum had been received. It is as really a falsehood to deceive in this manner, as it would have been to have affirmed that they received much *more* than they actually did for the land. Falsehood consists in making an erroneous representation of a thing in any way for the purpose of deceiving. And *this* species is much more common than an open and bold lie, declaring what is in no sense true.

{+} "answered" "Said"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Agreed together*. Conspired, or laid a plan. From this, it seems that Sapphira was as guilty as her husband.

To tempt. To try; to endeavour to impose on, or to deceive; that is, to act as if the Spirit of the Lord could not detect the crime. They did this by trying to see whether the Spirit of God could detect hypocrisy.

At the door. Are near at hand. They had not yet returned. The dead were buried without the walls of cities; and this space of three hours, it seems, had elapsed before they returned from the burial.

Shall carry thee out. This passage shows that it was by Divine interposition or judgment that their lives were taken. The judgment was in immediate connexion with their crime, and was designed as an expression of the Divine displeasure.

If it be asked here, *why* Ananias and Sapphira were punished in this severe and awful manner, an answer may be found in the following considerations:

(1.) This was an atrocious crime; a deep and dreadful act of iniquity. It was committed knowingly, and without excuse, Ac 5:4. It was important that sudden and exemplary punishment should follow it, because the society of Christians was just then organized, and it was designed that it should be a *pure* society, and be regarded as a body of holy men. Much was gained by making this *impression* on the people, that sin could not be allowed in this new community, but would be detected and punished.

(2.) God has often, in a most solemn manner, showed his abhorrence of hypocrisy and insincerity. By awful declarations and fearful judgments he has declared his displeasure at it. In a particular manner no small part of the preaching of the Saviour was employed in detecting the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees, and denouncing heavy judgments on them. See Mt 23 throughout, for the most sublime and awful denunciation of hypocrisy anywhere to be found. Compare Mr 12:15; Lu 12:1 1Ti 4:2; Job 8:13 13:16, 15:34 20:5 36:13 Mt 7:5 Lu 11:44.

In the very beginning of the Christian church, therefore, it was important, by a decided and awful act, to *impress* upon the church and the world the danger and guilt of hypocrisy. Well did the Saviour know that it would be one of the most insidious and deadly foes to the purity of the church; and at its very *threshold*, therefore, he set up this solemn warning to guard it; and laid the bodies of Ananias and Sapphira in the path of every hypocrite that would enter the church. If they enter and are destroyed, they cannot plead that they were not fully warned. If they practise iniquity in the church, they cannot plead ignorance of the fact that God intends to detect and punish them.

(3.) The apostles were just then establishing their authority. They claimed to be under the influence of inspiration. To establish that, it was necessary to show that they could know the views and motives of those who became connected with the church. If easily imposed on, it would go far to destroy their authority and their claim to infallibility. If they showed that they could detect hypocrisy, even where most artfully concealed, it would establish the Divine authority of their message. At the *commencement* of their work, therefore, they gave this decisive and most awful proof that they were under the guidance of an infallible Teacher.

(4.) This case does not stand alone in the New Testament. It is clear from other instances that the apostles had the power of punishing sinners, and that a violation of the commands of Christ was attended by sudden and fearful judgments. See 1Co 11:30. See the case of Elymas the sorcerer, in Ac 13:8-11.

(5.) Neither does this event stand alone in the history of the world Acts of judgment sometimes occur as sudden and decided, in the Providence of God, as in this case. The profane man, the drunkard, the profligate is sometimes as suddenly stricken down as in this instance. Cases have not been uncommon where the blasphemer has been smitten in death with the curse on his lips; and God often thus comes forth in judgment to slay the wicked, and to show that there is a God that reigns in the earth. This narrative cannot be objected to as improbable until *all* such eases are

disposed of; nor can this infliction be regarded as unjust, until all the instances where men die by remorse of conscience, or by the direct judgment of heaven, are proved to be unjust also.

In view of this narrative, we may remark,

(1.) that God searches the heart, and knows the purposes of the soul. Comp. Ps 139.

(2.) God judges the *motives* of men. It is not so much the *external* act, as it is the views and feelings by which it is prompted, that determines the character of the act.

(3.) God will bring forth sin that man may not be able to detect; or that may elude human justice. The day is coming when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed, and God will reward every man according as his works shall be.

(4.) Fraud and hypocrisy will be detected. They are often revealed in this life. The Providence of God often lays them open to human view, and overwhelms the soul in shame at the guilt which was long concealed. But if not in this life, yet the day is coming when they will be disclosed, and the sinner shall stand *revealed* to an assembling universe.

(5.) We have here an illustration of the powers of conscience. If *such* was its overwhelming effect *here*, what will it be when all the crimes of the life shall be disclosed in the day of judgment, and when the soul shall sink to the woes of hell. Through *eternity* the conscience shall do its office; and these terrible inflictions shall go on from age to age, for ever and ever, in the dark world of hell.

(6.) We see here the guilt of attempting to impose on God in regard to *property*. There is no subject in which men are more liable to hypocrisy; none in which they are more apt to keep back a *part*. Christians professedly devote all that they have to God. They profess to believe that God has a *right* to the silver and the gold, and the cattle on a thousand hills, Ps 50:10. Their *property*, as well as their bodies and their spirits, they have devoted to him; and profess to desire to employ it as he shall direct and please. And yet, is it not clear that the sin of Ananias has not ceased in the church? How many professing Christians there are who give nothing really to God; who contribute nothing for the poor and needy; who give nothing, or next to nothing, to any purposes of benevolence; who would devote "millions" for their own gratification, and their families, but not a penny for "*tribute*" to God. The case of Ananias is to all such a case of most fearful warning. And on no point should Christians more faithfully examine themselves than in regard to the professed devotion of their *property* to God. If God punished this sin in the beginning of the Christian church, he will do it still in its progress; and in nothing have professed Christians more to fear the wrath of God than on this very subject.

(7.) Sinners should fear and tremble before God. He holds their breath in his hands, he can cut them down in an instant. The bold blasphemer, the unjust, the liar, the scoffer, he can destroy in a moment, and sink them in all the woes of hell. Nor have they security that he will not do it. The profane man has no evidence that he will live to finish the curse which he has begun; nor the drunkard, that he will again become sober; nor the seducer, that God will not arrest him in his act of wickedness, and send him down to hell! The sinner walks over his grave, and over hell! In an instant he may die, and be summoned to the judgment-seat of God! How awful it is to sin in a world like this; and how fearful the doom which must soon overtake the ungodly.

{c} "agreed together" Ac 5:2 Ps 50:18 {+} "tempt" "try"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No Barnes text on this verse.
{d} "fell she down"
Act 5:5
{&} "straitway" "immediately" {+} "ghost" "expired"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 11

Verse 11. No Barnes text on this verse.
{a} "great fear"
Ac 2:43

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *And by the hands*, etc. By the apostles. This verse should be read in connexion with Ac 5:15, to which it belongs.

Signs and wonders. **See Barnes "Ac 2:43"**.

Miracles. **See Barnes** "Ac 2:43.

With one accord. With one *mind*, or intention. **See Barnes "Ac 1:14"**.

In Solomon's porch. **See Barnes "Mt 21:12** Joh 10:23.

They were doubtless there for the purpose of worship. It does not mean that they were there constantly, but at the regular periods of worship. Probably they had two designs in this; one was to join in the public worship of God in the usual manner with the people, for they did not design to leave the temple-service; the other was that they might have opportunity to preach to the people assembled there. In the presence of the great multitudes who came up to worship, they had an opportunity of making known the doctrines of Jesus, and of confirming them by miracles, the reality of which could not be denied, and which could not be resisted, as proofs that Jesus was the Messiah.

{b} "many signs" Ac 4:30 Ro 15:19; Heb 2:4
{*} "one accord" "consent"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *And of the rest*. Different interpretations have been given of this expression. Lightfoot supposes that by *the rest* are meant the remainder of the one hundred and twenty disciples of whom Ananias had been one; and that they feared to put themselves on an equality with the apostles. But this interpretation seems to be far- fetched. Kuinoel supposes that by *the rest* are meant those who had not already joined with the apostles, whether Christians or Jews, and that they were deterred

by the fate of Ananias. Priceeus, Morns, Rosenmiiller, Schleusner, etc., suppose that by the rest are meant the rich men, or the men of authority and influence among the Jews, of whom Ananias was one, and that they were deterred from it by the fate of Ananias. This is by far the most probable opinion, because

(1.) there is an evident contrast between them and the people: *the rest*, i.e. the others of the rich and great, feared to join with them; but *the people*, the common people, magnified them.

(2.) The fate of Ananias was fitted to have this effect on the rich and great.

(3.) Similar instances had occurred before, that the great, though they believed on Jesus, yet were afraid to come forth publicly and profess him before men. See Joh 12:42,43, 5:44.

(4.) The phrase *the rest* denotes sometimes that which is more excellent, or which is superior in value or importance to something else. See Lu 12:26.

Join himself. Become united to, or associated with. The rich and the great then, as now, stood aloof from them, and were deterred by fear or shame from professing attachment to the Lord Jesus.

But the people. The mass of the people; the body of the nation.

Magnified them. Honoured them; regarded them with reverence and fear.

{c} "and of the rest" Joh 12:42 {d} "but the people" Ac 4:21

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *And believers*. This is the name by which Christians were designated, because one of the main things that distinguished them was that they believed that Jesus was the Christ. It is also an incidental proof that none should join themselves to the church who are not believers, i.e. who do not profess to be Christians in heart and in life.

Were the more added. The effect of all things was to increase the number of converts. Their persecutions, their preaching, and the judgment of God, all tended to impress the minds of the people, and to lead them to the Lord Jesus Christ. Comp. Ac 4:4. Though the judgment of God had the effect of deterring hypocrites from entering the church, though it produced awe and caution, yet still the number of true converts was increased. An effort to keep the church pure by wholesome discipline, by cutting off unworthy members, however rich or honoured, so far from weakening its true strength, has a tendency greatly to increase its numbers as well as its purity. Men will not seek to enter a corrupt church; or regard it as worth any thought to be connected with a society that does not endeavour to be pure.

Multitudes. Comp. Ac 4:4.

{e} "multitudes, both men and women" Ac 2:47

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Insomuch*. So that. This should be connected with Ac 5:12. Many miracles were wrought by the apostles, insomuch, etc.

They brought forth. The people, or the friends of the sick, brought them forth.

Beds. *klinwn*. This word denotes usually the *soft* and *valuable* beds on which the rich commonly lay. And it means that the rich, as well as the poor, were laid in the path of Peter and the other apostles.

Couches. *krabbatwn*. The coarse and hard couches on which the poor used to lie, Mr 2:4,9,11,12 6:55 Joh 5:8-12 Ac 9:33.

The shadow of Peter. That is, they were laid in the path so that the shadow of Peter, as he walked, might pass over them. Perhaps the sun was near setting, and the lengthened shadow of Peter might be thrown afar across the way. They were not able to approach him on account of the crowd; and they *imagined* that if they could *any how* come under his influence, they might be healed. The sacred writer does not say, however, that any were healed in this way; nor that they were commanded to do this. He simply states the *impression* which was on the minds of the people that it *might be*. Whether they were healed by this, it is left for us merely to conjecture. An instance somewhat similar is recorded in Ac 19:12, where it is expressly said, that the sick were healed by contact with *handkerchiefs* and *aprons* that were brought from the body of Paul. Comp. also Mt 9:21,22, where the woman said respecting Jesus, "If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole."

Might overshadow. That his shadow might pass over them. Though there is no evidence that any were healed in this way, yet it shows the full belief of the people that Peter had the power of working miracles. *Peter* was supposed by them to be eminently endowed with this power, because it was by him that the lame man in the temple had been healed, Ac 3:4-6, and because he had been most prominent in his addresses to the people. The persons who are specified in this verse were those who dwelt at Jerusalem.

{1} "into the streets" "in every street"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *There came also*, etc. Attracted by the fame of Peter's miracles, as the people formerly had been by the miracles of the Lord Jesus.

Vexed. Troubled, afflicted, or tormented.

Unclean spirits. Possessed with devils; called unclean because they prompted to sin and impurity of life. **See Barnes** "Mt 4:23,24.

And they were healed. Of these persons it is expressly affirmed that they were healed. Of those who were so laid as that the shadow of Peter might pass over them, there is no such affirmation.

{a} "bringing sick folks" Mr 16:17,18; Joh 14:12

{b} "and they were healed" Jas 5:16

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Then the High Priest*. Probably Caiaphas. Comp. Joh 11:49. It seems from this place that he belonged to the sect of the Sadducees. It is certain that he had signalized himself by opposition to the Lord Jesus and to his cause, constantly.

Rose up. This expression is sometimes *redundant*, and at others it means simply to *begin* to do a thing, or to resolve to do it. Comp. Lu 15:18.

And all they that were with him. That is, all they that coincided with him in doctrine or opinion; or, in other words, that portion of the sanhedrim that was composed of *Sadducees*. There was a strong party of Sadducees in the sanhedrim; and perhaps at this time it was so strong a majority as to be able to control its decisions. Comp. Ac 23:6.

Which is the sect. The word translated *sect* here is that from which we have derived our word *heresy*. It means simply *sect*, or party, and is not used in a bad sense, as implying reproach, or even error. The idea which we attach to it of error, and of denying fundamental doctrines in religion, is one that does not occur in the New Testament.

Sadducees. **See Barnes "Mt 3:7".**

The main doctrine of this sect was the denial of the resurrection of the dead. The reason why *they* were particularly opposed to the apostles, rather than the Pharisees, was that the apostles dwelt much on *the resurrection of the Lord Jesus*, which, if true, completely overthrew their doctrine. All the converts, therefore, that were made to Christianity, tended to diminish their numbers and influence; and also to establish the belief of the *Pharisees* in the doctrine of the resurrection. So long, therefore, as the effect of the labours of the apostles was to establish one of the main doctrines of the *Pharisees*, and to confute the *Sadducees*, so long we may suppose that the *Pharisees* would either favour them or be silent; and so long the *Sadducees* would be opposed to them, and enraged against them. One sect will often see with composure the progress of another that it really hates, if it will humble a rival. Even opposition to the gospel will sometimes be silent, provided the spread of religion will tend to humble and mortify those against whom we may be opposed.

Were filled with indignation. Greek, *Zeal*. The word denotes any kind of *fervour or warmth*, and may be applied to any warm or violent affection of the mind, either *envy, wrath, zeal, or love*, Ac 13:45 Joh 2:17; Ro 10:2 2Co 7:7, 11:2.

Here it probably *includes envy and wrath*. They were *envious* at the success of the apostles; at the number of converts that were made to a doctrine that they hated; they were envious that the *Pharisees* were deriving such an accession of strength to their doctrine of the resurrection; and they were indignant that they regarded so little their authority, and disobeyed the solemn injunction of the sanhedrim. Compare Ac 4:18-21.

{c} "and were filled" Ac 4:1,2 {1} "indignation" "envy"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *The common prison.* The public prison; or the prison for the keeping of common and notorious offenders.

{d} "common prison" Ac 12:5-7 16:23-27

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *But the angel of the Lord*. This does not denote any particular angel, but simply *an* angel. The *article* is not used in the original. The word angel denotes, properly, a *messenger*, and particularly it is applied to the pure spirits that are sent to this world on errands of mercy. **See Barnes "Mt 1:20".**

The case here was evidently a *miracle*. An angel was employed for this special purpose; and the design might have been,

(1.) to reprove the Jewish rulers, and to convince them of their guilt in resisting the gospel of God;

(2.) to convince the apostles more firmly of the protection and approbation of God;

(3.) to encourage them more and more in their work, and in the faithful discharge of their high duty; and,

(4.) to give the people a new and impressive proof of the truth of the message which they bore. That they were *imprisoned* would be known to the people. That they were made as secure as possible was also known. When, therefore, the next morning, before they could have been tried or acquitted, they were found again in the temple, delivering the same message still, it was a new and striking proof that they were sent by God.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *In the temple*. In a public and conspicuous place. In this way there would be a most striking exhibition of their boldness; a proof that God had delivered them; and a manifestation of their purpose to obey God rather than man.

All the words. All the *doctrines*. Comp. Joh 6:68, "Thou hast the words of eternal life."

Of this life. Pertaining to life, to the eternal life which they taught through the resurrection and life of Jesus. The word *life* is used sometimes to express the whole of religion, as opposed to the spiritual *death* of sin. See Joh 1:4 3:36. Their deliverance from prison was not that they might be idle, and escape to a place of safety. Again they were to engage at once in the toils and perils which they had just before encountered. God delivers us from danger sometimes, that we may plunge into *new* dangers; he preserves us from calamity, that we may be tried in some new furnace of affliction; and he calls us to encounter trials simply *because* he demands it, and as an expression of gratitude to him for his gracious interposition.

{e} "all the words" Ex 24:3 {f} "of this life" Joh 6:63,68, 17:8

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Early in the morning*. Greek, At the break of day. Comp. Lu 24:1 Joh 8:2.

Called the council together. The sanhedrim, or the great council of the nation. This was clearly for the purpose of trying the apostles for disregarding their commandments.

And all the senate. Greek, *Eldership*. Probably these were not a part of the sanhedrim, but were men of age and experience, who (in Ac 4:8 25:15) are called *elders of the Jews*, and who were present for the sake of counsel and advice in a case of emergency.

{g} "the high priest" Ac 4:5,6

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 22

Verse 22. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Found we shut*. It had not been broken open; and there was therefore clear proof that they had been delivered by the interposition of God. Nor could they have been released by the guard, for they were keeping watch, as if unconscious that anything had happened, and the officers had the only means of entering the prison.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *The captain of the temple*. **See Barnes "Ac 4:1"**.

Doubted of them. They were in perplexity about these things. The word rendered *doubted* denotes that state of anxiety which arises when a man *has lost his way*, or when he does not know what to do to escape from a difficulty. See Lu 9:7.

Whereunto this would grow. What this *would be*; or what would be the result or end of these events. For,

(1.) their authority was disregarded;

(2.) God had opposed them by a miracle;

(3.) the doctrines of the apostles were gaining ground;

(4.) Their efforts to oppose themhad been in vain. They need *not* have doubted; but sinners are not disposed to be convinced of the truth of religion.

{h} "and captain of the temple" Ac 4:1 {*} "this would grow" "what this would become"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 25

Verse 25. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Without violence*. Not by force; not by *binding* them. Comp. Mt 27:22. The command of the sanhedrim was sufficient to secure their presence, as they did not intend to refuse to answer for any alleged violation of the laws. Besides, their going before the council would give them another noble opportunity to bear witness to the truth of the gospel. Christians, when charged with a violation of the laws of the land, should not refuse to answer. Ac 25:11, "If I be an offender, or have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die." It is a part of our religion to yield obedience to all the just laws of the land, and to evince respect for all that are in authority, Ro 13:1-7.

For they feared the people. The people were favourable to the apostles. If violence had been attempted, or they had been taken in a cruel and forcible manner, the consequence would have been a tumult and bloodshed. In this way, also, the apostles showed that they were not disposed to excite tumult. Opposition by them would have excited commotion; and though *they* would have been rescued, yet they resolved to show that they were not obstinate, contumacious, or rebellious, but were disposed, as far as it could be done with a clear conscience, to yield obedience to the laws of the land.

{a} "for they feared" Mt 21:26

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 27

Verse 27. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *Straitly command you*. Did we not command you with a threat? Ac 4:17,18,21.

In this name. In the name of Jesus.

Ye have filled Jerusalem. This, though not so designed, was an honourable tribute to the zeal and fidelity of the apostles. When Christians are arraigned or persecuted, it is well if the only charge which their enemies can bring against them is that they have been distinguished for zeal and success in propagating their religion. See 1Pe 4:16, "If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf." Also Ac 5:13-15.

Intend to bring this man's blood upon us. To bring *one's blood* upon another is a phrase denoting to hold or to prove him guilty of murdering the innocent. The expression here charges them with designing to prove that they had put Jesus to death when he was innocent; to convince the people of this, and thus to enrage them against the sanhedrim; and also to prove that they were guilty, and were exposed to the Divine vengeance for having put the Messiah to death. Comp. Ac 2:23,36, 3:15 7:52.

That the apostles *did* intend to charge them with being guilty of murder, is clear; but it is observable that on *this occasion* they had said nothing of this; and it is further observable that they

did not charge it on them *except in their presence*. See the places just referred to. They took no pains to spread this among the people, *except as the people were necessary to the crime of the rulers*, Ac 2:23,36. Their consciences were not at ease, and the remembrance of the death of Jesus would occur to them at once at the sight of the apostles.

{b} "straitly command" Ac 4:18 {c} "this man's blood" Mt 27:25 Ac 2:23,36 3:15, 7:52

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *We ought to obey*, etc. **See Barnes "Ac 4:19"**

{d} "ought to obey" Ac 4:19

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *Raised up Jesus*. This refers to his resurrection.

Hanged on a tree. That is, on the cross, Ga 3:13 1Pe 2:24; Ac 10:39 13:29. This is the amount of Peter's defence. He begins with the great principle, (Ac 5:29,) which they could not gainsay, that God ought to be obeyed rather than man. He then proceeds to state that they were convinced that God had raised up Jesus from the dead. And as they had such decisive evidence of that, and were commanded by the authority of the Lord Jesus to be *witnesses of that*, and had constant evidence that God had done it, they were not *at liberty* to be silent. They were bound to obey God rather than the sanhedrim, and to make known eerywhere the fact that the Lord Jesus was risen. The remark that God had raised up Jesus, whom they had *slain*, does not seem to have been made to irritate or to reproach them, but mainly to *identify* the person that had been raised. It was also a confirmation of the truth and reality of the miracle. Of his *death* they had no doubt, for they had been at pains to certify it, Joh 19:31-34. It is certain, however, that Peter did not shrink from charging on them their guilt; nor was he at any pains to *soften* or *mitigate* the severe charge that they had murdered their own Messiah.

{e} "hanged" Ga 3:13 {*} "tree" "Cross"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *Him hath God exalted*. **See Barnes "Ac 2:33"**.

To be a Prince. *archgon*, **See Barnes "Ac 3:16"**.

In that place he is called "*the Prince of life*." Here it means that he is actually in the *exercise* of the office of a Prince or a King, at the right hand of his Father. The title *Prince*, or *King*, was one which was well known as applied to the Messiah. It denotes that he has *dominion* and *power*, especially the power which is needful to give repentance and the pardon of sins.

A Saviour. **See Barnes "Mt 1:21"**.

To give repentance. The word *repentance* here is equivalent to reformation, and a change of life. The expression here does not differ from what is said in Ac 3:26.

To Israel. This word properly denotes the *Jews*; but his office was not to be confined to the Jews. Other passages show that it would be also extended to the *Gentiles*. The reasons why the Jews are particularly specified here are, probably,

(1.) because the Messiah was long promised to the Jewish people, and his first work was there; and,

(2,) because Peter was addressing Jews, and was particularly desirous of leading them to'repentance.

Forgiveness of sins. Pardon of sin; the act which can be performed by God only, Mr 2:7.

If it be asked in what sense the Lord Jesus *gives repentance*, or how his *exaltation* is connected with it, we may answer,

(1.) His exaltation is evidence that his work was accepted, and thus a foundation is laid by which repentance is available, and may be connected with pardon. Unless there was some way of *forgiveness*, sorrow for sin would be of no value, even if exercised. The relentings of a culprit condemned for murder would be of no avail, unless the executive can *consistently* pardon him; nor would relentings in hell be of avail, for there is no promise of forgiveness. But Jesus Christ by his death has laid a foundation by which repentance *may be* accepted.

(2.) He is entrusted with all power in heaven and earth with *reference* to this, to apply his work to men; or, in other words, to bring them to repentance. See Joh 17:2 Mt 28:18.

(3.) His exaltation is immediately connected with the bestowment of the Holy Spirit, by whose influence men are brought to repentance, Joh 16:7-11. The Spirit is represented as being *sent* by him as well as by the Father, Joh 15:26 16:7.

(4.) Jesus has power in this state of exaltation over all things that can affect the mind. He sends his ministers; he directs the events of sickness or disappointment, of health or prosperity, that will influence the heart. There is no doubt that he can so recall the sins of the past life, and refresh the memory, as to overwhelm the soul in the consciousness of guilt. Thus also he can appeal to man by his *goodness*, and by a sense of his mercies; and especially he can so present a view of *his* life and death as to affect the heart, and show the evil of the past life of the sinner. Knowing the heart, he knows all the avenues by which it can be approached; and in an instant he can overwhelm the soul with the remembrance of crime.

It was *proper* that the power of *pardon* should be lodged with the same Being that has the power of producing repentance. Because,

(1.) the one appropriately follows the other.

(2.) They are parts of the same great work, the work which the Saviour came to do, *to remove sin with all its effects from the human soul*. This power of *pardon* Jesus exercised when he was on the earth; and this he can now dispense in the heavens, Mr 2:9-11.

And from this we may learn,

(1.) that Jesus Christ is *Divine*. It is a dictate of natural religion that none can forgive sins against God, but God himself. None can pardon but the Being who has been offended. And this is also the dictate of the Bible. The power of *pardoning* sin is one that God claims as *his* prerogative; and it is clear that it can appertain to no other. See Isa 43:25 Da 9:9; Ps 130:4.

Yet Jesus Christ exercised this power when on earth; gave *evidence* that the exercise of that power was one that was acceptable to God by working a miracle, and removing the *consequences*

of sin with which God had visited the sinner, (Mt 9:6;) and exercises it still in heaven. He must, therefore, be Divine.

(2.) The sinner is dependent on him for the exercise of repentance and forgiveness.

(3.) The proud sinner must be humbled at his feet. He must be willing to come and receive eternal life at his hands. No step is more humUiating than this for proud and hardened men; and there is none which they are more reluctant to do. We always shrink from coming into the presence of one whom we have offended; we are extremely reluctant to confess a fault; but it *must be done*, or the soul *must* be lost for ever.

(4.) Christ has power to pardon the greatest offender. He is exalted for this purpose; and he is fitted to his work. Even his murderers he could pardon; and no sinner need fear that he who is a *Prince and a Saviour at the right hand of God* is unable to pardon every sin. To him we may come with confidence; and when pressed with the consciousness of the blackest crimes, and when we must feel that we deserve eternal death, we may confidently roll all on his arm.

{f} "exalted" Php 2:9 {g} "a Prince" Isa 9:6 {h} "Saviour" Mt 1:21

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *And we are his witnesses*. For this purpose they had been appointed, Ac 1:8,21,22 2:32 3:15 Lu 24:48.

Of these things. Particularly of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and of the events which had followed it. Perhaps, however, he meant to include everything pertaining to the life, teachings, and death of the Lord Jesus.

And so is also, etc. The descent of the Holy Ghost to endow them with remarkable gifts, (Ac 2:1-4,) to awaken and convert such a multitude, (Ac 2:41 4:4, 5:14,) was an unanswerable attestation of the truth of these doctrines, and of the Christian religion. So manifest and decided was the presence of God attending them, that *they* could have no doubt that what they said was true; and so open and public was this attestation, that it was an evidence to all the people of the truth of their doctrine.

{a} "witnesses" Lu 24:48 {*} "Holy Ghost" "Holy Spirit" {b} "whom God hath given" Ac 2:4

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *When they heard that*. That which the apostle Peter had said; to wit, that they were guilty of murder; that Jesus was raised up; and that he stir lived as the Messiah.

They were cut to the heart. The word used here properly denotes to *cut with a saw*; and as applied to the *mind*, it means, to be agitated with *rage* and *indignation*, as if wrath should seize upon the mind as a saw does upon wood, and tear it violently, or agitate it severely. It is commonly used in connexion with the *heart*; and means that the heart is violently agitated, and rent with rage. See Ac 7:54. It is not used elsewhere in the New Testament. The *reasons* why they were thus indignant were, doubtless,

(1.) because the apostles had disregarded their command;

(2.) because they charged them with murder;

(3.) because they affirmed the doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus, and thus tended to overthrow the sect of the Sadducees. The effect of the doctrines of the gospel is, often, to make men enraged.

Took counsel. The word rendered *took counsel* denotes, commonly, *to will*; then, *to deliberate*; and, sometimes, *to decree*, or *to determine*. It doubtless implies here that their minds were made up to do it; but probably the formal decree was not passed to put them to death.

{c} "they were cut" Ac 7:54 {+} "slay" "Kill"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *Then stood there up one*. He *rose*, as is usual in deliberative assemblies, to speak.

In the council. In the sanhedrim, Ac 4:15.

A Pharisee. The high priest and those who had been most active in opposing the apostles were Sadducees. The Pharisees were opposed to them particularly on the doctrine in regard to which the apostles were so strenuous, the resurrection of the dead. **See Barnes "Mt 3:7"**.

Comp. Ac 23:6.

Gamaliel. This name was very common among the Jews. Dr. Lightfoot says, that this man was the teacher of Paul, (Ac 22:3,) the son of the *Simon* who took the Saviour in his arms, (Lu 2) and the grandson of the famous *Hillel*, and was known among the Jews by the title of *Rabban Gamaliel the elder*. There were other men of this name, who were also eminent among the Jews. This man is said to have died eighteen years before the destruction of Jerusalem; and he died as he had lived, a Pharisee. There is not the least evidence that he was a friend of the Christian religion; but he was evidently a man of far more liberal views than the other members of the sanhedrim.

A doctor of the law. That is, a *teacher* of the Jewish law; one whose province it was to *interpret* the laws of Moses, and probably to preserve and transmit the *traditional* laws of the Jews. **See Barnes "Mt 15:3"**.

So celebrated was he, that Saul of Tarsus went to Jerusalem to receive the benefit of his instructions, Ac 22:3.

Had in reputation among all the people. *Honoured* by all the people. His advice was likely, therefore, to be respected.

To put the apostles forth. This was done doubtless, because, if the apostles had been suffered to remain, it was apprehended that they would take fresh courage, and be confirmed in their purposes. It was customary, besides, when they deliberated, to command those accused to retire, Ac 4:15.

A little space. *A little time*, Lu 22:58.

{d} "a doctor of the law" Ac 22:3 {&} "a little space" "To send the apostles our for a short time"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 35

Verse 35. No Barnes text on this verse.
{*} "touching" "with respect to"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *For before these days*. The advice of Gamaliel was to suffer these men to go on. The *arguments* by which he enforced his advice were,

(1.) that there were *cases* or *precedents* in point, (Ac 5:36,37;) and,

(2.) that if it should turn out *to be* of God, it would be a solemn affair to be involved in the consequences of opposing him. How long before those days this transaction occurred cannot now be determined, as it is not certain to what case Gamaliel refers.

Rose up. That is, commenced or excited an insurrection.

Theudas, This was a name quite common among the Jews. Of this man nothing more is known than is here recorded. Josephus (Antiq. b. xx. chap. v.) mentions one *Theudas*, in the time of *Fadus* the procurator of Judea, in the reign of the emperor Claudius, (A.D. 45 or 46,) who persuaded a great part of the people to take their effects with him, and follow him to the river Jordan. He told them he was a prophet, and that he would divide the river, and lead them over. Fadus, however, came suddenly upon them, and slew many of them. Theudas was taken alive, and conveyed to Jerusalem, and there beheaded. But this occurred at least ten or fifteen years after this discourse of Gamaliel. Many efforts have been made to reconcile Luke and Josephus, on the supposition that they refer to the same man. Lightfoot supposed that Josephus had made an error in chronology. But there is no reason to suppose that there is reference to the same event; and the fact that Josephus has not recorded the insurrection referred to by Gamaliel, does not militate at all against the account in the Acts. For

(1.) Luke, for anything that appears to the contrary, is quite as credible an historian as Josephus.

(2.) The name *Theudas* was a common name among the Jews; and there is no improbability that there were *two* leaders of an insurrection of this name. If it is improbable, the improbability would affect Josephus's credit as much as that of Luke.

(3.) It is altogether improbable that *Gamaliel* should refer to a case which was not well authenticated; and that Luke should record a speech of this kind unless it was delivered, when it would be so easy to detect the error.

(4.) Josephus has recorded many instances of insurrection and revolt. He has represented the country as in an unsettled state, and by no means professes to give an account of *all* that occurred. Thus he says, (Antiq. xvii. x. § 4,) that there were "at this time *ten thousand* other disorders in Judea;" and (&8) that "Judea was full of robberies." When this *Theudas* lived cannot be ascertained; but as Gamaliel mentions him before Judas of Galilee, it is probable that he lived not far from the time that our Saviour was born—at a time when many false prophets appeared, claiming to be the Messiah.

Boasting himself to be somebody. Claiming to be an eminent prophet probably, or the Messiah.

Obeyed him. The word used here is the one commonly used to denote *belief*. As many as *believed* on him, or gave credit to his pretensions.

{1} "these days" "In the third year before the account called A. D." {2} "obeyed" "believed"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *Judas of Galilee*. Josephus has given an account of this man, (Antiq. b. xvii. chap. x. § 5,) and calls him a *Galilean*. He afterwards calls him a *Gualonite*, and says he was of the city of *Gamala*, (Antiq. xviii, i. 1.) In this place, he says that the revolt took place under *Cyrenius*, a Roman senator, who came into "Syria to be judge of that nation, and to take account of their substance." "Moreover," says he, "Cyrenius came himself into Judea, which was now added to the province of Syria, to take an account of their substance, and to dispose of Archelaus's money." "Yet Judas taking with him Saddouk, a Pharisee, became zealous to draw them to a revolt, who both said that this taxation was no better than an introduction to slavery, and exhorted the nation to assert their liberty," etc. *This* revolt, he says, was the commencement of the series of revolts and calamities that terminated in the destruction of the city, temple, and nation.

In the days of the taxing. Or, rather, the *enrolling*, or the census. Josephus says, it was designed to take an account of their substance. Comp. Lu 2:1,2.

{*} "taxing" "enrollment" {a} "he also perished" Lu 13:1,2 {b} "let them alone" Pr 21:30 Isa 8:10; Mt 15:13

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *Refrain from these men*. Cease to oppose them, or to threaten them. The *reason* why he advised this, he immediately adds: that if it were of men, it would come to nought; if of God, they could not overthrow it.

This counsel. This plan, or purpose. If the apostles had originated it for the purposes of imposture.

It will come to nought. Gamaliel *inferred* that from the two instances which he specified. They had been suppressed without the interference of the sanhedrim; and he inferred that *this* would also die away if it was a human device. It will be remembered that this is the mere advice of Gamaliel, who was not inspired; and that this opinion should not be adduced to guide us, except as it was an instance of great shrewdness and prudence. It is, doubtless, right to oppose *error* in the proper way and with the proper temper—not with arms, or vituperation, or with the civil power, but with argument and kind entreaty. But the sentiment of Gamaliel is full of wisdom in regard to error. For,

(1.) the very way to exalt error into notice, and to confirm men in it, is to oppose it in a harsh, authoritative, and unkind manner.

(2.) Error, if left alone, will often die away itself. The interest of men in it will often cease as soon as it ceases to be opposed; and having nothing to fan the flame, it will expire. It is not so with truth.

(3.) In this respect the remark may be applied.to the Christian religion. It has stood too long, and in too many circumstances of prosperity and adversity, to be of men. It has been subjected to all trials from its pretended friends and real foes; and it still lives as vigorous and flourishing as ever. Other kingdoms have changed; empires have risen and fallen since Gamaliel spoke this; systems of opinion and belief have had their day, and expired; but the preservation of the Christian religion, unchanged through so many revolutions, and in so many fiery trials, shows that it is not of men, but of God. The argument for the Divine origin of the Christian religion from its perpetuity,

is one that can be applied to no other system that has been, or that now exists. For Christianity has been opposed in every form. It confers no temporal conquests, and appeals to no base and strong native passions. Mohammedanism is supported by the sword and the state; paganism relies on the arm of the civil power and the terrors of superstition, and is sustained by all the corrupt passions of men; atheism and infidelity have been short-lived, varying in their forms—dying today, and tomorrow starting up in a new form—never organized, consolidated, or pure, and never tending to promote the peace or happiness of men. Christianity, without arms or human power, has lived, holding its steady and triumphant movements among men, regardless alike of the opposition of its foes, and of the treachery of its pretended friends. If the opinion of Gamaliel was just, it is from God; and the Jews particularly should regard as important an argument derived from the opinion of one of the wisest of their ancient Rabbins.

{b} "let them alone" Pr 21:30 Isa 8:10; Mt 15:13

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *But if it be of God*. If God is the *Author* of this religion. From this it seems that Gamaliel supposed that it was at least possible that this religion was Divine. He evinced a far more candid mind than did the rest of the Jews; but still it does not appear that he was entirely convinced. The arguments which could not but stagger the Jewish sanhedrim, were those drawn from the resurrection of Jesus, the miracle on the day of Pentecost, the healing of the lame man in the temple, and the release of the apostles from the prison.

Ye can not overthrow it. Because

(1) God has almighty power, and can execute his purposes;

(2.) because he is unchanging, and will not be diverted from his plans, Job 23:13,14. The plan which God forms must be accomplished. All the devices of man are feebleness when opposed to him, and he can dash them in pieces in an instant. The prediction of Gamaliel has been fulfilled. Men have opposed Christianity in every way, but in vain. They have reviled it; have persecuted it; have resorted to argument and to ridicule, to fire, and fagot, and sword; they have called in the aid of science; but all has been in vain. The more it has been crushed, the more it has risen, and still exists with as much life and power as ever. The *preservation* of this religion amidst so much and so varied opposition, proves that it is of God. No severer trial can await it than it has already experienced; and as it has survived so many storms and trials, we have every evidence that, according to the predictions, it is destined to live, and to fill the world. **See Barnes "Mt 16:18"**; Isa 54:17 55:11; Da 4:35.

Lest. That is, if you continue to oppose it, you may be found to have been opposing God.

Haply. Perhaps. In the Greek this is *lest at any time*; that is, at some *future* time, when too late to retract your doings, etc.

Ye be found. It shall appear that you have been opposing God.

Even to fight against God. Greek, *yeomacoi*. The word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. To fight against God is to oppose him, or to maintain an attitude of hostility against him. It is an attitude that is most fearful in its character, and will most certainly be attended with an overthrow. No condition can be more awful than such an opposition to the Almighty; no overthrow

more terrible than that which must follow such opposition. Comp. Ac 9:5 23:9. Opposition to the *gospel*, in the Scriptures, is uniformly regarded as opposition to God, Mt 12:30 Lu 11:23. Men may be said *to fight against God* in the following ways, or on the following subjects:

(1.) When they oppose *his gospel*, its preaching, its plans, its influence among men; when they endeavour to prevent its spread, or to withdraw their families and friends from its influence.

(2.) When they oppose the *doctrines* of the Bible. When they become angry that the real truths of religion are preached; and suffer themselves to be irritated and excited, by an *unwillingness* that those doctrines should be true, and should be presented to men. Yet this is no uncommon thing. Men by nature do not love those doctrines, and they are often indignant that they are preached. Some of the most angry feelings which men ever have arise from this source; and man can never find peace until he is *willing* that God's truth should exert its influence on his own soul, and rejoice that it is believed and loved by others.

(3.) Men oppose the *law* of God. It seems to them too *stern* and *harsh*. It condemns them; and they are unwilling that it should be applied to them. There is nothing which a sinner likes *less* than he does the pure and holy law of God.

(4.) Sinners fight against the *providence* of God. When he afflicts them, they rebel. When he takes away their health, or property, or friends, they murmur. They esteem him harsh and cruel; and, instead of finding peace by *submission*, they greatly aggravate their sufferings, and infuse a mixture of wormwood and gall into the cup, by murmuring and repining. There is no peace in affliction but in the feeling that God is *right*. And until this belief is cherished, the wicked will be like the troubled sea, which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt, Isa 57:20. Such opposition to God is as wicked as it is foolish. The Lord gave, and has a right to remove our comforts; and we should be still, and know that he is God.

(5.) Sinners fight against God when they resist the influences of his Spirit; when they *oppose* serious thoughts; when they seek evil or gay companions and pleasures rather than submit to God; and when they resist all the entreaties of their friends to become Christians. All these may be the appeals which God is making to men to be prepared to meet him. And yet it is common for sinners thus to stifle conviction, and refuse even to think of their eternal welfare. Nothing can be an act of more *direct* and deliberate wickedness and folly than this. Without the aid of the Holy Spirit none can be saved; and to resist his influences is to put away the only prospect of eternal life. To do it, is to do it over the grave; not knowing that another hour or day may be granted; and not knowing that, *if* life is prolonged, the Spirit will ever strive again with the heart.

In view of this verse we may remark,

(1.) that the path of wisdom is to submit at once to all the requirements of God. Without this, we must expect conflicts with him, and perils and ruin. No man can be *opposed* to God without endangering himself every minute.

(2.) Submission to God should be entire. It should extend to every doctrine and demand; every law, and every act of the Almighty. In all his requirements, and in all afflictions, we should submit to him, and thus only shall we find peace.

(3.) Infidels and scoffers will gain nothing by opposing God. They have thus far been thwarted and unsuccessful; and they will be still. None of their plans have succeeded; and the hope of destroying the Christian religion, after the efforts of almost two thousand years, must be vain, and will recoil with tremendous vengeance on those who make them.

{c} "if it be of God" Job 34:29 1Co 1:25 {*} "haply" "Perhaps" {d} "fight against God" Ac 9:5 23:9

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 40

Verse 40. *And to him they agreed*. Greek, They *were persuaded* by him; or they *trusted* to him. They agreed only so far as their design of putting them to death was concerned. They abandoned that design. But they did *not* comply with his advice to let them entirely alone.

And beaten them. The usual amount of lashes which were inflicted on offenders was thirty-nine, 2Co 11:24. *Beating*, or *whipping*, was a common mode of punishing minor offences among the Jews. It was expressly foretold by the Saviour that the apostles would be subjected to this, Mt 10:17. The reason why they did not adopt the advice of Gamaliel altogether, doubtless was, that if they did, they feared that their *authority* would be despised by the people. They had commanded them not to preach; they had threatened them, (Ac 4:18 5:28;) they had imprisoned them, (Ac 5:18;) and now, if they suffered them to go without even the *appearance* of punishment, their authority, they feared, would be despised by the nation, and it would be supposed that the apostles had triumphed over the sanhedrim. It is probable, also, that they were so indignant, that they could not suffer them to go without the gratification of subjecting them to the public odium of a *whipping*. Men, if they cannot accomplish their *full* purposes of malignity against the gospel, will take up with even some petty annoyance and malignity, rather than let it alone.

{a} "beaten them" Mt 10:17 {b} "commanded" Ac 4:18

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 41

Verse 41. *Rejoicing*. Nothing to most men would seem more disgraceful than a public whipping. It is a punishment inflicted usually not so much because it gives *pain*, as because it is esteemed to be attended with disgrace. The Jewish rulers, doubtless, desired that the apostles might be so affected with the sense of this disgrace as to be unwilling to appear again in public, or to preach the gospel any more. Yet in this they were disappointed. The effect was just the reverse. If it be asked *why they rejoiced* in this manner, we may reply,

(1.) because they were permitted thus to *imitate* the example of the Lord Jesus. He had been scourged and reviled, and they were glad that they were permitted to be treated as he was. Comp. Php 3:10; Col 1:24 1Pe 4:13, "Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings."

(2.) Because, by this, they had evidence that they were the friends and followers of Christ. It was clear they were engaged in the same cause that he was; enduring the same sufferings; and striving to advance the same interests. As they loved the *cause*, therefore they would rejoice in enduring even the shame and sufferings which the cause of necessity involved. The kingdom of the Redeemer was an object so transcendantly important, that *for* it they were willing to endure *all* the afflictions and disgrace which it might involve.

(3.) They had been told to *expect* this; it was a part of their enterprise. They had been warned of these things, and they now rejoiced that they had this evidence that they were engaged in the cause of truth, Mt 5:11,12, 10:17,22; 2Co 12:10 Php 1:29; Jas 1:2.

(4.) Religion appears to a Christian so excellent and lovely, that he is willing, for its sake, to endure trial, and persecution, and death. With *all* this, it is infinite gain; and we should be willing to endure these trials, if, by them, we may gain a crown of glory. Comp. Mr 10:30.

(5.) Christians are the professed friends of Christ. We showy attachment for friends by being willing to suffer for them; to bear contempt and reproach on their account; and to share *their* persecutions, sorrows, and calamities.

(6.) The apostles were engaged in a cause of innocence, truth, and benevolence. They had *done* nothing of which to be ashamed; and they rejoiced, therefore, in a conscience void of offence, and in the consciousness of integrity and benevolence. When other men *disgrace themselves* by harsh, or vile, or opprobrious language or conduct towards us, we should not feel that the disgrace belongs to us. It is *theirs*; and we should not be ashamed or distressed, though their rage should fall on us. See 1Pe 4:14-16.

Counted worthy. Esteemed to be deserving. That is, esteemed *fit* for it *by the sanhedrim*. It does not mean that God esteemed them worthy, but that the Jewish council judged them fit to suffer shame in this cause. They evinced so much zeal and determination of purpose, that they were judged fit objects to be treated as the Lord Jesus had himself been.

To suffer shame. To be *dishonoured or disgraced* in the estimation of the Jewish rulers. The *particular* disgrace to which reference is made here was *whipping*. To various other kinds of shame they were also exposed. They were persecuted, reviled, and finally put to death. Here we may remark, that a profession of the Christian religion has been in all ages esteemed by many to be a *disgrace*. The reasons are,

(1.) that Jesus is himself despised;

(2.) that his precepts are opposed to the gaiety and follies of the world;

(3.) that it attacks that on which the men of the world pride themselves—rank, wealth, fashion;

(4.) that it requires a *spirit* which the world esteems mean and grovelling— meekness, humility, self-denial, patience, forgiveness of injuries; and,

(5.) that it requires *duties*—prayer, praise, seriousness, benevolence-which the men of the world despise. All these things the world esteem degrading and mean; and hence they endeavour to subject those who practise them to disgrace. The *kinds* of disgrace to which Christians have been subjected are too numerous to be mentioned here. In former times they were subjected to the loss of property, of reputation, and to all the shame of public punishment, and to the terrors of the dungeon, the stake, or the rack. One main design of persecution was to select a kind of punishment so *disgraceful* as to deter others from professing religion. Disgrace even yet may attend it. It may subject one to the ridicule of friends—of even a father, mother, or brother. Christians hear their opinions abused; their names vilified; their Bible travestied; the name of their God profaned, and of their Redeemer blasphemed. Their feelings are often wantonly and rudely torn by the cutting sarcasm, or the bitter sneer. Books and songs revile them; their peculiarities are made the occasion of indecent merriment on the stage and in novels; and in this way they are still subjected to shame for the name of Jesus. Every one who becomes a Christian should remember that this is a part of his inheritance, and should not esteem it dishonourable to be treated as his Master was before him, Joh 15:18-20 Mt 10:25.

For his name. For attachment to him. **See Barnes "Ac 2:46"**.
{c} "rejoicing" Mt 5:12 2Co 12:10; Php 1:29 Jas 1:2; 1Pe 4:13-16

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 5 - Verse 42

Verse 42. *And daily*. Comp. 2Ti 4:2. **See Barnes "Ac 2:46"**.
{d} "daily in the temple" 2Ti 4:2

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 6

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 6 - Verse 1

CHAPTER 6

Verse 1. *In those days*, etc. The first part of this chapter contains an account of the appointment of *deacons*. It may be asked, perhaps, why the apostles did not appoint these officers at the first organization of the church? To this question we may reply, that it was better to defer the appointment until an occasion should occur when it should appear to be manifestly necessary and proper. When the church was small, its alms could be distributed by the apostles themselves without difficulty; but when it was greatly increased in when its charities would be multiplied, and when the distribution might give rise to contentions, it was necessary that this matter should be entrusted to the hands of *laymen*, and that the *ministry* should be freed from all embarrassment, and all suspicions of dishonesty and unfairness in regard to pecuniary matters. It has never been found to be wise that the temporal affairs of the church should be entrusted in any considerable degree to the clergy; and they should be freed from such sources of difficulty and embarrassment.

Was multiplied. By the accession of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost, and of those who were subsequently added, Ac 4:4 5:14.

A murmuring. *A complaint*—as if there had been partiality in the distribution.

Of the Grecians. There has been much diversity of opinion in regard to these persons, whether they were Jews that had lived among the Gentiles, and who spoke the Greek language, or whether they were proselytes from the Gentiles. The former is probably the correct opinion. The word here used is not that which is usually employed to designate the inhabitants of Greece, but it properly denotes those who *imitate* the customs and habits of the Greeks, who use the Greek language, etc. In the time when the gospel was first preached, there were two classes of Jews— those who remained in Palestine, who used the Hebrew language, etc., and who were appropriately called *Hebrews*; and those who were scattered among the Gentiles, who spoke the Greek language, and who used, in their synagogues, the Greek translation of the Old Testament called the Septuagint. These were called *Hellenists*, or, as it is in our translation, *Grecians*. **See Barnes "Joh 7:36"**.

These were doubtless the persons mentioned here—not those who were proselyted from Gentiles, but those who were not natives of Judea, who had come up to Jerusalem to attend the great festivals of the Jews.

See Ac 2:5,9-11.

Dissensions would be very likely to arise between these two classes of persons. The Jews of Palestine would pride themselves much on the fact that they dwelt in the land of the patriarchs, and the land of promise; that they used the language which their fathers spoke, and in which the oracles of God were given; and that they were constantly near the temple, and regularly engaged in its solemnities. On the other hand, the Jews from other parts of the world would be suspicious, jealous, and envious of their brethren, and would be likely to charge them with partiality, or of taking advantage in their intercourse with them. These occasions of strife would not be destroyed by their conversion to Christianity, and one of them is furnished on this occasion.

Because their widows, etc. The property which had been contributed, or thrown into common stock, was understood to be designed for the equal benefit of *all* the poor, and particularly it would seem for the poor widows. The distribution before this seems to have been made by the apostles themselves—or possibly, as Mosheim conjectures, (Comm. de rebus Christianovum ante Constantinure, p. 139, 118,) the apostles committed the distribution of these funds to the Hebrews, and hence the Grecians are represented as murmuring against them, and not against the apostles.

In the daily ministration. In the daily distribution which was made for their wants. Comp. Ac 4:35. The property was contributed doubtless with an understanding that it should be *equally* and justly distributed to all classes of Christians that had need. It is clear from the Epistles that widows were objects of special attention in the primitive church, and that the first Christians regarded it as a matter of indispensable obligation to provide for their wants, 1Ti 5:3,9,10,16 Jas 1:27.

{*} "Grecians" "Hellenistic Greeks" {e} "against the Hebrews" Ac 9:29 11:20 {a} "neglected" Ac 4:35 {+} "ministration" "distribution of alms"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 6 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Then the twelve*. That is, the apostles. Matthias had been added to them after the apostasy of Judas, which had completed the original number.

The multitude of the disciples. It is not necessary to suppose that *all* the disciples were convened, which amounted to many thousands, but that the business was laid before a large number; or perhaps *the multitude* here means those merely who were more particularly interested in the matter, and who had been engaged in the complaint.

It is not reason. The original words used here properly denote, it is not *pleasing*, or *agreeable*; but the meaning evidently is, it is not *fit*, or *proper*. It would be a departure from the design of their appointment, which was to preach the gospel, and not to attend to the pecuniary affairs of the church.

Leave the word of God. That we should neglect, or abandon the preaching of the gospel so much as would be necessary, if we attended personally to the distribution of the alms of the church. The *gospel* is here called the *word of God*, because it is his message; it is that which he has *spoken*; or which he has commanded to be proclaimed to men.

Serve tables. This expression properly denotes to take care of, or to provide for the table, or for the daily wants of the family. It is an expression that properly applies to a steward, or a servant. The word *tables* is, however, sometimes used with reference to *money*, as being the place where money was kept for the purpose of exchange, etc., Mt 21:12 25:27. Here the expression means, therefore, to attend to the pecuniary transactions of the church, and to make the proper distribution for the wants of the poor.

{b} "It is not reason" Ex 18:17-26

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 6 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Look ye out*. Select, or choose. As this was a matter pertaining to their own pecuniary affairs, it was proper that *they* should be permitted to choose such men as they could confide in. By this means the apostles would be free from all suspicions. It could not be pretended that *they* were partial, nor could it ever be charged on them that they wished to embezzle a part of the funds by managing them themselves, or by entrusting them to men of their own selection. It follows from this, also, that the right of selecting *deacons* resides *in* the church, and does not pertain to the ministry. And it is evidently proper that men who are to be entrusted with the alms of the church should be selected by the church itself.

Among you. That is, from among the Grecians and Hebrews, that there may be justice done, and no further cause of complaint.

Seven men. Seven was a sacred number among the Hebrews, but there does not appear to have been any *mystery* in choosing this number. It was a convenient number, sufficiently numerous to secure the faithful performance of the duty, and not so numerous as to produce confusion and embarrassment. It does not follow, however, that the same number is now to be chosen as deacons in a church, for the precise number is not commanded.

Of honest report. Of fair reputation; regarded as men of integrity. Greek, *testified of*, or *borne witness to*, i.e. whose characters were well known and fair.

Full of the Holy Ghost. This evidently does not mean endowed with miraculous gifts, or the power of speaking foreign languages, for such gifts were not necessary to the discharge of their office; but it means men who were eminently under the influence of the Holy Ghost, or who were of distinguished piety. This was all that was necessary in the case, and this is all that the words fairly imply in this place.

And wisdom. Prudence, or skill, to make a wise and equable distribution. The qualifications of deacons are still further stated and illustrated in 1Ti 3:8-10. In this place it is seen that they must be men of eminent piety and fair character, and that they must possess *prudence*, or wisdom, to manage the affairs connected with their office. These qualifications are indispensable to a faithful discharge of the duty entrusted to the officers of the church.

Whom we may appoint. Whom we may *constitute*, or set over this business. The way in which this was done was by prayer and the imposition of hands, Ac 6:6. Though they were *selected* by the church, yet the power of ordaining them, or setting them apart, was retained by the apostles. Thus the fights of *both* were preserved— the right of the church to designate those who should serve them in the office of deacon, and the right of the apostles to organize and establish the church

with its appropriate officers; on the one hand, a due regard to the liberty and privileges of the Christian community, and on the other, the security of proper respect for the office, as being of apostolic appointment and authority.

Over this business. That is, over the distribution of the alms of the church—not to preach, or to govern the church, but solely to take care of the sacred funds of charity, and distribute them to supply the wants of the poor. The office is distinguished from that of *preaching* the gospel. To that the apostles were to attend. The deacons were expressly set apart to a different work, and to that work they should be confined. In this account of their original appointment, there is not the slightest intimation that they were to preach, but the contrary is supposed in the whole transaction. Nor is there here the slightest intimation that they were regarded as an order of clergy, or as in any way connected with the clerical office; In the ancient synagogues of the Jews there were three men to whom was entrusted the care of the poor. They were called by the Hebrews *Parnasin* or *Pastors*. (Lightfoot, Horse Heb. et Talin. Mt 4:23.) From these officers the apostles took the idea probably of appointing deacons in the Christian church, and doubtless intended that their duties should be the same.

{c} "look ye out" De 1:13 {d} "honest report" Ac 16:2 1ti 3:7,8,10

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 6 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *But we will give ourselves continually*. The original expression here used denotes *intense and persevering* application to a thing, or unwearied effort in it. **See Barnes "Ac 1:14"**.

It means that the apostles meant to make this their constant and main object, undistracted by the cares of life, and even by attention to the temporal wants of the church.

To prayer. Whether this means *private* or *public* prayer cannot be certainly determined. The passage, however, would rather incline us to suppose that the *latter* was meant, as it is immediately connected with preaching. If so, then the phrase denotes that they would give themselves to the duties of their office, one part of which was public prayer, and another preaching. Still it is to be believed that the apostles felt the need of secret prayer, and practised it, as preparatory to their public preaching.

And to the ministry of the word. To preaching the gospel; or communicating the message of eternal life to the world. The word ministry —*diakonia*—properly denotes the employment of a *servant*, and is given to the preachers of the gospel because they are employed in this *service* as the servants of God, and of the church. We have here a view of what the apostles thought to be the proper work of the ministry. They were set apart to this work. It was their main, their only employment. To this their lives were to be devoted, and both by their example and their writings they have shown that it was on this principle they acted. Comp. 1Ti 4:15,16; 2Ti 4:2.

It follows, also, that if their time and talents were to be wholly devoted to this work, it was reasonable that they should receive competent support from the churches, and this reasonable claim is often urged by the apostles. See 1Co 9:7-14 Ga 6:6.

{e} "give ourselves" 1Ti 4:15

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 6 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And the saying*. The *word*—the counsel, or command.

And they chose Stephen, etc. A man who soon showed (Ac 7) that he was every way qualified for his office, and fitted to defend also the cause of the Lord Jesus. This man had the distinguished honour of being the first Christian martyr, Ac 7.

And Nicolas. From this man some of the Fathers (Ire. lib. i. 27; Epipha. 1; Haeres. 5) say that the sect of the *Nicolaitanes*, mentioned with so much disapprobation, (Re 2:6,15,) took their rise. But the evidence of this is not clear.

A proselyte. A *proselyte* is one who is converted from one religion to another. **See Barnes "Mt 23:15"**.

The word does not mean here that he was a convert to Christianity—which was true—but that he had been converted at Antioch from paganism to the Jewish religion. As this is the only proselyte mentioned among the seven deacons, it is evident that the others were native-born Jews, though a part of them might have been born out of Palestine, and have been of the denomination of *Grecians*, or *Hellenists*.

Of Antioch. This city, often mentioned in the New Testament, (Ac 11:19,20,26 15:22,35 Ga 2:11, etc.,) was situated in Syria on the river Orontes, and was formerly called *Riblath*. It is not mentioned in the Old Testament, but is frequently mentioned in the Apocrypha. It was built by Seleucus Nicanor, A. D. 301, and was named *Antioch*, in honour of his father Antiochus. It became the seat of empire of the Syrian kings of the Macedonian race, and afterwards of the Roman governors of the eastern provinces. In this place the disciples of Christ were first called Christians, Ac 11:26. Josephus says it was the third city in size of the Roman provinces, being inferior only to Seleucia and Alexandria. It was long, indeed, the most powerful city of the East. The city was almost square, had many gates, was adorned with fine fountains, and possessed great fertility of soil and commercial opulence. It was subject to earthquakes, and was often almost destroyed by them. In A.D. 588, above sixty thousand persons perished in it in this manner. In A.D. 970, an army of one hundred thousand Saracens besieged it, and took it. In 1268 it was taken possession of by the Sultan of Egypt, who demolished it, and placed it under the dominion of the Turk. It is now called *Antakia*; and till the year 1822, it occupied a remote corner of the ancient enclosure of its walls, its splendid buildings being reduced to hovels, and its population living in Turkish debasement. It contains now about ten thousand inhabitants.— *Robinson's Calmet*. This city should be distinguished from Antioch in Pisidia, also mentioned in the New Testament, Ac 13:14.

{*} "saying" "Words" {a} "full of faith" Ac 11:24 {+} "Holy Ghost" "Holy Spirit" {b} "Philip" Ac 8:5,26, 21:6

{c} "Nicolas" Re 2:6,15

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 6 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *And when they had prayed*. Invoking in this manner the blessing of God on them to attend them in the discharge of the duties of their office.

They laid their *hands*, etc. Among the Jews it was customary to lay hands on the head of a person who was set apart to any particular office, Nu 27:18; comp. Ac 8:19. This was done, not to impart any power or ability, but to *designate* that they received their authority, or commission, from those who thus laid their hands on them, as the act of laying hands on the sick by the Saviour was an act signifying that the power of healing came from him, Mt 9:18; comp. Mr 16:18. In this case the laying on of the hands conveyed of itself no healing power, but was a sign or token that the power came from the Lord Jesus. Ordination has been uniformly performed in this way. See 1Ti 5:22. Though the seven deacons had been chosen by the church to this work, yet they derived their immediate commission and authority from the apostles.

{d} "when they prayed" Ac 1:24 13:3 {e} "laid their hand" Ac 9:17 1Ti 4:14, 5:22 2Ti 1:6

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 6 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *And the word of God increased*. That is, the gospel was more and more successful, or became more mighty and extensive in its influence. An instance of this success is immediately added.

And a great company of the priests. A great *multitude*. This is recorded justly as a remarkable instance of the power of the gospel. How great this company was is not mentioned. But the number of the priests in Jerusalem was very great; and their conversion was a striking proof of the power of truth. It is probable that they had been opposed to the gospel with quite as much hostility as any other class of the Jews. And it is now mentioned, as worthy of special record, that the gospel was sufficiently mighty to humble even the proud, and haughty, and selfish, and envious priest to the foot of the cross. One design of the gospel is to evince the power of truth in subduing all classes of men; and hence in the New Testament we have the record of its having actually subdued every class to the obedience of faith. Some MSS., however, here instead of *priests* read *Jews*. And this reading is followed in the Syriac version.

Were obedient to the faith. The word *faith* here is evidently put for the *Christian religion*. Faith is one of the main requirements of the gospel, Mr 16:16, and by a figure of speech is put for the gospel itself. To become *obedient to the faith*, therefore, is to obey the requirements of the gospel, particularly that which requires us to *believe*. Comp. Ro 10:16. By the accession of the *priests* also no small part of the reproach would be taken away from the gospel, that it made converts only among the lower classes of the people. Comp. Joh 7:48.

{f} "the word of God" Isa 55:11 Ac 12:24, 19:20

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 6 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *And Stephen*. The remarkable death of this first Christian martyr, which soon occurred, gave occasion to the sacred writer to give a detailed account of his character, and of the causes which led to his death. Hitherto the opposition of the Jews had been confined to threats and imprisonment; but it was now to burst forth with furious rage and madness, that could be satisfied

only with blood. This was the first in a series of persecutions against Christians that filled the church with blood, and that closed the lives of thousands, perhaps millions, in the great work of establishing the gospel on the earth.

Full of faith. Full of *confidence* in God; or trusting entirely to his promises. **See Barnes "Mr 16:16"**.

And power. The power which was evinced in working miracles.

Wonders. This is one of the words commonly used in the New Testament to denote miracles.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 6 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Then there arose*. That is, they stood up against him; or they opposed him.

Of the synagogue. **See Barnes "Mt 4:23"**.

The Jews were scattered in all parts of the world. In every place they would have synagogues. But it is also probable that there would be enough foreign Jews residing at Jerusalem from each of those places to maintain the worship of the synagogue; and at the great feasts those synagogues, adapted to Jewish people of different nations, would be attended by those who came up to attend the great feasts. It is certain that there was a large number of synagogues at Jerusalem. The common estimate is, that there were four hundred and eighty in the city.—(*Lightfoot, Vitringa*.)

Of the Libertines. There has been very great difference of opinion about the meaning of this word. The chief opinions may be reduced to three;

(1.) The word is Latin, and means, properly, a *freedman*, a man who had been a slave and was set at liberty. And many have supposed that these persons were manumitted slaves, of Roman origin, but which had become proselyted to the Jewish religion, and who had a synagogue in Jerusalem. This opinion is not very probable; though it is certain, from *Tacitus*, (Annul. lib. il. c. 85,) that there were many persons of this description at Rome. He says that four thousand Jewish proselytes of Roman slaves made free were sent at one time to Sardinia.

(2.) A second opinion is, that these persons were Jews by birth, and had been taken captives by the Romans, and then set at liberty, and thus called *freedmen*, or *libertines*. That there *were* many Jews of this description there can be no doubt. Pompey the Great, when he subjugated Judea, sent large numbers of the Jews to Rome.— (*Philo, in Legat. ad Caium*.) These Jews were set at liberty at Rome, and assigned a place beyond the Tiber for a residence. See Introduction to the Epistle to the Romans. These persons are by *Philo* called *libertines*, or *freedmen*.—(*Kuinoel*, in loco.) Many Jews were also conveyed as captives by Ptolemy I. to Egypt, and obtained a residence in that country and the vicinity. But

(3) another and more probable opinion is, that they took their name from some *place* which they occupied. This opinion is more probable, from the fact that all the *other* persons mentioned here are named from the countries which they occupied. Suidas says that this is the name of a place. And in one of the Fathers this passage occurs: "Victor, bishop of the Catholic church at *Libertina*, says unity is there," etc. From this passage it is plain that there was a place called *Libertina*. That place was in Africa, not far from ancient Carthage. See Bishop *Pearce's* Comment on this place.

Cyrenians. Jews who dwelt at *Cyrene* in Africa. **See Barnes "Mt 27:32"**.

Alexandrians. Inhabitants of Alexandria in Egypt. It was founded by Alexander the Great, B.C. 332, and was peopled by colonies of Greeks and Jews. This city was much celebrated, and contained not less than three hundred thousand free citizens, and as many slaves. The city was the residence of many Jews. Josephus says that Alexander himself assigned to them a particular quarter of the city, and allowed them equal privileges with the Greeks. (Antiq. xiv. 7, 2; against Apion, ii. 4.) Philo affirms, that of five parts of the city the Jews inhabited two. According to his statement, there dwelt in his time at Alexandria, and the other Egyptian cities, not less than *ten hundred thousand Jews*. Amron, the general of Omar, when he took the city, said that it contained forty thousand tributary Jews. At this place the famous version of the Old Testament called the *Septuagint*, or the Alexandrian version, was made. See Robinson's Calmet.

Cilicia. This was a province of Asia Minor, on the sea-coast, at the north of Cyprus. The capital of this province was Tarsus, the native place of Paul, Ac 9:11. And as Paul was of this place, and belonged doubtless to this synagogue, it is probable that he was one who was engaged in this dispute with Stephen. Comp. Ac 7:58.

Of Asia. **See Barnes "Ac 2:9".**

Disputing with Stephen. Doubtless on the question whether Jesus was the Messiah. This word does not denote *angry disputing*, but is commonly used to denote fair and impartial inquiry; and it is probable that the discussion began in this way; and when they were overcome by *argument*, they resorted, as disputants are apt to do, to angry criminations and violence.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 6 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *To resist*. That is, they were not able to *answer* his arguments.

The wisdom. This properly refers to his knowledge of the Scriptures; his skill in what *the Jews* esteemed to be wisdom—acquaintance with their sacred writings, opinions, etc.

And the spirit. This has been commonly understood of the Holy Spirit, by which, he was aided; but it rather means the *energy*, *power*, or *ardour* of Stephen. He *evinced* a spirit of zeal and sincerity which they could not withstand; which served, more than mere argument could have done, to convince them that he was right. The evidence of sincerity, honesty, and zeal in a public speaker, will often go farther to convince the great mass of mankind, than the most able argument, if delivered in a cold and indifferent manner.

{a} "able to resist" Lu 21:15

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 6 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Then they suborned men*. To *suborn* in law, means to procure a person to take such a false oath as constitutes perjury.— *Webster*. It has substantially this sense here. It means that they induced them to declare that which was false, or to bring a false accusation against him. This was done not by declaring a palpable and open falsehood, but by *perverting* his doctrines, and by stating their own *inferences* as what he had actually maintained—the common way in which men oppose

doctrines from which they differ. The Syriac reads this place, "Then they sent certain men, and instructed them that they should say," etc. This was repeating an artifice which they practised so successfully in relation to the Lord Jesus Christ. See Mt 26:60,61.

We have heard, etc. *When* they alleged that they had heard this, is not said. Probably, however, in some of his discourses with the people, when he wrought miracles and wonders among them, Ac 6:8. *Blasphemous words*. **See Barnes "Mt 9:3"**.

Moses was regarded with profound reverence. His laws they regarded as unchangeable. Any intimation, therefore, that there was a greater lawgiver than he, or that his institutions were mere shadows and types, and were no longer binding, would be regarded as blasphemy, even though it should be spoken with the highest respect for Moses. That the Mosaic institutions were to be changed, and give place to another and better dispensation, all the Christian teachers would affirm; but this was not said with a design to *blaspheme* or revile Moses. *In the view of the Jews*, to say that was to speak blasphemy; and hence, instead of reporting what he actually *did* say, they accused him of *saying* what they regarded as blasphemy. If reports are made of what men say, their very *words* should be reported; and we should not report *our* inferences or *impressions* as what they actually said.

And against *God*. God was justly regarded by the Jews as the Giver of their law, and the Author of their institutions. But the Jews, either wilfully or involuntarily, not knowing that they were a shadow of good things to come, and were therefore to pass away, regarded all intimations of such a change as blasphemy against God. God had a right to change or abolish those ceremonial observances; and it was not blasphemy in Stephen to declare it.

{b} "suborned men" 1Ki 21:10,13; Mt 26:59,60

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 6 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *And they stirred up the people*. They excited the people, or alarmed their fears, as had been done before when they sought to put the Lord Jesus to death, Mt 27:20.

The elders. The members of the sanhedrim, or great council.

Scribes. **See Barnes "Mt 2:4"**.

To the council. To the sanhedrim, or the great council of the nation, which claimed jurisdiction in the matters of religion. **See Barnes "Mt 2:4"**.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 6 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *And set up false witnesses*. It has been made a question why these persons are called *false* witnesses, since it is supposed by many that they reported merely the *words* of Stephen. It may be replied, that *if* they did report merely his words, if Stephen had actually said what they affirmed, yet they perverted his meaning. *They* accused him of *blasphemy*, that is, of calumnious and reproachful words against Moses, and against God. That Stephen had spoken in such a manner, or had designed to *reproach* Moses, there is no evidence. What was said in the mildest manner,

and in the way of cool argument, might easily be perverted so as in *their view* to amount to blasphemy. But there is no evidence whatever that Stephen had ever used these words on any occasion. And it is altogether improbable that he ever did, for the following reasons:

(1.) Jesus *himself* never affirmed that *he* would destroy that place, he uniformly taught that it would be done by the *Gentiles*, Mt 24. It is altogether improbable, therefore, that Stephen should declare any such thing.

(2.) It is equally improbable that he taught that Jesus would abolish the peculiar customs and rites of the Jews. It was long, and after much discussion, before the apostles themselves were convinced of it; and when those customs were changed, it was done gradually. See Ac 10:14, etc.; Ac 11:2, etc. Ac 15:20; Ac 21:20, etc. The probability therefore is, that the whole testimony *was false*, and was artfully invented to produce the utmost exasperation among the people, and yet was at the same time so plausible as to be easily believed. For on this point the Jews were particularly sensitive; and it is clear that they had some expectations that the Messiah *would* produce some such changes. Comp. Mt 26:61, with Da 9:26,27. The same charge was afterwards brought against Paul, which he promptly denied. See Ac 25:8.

This holy place. The temple.

The law. The law of Moses.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 6 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Shall change*. Shall abolish them; or shall introduce others in their place.

The customs. The ceremonial rites and observations of sacrifices, festivals, etc. appointed by Moses.

{c} "we have heard him" Ac 25:8 {d} "shall destroy this place" Da 9:26 {1} "customs" "rites"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 6 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Looking stedfastly on him*. Fixing the eyes intently on him. Probably they were attracted by the unusual appearance of the man, hie meekness, and calm and collected fearlessness, and the proofs of conscious innocence and sincerity.

The face of an angel. This expression is one evidently denoting that he manifested evidence of sincerity, gravity, fearlessness, confidence in God. It is used in the Old Testament to denote peculiar wisdom, 2Sa 14:17 19:27. In Ge 33:10, it is used to denote peculiar majesty and glory, as if it were the face of God. When Moses came down from Mount Sinai from communning with God, it is said that the skin of his face shone, so that the children of Israel were afraid to come nigh to him, Ex 34:29,30; 2Co 3:7,13.

Comp. Re 1:16 Mt 17:2. The expression is used to denote the impression which will be produced on the countenance by communion with God; the calm serenity and composure which will follow a confident committing of all into his hands. It is not meant that there was anything miraculous in the case of Stephen, but is an expression denoting his calmness, and dignity, and confidence in

God; all of which were so marked on his countenance, that it impressed them with clear proofs of his innocence and piety. The expression is very common in the Jewish writings. It is common for deep feeling, sincerity, and confidence in God, to impress themselves on the countenance. Any deep emotion will do this; and it is to be expected that religious feeling, the most tender and solemn of all feeling, will diffuse seriousness, serenity, calmness, and peace, not affected sanctimoniousness, over the countenance.

In this chapter we have another specimen of the manner in which the church of the Lord Jesus was reared on earth. It was from the beginning amid scenes of persecution; and encountering opposition adapted to try the nature and power of religion. If Christianity was an imposture, it had enemies acute and malignant enough to detect the imposition. The learned, the cunning, and the mighty rose up in opposition, and by all the arts of sophistry, all the force of authority, and all the fearfulness of power, attempted to destroy it in the commencement. Yet it lived; and it gained new accessions of strength from every new form of opposition, and only evinced its genuineness more and more by showing that it was superior to the arts and malice of earth and of hell.

{e} "his face" Ex 34:30,35

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 1

CHAPTER 7

Introduction

THIS chapter contains the defence of Stephen before the sanhedrim, or great council of the Jews. There has been great diversity of opinion about the object which Stephen had in view in this defence, and about the reason why he introduced at such length the history of the Jewish people. But a few remarks may perhaps show his design, He was accused of *blasphemy in speaking against the institutions of Moses and the temple, that is, against everything held sacred among the Jews*. To meet this charge, he gives a statement, at length, of his belief in the Mosaic religion, in the great points of their history, and in the fact that God had interposed in a remarkable manner in defending them from dangers. By this historical statement he avows his full belief in the Divine origin of the Jewish religion, and thus *indirectly* repels the charge of blasphemy. It is further to be remembered, that this was the best way of securing the *attention* of the council. Had he entered on an abstract defence, he might expect to be stopped by their cavils or their clamour. But the history of their own nation was a favourite topic among the Jews. They were always ready to listen to an account of their ancestors; and to secure their attention, nothing more was necessary than to refer to their illustrious lives and deeds. Comp. Psalm 78, 105, 106, 135, Ezekiel 20. In this way Stephen secured their attention, and practically repelled the charge of speaking reproachfully of Moses and the temple. He showed them that *he* had as firm a belief as they in the great historical facts,of their nation. It is to be remembered, also, that this speech was broken off in the midst, Ac 7:53,54, and

it is therefore difficult to tell what the design of Stephen was. It seems clear, however, that he intended to convict *them* of guilt, by showing that they sustained the same character as their fathers had manifested, Ac 7:51,52) and there is some probability that he intended to show that the acceptable worship of God was not to be confined to any place particularly, from the fact that the worship of Abraham, and the patriarchs, and Moses, was acceptable *before* the temple was reared, (Ac 7:2, etc.,) and from the declaration in Ac 7:48, that God dwells not in temples made with hands. All that can be said here is, that Stephen

(1) showed his full belief in the Divine appointment of Moses, and the historical facts of their religion.

(2.) That he laid *the foundation* of an argument to show that those things were not perpetually binding, and that acceptable worship *might* be offered in other places and in another manner than at the temple.

It has been asked in what way Luke became acquainted with this speech so as to repeat it. The Scripture has not informed us. But we may remark,

(1.) that Stephen was the first martyr. His death, and the incidents connected with it, could not but be a matter of interest to the first Christians; and the *substance* of his defence, at least, would be familiar to them. There is no improbability in supposing that imperfect copies might be preserved by writing, and circulated among them.

(2.) Luke was the companion of Paul. (See Introduction to the Gospel by Luke.) Paul was present when this defence was delivered, and was a man who would be likely to *remember* what was said on such an occasion. From him Luke might have derived the account of this defence. In regard to this discourse, it may be further remarked, that it is not necessary to suppose that *Stephen* was *inspired*. Even if there should be found inaccuracies, as some critics have pretended, in the address, it would not militate against its genuineness. It is the defence of a man on trial under a serious charge; not a man of whom there is evidence that he was *inspired*, but a pious, devoted, heavenly-minded man. All that the sacred narrative is responsible for is the *correctness* of the report. Luke alleges only that *such a speech was in fact delivered*, without affirming that every particular in it is correct.

Verse 1. *Then said the High Priest*. **See Barnes "Mt 2:4".**

In this case the high priest seems to have presided in the council.

Are these things so? To wit, the charge alleged against him of blasphemy against Moses and the temple, Ac 6:13,14.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Men, brethren, and fathers*. These were the usual titles by which the sanhedrim was addressed. In all this Stephen was perfectly respectful, and showed that he was disposed to render due honour to the institutions of the nation.

The God of glory. This is a Hebrew form of expression denoting *the glorious God*. It properly denotes his majesty, or splendour, or magnificence; and the word glory is often applied to the splendid appearances in which God has manifested himself to men, De 5:24; Ex 33:18 16:7,10 Le 9:23; Nu 14:10.

Perhaps Stephen meant to affirm that God appeared to Abraham in some such glorious or splendid manifestation, by which he would know that he was addressed by God. Stephen, moreover, evidently uses the word *glory* to repel the charge of *blasphemy* against God, and to show that he regarded him as worthy of honour and praise.

Appeared, etc. In what manner he appeared is not said. In Ge 12:1, it is simply recorded that God *had said* unto Abraham, etc.

Unto our father. The Jews valued themselves much on being the children of Abraham, **See Barnes "Mt 3:9"**.

This expression was therefore well calculated to conciliate their minds.

When he was in Mesopotamia. In Ge 11:31, it is said that Abraham dwelt *in Ur of the Chaldees*. The word Mesopotamia properly denotes the region between the two rivers, the Euphrates and the Tigris. **See Barnes "Ac 2:9"**.

The name is Greek, and the region had also other names before the Greek name was given to it. In Ge 11:31 15:7, it is called Ur of the Chaldees. Mesopotamia and Chaldea might not exactly coincide; but it is evident that Stephen meant to say that *Ur* was in the country afterwards called Mesopotamia. Its precise situation is unknown. A Persian fortress of this name is mentioned by Ammianus, (xxv. 8,) between Nesibis and the Tigris.

Before he dwelt in Charran. From Ge 11:31, it would seem that Terah took his son Abraham of his own accord, and removed to Haran. But, from Ge 12:1 15:7, it appears that God had commanded *Abraham* to remove, and he so ordered it in his providence that *Terah* was disposed to remove his family with an intention of going into the land of Canaan, (*Charran*.) This is the Greek form of the Hebrew word *Haran*, Ge 11:31. This place was also in Mesopotamia, in 36 52' N. lat. and 39 5' E. lon. Here Terah died, (Ge 11:32;) and to this place Jacob retired when he fled from his brother Esau, Ge 27:43. It is situated "in a flat and sandy plain, and is inhabited by a few wandering Arabs, who select it for the delicious water which it contains."—*Robinson' s Calmet*.

{a} "brethren" Ac 22:1 {*} "Charran" "Haran"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And said unto him*. How long this was said unto him before he went is not recorded. Moses simply says that God had commanded him to go, Ge 12:1.

Thy kindred. Thy relatives, or family connexions. It seems that *Terah* went with him as far as to Haran; but Abraham was apprized that he was to leave his family, and to go almost alone.

Into the land, etc. The country was yet unknown. The place was to be shown him. This is presented in the New Testament as a strong instance of faith, Heb 11:8,9. It was an act of *simple confidence* in God. And to leave his country and home, to go into a land of strangers, not knowing whither he went, required strong confidence in God. It is a simple illustration of what man is always required to do at the commands of God. Thus the gospel requires him to commit all to God; to yield body and soul to his disposal; and to be ready at his command to forsake father and mother, and friends, and houses, and lands, for the sake of the Lord Jesus, Lu 14:33; Mt 19:27,29. The trials which Abraham might have anticipated may be readily conceived. He was going, in a rude and barbarous age of the world, into a land of strangers. He was without arms or armies, almost alone.

He did not even know the nature or situation of the land, or the character of its inhabitants. He had no title to it; no claim to urge; and he went depending on the simple promise of God that he would give it to him. He went, therefore, trusting simply to the promise of God. And thus his conduct illustrated precisely what we are to do in all the future—in reference to all our coming life, and to the eternity before us-we are to trust simply to the promise of God, and do that which he requires. This is faith. In Abraham it was as simple and intelligible an operation of mind as ever occurs in any instance. Nor is faith in the Scripture regarded as more mysterious than any other mental operation. Had Abraham *seen* all that was to result from his going into that land, it would have been sufficient *reason* to induce him to do as he did. But God saw it; and Abraham was required to act just *as if* he had seen it all, and all the reasons why he was called. On the strength of God's promises he was called to act. This was *faith*. It did not require him to act where there was *no reason* for his so acting, but where he did not *see* the reason. So in all cases of faith. If man could see all that God sees, he would perceive reasons for acting as God requires. But the reasons of things are often concealed, and man is required to act on the *belief* that *God* sees reasons why he should so act. To act under the proper impression of that truth which God presents, is faith—as simple and intelligible as any other act or operation of the mind. **See Barnes "Mr 16:16".**

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Land of the Chaldaeans*. From Ur of the Chaldees, Ge 11:31.

When his father was dead. This passage has given rise to no small difficulty in the interpretation. The difficulty is this: From Ge 11:26, it would seem that Abraham was born when Terah was seventy years of age—" And Terah lived seventy years and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran." From Ge 12:4, it seems that Abraham was seventy-five years of age when he departed from Haran to Canaan. The age of Terah was therefore but one hundred and forty-five years. Yet, in Ge 11:32, it is said that Terah was two hundred and five years old when he died; thus leaving sixty years of Terah's life beyond the time when Abraham left Haran. Various modes have been proposed of meeting this difficulty.

(1.) Errors in *numbers* are more likely to occur than any other. In the *Samaritan* copy of the Pentateuch, it is said that Terah died in Haran at the age of one hundred and five years; which would suppose that his death occurred forty years before Abraham left Haran. But the Hebrew, Latin Vulgate, Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic, read it two hundred and five years.

(2.) It is not affirmed that Abraham was born just at the time when Terah was seventy years of age. All that the passage in Ge 11:26 proves, according to the usual meaning of similar expressions, is, that Terah was seventy years old *before* he had any sons, and that the three were born subsequently to that. But which was born first, or how long intervals intervened between their birth, does not appear. Assuredly it does not mean that all were born precisely at the time when Terah was seventy years of age. Neither does it appear that Abraham was the eldest of the three. The sons of Noah are said to have been Shem, Ham, and Japheth, (Ge 5:32;) yet Japheth, though mentioned last, was the eldest, (Ge 10:21.) As Abraham afterwards became much the most distinguished, and as he was the father of the Jewish people of whom Moses was writing, it was natural that he should be mentioned first. If it cannot be *proved* that Abraham was the eldest, as assuredly it cannot be, then

there is no improbability in supposing that his birth might have occurred many years after Terah was seventy years of age.

(3.) The Jews unanimously affirm that Terah relapsed into idolatry before Abraham left Haran; and this they denominate *death*, or a moral death.—*Kuinoel*. It is certain, therefore, that, from some cause, they were accustomed to speak of Terah as *dead*, before Abraham left him. Stephen only used language which was customary among the Jews; and would use it doubtless correctly, though we may not be able to see precisely how it can be reconciled with the account in Genesis.

{a} "Then came he out" Ge 12:5 {*} "Charran" "Haran"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And he gave him none inheritance*. Abraham led a wandering life; and this passage means, that he did not himself receive a permanent possession or residence in that land. The only land which he owned was the field which he *purchased* of the children of Heth, for a burial-place, Ge 23. As this was obtained by *purchase*, and not by the direct gift of God, and as it was not designed for a *residence*, it is said that God gave him no *inheritance*. It is mentioned as a strong instance of his faith, that he should remain there without a permanent residence himself, with only the prospect that his children, at some distant period, would inherit it.

Not so much as *to set his foot on*. This is a proverbial expression, denoting in an emphatic manner that he had *no land*, De 2:5.

Would give it to him. Ge 13:15. Abraham did not himself possess all that land; and the promise is evidently equivalent to saying that it should be conferred on the family of Abraham, or the family of which he was the father, without affirming that he should himself personally possess it. It is true, however, that Abraham himself afterwards dwelt many years in that land as his home, Ge 13, etc.

For a possession. To be held as his own property.

When as yet he had no child. When there was no human probability that he would have any posterity. Comp. Ge 15:2,3, 18:11,12.

This is mentioned as a strong instance of his faith: "Who against hope believed in hope," Ro 4:18.

{b} "he promised" Ge 13:15

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *And God spake on this wise*. In this manner, Ge 15:13,14.

His seed. His posterity; his descendants.

Should sojourn. This means that they should have a *temporary residence* there. The word is used in opposition to a fixed, permanent home, and is applied to travellers or foreigners.

In a strange land. In the Hebrew, (Ge 15:13,) "Shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs." The land of Canaan and the land of Egypt were to them strange lands, though the obvious reference here is to the latter.

Should bring them into bondage. Or, should make them slaves, Ex 1:11.

And entreat them evil. Should *oppress* or *afflict* them.

Four hundred years. This is the precise time which is mentioned by Moses, Ge 15:13. Great perplexity has been experienced in explaining this passage, or reconciling it with other statements. In Ex 12:40, it is said that their sojourning in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. Josephus (Antiq. b. ii.chap. ix. 2]) also says, that the time in which they were in Egypt was four hundred years; though in another place (Antiq. b. ii. chap. xv. & 2) he says, that they left Egypt four hundred and thirty years after their forefather Abraham came to Canaan, but two hundred and fifteen years after Jacob removed to Egypt. Paul also (Ga 3:17) says, that it was four hundred and thirty years from the time when the promise was given to Abraham to the time when the law was given on Mount Sinai. The Samaritan Pentateuch says also, (Ex 12:40,) that the "dwelling of the sons of Israel, and of their fathers, which they dwelt *in the land of Canaan*, and in the land of Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years." The same is the version of the Septuagint. A *part* of this perplexity is removed by the fact that Stephen and Moses use, in accordance with a very common custom, *round numbers* in speaking of it; and thus speak of four hundred years, when the *literal* time was four hundred and thirty. The other perplexities are not so easily removed. From the account which Moses has given of the lives of certain persons, it would seem clear that the time which they spent in *Egypt* was not four hundred years. From Ge 46:8,11, it appears that *Kohath* was born when Jacob went into Egypt. He lived one hundred and thirty-three years, Ex 6:18. Amram, his son, and the father of Moses, lived one hundred and thirty-seven years, Ex 6:20. Moses was eighty years old when he was sent to Pharoah, Ex 7:7. The *whole* time thus mentioned, including the time in which the father lived *after* his son was born, was only three hundred and fifty years. Exclusive of that, it is reasonable to suppose that the actual time of their being in Egypt could not have been but about two hundred years, according to one account of Josephus. The question then is, how can these accounts be reconciled? The only satisfactory way is, by supposing that the four hundred and thirty years includes the whole time from the calling of Abraham to the departure from Egypt. And that this was the fact is probable from the following circumstances:

(1.) The purpose of *all* the narratives on this subject is to trace the period *before* they became finally settled in the land of Canaan. During *all* this period from the calling of Abraham, they were in a wandering, unfixed situation. This constituted substantially one period, including all their oppressions, hardships, and dangers; and it was natural to have reference to this *entire* period in any account which was given.

(2.) All this period was properly the period of *promise*, not of *possession*. In this respect, the wanderings of Abraham and the oppressions of Egypt came under the same general description.

(3.) Abraham was himself occasionally in Egypt. He was unsettled; and since Egypt was so *pre-eminent* in all their troubles, it was natural to speak of *all* their oppressions as having occurred in that country. The phrase, "residence in Egypt," or" in a strange land," would come to be synonymous, and would denote *all* their oppressions and trials. They would speak of their sufferings as having been endured in Egypt, because their afflictions there were so much more prominent than before.

(4.) All this receives countenance from the version of the LXX., and from the Samaritan text, showing the manner in which the ancient Jews were accustomed to understand it.

(5.) It should be added, that difficulties of chronology are more likely to occur than any others; and it should not be deemed strange if there are perplexities of this kind found in ancient writings

which we cannot explain. It is so in *all* ancient records; and all that is usually expected in relation to such difficulties is, that we should be able to present a *probable* explanation.

{+} "on this wise" "In this manner" {c} "that his seed" Ge 15:13,16 {++} "strange land" "Foreign" {*} "evil" "Afflict them" {d} "four hundred years" Ex 12:40,41

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *And the nation*, etc. Referring particularly to the Egyptians.

Will I judge. The word judge, in the Bible, often means to *execute judgment*, as well as to pronounce it; that is, *to punish*. See Joh 18:31 3:17, 8:50 12:47; Ac 24:6 1Co 5:13, etc. It has this meaning here. God regarded their oppressive acts as *deserving* his indignation, and he evinced it in the *plagues* with which he visited them, and in their overthrow in the Red Sea.

Shall serve me. Shall worship me, or be regarded as my people.

In this place. That is, in the place where God made this promise to Abraham. These words are not found in Genesis; but similar words are found in Ex 3:12; and it was a practice, in making quotations, to quote the sense only, or to connect two or more promises having relation to the same thing.

{a} "serve me in this place" Ex 3:12

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *And he gave him*. That is, God appointed, or commanded this, Ge 17:9-13.

The covenant. The word *covenant* denotes, properly, a compact or agreement between two or more persons, usually attended with seals, or pledges, or sanctions. In Ge 17:7, and elsewhere: it is said that God would establish his covenant with Abraham; that is, he made him certain definite promises, attended with pledges and seals, etc. The idea of a strict compact or agreement between God and man, as between *equal parties*, is not found in the Bible. It is commonly used, as here, to denote a promise on the part of God, attended with pledges, and demanding, on the part of man, in order to avail himself of its benefits, a stipulated course of conduct. The *covenant* is therefore another name for denoting two things on the part of God:

(1.) *A command*, which man is not at liberty to reject, as he *would be* if a literal covenant; and,

(2.) *a promise*, which is to be fulfilled only on the condition of obedience. The covenant with Abraham was simply a *promise* to give him the land, and to make him a great nation, etc. It was never proposed to Abraham with the supposition that he was at liberty to *reject* it, or to *refuse* to comply with its conditions. Circumcision was appointed as the mark or indication that Abraham and those thus designated were the persons included in the gracious purpose and promise. It served to *separate* them as a peculiar people; a people whose peculiar characteristic it was, that they obeyed and served the God who had made the promise to Abraham. The phrase, "covenant of circumcision," means, therefore, the covenant or promise which God made to Abraham, of which circumcision was the distinguishing *mark* or *sign*.

The twelve patriarchs. The word *patriarch* properly denotes the father and ruler of a family. But it is commonly applied, by way of eminence, to the progenitors of the Jewish race, particularly to the twelve sons of Jacob. **See Barnes "Ac 2:29"**.

{b} "he gave him the covenant" Ge 17:9-11 {c} "so Abraham" Ge 21:1-4 {d} "Isaac begat" Ge 25:26 {e} "Jacob begat twelve patriarchs" Ge 29:32

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Moved with envy*. That is, dissatisfied with the favour which their father Jacob showed Joseph, and envious at the dreams which indicated that he was to be raised to remarkable honour above his parents and brethren, Ge 37:3-11.

Sold Joseph into Egypt. Sold him, that he might be taken to Egypt. This was done at the suggestion of *Judah*, who advised it that Joseph might not be put to death by his brethren, Ge 27:28. It is possible that Stephen, by this fact, might have designed to prepare the way for a severe rebuke of the Jews for having dealt in a similar manner with their Messiah.

But God was with him. God protected him, and overruled all these wicked doings, so that he was raised to extraordinary honours.

{f} "envy" Ge 37:28 Ps 105:17 {g} "God was with him" Ge 39:2,21

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *And delivered him*, etc. That is, restored him to liberty from his servitude and humiliation, and raised him up to high honours and offices in Egypt.

Favour and wisdom. The favour was the result of his wisdom. His wisdom was particularly evinced in interpreting the dreams of Pharaoh, Ge 41.

And he made him governor, etc. Ge 41:40.

All his house. All the family, or all the court and government of the nation.

{h} "he made him" Ge 41:40 {*} "house" "Palace"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Now there came a dearth*. A famine. Ge 41:54.

And Chanaan. Jacob was living at that time in Canaan.

Found no sustenance. No food; no means of living.

{i} "there came a dearth" Ge 41:54

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Was corn in Egypt*. The word corn here rather denotes *wheat*. **See Barnes "Mt 12:1"**.

Our fathers. His ten sons; all his sons except Joseph and Benjamin, Ge 42:2. Stephen here *refers* only to the history, without entering into details. By this *general* reference he sufficiently showed that he believed what Moses had spoken, and did not intend to show him disrespect.

{k} "But when Jacob heard" Ge 13:1,2 {+} "sent out our fathers first" "The first time"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Joseph was not known*. Ge 14:4.

Joseph's kindred, etc. His relatives, his family. Ge 14:16.

{l} "Joseph was made known" Ge 14:4,16

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *All his kindred*. His father and family, Ge 45:17-28 Ge 46:1-26.

Threescore and fifteen souls. Seventy-five persons. There has been much perplexity felt in the explanation of this pas sage. In Ge 46:26 Ex 1:5; De 10:22, it is expressly said that the number which went down to Egypt consisted of but seventy persons. The question is, in what way these accounts can be reconciled? It is evident that Stephen has followed the account which is given by the Septuagint. In Ge 46:27, that version reads, "But the sons of Joseph who were with him in Egypt, were nine souls; all the souls of-the house of Jacob which came with Jacob into Egypt, were seventy-five souls." This number is made out by adding these *nine* souls to the sixty-six mentioned in Ge 46:26. The difference between the Septuagint and Moses is, that the former mentions five descendants of Joseph who are not recorded by the latter. The *names* of the sons of Ephraim and Manasseh are recorded in 1Ch 7:14-21. Their names were Ashriel, Machir, Zelophehad, Peresh, sons of Manasseh; and Shuthelah, son of Ephraim. Why the Septuagint inserted these, it may not be easy to see. But such was evidently the fact; and the fact accords accurately with the historic record, though Moses did not insert their names. The solution of difficulties in regard to chronology is always difficult; and what might be entirely apparent to a Jew, in the time of Stephen, may be wholly inexplicable to us.

{m} "all his kindred" Ge 46:27 De 10:22

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 15

Verse 15, 16. *And died*. Ge 49:33.

He, and our fathers. The time which the Israelites remained in Egypt was two hundred and fifteen years; so that all the sons of Jacob were deceased before the Jews went out to go to the land of Canaan.

And were carried over. Jacob himself was buried in the field of Machpelah, by Joseph and his brethren, Ge 1:13. It is expressly said that the bones of Joseph were carried by the Israelites when they went into the land of Canaan, and buried in Shechem, Jos 24:32. Comp. Ge 1:25. No mention is made in the Old Testament of their carrying the bones of any of the other patriarchs; but the thing is highly probable in itself. If the descendants of Joseph carried his bones, it would naturally occur to them to take also the bones of each of the patriarchs, and give them an honourable sepulchre together in the land of promise. Josephus (Antiq. b. ii. chap. viii. & 2) says, that "the posterity and sons of these men, (of the brethren of Joseph,) after some time, carried their bodies and buried them in Hebron; but as to the bones of Joseph, they carried them into the land of Canaan afterward, when the Hebrews went out of Egypt." This is the account which Josephus gives, and it is evidently in accordance with the common opinion of the Jewish writers, that they were buried in Hebron. Yet the tradition is not uniform. Some of the Jews affirm that they were buried in Sychem. (*Kuinoel*.) As the Scriptures do not anywhere deny that the fathers were buried in Sychem, it cannot be proved that Stephen was in error. There is one circumstance of strong probability to show that he was correct. At the time this defence was delivered, *Sychem* was in the hands of the Samaritans, between whom and the Jews there was a violent hostility. Of course the Jews would not be willing to concede that the Samaritans had the bones of their ancestors; and hence perhaps the opinion had been maintained that they were buried in Hebron.

Into Sychem. This was a town or village near to Samaria. It was called Sychar, **See Barnes** "Joh 4:5,) *Schechem*, and *Sychem*. It is now called *Naplous*, or *Napolose*, and is ten miles from Shiloh, and about forty from Jerusalem, towards the north.

That Abraham bought. The word *Abraham* here has given rise to considerable perplexity; and it is now pretty generally conceded that it is a mistake. It is certain, from Ge 33:19 Jos 24:32, that this piece of land was bought not by Abraham, but by *Jacob*, of the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem. The land which Abraham purchased was the cave of Machpelah, of the sons of Heth, in Hebron, Ge 23. Various solutions have been proposed of this difficulty, which it is not necessary to detail. It may be remarked, however,

(1.) that as the text now stands, it is an evident error. This is clear from the passages cited from the Old Testament, above.

(2.) It is not at all probable that either Stephen or Luke would have committed such an error. Every consideration must lead us to the conclusion that they were too well acquainted with such prominent points of the Jewish history to commit an error like this.

(3.) The *probability* therefore is, that the error has arisen since; but *how* is not known, nor is there any way of ascertaining. All the ancient versions agree in reading *Abraham*. One Ms. only reads "*Abraham our Father*." Some have supposed, therefore, that it was written, "which our father brought," and that some early transciber inserted the name Abraham. Others, that the name was omitted entirely by Stephen; and then the antecedent to the verb "bought" will be "Jacob," in Ac 7:15, according with the fact. Other modes have been proposed also, but none are entirely satisfactory. If there was positive proof of Stephen's inspiration, or if it were necessary to make that out, the difficulty would be much greater. But it has already been remarked, that there is no decisive evidence of that; and it is not necessary to make out that point to defend the Scriptures.

All that can be demanded of the historian is, that he should give a fair account of the defence as it was delivered; and though the *probability* is that Stephen would not commit such an error, yet, admitting that *he* did, it by no means proves that Luke was not inspired, or that *Luke* has committed any error in recording what was actually said.

Of the sons of Emmor. In the Hebrew, Ge 33:19, the "children of Hamor"—but different ways of rendering the same word.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 16

Verse 16. No Barnes text on this verse.
{a} "Was carried over into Sychem"
Jos 24:32
{*} "Sychem" "Shechem" {+} "Emmor" "Hamor"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *The times of the promise*. The time of the *fulfillment* of the promises.
The people grew, etc. Ex 1:7,8
{b} "the people grew" Ex 1:7-9

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Till another king arose*. This is quoted from Ex 1:8. What was the name of this king is not certainly known. The *common* name of all the kings of Egypt was *Pharaoh*, as *Caesar* became the common name of the emperors of Rome after the time of Julius Caesar: thus we say, Augustus Caesar, Tiberius Caesar, etc. It has commonly been supposed to have been the celebrated Rameses, or Ramses Meiamoun, the sixth king of the eighteenth dynasty; and the event is supposed to have occurred about 1559 years before the Christian era. But M. Champollion supposes that his name was Mandonel, whose reign commenced 1585, and ended 1565 years before. Christ. (Essay on the Hieroglyphic System, pp. 94, 95.)

Which knew not Joseph. It can hardly be supposed that he would be ignorant of the name and deeds of Joseph; and this expression, therefore, probably means that he did not *favour* the designs of Joseph; he did not remember the benefits he had conferred on the nation; or furnish the patronage for the kindred of Joseph which had been secured for them by Joseph under a former reign. National ingratitude and forgetfulness of favours have not been uncommon in the world; and a change of dynasty or succession has often obliterated all memory of former obligations and compacts.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Dealt subtilly*. He acted deceitfully; he used fraud, The cunning or deceitful attempt which is referred to, is his endeavour to weaken and destroy the Jewish people by causing their male children to be put to death, Ex 1:22.

Our kindred. Our nation, or our ancestors.

And evil entreated. Was unjust and cruel towards them.

So that, etc. For that purpose, or to cause them to cast them out. He dealt with them in this cruel manner, hoping that the Israelites themselves would destroy their own sons, that they might not grow up to experience the same sufferings as their fathers had. The cunning or subtilty of Pharaoh extended to everything that he did to oppress, to keep under, and to destroy the children of Israel.

{c} "so that they cast out" Ex 1:22

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *In which time*, etc. During this period of oppression. See Ex 2:2, etc.

Was exceeding fair. Greek, "was fair *to God*;" properly rendered, *was very handsome*. The word God is used in the Greek here in accordance with the Hebrew usage, by which anything that is very handsome, or lofty, or grand, is thus designated. Thus, Ps 36:7, *mountains of God* mean lofty mountains; Ps 80:10, [ver. 11, Heb.,] *cedars of God* mean lofty, beautiful cedars. Thus Nineveh is called "a great city *to God*," (Jon 3:3, Greek,) meaning a very great city. The expression here means simply, that Moses was *very fair*, or handsome. Comp. Heb 11:23, where he is called a "proper child," i.e., a *handsome* child. It would seem from this, that Moses was preserved by his mother on account of his *beauty*; and this is hinted at in Ex 2:2. And it would also seem from this, that Pharaoh had succeeded by his oppressions in what he had attempted; and that it was not unusual for parents among the Jews to *expose* their children, or to put them to death.

{d} "Moses was born" Ex 2:2 {1} "exceeding fair" or, "fair to God" {+} "exceeding fair" "Very Beautiful"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Was cast out*. When he was exposed on the banks of the Nile, Ex 2:3.

And nourished him. Adopted him, and treated him as her son, Ex 2:10. It is implied in this, that he was *educated* by her. An adopted son in the family of Pharaoh would be favoured with all the advantages which the land could furnish for an education.

{e} "nourished him" Ex 2:10

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Moses was learned*. Or, was *instructed*. It does not mean that he *had* that learning, but that he was carefully trained or educated in that wisdom. The passage does not express the fact that Moses was distinguished for *learning*, but that he was carefully *educated*, or that pains were taken to *make* him learned.

In all the wisdom, etc. The learning of the Egyptians was confined chiefly to astrology, to the interpretation of dreams, to medicine, to mathematics, and to their sacred science or traditionary doctrines about religion, which were concealed chiefly under their hieroglyphics. Their learning is not unfrequently spoken of in the Scriptures, 1Ki 4:30; Comp. Isa 19:11,12. And their knowledge is equally celebrated in the heathen world. It is known that science was carried from Egypt to Phenicia, and thence to Greece; and not a few of the Grecian philosophers travelled to Egypt in pursuit of knowledge.

And was mighty. Was powerful, or was distinguished. This means that he was eminent in Egypt, before he conducted the children of Israel forth. It refers to his addresses to Pharaoh, and to the miracles which he wrought *before* their departure.

In words. From Ex 4:10, it seems that Moses was "slow of speech, and of a slow tongue." When it is said that he was mighty in words, it means that he was mighty in his communications to Pharaoh, though they were spoken by his brother Aaron. Aaron was in his place, and Moses addressed Pharaoh through him, who was appointed to deliver the message, Ex 4:11-16.

Deeds. Miracles, Ex 7, etc.

{*} "Learned" "Instructed" {f} "mighty in words" Lu 24:19

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Full forty years of age*. This is not recorded in the Old Testament, but it is a constant tradition of the Jews that Moses was forty years of age when he undertook to deliver them. Thus it is said, "Moses lived in the palace of Pharaoh forty years; he was forty years in Midian; and he ministered to Israel forty years." (*Kuinoel*.)

To visit, etc. Probably with a view of delivering them from their oppressive bondage. Comp. Ac 7:26.

{a} "And when he was" Ex 2:11

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Suffer wrong*. The wrong or injury was, that the Egyptian was smiting the Hebrew, Ex 2:11,12.

Smote the Egyptian. He slew him, and buried him in the sand.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *For he supposed*. This is not mentioned by Moses; but it is not at all improbable. When they saw him *alone* contending with the Egyptian, when it was understood that he had come and taken vengeance or one of their oppressors, it might have been presumed that he regarded himself as directed by God to interpose, and save the people.

{1} "For he supposed" "Now"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *And the next day*. Ex 2:13.

He shewed himself. He appeared in a sudden and unexpected manner to them.

Unto them. That is, to two of the Hebrews, Ex 2:13.

As they strove. As they were engaged in a quarrel.

Have set them at one. Greek, "would have urged them to peace." This he did by remonstrating with the man that did the wrong.

Saying. What follows is not quoted literally from the account which Moses gives, but it is substantially the same.

Sirs. Greek, "men."

Ye are brethren. You belong not only to the same nation, but you are brethren and companions in affliction, and should not, therefore, contend with each other. One of the most melancholy scenes in this world, is that where those who are poor, and afflicted, and oppressed, add to all their other calamities, altercations and strifes among themselves. Yet it is from this class that contentions and lawsuits usually arise. The address which Moses here makes to the contending Jews, might be applied to the whole human family, in view of the contentions and wars of nations: "Ye are *brethren*, members of the same great family, and why do you contend with each other?"

{*} "at one again" "Would have reconciled them"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *But he that did*, etc. Intent on his purpose, filled with rage and passion, he rejected all interference, and all attempts at peace. It is usually the man that does the injury that is unwilling to be reconciled; and when we find a man that regards the entreaties of his friends as improper interference, when he becomes increasingly angry when we exhort him to peace, it is usually a strong evidence that he is conscious that he has been at fault. If we wish to reconcile parties, we should go first to the man that has been injured. In the controversy between God and man, it is the *sinner* who has done the wrong that is unwilling to be reconciled, and not God.

His neighbour. The Jew with whom he was contending.

Who made thee, etc. What right have you to interfere in this matter? The usual salutation with which a man is greeted who attempts to prevent quarrels.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *Wilt thou kill me*, etc. How it was known that he had killed the Egyptian does not appear. It was probably communicated by the man who was rescued from the hands of the Egyptian, Ex 2:11,12.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Then fled Moses*, etc. Moses fled because he now ascertained that it was known. He supposed that it had been unobserved, Ex 2:12. But he now supposed that the knowledge of it might reach Pharaoh, and that his life might thus be endangered. Nor did he judge incorrectly; for as soon as Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to take his life, Ex 2:16.

Was a stranger. Or became a *sojourner—paroikov*—one who had a temporary abode in the land. The use of this word implies that he did not expect to make that his permanent dwelling.

In the land of Madian. This was a part of Arabia. It was situated on the east side of the Red Sea. The city of Midian is placed there by the Arabian geographers; but the Midianites seem to have spread themselves along the desert east of Mount Seir, to the vicinity of the Moabites. To the west they ex, tended also to the neighbourhood of Mount Sinai. This was extensively a desert region, an unknown land; and Moses expected there to be safe from Pharaoh.

Where he begat two sons. He married Zipporah, the daughter of *Reuel*, (Ex 2:18,) or *Jethro*, (Nu 10:29 Ex 3:1,) a *priest* of Midian. The names of the two sons were Gershom and Eliezer, Ex 18:3,4.

{+} "stranger" "Sojourned"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *And when forty years*, etc. At the age of eighty years. This, however, was known by tradition. It is not expressly mentioned by Moses. It is said, however, to have been after the king of Egypt had died, (Ex 2:23;) and the tradition is not improbable.

In the wilderness of mount Sina. In the desert adjacent to, or that surrounded Mount Sinai. In Ex 3:1, it is said that this occurred at Mount *Horeb*. But there is no contradiction; Horeb and Sinai are different peaks or elevations of the same mountain. They are represented as springing from the same base, and branching out in different elevations. The mountains, according to Burckhardt, are a prodigious pile, comprehending many peaks, and about thirty miles in diameter. From one part of this mountain, *Sinai*, the law was given to the children of Israel.

An angel of the Lord. The word angel means, properly, a *messenger*, (**See Barnes** "Mt 1:20,) and is applied to the invisible spirits in heaven, to men, to the winds, or pestilence, or to whatever is appointed as a messenger to make known the will of God. The mere *name*, therefore, can determine nothing about the nature of the messenger. That *name* might be applied to any messenger, even an inanimate object. The nature and character of this messenger are to be determined by other

considerations. The word may denote that the *bush on fire* was the messenger. But a comparison with the other places where this occurs will show that it was a celestial messenger, and perhaps that it was the Messiah who was yet to come, appearing to take the people of Israel under his own charge and direction. Comp. Joh 1:11, where the Jews are called "his own." In Ex 3:2, it is said that the angel of the Lord appeared IN a flame of fire; in Ex 3:4, it is said that Jehovah spake to him out of the midst of the bush; language which implies that God was there, and which is strongly expressive of the doctrine that the angel was Jehovah. In Ex 23:20,21, God says, "I send an angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware *of him*, and obey *his* voice," Ex 23:23 32:34, 33:2.

In all these places this angel is mentioned as an extraordinary messenger to conduct them to the land of Canaan. He was to guide them, defend them, and drive out the nations before them. All these circumstances seem to point to the conclusion that this was no other than the future Deliverer of the world, who came then to take his people under his own guidance, as emblematic of the future redemption of mankind.

In a flame of fire. That is, in what appeared to be a flame of fire. The *bush* or clump of trees seemed to be on fire, or to be illuminated with a peculiar splendour. God is often represented as encompassed with this splendour, or glory, Lu 2:9 Mt 17:1-6; Ac 9:3 12:7.

In a bush. In a grove, or clump of trees. Probably the light was seen issuing from the *midst* of such a grove.

{b} "And when forty years" Ex 3:2

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *He wondered*, etc. What particularly attracted his attention was the fact that the bush was not consumed, Ex 3:2,3.

The voice of the Lord. Jehovah spake to him from the midst of the bush. He did not see him, but he simply heard a voice.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 32

Verse 32. Saying, *I am the God*, etc. See this explained **See Barnes "Mt 22:32"**.

Then Moses trembled. Ex 3:6.

{a} "God of thy fathers" Mt 22:32 Heb 11:16

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *Then said the Lord*, etc. In Ex 3 this is introduced in a different order, as being spoken *before* God said, "I am the God," etc.

Put off thy shoes, etc. Ex 3:5. To put off the shoes, or sandals, was an act of reverence. Especially the ancients were not permitted to enter a temple or holy place with their shoes on. Indeed, it was customary for the Jews to remove their shoes whenever they entered any house, as a mere matter of civility. Comp. **See Barnes "Joh 13:6"**.

See Jos 5:15.

Is holy ground. Is rendered sacred by the symbol of the Divine Presence. We should enter the sanctuary, the place set apart for Divine worship, not only with reverence m our hearts, but with every external indication of veneration. Solemn awe, and deep seriousness, become the place set apart to the service of God.

{b} "Put off thy shoes" Jos 5:15 Ec 5:1

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *I have seen*, etc. The repetition of this word is in accordance with the usage of the Hebrew writers when they wish to represent anything emphatically.

Their groaning. Under their oppressions.

Am come down. This is spoken in accordance with human conceptions. It means that God was about to deliver them.

I will send this, etc. This is a mere *summary* of what is expressed at much greater length in Ex 3:7-10.

{*} "seen the affliction" "I have surely seen"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *When they refused*. That is, when he *first* presented himself to them, Ex 2:13,14. Stephen introduces and dwells upon this refusal in order, perhaps, to remind them that this had been the character of their nation; and to prepare the way for the charge which he intended to bring against those whom he addressed, as being stiff-necked and rebellious. See Ac 7:51,52, etc.

A ruler. A military leader, or a governor in civil matters.

A deliverer. A Redeemer—*lutrwthn*—. It properly means one who redeems a captive or a prisoner by paying a *price* or *ransom*. And it is applied thus to our Lord Jesus, as having redeemed or purchased sinners by his blood as a price, Tit 2:14 1Pe 1:18; Heb 9:12.

It is used here, however, in a more *general* sense to denote the *deliverance*, without specifying the manner. Comp. Ex 6:6; Lu 24:21 1:68, 2:38.

By the hand of the angel. Under the direction and by the help of the angel, Nu 20:16. **See Barnes "Ac 7:30"**.

{c} "the angel" Ex 14:19 Nu 20:16

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *Wonders and signs*.Miracles, and remarkable interpositions of God. **See Barnes "Ac 2:22"**.

In the land of Egypt. By the ten,plagues, Exodus chapters 4-12.

In the Red sea. Dividing it, and conducting the Israelites in safety, and overthrowing the Egyptians, Ex 13.

In the wilderness. During their forty years' journey to the promised land. The wonders or miracles were, providing them with manna daily; with flesh in a miraculous manner; with water from the rock, etc., Exodus chapters 16 and 17.

{d} "after that he had showed" Exodus chapters 7-11,14 {e} "forty years" Ex 16:35

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *Which said*, etc. De 18:15,18. See this explained, Ac 3:22. Stephen introduced this to remind them of the promise of a Messiah; to show his fait in it; and *particularly* to remind them of their obligation to hear and obey him.

{f} "said unto the children on Israel" De 18:15,18; Ac 3:22

{1} "like unto me" "as myself" {g} "him shall ye hear" Mt 17:5

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *In the church*. The word *church* means, literally, the *people called out*; and is applied with great propriety to the assembly or multitude called out of Egypt, and separated from the world. It has not, however, of necessity our idea of a church; but means the *assembly*, or people called out of Egypt, and placed under the con- duct of Moses,

With the angel. In this place there is undoubted reference to the giving of the law on Mount Sinai. Yet that was done by God himself, Ex 20. It is clear, therefore, that by the angel here Stephen intends to designate him who was God. It may be observed, however, that the law is represented as having been given by the ministry of an angel (in this place,) and by the ministry of *angels*, Ac 7:53 Heb 2:2. The essential idea is, that God did it by a messenger, or by mediators. The *character* and rank of the messengers, or of the principal messenger, must be learned by looking at all the circumstances of the case.

The lively oracles. See Ro 3:2. The word *oracles* here means *commands* or *laws* of God, The word *lively*, or *living—zwnta*—stands in opposition to that which is dead, or useless, and means that which is vigorous, efficacious; and in this place it means that the commands were of such a nature, and given in such circumstances, as to secure attention; to produce obedience; to excite them to act for God—in opposition to laws which would fall powerless, and produce no effect.

{h} "This is he" Heb 2:2 {+} "church" "Congregation" {i} "angel" Isa 63:9 Ga 3:19 {k} "in the mount Sina" Ex 19:3,17 {l} "who received" De 5:27,31; Joh 1:17

{m} "received" Ro 3:2 {*) "lively" "Life giving"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *Would not obey*, etc. This refers to what they said of him when he was in the mount, Ex 32:1,23.

In their hearts turned, etc. They wished to return to Egypt. They regretted that they had come out of Egypt, and desired again the things which they had there, as preferable to what they had in the desert, Nu 11:5. Perhaps, however, the expression means, not that they desired literally to return to Egypt, but that *their hearts inclined to the habits and morals of the Egyptians*. They forsook God, and imitated the idolatries of the Egyptians.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 40

Verse 40. *Saying unto Aaron*. Ex 32:1

Make us gods. That is, idols.

{n} "Saying unto Aaron" Ex 32:1 {=} "wot" "know"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 41

Verse 41. *And they made a calf*. This was made of the ear-rings and ornaments which they had brought from Egypt, Ex 32:2-4. Stephen introduces this to remind them how prone the nation had been to reject God, and walk in the ways of sin.

{o} "calf" De 9:16

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 42

Verse 42. *Then God turned*. That is, turned away from them; abandoned them to their own desires.

The host of heaven. The stars, or heavenly bodies. The word *host* means *armies*. It is applied to the heavenly bodies, because they are very numerous, and appear to be marshalled or arrayed in military order. It is from this that God is called *JEHOVAH of hosts*, as being the Ruler of these well-arranged heavenly bodies, Isa 1:9. The proof that they did this, Stephen proceeds to allege by a quotation from the prophets.

In the book of the Prophets. Am 5:25,26. The twelve minor prophets were commonly written in one volume, and were called the Book of the Prophets; the book containing these several prophecies, Daniel, Hosea, Micah, etc. They were small *tracts* separately, and were bound up

together to preserve them from being lost. This passage is not quoted literally; it is evidently made from memory; and though in its main spirit it coincides with the passage in Amos, yet in some important respects it varies from it.

ye house of Israel. Ye people of Israel.

Have ye offered, etc.

That is, ye have *not* offered. The interrogative is often an emphatic way of saying that the thing had *not* been done. But it is certain that the Jews *did* offer sacrifices to God in the wilderness, though it is also certain that they did not do it with a pure and upright heart. They kept up the *form* of worship to idols. *Through* the continuous space of forty years they did *not* honour God, but often departed from him, and worshipped idols.

{p} "gave them up" Psa 81:12 {q} "host of heaven" De 4:19 {r} "as it is written" Am 5:25,26 {*} "wilderness" or, "Desert"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 43

Verse 43. *Yea, ye took up*. That is, you *bore*, or you carried with you, for purposes of idolatrous worship.

The tabernacle. This word properly means a *tent*; but it is also applied to the small tent or house in which was contained the image of the god; the house, box, or tent, in which the idol was placed. It is customary for idolatrous nations to bear their idols about with them, enclosed in *cases* or boxes of various sizes, usually very small, as their idols are commonly small. Probably they were made in the shape of small *temples* or tabernacles; and such appear to have been the *silver shrines* for Diana, made at Ephesus, Ac 19:24. These shrines, or images, were borne with them as a species of *amulet*, or *charm*, or *talisman*, to defend them from evil. Such images the Jews seem to have borne with them.

Moloch. This word comes from the Hebrew word signifying *king*. This was a god of the Ammonites, to whom human sacrifices were offered. Moses in several places forbids the Israelites, under penalty of death, to dedicate their children to Moloch, by making them pass through the fire, Le 18:21 20:2-5. There is great probability that the Hebrews were addicted to the worship of this deity after they entered the land of Canaan. Solomon built a temple to Moloch on the Mount of Olives, 1Ki 11:7; and Manasseh made his son pass through the fire in honour of this idol, 2Ki 21:3,6. The image of this idol was made of brass, and his arms extended so as to embrace any one; and when they offered children to him, they heated the statue, and when it was burning hot, they placed the child in his arms, where it was soon destroyed by heat. It is not certain what this god was supposed to represent. Some suppose it was in honour of the planet Saturn, others the sun, others Mercury, Venus, etc. What particular god it was, is not material. It was the most cutting reproof that could be made to the Jews, that their fathers had been guilty of worshipping this idol.

And the star. The Hebrew in this place, is "Chiun your images, the star of your god." The expression here used leads us to suppose that this was a *star* which was worshipped, but *what* star it is not easy to ascertain; nor is it easy to determine why it is called both *Chiun* and *Remphan*. Stephen quotes from the LXX. They have rendered the word *Chiun* by the word *Raiphan*, or *Rephan*,

easily changed into *Remphan*. Why the LXX. adopted this is not known. It was probably, however, from one of two causes.

(1.) Either because the word *Chiun* in Hebrew meant the same as *Remphan* in the language of Egypt, where the translation was made; or,

(2.) because the *object* of worship called *Chiun* in Hebrew, was called *Remphan* in the language of Egypt. It is generally agreed that the *object* of their worship was the planet *Saturn*, or *Mars*, both of which planets were worshipped as gods of evil influence. In Arabic, the word *Chevan* denotes the planet Saturn. Probably *Rephan*, or *Remphan*, is the Coptic name for the same planet, and the Septuagint adopted this because their translation was made in Egypt, where the Coptic language was spoken.

Figures which ye made. Images of the god which they made. See the article *Chuin* in Robinson's Calmet.

And I will carry you away, etc. This is simply expressing in few words what is stated at greater length in Am 5:27. In Hebrew it is *Damascus*; but this evidently denotes the eastern region, in which also Babylon was situated.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 44

Verse 44. *The tabernacle of witness*. The *tent* or *tabernacle* which Moses was commanded to make. It was called a tabernacle of *witness*, or of testimony, because it was the visible witness or proof of God's presence with them; the evidence that he to whom it was devoted was their protector and guide. The name is given either to the *tent*, or to the two tables of stone, or to the ark; all of which were *witnesses* or *evidence*, of God's relation to them as their Lawgiver and Guide, Ex 16:34 25:16,21 27:21, 30:6,36 31:18

Nu 1:50,53. The two charges against Stephen were that he had spoken blasphemy against Moses, or his law, and against the temple, Ac 6:13,14. In the previous part of this defence he had shown his respect for Moses and his law. He now proceeds to show that he did not design to speak with disrespect of the temple, or the holy places of their worship. He therefore expresses his belief in the Divine appointment of both the tabernacle Ac 7:44-46 and of the temple, Ac 7:47.

According to the fashion, etc. According to the *pattern* that was shown to him, by which it was to be made, Ex 25:9,40; Ex 26:30. As God showed him a *pattern*, it proved that the tabernacle had his sanction. Against that Stephen did not intend to speak.

{+} "witness" "Testimony" {1} "speaking" "who spake" {a} "that he should make" Ex 25:40 26:30; Heb 8:5

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 45

Verse 45. *Our fathers that came after*. None of the generation that came out of Egypt were permitted to enter into the land of Canaan on account of their rebellion, except Caleb and Joshua, Nu 14:22-24 32:11,12.

Hence it is said that their fathers *who came after*, i.e. afar the generation when the tabernacle was built. The Greek, however, here means, properly, "which also our fathers, having *received*, brought," etc. The sense is not materially different. Stephen means that it was not brought in by that generation, but by the next.

With Jesus. This should have been rendered, "*with Joshua*." *Jesus* is the Greek mode of writing the name *Joshua*. But the Hebrew name should by all means have been retained here, as also in Heb 4:8.

Into the possession of the Gentiles. Into the land possessed by the Gentiles; that is, into the promised land then occupied by the Canaanites, etc.

Whom God, etc. That is, he continued to drive them out until the time of David, when they were completely expelled. Or it may mean that the tabernacle was in the possession of the Jews, and was the up, pointed place of worship, until the time of David, who desired to build him a temple. The Greek is ambiguous. The *connexion* favours the latter interpretation.

{b} "Which also" Jos 3:14 {2} "Which also our fathers" or, "having received" {*} "Jesus" "Joshua" {=} "possession of the Gentiles" "When they possessed the land of the nations" {c} "whom God Drave out" Neh 9:24 Psa 44:2, 78:55

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 46

Verse 46. *Who found favour*. That is, God granted him great him great prosperity, and delivered him from his enemies.

To find a tabernacle. To prepare a permanent dwelling place for the *ark* and for the visible symbols of the Divine Presence. Hitherto the ark had been kept in the tabernacle, and had been borne about from place to place. David sought to build an house that would be permanent, where the ark might be deposited, 2Sa 7, 1Ch 22:7.

{d} "favour before God" 1Sa 16:1 {e} "desired to find a tabernacle" 1Ch 22:7

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 47

Verse 47. *But Solomon*, etc. Built the temple. David was not permitted to do it, because he had been a man of war, 1Ch 22:8. David prepared the principal materials for the temple, but Solomon built it, 1Ch 22; comp. 1Ki 6.

{f} "Solomon" 1Ki 8:27 8:20 {=} "house" "Temple"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 48

Verse 48. *Howbeit*. But. Why Stephen added this, is not very clear. He was charged with speaking against the temple. He had now shown that he had due veneration for it, by his declaring that it had been built by the command of God. But he *now* adds, that God does not need such a

temple. Heaven is his throne; the universe his dwelling-place; and *therefore* this temple might be destroyed. A new, glorious truth was to be revealed to mankind, that God was not *confined* in his worship to any age, or people, or nation. In entire consistency, therefore, with all proper respect for the temple at Jerusalem, it might be maintained that the time would come when that temple would be destroyed, and when God might be worshipped by all nations.

The Most High. God. This sentiment was expressed by Solomon when the temple was dedicated, 1Ki 8:27.

As saith the prophet. Isa 66:1,2. The place is not literally quoted, but the sense is given.

{g} "Howbeit" 1Ki 8:27 Ac 17:24

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 49

Verse 49. *Heaven is my throne*. **See Barnes "Mt 5:34".**

Earth is *my footstool*. **See Barnes "Mt 5:35".**

What house, etc. What house or temple can be large or magnificent enough for the dwelling of Him who made all things?

The place of my rest. My home, my abode, my fixed seat or habitation. Comp. Psa 95:11.

{h} "Heaven is my throne" Isa 66:1,2

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 50

Verse 50. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 51

Verse 51. *Ye stiffnecked*. The discourse of Stephen has every appearance of having been interrupted by the clamours and opposition of the sanhedrim. This verse has no immediate connexion with that which precedes; and *appears* to have been spoken in the midst of much opposition and clamour. If we may conjecture in this case, it would seem that the Jews saw the drift of his argument; that they interrupted him; and that when the tumult had somewhat subsided, he addressed them in the language of this verse, showing them that they sustained a character precisely similar to their rebellious fathers. The word *stiff-necked* is often used in the Old Testament, Ex 32:9; Ex 33:3,5, 34:9 De 9:6,13 10:16, etc. It is a figurative expression taken from oxen that were refractory, and that would not submit to be yoked. Applied to men, it means that they were stubborn, contumacious, and unwilling to submit to the restraints of law.

Uncircumcised in heart. *Circumcision* was a sign of being a Jew— of acknowledging the authority of the laws of Moses. It was also emblematic of purity, and of submission to the law of God. The expression *uncircumcised in heart* denotes those who were not willing to acknowledge the law, and submit to it. They had hearts filled with vicious and unsubdued affections and desires.

And ears. That is, who are unwilling to hear what God says. Comp. Le 26:41 Jer 9:26; **See Barnes** "Ro 2:28,29.

Resist the Holy Ghost. You oppose the message which is brought to you by the authority of God, and the inspiration of his Spirit. The message brought by Moses, by the prophets, by the Saviour, and by the apostles—all by the infallible direction of the Holy Ghost—they and their fathers opposed.

As your fathers did, etc. As he had specified in Ac 7:27,35,39-43.

{a} "stiffnecked" Ex 32:9 Isa 48:4 {b} "uncircumcised" Le 26:41 Jer 9:26; Ro 2:28,29

{*} "Holy Ghost" "Holy Spirit"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 52

Verse 52. *Which of the prophets*, etc. The interrogative form here is a strong mode of saying that they had persecuted all the prophets. It was *the characteristic of the nation* to persecute the messengers of God. This is not to be taken as literally and universally true; but it was a general truth; it was the national characteristic. See Notes, Mt 21:33-40 23:29-35.

And they have slain them, etc. That is, they have slain the prophets, whose main message was that the Messiah was to come. It was a great aggravation of their offence, that they put to death the messengers which foretold the greatest blessing that the nation could receive.

The Just One. The Messiah. **See Barnes** "Ac 3:14.

Of whom ye, etc. You thus show that you resemble those who rejected and put to death the prophets. You have even gone beyond them in guilt, because you have put the Messiah himself to death.

The betrayers. They are called *betrayers* here, because they employed Judas to betray him—agreeable to the maxim in law, *He who does* anything by another, is held to have done it himself.

{c} "Which of the prophets" 2Ch 36:16 1Th 2:15 {d} "Just One" Ac 3:14

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 53

Verse 53. *Who have received the law*. The law of Moses given on Mount Sinai.

By the disposition of angels. There has been much diversity of opinion in regard to this phrase, *eiv diatagav aggelwn*. The word translated *disposition* does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It properly means the *constituting* or *arranging* of an army; disposing it into ranks and proper divisions. Hence it has been supposed to mean that the law was given *amidst* the various ranks of angels, being present to witness its promulgation. Others suppose that the angels were employed as agents or instruments to communicate the law. All that the expression fairly implies is the former; that the law was given amidst the attending ranks of angels, as if they were summoned to witness the pomp and ceremony of giving *law* to an entire people, and through them to an entire world. It should be added, moreover, that the Jews applied the word angels to any of the messengers

of God; to fire, and tempest, and wind, etc. And all that Stephen means here may be to express the common Jewish opinion, that God was attended on this occasion by the heavenly hosts; and by the symbols of his presence, the fire, and smoke, and tempest. Comp. Ps 104:4 68:17. Other places declare that the law was spoken by *an angel*, one eminent above all attending angels, the peculiar messenger of God. **See Barnes "Ac 7:38"**.

It is plain that Stephen spoke only the common sentiment of the Jews, Thus Herod is introduced by Josephus, (Antiq. b. xv. chap. v. & 3,) as saying, "We have learned from God the most excellent of our doctrines, and the most holy part of our law *by angels*," etc. In the eyes of the Jews, it justly gave increased majesty and solemnity to the law, that it had been given in so grand and imposing circumstances. And it greatly aggravated their guilt, that, notwithstanding this, they had not kept it.

{e} "law by the disposition of angels" Ga 3:19

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 54

Verse 54. *They were cut to the heart*. They were exceedingly enraged and indignant. The whole course of the speech had been such as to excite their anger, and now they could restrain themselves no longer.

They gnashed on him, etc. Expressive of the bitterness and malignity.

{f} "heard these things" Ac 5:33

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 55

Verse 55. *Full of the Holy Ghost*. **See Barnes "Ac 2:4"**.

Looked up stedfastly. Fixed his eyes intently on heaven. Foreseeing his danger, and the effect his speech had produced—seeing that there was no safety in the great council of the nation, and no prospect of justice at their hands-he cast his eyes to heaven and sought protection them. When dangers threaten us, our hope of safety lies in heaven. When men threaten our persons, reputation, or lives, it becomes us to fix our eyes on the heavenly world; and we shall not look in vain.

And saw the glory of God. This phrase is commonly used to denote the visible symbols of God. It means some magnificent representation; a splendour, or light, that is the appropriate exhibition of the presence of God, Mt 16:27 24:30. **See Barnes "Lu 2:9"**.

In the case of Stephen there is every indication of a vision, or supernatural representation of the heavenly objects; something in advance of mere *faith*, such as dying Christians now have. What was its precise nature, we have no means of ascertaining. Objects were often represented to prophets by visions; and probably something similar is intended here. It was such an elevation of view, such a representation of truth, and of the glory of God, as to be denoted by the word *see*; though it is not to be maintained that Stephen really saw the Saviour with the bodily eye.

On the right hand of God. That is, exalted to a place of honour and power in the heavens. **See Barnes "Mt 26:64"**.

See Barnes "Ac 2:25".

{g} "being full of" Ac 6:5 {*} "Holy Ghost" "Holy Spirit"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 56

Verse 56. *I see the heavens opened*. A figurative expression, denoting that he was permitted to see *into* heaven, or to see what was there, *sd if* the firmament was divided, and the eye was permitted to penetrate the eternal world. Comp. Eze 1:1.

{h} "heavens opened" Eze 1:1 {i} "the Son of man" Da 7:13

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 57

Verse 57. *Then they cried out*. That is, probably, *the people*, not the members of the council. It is evident he was put to death in a popular tumult. They had charged him with blasphemy; and they regarded what he had now said as full proof of it.

And stopped their ears. That they might hear no more blasphemy.

With one accord. In a tumult; unitedly.

{+} "accord" "consent"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 58

Verse 58. *And cast him out of the city*. This was in accordance with the usual custom. In Le 24:14, it was directed to bring forth him that had cursed without the camp; and it was not usual, the Jewish writers inform us, to stone in the presence, of the sanhedrim. Though this was a popular tumult, and Stephen was condemned without the regular process of trial, yet some of the *forms* of law were observed, and he was stoned in the manner directed in the case of blasphemers.

And stoned him. This was the punishment appointed in the case of blasphemy, Le 24:16. **See Barnes "Joh 10:31".**

And the witnesses. That is, the false witnesses who bore testimony against him, Ac 6:13. It was directed in the law De 17:7 that the *witnesses* in the case should be first in executing the sentence of the law. This was done to prevent false accusations by the prospect that they must be employed as executioners. After *they* had commenced the process of execution, all the people joined in it, De 17:7 Le 24:16.

Laid down their clothes. Their outer garments. They were accustomed to lay these aside when they ran or worked. **See Barnes** "Mt 5:40.

At a young man's feet, etc. That is, they procured him to take care of their garments. This is mentioned solely because Saul, or Paul, afterwards became so celebrated, first as a persecutor, and then an apostle. His whole heart was in this persecution of Stephen; and he himself afterwards

alluded to this circumstance as an evidence of his sinfulness in persecuting the Lord Jesus, Ac 22:20.

{k} "cast him out" Lu 4:29 Heb 13:12,13

{l} "witnesses" Ac 6:13 {m} "whose name was Saul" Ac 8:1,3, 22:20

{+} "clothes" "mantles"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 59

Verse 59. *Calling upon God*. The word *God* is not in the original, and should not have been in the translation. It is in none of the ancient Mss. or versions. It should have been rendered, "They stoned Stephen, invoking, or calling upon, and saying, Lord Jesus," etc. That is, he was engaged *in prayer* to the Lord Jesus. The word is used to express prayer in the following, among other places: 2Co 1:23, "I call God to witness." 1Pe 1:17, "And if ye call on the Father," etc. Ac 2:21, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord," etc.; Ac 9:14 22:16; Ro 10:12-14.

This was, therefore, an act of worship; a solemn invocation of the Lord Jesus, in the most interesting circumstances in which a man can be placed —in his dying moments. And this shows that it is *right* to worship the Lord Jesus, and to pray to him. For if Stephen was *inspired*, it settles the question. The example of an inspired man, in such circumstances, is a safe and correct example. If it should be said that the inspiration of *Stephen* cannot be made out, yet the inspiration of *Luke*, who has recorded it, will not be called in question. Then the following circumstances show that *he*, an inspired man, regarded it as right, and as a proper example to be followed.

(1.) He has recorded it without the slightest expression of an opinion that it was improper. On the contrary, there is every evidence that he regarded the conduct of Stephen in this case as right and praiseworthy. There is, therefore, this attestation to its propriety.

(2.) The Spirit that inspired Luke knew what use would be made of this case. He knew that it would be used as an example, and as an evidence that it was right to worship the Lord Jesus. It is one of the cases which has been used to perpetuate the worship of the Lord Jesus in every age. If it was wrong, it is inconceivable that it should be recorded without some expression of disapprobation.

(3.) The case is strikingly similar to that recorded in Joh 20:28, where Thomas offered worship to the Lord Jesus, *as his God*, without reproof. If Thomas did it in the presence of the Saviour without reproof, it was right. If Stephen did it without any expression of disapprobation from the inspired historian, it was right.

(4.) These examples were used to encourage Christians and Christian martyrs to offer homage to Christ. Thus Pliny, writing to the emperor Trajan, and giving an account of the Christians in Bithynia, says, that they were accustomed to meet and *sing hymns to Christ as to God.-Lardner*.

(5.) It is worthy of remark, that Stephen in his death offered the same act of homage to Christ, that Christ himself did to the Father, when he died, Lu 23:46. From all these considerations, it follows that the Lord Jesus is an object of worship; that in most solemn circumstances it is proper to call upon him, to worship him, and to commit our dearest interests to his hands. If this may be done, he is Divine.

Receive my spirit. That is, receive it to thyself; take it to thine abode in heaven.

{a} "receive my spirit" Ps 31:5 Lu 23:46

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 7 - Verse 60

Verse 60. *And he kneeled down*. This seems to have been a *voluntary* kneeling; a placing himself in this position for the purpose of *prayer*, choosing to die in this attitude.

Lord. That is, Lord *Jesus*. **See Barnes "Ac 1:24".**

Lay not, etc. Forgive them. This passage strikingly resembles the dying prayer of the Lord Jesus, Lu 23:34. Nothing but the Christian religion will enable a man to utter this passage in his dying moments.

He fell asleep. This is the usual mode of expressing the death of saints in the Bible. It is an expression indicating

(1.) the *peacefulness* of their death, compared with the alarm of sinners;

(2.) the hope of a resurrection—as we retire to sleep with the hope of again awaking to the duties and enjoyments of life. See Joh 11:11,12; 1Co 11:30 15:51; 1Th 4:14 5:10; Mt 9:24.

In view of the death of this first Christian martyr, we may remark,

(1.) That it is right to address to the Lord Jesus the language of prayer.

(2.) It is peculiarly proper to do it in afflictions, and in the prospect of death, Heb 4:15.

(3.) Sustaining grace will be derived in trials chiefly from a view of the Lord Jesus. If we can look to him as our Saviour, see him to be exalted to deliver us, and truly commit our souls to him, we shall find the grace which we shall need in our afflictions.

(4.) We should have such confidence in him, as to enable us to commit ourselves to him at any time. To do this, we should live a life of faith. In health, and youth, and strength, we should seek him *as our first and best Friend*.

(5.) While we are in health, we should prepare to die. What an unfit place for preparation for death would have been the situation of Stephen! How impossible then would it have been to have made preparation! Yet the dying bed is often a place as unfit to prepare as were the circumstances of Stephen.—When racked with pain; when faint and feeble; when the mind is indisposed to thought, or when it raves in the wildness of delirium, what an unfit place is this to prepare to die! I have seen many dying beds; I have seen many in all stages of their last sickness; but never have I yet seen a dying bed which seemed to me to be a proper place to make preparation for eternity.

(6.) How peaceful and calm is a death like that of Stephen, when compared with the alarms and anguish of a sinner! One moment of such peace, in that trying time, is better than all the pleasures and honours which the world can bestow. And to *obtain* such peace, the dying sinner would be willing to give all the wealth of the Indies, and all the crowns of the earth. So may I die—and so may all my readers—enabled, like this dying martyr, to commit my de- parting spirit to the sure keeping of the great Redeemer! When we take a parting view of the world; when our eyes shall be turned for the last time to take a look of friends and relatives; and when the darkness of death shall begin to come around us, then may we be enabled to cast the eye of faith to the heavens, and say, "Lord Jesus, receive our spirits;" and thus fall asleep, peaceful in death, in the hope of the resurrection of the just.

{b} "lay not this sin" Mt 5:44 Lu 23:34

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 8

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 8 - Verse 1

CHAPTER VIII

Verse 1. *And Saul was consenting*, etc. Was pleased with his being put to death, and approved it. Comp. Ac 22:20. This part of the verse should have been connected with the previous chapter.

At that time. That is, immediately following the death of Stephen. The persecution arose on account of Stephen, Ac 11:19. The tumult did not subside when Stephen was killed. Their anger continued to be excited against all Christians. They had become so embittered by the zeal and success of the apostles, and by their frequent charges of *murder* in putting the Son of God to death, that they resolved at once to put a period to their progress and success. This was the *first* persecution against Christians; the first in a series that terminated only when the religion which they wished to destroy was fully established on the ruins of both Judaism and Paganism.

The Church. The collection of Christians which were now organized into a church. The church at Jerusalem was the first that was collected.

All scattered. That is, the great mass of Christians.

The regions of Judea, etc. **See Barnes "Mt 2:22"**.

Except the apostles. Probably, the other Christians fled from fear. Why the apostles, who were particularly in danger, did not flee also, is not stated by the historian. Having been, however, more fully instructed than the others, and having been taught their duty by the example and teaching of the Saviour, they resolved, it seems, to remain and brave the fury of the persecutors. For *them* to have fled then would have exposed them, as leaders and founders of the new religion, to the charge of timidity and weakness. They therefore resolved to remain in the midst of their persecutors; and a merciful Providence watched over them, and defended them from harm. The dispersion extended not only to Judea and Samaria, but those who fled carried the gospel also to Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, Ac 11:19. There was a *reason* why this was permitted. The early converts were Jews. They had strong feelings of attachment to the city of Jerusalem, to the temple, and to the land of their fathers. Yet it was the design of the Lord Jesus that the gospel should be preached everywhere. To accomplish this, he suffered a persecution to rage; and they were scattered abroad, and bore his gospel to other cities and lands. Good thus came out of evil; and the first persecution resulted, as all others have done, in advancing the cause which was intended to be destroyed.

{c} "Saul was consenting" Ac 7:58 {d} "scattered abroad" Ac 11:19

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 8 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And devout men*. Religious men. The word used here does not imply of necessity that they were Christians. There might have been Jews who did not approve the popular tumult, and the murder of Stephen, and who gave him a decent burial. Joseph of Arimathaea, and Nicodemus, both Jews, thus gave to the Lord Jesus a decent burial, Joh 19:38,39.

Carried Stephen. The word translated *carried* means, properly, to *collect*, as fruits, etc. Then it is applied to all the preparations necessary for fitting a dead body for burial—as *collecting*, or confining it by bandages, with spices, etc.

And made great lamentation. This was usual among the Jews at a funeral. **See Barnes "Mt 9:23"**.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 8 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *As for Saul*. But Saul. He had no concern in the pious attentions shown to Stephen, but engaged with zeal in the work of persecution.

He made havoc. *elumaineto*. This word is commonly applied to wild beasts, to lions, wolves, etc., and denotes the devastations which they commit. Saul raged against the church like a wild beast—a strong expression, denoting the zeal and fury with which he engaged in persecution.

Entering into every house. To search for those who were suspected of being Christians.

Haling. Dragging, or compelling them.

Committed them to prison. The sanhedrim had not power to put them to death, Joh 18:31, but they had power to imprison; and they resolved, it seems, to exercise this power to the utmost. Paul frequently refers to his zeal in persecuting the church, Ac 26:10,11; Ga 1:13.

It may be remarked here, that there never was a persecution commenced with more flattering prospects to the persecutors. Saul, the principal agent, was young, zealous, learned, and clothed with power. He showed afterwards that he had talents fitted for any station; and zeal that tired with no exertion, and that was appalled by no obstacle. With this talent he entered on his work. Christians were few and feeble. They were scattered and unarmed. They were unprotected by any civil power, and exposed, therefore, to the full blaze and rage of persecution. That the church was *not* destroyed, was owing to the protection of God—a protection that not only secured its existence, but which extended its influence and power, by means of this very persecution, far abroad on the earth.

{a} "he made havoc" Ac 26:10,11; Ga 1:13

{*} "haling" "Dragging forth"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 8 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Went every where*. That is, they travelled through the various regions where they were scattered. In all places to which they came, they preached the word.

Preaching the word. Greek, *Evangelizing*, or announcing the good news of the message of mercy, or the word of God. It is not the usual word which is rendered *preach*, but means simply announcing the good news of salvation. There is no evidence, nor is there any probability, that all these persons were *ordained* to preach. They were manifestly common Christians who were scattered by the persecution; and the meaning is, that they communicated to their fellow-men in conversation, wherever they met them—and probably in the synagogues, where all Jews had a right to speak—the glad tidings that the Messiah had come. It is not said that they set themselves up for public teachers; or that they administered baptism; or that they founded churches; but they proclaimed everywhere

the news that a Saviour had come. Their hearts were full of it. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks; and they made the truth known to all whom they met. We may learn from this,

(1.) that persecution tends to promote the very thing which it would destroy.

(2.) That one of the best means to make Christians active and zealous is to persecute them.

(3.) That it is right for *all* Christians to make known the Paths of the gospel. When the heart is full, the lips will speak; and there is no more impropriety in their speaking of redemption than of anything else.

(4.) It should be the great object of all Christians to make the Saviour known *everywhere*. By their lives, conversation, and pious exhortations and entreaties, they should beseech dying sinners to be reconciled to God. And especially should this be done when they are *travelling*. Christians, when away from home, seem almost to imagine that they lay aside the obligations of religion. But the example of Christ and his early disciples has taught us that this is the very time to attempt to do good.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 8 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Then Philip*. One of the seven deacons, Ac 6:5. He is afterwards called *the Evangelist*, Ac 21:8.

The city of Samaria. This does not mean a city whose *name* was Samaria, for no such city at that time existed. Samaria was a region, Mt 2:22. The ancient city Samaria, the capital of that region, had been destroyed by *Hyrcanus* so completely, as to leave no vestige of it remaining; and he "took away," says Justifies, "the very marks that there had ever been such a city there, Anti. b. xlii. chap. x. 3. Herod the Great afterwards built a city on this site, and called it *Sebaste*, i. e. *Augusta*, in honour of the emperor Augustus, Jos. Anti. b. xv. chap. viii. 5. Perhaps this city is intended, as being the principal city of Samaria; or possibly *Sychar*, another city where the gospel had been before preached by the Saviour himself, Joh 4.

And preached Christ. Preached that the Messiah had come, and made known his doctrines. The same truths had been before stated in Samaria by the Saviour himself, Joh 4 and this was doubtless one of the reasons why they so gladly now received the word of God. The field had been prepared by the Lord Jesus; and he had said that it was white for the harvest, Joh 4:35 and into that field Philip now entered, and was signally blessed. His coming was attended with a remarkable *revival of religion*. The word translated *preach* here is not that which is used in the previous verse. This denotes to *proclaim as a crier*, and is commonly employed to denote the preaching of the gospel, so called, Mr 5:20 7:36; Lu 8:39; Mt 24:14 Ac 10:42; Ro 10:15 1Co 9:27, 15:12 2Ti 4:2.

It has been argued that because *Philip* is said thus to have preached to the Samaritans, that *therefore* all *deacons* have a right to preach, or that they are, under the New Testament economy, an *order* of ministers. But this is by no means clear. For,

(1.) it is not evident, nor can it be shown, that the other deacons Ac 6 ever preached. There is no record of their doing so; and the narrative would lead us to suppose that they did not.

(2.) They were *appointed* for a very different purpose, Ac 6:1-5; and it is fair to suppose that, *as deacons*, they confined themselves to the design of their appointment.

(3.) It is not said that *Philip* preached, in virtue of his being a *deacon*. From anything in *this* place, it would seem that he preached as the other Christians did—wherever he was.

(4.) But *elsewhere* an express distinction is made between Philip and the others. A new appellation is given him, and he is expressly called *the Evangelist*, Ac 21:8. From this, it seems that he preached, not because he was a deacon, but because he had received a special appointment to this business as an evangelist.

(5.) This same office, or rank of Christian teachers, is expressly recognized elsewhere, Eph 4:11. All these considerations show that there is not, in the sacred Scriptures, an order of ministers appointed to preach as deacons.

{b} "Philip went down" Ac 6:5

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 8 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *With one accord*. Unitedly, or with one mind. Great multitudes of them did it.

Gave heed. Paid attention to; embraced.

Hearing. Hearing what he said.

{+} "accord" "Consent" {d} "hearing and seeing" Joh 4:41,42

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 8 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *For unclean spirits*. **See Barnes "Mt 4:24"**.

Crying with loud voice. **See Barnes "Mr 1:26"**.

Palsies. **See Barnes "Mt 4:24"**.

{e} "unclean spirits" Mr 16:17 {f} "palsies" Mr 2:3-11 Ac 9:33,34

{g} "lame" Mt 11:5

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 8 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *And there was great joy*. This joy arose,

(1.) from the fact that so many persons, before sick and afflicted, were restored to health.

(2.) From the conversion on individuals to Christ. The tendency of religion is to produce joy.

(3.) From the mutual joy of *families* and *friends* that their friends were converted. The tendency of a revival of religion is thus to produce great joy.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 8 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *But there was a certain man, called Simon*. The Fathers have written much respecting this man, and have given strange accounts of him; but nothing more is certainly known of him than is stated in this place. Rosenmuller and Canaille suppose him to have been a Simon mentioned by Justifies, (Anti. b. xx. chap. vii. § 2,) who was born in Cyprus. He was a magician, and was employed by Felix to persuade Drusilla to forsake her husband Azizus, and to marry Felix. But it is not very probable that this was the same person. See Note in Whiston's Justifies. Simon Magus was probably a *Jew* or a *Samaritan*, who had addicted himself to the arts of magic, and who was much celebrated for it. He had studied philosophy in Alexandria in Egypt, (Mosheim, i. p. 113, 114, *Murdock's translation*,) and then lived at Samaria. After he was cut off from the hope of adding to his other powers the power of working miracles, the *Fathers* say that he fell into many errors, and became the founder of the sect of the Simonians. They accused him of affirming that he came down as the *Father* in respect to the Samaritans; the *Son* in respect to the Jews; and the *Holy Spirit* in respect to the Gentiles, He did not acknowledge Christ to be the Son of God, but a rival, and pretended himself to be Christ. He rejected the law of Moses. Many other things are affirmed of him, which rest on doubtful authority. He seems to have become an enemy to Christianity; though he was willing *then* to avail himself of some of its doctrines in order to advance his own interests. The account that he came to a tragical death at Rome; that he was honoured as a deity by the Roman senate; and that a statue was erected to his memory in the isle of Tiber, is now generally rejected. His end is not known. See Calmed, art. *Simon Magus*, and Mosheim, i. p. 114, Note.

Beforetime. The practice of magic, or sorcery, was common at that time, and in all the ancient nations.

Used sorcery. *mageuwn*. Exercising the arts of the *Magi*, or *Magicians*; hence the name Simon *Magus*. **See Barnes "Mt 2:1".**

The ancient *Magi* had their rise in Persia, and were at first addicted to the study of philosophy, astronomy, medicine, etc. This name came afterwards to signify those who made use of the knowledge of these arts for the purpose of imposing on mankind—astrologers, soothsayers, necromancers, fortune-tellers, etc. Such persons pretended to predict future events by the positions of the stars, and to cure diseases by incantations, etc. See Isa 2:6; see also Da 1:20 2:2. It was expressly forbidden the Jews to consult such persons on pain of death, Le 19:31 20:6. In these arts Simon had been eminently successful.

And bewitched. This is an unhappy translation. The Greek means merely that he *astonished* or *amazed* the people, or *confounded* their judgment. The idea of *bewitching* them is not in the original.

Giving out, etc. *Saying*, i.e. boasting. It was in this way, partly, that he so confounded them. Jugglers generally impose on people just in proportion to the *extravagance* and *folly* of their pretensions. The same remark may be made of *quack doctors*, and of all persons who attempt to delude and impose on mankind.

{*} "sorcery" "magic" {a} "and bewitched" Ac 13:6 Re 22:15 {+} "bewitched" "astonished" {b} "giving out" Ac 5:36

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 8 - Verse 12

Verse 12. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

{e} "believed Philip"
Ac 8:37 2:41
{f} "things concerning" Ac 1:3

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 8 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Then Simon himself believed also*. That is, he believed that Jesus had wrought miracles, and was raised from the dead, etc. All this he could believe in entire consistency with his own notions of the power of magic: and all that the connexion requires us to suppose is that he believed this—that Jesus had power of working miracles, etc.; and as he purposed to turn this to his own account, he was willing to profess himself to be his follower. It might have injured his popularity, moreover, if he had taken a stand when so many were professing to become Christians. Men often profess religion because, if they do not, they fear they will lose their influence, and be left with the ungodly. That Simon was not a real Christian is apparent from the whole narrative, Ac 8:18,21-23.

And when he was baptized. He was admitted to a *profession* of religion in the same way as the others. Philip did not pretend to know the heart; and Simon was admitted because he *professed* his belief. This is all the evidence that ministers can have; and it is no wonder that they, as well as Philip, are often deceived. The reasons which influenced Simon to make a profession of religion seem to have been these:

(1.) An impression that Christianity was *true*. He seems to have been convinced of this by the miracles of Philip.

(2.) The fact that many others were becoming Christians; and *he* went in with the multitude. This is often the case in revivals of religion.

(3.) He had no religion; but it is clear Ac 8:20,21, that he was willing to make use of Christianity to advance his own power, influence, and popularity—a thing which multitudes of men of the same mind with Simon Magus have been willing since to do.

He continued, etc. It was customary and natural for the disciples to remain with their teachers. See Ac 2:42.

And wondered. This is the same word that is translated *bewitched* in Ac 8:9,11. It means that he was amazed that Philip could really perform so much greater miracles than he had even pretended to. Hypocrites will sometimes be greatly attentive to the external duties of religion, and will be greatly surprised at what is done by God for the salvation of sinners.

Miracles and signs. Greek, Signs and *great powers*, or great miracles. That is, so much greater than he pretended to be able to perform.

{1} "miracles" "signs and great miracles"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 8 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *They sent*. That is, the apostles deputed two of their number. This shows conclusively that there was no *chief* or *ruler* among them. They acted as being equal in authority. The reason

why they sent them was, probably, that there would be a demand for more labour than Philip could render; a church was to be founded, which required their presence; and it was important that they should be present to organize it, and to build it up. The *harvest* had occurred in Samaria, of which the Saviour spoke, Joh 4:35, and it was proper that they should enter into it. In times of revival there is often more to be done than can be done by the regular pastor of a people, and it is proper that he should be aided from abroad.

Peter. This shows that *Peter* had no such authority and primacy as the Roman Catholics claim far him. He exercised no authority of *sending* others, but was himself *sent*. He was appointed by *their* united voice, instead of claiming the power himself of directing them.

And John. Peter was ardent, bold, zealous, rash; John was mild, gentle, tender, persuasive. There was wisdom in uniting them in this work, as the talents of both were needed; and the excellencies in the character of the one would compensate for the defects of the other. It is observable that the apostles sent two together, as the Saviour had himself done. **See Barnes "Mr 6:7"**.

The *reasons* why this additional aid was sent to Samaria were probably these:

(1.) To assist Philip in a great work—in the *harvest* which he was there collecting.

(2.) To give the *sanction* of the authority of the apostles to what he was doing.

(3.) To confer on the converts the gift of the Holy Ghost, Ac 8:17.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 8 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Were come down*. To Samaria. Jerusalem was generally represented as *up*, or *higher* than the rest of the land, Mt 20:18 Joh 7:8.

Prayed for them. They sought at the hand of God the extraordinary communications of the Holy Spirit. They did not even pretend to have the power of doing it without the aid of God.

That they might receive the Holy Ghost. The main question here is, what was *meant* by the Holy Ghost? In Ac 8:20, it is called "the gift of God." The following remarks may make this plain:

(1.) It was not that gift of the Holy Ghost by which *the soul is converted*, or *renewed*, for they had this when they believed, Ac 8:6. Everywhere the conversion of the sinner is traced to his influence. Comp. Joh 1:13.

(2.) It was not the ordinary influences of the Spirit by which the soul is sanctified; for sanctification is a progressive work, and this was sudden: sanctification is shown by the general tenor of the life; this was sudden and striking.

(3.) It was something that was discernible by *external effects*; for Simon saw Ac 8:18 that this was done by the laying on of hands.

(4.) The phrase, "the gift of the Holy Ghost," and "the descent of the Holy Ghost," signified not merely his *ordinary* influences in converting sinners, but those *extraordinary* influences that attended the first preaching of the gospel—the power of speaking with new tongues, Ac 2, the power of working miracles, etc., Ac 19:6.

(5.) This is further clear from the fact that Simon wished to *purchase* this power, evidently to keep up his influence among the people, and to retain his ascendancy as a juggler and sorcerer. But surely Simon would not wish to *purchase* the *converting* and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit; it was the power of working miracles. These things make it clear that by the gift of the Holy

Spirit here is meant the power of speaking with new tongues, (comp. 1Co 14,) and the power of miracles. And it is further clear that *this* passage should not be adduced in favour of "the rite of confirmation" in the Christian church. For, besides the fact that there are now no apostles, the thing spoken of here is entirely different from that of the rite of confirmation. *This* was to confer the extraordinary power of working miracles; that is for a different purpose.

If it be asked *why* this power was conferred on the early Christians, it may be replied, that it was to furnish striking proof of the truth of the Christian religion; to impress the people, and thus to win them to embrace the gospel. The early church was thus armed with the power of the Holy Spirit; and this extraordinary attestation of God to his message was one cause of the rapid propagation and permanent establishment of the gospel.

{§} "Holy Ghost" "Holy Spirit"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 8 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *He was fallen*. This expression is several times applied to the Holy Spirit, Ac 10:44 11:15. It does not differ materially from the common expression, "*the Holy Ghost descended*." It means that he came from heaven; and the expression *to fall*, applied to his influences, denotes the *rapidity* and *suddenness* of his coming. Comp. Ac 19:2.

In the name of the Lord Jesus. **See Barnes "Ac 2:38"**.

See also Ac 10:48 19:5,6.

{a} "as yet" Ac 19:2 {b} "were baptized" Ac 2:38 10:48, 19:5,6; 1Co 1:13

{*} "in the name" "unto"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 8 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Then laid they* their *hands*, etc. This was an act of prayer, expressing an invocation to God that he would impart the blessing to *them*. On *how many* they laid their hands is not said. It is evident that it was not on *all*, for they did not thus lay hands on Simon. Perhaps i.t was done on a few of the more prominent and leading persons, who were to be employed particularly in bearing witness to the truth of the gospel. It was customary to lay the hands on any person when a *favour* was to be conferred, or a blessing imparted. **See Barnes "Mt 9:18"**.

{c} "laid they their hands" Ac 6:5 Heb 6:2 {+} "Holy Ghost" "Holy Spirit"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 8 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Simon saw*, etc. That is, he witnessed the extraordinary effects, the power of speaking in a miraculous manner, etc. **See Barnes "Ac 8:15"**.

He offered them money. He had had a remarkable influence over the Samaritans, and he saw that the possession of this power would perpetuate and increase his influence. Men commonly

employ the tricks of legerdemain for the purpose of making money; and it seems probable that such had been the design of Simon. He saw that if he could communicate to *others* this power, if he could confer on *them* the talent of speaking other languages, it might be turned to vast account, and he sought therefore to purchase it of the apostles. From this act of Simon we have derived our word *simony*, to denote the buying and selling of ecclesiastical preferment, or church offices, where religion is supported by the state. This act of Simon shows conclusively that he was influenced by improper motives in becoming connected with the church.

{d} "purchase" 1Ti 6:5

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 8 - Verse 19

Verse 19. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 8 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Thy money perish with thee*. This is an expression of the horror and indignation of Peter at the base offer of Simon. It is not to be understood as an imprecation on Simon. The main idea is the apostle's contempt for the *money*, as if he regarded it as of no value. "Let your money go to destruction. We abhor your impious offer. We can freely see any amount of money destroyed, before we will be tempted to *sell* the gift of the Holy Ghost." But there was here also an expression of his belief that *Simon* also would perish. It was a declaration that he was hastening to ruin, and *as if* this was certain, Peter says, let your money *perish too*.

The gift of God. That which he has *given*, or conferred as a favour. The idea was *absurd* that that which God himself *gives* as a sovereign could be purchased. It was *impious* to think of attempting to buy with worthless gold that which was of so inestimable value. The *gift of God* here means the extraordinary influences of the Holy Ghost, Ac 10:45 11:17. How can we pay a *price* to God? All that we can give, the silver, and the gold, and the cattle on a thousand hills, belong to him already. We have *nothing* which we can present for his favours. And yet there are many who seek to *purchase* the favour of God. Some do it by alms and prayers; some by penance and fasting; some by attempting to make their own hearts better, and by self-righteousness; and some by penitence and tears. All these will not *purchase* his favour. Salvation, like every other blessing, will be *his gift*; and if ever received, we must be willing to accept it on his own terms, at his own time, and in his own way. We are without merit; and if saved, it will be by the sovereign grace of God.

{e} "because thou thought" 2Ki 5:15,16; Mt 10:8

{f} "gift of God" Ac 10:45 11:17

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 8 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Neither part*. You have no *portion* of the grace of God; that is, you are destitute of it altogether. This word commonly denotes the *part* of an inheritance which falls to one when it is divided.

Nor lot. This word means, properly, a portion which *falls* to one when an estate, or when spoil in war, is divided into portions, according to the number of those who are to be partakers, and the part of each one is determined by *lot*. The two words denote emphatically that he was in no sense a partaker of the favour of God.

In this matter. Greek, In this *word*, i.e. thing. That which is referred to here is the religion of Christ. He was not a Christian. It is remarkable that Peter judged him so soon, and when he had seen but *one* act of his. But it was an act which satisfied him that he was a stranger to religion. One act may sometimes bring out the *whole character*; it may evince the governing motives; it may show traits of character utterly inconsistent with true religion; and then it is as certain a criterion as any long series of acts.

Thy heart. Your *affections*, or *governing motives*; your principle of conduct. Comp. 2Ki 10:15. You love gold and popularity, and not the gospel for what it is. There is no evidence here that Peter saw this in a miraculous manner, or by any supernatural influence. It was apparent and plain that Simon was not influenced by the pure, disinterested motives of the gospel, but by the love of power and of the world.

In the sight of God. That is, God *sees* or judges that your heart is not sincere and pure. No external profession is acceptable without the heart. Reader, is *your* heart right with God? Are your motives pure—and does *God* see there the exercise of holy, sincere, and benevolent affections towards him? God *knows* the motives; and with unerring certainty he will judge; and with unerring justice he will fix our doom, according to the affections of the heart.

{g} "neither part" Jos 22:25 {h} "for thy heart" Ps 78:36,37; Eze 14:3

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 8 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Repent therefore*. Here we may remark,

(1.) that Simon was at this time an unconverted sinner.

(2.) That the command was given to him *as such*.

(3.) That he was required to *do the thing*; not to wait or seek merely, but actually to repent.

(4.) That this was to be the first step in his conversion. He was not even directed to pray first; but his first indispensable work was to *repent*, that is, to exercise proper sorrow for this sin, and to *abandon* his plan or principle of action. And this shows,

(1.) that *all* sinners are to be exhorted to repent, as their first work. They are not to be told to *wait*, and *read*, and *pray*, in the expectation that repentance will be given them. With such helps they can obtain, they are to *do the thing*.

(2.) Prayer will not be acceptable, or heard, unless the sinner comes *repenting*, that is, unless he regrets his sin, and desires to forsake it. Then, and then only, will he be heard. When he comes *loving* his sins, and resolving still to practise them, God will not hear him. When he comes *desirous* of forsaking them, grieved that he is guilty, and *feeling* his need of help, God will hear his prayer. See Isa 1:15 Mic 3:4; Pr 1:28 Ps 66:18.

And pray God. Having a *desire* to forsake the sin, and to be pardoned, *then* pray to God to forgive. It would be absurd to ask forgiveness until a man felt his need of it. This shows that a sinner *ought* to pray, and how he ought to do it. It should be with a desire and purpose to forsake sin, and in that state of mind God will hear the prayer. Comp. Da 4:27.

If perhaps. There was no certainty that God would forgive him; nor is there any evidence either that Simon prayed, or that he was forgiven. This direction of Peter presents *another* important principle in regard to the conduct of sinners. They are to be directed to repent, not *because* they have the promise of forgiveness, and not *because* they *hope* to be forgiven, but because *sin is a great evil*, and because it is *right* and *proper* that they should repent, whether they are forgiven or not. That is to be left to the sovereign mercy of God. *They* are to repent of sin; and then they are to feel, not that they have any *claim* on God, but that they are dependent on him, and must be saved or lost at his will. They are not to suppose that their tears will *purchase* forgiveness, but that they lie at the foot of mercy, and that there is *hope*—not certainty—that *God* will forgive. The language of the humbled sinner is—

"Perhaps he will admit my plea,
Perhaps will hear my prayer;
But if I perish I will pray,
And perish only there.

"I can but perish if I go;
I am resolved to try,
For if I stay away, I know
I shall for ever die."

The thought, etc. Your *purpose*, or *wish*. *Thoughts* may be, therefore, evil, and need forgiveness. It is not open sin only that needs to be pardoned; it is the secret purpose of the soul.

{i} "if perhaps" Da 4:27 2Ti 2:25

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 8 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *For I perceive*. That is, by the act which he had done. His offer had shown a state of mind that was wholly inconsistent with true religion. One single sin may as certainly show that there is no true piety, as many acts of iniquity. It may be so decided, so malignant, so utterly inconsistent with just views, as at once to determine what the character is. The sin of Simon was of this character. Peter here does not appear to have claimed the power of judging the *heart*; but he judged, as all other men would, by the act.

In the gall. This word denotes properly bile, or that bitter, yellowish-green fluid that is secreted in the liver. Hence it means anything very bitter; and also any bad passion of the mind, as anger, malice, etc. We speak of *bitterness* of mind, etc.

Of bitterness. This is a Hebraism; the usual mode of expressing the *superlative*, and means excessive bitterness. The phrase is used respecting *idolatry*, De 29:18 "Lest there should be among, you a root that beareth gall and wormwood." A similar expression occurs in Heb 12:15, "Lest any

root of bitterness springing up, trouble you," etc. *Sin* is thus represented as a *bitter* or poisonous thing; a thing not only unpleasant in its consequences, but ruinous in its character, as a poisonous plant would be in the midst of other plants. Jer 2:19, "It is an evil and *bitter* thing that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God;" Jer 4:18 Ro 3:14, "Whose mouth is full of cursings and bitterness;" Eph 4:31. The meaning here is, that the heart of Simon was full of dreadful, malignant sin.

Bond of iniquity. Or, that thou art bound by iniquity. That is, that it has the rule over you, and *binds* you as a slave. Sin is often thus represented as *bondage* and *captivity*. Sinners are represented as chained to it, and kept in hard servitude, Ps 116:16 Pr 5:22, "He shall be holden with the cords of his sins;" Ro 7:23,24. These expressions prove conclusively that Simon was a stranger to religion.

{a} "gall of bitterness" Jer 4:18 Heb 12:15 {b} "bond of iniquity" Ps 116:16 Pr 5:22; Isa 28:22

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 8 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Pray ye*, etc. Here remark,

(1.) that Simon was directed to pray for himself, Ac 8:22, but he had no disposition to do that. Sinners will often ask others to pray for them, when they are too proud, or too much in love with sin, to pray for themselves.

(2.) The main thing that Peter wished to impress on him was a sense of his *sin*. Simon did not regard this, but looked only to the *punishment*. He was terrified and alarmed; and he sought to avoid future punishment; but he had no alarm about his *sins*. So it is often with sinners. So it was with Pharaoh, Ex 8:28,32 and with Jeroboam, 1Ki 13:6. And so sinners often quiet their own consciences by asking ministers and Christian friends to pray for them, while *they* still purpose to persevere in iniquity. If men expect to be saved, they must pray *for themselves*; and pray, not chiefly to be freed from *punishment*, but from the *sin which deserves hell*. This is all that we hear of Simon in the New Testament; and the probability is, that, like many other sinners, he did not pray for himself, but continued to live in the gall of bitterness, and died in the bond of iniquity. The testimony of antiquity is decided on that point. **See Barnes "Ac 8:9"**.

{c} "Pray ye" Ex 8:8 Nu 21:7; 1Ki 13:6 Job 42:8; Jas 5:16

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 8 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *In many villages*, etc. They *went* at first directly to the *city* of Samaria. On their return to Jerusalem, they travelled more at leisure, and preached in the villages also—a good example for the ministers of the gospel, and for all Christians, when travelling from place to place. The reason why they returned to Jerusalem, and made that their permanent abode, might have been, that it was important to bear witness to the resurrection of Christ in the very city where he had been crucified, and where his resurrection had occurred. If the doctrine was established *there*, it would be more easy to establish it elsewhere.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 8 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *And the angel of the Lord*. The word *angel* is used in the Scriptures in a great variety of significations. **See Barnes "Mt 1:20"**.

Here it has been supposed by some to mean literally a celestial messenger sent from God; others have supposed that it means a *dream*, others a *vision*, etc. The word properly means *a messenger*; and all that it can be shown to signify here is, that the Lord sent a message to Philip of this kind. It is most probable, I think, that the passage means that God communicated the message by his Spirit; for, in Ac 8:29,39, it is expressly said that *the Spirit* spake to Philip, etc. Thus in Ac 16:7, the *Spirit* is said to have forbidden Paul to preach in Bithynia; and in Ac 16:9, the message on the subject is said to have been conveyed in a *vision*. There is no absurdity, however, in supposing that an *angel* literally was employed to communicate this message to Philip. See Heb 1:14; Ge 19:1 22:11; Jud 6:12.

Spake unto Philip. Comp. Mt 2:13.

Arise. **See Barnes "Lu 15:18"**.

And go, etc. philip had been employed in Samaria. As God now intended to send the gospel to another place, he gave a special direction to Philip to go and convey it. It is evident that God designed the *conversion* of this eunuch; and the direction to Philip shows how he accomplishes his designs. It is not by miracle, but by the use of means. It is not by direct power without *truth*, but it is by a message fitted to the end. The salvation of a single sinner is an object worthy the attention of God. When such a sinner is converted, it is because God forms a plan or purpose to do it. *When* it is done, he inclines his servants to labour; he directs their labours; he leads his ministers; and he prepares the way Ac 8:28 for the reception of the truth.

Toward the south. That is, south of Samaria, where Philip was then labouring.

Unto Gaza. Gaza, or AZZAH, Ge 10:19, was a city of the Philistines, given by Joshua to Judah, Jos 15:47 1Sa 6:17. It was one of the *five* principal cities of the Philistines. It was formerly a large place; was situated on an eminence, and commanded a beautiful prospect. It was in this place that Samson took away the gates of the city, and bore them off, Jud 16:2,3. It was near Askelon, about sixty miles south-west from Jerusalem.

Which is desert. This may refer either to the *way* or to the *place*. The natural construction is the latter. In explanation of this, it is to be observed that there were two towns of that name, Old and New Gaza. The prophet Zephaniah Zep 2:4 said that *Gaza* should be *forsaken*, i. e., destroyed. "This was partly accomplished by Alexander the Great. (Jos. Antiq. b. xi. ch. viii. § 3, 4; b. xiii. ch. xiii. § 3.) Another town was afterwards built of the same name, but at some distance from the former; and Old Gaza was abandoned to destruction. Strabo mentions 'Gaza the desert,' and Diodorous Siculus speaks of 'Old Gaza.'" (*Robin. Calmet*.) Some have supposed, however, that Luke refers here to the *road* leading to Gaza, as being desolate and uninhabited. But I regard the former interpretation as most natural and obvious. In this place, in 1823, the American missionaries, Messrs. Fisk and King, found Gaza, a town built of stone, making a very mean appearance, and containing about five thousand inhabitants." (*Hall on the Acts*.)

{d} "unto Gaza" Jos 15:47

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 8 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *A Man of Ethiopia*. Gaza was near the confines between Palestine and Egypt. It was in the direct road from Jerusalem to Egypt. *Ethiopia* was one of the great kingdoms of Africa, part of which is now called Abyssinia. It is frequently mentioned in Scriptare under the name of *Cush*. But *Cush* comprehended a much larger region, including the southern part of Arabia, and even sometimes the countries adjacent to the Tigris and Euphrates. Ethiopia Proper lay south of Egypt, on the Nile, and was bounded north by Egypt, that is, by the cataracts near Syene; east by the Red Sea, and perhaps part by the Indian Ocean; south by unknown regions in the interior of Africa; and west by Lybia and the deserts. It comprehended the modern kingdoms of Nubia or Sennaar, and Abyssinia. The chief city in it was the ancient Meroe, situated on the island or tract of the same name, between the Nile and Ashtaborus, not far from the modern Shendi. (*Robinson's Calmet*,)

An eunuch, etc. **See Barnes "Mt 19:12"**.

Eunuchs were commonly employed in attendance on the females of the harem; but the word is often used to denote any confidential officer, or counsellor of state. It is evidently so used here.

Of great authority. Of high rank; an officer of the court. It is clear, from what follows, that this man was a Jew. But it is known that *Jews* were often raised to posts of high honour and distinction in foreign courts, as in the case of Joseph in Egypt, and of Daniel in Babylon.

Under Candace, etc. Candace is said to have been the common name of the queens of Ethiopia, as *Pharaoh* was of the sovereigns of Egypt. This is expressly stated by Pliny. (Nat. Hist. vii. 29.) His words are, "The edifices of the city were few; a woman reigned there of the name of CANDACE, which name had been transmitted to these queens for many years." Strabo mentions also a queen of Ethiopia of the name of Candace. Speaking of an insurrection against the Romans, he says, "Among these were the officers of queen CANDANCE, who in our days reigned over the Ethiopians." As this could not have been the Candace mentioned here, it is plain that the name was common to these queens—a sort of royal title. She was probably queen of Meroe, an important part of Ethiopia. (Bruce's Travels, vol. ii. p. 431—Clarke.)

Who had the charge, etc. The treasurer was an officer of high trust and responsibility.

And had come, etc. This proves that he was a Jew, or at least a Jewish proselyte. It was customary for the Jews in foreign lands, as far as practicable, to attend the great feasts at Jerusalem. He had gone up to attend the Passover, etc. **See Barnes "Ac 2:5"**.

{e} "man of Ethiopia" Zep 3:10 {f} "an eunuch of high" Isa 56:3-5

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 8 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *And sitting in his chariot*. His carriage; his vehicle. The form of the carriage is not known. In some instances the carriages of the ancients were placed on wheels; in others, were borne on poles in the form of a *litter* or palanquin, by men, or mules, or horses. (See Calmet, art. *Chariot*.)

Read Esaias, etc. Isaiah. Reading doubtless the translation of Isaiah called the Septuagint. This translation was made in Egypt, for the special use of the Jews in Alexandria and throughout Egypt, and was that which was commonly used. *Why* he was reading the Scriptures, and especially this prophet, is not certainly known. It is morally certain, however, that he was in Judea at the time of

the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus; that he had heard much of him; that this would be a subject of discussion; and it was natural for him, in returning, to look at the prophecies respecting the Messiah, perhaps either to meditate on them as a suitable subject of inquiry and thought, or perhaps to examine the claims of Jesus of Nazareth to this office. The prophecy in Isa 53 was so striking, and coincided so clearly with the character of Jesus, that it was natural for a candid mind to examine whether *he* might not be the person intended by the prophet. On this narrative we may remark:

(1.) It is a proper and profitable employment on returning from *worship* to examine the sacred Scriptures.

(2.) It is well to be in the habit of reading the Scriptures when we are on a journey. It may serve to keep the heart from worldly objects, and secure the affections for God.

(3.) It is well at *all* times to read the Bible. It is one of the means of grace. And it is when we are searching his will that we obtain light and comfort. The sinner should examine with a candid mind the sacred volume. It may be the means of conducting him in the true path of salvation.

(4.) God often gives us light in regard to the meaning of the Bible in unexpected modes. How little did this eunuch *expect* to be enlightened in the manner in which he actually was. Yet God, who intended to instruct and save him, sent the living teacher, and opened to him the sacred Scriptures, and led him to the Saviour. It is probable Ac 8:30 that he was reading it aloud.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 8 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *The Spirit*. **See Barnes "Ac 8:26".**

The Holy Spirit is here evidently intended. The thought in Philip's mind is here traced to his suggestion. All good thoughts and designs have the same origin.

Join thyself. Join him in his chariot. Go and sit with him.

{b} "Then the Spirit said to Philip" Isa 65:24 Hos 6:3

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 8 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *And Philip ran*, etc. Indicating his haste, and his desire to obey the suggestions of the Spirit. A thousand difficulties might have been started in the mind of Philip if he had reflected a little. The eunuch was a stranger; he had the appearance of a man of rank; he was engaged in reading; he might be indisposed to be interrupted or to converse, etc. But Philip obeyed without any hesitation the monitions of the Spirit, and *ran* to him. It is well to follow the *first* suggestions of the Spirit; to yield to the clear indications of duty, and to perform it *at once*. Especially in a deed of benevolence, and in conversing with others on the subject of religion, our *first* thoughts are commonly safest and best. If we do not follow them, the calculations of avarice, or fear, or some worldly prudence, are very apt to come in. We become alarmed; we are afraid of the rich and the great; and we suppose that our conversation and admonitions will be unacceptable. We may learn from this case,

(1.) to do our duty at once, without hesitation or debate.

(2.) We shall often be disappointed in regard to subjects of this kind. We shall find candid, humble, Christian conversation far more acceptable to strangers, to the rich, and to the great, than we commonly suppose. If, as in this case, they are *alone*; if we approach them kindly; if we do not rudely and harshly address them, we shall find most men willing to talk on the subject of religion. I have conversed with some hundreds of persons on the subject of religion, and do not now recollect but *two* instances in which I was rudely treated, and in which it was not easy to gain a respectful and kind attention to Christian conversation.

And heard him read. He was reading loud—sometimes the best way of impressing truth on the mind in our private reading the Scriptures.

And said, etc. This question, there might have been reason to fear, would not be kindly received. But the eunuch's mind was in such a state that he took no offence from such inquiry, though made by a foot-man and a stranger. He doubtless recognized him as a brother Jew. It is an important question to ask ourselves when we read the sacred Scriptures.

{c} "Understandest thou what thou readest? Mt 13:23,51; Eph 5:17

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 8 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *And he said*, etc. This was a *general* acknowledgment of his need of direction. It evinced a humble state of mind. It was an acknowledgment, also, originating probably from this particular passage which he was reading. He did not understand how it could be applied to the Messiah; how the description of his humiliation and condemnation Ac 8:33 could be reconciled to the prevalent ideas of his being a prince and a conqueror. The same sentiment is expressed by Paul in Ro 10:14. The circumstances, the state of mind in the eunuch, and the result, strongly remind one of the declaration in Ps 25:9, "The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way."

And he desired, etc. He was willing to receive instruction even from a stranger. The rich and the great may often receive valuable instruction from a stranger, and from a poor, unknown man.

{d} "How can I" Ro 10:14 {e} "some man should guide me" Ps 25:9

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 8 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *The place*, etc. Isa 53:7,8.

He was led, etc. This quotation is taken literally from the Septuagint. It varies very little from the Hebrew. It has been almost universally understood that this place refers to the Messiah; and Philip expressly applies it to him. The word "was led" *hcyh*, implies that he was conducted by others; that he was led as a sheep is led to be killed. The general idea is that of *meekness* and *submission* when he was led to be put to death; a description that applies in a very striking manner to the Lord Jesus.

To the slaughter. To be killed. The characteristic here recorded is more remarkable in the sheep than in any other animal.

And like a lamb dumb, etc. Still, patient, unresisting.

So opened he not his mouth. He did not *complain*, or murmur; he offered no resistance, but yielded patiently to what was done by others.

{f} "He was lead" Isa 53:7,8

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 8 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *In his humiliation*. This varies from the Hebrew, but is copied exactly from the Septuagint, showing that he was reading the Septuagint. The Hebrew is, "he was taken from prison, and from judgment." The word rendered "prison" denotes any kind of *detention*, or even oppression. It does not mean, as with us, to be confined in a prison or jail, but may mean *custody*, and be applied to the detention or custody of the Saviour when his hands were bound, and he was led to be tried. **See Barnes "Mt 27:2".**

It is not known why the Seventy thus translated the expression "he was taken from prison" etc., by "*in his humiliation*," etc. The word "from prison," may mean, as has been remarked, however, from oppression, and this does not differ materially from humiliation; and in this sense the Seventy understood it. The *meaning* of the expression in the Septuagint and the Acts is clear. It denotes that in his state of oppression and calamity, when he was destitute of protectors and friends, when at the *lowest* state of his humiliation, and, therefore, most the object of pity, that *in addition to that*, justice was denied him, his judgment—a just sentence—was taken away, or withheld, and he was delivered to be put to death. His deep humiliation and friendless state was followed by an unjust and cruel condemnation, when no one would stand forth to plead his cause. Every circumstance thus goes to deepen the view of his sufferings.

His judgment. Justice, a just sentence, was denied him, and he was cruelly condemned.

And who shall declare his generation? The word generation, used here, properly denotes *posterity*; then an age of mankind, comprehending about thirty years, as we speak of this and the next generation; then it denotes *the men* of a particular age or time. Very various interpretations have been given of this expression. Lowth translates it, "His manner of life, who would declare?" referring, as he supposes, to the fact that when a prisoner was condemned and led to execution, it was customary for a proclamation to be made by a crier in these words, "Whoever knows anything about his innocence, let him come and declare it." This passage is taken from the Gemara of Babylon.—*Kennicott, as quoted by Lowth*. The same Gemara of Babylon on this passage adds, that "before the death of Jesus, this proclamation was made forty days; but no defence could be found"—a manifest falsehood; and a story strikingly illustrative of the character of the Jewish writings. The Gemara was written some time after Christ, perhaps not far from the year 180, *Lardher*, and is a collection of commentaries on the traditional laws of the Jews. That this custom existed is very probable; but it is certain that no such thing was done on the trim of the Saviour. But instances are wanting where the word "generation" has this meaning. The Chaldee paraphrase translates the passage in Isaiah, "He shall collect our captivity from infirmities and vengeance; and who can declare what wonderful things shall be done for us in his days?" Others have referred this question to his Deity, or Divine *generation*; intimating that no one could explain the mystery of his eternal generation. But the word in the Scriptures has no such signification; and such a sense would not

suit the connexion. (See Calvin, in loco.) Others have referred it to *his own spiritual posterity*, his disciples, his family: "The number of his friends and followers who could enumerate?"—*Calvin*, *Beza*, etc. But this as little suits the connexion. Another sense which the word has, is to denote the men of any particular age or time, Mt 11:16 23:36; Lu 16:8, etc. And it has been supposed that the question here means, "Who can describe the character and wickedness of the generation when he shall breathe enormous crime of that age, in putting him to death?' This, perhaps, is the most probable interpretation of the question, for these reasons:

(1.) It is the most usual signification of the word, (see Schleusner,) and would be its obvious meaning in any other connexion.

(2.) It suits the connexion here. For the prophet *immediately adds* as *a reason* for the fact that no one can describe that generation, that he was *put to death*—a deed so enormous, as to make it *impossible to describe* the wickedness of the generation that would do it. This was the sum, the crowning act of human guilt—a deed so enormous as to defy all attempt at description. The murder of the Messiah; the crucifixion of the Son of God; the killing of the highest Messenger that heaven could send, was the consummation of all earthly wickedness. There was no other deed so enormous that could be performed; and there were no words to describe this. The same thing is implied in what the Saviour himself said, Mt 23:37,38; Lu 13:34,35, 19:42, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem," etc. The idea in these places is, that notwithstanding their sin in killing the prophets, and stoning those who had been sent to them, he would *still* have been willing to receive and pardon them, but for this enormous act of wickedness in putting the Messiah to death—a deed which they were *about* to accomplish, and which should be attended with the destruction of their state and nation. The Hebrew word "declare" Isa 53:8 means, properly, to *meditate*, to *think of*, and then *to speak*, *to declare*. It means probably in that place," Who can think of, who can conceive the enormity of the crimes of that age, so as fully to publish or declare them?"

For his life, etc. This is the *act* of wickedness just referred to—putting the Messiah to death. The Hebrew is, "For he was cut off from the land of the living," i. e., he was put to death. The expression used in the Acts was taken from the Septuagint, and means substantially the same as the Hebrew.

{*} "generation" "The men of his generation who can describe"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 8 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *Answered Philip*. That is, *addressed* Philip. The Hebrews often use the word *answer* as synonymous with addressing one, whether he had spoken or not.

Of himself, etc. This was a natural inquiry, for there was nothing in the text itself that would determine expressly to whom the reference was. The ancient Jews expressly applied the passage to the Messiah. Thus the Targum of Jonathan on Isa 52:13, "Behold, my servant shall deal prudently," etc., renders it, "Behold, my servant, *the Messiah*, shall be prospered," etc. But we should remember that the eunuch was probably not deeply versed in the Scriptures. We should remember, further, that he had just been at Jerusalem, and that the public mind was agitated about the proceedings of the sanhedrim in putting Jesus of Nazareth, who claimed to be the Messiah, to death. It is by no means improbable that *this* passage had been urged as a proof that he was the Messiah; and that

the Jews, to evade the force of it, had maintained that it referred to Isaiah or Jeremiah—as they have since done. Yet the subject was so important and so difficult, that it had occupied the attention of the traveller during his journey; and his question shows that he had been deeply pondering the inquiry whether it *could* refer to Isaiah, or whether it must have reference to the Messiah. In this state of suspense and agitation, when his mind was just fitted to receive instruction, God sent a messenger to guide him. He often thus prepares, by his providence, or by a train of affecting and solemn events, the minds of men for a reception of the truth; and *then* he sends his messengers to guide the mind, thoughtful and anxious, in the way of peace and salvation.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 8 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *Opened his mouth*. See Mt 5:2.

At the same Scripture. Taking this as a *text* to be illustrated.

Preached unto him Jesus. Showed him that Jesus of Nazareth exactly answered to the description of the prophet; and that therefore the prophet referred to the Messiah, and that that Messiah was Jesus of Nazareth. How far Philip detailed the circumstances of the life and death of Christ is unknown. What follows shows also that he stated the design of baptism, and the duty of being baptized.

{a} "at the same Scripture" Lu 24:27 {b} "and preached unto him" Ac 18:28

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 8 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *As they went on their way*.

A certain water. The expression used here does not determine whether this was a river, a brook, or a pond or standing pool. And there are no circumstances to determine that. It is well known, however, that there is no large river, or very considerable stream, in this vicinity. All that is intimated is, that there was water enough to perform the rite of baptism, whether that was by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion. It must be admitted, I think, that there might have been water enough for either. Grotius says they came "*to a fountain* which was in the neighbourhood of *Bethsora*, in the tribe of Juda, at the twentieth milestone from AElia (*Jerusalem*) to Hebron." This is, however, a tradition taken from *Eusebius*. The place is still shown.—*Pococke*.

What doth hinder me, etc. This shows that he had been instructed by Philip in the nature and design of baptism. It evinces also a purpose at once to give himself to Christ, to profess his name, and to be dedicated to his service.

To be baptized. On the meaning of the word *baptize*, **See Barnes "Mt 3:6"**.

{c} "what doth hinder me" Ac 10:47

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 8 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *And Philip said*, etc. This was then stated to be the proper qualification for making a profession of religion. The terms are:

(1.) *Faith*, that is, a reception of Jesus as a Saviour; yielding the mind to the proper influences of the truths of redemption. **See Barnes "Mr 16:16"**.

(2.) There is required not merely the assent of the understanding, but a surrender of *the heart, the will, the affections*, to the truth of the gospel. As these were the proper qualifications then, so they are now. Nothing less is required; and nothing but this can constitute a proper qualification for the Lord's Supper.

I believe, etc. This profession is more than a professed belief that Jesus was the Messiah. The name *Christ* implies that. "I believe that *Jesus the Messiah*" is, etc. In addition to this, he professed his belief that he was *the Son of God*—showing either that he had before supposed that the Messiah *would be* the Son of God, or that Philip had instructed him on that point. It was natural for Philip, in discoursing on the humiliation and poverty of Jesus, to add also that he sustained a higher rank of being than a man, and was the Son of God. What precise ideas the eunuch attached to this expression cannot be now determined. This verse is wanting in a very large number of manuscripts, (*Mill*,) and has been rejected by many of the ablest critics. It is also omitted in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions. It is not easy to conceive why it has been omitted in almost all the Greek Mss., unless it is spurious. If it was not in the original copy of the Acts, it was probably inserted by some early transcriber, and was deemed so important to the connexion, to show that the eunuch was not admitted hastily to baptism, that it was afterwards retained. It contains, however, an important truth, elsewhere abundantly taught in the Scriptures, that *faith* is necessary to a proper profession of religion.

{d} "If thou believest" Mr 16:16 Ac 8:12 {a} "I believe that Jesus Christ" Joh 11:27 1Co 12:3; 1Jo 4:15.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 8 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *And they went down both into the water*. This passage has been made the subject of much discussion on the subject of baptism. It has been adduced in proof of the necessity of immersion. It is not proposed to enter into that subject here. **See Barnes "Mt 3:6"**.

It maybe remarked here, that the preposition *eiv*, translated here "into," does not of necessity mean that. Its meaning would be as well expressed by "to," or "unto," or, as we should say, "they went to the water," without meaning to determine whether they went into it or not. Out of *twenty-six* significations which Schleusner has given the word, this is one. Joh 11:38: "Jesus therefore groaning in himself, cometh to *eiv* the grave "—assuredly not *into* the grave. Lu 11:49: I send them prophets. Greek, I send *to eiv* them prophets" —*to* them, not *into* them. Comp. Ro 2:4; 1Co 14:36 Mt 12:41: "They repented *at eiv* the preaching of Jonas"—not *into* his preaching, Joh 4:5: "Then cometh he *to eiv* a city of Samaria," that is, *near to it*; for the context shows that he had not yet entered *into* it. Comp. Joh 4:6,8; Joh 21:4: "Jesus stood *on eiv* the shore;" that is, not *in*, but *near* the shore. These passages show that the word does not necessarily mean that they entered *into* the water; but

(1.) if it did, it does not necessarily follow that the eunuch was *immersed*. There might be various ways of baptizing, even after they were *in* the water, besides immersing. Sprinkling or pouring might be performed there as well as elsewhere.

(2.) It is incumbent on those who maintain that *immersion* is the *only* valid mode of baptism, to prove that this passage cannot *possibly* mean anything else, and that there *was* no other mode practised by the apostles.

(3.) It would be still incumbent to show that if this were the common and even the only mode then, in a warm climate, etc., that it is indispensable that this mode should be practised everywhere else. No such positive command can be adduced. And it follows, therefore, that it cannot be proved that immersion is the only lawful mode of baptism. **See Barnes "Mt 3:6"**.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 8 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *Out of the water*, *ek*. This preposition stands opposed to *eiv* "into;" and as that may mean *to*, so this may mean *from*; if that means *into*, this means here *out of*.

The Spirit of the Lord. Ac 8:29. The *Spirit* had suggested to Philip to go to meet the eunuch; and the same Spirit, now that he had fulfilled the design of his going there, directed his departure.

Caught away. This phrase has been usually understood of a *forcible* or *miraculous* removal of Philip to some other place. Some have even supposed that he was borne through the air by an angel. (See even Doddridge.) To such foolish interpretations have many expositors been led. The meaning is, clearly, that the Spirit, who had directed Philip to go near the eunuch, now removed him in a similar manner. That this is the meaning is clear,

(1.) because it accounts for all that occurred. It is not wise to suppose the existence of a miracle, except where the effect cannot otherwise be accounted for, and except where there is a plain statement that there was a miracle.

(2.) The word "caught away" *hrpase* does not imply that there was a miracle. The word properly means, to seize and bear away anything violently, without the consent of the owner, as robbers and plunderers do. Then it signifies to remove anything in a forcible manner; to make use of strength or power to remove it, Ac 23:10 Mt 13:19; Joh 10:28; 2Co 12:2,4, etc. In *no case* does it ever denote that a *miracle* is performed. And :all that can be signified here is, that the Spirit *strongly admonished* Philip to go to some other place; that he so *forcibly* or *vividly suggested* the duty to his mind, as to *tear him away*, as it were, from the society of the eunuch. He had been deeply interested in the case. He would have found pleasure in continuing the journey with him. But the strong convictions of duty, urged by the Holy Spirit, impelled him, as it were, to break off this new and interesting acquaintanceship, and to go to some other place. The purpose for which he was sent, to instruct and baptize the eunuch, was accomplished, and now he was called to some other field of labour. A similar instance of interpretation has been considered **See Barnes "Mt 4:5"**.

And he went on his way rejoicing. His mind was enlightened on a perplexing passage of scripture. He was satisfied respecting the Messiah. He was baptized; and he experienced that which all feel who embrace the Saviour and are baptized, *joy*. It was joy resulting from the fact that he was reconciled to God; and a joy, the natural effect of having done his duty promptly, in making a profession of religion. If we wish happiness, if we would avoid clouds and gloom, we shall *do our*

duty at once. If we delay till tomorrow what we ought to do today, we may expect to be troubled with melancholy thoughts. If we find peace, it will be in doing promptly: just that which God requires at our hands. This is the last that we hear of this man. Some have supposed that this eunuch carried the gospel to Ethiopia, and preached it there. But there is strong evidence to believe that the gospel was not preached there successfully until about the year 330, when it was introduced by *Frumentius*, sent to Abyssinia for that purpose by Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria. From this narrative we may learn,

(1.) that God often prepares the mind to receive the truth.

(2.) That this takes place sometimes with the great and the noble, as well as the poor and obscure.

(3.) We should study the Scriptures. It is the way in which God usually directs the mind in the truths of religion.

(4.) They who read the Bible with candour and care may expect that God will, in some mode, guide them into the truth. It will often be in a way which they least expect; but they need not be afraid of being left to darkness or error.

(5.) We should be ready at all times to speak to sinners. God often prepares their minds, as he did that of the eunuch, to receive the truth.

(6.) We should not be afraid of the great, the rich, or of strangers. God often prepares *their* minds to receive the truth; and we may find a man willing to hear of the Saviour where we least expected it.

(7.) We should do our duty in this respect, as Philip did, promptly. We should not delay or hesitate; but should at once do that which we believe is in accordance with the will of God. See Ps 119:60.

{b} "caught away" 1Ki 18:12 Eze 3:12,14

{c} "rejoicing" Ps 119:14,111

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 8 - Verse 40

Verse 40. *But Philip was found*. That is, he came to Azotus; or, he was not heard of until he reached Azotus. The word is often used in this sense. See 1Ch 29:17, margin; 2Ch 29:29, margin; Ge 2:20. See also Lu 17:18 Ro 7:10. In all these places the word is used in the sense of *to be*, or *to be present*. It does not mean here that there was any *miracle* in the case, but that Philip, after leaving the eunuch, came to or was in Azotus.

Azotus. This is the Greek name of the city, which by the Hebrews was called *Ashdod*. It was one of the cities which were *not* taken by Joshua, and which remained in the possession of the Philistines. It was to this place that the ark of God was sent when it was taken by the Philistines from the Israelites; and here Dagon was cast down before it, 1Sa 5:2,3. Uzziah, king of Judah, broke down its wall, and built cities or watch-towers around it, 2Ch 26:6. It was a place of great strength and consequence. It was distant about thirty miles from Gaza. It was situated on the coast of the Mediterranean, and was a seaport. The distance which Philip had to travel, therefore, was not very great; and as Azotus lay almost directly *north* of Gaza, it shows that, in order to reach it, he must have parted from the eunuch, whose route was almost directly *south* of Gaza. It is at present inhabited by Arabs chiefly, and is by them called *Mezdel*. Dr. Wittman describes it at present as

being entered by two small gates. In passing through it, he saw several fragments of columns, capitals, etc. In the centre of the town is a handsome mosque, with a minaret. The surrounding country is represented as remarkably verdant and beautiful. In the neighbourhood there stands an abundance of fine old olive-trees, and the region around it is fertile.

He preached in all the cities. Joppa, Lydda, Askelon, Arimathea, etc., lying along the coast of the Mediterranean.

Caesarea. This city was formerly called *Strato's Tower*. It is situated on the coast of the Mediterranean, at the mouth of a small river, and has a fine harbour. It is thirty-six miles south of Acre, and about sixty-two north-west of Jerusalem, and about the same distance north-east of Azotus. This city is supposed by some to be the Hazor mentioned in Jos 11:1. It was rebuilt by Herod the Great, and named *Caesarea* in honour of Augustus Caesar. The city was dedicated to him; the seaport was called *Sebaste*, the Greek word for Augustus. It was adorned with most splendid houses; and the temple of Caesar was erected by Herod over against the mouth of the haven, in which was placed the statue of the Roman emperor. It became the seat of the Roman governor, while Judea was a Roman province, Ac 23:33; Ac 25:6,13. Philip afterwards resided at this place. See Ac 21:8,9. Caesarea at present is inhabited only by jackals and beasts of prey. "Perhaps," says Dr. Clarke, "there has not been in the history of the world an example of any city that, in so short a space of time, rose to such an extraordinary height of splendour as did this of Caesarea; or that exhibits a more awful contrast to its former magnificence, by the present desolate appearance of its ruins. Not a single inhabitant remains. Of its gorgeous palaces and temples, enriched with the choicest Works of art, scarcely a trace can be discerned. Within the space of ten years after laying the foundation, from an obscure fortress, it became the most flourishing and celebrated city of all Syria." Now it is in utter desolation. (See Robinson's Calmet, Art. *Caesarea*.)

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 1

Chapter 9

Introduction

: This chapter commences a very important part of the Acts of the Apostles—the conversion and labours of Saul of Tarsus. The remainder of the book is chiefly occupied with an account of his labours and trials in the establishment of churches, and in spreading the gospel through the Gentile world. As the fact that the gospel was to be thus preached to the Gentiles was a very important fact, and as the toils of the apostle Paul and his fellow-labourers for this purpose were of an exceedingly interesting character, it was desirable to preserve an authentic record of those labours; and that record we have in the remainder of this book.

Verse 1. *And Saul*. **See Barnes "Ac 7:58"; See Barnes "Ac 8:3".**

He had been engaged before in persecuting the Christians, but he now sought opportunity to gratify his insatiable desire on a larger scale.

Yet breathing. Not satisfied with what he had done, Ac 8:3. The word *breathing out* is expressive often of any deep, agitating emotion, as we then breathe rapidly and violently. It is thus expressive of violent *anger*. The emotion is absorbing, agitating, exhausting, and demands a more rapid circulation of blood to supply the exhausted vitality; and this demands an increased supply of oxygen, or vital air, which leads to the increased action of the lungs. The word is often used in this sense in the classics. (*Schleusner*.) It is a favourite expression with Homer. Euripides has the same expression: "Breathing out fire and slaughter." So Theocritus: "They came unto the assembly, breathing mutual slaughter," Idyll. xxii. 28.

Threatening. Denunciation; threatening them with every breath —the action of a man violently enraged, and who was bent on vengeance. It denotes, also, intense activity and energy in persecution.

Saughter. Murder. Intensely desiring to put to death as many Christians as possible. He rejoiced in their death, and joined in condemning them, Ac 26:10,11. From this latter place, it seems that he had been concerned in putting many of them to death.

The disciples of the Lord. Against Christians.

Went unto the High Priest. The letters were written and signed in the name and by the authority of the sanhedrim, or great council of the nation. The high priest did it as president of that council. See Ac 9:14 22:5. The high priest of that time was Theophilus, son of Artanus, who had been appointed at the feast of Pentecost, A. D. 37, by Vitellius, the Roman governor. His brother Jonathan had been removed from that office the same year. (*Kuinoel*.)

{a} "breathing out threatenings" Ac 8:3 Ga 1:13

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And desired of him*. This shows the intensity of his wish to persecute the Christians, that he was willing to *ask* for such an employment.

Letters. Epistles; implying a *commission* to bring them to Jerusalem for trial and punishment. From this, it seems that the sanhedrim at Jerusalem claimed jurisdiction over *all* synagogues everywhere. They claimed the authority of regulating everywhere the Jewish religion.

To Damascus. This was a celebrated city of Syria, and long the capital of a kingdom of that name. It is situated in a delightful region about one hundred and twenty miles north-east of Jerusalem, and about one hundred and ninety miles south-east of Antioch. It is in the midst of an extensive plain, abounding with cypress and palm-trees, and extremely fertile. It is watered by the river Barrady, anciently called *Abana*, 2Ki 5:12. About five miles from the city is a place called the "meeting of the waters," where the Barrady is joined by another river, and thence is divided by art into several streams that flow through the plain. These streams, six or seven in number, are conveyed to water the orchards, farms, etc., and give to the whole scene a very picturesque appearance. The city, situated in a delightful climate, in a fertile country, is perhaps among the most pleasant in the world. It is called by the Orientals themselves *the paradise on earth*. This city is mentioned often in the Old Testament. It was a city in the time of Abraham, Ge 15:2. By whom it was founded is unknown. It was taken and garrisoned by David, A.M. 2992; 2Sa 8:6; 1Ch 18:6. It is subsequently

mentioned as sustaining very important parts in the conflicts of the Jews with Syria, 2Ki 14:25; 2Ki 16:6 Isa 9:11. It was taken by the Romans, A.M. 3939, or about sixty years before Christ; in whose possession it was when Saul went there. It was conquered by the Saracens, A.D. 713. About the year 1250 it was taken by the Christians in the crusades; and was captured, A.D. 1517, by Selim, and has been since under the Ottoman emperors.

The Arabians call this city *Damasch*, or *Demeseh*, or *Schams*. It is one of the most commercial cities in the Ottoman empire, and is distinguished also for manufactures, particularly for *steel*, hence called Damascus steel. The population is estimated by Ali Bey at two hundred thousand; Volney states it at eighty thousand; Hassel, at one hundred thousand. About twenty thousand are Maronites of the Catholic church, five thousand Greeks, and one thousand are Jews. The road from Jerusalem to Damascus lies between two mountains, not above a hundred paces distant from each other; both are round at the bottom, and terminate in a point. That nearest the great road is called *Cocab, the star*, in memory of the dazzling light which is here said to have appeared to Saul.

To the synagogues. **See Barnes "Mt 4:23"**.

The Jews were scattered into nearly all the regions surrounding Judea; and it is natural to suppose that many of them would be found in Damascus. Josephus assures us that ten thousand were massacred there in one hour; and at another time eighteen thousand, with their wives and children. (*Jewish Wars*, b. ii. chap. xx. § 2; b. vii. chap. viii. § 7.) **See Barnes "Ac 2:9-11"**.

By whom the gospel was preached there, or how they had been converted to Christianity, is unknown. The presumption is, that some of those who had been converted on the day of Pentecost had carried the gospel to Syria.

That if, etc, It would seem that it was not certainly *known* that there were any Christians there. It was presumed that there were; and probably there was a report of that kind.

Of this way. Of this *way* or mode of life; of this kind of opinions and conduct; that is, any Christians.

He might bring them, etc. To be tried. The sanhedrim at Jerusalem claimed jurisdiction over religious opinions; and their authority would naturally be respected by foreign Jews.

{1} "any of this way" "the way"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And as he journeyed*. On his way; or while he was travelling. The *place*. where this occurred is not known. Tradition has fixed it at the mountain now called *Cocab*. **See Barnes "Ac 9:2"**.

All that we know of it is, that it was near to Damascus.

And suddenly. Like a flash of lightning.

There shined round about him, etc. The *language* which is expressed here would be used in describing a flash of lightning. Many critics have supposed that God made use of a sudden flash to arrest Paul, and that he was much alarmed, and brought to reflection. That God *might* make use of such a means cannot be denied. But to this supposition in this case there are some unanswerable objections.

(1.) It was declared to be the appearance of the Lord Jesus: Ac 9:27, "Barnabas declared unto them how that he had seen the Lord in the way." 1Co 15:8: "And last of all he was seen of me also." 1Co 9:1: "Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?"

(2.) Those who were *with* Saul saw the light, but did not hear the voice, Ac 22:9. **See Barnes "Ac 22:9".**

This is incredible on the supposition that it was a flash of lightning near them.

(3.) It was manifestly regarded as a message to *Saul*. The light appeared, and the voice spake to him. The others did not even hear the address. Besides,

(4.) it was as easy for Jesus to appear in a supernatural manner, as to appear amidst thunder and lightning. That the Lord Jesus appeared, is distinctly affirmed. And we shall see that it is probable that he would appear in a supernatural manner.

In order to understand this, it may be necessary to make the following remarks:

(1.) God was accustomed to appear to the Jews in a cloud; in a pillar of smoke, or of fire; in that peculiar splendour which they denominated the *Shecaniah*. In this way he went before them into the land of Canaan, Ex 13:21,22. Comp. Isa 4:5,6. This appearance or visible manifestation they called the *glory* of JEHOVAH, Isa 6:1-4 Ex 16:7, "In the morning ye shall see the glory of the Lord ;" Le 9:23 Nu 14:10, 15:19 24:16; 1Ki 8:11; Eze 10:4. **See Barnes** "Lu 2:9, "The glory of the Lord shone round about them."

(2.) The Lord Jesus, in his transfiguration on the mount, had been encompassed with that glory. **See Barnes "Mt 17:1-5".**

(3.) He had spoken of similar glory as pertaining to him; as that which he had been invested with before his incarnation; and to which he would return. Joh 17:5, "And now, Father, glorify thou me, etc., with the glory Which I had with thee before the world was." Mt 25:31, "The Son of man shall come in his glory." Comp. Mt 16:27 19:28. To *this glory* he had returned when he left the earth.

(4.) It is a sentiment which cannot be shown to be incorrect, that the various appearances of" the angel of Jehovah," and of Jehovah, mentioned in the Old Testament, were appearances of the Messiah; the God who should be incarnate; the peculiar Protector of his people. See Isa 6, comp. with Joh 12:41.

(5.) *If* the Lord Jesus appeared to Saul, it would be in this manner. It would be in his appropriate glory and honour, as the ascended Messiah.

That he *did* appear is expressly affirmed.

(6.) This was *an occasion* when, if ever, such an appearance was proper. The design was to convert an infuriated persecutor, and to make him an *apostle*. To do this, it was necessary that he should see the Lord Jesus, 1Co 9:1,2. The design was, further, to make him an eminent instrument in carrying the gospel to the Gentiles. A signal miracle; a demonstration that he was invested with his appropriate glory, Joh 17:5; a calling up a new *witness* to the fact of his resurrection, and his solemn investment with glory in the heavens, seemed to be required in thus calling a violent persecutor to be an apostle and friend.

(7.) We are to regard this appearance, therefore, as the reappearance of the Shecaniah, the Son of God invested with appropriate glory, appearing to convince an enemy of his ascension, and to change him from a foe to a friend.

It has been objected, that as the Lord Jesus had ascended to heaven, it cannot be presumed that his body would return to the earth again. To this we may reply, that the New Testament has thrown

no light on this. Perhaps it is not necessary to suppose that his body returned, but that he made such a visible manifestation of himself as to convince Saul that he was the Messiah.

From heaven. From above; from the sky. In Ac 26:13, Paul says that the light was above the brightness of the sun at mid-day.

{a} "why persecutest thou me" Mt 25:40,45

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And he fell to the earth*. He was astonished and overcome by the sudden flash of light. There is a remarkable similarity between what occurred here, and what is recorded of Daniel in regard to the visions which he saw, Da 8:17. Also Da 10:8, "Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision; and there remained no strength in me, for my comeliness (vigour) was turned into corruption, and I retained no strength." The effect was such as to overpower the body.

And heard a voice. The whole company heard a voice, Ac 9:7, but did not distinguish it as addressed particularly to Saul. *He* heard it speaking to himself.

Saying unto him, etc. This shows that it was not thunder, as many have supposed. It was a distinct articulation or utterance, addressing him by name.

Saul, Saul. A mode of address that is emphatic. The repetition of the name would fix his attention. Thus Jesus addresses Martha, Lu 10:41 and Simon, Lu 22:31; and Jerusalem, Mt 23:37.

Why. For what reason, Jesus had done him no injury; had given him no provocation. All the opposition of sinners to the Lord Jesus, and his church, is without cause. **See Barnes** "Joh 15:25, "They hated me without a cause."

Persecutest. **See Barnes "Mt 5:11"**.

Thou me? Christ and his people are one, Joh 15:1-6. To persecute them, therefore, was to persecute him, Mt 25:40,45.

{b} "to kick" Ac 5:39 {*} "pricks" "goads"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And he said, Who art thou, Lord?* The word *Lord* here, as is frequently the case in the New Testament, means no more than *Sir*, Joh 4:19. It is evident that Saul did not as yet know that this was the Lord Jesus. He heard the voice as of a *man*; he heard himself addressed; but by whom the words were spoken was to him unknown. In his amazement and confusion, he naturally asked who it was that was thus addressing him.

And the Lord said. In this place the word *Lord* is used, in a higher sense, to denote the Saviour. It is his usual appellation. **See Barnes "Ac 1:24"**.

I am Jesus. It is clear from this, that there was a personal appearance of the Saviour; that he was present to Saul; but in what particular *form* whether *seen* as a man, or only appearing by the manifestation of his glory—is not affirmed. It was a personal appearance, however, of the Lord Jesus, designed to take the work of converting such a persecutor into his own hands, without the

ordinary means. Yet he designed to convert him in a natural way. He *arrested* his attention; filled him with alarm at his guilt; and then presented the *truth* respecting himself. In Ac 22:8, the expression is thus recorded: "I am Jesus of Nazareth," etc. There is no contradiction, as Luke here records only a *part* of what was said; Paul afterwards stated the whole. This declaration was fitted peculiarly to humble and mortify Saul. There can be no doubt that he had often blasphemed his name, and profanely derided the notion that the Messiah could come out of Nazareth. Jesus here uses, however, that very designation: "I am *Jesus the Nazarene*, the object of your contempt and scorn." Yet Saul saw him now invested with peculiar glory.

It is hard, etc. This is evidently a proverbial expression. Kuinoel has quoted numerous places in which a similar mode of expression occurs in Greek writers. Thus Euripides, Bacch. 791: "I, who am a frail mortal, should rather sacrifice to him who is a God, than, by giving place to anger, *kick against the goads*." So Pindar, Pyth. ii. 173: "It is profitable to bear willingly the assumed yoke. To kick against the goad is pernicious conduct." So Terence, Phome. 1, 2, 27: "It is foolishness for thee to kick against a goad." Ovid has the same idea, (Trist. b. ii. 15.) The word translated "pricks" here—*kentra*—means, properly, any sharp point which will pierce or perforate, as the sting of a bee, etc. But it commonly means an ox-goad, a sharp piece of iron stuck into the end of a stick, with which the ox is urged on. These goads, among the Hebrews, were made very large. Thus Shamgar slew six hundred men with one of them, Jud 3:31: Comp. 1Sa 13:21. The expression, "to kick against the prick," or the goad, is derived from the action of a stubborn and unyielding ox, kicking against the goad. And as the ox would injure no one by it but himself—as he would gain nothing—it comes to denote an obstinate and refractory disposition and course of conduct, opposing motives to good conduct; resisting the authority of Him who has a right to command; and opposing the leadings of Providence, to the injury of him who makes the resistance. It denotes rebellion against lawful authority, and thus getting into greater difficulty by attempting to oppose the commands to duty. This is the condition of every sinner. If men wish to be happy, they should cheerfully submit to the authority of God. They should not rebel against the dealings of Providence. They should not murmur against their Creator. They should not resist the claims of their consciences. By all this they would only injure themselves. No man can resist God, or his own conscience, and be happy. And nothing is more difficult than for a man to pursue a course of pleasure and sin against the admonitions of God and the reproofs of his own conscience. Men evince this temper in the following ways:

(1.) By violating plain laws of God.

(2.) By attempting to resist his claims.

(3.) By refusing to do what their conscience requires.

(4.) By grieving the Holy Spirit, by attempting to free themselves from serious impressions and alarms. They will return with redoubled frequency and power.

(5.) By pursuing a course of vice and wickedness against what they know to be right.

(6.) By refusing to submit to the dealings of Providence, And

(7.) in any way by opposing God, and refusing to submit to his authority, and to do what is right.

{b} "kick" Ac 5:39 {*} "pricks" "goads"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *And he trembling*. Alarmed at what he saw and heard, and at the consciousness of his own evil course. It is not remarkable that a sinner trembles when he sees his guilt and danger.

And astonished. At what he saw.

Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? This indicates a subdued soul; a humbled spirit. Just before he had sought only to do his own will; now he inquired what was the will of the Saviour. Just before he was acting under a commission from the sanhedrim; now he renounced their supreme authority, and asked what the Lord Jesus would have him to do. Just before he had been engaged in a career of *opposition* to the Lord Jesus; now he sought at once to do his will. This indicates the usual change in the sinner. The great controversy between him and God is, *whose will* shall be followed. The sinner follows his own; the first act of the Christian is to surrender his own will to that of God, and to resolve to do that which he requires. We may further remark here, that this indicates the true nature of conversion. It is decided, prompt, immediate. Paul did not *debate* the matter, Ga 1:16; he did not inquire what the scribes and Pharisees would say; he did not consult his own reputation; he did not ask what the world would think. With characteristic promptness—with a readiness which showed what he *would* yet be—he gave himself up *at once* and *entirely* to the Lord Jesus; evidently with a purpose to do *his* will alone. This was the case also with the jailer, at Philippi, Ac 16:30. Nor can there be real conversion where the *heart* and *will* are not given to the Lord Jesus, to be directed and moulded by him at his pleasure. We may test our conversion, then, by the example of the apostle Paul. If our hearts have been given up as his was, we are true friends of Christ.

Go into the city. Damascus. They were near it, Ac 9:3.

And it shall be told thee. It is remarkable that he was thus directed. But we may learn from it,

(1.) that even in the most striking and remarkable cases of conversion, there is not at once a clear view of duty. What course of life should be followed; what should be done; nay, what should be *believed*, is not at once apparent.

(2.) The aid of others, and especially of ministers, and of experienced Christians, is often very desirable to aid even those who are converted in the most remarkable manner. Saul was converted by a miracle: the Saviour appeared to him in his glory; of the truth of his Messiahship he had no doubt; but still he was dependent on a humble disciple in Damascus to be instructed in what he should do.

(3.) Those who are converted, in however striking a manner it may be, should be *willing* to seek the counsel of those who are in the church and in the ministry before them. The most striking evidence of their conversion will not prevent their deriving important direction and benefit from the aged, the experienced, and the wise in the Christian church.

(4.) Such remarkable conversions are fitted to *induce* the subjects of the change to seek counsel and direction. They produce humility, a deep sense of sin and of unworthiness; and a willingness to be taught and directed by any one who can point out the way of duty and of life.

{a} "What will thou have me to do?" Ac 16:30

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *And the men which journeyed with him*. *Why* these men attended him is unknown. They might have been appointed to aid him, or they may have been travellers with whom Saul had accidentally fallen in.

Stood speechless. In Ac 26:14, it is said that they all fell to the earth at the appearance of the light. But there is no contradiction. The narrative in that place refers to the *immediate* effect of the appearance of the light. They were *immediately* smitten to the ground together. This was before the voice spake to Saul, Ac 26:14. In *this* place Ac 9:7 the historian is speaking of what occurred *after* the first alarm. There is no improbability that they rose fro the ground immediately, and surveyed the scene with silent amazement and alarm. The word *speechless—enneoi—* properly denotes those who are so astonished or so stupified as to be unable to speak. In the Greek writers it means those who are deaf and dumb.

Hearing a voice. Hearing a *sound or noise*. The word here rendered "voice" is thus frequently used, as in Ge 3:8 1Sa 12:18; Ps 29:3,4; Mt 24:31, (Greek;) 1Th 4:16. In Ac 22:9, it is said, "They which were with me (Paul) saw indeed the light, and were afraid, but they heard not the *voice* of him that spake to me." In this place the words "heard not the voice" must be understood in the sense of *understanding the words*, of hearing the address, the distinct articulation, which Paul heard. They heard a *noise*, they were amazed and alarmed, but they did not hear the distinct words addressed to Saul. A similar instance we have in Joh 12:28,29, when the voice of God came from heaven to Jesus: "The people who stood by and heard it, said that it thundered." They heard the *sound*, the *noise*; they did *not* distinguish the *words* addressed to him. See also Da 10:7, and 1Ki 19:11-13.

{b} "but seeing no man" Da 10:7 {*} "speechless" "Da 10:7"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *When his eyes were opened*. He naturally closed them at the appearance of the light; and in his fright kept them closed for some time.

He saw no man. This darkness continued three days, Ac 9:9. There is no reason to suppose that there was a *miracle* in this blindness, for in Ac 22:11, it is expressly said to have been caused by the intense light: "And when I could not see for the glory of that light," etc. The intense, sudden light had so affected the optic nerve of the eye as to cause a temporary blindness. This effect is not uncommon. The disease of the eye which is thus produced is called *amaurosis*, or, more commonly, *gutta serena*. It consists in a loss of sight without any apparent defect of the eye. Sometimes the disease is periodical, coming on suddenly, continuing for three or four days, and then disappearing.—(*Webster*.) A disease of this kind is often caused by excessive light. When we look at the sun, or into a furnace, or into a crucible, with fused metal, we are conscious of a temporary pain in the eye, and of a momentary blindness. "In northern and tropical climates, from the glare of the sun or snow, a variety of amaurosis (gutta serena) occurs, which, if it produces blindness during the day, is named nyctalopia, if during the night, hemeralopia. Another variety exists in which the individual is blind all day, until a certain hour, when he sees distinctly, or he sees and is blind every alternate day, or is only blind one day in the week, fortnight, or month." (Edin. Encyc. Art. *Surgery*.) A total loss of sight has been the consequence of looking at the sun during an eclipse, or of watching it as it sets in the west. This effect is caused by the intense action of the light on the

optic nerve, or sometimes from a disorder of the brain. A case is mentioned by Michaelis (*Kuinoel, in loco*) of a man who was made blind by a bright flash of lightning, and who continued so for four weeks, who was again restored to sight in a tempest by a similar flash of lightning. Electricity has been found one of the best remedies for restoring sight in such cases.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *And neither did eat nor drink*. Probably because he was overwhelmed with a view of his sins, and was thus indisposed to eat. All the circumstances would contribute to this. His past life; his great sins; the sudden change in his views; his total absorption in the vision; perhaps also his grief at the loss of his sight, would all fill his mind, and indispose him to partake of food. Great grief always produces this effect. And it is not uncommon now for an awakened and convicted sinner, in view of his past sins and danger, to be so pained, as to destroy his inclination for food, and to produce involuntary fasting. We are to remember, also, that Paul had yet no assurance of forgiveness. He was arrested, alarmed, convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, and humbled, but he had no comfort. He was brought to the dust, and left to three painful days of darkness and suspense, before it was told him what he was to do. In this painful and perplexing state, it was natural that he should abstain from food. This case should not be brought now, however, to prove that convicted sinners must remain in darkness and under conviction. Saul's case was extraordinary. His blindness was literal. This state of darkness was necessary to humble him, and fit him for his work. But the moment a sinner will give his heart to Christ, he may find peace. If he resists, and rebels longer, it will be his own fault. By the nature of the case, as well as by the promises of the Bible, if a sinner will yield himself at once to the Lord Jesus, he may obtain peace. That sinners do not sooner obtain peace, is because they do not sooner submit themselves to God.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *A certain disciple*. A christian. Many have supposed that he was one of the seventy disciples. But nothing more is certainly known of him than is related here. He had very probably been some time a Christian, Ac 9:13 and had heard of Saul, but was personally a stranger to him. In Ac 22:12, it is said that he was a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there. There was wisdom in sending such a Christian to Saul, as it might do much to conciliate the minds of the Jews there towards him.

Said the Lord. The Lord *Jesus* is alone mentioned in all this transaction. And as he had commenced the work of converting Saul, it is evident that he is intended here. **See Barnes "Ac 1:24"**.

In a vision. Perhaps by a dream. The main idea is, that he *revealed* his will to him in the case. The word *vision* is often used in speaking of the communications made to the prophets, and commonly means that future events were made to pass in review before the mind, as we look upon a landscape. See Isa 1:1 Ge 15:1; Nu 12:6 Eze 11:24; Da 2:19 7:2, 8:1,2,26 10:7 Ac 10:3 11:5, 16:9; **See Barnes "Mt 17:9"**.

{a} "named Ananias" Ac 22:12

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Into the street which is called Straight*. This street extends now from the eastern to the western gate, about three miles, crossing the whole city and suburbs in a direct line. Near the eastern gate is a house, said to be that of Judah, in which Paul lodged. There is in it a very small closet, where tradition reports that the apostle passed three days without food, till Ananias restored him to sight. Tradition also says that he had here the vision recorded in 2Co 12:2. There is also in this street a fountain whose water is drunk by Christians, in remembrance of that which, they suppose, the same fount as produced for the baptism of Paul. —*Rob. Calmet*.

Of Tarsus. This city was the capital of Cilicia, a province of Asia Minor. It was situated on the banks of the river Cydnus. It was distinguished for the culture of Greek philosophy and literature, so that at one time in its schools, and in the number of its learned men, it was the rival of Athens and Alexandria. In allusion to this, perhaps, Paul says that he was "born in Tarsus, a citizen of no mean city," Ac 21:39. In reward for its exertions and sacrifices during the civil wars of Rome, Tarsus was made a free city by Augustus. **See Barnes** "Ac 22:28, **See Barnes** "Ac 22:25, **See Barnes** "Ac 21:39, **See Barnes "Ac 16:37"**.

Beheld, he prayeth. This gives us a full indication of the manner in which Saul passed the three days mentioned in Ac 9:9. It is plain, from what follows, that Ananias regarded Saul as a foe to Christianity, and that he would have been apprehensive of danger if he were with him, Ac 9:13,14. This remark, "behold he prayeth," is made to him to silence his fears, and to indicate the change in the feelings and views of Saul. Before he was a persecutor; now his change is indicated by his giving himself to prayer. That Saul did not *pray* before, is not implied by this; for he fully accorded with the customs of the Jews, Php 3:4-6. But his prayers then were not the prayers of a saint. They were then the prayers of a Pharisee, (comp. Lu 18:10, etc.;) now they were the prayers of a broken-hearted sinner. Then he prayed depending on his own righteousness; now depending on the mercy of God in the Messiah. We may learn here,

(1,) that one indication of conversion to God is real prayer. A Christian may as well be characterized by that as by any single appellation—" a man of prayer."

(2.) It is always the attendant of true conviction for sin, that we pray. The convicted sinner feels his danger, and his need of forgiveness. Conscious that he has no righteousness himself, he now seeks that of another, and depends on the mercy of God. Before he was too proud to pray; now he is willing to humble himself through Jesus Christ, and ask for mercy.

(3.) It is a sufficient indication of the character of any man to say, "Behold, he prays." It at once tells us, better than volumes would without this, his *real* character. Knowing this, we know all about him. We at once confide in his piety, his honesty, his humility, his willingness to do good. It is at once the indication of his state with God, and the pledge that he will do his duty to men. We mean, of course, *real* prayer. Knowing that a man is sincere, and humble, and faithful in his private devotions, and in the devotions of his family, we confide in him, and are willing at once to trust to his readiness to do all that he is convinced that he *ought* to do. Ananias, apprized of this in Saul,

had full evidence of the change of his character, and was convinced that he ought to lay aside all his former views, and at once to seek him, and to acknowledge him as a brother.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *And hath seen in a vision*, etc. *When* this was shown to Saul, or how, is not recorded. The vision was shown to Saul to assure him when he came that he was no impostor. He was thus *prepared* to receive consolation from this disciple. He was even apprized of his *name*, that he might be more confirmed.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 13

Verses 13,14. *I have heard by many*, etc. This was in the vision, Ac 9:10. The passage of such a train of thoughts through the mind was perfectly natural at the command to go and search out Saul. There would instantly occur all that had been heard of his fury in persecution; and the expression here may indicate the state of a mind *amazed* that such an one should need his counsel, and *afraid*, perhaps of entrusting himself to one thus bent on persecution. All this evidently passed in the *dream* or *vision* of Ananias; and perhaps cannot be considered as any *deliberate* unwillingness to go to him. It is clear, however, that *such* thoughts should have been banished, and that he should have gone *at once* to the praying Saul. When Christ commands, we should suffer no suggestion of our own thoughts, and no apprehension of our own danger, to interfere,

By many. Probably many who had fled from persecution, and had taken refuge in Damascus. It is also evident, Ac 9:14, that Ananias had been *apprized*, perhaps by letters from the Christians at Jerusalem, of the purpose which Saul had in view in now going to Damascus.

To thy saints. Christians; called saints—*agioiv*—because they are holy, or consecrated to God.

{b} "this man" 1Ti 1:13

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 14

Verse 14. No Barnes text on this verse.

{c} "he hath authority"

Ac 9:21

{d} "that call on thy" 1Co 1:2 2Ti 2:22

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Go thy way*. This is often the only answer that we obtain to the suggestion of our doubts and hesitations about duty. God tells us still to *do* what he requires, with an assurance only that his commands are just, and that there are good reasons for them.

A chosen vessel. The usual meaning of the word *vessel* is well known. It usually denotes a *cup* or *basin*, such as is used in a house. It then denotes *any* instrument which may be used to accomplish a purpose, perhaps particularly with the notion of *conveying* or communicating. In the Scriptures it is used to denote the *instrument* or *agent* which God employs to convey his favours to mankind; and is thus employed to represent the ministers of the gospel, or the *body* of the minister, 2Co 4:7 1Th 4:4; comp. Isa 13:5. Paul is called *chosen* because Christ had *selected* him, as he did his other apostles, for this service. **See Barnes "Joh 15:16"**.

To bear my name. To communicate the knowledge of me.

Before the Gentiles. The nations; all who were not Jews. This was the *principal* employment of Paul. He spent his life in this, and regarded himself as peculiarly called to be the apostle of the Gentiles, Ro 11.13 15:16 Ga 2:8.

And kings. This was fulfilled, Ac 25:23 26:1-32, 27:24.

And the children of Israel. The Jews. This was done. He *immediately* began to preach to them, **@Ac 9:20-22.**

Wherever he went, he preached the gospel first to them, and then to the Gentiles, Ac 13:46 28:17.

{e} "he is a chosen vessel" Ac 13:2 Ro 1:1; 1Co 15:10 Ga 1:15

Eph 3:7,8 {f} "before the gentiles" Ro 11:13 Ga; 2:7,8

{g} "kings" Ac 25:23 {h} "the children of Israel" Ac 20:23

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *For I will shew him*, etc. This seems to be added to encourage Ananias. He had feared Saul. The Lord now informs him that Saul, hitherto his enemy, would ever after be his friend. He would not merely *profess* repentance, but would *manifest* the sincerity of it by encountering trials and reproaches for his sake. The prediction here was fully accomplished, Ac 20:23 2Co 11:23-27; 2Ti 1:11,12.

{i} "must suffer" Ac 20:23 2Co 11:23-27; 2Ti 1:11,12

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Putting his hands on him*. This was not *ordination*, but was the usual mode of imparting or communicating blessings. **See Barnes "Mt 19:13"**; **See Barnes** "Mt 9:18".

Brother Saul. An expression recognizing him as a fellow-Christian.

Be filled with the Holy Ghost. **See Barnes "Ac 2:4"**.

{k} "putting his hands" Ac 8:17 {a} "be filled" Ac 2:4 {*} "Ghost" "Spirit"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *As it had been scales*. *wsei lepidev* The word *wsei*, "as it had been," is designed to *qualify* the following word. It is not said that scales *literally* fell from his eyes; but that an effect followed *as if* scales had been suddenly taken off. Evidently the whole expression is designed to mean no more than this. The effect was such as would take place if some dark, impervious substance had been placed before the eyes, and had been suddenly removed. The cure was as sudden, the sight was as immediate, *as if* such an interposing substance had been suddenly removed. This is all that the expression fairly implies, and this is all that the nature of the case demands. As the blindness had been caused by the natural effect of the light, probably on the optic nerve, **See Barnes** "Ac 9:8, **See Barnes** "Ac 9:9, it is manifest that no *literal* removing of scales would restore the vision. We are therefore to lay aside the idea of *literal* scales falling to the earth; no such thing is affirmed, and no such thing would have met the case. The word translated *scales* is used nowhere else in the New Testament. It means, properly, the small crust or layer which composes a part of the covering of a fish, and also any thin layer or leaf exfoliated or separated; as scales of iron, bone, or a piece of bark, etc.—*Webster*. An effect similar to this is described in Tobit xi. 8, 13. It is evident that there was a miracle in the *healing* of Saul. The blindness was the natural effect of the light. The cure was by miraculous power. This is evident,

(1.) because there were no means used that would naturally restore the sight. It may be remarked here, that *gutta serena* has been regarded by physicians as one of the most incurable of diseases. Few cases are restored; and few remedies are efficacious. (See Edin. Encyc. Art. *Surgery*, on *Amaurosis*.)

(2.) Ananias was *sent* for this very purpose to heal him, Ac 9:17.

(3.) The *immediate* effect shows that this was miraculous. Had it been a *slow* recovery, it might have been doubtful; but here it was instantaneous, and thus put beyond a question that it was a miracle.

And was baptized. In this he followed the example of all the early converts to Christianity. They were baptized immediately. See Ac 2:41 8:12,36-39.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Had received meat*. Food. The word *meat* has undergone a change since our translation was made. It then meant, as the original does, food of all kinds.

With the disciples. With Christians. Comp. Ac 2:42.

Certain days. How long is not known. It was long enough, however, to preach the gospel, Ac 9:22 26:20. It might have been for some months, as he did not go to Jerusalem under three years from that time. He remained some time at Damascus, and then went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus, and then went to Jerusalem, Ga 1:17. This visit to *Arabia* Luke has omitted, but there is no contradiction. He does not affirm that he did not go to Arabia.

We have now passed through the account of one of the most remarkable conversions to Christianity that has ever occurred—that of the apostle Paul. This conversion has always been justly considered as a strong proof of the Christian religion. For,

(1.) this change could not have occurred by any *event* of fair prospects of honour. He was distinguished already as a Jew. He had had the best opportunities for education that the nation afforded. He had every prospect of rising to distinction and office.

(2.) It could not have been produced by any prospect of wealth or fame; by becoming a Christian. Christians were poor; and to be a Christian then was to be exposed to contempt, persecution, and death. Saul had no reason to suppose that *he* would escape the common lot of Christians.

(3.) He was as firmly opposed to Christianity before his conversion as possible. He had already distinguished himself for his hostility. Infidels often say that Christians are prejudiced in favour of their religion. But here was a man, at first, a bitter infidel and foe to Christianity. All the prejudices of his education, and his prospects, all his former views and feelings, were opposed to the gospel of Christ. He became, however, one of its most firm advocates and friends; and it is for infidels to account for this change. There must have been *some* cause, some motive for it; and is there anything more rational than the supposition, that Saul was convinced in a most striking and wonderful manner of the truth of Christianity?

(4.) His subsequent life showed that his change was sincere and real. He encountered danger and persecution to evince his attachment to Christ; he went from land to land, and exposed himself to every danger, and every mode of obloquy and scorn, always rejoicing that he was a Christian, and was permitted to suffer as a Christian; and has thus given the highest proofs of his sincerity. If *these* sufferings, and if the life of Paul were not evidences of sincerity, then it would be impossible to fix on any circumstances of a man's life that would furnish proof that he was not a deceiver.

(5.) If Paul was sincere—if this conversion was genuine—the Christian religion is true. Nothing else *but* a religion from heaven could produce this change. There is here, therefore, the independent testimony of a man who was once a persecutor; converted, not by the preaching of the apostles; changed in a wonderful manner; his whole life, views, and feelings revolutionized, and all his subsequent days evincing the sincerity of his feelings, and the reality of the change. He is just such a *witness* as infidels ought to be satisfied with; whose testimony cannot be impeached; who had no interested motives, and who was willing to stand forth anywhere, and avow his change of feeling and purpose. We adduce him as such a witness; and infidels are *bound* to dispose of his testimony, or to embrace the religion which he embraced.

(6.) The example of Saul does not stand alone. Hundreds and thousands of enemies, persecutors, and slanderers, have been changed, and each one becomes a living witness of the power and truth of the Christian religion. The scoffer becomes reverent; the profane man learns to speak the praise of God; the sullen, bitter foe of Christ becomes his friend, and lives and dies under the influence of his religion. Could better proof be asked that this religion is from God?

{+} "meat" "food" {b} "Damascus" ac 26:20 Ga 1:17

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *And straightway*. Immediately. This was an evidence of the genuineness of his conversion, that he was willing at once to avow himself to be the friend of the Lord Jesus.

He preached Christ. He proclaimed and proved that Jesus was the Christ. See Ac 9:22. Many manuscripts read here *Jesus* instead of *Christ*. Griesbach has adopted this reading. Such is also the

Syriac, the Vulgate, and the Ethiopic. This reading accords much better with the subject than the common reading. That *Christ*, or the *Messiah*, was the Son of God, all admitted. In the New Testament the names *Christ* and *Son of God* are used as synonymous. But the question was, whether Jesus was the Christ, or the Son of God, and this Paul showed to the Jews. Paul continued the practice of attending the synagogues; and in the synagogues any one had a right to speak, who was invited by the officiating minister. Ac 13:15.

That he is the Son of God. That he is the Messiah.

{+} "straitway" "immediately"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Were amazed*. Amazed at his sudden and remarkable change.

That destroyed. That opposed; laid waste; or persecuted. Comp. Ga 1:13.

For that intent. With that design, that he might destroy the church at Damascus.

{c} "were amazed" Ga 1:13,23 {d} "he that destroyed" Ac 8:3 {§} "intent" "For this purpose"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Increased the more in strength*. His conviction of the truth of the Christian religion became stronger every day. Hence his moral strength or boldness increased.

And confounded. See Ac 2:6. The word here means *confuted*. It means also, occasionally, to produce a *tumult*, or *excitement*, Ac 19:32 21:31. Perhaps the idea of producing such a tumult is intended to be conveyed here, Paul confuted the Jews, and by so doing he was the occasion of their tumultuous proceedings, or he so enraged them as to lead to great agitation and excitement. A very common effect of close and conclusive argumentation.

Proving that this. This Jesus.

Is very Christ. Greek, that this is the Christ. The word *very* means here simply *the*. Greek, *o cristov*. It means that Paul showed, by strong and satisfactory arguments, that Jesus of Nazareth was the true Messiah. The arguments which he would use may be easily conceived; but the evangelist has not seen fit to record them.

{e} "more in strength" Ps 84:7 {f} "confounded the Jews" Ac 18:28

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *And after that many days*, etc. How long a time elapsed before this, is not recorded in this place; but it is evident that the writer means to signify that a *considerable* time intervened. There is, therefore, an *interval* here which Luke has not filled up; and if this were the only narrative which we had, we should be at a loss how to understand this. From all that we know now of the usual conduct of the Jews towards the apostles, and especially towards Paul, it would seem highly

improbable that this interval would be passed peaceably or quietly. Nay, it would be highly improbable that he would be allowed to remain in Damascus *many days* without violent persecution. Now it so happens that, by turning to another part of the New Testament, we are enabled to ascertain the manner which this interval was filled up. Turn then to Ga 1:17, and we learn from Paul himself that he went into Arabia, and spent some time there, and then returned again to Damascus. The precise time which would be occupied in such a journey is not specified; but it would not be performed under a period of some months. In Ga 1:18, we are informed that he did not go to Jerusalem until *three years* after his conversion; and as there is reason to believe that he went up to Jerusalem *directly* after escaping from Damascus the second time, Ac 9:25,26 it seems probable that the three years were spent chiefly in Arabia. We have thus an account of the "*many days*" here referred to by Luke. And in this instance we have a striking example of the truth and honesty of the sacred writers. By comparing these two accounts together, we arrive at the whole state of the case. Neither seems to be complete without the other. Luke has left a chasm which he has nowhere else supplied. But that chasm we are enabled to fill up from the apostle himself, in a letter written long after, and without any design to amend or complete the history of Luke: for the introduction of this history into the epistle to the Galatians was for a very different purpose—to show that he received his commission directly from the Lord Jesus, and in a manner independent of the other apostles. The two accounts, therefore, are like the two parts of a *tally*; neither is complete without the other; and yet being brought together, they so exactly fit as to show that the one is precisely adjusted to the other. And as the two parts were made by different individuals, and without design of adapting them to each other, they show that the writers had formed no collusion or agreement to impose on the world; that they are separate and independent witnesses; that they are honest men; that their narratives are true records of what actually occurred; and the two narratives constitute, therefore, a strong and very valuable proof of the correctness of the sacred narrative. If asked why *Luke* has omitted this in the Acts, it may be replied, that there are many circumstances and facts omitted in all histories from the necessity of the case. Comp. Joh 21:25. It is remarkable here, not that he has *omitted* this, but that he has left a *chasm* in his own history which can be so readily filled up.

Were fulfilled. Had elapsed.

Took counsel, etc. Laid a scheme; or designed to kill him. Comp. Ac 23:12 25:3. His zeal and success would enrage them, and they knew of no other way in which they could free themselves from the effects of his arguments and influence.

{a} "took counsel" Ac 23:12 25:3

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *But their laying await*. Their counsel; their design.

Was known of Saul. Was made known to him. In what way this was communicated we do not know. This design of the Jews against Saul is referred to in 2Co 11:32, 33, where it is said, "In Damascus, the governor under Aretas the king kept the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me; and through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped their hands."

And they watched the gates. Cities were surrounded by high walls; and of course the gates were presumed to be the only places of escape. As they supposed that Saul, apprized of their designs, would make an attempt to escape, they stationed guards at the gates to intercept him. In 2 Cor. xi. 32, it is said that the *governor* kept the city for the purpose of apprehending him. It is possible that the governor might have been a Jew, and one, therefore, who would enter into their views. Or if not a Jew, the Jews who were there might easily represent Saul as an offender, and demand his being secured; and thus a garrison or guard might be furnished them for their purpose. See a similar attempt made by the Jews recorded in Mt 28:14.

{b} "watched the gates" 2Co 11:26 Ps 21:11, 37:32,33

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *They took him by night*, etc. This was done through a window in the wall, 2Co 11:33.

In a basket. This word is used to denote commonly the basket in which food was carried, Mt 15:37 Mr 8:8,20.

This conduct of Saul was in accordance with the direction of the Lord Jesus, Mt 10:23, "When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another," etc. Saul was certain of death if he remained; and as he could secure his life by flight without abandoning any principle of religion, or denying his Lord, it was his duty to do so. Christianity requires us to sacrifice our lives only when we cannot avoid it without denying the Saviour, or abandoning the principles of our holy religion.

{c} "let him down" Jos 2:15

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Was come to Jerusalem*. It is probable that he then went immediately to Jerusalem, Ga 1:18. This was three years after his conversion.

He assayed. He attempted; he endeavoured.

To join himself. To become connected with them as their fellow Christian.

But they were all afraid of him. Their fear, or suspicion, was excited probably on these grounds:

(1.) They remembered his former violence against Christians. They had an instinctive shrinking from him, and suspicion of the man that had been so violent a persecutor.

(2.) He had been absent three years. If they had not heard of him during that time, they would naturally retain much of their old feelings towards him. If they had, they might suspect the man who had not returned to Jerusalem; who had not before sought the society of other Christians; and who had spent that time in a distant country, and among strangers. It would seem remarkable that he had not at once returned to Jerusalem and connected himself with the apostles. But the sacred writer does not justify the fears of the apostles. He simply records the fact of their apprehension. It is not unnatural, however, to have doubts respecting an open and virulent enemy of the gospel who suddenly professes a change in favour of it. The human mind does not easily cast off suspicion of some unworthy motive, and open itself at once to entire confidence. When great and notorious

sinners profess to be converted—men who have been violent, or artful, or malignant— it is natural to ask whether they have not some unworthy motive still in their professed change. Confidence is a plant of slow growth, and starts up not by a sudden profession, but by a course of life which is *worthy* of affection and of trust.

A disciple. A sincere Christian.

{d} "come to Jerusalem" Ga 1:18 {*} "assayed" "Attempted"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *But Barnabas*. **See Barnes "Ac 4:36"**.

Barnabas was of Cyprus, not far from Tarsus, and it is not improbable that he had been before acquainted with Saul.

To the apostles. To Peter and James, Ga 1:18,19. Probably the other apostles were at that time absent from Jerusalem.

And declared unto them, etc. It may seem remarkable that the apostles at Jerusalem had not before heard of the conversion of Saul. The following considerations may serve in some degree to explain this:

(1.) It is certain that intercourse between different countries was then much more difficult than it is now. There were no posts; no public conveyances; nothing that corresponded with our modes of intercourse between one part of the world and another.

(2.) There was at this time a state of animosity, amounting to hostility, subsisting between Herod and Aretas. Herod the tetrarch had married the daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia, and had put her away.—*Josephus*, Antiq. b. xviii. chap. v. § 1, 2. The result of this was a long misunderstanding between them, and a war; and the effects of that war might have been to interrupt the communication very much throughout all that country.

(3.) Though the *Jews* at Jerusalem *might* have heard of the conversion of Saul, yet it was for their interest to keep it a secret, and not to mention it to Christians. But,

(4.) though the Christians who were there *had* heard of it, yet it is probable that they were not fully informed on the subject; that they had not had all the evidence of his conversion which they desired; and that they looked with suspicion on him. It was therefore proper that they should have a *full* statement of the evidence of his conversion; and this was made by Barnabas.

{e} "Barnabas took him" Ac 4:36 {f} "at Damascus" Ac 9:20,22

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *And he was with them*, etc. That is, he was admitted to their friendship, and recognized as a Christian and an apostle. The *time* during which he then remained at Jerusalem was, however, only fifteen days, Ga 1:18.

{+} "coming in and going out" "He continued to associate with them"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *He spake boldly*. He openly defended the doctrine that Jesus was the Messiah.

In the name, etc. By the authority of the Lord Jesus.

Against the Grecians. See the word *Grecians* explained **See Barnes "Ac 6:1"**.

It means, that he not only maintained that Jesus was the Christ in the presence of those Jews who resided at Jerusalem, and who spoke the Hebrew language, but also before those *foreign* Jews, who spoke the Greek language, and who had come up to Jerusalem. They would be as much opposed to the doctrine that Jesus was the Christ, as those who resided in Jerusalem.

They went about. They *sought* to slay him; or they formed a purpose or plan to put him to death as an apostate. See Ac 9:23.

{*} "Grecians" "Helenists" {a} "but they went" Ac 9:23 {+} "slay" "kill"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *Caesarea*. **See Barnes "Ac 8:40"**.

And sent him forth to Tarsus. This was his native city. **See Barnes "Ac 9:11"**.

It was in Cilicia, where Paul doubtless preached the gospel. Ga 1:21: "Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia."

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *Then had the churches rest*. That is, the persecutions against Christians ceased. Those persecutions had been excited by the opposition made to Stephen, Ac 11:19 they had been greatly promoted by Saul, Ac 8:3 and had extended, doubtless, throughout the whole land of Palestine. The precise causes of this cessation of the persecution are not known. Probably they were the following:

(1.) It is not improbable that the great mass of Christians had been driven into other regions by these persecutions.

(2.) He who had been most active in exciting the persecution, who was, in a sort, its leader, and who was best adapted to carry it on, had been converted. He had ceased his opposition; and even he now was removed from Judea. All this would have some effect in causing the persecution to subside.

(3.) But it is not improbable that the civil state of things in Judea contributed much to turn the attention of the Jews to other matters. Dr. Lardner accounts for this in the following manner:

> "Soon after Caligula's accession, the Jews at Alexandria suffered very much from the Egyptians in that city, and at length their oratories there were all destroyed. In the third year of Caligula, A.D. 39, Petronius was sent into Syria, with orders to set up the emperor's statue in the temple at

> Jerusalem. This order from Caligula was, to the Jews, a thunderstroke. The Jews must have been too much engaged after this to mind anything else, as may appear from the accounts which Philo and Josephus have given us of this affair. Josephus says, that 'Caligula ordered Perronius to go with an army to Jerusalem, to set up his statue in the temple there; enjoining him, if the Jews opposed it, to put to death all who made any resistance, and to make all the rest of-the nation slaves. Petronius, therefore, marched from Antioch into Judea, with three legions and a large body of auxiliaries raised in Syria. *All were hereupon filled with consternation*, the army being come as far as Ptolemais.'"

See Lardner's Works, vol. i. pp. 101, 102; Lond. Ed. 1829. Philo gives the same account of the consternation as Josephus. Philo de legat, ad Cal. pp. 1024,1025. He describes the Jews

> "as abandoning their cities, villages, and open country, as going to Petronius in Phenicia, both men and women, the old, the young, the middle aged; as throwing themselves on the ground before Petronius with weeping and lamentation," etc.

The effect of this consternation in diverting their minds from the Christians can be easily conceived. The prospect that the images of the Roman emperor were about to be set up by violence in the temple, or that, in case of resistance, death or slavery was to be their portion; the advance of a large army to execute that purpose; all tended to throw the nation into alarm. By the providence of God, therefore, this event was permitted to occur to divert the attention of bloody-minded persecutors from a feeble and a bleeding church. Anxious for their own safety, the Jews would cease to persecute the Christians; and thus, by the conversion of the main instrument in persecution, and by the universal alarm for the welfare of the nation, the trembling and enfeebled church was permitted to obtain repose. Thus *ended* the first general persecution against Christians, and thus effectually did God show that he had power to guard and protect his chosen people.

All Judea, etc. These three places included the land of Palestine. **See Barnes "Mt 2:22"**.

The formation of churches in Galilee is not expressly mentioned before this; but there is no improbability in supposing that Christians had travelled there, and had preached the gospel. Comp. Ac 11:19. The formation of churches in Samaria is expressly mentioned, Ac 8:5, etc.

Were edified. Were built up, increased, and strengthened. See Ro 14:19 15:2; 1Co 8:1.

And walking. Proceeding; living. The word is often used to denote Christian conduct, or manner of life, Col 1:10 Lu 1:6; 1Th 4:1

1Jo 2:6. The idea is that of travellers who are going to any place, and who walk in the right path. Christians are thus travellers to another country, an heavenly.

In the fear of the Lord. Fearing the Lord; with reverence for him and his commandments. This expression is often used to denote piety in general, 2Ch 19:7 Job 28:28; Ps 19:9 111:10; Pr 1:7 9:10, 13:13.

In the comfort of the Holy Ghost. In the consolations which the Holy Ghost produced, Joh 14:16,17; Ro 5:1-6.

Were multiplied. Were increased.

{b} "Then had the churches rest" Zec 9:1 Ac 8:1 {c} "throughout Judaea" Ps 94:13 {d} "were edified" Ro 14:19 {e} "walking in the fear" Joh 14:16,17 {f} "comfort of" Joh 14:16,17 {+} "Ghost" "Spirit" {g} "were multiplied" Zec 8:20,22

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *To the saints*. To the Christians.

Which dwelt at Lydda. This town was situated on the road from Jerusalem to Caesarea Philippi. It was about fifteen miles east of Joppa, and belonged to the tribe of Ephraim. It was called by the Greeks Diospolis, or city of Jupiter, probably because a temple was at some period erected to Jupiter in that city. It is now so entirely ruined as to be a miserable village. Since the crusades, it has been called by the Christians St. George, on account of its having been the scene of the martyrdom of a saint of that name. Tradition says, that in this city the emperor Justinian erected a church.

{§} "all quarters" "all parts"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *Aeneas*. This is a Greek name; and probably he was a Hellenist. **See Barnes "Ac 6:1"**.

Sick of the palsy. **See Barnes "Mt 9:6"**

See Barnes "Mr 2:9, **See Barnes "Joh 5:11,12"**

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *Maketh the whole*. Cures thee. Peter claimed no power to do it himself. Comp. Ac 3:6,16, 4:10.

Make thy bed. This would show that he was truly healed. Comp. Mt 9:6 Mr 2:9,11 Joh 5:11,12

{h} "maketh thee whole" Ac 3:6,16, 4:10

{*} "whole" "well"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *And all*. The mass, or body of the people. The affliction of the man had been long, and was probably well known; the miracle would be celebrated, and the effect was an extensive revival of religion.

Saron. This was the *champaign*, or open country, usually mentioned by the name of *Sharon* in the Old Testament, 1Ch 5:16; 1Ch 27:29 So 2:1 Isa 33:9.

It was a region of extraordinary fertility, and the name was almost proverbial to denote any country of great beauty and fertility. Comp. Isa 33:9 35:2, 65:19.

It was situated south of Mount Carmel, along the coast of the Mediterranean, extending to Caesarea and Joppa. Lydda was situated in this region.

Turned to the Lord. Were converted; or received the Lord Jesus as the Messiah, Ac 11:21 2Co 3:16.

{i} "Saron" 1Ch 5:16 {k} "turned to the Lord" Ac 11:21

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *At Joppa*. This was a seaport town, situated on the Mediterranean, in the tribe of Dan, about thirty miles south of Caesarea, and forty-five north-west of Jerusalem. It was the principal seaport of Palestine; and hence, though the harbour was poor, it had considerable celebrity. It was occupied by Solomon to receive the timber brought for the building of the temple from Tyre, 2Ch 2:16 and was used for a similar purpose in the time of Ezra, Ezr 3:7. The present name of the town is *Jaffa*. It is situated on a promontory, jutting out into the sea, rising to the height of about one hundred and fifty feet above its level, and offering on all sides picturesque and varied prospects. The streets are narrow, uneven, and dirty. The inhabitants are estimated at between four and five thousand, of whom the greater part are Turks and Arabs. The Christians are stated to be about six hundred, consisting of Roman Catholics, Greeks, Maronites, and Arminians. It is several times mentioned in the New Testament, Ac 10:5,23, 11:5.

Tabitha. This word is properly Syriac, and means, literally, the gazelle or antelope. The name became an appellation of a female probably on account of the beauty of its form. "It is not unusual in the East to give the names of beautiful animals to young women." (*Clark*.) Comp. So 2:9 4:5.

Dorcas. A Greek word signifying the same as Tabitha. Our word *doe* or *roe* answers to it in signification.

Full of good works. Distinguished far good works. Comp. 1Ti 2:10 Tit 2:7.

And almsdeeds. Acts of kindness to the poor.

{1} "Dorcas" "Doe" or "Roe" {l} "full of good" 1Ti 2:10 Tit 2:7 {%} "almsdeeds" "Alms"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *Whom, when they had washed*. Among most people it has been customary to wash the body before it buried or burned. They prepared her in the usual manner for interment.

In an upper chamber. **See Barnes "Ac 1:13"**.

There is no evidence that they expected that Peter would raise her up to life.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *Was nigh to Joppa*. It was about six miles.

They sent unto him, etc. Why they sent is not affirmed. It is probable that they desired his presence to comfort and sustain them in their affliction. It is certainly *possible* that they expected he would restore her to life; but as this is not mentioned—as the apostles had as yet raised up no one from the dead—as even Stephen had not been restored to life—we have no authority for assuming, or supposing, that they had formed any such expectation.

{1} "not delay" "be grieved"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *Then Peter arose*. **See Barnes "Lu 15:8"**.

And all the widows. Whom Dorcas had benefited by her kindness. They had lost a benefactress; and it was natural that they should recall her kindness, and express their gratitude by enumerating the proofs of her beneficence. Each one would therefore naturally dwell on the kindness which had been shown to herself.

{*} "garments" "mantles" {a} "while she was with them" Joh 12:11

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 40

Verse 40. *But Peter put them all forth*. From the room. See a similar case in Mt 9:25. *Why* this was done is not said. Perhaps because he did not wish to appear as if seeking publicity. If done in the presence of many persons, it might seem like ostentation. Others suppose it was that he might offer more fervent and agonizing prayer to God than he would be willing they should witness. Compare 2Ki 4:23.

Tabitha, arise. Compare Mr 5:41,42.

{b} "put them all forth" Mt 9:25 {c} "Tabitha, arise" Mr 5:41,42; Joh 11:43

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 41

Verse 41. *He presented her alive*. He exhibited, or showed her to them alive. Compare 1Ki 17:23.

{d} "presented her" 1Ki 17:23

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 42

Verse 42. *And many believed*, etc. A similar effect followed when Jesus raised up Lazarus. See Joh 12:11.

This was the first miracle of this kind that was performed by the apostles. The effect was, that many believed. It was not merely a work of benevolence in restoring to life one who contributed largely to the comfort of the poor, but it was used as a means of extending and establishing, as it was designed doubtless to do, the kingdom of the Saviour.

{e} "many believed" Joh 12:11

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 9 - Verse 43

Verse 43. No Barnes text on this verse.

{+} "tarried" "abode"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 1

CHAPTER 10

Introduction

: This chapter commences a very important part of the history of the transactions of the apostles. Before this, they had preached the gospel to the Jews only. They seem to have retained the feelings of their countrymen on this subject, that the Jews were to be regarded as the peculiarly favoured people, and that salvation was not to be offered beyond the limits of their nation. it was important, indeed, that the gospel should be offered to them first; but the whole tendency of the Christian religion was to enlarge and liberalize the mind; to overcome the narrow policy and prejudices of the Jewish people; and to diffuse itself over all the nations of the earth. In various ways, and by various parables, the Saviour had taught the apostles, indeed, that his gospel should be spread among the Gentiles. He had commanded them to go and preach it to every creature, Mr 16:15. But he had told them to tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high, Lu 24:49. It was natural, therefore, that they should receive *special* instructions and Divine revelation on a point so important as this; and God selected the case of Cornelius as the instance by which he would fully establish his purpose of conveying the gospel to the Gentile world. It is worthy of observation, also, that he selected Peter for the purpose of conveying the gospel first to the Gentiles. The Saviour had told him, that on him he would build his church; that he would give to him first the key of the kingdom of heaven; that is, that he should be the agent in opening the doors of the church to both Jews and Gentiles. **See Barnes** "Mt 16:18, **See Barnes "Mt 16:19"**.

Peter had, in accordance with these predictions, been the agent in first presenting the gospel to the Jews, Ac 2; and the prediction was now to be *completely* fulfilled in extending the same gospel to the Gentile world. The transaction recorded in this chapter is one, therefore, that is exceedingly

important in the history of the church; and we are not to be surprised that it is recorded at length. It should be remembered, also, that this point became afterwards the source of incessant controversy in the early church. The converts from Judaism insisted on the observance of the whole of the rites of their religion; the converts from among the Gentiles claimed exemption eruption from them all. To settle these disputes, and to secure the reception of the gospel among the Gentiles, and to introduce them to the church with all the privileges of the Jews, required all the wisdom, talent, and address of the apostles. See Ac 11:1-18 Ac 15; Ro 14; Ro 15; Ga 2:11-16.

Verse 1. *In Caesarea*. **See Barnes "Ac 8:40"**.

Cornelius. This is a Latin name, and shows that the man was doubtless a Roman. It has been supposed by many interpreters that this man was "a proselyte of the gate;" that is, one who had renounced idolatry, and who observed some of the Jewish rites, though not circumcised, and not called a Jew. But there is no sufficient evidence of this. The reception of the narrative of Peter, Ac 11:1-3, shows that the other apostles regarded him as a Gentile. In Ac 10:28, Peter evidently regards him as a foreigner; one who did not in any sense esteem himself to be a Jew. In Ac 11:1, it is expressly said that "the Gentiles" had received the word of God; evidently alluding to Cornelius and those who were with him.

A centurion. One who was the commander of a division in the Roman army, consisting of a hundred men. A captain of a hundred. **See Barnes "Mt 8:6"**.

Of the band. A division of the Roman army, consisting of from four hundred to six hundred men. **See Barnes "Mt 27:27"**.

The Italian band. Probably a band or regiment that was composed of soldiers from *Italy*, in distinction from those which were composed of soldiers born in provinces. It is evident that many of the soldiers in the Roman army would be those who were born in other parts of the world; and it is altogether probable, that those who were born in Rome or Italy would claim pre-eminence over those enlisted in other places.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 2

Verse 2. A *devout* man. Pious; or one who maintained the worship of God. **See Barnes "Lu 2:25"**.

Comp. Ac 2:5 8:2.

And one that feared God. This is often a designation of piety. **See Barnes "Ac 9:31"**.

It has been supposed by many that the expressions here used denote that Cornelius was Jew, or was instructed in the Jewish religion, and was a proselyte. But this by no means follows. It is probable that there might have been among the Gentiles a few at least who were fearers of God, and who maintained his worship according to the light which they had. So there may be now persons found in pagan lands, who, in some unknown way, have been taught the evils of idolatry; the necessity of a purer religion; and who may be *prepared* to receive the gospel. The Sandwich Islands were very much in this state when the American missionaries first visited them. They had thrown away their idols, and seemed to be waiting for the message of mercy and the word of eternal life, as Cornelius was. A few other instances have been found by missionaries in heathen lands, who have thus been prepared by a train of providential events, or by the teaching of the Spirit, for the gospel of Christ.

With all his house. With all his family. It is evident here that Cornelius instructed his family, and exerted his influence to train them in the fear of God. True piety will always lead a man to seek the salvation of his family.

Much alms. Large and liberal charity. This is always an effect of piety. See Jas 1:27 Ps 41:1.

Prayed to God alway. Constantly; meaning that he was in the regular habit of praying to God. Comp. Ro 12:12 Lu 18:1; Ps 119:2 Pr 2:2-5.

As no particular *kind* of prayer is mentioned except secret prayer, we are not authorized to affirm that he offered prayer in any other manner. It may be observed, however, that he who prays in secret will usually pray in his family; and as the *family* of Cornelius is mentioned as being also under the influence of religion, it is perhaps not a forced inference that he observed family worship.

{+} "devout" "pious" {f} "man" Ac 8:2 22:12 {g} "feared" Ec 7:18

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *He saw in a vision*. **See Barnes "Ac 9:10"**.

Evidently. Openly; manifestly.

About the ninth hour. About three o'clock, P.M. This was the usual hour of evening worship among the Jews.

An angel of God. **See Barnes "Mt 1:20"**.

Comp Heb 1:14. This angel was sent to signify to Cornelius that his alms were accepted by God as an evidence of his piety, and to direct him to send for Peter to instruct him in the way of salvation. The importance of the occasion—the introduction of the gospel to a *Gentile*, and hence to the entire Gentile world—was probably the chief reason why an angel was commissioned to visit the Roman centurion. Comp. Ac 16:9,10.

{d} "an angel of God" Heb 1:14

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And when he looked on him*. Greek, Having fixed his eyes attentively on him.

He was afraid. At the suddenness and unexpected character of the vision.

What is it, Lord? This is the expression of surprise and alarm. The word *Lord* should have been translated *Sir*, as there is no evidence that this is an address to god, and still less that he regarded the personage present as the Lord. It is such language as a man would naturally use who was suddenly surprised; who should witness a strange form appearing unexpectedly before him; and who should exclaim, "Sir, what is the matter?"

Are come up for a memorial. Are remembered before God. Comp. Isa 45:19. They were an evidence of piety towards God, and were accepted as such. Though he had not offered sacrifice according to the Jewish laws—though he had not been circumcised—yet, having acted according to the light which he had, his prayers were heard, and his alms accepted. This was done in accordance with the general principle of the Divine administration, that God prefers the offering of the heart,

to external forms; the expressions of love, to sacrifice without it. This he had often declared, Isa 1:11-15 Am 5:21,22 1Sa 15:22, "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams;" Hos 6:6 Ec 5:1. It should be remembered, however, that Cornelius was not depending on external morality. His *heart* was in the work of religion. It should be remembered, further, that he was ready to receive the gospel when it was offered to him, and to become a Christian. In this there was an important difference between him and those who are depending for salvation on their morality in Christian lands. Such men are apt to defend themselves by the example of Cornelius, and to suppose that as *he* was accepted *before* he embraced the gospel, so they may be *without* embracing it. But there is an important difference in the two cases. For,

(1.) there is no evidence that Cornelius was depending on external morality for salvation. His offering was that of the *heart*, and not merely an external offering. Moral men in Christian lands depend on their *external morality* in the sight of men. But God looks upon the heart.

(2.) Cornelius did not rely on his *morality* at all. His was a work of religion. He feared God; he prayed to him; he exerted his influence to bring his *family* to the same state. Moral men do neither. All their works they do to be "seen of men;" and in their heart there is "no good thing towards the Lord God of Israel." Comp. 1Ki 14:13 2Ch 19:3. Who hears of a man that "fears God," and that prays, and that instructs his household in *religion*, that *depends* on his morality for salvation?

(3.) Cornelius was disposed to do the will of God, as far as it was made known to him. Where this exists there is religion. The moral man is not.

(4.) Cornelius was willing to embrace a Saviour, when he was made known to him. The moral man is not. He hears of a Saviour with unconcern; he listens to the message of God's mercy from year to year without embracing it. In all this there is an important difference between him and the Roman centurion; and while we hope there may be many in pagan lands who are in the same state of mind that he was —disposed to do the will of God as far as made known, and therefore accepted and saved by his mercy in the Lord Jesus—yet this cannot be adduced to encourage the hope of salvation in those who *do* know his will, and yet will not do it.

{e} "memorial before God" Isa 14:19

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 5

Verse 5. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *He lodgeth*.He remains as a guest at his house. See Ac 9:43.

By the sea side. Joppa was a seaport on the Mediterranean. Tanneries are erected on the margin of streams, or of any body of water, to convey away the filth produced in the operation of dressing skins.

{f} "Simon a tanner" Ac 9:43 {g} "what thou oughtest" Ac 11:14

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *A devout soldier*. A pious man. This is an instance of the effect of piety in a military officer. Few men have more influence; and in this case the effect was seen not only in the piety of his family, but of this attending soldier. Such men have usually been supposed to be far from the influence of religion; but this instance shows that even the labours and disadvantages of a camp are not necessarily hostile to the existence of piety. Comp. Lu 3:14.

{+} "devout" "Pious"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *And when*, etc. "It has been remarked, that from Joppa Jonah was sent to preach to the Gentiles at Nineveh; and that from the same place Peter was sent to preach to the Gentiles at Caesarea." (*Clarke*.)

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Peter went up*, etc. The small room in the second story, or on the roof of the house, was the usual place for retirement and prayer, **See Barnes** "Mt 6:6, **See Barnes "Mt 9:2"**.

About the sixth hour. About twelve o'clock at noon. The Jews had two stated seasons of prayer—morning and evening. But it is evident that the more pious of the Jews frequently added a third season of devotion, probably at noon. Thus David says, Ps 55:17 "Evening and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud." Thus Daniel "kneeled upon his knees three times a day and prayed," Da 6:10,13. It was also customary in the early Christian church to offer prayer at the third, sixth, and ninth hours. Clem. Alex. as quoted by Doddridge. Christians will, however, have not merely *stated* seasons for prayer, but they will seize upon moments of leisure, and when their feelings strongly incline them to it, to pray.

{h} "Peter went up" Ac 6:5 {§} "housetop" "House-roof"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *And he became very hungry*. From the connexion, where it is said that they were making ready, that is, preparing a meal, it would seem that this was the customary hour of dining. The Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans, however, had but two meals, and the first was usually taken about ten or eleven o'clock. This meal usually consisted of fruit, milk, cheese, etc. Their principal meal was about six or seven in the afternoon; at which time they observed their feasts. See Jahn's Bib. Archae § 145.

He fell into a trance. Greek, An ecstasy—*ekstasiv*—fell upon him. In Ac 11:5, Peter says that *in* a trance he saw a vision. The word *trance*, or *ecstasy*, denotes a state of mind when the attention is absorbed in a particular train of thought, so that the external senses are partially or entirely suspended. It is a high species of abstraction from external objects; when the mind becomes forgetful of surrounding things, and is fixed solely on its own thoughts, so that appeals to the external senses do not readily rouse it. The soul seems to have passed out of the body, and to be conversant only with spiritual essences. Thus Balaam is said to have seen the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, Nu 24:4,16; thus Paul, in praying in the temple, fell into a trance, Ac 22:17 and perhaps a similar state is described in 2Co 12:2. This effect seems to be caused by so intense and absorbing a train of thought, as to overcome the senses of the body, or wholly to withdraw the mind from their influence, and to fix it on the unseen object that engrosses it. It is often a high state of *revery*, or absence of mind, which Dr. Rush describes as "induced by the stimulus of ideas of absent subjects, being so powerful as to destroy the perception of present objects." (Diseases of the Mind, p. 310, Ed. Phila. 1812.) In the case of Peter, however, there was a supernatural influence that drew his attention away from present objects.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *And saw heaven opened*. Ac 7:56; **See Barnes "Mt 3:16"**.

This *language* is derived from a common mode of speaking in the Hebrew Scriptures, as if the sky above us was a solid, vast expanse, and [as] if it were opened to present an opportunity for anything to descend. It is language that is highly figurative.

And a certain vessel. **See Barnes "Ac 9:15"**.

As it had been. It is important to mark this expression. The sacred writer does not say that Peter literally saw such all object descending; but he uses this as an imperfect description of the vision. It was not a literal descent of a vessel, but it was such a kind of representation to him, producing the same impression, and the same effect, *as if* such a vessel had descended.

Knit at the four corners. Bound, united, or *tied*. The corners were collected, as would be natural in putting anything into a great sheet.

{a} "saw heaven" Ac 7:56 {*} "vessel" "and something" {+} "knit" "bound together"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Wherein*, etc. This particular vision was suggested by Peter's hunger, Ac 10:10. It was designed, however, to teach him an important lesson in regard to the introduction of all nations to the gospel. Its descending from heaven may have been an intimation that that religion which was about to abolish the distinction between the Jews and other nations was of Divine origin. See Re 21:2.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 13

Verse 13. No notes from Barnes on this verse.
{+} "kill, and eat" "Slay"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *I have never eaten*, etc. In the Old Testament, God had made a distinction between clean and unclean animals. See Le 11:2-27 De 14:3-20. This law remained in the Scriptures, and Peter pleaded that he *had never* violated it, implying that he could not now violate it; as it was a law of God, and as it was unrepealed, he did not dare to act in a different manner from what it required. Between that law, and the command which he now received in the vision, there was an apparent variation; and Peter naturally referred to the well-known and admitted written law. One design of the vision was to show him that that law was now to pass away.

That is common. This word properly denotes *that which pertains to all*; but among the Jews, who were bound by special laws, and who were prohibited from many things that were freely indulged in by other nations, the word *common* came to be opposed to the word *sacred*, and to denote that which was in common use among the heathens—hence that which was *profane* or *polluted*. Here it means the same as *profane*, or *forbidden*.

Unclean. Ceremonially unclean; i.e., that which is forbidden by the ceremonial law of Moses.
{b} "common" Le 11:2 20:25; De 14:3 Eze 4:14

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *What God hath cleansed*. What God hath pronounced or declared pure. If God has commanded you to do a thing, it is not impure or wrong. Its use is lawful if he has commanded it. Perhaps Peter would have supposed that the design of this vision was to instruct him that the distinction between clean and unclean food, as recognized by the Jews, was about to be abolished, Ac 17. But the result showed that it had a higher and more important design. It was to show him that they who had been esteemed by the Jews as unclean or profane—the entire Gentile world—might now be admitted to similar privileges with the Jews. That barrier was to be broken down, and the whole world was to be admitted to the same fellowship and privileges in the gospel. See Eph 2:14; Ga 3:28. It was also true that the ceremonial laws of the Jews in regard to clean and unclean beasts was to pass away, though this was not directly taught in this vision. But when once the barrier was removed that separated the Jews and Gentiles, all the *laws* which *supposed* such a distinction, and which were framed to *keep* up such a distinction, passed away of course. The ceremonial laws of the Jews were designed *solely* to keep up the distinction between them and other nations. When the distinction was abolished— when other nations were to be admitted to the same privileges—the laws which were made to keep up such a difference received their death-blow, and expired of course. For it is a maxim of all law, that when the reason why a law was made ceases to exist, the

law becomes obsolete. Yet it was not easy to convince the Jews that their laws ceased to be binding. This point the apostles laboured to establish; and from this point arose most of the difficulties between the Jewish and Gentile converts to Christianity. See

Ac 15, Ro 14, Ro 15.

{c} "that call not" Ac 10:28 Mt 15:11; Ro 14:14 1Co 10:25; 1Ti 4:4

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *This was done thrice*. Three time, doubtless, to impress the mind of Peter with the certainty and importance of the vision. comp. Ge 41:32.

{§} "vessel" "Sheet"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Doubted in himself*. Doubted in his own mind. He was perplexed to understand it.

Behold, the men, etc. We see here an admirable arrangement of the events of Providence to fit each other. Every part of this transaction is made to harmonize with every other part; and it was so arranged, that, just in the moment when the mind of Peter was filled with perplexity, the very event should occur which should relieve him of his embarrassment. Such a coincidence is not uncommon. An event of Divine Providence may be as clear an expression of his will, and may as certainly serve to indicate our duty, as the most manifest revelation would do; and a state of mind may, by an arrangement of circumstances, be produced, that shall be extremely perplexing until some event shall occur, or some field of usefulness shall open, that shall exactly correspond to it, and shall indicate to us the will of God. We should observe then the events of God's Providence. We should mark and record the train of our own thoughts, and we should watch with interest any event that occurs, when we are perplexed and embarrassed, to obtain, if possible, an expression of the will of God.

Before the gate. The word here rendered "gate" —*pulwna*—refers, properly, to *the porch* or principal entrance to an eastern house. **See Barnes "Mt 9:2"**; **See Barnes** "Mt 26:71".

It does not mean, as with us, a *gate*, but rather a *door*. See Ac 12:13.

{d} "inquiry for Simon's" Ac 9:43

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 18

Verse 18. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *The Spirit*. **See Barnes "Ac 8:29"; comp.** Is 65:24, "And it shall come to pass, that before they call I will answer," etc.

{e} "Spirit" Ac 11:12

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 20

Verse 20. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

{f} "Arise"

Ac 15:7

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 21

Verse 21. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *To hear words of thee*. To be instructed by thee.

{a} "Cornelius" Ac 10:1 {b} "good report" Ac 22:12 Heb 11:2

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *And lodged them*. They remained with him through the night. Four days were occupied before Peter met Cornelius at Caesarea. On the first, the angel appeared to Cornelius; on the second, the messengers arrived at Joppa, Ac 10:9; on the third, Peter returned with them, Ac 10:23; and on the fourth, they arrived at Caesarea, Ac 10:24,30.

And certain brethren. Some Christians. They were six in number, Ac 11:12. It was usual for the early Christians to accompany the apostles in their journeys. Ro 15:24 Ac 15:3; 3Jo 1:6 1Co 16:6,11.

As this was an important event in the history of the church—the bearing of the gospel to a Gentile—it was more natural rant proper that Peter should be attended with others.

{c} "certain brethren" "Ac 10:45"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *His kinsman*. His relatives, or the connexions of his family. A man may often do vast good by calling his kindred and friends to hear the gospel.

{*} "waited for them" "Was expecting them."

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Fell down at his feet*. This was an act of profound regard for him as an ambassador of God. In Oriental countries it was usual to prostrate themselves at length on the ground before men of rank and honour.

Worshipped him. This does not mean religious grinage, but civil respect; the homage, or profound regard, which was due to one in honour. **See Barnes "Mt 2:2"**.

{+} "worshipped him" "Did obeisance"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Stand up*, etc. This does not imply that Peter supposed that Cornelius intended to do him religious reverence. It was practically saying to him, "I am nothing more than a man, as thou art, and pretend to no right to such profound respects as these, but am ready in civil life to show thee all the respect that is due."—Doddridge.

{d} "stand up" Ac 14:14,15; Re 19:10 22:9

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *And as he talked with him.* He probably met with him at the door, or at a small distance from the house. It was an expression of joy thus to go out to meet him.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *It is an unlawful thing*. This was not explicitly enjoined by Moses, but it seemed to be implied in his institutions, and was at any rate the common understanding of the Jews. The design was to keep them a separate people. To do this, Moses forbade alliances by contract, or marriage, with the surrounding nations, which were idolatrous. See Le 18:24-30 De 7:3-12; comp. Ezr 9:11,12. This command the Jews perverted; and explained as referring to intercourse of an kinds, even to the exercise of friendly offices and commercial transactions. Comp. Joh 4:9.

Of another nation. Greek, Another *tribe*. It refers here to all who were not Jews.

God hath shewed me. Comp. Ac 15:8,9. He had showed him by the vision, Ac 10:11,12.

Any man common or unclean. **See Barnes "Ac 10:14"**.

That no man was to be regarded as excluded from the opportunity of salvation; or be despised and abhorred. The gospel was to be preached to all; the barrier between Jews and Gentiles to be broken down; and all were to be regarded as capable of being saved.

{e} "unlawful thing" Joh 4:9 {f} "God hath shewed me" Joh 15:8,9; Eph 3:6

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Without gainsaying*. Without *saying anything against it*; without hesitation or reluctance.

I ask therefore, etc. The main design for which Cornelius had sent for him had been mentioned to Peter by the messenger, Ac 10:22. But Peter now desired from his own Ups a more particular statement of the considerations which had induced him to send for him.

For what intent. For what purpose or design.

{+} "intent" "On what account"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *Four days ago.* **See Barnes "Ac 10:23"**.

Until this hour. The ninth hour, or three o'clock P.M. See Ac 10:3.

A man. Called, in Ac 10:3, am angel. He had the *appearance* of a man. Comp. Mr 16:5.

In bright clothing.

See Barnes "Mt 28:3"

{g} "in bright clothing" Mt 28:3 Ac 1:10

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 31

Verse 31. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

{h} "thy prayer is heard"

Ac 10:4

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 32

Verse 32. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *Thou hast well done*. This is an expression of grateful feeling.

Before God. In the presence of God. It is implied that they believed that God saw them, and that they were assembled at his command, and that they were disposed to listen to his instructions.

{i} "Now therefore" De 5:27

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *Then Peter opened his mouth*. Began to speak, Mt 5:2.

Of a truth. Truly; evidently. That is, I have *evidence here* that God is no respecter of persons.

Is no respecter of persons. The word used here denotes the act of showing favour to one on account of rank, family, wealth, or partiality, arising from any cause. It is explained in Jas 2:1-4. A judge is a respecter of persons when he favours one of the parties on account of private friendship; or because he is a man of rank, influence, or power; or because he belongs to the same political party, etc. The Jews supposed that they were peculiarly favoured by God, and that salvation was not extended to other nations, and that the fact of *being a Jew* entitled them to this favour. Peter here says that he has learned the error of this doctrine. That a man is not to be *accepted* because he is a *Jew*, nor is he to be *excluded* because he is a *Gentile*. The barrier is broken down, the offer is made to all, and God will save all on the same principle—not by external privileges, or rank, but according to their character. The same doctrine is elsewhere explicitly stated in the New Testament, Ro 2:11 Eph 6:9; Col 3:25.

It may be observed here, that this does not refer to the doctrine of Divine sovereignty or election. It simply affirms that God will not save a man because he is a Jew; nor because he is rich, or learned, or of elevated rank; nor by any external privileges. Nor will he exclude any man because he is destitute of these privileges. But this does not affirm that he will not make a difference *in their character*, and then treat them *according* to their character; nor that he will not pardon whom he pleases, which is a different question. The interpretation of this passage should be limited strictly to the case in hand—to mean that God will not accept and save a man on account of external national rank and privileges. That by receiving some, and leaving others, *on other grounds*, he will not make *a difference*, is not anywhere denied. Comp. 1Co 4:7 Ro 12:6. It is worthy of remark, further, that the most strenuous advocate for the doctrines of sovereignty and election in the New Testament—the apostle Paul—is also the one that laboured most to establish the doctrine that God was no respecter of persons; that is, that there was no difference between the Jews and Gentiles in regard to the way of salvation; that God would not save a man because he was a Jew, nor *destroy* a man because he was a Gentile. Yet, in regard to *the whole race viewed as lying on a level*, he maintained that God had a right to exercise the prerogatives of a sovereign, and to have mercy on whom he would have mercy. The doctrine may be thus stated:

(1.) The barrier, between the Jews and Gentiles was broken down.

(2.) All men thus were placed on a level—none to be saved by external privileges, none to be lost by the want of them.

(3.) *All* were guilty, Ro 1 2 3

and none had a claim on God.

(4.) If any were saved, it would be by God's showing mercy on such of this common mass as he chose. Ro 3:22 10:12, 2:11 Ga 2:6; compared with Ro 9 Eph 1.

{k} "God is no respector of persons" De 10:17 2Ch 19:7; Job 34:19

Ro 2:11 Ga 2:6; 1Pe 1:17

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *But in every nation*, etc. This is given as a reason for what Peter had just said, that God was no respecter of persons. The sense is, that he now perceived that the favours of God were not confined to the Jew, but might be extended to all others on the same principle. The remarkable circumstances here, the vision to him, and to Cornelius, and the declaration that the alms of Cornelius were accepted, now convinced Peter that the favours of God were no longer to be confined to the Jewish people, but might be extended to all. This was what the vision was designed to teach; and to communicate this to the apostles was an important step in their work of spreading the gospel.

In every nation. Among all people; Jews or Gentiles. Acceptance with God does not depend on the fact of being descended from Abraham, or of possessing external privileges, but on the state of the heart.

He that feareth him. This is put for piety towards God in general. **See Barnes "Ac 9:31"**.

It means, that he that honours God and keeps his law—that is a true worshipper of God, according to the light and privileges which he has—is approved by him, as giving evidence that he is his friend.

And worketh righteousness. Does that which is right and just. This refers to his conduct towards man. He that discharges conscientiously his duty to his fellow-men, and evinces by his conduct that he is a righteous man. These two things comprehend the whole of religion, the sum of all the requirements of God—piety towards God, and justice towards an men; and as Cornelius had showed these, he showed that, though a Gentile, he was actuated by true piety. We may observe here,

(1.) that it is not said that Cornelius was accepted on account of his good works. Those works were simply an evidence of true piety in the heart; a proof that he feared and loved God, and not a meritorious ground of acceptance.

(2.) He improved the light which he had.

(3.) *He embraced the Saviour when he was offered to him*. This circumstance makes an essential difference between the case of Cornelius, and those who depend on their morality in Christian lands. They do *not* embrace the Lord Jesus, and they are, therefore, totally unlike the Roman centurion. His example should not be pleaded, therefore, by those who neglect the Saviour, for it furnishes no evidence that *they* will be accepted, when they are totally unlike him.

{a} "in every nation" Ro 2:13,27, 3:22,29, 10:12,13; Eph 2:13-18

{*} "with" "by"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *The word.* That is, this is the word, or the doctrine. Few passages in the New Testament have perplexed critics more than this. It has been difficult to ascertain to what the term "word" in the accusative case (*ton logon*) here refers. Our translation would lead us to suppose that it is synonymous with what is said in the following verse. But it should be remarked, that the term used there, and translated "word," as if it were a repetition of what is said here, is a different term. It is not *logon*, but *rhma* a word, a thing; not a doctrine. I understand the first term "word" to be an introduction of the doctrine which Peter set forth, and to be governed by a preposition understood. The whole passage may be thus expressed: Peter had been asked to *teach* Cornelius and his assembled friends. It was expected, of course, that he would instruct him in regard to the true doctrines of religion—the doctrine which had been communicated to the Jews. He commences, therefore, with a statement respecting the true doctrine of the Messiah, or the way of salvation which was now made known to the Jews. "In regard to the "word," or the doctrine which God sent to the children of Israel, proclaiming peace through Jesus Christ, (who is Lord of all,) you know already that which was done, or the transactions which occurred throughout all Judea, from Galilee, where he commenced after John had preached, that this was by Jesus Christ, since God had anointed him," etc. Peter here assumes that Cornelius had some knowledge of the principal events of the life of the Saviour, though it was obscure and imperfect; and his discourse professes only to state this more *fully* and *clearly*. He commences his discourse with stating the true doctrine on the subject, and explaining more perfectly that of which Cornelius had been only imperfectly informed.

Unto the children of Israel. To the Jews. The Messiah was promised to them, and spent his life among them.

Preaching. That is, proclaiming or announcing. God did this by Jesus Christ.

Peace. This word sometimes refers to the peace or union which was made between Jews and Gentiles, by breaking down the wall of division between them. But it is here used in a wider sense, to denote peace or reconciliation with God. He announced the way by which man might be reconciled to God, and might find peace.

He is Lord of all. That is, Jesus Christ. He is Sovereign, or Ruler, of both Jews and Gentiles; he is their Proprietor; and hence Peter saw the propriety of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles as well as Jews. See Joh 17:2 Mt 28:18; Eph 1:20-22.

This does not necessarily imply divinity; but only that the Lord Jesus, as Mediator, had been constituted or appointed Lord over all nations. It is true, however, that this is a power which we cannot conceive to have been delegated to one that was not divine. Comp. Ro 9:5.

{b} "peace" Isa 57:19 Col 1:20 {c} "Lord of all" Ps 24:7-10 Mt 28:18; Ro 14:9 1Co 15:27; Eph 1:20-22

1Pe 3:22 Re 17:14

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *That word*. Greek, *rhma*—a different word from that in the previous verse. It may be translated *thing*, as well as *word*.

Which was published. Greek, Which was *done*. "You know, though it may be imperfectly, what was *done* or accomplished in Judea," etc.

Throughout all Judea. The miracles of Christ were not confined to any place, but were wrought in every part of the land. For an account of the divisions of Palestine, **See Barnes "Mt 2:22"**.

And began, etc. Greek, Having been begun in Galilee. Galilee was not far from Caesarea. There was, therefore, the more probability that Cornelius had heard of what had occurred there, indeed, the Gospels themselves furnish the highest evidence that the fame of the miracles of Christ spread into all the surrounding regions.

{+} "word" "Doctrine"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *How God anointed*, etc. That is, set him apart to this work, and was with him, acknowledging him as the Messiah. **See Barnes "Mt 1:1"**.

With the Holy Ghost. **See Barnes "Lu 4:19"**.

The act of anointing the kings and priests seems to have been emblematic of the influences of the Holy Ghost. Here it means, that God communicated to him the influences of the Holy Spirit, thus setting him apart for the work of the Messiah. See Mt 3:16,17; Joh 3:34

: "God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him."

And with power. The power of healing the sick, raising the dead, etc.

Who went about doing good. Whose main business it was to travel from place to place to do good. He did not go for applause, or wealth, or comfort, or ease, but to diffuse happiness as far as possible. This is the simple but sublime record of his life. This, in few, but most affecting words, tells us all about the Saviour. It gives us a distinct portrait of his character, as he is distinguished from conquerors and kings, and false prophets, and the mass of men.

And healing, etc. Restoring to health.

All that were oppressed of the devil. All that were possessed by him. **See Barnes "Mt 4:23,24"**.

God was with him. God appointed him, and furnished by his miracles the highest evidence that *he* had sent him. His miracles were such that they could be wrought only by God.

{d} "anointed Jesus" Lu 4:18 Heb 1:9 {e} "who went about" Mt 12:15 {+} "healing" "curing" {f} "oppressed of the devil" 1Jo 3:8 {g} "for God was with him" Joh 3:2

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *And we are witnesses*. We who are apostles. **See Barnes "Lu 24:48"**.

In the land of the Jews. In the country of Judea.

Whom they slew, etc. Our translation would seem to imply that there were two separate acts—first slaying him, and *then* suspending him. But this is neither according to truth nor to the Greek text. The original is simply, "whom they put to death, *suspending* him on a tree."

On a tree. On a cross. **See Barnes "Ac 5:30".**

{h} "we are witnesses" Lu 24:48 Ac 2:32 {§} "tree" "cross"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 40

Verse 40. *Shewed him openly*. Manifestly; so that there could be no deception, no doubt of his resurrection.

{a} "raised up the third day" Mt 28:1,2

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 41

Verse 41. *Not to all the people*. Not to the nation at large; for this was not necessary in order to establish the truth of his resurrection. He, however, showed himself to many persons. See the Harmony of the accounts of the resurrection of Jesus, at the close of the Notes on Matthew.

Chosen of God. Appointed by God, or set apart by his authority through Jesus Christ.

Who did eat and drink, etc. And by doing this he furnished the clearest possible proof that he was truly risen; and that they were not deceived by an illusion of the imagination, or by a phantasm. Compare Joh 21:12,13.

{b} "Not to all people" Joh 14:22

Joh 20

Joh 21

{c} "before of God" Joh 15:16

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 42

Verse 42. *And he commanded us*, etc. Mt 28:19,20; Mr 16:15,16.

And to testify. To bear witness.

That it is he, **See Barnes "Joh 5:22-27".**

Compare the references in the margin.

Of quick. The *living*. The doctrine of the New Testament is, that those who are alive when the Lord Jesus shall return to judge the world, shall be caught up in vast numbers like clouds, to meet him in the air, without seeing death, 1Th 4:16,17. Yet before this, they shall experience such a *change* in their bodies as shall fit them for the judgment and for their eternal residence—a change which shall liken them to those who have died, and have been raised from the dead. What this change will be, speculation may fancy, but the Bible has not revealed. See 1Co 15:52: "The dead shall be raised, and we shall be changed."

{d} "commanded us to preach" Mt 28:19,20 {e} "that it is he" Joh 5:22,27; Ac 17:31 2Co 5:10; 1Pe 4:5

{*} "quick" "living"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 43

Verse 43. *To him give*, etc. **See Barnes "Lu 24:27,44"**.

That through his name, etc. This was *implied* in what the prophets said. See Ro 10:11. It was not, indeed, expressly affirmed that they who believed in him should be pardoned; but this was implied in what they said. They promised a Messiah; and their religion consisted mainly in believing in a Messiah to come. See the reasoning of the apostle Paul in Ro 4.

{f} "To him" Lu 24:27 {+} "witness" "All the prophets bear testimony" {g} "whosoever believeth" Joh 3:14,16; Ro 10:11

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 44

Verse 44. *The Holy Ghost fell*, etc. Endowing them with the power of speaking with other tongues, Ac 10:46. Of this the apostle Peter makes much in his argument in Ac 11:17. By this God showed that the Gentiles were to be admitted to the same privileges with the Jews, and to the blessings of salvation in the same manner. Comp. Ac 2:1-4.

Which heard the word. The word of God; the message of the gospel.

{h} "Holy Ghost fell" Joh 4:31

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 45

Verse 45. *And they of the circumcision*. Who had been Jews.

Were astonished. Were amazed that *Gentiles* should be admitted to the same favour as themselves.

{i} "they of the circumcision" Ac 10:23 {} "Ghost" "Spirit"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 46

Verse 46. *Speak with tongues*. In other languages than their native language, Ac 2:4.

And magnify God.

{k} "speak" Ac 2:4 {§} "tongues" "different languages"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 47

Verse 47. *Can any man forbid water*, etc. They have shown that they are favoured in the same way as the Jewish converts. God has manifested himself to them, as he did to the Jews on the day of Pentecost. Is it not clear, therefore, that they are entitled to the privilege of Christian baptism? The expression here used is one that would *naturally* refer to water being *brought*; that is, to a small quantity; and would seem to imply that they were baptized, not by immersion, but by pouring or sprinkling.

{l} "Can any man forbid" Ac 8:12 {} "Ghost" "Spirit"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 10 - Verse 48

Verse 48. *And he commanded them*, etc. Why Peter did not himself baptize them is unknown. But it *might* be, perhaps, because he chose to make use of the ministry of the brethren who were with him, to prevent the possibility of future cavil. If they did it themselves, they could not so easily be led by the Jews to find fault with it. It may be added, also, that it seems not to have been the practice of the apostles themselves to baptize very extensively. This was left to be performed by others. See 1Co 1:14-17: "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel."

{¶} "certain days" "abide some days"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 11

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 11 - Verse 1

CHAPTER 11

Verse 1. *And the apostles and brethren*. The Christians who were in Judea.

Heard, etc. So extraordinary an occurrence as that at Caesarea, the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Gentiles, and their reception into the church, would excite attention, and be likely to produce much sensibility in regard to the conduct of Peter and those with him. It was so contrary to all the ideas of the Jews, that it is not to be wondered at that it led to contention.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 11 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *They that were of the circumcision*. The Christians who had been converted from among the Jews.

Contended with him. Disputed, or reproved him; charged him with being in fault. This is one of the circumstances which show conclusively that the apostles and early Christians did not regard Peter as having any particular *supremacy* over the church, or as being in any peculiar sense the vicar of Christ upon earth. If Peter had been regarded as having the authority which the Roman Catholics claim for him, they would have submitted at once to what he had thought proper to do. But the primitive Christians had no such idea of his authority. This claim for Peter is not only opposed to this place, but to every part of the New Testament.

{m} "they that were of the circumcision" Ac 10:23,28; Ga 2:12

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 11 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And didst eat with them*. **See Barnes "Ac 10:13,14"**.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 11 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *But Peter rehearsed*. Greek, Peter beginning, explained it to them in order. That is, he began with the vision which he saw, and gave a narrative of the various events in order, as they actually occurred. A simple and unvarnished statement of *facts* is usually the best way of disarming prejudice and silencing opposition. In revivals of true religion, the best way of silencing opposition, and especially among Christians, is to make a plain statement of things as they actually occurred. Opposition most commonly arises from prejudice, or from false or exaggerated statements; and those can be best removed, not by angry contention, but by an unvarnished relation of the facts. In most cases prejudice will thus be disarmed, and opposition will die away, as was the case in regard to the admission of the Gentiles to the church.

And expounded it. Explained it; stated it as it actually occurred.

By order. One event after another, as they happened. He thus showed that his own mind had been as much biassed as theirs, and stated in what manner his prejudices had been removed. It often happens that those who become most zealous and devoted in any new plans for the advancement of religion, were as much opposed to them at first as others. They are led from one circumstance to another, until their prejudices die away, and the Providence and Spirit of God indicate clearly their duty,

{**} "rehearsed" "Related"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 11 - Verse 5

Verse 5. No Barnes text on this verse.

{a} "Joppa" Ac 10:9 {*} "vessel" "something"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 11 - Verse 6

Verse 6. No Barnes text on this verse.
{+} "fastened my eyes" "looked earnestly"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 11 - Verse 7

Verse 7. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 11 - Verse 8

Verse 8. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 11 - Verse 9

Verse 9. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 11 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 11 - Verse 11

Verse 11. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 11 - Verse 12

Verse 12. No Barnes text on this verse.
{b} "Spirit bade me go"
Joh 16:13

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 11 - Verse 13

Verse 13. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 11 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *And all thy house*. Thy family. This is a circumstance which is omitted in the account in Ac 10. It is said, however, in Ac 10:2, that Cornelius feared God *with all his house*. And it is evident, from Ac 10:48, that the family also received the ordinance of baptism, and was received into the church.

{c} "tell thee words" Ps 19:7-11 Joh 6:63,68

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 11 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *And as I began to speak.* Or, when I was speaking.

The Holy Ghost, etc. Ac 10:44

{d} "fell on them" Ac 2:4

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 11 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *The word of the Lord*. **See Barnes "Ac 1:6"**.

{e} "John indeed baptized" Mt 3:11 Joh 1:26,33 Ac 1:5

{f} "ye shall be baptized" Isa 44:3 Joe 2:28 {§} "Ghost" "Spirit"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 11 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *What was I*. What power or right had I to oppose the manifest will of God that the Gentiles should be received into the Christian church.

Withstand God. Oppose or resist God. He had indicated his will; he had showed his intention to save the Gentiles; and the prejudices of Peter were all overcome. One of the best means of destroying prejudice and false opinions, is a powerful revival of religion. More erroneous doctrines and unholy feelings are overcome in such scenes, than in all the angry controversies, and bigoted and fierce contentions, that have ever taken place. If men wish to root error out of the church, they should strive by all means to promote everywhere revivals of pure and undefiled religion. The Holy Spirit more easily and effectually silences false doctrine, and destroys heresy, than all the denunciations of fierce theologians; all the alarms of professed zeal for truth; and all the anathemas

Which professed orthodoxy and love for the purity of the church ever uttered from the icebergs on which such champions usually seek their repose and their home.

{g} "as God gave them" Ac 15:8,9 {h} "what was I" Ro 9:21-26

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 11 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *They held their peace*. They were convinced, as Peter had been, by the manifest indications of the will of God.

Then hath God, etc. The great truth is in this manner established, that the doors of the church are opened to the entire Gentile world—a great and glorious truth, that was worthy of this remarkable interposition. It at once changed the views of the apostles and of the early Christians; gave them new, large, and liberal conceptions of the gospel; broke down all their long-cherished prejudices; taught them to look upon all men as their brethren; and impressed their hearts with the truth, never after to be eradicated, that the Christian church was founded for the wide world, and opened the same glorious pathway to life wherever man might be found, whether with the narrow prejudice of the Jew, or amidst the degradations of the pagan world. To this truth we owe our hopes; for this, we should thank the God of heaven; and impressed with it, we should seek to invite the entire world to partake with us of the rich provisions of the gospel of the blessed God.

{*} "held their peace, and glorified God" "were satisfied" {i} "to the Gentiles granted" Ro 10:12,13, 15:9,16

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 11 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Now they*, etc. This verse introduces a new train of historical remark; and from this point the course of the history of the Acts of the Apostles takes a new direction. Thus far, the history had recorded chiefly the preaching of the gospel to the Jews only. From this point the history records the efforts made to convert the Gentiles. It begins with the labours put forth in the important city of Antioch, Ac 11:19,20 and as, during the work of grace that occurred in that city, the labours of the apostle Paul were especially sought, Ac 11:25,26, the sacred writer thenceforward confines the history mainly to his travels and labours.

Which were scattered abroad. See Ac 8:1.

As far as Phenice. Phoenice, or Phoenicia, was a province of Syria, which in its largest sense comprehended a narrow strip of country lying on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, and extending from Antioch to the borders of Egypt. But Phoenice Proper extended only from the cities of Laodicea to Tyre, and included only the territories of Tyre and Sidon. This country was called sometimes simply *Canaan*. **See Barnes "Mt 15:22"**.

And Cyprus. An island off the coast of Asia Minor, in the Mediterranean Sea. **See Barnes "Ac 4:36"**.

And Antioch. There were two cities of this name, one situated in Pisidia in Asia Minor, see Ac 13:14; the other, referred to here, was situated on the river Orontes, and was long the capital of

Syria. It was built by Seleucus Nicanor, and was called Antioch, in honour of his father Antiochus. It was founded three hundred and one years before Christ. It is not mentioned in the Old Testament, but is several times mentioned in the Apocrypha, and in the New Testament. It was long the most powerful city of the East, and was inferior only to Seleucia and Alexandria. It was famous for the fact that the right of citizenship was conferred by Seleucus on the Jews, as well as the Greeks and Macedonians, so that here they had the privilege of worship in their own way without molestation. It is probable that the Christians would be regarded merely as a sect of Jews, and would be here suffered to celebrate their worship without interruption. On this account it may have been that the early Christians regarded this city as of such particular importance, because here they could find a refuge from persecution, and be permitted to worship God without molestation. This city was honoured as a Roman colony, a metropolis, and an asylum. It was large; was almost square; had many gates; was adorned with fountains; and was a city of great opulence. It was, however, subject to earthquakes, and was several times nearly destroyed. In the year 588 it experienced an earthquake, in which 60,000 persons were destroyed. It was taken by the Saracens in A. D. 638; and, after some changes and revolutions, it was taken during the crusades, after a long and bloody siege; by Godfrey of Bouillon, June 3, A. D. 1098. In 1268, it was taken by the sultan of Egypt, who demolished it, and placed it under the dominion of the Turk. Antioch is now called Antakia, and contains about 10,000 inhabitants. (*Robinson's Calmet*.)

Preaching the word. The word of God, the gospel.

To none but unto the Jews only. They had the common prejudices of the Jews, that the offers of salvation were to be made only to Jews.

{k} "they which were scattered abroad" Ac 8:1 {l} "unto the Jews only" Mt 10:6

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 11 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Were men of Cyprus and Cyrene*. Were natives of Cyprus and Cyrene. Cyrene was a province and city of Libya in Africa. It is at present called Cairoan, and is situated in the kingdom of Barca. In Cyprus, the Greek language was spoken; and from the vicinity of Cyrene to Alexandria, it is probable that the Greek language was spoken there also. From this circumstance it might have happened that they were led more particularly to address the *Grecians* who were in Antioch. It is possible, however, that they might have heard of the vision which Peter saw, and felt themselves called on to preach the gospel to the Gentiles.

Spake unto the Grecian. *prov touv ellhnistav* To the Hellenists. This word usually denotes, in the New Testament, those Jews residing in foreign lands who spoke the Greek language. **See Barnes "Ac 6:1".**

But to them the gospel had been already preached; and yet in this place it is evidently the intention of Luke to affirm, that the men of Cyprus and Cyrene preached to those who were *not* Jews, and that thus their conduct was distinguished from those Ac 11:19 who preached to the Jews only. It is thus manifest that we are here required to understand the *Gentiles*, as those who were addressed by the men of Cyprus and Cyrene. In many Mss. the word used here is *ellhnav*, *Greeks*, instead of *Hellenists*. This reading has been adopted by Griesbach, and is found in the Syriac, the Arabic, the Vulgate, and in many of the Fathers. The AEthiopic version reads, "to the Gentiles."

There is no doubt that this is the true reading; and that the sacred writer means to say that the gospel was here preached to those who were not Jews, for all were called Greeks by them who were not Jews, Ro 1:16. The connexion would lead us to suppose that they had heard of what had been done by Peter, and that, imitating his example, they preached the gospel now to the Gentiles also.

{*} "Grecians" "Hellenists" {a} "preaching" Ac 6:1 9:29

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 11 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *And the hand of the Lord*. **See Barnes "Lu 1:66"**.

Comp. Ps 80:17. The meaning is, that God showed them favour, and evinced his power in the conversion of their hearers.

{b} "hand of the Lord" Lu 1:66

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 11 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Then tidings*, etc. The church at Jerusalem heard of this. It was natural that so remarkable an occurrence as the conversion of the Gentiles, and the extraordinary success of the gospel in a splendid and mighty city, should be reported at Jerusalem, and excite deep interest there.

And they sent forth. To aid the disciples there, and to give them their sanction. They had done a similar thing in the revival which occurred in Samaria. **See Barnes "Ac 8:14"**.

Barnabas. See Ac 4:36,37. He was a native of Cyprus, and was probably well acquainted with Antioch. He was, therefore, peculiarly qualified for the work on which they sent him.

{+} "tidings" "report" {d} "sent forth Barnabas" Ac 9:27

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 11 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Had seen the grace of God*. The *favour* or *mercy* of God, in converting sinners to himself.

Was glad. Approved of what had been done in preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, and rejoiced that God had poured down his Spirit on them. The effect of a revival is to produce joy in the hearts of all those who love the Saviour.

And exhorted them all. Entreated them. They would be exposed to many trials and temptations, and he sought to secure their affections in the cause of religion.

That with purpose of heart. With a firm mind; with a fixed, settled resolution; that they would make this their settled plan of life, their main object.

A purpose, proyesei is a resolution of the mind, a plan, or intention, Ro 8:28 Eph 1:11, 3:11 2Ti 1:9, 3:10.

It is a resolution of the mind in regard to future conduct; and the doctrine of Barnabas here was, undoubtedly, that it should be a regular, fixed, determined *plan*, or *design*, in their minds, that they

would henceforward adhere to God. This plan must be formed by all Christians in the beginning of their Christian life, and without such a plan there can be no evidence of piety. We may also remark that such a plan is one of the *heart*. It is not simply of the *understanding*, but is of the entire mind, including the *will* and affections. It is the leading principle; the strongest affection; the guiding purpose of the will to adhere to God. And unless this is the prevalent, governing desire of the heart, there can be no evidence of conversion.

That they would cleave. Greek, That they would remain; that is, that they would adhere constantly and faithfully attached to the Lord.

{e} "was glad" 3Jo 1:4 {f} "exhorted" Ac 13:43 14:22 {g} "purpose" Ps 17:3 2Co 1:17 {h} "of heart" Pr 23:15,26

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 11 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *For he was a good man*. This is given as a reason why he was so eminently successful. It is not said that he was a man of distinguished talents or learning; that he was a splendid or an imposing preacher; but simply that he was a pious, humble man of God. He was honest, and devoted to his master's work. We should not undervalue talent, eloquence, or learning in the ministry; but we may remark, that humble piety will often do more in the conversion of souls than the most splendid talents. No endowments can be a substitute for this. The real power of a minister is concentrated in this; and without this his ministry will be barrenness and a curse. There is nothing on this earth so mighty as *goodness*. If a man wished to make-the most of his powers, the true secret would be found in employing them for a good object, and suffering them to be wholly under the direction of benevolence. John Howard's purpose *to do good* has made a more permanent impression on the interests of the world than the mad ambition of Alexander or Caesar. Perhaps the expression, "he was a good man," means that he was a man of a kind, amiable, and sweet disposition.

Full of the Holy Ghost. Was entirely under the influence of the Holy Spirit. He was eminently a pious man. This is the second qualification here mentioned of a good minister. He was not merely exemplary for mildness and kindness of temper, but he was eminently a man of God. He was filled with the influences of the sacred Spirit, producing zeal, love, peace, joy, etc. See Ga 5:22,23. Comp. **See Barnes "Ac 2:4".**

And of faith. Confidence in the truth and promises of God. This is the *third* qualification mentioned; and this was another cause of his success. He confided in God. He trusted to his promises. He depended not on his own strength, but on the strength of the arm of God. With these qualifications he engaged in his work, and he was successful. These qualifications should be sought by the ministry of the gospel. Others should not indeed be neglected, but a man's ministry will usually be successful only as he seeks to possess those endowments which distinguished Barnabas—a kind, tender, benevolent heart; devoted piety; the fulness of the Spirit's influence; and strong, unwavering confidence in the promises and power of God.

And much people. Many people.

Was added unto the Lord. Became Christians.

{i} "full of" Ac 6:5 {++} "Ghost" "Spirit" {k} "much people" Ac 11:21

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 11 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Then departed*, etc. *Why* Barnabas sought Saul, is not known. It is probable, however, that it was owing to the remarkable success which he had in Antioch. There was a great revival of religion; and there was need of additional labour. In such scenes the ministers of the gospel need additional help, as men in harvest-time seek the aid of others. Saul was in this vicinity, Ac 9:30 and he was eminently fitted to aid in this work. With him Barnabas was well acquainted, Ac 9:27 and probably there was no other one in that vicinity whom he could obtain.

To Tarsus. **See Barnes "Ac 9:11"**.

{l} "departed Barnabas" Ac 9:27,30

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 11 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *That a whole year*. Antioch was a city exceedingly important in its numbers, wealth, and influence. It was for this reason, probably, that they spent so long a time there, instead of travelling in other places. The attention of the apostles was early and chiefly directed to *cities*, as being places of influence and centres of power. Thus Paul passed three years in the city of Ephesus, Ac 20:31. And thus he continued a year and a half at Corinth, Ac 18:11. It may be added, that the first churches were founded in cities; and the most remarkable success attended the preaching of the gospel in large towns.

They assembled themselves, etc. They came together for worship.

With the church. Marg., *in* the church. The Greek *en* will bear this construction; but there is no instance in the New Testament where the word *church* refers to the *edifice* in which a congregation worships. It evidently here means that Barnabas and, Saul convened *with* the Christian assembly at proper times, through the space of a year, for the purposes of public worship.

And the disciples were called Christians, etc. As this became the distinguishing name of the followers of Christ, it was worthy of record. The name was evidently given because they were the followers of *Christ*. But by *whom*, or with what views it was given, is not certainly known. Whether it was given by their enemies in *derision*, as the names *Puritan*, *Quaker*, *Methodist*, etc., have been; or whether the disciples assumed it themselves; or whether it was given by Divine intimation, has been a matter of debate. That it was given in derision is not probable. For in the name *Christian* there was nothing dishonourable. To be the professed friends of *the Messiah*, or *the Christ*, was not with Jews a matter of reproach, for they *all* professed to be the friends of the Messiah. The cause of reproach with the disciples was that they regarded *Jesus of Nazareth* as the Messiah; and hence, when they wished to speak of them with contempt, they would speak of them as *Galilaeans*, Ac 2:7 or as *Nazarenes*, Ac 24:6 "And a ringleader of the sect *of the Nazarenes*." It is possible that the name might have been given to them as a mere *appellation*, without intending to convey by it any reproach. The *Gentiles* would probably use this name to distinguish them; and it might have become thus the common appellation. It is evident from the New Testament, I think, that it was not designed as a term of reproach. It is but twice used besides this place: Ac 26:28, "Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a *Christian;*" 1Pe 4:16, "Yet if any man suffer as a

Christian, let him not be ashamed." No certain argument can be drawn in regard to the source of the name from the word which is used here. The word *crhmatizw* used here, means,

(1.) to transact any business; to be employed in accomplishing anything, etc. This is its usual signification in the Greek writers. It means,

(2.) to be divinely admonished, to be instructed by a Divine communication, etc., Mt 2:12 Lu 2:26; Ac 10:22 Heb 8:5, 11:7 12:26.

It also means,

(3.) to be named, or called, in any way, without a Divine communication. Ro 7:3, "She shall be called an adulteress." It cannot be denied, however, that the most usual signification in the New Testament is that of a *Divine monition*, or *communication*; and it is certainly *possible* that the name was given by Barnabas and Saul. I incline to the opinion, however, that it was given to them by the Gentiles who were there, simply as an appellation, without intending it as a name of reproach, and that it was readily assumed by the disciples as a name that would fitly designate them. If it had been assumed by them, or if Barnabas and Saul had conferred the name, the record would probably have been to that effect; not simply that they "*were called*," but that they took this name, or that it was given by the apostles. It is, however, of little consequence whence the name originated. It soon became a name of reproach; and has usually been in all ages since, by the wicked, the gay, the licentious, and the ungodly. It is, however, an honoured name; the *most* honourable appellation that can be conferred on a mortal. It suggests at once to a Christian the name of his great Redeemer; the idea of our intimate relation to him; and the thought that we receive him as our chosen Leader, the source of our blessings, the author of our salvation, the fountain of our joys. It is the *distinguishing* name of all the redeemed. It is not that we belong to this or that denomination; it is not that our names are connected with high and illustrious ancestors; it is not that they are recorded in the books of heralds; it is not that they stand high in courts, and among the gay, and the fashionable, and the rich, that true honour is conferred on men. These are not the things that give *distinction* and *peculiarity* to the followers of the Redeemer. It is that they are *Christians*; that this is their peculiar name, and by this they are known; that this at once suggests their character, their feelings, their doctrines, their hopes, their joys. This binds them all together—a name which rises above every other appellation; which unites in one the inhabitants of distant nations and tribes of men; which connects the extremes of society, and places them, in most important respects, on a common level; and which is a bond to unite in one family all those who love the Lord Jesus, though dwelling in different climes, speaking different languages, engaged in different pursuits in life, and occupying distant graves at death. He who lives according to the import of this name is the most blessed and eminent of mortals. The name shall be had in remembrance when the names of royalty shall be remembered no more, and when the appellations of nobility shall cease to amuse or to dazzle the world.

{1} "assembled themselves" or, "in" {a} "much people" Mt 28:19

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 11 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *And in these days*. While Barnabas and Saul were at Antioch.

Came prophets. The word prophet denotes, properly, one who foretells future events. **See Barnes "Mt 7:16".**

It is sometimes used in the New Testament to denote simply *religious teachers, instructors sent from God*, without particular reference to future events. To teach the people in the doctrines of religion was a part of the prophetic office; and this idea only was sometimes denoted by the use of the word. See Ro 12:6 1Co 12:10,28 13:2,8 14:3,5,24.

These *prophets* seem to have been endowed in a remarkable manner with the knowledge of future events; with the power of explaining mysteries; and in some cases with the power of speaking foreign languages. In this case, it seems that one of them at least had the power of foretelling future events.

{b} "prophets" Ac 2:17 13:1; Eph 4:11

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 11 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *Named Agabus*. This man is mentioned but in one other place in the New Testament. In Ac 21:10,11, he is mentioned as having foretold that Paul would be delivered into the hands of the Gentiles. It is not expressly said that he was a Christian, but the connexion seems to imply that he was.

And signified. See Joh 12:33. The word usually denotes, *to indicate by signs*, or with a degree of obscurity and uncertainty, not to declare in explicit language. But here it seems to denote simply to foretell, to predict.

By the Spirit. Under the influence of the Spirit. He was inspired.

A great dearth. A great famine.

Throughout all the world. The word here used, *oikoumenhn*, usually denotes the inhabitable world, the parts of the earth which are cultivated and occupied. It is sometimes limited, however, to denote an *entire land* or *country*, in contradistinction from *the parts* of it; thus, to denote *the whole* of the land of Palestine in distinction from its parts, or to denote that an event would have reference to *all* the land, and not be confined to one or more parts, as Galilee, Samaria, etc. **See Barnes "Lu 2:1".**

The meaning of this prophecy evidently is, that the famine would be extensive; that it would not be confined to a single province or region, but that it would extend so far as that it might be called *general*. In fact, though the famine was particularly severe in Judea, yet it extended much farther. This prediction was uttered not long after the conversion of Saul, and probably, therefore, about the year A.D. 38, or A.D. 40. Dr. Lardner has attempted to show that the prophecy had reference *only* to the land of Judea, though in fact there were famines in other places.— (*Lardner's Works*, vol. i. pp. 253, 254. Ed. Lond., 1829.)

Which came to pass, etc. This is one of the few instances in which the sacred writers in the New Testament affirm the fulfillment of a prophecy. The history having been written after the event, it was natural to give a passing notice of the fulfillment.

In the days of Claudius Caesar. The Roman emperor. He began his reign A.D. 41, and reigned thirteen years. He was at last poisoned by one of his wives, Agrippina, who wished to raise her son Nero to the throne. During his reign no less than *four* different famines are mentioned by ancient

writers, one of which was particularly severe in Judea, and was the one doubtless to which the sacred writer here refers.

(1.) The first happened at Rome, and occurred in the first or second year of the reign of Claudius. It arose from the difficulties of importing provisions from abroad. It is mentioned by Dio, whose words are these: "There being a great famine, he (Claudius) not only took care for a present supply, but provided also for the time to come." He then proceeds to state the great expense which Claudius was at in making a good port at the mouth of the Tiber, and a convenient passage from thence up to the city.—Dio, lib. Ix. pp. 671, 672. See also Suetonius, Claud. cap. 20.

(2.) A second famine is mentioned as having been particularly severe in Greece. Of this famine Eusebius speaks in his Chronicon, p. 204: "There was a great famine in Greece, in which a modius of wheat (about half a bushel) was sold for six drachms." This famine is said by Eusebius to have occurred in the ninth year of the reign of Claudius.

(3.) In the latter part of his reign, A. D. 151, there was another famine at Rome, mentioned by Suetonius, (Claud. cap. 18,) and by Tacitus, (Ann. xii. 43.) Of this Tacitus says, that "it was so severe, that it was deemed to be a Divine judgment."

(4.) A *fourth* famine is mentioned as having occurred particularly in Judea. This is described by Josephus, (Ant. b. xx. chap. 2, § 5.) "A famine," says he, "did oppress them at the time, (in the time of Claudius ;) and many people died for the want of what was necessary to procure food withal. Queen Helena sent some of her servants to Alexandria with money to buy a great quantity of corn, and others of them to Cyprus to bring a cargo of dried figs." This famine is described as having continued under the two procurators of Judea—Tiberius Alexander, and Cassius Fadus. Fadus was sent into Judea on the death of Agrippa, about the fourth year of the reign of Claudius; and the famine, therefore, continued probably during the fifth, sixth, and seventh years of the reign of Claudius. See Note in Whiston's Josephus, Ant. b. xx. chap. 2, § 5; also Lardner as quoted above. Of this famine, or the want consequent on the famine, repeated mention is made in the New Testament.

{c} "Agabus" Ac 21:10 {*} "dearth" "A great famine"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 11 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Then the disciples*. The Christians at Antioch.

According to his ability. According as they had prospered. It does not imply that they were rich, but that they rendered aid as they could afford it.

Determined to send relief. This arose not merely from their general sense of their obligation to aid the poor, but they felt themselves particularly bound to aid their Jewish brethren. The obligation to aid the temporal wants of those from whom they had received so important spiritual mercies, is repeatedly enforced in the New Testament. Comp. Ro 15:25-27 1Co 16:1,2 2Co 9:1,2 Ga 2:10.

{a} "relief" Ro 15:26 1Co 16:1; 2Co 9:1,2

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 11 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *Sent it to the elders*. Greek, To the presbyters. This is the first mention which we have in the New Testament of *elders*, or *presbyters*, in the Christian church. The word literally denotes *aged men*, but it was a name of office only in the Jewish synagogue. It is clear, however, I think, that the elders of the Jewish synagogue here are not included, for the relief was intended for the "brethren," Ac 11:29 that is, the Christians who were at Jerusalem, and it is not probable that a charity like this would have been entrusted to the hands of Jewish elders. The connexion here does not enable us to determine anything about the sense in which the word was used. I think it probable that it does not refer to *officers* in the church, but that it means simply that the charity was entrusted to the *aged*, prudent, and experienced men in the church, for distribution among the members. Calvin supposes that the apostles were particularly intended. But this is not probable. It is possible that the *deacons*, who were probably aged men, may be here particularly referred to; but I am rather inclined to think that the charity was sent to the aged members of the church without respect to their office, to be distributed according to their discretion.

{b} "and sent" Ac 12:25

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 12

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 12 - Verse 1

CHAPTER 12

Verse 1. *Now about that time*. That is, during the time that the famine existed; or the time when Barnabas and Saul went up to Jerusalem. This was probably about the fifth or sixth year of the reign of Claudius, not far from A.D. 47.

Herod the king. This was Herod Agrippa. The Syriac so renders it expressly, and the chronology requires us so to understand it. He was a grandson of Herod the Great, and one of the sons of Aristobulus, whom Herod put to death. Josephus, Ant., b. xviii, chap. 5. Herod the Great left three sons, between whom his kingdom was divided—Archelaus, Philip, and Antipas. **See Barnes "Mt 2:19"**.

To Philip was left Iturea and Trachonitis, see Lu 3:1; to Antipas, Galilee and Perea; and to Archelaus, Judea, Idumea, and Samaria. Archelaus, being accused of cruelty, was banished by Augustus to Vienna in Gaul, and Judea was reduced to a province, and united with Syria. When Philip died, this region was granted by the emperor Caligula to Herod Agrippa. Herod Antipas was driven as an exile also into Gaul, and then into Spain, and Herod Agrippa received also *his* tetrarchy. In the reign of Claudius also, the dominions of Herod Agrippa were still farther enlarged. When Caligula was slain, he was at Rome; and having ingratiated himself into the favour of Claudius, he conferred on him also Judea and Samaria, so that his dominions were equal in extent to those of his grandfather, Herod the Great. See Josephus, Ant., b. xix., chap. 5, § 1.

Stretched forth his hands. A figurative expression, denoting that he laid his hands on them, or that he endeavoured violently to oppress the church.

To vex. To injure, to do *evil to*. *kakwsai*

Certain. Some of the church. Who they were the writer immediately specifies.

{1} "stretched forth his hands" "began" {*} "vex certain" "afflict some"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 12 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And he killed*, etc. He caused to be put to death with a sword, either by beheading, or piercing him through. The Roman procurators were entrusted with authority over life, though in the time of Pilate the Jews had not this authority. *James the brother of John*. This was the son of Zebedee, Mt 4:21. He is commonly called James the Greater, in contradistinction from James the son of Alpheus, who is called James the Less, Mt 10:3. In this manner were the predictions of our Saviour respecting him fulfilled. Mt 20:23, "Ye shall indeed drink of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with."

{c} "James the brother" Mt 4:21 20:23

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 12 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And because he saw it pleased the Jews*. This was the principle on which he acted. It was not from a sense of right; it was not to do justice, and protect the innocent; it was not to discharge the appropriate duties of a magistrate, and a king; but it was to promote his own popularity. It is probable that Agrippa would have acted in this way in any circumstances. He was ambitious, vain, and fawning; he sought, as his great principle, popularity; and he was willing to sacrifice, like many others, truth and justice to obtain this end. But there was also a particular reason for this in his case. He held his appointment under the Roman emperor. This foreign rule was always unpopular among the Jews. In order, therefore, to secure a peaceful reign, and to prevent insurrection and tumult, it was necessary for him to court their favour; to indulge their wishes, and to fall in with their prejudices. Alas! how many monarchs and rulers there have been, who were governed by no better principle, and whose sole aim has been to secure popularity, even at the expense of law, and truth and justice. That this was the character of Herod, is attested by Josephus, Ant., b. xix., chap. 8, § 3:

> "This king (Herod Agrippa) was by nature very beneficent, and liberal in his gifts, and *very ambitious to please the people* with such large donations; and he made himself very illustrious by the many expensive presents he made them. He took delight in giving, and rejoiced in living with *good reputation*."

To take Peter also. Peter was one of the most conspicuous men in the church. He had made himself particularly obnoxious by his severe and pungent discourses, and by his success in winning men to Christ. It was natural, therefore, that he should be the next object of attack.

The days of unleavened bread. The passover, or the seven days immediately succeeding the passover, during which they were required to eat bread without leaven, Ex 12:15-18. It was some time during this period that Herod chose to apprehend Peter.

Why this season was selected is not known. As it was, however, a season of religious solemnity, and as Herod was desirous of showing his attachment to the *religious* rites of the nation, (Josephus, Ant., b. xix., chap. 7, § 3,) it is probable that he chose this period to show to them more impressively his purpose to oppose all false religions, and to maintain the existing establishments of the nation.

{d} "pleased the Jews" Ac 24:27 {e} "take Peter also" Joh 21:18 {f} "days of unleavened bread" Joh 12:14,15

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 12 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And when he had apprehended him*. When he had *taken* or arrested him.

He put him in prison. During the solemnities of this religious festival, it would have been deemed improper to have engaged in the trial of a supposed criminal. The minds of the people were expected to be devoted solely to the solemnities of religion; and hence Herod chose to retain him in custody until the passover had ended.

To four quaternions of soldiers. A *quaternion* was a company of *four*; consequently the whole number employed here was sixteen. The Romans divided the night into four watches, so that the guards could be relieved; those who were on guard occupying three hours, and being then relieved. Of the *four* who were on guard, *two* were with Peter in the prison, Ac 12:6, and two kept watch before the door of the prison. The utmost precaution was thus taken that he should not escape; and Herod thus gave the most ample assurance to the Jews of his intention to secure Peter, and to bring him to trial.

Intending after Easter. There never was a more absurd or unhappy translation than this. The original is simply *after the Passover*, *meta to pasca*. The word *Easter* now denotes the festival observed by many Christian churches in honour of the resurrection of the Saviour. But the original has no reference to that; nor is there the slightest evidence that any such festival was observed at the time when this book was written. The translation is not only unhappy, as it does not convey at all the meaning of the original, but because it may contribute to foster an opinion that such a festival was observed in the times of the apostles. The word *Easter* is of Saxon origin, and is supposed to be derived from *Eostre*, the goddess of love, or the Venus of the North, in honour of whom a festival was celebrated by our pagan ancestors in the month of April. (*Webster*.) As this festival coincided with the Passover of the Jews, and with the feast observed by Christians in honour of the resurrection of Christ, the name came to be used to denote the latter. In the old Anglo-Saxon service-books the term *Easter* is used frequently to translate the word Passover. In the translation by Wicliffe, the word *paske*, i.e., passover, is used. But Tindal and Coverdale used the word *Easter*, and hence it has very improperly crept into our translation. (Clark.)

To bring him forth to the people. That is, evidently, to put him publicly to death to gratify them. The providence of God, in regard to Peter, is thus remarkable. Instead of his being put suddenly to death, as was James, he was reserved for *future* trial; and thus an abundant opportunity was given for the prayers of the church, and for his consequent release.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 12 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *But prayer was made*. The church was apprized of his imprisonment and danger; and had no resource but to apply to God by prayer. In scenes of danger there is no other refuge; and the result shows that, even in most discouraging circumstances, God can hear prayer. Nothing scarcely could appear more hopeless than the idea of rescuing Peter out of the hands of Herod, and out of the prison, and out of the custody of sixteen men, by prayer. But the prayer of faith was prevalent with God.

Without ceasing. Intense, steady, ardent prayer. The word here used, *ektenhv*, is found in but one other place in the New Testament. 1Pe 4:8: "Have *fervent* charity among yourselves." The word has rather the idea that their prayer was *earnest* and *fervent*, than that it was constant.

Of the church. By the church.

{1} "prayer" "instant and earnest prayer was made"
2Co 1:11 Eph 6:18,19 1Th 5:17; Jas 5:16

{*} "without ceasing" "earnestly"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 12 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *And when Herod would have brought him forth*. When he was about to bring him to be put to death.

The same night. That is, the night *preceding*. The intention of Herod was to bring him out as soon as the Passover was over; but during the night which immediately preceded the day in which Herod intended to bring him to punishment, Peter was rescued.

Peter was sleeping. Here is an instance of remarkable composure, and one of the effects of peace of conscience and of confidence in God. It was doubtless known to Peter what the intention of Herod was. James had just been put to death; and Peter had no reason to expect a better fate. And yet in this state he slept as quietly as if there had been no danger, and was roused even by an *angel* to contemplate his condition, and to make his escape. There is nothing that will give quiet rest and gentle sleep so certainly as a conscience void of offence; and in the midst of imminent dangers, he who confides in God may rest securely and calmly.

Between two soldiers. **See Barnes "Ac 12:4"**.

Peter was bound to the two. His left hand was chained to the right hand of one of the soldiers, and his right hand to the left hand of the other. This was a common mode of securing prisoners among the Romans. See abundant authorities for this quoted in Lardner's Credibility, part i. chap. x. § 9, Lond. ed. 1829, vol. i. pp. 242, 243, etc.

And the keepers, etc. See Ac 12:4. Two soldiers were stationed at the door. We may see now that every possible precaution was used to insure the safe custody of Peter.

(1.) He was in prison.

(2.) He was in the charge of sixteen men, who could relieve each other when weary, and thus every security was given that he could not escape by inattention or weariness on their part.

(3.) He was bound fast between two men. And

(4.) he was further guarded by two others, whose business it was to watch the door of the prison. It is to be remembered, also, that it was death for a Roman soldier to be found sleeping at his post. And in this way every possible security was given for the safe keeping of Peter. But God can deliver in spite of all the precautions of men; and it is easy for him to overcome the most cunning devices of his enemies.

{+} "kept the prison" "guarded"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 12 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *And, behold, the angel of the Lord*. **See Barnes "Ac 5:19"**.

Came upon him. Greek, was present with him; stood near him, *epesth*

And a light shined in the prison. Many have supposed that this was lightning. But *light*, and *splendour*, and shining apparel, are commonly represented as the accompaniments of the heavenly beings when they visit the earth, Lu 2:9 24:4. Comp. Mr 9:3. It is highly probable that this light was discerned only by Peter; and it would be to him an undoubted proof of the Divine interposition in his behalf.

And he smote Peter on the side. This was doubtless a gentle blow or stroke to arouse him from sleep.

And his chains, etc. This could have been only by Divine power. No natural means were used, or could have been used without arousing the guard. It is a sublime expression of the *ease* with which God can deliver from danger, and rescue his friends. Comp. Ac 16:26.

{b} "his chains" Ac 16:26

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 12 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Gird thyself*. When they slept, the outer garment was thrown off, and the *girdle* with which they bound their inner garment, or tunic, was loosed. He was directed now to gird up that inner garment as they usually wore it; that is, to *dress himself*, and prepare to follow him.

Bind on thy sandals. Put on thy sandals—prepared to walk. **See Barnes "Mt 3:11"**.

Cast thy garment about thee. The outer garment, that was thrown loosely around the shoulders. It was nearly square, and was laid aside when they slept, or worked, or ran. The direction was, that he should dress himself in his usual apparel. **See Barnes "Mt 5:38-42"**.

{++} "garment" "mantle"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 12 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *And wist not* Knew not.

Saw a vision. That is, was a representation made to his mind, similar to that which he had seen before. Comp. Ac 10:11,12. It was so astonishing, so unexpected, so wonderful, that he could not realize that it was true.

{§} "wist" "knew" {c} "that it was" Ps 126:1 {*} "true" "real" {d} "vision" Ac 10:3,17

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 12 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *The first and the second ward*. The word which is here rendered *ward*, *fulakhn* properly denotes the act of guarding; but it is most commonly used to denote a prison, or place of confinement. In this place it seems to denote the *guard* itself—the soldiers stationed at intervals in the entrance into the prison. These were passed silently, probably a deep sleep having been sent on them to facilitate the escape of Peter.

The iron gate. The outer gate, secured with iron, as the doors of prisons are now.

That leadeth unto the city. Or, rather, *into eiv* the city. Jerusalem was surrounded by three walls. (See Lightfoot on this place.) The prison is supposed to have been situated between two of these walls. And it is probable that the entrance to the prison was immediately from the inner wall, so that this gate opened directly into the city.

Of his own accord. Itself. It opened spontaneously, without the application of any force, or key, thus showing conclusively that Peter was delivered by miraculous interposition.

And passed on through one street. Till Peter was entirely safe from any danger of pursuit, and then the angel left him. God had effected his complete rescue, and now left him to his own efforts as usual.

{@} "ward" "guard"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 12 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *And when Peter was come to himself*. This expression naturally means, when he had overcome his amazement and astonishment at the unexpected deliverance, so as to be capable of reflection. He had been amazed by the whole transaction. He thought it was a vision; and in the suddenness and rapidity with which it was done, he had no time for cool reflection. The events of Divine Providence often overwhelm and amaze us; and such are their suddenness, and rapidity, and unexpected character in their development, as to confound us, and prevent calm and collected reflection.

Of a surety. Certainly; surely. He considered all the circumstances; he saw that he was actually at liberty and that it could have been effected only by Divine interposition.

The expectation of the people. From this it appears that the people earnestly desired his death; and it was to gratify that desire that Herod had imprisoned him.

{**} "surety" "Certainty" {e} "his angel" 2Ch 16:9 Ps 34:7; Da 3:28 6:22; Heb 1:14
{f} "hath delivered" Ps 33:18,19, 97:10 2Co 1:10; 2Pe 2:9

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 12 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *And when he had considered*, etc. Thinking on the subject; considering what he should do in these circumstances.

He came to the house of Mary, etc. Probably this house was near him; and he would naturally seek the dwelling of a Christian friend.

The mother of John, etc. Probably this was the John *Mark* who wrote the gospel. But this is not certain.

Whose surname. Greek, Who was *called* Mark. It does not mean that he had two names conferred, as with us, *both* of which were used at the same time. But he was called by either—the Greeks probably using the name Mark, and the Jews the name John. He is frequently mentioned afterwards, as having been the attendant of Paul and Barnabas in their travels, Ac 12:25 15:39; 2Ti 4:11

He was a nephew of Barnabas, Col 4:10.

Where many were gathered together praying. This was in the *night*; and it shows the propriety of observing extraordinary seasons of prayer, even in the night. Peter was to have been put to death the next day; and they assembled to pray for his release, and did not intermit their prayers. When dangers increase around us and our friends, we should become more fervent in prayer. While life remains we may pray; and even when there is no human hope, and we may have no power to heal or deliver, still God may interpose, as he did here, in answer to prayer.

{a} "Many were gathered" Ac 12:5

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 12 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *At the door of the gate*. Rather, the door of the *vestibule*, or principal entrance into the house. The house was entered through such a *porch* or *vestibule*, and it was the door opening into this which is here intended. **See Barnes "Mt 9:2"**.

A damsel. A girl.

Came to hearken. To hear who was there.

Named Rhoda. This is a Greek name signifying a rose. It was not unusual for the Hebrews to give the names of flowers, etc., to their daughters. Thus *Susanna*, a lily; *Hadessa*, a myrtle; *Tamar*, a palm-tree; etc. (*Grotius*.)

{*} "gate" "Porch" {1} "came to hearken" "to ask who was there"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 12 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *She opened not the gate*. At this time of night, and in these circumstances, the door would be fastened. Christians were doubtless alarmed by the death of James, and the imprisonment of Peter, and they would take all possible precautions for their own safety.

For gladness. In her joy, she hastened to inform those who were assembled of the safety of Peter.

{*} "gate" "porch"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 12 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Thou art mad*. Thou art insane. They seem to have regarded his rescue as so difficult and so hopeless, that they deemed it proof of derangement that she now affirmed it. And yet this was the very thing for which they had been so earnestly praying. When it was now announced to them that the object of their prayers was granted, they deemed the messenger that announced it insane. Christians are often surprised even when their prayers are answered. They are overwhelmed and amazed at the success of their own petitions, and are slow to believe that the very thing for which they have sought could be granted. It shows, perhaps, with how *little faith*, after all, they pray; and how slow they are to believe that God can hear and answer prayer. In a revival of religion, in answer to prayer, Christians are often overwhelmed, and astonished when even their own petitions are granted, and when God manifests his own power in his own way and time. Prayer should be persevered in, and we should place ourselves in a waiting posture to catch the first indications that God has heard us with joy.

But she constantly affirmed it. She insisted on it. How much better it would have been to have hastened at once to the gate, than thus to have engaged in a controversy on the subject. Peter was suffered to remain knocking, while they debated the matter. Christians are often engaged in some unprofitable controversy, when they should hasten to catch the first tokens of Divine favour, and open their arms to welcome the proofs that God has heard their prayers.

Then said they. Still resolved not to be convinced.

It is his angel. Any way of accounting for it rather than to admit the simple fact, or to ascertain the simple truth. All this was produced by the little hope which they had of his release, and their earnest desire that it should be so. It was just such a state of mind as is indicated when we say, "the news is too good to be believed." The expression *it is his angel* may mean, that they supposed the *tutelary guardian*, or angel appointed to attend Peter, had come to announce something respecting him, and that he had assumed the voice and form of Peter, in order to render them certain that he came from him. This notion arose from the common belief of the Jews, that each individual had assigned to him, at birth, a celestial spirit, whose office it was to guard and defend him through life. **See Barnes "Mt 18:10"**.

That the Jews entertained this opinion is clear from their writings. (See *Kuinoel*.) Lightfoot thinks that they who were assembled supposed that this angel had assumed the voice and manner of Peter, in order to intimate to them that he was about to die, and to excite them to earnest prayer that he might die with constancy and firmness. Whatever their opinions were, however, it proves nothing on these points. There is no evidence that they were inspired in these opinions; nor are

their notions countenanced by the Scriptures. They were the mere common traditions of the Jews, and prove nothing in regard to the truth of the opinion one way or the other.

{+} "constantly" "consistently" {b} "his angel" Mt 18:10

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 12 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Were astonished*. They were now convinced that it was Peter, and they were amazed that he had been rescued. As yet they were of course ignorant of the manner in which it was done.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 12 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *But he beckoning*, etc. To prevent the noise, and tumult, and transport which was likely to be produced. His wish was, not that there should be clamorous joy, but that they should listen in silence to what God had done. It was sufficient to awe the soul, and produce deep, grateful feeling. A noise might excite the neighbouring Jews, and produce danger. But religion is calm and peaceful; and its great scenes and surprising deliverances are rather fitted to awe the soul, to produce calm, sober, and grateful contemplation, than the noise of rejoicing, and the shoutings of exultation. The consciousness of the presence of God, and of his mighty power, does not produce rapturous disorder and tumult, but holy, solemn, calm, grateful emotion.

Go, shew these things, etc. Acquaint them that their prayer is heard, and that they may rejoice also at the mercy of God.

Unto James. James the son of Alpheus, commonly called the Less. Note, Ac 12:2 1:13; Mt 10:2.

{c} "beckoning" Ac 13:16 {*) "peace" "Be silent" {1} "declared" "related" {2} "shew" "report"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 12 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *No small stir*. Amazement that he had escaped, and apprehension of the consequences. The punishment which they had reason to expect, for having suffered his escape, was death.

{**} "stir" "disturbance"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 12 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *He examined the keepers*. The soldiers who were entrusted with his custody. Probably only those who had the special care of him at that watch of the night. The word examine here means to inquire diligently, to make investigation. He subjected them to a rigid scrutiny to ascertain the

manner of his escape; for it is evident that Herod did not mean to admit the possibility of a miraculous interposition.

Should be put to death. For having failed to keep Peter. This punishment they had a right to expect for having suffered his escape.

And he went down, etc. How soon after the escape of Peter he went down to Caesarea, or how long he abode there, is not known. Caesarea was rising into magnificence, and the Roman governors made it often their abode. **See Barnes "Ac 8:40"**

comp. Ac 25:1,4. This journey of Herod is related by Josephus, Antiq. b. xix. chap. viii. § 2. He says that it was after he had reigned over all Judea three years.

And there abode. That is, till his death, which occurred shortly after. We do not learn that he made any further inquiry after Peter, or that he attempted any further persecutions of the Christians. The guard was undoubtedly put to death; and thus Herod used all his power to create the impression that Peter had escaped by their negligence; and this would undoubtedly be believed by the Jews. See Mt 28:15. He might *himself* perhaps be convinced, however, that the escape was by miracle, and be afraid to attempt any further persecutions; or the affairs of his government might have called off his attention to other things; and thus, as in the case of the "persecution that arose about Stephen," the political changes and dangers might divert the attention from putting Christians to death. **See Barnes "Ac 9:31".**

Thus by the Providence of God *this* persecution, that had been commenced, not by popular tumult, but by royal authority and power, and that was aimed at the very pillars of the church, ceased. The prayers of the church prevailed; and the monarch was overcome, disappointed, humbled, and by Divine judgment soon put to death.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 12 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *And Herod was highly displeased*, etc. Greek, *Bare an hostile mind, intending war*. See the margin. The Greek word—*yumomacwn* —does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It means to meditate war; to purpose war in the mind; or here probably, to be *enraged or angry* at them. What was the cause of this hostility to the people of Tyre and Sidon is not mentioned, and conjecture is useless. It is not at all inconsistent, however, with the well-known character of Herod. It was probably from some cause relating to commerce. Tyre and Sidon were under the Roman power, and had some shadow of liberty, (*Grotius*;) and it is probable that they might have embarrassed Herod in some of his regulations respecting commerce.

Tyre and Sidon. **See Barnes "Mt 11:21".**

They were *north* of Caesarea.

They came with one accord. Fearing the effects of his anger, they united in sending an embassage to him to make peace.

Blastus the king's chamberlain. See Ro 16:23. The word *chamberlain* denotes an officer who is charged with the direction and management of a chamber, or chambers, particularly a bed-chamber. It denotes, here, a man who had charge of the bed-chamber of Herod.

Because their country was nourished, etc. Was supplied by the territories of Herod. The country of Tyre and Sidon included a narrow strip of land on the coast of the Mediterranean. Of course they were dependent for provisions, and for articles of commerce, on the interior country; but this belonged to the kingdom of Herod; and as they were entirely dependent on his country, as he had power to dry up the sources of their supports, and commerce, they were the more urgent to secure his favour.

{1} "highly displeased" "bare an hostile mind, intending war" {*} "accord" "consent" {2} "king's chamberlain" "That was over the king's bed-chamber" {a} "their country" Eze 27:17

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 12 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *And upon a set day*. An *appointed, public day*. This was the second day of the sports and games which Herod celebrated in Caesarea in honour of Claudius Caesar. Josephus has given an account of this occurrence, which coincides remarkably with the narrative here. The account is contained in his Antiquities of the Jews, b. xix. chap. viii. § 2, and is as follows:

"Now when Agrippa had reigned three years over all Judea, he
came to the city Caesarea, which was formerly called Strato's
Tower; and there he exhibited shows in honour of Caesar, upon
his being informed that there was a certain festival celebrated
to make vows for his safety. At which festival a great multitude
was gotten together of the principal persons, and such as were
of dignity throughout his province. On the second day of which
shows, he put on a garment made wholly of silver,"
etc.

Arrayed in royal apparel. In the apparel of a king. Josephus thus describes the dress which Herod wore on that occasion:

"He put on a garment made wholly of silver, and of wonderful
contexture, and early in the morning came into the theatre,
place of the shows and games at which time the silver of his
garment, being illuminated by the first reflection of the
sun's rays upon it, shone after a surprising manner, and was
so resplendent as to spread a horror over those that looked
intently on him."

Sat upon his throne. This does not denote a *throne* in the usual sense of that word, but a high seat in the theatre, where he sat, and from whence he could have a full view of the games and sports. From this place he made his speech.

Made an oration. Addressed the people. What was the subject of this speech is not intimated by Luke or Josephus.

{+} "set day" "An appointed"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 12 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *And the people gave a shout*. A loud applause.

It is the voice of a god, etc. It is not probable that the *Jews* joined in this acclamation, but that it was made by the idolatrous Gentiles. Josephus gives a similar account of their feelings and conduct. He says,

"And presently his flatterers cried out, one from one place,
and another from another, (though not for his good,) that he
was a god; and they added, 'Be thou merciful unto us, for
although we have hitherto reverenced thee only as a king, yet
shall we henceforth own thee as a superior to mortal nature.'"

It is true that Josephus says that this was done when they saw his splendid apparel, and that he gives no account of his addressing the people; while Luke describes it as the effect of his speech. But the discrepancy is of no consequence. Luke is as credible an historian as Josephus; and his account is more consistent than that of the Jewish historian. It is far more probable that this applause and adoration would be excited by speech, than simply by beholding his apparel.

{b} "voice of a god" Jude 1:16

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 12 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *And immediately the angel of the Lord*. Diseases and death are, in the Scriptures, often attributed to an angel. See 2Sa 24:16; 1Ch 21:12,15,20,27 2Ch 32:21.

It is not *intended* that there was a *miracle* in this case, but it certainly is intended by the sacred writer, that his death was a Divine judgment on him for his receiving homage as a god. Josephus says of him that he

"did neither rebuke them, [the people,] nor reject their
impious flattery. A severe pain arose in his belly, and
began in a most violent manner. And when he was quite worn
out by the pain in his belly for five days, he departed this
life, in the fifty-fourth year of his age, and the seventh
of his reign."

Josephus does not mention that it was done by an angel, but says that when he looked up, he saw an owl sitting on a rope over his head, and judging it to be an evil omen, he immediately became melancholy, and was seized with the pain.

Because he gave not God the glory. Because he was willing himself to receive the worship due to God. It was the more sinful in him as he was a Jew, and was acquainted with the true God, and with the evils of idolatry. He was proud, and willing to be flattered, and even adored. He had *sought* their applause; he had arrayed himself in this splendid manner to excite their admiration; and when they carried it even so far as to offer *Divine homage*, he did not reject the impious flattery, but listened still to their praises. Hence he was judged; and God vindicated his own insulted honour by inflicting severe pains on him, and by his most awful death.

And he was eaten of worms. The word used here is not elsewhere found in the New Testament. A similar disease is recorded of Antiochus Epiphanes, in the Apocrypha; 2 Mac. ix. 5,

"But the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, smote him with an
invisible and incurable plague; for a pain in the bowels,
that was remediless, came upon him, and sore torments of the
inner parts, (yet. 9,) so that worms rose up out of the body
of this wicked man," etc.

Probably this was the disease known as *morbus pedicularis*. It is loathsome, offensive, and most painful. See the death of Antiochus Epiphanes, described in 2 Mac. ix. With this disease also Herod the Great, grandfather of Herod Agrippa, died. Josephus, Antiquities, b. xvii. chap. 6, § 5. Such a death, so painful sudden, and loathsome, was an appropriate judgment on the pride of Herod. We may here learn,

(1.) that sudden and violent deaths are often an act of direct Divine judgment on wicked men.

(2.) That men, when they seek praise and flattery, expose themselves to the displeasure of God. His glory he will not give to another.

(3.) That the most proud, and mighty, and magnificent princes, have no security of their lives. God can in a moment—even when they are surrounded by their worshippers and flatterers—touch the seat of life, and turn them to loathsomeness and putrefaction. What a pitiable being is a man of pride receiving from his fellow-men that homage which is due to God alone! See Isa 14.

(4.) Pride and vanity, in any station of life, are hateful in the sight of God. Nothing is more inappropriate to our situation as lost, dying sinners, and nothing will more certainly meet the wrath of heaven.

(5.) We have here a strong confirmation of the truth of the sacred narrative. In all essential particulars, Luke coincides in his account of the death of Herod with Josephus. This is one of the many circumstances which go to show that the sacred Scriptures were written at the time when they professed to be; and that they accord with the truth. See Lardner's Credibility, part i. chap. 1. & 6.

{+} "gave up the ghost" "expired"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 12 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *But the word of God grew*, etc. Great success attended it. The persecutions had now ceased; and notwithstanding all the attempts which had been made to crush it, still the church increased and flourished. The liberation of Peter and the death of Herod would contribute to extend it. It was a new evidence of Divine interposition in behalf of the church; it would augment the zeal of Christians; it would humble their enemies; and fill those with fear who had attempted to oppose and crush the church of God.

{a} "grew" Col 1:6

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 12 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Returned from Jerusalem*. They had gone to Jerusalem to carry alms, and they now returned to Antioch, Ac 11:30.

When they had fulfilled their ministry. When they had accomplished the purpose for which they had been sent there; that is, to deposit the alms of the church at Antioch, in the hands of the elders of the churches, chap. xi. 30.

John, whose surname was Mark. Ac 11:30".

John, whose surname was Mark. **See Barnes "Ac 12:12"**.

From this period the sacred historian records chiefly the labours of Paul. The labours of the other apostles are, after this, seldom referred to in this book; and the attention is fixed almost entirely on the trials and travels of the great apostle of the Gentiles. His important labours, his unwearied efforts, his eminent success, and the fact that *Luke* was his companion, may be the reasons why *his* labours are made so prominent in the history. Through the previous chapters we have seen the church rise from small beginnings, until it was even now spreading into surrounding regions. We have seen it survive two persecutions, commenced and conducted with all the power and malice of Jewish rulers. We have seen the most zealous of the persecutors converted to the faith which he once destroyed; and the royal persecutor put to death by the Divine judgment. And we have thus seen that God was the Protector of the church; that no weapon formed against it could prosper; and that, according to the promise of the Redeemer, the gates of hell could not prevail against it. In that God and Saviour, who *then* defended the church, we may still confide; and may be assured that he who was then its Friend has it stir "engraved on the palms of his hands," and intends that it shall extend until it fills the earth with light and salvation.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 1

CHAPTER 13

Verse 1. *The church that was at Antioch*. **See Barnes "Ac 2:20"**.

Certain prophets. **See Barnes "Ac 11:27"**.

And teachers. Teachers are several times mentioned in the New Testament as an order of ministers, 1Co 12:28,29; Eph 4:11 2Pe 2:11.

Their precise rank and duty are not known. It is probable that those here mentioned as prophets were the same persons as the teachers. They might discharge *both* offices, predicting future events, and instructing the people.

As Barnabas. Barnabas was a *preacher*, Ac 4:35,36, 9:27 11:22,26; and it is not improbable that the names "prophets and teachers" here simply designate the preachers of the gospel.

Simeon that was called Niger. Niger is a Latin name meaning black. Why the name was given is not known. Nothing more is known of him than is here mentioned.

Lucius of Cyrene. Cyrene was in Africa. **See Barnes "Mt 27:32"**.

He is afterwards mentioned as with the apostle Paul when he wrote the Epistle to the Romans, Ro 16:21.

And Manaen. He is not elsewhere mentioned in the New Testament.

Which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch. Herod Antipas, not Herod Agrippa. Herod was *tetrarch* of Galilee, Lu 3:1. The word here translated, "which had been brought up"—*suntrofov*—denotes one who is educated or nourished at the same time with another. It is not elsewhere used in the New Testament. He might have been connected with the royal family; and being nearly of the same age, was educated by the father of Herod Antipas with him. He was therefore a man of rank and education, and his conversion shows that the gospel was not confined entirely in its influence to the poor.

And Saul. Saul was an apostle; and yet he is here mentioned among the "prophets and teachers." Showing that these words denote ministers of the gospel in general, without reference to any particular order or rank.

{2} "Manean" "Herod's foster brother"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *As they ministered to the Lord*. It is probable that this took place on some day set apart for fasting and prayer. The expression "ministered to the Lord" denotes, as they were engaged in prayer to the Lord, or as they were engaged in Divine service. The Syriac thus renders the passage.

The Holy Ghost said. Evidently by direct revelation.

Separate me. Set apart to me, or for my service. It does not mean to *ordain*, but simply to designate, or appoint to this specific work.

For the work whereunto I have called them. Not the apostolic office, for Saul was called to that by the express revelation of Jesus Christ, Ga 1:12, and Barnabas was not an apostle. The "work" to which they were now set apart was that of preaching the gospel in the regions round about Antioch. It was not any *permanent* office in the church, but was a temporary designation to a *missionary enterprise* in extending the gospel especially through Asia Minor and the adjacent regions. Accordingly, when, in the fulfillment of this appointment, they had travelled through Seleucia, Cyprus, Paphos, Pamphylia, Pisidia, etc., they returned to Antioch, having fulfilled the work to which they were separated. See Ac 14:26,27.

Whereunto I have called them.

This proves that they received their commission to this work directly from God the Holy Spirit. It is possible that Paul and Barnabas had been influenced by the Spirit to engage in this work, but they were to be sent forth by the concurrence and designation of the church.

{b} "Separate me" Ga 1:13 {c} "for the work" 1Ti 2:7 {+} "whereunto" "To which"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And when they had fasted*. They were *fasting* when they were commanded to set them apart. Yet this probably refers to an appointed day of prayer, with reference to this very purpose. The first formal mission to the Gentiles was an important event in the church; and they engaged in this appointment with deep solemnity, and with humbling themselves before God.

And prayed. This enterprise was a new one. The gospel had been preached to the Jews, to Cornelius, and to the Gentiles at Antioch. But there had been no solemn, and public, and concerted plan of sending it to the Gentiles, or of appointing a mission to the heathen. It was a new event, and was full of danger and hardships. The primitive church felt the need of Divine direction and aid in the great work. Two missionaries were to be sent forth amongst strangers, to be exposed to perils by sea and land; and the commencement of the enterprise demanded prayer. The church humbled itself; and this primitive missionary society sought, as all others should do, the Divine blessing, to attend the labours of those employed in this work. The result showed that the prayer was heard.

And laid their hands on them. That is, those who are mentioned in Ac 13:1. This was not to set them apart to the apostolic office. Saul was chosen by Christ himself, and there is no evidence that any of the apostles were ordained by the imposition of hands. **See Barnes "Ac 1:26"**; **See Barnes** "Mt 10:1"; **See Barnes "Lu 6:12-16"**.

And Barnabas was not an apostle in the original and peculiar sense of the word. Nor is it meant that this was an *ordination* to the *ministry*, to the office of preaching the gospel. For both had been engaged in this before. Saul received his commission directly from the Saviour, and began at once to preach, Ac 9:20 Ga 1:11-17. Barnabas had preached at Antioch, and was evidently recognized as a preacher by the apostles, Ac 9:27 11:22,23.

It follows, therefore, that this was not an *ordination* in the doctrinal sense of this term, either Episcopal or Presbyterian, but was a designation to a particular work—a work of vast importance; strictly a *missionary appointment* by the church, under the authority of the Holy Ghost. The act of laying hands on any person was practised, not only in ordination, but in conferring a favour; and in setting apart for any purpose. See Le 3:2,8,13 4:4, Le 4:29 16:21; Nu 8:12 Mr 5:23, 16:18 Mt 21:46.

It means, in this case, that they appointed *them* to a particular field of labour, and by laying hands on them they implored the blessing of God to attend them.

They sent them *away*. The church by its teachers sent them forth under the direction of the Holy Ghost. All missionaries are thus sent by the church; and the church should not forget its ambassadors in their great and perilous work.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Being sent forth by the Holy Ghost*. Having been called to this work by the Holy Spirit, and being under his direction.

Departed unto Seleucia. This city was situated at the mouth of the river Orontes, where it falls into the Mediterranean. Antioch was also built on this river, some distance from its mouth.

They sailed to Cyprus. An island in the Mediterranean, not far from Seleucia. **See Barnes "Ac 4:36"**.

{*} "Ghost" "Spirit"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And when they were at Salamis*. This was the principal city and seaport of Cyprus. It was situated on the south-east part of the island, and was afterwards called Constantia.

In the synagogues of the Jews. Jews were living in all the countries adjacent to Judea; and in those countries they had synagogues. The apostles uniformly preached first to them.

And they had also John to their minister. John Mark, Ac 12:12. He was their *attendant*; he was with them as a companion, yet not pretending to be equal to them in office. They had been specifically designated to this work. He was with them as their friend and travelling companion; perhaps also employed in making the needful arrangements for their comfort, and for the supply of their wants in their travels.

{+} "minister" "For their attendant"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *And when they had gone through the isle*. The length of the island, according to Strabo, was one thousand and four hundred stadia, or nearly one hundred and seventy miles.

Unto Paphos. Paphos was a city at the western extremity of the island. It was the residence of the proconsul, and was distinguished for a splendid temple erected to Venus, who was worshipped throughout the island. Cyprus was fabled to be the place of the birth of this goddess. It had, besides Paphos and Salamis, several towns of note—Citium, the birth-place of Zeno; Amathus, sacred to Venus, etc. Its present capital is Nicosia. Whether Paul preached at any of these places is not recorded. The island is supposed formerly to have had a million of inhabitants.

A certain sorcerer. Greek—Magus, or magician. See Ac 8:9.

A false prophet. Pretending to be endowed with the gift of prophecy; or a man, probably, who pretended to be inspired.

Bar-jesus. The word Bar is Syriac, and means *son*. Jesus, or Joshua, was not an uncommon name among the Jews. The name was given from his father —son of Jesus, or Joshua; as Bar-jonas, son of Jonas.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Which was with the deputy*. Or with the proconsul. Cyprus was at this time subject to the Roman empire, and was governed by a proconsul appointed by the emperor. The provinces subject to Rome were governed by persons who held their office originally from the consul, or chief magistrate of the Roman republic. Men of the rank of senators were usually appointed to these

offices. See on this subject Lardner's Credibility, part i., chap. i., & 11, where he fully vindicated the accuracy of the appellation which is here given to Sergius by Luke.

Sergius Paulus, a prudent man. The word here rendered *prudent* means *intelligent, wise, learned*. It also may have the sense of candid, and may have been given to this man because he was of large and liberal views, of a philosophic and inquiring turn of mind, and was willing to obtain knowledge from any source. Hence he had entertained the Jews; and hence he was willing also to listen to Barnabas and Saul. It is not often that men in office, and men of rank, are thus willing to listen to the instructions of the professed ministers of God.

Who called for Barnabas and Saul. It is probable that they had preached in Paphos, and Sergius was desirous himself of hearing the import of their new doctrine.

And desired to hear, etc. There is no evidence that he then wished to listen to this as Divine truth, or that he was anxious about his own salvation, but rather as a speculative inquiry. It was a professed characteristic of many ancient philosophers to be willing to receive instruction from any quarter. Comp. Ac 17:19,20.

{+} "prudent" "well-informed"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *But Elymas the sorcerer, for so is his name by interpretation*. Elymas the magician. Elymas is the interpretation, not of the name Bar-jesus, but of the word rendered *the sorcerer*. It is an Arabic word, and means the same as *magus*. It seems that he was better known by this foreign name than by his own.

Withstood them. Resisted them. He was sensible that if the influence of Saul and Barnabas should be extended over the proconsul, that he would be seen to be an impostor, and his power be at an end. His interest, therefore, led him to oppose the gospel, His own popularity was at stake; and being governed by this, he opposed the gospel of God. The love of popularity and power, the desire of retaining some *political* influence, is often a strong reason why men oppose the gospel.

To turn away the deputy from the faith. To prevent the influence of the truth on his mind; or to prevent his becoming the friend and patron of the Christians.

{a} "withstood" 2Ti 3:8

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Then Saul*, (*who also* is called *Paul*.) This is the last time that this apostle is called *Saul*. Henceforward he is designated by the title by which he is usually known, as *Paul*. When, or why, this change occurred in the name, has been a subject on which commentators are not agreed. From the fact that the change in the name is here first intimated, it would seem probable that it was first used in relation to him at this time. *By whom* the name was given him—whether he assumed it himself, or whether it was first given him by Christians or by Romans— is not intimated. The name is of Roman origin. In the Latin language the name *Paulus* signifies *little, dwarfish*; and some

have conjectured that it was given by his parents to denote that he was small when born; others, that it was assumed or conferred in subsequent years because he was little in stature. The name is not of the same signification as the name Saul. This signifies one that is asked, or desired. After all the conjectures on this subject, it is probable,

(1.) that this name was first used here; for before this, even after his conversion, he is uniformly called *Saul*.

(2.) That it was given by the Romans, as being a name with which they were more familiar, and one that was more consonant with their language and pronunciation. It was made by the change of a single letter; and probably because the name Paul was common among them, and pronounced perhaps with greater facility.

(3.) Paul suffered himself to be called by this name, as he was employed chiefly among the Gentiles. It was common for names to undergo changes quite as great as this, without our being able to specify any particular cause, in passing from one language to another. Thus the Hebrew name Jochanan, among the Greeks and Latins was Johannes, with the French it is Jean, with the Dutch Hans, and with us John.—*Doddridge*. Thus Onias becomes Menelaus; Hillel, Pollio; Jakim, Alcimus; Silas, Silvanus, etc.— *Grotius*.

Filled with the Holy Ghost. Inspired to detect his sin; to denounce Divine judgment; and to inflict punishment on him. **See Barnes "Ac 2:4"**.

Set his eyes on him. Looked at him intently.

{*} "Ghost" "Spirit"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *O full of all subtilty and mischief*. The word *subtilty* denotes deceit and fraud; and implies that he was practicing an imposition, and that he knew it. The word rendered *mischief*, *radiourgiav* denotes, properly, *facility of acting*, and then *sleight of hand*; sly, cunning arts, by which one imposes on another, and deceives him with a fraudulent intention. It is not elsewhere used in the New Testament. The art of Elymas consisted probably in sleight of hand, legerdemain, or trick, aided by skill in the abstruse sciences, by which the ignorant might be easily imposed on. **See Barnes "Ac 8:9"**.

Child of the devil. Being under his influence; practicing his arts; promoting his designs by deceit and imposture, so that he may be called your father. **See Barnes "Joh 8:44"**.

Satan is here represented as the author of deceit, and the father of lies.

Enemy of all righteousness. Practicing deceit and iniquity, and thus opposed to righteousness and honesty. A man who lives by wickedness will, of course, be the foe of every form of integrity. A man who lives by fraud will be opposed to the truth; a pander to the vices of men will hate the rules of chastity and purity; a manufacturer or vender of ardent spirits will be the enemy of temperance societies.

Wilt thou not cease to pervert. In what way he had opposed Paul and Barnabas is not known. Probably it might be by misrepresenting their doctrines; by representing them as apostate Jews; and thus by retarding or hindering the progress of the gospel. The expression, "wilt thou *not cease*,"

implies that he had been engaged sedulously in doing this, probably from the commencement of their work in the city.

The right ways of the Lord. The straight paths, or doctrines of the Christian religion, in opposition to the *crooked* and *perverse* arts of deceivers and impostors. Straight paths denote integrity, sincerity, truth, Jer 31:9 Heb 12:13. Comp. Isa 40:3,4, 42:16 Lu 3:5.

Crooked ways denote the ways of the sinner, the deceiver, the impostor, De 32:5 Ps 125:5; Pr 2:15 Isa 59:8; Php 2:15.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *The hand of the Lord is upon thee*. God shall punish thee. By this sudden and miraculous punishment, he would be awed and humbled; and the proconsul and others would be convinced that he was an impostor, and that the gospel was true. His *wickedness* deserved such a punishment; and at the same time that due punishment was inflicted, it was designed that the gospel should be extended by this means. In all this there was the highest evidence that Paul was under the inspiration of God. He was full of the Holy Ghost; he detected the secret feelings and desires of the heart of Elymas, and he inflicted on him a punishment that could have proceeded from none but God. That the apostles had the power of inflicting punishment, in many cases, is apparent from various places in the New Testament, 1Co 5:5 1Ti 1:20. The punishment inflicted on Elymas, also, would be highly emblematic of the *darkness* and *perverseness* of his conduct.

Not seeing the sun for a season. For how long a time this blindness was to continue, is nowhere specified. It was, however, in mercy ordained that the blindness should not be permanent and final. Nothing would be more likely to lead him to reflection and repentance than such a state of blindness. It was such a manifest proof that God was opposed to him; it was such a sudden Divine judgment; and it so completely cut him off from all possibility of practicing his arts of deception, that it was adapted to bring him to repentance. Accordingly, there is a tradition in the early church that he became a Christian. Origen says, that "Paul, by a word striking him blind, by anguish converted him to godliness."—*Clark*.

A mist. The word here used properly denotes a darkness or obscurity of the air; a cloud, etc. But it also denotes an extinction of sight by the drying up or disturbance of the humours of the eye.—*Hippocrates, as quoted by Schleusner*.

And a darkness. Blindness; night. What was the precise cause or character of this miracle is not specified.

And he went about, etc. This is a striking account of the effect of the miracle. The change was so sudden, that he knew not where to go. He sought some one to guide him in the ways in which he had before been familiar. How soon can God bring down the pride of man, and make him helpless as an infant! How easily can he touch our senses, the organs of our most exquisite pleasures, and wither all our enjoyments! How dependent are we on him for the inestimable blessings of vision! And how easily can he annihilate all the sinner's pleasures, break up all his plans, and humble him in the dust! Sight is his gift; and it is a mercy unspeakably great that he does not whelm us in thick darkness, and destroy for ever all the pleasure that through this organ is conveyed to the soul.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Then the deputy—believed*. Was convinced that Elymas was an impostor, and that the doctrine of Paul was true. There seems no reason to doubt that his faith was that which is connected with eternal life; and if so, it is an evidence that the gospel was not always confined to the poor, and to the obscure ranks of life.

At the doctrine of the Lord. The word *doctrine* here seems to denote, not the teaching or instruction, but the wonderful effects which were connected with the doctrine. It was particularly the *miracle* with which he was astonished; but he might have been also deeply impressed and amazed at the purity and sublimity of the truths which were now expanded to his view. We learn nothing further respecting him in the New Testament.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Paul and his company*. Those with him—Barnabas and John —and perhaps others who had been converted at Paphos; for it was common for man)' of the converts to Christianity to attend on the apostles in their travels. See Ac 9:30.

Loosed from Paphos. Departed from Paphos.

They came to Perga and Pamphylia. Pamphylia was a province of Asia Minor, lying over against Cyprus, having Cilicia east, Lycia west, Pisidia north, and the Mediterranean south. Perga was the metropolis of Pamphylia, and was situated, not on the sea coast, but on the river Cestus, at some distance from its mouth. There was on a mountain near it a celebrated temple of Diana.

And John departing from them, etc. Why he departed from them is unknown. It might have been from fear of danger; or from alarm in travelling so far into unknown regions. But it is plain, from Ac 15:38, that it was from some cause which was deemed blameworthy, and that his conduct now was such as to make Paul unwilling again to have him as a companion.

{a} "John departing from him" Ac 15:38

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *They came to Antioch in Pisidia*. Pisidia was a province of Asia Minor, and was situated north of Pamphylia. Antioch was not in Pisidia, but within the limits of Phrygia; but it belonged to Pisidia, and was called Antioch of Pisidia to distinguish it from Antioch in Syria. Pliny, Nat. Hist. 5, 27. Strabo, 12, p. 577.— (*Kuinoel. Robinson's Calmet*.)

Went into the synagogue. Though Paul and Barnabas were on a special mission to the Gentiles, yet they availed themselves of every opportunity to offer the gospel to the Jews first.

{b} "synagogue" Ac 18:4

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets*. **See Barnes "Lu 4:16"**.

The rulers of the synagogue. These were persons who had the general charge of the synagogue and its service, to keep everything in order, and to direct the affairs of public worship. They designated the individuals who were to read the law; and called on those whom they pleased to address the people, and had the power also of inflicting punishment, and of excommunicating, etc.—(*Schleusner*.) Mr 5:22,35,36,38 Lu 8:49; Lu 13:14 Ac 18:8,17.

Seeing that Paul and Barnabas were Jews, though strangers, they sent to them, supposing it probable that they would wish to address their brethren.

Men and brethren. An affectionate manner of commencing a discourse, recognizing them as their own countrymen, and as originally of the same religion.

Say on. Greek, Speak.

{d} "word of exhortation" Heb 13:22 {*} "say on" "Speak"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Men of Israel*. Jews. The design of this discourse of Paul was to introduce to them the doctrine that Jesus was the Messiah. To do this, he evinced his usual wisdom and address. To have commenced at once on this would have probably excited their prejudice and rage. He therefore pursued a train of argument which showed that he was a firm believer in the Scriptures; that he was acquainted with the history and promises of the Old Testament; and that he was not disposed to call in question the doctrines of their fathers. The passage which had been read, perhaps De 1, had probably given occasion for him to pursue this train of thought. By going over, in a summary way, their history, and recounting the former dealings of God with them, he showed them that he believed the Scriptures; that a promise had been given of a Messiah; and that he had actually come according to the promise.

Ye that fear God. Probably *proselytes of the gate*, who had not yet been circumcised, but who had renounced idolatry, and were accustomed to worship with them in their synagogues.

Give audience. Hear.

{+} "audience" "hearken"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *The God of this people*. Who has manifested himself as the peculiar friend and protector of this nation. This implied a belief that he had been particularly their God; a favourite doctrine of the Jews, and one that would conciliate their favour towards Paul.

Of Israel. The Jews.

Chose our fathers. Selected the nation to be a chosen and peculiar people to himself, De 7:6,7.

And exalted the people. Raised them up from a low and depressed state of bondage. He elevated them from a prostrate state of slavery to freedom, and to peculiar privileges as a nation.

When they dwelt as strangers in Egypt. *en th paroikia*. This properly refers to their dwelling there as foreigners. They were always strangers there in a strange land. It was not their home. They never mingled with the people; never became constituent parts of the government; never united with their usages and laws. They were a strange, separate, depressed people there; not less so than Africans are strangers, and foreigners, and a depressed and degraded people in this land, [U.S.] Ge 36:7 Ex 6:4, 22:21 23:9; Le 19:34 De 10:19.

And with an high arm. This expression denotes great power. The *arm* denotes strength, as that by which we perform anything. A *high* arm, an arm lifted up, or stretched out, denotes that strength exerted to the utmost. The children of Israel are represented as having been delivered with an "outstretched arm," De 26:8 Ex 6:6. "With a strong hand," Ex 6:1. Reference is made in these places to the plagues inflicted on Egypt, by which the Israelites were delivered; to their passage through the Red Sea; to their victories over their enemies, etc.

{a} "our fathers" De 7:6,7 {b} "as strangers" Ps 105:23 {*} "in the land of Egypt" "sojourned" {c} "high arm" Ex 13:14,16

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *And about the time of forty years*. They were this time going from Egypt to the land of Canaan, Ex 16:35 Nu 33:38.

Suffered he their manners. This passage has been very variously rendered. See the margin. Syriac, "He *nourished* them," etc. Arabic, He blessed them, and nourished them," etc. The word is not elsewhere used in the New Testament. The word properly means, to *tolerate*, or *endure the conduct* of any one, implying that that conduct is evil, and tends to provoke to punishment. This is doubtless its meaning here. Probably Paul referred to the passage in De 1:31: "The Lord thy God bare thee." But instead of this word, *etropoforhsen*, many Mss. read *etrofoforhsen*, he sustained or nourished. This reading was followed by the Syriac, Arabic, and has been admitted by Griesbach into the text. This is also found in the Septuagint, in De 1:31, which place Paul doubtless referred to. This would well suit the connexion of the passage; and a change of a single letter might easily have occurred in a Ms. It adds to the probability that this is the true reading, that it accords with De 1:31 Nu 11:12; De 32:10.

It is furthermore not probable that Paul would have commenced a discourse by reminding them of the obstinacy and wickedness of the nation. Such a course would rather tend to exasperate than to conciliate; but by reminding them of the mercies of God to them, and slowing them that God had been their protector, he was better fitting them for his main purpose—that of showing them the kindness of the God of their fathers in sending to them a Saviour.

In the wilderness. The desert through which they passed in going from Egypt to Canaan.

{d} "forty years" Ex 13:14,16 {1} "suffered he their manners" "*etropoforhsen*, perhaps for etrofoforhsen, bore or

fed them, as a nurse beareth or feedeth her child, De 1:31

according to the Seventy; and so Chrysostam.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *And when he had destroyed*. Subdued; cast out; or extirpated, as nations. It does not mean that all were put to death, for many of them were left in the land; but that they were subdued as nations—they were broken up, and overcome. De 7:1: "And hath *cast out* many nations before them," etc.

Seven nations. The Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, De 7:1; Jos 3:10 Ne 9:8.

In the land of Chanaan. The whole land was called by the name of one of the principal nations. This was the promised land; the holy land, etc.

He divided, etc. See an account of this in Jos 14, Jos 15. The *lot* was often used among the Jews to determine important questions. **See Barnes "Ac 1:26"**.

{e} "seven nations" De 7:1 {f} "Chanaan" Jos 14:1

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *He gave* unto them *judges*. Men who were raised up in an extraordinary manner to administer the affairs of the nation, to defend it from enemies, etc. See Jud 2:16.

About the space of our hundred and fifty years. This is a most difficult passage, and has exercised all the ingenuity of chronologists. The ancient versions agree with the present Greek text. The difficulty has been to reconcile it with what is said in 1Ki 6:1: "And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel .... he began to build the house of the Lord." Now if, to the forty years that the children of Israel were in the wilderness, there be added the four hundred and fifty said in Acts to have been passed under the administration of the judges, and about seventeen years of the time of Joshua, forty for Samuel and the reign of Saul together, and forty for the reign of David, and three of Solomon before he began to build the temple, the sum will be five hundred and ninety years, a period greater by one hundred and ten years than that mentioned in 1Ki 6:1. Various ways have been proposed to meet the difficulty. Doddridge renders it, "After these transactions, [which lasted] four hundred and fifty years, he gave them a series of judges," etc., reckoning from the birth of Isaac, and supposing that Paul meant to refer to this whole time. But to this there are serious objections.

(1.) It is a forced and constrained interpretation, and one manifestly made to meet a difficulty.

(2.) There is no propriety in commencing this period at the birth of *Isaac*. That was in no manner remarkable, so far as Paul's narrative was concerned; and Paul had not even referred to it. This same solution is offered also by Calovius, Mill, Lud, and De Dieu. Luther and Beza think it should be read *three* hundred, instead of *four* hundred. But this is a mere conjecture, without any authority from Mss. Vitringa and some others suppose that the text has been corrupted by some transcriber, who has inserted this without authority. But there is no evidence of this; and the Mss. and ancient versions are uniform. None of these explanations are satisfactory. In the solution of the difficulty we may remark,

(1.) that nothing is more perplexing than the chronology of ancient facts. The difficulty is found in all writings; in profane as well as sacred. Mistakes are so easily made in transcribing numbers where letters are used, instead of writing the words at length, that we are not to wonder at such errors.

(2.) Paul would naturally use the chronology which was in current, common use, among the Jews. It was not his business to *settle* such points; but he would speak of them as they were usually spoken of, and refer to them as others did.

(3.) There is reason to believe that that which is here mentioned was the *common* chronology of his time. It accords remarkably with that which is used by Josephus. Thus (Antiq. b. vii. chap. iii. & 1) Josephus says expressly, that Solomon "began to build the temple in the fourth year of his reign, *five hundred and ninety-two years* after the Exodus out of Egypt, etc. This would allow forty years for their being in the wilderness, seventeen for Joshua, forty for Samuel and Saul, forty for the reign of David, and *four hundred and fifty-two* years for the time of the judges and the times of anarchy that intervened. This remarkable coincidence shows that this was the chronology which was then used, and which Paul had in view.

(4.) This chronology has the authority, also, of many eminent names. See Lightfoot, and Boyle's Lectures, chap. xx. In what way this computation of Josephus and the Jews originated, it is not necessary here to inquire. It is a sufficient, solution of the difficulty that *Paul spoke in their usual manner*, without departing from his regular object by settling a point of chronology.

{g} "judges" Jud 2:16

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *And afterward they desired a king*. See 1Sa 8:5; Hos 13:10. It was predicted that they would have a king, De 17:14,15.

Saul the son of Cis. *Cis* is the Greek mode of writing the Hebrew name *Kish*. In the Old Testament it is uniformly written Kish; and it is to be regretted that this has not been retained in the New Testament. See 1Sa 9:1.

By the space of forty years. During forty years. The Old Testament has not mentioned the time during which Saul reigned. Josephus says (Antiq. b. vi. chap. xiv & 9) that he reigned eighteen years while Samuel was alive, and twenty-two years after his death. But Dr. Doddridge (Note in loco) has shown that this cannot be correct, and that he probably reigned, as some copies of Josephus have it, but two years after the death of Samuel. Many critics suppose that the term of forty years here mentioned, includes also the time in which Samuel judged the people. This supposition does not violate the text in this place, and may be probable. See Doddridge and Grotius on this place.

{h} "desired a king" 1Sa 8:5 {i} "Saul, the son of Cis" 1Sa 8:5 {+} "space of forty years" "during"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *And when he had removed him*. This was done because he rebelled against God in sparing the sheep and oxen and valuable property of Amalek, together with Agag the king, when he was commanded to destroy all, 1Sa 15:8-23. He was put to death in a battle with the Philistines, 1Sa 22:1-6. The phrase, "when he removed him," refers probably to his rejection as a king, and not to his death; for David was anointed king before the death of Saul, and almost immediately after the rejection of Saul on account of his rebellion in the business of Amalek. See 1Sa 6:12,13.

He gave testimony. He bore witness, 1Sa 13:14.

I have found David, etc. This is not quoted literally, but contains the substance of what is expressed in various places. Comp. 1Sa 13:14, with Ps 89:20 1Sa 16:1,12.

A man after mine own heart. This expression is found in 1Sa 13:14. The connexion shows, that it means simply a man who would not be rebellious and disobedient as Saul was, but would do his will, and keep his commandments. This refers, doubtless, rather to the public than to the private character of David; or to his character as a king. It means, that he would make the will of God the great rule and law of his reign, in contradistinction from Saul, who, as a king, had disobeyed God. At the same time it is true that the prevailing character of David, as a pious, humble, devoted man, was, that he was a man after God's own heart, and was beloved by him as a saint and a holy man. He had faults; he committed sin; but who is free from it? He was guilty of great offences; but he also evinced, in a degree equally eminent, *repentance*, Ps 51 and not less in his private than his public character did he evince those traits which were prevailingly such as accorded with *the heart*, i.e., the earnest desires of God.

Which shall fulfil all my will. Saul had not done it. He had disobeyed God in a case where he had received an express command. The characteristic of David would be, that he would obey the commands of God. That David *did* this—that he maintained the worship of God, opposed idolatry, and sought to promote universal obedience to God among the people—is expressly recorded of him. 1Ki 14:8,9: "And thou [Jeroboam] hast not been as my servant David, *who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart, to do that only which was right in mine eyes*," etc., 1Ki 15:3,5.

{a} "when he had removed him" 1Sa 31:6 {b} "David to be their king" 2Sa 5:3 {c} "a man after mine own heart" 1Sa 13:14 {*} "all my will"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Of this man's seed*. Of his posterity.

According to his promise. **See Barnes "Ac 2:30"**

Raised unto Israel. **See Barnes "Ac 2:30"**

A Saviour, Jesus. **See Barnes "Mt 1:21"**

{d} "his promise" Ps 132:11 {e} "a Saviour, Jesus" Mt 1:21

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *When John had first preached*, etc. After John had preached, and prepared the way, Mt 3.

{f} "John had first preach" Mt 3:1-11

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *And as john fulfilled his course*. As he was engaged in completing his work. His ministry is called a *course* or *race*; that which was to be *run* or completed.

He said, etc. These are not the precise words which the evangelists have recorded, but the sense is the same. **See Barnes** "Joh 1:20, **See Barnes "Mt 3:11"**.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Men and brethren*. Paul now exhorts them to embrace the Lord Jesus as the Messiah. He uses, therefore, the most respectful and fraternal language.

Children of the stock of Abraham. Descendants of Abraham; who regard Abraham as your ancestor. He means here to address particularly the native -born Jews; and appellation is used because they valued themselves highly on account of their descent from Abraham, **See Barnes "Mt 3:9"**

and because the promise of the Messiah had been specially given to him.

And whosoever, etc. Proselytes. **See Barnes "Ac 13:16"**.

Is the word of this salvation sent. This message of salvation. It was sent particularly to the Jewish people. The Saviour was sent to that nation, Mt 15:24 and the design was to offer to them first the message of life. **See Barnes "Ac 13:46"**.

{g} "feareth God, to you" Mt 10:6 {+} "word of this salvation" "Doctrine"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *Because they knew him not*. The statement in this verse is designed, not to reproach the Jews at Jerusalem, but to introduce the fact that Jesus had died, and had risen again. With great wisdom and tenderness, he speaks of his murderers in such a manner as not to exasperate, but as far as possible to mitigate their crime. There was sufficient guilt in the murder of the Son of God to overwhelm the nation with alarm, even after all that could be said to mitigate the deed. See Ac 2:23,36,37.

When Paul says, "They knew him not," he means, that they did not know him to be the Messiah, (see 1Co 2:8) they were ignorant of the true meaning of the prophecies of the Old Testament; they regarded him as an impostor. **See Barnes "Ac 3:17"**.

Nor yet the voices of the Prophets. Neither the meaning of the predictions in the Old Testament, respecting the Messiah. They expected a prince, and a conqueror, but did not expect a Messiah poor and despised, and a man of sorrows, and that was to die on a cross.

Which are read every sabbath day. In the synagogues. Though the Scriptures were read so constantly, yet they were ignorant of their true meaning. They were blinded by pride, and prejudice, and preconceived opinions. Men may often m this way read the Bible a good part of their lives, and, for want of attention, or of a humble mind, never understand it.

They have fulfilled them, etc. By putting him to death they have accomplished what was foretold.

{++} "voices of the Prophets" "Words" {h} "they have fulfilled them" Lu 24:20,44

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *And though they found*, etc. They found no crime which deserved death. This is conclusively shown by the trial itself. After all their efforts; after the treason of Judas; after their employing false witnesses; still no crime was laid to his charge. The sanhedrim condemned him for blasphemy; and yet they knew that they could not substantiate this charge before Pilate, and they therefore endeavoured to procure his condemnation on the ground of sedition. Comp. Lu 22:70,71, with Lu 23:1,2.

Yet desired they Pilate, etc. Mt 27:1,2; Lu 23:4,6.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *They took him down*, etc. That is, it was done by the Jews, Not that it was done by those who put him to death, but by Joseph of Arimathea, a Jew, and by Nicodemus, and their companions. Paul is speaking of what was done to Jesus by *the Jews* at Jerusalem; and he does not affirm that the same persons put him to death and laid him in a tomb, but that all this was done *by Jews*. See Joh 19:38,39.

{*} "tree" "cross"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *But God raised him*, **See Barnes "Ac 2:23,24"**.

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THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *And he was seen*. **See Barnes "Mt 28:20"**.

Many days Forty day, Ac 1:3.

Of them which came up. By the apostles particularly. He was seen by others; but they are especially mentioned as having been chosen for this object, to bear witness to him, and as having been particularly qualified for it.

{i} "seen many days" Ac 1:3

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *And we*. We who are present. Paul and Barnabas.

Declare unto you glad tidings We preach the gospel—the good news. To a Jew, nothing could be more grateful intelligence than that the Messiah had come; to a sinner convinced of his sins, nothing can be more cheering than to hear of a Saviour.

The promises, etc. The *promise* here refers to *all* that had been spoken in the Old Testament respecting the advent, sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ.

{a} "promise" Ro 4:13

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *God hath fulfilled*. God has completed, or carried into effect, by the resurrection of Jesus. He does not say that all the promise had reference to *his resurrection*; but his being raised up *completed* or *perfected* the fulfillment of the promises which had been made respecting him.

In the second psalm. Ps 2:7.

Thou art my Son. This psalm has been usually understood as referring to the Messiah. **See Barnes "Ac 4:25"**.

This day have I begotten thee. It is evident that Paul uses the expression here as implying that the Lord Jesus is called the Son of God because he raised him up from the dead; and that he means to imply that it was for this *reason* that he is so called in the psalm. This interpretation of an inspired apostle fixes the meaning of this passage in the psalm; and proves that it is not there used with reference to the doctrine of eternal generation, or to his incarnation, but that he is here called his Son because he was raised from the dead. And this interpretation accords with the scope of the psalm. In Ps 2:1-3, the psalmist records the combination of the rulers of the earth against the Messiah, and their efforts to cast off his reign. This was done, and the Messiah was rejected. All this pertains, not to his previous existence, but to the Messiah on the earth. In Ps 2:4,5, the psalmist shows that their efforts should not be successful; that God would laugh at their designs; that is, that their plans should not succeed. In Ps 2:6,7, he knows that the Messiah would be established as a King; that this was the fixed decree, that he had *begotten* him for this. All this is represented as *subsequent* to the raging of the heathen, and to the counsel of the kings against him, and *must*, therefore, refer

not to his eternal generation, or his incarnation, but to something succeeding his death; that is, to his resurrection, and establishment as King at the right hand of God. This interpretation by the apostle Paul proves, therefore, that this passage is not to be used to establish the doctrine of the eternal generation of Christ. Christ is called the Son of God from various reasons. In Lu 1:35, because he was begotten by the Holy Ghost. In this place, on account of his resurrection. In Ro 1:4, it is also said, that he was declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead. **See Barnes "Ro 1:4".**

The resurrection from the dead is represented as in some sense *the beginning of life*, and it is with reference to this that the terms *Son*, and *begotten from the dead*, are used, as the birth of a child is the beginning of life. Thus Christ is said, Col 1:18, to be "the first, born from the dead" and thus in Re 1:5, he is called "*the first-begotten of the dead*," and with reference to this *renewal* or beginning of life he is called a *Son*. In whatever other senses he is caned a *Son* in the New Testament, yet it is here proved,

(1.) that he is called a Son from his resurrection; and,

(2.) that this is the sense in which the expression in the psalm is to be used.

This day. The day, in the mind of the psalmist and of Paul, of his resurrection. Many efforts have been made, and much learned criticism has been expended, to prove that this refers to eternity, or to his pre-existence. But the signification of the word, which never refers to eternity, and the connexion, and the obvious intention of the speaker, is against this. Paul understood this manifestly of the resurrection, This settles the inquiry, and this is the *indispensable* interpretation in the psalm itself.

Have I begotten thee. This evidently cannot be understood in a literal sense. It *literally* refers to the relation of an earthly father to his children; but in no such sense can it be applied to the relation of God the Father to the Son. It *must* therefore be figurative. The word sometimes figuratively means to produce, to cause to exist in any way. 2Ti 2:23: "Unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do *gender* [beget] strifes." It refers also to the labours of the apostles in securing the conversion of stoners to the gospel. 1Co 4:15: "In Christ Jesus I have *begotten* you through the gospel." Phm 1:10: "Whom [Onesimus] I have *begotten* in my bonds." It is applied to Christians, Joh 1:13, "Which were born [begotten] not of blood, etc., but of God." Joh 3:3: "Except a man be born [begotten] again," etc. In all these places it is used in a figurative sense to denote the commencement of spiritual life by the power of God attending the truth; raising up sinners from the death of sin; or so producing spiritual life as that they should sustain to God the relation of sons. Thus he raised up Christ from the dead; imparted life to his body; by his own power restored him; and hence is said figuratively to have *begotten* him from the dead, and hence sustains towards the risen Saviour the relation of Father. Comp. Col 1:18 Re 1:5; Heb 1:5.

{b} "thou art my Son" Ps 2:7.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *And as concerning*. In further proof of that. To show that he actually did it, he proceeds to quote another passage of Scripture.

No more to return to corruption. The word corruption is usually employed to denote putrefaction, or the mouldering away of a body in the grave; its returning to its native dust. But it is certain Ac 13:35; **See Barnes "Ac 2:27"**

that the body of Christ never in this sense saw corruption. The word is therefore used to denote *death*, or *the grave*, the cause and place of corruption, The word is thus used in the Septuagint. It means here simply that he should not again *die*.

He said on this wise. He said thus, *outwv*.

I will give you. This quotation is made from Isa 55:3. It is quoted from the Septuagint, with a change of but one word, not affecting the sense. In Isaiah the passage does not refer particularly to the *resurrection* of the Messiah; nor is it the design of Paul to affirm that it does. His object in this verse is not to prove that he would rise *from the dead*; but that *being* risen, he would not again die. That the passage in Isaiah refers to the Messiah there can be no doubt, Isa 55:1,4. The passage here quoted is an address to the people, an assurance to them that the promise made to David should be performed; a solemn declaration that he would make an everlasting covenant with them through the Messiah, the promised descendant of David.

The sure mercies of David. The word *mercies* here refers to the promise made to David; the *mercy* or *favour* shown to him by promising to him a successor, that should not fail to sit on his throne, 2Sa 7:16 Ps 89:4,6 132:11,12.

These mercies and these promises are called "sure," as being true, or unfailing; they should certainly be accomplished. Comp. 2Co 1:20. The word *David* here does not refer, as many have supposed, to the Messiah, but to the king of Israel God made to David a promise, a certain pledge; he bestowed on him this special *mercy*, in promising that he should have a successor who should sit for ever on his throne. This promise was understood by the Jews, and is often referred to in the New Testament, as relating to the Messiah. And Paul here says that that promise here is fulfilled. The only question is, how it refers to the subject on which Paul was immediately discoursing. That point was not mainly to prove his *resurrection*, but to show particularly that he would *never die* again, or that he would for ever live and reign. And the argument is, that as God had promised that David should have a successor who should sit for ever on his throne; and as this prediction now terminated in the Messiah, the Lord Jesus, it followed that, as that promise was sure and certain, he would never die again. He must live, if the sure promise was fulfilled. And though he had been put to death, yet under that general promise was the certainty that he would live again. The meaning is, it was impossible that the Messiah, the promised successor of David, the perpetual occupier of his throne, should remain under the power of death. Under this assurance the church now reposes its hopes. Zion's King now lives, ever able to vindicate and save his people.

{*} "this wise" "thus" {1} *ta osia* or, *just things*; which word the Seventy, both in the place of Isa 55:3, and in many others, use for that which in the Hebrew, *mercies*

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *Wherefore did*. To the same intent or end. In the proof of the same thing—that he must rise and live for ever.

He saith. God says by David; or David declares the promises made by God.
In another Psalm; Ps 16:10.
Thou shalt not suffer, etc. **See Barnes "Ac 2:27"**.
{c} "in another Psalm" Ps 16:10

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *For David*, etc. This verse is designed to show that the passage in Ps 16 could not refer to David, and must therefore relate to some other person. In Ac 13:37, it is affirmed that this *could* refer to no one, in fact, but to the Lord Jesus.

After he had served his own generation. See the margin. Syriac, "David in his own generation having served the will of God, and slept," etc. Arabic, "David served in his own age, and saw God." The margin probably most correctly expresses the sense of the passage. To serve a generation, or an age, is an unusual and almost unintelligible expression.

Fell of sleep. Greek, slept; that is, *died*. This is the usual word to denote the death of saints. It is used of David in 1Ki 2:10.

See Barnes "Mt 27:52".

And was laid unto, etc. And was buried with his fathers, etc., 1Ki 2:10.

And saw corruption. Remained in the grave, and returned to his native dust. See this point argued more at length by Peter, in Ac 2:29-32, and explained **See Barnes "Ac 2:29, and** Ac 2:30-30.

{2} "after he had served" "after he had in his own age served the will of God"

{d} "fell on sleep" 1Ki 2:10 {+} "laid" "gathered"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *But he, whom God raised again*. The Lord Jesus.

Saw no corruption. Was raised without undergoing the usual change that succeeds death. As David *had* returned to corruption, and the Lord Jesus had *not*, it followed that this passage in Ps 16 referred to the Messiah.

{a} "raised again" Ac 2:24

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *Be it known*, etc. Paul, having proved his resurrection, and shown that he was the Messiah, now state the *benefits* that were to be derived from his death.

Through this man. **See Barnes "Lu 24:47"**.

{b} "through this man" Da 9:24 Lu 24:47; 1Jo 2:12

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *And by him*. By means of him; by his sufferings and death.

All that believe. **See Barnes "Mr 16:16"**.

Are justified. Are regarded and treated as if they were righteous. They are pardoned, and admitted to the favour of God, and treated as pardoned sinners, and as if they had not offended. See this point explained in **See Barnes "Ro 1:17"**; **See Barnes** "Ro 3:24, **See Barnes "Ro 3:25"**; **See Barnes "Ro 4:1, and** Ro 4:2-8.

From all things. From the guilt of all offences. All will be pardoned.

From which ye could not, etc. The law of Moses commanded what was to be done. It appointed sacrifices and offerings, as typical of a greater Sacrifice. But the same apostle has fully shown, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that those sacrifices could not take away sin, Heb 9:7-14; Heb 10:1-4,11. The design of the law was not to reveal a way of pardon. That was reserved to be the peculiar purpose of the gospel.

The law of Moses. The commands and institutions which he, under the direction of God, established.

{c} "by him" Isa 53:11 Hab 2:4; Ro 3:28 8:1

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 40

Verses 40,41. *Beware therefore*. Avoid that which is threatened. It will come on *some*; and Paul exhorted his hearers to beware lest it should come on them. It was the more important to caution them against this danger, as the Jews held that *they* were safe.

Lest that come. That calamity, that threatened punishment.

In the prophets. In that part of the Scriptures called "the prophets." The Jews divided the Old Testament into three parts, of which "the book of the prophets" was one. **See Barnes "Lu 24:44"**.

The place where this is recorded is Hab 1:5. It is not taken from the Hebrew, but substantially from the Septuagint. The original design of the threatening was to announce the destruction that would come upon the nation by the Chaldeans. The original threatening was fulfilled. But it was as *applicable* to the Jews in the time of Paul as in the time of Habakkuk. The *principle* of the passage is, that if they held in contempt the doings of God, they would perish. The work which God was to do by means of the Chaldeans was so fearful, so unusual, and so remarkable, that they would not believe it in time to avoid the calamity. In the same way, that which God did in giving a Messiah so little in accordance with their expectation, the manner of the introduction of his kingdom by miracles, and the gift of his Spirit, was so much at variance with their expectations, that they might see it, yet disbelieve it; they might have the fullest proof, and yet despise it; they might wonder, and be amazed and astonished, and unable to account for it, and yet refuse to believe it, and be destroyed.

Behold, ye despisers. Heb. "Behold, ye among the heathen." The change from this expression to "ye despisers" was made by the Septuagint translators, by a very slight change in the Hebrew word—probably from a variation in the copy which they used. It arose from reading

HEBREW

instead of

HEBREW

Bogedim instead of *Baggoin*. The Syriac, the Arabic, as well as the Seventy, follow this reading.

And wonder. Heb. "And regard, and wonder marvellously."

And perish. This is not in the Hebrew, but is in the Septuagint and the Arabic. The word means, literally, to be removed from the sight, to disappear; and then to corrupt, defile, destroy, Mt 6:16,19. The word, however, may mean, *to be suffused with shame*; to be overwhelmed and confounded, (*Schleusner*;) and it may perhaps have this meaning here, answering to the Hebrew. The word used here is not that which is commonly employed to denote eternal perdition; though Paul seems to use it with reference to their destruction for rejecting the gospel.

For I work a work. I do a thing. The thing to which the prophet Habakkuk referred was that God would bring upon them the Chaldeans, that would destroy the temple and nation. In like manner Paul says that God in *that* time might bring upon the nation similar calamities. By rejecting the Messiah and his gospel, and by persevering in wickedness, they would bring upon themselves the destruction of the temple, and city, and nation. It was this threatened destruction, doubtless, to which the apostle referred.

Which ye shall in no wise believe. Which you will not believe. So remarkable, so unusual, so surpassing anything which had occurred. The original reference in Habakkuk is to the destruction of the temple by the Chaldeans—a thing which the Jews would not suppose *could* happen. The temple was so splendid; it had been built by the direction of God; it had been so long under his protection, that they would suppose that it *could not* be given into the hands of their enemies to be demolished. And even though it were predicted by a prophet of God, still they would not believe it. The same feelings the Jews would have respecting the temple and city in the time of Paul. Though it was foretold by the Messiah, yet they were so confident that it was protected by God, that they would not believe that it could *possibly* be destroyed. The same infatuation seems to have possessed them during the siege of the city by the Romans.

Though a man, etc. Though it be plainly predicted. We may learn,

(1.) that men may see, and be amazed at the works of God, and yet be destroyed.

(2.) There may be a prejudice so obstinate that even a Divine revelation will not remove it.

(3.) The fancied security of sinners will not save them.

(4.) There are men who will not believe in the possibility of their being lost, though it be declared by the prophets, by apostles, by the Saviour, and by God. They will still remain in fancied security, and suffer nothing to alarm or rouse them. But

(5.) the fancied security of the Jews furnished no safety against the Babylonians or the Romans. Nor will the indifference and unconcern of sinners furnish any security against the dreadful wrath of God. Yet there are multitudes who live amidst the displays of God's power and mercy in the redemption of sinners; who witness the effects of his goodness and truth in revivals of religion, who live to *despise* it all; who are amazed and confounded by it; and who shall yet perish.

{d} "in the prophets" Isa 29:14 Hab 1:5

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 41

Verse 41. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 42

Verse 42. *And when the Jews*, etc. There is a great variety in the Mss. on this verse; and in the ancient versions. Griesbach and Knapp read it, "And when they were gone out, they besought them that these words might be spoken," etc. The Syriac reads it, "When they departed from them, they sought from them that these words might be spoken to them on another Sabbath." The Arabic, "Some of the synagogue of the Jews asked of them that they would exhort the Gentiles with them," etc. If these readings be correct, then the meaning is, that some of the Jews exhorted the apostles to proclaim these truths at some other time; particularly to the Gentiles. The MSS. greatly vary in regard to the passage, and it is perhaps impossible to determine the true reading. If the present reading in the English translation is to be regarded as genuine—of which, however, there is very little evidence—the meaning is, that a part of the Jews, perhaps a majority of them, rejected the message, and went out, though many of them followed Paul and Barnabas, Ac 13:43.

The Gentiles besought. This expression is wanting in the Vulgate, Coptic, Arabic, and Syriac versions, and in a great many Mss.—*Mill* It is omitted by Griesbach, Knapp, etc., and is probably spurious. Among other reasons which may be suggested why it is not genuine, this is one, that it is not evident or probable that the *Gentiles* were in the habit of attending the synagogue. Those who attended there were called *proselytes*. The expression, if genuine, might mean, either that the *Gentiles* besought, or that *they* besought the Gentiles. The latter would be the more probable meaning.

The next sabbath. The *margin* has probably the correct rendering of the passage. The meaning of the verse is, that a wish was expressed that these doctrines might be repeated to them in the intermediate time before the next Sabbath.

{1} "next Sabbath" "In the week between; or, in the Sabbath between"

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THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 44

Verse 44. *And the next sabbath day*. This was the regular day for worship, and it was natural that a greater multitude should convene on that day than on the other days of the week.

Came almost the whole city. Whether this was in the synagogue is not affirmed; but it is probable that that was the place where the multitude convened. The news of the presence of the apostles, and of their doctrines, had been circulated doubtless by the Gentiles who had heard them, and curiosity attracted the multitude to hear them. Comp. **See Barnes "Ac 13:7"**.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 45

Verse 45. *They were filled with envy*. Greek, *zeal*. The word here denotes *wrath, indignation*, that such multitudes should be disposed to hear a message which they rejected, and which threatened to overthrow their religion.

Spake against. Opposed the doctrine that Jesus was the Messiah; that the Messiah would be humble, lowly, despised, and put to death, etc.

Contradicting. Contradicting the apostles. This was evidently done in their presence, Ac 13.46, and would cause great tumult and disorder.

And blaspheming. **See Barnes "Mt 9:3"**.

The sense evidently is, that they *reproached and vilified* Jesus of Nazareth; they spake of him with contempt and scorn. To speak thus of him is denominated blasphemy, Lu 22:66. When men are enraged, they little regard the words which they utter, and little care how they may be estimated by God. When men attached to sect and party, in religion or politics, have no good *arguments* to employ, they attempt to overwhelm their adversaries by bitter and reproachful words. Men in the heat of strife, and in professed zeal for peculiar doctrines, and for sect and party, more frequently utter *blasphemy* than they are aware. Precious and pure doctrines are often thus vilified, because we do not believe them; and the heart of the Saviour is pierced anew, and his cause bleeds by the wrath and wickedness of his professed friends. Comp. Ac 18:6.

{b} "contradicting" Ac 18:6

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 46

Verse 46. *Waxed bold*. Became bold; spake boldly and openly. They were not terrified by their strife, or alarmed by their opposition. The contradictions and blasphemies of sinners often show that their consciences are alarmed; that the truth has taken effect; and then is not the time to shrink, but to declare more fearlessly the truth.

It was necessary. It was so designed; so commanded. They regarded it as their duty to offer the gospel first to their own countrymen. **See Barnes "Lu 24:47".**

Ye put it from you. Ye reject it.

And judge yourselves. By your conduct, by your rejecting it, you declare this. The word *judge* here does not mean they *expressed such an opinion*, or that *they regarded* themselves as unworthy of eternal life; for they thought just the reverse; but that by their conduct they CONDEMNED *themselves*. By such conduct they did in fact *pass sentence* on themselves, and show that they were unworthy of eternal life, and of having the offer any farther made to them. Sinners by their conduct do in fact condemn themselves, and show that they are not only unfit to be saved, but that they have advanced so far in wickedness that there is no hope of their salvation, and no propriety in offering them, any farther, eternal life. **See Barnes "Mt 7:6".**

Unworthy, etc. Unfit to be saved. They had *deliberately* and *solemnly* rejected the gospel, and thus shown that they were not fitted to enter into everlasting life. When men, even but once, deliberately and solemnly *reject* the offers of God's mercy, it greatly endangers their salvation. The *probability* is, that they then put the cup of salvation for ever away from themselves. The gospel produces an effect wherever it is preached. And when sinners are hardened, and spurn the gospel, it may often be the duty of ministers to turn their efforts towards others, where they may have more prospect of success. A man will not long labour on a rocky, barren, sterile soil, when there is near him a rich and fertile valley that will abundantly reward the pains of cultivation.

Lo, we turn, etc. We shall offer salvation to them, and devote ourselves to seeking their salvation.

{c} "first have been spoken" Mt 10:6 Lu 24:47; Ro 1:16

{d} "we turn to the Gentiles" De 32:21 Mt 21:43; Ro 10:19

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 47

Verse 47. *For so*, etc. Paul, as usual, appeals to the Scriptures in order to justify his course. He here appeals to the *Old Testament*, rather than to the command of the Saviour, because the Jews recognized the authority of their own Scriptures, while they would have turned in scorn from the command of Jesus of Nazareth.

I have set thee, etc. I have constituted or appointed thee. This passage is found in Isa 49:6. That it refers to the Messiah there can be no doubt. From the fortieth chapter of Isaiah to the end of the prophecies, Isaiah had a primary and main reference to the times of the Messiah.

To be a light. **See Barnes "Joh 1:4".**

Of the Gentiles. This was in accordance with the uniform doctrines of Isaiah, Isa 42:1 44:3, 60:3,5,16 61:6,9 62:2 66:12.

Comp. Ro 15:9-12.

For salvation. To save sinners. *Unto the ends of the earth*, To all lands; in all nations. **See Barnes "Ac 1:8".**

{e} "saying" Isa 49:6

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 48

Verse 48. *When the Gentiles heard this*. Heard that the gospel was to be preached to them. The doctrine of the Jews had been, that salvation was confined to themselves. The Gentiles rejoiced that from the mouths of Jews they now heard a different doctrine.

They glorified the word of the Lord.They honoured it as a message from God; they recognized and received it as the word of God. The expression conveys the idea of praise on account of it, and of *reverence* for the message as the word of God.

And as many as were ordained. *osoi hsan tetagmenoi*, Syriac, "Who were *destined*," or constituted. Vulgate, "As many as were foreordained (quotquot erant praeordinati) to eternal life believed." There has been much difference of opinion in regard to this expression. One class of commentators have supposed that it refers to the doctrine of election— to God's *ordaining men* to eternal life; and another class, to their being *disposed themselves* to embrace the gospel—to those among them who did not reject and despise the gospel, but who were *disposed* and *inclined* to embrace it. The main inquiry is, what is the meaning of the word rendered *ordained*? The word is used but eight times in the New Testament. Mt 28:16, "Into a mountain where Jesus *had appointed* them," i.e., *previously* appointed, or commanded them—before his death. Lu 7:8. "For I also am a man *set under authority*"—appointed, or designated, as a soldier, to be under the authority of another. Ac 15:2. "They *determined* that Paul and Barnabas, etc., should go to Jerusalem." Ac 22:10, "It shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do;" Ac 28:23, "And when they *had appointed* him a day," etc. Ro 13:1, "The powers that be, *are ordained* of God." 1Co 16:15, "They *have addicted* themselves to the ministry of saints." The word *tassw*, or *tattw*, properly means *to place*; *to place in a certain rank or order*. Its meaning is derived from arranging or disposing a body of soldiers in regular order; to arrange in military order. In the places which have been mentioned above, the word is used to denote the following things:

(1.) *To command*, or to designate, Mt 28:16 Ac 22:10, 28:23.

(2.) To institute, constitute, or appoint, Ro 13:1. Comp. 2Sa 7:11 1Sa 22:7.

(3.) To determine, to take counsel, to resolve, Ac 15:2

(4.) To subject to the authority of another, Lu 7:8.

(5.) To addict to; to devote to, 1Co 16:15. The meaning may be thus expressed:

(1.) The word is *never* used to denote an internal disposition or inclination arising from one's own self. It does not mean that they disposed themselves to embrace eternal life.

(2.) It has uniformly the notion of an *ordering*, *disposing*, or *arrangement from without*, i.e., from some other source than the individual himself; as of a soldier, who is arranged or classified

according to the will of the proper officer. In relation to these persons it means, therefore, that they were *disposed* or inclined to this from some other source than themselves.

(3.) It does not properly refer to an eternal decree, or directly to the doctrine of election; though that may be inferred from it; but it refers to their being THEN IN FACT *disposed* to embrace eternal life. They were then inclined by an influence from without themselves, or so disposed as to embrace eternal life. It refers not to an eternal decree, but that then there was such an influence as to dispose them, or incline them, to lay hold on salvation. That this was done by the influence of the Holy Spirit, is clear from all parts of the New Testament, Tit 3:5,6; Joh 1:13.

It was not a disposition or *arrangement* originating with themselves, but with God.

(4.) This *implies* the doctrine of election. It was in fact that doctrine expressed. It was nothing but God's disposing them to embrace eternal life. And that he does this according to a plan in his own mind—a plan which is unchangeable as God himself is unchangeable—is clear from the Scriptures. Comp. Ac 18:10 Ro 8:28-30, 9:15,16,21,23

Eph 1:4,5,11.

The meaning may be expressed in few words:— *who were THEN disposed, and in good earnest determined, to embrace eternal life, by the operation of the grace of God on their hearts*.

Eternal life. Salvation. **See Barnes "Joh 3:36"**.

{f} "as many as were ordained" Ac 2:47, Ro 8:30

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 49

Verse 49. No Barnes text on this verse.

{*} "region" "Country"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 50

Verse 50. *But the Jews stirred up*. Excited opposition.

Honourable women. **See Barnes "Mr 15:43"**.

Women of influence, and connected with families of rank. Perhaps they were proselytes, and were connected with the magistrates of the city.

And raised persecution. Probably on the ground that they produced disorder and excitement. The aid of "*chief men*" has often been called in to oppose revivals of religion, and to put a period, if possible, to the spread of the gospel.

Out of their coasts. Out of the regions of their country; out of their province.

{a} "raised persecution" 2Ti 3:11

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 51

Verse 51. *But they shook off the dust*, etc. **See Barnes "Mt 10:14"**.

And came into Iconium. This was the capital of Lycaonia. It is now called Cogni, or Lonieh, and is the capital of Caramania.

{b} "shook off the dust" Mr 6:11 Lu 9:5; Ac 18:6

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 13 - Verse 52

Verse 52. *And the disciples*. The disciples in Antioch. *Were filled with joy*. This happened even in the midst of persecution, and is one of the many evidences that the gospel is able to fill the soul with joy, even in the severest trials.

{c} "filled with joy" Mt 5:12 {*} "Holy Ghost" "Spirit"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 14

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 14 - Verse 1

CHAPTER XIV

Verse 1. *In Iconium*. **See Barnes "Ac 13:51"**.

In this place it appears that Timothy became acquainted with Paul and his manner of life, 2Ti 3:10,11.

So spake. Spake with such power—their preaching was attended so much with the influence of the Spirit,

And also of the Greeks. Probably proselytes from the Greeks, who were in the habit of attending the synagogue.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 14 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *But the unbelieving Jews*, etc. **See Barnes "Ac 13:50"**.

And made their minds evil affected. Irritated, or exasperated them. ¶ Against the brethren. One of the common appellations by which Christians were known.

{+} "affected" "ill-affected"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 14 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Long time therefore*. In this city they were not daunted by persecution. It seems probable that there were here no forcible or public measures to expel them, as there had been at Antioch, Ac

13:50, and they therefore regarded it as their duty to remain. God granted them here also great success, which was the main reason for their continuing a long time. Persecution and opposition may be attended often with signal success to the gospel.

Speaking boldly in the Lord. In the *cause* of the Lord Jesus; or in his name and authority. Perhaps also the expression includes the idea of their trusting in the Lord.

Which gave testimony. Bore witness to the truth of their message by working miracles, etc. Comp. Mr 16:20. This was evidently *the Lord Jesus* to whom reference is here made; and it shows that he was still, though bodily absent from them, clothed with power, and still displayed that power in the advancement of his cause. The conversion of sinners accomplished by him is always a *testimony* as decided as it is cheering to the labours and messages of his servants.

Unto the word of his grace. His gracious word, or message.

And granted signs, etc. Miracles. **See Barnes "Ac 2:22"**.

{+} "boldly in the Lord" "concerning" {*} "which" "who" {d} "gave testimony" Mr 16:20 Heb 2:4

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 14 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Was divided*. Into parties. Greek, There was a schism. *escisyh*.

And part held with the Jews. Held to the doctrines of the Jews, in opposition to the apostles. A revival of religion may produce excitement by the bad passions of opposers. The enemies of the truth may form parties, and organize opposition. It is no uncommon thing even now for such parties to be formed; but the fault is not in Christianity. It lies with those who form a party *against* religion, and who confederate themselves, as was done here, to oppose it.

{e} "part held with the Jews" Ac 28:24

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 14 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *An assault made*. Greek, A *rush—ormh*. It denotes an impetuous excitement and aggression; a rush to put them to death. It rather describes a popular tumult than a calm and deliberate purpose. There was a violent, tumultuous excitement.

Both of the Gentiles, etc. Of that part of them which was opposed to the apostles.

To use them despitefully. **See Barnes "Mt 5:44"**.

To *reproach* them; to bring contempt upon them; to injure them.

To stone them. To put them to death by stoning; probably as blasphemers, Ac 7:57-59.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 14 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *They were ware of it*. They were in some way informed of the excitement and of their danger.

And fled unto Lystra. This was a city of Lycaonia, and was a few miles south of Iconlure. It is now called *Latik*.

And Derbe. Derbe was a short distance east of Lystra.

Cities of Lycaonia. Lycaonia was one of the provinces of Asia Minor. It had Galatia north, Pisidia south, Cappadocia east, and Phrygia west. It was formerly within the limits of Phrygia, but was erected into a separate province by Augustus.

And unto the region, etc. The adjacent country. Though persecuted, they still preached; and though driven from one city, they fled into another. This was the direction of the Saviour, Mt 10:23.

{|} "ware of it" "aware" {f} "fled unto Lystra" Mt 10:23

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 14 - Verse 7

Verse 7. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 14 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *And there sat*. There dwelt, Mt 9:1-6 Ac 18:11. (*Margin*.) The word *sat*, however, indicates his usual posture; his helpless condition. Such persons commonly sat at the wayside, or in some public place, to ask for alms, Mr 10:46.

Impotent in his feet—adunatov. Without any power. Entirely deprived of the use of his feet.

Being a cripple. Lame.

Who never had walked. The miracle, therefore, would be more remarkable, as the man would be well known, and there could be no plea that there was an imposition. As they were persecuted from place to place, and opposed in every manner, it was desirable that a signal miracle should be performed to carry forward and establish the work of the gospel.

{*} "impotent" "infirm" {g} "cripple" Ac 3:2

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 14 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Who stedfastly beholding him*. Fixing his eyes intently on him. **See Barnes "Ac 1:10"**.

And perceiving. How he perceived this, is not said. Perhaps it was indicated by the ardour, humility, and strong desire depicted in his countenance. He had heard Paul, and perhaps the apostle had dwelt particularly on the miracles with which the gospel had been attested. The miracles wrought also in Iconium had doubtless also been heard of in Lystra.

Had faith to be healed. Compare Notes, **See Barnes** "Mt 9:21, **See Barnes** "Mt 9:22, **See Barnes** "Mt 9:28, **See Barnes "Mt 9:29"**; **See Barnes "Lu 7:50"**; **See Barnes** "Lu 17:19

See Barnes ""Lu 18:42"

{a} "had faith" Mt 9:28,29 {*} "to be healed" "cured"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 14 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Said with a loud voice*. **See Barnes "Joh 11:43"**.
And he leaped. **See Barnes** "Ac 3:8; comp. Isa 35:6.
{b} "leaped and walked" Isa 35:6

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 14 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *They lifted up their voices*. They spoke with astonishment, such as might be expected when it was supposed that the gods had come down.

In the speech of Lycaonia. What this language was has much puzzled commentators. It was probably a mixture of the Greek and Syriac. In that region generally the Greek was usually spoken with more or less purity; and from the fact that it was not far from the regions of Syria, it is probable that the Greek language was corrupted with this foreign admixture.

The gods, etc. All the region was idolatrous. The gods which were worshipped there were those which were worshipped throughout Greece.

Are come down. The miracle which Paul had wrought led them to suppose this. It was evidently beyond human ability, and they had no other way of accounting for it than by supposing that their gods had personally appeared.

In the likeness of men. Many of their gods were heroes, whom they worshipped after they were dead. It was common among them to suppose that the gods appeared to men in human form. The poems of Homer, of Virgil etc., are filled with accounts of such appearances; and the only way in which they supposed the gods to take knowledge of human affairs, and to aid men, was by their personally appearing in this form. See Homer's Odyssey, xvii. 485; Catullus, 64, 384; Ovid's Metamorphosis, i. 212. (*Kuinoel*) Thus Homer says:

For in similitude of strangers oft
The gods, who can with ease all shapes assume,
Repair to populous cities, where they mark
Th'outrageous and the righteous deeds of men.—COWPER

Among the Hindoos, the opinion has been prevalent that there have been many incarnations of their gods.

{+} "lifted up" "raised" {c} "gods" Ac 18:6

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 14 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *And they called Barnabas, Jupiter*. Jupiter was represented as the most powerful of all the gods of the ancients. He was represented as the son of Saturn and Ops, and was educated in a cave on Mount Ida, in the island of Crete. The worship of Jupiter was almost universal. He was the Ammon of Africa, the Belus of Babylon, the Osiris of Egypt. His common appellation was, the father of gods and men. He was usually represented as sitting upon a golden or an ivory throne,

holding in one hand a thunderbolt, and in the other a sceptre of cypress. His power was supposed to extend over other gods; and everything was subservient to his will, except the fates. There is the most abundant proof that he was worshipped in the region of Lycaonia, and throughout Asia Minor. There was, besides, a fable among the inhabitants of Lycaonia that Jupiter and Mercury had once visited that place, and had been received by Philemon. The whole fable is related by Ovid, (Metam. 8, 611, etc.)

And Paul, Mercarius. Mercury, called by the Greeks *Hermes*, was a celebrated god of antiquity. No less than five of this name are mentioned by Cicero. The most celebrated was the son of Jupiter and Msia. He was the messenger of the gods, and of Jupiter in particular; he was the patron of travellers and shepherds; he conducted the souls of the dead into the infernal regions; and he *presided over orators, and declaimers*, and merchants; and he was also the god of thieves, pickpockets, and all dishonest persons. He was regarded as *the god of eloquence*; and as light, rapid, and quick in his movements. The conjecture of Chrysostom is, that Barnabas was a large, athletic man, and was hence taken for Jupiter; and Paul was small in his person, and was hence supposed to be Mercury.

Because he was the chief speaker. The office of Mercury was to deliver the messages of the gods; and as Paul only had been discoursing, he was supposed to be Mercury.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 14 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Then the priest of Jupiter*. He whose office it was to conduct the worship of Jupiter, by offering sacrifices, etc.

Which was before their city. The word" which" here refers not to the priest, but to Jupiter. The temple or image of Jupiter was in front of their city, or near the gates. Ancient cities were supposed to be under the protection of particular gods; and their image, or a temple for their worship, was placed commonly in a conspicuous place at the entrance of the city.

Brought oxen. Probably brought two—one to be sacrificed to each. It was common to sacrifice bullocks to Jupiter.

And garlands. The victims of sacrifice were usually decorated with ribands and chaplets of flowers. See *Kuinoel*.

Unto the gates. The gates of the city, where were the images or temple of the gods.

Would have done sacrifice. Would have offered sacrifice to Barnabas and Paul. This the priest deemed a part of his office. And here we have a remarkable and most affecting instance of the folly and stupidity of idolatry.

{d} "and would have done" Da 2:46

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 14 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Which when the apostles*. Barnabas is called an apostle because he was sent forth by the church on a particular message, Ac 13:3; comp. Ac 14:26; not because he had been chosen to

the peculiar work of the apostleship—to bear witness to the life and resurrection of Christ. **See Barnes "Ac 1:22"**

They rent their clothes. As an expression of their abhorrence of what they were doing, and of their deep grief that they should thus debase themselves by offering worship to men. **See Barnes "Mt 26:65"**.

{e} "rent their clothes" Mt 26:65

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 14 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *And saying, Sirs*. Greek, *Men*.

Why do ye these things?.

This is an expression of solemn remonstrance at the folly of their conduct in worshipping those who were men. The *abhorrence* which they evinced at this may throw strong light on the rank and character of the Lord Jesus Christ. When an offer was made to worship Paul and Barnabas, they shrank from it with strong expressions of indignation and abhorrence. Yet when similar worship was offered to the Lord Jesus, when he was addressed by Thomas in the language of worship, "My Lord and my God," (Joh 20:28,) he commended the disciple. For this act he uttered not the slightest reproof. Nay, he approved it, and expressed his approbation of others who should also do it, Joh 20:29; comp. Joh 5:23. How can this difference be accounted for, except on the supposition that the Lord Jesus was Divine? Would he, if a mere man, receive homage as God, when his disciples rejected it with horror?

Of like passions with you. We are men like yourselves. We have no claim, no pretensions to anything more. The word "passions" here means simply that they had the common feelings and propensities of men; we have the nature of men; the affections of men. It does not mean that they were subject to any improper *passions*, to ill temper, etc.,as some have supposed; but that they did not pretend to be gods, We need food and drink; we are exposed to pain and sickness, and death." The Latin Vulgate renders it, "We are *mortal* like yourselves." The expression stands opposed to the proper conception of God, who is not subject to these affections, who is most blessed and immortal. Such a Being only is to be worshipped; and the apostles remonstrated strongly with them on Comp. Jas 5:17, "Elias [Elijah] was a man subject to like passions as we are," etc.

That ye should turn from these vanities. That you should cease to worship idols. Idols are often called vanities, or vain things, De 32:21 2Ki 17:15; 1Ki 16:13,26; Jer 2:5 8:19, 10:8 Jon 2:8.

They are called *vanities*, and often a *lie*, or lying vanities, as opposed to the living and true God, because they are *unreal*, because they have no power to help, because confidence in them is vain.

Unto the living God. 1Th 1:9. He is called the *living* God to distinguish him from idols. **See Barnes "Mt 16:16"**.

Which made heaven, etc. Who thus showed that he was the only proper object of worship. This doctrine, that there was one God, who had made all things, was new to them. They worshipped multitudes of divinities; and though they regarded Jupiter as the father of gods and men, yet they had no conception that all things had been formed from nothing by the will of one Infinite Being.

{f} "We also" Ac 10:26 Jas 5:17; Re 19:10

{g} "vanities" 1Sa 12:21 1Ki 16:13; Jer 14:22 Jon 2:8; 1Co 8:4
{h} "the living God" 1Th 1:9 {i} "which made" Ge 1:1 Ps 33:6, 146:6 Re 14:7

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 14 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Who in times past*. Previous to the gospel; in past ages.

Suffered all nations. Permitted all nations; that is, all Gentiles. Ac 17:30, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at."

To walk in their own ways. To conduct themselves without the restraints and instructions of a written law. They were permitted to follow their own reason and passions, and their own system of religion. He gave them no written laws, and sent to them no messengers. *Why* he did this, we cannot determine. It might have been, among other reasons, to show to the world conclusively,

(1.) the insufficiency of *reason* to guide men in the matters of religion. The experiment was made under the most favourable circumstances. The most enlightened nations, the Greeks and Romans, were left to pursue the inquiry, and failed no less than the most degraded tribes of men. The trial was made for four thousand years, and attended with the same results everywhere.

(2.) It showed the need of revelation to guide man.

(3.) It evinced, beyond the possibility of mistake, the depravity of man. In all nations, in all circumstances, men had shown the same alienation from God. By suffering them to walk in their own ways, it was seen that those ways were sin, and that some power more than human was necessary to bring men back to God.

{a} "in times past" Ps 81:12 Ac 17:30 {*} "nations" "The Gentiles"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 14 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Nevertheless*. Though he gave them no revelation.

He left not himself without witness. He gave demonstration of his existence, and of his moral character.

In that he did good. By doing good. The manner in which he did it he immediately specifies. Idols did not do good, or confer favours, and were therefore unworthy of their confidence.

And gave us rain from heaven. Rain from above, from the clouds, Mr 8:11 Lu 9:54, 17:29 21:11; Joh 6:31,32.

Rain is one of the evidences of his goodness. Man could not cause it; and without it, regulated at proper intervals of time, and in proper quantities, the earth would soon be one wide scene of desolation. There is scarcely anything that more certainly indicates unceasing care and wisdom than the needful and refreshing showers of rain. The sun and stars move by fixed laws, whose operation we can see and anticipate. The falling of rain and dew is regulated by laws which we cannot trace, and seems therefore to be poured, as it were, directly from God's hollow hand. Ps 147:8, "Who covereth the heaven with clouds; who prepareth rain for the earth."

"He sends his showers of blessings down,

To cheer the plains below;
He makes the grass the mountains crown,
And corn in valleys grow.

"The cheering wind, the flying cloud,
Obey his mighty word:
with songs and honours sounding loud,
Praise ye the sovereign Lord."—WATTS

And fruitful seasons. Seasons when the earth produces abundance. It is remarkable, and a shining proof of the Divine goodness, that so few seasons are unfruitful. The earth yields her increase; and the labours of the husbandman are crowned with success; and the goodness of God demands the expressions of praise. His ancient covenant God does not forget, Ge 8:22, though man forgets it, and disregards his great Benefactor.

Filling our hearts with food. The word *hearts* is here used as a Hebraism, to denote *persons themselves*; filling *us* with food, etc. Comp. Mt 12:40.

Gladness. Joy; comfort—the comfort arising from the supply of our constantly returning wants. This is proof of ever watchful goodness. It is demonstration at once that there is a God, and that he is good. It would be easy for God to withdraw these blessings, and leave us to want. A single word, or a single deviation from the fullness of benevolence, would blast all these comforts, and leave us to lamentation, woe, and death, Ps 145:15,16.

"The eyes of all wait upon thee,
And thou givest them their food in due season.
Thou openest thine hand,
And satisfiest the desire of all the living."

{b} "Nevertheless" Ro 1:20 {c} "rain" Job 5:10 Ps 147:8; Mt 5:45

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 14 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *And with these saying*. With these arguments.

Scarce restrained the people. They were so fully satisfied that the gods had appeared, and were so full of zeal to do them honour.

{+} "sayings" "words"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 14 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *And there came thither certain Jews*. Not satisfied with having expelled them from Antioch and Iconium, they still pursued them. Persecutors often exhibit a zeal and perseverance in a bad cause, which it would be well if Christians evinced in a holy cause. Men will often travel

farther to do evil than they will to do good; and many men show more zeal in opposing the gospel than professed Christians do in advancing it.

Antioch and Iconium. **See Barnes "Ac 13:14,51"**.

Who persuaded the people. That they were impostors; and who excited their rage against them.

And, having stoned Paul. Whom they were just before ready to worship as a god! What a striking instance of the fickleness and instability of idolaters! and what a striking instance of the instability and uselessness of mere *popularity*. Just before, they were ready to adore him; now they sought to put him to death. Nothing is more fickle than mere popular favour. The unbounded admiration of a man may soon be changed into unbounded indignation and contempt! It was well for Paul that he was not *seeking* this popularity, and that he did not depend on it for happiness. He had a good conscience; he was engaged in a good cause; he was under the protection of God; and his happiness was to be sought from a higher source than the applause of men, fluctuating and uncertain as the waves of the sea. To this transaction Paul referred when he enumerated his trials, in 2Co 11:26, "Once was I stoned."

Drew him out of the city. Probably in haste, and in popular rage, as if he was unfit to be *in* the city, and was unworthy of a decent burial; for it does not appear that they contemplated an interment, but indignantly dragged him beyond the walls of the city to leave him there. Such sufferings and trials it cost to establish that religion in the world which has shed so many blessings on man, and which now crowns us with comfort, and saves us from the abominations and degradations of idolatry here, and from the pains of hell hereafter.

Supposing he had been dead. The next verse shows that he was really *not* dead, though many commentators, as well as the Jews, have supposed that he was, and was miraculously restored to life. It is remarkable that Barnabas was not exposed to this popular fury. But it is to be remembered that Paul was the chief speaker, and it was his peculiar zeal that exposed him to this tumult.

{d} "stoned Paul" 2Co 11:25

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 14 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Howbeit*. But. Notwithstanding the supposition that he was dead.

As the disciples stood round about him. It would seem that they did not suppose that he was dead; but might be expecting that he would revive.

He rose up, etc. Most commentators have supposed that this was the effect of a miracle. They have maintained that he could not have risen so soon, and entered into the city, without the interposition of miraculous power.—(Calvin, Doddridge, Clark, etc.) But the commentators have asserted that which is not intimated by the sacred penman. Nor is there propriety in supposing the intervention of miraculous agency where it is not necessary. The probability is, that he was *stunned* by a blow— perhaps a single blow—and after a short time recovered from it. Nothing is more common than thus by a violent blow on the head to be rendered apparently lifeless, the effect of which soon is over, and the person restored to strength. Pricaeus and Wetstein suppose that Paul *feigned* himself to be dead, and when out of danger rose and

And came into the city. It is remarkable that he should have returned again to the same city. But probably it was only among the new converts that he showed himself. The Jews supposed that he was dead; and it does not appear that he again exposed himself to their rage.

And the next day, etc. The opposition here was such that it was vain to attempt to preach there any longer. Having been seen by the disciples after his supposed death, their faith was confirmed, and he departed to preach in another place.

To Derbe. Ac 14:6

{+} "Howbeit" "But" Ac 14:6

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 14 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Had taught many*. Or rather, had made many disciples, (margin.)

To Lystra. Ac 14:6.

And to Iconium, Ac 14:1. We have here a remarkable instance of the courage of the apostles. In these very places they had been persecuted and stoned, and yet in the face of danger they ventured to return, The welfare of the infant churches they deemed of more consequence than their own safety; and they threw themselves again into the midst of danger, to comfort and strengthen those just converted to God. There are times when ministers should not count their own lives dear to them, Ac 20:24, but when they should fearlessly throw themselves into the midst of danger, confiding only in the protecting care of their God and Saviour.

{1} "had taught many" "Had made many disciples"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 14 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Confirming. Strengthening—episthrizontev*. The expression, "to confirm," has in some churches a technical signification, denoting "to admit to the full privileges of a Christian, by the imposition of hands."—*Johnson*. It is scarcely necessary to say that the word here refers to no such rite. It has no reference to any imposition of hands, nor to the thing which is usually supposed to be denoted by the rite of "confirmation." It means simply, that they *established*, *strengthened*, made firm, or encouraged by the presentation of truth, and by the motives of the gospel. Whether the rite of confirmation, as practised by some churches, be founded on the authority of the New Testament or not, it is certain that it can receive no support from this passage. The truth was, that these were young converts; that they were surrounded by enemies, exposed to temptations and to dangers; that they had as yet but a slight acquaintance with the truths of the gospel, and that it was therefore important that they should be further instructed in the truth, and established in the faith of the gospel. This was what Paul and Barnabas returned to accomplish. There is not the slightest evidence that they had not been admitted to the full privileges of the church before, or that any *ceremony* was now performed in confirming or strengthening them.

The souls. The minds, the hearts; or *the disciples themselves*.

Disciples. They were as yet scholars, or learners, and the apostles returned to instruct them further in the doctrines of Christ.

And exhorting them, etc. Ac 13:43.

In the faith. In the belief of the gospel.

And that we must. *kai oti—dei*. That it is fit or proper that we should, etc. Not that it is in itself fixed by any fatal necessity; but that such is the nature of religion, and such the wickedness and opposition of the world, *that it will happen*. We are not to expect that it will be otherwise. We are to calculate on it when we become Christians. *Why* it is proper, or fit, the apostle did not state. But we may remark that it is proper,

(1.) because such is the opposition of the world to pure religion, that it cannot be avoided. Of this they had had striking demonstration in Lystra and Iconium.

(2.) It is necessary to reclaim us from wandering, and to keep us in the path of duty, Ps 119:67,71.

(3.) It is necessary to wean us from the world; to keep before one's mind the great truth, that we have here "no continuing city, and no abiding place." Trial here, makes us pant for a world of rest. The opposition of sinners makes us desire that world where the wicked shall cease from troubling, and where there shall be eternal friendship and peace.

(4.) When we are persecuted and afflicted, we may remember that it has been the lot of Christians from the beginning. We tread a path that has been watered by the tears of the saints, and rendered sacred by the shedding of the best blood on the earth. The Saviour trod that path; and it is enough that the "disciple be as his master, and the servant as his lord," Mt 10:24,25.

Through much tribulation. Through many afflictions.

Enter into the kingdom of God. Be saved. Enter into heaven. **See Barnes "Mt 3:2"**.

{*} "souls" "minds" {a} "continue in the faith" Ac 13:43 {b} "that we must through" Ro 8:17

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 14 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *And when they had ordained*. *ceirotonhsantev*. The word *ordain* we now use in an ecclesiastical sense, to denote a setting apart to an office by the imposition of hands. But it is evident that the word here is not employed in that sense. That imposition of hands might have occurred in setting apart afterwards to this office is certainly possible, but it is not implied in the word employed here, and did not take place in the transaction to which this word refers. The word occurs but in one other place in the New Testament, (2Co 8:19,) where it is applied to Luke, and translated, "who was also chosen of the church, (i.e. appointed or elected by suffrage by the churches,) to travel with us," etc. The verb properly denotes *to stretch out the hand*; and as it was customary to elect to office, or to vote, by stretching out or elevating the hand, so the word,simply means to elect, appoint, or designate to any office. The word here refers simply to an *election* or *appointment* of the elders. It is said, indeed, that Paul and Barnabas did this. But probably all that is meant by it is, that they presided in the assembly when the choice was made. It does not mean that they appointed them without consulting the church; but it evidently means that they appointed them in the usual way of appointing officers, by the suffrages of the people. See *Schleusner*, and the notes of Doddridge and Calvin.

Ordained them. Appointed for *the disciples*, or for the church. It is not meant that the elders were ordained for the apostles.

Elders. Greek, Presbyters. Literally, this word refers to the aged. **See Barnes "Ac 11:30"**.

But it may also be a word relating to office, denoting those who were more experienced than others, to preside over and to instruct the rest. What was the nature of this office, and what was the design of the appointment, is not intimated in this word. All that seems to be implied is, that they were to take the charge of the churches during the absence of the apostles. The apostles were about to leave them. They were just organized into churches; were inexperienced; needed counsel and direction; were exposed to dangers; and it was necessary, therefore, that persons should be designated to watch over the spiritual interests of the brethren. The probability is, that they performed all the functions that were required in the infant and feeble churches; in exhorting, instructing, governing, etc. The more experienced and able would be most likely to be active in exhorting and instructing the brethren; and all would be useful in counselling and guiding the flock. The same thing occurred in the church at Ephesus. **See Barnes "Ac 20:17-28"**.

It is not improbable that the business of instructing, or teaching, would be gradually confined to the more talented and able of the elders, and that the others would be concerned mainly in governing and directing the general affairs of the church.

In every church. It is implied here that there were *elders in each church*; that is, that in each church there was more than one. See Ac 15:21, where a similar phraseology occurs, and where it is evident that there was more than one reader of the law of Moses in each city. Tit 1:5, "I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest ordain *elders in every city*." Ac 20:17, "And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called *the elders of the church*." It could not mean, therefore, that they appointed a *single* minister or pastor to each church, but they committed the whole affairs of the church to a bench of elders.

And had prayed with fasting. With the church. They were about to leave them. They had entrusted the interests of the church to a body of men chosen for this purpose; and they now commended the church and its elders together to God. Probably they had no prospect of seeing them again; and they parted as ministers and people should part, and as Christian friends should part, with humble prayer, commending themselves to the protecting care of God.

They commended them, etc. They *committed* the infant church to the guardianship of the Lord. They were feeble, inexperienced, and exposed to dangers; but in his hands they were safe.

To the Lord, etc. The Lord Jesus. The connexion shows that he is particularly referred to. In his hands, the redeemed are secure. When we part with Christian friends, we may, with confidence, leave them in his holy care and keeping.

{+} "ordained" "Appointed"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 14 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Throughout Pisidia*. **See Barnes "Ac 13:14"**.

They came to Pamphylia. **See Barnes "Ac 13:13"**.

These places they had visited before.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 14 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *In Perga*. **See Barnes "Ac 13:13"**.

They went down into Attalia. This was a city of Pamphylia, situated on the sea shore. It was built by Attalus Philadelphus, king of Pergamus, who gave it his own name. It is now called *Antali.—Rob. Cal*.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 14 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *And thence sailed to Antioch*. **See Barnes "Ac 11:19"**.

From whence they had been recommended, etc. Where they had been ap- pointed to this missionary tour by the church, Ac 13:1-4.

To the grace of God. His favour and protection had been implored for them in their perilous undertaking.

For the work which they fulfilled. This shows conclusively,

(1.) that they had accomplished fully the work which was originally contemplated. It was strictly a *missionary tour* among the Gentiles. It was an important and hazardous enterprise; and was the first in which the church formally engaged. Hence so much importance is attached to it, and so faithful a record of it is preserved.

(2.) It shows that the act by which they were set apart to this, (Ac 13:1-3,) was not an ordination to the ministerial office. It was an appointment to a missionary tour.

(3.) It shows that the act was not an appointment to *the apostleship*. Paul was an apostle before, by the express appointment of the Saviour; and Barnabas was never an apostle in the original and proper sense of the term. It was a designation to a temporary work, which was now fulfilled.

We may remark, also, in regard to this *missionary tour*,

(1,) that the work of missions is one which early engaged the attention of Christians.

(2.) It entered into their *plans*, and was one in which the church was deeply interested.

(3.) The work of missions is attended with danger. Men are now no less hostile to the gospel than they were in Lystra and Iconium.

(4.) Missionaries should be sustained by the prayers of the church. And,

(5.) in the conduct of Paul and Barnabas, missionaries have an example in founding churches, and in regard to their own trials and persecutions. If Paul and Barnabas were persecuted, missionaries may be now. And if the grace of Christ was sufficient to sustain them, it is not the less sufficient to sustain those of our own times amidst all the dangers attending the preaching of the cross in pagan lands.

{a} "Antioch" Ac 13:1,3 {b} "the grace of god" Ac 15:40

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 14 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *They rehearsed*, etc. Ac 11:4. They related what had happened; their dangers and their success. This they did because they had been sent out by the church, and it was proper that they should give an account of their work; and because it furnished a suitable occasion of gratitude to God for his mercy.

All that God had done, etc. In protecting, guarding them, etc. All was traced to God.

Had opened the door of faith. Had furnished an opportunity of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, 1Co 16:9 2Co 2:12.

{c} "rehearsed all that God" Ac 15:4 {d} "opened the door of faith" 1Co 16:9

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 14 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *And there they abode*. At Antioch.

Long time. How long is not intimated; but we hear no more of them until the council at Jerusalem, mentioned in the next chapter. If the transactions recorded in this chapter occurred, as is supposed, about A.D. 45 or 46, and the council at Jerusalem assembled A.D. 51 or 53, as is supposed, then here is an interval of from five to eight years in which we have no account of them. Where they were, or what was their employment in this interval, the sacred historian has not informed as. It is certain, however, that Paul made several journeys, of which we have no particular record in the New Testament; and it is possible that some of those journeys occurred during this interval. Thus he preached the gospel as far as Illyricum, Ro 15:19. And in 2Co 11:23-27, there is an account of trials and persecutions, of many of which we have no distinct record, and which might have occurred during this interval. We may be certain that these holy men were not idle. And we may learn from their example to fill up our time with usefulness; to bear all persecutions and trials without a murmur; and to acknowledge the good hand of God in our preservation in our travels; in our defence when we are persecuted; in all the opportunities which may be open before us to do good; and in all the success which may attend our efforts. Christians should remember that it is *God* who opens doors of usefulness; and they should regard it as a matter of much rejoicing and thanksgiving that such doors *are* opened, and that they are permitted to spread the gospel, whatever toil it may cost, whatever persecution they may endure, whatever perils they may encounter.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15 - Verse 1

CHAPTER 15

Verse 1. *And certain men*. These were men undoubtedly who had been Jews, but who were now converted to Christianity. The fact that they were willing to refer the matter in dispute to the apostles and elders, Ac 15:2, shows that they had professedly embraced the Christian religion. The

account which follows is a record of the first internal dissension which occurred in the Christian church. Hitherto they had been struggling against external foes. Violent persecutions had raged, and had fully occupied the attention of Christians. But now the churches were at peace. They enjoyed great external prosperity in Antioch. And the great enemy of souls took occasion then, as he has often done in similar circumstances since, to excite contentions in the church itself; so that when external violence could not destroy it, an effort was made to secure the same object by internal dissension and strife. The history, therefore, is particularly important, as it is the record of the first unhappy debate which arose in the bosom of the church. It is further important, as it shows the manner in which such controversies were settled in apostolic times; and as it established some very important principles respecting the perpetuity of the religious rites of the Jews.

Came down from Judaea. To Antioch, and to the regions adjacent, which had been visited by the apostles, Ac 15:23. Judea was a high and hilly region; and going from that toward the level countries adjacent to the sea, was represented to be descending or going down.

Taught the brethren. That is, Christians. They endeavoured to *convince* them of the necessity of keeping the laws of Moses.

Except ye be circumcised. This was the leading or principal rite of the Jewish religion. It was indispensable to the name and privileges of a Jew. Proselytes to their religion were circumcised as well as native-born Jews, and they held it to be indispensable to salvation. It is evident, from this, that Paul and Barnabas had dispensed with this rite in regard to the Gentile converts, and that they intended to found the Christian church on the principle that the Jewish ceremonies were to cease. When, however, it was necessary to conciliate the minds of the Jews and to prevent contention, Paul did not hesitate to practise circumcision, Ac 16:3.

After the manner of Moses. According to the custom which Moses commanded; according to the Mosaic ritual.

Ye cannot be saved. The Jews regarded this as indispensable to salvation. The grounds on which they would press it on the attention of Gentile converts would be very plausible, and such as would produce much embarrassment. For,

(1.) it would be maintained that the laws of Moses were the laws of God, and were therefore unchangeable; and,

(2.) it would doubtless be maintained that the religion of the Messiah was only a completing and perfecting of the Jewish religion; that it was designed simply to carry out its principles according to the promises, and not to subvert and destroy anything that had been established by Divine authority. It is usually not difficult to perplex and embarrass young converts with questions of modes, and rites, and forms of religion; and it is not uncommon that a revival is followed by some contention just like this. Opposing sects urge the claims of their peculiar rites, and seek to make proselytes, and introduce contention and strife into an otherwise peaceful and happy Christian community.

{e} "certain men" Gal 2:3 {f} "be circumcised" Joh 7:22 {g} "after the manner of Moses" Le 12:3

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Had no small dissension and disputation*. The word rendered dissension (*stasewv*) denotes sometimes sedition or intestine war, and sometimes earnest and violent disputation or controversy, Ac 23:7,10. In this place it clearly denotes that there was earnest and warm discussion; but it is not implied that there was any improper heat or temper on the part of Paul and Barnabas. Important principles were to be settled in regard to the organization of the church. Doctrines were advanced by the Judaizing teachers which were false, and which tended to great strife and disorder in the church. Those doctrines were urged with great zeal, were declared to be essential to salvation, and would therefore tend greatly to distract the minds of Christians, and to produce great anxiety. It became therefore necessary to meet them with a determined purpose, and to establish the truth on an immovable basis. And the case shows that it is right to "contend earnestly for the faith," (Jude 1:3;) and when similar cases occur, it is proper to resist the approach of error with all the arguments which may be at our command, and with all the weapons which truth can furnish. It is further implied here, that it is the duty of the ministers of the gospel to defend the truth and to oppose error. Paul and Barnabas regarded themselves as set for this purpose, (comp. Php 1:17, "Knowing that I am set for the *defence* of the gospel;") and Christian ministers should be *qualified* to defend the truth; and should be willing, with a proper spirit and with great earnestness, to maintain the doctrines revealed.

They determined. There was no prospect that the controversy would be settled by contention and argument. It would seem, from this statement, that those who came down from Judea were also willing that the whole matter should be referred to the apostles at Jerusalem. The reason for this may have been,

(1,) that Jerusalem would be regarded by them as the source of authority in the Christian church, as it had been among the Jews.

(2.) Most of the apostles and the most experienced Christians were there. They had listened to the instructions of Christ himself; had been long in the church; and were supposed to be better acquainted with its design and its laws.

(3.) Those who came from Judea would not be likely to acknowledge the authority of Paul as an apostle: the authority of those at Jerusalem they would recognize.

(4.) They might have had a very confident expectation that the decision there would be in their favour. The question had not been agitated there. They had all been Jews. And it is certain that they continued as yet to attend in the temple-service, and to conform to the Jewish customs. They might have expected, therefore, with great confidence, that the decision would be in their favour, and they were willing to refer it to those at Jerusalem.

Certain other of them. Of the brethren; probably of each party. They did not go to debate; or to give their opinion; or to vote in the case themselves; but to lay the question fairly before the apostles and elders.

Unto the apostles. The authority of the apostles in such a case would be acknowledged by all. They had been immediately instructed by the Saviour, and had the promise of infallible guidance in the organization of the church. **See Barnes** "Mt 16:19; **See Barnes "Mt 18:18"**.

And elders. **See Barnes "Ac 11:30"**.

Greek, Presbyters. **See Barnes** "Ac 14:23.

Who these were, or what was their office and authority, it is not easy now to determine. It may refer to the *aged* men in the church at Jerusalem, or to those who were appointed to rule and to preach in connexion with the apostles. As in the synagogue it was customary to determine questions

by the advice of a bench of elders, there is no improbability in the supposition that the apostles would imitate that custom, and appoint a similar arrangement in the Christian church. (*Grotius*.) It is generally agreed that this is the journey to which Paul refers in Gal 2:1-10. If so, it happened fourteen years after his conversion, Gal 2:1. It was done in accordance with the Divine command, "by revelation," Gal 2:2. And among those who went with him was Titus, who was afterwards so much distinguished as his companion, Gal 2:3.

About this question. The question whether the ceremonial laws of Moses were binding on Christian converts. In regard to the nature and design of this council at Jerusalem, **See Barnes** "Ac 15:30, **See Barnes "Ac 15:31"**.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And being brought on their way by the church*. Being attended and conducted by the Christian brethren. **See Barnes "Ro 15:24"**.

It was customary for the Christians to attend the apostles in their travels. Comp. 1Co 16:6,11; 3Jo 1:6.

Through Phenice. **See Barnes "Ac 11:19"**.

And Samaria. These places were directly on their route to Jerusalem.

Declaring the conversion, etc. Of the Gentiles in Antioch, and in the regions in Asia Minor, through which they had travelled. These remarkable events they would naturally communicate with joy to the Christians with whom they would have intercourse in their journey.

Caused great joy. At the news of the extensive spread of the gospel. It was an indication of their deep feeling in the interest of religion, that they thus rejoiced. Where Christians are themselves awake, and engaged in the service of Christ, they rejoice at the news of the conversion of sinners. Where they are cold, they hear such news with indifference, or with the utmost unconcern. One way of testing our feelings on the subject of religion is by the emotions which we have when we hear of extensive and glorious revivals of religion. Comp. **See Barnes "Ac 8:8"**.

{a} "brought on their way" Ro 15:24 1Co 16:6,11 3Jo 1:6

{b} "declaring the conversion" Ac 14:27 {c} "great joy" Lu 15:7,10

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *They were received of the church*. By the church, in a hospitable and friendly manner. They were acknowledged as Christian brethren, and received with Christian kindness. See Gal 2:9.

And they declared. Paul and Barnabas, and those with them. That is, they stated the case; the remarkable conversion of the Gentiles, the evidence of their piety, and the origin of the present dispute.

{*} "received of the church" "by" {*} "of the apostles" "by" {d} "they declared" Ac 21:19 {+} "declared" "related" {*} "with" "by"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *But there rose up*, etc. It has been doubted whether these are the words of Paul and Barnabas, relating what occurred at Antioch; or whether they are the words of Luke, recording what took place at Jerusalem. The correct exposition is probably that which refers it to the latter. For,

(1.) this seems to be the most obvious interpretation.

(2.) The use of the words "rose up" implies that. Those who disturbed the church at Antioch are said to have come down from Judea, Ac 15:1 and if this place referred to that occurrence, the same words would have been retained.

(3.) The particular specification here of "the sect of the Pharisees," looks as if this was an occurrence taking place at Jerusalem. No such specification exists respecting those who came down to Antioch; but it would seem here, as if this party in Jerusalem resolved still to abide by the law, and to impose those rites on the Christian converts. However, this interpretation is by no means certain.

Which believed. Who maintained, or taught.

That it was needful, etc. **See Barnes "Ac 15:1"**.

{1} "rose up", or "rose up, said they, certain" {e} "saying" Ac 15:1

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *And the apostles and elders*, etc. They came together in accordance with the authority in Mt 18:19,20. It would seem, also, that the whole church was convened on this occasion; and that they concurred, at least, in the judgment expressed in this case. See Ac 15:12,22,23.

For to consider this matter. Not to decide it arbitrarily, or even by authority, without deliberation; but to compare their views, and to express the result of the whole to the church at Antioch. It was a grave and difficult question, deeply affecting the entire constitution of the Christian church, and they therefore solemnly engaged in deliberation on the subject.

{f} "together for to consider" Mt 18:20

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Much disputing*. Or, rather, much *inquiry*, or *deliberation*. With our word *disputing*, we commonly connect the idea of heat and anger. This is not necessarily implied in the word used here. It might have been calm, solemn, deliberate inquiry; and there is no evidence that it was conducted with undue warmth or anger,

Peter rose up, and said. Peter was probably the most aged, and was most accustomed to speak, Ac 2:14 3:6,12.

Besides, there was a particular reason for his speaking here, as he had been engaged in similar scenes, and understood the case, and had had evidence that God had converted sinners without the

Mosaic rites, and knew that it would have been inexpedient to have imposed these rites on those who had thus been converted.

A good while ago. Ac 10. Some time since. So long since that there had been opportunity to ascertain whether it was necessary to observe the laws of Moses in order to the edification of the church.

God made choice, etc. That is, of all the apostles, he designated me to engage in this work. Comp. **See Barnes** "Mt 16:18, with Ac 10.

That the Gentiles. Cornelius, and those who were assembled with him at Caesarea. This was the first case that had occurred, and therefore it was important to appeal to it.

{g} "ye know how" Mt 16:18,19; Ac 10:20

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Verse 7.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *And God, which knoweth the hearts*, Ac 1:24. God thus knew whether they were *true* converts or not, and gave a demonstration that he acknowledged them as his.

Giving them the holy Ghost, etc. Ac 10:45,46.

{h} "which knoweth the hearts" Ac 1:24 {*} "witness" "Bore testimony to them" {+} "holy Ghost" "Spirit"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *And put no difference*, etc. Though they had not been circumcised, and though they did not conform to the law of Moses. Thus God showed that the observance of these rites was not necessary in order to the true conversion of men, and to acceptance with him. He did not give us, who are Jews, any advantage over them, but justified and purified all in the same manner.

Purifying their hearts. Thus giving the best evidence that he had renewed them, and admitted them to favour with him.

By faith. By believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. This showed that the plan on which God was now about to show favour to men, was not by external rites and ceremonies, but by a scheme which required faith as the only condition of acceptance. It is further implied here, that there is no true faith which does not purify the heart.

{a} "purifying their hearts by faith" Heb 9:13,14; 1Pe 1:22

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Why tempt ye God*? Why provoke him to displeasure? Why, since he has shown his determination to accept them without such rites, do you provoke him by attempting to impose on

his own people rites without his authority, and against his manifest will? The argument is, that God had already accepted them. To attempt to impose these rites would be to provoke him to anger; to introduce observances which he had shown it was his purpose should now be abolished.

To put a yoke. That which would be burdensome and oppressive, or which would infringe on their just freedom, as the children of God. It is, called in Ga 5:1, "a yoke of bondage." **See Barnes "Mt 23:4"**.

A yoke is an emblem of slavery or bondage, 1Ti 6:1 or of affliction, La 3:27; or of punishment, La 1:14; or of oppressive and burdensome ceremonies, as in this place; or of the restraints of Christianity, Mt 11:29,30. In this place they are called a *yoke*, because,

(1.) they were burdensome and oppressive; and,

(2.) because they would be an infringement of Christian freedom. One design of the gospel was to set men free from such rites and ceremonies. The yoke here referred to is not the moral law, and the just restraints of religion; but the ceremonial laws and customs of the Jews.

Which neither our fathers, etc. Which have been found burdensome at all times. They were expensive, and painful, and oppressive: and as they had been found to be so, it was not proper to impose them on the Gentile converts, but should rather rejoice at any evidence that the people of God might be delivered from them.

Were able to bear. Which are found to be oppressive and burdensome. They were attended with great inconvenience, and many transgressions, as the consequence.

{b} "a yoke on the neck" Ga 5:1

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *But we believe*. We apostles, who have been with them; and have seen the evidences of their acceptance with God.

Through the grace, etc. By the grace or mercy of Christ alone, without any of the rites and ceremonies of the Jews.

We shall be saved, even as they. In the same manner, by the mere grace of Christ. So far from being necessary to their salvation, they are really of no use in ours. We are to be saved not by these ceremonies, but by the mere mercy of God in the Redeemer. They should not, therefore, be imposed on others.

{c} "through the grace of the Lord Jesus" Ro 3:24 Eph 2:8; Tit 3:4,5

{+} "even" "In like manner"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Then all the multitude*. Evidently the multitude of private Christians who were assembled on this occasion. That it does not refer to a synod of ministers and elders merely, is apparent,

(1.) because the church, the brethren, are represented as having been present, and concurring in the final opinion, Ac 15:22,23; and,

(2.) because the word multitude (*to plhyov*) would not have been used in describing the collection of apostles and elders merely. Comp. Lu 1:10,11,13 5:6 6:17 19:37 Joh 5:3 21:6; Ac 4:32 6:2; Mt 3:7.

Gave audience. Heard; listened attentively to.

Barnabas and Paul. They were deeply interested in it; and they were qualified to give a fair statement of the facts as they had occurred.

Declaring what miracles and wonders, etc. The argument here evidently is, that God had approved their work by miracles; that he gave evidence that what they did had his approbation; and that as all this was done without imposing on them the rites of the Jews, so it would follow that those were not now to be commanded.

{*} "audience" "hearkened to" {d} "God had wrought" Ac 14:27

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *James answered*. James the Less, son of Alpheus. **See Barnes "Ac 12:1"**.

Hearken unto me. This whole transaction shows that Peter had no such authority in the church as the Papists pretend, for otherwise his opinion would have been followed without debate. James had an authority not less than that of Peter. It is possible that he might have been next in age, (comp. 1Co 15:7;) and it seems morally certain that he remained for a considerable part of his life in Jerusalem, Ac 12:17 21:18 Ga 1:19 2:9,12.

{|} "peace" "were silent" {**} "saying" "spoke"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Simeon*. This is a Hebrew name. The Greek mode of writing it commonly was *Simon*. It was one of the names of Peter, Mt 4:18.

To take out of them a people. To choose from among the Gentiles those who should be his friends.

{e} "declared" Lu 2:31,32

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *The words of the prophets*. Am 9:11,12. It was a very material point with them, as Jews, to inquire whether this was in accordance with the predictions of the Scriptures. The most powerful revivals of religion, and the most striking demonstrations of the Divine Presence, will be in accordance with the Bible, and should be tested by it. This habit was always manifested by the apostles and early Christians, and should be followed by Christians at all times. Unless a supposed

work of grace accords with the Bible, and can be defended by it, it must be false, and should be opposed. Comp. Isa 8:20.

{f} "as it is written" Am 9:11,12

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *After this*. This quotation is not made literally either from the Hebrew or the Septuagint, which differs also from the Hebrew. The 17th verse is quoted literally from the Septuagint; but in the 16th the general sense only of the passage is retained. The *main point* of the quotation, as made by James, was to show that, according to the prophets, it was contemplated that the Gentiles should be introduced to the privileges of the children of God; and on this point the passage has a direct bearing. The prophet Amos Am 9:8-10 had described the calamities that should come upon the nation of the Jews, by their being scattered and driven away. This implied that the city of Jerusalem, and the temple, and the walls of the city, should be destroyed. But *after that* (Heb. "on that day," Am 9:11; that is, the day when he should revisit them, and recover them) he would restore them to their former privileges; would rebuild their temple, their city, and their walls, Am 9:11. And not only so—not only should the blessing descend on the Jews, but it should also be extended to others. The "remnant of Edom," "the heathen upon whom" his "name would be called," (Am 9:12,) should also partake of the mercy of God, and be subject to the Jewish people; and the time of general prosperity and of permanent blessings should follow, Am 9:13-15. James understands this as referring to the times of the Messiah, and to the introduction of the gospel to the Gentiles. And so the passage (Am 9:12)is rendered in the Septuagint. See Ac 15:17.

I will return. When the people of God are subjected to calamities and trials, it is often represented as if God had *departed* from them. This *returning*, therefore, is an image of their restoration to his favour, and to prosperity. This is not, however, in the Hebrew, in Am 9:11.

And will build again. In the calamities that should come upon the nation, (Am 9:8,) it is implied that the temple and the city should be destroyed. To build them again would be a proof of his returning favour.

The tabernacle of David. The *tent* of David. Here it means the house, or royal residence of David, and the kings of Israel. That is, he which was the work of Solomon; but to the magnificence and splendour of the dwelling place of David; that is, to the full enjoyment of their former high privileges and blessings.

Which is fallen down. Which would be destroyed by the captivity under the king of Babylon, and by the long neglect and decay resulting from their being carried to a distant land.

The ruins thereof. Hebrew, "Close up the breaches thereof." That is, it should be restored to its former prosperity and magnificence; an emblem of the favour of God, and of the spiritual blessings, that should in future times descend on the Jewish people.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *That the residue of men*. This verse is quoted literally from the Septuagint, and differs in some respects from the Hebrew. The phrase, "the residue of men," here is evidently understood, both by the Seventy and by James, as referring to others than the Jews— to the Gentiles. The *rest* of the world—implying that many of them would be admitted to the friendship and favour of God. The Hebrew is, "that they may possess the remnant of Edom." This change is made in the Septuagint by a slight difference in the reading of two Hebrew words. The Seventy, instead of the Hebrew

HEBREW

shall inherit, read

HEBREW, *shall seek of thee*; and instead of

HEBREW

Edom they read

HEBREW, *Man*, or *mankind*, i.e. men. Why this variation occurred, cannot be explained; but the sense is not materially different. In the Hebrew, the word *Edom* has undoubted reference to another nation than the Jewish; and the expression means, that in the great prosperity of the Jews, after their return, they should extend the influence of their religion to other nations; that is, as James applies it, the *Gentiles* might be brought to the privileges of the children of God.

And all the Gentiles. Heb., All the heathen; i.e., all who were not Jews. This was a clear prediction that other nations were to be favoured with the light of the true religion, and that without any mention of their conforming to the rites of the Jewish people.

Upon whom my name is called. Who are called by my name, or who are regarded by me as my people.

Who doeth all these things. That is, who will certainly accomplish this in its time.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Known unto God*, etc. **See Barnes "Ac 1:24"**.

The meaning of this verse, in this connexion, is this. God sees everything future; he knows what he will accomplish; he has a plan; and all his works are so arranged in his mind, that he sees all things distinctly and clearly. As he foretold these, it was a part of his plan; and as it was a part of his plan long since foretold, it should not be opposed and resisted by us. {a} "Known unto God" Nu 23:19 Isa 46:10

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *My sentence*. Gr., I judge, (*krinw*) that is, I give my opinion. It is the usual language in which a judge delivers his opinion; but it does not imply here that James assumed authority to settle the case, but merely that he gave his opinion or counsel.

That we trouble not them. That we do not molest, disturb, or oppress them, by imposing on them unnecessary and burdensome rites and ceremonies.

{*} "my sentence is" "judgment" {b} "turned to God" 1Th 1:9

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *That we write unto them*. Expressing our judgment, or our views of the case. This verse has greatly perplexed commentators. The main grounds of difficulty have been,

(1.) why fornication—an offence against the moral law, and about which there could be no dispute—should have been included; and,

(2.) whether the prohibition to abstain from blood is still binding.

That they abstain. That they refrain from these things, or wholly avoid them.

Pollutions of idols. The word rendered *pollutions* means any kind of defilement. But here it is evidently used to denote the flesh of those animals that were offered in sacrifice to idols. See Ac 15:29. That flesh, after being offered in sacrifice, was often exposed for sale in the markets, or was served up at feasts, 1Co 10:25-29. It became a very important question whether it was *right* for Christians to partake of it. The Jews would contend that it was, in fact, partaking of idolatry. The Gentile converts would allege that they did not eat it *as a sacrifice* to idols, or lend their countenance in any way to the idolatrous worship where it had been offered. See this subject discussed at length in 1Co 8:4-13. As idolatry was forbidden to the Jews in every form, and as partaking even of the sacrifices to idols, in their feasts, might seem to countenance idolatry, the Jews would be utterly opposed to it; and for the sake of peace, James advised that they be recommended to abstain from this. To partake of that food might not be morally wrong, (1Co 8:4,) but it would give occasion for scandal and offence; and, therefore, as a matter of expediency, it was advised that they should abstain from it.

And from *fornication*, The word used here—*porneiav*— is applicable to all illicit intercourse; and may refer to adultery, incest, and licentiousness in any form. There has been much diversity of opinion in regard to this expression. Interpreters have been greatly perplexed to understand why this violation of the *moral* law has been introduced amidst the violations of the *ceremonial* law; and the question is naturally asked, whether this was a sin about which there could be any debate between the Jewish and Gentile converts? Were there any who would practise it, or plead that it was lawful? If not, why is it prohibited here? Various interpretations have been proposed. Some have supposed that James refers here to the *offerings* which harlots would make of their gains to the service of religion, and that James would prohibit the reception of it. Beza, Selden, and Schleusner, suppose the word is taken for *idolatry*, as it is often represented in the Scriptures as consisting in unfaithfulness to God, and as it is often called adultery. Heringius supposes that marriage between idolaters and Christians is here intended. But, after all, the usual interpretation of the word, as referring to illicit intercourse of the sexes of any kind, is undoubtedly here to be retained. There is no reason for departing from the ordinary and usual meaning of the word. If it be asked, then, why this was particularly forbidden, and was introduced in this connexion, we may reply,

(1.) that this vice prevailed everywhere among the Gentiles, and was that to which all were particularly exposed.

(2.) That it was not deemed by the Gentiles disgraceful. It was practised without shame, and without remorse.—-Terence, Adelph. 1, 2, 21. See Grotius. It was important, therefore, that the pure laws of Christianity on this subject should be known, and that special pains should be taken to instruct the early converts from paganism in those laws. The same thing is necessary still in heathen lands.

(3.) This crime was connected with religion. It was the practice not only to introduce indecent pictures and emblems into their worship, but also for females to devote themselves to the service of particular temples, and to devote the avails of indiscriminate prostitution to the service of the god, or the goddess. The vice was connected with no small part of the pagan worship; and the images, the emblems, and the customs of idolatry, everywhere tended to sanction and promote it. A mass of evidence on this subject, which sickens the heart—but which would be too long and too indelicate to introduce here-may be seen in Tholuck's Nature and Moral Influence of Heathenism, in the Biblical Repository, for July, 1832, pp. 441—464. As this vice was almost universal; as it was practised without shame or disgrace; as there were no laws among the heathen to prevent it; as it was connected with all their views of idol worship and of religion, it, was important for the early Christians to frown upon and to oppose it, and to set a peculiar guard against it in all the churches. It was the sin to which, of all others, they were the most exposed, and which was most likely to bring scandal on the Christian religion. It is for this cause that it is so often and so pointedly forbidden in the New Testament, Ro 1:29 1Co 6:13,18 Ga 5:19; Eph 5:3 1Th 4:3.

And from *things strangled*. That is, from animals or birds that were killed without shedding their brood. The reason why these were considered by the Jews unlawful to be eaten was, that thus they would be under a necessity of eating blood, which was positively forbidden by the law. Hence it was commanded in the law, that when any beast or fowl was taken in a snare, the blood should be poured out before it was lawful to be eaten, Le 17:13.

And from blood. The eating of blood was strictly forbidden to the Jews. The reason of this was that it contained *the life*, Le 17:11,14. **See Barnes "Ro 3:25"**.

The use of blood was common among the Gentiles. They *drank* it often at their sacrifices, and in making covenants or compacts. To separate the Jews from them in this respect was one design of the prohibition. See Spencer, De Leg. Hebrm. pp. 144, 145, 169, 235, 377, 381, 594, Ed. 1732. See also this whole passage examined at length in Spencer, pp. 588—626. The primary reason of the prohibition was, that it was thus used in the feasts and compacts of idolaters. That blood was thus drank by the heathens, particularly by the Sabians, in their sacrifices, is fully proved by Spencer, De Leg., pp. 377—380. But the prohibition specifies a *higher* reason, that the life is in the blood, and that *therefore* it should not be eaten. **See Barnes "Ro 3:25"**.

This reason existed before any ceremonial law; is founded in the nature of things; has no particular reference to any custom of the Jews; and therefore is as forcible in any other circumstances as in theirs. It was proper, therefore, to forbid it to the early Christian converts; and for the same reason its use should be abstained from everywhere. It adds to the force of these remarks, when we remember that the same principle was settled before the laws of Moses were given; and that God regarded the fact that the life was in the blood as of so much importance as to make the shedding of it worthy of death, Ge 9:4-6. It is supposed, therefore, that this law is still obligatory. Perhaps also there is no food more unwholesome than blood; and it is a further circumstance of some moment that all men naturally revolt from it as an article of food.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *For Moses*. The meaning of this verse is, that the law of Moses, prohibiting these things, was read in the synagogues constantly. As these commands were constantly read, and as the Jewish converts would not soon learn that their ceremonial law had ceased to be binding, it was deemed to be a matter of expediency that no needless offence should be given to them. For the sake of peace, it was better that they should abstain from meat offered to idols than to give offence to the Jewish converts. Comp. 1Co 8:10-13.

Of old time. Greek, From ancient generations. It is an established custom; and therefore his laws are well known, and have, in their view, not only the authority of revelation, but the venerableness of antiquity.

In every city. Where there were Jews. This was the case in all the cities to which the discussion here had reference.

Them that preach him. That is, by reading the law of Moses. But in addition to reading the law, it was customary also to offer an explanation of its meaning. **See Barnes** "Lu 14:16, and Lu 4:17-22.

{*} "old time" "From ancient generations" {a} "being read" Ac 13:15,27

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Then pleased it*. It seemed fit and proper to them.

The apostles and elders. To whom the business had been particularly referred, Ac 15:2. Comp. Ac 16:4.

With the whole Church. All the Christians who were there assembled together. They *concurred* in the sentiment, and expressed their approbation in the letter that was sent, Ac 15:23. Whether they were *consulted*, does not particularly appear. But as it is not probable that they would volunteer an opinion unless they were consulted, it seems most reasonable to suppose that the apostles and elders submitted the case to them for their approbation. It would seem that the apostles and elders deliberated on it, and decided it; but still, for the sake of peace and unity, they also took measures to ascertain that their decision agreed with the unanimous sentiment of the church.

Chosen men. Men chosen for this purpose.

Of their own company. From among themselves. Greater weight and authority would thus be attached to their message.

Judas, surnamed Barsabas. Possibly the same who was nominated to the vacant place in the apostleship, Ac 1:23. But Grotius supposes that it was his brother.

And Silas. He was afterwards the travelling companion of Paul, Ac 15:40 16:25,29 17:4,10,15.

He is also the same person, probably, who is mentioned by the name of *Silvanus*, 2Co 1:19 1Th 1:1 2Th 1:1 1Pe 5:12.

Chief men among the brethren. Greek, *Leaders*. Comp. Lu 22:26. Men of influence, experience, and authority in the church. Judas and Silas are said to have been *prophets*, Ac 15:32. They had, therefore, been engaged as preachers and rulers in the church at Jerusalem.

{b} "Barsabas" Ac 1:23

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *And wrote letters*. Greek, *Having written*. He does not mean that they wrote more than one epistle.

By them. Greek, *By their hand*.

After this manner. Greek, These things.

Send greeting. A word of salutation, expressing their desire of the happiness (*cairein*) of the persons addressed. Comp. Mt 26:49; Mt 27:29 Lu 1:28; Joh 19:3.

In Antioch. Where the difficulty first arose.

And Syria. Antioch was the capital of Syria, and it is probable that the dispute was not confined to the capital.

And Cilicia. **See Barnes "Ac 6:9"**.

Cilicia was adjacent to Syria. Paul and Barnabas had travelled through it; and it is probable that the same difficulty would exist there which had disturbed the churches in Syria.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Forasmuch*. Since we have heard.

That certain. That some, Ac 15:1.

Have troubled you with words. With doctrines. They have disturbed your minds, and produced contentions.

Subverting your souls. The word here used occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, (*anaskeuazontev*.) It properly means to collect together the vessels used in a house—the household furniture—for the purpose of removing it. It is applied to marauders, robbers, and enemies, who remove and bear off property; thus producing distress, confusion, and disorder. It is thus used in the sense of disturbing, or destroying; and here denotes that they unsettled their minds—that they produced anxiety, disturbance, and distress—by these doctrines about Moses.

To whom we gave no such commandment. They went, therefore, without authority. Self-constituted and self-sent teachers not unfrequently produce disturbance and distress. Had the apostles been consulted on this subject, the difficulty would have been avoided. By thus saying that they had not given them a command to teach these things, they practically assured the Gentile converts that they did not approve of the course which those who went from Judea had taken.

{+} "certain" "Some" {c} "which went out" Ac 15:1 {d} "troubled you" Ga 5:12 {e} "subverting your souls" Ga 5:4 {++} "saying" Unsettling your minds" {f} "To whom we gave" Ga 2:4

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15 - Verse 25

Verse 25. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

{&} "one accord" "one mind"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Men that have hazarded their lives*, etc. See Ac 14. This was a noble testimony to the character of Barnabas and Paul. It was a commendation of them to the confidence of the churches, and an implied expression that they wished their authority to be regarded in the establishment and organization of the church.

For the name. In the cause of the Lord Jesus.

{g} "hazarded their lives" Ac 13:50 14:19

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *The same things*. The same things that we wrote to you. They shall confirm all by their own statements.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost*. This is a strong and undoubted claim to inspiration. It was with special reference to the organization of the church that the Holy Spirit had been promised to them by the Lord Jesus, Mt 18:18-20 Joh 14:26.

No greater burthen. To impose no greater restraints; to enjoin no other observances. **See Barnes "Ac 15:10".**

Than these necessary things. Necessary,

(1.) in order to preserve the peace of the church.

(2.) To conciliate the minds of the Jewish converts, Ac 15:21.

(3.) Necessary in their circumstances, particularly, because the crime which is specified—licentiousness—was one to which all early converts were particularly exposed. **See Barnes "Ac 15:20".**

{|} "Ghost" "Spirit" {h} "burthen" Re 2:24

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *From meats offered to idols*. This explains what is meant by "pollutions of idols," Ac 15:20.

Ye shall do well. You will do what ought to be done in regard to the subjects of dispute.

{i} "abstain from meats" Ac 15:20 {k} "keep yourselves" 2Co 11:9 Jas 1:27; 1Jo 5:21 Jude 1:20,21

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *They rejoiced for the consolation*. They acquiesced in the decision of the apostles and elders, and rejoiced that they were not to be subjected to the burdensome rites and ceremonies of the Jewish religion. This closes the account of the first Christian council. It was conducted throughout on Christian principles, in a mild, kind, conciliatory spirit; and is a model for all similar assemblages. It came together, not to promote, but to silence disputation; not to persecute the people of God, but to promote their peace; not to be a scene of harsh and angry recrimination, but to be an example of all that was mild, and tender, and kind. Those who composed it came together, not to carry a point, not to overreach their adversaries, not to be party men; but to mingle their sober counsels to inquire what was right, and to express, in a Christian manner, that which was proper to be done. Great and important principles were to be established, in regard to the Christian church; and they engaged in their work evidently with a deep sense of their responsibility, and with a just view of their dependence on the aid of the Holy Spirit. How happy would it have been if this spirit had been possessed by all professedly Christian councils! How happy, if all had really sought the peace and harmony of the churches; and if none had ever been convened to kindle the fires of persecution, to evince the spirit of party, or to rend and destroy the church of God!

This council has been usually appealed to as the authority for councils in the church, as a permanent arrangement; and especially as an authority for courts of appeal and control. But it establishes neither, and should be brought as an authority for neither. For,

(1.) it was not a court of appeal in any intelligible sense. It was an assembly convened for a special purpose; designed to settle an inquiry which arose in a particular part of the church, and which required the collected wisdom of the apostles and elders to settle.

(2.) It had none of the marks or appendages of a court. The term court, or judicature, is nowhere applied to it, nor to any assembly of Christian men, in the New Testament. Nor should these terms be used now in the churches. Courts of judicature imply a degree of authority, which cannot be proved from the New Testament to have been conceded to any ecclesiastical body of men.

(3.) There is not the slightest intimation that anything like permanency was to be attached to this council; or that it would be periodically or regularly repeated. It will prove, indeed, that when cases of difficulty occur, when Christians are perplexed and embarrassed, or when contentions arise, it will be proper to refer to Christian men for advice and direction. Such was the case here; and such a course is obviously proper. If it should be maintained that it is well that Christian ministers and laymen should assemble periodically, at stated intervals, on the supposition that such cases may arise, this is conceded; but the example of the apostles and elders should not be pleaded as making such assemblies of Divine right and authority, or as being essential to the existence of the church of God. Such an arrangement has been deemed to be so desirable by Christians, that it has been adopted by Episcopalians in their regular annual and triennial conventions; by Methodists in their conferences; by Presbyterians in their general assembly; by Friends in their yearly meetings; by Baptists and Congregationalists in their associations, etc. But the example of the council *summoned on a special emergency* at Jerusalem should not be pleaded as giving Divine authority to all, or to any, of these periodical assemblages. They are wise and prudent arrangements, contributing to the peace of the church; and the example of the council at Jerusalem can be adduced as furnishing as much Divine authority for one as for another; that is, it does not make all or either of them of Divine authority, or as obligatory on the church of God.

(4.) It should be added, that a degree of authority (compare Ac 16:4) would, of course, be attached to the decision of the apostles and elders of that time, which cannot be to any body of ministers and laymen now. Besides, it should never be forgotten—what, alas, it seems to have been the pleasure and the interests of ecclesiastics to forget—that neither the apostles nor elders *asserted* any jurisdiction over the churches of Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia; that they did not claim a right to have these cases *referred to them*; that they did not attempt "to lord it" over their faith or their consciences. The case was a single, specific, definite question, referred to them; and they decided it as such. They asserted no abstract right of such jurisdiction; they sought not to intermeddle with it; they enjoined no future reference to them, to their successors, or to any ecclesiastical tribunal. They evidently regarded the churches as blessed with the most ample freedom; and evidently contemplated no arrangement of a permanent character, asserting a right to legislate on articles of faith, or to make laws for the direction of the Lord's freemen.

{1} "consolation" "exhortation"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *Being prophets*. **See Barnes "Ac 11:27".**

This evidently implies that they had been preachers before they went to Antioch. What was the precise nature of the office of a *prophet* in the Christian church, it is not easy to ascertain. Possibly it may imply that they were *teachers* of unusual or remarkable ability.

Confirmed them. Strengthened them; that is, by their instructions and exhortations. **See Barnes "Ac 14:22".**

{*} "prophets" "teachers" {a} "confirmed them" Ac 14:22

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *A space*. For some time.

They were let go in peace. An expression implying that they departed with the affectionate regard of the Christians to whom they had ministered, and with their highest wishes for their prosperity, 1Co 16:11 2Jo 1:10. Silas however, it seems, chose to remain.

Unto the apostles. At Jerusalem. Many Mss., however, instead of "unto the *apostles*," read, "unto those who had sent them." The sense is not materially different.

{+} "tarried" "Abode" {++} "a space" "For some time" {|} "let go" "dismissed" {b} "peace" 1Co 16:11 2Jo 1:10

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *Notwithstanding*, etc. This whole verse is wanting in many Mss., in the Syriac, Arabic, and Coptic versions; and is regarded as spurious by Mill, Griesbach, and by other critics. It was

probably introduced by some early transcriber, who judged it necessary to complete the narrative. The Latin Vulgate reads, "It seemed good to Silas to remain, but Judas went alone to Jerusalem."

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch*. How long a time is unknown. It is probable that at this time the unhappy incident occurred between Paul and Peter, which is recorded in Ga 2:11-14.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *Let us go again and visit our brethren*. That is, in the churches which they had established in Asia Minor, Ac 13, Ac 14. This was a natural wish; and was an enterprise that might be attended with important advantages to those feeble churches.

{c} "in every city" Ac 13:4

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *And Barnabas determined*. Greek, willed, or was disposed to *ebouleusato*.

John, etc. **See Barnes "Ac 12:12"**.

He had been with them before as a travelling companion, Ac 12:25 13:5. He was the son of a sister of Barnabas, Col 4:10; and it is probable that Barnabas' affection for his nephew was the main reason for inducing him to wish to take him with him in the journey.

{|} "determined" "desired" {d} "John, whose surname" Ac 12:12,25; Col 4:10

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *But Paul thought not good*. Did not think it proper. Because he could not confide in his perseverance with them in the toils and perils of their journey.

Who departed from them, etc. Ac 13:13. Why he did this is not known. It was evidently, however, for some cause which Paul did not consider satisfactory, and which, in his view, disqualified him from being their attendant again.

To the work. Of preaching the gospel.

{e} "departed" Ac 13:13

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *And the contention was so sharp*. The word used here— *paroxusmov*—is that from which our word *paroxysm* is derived. It may denote any excitement of mind, and is used in a good sense in Heb 10:24. It here means, evidently, a violent altercation that resulted in their separation for a time, and in their engaging in different spheres of labour.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15 - Verse 40

Verse 40. *Being recommended*. Being commended by prayer to God. **See Barnes "Ac 14:26".**

{a} "recommended by the" Ac 14:26 20:32

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 15 - Verse 41

Verse 41. *Syria and Cilicia*. These were countries lying near to each other, which Paul, in company with Barnabas, had before visited.

Confirming the churches. Strengthening them by instruction and exhortation. It has no reference to the rite of confirmation. **See Barnes "Ac 14:22".**

In regard to this unhappy contention between Paul and Barnabas, and their separation from each other, we may make the following remarks:

(1.) That no apology or vindication of it is offered by the sacred writer. It was undoubtedly improper and evil. It was a melancholy instance in which even apostles evinced an improper spirit, and engaged in improper strife.

(2.) In this contention it is probable that Paul was, in the main, right. Barnabas seems to have been influenced by attachment to a relative; Paul sought a helper who would not shrink from duty and danger. It is clear that Paul had the sympathies and prayers of the church in his favour, Ac 15:40, and it is more than probable that Barnabas departed without any such sympathy, Ac 15:39.

(3.) There is reason to think that this contention was overruled for the furtherance of the gospel. They went to different places, and preached to different people. It often happens that the unhappy and wicked strifes of Christians are the means of exciting their zeal, and of extending the gospel, and of establishing churches. But no thanks to their contention; nor is the guilt of their anger and strife mitigated by this.

(4.) This difference was afterwards reconciled, and Paul and Barnabas again became travelling companions, 1Co 9:6 Ga 2:9.

(5.) There is evidence that Paul also became reconciled to John Mark, Col 4:10 Phm 1:24; 2Ti 4:11.

How long this separation continued is not known; but perhaps in this journey with Barnabas, John gave such evidence of his courage and zeal as induced Paul again to admit him to his confidence as a travelling companion, and as to become a profitable fellow-labourer. See 2Ti 4:11, "Take Mark, and bring him with thee; for he is profitable to me for the ministry."

(6.) This account proves that there was no collusion or agreement among the apostles to impose upon mankind. Had there been such an agreement, and had the books of the New Testament been an imposture, the apostles would have been represented as perfectly harmonious, and as united in all their views and efforts. What impostor would have thought of the device of representing the early friends of the Christian religion as divided, and contending, and separating from each other? Such a statement has an air of candour and honesty, and at the same time is apparently so much again, st the truth of the system, that no impostor would have thought of resorting to it.

{b} "confirming the churches" Ac 16:5

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16 - Verse 1

CHAPTER 16

Verse 1. *Then came he*. That is, Paul, in company with Silas. Luke does not give us the history of Barnabas, but confines his narrative to the journey of Paul.

To Derbe and Lystra. **See Barnes** "Ac 14:6

".

And behold a certain disciple—named Timotheus. It was to this disciple that Paul afterwards addressed the two epistles which bear his name. It is evident that he was a native of one of these places, but whether of Derbe or Lystra it is impossible to determine.

The son of a certain woman, etc. Her name was Eunice, 2Ti 1:5.

And believed. And was a Christian. It is evident also that *her* mother was a woman of distinguished Christian piety, 2Ti 1:5. It was not lawful for a Jew to marry a woman of another nation, or to give his daughter in marriage to a Gentile, Ezr 9:12. But it is probable that this law was not regarded very strictly by the Jews who lived in the midst of heathen nations. It is evident that Timothy, at this time, was very young; for when Paul besought him to abide at Ephesus, to take charge of the church there, 1Ti 1:3, he addressed him then as a young man: 1Ti 4:12, "Let no man despise thy youth."

But his father was a Greek. Evidently a man who had not been circumcised—for had he been, Timothy would have been also.

{c} "Derbe and Lystra" Ac 14:6 {d} "Timotheus" Ac 19:22 {e} "certain woman" Ac 14:5 {*} "Greek" "A Gentile"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Which*. That is, Timothy. The connexion requires us to understand this of him. Of the character of his father nothing is known.

Was well reported of. Was esteemed highly as a young man of piety and promise. **See Barnes "Ac 6:3"; comp.** 1Ti 5:10. Timothy had been religiously educated. He was carefully trained in the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, and was therefore the better qualified for his work, 2Ti 3:15.

{f} "well reported" Ac 6:3

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Him would Paul have*, etc. This was an instance of Paul's selecting young men of piety for the holy ministry. It shows,

(1.) that he was disposed to look up and call forth the talent that might be in the church, that might be usefully employed. It is quite evident that Timothy would not have thought of this, had it not been suggested by Paul. The same thing education societies are attempting now to accomplish.

(2.) That Paul sought proper qualifications, and valued them. Those were,

(a.) that he had a good reputation for piety, etc., Ac 16:2
This he demanded as an indispensable qualification for a minister of the gospel. 1Ti 3:7. "Moreover he (a bishop) must have a good report of them which are without." Comp. Ac 22:12.

(b) Paul esteemed him to be a young man of talents and prudence. His admitting him to a partnership in his labours, and his entrusting to him the affairs of the church at Ephesus, prove this.

(c) He had been carefully trained in the Holy Scriptures. A foundation was thus laid for usefulness. And this qualification seems to have been deemed by Paul of indispensable value for the right discharge of his duties in this holy office.

And he took and circumcised him. This was evidently done to avoid the opposition and reproaches of the Jews. It was a measure not binding in itself, (comp. Ac 15:1,28,29) but the neglect of which would expose to contention and opposition among the Jews, and greatly retard or destroy his usefulness. It was an act of expediency for the sake of peace, and was in accordance with Paul's uniform and avowed principle of conduct. 1Co 9:20, "And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews." Comp. Ac 21:23-26.

{g} "circumcised him, because" Ga 2:3-8 5:1-3 {h} "Jews which were" 1Co 9:20

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And as they went through the cities*. The cities of Syria, Cilicia, etc.

They delivered them. Paul and Silas delivered to the Christians in those cities.

The decrees. *ta dogmata*. The decrees in regard to the four things specified in Ac 15:20,29. The word translated *decrees* occurs in Lu 2:1, "*A decree* from Caesar Augustus;" in Ac 17:7, "The

decrees of Caesar;" in Eph 2:15 and in Col 2:14. It properly means, a law or edict of a king or legislature. In this instance it was the decision of the council in a case submitted to it; and implied an obligation on the Christians to submit to that decision. The laws of the apostles would, and ought to be, in such cases, esteemed to be binding. It is probable that a correct and attested copy of the letter, Ac 15:23-29 would be sent to the various churches of the Gentiles.

To keep. To obey, or to observe.

That were ordained. Gr., That were adjudged, or determined.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Established in the faith*. Confirmed in the belief of the Gospel. The effect of the wise and conciliatory measure was to increase and strengthen the churches.

{k} "churches established" Ac 15:41

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Throughout Phrygia*. This was the largest province of Asia Minor. It had Bithynia, north; Pisidia and Lycia, south; Galatia and Cappadocia, east; and Lydia and Mysia, west.

And the region of Galatia. This province was directly east of Phrygia. The region was formerly conquered by the Gauls. They settled in it, and called it, after their own name, *Galatia*. The Gauls invaded the country at different times, and no less than three tribes or bodies of Gauls had possession of it. Many Jews were also settled there. It was from this cause that so many parties could be formed there, and that so much controversy would arise between the Jewish and Gentile converts. See the Epistle to the Galatians.

And were forbidden. Probably by a direct revelation. The reason of this was, doubtless, that it was the intention of God to extend the gospel farther into the regions of Greece than would have been done if they had remained in Asia Minor. This prohibition was the means of the first introduction of the gospel into Europe.

In Asia. **See Barnes "Ac 2:9"**.

This was doubtless the region of proconsular Asia. This region was also called *Ionia*. Of this region Ephesus was the capital; and here were situated also the cities of Smyrna, Thyatira, Philadelphia, etc., within which the seven churches, mentioned in Revelation chapters 1-3, were established. Cicero speaks of proconsular Asia as containing the provinces of Phrygia, Mysia, Carla, and Lydia. In all this region the gospel was afterwards preached with great success. But now a more important and wider field was opened before Paul and Barnabas, in the extensive country of Macedonia.

{l} "Galatia" Ga 1:2 1Pe 1:1 {m} "forbidden of the Holy Ghost" Am 8:11,12; 1Co 12:11

{+} "Ghost" "Spirit" {n} "in Asia" Re 1:4,11

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Mysia*. This was a province of Asia Minor, having Propontis on the north, Bithynia on the east, Lydia on the south, and the AEgean Sea on the west.

They assayed. They endeavoured; they attempted.

Into Bithynia. A province of Asia Minor, lying east of Mysia.

{*} "assayed" "attempted"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Came down to Troas*. This was a city of Phrygia or Mysia, on the Hellespont, between Troy north, and Assos south. Sometimes the name *Troas*, or *Troad*, is used to denote the whole country of the Trojans, the province where the ancient city of Troy had stood. This region was much celebrated in the early periods of Grecian history. It was here that the events recorded in the Iliad of Homer are supposed to have occurred. The city of Troy has long since been completely destroyed. *Troas* is several times mentioned in the New Testament, 2Co 2:12 2Ti 4:13; Ac 20:5.

{a} "Troas" 2Co 2:12

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *And a vision*. **See Barnes "Ac 9:10"**.

There stood a man, etc. The appearance of a man, who was known to be of Macedonia, probably, by his dress and language. Whether this was in a dream, or whether it was a representation made to the senses while awake it is impossible to tell. The will of God was at different times made known in both these ways. Comp. Mt 2:12; **See Barnes "Ac 10:3"**.

Grotius supposes that this was the guardian angel of Macedonia, and refers for illustration to Da 10:12,13,20,21.

But there seems to be no foundation for this opinion.

Of Macedonia. This was an extensive country of Greece, having Thrace on the north, Thessaly south, Epirus west, and the AEgean Sea east. It is supposed that it was peopled by Kittim, son of Javan, Ge 10:4. The kingdom rose into celebrity chiefly under the reign of Philip and his son Alexander the Great. It was the first region in Europe in which we have any record that the gospel was preached.

And help us. That is, by preaching the gospel. This was a call to preach the gospel in an extensive heathen land, amidst many trials and dangers. To this call, notwithstanding all this prospect of danger, they cheerfully responded, and gave themselves to the work. Their conduct was thus an example to the church. From all portions of the earth a similar call is now coming to the churches. Openings of a similar character, for the introduction of the gospel, are presented in all lands. Appeals are coming from every quarter; and all that seems now necessary for the speedy conversion of the

world, is for the church to enter into these vast fields with the self-denial, spirit, and zeal which characterized the apostle Paul.

{b} "man of Macedonia" Ac 10:30

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *We endeavoured*. This is the first instance in which Luke refers to himself as being in company with Paul. It is hence probable that he joined Paul and Silas about this time; and it is evident that he attended him in his travels, as recorded throughout the remainder of the Acts.

Assuredly gathering. Being certainly convinced.

{c} "go into Macedonia" 2Co 2:13

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Loosing from Troas*. Setting sail from this place.

To Samothracia. This was an island in the AEgean Sea, not far from Thrace. It was peopled by inhabitants from Samos and from Thrace, and hence called Samothracia. It was about twenty miles in circumference; and was an asylum for fugitives and criminals.

And the next day to Neapolis.This was a maritime city of Macedonia, near the borders of Thrace. It is now called *Napoli*.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *And from thence to Philippi*. The former name of this city was Dathos. It was repaired and adorned by Philip, the father of Alexander the Great, and after him was called Philippi. It was famous for having been the place where several battles were fought in the civil wars of the Romans; and, among others, for the decisive battle between Brutus and Antony. At this place Brutus killed himself. To the church in this place Paul afterwards wrote the epistle which bears its name.

Which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia. This whole region had been conquered by the Romans under Paulus Emilius. By him it was divided into four parts or provinces. (*Livy*.) The Syriac version renders it, "a city of the *first* part of Macedonia;" and there is a medal extant which also describes this region by this name. It has been proposed, therefore, to alter the Greek text in accordance with this, since it is known that Amphipolis was made the chief city by Paulus Emilius. But it may be remarked, that although Amphipolis was the chief city in the time of Paulus Emilius, it may have happened that in the lapse of two hundred and twenty years from that time, Philippi might have become the most extensive and splendid city. The Greek here may also mean simply that this was the *first* city to which they arrived in their travels.

And a colony. This is a Latin word, and means that this was a Roman colony. The word denotes a city or province which was planted or occupied by Roman citizens. On one of the coins now

extant, it is recorded that Julius Caesar bestowed the advantages and dignity of a colony on Philippi, which Augustus afterwards confirmed and augmented. See *Rob. Cal*., Art. Philippi.

Certain days. Some days.

{d} "Philippi, which is the chief city" Php 1:1 {1} "the chief city" "the first" {+} "certain days" "Some"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *And on the sabbath*. There is no doubt that in this city there were Jews. In the time of the apostles they were scattered extensively throughout the known world.

By a river side. What river this was is not known. It is known, however, that the Jews were accustomed to provide water, or to build their synagogues and oratories near water, for the convenience of the numerous washings before and during their religious services.

Where prayer. Where there was a *proseuchae*, or place of prayer; or where prayer was commonly offered. The Greek will bear either; but the sense is the same. Places for prayer were erected by the Jews in the vicinity of cities and towns, and particularly where there were not Jewish families enough, or where they were forbidden by the magistrate to erect a synagogue. These *proseuchae*, or places of prayer, were simple enclosures made of stones in a grove, or under a tree, where there would be a retired and convenient place for worship.

Was wont. Was accustomed to be offered; or where it was established by custom.

And spake unto the women, etc. This was probably before the regular service of the place commenced.

{2} "the sabbath" "Sabbath day" {e} "was wont" Ac 21:5

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *A seller of purple*. Purple was a most valuable colour, obtained usually from shell-fish. It was chiefly worn by princes, and by the rich; and the traffic in it might be very profitable.

The city of Thyatira. This was a city of Lydia, in Asia Minor, now called *Ak-hisar*. The art of dying was particularly cultivated, as appears from an inscription found there. (See *Kuinoel*.)

Which worshipped God. A religious woman; a proselyte. **See Barnes "Ac 13:16"**

Whose heart the Lord opened. **See Barnes "Lu 24:45"**.

{a} "the Lord opened" Lu 24:45

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *And when she was baptized*. Apparently without any delay. Comp. Ac 2:41 8:38. It was usual to be baptized immediately on believing.

And her household. Gr., Her house, (*o oikov authv*.) Her family. No mention is made of their having believed. And the case is one that affords a strong presumptive proof that this was an instance of *household* or infant baptism. For,

(1.) *her* believing is particularly mentioned.

(2.) It is not intimated that *they* believed. On the contrary, it is strongly implied that they did not.

(3.) It is manifestly implied that *they* were baptized because *she* believed. It was the offering of her family to the Lord. It is just such an account as would now be given of a household or family that were baptized on the faith of the parent.

If ye have judged me to be faithful. If you deem me a Christian, or a believer.

And she constrained us. She urged us. This was an instance of great hospitality, and also an evidence of her desire for further instruction in the doctrines of religion.

{b} "besought us" Heb 13:2

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *As we went to prayer*. Greek, As we were going to the *proseuchae*, the place of prayer, Ac 16:13. Whether this was on the same day in which the conversion of Lydia occurred, or at another time, is not mentioned by the historian.

A certain damsel. A maid; a young woman.

Possessed with a spirit of divination. Greek, *Python*. See the margin. Python, or Pythios, was one of the names of Apollo, the Grecian god of the fine arts, of music, poetry, medicine, and eloquence. Of these he was esteemed to have been the inventor. He was reputed to be the third son of Jupiter and Latona. He had a celebrated temple and oracle at Delphi, which was resorted to from all parts of the world, and which was perhaps the only oracle that was in universal repute. The name *Python* is said to have been given him, because, as soon as he was born, he destroyed with arrows a serpent of that name, that had been seen by Juno to persecute Latona; hence his common name was *the Pythian Apollo*. He had temples on Mount Parnassus, at Delphi, Delos, Claros, Tenedos, etc., and his worship was almost universal In the celebrated oracle at Delphi, the priestess of Apollo pretended to be inspired; became violently agitated during the periods of pretended inspiration; and during those periods gave such responses to inquirers as were regarded as the oracles of the god. Others would also make pretensions to such inspiration; and the art of fortune-telling, or of jugglery, was extensively practised, and was the source of much gain. **See Barnes "Ac 8:8-10"**.

What was the cause of this extensive delusion in regard to the oracle at Delphi, it is not necessary now to inquire. It is plain that Paul regarded this as a case of demoniacal possession, and treated it accordingly.

Her masters. Those in whose employ she was.

By soothsaying. Pretending to foretell future events.

{c} "possessed with" 1Sa 28:7 {1} "divination" "Python" {d} "gain by soothsaying" Ac 19:24 {*} "soothsaying" "Divining"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *The same followed Paul*, etc. Why she did this, or under what pretence, the sacred writer has not informed us. Various conjectures have been formed of the reason why this was done. It may have been,

(1.) that as she prophesied for gain, she supposed that Paul and Silas would reward her if she publicly proclaimed that they were the servants of God. Or,

(2.) because she was conscious that an evil spirit possessed her, and that she feared that Paul and Silas would expel that spirit; and that, by proclaiming them to be the servants of God, she hoped to conciliate their favour. Or,

(3.) more probably, it was because she saw evident tokens of their being sent from God, and that their doctrine would prevail; and by proclaiming this she hoped to acquire more authority, and a higher reputation for being herself inspired. Comp. Mr 5:7.

{e} "most high God" Ge 14:18-22 {f} "way of salvation" Ac 18:26 Heb 10:20

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *But Paul, being grieved*. Being molested, troubled, offended. Paul was grieved, probably,

(1.) because her presence was troublesome to him;

(2.) because it might be said that he was in alliance with her, and that his pretensions were just like hers;

(3) because what she did was for the sake of gain, and was a base imposition;

(4.) because her state was one of bondage and delusion, and it was proper to free her from this demoniacal possession; and,

(5.) because the system under which she was acting was a part of a vast scheme of delusion and imposture, which had spread over a large portion of the pagan world, and which was then holding it in bondage. Throughout the Roman empire, the inspiration of the priestesses of Apollo was believed in; and temples were everywhere reared to perpetuate and celebrate the delusion. Against this extensive system of imposture and fraud, Christianity must oppose itself; and this was a favourable instance to expose the delusion, and to show the power of the Christian religion over all the arts and powers of imposture. The mere fact that in a *very few* instances—of which this was one—they spoke the truth, did not make it improper for Paul to interpose. That fact would only tend to perpetuate the delusion, and to make his interposition more proper and necessary. The expulsion of the evil spirit would also afford a signal proof of the fact that the apostles were *really* from God. A far better proof than her noisy and troublesome proclamation of it would furnish.

In the name of Jesus Christ. Or, by the authority of Jesus Christ. **See Barnes "Ac 3:6"**.

{g} "said to the spirit" Mr 1:25,34 {h} "he came out" Mr 16:17

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *The hope of their gains was gone*. It was this that troubled and enraged them. And this is as likely to enrage men as anything. Instead of regarding the act as proof of Divine power, they were intent only on their profits. And their indignation furnishes a remarkable illustration of the fixedness with which men will regard wealth; of the fact that the love of it will blind them to all the truths of religion, and all the proofs of the power and presence of God; and of the fact that any interposition of Divine power that destroys their hopes of gain, fills them with wrath and hatred and murmuring. Many a man has been opposed to God and his gospel, because, if religion should be extensively prevalent, the hopes of gain would be gone. Many a slave-dealer, and many a trafficker in ardent spirits, and many a man engaged in other unlawful modes of gain, have been unwilling to abandon their employments, simply because the hopes of their gain would be destroyed. No small part of the opposition to the gospel arises from the fact, that, if embraced, it would strike at so much of the dishonourable employments of men, and make them honest and conscientious.

The marketplace. The court, or forum. The market-place was a place of concourse; and the courts were often held in or near those places.

The rulers. The term used here refers commonly to *civil magistrates*.

{i} "gains was gone" Ac 19:24,27 {2} "market-place" "court" {k} "rulers" Mt 10:18

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *And brought them to the magistrates*. To the *military rulers*, (*strathgoiv*) or praetors. Philippi was a Roman colony; and it is probable that the officers of the army exercised the double function of civil and military rulers.

Do exceedingly trouble our city. In what way they did it, they specify in the next verse. The charge which they wished to substantiate was that of being disturbers of the public peace. All at once they became conscientious. They forgot the subject of their gains, and were greatly distressed about the violation of the laws. There is nothing that will make men more hypocritically conscientious, than to denounce, and detect, and destroy their unlawful and dishonest practices. Men who are thus exposed become suddenly filled with reverence for the law, or for religion; and they, who have heretofore cared nothing for either, become greatly alarmed lest the public peace should be disturbed. Men slumber quietly in sin, and pursue their wicked gains; they hate or despise all law and all forms of religion; but the moment their course of life is attacked and exposed, they become full of zeal for laws that they would not themselves hesitate to violate, and for the customs of religion, which in their hearts they thoroughly despise. Worldly-minded men often thus complain that their towns, and cities, and villages, are disturbed by revivals of religion; and the preaching of the truth, and attacking vice, often arouses this hypocritical conscientiousness, and makes them alarmed for the laws, and for religion, and for order, which they at other times are the first to disturb and disregard.

{l} "our city" 1Ki 18:17 Ac 17:6

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *And teach customs*. The word customs here (*eyh*) refers to religious rites or forms of worship. **See Barnes "Ac 6:14".**

They meant to charge the apostles with introducing a new mode of worship and a new religion, which was unauthorized by the Roman laws. This was a cunning and artful accusation. It is perfectly evident that they cared nothing either for the religion of the Romans or of the Jews. Nor were they really concerned about any change of religion. Paul had destroyed their hopes of gain; and as they could not prevent that except by securing his punishment or expulsion, and as they had no way of revenge except by endeavouring to excite indignation against him and Silas for violating the laws, they endeavoured to convict them of such violation. This is one, among many instances, where wicked and unprincipled men will endeavour to make religion the means of promoting their Own interest. If they can make money by it, they will become its professed friends; or if they can annoy Christians, they will at once have remarkable zeal for the laws and for the purity of religion. Many a man opposes revivals of religion and the real progress of evangelical piety, from professed zeal for truth and order.

Which are not lawful for us to receive, There were laws of the Roman empire under which they might shield themselves in this charge, though it is evident that their zeal was not because they loved the laws *more*, but because they loved Christianity *less*. Thus Servius on Virgil, AEnead, viii. 181, says, "Care was taken among the Athenians and the Romans, that no one should introduce new religions. It was on this account that Socrates was condemned, and the Chaldeans or Jews were banished from the city." Cicero (de Legibus ii. 8) says, "No person shall have any separate gods, or new ones; nor shall he privately worship any strange gods, unless they be publicly allowed." Wetstein (in loco) says, "The Romans would indeed allow foreigners to worship their own gods, but not unless it were done secretly, so that the worship of foreign gods would not interfere with the allowed worship of the Romans, and so that occasion for dissension and controversy might be avoided. Neither was it lawful among the Romans to recommend a new religion to the citizens, contrary to that which was confirmed and established by the public authority, and to call off the people from that. It was on this account that there was such a hatred of the Romans against the Jews." (*Kuinoel*.) Tertullian says, that "there was a decree that no god should be consecrated, unless approved by the senate." (*Grotius*.) See many other authorities quoted in Bishop Watsoh's "Apology for Christianity."

To observe. To do.

Being Romans. Having the privileges of Roman citizens. **See Barnes "Ac 16:12".**

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *And the multitude*, etc. It is evident that this was done in a popular tumult, and without even the form of law. Of this, Paul afterwards justly complained, as it was a violation of the privileges of a Roman citizen, and contrary to the laws. **See Barnes "Ac 16:37".**

It was one instance in which men affect great zeal for the honour of the law, and yet are among the first to disregard it.

And the magistrates. Ac 16:20. They who should have been their protectors, until they had had a fair trial according to law.

Rent off their clothes. This was always done when one was to be scourged or whipped. The criminal was usually stripped entirely naked. Livy says, (ii. 5,) "The lictors, being sent to inflict punishment, beat them with rods, being naked." Cicero against Vetres says, "He commanded the man to be seized, and to be stripped naked in the midst of the forum, and to be bound, and rods to be brought."

And commanded to beat them. *rabdizein*. To beat them with rods. This was done by *lictors*, whose office it was, and was a common mode of punishment among the Romans. Probably Paul alludes to this when he says, (2Co 11:25,) "Thrice was I beaten with rods."

{*} "rent off" "tore"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *And when they had laid many stripes upon them*. The Jews were by law prohibited from inflicting more than forty stripes, and usually inflicted but thirty-nine, 2Co 11:24. But there was no such law among the Romans. They were unrestricted in regard to the number of lashes; and probably inflicted many more. Perhaps Paul refers to this when he says, (2Co 11:23,) "In stripes above measure," i. e., beyond the usual measure among the Jews, or beyond moderation.

They cast them into prison. The magistrates, Ac 16:36,37, as a punishment; and probably with a view hereafter of taking vengeance on them, more according to the forms of law.

{a} "many stripes" 2Co 6:5 11:23,25 1Th 2:2

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Thrust them into the inner prison*. Into the most retired and secure part of the prison. The cells in the interior of the prison would be regarded as more safe, being doubtless more protected, and the difficulty of escape would be greater.

And made their feet fast in the stocks. Greek, And made their feet secure to wood. The word *stocks*, with us, denotes a machine made of two pieces of timber, between which the feet of the criminals are placed, and in which they are thus made secure. The account here does not imply necessarily that they were secured precisely in this way, but that they were fastened or secured by the feet, probably by cords, to a piece or beam of wood, so that they could not escape. It is supposed that the legs of the prisoners were bound to large pieces of wood, which not only encumbered them, but which often were so placed as to extend their feet to a considerable distance. In this condition it might be necessary for them to lie on their backs; and if this, as is probable, was on the cold ground, after their severe scourging, their sufferings must have been very great. Yet in the midst of this they sang praises to God.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *And at midnight*. Probably their painful posture, the sufferings of their recent scourging, prevented their sleeping. Yet, though they had no repose, they had a quiet conscience, and the supports of religion.

Prayed. Though they had suffered much, yet they had reason to apprehend more. They sought, therefore, the sustaining grace of God.

And sang praises. Nothing but religion would have enabled them to do this. They had endured much, but they had cause still for gratitude. A Christian may find more true joy in a prison, than the monarch on his throne.

And the prisoners heard them. And doubtless with astonishment. Prayer and praise were not common in a prison. The song of rejoicing and the language of praise is not usual among men lying bound in a dungeon, From this narrative we may learn,

(1.) that the Christian has the sources of his happiness within him. External circumstances cannot destroy his peace and joy. In a dungeon he may find as real happiness as on a throne. On the cold earth, beaten and bruised, he may be as truly happy as on a bed of down.

(2.) The enemies of Christians cannot destroy their peace. They may incarcerate the body, but they cannot bind the spirit. They may exclude from earthly comforts, but they cannot shut them out from the presence and sustaining grace of God.

(3.) We see the value of a good conscience. Nothing else can give peace; and amidst the wakeful hours of the night, whether in a dungeon or on a bed of sickness, it is of more value than all the wealth of the world.

(4.) We see the inestimable worth of the religion of Christ. It fits for all scenes; supports in all trims; upholds by day or by night; inspires the soul with confidence in God; and puts into the lips the songs of praise and thanksgiving.

(5.) We have here a sublime and holy scene, which sin and infidelity could never furnish. What more sublime spectacle has the earth witnessed than that of scourged and incarcerated men, suffering from unjust and cruel inflictions, and anticipating still greater sorrows; yet, with a calm mind, a pure conscience, a holy joy, pouring forth their desires and praises at midnight, into the ear of the God, who always hears prayer! The darkness, the stillness, the loneliness, all give sublimity to the scene, and teach us how invaluable is the privilege of access to the throne of mercy in this suffering world.

{b} "prayed" Jas 5:13 {c} "praises" Ps 34:1

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *And suddenly*. While they were praying and singing. *A great earthquake*. Mt 28:2. An earthquake, in such circumstances, was regarded as a symbol of the presence of God, and as an answer to prayer. **See Barnes "Ac 4:31"**.

The *design* of this was, doubtless, to furnish them proof of the presence and protection of God, and to provide a way for them to escape. It was one among the series of wonders by which the gospel was established, and the early Christians protected amidst their dangers.

And immediately all the doors were opened. An effect that would naturally follow from the violent concussion of the earthquake. Comp. Ac 5:19.

Every one's bands were loosed. This was evidently a miracle. Some have supposed that their chains were dissolved by electric fluid; but the narrative gives no account of any such fluid, even supposing such an effect to be possible. It was evidently a direct interposition of Divine power. But for what purpose it was done is not recorded. Grotius supposes it was that they might know that the apostles might be useful to them and to others, and that by them their spiritual bonds might be loosed. Probably the design was to impress all the prisoners with the conviction of the presence and power of God, and thus to prepare them to receive the message of life from the lips of his servants Paul and Silas. They had just before heard them singing and praying; they were aware, doubtless, of the cause for which they were imprisoned; they saw evident tokens that they were the servants of the Most High, and under his protection; and their own minds were impressed and awed by the terrors of the earthquake, and by the fact of their own liberation. It renders this scene the more remarkable, that though the doors were opened, and the prisoners loosed, yet no one made any attempt to escape.

{a} "all the doors were opened" Is 42:7 Ac 5:19, 12:7,10

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *Would have killed himself*. This was all done in the midst of agitation and alarm. He supposed that the prisoners had fled. He presumed that their escape would be charged on him. It was customary to hold a jailer responsible for the safe keeping of prisoners, and to subject him to the punishment due to them, if he suffered them to escape. See Ac 12:19. It should be added, that it was common, and approved among the Greeks and Romans, for a man to commit suicide when he was encompassed with dangers from which he could not escape. Thus Cato was guilty of self-murder in Utica; and thus, at this very place at Philippi—Brutus and Cassius, and many of their friends, fell on their own swords, and ended their lives by suicide. The custom was thus sanctioned by the authority and example of the great; and we are not to wonder that the jailer, in a moment of alarm, should also attempt to destroy his own life. It is not one of the least benefits of Christianity, that it has proclaimed the evil of self-murder, and that it has done so much to drive it from the world.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *Do thyself no harm*. This is the solemn command of religion in his case, and in all others. It enjoins on men to do themselves no harm—by self-murder, whether by the sword, the pistol, the halter; or by intemperance, and lust, and dissipation. In all cases Christianity seeks the true welfare of man. In all cases, if it were obeyed, men would do themselves no harm. They would promote their own best interests here, and their eternal welfare hereafter.

{b} "Paul cried" Pr 24:11,12; 1Th 5:15

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Then he called for a light*. Greek, *Lights*, in the plural. Probably several torches were brought by his attendants.

And came trembling. Alarmed at the earthquake, and amazed that the prisoners were still there, and probably not a little confounded at the calmness of Paul and Silas, and overwhelmed at the proof of the presence of God. Comp. Jer 5:22, "Fear ye not me, saith the Lord? will ye not tremble at my presence?" etc.

And fell down, etc. This was an act of profound reverence. **See Barnes "Mt 2:11"**.

It is evident that he regarded them as the favourites of God, and was constrained to recognize them in their character as religious teachers.

{d} "and fell down before Paul" Jer 5:22

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *And brought them out*. From the prison.

Sirs. Greek, *kurioi*, lords—an address of respect; a title usually given to masters, or owners of slaves.

What must I do to be saved? Never was a more important question asked than this. It is evident that by this question he did not refer to any danger to which he might be exposed from what had happened. For,

(1.) the apostles evidently understood him as referring to his eternal salvation, as is manifest from their answer; since to believe on the Lord Jesus would have no effect in saving him from any danger of punishment to which he might be exposed from what had occurred.

(2.) He could scarcely consider himself as exposed to punishment by the Romans. The prisoners were all safe; none had escaped, or showed any disposition to escape: and besides, for the earthquake and its effects he could not be held responsible. It is not improbable that there was much confusion in his mind. There would be a *rush* of many thoughts; a state of agitation, and alarm, and fear; and in view of all he would naturally ask those whom he now saw to be men sent by God, and under his protection, what he should do to obtain the favour of that great Being under whose protection he saw that they manifestly were. Perhaps the following thoughts might have gone to produce this state of agitation and alarm:

(1.) They had been designated by the Pythoness Ac 16:17 as religious teachers sent from God, and appointed to "show *the way of salvation*;" and in her testimony he might have been disposed to put confidence, or it might now be brought fresh to his recollection.

(2.) He manifestly saw that they were under the protection of God. A remarkable interposition—an earthquake—an event which all the heathen regarded as ominous of the presence of the Divinity—had showed this.

(3.) The guilt of their imprisonment might rush upon his mind; and he might suppose that he, the agent of the imprisonment of the servants of God, would be exposed to his displeasure.

(4.) His own guilt in attempting his own life might overwhelm him with alarm.

(5.) The whole scene was fitted to show him the need of the protection and friendship of the God that had thus interposed. In this state of agitation and alarm, the apostles directed him to the only source of peace and safety—the blood of the atonement. The feelings of an awakened sinner are often strikingly similar to those of this jailer. He is agitated, alarmed, and fearful; he sees that he is a sinner, and trembles; the sins of his life rush over his memory, and fill him with deep anxiety, and he inquires what he must do to be saved. Often too, as here, the Providence of God is the means of awakening the sinner, and of leading to this inquiry. Some alarming dispensation convinces him that God is near, and that the soul is in danger. The loss of health, property, or of a friend, may thus alarm the soul; or the presence of the pestilence, or any fearful judgment, may arrest the attention, and lead to the inquiry, "What must I do to be saved?" Reader, have you ever made this inquiry? Have you ever, like the heathen jailer at Philippi, seen yourself to be a lost sinner, and been willing to ask the way to life?

In this narrative we see the contrast which exists in periods of distress and alarm between Christians and sinners. The guilty jailer was all agitation, fear, distress, and terror; the apostles all peace, calmness, joy. The one was filled with thoughts of self-murder; the others intent on saving life and doing good. This difference is to be traced to religion. It was confidence in God that gave peace to them; it was the want of that which led to agitation and alarm in him. It is so still. In the trying scenes of this life the same difference is still seen. In bereavements, in sickness, in times of pestilence, in death, it is still so. The Christian is calm, the sinner is agitated and alarmed. The Christian can pass through such scenes with peace and joy; to the sinner they are scenes of terror and of dread. And thus it will be beyond the grave. In the morning of the resurrection the Christian will rise with joy and triumph; the sinner with fear and horror. And thus at the judgment-seat. Calm and serene, the saint shall witness the solemnities of that day, and triumphantly hail the Judge as his friend: fearful and trembling, the sinner shall regard these solemnities, and with a soul filled with horror, shall listen to the sentence that consigns him to eternal woe! With what solicitude, then, should we seek, without delay, an interest in that religion which alone can give peace to the soul!

{e} "must I do?" Jer 5:22

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ*. This was a simple, a plain, and an effectual direction. They did not direct him to use the means of grace, to pray, or to continue to seek for salvation. They did not advise him to delay, or to wait for the mercy of God. They told him to believe at once; to commit his agitated, and guilty, and troubled spirit to the Saviour, with the assurance that he should find peace. They presumed that he would understand what it was to believe; and they commanded him *to do the thing*. And this was the uniform direction which the early preachers gave to those inquiring the way to life. **See Barnes "Mt 16:16"**; comp. **See Barnes "Ac 8:22"**.

And thy house. And thy family. That is, the same salvation is equally adapted to, and offered to your family. It does not mean that his family would be saved simply by his believing; but that the offers had reference to them as well as to himself; that they might be saved as well as he. His attention was thus called at once, as every man's should be, to his family. He was reminded that

they needed salvation; and he was presented with the assurance that they might unite with him in the peace and joy of redeeming mercy. Comp. Ac 2:39. It may be implied here that the faith of a father may be expected to be the means of the salvation of his family. It often is so, in fact. But the direct meaning of this is, that salvation was offered to his family as well as himself; implying that if they believed, they should also be saved.

{f} "on the Lord Jesus Christ" Hab 2:4 Joh 3:16,36 6:47; Ac 13:39

{g} "house" Ac 2:39 {*} "house" "Household"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *To all that were in his house*. Old and young. They instructed them in the doctrines of religion, and doubtless in the nature of the ordinances of the gospel, and then baptized the entire family.

{a} "all that were in" Ro 1:14,16

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *And he took them*. To a convenient place for washing. It is evident from this, that though the apostles had the gift of miracles, that they did not exercise it in regard to their own sufferings, or to heal their own wounds. They restored others to health, not themselves.

And washed their stripes. The wounds which had been inflicted by the severe scourging which they had received the night before. We have here a remarkable instance of the effect of religion in producing humanity and tenderness. This same man, a few hours before, had thrust them into the inner prison, and made them fast in the stocks. He evidently had then no concern about their stripes or their wounds. But no sooner was he converted, and his heart changed, than one of his first acts was an act of humanity. He saw them suffering; he pitied them, and hastened to minister to them, and to heal their wounds. Till the time of Christianity there never had been an hospital or an almshouse. Nearly all the hospitals for the sick since have been reared by Christians. They who are most ready to minister to the sick and dying are Christians. They who are willing to encounter the pestilential damps of dungeons to aid the prisoner, are, like Howard, Christians. Who ever saw an infidel attending a dying bed, if he could help it? and where has infidelity ever reared a hospital or an almshouse, or made provision for the widow and the fatherless? Often one of the most striking changes that occurs in conversion is seen in the disposition to be kind and humane to the suffering. Comp. Jas 1:27.

And was baptized. This was done *straightway*; that is, immediately. As it is altogether improbable that either in his house or in the prison there would be water sufficient for immersing them, there is every reason to suppose that this was performed in some other mode. All the circumstances lead us to suppose that it was not by immersion. It was at the dead of night, in a prison, amidst much agitation, and evidently performed in haste.

{*} "straightway" "immediately"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *He set meat before them*. Food. Gr., He placed a *table*. The word *meat* formerly meant food of all kinds.

And rejoiced. This was the effect of believing. Religion produces joy. **See Barnes "Ac 8:8"**.

He was free from danger and alarm; he had evidence that his sins were forgiven, and that he was the friend of God. The agitating and alarming scenes of the night had passed away, the prisoners were safe; and religion, with its peace, and pardon, and rejoicings, had visited his family. What a change to be produced in one night! What a difference between the family when Paul was thrust into prison, and when he was brought out and received as an honoured guest at the very table of the renovated jailer! Such a change would Christianity produce in every family, and such joy would it diffuse through every household.

With all his house. With all his family. Whether they believed *before* they were baptized, or *after*, is not declared. But the whole narrative would lead us to suppose, that as soon as the jailer believed, he and all his family were baptized. It is subsequently added, that they believed also. The *joy* arose from the fact that they all believed the gospel; the *baptism* appears to have been performed on account of the faith of the head of the family.

{b} "meat before them" Lu 5:29 {c} "rejoiced, believing" Ro 5:11

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *And when it was day*, etc. It is evident, from the narrative, that it was not contemplated at first to release them so soon, Ac 16:22-24. But it is not known what produced this change of purpose in the magistrates. It is probable, however, that they had been brought to reflection, somewhat as the jailer had, by the earthquake; and that their consciences had been troubled by the fact, that, in order to please the multitude, they had caused strangers to be beaten and imprisoned without trial, and contrary to the Roman laws. An earthquake is always fitted to alarm the guilty; and among the Romans it was regarded as an omen of the anger of the gods, and was therefore fitted to produce agitation and remorse. Their agitation and alarm were shown by the fact that they sent the officers *as soon* as it was day. The judgments of God are eminently adapted to alarm sinners. Two ancient Mss. read this, "The magistrates, *who were alarmed by the earthquake*, sent," etc.— (*Doddridge*.) Whether this reading be genuine or not, it doubtless expresses the true cause of their sending to release the apostles.

The sergeants. *rabdoucouv*. Literally, those having rods; the lictors. These were public officers, who went before magistrates with the emblems of authority. In Rome they bore before the senators the *fasces*; that is, a bundle of rods with an axe in its centre, as a symbol of office. They performed somewhat the same office as a beadle in England, or as a constable in our courts, [America.]

{+} "serjeants" "officers"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16 - Verse 36

Verse 36. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *They have beaten us openly uncondemned*. There are three aggravating circumstances mentioned, of which Paul complains.

(1.) That they had been beaten, contrary to the Roman laws.

(2.) That it had been public; the disgrace had been in the presence of the people, and the reparation ought to be as public. And

(3) that it had been done without a trial, and while they were uncondemned and therefore the magistrates ought themselves to come and release them, and thus publicly acknowledge their error. Paul knew the privileges of a Roman citizen; and at proper times, when the interests of justice and religion required it, he did not hesitate to assert them. In all this he understood and accorded with the Roman laws. The Valerian law declared, that if a citizen appealed from the magistrate to the people, it should not be lawful for the magistrate to beat him with rods, or to behead him. (Plutarch, Life of P. Valeflus Publicola. Livy, ii. 8.) By the Porcian law, it was expressly forbidden that a citizen should be beaten, (Livy, iv. 9.) Cicero (Pro. Rabir. chap. 4) says, that the body of every Roman citizen was inviolable. "The Porcian law," he adds, "has removed the rod from the body of every Roman citizen." And in his celebrated oration against Verres, he says, "A Roman citizen was beaten with rods in the forum, O judges; where, in the mean time, no groan, no other voice of this unhappy man was heard, except the cry, 'I am a Roman citizen'—Take away this hope," he says, "take away this defence from the Roman citizens—let there be no protection in the cry, *I am a Roman citizen*—and the praetor can with impunity inflict any punishment on him who declares himself a citizen of Rome," etc.

Being Romans. Being Romans, or having the privilege of Roman citizens. They were born Jews, but they claimed that they were Roman citizens, and had a right to the privilege of citizenship. On the ground of this claim, and the reason why Paul claimed to be a Roman citizen, **See Barnes "Ac 22:28"**.

Privily. Privately. The release should be as public as the unjust act of imprisonment. As they have publicly attempted to disgrace us, so they should as publicly acquit us. This was a matter of mere justice; and as it was of great importance to their character and success, they insisted on it.

Nay, verily; but let them come, etc. It was proper that they should be required to do this,

(1.) because they had been illegally imprisoned, and the injustice of the magistrates should be acknowledged.

(2.) Because the Roman laws had been violated, and the majesty of the Roman people thus insulted and honour should be done to the laws.

(3.) Injustice had been done to Paul and Silas, and they had a right to demand just treatment and protection.

(4.) Such a public act on the part of the magistrates would strengthen the young converts, and show them that the apostles were not guilty of a violation of the laws.

(5.) It would tend to the honour and to the furtherance of religion. It would be a public acknowledgment of their innocence; and would go far towards lending to them the sanction of the laws as religious teachers. We may learn from this also,

(1.) that though Christianity requires meekness in the reception of injuries, that there are occasions where Christians may insist on their rights according to the laws. Comp. Joh 18:23.

(2.) That this is to be done, particularly where the honour of religion is concerned, and where by it the gospel will be promoted. A Christian may bear much as a man in a private capacity, and may submit, without any effort to seek reparation; but where the honour of the gospel is concerned—where submission, without any effort to obtain justice, might be followed by disgrace to the cause of religion—a higher obligation may require him to seek a vindication of his character, and to claim the protection of the laws. His name, and character, and influence, belong to the church. The laws are designed as a protection to an injured name, or of violated property and rights, and of an endangered life. And when that protection can be had only by an appeal to the laws, such an appeal, as in the case of Paul and Silas, is neither vindictive nor improper. My private interests I may sacrifice, if I choose; my public name, and character, and principles belong to the church and the world; and the laws, if necessary, may be called in for their protection.

{++} "openly" "Publicly" {d} "being Romans" Ac 22:25 {|} "privily" "privately" {&} "verily" "truly" {e} "themselves" Da 6:18,19; Mt 10:16

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *They feared, when they heard*, etc. They were apprehensive of punishment for having imprisoned them in violation of the laws of the empire. To punish unjustly a Roman citizen was deemed an offence to the majesty of the Roman people, and was severely punished by the laws. Dionysius Hall. (Ant. Rom. ii.) says, that "the punishment appointed for those who abrogated or transgressed the Valerian law was death, and the confiscation of his property." The emperor Claudius deprived the inhabitants of Rhodes of freedom for having crucified some Roman citizens. Dio. Cuss. lib. 60. (See *Kuinoel* and *Grotius*.)

{*} "serjeants" "officers"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *And they came and besought them*. A most humiliating act for Roman magistrates; but in this case it was unavoidable. The apostles had them completely in their power, and could easily effect their disgrace and ruin. Probably they *besought* them by declaring them innocent; by affirming that they were ignorant that they were Roman citizens, etc.

And desired them to depart, etc. Probably,

(1.) to save their own character, and to secure from their taking any further steps to convict the magistrates of violating the laws; and;

(2.) to evade any further popular tumult on their account. This advice they saw fit to comply with, after they had seen and comforted the brethren, Ac 16:40. They had accomplished their main purpose in going to Philippi; they had preached the gospel; had laid, the foundation of a flourishing church, (comp. the Epistle to the Philippians;) and they were now prepared to prosecute the purpose of their agency into surrounding regions. Thus the opposition of the people and the magistrates at Philippi was the occasion of the founding of the church there; and thus their unkind and inhospitable request that they should leave them, was the means of the extension of the gospel into adjacent regions.

{a} "besought them" Ex 11:8 Re 3:9 {b} "desired them" Mt 8:34

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 16 - Verse 40

Verse 40. *They comforted them*. They exhorted them, and encouraged them to persevere, notwithstanding the opposition and persecution which they might meet with.

And departed. That is, Paul and Silas departed. It would appear probable that Luke and Timothy remained in Philippi, or, at least, did not attend Paul and Silas. For Luke, who, in Ac 16:10, uses the first person, and speaks of himself as with Paul and Silas, speaks of them now in the third person, implying that he was not with them until Paul had arrived at Troas, where Luke joined him from Philippi, Ac 20:5,6. In Ac 17:14, also, Timothy is mentioned as being at Berea in company with Silas, from which it appears that he did not accompany Paul and Silas to Thessalonica. Comp. Ac 17:1,4. Paul and Silas, when they departed from Philippi, went to Thessalonica, Ac 17:1.

{c} "and when they had seen the brethren" Ac 16:14

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 17

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 17 - Verse 1

CHAPTER 17

Verse 1. *Amphipolis*. This was the capital of the eastern province of Macedonia. It was originally a colony of the Athenians; but under the Romans it was made the capital of that part of Macedonia. It was near to Thrace, and was situated not far from the mouth of the river Strymon, which flowed *around the city*, and thus occasioned its name, around the city. In the middle ages it was called Chrysopolis. The village which now stands upon the site of the ancient city is called *Empoli*, or *Yamboli*, a corruption of Amphipolis. (*Rob. Cal*.)

And Apollonia. This city was situated between Amphipolis and Thessalonica, and was formerly much celebrated for its trade.

They came to Thessalonica. This was a seaport of the second part of Macedonia. It is situated at the head of the bay Thermaicus. It was made the capital of the second division of Macedonia by

AEmilius Paulus, when he divided the country into four districts. It was formerly called Therma, but afterwards received the name of Thessalonica, either from Cassander, in honour of his wife Thessalonica, the daughter of Philip, or in honour of a victory which Philip obtained over the armies of Thessaly. It was inhabited by Greeks, Romans, and Jews. It is now called *Saloniki*, and is a wretched place, though it has a population of near sixty thousand. In this place a church was collected, to which Paul afterwards addressed the two epistles to the Thessalonians.

Where was a synagogue. Greek, Where was THE SYNAGOGUE (*h sunagwgh*) of the Jews. It has been remarked by Grotius and Kuinoel, that the article used here is emphatic, and denotes that there was probably no synagogue at Amphipolis and Apollonia. This was the reason why they passed through those places without making any delay.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 17 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *His manner was*. His custom was to attend on the worship of the synagogue, and to preach the gospel to his countrymen first, Ac 9:20 13:5,14.

Reasoned with them. Discoursed to them, or attempted to prove that Jesus was the Messiah. The word used here (*dielegeto*) means often no more than to make a public address or discourse. **See Barnes "Ac 24:25"**.

Out of the Scriptures. By many critics this is connected with the following verse, "Opening and alleging from the Scriptures, that Christ must needs have suffered," etc. The sense is not varied materially by the change.

{d} "went in unto them" Lu 4:16 Ac 9:20, 13:5,14

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 17 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Opening*. *dianoigwn*. See Lu 24:32. The word means, to explain, or to unfold. It is usually applied to that which is shut, as to the eyes, etc. Then it means to explain that which is concealed or obscure. It means here, that he explained the Scriptures in their true sense.

And alleging. *paratiyemenov*. Laying down the proposition; that is, maintaining that it must be so.

That Christ must needs have suffered. That there was a fitness and necessity in his dying, as Jesus of Nazareth had done. The sense of this will be better seen by retaining the word Messiah. "That there was a fitness or necessity that the *Messiah* expected by the Jews, and predicted in their Scriptures, should suffer." This point the Jews were unwilling to admit; but it was essential to his argument in proving that Jesus was the Messiah, to show that it was foretold that he should die for the sins of men. On the necessity of this, **See Barnes "Lu 4:26"**.

Have suffered. That he should die.

And that this Jesus. And that this Jesus of Nazareth, who has thus suffered and risen, whom, said he, I preach to you, is the Messiah.

The arguments by which Paul probably proved that Jesus was the Messiah were,

(1.) that he corresponded with the prophecies respecting him, in the following particulars:
(a.) He was born at Bethlehem,
#Mic 5.2

(b.) He was of the tribe of Judah, Ge 49:10

(c.) He was descended from Jesse, and of the royal line of David,
Isa 11:1,10

(d.) He came at the *time* predicted Da 9:24-27

(e.) His appearance, character, work, etc., corresponded with the
predictions of Isa 53.

(2.) His miracles proved that he was the Messiah, for he *professed* to be, and God would not work a miracle to confirm the claims of an impostor.

(3.) For the same reason, his resurrection from the dead proved that he was the Messiah.

{&} "Opening and alleging" "Explaining them" {e} "needs have suffered" Lu 24:26,46; Ac 18:28 Ga 3:1

{1} "whom I preach" "whom, said he, I preach"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 17 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And consorted*. Literally, had their lot with Paul and Silas; that is, they united themselves to them, and became their disciples. The word is commonly applied to those who are partakers of an inheritance.

And of the devout Greeks. Religious Greeks; or, of those who worshipped God. Those were so denoted who had renounced the worship of idols, and who attended on the worship of the synagogue, but who were not fully admitted to the privileges of Jewish proselytes. They were called, by the Jews, proselytes of the gate.

And of the chief women. **See Barnes "Ac 13:50".**

{a} "some of them" Ac 28:24 {b} "and consorted" 2Co 8:5

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 17 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Moved with envy*. That they made so many converts, and met with such success.

Certain lewd fellows of the baser sort. This is an unhappy translation. The word *lewd* is not in the original. The Greek is, "And having taken certain wicked men of those who were about the forum," or market-place. The forum, or market-place, was the place where the idle assembled, and where those were gathered together that wished to be employed, Mt 20:3. Many of these would be

of abandoned character —the idle, the dissipated, and the worthless; and, therefore, just the materials for a mob. It does not appear that they felt any particular interest in the subject; but they were, like other mobs, easily excited, and urged on to any acts of violence. The pretence on which the mob was excited was, that they had everywhere produced disturbance, and that they violated the laws of the Roman emperor, Ac 17:6,7. It may be observed, however, that a mob usually regards very little the cause in which they are engaged. They may be roused either for or against religion, and become as full of zeal *for the insulted honour* of religion as against it. The profane, the worthless, and the abandoned, thus often become violently enraged for the honour of religion, and fun of indignation and tumult against those who are accused of violating public peace and order.

The house of Jason. Where Paul and Silas were, Ac 17:7. Jason appears to have been a relative of Paul, and for this reason it was, probably, that he lodged with him, Ro 16:21.

{c} "Jason, and sought" Ro 16:21

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 17 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *These that have turned the world upside down*. That have excited commotion and disturbance in other places. The charge has been often brought against the gospel, that it has been the occasion of confusion and disorder.

{*} "Drew" "Dragged" {d} "These that turned the world" Lu 23:5 Ac 16:20

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 17 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Whom Jason hath received*. Has received into his house, and entertained kindly.

These all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar. The charge against them was that of sedition and rebellion against the Roman emperor. Grotius on this verse remarks, that the Roman people, and after them the emperors, would not permit the name of king to be mentioned in any of the vanquished provinces, except by their permission.

Saying that there is another king. This was probably a charge of mere malignity. They probably understood, that when the apostles spoke of Jesus as a king, they did not do it as of a temporal prince. But it was easy to pervert their words, and to give plausibility to the accusation. The same thing had occurred in regard to the Lord Jesus himself, Lu 23:2.

{e} "contrary to the decrees of Caesar" Lu 23:2 Joh 19:12

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 17 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *And they troubled the people*. They excited the people to commotion and alarm. The rulers feared the tumult that was excited, and the people feared the Romans, when they heard the charge that there were rebels against the government in their city. It does not appear, that there was

a disposition in the rulers or the people to persecute the apostles; but they were excited and alarmed by the representations of the Jews, and by the mob that they had collected.

{+} "troubled" "alarmed" {f} "the people" Mt 2:3 Joh 11:48

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 17 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *And when they had taken security of Jason*. This is an expression taken from courts, and means that Jason and the other gave satisfaction to the magistrates for the good conduct of Paul and Silas, and became responsible for it. Whether it was by depositing a sum of money, and by thus giving bail, is not quite Clear. The sense is, that they did it in accordance with the Roman usages, and gave sufficient security for the good conduct of Paul and Silas. Heuman supposes that the pledge given was, that they should leave the city. Michaelis thinks that they gave a pledge that they would no more harbour them; but that if they returned again to them, they would deliver them to the magistrates.

And of the other. The other brethren Ac 17:6 who had been drawn to the rulers of the city.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 17 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas*. Comp. Ac 9:25. They did this for their safety. Yet this was not done until the gospel had taken deep root in Thessalonica. Having preached there, and laid the foundation of a church; having thus accomplished the purpose for which they went there, they were prepared to leave the city. To the church in this city Paul afterwards addressed two epistles.

Unto Berea. This was a city of Macedonia, near Mount Cithanes. There is a medal of Berea extant, remarkable for being inscribed, "of the second Macedonia."

{g} "sent away Paul and Silas" Ac 17:14 9:25

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 17 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *These were more noble*. *eugenesteroi*. This literally means more noble by birth; descended from more illustrious ancestors. But here the word is used to denote a quality of mind and heart; they were more generous, liberal, and noble in their feelings; more disposed to inquire candidly into the truth of the doctrines advanced by Paul and Silas. It is always proof of a noble, liberal, and ingenuous disposition, to be willing to examine into the truth of any doctrine presented. The writer refers here particularly to the Jews.

In that. Because.

They received the word, etc. They listened attentively and respectfully to the gospel. They did not reject and spurn it, as unworthy of examination. This is the first particular in which they were more noble than those in Thessalonica.

And searched the Scriptures. That is, the Old Testament. **See Barnes "Joh 5:39"**.

The apostles always affirmed that the doctrines which they maintained respecting the Messiah were in accordance with the Jewish Scriptures. The Bereans made diligent and earnest inquiry in respect to this, and were willing to ascertain the truth.

Daily. Not only on the Sabbath, and in the synagogue; but they made it a daily employment. It is evident from this, that they had the Scriptures; and this is one proof that Jewish families would, if possible, obtain the oracles of God.

Whether those things were so. Whether the doctrines stated by Paul and Silas were in accordance with the Scriptures. The Old Testament they received as the standard of truth, and whatever could be shown to be in accordance with that they received. On this verse we may remark,

(1.) that it is proof of true nobleness and liberality of mind to be willing to examine the proofs of the truth of religion. What the friends of Christianity have had most cause to lament and regret is, that so many are unwilling to examine its claims; that they spurn it as unworthy of serious thought, and condemn it without hearing.

(2.) The Scriptures should be examined *daily*. If we wish to arrive at the truth, they should be the object of constant study. That man has very little reason to expect that he will grow in knowledge and grace, who does not peruse, with candour and With prayer, a portion of the Bible every day.

(3.) The constant searching of the Scriptures is the best way to keep the mind from error. He who does not do it daily may expect to be "carried about with every wind of doctrine," and to have no settled opinions.

{4) The preaching of ministers should be examined by the Scriptures. Their doctrines are of no value unless they accord with the Bible. Every preacher should expect his doctrines to be examined in this way, and to be rejected if they are not in accordance with the word of God. The church, in proportion to its increase in purity and knowledge, will feel this more and more; and it is an indication of advance in piety when men are increasingly disposed to examine everything by the Bible. How immensely important then is it, that the young should be trained up to diligent habits of searching the word of God. And how momentous is the duty of parents, and of Sabbath-school teachers, to inculcate just views of the interpretation of the Bible, and to form the habits of the rising generation so that they shall be disposed and enabled to examine every doctrine by the sacred oracles. The purity of the church depends on the extension of the spirit of the noble-minded Bereans; and that spirit is to be extended mainly by the instrumentality of Sabbath-schools.

{h} "more noble" Ps 119:99,100 {i} "readiness of mind" Jas 1:21 1Pe 2:2 {k} "Scriptures daily" Isa 34:16 Lu 16:29, 24:44 Joh 5:39

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 17 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Therefore*. As the result of their examination. They found that the doctrines of Paul and Silas accorded with the Old Testament. This result will commonly follow when people search the Scriptures. Much is gained when men can be induced to examine the Bible. We may commonly take it for granted that such an examination will result in their conviction of the truth. The most prominent and invariable cause of infidelity is found in the fact that men will not investigate the Scriptures. Many infidels have confessed that they had never carefully read the New Testament.

Thomas Paine confessed that he wrote the first part of the "Age of Reason" without having a Bible at hand; and without its being possible to procure one where he then was, (in Paris.) "I had," says he, "neither Bible nor Testament to refer to, though I was writing against both; nor could I procure any."—*Age of Reason*, p. 65, Edin. 1831. Also p. 33. None have ever read the Scriptures with candour, and with the true spirit of prayer, who have not been convinced of the truth of Christianity, and been brought to submit their souls to its influence and its consolations. The great thing which Christians desire their fellow-men to do, is candidly to search the Bible; and when this is done, they confidently expect that they will be truly converted to God.

Of honourable women. **See Barnes "Ac 13:50".**

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 17 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Stirred up the people*. The word used here *saleuontev*, denotes, properly, *to agitate*, or *excite*, as the waves of the sea are agitated by the wind. It is with great beauty used to denote the agitation and excitement of a popular tumult, from its resemblance to the troubled waves of the ocean. The figure is often employed by the classic writers, and also occurs in the Scriptures. See Ps 65:7; Isa 17:12,13 Jer. 46:7,8.

{a} "stirred up" Lu 12:51 {*} "the people" "Multitudes"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 17 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *The brethren*. Those who were Christians.

Sent away Paul. In order to secure his safety. A similar thing had been done in Thessalonica, Ac 17:10. The tumult was great; and there was no doubt, such was the hostility of the Jews, that the life of Paul would be endangered, and they therefore resolved to secure his safety.

As it were. Rather, "even to the sea," for that is its signification. It does not imply that there was any feint or sleight in the case, as if they intended to deceive their pursuers. They took him to the sea coast, not far from Berea, and from that place he probably went by sea to Athens.

{b} "sent away Paul" Mt 10:23

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 17 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Unto Athens*. This was the first visit of Paul to this celebrated city; and perhaps the first visit of a Christian minister. His success in this city, for some cause, was not great. But his preaching was attended with the conversion of some individuals. See Ac 17:34. Athens was the most celebrated city of Greece, and was distinguished for the military talents, learning, eloquence, and politeness of its inhabitants. It was founded by Cecrops and, an Egyptian colony, about 1556 years before the Christian era. It was called Athens in honour of Minerva, who was chiefly worshipped there, and to whom the city was dedicated. The city, at first, was built on a rock in the

midst of a spacious plain; but in process of time the whole plain was covered with buildings, which were called the lower city. No city of Greece, or of the ancient world, was so much distinguished for philosophy, learning, and the arts. The most celebrated warriors, poets, statesmen, and philosophers, were either born or flourished there. The most celebrated models of architecture and statuary were there; and for ages it held its pre-eminence in civilization, arts, and arms. The city still exists, though it has been often subject to the calamities of war, to a change of masters, and to the mouldering hand of time. It was twice burnt by the Persians; destroyed by Philip IX. of Macedon; again by Sylla; was plundered by Tiberius; desolated by the Goths in the reign of Claudius; and the whole territory ravaged and ruined by Alaric. From the reign of Justinian to the thirteenth century, the city remained in obscurity, though it continued to be a town at the head of a small state. It was seized by Omar, general of Mohammed the Great, in 1455; was sacked by the Venetians in 1464; and was taken by the Turks again in 1688. In 1812, the population was 12,000; but it has since been desolated by the sanguinary contests between the Turks and the Greeks, and left almost a mass of ruins. It is now free; and efforts are making by Christians to restore it to its former elevation in learning and importance, and to impart to it the blessings of the Christian religion. Two American missionaries are labouring in the place where Paul preached almost two thousand years ago; and schools, under their immediate superintendence and care, are established by American Christian missionaries, in the place that was once regarded as "the eye of Greece," and the light of the civilized world. In the revolutions of ages it has been ordered that men should bear the torch of learning to Athens from a land unknown to its ancient philosophers, and convey the blessings of civilization to them by that gospel which in the time of Paul they rejected and despised.

And receiving a commandment. They who accompanied Paul received his commands to Silas and Timothy.

With all speed. As soon as possible. Perhaps Paul expected much labour and success in Athens, and was therefore desirous, of securing their aid with him in his work.

{c} "Timotheus" Ac 18:5

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 17 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Now while Paul waited*. How long he was there is not intimated; but doubtless some time would elapse before they could arrive. In the mean time, Paul had ample opportunity to observe the state of the city.

His spirit was stirred in him. His mind was greatly excited. The word used here *parwxuneto* denotes any excitement, agitation, or paroxysm of mind, 1Co 13:5. It here means that the mind of Paul was greatly concerned, or agitated, doubtless with pity and distress, at their folly and danger.

The city wholly given to idolatry. Greek, *kateidwlon*. It is well translated in the margin, "full of idols." The word is not elsewhere used in the New Testament. That this was the condition of the city is abundantly testified by profane writers. Thus Pausanias (in Attic. i. 24) says, "The Athenians greatly surpassed others in their zeal for religion" Lucian (T. i. Prometh. p. 180) says of the city of Athens," On every side there are altars, victims, temples, and festivals." Livy (45, 27) says, that Athens "was full of the images of gods and men, adorned with every variety of material, and with all the skill of art." And Petronius (Sat. xvii.) says humourously of the city, that "it was easier to

find a god than a man there." See Kuinoel. In this verse we may see how a splendid, idolatrous city will strike a pious mind. Athens then had more that was splendid in architecture, more that was brilliant in science, and more that was beautiful in the arts, than any other city in the world; perhaps more than all the rest of the world united. Yet there is no account that the mind of Paul was filled with admiration; there is no record that he spent his time in examining the works of art; there is no evidence that he forgot his high purpose in an idle and useless contemplation of temples and statuary. His was a Christian mind; and he contemplated all this with a Christian heart. That heart was deeply affected in view of the amazing guilt of a people that were ignorant of the true God, and that had filled their city with idols reared to the honour of imaginary divinities; and who, in the midst of all this splendour and luxury, were going down to the gates of death. So should every pious man feel who treads the streets of a splendid and guilty city. The Christian will not despise the productions of art; but he will feel, deeply feel, for the unhappy condition of those who, amidst wealth and splendour and adorning, are withholding their affections from the living God, bestowing them on the works of their own hands, or on objects degraded and polluting, and who are going unredeemed to eternal woe. Happy would it be if every Christian traveller who visits cities of wealth and splendour would, like Paul, be affected in view of their crimes and dangers; and happy if, like him, men could cease their unbounded admiration of magnificence and splendour in temples and palaces and statuary, to regard the condition of mind, not perishable like marble; and of *the soul*, more magnificent even in its ruins than all the works of Phidias or Praxiteles.

{d} "his spirit" Ps 119:136 2Pe 2:8 {1} "wholly given to idolatry" "full of idols"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 17 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Therefore disputed he*. Or reasoned. He engaged in an argument with them.

With the devout persons. Those worshipping God after the manner of the Jews. They were Jewish proselytes, who had renounced idolatry, but who had not been fully admitted to the privileges of the Jews. **See Barnes "Ac 10:2"**.

And in the market. In the forum. It was not only the place where provisions were sold, but was also a place of great public concourse. In this place the philosophers were not unfrequently found engaged in public discussion.

{a} "devout persons" Ac 8:2

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 17 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Then certain philosophers*. Athens was distinguished, among all the cities of Greece and the world, for the cultivation of a subtle and refined philosophy. This was their boast, and the object of their constant search and study, 1Co 1:22.

Of the Epicureans. This sect of philosophers was so named from Epicurus, who lived about 300 years before the Christian era. They denied that the world was created by God, and that the gods exercised any care or providence over human affairs, and also the immortality of the soul.

Against these positions of the sect, Paul directed his main argument, in proving that the world was created and governed by God. One of the distinguishing doctrines of Epicurus was, that pleasure was the *summum bonum*, or chief good, and that virtue was to be practised only as it contributed to pleasure. By pleasure, however, Epicurus did not mean sensual and grovelling appetites, and degraded vices, but rational pleasure, properly regulated and governed. See Good's Book of Nature. But whatever *his* views were, it is certain that his followers had embraced the doctrine that voluptuousness and the pleasures of sense were to be practised without restraint. Both in principle and practice, therefore, they devoted themselves to a life of gaiety and sensuality, and sought happiness only in indolence, effeminacy, and voluptuousness. Confident in the belief that the world was not under the administration of a God of justice; they gave themselves up to the indulgence of every passion; the infidels of their time, and the exact example of the gay and fashionable multitudes of all times, that live without God, and that seek *pleasure* as their chief good.

And of the Stoics. These were a sect of philosophers, so named from the Greek *stoa*, *stoa*, porch, or portico, because Zeno, the founder of the sect, held his school and taught in a porch, in the city of Athens. Zeno was born in the island of Cyprus, but the greater part of his life was spent at Athena in teaching philosophy. After having taught publicly forty-eight years, he died at the age of ninety-six, two hundred and-sixty-four years before Christ. The doctrines of the sect were, that the Universe was created by God; that all things were fixed by fate; that even God was under the dominion of fatal necessity; that the fates were to be submitted to; that the passions and affections were to be suppressed and restrained; that happiness consisted in the insensibility of the soul to pain; and that a man should gain an absolute mastery over all the passions and affections of his nature. They were stern in their views of virtue, and, like the Pharisees prided themselves on their own righteousness. They supposed that matter was eternal, and that God was either the animating principal or soul of the world, or that all things were a part of God. They fluctuated much in their views of a future state; some of then holding that the soul would exist only until the destruction of the universe, and others that it would finally be absorbed into the Divine Essence, and become a part of God. It will be readily seen, therefore, with what pertinency and address Paul discoursed to them. The leading doctrines of both sects were met by him.

Encountered him. Contended with him; opposed themselves to him.

And some said. This was said in scorn and contempt. He had excited attention; but they scorned the doctrines that should be delivered by an unknown foreigner from Judea.

What will this babbler say? Margin, *base fellow*. Greek, *spermologov*. The word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It properly means *one who collects seeds*; and was applied by the Greeks to the poor persons who collected the scattered grain in the fields after harvest, or to gleaners; and also to the poor, who obtained a precarious subsistence around the markets and in the streets. It was also applied to birds that picked up the scattered seeds of grain in the field, or in the markets. The word came hence to have a two-fold signification.

(1.) It denoted the poor, needy, and vile; the refuse and offscouring of society; and,

(2,) from the birds which were thus employed, and which were troublesome by their continual unmusical sounds, it came to denote those who were talkative, garrulous, and opinionated; those who collected the opinions of others, or scraps of knowledge, and retailed them fluently, without order or method, It was a word, therefore, expressive of their contempt for an unknown foreigner who should pretend to instruct the learned men and philosophers of Greece. Doddridge renders it, "retailer of scraps." Syriac, "collector of words."

Other some. Others.

He seemeth to be a setter forth. He announces or declares the existence of strange gods. The reason why they supposed this was, that he made the capital points of his preaching to be Jesus and the resurrection, which they mistook for the names of divinities.

Of strange gods. Of *foreign* gods, or demons. They worshipped many gods themselves; and as they believed that every country had its own peculiar divinities, they supposed that Paul had come to announce the existence of some such foreign, and to them unknown divinities. The word translated *gods daimoniwn*, denotes, properly, the genii, or spirits who were superior to men, but inferior to the gods. It is, however, often employed to denote the gods themselves; and is evidently so used here. The *gods* among the Greeks were such as were supposed to have that rank by nature. The demons were such as had been exalted to divinity from being heroes and distinguished men.

He preached unto them Jesus. He proclaimed him as the Messiah. The mistake which they made, by supposing that he was a foreign divinity, was one which was perfectly natural for minds degraded like theirs by idolatry. They had no idea of a pure God; they knew nothing of the doctrine of the Messiah; and they naturally supposed, therefore, that he of whom Paul spoke so much must be a god of some other nation, of a rank similar to their own divinities.

And the resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus, and through him the resurrection of the dead. It is evident, I think, that by the resurrection (*thn anastasin*) they understood him to refer to the name of some goddess. Such was the interpretation of Chrysostom. The Greeks had erected altars to Shame, and Famine, and Desire, (Paus. i. 17,) and it is probable that they supposed "the resurrection," or *the Anastasis*, to be the name also of some unknown goddess who presided over the resurrection. Thus they regarded him as a setter forth of two foreign or strange gods.—Jesus, and the Anastasis, or resurrection.

{b} "of the Epicureans" Col 2:8 {1} "babbler" "base fellow" {*} "strange" "Foreign"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 17 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *And brought him unto Areopagus*. Margin, or Mars' hill. This was the place or court in which the Areopagites, the celebrated supreme judges of Athens, assembled. It was on a hill almost in the middle of the city; but nothing now remains by which we can determine the form or construction of the tribunal. The hill is almost entirely a mass of stone, and is not easily accessible, its sides being steep and abrupt. On many accounts this was the most celebrated tribunal in the world. Its decisions were distinguished for justice and correctness; nor was there any court in Greece in which so much confidence was placed. This court took cognizance of murders, impieties, and immoralities; they punished vices of all kinds, including idleness; they rewarded the virtuous; they were peculiarly attentive to blasphemies against the gods, and to the performance of the sacred mysteries of religion. It was, therefore, with the greatest propriety that Paul was questioned before this tribunal, as being regarded as a setter forth of strange gods, and as being supposed to wish to introduce a new mode of worship. See Potter's Antiquities of Greece, b. i. chap. 19; and Travels of Anacharsis, vol. i. pp. 136, 185; ii. pp. 292—295.

May we know. We would know. This seems to have been a respectful inquiry; and it does not appear that Paul was brought there for the sake of *trial*. There are no accusations; no witnesses;

none of the forms of trial. They seem to have resorted thither because it was the place where the subject of religion was usually discussed, and because it was a place of confluence of the citizens and judges and wise men of Athens, and of foreigners. The design seems to have been not to try him, but fairly to canvass the claims of his doctrines. See Ac 17:21. It was just an instance of the inquisitive spirit of the people of Athens, willing to hear before they condemned, and to examine before they approved.

{2} "Areopagus" "Mars Hill" It was the highest court in Athens {c} "new doctrine" Joh 13:34 1Jo 2:7,8

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 17 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Certain strange things*. Literally, something pertaining to a *foreign* country or people. Here it means something unusual, remarkable, to which we are not accustomed to hear from their philosophers and religious teachers.

What these things mean. We would understand more clearly what is affirmed respecting Jesus and the resurrection.

{a} "certain strange" Jos 8:12

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 17 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *For all the Athenians*. This was their general character.

And strangers which were there. Athens was greatly distinguished for the celebrity of its schools of philosophy. It was at that time at the head of the literary world. Its arts and its learning were celebrated in all lands. It is known, therefore, that it was the favourite resort of men of other nations, who came there to become acquainted with its institutions, and to listen to its sages.

Spent their time in nothing else. The learned and subtle Athenians gave themselves much to speculation, and employed themselves in examining the various new systems of philosophy that were proposed. Strangers and foreigners who were there, having much leisure, would also give themselves to the same inquiries.

But either to tell or to hear some new thing. Greek, *something newer*. *kainoteron*. The latest news; or the latest subject of inquiry proposed. This is well known to have been the character of the people of Athens at all times. "Many of the ancient writers bear witness to the garrulity, and curiosity, and intemperate desire of novelty, among the Athenians, by which they inquired respecting all things, even those in which they had no interest, whether of a public or private nature." —Kuinoel. Thus Thucyd. (3,38) says of them, "You excel in suffering yourselves to be deceived with *novelty of speech*." On which the old Scholiast makes this remark, almost in the words of Luke: "He (Thucydides) here blames the Athenians, who care for nothing else but to tell or to hear something new." Thus AElian (15, 13) says of the Athenians, that they are versatile in novelties. Thus Demosthenes represents the Athenians "as inquiring in the place of public resort if there were any NEWS?" *ti newteron*. Meursius has shown, also, that there were more than three hundred public

places in Athens of public resort, where the principal youth and reputable citizens were accustomed to meet for the purpose of conversation and inquiry.

{1} "Mars Hill" "the court of the Areopagites" {b} "too superstitious" Jer 50:38 {+} "superstitious" "Much addicted to the worship of demons"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 17 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Then Paul*. This commences Paul's explanation of the doctrines which he had stated. It is evident that Luke has recorded but a mere summary or outline of the discourse; but it is such as to enable us to see clearly his course of thought, and the manner in which he met the two principal sects of their philosophers.

In the midst of Mars' hill. Greek, Areopagus. This should have been retained in the translation.

Ye men of Athens. This language was perfectly respectful, notwithstanding his heart had been deeply affected by their idolatry. Everything about this discourse is calm, grave, cool, and argumentative. Paul understood the character of his auditors, and did not commence his discourse by denouncing them, or suppose that they would be convinced by mere dogmatical assertion. No happier instance can be found, of cool, collected argumentation, than is furnished in this discourse.

I perceive. He perceived this by his observations of their forms of worship, in passing through their city, Ac 17:23. ¶ In all things. In respect to all events.

Ye are too superstitious. *deisidaimonesterouv*. This is a most unhappy translation. We use the word *superstitious* always in a bad sense, to denote being over scrupulous and rigid in religious observances, particularly in smaller matters; or to a zealous devotion to rites and observances which are not commanded. But the word here is designed to convey no such idea. It properly means reverence for the gods or demons. It is used in the classic writers in a good sense, to denote piety towards the gods, or suitable *fear* and reverence for them; and also in a bad sense, to denote improper fear or excessive dread of their anger; and in this sense it accords with our word superstitious. But it is altogether improbable that Paul should have used it in a bad sense. For,

(1.) it was not his custom needlessly to blame or offend his auditors.

(2.) It is not probable that he would commence his discourse in a manner that would only excite their prejudice and opposition.

(3.) In the thing which he specifies, Ac 17:23, as proof on the subject, he does not introduce it as a matter of blame, but rather as a proof of their devotedness to the cause of religion, and of their regard for God.

(4.) The whole speech is calm, dignified, and argumentative—such as became such a place, such a speaker, and such an audience. The meaning of the expression is, therefore, "I perceive that you are greatly devoted to reverence for religion; that it is a characteristic of the people to honour the gods, to rear altars to them, and to recognize the Divine agency in times of trial." The *proof* of this was the altar reared to the unknown God; its *bearing* on his purpose was, that such a state of public sentiment must be favourable to an inquiry into the truth of what he was about to state.

{1} "Mars Hill" "the court of the Areogapites" {b} "too superstitious" Jer 50:35 {+} "superstitious" "much addicted to the worship of demons"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 17 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *For as I passed by*. Greek, "For I, coming through, and seeing," etc.

And beheld. Diligently contemplated; attentively considered— *anayewrwn*. The worship of an idolatrous people will be an object of intense and painful interest to a Christian.

Your devotions. *ta sebasmata*. Our word *devotions* refers to the act of worship—to prayers, praises, etc. The Greek word here used means, properly, any sacred *thing*; any *object* which is worshipped, or which is connected with the place or rites of worship. Thus it is applied either to the gods themselves, or to the temples, altars, shrines, sacrifices, statues, etc., connected with the worship of the gods. This is its meaning here. It does not denote that Paul saw them engaged in the act of worship, but that he was struck with the numerous temples, altars, statues, etc., which were reared to the gods, and which indicated the state of the people. Syriac, "The temple of your gods." Vulgate, "your images." Margin, "gods that ye worship?'"

I found an altar. An altar usually denotes a place for sacrifice. Here, however, it does not appear that any sacrifice was offered; but it was probably a monument of stone, reared to commemorate a certain event, and dedicated to the unknown God.

To the unknown God. *agnwstw yew*. Where this altar was reared, or on what occasion, has been a subject of much debate with expositors. That there was such an altar in Athens, though it may not have been specifically mentioned by the Greek writers, is rendered probable by the following circumstances:

(1.) It was customary to rear such altars. Minutius Felix says of the Romans, in his Philopatria, uses this form of an oath: "I swear by the *unknown God* at Athens"—the very expression used by the apostle. And again he says, (chap. xxix. 180,) "We have found out the *unknown God at Athens*, and worshipped him with our hands stretched up to heaven," etc.

(3.) There were altars at Athens inscribed *to the unknown gods*. Philostratus says, (in Vita. Apollo. vi. 3,) "And this at Athens, where there are even altars to the unknown gods," Thus Pausanina (in Attic. chap. 1) says, that at Athens there are altars of gods which are called the UNKNOWN ones." Jerome, in his commentary, (Epistle to Titus 1:12,) says that the whole inscription was, "to the gods of Asia, Europe, and Africa; to *the unknown and strange gods*."

(4.) There was a remarkable altar reared in Athens in a time of pestilence, in honour of the unknown god which had granted them deliverance. Diogenes Laertius says that Epimenides restrained the pestilence in the following manner: "Taking white and black sheep, he led them to the Areopagus, and there permitted them to go where they would, commanding those who followed them to sacrifice (*tw proshkonti yew*) to the god to whom these things pertained, [or who had the power of averting the plague, whoever he might be, without adding the name,] and thus to allay the pestilence. From which it has arisen, that at this day, through the villages of the Athenians, altars are found without any name. (Dioge. Laer. b. i. &§ 10.) This took place about 600 years before Christ, and it is not improbable that one or more of those altars remained until the time of Paul. It should be added, that the natural inscription on those altars would be, "To the unknown god." None of the gods to whom they usually sacrificed could deliver them from the pestilence. They therefore reared them to some unknown Being who had the power to free them from the plague.

Whom therefore. The true God, who had really delivered them from the plague.

Ye ignorantly worship. Or worship without knowing his name. You have expressed your homage for him by rearing to him an altar.

Him declare I unto you. I make known to you his name, attributes, etc. There is remarkable address and *tact* in Paul's seizing on this circumstance; and yet it was perfectly fair and honest. God only could deliver in the time of the pestilence. This altar had, therefore, been really reared to him, though his name was unknown. The same Being who had interposed at that time, and whose interposition was recorded by the building of this altar, was he who had made the heavens; who ruled over all; and whom Paul was now about to make known to them. There is another feature of skill in the allusion to this altar. In other circumstances it might seem to be presumptuous for an unknown Jew to attempt to instruct the sages of Athens. But here they had confessed and proclaimed their ignorance. By rearing this altar they acknowledged their need of instruction. The way was, therefore, fairly open for Paul to address even these philosophers, and to discourse to them on a point on which they acknowledged their ignorance.

{2} "devotions" "much addicted to the worship of demons"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 17 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *God that made the world*. The main object of this discourse of Paul is to convince them of the folly of idolatry, Ac 17:29, and thus to lead them to repentance. For this purpose he commences with a statement of the true doctrine respecting God as the Creator of all things. We may observe here,

(1.) that he speaks here of *God* as the Creator of the world—thus opposing *indirectly* their opinions that there were *many* gods.

(2.) He speaks of him as the *Creator* of the world, and thus opposes the opinion that matter was eternal; that all things were controlled by fate; and that he could be confined to temples. The Epicureans held that matter was eternal, and that the world was formed by a fortuitous concourse of atoms. To this opinion Paul opposed the doctrine that all things were made by one God. Comp. Ac 14:15.

Seeing that, etc. Gr., "He being Lord of heaven and earth."

Lord of heaven and earth. Proprietor and Ruler of heaven and earth. It is highly absurd, therefore, to suppose that He who is present in heaven and in earth at the same time, and who rules over all, should be confined to a temple of an earthly structure, or dependent on man for anything.

Dwelleth not, etc. **See Barnes "Ac 7:48"**.

{a} "that made the world" Ac 14:15 {b} "Lord of heaven" Mt 11:25 {c} "not in temples" Ac 7:48

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 17 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Neither is worshipped with men's hands*. The word here rendered worshipped—*yerapeuetai*—denotes to *serve*; to wait upon; and then to render religious service or homage. There is reference here, undoubtedly, to a notion prevalent among the heathen, that the gods were fed or nourished by the offerings made to them. The idea is prevalent among the Hindoos,

that the sacrifices which are made, and which are offered in the temples, are consumed by the gods themselves. Perhaps, also, Paul had reference to the fact that so many persons were employed in their temples in serving them with their hands; that is, in preparing sacrifices and feasts in their honour. Paul affirms that the great Creator of all things cannot be thus dependent on his creatures for happiness; and consequently that that mode of worship must be highly absurd. The same idea occurs in Ps 50:10-12:

For every beast of the forest is mine;
And the cattle upon a thousand hills.
I know all the fowls of the mountain;
And the wild beasts of the field are mine.
If I were hungry, I would not tell thee;
For the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.

Seeing he giveth. Gr., He having given to all, etc.

Life. He is the Source of life; and therefore he cannot be dependent on that life which he has himself imparted.

And breath. The power of breathing, by which life is sustained. He not only originally gave life, but he gives it at each moment; he gives the power of drawing each breath by which life is supported. It is possible that the phrase "life and breath" may be the figure *hendyades*, by which one thing is expressed by two words. And it is highly probable that Paul here had reference to Ge 2:7: "And the LORD God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." The same idea occurs in Job 12:10:

In whose hand is the life (margin) of every living thing;
And the breath of all mankind.

And all things. All things necessary to sustain life. We may see here how dependent man is on God. There can be no more absolute dependence than that for every *breath*. How easy it would be for God to suspend our breathing! How incessant the care, how unceasing the providence by which, whether we sleep or wake —whether we remember or forget him—he heaves our chest, fills our lungs, restores the vitality of our blood, and infuses rigour into our frame! Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 11:36"**.

{d} "needed anything" Ps 50:8 {e} "giveth to all life" Job 12:10 Zec 12:1 {f} "all things" Ro 11:36

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 17 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *And hath made of one blood*. All the families of men are descended from one origin, or stock. However different their complexion, features, language, etc., yet they are derived from a common parent. The word *blood* is often used to denote *race, stock, kindred*. This passage completely proves that all the human family are descended from the same ancestor; and that, consequently, all the variety of complexion, etc., is to be traced to some other cause than that there were originally different races created. See Ge 1; comp. Mal 2:10. The *design* of the apostle in this affirmation was, probably, to convince the Greeks that he regarded them all as brethren; and that, although he

was a Jew, yet he was not enslaved to any narrow notions or prejudices in reference to other men. It follows also from this, that no one nation, and no individual, can claim any pre-eminence over others in virtue of birth or blood. All are in this respect equal; and the whole human family, however they may differ in complexion, customs, and laws, are to be regarded and treated as brethren. It follows, also, that no one part of the race has a right to enslave or oppress any other part, on account of difference of complexion. Nor has man a right, because

He finds his fellow guilty of a skin
Not coloured like his own, and having power
T' enforce the wrong, for such a worthy cause to
Doom and devote him as his lawful prey.

For to dwell, etc. To cultivate and till the earth. This was the original command, Ge 1:28; and God, by his providence, has so ordered it that the descendants of one family have found their way to all lands, and have become adapted to the climate where he has placed them.

And hath determined. Gr. *orisav*. Having fixed or marked out a boundary. **See Barnes "Ro 1:4"**.

The word is usually applied to a *field*, which is designated by a boundary. It means here, that God hath marked out, or designated in his purpose, their future abodes.

The times before appointed. This evidently refers to the dispersion and migration of nations. And it means that God had, in his plan, fixed the times when each country should be settled; the time of the location, the rise, the prosperity, and the fall of each nation. It implies,

(1.) that these times had been before appointed; and,

(2.) that it was done in wisdom. It was his plan; and the different continents and islands had not, therefore, been settled by chance, but by a wise rule, and in accordance with his arrangement and design.

And the bounds of their habitation. Their limits and boundaries as a people. He has designated the black man to Africa; the white man to northern regions; the American savage he fixed in the wilds of the western continent, etc. By customs, laws, inclinations, and habits, he fixed the boundaries of their habitations, and disposed them to dwell there. We may learn,

(1.) that the revolutions and changes of nations are under the direction of infinite wisdom;

(2.) that men should not be restless and dissatisfied with the place where God has located them;

(3.) that God has given sufficient limits to all, so that it is not needful to invade others; and,

(4.) that wars of conquest are evil. God has given to men their places of abode, and we have no right to disturb those abodes, or to attempt to displace them in a violent manner. This strain of remark by the apostle was also opposed to all the notions of the Epicurean philosophers; and yet so obviously true and just, that they could not gainsay or resist it.

{g} "blood" Mal 2:10 {h} "before appointed" Ps 31:15 {i} "bounds of their habitation" Isa 14:21

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 17 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *That they should seek the Lord*. Gr., To seek the Lord. The design of thus placing them on the earth—of giving them their habitation among his works—was that they should contemplate his wisdom in his works, and thus come to a knowledge of his existence and character. All nations, though living in different regions and climates, have thus the opportunity of becoming acquainted with God, Ro 1:19,20. The fact, that the nations did *not* thus learn the character of the true God, shows their great stupidity and wickedness. The design of Paul in this was, doubtless, to reprove the idolatry of the Athenians. The argument is this: "God has given to each nation its proper opportunity to learn his character. Idolatry, therefore, is folly and wickedness; since it is possible to find out the existence of the one God from his works."

If haply. *ei arage*. If perhaps—implying that it was *possible* to find God, though it might be attended with some difficulty. God has placed us here that we may make the trial; and has made it possible thus to find him.

They might feel after him. The word used here—*qhlafhseian* means, properly, *to touch, to handle*, Lu 24:39 Heb 12:18; and then to ascertain the qualities of an object by the sense of touch. And as the sense of touch is regarded as a certain way of ascertaining the existence and qualities of an object, the word means to search diligently, that we may know distinctly and certainly. The word has this sense here. It means to search diligently and accurately for God, to learn his existence and perfections. The Syriac renders it, "that they may seek for God, and find him from his creatures."

And find him. Find the proofs of his existence. Become acquainted with his perfections and laws.

Though he be not far, etc. This seems to be stated by the apostle to show that it was *possible* to find him; and that even those who were without a revelation need not despair of becoming acquainted with his existence and perfections. He is near to us,

(1.) because the proofs of his existence and power are round about us everywhere, Ps 19:1-6.

(2.) Because he fills all things in heaven and earth by his essential presence, Ps 139:7-10 Jer 23:23,24 Am 9:2-4; 1Ki 8:27.

We should learn then,

(1.) to be afraid to sin. God is present with us, and sees all.

(2.) He can protect the righteous. He is ever with them.

(3.) He can detect and punish the wicked. He sees all their plans and thoughts, and records all their doings.

(4.) We should seek him continually. It is the design for which he has made us; and he has given us abundant opportunities to learn his existence and perfections.

{*} "haply" "possible" {**} "feel after him" "search" {a} "he be not far" Ac 14:16

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 17 - Verse 28

Verse 28:*For in him we live*. The expression "in him" evidently means by him; by his originally forming us, and continually sustaining us. No words can better express our constant dependence on him. He is the original Fountain of life; and he upholds us each moment. A similar sentiment is found in Plautus, (5, 4, 14:) "O Jupiter, who dost cherish and nourish the race of man; by whom we live, and with whom is the hope of the life of all men."—(Kuinoel.) It does not appear, however,

that Paul intended this as a quotation; yet he doubtless intended to state a sentiment with which they were familiar, and with which they would agree.

And move. *kinoumeya*. Doddridge translates this, "And are moved." It may, however, be in the middle voice, and be correctly rendered as in our version. It means that we derive strength to move from him; an expression denoting constant and absolute dependence. There is no idea of dependence more striking than that we owe to him the ability to perform the slightest motion.

And have our being. *kai esmen*. And *are*. This denotes that our continued existence is owing to him. That we live at all is his gift; that we have power to move is his gift; and our continued and prolonged existence is his gift also. Thus Paul traces our dependence on Him from the lowest pulsation of life to the highest powers of action and of continued existence. It would be impossible to express in more emphatic language our entire dependence on God.

As certain also. As some. The sentiment which he quotes was found substantially in several Greek poets.

Of your own poets. He does not refer particularly here to poets of Athens, but to Greek poets—poets who had written in their language.

For we are also his offspring. This precise expression is found in Aratus, (Phaenom. v. 5,) and in Cleanthus in a hymn to Jupiter. Substantially the same sentiment is found in several other Greek poets. Aratus was a Greek poet of Cilicia, the native place of Paul, and flourished about 277 years before Christ. As Paul was a native of the same country, it is highly probable he was acquainted with his writings. Aratus passed much of his time at the court of Antigonus Gonatas, king of Macedonia. His principal work was the Phaenomena, which is here quoted, and was so highly esteemed in Greece that many learned men wrote commentaries on it. The sentiment here quoted was directly at variance with the views of the Epicureans; and it is proof of Patti's address and skill, as well as his acquaintance with his auditors, and with the Greek poets, that he was able to adduce a sentiment so directly in point, and that had the concurrent testimony of so many of the Greeks themselves. It is *one* instance among thousands where an acquaintance with profane learning may be of use to a minister of the gospel.

{b} "in him" Col 1:17 {+} "him" "deity" {c} "certain" Tit 1:12

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 17 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Forasmuch then*. Admitting or assuming this to be true. The argument which follows is drawn from the concessions of their own writers.

We ought not to think. It is absurd to suppose. The argument of the apostle is this: "Since we are formed by God; since we are like him, living and intelligent beings; since we are more excellent in our nature than the most precious and ingenious works of art, it is absurd to suppose that the original Source of our existence can be like gold, and silver, and stone. Man himself is far more excellent than an image of wood or stone; how much more excellent still must be the great Fountain and Source of all our wisdom and intelligence!" See this thought pursued at length in Isa 40:18-23.

The Godhead. The Divinity—*to yeion*—the Divine Nature, or Essence. The word used here is an adjective employed as a noun, and does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament.

Is like unto gold, etc. All these things were used in making images, or statues of the gods. It is absurd to think that the Source of all life and intelligence resembles a lifeless block of wood or stone. Even degraded heathen, one would think, might see the force of an argument like this.

Graven. Sculptured; wrought into an image.

{d} "to think" Isa 40:18 {++} "Godhead" "Deity"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 17 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *And the times of this ignorance*. The long period when men were ignorant of the true God, and when they worshipped stocks and stones. Paul here refers to the times preceding the gospel.

God winked at. *uperidwn*. Overlooked, connived at; did not come forth to punish. In Ac 14:16, it is expressed thus: "Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways." The sense is, he passed over those times without punishing them, as if he did not see them. For wise purposes he suffered them to walk in ignorance, and to make the fair experiment to show what men would do; and how much necessity there was for a revelation to instruct them in the true knowledge of God. We are not to suppose that God regarded idolatry as innocent, or the crimes and vices to which idolatry led as of no importance; but their ignorance was a mitigating circumstance, and he suffered the nations to live without coming forth in direct judgment against them. Comp. **See Barnes "Ac 3:17"**; **See Barnes "Ac 14:16"**.

But now commandeth. By the gospel, Lu 24:47.

All men. Not Jews only, who had been favoured with peculiar privileges, but all nations. The barrier was broken down, and the call to repentance was sent abroad into all the earth.

To repent. To exercise sorrow for their sins, and to forsake them. If God *commands* all men to repent, we may observe,

(1.) that it is their *duty* to do it. There is no higher obligation than to obey the command of God.

(2.) It *can* be done. God would not command an impossibility.

(3.) It is binding on *all*. The rich, the learned, the great, the gay, are as much bound as the beggar and the slave. There is no distinction made. It pertains to all people, in all lands.

(4.) It must be done, or the soul lost. It is not wise, and it is not safe, to neglect a plain law of God. It will not be well to die reflecting that we have all our life neglected and despised his plain commands.

(5.) We should send the gospel to the heathen. God calls on the *nations* to repent, and to be saved. It is the duty of Christians to make known to them the command, and to invite them to the blessings of pardon and heaven.

{e} "winked at" Ro 2:16 {f} "commandeth all men" Lu 24:47 Tit 2:11,12

{&} "winked at" "overlooked"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 17 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *Because he hath appointed a day*. This is given as a reason why God commands men to repent. They must be judged; and if they are not penitent and pardoned, they must be condemned. **See Barnes "Ro 2:16".**

Whom he hath ordained. Or whom he has constituted or appointed as judge. **See Barnes "Ac 10:42".**

See Barnes "Joh 5:25".

Hath given assurance Has afforded evidence of this. That evidence consists,

(1.) in the fact that Jesus *declared* that he would judge the nations, Joh 5:25,26; Mt 25, and

(2.) God confirmed the truth of his declaration by raising him from the dead, or gave his sanction to what the Lord Jesus had said, for God would not work a miracle in favour of an imposter.

{g} "a day" Ro 2:16 {*} "ordained" "Appointed" {1} "given assurance" "offered faith"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 17 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *Some mocked*. Some of the philosophers derided him. It was believed by none of the Greeks; it seemed incredible; and they regarded it as so absurd as not to admit of an argument. It has not been uncommon for even professed philosophers to mock at the doctrines of religion, and to meet the arguments of Christianity with a Sneer. The Epicureans particularly would be likely to deride this, as they denied altogether any future state. It is not improbable that this derision by the Epicureans produced such a disturbance as to break off Paul's discourse, as that of Stephen had been by the clamour of the Jews, Ac 7:54.

And others said. Probably some of the Stoics. The doctrine of a future state was not denied by them; and the fact, affirmed by Paul, that one had been raised up from the dead, would appear more plausible to them, and it *might* be a matter worth inquiry to ascertain whether the alleged fact did not furnish a new argument for their views. They, therefore, proposed to examine this further at some future time. That the inquiry was prosecuted any further does not appear probable; for,

(1.) no church was organized at Athens.

(2.) There is no account of any future interview with Paul.

(3.) He departed almost immediately from them, Ac 18:1. Men who defer inquiry on the subject of religion seldom find the favourable period arrive. Those who propose to examine its doctrines at a future time, often do it to avoid the *inconvenience* of becoming Christians now; and as a plausible and easy way of rejecting the gospel altogether, without appearing to be rude, or to give offence.

{a} "some mocked" Ac 26:8 {+} "mocked" "scoffed" {b} "of this matter" Lu 14:18

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 17 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *So Paul departed*. Seeing there was little hope of saving them. it was not his custom to labour long in a barren field, or to preach where there was no prospect of success.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 17 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *Clave unto him*. Adhered to him firmly; embraced the Christian religion.

Dionysius. Nothing more is certainly known of this man than is here stated.

The Areopagite. Connected with the court of Areopagus, but in what way is not known. It is probable that he was one of the judges. The conversion of one man was worth the labour of Paul; and the secret influence of that conversion might have had an extensive influence on others.

In regard to this interesting account of the visit of Paul to Athens —probably the only one which he made to that splendid capital— we may remark,

(1.) that he was indefatigable and constant in his great work.

(2.) Christians, amidst the splendour and gaieties of such cities, should have their hearts deeply affected in view of the moral desolations of the people.

(3.) They should be willing to do their duty, and to bear witness to the pure and simple gospel in the presence of the great and the noble.

(4.) They should not consider it their main business to admire splendid temples, and statues, and paintings—the works of art; but their main business should be, to do good as they may have opportunity.

(5.) A discourse, even in the midst of much wickedness and idolatry, may be calm and dignified; not an appeal merely to the passions, but to the understanding. Paul *reasoned* with the philosophers of Athens; he did not denounce them; he endeavoured calmly to convince them, not harshly to censure them.

(6.) The example of Paul is a good one for all Christians. In all places —cities, towns, or country; amidst all people—philosophers, and the rich, and the poor; among friends and countrymen, or among strangers and foreigners, the great object should be to do good, to instruct mankind, and to seek to elevate the human character, and promote human happiness, by diffusing the mild and pure precepts of the gospel of Christ.

{++} "clave" "Joined themselves"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 18

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 18 - Verse 1

CHAPTER 18

Verse 1. After these things. After what occurred at Athens, as recorded in the previous chapter.

Came to Corinth. Corinth was the capital of Achaia, called anciently Ephyra, and was seated on the isthmus which divides the Peloponnesus from Attica. The city itself stood on a little island; it had two ports, Lechaeum on the west, and Cenchrea on the east. It was one of the most populous and wealthy cities of Greece; and, at the same time, one of the most luxurious, effeminate, proud, ostentatious, and dissolute. Laciviousness here was not only practised and allowed, but was consecrated by the worship of Venus; and no small part of the wealth and splendour of the city

arose from the offerings made by licentious passion in the very temples of this goddess. No city of ancient times was more profligate. It was the *Paris* of antiquity; the seat of splendour, and show, and corruption. Yet even here, notwithstanding all the disadvantages of splendour, gaiety, and dissoluteness, Paul entered on the work of rearing a church; and here he was eminently successful. The two epistles which he afterwards wrote to this church show the extent of his success; and the well-known character and propensities of the people will account for the general drift of the admonitions and arguments in those epistles. Corinth was destroyed by the Romans, 146 years before Christ; and during the conflagration, several metals in a fused state, running together, produced the composition known as Corinthian brass. It was afterwards restored by Julius Caesar, who planted in it a Roman colony. It soon regained its ancient splendour, and soon relapsed into its former dissipation and licentiousness. Paul arrived there A.D. 52 or 53.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 18 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And found a certain Jew*. Aquila is elsewhere mentioned as the friend of Paul, Ro 16:3 2Ti 4:19; 1Co 16:19.

Though a Jew by birth, yet it is evident that he became a convert to the Christian faith.

Born in Pontus. **See Barnes "Ac 2:9"**.

Lately come from Italy. Though the command of Claudius extended only to Rome, yet it was probably deemed not safe to remain, or it might have been difficult to procure occupation in any part of Italy.

Because that Claudius. Claudius was the Roman emperor. He commenced his reign A.D. 41, and was poisoned A.D. 64. At what time in his reign this command was issued is not certainly known.

Had commanded, etc. This command is not mentioned by Josephus; but it is recorded by Suetonius, a Roman historian, (Life of Claudius, chap. 26,) who says, that "he expelled the Jews from Rome, who were constantly exciting tumults under their leader, Chrestus." Who this *Chrestus* was, is not known. It *might* have been a foreign Jew, who raised tumults on some occasion, of which we have no knowledge—as the Jews in all heathen cities were greatly prone to excitements and insurrections. Or it may be that Suetonius, little acquainted with Jewish affairs, mistook this for the name *Christ*, and supposed that he was the leader of the Jews. This explanation has much plausibility; for,

(1.) Suetonius could scarcely be supposed to be intimately acquainted with the affairs of the Jews.

(2.) There is every reason to believe that, before this, the Christian religion was preached at Rome.

(3.) It would produce there, as everywhere else, great tumult and contention among the Jews.

(4.) Claudius, the emperor, might suppose that such tumults endangered the peace of the city, and resolve to remove the cause at once by the dispersion of all the Jews.

(5.) A Roman historian might easily mistake the true state of the case; and while they were contending about Christ, he might suppose that it was under him, as a leader, that these tumults

were excited. All that is material however, here, is *the fact*, in which Luke and Suetonius agree, that the Jews were expelled from Rome during his reign.

{c} "Aquila" Ro 16:3

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 18 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *The same craft*. Of the same *trade*, or *occupation*.

And wrought. And worked at that occupation. Why he did it, the historian does not affirm; but it seems pretty evident that it was because he had no other means of maintenance. He also laboured for his own support in Ephesus, Ac 20:34 and also at Thessalonica, 2Th 3:9,10. The apostle was not ashamed of honest industry for a livelihood; nor did he deem it any disparagement that a minister of the gospel should labour with his own hands.

For by their occupation. By their trade; that is, they had been brought up to this business. Paul had been designed originally for a lawyer, and had been brought up at the feet of Gamaliel. But it was a regular custom among the Jews to train up their sons to some useful employment, that they might have the means of an honest livelihood. Even though they were trained up to the liberal sciences, yet they deemed a handicraft trade, or some honourable occupation, an indispensable part of education. Thus Maimonides (in the Tract Talmud. Tors, c. i. & 9) says, that "the wise generally practise some of the arts, lest they should be dependent on the charity of others." See Grotius. The wisdom of this is obvious; and it is equally plain that a custom of this kind now might preserve the health and lives of many professional men, and save from ignoble dependence or vice, in future years, many who are trained up in the lap of indulgence and wealth.

They were tentmakers. *skhnopoioi*. There have been various opinions about the meaning of this word. Many have supposed that it denotes a weaver of tapestry. Luther thus translated it. But it is probable that it denotes, as in our translation, a manufacturer of tents, made of skin or cloth. In eastern countries, where there was much travel, where there were no inns, and where many were shepherds, such a business might be useful, and a profitable source of living. It was an honourable occupation, and Paul was not ashamed to be employed in it.

{&} "craft" "occupation" {d} "wrought" Ac 20:34 {|} "wrought" "worked"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 18 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And he reasoned*. **See Barnes "Ac 17:2"**.

{*) "reasoned" "discoursed" {a} "synagogue" Ac 17:2

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 18 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And when Silas and Timotheus*, etc. They came to Paul according to his request, which he had sent by the brethren who accompanied him from Thessalonica, Ac 17:16.

Paul was pressed. Was urged; was borne away by an unusual impulse. It was deeply impressed on him as his duty.

In spirit. In his mind, in his feelings. His love to Christ was so great, and his conviction of the truth so strong, that he laboured to make known to them the truth that Jesus was the Messiah.

That Jesus was Christ. That Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah. Comp. Ac 17:16. The presence of Silas and Timothy animated him; and the certainty of aid in his work urged him to zeal in making known the Saviour.

{1} "was Christ" "is the Christ"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 18 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *And when they opposed themselves*. To him and his message.

And blasphemed. **See Barnes "Ac 13:4"**.

He shook his raiment. As an expressive act of shaking off the guilt of their condemnation. Comp. Ac 13:45. He shook his raiment to show that he was resolved henceforward to have nothing to do with them; perhaps, also, to express the fact that God would soon shake them off, or reject them. (*Doddridge*.)

Your blood, etc. The guilt of your destruction is your own. You only are the cause of the destruction that is coming upon you. **See Barnes "Mt 27:25"**.

I am clean. I am not to blame for your destruction. I have done my duty. The gospel had been fairly offered, and deliberately rejected; and Paul was not to blame for their ruin, which he saw was coming upon them.

I will go, etc. See Ac 13:46.

{c} "opposed themselves" 2Ti 2:25 {d} "shook his raiment" Ne 5:13 {e} "Your blood be" Eze 28:4

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 18 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *A certain man's house*. Probably he had become a convert to the Christian faith.

Joined hard. Was near to the synagogue.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 18 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *And Crispus*. He is mentioned, in 1Co 1:14, as having been one of the few whom Paul baptized with his own hands. The conversion of such a man must have tended greatly to exasperate the other Jews, and to further the progress of the Christian faith among the Corinthians.

With all his house. With all his family, Ac 10:2.

And many of the Corinthians. Many even in this voluptuous and wicked city. Perhaps the power of the gospel was never more signal than in converting sinners in Corinth, and rearing a Christian

church in a place so dissolute and abandoned. If it was adapted to such a place as *Corinth* —if a church, under the power of Christian truth, could be organized there—it is adapted to any city; and there is none so corrupt that the gospel cannot change and purify it.

{f} "Crispus" 1Co 1:14 {+} "with all his house" "with his hold household"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 18 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *By a vision*. **See Barnes** "Ac 9:10, **See Barnes "Ac 16:9"**.

Be not afraid. *Perhaps* Paul might have been intimidated by the learning, refinement, and splendour of Corinth; *perhaps* embarrassed in view of his duty of addressing the rich, the polite, and the great. To this he may allude in 1Co 2:3: "And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling." In such circumstances it pleased God to meet him, and disarm his fears. This he did by assuring him of success. The fact that God had much people in that city, Ac 18:10, was employed to remove his apprehensions. The prospect of success in the ministry, and the certainty of the presence of God, will take away the fear of the rich, the learned, and the great.

{&} "Hold not thy peace" "Be not silent"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 18 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *For I am with thee*. I will attend, bless, and protect you. **See Barnes "Mt 28:20"**.

No man shall set on thee. No one who shall rise up against thee shall be able to hurt thee. His life was in God's hands, and he would preserve him, in order that his people might be collected into the church.

For I have. Greek, There is to me; i.e., I possess, or there belongs to me.

Much people. Many who should be regarded as his true friends, and who should be saved.

In this city. In that very city that was so voluptuous, so rich, so effeminate, and where there had been already so decided opposition shown to the gospel. This passage evidently means that God had a design or purpose to save many of that people; for it was given to Paul as all encouragement to him to labour there, evidently meaning that God *would* grant him success in his work. It cannot mean that the Lord meant to say that the great mass of the people, or that the moral and virtuous part, if there were any such, was then regarded as his people; but that he *intended* to convert many of those guilty and profligate Corinthians to himself, and to gather a people for his own service there. We may learn from this,

(1.) that God has a purpose in regard to the salvation of sinners.

(2.) That that purpose is so fixed in the mind of God, that *he* can say that those in relation to whom it is formed are his. There is no chance; no hap-hazard; no doubt in regard to his gathering them to himself.

(3.) This is the ground of encouragement to the ministers of the gospel. Had God no purpose to save sinners, they could have no hope in their work.

(4.) This plan may have reference to the most gay, and guilty, and abandoned population; and ministers should not be deterred by the amount or the degree of wickedness from attempting to save them.

(5.) There may be more hope of success among a dissolute and profligate population, than among proud, and cold, and skeptical philosophers. Paul had little success in philosophic Athens; he had great success in dissolute Corinth. There is often more hope of converting a man openly dissolute and abandoned, than one who prides himself on his philosophy, and is confident in his own wisdom.

{g} "I am with thee" Mt 28:20. {%} "set on thee" "Lay hands on" {|} "much people in this city" "many"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 18 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *And he continued*. etc. Paul was not accustomed to remain long in a place. At Ephesus, indeed, he remained three years, Ac 20:31; and his stay at Corinth was caused by his success, and by the necessity of placing a church, collected out of such corrupt and dissolute materials, on a firm foundation.

{2} "he continued there" "sat there"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 18 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *And when Gallio*. After the Romans had conquered Greece, they reduced it to two provinces, Macedonia and Achaia, which were each governed by a proconsul. Gallio was the brother of the celebrated philosopher Seneca, and was made proconsul of Achaia, A.D. 53. His proper name was Marcus Annaeus Novatus; but having been adopted into the family of Gallio, a rhetorician, he took his name. He is described by ancient writers as having been of a remarkably mild and amiable disposition. His brother Seneca (Pref. Quest. Natu. 4) describes him as being of the most lovely temper: "No mortal," says he, "was ever so mild to any one, as he was to all; and in him there was such a natural power of goodness, that there was no semblance of art or dissimulation."

Was the deputy. See this word explained in Ac 13:7. It means, here, proconsul.

Of Achaia. This word, in its largest sense, comprehended the whole of Greece. Achaia Proper, however, was a province of which Corinth was the capital. It embraced that part of Greece lying between Thessaly and the southern part of the Peloponnesus.

The Jews made insurrection. Excited a tumult, as they had in Philippi, Antioch, etc.

And brought him to the judgment seat. The tribunal of Gallio; probably intending to arraign him as a disturber of the peace.

{a} "judgment seat" Jas 2:6

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 18 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Contrary to the law*. Evidently intending contrary to *all* law—the laws of the Romans and of the Jews. It was permitted to the Jews to worship God according to their own views in Greece; but they could easily pretend that Paul had departed from that mode of worshipping God. It was easy for them to maintain that he taught contrary to the laws of the Romans, and their acknowledged religion; and their design seems to have been, to accuse him of teaching men to worship God in an unlawful and irregular way, a way unknown to any of the laws of the empire.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 18 - Verse 14

Verse 14. About to open his mouth. In self-defence; ever ready to vindicate his conduct.

A matter of wrong. Injustice, or crime; such as could be properly brought before a court of justice.

Or wicked lewdness. Any flagrant and gross offence. The word used here occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It denotes, properly, an act committed by him who is skilled, facile, or an adept in iniquity—an act of a veteran offender. Such crimes Gallio was willing to take cognizance of.

Reason would, etc. Greek, "I would bear with you according to reason." There would be propriety or fitness in my hearing and trying the ease. That is, it would fall within the sphere of my duty, as appointed to guard the peace, and to punish crimes.

(*} "wicked lewdness" "injustice or wicked mischief" {b} "O ye Jews, reason" Ro 13:3 {+} "bear with you"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 18 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Of words*. A dispute about *words*; for such he would regard all their controversies about religion to be.

And names. Probably he had heard something of the nature of the controversy, and understood it to be a dispute about *names*; i.e., whether Jesus was to be called the Messiah or not. To him this would appear as a matter pertaining to the Jews alone, and to be ranked with their other disputes arising from the difference of sect and name.

Of your law. A question respecting the proper interpretation of the law, or the rites and ceremonies which it commanded. The Jews had many such disputes, and Gallio did not regard them as coming under his cognizance as a magistrate.

Look ye to it. Judge this among yourselves; settle the difficulty as you can. Comp. Joh 18:31.

For I will be no judge, etc. I do not regard such questions as pertaining to my office, or deem myself called on to settle them.

{++} "words and names" "Doctrines" {c} "look ye to it" Joh 18:31 Ac 23:29, 22:11,19

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 18 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *And he drave them*, etc. He refused to hear and decide the controversy. He commanded them to depart from the court. The word used here does not denote that there was any violence used by Galio, but merely that he dismissed them in an authoritative manner.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 18 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Then all the Greeks*. The Greeks who had witnessed the persecution of Paul by the Jews, and who had seen the tumult which they had excited.

Took Sosthenes, etc. As he was the chief ruler of the synagogue, he had probably been a leader in the opposition to Paul, and in the prosecution. Indignant at the Jews—at their bringing such questions before the tribunal—at their bigotry, and rage, and contentious spirit—they probably fell upon him in a tumultuous and disorderly manner as he was leaving the tribunal. The Greeks would feel no small measure of indignation at these disturbers of the public peace, and they took this opportunity to express their rage.

And beat him. *etupton*. This word is not that which is commonly used to denote a judicial act of scourging. It probably means that they fell upon him, and beat him with their fists, or with whatever was at hand.

Before the judgment seat. Probably while leaving the tribunal. Instead of "Greeks" in this verse, some Mss. read "Jews," but the former is probably the true reading. The Syriac, Arabic, and Coptic read it "the Gentiles." It is probable that this Sosthenes afterwards became a convert to the Christian faith, and a preacher of the gospel. See 1Co 1:1,2: "Paul, and Sosthenes our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth."

And Gallio cared, etc. This has been usually charged on Gallio as a matter of reproach, as if he were wholly indifferent to religion. But the charge is unjustly made; and his name is often most improperly used to represent the indifferent, the worldly, the careless, and the skeptical. But by the testimony of ancient writers, he was a most mild and amiable man; and an upright and just judge. Nor is there the least evidence that he was indifferent to the religion of his country, or that he was of a thoughtless and skeptical turn of mind. All that this passage implies is,

(1.) that he did not deem it to be his duty, or a part of his office, to settle questions of a theological nature that were started among the Jews.

(2.) That he was unwilling to make this subject a matter of legal discussion and investigation.

(3.) That he would not interfere, either on one side or the other, in the question about making proselytes either to or from Judaism. So far certainly his conduct was exemplary and proper.

(4.) That he did not choose to interpose, and rescue Sosthenes from the hands of the mob. From *some* cause he was willing that *he* should feel the effects of the public indignation. Perhaps it was not easy to quell the riot; perhaps he was not unwilling that he who had joined in a furious and unprovoked persecution should feel the effect of it in the excited passions of the people. At all events, he was but following the common practice among the Romans, which was to regard the Jews with contempt, and to care little how much they were exposed to popular fury and rage. In this he was wrong; and it is certain also that he was indifferent to the disputes between Jews and

Christians; but there is no propriety in defaming his name, and making him the type and representative of all the thoughtless and indifferent men on the subject of religion in subsequent times. Nor is there propriety in using this passage as a text applicable to this class of men.

{d} "Sosthenes" 1Co 1:1

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 18 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *And sailed thence into Syria*. Or set sail for Syria. His design was to go to Jerusalem to the festival which was soon to occur, Ac 18:21.

Having shorn his head. Many interpreters have supposed that this refers to Aquila, and not to Paul. But the connexion evidently requires us to understand it of Paul, though the Greek construction does not with certainty determine to which it refers. The Vulgate refers it to Aquila, the Syriac to Paul.

In Cenchrea. Cenchrea was the eastern port of Corinth. A church was formed in that place, Ro 16:1.

For he had a vow. A vow is a solemn promise made to God respecting anything. The use of vows is observable throughout the Scripture. Jacob, going into Mesopotamia, vowed the tenth of his estate, and promised to offer it at Bethel to the honour of God, Ge 28:22. Moses made many regulations in regard to vows. A man might devote himself or his children to the Lord. He might devote any part of his time or property to his service. The vow they were required sacredly to observe, (De 23:21,22) except in certain specified cases they were permitted to redeem that which had been thus devoted. The most remarkable vow among the Jews was that of the Nazarite; by which a man made a solemn promise to God to abstain from wine and all intoxicating liquors, to let the hair grow, and not to enter any house polluted by having a dead body in it, or to attend any funeral. This vow generally lasted eight days, sometimes a month, sometimes during a definite period fixed by themselves, and sometimes during their whole lives. When the vow expired, the priest made an offering of a he-lamb for a burnt-offering, a she-lamb for an expiatory sacrifice, and a ram for a peace-offering. The priest then, or some other person, shaved the head of the Nazarite at the door of the tabernacle, and burnt the hair on the fire of the altar. Those who made the vow out of Palestine, and who could not come to the temple when the vow was expired, contented themselves with observing the abstinence required by the law, and cutting off the hair where they were. This I suppose to have been the case with Paul. His hair he cut off at the expiration of the vow at Cenchrea, though he delayed to perfect the vow by the proper ceremonies until he reached Jerusalem, Ac 21:23,24. Why Paul made this vow, or on what occasion, the sacred historian has not informed us, and conjecture perhaps is useless. We may observe, however,

(1,) that it was common for the Jews to make such vows to God, as an expression of gratitude or of devotedness to his service, when they had been raised up from sickness, or delivered from danger or calamity. See Josephus, b. i. 2, 15. Vows of this nature were also made by the Gentiles on occasions of deliverance from any signal calamity. Juvenal Sat. 12, 81. It is *possible* that Paul may have made such a vow in consequence of signal deliverance from some of the numerous perils to which he was exposed. But,

(2.) there is reason to think that it was mainly with a design to convince the Jews that he did not despise their law, and was not its enemy. See Ac 21:22-24. In accordance with the custom of the nation, and in compliance with the law which was not wrong in itself, he might have made this vow, not for a time-serving purpose, but in order to conciliate them, and to mitigate their anger against the gospel. But where nothing is recorded, conjecture is useless. Those who wish to see the subject discussed, may consult Grotius and Kuinoel in loco, and Spencer de Legibus Hebrae. p. 862, and Calmet's Dic. art. *Nazarite*.

{&} "tarried" "remained" {e} "having shorn his head" Nu 6:18 Ac 21:24 {f} "for he had a vow" Ro 16:1

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 18 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *And he came to Ephesus*. This was a celebrated city in Ionia, in Asia Minor, about forty miles south of Smyrna. It was chiefly famous for the temple of Diana, usually reckoned one of the seven wonders of the world. Pliny styles this city the ornament of Asia. In the times of the Romans it was the metropolis of Asia. This city is now under the dominion of the Turks, and is almost in a state of ruin. Dr. Chandler, in his travels in Asia Minor, says—"The inhabitants are a few Greek peasants, living in extreme wretchedness, dependence, and insensibility; the representatives of an illustrious people, and inhabiting the wreck of their greatness; some in the substructions of the glorious edifices which they raised; some beneath the vaults of the stadium, once the crowded scene of their diversions; and some in the sepulchres which received their ashes."—Travels, p. 131, Oxford, 1775. The Jews, according to Josephus, were very numerous in Ephesus, and had obtained the privilege of citizenship.

Left them there. That is, Aquila and Priscilla, Ac 18:24-26.

Reasoned with the Jews. **See Barnes "Ac 17:2"**.

{*} "reasoned" "Discoursed" {a} "reasoned with the Jews" Ac 17:2

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 18 - Verse 20

Verse 20. No Barnes text on this verse.

{+} "tarry" "Abide"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 18 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Keep this feast*. Probably the passover is here referred to. *Why* he was so anxious to celebrate that feast at Jerusalem, the historian has not informed us. It is probable, however, that he wished to meet as many of his countrymen as possible, and to remove, if practicable, the prejudices which had everywhere been raised against him, Ac 21:20,21. Perhaps, also, he supposed that there would be many Christian converts present, whom he might meet also.

But I will return, etc. This he did, Ac 19:1, and remained there three years, Ac 20:31.
{b} "Jerusalem" Ac 19:21 20:16 {c} "if God will" 1Co 4:19 Jas 4:15

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 18 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Caesarea*. **See Barnes "Ac 8:40"**.
And gone up. From the ship.
And saluted the church. Having expressed for them his tender regard and affection.
To Antioch. In Syria. **See Barnes "Ac 11:19"**.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 18 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *The country of Galatia and Phrygia*. He had been over these regions before, preaching the gospel, Ac 16:6
Strengthening. Establishing then by exhortation and counsel. **See Barnes "1Co 1:12"**.
{d} "Galatia" Ga 1:2 {e} "strengthening" Ac 14:22 15:32,41

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 18 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *And a certain Jew named Apollos*. Apollos afterwards became a distinguished and successful preacher of the gospel, 1Co 1:12; 1Co 3:5,6, 4:6 Tit 3:13.
Nothing more is known of him than is stated in these passages.
Born at Alexandria. Alexandria was a celebrated city in Egypt, founded by Alexander the Great. There were large numbers of Jews resident there. **See Barnes "Ac 6:9"**.
An eloquent man. Alexandria was famous for its schools; and it is probable that Apollos, in addition to his natural endowments, had enjoyed the benefit of these schools.
Mighty in the Scriptures. Well instructed, or able in the Old Testament. The foundation was thus laid for future usefulness in the Christian church. **See Barnes "Lu 24:19"**.
{f} "named Apollos" 1Co 1:12 3:5,6 Tit 3:13

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 18 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *This man was instructed*. Greek, was *catechised*. He was instructed, in some degree, into the knowledge of the Christian religion. By whom this was done, we have no information. **See Barnes "Ac 2:9-11"**.

In the right way of the Lord. The word *way* often refers to doctrine, Mt 21:32. It means here that he had been correctly taught in regard to the Messiah; yet his knowledge was imperfect, Ac 18:26. The amount of his knowledge seems to have been:

(1.) He had correct views of the Messiah to come—views which he had derived from the study of the Old Testament. He was expecting a Saviour that should be humble, obscure, and a sacrifice, in opposition to the prevailing notions of the Jews.

(2.) He had heard of John; had embraced his doctrine; and probably had been baptized with reference to him that was to come. Comp. Mt 3:2 Ac 19:4. But it is clear that he had not heard that Jesus was the Messiah. With his correct views in regard to the coming of the Messiah, he was endeavouring to instruct and reform his countrymen. He was just in the state of mind to welcome the announcement that the Messiah had come, and to embrace Jesus of Nazareth as the hope of the nation.

Being fervent in the spirit. Being zealous and ardent. **See Barnes "Ro 12:11"**.

Taught diligently. Defended with zeal and earnestness his views of the Messiah.

The things of the Lord. The doctrines pertaining to the Messiah, as far as he understood them.

Knowing only the baptism of John. Whether he had heard John, and been baptized by him, has been made a question, and cannot now be decided. It is not necessary, however, to suppose this, as it seems that the knowledge of John s preaching and baptism had been propagated extensively into other nations besides Judea, Ac 19:1-3. The Messiah was expected about that time. The foreign Jews would be waiting for him; and the news of John's ministry, doctrine, and success, would be rapidly propagated from synagogue to synagogue into the surrounding nations. John preached repentance, and baptized with reference to him that was to come after him, Ac 19:4; and this doctrine Apollos seems to have embraced.

{g} "fervent" Ro 12:11 Jas 5:16 {h} "knowing" Ac 19:3

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 18 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *And expounded*. Explained.

The way of God. Gave him full and ample instructions respecting the Messiah as having already come, and respecting the nature of his work.

{i} "more perfectly" He 6:1

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 18 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *Into Achaia*. **See Barnes "Ac 18:12"**.

The brethren wrote. The brethren at Ephesus. *Why* he went, the historian does not inform us. But he had heard of the success of Paul there; of the church which he had established; of the opposition of the Jews; and it was doubtless with a desire to establish that church, and with a wish to convince his unbelieving countrymen that their views of the Messiah were erroneous, and that

Jesus of Nazareth corresponded with the predictions of the prophets. Many of the Greeks at Corinth were greatly captivated with his winning eloquence, 1Co 1:12 3:4,5

and his going there was the occasion of some unhappy divisions that sprung up in the church. But in all this, he retained the confidence and love of Paul, 1Co 1; 1Co 3. It was thus shown that Paul was superior to envy, and that great success by one minister need not excite the envy, or alienate the confidence and good-will of another.

Helped them much. Strengthened them, and aided them in their controversies with the unbelieving Jews.

Which had believed through grace. The words "through grace" may refer either to Apollos, or to the Christians who had believed. If to *him*, it means that he was enable by grace to strengthen the brethren there; if to *them*, it means that they had been led to believe by the grace or favour of God. Either interpretation makes good sense. Our translation has adopted that which is most natural and obvious.

{a} "helped" 1Co 3:6 {b} "believed" Eph 2:8

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 18 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *For he mightily convinced the Jews*. He did it by strong arguments; he bore down all opposition, and effectually silenced them. *And that publicly*. In his public preaching in the synagogue and elsewhere.

Showing by the Scriptures. Proving from the Old Testament. Showing that Jesus of Nazareth corresponded with the account of the Messiah given by the prophets. **See Barnes "Joh 5:39"**.

That Jesus was Christ. See the margin. That Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah.

{*} "convinced" "earnestly confuted" {c} "by the Scriptures" Joh 5:39 {1} "Jesus was Christ" "is the Christ" Ac 18:5

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 1

CHAPTER 19

Verse 1. *While Apollos was at Corinth*. It is probable that he remained there a considerable time.

Paul having passed through the upper coasts. The upper, or more elevated regions of Asia Minor. The writer refers here particularly to the provinces of Phrygia and Galatia, Ac 18:23. These regions were called upper, because they were situated on the high table-land in the interior of Asia Minor; while Ephesus was in the low maritime regions, and called the low country.

Came to Ephesus. Agreeably to his promise, Ac 18:21.

And finding certain disciples. Certain persons who had been baptized into John's baptism, and who had embraced John's doctrine, that the Messiah was soon to appear, Ac 19:3,4. It is very clear that they had not yet heard that he had come, or that the Holy Ghost was given. They were evidently in the same situation as Apollos. **See Barnes "Ac 18:25".**

{d} "Apollos" 1Co 3:5,6 {+} "certain disciples" "Some"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Have ye received the Holy Ghost*? Have ye received the extraordinary effusions and miraculous influences of the Holy Ghost Paul would not doubt that, if they had "believed," they had received the ordinary converting influences of the Holy Spirit—for it was one of his favourite doctrines, that the Holy Spirit renews the heart. But, besides this, the miraculous influences of the Spirit were conferred on most societies of believers. The power of speaking with tongues, or of working miracles, was imparted as an evidence of the presence of God, and of their acceptance with him, Ac 10:45,46; 1Co 15. It was natural for Paul to ask whether this evidence of the Divine favour had been granted to them.

Since ye believed. Since you embraced the doctrine of John, that the Messiah was soon to come.

We have not so much as heard, etc. This seems to be a very remarkable and strange answer. Yet we are to remember,

(1.) that these were mere disciples of *John's* doctrine, and that his preaching related particularly to the Messiah, and not to the Holy Ghost.

(2.) It does not even appear that they had heard that the Messiah *had* come, or had heard of Jesus of Nazareth, Ac 19:4,5.

(3.) It is not remarkable, therefore, that they had no clear conceptions of the character and operations of the Holy Ghost. Yet,

(4.) they were just in that state of mind, that they were willing to embrace the doctrine when it was proclaimed to them; thus showing that they were *really* under the influence of the Holy Spirit. God may often produce important changes in the hearts and lives of sinners, even where they have no clear and systematic views of religious doctrines. In all such cases, however, as in this, there will be readiness of heart to embrace the truth where it is made known.

{e} "not so" Ac 8:16 1Sa 3:7 {&} "Holy Ghost" 'Spirit *given*'

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Unto what*. Unto what faith, or doctrine. What did you profess to believe when you were baptized.

Unto John's baptism. **See Barnes "Ac 18:25".**

{|} "Unto" "Into" {f} "John's Baptism" Ac 18:25

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *John verily baptized*. John did indeed baptize.

With the baptism of repentance. Having special relation to repentance, or as a profession that they did repent of their sins. **See Barnes "Mt 3:6"**.

Saying unto the people. The design of his coming was to turn the people from their sins, and to prepare them for the coming of the Messiah. He therefore directed their attention principally to him that was to come, Joh 1:15, 22-27.

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That is, on Christ Jesus. These are the words of Paul, explaining what John taught. He taught them to believe in the Messiah, and that the Messiah was Jesus of Nazareth. The argument of Paul is, that it was highly proper for them now to profess publicly that Saviour to whom John had borne such explicit testimony. "Jesus is the Messiah for whom John came to prepare the way; and as you have embraced John's doctrine, you ought now publicly to acknowledge that Redeemer by baptism in his name."

{g} "John" Mt 3:11 {&} "verily" "indeed" {h} "repentance" Joh 1:15,27,30

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *When they heard this*. When they heard what Paul had said respecting the nature of John's baptism.

They were baptized, etc. As there is no other instance in the New Testament of any persons having been rebaptized, it has been made a question by some critics whether it was done here; and they have supposed that all this is the narrative of Luke respecting what took place under the ministry of John; to wit, that he told them to believe on Christ Jesus, and then baptized them in his name. But this is a most forced construction; and it is evident that these persons were *rebaptized* by the direction of Paul. For,

(1.) this is the *obvious* interpretation of the passage—that which would strike all persons as correct, unless there were some previous theory to support.

(2.) It was not a matter of fact that John baptized in the name of Christ Jesus. His was the baptism of repentance; and there is not the slightest evidence that he ever used the name of Jesus in the form of baptism.

(3.) If this be the sense of the passage, that John baptized them in the name of Jesus, then this verse is a mere repetition of Ac 19:4—a tautology of which the sacred writers would not be guilty.

(4.) It is evident that the persons on whom Paul laid his hands, Ac 19:6, and those who were baptized, were the same. But these were the persons who heard Ac 19:5 what was said. The narrative is continuous, all parts of it cohering together as relating to a transaction that occurred at the same time. If the *obvious* interpretation of the passage be the true one, it follows that the baptism of John was not strictly Christian baptism. It was the baptism of repentance; a baptism designed to prepare the way for the introduction of the kingdom of the Messiah. It will *not* follow however, from this, that Christian baptism is now ever to be repeated. For this there is no warrant, no example in the New Testament. There is no command to repeat it, as in the case of the Lord's Supper; and the

nature and design of the ordinance evidently supposes that it is to be performed but once. The disciples of John were rebaptized, not because baptism is designed to be repeated, but because they never had been, in fact, baptized in the manner prescribed by the Lord Jesus.

In the name of the Lord Jesus. **See Barnes "Ac 2:38"**.

{|} "Unto" "into" {i} "name of the Lord Jesus" 1Co 1:13

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *And when Paul had laid his hands*, etc. **See Barnes "Ac 2:17"**; **See Barnes** "Ac 11:27"

{k} "laid his hands" Ac 8:17 {++} "Holy Ghost" "Spirit" {l} "them" Ac 2:4 10:46 {m} "prophesied" 1Co 14:1

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *And all the men*. The whole number.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Persuading the things*. Endeavouring to persuade them of the truth of what was affirmed respecting the kingdom of God.

{n} "disputing" Ac 18:19 {**} "persuading" "discoursing and stating" {o} "the things concerning" Ac 28:23

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *But when divers*. When *some* were hardened.

Were hardened. When their hearts were hardened, and they became violently opposed to the gospel. When the truth made no *impression* on them. The word *harden*, as applied to the heart, is often used to denote insensibility and opposition to the gospel.

But spake evil of that way. Of the gospel—the *way*, path, or manner in which God saves men. See Ac 16:17 18:26; Mt 7:13,14.

Separated the disciples. Removed them from the influence and society of those who were seeking to draw them away from the faith. This is often the best way to prevent the evil influence of others. Christians, if they wish to preserve their minds calm and peaceful; if they wish to avoid the agitations of conflict, and the temptations of those who would lead them astray, may often find

it necessary to withdraw from their society, and should seek the fellowship of their Christian brethren.

Disputing daily. This is not a happy translation. The word used here—*dialegomenov*— does not of necessity denote *disputation* or *contention*, but is often used in a good sense of reasoning, Ac 17:2; Ac 18:4,19; 24:25; or of public *preaching*, Ac 20:7,9. It is used in this sense here, and denotes that Paul taught publicly, or reasoned on the subject of religion in this place.

In the school of one Tyrannus. Who this Tyrannus was, is not known. It is probable that he was a Jew, who was engaged in this employment, and who might not be unfavourable to Christians. In his school, or in the room which he occupied for teaching, Paul instructed the people when he was driven from the synagogue. Christians at that time had no churches, and they were obliged to assemble in any place where it might be convenient to conduct public worship.

{*} "divers" "Some" {a} "hardened" Ro 11:7 Heb 3:13 {b} "evil" 2Ti 1:15 {c} "that way" Ac 19:25 {d} "departed from" 1Ti 6:5 {+} "disputing daily" "discoursing"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *This continued*. This public instruction.

By the space, etc. For two whole years.

So that all. That is, the great mass of the people.

That dwelt in Asia. In that province of Asia Minor of which Ephesus was the principal city. The name Asia was used sometimes to denote that single province. **See Barnes "Ac 2:9"**.

Ephesus was the capital; and there was, of course, a constant and large influx of people there for the purposes of commerce and worship.

Heard the word of the Lord Jesus. Heard the doctrine respecting the Lord Jesus.

{e} "space" Ac 20:31 {f} "Asia" Ac 20:18 {++} "Greeks" "Gentiles"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Special Miracles*. Miracles that were remarkable; that were not common, or that were very unusual, *ou tav tucousav*. This expression is classic Greek. Thus Longinus says of Moses, that he was no common man. *ouc o tucwn anhr*.

{|} "special" "signal" {g} "miracles" Mr 16:20

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *So that from his body*. That is, these handkerchiefs which had been applied to his body, which he had used, or which he had touched. An instance somewhat similar to this occurs in the case of the woman who was healed by touching the hem of the Saviour's garment, Mt 9:20-22.

Unto the sick. The sick who were at a distance, and who were unable to go where he was. If it be asked *why* this was done, it may be observed,

(1.) that the working of miracles in that region would greatly contribute to the spread of the gospel.

(2.) We are not to suppose that there was any *efficacy* in the aprons thus brought, or in the mere fact that they had touched the body of Paul, any more than there was in the hem of the Saviour's garment which the woman touched, or in the clay which he made use of to open the eyes of the blind man, Joh 8:6.

(3.) In this instance the fact, that the miracles were wrought in this manner by garments which had touched his body, was a *mere sign*, or *an evidence* to the persons concerned, that it was done by the instrumentality of Paul, as the fact that the Saviour put his fingers into the ears of a deaf man, and spit and touched his tongue, Mr 7:33, was an evidence to those who saw it, that the power of healing came from him. The bearing of these aprons to the sick was, therefore, a mere *sign*, or evidence to all concerned, that miraculous power was given to *Paul*.

Handkerchiefs. The word used here—*soudaria*—is of Latin origin, and properly denotes a piece of linen with which sweat was wiped from the face; and then any piece of linen used for tying up, or containing anything, In Lu 19:20, it denotes the "napkin" in which the talent of the unprofitable servant was concealed; in Joh 11:44 20:7, the "napkin" which was used to bind up the face of the dead, applied to Lazarus and to our Saviour.

Or aprons. *simikinyia*. This also is a Latin word, and means, literally, a *half-girdle*—a piece of cloth which was girded round the waist to preserve the clothes of those who were engaged in any kind of work. The word *aprons* expresses the idea.

And the diseases departed. The sick were healed.

And the evil spirits. **See Barnes "Mt 4:24"**.

It is evident that this power of working miracles would contribute greatly to Paul's success among the people.

{h} "handkerchiefs or aprons" Ac 5:15

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *The vagabond Jews*. Gr., Jews going about. *periercomenwn*. The word *vagabond* with us is now commonly used in a bad sense, to denote a vagrant; a man who has no home; an idle, worthless fellow. The word, however, properly means one wandering from place to place, without any settled habitation, from whatever cause it may be. Here it denotes those Jews who wandered from place to place, practicing exorcism.

Exorcists. *exorkistwn*. This word properly denotes those who went about pretending to be able to expel evil spirits, or to cure diseases by charms, incantations, etc, The word is derived from *orkov orkos*, an oath, and from *orkizw*, to bind with an oath. It was applied in this sense, because those who pretended to be able to expel demons used the formula of an oath, or adjured them, to compel them to leave the possessed persons. Comp. Mt 12:27. They commonly used the name of God, or called on the demons in the name of God to leave the person. Here they used the name Jesus to command them to come out.

To call over them. To name, or to use his name as sufficient to expel the evil spirit.

The name of the Lord Jesus. The reasons why they attempted this were,

(1.) that Jesus had expelled many evil spirits; and,

(2.) that it was in his name that Paul had wrought his miracles. Perhaps they supposed there was some *charm* in this name to expel them.

We adjure you. We bind you by an oath; we command you as under the solemnity of an oath, Mr 5:7 1Th 5:27. It is a form of putting one under oath, 1Ki 2:43 Ge 24:37; 2Ki 11:4 Ne 13:25.

(Septuagint.) That this art was practised then, or attempted, is abundantly proved from Iraeneus, Origen, and Josephus. (Ant. b. viii. chap. 2, § 5.) See Doddridge. The common name which was used was the incommunicable name of God, JEHOVAH, by pronouncing which, in a peculiar way, it was pretended they had the power of expelling demons.

{&} "vagabond Jews" "Some of the travelling Jews" {i} "took upon them to call" Mr 16:20 Lu 9:49 {k} "adjure by Jesus" Jos 6:25

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *One Sceva*. Sceva is a Greek name, but nothing more is known of him.

Chief of the priests. *arcierewv*. This cannot mean that he was high priest among the Jews, as it is wholly improbable that his sons would be wandering exorcists. But it denotes that he was of the sacerdotal order. He was a Jewish chief priest; a priest of distinction, and that had held the office of a ruler. The word *chief priest*, in the New Testament, usually refers to men of the sacerdotal order, who were also rulers in the sanhedrim.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Jesus I know*. His power to cast out devils I know. Comp. Mt 8:29.

Paul I know. Paul's power to cast out devils, Ac 19:12.

But who are ye? What power have you over evil spirits? By what right do you attempt to expel them? The meaning is, "You belong neither to Jesus nor Paul; you are not of their party; and you have no right or authority to attempt to work miracles in the name of either."

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Leaped on them*. Several such instances are recorded of the extraordinary power and rage of those who were possessed with evil spirits. Mr 5:3 9:29; Lu 9:42.

{l} "leaped on them" Lu 8:29

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 17

Verse 17. The name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. Acquired increasing honour. The transaction showed that the miracles performed in the name of the Lord Jesus, by Paul, were real, and were wrought in attestation of the truth of the doctrine which he taught. Impostors could not work such miracles; and they who pretended to be able to do it only exposed themselves to the rage of the evil spirits. It was thus shown that there was a real, vital difference between Paul and these impostors; and their failure only served to extend his reputation and the power of the gospel.

{a} "fear fell" Lu 1:65 Ac 2:43, 5:5,11

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Their deeds*. Their actions; their evil course of life. Their deeds of iniquity in their former state. The direct reference here is to the magical arts which had been used, but the word may also be designed to denote iniquity in general. They who make a profession of religion will be willing to confess their transgressions. And no man can have evidence that he is truly renewed who is not willing to confess as well as to forsake his sins, Ro 10:10 Pr 28:13: "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall find mercy."

{b} "confessed" Mt 3:6 {*} "shewed" "declared"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Curious arts*. Arts or practices requiring *skill, address, cunning*. The word used here—*perierga*—denotes, properly, those things that require care or skill; and was thus applied to the arts of magic and jugglery, and sleight of hand, that were practised so extensively in eastern countries. That such arts were practised at Ephesus is well known. The *Ephesian letters*, by which incantations and charms were supposed to be produced, were much celebrated. They seem to have consisted of certain combinations of letters or words, which, by being pronounced with certain intonations of voice, were believed to be effectual in expelling diseases or evil spirits; or which, by being written on parchment and worn, were supposed to operate as *amulets*, or charms, to guard from evil spirits or from danger. Thus Plutarch (Sympos 7) says, "The magicians compel those who are possessed with a demon to recite and pronounce *the Ephesian letters*, in a certain order, by themselves." Thus Clemens Alex. (Strom. ii.) says, "Androcydes, a Pythagorean, says that the letters which are called Ephesian, and which are so celebrated, are symbols," etc. Erasmus says, (Adagg. Cent. 2,) that there were certain marks and magical words among the Ephesians, by using which they succeeded in every undertaking. Eustha. ad Homer. Odys. *t*, says, "that those letters were incantations which Croesus used when on the funeral pile, and which greatly befriended him." He adds, that in the war between the Milesians and Ephesians, the latter were thirteen times saved from ruin by the use of these letters. See Grotius and Kuinoel *in loco*.

Brought their books. Books which explained the arts; or which contained the magical forms and incantations—perhaps pieces of parchment, on which were written the letters which were to be used in the incantations and charms.

And burned them before all men. Publicly. Their arts and offences had been public, and they sought now to *undo* the evil, as much as lay in their power, as extensively as they had done it.

And they counted. The price was estimated. By whom this was done does not appear. Probably it was not done by those who had been engaged in this business, and who had suffered the loss, but by the people, who were amazed at the sacrifice, and who were astonished at their folly in thus destroying their own property.

Fifty thousand pieces of silver. What coin the word *argurion*— here translated silver denotes, it is impossible to tell; and consequently the precise value of this sacrifice cannot be ascertained. If it refers to the Jewish *shekel*, the sum would be 25,000 dollars, [or £5,420,] as the shekel was worth about half a dollar. If it refers to Grecian or Roman coin—which is much more probable, as this was a heathen country, where the Jewish coin would not probably be much used—the value would be much less. Probably, however, it refers to the Attic *drachm*, which was a silver coin worth about 9d. sterling; and then the value would be about 8,500 dollars, [or £1,875.] The precise value is not material. It was a large sum; and it is recorded to show that Christianity had power to induce men to forsake arts that were most lucrative, and to destroy the means of extending and perpetuating those arts, however valuable in a pecuniary point of view they might be. We are to remember, however, that this was not the *intrinsic* value of these books, but only their value *as* books of incantations. In themselves they might have been of very little worth. *The universal prevalence of Christianity would make much that is now esteemed valuable property utterly worthless*—as, e.g., all that is used in gambling, in fraud, in counterfeiting, in distilling ardent spirits for drink, in the slave-trade, and in attempts to impose on and defraud mankind. {++} "Counted" "Computed"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *So mightily*. So powerfully. It had such efficacy and power in this wicked city. The power must have been mighty that would thus make them willing, not only to cease to practise imposition, but to give up all hopes of future gains, and to destroy their property. On this instructive narrative, we may remark,

(1.) that religion has power to break the hold of sinners on unjust and dishonest means of living.

(2.) That those who have been engaged in an unchristian and dishonourable practice, will abandon it when they become Christians.

(3.) That their abhorrence of their former course will be, and ought to be, expressed as publicly as was the offence.

(4.) That the evil practice will be abandoned at any sacrifice, however great. The only question will be, *what is right*; not, *what will it cost*. Property, in the view of a converted man, is nothing When compared with a good conscience.

(5.) This conduct of those who had used curious arts shows us what ought to be done by those who have been engaged in any evil course of life, and who are then converted. If their conduct was right—and who can doubt it?—it settles a great principle on which young converts should act. If

a man has been engaged in the slave-trade, he will abandon it; and his duty will *not* be to sell his ship to one who he knows will continue the traffic. His property should be withdrawn from the business publicly, either by being destroyed, or by being converted to a useful purpose. If a man has been a distiller of ardent spirits as a drink, his duty will be to forsake his evil course. Nor will it be his duty to sell his distillery to one who will continue the business; but to withdraw his property from it *publicly*, either by destroying it, or converting it to some useful purpose. If a man has been engaged in *traffic* in ardent spirits, his duty is not to sell his stock to those who will continue the sale of the poison, but to withdraw it from public use; converting it to some useful purpose, if he can; if not, by destroying it. All that has ever been said by money- loving distillers, or vendors of ardent spirits, about the loss which they would sustain by abandoning the business, might have been said by these practitioners of curious arts in Ephesus. And if the excuses of rum-selling men are valid, their conduct was folly; and they should either have continued the business of practicing "curious arts," after they were converted, or have sold their "books" to those who would have continued it. For assuredly it was not worse to practise jugglery and fortune-telling than it is to destroy the bodies and souls of men by the traffic in ardent spirits. And yet how few men there are in Christian lands who practise on the principle of these honest, but comparatively unenlightened men at Ephesus!

{c} "grew the word" Ac 12:24

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *After these things were ended*. After the gospel was firmly established at Ephesus, so that his presence was no longer necessary.

Purposed in the spirit. Resolved in his mind.

When he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia. In these places he had founded flourishing churches. It is probable that his main object in this visit was to take up a collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem. **See Barnes "Ro 15:25"**.

To go to Jerusalem. To bear the contribution of the Gentile churches to the poor and oppressed Christians in Judea.

I must also see Rome. **See Barnes "Ro 15:24"**.

He did go to Rome, but he went in chains, as a prisoner.

{d} "After these things were ended" Ga 2:1 {e} "been there" Ro 15:23-28

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Timotheus*. Timothy. He was a proper person to send there to visit the churches, as he had been there before with Paul, when they were established, Ac 16:3 17:14.

And Erastus. Erastus was chamberlain of Corinth, (Ro 16:23,) or, more properly, the *treasurer* of the city, **See Barnes "Ro 16:23"**; and he was, therefore, a very proper person to be sent with Timothy, for the purpose of making the collection for the poor at Jerusalem. Paul had wisdom enough to

employ a man accustomed to monied transactions in making a collection. On this collection his heart was intent, and he afterwards went up with it to Jerusalem. 2Co 8; 2Co 9.

Stayed in Asia. At Ephesus.

For a season. How long is uncertain. He waited for a convenient opportunity to follow them; probably intending to do it as soon as they had fully prepared the way for the collection. See Paley's Horae Paulinae, p. 1. chap. ii.

{f} "Erastus" Ro 16:23 {|} "season" "Time"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *No small stir*. No little excitement, disturbance, or tumult, *taracov* Comp. Ac 17:4,5.

About that way. Respecting the doctrines of Christianity which Paul preached. **See Barnes "Ac 9:2 18:26, 19:9".**

{*} "stir" "disturbance" {a} "about that" 2Co 1:8 6:9 {+} "way" "doctrine"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *A silversmith*. The word used here denotes one who works in silver in any way, either in making money, in stamping silver, or in forming utensils of it. It is probable that the employment of this man was confined to the business here specified, that of making shrines—as his complaint Ac 19:26,27 implied, that destroying this would be sufficient to throw them all out of employment.

Silver shrines. *naouv*. Temples. The word shrine properly means a case, small chest, or box; particularly applied to a box in which sacred things are deposited. Hence we hear of the shrines for relics.—*Webster*. The word shrines here denotes small portable temples, or edifices, made of silver, so as to resemble the temple of Diana, and probably containing a silver image of the goddess. Such shrines would be purchased by devotees and by worshippers of the goddess, and by strangers, who would be desirous of possessing a representation of one of the seven wonders of the world. **See Barnes "Ac 19:27".**

The great number of persons that came to Ephesus for her worship would constitute an ample sale for productions of this kind, and make the manufacture a profitable employment. It is well known that pagans everywhere are accustomed to carry with them small images, or representations of their gods, as an amulet, or charm. The Romans had such images in all their houses, called *Penates*, or household gods. A similar thing is mentioned as early as the time of Laban, Ge 31:19) whose images Rachel had stolen and taken with her. Comp. Jud 17:5, "The man Micah had an house of gods;" 1Sa 19:13 Hos 3:4. These images were usually enclosed in a box, case, or chest, made of wood, iron, or silver; and probably, as here, usually made to resemble the temple where the idol was worshipped.

Diana. This was a celebrated goddess of the heathen, and one of the twelve superior deities. In the heavens she was Luna, or Meni, (the moon;) on earth, Diana; and in hell, Hecate, She was sometimes represented with a crescent on her head, a bow in her hand, and dressed in a hunting-habit;

at other times with a triple face, and with instruments of torture. She was commonly regarded as the goddess of hunting. She was also worshipped under the various names of Lucina, Proserpine, Trivia, etc. She was also represented with a great number of breasts, to denote her being the fountain of blessings, or as distributing her benefits to each in their proper station. She was worshipped in Egypt, Athens, Cilicia, and among heathen nations generally; but the most celebrated place of her worship was Ephesus—a city peculiarly dedicated to her.

To the craftsmen. To the labourers employed under Demetrius in the manufacture of shrines.

{++} "shrines" "Models of" {b} "small gain" Ac 16:16,19 {&} "craftsmen" "workmen"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *With the workmen of like occupation*. Those who were in his employ, and all others engaged in the same business. As they would be all affected in the same way, it was easy to produce an excitement among them all.

Sirs. Greek, Men.

By this craft. By this business, or occupation. This is our *trade*.

Our wealth. Greek, our acquisition; our property. We are dependent on it for a living. It does not mean that they were *rich*, but that they relied on this for a subsistence. That it was a lucrative business is apparent; but it is not affirmed that they were in fact rich.

{c} "called together" Re 18:11 {|} "craft" "Employment"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Ye see and hear*. You see at Ephesus; and you hear the same of other places.

Throughout all Asia. All Asia Minor; or perhaps the province of which Ephesus was the capital. **See Barnes "Ac 2:9"**.

This Paul hath persuaded. We have here the noble testimony of a heathen to the zeal and success of the ministry of Paul. It is an acknowledgment that his labours had been most strikingly successful in turning the people from idolatry.

Saying that they be no gods, etc. **See Barnes "Ac 14:14,15"**.

{*} "much people" "many" {d} "that they be no gods" Ps 115:4 Isa 44:10-20

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *So that not only*, etc. The grounds of the charge which Demetrius made against Paul were two:—first, that the business of the craftsmen would be destroyed—usually the first thing that strikes the mind of a sinner who is influenced by self-interest alone; and second, that the worship of Diana would cease if Paul and his fellow-labourers were suffered to continue their efforts.

This our craft. This business in which we are engaged, and on which we are dependent. Greek, This part *to merov* which pertains to us,

To be set at nought. To be brought into contempt. It will become so much an object of ridicule and contempt that we shall have no further employment. Greek, "*Is in danger of coming into refutation*" *eiv apelegmon*. As that which is refuted by argument is deemed useless, so the word comes also to signify that which is useless, or which is an object of contempt or ridicule. We may here remark,

(1.) that the extensive prevalence of the Christian religion would *destroy* many kinds of business in which men now engage. It would put an end to all that now ministers to the pride, vanity, luxury, vice, and ambition of men. Let religion prevail, and wars would cease, and all the preparations for war which now employ so many hearts and hands would be useless. Let religion prevail, and *temperance* would prevail also; and consequently all the capital and labour now employed in distilling and vending ardent spirits would be withdrawn, and the business be broken up. Let religion prevail, and luxury ceases, and the arts which minister to licentiousness would be useless. Let Christianity prevail, and all that goes now to minister to idolatry, and the corrupt passions of men, would be destroyed. No small part of the talent, also, that is now worse than wasted in corrupting others by ballads and songs, by fiction and licentious tales, would be withdrawn. A vast amount of capital and talent would thus be at once set at liberty, to be employed in nobler and better purposes.

(2.) The effect of religion is often to bring the employments of men into shame and contempt. A revival of religion often makes the business of distilling an object of abhorrence. It pours shame on those who are engaged in ministering to the vices and luxuries of the world. Religion reveals the evil of such a course of life, and those vices are banished by the mere prevalence of better principles. Yet,

(3.)the talent and capital thus disengaged is not rendered useless. It may be directed to other channels and other employments. Religion does not make men idle. It devotes talents to useful employments, and opens fields in which all may toil usefully to themselves and to their fellow-men. If all the capital, and genius, and learning which are now wasted, and worse than wasted, were to be at once withdrawn from their present pursuits, they might be profitably employed. There is not now a useless man who might not be useful; there is not a farthing wasted which might not be employed to advantage in the great work of making the world better and happier.

But also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised. This temple, so celebrated, was regarded as one of the seven wonders of the world. It was two hundred and twenty years in building, before it was brought to perfection. It was built at the expense of all Asia Minor. The original object of worship among the Ephesians was a small statue of Diana, of elm or ebony, made by one Canitias, though commonly believed in those days to have been sent down from heaven by Jupiter. It was merely an Egyptian hieroglyphic with many breasts, representing the goddess of Nature—under which idea Diana was probably worshipped at Ephesus, As the original figure became decayed by age, it was propped up by two rods of iron like spits, which were carefully copied in the image which was afterwards made in imitation of the first. A temple, most magnificent in structure, was built to contain the image of Diana, which appears to have been several times built and rebuilt. The first is said to have been completed in the reign of Servius Tullius, at least 570 years before Christ. Another temple is mentioned as having been designed by Ctesiphon, 540 years before the Christian era, and which was completed by Daphnis of Miletus, and a citizen of Ephesus. This temple was partially destroyed by fire on the very day on which Socrates was poisoned, 400

years B.C., and again 356 years B.C., by the philosopher Herostratus, on the day on which Alexander the Great was born. He confessed, on being put to the torture, that the only motive which he had was to immortalize his name. The four walls and a few columns only escaped the flames. The temple was repaired, and restored to more than its former magnificence, in which, says Pliny, (Lib. xxxvi, c. 14,) 220]rears were required to bring it to completion. It was 425 feet in length, 220 in breadth, and was supported by 127 pillars of Parian marble, each of which was sixty feet high. These pillars were furnished by as many princes, and thirty-six of them were curiously carved, and the rest were finely polished. Each pillar, it is supposed, with its base, contained 150 tons of marble. The doors and panelling were made of cypress wood, the roof of cedar, and the interior was rendered splendid by decorations of gold, and by the finest productions of ancient artists. This celebrated edifice, after suffering various partial demolitions, was finally burnt by the Goths, in their third naval invasion, A.D. 260. Travellers are now left to conjecture where its site was. Amidst the confused ruins of ancient Ephesus, it is now impossible to tell where was this celebrated temple, once one of the wonders of the world. "So passes away the glory of this world." See Edinburgh Ency., article Ephesus; also Anacharsis' Travels, vol. vi. p. 188; Ancient Universal History, vol. vii. p. 416; and Pococke's Travels. *And her magnificence*. Her majesty and glory; i.e., the splendour of her temple and her worship.

Whom all Asia. All Asia Minor.

And the world. Other parts of the world. The temple had been built by contributions from a great number of princes; and doubtless multitudes from all parts of the earth came to Ephesus to pay their homage to Diana.

{e} "should be despised" Zep 2:11 {a} "world worshippeth" 1Jo 5:19 Re 13:8

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *Were full of wrath*. Were greatly enraged—probably at the prospect of losing their gains.

Great is Diana, etc. The term *great* was often applied by the Greeks to Diana. Thus in *Xenophon* (Ephes. i.) he says, "I adjure you by your own goddess, the great (*thn megalhn*) Diana of the Ephesians." The *design* of this clamour was doubtless to produce a persecution against Paul; and thus to secure a continuance of their employment. Often, when men have no arguments, they raise a clamour; when their employments are in danger of being ruined, they are filled with rage. We may learn, also, that when men's pecuniary interests are affected, they often show great zeal for religion, and expect by clamour in behalf of some doctrine, to maintain their own interest, and to secure their own gains.

{b} "full of wrath, and cried out" Jer 50:38

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Confusion*. Tumult; disorder.

Gaius. He had lived at Corinth, and had kindly entertained Paul at his house, 1Co 1:14 Ro 16:23.

Aristarchus. He attended Paul to Rome, and was there a prisoner with him, Col 4:10.

With one accord. Tumultuously; or with one mind, or purpose.

Into the theatre. The *theatres* of the Greeks were not only places for public exhibitions, but also for holding assemblies, and often for courts, elections, etc. The people, therefore, naturally rushed there, as being a suitable place to decide this matter.

{c} "Gaius" Ro 16:23 {d} "Aristarchus" Col 4:10

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *Would have entered in unto the people*. Probably to have addressed them, and to defend his own cause.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *Certain of the chief of Asia*. *twn asiarcwn*. Of the *Asiarchs*. These were persons who presided over sacred things, and over the public games. It was their business to see that the proper services of religion were observed, and that proper honour was rendered to the Roman emperor in the public festivals, at the games, etc. They were annually elected, and their election was confirmed at Rome before it was valid. They held a common council at the principal city within their province, as at Ephesus, Smyrna, Sardis, etc., to consult and deliberate about the interests committed to their charge in their various provinces.—*Kuinoel* and *Schleusner*. Probably they were assembled on such an occasion now; and during their remaining there they had heard Paul preach, and were friendly to his views and doctrines.

Which were his friends. It does not appear from this that they were Christian converts; but they probably had feelings of respect towards him, and were disposed to defend him and his cause. Perhaps, also, there might have existed a present acquaintance and attachment.

Would not adventure. Would not risk his life in the tumult, and under the excited feelings of the multitude.

{*} "chief" "chief magistrates" {e} "desiring him" Ac 21:12

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *Some therefore cried one thing*, etc. This is an admirable description of a mob, assembled for what purpose they knew not; but agitated by passions, and strifes, and tumults.

And the more part knew not, etc. The greater part did not know. They had been drawn together by the noise and excitement; but a small part would know the real cause of the commotion. This is usually the case in tumultuous meetings.

{f} "Some therefore" Ac 21:34 {++} "more part" "Greater"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *And they drew Alexander*. Who this Alexander was, is not known. Grotius supposes that it was "Alexander the coppersmith," who had in some way done Paul much harm, 2Ti 4:14; and whom, with Philetas, Paul had excommunicated. He supposes that it was a device of the Jews to put forward one who had been of the Christian party, in order to accuse Paul, and to attempt to cast the odium of the tumult on him. But it is not clear that the Alexander whom Paul had excommunicated was the person concerned in this transaction. All that appears in this narrative is, that Alexander was one who was known to be a Jew; and who wished to defend the Jews from being regarded as the authors of this tumult. It would be supposed by the heathen that the Christians were only a sect of the Jews; and the Jews wished doubtless to show that *they* had not been concerned in giving occasion to this tumult, but that it was to be traced wholly to Paul and his friends.

The Jews putting him forward. That he might have a convenient opportunity to speak to the people.

Would have made his defence. Our translation, by the phrase "*his* defence," would seem to imply that he was personally accused. But it was not so. The Greek is simply, "was about to apologize to the people" that is, to make a defence, not of himself particularly, but of the Jews in general. The translation should have been "*a defence*."

{g} "Alexander" 1Ti 1:20

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *But when they knew*. When they perceived or ascertained.

That he was a Jew. There was a general prejudice against the Jews. They were disposed to charge the whole difficulty on Jews— esteeming Christians to be but a sect of the Jews. They were, therefore, indignant and excited, and indiscriminate in their wrath, and unwilling to listen to any defence.

With one voice. Unitedly; in one continued shout and clamour.

About the space of two hours. The day, from sunrise to sunset, among the Greeks and Romans, was divided into twelve equal parts, Joh 11:9. An *hour*, therefore, did not differ materially from an hour with us. It is not at all improbable that the tumult would continue for so long a time, before it would be possible to allay the excitement.

Cried out, etc. This they at first did to silence Alexander. The excitement, however, was continued in order to evince their attachment to Diana, as would be natural in an excited and tumultuous mob of debased heathen worshippers.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *And when the town-clerk*. *o grammateuv*. The scribe; the secretary. The word is often used in the New Testament, and is commonly translated *scribe*, and is applied to public notaries in the synagogues; to clerks, and to those who transcribed books, and hence to men skilled in the law or any kind of learning. Compare 2Sa 8:17 2Ki 12:11; Ezr 7:6,11,12 Mt 5:20 12:38, 13:52 15:1 23:34

1Co 1:20. It is, however, nowhere else applied to a heathen magistrate. It probably denoted a recorder; or a transcriber of the laws; or a chancellor.—*Kuinoel*; *Doddridge*. This officer had a seat in their deliberative assemblies; and on him it seems to have devolved to keep the peace. The Syriac, "Prince of the city." The Vulgate and Arabic, "Scribe."

Had appeased the people. *katasteilav*. Having restrained, quieted, tranquillized, so as to be able to address them.

What man is there. Who is there that can deny this? It is universally known and admitted. This is the language of strong confidence, of reproof, and of indignation. It implied, that the worship of Diana was so well established, that there was no danger that it could be destroyed by a few Jews; and he therefore reproved them for what he deemed their unreasonable alarms. But he little knew the power of that religion which had been the innocent cause of all this tumult; nor that, at no very distant period, this then despised religion would overturn, not only the worship of Diana at Ephesus, but the splendid idolatry of the mighty Roman empire.

Is a worshipper. *newkoron*. Margin, Temple-keeper. The word here used does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It is derived from *newv* for *naov*, a temple, and *korew*, to sweep, to cleanse. But, among the ancients, the office of keeping their temples was by no means as humble as that of sexton is with us. It was esteemed to be an office of honour and dignity to have charge of the temples of the gods, and to keep them in order. The name was also given to the cities that were regarded as the peculiar patrons or worshippers of certain gods and goddesses. They esteemed it an honour to be regarded as the peculiar *keepers* of their temples and images; and as having adopted them as their tutelar divinities. Such was Ephesus in regard to Diana. It was esteemed a high honour that the city was known, and everywhere regarded as being *intrusted* with the worship of Diana, or with keeping the temple regarded by the whole world as peculiarly her own. See *Schleusner* on this word.

And of the image. A special guardian of the image, or statue of Diana.

Which fell down, etc. Which was feigned or believed to have been sent down from heaven. Of what this image was made is not known. Pliny says, (Hist. Nat. xvi. 79,) that it was made of a vine. Mucian (on Pliny) says, that the image was never changed, though the temple had been seven times rebuilt. It is probable that the image was so ancient that the maker of it was unknown, and it was therefore feigned to have fallen from heaven. It was for the interest of the priests to keep up this impression. Many cities pretended to have been favoured in a similar manner with images or statues of the gods, sent directly from heaven. The safety of Troy was supposed to depend on the *Palladium*, or image of Pallas Minerva, which was believed to have fallen from heaven. Numa pretended that the *ancilia*, or sacred shields, had descended from heaven. Thus Herodian expressly affirms, that "the Phenicians had no statue of the sun polished by the hand, but only a certain large stone, circular below, and terminated acutely above in the figure of a cone, of a black colour, and that they believe it to have fallen from heaven." It has been supposed that this image at Ephesus was merely a conical

or pyramidal stone which fell from the clouds—*a meteorite* —and that it was regarded with superstitious reverence, as having been sent from heaven. See the Edinburgh Ency., article *Meteorites*.

From Jupiter. **See Barnes "Ac 14:12".**

{a} "men of Ephesus" Eph 2:12 {1} "is a worshipper" "temple keeper"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *Seeing then*, etc. Since this is established and admitted. Since no one can call in question the zeal of the Ephesians on this subject, or doubt the sincerity of their belief. And since there can be no danger that this well-established worship is to be destroyed by the efforts of a few evil-disposed Jews, there is no occasion for this tumult.

Be quiet. Be appeased. The same Greek word which is used in Ac 19:35, "had appeased the people."

To do nothing rashly. To do nothing in a heated, inconsiderate manner. There is no occasion for tumult and riot. The whole difficulty can be settled in perfect consistency with the maintenance of order.

{b} "do nothing rashly" Pr 14:29

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *For ye*, etc. Demetrius and his friends. The blame was to be traced to them.

Which are neither robbers of churches. The word churches we now apply to edifices reared for purposes of Christian worship. As no such churches had then been built, this translation is unhappy, and is not at all demanded by the original. The Greek word—*ierosulouv*—is applied properly to those who commit sacrilege, who plunder temples of their sacred things. The meaning here is, that Paul and his companions had not been guilty of robbing the temple of Diana, or any other temple. The charge of sacrilege could not be brought against them. Though they had preached against idols and idol worship, yet they had offered no violence to the temples of idolaters, nor had they attempted to strip them of the sacred utensils employed in their service. What they had done, they had done peaceably.

Nor yet blasphemers of your goddess. They had not used harsh or reproachful language of Diana. This had not been charged on them, nor is there the least evidence that they had done it. They had opposed idolatry; had reasoned against it; and had endeavoured to turn the people from it. But there is not the least evidence that they had ever done it in harsh or reproachful language. And it shows that men should employ *reason*, and not harsh or reproachful language against any pervading evil; and that the way to remove it is to *enlighten* the minds of men, and to *@convince* them of the error of their ways. Men gain nothing by bitter and reviling words; and it is much to obtain the testimony of even the enemies of religion—as Paul did of the chancellor of Ephesus—that no such words had been used in describing their crimes and follies.

{c} "neither robbers of churches" Ac 25:8 {*} "churches" "temples"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *Have a matter against any man*. Have a complaint of injury; if injustice has been done them by any one.

The law is open. See the margin. *agoraioi agontai*, i.e. *hmerai*. There are *court days*; days which are open, or appointed for judicial trials, where such matters can be determined in a proper manner. Perhaps the courts were then held, and the matter might be immediately determined.

And there are deputies. Roman proconsuls. **See Barnes "Ac 13:7".**

The cause might be brought before them with the certainty that it might be heard and decided. The Syriac reads this in the singular number—"Lo, the proconsul is in the city."

Let them implead one another. Let them accuse each other in the court; i.e., let them defend their own cause, and arraign one another. The laws are equal, and impartial justice will be done.

{+} "craftsmen" "workmen" {2} "the law is open" "the court days are kept" {++} "implead" "summon"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *But if ye enquire*. If you seek to determine any other matters than that pertaining to the alleged wrong which Demetrius has suffered in his business.

Other matters. Anything respecting public affairs; anything pertaining to the government and the worship of Diana.

In a lawful assembly. In an assembly convened, not by tumult and riot, but in conformity to law. This was a tumultuous assemblage, and it was proper in the public officer to demand that they should disperse; and that, if there were any public grievances to be remedied, it should be done in an assembly properly convened. It may be remarked here, that the original word rendered *assembly*, is that which is usually in the New Testament rendered *church*. *ekklhsia*. It is properly rendered by the word *assembly*—not denoting here a mixed or tumultuous assemblage, but one convened in the legal manner. The proper meaning of the word is, *that which is called out*. The church, the Christian assembly of the faithful, is made up of those who are *called out* from the world.

{3} "lawful assembly" "ordinary"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 40

Verse 40. *To be called in question*. By the government; by the Roman authority. Such a tumult, continued for so long a time, would be likely to attract the attention of the magistrates, and expose them to their displeasure. Popular commotions were justly dreaded by the Roman government; and such an assembly as this, convened without any good cause, would not escape their notice. There

was a Roman law which made it capital for any one to be engaged in promoting a riot. *Qui caetum, et concursum fecerit, capite puniatur*: "He who raises a mob, let him be punished with death."

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 19 - Verse 41

Verse 41. *Dismissed the assembly*. *thn ekklhsian*. The word usually translated *church*. Here it is applied to the irregular and tumultuous assemblage which had convened in a riotous manner.

{d} "assembly" 2Co 1:8-10.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 20

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 20 - Verse 1

CHAPTER 20

Verse 1. *The uproar*. The tumult excited by Demetrius and the workmen. After it had been quieted by the town-clerk, Ac 19:40,40.

Embraced them. Saluted them; gave them parting expressions of kindness. Comp. **See Barnes "Lu 7:45 Ro 16:16; 1Co 16:20** 2Co 13:12; 1Th 5:26 1Pe 5:14. The Syriac translates this, "Paul called the disciples, and consoled them, and kissed them."

To go into Macedonia. On his way to Jerusalem, agreeably to his purpose—recorded in Ac 19:21.

{a} "uproar was ceased" Ac 19:40 {b} "go into Macedonia" 1Co 16:5 1Ti 1:3

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 20 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Over those parts*. The parts of country in and near Macedonia. He probably went to Macedonia by *Troas*, where he expected to find Titus, 2Co 2:12; but not finding him there, he went by himself to Philippi, Thessalonica, etc., and then returned to Greece Proper.

Into Greece. Into Greece Proper, of which Athens was the capital. While in Macedonia, he had great anxiety and trouble, but was at length comforted by the coming of Titus, who brought him intelligence of the liberal disposition of the churches of Greece in regard to the collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem, 2Co 7:5-7. It is probable that the Second Epistle to the Corinthians was written during this time in Macedonia, and sent to them by Titus. See Note of Doddridge.

{c} "exhortation" 1Th 2:3,11

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 20 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And there abode*. Why he remained here is unknown. It is probable, that while in Greece he wrote the Epistle to the Romans. Comp. Ro 15:25-27.

Laid wait. There was a design formed against him by the Jews, which they sought to execute. Why they formed this purpose, the historian has not informed us.

As he was about to sail. It would seem from this, that the design of the Jews was to attack the ship in which he was about, to sail, or to arrest him on ship-board. This fact determined him to take a much more circuitous route by land, so that the churches Of Macedonia were favoured with another visit from him.

Into Syria. On his way to Jerusalem.

He purposed, etc. He resolved to avoid the snare which they had laid for him, and to return by the same way in which he had come into Greece.

{d} "wait" Ac 23:12 25:3; 2Co 11:26

{*} "purposed" "determined"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 20 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And there accompanied him*. It was usual for some of the disciples to attend the apostles in their journeys.

Into Asia. It is not meant that they attended him from Greece through Macedonia; but that they went with him to Asia, having gone before him, and joined him at Troas.

Sopater of Berea. Perhaps the same person who, in Ro 16:21, is called Sosipater, and who is there said to have been a kinsman of Paul.

Aristarthus, Ac 19:29.

Gaius of Derbe. **See Barnes "Ac 19:29"**.

Tychicus. This man was high in the confidence and affection of Paul. In Eph 6:21,22, he styles him "a beloved brother, and faithful minister in the Lord."

And Trophimus. Trophimus was from Ephesus, Ac 20:29. When Paul wrote his Second Epistle to Timothy, he was at Mileturn, sick, 2Ti 4:20.

{e} "Aristarchus" Ac 19:29 {f} "Timotheus" Ac 16:1 {g} "Tychius" Eph 6:21 {h} "Trophimus" Ac 21:29 2Ti 4:20

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 20 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *These going before*. Going before Paul and Luke. Dr. Doddridge supposes that only Tychicus and Trophimus went before the others. Perhaps the Greek most naturally demands this interpretation.

Tarried for us. The word "us" here shows that Luke had again joined Paul as his companion. In Ac 16:12, it appears that Luke was in Philippi, in the house of Lydia. Why he remained there,

or why he did not attend Paul in his journey to Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, etc., is not known. It is evident, however, that he here joined him again.

At Troas. **See Barnes "Ac 16:8"**.

{++} "tarried" "waited"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 20 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *After the days of unleavened bread*. After the seven days of the passover, during which they ate only unleavened bread. See Ex 12.

In five days. They crossed the AEgean Sea. Paul, when he crossed it on a former occasion, did it in two days, Ac 16:11,12; but the navigation of the sea is uncertain, and they were now probably hindered by contrary winds.

{i} "unleavened bread" Ex 23:15 {k} "Troas" 2Ti 4:13

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 20 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *And upon the first day of the week*. Showing thus that this day was then observed buy Christians as holy time. Comp. 1Co 16:2; Re 1:10.

To break bread. Evidently to celebrate the Lord's Supper. Comp. Ac 2:46. So the Syriac understands it, by translating it, "to break the Eucharist," i.e. the eucharistic bread. It is probable that the apostles and early Christians celebrated the Lord's Supper on every Lord's-day.

And continued his speech until midnight. The discourse of Paul continued until the breaking of day, Ac 20:11. But it was interrupted about midnight by the accident that occurred to Eutychus. The fact that Paul was about to leave them on the next day, probably to see them no more, was the principal reason why his discourse was so long continued. We are not to suppose, however, that it was one continued or set discourse. No small part of the time might have been passed in hearing and answering questions, though Paul was the chief speaker. The case proves that such seasons of extraordinary devotion may, in peculiar circumstances, be proper. Occasions may arise where it will be proper for Christians to spend a much longer time than usual in public worship. It is evident, however, that such seasons do not often occur.

{l} "first day" 1Co 16:2 Re 1:10 {m} "break bread" Ac 2:42,46; 1Co 10:16 11:20-34

{++} "speech" "discourse"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 20 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *And there were many lights*. Why this circumstance is mentioned is not apparent. It, however, meets one of the slanders of the early enemies of Christianity, that Christians in their assemblies were accustomed to extinguish all the lights, and to commit every kind of abomination.

Perhaps the mention of many lights here is designed to intimate that it was a place of public worship, as not only the Jews, but the Gentiles were accustomed to have many lights burning in such places.

In the upper chamber. **See Barnes "Ac 1:13"**.

{&} "many lights" "lamps" {n} "upper chamber" Ac 1:13 {|} "upper" "room" {+} "together" "Assembled"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 20 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *And there sat in a window*. The window was left open, probably to avoid the malice of their enemies, who might be disposed otherwise to charge them with holding their assemblies in darkness for purposes of iniquity. The window was a mere opening in the wall to let in light, as there was no *glass* known at that time; and as the shutters of the window were not closed, there was nothing to prevent Eutychus from falling down.

The third loft. The third story.

And was taken up dead. Some have supposed that he was merely stunned with the fall, and that he was still alive. But the obvious and therefore the safest interpretation is, that he was actually killed by the fall, and was miraculously restored to life. This is an instance of sleeping in public worship that has some apology. The late hour of the night, and the length of the services, were the excuse. But, though the thing is often done now, yet how seldom is a sleeper in a church furnished with an excuse for it. No practice is more shameful, disrespectful, and abominable, than that so common of sleeping in the house of God.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 20 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *And fell on him*, etc. Probably stretching himself on him as Elisha did on the Shunammite's son, 2Ki 4:33-35. It was an act of tenderness and compassion, evincing a strong desire to restore him to life.

Trouble not yourselves. They would doubtless be thrown into great consternation by such an event. Paul therefore endeavoured to compose their minds by the assurance that he would live.

For his life is in him. He is restored to life. This has all the appearance of having been a miracle. Life was restored to him as Paul spoke.

{o} "fell on him" 1Ki 17:21 2Ki 4:34

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 20 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Come up again*. To the upper room, Ac 20:8.

And had broken bread, and eaten, Had taken refreshment. As this is spoken of Paul only, it is evidently distinguished from the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 20 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Not a little comforted*. By the fact that he was alive; perhaps also strengthened by the evidence that a miracle had been wrought.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 20 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Sailed unto Assos*. There were several cities of this name. One was in Lycia; one in the territory of Eolis; one in Mysia; one in Lydia; and another in Epirus. The latter is the one intended here. It was between Troas and Mitylene. The distance to it from Troas by sea was much greater than by land, and accordingly Paul chose to go to it on foot.

Minding himself. Choosing or preferring to go on foot. Most of his journeys were probably performed in this way.

{*} "afoot" "Intending himself to go by land"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 20 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Came to Mitylene*. This was the capital of the island of Lesbos. It was distinguished by the beauty of its situation, and the splendour and magnificence of its edifices. The island on which it stood, Lesbos, was one of the largest in the AEgean Sea, and the seventh in the Mediterranean. It is a few miles distant from the coast of Aeolia, and is about one hundred and sixty-eight miles in circumference. The name of the city now is *Castro*.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 20 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Over against*. Opposite to. Into the neighborhood of, or near to it.

Chios, called also *Coos*, an island in the Archipelago, between Lesbos and Samos. It is on the coast of Asia Minor, and is now called *Scio*. It will long be remembered now as the seat of a dreadful massacre of almost all its inhabitants by the Turks in 1823.

At Samos. This was also an island of the Archipelago, lying off the coast of Lydia, from which it is separated by a narrow strait. These islands were celebrated among the ancients for their extraordinary wines.

Trogyllium. This was the name of a town and promontory of Ionia in Asia Minor, between Ephesus and the mouth of the river Meander, opposite to Samos. The promontory is a spur of Mount Mycale.

Miletus. Called also Miletum. It was a city and seaport, and the ancient capital of Ionia. It was originally composed of a colony of Cretians. It became extremely powerful, and sent out colonies to a great number of cities on the Euxine Sea. It was distinguished for a magnificent temple dedicated

to Apollo. It is now called, by the Turks, *Melas*. It was the birthplace of Thales, one of the seven wise men of Greece. It was about forty or fifty miles from Ephesus.

{+} "tarried" "remained"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 20 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *To sail by Ephesus*. The word *by* in our translation is ambiguous. We say to go by a place, meaning either to take it in our way, to go *to* it, or to go past it. Here it means the latter. He intended to sail *past* Ephesus, without going *to* it.

For he hasted, etc. Had he gone to Ephesus, he would probably have been so delayed in his journey that he could not reach Jerusalem at the time of Pentecost.

The day of Pentecost. **See Barnes "Ac 2:1"**.

{b} "be at Jerusalem" Ac 18:21 24:17 {c} "Pentecost" Ac 2:1

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 20 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *He sent to Ephesus*. Perhaps a distance of forty miles.

The elders of the church. Who had been appointed while he was there to take charge of the church. **See Barnes "Ac 15:2"**.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 20 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *And when they were come to him*. The discourse which follows is one of the most tender, affectionate, and eloquent, which is anywhere to be found. It is strikingly descriptive of the apostle's manner of life while with them; evinces his deep concern for their welfare; is full of tender and kind admonition; expresses the firm purpose of his soul to live to the glory of God, and his expectation to be persecuted still; and is a most affectionate and solemn farewell. No man can read it without being convinced that it came from a heart full of love and kindness; and that it evinces a great and noble purpose to be entirely employed in one great aim and object —the promotion of the glory of God, in the face of danger and of death.

Ye know. From your own observation. He had been with them three years, and could make this solemn appeal to themselves, that he had led a faithful and devoted life. How happy is it when a minister can thus appeal to those with whom he has laboured, in proof of his own sincerity and fidelity! How comforting to himself, and how full of demonstration to a surrounding world, of the truth and power of the gospel which is preached! We may further remark, that this appeal furnishes strong proof of the purity and holiness of Paul's life. The elders at Ephesus must have had abundant opportunity to know him. They had seen him, and heard him publicly, and in their private dwellings. A man does not make such an appeal unless he has a consciousness of integrity, nor unless there is conclusive *proof* of his integrity. It is strong evidence of the holiness of the character of the

apostles, and proof that they were not impostors, that they could thus appeal with the utmost assurance to those who had every opportunity of knowing them.

From the first day. He was with *them* three years, Ac 20:31.

Into Asia. Asia Minor. They would probably know, not only how he had demeaned himself while with them, but also how he had conducted [himself] in other places near them.

After what manner I have been with you. How I have lived and acted. What has been my manner of life. What *had* been his mode of life, he specifies in the following verses.

At all seasons. At all times.

{d} "first day" Ac 19:1,10 {++} "seasons" "The whole team"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 20 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Serving the Lord*. In the discharge of the appropriate duties of his apostolic office, and in private life. To discharge aright our duties in any vocation is serving the Lord. Religion is often represented in the Bible as a service rendered to the Lord.

With all humility. Without arrogance, pride, or a spirit of dictation; without a desire to "lord it over God's heritage ;" without being elated with the authority of the apostolic office, the variety of the miracles which he was enabled to perform, or the success which attended his labours. What an admirable model for all who are in the ministry, for all who are endowed with talents and learning, and for all who meet with remarkable success in their work. The proper effect of such success, and of such talent, will be to produce true humility. Eminent success in the work of the ministry tends to produce lowliness and humbleness of mind; and the greatest endowments are usually connected with the most simple and childlike humility.

And with many tears. Paul not unfrequently gives evidence of the tenderness of his heart, and his regard for the souls of men, and his deep solicitude for the salvation of sinners, Ac 20:31; Php 3:18 2Co 2:4. The *particular* thing, however, here specified as producing weeping, was the opposition of the Jews. But it cannot be supposed that those tears were shed from an apprehension of personal danger. It was rather because the opposition of the Jews impeded his work, and retarded his progress in winning souls to Christ. A minister of the gospel will

(1.) feel, and deeply feel, for the salvation of his people. He will weep over their condition when he sees them going astray, and in danger of perishing, He will

(2.) be especially affected with opposition, because it will retard his work, and prevent the progress and the triumph of the gospel. It is not because it is a personal concern, but because it is the cause of his Master.

And temptations. Trials, arising from their opposition. We use the word *temptation*, in a more limited sense, to denote inducements offered to one to lead him into sin. The word in the Scriptures most commonly denotes *trials* of any kind.

Which befell me. Which happened to me; which I encountered.

By the lying in wait, etc. By their snares and plans were designed to blast his reputation, and to destroy his usefulness.

{e} "humility" 1Co 15:9,10 {f} "many tears" Php 3:18 {g} "temptations" 2Co 4:8-11 {&} "temptations" "trials"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 20 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *I kept back nothing*, etc. No doctrine, no admonition, no labour. Whatever he judged would promote their salvation, he had faithfully and fearlessly delivered. A minister of the gospel must be the judge of what will be profitable to the people of his charge. His aim should be to promote their real welfare—to preach that which will be *profitable*. His object will not be to please their fancy, to gratify their taste, to flatter their pride, or to promote his own popularity. "All Scripture is *profitable*," 2Ti 3:16; and it will be his aim to declare that only which will tend to promote their real welfare. Even if it be unpalatable; if it be the language of reproof and admonition; if it be doctrine to which the heart is by nature opposed; if it run counter to the native prejudices and passions of men; yet, by the grace of God, it should be, and will be delivered. No doctrine that will be profitable should be kept back; no plan, no labour, that may promote the welfare of the flock, should be withheld.

But have shewed you. Have announced or declared to you. The word here used—*anaggeilai*—is most commonly applied to preaching in public assemblies, or in a public manner.

Have taught you publicly. In the public assembly; by public preaching.

And from house to house. Though Paul preached in public, and though his time was much occupied in manual labour for his own support, Ac 20:34, yet he did not esteem his public preaching to be all that was required of him; nor his daily occupation to be an excuse for not visiting from house to house. We may observe here,

(1.) that Paul's example is a warrant and an implied injunction for family visitation by a pastor. If proper in Ephesus, It is proper still. If practicable in that city, it is in other cities. If it was useful there, it will be elsewhere. If it furnished to him consolation in the retrospect when he came to look over his ministry, and if it was *one* of the things which enabled *him* to say, "I am pure from the blood of all men," it will be so in other cases.

(2.) The design for which ministers should visit, should be a religious design, Paul did not visit for mere ceremony, nor for idle gossip, or chit-chat; nor to converse on the mere news or politics of the day. His aim was to show the way of salvation, and to teach in private what he taught in public.

(3.) How much of this is to be done, is of course to be left to the discretion of every minister. Paul, in private visiting, did not neglect public instruction. The latter he evidently considered to be his main or chief business. His high views of the ministry are evinced in his life, and in his letters to Timothy and Titus. Yet, while public preaching is the main, the prime, the leading business of a minister, and while his first efforts should be directed to preparation for that, he may and should find time to enforce his public instructions by going from house to house; and often he will find that his most *immediate* and apparent success will result from such family instructions.

(4.) If it is his duty to visit, it is the duty of his people to receive him as becomes an ambassador of Christ. They should be willing to listen to his instructions; to treat him with kindness, and to aid his endeavours in bringing a family under the influence of religion.

{b} "kept back nothing" Ac 20:27 {c} "from house to house" 2Ti 4:2

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 20 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Testifying*. Bearing witness to the necessity of repentance towards God. Or *teaching* them the nature of repentance, etc., and exhorting them to repent and believe. Perhaps the word *testifying* includes both ideas of giving evidence, and of urging with great earnestness and affection that repentance and faith were necessary. See 1Ti 5:21; 2Ti 2:14; where the word here used, and here translated *testify*, is there translated correctly *charge*, in the sense of strongly urging, or entreating with great earnestness.

Also to the Greeks. To all who were not Jews. The Greeks, properly, denoted those who lived in Greece% and who spoke the Greek language. But the phrase "Jews and Greeks," among the Hebrews, denoted the whole human race. He urged the necessity of repentance and faith in all. Religion makes no distinction, but regards all as sinners, and as needing salvation by the blood of the Redeemer.

Repentance toward God. **See Barnes "Mt 3:2"**.

Repentance is to be exercised "toward God," because

(1.) sin has been committed against him, and it is proper that we express our sorrow to the Being whom we have offended; and,

(2.) because God only can pardon. Sincere repentance exists only where there is a willingness to make acknowledgment to the very being whom we have offended or injured.

And faith. **See Barnes "Mr 16:6"**.

Toward. *eiv*. In regard to; in; confidence in the work and merits of the Lord Jesus. This is required, because there is no other one who can save from sin. **See Barnes "Ac 4:12"**.

{d} "repentance toward God" Mr 1:15

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 20 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Bound in the spirit*. Strongly urged or constrained by the influences of the Holy Spirit on my mind. Not by any desire to see the place where my fathers worshipped, and not urged merely by reason, but by the convictions and mighty promptings of the Holy Spirit to do my duty in this case. The expression "bound in the spirit"—*dedemenov tw pneumati*— is one of great strength and emphasis. The word *dew*, *to bind*, is usually applied to confinement by cords, fetters, or bands, Mt 13:30 14:3, 21:2; and then denotes any strong obligation, Ro 7:2, or anything that strongly urges or impels, Mt 21:2. When we are strongly urged by the convictions of duty, by the influences of the Holy Spirit, we should not shrink from danger or from death. Duty is to be done at all hazards. It is ours to follow the directions of God; *results* we may safely and confidently leave with him.

Not knowing the things that shall befall me there. He knew that calamities and trials of some kind awaited him, Ac 20:23, but he did not know

(1.) of what particular kind they would be; nor

(2.) their issue, whether it should be life or death. We should commit our way unto God, not knowing what trials may be before us in life; but knowing that, if we are found faithful at the post of duty, we have nothing to fear in the issue.

{e} "go bound" Ac 19:21 {f} "knowing" Jas 4:14

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 20 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Save that*. Except that. This was all that he knew, that bonds and afflictions were to be his portion.

The Holy Ghost witnesseth. Either by direct revelation to him, or by the predictions of inspired men whom Paul might meet. An instance of the latter mode occurs in Ac 21:11. It is probable that the meaning here is, that the Holy Ghost had deeply impressed the mind of Paul by his direct influences, and by his experience in every city, that bonds and trials were to be his portion. Such had been his experience in every city where he had preached the gospel by the direction of the Holy Ghost, that he regarded it as his certain portion that he was thus to be afflicted.

In every city. In almost every city where Paul had been, he had been subjected to these trials. He had been persecuted, stoned, and scourged. So uniform was this, so constant had been his experience in this way, that he regarded it as his certain portion to be thus afflicted; and he approached Jerusalem, and every other city, with a confident expectation that such trials awaited him there.

Saying. In his experience; by direct revelation; and by the mouth of prophets, Ac 21:11. When Paul was called to the apostleship, it was predicted that he would suffer much, Ac 9:16.

Bonds. Chains. That I would be bound, as prisoners are who are confined.

Abide me. See the margin. They remain or wait for me; i.e., I must expect to suffer them.

(*) "Ghost" "Spirit" {g} "saying that bonds" Ac 9:16 21:11 {1} "abide me" "wait for me"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 20 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Move me*. Alarm me, or deter me from my purpose. Gr., "I make an account of none of them." I do not regard them as of any moment, or as worth consideration, in the great purpose to which I have devoted my life.

Neither count I my life. I do not consider my life as so valuable as to be retained by turning away from bonds and persecutions. I am certain of bonds and afflictions; I am willing also, if it be necessary, to lay down my life in the prosecution of the same purpose.

Dear unto myself. So precious or valuable as to be retained at the sacrifice of duty. I am willing to sacrifice it, if it be necessary. This was the spirit of the Saviour, and of all the early Christians. Duty is of more importance than life; and when either duty or life is to be sacrificed, life is to be cheerfully surrendered.

So that. This is my main object, to finish my course with joy. It is implied here,

(1.) that this was the great purpose which Paul had in view.

(2.) That if he should even lay down his life in this cause, it would be a finishing his course with joy. In the faithful discharge of duty, he had nothing to fear. Life would be ended with peace, whenever God should require him to finish his course.

Finish my course. Close my career as an apostle and a Christian. Life is thus represented as a *course*, or race that is to be run, 2Ti 4:7 Heb 12:1; 1Co 9:24 Ac 13:25.

With joy. With the approbation of conscience and of God; with peace in the recollection of the past. Man should strive so to live that he will have nothing to regret when he lies on a bed of death.

It is a glorious privilege to finish life with joy. It is most sad and awful when the last hours are embittered with the reflection that life has been wasted, or that the course has been evil. The only way in which the course of life may be finished with joy, is by meeting faithfully every duty, and encountering, as Paul did, every trial with a constant desire to glorify God.

And the ministry. That I may fully discharge the duty of the apostolic office, the preaching of the gospel. In 2Ti 4:5, he charges Timothy to *make full proof of his ministry*. He here shows that this was the ruling principle of his own life.

Which I have received of the Lord Jesus. Which the Lord Jesus has committed to me, Ac 9:15-17. Paul regarded his ministry as an office entrusted to him by the Lord Jesus himself. On this account he deemed it to be peculiarly sacred, and of high authority, Ga 1:12. Every minister has been entrusted with an office by the Lord Jesus. He is not his own; and his great aim should be, to discharge fully and entirely the duties of that office.

To testify the Gospel. To bear witness to the good news of the favour of God. This is the great design of the ministry. It is to bear witness to a dying world of the good news that God is merciful, and that his favour may be made manifest to sinners. From this verse we may learn,

(1,) that we all have a course to run; a duty to perform. Ministers have an allotted duty; and so have men in all ranks and professions.

(2.) We should not be deterred by danger, or the fear of death, from the discharge of that duty. We are safe only when we are doing the will of God. We are really in danger only when we neglect our duty, and make the great God our enemy.

(3.) We should so live as that the end of our course may be joy. It is, at best, a solemn thing to die; but death may be a scene of triumph and of joy.

(4.) It matters little when, or where, or how we die, if we die in the discharge of our duty to God. He will order the circumstances of our departure; and he can sustain us in the last conflict. Happy is that life which is spent in doing the will of God, and peaceful that death which closes a life of toil and trial in the service of the Lord Jesus.

{a} "ministry" 2Co 4:1 {b} "received" Gal 1:1

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 20 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *I know that ye all*. Perhaps this means simply, "I have no expectation of seeing you again; I have every reason to suppose that this is my final interview with you." He expected to visit Ephesus no more. The journey to Jerusalem was dangerous. Trials and persecutions he knew awaited him. Besides, it is evident that he designed to turn his attention to other countries, and to visit Rome; and probably had already formed the purpose of going into Spain. See Ac 19:21. Comp. Ro 15:23-28. From all these considerations it is evident that he had no expectation of being again at Ephesus: it is probable, however, that he did again return to that city. **See Barnes "Ac 28:31"**.

Among whom I have gone preaching. Among whom I have preached. The parting of a minister and people is among the most tender and affecting of the separations that occur on earth.

The kingdom of God. Making known the nature of the reign of God on earth by the Messiah. **See Barnes "Mt 3:2"**.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 20 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Wherefore*. *dio*. In view of the past, of my ministry and labours among you, I appeal to your own selves to testify that I have been faithful.

I take you to record. Greek, I call you to witness; I appeal to you to testify. If any of you are lost, if you prove unfaithful to God, I appeal to yourselves that the fault is not mine. It is well when a minister can make this appeal, and call his hearers to bear testimony to his own faithfulness. Ministers who preach the gospel with fidelity, may thus appeal to their hearers; and in the day of judgment may call on them to witness that the fault of the ruin of the soul is not to be charged to them.

That I am pure. I am not to be charged with the guilt of your condemnation, as owing to my unfaithfulness. This does not mean that he set up a claim to absolute perfection; but that, in the matter under consideration, he had a conscience void of offence.

The blood of all men. The word *blood* is used often in the sense of *death*, of blood shed; and hence of the guilt or crime of putting one to death, or condemnation for it, Mt 23:35 27:25; Ac 5:28 18:6.

It here means, that if they should die the second death, if they should be lost for ever, *he* would not be to blame. He had discharged his duty, in faithfully warning and teaching them; and now, if they were lost, the fault would be their own, not his.

All men. All classes of men—Jews and Gentiles. He had warned and instructed all alike. Ministers may have many fears that their hearers will be lost. Their aim, however, should be

(1.) to save them, if possible; and

(2.) if they are lost, that it should be by no neglect or fault of theirs.

{*} "record" "declare to you" {c} "pure from the blood" 2Co 7:2

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 20 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *For*. This verse contains a reason for what had been said in the previous verse. It shows *why* Paul regarded himself as innocent if they should be lost.

I have not shunned. I have not kept back; I have not been deterred by fear, by the desire of popularity, by the fact that the doctrines of the gospel are unpalatable to men, from declaring them fully. The proper meaning of the word translated here, "I have not shunned," *upesteilamhn* is to *disguise* any important truth; to *withdraw* it from public view; to decline publishing it from fear, or an apprehension of the consequences. Paul means that he had not *disguised* any truth; he had not *withdrawn* or kept it from open view, by any apprehension of the effect which it might have on their minds. Truth may be disguised or kept back,

(1.) by avoiding the subject altogether from timidity, or an apprehension of giving offence if it is openly proclaimed; or,

(2.) by giving it too little prominency, so that it shall be lost in the multitude of other truths; or,

(3.) by presenting it amidst a web of metaphysical speculations, by entangling it with other subjects; or,

(4.) by making use of other terms than the Bible does, for the purpose of involving it in a mist, so that it cannot be understood. Men may resort to this course,

(1.) because the truth itself will be unpalatable;

(2.) because they may apprehend the loss of reputation or support;

(3.) because they may not love the truth themselves, and choose to conceal its prominent and offensive points;

(4.) because they may be afraid of the rich, the great, and the gay, and apprehend that they shall excite their indignation; and,

(5.) by a love of metaphysical philosophy, and a constant effort to bring everything to the test of their own reason. Men often preach a *philosophical explanation* of a doctrine instead of the *doctrine itself*. They deserve the credit of ingenuity, but not that of being open and bold proclaimers of the truth of God.

All the counsel, *pasan thn boulhn*. The word *counsel* (*boulh*), denotes, properly, consultation, deliberation; and then will or purpose, Lu 23:51 Ac 2:23. It means here the will or purpose of God, as revealed in regard to the salvation of men. Paul had made a full statement of that plan—of the guilt of men, of the claims of the law, of the need of a Saviour, of the provisions of mercy, and of the state of future rewards and punishments. Ministers ought to declare all that counsel, because God commands it; because it is needful for the salvation of men; and because the message is not theirs, but God's, and they have no right to change, to disguise, or to withhold it. And if it is the duty of ministers to *declare* that counsel, it is the duty of a people to listen to it with respect and candour, and with a desire to know the truth, and to be saved by it. *Declaring* the counsel of God will do no good, unless it is *received* into honest and humble hearts, and with a disposition to know what God has revealed for salvation.

{d} "counsel" Ep 1:11

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 20 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *Take heed therefore*. Attend to; be on your guard against the dangers which beset you, and seek to discharge your duty with fidelity.

To yourselves. To your own piety, opinions, and mode of life. This is the first duty of a minister; for, without this, all his preaching will be vain. Compare Col 4:17 1Ti 4:14. Ministers are beset with peculiar dangers and temptations, and against them they should be on their guard. In addition to the temptations which they have in common with other men, they are exposed to those peculiar to their office— arising from flattery, and ambition, and despondency, and worldly- mindedness. And just in proportion to the importance of their office, is the importance of the injunction of Paul, to take heed to themselves.

And to all the flock. The church; the charge entrusted to them. The church of Christ is often compared *to a flock*. **See Barnes "Joh 10:1"; and** Joh 10:2-20; also **See Barnes "Joh 21:16"; and** Joh 21:17.

The word *flock* here refers particularly to *the church*, and not to the congregation in general, for it is represented to be that which was purchased with the blood of the atonement. The command here is,

(1.) to take heed to the church; i.e., to instruct, teach, and guide it; to guard it from enemies, Ac 20:29 and to make it their special object to promote its welfare.

(2.) To take heed to ALL the flock—the rich and the poor, the bond and the free, the old and the young. It is the duty of ministers to seek to promote the welfare of each individual of their charge—not to pass by the poor because they are poor; and not to be afraid of the rich because they are rich. A shepherd regards the interest of the tenderest of the fold as much as the strongest; and a faithful minister will seek to advance the interest of *all*. To do this, he should know *all* his people; should be acquainted, as far as possible, with their peculiar wants, character, and dangers, and should devote himself to their welfare as his first and main employment.

Over the which the Holy Ghost. Though they had been appointed, doubtless, by the church, or by the apostles, yet it is here represented as having been done by the Holy Ghost. It is by him,

(1.) because he had called and qualified them for their work; and,

(2.) because they had been set apart in accordance with his direction and will.

Overseers. *episkopouv*. Bishops. The word properly denotes those who are appointed to oversee, or inspect anything. This passage proves that the name was applicable to elders; and that in the time of the apostles, the name *bishop* and *presbyter*, or *elder*, was given to the same class of officers, and, of course, that there was no distinction between them. One term was originally used to denote *office*, the other *age*, and both were applied to the same persons in the church. The same thing occurs in Tit 1:5-7, where those who in Ac 20:5 are called elders, are in Ac 20:7 called bishops. See also 1Ti 3:1-10 Php 1:1.

To feed. *poimainein*. This word is properly applied to the care which a shepherd exercises over his flock. **See Barnes "Joh 21:15,16"**.

It applies not only to the act of *feeding* a flock, but also to that of protecting, guiding, and guarding it. It here denotes not merely the duty of properly *instructing* the church, but also of *governing* it; of securing it from enemies, Ac 20:29 and of directing its affairs so as to promote its edification and peace.

The Church of God. This is one of the three passages in the New Testament, in regard to which there has been a long controversy among critics, which is not yet determined. The controversy is, whether this is the correct and genuine reading. The other two passages are, 1Ti 3:16 1Jo 5:7. The Mss. and versions exhibit three readings: the church of GOD, *tou yeou*; the church OF THE LORD, *tou kuriou*; and the church of THE LORD and GOD, *kuriou kai yeou*. The Latin vulgate reads it *God*; the Syriac, *the Lord*; the Arabic, *the Lord God*; the Ethiopic, *the Christian family of God*. The reading which now occurs in our text is found in no ancient Mss., except the Vatican codex; and occurs nowhere among the writings of the fathers, except in Athanasius, in regard to whom also there is a various reading. It is retained, however, by Beza, Mill, and Whitby, as the genuine reading. The most ancient Mss. and the best, read *the church of the Lord*, and this probably was the genuine text. It has been adopted by Griesbach and Wetstein; and many important reasons may be given why it should be retained. See those reasons stated at length in Kuinoel, in loco; see also Griesbach and Wetstein. It may be remarked, that a change from Lord to God might easily be made in the transcribing, for in ancient MSS. the words are not written at length, but are abbreviated. Thus, the name Christ *cristov* is written *coe*; the name God *yeov* is written *yoe*; the name Lord *kuriov* is written *koe*; and a mistake, therefore, of a single letter, would lead to the variations observable in the manuscripts. Compare in this place the Note of Mill in his Greek Testament, who thinks that the name God should be retained. The authority, however, is so doubtful, that it should not be used

as a proof-text on the divinity of Christ; and is not necessary, as there are so many undisputed passages on that subject.

Which he hath purchased. The word here used *periepoihsato* occurs but in one other place in the New Testament: 1Ti 3:13, "For they that have used the office of deacon well, *purchase* to themselves a good degree and great boldness in the faith." The word properly means, to acquire or gain anything; or to *make it ours*. This may be done by a price, or by labour, etc. The noun *peripoihsiv* derived from this verb, is several times used in the New Testament, and denotes acquisition. 1Th 5:9: "God hath appointed us *to obtain* [unto the obtaining or acquisition of] salvation." 2Th 2:14: "Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the *obtaining* of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1Pe 2:9 Tit 2:14; Eph 1:14.

In this place it means that Christ had *acquired, gained, or procured* the church for himself, by paying his own life as the price. The church is often represented as having thus been bought with a price, 1Co 6:20 7:23; 2Pe 2:1.

With his own blood. With the sacrifice of his own life; for blood is often put for life, and to shed the blood is equivalent to taking the life. **See Barnes "Ro 3:25"**.

The doctrines taught here are,

(1.) that the death of Christ was an atoning sacrifice; that he offered himself to purchase a people to his own service.

(2.) That the church is, therefore, of peculiar value— a value to be estimated by the worth of the price paid for it. Comp. 1Pe 1:18,19.

(3.) That this fact should make the purity and salvation of the church an object of special solicitude with the ministers of the gospel. They should be deeply affected in view of that blood which has been shed for the church; and they should guard and defend it as having been bought with the highest price in the universe. The chief consideration that will make ministers faithful and self-denying is, that the church has been bought with a price. If the Lord Jesus so loved it—if he gave himself for it—they should be willing to deny themselves; to watch, and toil, and pray, that the great object of his death—the purity and the salvation of that church—may be obtained.

{e} "heed" Col 4:17 1Ti 4:16 {f} "overseers" Heb 13:17 {g} "feed" Pr 10:21 Jer 3:15; Joh 21:15-17 1Pe 5:2,3

{a} "purchased" Eph 1:14 Col 1:14; Heb 9:12,14; 1Pe 1:18,19; Re 5:9

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 20 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *For I know this*. By what he had seen in other places; by his knowledge of human nature, and of the dangers to which they were exposed; and by the guidance of inspiration.

After my departing. His presence had been the means of guarding the church, and preserving it from these dangers. Now that the founder and guide of the church was to be removed, they would be exposed to dissensions and dangers.

Grievous wolves. Heavy, *bareiv*, strong, mighty, dangerous wolves—so strong that the feeble flock would not be able to resist them. The term wolves is used to denote the enemies of the flock—false, and hypocritical, and dangerous teachers. Compare Mt 10:16; **See Barnes "Ac 7:15"**.

Enter in among you. From abroad; doubtless referring particularly to the Jews, who might be expected to distract and divide them.

Not sparing the flock. Seeking to destroy the church. The Jews would regard it with peculiar hostility, and would seek to destroy it in every way. Probably they would approach them with great professed friendship for them, and expressing a desire only to defend the laws of Moses.

{b} "Grievous wolves" Mt 7:15 2Pe 2:1 {c} "sparing the flock" Jer 13:20 23:1; Eze 34:2,3; Zec 11:17

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 20 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *Also of your own selves*. From your own church; from those who profess to be Christians.

Speaking perverse things. Crooked, perverted, distracting doctrines, *diestrammena*. **See Barnes "Ac 13:10".**

They would proclaim doctrines tending to distract and divide the church. The most dangerous enemies which the church has had, have been nurtured in its own bosom, and have consisted of those who have perverted the true. doctrines of the gospel. Among the Ephesians, as among the Corinthians, 1Co 1:11-13, there might be parties formed; there might be men influenced by ambition, like Diotrephes, 3Jo 1:9, or like Phygellus or Hermogenes, 2Ti 1:15, or like Hymeneus and Alexander, 1Ti 1:20. Men under the influence of ambition, or from the love of power or popularity, form parties in the church, produce divisions and distractions, and greatly retard its internal prosperity, and mar its peace. The church of Christ would have little to fear from external enemies if it nurtured no foes in its own bosom; and all the power of persecutors is not so much to be dreaded as the counsels and plans, the parties, strifes, heart-burnings, and contentions which are produced by those who have power, among the professed friends of Christ.

{d} "of you own selves" 1Jo 2:19 Jude 1:4

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 20 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *Therefore watch*. Mt 24:42. In view of the dangers which beset yourselves, Ac 20:28, the danger from men not connected with the church, Ac 20:29, and the danger that shall arise from the lovers of power among yourselves, Ac 20:30, be on your guard. Observe the approach of danger, and set yourselves against it.

Remember. Recall my counsels and admonitions in reference to these dangers.

By the space of three years. In Ac 19:10, we are told that Paul spent two years in the school of Tyrannus. In Ac 19:8, it is said that he was teaching in the synagogue at Ephesus three months. In addition to this it is not improbable that he spent some months more in Ephesus in instructing the church in other places. Perhaps, however, by the phrase three years, he meant to use merely a round number, denoting *about* three years; or, in accordance with the Jewish customs, part of each of the three years— one whole year, and a considerable portion of the two others. **See Barnes "Mt 12:40".**

I ceased not. I continued to do it.

To warn. To admonish; to place before the mind, *nouyetwn*; setting the danger and duty of each individual before him.

Every one. He had thus set them an example of what he had enjoined, Ac 20:28. He had admonished each individual, whatever was his rank or standing. It is well when a minister can refer to his own example as an illustration of what he meant by his precepts.

Night and day. Continually; by every opportunity.

With tears. Expressive of his deep feeling and his deep interest in their welfare. **See Barnes "Ac 20:19".**

{e} "watch" 2Ti 4:5 {*} "warn" "admonish" {f} "every one" Col 1:28

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 20 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *And now, brethren*. About to leave them, probably to see them no more, he committed them to the faithful care and keeping of God. Amidst all the dangers of the church, when human strength fails or is withdrawn, we may commit that church to the safe keeping and tender care of God.

I commend you. I commit you; I *place you paratiyemai* in his hands, and under his protection. **See Barnes "Ac 14:23".**

And to the word of his grace. That is, to his gracious word; to his merciful promise. To his doctrine of salvation by Jesus Christ, which has been conferred on us by grace. Paul refers, doubtless, to the *gospel* —including its promises of support, its consoling truths, and its directions to seek all needful help and comfort in God.

Which is able. Which has power. *tw dunamenw*. Which word, or gospel, has power to build you up. Heb 4:12: "For the word of God is quick, [living, life-giving, *zwn*,] and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword," etc. Comp. Isa 49:2 Jer 23:29. "Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" It is implied here, that the gospel is not a dead letter; that it has power to accomplish a great work; and that it is *adapted* to the end in view, the conversion and sanctification of the soul. There is no danger in representing the gospel as mighty, and as fitted by infinite wisdom to secure the renovation and salvation of man. Comp. Ro 1:16; 1Co 1:18 2Co 10:4.

To build you up. The word used here is properly applied to a house, which is reared and completed by slow degrees, and by toil. It here means to establish, make firm, or permanent; and hence to instruct, to establish in doctrine, and in hope. It here means that the word of God was able to confirm and establish them in the hopes of the gospel, amidst the dangers to which they would be exposed.

And to give you an inheritance. To make you heirs; or to make you joint partakers with the saints of the blessings in reserve for the children of God. Those blessings are often represented as an inheritance, or heirship, which God will confer on his adopted children, Mt 19:29; Mt 25:34 Mr 10:17; Heb 6:12 Re 21:7; Eph 1:11 5:5; Col 1:12 3:24

Ro 8:17 Ga 3:29.

Among all them which are sanctified. With all who are holy; with all the saints. **See Barnes "Joh 10:36"**.

Those who shall be saved are made holy. They who receive a part in the inheritance beyond the grave, shall have it only among the sanctified and the pure. They must, therefore, be pure themselves, or they can have no part in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

{a} "which is able" Joh 17:17 {b} "inheritance among" Ac 26:18 Col 1:12; Heb 9:15 1Pe 1:4

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 20 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *I have coveted*. I have not desired. I have not made it an object of my living among you to obtain your property. Thus 2Co 12:14 he says, "I seek not yours, but you." Paul had power to demand support in the ministry as the reward of his labour, 1Co 9:13,14. Yet he did not choose to exercise it, lest it should bring the charge of avarice against the ministry, 1Co 9:12,15. Paul also had power in another respect. He had a vast influence over the people. The early Christians were disposed to commit their property to the disposal of the apostles. See Ac 4:34,35,37.

The heathen had been accustomed to devote their property to the support of religion. Of this propensity, if the object of Paul had been to make money, he might have availed himself, and have become enriched. Deceivers often thus impose on people for the purpose of amassing wealth; and one of the incidental but striking proofs of the Christian religion is here furnished, in the appeal which the apostle Paul made to his hearers, that this had not been his motive for action. If it had been, how easy would it have been for them to have contradicted him! and who, in such circumstances, would have dared to make such an appeal? The circumstances of the case, therefore, prove that the object of the apostle was not to amass wealth. And this fact is an important proof of the truth of the religion which he defended. What should have induced him to labour and toil in this manner, but a conviction of the truth of Christianity? And if he really believed it was true, it is, in his circumstances, a strong proof that this religion is from heaven. See this proof stated in Faber's "Difficulties of Infidelity," and in Lord Lyttleton's "Letter on the Conversion of St. Paul."

Or apparel. Raiment. Changes of raiment among the ancients, as at present among the orientals, constituted an important part of their property, **See Barnes "Mt 6:19"**.

{c} "I have coveted" 1Sa 12:3 1Co 7:12.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 20 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *Yea, ye yourselves know*. By your own acquaintance with my manner of life. In Corinth he had lived and laboured with Apollos, **See Barnes "Ac 18:3"**; and he refers elsewhere to the fact that he had supported himself, in part at least, by his own labour, 1Co 4:12 1Th 2:9 2Th 3:8. We may hence learn that it is no discredit to a minister to labour. Whatever it may be to a people who put him under a necessity to toil for his support, yet the example of Paul shows that a man should rejoice in the privilege of preaching the gospel, even if it is done while he is obliged to resort to labour for his daily bread. It is well when a minister of the gospel can make an appeal

to his people like this of Paul, and say, "I have coveted no man's gold, or silver, or apparel." Every minister should so live that he can make this appeal to their own consciences of the sincerity and disinterestedness of his labours from the pulpit; or when called to separate from them as Paul did; or when on a dying bed. Every minister of the gospel, when he comes to lie down to die, will desire to be able to make this appeal, and to leave a solemn testimony there, that it was not for gold, or ease, or fame, that he toiled in the ministerial office. How much more influence can such a man have, than he who has been worldly-minded; who has sought to become rich; and the only memorials of whose life is, that he has sought "the fleece, not the flock," and that he has gained the *property*, not the *souls* of men. And every Christian, when he dies, should and will desire to leave a testimony *as* pure, that he has been disinterested, self-denying, and laborious in the cause of Jesus the Lord.

{d} "yourselves know" Ac 18:3 1Co 4:12; 1Th 2:9 2Th 3:8

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 20 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *I have shewed you*. I have taught you by instruction and example. I have not merely *discoursed* about it, but have *showed* you how to do it.

All things. Or, in respect to all things. In everything that respects preaching and the proper mode of life, I have for three years set you an example, illustrating the design, nature, and duties of the office by my own self-denials and toils.

How that. Or *that*. *oti*. I have showed you that ye should by so labouring support the weak.

So labouring, Labouring as I have done. Setting this example, and ministering in this way to the wants of others.

To support the weak. To provide for the wants of the sick and feeble members of the flock, who are unable to labour for themselves. The *weak* here denote the poor, the needy, the infirm.

And to remember. To call to mind for encouragement, and with the force of a command.

The words of the Lord Jesus. These words are nowhere recorded by the evangelists. But they did not pretend to record *all* his sayings and instructions. Comp. Joh 21:25. There is the highest reason to suppose that many of his sayings which are not recorded would be treasured up by those who heard them; would be transmitted to others; and would be regarded as a precious part of his instructions. Paul evidently addresses them as if they had heard this before, and were acquainted with it. Perhaps he had himself reminded them of it. This is one of the Redeemer's most precious sayings; and it seems even to have a peculiar value, from the fact that it is *not* recorded in the regular and professed histories of his life. It comes to us *recovered*, as it were, from the great mass of his unrecorded sayings; *rescued* from that oblivion to which it was hastening if left to mere tradition, and placed in permanent form in the sacred writings by the act of an apostle, who had never seen the Saviour before his crucifixion. It is a precious relic— a memento of the Saviour—and the effect of it is to make us regret that more of his words were not recovered from an uncertain tradition, and placed in a permanent form by an inspired penman. God, however, who knows what is requisite to guide us, has directed the words which are needful for the welfare of the church, and has preserved by inspiration the doctrines which are adapted to convert and bless man.

It is more blessed to give. It is a higher privilege; it tends more to the happiness of the individual, and of the world. The giver is more blessed or happy than the receiver. This appears,

(1.) because it is a privilege to give to the wants of others; it is a condition for which we should be thankful; when we are in a situation to promote their felicity.

(2.) Because it tends to promote the happiness of the benefactor himself. There is pleasure in the act of giving, when it is done with pure motives. It promotes our own peace; is followed by happiness in the recollection of it; and will be followed by happiness for ever. That is the most truly happy man, who is most benevolent. He is the most miserable, who has never known the luxury of doing good, but who lives to gain all he can, and to hoard all he gains.

(3.) It is blessed in the reward that shall result from it. Those who give from a pure motive, God will bless. They shall be rewarded, not only in the peace which they shall experience in this life, but in the higher bliss of heaven, Mt 25:34-36. We may also remark, that this is a sentiment truly great and noble. It is worthy of the Son of God. It is that on which he himself acted, when he came to *give* pardon to the guilty, comfort to the disconsolate and the mourner, peace to the anxious sinner, sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, life to the dead, and heaven to the guilty and the lost. Acting on this, he *gave* his own tears to weep over human sorrows and human guilt; he *gave* his own labours and toils to instruct and save man; he *gave* his own life a sacrifice for sin on the cross; and he *gave* his Spirit to awaken and save those for whom he died. Loving to give, he has freely given us all things. Loving to give, he delights in the same character in his followers, and seeks that they who have wealth, and strength, and influence, should be willing to give all to save the world. Imitating his great example, and complying with his command, the church shall yet learn more and more to give its wealth to bless the poor and needy, its sons and its daughters to bear the gospel to the benighted heathen, and its undivided and constant efforts to save a lost world. Here closes this speech of Paul—an address of inimitable tenderness and beauty. Happy would it be if every minister could bid *such* an adieu to his people, when called to part from them; and happy if, at the close of life, every Christian could leave the world with a like consciousness that he had been faithful in the discharge of his duty. Thus dying, it will be blessed to leave the world; and thus would the example of the saints live in the memory of survivors long after they themselves have ascended to their rest.

{e} "to support the weak" Ro 15:1 Eph 4:28; 1Th 5:14

{*} "weak" "Infirm" {f} "how he said" Lu 14:12-14

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 20 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *He kneeled down*. The usual attitude of prayer. It is the proper posture of a suppliant. It indicates reverence and humility; and is represented in the Scriptures as the common attitude of devotion, 2Ch 6:13 Da 6:10; Lu 22:41 Ac 7:60, 9:40 21:5; Ro 11:4 Php 2:10; Eph 3:14 Mr 1:40.

{a} "kneeled down" Ac 21:5.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 20 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *Wept sore*. Wept much. Greek, "There was a great weeping of all."

And fell on, Paul's neck. Embraced him, as a token of tender affection. The same thing Joseph did when he met his aged father Jacob, Ge 46:29.

And kissed him. This was the common token of affection. Note, Mt 26:48 Lu 15:20; Ro 16:16 1Co 16:20.

{b} "fell on Paul's neck" Ge 46:29.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 20 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *Sorrowing most of all*, etc. This was a most tender and affectionate parting scene. It can be more easily imagined than described. We may learn from it,

(1.) that the parting of ministers and people is a most solemn event, and should be one of much tenderness and affection.

(2.) The effect of true religion is to make the heart more tender; to make friendship more affectionate and sacred; and to unite more closely the bonds of love.

(3.) Ministers of the gospel should be prepared to leave their people with the same consciousness of fidelity, and the same kindness and love, which Paul evinced. They should live such lives as to be able to look back upon their whole ministry as pure and disinterested; and as having been employed in guarding the flock, and in making known to them the whole counsel of God. So parting, they may part in peace. And so living, and acting, they will be prepared to give up their account with joy, and not with grief. May God grant to every minister the spirit which Paul evinced at Ephesus, and enable each one, when called to leave his people by death or otherwise, to do it with the same consciousness of fidelity which Paul evinced, when he left his people to see their face no more!

{c} "words" Ac 20:25

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21 - Verse 1

CHAPTER 21

Verse 1. *After we were gotten from them*. After we had left the elders at Miletus, Ac 20:38. They were on their way to Jerusalem.

Unto Coos. This was a small island in the Grecian Archipelago, a short distance from the south-western point of Asia Minor. It is now called *Stan-co*. It was celebrated for its fertility, and for the wine and silk-worms which it produced.

Unto Rhodes. This was an island in the Levant. On the island was a city of the same name, which was principally distinguished for its brazen Colossus, which was built by Chares of Lyndus. It stood across the mouth of the harbour; and was so high that vessels could pass between its legs.

It stood fifty-six years, and was then thrown down by an earthquake. It was reckoned as one of the seven wonders of the world. When the Saracens took possession of this island, they sold this prostrate image to a Jew, who loaded 900 camels with the brass of it. This was A.D. 600, about 900 years after it had been thrown down. The ancient name of the island was Asteria. Its name *Rhodes* was given from the great quantity of *roses* which it produced.

Unto Patara. This was a maritime city of Lycia, in Asia Minor, over against Rhodes.

{*} "gotten" "had separated"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Unto Phenicia*. **See Barnes** "Ac 11:19.

Phenicia was on their way to Jerusalem.

Set forth. Sailed.

{+} "sailed" "loosed"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Had discovered Cyprus*. **See Barnes "Ac 4:36"**.

Into Syria. **See Barnes "Mt 4:24"**.

And landed at Tyre. **See Barnes "Mt 11:21"**.

To unlade her burden. Her cargo. Tyre was formerly one of the most commercial cities of the world; and it is probable, that in the time of Paul its commercial importance had not entirely ceased.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And finding disciples*. Christians. This is the first mention of there being Christians at Tyre; but there is no improbability in supposing that the gospel had been preached there, though it is not expressly recorded by Luke.

Who said to Paul. Comp. Ac 21:12. Their deep interest in his welfare, and their apprehension of his danger, was the reason why they admonished him not to go.

Through the Spirit. There as some difficulty in understanding this. In solving this difficulty, we may remark,

(1.) that it is evident that the Holy Spirit is meant, and that Luke means to say that this was spoken by his inspiration. The Holy Spirit was bestowed on Christians at that time in large measures, and many appear to have been under his inspiring guidance.

(2.) It was not understood by Paul as a positive *command* that he should not go up to Jerusalem—for, had it been, it would not have been disobeyed. Paul evidently understood it as expressive of their earnest wish that he should not go, as apprizing him of danger, and as a kind

expression in regard to his own welfare and safety. Comp. Ac 21:13. Paul was in better circumstances to understand this than we are, and his interpretation was doubtless correct.

(3.) It is to be understood, therefore, simply as an *inspired prophetic warning*, that if he went, he went at the risk of his life; a prophetic warning joined with their individual personal wishes, that he would not expose himself to this danger. The meaning evidently is, that they said by inspiration of the Spirit, that he should not go unless he was willing to encounter danger, and the hazard of life as a consequence, for they foresaw that the journey would be attended with this hazard. Grotius renders it, "that he should not go, *unless he was willing to be bound*." Michaelis and Stolzius, "They gave him prophetic warning, that he should not go to Jerusalem." Doddridge, "If he tendered his own liberty and safety, not to go up to Jerusalem, since it would certainly expose him to very great hazard." The inspiration in the case was that of admonition and warning, not of positive command. Paul was simply apprized of the danger; and then left to the free determination of his own will. He chose to encounter the danger of which he was thus apprized. He did not despise the intimations of the Spirit; but he judged that his duty to God called him thus to encounter the hazards of the journey. We may be apprized of danger in a certain course, either by our friends or by the word of God, and still it may be our duty to meet it. Our duty is not to be measured by the fact that we shall experience *dangers*, in whatever way that may be made known to us. It is in following the will of God; and encountering whatever trials may be in our way.

{d} "said to Paul" Ac 21:12

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Had accomplished those days*. When those days were passed.

They all brought us on our way. They attended us. **See Barnes "Ac 15:3"**; **See Barnes** "Ro 15:24"; **See Barnes "1Co 16:6,11"**; **See Barnes** "3Jo 1:6".

This was an expression of tender attachment, and of a deep interest in the welfare of Paul and his fellow-travellers.

We kneeled down. **See Barnes "Ac 20:36"**.

On the shore. Any place may be proper for prayer. **See Barnes "Joh 4:21, also** Joh 4:22-24. God is everywhere, and can as easily hear the prayer of the humble on the sea-shore as in the most magnificent temple. This is an instance, as well as that in Ac 20:36, where the apostle evidently prayed with the church without a form of prayer. No man can believe that he thus poured forth the desires of his heart at parting, and commended them to God, in *a prescribed form of words*. Besides that, there is not the least evidence that such a form was then used in the Christian church: scenes like this show more clearly than abstract arguments could do, that such a form was not needed, and would not be used. Paul and his fellow Christians, on the sand of the sea-shore, would pour forth the gushing emotions of their souls in language such as their circumstances would suggest, and such as such a scene would demand. And it is presumed to be impossible that any man can read this narrative in a dispassionate manner without believing that they offered an *extempore* prayer.

{*} "accomplished" "completed" {+} "brought" "conducted" {a} "kneeled" Ac 20:36

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21 - Verse 6

Verse 6. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *We came to Ptolemais*. This was a city situated on the coast of the Mediterranean, on the north angle of a bay which extends, in a semi-circle of three leagues, as far as the point of Mount Carmel. At the south and west sides the city was washed by the sea; and was surrounded by triple walls. It was in the tribe of Asher, Jud 1:31 and was originally called Acerio; but was called *Ptolemais* in honour of one of the *Ptolemies*, who beautified and adorned it. The Christian crusaders gave it the name of Acre, or St. John of Acre, from a magnificent church which was built in it, and which was dedicated to the apostle John. It is still called *Akka* by the Turks. The Syriac and Arabic render it *Accho* in this place. It sustained several sieges during the crusades, and was the last fortified place wrested from the Christians by the Turks. It sustained a memorable siege by Bonaparte, and since then it has been much increased and strengthened. It surrendered to the British fleet under Admiral Stopford, Nov. 3, 1840, after a few hours' resistance. Its present population is estimated at from 18,000 to 20,000.

And saluted the brethren. Embraced them; gave them expressions of affection and regard.

{++} "abode" "remained"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *We that were of Paul's company*. From this it would appear that they had been attended thus far by some persons who were going only to Ptolemais. This clause, however, is wanting in many MSS., and has been omitted by Bengel, Griesbach, Knapp, and others, as spurious. It is also wanting in the Syriac and the Vulgate.

Unto Caesarea. **See Barnes "Ac 8:40"**.

Into the house of Philip.One of the seven deacons, Ac 6:5. After his conversation with the eunuch of Ethiopia, he went to Caesarea, and probably there abode.

The evangelist. This word properly means one who announces good news. In the New Testament it is applied to a preacher of the gospel, or one who declares the glad tidings of salvation. It occurs only in two other places, Eph 4:11 2Ti 4:5. What was the precise rank of those who bore this title in the early Christian church, cannot perhaps be determined. It is evident, however, that it is used to denote the office of preaching the gospel; and as this title is applied to *Philip*, and not to any other of the seven deacons, it would seem probable that he had been entrusted with a special commission to *preach*, and that *preaching* did not pertain to him as a deacon, and does not properly belong to that office. The business of a deacon was to take care of the poor members of the church, Ac 6:1-6. The office of preaching was distinct from this, though, as in this case, it might be conferred on the same individual.

{b} "Philip" Ac 8:26-40 {c} "evangelist" Eph 4:11 2Ti 4:5 {d} "seven" Ac 6:5 {++} "abode" "remained"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Which did prophesy*. That females sometimes partook of the prophetic influence, and foretold future events, is evident from various places in the New Testament. **See Barnes "Ac 2:17"**; **See Barnes "Ac 11:27"**.

{e} "did prophesy" Joe 2:28 Ac 2:17

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *There came down*. **See Barnes "Ac 15:1"**.

Named Agabus. **See Barnes "Ac 11:28"**.

{f} "Agabus" Ac 11:28

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *He took Paul's girdle*. The loose, flowing robes, or outer garments, which were worn in eastern countries, were bound by a *girdle*, or *sash*, around the body, when they ran, or laboured, or walked. Such a girdle was, therefore, an indispensable part of dress.

And bound his own hands and feet. As emblematic of what would be done by the Jews to Paul. It was common for the prophets to perform actions which were emblematic of the events which they predicted. The design was to make the prediction more forcible and impressive, by representing it to the eye. Thus Jeremiah was directed to bury his girdle by the Euphrates, to denote the approaching captivity of the Jews, Jer 13:4. Thus he was directed to make bands and yokes, and to put them around his neck, as a sign to Edom and Moab, etc., Jer 27:2,3. Thus the act of the potter was emblematic of the destruction that was coming upon the nation of the Jews, Jer 18:4. So Isaiah walked naked and barefoot as a sign of the captivity of Egypt and Ethiopia, Isa 20:3,4. Comp. Eze 4, Eze 12, etc.

So shall the Jews, etc. This was fulfilled. See Ac 21:33 and Ac 24.

Into the hands of the Gentiles. To be tried; for the Romans then had jurisdiction over Judea.

{&} "Ghost" "Spirit" {g} "so shall the Jews" Ac 21:33 20:23

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21 - Verse 12

Verse 12. No Barnes text on this verse.

{h} "besought"
Mt 16:22,23

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *What mean ye*. Greek, What do ye. A tender and affectionate, but firm reproach.

To weep and to break mine heart? To afflict me, and distract my mind by alarms, and by the expressions of tenderness. His mind was fixed on going to Jerusalem; and he felt that he was prepared for whatever awaited him. Expressions of tenderness among friends are proper. Tears may be inevitable at parting from those whom we love; but such expressions of tenderness and love ought not to be allowed to interfere with the convictions of duty in their minds. If they have made up their minds that a certain course is proper, and have resolved to pursue it, we ought neither to attempt to divert them from it, nor to distract their minds by our remonstrances or our tears. We should resign them to their convictions of what is demanded of them, with affection and prayer, but with cheerfulness. We should lend them all the aid in our power, and then commend them to the blessing and protection of God. These remarks apply especially to those who are engaged in the missionary enterprise. It is trying to part with a son, a daughter, or a beloved friend, in order that they may go to proclaim the gospel to the benighted and dying heathen. The act of parting—*for life*— and the apprehension of the perils which they may encounter on the ocean, and in heathen lands, may be painful; but if they, like Paul, have looked at it calmly, candidly, and with much prayer—if they have come to the deliberate conclusion that it is the will of God that they should devote their lives to this service—we ought not to weep, and to break their hearts. We should cheerfully and confidently commit them to the protection of the God whom they serve, and remember that they are seeking his glory, and that the parting of Christians, though for life, will be short. Soon, in a better world, they will be united again, to part no more; and the blessedness of that future meeting will be greatly heightened by all the sorrows and self-denials of separation here, and by all the benefits which such a separation may be the means of conveying to a dying world. That mother will meet with joy, in heaven, the son from whom, with many tears, she was sundered, when he entered on a missionary life; and surrounded with many ransomed heathen, heaven will be made more blessed, and all eternity more happy.

But also to die. This was the true spirit of a martyr. This spirit reigned in the hearts of all the early Christians.

For the name of the Lord Jesus. For his sake; in making his name known.

{i} "ready" 2Ti 4:6

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Would not be persuaded*. To remain. He was resolved to go. *We ceased*. We ceased remonstrating with him, and urging him to remain.

The will of the Lord be done. They were now assured that it was the will of God that he should go. And they were now ready to submit to that will. This is an instance and an evidence of true piety. It was the expression of a wish, that whatever God might judge to be necessary for the advancement of his cause might take place, even though it should be attended with many trials. They commended their friend to the protection of God, confident that whatever should occur would be right. Compare Mt 6:10 26:42.

{a} "will of the Lord" Mt 6:10 27:42

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *After those days*. After what had occurred, as related in the previous verses.

We took up our carriages. This is a most unhappy translation. The word carriage we apply now exclusively to a vehicle for conveying anything—as a coach, chariot, gig, cannon-carriage, etc. The original word means simply, that they prepared themselves; made themselves ready; put their baggage in order, etc. *aposkeuasamenoi*. They prepared for the journey. The English word *carriage* was formerly used in the sense of that which is carried —baggage, burden, vessels, furniture, etc. Thus it was used in the time that our translation was made; and in this sense it is to be understood in 1Sa 17:22, "And David left his *carriage* (baggage) in the hand of the keeper of the carriage," etc. See Ac 21:20, margin. Isa 10:28, "At Michmash he hath laid up his carriages," [his baggage, etc.]

{*} "carriages" "Baggage"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *One Mnason of Cyprus*. The original in this place would be better translated, "And brought us *to* Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple," etc. It is evident, that though Mnason was originally of Cyprus, yet he was now an inhabitant of Jerusalem, and was well known to the disciples at Caesarea. It is possible that he might have been at Caesarea, and accompanied Paul to Jerusalem; but the more correct interpretation of the passage is, that Paul and his fellow- travellers were conducted to his house in Jerusalem, and that he was not with them in the journey.

Of Cyprus. **See Barnes "Ac 4:36"**.

An old disciple. An early convert to Christianity—perhaps one who was converted before the crucifixion of the Saviour.

With whom we should lodge. In whose house we were to take up our abode. The rites of hospitality were shown in a distinguished manner by the early Christians.

{b} "old disciple" Pr 16:31

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *The brethren*. Christians.

Received us gladly. They had been long absent. They had been into distant regions, and had encountered many dangers. It was a matter of joy that they had now returned in safety.

{c} "gladly" Ac 15:4

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Unto James*. James the Less. **See Barnes "Ac 15:13"**.

He resided at Jerusalem. Comp. Ga 1:19. It is not improbable that he was the only one of the apostles then at Jerusalem; and there is reason to believe that the church at Jerusalem was left under his particular care. It was natural, therefore, that Paul and his travelling companions should take an early opportunity to see him. James was the cousin of our Lord; and, in Ga 1:19, he is called the Lord's brother. On all accounts, therefore, he was entitled to, and would receive, particular respect from the early disciples.

{d} "James" Ac 15:13 Ga 1:19

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Had saluted them*. With the usual tokens of respect and affection.

He declared particularly, etc. As an evidence that God had been with him. It is not improbable that there might have been some suspicion in regard to Paul among the disciples at Jerusalem, and he might have heard that they were prejudiced against him. This prejudice would be removed by his stating what had actually occurred under his ministry.

{e} "what things" Ro 15:18,19 {f} "by his ministry" Ac 20:24 2Co 12:12

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *They glorified the Lord*. They gave praise to the Lord for what he had done. They saw new proofs of his goodness and mercy, and they rendered him thanks for all that had been accomplished. There was no jealousy that it had been done by the instrumentality of Paul. True piety will rejoice in the spread of the gospel, and in the conversion of sinners, by whatever instrumentality it may be effected.

Thou seest, brother. The language of tenderness in this address, recognizing Paul as a fellow-labourer and fellow Christian, implies a wish that Paul would do all that could be done to avoid giving offence, and to conciliate the favour of his country-men.

How many thousands. The number of converts at this time must have been very great. Twenty-five years before this, three thousand had been converted at one time, Ac 2, and afterwards the number had swelled to some more thousands, Ac 4:4, The assertion, that there were then "many

thousands," implies that the work, so signally begun on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem, had not ceased, and that many more had been converted to the Christian faith.

Which believe. Who are Christians. They are spoken of as *believers*, or as having faith in Christ, in contradistinction from those who rejected him, and whose characteristic trait it was that they were *unbelievers*.

And they are all zealous of the law. They still observe the law of Moses. The reference here is to the law respecting circumcision, sacrifices, distinctions of meats and days, festivals, etc. It may seem remarkable that they should still continue to observe those rites, since it was the manifest design of Christianity to abolish them. But we are to remember,

(1.) that those rites had been appointed by God, and that they were trained to their observance.

(2.) That the apostles conformed to them while they remained in Jerusalem, and did not deem it best to set themselves violently against them, Ac 3:1 Lu 24:53.

(3.) That the question about their observance had never been agitated at Jerusalem. It was only among the Gentile converts that the question had risen, and there it *must* arise, for if they were to be observed, they must have been *imposed* upon them by authority.

(4.) The decision of the council Ac 15 related only to the Gentile converts. It did not touch the question, whether those rites were to be observed by the *Jewish* converts.

(5.) It was to be presumed, that as the Christian religion became better understood— that as its large, free, and catholic nature became more and more developed, the peculiar institutions of Moses would be laid aside of course, without agitation and without tumult. Had the question been agitated at Jerusalem, it would have excited tenfold opposition to Christianity, and would have rent the Christian church into factions, and greatly retarded the advance of the Christian doctrine. We are to remember also,

(6.) that, in the arrangement of Divine Providence, the time was drawing near which was to destroy the temple, the city, and the nation; which was to put an end to sacrifices, and *effectually* to close for ever the observance of the Mosaic rites. As this destruction was so near, and as it would be so effectual an *argument* against the observance of the Mosaic rites, the Great Head of the church did not suffer the question of their obligation to be needlessly agitated among the disciples at Jerusalem.

{g} "zealous" Ac 22:3 Ro 10:2

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *And they are informed of thee*. Reports respecting the conduct of Paul would be likely to be in circulation among all at Jerusalem. His remarkable conversion; his distinguished zeal; his success among the Gentiles, would make his conduct a subject of special interest. Evil-minded men among the Jews, who came up to Jerusalem from different places where he had been, would be likely to represent him as the decided enemy of the laws of Moses, and these reports would be likely to reach the ears of the Jewish converts. The reports, as they gained ground, would be greatly magnified, until suspicion might be excited among the Christians at Jerusalem, that he was, as he was reputed to be, the settled foe of the Jewish rites and customs.

That thou teachest all the Jews, etc. From all the evidence which we have of his conduct, this report was incorrect and slanderous. The truth appears to have been, that he did not enjoin the observance of those laws on the Gentile converts; that the effect of his ministry on them was to lead them to suppose that their observance was not necessary—contrary to the doctrines of the Judaizing teachers, Ac 15 and that he argued with the Jews themselves, where it could be done, against the *obligation* of those laws and customs, since the Messiah had come. They depended on that observance for justification and salvation. This Paul strenuously opposed, and this he defended at length in the epistles which he wrote. See the epistles to the Romans, the Galatians, and the Hebrews. Yet these facts might be easily misunderstood and perverted, so as to give rise to the slanderous report, that he was everywhere the enemy of Moses and the law.

Which are among the Gentiles. Who live in heathen countries. The Jews were extensively scattered, and settled in all the large towns and cities of the Roman empire.

To forsake Moses. The law and authority of Moses. That is, to regard his laws as no longer binding.

To walk after the customs. To observe the institutions of the Mosaic ritual. **See Barnes "Ac 6:14"**.

The word *customs* denotes the rites of the Mosaic economy —the offering of sacrifices, incense, the oblations, anointings, festivals, etc., which the law of Moses prescribed.

{*} "informed of thee" "concerning" {a} "circumcise" Ga 5:3

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *What is it therefore*? What is to be done? What is it proper to do, to avoid the effects of the evil report which has been circulated? What they deemed it proper to do, is suggested in the following verses.

The multitude. The multitude of Jews.

Must needs come together. There will be inevitably a tumultuous assemblage. It will be impossible to prevent that. The reasons were, because their minds were exceedingly agitated that one of their own countrymen had, as they understood, been advising apostasy from the religion of their fathers; because it had been extensively done in many parts of the world, and with great success; and because Paul, having, as they believed, himself apostatized from the national religion, had become very conspicuous, and his very presence in Jerusalem, as in other places, would be likely to excite a tumult. It was, therefore, the part of friendship to him, and to the cause, to devise some proper place to prevent, if possible, the anticipated excitement.

{+} "therefore the multitude" "What therefore should be done" {b} "come together" Ac 19:32

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *We have four men*. There are with us four men. It is evident that James and the elders meant to say, that these men were connected with them in the Christian church; and that act shows

that the Christians at Jerusalem did not disregard the institutions of Moses, and had not been so far enlightened in the doctrines of Christianity as to forsake yet the ceremonial rites of the Jews.

Which have a vow on them. Which have made a vow. **See Barnes "Ac 18:18"**.

From the mention of shaving the head, Ac 21:24, it is evident that the vow which they had taken was that of the Nazarite; and that as the time of their vow was about expiring, they were about to be shaven, in accordance with the custom usual on such occasions. **See Barnes "Ac 18:18"**.

These persons Paul could join, and thus show decisively that he did not intend to undervalue or disparage the laws of Moses, when those laws were understood as mere ceremonial observances.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Them take*. Take with you. Join yourself with them.

And purify thyself with them. Join them in observing the forms of purification prescribed by the law of Moses in the observance of the vow of the Nazarite. The *purifying* here refers to the vows of sanctity which the Nazarites were to observe. They were to abstain from wine and strong drink; they were to eat no grapes, moist or dried; they were to come near no dead body, nor to make themselves "unclean"—for their father, mother, brother, or sister, when they died, Nu 6:3-7; and they were to present an offering when the days of the vow were completed, Nu 6:13-21.

And be at charges with them. Share with them the expense of the sacrifices and offerings required when the vow is completed. Those offerings were a ram of a year old for a burnt-offering, a sheep of the same age for a sin-offering, a ram for a thank-offering, a basket of unleavened cakes, and a libation of wine. See Nu 6:13-20.

That they may shave their heads. The shaving of the head, or the cutting of the hair which had been suffered to grow during the continuance of the vow, Nu 6:5, was an observance indicating that the vow had been performed. Paul was requested to join with them in the expense of the sacrifices and offerings, that thus the whole of the ceremonies having been observed, their heads might be shaved as an indication that every part of the vow had been complied with.

And all may know. By the fact of your observance of one of the rites of the Mosaic religion, all may have evidence that it is not your purpose or practice to speak contemptuously of those rites, or to undervalue the authority of Moses.

Are nothing. Are untrue, or without any foundation.

Walkest orderly. That you live in accordance with the real requirements of the law of Moses. To *walk*, in the Scriptures, often denotes *to live, to act, to conduct*, in a certain manner. All, probably, that they wished Paul to show by this was, that he was not an enemy of Moses. They who gave this counsel were Christians, and they could not wish him to do anything which would imply that he was not a Christian.

{c} "shave their heads" Nu 6:2,13,18

{&} "are nothing" "Not true"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *As touching the Gentiles*. In regard to the Gentile converts. It might be expedient for Paul to do what could not be *enjoined* on the Gentiles. They could not *command* the Gentile converts to observe those ceremonies; while yet it might be proper, for the sake of peace, that the converts to Christianity from among the Jews should regard them. The conduct of the Christians at Jerusalem in giving this advice, and of Paul in following it, may be easily vindicated. If it be objected, as it has been by infidels, that it looks like double-dealing—that it was designed to *deceive* the Jews in Jerusalem, and to make them believe that Paul actually conformed to the ceremonial law, when his conduct among the Gentiles showed that he did not—we may reply,

(1.) that the observance of that law was not necessary in order to justification.

(2.) That it would have been improper to have enjoined its observance on the Gentile converts as necessary, and therefore it was never done.

(3.) That when the Jews urged its observance as necessary to justification and salvation, Paul strenuously *opposed* this view of it everywhere.

(4.) Yet, that as a matter of expediency, he did not oppose its being observed either by the Jews, or by the converts made among the Jews. In fact, there is other evidence besides the case before us, that Paul himself continued to observe some at least of the Jewish rites, and his conduct in public at Jerusalem, was in strict accordance with his conduct in other places. See Ac 18:18. The sum of the whole matter is this, that when the observance of the Jewish ceremonial law was urged as necessary to justification and acceptance with God, Paul resisted it; when it was demanded that its observance should be enjoined on the Gentiles, he opposed it; in all other cases he made no opposition to it, and was ready himself to comply with it, and willing that others should also.

We have written. **See Barnes** "Ac 15:20,29.

{d} "we have written" Ac 15:20,29

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Then Paul took the men*. Took them to himself; united with them in observing the ceremonies connected with their vow. To transactions like this he refers in 1Co 9:20, "And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under under the law." Thus, it has always been found necessary in propagating the gospel among the heathen, not to offend them needlessly, but to conform to their innocent customs in regard to dress, language, modes of travelling, sitting, eating, etc. Paul did nothing more than this. He violated none of the dictates of honesty and truth.

Purifying himself with them. Observing the ceremonies connected with the rite of purification. **See Barnes** "Ac 21:24.

This means evidently that he entered on the ceremonies of the separation according to the law of the Nazarite.

To signify. Greek, Signifying or making known. That is, he announced to the priests in the temple his purpose of observing this vow with the four men, according to the law respecting the

Nazarite. It was proper that such an announcement should be made beforehand, in order that the priests might know that all the ceremonies required had been observed.

The accomplishment, etc. The fulfilling; the completion. That is, he announced to them his purpose to observe all the days, and all the rites of purification required in the law, in order that an offering might be properly made. It does not mean that the days *had been* accomplished, but that it was his intention to observe them, *so that* it would be proper to offer the usual sacrifice. Paul had not, indeed, engaged with them in the beginning of their vow of separation; but he might come in with hearty intention to share with them. It cannot be objected that he meant to impose on the priests, and to make them believe that he had observed the whole vow with them; for it appears from their own writings, (*Bereshith Rabba* 90, and *Koheleth Rabba* 7,) that in those instances where the Nazarites had not sufficient property to enable them to meet the whole expense of the offerings, other persons, who possessed more, might become sharers of it, and thus be made parties to the vow. See Jahn's Archeology, & 396. This circumstance will vindicate Paul from any intention to take an improper advantage, or to impose on the priests or the Jews. All that he announced was, his intention to *share* with the four men in the offering which they were required to make; to divide the expenses with them: and thus to show his *approval* of the thing, and his accordance with the law which made such a vow proper, *as he had before done in a voluntary manner, when it would not be pretended that it was for double-dealing, or imposition*, Ac 18:18.

Until that an offering, etc. The sacrifices required of all those who had observed this vow. **See Barnes "Ac 21:24"; See Barnes "Nu 6:13".**

It is a complete vindication of Paul in this case, that he did no more here than he had done in a voluntary manner, Ac 18:18, and as appears then in a secret manner, showing that he was still in the practice of observing this rite of the Mosaic institution. Nor can it be proved that Paul ever, *in any way*, or *at any time*, spoke against the vow of the Nazarite, or that a vow of a similar kind in spirit would be improper for a Christian in any circumstances.

{a} "entered into the temple" Ac 24:18 {b} "accomplishment" Nu 6:13

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *And when the seven days were almost ended*. Gr., As the seven days were about to be fulfilled. *emellon sunteleisyai*. The seven days which were to complete the observance of the vow, Ac 21:26. Perhaps the whole observance in this case was intended to be but seven days, as the time of such a vow was voluntary. The translation, "were almost ended," is not quite correct. The Greek implies no more than that the period of the seven days was *about to be accomplished*, without implying it was near the close of them when he was seized. By comparing the following places— Ac 21:18,26, 22:30, 23:12,32 24:1,11

—it appears that the time of his seizure must have been near the beginning of those days. (*Doddridge*,)

The Jews which were of Asia. Who resided in Asia Minor, but who had come up to Jerusalem for purposes of worship. **See Barnes "Ac 2:1"**

and following.

{c} "Jews" Ac 24:18 {d} "laid hands on him" Ac 26:21

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *Men of Israel*. Jews. All who are the friends of the law of Moses.

This is the man, etc. This implies that they had before given information to the Jews at Jerusalem that there was such a man; and they now exulted in the fact that they had found him. They, therefore, called on all these to aid in securing and punishing him.

That teacheth, etc. **See Barnes "**Ac 6:13, **See Barnes "Ac 6:14"**.

Against the people. The people of the Jews. That is, they pretended that he taught that the customs and laws of the Jewish nation were not binding, and endeavoured to prejudice all men against them.

And the law. The law of Moses.

And this place. The temple. Everything against the law would be interpreted also as being against the temple, as most of the commandments of the law were celebrated there. It is possible also that Paul might have declared that the temple was to be destroyed. Comp. Ac 6:13,14.

And further, brought Greeks, etc. The temple was surrounded by various areas called *courts*. **See Barnes "Mt 21:12"**.

The outermost of these courts was called the court of the Gentiles, and into that it was lawful for the Gentiles to enter. But the word "temple" here refers, doubtless, to the parts of the area appropriated especially to the Israelites, and which it was unlawful for a Gentile to enter. See the area marked G G G G in the plan of the temple, **See Barnes "Mt 21:12"**.

And hath polluted, etc. He defiled the temple by thus introducing a Gentile. No greater defilement, in their view, could scarcely be conceived. No more effective appeal could be made to the passions of the people than this.

{e} "teacheth" Ac 6:13,14, 24:5,6

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *In the city*. In Jerusalem. As he was with Paul, it was inferred that he would attend him everywhere.

Trophimus. He had accompanied Paul on his way from Ephesus, Ac 20:4.

Whom they supposed, etc. This is a most striking illustration of the manner in which accusations are often brought against others. They had *seen* him with Paul in the city; they *inferred*, therefore, that he had been with him in the temple. They did not even pretend that they had *seen* him in the temple; but the inference was enough to inflame the angry and excitable passions of the multitude. So in the accusations which men now often make of others. They *see* one thing, they *infer* another; they could *testify* to one thing, but they *conclude* that another thing will also be true, and that *other thing* they charge on them as the truth. If men would state facts as they are, no small part of the slanderous accusations against others would cease. An end would be made of most of the charges of falsehood, and error, and heresy, and dishonesty, and double-dealing, and immorality. If a statement is made, it should be of the thing as it was. If we attempt to state what a man has done, it should not be what we *suppose* he has done. If we attempt to state what he believes, it should not be what we *suppose* he believes.

{f} "Trophimus" Ac 20:4

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *The city was moved*. Was agitated; was thrown into commotion.

Drew him out of the temple. Under the pretence that he had defiled it. The evident design was to put him to death, Ac 21:31.

The doors were shut. The doors leading into the courts of the temple.

{*} "forthwith" "Immediately"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *And as they were about to kill him*. Gr., They *seeking* to kill him. This was evidently done in a popular tumult, as had been done in the case of Stephen, Ac 7. They could not pretend that they had a right to do it by law.

Tidings came. The news, or rumour came; he was told of it.

The chief captain of the band. This band or body of Roman soldiers was stationed in the tower Antonia, on the north of the temple. This tower was built by John Hyrcanus, high priest of the Jews, and was by him called *Baris*. It was beautified and strengthened by Herod the Great, and was called *Antonia*, in honour of his friend Mark Antony. Josephus describes this castle as consisting of four towers, one of which overlooked the temple, and which he says was seventy cubits high. Jewish Wars, b. v. chap. 5, § 8. In this tower a guard of Roman soldiers was stationed, to secure the temple, and to maintain the peace. The commander of this cohort is here called "the chief captain." Reference is made to this guard several times in the New Testament, Mt 27:65,66; Joh 18:12 Ac 5:26.

The word translated" chief captain"—*ciliarcw*—denotes, properly, one who commanded a thousand men. The band—*speirhv*—was the tenth part of a legion, and consisted sometimes of four hundred and twenty-five soldiers, at others of five hundred, and at others of six hundred, according to the size of the legion. The name of this captain was Claudius Lysias, Ac 23:26.

In an uproar. That the whole city was in commotion.

{g} "kill" 2Co 11:23 {++} "tidings" "A report" {&} "chief captain" "Commander"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *Centurions*. Captains of a hundred men.

{a} "who immediately" Ac 23:27 24:7 {*} "chief captain" "Commander"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *To be bound with two chains*. To show to the enraged multitude that he did not intend to rescue any one from justice, but to keep the peace. Paul's being thus bound would convince them of his determination that justice should be done in the case. Probably he was bound between two soldiers—his right arm to the left arm of the one, and his left arm to the right arm of the other. **See Barnes "Ac 12:6".**

Or, if his hands and feet were bound, it is evident that it was so done that he was able still to walk, Ac 21:37,38. This was in accordance with the prediction of Agabus, Ac 21:11.

{*} "chief captain" "Commander" {b} "bound with two chains" Ac 21:11 20:23; Eph 6:20

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *Into the castle*. The castle or tower of Antonia, where the guard was kept.
See Barnes "21:31".
Comp. Ac 23:10,16.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *Upon the stairs*. The stairs which led from the temple to the tower of Antonia. Josephus says, (Jewish Wars, b. v. chap. 5, § 8,) that the tower of Antonia

"was situated at the corner of two cloisters of the court of
the temple—of that on the west, and of that on the north; it
was erected on a rock of fifty cubits [seventy-five feet]
in height, and was on a great precipice. On the corner where
it joined to the two cloisters of the temple, *it had passages*
down to them both, through which the guards went several ways
among the cloisters with their arms on the Jewish festivals,"

etc. It was on these stairs, as the soldiers were returning, that the tumult was so great, or the crowd so dense, that they were obliged to bear him along to rescue him from their violence.

Violence of the people. The *rush* of the multitude.

{d} "violence" Ps 55:9 Hab 1:3

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *Away with him*! That is, to death. Comp. Lu 23:18.

{e} "Away" Lu 23:18 Joh 19:15 {+} "him" "Destroy him"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *May I speak unto thee*? May I have the privilege of making my defence before thee; or of stating the case truly, the cause of my accusation, of this tumult, etc.

Canst thou speak Greek? Implying that if he could, he might be permitted to speak to him. The Greek language was that which was then almost universally spoken, and it is not improbable that it was the native tongue of the chief captain. It is evident that he was not a Roman by birth, for he says, Ac 22:28 that he had obtained the privilege of citizenship by paying a great sum. The language which the Jews spoke was the Syro-Chaldaic; and as he took Paul to be an Egyptian Jew, Ac 21:38, he supposed, from that circumstance also, that he was not able to speak the Greek language.

{*} "chief captain" "Commander"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *Art not thou that Egyptian*. That Egyptian was probably a Jew, who resided in Egypt. Josephus has given an account of this Egyptian, which strikingly accords with the statement here recorded by Luke. See Josephus' Antiq. b. xx. chap. viii. § 6, and Jewish War, b. ii. chap. xiii. § 5. The account which he gives is, that this Egyptian, whose name he does not mention, came from Egypt to Jerusalem, and said that he was a prophet, and advised the multitude of the common people to go with him to the Mount of Olives. He said further, that he would show them from thence how the walls of Jerusalem would fall down; and he promised them that he would procure for them an entrance through those walls when they were fallen down. Josephus adds, (Jewish War,) that he got together thirty thousand men that were deluded by him, "these he led round about from the wilderness to the mount, which was called the Mount of Olives, and was ready to break into Jerusalem by force from that place." But Felix, who was apprized of his movements, marched against him with the Roman soldiers, and discomfited him, and slew four hundred of them, and took two hundred alive. "But the Egyptian escaped himself out of the fight, but did not appear any more." It was natural that the Roman tribune should suppose that Paul was this Egyptian, and that his return had produced this commotion and excitement among the people.

Madest an uproar. Producing a sedition, or a *rising* among the people. Greek, "That Egyptian, who before these days having risen up."

Into the wilderness. This corresponds remarkably with the account of Josephus. He indeed mentions that he led them to the Mount of Olives, but he expressly says that "he led them round about from the wilderness." This wilderness was the wild and uncultivated mountainous tract of country lying to the east of Jerusalem, and between it and the river Jordan. **See Barnes "Mt 3:1"**.

It is also another striking coincidence showing the truth of the narrative, that neither Josephus nor Luke mention the name of this Egyptian, though he was so prominent and acted so distinguished a part.

Four thousand men. There is here a remarkable discrepancy between the chief captain and Josephus. The latter says that there were thirty thousand men. In regard to this the following remarks may be made.

(1.) This cannot be alleged to convict Luke of a false statement, for his record is, that *the chief captain* made this statement, and it cannot be proved that Luke has put into his mouth words which he did not utter. All that he is responsible for is a correct *report* of what the Roman tribune said, not for the truth or falsehood of his statement. It is certainly *possible* that that might have been the common estimate of the number then, and that the account given by Josephus might have been made from more correct information. Or it is possible, certainly, that the statement by Josephus is incorrect.

(2.) If Luke *were* to be held responsible for the statement of the number, yet it remains to be shown that he is not as correct a historian as Josephus. Why should Josephus be esteemed infallible, and Luke false? Why should the accuracy of Luke be tested by Josephus, rather than the accuracy of Josephus by Luke? Infidels usually *assume* that Josephus and other profane historians are infallible, and then endeavour to convict the sacred writers of falsehood.

(3.) The narrative of Luke is the more probable of the two. It is more probable that the number was only four thousand, than it was thirty thousand. For Josephus says, that four hundred were killed, and two hundred taken prisoners; and that thus they were dispersed. Now, it is scarcely credible, that an army of thirty thousand desperadoes and cut-throats would be dispersed by so small a slaughter and captivity. But if the number was originally but four thousand, it is entirely credible that the loss of six hundred would discourage and dissipate the remainder.

(4.) It is possible that the chief captain refers only to the *organized Sicarii*, or murderers that the Egyptian led with him, and Josephus to the *multitude* that afterwards joined them, the rabble of the discontented and disorderly that joined them on their march. Or,

(5.) there may have been an error in transcribing Josephus. It has been supposed that he originally wrote four thousand, but that ancient copyists, mistaking the *d*, delta, *four*, for *l*, lambda, thirty, wrote thirty thousand, instead of four thousand. Whichever of these solutions be adopted is not material.

Which were murderers. *sikariwn*. *Sicara*. This is originally a Latin word, and is derived from Sica, a short sword, or sabre, or crooked knife, which could be easily concealed under the garment. Hence it came to denote assassins, and to be applied to banditti, or robbers. It does not mean that they *had* actually committed murder, but that they were desperadoes and banditti, and were drawn together for purposes of plunder and of blood. This class of people was exceedingly numerous in the wilderness of Judea. **See Barnes "Lu 10:30"**.

{1} "that Egyptian" "This Egyptian arose A.D. 55" Ac 5:36 {++} "before these days" "Formerly" {&} "uproar" "A disturbance" {|} "murderers" "Assassins"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *A Jew of Tarsus*. A Jew by birth. **See Barnes "Ac 9:11"**.

Of no mean city. Not obscure, or undistinguished. He could claim an honourable birth, so far as the place of his nativity was concerned. **See Barnes "Ac 9:11"**.

Tarsus was much celebrated fro its learning, and was at one time the rival of Alexandria and Athens. Xenophon calls it *a great and flourishing city*. Anabasis. Josephus (Antiq. b. i. chap vi & 6) says that *it was the metropolis and most renowned city among them*. [the *Cilicians*.]

{f} "Paul said" Ac 9:11 22:3 {g} "a citizen" Ac 22:25

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 21 - Verse 40

Verse 40. *License*. Liberty; permission.

On the stairs. **See Barnes "Ac 21:35".**

Beckoned with the hand. Waving the hand as a sign that he was about to address them, and to produce silence and attention. See Ac 12:17.

In the Hebrew tongue. The language which was spoken by the Jews, which was then a mixture of the Chaldee and Syriac, called *Syro-Chaldaic*. This language he doubtless used on this occasion in preference to the Greek, because it was understood better by the multitude, and would tend to conciliate them if they heard him address them in their own language. The following chapter should have been connected with this. The division here is unnatural.

{*} "license" "permission" {a} "beckoned" Ac 12:17

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 22

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 22 - Verse 1

Chapter 22

Verse 1. *Men, brethren, and fathers*. This defence was addressed to the Jews; and Paul commenced it with an expression of sincere respect for them. Stephen began his defence with the same form of address. **See Barnes "Ac 7:2".**

My defence. Against the charges brought against me. Those charges were, that he had endeavoured to prejudice men everywhere against the Jews, and the law, and the temple, Ac 21:28. In order to meet this charge, Paul stated,

(1.) that he had been born a Jew, and had enjoyed all the advantages of a Jewish education, Ac 22:3;

(2.) he recounted the circumstances of his conversion, and the reason why he believed that he was called to preach the gospel, Ac 22:4-16;

(3.) he proceeded to state the reasons why he went among the Gentiles, and evidently designed to vindicate his conduct there, Ac 22:17-21; but at this point, at the name *Gentiles*, his defence was interrupted by the enraged multitude, and he was not permitted to proceed. What would have been his defence, therefore, had he been suffered to finish it, it is impossible to know with certainty. On another occasion, however, he was permitted to make a *similar* defence, and perhaps to complete the train of thought which he had purposed to pursue here. See Ac 26.

{b} "Men" Ac 7:2 {c} "defence" 1Pe 3:15

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 22 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *The Hebrew tongue*. **See Barnes "Ac 21:40"**.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 22 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Born in Tarsus*. **See Barnes "Ac 21:39"**.

Brought up in this city. In Jerusalem, sent there for the advantage of more perfect instruction in the law.

At the feet of Gamaliel. As a scholar, or disciple of Gamaliel. The phrase, *to sit at the feet of one*, is expressive of the condition of a disciple or learner. Comp. De 33:3 Lu 10:39. It is probable that the expression arose from the fact that the learners occupied a lower place or seat than the teacher. The phrase is expressive of humility and a lower condition. On the character and rank of Gamaliel, **See Barnes "Ac 5:34"**.

Paul mentions his having been instructed in this manner, in order to show that he was entitled to the full privilege of the Jew, and that he had had every opportunity to become fully acquainted with the nature of the law.

According to the perfect manner. *kata akribeian*. By strict diligence, or exact care; or in the utmost rigour and severity of that instruction. No pains were spared to make him understand and practise the law of Moses.

The law of the fathers. The law of our fathers; i.e., the law which they received and handed down to us. Paul was a Pharisee; and the law in which he had been taught was not only the written law of Moses, but the traditional law which had been handed down from former times. **See Barnes "Mt 3:6"**.

And was zealous towards God. Ga 1:14. He had a constant burning zeal for God and his law, which was expressed not only by scrupulous adherence to its forms, but by persecuting all who opposed it, Ac 22:4,5.

{d} "I am" Ac 21:39 2Co 11:22; Php 3:5

{+} "verily" "Indeed" {e} "Gamaliel" Ac 5:34 {f} "according" Ac 26:5 {++} "perfect manner" "exactness" {g} "zealous" Ga 1:14 {h} "ye all" Ac 21:20

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 22 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And I persecuted*, Ac 8:3.

This way. Those who were of this mode of worshipping God; that is, Christians. **See Barnes "Ac 9:2"**.

Unto the death. Intending to put them to death, He did not probably put any to death himself, but he committed them to prison, he sought their lives, he was the agent employed in arresting them; and when they were put to death, he tells us that he gave his voice against them, Ac 26:10; that is, he joined in and approved of their condemnation.

Delivering into prisons, etc. Ac 8:3
{i} "persecuted" Ac 8:3 {&} "way" "Doctrine"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 22 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *As also the High Priest*, etc. **See Barnes "Ac 9:2"**.

All the estate of the elders. Greek, All the presbytery; that is, the whole body of the sanhedrim, or great council of the nation.

Unto the brethren. The *Jewish* brethren, who were at Damascus. Paul here speaks as a Jew, and regards his countrymen as his brethren.

{|} "doth" "Can" {&} "estate of the elders" "Body" {k} "Damascus" Ac 9:2

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 22 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *As I made my journey*. As I was on my journey.

About noon. Ac 26:13. "At mid-day." This circumstance is omitted by Luke in account in Ac 9. Paul mentions it, as being the more remarkable since it occurred at mid-day, to show that he was not deluded by any meteoric or natural appearances, which usually occur at night.

See Barnes "Ac 9:3"
and Ac 9:4-7
{**} "journey" "journeyed"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 22 - Verse 7

Verse 7. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes "Ac 9:3"
and Ac 9:4-7

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 22 - Verse 8

Verse 8. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes "Ac 9:3"
and Ac 9:4-7.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 22 - Verse 9

Verse 9. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes "Ac 9:3, and Ac 9:4-7.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 22 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes "Ac 9:3, Ac 9:4-7.
{++} "of all things" "concerning"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 22 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *The gory of that light*. The splendour, the intense brillancy of the light. See this and its effect explained **See Barnes "Ac 9:8"**.
{+++} "the glory" "because of"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 22 - Verse 12

Verse 12. **See Barnes "Ac 9:17"**; **See Barnes** "Ac 9:18"

{m} "Aninias" Ac 10:22 {n} "good report" Ac 10:22 1Ti 3:7; Heb 11:2

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 22 - Verse 13

Verse 13. **See Barnes "Ac 9:17"**; **See Barnes** "Ac 9:18".

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 22 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Shouldest know his will*. His will in the plan of salvation, and in regard to your future life.
And see that Just One. The Messiah. **See Barnes "Ac 3:14"**.

As Paul was to be an apostle. and as it was the peculiar office of an apostle to bear witness to the person and deeds of the Lord Jesus, **See Barnes "Ac 1:21"**; **See Barnes** "Ac 1:22, it was necessary that he should *see* him, that thus he might be a competent witness of the resurrection.

Shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. Shouldest hear and obey his commands.

{a} "see" Ac 21:18 1Co 9:1, 15:8

{b} "Just One" Ac 3:14 7:52 {c} "voice" 1Co 11:23 Ga 1:12

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 22 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *For thou shalt be his witness*, etc. As an *apostle* to testify to all men that the Messiah has come, that he has died, that he has risen, and that he is the Saviour of the world.

Of what thou hast seen and heard. Of the remarkable proof which has been furnished you of the Divine mission and character of the Lord Jesus.

{d} "thou shalt" Ac 23:11 16:16

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 22 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *And now, why tarriest thou*? Why dost thou delay, or wait any longer? These words are not recorded by Luke in Ac 9, where he has given an account of the conversion of Paul; but there is nothing here contradictory to his statement.

And wash away thy sins. Receive baptism, as an act expressive of the washing away of sins. It cannot be intended that the external rite of baptism was sufficient to make the soul pure, but that it was an ordinance divinely appointed as *expressive* of the washing away of sins, or of purifying the heart. Comp. Heb 10:22. Sinners are represented in the Scriptures as *defiled* or *polluted* by sin. To wash away the sins denotes the purifying of the soul from this polluted influence, 1Co 6:11 Re 1:5, 7:14 Isa 1:16; Ps 51:2,7.

Calling on the name of the Lord. For pardon and sanctification. Ro 10:13, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." It was proper that this calling on the name of the Lord should be connected with the ordinance of baptism. That ordinance was expressive of a purifying which the Lord only could produce. It is proper that the rite of baptism should be attended with extraordinary prayer; and that he who is to be baptized should make it the occasion of peculiar and very solemn religious exercises. The external rite will avail nothing without the pardoning mercy of God.

{*} "tarriest" "delayest" {e} "wash away" Heb 10:22 1Pe 3:21 {f} "calling" Ro 10:13 1Co 1:2

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 22 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *When I was come again to Jerusalem*. That is, three years after his conversion. See Ga 1:17,18.

While I prayed in the temple. Paul, like the other converts to Christianity from among the Jews, would naturally continue to offer his devotions in the temple. We meet with repeated instances of their continuing to comply with the customs of the Jewish people.

I was in a trance. Greek, Ecstasy. **See Barnes "Ac 10:10"**.

Perhaps he here refers to what he elsewhere mentions, 2Co 12:1-5, which he calls "visions and revelations of the Lord." In that place he mentions his being "caught up to the third heaven," 2Co 12:2, and "into paradise," where he heard words which it was "not possible for a man to utter," 2Co 12:4. It is not certain, however, that he refers in this place to that remarkable occurrence. The narrative would rather imply that the Lord Jesus appeared to him in the temple in a remarkable manner, in a vision, and gave him a direct command to go to the Gentiles. Paul had now stated the evidence of his conversion, which appears to have been satisfactory to them: at least they made no objection to his statement; he had shown by his being in the temple his respect for their institutions; and he now proceeds to show that in his other conduct he had been directed by the same high authority by which he had been called into the ministry, and that the command had been given to him in their own temple and in their own city.

{g} "in a trance" 2Co 12:2

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 22 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *And saw him*. Evidently the Lord Jesus, Ac 22:14. He had received his commission from him, and he now received a distinct command to go to the Gentiles.

For they will not receive. The inhabitants of Jerusalem, probably including both Jews and Christians. The *Jews* would not listen to him, because he had become, in their view, an apostate, and they would hate and persecute him. The *Christians* would not be likely to receive him, for they would remember his former persecutions, and would be suspicious of him, because he had been so long in Arabia, and had not sooner connected himself with them. **See Barnes** "Ac 9:26, "And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple."

{h} "saw him" Ac 7:58

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 22 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *And I said, Lord*. This shows that it was the Lord Jesus, whom Paul saw in a trance in the temple. The term *Lord* is usually applied to him in the Acts. **See Barnes "Ac 1:24"**.

They know. Christians know; and they will therefore be not likely to receive to their fellowship their former enemy and persecutor.

Beat in every synagogue. Beating, or scourging, was often done in the synagogue. **See Barnes "Mt 10:17"**.

Comp. Ac 26:11. It was customary for those who were converted to Christianity still to meet with the Jews in their synagogues, and to join with them in their worship.

{i} "they know" Ac 22:4

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 22 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *The blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed*. Ac 7:58; Ac 8:1.

I also was standing by. Ac 7:58.

And consenting unto his death. Ac 8:1.

And kept the raiment. The outer robes or garments which were usually laid aside, when they engaged in running or labour. Ac 7:58. All this showed, that though Paul was not engaged in stoning Stephen, yet he was with them in spirit, and fully accorded with what they did. These circumstances are mentioned here by him, as *reasons* why he knew that he would not be received by Christians as one of their number, and why it was necessary, therefore, for him to turn to the Gentile world.

{+} "martyr" "witness" {k} "I also" Ac 7:58 {l} "consenting" Ac 8:1 {++} "raiment" "mantles" {&} "slew" "killed"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 22 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *And he said unto me, Depart*. Because the Christians at Jerusalem would not receive him.

Far hence. Paul travelled far in the heathen nations. A large part of his time in the ministry was spent in remote countries, and in the most distant regions then known. Ro 15:19.

{m} "I will" Ac 13:2,47; Ro 1:5 11:13, 15:16 Ga 2:7,8 Eph 3:7,8

1Ti 2:7

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 22 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *And they gave him audience*. They heard him patiently.

Unto this word. The word *Gentiles*.

Away with such a fellow. Greek, Take such a man from the earth; i.e., put him to death. It is language of strong indignation and abhorrence. The reasons of their indignation were not that they supposed that the Gentiles could not be brought into covenant with God, for they would themselves compass sea and land to make one proselyte; but they were,

(1.) that they believed that Paul taught that they might be saved without conforming to the law of Moses; and,

(2.) his speech implied that the Jews were more hardened than the Gentiles, and that he had a greater prospect of success in bringing them to God than he had in regard to the Jews.

{%} "lifted up" "raised" {n} "it is not fit" Ac 25:24

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 22 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Cast off their clothes*. Their outer garments. Probably they did it now intending to stone him, Ac 7:58.

And threw dust into the air. As expressive of their abhorrence and indignation. This was a striking exhibition of rage and vindictive malice. Paul was guarded by Roman soldiers, so that they could not injure him; and their only way of expressing their wrath was by menaces and threats, and by these tokens of furious indignation. Thus Shimei expressed his indignation against David by cursing him, and throwing stones at him, and casting dust, 2Sa 16:13.

{++} "clothes" "mantles"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 22 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *The castle*. The tower of Antonia. He would be there removed entirely from the wrath of the Jews.

Should be examined. *anetazesyai*. The word *examine* with us commonly means to inquire, to question, to search for, or to look carefully into a subject. The word here used is commonly applied to *metals*, whose nature is tested or *examined* by fire; and then it means to subject to torture or torments, in order to extort a confession, where persons were accused of crime. It was often resorted to among the ancients. The usual mode has been by the *rack*; but various kinds of torments have been invented in order to extort confessions of guilt from those who were accused. The whole practice has been one of the most flagrant violations of justice, and one of the foulest blots on human nature. In this case, the tribune saw that Paul was accused violently by the Jews; he was ignorant of the Hebrew language, and had not probably understood the address of Paul; he supposed from the extraordinary excitement that Paul must have been guilty of some flagrant offence, and he therefore resolved to subject him to torture, to extort from him a confession.

By scourging. By the scourge or whip. Comp. Heb 11:36. This was one mode of torture, in order to extort a secret from those who were accused. {**} "chief captain" "Commander"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 22 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Bound him with thongs*. With cords, preparatory to scourging.

Is it lawful, etc. It was directly contrary to the Roman law, to bind and scourge a Roman citizen. **See Barnes "Ac 16:36".**

{a} "Roman" Ac 16:37 25:16

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 22 - Verse 26

Verse 26. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 22 - Verse 27

Verse 27. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 22 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *With a great sum obtained I this freedom*. This freedom, or privilege of Roman citizenship. From this, it would seem that the privilege of being a Roman citizen might be purchased. Perhaps he refers, however, to the expenses which were necessarily attendant in passing through the proper *forms* of becoming a Roman citizen. The argument of the tribune in this case is this:—"I obtained this privilege at a great price. Whence did you, Paul, thus poor and persecuted, obtain the means of becoming a Roman citizen?". Paul had informed him that he was a native of Tarsus, Ac 21:39; and the chief captain supposed that that was not a free city, and that Paul could not have derived the privilege of citizenship from his birth.

But I was free born. I was born a Roman citizen, or I am such in virtue of my birth. Various opinions have been formed on the question, in what way or for what reasons Paul was entitled to the privilege of a Roman citizen. Some have supposed that Tarsus was a Roman colony, and that he thus became a Roman citizen. But of this there does not appear to be sufficient proof. Pliny says, (5, 27,) that it was a *free city*. The city of Tarsus was endowed with the privileges of a free city by Augustus Caesar, after it had been greatly afflicted and oppressed by wars.—Appian. Dio Chrysost says to the people of Tarsus, "He (Augustus) has conferred on you everything which any one could bestow on his friends and companions—a country, (i.e. a free country,) laws, honour, authority over the river (Cydranus,) and the neighbouring sea." Free cities were permitted in the Roman empire to use their own laws and customs, to have their own magistrates, and they were free from being subject to Roman guards. They were required only to acknowledge the supremacy and authority of the Roman people, and to aid them in their wars. Such a city was Tarsus; and having been born there, Paul was entitled to these privileges of a free man. Many critics have supposed that this privilege of Roman citizenship had been conferred on some of the ancestors of Paul, in consequence of some distinguished military service. Such a conferring of the rights of citizenship was not unusual, and possibly might have occurred in this case. But there is no direct historical proof of it; and the former fact, that he was born in a free city, will amply account for his affirmation that he was free-born.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 22 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Then straightway*. Immediately. They saw that by scourging him they would have violated the Roman law, and exposed themselves to its penalty.

Which should have examined him. Who were about to torture him by scourging him, Ac 22:24.

Because he had bound him. Preparatory to scourging him. The act of *binding* a Roman citizen, with such an intent, untried and uncondemned, was unlawful. Prisoners who were to be scourged were usually bound by the Romans to a pillar or post; and a similar custom prevailed among the Jews. That it was unlawful to bind a man, with this intent, who was uncondemned, appears from an express declaration in Cicero, (against Vetres.) "It is a heinous sin to *bind* a Roman citizen; it is wickedness to beat him; it is next to parricide to kill him; and what shall I say to crucify him?"

{+} "straightway" "immediately" {1} "examined"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 22 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *On the morrow*. After he had arrested Paul. Paul was still a prisoner; and if suffered to go at liberty among the Jews, his life would have been in danger.

And commanded the chief priests, etc. Summoned a meeting of the sanhedrim, or great council of the nation. He did this, as he was prevented from scourging Paul, in order to know what he had done, and that he might learn from the Jews themselves the nature of the charge against him. This was necessary for the safety of Paul, and for the ends of justice. This should have been done without any attempt to torture him in order to extort a confession.

And brought Paul down. From the elevated castle or tower of Antonia. The council assembled commonly in the house of the high priest.

And set him before them. He brought the prisoner to their bar, that they might have an opportunity to accuse him, and that thus the chief captain might learn the real nature of the charge against him.

{b} "because he would" Ac 23:28 {++} "bands" "chain" {&} "appear" "Assemble"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 23

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 23 - Verse 1

CHAPTER 23

Verse 1. *And Paul, earnestly beholding*. *atenisav*. Fixing his eyes intently on the council. The word denotes a fixed and earnest gazing; a close observation. See Lu 4:20. **See Barnes "Ac 3:4"**.

Paul would naturally look with a keen and attentive observation on the council. He was arraigned before them, and he would naturally observe the appearance, and endeavour to ascertain the character of his judges. Besides, it was by this council that he had been formerly commissioned to persecute the Christians, Ac 9:1,2. He had not seen them since that commission was given, he would naturally, therefore, regard them with an attentive eye. The result shows, also, that Paul looked at them to see what was the character of the men there assembled, and what was the proportion of Pharisees and Sadducees, Ac 23:6.

The council. Greek, The sanhedrim, Ac 22:30. It was the great council composed of seventy elders, to whom was entrusted the affairs of the nation. **See Barnes "Mt 2:4"**.

Men and brethren. Greek, "Men, brethren;" the usual form of beginning an address among the Jews. See Ac 2:29. Hie addressed them still as his *brethren*.

I have lived in all good conscience. I have conducted myself so as to maintain a good conscience. I have done what I believed to be right. This was a bold declaration, after the tumult, and charges, and accusations of the previous day, Ac 22; and yet it was strictly true. His persecutions of the Christians had been conducted *conscientiously*. Ac 26:9, "I verily thought with myself," says he, "that I *ought* to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." Of his conscientiousness and fidelity in *their* service, they could bear witness. Of his conscientiousness *since*, he could make a similar declaration. And he, doubtless, meant to say, that as he had been conscientious in persecution, so he had been in his conversion, and in his subsequent course. And as they *knew* that his former life had been with a good conscience, they ought to *presume* that he had maintained the same character still. This was a remarkably bold appeal to be made by an accused man, and it shows the strong consciousness which Paul had of his innocence. What would have been the drift of Paul's discourse in proving this, we can only conjecture. He was interrupted, Ac 23:2; but there can be no doubt that he would have pursued such a course of argument as should tend to establish his innocence.

Before God. Greek, To God. *tw yew*. He had lived *to* God, or with reference to his commands, so as to keep a conscience pure in his sight. The same principle of conduct he states more at length in Ac 4:16: "And herein do I excuse myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men."

Until this day. Including the time *before* his conversion to Christianity, and after. In both conditions he was conscientious; in one, conscientious in persecution and error, though he deemed it to be right; in the other, conscientious in the truth. The mere fact that a man is conscientious does not prove that he is right, or innocent. **See Barnes "Joh 16:2"**.

{c} "I have lived" Ac 24:16 2Co 1:12; Heb 13:18

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 23 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And the High Priest Ananias*. This Ananias was, doubtless, the son of Nebedinus, (Jos. Ant. xx. chap. v. § 3,) who was high priest when Quadratus, who preceded Felix, was president of Syria. He was sent bound to Rome by Quadratus, at the same time with Ananias, the prefect of the temple, that they might give an account of their conduct to Claudius Caesar. Josephus, Ant. b. xx. chap. vi. & 2. But in consequence of the intercession of Agrippa the Younger, they were dismissed, and returned to Jerusalem. Ananias, however, was not restored to the office of high priest; for, when Felix was governor of Judea, this office was filled by Jonathan, who succeeded Ananias. Josephus, Ant. b. xx. chap. x. Jonathan was slain in the temple itself, by the instigation of Felix, by assassins who had been hired for the purpose. This murder is thus described by Josephus, (Ant. b. xx. chap. viii. § 5 :)

"Felix bore an ill-will to Jonathan, the high priest, because he
frequently gave him admonitions about governing the Jewish

affairs better than he did, lest complaints should be made
against him, since he had procured of Caesar the appointment
of Felix as procurator of Judea. Accordingly, Felix contrived
a method by which he might get rid of Jonathan, whose
admonitions had become troublesome to him. Felix persuaded one
of Jonathan's most faithful friends, of the name Doras,
to bring the robbers upon him, and to put him to death."

This was done in Jerusalem. The robbers came into the city as if to worship God, and with daggers, which they had concealed under their garments, they put him to death. After the death of Jonathan, the office of high priest remained vacant, until king Agrippa appointed Ismael, the son of Fabi, to the office. Josephus, Ant. b. xx. chap. viii. § 8. It was during this interval, while the office of high priest was vacant, that the events which are here recorded took place. Ananias was then at Jerusalem; and as the office of high priest was vacant, and as he was the last person who had borne the office, it was natural that he should discharge, probably by common consent, its duties, so far at least as to preside in the sanhedrim. Of these facts Paul would be doubtless apprized; and hence what he said Ac 23:5 was strictly true, and is one of the evidences that Luke's history accords precisely with the peculiar circumstances which then existed. When Luke here calls Ananias "the high priest," he evidently intends not to affirm that he was actually such; but to use the word as the Jews did, as applicable to one who had been ill that office, and who, on that occasion, when the office was vacant, performed its duties.

To smite him on the mouth. To stop him from speaking; to express their indignation at what he had said. The anger of Ananias was excited, because Paul affirmed that all that he had done had been with a good conscience. Their feelings had been excited to the utmost; they regarded him as certainly guilty; they deemed him to be an apostate; and they could not bear it that he, with such coolness and firmness, declared that *all* his conduct had been under the direction of a good conscience. The injustice of the command of Ananias is apparent to all. A similar instance of violence occurred on the trial of the Saviour, Joh 18:22.

{a} "smite him on the mouth" Joh 18:22

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 23 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *God shall smite thee*. God shall punish thee. God is just; and he will not suffer such a manifest violation of all the laws of a fair trial to pass unavenged. This was a remarkably bold and fearless declaration. Paul was surrounded by enemies. They were seeking his life; and he must have known that such declarations would have only excited their wrath, and made them more thirsty for his blood. That he could thus address the president of the council was not only strongly characteristic of the man, but was also a strong proof that he was conscious of innocence, and that justice was on his side. This expression of Paul, "God shall smite thee," is not to be regarded in the light of an *imprecation*, or as an expression of angry feeling, but of a *prediction*, or of a strong conviction on the mind of Paul, that a man so hypocritical and unjust as Ananias was, could not escape the vengeance of God. Ananias was slain, with Hezekiah his brother, during the agitation that occurred in Jerusalem, when the robbers, or *Sicarii*, under their leader Manahem, had taken possession of

the city. He attempted to conceal himself in an aqueduct, but was drawn forth and killed. See Josephus, Jewish Wars, b. ii. chap. xvii. 8. Thus Paul's prediction was fulfilled.

Thou whited wall. This is evidently a proverbial expression, meaning *thou hypocrite*. His hypocrisy consisted in his pretending to sit there to do justice; and yet, in commanding the accused to be smitten in direct violation of the law, he thus showed that his character was not what, by his sitting there, he professed it to be, but that of one determined to carry the purposes of his party, and of his own feelings. Our Saviour used a similar expression, to describe the hypocritical character of the Pharisees, Mt 23:27, when he compares them to whited sepulchres. A whited wall is a wall or enclosure that is covered with lime or gypsum, and that thus appears to be different from what it is, and thus aptly describes the hypocrite. Seneca (de Providentia, chap. 6) uses a similar figure to describe hypocrites: "They are sordid, base, and like their walls adorned only externally." See also Seneca, Epis. 115.

For sittest thou, etc. The law required that justice should be done; and in order to that, it gave every man an opportunity of defending himself. **See Barnes "Joh 7:51"**; **See Barnes** "Pr 18:13"; **See Barnes** "Le 19:15, **See Barnes** "Ex 23:1, **See Barnes** "De 19:15, **See Barnes "De 19:18"**.

To judge me after the law. As a judge, to hear and decide the case according to the rules of the law of Moses.

Contrary to the law. In violation of the law of Moses, Le 19:35, "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment."

{*} "shall smite" "will" {b} "contrary" Le 19:35 De 25:1,2 Joh 7:51

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 23 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Revilest thou*, etc. Dost thou reproach or abuse the high priest of God? It is remarkable that they who knew that he was *not* the high priest should have offered this language. He was, however, in the place of the high priest, and they might have pretended that respect was due to the office.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 23 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Then said Paul, I wist not*. I knew not; I was ignorant of the fact, that he was high priest. Interpreters have been greatly divided on the meaning of this expression. Some have supposed that Paul said it in *irony*; as if he had said, "Pardon me, brethren, I did not consider that this was the high priest. It did not occur to me, that a man who could conduct thus could be God's high priest." Others have thought (as Grotius) that Paul used these words for the purpose of mitigating their wrath, and as an acknowledgment that he had spoken hastily, and that it was contrary to his usual habit, which was not to speak evil of the ruler of the people. As if he had said, "I acknowledge my error and my haste. I did not *consider* that I was addressing him whom God had commanded me to respect." But this interpretation is not probable, for Paul evidently did not intend to retract what he had said. Dr. Doddridge renders it, "I was not aware, brethren, that it was the high priest,"

and regards it as all apology for having spoken in haste. But the obvious reply to this interpretation is, that if Ananias was the high priest, Paul could not but be aware of it. Of so material a point, it is hardly possible that he could be ignorant. Others suppose, that as Paul had been long absent from Jerusalem, and had not known the changes which had occurred there, he was a stranger to the person of the high priest. Others suppose that Ananias did not occupy the usual seat which was appropriated to the high priest, and that he was not clothed in the usual robes of office, and that Paul did not recognize him the high priest. But these interpretations are not probable. It is wholly improbable that, on such an occasion, the high priest, who was the presiding officer in the sanhedrim, should not be known to the accused. The true interpretation, therefore, I suppose is, that which is derived from the fact that Ananias was not then properly the high priest; that there was a vacancy in the office, and that he presided by courtesy, or in virtue of his having been formerly invested with that office. The meaning then will be, "I did not regard or acknowledge him as the high priest. I did not address him *as such*, since that is not his true character. Had he been truly the high Priest, even if he had thus been guilty of manifest injustice, I would not have used the language which I did. The *office*, if not the man, would have claimed respect. But as he is not truly and properly clothed with that office, and as he was guilty of manifest injustice, I did not believe that he was to be shielded in his injustice by the law which commands me to show respect to the proper ruler of the people." If this be the true interpretation, it shows that Luke, in this account, accords entirely with the truth of history. The character of Ananias, as given by Josephus; the facts which he has stated in regard to him, all accord with the account here given, and show that the writer of the "Acts of the Apostles" was acquainted with the history of that time, and has correctly stated it.

For it is written. Ex 22:28. Paul adduces this to show that it was his purpose to observe the law; that he would not intentionally violate it; and that, if he had known Ananias to be high priest, he would have been restrained by his regard for the law from using the language which he did.

Of the ruler of thy people. This passage had not any peculiar reference to the high priest, but it inculcated the general spirit of respect for those in office, whatever that office was. As the office of high priest was one of importance and authority, Paul declares here that he would not be guilty of showing disrespect for it, or of using reproachful language towards it. {+} "wist" "knew" {c} "written" Ex 22:28 Ec 10:20; 2Pe 2:10 Jude 1:8

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 23 - Verse 6

Verse 6. But when Paul perceived. Probably by his former acquaintance with the men who composed the council. As he had been brought up in Jerusalem, and had been before acquainted with the sanhedrim, Ac 9:2, he would have an acquaintance, doubtless, with the character of most of those present, though he had been absent from them for fourteen years, Ga 2:1.

The one part, etc. That the council was divided into two parties, Pharisees and Sadducees. This was commonly the case, though it is uncertain which had the majority. In regard to the opinions of these two sects, **See Barnes "Mt 3:7"**.

He cried out, etc. The reasons why Paul resolved to take advantage of their difference of opinion were probably,

(1.) that he saw that it was impossible to expect justice at their hands; and he, therefore, regarded it as prudent and proper to consult his safety, He saw, from the conduct of Ananias, and from the spirit manifested, Ac 23:4, that they, like the other Jews, had prejudged the case, and were driven on by blind rage and fury.

(2.) His object was to show his innocence to the chief captain. To ascertain that was the purpose for which he had been arraigned. Yet that, perhaps, could be most directly and satisfactorily shown by bringing out, as he knew he could do, the real spirit which actuated the whole council, as a spirit of party strife, contention, and persecution. Knowing, therefore, how sensitive they were on the subject of the resurrection, he seems, to have resolved to do what he would not have done had they been disposed to hear him according to the rules of justice—to abandon the direct argument for his defence, and to enlist a large part, perhaps a majority of the council, in his favour. Whatever may be thought of the propriety of this course, it cannot be denied that it was a master-stroke of policy, and that it evinced a profound knowledge of human nature.

I am a Pharisee. That is, I was of that sect among the Jews. I was born a Pharisee, and I ever continued while a Jew to be of that sect. In the main he agreed with them still. He did not mean to deny that he was a Christian, but that so far as the Pharisees differed from the Sadducees, he was in the main with the former. He agreed with *them*, not with the Sadducees, in regard to the doctrine of the resurrection, and the existence of angels and spirits.

The son of a Pharisee. What was the name of his father is not known. But the meaning is, simply, that he was entitled to all the immunities and privileges of a Pharisee. He had, from his birth, belonged to that sect, nor had he ever departed from the great cardinal doctrines which distinguished that sect—the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. Comp. Php 3:5.

Of the hope and resurrection of the dead. That is, of the hope that the dead will be raised. This is the real point of the persecution and opposition to me.

I am called in question. Gr., I am judged; that is, I am persecuted, or brought to trial. Orobio charges this upon Paul as an artful manner of declining persecution, unworthy the character of an upright and honest man. Chubb, a British Deist of the seventeenth century, charges it upon Patti as an act of gross "dissimulation, as designed to conceal the true ground of all the troubles that he had brought upon himself; and as designed to deceive and impose upon the Jews." He affirms also, that "St. Paul probably invented this pretended charge against himself, to draw over a party of the unbelieving Jews unto him." See Chubb's Posthumous Works, vol. ii. p. 238., Now, in reply to this we may observe,

(1.) that there is not the least evidence that Paul denied that he had been, or was then, a Christian. An attempt to deny this, after all that they knew of him, would have been vain; and there is not the slightest hint that he attempted it.

(2.) The doctrine of the resurrection of the dead *was* the *main* and *leading* doctrine which he had insisted on, and which had been to him the cause of much of his persecution. Ac 17:31,32 1Co 15 Ac 13:34

Ac 26:6,7,23,25.

(3.) Paul defended this by an argument which he deemed invincible, and which constituted, in fact, the principal evidence of its truth—the fact that the Lord Jesus had been raised. That fact had given demonstration to the doctrine of the Pharisees, that the dead would rise. As Paul had everywhere proclaimed the fact that Jesus had been raised up, and as this had been the occasion of his being opposed, it was true that he had been persecuted on account of that doctrine.

(4.) The real ground of the opposition which the Sadducees made to him, and of their opposition to his doctrine, was the additional zeal with which he urged this doctrine, and the additional argument which he brought far the resurrection of the dead. Perhaps the cause of the opposition of this great party among the Jews—the Sadducees—to Christianity, was the strong confirmation which the resurrection of Christ gave to the doctrine which they so much hated—the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. It thus gave a triumph to their opponents among the Pharisees; and Paul, as a leading and zealous advocate of that doctrine, would excite their special hatred.

(5.) All that Paul said, therefore, was strictly true. It was because he advocated this doctrine that he was opposed. That there were other causes of opposition to him might be true also; but still this was the main and prominent cause of the hostility.

(6.) With great propriety, therefore, he might address the Pharisees, and say, "Brethren, the great doctrine which has distinguished you from the Sadducees is at stake. The great doctrine which is at the foundation of all our hopes—the resurrection of the dead—the doctrine of our fathers, of the Scriptures, of our sect, is in danger. Of that doctrine I have been the advocate. I have never denied it. I have endeavoured to establish it, and have everywhere defended it, and have devoted myself to the work of putting it on an imperishable basis among the Jews and the Gentiles. For my zeal in that I have been opposed. I have excited the ridicule of the Gentile, and the hatred of the Sadducee. I have thus been persecuted and arraigned; and for my zeal in this, in urging the argument in defence of it, which I have deemed most irrefragable—the resurrection of the Messiah—I have been persecuted and arraigned, and now cast myself on your protection against the mad zeal of the enemies of the doctrine of our fathers. Not only, therefore, was this an act of policy and prudence in Paul, but what he affirmed was strictly true, and the effect was as he had anticipated.

{a} "a Pharisee" Ac 26:5 Php 3:5 {*} "of the hope" "concerning" {b} "the hope" Ac 24:15,21, 26:6 28:20

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 23 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *A dissension*. A dispute or difference.

And the multitude. The council. Comp. Ac 14:4. The Pharisees embraced, as he desired and expected, his side of the question, and became his advocates, in opposition to the Saducees, who were arrayed against him.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 23 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *For the Sadducees say*. They believe.

No resurrection. Of the dead. By this doctrine they also understood that there was no future state, and that the soul did not exist after death. **See Barnes "Mt 22:23"**.

Neither angel. That there are no angels. They deny the existence of good or bad angels. **See Barnes "Mt 3:7"**.

Nor spirit. Nor soul. That there was nothing but matter. They were materialists, and supposed that all the operations which we ascribe to mind, could be traced to some modification of matter. The Sadducees, says Josephus, (Jewish war, b. ii. chap. viii. &. 14,) "take away the belief of the immortal duration of the soul, and the punishments and rewards in hades." "The doctrine of the Sadducees is this," says he, (Ant: b. xviii, chap. i. & 4,) "that souls die with the bodies." The opinion that the soul is material, and that there is nothing but matter in the universe, has been held by many philosophers, ancient and modern, as well as by the Sadducees.

Confess both. Acknowledge, or receive both as true; i.e., that there is a future state, and that there are spirits distinct from matter, as angels, and the disembodied souls of men. The two points in dispute were,

(1,) whether the dead would be raised and exist in a future state; and, (2,) whether mind was distinct from matter. The Sudducees denied both, and the Pharisees believed both. Their belief of the latter point was, that spirits existed in two forms—that of angels, and that of souls of men distinct from the body.

{c} "Saducees say" Mt 22:23 Mr 12:18; Lu 20:27

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 23 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *A great cry*. A great clamour and tumult.

The scribes. The learned men. They would naturally be the chief speakers.

Of the Pharisees' part. Who were Pharisees; or who belonged to that party. The scribes were not a distinct sect, but might be either Pharisees or Sadducees.

We find no evil in this man. No opinion which is contrary to the law of Moses; and no conduct in spreading the doctrine of the resurrection which we do not approve. The importance of this doctrine, in their view, was so great as to throw into the back ground all the other doctrines that Paul might hold; and provided this were propagated, they were willing, to vindicate and sustain him. A similar testimony was offered to the innocence of the Saviour by Pilate, Joh 19:6.

But if a spirit or an angel, etc. They here referred, doubtless, to what Paul had said in Ac 22:17,18. He had declared that he had gone among the Gentiles in obedience to a command which he received in a vision in the temple. As the Pharisees held to the belief of spirits and angels, and to the doctrine that the will of God was often delivered to men by their agency, they were ready now to admit that he had received such a communication, and that he had gone among the Gentiles in obedience to it, to defend their great doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. We are not to suppose that the Pharisees had become the friends of Paul, or of Christianity. The true solution of their conduct doubtless is, that they were so inflamed with hatred against the Sadducees, that they were willing to make use of *any* argument against their doctrine. As the testimony of Paul might be turned to their account, they were willing to vindicate him. It is remarkable, too, that they *perverted* the statement of Paul in order to oppose the Sadducees. Paul had stated distinctly, Ac 22:17,18,) that he had been commanded to go by the Lord, meaning the Lord Jesus. He had said nothing of "a spirit, or an angel." Yet they would unite with the Sadducees so far as to maintain that he had received no such command from the Lord Jesus. But they might easily vary his statements, and suppose that an "angel or a spirit" had spoken to him, and thus made use of his

conduct as an argument against the Sadducees. Men are not always very careful about the exact correctness of their statements, when they wish to humble a rival.

Let us not fight against God. **See Barnes "Ac 5:39"**.

These words are wanting in many MSS. and in some of the ancient versions. The Syriac reads it, "If a spirit or an angel have spoken to him, what is there in this?" i.e., what is there unusual or wrong.

{a} "no evil" Ac 25:25 26:31 {b} "spirit" Ac 22:17,18 {c} "not fight" Ac 5:39

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 23 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *A great dissension*. A great tumult, excitement, or controversy.

Into the castle. **See Barnes "Ac 21:34"**.

{*} "dissension" "disturbance" {+} "chief captain" "commander"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 23 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *The Lord stood by him*. Evidently the Lord Jesus. **See Barnes "Ac 1:24"**.

Comp. Ac 22:18. The appearance of the Lord in this case was a proof that he approved the course which Paul had taken before the sanhedrim.

Be of good cheer. It would not be remarkable if Paul, by these constant persecutions, should be somewhat dejected in mind. The issue of the whole matter was as yet doubtful. In these circumstances, it must have been peculiarly consoling to him to hear these words of encouragement from the Lord Jesus, and this assurance that the object of his desires should be granted, and that he would be permitted to bear the same witness of him in Rome. Nothing else can comfort and sustain the soul in trials, and persecutions, but evidence of the approbation of God, and the promises of his gracious aid.

Bear witness also at Rome. This had been the object of his earnest wish, Ro 1:10 15:23,24, and this promise of the Lord Jesus was fulfilled, Ac 28:30,31. The promise which was here made to Paul was not *directly* one of deliverance from the present persecution, but it *implied* that, and made it certain.

{d} "stood by him" Ps 46:1,7; Ac 18:9 27:23,24

{++} "good cheer" "courage" {&} "witness" "testify" {e} "Rome" Ac 28:30,31; Ro 1:15

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 23 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Certain of the Jews*. Some of the Jews. They were more than forty in number, Ac 23:13.

Banded together. Made an agreement, or compact. They conspired to kill him.

And bound themselves under a curse. See the margin. The Greek is, "they anathematized themselves;" i.e., they bound themselves by a solemn oath. They invoked a curse on themselves, or devoted themselves to destruction, if they did not do it. Lightfoot remarks, however, that they could be absolved from this vow by the Rabbins, if they were unable to execute it. Under various pretences they could easily be freed from such oaths, and it was common to take them; and if there was any difficulty in fulfilling them, they could easily apply to their religious teachers and be absolved.

That they would neither eat nor drink. That is, that they would do it as soon as possible. This was a common form of an oath, or curse, among the Jews. Sometimes they only vowed abstinence from particular things, as from meat or wine. But in this case, to make the oath more certain and binding, they vowed abstinence from all kinds of food and drink till they had killed him. Who these were—whether their were Sadducees or not—is not mentioned by the sacred writer. It is evident, however, that the minds of the Jews were greatly inflamed against Paul; and as they saw him in the custody of the Roman tribune, and as there was no prospect that he would punish him, they resolved to take the matter into their own hands. Michaelis conjectures that they were of the number of the *Sicarii*, or cut-throats, with which Judea then abounded. **See Barnes "Ac 21:38"**.

It is needless to remark that this was a most wicked oath. It was a deliberate purpose to commit murder; and it shows the desperate state of morals among the Jews at that time, and the infuriated malice of the people against the apostle.

{|} "Certain" "Some" {f} "Certain" Ac 23:21,30, 25:3

{1} "oath" "with an oath of execration" {g} "till" Ps 31:13

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 23 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Which had made this conspiracy*. This oath, *sunwmosian*, this agreement or compact. This large number of desperate men, bound of by so solemn an oath, would be likely to be successful; and the life Paul was therefore in peculiar danger. The manner in which they purposed to accomplish their design is stated in Ac 23:15.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 23 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *And they came*, etc. Probably by a deputation.

To the chief priests and elders. The members of the great council, or sanhedrim. It is probable that the application was made to the party of the Sadducees, as the Pharisees had shown their determination to defend Paul. They would have had no prospect of success had they attacked the castle; and they therefore devised this ingenious mode of obtaining access to Paul, where they might easily despatch him.

Under a great curse. Greek, "We have anathematized ourselves with an anathema." We have made the vow as solemn as possible.

{h} "Chief Priests" Hos 4:9 {**} "slain" "killed"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 23 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Ye, with the council*. With the concurrence or request of the sanhedrim. It was only by such a request that they had any hope that the chief captain would remove Paul from the castle.

Signify to the chief captain. Send a message or request to him.

That he bring him down unto you. That he bring him from the castle to the usual place of the meeting of the sanhedrim. As this was at some distance from the castle, or tower of Antonia, where Paul was, they supposed it would be easy to waylay him, and take his life.

Tomorrow. This is wanting in the Syriac, Vulgate, and Ethiopic versions. It is, however, probably the correct reading of the text, as it would be necessary to convene the council, and make the request of the tribune, which might require the whole of one day.

As though ye would enquire, etc. This request appeared so reasonable that they did not doubt that the tribune would grant it to the council. And though it was obviously a false and wicked pretence, yet these conspirators knew the character of the persons to whom they addressed themselves so well, that they did not doubt that they would prevail On the council to make the request. Public justice must have been deeply fallen, when it was known that such an iniquitous request could be made with the certain prospect of success.

Or ever he come near. Before he comes near to the sanhedrim. The great council will thus not be suspected of being privy to the deed. We will waylay him, and murder him in the way. The plan was well laid; and nothing but the interposition of Providence could have prevented its execution.

{+} "chief captain" "Commander" {++} "perfectly" "exactly" {+++} "ever" "before" {i} "ready to kill" Ps 21:11

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 23 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Paul's sister's son*. This is all we know of the family of Paul. Nor do we know for what purpose he was at Jerusalem. It is possible that Paul might have a sister residing there; though, as Paul had been sent there formerly for his education, it seems more probable that this young man was sent there for the same purpose.

Entered into the castle. Paul had the privileges of a Roman citizen; and as no well-founded charge had been laid against him, it is probable that he was not very closely confined, and that his friends might have free access to him.

{a} "he went" 2Sa 17:17

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 23 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Called one of the centurions*. Who might at that time have had special charge of the castle, or been on guard. Paul had the most positive assurance that his life would be spared, and that he would yet see Rome; but he always understood the Divine promises and purposes as being consistent with his own efforts, and with all proper measures of prudence and diligence in securing

his own safety. He did not rest merely on the Divine promise without any effort of his own; but he took encouragement from those promises to put forth his own exertions for security and for salvation.

{b} "Paul called" Pr 22:3 Mt 10:16 {*} "chief captain" "commander"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 23 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *And prayed me*. And asked me.

{c} "prisoner" Ac 18:17 Eph 3:1, 4:1 Phm 1:9

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 23 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Took him by the hand*. As an expression of kindness and civility. He did it to draw him aside from the multitude, that he might communicate his message privately.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 23 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *And he said*, etc. In what way this young man had received intelligence of this, we can only conjecture. It is not improbable that he was a student under some one of the Jewish teachers, and that he might have learned it of him. It is not at all probable that the purpose of the forty men would be very closely kept. Indeed, it is evident that they were not themselves very anxious about concealing their oath, as they mentioned it fully to the chief priests and elders, Ac 23:14.

{d} "have agreed" Ac 23:12 {+} "perfectly" "exactly"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 23 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Looking for a promise from thee*. Waiting for you consent to bring him down to them.

{e} "yield unto them" Ex 23:2

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 23 - Verse 22

Verse 22. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 23 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *And he called unto him two centurions*, etc. Each centurion had under him one hundred men. The chief captain resolved to place Paul beyond the power of the Jews, and to protect him as became a Roman citizen.

Two hundred soldiers. These foot-soldiers were designed only to guard Paul till he was safely out of Jerusalem. The horsemen only were intended to accompany him to Caesarea. Ac 23:32.

And horsemen. These were commonly attached to foot-soldiers. In this case, however, they were designed to attend Paul to Caesarea.

And spearmen. *dexiolabouv*. This word is found nowhere else in the New Testament, and occurs in no classic writer. It properly means those who take, or apprehend by the right hand; and might be applied to those who apprehend prisoners, or to those who hold a spear or dart in the right hand for the purpose of throwing it. Some have conjectured that it should be read *dexiobolouv*, —those who cast or throw [a spear] with the right hand. So the Vulgate, the Syriac, and the Arabic understand it. They were probably those who were armed with spears or darts, and who attended on the tribune as a guard.

At the third hour of the night. At nine o'clock. This was in order that it might be done with secrecy, and to elude the band of desperadoes that had resolved to murder Paul. If it should seem that this guard was very numerous for one man, it should be remembered,

(1.) that the number of those who had conspired against him was also large; and,

(2.) that they were men accustomed to scenes of blood, of desperate characters, and who had solemnly sworn that they would take his life. In order, therefore, to deter them effectually from attacking the guard, it was made very numerous and strong, and nearly five hundred men were appointed to guard Paul as he left Jerusalem.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 23 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *And provide them beasts*. One for Paul, and one for each of his attendants. The word translated beasts—*kthnh* of a general character, and may be applied either to horses, to camels, or to asses. The latter were most commonly employed in Judea.

Unto Felix the governor. The governor of Judea. His place of residence was Caesarea, about sixty miles from Jerusalem. **See Barnes "Ac 8:40"**.

His name was Antonius Felix, and was a freedman of Antonia, the mother of the emperor Claudius. He was high in the favour of Claudius, and was made by him governor of Judea. Josephus calls him Claudius Felix. He had married three wives in succession that were of royal families, one of whom was Drusilla, afterwards mentioned in Ac 23:24, who was sister to king Agrippa. Tacitus (Hist. v. 9) says, that he governed with all the authority of a king, and the baseness and insolence of a slave. "He was an unrighteous governor, a base, mercenary, and bad man." (*Clarke*.) See his character further described **See Barnes "Ac 24:25"**.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 23 - Verse 25

Verse 25. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 23 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Unto the most excellent governor Felix*. The most honoured, etc. This was a mere title of office.

Greeting. A term of salutation in an epistle wishing health, joy, and prosperity.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 23 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *Should have been killed of them*. Was about to be killed by them. The life of Paul had been twice endangered in this manner, Ac 21:30 23:10.

With an army. With a band of soldiers, Ac 23:10.

{f} "this man" Ac 21:33 24:7 {++} "taken of the Jews" "seized by" {&} "should have been killed" "would" {|} "army" "with the soldiers"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 23 - Verse 28

Verse 28. No Barnes text on this verse.

{g} "And when"

Ac 22:30

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 23 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Questions of their law*. So he understood the whole controversy to be.

Worthy of death. By the Roman law. He had been guilty of no crime against the Roman people.

Or of bonds. Of chains, or of confinement.

{*) "accused of" "Concerning" {a} "questions" Ac 18:15 25:19 {b} "laid" Ac 26:31

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 23 - Verse 30

Verse 30. No Barnes text on this verse.

{c} "when it was told"

Ac 23:20,21
{d} "gave commandment" Ac 24:8 25:6 {+} "straightway" "immediately"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 23 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *To Antipatris*. This town was anciently called Cafar-Saba. Josephus says (Antiq. xiii. 23,) that it was about seventeen miles from Joppa. It was about twenty-six miles from Caesarea, and of course about thirty-five from Jerusalem. Herod the Great changed the name to Antipatris, in honour of his father Antipater. It was situated in a fine plain, and watered with many springs and fountains.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 23 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *They left the horsemen*. As they were then beyond the danger of the conspirators, the soldiers who had guarded them thus far returned to Jerusalem.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 23 - Verse 33

Verse 33. No Barnes text on this verse.
{e} "epistle" Ac 23:25-30

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 23 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *Of what province he was*. Greek, Of what heparchy *eparciav* he was. He knew from the letter of Lysias that he was a Roman, but he was not informed of what place or province he was. This he doubtless did in order to ascertain whether he properly belonged to his jurisdiction. Roman provinces were districts of country which were entrusted to the jurisdiction of procurators. How far the jurisdiction of Felix extended is not certainly known. It appears, however, that it included Cilicia.

Was of Cilicia. Tarsus, the birthplace of Paul, was in this province, Ac 21:39.
{f} "Cilicia" Ac 21:39

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 23 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *In Herod's judgment hall*. Greek, In the praetorium of Herod. The word here used denoted, formerly, the *tent* of the Roman praetor; and as that was the place where justice was administered, it came to be applied to halls, or courts of justice. This had been reared probably by Herod the Great as his palace, or as a place for administering justice. It is probable also that prisons, or places of security, would be attached to such places.

{g} "accusers" Ac 24:1 25:16 {h} "Herod's" Mt 27:27

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 24

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 24 - Verse 1

CHAPTER 24

Verse 1. *And after five days*. This time was occupied, doubtless, in their receiving the command to go to Caesarea, and in making the necessary arrangements. This was the twelfth day after his arrival at Jerusalem. See Ac 24:11.

Ananias the High Priest. **See Barnes "Ac 23:2"**.

Descended. Came down from Jerusalem. This was the usual language when a departure from Jerusalem was spoken of. **See Barnes "Ac 15:1"**.

With a certain orator named Tertullus. Appointed to accuse Paul. This is a Roman name, and this man was doubtless a Roman. As the Jews were, to a great extent, ignorant of the Roman customs and laws, and of their mode of administering justice, it is not improbable that they were in the habit of employing Roman lawyers to plead their causes.

Who informed the governor against Paul. Who acted as the accuser, or who managed their cause before the governor.

{i} "Ananias" Ac 23:2 25:2 {k} "who informed" Ps 11:2

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 24 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And when he was called forth*. When Paul was called forth from prison. See Ac 23:35.

We enjoy great quietness. This was said in the customary style of flatterers and orators, to conciliate his favour, and is strikingly in contrast with the more honest and straightforward introduction in the reply of Paul, Ac 24:10. Though it was said for flattery, and though Felix was in many respects an unprincipled man, yet it was true that his administration had been the means of producing much peace and order in Judea, and that he had done many things that tended to promote their welfare. In particular, he had arrested a band of robbers, with Eleazar at their head, whom he had sent to Rome to be punished, (Jos. Ant. b. xx. chap. viii.;) he had arrested the Egyptian false prophet, who had led out four thousand men into the wilderness, and who threatened the peace

of Judea, **See Barnes "Ac 21:38"**; and he had repressed a sedition which arose between the inhabitants of Caesarea and of Syria. Jos. Jewish Wars, b. ii. chap. xiii. 2.

Very worthy deeds. Acts that tended much to promote the peace and security of the people. He referred to those which have just been mentioned as having been accomplished by Felix, particularly his success in suppressing riots and seditions; and as, in the view of the Jews, the case of Paul was another instance of a similar kind, he appealed to him with the more confidence that he would suppress that also.

By thy providence. By thy foresight, skill, vigilance, prudence.

{l} "worthy deeds" Ps 12:2 {++} "providence" "prudence"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 24 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *We accept it always*. We admit that it is owing to your vigilance, and we accept your interposition to promote peace, with gratitude.

Always, and in all places. Not merely in your presence, but we always acknowledge that it is owing to your vigilance that the land is secure. "What we now do in your presence, we do also in your absence; we do not commend you merely when you are present." (Wetstein.)

Most noble Felix. This was the title of office.

With all thankfulness. In this, there was probably sincerity, for there was no doubt that the peace of Judea was owing to Felix. But at the same time that he was an energetic and vigilant governor, it was also true that he was proud, and avaricious, and cruel. Josephus charges him with injustice and cruelty in the case of Jonathan, the high priest, (Ant. b. xx. chap. viii. § 5 ;) and Tacitus, (Hist. b. v. ch. 9,) and Suetonius, (Life of Claudius, ch. 28,) concur in the charge.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 24 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Be not further tedious unto thee*. By taking up your time with an introduction, and with commendation.

{&} "tedious" "troublesome" {|} "clemency" "goodness"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 24 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *We have found this man a pestilent fellow*. *loimon*. This word is commonly applied to a plague, or pestilence; and then to a man who corrupts the morals of others, or who is turbulent, and an exciter of sedition. Our translation somewhat weakens the force of the original expression. Tertullus did not say that he was a pestilent fellow, but that he was *the very pestilence itself*. In this he referred to their belief, that he had been the cause of extensive disturbances everywhere among the Jews.

And a mover of sedition. An exciter of tumult. This they pretended he did by preaching doctrines contrary to the laws and customs of Moses, and exciting the Jews to tumult and disorder.

Throughout the world. Throughout the Roman empire, and thus leading the Jews to violate the laws, and to produce tumults, riots, and disorder.

And a ringleader. *prwtostathn*. This word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It is properly a military word, and denotes one who stands first in an army, a standard-bearer, a leader, or commander. The meaning is, that Paul had been so active, and so prominent in preaching the gospel, that he had been a leader, or the principal person, in extending the sect of the Nazarenes.

Of the sect. The original word here *airesewv* is the word from which we have derived the term *heresy*. It is, however, properly translated *sect*, or *party*, and should have been so translated in Ac 24:14. **See Barnes "Ac 5:17"**.

Of the Nazarenes. This was the name usually given to Christians by way of contempt. They were so called because Jesus was of Nazareth.

{a} "fellow" Lu 23:2 Ac 6:13, 16:20 17:6, 21:28 1Pe 2:18,19

{*} "sedition" "insurrection"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 24 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Who also hath gone about*. Who has endeavoured.

To profane the temple. This was a serious, but unfounded charge. It arose from the gross calumny of the apostle, when they pretended that he had introduced Greeks into that sacred place, Ac 21:28. To this charge the apostle replies in Ac 24:18.

And would have judged. That is, would have condemned and punished.

According to our law. Their law, which forbade the introduction of strangers into the temple.

{+} "about" "attempted" {b} "profane" Ac 19:37 21:28 {++} "took" "seized" {c} "according" Joh 18:31

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 24 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *But the chief captain*, etc. Tertullus pretends that they would have judged Paul righteously, if Lysias had not interposed; but the truth was, that, without regard to law or justice, they would have murdered him on the spot.

{d} "chief captain" Ac 21:33 {&} "chief captain" "commander"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 24 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Commanding his accusers*, Ac 23:30.

By examining of whom. That is, the Jews who were then present. Tertullus presented them as his witnesses of the truth of what he had said. It is evident that we have here only the summary or

outline of the speech which Tertullus made. It is incredible that a Roman rhetorician would have, on such an occasion, delivered an address so brief, so meager, and so destitute of display as this. But it is doubtless a correct summary of his address, and contains the leading points of the accusation. It is customary for the sacred writers, as for other writers, to give only the outline of discourses and arguments. Such a course was inevitable, unless the New Testament had been swelled to wholly undue proportions.

{e} "accusers" Ac 23:30 {|} "take knowledge" "Gain"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 24 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *And the Jews also assented*. The Jews who had accompanied Tertullus to Caesarea. They had gone as the accusers of Paul; and they bore testimony, when called upon, to the truth of all that the orator had said. Whether they were examined individually or not, is not declared. In whatever way their testimony was arrived at, they confirmed unanimously the accusation which he had brought against Paul.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 24 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Had beckoned unto him to speak*. Either by a nod or by the hand.

Hast been of many years. Felix and Cumanus had been joint-governors of Judea; but after Cumanus had been condemned for his bad administration of the affairs, the government fell entirely into the hands of Felix. This was about seven years before Paul was arraigned before him, and with might be called many years, as he had been long enough there to become acquainted the customs and habits of the Jews; and it might also be called long in comparison with the short time which any of his immediate predecessors had held the office. See Josephus, Ant. b. xx. ch. vi., vii.

A judge. This word is evidently used here in the sense of magistrate, or one appointed to administer the affairs of government. To determine litigated matters was, however, one part of his office. It is remarkable that Paul did not begin his speech as Tertullus had done, by any flattering address, or by any of the arts of rhetoric. He founded his plea on the justice of his cause, and on the fact, that Felix had had so much experience on the affairs of Judea, that he was well qualified to understand the merits of the case, and to judge impartially. Paul was well acquainted with his character, **See Barnes "Ac 24:25"**

and would not by flattering words declare that which was not strictly true.

I do the more cheerfully, etc. Since you are so well acquainted with the customs and habits of the Jews, I the more readily submit the case to your disposal. This address indicated great confidence in the justice of his cause; and was the language of a man bold, fearless, and conscious of his innocence.

{1} "governor" "Felix, made Procurator over Judea, A.D. 53" {f} "answer" 1Pe 3:15 {+} "myself" "make my defence"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 24 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Because that thou mayest understand*. Greek, "Thou being able to know." That is, he could understand or know, by taking the proper evidence. Paul does not mean to say that Felix could understand the case, *because* he had been many years a judge of that nation. That fact would qualify him to judge correctly, or to understand the customs of the Jews. But the fact that he had been but twelve days in Jerusalem, and had been orderly and peaceable there, Felix could ascertain only by the proper testimony. The first part of Paul's defence Ac 24:11-13 consists in an express denial of what they alleged against him.

Are yet but twelve days. Beza reckons these twelve days in this manner: The first was that on which he came to Jerusalem, Ac 21:15. The second he spent with James and the apostles, Ac 21:18. Six days were spent in fulfilling his vow, Ac 21:21,26. On the ninth day the tumult arose, being the seventh day of his vow, and on this day he was rescued by Lysias, Ac 21:27 22:29. The tenth day he was before the sanhedrim, Ac 22:30 23:10. On the eleventh the plot was laid to take his life; and on the same day, at evening, he was removed to Caesarea. The days on which he was confined at Caesarea are not enumerated, since his design in mentioning the number of days was to show the improbability that, in that time, he had been engaged in producing a tumult; and it would not be pretended that he had been so engaged while confined in a prison at Caesarea. The defence of Paul here is, that but twelve days occurred from the time that he went to Jerusalem, till he was put under the custody of Felix; and that during *so short a time* it was wholly improbable that he would have been able to excite sedition.

For to worship. This farther shows that the design of Paul was not to produce sedition. He had gone up for the peaceful purpose of devotion, and not to produce riot and disorder. That this was his design in going to Jerusalem, or at least a part of his purpose, is indicated by the passage in Ac 20:16. It should be observed, however, that our translation conveys an idea which is not necessarily in the Greek—that this was the *design* of his going to Jerusalem. The original is, "Since I went up to Jerusalem *worshipping*," *proskunhswn* i.e., he was actually *engaged* in devotion when the tumult arose. But his main design m going to Jerusalem, was to convey to his suffering countrymen there the benefactions of the Gentile churches. See Ac 24:17 Ro 15:25,26.

{h} "neither found me" Ac 25:8 28:17

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 24 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *And they neither found me*, etc. The first charge of Tertullus against Paul was, Ac 24:5, that he was "a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition." The charge of his being *a pest* was so general, that Paul did not think it necessary to attempt to refute it. To the specification, that he was a mover of sedition, he replies by a firm denial, and by a solemn declaration that they had not found him in any synagogue, or in the city, or in the temple, either disputing or exciting a tumult. His conduct there had been entirely peaceable; and they had no right to suppose that it had been otherwise anywhere.

{h} "neither found me" Ac 25:8 28:17

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 24 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Neither can they prove the things*, etc. That is, that I am a mover of sedition, or a disturber of the peace of the people. This appeal he boldly makes; he challenges investigation; and as they did not offer to specify any acts of disorder or tumult excited by him, this charge falls of course.

{i} "prove the things" 1Pe 3:16

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 24 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *But this I confess*, etc. The next specification in the charge of Tertullus was, Ac 24:5, that he was "a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes." To this, Paul replies in this and the two following verses. Of this reply we may observe,

(1.) that he does not stoop to notice the contempt implied in the use of the word Nazarenes. He was engaged in a more important business than to contend about the name which they chose to give to Christians.

(2.) He admits that he belonged to that sect or class of people. That he was a Christian he neither denied, nor was disposed to deny.

(3.) He maintains that in this way he is still worshipping the God of his fathers. Of this, the fact that he was engaged in worship in the temple, was sufficient proof.

(4.) He shows them that he believed only what was written in the law and the prophets; that this involved the main doctrine of their religion—the hope of the resurrection of the dead, Ac 24:15; and that it was his constant and earnest desire to keep a pure conscience in all things, Ac 24:16. These are the points of his defence to this second charge, and we shall see that they fully meet and dispose of the accusation.

After the way. After the manner or mode of worship.

Which they call heresy. This translation does not express to us the force of the original. We have attached to the word heresy an idea which is not conveyed by the Greek word, and now commonly understand by it, *error of doctrine*. In Paul's answer here, there is an explicit reference to their charge, which does not appear in our version. The charge of Tertullus was, that he was the ringleader *of the sect thv airesewv* of the Nazarenes, Ac 24:5. To this, Paul replies, "After the way which they call *sect*, (*airesin, not error of doctrine*, but after a way which they maintain is producing *division* or *schism*,) so worship I the God of my fathers." Paul was not ashamed to be called a follower of that sect or party among the Jewish people. Nor should we be ashamed to worship God in a mode that is called *heresy* or *schism*, if we do it in obedience to conscience and to God.

So worship I. I continue to worship. I have not departed from the characteristic of the Jewish people, the proper and public acknowledgment of the God of the Jews.

The God of my fathers. My fathers' God; Jehovah; the God whom my Jewish ancestors adored. There is something very touching in this, and fitted to find its way to the heart of a Jew. He had introduced no new object of worship, (comp. De 13:1-5;) he had not become a follower of a false or foreign God; and this fact was really a reply to their charge, that he was setting up a new sect in

religion. The same thing Paul affirms of himself in 2Ti 1:3: "I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with a pure conscience."

Believing all things, etc. Particularly respecting the Messiah. So he more fully explains his meaning in his speech before king Agrippa, Ac 26:23.

In the Law and in the Prophets. Commanded in the law of Moses, and foretold by the prophets. That Paul had ever disbelieved any of these things, they could not prove; and his whole course had shown that he fully credited the sacred records. Most of his arguments in defending Christianity had been drawn from the Jewish writings.

{*} "heresy" "A sect" {a} "worship" Mic 4:5 {b} "God of my fathers" 2Ti 1:3 {c} "written in the law" Lu 24:27 Ac 26:22, 28:23

{d} "in the prophets" Mt 22:40 Lu 16:16; Joh 1:45 Ac 13:15; Ro 3:21

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 24 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *And have hope toward God*. Having a hope of the resurrection of the dead, which arises from the promises of God.

Which they themselves, etc. That is, the Pharisees. Perhaps he designated in this remark the Pharisees who were present, he held nothing in this great cardinal point, which they did not also hold. For the reasons why Paul introduced this point so prominently, and the success of thus introducing it, **See Barnes "Ac 23:1, also** Ac 23:2-9.

Both the just and unjust. Of the righteous and the wicked; that is, of all the race. As *they* held this, they could not arraign him for holding it also.

{e} "hope toward God" Ac 23:6 26:6,7 28:20

{+} "allow" "admit" {f} "resurrection of the dead" Da 12:2 Joh 5:28,29 1Co 15:12-27

Re 20:6,13 {++} "unjust" "righteous and unrighteous"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 24 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *And herein*. In this, or for this purpose.

Do I exercise myself. askw. I accustom or employ myself; I make it my constant aim and endeavour. It is the purpose of my constant study. Paul often appeals to his conscientiousness as the leading habit of his life. Even before his conversion he endeavoured to act according to the dictates of conscience. See Ac 26:9. Comp. Php 3:5,6.

To have always a conscience, etc. To do that which is right, so that my conscience shall approve of it, and never reproach me.

Void of offence. *aroskopon*. That which is inoffensive, or which does not cause one to stumble or fall. lie means, that he endeavoured to keep his conscience so enlightened and pure in regard to duty, and that he acted according to its dictates in such a way, that his conduct should not be displeasing to God, or injurious to man. To have such a conscience implies two things:

(1.) That it be enlightened or properly informed in regard to truth and duty; and,

(2,) that that which is made known to be right should be honestly and faithfully performed. Without these two things, no man can have a conscience that shall be inoffensive and harmless.

Toward God. In an honest endeavour to discharge all the duties of public and private worship, and to do constantly what he requires. In believing all that he has spoken; doing all that he requires; and offering to him the service which he approves.

Toward men. In endeavouring to meet all the demands of justice and mercy; to advance their knowledge, happiness, and salvation; so that I may look back on my life with the reflection that I have done all that I *ought* to have done, and all that I could do, to promote the welfare of the whole human family. What a noble principle of conduct was this! How devoted, and how pure! How unlike the conduct of those who live to gratify debasing sensual appetites, or for gold or honour; and who pass their lives in such a manner as to offer the grossest offence to God, and to do the most injury to man! The great and noble aim of Paul was to be pure; and no slander of his enemies, no trials, persecutions, or perils, and no pains of dying, could take away the approving voice of conscience. Alike in his travels, and in his persecutions; among friends and foes; when preaching in the synagogue, the city, or the desert; or when defending himself before governors and kings, he had this testimony of a self-approving mind. Happy they who thus frame their lives. And happy will be the end of a life where this has been the grand object of the journey through this world.

{g} "have always" Ac 23:1

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 24 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Now after many years*. After many years' absence. Paul here commences a reply to the charges of Tertullus, that he had endeavoured to profane the temple, Ac 24:6. He begins by saying that his design in coming up to Jerusalem was to bring to them needed aid in a time of distress. It would be absurd to suppose, therefore, that his object in coming was to violate the customs of the temple, and to defile it.

I came to bring. See Ac 11:29,30. **See Barnes "Ro 15:25"**.

Alms. Charities; the gift of the churches.

To my nation. Not to *all* the nation; but to the poor saints or Christians who were in Judea, and who were suffering much by persecutions and trials.

And offerings. The word used here properly denotes an offering or gift of any kind; but it is usually applied to an oblation, or offering made to God in the temple—a thank-offering, a sacrifice. This is probably its meaning here. He came to bring aid *to his needy countrymen*, and *an offering to God*; and it was, therefore, no part of his purpose to interfere with, or to profane the worship of the temple.

{h} "to bring alms" Ac 11:29,30, 20:16 Ro 15:25

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 24 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Certain Jews from Asia*. Ac 21:27.

Found me purified in the temple. Ac 21:26,27. They found me engaged in the sacred service of completing the observance of my vow.

Neither with multitude. Not having introduced a multitude with me—in a quiet and peaceful manner.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 24 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Who ought to have been here*, etc. They were the proper witnesses; as they had stayed away, it showed that they were not prepared to undergo a strict examination. Paul, therefore, justly complains that the very persons who alone *could* testify against him were absent, and showed that there was really no well-founded charge against him. They alone could testify as to anything that occurred in the temple; and as *they* were not present, that charge ought to be dismissed.

{i} "here before thee" Ac 25:16 {&} "object" "accuse me" {|} "ought" "anything"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 24 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Or else*. Since they are not here to witness against me in regard to what occurred in the *temple*, let these here present bear witness against me, if they can, in regard to *any other part* of my conduct. This was a bold appeal, and it showed his full consciousness of innocence.

Let these same here *say*. The Jews who are here present. *Any evil doing*. Any improper conduct, or any violation of the law.

While I stood before the council. The sanhedrim, Ac 23:1-10. As they were present there, Paul admits that they were competent to bear witness to his conduct on that occasion; and calls upon them to testify, if they could, to any impropriety in his conduct.

{&} "evil doing" "crime"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 24 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Except it be for this one voice*. For this one expression, or decimation. This was what Paul had said before the council—the main thing on which he had insisted; and he calls on them to testify to this, and to show, if they could, that in this declaration he had been wrong. Chubb and other infidels have supposed that Paul here acknowledges that he was wrong in the declaration which he made, when he said, that he was called in question for the doctrine of the resurrection of the del (Ac 23:6,) and his conscience reproached him for appearing to be time-serving, and for concealing the true cause of offence against him; and for attempting to take advantage of their divisions of sentiment, and endeavouring to produce discord in the council. But against this interpretation we may urge the following considerations:

(1.) Paul wished to fix their attention on the main thing which he had said before the council.

(2.) It was true, as has been shown on the passage, (Ac 23:1-10), that this was the principal doctrine which Paul had been defending.

(3.) If they were prepared to witness against him for holding and teaching the resurrection of the dead as a false or evil doctrine, he called on them to do it. As this had been the only thing which they had witnessed before the council, he calls on them to testify to what they knew only, and to show, if they could, that this was wrong.

Touching the resurrection, etc. Respecting the resurrection, Ac 23:6.

{*} "one voice" "declaration" {+} "cried" "proclaimed"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 24 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Having more perfect knowledge of that way*. Our translation of this verse is very obscure, and critics are divided about the proper interpretation of the original. Many (Erasmus, Luther, Michaelis, Morus, etc.) render it, "Although he had a more perfect knowledge of the Christian doctrine than Paul's accusers had, yet he deferred the hearing of the cause till Lysias had come down." They observe, that he might have obtained this knowledge, not only from the letter of Lysias, but from public rumour, as there were doubtless Christians at Caesarea. They suppose that he deferred the cause, either with the hope of receiving a bribe from Paul, (comp. Ac 24:26,) or to gratify the Jews with his being longer detained as a prisoner. Others, among whom are Beza, Grotius, Rosenmuller, and Doddridge, suppose that it should be rendered, "He deferred them, and said, After I have been more accurately informed concerning this way, when Lysias has come down, I will hear the cause." This is doubtless the true interpretation of the passage, and it is rendered more probable by the fact that Felix sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith of Christ, (Ac 24:24,) evidently with a design to make himself better acquainted with the charges against him, and the nature of his belief.

Of that way. Of the Christian religion. This expression is repeatedly used by Luke to denote the Christian doctrine. **See Barnes "Ac 9:2"**.

He deferred them. He put them off; he postponed the decision of the case; he adjourned the trial.

When Lysias, etc. Lysias had been acquainted with the excitement and its causes, and Felix regarded him as an important witness in regard to the true nature of the charges against Paul.

I will know the uttermost, etc. I shall be fully informed and prepared to decide the cause.

{a} "Lysias" Ac 24:7 {+} "chief captain" "commander" {&} "I will know" "I will determine"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 24 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *And he commanded*, etc. It is evident from this verse, that Felix was disposed to show Paul all the favours that were consistent with his safe keeping. He esteemed him to be a persecuted man, and doubtless regarded the charges against him as entirely malicious. What was Felix's *motive* in this cannot be certainly known. It is not improbable, however, that he detained him,

(1.) to gratify the Jews by keeping him in custody as if he were guilty; and,

(2.) that he hoped the friends of Paul would give him money to release him. Perhaps it was for this purpose that he gave orders that his friends should have free access to him, that thus Paul might be furnished with the means of purchasing his freedom.

{b} "liberty" Ac 27:3 28:16

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 24 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Felix came with his wife Drusilla*. Drusilla was the daughter of Herod Agrippa the elder, and was engaged to be married to Epiphanes, the son of king Antiochus, on condition that he would embrace the Jewish religion; but as he afterwards refused to do that, the contract was broken off. Afterwards she was given in marriage, by her brother Agrippa the younger, to Azizus king of Emesa, upon his consent to be circumcised. When Felix was governor of Judea, he saw Drusilla, and fell in love with her, and sent to her Simon, one of his friends, a Jew, by birth a Cyprian, who pretended to be a magician, to endeavour to persuade her to forsake her husband, and to marry Felix. Accordingly, in order to avoid the envy of her sister Bernice, who treated her ill on account of her beauty, "she was prevailed on," says Josephus, "to transgress the laws of her forefathers, and to marry Felix." Josephus, Antiq. b. xx. chap. vii. § 1, 2. She was, therefore, living in adultery with him; and this was probably the reason why Paul dwelt in his discourse before Felix particularly on "temperance," or chastity. **See Barnes "Ac 24:25"**.

He sent for Paul, and heard him. Perhaps he did this in order to be more fully acquainted with the case which was submitted to him. It is possible, also, that it might have been to gratify his wife, who was a Jewess, and who doubtless had a desire to be acquainted with the principles of this new sect. It is certain also that one object which Felix had in this, was to let Paul see how dependent he was on him, and to induce him to purchase his liberty.

Concerning the faith in Christ. Concerning the Christian religion. Faith in Christ is often used to denote the whole of Christianity, as it is the leading and characteristic feature of the religion of the gospel.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 24 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *And as he reasoned*. Greek, "And he discoursing." *dialegomenou de autou* No argument should be drawn from the word that is used here, to prove that Paul particularly appealed to *reason*, or that his discourse was argumentative. That it was so, is indeed not improbable, from all that we know of the man, and from the topics on which he discoursed. But the word used here means simply, as he discoursed, and is applied usually to making a public address, to preaching, etc., in whatever way it is done, Ac 17:2 18:4,19 19:8,9 24:12.

Felix and Drusilla intended this as a matter of entertainment or amusement. Paul readily obeyed their summons, as it gave him an opportunity to preach the gospel to them; and as they desired his sentiments in regard to the faith in Christ, he selected those topics which were adapted to their

condition, and stated those principles of the Christian religion which were fitted to arrest their attention, and lead them to repentance. Paul seized every opportunity of making known the gospel; and whether a prisoner or at liberty, whether before princes, governors, kings, or common people, was equally prepared to defend the pure and holy doctrines of the cross. His boldness in this instance is the more remarkable, as he was dependent on Felix for his pardon. A timeserver or an impostor would have chosen such topics as would have conciliated the favour of the judge, and procured his pardon, he would have flattered his vanity, or palliated his vices. *But such an idea never seems to have occurred to Paul*. His aim was to defend the truth, and to save, if possible, the souls of Drusilla and of Felix.

Of righteousness, peri dikaiosunhv. Of justice. Not of the justice of God particularly, but of the nature and requirements of justice in the relations of life, the relations which we sustain to God and to man. This was a proper topic with which to introduce his discourse, as it was the office of Felix to dispense justice between man and man; and as his administration was not remarkable for the exercise of that virtue. It is evident that he could be influenced by a bribe, (Ac 24:26;) and it was proper for Paul to dwell on this as designed to show him the guilt of his life, and his danger of meeting the justice of a Being who cannot be bribed, but who will dispense equal justice alike to the great and the mean. That Paul dwelt also on the *justice* of God, as the moral Governor of the world, may also be presumed. The apprehension of *that* justice, and the remembrance of his own guilty life, tended to produce the alarm of Felix, and to make him tremble.

Temperance. *egkrateiav*. The word *temperance* we now use commonly to denote moderation, or restraint in regard to eating and drinking, particularly to abstinence from the use of ardent spirits. But this is not its meaning here. There is no reason to suppose that Felix was *intemperate* in the use of intoxicating liquors. The original word here denotes a restraint of all the passions and evil inclinations; and may be applied to prudence, chastity, and moderation in general. The particular thing in the life of Felix which Paul had probably in view, was the indulgence of licentious desires, or incontinence. He was living in adultery with Drusilla; and for this, Paul wished doubtless to bring him to repentance.

And judgment to come. The universal judgment; the judgment that was to come on all transgressors. On this topic Paul also dwelt when he preached before the Areopagus at Athens, Ac 17:31. These topics were admirably adapted to excite the alarm of both Felix and Drusilla. It evinced great boldness and faithfulness in Paul to select them; and the result showed that he correctly judged of the kind of truth which was adapted to alarm the fears of his guilty auditor.

Felix trembled. In view of his past sins, and in the apprehension of the judgment to come. The Greek *emfobov* does not denote that his body was agitated or shaken, but only that he was alarmed, or terrified. That such fear usually shakes the frame, we know; but it is not certain that the body of Felix was thus agitated. He was alarmed and terrified; and looked with deep apprehension to the coming judgment. This was a remarkable instance of the effect of truth on the mind of a man unaccustomed to such alarms, and unused to hear such truth. It shows the power of conscience, when thus under the preaching of *a prisoner* the judge should be thrown into violent alarm.

And answered, Go thy way, etc. How different is this answer from that of the jailer of Philippi when alarmed in a similar manner. *He asked*, "What must I do to be saved?" and was directed to Him in whom he found peace from a troubled conscience, Ac 16:30,31. Felix was troubled; but instead of asking what he should do, he sent the messenger of God away. He was evidently not prepared to break off his sins, and turn to God. He sought peace by sending away his reprover; and

manifestly intended *then* to banish the subject from his mind. Yet, like others, he did not intend to banish it altogether. He looked forward to a time when he should be more at leisure; when the cares of office should press less heavily on his attention; or when he should be more disposed to attend to it. Thus multitudes, when they are alarmed, and see their guilt and danger, resolve to defer it to a more convenient time. One man is engaged in a career of pleasure, and it is not now a convenient time to attend to his soul's salvation. Another is pressed with business; with the cares of life; with a plan of gain; with the labours of office, or of a profession, and it is not now a convenient time for him to attend to religion. Another supposes that his time of life is not the most convenient. His youth he desires to spend in pleasure, and waits for a more convenient time in middle age. His middle life he spends in business, and the toils of the world, and *this* is not a convenient time. Such a period he expects then to find in old age. But as age advances, he finds an increasing disposition to defer it; he is still indisposed to attend to it; still in love with the world. Even old age is seldom found to be a convenient time to prepare for heaven; and it is deferred from one period of life to another, till death closes the scene. It has been commonly supposed and said, that Felix never found that more convenient time to call for Paul. That he did not embrace the Christian religion, and forsake his sins, is probable, nay, almost certain. But it is not true that he did not take an opportunity of hearing Paul further on the subject; for it is said that he sent for him often, and communed with him. But though Felix found this opportunity, yet

(1) we have no reason to suppose that the main thing —the salvation of his soul— ever again occupied his attention. There is no evidence that he was again alarmed or awakened, or that he had any further solicitude on the subject of his sins. He had passed for ever the favourable time; the golden moments when he might have secured the salvation of his soul.

(2.) Others have no right to suppose that their lives will be lengthened out that they may have any further opportunity to attend to the subject of religion.

(3.) When a sinner is awakened, and sees his past sins, if he rejects the appeal to his conscience *then*, and defers it to a more convenient opportunity, he has no reason to expect that his attention will ever be again called with deep interest to the subject. He may live; but he may live without the strivings of the Holy Spirit. When a man has once deliberately rejected the offers of mercy; when he has trifled with the influences of the Spirit of God, he has no *right* or *reason* to expect that that Spirit will ever strive with him again. Such, we have too much reason to fear was the case with Felix. Though he often saw Paul again, and "communed with him," yet there is no account that he was again alarmed or awakened. And thus sinners often attend on the means of grace after they have grieved the Holy Spirit; they listen to the doctrines of the gospel, they hear its appeals and its warnings, but they have no feeling, no interest, and die in their sins.

A more convenient season. Greek, "Taking time." I will take a time for this.

I will call for thee. To hear thee further on this subject. This he did, Ac 24:26. It is remarkable that Drusilla was not alarmed. She was as much involved in guilt as Felix; but she, being a Jewess, had been accustomed to hear of a future judgment, until it caused in her mind no alarm. Perhaps also she depended on the rites and ceremonies of her religion as a sufficient expiation for her sins. She might have been resting on those false dependencies which go to free the conscience from a sense of guilt, and which thus beguile and destroy the soul.

{|} "reasoned" "discoursed" {c} "righteousness" Pr 16:12 Jer 22:15-17; Da 4:27 Joh 16:8

{@} "righteousness" "Justice" {d} "temperance" Pr 31:4,5; Da 5:1-4 Hos 7:5; 1Pe 4:4

{e} "judgment" Ps 1:3,4; Da 12:2 Mt 25:31-46; 2Co 5:10 Re 20:12

{a} "trembled" Ps 99:1 Isa 32:11; Hab 3:16 Heb 4:1,12
{b} "Go thy way" Pr 1:24-32 Mt 20:1-5, 25:1-10
{*} "call for thee" "send"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 24 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *He hoped also*. He thought that by giving him access to his friends, and by often meeting him himself, and showing kindness, Paul might be induced to attempt to purchase his freedom with a bribe.

That money should have been given him of Paul. That Paul would give him money to procure a release. This shows the character of Felix. He was desirous of procuring a bribe. Paul had proved his innocence, and should have been at once released. But Felix was influenced by avarice; and he therefore detained Paul in custody, with the hope that, wearied with confinement, he would seek his release by a bribe. But Paul offered no bribe. He knew what was justice; and he would not be guilty, therefore, of attempting to purchase what was his due, or of gratifying a man who prostituted his high office for the purpose of gain. The Roman governors in the provinces were commonly rapacious and avaricious, like Felix. They usually took the office for the purpose of its pecuniary advantage, and they consequently usually disregarded justice, and made the procuring of money their leading object.

He sent for him the oftener. It may seem remarkable that he did not fear again being alarmed. But the hope of money overcame all this. And having once resisted the reasoning of Paul, and the strivings of the Spirit of God, he seems to have had no further alarm or anxiety. He could again hear the same man, and the same truth, unaffected. When sinners have once grieved God's Spirit, they often sit with unconcern under the same truth which once alarmed them, and become entirely hardened and unconcerned.

And communed with him. And conversed with him.

{c} "money" Ex 23:8 {+} "loose him" "release" {++} "wherefore" "For which cause" {&} "communed" "conversed"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 24 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *But after two years*. Paul was unjustly detained during all this time. The hope of Felix seems to have been to weary his patience, and induce him to purchase his freedom.

Came into Felix' room. As governor.

And Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure. Desirous of pleasing them, even at the expense of justice. This shows the principle on which he acted.

Left Paul bound. Left him in custody to the charge of his successor. His object in this was to conciliate the Jews; that is, to secure their favour, and to prevent them, if possible, from accusing him for the evils of his administration before the emperor. The account which Luke gives here coincides remarkably with that which Josephus has given. He says, that Porcius Festus was sent as

successor to Felix by Nero. He does not indeed mention Paul, or say that Felix sought to conciliate the favour of the Jews; but he gives such an account as to make the statement by Luke *perfectly consistent* with his character while in office. He informs us that Felix was unpopular, and that there was reason to apprehend that the Jews would accuse him before the emperor; and, *therefore*, the statement in the Acts, that he would be willing to show the Jews a favour, is in perfect keeping with his character and circumstances, and is one of those *undesigned coincidences*, which show that the author of the Acts was fully acquainted with the circumstances of the time, and that his history is true. The account in Josephus is, that

"when Porcine Festus was sent as successor to Felix by Nero,
the principal inhabitants of Caesarea went up to Rome to accuse
Felix; and he had been certainly brought to punishment, unless
Nero had yielded to the importunate solicitations of his brother
Pallas, who was at that time had in the greatest honour by him."

Antiq. b. xx. chap. viii. & 9.

The plan of Felix, therefore, in suppressing the enmity of the Jews, and conciliating their favour by injustice to Paul, did not succeed; and is one of those instances, so numerous in the world, where a man gains nothing by wickedness. He sought money from Paul by iniquity, and failed; he sought by injustice to obtain the favour of the Jews, and failed in that also. And the inference from the whole transaction is, that "honesty is the best policy," and that man in any office should pursue a course of firm, and constant, and undeviating integrity.

{|} "room" "succeeded Felix" {&} "shew the Jews a pleasure" "Gratify the Jews" {&} "shew" Mr 15:15 Ac 25:9

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 25

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 25 - Verse 1

CHAPTER 25

Verse 1. *Now when Festus was come*. **See Barnes "Ac 24:27"**.

Into the province. The province of Judea; for Judea at that time was a Roman province.

After three days. Having remained three days at Caesarea.

He ascended. This was the usual language which described a journey to Jerusalem. Thus the English people speak of going up to London, because it is the capital. **See Barnes "Ac 15:1"**.

To Jerusalem. The governors of Judea at this time usually resided at Caesarea; but as Jerusalem had been the former capital; as it was still the seat of the religious solemnities; as the sanhedrim held its meetings there; and as the great, and rich, and learned men, and the priests resided there, it is evident that a full knowledge of the state of the province could be obtained only there. Festus therefore, having entered on the duties of his office, early went to Jerusalem to make himself acquainted with the affairs of the nation.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 25 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Then the High Priest*. The high priest at this time was Ismael, the son of Fabi. He had been promoted to that office by Agrippa. Josephus' Antiq. b. xx. ch. viii. & 8. It is probable, however, that the person here intended was Ananias, who had been high priest, and who would retain the name. **See Barnes "Ac 23:2"**.

Some Mss. read *high priests* here, in the plural number, and this reading is approved by Mill and Griesbach. There is, however, no improbability in supposing that the high priest Ismael might have been also as much enraged against Paul as the others.

Informed him against Paul. Informed him of the accusation against him; and doubtless endeavoured to prejudice the mind of Festus against him. They thus showed their unrelenting disposition. It might have been supposed that after two years this unjust prosecution would be abandoned and forgotten. But malice does not thus forget its object; and the spirit of persecution is not thus satisfied. It is evident that there was here every probability that injustice would be done to Paul, and that the mind of Festus would be biassed against him. He was a stranger to Paul, and to the embittered feelings of the Jewish character, he would wish to conciliate their favour on entering on the duties of his office. And a strong representation therefore, made by the chief men of the nation, would be likely to prejudice him violently against Paul, and to unfit him for the exercise of impartial justice.

{*} "informed against" "Brought an accusation"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 25 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And desired favour against him*. Desired the favour of Festus, that they might accomplish their wicked purpose on Paul.

Would send for him to Jerusalem. Probably under a pretence that he might be tried by the sanhedrim; or perhaps they wished Festus to hear the cause there, and to decide it while he was at Jerusalem. Their *real* motive is immediately stated.

Laying wait in the way to kill him. That is, they would lie in wait, or they would employ a band of Sicarii, or assassins, to take his life on the journey. **See Barnes "Ac 21:38"**; **See Barnes** "Ac 23:12".

It is altogether probable that if this request had been granted, Paul would have been killed. But God had promised him that he should bear witness to the truth at Rome, (Ac 23:11;) and his providence was remarkable in thus influencing the mind of the Roman governor, and defeating the plans of the Jewish council.

{a} "laying wait" Ac 23:14,15 {+} "wait" "purposing to lie in wait"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 25 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *But Festus answered*, etc. What induced Festus to refuse their request, is not known. It is probable, however, that he was apprized that Paul was a Roman citizen, and that his case could

not come before the Jewish sanhedrim, but must be heard by himself. As Cesarea was also at that time the residence of the Roman governor, and the place of holding the courts, and as Paul was lodged there safely, there did not appear any sufficient reason for removing him to Jerusalem for trial. Festus, however, granted them all that they could reasonably ask, and assured them that he should have a speedy trial.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 25 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Which among you are able*. Enjoy all the advantages of a just trial, and exhibit your accusations with all the learning and talent in your power. This was all that they could reasonably ask at his hands.

{++} "wickedness" "anything amiss"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 25 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *More than ten days*. See the margin. The Syriac reads it, "eight or ten." The Vulgate, "not more than eight or ten." The Coptic, "eight or ten." Griesbach supposes this to be the true reading, and has admitted it into the text.

Sitting in the judgment seat. On the tribunal; or holding a court for the trial of Paul.

Commanded Paul to be brought. To be brought up for trial. He had been secured but was placed in the care of a soldier, who was commanded to let him have all the freedom that was consistent with his security.

{&} "tarried" "passed" {1} "more than ten days" "Or, as some copies read, no more than eight or
ten days"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 25 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Grievous complaints*. Heavy accusations. Doubtless the same with which they had charged him before Felix, Ac 24:5,6. Comp. Ac 25:19.

Which they could not prove. Ac 24:13,19.

{|} "come" "when he appeared" {&} "complaints" "accusations" {b} "which they could not prove" Ps 35:11 Mt 5:11,12 Ac 24:5,13

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 25 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *While he answered*, etc. See this answer more at length in Ac 24:10-21. As the accusations against him were the same now as then, he made to them the same reply.

{**} "for himself" "made his defense"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 25 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure*. Desirous of securing their favour, as he had just entered on his administration. Comp. Ac 24:27. In this he evinced rather a desire, of popularity than an inclination to do justice, Had he been disposed to do right at once, he would have immediately discharged Paul. Festus perceived that the case was one that did not come fairly within the jurisdiction of a Roman magistrate; that it pertained solely to the customs and questions among the Jews, (Ac 25:18-20;) and he therefore proposed that the case should be tried before him at Jerusalem. It is remarkable, however, that he had such a sense of justice, and law, as not to suffer the case to go out of his own hands. He proposed still to hear the cause, but asked Paul whether he was willing that it should be tried at Jerusalem? As the question which he asked Paul was one on which he was at liberty to take his own course, and as Paul had no reason to expect that his going to Jerusalem would facilitate the cause of justice, it is not remarkable that he declined the offer, as perhaps Festus supposed he would.

{++} "pleasure" "desiring to gratify the Jews" {&&} "judged of" "concerning"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 25 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Then said Paul*, etc. The reasons why Paul declined the proposal to be tried at Jerusalem are obvious. He had experienced so much violent persecution from his countrymen, and their minds were so full of prejudice, misconception, and enmity, that he had neither justice nor favour to hope at their hands. He knew, too, that they had formerly plotted against his life, and that he had been removed to Cesarea for the purpose of safety. It would be madness and folly to throw himself again into their hands, or to give them another opportunity to form a plan against his life. As he was, therefore, under no obligation to return to Jerusalem, and as Festus did not propose it because it could be supposed that justice would be promoted by it, but to gratify the Jews, Paul prudently declined the proposal, and appealed to the Roman emperor.

I stand at Caesar's judgment seat. The Roman emperors, after Julius Caesar, were all called Caesar; thus, Augustus Caesar, Claudius Caesar, etc., as all the kings of Egypt were called Pharaoh, though they had each his proper name, as Pharaoh Necho, etc. The emperor at this time (A. D. 60) was Nero, one of the most cruel and impious men that ever sat on a throne. It was under him that Paul was afterwards beheaded. When Paul says, "I stand at Caesar's judgment-seat, he means to say that he regarded the tribunal before which he then stood, and on which Festus sat, as really the judgment-seat of Csesar. The procurator, or governor, held his commission from the Roman emperor, and it was, in fact, his tribunal. The *reason* why Paul made this declaration may be thus expressed:

"I am a Roman citizen. I have a right to justice. I am under

no obligation to put myself again in the hands of the Jews.
I have a right to a fair and impartial trial; and I claim the
protection and privileges which all Roman citizens have before
their tribunals, the right of a fair and just trial."

It was, therefore, a severe rebuke of Festus for proposing to depart from the known justice of the Roman laws; and, for the sake of popularity, proposing to him to put himself in the hands of his enemies.

Where I ought to be judged. Where I have a right to demand and expect justice. I have a right to be tried where courts are usually held, and according to all the forms of equity which are usually observed.

Have I done no wrong. I have not injured their persons, property, character, or religion, This was a bold appeal, which his consciousness of innocence and the whole course of proceedings enabled him to make, without the possibility of their gainsaying it.

As thou very well knowest. Festus knew, probably, that Paul had been tried by Felix, and that nothing was proved against him. He had now seen the spirit of the Jews, and the cause why they arraigned him. He had given Paul a trial, and had called on the Jews to adduce their "able" men to accuse him; and, after all, nothing had been proved against him. Festus knew, therefore, that he was innocent. This abundantly appears also from his own confession, Ac 25:18,19. As he knew this, and as Festus was proposing to depart from the regular course of justice for the sake of popularity, it was proper for Paul to use the strong language of rebuke, and to claim what he knew Festus did not dare to deny him, the protection of the Roman laws. Conscious innocence may be bold; and Christians have a right to insist on impartial justice, and the protection of the laws. Alas! how many magistrates there have been like Festus, who, when Christians have been arraigned before them, have been fully satisfied of their innocence, but who, for the sake of popularity, have departed from all the rules of law, and all the claims of justice.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 25 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *For if I be an offender*. If I have injured the Jews so as to deserve death. If it can be proved that I have done injury to any one.

I refuse not to die. I have no wish to escape justice. I do not wish to evade the laws, or to take advantage of any circumstances to screen me from just punishment. Paul's whole course showed that this was the noble spirit which actuated him. No true Christian wishes to escape from the laws. He will honour them, and not seek to evade them. But, like other men, he has rights; and he may and should insist that justice should be done.

No man may deliver me unto them. No man shall be allowed to do it. This bold and confident declaration Paul could make, because he knew what the law required, and he knew that Festus would not *dare* to deliver him up contrary to the law. Boldness is not incompatible with Christianity; and innocence, when its rights are invaded, is always bold. Jesus firmly asserted his rights when on trial, (Joh 18:23;) and no man is under obligation to submit to be trampled on by an unjust tribunal in violation of the laws.

I appeal unto Caesar. I appeal to the Roman emperor, and carry my cause directly before him. By the Valerian, Porcian, and Sempronian laws, it had been enacted, that if any magistrate should be about to beat, or to put to death, any Roman citizen, the accused could appeal to the Roman people, and this appeal carried the cause to Rome. The law was so far changed under the emperors, that the cause should be carried before the emperor, instead of the people. Every citizen had the right of this appeal; and when it was made, the accused was sent to Rome for trial. Thus Pliny (Ep. 10, 97) says, that those Christians who were accused, and who, being Roman citizens, appealed to Csesar, he sent to Rome to be tried. The reason why Paul made this appeal was, that he saw that justice would not be done him by the Roman governor. He had been tried by Felix, and justice had been denied him; and he was detained a prisoner in violation of law, to gratify the Jews. He had now been tried by Festus, and saw that he was pursuing the same course; and he resolved, therefore, to assert his rights, and remove the cause, far from Jerusalem and from the prejudiced men in that city, at once to Rome. It was in this mysterious way that Paul's long-cherished desire to see the Roman church, and to preach the gospel there, was to be gratified. **See Barnes** "Ro 1:9, and Ro 1:10,11. For this he had prayed long, (Ro 1:10 15:23,24;) and now at length this purpose was to be fulfilled. God answers prayer; but it is often in a way which we little anticipate. He so orders the train of events—he so places us amidst a press of circumstances—that the desire is granted in a way which we could never have anticipated, but which shows in the best manner that he is a hearer of prayer.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 25 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *When he had conferred with the council*. With his associate judges, or with those who were his counsellors in the administratien of justice. They were made up ofthe chief persons, probably military as well as civil, who were about him, and who were his assistants in the administration of the affairs of the province.

Unto Caesar shalt thou go. He was willing in this way to rid himself of this trial, and of the vexation attending it. He did not dare to deliver him to the Jews in violation of the Roman laws; and he was not willing to do justice to Paul, and thus make himself unpopular with the Jews. He was, therefore, probably rejoiced at the opportunity of thus freeing himself from all the trouble in the case, in a manner against which none could object.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 25 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *And after certain days, king Agrippa*. This Agrippa was the son of Herod Agrippa, (Ac 12:1,) and great grandson of Herod the Great. His mother's name was Cypros. Josephus' Jewish Wars, b. ii. chap. xi. & 6. When his father died, he was at Rome with the emperor Claudius. Josephus says that the emperor was inclined to bestow upon him all his father s dominions, but was dissuaded by his ministers. The reason of this was, that it was thought imprudent to bestow so large a kingdom on so young a man, and one so inexperienced. Accordingly, Claudius sent Cuspius Fadus to be

procurator of Judea, and of the entire kingdom. Josephus' Antiq. b. xix. chap. ix. § 2., When Herod, the brother of his father Agrippa the Great, died in the eighth year of the reign of Claudius, his kingdom—the kingdom of Chalcis—was bestowed by Claudius on Agrippa. Josephus' Antiq. b. xx. chap. v. & 2. Afterwards he bestowed on him the tetrarchy of Philip and Batanea, and added to it Trachonitis with Abila. Antiq. b. xx. chap. vii. § 1. After the death of Claudius, Nero his successor added to his dominions Julius in Perea, and a part of Galilee. Agrippa had been brought up at Rome; and was strongly attached to the Romans. When the troubles commenced in Judea which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem, he did all that he could to preserve peace and order, but in vain. He afterwards joined his troops with those of the Romans, and assisted them at the destruction of Jerusalem. After the captivity of that city, he went to Rome with his sister Bernice, where he ended his days. He died at the age of seventy years, about A.D. 90. His manner of living with his sister gave occasion to reports respecting him very little to his advantage.

And Bernice. She was sister of Agrippa. She had been married to Herod, king of Chalcis, her own uncle by her father's side. After his death, she proposed to Polemon, king of Pontus and part of Cilicia, that if he would become circumcised she would marry him. He complied, but she did not continue long with him. After she left him, she returned to her brother Agrippa, with whom she lived in a manner such as to excite scandal. Josephus directly charges her with incest with her brother Agrippa. Antiq. b. xx. chap. vii. § 3.

To salute Festus. To show him respect as the governor of Judea.

{*} "certain days" "some"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 25 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Festus declared Paul's case*. He did this, probably, because Agrippa, being a Jew, would be supposed to be interested in the case. It was natural that this trial should be a topic of conversation, and perhaps Festus might be disposed to ask what was proper to be done in such cases.

Left in bonds. Greek, "a prisoner"—*desmiov*. He was left in custody, probably in the keeping of a soldier, Ac 24:23,27.

{*} "bonds" "left a prisoner"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 25 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *About whom*, etc. Ac 25:1-5.

To have judgment against him. Thome have him condemned.

{a} "when I was at Jerusalem" Ac 25:2,3 {+} "informed me" "laid an information"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 25 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *It is not the manner*, etc. He here states the reasons which he gave to the Jews for not delivering Paul into their hands. In Ac 25:4,5, we have an account of the fact that he would not accede to the requests of the Jews; and he here states that the reason of his refusal was, that it was contrary to the Roman law. Appian, in his Roman history, says, "It is not their custom to condemn men before they are heard." Philo de Preesi. Rom. says the same thing. In Tacitus (Annul. ii.) it is said, "A defendant is not to be prohibited from adducing all things, by which his innocence may be established." It was for this that the equity of the Roman jurisprudence was celebrated throughout the world. We may remark, that it is a subject of sincere gratitude to the God of our nation, that this privilege is enjoyed in the highest perfection in this land. It is the privilege of every man here to be heard; to know the charges against him; to be confronted with the witnesses; to make his defence; and to be tried by the *laws*, and not by the passions and caprices of men. In this respect our jurisprudence surpasses all that Rome ever enjoyed; and is not inferior to that of the most favoured nation of the earth.

To deliver. To give him up as a favour—*carizesyai*—to popular clamour and caprice. Yet our Saviour, in violation of the Roman laws, was thus given up by Pilate, Mt 27:18-25.

Have the accusers face to face. That he may know who they are, and hear their accusations, and refute them. Nothing contributes more to justice than this. Tyrants suffer men to be accused without knowing who the accusers are, and without an opportunity of meeting the charges. It is one great principle of modem jurisprudence, that the accused may know the accusers, and be permitted to confront the witnesses, and adduce all the testimony possible in his own defence.

And have license. Greek, "Place of apology," may have the liberty of defending himself.

{++} "manner" "custom"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 25 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Therefore, when they were come hither*, etc. See Ac 25:6.

{b} "when they" Ac 25:6

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 25 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *None accusation*, etc. No charge as I expected of a breach of the peace; of a violation of the Roman law; of atrocious crime. It was natural that Festus should suppose that they would accuse Paul of some such offence. He had been arraigned before Felix; had been two years in custody; and the Jews were exceedingly violent against him. All this, Festus would presume, must have arisen from some flagrant and open violation of the laws.

{%} "none accusation" "No"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 25 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *But had certain questions*. Certain inquiries, or litigated and disputed subjects; certain points of dispute in which they differed. *zhthmata tina*.

Of their own superstition. *deisidaimoniav*.

This word properly denotes the worship or fear of demons; but was applied by the Greeks and Romans to the worship of their gods. It is the same word which is used in Ac 17:22, where it is used in a good sense. **See Barnes "Ac 17:22"**.

There are two reasons for thinking that Festus used the word here in a good sense, and not in the sense in which we use the word superstition.

(1.) It was the word by which the worship of the Greeks and Romans, and therefore of Festus himself, was denoted, and he would naturally use it in a similar sense in applying it to the Jews. He would wish simply to describe their worship in such language as he was accustomed to use when speaking of religion.

(2.) He knew that Agrippa was a Jew. Festus would not probably speak of the religion of his royal guest as *superstition*, but would speak of it with respect. He meant, therefore, to say simply that they had certain inquiries about their own *religion*; but accused him of no crime against the Roman laws.

And of one Jesus, which was dead. Gr., "Of one dead Jesus." It is evident that Festus had no belief that Jesus had been raised up; and in this he would expect that Agrippa would concur with him. Paul had admitted that Jesus had been put to death; but he maintained that he had been raised from the dead. As Festus did not believe this, he spoke of it with the utmost contempt. "They had a dispute about one dead Jesus, whom Paul affirmed to be alive." In this manner a Roman magistrate could speak of the glorious truth of the Christian religion; and this shows the spirit with which the great mass of philosophers and statesmen regarded its doctrines.

{c} "But had certain" Ac 18:15 {|} "certain" "some" {%} "superstition" "Religion"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 25 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *And because I doubted of such manner of questions*. See the margin. Because I hesitated about the right way of disposing of them; because I was ignorant of their nature and bearing, I proposed to go to Jerusalem, that the matter might be there more fully investigated. It is obvious, that if Paul was not found guilty of any violation of the laws, he should have been at once discharged. Some interpreters understand this as affirming that he was not satisfied about the question of Paul's innocence, or certain whether he ought to be set at liberty or not.

{1} "doubted" "Or, I was doubtful how to inquire hereof"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 25 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *But when Paul had appealed*. Ac 25:11.

To be reserved. To be kept; not to be tried at Jerusalem, but to be sent to Rome for trial.

Unto the hearing. Margin, "the judgment." That Augustus might hear and decide the cause.

Of Augustus. The reigning emperor at this time was Nero. The name Augustus—*sebastou*—properly denotes that which is venerable, or worthy of honour and reverence. It was first applied to Caesar Octavianus, who was the Roman emperor in the time when our Saviour was born, and who is usually called Augustus Caesar. But the title continued to be used of his successors in office, as denoting the veneration or reverence which was due to the rank of emperor.

{2} "the hearing of Augustus" "judgment"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 25 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Then Agrippa said*, etc. Agrippa doubtless had heard much of the fame of Jesus, and of the new sect of Christians; and probably he was induced by mere curiosity to hear what Paul could say in explanation and defence of the doctrine of Christianity. This wish of Agrippa gave occasion to the noblest defence which was ever made before any tribunal, and to as splendid eloquence as can be found anywhere in any language. See Ac 26.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 25 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *With great pomp*. Gr., "With much phantasy"—*fantasiav*—, with much show, parade, and splendour, it was an occasion on which he could exhibit much of the splendour of royalty, and he chose to do it.

Into the place of hearing. The court-room, or the place where the judges heard and tried causes.

With the chief captains. Gr., The chiliarchs; the commanders of a thousand men. It means here that the military officers were assembled.

The principal men of the city. The civil officers, or the men of reputation and influence.

{d} "pomp" Eze 7:24 {**} "chief captains" "commanders" {e} "Paul" Ac 9:15

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 25 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Have dealt with me*. Have appeared before me, desiring me to try him. They have urged me to condemn him.

Crying out, etc. Ac 22:22. They had sought that he should be put to death.

{a} "all the multitude" Ac 25:3,7 {*} "with me" "Applied to me" {b} "that he ought" Ac 22:22

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 25 - Verse 25

Verse 25. No Barnes text on this verse.

{c} "nothing worthy"

Ac 23:9,29, 26:31
{d} "appealed to Augustus" Ac 25:11,12

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 25 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Of whom*. Respecting his character, opinions, manner of life, and respecting the charges against him.

No certain thing. Nothing definite, and well established. They had not accused Paul of any crime against the Roman laws; and Festus professes himself too ignorant of the customs of the Jews to inform the emperor distinctly of the nature of the charges, and the subject of trial.

Unto my lord. To the emperor; to Caesar. This name *lord* the emperors Augustus and Tiberius had rejected, and would not suffer it to be applied to them. Suetonius (Life of Augustus, v. 53) says, "The appellation of Lord he always abhorred as abominable and execrable." See also Suetonius' Life of Tiberius, v. 27. The emperors that succeeded them, however, admitted the title, and suffered themselves to be called by this name. Nothing would be more satisfactory to Nero, the reigning emperor, than this title.

I might have somewhat to write. As Agrippa was a Jew, and was acquainted with the customs and doctrine of the Jews, Festus supposed that, after hearing Paul, he would be able to inform him of the exact nature of these charges, so that he could present the case intelligibly to the emperor.

{+} "lord" "Our sovereign"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 25 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *For it seemeth to me unreasonable*, Festus felt that he was placed in an embarrassing situation, he was about to send a prisoner to Rome to be tried, who had been tried by himself, and who had appealed from his jurisdiction; and yet he was ignorant of the charges against him, and of the nature of his offences, if any had been committed. When prisoners were thus sent to Rome to be tried before the emperor, it would be proper that the charges should be all specified, and the evidence stated by which they were supported. Yet Festus could do neither; and it is not wonderful that he felt himself perplexed and embarrassed; and that he was glad to avail himself of the desire which Agrippa had expressed to hear Paul, that he might be able to specify the charges against him.

Withal. Also; at the same time.

To signify. To specify, or make them known. In concluding this chapter, we may observe:

(1.) That in the case of Agrippa, we have an instance of the reasons which induce many men to hear the gospel, he had no belief in it; he had no concern for its truth or its promises; but he was led by *curiosity* to desire to hear the minister of the gospel of Christ. Curiosity thus draws multitudes to the sanctuary. In many instances they remain unaffected and unconcerned in regard to its provisions of mercy. They listen, and are unmoved, and die in their sins. In many instances, like Agrippa, they are almost persuaded to be Christians, Ac 26:28. But, like him, they resist the appeals; and die uninterested in the plan of salvation. In some instances, they are converted; and their

curiosity, like that of Zaccheus, is made the means of their embracing the Saviour, Lu 19:1-9. Whatever may be the motive which induces men to desire to hear, it is the duty of the ministry cheerfully and thankfully, like Paul, to state the truth, and to defend the Christian religion.

(2.) In Festus we have a specimen of the manner in which the great men, and the rich, and the proud, usually regard Christianity. They esteem it to be a subject of inquiry in which they have no interest; a question about "one dead Jesus," whom Christians affirm to be alive. Whether he be alive or not, whether Christianity be true or false, they suppose, is an inquiry which does not pertain to them. Strange that it did not occur to Festus that if he *was* alive, his religion was true; and that it was possible that it *might* be from God. And strange that the men of this world regard the Christian religion as a subject in which *they* have no personal interest, but as one concerning which Christians *only* should inquire, and in which they alone should feel any concern.

(3.) In Paul we have the example of a man unlike both Festus and Agrippa. He felt a deep interest in the subject—a subject which pertained as much to them as to him. He was willing not only to look at it with curiosity, but to stake his life, his reputation, his all, on its truth, he was willing to defend it everywhere, and before any class of men. At the same time that he urged his rights as a Roman citizen, yet it was mainly that he might preach the gospel. At the same time that he was anxious to secure justice to himself, yet his chief anxiety was to declare the truth of God. Before any tribunal, before any class of men, in the presence of princes, nobles, and kings, of Romans and of Jews, he was ready to pour forth irresistible eloquence and argument in defence of the truth. Who would not rather be Paul than either Festus or Agrippa? Who would not rather be a *prisoner* like him, than invested with authority like Festus, or clothed in splendour like Agrippa? And who would not rather be an honest and cordial believer of the gospel like Paul, than, like them, to be cold contemners or neglecters of the God that made them, and of the Saviour that died, and rose again?

{e} "it seemeth" Pr 18:13 {++} "crimes" "charges"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 26

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 26 - Verse 1

CHAPTER 26

Verse 1. *Then Paul stretched forth the hand*. **See Barnes "Ac 21:40".**

This was the usual posture of orators or public speakers. The ancient statues are commonly made in this way, with the right hand extended. The dress of the ancients favoured this. The long and loose robe, or outer garment, was fastened usually with a hook or clasp on the right shoulder, and thus left the arm at full liberty.

And answered for himself. It cannot be supposed that Paul expected that his defence would be attended with a release from confinement; for he had himself appealed to the Roman emperor, Ac 25:11. This design in speaking before Agrippa was, doubtless,

(1.) to vindicate his character, and obtain Agrippa':s attestation to his innocence, that thus he might allay the anger of: the Jews;

(2.) to obtain a correct representation of the case to the emperor, as Festus had desired this, in order that Agrippa might enable him to make a fair statement of the case, (Ac 25:26,27;) and,

(3.) to defend his own conversion, and the truth of Christianity, and to preach the gospel in the hearing of Agrippa and the attendants, with a hope that their minds might be improved by the truth, and that they might be converted to God.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 26 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *I think myself happy*. I esteem it a favour and a privilege to be permitted to make my defence before one acquainted with Jewish customs and opinions. His defence, on former occasions, had been before *Roman* magistrates, who had little acquaintance with the opinions and customs of the Jews, who were not disposed to listen to the discussion of the points of difference between him and them, and who looked upon all their controversies with contempt. See Ac 24, Ac 25. They were, therefore, little qualified to decide a question which was closely connected with the Jewish customs and doctrines; and Paul now rejoiced to know that he was before one who, from his acquaintance with the Jewish customs and belief, would be able to appreciate his arguments and motives. Paul was not now on his trial; but he was to defend himself, or state his cause, so that Agrippa might be able to aid Festus in transmitting a true account of the case to the Roman emperor. It was his interest and duty, therefore, to defend himself as well as possible; and to put him in possession of all the facts in the case. His defence is, consequently, made up chiefly of a most eloquent statement of the *facts* just as they had occurred.

I shall answer. I shall be permitted to make a statement, or to defend myself.

Touching, etc. Respecting.

Whereof I am accused of the Jews. By the Jews. The matters of the accusation were—his being a mover of sedition, a ringleader of the Christians, and a profaner of the temple, Ac 24:5,6

{&} "answer for myself" "make my defence"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 26 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *To be expert*. To be skilled, or well acquainted.

In all customs. Rites, institutions, laws, etc. Everything pertaining to the Mosaic ritual, etc.

And questions. Subjects of debate, and of various opinions. The inquiries which had existed between the Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, etc. Paul could say this of Agrippa without falsehood or flattery. Agrippa was a Jew, and had passed much of his time in the kingdom over which he presided; and though he had passed the early part of his life chiefly at Rome, yet it was natural that he should make himself acquainted with the religion of his fathers. Paul did not know how to flatter men; but he was not unwilling to state the simple truth, and to commend men as far as truth would permit.

Wherefore. On this account; because you are acquainted with those customs. The Romans, who regarded those customs as superstitious, and those questions as matters to be treated with contempt, could not listen to their discussion with patience. Agrippa, who knew their real importance, would be disposed to lend to all inquiries respecting them a patient attention.

{a} "expert in all customs" De 17:18

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 26 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *My manner of life*. My opinions, principles, and conduct.

From my youth. Paul was born in Tarsus; but at an early period he had been sent to Jerusalem for the purpose of education in the school of Gamaliel, Ac 22:3.

Which was at the first. Which was from the beginning; the early part of which, the time when the opinions and habits are formed.

Know all the Jews. It is not at all improbable that Paul was distinguished in the school of Gamaliel for zeal in the Jewish religion. The fact that he was early entrusted with a commission against the Christians, (Ac 9,) shows that he was known. Comp. Php 3:4-6. He might appeal to them, therefore, in regard to the early part of his life; and, doubtless, to the very men who had been his violent accusers.

{c} "manner of life" 2Ti 3:10

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 26 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Which knew me*. Who were well acquainted with me.

From the beginning. *anwyen*. Formerly, or from the very commencement of my career. Who were perfectly apprized of my whole course.

If they would testify. If they would bear witness to what they knew.

That after the most straitest. The most rigid, the most strict; not only in regard to the written law of God, but the traditions of the elders. Paul himself elsewhere testifies, Php 3:4-6, that he had enjoyed all the advantages of birth and training in the Jewish religion, and that he had early distinguished himself by his observance of its rites and customs.

Sect. Division, or party.

I lived a Pharisee. I lived in accordance with the rules and doctrines of the Pharisees. **See Barnes "Mt 3:7"**.

The reasons why Paul here refers to his early life are:

(1.) As he had lived during the early period of his life without crime; as his principles had been settled by the instruction of the most able of their teachers, it was to be presumed that his subsequent life had been of a similar character.

(2.) As he, at that period of his life, evinced the utmost zeal for the laws and customs of his country, it was to be presumed that he would not be found opposing or reviling them at any subsequent period. From the strictness and conscientiousness of his past life, he supposed that

Agrippa might argue favourably respecting his subsequent conduct. A virtuous and religious course in early life is usually a sure pledge of virtue and integrity in subsequent years.

{*} "straitest" "According to the strictest" {d} "Pharisee" Ac 22:3 Php 3:5

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 26 - Verse 6

Verse 6. And now I stand. I stand before the tribunal. I am arraigned.

And am judged. Am tried with reference to being judged. I am undergoing a trial on the point in which all my nation are agreed.

For the hope. On account of the hope; or because, in common with my countrymen, I had entertained this hope, and now believe in its fulfillment.

Of the promise, etc. See the references in the margin. It is not quite certain whether Paul refers here to the promise of the Messiah, or to the hope of the resurrection of the dead. When he stood before the Jewish sanhedrim, Ac 23:6, he said that he was called in question on account of holding the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. But it may be observed, that in Paul's view, the two things were closely united. He hoped that the Messiah would come, and he hoped therefore for the resurrection of the dead. He believed that he had come, and had risen; and therefore he believed that the dead would rise. He argued the one from the other. And as he believed that Jesus was the Messiah, and that he had risen from the dead, and had thus furnished a demonstration that the dead would rise, it was evident that the subject of controversy between him and the Jews involved everything that was vital to their opinions and their hopes. See Ac 24:8.

Made of God. Made by God. See the marginal references. The promises had been made to the fathers of a Messiah to come, and that embraced the promise of a future state, or of the resurrection of the dead. It will help us to understand the stress which Paul and the other apostles laid on the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, to remember that it involved the whole doctrine of the separate existence of the soul, and of a future state. The Sadducees denied all this; and when the Pharisees, the Saviour, and the apostles opposed them, they did it by showing that there would be a future state of rewards and punishments. See the argument of the Saviour with the Sadducees explained: **See Barnes "Lu 20:27-38"**.

Unto our fathers. Our ancestors, the patriarchs, etc.

{e} "I stand" Ac 23:6 {f} "promise made of God" Ge 3:15 22:18, 49:10 De 18:15; 2Sa 7:12

Isa 4:2 7:14, 9:6,7; Jer 23:5 33:14-16; Eze 34:23 Da 9:24; Mic 7:20

Zec 13:1,7; Mal 3:1 Ac 13:32; Ga 4:4

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 26 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Unto which promise*. To the fulfillment of which promise, they hope to come; i.e., they hope and believe that the promise will be fulfilled, and that they will partake of its benefits.

Our twelve tribes. This was the name by which the Jews were designated. The ancient Jewish nation had hoped to come to that promise; it had been the hope and expectation of the nation. Long before the coming of the Messiah, ten of the twelve tribes had been carried captive to Assyria, and had not returned, leaving but the two tribes of Benjamin and Judah. But the name, "the twelve tribes," to designate the Jewish people, would be still retained. Comp. Jas 1:1. Paul here says that the hope had been that of the Jewish nation. Except the comparatively small portion of the Sadducees, the great mass of the nation had held to the doctrine of a future state. This Agrippa would well know.

Instantly. Constantly; with intensity; with an effort—*en ekteneia*— with zeal. This was true; for, amidst all the sins of the nation, they observed with punctuality and zeal the outward forms of the worship of God.

Serving God. In the ordinances and observances of the temple. As a nation, they did not serve him in their hearts; but they kept up the outward form of religious worship.

Day and night. With unwearied zeal; with constancy and ardour, Lu 2:37. The ordinary Jewish services and sacrifices were in the morning and evening, and might be said to be performed day and night. Some of their services, as the paschal supper, were prolonged usually till late at night. The main idea is, that they kept up the worship of God with constant and untiring zeal and devotion.

For which hope's sake. On account of my cherishing this hope in common with the great mass of my countrymen. See Ac 23:6. If Paul could convince Agrippa that the main point of his offence was that which had been the common belief of his countrymen, it would show to his satisfaction that he was innocent. And on this ground Paul put his defence: that he held only that which the mass of the nation had believed, and that he maintained this in the only consistent and defensible manner—that God had, *in fact*, raised up the Messiah, and had thus given assurance that the dead should rise.

{g} "serving God" Lu 2:37 1Th 3:10 {1} "day and night" "night and day" {+} "hope to come" "to attain in its fulfillment" {++} "hope's sake" "concerning which hope"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 26 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Why should it be thought*, etc. The force of this question will be better seen by an interrogation point after *why*, *ti*. "What! Is it to be thought a thing incredible?" etc. It intimates surprise that it should be thought incredible; or implies that no reason could be given why such a doctrine should be unworthy of belief.

A thing incredible. A doctrine which cannot be credited or believed. Why should it be regarded as absurd?

With you. This is in the plural number; and it is evident that Paul here addressed not Agrippa alone, but those who were with him. There is no evidence that Agrippa doubted that the dead could be raised; but Festus, and those who were with him, probably did; and Paul, in the ardour of his speech, turned and addressed the entire assembly. It is very evident that we have only an outline of this argument, and there is every reason to suppose that Paul would dwell on each part of the subject at greater length than is here recorded.

That God should raise the dead. Why should it be regarded as absurd that God—who has all power, who was the Creator of all, who was the Author of the human frame—should again restore man to life, and continue his future existence. The resurrection is no more incredible than the original creation of the human body, and it is attended with no greater difficulties. And as the perfections of God will be illustrated by his raising up the dead; as the future state is necessary to the purposes of justice in vindicating the just, and punishing the unjust; and as God is a righteous moral Governor, it should not be regarded as an absurdity that he will raise up those who have died, and bring them to judgment.

{h} "Why" 1Co 15:12,20

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 26 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *I verily thought*. I indeed *men* supposed. Paul here commences the account of his conversion, and states the evidence on which he judged that he was called of God to do what he had done. He begins by saying that it was not because he was originally disposed to be a Christian, but that he was violently and conscientiously opposed to Jesus of Nazareth, and had been converted when in the full career of opposition to him and his cause.

With myself. I thought to myself; or, I myself thought. He had before stated the hopes and expectations of his countrymen, Ac 26:6-8. He now speaks of his own views and purposes. "For myself, I thought," etc.

That I ought to do. That I was bound, or that it was a duty incumbent on me. *dein*. "I thought that I owed it to my country, to my religion, and to my God, to oppose in every manner the claims of Jesus of Nazareth to be the Messiah." We here see that Paul was conscientious, and that a man may be conscientious even when engaged in enormous wickedness. It is no evidence that a man is right because he is conscientious. No small part of the crimes against human laws, and almost all the cruel persecutions against Christians, have been carried on under the plea of conscience. Paul here refers to his conscientiousness in persecution, to show that it was no slight matter which could have changed his course. As he was governed in persecution by conscience, it could have been only by a force of demonstration, and by the urgency of conscience equally clear and strong, that could ever have induced him to abandon this course, and become a friend of that Saviour whom he had thus persecuted.

Many things. As much as possible. He was not satisfied with a few things—a few words, or purposes, or arguments; but he felt bound to do as much as possible to put down the new religion.

Contrary to the name, etc. In opposition to Jesus himself, or to his claims to be the Messiah. The name is often used to denote the person himself, Ac 3:6.

{a} "I verily" 1Ti 1:13 {*} "verily" "Indeed"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 26 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Which thing I also did*, etc. Ac 8:3.

And many of the saints, etc. Many Christians, Ac 8:3.

And when they were put to death. In the history of those transactions there is no account of any Christian being put to death, except Stephen, Ac 7. But there is no improbability in supposing that the same thing which had happened to Stephen, had occurred in other cases. Stephen was the first martyr; and as he was a prominent man, his case is particularly recorded.

I gave my voice. Paul was not a member of the sanhedrim, and this does not mean that he *voted*, but simply that he joined in the persecution; he approved it; he assented to the putting of the saints to death. Comp. Ac 22:20. The Syriac renders it, "I joined with those who condemned them." It is evident also that Paul instigated them in this persecution, and urged them on to deeds of blood and cruelty.

{b} "did in Jerusalem" Ac 8:3 Ga 1:13 {c} "authority" Ac 9:14 {++} "my voice" "vote"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 26 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *And I punished them oft*, etc. See Ac 22:19.

And compelled them to blaspheme. To blaspheme the name of Jesus, by denying that he was the Messiah, and by admitting that he was an impostor. This was the object which they had in view in the persecution. It was not to make them blaspheme or reproach God, but to deny that Jesus was the Messiah, and to reproach him as a deceiver and an impostor. It is not necessarily implied in the expression, "and *compelled* them to blaspheme," that he succeeded in doing it; but that he violently endeavoured to make them apostatize from the Christian religion, and deny the Lord Jesus. It is certainly not impossible that a few might thus have been induced by the authority of the sanhedrim, and by the threats of Paul to do it; but it is certain that the great mass of Christians adhered firmly to their belief that Jesus was the Messiah.

And being exceedingly mad. Nothing could more forcibly express his rage and violence against the Christians. He raged like a madman; he was so indignant that he laid aside all appearance of reason; and with the fury and violence of a maniac, he endeavoured to exterminate them from the earth. None but a madman will persecute men on account of their religious opinions; and all persecutions have been conducted like this, with the violence, and fury, and ungovernable temper of maniacs.

Unto strange cities. Unto foreign cities; cities out of Judea. The principal instance Of this was his going to Damascus; but there is no evidence that he did not intend also to visit other cities out of Judea, and bring the Christians there, if he found any, to Jerusalem.

{d} "oft in every" Ac 22:19 {++} "strange" "foreign"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 26 - Verse 12

Verse 12. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes "Ac 9:5"

{e} "went to Damascus" Ac 9:3

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 26 - Verse 13

Verse 13. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes "Ac 9:5"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 26 - Verse 14

Verse 14. No Barnes text on this verse.
See Barnes "Ac 9:5"
{&} "pricks" "goads"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 26 - Verse 15

Verse 15. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes "Ac 9:5"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 26 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *But rise*, etc. The particulars mentioned in this verse and the two following are not recorded in the account of Paul's conversion in Ac 9. But it is not improbable that many circumstances may have occurred which are not recorded. Paul dwells on them here at length, in order particularly to show his authority for doing what he had done in preaching to the Gentiles.

To make thee a minister. A minister of the gospel; a preacher of the truth.

And a witness. **See Barnes "Ac 22:15"**.

Which thou hast seen. On the road to Damascus; that is, of the Lord Jesus, and of the fact that he was risen from the dead.

And of those things, etc. Of those further manifestations of my person, protection, and will, which I will yet make to you. It is evident from this, that the Lord Jesus promised to manifest himself to Paul in his ministry, and to make to him still further displays of his will and glory. Comp. Ac 22:17,18. This was done by his rescuing him from destruction and danger; by the intimation of his will; and by the growing and expanding view which Paul was permitted to take of the character and perfections of the Lord Jesus. In this we see that it is the duty of ministers to bear witness not

only to the truth of religion in general, or of that which they can demonstrate by argument; but more especially of that which they experience in their own hearts, and which they understand by having themselves been the subjects of it. No man is qualified to enter the ministry who has not a personal and practical and saving view of the glory and perfections of the Lord Jesus, and who does not go to his work as a *witness* of those things which he has felt. And no man enters the ministry with these feelings, who has not, as Paul had, a promise that he shall see still brighter displays of the perfections of the Saviour, and be permitted to advance in the knowledge of him and of his work. The highest personal consolation in this work is the promise of their being admitted to ever-growing and expanding views of the glory of the Lord Jesus, and of experiencing his presence, guidance, and protection.

{|} "make thee" "Appoint" {f} "minister" Eph 3:7 Col 1:23,25

{g} "witness" Ac 22:15

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 26 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Delivering thee from the people*. From the Jewish people. This implied that he would be persecuted by them, and that the Lord Jesus would interpose to rescue him.

And from the Gentiles. This also implied that he would be persecuted and opposed by them —-a prospect which was verified by the whole course of his ministry. Yet in all he experienced, according to the promise, the support and the protection of the Lord Jesus. This was expressed in a summary manner in Lu 9:16.

Unto whom now I send thee. Ac 22:21. As the opposition of the Jews arose mainly from the fact that he had gone among the Gentiles, it was important to bring this part of his commission into full view before Agrippa, and to show that the same Saviour who had miraculously converted him, had commanded him to go and preach to them.

{a} "unto whom" Ac 22:21 Ro 11:13

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 26 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *To open their eyes*. To enlighten or instruct them. Ignorance is represented by the eyes being closed, and the instruction of the gospel by the opening of the eyes. See Eph 1:18.

And to turn them from darkness to light. From the darkness of heathenism and sin, to the light and purity of the gospel. Darkness in an emblem of ignorance and of sin; and the heathen nations are often represented as sitting in darkness. **See Barnes** "Mt 4:16; **See Barnes "Joh 1:4"**; **See Barnes** "Joh 1:6".

And from the power of Satan. From the dominion of Satan. Comp. Col 1:13 1Pe 2:9; **See Barnes "Joh 12:31"**; **See Barnes "Joh 16:11"**.

Satan is thus represented as the prince of this world; the ruler of the darkness of this world; the prince of the power of the air, etc. The heathen world, lying in sin and superstition, is represented

as under his control; and this passage teaches, doubtless, that the great mass of the people of this world are the subjects of the kingdom of Satan, and are led captive by him at his will.

Unto God. To the obedience of the one living and true God.

That they may receive forgiveness of sins. Through the merits of that Saviour who died; that thus the partition wall between the Jews and the Gentiles might be broken down, and all might be admitted to the same precious privileges of the favour and mercy of God. **See Barnes "Ac 2:38".**

And inheritance. An heirship, or lot, (*klhron*;) that they might be entitled to the privileges and favours of the children of God. **See Barnes "Ac 20:32".**

Which are sanctified. Among the saints; the children of God. **See Barnes "Ac 20:32".**

{b} "open their eyes" Isa 35:5 42:7; Eph 1:18

{c} "turn them" Lu 1:79 Joh 8:12; 2Co 4:6 1Pe 2:9

{d} "power of Satan" Col 1:13 {e} "forgiveness of sins" Lu 1:77 Eph 1:7; Col 1:14

{f} "inheritance" Eph 1:11 Col 1:12; 1Pe 1:4

{g} "sanctified" Joh 17:17 Ac 20:32; 1Co 1:30 Re 21:27

{h} "faith" Eph 2:8 Heb 11:6

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 26 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Whereupon*. Whence, *oyen*. Since the proof of his being the Messiah, and of his resurrection, and of his calling me to this work, was so clear and plain, I deemed it my duty to engage without delay in the work.

I was not disobedient. I was not incredulous or unbelieving; I yielded myself to the command, and at once obeyed. See Ac 9:6; Comp. Gal 1:16.

To the heavenly vision. To the celestial appearance; or to the vision which appeared to me manifestly from heaven. I did not doubt that this splendid appearance Ac 26:13 was from heaven; and I did not refuse to obey the command of Him who thus appeared to me. He knew it was the command of God his Saviour; and he gave evidence of repentance by yielding obedience to it at once.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 26 - Verse 20

Verse 20. See Ac 9:20-23. The 20th verse contains a summary of his labours in obedience to the command of the Lord Jesus. His argument is, that the Lord Jesus had from heaven commanded him to do this, and that he had done no more than to obey his injunction.

{*} "shewed" "declared" {i} "first" Ac 9:19 {k} "works" Mt 3:8 {+} "meet for" "worthy of"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 26 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Caught me in the temple*. Ac 21:30.

And went about, etc. Endeavoured to put me to death.

{l} "Jews" Ac 21:30 {++} "caught" "seized" {&} "about to kill" "attempted"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 26 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Having therefore obtained help of God*. Paul had seen and felt his danger. He had known the determined malice of the Jews, and their efforts to take his life. He had been rescued by Lysias, and had made every effort to avoid the danger, and to save his life; and at the end of all, he traced his safety entirely to the help of God. It was not by any power of his own that he had been preserved; but it was because God had interposed and rescued him. Those who have been delivered from danger, if they have just views, will delight to trace it all to God. They will regard his hand; and will feel that whatever wisdom they may have had, or whatever may have been the kindness of their friends to aid them, yet that *all this also* is to be traced to the superintending providence of God.

Witnessing. Bearing testimony to what he had seen, according to the command of Christ, Ac 26:16.

To small. To those in humble life; to the poor, the ignorant, and the obscure. Like his Master, he did not despise them, but regarded it as his duty and privilege to preach the gospel to the poor.

And great. The rich and noble; to kings, and princes, and governors. He had thus stood on Mars' Hill at Athens; he had borne testimony before the wise men of Greece; he had declared the same gospel before Felix, Festus, and now before Agrippa. He offered salvation to all. He passed by none because they were poor; and he was not deterred by the fear of the rich and the great from making known their sins, and calling them to repentance. What an admirable illustration of the proper duties of a minister of the gospel!

Saying none other things, etc. Delivering no new doctrine; but maintaining only that the prophecies had been fulfilled. As he had done this only, there was no reason for the opposition and persecution of the Jews.

Should come. Should come to pass; or, should take place. Paul here evidently means to say, that the doctrine of the atonement, and of the resurrection of Christ, is taught in the Old Testament.

{|} "witnessing" "testifying" {m} "the prophets" Lu 24:27,46

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 26 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *That Christ*. That the Messiah expected by the Jews should be a suffering Messiah.

Should suffer. Should lead a painful life, and be put to death. **See Barnes "Ac 17:3"**.

Compare Da 9:27 Isa 53.

And that he should be the first, etc. This declaration contains two points: (1.) That it was taught in the prophets that the Messiah should rise from the dead. On this, see the proof alleged in Ac 2:24-32; Ac 13:32-37.

(2.) That he should be the first that should rise. This cannot mean that the Messiah should be the first dead person who should be restored to life, for Elijah had raised the son of the Shunammite, and Jesus himself had raised Lazarus and the widow's son at Nain. It does not mean that he should be the first *in the order of time* that should rise, but *first in eminence*, the most distinguished, the chief, the head of those who should rise from the dead. *prwtov ex anastasewv nekrwn*. In accordance with this he is called Col 1:18 "the beginning, the first-born from the dead;" having, among all the dead who should be raised up, the rights and pre-eminence of the primogeniture, or which pertained to the first-born. In 1Co 15:20, he is called "the first-fruits of them that slept." This declaration is, therefore, made of him by way of eminence:

(1.) As being chief, a prince among those raised from the dead;

(2.) as being raised by his own power, Joh 10:18

(3.) as, by his rising, securing a dominion over death and the grave, (1Co 15:25,26;) and,

(4.) as bringing, by his rising, life and immortality to light. He rose to return to death no more. And he thus secured an ascendancy over death and the grave, and was thus, by way of eminence, *first* among those raised from the dead.

And should shew light unto the people. To the Jews. Should be their instructor and prophet. This Moses had predicted, De 18:15.

And to the Gentiles. This had often been foretold by the prophets, and particularly by Isaiah, Isa 9:1,2. Compare Mt 4:14-16 Isa 11:10 42:1,4 44:3, 60:3,5,11 61:6 62:2 66:12.

{n} "the first" 1Co 15:23

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 26 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Festus said with a loud voice*. Amazed at the zeal and ardour of Paul. Paul doubtless evinced deep interest in the subject, and great earnestness in the delivery of his defence.

Thou art beside thyself. Thou art deranged; thou art insane. The reasons why Festus thought Paul mad were, probably,

(1.) his great earnestness and excitement on the subject.

(2.) His laying such stress on the gospel of the despised Jesus of Nazareth, as if it were a matter of infinite moment. Festus despised it; and he regarded it as proof of derangement that so much importance was attached to it.

(3.) Festus regarded, probably, the whole story of the vision that Paul said had appeared to him, as the effect of an inflamed and excited imagination; and as the proof of delirium. This is not an uncommon charge against those who are Christians, and especially when they evince any unusual zeal. Sinners regard them as under the influence of delirium and fanaticism; as terrified by imaginary and superstitious fears; or as misguided by fanatical leaders. Husbands often thus think their wives deranged, and parents their children, and wicked men the ministers of the gospel. The gay think it proof of derangement that others are serious, and anxious, and prayerful; the rich, that others are willing to part with their property to do good; the ambitious and worldly, that others are willing to leave their country and home, to go among the Gentiles to spend their lives in making known the unsearchable riches of Christ. The really sober and rational part of the world—they who fear God, and keep his commandments; who believe that eternity is before them, and who strive to live for

it—are thus charged with insanity by those who are really deluded, and who are thus living lives of madness and folly. The tenants of a madhouse often think all others deranged but themselves; but there is no madness so great, no delirium so awful, as to neglect the eternal interest of the soul for the sake of the poor pleasures and honours which this life can give.

Much learning. It is probable that Festus was acquainted with the fact that Paul had been well instructed, and was a learned man. Paul had not, while before him, manifested particularly his learning. But Festus, acquainted in some way with the fact that he was well educated, supposed that his brain had been turned, and that the effect of it was seen by devotion to a fanatical form of religion. The tendency of long-continued and intense application to produce mental derangement, is everywhere known.

Doth make thee mad. Impels, drives, or excites thee *peritrepei* to madness.

{&} "spake for himself" "Made his defence" {o} "make thee mad" 2Ki 9:11

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 26 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *I am not mad*. I am not deranged. There are few more happy turns than that which Paul gives to this accusation of Festus. He might have appealed to the course of his argument; he might have dwelt on the importance of the subject, and continued to reason; but he makes an appeal at once to *Agrippa*, and brings him in for a witness that he was not deranged. This would be far more likely to make art impression on the mind of Festus, than anything that Paul could say in self-defence. The same reply, "I am not mad," can be made by all Christians to the charge of derangement which the world brings against them. They have come, like the prodigal, Lu 15:17 to their right mind; and by beginning to act as if there were a God and Saviour, as if they were to die, as if there were a boundless eternity before them, they are conducting [themselves] according to the dictates of reason. And as Paul appealed to Agrippa, who was not a Christian, for the reasonableness and soberness of his own views and conduct, so may all Christians appeal even to sinners themselves, as witnesses that they are acting as immortal beings *should* act. All men *know* that if there is an eternity, it is right to prepare for it; if there is a God, it is proper to serve him, if a Saviour died for us, we should love him; if a hell, we should avoid it; if a heaven, we should seek it. And even when they charge us with folly and derangement, we may turn at once upon *them*, and appeal to their own consciences, and ask them if all our anxieties, and prayers, and efforts, and self-denials, are not right? One of the best ways of convicting sinners, is to appeal to them just as Paul did to Agrippa. When *so* appealed to, they will usually acknowledge the force of the appeal; and will admit that all the solicitude of Christians for their salvation is according to the dictates of reason.

Most noble Festus. This was the usual title of the Roman governor. Comp. Ac 24:3.

Of truth. In accordance with the predictions of Moses and the prophets; and the facts which have occurred in the death and resurrection of the Messiah. In proof of this he appeals to Agrippa, Ac 26:26,27. Truth here stands opposed to delusion, imposture, and fraud.

And soberness. Soberness (*swfrosunhv*, *wisdom*) stands opposed here to madness, or derangement, and denotes sanity of mind. The words which I speak are those of a sane man, conscious of what he is saying, and impressed with its truth. They were the words, also, of a man

who, under the charge of derangement, evinced the most perfect self-possession and command of his feelings; and who uttered sentiments deep, impressive, and worthy of the attention of mankind.

{*} "soberness" "a sound mind"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 26 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *For the king*. King Agrippa.

Knoweth. He had been many years in that region, and the fame of Jesus and of Paul's conversion were probably well known to him.

These things. The things pertaining to the early persecutions of Christians; the spread of the gospel; and the remarkable conversion of Paul. Though Agrippa might not have been fully informed respecting these things, yet he had an acquaintance with Moses and the prophets; he knew the Jewish expectation respecting the Messiah; and he could not be ignorant respecting the remarkable public events in the life of Jesus of Nazareth, and of his having been put to death by order of Pontius Pilate on the cross.

I speak freely. I speak openly, boldly. I use no disguise; and I speak the more confidently before him, because, from his situation, he must be acquainted with the truth of what I say. Truth is always bold and free; and it is an evidence of honesty when a man is willing to declare everything without reserve before those who are qualified to detect him if he is an impostor. Such evidence of truth and honesty was given by Paul.

For I am persuaded. I am convinced; I doubt not that he is well acquainted with these things.

Are hidden from him. That he is unacquainted with them.

For this thing. The thing to which Paul had mainly referred in this defence, his own conversion to the Christian religion.

Was not done in a corner. Did not occur secretly and obscurely; but was public, and was of such a character as to attract attention. The conversion of a leading persecutor, such as Paul had been, and in the manner in which that conversion had taken place, could not but attract attention and remark. And although the Jews would endeavour as much as possible to conceal it, yet Paul might presume that it could not be entirely unknown to Agrippa.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 26 - Verse 27

King Agrippa. This bland personal address is an instance of Paul's happy manner of appeal. He does it to bring in the testimony of Agrippa to meet the charge of Festus that he was deranged.

Believest thou the prophets? The prophecies respecting the character, the sufferings, and the death of the Messiah.

I know that thou believest. Agrippa was a Jew; and, as such, he of course believed the prophets. Perhaps, too, from what Paul knew of his personal character, he might confidently affirm that he professed to be a believer. Instead, therefore, of waiting for his answer, Paul anticipates it, and says

that he knows that Agrippa professes to believe all these prophecies respecting the Messiah. His design is evident. It is

(1) to meet the charge of derangement, and to bring in the testimony of Agrippa, who well understood the subject, to the importance and the truth of what he was saying.

(2.) To press on the conscience of his royal hearer the evidence of the Christian religion, and to secure if possible his conversion. "Since thou believest the prophecies, and since I have shown that they are fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, that he corresponds in person, character, and work with the prophets, it follows that his religion is true." Paul lost no opportunity of pressing the truth on every class of men. He had such a conviction of the truth of Christianity, that he was deterred by no rank, station, or office; by no fear of the rich, the great and the learned; but everywhere urged the evidence of that religion as indisputable. In this lay the secret of no small part of his success. A man who *really* believes the truth, will be ready to defend it. A man who truly loves religion, will not be ashamed of it anywhere.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 26 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *Then Agrippa said unto Paul*. He could not deny that he believed the prophets. He could not deny that the argument was a strong one, that they had been fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. He could not deny that the evidence of the miraculous interposition of God in the conversion of Paul was overwhelming. And instead, therefore, of charging him as Festus had done with derangement, he candidly and honestly avows the impression which the proof had made on his mind.

Almost. Except a very little. *en oligw*. Thou hast nearly convinced me that Christianity is true, and persuaded me to embrace it. The arguments of Paul had been so rational; the appeal which he had made to his belief of the prophets had been so irresistible, that he had been nearly convinced of the truth of Christianity. We are to remember,

(1.) that Agrippa was a Jew, and that he would look on this whole subject in a different manner from the Roman Festus.

(2.) That Agrippa does not appear to have partaken of the violent passions and prejudices of the Jews who had accused Paul.

(3.) His character, as given by Josephus, is that of a mild, candid, and ingenuous man. He had no particular hostility to Christians; he knew that they were not justly charged with sedition and crime; and he saw the conclusion to which a belief of the prophets inevitably tended. Yet, as in thousands of other cases, he was not *quite* persuaded to be a Christian. What was included in the "almost"—what prevented his being *quite* persuaded—we know not. It may have been that the evidence was not so clear to his mind as he would profess to desire; or that he was not willing to give up his sins; or that he was too proud to rank himself with the followers of Jesus of Nazareth; or that, like Felix, he was willing to defer it to a more convenient season. There is every reason to believe that he was never *quite* persuaded to embrace the Lord Jesus; and that he was never nearer the kingdom of heaven than at this moment. It was the *crisis*, the turning point in Agrippa's life, and in his eternal destiny; and, like thousands of others, he neglected or refused to allow the full conviction of the truth on his mind, and died in his sins.

Thou persuadest me. Thou dost convince me of the truth of the Christian religion, and persuadest me to embrace it.

To be a Christian. On the name Christian, **See Barnes "Ac 11:26"**.

On this deeply interesting case, we may observe,

(1.) that there are many in the same situation as Agrippa— many who are almost, but not altogether, persuaded to be Christians. They are found among

(a) those who have been religiously educated;

(b) those who are convinced by argument of the truth of Christianity;

(c) those whose consciences are awakened, and who feel their guilt, and the necessity of some better portion than this world can furnish.

(2.) Such persons are deterred from being altogether Christians by the following, among other causes:

(a) By the love of sin—the love of sin in general, or some particular sin which they are not willing to abandon.

(b) The fear of shame, persecution, or contempt, if they become Christians.

(c) By the temptations of the world—its cares, vanities, and allurements—which are often prosecuted most strongly in just this state of mind.

(d) The love of office, the pride of rank and power, as in the case of Agrippa.

(e) A disposition, like Felix, to delay to a more favourable time the work of religion, until life has wasted away, and death approaches, and it is too late; and the unhappy man dies *ALMOST a Christian*.

(3.) This state of mind is one of peculiar interest, and peculiar danger. It is not one of safety; and it is not one that implies any certainty that the "almost Christian" will ever be saved. There is no reason to believe that Agrippa ever became *fully* persuaded to become a Christian. To be almost persuaded to do a thing which we ought to do, and yet not to do it, is the very position of guilt and danger. And it is no wonder that many are brought to *this* point—the turning point, the *crisis* of life —and then lose their anxiety, and die in their sins. May the God of grace keep us from resting in being almost persuaded to be Christians. And may every one who shall read this account of Agrippa be admonished by his convictions, and be alarmed by the fact that he then paused, and that his convictions there ended! And may every one resolve, by the help of God, to forsake *everything* that prevents his becoming an entire believer, and without delay embrace the Son of God as his Saviour!

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 26 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *I would to God*. I pray to God; I earnestly desire it of God. This shows

(l.) Paul's intense desire that Agrippa, and all who heard him, might be saved.

(2.) His steady and constant belief that none but God could incline them to become altogether Christians. Hence he expressed it as the object which he earnestly sought of God, that they might be true believers. Paul knew well that there was nothing that would overcome the reluctance of the human heart to be an entire Christian, but the grace and mercy of God. He had addressed to them

the convincing arguments of religion; and he now breathed forth his earnest prayer to God that these arguments might be effectual. So prays every faithful minister of the cross.

All that hear me. Festus, and the military and civil officers who had been assembled to hear his defence, Ac 25:23.

Were both almost, and altogether, etc. Paul had no higher wish for them than that they might have the faith and consolations which he had himself enjoyed. He had so firm a conviction of the truth of Christianity, and had experienced so much of its consolations and supports amidst all his persecutions and trials, that his highest desire for them was, that they might experience the same inexpressibly pure and holy consolations. He well knew that there was neither happiness nor safety in being almost a Christian; and he desired, therefore, that they would give themselves, as he had done, entirely and altogether to the service of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Except these bonds. These chains. This is an exceedingly happy and touching appeal. Probably Paul, when he said this, lifted up his arm with the chain attached to it. His wish was, that they might be partakers of the pure joys which religion had conferred on him; that in all other respects they might partake of the effects of the gospel, *except those chains*. Those he did not wish them to bear. The persecutions, and unjust trials, and confinements which he had been called to suffer in the cause, he did not desire them to endure. True Christians wish others to partake of the full blessings of religion. The trials which they themselves experience from without, in unjust persecutions, ridicule, and slander, they do not wish them to endure. The trials which they themselves experience from an evil heart, from corrupt passions, and from temptations, they do not wish others to experience. But even *with* these, religion confers infinitely more pure joy than the world can give; and even though others should be called to experience severe trials for their religion, still Christians wish that all should partake of the pure consolations which Christianity alone can furnish in this world and the world to come.

{a} "would to God" 1Co 7:7

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 26 - Verse 30

Verse 30. No notes from Barnes on this verse.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 26 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *This man doeth nothing worthy of death*. This was the conclusion to which they had come, after hearing all that the Jews had to allege against him. It was the result of the whole investigation; and we have, therefore, the concurring testimony of Claudius Lysias, Ac 23:29, of Felix, Ac 24 of Festus, Ac 25:26,27, and of Agrippa, to his innocence. More honourable and satisfactory testimony of his innocence Paul could not have desired. It was a full acquittal from all the charges against him; and though he was to be sent to Rome, yet he went there with every favourable circumstance of being acquitted there also.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 26 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *Then said Agrippa unto Festus*, etc. This is a full declaration of the conviction of Agrippa, that Paul was innocent. It is an instance also where boldness and fidelity will be attended with happy results. Paul had concealed nothing of the truth. He had made a bold and faithful appeal Ac 26:27 to Agrippa himself, for the truth of what he was saying. By this appeal, Agrippa had not been offended. It had only served to impress him more with the innocence of Paul. It is an instance which shows us that religion may be commended to the consciences and reason of princes, and kings, and judges, so that they will see its truth. It is an instance which shows us that the most bold and faithful appeals may be made by the ministers of religion to their hearers, for the truth of what they are saying. And it is a full proof that the most faithful appeals, if respectful, may be made without offending men, and with the certainty that they will feel and admit their force. All preachers should be as faithful as Paul; and whatever may be the rank and character of their auditors, they should never doubt that they have truth and God on their side, and that their message, when most bold and faithful, will commend itself to the consciences of men.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 1

CHAPTER 27

Verse 1. *And when it was determined*. By Festus, Ac 25:12 and when the time was come when it was convenient to send him.

That we should sail. The use of the term "we" here shows that the author of this book, Luke, was with Paul. He had been the companion of Paul; and though he had not been accused, yet it was resolved that he should still accompany him. Whether he went at his own expense, or whether he was sent at the expense of the Roman government, does not appear. There is a difference of reading here in the ancient versions. The Syriac reads it, "And thus Festus determined that he [Paul] should be sent to Caesar in Italy," etc. The Latin Vulgate and the Arabic also read "he" instead of "we." But the Greek manuscripts are uniform; and the correct reading is, doubtless, that which is in our version.

Into Italy. The country still bearing the same name, of which Rome was the capital.

And certain other prisoners. Who were probably also sent to Rome for a trial before the emperor. Dr. Lardner has proved that it was common to send prisoners from Judea and other provinces to Rome. Credibility, Part i., chap. x., & 10, pp. 248, 249.

A centurion. A commander of a hundred men.

Of Augustus' band. For the meaning of the word "band," **See Barnes** "Mt 27:27, **See Barnes "Ac 10:1"**.

It was a division in the Roman army, consisting of from four to six hundred men. It was called "Augustus' band" in honour of the Roman emperor Augustus, **See Barnes** "Ac 25:21, and was probably distinguished in some way for the care in enlisting or selecting them. The Augustus cohort or band is mentioned by Suetonius in his Life of Nero, 20.

{b} "Paul" Ac 25:12,25 {*} "certain" "some"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *A ship of Adramyttium*. A maritime town of Mysia, in Asia Minor, opposite to the island of Lesbos. This was a ship which had been built there, or which sailed from that port, but which was then in the port of Caesarea. It is evident, from Ac 27:6, that this ship was not expected to sail to Italy, but that the centurion expected to find some other vessel into which he could put the prisoners to take them to Rome.

We launched. We loosed from our anchorage; or we set sail. See Ac 13:13.

By the coasts of Asia. Of Asia Minor. Probably the owners of the ship designed to make a coasting voyage along the southern part of Asia Minor, and to engage in traffic with the maritime towns and cities.

One Aristarchus, a Macedonian. This man is mentioned as Paul's companion in travel, in Ac 19:29. He afterwards attended him to Macedonia, and returned with him to Asia, Ac 20:4. He now appears to have attended him, not as a prisoner, but as a voluntary companion, choosing to share with him his dangers, and to enjoy the benefit of his society and friendship. He went with him to Rome, and was a fellow-prisoner with him there, Col 4:10 and is mentioned Phm 1:24) as Paul's fellow-labourer. It was, doubtless, a great comfort to Paul to have with him two such valuable friends as Luke and Aristarchus; and it was an instance of great affection for him that they were not ashamed of his bonds, but were willing to share his dangers, and to expose themselves to peril for the sake of accompanying him to Rome.

{a} "Aristarchus" Ac 19:29

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *We touched at Sidon*. **See Barnes "Mt 11:21"**.

It was north of Caesarea.

And Julius courteously entreated Paul. Treated him kindly, or humanely.

And gave him liberty, etc. The same thing had been done by Felix, Ac 24:23.

Unto his friends. In Sidon. Paul had frequently travelled in that direction, in going to and returning from Jerusalem; and it is not improbable, therefore, that he had friends in all the principal cities.

To refresh himself. To enjoy the benefit of their kind care, to make his present situation and his voyage as comfortable as possible. It is probable that they would furnish him with many supplies which were needful to make his long and perilous voyage comfortable.

{b} "courteously entreated" Ac 24:23 28:16 {*} "refresh himself" "Take refreshment"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *We sailed under Cyprus*. For an account of Cyprus, **See Barnes "Ac 4:36"**.

By sailing "*under* Cyprus" is meant that they sailed along its coasts; they kept near to it; they thus endeavoured to break off the violent winds. Instead of steering a direct course in the open sea, which would have exposed them to violent opposing winds, they kept near this large island, so that it was between them and the westerly winds. The force of the wind was thus broken, and the voyage rendered less difficult and dangerous. They went between Cyprus and Asia Minor, leaving Cyprus to the left. Had it not been for the strong western winds they would have left it on the right.

The winds were contrary. Were from the west, or south-west, which thus prevented their pursuing a direct course. See the Map.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *The sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia*. The sea which lies off the coast from these two regions. For their situation, see the Map, and Notes, Ac 6:9 13:13.

We came to Myra, a city *of Lycia*. Lycia was a province in the south-western part of Asia Minor, having Phrygia and Pisidia on the north, the Mediterranean on the south, Pamphylia on the east, and Caria on the west.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *A ship of Alexandria*. A ship belonging to Alexandria. Alexandria was in Egypt, and was founded by Alexander the Great. It appears, from Ac 27:38, that the ship was laden with wheat. It is well known that great quantities of wheat were imported from Egypt to Rome; and it appears that this was one of the large ships which were employed for that purpose. Why the ship was on the coast of Asia Minor, is not known. But it is probable that it had been driven out of its way by adverse winds or tempests.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Had sailed slowly*. By reason of the prevalence of the western winds, Ac 27:4.

Over against Cnidus. This was a city standing on a promontory of the same name in Asia Minor, in the part of the province of Cans called Doris, and a little north-west of the island of Rhodes.

The wind not suffering us. The wind repelling us in that direction; not permitting us to hold on a direct course, we were driven off near to Crete.

We sailed under Crete. See Ac 27:4. We lay along near to Crete, so as to break the violence of the wind. For the situation of Crete, **See Barnes "Ac 2:11"**.

Over against Salmone. Near to Salmone. This was the name of the promontory which formed the eastern extremity of the island of Crete.

{1} "under Crete" "Candy"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *And, hardly passing it*. Scarcely being able to pass by it without being wrecked. Being almost driven on it. They passed round the east end of the island, because they had been unable to sail directly forward between the island and the main land.

The fair havens. This was on the south-eastern part of the island of Crete. It was probably not so much a harbour as an open kind of *road*, which afforded good anchorage for a time. It is called by Stephen, the geographer, "the fair shore."

{++} "whereunto" "near which"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *When much time was spent*. In sailing along the coast of Asia; in contending with the contrary winds. It is evident that, when they started, they had hoped to reach Italy before the dangerous time of navigating the Mediterranean should arrive. But they had been detained and embarrassed contrary to their expectation, so that they were now sailing in the most dangerous and tempestuous time of the year.

Because the fast was now already past. By "the fast," here is evidently intended the fast which occurred among the Jews on the great day of atonement. That was the tenth of the month *Tisri*, which answers to a part of September and part of October. It was therefore the time of the autumnal equinox, and when the navigation of the Mediterranean was esteemed to be particularly dangerous, from the storms which usually occurred about that time. The ancients regarded this as a dangerous time to navigate the Mediterranean. See the proofs in Kuinoel on this place.

Paul admonished them. Paul exhorted, entreated, or persuaded them. He was somewhat accustomed to the navigation of that sea; and endeavoured to persuade them not to risk the danger of sailing at that season of the year.

{2} "fast" "The fast was on the tenth day of the seventh month, Le 23:27,29

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Sirs*. Greek, Men.

I perceive. It is not certain that Paul understood this by direct inspiration. He might have perceived it from his own knowledge of the danger of navigation at the autumnal equinox, and from what he saw of the ship as unfitted to a dangerous navigation. But there is nothing that should prevent our believing also that he was guided to this conclusion by the inspiration of the Spirit of God. Comp. Ac 27:23,24.

Will be with hurt. With injury, or hazard. It is not meant that their lives would be lost, but that they would jeoparded.

The lading. The freight of the ship. It was laden with wheat, Ac 27:38. Paul evidently, by this, intended to suggest the propriety of remaining where they were, until the time of dangerous navigation was past.

{1} "hurt" "injury"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *The master*. The captain, or the pilot. The person who is here meant was the helmsman, who occupied, in ancient ships, a conspicuous place on the stern, and steered the ship, and gave directions to the crew.

The owner of the ship. Probably a different person from "the master." He had the general command of the ship as his own property, but had employed "the master," or the pilot, to direct and manage it. His counsel, in regard to the propriety of continuing the voyage, would be likely to be followed.

{a} "believed" Pr 27:12

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *The haven*. The fair havens, Ac 27:8.

Was not commodious to winter in. Not safe or convenient to remain there. Probably it furnished rather a safe anchorage-ground in time of a storm, than a convenient place for a permanent harbour.

The more part. The greater part of the crew.

To Phenice. This was a port or harbour on the south side of Crete, and west of the fair havens. It was a more convenient harbour, and regarded as more safe. It appears, therefore, that the majority

of persons on board concurred with Paul in the belief that it was not advisable to attempt the navigation of the sea, until the dangers of the winter had passed by.

And lieth toward. Greek, *Looking* toward; i.e., it was open in that direction.

The southwest. *kata liba*. Toward *Libya*, or *Africa*. That country was situated south-west of the mouth of the harbour. The entrance of the harbour was in a south-west direction.

And northwest. *kata cwron*. This word denotes a wind blowing from the north-west. The harbour was doubtless curved. Its entrance was in a south-west direction. It then turned so as to lie in a direction towards the north-west. It was thus rendered perfectly safe from the winds and heavy seas; and in that harbour they might pass the winter in security.

{*} "more part" "greater" {b} "Crete" Ac 27:7

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *The south wind*. The wind before had probably been a headwind, blowing from the west. When it veered round to the south, and when it blew gently, though not entirely favourable, yet it was so that they supposed they could sail along the coast of Crete.

Had obtained their purpose. The object of their desire; that is, to sail safely along the coast of Crete.

Loosing thence. Setting sail for the fair havens.

Close by Crete. Near the shore. It is evident that they designed, if possible, to make the harbour of Phenice, to winter there.

{c} "loosing thence" Ac 27:7.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Arose*. Beat violently.

Against it. Against the island of Crete.

A tempestuous wind. Turbulent, violent, strong.

Called Euroclydon. Interpreters have been much perplexed about the meaning of this word, which occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. The most probable supposition is, that it denotes a wind not blowing steadily from any quarter, but a *hurricane*, or wind veering about to different quarters. Such hurricanes are known to abound in the Mediterranean, and are now called *Levanters*, deriving their name from blowing chiefly in the Levant, or eastern part of the Mediterranean. The name Euroclydon is derived probably from two Greek words, *eurov*, wind, and *kludwn*, a wave; so called from its agitating and exciting the waves. It thus answers to the usual effects hurricane, or of a wind rapidly changing its points of compass.

{2} "arose" "beat" {d} "tempestuous wind" Ps 107:25

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *The ship was caught*. By the wind. It came suddenly upon them as a tempest.

Could not bear up, etc. Could not resist its violence, or could not direct the ship. It was seized by the wind, and driven with such violence that it became unmanageable.

We let her drive. We suffered the ship to be borne along by the wind, without attempting to control it.

{+} "caught" "Borne away"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *And running under*. Running near to an island. They run near to it, where the violence of the wind was probably broken by the island.

Which is called Clauda. This is a small island southwest of Crete.

We had much work. Much difficulty; we were scarcely able to do it.

To come by the boat. This does not mean that they attempted here to land in the boat, but they had much difficulty in saving the small boat attached to the ship, from being staved to pieces. Whether it was carried in the ship or towed at the stern, does not appear; but it is evident that it was in danger of being broken to pieces, or lost, and that they had much difficulty in securing it. The importance of securing the small boat is known by all seamen.

{++} "much work" "difficulty"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Which when they had taken up*. When they had raised up the boat into the ship, so as to secure it.

They used helps. They used ropes, cables, stays, or chains, for the purpose of securing the ship. The danger was, that the ship would be destroyed; and they, therefore, made use of such aids as should prevent the loss of the ship.

Undergirding the ship. The ancients were accustomed to pass cables or strong ropes from one side of the ship to another, to keep the planks from springing or starting by the action of the sea. The rope was slipped under the prow, and passed along to any part of the keel which they pleased, and made fast on the deck. See cases mentioned in Kuinoel on this verse. An instance of the same kind is mentioned in Lord Anson's voyage round the world. Speaking of a Spanish man-of-war in a storm, he says, "They were obliged to throw overboard all their upper-deck guns, and take six turns of the cable round the ship, to prevent her opening." (*Clark*.)

Lest they should fall into the quicksands. There were two celebrated *syrtes*, or quicksands, on the coast of Africa, called the greater and lesser. They were vast beds of sand driven up by the sea,

and constantly shifting their position, so that they could not know certainly where the danger was, and guard against it. As they were constantly changing their position, they could not be accurately laid down in a chart. They were afraid, therefore, that they should be driven on one of those banks of sand, and thus be lost.

Strake sail. Or, rather, lowered or took down the mast, or the yards to which the sails were attached. There has been a great variety of interpretations proposed on this passage. The most probable is, that they took down the mast, by cutting or otherwise, as is now done in storms at sea, to save the ship. They were at the mercy of the wind and waves; and their only hope was by taking away their sails.

And so were driven. By the wind and waves. The ship was unmanageable, and they suffered it to be driven before the wind.

{e} "fall into the quicksands" Ps 107:25

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *They lightened the ship*. By throwing out a part of the cargo.

{f} "tossed" Ps 107:27

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *The tackling of the ship*. The anchor, sails, cables, baggage, etc. That is, they threw over everything that was not indispensable to its preservation, for it seems still Ac 27:29.

{g} "cast out" Job 2:4 Jon 1:5

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Neither sun nor stars*, etc. As they could see neither sun nor stars, they could make no observations; and as they had no compass, they would be totally ignorant of their situation, and gave up all is lost.

{i} "all hope" Eze 37:11

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *But after long abstinence*. By the violence of the storm, by their long-continued labour, and by their apprehension of danger, they had a long time abstained from food.

And to have gained this harm. To have *procured* this harm, or have subjected yourselves to it. Had you remained there, you would have been safe. It seems to be bad English to speak of *gaining a loss*, but it is a correct translation of the original, *kerdhsai*, which expresses the idea of *acquiring or procuring*, whether good or evil. See Ac 27:9,10.

{a} "hearkened" Ac 27:10 {b} "have loosed" Ac 27:13 {*} "gained" "procured"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *There shall be no loss*. This must have been cheering news those who had given up all for lost. As Paul had manifested great wisdom in former advice to them, they might now be more disposed to listen to him. The reason why he believed they would be safe, he immediately states.

{c} "I exhort" Job 22:29 Ps 112:7; 2Co 4:8,9

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *There stood by me*. There appeared to me.

The angel of God. The message of God were often communicated by angels. See Heb 1:14. This does not mean that there was any *particular* angel, but simply *an* angel.

Whose I am. Of the God to whom I belong. This is an expression of Paul's entire devotedness to him.

Whom I serve. In the gospel. To whom and to whose cause I am entirely devoted.

{d} "this night the angel" Ac 22:11 {e} "angel of God" Heb 1:14 {f} "whom I serve" De 32:9 Ps 135:4; Isa 44:5 Mal 3:17; Joh 17:9,10

1Co 6:20 1Pe 2:9,10

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Fear not, Paul*. Do not be alarmed with the danger of the loss of life.

Thou must be brought, etc. And therefore thy life will be spared.

God hath given thee all, etc. That is, they shall all be preserved with thee. None of their lives shall be lost. It does not mean that they should be converted; but that their lives should be preserved. It is implied here that it was for the sake of Paul, or that the leading purpose of the Divine interposition to rescue them from danger was to save his life. The wicked often derive important

benefits from being connected with Christians; and God often confers important favours on *them* in his general purposes to benefit his own people. The lives of impenitent men are often spared because God interposes to save his own people.

{h} "given thee" Ge 19:21,29

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 25

Verse 25. No Barnes text on this verse.

{+} "good cheer" "courage" {i} "For I believe God"

Lu 1:45 Ro 4:20,21 2Ti 1:12

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Howbeit*. Nevertheless.

Upon a certain island. Malta. See Ac 28:1

{k} "certain island" Ac 28:1

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *The fourteenth night*. From the time when the tempest commenced.

In Adria. In the Adriatic Sea. This sea is properly situated between Italy and Dalmatia, now called the Adriatic Gulf. But, among the ancients, the name was given not only to that gulf, but to the whole sea lying between Greece, Italy, and Africa, including the Sicilian and Ionian Sea. It is evident, from the narrative, that they were not in the Adriatic Gulf, but somewhere in the vicinity of Malta. See the Map.

Deemed. Judged. Probably by the appearance of the sea.

{&} "Adria" "The Adriatic Sea" {|} "shipmen deemed" "The sailors thought"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *And sounded*. To *sound* is to make use of a line and lead to ascertain the depth of water.

Twenty fathoms. A fathom is six feet, or the distance from the extremity of the middle finger on one hand to the extremity of the other, when the arms are extended. The depth, therefore, was about one hundred and twenty feet.

Fifteen fathoms. They knew, therefore, that they were drawing near to shore.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *They cast four anchors*. On account of the violence of the storm and waves, to make if possible the ship secure.

And wished for the day. To discern more accurately their situation and danger.

{l} "wished for the day" Ps 130:6

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *The shipmen*. The sailors, leaving the prisoners.

Under colour. Under pretence. They pretended that it was necessary to get into the boat, and carry the anchors ahead of the ship so as to make it secure, but with a real intention to make for the shore.

Out of the foreship. From the prow, so as to make the fore part of the ship secure. The reason why they did this was, probably, that they expected the ship would go to pieces; and as all on board could not be saved in one small boat, they resolved to escaped to a place of safety as soon as possible.

{%} "shipmen" "sailors" {**} "flee" "escape" {++} "under colour" "pretence"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers*. The centurion had, it appears, the general direction of the ship, Ac 27:11. Probably it had been pressed into the service of the government.

Except these. These seamen. The soldiers and the centurion were unqualified to manage the ship, and the presence of the sailors was therefore indispensable to the preservation of any.

Abide in the ship. Remain on board.

Ye cannot be saved. You cannot be preserved from death. You will have no hope of managing the ship so as to be secure from death. It will be remembered that Paul had been informed by the angel, and had assured then, Ac 27:22-24, that no lives should be lost. But it was only in the use of the proper *means* that their lives would be safe, yet this did not, in his view, prevent the use of the proper means to secure it. From this we lay learn,

(1.) that the certainty of an event does not render it improper to use means to obtain it.

(2.) That though the event may be determined, yet the use of the means may be indispensable. The event is rendered no more certain than the means requisite to accomplish it.

(3.). That the doctrine of the Divine purposes or decrees, making certain future events, does not make the use of man's agency unnecessary or improper. The means are determined as well as the end; and the one will not be secured without the other.

(4.) The same is true in regard to the decrees respecting salvation. The end is not determined without the means; and as God has resolved that his people shall be saved, so he has also determined the means. He has ordained that they shall repent, shall believe, shall be holy, and shall *thus* be saved.

(5.) We have in this case a full answer to the objection that a belief in the decrees of God will make men neglect the means of salvation, and lead to licentiousness. It has just the contrary tendency. Here is a case in which Paul *certainly* believed in the purpose of God to save these men; in which he was assured that it was fully determined; and yet the effect was not to produce inattention and unconcern, but to prompt him to use strenuous efforts to accomplish the very effect which God had determined *should* take place. So it is always. A belief that God has purposes of mercy; that he designs, and has always designed, to save some, will prompt to the use of all proper means to secure it. If we had no evidence that God had any such purpose, effort would be vain. We should have no inducement in exertion. Where we *have* such evidence, it operates as it did in the case of Paul, to produce great and strenuous endeavours to secure the object.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *Cut off the ropes*, etc. It is evident that the mariners had not yet got on board the boat. They had let it down into the sea, Ac 27:30, and were about to go on board. By thus cutting the ropes which fastened the boat to the ship, and letting it go, they removed all possibility of their fleeing from the ship, and compelled them to remain on board.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *And while the day was coming on*. At daybreak. It was before they had sufficient light to discern what they should do.

To take meat. Food. The word meat was formerly used to denote *food* of any kind.

That ye have tarried. That you have remained or been fasting.

Having taken nothing. No *regular* meal. It cannot mean that they had lived entirely without food; but that they had been so much in danger, so constantly engaged, and so anxious about their safety, that they had taken no *regular* meal; and that what they had taken had been at irregular intervals, and had been a scanty allowance. "Appian speaks of an army which for twenty days together had neither food nor sleep; by which he must mean that they neither made full meals, nor slept whole nights together. The same interpretation must be given to this phrase." (*Doddridge*.)

The effect of this must have been, that they would be weak and exhausted, and little able to endure the fatigues which yet remained.

{*} "meat" "food" {+} "tarried" "waited"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *Not an hair fall from the head*, This is a proverbial expression, denoting that they should be preserved safe; that none of them should be lost; and that in their persons they should not experience the least damage, 1Sa 14:45, 1Ki 1:52.

{a} "for your health" Mt 15:32 1Ti 5:23 {b} "shall not an hair fall" 1Ki 1:52 Mt 10:30; Lu 12:7 21:18

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *And gave thanks*, etc. This was the usual custom among the Hebrews. **See Barnes "Mt 14:19".**

Paul was among those who were not Christians. But he was not ashamed of the proper acknowledgment of God, and was not afraid to avow his dependence on him, and to express his gratitude for his mercy.

{c} "gave thanks" 1Sa 9:13 Mt 15:36; Mr 8:6 Joh 6:11,23 1Ti 4:3,4

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 36

Verse 36. No Barnes text on this verse.

{+} "good cheer" "courage" {*} "meat" "food"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 37

Verse 37. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *They lightened the ship*. By casting the wheat into the sea. As they had no hope of saving the cargo, and had no further use for it, they hoped that by throwing the wheat overboard, the ship would draw less water, and that thus they would be able to come nearer to the shore.

{&} "wheat" "corn"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *They knew not the land*. They had been driven with a tempest, without being able to make any observation; and it is probable that they were entire strangers to the coast, and to the whole island.

A certain creek with a shore. Greek, A certain *bosom—kolpon*—or bay. By its having a shore is probably meant that it had a level shore, or one that was convenient for landing. It was not a high bluff of rocks, but was accessible. Kuinoel thinks that the passage should be construed, "they found a certain shore, having a bay," etc.

Were minded. Were resolved.

{|} "minded" "determined"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 40

Verse 40. *Had taken up the anchors*. The four anchors with which they had moored the ship, Ac 27:29. See the margin. The expression may mean that they slipped or cut their cables, and that thus they left the anchors in the sea. This is the most probable interpretation.

And loosed the rudder-bands. The rudder in navigation is that by which a ship is steered. It is that part of the helm which consists of a piece of timber, broad at the bottom, which enters the water, and is attached by hinges to the stern-post on which it turns. (*Webster*.) But what was the precise form of the rudder, among the ancients, is not certainly known. Sometimes a vessel might be steered by oars. In most ships they appear to have had a rudder at the prow as well as at the stern. In some instances also they had them on the sides. The word used here in the Greek is in the plural—*twn phdaliwn*—and it is evident that they had in this ship more than one rudder. The bands mentioned here were probably the cords or fastenings, by which the rudder could be made secure to the sides of the ship, or could be raised up out of the water in a violent storm, to prevent its being carried away. And as in the tempest the rudders had become useless, (Ac 27:15,17,) they were probably either raised out of the water, or made fast. Now that the storm was passed, and they could be used again, they were *loosed*, and they endeavoured to direct the vessel into port.

The mainsail. *artemona*. There have been various explanations of this word. Luther translates it, *the mast*. Erasmus, *the yards*. Grotius, who supposes that the mainmast had been cast away, (Ac 27:17,) thinks that this must mean the foremast or bowsprit. The word usually means the *mainsail*. The Syriac and Arabic understand it of a small sail, that was hoisted for a temporary purpose.

{1} "taken up the anchors" "Or, cut the anchors, they left them in the sea"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 41

Verse 41. *And falling*. Being carried by the wind and waves.

Into a place where two seas met. Gr., Into a place *of a double sea*. *diyalasson*. That is, a place which is washed on both sides by the sea. It refers properly to an isthmus, tongue of land, or a sand-bar, stretching out from the main land, and which was washed on both sides by the waves. It is evident that this was not properly an isthmus that was above the waves, but was probably a long sandbank that stretched far out into the sea, and which they did not perceive. In endeavouring to make the harbour, they ran on this bar or sand-bank.

They ran the ship aground. Not designedly, but in endeavouring to reach the harbour, Ac 27:39.

The hinder part was broken. The stern was broken or staved in. By this means the company was furnished with boards, etc., on which they were safely conveyed to the shore, Ac 27:44.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 42

Verse 42. *And the soldiers' counsel*, etc. Why they gave this advice is not known. It was probably, however, because the Roman military discipline was very strict, and if they escaped, it would probably be charged on them that it had been done by the negligence and unfaithfulness of the soldiers. They therefore proposed, in a most cruel and bloodthirsty manner, to kill them, though contrary to all humanity, justice, and laws; presuming probably that it would be supposed that they had perished in the wreck. This is a remarkable proof that men can be cruel even when experiencing the tender mercy of God; and that the most affecting scenes of Divine goodness will not mitigate the natural ferocity and cruelty of those who delight in blood.

{d} "counsel" Ps 74:20

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 43

Verse 43. *But the centurion, willing to save Paul*. He had at first been disposed to treat Paul with kindness, Ac 27:3. And his conduct on board the ship; the wisdom of his advice, Ac 27:10; the prudence of his conduct in the agitation and danger of the tempest; and not improbably the belief that he was under the Divine protection and blessing, disposed him to spare his life.

Kept them from their purpose. Thus, for the sake of this one righteous man, the lives of all were spared. The instance here shows,

(1.) that it is possible for a pious man, like Paul, so to conduct in the various trying scenes of life—the agitations, difficulties, and temptations of this world—as to conciliate the favour of the men of this world; and,

(2.) that important benefits often result to sinners from the righteous. Paul's being on board was the means of saving the lives of many prisoners; and God often confers important blessings on the wicked for the sake of the pious relatives, friends, and neighbours with whom they are connected. Ten righteous men would have saved Sodom, Ge 18:32; and Christians are in more ways than one the salt of the earth, and light of the world, Mt 5:13,14. It is a privilege to be related to the friends of God—to be the children of pious parents, or to be connected with pious partners in life. It is a privilege to be connected with the friends of God in business, or to dwell near them, or to be associated with them in the various walks and dangers of life. The streams of blessings which flow to fertilize *their* lands, flow also to bless others; the dews of heaven which descend on their habitations, descend on all around; and the God which crowns them with loving-kindness, often fills the abodes of their neighbours and friends with the blessings of peace and salvation.

And commanded. Probably they were released from their chains.

{e} "save Paul" 2Co 11:25

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 27 - Verse 44

Verse 44. *And the rest*. Those who could not swim.

They escaped all safe to land. According to the promise which was made to Paul, Ac 27:22. This was done by the special Providence of God. It was a remarkable instance of Divine interposition to save so many through so long-continued dangers; and it shows that God can defend in any perils, and can accomplish all his purposes. On the ocean or the land, we are safe in his keeping; and he can devise ways that shall fulfil all his purposes, and that can protect his people from danger.

{a} "so it came to pass" Ac 27:22 Ps 107:28-30.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 28

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 28 - Verse 1

Chapter 28

Verse 1. *They knew*. Either from their former acquaintance with the island, or from the information of the inhabitants.

Was called Melita. Now called Malta. It was celebrated formerly for producing large quantities of honey, and is supposed to have been called Melita from the Greek word signifying honey. It is about twenty miles in length from east to west, and twelve miles in breadth from north to south, and about sixty miles in circumference. It is about sixty miles from the coast of Sicily. The island is an immense rock of white soft free-stone, with a covering of earth about one foot in depth, which has been brought from the island of Sicily. There was also another island formerly called *Melita*, now called *Meleda*, in the Adriatic Sea, near the coast of Illyricum; and some have supposed that

Paul was shipwrecked on that island. But tradition has uniformly said that it was on the island now called Malta. Besides, the other Melita would have been far out of the usual tract in going to Italy; and it is further evident that Malta was the place, because, from the place of his shipwreck, he went directly to Syracuse, Rhegium, and Puteoli, thus sailing in a direct course to Rome. In sailing from the other Melita to Rhegium, Syracuse would be far out of the direct course. The island now is in the possession of the British.

{b} "island" Ac 27:26

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 28 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And the barbarous people*. **See Barnes "Ro 1:14"**.

The Greeks regarded all as barbarians who did not speak their language; and applied the name to all other nations but their own. It does not denote, as it does sometimes with us, people of savage, uncultivated, and cruel habits, but simply those whose speech was unintelligible. See 1Co 14:11. The island is supposed to have been peopled at first by the Phoecians, afterwards by the Phoenicians, and afterwards by a colony from Carthage. The language of the Maltese was that of Africa, and hence it was called by the Greeks the language of barbarians. It was a language which was unintelligible to the Greeks and Latins.

The rain. The continuance of the storm.

And of the cold. The exposure to the water in getting to the shore, and probably to the coldness of the weather. It was now in the month of October.

{c} "barbarous people" Ro 1:14 Col 3:11 {d} "received us every one" Mt 10:42 Heb 13:2

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 28 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Had gathered a bundle of sticks*. For the purpose of making a fire.

There came a viper. A poisonous serpent. **See Barnes "Mt 3:7"**.

The viper was, doubtless, in the bundle of sticks or limbs of trees which Paul had gathered, but was concealed, and was torpid. But when the bundle was laid on the fire, the viper became warmed by the heat, and ran out, and fastened on the hand of Paul.

And fastened on his hand. *kayhqe*. This word properly means, to join one's self to; to touch; to adhere to. It might have been by coiling around his hand and arm; or by fastening its fangs in his hand. It is not expressly affirmed that Paul was *bitten* by the viper, yet it is evidently implied; and it is wholly incredible that a viper, unless miraculously prevented, should fasten himself to the hand without biting.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 28 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *The venomous beast*. The word beast we apply usually to an animal of larger size than a viper. But the original word—*yhrion*— is applicable to animals of any kind, and especially applied by Greek writers to serpents. See *Schleusner*.

No doubt. The fact that the viper had fastened on him, and that, as they supposed, he must now certainly die, was the proof from which they inferred his guilt.

Is a murderer. Why they thought he was a murderer rather than guilty of some other crime, is not known. It might have been,

(1.) because they inferred that he must have been guilty of some very atrocious crime; and as murder was the highest crime that man could commit, they inferred that he had been guilty of this. Or,

(2.) more probably, they had an opinion that when Divine vengeance overtook a man, he would be punished in a manner similar to the offence; and as murder is committed usually with the hand, and as the viper had fastened on the hand of Paul, they inferred that he had been guilty of taking life. It was supposed among the ancients, that persons were often punished by Divine vengeance in that part of the body which had been the instrument of the sin.

Whom, though he hath escaped the sea. They supposed that vengeance and justice would still follow the guilty; that though he might escape one form of punishment, yet he would be exposed to another. And this, to a certain extent, is true. These barbarians reasoned from great original principles, written on the hearts of all men by nature, that there is a God of justice, and that the guilty would be punished. They reasoned incorrectly, as many do, only because that they supposed that every calamity is a judgment for some particular sin. Men often draw this conclusion; and suppose that suffering is to be traced to some particular crime, and to be regarded as a direct judgment from heaven. **See Barnes "Joh 9:1,** Joh 9:2-3. The general proposition, that all sin will be punished at some time is true; but we are not qualified to affirm of particular calamities always that they are direct judgments for sin. In some cases we may. In the case of the drunkard, the gambler, and the profligate, we cannot doubt that the loss of property, health, and reputation is the direct result of specific crime. In the ordinary calamities of life, however, it requires a more profound acquaintance with the principles of Divine government than we possess, to affirm of each instance of suffering that it is a particular judgment for some crime.

Yet vengeance. *dikh Dike*, or justice, was represented by the heathen as a goddess, the daughter of Jupiter, whose office it was to take vengeance, or to inflict punishment for crimes.

Suffereth not to live. They regarded him as already a dead man. They supposed the effect of the bite of the viper would be so certainly fatal, that they might speak of him as already in effect dead.—*Beza*.

{*} "venomous beast" "serpent" {e} "No doubt" Joh 7:24

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 28 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And he shook off*, etc. In this was remarkably fulfilled the promise of the Saviour; "They shall take up serpents," etc. Mr 16:18.

{*} "beast" "serpent" {f} "no harm" Mr 16:18 Lu 10:19

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 28 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *When he should have swollen*. When they expected he would have swollen from the bite of the viper. The poison of the viper is rapid; and they expected that he would die soon. The word rendered "swollen"—*pimprasyai*—means, properly, to burn, to be inflamed, and then to be swollen from inflammation. This was what they expected here, that the poison would produce a violent inflammation.

Or fallen down dead suddenly. As is sometimes the case from the bite of the serpent, when a vital part is affected.

They changed their minds. They saw he was uninjured, and miraculously preserved; and they supposed that none but a god could be thus kept from death.

That he was a god. That the Maltese were idolaters there can be no doubt. But what gods they worshipped is unknown, and conjecture would be useless. It was natural that they should attribute such a preservation to the presence of a divinity. A similar instance occurred at Lystra. **See Barnes "Ac 14:11"**.

{+} "Howbeit" "However" {++} "looked" "expected" {g} "that he was a god" Ac 14:11

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 28 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *In the same quarters*. In that place, or that part of the island.

Possessions. Property. His place of residence.

The chief man. Gr. The *first* man. Probably he was the governor of the island.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 28 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *A bloody flux*. Gr. Dysentery.

And laid his hand on him, In accordance with the promise of the Saviour, Mr 16:18. This miracle was a suitable return for the hospitality of Publius, and would serve to conciliate further the kindness of the people, and prepare the way for the usefulness of Paul.

{a} "Paul entered" Jas 5:14,15 {b} "laid his hands" Mt 9:18 Mr 6:5-7,32 16:18; Lu 4:40 Ac 19:11

1Co 12:9,22

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 28 - Verse 9

Verse 9. No Barnes text on this verse.

{*} "healed" "cured"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 28 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Who also honoured us*. As men who were favoured of heaven, and who had been the means of conferring important benefits on them in healing the sick, etc. Probably the word "honours" here means gifts, or marks of favour.

They laded us. They gave us, or conferred on us. They furnished us with such things as were necessary for us on our journey.

{c} "honoured us" 1Th 2:6 1Ti 5:17

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 28 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *And after three months*. Probably they remained there so long, because there was no favourable opportunity for them to go to Rome. If they arrived there, as is commonly supposed, in October, they left for Rome in January.

In a ship of Alexandria. **See Barnes "Ac 27:6".**

Whose sign. Which was ornamented with an image of Castor and Pollux. It was common to place on the prow of the ship the image Of some person, or god, whose name the ship bore. This custom is still observed.

Castor and Pollux. These were two semi-deities. They were reputed to be twin brothers, sons of Jupiter and Leda, the wife of Tyndarus, king of Sparta. After their death, they are fabled to have been translated to heaven, and made *constellations* under the name of *gemini*, or the twins. They then received divine honours, and were called the sons of Jupiter. They were supposed to preside over sailors, and to be their protectors; hence it was not uncommon to place their image on ships. See authorities in Lempriere's Dictionary.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 28 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *And landing at Syracuse*. Syracuse was the capital of the island of Sicily, on the eastern coast. it was in the direct course from Malta to Rome. It contains at present about 18,000 inhabitants.

{+} "tarried" "remained"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 28 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *We fetched a compass*. We coasted about; or we coasted along the eastern side of Sicily. The course can be seen on the Map.

And came to Rhegium. This was a city of Italy, in the kingdom of Naples, on the coast near the south-west extremity of Italy. It was nearly opposite to Messina, in Sicily. It is now called *Reggio*. See the Map.

The south wind. A wind favourable for their voyage.

To Puteoli. The wells. It was celebrated for its warm baths; and from these, and its springs, it is supposed to have derived its name of *the wells*. It is now called *Pozzuoli*, and is in the campania of Naples, on the northern side of the bay, and about eight miles north-west from Naples. The town contains at present about 10,000 inhabitants.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 28 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Brethren*. Christian brethren. But by whom the gospel had been preached there is unknown.

{&} "tarry" "remain"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 28 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *And from thence*. From Puteoli.

When the brethren heard of us. The Christians who were at Rome.

As far as Appii forum. This was a city about fifty-six miles from Rome. The remains of an ancient city are still seen there. It is on the borders of the Pontine marshes. The city was built on the celebrated Appian way, or road from Rome to Capua. The road was made by Appius Claudius, and probably the city also. It was called the *forum* or *market-place* of Appius, because it was a convenient place for travellers on the Appian way to stop for purposes of refreshment. It was also a famous resort for pedlars and merchants. See Horace, b. i. sat. 5.3.

And The three taverns. This place was about eight or ten miles nearer Rome than Appii forum. Cicero ad Att. ii. 10. It undoubtedly received its name because it was distinguished as a place of refreshment on the Appian way. Probably the greater part of the company of Christians remained at this place, while the remainder went forward to meet Paul, and to attend him of his way. The Christians at Rome had doubtless heard much of Paul. His epistle to them had been written about A. D. 57, or at least five years before this time. The interest which the Roman Christians felt in the apostle was thus manifested by their coming so far to meet him, though he was a prisoner.

He thanked God. He had long ardently desired to see the Christians of Rome, Ro 1:9-11 15:23,32.

He was now grateful to God that the object of his long desire was at last granted to him, and that he was permitted to see them, though in bonds.

And took courage. From their society and counsel. The presence and counsel of Christian brethren is often of inestimable value in encouraging and strengthening us in the toils and trials of life.

{e} "came to meet us" Ac 21:5 3Jo 1:6,8
{f} "courage" Jos 1:6,7,9 1Sa 30:6 Ps 27:14

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 28 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *The captain of the guard*. The commander of the Pretorian cohort, or guard. The custom was, that those who were sent from the provinces to Rome for trial were delivered to the custody of this guard. The name of the prefect or captain of the guard, at this time, was Burrhas Afranius. Tacit. Ann. 12, 42, 1.

But Paul was suffered, etc. Evidently by the permission of the centurion, whose favour he had so much conciliated on the voyage. See Ac 27:43.

With a soldier that kept him. That is, in the custody of a soldier, to whom he was chained, and who, of course, constantly attended him. See Ac 24:23. **See Barnes "Ac 12:6"**.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 28 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Paul called the chief of the Jews*. He probably had two objects in this: one was to vindicate himself from the suspicion of crime, or to convince them that the charges alleged against him were false; and the other, to explain to them the gospel of Christ. In accordance with his custom everywhere, he seized the excellent opportunity of making the gospel known to his own countrymen; and he naturally supposed that charges highly unfavourable to his character had been sent forward against him to the Jews at Rome by those in Judea.

Against the people. Against the Jews, Ac 24:12.

Or customs, etc. The religious rites of the nation. **See Barnes "Ac 24:12"**.

Was I delivered prisoner, etc. By the Jews, Ac 21:33, etc.

{|} "come together" "assembled" {h} "though I have committed" Ac 24:12,13, 25:8
{i} "delivered prisoner" Ac 21:33

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 28 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *When they had examined me*, etc. Ac 24:10-17, Ac 25, Ac 26.

No cause of death. No crime worthy of death.

{k} "Who" Ac 24:10 26:31

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 28 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *The Jews spake against it*. Against my being set at liberty.

I was constrained. By a regard to my own safety and character.

To appeal unto Caesar. **See Barnes "Ac 25:11".**

Not that I had ought, etc. I did it for my own preservation and safety; not that I wished to accuse my own countrymen. It was not from motives of revenge, but for safety. Paul had been unjustly accused and injured; yet, with the true spirit of the Christian religion, he here says that he cherished no unkind feelings towards them.

{a} "appeal" Ac 25:11

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 28 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Because that for the hope of Israel*. On account of the hope which the Jews cherished of the coming of the Messiah; of the resurrection; and of the future state through him. **See Barnes "Ac 23:6".**

I am bound with this chain. **See Barnes "Ac 26:29".**

Probably he was attached constantly to a soldier by a chain.

{b} "hope of Israel" Ac 26:6,7 {c} "chain" Ac 26:29 Eph 3:1, 4:1 6:20; 2Ti 1:16 2:9; Phm 1:10,13.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 28 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *We neither received letters*, etc. Why the Jews in Judea had not forwarded the accusation against Paul to their brethren at Rome, that they might continue the prosecution before the emperor, is not known. It is probable that they regarded their cause as *hopeless*, and chose to abandon the prosecution. Paul had been acquitted successively by Lysias, Felix, Festus, Agrippa; and as they had not succeeded in procuring his condemnation before them, they saw no prospect of doing it at Rome, and chose therefore not to press the prosecution any farther.

Neither any of the brethren that came. Any of the Jews. There was a very constant intercourse between Judea and Rome; but it seems that the Jews, who had come before Paul had arrived, had not mentioned his case, so as to prejudice them against him.

{*} "shewed" "related"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 28 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *What thou thinkest*. What your belief is; or what are the doctrines of Christians respecting the Messiah.

This sect. The sect of Christians.

Spoken against. Particularly by Jews. This was the case then, and, to a great extent, is the case still. It has been the common lot of the followers of Christ to be spoken of with contempt. Comp. Ac 24:5.

{d} "every where" Lu 2:34 Ac 24:5,14 1Pe 2:12, 4:14

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 28 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Appointed him a day*. A day when they would hear him.

To his lodging. To the house where he resided, Ac 28:30.

He expounded. He explained or declared the principles of the Christian religion.

And testified the kingdom of God. Bore witness to, or declared the principles and doctrines of the reign of the Messiah. **See Barnes "Mt 3:2"**.

Persuading them concerning Jesus. Endeavouring to convince them that Jesus was the Messiah.

Both out of the law of Moses. Endeavouring to convince them that he corresponded with the predictions respecting the Messiah in the books of Moses, Ge 49:10; De 18:18, and with the types which Moses had instituted to prefigure the Messiah.

And out of the prophets. Showing that he corresponded with the predictions of the prophets. **See Barnes "Ac 17:3"**.

From morning till evening. An instance of Paul's indefatigable toil in endeavouring to win his own countrymen to Jesus as the Messiah.

{e} "lodging" Phm 1:2 {f} "expounded" Lu 24:27 Ac 17:3, 19:8

{g} "law and prophets" Ac 26:6,22 {+} "testified" "bore testimony to"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 28 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *And some believed*, etc. **See Barnes "Ac 14:4"**.

{h} "some believed" Ac 14:1 17:4, 19:9 Ro 3:3

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 28 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Had spoken one word*. One declaration of solemn prophecy, reminding them that it was the characteristic of the nation to reject the testimony of God, and that it was to be expected. It was the last solemn warning which we know Paul to have delivered to his countrymen the Jews.

Well spake. Or he spoke the truth; he justly described the character of the Jewish people. The passage here quoted was as applicable in the time of Paul as of Isaiah.

The Holy Ghost. A full proof of the inspiration of Isaiah.

By Esaias. By Isaiah. Isa 6:9,10.

{++} "Holy Ghost" "Holy Spirit" {&} "Esias" "Isaiah" {i} "the prophet" Ps 81:11 Isa 6:9; Jer 5:21 Eze 3:6,7 12:2

Mt 13:14,15; Ro 11:8

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 28 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Saying*, etc. See this passage explained; **See Barnes "Mt 13:14"**; **See Barnes** "Joh 12:39,40".

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 28 - Verse 27

Verse 27. No Barnes text on this verse.
{|} "waxed gross" "become"

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 28 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *The salvation of God*. The knowledge of God's mode of saving men.

Is sent unto the Gentiles. Since you have rejected it, it will be offered to them. **See Barnes "Ac 13:46".**

And that they will hear it. They will embrace it. Paul was never discouraged. If the gospel was rejected by one class of people, he was ready to offer it to another. If his own countrymen rejected and despised it, he never allowed himself to suppose that Christ had died in vain, but believed that others would be inclined to embrace its saving benefits. How happy would it be if all Christians had the same unwavering faith and zeal as Paul!

{k} "Gentiles" Mt 21:41 Ac 13:46,47 18:6, 22:21 26:17,18 Ro 11:11

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 28 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *And had great reasoning*. Great discussion or debates. That is, the part which believed that Jesus was the Messiah, Ac 28:24, discussed the subject warmly with those who did not believe. This whole verse is wanting in the Syriac version and in some Greek Mss., and is supposed by Mill and Griesbach to be spurious.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 28 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *Paul dwelt two whole years*. Doubtless in the custody of the soldiers. Why he was not prosecuted before the emperor during this time is not known. It is evident, however, Ac 28:21, that the Jews were not disposed to carry the case before Nero; and the matter, during this time, was suffered quietly to sleep. There is great probability that the Jews durst not prosecute him before the emperor. It is clear that they had never been in favour of the appeal to Rome, and that they had no hope of gaining their cause. Probably they might remember the former treatment of the Roman emperor of their people, **See Barnes "Ac 18:2"**; they might remember that they were despised at the Roman capital, and not choose to encounter the scorn and indignation of the Roman court; and as there was no prosecution, Paul was suffered to live in quietness and safety. Lardner, however, supposes (vol. v. pp. 528, 529, Edit. 8vo. Lond. 1829) that the case of Paul was soon brought before Nero, and decided; and that the method of confinement was ordered by the emperor himself. Lightfoot also supposes that Paul's "accusers, who had come from Judea to lay their charge against him, would be urgent to get their business despatched, that they might be returning to their own home again, and so would bring him to trial as soon as they could." But nothing certain is known on the subject. It is evident, indeed, from 2Ti 4:16, that he was at *some time* arraigned before the emperor; but when it was, or what was the decision, or why he was at last set at liberty, are all involved in impenetrable obscurity.

In his own hired house. In a house which he was permitted to hire, and occupy as his own. Probably in this he was assisted by the kindness of his Roman friends.

And received all, etc. Received all hospitably and kindly who came to him to show him kindness, or to listen to his instructions. It is evident from this, that he was still a prisoner, and was not permitted to go at large.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - Chapter 28 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *Preaching the kingdom of God*. **See Barnes "Ac 20:25"**.

With all confidence. Openly and boldly, without any one to hinder him. It is known, also, that Paul was not unsuccessful even when a prisoner at Rome. Several persons were converted by his preaching even in the court of the emperor. The things which had happened to him, he says, Php 1:12-14, had fallen out rather to the furtherance of the gospel, so that his bonds in Christ were manifested in all the palace, and in all other places; and many brethren in the Lord, says he, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. In this situation he was remembered with deep interest by the church of Philippi, who sent Epaphroditus to him with a contribution to supply his wants. Of their kindness he speaks in terms of the tenderest gratitude in Php 2:25 4:18. During his confinement, also, he was the means of the conversion of Onesimus, a runaway slave of Philemon, of Colosse in Phrygia, Phm 1:10 whom he sent back to his master with a letter to himself, and with an epistle to the church at that place. Col 4:8,9,18.

During this imprisonment he wrote, according to Lardner, the following epistles, in the following order and time, viz :—

Ephesians, April, A. D 61
2Timothy, May 61
Philippians, before the end of 62
Colossians 62
Philemon 62
Hebrews, spring of 63

Here closes the inspired account of the propagation of Christianity, of the organization of the Christian church, and of the toils and persecutions of the apostle Paul. Who can but be deeply affected when he comes to the conclusion of this inspired book of revivals, and of the history of the spread of the Christian religion, and of the account of that wonderful man—the apostle Paul? Who can help heaving the sigh of regret, that this interesting historian did not carry forward the history of Paul till his death; and that henceforward, in the history of the church, we want this faithful, inspired guide; and that, from the close of this book, everything becomes at once so involved in obscurity and uncertainty? Instead, however, of pouring forth the sigh of unavailing regret that the sacred historian has carried us no farther onward, we should rather speak the language of praise that he has given, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, a history of the church for thirty years after the ascension of the Saviour; that he has recorded the accounts of the first great revivals of religion; that he has presented us the examples of the early missionary zeal; that he has informed us how the early Christians endured persecution and toil; that he has conducted us from land to land, and from city to city, showing us everywhere how the gospel was propagated, until we are led to the seat of the Roman power, and see the great apostle of Christianity there proclaiming, in that mighty capital of the world, the name of Jesus as the Saviour of men. Perhaps there could be no more appropriate close to the book of the inspired history, than thus to have conducted the apostle of the Gentiles, and to have recorded the spread of Christianity, to the capital of the Roman world, and to leave the principal agent in the establishment of the Christian religion in that seat of intelligence, and influence, and power. It is the conducting of Christianity to the very height of its earthly victories; and having shown its power in the provinces of the empire, it was proper for the inspired author of this ecclesiastical history to close the account with the record of its achievements in the capital.

Why Luke closed his history here is not known. It may have been that he was not afterwards the companion of Paul; or that he might have been himself removed by death. It is agreed on all hands that he did not attend Paul in his subsequent travels; and we should infer, from the conclusion of this book, that he did not survive the apostle, as it is almost incredible, if he did, that he did not mention his release and death. It is the uniform account of antiquity, that Luke, after the transactions with which the Acts of the Apostles closes, passed over into Achaia, where he lived a year or two, and there died at the age of eighty-four years.

Everything in regard to the apostle Paul, after the account with which Luke closes this book, is involved in doubt and uncertainty. By what means he was set at liberty is not known; and there is a great contradiction of statements in regard to his subsequent travels, and even the time of his death. It is generally agreed, indeed, that he was set at liberty in the year of our Lord 63. After this, some of the Fathers assert that he travelled over Italy, and passed into Spain. But this account is involved in great uncertainty. Lardner, who has examined all the statements with care, and than whom no one is better qualified to pronounce an opinion on these subjects, gives the following

account of the subsequent life of Paul. (Works, vol. v. 331—336. Ed. Loud. 1829.) He supposes that, after his release, he went from Rome to Jerusalem as soon as possible; that he then went to Ephesus, and from thence to Laodicea and Colosse; and that he returned to Rome by Troas, Philippi, and Corinth. The reason why he returned to Rome, Lardner supposes, was that he regarded that city as opening before him the widest and most important field of labour; and that therefore he proposed there to spend the remainder of his life.

In the year of our Lord 64, a dreadful fire happened at Rome, which continued for six or seven days. It was generally supposed that the city had been set on fire by order of the emperor Nero. In order to divert the attention of the people from this charge against himself, he accused the Christians of having been the authors of the conflagration, and excited against them a most furious and bloody persecution. In this persecution, it is generally supposed that Paul and Peter suffered death; the former by being beheaded, and the latter by crucifixion. Paul is supposed to have been beheaded rather than crucified, because he was a Roman citizen, and because it was unlawful to put a Roman citizen to death on a cross. Lardner thinks that this occurred in the year 65. Where Paul was beheaded is not certainly known. It is generally supposed to have occurred at a place called the Salvian Waters, about three miles from Rome, and that he was buried in the Ostian Way, where a magnificent church was afterwards built. But of this there is no absolute certainty.

It is far more important and interesting for us to be assured, from the character which he evinced, and from the proofs of his zeal and toil in the cause of the Lord Jesus, that his spirit rested in the bosom of his Saviour and his God. Wherever he died, his spirit, we doubt not, is in heaven. And where that body rested at last, which he laboured "to keep under," and which he sought to bring "into subjection," 1Co 9:27, and which was to him so much the source of conflict and of sin, Ro 7:5,23 is a matter of little consequence. It will be watched and guarded by the eye of that Saviour whom he served, and will be raised up to eternal life. In his own inimitable language, it was sown in corruption, it shall be raised in incorruption; it was sown in dishonour, it shall be raised in glory; it was sown in weakness, it shall be raised in power; it was sown a natural body, it shall be raised a spiritual body, 1Co 15:42-44. And in regard to him, and to all other saints, when that corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and that mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory," 1Co 15:54. To Paul now, what are all his sorrows, and persecutions, and toils in the cause of his Master? What but a source of thanksgiving that he was permitted thus to labour to spread the gospel through the world? So may we live, imitating his life of zeal, and self-denial, and faithfulness, that, when he rises from the dead, we may participate with him in the glories of the resurrection of the just!

{a} "kingdom of Jesus" Ac 4:31 Eph 6:19

BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

CONDENSED FROM THE LATE REV. JOHN BROWN, OF HADDINGTON \- I.—Brief history of Christ after his death, 1—8; his ascension to heaven, 9—11. The disciples' return to Jerusalem, 12—14. Peter relates the history of Judas' wickedness and ruin; Matthias chosen an apostle by lot, 15—26.

II.—The Holy Ghost poured out upon the disciples, 1—4. Multitudes crowd to see and hear them; part are astonished, and others deride, 5—13. Peter vindicates himself and brethren, and shows that this was promised by Joel, and bestowed in consequence of the death, resurrection, and

ascension of Christ, 14—36. Three thousand converted to Christ, 37—41. These primitive Christians remarkably pious and charitable, and God blesses them, 42—47.

III.—Peter and John cure a lame man by a word, 1—11. Peter takes occasion to represent Christ's power, and their sin in crucifying him, 12—18. He exhorts and encourages them to repent and believe in him, 19—26.

IV.—Peter and John are imprisoned; but five thousand are converted to Christ, 1—4. Being examined touching their cure of the lame man, they avow that they had done it by the authority and power of Jesus Christ, 8—12. The Jewish rulers dismiss them, and prohibit them from preaching, 13—22. The two apostles and brethren ask of God further operations of his grace; and are answered by a repeated descent of the Holy Ghost, 23—31. The believers knit together in love, and abound in piety and charity, 31—37.

V.—Ananias and Sapphira struck dead, 1—11. The apostles work many miracles, 12—16. Are again imprisoned, but delivered by an angel, and go on in preaching, 17—25. Being again brought before the sanhedrim, they boldly avow Jesus to be the exalted Messiah, 26—33. By the advice of Gamaliel, they are dismissed, after being scourged, 34—40. They depart, rejoicing in their persecution, and proceed in their work of preaching Christ, 41, 42.

VI.—Seven deacons chosen and ordained for the distribution of alms, 1—6. Many priests and others converted; Stephen actively bestirs himself for Christ —is disputed against, accused, and appears before the sanhedrim, 7—15.

VII.—By an historical account of the Hebrew nation under Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, 1—16: under Moses, 17—4!: under Joshua, David, and Solomon, 44—50: and under their judges and kings, 42, 43: Stephen shows that the temple and ceremonies were but typical; and that, for their wickedness, God had threatened to disperse their nation. He charges his persecutors with wickedness, 51—53. Enraged,they stone him to death; he commits himself to Christ, and prays for his murderers, 54—60,

VIII.—While Stephen is buried and lamented, the Christians at Jerusalem are terribly persecuted by Saul and others, 1—3. The church enlarged by the dispersion of the persecuted preachers, who spread the gospel abroad; particularly Philip in Samaria, 4—13. Peter and John confirm the new converts there, and reprove Simon, 14—25. Philip converts and baptizes the Ethiopian eunuch, 26—38. The eunuch joyfully pursues his journey homeward; Philip preaches along the western borders of Canaan, 39,40.

IX.—Saul, going to persecute the Christians at Damascus, is, by Christ's voice from heaven, converted, 1—9. After some reluctance, Ananias baptizes him, 10—19. Saul preaches Christ at Damascus, 20—22. The Jews attempt to murder him, and he narrowly escapes, 23—25. After three years, he is admitted among the Christians at Jerusalem, 26—28. To escape the fury of the Hellenist Jews, he retires to Tarsus, while the church greatly flourishes, 29—31. Peter cures Eneas of a palsy, and restores Dorcas to life, 32—43.

X.—The long-promised calling of the Gentiles into the gospel church. Directed by a vision, Cornelius sends to Joppa for Peter, 1—8. Directed by a vision of beasts and a voice from heaven, Peter readily goes, 9—23. Peter and Cornelius relate the substance of their respective visions, 24—33. Peter represents that the distinction of Jews and Gentiles was now abolished by God; and exhibits Christ crucified, and now exalted, as the Messiah foretold by the prophets, and the Saviour of the world, 34—43. The Holy Ghost descends upon Cornelius and his friends, and they are baptized, 44—48.

XI.—Peter accused by his Christian brethren at Jerusalem, 1—5. He vindicates himself, and abundantly satisfies them, 6—18. The gospel published at Antioch in Syria, with great success, 19—21. Barnabas is sent thither; and, finding Paul, goes with him to help forward the work: the converts are there first named Christians, 22—26. Agabus having foretold a famine, the Syrian converts agree to contribute to their poor brethren at Jerusalem, 27—30.

XII.—Herod Agrippa persecutes the Christians, murders the apostle James, and imprisons Peter, 1—4. Peter liberated by an angel, 5—19. Herod struck by an angel, and dies miserably, 20—23. After his death the gospel has great success, and Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch, 24, 25.

XIII.—Paul and Barnabas are solemnly separated to preach the gospel, 1—3. Beginning at Seleucia, they proceed to Cyprus, 4—7. They strike Elymas the sorcerer with blindness, and convert Sergius Paulus, 8—12. Coming from Cyprus, they arrive at Antioch in Pisidia; where Paul gives the Jews a history of their nation, from the deliverance from Egypt to David; represents the crucified Jesus as risen again and exalted to glory, and as the only Saviour of men, 13—41. On the next sabbath, some were converted; but other Jews contradicting and blaspheming, Paul and Barnabas pronounce them obstinate unbelievers, and preach to the Gentiles with great success, 42—49. Departing thence, they testify against their persecutors, and come to Iconium, 50—52.

XIV.—After successfully preaching the gospel at Iconium, persecution makes Paul and Barnabas flee to Lystra, Derbe, etc., 1—7. At Lystra they heal a lame man; upon which the people could scarcely be restrained from worshipping them as gods, 8—18. Quickly after, instigated by the Jews, they stoned Paul till they thought he was dead, 19, 20. They visit the churches lately planted, 21—23. They report what the Lord had done, 24—28.

XV.—A dispute at Antioch about circumcising Gentile converts; Paul and Barnabas sent to Jerusalem to have the matter decided, 1—5. The apostles and elders meet to consider it; after Peter, Paul, Barnabas, and James had spoken, a decision is made against circumcising Gentiles; but requiring them to abstain from things offered to idols, from things strangled, from blood, and from fornication, 6—-29. Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch, where the decree is received with great joy, 30—35. They propose a second journey, but contend about John Mark, and take different routes, 36—41.

XVI.—Paul finds Timothy at Lystra, circumcises him, takes him for an assistant, and visits the churches, delivering the decrees, 1—5. The Holy Ghost prohibits their preaching in Proconsular Asia and Bithynia, but directs them to Macedonia, 6—12. Lydia is converted at Philippi, and entertains them kindly, 13—15. Paul casts out a spirit of divination, for which he and Silas are scourged and imprisoned, 16—24. They sing praises in the prison, an earthquake opens the doors, and the jailer and his family are converted and baptized, 25—33. Paul and Silas oblige the magistrates to liberate and dismiss them honourably as Roman citizens, 34—40.

XVII.—Paul comes to Thessalonica, and preaches with great success; is persecuted by the Jews, 1—9. Flees to Berea, and preaches till the Jews drive him thence, 10—14. Conducted to Athens, he preaches Christ and the resurrection, and disputes with the heathen, 15—31. Converts but few, 32—34.

XVIII.—Paul goes from Athens to Corinth: preaches first to the Jews, 1—6; and afterwards to the Gentiles with great success, and encouraged by a vision, 6—11. Accused before Gallio, who refuses to hear the accusation, 19—17. Returns through Ephesus, Antioch, and other places, 18—23. Apollos, instructed by Aquila and Priscilla, preaches in Ephesus and Achaia, 24—28.

XIX.—Paul returns to Ephesus, and imparts the Holy Ghost to some of John's disciples. 1—7. Preaches three months in the Jews' synagogue; but meeting there with great opposition, he preaches two years in the school of Tyrannus, 8—12. Some Jewish exorcists confounded, and many other practisers of devilish arts converted, 13—20. Paul defers his intended journey, 21, 22. Demetrius and his brethren raise a mob to cry up Diana, but the town clerk disperses it by a sensible remonstrance, 23—41.

XX.—Paul travels through Macedonia, Greece, and Asia, till he comes to Troas, 1—6. Preaches at Troas, administers the Lord's Supper, and raises Eutychus, 7—12. Leaves for Jerusalem, and comes to Miletus, 13—16. Sends for the elders of Ephesus, and charges them to take the care of their church, 17—35. Takes a most solemn and affectionate farewell, 86—38.

XXI.—Paul and his friends, sailing southward from Miletus, touch at Patara, Tyre, Ptolemais, and arrive at Caesarea, 1—8. Lodged in Philip's house, and urged in vain to forbear going up to Jerusalem, 8—14. Coming to Jerusalem, Paul salutes the brethren; reports his success; and at their advice, purifies himself after the custom of the Jews, 15—25. Some Asiatic Jews, seeing him in the temple, incense the multitude to apprehend him, 27—30. Being in danger of his life, he is rescued by the Roman captain, 31—40.

XXII.—By an affectionate address in the Hebrew tongue, Paul procures attention, 1,2. He gives an account of his parentage and early life, 3—5; of his conversion, 6—11; of his being baptized, and further instructed by Ananias, 12—16; of his call from heaven to preach to the Gentiles, 17—1; which greatly enrages the Jews, 22, 23. The chief captain again rescues him, and orders him to be bound and scourged, 24, 25. Paul claims his privileges, is freed from his bonds, and brought to the Jewish council, 26—30.

XXIII.—Paul, before the council, professes his continued integrity; rebukes the high priest, and foretells his ruin, 1—5. He prudently creates a division among his enemies, 6—9; and is carried away by the chief captain, 10. Christ, by a vision, encourages him, and warns him of further trouble at Rome; plot of the Jews to murder him, 11—15. Paul's nephew informs him and the chief captain of the plot, 16—22. Its execution prevented, 23—35.

XXIV.—The high priest and elders, with Tertullus, come to Caesarea, and accuse Paul before Felix, 1—9. Paul clears himself, and defends his behaviour and doctrine, 10—21. Felix defers the decision, and gives Paul more liberty, 22, 23; trembles at his discourse, 24, 25; but he leaves him a prisoner, 26, 27.

XXV.—Paul again accused before Festus, 1—7. He again vindicates himself, and appeals to the Roman emperor, 8—12. Festus relates the case to king Agrippa, who desires to hear Paul, 13—23. Festus presents Paul; acquits him of the charges, and leaves him to answer for himself, 23—27.

XXVI.—After a polite address to Agrippa, 1—3; Paul gives an account of his parentage, Pharisaical profession, belief of the resurrection, inveterate rage against Christ and his followers, 4-11. Relates the manner of his conversion and call to the apostleship; his preaching Christ afterwards, 12—23. Festus pronounces him mad; but Paul maintains the contrary, 24—26. Agrippa almost persuaded to be a Christian; declares Paul innocent, 27—32.

XXVII.—Paul's voyage to Rome as a prisoner: the beginning calm and prosperous, 1—8. Paul warns them of a storm, but in vain, 9—11. They meet it, and are nearly wrecked, 12—20. Paul assures them that their lives would be preserved, 21—26. They all escape to land at Malta, 27—44.

XXVIII.—Paul and his companions hospitably entertained at Malta, 1, 2. Miraculously preserved from a viper, 3—6. Heals Publius' father, and others, 7—10. After three months, they sail by Syracuse, Rhegium, and Puteoli; Paul travels to Rome, 11—16. He sends for some principal Jews, and shows them the injustice of his imprisonment, 17—20. He afterwards preaches the gospel with partial success, 21—29. As a prisoner in his own hired house, he preaches unmolested to all that come to him, 30, 31.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 1

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 1

ROMANS Chapter One

PREFACE

THE Epistle to the Romans has been usually regarded as the most difficult portion of the New Testament. It is from this cause, probably, as well as from the supposition that its somewhat abstruse discussions could not be made interesting to the young, that so few efforts have been made to introduce it into Sunday Schools and Bible Classes. It will doubtless continue to be a fact, that Sunday School instruction will be confined chiefly to the historical parts of the Bible. In the Sacred Scriptures there is this happy adaptedness to the circumstances of the world, that so large a portion of the volume can thus be made interesting to the minds of children and youth; that so much of it is occupied with historical narrative; with parables; with interesting biographies of the holy men of other times, and with the life of our blessed Lord. But still, while this is true, there is a considerable portion of the youth, in various ways under the instruction of the Bible, who may be interested in the more abstruse statements and discussions of the *doctrinal* parts of the Holy Scriptures. For such—for Sunday School teachers; for Bible Classes; and for the higher classes in Sabbath Schools—these Notes have been prepared. The humble hope has been cherished that this epistle might be introduced to this portion of the youth of the churches; and thus tend to imbue their minds with correct views of the great *doctrines* of the Christian Revelation.

This object has been kept steadily in view. The design has not been to make a *learned* commentary; nor to enter into theological discussions; nor to introduce, at length, practical reflections; nor to enter minutely into critical investigations. All these can be found in books professedly on these subjects. The design has been to state, with as much brevity and simplicity as possible, the real meaning of the sacred writer; rather the *results* of critical inquiry, as far as the author has had ability and time to pursue it, than the *process* by which those results were reached. The design has been to state what appeared to the author to be the real *meaning* of the Epistle, without any regard to any existing theological system; and without any deference to the opinions of others, further than the respectful deference and candid examination, which are due to the opinions of the learned, the wise, and the good, who have made this Epistle their particular study. At the same time that this object has been kept ill view, and the reference to the Sabbath School teacher, and the Bible Class, has given character to the work, still it is hoped that the expositions are of such a nature as not to be uninteresting to Christians of every age and of every class. He accomplishes a service of no little moment in the cause of the church of God, and of truth, who contributes in any degree to explain the profound argument, the thorough doctrinal discussion, the elevated views, and the vigorous, manly, and masterly reasonings of the Epistle to the Romans.

Of the defects of this work, even for the purpose contemplated, no one will probably be more deeply sensible than the author. Of the time and labour necessary to prepare even such brief Notes as these, few persons, probably, are aware. This work has been prepared amidst the cares and toils of a most responsible pastoral charge. My brethren in the ministry, so far as they may have occasion to consult these Notes, will know how to appreciate the cares and anxieties amidst which they have been prepared. They will be indulgent to the faults of the book; they will not censure harshly what is well-meant for the rising generation; they will be the patrons of every purpose, however humble, to do good.

It remains only to add, that free use has been made of all the helps within the reach of the author. The language of other writers has not been adopted without particular acknowledgment, but their ideas have been freely used where they were thought to express the sense of the text. In particular, aid has been sought and obtained from the following works: the CRITICI SACRI, CALVIN'S COMMENTARY ON THE Romans, DODRIDGE, MACKNIGHT, and ROSENMULLER; and the commentaries of THOLUCK and FLATT—So far as an imperfect knowledge of the German language could render their aid available. A considerable portion was written before Professor STUART'S Commentary appeared. In the remaining portion, important aid has been freely derived from that work. The aim of this work is substantially the same as that of the "Notes on the Gospels," and on the Acts of the Apostles; and the earnest wish and prayer of the author is, that it may be one among many means of establishing the truth, and of promoting its advancement and ultimate triumph in the world.

Philadelphia, June 14, 1834.

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To see the Introduction to Romans, **See Barnes "Ro 1:2"**

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

CHAPTER 1.

Verse 1. *Paul*. The original name of the author of this epistle was *Saul*, Ac 7:58 8:1, 9:1, etc. This was changed to Paul, **See Barnes "**Ac 13:9, and by this name he is generally known in the New Testament. The reason why he assumed this name is not certainly known. It was, however, in accordance with the custom of the times. **See Barnes "Ac 13:9"**.

The name *Saul* was Hebrew; the name *Paul* was Roman. In addressing an epistle to the Romans, he would naturally make use of the name to which they were accustomed, and which would excite no prejudice among them. The ancient custom was to *begin* an epistle with the name of the writer, as Cicero to Varro, etc. We record the name at the end. It may be remarked, however, that the placing the name of the writer at the *beginning* of an epistle was always done, and is still, when the letter was one of authority, or when it conferred any peculiar privileges. Thus in the proclamation of Cyrus, Ezr 1:2, "Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia," etc. See also Ezr 4:11; Ezr 7:12, "Artaxerxes, king of kings, unto Ezra the priest," etc.; Da 4:1. The commencement of a letter by an apostle to a Christian church in this manner was peculiarly proper as indicating *authority*.

A servant. This name was that which the Lord Jesus himself directed his disciples to use, as their *general* appellation, Mt 10:25; Mt 20:27 Mr 10:44.

And it was the customary name which they assumed, Ga 1:10 Col 4:12; 2Pe 1:11 Jude 1:1; Ac 4:29 Tit 1:1; Jas 1:1. The *proper* meaning of this word servant— *doulov* is *slave*, one who is not

free. It expresses the condition of one who has a master, or who is at the control of another. It is often, however, applied to *courtiers*, or the officers that serve under a king; because in an eastern monarchy the relation of an absolute king to his courtiers corresponded nearly to that of a master and a slave. Thus the word is expressive of *dignity* and *honour*; and the servants of a king denote officers of a high rank and station. It is applied to the prophets as those who were honoured by God, or peculiarly entrusted by him with office, De 34:5 Jos 1:2; Jer 25:4.

The name is also given to the Messiah, Isa 42:1, "Behold my servant in whom my soul delighteth," etc.; Isa 53:11, "Shall righteous servant justify many."

The apostle uses it here evidently to denote *his* acknowledging Jesus Christ as his Master; as indicating his dignity, as peculiarly appointed by him to his great work; and as showing that in this epistle he intended to assume no authority of his own, but simply to declare the will of his Master, and thefts.

Called to be *an apostle*. This word called means, here, not merely to be invited, but has the sense of appointed. It indicates that he had not assumed the office himself, but that he was set apart to it by the authority of Christ himself. It was important for Paul to state this,

(1.) because the other apostles had been called or chosen to this work, Joh 15:16,19; Mt 10:1 Lu 6:13

and,

(2.) because Paul was not one of those originally appointed. It was of consequence for him, therefore, to affirm that he had not taken this high office to himself, but that he had been called to it by the authority of Jesus Christ. His appointment to this office he not unfrequently takes occasion to vindicate, 1Co 9:1, etc.; Ga 1:12-24 2Co 12:12; 1Ti 2:7 2Ti 1:11; Ro 11:13.

An apostle. One *sent* to execute a commission. It is applied because the apostles were *sent out* by Jesus Christ to preach his gospel, and to establish his church. **See Barnes "Mt 10:2"**; **See Barnes "Lu 6:13"**.

Separated. The word translated *separated unto—aforizw* —means, to designate, to mark out by fixed limits, to bound as a field, etc. It denotes those who are separated, or called out from the common mass, Ac 19:9 2Co 6:17. The meaning here does not materially differ from the expression, *called to be an apostle*, except that perhaps this includes the notion of the *purpose* or *designation* of God to this work. Thus Paul uses the same word respecting himself, Ga 1:15, "God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace;" i.e., God designated me; marked me out; or designed that I should be an apostle from my infancy. In the same way Jeremiah was designated to be a prophet, Jer 1:5.

Unto the Gospel of God. Designated or designed by God that I should make it *my business* to preach the gospel. Set apart to this, as the peculiar, great work of my life; as having no other object for which I should live. For the meaning of the word *gospel*, **See Barnes "Mt 1:1"**.

It is called the gospel *of God* because it is his appointment; it has been originated by him, and has his authority. The office of an apostle was to preach the gospel. Paul regarded himself as separated to this work. It was not to live in splendour, wealth, and ease, but to devote himself to this great business of proclaiming good news, that God was reconciled to men in his Son. This is the sole business of all ministers of religion.

{a} "a servant of" Ac 27:23 {b} "called" Ac 9:15 1Co 1:1 {c} "separated" Ac 13:2 Ga 1:15

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 2

The EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

INTRODUCTION

THIS Epistle has been, with great uniformity, attributed to the apostle Paul, and received as a part of the sacred canon. It has *never* in the church been called in question as a genuine, an inspired book, except by three of the ancient sects deemed heretical—the Ebionites, the Encratites, and Cerinthians. But they did not deny that it was written by the apostle Paul. They rejected it because they could not make its *doctrines* harmonize with their views of other parts of the Scriptures. Their rejecting it, therefore, does not militate against its genuineness. That is a question to be settled *historically*, like the genuineness of any other ancient writing. On this point the testimony of antiquity is uniform. The proof on this subject may be seen at length in Lardner's works. The *internal* evidence that this was written by Paul is stated in a most ingenious and masterly manner by Dr. Paley, in his *Horae Paulinae*.

It is agreed by all, that this epistle was written in Greek, Though addressed to a people whose language was the Latin, yet this epistle to them, like those to other churches, was in Greek. On this point, also, there is no debate. The reasons why this language was chosen were probably the following.

(1.) The epistle was designed, doubtless, to be read by other churches as well as the Roman. Compare Col 4:16. Yet the Greek language, being generally known and spoken, was more adapted to this design than the Latin.

(2.) The Greek language was then understood at Rome, and extensively spoken. It was a part of polite education to learn it. The Roman youth were taught it; and it was the fashion of the times to study it, even so much so as to make it matter of complaint that the Latin was neglected for it by the Roman youth. Thus Cicero (Pro. Arch.) says, *The Greek language is spoken in almost all nations; the Latin is confined to our comparatively narrow borders*. Tacitus (Orat. 29) says, *An infant born now is committed to a Greek nurse*. Juvenal (vi. 185) speaks of its being considered as an indispensable part of polite education, to be acquainted with the Greek.

(3.) It is not impossible that the Jews at Rome, who constituted a separate colony, were better acquainted with the Greek than the Latin. They had Greek, but no Latin translation of the Scriptures; and it is very possible that they used the language in which they were accustomed to read their Scriptures, and which was extensively spoken by their brethren throughout the world.

(4.) The apostle was himself probably more familiar with the Greek than the Latin. He was a native of Cilicia, where the Greek was doubtless spoken, and he not unfrequently quotes the Greek poets in his addresses and epistles, Ac 21:37 17:28; Tit 1:12 1Co 15:33.

This epistle is placed *first* among Paul's epistles, not because it was the first written, but because of the length and importance of the epistle itself, and the importance of the church in the imperial city. It has uniformly had this place in the sacred canon, though there is reason to believe that the Epistle to the Galatians, the first to the Corinthians, and perhaps the two to the Thessalonians, were written before this. Of the *time* when it was written there can be little doubt. About the year 52 or 54 the emperor Claudius banished all Jews from Rome. In Ac 18:2, we have an account of the *first* acquaintance of Paul with Aquila and Priscilla, who had departed from Rome in consequence of

that decree. This acquaintance was formed in Corinth; and we are told that Paul abode with them, and worked at the same occupation, Ac 18:3. In Ro 16:3,4, he directs the church to greet Priscilla and Aquila, who had for his life laid down their own necks. This service which they rendered him must have been, therefore, *after* the decree of Claudius; and of course the epistle must have been written *after* the year 52.

In Ac 18:19, we are told that he left Aquila and Priscilla at Ephesus. Paul made a journey through the neighbouring regions, and then returned to Ephesus, Ac 19:1. Paul remained at Ephesus at least two years, (Ac 19:8,9,10) and while here probably wrote the first Epistle to the Corinthians. In that epistle (Ac 16:19) he sends the salutation of Priscilla and Aquila, who were of course still at Ephesus, The Epistle to the Romans, therefore, in which he sends his salutation to Aquila and Priscilla, as being then at Rome, could not be written until they had left Ephesus and returned to Rome; that is, until three years, at least, after the decree of Claudius in 52 or 54.

Still further. When Paul wrote this epistle, he was about to depart for Jerusalem to convey a collection which had been made for the poor saints there, by the churches in Macedonia and Achaia, Ro 15:25,26. When he had done this, he intended to go to Rome, Ro 15:28. Now, by looking at the Acts of the Apostles, we can determine when this occurred. At this time he sent Timotheus and Erastus before him into Macedonia, while he remained in Asia for a season, Ac 19:22. After this, (Ac 20:1,2) Paul himself went into Macedonia, passed through Greece, and remained about three months there. In this journey it is almost certain that he went to Corinth, the capital of Achaia, at which time it is supposed this epistle was written. From this place he set out for Jerusalem, where he was made a prisoner and after remaining a prisoner two years, Ac 24:27 he was sent to Rome about A.D. 60. Allowing for the time of his travelling and his imprisonment, it must have been about three years from the time that he purposed to go to Jerusalem; that is, from the time that he finished the epistle. (Ro 15:25-29) to the time when he reached Rome, and thus the epistle must have been written about A.D. 57.

It is clear, also, that the epistle was written from Corinth. In Ro 16:1, Phebe, a member of the church at Cenchrea, is commended to the Romans. She probably had charge of the epistle, or accompanied those who had it. Cenchrea was the port of the city of Corinth, about seven or eight miles from the city. In Ro 16:23, Gaius is spoken of as the *host* of Paul, or he of whose hospitality Paul partook; but Gaius was baptized by Paul at Corinth, and Corinth was manifestly his place of residence, 1Co 1:14. Erastus is also mentioned as the chamberlain of the city where the epistle was written; but this Erastus is mentioned as having his abode at Corinth, 2Ti 4:20. From all this it is manifest that the epistle was written at Corinth, about the year 57.

Of the state of the church at Rome at that time it is not easy to form a precise opinion. From this epistle it is evident that it was composed of Jews and Gentiles, and that one design of writing to it was to reconcile their jarring opinions, particularly about the obligation of the Jewish law; the advantage of the Jew; and the way of justification. It is probable that the two parties in the church were endeavouring to defend each their peculiar opinions, and that the apostle took this opportunity and mode to state to his converted countrymen the great doctrines of Christianity, and the relation of the law of Moses to the Christian system. The epistle itself is full proof that the church to whom it was addressed was composed of Jews and Gentiles. No small part of it is an argument expressly with the Jews, chapters 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, and 11. And no small part of the epistle also is designed to state the true doctrine about the character of the Gentiles, and the way in which they could be justified before God.

At this time there was a large number of Jews at Rome. When Pompey the Great overran Judea, he sent a large number of Jews prisoners to Rome, to be sold as slaves. But it was not easy to control them. They persevered resolutely and obstinately in adhering to the rites of their nation, in keeping the Sabbath, etc.; so that the Romans chose at last to give them their freedom, and assigned them a place in the vicinity of the city across the Tiber. Here a town was built, which was principally inhabited by Jews. Josephus mentions that 4000 Jews were banished from Rome at one time to Sardinia, and that a still greater number were punished who were unwilling to become soldiers, Ant. xviii, ch. 3, § 5. Philo (Legat. ad Caium) says, that many of the Jews at Rome had obtained their freedom; for, says he, *being made captive in war, and brought into Italy, they were set at liberty by their masters, neither were they compelled to change the rites of their fathers*. See also Josephus, Ant. xvii. ch. ii. § 1. Suetonius' Life of Tiberius, 36, and Notes on Ac 6:9. From that large number of Jews, together with those converted from the Gentiles, the church at Rome was collected, and it is easy to see that *in* that church there would be a great diversity of sentiment, and, no doubt, warm discussions about the authority of the Mosaic law.

At what time, or by whom, the gospel was first preached at Rome has been a matter of controversy. The Roman Catholic Church have maintained that it was founded by Peter, and have thence drawn an argument for their high claims and infallibility. On this subject they make a confident appeal to some of the fathers. There is strong evidence to be derived from this epistle itself, and from the Acts, that *Paul* did not regard Peter as having any such *primacy* and *ascendency* in the Roman church as are claimed for him by the papists.

(1.) In this whole epistle there is no mention of Peter at all. It is not suggested that he had been, or was then, at Rome. If he had been, and the church had been founded by him, it is incredible that Paul did not make mention of that fact. This is the more striking, as it was done in *other* cases where churches had been founded by other men. See 1Co 1:12-15. Especially is *Peter*, or Cephas, mentioned repeatedly by the apostle Paul in his other epistles, 1Co 3:22; 1Co 9:5 15:5; Ga 2:9 1:18, 2:7,8,14.

In these places Peter is mentioned in connexion with the churches at Corinth and Galatia, yet never there as appealing to his authority, but, in regard to the latter, expressly calling it in question. Now, it is incredible that if Peter *had been* then at Rome, and had founded the church there, and was regarded as invested with any peculiar authority over it, that Paul should never once have even suggested his name.

(2.) It is clear that Peter was *not* there when Paul wrote this epistle. If he had been, he could not have failed to have sent him a salutation, amid the numbers that he saluted in the sixteenth chapter.

(3.) In the Acts of the Apostles there is no mention of Peter's having been at Rome; but the presumption, from that history, is almost conclusive that he had not been. In Ac 12:3,4 we have an account of his having been imprisoned by Herod Agrippa near the close of his reign, (comp. Ac 5:23.) This occurred about the third or fourth year of the reign of Claudius, who began to reign A.D. 41. It is altogether improbable that he had been at Rome before this. Claudius reigned more than three years; and all the testimony that the fathers give is, that Peter came to Rome in his reign.

(4.) Peter was at Jerusalem still in the *ninth* or *tenth* year of the reign of Claudius, Ac 15:6, etc. Nor is there any mention made then of his having been at Rome.

(5.) Paul went to Rome about A.D. 60. There is no mention made then of Peter's being with him, or being there. If he had been, it could hardly have failed of being recorded. Especially is this remarkable when Paul's meeting with *the brethren* is expressly mentioned, Ac 28:14,15; and when

it is recorded that he met the Jews, and abode with them, and spent at Rome no less than two years. If *Peter* had been there, such a fact could not fail to have been recorded, or alluded to, either in the Acts or the Epistle to the Romans.

(6.) The epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, to Philemon, and the second Epistle to Timothy, (Lardner, vi. 235,) were written from Rome during the residence of Paul as a prisoner; and the Epistle to the Hebrews probably also while he was still in Italy. In none of these epistles is there any hint that Peter was then, or had been, at Rome; a fact that cannot be accounted for, if he was regarded as the founder of that church, and especially if he was then in that city. Yet in those epistles there are the salutations of a number to those churches. In particular, Epaphras, Luke the beloved physician, Col 4:12,14 and the saints of the household of Caesar are mentioned, Php 4:22. In 2Ti 4:11, Paul expressly affirms that *Luke only was with him*—a declaration utterly irreconcilable with the supposition that Peter was then at Rome.

(7.) If Peter was ever at Rome, therefore, of which indeed there is no reason to doubt, he must have come there after Paul: at what time is unknown. That he was there cannot be doubted, without calling in question the truth of all history.

When, or by whom, the gospel was preached first at Rome, it is not easy, perhaps not possible, to determine. In the account of the day of Pentecost, Ac 2:10 we find, among others, that there were present *strangers of Rome*, and it is not improbable that they carried back the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and became the founders of the Roman church. One design and effect of that miracle was doubtless to spread the knowledge of the Saviour among all nations. See Barnes Notes on Acts chapter 2. In the list of persons who are mentioned in Romans chapter 16 it is not improbable that some of those early converts are included; and that Paul thus intended to show honour to their early conversion and zeal in the cause of Christianity. Thus in Ro 16:7 he designates Andronicus and Junia, his kinsmen and fellow prisoners, who were distinguished among the apostles, and who had been converted before himself, i.e. before a.D. 34, *at least* eight years before it was ever pretended that Peter was at Rome. Other persons are mentioned also as distinguished, and it is not improbable that they were the early founders of the church at Rome, Ro 16:12,13, etc.

That the church at Rome was founded early, is evident from the celebrity which it had acquired. At the time when Paul wrote this epistle, (A.D. 57,) their faith was spoken of throughout the world, Ro 1:8. The character of the church at Rome cannot be clearly ascertained. Yet it is clear that it was not made up merely of the lower classes of the community. In Php 4:22, it appears that the gospel had made its way to the family of Caesar, and that a part of his household had been converted to the Christian faith. Some of the fathers affirm that Nero, in the beginning of his reign, was favourably impressed in regard to Christianity; and it is possible that this might have been through the instrumentality of his family. But little on this subject can be known. While it is probable that the great mass of believers in all the early churches was of obscure and plebeian origin, it is also certain that some who were rich, and noble, and learned, became members of the church of Christ. See 1Ti 2:9; 1Pe 3:3 1Ti 6:20; Col 2:8 1Co 1:26; Ac 17:34.

This epistle has been usually deemed the most difficult of interpretation of any part of the New Testament; and no small part of the controversies in the Christian church have grown out of discussions about its meaning. Early in the history of the church, even before the death of the apostles, we learn from 2Pe 3:16, that the writings of Paul were some of them regarded as being hard to be understood; and that the unlearned and unstable wrested them to their own destruction. It is probable that Peter has reference here to the high and mysterious doctrines about justification

and the sovereignty of God, and the doctrines of election and decrees. From the epistle of James, it would seem probable also, that already the apostle Paul's doctrine of justification by faith had been perverted and abused. It seems to have been inferred that good works were unnecessary; and here was the beginning of the cheerless and withering system of Antinomianism—than which a more destructive or pestilential heresy never found its way into the Christian church. Several reasons might be assigned for the controversies which have grown out of this epistle.

(1.) The very structure of the argument, and the peculiarity of the apostle's manner of writing. He is rapid; mighty; profound; often involved; readily following a new thought; leaving the regular subject, and returning again after a considerable interval. Hence his writings abound with parentheses, and with complicated paragraphs.

(2.) Objections are often introduced, so that it requires close attention to determine their precise bearing. Though he employs no small part of the epistle in answering objections, yet an objector is never once formally introduced or mentioned.

(3.) His *expressions* and *phrases* are many of them liable to be misunderstood, and capable of perversion. Of this class are such expressions as the righteousness of faith, the righteousness of God, etc.

(4.) The doctrines themselves are high and mysterious. They are those subjects on which the profoundest minds have been in all ages exercised in vain. On them there has been, and always will be, a difference of opinion. Even with the most honest intentions that men ever have, they find it difficult or impossible to approach the investigation of them without the bias of early education, or the prejudice of previous opinion. In this world it is not given to men fully to understand these great doctrines. And it is not wonderful that the discussion of them has given rise to endless controversies; and that they who have

Reasoned high
Of Providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate—
Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute—
Have found no end, in wandering mazes lost.

(5.) It cannot be denied, that one reason why the epistles of Paul have been regarded as so difficult has been an unwillingness to admit the truth of the plain doctrines which he teaches. The heart is by nature opposed to them, and comes to believe them with great reluctance. This feeling will account for no small part of the difficulties felt in regard to this epistle. There is one great maxim in interpreting the Scriptures that can never be departed from. It is, that men can never understand them aright, until they are *willing* to suffer them to speak out their fair and proper meaning. When men are determined *not* to find certain doctrines in the Bible, nothing is more natural than that they should find difficulties in it, and complain much of its great obscurity and mystery. I add,

(6.) that one principal reason why so much difficulty has been felt here, has been an unwillingness to stop where the apostle does. Men have desired to advance farther, and penetrate the mysteries which the Spirit of inspiration has not disclosed. Where Paul states a simple *fact*, men often advance a *theory*. The *fact* may be clear and plain; their *theory* is obscure, involved, mysterious, or absurd. By degrees they learn to *unite* the fact and the theory; they regard *their* explanation as the only possible one; and as the fact in question has the authority of Divine revelation, so they insensibly come to regard their theory in the same light; and he that calls in question their speculation about the *cause*, or the *mode*, is set down as heretical, and as denying the doctrine of the apostle. A

melancholy instance of this we have in the account which the apostle gives (chapter 5) about the effect of the sin of Adam. The simple *fact* is stated, that that sin was followed by the sin and ruin of all his posterity. Yet he offers no explanation of the *fact*. He leaves it as indubitable; and as not demanding an explanation in his argument-perhaps as not admitting it. This is the whole of his doctrine on that subject, Yet men have not been satisfied with that. They have sought for a theory to account for it. And many suppose they have found it in the doctrine that the sin of Adam is *imputed*, or set over by an arbitrary arrangement to beings otherwise innocent and that they are held to be responsible for a deed committed by a man thousands of years before they were born. This is the *theory*; and men insensibly forget that it is *mere theory*, and they blend that and the *fact* which the apostle states together; and deem the denial of the one heresy as much as the denial of the other; that is, they make it as impious to call in question *their philosophy*, as to doubt *the facts* stated on the authority of *the apostle Paul*. If men desire to *understand* the epistles of Paul, and avoid difficulties, they should be willing to leave it where *he* does; and this single rule would have made useless whole years and whole tomes of controversy.

Perhaps, on the whole, there is no book of the New Testament that more demands a humble, docile, and prayerful disposition in its interpretation than this epistle. Its profound doctrines; its abstruse inquiries; and the opposition of many of those doctrines to the views of the unrenewed and unsubdued heart of man, make a spirit of docility and prayer peculiarly needful in its investigation. No man ever yet understood the reasonings and views of the apostle Paul but under the influence of elevated piety. None ever found opposition to his doctrines recede, and difficulties vanish, who did not bring the mind in a humble frame to receive *all* that has been revealed; and that, in a spirit of humble prayer, did not purpose to lay aside all bias, and open the heart to the full influence of the elevated truths which he inculcates. Where there is a willingness that God should reign and do all his pleasure, this epistle may be, in its general character, easily understood. Where this is wanting, it will appear full of mystery and perplexity; the mind will be embarrassed, and the heart dissatisfied with its doctrines; and the unhumbled spirit will rise from its study only confused, irritated, perplexed, and dissatisfied.

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Verse 2. *Which he had promised afore*. Which gospel, or which doctrines, he had before announced.

By his prophets. The word *prophets* here is used to include those who *wrote* as well as those who *spake*. It included the teachers of the ancient Jews generally.

In the holy Scriptures. In the writings of the Old Testament. They were called holy because they were inspired of the Holy Ghost, and were regarded as separated from all other writings, and worthy of all reverence. The apostle here declares that he was not about to advance anything new. His doctrines were in accordance with the acknowledged oracles of God. Though they might *appear* to be new, yet he regarded the *gospel* as entirely consistent with all that had been declared in the Jewish dispensation; and not only consistent, but as actually promised there. He affirms, therefore,

(1.) That all this was *promised*, and no small part of the epistle is employed to show this.

(2.) That it was confirmed by the authority of holy and inspired men.

(3.) That it depended on no vague and loose tradition, but was *recorded*, so that men might examine for themselves. The reason why the apostle was so anxious to show that his doctrine coincided with the Old Testament was, because the church at Rome was made up in part of Jews. He wished to show them, and the remainder of his countrymen, that the Christian religion was built

on the foundation of *their* prophets, and their acknowledged writings. So doing, he would disarm their prejudice, and furnish a proof of the truth of religion. It was a constant position with the apostle that he advanced nothing but what was maintained by the best and holiest men of the nation: Ac 26:22,23 "Saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come," etc. There was a further reason here for his appealing so much to the Old Testament. He had never been at Rome. He was therefore personally a stranger, and it was proper for him then especially to show his regard for the doctrines of the prophets. Hence he appeals here so often to the Old Testament; and defends every point by the authority of the Bible. The particular *passages* of the Old Testament on which he relied will come before us in the course of the epistle. See particularly chapters 3, 4, 9, 10, and 11.

We may see here,

(1.) the reverence which Paul showed for the Old Testament. He never undervalued it. He never regarded it as obsolete, or useless. He manifestly *studied* it; and never fell into the impious opinion that the Old Testament is of little value.

(2.) If these things were *promised—predicted* in the Old Testament, then Christianity is true. Every passage which he adduces is therefore proof that it is from God.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Concerning his Son*. This is connected with the first verse, with the word *gospel*. The gospel of God concerning his Son. The design of the gospel was to make a communication relative to his Son Jesus Christ. This is the whole of it. There is no *good news* to man respecting salvation except that which comes by Jesus Christ.

Which was made. The word translated *was made* means, usually, *to be*, or *to become*. It is used, however, in the sense of *being born*. Thus, Ga 4:4, "God sent forth his Son *made* of a woman," born of a woman. Joh 8:58, "Before Abraham *was [born,]* I am." In this sense it seems to be used here—who was born, or descended from the seed of David.

Of the seed of David. Of the posterity or lineage of David. He was a descendant of David. David was perhaps the most illustrious of the kings of Israel. The promise to him was, that there should not fail a man to sit on his throne, 1Ki 2:4 8:25, 9:5 2Ch 6:16.

This ancient promise was understood as referring to the Messiah; and hence in the New Testament he is called the descendant of David, and so much pains is taken to show that he was of his line, Lu 1:27 Mt 9:27, 15:22 12:23

Mt 21:9,15, 22:42,45; Joh 7:42 2Ti 2:8.

As the Jews universally believed that the Messiah would be descended from David, Joh 7:42, it was of great importance for the sacred writers to make it out clearly that Jesus of Nazareth was of that line and family. Hence it happened, that though our Saviour was humble, and poor, and obscure, yet he had that on which no small part of the world have been accustomed so much to pride themselves—an illustrious ancestry. To a Jew there could be scarcely any honour so high as to be descended from the best of their kings; and it shows how little the Lord Jesus esteemed the honours of this world, that he could always evince his deep humility in circumstances where men

are usually proud; and that when he spoke of the honours of this world, and told how little they were worth, he was not denouncing that which was not within his reach.

According to the flesh. The word *flesh—sarx*—is used in the Scriptures in a great variety of significations.

(1.) It denotes, as with us, the flesh literally of any living being. Lu 24:39, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones," etc.

(2.) The animal system, the body, including flesh and bones, the *visible* part of man, in distinction from the invisible, or the soul. Ac 2:31, "Neither did his *flesh*" (his body) "see corruption." 1Co 5:5 15:39.

(3.) The man, the whole animated system, body and soul. Ro 8:3, "In the likeness of sinful *flesh*." 1Co 15:50; Mt 16:17; Lu 3:6.

(4.) *Human nature*. As a man. Thus, Ac 2:30, "God had sworn with an oath that of the fruit of his loins according to the flesh, [i.e., in his human nature,] he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne." Ro 9:5, "Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever." The same is its meaning here. He was a descendant of David in his human nature, or as a man. This implies, of course, that he had *another* nature besides his human; or that, while he was a man, he was also something else; that there was a nature in which he was not descended from David. That this is its meaning will still further appear by the following observations.

(1.) The apostle *expressly* makes a contrast between his condition according to the flesh, and that according to the spirit of holiness.

(2.) The expression, "according to the flesh," is applied to no other one in the New Testament but to Jesus Christ. Though the word *flesh* often occurs, and is often used to denote man, yet the peculiar expression *according to the flesh* occurs in no other connexion. In all the Scriptures it is never said of any prophet or apostle, any lawgiver or king, or any man in any capacity, that he came in the flesh, or that he was descended from certain ancestors *according to the flesh*. Nor is such an expression ever used anywhere else. If it were applied to a mere man, we should instantly ask in what other way *could* he come than in the flesh? Has he a higher nature? Is he an angel, or a seraph? The expression would be unmeaning. And when, therefore, it is applied to Jesus Christ, it implies, if language has any meaning, that there was a sense in which Jesus was not descended from David. What that was appears in the next verse.

{d} "was made" Ps 89:36

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And declared*. In the margin, *determined*. *tou orisyentov*. The ancient Syriac has, "And he was *known* to be the Son of God by might and by the Holy Spirit, who rose from the house of the dead." The Latin Vulgate, "Who was *predestinated* the Son of God," etc. The Arabic, "The Son of God destined by power peculiar to the Holy Spirit," etc. The word translated "declared to be" means, properly, *to bound, to fix limits to*, as to a field, to determine its proper limits or boundaries, to define, etc. Ac 17:26, "And *hath determined the bounds* of their habitation." Hence it means, to determine, constitute, ordain, decree; i.e., to fix or designate the proper boundaries of a truth, or a

doctrine; to distinguish its lines and marks from error; or to show or declare a thing to be so by any action. Lu 22:22, "The Son of man goeth as it was *determined*," as it was fixed, purposed, defined, in the purpose of God, and declared in the prophets. Ac 2:23, "Him being delivered by the *determinate counsel*," the definite, constituted will, or design of God. Ac 4:28 Heb 4:7, "He *limiteth* a certain day," fixes it, defines it. In this sense it is clearly used in this place. The act of raising him from the dead *designated* him, or *constituted* him the Son of God. It was such an act *as in the circumstances* of the case showed that he was the Son of God in regard to a nature which was not "according to the flesh." The ordinary resurrection of a man, like that of Lazarus, would not show that he was the Son of God; but *in the circumstances of Jesus Christ* it did; for he had claimed to be so; he had taught it; and God now *attested* the truth of his teaching by raising him from the dead.

The Son of God. The word *son* is used in a great variety of senses, denoting literally a son, then a descendant, posterity near or remote, a disciple or ward, an adopted son, or one that imitates or resembles another. **See Barnes "Mt 1:1"**.

The expression *sons of God*, or son of God, is used in an almost equal latitude of signification. It is

(1.) applied to Adam, as being immediately created by God, without an earthly father, Lu 3:38.

(2.) It is applied to saints or Christians, as being adopted into his family, and sustaining to him the relation of children, Joh 1:12,13; 1Jo 3:1,2, etc. This name is given to them because they *resemble* him in their *moral* character, Mt 5:45.

(3.) It is given to *strong men* as resembling God in strength. Ge 6:2, "The sons of God saw the daughters of men," etc. Here these men of violence and strength are called sons of God, just as the high hills are called *hills of God*, the lofty trees of Lebanon are called *cedars of God*, etc.

(4.) Kings are sometimes called his sons, as resembling him in dominion and power, Ps 82:6.

(5.) The name is given to angels, because they resemble God; because he is their Creator and Father, etc., Job 1:6 2:1; Da 3:25.

But the name THE *Son of God* is, in the New Testament, given by way of eminence to the Lord Jesus Christ. This was the common and favourite name by which the apostles designated him. The expression *Son of God* is applied to him no less than twenty-seven times in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, and fifteen times in the Epistles and the Revelation. The expression *my Son*, and *his Son, thy Son*, etc., is applied to him in his peculiar relation to God, times almost without number. The other most common appellation which is given to him is *Son of man*. By this name he commonly designated himself. There can be no doubt that *that* was assumed to denote that he was a man, that he sustained a peculiar relation to man, and that he chose to speak of himself as a man. The first, the most obvious, impression on the use of the name *Son of man* is, that he was *truly a man*; and it was used, doubtless, to guard against the impression that one who manifested so many *other* qualities, and did so many things like a celestial being, was *not* truly a human being. The phrase *Son of God* stands in contrast with the title *Son of man*; and as the *natural* and *obvious* import of that is that he was *a man*, so the *natural* and *obvious* import of the title *Son of God* is that he was Divine; *or that he sustained relations to God, designated by the name Son of God, corresponding to the relations which he sustained to man, designated by the name Son of Man*. The natural idea of the term Son of God therefore is, that he sustained a relation to God in his nature which implied more than was human or angelic; which implied *equality* with God. Accordingly, this idea was naturally suggested to the Jews by his calling God his Father: Joh 5:18, "But said also that God

was his Father, *making himself equal with God*." This idea Jesus immediately proceeded to confirm.
See Barnes "Joh 5:19"

and Joh 5:20-30. The same idea is also suggested in Joh 10:29,30,31,33,36, "Say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, thou blasphemest: *because I said I am the Son of God?*" There is, in these places, the fullest proof that the title suggested *naturally* the idea of equality with God; or the idea of his sustaining a relation to God corresponding to the relation of equality to man, suggested by the title Son of man. This view is still further sustained in the first chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, Heb 1:1,2. God hath spoken unto US BY HIS SON. He is *the brightness of his glory*, and the *express image of his person*, Heb 1:3. He is higher than the angels, and they are required to worship him, Heb 1:4,5,6.

He is called God, and his throne is for ever and ever, Heb 1:8. He is *the Creator of the heavens and the earth*, and is IMMUTABLY THE SAME, Heb 1:10-12. Thus the rank, or title, of *the Son of God*, suggests the ideas and attributes of the Divinity. This idea is sustained throughout the New Testament. See Joh 14:9, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father;" Joh 5:23, "That all men should honour the Son even as they honour the father." Col 1:19, "It hath pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;" Col 2:9, "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Php 2:2-11 Re 5:13,14; Re 21:23. It is not affirmed that this title was given to the Second Person of the Trinity *before* he became *incarnate*, or to suggest the idea of any *derivation* or *extraction* before he was made flesh. There is no instance in which the appellation is not conferred to express the relation *after* he assumed human flesh. Of any *derivation* from God, or emanation from him in eternity, the Scriptures are silent. The title is conferred on him, it is supposed, with reference to his condition in this world as the Messiah. And it is conferred, it is believed, for the following reasons, or to denote the following thing, viz:

(1.) To designate his peculiar relation to God, as equal with him, (Joh 1:14,18; Mt 11:27 Lu 10:22, 3:22 2Pe 1:17;) or as sustaining a most intimate and close connexion with him, such as neither man nor angels could do—an acquaintance with his nature, (Mt 11:27,) plans, and counsels, such as no being but one who was *equal* with God *could* possess. In this sense I regard it as conferred on him in the passage under consideration.

(2.) It designates him as the anointed King, or the Messiah. In this sense it accords with the use of the word in Ps 82:6. See Mt 16:16, "Thou art *the Christ, the Son of the living God*." Mt 26:63, "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou *be the Christ, the Son of God*." Mr 14:61; Lu 22:70 Joh 1:34; Ac 9:20, "He preached *Christ* in the synagogues, that *he is the Son of God*."

(3.) It was conferred on him to denote his miraculous conception in the womb of the Virgin Mary. Lu 1:35, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, THEREFORE (*dio*) also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called *the Son of God*."

With power. *en dunamei*. By some, this expression has been supposed to mean *in* power or authority, *after* his resurrection from the dead. It is said, that he was before a man of sorrows; now he was clothed with power and authority. But I have seen no instance in which the expression *in power* denotes *office*, or authority. It denotes *physical* energy and might—and this was bestowed on Jesus *before* his resurrection as well as after. Ac 10:38, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and *with power*." Ro 15:19 1Co 15:43. With *such* power Jesus will come to judgment, Mt 24:30. If there is any passage in which the word *power* means authority, office, etc., it is Mt 28:18, "All power in heaven and earth is given unto me." But this is not a power which was

given unto him after his resurrection, or which he did not possess before. The same authority to commission his disciples he had exercised before this on the same ground, Mt 10:7,8. I am inclined to believe, therefore, that the expression means *powerfully*, *efficiently*; he was with great power, or conclusiveness, shown to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead. Thus the phrase *in power* is used to qualify a verb in Col 1:29, "Which worketh in me *mightily*"—*Greek*, in power i.e., operating in me effectually, or powerfully. The ancient versions seem to have understood it in the same way. *Syriac*, "He was known to be the Son of God by power, and by the Holy Ghost." AEthiopic, "Whom he declared to be the Son of God by his own power, and by his Holy Spirit," etc. Arabic, "Designated the Son of God by power appropriate to the Holy Spirit."

According to the spirit of holiness. *kata pneuma agiwsunhv*. This expression has been variously understood. We may arrive at its meaning by the following considerations.

(1.) It is not the Third Person in the Trinity that is referred to here. The designation of that person is always in a different form. It is the *Holy Spirit*, the Holy Ghost— *pneuma agion*, or *to pneuma to agion*; never the *Spirit of holiness*.

(2.) It stands in contrast with the *flesh*, Ro 1:3, "According to the flesh, the seed of David: according to the spirit of holiness, the Son of God." As the former refers doubtless to his human nature, so this must refer to the nature designated by the title Son of God, that is, to his superior or Divine nature.

(3.) The expression is altogether peculiar to the Lord Jesus Christ. Nowhere in the Scriptures, or in any other writings, is there an affirmation like this. What would be meant by it if affirmed of a mere man?

(4.) It cannot mean that the Holy Spirit, the Third Person in the Trinity, showed that Jesus was the Son of God by raising him from the dead, because that act is nowhere attributed to him. It is uniformly ascribed either to God, *as God*, (Ac 2:24,32, 3:15,26, 4:10 5:30 10:40 13:30,33,34 17:31 Ro 10:9; Eph 1:20,) or to the rather, (Ro 6:4,) or to Jesus himself, (Joh 10:18.) In no instance is this act ascribed to the Holy Ghost.

(5.) It indicates a state far more elevated than any human dignity, or honour. In regard to his earthly descent, he was of a royal race; in regard to the Spirit of holiness, much more than that, he was the Son of God.

(6.) The word *Spirit* is used often to designate God, the holy God, as distinguished from all the material forms of idol worship, Joh 4:24.

(7.) The word *Spirit* is applied to the Messiah in his more elevated or Divine nature. 1Co 15:45, "The last Adam was made a quickening Spirit." 2Co 3:17, "Now the Lord (Jesus) is that Spirit." Heb 9:14, Christ is said to have "offered himself through the eternal Spirit." 1Pe 3:18, he is said to have been "put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." 1Ti 3:16, he is said to have been "justified in the Spirit." In most of these passages there is the same contrast noticed between *his flesh*, his human nature, and his other state, which occurs in Ro 1:3,4. In all these instances, the design is, doubtless, to speak of him as *a man*, and as something more than a man; he was one thing as a man; he was another thing in his other nature. In the one, he was of David; was put to death, etc. In the other, he was of God; he was manifested to be such; he was restored to the elevation which he had sustained before his incarnation and death, Joh 17:1-5 Php 2:2-11. The expression, *according to the spirit of holiness*, does not indeed of itself imply Divinity. It denotes that *holy* and more exalted nature which he possessed as distinguished from the human. What that is, is to be learned from other declarations. *This expression implies simply that it was such as to make proper*

the appellation, the Son of God. Other places, as we have seen, show that that designation naturally implied Divinity. And that this was the true idea couched under the expression, according to the spirit of holiness, appears from those numerous texts of Scripture which explicitly assert his Divinity. See Joh 1:1, etc., and **See Barnes "Joh 1:1"**.

By the resurrection from the dead. This has been also variously understood. Some have maintained that the word *by—ex—*denotes AFTER. He was declared to be the Son of God *in power* after he rose from the dead; that is, he was solemnly invested with the dignity that became the Son of God after he had been so long in a state of voluntary humiliation. But to this view there are some insuperable objections.

(1.) It is not the natural and usual meaning of the word *by*.

(2.) It is not the object of the apostle to state the *time* when the thing was done, or the order, but evidently to declare the *fact*, and the evidence of the fact. If such had been his design, he would have said, that *previous* to his death he was *shown* to be of the seed of David, but *afterwards* that he was invested with power.

(3.) Though it must be admitted that the preposition *by ex* sometimes means AFTER, (Mt 19:20 Lu 8:27, 23:8) yet its proper and usual meaning is to denote the efficient cause, or the agent, or origin of a thing. Mt 1:3,18, 21:25 Joh 3:5; Ro 5:16 Ro 11:36.

"Of him are all things." 1Co 8:6, "One God, the Father, of whom are all things," etc. In this sense I suppose it is used here; and that the apostle means to affirm that he was *clearly* or *decisively* shown to be the Son of God *by* his resurrection from the dead. But here it will be asked, *how* did his *resurrection* show this? Was not Lazarus raised from the dead? And did not many saints rise also after Jesus? And were not the dead raised by the apostles, by Elijah, by the bones of Elisha, and by Christ himself? And did *their* being raised prove that they were the sons of God? I answer, that the mere fact of the resurrection of the body proves nothing *in itself* about the character and rank of the being that is raised. But *in the circumstances* in which Jesus was placed it might show it conclusively. When Lazarus was raised, it was not in attestation of anything which he had taught or done. It was a mere display of the power and benevolence of Christ. But, in regard to the resurrection of Jesus, let the following circumstances be taken into the account.

(1.) He came as the Messiah.

(2.) He uniformly taught that he was the Son of God.

(3.) He maintained that God was his Father in such a sense as to imply equality with him, Joh 5:17-30; Joh 10:36.

(4.) He claimed authority to abolish the laws of the Jews, to change their customs, and to be himself absolved from the observance of those laws, even as his Father was, Joh 5:1-17; Mr 2:28.

(5.) When God raised Him up, therefore, it was not an ordinary event. It was *a public attestation, in the face of the universe, of the truth of his claims to be the Son of God*. God would not sanction the doings and doctrines of an impostor. And when, therefore, he raised up Jesus, he, by this act, showed the truth of his claims, that he was the Son of God. Further; in the view of the apostles, the resurrection was intimately connected with the *ascension* and *exaltation* of Jesus. The one made the other certain. And it is not improbable that, when they spoke of his resurrection, they meant to include not merely that single act, but the entire series of doings of which that was the *first*, and which was the *pledge* of the elevation and majesty of the Son of God. Hence, when they had proved his *resurrection*, they *assumed* that all the others would follow. That involved and supposed all And the *series*, of which that was the first, *proved* that he was the Son of God. See Ac 17:31: "He

will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given ASSURANCE, unto all men, *in that he hath raised him from the dead*." The one involves the other. See Ac 1:6. Thus Peter, (Ac 2:22-32) having proved that Jesus was raised up, adds, Ac 2:33, "THEREFORE being by the right hand exalted, he hath shed forth this," etc.; and Ac 2:36, "THEREFORE let all the house of Israel KNOW ASSUREDLY, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, Both LORD AND CHRIST."

This verse is a remarkable instance of the apostle Paul's manner of writing. Having mentioned a subject, his mind seems to catch fire; he presents it in new forms, and amplifies it, until he seems to forget for a time the subject on which he was writing. It is from this cause that his writings abound so with parentheses, and that there is so much difficulty in following and understanding him.

{1} "declared" or "determined" {e} "to be the Son" Ac 13:33,34; Re 1:18

{f} "to the spirit" Heb 9:14

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *By whom*. The apostle here returns to the subject of the salutation of the Romans, and states to them his authority to address them. That authority he had derived from the Lord Jesus, and not from man. On this fact, that he had received his apostolic commission, not from man, but by the direct authority o{ Jesus Christ, Paul not unfrequently insisted. Ga 1:12, "For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by revelation of Jesus Christ." 1Co 15:1-8 Eph 3:1-3.

We. The plural here is probably put for the singular. See Col 4.3.

Comp. Eph 6:19,20. It was usual for those who were clothed with authority to express themselves in this manner. Perhaps here, however, he refers to the general nature of the apostolic office, as being derived from Jesus Christ, and designs to assure the Romans that he had received the apostolic commission as the others had. "We, the apostles, have received the appointment from Jesus Christ."

Grace and apostleship\. Many suppose that this is a figure of speech, *hendiadys*, by which one thing is expressed by two words, meaning the grace or favour of the apostolic office. Such a figure of speech is often used. But it may mean, as it does probably here, the two things, *grace*, or the favour of God to his own soul, as a personal matter; and the apostolic office as a distinct thing, he often, however, speaks of the office of the apostleship as a matter of special favour, Ro 15:15,16; Ga 2:9 Eph 3:7-9.

For obedience to the faith. In order to produce, or promote, obedience to the faith; that is, to induce them to render that obedience to God which *faith* produces. There are two things therefore implied.

(1.) That the design of the gospel and of the apostleship is to induce men to *obey* God.

(2.) That the tendency of faith is to produce obedience. There is no true faith which does not produce that. This is constantly affirmed in the New Testament, Ro 15:18 16:19; 2Co 7:15 Jas 2:1.

Among all nations. This was the original commission which Jesus gave to his apostles, Mr 16:15,16; Mt 28:18,19.

This was the special commission which Paul received when he was converted, Ac 9:15. It was important to show that the commission extended thus far as he was now addressing a distant church which he had not seen.

For his name. This means, probably, *on his account*, that is, on account of Christ, Joh 14:13,14, 16:23,24.

The design of the apostleship was to produce obedience to the gospel among all nations, that thus the name of Jesus might be honoured. Their work was not one in which they were seeking to honour themselves, but it was solely for the honour and glory of Jesus Christ. For him they toiled, they encountered perils, they laid down their lives, because by so doing they might bring men to obey the gospel, and thus Jesus Christ might wear a brighter crown, and be attended by a longer and more splendid train of worshippers in the kingdom of his glory.

{1} "for obedience", or "to the obedience of faith" {g} "to the faith" Ac 6:7 Ro 16:26

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Among whom*. That is, among the Gentiles who had become obedient to the Christian faith, in accordance with the design of the gospel, Ro 1:8. This proves that the church at Rome was made up—partly at least, if not mainly—of Gentiles or pagans. This is fully proved in the sixteenth chapter by the *names* of the persons whom Paul salutes.

The called of Jesus Christ. Those whom Jesus Christ has called to be his followers. The word called (see ver. 1) denotes not merely an external invitation to a privilege, but it also denotes the *internal* or *effectual* call which secures conformity to the will of him who calls, and is thus synonymous with the name Christians, or believers. That true Christians are contemplated by this address is clear from the whole scope of the epistle. See particularly Roman chapter 8. Comp. Php 3:14; Heb 3:1.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *To all that be in Rome*. That is, to all who bear the Christian name. Perhaps he here included not only *the church* at Rome, but all who might have been there from abroad. Rome was a place of vast concourse for foreigners; and Paul probably addressed all who happened to be there.

Beloved of God. Whom God loves. This is the privilege of all Christians. And this proves that the persons whom Paul addressed were not those merely who had been invited to the external privileges of the gospel. The importance of this observation will appear in the progress of these Notes.

Called to be saints. So called, or influenced by God who had called them, as to become saints. The word saints—*agioi*—means those who are holy, or those who are devoted or consecrated to God. The radical idea of the word is that which is separated from a common to a sacred use, and answers to the Hebrew word

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—*kadosh*. It is applied to anything that is set apart to the service of God, to the temple, to the sacrifices, to the utensils about the temple, to the garments, etc., of the priests, and to the priests them- selves. It was applied to the Jews as a people separated from other nations, and devoted or

consecrated to God; while other nations were devoted to the service of idols. It is also applied to Christians, as being a people devoted or set apart to the service of God. The *radical* idea, then, as applied to Christians is, *that they are separated from other men, and other objects and pursuits, and consecrated to the service of God*. This is the peculiar characteristic of the *saints*. And this characteristic the Roman Christians had shown. For the use of the word as stated above, see the following passages of Scripture: Lu 2:23 Ex 13:2; Ro 11:16 Mt 7:6; 1Pe 1:16 Ac 9:13; 1Pe 2:5 Ac 3:21; Eph 3:5 1Pe 2:9; Php 2:15 1Jo 3:1,2.

Grace. This word properly means, *favour*. It is very often used in the New Testament, and is employed in the sense of benignity or benevolence; felicity, or a prosperous state of affairs; the Christian religion, as the highest expression of the benevolence or favour of God; the happiness which Christianity confers on its friends in this and the future life; the apostolic office; charity, or alms; thanksgiving; joy, or pleasure; and the benefits produced on the Christian's heart and life by religion—the grace of meekness, patience, charity, etc. *Schleusner*. In this place, and in similar places in the beginning of the apostolic epistles, it seems to be a word including *all* those blessings that are applicable to Christians in common; denoting an ardent wish that *all* the mercies and favours of God for time and eternity, *blended* under the general name *grace*, may be conferred on them. It is to be understood as connected with a word implying invocation. I *pray*, or I desire that *grace*, etc., may be conferred on you. It is the customary form of salutation in nearly all the apostolic epistles, 1Co 1:3 2Co 1:2; Ga 1:3 Eph 1:2; Php 1:2 Col 1:2; 1Th 1:1 2Th 1:2; Phm 1:3.

And peace. *Peace* is the state of freedom from war. As war conveys the idea of discord and numberless calamities and dangers, so peace is the opposite, and conveys the idea of concord, safety, and prosperity. Thus, to wish one *peace* was the same as to wish him all safety and prosperity. This form of salutation was common among the Hebrews. Ge 43:23, "Peace to you, fear not;" Jud 6:23 19:20; Lu 24:36.

But the word *peace* is also used in contrast with that state of agitation and conflict which a sinner has with his conscience, and with God. The sinner is like the troubled sea which cannot rest, Isa 57:20. The Christian is at peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ, Ro 5:1. By this word, denoting reconciliation with God, the blessings of the Christian religion are often described in the Scriptures, Ro 8:6 14:17, 15:13 Ga 5:22; Php 4:7.

A prayer for peace, therefore, in the epistles, is not a mere formal salutation, but has a special reference to those spiritual blessings which result from reconciliation with God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

From God our Father. The Father of all Christians. He is the Father of all his creatures, as they are his offspring, Ac 17:28,29. He is especially the Father of all Christians, as they have been "begotten by him to a lively hope," have been adopted into his family, and are like him, Mt 5:45 1Pe 1:3; 1Jo 5:1 3:1,2.

The expression here is equivalent to a *prayer* that God the Father would bestow grace and peace on the Romans. It implies that these blessings proceed from God, and are to be expected from him.

And the Lord Jesus Christ. *From* him. The Lord Jesus Christ is especially regarded in the New Testament as the source of peace, and the procurer of it. See Lu 2:14 19:38,42 Joh 14:27, 16:33 Ac 10:36; Ro 5:1 Eph 2:17. Each of these places will show with what propriety *peace* was invoked from the Lord Jesus. From thus connecting the Lord Jesus with the Father in this place, we may see,

(1.) that the apostle regarded him as the source of grace and peace as really as he did the Father.

(2.) He introduced them in the same connexion, and with reference to the bestowment of the same blessings.

(3.) If the mention of the Father in this connexion implies a *prayer* to *him*, or an act of worship, the mention of the Lord Jesus implies the same thing, and was an act of homage to him.

(4.) All this shows that his mind was familiarized to the idea that he was Divine. No man would introduce his name in such connexions if he did not believe that he was equal with God. Comp. Php 2:2-11. It is from this *incidental* and *unstudied* manner of expression, that we have one of the most striking proofs of the manner in which the sacred writers regarded the Lord Jesus Christ.

These seven verses are one sentence. They are a striking instance of the manner of Paul. The subject is simply a salutation to the Roman church. But at the mention of some single words, the mind of Paul seems to catch fire, and to burn and blaze with signal intensity. He leaves the immediate subject before him, and advances some vast thought that awes us, and fixes us in contemplation, and involves us in difficulty about his meaning, and then returns to his subject. This is the characteristic of his great mind; and it is this, among other things, that makes it so difficult to interpret his writings.

{h} "called" 1Co 1:2 1th 4:7 {i} "Grace to you" 1Co 1:3 2Pe 1:2

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *First*. In the first place, not in point of importance, but before speaking of other things, or before proceeding to the main design of the epistle.

I thank my God. The God whom I worship and serve. The expression of thanks to God for his mercy to them was fitted to conciliate their feelings, and to prepare them for the truths which he was about to communicate to them. It showed the deep interest which he had in their welfare; and the happiness it would give him to do them good. It is proper to give thanks to God for his mercies to others as well as ourselves. We are members of one great family, and we should make it a subject of thanksgiving that he confers any blessings, and especially the blessings of salvation, on any mortals.

Through Jesus Christ. The duty of presenting our thanks to God, through Christ, is often enjoined in the New Testament, Eph 5:20 Heb 13:15; comp. Joh 14:14. Christ is the Mediator between God and men; or the medium by which we are to present our prayers, and also our thanksgivings. We are not to approach God directly, but through a mediator at all times, depending on him to present our cause before the mercy-seat; to plead for us there; and to offer the desires of our souls to God. It is no less proper to present *thanks* in his name, or through him, than it is *prayer*, he has made the way to God accessible to us, whether it be by prayer or praise; and it is owing to *his* mercy and grace that *any* of our services are acceptable to God.

For you all. On account of you all, i.e., of the entire Roman church. This is one evidence that that church then was remarkably pure. How few churches have there been of whom a similar commendation could be expressed.

That your faith. *Faith* is put here for the whole of religion, and means the same as your piety. Faith is one of the principal things of religion; one of its first requirements; and hence it signifies religion itself. The readiness with which the Romans had embraced the gospel, the firmness with

which they adhered to it, was so remarkable, that it was known and celebrated everywhere. The same thing is affirmed of them in Ro 16:19. "For your obedience is come abroad unto all men."

Is spoken of. Is celebrated, or known. They were in the capital of the Roman empire; in a city remarkable for its wickedness; and in a city whose influence extended everywhere. It was natural, therefore, that their remarkable conversion to God should be celebrated everywhere. The religious or irreligious influence of a great city will be felt far and wide; and this is one reason why the apostles preached the gospel so much in such places.

Throughout the whole world. As we say, everywhere; or throughout the Roman empire. The term *world* is often thus limited in the Scriptures; and here it denotes those parts of the Roman empire where the Christian church was established. All the churches would hear of the work of God in the capital, and would rejoice in it. Comp. Col 1:6,23; Joh 12:19.

It is not improper to *commend* Christians, and to remind them of their influence; and especially to call to their mind the great power which they may have on other churches and people. Nor is it improper that great displays of Divine mercy should be celebrated everywhere, and excite in the churches praise to God.

{l} "your faith" Ro 16:19

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *For God is my witness*. The reason of this strong appeal to God is to show to the Romans the deep interest which he felt in their welfare. This interest was manifested in his prayers, and in his earnest desires to see them. A deep interest shown in this way was well-fitted to prepare them to receive what he had to say to them.

Whom I serve. See Ro 1:1, comp. Ac 27:23. The expression denotes that he was devoted to God in this manner; that he obeyed him, and had given himself to do his will in making known his gospel.

With my spirit. Greek—*en*—*in* my spirit, i.e., with my *heart*. It is not an external service merely; it is internal, real, sincere. He was really and sincerely devoted to the service of God.

In the gospel of his Son. In making known the gospel, or as a minister of the gospel.

That without ceasing, adialeiptwv. This word means constantly, always, without intermission. It was not only *once*, but repeatedly. It had been the burden of his prayers. The same thing he also mentions in regard to other churches, 1Th 1:2 2:13.

I make mention. I call you to remembrance, and present your case before God. This evinced his remarkable interest in a church which he had never seen, and it shows that Paul was a man of prayer; praying not for his friends and kindred only, but for those whom he had never seen. If with the same intensity of prayer all Christians, and Christian ministers, would remember the churches, what a different aspect would the Christian church soon assume!

Always. This word should be connected with the following verse, "Always making request," etc.

{m} "whom I serve" Ac 27:22 {1} "with" or, "in" {n} "I make mention" 1Th 3:10

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Making request*. It was his earnest desire to see them, and he presented the subject before God.

If by any means. This shows the earnest desire which he had to see them, and implies that he had designed it, and had been hindered. See Ro 1:13.

Now at length. He had purposed it a long time, but had been hindered, he doubtless cherished this purpose for years. The expressions in the Greek imply an earnest wish that this long-cherished purpose might be accomplished before long.

A prosperous journey. A safe, pleasant journey. It is right to regard all success in travelling as depending on God, and to pray for success and safety from danger. Yet all such prayers are not answered according to the *letter* of the petition. The prayer of Paul that he might see the Romans was granted, but in a remarkable way. He was persecuted by the Jews, and arraigned before king Agrippa. He appealed to the Roman emperor, and was taken there in chains as a prisoner. Yet the journey *might* in this way have a more deep effect on the Romans, than if he had gone in any other way. In so mysterious a manner does God often hear the prayers of his people; and though their prayers are answered, yet it is in his own time and way. See the last chapters of the Acts.

By the will of God. If God shall grant it; if God will, by his mercy, grant me the great favour of my coming to you. This is a proper model of a prayer, and is in accordance with the direction of the Bible. See Jas 4:14,15.

{o} "by the will" Jas 4:15

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *For I long to see you*. I earnestly desire to see you. Comp Ro 15:23,32.

That I may impart. That I may give, or communicate to you.

Some spiritual gifts. Some have understood this as referring to miraculous gifts, which it was supposed the apostles had the power of conferring on others. But this interpretation is forced and unnatural. There is no instance where the expression denotes the power of working miracles. Besides, the apostle in the next verse explains his meaning— "That I may be comforted together by *the mutual faith*," etc. From this it appears that he desired to be among them to exercise the office of the ministry, to establish them in the gospel, and to confirm their hopes. He expected that the preaching of the gospel would be the means of confirming them in the faith; and he desired to be the means of doing it. It was a wish of benevolence, and accords with what he says respecting his intended visit in Ro 15:29, "And I am sure that when I come, I shall come ill the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ." To make known to them more fully the blessings of the gospel, and thus to impart spiritual gifts, was the design he had in view.

To the end, etc. With the design, or purpose.

Ye may be established. That is, that they might be confirmed in the truths of the gospel. This was one design of the ministry, that Christians may be established, or strengthened, Eph 4:13. It is not to have dominion over their faith, but to be "helpers of their joy," 2Co 1:24. Paul did not doubt that this part of his office might be fulfilled among the Romans, and he was desirous there also of

making full proof of his ministry. His wish was to preach not simply where he *must*, but where he *might*. This is the nature of this work.

{p} "For I long" Ro 15:23,32 {q} "that I may impart" Ro 15:29

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *That I may be comforted*, etc. It was not merely to confirm them that Paul wished to come. He sought the communion of saints; he expected to be *himself* edified and strengthened; and to be comforted by seeing their strength of faith, and their rapid growth in grace. We may remark here,

(1.) that one effect of religion is to produce the desire of the communion of saints. It is the nature of Christianity to seek the society of those who are the friends of Christ.

(2.) Nothing is better fitted to produce growth in grace than such communion. Every Christian should have one or more Christian friends to whom he may unbosom himself. No small part of the difficulties which young Christians experience would vanish if they should communicate their feelings and views to others. Feelings which they suppose no Christians ever had, which greatly distress them, they will find are common among those who are experienced in the Christian life.

(3.) There is nothing better fitted to excite the feelings, and confirm the hopes of Christian ministers, than the firm faith of young converts, of those just commencing the Christian life, 3Jo 1:4.

(4.) The apostle did not disdain to be taught by the humblest Christians. He expected to be strengthened himself by the faith of those just beginning the Christian life. "There is none so poor in the church of Christ, that he cannot make some addition of importance to our stores." Calvin.

{1} "with you" or, "in you" {r} "mutual faith" 2Pe 1:1

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *That oftentimes I purposed*. See Ro 1:10. How often he had purposed this we have no means of ascertaining. The fact, however, that he had done it, showed his strong desire to see them, and to witness the displays of the grace of God in the capital of the Roman world. Comp. Ro 15:23,24. One instance of his having purposed to go to Rome is recorded in Ac 19:21: "After these things were ended, (viz., at Ephesus,) Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem; saying, after I have been there, I must also see Rome." This purpose expressed in this manner in the *epistle*, and the *Acts* of the Apostles, has been shown by Dr. Paley (Horae Paulinae on Ro 1:13) to be one of those undesigned coincidences which strongly show that both books are genuine. Comp. Ro 15:23,24 with Ac 19:21. A forger of these books would not have *thought* of such a contrivance as to feign such a purpose to go to Rome at that time, and to have mentioned it in that manner. Such coincidences are among the best proofs that can be demanded, that the writers did not intend to impose on the world. See Paley.

But was let hitherto. The word "let" means to *hinder*, or to *obstruct*. In what way this was done we do not know, but it is probable that he refers to the various openings for the preaching of the gospel where he had been, and to the obstructions of various kinds from the enemies of the gospel to the fulfillment of his purposes.

That I might have some fruit among you. That I might be the means of the conversion of sinners, and of the edification of the church, in the capital of the Roman empire. It was not curiosity to see the splendid capital of the world that prompted this desire; it was not the love of travel, and of roaming from clime to clime; it was the specific purpose of doing good to the souls of men. To *have fruit* means to obtain success in bringing men to the knowledge of Christ. Thus the Saviour said, (Joh 15:16) "I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain."

{1} "among" or, "in"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *I am debtor*. This does not mean that they had conferred any favour on *him*, which bound him to make this return, but that he was under *obligation* to preach the gospel to all to whom it was possible. This *obligation* arose from the *favour* that God had shown him in appointing him to this work. He was specially chosen as a vessel to bear the gospel to the Gentiles, (Ac 9:15; Ro 11:13) and he did not feel that he had discharged the obligation until he had made the gospel known as far as possible among all the nations of the earth.

To the Greeks. This term properly denotes those who dwelt in Greece. But as the Greeks were the most polished people of antiquity, the term came to be synonymous with the polished, the refined, the wise, as opposed to barbarians. In this place it doubtless means the same as "the wise," and includes the Romans also, as it cannot be supposed that Paul would designate the Romans as barbarians. Besides, the Romans, claimed an origin from Greece, and Dionysius Halieaxnassus (book i.) shows that the Italian and Roman people were of Greek descent.

Barbarians. All who were not intended under the general name of Greeks. Thus Ammonius says, that "all who were not Greeks were barbarians." This term *barbarian—barbarov*—properly denotes one who speaks a foreign language—a foreigner; and the Greeks applied it to all who did not use their tongue. Comp. 1Co 14:11. "I shall be unto him that speaketh *a barbarian*," etc.; i.e., I shall speak a language which he cannot understand. The word did not therefore of necessity denote any rusticity of manners, or any want of refinement.

To the wise. To those who esteemed themselves to be wise, or who boasted of their wisdom. The term is synonymous with "the Greeks," who prided themselves much in their wisdom. 1Co 1:22, "The Greeks seek after wisdom." Comp. 1Co 1:19 3:18,19 4:19; 2Co 11:19.

Unwise. Those who were regarded as the ignorant and unpolished part of mankind. The expression is equivalent to ours, "to the learned and the unlearned." It was an evidence of the proper spirit to be willing to preach the gospel to either. The gospel claims to have power to instruct all mankind, and they who are called to preach it should be *able* to instruct those who esteem themselves to be wise, and who are endowed with science, learning, and talent; and they should be willing to

labour to enlighten the most obscure, ignorant, and degraded portions of the race. This is the true spirit of the Christian ministry.

{s} "debtor" 1Co 9:16

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *So, as much as in me is*. As far as opportunity may be offered, and according to my ability.

I am ready, etc. I am prepared to preach among you, and to show the power of the gospel, even in the splendid metropolis of the world. He was not deterred by any fear; nor was he indifferent to their welfare; but he was under the direction of God, and as far as *he* gave him opportunity, he was ready to make known to them the gospel, as he had done at Antioch, Ephesus, Athens, and Corinth.

This closes the *introduction* or *preface* to the epistle. Having shown his deep interest in their welfare, he proceeds in the next verse to state to them the great doctrines of that gospel which he was desirous of proclaiming to them.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *For I am not ashamed*, etc. The Jews had cast him off, and regarded him as an apostate; and by the wise among the Gentiles he had been persecuted, and despised, and driven from place to place, and regarded as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things, (1Co 4:13) but still he was not ashamed of the gospel. He had so firm a conviction of its value and its truth; he had experienced so much of its consolations, and had seen so much of its efficacy, that he was so far from being ashamed of it that he gloried in it as the power of God unto salvation. Men should be ashamed of crime and folly. They are ashamed of their own offences, and of the follies of their conduct, when they come to reflect on it. But they are not ashamed of that which they feel to be right, and of that which they know will contribute to their welfare, and to the benefit of their fellow-men. Such were the views of Paul about the gospel; and it is one of his favourite doctrines that they who believe on Christ shall not be ashamed, Ro 9:33 Ro 10:11 5:5; 2Co 7:14 2Ti 1:12; Php 1:20 Ro 9:33; 2Ti 1:8; comp. Mr 8:38 1Pe 4:16; 1Jo 2:28.

Of the gospel. This word means the *good news*, or the glad intelligence. **See Barnes "Mr 1:1".**

It is so called because it contains the glad annunciation that sin may be pardoned, and the soul saved.

Of Christ. The good news respecting the Messiah; or which the Messiah has brought. The expression probably refers to the former, the good news which relates to the Messiah, to his character, advent, preaching, death, resurrection, and ascension. Though this was "to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness," yet he regarded it as the only hope of salvation, and was ready to preach it even in the rich and splendid capital of the world.

The power of God. This expression means, that it is the way in which God exerts his power in the salvation of men. It is the efficacious or mighty plan, by which power goes forth to save, and by which all the obstacles of man's redemption are taken away. This expression implies,

(1.) that it is God's plan, or *his* appointment. It is not the device of man.

(2.) It is adapted to the end. It is fitted to overcome the obstacles in the way. It is not *merely* the instrument by which God exerts his power, but it has an inherent adaptedness to the end, it is *fitted* to accomplish salvation to man, so that it may be denominated *power*.

(3.) It is mighty: hence it is called power, and the power of God. It is not a feeble and ineffectual instrumentality, but it is "mighty to the pulling down of strong holds," 2Co 10:4,5. It has shown its power as applicable to every degree of sin, to every combination of wickedness. It has gone against the sins of the world, and evinced its power to save sinners of all grades, and to overcome and subdue every mighty form of iniquity. Comp. Jer 23:29, "Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" 1Co 1:18, "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."

Unto salvation. This word means, complete deliverance from sin and death, and all the foes and dangers that beset man. It cannot imply anything less than eternal life. If a man should believe and then fall away, he could in no correct sense be said *to be saved*. And hence when the apostle declares that it is the power of God unto salvation "to *every one* that believeth," it implies that *all* who become believers "shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation," (see #1Pe 1:5) and that none shall ever fall away and be lost. The apostle thus commences his discussion with one of the important doctrines of the Christian religion, the final preservation of the saints. He is not defending the gospel for any *temporary object*, or with any temporary hope. He looks *through* the system, and sees in it a plan for the complete and eternal recovery of all those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. When he says it is the power of God unto salvation, he means that it is the power of God for the *attainment* of salvation. This is the *end*, or the design of this exertion of power.

To every one that believeth. Comp. Mr 16:16,17. This expresses the condition, or the terms, on which salvation is conferred through the gospel. It is not indiscriminately to *all* men, whatever may be their character. It is only to those who confide or trust in it; and it is conferred on all who receive it in this manner. If this qualification is possessed, it bestows its blessings freely and fully. All men know what *faith* is. It is exercised when we confide in a parent, a friend, a benefactor. It is such a reception of a promise, a truth, or a threatening, as to suffer it to make its *appropriate* impression on the mind, and such as to lead us to act under its influence, or to act as we should on the supposition that it is true. Thus a sinner credits the threatenings of God, and fears: this is faith. He credits his promises, and hopes: this is faith. He feels that he is lost, and relies on Jesus Christ for mercy: this is faith. And, in general, faith is such an impression on the mind made by truth as to lead us to feel and act as if it were true; to have the appropriate feelings, and views, and conduct, raider the commands, and promises, and threatenings of God. **See Barnes "Mr 16:16"**.

To the Jew first. First *in order of time*. Not that the gospel was any more adapted to Jews than to others; but to them had been committed the oracles of God; the Messiah had come through them; they had had the law, the temple, and the service of God, and it was natural that the gospel should be proclaimed to them before it was to the Gentiles. This was the order in which the gospel was actually preached to the world, first to the Jews, and then to the Gentiles. Comp. Acts Chapters 2 and 10; Mt 10:6 Lu 24:49; Ac 13:46, "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been

spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." Comp. Mt 21:43.

And also to the Greek. To all who were not Jews, that is, to all the world. It was not confined in its intention or efficacy to any class or nation of men. It was *adapted to all*, and was designed to be extended to all.

{t} "ashamed of the gospel" Mr 8:38 2Ti 1:8 {u} "power of God" Jer 23:29 1Co 1:18 {u2} "that believeth" Mr 16:16 {v} "to the Jew" Ac 3:26

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *For*. This word implies that he is now about to give a reason for that which he had just said, a reason why he was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. That reason is stated in this verse. It embodies the *substance* of all that is contained in the epistle. It is the *doctrine* which he seeks to establish; and there is not perhaps a more important passage in the Bible than this verse, or one more difficult to be understood.

Therein. In it—*en autw*—i.e. in the gospel.

Is the righteousness of God—dikaiosunh yeou—. There is not a more important expression to be found in the epistle than this. It is capable of only the following interpretations.

(1.) Some have said that it means that the *attribute* of God, which is denominated *righteousness* or *justice*, is here displayed. It has been supposed that this was the design of the gospel to make this known; or to evince his *justice* in his way of saving men. There is an important sense in which this is true, (Ro 3:26.) But this does not seem to be the meaning in the passage before us. For

(a) the leading design of the gospel is not to evince the justice of God, or the attribute of *justice*, but the *love* of God. See Joh 3:16 Eph 2:4; 2Th 2:16 1Jo 4:8.

(b) The attribute of *justice* is not that which is principally evinced in the gospel. It is rather mercy, *or mercy in a manner consistent with justice*, or that does not interfere with justice.

(c) The passage, therefore, is not designed to teach simply that the righteousness of God, *as an attribute*, is brought forth in the gospel, or that the main idea is to reveal his justice.

(2.) A second interpretation which has been affixed to it is to make it the same as *goodness*, the *benevolence* of God is revealed, etc. But to this there are still stronger objections. For

(a) it does not comport with the design of the apostle's argument.

(b) It is a departure from the established meaning of the word *justice*, and the phrase "the righteousness of God."

(c) If this had been the design, it is remarkable that the usual words expressive of *goodness* or mercy had not been used. Another meaning, therefore, is to be sought as expressing the sense of the phrase.

(3.) The phrase, *righteousness of God*, is equivalent to *God's plan of justifying men; his scheme of declaring them just in the sight of the law, or of acquitting them from punishment, and admitting them to favour*. In this sense it stands opposed to *man's* plan of justification, i. e. by his own works. God's plan is by faith. The *way* in which that is done is revealed in the gospel. The object contemplated to be done is to treat men as if they were righteous. Man attempted to accomplish this by obedience to the law. The plan of God was to arrive at it by faith, here the two schemes differ; and the great design of this epistle is to show that man cannot be justified on his own plan—to wit, by works; and that the plan of God is the only way, and a wise and glorious way of making man just in the eye of the law. No small part of the perplexity usually attending this subject will be avoided if it is remembered that the discussion in this epistle pertains to the question, "How can mortal man be just with God?" The apostle shows that it *cannot* be by works; and that it *can be* by faith. This latter is what he calls the *righteousness of God* which is revealed in the gospel.

To see that this is the meaning, it is needful only to look at the connexion; and at the usual meaning of the words. The word to justify—*dikaiow*—means, properly, *to be just, to be innocent, to be righteous*. It then means to *declare* or treat as righteous; as when a man is charged with an offence, and is acquitted. If the crime alleged is not *proved* against him, he is declared by the law *to be innocent*. It then means *to treat as if innocent*, to *regard as innocent*, that is, to pardon, to forgive, and consequently to treat as if the offence had not occurred. It does not mean that the man *did not* commit the offence; or that the law might not have held him answerable for it; but that the offence is forgiven; and it is consistent to receive the offender into favour, and treat him as if he had not committed it. *In what way* this may be done rests with him who has the pardoning power. And in regard to the salvation of man, it rests solely with God, and must be done in that way only which he appoints and approves. The design of Paul in this epistle is to show how this is done, or to show that it is done by faith. It may be remarked here, that the expression before us does not imply any particular manner in which it is done; it does not touch the question whether it is by imputed righteousness or not; it does not say that it is on legal principles; it simply affirms *that the gospel contains God's plan of justifying men by faith*.

The primary meaning of the word is, therefore, to be innocent, pure, etc.; and hence the name means righteousness in general. For this use of the word, see Mt 3:5 5:6,10,20 21:32 Lu 1:75 Ac 10:35; Ac 13:10 Ro 2:26, 8:4, etc.

In the sense of pardoning sin, or of treating men as if they were innocent, on the condition of faith, it is used often, and especially in this epistle. See Ro 3:24,26,28,30 4:5 5:1 8:30 Ga 2:16 3:8,24; Ro 3:21,22,25 4:3,6,13 9:30, etc.

It is called *God's* righteousness, because it is God's plan, in distinction from all the plans set up by men. It was originated by him; it differs from all others; and it claims him as its Author, and tends to his glory. It is called his *righteousness*, as it is the way by which he receives and treats men as righteous. This same plan was foretold in various places, where the word *righteousness* is nearly synonymous with *salvation*. Isa 51:5, "My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth." 6, "My salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished." Isa 56:1, "My salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed." Da 9:24, "To make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness."

In regard to this plan, it may be observed,

(1.) that it is not to declare that men are innocent and pure. That would not be true. The truth is just the reverse; and God does not esteem men to be different from what they are.

(2.) It is not to *take part* with the sinner, and to mitigate his offences. It admits them to their full extent; and makes him feel them also.

(3.) It is not that we become partakers of the essential righteousness of God. That is impossible.

(4.) It is not that *his* righteousness becomes *ours*. This is not true; and there is no intelligible sense in which that can be understood. But it is God's plan for *pardoning* sin, and for *treating us* as if we had not committed it; that is, adopting us as his children, and admitting us to heaven on the ground of what the Lord Jesus has done in our stead. This is God's plan. Men seek to save themselves by their own works. God's plan is to save them by the merits of Jesus Christ.

Revealed. Made known, and communicated. The gospel states the fact that God has such a plan of justification; and shows the *way* or *manner* in which it might be done. The *fact* seems to have been understood by Abraham and the patriarchs, (Heb 11:1,) but the full mode or manner in which it was to be accomplished was not revealed, until it was done in the gospel of Christ. And *because* this great and glorious truth was thus made known, Paul was not ashamed of the gospel. Nor should we be.

From faith—ek pistewv. This phrase I take to be connected with the expression, "the righteousness of God." Thus, the righteousness of God, or God's plan of justifying men *by faith*, is revealed in the gospel. Here the great truth of the gospel is brought out, that men are justified *by faith*, and not by the deeds of the law. The common interpretation of the passage has been, that the righteousness of God in this is revealed from *one degree of faith to another*. But to this interpretation there are many objections.

(1.) It is not true. The gospel was not designed for this. It did not *suppose* that men had a certain degree of faith by nature, which needed only to be *strengthened* in order that they might be saved.

(2.) It does not make good sense. To say that the righteousness of God— meaning, as is commonly understood, his *essential justice*—is *revealed* from one degree of faith to another, is to use words without any meaning.

(3.) The connexion of the passage does not admit of this interpretation. The design of the passage is evidently to set forth the doctrine of justification as the grand theme of remark, and it does not comport with that design to introduce here the advance from one degree of faith to another as the main topic.

(4.) The epistle is intended clearly to establish the fact that men are justified *by faith*. This is the grand idea which is kept up; and to show *how* this may be done is the main purpose before the apostle. See Ro 3:22,30, 9:30,32, 10:6, etc.

(5.) The passage which he immediately quotes shows that he did not speak of different *degrees* of faith, but of the doctrine that men are to be justified by faith.

To faith. Unto those who believer (comp. Ro 3:22;) or to every one that believeth, Ro 1:16. The abstract is here put for the concrete. It is designed to express the idea, *that God's plan of justifying men is revealed in the gospel, which plan is by faith, and the benefits of which plan shall be extended to all that have faith, or that believe*.

As it is written. See Hab 2:4.

The just shall live by faith. The LXX. translate the passage in Habakkuk, "If any man shall draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him; but the just by my faith" (or by faith in me) "shall

live." The very words are used by them which, are employed by the apostle, except they add the word "my, *mou*", my faith. The Syriac renders it in a similar manner, "The just by faith shall live." The meaning of the Hebrew in Habakkuk is the same. It does not refer originally to the doctrine of justification by faith; but its meaning is this, "The just man, or the righteous man, shall live by his confidence in God." The prophet is speaking of the woes attending the Babylonish captivity. The Chaldeans were to come upon the land and destroy it, and remove the nation, Hab 1:6-10. But this was not to be perpetual. It should have an end, Hab 2:3, and they who had confidence in God should live, Hab 2:4 that is, should be restored to their country, should be blessed and made happy. Their *confidence in God* should sustain them, and preserve them. This did not refer primarily to the doctrine of justification by faith, nor did the apostle so quote it; but it expressed a *general principle* that those who had *confidence* in God should be happy, and be preserved and blessed. This would express the doctrine which Paul was defending. It was not by relying on his own *merit* that the Israelite would be delivered, but it was by confidence in God, by *his* strength and mercy. On the same principle would men be saved under the gospel. It was not by reliance on their own works or merit; it was by *confidence* in God, by *faith* that they were to live.

Shall live. In Habakkuk this means to be made happy, or blessed; shall find comfort, and support, and deliverance. So in the gospel the blessings of salvation are represented as *life*, eternal life. Sin is represented as death, and man by nature is represented as dead in trespasses and sins, Eph 2:1. The gospel restores to *life* and salvation, Joh 3:36 5:29,40 6:33,51,53 20:31 Ac 2:28 Ro 5:18, 8:6.

This expression, therefore, does not mean, as it is sometimes supposed, the *justified by faith* shall live; but it is expressive of a general principle in relation to men, that they shall be defended, preserved, made happy, not by their own merits or strength, but by *confidence* in God. This principle is exactly applicable to the gospel plan of salvation. Those who rely on God the Saviour shall be justified and saved.

{w} "therein" Ro 3:21,25

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *For*. This word denotes that the apostle is about to give a *reason* for what he had just said. This verse commences the argument of the epistle, an argument designed to establish the proposition advanced in Ro 1:17. The proposition is, that God's plan of justification is revealed in the gospel. To show this, it was necessary to show that all other plans had failed; and that there was need of some *new* plan or scheme to save men. To this he devotes this and the two following chapters. The design of this argument is to show that men were sinners. And in order to make this out, it was necessary to show that they were under law. This was clear in regard to the Jews. They had the Scriptures; and the apostle in *this* chapter shows that it was equally clear in regard to the Gentiles, and then proceeds to show that *both* had failed of obeying the law. To see this clearly it is necessary to add only, that there can be but *two* ways of justification conceived of: one by obedience to law, and the other by grace. The former was the one by which Jews and Gentiles had sought to be justified; and if it could be shown that in this they had failed, the way was clear to show that there was need of some other plan.

The wrath of God—orgh yeou. The word rendered *wrath* properly denotes that earnest appetite, or desire, by which we seek anything, or an intense effort to obtain it. And it is particularly applied to the desire which a man has to take vengeance who is injured, and who is enraged. It is thus synonymous with revenge. Eph 4:31, "Let all bitterness, and wrath," etc. Col 3:8, "Anger, *wrath*, malice," etc. 1Ti 2:8; Jas 1:19. But it is also often applied to God and it is clear that when we think of the word as applicable to him it must be divested of everything like human passion, and especially of the passion of *revenge*. As he cannot be *injured* by the sins of men, (Job 35:6-8,) he has no motive for vengeance, properly so called; and it is one of the most obvious rules of interpretation that we are not to apply to God passions and feelings which, among us, have their origin in evil. In making a revelation, it was indispensable to use words which men used; but it does not follow that when applied to *God* they mean *precisely* what they do when applied to *man*. When the Saviour is said (Mr 3:5) to have looked on his disciples with *anger*, (Greek, *wrath*, the same word is here,) it is not to be supposed that he had the feelings of an implacable man seeking vengeance. The nature of the feeling is to be judged of by the character of the person. So, in this place, the word denotes the *Divine displeasure or indignation* against sin; the Divine purpose to *inflict punishment. It is the opposition of the Divine character against sin*; and the determination of the Divine Mind to *express* that opposition in a proper way, by excluding the offender from the favours which he bestows on the righteous. It is not an unamiable or arbitrary principle of conduct. We all admire the character of a father who is *opposed* to disorder, and vice, and disobedience in his family, and who *expresses* his opposition in a proper way. We admire the character of a ruler who is *opposed* to all crime in the community, and who expresses those feelings in the laws. And the more he is *opposed* to vice and crime, the more we admire his character and his laws; and why shall we be not equally pleased with God, who is opposed to *all* crime in all parts of the universe, and who determines to express it in the proper way for the sake of preserving order and promoting peace. The word Divine *displeasure* or *indignation*, therefore, expresses the meaning of this phrase. See Mt 3:7 Lu 3:7, 21:23 Joh 3:36; Ro 2:5,8, 3:5 4:15, 5:9 9:22 12:19; Ro 13:4,5; Eph 2:3 5:6; 1Th 1:10 2:16, etc. The word occurs thirty-five times in the New Testament.

Is revealed. That is, revealed to the Jews by their law; and to the Gentiles in their reason and conscience, as the apostle proceeds to show.

From heaven. This expression I take to mean simply that the Divine displeasure against sin is made known by a Divine appointment; by an arrangement of events, communications, and arguments, which evince that they have had their origin in heaven; or are divine, How this is, Paul proceeds to state, in the works of creation, and in the law which the Hebrews had. A variety of meanings have been given to this expression, but this seems the most satisfactory. It does not mean that the wrath *will be sent* from heaven; or that the heavens declare his wrath; or that the heavenly bodies are proofs of his wrath against sin; or that Christ, the executioner of wrath, will be manifest from heaven, (Origen, Cyrill, Beza, etc.;) or that it is from God *who is in heaven*; but that it is by an arrangement which shows that it had its origin in heaven, or has proofs that it is divine.

Against all ungodliness. This word properly means *impiety* failed to honour the true God, and had paid to idols the homage which was due to him. *asebeian*. Multitudes also in every age refuse to honour him, and neglect his worship, though they are not idolaters. Many men suppose that if they do not neglect their duty to their fellow-men, if they are honest and upright in their dealings, they are not guilty, even though they are not righteous, or do not do their duty to God; as though it were a less crime to dishonour God than man, and as though it were innocence to neglect and

disobey our Maker and Redeemer. The apostle here shows that the wrath of God is as really revealed against the *neglect* of God as it is against positive iniquity; and that this is an offence of so consequence as to be placed *first*, and as deserving the Divine indignation more than the neglect of our duties towards men. Comp. Ro 11:26 2Ti 2:16; Tit 2:12; Jude 1:15,18.

The word does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament.

Unrighteousness of men. Unrighteousness, or iniquity *towards* men. All offences against our neighbour, our parents, our country, etc. The word *ungodliness* includes all crimes against God: this, all crimes against our fellow-men. The two words express that which comprehends the violation of all the commands of God: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, etc., and thy neighbour as thyself," Mt 22:37-40. The wrath of God is thus revealed against *all* human wickedness.

Who hold the truth. Who *keep back*, or *restrain* the truth. The word translated *hold* here, sometimes means *maintain*, to *keep*, to *observe*, (1Co 7:30 2Co 6:10) but it also means *to hold back, to detain, to hinder*. Lu 4:42, "The people sought him, (Jesus,) and came to him, and *stayed* him." (Greek, the same as here.) Phm 1:13, "Whom I would have *retained* with me," etc. 2Th 2:6, "And now ye know what *withholdeth*," etc. In this place it means also that they held back, or restrained the truth, by their wickedness.

The truth. The truth of God, in whatever way made known, and particularly, as the apostle goes on to say, that which is made known by the light of nature. The truth pertaining to his perfections, his law, etc. They *hold it back*, or restrain its influence.

In unrighteousness. Or rather, *by* their iniquity. Their *wickedness* is the cause why *the truth* had had so little progress among them, and had exerted so little influence. This was done by their yielding to corrupt passions and propensities, and by their being therefore unwilling to retain the knowledge of a pure and holy God, who is opposed to such deeds, and who will punish them. As they were determined to *practise* iniquity, they chose to exclude the knowledge of a pure God, and to worship impure idols, by which they might give a sanction to their lusts. Their vice and tendency to iniquity was, therefore, the reason why they had so little knowledge of a holy God; and by the love of this, they *held back* the truth from making progress, and becoming diffused among them.

The same thing is substantially true now. Men hold back or resist the the truth of the gospel by their sins in the following ways:

(1.) Men of influence and wealth employ both in directly opposing the gospel.

(2.) Men directly resist the *doctrines* of religion, since they know they could not hold to those doctrines without abandoning their sins.

(3.) Men who resolve to live in sin, of course, resist the gospel, and endeavour to prevent its influence.

(4.) Pride, and vanity, and the love of the world also resist the gospel, and oppose its advances.

(5.) Unlawful business—business that begins in evil, and progresses and ends in evil—-has this tendency to hold back the gospel. Such is the effect of the traffic in ardent spirits, in the slave-trade, etc. They begin in the love of money, the root of all evil, (1Ti 6:10;) they progress in the tears and sorrows of the widow, the orphan, the wife, the sister, or the child; and they end in the deep damnation of multitudes in the world to come. Perhaps there has been nothing that has so much *held back* the influence of truth, and of the gospel, as indulgence in the vice of intemperance, and traffic in liquid fire.

(6.) Indulgence in vice, or wickedness of *any kind*, holds back the truth of God. Men who are resolved to indulge their passions will not yield themselves to this truth. And hence all the wicked,

the proud, and vain, and worldly are responsible, not only for their own sins directly, but for hindering, by theft example and theft crimes, the effect of religion on others. They are answerable for standing in the way of God and his truth; and for *opposing* him in the benevolent design of doing good to all men. There is nothing that prevents the universal spread and influence of truth but sin. And men of wickedness are answerable for all the ignorance and woe which are spread over the community, and which have extended themselves over the world.

{y} "wrath" Eph 5:6

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Because*. The apostle proceeds to show *how* it was that the heathen hindered the truth by theft iniquity. This he does by showing that the truth might be known by the works of creation; and that nothing but their iniquity prevented it.

That which may be known of God. That which is *knowable* concerning God. The expression implies that there may be many things concerning God which cannot be known. But there are also many things which may be ascertained. Such are his existence, and many of his attributes, his power, and wisdom, and justice, etc. The object of the apostle was not to say that *everything* pertaining to God could be known by them, or that they could have as clear a view of him as if they had possessed a revelation. We must interpret the expression according to the object which he had in view. That was, to show that so much might be known of God as to prove that they had no excuse for their crimes; or that God would be just in punishing them for their deeds, for this it was needful only that his existence and his justice, or his determination to punish sin, should be known; and this, the apostle affirms, was known among them, and had been from the creation of the world. This expression, therefore, is not to be pressed as implying that they knew *all* that *could* be known about God, or that they knew as much as they who had a revelation; but that they knew enough to prove that they had no excuse for their sins.

Is manifest. Is known; is understood.

In them. *Among them*. So the preposition *in* is often used. It means that they *had* this knowledge; or it had been communicated to them. The great mass of the heathen world was indeed ignorant of the true God; but their leaders, or their philosophers, *had* this knowledge. **See Barnes "Ro 1:21"**.

But this was not true of the mass, or body of the people. Still it was true that this knowledge was in the possession of man, or was *among* the pagan world, and would have spread, had it not been for the love of sin.

God hath shewed it unto them. Comp. Joh 1:9. He had endowed them with reason and conscience, (Ro 2:14,15;) he had made them capable of seeing and investigating his works; he had spread before them the proofs of his wisdom, and goodness, and power, and had thus given them the means of learning his perfections and will.

{1} "in" or, "to" {f} "for God" Joh 1:9

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *For the invisible things of him*. The expression "his invisible things" refers to those things which cannot be perceived by the senses. It does not imply that there *are* any things pertaining to the Divine character which *may* be seen by the eye; but that there are things which may be known of him, though not discoverable by the eye. We judge of the objects around us by the senses, the sight, the touch, the ear, etc. Paul affirms, that though we cannot judge thus of God, yet there *is* a way by which we may come to tho knowledge of him. What he means by the *invisible* things of God he specifies at the close of the verse, *his eternal power and Godhead*. The affirmation extends only to that; and the argument implies that that was enough to leave them without any excuse for their sins.

From the creation of the world. The word *creation* may either mean the act of creating, or more commonly it means the thing created, the world, the universe. In this sense it is commonly used in the New Testament. Comp. Mr 10:6 13:19, 16:15 Ro 1:25; 2Co 5:17 Ga 6:15; Co 1:15,23; Heb 4:13 9:11; 1Pe 2:13 2Pe 3:4; Re 3:14.

The word "from" may mean *since*, or it may denote *by means of*. And the expression here may denote that, as an historical fact, God *has been* known since the act of creation; or it may denote that he is known by means of the material universe which he has formed. The latter is doubtless the true meaning. For

(1) this is the common meaning of the word *creation*; and

(2) this accords with the design of the argument. It is not to state an *historical fact*, but to show that they had the means of knowing their duty within their reach, and were without excuse. Those means were in the wisdom, power, and glory of the universe, by which they were surrounded.

Are clearly seen. Are made manifest; or may be perceived. The word used here does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament.

Being understood. His perfections may be investigated, and comprehended by means of his works. They are the *evidences* submitted to our intellects, by which we may arrive at the true knowledge of God.

Things that are made. By his works. Comp. Heb 11:3. This means not by the original *act* of creation, but by the continual operations of God in his Providence, by his *doings—poihmasi*—by what he is continually producing and accomplishing in the displays of his power and goodness in the heavens and the earth. What they were capable of understanding he immediately adds, and shows that he did not intend to affirm that *every* thing could be known of God by his works; but so much as to free them from excuse for their sins.

His eternal power. Here are two things implied.

(1.) That the universe contains an exhibition of his *power*, or a display of that attribute which we call *omnipotence*; and,

(2.) That this power has existed from eternity, and of course implies an eternal existence in God. It does not mean that this power has been exerted or put forth *from eternity*, for the very idea of *creation* suppose that it had not; but that there is proof, in the works of creation, of power which must have *existed* from eternity, or have belonged to an eternal Being. The proof of this was clear, even to the heathen, with their imperfect views of creation and of astronomy. Comp. Ps 19:1. The majesty and grandeur of the heavens would strike their eye, and be full demonstration that they were the work of an infinitely great and glorious God. But to us, under the full blaze of modern

science, with our knowledge of the magnitude, and distances, and revolutions of the heavenly bodies, the proof of this power is much more grand and impressive. *We* may apply the remark of the apostle to the present state of the science, and his language will cover all the ground; and the proof to human view is continually rising of the amazing power of God, by every new discovery in science, and especially in astronomy. Those who wish to see this subject presented in a most impressive view, may find it done in Chalmer's Astronomical Discourses, and in Dick's Christian Philosopher. Equally clear is the proof that this power must have been *eternal*. If it had not *always* existed, it could in no way have been produced. But it is not to be supposed that it was *always exerted*, any more than it is that God now puts forth all the power that he can, or than that we constantly put forth all the power which we possess. God's power was *called forth* at the creation. He *showed* his omnipotence; and gave, by that one great act, eternal demonstration that he was almighty; and we may survey the *proof* of that, as clearly as if we had seen the operation of his hand there. The proof is not weakened because we do not see the process of creation constantly going on. It is rather augmented by the fact that he sustains all things, and controls continually the vast masses of matter in the material worlds.

Godhead. His Deity; Divinity; Divine nature, or essence. The word is not elsewhere used in the New Testament. Its meaning cannot therefore be fixed by any parallel passages. It proves the truth that the *supremacy*, or supreme Divinity of God, was exhibited in the works of creation, or that he was exalted above all creatures and things. It would not be proper, however, to *press* this word as implying that all that we know of God by revelation was known to the heathen; but that so much was known as to show his supremacy; his right to their homage; and of course the folly and wickedness of idolatry. This is all that the argument of the apostle demands, and, of course, on this principle the expression is to be interpreted.

So that they are without excuse. God has given them so clear evidence of his existence and claims, that they have no excuse for their idolatry, and for hindering the truth by their iniquity. It is implied here, that in order that men should be responsible, they should have the means of knowledge; and that he does not judge them when their ignorance is involuntary, and the means of knowing the truth have not been communicated. But where men *have* these means within their reach, and will not avail themselves of them, all excuse is taken away. This was the case with the Gentile world. They *had* the means of knowing *so much* of God, as to show the folly of worshipping dumb idols. Comp. Isa 44:8-20. They had also *traditions* respecting his perfections; and they could not plead for their crimes and folly that they had no means of knowing him. If this was true of the pagan world then, how much more is it true of the world now? And especially how true and fearful is this, respecting that great multitude in Christian lands who have the Bible, and who never read it; who are within the reach of the sanctuary, and never enter it; who are admonished by friends, and by the providences of God, and who regard it not; and who look upon the heavens, and *even yet* see no proof of the eternal power and Godhead of him who made them all! Nay, there are those who are apprized of the discoveries of modern astronomy, and who yet do not seem to reflect that all these glories are proof of the existence of an eternal God; and who live in ignorance of religion as really as the heathen, and in crimes as decided and malignant as disgraced the darkest ages of the world. For such there is no excuse, or shadow of excuse, to be offered m the day of doom. And there is no fact more melancholy in our history, and no one thing that more proves the stupidity of men, than this sad forgetfulness of Him that made the heavens, even amid all the wonders and glories that have come fresh from the hand of God, and that everywhere speak his praise.

{a} "things" Ps 19:1 {1} "so that" or, "that they may be"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Because that*. The apostle here is showing that it was right to condemn men for their sins. To do this it was needful to show them that they *had* the knowledge of God, and the means of knowing what was right; and that the true source of their sins and idolatries was a corrupt and evil heart.

When they knew God. Greek, *knowing God*. That is, they had an acquaintance with the existence and many of the perfections of one God. That many of the philosophers of Greece and Rome had a knowledge of one God, there can be no doubt. This was undoubtedly the case with Pythagoras, who had travelled extensively in Egypt, and even in Palestine; and also with Plato and his disciples. This point is clearly shown by Cudworth in his Intellectual System, and by Bishop Warburton in the Divine Legation of Moses. Yet the knowledge of this great truth was not communicated to the people. It was confined to the philosophers; and not improbably one design of the *mysteries* celebrated throughout Greece was to keep up the knowledge of the one true God. Gibbon has remarked, that "the philosophers regarded all the popular superstitions as equally false; the common people as equally true; and the politicians as equally useful." This was probably a correct account of the prevalent feelings among the ancients. A single extract from Cicero (de Natura Deerum, lib. fl. e. 6) will show that they had the knowledge of one God: "There is something in the nature of things Which the mind of man, which reason, which human power cannot effect; and certainly that which produces this must be better than man. What can this be called but *God*?" Again (c. 2,) "What can be so plain and manifest, when we look at heaven, and contemplate heavenly things, as that there is some Divinity of most excellent mind, by which these things are governed?"

They glorified him *not as God*. They did not *honour* him as God. This was the true source of their abominations, To glorify him as God is to regard with proper reverence all his perfections and laws; to venerate his name, his power, his holiness, and presence, etc. As they were not *inclined* to do this, so they were given over to their own vain and wicked desires. Sinners are not willing to give honour to God as God. They are not pleased with his perfections; and therefore the mind becomes fixed on other objects, and the heart gives free indulgence to its own sinful desires. A willingness to honour God as God—to reverence, love, and obey him, would effectually restrain men from sin.

Neither were thankful. The obligation to be *thankful* to God for his mercies, for the goodness which we experience, is plain and obvious. Thus we judge of favours received of our fellow-men. The apostle here clearly regards this unwillingness to render *gratitude* to God for his mercies as one of the causes of their subsequent corruption and idolatry. The reasons of this are the following.

(1.) The effect of *ingratitude* is to render the heart hard and insensible.

(2.) Men seek to *forget* the Being to whom they are unwilling to exercise gratitude.

(3.) To do this, they fix their affections on other things; and hence the heathen expressed their gratitude not to God, but to the sun, and moon, and stars, etc., the mediums by which God bestows his favours on men. And we may here learn, that an unwillingness to thank God for his mercies is one of the most certain causes of alienation and hardness of heart.

But became vain. To *become vain*, with us, means to be elated, or self-conceited, or to seek praise from others. The meaning here seems to be, they became foolish, frivolous ill their thoughts and reasonings. They acted foolishly; they employed themselves in useless and frivolous questions, the effect of which was to lead the mind farther and farther from the truth respecting God.

Imaginations. This word means, properly, *thoughts*; then *reasonings*, and also *disputations*. Perhaps our word *speculations*, would convey its meaning here. It implies that they were unwilling to honour him, they *commenced those speculations* which resulted in all their vain and foolish opinions about idols, and the various rites of idolatrous worship. Many of the speculations and inquiries of the ancients were among the most vain and senseless which the mind can conceive.

And their foolish heart. The word *heart* is not infrequently used to denote the *mind*, or the *understanding*. We apply it to denote the *affections*. But such was not its common use among the Hebrews. We speak of the *head* when we refer to the understanding, but this was not the case with the Hebrews. They spoke of the *heart* in this manner, and in this sense it is clearly used in this place. See Eph 1:18; Ro 2:15 2Co 4:6; 2Pe 1:19.

The word *foolish* means, literally, that which is without *understanding*, Mt 15:16.

Was darkened. Was rendered obscure, so that they did not perceive and comprehend the truth. The process which is stated in this verse is,

(1.) that men had the knowledge of God;

(2.) that they refused to *honour* him when they knew hun, and were *opposed* to his character and government;

(3) that they were ungrateful;

(4) that they then began to doubt, to reason, to speculate, and wandered far into darkness. This is substantially the process by which men wander away from God now. They *have* the knowledge of God, but they do not love him; and being dissatisfied with his character and government, they begin to speculate, fall into error, and then "find no end in wandering mazes lost," and sink into the depths of heresy and of sin.

{b} "vain" Jer 2:5 Eph 4:17,18

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Professing themselves to be wise*. This was the common boast of the *philosophers* of antiquity. The very word by which they chose to be called, *philosophers*, means literally *lovers of wisdom*. That it was their *boast* that they were wise is well known. Comp. Ro 1:14 1Co 1:19-22 3:19; 2Co 11:19.

They became fools. Comp. Jer 8:8,9. They became really foolish in their opinions and conduct. There is something particularly pungent and cutting in this remark, and as true as it is pungent. In what way they evinced their folly, Paul proceeds immediately to state. Sinners of all kinds are frequently spoken of as fools in the Scriptures. In the sense in which it is thus used, the word is applied to them as void of understanding or moral sense; as idolaters, and as wicked, Ps 14:1 Pr 26:4, 1:7,22; Pr 14:8,9.

The senses in which this word here is applied to the heathen are,

(1.) that their speculations and doctrines were senseless; and

(2.) that their conduct was corrupt.
{c} "they became fools" Jer 8:8,9

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *And changed*. This does not mean that they literally *transmuted* God himself; but that in their views they exchanged him; or they changed him as an object of worship for idols. They produced, of course, no real change in the glory of the infinite God, but the change was in themselves. They forsook him of whom they had knowledge, Ro 1:21 and offered the homage which was due to him to idols.

The glory. The majesty, the honour, etc. This word stands opposed here to the *degrading* nature of their worship. Instead of adoring a Being clothed with *majesty* and *honour*, they bowed down to reptiles, etc. They exchanged a *glorious* object of worship for that which was degrading and humiliating. The *glory* of God, in such places as this, means his essential honour, his *majesty*, the concentration and expression of his perfections, as the *glory of the sun*, 1Co 15:41 means his shining, or his splendour. Comp. Jer 2:11 Ps 106:20.

The uncorruptible God. The word *uncorruptible* is here applied to God in opposition to *man*. God is unchanging, indestructible, immortal. The word conveys also the idea that God is eternal. As he is incorruptible, he is the proper object of worship. In all the changes of life, man may come to him, assured that he is the same. When man decays by age or infirmities, he may come to God, assured that he undergoes no such change, but is the same yesterday, today, and for ever. Comp. 1Ti 1:17.

Into an image. An image is a representation or likeness of anything, whether made by painting, or from wood, stone, etc. Thus the word is applied to *idols*, as being *images* or *representations* of heavenly objects, 2Ch 33:7 Da 3:1; Re 13:14, etc. See instances of this among the Jews described in Isa 40:18-26 Eze 8:10.

To corruptible man. This stands opposed to the *incorruptible God*. Many of the images or idols of the ancients were in the forms of men and women. Many of their gods were heroes and benefactors, who were *deified*, and to whom temples, altars, and statues were erected. Such were Jupiter, and Hercules, and Romulus, etc. The worship of these *heroes* thus constituted no small part of their idolatry, and their *images* would be of course representations of them in human form. It was proof of great degradation, that they thus adored men with like passions as themselves; and attempted to displace the true God from the throne, and to substitute in his place an idol in the likeness of men.

And to birds. The *ibis* was adored with peculiar reverence among the Egyptians, on account of the great benefits resulting from its destroying the serpents, which, but for this, would have overrun the country. The *hawk* was also adored in Egypt, and the *eagle* at Rome. As one great principle of pagan idolatry was to adore all objects from which important benefits were derived, it is probable that all *birds* would come in for a share of pagan worship, that rendered service in the destruction of noxious animals.

And fourfooted beasts. Thus the ox, under the name *apis*, was adored in Egypt; and even the dog and the monkey. In imitation of the Egyptian ox, the children of Israel made their golden calf,

Ex 22:4. At this day, two of the most sacred objects of worship in Hindoostan are the cow and the monkey.

And creeping things. Reptiles. "Animals that have no feet, or such short ones that they seem to creep or crawl on the ground." *Calmet*. Lizards, serpents, etc., come under this description. The *crocodile* in Egypt was an object of adoration, and even the serpent. So late as the second century of the Christian era, there was a sect in Egypt called *Ophites*, from their worshipping a serpent, and who even claimed to be Christians. (Murdock's Mosheim, vol. i. pp. 180, 181.) There was scarcely an object, animal or vegetable, which the Egyptians did not adore. Thus the *leek*, the *onion*, etc., were objects of worship; and men bowed down and paid adoration to the sun and moon, to animals, to vegetables, and to reptiles. Egypt was the source of the views of religion that pervaded other nations, and hence their worship partook of the same wretched and degrading character. (See Leland's "Advantage and Necessity of Revelation."

{d} "image like to" Isa 40:18,25; Eze 8:10

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Wherefore*. That is, because they were unwilling to retain him in their knowledge, and chose to worship idols. Here is traced the practical tendency of heathenism; not as an *innocent and harmless* system, but as resulting in the most gross and shameless acts of depravity.

God also gave them up. He abandoned them, or he ceased to restrain them, and suffered them to *act out* their sentiments, and to manifest them in their life. This does not imply that he exerted any *positive* influence in inducing them to sin, any more than it would if we should seek, by argument and entreaty, to restrain a headstrong youth, and when neither would prevail, should leave him to act out his propensities, and to go as he chose to ruin. It is implied in this,

(1.) that the tendency of man was to these sins;

(2) that the tendency of idolatry was to promote them; and

(3) that all that was needful, in order that men should commit them, was for God to leave him to follow the devices and desires of his own heart. Comp. Ps 81:12 2Th 2:10,12.

To uncleanness. To impurity, or moral defilement; particularly to those impurities which he proceeds to specify, Ro 1:26, etc.

Through the lusts of their own hearts. Or, in consequence of their own evil and depraved passions and desires. He left them to act out, or manifest, their depraved affections and inclinations.

To dishonour. To disgrace, Ro 1:26,27.

Between themselves. Among themselves; or mutually. They did it by unlawful and impure connexions with one another.

{e} "gave them up" Ps 81:12 2Th 2:11

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Who changed the truth of God*. This is a repetition of the declaration in Ro 1:23, in another form. The phrase, "the truth of God," is a Hebrew phrase, meaning *the true God*. In such a ease, where two nouns come together, one is employed as an adjective to qualify the other. Most commonly the latter of two nouns is used as the adjective, but sometimes it is the former, as in this case. God is called the *true God* in opposition to idols, which are called false gods. There is but one *real* or *true* God, and all others are false.

Into a lie. Into *idols*, or false gods. Idols are not un frequently called *falsehood* and *lies*, because they are not true representations of God, Jer 13:25 Isa 28:15; Jer 10:14 Ps 40:4.

The creature. Created things, as the sun, moon, animals, etc.

Who is blessed for ever. It was not uncommon to add a doxology, or ascription of praise to God, when his name was mentioned. See Ro 9:5 2Co 11:31; Ga 1:6.

The Jews also usually did it. In this way they preserved veneration for the name of God, and accustomed themselves to speak of him with reverence.

> "The Mohammedans also borrowed this custom from the Jews, and practise it to a great extent. Tholuk mentions an Arabic manuscript, in the library at Berlin, which contains an account of heresies in respect to Islamism, and as often as the writer has occasion to mention the name of a new heretical sect, he adds, 'God be exalted above all which they say.'" Stuart.

Amen. This is a Hebrew word denoting strong affirmation. So let it be. It implies here the solemn assent of the writer to what was just said; or his strong wish that what he had said might be—that the name of God might be esteemed and be blessed for ever. The mention of the degrading idolatry of the heathens was strongly calculated to impress on his mind the superior excellency and glory of the one living God. It is mentioned respecting the honourable Robert Boyle, that he never *mentioned* the name of God without a solemn pause, denoting his profound reverence. Such a practice would tend eminently to prevent an unholy familiarity and irreverence in regard to the sacred name of the Most High. Comp. Ex 20:7.

{f} "truth of God into a lie" Am 2:4. {1} "more" or, "rather"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *For this cause*. On account of what had just been specified; to wit, that they did not glorify him as God, that they were unthankful, that they became polytheists and idolaters. In the previous verses he had stated their *speculative belief*, he now proceeds to show its practical influences on their conduct.

Vile affections. Disgraceful passions or desires. That is, to those which are immediately specified. The great object of the apostle here, it will be remembered, is to show the state of the heathen world, and to prove that they had need of some other way of justification than the law of nature. For this

purpose, it was necessary for him to enter into a detail of their sins. The sins which he proceeds to specify are the most indelicate, vile, and degrading which can be charged on man. But this is not the fault of the apostle. If they *existed*, it was necessary for him to charge them on the pagan world. His argument would not be complete without it. The shame is not in *specifying* them, but in *their existence*; not in the apostle, but in those who practised them, and imposed on him the necessity of accusing them of these enormous offences. It may be further re- marked, that the *mere fact* of his charging them with these sins is strong presumptive proof of their being practised. If they did *not* exist, it would be easy for them to *deny it*, and *put him to the proof* of it. No man would venture charges like these without evidence; and the presumption is, that these things were known and practised without shame. But this is not all. There is still abundant proof on record, in the writings of the heathen themselves, that these crimes were known and extensively practised.

For even their women, etc. Evidence of the shameful and disgraceful fact here charged on the women is abundant in the Greek and Roman writers. Proof may be seen, which it would not be proper to specify, in the lexicons, under the words *tribav*, *olisbov* and *etairisthv*. See also Seneca, epis. 95; Martial, epis. i. 90; Tholuck on the State of the Heathen World, in the Biblical Repository, vol. ii.; Lucian, Dial. Meretric. v.; and Tertullian de Pallio.

{g} "vile affections" Eph 5:12 Jude 1:10.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *And likewise the men*, etc. The sin which is here specified is that which was the shameful sin of Sodom, and which from that has been called *sodomy*. It would scarcely be credible that man had been guilty of a crime so base and so degrading, unless there was ample and full testimony to it. Perhaps there is no sin which so deeply shows the depravity of man as this; none which would so much induce one "to hang his head, and *blush* to think himself a man." And yet the evidence that the apostle did not bring a *railing accusation* against the heathen world, that he did not advance a charge which was unfounded, is too painfully clear. It has been indeed a matter of controversy whether *paederasty*, or the love of boys, among the ancients, was not a pure and harmless love, but the evidence is against it. See this discussed in Dr. Leland's "Advantage and Necessity of Revelation," vol. i. 49—56. The crime with which the apostle charges the Gentiles here was by no means confined to the *lower* classes of the people. It doubtless pervaded *all* classes, and we have distinct specifications of its existence in a great number of cases. Even Virgil speaks of the attachment of Corydon to Alexis, without seeming to feel the necessity of a blush for it. Maximus Tyrius (Diss. 10) says, that in the time of Socrates this vice was common among the Greeks; and is at pains to vindicate Socrates from it as almost a solitary exception. Cicero (Tuscul. Ques. iv. 84) says, that "Dicearchus had accused *Plato* of it, and probably not unjustly." He also says, (Tuscul. Q. iv. 33,) that the practice was common among the Greeks, and that their poets and great men, and even their learned men and philosophers, not only practised, but gloried in it. And he adds, that it was the custom, not of particular cities only, but of Greece in general. (Tuscul. Ques. v. 20.) Xenophon says, that "the unnatural love of boys is so common, that in many places it is established by the public laws." He particularly alludes to Sparta. (See Leland's Advantage, etc., i. 56.) Plato says that the *Cretians* practised this crime, and justified themselves by the example of

Jupiter and Ganymede. (Book of Laws, i.) And Aristotle says, that among the Cretians there was a law encouraging that sort of unnatural love. (Arist. Politic. b. ii. ch. 10.) Plutarch says, that this was practised at Thebes, and at Ellis. He further says, that *Solon*, the great lawgiver of Athens, "was not proof against beautiful boys, and had not courage to resist the force of love." (Life of Solon.) Diogenes Laertins says that this vice was practised by the stoic Zeno. Among the Romans, to whom Paul was writing, this vice was no less common. Cicero introduces, without any mark of disapprobation, *Cotta*, a man of the first rank and genius, freely and familiarly owning to other Romans of the same quality, that this worse than beastly vice was practised by himself, and quoting the authority of ancient philosophers in vindication of it. (De Natura Decrum, b. i. eh. 28.) It appears from what Seneca says, (epis. 95,) that in his time it was practised openly at Rome, and without shame. He speaks of flocks and troops of boys, distinguished by their colours and nations; and says that great care was taken to train them up for this detestable employment. Those who may wish to see a further account of the *morality* in the pagan world may find it detailed in Tholick's "Nature and Moral Influence of Heathenism," in the Biblical Repository, vol. ii., and in Leland's Advantage and Necessity of the Christian Revelation. There is not the least evidence that this abominable vice was *confined* to Greece and Rome. If so common there—if it had the sanction even of their philosophers—it may be presumed that it was practised elsewhere, and that the sin against nature was a common crime throughout the heathen world. Navaratte, in his account of the empire of China, (book ii. ch. 6,) says that it is extremely common among the Chinese. _And there is every reason to believe that, both in the old world and the new, this abominable crime is still practised. If such was the state of the pagan world, then surely the argument of the apostle is well sustained, that there was need of some other plan of salvation than was taught by the light of nature.

That which is unseemly. That which is shameful, or disgraceful.

And receiving in themselves, etc. The meaning of this doubtless is, that the effect of such base and unnatural passions was to enfeeble the body, to produce premature old age, disease, decay, and an early death. That this is the effect of the indulgence of licentious passions, is amply proved by the history of man. The despots who practise polygamy, and keep harems in the east, are commonly superannuated at forty years of age; and it is well known, even in Christian countries, that the effect of licentious indulgence is to break down and destroy the constitution. How much more might this be expected to follow the practice of the vice specified in the verse under examination! God has marked the indulgence of licentious passions with his frown. Since the time of the Romans and the Greeks, as if there had not been sufficient restraints before, he has originated a new disease, which is one of the most loathsome and distressing which has ever afflicted man, and which has swept off millions of victims. But the effect on the body was not all. It tended to debase the mind; to sink man below the level of the brute; to destroy the sensibility; and to "sear the conscience as with a hot iron." The last remnant of reason and conscience, it would seem, must be extinguished in those who would indulge in this unnatural and degrading vice. See Suetonius' Life of Nero, 28.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *And even as they did not like*, etc. This was the true source of their crimes. They did not *choose* to acknowledge God. It was not because they *could not*, but because they were *displeased* with God, and chose to forsake him, and follow their own passions and lusts.

To retain God, etc. To think of him, or to serve and adore him. This was the *first step* in their sin. It was not that God *compelled* them; or that he did not give them knowledge; nor even is it said that he arbitrarily abandoned them as the first step; but they forsook *him*, and as a consequence he gave them up to a reprobate mind.

To a reprobate mind. A mind destitute of judgment. In the Greek the same word is used here which, in another form, occurs in the previous part of the verse, and which is translated "like." The apostle meant, doubtless, to retain a reference to that in this place. "As they did not *approve*, *edokimasan* or choose to retain God, etc., he gave them up to a mind *disapproved*, *rejected*, reprobate," *adokimon*; and he means, that the state of their minds was such that God could not approve it. It does not mean that they were *reprobate* by any arbitrary decree; but that, *as a consequence* of their headstrong passions, their determination to *forget* him, he left them to a state of mind which was *evil*, and which he could not *approve*.

Which are not convenient. Which are not fit or proper; which are disgraceful and shameful; to wit, those things which he proceeds to state in the remainder of the chapter.

{1} "like" or, "to acknowledge" {2} "reprobate mind" or, "a mind void of judgement"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Being filled*. That is, the things which he specifies were *common*, or abounded among them. This is a strong phrase, denoting that these things were so often practised as that it might be said they were *full of them*. We have a phrase like this still, when we say of one that he is *full of mischief*, etc.

Unrighteousness, *adikia*. This is a word denoting *injustice*, or iniquity in general. The particular specifications of the iniquity follow.

Fornication. This was a common and almost universal sin among the ancients, as it is among the moderns. The word denotes *all illicit intercourse*. That this was a common crime among the ancient heathen it would be easy to show, were it proper, even in relation to their wisest and most learned men. They who wish to see ample evidence of this charge may find it in Tholuck's "Nature and Moral Influence of Heathenism," in the Biblical Repository, vol. ii. pp. 441—464.

Wickedness. The word used here denotes *a desire of injuring others*; or, as we should express it, *malice*. It is that depravity and obliquity of mind which strives to produce injury on others. *Calvin*.

Covetousness. Avarice, or the desire of obtaining that which belongs to others. This vice is common in the world; but it would be particularly so where the other vices enumerated here abounded, and men were desirous of luxury, and the gratification of their senses. Rome was particularly desirous of the wealth of other nations, and hence its extended wars, and the various evils of rapine and conquest.

Licentiousness, *kakia*. This word denotes evil in general; rather the act of doing wrong than the desire, which was expressed before by the word wickedness.

Full of envy. "Pain, uneasiness, mortification or discontent, excited by another's prosperity, accompanied with some degree of hatred or malignity, and often with a desire or an effort to depreciate the person, and with pleasure in seeing him depressed." *Webster*. This passion is so common still, that it is not necessary to attempt to prove that it was common among the ancients. It seems to be natural to the human heart, it is one of the most common manifestations of wickedness, and shows clearly the deep depravity of man. Benevolence rejoices at the happiness of others, and seeks to promote it. But envy exists almost everywhere, and in almost every human bosom:

"All human virtue, to its latest breath
Finds envy never conquered but by death."

Pope.

Murder. "The taking of human life, with premeditated malice, by a person of a sane mind." This is necessary to constitute murder now; but the word used here denotes all manslaughter, or taking human life, except that which occurs as the punishment of crime. It is scarcely necessary to show that this was common among the Gentiles. It has prevailed in all communities, but it was particularly prevalent in Rome. It is necessary only to refer the reader to the common events in the Roman history of assassinations, deaths by poison, and the destruction of slaves. But in a special manner the charge was properly alleged against them, on account of the inhuman contests of the gladiators in the amphitheatres. These were common at Rome, and constituted a favorite amusement with the people. Originally, captives, slaves, and criminals were trained up for combat; but it afterwards became common for even Roman citizens to engage in these bloody combats; and Nero at one show exhibited no less than four hundred senators and six hundred knights as gladiators. The fondness for this bloody spectacle continued till the reign of Constantine the Great, *the first Christian emperor*, by whom they were abolished about six hundred years after the original institution. "Several hundred, perhaps several thousand, victims were annually slaughtered in the great cities of the empire," Gibbon's Decline and Fall, chap. ,xxx., A.D. 404. As an instance of what *might* occur in this inhuman spectacle, we may refer to what took place on such an occasion in the reign of Probus, (A.D. 281.) During his triumph, near *seven hundred* gladiators were reserved to shed each other's blood for the amusement of the Roman people. But "disdaining to shed their blood for the amusement of the populace, they killed their keepers, broke from their place of confinement, and filled the streets of Rome with blood and confusion," Gibbon's Decline and Fall, chap. xii. With such views and with such spectacles before them, it is not wonderful that murder was regarded as a matter of little consequence, and hence this crime prevailed throughout the world.

Debate. Our word *debate* does not commonly imply evil. It denotes commonly discussion for elucidating truth; or for maintaining a proposition, as the *debates* in Congress, etc. But the word in the original meant also *contention, strife*, altercation, connected with anger and heated zeal, Ro 13:13 1Co 1:11, 3:3 2Co 12:20; Ga 5:20.

Php 1:15 1Ti 6:4; Tit 3:9.

This contention and strife would, of course, follow from malice and covetousness, etc.

Deceit. This denotes *fraud, falsehood*, etc. That this was common is also plain. The *Cretians* are testified by one of the Greek poets to have been always liars. (Tit 1:12.) Juvenal charges the same thing on the Romans. (Sat. iii. 41.) "What, says he, should I do at Rome? *I cannot lie*." Intimating that if he were there, it would follow, of course, that he would be expected to be false. The same thing is still true. Writers on India tell us that the word of a Hindoo, even under oath, is not to be regarded; and the same thing occurs in most pagan countries.

Malignity. This word signifies here, not malignity in general, but that particular species of it which consists in misinterpreting the words or actions of others, or putting the worst construction on their conduct.

Whisperers. Those who secretly, and in a sly manner, by hints and innuendoes, detract from others, or excite suspicion of them. It does not mean those who *openly calumniate*, but that more dangerous class who give *hints* of evil in others, who affect great knowledge, and communicate the evil report under an injunction of secrecy, knowing that it will be divulged. This class of people abounds everywhere, and there is scarcely any one more dangerous to the peace or happiness of society.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *Backbiters*. Those who calumniate, slander, or speak ill of those who are absent. Whisperers declare secretly, and with great reserve, the supposed faults of others. Backbiters proclaim them publicly and avowedly.

Haters of God. There is no charge which can be brought against men more severe than this. It is the highest possible crime; yet it is a charge which the conduct of men will abundantly justify, and the truth of which all those experience who are brought to see their true character. To an awakened sinner there is often nothing more plain and painful than that he is a hater of God. His heart rises up against Him, and his law, and his plan of saving men; and he deeply feels that nothing can subdue this but the mighty power of the Holy One. This is a charge which is not unfrequently brought against men in the Bible. See Joh 7:7,18,24,25; Joh 3:19,20. Surely, if this be the native character of man, then it is "far gone from original righteousness." No more striking proof of depravity could be given; and in no creed or confession of faith is there a more painful and humiliating representation given of human wickedness than in this declaration of an inspired apostle, that men are by nature HATERS OF GOD.

Despiteful. This word denotes those who abuse, or treat with unkindness or disdain, those who are present. *Whisperers and backbiters* are those who calumniate those who are absent.

Proud. Pride is well understood. It is an inordinate self-esteem; an unreasonable conceit of one's superiority in talents, beauty, wealth, accomplishments, etc. *Webster*. Of the existence of this everywhere there is abundant proof. And it was particularly striking among the ancients. The sect of the *Stoics* was distinguished for it, and this was the general character of their philosophers. Men will be proud where they suppose none are superior; and it is only the religion that reveals a great and infinite God, and that teaches that *all* blessings are *his gift*, and that he has given us the station which we occupy, that will produce true humility. We may add, that the system of heathenism did not disclose the wickedness of the heart, and that this was a main reason why they were elevated in self-esteem.

Boasters. Those who arrogate to themselves that which they do not possess, and glory in it. This is closely connected with pride. A man who has an inordinate self-conceit, will not be slow to proclaim his own merits to those around him.

Inventors of evil things. This doubtless refers to their seeking to find out new arts or plans to practise evil; new devices to gratify their lusts and passions; new forms of luxury and vice, etc. So

intent were they on practicing evil, so resolved to gratify their passions, that the mind was excited to discover new modes of gratification. In cities of luxury and vice, this has always been done. Vices change their form, men become satiated, and they are obliged to resort to some new form. The passions cease to be gratified with old forms of indulgence, and consequently men are obliged to resort to new devices to pamper their appetites, and to rekindle their dying passions to a flame. This was eminently true of ancient Rome; a place where all the arts of luxury, all the devices of passion, all the designs of splendid gratification, were called forth to excite and pamper the evil passions of men. Their splendid entertainments, their games, their theatres, their sports—cruel and bloody—were little else than new and ever- varying inventions of evil things to gratify the desires of lust and of pride.

Disobedient to parents. This expresses the idea that they did not show to parents that honour, respect, and attention which was due. This has been a crime of paganism in every age; and though among the Romans the duty of honouring parents was enjoined by the laws, yet it is not improbable that the duty was often violated, and that parents were treated with great neglect and even contempt. "Disobedience to parents was punished by the Jewish law with death; and with the Hindoos it is attended with the loss of the child's inheritance. The ancient Greeks considered the neglect of it to be extremely impious, and attended with the most certain effects of Divine vengeance. Solon ordered all persons who refused to make due provision for their parents to be punished with infamy, and the same penalty was incurred for personal violence towards them." Kent's Commentaries on American Law, vol. ii. pg. 207. Comp. Virg. AEnid ix. 283. The feelings of pride and haughtiness would lead to disregard of parents. It might also be felt that to provide for them when aged and infirm was a burden; and hence there would arise disregard for their wants, and probably open opposition to their wishes, as being the demands of petulance and age. It has been one characteristic of heathenism everywhere, that it leaves children to treat their parents with neglect. Among the Sandwich islanders it was customary, when a parent was old, infirm, and sick beyond the hope of recovery, for his own children to bury him alive; and it has been the common custom in India for children to leave their aged parents to perish on the banks of the Ganges.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *Without understanding*. Inconsiderate or foolish. See Ro 1:21,22.

Covenantbreakers. Perfidious; false to their contracts.

Without natural affection. This expression denotes the want of affectionate regard towards their children. The attachment of parents to children is one of the strongest in nature, and nothing can overcome it but the most confirmed and established wickedness. And yet the apostle charges on the heathen generally the want of this affection. He doubtless refers here to the practice so common among heathens of *exposing* their children, or putting them to death. This crime, so abhorrent to all the feelings of humanity, was common among the heathen, and is still. The Canaanites, we are told, Ps 106:37,38, "sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, and shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan." Manasseh, among the Jews, imitated their example, and introduced the horrid custom of sacrificing children to Moloch, and set the example by offering his own, 2Ch 33:6. Among the ancient Persians

it was a common custom to bury children alive. In most of the Grecian states, infanticide was not merely permitted, but actually enforced by law. The Spartan lawgiver expressly ordained that every child that was born should be examined by the ancient men of the tribe, and that if found weak or deformed, should be thrown into a deep cavern at the foot of Mount Taygetus. Aristotle, in his work on government, enjoins the exposure of children that are naturally feeble and deformed, in order to prevent an excess of population. But among all the nations of antiquity, the Romans were the most unrelenting in their treatment of infants, Romulus obliged the citizens to bring up all their male children, and the *eldest* of the females— proof that the others were to be destroyed. The Roman father had an absolute right over the life of his child, and we have abundant proof that that right was often exercised. Romulus expressly authorized the destruction of all children that were deformed, only requiring the parents to exhibit them to their five nearest neighbours, and to obtain their consent to theft death. The law of the Twelve Tables, enacted in the 301st year of Rome, sanctioned the same barbarous practice. Minucius Felix thus describes the barbarity of the Romans in this respect: "I see you exposing your infants to wild beasts and birds, or strangling them after the most miserable manner," (chap. xxx.) Pliny, the elder, defends the right of parents to destroy their children, upon the ground of its being necessary in order to preserve the population within proper bounds. Tertullian, in his apology, expresses himself boldly on this subject. "How many of you (addressing himself to the Roman people, and to the governors of cities and provinces) might I deservedly charge with infant murder; and not only so, but among the different kinds of death, for choosing some of the cruellest for their own children, such as drowning, or starving with cold or hunger, or exposing to the mercy of dogs; dying by the sword being too sweet a death for children." Nor was this practice arrested in the Roman government until the time of Constantine, the first Christian prince. The Phenicians and Carthagenians were in the habit of sacrificing infants to the gods. It may be added, that the crime is no less common among modern pagan nations, no less than 9000 children are exposed in Pekin in China, annually. Persons are employed by the police to go through the city with carts every morning to pick up all the children that may have been thrown out during the night. The bodies are carried to a common pit without the walls of the city, into which all, whether *dead or living*, are promiscuously thrown. (Barrow's Travels in China, p. 113, Am. ed.) Among the Hindoos the practice is perhaps still more common. In the provinces of Cutch and Guzerat alone the number of infantile murders amounted, according to the lowest calculation in 1807, to 3000 annually; according to another calculation, to 30,000. Females are almost the only victims. (Buchanan's Researches in Asia, Eng. ed., p. 49. Ward's View of the Hindoos.) In Otaheite, previously to the conversion of the people to Christianity, it was estimated that at least *two-thirds* of the children were destroyed. (Turnbull's Voyage round the World in 1800, 2, 3, and 4.) The natives of New South Wales were in the habit of burying the child with its mother, if she should happen to die. (Collins' Account of the Colony of New South Wales, p. 124, 125.) Among the Hottentots, infanticide is a common crime. "The altars of the *Mexicans* were continually drenched. in the blood of infants." In Peru, no less than two hundred infants were sacrificed on occasion of the coronation of the Inca. The authority for these melancholy statements may be seen in Beck's Medical Jurisprudence, vol. i. 184—197, ed. 1823. See also Robertson's History of America, p. 221, ed. 1821. This is a *specimen* of the views and feelings of the heathen world; and the painful narrative might be continued to almost any length. After this statement, it cannot surely be deemed a groundless charge when the apostle accused them of being destitute of *natural affection*.

Implacable. This word properly denotes those who will not be reconciled where there is a quarrel; or who pursue the offender with unyielding revenge. It denotes an unforgiving temper; and was doubtless common among the ancients, as it is among all heathen people. The aborigines of this country have given the most striking manifestation of this that the world has known. It is well known that, among them, neither time nor distance will obliterate the memory of an offence; and that the avenger will pursue the offender over hills and streams, and through heat or snow, happy if he may at last, though at the expiration of years, bury the tomahawk in the head of his victim, though it may be at the expense of his own life. See Robertson's America, book iv. & lxxiii—lxxxi.

Unmerciful. Destitute of compassion. As a proof of this we may remark, that no provisions for the poor or infirm were made among the heathen. The sick and the infirm were cast out, and doomed to depend on the stinted charity of individuals. Pure religion, only, opens the heart to the appeals of want; and nothing but Christianity has yet expanded the hearts of men to make public provisions for the poor, the ignorant, and the afflicted.

{1} "natural affection" or, "unsociable"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *Who knowing*. That the Gentiles had a moral sense, or were capable of knowing the will of God in this case, is clear from Ro 2:14,15. The means which they had of arriving at the knowledge of God were, their own reason, their conscience, and an observation of the *effects* of depravity.

The judgment of God. The word *judgment* here denotes the declared *sentiment* of God, that such things deserved death. It does not mean his *inflictions*, or his *statutes or precepts*; but it means that God *thought or judged* that they which did such things ought to die. As they were aware of this, it showed their guilt in still persevering in the face of his Judgments, and his solemn purpose to inflict punishment.

Are worthy of death. The word *death*, in the Scriptures, is often used to denote punishment. But it does not mean here that these deserved capital punishment from the civil magistrate, but that they knew they were evil, and offensive to God, and deserving of punishment from his hand. See Joh 8:51 Ro 5:12-19.

Have pleasure,etc. They delight in those who commit sin; and hence encourage them in it, and excite them to it. This was a grievous aggravation of the offence. It greatly heightens guilt when we excite others to do it, and seduce them from the ways of innocence. That this was the case with the heathen there can be no doubt. Men do not commit sin often alone. They need the countenance of others. They "join hand in hand," and become confederate in iniquity. All social sins are of this class; and most of those which the apostle mentioned were sins of this character.

If this revolting and melancholy picture of the pagan world was a true representation, then it was clear that there was need of some other plan of religion. And that it was true has already in part been seen. In the conclusion of this chapter we may make a few additional observations.

1. The charges which the apostle makes here were evidently those which were well known, he does not even appeal to their writings, as he does on some other occasions, for proof. Comp. Tit 1:12. So well known were they, that there was no need of proof. A writer would not advance charges in this manner unless he was *confident* that they were well-founded, and could not be denied.

2. They are abundantly sustained by the heathen writers themselves. This we have in part seen. In addition we may adduce the testimony of two Roman writers respecting the state of things at Rome in the time of the apostle. Livy says of the age of Augustus, in some respects the brightest period of the Roman history, "Rome has increased by her virtues until now, *when we can neither bear our vices nor their remedy*." (Preface to his History.) Seneca, one of the purest moralists of Rome, who died A. D. 65, says of his own time, "All is full of criminality and vice; indeed much more of these is committed than can be remedied by force. A monstrous contest of abandoned wickedness is carried on. The lust of sin increases daily; and shame is daily more and more extinguished. Discarding respect for all that is good and sacred, lust rushes on wherever it will. Vice no longer hides itself. It stalks forth before all eyes. So public has abandoned wickedness become, and so openly does it flame up in the minds of all, that innocence is no longer *seldom*, but has wholly ceased to exist," Seneca de Ira, ii. 8. Further authorities of this kind could be easily given, but these will show that the apostle Paul did not speak at random when he charged them with these enormous crimes.

3. If this was the state of things, then it was clear that there was need of another plan of saving men. It will be remembered that, in these charges, the apostle speaks of the most enlightened and refined nations of antiquity; and especially that he speaks of the Romans at the very height of their power, intelligence, and splendor. The experiment, whether man could save himself by his own works, had been fairly made. After all that their greatest philosophers could do, this was the result, and it is clear that there was need of some better plan than this. More profound and laborious philosophers than had arisen, the pagan world could not hope to see; more refinement and civilization than then existed, the world could not expect to behold under heathenism. At this time, when the experiment had been made for four thousand years, and when the inefficacy of all human means, even under the most favourable circumstances, to reform mankind, had been tried, *the gospel* was preached to men. It disclosed *another* plan; and its effects were seen at once throughout the most abandoned states and cities of the ancient world.

4. If this was the state of things in the ancient heathen world, the same may be expected to be the state of heathenism still. And it is so. The account given here of ancient heathens would apply substantially still to the pagan world. The same things have been again and again witnessed in China, and Hindoostan, and Africa, the Sandwich Islands, and in aboriginal America. It would be easy to multiply proofs almost without end of

this; and to this day the heathen world is exhibiting substantially the same characteristics that it was in the time of Paul.

5. There was need of some better religion than the pagan. After all that infidels and deists have said of the sufficiency of natural religion, yet here is the sad result. This shows what man can do, and these facts will demonstrate for ever that there was need of some other religion than that furnished by the light of nature.

6. The account in this chapter shows the propriety of missionary exertions. So Paul judged; and so we should judge still. If *this* be the state of the world, and if Christianity, as all Christians believe, contains the remedy for all these evils, then it is wisdom and benevolence to send it to them. And it is not *wisdom* or *benevolence* to withhold it from them. Believing as they do, Christians are bound to send the gospel to the heathen world. It is on this principle that modern missions to the heathen are established; and if the toils of the apostles were demanded to spread the gospel, then are the labours of Christians now. If it was right, and wise, and proper for *them* to go to other lands to proclaim "the unsearchable riches of Christ," then it is equally proper and wise to do it now. If there was danger that the heathen world *then* would perish without the gospel, there is equal danger that the heathen world will perish now.

7. If it should be said that many of these things are practised now in nations which are called *Christian*, and that therefore the charge of the apostle, that this was the effect of heathenism, could not be well-founded, we may reply,

(1.) that this is true, too true. But this very fact shows the deep and dreadful depravity of human nature. If such things exist in lands that have a *revelation*, what must have been the state of those countries that had none of its restraints and influences? But

(2.) these things do not exist where religion exerts its influence. They are *not* in the bosom of the Christian church. They are not practised by Christians. And the effect of the Christian religion, so far as it has influence, is to call off men from such vices, and to make them holy and pure in their life. Let religion exert its *full influence* on any nominally Christian nation, and these things would cease. Let it send its influence into other lands, and the world, the now polluted world, would become pure before God.

{1} "have pleasure" or, "consent with them"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 2

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 1

ROMANS Chapter 2

Verse 1. *Therefore*. *dio*. The force of this word here has been the subject of much discussion. The design of this and the following chapter is to show that the *Jews* were no less guilty than the Gentiles, and that they needed the benefit of the same salvation. This the apostle does by showing that they had *greater light* than the Gentiles, and yet that they did the same things. Still they were in the habit of accusing and condemning the Gentiles as wicked and abandoned; while they *excused* themselves on the ground that they possessed the *law* and *oracles* of God, and were his favourite people. The apostle here affirms that they were *inexcusable* in theft sins, that they must be condemned in the sight of God, *on the same ground* on which they condemned the Gentiles; to wit, that they had light, and yet committed wickedness. If the *Gentiles* were without excuse Ro 1:20 in *their* sins, much more would the Jew, who condemned them, be without excuse on the same ground. The word *therefore*, I suppose, refers not to any particular word in the previous chapter, or to any particular verse, but to the general considerations which were suggested by a view of the whole case. And its sense might be thus expressed: "Since you Jews condemn the Gentiles for their sins, on the ground that they have the means of knowing their duty, THEREFORE YOU, who are far more favoured than they, are entirely without an excuse for the same things."

Thou art inexcusable. This does not mean that they were inexcusable for *judging others*; but that they had no excuse for their sins before God; or that they were under condemnation for their crimes, and needed the benefits of another plan of justification. As the *Gentiles* whom they judged were *condemned*, and were without excuse, Ro 1:20, so were the Jews who condemned them without excuse, on the same principle and in a still greater degree.

O man. This address is *general* to *any* man who should do this. But it is plain, from the connexion, that he means especially the Jews. The use of this word is an instance of the apostle's skill in argument. If he had openly named the Jews here, it would have been likely to have excited opposition from them. He therefore approaches the subject gradually, affirms it of man in general, and then makes a particular application to the Jews. This he does not do, however, until he has advanced so far in the general principles of his argument that it would be impossible for them to evade his conclusions; and then he does it in the most tender, and kind, as well as convincing manner, Ro 2:17, etc.

Whosoever thou art that judgest. The word *judgest—krineiv* — here is used in the sense of *condemning*. It is not a word of equal strength with that which is rendered "*condemnest*"—*katakrineiv*. It implies, however, that they were accustomed to express themselves freely and severely of the character and doom of the Gentiles. And from the New Testament, as well as from their own writings, there can be no doubt that such was the fact; that they regarded the entire Gentile world with abhorrence, considered them as shut out from the favour of God, and applied to them terms expressive of the utmost contempt. Comp. Mt 15:27.

For wherein. For in the *same thing*. This implies that substantially the same crimes which were committed among the heathen were also committed among the Jews.

Thou judgest another. The meaning of this clearly is, "for the same thing for which you condemn *the heathen*, you condemn yourselves."

Thou that judgest. You Jews who condemn other nations.

Doest the same things. It is clearly implied here, that they were guilty of offences similar to those practised by the Gentiles. It would not be a just principle of interpretation *to press* this declaration as implying that *precisely* the same offences, and *to the same extent*, were chargeable on them. Thus they were not guilty, in the time of the apostle, of *idolatry*; but of the other crimes

enumerated in the first chapter, the Jews might be guilty. The character of the nation, as given in the New Testament, is that they were "an evil and adulterous generation," Mt 12:39 Joh 8:7; that they were a "generation of vipers," Mt 3:7 12:34; that they were wicked, Mt 12:45 that they were sinful, Mr 8:38; that they were proud, haughty, hypocritical, etc., Mt 23:1. If such was the character of the Jewish nation in general, there is no improbability in supposing that they practised most of the crimes specified in ch 1. On this verse we may remark,

(1.) that men are prone to be severe judges of others.

(2.) This is often, perhaps commonly, done when the accusers themselves are guilty of the same offences. It often happens, too, that men are remarkably zealous in opposing those offences which they themselves secretly practise. A remarkable instance of this occurs in Joh 8:1, etc. Thus David readily condemned the supposed act of injustice mentioned by Nathan, 2Sa 12:1-6. Thus also kings and emperors have enacted severe laws against the very crimes which they have constantly committed themselves. Nero executed the laws of the Roman empire against the very crimes which he was constantly committing; and it was a common practice for Roman *masters* to commit offences which they punished with death in their slaves. (See instances in Grotius on this place.)

(3.) Remarkable zeal against sin may be no proof of innocence. Comp. Mt 7:3. The zeal of persecutors, and often of pretended reformers, may be far from proof that they are free from the very offences which they are condemning in others. It may all be the work of the hypocrite to conceal some base design; or of the man who seeks to show his hostility to one kind of sin, in order to be a salvo to his conscience for committing some other.

(4.) The heart is deceitful. When we judge others we should make it a rule to examine ourselves *on that very point*. Such an examination might greatly *mitigate the severity of our judgment*; or might turn the whole of our indignation against ourselves.

{i} "for wherein thou" 2Sa 12:6,7

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *But we are sure*. Greek, "We know." That is, it is the common and admitted sentiment of mankind. It is known and believed by men generally that God will punish such crimes. It is *implied* in this declaration that this was known to the Jews, and it was particularly to the purpose of the apostle so to express himself as to *include* the Jews. *They* knew it because it was everywhere taught in the Old Testament, and it was the acknowledged doctrine of the nation. The design of the apostle here, says Calvin, is to take away the subterfuges of the hypocrite, lest he should pride himself, if he obtained the praise of men, for a far more important trial awaited him at the bar of God. Outwardly he might appear well to men; but *God* searched the heart, and saw the secret as well as the open deeds of men; and they who practised *secretly* what they condemned openly, could not expect to escape the righteous judgment of God. God, without respect of persons, would punish wickedness, whether it was *open*, as among the Gentiles, or whether it was concealed under the guise of great regard for religion, as among the Jews.

The judgment of God. That God condemns it, and will punish it. He regards those who do these things as guilty, and will treat them accordingly.

According to truth. This expression is capable of two meanings. The Hebrews sometimes use it to denote *truly* or *certainly*. God will *certainly* judge and punish such deeds. Another meaning, which is probably the correct one here, is, that God will judge those who are guilty of such things, not according *to appearance*, but in *integrity*, and with *righteousness*, he will judge men according to the *real nature* of their conduct; and *not* as their conduct may appear unto men. The secret as well as the open sinner, therefore; the hypocrite, as well as the abandoned profligate, must expect to be judged according to their true character. This meaning comports with the design of the apostle, which is to show that the Jew, who *secretly* and *hypocritically* did the very things which he condemned in the Gentile, could not escape the righteous judgment of God.

Against them. That is, against *every man*, no matter of what age or nation.

Which commit such things. The crimes enumerated in chap. i. The apostle is not to be understood as affirming that each and every individual among the Jews was guilty of the specific crimes charged on the heathen, but that they were, *as a people*, inclined to the same things. Even where they might be *externally* moral, they might be guilty of cherishing evil desires in their hearts, and thus be guilty of the offence, Mt 5:28. When men *desire* to do evil, and are prevented by the providence of God, it is right to punish them for their evil intentions. The fact that *God* prevents them from carrying their evil purposes into execution does not constitute a difference between their real character and the character of those who are suffered to *act out* their wicked designs.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And thinkest thou*, etc. This is an appeal to their common sense, to their deep and instinctive conviction of what was *right*. If *they* condemned those who practised these things; if, imperfect and obscure as their sense of justice was; if, unholy as they were, they yet condemned those who were guilty of these offences, would not a holy and just God be far more likely to pronounce judgment? And could *they* escape who had themselves delivered a similar sentence? God is of "purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look upon iniquity," Hab 1:13. And if *men* condemned their fellowmen, how much more would a pure and holy God condemn iniquity. This appeal is evidently directed against the *Jew*. It was doubtless a prevalent sentiment among them, that provided they adhered to the rites of their religion, and observed the ceremonial law, God would not judge them with the same severity as he would the abandoned and idolatrous Gentiles. Comp. Mt 3:9 Joh 8:33. The apostle shows them that *crime is crime*, wherever committed; that sin does not lose its essential character by being committed in the midst of religious privileges; and that those who professed to be the people of God have no peculiar license to sin. Antinomians in all ages, like the Jews, have supposed that *they*, being the friends of God, have a right to do many things which would not be proper in others; that what *would be* sin in others, *they* may commit with impunity; and that God will not be strict to mark the offences of his people. Against all this Paul is directly opposed, and the Bible uniformly teaches that the most aggravated sins among men are those committed by the professed people of God. Comp. Isa 1:11-17 65:2-6; Re 3:10.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Or despisest*. This word properly means to *contemn*, or to treat with neglect. It does not mean here that they *professedly* treated God's goodness with neglect or contempt; but that they *perverted* and *abused* it; they did not make a proper use of it; they did not regard it as fitted to lead them to repentance; but they derived a *practical impression*, that because God *had* not come forth in judgment and cut them off, but had continued to follow them with blessings, that *therefore* he did not regard them as *sinners*, or they inferred that they were innocent and safe. This argument the Jews were accustomed to use, (comp. Lu 13:1-5 Joh 9:2;) and thus sinners still continue to abuse the goodness and mercy of God.

The riches of his goodness. This is a Hebrew mode of speaking, for "his rich goodness," that is, for his *abundant* or *great* goodness. *Riches* denote superfluity, or that which *abounds*, or which *exceeds* a man's present wants; and hence the word in the New Testament is used to denote abundance; or that which is very great and valuable. **See Barnes "Ro 9:23"**.

Comp. Ro 11:12,33; 2Co 8:2 Eph 1:7,18 2:4, 3:8,16; Col 1:27.

The word is used here to qualify each of the words which follow it—his *rich* goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering.

Goodness. Kindness, benignity.

Forbearance. *anochv*. Literally, his *holding in or restraining* his indignation; or forbearing to manifest his displeasure against sin.

Longsuffering. This word denotes his slowness to anger; or his suffering them to commit sins long without punishing them. It does not differ essentially from forbearance. This is shown by his not coming forth, at the moment that sin is committed, to punish it. He might do it justly, but he spares men from day to day, and year to year, to give them opportunity to repent, and be saved. The way in which men *despise* or *abuse* the goodness of God is to *infer* that he does not intend to punish sin; that they may do it safely; and instead of turning from it, to go on in committing it more constantly, as if they were safe. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil," Ec 8:11. The same thing was true in the time of Peter, 2Pe 3:3,4. And the same thing is true of wicked men in every age. Nor is there a more decisive proof of the wickedness of the human heart, than this disposition to abuse the goodness of God; and because *he* shows kindness and forbearance, to take occasion to plunge deeper into sin, to forget his mercy, and to provoke him to anger.

Not knowing. Not *considering*. The word used here— *agnown*—means not merely *to be ignorant of*, but it denotes such a degree of inattention as to result in ignorance. Comp. Hosea ii. 8. In this sense it denotes a *voluntary*, and therefore a criminal ignorance.

Leadeth thee, etc. Or the tendency, the design of the goodness of God, is to induce men to repent of their sins, and not to lead them to deeper and more aggravated iniquity. The same sentiment is expressed in 2Pe 3:9, "The Lord is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." See also Isa 30:18, "And therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you." Ho 5:15; Eze 18:23,32.

Repentance. Change of mind, and purpose, and life. The word here evidently means not merely sorrow, but a forsaking of sin, and turning from it. The tendency of God's goodness and forbearance to lead men to repentance is manifest in the following ways.

(1.) It shows the evil of transgression when it is seen to be committed against so kind and merciful a Being.

(2.) It is fitted to melt and soften the heart. Judgments often harden the sinner's heart, and make him obstinate. But if, while he does evil, God is as constantly doing him good; if the patience of God is seen from year to year, while the man is rebellious, it is adapted to melt and subdue the heart.

(3.) The *great* mercy of God in this often appears to men to be overwhelming; and so it would to all, if they saw it as it is. God bears with men from childhood to youth; from youth to manhood; from manhood to old age; often while they violate every law, contemn his mercy, profane his name, and disgrace their species; and still, notwithstanding all this, his anger is turned away, and the sinner lives, and "riots in the beneficence of God." If there is any thing that can affect the heart of man, it is this; and when he is brought to see it, and contemplate it, it rushes over the soul, and overwhelms it with bitter sorrow.

(4.) The mercy and forbearance of God are constant. The manifestations of his goodness come in every form; in the sun, and light, and air; in the rain, the stream, the dew-drop; in food, and raiment, and home; in friends, and liberty, and protection; in health and peace; and in the gospel of Christ, and the offers of life; and in all these ways God is appealing to his creatures each moment, and setting before them the evils of ingratitude, and beseeching them to turn and live.

And from this passage we cannot but remark,

(1.) that the most effectual preaching is that which sets before men most of the goodness of God.

(2.) Every man is under obligation to forsake his sins, and turn to God. There is no man who has not seen repeated proofs of his mercy and love.

(3.) Sin is a stubborn and an amazing evil. Where it can resist all the appeals of God's mercy; where the sinner can make his way down to hell through all the proofs of God's goodness; where he can refuse to hear God speaking to him each day, and each hour, it shows an amazing extent of depravity to resist all this, and still remain a sinner. Yet there are thousands and millions who do it; and who can be won by no exhibition of love or mercy to forsake their sins, and turn to God. Happy is the man who is melted into contrition by the goodness of God, and who sees and mourns over the evil of sinning against so good a Being as is the Creator and Parent of all.

{k} "riches of his goodness" Ro 9:23 {l} "forbearance and longsuffering" Isa 30:18 {m} "not knowing" Joh 4:2 {n} "leadeth" Isa 30:18

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *But after thy hardness*. The word "after" here (*kata*) means, *in respect to*; or, you act according *to the direct tendency* of a hard heart in treasuring up wrath. The word *hardness* is used to denote *insensibility* of mind. It properly means that which is insensible to the *touch*, or on which no impression is made by contact, as a stone, etc. Hence it is applied to the *mind*, to denote a state where no motives make an impression; which is insensible to all the appeals made to it. See Mt 25:24 19:8; Ac 19:9.

And here it expresses a state of mind where the *goodness* and *forbearance* of God have no effect. The man still remains *obdurate*, to use a word which has precisely the meaning of the Greek in this place. It is implied in this expression, that the *direct tendency*, or the *inevitable result* of that state of mind, was to treasure up wrath, etc.

Impenitent heart. A heart which is not affected with sorrow for sin, in view of the mercy and goodness of God. This is an explanation of what he meant by hardness.

Treasurest up. To *treasure up*, or to *lay up treasure*, commonly denotes a laying by in a place of security of property that may be of use to us at some future period. In this place it is used, however, in a more general sense, to accumulate, to increase. It still has the idea of hoarding up, carries the thought beautifully and impressively onward to future times. *Wrath*, like wealth treasured up, is not exhausted at present, and hence the sinner becomes bolder in sin. But it exists for future use; it is kept in store (comp. 2Pe 3:7) against future times; and the man who commits sin is only *increasing* this by every act of transgression. The same sentiment is taught in a most solemn manner in De 32:34,35. It may be remarked here, that most men have an *immense treasure* of this kind in store, which eternal ages of pain will not exhaust or diminish! Stores of wrath are thus reserved for a guilty world, and in due time it "will come upon man *to the uttermost*," 1Th 2:16.

Unto thyself. For thyself, and not for another; to be exhausted on thee, and not on your fellow-man. This is the case with every sinner, as really and as certainly as though he were the only solitary mortal in existence.

Wrath. Note, Ro 1:18.

Day of wrath. The day when God shall show or execute his wrath against sinners. Comp. Re 6:17 1Th 1:10; Joh 3:36 Eph 5:6.

And revelation. Or the day when the righteous judgment of God will be *revealed*, or made known. Here we learn,

(1.) that the punishment of the wicked will be *just*. It will not be a judgment of *caprice* or *tyranny*, but a righteous judgment; that is, such a judgment as it will be *right* to render, or as ought to be rendered, and THEREFORE such as God will render, for he will do right, 2Th 1:6.

(2.) The punishment of the wicked is *future*. It is not exhausted in this life. It is *treasured* up for a future day, and that day is a day of wrath. How contrary to this text are the pretences of those who maintain that all punishment is executed in this life.

(3.) How foolish, as well as wicked, is it to lay up such a treasure for the future; to have the *only* inheritance in the eternal world, an inheritance of *wrath* and *woe*!

{o} "treasurest up" De 32:34 {p} "and revelation" Ec 12:14

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Who will render*. That is, who will make retribution as a righteous Judge; or who will *give* to every man as he deserves.

To every man. To each one. This is a general principle, and it is clear that in this respect God would deal with the Jew as he does with the Gentile. This *general principle* the apostle is establishing, that he may bring it to bear on the Jew, and to show that he cannot escape *simply because he is a Jew*.

According to his deeds. That is, *as he deserves*; or God will be just, and will treat every man as he *ought* to be treated, or according to his character. The word deeds (*erga*) is sometimes applied to the *external conduct*. But it is plain that this is not its meaning here. It denotes everything connected with conduct, including the acts of the mind, the motives, the principles, as well as the mere external act. Our word *character* more aptly expresses it than any single word. It is not true that God will treat men according to their external conduct; but the whole language of the Bible implies that he will judge men according to the whole of their conduct, including their thoughts, and principles, and motives; that is, as they deserve. The doctrine of this place is elsewhere abundantly taught in the Bible. Pr 24:12 Mt 16:27; Re 20:12 Jer 32:19.

It is to be observed here, that the apostle does not say that men will be rewarded for their deeds, (comp. Lu 17:10,) but *according to* (*kata*) their deeds. Christians will be saved *on account* of the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ, (Tit 3:5) but still the rewards of heaven will be *according to* their works; that is, they who have laboured most, and been most faithful, shall receive the highest reward, or their fidelity in their Master's service shall be the measure or rule according to which the rewards of heaven shall be distributed, Mt 25:14-29. Thus the ground or reason *why* they are saved shall be the merits of the Lord Jesus. The measure of their happiness shall be according to their *character and deeds*. On what principle God will distribute his rewards the apostle proceeds immediately to state.

{q} "Who will render" Pr 24:12 Mt 16:27; Re 20:12

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *To them*. Whoever they may be.

Patient continuance. Who by *perseverance* in well doing, or in a good work. It means, that they who so continue or persevere in good works as to evince that they are disposed to obey the law of God. It does not mean those who perform one *single act*, but those who so live as to show that this is their *character* to obey God. It is the uniform doctrine of the Bible, that none will be saved but those who *persevere* in a life of holiness, Re 5:10 Mt 10:22; Heb 10:38,39.

No other conduct gives evidence of piety but that which continues in the ways of righteousness. Nor has God ever promised eternal life to men unless they so *persevere* in a life of holiness as to show that this is their *character*, their settled and firm rule of action. The words *well doing* here denote such conduct as shall be conformed to the law of God; not merely *external* conduct, but that which proceeds from a heart attached to God and his cause.

Seek for. This word properly denotes the act of endeavouring to find anything that is lost, Mt 18:12 Lu 2:48,49.

But it also denotes the act when one earnestly strives, or desires to obtain anything; when he puts forth his efforts to accomplish it. Thus, Mt 6:33, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God," etc. Ac 16:10 1Co 10:24 Lu 13:24. In this place it denotes an earnest and intense desire to obtain eternal life. It does not mean simply the desire of a sinner *to be happy*, or the efforts of those who are *not willing* to forsake their sins and yield to God, but the intense effort of those who are willing to forsake all their crimes, and submit to God and obey his laws.

Glory and honour and immortality. The three words used here denote the happiness of the heavenly world. They vary somewhat in their meaning, and are *each* descriptive of *something* in heaven, that renders it an object of intense desire. The expressions are *cumulative*, or they are designed to express the happiness of heaven in the highest possible degree. The word *glory doxan* denotes, properly, *praise, celebrity*, or anything distinguished for beauty, ornament, majesty, splendour, as of the sun, etc.; and then it is used to denote the highest happiness or felicity, as expressing everything that shall be splendid, rich, and grand. It denotes that there will be an absence of everything *mean, grovelling*, obscure. The word *honour* (*timhn*) implies rather the idea of *reward*, or just retribution—the honour and reward which shall be conferred in heaven on the friends of God. It stands opposed to contempt, poverty, and want among men. Here they are *despised* by men; there they shall be *honoured* by God.

Immortality. That which is not corruptible, or subject to decay. It is applied to heaven as a state where there shall be no *decay* or *death*, in strong contrast with our present condition, where all things are corruptible, and soon vanish away. These expressions are undoubtedly descriptive of a state of things *beyond the grave*. They are never applied in the Scriptures to any condition of things *on the earth*. This consideration proves, therefore, that the expressions in the next verse; *indignation*, etc., apply to the punishment of the wicked *beyond the grave*.

Eternal life. That is, God will "render" eternal life to those who seek it in this manner. This is a great principle; and this shows that the apostle means by "*their deeds*," (Ro 2:6,) not merely their *external conduct*, but their inward thoughts, and efforts *evinced by their seeking* for glory, etc. For the meaning of the expression "eternal life," **See Barnes "Joh 5:24"**.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Who are contentious*. This expression usually denotes those who are of a quarrelsome or litigious disposition; and generally has reference to controversies *among men*. But here it evidently denotes a disposition *towards God*, and is of the same signification as *rebellious*, or as *opposing God*. They who contend with the Almighty; who resist his claims, who rebel against his laws, and refuse to submit to his requirements, however made known. The Seventy use the verb to translate the Hebrew word

HEBREW, *marah*, in De 21:20. One striking characteristic of the sinner is, that he *contends* with God; that is, that he opposes and resists his claims. This is the case with *all* sinners; and it was particularly so with the Jews, and hence the apostle used the expression here to characterize them particularly. His argument he intended to apply to the Jews, and hence he used such an expression as would exactly describe them. This character of being a rebellious people was one which was often charged on the Jewish nation, De 9:7,24, 31:27 Isa 1:2, 30:9 65:2

Jer 5:23 Eze 2:3,5.

Do not obey the truth. Comp. Ro 1:18. The *truth* here denotes the Divine will, which is alone the light of truth. *Calvin*. It means true doctrine in opposition to false opinions; and to refuse to obey it is to regard it as false, and to resist its influence. The *truth* here means all the correct representations which had been made of God, and his perfections, and law, and claims, whether

by the light of nature or by revelation. The description thus included Gentiles and Jews; but particularly the *latter*, as they had been more signally favoured with the light of truth. It had been an eminent characteristic of the Jews that they had refused to obey the commands of the true God, Jos 5:6 Jud 2:2, 6:10 2Ki 18:12; Jer 3:13,25, 42:21 43:4,7 9:13

But obey unrighteousness. The expression means that they yielded themselves to iniquity, and thus became *the servants of sin*, Ro 6:13,16,17,19.

Iniquity thus may be said to reign over men, as they follow the dictates of evil, make no resistance to it, and implicitly obey all its hard requirements.

Indignation and wrath. That is, these *shall be rendered* to those who are contentious, etc. The difference between indignation and wrath, says Ammonius, is that the former is of *short duration*, but the latter is a long-continued remembrance of evil. The one is temporary, the other denotes continued expressions of hatred of evil. Eustathius says, that the word *indignation* denotes the *internal* emotion, but *wrath* the *external* manifestation of indignation. *Tholuck*. Both words refer to the opposition which God will cherish and express against sin in the world of punishment.

{r} "that are contentious" 1Ti 6:3,4 {s} "and do not obey" 2Th 1:8

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Tribulation*. This word commonly denotes *affliction*, or the situation of being *pressed down* by a burden, as of trials, calamities, etc.; and hence to be *pressed down* by punishment or pain inflicted for sins. As applied to future punishment, it denotes the pressure of the calamities that will come upon the soul as the just reward of sin.

And anguish. *stenocwria*. This noun is used in but three other places in the New Testament, Ro 8:35 2Co 6:4, 12:10.

The verb is used in 2Co 4:8 6:12. It means, literally *narrowness of place, want of room*; and then the anxiety and distress of mind which a man experiences who is pressed *on every side* by afflictions, and trials, and want, or by punishment, and who does not know where he may turn himself to find relief. *Schleusner*. It is thus expressive of the punishment of the wicked. It means that they shall be *compressed* with the manifestations of God's displeasure, so as to be in deep distress, and so as not to know where to find relief. These words, *affliction and anguish*, are often connected, Ro 8:35.

Upon every soul of man. Upon *all* men. In Hebrew the word *soul* often denotes the man himself. But still the apostle, by the use of this word here, meant perhaps to signify that the punishment should not be corporeal, but afflicting the soul. It should be a *spiritual* punishment, a punishment of *mind*. (*Ambrose*. See *Tholuck*.)

Of the Jew first. Having stated the *general* principle of the Divine administration, he comes now to make the application. To the *principle* there could be no objection. And the apostle now shows that it was applicable to the Jew as well as the Greek, and to the Jew pre-eminently. It was applicable *first*, or in an eminent degree, to the Jew, because

(1) he had been peculiarly favoured with light and knowledge on all these subjects.

(2.) These principles were fully stated in his own law, and were in strict accordance with all the teaching of the prophets. **See Barnes "Ro 2:6".**

Also Ps 7:11 9:17, 139:19 Pr 14:32.

Of the Gentile. That is, of all who were not Jews. On what principles God will inflict punishment on them, he states in Ro 2:12-16. It is clear that this refers to the *future* punishment of the wicked, for

(1) it stands in contrast with the *eternal life* of those who seek for glory, (Ro 2:7). If this description of the effect of sin refers to this life, then the effects spoken of in relation to the righteous refer to this life also. But in no place in the Scriptures is it said that men experience *all* the blessings of eternal life in this world; and the very supposition is absurd.

(2.) It is not *true* that there is a just and complete retribution to every man, according to his deeds, in this life. Many of the wicked are prospered in *life*, and "there are no bands in their death, but their strength is firm," Ps 73:4. Many of the righteous pine in poverty and want and affliction, and die in the flames of persecution. Nothing is more clear than [that] there is *not*, in this life, a full and equitable distribution of rewards and punishments; and as the proposition of the apostle here is, that *God WILL render to every man ACCORDING to his deeds*, (Ro 2:6) it follows that this must be accomplished in another world.

(3.) The Scriptures uniformly affirm, that for *the very things* specified here, God will consign men to eternal death. 2Th 1:8, "In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that OBEY NOT the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction," etc. 1Pe 4:17. We may remark, also, that there could be no more alarming description of future suffering than is specified in this passage. It is *indignation*; it is *wrath*; it is *tribulation*; it is *anguish* which the sinner is to endure for ever. Truly men exposed to this awful doom should be alarmed, and should give diligence to escape from the woe which is to come!

{1} "Gentile" or, "Greek"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 10

Verse 10. No Barnes text on this verse.

{t} "glory" 1Pe 1:7 {1} "Gentile", or "Greek"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *For*. This particle is used here to *confirm* what is said before, particularly that this punishment should be experienced by the *Jew* as well as the *Gentile*. For God would deal with both on the principles of justice.

Respect of persons. The word thus rendered means *partiality*, in pronouncing judgment, in favouring one party or individual more than another, not because his cause is more just, but on account of something personal—on account of his wealth, or rank, or office, or influence, or by personal friendship, or by the fear of him. It has special reference to a *judge* who pronounces

judgment between parties at law. The exercise of such partiality was strictly and often forbidden to the Jewish magistrates, Le 19:15 De 1:17; Pr 24:23 Jas 2:1,3,9.

In his capacity as a *Judge*, it is applied often to God. It means that he will not be influenced in awarding the retributions of eternity, in *actually* pronouncing and executing sentence, by any partiality, or by regard to the wealth, office, rank, or appearance of men. He will judge righteous judgment; he will judge men as they *ought* to be judged; according to their character and deserts; and not contrary to theft character, or by partiality. The connexion here demands that this affirmation should be limited *solely to his dealing with men As THEIR JUDGE*. And in this sense, and this only, this is affirmed often of God in the Scriptures, De 10:17 2Ch 19:7 Eph 6:9 Col 3:25; Gal 6:7,8; 1Pe 1:17 Ac 10:34.

It does not affirm that he *must* make all his creatures *equal* in talent, health, wealth, or privilege; it does not imply that, as a sovereign, he may not make a difference in their endowments, their beauty, strength, or graces; it does not imply that he may not bestow his favours where he pleases where *all* are undeserving, or that he may not make a difference in the *characters* of men by his providence, and by the agency of his Spirit. All these are *actually* done, done not out of any respect to their persons, to their rank, office, or wealth, but according to his own sovereign good pleasure, Eph 1. To deny that this is done, would be to deny the manifest arrangement of things everywhere on the earth. To deny that God had a *right* to do it, would be

(1.) to maintain that sinners had a claim on his favours;

(2.) that he might not do what he willed with his own; or

(3.) to affirm that God was under obligation to make all men with just the same talents and privileges; that is, that all creatures *must be*, in all respects, *just alike*. This passage, therefore, is very improperly brought to *disprove* the doctrine of decrees, or election, or sovereignty. It has respect to a different thing, to the *actual exercise* of the office of *the Judge of the world*; and whatever may be the truth about God's decrees, or his electing love, *this* passage teaches nothing in relation to either. It may be added, that this passage contains a most alarming truth for guilty men. It is that God will not be influenced by *partiality*, but will treat them *just as they deserve*. He will not be won or awed by their rank or office; by their wealth or endowments; by their numbers, their power, or their robes of royalty and splendour. Every man should tremble at the prospect of falling into the hands of a *just God*, who will treat him just as he deserves; and should, without delay, seek a refuge in the Saviour and Advocate provided for the guilty, Joh 2:1,2.

{u} "For there is no" De 10:17 2Ch 19:7; Ga 6:7,8; 1Pe 1:17

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *For*. This is used to give a reason for what he had just said, or to show on what principles God would treat man so as not to be a respecter of persons.

As many. *Whosoever*. This includes all who have done it, and evidently has respect to the Gentile world. It is of the more importance to remark this, because he does not say that it is applicable to a few only, or to great and incorrigible instances of pagan wickedness; but it is a universal, sweeping declaration, obviously including *all*.

Have sinned, have been guilty of crimes of any kind toward God or man. Sin is the transgression of a rule of conduct, however made known to mankind.

Without law. *anomwv*. This expression evidently means without *revealed* or *written* law, as the apostle immediately says that they had a law of nature, (Ro 2:14,15.) The word law, *nomov*, is often used to denote the revealed law of God, the Scriptures, or revelation in general, Mt 12:5 Lu 2:23,24 10:26; Joh 8:5,17.

Shall also perish. *apolountai*. The Greek word used here occurs frequently in the New Testament. It means, *to destroy*, *to lose*, or *to corrupt*; and is applied to life, (Mt 10:39) to a reward of labour, (Mt 10:42) to wisdom, (1Co 1:19) to bottles, Mt 9:17. It is also used to denote future punishment, or the destruction of soul and body in hell, (Mt 10:28 18:14; Joh 3:15,) where it is *opposed to eternal life*, and therefore denotes *eternal death*. Ro 14:15 Joh 17:12. In this sense the word is evidently used in this verse. The connexion demands that the reference should be to a future judgment to be passed on the heathen. It will be remarked here, that the apostle does not say they shall *be saved* without law. He does not give even an intimation respecting their salvation. The strain of the argument, as well as this express declaration, shows that they who had *sinned*—and in the first chapter he had proved that *all* the heathen were sinners—would be punished. If any of the heathen are saved, it will be, therefore, an exception to the *general rule* in regard to them. The apostles evidently believed that the great mass of them would be destroyed. On this ground they evinced such zeal to save them; on this ground the Lord Jesus commanded the gospel to be preached to them; and on this ground Christians are now engaged in the effort to bring them to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus. It may be added here, that all modern investigations have gone to confirm the position that the heathen are as degraded now as they were in the time of Paul.

Without law. That is, they shall not be judged by a law which they have not. They shall not be tried and condemned by the *revelation* which the Jews had. They shall be condemned only according to the knowledge and the law which they actually possess. This is the equitable rule on which God will judge the world. According to this, it is not to be apprehended that they will suffer as much as those who have the revealed will of God. Comp. Mt 10:15 11:24; Lu 10:12.

Have sinned in the law. Have sinned having the revealed will of God, or endowed with greater light and privileges than the heathen world. The apostle here has undoubted reference to the *Jews* who had the law of God, and who prided themselves much on its possession.

Shall be judged by the law. This is an equitable and just rule; and to this the Jews could make no objection. Yet the admission of this would have led directly to the point to which Paul was conducting his argument, to show that *they* also were under condemnation, and needed a Saviour. It will be observed here, that the apostle uses a different expression in regard to the Jews from what he does of the Gentiles. He says of the former, that they "shall be judged;" of the latter, that they "*shall perish*." It is not certainly known why he varied this expression. But if conjecture may be allowed, it may have been for the following reasons.

(1.) If he had affirmed of the Jews that they should perish, it would at once have excited their prejudice, and have armed them against the conclusion to which he was about to come. Yet they could bear the word to be applied to *the heathen*, for it was in accordance with their own views, and their own mode of speaking, and was strictly true.

(2.) The word "judged" is *apparently* more *mild*, and yet *really* more *severe*. It would arouse no prejudice to say that they would be judged by their law. It was indeed paying a sort of tribute or regard to that on which they prided themselves so much—the possession of the law of God. Still,

it was a word *implying* all that he wished to say, and *involving* the idea that *they* would be punished and destroyed. If it was admitted that the heathen would perish, and if God was to judge the Jews by an unerring rule, that is, according to their privileges and light, then it would follow that they would also be condemned, and *their own minds* would come at once to the conclusion. The change of words here may indicate, therefore, a nice *tact*, or delicate address in argument, urging home to the conscience an offensive truth rather by the deductions of the mind of the opponent *himself*, than by a harsh and severe charge of the writer. In instances of this the Scriptures abound.; and it was this especially that so eminently characterized the arguments of our Saviour.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *For not the hearers*, etc. The same sentiment is implied in Jas 1:22 Mt 7:21,24 Lu 6:47.

the apostle here doubtless designed to meet an objection of the Jews; to wit, that they had the law, that they manifested great deference for it, that they heard it read with attention, and professed a willingness to yield themselves to it. To meet this, he states a very plain and obvious principle, that this was insufficient to justify them before God, unless they rendered actual obedience.

Are just. Are justified before God, or are personally holy. Or, in other words, simply *hearing* the law is not meeting all its requirements, and making men holy. If they expected to be saved by the *law*, it required something more than merely to hear it. It demanded *perfect obedience*.

But the doers of the law. They who comply entirely with its demands; or who yield to it perfect and perpetual obedience. This was the plain and obvious demand, not only of common sense, but of the Jewish law itself, De 4:1 Le 18:5. Comp. Ro 10:9.

Shall be justified. This expression is evidently synonymous with that in Le 18:5 where it is said that "he shall live in them." The meaning is, that it is a maxim or principle of the law of God, that if a creature will keep it, and obey it entirely, he shall not be *condemned*, but shall be *approved*, and *live for ever*. This does not affirm that any one ever *has* thus lived in this world, but it is an affirmation of a great general principle of law, that if a creature is justified BY the law, the obedience must be entire and perpetual. If such *were* the case, as there would be no ground of condemnation, man would be saved by the law. If the Jews, therefore, expected to be saved by their law, it must be, not by *hearing* the law, nor by being called a Jew, but by perfect and unqualified obedience to all its requirements. This passage is designed, doubtless, to meet a very common and pernicious sentiment of the Jewish teachers, that *all* who became hearers and listeners to the law would be saved. The inference from the passage is, that no man can be saved by his *external* privileges, or by an *outward* respectful deference to the truths and ordinances of religion.

{v} "For not the hearers" Jas 1:22,25

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *For when*. The apostle, in Ro 2:13, had stated a general principle, that the *doers of the law* only can be justified, if justification is attempted by the law. In this verse and the next, he proceeds to show that the same *principle* is applicable to the heathen; that though they have not the *written* law of God, yet that they have sufficient knowledge of his will to take away every excuse for sin, and consequently that the course of reasoning by which he had come to the conclusion that they were guilty is well founded. This verse is not to be understood as affirming, as an *historical fact*, that any of the heathen ever *did* perfectly obey the law which they had, any more than the previous verse affirms it of the Jews. The main point in the argument is, that if men are justified by the *law*, their obedience must be *entire and perfect*; that this is not to be external only, or to consist in *hearing* or in acknowledging the justice of the law; and that the Gentiles had an opportunity of illustrating this principle as well as the Jews, since they also had a law among themselves. The word *when* (*otan*) does not imply that the thing *shall certainly* take place, but is one form of introducing a supposition, or of stating the connexion of one thing with another; Mt 5:11 6:2,5,6,16 10:19.

It is, however, true that the main things contained in this verse, and the next, actually occurred, that the Gentiles did *many* things which the law of God required.

The Gentiles. All who were not Jews.

Which have not the law. Who have not a revelation, or the written word of God. In the Greek the article is omitted, "who have not law," i.e., any revealed law.

By nature. By some, this phrase has been supposed to belong to the previous member of the sentence, "who have not the law by *nature*." But our translation is the more natural and usual construction. The expression means clearly by the light of conscience and reason, and whatever other helps they may have *without* revelation. It denotes simply, *in that state which is without the revealed will of God*. In that condition they had many helps of tradition, conscience, reason, and the observation of the dealings of Divine Providence, so that to a considerable extent they knew what was right and what was wrong.

Do the things. Should they not merely *understand and approve*, but actually *perform* the things required in the law.

Contained in the law. Literally, the things *of* the law, i.e. the things which the law requires. Many of those things might be done by the heathen, as, e.g., respect to parents, truth, justice, honesty, chastity. *So far* as they *did* any of those things, so far they showed that they *had* a law among themselves. And wherein they *failed* in these things, they showed that they were justly condemned.

Are a law unto themselves. This is explained in the following verse. It means that their own reason and conscience constituted, *in these things*, a law, or prescribed that for them which the revealed law did to the Jews.

{w} "a law unto" 1Co 11:14

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Which shew*. Who thus evince or show.

The work of the law. The design, purpose, or object which is contemplated by the revealed law; that is, to make known to man his duty, and to *enforce* the obligation to perform it. This does not

mean, by any means, that they had *all* the knowledge which the law would impart, for then there would have been no need of a revelation; but that, *as far as it went*, as far as they had a knowledge of right and wrong, they *coincided* with the revealed will of God. In other words, the will of God, whether made known by reason or revelation, will be *the same* so far as reason goes. The difference is, that revelation *goes farther* than reason; sheds light on new duties and doctrines; as the information given by the naked eye and the telescope is the same, except that the telescope carries the sight *forward*, and reveals new worlds to the sight of man.

Written in their hearts. The revealed law of God was written on tables of stone, and then recorded in the books of the Old Testament. This law the Gentiles did not possess, but, to a certain extent, the same requirements were written on their hearts. Though not *revealed* to them as to the *Jews*, yet they had obtained the knowledge of them by the light of nature, The word *hearts* here denotes the *mind itself*, as it does also frequently in the sacred Scriptures; not the heart, as the seat of the affections. It does not mean that they loved or even approved of the law, but that they had knowledge of it; and that knowledge was deeply engraven on their minds.

Their conscience. This word properly means the judgment of the mind respecting right and wrong; or the judgment which the mind passes on the morality or immorality of its own actions, when it instantly approves or condemns them. It has usually been termed the *moral sense*, and is a very important principle in a moral government. Its design is to answer the purposes of an ever-attendant witness of a man's conduct; to compel him to pronounce on his own doings, and thus to excite him to virtuous deeds, to give comfort and peace when he does right, to deter from evil actions by making him, whether he will or no, *his own executioner*. See Joh 8:9 Ac 23:1, 24:16 Ro 9:1; 1Ti 1:5.

By nature every man thus approves or condemns his own acts; and there is not a profounder principle of the Divine administration, than thus compelling every man to pronounce on the moral character of his own conduct. Conscience may be enlightened or unenlightened; and its use may be greatly perverted by false opinions. Its province is not to communicate any *new truth*, it is simply to express *judgment*, and to impart pleasure or inflict pain for a man's own good or evil conduct. The apostle's argument does not require him to say that conscience revealed any truth, or any knowledge of duty, to the Gentiles, but that *its actual exercise* proved that they *had* a knowledge of the law of God. Thus it was a *witness* simply of that fact.

Bearing witness. To bear witness is to furnish testimony or proof. And the exercise of the conscience here showed or proved that they *had* a knowledge of the law. The expression does not mean that the exercise of *their* conscience bore witness of anything to them, but that its exercise may be alleged as a proof that they were not without some knowledge of the law.

And their *thoughts*. The word thoughts (*logismwn*) means, properly, *reasonings*, or *opinions*, *sentiments*, etc. Its meaning here may be expressed by the word *reflections*. Their reflections on their own conduct would be attended with pain or pleasure. It differs from conscience, inasmuch as the decisions of conscience are *instantaneous*, and without any process of reasoning. This supposes subsequent reflection, and it means that such reflections would only deepen and confirm the decisions of conscience.

The mean while. Margin, "Between themselves." The rendering in the margin is more in accordance with the Greek. The expression sometimes means, in the mean time, or at the same time; and sometimes afterward, or subsequently. The Syriac and Latin Vulgate render this mutually.

They seem to have understood this as affirming that the heathen among themselves, by their writings, accused or acquitted one another.

Accusing. If the actions were evil.

Excusing. That is, if their actions were good.

One another. The margin renders this expression in connexion with the adverb, translated "in the mean while," "between themselves." This view is also taken by many commentators, and this is its probable meaning. If so, it denotes the fact that in their *reflections*, or their *reasonings* or *discussions*, they accused each other of crime, or acquitted one another; they showed that they had a law; that they acted on the supposition that they had. To show this was the design of the apostle; and there was no further proof of it needed than that which he here adduced.

(1.) They had a *conscience*, pronouncing on their own acts; and

(2.) their *reasonings, based on the supposition of some such common and acknowledged standard* of accusing or acquitting, supposed the same thing. If, therefore, they condemned or acquitted *themselves*, if, in these reasonings and reflections, they proceeded on the principle that they had some rule of right and wrong, *then* the proposition of the apostle was made out that it was right for God to judge them, and destroy them, Ro 2:8-12.

{1} "the mean" or, "between themselves"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *In the day*. This verse is doubtless to be connected with Ro 2:12, and the intermediate verses are a parenthesis, and it implies that the heathen world, as well as the Jews, will be arraigned at the bar of judgment. At that time God will judge all in righteousness, the Jew by the law which *he* had, and the heathen by the law which *he* had.

When God shall judge. God is often represented as the judge of mankind, De 32:36 Ps 1:4; 1Sa 2:10 Ec 3:17; Ro 3:6 Heb 13:4.

But this does not militate against the fact that he will do it *by* Jesus Christ. God has appointed his Son to administer judgment; and it will be not by God *directly*, but by Jesus Christ that it will be administered.

The secrets of men. See Lu 18:17 Ec 12:14, "For God shall bring every work into judgment, *with every secret thing*," etc. Mt 10:26 1Co 4:5. The expression denotes the hidden desires, lusts, passions, and motives of men; the thoughts of the hearts, as well as the outward actions of the life. It will be a characteristic of the day of judgment, that all these will be brought out, and receive their appropriate reward. The propriety of this is apparent, for

(1.) it is by these that the character is really determined. The motives and principles of a mart constitute his character, and to judge him impartially these must be known.

(2.) They are not judged or rewarded in this life. The external conduct only can be seen by men, and of course that only can be rewarded or punished here.

(3.) Men of pure motives and pure hearts are often here basely aspersed and calumniated. They are persecuted, traduced, and often overwhelmed with ignominy. It is proper that the *secret* motives of their conduct should be brought out, and approved. On the other hand, men of base motives—men of unprincipled character, and who are corrupt at the heart—are often lauded, flattered, and exalted

into public estimation. It is proper that their secret principles should be detected, and that they should take their proper place in the government of God. In regard to this expression, we may further remark

(1.) that the fact, that *all* secret thoughts and purposes will be brought into judgment, invests the judgment with an awful character. Who should not tremble at the idea that the secret plans and desires of his soul, which he has so long and so studiously concealed, should be brought out into noon-day in the judgment? All his artifices of concealment shall be then at an end. He will be able to practise disguise no longer. He will be seen as he is; and he will receive the doom he deserves. There will be *one* place, at least, where the sinner shall be treated as he ought.

(2.) To execute this judgment implies the power of searching the heart, of knowing the thoughts, and of developing and unfolding all the purposes and plans of the soul. Yet this is entrusted to Jesus Christ, and the fact that *he* will exercise this shows that he is Divine.

Of men. Of all men, whether Jew or Gentile, infidel or Christian. The day of judgment, therefore, may be regarded as a day of universal development of all the plans and purposes that have ever been entertained in this world.

By Jesus Christ. The fact that Jesus Christ is appointed to judge the world is abundantly taught in the Bible, Ac 17:31 2Ti 4:1; 1Pe 4:5 Joh 5:22,27 1Th 4:16-18; Mt 25:31-46.

According to my Gospel. According to the gospel which *I preach*. Comp. Ac 17:31 2Ti 4:8. This does not mean that the gospel which he preached would be the rule by which God would judge all mankind, for he had just said that the heathen world would be judged by a different rule, Ro 2:12. But it means that he was entrusted with the gospel to make it known; and that one of the great and prime articles of that gospel was, that God would judge the world by Jesus Christ. To make this known he was appointed; and it could be called his gospel only as being a part of the important message with which he was entrusted.

{x} "secrets" Lu 8:17 {y} "my Gospel" Ro 16:25

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Behold*. Having thus stated the *general principles* on which God would judge the world; having shown how they condemned the Gentiles; and having removed all objections to them, he now proceeds to *another* part of his argument, to show how they applied to the *Jews*. By the use of the word *behold*, he calls their attention to it, as to an important subject; and with great skill and address, he states their privileges, before he shows them how those privileges might enhance their condemnation. He admits all their claims to pre-eminence in privileges, and then with great faithfulness proceeds to show how, if abused, these might deepen their final destruction. It should be observed, however, that the word rendered *behold* is, in many Mss., written in two words, *ei de*, instead of *ide*. If this, as is probable, is the correct reading there, it should be rendered, "If now thou art," etc. Thus the Syriac, Latin, and Arabic read it.

Thou art called. Thou art named Jew, implying that this name was one of very high honour. This is the first thing mentioned on which the Jew would be likely to pride himself.

A Jew. This was the name by which the Hebrews were at that time generally known; and it is clear that they regarded it as a name of honour, and valued themselves much on it. See Ga 2:15 Re

2:9. Its origin is not certainly known. They were called the children of Israel until the time of Rehoboam. When the *ten* tribes were carried into captivity, but two remained, the tribes of *Judah* and Benjamin. The name *Jews* was evidently given to denote those of the tribe of Judah. The reasons why the name of *Benjamin*, was lost in that of *Judah* were probably,

(1.) because the tribe of Benjamin was small, and comparatively without influence or importance.

(2.) The *Messiah* was to be of the tribe of Judah, (Ge 49:10); and that tribe would therefore possess a consequence proportioned to their expectation of that event. The name of *Jews* would therefore be one that would suggest the facts that they were preserved from captivity, that they had received remarkably the protection of God, and that the Messiah was to be sent to that people. Hence it is not wonderful that they should regard it as a special favour to be a *Jew*, and particularly when they added to this the idea of *all* the other favours connected with their being the peculiar people of God. The name *Jew* came thus to denote all the peculiarities and special favours of their religion.

And restest in the law. The word *rest* here is evidently used in the sense of *trusting to*, or *leaning upon*. The Jew *leaned on*, or *relied* on the law for acceptance or favour; on the fact that he *had* the law, and on his obedience to it. It does not mean that he relied on his own works, though that was true, but that he leaned on *the fact* that he had the law, and was thus distinguished above others. The *law* here means the entire Mosaic economy; or all the rules and regulations which Moses had given. Perhaps also it includes, as it sometimes does, the whole of the Old Testament.

Makest thy boast of God. Thou dost boast, or glory, that thou hast the knowledge of the true God, while other nations are in darkness. On this account the Jew felt himself far elevated above all other people, and despised them. It was true that they only had the true knowledge of God, and that he had declared himself to be their God, (De 4:7; Ps 147:19,20;) but this was not a ground for *boasting*, but for *gratitude*. This passage know us that it is much more common to boast of privileges than to be *thankful* for them, and that it is no evidence of piety for a man to *boast* of his knowledge of God. A humble, ardent thankfulness that we have that knowledge—a thankfulness which leads us not to *despise* others, but to desire that *they* may have the same privilege—*is* an evidence of piety.

{z} "art called a Jew" Ro 2:28

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *And knowest* his *will*. The will or commands of God. This knowledge they obtained from the Scriptures; and of course in this they were distinguished from other nations.

And approvest. The word used here is capable of two interpretations. It may mean to *distinguish*, or to *approve*. The word is properly and usually applied to the process of testing or trying metals by fire. Hence it comes to be used in a general sense to *try* or to *distinguish* anything; to ascertain its nature, quality, etc., Lu 12:56. This is probably its meaning here, referring rather to the *intellectual* process of discriminating, than to the *moral* process of approving. It could not, perhaps, be said with propriety— at least the scope of the passage does not properly suppose this—that the Jew *approved* or *loved* the things of God; but the scope of the passage is, that the Jew valued himself on his knowledge of that which was conformable to the will of God. **See Barnes "Ro 14:1"**

and following.

The things that are more excellent. The word here translated *more excellent* denotes, properly the things that differ from others, and then also the things that *excel*. It has an ambiguity similar to the word translated "approved." If the interpretation of that word above given is correct, then this word here means those things that differ from others. The reference is to the rites and customs, to the distinctions of meats and days, etc., prescribed by the law of Moses. The Jew would pride himself on the fact that he had been taught by the law to make these distinctions, while all the heathen world had been left in ignorance of them. This was one of the advantages on which he valued himself and his religion.

Being instructed, etc. That is, in regard to the one God, his will, and the distinguishing rites of his worship.

{a} "And knowest" Ps 147:19,20 {1} "and approvest", or "triest the things that differ" {b} "the things" Php 1:10

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *And art confident*. This expression denotes the full assurance of the Jew that he was superior in knowledge to all other people. It is a remarkable fact, that the Jews put the fullest confidence in their religion. Though proud, wicked, and hypocritical, yet they were not speculative infidels. It was one of their characteristics, evinced through all their history, that they had the fullest assurance that God was the Author of their institutions, and that their religion was his appointment.

A guide of the blind. A guide of the blind is a figurative expression to denote an instructer of the ignorant. The blind here properly refers to the Gentiles, who were thus regarded by the Jews. The meaning is, that they esteemed themselves qualified to instruct the heathen world, Mt 15:14 23:16.

A light. Another figurative expression to denote a teacher. Comp. Isa 49:6 Joh 1:4,5,8,9.

In darkness. A common expression to denote the ignorance of the Gentile world. **See Barnes "Mt 4:16"**.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Of the foolish*. The word foolish is used in the Scriptures in two significations—to denote those who are void of understanding, and to denote the wicked. Here it is clearly used in the former sense, signifying that the Jew esteemed himself qualified to instruct those without knowledge.

Of babes. This is the *literal* meaning of the original word. The expression is figurative, and denotes those who were as ignorant as children—an expression which they would be likely to apply to all the Gentiles. It is evident that the character here given by Paul to the Jews is one which they claimed, and of which they were proud. They are often mentioned arrogating this prerogative to themselves, as being qualified to be guides and teachers of others, Mt 14:14 23:2,16,24.

It will be remembered, also, that the Jews considered themselves to be qualified to teach all the world, and hence evinced great zeal to make proselytes. And it is not improbable (*Tholuck*) that their rabbies were accustomed to give the names "foolish" and "babes" to the ignorant proselytes which they had made from the heathen.

Which hast the form of knowledge. The word here translated *form* properly denotes a *delineation* or *picturing* of a thing. It is commonly used to denote also the *appearance* of any object; that which we see, without reference to its internal character; the external figure. It sometimes denotes the external appearance as distinguished from that which is internal; or a hypocritical profession of religion without its reality, 2Ti 3:6, "Having the form of godliness, but denying its power." It is sometimes used in a good, and sometimes in a bad sense. Here it denotes, that in their teaching they retained the *semblance, sketch*, or *outline* of the true doctrines of the Old Testament. They had in the Scriptures a correct *delineation* of the truth. Truth is the representation of things as they are; and the doctrines which the Jews had in the Old Testament were a correct representation or delineation of the objects of knowledge. Comp. 2Ti 1:13.

In the law. In the Scriptures of the Old Testament. In these verses the apostle concedes to the Jews all that they would claim. Having made this concession of their superior knowledge, he is prepared with the more fidelity and force to convict them of their deep and dreadful depravity in sinning against the superior light and privileges which God had conferred on them.

{c} "the form of knowledge" 2Ti 1:13 3:5

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Thou therefore*, etc. he who is a teacher of others may be expected to be learned himself. They ought to be found to be possessed of superior knowledge; and by this question the apostle *impliedly* reproves them for their ignorance. The form of a *question* is chosen because it conveys the truth with greater force. He puts the question as if it were undeniable that they were grossly ignorant. Comp. Mt 23:3, "They say, and do not," etc.

That preachest. This word means to *proclaim* in any manner, whether in the synagogue, or in any place of public teaching.

Dost thou steal? It cannot be proved, perhaps, that the Jews were extensively guilty of this crime. It is introduced partly, no doubt, to make the inconsistency of their conduct more apparent. We expect a man to set an example of what he means by his public instruction.

{d} "Thou therefore which" Mt 23:3

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Dost thou commit adultery*? There is no doubt that this was a crime very common among the Jews. **See Barnes "Mt 12:39"; See Barnes "Joh 8:1"**

and Joh 8:2-11. The Jewish Talmud accuses some of the most celebrated of their rabbies, by name, of this vice. *Grotius*. Josephus also gives the same account of the nation.

Thou that abhorest idols. It was one of the doctrines of their religion to abhor idolatry. This they were everywhere taught in the Old Testament; and this they doubtless inculcated in their teaching. It was impossible that they could recommend idolatry.

Dost thou commit sacrilege? Sacrilege is the crime of violating or profaning sacred things; or of appropriating to common purposes what has been devoted to the service of religion. In this question, the apostle shows remarkable tact and skill, he could not accuse them of idolatry, for the Jews, after the Babylonish captivity, had never fallen into it. But then, though they had not the *form*, they might have the *spirit* of idolatry. That spirit consisted in withholding from the true God that which was his due, and bestowing the affections upon something else. This the Jews did by perverting from their proper use the offerings which were designed for his honour; by withholding that which he demanded of tithes and offerings; and by devoting to other uses that which was devoted to him, and which properly belonged to his service. That this was a common crime among them is apparent from Mal 1:8,12-14 3:8,9.

It is also evident, from the New Testament, that the temple was, in many ways, desecrated and profaned in the time of our Saviour. **See Barnes** "Mt 21:12, **See Barnes "Mt 21:13"**.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Makest thy boast*, etc. To boast in the law implied their conviction of its excellence and obligation, as a man does not boast of that which he esteems to be of no value.

Dishonourest thou God. By boasting of the law, they proclaimed their conviction that it was from God. By breaking it, they denied it. And as actions are a true test of men's real opinions, their breaking the law did it more dishonour than their boasting of it did it honour. This is always the case. It matters little what a man's speculative opinions may be; his practice may do far more to disgrace religion, than his profession does to honour it. It is the life and conduct, and not merely the profession of the lips, that does real honour to the true religion. Alas, with what pertinency and force may this question be put to many who call themselves Christians !

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *The name of God*. The name and character of the true God. *Is blasphemed*. **See Barnes "Mt 9:3"**.

That is, your conduct is such as to lead the heathen world to blaspheme and reproach both your religion and its Author. By your hypocrisy and crimes the pagan world is led to despise a religion which is observed to have no effect in purifying and restraining its professors; and of course the reproach will terminate on the Author of your religion—that is, the true God. A life of purity would tend to honour religion and its Author; a life of impurity does the reverse. There is no doubt that this was actually the effect of the deportment of the Jews. They were scattered everywhere; everywhere they were corrupt and wicked; and everywhere they and their religion were despised.

Among the Gentiles. In the midst of whom many Jews lived.

Through you. By means of you, or as the result of your conduct. It *may* mean, that you Jews do it, or profane the name of God; but the connexion seems rather to require the former sense.

As it is written. To what place the apostle has reference cannot be certainly determined. There are two passages in the Old Testament which will bear on the case, and perhaps he had them both in his view, Isa 52:5 Eze 36:20,23.

The meaning is not that the passages in the Old Testament, referred to by the phrase "as it is written," had any particular reference to the conduct of the Jews in the time of Paul, but that this had been the *character of the people*, and the effect of their conduct *as a nation*, instances of which had been before observed and recorded by the prophets. The same thing has occurred to a most melancholy extent in regard to professed Christian nations. For purposes of commerce, and science, and war, and traffic, men from nations nominally Christian have gone into almost every part of the heathen world. But they have not often been real Christians. They have been intent on gain; and have to a melancholy extent been profane, and unprincipled, and profligate men. Yet the heathen have regarded them as *Christians*; as fair specimens of the effect of the religion of Christ. They have learned, therefore, to abuse the name of Christian, and the Author of the Christian religion, as encouraging and promoting profligacy of life. Hence *one* reason, among thousands, of the importance of Christian missions to the heathen. It is well to disabuse the pagan world of their erroneous opinions of the tendency of Christianity. It is well to teach them that we do not regard these men as Christians. As we have sent to them the worst part of our population, it is well to send them holy men, who shall exhibit to them the true nature of Christianity, and raise our character in their eyes as a Christian people. And were there no other result of Christian missions, it would be worth all the expense and toll attending them, *to raise the national character* in the view of the pagan world.

{e} "as it is written" Eze 36:20,23

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *For circumcision*. **See Barnes "Joh 7:22"; See Barnes "Ac 7:8".**

This was the peculiar rite by which the relation to the covenant of Abraham was recognised; or by which the right to all the privileges of a member of the Jewish commonwealth was acknowledged. The Jews of course affixed a high importance to the rite.

Verily profiteth. Is truly a benefit; or is an advantage. The meaning is, that their being recognised as members of the Jewish commonwealth, and introduced to the privileges of the Jew, was an advantage. See Ro 3:1,2. The apostle was not disposed to deny that they possessed this advantage, but he tells them *why* it was a benefit, and how it might fail of conferring any favour.

If thou keep the law. The mere *sign* can be of no value. The mere fact of being a Jew is not what God requires. It may be a favour to *have* his law, but the mere possession of the law cannot entitle to the favour of God. So it is a privilege to be born in a Christian land; to have had pious parents; to be amidst the ordinances of religion; to be trained in Sunday-schools; and to be devoted to God in baptism: for all these are favourable circumstances for salvation. But none of them entitle to the favour of God; and unless they are improved as they should be, they may be only the means of increasing our condemnation, 2Co 2:16.

Thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. Thy circumcision, or thy being called a Jew, is of no value. It will not distinguish you from those who are not circumcised. You will be treated as a heathen. No external advantages, no name, or rite, or ceremony will save you. God requires the obedience of the heart and of the life. Where there is a disposition to render that, there is an advantage in possessing the external means of grace. Where that is wanting, no rite or profession can save. This applies with as much force to those who have been baptized in infancy, and to those who have made a profession of religion in a Christian church, as to the Jew.

{f} "but if thou" Ga 5:3

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Therefore if the uncircumcision*. If those who are not circumcised, i.e. the heathen.

Keep the righteousness of the law. Keep that which the law of Moses commands. It could not be supposed that a heathen would understand the requirements of the ceremonial law; but reference is had here to the *moral* law. The apostle does not expressly affirm that this was ever done; but he supposes the case, to show the true nature and value of the rites of the Jews.

Shall not his uncircumcision. Or, shall the fact that he is uncircumcised stand in the way of the acceptance of his services? Or, shall he not as certainly and as readily be accepted by God as if he were a Jew? Or, in other Words, the apostle teaches the doctrine that acceptance with God does not depend on a man's external privileges, but on the state of the heart and life.

Be counted for circumcision. Shall he not be *treated* as if he were circumcised? Shall his being uncircumcised be any barrier in the way of his acceptance with God? The word rendered "be counted," is that which is commonly rendered *to reckon, TO IMPUTE*; and its use here shows that the Scripture use of the word is not to transfer, or to charge with that which is not deserved, or not true. It means simply that a man shall be treated as if it were so; that this want of circumcision shall be no bar to acceptance. There is nothing set over to his account; nothing transferred; nothing reckoned different from what it is. God judges things as they are; and as the man, though uncircumcised, who keeps the law, *ought* to be treated as if he had been circumcised, so he who believes in Christ agreeably to the Divine promise, *and trusts to his merits alone for Salvation*, ought to be treated as if he were himself righteous. God judges the thing as it is, and treats men as it is proper to treat them, as being pardoned and accepted through his Son.

{g} "Therefore if the uncircumcision" Ac 10:34,35

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *Which is by nature*. Which is the natural state of man; his condition before he is admitted to any of the peculiar rites of the Jewish religion.

If it fulfil the law. If they who are uncircumcised keep the law.

Judge thee. Condemn thee as guilty. As we say, the conduct of such a man condemns us. He acts so much more consistently and uprightly than we do, that we see our guilt. For a similar mode of expression, see Mt 12:41,42.

Who by the letter, etc. The translation here is certainly not happily expressed. It is difficult to ascertain its meaning. The evident meaning of the original is, "Shall not a heathen man who has none of your external privileges, if he keeps the law, condemn you who are Jews; who, *although* you have the letter and circumcision, are nevertheless transgressors of the law?"

The letter. The word *letter* properly means the mark or character from which syllables and words are formed. It is also used in the sense of *writing* of any kind, (Lu 16:6,7; Ac 28:21 Ga 6:11) particularly the writings of Moses, denoting, by way of eminence, *the letter*, or the *writing*, Ro 7:6 2Ti 3:16.

{h} "fulfil the law" Mt 12:41,42

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *For he is not a Jew*, etc. He who is merely descended from Abraham, and is circumcised, and externally conforms to the law only, does not possess the true character, and manifest the true spirit, contemplated by the separation of the Jewish people. Their separation required much more.

Neither is that *circumcision*. etc. Neither does it meet the full design of the rite of circumcision, that it is externally performed. It contemplated much more. See Ro 2:29.

{i} "he is not a Jew" Mt 3:9 Joh 8:39; Ro 9:6,7; Ga 6:15 Re 2:19

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *But he is a Jew*. He comes up to the design of the Jewish institution; he manifests truly what it is to be a Jew.

Which is one inwardly. Who is *in heart* a Jew. Who has the true spirit, and fulfills the design of their being separated as a peculiar people. This passage proves that the *design* of separating them was not merely to perform certain external rites, or to conform to external observances, but to be a people holy in heart and in life. It cannot be denied that this design was not generally understood in the time of the apostles; but it was abundantly declared in the Old Testament, De 6:5 10:12,13,20 30:20 Isa 1:11-20 Mic 6:8; Psa 51:16,17, 50:7-23.

And circumcision is that of the heart. That is, that circumcision which is acceptable to God, and which meets the design of the institution, is that which is attended with holiness of heart; with the cutting off of sins; and with a pure life. The design of circumcision was to be a sign of separation from the heathen world, and of consecration to the holy God. And this design implied the renunciation and forsaking of all sins; or the cutting off of everything that was offensive to God. This was a work peculiarly of the heart. This design was often stated and enforced in the writings

of the Old Testament. De 10:16, "Circumcise, therefore, the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked." Jer 4:4 De 30:6.

In the spirit. This is an expression explaining further what he had just said. It does not mean *by the Holy Spirit*, but that the work was to take place in the soul, and not in the body only. It was to be an internal, spiritual work, and not merely an external service.

And *not in the letter*. That is, not only according to the literal, external command.

Whose praise, etc. Whose object is not to secure the praise of men. One of the main characteristics of the Jews in the time of Christ was, a desire to secure honour among men, as being exactly scrupulous in the performance of all the duties of their religion. They prided themselves on their descent from Abraham, and on their regular conformity to the precepts of the law of Moses, Mt 3:9 6:2,5 Lu 18:10-12; Mt 23:23.

But of God. "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart," 1Sa 16:7. The praise of God can be bestowed only on those who conform *really*, and not externally only, to his requirements.

The remarks which are made here respecting the Jews, are also strictly applicable to professing Christians, and we may learn—

1. That the external rites of religion are of much less importance than the state of the heart.
2. That the only value of those rites is to promote holiness of heart and life.
3. That the mere fact that we are born of pious ancestors will not save us.
4. That the fact that we were dedicated to God in baptism will not save us.
5. That a mere profession of religion, however orthodox may be our creed, will not save us.
6. That the estimate which men may put on our piety is not the proper measure of our true character and standing.
7. It is an inexpressible privilege to be in possession of the word of God, and to know our duty. It may, if improved, conduce to our elevation in holiness and happiness here, and to our eternal felicity hereafter.
8. It is also a fearful thing to neglect the privileges which we enjoy. We shall be judged according to the light which we have; and it will be an awful event to go to eternity from a Christian land unprepared.
9. Whatever may be the destiny of the heathen, it is *our* duty to make preparation to meet God. The most wicked of the heathen may meet a far milder doom than many who are eternally moral, or who profess religion in Christian lands. Instead, therefore, of speculating on what may be their destiny, it is the duty of every individual to be at peace himself with God, and to flee from the wrath to come.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 3

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 1

ROMANS Chapter 3

Verse 1. *What advantage*, etc. The design of the first part of this chapter is to answer some of the objections which might be offered by a Jew to the statements in the last chapter. The first objection is stated in this verse. A Jew would naturally ask, if the view which the apostle had given were correct, what peculiar benefit could the Jew derive from his religion? The objection would arise particularly from the position advanced, (Ro 2:25,26) that if a heathen should do the things required by the law, he would be treated *as if* he had been circumcised. Hence the question, "What profit is there of circumcision?"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Much every way*. Or, in every respect. This is the answer of the apostle to the objection in Ro 3:1.

Chiefly. That is, this is the principal advantage, and one including all others. The main benefit of being a Jew is to possess the sacred Scriptures, and their instructions.

Unto them were committed. Or were entrusted, were *confided*. The word translated "were committed," is that which is commonly employed to express *faith* or *confidence*, and it implied confidence in them on the part of God in entrusting his oracles to them; a confidence which was not misplaced, for no people ever guarded a sacred trust or deposit with more fidelity, than the Jews did the sacred Scriptures.

The oracles. The word *oracle* among the heathen meant, properly, the answer or response of a god, or of some priest supposed to be inspired, to an inquiry of importance, usually expressed in a brief, sententious way, and often with great ambiguity. The place from which such a response was usually obtained was also called *an oracle*, as *the oracle at Delphi*, etc. These oracles were frequent among the heathen, and affairs of great importance were usually submitted to them. The word rendered *oracles* occurs in the New Testament but four times, Ac 7:38 Heb 5:12; 1Pe 4:11; Ro 3:2. It is evidently here used to denote the Scriptures, as being that which was spoken by God, and particularly perhaps the Divine promises. To possess these was, of course, an eminent privilege, and included all others, as they instructed them in their duty, and were their guide in everything that pertained to them in this life and the life to come. They contained, besides, many precious promises respecting the future dignity of the nation ill reference to the Messiah. No higher favour can be conferred on a people than to be put in possession of the sacred Scriptures. And this fact should excite us to gratitude, and lead us to endeavour to extend them also to other nations. Comp. De 4:7,8; Ps 147:19,20.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *For what if some did not believe*? This is to be regarded as another objection of a Jew. "What then? or what follows? if it be admitted that some of the nation did not believe, does it not fallow that the faithfulness of God in his promises will fail?" The points of the objection are these:

(1.) The apostle had maintained that the nation was sinful, (chapter 2;) that is, that they had not obeyed or believed God.

(2.) This the objector for the time admits, or supposes, in relation to *some* of them. But

(3) he asks whether this does not involve a consequence which is not admissible, that God is unfaithful. Did not the fact that God chose them as his people, and entered into covenant with them, imply that the Jews should be kept from perdition? It was evidently their belief that all Jews would be saved—and this belief they grounded on his covenant with their fathers. The doctrine of the apostle (chapter 2) would seem to imply that, in certain respects, they were on a level with the Gentile nations; that ff they sinned, they would be treated just like the heathen; and hence they asked of what value was the promise of God ? Had it not become vain and nugatory?

Make the faith. The word *faith* here evidently means the *faithfulness* or *fidelity of God to his promises*. Comp. Mt 23:23 2Ti 3:10; Ho 2:20.

Without effect. Destroy it; or prevent him from fulfilling his promises. The meaning of the objection is, that the fact supposed, that the Jews would become unfaithful and be lost, would imply that God had failed to keep his promises to the nation; or that he had made promises which the result showed he was not able to perform.

{n} "some did not believe" Ro 10:16 Heb 4:2

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *God forbid*. Greek, Let not this be. The sense is, *Let not this by any means be supposed*. This is the answer of the apostle, showing that no such consequence followed from his doctrines; and that if any such consequence should follow, the doctrine should be at once abandoned, and that every *man*, no matter who, should be rather esteemed false than God. *The veracity of God was a great first principle*, which was to be held, whatever might be the consequence. This implies that the apostle believed that the fidelity of God could be maintained in strict consistency with the fact that any number of the Jews might be found to be unfaithful, and be cast off. The apostle has not entered into an explanation of this, or shown how it could be; but it is not difficult to understand how it was. The promise made to Abraham, and the fathers, was not unconditional and absolute, that all the Jews should be saved. It was *implied* that they were to be obedient; and that if they were not, they would be cast off, Ge 18:19. Though the apostle has not stated it here, yet he has considered it at length in another part of this epistle, and showed that it was not only *consistent* with the original promise that a part of the Jews should be found unfaithful, and be cast off, but that it had *actually occurred* according to the prophets, Ro 10:16-21; Ro 11:1.

Thus the *fidelity* of God was preserved; at the same time that it was a matter of fact that no small part of the nation was rejected and lost.

Let God be true. Let God be esteemed true and faithful, whatever consequence may follow. This was a first principle, and should be now, that God should be believed to be *a God of truth*, whatever consequence it might involve. How happy would it be, if *all* men would regard this as a fixed principle, a matter not to be questioned in their hearts, or debated about, that God is true to his word! How much doubt and anxiety would it save professing Christians; and how much error would it save among sinners! Amidst all the agitations of the world, all conflicts, debates, and trials,

it would be a fixed position, where every man might find rest, and which would do more than all other things to allay the tempests, and smooth the agitated waves of human life.

But every man a liar. Though every man and every other opinion should be found to be false. Of course this included the apostle and his reasoning; and the expression is one of those which show his magnanimity and greatness of soul. It implies that every opinion which he and all others held—every doctrine which had been defended, should be at once abandoned, if it implied that God was false. It was to be assumed as a *first principle* in all religion and all reasoning, that if a doctrine implied that God was not faithful, it was of course a false doctrine. This showed *his* firm conviction that the doctrine which he advanced was strictly in accordance with the veracity of the Divine promise. What a noble principle is this! How strikingly illustrative of the humility of true piety, and of the confidence which true piety places in God above all the deductions of human reason! And if all men were willing to sacrifice their opinions when they appeared to impinge on the veracity of God; if they started back with instinctive shuddering at the very supposition of such a want of fidelity in him, how soon would it put an end to the boastings of error, to the pride of philosophy, to lofty dictation in religion! No man with this feeling could be for a moment a Universalist; and none could be an infidel.

As it is written. Ps 51:4. To confirm the sentiment which he had just advanced, and to show that it accorded with the spirit of religion as expressed in the Jewish writings, the apostle appeals to the language of David, uttered in a state of deep penitence for past transgressions. Of all quotations ever made, this is one of the most beautiful and most happy. David was overwhelmed with grief; he saw his crime to be awful; he feared the displeasure of God, and trembled before him. Yet *he held it as a fixed, indisputable principle, that GOD WAS RIGHT*. This he never once thought of calling in question. He had sinned against God, God only; and he did not once think of calling in question the fact that God was just altogether in reproving him for his sin, and in pronouncing against him the sentence of condemnation.

That thou mightest be justified. That thou mightest be *regarded as just or right*; or, that it may appear that God is not unjust. This does not mean that David had sinned against God *for the purpose* of justifying him, but that he now clearly saw that his sin had been so *directly* against him, and so aggravated, that God was right in his sentence of condemnation.

In thy sayings. In what thou hast spoken; that is, in thy sentence of condemnation; in thy words in relation to this offence. It may help us to understand this, to remember that the psalm was written immediately after Nathan, at the command of God, had gone to reprove David for his crime. (See the title of the psalm.) God, by the mouth of Nathan, had *expressly* condemned David for his crime. To this expression of condemnation David doubtless refers by the expression "in thy sayings." See 2Sa 12:7-13.

And mightest overcome. In the Hebrew, "*mightest be pure*," or mightest be esteemed pure, or just. The word which the Seventy and the apostle have used, "mightest *overcome*," is sometimes used with reference to litigations or trials in a court of justice. He that was accused and acquitted, or who was adjudged to be innocent, might be said to *overcome*, or to gain the cause. The expression is thus used here. As if there were a *trial* between David and God, God would overcome; that is, would be esteemed pure and righteous in his sentence condemning the crime of David.

When thou art judged. The Hebrew is, *when thou judgest*; that is, in thy judgment pronounced on this crime. The Greek *may* also be in the middle voice as well as the passive, and may correspond, therefore, in meaning precisely with the Hebrew. So the Arabic renders it. The Syriac renders it,

"*when they* (that is, *men*) shall judge thee." The meaning, as expressed by David, is, that God is to be esteemed right and just in condemning men for their sins, and that a true penitent, that is, a man placed in the best circumstances to form a proper estimate of God, will see this, though it should condemn himself. The meaning of the expression in the connexion in which Paul uses it is, that it is to be held as a fixed, unwavering principle, that God is right and true, whatever consequences it may involve, whatever doctrine it may overthrow, or whatever man it may prove to be a liar.

{o} "as it is written" Ps 51:4

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *But if our unrighteousness*. If our *sin* The *particular* sin which had been specified Ro 3:3 was *unbelief*. But the apostle here gives the objection a general form. This is to be regarded as an *objection* which a Jew might take. The force of it is this:

(1) It had been conceded that some had not believed; that is, had sinned.

(2) But God was true to his promises. Notwithstanding *their* sin, God's character was the same. Nay,

(3) *in the very midst of sin*, and as one of the *results* of it, the character of God as a just Being shone out illustriously. The question then was,

(4.) if his glory resulted from it; if the effect of all was to *show* that his character was pure, how could he *punish* that sin from which his own glory resulted? And this is a question which is often asked by sinners.

Commend. Recommend; show forth; render illustrious.

The righteousness of God. His just and holy character. This was the effect on David's mind, that he saw more clearly the justice of God in his threatenings against sin, in consequence of his own transgression. And if this *effect* followed, if honour was thus done to God, the question was, how he could consistently *punish* that which tended to promote his own glory?

What shall we say? What follows? or, what is the inference? This is a mode of speech as if the objector hesitated about expressing an inference which would seem to follow, but which was horrible in its character. *Is God unrighteous*? The meaning of this would be better expressed thus: "Is *not* God unrighteous in punishing? Does it not follow, that if God is honoured by sin, that it would be wrong for him to inflict punishment?"

Who taketh vengeance. The meaning of this is simply, who inflicts punishment. The idea of *vengeance* is not necessarily in the original, *orghn*. It is commonly rendered wrath, but it often means simply punishment, with out any reference to the state of the mind of him who inflicts it. Mt 3:7 Lu 3:7, 21:23 Joh 3:36.

See Barnes "Ro 1:18; **See Barnes "Ro 4:15"**.

I speak as a man. I speak after the manner of men. I speak as appears to be the case to human view; or as would strike the human mind. It does not mean that the language was such as *wicked men* were accustomed to use; but that the objector expressed a sentiment which to human view would seem to follow from what had been said. This I regard as the language of an objector. It implies a degree of reverence for the character of God, and a seeming unwillingness to *state* an objection which seemed to be dishonourable to God, but which nevertheless pressed itself so strong

on the mind as to appear irresistible. No way of stating the objection could have been more artful or impressive.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *God forbid*. **See Barnes "Ro 3:4"**.

For then. If it be admitted that it would be unjust for God to inflict punishment.

How shall God, etc. How will it be *right* or consistent for him to judge the world. *Judge*. To *judge* implies the possibility and the correctness of *condemning* the guilty; for if it were not right to condemn them, judgment would be a farce. This does not mean that God would condemn all the world; but that the fact of *judging* men implied the possibility and propriety of condemning those who were guilty. It is remarkable that the apostle does not attempt to explain *how* it could be that God could take occasion from the sins of men to promote his glory; nor does he even admit the fact; but he meets *directly* the objection. To understand the force of his answer, it must be remembered that it was an *admitted fact*, a fact which *no one* among the Jews would call in question, that God would judge the world. This fact was fully taught in their own writings, Ge 18:25 Ec 12:14, 11:9.

It was besides an admitted point with them, that God would *condemn the heathen world*; and perhaps the term "world" here refers particularly to them. But how could this be, if it *were not right* for God to inflict punishment at nil? The inference of the objector, therefore, *could not* be true; though the apostle does not tell us *how* it was consistent to inflict punishment for offences from which God took occasion to promote his glory. It may be remarked, however, that God will judge offences, not from what *he* may do in *overruling* them, but from the nature of the crime itself. The question is not, what *good* God may bring out of it, but what does the crime itself deserve? what is the character of the offender? what was his intention? It is not what God may do to overrule the offence when it *is* committed. The just punishment of the murderer is to be determined by the law, and by his own desert; and not from any reputation for integrity and uprightness which the *judge* may manifest on his trial; or from any honour which may accrue to the police for detecting him; or any security which may result to the commonwealth from his execution; or from any honour which the *law* may gain as a just law by his condemnation. Nor should any of these facts and advantages, which may result from his execution, be pleaded in bar of his condemnation. So it is with the sinner under the Divine administration. It is indeed a truth (Ps 76:10) that the wrath of man shall praise God, and that he will take *occasion* from men's wickedness to glorify himself as a just Judge and moral Governor; but this will be no ground of acquittal for the sinner.

{p} "how shall God judge" Job 8:3

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *For if*, etc. This is an objection similar to the former. It is indeed but another form of the same.

The truth of God. His truth or faithfulness in adhering to his threatenings. God threatened to punish the guilty. By their guilt he will take *occasion* to show his own truth; or their crime will furnish occasion for such an exhibition.

Hath more abounded. Has been more striking, or more manifest. His *truth* will be shown by the fulfillment of all his promises to his people, and of all his predictions. But it will also be shown by fulfilling his threatenings on the guilty. It will, therefore, *more abound* by their condemnation; that is, their condemnation will furnish new and striking *instances* of his truth. Every lost sinner will be, therefore, an eternal monument of the truth of God.

Through my lie. By means of my lie, or as one of the results of my falsehood. The word *lie* here means falsehood, deceitfulness, *unfaithfulness*. If by the unfaithfulness of the Jewish people to the covenant, occasion should be given to God to glorify himself, how could they be condemned for it? *Unto his glory*. To his praise, or so as to show his character in such a way as to excite the praise and admiration of his intelligent creation.

Why yet am I, etc. How *can* that act be regarded as evil, which tends to promote the glory of God? The fault in the reasoning of the objector is this, that he takes for granted that the *direct* tendency of his conduct is to promote God's glory, whereas it is just the reverse; and it is by God's *reversing* that tendency, or overruling it, that he obtains his glory. The *tendency* of murder is not to honour the law, or to promote the security of society, but just the reverse. Still, his execution shall avert the *direct* tendency of his crime, and do honour to the law and the judge, and promote the peace and security of the community by restraining others.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *And not rather*. This is the answer of the apostle. He meets the objection by showing its tendency if *carried out*, and if it were made a principle of conduct. The meaning is, "If the glory of God is to be promoted by sin, and if a man is not therefore to be condemned, or held guilty for it; if this fact absolves man from crime, *why not carry the doctrine out, and make it a principle of conduct, and DO ALL THE EVIL WE CAN, in order to promote his glory?"* This was the fair consequence of the objection. And yet this was a result so shocking and monstrous, that all that was necessary in order to answer the objection was merely to state this consequence. Every man's moral feelings would revolt at the doctrine; every man would *know* that it could not be true; and every man, therefore, could see that the objection was not valid.

As we. This refers, doubtless, to the apostles, and to Christians generally. It is unquestionable, that this accusation was often brought against them.

Slanderously reported. Greek, "As we are *blasphemed*." This is the legitimate and proper use of the word *blaspheme*, to speak of one in a reproachful and calumnious manner.

As some affirm, etc. Doubtless Jews. Why they should affirm this, is not known. It was doubtless, however, some *perversion* of the doctrines that the apostles preached. The doctrines which were thus misrepresented and abused were probably these: the apostles taught that the *sins* of men were the occasion of promoting God's glory in the plan of salvation. That "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound," Ro 5:20. That God, in the salvation of men, would be glorified just in proportion to the depth and pollution of the guilt which was forgiven. This was true; but how easy

was it to misrepresent this as teaching that men *ought* to sin in order to promote God's glory! And instead of stating it as an inference which THEY drew from the doctrine, to state it as what the apostles *actually taught*. This is the common mode in which charges are brought against others. Men draw an *inference* themselves, or suppose that the doctrine *leads* to such an inference, and then *charge* it on others as what they actually *hold and teach*. There is one maxim which should never be departed from: *that a man is not to be held responsible for the inferences which we may draw from his doctrine; and that he is never to be represented as holding and teaching that which WE suppose follows from his doctrine*. He is answerable only for what he avows.

Let us do evil. That is, since sin is to promote the glory of God, let us commit as much as possible.

That good may come. That God may take occasion by it to promote his glory.

Whose damnation is just. Whose *condemnation*. **See Barnes "Ro 14:23"**.

This does not necessarily refer to future punishment, but it means that the conduct of those who thus slanderously perverted the doctrines of the Christian religion, and accused the apostles of teaching this doctrine, was deserving of condemnation or punishment. Thus he expressly disavows, in strong language, the doctrine charged on Christians. Thus he silences the objection; and thus he teaches as a great fundamental law, *that evil is not to be done that good may come*. This is a universal rule; and this is *in no case* to be departed from. Whatever is evil is not to be done under any pretence. Any imaginable good which we may think will result from it; any advantage to ourselves or to our cause; or any glory which we may think may result to God, will not sanction or justify the deed. Strict, uncompromising integrity and honesty is to be the maxim of our lives; and in *such* a life only can we hope for success, or for the blessing of God.

{q} "Let us do evil" Ro 6:1,15

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *What then*? This is another remark supposed to be made by a Jewish objector. "What follows? or are we to infer that we are better than others?"

Are we better than they? Are we Jews better than the Gentiles? Or rather, have we any *preference*, or advantage as to character and prospects, over the Gentiles? These questions refer only *to the great point in debate*, to wit, about justification before God. The apostle had admitted (Ro 3:2) that the Jews *had* important advantages *in some respects*, but he now affirms that those advantages did not make a difference between them and the Gentiles about justification.

No, in no wise. Not at all. That is, the Jews have no preference or advantage over the Gentiles in regard to the subject of justification before God. They have failed to keep the law; they are sinners; and if they are justified, it must be in the same way as the rest of the world.

We have before proved, etc. Ro 1:21-32 2:1-29.

Under sin. Sinners. Under the power and dominion of sin.

{1} "proved" or, "charged"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *As it is written*. The apostle is reasoning with Jews; and he proceeds to show, from their own Scriptures, that what he had affirmed was true. The point to be proved was, that the Jews, in the matter of justification, had no advantage or preference over the Gentiles; that the Jew had failed to keep the law which had been given *him*, as the Gentile had failed to keep the law which had been given him; and that both therefore were equally dependent on the mercy of God, incapable of being justified and saved by their works. To show this the apostle adduces texts, to show what was the character of the Jewish people; or to show that, according to their own Scriptures, they were sinners no less than the Gentiles. The point then is, to prove the depravity of *the Jews*, not that of universal depravity. The interpretation should be confined to the bearing of the passages on the Jews, and the quotations should not be adduced as *directly* proving the doctrine of universal depravity. In a certain sense, which will be stated soon, they may be adduced as bearing on that subject. But their direct reference is to the Jewish nation. The passages which follow are taken from various parts of the Old Testament. The design of this is to show, that this characteristic of sin was not confined to any particular period of the Jewish history, but pertained to them *as a people*; that it had characterized them *throughout* their existence as a nation. Most of the passages are quoted in the language of the Septuagint. The quotation in Ro 3:10-12, is from Ps 14:1-3, and from Ps 53:1-3. The fifty-third psalm is the same as the fourteenth, with some slight variations.

There is none righteous. The Hebrew (Ps 14:1) is, there is none that doeth good. The Septuagint has the same. The apostle quotes according to the *sense* of the passage. The design of the apostle is to show that none could be justified by the law. He uses an expression, therefore, which is exactly conformable to his argument, and which accords in meaning with the Hebrew, *there is none just—dikaiov*.

No, not one. This is not in the Hebrew, but is in the Septuagint. It is a strong universal expression, denoting the state of almost universal corruption which existed in the time of the psalmist. The expression should not be interpreted to mean that there was not literally one pious man in the nation; but that the characteristic of the nation was, at that time, that it was exceedingly corrupt. Instead of being righteous, as the Jew claimed, because they were Jews, the testimony of their own Scriptures was, that they were universally wicked.

{r} "There is none righteous" Ps 14 Ps 53

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *There is none that understandeth*. In the Hebrew, (Ps 14:2), God is represented as looking down from heaven to see, that is, to make investigation, whether there were any that understood or sought after him. This circumstance gives not only high poetic beauty to the passage, but deep solemnity and awfulness. God, the Searcher of hearts, is represented as making investigation *on this very point*, he looks down from heaven for this very purpose, to ascertain whether there were any righteous. In the Hebrew it is not asserted, though it is clearly and strongly implied, that *none such were found*. That fact the apostle *states*. If, as the result of such an investigation, none were found; if God did not specify that there were any such; then it follows that there were none.

For none could escape the notice of his eye; and if there *had* been any, the benevolence of his heart would have led him to record it. To *understand* is used in the sense of being wise; or of having such a state of moral feeling as to dispose them to serve and obey God. The word is often used in the Bible, not to denote a mere *intellectual* operation of the mind, but the state of the heart *inclining the mind* to obey and worship God, Ps 107:43 119:27,100

Pr 2:5 Isa 6:10: "Lest they should understand with their heart," etc.

That seeketh after God. That endeavours to know and do his will, and to be acquainted with his character. A disposition *not* to seek after God, that is, to neglect and forget him, is one of the most decided proofs of depravity. A righteous man counts it his highest privilege and honour to know God, and to understand his will. A man can indulge in wickedness only by forgetting God. Hence a disposition not to seek God is full proof of depravity.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *They have all gone out of the way*. They have *declined* from the true path of piety and virtue.

They are together. They have *at the same time*; or *they have equally* become unprofitable. They are *as one*; they are joined, or *united*, in this declension. The expression denotes *union* or *similarity*.

Become unprofitable. This word in Hebrew means, to become *putrid* and *offensive*, like fruit that is spoiled. In Arabic, it is applied to *milk* that becomes sour. Applied to moral subjects, it means to become corrupt and useless. They are of *no value* in regard to works of righteousness.

There is none, etc. This is taken literally from the Hebrew.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Their throat*, etc. This expression is taken from Ps 5:9, literally from the Septuagint. The design of the psalm is to reprove those who were false, traitorous, slanderous, etc., Ps 5:6. The psalmist has the sin of deceit, and falsehood, and slander particularly in his eye. The expressions here are to be interpreted in accordance with that. The sentiment here may be, as the grave is ever open to receive all into it, that is, into destruction, so the mouth or the throat of the slanderer is ever open to swallow up the peace and happiness of all. Or it may mean, as from an open sepulchre there proceeds an offensive and pestilential vapour, so from the mouths of slanderous persons there proceeds noisome and ruinous words. (*Stuart*.) I think the connexion demands the former interpretation.

With their tongues, etc. In their conversation, their promises, etc., they have been false, treacherous, and unfaithful.

The poison of asps. This is taken literally from the Septuagint of Ps 140:3. The *asp*, or adder, is a species of serpent whose poison is of such active operation that it kills almost the instant that it penetrates, and that without remedy. It is small, and commonly lies concealed, often in the sand in a road, and strikes the traveller before he sees it. It is found chiefly in Egypt and Lybia. It is said

by ancient writers that the celebrated Cleopatra, rather than be carried a captive to Rome by Augustus, suffered an asp to bite her in the arm, by which she soon died. The precise species of serpent which is here meant by the psalmist, however, cannot be ascertained. All that is necessary to understand the passage is, that it refers to a serpent whose bite was deadly, and rapid in its execution.

Is under their lips. The poison of the serpent is contained in a small bag which is concealed at the root of the tooth. When the tooth is struck into the flesh, the poison is pressed out, through a small hole in the tooth, into the wound. whether the psalmist was acquainted with that fact, or referred to it, cannot be known: his words do not of necessity imply it. The sentiment is, that as the poison of the asp is rapid, certain, spreading quickly through the system, and producing death, so the words of the slanderer are deadly, pestiferous, quickly destroying the reputation and happiness of man. They are as subtle, as insinuating, and as deadly to the reputation, as the poison of the adder is to the body. Wicked men, in the Bible, are often compared to serpents, Mt 23:33 Ge 49:17.

{s} "throat is an open" Ps 5:9 {t} "poison of asps" Ps 140:3

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Whose mouth*. Ps 10:7. The apostle has not quoted this literally, but has given the sense. David in the psalm is describing his bitter enemies.

Cursing. Reproachful and opprobrious language, such as Shimei used in relation to David, 2Sa 16:5,7,8.

Bitterness. In the psalm, *deceits*. The word *bitterness* is used to denote severity, harshness, cruelty; reproachful and malicious words.

{u} "whose mouth is full" Ps 10:7

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Their feet*, etc. The quotation in this and the two following verses is abridged or condensed from Isa 59:7,8. The expressions occur in the midst of a description of the character of the nation in the time of the prophet. The apostle has selected a few expressions out of many, rather making a reference to the entire passage, than a formal quotation. The expression, "their feet are swift," etc., denotes the eagerness of the nation to commit crime, particularly deeds of injustice and cruelty. They thirsted for the blood of innocence, and *hasted* to shed it, to gratify their malice, or to satisfy their vengeance.

{v} "feet are swift" Ps 10:7

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Destruction*. That is, they cause the destruction or the ruin of the reputation, happiness, and peace of others.

Misery. Calamity, ruin.

In their ways. Wherever they go. This is a striking description not only of the wicked then, but of all times. The tendency of their conduct is to destroy the virtue, happiness, and peace of all with whom they come in contact.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *And the way of peace*, etc. What tends to promote their own happiness, or that of others, they do not regard. Intent on their plans of evil, they do not know or regard that which is fitted to promote the welfare of themselves or others. This is the case with all who are selfish, and who seek to gain theft own purposes of crime and ambition.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *There is no fear of God*. Ps 36:1. The word *fear* here denotes reverence, awe, veneration. There is no such regard or reverence for the character, authority, and honour of God, as to restrain them from crime. Their conduct shows that they are not withheld from the commission of iniquity by any regard to the fear or favour of God. The only thing that will be effectual in restraining men from sin, will be a regard to the honour and law of God.

In regard to these quotations from the Old Testament, we may make the following remarks:

(1.) They fully establish the position of the apostle, that the nation, as such, was far from being righteous, or that they could be justified by their own works. By quotations from no less than six distinct places in their own writings, referring to different periods of their history, he shows what the character of the nation was. And as this was the characteristic of those times, it followed that a Jew could not hope to be saved *simply because he was a Jew*. He needed, as much as the Gentile, the benefit of some other plan of salvation.

(2.) These passages show us how to use the Old Testament, and the facts of ancient history. They are to be adduced not as showing *directly* what the character of man is *now*, but to show what *human nature* is. They demonstrate what man is when under the most favourable circumstances; in different situations; and at different periods of the world. The concurrence of *past* facts shows what the race is. And as past facts are uniform; as man thus far, in the most favourable circumstances, has been sinful; it follows that this is the characteristic of man everywhere. It is settled by the facts of the world, just as any other characteristic of man is settled by the uniform occurrence of facts in all circumstances and times. Ancient facts, and quotations of Scripture, therefore, are to be adduced as proofs of the *tendency of human nature*. So Paul used them; and so it is lawful for us to use them.

(3.) It may be observed, further, that the apostle has given a view of human depravity which is very striking. He does not confine it to one faculty of the mind, or to one set of actions; he *specifies* each member and each faculty as being perverse, and inclined to evil. The depravity extends to all the departments of action. The *tongue*, the *mouth, the feet, the lips*, are all involved in it; all are

perverted, and all become the occasion of the commission of sin. The entire man is corrupt; and the painful description extends to every department of action.

(4.) If such was the character of the Jewish nation under all its advantages, what must have been the character of the heathen? We are prepared thus to credit all that is said in Ro 1 and elsewhere, of the sad state of the pagan world.

(5.) What a melancholy view we have thus of human nature. From whatever quarter we contemplate it, we come to the same conclusion. Whatever record we examine, whatever history we read; whatever time or period we contemplate, we find the same facts, and are forced to the same conclusion. All are involved in sin, and are polluted, and ruined, and helpless. Over these ruins we should sit down and weep, and lift our eyes with gratitude to the God or mercy, that he has pitied us in our low estate, and has devised a plan by which. "these ruins may be built again," and lost, fallen man be rinsed up to forfeited "glory, honour, and immortality."

{w} "There is no fear of God" Ps 36:1

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Now we know*. We all admit. It is a conceded, plain point.

What things soever. Whether given as precepts, or recorded as historical facts. Whatever things are found *in* the law.

The law saith. This means here evidently the Old Testament. From that the apostle had been drawing his arguments, and his train of thought requires us here to understand the whole of the Old Testament by this. The same principle applies, however, to all law, that it speaks only to those to whom it is expressly given.

It saith to them, etc. It speaks to them for whom it was expressly intended; to them for whom the law was made. The apostle makes this remark in order to prevent the Jew from evading the force of his conclusion. He had brought proofs from their *own* acknowledged laws, from writings given expressly *for* them, and which recorded their own history, and which they admitted to be divinely inspired. These proofs, therefore, they could not evade.

That every mouth may be stopped. This is, perhaps, a proverbial expression, Job 5:16 Ps 107:42. It denotes that they would be thoroughly convinced; that the argument would be so conclusive as that they would have nothing to reply; that all objections would be silenced. Here it denotes that the argument for the depravity of the Jews from the Old Testament was so clear and satisfactory, that nothing could be alleged in reply. This may be regarded as the conclusion of his whole argument, and the expressions may refer not to the Jews only, but to all the world. Its meaning may, perhaps, be thus expressed: "The Gentiles are proved guilty by their own deeds, and by a violation of the laws of nature. *They* sin against their own conscience; and have thus been shown to be guilty before God, Ro 1. The Jews have also been shown to be guilty; all their objections have been silenced by an independent train of remark; by appeals to *their own law*; by arguments drawn from the authority which *they* admit. Thus the mouths of both are stopped. Thus the whole world becomes guilty before God." I regard, therefore, the word "*that*" here —*ina*—as referring, not particularly to the argument from the *law* of the Jews, but to *the whole previous train of argument*, embracing both

Jews and Gentiles. His conclusion is thus *general* or *universal*, drawn from arguments adapted to the two great divisions of mankind.

And all the world. Both Jews and Gentiles, for so the strain of the argument shows. That is, all by nature; all who are out of Christ; all who are not pardoned. All are guilty where there is not some scheme contemplating forgiveness, and which is not applied to purify them. The apostle in all this argument speaks of what man is, and ever would be, without some plan of justification appointed by God.

May become. May *be*. They are not *made* guilty by the law; but the argument from the law, and from fact, *proves* that they are guilty.

Guilty before God. *upodikov tw yew*, Marg., *subject to the judgment of God*. The phrase is taken from courts of justice. It is applied to a man who has not vindicated or defended himself; against whom therefore the charge or the indictment is found true; and who is in consequence subject to punishment. The idea is that of subjection to *punishment*; but *always* because the man personally *deserves* it, and because being unable to vindicate himself, he *ought* to be punished. It is never used to denote simply an obligation to punishment, but with reference to the fact that the punishment is personally *deserved*. This word, rendered *guilty*, is not elsewhere used in the New Testament, nor is it found in the Septuagint. The argument of the apostle here shows,

(1.) that in order to guilt, there must be a *law*, either that of nature or by revelation, Ro 1:1-3:31 and

(2) that in order to *guilt*, there must be a violation of that law which may be charged on them as individuals, and for which they are to be held personally responsible.

{x} "every mouth may be stopped" or, "subject to the judgment of God."

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *By the deeds of the law*. By works; or by such deeds as the law requires. The word *law* has, in the Scriptures, a great variety of significations. Its strict and proper meaning is, a *rule* of conduct prescribed by superior authority. The course of reasoning in these chapters shows the sense in which the apostle uses it here. He intends evidently to apply it to those rules or laws by which the Jews and Gentiles pretended to frame their lives; and to affirm that men could be justified by no conformity to those laws. He had shown Ro 1 that *the heathen, the entire Gentile world*, had violated the laws of nature—the rules of virtue made known to them by reason, tradition, and conscience, He had shown the same Ro 2:1-3:29 in respect to the Jews. They had equally failed in rendering obedience to *their* law. In both these cases the reference was not to *ceremonial* or *ritual* laws, but to the moral law; whether that law was made known by reason or by revelation. The apostle had not been discussing the question whether they had yielded obedience to their ceremonial law, but whether they had been found *holy*, i.e. whether they had obeyed the *moral* law. The conclusion was, that in all this they had failed, and that therefore they could not be justified by that law. That the apostle did not intend to speak of *external* works only is apparent; for he all along charges them with a want of conformity of the heart no less than with a want of conformity of the life. See Ro 1:26,29-31; Ro 2:28,29. The conclusion is therefore a general one, that by no law, made known either by reason, conscience, tradition, or revelation, could man be justified; that there

was no form of obedience which could be rendered, that would justify men in the sight of a holy God.

There shall no flesh. No man; no human being, either among the Jews or the Gentiles. It is a strong expression, denoting the absolute universality of his conclusion. **See Barnes "Ro 1:3"**.

Be justified. Be regarded and treated as righteous. None shall be esteemed as having *kept* the law, and as being entitled to the rewards of obedience. **See Barnes** "Ro 1:17.

In his sight. Before him. God sits as a Judge to determine the characters of men, and he shall not adjudge any to have kept the law.

For by the law. That is, by *all* law. The connexion shows that this is the sense. Law is a rule of action. The effect of *applying* a rule to our conduct is to show us what sin is. The meaning of the apostle clearly is, that the application of a law to try our conduct, instead of being a ground of justification, will be merely to show us our own sinfulness and departures from duty. A man may esteem himself to be very right and correct, until he compares himself with a rule, or law; so, whether the Gentiles compared their conduct with their laws of reason and conscience, or the Jew his with his *written* law, the effect would be to show them how far they had departed. The more closely and faithfully it should be applied, the more they would see it. So far from being justified by it, they would be more and more condemned. Comp. Ro 7:7-10. The same is the case now. This is the way in which a sinner is converted; and the more closely and faithfully the law is preached, the more will it condemn him, and show him that he needs some other plan of salvation.

{y} "therefore by the deeds of the law" Ps 143:2

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *But now*. The apostle, having shown the entire failure of all attempts to be justified by the law, whether among Jews or Gentiles, proceeds to state fully the plan of justification by Jesus Christ in the gospel. To do this was the main design of the epistle, Ro 1:17. He makes, therefore, in the close of this chapter, an explicit statement of the nature of the doctrine; and in the following parts of the epistle he fully-proves it, and illustrates its effects.

The righteousness of God. God's plan of justifying men. **See Barnes "Ro 1:17"**.

Without the law. In a way different from personal obedience to the law. It does not mean that God *abandoned* his law; or that Jesus Christ did not *regard* the law, for he came to "magnify" it, Isa 42:21 or that sinners *after* they are justified have no regard to the law; but it means simply what the apostle had been endeavouring to show, that justification could not be accomplished by *personal* obedience to any law of Jew or Gentile, and that it must be accomplished in some other way.

Being witnessed. Being borne witness to. It was not a *new* doctrine; it was found in the Old Testament. The apostle makes this observation with special reference to the *Jews*. He does not declare any *new* thing, but that which was fully declared in their own sacred writings.

By the law. This expression here evidently denotes, as it did commonly among the Jews, the five books of Moses. And the apostle means to say that this doctrine was found in those books; not that it was in the ten commandments, or in the *law*, strictly so called. It is not a part of *law* to declare justification except by strict and perfect obedience. That it was found in those books the apostle

shows by the case of Abraham, Ro 4. See also his reasoning on Le 18:5, and De 30:12-14, in Ro 10:5-11; comp. Ex 34:6,7.

And the prophets. Generally, the remainder of the Old Testament. The phrase "the law and the prophets" comprehended the whole of the Old Testament, Mt 5:17 11:13, 22:40 Ac 13:15, 28:23.

That this doctrine was contained in the prophets, the apostle showed by the passage quoted from Hab 2:4, in Hab 1:17, "The just shall live by faith." The same thing he showed in \\Ro 10:11\, from \\Isa 28:16 49:23\; and Ro 4:6-8, from Ps 22. The same thing is fully taught in Isa 53:11 Da 9:24. Indeed, the general tenor of the Old Testament— the appointment of sacrifices, etc.—taught that man was a sinner, and that he could not be justified by obedience to the moral law.

{z} "by the Law and the Prophets" Ac 26:22

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Even the righteousness of God*. The apostle, having stated that the design of the gospel was to reveal a new plan of becoming just in the sight of God, proceeds here more fully to explain it. The explanation which he offers makes it plain that the phrase so often used by him, "righteousness of God," does not refer to an *attribute* of God, but to his plan of making men righteous. Here he says that it is by faith in Jesus Christ; but surely an *attribute* of God is not produced by faith in Jesus Christ. It means God's mode of regarding men as righteous through their belief in Jesus Christ.

By faith of Jesus Christ. That is, by faith *in* Jesus Christ. Thus the expression, Mr 11:22, "Have the faith of God," (*margin*,) means, have faith *in* God. So Ac 3:16, the "faith of his name," (*Greek*,) means, faith *in* his name. So Ga 2:20, the "faith of the Son of God" means, faith in the Son of God. This cannot mean that faith is the meritorious cause of salvation, but that it is the instrument or means by which we become justified. It is *the state of mind*, or *condition of the heart*, to which God has been pleased to promise justification. (On the nature of faith, **See Barnes "Mr 16:16"**.

) God has promised that they who believe in Christ shah be pardoned and saved. This is his plan in distinction from the plan of those who seek to be justified by works.

Unto all and upon all. It is evident that these expressions are designed to be emphatic, but why both are used is not very apparent. Many have supposed that there was no essential difference in the meaning. If there be a difference, it is probably this: the first expression, "unto all"—*eiv pantav*—may denote that this plan of justification has come (*Luther*) unto all men, to Jews and Gentiles; i.e. that it has been provided for them and offered to them without distinction. The plan was ample for all, was fitted for all, was equally necessary for all, and was offered to all. The second phrase, "upon all"—*epi pantav*—may be designed to guard against the supposition that *all* therefore would be benefited by it, or be saved by the mere face that the announcement had come to all. The apostle adds, therefore, that the benefits of this plan must actually come upon all, or must be applied to all, if they would be justified. They could not be justified merely by the fact that the plan was provided, and that the knowledge of it had come to all, but by their actually coming *under* this plan, and availing themselves of it. Perhaps there is reference in the last expression, "upon all," to a robe, or garment, that is placed upon one to hide his nakedness, or sin. Comp. Isa 64:6, also Php 3:9.

For there is no difference. That is, there is no difference *in regard to the matter under discussion*. The apostle does not mean to say that there is no difference in regard to the talents, dispositions,

education, and property of men; but there is no distinction in regard to the way in which they must be justified. All must be saved, if saved at all, in the same mode, whether Jews or Gentiles, bond or free, rich or poor, learned or ignorant. None can be saved by works; and all are therefore dependent on the mercy of God in Jesus Christ.

{a} "faith of Jesus Christ" Ro 5:1

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *For all have sinned*. This was the point which he had fully established in the discussion in these chapters.

And come short. Greek, *Are deficient in regard to*; are wanting, etc. Here it means, that *they had failed to obtain*, or were destitute of.

The glory of God. The praise or approbation of God. They had sought to be justified, or approved, by God; but all had failed. Their works of the law had not secured his approbation; and they were therefore under condemnation. The word *glory—doxa*—is often used in the sense of *praise*, or *approbation*. Joh 5:41,44; Joh 7:18; Joh 8:50,54 12:43.

{b} "all have sinned" Ec 7:20

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Being justified*. Being treated as if righteous; that is, being regarded and treated as if they had kept the law. The apostle has shown that they *could not* be so regarded and treated by any merit of their own, or by personal obedience to the law. He now affirms that if they were so treated, it must be by mere favour, and as a matter not of right, but of gift. This is the essence of the gospel. And to show this, and the way in which it is done, is the main design of this epistle. The expression here is be understood as referring to all who are justified, Ro 3:22. The righteousness of God, by faith in Jesus Christ, is "upon all who believe," who are all "justified freely by his grace."

Freely—dwrean. This word stands opposed to that which is purchased, or which is obtained by labour, or which is a matter of claim. It is a free, undeserved gift, not merited by our obedience to the law, and not that to which we have any claim. The apostle uses the word here in reference to those who are justified. To *them* it is a mere undeserved gift. It does not mean that it has been obtained, however, without any price or merit from any one, for the Lord Jesus has purchased it with his own blood, and *to him* it becomes a matter of justice that those who were given to him should be justified, 1Co 6:20 7:23; 2Pe 2:1 1Pe 2:9, (Greek.) Ac 20:28 Isa 53:11. We have no offering to bring, and no claim. To us, therefore, it is entirely a matter of gift.

By his grace. By his favour; by his mere undeserved mercy. **See Barnes "Ro 1:7"**.

Through the redemption—dia thv apolutrwsewv. The word used here occurs but ten times in the New Testament, Lu 21:28 Ro 3:24, 8:23 1Co 1:30

Eph 1:7,14, 4:30 Col 1:14; Heb 9:15 11:35.

Its root—*lutron lutron*—properly denotes the price which is paid for a prisoner of war; the ransom, or stipulated purchase-money, which being paid, the captive is set free. The word here used is then employed to denote liberation from bondage, captivity, or evil of any kind, usually keeping up the idea of a *price*, or a *ransom paid*, in consequence of which the delivery is effected. It is sometimes used, in a large sense, to denote simple deliverance *by any means*, without reference to a price paid, as in Lu 21:28 Ro 8:23; Eph 1:14.

That this is *not* the sense here, however, is apparent. For the apostle in the next verse proceeds to specify the *price* which has been paid, or the means by which this redemption has been effected. The word *here* denotes that *deliverance from sin, and from the evil consequences of sin*, which has been effected by the offering of Jesus Christ as a propitiation, Ro 3:25.

That is in Christ Jesus. Or, that has been effected by Christ Jesus; that of which he is the author and procurer. Comp. Joh 3:16.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Whom God hath set forth*. Margin, *Fore-ordained —proeyeto*. The word properly means, *to place in public view*; to exhibit in a conspicuous, situation, as goods are exhibited or exposed for sale, or as premiums or rewards of victory were exhibited to public view in the games of the Greeks. It *sometimes* has the meaning of decreeing, purposing, or constituting, as in the margin, (comp. Ro 1:13 Eph 1:9) and many have supposed that this is its meaning here. But the connexion seems to require the usual signification of the word; and it means that God has *publicly exhibited Jesus Christ* as a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of men. This public exhibition was made by his being offered on the cross, in the face of angels and of men. It was not concealed; it was done openly. He was put to open shame; and *so* put to death as to attract towards the scene the eyes of angels, and of the inhabitants of all worlds.

To be a propitiation—ilasthrion. This word occurs but in one other place in the New Testament: Heb 9:5, "And over it (the ark) the cherubim of glory shadowing *the mercy-seat*." It is used here to denote the lid or cover of the ark of the covenant. It was made of gold, and over it were the cherubim. In this sense it is often used by the LXX. Ex 25:17, "And thou shalt make a propitatory—*ilasthrion*, of gold," Ex 25:18-20,22, 30:6 31:7, 35:12 37:6-9 40:20 Le 16:2,13.

The Hebrew name for this was *capphoreth*, from the verb *caphar*, to cover, or conceal. It was from this place that God was represented as speaking to the children of Israel: Ex 25:22, "And I will speak to thee front above the *Ilasterion*," the propitiatory, the mercy-seat; Le 16:2, "For I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy.seat." This seat, or cover, was covered with the smoke o{ the *incense*, when the high priest entered the most holy place, Le 16:13. And the blood of the bullock offered on the great day of atonement was to be sprinkled "upon the mercy-seat," and "before the mercy-seat," "seven times," Le 16:14,15. This sprinkling or offering of blood was called making "an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel," etc., Le 16:16. It was from this mercy-seat that God pronounced pardon, or expressed himself as *reconciled* to his people. The atonement was made, the blood was sprinkled, and the reconciliation thus effected. The *name* was thus given to that cover of the ark, because it was the place from which God declared himself reconciled to his people. Still the inquiry is, why is this name given to Jesus Christ? In

what sense is *he* declared to be a propitiation? It is evident that it cannot be applied to him in any literal sense. Between the golden cover of the ark of the covenant and the Lord Jesus the analogy *must* be *very* slight, if any such analogy can be perceived. We may observe, however,

(1.) that the *main idea*, in regard to the cover of the ark called the mercy-seat, was that of God's being reconciled to his people; and that this is the main idea in regard to the Lord Jesus, whom "God hath set forth."

(2.) This reconciliation was effected *then* by the sprinkling of blood on the mercy-seat, Le 16:15,16. The same is true of the Lord Jesus —by blood.

(3.) In the former case it was [by] the blood of atonement; the offering of the bullock on the great day of atonement, that the reconciliation was effected, Le 16:17,18. In the case of the Lord Jesus it was also by blood—by the blood of atonement. But it was by his *own* blood. This the apostle distinctly states in this verse.

(4.) In the former case there was a *sacrifice*, or *expiatory* offering; and so it is in reconciliation by the Lord Jesus. In the former, the mercy-seat was the visible, declared place where God would express his reconciliation with his people. So in the latter, the offering of the Lord Jesus is the manifest and open way by which God will be recon- ciled to men.

(5.) In the former, there was joined the idea of a *sacrifice* for sin, Le 16:1. So in the latter. And hence the *main idea* of the apostle here is to convey the idea of a *sacrifice for sin*; or to set forth the Lord Jesus as such a sacrifice. Hence the word "propitiation" in the original may express the idea of a *propitiatory sacrifice*, as well as the cover to the ark. The word is an *adjective*, and may be joined to the noun *sacrifice*, as well as to denote the mercy-seat of the ark. This meaning accords also with its classic meaning to denote a *propitiatory offering*, or an offering to produce reconciliation. Christ is thus represented, not as a mercy-seat, which would be unintelligible; but as the medium, the offering, the expiation, by which reconciliation is produced between God and man.

Through faith. Or, by means of faith. The offering will be of no avail without *faith*. The offering has been made; but it will not be applied, except where there is faith. He has made an offering which may be efficacious in putting away sin; but it produces no reconciliation, no pardon, except where it is accepted by faith.

In his blood. Or, in his death—his bloody death. Among the Jews, *the blood* was regarded as the seat of life, or vitality, Le 17:11, "The life of the flesh is in the blood." Hence they were commanded not to eat blood: Ge 9:4, "But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat." Le 19:26 De 12:23; 1Sa 14:34.

This doctrine is contained uniformly in the sacred Scriptures. And it has been also the opinion of not a few celebrated physiologists, as well in modern as in ancient times. The same was the opinion of the ancient Pharisees and Hindoos. Homer thus often speaks of blood as the seat of life, as in the expression *porfureov yanatov*, or *purple death*. And Virgil speaks of *purple life*,

Purpuream vomit ille animam.

AEniad, ix. 349.

Empedocles and Critias, among the Greek philosophers, also embraced this opinion. Among the moderns, Harvey, to whom we are indebted for a knowledge of the circulation of the blood, fully believed it. Hoffman and Huxham believed it. Dr. John Hunter has fully adopted the belief, and sustained it, as he supposed, by a great variety of considerations. See Good's Book of Nature,

pp. 102, 108, Edit. New York, 1828. This was undoubtedly the doctrine of the Hebrews; and hence with them to shed the blood was a phrase signifying to kill; hence the efficacy of their sacrifices was supposed to consist in *the blood*, that is, in the life of the victim. Hence it was unlawful to *eat* it, as it was the *life*, the seat of vitality; the more immediate and direct gift of God. When therefore *the blood of Christ* is spoken of in the New Testament, it means the *offering of his life as a sacrifice*, or his death as an expiation. His life was given to make atonement. See the word *blood* thus used in Ro 5:9 Eph 1:7; Col 1:14 Heb 9:12,14; Heb 13:12 Re 1:5; 1Pe 1:19 1Jo 1:7.

By faith in his death as a sacrifice for sin; by believing that he took *our* sins; that he died in our place; by thus, in some sense, making his offering ours; by *approving* it, loving it, embracing it, trusting it, our sins become pardoned, and our souls made pure.

To declare. *eiv endeixin*. *For the purpose* of showing, or exhibiting; to present it to man. The meaning is, that the plan was adopted; the Saviour was given; he suffered and died; and the scheme is proposed to men, *for the purpose* of making a full manifestation of his plan, in contradistinction from all the plans of men.

His righteousness. His plan of justification. The method or scheme which *he* has adopted, in distinction from that of man, and which he now exhibits, or proffers to sinners. There is great variety in the explanation of the word here rendered *righteousness*. Some explain it as meaning *veracity*; others as holiness; others as *goodness*; others as *essential justice*. Most interpreters, perhaps, have explained it as referring to an attribute of God. But the whole connexion requires us to understand it here as in Ro 1:17, not of an *attribute* of God, but of his plan of justifying sinners. He has adopted and proposed a plan by which men may become *just* by faith in Jesus Christ, and not by their own works. His acquitting men from sin; his regarding them and treating them as just, is set forth in the gospel by the offering of Jesus Christ as a sacrifice on the cross.

For the remission of sins. Margin, *Passing over*. The word here used (*paresin*) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, nor in the Septuagint. It means *passing by*, as not noticing; and hence forgiving. A similar idea occurs in 2Sa 24:10 Mic 7:18: "Who is a God like unto thee, that passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance?" In Romans it means for the *pardoning*, or in order to pardon past transgression.

That are past. That have been committed; or that have existed before. This has been commonly understood to refer to past generations, as affirming that sins under all dispensations of the world are to be forgiven in this manner, through the sacrifice of Christ. And it has been supposed that all who have been justified have received pardon by the merits of the sacrifice of Christ. This may be true; but there is no reason to think that this is the idea in *this* passage, for

(1.) the scope of the passage does not require it. The argument is not to show how men had been justified, but how they *might* be. It is not to discuss an historical *fact*, but to state the way in which sin was to be forgiven under the gospel.

(2.) The language has no immediate or necessary reference to past generations. It evidently refers to the past lives of the *individuals* who are justified, and not to the sins of former times. All that the passage means, therefore, is, that the plan of pardon is such as completely to remove all the former sins of the *life*, not of all former generations. If it referred to the sins of former times, it would not be easy to avoid the doctrine of universal salvation.

Through the forbearance of God. Through his patience, his long-suffering. That is, he did not come forth in judgment *when* the sin was committed; he spared us, though deserving of punishment; and now he comes forth completely to *pardon* those sins concerning which he has so long and so

graciously exercised forbearance. This expression obviously refers not to the *remission* of sins, but to the fact that they were *committed* while he evinced such long-suffering. Comp. Ac 17:30. I do not know better how to show the practical value and bearing of this important passage of Scripture, than by transcribing a part of the affecting experience of the poet *Cowper*. It is well known that *before* his conversion he was oppressed by a long and dreadful melancholy; that this was finally heightened to despair; and that he was then subjected to the kind treatment of Dr. Cotton in St. Alban's, as a melancholy case of derangement. His leading thought was, that he was doomed to inevitable destruction, and that there was no hope. From this he was roused only by the kindness of his brother, and by the promises of the gospel. (See Taylor's Life of Cowper.) The account of his conversion I shall now give in his own words. "The happy period,, which was to shake off my fetters, and afford me a clear discovery of the free mercy of God in Christ Jesus was now arrived. I flung myself into a chair near the window, and, seeing a Bible there, ventured once more to apply to it for comfort and instruction. The first verse I saw was the 25th of the third chapter of Romans, *Whom God hath set forth*, etc. Immediately I received strength to believe, and the full beam of the Sun of Righteousness shone upon me. I saw the sufficiency of the atonement he had made for my pardon and justification. In a moment I believed, and received the peace of the gospel. Unless the almighty Arm had been under me, I think I should have been overwhelmed with gratitude and joy. My eyes filled with tears, and my voice choked with transport. I could only look up to heaven in silent fear, overwhelmed with love and wonder. How glad should I now have been to have spent every moment in prayer and thanksgiving. I lost no opportunity of repairing to a throne of grace; but flew to it with an earnestness irresistible, and never to be satisfied."

{1} "set forth" or, "fore-ordained" {2} "remission of sins" or, "passing over"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *At this time*. The time now since the Saviour has come, now is the time when he manifests it.

That he might be just. This verse contains the substance of the gospel. The word "just" here does not mean benevolent, or merciful, though it *may* sometimes have that meaning, (**See Barnes** "Mt 1:19, also **See Barnes "Joh 17:25"**) but it refers to the fact that God had retained the integrity of his character as a moral Governor; that he had shown a due regard to his law, and to the penalty of the law, by his plan of salvation. Should he forgive sinners without an atonement, *justice* would be sacrificed and abandoned. The law would cease to have any terrors for the guilty, and its penalty would be a nullity. In the plan of salvation, therefore, he has shown a regard to the law by appointing his Son to be *a substitute* in the place of sinners; not to endure its precise penalty, for his sufferings were not eternal, nor were they attended with remorse of conscience, or by despair, which are the proper penalty of the law; but he endured so much as to accomplish the same ends as if those who shall be saved by him had been doomed to eternal death. That is, he showed that the law could not be violated without introducing suffering; and that it could not be broken with impunity, he showed that he had so great a regard for it, that he would not pardon *one sinner* without an atonement. And *thus* he secured the proper honour to his character as a lover of his law, a hater of sin, and a just God. He has shown that if sinners do not avail themselves of the offer of pardon by Jesus Christ,

they must experience in their own souls for ever the pains which this substitute for sinners endured in behalf of men on the cross. Thus, no principle of justice has been abandoned; no threatening has been modified; no claim of his law has been let down; no disposition has been evinced to do *injustice* to the universe by suffering the guilty to escape. He is in all this great transaction, a just moral governor, as *just* to his law, to himself, to his Son, to the universe, when he pardons, as he is when he sends the incorrigible sinner down to hell. A full compensation, an equivalent, has been provided by the sufferings of the Saviour in the sinner's stead, and the sinner may be pardoned.

And the justifier of him, etc. Greek, *Even justifying him that believeth*, etc. This is the peculiarity and the wonder of the gospel, *Even while* pardoning, and treating the ill-deserving *as if* they were innocent, he can retain his pure and holy character. His treating the guilty with favour does not show that he loves guilt and pollution, for he has expressed his abhorrence of it in the atonement. His admitting them to friendship and heaven does not show that he *approves* their past conduct and character, for he showed how much he hated even their *sins* by giving his Son to a shameful death for them. When an executive pardons offenders, there is an abandonment of the principles of justice and law. The sentence is *set aside*; the threatenings of the law are departed from; and it is done without compensation. It is declared that, in certain cases, the law *may be violated*, and its penalty not be inflicted. But not so with God. He shows no less regard to his law in pardoning than in punishing. This is the grand, glorious, peculiar feature of the gospel plan of salvation.

Him which believeth in Jesus. Gr., *Him who is of the faith of Jesus*; in contradistinction from him who is of the works of the law; that is, who depends on his own works for salvation.

{c} "that he might be just" Ac 13:38,39

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *Where is boasting then*? Where is there ground or occasion of boasting or pride? Since all have sinned, and since all have failed of being able to justify themselves by obeying the law, and since all are alike dependent on the mere mercy of God in Christ, all ground of boasting is of course taken away. This refers particularly to the Jews, who were much addicted to boasting of their peculiar privileges. **See Barnes** "Ro 3:1, etc.

By what law? The word *law* here is used in the sense of *arrangement*, *rule*, or *economy*. By what arrangement, or by the operation of what *rule*, is boasting excluded? *Stuart*. See Ga 3:21 Ac 21:20.

Of works? The law which commands works, and on which the Jews relied. If this were complied with, and they were thereby justified, they would have had ground of self-confidence, or boasting, as being justified by their own merits. But a plan which led to this, which ended in boasting, and self-satisfaction, and pride, could not be true.

Nay. No.

The law of faith. The rule, or arrangement which proclaims that we have no merit; that we are lost sinners; and that we are to be justified only by faith.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *Therefore*. As the result of the previous train of argument.

That a man. That *all* who are justified; that is, that there is no other way.

Is justified by faith. Is regarded and treated as righteous, by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Without the deeds of the law. Without works as a meritorious ground of justification. The apostle, of course, does not mean that Christianity does not produce good works, or that they who are justified will not obey the law, and be holy; but that no righteousness of their own will be the ground of their justification. They are sinners; and as such can have no claim to be treated as righteous. God has devised a plan by which they may be pardoned and saved; and that is by faith alone. This is the grand peculiarity of the Christian religion. This was the peculiar point in the reformation from popery. Luther often called this doctrine of justification by faith the article on which the church stood or fell—*articulus stantis, vel earlentis ecclesiae*—and it is so. If this doctrine is held entire, all others will be held with it. If this is abandoned, all others will fall also. It may be remarked here, however, that this doctrine by no means interferes with the doctrine that good works are to be performed by Christians. Paul urges this as much as any other writer in the New Testament. His doctrine is, that they are not to be relied on as a ground of justification; but that he did not mean to teach that they are not to be performed by Christians is apparent from the connexion, and from the following places in his epistles: Ro 2:7 2Co 9:8; Eph 2:10 1Ti 2:10, 5:10,25, 6:18 2Ti 3:17; Tit 2:7,14; Tit 3:8 Heb 10:24. That we are *justified* by our works is a doctrine which he has urged and repeated with great power and frequency. See Ro 4:2,6, 9:11,32, 11:6 Ga 2:16, 3:2,5,10 Eph 2:9 2Ti 1:9.

{d} "that a man" Ro 3:20-22 8:3; Ga 2:16

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 29

Verses 29, 30. *Is he the God*, etc. The Jews supposed that he was the God of their nation only, that *they* only were to be admitted to his favour. In these verses Paul showed that as all had alike sinned, Jews and Gentiles, and as the plan of salvation by faith was adapted *to sinners*, without any special reference to Jews, so God could show favours to all, and all might be admitted on the same terms to the benefits of the plan of salvation.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *It is one God*. The same God; there is but one, and his plan is equally fitted to Jews and Gentiles.

The circumcision. Those who are circumcised—the *Jews*.

The uncircumcision. Gentiles; all who were not Jews.

By faith—through faith. There is no difference in the meaning of these expressions. Both denote that faith is the instrumental cause of justification, or acceptance with God.

{e} "which shall justify" Ga 3:8,28

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *Do we then make void the law*. Do we render it vain and useless; do we destroy its moral obligation; and do we prevent obedience to it, by the doctrine of justification by faith ? This was an objection which would naturally be made; and which has thousands of times been since made, that the doctrine of justification by faith tends to licentiousness. The word *law* here, I understand as referring to the *moral law*, and not merely to the Old Testament. This is evident from Ro 3:20,21, where the apostle shows that no man could be justified *by deeds of law*, by conformity with the moral law. See Note.

God forbid. By no means. **See Barnes "Ro 3:4".**

This is an explicit denial of any such tendency.

Yea, we establish the law. That is, by the doctrine of justification by faith; by this scheme of treating men as righteous, the moral law is confirmed, its obligation is enforced, obedience to it is secured. This is done in the following manner:

(1.) God showed respect to it, in being unwilling to pardon sinners without an atonement. He showed that it could not be violated with impunity; that he was resolved to fulfil its threatenings.

(2.) Jesus Christ came to magnify it, and to make it honourable. He showed respect to it in his life; and he died to show that God was determined to inflict its penalty.

(3.) The plan of justification by faith leads to an observance of the law. The sinner sees the evil of transgression. He sees the respect which God has shown to the law. He gives his heart to God, and yields himself to obey his law. All the sentiments that arise from the conviction of sin; that flow from gratitude for mercies; that spring from love to God; all his views of the sacredness of the law, prompt him to yield obedience to it. The fact that Christ endured such sufferings to show the evil of violating the law, is one of the strongest motives prompting to obedience. We do not easily and readily repeat that which overwhelms our best friends in calamity; and we are brought to *hate* that which inflicted such woes on the Saviour's soul. The sentiment recorded by Watts is as true as it is beautiful :— \-

'"Twas for my sins my dearest Lord
Hung on the cursed tree,
And groan'd away his dying life
For thee, my soul, for thee.

"Oh, how I hate those lusts of mine
That crucified my Lord;
Those sins that pierc'd and nail'd his flesh
Fast to'the fatal wood.

"Yes, my Redeemer, they shall die,
My heart hath so decreed,
Nor will I spare the guilty things

That made my Saviour bleed."

This is an advantage in moral influence which no cold, abstract law ever has over the human mind. And one of the chief glories of the plan of salvation is, that while it justifies the sinner, it brings a new set of influences from heaven, more tender and mighty than can be drawn from any other source, to produce obedience to the law of God.

{f} "through faith" Heb 10:15,16

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 4

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 1

ROMANS Chapter 4

Verse 1. The main object of this chapter is to show that the doctrine of justification by faith, which the apostle was defending, was found in the Old Testament. The argument is to be regarded as addressed particularly to a Jew, to show him that no new doctrine was advanced. The argument is derived, first, from the fact that Abraham was so justified, (Ro 4:1-5) secondly, from the fact that the same thing is declared by David, (Ro 4:6-8.)

A question might still be asked, whether this justification was not in consequence of their being circumcised, and thus grew out of conformity to the law? To answer this, the apostle shows (Ro 4:9-12) that Abraham was justified by faith before he was circumcised; and that even his circumcision was *in consequence* of his being justified by faith, and a public seal or attestation of that fact.

Still further, the apostle shows that if men were to be justified by works, faith would be of no use; and the promises of God would have no effect. The law works wrath, (Ro 4:13,14) but the conferring of the favour by faith is demonstration of the highest favour of God, (Ro 4:16.) Abraham, moreover, had evinced a strong faith; he had shown what it was; he was an example to all who should follow. And he had thus shown that as *he* was justified before circumcision, and before the giving of the law, so the same thing might occur in regard to those who had never been circumcised. In chapters 2 and 3 the apostle had shown that all had failed of keeping the law, and that there was no other way of justification but by faith. To the salvation of the heathen, the Jew would have strong objections. He supposed that none could be saved but those who had been circumcised, and who were Jews. This objection the apostle meets in this chapter, by showing that Abraham was justified in the very way in which he maintained the heathen *might be*; that Abraham was justified by faith *without* being circumcised. If the father of the faithful, the ancestor on whom the Jews so much prided themselves, was thus justified, then Paul was advancing no new doctrine in maintaining that the same thing might occur now. He was keeping strictly within the spirit of their religion in maintaining that the Gentile world might also be justified by faith. This is the outline of the reasoning in this chapter. The reasoning is such as a serious Jew must feel and acknowledge. And keeping in mind the main object which the apostle had in it, there will be found little difficulty in its interpretation.

Verse 1. *What shall we then say*? See Ro 3:1. This is rather the objection of a Jew. "How does your doctrine of justification by faith agree with what the Scriptures say of Abraham? Was the law set aside in his case? Did he derive no advantage in justification from the rite of circumcision, and from the covenant which God made with him." The object of the apostle now is to answer this inquiry.

That Abraham our father. Our ancestor; the father and founder of the nation. **See Barnes "Mt 3:9".**

The Jews valued themselves much on the fact that he was their father; and an argument, drawn from his example or conduct, therefore, would be peculiarly forcible.

As pertaining to the flesh. This expression is one that has been much controverted. In the original, it may refer either to Abraham as their father "according to the flesh"—that is, their natural father, or from whom they were descended—or it may be connected with "hath found." "What shall we say that Abraham our father hath found in respect to the flesh?" *kata sarka*. The latter is doubtless the proper connexion. Some refer the word *flesh* to external privileges and advantages; others to his own strength or power, (*Calvin* and *Grotius*;) and others make it refer to circumcision. This latter I take to be the correct interpretation. It agrees best with the connexion, and equally well with the usual meaning of the word. The idea is, "If men are justified by *faith*; if works are to have no place; if, therefore, all rites and ceremonies, all legal observances, are useless in justification, what is the advantage of circumcision? What benefit did Abraham derive from it? Why was it appointed? And why is such an importance attached to it in the history of his life?" A similar question was asked in Ro 3:1.

Hath found. Hath obtained. What advantage has he derived from it?

{g} "as pertaining" Mt 3:9

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *For if Abraham*, etc. This is the answer of the apostle. If Abraham was justified on the ground of his own merits, he would have reason to boast, or to claim praise. He might regard himself as the author of it, and take the praise to himself. Ro 4:4. The inquiry therefore was, whether in the account of the justification of Abraham there was to be found any such statement of a reason for self-confidence and boasting.

But not before God. In the sight of God. That is, in his recorded judgment he had no ground of boasting on account of works. To show this, the apostle appeals at once to the Scriptures, to show that there was no such record as that Abraham could boast that he was justified by his works. As God judges right in all cases, so it follows that Abraham had no just ground of boasting, and of course that he was not justified by his own works. The sense of this verse is well expressed by Calvin. "If Abraham was justified by his works, he might boast of his own merits. But he has no ground of boasting before God. Therefore he was not justified by works."

{h} "not before God" Ro 3:27

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *For what saith the Scripture*? The inspired account of Abraham's justification. This account was final, and was to settle the question. This account is found in Ge 15:6.

Abraham believed God. In the Hebrew, "Abraham believed *Jehovah*." The sense is substantially the same, as the argument turns on the *act* of believing. The faith which Abraham exercised was, that his posterity should be like the stars of heaven in number. This promise was made to him when he had no child, and of course when he had no prospect of such a posterity. See the strength and nature of this faith further illustrated in Ro 4:16-21. The *reason* why it was counted to him for righteousness was, that it was such a strong, direct, and unwavering act of confidence in the promise of God.

And it. The word "it" here evidently refers to the *act* of believing. It does not refer to the righteousness of another —of God, or of the Messiah; but the discussion is solely of the *strong act* of Abraham's faith, which *in some sense* was counted to him for righteousness. In what sense this was, is explained directly after. All that is material to remark here is, that *the act* of Abraham, the strong confidence of his mind in the promises of God, his unwavering assurance that what God had promised he would perform, was reckoned for righteousness. The same thing is more fully expressed in Ro 4:18-22. When, therefore, it is said that the righteousness of Christ is accounted or imputed to us; when it is said that his merits are transferred and reckoned as ours; whatever may be the truth of the doctrine, it cannot be defended by this passage of Scripture. Faith is always an act of the mind. It is not a created essence which is placed within the mind. It is not a substance created independently of the soul, and placed within it by almighty power. It is not a *principle*, for the expression *a principle of faith* is as unmeaning as a principle of joy, or a principle of sorrow, or a principle of remorse. God promises; the man believes; and this is the whole of it. While the word faith is sometimes used to denote *religious doctrine*, or the system that is to be believed, (Ac 6:7 15:9; Ro 1:5 10:8, 16:26 Eph 3:17, 4:5 1Ti 2:7, etc.) yet, when it is used to denote that which is required of men, it always denotes an *acting of the mind* exercised in relation to some object, or some promise, or threatening, or declaration of some other being. **See Barnes "Mr 16:16"**.

Was counted—(*elogisyh*.) The same word in Ro 4:22 is rendered "it was imputed." The word occurs frequently in the Scriptures. In the Old Testament, the verb

HEBREW, (hashab,) which is translated by the word *logizomai*, means, literally, *to think, to intend, or purpose*; *to imagine, invent, or devise; to reckon, or account; to esteem*; *to impute*, i.e. to impute to a man what belongs to himself, or what ought to be imputed to him. It occurs only in the following places: 1Sa 18:25 Es 8:3, 9:24,25; Isa 33:8 Jer 49:20, 50:45 La 2:8; 2Sa 14:14 Jer 49:30; Ge 1:20 Job 35:2; 2Sa 14:13 Eze 38:10; Jer 18:8

Ps 21:11 140:2,4 Jer 11:19, 48:2 Am 6:5; Ps 10:2 Isa 53:3, Jer 26:3 Mic 2:3; Nah 1:11 Jer 18:11; Job 13:24 41:27,29, Ps 32:2 35:5; Isa 10:7 Job 19:11, 33:10 Ge 15:6, 38:15 1Sa 1:13; Ps 52:2 Jer 18:18; Zec 7:10 Job 6:26, 19:11 Isa 13:17; 1Ki 10:21; Nu 18:27,30; Ps 88:4 Isa 40:17; La 4:2 Isa 40:17; La 4:2 Isa 40:15; Ge 31:15. I have examined *all* the passages, and, as the result of my examination, have come to the conclusion, that there is not *one* in which the word is used in the sense of *reckoning* or *imputing* to a man that which does not strictly *belong* to him; or of charging on him that which *ought* not to be charged on him as a matter of personal right. The word is never used to denote *imputing* in the sense of *transferring*, or of charging that on one which does not properly belong to him. The same is the case in the New Testament. The word occurs about forty

times, (see *Schmidius' Concord*.,)and in a similar signification. No doctrine of *transferring*, or of setting over to a man what does not properly belong to him, be it sin or holiness, can be derived, therefore, from this word. Whatever is meant by it here, it evidently is declared that the act of believing is that which is intended, both by Moses and by Paul.

For righteousness. In order to justification; or to regard and treat him in connexion with this *as a* righteous man; as one who was admitted to the favor and friendship of God. In reference to this we may remark,

(1.) that it is evidently not intended that the act of believing, on the part of Abraham, was the *meritorious* ground of acceptance; for then it would have been a work. Faith was as much his own act, as any act of obedience to the law.

(2.) The design of the apostle was to show that by the *law*, or by *works*, man could not be justified, Ro 3:28 4:2.

(3.) *Faith* was not that which the law required. It demanded complete and perfect obedience; and if a man was justified by *faith*, it was in *some other way* than by the law.

(4.) As the law did not demand this, and as faith was something different from the demand of the law, so if a man were justified by that, it was *on a principle* altogether different from justification by works. It was not by personal merit. It was not by complying with the law. It was in a mode entirely different.

(5.) In being justified by faith, it is meant, therefore, that we are treated as righteous; that we are forgiven; that we are admitted to the favour of God, and treated as his friends.

(6.) In this act, *faith* is a mere instrument, an antecedent, a *sine qua non*, that which God has been pleased to appoint as a condition on which men may be treated as righteous. It expresses a state of mind which is demonstrative of love to God; of affection for his cause and character; of reconciliation and friendship; and is therefore that state to which he has been graciously pleased to promise pardon and acceptance.

(7.) As this is not a matter of law; as the law could not be said to *demand* it; as it is on a different principle; and as the acceptance of faith, or of a believer, cannot be a matter of merit or claim, so justification is of grace, or mere favour. It is in no sense a matter of merit on our part, and thus stands distinguished entirely from justification by works, or by conformity to the law. From beginning to end, it is, so far as *we* are concerned, a matter of grace. The *merit* by which all this is obtained is the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, through whom this plan is proposed, and by whose atonement alone God can consistently pardon and treat as righteous those who are in themselves ungodly. See Ro 4:5. In this place we have also evidence that *faith* is always substantially of the same character. In the case of Abraham it was confidence in God and his promises. All faith has the same nature, whether it be confidence in the Messiah, or in any of the Divine promises or truths. As this *confidence* evinces the same state of mind, so it was as consistent to justify Abraham by it, as it is to justify him who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ under the gospel. See Heb 11:1 and following.

{i} "Abraham believed" Ge 15:6

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Now to him that worketh*, etc. This passage is not to be understood as affirming that any actually *have* worked out their salvation by conformity to the law so as to be saved by their own merits; but it expresses a general truth in regard to works. *On that plan*, if a man were justified by his works, it would be a matter *due* to him. It is a general principle in regard to contracts and obligations, that where a man fulfills them he is entitled to the reward as that which is *due* to him, and which he can claim. This is well understood in all the transactions among men. Where a man has fulfilled the terms of a contract, to pay him is not a matter of *favour*; he has *earned* it; and we are bound to pay him. So, says the apostle, it would be, if a man were justified by his works, he would have a *claim* on God. It would be wrong *not* to justify him. And this is an additional reason why the doctrine cannot be true. Comp. Ro 11:6.

The reward. The pay, or wages. The word is commonly applied to the pay of soldiers, day-labourers, etc., Mt 20:8 Lu 10:7; 1Ti 5:18; Jas 5:4. It has a similar meaning here.

Reckoned. Greek, Imputed. The same word which, in Ro 4:3. is rendered counted, and in Ro 4:22, imputed. It is here used in its strict and proper sense, to reckon that as belonging to a man which is his own, or which is due to him.

Of grace. Of favour; as a gift.

Of debt. As due; as a claim; as a fair compensation according to the contract.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *But to him that worketh not*. Who does not rely on his conformity to the law for his justification; who does not depend on his works; who seeks to be justified in some other way. The reference here is to the Christian plan of justification.

But believeth. **See Barnes "Ro 3:26"**.

On him. On God. Thus the connexion requires; for the discussion has immediate reference to Abraham, whose faith was in the promise of God.

That justifieth the ungodly. This is a very important expression. It implies,

(1.) that men are sinners, or are ungodly.

(2.) That God regards them as such when they are justified, he does not justify them because he sees them to be, or regards them to be righteous; but knowing that they are *in fact* polluted. He does not *first esteem* them, contrary to fact, to be pure; but knowing that they are polluted, and that they deserve no favour, he resolves to forgive them, and to treat them as his friends.

(3.) In themselves they are equally undeserving, whether they are justified or not. Their souls have been defiled by sin; and that is known when they are pardoned. God judges things as they are; and sinners who are justified, he judges not as if they were pure, or as if they had a claim; but he regards them *as united by faith to the Lord Jesus; and In THIS RELATION he judges that they SHOULD be treated as his friends, though they have been, are, and always will be, personally undeserving*. It is not meant that the righteousness of Christ is *transferred* to them so as to become personally theirs—for moral character cannot be transferred;—nor that it is *infused* into them, making them personally meritorious—for then they could not be spoken of as ungodly; but that

Christ died in their stead, to atone for their sins, and is regarded and esteemed by God to have died; and that the results or benefits of his death are so reckoned or imputed to believers as to make it proper for God to regard and treat them as if they had themselves obeyed the law; that is, as righteous in his sight.

{l} "his faith is counted" Hab 2:4

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Even as David*. The apostle, having adduced the example of Abraham to show that the doctrine which he was defending was not new, and contrary to the Old Testament, proceeds to adduce the case of David also; and to show that he understood the same doctrine of justification without works.

Describeth. Speaks of.

The blessedness. The happiness; or the desirable state or condition.

Unto whom God imputeth righteousness. Whom God treats as righteous, or as entitled to his favour in a way different from his conformity to the law. This is found in Ps 32. And the whole scope and design of the psalm is to show the blessedness of the man who is *forgiven*, and whose sins are not charged on him, but who is freed from the punishment due to his sins. Being thus pardoned, he is treated as a righteous man. And it is evidently in this sense that the apostle uses the expression "imputeth righteousness," i.e. he does *not* impute, or charge on the man his sins; he reckons and treats him as a pardoned and righteous man, Ps 32:2. He regards him as one who is forgiven and admitted to his favour, and who is to be treated henceforward as though he had not sinned. That is, he partakes of the benefits of Christ's atonement, so as not henceforward to be treated as a sinner, but as a friend of God.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Blessed*. Happy are they: they are highly favoured. **See Barnes "Mt 5:3"**.

Whose sins are covered. Are concealed; or hidden from the view. On which God will no more look, and which he will no more remember. "By these words," says Calvin, (*in loco*,) "we are taught that justification with Paul is nothing else but pardon of sin." The word *cover* here has not reference to the atonement, but is expressive of *hiding*, or *concealing*, i.e. of forgiving sin.

{m} "Blessed are they" Psa 32:1,2

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Will not impute sin*. On whom the Lord will not charge his sins; or who shall not be *reckoned* or regarded as guilty. This shows clearly what the apostle meant by imputing faith without works. It is to pardon sin, and to treat with favour; *not* to reckon or charge a man's sin to him; but

to treat him, though personally undeserving and ungodly, (Ro 4:5) as though the sin had not been committed. The word "impute" here is used in its natural and appropriate sense, as denoting to charge on man that which properly belongs to him.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 9

Verse 9. Cometh, etc. The apostle has now prepared the way for an examination of the inquiry whether this came *in consequence* of obedience to the law? or whether it was *without* obedience to the law? Having shown that Abraham was justified by faith, in accordance with the doctrine which he was defending, the only remaining inquiry was, whether it was *after* he was circumcised or before; whether in consequence of his circumcision or not. If it was after his circumcision, the Jew might still maintain that it was by complying with the works of the law; but if it was *before*, the point of the apostle would be established, that it was without the works of the law. Still further, if he was justified by faith before he was circumcised, then here was an instance of justification and acceptance without conformity to the Jewish law; and if the father of the Jewish nation was so justified, and reckoned as a friend of God *without* being circumcised, i.e. in the condition in which the heathen world then was, then it would follow that the Gentiles might be justified in a similar way now. It would not be departing, therefore, from the spirit of the Old Testament itself to maintain, as the apostle had done, (Ro 3) that the Gentiles who had not been circumcised might obtain the favour of God as well as the Jew; that is, that it was independent of circumcision, and might be extended to all.

This blessedness. This happy state, or condition. This state of being justified by God, and of being regarded as his friends. This is the sum of all blessedness; the only state that can be truly pronounced happy.

Upon the circumcision only. The Jews alone, as they pretended.

Or upon the uncircumcision also. The Gentiles who believed as the apostle maintained.

For we say. We all admit. It is a conceded point. It was the doctrine of the apostle, as well as the Jews; and as much theirs as his. With this, then, as a conceded point, what is the fair inference to be drawn from it?

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *How*. In what circumstances, or time.

When he was in circumcision, etc. Before or after he was circumcised? This was the very point of the inquiry. For if he was justified by faith *after* he was circumcised, the Jew might pretend that it was in virtue of his circumcision; that even his *faith* was acceptable, *because* he was circumcised. But if it was *before* he was circumcised, this plea could not be set up; and the argument of the apostle was confirmed by the case of Abraham, the great father and model of the Jewish people, that circumcision and the deeds of the law did not conduce to justification; and that as Abraham

was justified *without* those works, so might others be; and the heathen, therefore, might be admitted to similar privileges.

Not in circumcision. Not *being* circumcised, or *after* he was circumcised, but before. This was the record in the case, Ge 15:6. Comp. Ge 17:10.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *And he received the sign*, etc. A *sign* is that by which anything is *shown* or *represented*. And circumcision thus showed that there was a covenant between Abraham and God, Ge 17:1-10. It became the public mark or token of the relation which he sus- tained to God.

A seal. **See Barnes "Joh 3:33"**.

A *seal* is that mark of wax or other substance, which is attached to an instrument of writing, as a deed, etc., to confirm, ratify it, or to make it binding. Sometimes instruments were sealed, or made authentic by *stamping* on them some word, letter, or device, which had been engraved on silver, or on precious stones. The *seal* or *stamp* was often worn as an ornament on the finger. Es 8:8 Ge 41:42, 38:18 Ex 28:11,36 39.

To *affix* the seal, whether of wax or otherwise, was to confirm a contract or engagement. In allusion to this, circumcision is called a *seal* of the covenant which God had made with Abraham. That is, he appointed this as a public attestation to the fact that he had previously approved of Abraham, and had made important promises to him.

Which he had yet *being circumcised*, he believed, (Ge 15:6) was accepted, or justified; was admitted to the favour of God, and favoured with clear and remarkable promises, (Ge 15:18-21; Ge 17:1-9) before he was circumcised. Circumcision, therefore, could have contributed neither to his justification, nor to the promise made to him by God.

That he might be the father, etc. All this was done that Abraham might be held up as an example, or a model, of the very doctrine which the apostle was defending. The word *father* here is used evidently in a spiritual sense, as denoting that he was the ancestor of all true believers; that he was their model and example. They are regarded as his *children* because they are possessed of his spirit; are justified in the same way, and are imitators of his example. **See Barnes "Mt 1:1"**.

In this sense the expression occurs in Lu 19:9 Joh 8:33; Ga 3:7,29.

Though they be not circumcised. This was stated fix opposition to the opinion of the Jews, that all ought to be circumcised. As the apostle had shown that Abraham enjoyed the favour of God previous to his being circumcised, that is, *without* circumcision, so it followed that others might on the same principle also. This instance settles the point; and there is nothing which a Jew can reply to this.

That righteousness, etc. That is, in the same way, by faith without works: that they might be accepted, and treated as righteous.

{n} "he received" Ge 17:10,11 {o} "father of all them that believe" Lu 19:9

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *And the father of circumcision*, the father, i.e., the ancestor, exemplar, or model of those who are circumcised, and who possess the same faith that he did. Not only the father of all believers, (Ro 4:11) but, in a special sense, the father of the Jewish people. In this, the apostle intimates that though *all* who believed would be saved as he was, yet the Jews had a special *proprietorship* in Abraham; they had special favours and privileges from the fact that he was their ancestor.

Not of the circumcision only. Who are not merely circumcised, but who possess his spirit and his faith. Mere circumcision would not avail; but circumcision, connected with faith like his, showed that they were peculiarly his descendants. **See Barnes "Ro 2:25"**.

Who walk in the steps, etc. Who imbibe his example; who imbibe his spirit; who have his faith.

Being yet uncircumcised. Before he was circumcised. Comp. Ge 15:6, with Ge 17.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *For the promise*, etc. To show that the faith of Abraham, on which his justification depended, was not by the law, the apostle proceeds to show that the promise concerning which his faith was so remarkably evinced was *before* the law was given. If this was so, then it was an additional important consideration in opposition to the Jew, showing that acceptance with God depended on faith, and not on works.

That he should be the heir of the world. An heir is one who succeeds, or is to succeed to an estate. In this passage, the world, or the entire earth, is regarded as the *estate* to which reference is made; and the promise is, that the posterity of Abraham should succeed to that, or should possess it as their inheritance. The precise expression here used, "heir of the world," is not found in the promises made to Abraham. Those promises were, that God would make of him a great nation, (Ge 12:2) that in him all the families of the earth should be blessed, Ge 12:3; that his posterity should be as the stars for multitude, Ge 15:5 and that he should be a father of many nations, Ge 17:5. As this latter promise is one to which the apostle particularly refers, (Ro 4:17) it is probable that he had this in his eye. This promise had, at first, respect to his numerous natural descendants, and to their possessing the land of Canaan. But it is also regarded in the New Testament as extending to the Messiah Ga 3:16 as his descendant, and to all his followers as the spiritual seed of the father of the faithful. When the apostle calls him "the heir of the world," he sums up in this comprehensive expression all the promises made to Abraham, intimating that his spiritual descendants, i.e. those who possess his faith shall yet be so numerous as to possess all lands.

Or to his seed. To his posterity, or descendants.

Through the law. By the observance of the law; or made in consequence of observing the law; or depending on the condition that he should observe the law. The covenant was made before the law of circumcision was given; and long before the law of Moses, (comp. Ga 3:16,17,18

a) and was independent of both.

But through, etc. In consequence of, or in connexion with, the strong confidence which he showed in the promises of God, Ge 15:6.

{p} "he should be the heir" Ge 17:4, etc.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *For if they which are of the law*. Who seek for justification and acceptance by the law.

Faith is made void. Faith would have no place in the scheme; and consequently the strong commendations bestowed on the faith of Abraham, would be bestowed without any just cause. If men are justified by the *law*, they cannot be by faith, and faith would be useless in this work.

And the promise, etc. A *promise* looks to the future. Its design and tendency is to excite trust and confidence in him who makes it. All the promises of God have this design and tendency; and consequently, as God has given *many* promises, the object is to call forth the lively and constant *faith* of men, all going to show that, in the Divine estimation, *faith* is of inestimable value. But if men are justified by the *law*—if they are rendered acceptable by conformity to the institutions of Moses—then they cannot depend for acceptance on any promise made to Abraham, or his seed. They cut themselves off from that promise, and stand independent of it. That promise, like all other promises, was made to excite faith. If, therefore, the Jews depended on the *law* for justification, they were cut out from all the *promises* made to Abraham; and if they *could* be justified by the law, the promise was useless. This is as true now as it was then. If men seek to be justified by their morality, or their forms of religion, they cannot depend on any *promise* of God; for he has *made* no promise to any such attempt. They stand independently of any promise, covenant, or compact, and are depending on a scheme of their *own*; a scheme which would render his plan vain and useless; which would render his promises, and the atonement of Christ, and the work of the Spirit of no value. It is clear, therefore, that *such* an attempt at salvation cannot be successful.

{q} "For if they which are of the law" Ga 3:18

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Because the law*. All law. It is the tendency of law.

Worketh wrath. Produces or causes wrath. While man is fallen, and a sinner, its tendency, so far from *justifying* him, and producing peace, is just the reverse. It condemns, denounces wrath, and produces suffering. The word *wrath* here is to be taken in the sense of punishment, Ro 2:8; and the meaning is, that the law of God, demanding perfect purity, and denouncing every sin, condemns the sinner, and consigns him to punishment. As the apostle had proved Ro 1:1-3:29 that all were sinners, so it followed that if any attempted to be justified by the *law*, they would be involved only in condemnation and wrath.

For where no law is, etc. This is a general principle; a maxim of common justice and of common sense. Law is a rule of conduct. If no such rule is given and known, there can be no crime. Law expresses what may be done, and what may not be done. If there is no command to pursue a certain course, no injunction to forbid certain conduct, actions will be innocent. The connexion in which

this declaration is made here seems to imply, that as the Jews had a multitude of clear laws, and as the Gentiles had the laws of nature, there could be no hope of escape from the charge of their violation. Since human nature was depraved, and men were prone to sin, the more just and reasonable the laws, the less hope was there of being justified *by* the law, and the more certainty was there that the law would produce wrath and condemnation.

{r} "law worketh wrath" Ro 5:20 {s} "no law is" 1Jo 3:4

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Therefore*. In view of the course of reasoning which has been pursued. We have come to this conclusion.

It is of faith. Justification is by faith; or the plan which God has devised of saving men is by faith, Ro 3:26.

That it might be by grace. As a matter of mere undeserved mercy. If men were justified by law, it would be by their own merits; now it is of mere unmerited favour.

To the end. For the purpose, or design.

The promise, Ro 4:13.

Might be sure. Might be firm, or established. On any other ground it could not be established. If it had depended on entire conformity to the *law*, the promise would never have been established, for none would have yielded such obedience. But now it may be secured to all the posterity of Abraham.

To all the seed. Ro 4:13.

Not to that only. Not to that part of his descendants alone who were Jews, or who had the law.

But to that, etc. To all who should possess the same faith as Abraham.

The father of us all. Of all who believe, whether they be Jews or Gentiles.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *As it is written*. Ge 17:5.

I have made thee. The word here used in the Hebrew (Ge 17:5) means, literally, *to give, to grant*; and also, to set, or constitute. This is also the meaning of the Greek word used both by the Lxx. and the apostle. The quotation is taken literally from the Septuagint. The argument of the apostle is founded, in part, on the fact that the *past* tense is used—-I have made thee—and that God spoke of a thing as already done, which he had promised or purposed to do. The sense is, he had, *in his mind* or *purpose*, constituted him the father of many nations; and so certain was the fulfillment of the Divine purposes, that he spoke of it as already accomplished.

Of many nations. The apostle evidently understands this promise as refering not to his *natural* descendants only, but to the great multitude who should believe as he did.

Before him. In his view or sight; i.e., god regarded him as such a father.

Whom he believed. Whose *promise* he believed; or in whom he trusted.

Who quickeneth the dead. Who gives *life* to the dead, Eph 2:1,5. This expresses the power of God to give life. But why it is used here has been a subject of debate. I regard it as having reference to the strong natural improbability of the fulfillment of the prophecy when it was given, arising from the age of Abraham and Sarah, Ro 4:19. Abraham exercise power in the God who gives life, and who gives it as he pleases. It is one of his prerogatives to give life to the dead (*nekrouv*) to raise up those who are in their graves; and a power *similar* to that, or strongly *reminding* of that, was manifested in fulfilling the promise to Abraham. The giving of the promise, and its fulfillment, were such as strongly to remind us that God has power to give life to the dead.

And calleth, etc. That is, those things which he foretells and promises are so certain, that he may speak of them as already in existence. Thus is relation to Abraham, God, instead of simply *promising* that he *would* make him the father of many nations, speaks of it as already done, "I *have* made thee," etc. In his own mind, or purpose, he had so constituted him, and it was so certain that it *would* take place, that he might speak of it as *already* done.

{t} "I have made thee a father"

@Ge 17:5

{1} "before him whom" or, "like man" {u} "quickeneth the dead" Eph 2:1,5 {v} "those things" 1Co 1:28 1Pe 2:10

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Who against hope*. Who against all apparent or usual ground of hope. He refers here to the prospect of a posterity. See Ro 4:19-21.

Believed in hope. Believed in that which was promised to excite his hope. Hope here is put for the object of his hope—that which was promised.

According to that which was spoken. Ge 15:5.

So shall they seed be.. That is, as the stars in heaven for multitude. Thy posterity shall be very numerous.

{w} "So shall thy seed be" Ge 15:5

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *And being not weak in faith*. That is, having strong faith.

He considered not. He did not regard the fact that his body was now dead, as any obstacle to the fulfilment of the promise. He did not suffer that fact to influence him, or to produce any doubt about the fulfilment. Faith looks to the strength of God, not to second causes, or to difficulties that may appear formidable to man.

Now dead. Aged; dead as to the purpose under consideration. Comp. Heb 11:12, "As good as dead." That is, he was now at an age when it was highly improbable that he would have any children. Comp. Ge 17:17.

Deadness, etc. Heb 11:11, "When she was past age." Comp. Ge 18:11.

{x} "deadness of Sarah's womb"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *He staggered not*. He was not moved, or agitated; he steadily and firmly believed the promise.

Giving glory to God. Giving honour to God by the firmness with which he believed his promises. His conduct was such as to honour God; that is, to show Abraham's conviction that he was worthy of implicit confidence and trust. In this way *all* who believe in the promises of God do honour to him. They bear testimony to him that he is worthy of confidence. They become so many witnesses in his favour; and furnish to their fellow-men evidence that God has a claim on the credence and trust of mankind.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *And being fully persuaded*. Thoroughly or entirely convinced, Lu 1:1 Ro 14:5; 2Ti 4:5,17.

He was able. Comp. Ge 18:14. This was not the only time in which Abraham evinced this confidence. His faith was equally implicit and strong when he was commanded to sacrifice his promised son, Heb 11:19.

{y} "also able to perform" Ge 18:14 Lu 1:37,45 Heb 11:19

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *And therefore*, this faith was so implicit, and so unwavering, that it was a demonstration that he was the firm friend of God. He was tried, and he had such confidence in God that he showed that he was supremely attached to him, and would obey and serve him. This was reckoned as a full proof of friendship; and he was recognized and treated as righteous; i.e., as the friend of God. **See Barnes "Ro 4:3,5"**.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Now it was not written*. The record of this extraordinary faith was not made on his account only; but it was made to show the way in which men may be regarded and treated as righteous by God. If Abraham was so regarded and treated, then, on the same principle, all others may be. God has but one mode of justifying men.

Imputed. Reckoned; accounted. He was regarded and treated as the friend of God.

{z} "Now it was not written" Ro 15:4 1Co 10:11

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *But for us also*. For our use, comp. Ro 15:4 1Co 10:11 that we might have an example of the way in which men may be accepted of God. It is recorded for our encouragement and imitation, to show that we may in a similar manner be accepted and saved.

If we believe on him. etc. Abraham showed his faith in God by believing *just what God revealed to him.* This was *his* faith, and it might be as *strong* and *implicit* as could be exercised under the fullest revelation. Faith, now, is belief in God *just so far as he has revealed his will to us*. It is therefore the same *in principle*, though it may have reference to different objects. It is confidence in the same God, according to what we know of his will. Abraham showed *his* faith mainly in confiding in the promises of God respecting a numerous prosperity. This was the leading truth made know to *him*, and this he believed. The main or leading leading truths that God had made known to *us* are, that he has given his Son to die; that he has raised him up; and that through him he is ready to pardon. To put confidence in these truths is to believe now. Doing this, we believe in the same God that Abraham did; we evince the same spirit; and thus show that we are the friends of the same God, and may be treated in the same manner. This is *faith* under the gospel (comp. **See Barnes "Mr 16:16"**) , and shows that the faith of Abraham and of all true believers is substantially the same, and is varied only by the difference of the truths made known.

{a} "For us also" Ac 2:39 {b} "we believe on him" Mr 16:16 Joh 3:14-16

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Who was delivered*. To death. Comp. **See Barnes "Ac 2:23"**.

For our offences. On account of our crimes. He was delivered up to death in order to make expiation for our sins.

And was raised again. From the dead.

For our justification. In order that we may be justified. The word *justification* here seems to be used in a large sense, to denote acceptance with God; including not merely the formal act by which God pardons sins, and by which we become reconciled to him, but but also the *completion* of the work—the treatment of us as righteous, and raising us up to a state of glory. By the *death* of Christ an atonement is made for sin. If it be asked how his *resurrection* contributes to our acceptance with God, we may answer,

(1.) It rendered *his* work complete. His *death* would have been unavailing, his work would have been imperfect, if he had not been raised up from the dead. He submitted to death as a sacrifice, and it was needful that he should rise, and thus conquer death and subdue our enemies, that the work which he had undertaken might be complete.

(2.) His resurrection was a proof that his work was *accepted* by the Father. What he had done, in order that sinners might be saved, was approved. Our justification, therefore become sure, as it was *for* this that he had given himself up to death.

(3.) His resurrection is the main-spring of all out hopes, and of all our efforts to be saved. Life and immortality are thus brought to light, 2Ti 1:10. God "hath begotten us again to a lively hope, (a living, active, real hope) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," 1Pe 1:3. Thus the fact that *he* was raised becomes the ground of hope that *we* shall be raised and accepted of God. The fact that *he* was raised, and that all who love him shall be raised also, becomes one of the most efficient motives to us to seek to be justified and saved. There is no higher motive that can be presented to induce man to seek salvation than the fact that he may be raised up from death and the grave, and made immortal. There is no satisfactory proof that man can be thus raised up, but the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In that resurrection we have a pledge that all his people will rise. "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him," 1Th 4:14. "Because I live," said the Redeemer, "ye shall live also," Joh 14:19 1Pe 1:21.

{c} "delivered" Isa 53:5,6; 2Co 5:21 Heb 9:28; 1Pe 2:24 Re 1:5

{d} "raised again" 1Co 15:17 1Pe 1:21

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 5

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 1

ROMANS Chapter 5

Introduction

The design of this chapter, which has usually been considered as one of the most difficult portions of the New Testament, especially Ro 5:12-21, is evidently to show the *results* or *benefits* of the doctrine of justification by faith. That doctrine the apostle had now fully established. He had shown in the previous chapters,

(1.) that men were under condemnation for sin;

(2.) that this extended alike to the Jews and the Gentiles;

(3.) that there was no way of escape now but by the doctrine of pardon, not by personal merit, but by grace;

(4.) that this plan was fully made known by the gospel of Christ; and

(5.) that this was no new doctrine, but was, in fact, substantially the same by which Abraham and David had been accepted before God.

Having thus stated and vindicated the doctrine, it was natural to follow up the demonstration, by stating its bearing and its practical influence. This he does by showing that its immediate effect is to produce *peace*, Ro 5:1. It gives us the privilege of access to the favour of God, Ro 5:2. But not only this, we are in a world of affliction. Christians, like others, are surrounded with trials; and

a very important question was, whether this doctrine would have an influence in supporting the soul in those trials. This question the apostle discusses in Ro 5:3-11. He shows that *in fact* Christians glory in tribulation, and that the reasons why they do so are,

(1.) that the natural effect of tribulations under the gospel was to lead to hope, Ro 5:3,4.

(2.) That the *cause* of this was, that the love of God was shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost. This doctrine he further confirms by showing the consolation which would be furnished by the fact that Christ had died for them. This involved a security that they would be sustained in their trials, and that a victory would be given them. For,

(1.) it was the highest expression of love that he should die for enemies, Ro 5:6-8.

(2.) It followed that if he was given for them when *they* were enemies, it was much more probable, it was *certain*, that all needful grace would be furnished to them now that they were reconciled, Ro 5:9-11.

But there was another very material inquiry. Men were not only exposed to affliction, but they were in the midst of *a wreck of things—of a fallen world—of the proofs and memorials of sin everywhere*. The first man had sinned, and the *race* was subject to sin and death. The monuments of death and sin were everywhere. It was to be expected that a remedy from God would have reference to this universal state of sin and woe; and that it would tend to meet and repair these painful and wide-spread ruins. The apostle then proceeds to discuss the question, how the plan of salvation, which involved justification by faith, was adapted to meet these universal and distressing evils, Ro 5:12-21. The design of this part of the chapter is to show that the blessings procured by the redemption through Christ, and the plan of justification through him, greatly exceed all the evils which had come upon the world in consequence of the apostasy of Adam. And if this was the case, the scheme of justification by faith was complete. It was adapted to the condition of fallen and ruined man, and was worthy of his affection and confidence. A particular examination of this argument of the apostle will occur in the Notes on verses 12—21.

Verse 1. Therefore (*oun*). Since we are thus justified, or as a consequence of being justified, we have peace.

Being justified by faith. **See Barnes "Ro 1:17"**; **See Barnes "Ro 3:24"**; **See Barnes** "Ro 4:5".

We. That is, all who are justified. The apostle is evidently speaking of true Christians.

Have peace with God. **See Barnes "Joh 14:27"**.

True religion is often represented as *peace* with God. See Ac 10:36 Ro 8:6, 10:15 14:17; Ga 5:22.

See also Isa 32:17:—

"And the work of righteousness shall be peace,
And the effect of righteousness
Quietness and assurance for ever."

This is called *peace*, because

(1.) the sinner is represented as the enemy of God, Ro 8:7 Eph 2:16; Jas 4:4 Joh 15:18,24 17:14; Ro 1:30.

(2.) The state of a sinner's mind is far from peace. He is often agitated, alarmed, trembling. He feels that he is alienated from God. For

"The wicked are like the troubled sea,
For it never can be at rest;
Whose waters east up mire and dirt."
Isa 57:20.

The sinner, in this state, regards God as his enemy. He trembles when he thinks of his law; fears his judgments; is alarmed when he thinks of hell. His bosom is a stranger to peace. This has been felt in all lands—alike under the thunders of the law of Sinai among the Jews, in the pagan world, and in lands where the gospel is preached. It is the effect of an alarmed and troubled conscience.

(3.) The plan of salvation by Christ reveals God as willing to be reconciled. He is ready to pardon, and to be at peace. If the sinner repents and believes, God can now consistently forgive him, and admit him to favour. It is therefore a plan by which the mind of God and of the sinner can become reconciled, or united in feeling and in purpose. The obstacles, on the part of God, to reconciliation, arising from his justice and law, been removed, and he is now willing to be at peace. The obstacles on the part of man, arising from his sin, his rebellion, and his conscious guilt, may be taken away, and he can now regard God as his friend.

(4.) The *effect* of this plan, when the sinner embraces it, is to produce *peace* in his own mind. He *experiences* peace; a peace which the world gives not, and which the world cannot take away, Php 4:7 1Pe 1:8; Joh 16:22.

Usually, in the work of conversion to God, this *peace* is the first evidence that is felt of the change of heart. Before, the sinner was agitated and troubled. But often suddenly, a peace and calmness is felt, which is before unknown. The alarm subsides; the heart is calm; the fears die away, like the waves of the ocean after a storm. A sweet tranquillity visits the heart—a pure shining light, like the sunbeams that break through the opening clouds after a tempest. The views, the feelings, the desires are changed; and the bosom that was just before filled with agitation and alarm, that regarded God as its enemy, is now at peace with him, and with all the world.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ. By means of the atonement of the Lord Jesus. It is *his* mediation that has procured it.

{e} "Therefore being justified" Isa 32:17 Eph 2:14; Col 1:20.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *We have access*. **See Barnes "Joh 14:6"**.

"I am the way," etc. Doddridge renders it, "by whom we have *been introduced*," etc. It means, *by whom we have the privilege of obtaining the favour of God which we enjoy when we are justified*. The word rendered "access" occurs but in two other places in the New Testament, Eph 2:18 3:12. By Jesus Christ the way is opened for us to obtain the favour of God.

By faith. By means of faith, Ro 1:17.

Into this grace. Into this *favour* of reconciliation with God.

Wherein we stand. In which we now are in consequence of being justified.

And rejoice. Religion is often represented as producing joy, Isa 12:3 35:10, 52:9 61:3,7 65:14,18 Joh 16:22,24; Ac 13:52 Ro 14:17; Ga 5:22 1Pe 1:8. The sources or steps of this joy are these:

(1.) We are justified, or regarded by God as righteous.

(2.) We are admitted into his favour, and abide there.

(3.) We have the prospect of still higher and richer blessings in the fulness of his glory when we are admitted to heaven.

In hope. In the earnest desire and expectation of obtaining that glory. Hope is a complex emotion, made up of a *desire* for an object, and an *expectation* of obtaining it. Where either of these is wanting, there is not *hope*. Where they are mingled in improper proportions, there is not peace. But where the *desire* of obtaining an object is attended with an *expectation* of obtaining it in proportion to that desire, there exists that peaceful, happy state of mind which we denominate hope. And the apostle here implies that the Christian *has* an earnest *desire* for that glory; and that he has a confident *expectation* of obtaining it. The result of that he immediately states to be, that we are by it sustained in our afflictions.

The glory of God. The glory that God will bestow on us. The word *glory* usually means splendour, magnificence, honour; and the apostle here refers to that honour and dignity which will be conferred on the redeemed when they are raised up to the full honours of redemption; when they shall triumph in the completion of the work; and be freed from sin, and pain, and tears, and permitted to participate in the full splendours that shall encompass the throne of God in the heavens. **See Barnes "Lu 2:9"**.

Comp. Re 21:22-24; Re 22:5 Isa 60:19,20.

{f} "whom also" Joh 14:6 {g} "rejoice in hope" Heb 3:6

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And not only so*. We not only rejoice in times of prosperity, and of health. Paul proceeds to show that this plan is not less adapted to produce support in trials.

But we glory. The word used here is the same that is, in verse 2, translated "we rejoice" *kaucwmeya*. It should have been so rendered here. The meaning is, that we rejoice not only *in hope*; not only in the *direct* results of justification, in the immediate effect which religion itself produces; but we carry our joy and triumph even into the midst of trials. In accordance with this, our Saviour directed his followers to rejoice in persecutions, Mt 5:11,12. Comp. Jas 1:2,12.

In tribulations. In afflictions. The word used here refers to *all kinds* of trials which men are called to endure; though it is possible that Paul referred particularly to the various persecutions and trials which they were called to endure as Christians.

Knowing. Being assured of this, Paul's assurance might have arisen from reasoning on the nature of religion, and its tendency to produce comfort; or it is more probable that he was speaking here the language of his own experience. He had found it to be so. This was written near the close of his life, and it states the personal experience of a man who endured, perhaps, as much as any one ever did, in attempting to spread the gospel; and *far* more than commonly falls to the lot of mankind. Yet he, like all other Christians, could leave his deliberate testimony to the fact that Christianity was sufficient to sustain the soul in its severest trials. See 2Co 1:3-6 11:24-29, 12:9,10.

Worketh. Produces; the effect of afflictions on the minds of Christians is to make them patient. Sinners are irritated and troubled by them; they murmur, and become more and more obstinate and rebellious. They have no sources of consolation; they deem God a hard master; and they become fretful and rebellious just in proportion to the depth and continuance of theft trials. But in the mind of a Christian, who regards his Father's hand in it; who sees that he deserves no mercy; who has confidence in the wisdom and goodness of God; who feels that it is necessary for his own good to be afflicted; and who experiences its happy, subduing, and mild effect in restraining his sinful passions, and in weaning him from the world—the effect is to produce *patience*. Accordingly, it will usually be found that those Christians who are longest and most severely afflicted are the most patient. Year after year of suffering produces increased peace and calmness of soul; and at the end of his course the Christian is more willing to be afflicted, and bears his afflictions more calmly, than at the beginning. He who on earth was most afflicted was the most patient of all sufferers; and not less patient when he was "led as a lamb to the slaughter," than when he experienced the first trial in his great work.

Patience. "A calm temper, which suffers evils without murmuring or discontent."— Webster.

{h} "glory in tribulations" Mt 5:11,12; Jas 1:2,12

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And patience, experience*. Patient endurance of trial produces experience. The word rendered experience (*dokimhn*) means *trial*, testing, or that thorough examination by which we ascertain the quality or nature of a thing, as when we test a metal by fire, or in any other way, to ascertain that it is genuine. It also means *approbation*, or the *result* of such a trial; the being approved, and accepted as the effect of a trying process. The meaning is, that long afflictions borne patiently show a Christian what he is; they test his religion, and prove that it is genuine. Afflictions are often sent for this purpose, and patience in the midst of them shows that the religion which can sustain them is from God.

And experience, hope. The result of such long trial is to produce hope. They show that religion is genuine; that it is from God; and not only so, but they direct the mind *onward* to another world, and sustain the soul by the prospect of a glorious immortality there. The various steps and stages of the benefits of afflictions are thus beautifully delineated by the apostle in a manner which accords with the experience of all the children of God.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And hope maketh not ashamed*. That is, this hope will not disappoint, or deceive. When we hope for an object which we do not obtain, we are conscious of disappointment; perhaps sometimes of a feeling of shame. But the apostle says that the Christian hope is such that it will be fulfilled; it will not disappoint; what we hope for we shall certainly obtain. See Php 1:20. The expression used here is probably taken from Ps 22:4,5:

"Our fathers trusted in thee;
They trusted; and thou didst deliver them.
They cried unto thee.
And were delivered;
They trusted in thee,
And were not confounded," [ashamed.]

Because the love of God. Love toward God. There is produced an abundant, an overflowing love to God.

Is shed abroad. Is diffused; is poured out; is abundantly produced, (*ekkecutai*). This word is properly applied to *water*, or to any other liquid that is poured out, or diffused. It is used also to denote imparting, or communicating freely or abundantly, and is thus expressive of the influence of the Holy Spirit *poured down*, or abundantly imparted to men, Ac 10:45. Here it means that love towards God is copiously or abundantly given to a Christian; his heart is conscious of high and abundant love to God, and by this he is sustained in his afflictions.

By the Holy Ghost. It is produced by the influence of the Holy Spirit. All Christian graces are traced to his influence. Ga 5:22, "But the fruit of the Spirit is *love*, joy," etc.

Which is given unto us. Which *Spirit* is given or imparted to us. The Holy Spirit is thus represented as dwelling in the hearts of believers, 1Co 6:19 3:16; 2Co 6:16.

In all these places it is meant that Christians are under his sanctifying influence; that he produces in their hearts the Christian graces; and fills their minds with peace, and love, and joy.

{i} "hope maketh not ashamed" Php 1:20 {k} "Holy Ghost which is given" Eph 1:13,14

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *For when*, etc. This opens a new view of the subject, or it is a new argument to show that our hope will not make ashamed, or will not disappoint us. The first argument he had stated in the previous verse, that the Holy Ghost was given to us. The next, which he now states, is, that God had given the most ample proof that he would save us, by giving his Son when we were sinners; and that he who had done so much for us when we were *enemies*, would not now fail us when we are his friends, Ro 5:6-10. He has performed the more *difficult* part of the work by reconciling us when we were enemies; and he will not now forsake us, but will carry forward and complete what he has begun.

We were yet without strength. The word here used (*asyenwn*) is usually applied to those who are sick and feeble, deprived of strength by disease, Mt 25:39 Lu 10:9; Ac 4:9 5:15.

But it is also used in a *moral* sense, to denote inability or feebleness with regard to any undertaking or duty. Here it means that we were without strength *in regard to the case which the apostle was considering*; that is, we had no power to devise a scheme of justification, to make an atonement, or to put away the wrath of God, etc. While all hope of man's being saved by any plan of his own was thus taken away— while he was thus lying exposed to Divine justice, and dependent on the mere mercy of God—God provided a plan which met the case, and secured his salvation. The remark of the apostle here has reference *only* to the condition of the race *before* an atonement

is made. It does not pertain to the question whether man has strength to repent and to believe after an atonement is made, which is a very different inquiry.

In due time. Margin, *According to the time*, (*kata kairon*). In a *timely manner*; at the proper time. Ga 4:4, "But when the fulness of time was come," etc. This may mean,

(1.) that it was a *fit* or *proper* time. All experiments had failed to save men. For four thousand years the trial had been made under the law among the Jews; and by the aid of the most enlightened reason in Greece and Rome; and still it was in vain. No scheme had been devised to meet the maladies of the world, and to save men from death. It was then *time* that a better plan should be presented to men.

(2.) It was the time *fixed* and appointed by God for the Messiah to come; the time which had been designated by the prophets, Ge 49:10; Da 9:24-27. See Joh 13:1 17:1.

(3.) It was a most *favourable* time for the spread of the gospel. The world was expecting such an event; was at peace; and was subjected mainly to the Roman power; and furnished facilities never before experienced for introducing the gospel rapidly into every land. **See Barnes "Mt 2:1,2".**

For the ungodly. Those who do not worship God. It here means *sinners* in general, and does not differ materially from what is meant by the word translated "without strength." **See Barnes "Ro 4:5".**

{1} "in due time", or "according to the time" {l} "due time" Ga 4:4

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *For scarcely*, etc. The design of this verse and the following is to illustrate the great love of God, by comparing it with what man was willing to do. "It is an unusual occurrence, an event which is all that we can hope for from the highest human benevolence and the purest friendship, that one would be willing to die for a good man. There are none who would be willing to die for a man who was seeking to do us injury, to calumniate our character, to destroy our happiness or our property. But Christ was willing to die for bitter foes."

Scarcely. With difficulty. It is an event which cannot be expected to occur often. There would scarcely be found an instance in which it would happen.

A righteous man. A just man; a man distinguished simply for integrity of conduct; one who has no remarkable claims for amiableness of character, for benevolence, or for personal friendship. Much as we may admire such a man, and applaud him, yet he has not the characteristics which would appeal to our hearts to induce us to lay down our lives for him. Accordingly, it is not known that any instance has occurred where for such a man one would be willing to die.

For a righteous man. That is, in his place, or in his stead. A man would scarcely lay down his own life to save that of a righteous man.

Will one die. Would one be willing to die.

Yet peradventure. Perhaps; implying that this was an event which might be expected to occur.

For a good man. That is, not merely a man who is coldly just; but a man whose characteristic is that of kindness, amiableness, tenderness. It is evident that the case of such a man would be much more likely to appeal to our feelings, than that of one who is merely a man of integrity. Such a man

is susceptible of tender friendship; and probably the apostle intended to refer to such a case—a case where we would be willing to expose life for a kind, tender, faithful friend.

Some would even dare to die. Some would have courage to give his life. Instances of this kind, though not many, have occurred. The affecting case of Damon and Pythias is one. Damon had been condemned to death by the tyrant Dionysius of Sicily, and obtained leave to go and settle his domestic affairs on promise of returning at a stated hour to the place of execution. Pythias pledged himself to undergo the punishment if Damon should not return in time, and deliver himself into the hands of the tyrant. Damon returned at the appointed moment, just as the sentence was about to be executed on Pythias; and Dionysius was so struck with the fidelity of the two friends, that he remitted their punishment, and entreated them to permit him to share their friendship. (Val. Max. iv. 7.) This case stands almost alone. Our Saviour says that it is the highest expression of love among men. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends," Joh 15:13. The friendship of David and Jonathan seems also to have been of this character, that one would have been willing to lay down his life for the other.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *But God commendeth*, etc. God has exhibited or showed his love in this unusual and remarkable manner.

His love. His kind feeling; his beneficence; his willingness to submit to sacrifice to do good to others.

While we were yet sinners. And of course his enemies. In this, his love surpasses all that has ever been manifested among men.

Christ died for us. In our stead; to save us from death, he took our place; and, by dying himself on the cross, saved us from dying eternally in hell.

{m} "while we were yet sinners" Joh 15:13 1Pe 3:18; 1Jo 3:16

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Much more then*. It is much more reasonable to expect it. There are fewer obstacles in the way. If, when we were enemies, he overcame all that was in the way of our salvation, much more have we reason to expect that he will afford us protection now that we are his friends. This is one ground of the hope expressed in Ro 5:6.

Being now justified. Pardoned; accepted as his friends.

By his blood. By his death. **See Barnes "Ro 3:25"**.

The fact that we are purchased by his blood, and sanctified by it, renders us *sacred* in the eye of God; bestows a value on us proportionate to the worth of the price of our redemption; and is a pledge that he will keep that which has been so dearly bought.

Saved from wrath. From hell; from the punishment due to sin. **See Barnes "Ro 2:8"**.

{n} "by his blood, we" Heb 9:14,22 {o} "from wrath" 1Th 1:10

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *For if*. The idea in this verse is simply a repetition and enlargement of that in Ro 5:9. The apostle dwells on the thought, and places it in a new light, furnishing thus a strong confirmation of his position.

When we were enemies. The work was undertaken while we were enemies. From being enemies we were changed to friends by that work. Thus it was commenced by God; its foundation was laid while we were still hostile to it; it evinced, therefore, a determined purpose on the part of God to perform it; and he has thus given a pledge that it shall be perfected.

We were reconciled, **See Barnes "Mt 5:24"**.

We are brought to an *agreement; to a state of friendship and union*. We became his friends, laid aside our opposition, and embraced him as our Friend and Portion. To effect this is the great design of the plan of salvation, 2Co 5:1-20 Col 1:21; Eph 2:16.

It means that there were obstacles existing on both sides to a reconciliation; and that these have been removed by the death of Christ; and that a union has thus been effected. This has been done in removing the obstacles on the part of God—by maintaining the honour of his law; showing his hatred of sin; upholding his justice, and maintaining his truth, at the same time that he pardons. **See Barnes "Ro 3:26"**.

And, on the part of man, by removing his unwillingness to' be reconciled; by subduing, changing, and sanctifying his heart; by overcoming his hatred of God, and of his law; and bringing him into submission to the government of God. So that the Christian is, in fact, reconciled to God; he is his friend; he is pleased with his law, his character, and his plan of salvation. And all this has been accomplished by the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus as an offering in our place.

Much more. It is much more to be expected; there are still stronger and more striking considerations to show it.

By his life. We were reconciled by his death. Death may include possibly his low, humble, and suffering condition. Death has the appearance of great feebleness; the death of Christ had the appearance of the defeat of his plans. His enemies triumphed and rejoiced over him on the cross, and in the tomb. Yet the effect of this feeble, low, and humiliating state was to reconcile us to God. If in *this* state—when humble, despised, dying, dead—he had power to accomplish so great a work as to reconcile us to God, how much more may we expect that he will be able to keep us now that he is a living, exalted, and triumphant Redeemer! If his fainting powers in *dying* were such as to reconcile us, how much more shall his full, vigorous powers, as an exalted Redeemer, be sufficient to keep and save us! This argument is but an expansion of what the Saviour himself said, Joh 14:19, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

{p} "much more" Ro 8:32 {q} "by his life" Joh 14:12

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *And not only so*. The apostle states another effect of justification.

We also joy in God. In Ro 5:2, he had said that we rejoice in tribulations, and in hope of the glory of God. But he here adds that we rejoice *in God himself*; in his existence; his attributes; his

justice, holiness, mercy, truth, love. The Christian rejoices that God is such a Being as he is; and glories that the universe is under his administration. The sinner is opposed to him; he finds no pleasure in him; he fears or hates him; and deems him unqualified for universal empire. But it is one characteristic of true piety, one evidence that we are truly reconciled to God, that we rejoice in him *as he is*; and find pleasure in the contemplation of his perfections as they are revealed in the Scriptures.

Through our Lord, etc. By the mediation of our Lord Jesus, who has revealed the true character of God, and by whom we have been reconciled to him.

The atonement. Marg., or *reconciliation*. This is the only instance in which our translators have used the word *atonement* in the New Testament. The word frequently occurs in the Old, Ex 29:33 36 37 30:10,15,16

etc. etc. As it is now used by us, it commonly means the ransom, or *the sacrifice*, by means of which reconciliation is effected between God and man. But in this place it has a different sense. It means the *reconciliation itself* between God and man; not the means by which reconciliation is effected. It denotes not that we have received a *ransom*, or an offering by which reconciliation *might* be effected; but that *in fact we have become reconciled through him*. This was the ancient meaning of the English word *atonement* —AT ONE MENT—being at one, or reconciled.

He seeks to make *atonement*

Between the Duke of Glo'ster-and your brothers.

Shakespeare.

The Greek word which denotes the expiatory offering by which a reconciliation is effected is different from the one here. **See Barnes "Ro 3:25"**.

The word used here—(*katallaghn*) is never used to denote such an offering, but denotes the *reconciliation itself*.

{r} "joy in God" Hab 3:18

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 12

Verses 12-21. This passage has been usually regarded as the most difficult part of the New Testament. It is not the design of these Notes to enter into a minute criticism of contested points like this. They who wish to see a full discussion of the passage, may find it in the professedly critical commentaries; and especially in the commentaries of Tholuck and of Professor Stuart on the Romans. The meaning of the passage in its general bearing is not difficult; and probably the whole passage would have been found far less difficult if it had not been attached to a philosophical theory on the subject of man's sin, and if a strenuous and indefatigable effort had not been made to prove that it teaches what it was never designed to teach. The plain and obvious design of the passage is this— to show one of the benefits of the doctrine of justification by faith. The apostle had shown

(1.) that that doctrine produced peace, Ro 5:1

(2.) That it produces joy in the prospect of future glory, Ro 5:2

(3.) That it sustained the soul in afflictions;

(a) by the regular tendency of afflictions under the gospel,

Ro 5:3,4; and

(b) by the fact that the Holy Ghost was imparted to the believer.

(4.) That this doctrine rendered it certain that we should be saved, because Christ had died for us, Ro 5:6; because this was the highest expression of love, Ro 5:7,8; and because, if we had been reconciled when thus alienated, we should be saved now that we are the friends of God, Ro 5:9,10.

(5.) That it led us to rejoice in God himself; produced joy in his presence, and in all his attributes. He now proceeds to show the bearing on that great mass of evil which had been introduced into the world by sin, and to prove that the benefits of the atonement were far greater than the evils which had been introduced by the acknowledged effects of the sin of Adam. "The design is to exalt our views of the work of Christ, and of the plan of justification through him, by comparing them with the evil consequences of the sin of our first father, and by showing that the blessings in question not only extend to the removal of these evils, but far beyond this; so that the grace of the gospel has not only abounded, but superabounded." (Prof. Stuart.) In doing this the apostle admits, as an undoubted and well understood fact,

1. That sin came into the world by one man, and death as the consequence, Ro 5:12.

2. That death had passed on all; even on those who had not the light of revelation, and the express commands of God, Ro 5:13,14.

3. That Adam was the figure, the type of him that was to come; that there was some sort of analogy or resemblance between the results of his act, and the results of the work of Christ. That analogy consisted in the fact that the effects of his doings did not terminate on himself, but extended to numberless other persons, and that it was thus with the work of Christ, Ro 5:14. But he shows,

4. That there were very material and important differences in the two cases. There was not a perfect parallelism. The effects of the work of Christ were far more than simply to counteract the evil introduced by the sin of Adam. The differences between the effect of his act and the work of Christ are these:

(1.) The sin of Adam led to condemnation. The work of Christ has an opposite tendency, Ro 5:15.

(2.) The condemnation which came from the sin of Adam was the result of one offence. The work of Christ was to deliver from many offences, Ro 5:16.

(3.) The work of Christ was far more abundant and overflowing in its influence. It extended deeper and farther. It was more than a compensation for the evils of the fall, Ro 5:17.

5. As the act of Adam threw its influence over all men to secure their condemnation, so the work of Christ was fitted to affect all men, Jews and Gentiles, in bringing them into a state by which they might be delivered from the fall, and restored to the favour of God. It was *in itself* adapted to produce far more and greater benefits than the crime of Adam had clone evil; and was thus a glorious plan, just fitted to meet the actual condition of a world of sin; and to repair the evils which apostasy had introduced. It had thus the evidence that it originated in the benevolence of God, and that it was adapted to the human condition, Ro 5:18-21.

Verse 12. Wherefore. (*dia touto*). On this account. This is not an *inference* from what has gone before, but a *continuance* of the design of the apostle to show the advantages of the plan of justification by faith; as if he had said, "The advantages of that plan have been seen in our comfort and peace, and in its sustaining power in afflictions. Further, the advantages of the plan are seen in regard to this, that it is applicable to the condition of man in a world where the sin of one man has produced so much woe and death. *On this account* also it is a matter of joy. It meets the ills of a fallen race; and it is therefore a plan adapted to man." Thus understood, the connexion and design of the passage is easily explained. *In respect to the state of things* into which man is fallen, the benefits of this plan may be seen, as adapted to heal the maladies, and to be commensurate with the evils which the apostasy of one man brought upon the world. This explanation is not that which is usually given to this place, but it is that which seems to me to be demanded by the strain of the apostle's reasoning. The passage is *elliptical*, and there is a necessity of supplying something to make out the sense.

As. (*wsper*). This is the form of a *comparison*. But the other part of the comparison is deferred to Ro 5:18. The connexion evidently requires us to understand the other part of the comparison of the work of Christ. In the rapid train of ideas in the mind of the apostle, this was deferred to make room for explanations, (Ro 5:13-17.) "As by one man sin entered into the world, etc., so by the work of Christ a remedy has been provided, commensurate with the evils. As the sin of one man had such an influence, *so* the work of the Redeemer has an influence to meet and to counteract those evils." The passage in Ro 5:13-17 is therefore to be regarded as a parenthesis thrown in for the purpose of making explanations, and to show how the cases of Adam and of Christ differed from each other.

By one man, etc. By means of one man; by the crime of one man. His act was the occasion of the introduction of all sin into all the world. The apostle here refers to the well-known historical fact, (Ge 3:6,7) without any explanation of the *mode* or *cause* of this. He adduced it as a fact that was well known; and evidently meant to speak of it not for the purpose of explaining the mode, or even of making this the leading or prominent topic in the discussion. His *main* design is not to speak of the manner of the introduction of sin, but to show that the work of Christ meets and removes well-known and extensive evils. His explanations, therefore, are chiefly confined to the work of Christ. He speaks of the introduction, the spread, and the effects of sin, not as having any *theory* to defend on that subject, not as designing to enter into a minute description of the case, but as it was manifest *on the face of things*, as it stood on the historical record, and as it was understood and admitted by mankind. Great perplexity has been introduced by forgetting the *scope* of the apostle's argument here, and by supposing that he was defending a peculiar *theory* on the subject of the introduction of sin; whereas nothing is more foreign to his design. He is showing how the plan of justification *meets well-understood and acknowledged universal evils*. Those evils he refers to just as they were seen, and admitted to exist. All men see them, and feel them, and practically understand them. The truth is, that the doctrine of the fall of man, and the prevalence of sin and death, do not belong peculiarly to Christianity, any more than the introduction and spread of disease does to the science of the *healing art*. Christianity did not introduce sin; nor is it responsible for it. The existence of sin and woe belongs to the *race*; appertains equally to all systems of religion, and is a part of the melancholy history of man, whether Christianity be true or false. The existence and extent of sin and death are not affected if the infidel could show that Christianity was an imposition. They would still remain. The Christian religion is just *one mode of proposing a remedy for well-known*

and desolating evils; just as the science of medicine proposes a remedy for diseases which it did not introduce, and which could not be stayed in their desolations, or modified, if it could be shown that the whole science of healing was pretension and quackery. Keeping this design of the apostle in view, therefore, and remembering that he is not defending or stating a theory about the introduction of sin, but that he is explaining the way in which the work of Christ delivers *from* a deep-felt universal evil, we shall find the explanation of this passage disencumbered of many of the difficulties with which it has been thought usually to be invested.

By one man. By *Adam*. See Ro 5:14. It is true that sin was literally introduced by *Eve*, who was first in the transgression, Ge 3:6 1Ti 2:14. But the apostle evidently is not explaining the precise *mode* in which sin was introduced, or making this his *leading* point. He therefore speaks of the introduction of sin in a *popular* sense, as it was generally understood. The following reasons may be suggested why the *man* is mentioned, rather than the woman, as the cause of the introduction of sin.

(1.) It was the natural and usual way of expressing such an event. We say that *man* sinned, that man is redeemed, man dies, etc. We do not pause to indicate the sex in such expressions. So in this, he undoubtedly meant to say that it was introduced by the *parentage* of the human race.

(2.) The name *Adam*, in Scripture, was given to the *created pair*, the parents of the human family, a name designating their earthly origin. Ge 5:1,2, "In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called THEIR *name Adam*." The name Adam, therefore, used in this connexion, (Ro 5:14,) would suggest the united parentage of the human family.

(3.) In transactions where man and woman are mutually concerned, it is usual to speak of the man first, on account of his being constituted superior in rank and authority.

(4.) The comparison on the one side, in the apostle's argument, is of the *man* Christ Jesus; and to secure *the fitness, the congruity* (Stuart) of the comparison, he speaks of the *man* only in the previous transaction.

(5.) The sin of the woman was not complete in its effects without the concurrence of the man. It was their uniting in it which was the cause of the evil. Hence *the man* is especially mentioned as having *rendered the offence what it was*; as having completed it, and entailed its curses on the race. From these remarks it is clear that the apostle does not refer to the *man* here from any idea that there was any particular covenant transaction with *him*, but that he means to speak of it in the usual, popular sense; referring to him as being the fountain of all the woes that sin has introduced into the world.

Sin entered into the world. He was the first sinner of the race. The word *sin* here evidently means the violation of the law of God. He was the first sinner among men, and in consequence all others became sinners. The apostle does not here refer to Satan, the tempter, though he was the *suggester* of evil; for his *design* was to discuss the effect of the plan of salvation in meeting the sins and calamities of *our race*. This design, therefore, did not require him to introduce the sin of *another order* of beings, he says, therefore, that Adam was the first sinner of the race, and that death was the consequence.

Into the world. Among mankind, Joh 1:10 3:16,17.

The term *world* is often thus used to denote human beings—the race, the human family. The apostle here evidently is not discussing the doctrine of *original* sin; but he is stating a simple fact,

intelligible to all: "The first man violated the law of God, and in this way sin was introduced among men." In this fact—this general, simple declaration—there is no mystery.

And death by sin. Death was the consequence of sin; or was introduced because man sinned. This is a simple statement of an obvious and well-known fact. It is repeating simply what is said in Ge 3:19, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." The threatening was, (Ge 2:17,) "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." If an inquiry be made here, how *Adam* would understand this, I reply, that we have no reason to think he would understand it as referring to anything more than the loss of life as an expression of the displeasure of God, Moses does not intimate that he was learned in the nature of laws and penalties; and his narrative would lead us to suppose that this was *all* that would occur to Adam. And indeed there is the highest evidence that the case admits of, that this was his understanding of it. For in the account of the *infliction* of the penalty after the law was violated, in God's own interpretation of it, in Ge 3:19, there is still *no* reference to anything further. "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Now, it is incredible that Adam should have understood this as referring to what has been called "spiritual death," and to "eternal death," when neither in the threatening, nor in the account of the infliction of the sentence, is there the slightest recorded reference to it. Men have done great injury in the cause of correct interpretation by carrying *their* notions of doctrinal subjects to the explanation of words and phrases in the Old Testament. They have usually described Adam as endowed with all the refinement, and possessed of all the knowledge, and adorned with all the metaphysical acumen and subtility of a modem theologian. They have deemed him qualified, in the very infancy of the world, to understand and discuss questions which, under all the light of the Christian revelation, still perplex and embarrass the human mind. After these accounts of the endowments of Adam, which occupy so large a space in books of theology, one is surprised, on opening the Bible, to find how unlike all this is the simple statement in Genesis. And the wonder cannot be suppressed that men should describe the obvious *infancy* of the race as superior to its highest advancement; or that the *first* man, just looking upon a world of wonders, imperfectly acquainted with law, and moral relations, and the effects of transgression, should be represented as endowed with knowledge which, four thousand years after, it required the advent of the Son of God to communicate! The account in Moses is simple. Created man was told not to violate a simple law, on pain of death. He did it; and God announced to him that the sentence would be inflicted, and that he should return to the dust whence he was taken. What else this *might* involve—what *other* consequences sin might introduce, might be the subject of future developments and revelations. It is absurd to suppose that *all* the consequences of the violation of a law can be foreseen, or must necessarily be foreseen, in order to make the law and the penalty just. It is sufficient that the law be known; that its violation be forbidden; and what the consequences of that violation will be, must be left in great part to future developments. Even we yet know not *half* the results of violating the law of God. The murderer knows not the results fully of taking a man's life: he breaks a just law, and exposes himself to the numberless unseen woes which may flow from it.

We may ask, therefore, what light subsequent revelations have cast on the character and result of the first sin? and whether the apostle here meant to state that the consequences of sin were *in fact* as limited as they must have appeared to the mind of Adam? or had subsequent developments and revelations, through four thousand years, greatly extended the right understanding of the penalty

of the law? This can be answered only by inquiring in what sense the apostle Paul here uses the word *death*. The passage before us shows in what sense he intended here to use the word. In his argument it stands opposed to "the grace of God, and the gift by grace," (Ro 5:15) to "justification," by the forgiveness of "many offences," (Ro 5:16) to the reign of the redeemed in eternal life, (Ro 5:17) and to "justification of life," (Ro 5:18.) To all these, the words "death," (Ro 5:12,17) and "judgment," (ro 5:16,18) stand opposed. These are the benefits which result from the work of Christ; and these benefits stand opposed to the evils which sin has introduced; and as it cannot be supposed that these benefits relate to *temporal life*, or solely to the resurrection of the body, so it cannot be that the evils involved in the words "death," "judgment," etc., relate simply to temporal death. The evident meaning is, that the word "death," as here used by the apostle, refers to *the train of evils* which have been introduced by sin. It does not mean simply temporal death; but that group and collection of woes, including temporal death, condemnation, and exposure to eternal death, which is the consequence of transgression. The apostle often uses the word *death*, and *to die*, in this wide sense, Ro 1:32 6:16, 7:5,10,13,24 8:2,6,13; 2Co 2:16 7:10; Heb 2:14.

In the same sense the word is often used elsewhere, Joh 8:51 11:26; 1Jo 5:16,17; Re 2:11 20:6, etc. etc. In contrasting with this the results of the work of Christ, he describes not the resurrection merely, nor deliverance from temporal death, but *eternal* life in heaven; and it therefore follows that he here intends by death that gloomy and sad train of woes which sin has introduced into the world. The consequences of sin are, besides, elsewhere specified to be far more than temporal death, Eze 18:4 Ro 2:8,9,12.

Though, therefore, Adam might not have foreseen all the evils which were to come upon the race as the consequence of his sin, yet these evils might nevertheless follow. And the apostle, four thousand years after the reign of sin had commenced, and under the guidance of inspiration, had full opportunity to see and describe that *train of woes* which he comprehends under the name of death. That train included evidently temporal death, condemnation for sin, remorse of conscience, and exposure to eternal death, as the penalty of transgression.

And so. Thus. In this way it is to be accounted for that death has passed upon all men; to wit, because all men have sinned. As death followed sin in the first transgression, so it has in all; for all have sinned. There is a connexion between death and sin which existed in the case of Adam, and which subsists in regard to all who sin, And as all have sinned, so death has passed on all men.

Death passed upon. (*dihlyen*). Passed through; pervaded; spread over the whole race, as pestilence passes through, or pervades a nation. Thus death, with its train of woes, with its withering and blighting influence, has passed through the world, laying prostrate all before it.

Upon all men. Upon the race; all die.

For that (*ef w*). This expression has been greatly controverted; and has been very variously translated. Elsner renders it, "on account of whom." Doddridge, "unto which all have sinned." The Latin Vulgate renders it, "in whom [Adam] all have sinned." The same rendering has been given by Augustine, Beza, etc. But it has never yet been shown that our translators have rendered the expression improperly. The old Syriac and the Arabic agree with the English translation fix this interpretation. With this agree Calvin, Vatablus, Erasmus, etc. And this rendering is sustained also by many other considerations.

(1.) If (*w*) be a relative pronoun here, it would refer naturally *to death*, as its antecedent, and not to *man*. But this would not make sense.

(2.) If this had been its meaning, the preposition (*en*) would have been used. See Note of Erasmus on the place.

(3.) It comports with the apostle's argument to state a cause *why* all died, and not to state that men sinned *in Adam*. He was inquiring into the cause why death was in the world; and it would not account *for that* to say that all sinned in Adam. It would require an *additional* statement to see how that could be a cause.

(4.) As his posterity had not then an existence, they could not commit actual transgression. Sin is the transgression of the law by a moral agent; and as the interpretation "*because all have sinned*" meets the argument of the apostle, and as the Greek favours that certainly *as much* as it does the other, it is to be preferred.

All have sinned. To sin is to transgress the law of God; to do wrong. The apostle in this expression does not *say* that all have sinned in Adam, or that their nature has become corrupt, which is true, but which is not affirmed here; nor that the sin of Adam is imputed to them; but simply affirms that all men have sinned. He speaks evidently of the great universal fact that all men are sinners. He is not settling a metaphysical difficulty; nor does he speak of the condition of man as he comes into the world. He speaks as other men would; he addresses himself to the common sense of the world; and is discoursing of universal, well-known facts. *Here is the fact—that all men experience calamity, condemnation, death*. How is this to be accounted for? The answer is, "All have sinned." This is a sufficient answer; it meets the case. And as his design cannot be shown to be to discuss a metaphysical question about the *nature* of man, or about the character of infants, the passage should be interpreted according to his design, and should not be pressed to bear on that of which he says nothing, and to which the passage evidently has no reference. I understand it, therefore, as referring to the fact that men sin *in their own persons, sin themselves*—as, indeed, how can they sin in any other way?—and that *therefore* they die. If men maintain that it refers to any metaphysical properties of the nature of man, or to infants, they should not *infer* or suppose this, but should show distinctly that it is in the text. Where is there evidence of any such reference?

{s} "as by one man" Ge 3:6,19.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *For until the law*, etc. This verse, with the following verses, to the 17th, is usually regarded as a parenthesis. The law here evidently means the law given by Moses. "Until the commencement of that administration, or state of things under the law." To see the reason why he referred to this period *between* Adam and the law, we should recall the design of the apostle, which is to show the exceeding grace of God in the gospel, abounding, and super abounding, as a complete remedy for all the evils introduced by sin. For this purpose he introduces *three* leading conditions or states where men sinned, and where the effects of sin were seen; in regard to *each* and *all* of which the grace of the gospel superabounded. The *first* was that of Adam, with its attendant train of ills, (Ro 5:12) which ills were all met by the death of Christ, Ro 5:15-18. The *second* period or condition was that long interval in which men had only the light of nature, that period occurring *between* Adam and Moses. This was a fair representation of the condition of the world without revelation, and without law, Ro 5:13,14. Sin *then* reigned—reigned everywhere where there was

no law. But the grace of the gospel abounded over the evils of this state of man. The *third* was *under* the law, Ro 5:20. The law entered, and sin was increased, and its evils abounded. But the gospel of Christ abounded even over this, and grace triumphantly reigned. So that the plan of justification met *all* the evils of sin, and was adapted to remove them; sin and its consequences as flowing from Adam; sin and its consequences when there was no written revelation; and sin and its consequences under the light and terrors of the law.

Sin was in the world. Men sinned. They did that which was evil.

But sin is not imputed. Is not charged on men, or they are not held guilty of it where there is no law. This is a self-evident proposition, for sin is a violation of law; and if there is no law, there can be no wrong. Assuming this as a self-evident proposition, the connexion is, that there must have been a law of some kind; "a law written on their hearts," since sin was in the world, and men could not be charged with sin, or treated as sinners, unless there was *some* law. The passage here states a great and important principle, that men will not be held to be guilty unless there is a law which binds them, of which they are apprized, and which they voluntarily transgress. **See Barnes "Ro 4:15"**.

This verse, therefore, meets an objection that might be started from what had been said in Ro 4:15. The apostle had affirmed, that "where no law is there is no transgression." He here stated that all were sinners. It might be objected, that as during this long period of time they had no law, they could not be sinners. To meet this, he says that men were then *in fact* sinners, and were treated as such, which showed that there must have been a law.

{t} "sin is not imputed" Ro 4:15 1Jo 3:4

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Nevertheless*. Notwithstanding that sin is not imputed where there is no law, yet death reigned.

Death reigned. Men died; they were under the dominion of death in its various melancholy influences. The expression "death reigned" is one that is very striking. It is a representation of death as a monarch; having, dominion over all that period, and over all those generations. Under his dark and withering reign men sank down to the grave. We have a similar expression when we represent death as "the king of terrors." It is a striking and affecting personification, for

(1.) his reign is absolute. He strikes down whom he pleases, and when he pleases.

(2.) There is no escape. All must bow to his sceptre, and be humbled beneath his hand.

(3.) It is universal. Old and young alike are the subjects of his gloomy empire.

(4.) It would be an eternal reign if it were not for the gospel. It would shed unmitigated woes upon the earth; and the silent tread of this terrific king would produce only desolation and tears for ever.

From Adam to Moses. From the time when God gave one revealed law to Adam, to the time when another revealed law was given to Moses. This was a period of 2500 years; no inconsiderable portion of the history of the world. Whether men were regarded and treated as sinners then, was a very material inquiry in the argument of the apostle. The fact that they *died* is alleged by him as full proof that they were sinners; and that sin had therefore scattered extensive and appalling woes among men.

Even over them. Over all those generations. The *point* or *emphasis* of the remark here is, that it reigned over those that had sinned under a different economy from that of Adam. This was that which rendered it so remarkable; and which showed that the withering curse of sin had been felt in all dispensations, and in all times.

After the similitude, etc. In the same way; in like manner. The expression "after the similitude" is a Hebraism, denoting in like manner, or *as*. The difference between their case and that of Adam was, plainly, that Adam had a revealed and positive law. They had not; they had only the law of nature, or of tradition. The giving of a law to Adam, and again to the world by Moses, were two great *epochs* between which no such event had occurred. The race wandered without revelation. The difference contemplated is not that Adam was an *actual* sinner, and that *they* had sinned only by imputation. For

(1.) the expression, "to sin by imputation," is unintelligible, and conveys no idea.

(2.) The apostle makes no such distinction, and conveys no such idea.

(3.) His very object is different. It is to show that they *were actual* sinners; that they transgressed law; and the proof of this is that they died.

(4.) It is utterly absurd to suppose that men from the time of Adam to Moses were sinners *only by imputation*. All history is against it; nor is there the slightest ground of plausibility in such a supposition.

Of Adam's transgression. When he broke a plain, positive, revealed law. This transgression was the open violation of a positive precept; theirs the violation of the laws communicated in a different way—by tradition, reason, conscience, etc. Many commentators have supposed that *infants* are particularly referred to here. Augustine first suggested this, and he has been followed by many others. But probably in the whole compass of the expositions of the Bible, there is not to be found a more unnatural and forced construction than this. For

(1.) the apostle makes no mention of infants. He does not in the remotest form allude to them by name, or give any intimation that he had reference to them.

(2.) The scope of his argument is against it. Did infants only die? Were they the only persons that lived in this long period? His argument is complete without supposing that he referred to them. The question in regard to this long interval was, whether men were sinners? Yes, says the apostle. *They died*. Death reigned; and this proves that they were sinners. If it should be said that the death of *infants* would prove that *they* were sinners also, I answer,

(a) that this was an inference which the *apostle* does not draw, and for which he is not responsible. It is not affirmed by him.

(b) If it did refer to infants, what would it prove? Not that the sin of Adam was imputed, but that they were *personally* guilty, and transgressors. For this is the only point to which the argument tends. The apostle here says not *one word* about imputation. He does not even refer to infants by name; nor does he here introduce at all the doctrine of imputation. All this is mere philosophy introduced to explain difficulties; but whether true or false, whether the theory explains or embarrasses the subject, it is not needful here to inquire.

(3.) *The very expression* here is against the supposition that infants are intended. One form of the doctrine of imputation as held by Edwards, Stapler, etc., has been that there was a constituted oneness or personal identity between Adam and his posterity; and that his sin was regarded as truly and properly theirs; and they as personally blameworthy or ill-deserving for it, in the same manner as a man at forty is answerable for his crime committed at twenty. If this doctrine be true, then it is certain that they not only had "sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression," but had *committed the very identical sin*, and that they were answerable for it as their own. But this doctrine is now abandoned by all, or nearly all, who profess to be Calvinists; and as the apostle expressly says that they had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, it cannot be intended here.

(4.) The same explanation of the passage is given by interpreters who nevertheless held to the doctrine of imputation. Thus CALVIN says on this passage, "Although this passage is understood commonly of infants, who, being guilty of no actual sin, perish by original depravity, yet I prefer that it should be interpreted generally of those who have not the law. For this sentiment is connected with the preceding words, where it is said that sin is not imputed where there is no law. For they had not sinned according to the similitude of Adam's transgression, because they had not, as he had, the will of God revealed. For the Lord forbid Adam to touch the fruit [of the tree] of the knowledge of good and evil; but to them he gave no command but the testimony of conscience." Calvin, however, supposes that infants are included in the "universal catalogue" here referred to. Turretine also remarks, that the discussion here pertains to all the *adults* between Adam and Moses. Indeed, it is perfectly manifest that the apostle here has no particular reference to infants; nor would it have ever been supposed, but for the purpose of giving support to the mere philosophy of a theological system.

Who is the figure. (*tupov*) type. This word occurs sixteen times in the New Testament: Joh 20:25, (twice;) Ac 7:43,44, 23:25; Ro 5:14 6:17; 1Co 10:6,11; Php 3:17 1Th 1:7; 2Th 3:9 1Ti 4:12

Tit 2:7 Heb 8:5; 1Pe 5:3.

It properly means,

(1.) any *impression, note, or mark* which is made by percussion, or in any way. Joh 20:25, "the print (*type*) of the nails."

(2.) An effigy or image which is made or formed by any rule; a model, pattern. Ac 7:43, "Ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures (*types*) which ye had made." Ac 7:44, "That he should make it [the tabernacle] according to the fashion (*type*) that he had seen." Heb 8:5.

(3.) A brief argument, or summary, Ac 23:25.

(4.) A rule of doctrine, or a law or *form* of doctrine, Ro 6:17.

(5.) An *example* or model to be imitated; an example of what we ought to be, (Php 3:17 1Th 1:7; 2Th 3:9 1Ti 4:12; Tit 2:7 1Pe 5:3) ; or an example which is to be *avoided*, an example to warn us, 1Co 10:6,11. In this place it is evidently applied to the Messiah. The expression "he Who was to come" is often used to denote the Messiah. As applied to him, it means that there was in some respects a *similarity* between the results of the conduct of Adam and the effects of the work of Christ. It does not mean that Adam was constituted or appointed *a type* of Christ, which would convey no intelligible idea; but that a *resemblance* may be traced between the effects of Adam's conduct and the work of Christ. It does not mean that *the person* of Adam was typical of Christ; but that between the results of his conduct and the work of Christ *there may be instituted a*

comparison, there may be traced some resemblance. What that is is stated in the following verses. It is mainly by way of *contrast* that the comparison is instituted, and may be stated as consisting in the following points of resemblance or contrast.

(1.) Contrast.

(a) By the crime of one, many are dead; by the work of the other, grace will much more abound, Ro 5:15.

(b) In regard to the *acts* of the two. In the case of Adam, one offence led on the train of woes; in the case of Christ, his work led to the remission of many offences, Ro 5:16.

(c) In regard to the effects. *Death* reigned by the one; but life much more over the other.

(2.) *Resemblance*. By the disobedience of one, many were made sinners; by the obedience of the other, many shall be made righteous, Ro 5:18,19. It is clear, therefore, that the comparison which is instituted is rather by way of *antithesis*, or *contrast*, than by direct resemblance. *The main design is to show that greater benefits have resulted from the work of Christ, than evils from the fall of Adam*. A comparison is also instituted between Adam and Christ in 1Co 15:22,45. The reason is, that Adam was the first of the race; he was the fountain, the head, the father; and the consequences of that first act could be seen everywhere. By a Divine constitution the race was so connected with him, that it was made certain that, if he fell, all would come into the world with a nature depraved, and subject to calamity and death, and would be treated as if fallen, and his sin would thus spread crime, and woe, and death everywhere. The evil effects of the apostasy were everywhere seen; and the object of the apostle was to show that the plan of salvation was adapted to meet and more than countervail the evil effects of the fall. He argued on great and acknowledged facts—that Adam was the first sinner, and that from him, as a fountain, sin and death had flowed through the world. Since the consequences of that sin had been so disastrous and wide-spread, his design is to show that from the Messiah effects had flowed more beneficent than the former were ruinous.

In him the tribes of Adam boast
More blessings than their father lost.
WATTS.

{v} "the figure of him" 1Co 15:22,45

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *But not as the offence*. This is the first point of contrast between the effect of the sin of Adam and of the work of Christ. The word *offence* means, properly, *a fall*, where we *stumble* over anything lying in our way. It then means *sin* in general, or crime, Mt 6:14,15, 18:35.

Here it means the fall, or first sin of Adam. We use the word *fall* as applied to Adam, to denote his first offence, as being that act by which he *fell* from an elevated state of obedience and happiness into one of sin and condemnation.

So also. The gift is *not* in its nature and effects like the offence.

The free gift. The favour, benefit, or good bestowed gratuitously on us. It refers to the favours bestowed in the gospel by Christ. These are *free*; i.e. without merit on our part, and bestowed on the undeserving.

For if, etc. The apostle does not labour to prove that this is so. This is not the point of his *argument*. He assumes that as what was seen and known everywhere. His *main point* is to show that greater benefits have resulted from the work of the Messiah than evils from the fall of Adam.

Through the offence of one. By the fall of one. This simply *concedes the fact* that it is so. The apostle does not attempt an explanation of the *mode* or *manner* in which it happened. He neither says that it is by *imputation*, nor by *inherent depravity*, nor by *imitation*. Whichever of these modes may be the proper one of accounting for the fact, it is certain that the apostle states neither. His object was not to *explain* the manner in which it was done, but to argue from the acknowledged existence of the fact. All that is certainly established from *this* passage is, that as a certain fact resulting from the transgression of Adam, "many" were "dead." This simple fact is all that can be proved from this passage. Whether it is to be explained by the doctrine of imputation, is to be a subject of inquiry independent of this passage. Nor have we a right to assume that this teaches the doctrine of the imputation of the sin of Adam to his posterity;—for

(1.) the apostle says nothing of it.

(2.) That doctrine is nothing but an effort to explain the *manner* of an event which the apostle Paul did not think it proper to attempt to explain.

(3.) That doctrine is, in fact, no explanation. It is introducing an additional difficulty. For, to say that I am blameworthy or ill-deserving for a sin in which I had no agency is no *explanation*, but is involving me in an additional difficulty still more perplexing, to ascertain how such a doctrine can possibly be just. The way of wisdom would be, doubtless, to rest satisfied with the simple statement of a fact which the apostle has assumed, without attempting to ex- plain it by a philosophical theory. Calvin accords with the above interpretation: "For we do not so perish by his [Adam's] crime as if we were ourselves innocent; but Paul ascribes our ruin to him *because his sin is THE CAUSE of our sin.*"

Many Greek, *The many*. Evidently meaning *all*; the whole race; Jews and Gentiles. That it means all here is proved in Ro 5:18. If the inquiry be, why the apostle used the word "*many*" rather than *all*, we may reply, that the design was to express an *antithesis*, or contrast to the cause—one offence. *One* stands opposed to *many*, rather than to *all*.

Be dead. **See Barnes "Ro 5:12"**.

The race is under the dark and gloomy reign of death. This is a simple fact which the apostle assumes, and which no man can deny.

Much more. The reason of this "much more" is to be found in the abounding mercy and goodness of God. If a wise, merciful, and good Being has suffered such a train of woes to be introduced by the offence of one, have we not much more reason to expect that his grace will superabound?

The grace of God. The favour or kindness of God. We have reason to expect under the administration of God, more extensive benefits than we have ills, flowing from a constitution of things which is the result of his appointment.

And the gift by grace. The gracious gift; the benefits flowing from that grace. This refers to the blessings of salvation.

Which is *by one man*. Standing in contrast with Adam. His appointment was the result of grace; and as he was constituted to bestow favours, we have reason to expect that they will superabound.

Hath abounded. Has been abundant, or ample; will be more than a counterbalance for the ills which have been introduced by the sin of Adam.

Unto many. Greek, *Unto the many*. The obvious interpretation of this is, that it is as unlimited as "the many" who are dead. Some have supposed that Adam represented *the whole* of the human race, and Christ a part, and that "the many" in the two members of the verse refer to the whole of those who were thus represented. But this is to do violence to the passage; and to introduce a theological doctrine to meet a supposed difficulty in the text. The obvious meaning is— one from which we cannot depart without doing violence to the proper laws of interpretation—that "the many" in the two cases are co-extensive; and that as the sin of Adam has involved the race—the many—in death; so the grace of Christ has abounded *in reference* to the many, to the race. If asked how this can be possible, since all have not been, and will not be savingly benefited by the work of Christ, we may reply,

(1.) that it *cannot* mean that the benefits of the work of Christ should be *literally* co-extensive with the results of Adam's sin, since it is a fact that men *have* suffered, and do suffer, from the effects of that fall. In order that the Universalist may draw an argument from this, he must show that it was the design of Christ to destroy ALL the effects of the sin of Adam. But this has *not* been in fact. Though the favours of that work have abounded, yet men have suffered and died. And though it may still abound to *the many*, yet some may suffer here, and suffer on the same principle for ever.

(2.) Though men are indubitably affected by the sin of Adam—as, e.g., by being born with a corrupt disposition; with loss of righteousness; with subjection to pain and woe; and with exposure to eternal death—yet there is reason to believe that all those who die in infancy are, through the merits of the Lord Jesus, and by an influence which we cannot explain, changed and prepared for heaven. As nearly half the race die in infancy, therefore there is reason to think that, in regard to this large portion of the human family, the work of Christ has more than repaired the evils of the fall, and introduced them into heaven, and that his grace has *thus* abounded unto many. In regard to those who live to the period of moral agency, a scheme has been introduced by which the offers of salvation may be made to them, and by which they may be renewed, and pardoned, and saved. The work of Christ, therefore, may have introduced advantages adapted to meet the evils of the fall as man comes into the world; and the original applicability of the one be as extensive as the other. In this way the work of Christ was *in its nature* fitted to abound unto the many.

(3.) The intervention of the plan of atonement by the Messiah, prevented the immediate execution of the penalty of the law, and produced *all* the benefits to *all* the race, resulting from the sparing mercy of God. In this respect it was co-extensive with the fall.

(4.) He died for all the race, Heb 2:9 2Co 5:14,15 1Jo 2:2.

Thus his death, in its adaptation to a great and glorious result, was as extensive as the ruins of the fall.

(5.) The *offer* of salvation is made to all, Re 22:17 Joh 7:37 Mt 11:28,29; Mr 16:15.

Thus his grace has extended unto the many— to all the race. Provision has been made to meet the evils of the fall; a provision as extensive in its applicability as was the ruin.

(6.) More *will* probably be actually saved by the work of Christ, than will be finally ruined by the fall of Adam. The number of those who shall be saved from all the human race, it is to be believed, will yet be many more than those who shall be lost. The gospel is to spread throughout the world. It is to be evangelized. The millennial glory is to rise upon the earth; and the Saviour is to reign with undivided empire. Taking the race as a whole, there is no reason to think that the number of those who shall be lost, compared with the immense multitudes that shall be saved, by the work of Christ, will be more than are the *prisoners* in a community now, compared with the number of peaceful and virtuous citizens. A medicine may be discovered that shall be said to *triumph* over disease, though it may have been the fact that thousands have died since its discovery, and thousands yet will not avail themselves of it; yet the medicine shall have the properties of universal triumph; it is adapted to the many; it might be applied by the many; where it *is* applied, it completely answers the end. Vaccination is adapted to meet the evils of the small-pox everywhere; and when applied, saves men from the ravages of this terrible disease, though thousands may die to whom it is not applied. It is a *triumphant* remedy. So of the plan of salvation. Thus, though all shall not be saved, yet the sin of Adam shall be counteracted; and grace abounds unto the many. All this fulness of grace the apostle says we have reason to expect from the abounding mercy of God.

{w} "grace of God" Eph 2:8 {x} "abounded unto many" Isa 53:11 Mt 20:28, 26:28 1Jo 2:2

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *And not*, etc. This is the *second* point in which the effects of the work of Christ differ from the sin of Adam. The *first* part (Ro 5:15) was, that the evil consequences flowed from the sin of *one* MAN, Adam; and that the benefits flowed from the work of *one* MAN, Jesus Christ. The point in this verse is, that the evil consequences flowed from *one* CRIME, one act of guilt; but that the favours had respect to MANY ACTS of guilt. The effects of Adam's sin, whatever they were, pertained to the *one sin*; the effects of the work of Christ to *many sins*.

By one that sinned. (*di enov amarthsantov*). By means *of one [man] sinning*; evidently meaning by *one offence*, or by one act of sin. So the Vulgate, and many Mss.; and the connexion shows that this is the sense.

The gift. The benefits resulting from the work of Christ.

The judgment. The sentence; the declared penalty. The word expresses, properly, the *sentence* which is passed by a judge. Here it means the sentence which God passed, as a judge, on Adam for the one offence, involving himself and his posterity in ruin, Ge 2:17; Ge 3:17-19.

Was by one. By one offence; or one act of sin.

Unto condemnation. Producing condemnation; or involving in condemnation. It is proved by this, that the effect of the sin of Adam was to involve the race in condemnation, or to secure this as a result that all mankind would be under the condemning sentence of the law, and be transgressors. But *in what way* it would have this effect the apostle does not state. He does not intimate that his sin would be imputed to them; or that they would be held to be personally guilty for it. He speaks of a broad, everywhere perceptible fact, that the effect of that sin had been somehow to whelm the race in condemnation. In what *mode* this was done is a fair subject of inquiry; but the apostle does not attempt to explain it.

The free gift. The unmerited favor in by the work of Christ.

Is of many offences. In *relation* to many sins. It differs thus from the condemnation. That had respect to one offence; this has respect to many crimes. Grace therefore abounds.

Unto justification. **See Barnes "Ro 3:24"**.

The work of Christ is designed to have reference to many offences, so as to produce pardon or justification in regard to them all. But the apostle here does not intimate *how* this is done. He simply states the fact, without attempting, in this place, to explain it; and as we know that that work does not produce its effect to justify without some act on the part of the individual, are we not hence led to conclude the same respecting the condemnation for the sin of Adam? As the work of Christ does not benefit the race unless it is embraced, so does not the reasoning of the apostle imply, that the deed of Adam does not involve in criminality and ill-desert unless there be some voluntary act on the part of each individual? However this may be, it is certain that the apostle has in neither case here explained the *mode* in which it is done. He has simply stated the *fact*, a fact which he did not seem to consider himself called on to explain. Neither has he affirmed that in the two cases the *mode* is the same. On the contrary, it is strongly implied that it is *not* the same, for the leading object here is to present not an entire *resemblance*, but a strong contrast between the effects of the sin of Adam and the work of Christ.

{y} "many offences" Isa 1:18

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *For if*. This verse contains the same idea as before presented, but in a varied form. It is *condensing* the whole subject, and presenting it in a single view.

By one man's offence. Or, by one offence. Margin. The reading of the text is the more correct. "If, under the administration of a just and merciful Being, it has occurred, that by the offence of one, death has exerted so wide a dominion; we have reason much more to expect, under that administration, that they who are brought under his plan of saving mercy shall be brought under a dispensation of life."

Death reigned, **See Barnes "Ro 5:14"**.

By one. By means of one man.

Much more. We have much more reason to expect it. It evidently accords much more with the administration of a Being of infinite goodness.

They which receive abundance of grace. The *abundant favour*; the mercy that shall counterbalance and surpass the evils introduced by the sin of Adam. That favour shall be more than sufficient to counterbalance all those evils. This is particularly true of the redeemed, of whom the apostle in this verse is speaking. The evils which *they* suffer in consequence of the sin of Adam bear no comparison with the mercies of eternal life that shall flow to them from the work of the Saviour.

The gift of righteousness. This stands opposed to the evils introduced by Adam. As the effect of his sin was to produce condemnation, so here the gift of righteousness refers to the opposite—to pardon, to justification, to acceptance with God: To show that men were thus justified by the gospel, was the leading design of the apostle; and the argument here is, that if by on e man's sin death

reigned over those who were under condemnation in consequence of it, we have much more reason to suppose that they who are delivered from sin by the death of Christ, and accepted of God, shall reign with him in life.

Shall reign. The word *reign* is often applied to the condition of saints in heaven. 2Ti 2:12, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him." Re 5:10 20:6, 22:5.

It means that they shall be exalted to a glorious state of happiness in heaven; that they shall be triumphant over all theft enemies; shah gain an ultimate victory; and shall partake with the Captain of their salvation in the splendours of his dominion above, Re 3:21 Lu 22:30.

In life. This stands opposed to the *death* that reigned as the consequence of the sin of Adam. It denotes complete freedom from condemnation; from temporal death; from sickness, pain, and sin. It is the usual expression to denote the complete bliss of the saints in glory. **See Barnes "Joh 3:36"**.

By one, Jesus Christ. As the consequence of his work. The apostle here does not state the mode or manner in which this was clone; nor does he say that it was perfectly parallel in the mode with the effects of the sin of Adam. He is comparing the *results* or *consequences* of the sin of the one and of the work of the other. There is a similarity in the consequences. The way in which the work of Christ had contributed to this he had stated in Ro 3:24,28.

{1} "one man's offence" or, "by one offence" {z} "receive abundance of grace" Joh 10:10 {a} "gift of righteousness" Ro 6:23

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Therefore*. Wherefore, (*ara oun*). This is properly a *summing up*, a recapitulation of what had been stated in the previous verses. The apostle resumes the statement or proposition made in Ro 5:12; and after the intermediate explanation in the parenthesis, Ro 5:13-17, in this verse and the following sums up the whole subject. The explanation, therefore, of the previous verses is designed to convey the real meaning of Ro 5:18,19.

As by the offence of one, Admitting this as an undisputed and everywhere apparent fact, a fact which no one can call in question.

Judgment came. This is not in the Greek, but it is evidently implied, and is stated in Ro 5:16. The meaning is, that all have been brought under the reign of death by one man.

Upon all men. The whole race. This explains what is meant by "the many" in Ro 5:15.

To condemnation. Ro 5:16.

Even so. In the manner explained in the previous verses. With the same certainty, and to the same extent. The apostle does not explain the *mode* in which it was done, but simply states the *fact*.

By the righteousness of one. This stands opposed to the *one offence* of Adam, and must mean, therefore, the holiness, obedience, purity of the Redeemer. The *sin* of one man involved men in ruin; the *obedience unto death* of the other Php 2:8 restored them to the favour of God.

Came upon all men. (*eiv pantav anyrwpouv*). Was with reference to all men; had a bearing upon all men; was *originally adapted* to the race. As the sin of Adam was of such a nature in the relation in which he stood as to affect all the race, so the work of Christ, in the relation in which he stood, was adapted also to all the race. As the tendency of the one was to involve the race in condemnation, so the tendency of the other was to restore them to acceptance with God. There was an *original*

applicability in the work of Christ to all men—a richness, a fulness of the atonement fitted to meet the sins of the entire world, and restore the race to favour.

Unto justification of life. With reference to that justification which is connected with eternal life. That is, his work is *adapted* to produce acceptance with God, to the same extent as the crime of Adam has affected the race by involving them in sin and misery. The apostle does not affirm that in fact as many *will* be affected by the one as by the other; but that it is fitted to meet all the consequences of the fall; to be as wide-spread in its effects; and to be as salutary as that had been ruinous. This is all that the argument requires. Perhaps there could not be found a more striking declaration anywhere, that the work of Christ had *an original applicability* to all men; or that it is, in its own nature, fitted to save all. The course of argument here leads inevitably to this; nor is it possible to avoid it without doing violence to the obvious and fair course of the discussion. It does not prove that all will in fact be saved, but that the plan is *fitted* to meet all the evils of the fall. A certain kind of medicine may have an original applicability to heal all persons under the same disease, and may be abundant and certain, and yet *in fact* be applied to few. The sun is fitted to give light to all, yet many may be blind, or may voluntarily close their eyes. Water is adapted to the wants of all men, and the supply may be ample for the human family, yet *in fact*, from various causes, many may be deprived of it. So of the provisions of the plan of redemption. They are adapted to all; they are ample, and yet *in fact*, from causes which this is not the place to explain, the benefits, like those of medicine, water, science, etc., may never be enjoyed by all the race. Calvin concurs in this interpretation, and thus shows that it is one which commends itself even to the most strenuous advocates of the system which is called by his name. He says, "He [the apostle] makes the grace common to all, because it is offered to all, not because it is in fact applied to all. *For although Christ suffered for the sins of THE WHOLE WORLD*, (nam etsi passus est Christus pro peecatis totius mundi,) and it is offered to all without distinction, (indifferenter,) yet all do not embrace it." See Calvin's Comm. on this place.

{1} "the offence", or "by one offence" {1a} "by the righteousness", or "by one righteousness" {b} "all men" Joh 12:32

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *For*, etc. This verse is not a *mere* repetition of the former, but it is an explanation. By the former statements it might perhaps be inferred that men were condemned without any guilt or blame of theirs. The apostle in this verse guards against this, and affirms that they are *in fact sinners*. He affirms that those who are sinners are condemned, and that the sufferings brought in, on account of the sin of Adam, are introduced because many were made *sinners*. Calvin says, "Lest any one should arrogate to him self innocence, [the apostle] adds, that each one is condemned because he is a sinner."

By one man's disobedience. By means of the sin of Adam. This affirms simply the fact that such a result followed from the sin of Adam. The word *by* (*dia*) is used in the Scriptures as it is in all books and in all languages. It may denote the efficient cause; the instrumental cause; the principal cause; the meritorious cause; or the chief occasion by which a thing occurred. (See Schleusner.) It does not express one mode, and one only, in which a thing is done; but that one thing is the result

of another. When we say that a young man is ruined in his character *by* another, we do not express the mode, but the *fact*. When we say that thousands have been made infidels *by* the writings of Paine and Voltaire, we make no affirmation about the mode, but about the fact. In each of those, and in all other cases, we should deem it most inconclusive reasoning to attempt to determine the mode by the preposition *by*; and still more absurd if it were argued from the use of that preposition that the sins of the seducer were *imputed* to the young man; or the opinions of Paine and Voltaire *imputed* to infidels.

Many. Greek, *The many*, Ro 5:15.

Were made—(*katestayhsan*). The verb here used occurs in the New Testament in the following places: Mt 24:45,47, 25:21,23

Lu 12:14,42,44 Ac 6:3 7:10,27,35 17:15 Ro 5:19 Tit 1:5; Heb 2:7; Heb 5:1 7:28, 8:3 Jas 3:6, 4:4 2Pe 1:8.

It usually means to constitute, set, or appoint. In the New Testament it has *two* leading significations.

(1.) To appoint to an office, to set over others, (Mt 24:45,47; Lu 12:42, etc. and

(2.) it means to *become*, to be in fact, etc. Jas 3:6, "So *is* the tongue among our members," etc. That is, it becomes such. Jas 4:4, "The friendship of the world *is* enmity with God;" it *becomes* such; it is in fact thus, and is thus to be regarded. The word is in no instance used to express the idea of *imputing that to one which belongs to another*. It here either means that this was *by a constitution of Divine appointment* that they in fact became *sinners*, or simply declares that they *were* so in fact. There is not the slightest intimation that it was by imputation. The whole scope of the argument is, moreover, against this; for the object of the apostle is not to show that they were charged with the sin of another, but that they were in fact *sinners* themselves. If it means that they were condemned for *his* act, without any concurrence of their own will, then the correspondent part will be true, that all are constituted righteous in the same way; and thus the doctrine of universal salvation will be inevitable. But as none are constituted righteous who do not voluntarily avail themselves of the provisions of mercy, so it follows that those who are condemned, are not condemned for the sin of another without their own concurrence, nor unless they personally deserve it.

Sinners. Transgressors; those who deserve to be punished. It does not mean those who are condemned for the sin of another; but those who are violators of the law of God. All who are condemned are *sinners*. They are not *innocent* persons condemned for the crime of another. Men may be involved in the *consequences* of the sins of others without being to blame. The consequences of the crimes of a murderer, a drunkard, a pirate, may pass over from them, and affect thousands, and whelm them in ruin. But this does not prove that they are blameworthy. In the Divine administration none are *regarded* as guilty who are not guilty; none are condemned who do not *deserve* to be condemned. All who sink to hell are *sinners*.

By the obedience of one. Of Christ. This stands opposed to the *disobedience* of Adam, and evidently includes the entire work of the Redeemer which has a bearing on the salvation of men. Php 2:8, "He—became *obedient* unto death."

Shall many. Greek, *The many*; corresponding to the term in the former part of the verse, and evidently commensurate with it; for there is no reason for limiting it to *a part* in this member, any more than there is in the former.

Be made. The same Greek word as before—be appointed, or *become*. The apostle has explained the mode in which this is done, Ro 1:17; Ro 3:24-26 4:1-5. That explanation is to limit the meaning here. No more are considered righteous than become so *in that way*. And as *all* do *not* become righteous thus, the passage cannot be adduced to prove the doctrine of universal salvation.

The following remarks may express the doctrines which are established by this much-contested and difficult passage.

(1.) Adam was created holy; capable of obeying law; yet free to fail.

(2.) A law was given him, adapted to his condition—simple, plain, easy to be obeyed, and fitted to give human nature a trial in circumstances as favourable as possible.

(3.) Its violation exposed him to the threatened penalty as he had understood it, and to all the collateral woes which it might carry in its train—involving, as subsequent developments showed, the loss of God's favour; his displeasure evinced in man's toil, and sweat, and sickness, and death; in hereditary depravity, and the curse, and the pains of hell for ever.

(4.) Adam was the head of the race; he was the fountain of being; and human nature was so far-tried in him, that it may be said he was on trial not for himself alone, but for his posterity, inasmuch as his fall would involve them in ruin. Many have chosen to call this a covenant, and to speak of him as a federal head; and if the above account is the idea involved in these terms, the explanation is not exceptionable. As the word covenant, however, is not applied in the transaction in the Bible, and as it is liable to be misunderstood, others prefer to speak of it as a *law* given to Adam, and as *a divine constitution* under which he was placed.

(5.) *His posterity are, in consequence of his sin, subjected to the same train of ills as if they had been personally the transgressors*. Not that they are regarded as personally ill-deserving, or criminal for his sin. God reckons things as they are, and not falsely, (see **See Barnes** "Ro 4:3, and his imputations are all according to truth. He regarded Adam as standing at the head of the race; and regards and treats all his posterity as coming into the world subject to pain, and death, and depravity, as a consequence of his sin. See Note, at introduction to Romans chapter 6. This is the Scripture idea of imputation; and this is what has been commonly meant when it has been said that "the GUILT of his first sin"—*not the sin itself*—" is imputed to his posterity."

(6.) There is *something* antecedent to the moral action of his posterity, and growing out of the relation which they sustain to him, which makes it certain that they will sin as soon as they begin to act as moral agents. What this is, we may not be able to say; but we may be certain that it is not physical depravity, or any created essence of the soul, or anything which prevents the first act of sin from being voluntary. This hereditary tendency to sin has been usually called "original sin;" and this the apostle evidently teaches.

(7.) As an infant comes into the world with a certainty that he will sin as soon as he becomes a moral agent here, there is the same certainty that, if he were removed to eternity, he would sin there also, unless he were changed. There is, therefore, need of the blood of the atonement and of the agency of the Holy Ghost, that an infant may be saved.

(8.) The *facts*, here stated accord with all the analogy in the moral government of God. The drunkard secures as a result commonly, that his family will be reduced to beggary, want, and woe. A pirate, or a traitor, will whelm not himself only, but his family in ruin. Such is the great law or constitution on which society is now organized; and we are not to be surprised that the same *principle* occurred in the *primary organization* of human affairs.

(9.) As this is the *fact* everywhere, the analogy disarms all objections which have been made against the scriptural statements of the effects of the sin of Adam. If just *now*, it was just, *then*. If it exists *now*, it existed *then*.

(10.) The doctrine should be left, therefore, simply as it is in the Scriptures. It is there the simple statement of *a fact*, without any attempt at explanation. That fact accords with all that we see and feel. It is a great principle in the constitution of things, that the conduct of one man may pass over in its effects on others, and have an influence on their happiness. The simple fact in regard to Adam is, that he sinned; and that such is the organization of the great society of which he was the head and father, that his sin has secured as a certain result that all the race will be sinners also. *How* this is, the Bible has not explained. It is a part of a great system of things. That it is *unjust* no man can prove, for none can show that any sinner suffers more than he deserves. That it is *wise* is apparent, for it is attended with numberless blessings. It is connected with all the advantages that grow out of the social organization. The race *might* have been composed of *independent individuals*, where the conduct of an individual, good or evil, might have affected no one but himself. But then *society* would have been impossible. All the benefits of organization into families, and communities, and nations, would have been unknown. Man would have lived alone; wept alone; rejoiced alone; died alone. There would have been no sympathy; no compassion; no mutual aid. God has therefore *grouped* the race into separate communities. He has organized society. He has constituted families, tribes, clans, nations; and though on the general principle the conduct of one *may* whelm another in misery, yet the union, the grouping, the constitution, is the source of most of the blessings which man enjoys in this life, and may be of numberless mercies in regard to that which is to come. If it was the organization on which the race might be plunged into sin, it is also the organization on which it may be raised to life eternal. If, on the one hand, it may be abused to produce misery, it may, on the other, be improved to the advancement of peace, sympathy, friendship, prosperity, salvation. At all events, such is the organization in common life and in religion, and it becomes man not to murmur, but to *act* on it, and to endeavour, by the tender mercy of God, to turn it to his welfare here and hereafter. As by this organization, through Adam, he has been plunged into sin, so by the same organization, he shall, through "the second Adam," rise to life, and ascend to the skies.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Moreover*. But. What is said in this verse and the following seems designed to meet the Jew, who might pretend that the law of Moses was intended to meet the evils of sin introduced by Adam, and therefore that the scheme defended by the apostle was unnecessary. He therefore shows them that the *effect* of the law of Moses was to *increase* rather than to *diminish* the sins which had been introduced into the world. And if *such* was the fact, it could not be pleaded that it was adapted to overcome the acknowledged evils of the apostasy.

The law. The Mosaic laws and institutions. The word seems to be used here to denote all the laws which were given in the Old Testament.

Entered. This word usually means *to enter secretly* or *surreptitiously*. But it appears to be used here simply in the sense that the law came in, or was given. It came in addition to, or it supervened the state before Moses, when men were living without a revelation.

That sin, etc. The word "that"—(*ina*)—in this place, does not mean that it was the *design* of giving the law that sin might abound or be increased, but that such was *in fact* the effect. It had this tendency, not to restrain or subdue sin, but to excite and increase it. That the word has this sense may be seen in the lexicons. The way in which the law produces this effect is stated more fully by the apostle in Ro 7:7-11. The law expresses the duty of man: it is spiritual and holy; it is opposed to the guilty passions and pleasures of the world; and it thus excites opposition, provokes to anger, and is the occasion by which sin is called into exercise, and shows itself in the heart. All law, where there is a *disposition* to do wrong, has this tendency. A command given to a child that is *disposed* to indulge his passions, only tends to excite anger and opposition. If the heart was holy, and there was a disposition to do right, law would have no such tendency. See this subject further illustrated in the **See Barnes "Ro 7:7-11"**.

The offence. The offence which had been introduced by Adam, i.e. sin. Comp. Ro 5:15.

Might abound. Might increase; that is, would be more apparent, more violent, more extensive. The introduction of the Mosaic law, instead of diminishing the sins of men, only increases them.

But where sin abounded. Alike in all dispensations-before the law, and under the law. In all conditions of the human family, before the gospel, it was the characteristic that sin was prevalent.

Grace. Favour; mercy.

Did much more abound. Superabounded. The word is used nowhere else in the New Testament, except in 2Co 7:4. It means that the pardoning mercy of the gospel greatly triumphed over sin, even over the sins of the Jews, though those sins were greatly aggravated by the light which they enjoyed under the advantages of Divine revelation.

{c} "Moreover, the law" Ro 7:8 Joh 15:22; Ga 3:19

{d} "grace did much more abound" Joh 10:10 1Ti 1:14

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *That as sin hath reigned*. **See Barnes "Ro 5:14"**.

Unto death. Producing or causing death.

Even so. In like manner, also. The provisions of redemption are in themselves ample to meet all the ruins of the fall.

Might grace reign. Might mercy be triumphant. See Joh 1:17, "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

Through righteousness. Through, or by means of God's plan of justification. **See Barnes "Ro 1:17"**.

Unto eternal life. This stands opposed to "death" in the former part of the verse, and shows that there the apostle had reference to *eternal* death. The result of God's plan of justification shall be to produce *eternal life*. The triumphs of the gospel here celebrated cannot refer to the *number* of the subjects, for it has not actually freed all men from the dominion of sin. But the apostle refers to the fact that the gospel is able to overcome sin of the most malignant form, of the most aggravated

character, of the longest duration. Sin in all dispensations and states of things can be thus overcome; and the gospel is more than sufficient to meet *all* the evils of the apostasy, and to raise up the race to heaven.

This chapter is a most precious portion of Divine revelation. It brings into view the amazing evils which have resulted from the apostasy. The apostle does not attempt to deny or palliate those evils; he admits them fully; admits them in their deepest, widest, most melancholy extent; just as the physician *admits* the extent and ravages of the disease which he hopes to cure. At the same time, Christianity is not responsible for those evils. It did not introduce them. It finds them in existence, as a matter of sober and melancholy fact pertaining to all the race. Christianity is no more answerable for the introduction and extent of sin, than the science of medicine is responsible for the introduction and extent of disease. Like that science, it *finds* a state of wide-spread evils *in* existence; and like that science, it is strictly *a remedial* system. And whether true or false, still the evils of sin exist, just as the evils of disease exist, whether the science of medicine be well-founded or not. Nor does it make any difference in the existence of these evils, whether Christianity be true or false. If the Bible could be proved to be an imposition, it would not prove that men are not sinners. If the whole work of Christ could be shown to be imposture, still it would annihilate no sin, nor would it prove that man has not fallen. The fact would still remain—a fact certainly quite as universal, and quite as melancholy, as it is under the admitted truth of the Christian revelation—and a fact which the infidel is just as much concerned to account for as is the Christian. Christianity proposes a remedy; and it is permitted to the Christian to rejoice that that remedy is ample to meet all the evils; that it is just fitted to recover our alienated world; and that it is destined yet to raise the race up to life, and peace, and heaven. In the provisions of that scheme we may and should triumph; and on the same principle as we may rejoice in the triumph of medicine over disease, so may we triumph in the ascendency of the Christian plan over all the evils of the fall. And while Christians thus rejoice, the infidel, the deist, the pagan, and the scoffer, shall contend with these evils, which their systems cannot alleviate or remove, and sink under the chilly reign of sin and death; just as men pant, and struggle, and expire under the visitations of disease, because they will not apply the proper remedies of medicine, but choose rather to leave themselves to its unchecked ravages, or to use all the nostrums of quackery in a vain attempt to arrest evils which are coming upon them.

{e} "grace reign" Joh 1:17

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 6

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 1

ROMANS Chapter 6

Introduction

THE argument commenced in this chapter is continued through the two following. The general design is the same—*to show that the scheme of justification which God had adopted does not lead men to sin, but, on the contrary, to holiness*. This is introduced by answering an objection, Ro 6:1. The apostle pursues this subject by various arguments and illustrations, all tending to show that the design and bearing of the scheme of justification was to produce the hatred of sin, and the love and practice of holiness. In this chapter, the argument is mainly drawn from the following sources:

(1.) From the *baptism* of Christians, by which they have professed to be dead to sin, and to be bound to live to God, Ro 6:2-13.

(2.) From the fact that they were now the *servants* of God, and under obligation, by the laws of servitude, to obey him, Ro 6:15-20.

(3.) From their former *experience* of the evil of sin, from its tendency to produce misery and death, and from the fact that by the gospel they had been made ashamed of those things, and had now given themselves to the pure service of God. By these various considerations, he repels the charge that the tendency of the doctrine was to produce licentiousness, but affirms that it was a system of purity and peace. The argument is continued in the two following chapters, showing still further the purifying tendency of the gospel.

Verse 1. *What shall we say then*? This is a mode of presenting an objection. The objection refers to what the apostle had said in Ro 5:20. What shall we say to such a sentiment as that where sin abounded grace did much more abound?

Shall we continue in sin? etc. If sin has been the occasion of grace and favour, ought we not to continue in it, and commit as much as possible, in order that grace might abound? This objection the apostle proceeds to answer, he shows that the consequence does not follow; and proves that the doctrine of justification does not lead to it.

{f} "Shall we continue" Ro 3:8

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *God forbid*. By no means. Greek, It may not be. **See Barnes "Ro 3:4"**.

The expression is a strong denial of what is implied in the objection in Ro 6:1.

How shall we, etc. This contains a *reason* of the implied statement of the apostle, that we should not continue in sin. The reason is drawn from the fact, that we are dead in fact to sin. It is impossible for those who are *dead* to act as if they were alive. It is just as absurd to suppose that a Christian should desire to live in sin, as that a dead man should put forth the actions of life.

That are dead to sin. That is, all Christians. To be *dead* to a thing is a strong expression denoting that it has no influence over us. A man that is dead is uninfluenced and unaffected by the affairs of this life. He is insensible to sounds, and tastes, and pleasures; to the hum of business, to the voice of friendship, and to all the scenes of commerce, gaiety, and ambition. When it is said, therefore, that a Christian is *dead* to sin, the sense is, that it has lost its influence over him; he is not subject to it; he is in regard to that, as the man in the grave is to the busy scenes and cares of this life. The expression is not infrequent in the New Testament. Ga 2:19, "For I am dead to the law." Col 3:3, "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." 1Pe 2:24, "Who—bare our sins—that we, being dead to sin," etc. The apostle does not here attempt to prove that Christians are thus dead,

nor to state in what way they become so. He assumes the fact without argument. All Christians are thus, in fact, dead to sin. They do not live to sin; nor has sin dominion over them. The expression used here by the apostle is common in all languages. We familiarly speak of a man's being dead to sensual pleasures, to ambition, etc., to denote that they have lost their influence over him.

Live any longer therein. How shall we, who have become sensible of the evil of sin, and who have renounced it by solemn profession, continue to practise it? It is therefore abhorrent to the very nature of the Christian profession. It is remarkable that the apostle did not attempt to argue the question on metaphysical principles. He did not attempt to show by abstruse argument that this consequence did not follow; but he appeals at once to Christian feeling, and shows that the supposition is abhorrent to that. To convince the great mass of men, such an appeal is far better than laboured metaphysical argumentation. All Christians can understand that; but few would comprehend an abstruse speculation. The best way to silence objections is, sometimes, to show that they violate the feelings of all Christians, and that therefore the objection must be wrong.

{g} "dead to sin" Ro 6:6,11; Col 3:3 1Pe 2:24

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Know ye not*. This is a further appeal to the Christian profession, and the principles involved in it, in answer to the objection. The simple argument in this verse and the two following is, that by our very profession made in baptism we have renounced sin, and have pledged ourselves to live to God.

So many of us, etc. All who were baptized; i.e. all professing Christians. As this renunciation of sin had been thus made by all who professed religion, so the objection could not have reference to Christianity in any manner.

Were baptized. The act of baptism denotes dedication to the service of him in whose name we are baptized. One of its designs is to dedicate or consecrate us to the service of Christ. Thus (1Co 10:2) the Israelites are said to have been "baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;" i.e. they became consecrated, Or dedicated, or bound to him as their leader and lawgiver. In the place before us, the argument of the apostle is evidently draw from the supposition that we have been solemnly consecrated by baptism to the service of Christ; and that to sin is therefore a violation of the very nature of our Christian profession.

Into. (*eiv*). This is the word which is used in Mt 28:19, "Teach all nations, baptizing them into (*eiv*) the name of the Father," etc. It means, being baptized *unto* his service; receiving him as the Saviour and Guide, devoting all unto him and his cause.

Were baptized into his death. We were baptized with special reference to his death. Our baptism had a strong resemblance to his death. By that he became insensible to the things of the world; by baptism we in like manner become dead to sin. Farther, we are baptized with particular reference to the *design* of his death, the great leading feature and purpose of his work. That was to expiate sin; to free men from its power; to make them pure. We have professed our devotion to the same cause; and have solemnly consecrated ourselves to the same design—to put a period to the dominion of iniquity.

{1} "were baptized", or "are baptized" {h} "into his death" 1Co 15:29

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Therefore we are buried*, etc. It is altogether probable that the apostle in this place had allusion to the custom of baptizing by immersion. This cannot, indeed, be *proved*, so as to be liable to no objection; but I presume that this is the idea which would strike the great mass of unprejudiced readers. But while this is admitted, it is also certain that his main scope and intention was not to describe the *mode* of baptism; nor to affirm that that mode was to be universal. The design was very different. It was to show *that by the solemn profession made at our baptism, we had become dead to sin, as Christ was dead to the living world around him when he was buried*; and that as he was raised up to life, so we should also rise to a new life. A similar expression occurs in Col 2:12, "Buried with him in baptism," etc.

Into death, (*eiv*). Unto death; i.e. with a solemn purpose to be dead to sin and to the world. Grotius and Doddrdge, however, understand this as referring to the death of Christ—in order to represent the death of Christ, or to bring us into a kind of fellowship with his death.

That like as. In a similar manner. Christ rose from death in the sepulchre; and so we are bound by our vows at baptism to rise to a holy life.

By the glory of the Father. Perhaps this means, amidst the glory, the majesty and wonders, evinced by the Father when he raised him up, Mt 28:2,3. Or possibly the word glory is here used to denote simply his power, as the resurrection was a signal and glorious display of his omnipotence.

Even so. As he rose to new life, so should we. As he rose from *death*, so we, being made *dead* to sin and the world by that religion whose profession is expressed by baptism, should rise to a new life, a life of holiness.

Should walk. Should live, or conduct. The word *walk* is often used to express the course of a man's life, or the tenor of his conduct. **See Barnes "Ro 4:12"**; **See Barnes** "2Co 5:7"; **See Barnes "2Co 10:3"**; **See Barnes** "Eph 2:10"; **See Barnes "Eph 4:1"**.

In newness of life. This is a Hebraism to denote *new life*. We should rise with Christ to a new life; and having been made dead to sin, as he was dead in the grave, so should we rise to a holy life, as he rose from the grave. The argument in this verse is, therefore, drawn from the nature of the Christian profession. By our very baptism, by our very profession, we have become dead to sin, as Christ became dead; and being devoted to him by that baptism, we are bound to rise as he did to a new life.

While it is admitted that the allusion here was probably to the custom of immersion in baptism, yet the passage cannot be adduced as an argument that that is the only mode, or that it is binding on all Christians in all places and ages, for the following reasons:

(1.) The scope or design of the apostle is not to discuss the mode of baptism, or to state any doctrine on the subject. It is an incidental allusion in the course of an argument, without stating or implying that this was the universal mode even then, still less that it was the only possible mode. His *main design* was to state the obligation of Christians to be holy, from the nature of their profession at baptism— an obligation just as impressive, and as forcible, from the application of water in any other mode as by immersion. It arises from the *fact* of baptism, not from the mode. It is just as true that they who are baptized by affusion, or by sprinkling, are baptized into his death; become professedly dead to sin and the world, and under obligations to live to God, as those who are immersed. It results from the *nature* of the ordinance, not from the *mode*.

(2.) If this was the mode commonly, it does not follow that it was the *only* mode, nor that it was to be universally observed. *There is no command that this should be the only mode*. And the simple fact that it was usually practised in a warm climate, where ablutions were common, does not prove that it is to be observed amidst polar snows and ice, and in infancy, and age, and feebleness, and sickness. **See Barnes** "Ac 8:38, 39".

(3.) If this is to be pressed *literally* as a matter of obligation, why should not also the following expression, "If we have been *planted together*," etc., be pressed literally, and it be demanded that Christians should somehow be "planted" as well as "buried?" Such an interpretation only shows the absurdity of insisting on a literal interpretation of the Scriptures in cases of simple allusion, or where the main scope is illustration by figurative language.

{i} "buried with him" Col 2:12 1Pe 3:21 {k} "like as Christ" Ro 8:2 2Co 13:4 {l} "by the glory of the Father" Mt 28:2,3 {m} "newness of life" 1Jo 2:6

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *For if we have been planted together*. The word here used (*sumfutoi*) does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It properly means, sown or planted at the same time; that which sprouts or springs up together; and is applied to plants and trees that are planted at the same time, and that sprout and grow together. Thus the name would be given to a field of grain that was sown a the same time, and where the grain sprung up and grew simultaneously. Hence it means *intimately connected*, or *joined together*. And here it denotes that Christians and the Saviour have been united intimately in regard to death; as he died and was laid in the grave, so have they by profession died to sin. And it is therefore natural to expect, that, like grain sown at the same time, they should grow up in a similar manner, and resemble each other.

We shall be also. We shall be also *fellow-piants*; i.e. we shall resemble him in regard to the resurrection. As he rose from the grave, so shall we rise from sin. As he lived a *new life*, being raised up, so shall we live a new life. The propriety of this figure is drawn from the doctrine often referred to in the New Testament, of a union between Christ and his people. See this explained **See Barnes "Joh 15:1"**

through Joh 15:2-10. The sentiment here inferred is but an illustration of what was said by the Saviour, (Joh 14:19) "Because I live, ye shall live also." There is perhaps not to be found a more beautiful illustration than that employed here by the apostle—of seed sown together in the earth, sprouting together, growing together, and ripening together for file harvest. Thus the Saviour and his people are united together in his death, start up to life together in his resurrection, and are preparing together for the same harvest of glory in the heavens.

In the likeness *of his resurrection*. This does not mean that we shall resemble him when we are raised up at the last day—which may be, however, true—but that our rising from sin will resemble his resurrection from the grave. As he rose from the tomb and lived, so shall we rise from sin and live a new life.

{n} "For if we" Php 3:10

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Knowing this*. We all knowing this. All Christians are supposed to know this. This is a new illustration drawn from the fact that by his crucifixion our corrupt nature has been crucified also, or put to death; and that thus we should be free from the servitude of sin.

Our old man. This expression occurs also in Eph 4:22, "That ye put off .... the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts." Col 3:9, "Lie not to one another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds." From these passages it is evident that Paul uses the expression to denote our sinful and corrupt nature; the passions and evil propensities that exist before the heart is renewed. It refers to the love of sin, the indulgence of sinful propensities, in opposition to the new disposition which exists after the soul is converted, and which is called "the new man."

Is crucified. Is put to death, as if on a cross. In this expression there is a personification of the corrupt propensities of our nature represented as "our old man," our native disposition, etc. The figure is here carried out; and this old man, this corrupt nature, is represented as having been put to death in an agonizing and torturing manner. The pains of crucifixion were perhaps the most torturing of any that the human frame could bear. Death in this manner was most lingering and distressing. And the apostle here, by the expression "is crucified," doubtless refers to the painful and protracted struggle which every one goes through when his evil propensities are subdued; when his corrupt nature is slain; and when, a converted sinner, he gives himself up to God. Sin *dies* within him, and he becomes *dead* to the world, and to sin; "for as by the cross, death is most lingering and severe, so that corrupt nature is not subdued but by anguish." (*Grotius*.) All who have been born again can enter into this description. They remember "the wormwood and the gall." They remember the anguish of conviction; the struggle of corrupt passion for ascendency; the dying convulsions of sin in the heart; the long and lingering conflict before it was subdued, and the soul became submissive to God. Nothing will better express this than the lingering agony of crucifixion; and the argument of the apostle is, that as sin has produced such an effect, and as the Christian is now free from its embrace and its power, he will live to God.

With him. The word "with"—(*sun*)—here is joined to the verb "is crucified," and means "is crucified *as* he was."

That the body of sin. This expression doubtless means the same as that which he had just used, "our old men" But why the term *body* is used, has been a subject in which interpreters have not been agreed. Some say that [it] is a Hebraism, denoting mere *intensity* or emphasis. Some, that it means the same as *flesh*; i.e., denoting our sinful propensities and lusts. Grotius thinks that the term "body" is elegantly attributed to *sin*, because the body of man is made up of many members joined together *compactly*, and sin also consists of numerous vices and evil propensities joined compactly, as it were, in one *body*. But the expression is evidently merely another form of conveying the idea contained in the phrase "our old man"—a personification of sin as if it had a living form, and as if it had been put to death on a cross. It refers to the *moral* destruction of the power of sin in the heart by the gospel, and not to any physical change in the nature or faculties of the soul. Comp. Col 2:11.

Might be destroyed. Might be put to death; might become inoperative and powerless. Sin becomes *enervated, weakened*, and finally annihilated, by the work of the cross.

We should not serve. Should not *be the slave* of sin, (*douleuein*). That we should not be subject to its control. The sense is, that before this we were slaves of sin, (Ro 5:17,) but that now we are made free from this bondage, because the *moral death* of sin has freed us from it.

Sin. Sin is here personified as a master that had dominion over us, but is now dead.
{o} "body of sin" Col 2:11

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *For he that is dead*. This is evidently an expression having a proverbial aspect, designed to illustrate the sentiment just expressed. The Rabbins had an expression similar to this, "When one is dead he is free from commands." (*Grotius*.) So, says Paul, when a man dies he is exempt from the power and dominion of his master, of him who reigned over him. The Christian had been subject to sin before his conversion; but he has now become dead to it. And as when a servant dies he ceases to be subject to the control of his master, so the Christian being now dead to sin, on the same principle, is released from the control of his former master, sin. The idea is connected with Ro 6:6, where it is said that we should not be the *slaves* of sin any more. The reason of this is assigned here, where it is said that we are freed from it as a slave is freed when he dies. Of course, the apostle here is saying nothing of the *future world*. His whole argument has respect to the state of the Christian here; to his being freed from the bondage of sin. It is evident that he who is not freed from this bondage here, will not be in the future world. But the argument of the apostle has no bearing on that point.

Is freed. Greek, *Is justified*. The word here is used clearly in the sense of *setting at liberty*, or *destroying the power or dominion*. The word is often used in this sense. Comp. Ac 13:38,39. Comp. a similar expression in 1Pe 4:1, "He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin." The design of the apostle is not to say that the Christian is perfect, but that sin has ceased to have dominion over him, as a master ceases to have power over a slave when he is dead. That dominion may be broken, so that the Christian may not be a slave to sin, and yet he may be conscious of many failings and of much imperfection. See Ro 7.

{p} "For he that" 1Pe 4:1 {1} "freed" "justified"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 8

Verses 8-11. This passage is a confirmation and illustration of what the apostle had said before, Ro 6:5-7. The argument is, that as Christ was once dead but now lives to God, and will no more die, so we, being dead to sin, but living unto God, should not obey sin, but should live only to God.

Verse 8. *Now if we be dead with Christ*. If we be dead in a manner similar to what he was; if we are made dead to sin by his work, as he was dead in the grave. **See Barnes "Ro 6:4"**.

We believe. All Christians. It is *an article of our faith*. This does not refer to the future world so much as to the present. It becomes an article of our belief that we are to live with Christ.

That we shall also live with him. This does not refer primarily to the resurrection, and to the future state, but to the present. *We hold it as an article of our faith, that we shall be alive with Christ*. As he was raised up from death, so we shall be raised from the death of sin. As he *lives*, so we shall live in holiness. We *are* in fact raised up here, and, as it were, made *alive* to him. This is

not *confined*, however, to the present life; but as Christ lives for ever, so the apostle goes on to show that *we* shall.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Knowing*. As we all know. This is assumed as an undoubted article of belief.

Dieth no more. Will never die again, He will have occasion to make no other atonement for sin; for that which he has made is sufficient for all. He is beyond the dominion of death, and will live for ever. Re 1:18, "I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore." This is not only a *consolation* to the Christian, but it is an argument why he should be holy.

No more dominion. No rule; no lordship; no power, he is free from its influence; and the king of terrors cannot reach his throne. Comp. Heb 9:26-28 10:12.

{q} "Christ being raised" Re 1:18

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *For in that he died*. For in respect to the design of his death.

He died unto sin. His death had *respect to sin*. The design of his death was to destroy sin; to make an atonement for it, and thus to put it away. As his death was designed to effect this, so it follows that Christians, being baptized into his death, and having it as their object to destroy sin, should not indulge in it. The whole force of the motive, therefore, drawn from the death of Christ, is to induce Christians to forsake sin. Comp. 2Co 5:15, "And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."

Once. (*efapax*). Once only; once for all. This is an adverb denying a repetition, (*Schleusner*,) and implies that it will not be done again. Comp. Heb 7:27 9:12, 10:10.

The argument of the apostle rests much on this, that his death was once for all; that it would not be repeated.

In that he liveth. The object, the design of his living. He aims with his living power to promote the glory of God.

Unto God. He seeks to promote his glory. The argument of Paul is this: Christians by their profession are united to him. They are bound to imitate him. As *he* now lives only to advance the glory of God; as all his mighty power, now that he is raised from the dead, and elevated to his throne in heaven, is exerted to promote *his* glory; so should their powers, being raised from the death of sin, be exerted to promote the glory of God.

{s} "be dead indeed" Ro 6:2 {t} "alive unto God" Ga 2:16

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Likewise*. In like manner. This is an exhortation drawn from the argument in the previous verses. It shows the design and tendency of the Christian scheme.

Reckon ye yourselves. Judge, or esteem yourselves.

To be dead indeed unto sin. So that sin shall have no influence or control over you, any more than the objects of this world have over the dead in their graves. **See Barnes "Ro 6:2"**.

But alive unto God. Bound to live to promote his glory; to make this the great and sole object of your living.

Through Jesus Christ. By means of the death, and resurrection, and example of Jesus Christ. The apostle regards all our disposition to live to God as resulting from the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

{s} "to be dead" Ro 6:2 {t} "but alive" Ga 2:19

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Let not sin therefore*. This is a conclusion drawn from the previous train of reasoning. The result of all these considerations is, that sin should not be suffered to reign in us.

Reign. Have dominion; obtain the ascendency, or rule.

In your mortal body. In you. The apostle uses the word "mortal" here, perhaps, for these reasons:

(1.) to remind them of the tendency of the flesh to sin and corruption, as equivalent to "fleshly," since the flesh is often used to denote evil passions and desires, (comp. Ro 7:5,23, 8:3,6) and,

(2.) to remind them of their *weakness*, as the body was mortal, was soon to decay, and was therefore liable to be overcome by temptation. Perhaps, also, he had his eye on the *folly* of suffering the "mortal body" to overcome the immortal mind, and to bring it into subjection to sin and corruption.

That ye should obey it. That sin should get such an ascendency as to rule entirely over you, and make you the slave.

In the lusts thereof. In its *desires*, or propensities.

{u} "Let not sin" Psa 19:13 119:33

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 13

Verse 13.

Neither yield ye your members. Do not give up, or devote, or employ your members, etc. The word *members* here refers to the *members of the body*—the hands, feet, tongue, etc. It is a specification of what in Ro 6:12 is included under the general term "body." See Ro 7:5,23; 1Co 6:15 12:12,18,20.

As instruments. This word—(*opla*)—properly signifies *arms*, or implements of war; but it also denotes an instrument of any kind which we use for defence or aid. Here it means that we should not devote our members—our hands, tongue, etc. —as if under the direction of sinful passions and

corrupt desires, to accomplish purposes of iniquity. We should not make the members of our bodies the slaves of sin reigning within us.

Unto sin. In the service of sin; to work iniquity.

But yield yourselves, etc. Give or devote yourselves to God.

That are alive. Ro 6:11.

And your members, etc. Christians should devote every member of the body to God, and to his service. Their *tongue* should be consecrated to his praise, and to the office of truth, and kindness, and benevolence; their *hands* should be employed in useful labour for him and his cause; their *feet* should be swift in his service, and should not go in the paths of iniquity; their eyes should contemplate his works, to excite thanksgiving and praise; their *ears* should not be employed to listen to words of deceit, or songs of dangerous and licentious tendency, or to persuasion that would lead astray, but should be open to catch the voice of God as he utters his will in the Book of Truth, or as he speaks in the gale, the zephyr, the rolling thunder, the ocean, or in the great events of his providence. He speaks to us every day, and we should hear him; he spreads his glories before us, and we should survey them to praise him; he commands, and our hands, and heart, and feet should obey.

{v} "members as" Col 3:5 {1} "instruments" or "arms, or weapons" {w} "but yield yourselves" Ro 12:1

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *For sin*, etc. The propensity or inclination to sin.

Shall not have dominion. Shall not reign, Ro 5:14 6:6. This implies that sin *ought* not to have this dominion; and it also expresses the conviction of the apostle that it would not have this rule over Christians.

For we are not under the law. We who are Christians are not subject to that law where sin is excited, and where it rages unsubdued. But it may be asked here, what is meant by this declaration? Does it mean that Christians are absolved from all the obligations of the law? I answer,

(1.) The apostle does not affirm that Christians are not bound to obey the moral law. The whole scope of his reasoning shows that he maintains that they are. The whole structure of Christianity supposes the same thing. Comp. Mt 5:17-19.

(2.) The apostle means to say that Christians are not under the law as *legalists*, or as attempting to be justified by it. They seek a different plan of justification altogether; and they do not attempt to be justified by their own obedience. The Jews did; they do not.

(3.) It is *implied* here, that the effect of an attempt to be justified *by the law* was not to *subdue* sins, but to excite them, and to lead to indulgence in them. Justification by works would destroy no sin, would check no evil propensity, but would leave a man to all the ravages and riotings of unsubdued passion. If, therefore, the apostle had maintained that men were justified by works, he could not have consistently exhorted them to abandon their sins. He would have had no powerful motives by which to urge it; for the scheme would not lead to it. But he here says that the Christian was seeking justification on a plan which *contemplated* and which *accomplished* the destruction of sin; and he therefore infers that sin should not have dominion over them.

But under grace. Under a scheme of mercy, the design and tendency of which is to subdue sin, and destroy it. In what way the system of grace removes and destroys sin, the apostle states in the following verses.

{x} "have dominion over you" Mic 7:19

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *What then? shall we sin*, etc. The apostle proceeds to notice an objection which might be suggested. "If Christians are not under the law, which *forbids* all sin, but are under grace, which pardons sin, will it not follow that they will feel themselves released from obligation to be holy? Will they not commit sin freely, since the system of grace is one which contemplates pardon, and which will lead them to believe that they may be forgiven to any extent?" This consequence has been drawn by many professing Christians; and it was well, therefore, for the apostle to guard against it.

God forbid. **See Barnes "Ro 3:4"**.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Know ye not*, etc. The objection noticed in Ro 6:15 the apostle answers by a reference to the known laws of servitude or slavery, (Ro 6:16-20,) and by showing that Christians, who had been the slaves of sin, have now become the servants of righteousness, and were therefore bound by the proper laws of servitude to obey their new master; as if he had said, "I assume that you know; you are acquainted with the laws of servitude; you know what is required in such cases." This would be known to all who had been either masters or slaves, or who had observed the usual laws and obligations of servitude.

To whom ye yield yourselves. To whom ye give up yourselves for servitude or obedience. The apostle here refers to voluntary servitude; but where this existed, the power of the master over the time and services of the servant was absolute. The argument of the apostle is, that Christians had become the *voluntary servants* of God, and were therefore bound to obey him entirely. Servitude among the ancients, whether voluntary or involuntary, was rigid, and gave the master an absolute right over his slave, Lu 17:9 Joh 8:34, 15:15.

To obey. To be obedient; or for the purpose of obeying his commands.

To whom ye obey. To whom ye come under subjection. That is, you are bound to obey his requirements.

Whether of sin. The general law of servitude the apostle now applies to the case before him. If men became the servants of sin, if they gave themselves to its indulgence, they would obey it, let the consequences be what they might. Even with death, and ruin, and condemnation before them, they would obey sin. They give indulgence to their evil passions and desires, and follow them as obedient servants, even if they lead them down to hell. Whatever be the consequences of sin, yet he who yields to it must abide by them, even if it leads him down to death and eternal woe.

Or of obedience, etc. The same law exists in regard to holiness or obedience. The man who becomes the servant of holiness will feel himself bound by the law of servitude to obey, and to pursue it to its regular consequences.

Unto righteousness. Unto justification; that is, unto eternal life. The expression stands contrasted with "death," and doubtless means that he who thus becomes the voluntary servant of holiness will feel himself bound to obey it, unto complete and eternal justification and life. Comp. Ro 6:21,22. The argument is drawn from what the Christian would *feel* of the nature of obligation. He would obey him to whom he had devoted himself.

{y} "whom ye yield" Joh 8:34 2Pe 2:19

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *But God be thanked*. The argument in this verse is drawn from a direct appeal to the feelings of the Roman Christians themselves. From *their experience* Paul was able to draw a demonstration to his purpose, and this was with him a ground of gratitude, to God.

That ye were, etc. The *sense* of this passage is plain. The *ground* of the thanksgiving was not that they had been the slaves of sin; but it is, that notwithstanding this, or although they had been thus, yet that they were now obedient. To give thanks to God that men were sinners, would contradict the whole spirit of this argument, and of the Bible. But to give thanks that *although* men had been sinners, yet that now they had become obedient that is, *that great sinners had become converted*—is in entire accordance with the spirit of the Bible, and with propriety. The word *although* or *whereas*, understood here, expresses the sense, "But thanks unto God, that *whereas* ye were the servants of sin," etc. Christians should thank God that they themselves, though once great sinners, have become converted; and when others who are great sinners are converted, they should praise him.

The servants of sin. This is a strong expression implying that they had been in *bondage* to sin; that they had been completely its slaves.

From the heart. Not in external form only; but as a cordial, sincere, and entire service. No other obedience is genuine.

That form of doctrine. Greek, *Type*. **See Barnes "Ro 5:14"**.

The form or type of doctrine means that shape or model of instruction which was communicated. It does not differ materially from *the doctrine itself*, "you have obeyed that doctrine," etc. You have yielded obedience to the instructions, the rules, the tenor of the Christian revelation. The word *doctrine* does not refer to an abstract dogma, but means *instruction, that which is taught*. And the meaning of the whole expression is simply, that they had yielded a cheerful and hearty obedience to that which had been communicated to them by the teachers of the Christian religion. Comp. Ro 1:8.

Which was delivered you. Marg.," Whereto ye were delivered." This is a literal translation of the Greek; and the sense is simply in which you have been instructed.

{z} "form of" 2Ti 1:13 {1} "doctrine" or, "whereto you were delivered"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Being then made free from sin*. That is, as a master. You are not under its dominion; you are no longer its slaves. They were made free, as a servant is who is set at liberty, and who is, therefore, no longer under obligation to obey.

Ye became the servants, etc. You became voluntarily under the dominion of righteousness; you yielded yourselves to it; and are therefore bound to be holy. Comp. **See Barnes "Joh 8:32"**.

{a} "free from sin" Joh 8:32

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *I speak after the manner of men*. I speak as men usually speak; or I draw an illustration from common life, in order to make myself better understood.

Because of the infirmity of your flesh. The word *infirmity* means weakness, feebleness; and is opposed to rigour and strength. The word *flesh* is used often to denote the corrupt passions of men; but it may refer here to their intellect, or understanding: "because of your imperfection of spiritual knowledge; or incapacity to discern arguments and illustrations that would be more strictly *spiritual* in their character." This dimness or feebleness had been caused by long indulgence in sinful passions, and by the blinding influence which such passions have on the mind. The sense here is, "I use an illustration drawn from common affairs, from the well-known relations of master and slave, because you will better see the force of such an illustration with which you have been familiar, than you would one that would be more abstract, and more strictly spiritual." It is a kind of apology for drawing an illustration from the relation of master and slave.

For as ye have yielded. **See Barnes "Ro 6:13"**.

Servants to uncleanness. Have been in bondage to impurity. The word uncleanness here refers to impurity of life in any form; to the degraded passions that were common among the heathen. See Ro 1.

And to iniquity. Transgression of law.

Unto iniquity. For the purpose of committing iniquity. It implies that they had done it in an excessive degree. It is web for Christians to be reminded of their former lives, to awaken repentance, to excite gratitude, to produce humility and a firmer purpose to live to the honour of God. This is the use which the apostle here makes of it.

Unto holiness. In order to practise holiness. Let the surrender of your members to holiness be as sincere and as unqualified as the surrender was to sin. This is all that is required of Christians. Before conversion they were *wholly* given to sin; after conversion they should be wholly given to God. If all Christians would employ the same energies in advancing the kingdom of God that they have in promoting the kingdom of Satan, the church would rise with dignity and grandeur, and every continent and island would soon feel the movement. No requirement is more reasonable than this; and it should be a source of lamentation and mourning with Christians that it is not so; that they have employed so mighty energies in the cause of Satan, and do so little in the service of God. This argument for *energy* in the divine life the apostle proceeds further to illustrate, by comparing the *rewards* obtained in the two kinds of servitude, that of the world and of God.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Ye were free from righteousness*. That is, in your former state, you were not at all under the influence of righteousness. You were entirely devoted to sin; a strong expression of total depravity. It settles the question; and proves that they had no native goodness. The argument which is implied here, rather than expressed, is, that now they ought to be equally free from sin, since they had become released from their former bondage, and had become the servants of another master.

{b} "servants of sin" Ro 6:16 {1} "from" or, "to"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *What fruit had ye then*, etc. What reward, or what advantage. This is an argument drawn from the experience of Christians respecting the indulgence of sinful passions. The question discussed throughout this chapter is, whether the gospel plan of justification by faith leads to indulgence in sin? The argument here is drawn from the past experience which Christians have had in the ways of transgression. They have tried it; they know its effects; they have tasted its bitterness; they have reaped its fruits. It is *implied* here, that having *once* experienced these effects, and *knowing* the tendency of sin, they will not indulge in it now. Comp. Ro 7:5.

Whereof ye are now ashamed. Having seen their nature and tendency, you are now ashamed of them. Comp. Ro 6:1 Eph 5:12, "For it is a shame to speak of those things which are done of them in secret." 2Co 4:2 Jude 1:13; Php 3:19.

For the end. The tendency—the result. Those things lead to death.

Is death. **See Barnes** "Ro 6:22.

{c} "fruit" Ro 7:5 {d} "the end of those" Jas 1:15

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *But now*. Under the Christian plan of justification.

Being made free from sin. Being delivered from its dominion, and from bondage; in the same manner as before conversion they were free from righteousness, Ro 6:20.

Ye have your fruit unto holiness. The fruit or result is holiness. This service produces holiness, as the other did sin. It is *implied* here, though not expressly affirmed, that in this service, which leads to holiness, they received important benefits, as in the service of sin they had experienced many evils.

And the end. The final result—the ultimate consequence will be. At present this service produces holiness; hereafter it will terminate in everlasting life. By this consideration the apostle states the tendency of the plan of justification, and urges on them the duty of striving after holiness.

Everlasting life. **See Barnes "Joh 3:36"**.

This stands in contrast with the word *death* in Ro 6:21, and shows its meaning. One is just as long in duration as the other; and if the one is limited, the other is. If those who obey shall be blessed with life for ever, those who disobey will be cursed with death for ever. Never was there an antithesis more manifest and more clear. And there could not be a stronger proof than the word *death*, in Ro 6:21, refers not to *temporal death*, but to eternal punishment. For what force would there be in the argument on the supposition that temporal death only is meant? The argument would stand thus, "The end of those sins is to produce *temporal death*; the end of holiness is to produce *eternal life*!" Will not temporal death be inflicted, it would be immediately asked, at any rate? Are Christians exempt from it? And do not men suffer this, whether they become Christians or not? How, then, could this be an argument bearing on the tenor of the apostle's reasoning? But admit the fair and obvious construction of the passage to be the true one, and it becomes plain. They were pursuing a course tending to everlasting ruin; they are now in a path that shall terminate in eternal life. By this weighty consideration, therefore, they are urged to be holy.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *For the wages of sin*. The word here translated *wages* (*oqwnia*)—properly denotes what is purchased to be eaten with bread, as fish, flesh, vegetables, etc., (*Schleusner*) and thence it means the pay of the Roman soldier, because formerly it was the custom to pay the soldier in these things. It means hence that which a man earns or deserves; that which is his proper pay, or what he merits. As applied to sin, it means that death is what sin deserves; that which will be its proper reward. Death is thus called the wages of sin, not because it is an arbitrary, undeserved appointment, but

(1.) because it is its proper desert. Not a pain will be inflicted on the sinner which he does not deserve. Not a sinner will die who ought not to die. *Sinners even in hell will be treated just as they deserve to be treated*; and there is not to man a more fearful and terrible consideration than this. No man can conceive a more dreadful doom than for himself to be treated for ever just as he deserves to be. But

(2.) this is the wages of sin, because, like the pay of the soldier, it is just what was threatened. Eze 18:4, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." God will not inflict anything more than was threatened, and therefore it is just.

Is death. This stands opposed here to eternal life, and proves that one is just as enduring as the other.

But the gift of God. Not the wages of man; not that which is due to him; but the mere gift and mercy of God. The apostle is careful to distinguish, and to specify that this is not what man deserves, but that which is gratuitously conferred on him. **See Barnes "Ro 6:15"**.

Eternal life. The same words which in Ro 6:22 are rendered "everlasting life." The phrase is opposed to death; and proves incontestably that means eternal death. We may remark, therefore,

(1.) that the one will be as long as the other.

(2.) As there is no doubt about the duration of *life*, so there can be none about the duration of death. The one will be rich, blessed, everlasting; the other sad, gloomy, lingering, awful, eternal.

(3.) If the sinner is lost, he will deserve to die. He will have his reward, He will suffer only what shall be the just due of sin. He will not be a *martyr* in the cause of injured innocence. He will not have the compassion of the universe in his favour. He will have no one to take his part against God. He will suffer just as much, and just as long, as he *ought* to suffer. He will suffer as the culprit pines in the dungeon, or as the murderer dies on the gibbet, because this is *the proper reward of sin*.

(4.) They who are saved will be raised to heaven, not because they merit it, but by the rich and sovereign grace of God. All their salvation will be ascribed to him; and they will celebrate his mercy and grace for ever.

(5.) It becomes us, therefore, to flee from the wrath to come. No man is so foolish and so wicked as he who is willing to reap the proper wages of sin. None so blessed as he who has part in the mercy of God, and who lays hold on eternal life.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 7

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 1

ROMANS Chapter 7

Introduction

Few chapters in the Bible have been the subject of more decidedly different interpretations than this. And after all that has been written on it by the learned, it is still made a matter of discussion, whether the apostle has reference, in the main scope of the chapter, to his own experience *before* he became a Christian, or to the conflicts in the mind of a man who is renewed. Which of these opinions is the correct one I shall endeavour to state in the Notes on the particular verses in the chapter. The main design of the chapter is not very difficult to understand. It is evidently to show the insufficiency of the law to produce peace of mind to a troubled sinner. In the previous chapters he had shown that it was incapable of producing justification, chapters 1-3, he had shown the way in which men were justified by faith, Ro 3:21-31 4:1-25. He had shown how that plan produced peace, and met the evils introduced by the fall of Adam, Ro 5. He had showed that Christians were freed from the law as a matter of obligation, and yet that this freedom did not lead to a licentious life, Ro 6. And he now proceeds still further to illustrate the tendency of the law on a man both in a state of nature and of grace; to show that its uniform effect in the present condition of man, whether impenitent and under conviction, or in a state of grace under the gospel, so far from promoting peace, as the Jew maintained, was to excite the mind to conflict, and anxiety, and distress. Nearly all the peculiar opinions of the Jews the apostle had overthrown in the previous argument. He here gives the finishing stroke, and shows that the tendency of the law, as a practical matter, was everywhere the same. It was not, *in fact*, to produce peace, but agitation, conflict, distress. Yet this was not the fault of the *law*, which was in itself good, but of sin, Ro 7:6-24. I regard this chapter

as not referring *exclusively* to Paul in a state of nature, or of grace. The discussion is conducted without particular reference to that point. It is rather designed to group together the actions of a man's life, whether in a state of conviction for sin or in a state of grace, and to show that the effect of the law is everywhere substantially the same. *It equally fails everywhere in producing peace and sanctification*. The argument of the Jew respecting the efficacy of the law; and its sufficiency for the condition of man, is thus overthrown by a succession of proofs relating to justification, to pardon, to peace, to the evils of sin, and to the agitated and conflicting moral elements in man's bosom. The effect is everywhere the same. The deficiency is apparent in regard to ALL, the great interests of man. And having shown this, the apostle and the reader are prepared for the language of triumph and gratitude, that deliverance from all these evils is to be traced to the gospel of Jesus Christ the Lord, Ro 7:25

Verse 1. *Know ye not*. This is an appeal to their own observation respecting the relation between husband and wife. The illustration (Ro 8:2,3) is designed simply to show, that as when a man dies, and the connexion between him and his wife is dissolved, his law ceases to be binding on her; so also a separation has taken place between Christians and the law, in which *they* have become dead to it; and they are not now to attempt to draw their life and peace from it, but from that new source with which they are connected by the gospel, Ro 8:4.

For I speak to them, etc. Probably the apostle refers here more particularly to the Jewish members of the Roman church, who were qualified particularly to understand the nature of the law, and to appreciate the argument. That there were many Jews fix the church at Rome has been shown, (see Introduction) but the illustration has no exclusive reference to them. The law to which he appeals is sufficiently general to make the illustration intelligible to all men.

That the law. The immediate reference here is probably to the Mosaic law. But what is here affirmed is equally true of all laws.

Hath dominion. Greek, Rules; exercises lordship. The law is here personified, and represented as setting up a lordship over a man, and exacting obedience.

Over a man. Over the man who is under it.

As long as he liveth. The Greek here may mean either as HE liveth," or "as it liveth," that is, the law. But our translation has evidently expressed the sense. The sense is, that death releases a man from the laws by which he was bound in life. It is a general principle, relating to the laws of the land, the law of a parent, the law of a contract, etc. This general principle the apostle proceeds to apply in regard to the law of God.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *For the woman*. This verse is a specific illustration of the general principle in Ro 7:1, that death dissolves those connexions and relations which make law binding in life. It is a simple illustration; and if this had been kept in mind, it would have saved much of the perplexity which has been felt by many commentators, and much of their wild vagaries in endeavouring to show that "men are the wife, the law the former husband, and Christ the new one;" or that "the old man is the wife, sinful desires the husband, sins the children." *Beza*. (See *Stuart*.) Such expositions are sufficient

to humble us, and to make us mourn over the puerile and fanciful interpretations which even wise and good men often give to the Bible.

Is bound by the law, etc. See the same sentiment in 1Co 7:39.

To her husband. She is united to him; and is under his authority as the head of the household. To *him* is particularly committed the headship of the family, and the wife is subject to his law, in the Lord, Eph 5:22,23.

She is loosed, etc. The husband has no more authority. The connexion from which obligation resulted is dissolved.

{h} "For the woman" 1Co 7:39

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *So then if*, etc. Comp. Mt 5:32.

She shall be called. She will be. The word used here (*crhmatisei*) is often used to denote being called by an oracle, or by Divine revelation. But it is here employed in the simple sense of being commonly called, or of being so regarded.

{i} "while her husband" Mt 5:32

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Wherefore*. This verse contains an application of the illustration in the two preceding. The idea there is, that *death dissolves a connexion from which obligation resulted*. This is the single point of the illustration, and consequently there is no need of inquiring whether by the wife the apostle meant to denote the old man, or the Christian, etc. The meaning is, as death dissolves the *connexion* between a wife and her husband, and of course the obligation of the law resulting from that connexion, so the death of the Christian to the law dissolves *that* connexion, so far as the scope of the argument here is concerned, and prepares the way for another union, a union with Christ, from which a new and more efficient obligation results. The design is to show that the *new* connexion would accomplish more important effects than the old.

Ye also are become dead to the law. **See Barnes** "Ro 6:3, **See Barnes** "Ro 6:4, **See Barnes** "Ro 6:8.

The connexion between us and the law is dissolved, so far as the scope of the apostle's argument is concerned. He does not say that we are dead to it, or released from it as a rule of duty, or as a matter of obligation to obey it; for there neither is, nor can be, any such release; but we are dead to it as a way of justification and sanctification. In the great matter of acceptance with God, we have ceased to rely on the law, having become dead to it, and having embraced another plan.

By the body of Christ. That is, by his body crucified; or, in other words, by his death. Comp. Eph 2:15, "Having abolished *in his flesh* the enmity," etc.; that is, by his death. Col 1:22, "In the body of his flesh through death," etc.; Ro 2:14 1Pe 2:24, "Who bare our sins in his own body on the tree." The sense is, therefore, that by the death of Christ as an atoning sacrifice; by his suffering for us that which would be sufficient to meet the demands of the law; by his taking our place, he

has released us from the law as a way of justification, freed us from its penalty, and saved us from its curse. Thus released, we are at liberty to be uffited to the law of him who has thus bought us with h is blood.

That ye should be married to another. That you might be united to another, and come under his law. This is the completion of the illustration in Ro 7:2,3. As the woman that is freed from the law of her husband by his death, when married again comes under the authority of another, so we who are made free from the law and its curse by the death of Christ, are brought under the new law of fidelity and obedience to him with whom we are thus united. The union of Christ and his people is not unfrequently illustrated by the most tender of all earthly connexions—that of a husband and wife, Eph 5:23-30 Re 21:9, "I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife;" Re 19:7.

Even *to him who is raised*, etc. See the force of this explained, Ro 6:8.

That we should bring forth fruit unto God. That we should live a holy life. This is the point and scope of all this illustration. The new connexion is such as will make us holy. It is also implied that the tendency of the law was only to bring forth fruit unto death, Ro 6:5 and that the tendency of the gospel is to make man holy and pure. Comp. Ga 5:22,23.

{l} "fruit unto God" Ga 5:22

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *For when*, etc. The illustration in this verse and the following is designed to show more at length the effect of the law, whenever and wherever applied; whether ill a state of nature or of grace. It was *always* the same. It was the occasion of agitation and conflict in a man's own mind. This was true when a sinner was under conviction; and it was true when a man was a Christian. In all circumstances where the law was applied to the corrupt mind of man, it produced this agitation and conflict. Even in the Christian's mind it produced this agitation, Ro 7:14-24, as it had done and would do in the mind of a sinner under conviction, Ro 7:7-12 and consequently there was no hope of release but in the delivering and sanctifying power of the gospel, Ro 7:25 8:1-3.

In the flesh. Unconverted; subject to the controlling passions and propensities of a corrupt nature. Comp. Ro 7:8,9. The connexion shows that this must be the meaning here, and the design of this illustration is to show the effect of the law *before* a man is converted, Ro 7:5-12. This is the obvious meaning, and all the laws of interpretation require us so to understand it.

The motions of sins. (*ta payhmata*). This translation is unhappy. The expression "motions of sins" conveys no idea. The original means simply *the passions, the evil affections, the corrupt desires*. See the margin. The expression, passions of sins, is a Hebraism, meaning sinful passions, and refers here to the corrupt propensities and inclinations of the unrenewed heart.

Which were by the law. Not that they were originated or created by the law; for a law does not originate evil propensities, and a holy law would not cause sinful passions; but they were excited, called up, inflamed by tile law, which forbids their indulgence.

Did work in our members. In our body; that is, in us. Those sinful propensities made use of our members as instruments to secure gratification. **See Barnes "Ro 6:12,13"**.

Comp. Ro 7:23.

To bring forth fruit unto death. To produce crime, agitation, conflict, distress, and to lead to death. We were brought under the dominion of death; and the consequence of the indulgence of those passions would be fatal. Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 6:21"**.

{m} "in the flesh" Ro 8:8,9 {1} "motions" or, "passions" {n} "bring forth fruit unto death" Ro 6:21

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *But now*. Under the gospel. This verse states the conse- quences of the gospel, in distinction from the effects of the law. The way in which this is accomplished the apostle illustrates more at length in Ro 8, with which this verse is properly connected. The remainder of Ro 7 is occupied in illustrating the statement in Ro 7:5, of the effects of *the law*; and after having shown that its effects *always* were to increase crime and distress, he is prepared in Ro 8, to take up the proposition in this verse, and to show the superiority of the gospel in producing peace.

We are delivered. We who are Christians. Delivered from it as a means of justification, as a source of sanctification, as a bondage to which we were subjected, and which tended to produce pain and death. It does not mean that Christians are freed from it as a rule of duty.

That being dead. Margin, "Being dead to that." There is a variation here in the Mss. Some read it, as in the text, as if the *law* was dead; others, as in the margin, as if we were dead. The majority are in favour of the reading as in the margin; and the connexion requires us to understand it in this sense. So the Syriac, the Arabic, the Vulgate, and the AEthiopic. The sentiment here, that we are dead to the law, is that which is expressed in Ro 7:4.

Wherein we were held. That is, as captives, or as slaves. We were held in bondage to it, Ro 7:1.

That we should serve. That we may now serve or obey God

In newness of spirit. In a new spirit; or in a new and Spiritual manner. This is a form of expression implying,

(1.) that their service under the gospel was to be of a *new* kind, differing from that under the former dispensation.

(2.) That it was to be of a *spiritual* nature, as distinguished from that practised by the Jews. Comp. 2Co 3:6. **See Barnes "Ro 2:28"**.

See Barnes "Ro 2:29".

The worship required under the gospel is uniformly described as that of the spirit and the heart, rather than that of form and ceremony. Joh 4:23, "The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth." Php 3:3.

And not in the oldness of the letter. Not in the old letter. It is implied here in this,

(1.) that the form of worship here described pertained to an old dispensation that had now passed away; and

(2.) that that was a worship that was in the *letter*. To understand this, it is necessary to remember that the *law* which prescribed the forms of worship among the Jews, was regarded by the apostle as destitute of that efficacy and power in renewing the heart which he attributed to the gospel. It was a service consisting in external forms and ceremonies; in the offering of sacrifices and of

incense, according to the literal requirement of the law, rather than the sincere offering of the heart. 2Co 3:6, "The letter killeth; the spirit giveth life." Joh 6:63 Heb 10:1-4, 9:9,10.

It is not to be denied that there were many holy persons under the law, and that there were many spiritual offerings presented; but it is at the same time true that the great mass of the people rested in the mere form; and that the service offered was the mere service of the letter, and not of the heart. The main idea is, that the services under the gospel are purely and entirely spiritual, the offering of the *heart*, and not the service rendered by external forms and rites.

{1} "delivered from the law" or, "being dead to that"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *What shall we say then*? The objection which is here urged is one that would very naturally rise, and which we may suppose would be urged with no slight indignation. The Jew would ask, "Are we then to suppose that the holy law of God is not only insufficient to sanctify us, but that it is the mere occasion of increased sin? Is its tendency to produce sinful passions, and to make men worse than they were before?" To this objection the apostle replies with great wisdom, by showing that the evil was not in the law, but in man; that though these effects often followed, yet that the law itself was good and pure.

Is the law sin? Is it sinful? Is it evil? For if, as it is said in Ro 7:5, the sinful passions were *by* the law," it might naturally be asked whether the law itself was not an evil thing?

God forbid. **See Barnes "Ro 3:4"**.

Nay, I had not known sin. The word translated *nay* (*alla*) means more properly *but*; and this would have more correctly expressed the sense, "I deny that the law is sin. My doctrine does not lead to that; nor do I affirm that it is evil. I strongly repel the charge; BUT, notwithstanding this, I still maintain 'hat it had an effect in exciting sins, yet so as that *I* perceived that the law itself was good," Ro 7:8-12. At the same time, therefore, that the law must be admitted to be the occasion of exciting sinful feelings, by crossing the inclinations of the mind, yet the fault was not to be traced to the law. The apostle in these verses refers, doubtless, to the state of his mind *before* he found that peace which the gospel furnishes by the pardon of sin.

But by the law. Ro 3:20. By the *law* here, the apostle has evidently in his eye every law of God, however made known. He means to my that the effect which he describes attends *all* law, and this effect he illustrates by a single instance drawn from the tenth commandment. When he says that he should not have known sin, he evidently means to affirm, that he had not understood that certain things were sinful unless they had been forbidden; and having stated this, he proceeds to another thing, to show the *effect* of their being thus forbidden on his mind. He was not merely acquainted abstractly with the nature and existence of sin, with what constituted crime because it was forbidden, but he was conscious of a certain effect on his mind resulting from this knowledge, and from the effect of strong, raging desires when thus restrained, Ro 7:8,9.

For I had not known lust. I should not have been acquainted with the nature of the sin of *covetousness*. The desire might have existed, but he would not have known it to be sinful, and he would not have experienced that raging, impetuous, and ungoverned propensity which he did when he found it to be forbidden. Man without law might have the strong feelings of desire. He might

covet that which others possessed. He might take property, or be disobedient to parents; but he would not know it to be evil. The *law* fixes bounds to his desires, and teaches him what is right and what is wrong. It teaches him where lawful indulgence ends, and where sin begins. The word "lust" here is not limited as it is with us. It refers to *all* covetous desires; to all wishes for that which is forbidden us.

Except the law had said. In the tenth commandment, Ex 20:17.

Thou shalt not covet. This is the beginning of the command, and all the rest is implied. The apostle knew that it would be understood without repeating the whole. This particular commandment he selected because it was more pertinent than the others to his purpose. The others referred particularly to external actions. But his object was to show the effect of sin on the mind and conscience. He therefore chose one that referred particularly to the desires of the heart.

{o} "not known sin" Ro 3:20 {1} "lust" or "concupiscence" {p} "had said" Ex 20:17

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *But sin*. To illustrate the *effect* of the law on the mind, the apostle in this verse depicts its influence in exciting to evil desires and purposes. Perhaps nowhere has he evinced more consummate knowledge of the human heart than here. He brings an illustration that might have escaped most persons, but which goes directly to establish his position that the law is insufficient to promote the salvation of man. Sin here is personified. It means not a real *entity*; not a physical subsistence; not something independent of the mind, having a separate existence, and lodged in the soul; but it means the corrupt passions, inclinations, and desires *of the mind* itself. Thus we say that lust burns, and ambition rages, and envy corrodes the mind, without meaning that lust, ambition, or envy are any independent physical subsistences; but meaning that the *mind* that is ambitious, or envious, is thus excited.

Taking occasion. The word occasion—(*aformhn*) properly denotes any material, or preparation, for accomplishing anything; then any opportunity, occasion, etc. of doing it. Here it means that *the law* was the exciting cause of sin; or was that which called the sinful principle of the heart into exercise. *But for this*, the effect here described would not have existed. Thus we say that a tempting object of desire presented is the exciting cause of covetousness. Thus an object of ambition is the exciting cause of the principle of ambition. Thus the presentation of wealth, or of advantages possessed by others which we have not, may excite covetousness or envy. Thus the fruit presented to Eve was the exciting cause of sin; the wedge of gold to Achan excited his covetousness. Had not these objects been presented, the evil principles of the heart might have slumbered, and never have been called forth. And hence no men understand the full force of their native propensities until some object is presented that calls them forth into decided action. The *occasion* which called these forth in the mind of Paul was the law *crossing his path*, and irritating and exciting the native strong inclinations of the mind.

By the commandment. By all law appointed to restrain and control the mind.

Wrought in me. Produced or worked in me. The word used here means often to operate in a powerful and efficacious manner. (*Doddridge*.)

All manner of. Greek, "All desire." Every species of unlawful desire. It was not confined to one single desire, but extended to everything which the law declared to be wrong.

Concupiscence. Unlawful or irregular desire. Inclination for unlawful enjoyments. The word is the same which in Ro 7:7 is rendered lust. If it be asked in what way the law led to this, we may reply, that the main idea here is, that opposition by law to the desires and passions of wicked men only tends to inflame and exasperate them. This is the case with regard to sin in every form. An attempt to restrain it by force; to denounce it by laws and penalties; to cross the path of wickedness; only tends to irritate, and to excite into living energy, that which otherwise would be dormant in the bosom. This it does, because

(1.) it crosses the path of the sinner, and opposes his intention, and the current of his feelings and his life.

(2.) The law acts the part of a *detector*, and lays open to view that which was in the bosom, but was concealed.

(3.) Such is the depth and obstinacy of sin in man, that the very *attempt* to restrain often only serves to exasperate, and to urge to greater deeds of wickedness. Restraint by law rouses the mad passions; urges to greater deeds of depravity; makes the sinner stubborn, obstinate, and more desperate. The very attempt to set up authority over him throws him into a posture of resistance, and makes him a party, and excites all the feelings of party rage. Any one may have witnessed this effect often on the mind of a wicked and obstinate child.

(4.) This is particularly true in regard to a sinner. He is calm often, and apparently tranquil; but let the law of God be brought home to his conscience, and he becomes maddened and enraged. He spurns its authority, yet his conscience tells him it is right; he attempts to throw it off, yet trembles at its power; and, to show his independence, or his purpose to sin, he plunges into iniquity, and becomes a more dreadful and obstinate sinner. It becomes a struggle for victory, and in the controversy with God he resolves *not* to be overcome. It accordingly happens that many a man is more profane, blasphemous, and desperate when under conviction for sin than at other times. In revivals of religion it often happens that men evince violence, and rage, and cursing, which they do not in a state of spiritual death in the church; and it is often a very certain indication that a man is under conviction for sin when he becomes particularly violent, and abusive, and outrageous in his opposition to God.

(5.) The effect here noticed by the apostle is one that has been observed at all times, and by all classes of writers. Thus Cato says, (Livy, xxxiv. 4,) "Do not think, Romans, that it will be hereafter as it was before the law was enacted. It is more safe that a bad man should not be accused, than that he should be absolved; and luxury not excited would be more tolerable than it will be now, by the very chains irritated and excited as a wild beast." Thus Seneca says, (de Clementia, i. 23,) "Parricides began with the law." Thus Horace; (Odes, i. 3,) "The human race, bold to endure all things, rushes through forbidden crime." Thus Ovid, (Amor. iii. 4,) "We always endeavour to obtain that which is forbidden, and desire that which is denied." (These passages are quoted from Tholuck.) See also Pr 9:17, "Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant." If such be the effect of the law, then the inference of the apostle is unavoidable, that it is not adapted to save and sanctify man.

For without the law. Before it was given; or where it was not applied to the mind.

Sin was dead. It was inoperative, inactive, unexcited. This is evidently in a comparative sense. The connexion requires us to understand it only so far as it was excited by the law. Men's passions

would exist; but without law they would not be known to be evil, and they would not be excited into wild and tumultuous raging.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *For I*. There seems to be no doubt that the apostle here refers to his own past experience. Yet in this he speaks the sentiment of all who are unconverted, and who are depending on their own righteousness.

Was alive. This is opposed to what he immediately adds respecting another state, in which he was when he died. It must mean, therefore, that he had a certain kind of peace; he deemed himself secure; he was free from the convictions of conscience and the agitations of alarm. The state to which he refers here must be doubtless that to which he himself elsewhere alludes, when he deemed himself to be righteous, depending on his own works, and esteeming himself to be blameless, Php 3:4-6 Ac 23:1 26:4,5.

It means, that he was then free from those agitations and alarms which he afterwards experienced when he was brought under conviction for sin. At that time, though he had the law, and was attempting to obey it, yet he was unacquainted with its spiritual and holy nature. He aimed at *external* conformity. Its claims on the heart were unfelt. This is the condition of every self-confident sinner, and of every one who is unawakened.

Without the law. Not that Paul was ever really without the law—that is, without the law of Moses; but he means before the law was applied to his heart in its spiritual meaning, and with power.

But when the commandment came. When it was applied to the heart and conscience. This is the only intelligible sense of the expression; for it *cannot* refer to the time when the law was given. When this was, the apostle does not say. But the expression denotes *whenever* it was so applied; when it was urged with power and efficacy on his conscience, to control, restrain, and threaten him, it produced this effect. We are unacquainted with the early operations of his mind, and with his struggles against conscience and duty. We know enough of him before conversion, however, to be assured that he was proud, impetuous, and unwilling to be restrained. See Ac 8:1-9:43. In the state of his self-confident righteousness and impetuosity of feeling, we may easily suppose that the holy law of God, which is designed to restrain the passions, to humble the heart, and to rebuke pride, would produce only irritation, and impatience of restraint, and revolt.

Sin revived. Lived again. This means that it was before dormant, Ro 7:8 but was now quickened into new life. The word is usually applied to a renewal of life, Ro 14:9 Lu 15:24,32

but here it means substantially the same as the expression in Ro 7:8, "Sin—wrought- in me all manner of concupiscence." The power of sin, which was before dormant, became quickened and active.

I died. That is, I was by it involved in additional guilt and misery. It stands opposed to "I was alive," and must mean the opposite of that; and evidently denotes that the effect of the commandment was to bring him under what he calls *death*, Ro 5:12,14,15

that is, sin reigned, and raged, and produced its withering and condemning effects; it led to aggravated guilt and misery. It may also include this idea: that before, he was self-confident and

secure; but that by the commandment he was stricken down and humbled, his self-confidence was blasted, and his hopes were prostrated in the dust. Perhaps no words would better express the humble, subdued, melancholy, and helpless state of a converted sinner than the expressive phrase "*I died*." The essential idea here is, that the law did not answer the purpose which the Jew would claim for it, to sanctify the soul and to give comfort, but that *all* its influence on the heart was to produce aggravated, unpardoned guilt and woe.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *And the commandment*. The law to which he had referred before.

Which was ordained *to life*. Which was intended to produce life, or happiness. *Life* here stands opposed to *death*, and means felicity, peace, eternal bliss. **See Barnes "Joh 3:36".**

When the apostle says that it was ordained to life, he probably has reference to the numerous passages in the Old Testament which speak of the law in this manner. Le 18:5, "Ye shall keep my statutes and my judgments; which if a man do, he shall live in them," Eze 20:11 Eze 20:11,13,21 18:9,21.

The meaning of these passages, in connexion with this declaration of Paul, may be thus expressed:

(1.) The law is good; it has no evil, and is itself fitted to produce no evil.

(2.) If man was pure, and it was obeyed perfectly, it would produce life and happiness only. On those who have obeyed it in heaven, it has produced only happiness.

(3.) For this it was ordained; it is adapted to it; and when perfectly obeyed, it produces no other effect. But,

(4.) man is a sinner; he has *not* obeyed it; and in such a case the law threatens woe. It crosses the inclination of man; and instead of producing peace and life, as it would on a being perfectly holy, it produces only woe and crime. The law of a parent may be good, and may be appointed to promote the happiness of his children; it may be admirably fitted to it if all were obedient; yet *in* the family there may be one obstinate, self-willed, and stubborn child, resolved to indulge his evil passions, and the results to him would be woe and despair. The commandment, which was ordained for the good of the family, and which would be adapted to promote their welfare, he alone, of all the number, would find to be unto death.

I found. It was to me. It produced this effect.

Unto death. Producing aggravated guilt and condemnation, Ro 7:9.

{q} "ordained to life" Eze 20:11

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *For sin*. This verse is a repetition, with a little variation, of the sentiment in Ro 7:8.

Deceived me. The word here used properly means, to lead or seduce from the right way; and then to deceive, solicit to sin, cause to err from the way of virtue, Ro 16:18 1Co 3:18; 2Co 11:3,

"The serpent *beguiled* Eve through his subtilty; "2Th 2:3. The meaning here seems to be, that his corrupt and rebellious propensities, excited by the law, led him astray; caused him more and more to sin; practised a species of deception on him by urging him on headlong, and without deliberation, into aggravated transgression. In this sense, all sinners are deceived. Their passions urge them on, deluding them, and leading them farther and farther from happiness, and involving them, before they are aware, in crime and death. No being in the universe is more deluded than a sinner in the indulgence of evil passions. The description of Solomon in a particular case will apply to all, Pr 7:21-23. \-

"With much fair speech she caused him to yield;
With the flattering of her lips she forced him.
He goeth after her straightway,
As an ox goeth to the slaughter,
Or as a fool to the correctran of the stocks;
Till a dart strike through his liver,
As a bird hasteth to the snare."

By it. By the law, Ro 7:8.

Slew me. Meaning the same as "I died," Ro 7:9.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Wherefore*. So that. The conclusion to which we come is, that the law is not to be blamed, though these are its effects under existing circumstances. The source of all this is not the law, but the corrupt nature of man. The law is good; and yet the position of the apostle is true, that it is not adapted to purify the heart of fallen man. Its tendency is to excite increased guilt, conflict, alarm, and despair. This verse contains an answer to the question in Ro 7:7, "Is the law sin?"

Is holy. Is not sin. Comp. Ro 7:7.

It is pure in its nature.

And the commandment. The word commandment is here synonymous with the law. It properly means that which is enjoined.

Holy. Pure.

Just. Righteous in its claims and penalties. It is not unequal in its exactions.

Good. In itself good; and in its own nature tending to produce happiness. The sin and condemnation of the guilty is not the fault of the law. If obeyed, it would produce happiness everywhere. See a most beautiful description of the law of God in Ps 19:7-11.

{r} "the law is holy" Ps 19:7-9.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Was then that which is good*, etc. This is another objection, which the apostle proceeds to answer. The objection is this: "Can it be possible that that which is admitted to be good and pure,

should be changed into evil? Can that which tends to life, be made death to a man?" In answer to this, the apostle repeats that the fault was not in the law, but was in himself, and in his sinful propensities.

Made death. Ro 7:8,10.

God forbid. **See Barnes "Ro 3:4"**.

But sin. This is a personification of sin as in Ro 7:8.

That it might appear sin. That it might develope its true nature, and no longer be dormant in the mind. The law of God is often applied to a man's conscience, that he may see how deep and desperate is his depravity. No man knows his own heart until the law thus crosses his path, and shows him what he is.

By the commandment. **See Barnes "Ro 7:8"**.

Might become exeeedingly sinful. In the original this is a very strong expression, and is one of those used by Paul to express strong emphasis, or intensity, *kay uperbolhn*. By hyperboles. In an extensive degree; to the utmost possible extent, 1Co 12:31 2Co 1:8, 4:7 12:7; Ga 1:13.

The phrase occurs in each of these places. The sense here is, that by the giving of the command, and its application to the mind, sin was completely developed; it was excited, inflamed, aggravated, and showed to be excessively malignant and deadly. It was not a dormant, slumbering principle; but it was awfully opposed to God and his law. Calvin has well expressed the sense: "It was proper that the enormity of sin should be revealed by the law; because unless sin should break forth by some dreadful and enormous excess, (as they say,) it would not be known to be sin. This excess exhibits itself the more violently, while it turns life into death." The sentiment of the whole is, that the tendency of the law is to excite the dormant sin of the bosom into active existence, and to reveal its true nature. It is desirable that that should be done; and as that is all that the law accomplishes, it is not adapted to sanctify the soul. To show that this was the design of the apostle, it is *desirable* that sin should be thus seen in its true nature, because

(1.) man should be acquainted with his true character. He should not deceive himself.

(2.) Because it is one part of God's plan to develope the secret feelings of the heart, and to show to all creatures what they are.

(3.) Because only by knowing this will the sinner be induced to take a remedy, and strive to be saved. God often thus *suffers* men to plunge into sin; to act out their nature, that they may see themselves, and be alarmed at the consequences of their own crimes.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 14

Verses 14-25: The remainder of this chapter has been the subject of no small degree of controversy. The question has been whether it describes the state of Paul before his conversion, or afterwards. It is not the purpose of these Notes to enter into controversy, or into extended discussion. But after all the attention which I have been able to give to this passage, I regard it as describing the state of a man under the gospel, as descriptive of the operations of the mind of Paul subsequent to his conversion. This interpretation is adopted for the following reasons:

(1.) Because it seems to me to be the most obvious. It is that which will strike plain men as being the natural meaning; men who have not a theory to support, and who understand language in its usual sense.

(2.) Because it agrees with the design of the apostle, which is to show that the law is not adapted to produce sanctification and peace. This he had done in regard to a man *before* he was converted. If this relates to the same period, then it is a useless discussion of a point already discussed. If it relates to that period also, then there is a large field of action, including the whole period after a man's conversion to Christianity, in which the question might still be unsettled, whether the law *there* might not be adapted to sanctify. The apostle therefore makes thorough work with the argument, and shows that the operation of the law is everywhere the same.

(3.) Because the expressions which occur are such as cannot be understood of an impenitent sinner. **See Barnes** "Ro 7:15, **See Barnes "Ro 7:22"**.

(4.) Because it accords with parallel expressions in regard to the state of the conflict in a Christian's mind.

(5.) Because there is a change made here from the past tense to the present. In Ro 7:7, etc., he had used the past tense, evidently describing some former state. In Ro 7:14 there is a change to the present, a change inexplicable, except on the supposition that he meant to describe some state different from that before described. That could be no other than to carry his illustration forward in showing the inefficacy of the law on a man in his renewed state; or to show that such was the remaining depravity of the man, that it produced substantially the same effects as in the former condition.

(6.) Because it accords with the experience of Christians, and not with sinners. It is just such language as plain Christians, who are acquainted with their own hearts, use to express their feelings. I admit that this last consideration is not by itself conclusive; but if the language did *not* accord with the experience of the Christian world, it would be a strong circumstance *against* any proposed interpretation. The view which is here expressed of this chapter, as supposing that the previous part (Ro 7:7-13) refers to a man in his unregenerate state, and that the remainder describes the effect of the law on the mind of a renewed man, was adopted by studying the chapter itself, without aid from any writer. I am happy, however, to find that the views thus expressed are in accordance with those of the late Rev. Dr. J.P. Wilson, than whom, perhaps, no man was ever better qualified to interpret the Scriptures. He says,

> "In the fourth verse, he (Paul) changes to the first person plural, because he intended to speak of the former experience of Christians, who had been Jews. In the seventh verse he uses the first person singular, but speaks in the past tense, because he describes his own experience when he was an unconverted Pharisee. In the fourteenth verse, and unto the end of the chapter, he uses the first person singular, and the present tense, because he exhibits his own experience since he became a Christian and an apostle."

Verse 14. *We know*. We admit. It is a conceded, well-understood point.

That the law is spiritual. This does not mean that the law is designed to control the spirit, in contradistinction from the body, but it is a declaration showing that the evils of which he was

speaking were not the fault of the law. That was not, in its nature, sensual, corrupt, earthly, carnal; but was pure and spiritual. The *effect* described was not the fault of the law, but of the man, who was sold under sin. The word spiritual is often thus used to denote that which is pure and holy, in opposition to that which is fleshly or carnal, Ro 8:5,6; Ga 5:16-23. The *flesh* is described as the source of evil passions and desires; the spirit as the source of purity, or as that which is agreeable to the proper influences of the Holy Spirit.

But I am. The present tense shows that he is describing himself as he was at the time of writing. This is the natural and obvious construction; and if this be not the meaning, it is impossible to account for his having changed the past tense (Ro 7:7) to the present.

Carnal. Fleshly; sensual; opposed to spiritual. This word is used because in the Scriptures the flesh is spoken of as the source of sensual passions and propensities, Ga 5:19-21. The sense is, that these corrupt passions still retained a strong, and withering, and distressing influence over the mind. The renewed man is exposed to temptations from his strong native appetites; and the power of these passions, strengthened by long habit before he was converted, has travelled over into religion, and they continue still to influence and distress him. It does not mean that he is *wholly* under their influence; but that the tendency of his natural inclinations is to indulgence.

Sold under sin. This expression is often adduced to show that it cannot be of a renewed man that the apostle is speaking. The argument is, that it cannot be affirmed of a Christian that he is sold under sin. A sufficient answer to this might be, that, IN FACT, this is the very language which Christians often now adopt to express the strength of that native depravity against which they struggle, and that no language would *better* express it. It does not mean that they choose or prefer sins. It strongly implies that the *prevailing bent* of their mind is against it, but that such is its strength that it brings them into slavery to it. The expression here used, "*sold* under sin," is "borrowed from the practice of selling captives taken in war, as slaves." (*Stuart*.) It hence means to deliver into the power of any one, so that he shall be dependent on his will and control. (*Schleusner*.) The emphasis is not on the word *sold*, as if any act of selling had taken place, but the *effect* was as if he had been sold; i.e., he was subject to it, and under its control, and it means that sin, contrary to the prevailing inclination of his mind, (Ro 7:15-17) had such an influence over him as to lead him to commit it, and thus to produce a state of conflict and grief, Ro 7:19-24. The verses which follow this are an explanation of the sense, and of the manner in which he was "sold under sin."

{s} "sold under sin" 2Ki 17:17

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *For that which I do*. That is, the evil which I do, the sin of which I am conscious, and which troubles me.

I allow not. I do not approve; I do not wish it; the prevailing bent of my inclinations and purposes is against it. Greek, "I *know* not." See the margin. The word *know*, however, is sometimes used in the sense of approving. Re 2:24, "Which have not *known* [approved] the depths of Satan." Comp. Ps 101:4, "I will not know a wicked person." Jer 1:5.

For what I would. That which I approve, and which is my prevailing and established desire. What I would wish always to do.

But what I hate. What I disapprove of; what is contrary to my judgment; my prevailing inclination; my established principles of conduct.

That do I. Under the influence of sinful propensities, and carnal inclinations and desires. This represents the strong native propensity to sin; and even the power of corrupt propensity under the restraining influence of the gospel. On this remarkable and important passage we may observe,

(1.) that the prevailing propensity—the habitual fixed inclination of the mind of the Christian—is to do right. The evil course is hated; the right course is loved. This is the characteristic of a pious mind. It distinguishes a holy man from a sinner.

(2.) The evil which is done is disapproved; is a source of grief; and the habitual desire of the mind is to avoid it, and be pure. This also distinguishes the Christian from the sinner.

(3.) There is no need of being embarrassed here with any metaphysical difficulties or inquiries how this can be; for \-

(a) it is in fact the experience of all Christians. The habitual, fixed inclination and desire of their minds is to serve God. They have a fixed abhorrence of sin; and yet they are conscious of imperfection, and error, and sin, that is the source of uneasiness and trouble. The strength of natural passion may in an unguarded moment overcome them. The power of long habits of previous thoughts may annoy them. A man who was an infidel before his conversion, and whose mind was filled with scepticism, and cavils, and blasphemy, will find the effect of his former habits of thinking lingering in his mind, and annoying his peace for years. These thoughts will start up with the rapidity of the lightning. Thus it is with every vice and every opinion. It is one of the effects of *habit*. "The very passage of an impure thought through the mind leaves pollution behind it;" and where sin has been long indulged, it leaves its withering, desolating effect on the soul long after conversion, and produces that state of conflict with which every Christian is familiar.

(b) An effect *somewhat* similar is felt by all men. All are conscious of doing that, under the excitement of passion and prejudice, which their conscience and better judgment disapprove. A conflict thus exists, which is attended with as much metaphysical difficulty as the struggle in the Christian's mind referred to here.

(c) The same thing was observed and described in the writings of the heathen. Thus Xenophon, (Cyrop. vi. 1,) Araspes, the Persian, says in order to excuse his treasonable designs, "Certainly I must have two souls; for plainly it is not one and the same which is both evil and

good; and at the same time wishes to do a thing and not to do it. Plainly, then, there are two souls; and when the good one prevails, then it does good; and when the evil one predominates, then it does evil." So also Epictetus (Enchirid. ii. 26) says, "He that sins does not do what he would; but what he would not, that he does." With this passage it would almost seem that Paul was familiar, and had his eye on it when he wrote. So also the well known passage from Ovid, Meta. vii. 9:

Aliudque Cupido,
Mens aliud suadet. Video meliora, proboque,
Deteriora sequor.

"Desire prompts to one thing, but the mind persuades to another. I see the good, and approve it, and yet pursue the wrong."—See other passages of similar import quoted in Grotius and Tholuck.
{1} "allow not" "know not"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *I consent unto the law*. The very struggle with evil shows that it is not loved, or approved, but that the law which condemns it is really loved. Christians may here find a test of their piety. The fact of struggling against evil—the desire to be free from it, and to overcome it, the anxiety and grief which it causes—is an evidence that we do not love it, and that therefore we are the friends of God. Perhaps nothing can be a more decisive test of piety than a long-continued and painful struggle against evil passions and desires in every form, and a panting of the soul to be delivered from the power and dominion of sin.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *It is no more I that do it*. This is evidently figurative language, for it is really the man that sins when evil is committed. But the apostle makes a distinction between *sin* and that which he intends by the pronoun *I*. By the former he evidently means his corrupt nature; by the latter he refers to his renewed nature, his Christian principles. He means to say that he does not approve or love it in his present state, but that it is the result of his native propensities and passions. In his heart, and conscience, and habitual feeling, he did not choose to commit sin, but abhorred it. Thus every Christian can say that he does not choose to do evil, but would wish to be perfect; that he hates sin, and yet that his corrupt passions lead him astray.

But sin. My corrupt passions and native propensities.

That dwelleth in me. Dwelling in me as its home. This is a strong expression, denoting that sin had taken up its habitation in the mind, and abode there. It had not yet been wholly dislodged. This expression stands in contrast with another that occurs, where it is said that "the Spirit of God dwells" in the Christian, Ro 8:9 1Co 3:16. The sense is, that he is strongly *influenced* by sin on the one hand; and by the Spirit on the other. From this expression has arisen the phrase so common among Christians, *indwelling sin*.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *For I know*. This is designed as an illustration of what he had just said, that sin dwelt in him.

That is, in my flesh. In my unrenewed nature; in my propensities and inclinations before conversion. Does not this qualifying expression show that in this discussion he was speaking of himself as a renewed man? Hence he is careful to imply that there was at that time in him something that was right or acceptable with God, but that that did not pertain to him by nature.

Dwelleth. His soul was wholly *occupied* by that which was evil. It had taken entire possession.

No good thing. There could not be possibly a stronger expression of belief of the doctrine of *total depravity*. It is Paul's own representation of himself. It proves that his heart was wholly evil. And if this was true of him, it is true of all others. It is a good way to examine ourselves, to inquire whether we have such a view of our own native character as to say that we *know* that in our flesh there dwelleth no good thing. The sense here is, that so far as the flesh was concerned—that is, in regard to his natural inclinations and desires— there was nothing good; all was evil. This was true in his entire conduct before conversion, where the desires of the flesh reigned and rioted without control; and it was true *after* conversion, so far as the natural inclinations and propensities of the flesh were concerned. All those operations in every state were evil, and not the less evil because they are experienced under the light and amidst the influences of the gospel.

To will. To purpose or intend to do good.

Is present with me. I can do that. It is possible; it is in my power. The expression may also imply that it was *near* to him, (*parakeitai*), that is, it was constantly before him; it was now his habitual inclination and purpose of mind. It is the uniform, regular, habitual purpose of the Christian's mind to do *right*.

But how. The sense would have been better retained here if the translators had not introduced the word *how*. The difficulty was not in the *mode* of performing it, but to do the *thing itself*.

I find not. I do not find it in my power; or I find strong, constant obstacles, so that I fail of doing it. The obstacles are not natural, but such as arise from long indulgence in sin; the strong native propensity to evil.

{t} "no good thing" Ge 6:5

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *For the good*, etc. This is substantially a repetition of what is said in Ro 7:15. The repetition shows how full the mind of the apostle was of the subject; and how much inclined he was to dwell upon it, and to place it in every variety of form. It is not uncommon for Paul thus to express his intense interest in a subject, by placing it in a great variety of aspects, even at the hazard of much repetition.

{u} "the good" Ga 5:17

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Now if I do*, etc. This verse is also a repetition of what was said in Ro 7:16,17.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *I find then a law*. There is a law whose operation I experience whenever I attempt to do good. There have been various opinions about the meaning of the word *law* in this place. It is evident that [it] is used here in a sense somewhat unusual. But it retains the notion which commonly attaches to it of that which binds, or controls. And though this to which he refers differs from a law, inasmuch as it is not imposed by a superior, which is the usual idea of a law, yet it has so far the sense of law that it binds, controls, influences, or is that to which he was subject. There can be no doubt that he refers here to his carnal and corrupt nature; to the evil propensities and dispositions which were leading him astray. His representing this as a *law* is in accordance with all that he says of it, that it is *servitude*, that he is in bondage to it, and that it impedes his efforts to be holy and pure. The meaning is this: "I find a habit, a propensity, an influence of corrupt passions and desires, which, when I would do right, impedes my progress, and prevents my accomplishing what I would." Comp. Ga 5:17. Every Christian is as much acquainted with this as was the apostle Paul.

Do good. Do right. Be perfect.

Evil. Some corrupt desire, or improper feeling, or evil propensity.

Is present with me. Is near; is at hand. It starts up unbidden, and undesired. It is in the path, and never leaves us, but is always ready to impede our going, and to turn us from our good designs. Comp. Ps 65:3, "Iniquities *prevail* against me." The sense is, that to do evil is agreeable to our strong natural inclinations and passions.

{v} "evil is present" Ps 65:3

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *For I delight*. The word used here (*sunhdomai*) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It properly means, to rejoice with any one; and expresses not only *approbation* of the understanding, as the expression, "I *consent* unto the law," in Ro 7:16, but, more than that, it denotes sensible pleasure in the heart. It indicates not only *intellectual* assent, but *emotion*—an emotion of pleasure in the contemplation of the law. And this shows that the apostle is not speaking of an unrenewed man. Of such a man it might be said that his conscience approved the law; that his understanding was convinced that the law was good; but never yet did it occur that an impenitent sinner found emotions of pleasure in the contemplation of the pure and spiritual law of God. If this expression can be applied to an unrenewed man, there is, perhaps, not a single mark of a pious mind which may not with equal propriety be so applied. It is the natural, obvious, and usual mode of denoting the feelings of piety, an assent to the Divine law followed with emotions of sensible delight in the contemplation. Comp. Ps 119:97, "O how love I thy law; it is my meditation all the day." Ps 1:2, "But his delight is in the law of the Lord." Ps 19:7-11 Job 23:12.

In the law of God. The word *law* here is used, in a large sense, to denote all the communications which God had made to control man. The sense is, that the apostle was pleased with the whole. One mark of genuine piety is to be pleased with the whole of the Divine requirements.

After the inward man. In respect to the inward man. The expression "the inward man" is used sometimes to denote the rational part of man as opposed to the sensual; sometimes the mind as opposed to the body, (comp. 2Co 4:16 1Pe 3:4). It is thus used by the Greek classic writers. Here it is used evidently in opposition to a carnal and corrupt nature; to the evil passions and desires of the soul in an unrenewed state; to what is called elsewhere "the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts," Eph 4:22. The "inward man" is elsewhere called "the *new* man," (Eph 4:24) and denotes not the mere intellect, or conscience, but is a personification of the principles of action by which a Christian is governed; the new nature; the holy disposition; the inclination of the heart that is renewed.

{w} "delight" Ps 1:2 {x} "inward man" 2Co 4:16 1Pe 3:4

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *But I see another law*. **See Barnes "Ro 7:21"**.

In my members. In my body; in my flesh; in my corrupt and sinful propensities. **See Barnes "Ro 6:13"**.

Comp. 1Co 6:15 Col 3:5 The body is composed of many members; and as the flesh is regarded as the source of sin, (Ro 7:18) the law of sin is said to be in the members, i.e. in the body itself.

Warring against, fighting against; or resisting.

The law of my mind. This stands opposed to the prevailing inclinations of a corrupt nature. It means the same as was expressed by the phrase "the inward man," and denotes the desires and purposes of a renewed heart.

And bringing me into captivity. Making me a prisoner, or a captive. This is the completion of the figure respecting the warfare. A captive taken in war was at the disposal of the victor. So the apostle represents himself as engaged in a warfare; and as being overcome, and made an unwilling captive to the evil inclinations of the heart. The expression is strong; and denotes strong corrupt

propensities. But though strong, it is believed it is language which all sincere Christians can adopt of themselves, as expressive of that painful and often disastrous conflict in their bosoms when they contend against the native propensities of their hearts.

{z} "captivity to the law" Ps 142:7

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *O wretched man that I am*! The feeling implied by this lamentation is the result of this painful conflict; and this frequent subjection to sinful propensities. The effect of this conflict is

(1.) to produce pain and distress, it is often an agonizing struggle between good and evil; a struggle which annoys the peace, and renders life wretched.

(2.) It tends to produce humility. It is humbling to man to be thus under the influence of evil passions. It is degrading to his nature; a stain on his glory; and it tends to bring him into the dust, that he is under the control of *such* propensities, and so often gives indulgence to them. In such circumstances, the mind is overwhelmed with wretchedness, and instinctively sighs for relief. Can the law aid? Can man aid? Can any native strength of conscience or of reason aid? In vain all these are tried, and the Christian then calmly and thankfully acquiesces in the consolations of the apostle, that aid can be obtained only through Jesus Christ.

Who shall deliver me. Who shall rescue me; the condition of a mind in deep distress, and conscious of its own weakness, and looking for aid.

The body of this death. Marg. *This body of death*. The word *body* here is probably used as equivalent to *flesh*, denoting the corrupt and evil propensities on the soul. **See Barnes "Ro 7:18"**.

It is thus used to denote the law of sin in the members, as being that with which the apostle was struggling, and from which he desired to be delivered. The expression "body of this death" is a Hebraism, denoting a body deadly in its tendency; and the whole expression may mean the corrupt principles of man; the carnal, evil affections that lead to death or to condemnation. The expression is one of vast strength, and strongly characteristic of the apostle Paul. It indicates,

(1.) that it was near him, attending him, and was distressing in its nature.

(2.) An earnest wish to be delivered from it. Some have supposed that he refers to a custom practised by ancient tyrants, of binding a dead body to a captive as a punishment, and compelling him to drag the cumbersome and offensive burden with him wherever he went. I do not see any evidence that the apostle had this in view. But such a fact may be used as a striking and perhaps not improper illustration of the meaning of the apostle here. No strength of words could express deeper feeling; none more feelingly indicate the necessity of the grace of God to accomplish that to which the unaided human powers are incompetent.

{a} "O wretched" Ps 38:2,10, 77:3-9

{1} "the body" or, "this body of death"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *I thank God*. That is, I thank God for effecting a deliverance to which I am myself incompetent. There is a way of I of rescue, and trace it altogether to his mercy in the Lord Jesus Christ. What conscience could not do, what the law could not do, what unaided human strength could not do, has been accomplished by the plan the gospel; and complete deliverance can be expected there, and there alone. This is the point to which all his reasoning had tended; and having thus shown that the law was insufficient to effect this deliverance, he is now prepared to utter the language of Christian thankfulness that it can be effected by the gospel. The superiority of the gospel to the law, in overcoming all the evils under which man labours, is thus triumphantly established. Comp. 1Co 15:57.

So then. As the result of the whole inquiry we have come to this conclusion.

With the mind. With the understanding, the conscience, the purposes or intentions of the soul. This is a characteristic of the renewed nature. Of no impenitent sinner could it be ever affirmed that with his mind he served the law of God.

I myself. It is still the same person, though acting in this apparently contradictory manner.

Serve the law of God. Do honour to it as a just and holy law, (Ro 7:12,16) and am inclined to obey it, Ro 7:22,24.

But with the flesh. The corrupt propensities and lusts, Ro 7:18.

The law of sin. That is, in the members. The flesh throughout, in all its native propensities and passions, leads to sin; it has no tendency to holiness; and its corruptions cart be overcome only by the grace of God. We have thus

(1.) a view of the sad and painful conflict between sin and God. They are opposed in all things.

(2.) We see the raging, withering effect of sin on the soul. In all circumstances it tends to death and woe.

(3.) We see the feebleness of the law and of conscience to overcome this. The tendency of both is to produce conflict and woe. And

(4.) we see that the gospel only can overcome sin. To us it should be a subject of ever-increasing thankfulness, that what could not be accomplished by the law can be thus effected by the gospel; and that God has devised a plan that thus effects complete deliverance, and which gives to the captive in sin an everlasting triumph.

{e} "I thank God" 1Co 15:57

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 8

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 1

ROMANS CHAPTER 8

INTRODUCTION

THIS chapter is one of the most interesting and precious portions of the sacred Scriptures. Some parts of it are attended with great difficulties; but its main scope and design is apparent to all. It is a continuation of the subject discussed in the previous chapter, and is intended mainly to show that the gospel could effect what the law was incapable of doing. In that chapter the apostle had shown that the law was incapable of producing sanctification or peace of mind. He had traced its influence on the mind in different conditions, and shown that, equally before regeneration and afterwards, it was incapable of producing peace and holiness. Such was man, such were his propensities, that the application of *law* only tended to excite, to irritate, to produce conflict. The conscience, indeed, testified to the law that it was good; but still it had shown that it was not adapted to produce holiness of heart and peace, but agitation, conflict, and a state of excited sin. In opposition to this, he proceeds to show in this chapter the power of the gospel to produce that which the law could not. In doing this, he illustrates the subject by several considerations.

(1.) The gospel does what the law could not do in giving life, and delivering from condemnation, Ro 8:1-13.

(2.) It produces a spirit of *adoption*, and all the blessings which result from the filial confidence with which we can address God as our Father, in opposition to the law which produced only terror and alarm, Ro 8:14-17.

(3.) It sustains the soul amidst its captivity to sin, and its trials, with the hope of a future deliverance—a complete and final redemption of the body from all the evils of this life, Ro 8:18-25.

(4.) It furnishes the aid of the Holy Spirit to sustain us in our trials and infirmities, Ro 8:26,27.

(5.) It gives the assurance that all things shall work together for good, since all things are connected with the purpose of God; and all that can occur to a Christian comes in as a part of the *plan* of him who has resolved to save him, Ro 8:28-30.

(6.) It ministers consolation from the fact that everything that can affect the happiness of man is *on the side* of the Christian, and will co-operate in his favour; as, e.g.

(a) God, in giving his Son, and in justifying the believer, Ro 8:31-33.

(b) *Christ*, in dying, and rising, and interceding for Christians, Ro 8:34.

(c) The love of a Christian to the Saviour is in itself so strong that nothing can separate him from it, Ro 8:35-39. By all these considerations the superiority of the gospel to the law is shown, and assurance is given to the believer of his final salvation. By this interesting and conclusive train of reasoning, the apostle is prepared for the triumphant language of exultation with which he closes this most precious portion of the word of God.

Verse 1. There is, *therefore, now*. This is connected with the closing verses of chapter 7. The apostle had there shown that the law could not effect deliverance from sin, but that such deliverance

was to be traced to the gospel alone, Ro 7:23-25. It is implied here that there *was* condemnation under the law, and would be still, but for the intervention of the gospel.

No condemnation. This does not mean that sin in believers is not to be condemned as much as anywhere, for the contrary is everywhere taught in the Scriptures; but it means,

(1.) that the gospel does not pronounce condemnation like the law. Its office is to pardon; the office of the law, to condemn. The one never affords deliverance, but always condemns; the object of the other is to free from condemnation, and to set the soul at liberty.

(2.) There is no *final* condemnation under the gospel. The office, design, and tendency of the gospel is to free from the condemning sentence of law. This is its first and its glorious announcement, that it frees lost and ruined men from a most fearful and terrible condemnation.

Which are in Christ Jesus. Who are united to Christ. To be *in* him is an expression not seldom used in the New Testament, denoting close and intimate union, Php 1:1 3:9; 2Co 5:17 Ro 16:7-11.

The union between Christ and his people is compared to that between the vine and its branches, (Joh 15:1-6) and hence believers are said to be in him in a similar sense, as deriving their support from him, and as united in feeling, in purpose, and destiny.

Who walk. Who conduct, or live. **See Barnes "Ro 4:12"**.

Not after the flesh. Who do not live to gratify the corrupt desires and passions of the flesh. **See Barnes "Ro 7:18"**.

This is a characteristic of a Christian. What it is to walk after the flesh may be seen in Ga 5:19-21. It follows, that a man whose purpose of life is to gratify his corrupt desires cannot be a Christian. Unless he lives not to gratify his flesh, he can have no evidence of piety. This is a test which is easily applied; and if every professor of religion were honest, there could be no danger of mistake, and there need be no doubts about his true character.

But after the Spirit. As the Holy Spirit would lead or prompt. What the Spirit produces may be seen in Ga 5:22,23. If a man has these fruits of the Spirit, he is a Christian; If not, he is a stranger to religion, whatever else he may possess. And *this* test also is easily applied.

{d} "no condemnation" Joh 3:18 {e} "walk not after" Ga 5:16

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *For the law*. The word law here means that *rule, command*, or *influence* which "the Spirit of life" produces. That exerts a *control* which is here called a *law*, for a law often means anything by which we are ruled or governed. **See Barnes** "Ro 7:21, **See Barnes "Ro 7:23"**.

Of the Spirit. I see no reason to doubt here that this refers to the Holy Spirit. Evidently, at the close of Ro 8:1, the word has this reference. The phrase "the Spirit of life" then means the Holy Spirit producing or giving life; i.e. giving peace, joy, activity, salvation; in opposition to the law, spoken of in chapter 7, that produced death and condemnation.

In Christ Jesus. Under the Christian religion: or sent by Christ to apply his work to men, Joh 16:7-14. The Spirit is sent by Christ; his influence is a part of the Christian scheme; and his power accomplishes that which the law could not do.

Hath made me free. That is, has delivered me from the predominating influence and control of sin. He cannot mean that he was perfect, for the whole tenor of his reasoning is opposed to that.

But the design, the tendency, and the spirit of the gospel was to produce this freedom from what the law could not deliver; and he was now brought under the general power of this scheme. In the former state he was under a most bitter and galling bondage, Ro 7:7-11. Now he was brought under the influence of a scheme which contemplated freedom, and which produced it.

The law of sin and death. The controlling influence of sin, leading to death and condemnation, Ro 7:5-11.

{f} "life in Christ" 2Co 3:6. {g} "free from the law" Ga 2:19 5:1.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *For what the law could not do*. The law of God, the moral law. It could not free from sin and condemnation. This the apostle had fully shown in chapter 7.

In that. Because.

It was weak. It was feeble and inefficacious. It could not accomplish it.

Through the flesh. In consequence of the strength of sin, and of the evil and corrupt desires of the unrenewed heart. The fault was not in the law, which was good, (Ro 7:12) but it was owing to the strength of the natural passions and the sinfulness of the unrenewed heart. See Ro 7:7-11, where this influence is fully explained.

God, sending his own Son. That is, God did or accomplished that, by sending his Son, which the law could not do. The word *did*, or *accomplished*, it is necessary to understand here, in order to complete the sense.

In the likeness of sinful flesh. That is, he so far resembled sinful flesh that he partook of flesh, or the nature of man, but without any of its sinful propensities or desires. It was not human nature; not, as the Docetae taught, human nature in appearance only; but it was human nature without any of its corruptions.

And for sin Margin, "By a sacrifice for sin." The expression evidently means, by an offering for sin, or that he was given as a sacrifice on account of sin. His being given had respect to sin.

Condemned sin in the flesh. The *flesh* is regarded as the source of sin. **See Barnes "Ro 7:18"**.

The flesh being the seat and origin of transgression, the atoning Sacrifice was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, that thus he might meet sin, as it were, on its own ground, and destroy it. He may be said to have condemned sin in this manner,

(1.) because the fact that he was given for it, and died on its account, was a condemnation of it. If sin had been approved by God, he would not have made an atonement to secure its destruction. The depth and intensity of the woes of Christ on its account show the degree of abhorrence with which it is regarded by God.

(2.) The word *condemn* may be used in the sense of *destroying*, *overcoming*, or *subduing*. 2Pe 2:6, "And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, *condemned* them with an overthrow." In this sense the sacrifice of Christ has not only condemned sin as being evil, but has weakened its power and destroyed its influence, and will finally annihilate its existence in all who are saved by that death.

{h} "law could not do" Ac 13:39 Heb 7:18,19

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *That the righteousness of the law*. That we might be conformed to the law, or be obedient to its requirements, and no longer under the influence of the flesh and its corrupt desires.

Might be fulfilled. That we might be obedient, or comply with its demands.

Who walk. **See Barnes "Ro 8:1"**.

{k} "walk not" Ro 8:1

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *For they that are after the flesh*. They that are under the influence of the corrupt and sinful desires of the flesh, Ga 5:19-21. Those who are unrenewed.

Do mind the things of the flesh. They are supremely devoted to the gratification of their corrupt desires.

But they that are after the Spirit. Who are under its influence; who are led by the Spirit.

The things of the Spirit. Those things which the Spirit produces, or which he effects in the mind, Ga 5:22, 23.

This verse is for the purpose of illustration, and is designed to show that the tendency of religion is to produce as entire a devotedness to the service of God as men had before rendered to sin; that is, that they would be fully engaged in that to which they had devoted themselves. As the Christian, there- fore, had devoted himself to the service of the Spirit, and had been brought under his influence, it was to be expected that he would make it his great and only object to cherish and cultivate the graces which that Spirit would produce.

{l} "the flesh do mind" Joh 3:6 1Co 15:48

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *For to be carnally minded*. Margin, "The minding of the flesh." The sense is, that to follow the inclinations of the flesh. or the corrupt propensities of our nature, leads to condemnation and death. The expression is one of great energy, and shows that it not only *leads* to death, or leads to misery, but that it is death itself; there is woe and condemnation in the *very act and purpose* of being supremely devoted to the corrupt passions. Its only tendency is condemnation and despair.

Is death. The penalty of transgression; condemnation and eternal ruin. **See Barnes "Ro 5:12"**.

But to be spiritually minded. Margin, "The minding of the Spirit." That is, making it the object of the mind, the end and aim of the actions, to cultivate the graces of the Spirit, and to submit to his influence. To be spiritually minded is to seek those feelings and views which the Holy Spirit produces, and to follow his leadings.

Is life. This is opposed to *death* in Ro 8:6. It tends to life, and is in fact real life. For, to possess and cultivate the graces of the Spirit, to be led where he would guide us, is the design of our existence, and is the only path of happiness.

And peace. **See Barnes "Ro 6:1".**

{1} "For to be carnally minded", or "the minding of the flesh" {n} "but to be" Gal 6:8 {2} "spiritually minded", or "the minding of the spirit"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Because*. This is given as a reason for what is said in Ro 8:6. In that verse the apostle had affirmed that to be carnally minded was death, but he had not stated *why* it was. He now explains it by saying that it is enmity against God, and thus involves a sinner in conflict with him, and exposes to his condemnation.

The carnal mind. This is the same expression as occurs in Ro 8:6, (*to fronhma thv sarkov*). It does not mean the mind itself, the intellect, or the will; it does not suppose that the mind or soul is *physically* depraved, or opposed to God; but it means that *the minding of the things of the flesh*, giving to them supreme attention, is hostility against God; and involves the sinner in a controversy with him, and hence leads to death and woe. This passage should not he alleged in proof that the *soul is physically depraved*, but merely that where there is a supreme regard to the flesh there is hostility to God. It does not directly prove the doctrine of universal depravity; but it proves only that where such attention exists to the corrupt desires of the soul, *there* is hostility to God. It is indeed *implied* that that supreme regard to the flesh exists everywhere by nature, but this is not expressly affirmed; for the object of the apostle here is not to teach the doctrine of depravity, but to show that where such depravity in fact exists, it involves the sinner in a fearful controversy with God.

Is enmity. Hostility; hatred. It means, that such a regard to the flesh is in fact hostility to God, because it is opposed to his law, and to his plan for purifying the soul. Comp. Jas 4:4 1Jo 2:15. The minding of the things of the flesh also leads to the hatred of *God himself*, because he is opposed to it, and has expressed his abhorrence of it.

Against God. Towards God; or in regard to him. It supposes hostility to him.

For it. The word "*it*" here refers to the minding of the things of the flesh. It does not mean that the *soul itself* is not subject to his law, but that the *minding* of those things is hostile to his law. The apostle does not express any opinion about the metaphysical ability of man, or discuss that question at all. The amount of his affirmation is, simply, that the minding of the flesh, the supreme attention to its dictates and desires, is not and cannot be subject to the law of God. They are wholly contradictory and irreconcilable, just as much as the love of falsehood is inconsistent with the laws of truth; as intemperance is inconsistent with the law of temperance; and as adultery is a violation of the seventh commandment. But whether the *man himself* might not obey the law—whether he has, or has not, ability to do it—is a question which the apostle does not touch, and on which this passage should not be adduced. For, whether the law of a particular sin is utterly irreconcilable with an opposite virtue, and whether the sinner is able to abandon that sin and pursue a different path, are very different inquiries.

Is not subject. It is not in *subjection* to the command of God. The minding of the flesh is opposed to that law, and thus shows that it is hostile to God.

Neither indeed can be. This is absolute and certain. It is impossible that it should be. There is the utmost inability in regard to it. The things are utterly irreconcilable. But the affirmation does not mean that the *heart* of the sinner might not be subject to God; or that his soul is so physically depraved that he cannot obey, or that he might not obey the law. On that the apostle here expresses no opinion. That is not the subject of the discussion. is simply that the supreme regard to the flesh, the minding of that is *utterly irreconcilable* with the law of God. They are different things and *can never* be made to harmonize; just as adultery *cannot* be chastity; falsehood *cannot* be truth; dishonesty *cannot* be honesty; hatred *cannot* be love. This passage, therefore, should not be adduced to prove the doctrine of man's inability to love God, for it does not refer to that; but it proves merely that a supreme regard to the things of the flesh is utterly inconsistent with the law of God— can never be reconciled with it; and involves the sinner in hostility with his Creator.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *So then*. It follows; it leads to this conclusion.

They that are in the flesh. They who are unrenewed sinners; who are following supremely the desires of the flesh, Ro 7:18. Those are meant here who follow fleshly appetites and desires, and who are not led by the Spirit of God.

Cannot please God. That is, while they are thus in the flesh; while they thus pursue the desires of their corrupt nature, they cannot please God. But this affirms nothing respecting their ability to turn from this course, and to pursue a different mode of life. That is a different question. A child may be obstinate, proud, and disobedient; and, *while in this state*, it may be affirmed of him that he cannot please his parent. But whether he might not *cease* to be obstinate, and become obedient, is a very different inquiry; and the two subjects should never be confounded: It follows from this,

(1.) that those who are unrenewed are *totally* depraved, since in this state they cannot please God.

(2.) That none of their actions, while in this state can be acceptable to him, since he is pleased only with those who are spiritually minded.

(3.) That those who are in this state should turn from it without delay; as it is desirable that every man *should* please God.

(4.) That if the sinner does not turn from his course, he will be ruined. With his present character he can never please him; neither in health nor sickness; neither in life nor death; neither on earth nor in hell. He is engaged in hostility against God; and if he does not himself forsake it, it will be endless, and involve his soul in all the evils of a personal, and direct, and eternal warfare with the Lord Almighty.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *But ye.* You who are Christians. This is the opposite character to that which he had been describing, and shows the power of the gospel.

Not in the flesh. Not under the full influence of corrupt desires and passions.

But in the Spirit. That is, you are spiritually minded; you are under the direction and influence of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit of God. The Holy Ghost.

Dwell in you. The Holy Spirit is often represented as dwelling in the hearts of Christians, (comp. 1Co 3:16,17, 6:19 2Co 6:16; Eph 2:21,22; Ga 4:6) and the meaning is not that there is a personal or physical indwelling of the Holy Ghost, but that he influences, directs, and guides Christians, producing meekness, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, etc., Ga 5:22,23. The expression, *to dwell in one*, denotes intimacy of connexion, and means that those things which are the fruits of the Spirit are produced in the heart.

Have not the Spirit of Christ. The word spirit is used in a great variety of significations in the Scriptures. It most commonly in the New Testament refers to the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Ghost. But the expression "the Spirit *of Christ*" is not, I believe, anywhere applied to him, except it may be 1Pe 1:11. He is called often the Spirit of God, (Mt 3:16 12:28; 1Co 2:11,14, 3:16 6:11

Eph 4:30) but not the Spirit of the Father. The word spirit is often used to denote the temper, disposition; thus we say, a man of a generous *spirit*, or of a revengeful *spirit*, etc. It may possibly have this meaning here; and denotes that he who has not the temper or disposition of Christ is not his, or has no evidence of piety. But the connexion seems to demand that it should be understood in a sense similar to the expression "the Spirit of God," and "the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus," (Ro 8:11) and if so, it means the Spirit which Christ imparts, or sends to accomplish his work, (Joh 14:26) the Holy Spirit, sent to make us like Christ, and to sanctify our hearts. And in this sense it evidently denotes the Spirit which Christ would send to produce in us the views and feelings which he came to establish, and which shall assimilate us to himself. If this refers to the Holy Spirit, then we see the manner in which the apostle spoke of the Saviour. He regarded "the Spirit" as equally the Spirit of God and of Christ, as proceeding from both; and thus evidently believed that there is a union of nature between the Father and the Son. Such language could never be used except on the supposition that the Father and the Son are one; that. is, that Christ is Divine.

Is none of his. Is not a Christian. This is a test of piety that is easily applied; and this settles the question. If a man is not influenced by the meek, pure, and holy spirit of the Lord Jesus, if he is not conformed to his image, if his life does not resemble that of the Saviour, he is a stranger to religion. No test could be more easily applied, and none is more decisive. It matters not what else he may have. He may be loud in his professions, amiable in his temper, bold in his zeal, or active in promoting the interests of his own party or denomination in the church; but if he has not the temper of the Saviour, and does not manifest his spirit, it is as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. May all who read this honestly examine themselves; and may they have that which is the source of the purest felicity, the spirit and temper of the Lord Jesus.

{o} "God dwell in you" 1Co 6:19 Ga 4:6

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *And if Christ be in you*. This is evidently a figurative expression, where the word "Christ" is used to denote his spirit, his principles; that is, he influences the man. Literally, he cannot be in a Christian; but the close connexion between him and Christians, and the fact that they are entirely under his influence, is expressed by this strong figurative language. It is language which m not unfrequently used. Comp. Ga 2:20 Col 1:27.

The body is dead. This passage has been interpreted in very different ways. Some understand it to mean that the body is dead *in respect to sin*; that is, that sin has no more power to excite evil passions and desires; others, that the body must die on account of sin, but that the spiritual part shall live, and even the body shall live also in the resurrection. Thus Calvin, Beza, and Augustine. Doddridge understands it thus: "Though the body is to die on account of the first sin that entered into the world, yet the spirit is life, and shall continue to live on for ever, through that righteousness which the second Adam has introduced." To each of these interpretations there are serious objections, which it is not necessary to urge. I understand the passage in the following manner: The *body* refers to that of which the apostle had said so much in the previous chapters—the flesh, the man before conversion. It is subject to corrupt passions and desires, and may be said thus to be dead, as it has none of the elements of spiritual life. It is under the reign of sin and death. The word (*men*)—*indeed*, or *truly*—has been omitted in our translation, and the omission has obscured the sense. The expression is an *admission* of the apostle, or a summary statement of what had before been shown. "It is to be admitted, indeed, or it is true, that the unrenewed nature, the man before conversion, under the influence of the flesh, is spiritually dead. Sin has its seat in the fleshly appetites; and the whole body may be admitted thus to be dead or corrupt."

Because of sin. Through sin, (*di amartian*) by means of sinful passions and appetites.

But the spirit. This stands opposed to the body; and it means that the soul, the immortal part, the renovated man, was alive, or was under the influence of living principles. It was imbued with the life which the gospel imparts, and had become active in the service of God. The word "spirit" here does not refer to the Holy Ghost, but to the spirit of man, the immortal part, recovered, renewed, and imbued with life under the gospel.

Because of righteousness. Through righteousness, (*dia dikaiosunhn*) This is commonly interpreted to mean, with reference to righteousness, or that it may become righteous. But I understand the expression to be used in the sense in which the word is so frequently used in this epistle, as denoting *God's plan of justification*. **See Barnes "Ro 1:17"**.

"The spirit of man has been recovered and made alive through his plan of justification. It communicates life, and recovers man from his death in sin to life."

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *But if the Spirit of him*, etc. The Holy Spirit, Ro 8:9. He that raised up Christ, etc. He that had *power* to restore him to life, has power to give life to you. He that did, *in fact*, restore him to life, will also restore you. The argument here seems to be founded, first, on the power of God; and, secondly, on the connexion between Christ and his people. Comp. Joh 14:19, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

Shall also quicken. Shall make alive.

Your mortal bodies. That this does not refer to the resurrection of the dead seems to be apparent, because that is not attributed to the Holy Spirit. I understand it as referring to the body, subject to carnal desires and propensities; by nature under the reign of death, and therefore mortal—i. e. subject to death. The sense is, that under the gospel, by the influence of the Spirit, the entire man will be made alive in the service of God. Even the corrupt, carnal, and mortal body, so long under the dominion of sin, shall be made alive and recovered to the service of God. This will be done by the Spirit that dwells in us, because that Spirit has restored life to our souls, abides with us with his purifying influence, and because the design and tendency of his indwelling is to purify the entire man, and restore all to God. Christians thus in their bodies and their spirits become sacred. For even their body, the seat of evil passions and desires, shall become alive in the service of God.

{p} "he that raised up" 2Co 4:14 {1} "by his Spirit" or, "because of"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *We are debtors*. We owe it as a matter of solemn obligation. This obligation arises

(1.) from the fact that the Spirit dwells in us;

(2.) because the design of his indwelling is to purify us;

(3.) because we are thus recovered from the death of sin to the life of religion; and he ,who has imparted life, has a right to require that it be spent in his service.

To the flesh. To the corrupt propensities and passions. We are not bound to indulge them, because the end of such indulgence is death and ruin, Ro 7:21,22. But we are bound to live to God, and to follow the leadings of his Spirit, for the end is life and peace, Ro 7:22,23. The reason for this is stated in the following verse.

{q} "not to the flesh" Ps 116:16

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *For if ye live*, etc. If you live to indulge your carnal propensities, you will sink to eternal death, Ro 7:23.

Through the Spirit. By the aid of the Spirit; by cherishing and cultivating his influences. What is here required can be accomplished only by the aid of the Holy Ghost.

Do mortify. Do put to death; do destroy. Sin is mortified when its power is destroyed and it ceases to be active.

The deeds of the body. The corrupt inclinations and passions; called *deeds of the body*, because they are supposed to have their origin in the fleshly appetites.

Ye shall live. You shall be happy and saved. Either your sins must die, or you must. If they are suffered to live, you will die. If they are put to death, you will be saved. No man can be saved in his sins. This closes the argument of the apostle for the superiority of the gospel to the law in promoting the purity of man. By this train of reasoning, he has shown that the gospel has

accomplished what the law could not do—the sanctification of the soul, the destruction of the corrupt passions of our nature, and the recovery of man to God.

{r} "do mortify" Col 3:5

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *For as many*. Whosoever; all who are thus led. This in- troduces a new topic, illustrating the benefits of the gospel—to wit, that it produces a spirit of adoption, Ro 8:14-17.

As are led. As submit to his influence and control. The Spirit is represented as influencing, suggesting, and controlling. One evidence of piety is, a willingness to *yield* to that influence, and submit to him. One decided evidence of the want of piety is, where there is an unwillingness to submit to that influence, but where the Holy Spirit is grieved and resisted. All Christians submit to his influence; all sinners decidedly reject it and oppose it. The influence of the Spirit, if followed, would lead every man to heaven. But when neglected, rejected, or despised, man goes down to hell. The glory belongs to the conducting Spirit when man is saved; the fault is man's when he is lost. The apostle here does not agitate the question how it is that the people of God are led by the Spirit, or why they yield to it when others resist it. His design is simply to state the fact, that they who are thus led are the sons of God, or have evidence of piety.

Are the sons of God. Are adopted into his family, and are his children. This is a name of endearment, meaning that they sustain to him this relation; that they are his friends, disciples, and imitators; that they are parts of the great family of the redeemed, of whom he is the Father and Protector. It is often applied to Christians in the Bible, Job 1:6 Joh 1:12; Php 2:15 1Jo 3:1,2 Mt 5:9,45 Lu 6:35.

This is a test of piety which is easily applied.

(1.) Are we conscious that an influence from above has been drawing us away from the corrupting passions and vanities of this world ? This is the work of the Spirit.

(2.) Are we conscious of a desire to yield to that influence, and to be conducted in the path of purity and life? This is an evidence that we are the sons of God.

(3.) Do we offer no resistance; do we follow cheerfully, and obey this pure influence, leading us to mortify pride, subdue passion, destroy lust, humble ambition, and annihilate the love of wealth and of the world? If so, we are his children. God will not lead us astray; and our peace and happiness consist only in *yielding* ourselves to this influence entirely, and in being willing to be conducted by this unseen hand "beside the still waters of salvation."

{s} "led by the spirit" Ga 5:18

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *The spirit of bondage*. The spirit that binds you; or the spirit of a slave, that produces only fear. The slave is under constant fear and alarm. But the spirit of religion is that of freedom and of confidence; the spirit of children, and not of slaves. Compare **See Barnes "Joh 8:32"**

through Joh 8:36.

Again to fear. That you should again be afraid, or be subjected to servile fear. This implies that in their former state, under the law, they were in a state of servitude, and that the tendency of it was merely to produce alarm. Every sinner is subject to such fear. He has everything of which to be alarmed. God is angry with him; his conscience will trouble him; and he has everything to apprehend in death and in eternity. But it is not so with the Christian. Comp. 2Ti 1:7.

The Spirit of adoption. The feeling of affection, love, and confidence which pertains to children; not the servile, trembling spirit of slaves, but the temper and affectionate regard of sons. Adoption is the taking and treating a stranger as one's own child. It is applied to Christians because God treats them as his children; he receives them into this relation, though they were by nature strangers and enemies. It implies,

(1.) that we by nature had no claim on him;

(2.) that, therefore, the act is one of mere kindness—of pure, sovereign love;

(3.) that we are now under his protection and care; and

(4.) that we are bound to manifest towards him the spirit of children, and yield to him obedience. **See Barnes "Joh 1:12".**

Comp. Ga 4:5 Eph 1:5. It is for this that Christians are so often called the sons of God.

Whereby we cry. As children who need protection and help. This evinces the habitual spirit of a child of God; a disposition,

(1.) to express towards him the feelings due to a father;

(2.) to call upon him— to address him in the language of affection and endearing confidence;

(3.) to seek his protection and aid.

Abba. This word is Chaldee—(

CHALDEE) —and means *father*. Why the apostle repeats the word in a different language is not known. The Syriac reads it, "By which we call the Father our Father." It is probable that the repetition here denotes merely intensity, and is designed to denote the interest with which a Christian dwells on the name, in the spirit of an affectionate, tender child. It is not unusual to repeat such terms of affection. Comp. Mt 7:22 Ps 8:1. This is an evidence of piety that is easily applied. He that can in sincerity and with ardent affection apply this term to God, addressing him with a filial spirit as his Father, has the spirit of a Christian. Every child of God has this spirit; and he that has it not is a stranger to piety.

{t} "bondage again to fear" 2Ti 1:7 {u} "but ye have" 1Co 2:12 {v} "whereby we cry" Jer 3:19 Ga 4:5,6

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *The Spirit* The Holy Spirit. That the Holy Spirit here is intended is evident,

(1.) because this is the natural meaning of the expression;

(2.) because it is of the Holy Spirit that the apostle is mainly treating here;

(3.) because it would be an unnatural and forced construction to say of the temper of adoption that it bore witness.

Beareth witness. Testifies, gives evidence.

With our spirit. To our minds. This pertains to the adoption; and it means, that the Holy Spirit furnishes evidence to our minds that we are adopted into the family of God. This effect is not unfrequently attributed to the Holy Spirit, 2Co 1:22 1Jo 5:10,11; 1Co 2:12. If it be asked how this is done, I answer, It is not by any revelation of new truth; it is not by inspiration; it is not always by assurance; it is not by a mere persuasion that we are elected to eternal life; but it is *by producing in us the appropriate effects of his influence*. It is his to renew the heart; to sanctify the soul; to produce "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," Ga 5:22,23. If a man has these, he has evidence of the witnessing of the Spirit with *his* spirit. If not, he has no such evidence. And the way, therefore, to ascertain whether we have this witnessing of the Spirit, is by an honest and prayerful inquiry whether these fruits of the Spirit actually exist in our minds. If they do, the evidence is clear. If not, all vain confidence.of good estate; all visions, and raptures, and fancied revelations, will be mere delusions. It may be added, that the *effect* of these fruits of the Spirit on the mind is to produce a calm and heavenly frame; and in that frame, when attended with the appropriate fruits of the Spirit in a holy life, we may rejoice as an evidence of piety.

That we are the children of God. That we are adopted into his family.

{w} "witness with our spirit" 2Co 1:22 1Jo 4:13

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *And if children*. If adopted into his family.

Then heirs. That is, he will treat us as sons. An *heir* is one who succeeds to an estate. The meaning here is, that if we sustain the relation of sons to God that we shall be treated as such, and admitted to share his favours. An adopted son comes in for a part of the inheritance, Nu 27.

Heirs of God. This expression means, that we shall be partakers of that inheritance which God confers on his people. That inheritance is his favour here, and eternal life hereafter. This is an honour infinitely higher than to be heir to the most princely earthly inheritance; or than to be the adopted son of the most magnificent earthly monarch.

And joint-heirs with Christ. Christ is by eminence *THE Son of God*. As such, he is heir to the full honours and glory of heaven. Christians are united to him; they are his friends; and they are thus represented as destined to partake with him of his glory. They are the sons of God in a different sense from what he is; *he* by his nature and high relation, they by adoption; but still the idea of *sonship* exists in both; and hence both will partake in the glories of the eternal inheritance. Comp. Php 2:8, 9Heb 2:9,10.

The connexion between Christ and Christians is often referred to in the New Testament. The fact that they are united here is often alleged as a reason why they will be in glory. Joh 14:19, "Because I live, ye shall live also." 2Ti 2:11,12, "For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with him." Re 3:21, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne," etc. Joh 17:22-24.

If so be. If this condition exist. We shall not be treated as co-heirs with him, unless we here give evidence that we are united to him.

That we suffer with him. Greek, "If we suffer together, that we may also be glorified together." If we suffer in his cause; bear afflictions as he did; are persecuted and tried for the same thing; and thus show that we are united to him. It does not mean that we suffer to the same *extent* that he did, but we may *imitate* him in the kind of our sufferings, and in the spirit with which they are borne; and thus show that *we are* united to him.

That we may be also glorified together. If united in the same kind of sufferings, there is propriety in being united in destiny beyond the scenes of all suffering, the kingdom of blessedness and love.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *For I reckon*. I think; I judge. This verse commences a new division of the subject, which is continued to Ro 8:25. Its design is to show the power of the gospel in sustaining the soul in trials: a very important and material part of the scheme. This had been partially noticed before, (Ro 5:3-5) but its full power to support the sold in the prospect of a glorious immortality had not been fully discussed. This topic seems here to have been suggested by what is said of *adoption*. The mind of the apostle instantly adverted to the effects or benefits of that adoption; and one of the most material of those benefits was the sustaining grace which the gospel imparted in the midst of afflictions. It should be borne in mind, that the early Christians were comparatively few and feeble, and exposed to many trials, and that this topic would be often, therefore, introduced into the discussions about theft privileges and condition.

The sufferings. The afflictions; the persecutions, sicknesses, etc. The expression evidently includes not only the *peculiar* trials of Christians at that time, but all that believers are ever called to endure.

Of this present time. Probably the apostle had *particular* reference to the various calamities then endured. But the expression is equally applicable to afflictions of all times and in all places.

Are not worthy to be compared. Are nothing in comparison; the one is far more than an equivalent in compensation for the other.

With the glory. The happiness; the honour in heaven.

Which shall be revealed in us. That shall be disclosed to us; or of which we shall be the partakers in heaven. The usual representation of heaven is that of glory, splendour, magnificence, or light. Comp. Re 21:10,23,24 22:5.

By this, therefore, Christians may be sustained. Their sufferings may seem great; but they should remember that they are nothing in comparison with future glory. They are nothing *in degree*. For these are light compared with that "eternal weight of glory" which they shall "work out," 2Co 4:17. They are nothing *in duration*. For these sufferings are but for a moment; but the glory shall be eternal. These will soon pass away; but that glory shall never become dim or diminished, it will increase and expand for ever and ever.

In us. Unto us, (*eiv hmav*).

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *For the earnest expectation*. (*apokaradokia*). This word occurs only here and in Php 1:20, "According to my *earnest expectation* and my hope," etc. It properly denotes a state of earnest desire to see any object when the head is thrust forward; an intense anxiety; an ardent wish; and is thus well employed to denote the intense interest with which a Christian looks to his future inheritance.

Of the creature. (*thv ktisewv*). Perhaps there is not a passage in the New Testament that has been deemed more difficult of interpretation than this, (Ro 8:19-23) and after all the labours bestowed on it by critics, still there is no explanation proposed which is perfectly satisfactory, or in which commentators concur. The object here will be to give what appears to the writer the true meaning, without attempting to controvert the opinions of critics. The *main design of the passage is to show the sustaining power of the gospel in the midst of trials, by the prospect of the future deliverance and inheritance of the sons of God*. This scope of the passage is to guide us in the interpretation. The following are, I suppose, the leading points in the illustration:

(1.) The word *creature* refers to the renewed nature of the Christian, or to the Christian as renewed.

(2.) He is waiting for his future glory; i. e. desirous of obtaining the full development of the honours that await him as the child of God, Ro 8:19.

(3.) He is subjected to a state of trial and vanity, affording comparatively little comfort and much disquietude.

(4.) This is not in accordance with the desire of his heart, "not willingly," but is the wise appointment of God, Ro 8:20.

(5.) In this state there is the hope of deliverance into glorious liberty, Ro 8:21.

(6.) This condition of things does not exist merely in regard to the Christian, but is the common condition of the world. It all groans, and is in trial, as much as the Christian. lie, therefore, should not deem his condition as peculiarly trying. It is the common lot of all things here, Ro 8:22. But

(7.) Christians only have the prospect of deliverance. To them is held out the hope of final rescue, and of an eternal inheritance beyond all these sufferings. They wait, therefore, for the full benefits of the adoption; the complete recovery even of the body from the effects of sin, and the toils and trials of this life; and thus they are sustained by hope, which is the argument which the apostle has in view, Ro 8:23,24. With this view of the general score of the passage, we may examine the particular phrases.

Of the creature. The word here rendered creature—(*ktisewv*) occurs in the New Testament nineteen times, and is used in the following senses:

(1.) Creation; the act of creating, Ro 1:20:

(2.) The creature; that which is created or formed; the universe, Mr 10:6 13:19; 2Pe 3:4 Ro 1:25, 8:39.

(3.) The rational creation; man as a rational being; the world of mankind, Mr 16:15 Col 1:23; 1Pe 2:13.

(4.) Perhaps the church, the new creation of God, taken collectively, Col 1:15 Re 3:14.

(5.) The *Christian*, the new creation, regarded individually; the work of the Holy Spirit on the renewed heart; the new man. —-After all the attention which I can give to this passage, I regard this to be the meaning here, for the following reasons, viz.:

(1.) Because this alone seems to me to suit the connexion, and to make sense in the argument. If the word refers, as has been supposed by different interpreters, either to angels, or to the bodies of men, or to the material creation, or to the rational creation—to men, or mankind—it is difficult to see what connexion either would have with the argument. The apostle is discoursing of the benefits of the gospel to *Christians* in time of trial; and the bearing of the argument requires us to understand this illustration of them, unless we are compelled not to understand it thus by the proper laws of interpreting words.

(2.) The word *creature* is used in a similar sense by the same apostle. Thus, 2Co 5:17, "If any man be in Christ, he is a *new creature*," (*kainh ktisiv*). Ga 6:15, "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a *new creature*."

(3.) The verb *create* is thus used. Thus, Eph 2:10, "For we are his workmanship, *created* in Christ Jesus unto good works." Ro 8:15, "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity—for to make in himself of twain one new man:" Greek, "That he might *create* (*ktish*) the two into one new man; Ro 4:24. "The new man, which *is created* in righteousness," etc.

(4.) Nothing was more natural than for the sacred writers thus to speak of a Christian as a new creation, a new creature. The great power of God involved in his conversion, and the strong resemblance between the creation and imparting spiritual life, led naturally to this use of the language.

(5.) Language similar to this occurs in the Old Testament, and it was natural to transfer it to the New. The Jewish people were represented as *made* or created by God for his service;and the phrase, therefore, might come to designate those who were thus formed by him to his service. De 32:6, "Hath he not *made thee*, and established thee?" Isa 43:7, "Every one that is called by my name: for I have *created* him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him."

@Ro 8:21, "This people have I *formed* for myself." From all which reasons, it seems to me that the expression here is used to denote Christians, renewed men. Its meaning, however, is varied in Ro 8:22.

Waiteth for. Expects; is not in a state of possession, but is looking for it with interest.

The manifestation of the sons of God. The full development of the benefits of the sons of God; the time when they shall be acknowledged, and received into the full privileges of sons. Here Christians have *some* evidence of their adoption. But they are in a world of sin; they are exposed to trials; they are subject to many calamities; and though they have evidence here that they are the sons of God, yet they wait for that period when they shall be fully delivered from all these trials, and be admitted to the enjoyment of all the privileges of the children of the Most High. The time when this shall take place will be at the day of judgment, when they shall be fully acknowledged, in the presence of an assembled universe, as his children. All Christians are represented as in this posture of waiting for the full possession of their privileges as the children of God. 1Co 1:7, "Waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2Th 3:5 Ga 5:5, "for we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith." 1Th 1:10.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *For the creature*. The renewed creature; the Christian mind. This is given as a reason for its *aspiring* to the full privileges of adoption; that the present state is not one of choice, or one which is preferred, but one to which it has been subjected for wise reasons by God.

Subject to vanity. The word "subject to" means placed in such a state; subjected to it by the appointment of another, as a soldier has his rank and place assigned him in an army. The word vanity here (*mataiothti*) is descriptive of the present condition of the Christian, as frail and dying; as exposed to trials, temptations, and cares; as in the midst of conflicts, and of a world which may be emphatically pronounced *vanity*. More or less, the Christian is brought under this influence; his joys are marred; his peace is discomposed; his affections wander; his life is a life of vanity and vexation.

Not willingly. Not voluntarily. It is not a matter of choice. It is not that which is congenial to his renewed nature. That would aspire to perfect holiness and peace. But this subjection is one that is contrary to it, and from which he desires to be delivered. This describes substantially the same condition as Ro 7:15-24.

But by reason. *By* him, (*dia*). It is the appointment of God, who has chosen to place his people in this condition; and who for wise purposes retains them in it.

Who hath subjected the same. Who has appointed his people to this condition. It is his wise arrangement. Here we may observe,

(1.) that the instinctive feelings of Christians lead them to desire a purer and a happier world, Php 1:23.

(2.) That it is not what they desire, to be subjected to the toils of this life, and to the temptations and vanities of this world. They sigh for deliverance.

(3.) Their lot in Life; their being subjected to this state of vanity, is the arrangement of God. *Why* it is, he has not seen fit to inform us fully. He *might* have taken his people at once to heaven as soon as they are converted. But though we know not all the reasons why they are continued here in this state of vanity, we can see some of them.

(a) Christians are subjected to this state to do good to their fellow-sinners. They remain on earth for this purpose; and this should be their leading aim.

(b) By their remaining here, the power of the gospel is shown in overcoming their sin; in meeting their temptations; in sustaining them in trial; and in thus furnishing living evidence to the world of the power and excellency of that gospel. This could not be attained if they were removed at once to heaven.

(c) It furnishes occasion for some interesting exhibitions of character—for hope, and faith, and love, and for increasing and progressive excellence.

(d) It is a proper *training* for heaven. It brings out the Christian character, and *fits* it for the skies. There may be inestimable advantages, all of which we may not see, in

subjecting the Christian to a process of training in overcoming his sins, and in producing confidence in God, before he is admitted to his state of final rest.

(e) It is fit and proper that he should engage here in the service of Him who has redeemed him. He has been ransomed by the blood of Christ, and God has the highest claim on him in all the conflicts and toils, in all the labours and services, to which he may be subjected in this life.

In hope. **See Barnes "Ro 5:4".**

Hope has reference to the future; and in this state of the Christian, he sighs for deliverance, and expects it.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Because*. This is the ground of his hope, and this sustains him now. It is the purpose of God that deliverance shall be granted, and this supports the Christian amidst the trials to which he is subjected here. The hope is, that this same renewed man shah be delivered from all the toils, and cares, and sins of this state.

The creature itself. The very soul that is renewed; the ransomed man without essential change. It will be the same being, though purified; the same man, possessed of the same body and soul, though freed from all the corruptions of humanity, and elevated above all the degradations of the present condition. The idea is everywhere presented, that the identical person shall be admitted to heaven without essential change, 1Co 15:35-38,42-44.

That this is the hope of all Christians, see 2Pe 3:13.

From the bondage of corruption. This does not differ materially from "vanity," Ro 8:20. It implies that this state is not a *willing* state, or not a condition of choice, but is one of bondage or servitude, (see Ro 7:15-24) and that it is a corrupt, imperfect, perishing condition. It is one that leads to sin, and temptation, and conflict, and anxiety. It is a condition often which destroys the peace, mars the happiness, dims the hope, enfeebles the faith, and weakens the love of Christians;and this is called the bondage of corruption. It is also one in which temporal death has dominion, and in the bondage of which believers as well as unbelievers shall be held. Yet from *all* this bondage the children of God shall be delivered.

The glorious liberty. Greek, The freedom of the glory of the children of God. This is,

(1.) liberty. It is freedom from the bondage under which the Christian groans. It will be freedom from sin; from corruption; from evil desires; from calamity; from death. The highest *freedom* in the universe is that which is enjoyed in heaven, where the redeemed are under the sovereignty and government of their King, but where they do that, and that only, which they desire. All is slavery but the service of God; all is bondage but that law which accords with the supreme wish of the soul, and where commands accord with the perfect desires of the heart.

(2.) This is *glorious* liberty. It is encompassed with majesty; attended with honour; crowned with splendour. The heavenly world is often described as a state of glory. **See Barnes "Ro 2:10".**

Of the children of God. That the children of God shall enjoy.
{e} "Because the creature" 2Pe 3:13

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *For we know*.The sentiment of this verse is designed as an illustration of what had just been said.

That the whole creation. Margin, "*every creature*." This expression has been commonly understood as meaning the same as "the creature" in Ro 8:20,21. But I understand it as having a different signification; and as being used in the natural and usual signification of the word creature, or creation. It refers, as I suppose, to the whole animate creation; to all living beings; to the state of all created things here, as in a condition of pain and disorder, and groaning and death. Everything which we see; every creature which lives, is thus subjected to a state of servitude, pain, vanity, and death. The reasons for supposing that this is the true interpretation are,

(1.) That the apostle expressly speaks of "the *whole* creation," of every creature, qualifying the phrase by the expression "we know," as if he was drawing an illustration from a well-understood, universal fact.

(2.) This interpretation makes consistent sense, and makes the verse have a direct bearing on the argument. *It is just an argument from analogy*, he had (Ro 8:20,21) said that the condition of a Christian was one of bondage and servitude. It was an imperfect, humiliating state; one attended with pain, sorrow, and death. This might be regarded as a melancholy description; and the question might arise, why was not the Christian at once delivered from this? The answer is in this verse. *It is just the condition of everything*. It is the manifest principle on which God governs the world. The whole creation is in just this condition; and we are not to be surprised, therefore, if it is the condition of the believer. It is a part of the universal system of things; it accords with everything we see; and we are not to be surprised that the church exists on the same principle of administration—in a state of bondage, imperfection, sorrow, and sighing for deliverance.

Groaneth. Greek, Groans together. All is united in a condition of sorrow. The expression denotes mutual and universal grief. It is one wide and loud lamentation, in which a dying world unites; and in which it has united "until now."

And travaileth in pain together. This expression properly denotes the extreme pain of parturition. It also denotes any intense agony, or extreme suffering; and it means here that the condition of all things has been that of intense, united, and continued suffering; in other words, that we are in a world of misery and death. This has been *united*; all have partaken of it: it has been *intense*; all endure much: it has been *unremitted*; every age has experienced the repetition of the same thing.

Until now. Till the time when the apostle wrote. It is equally true of the time since he wrote. It has been the characteristic of every age. It is remarkable that the apostle does not here say of "the whole creation," that it had any hope of deliverance; an additional consideration that shows that the interpretation above suggested is correct, Ro 8:20,21,23.

Of the sighing and suffering universe he says nothing with respect to its future state. He does not say that the suffering brutal creation shall be compensated, or shall be restored or raised up. He

simply adverts to the fact that it suffers, as an illustration that the condition of the Christian is not singular and peculiar. The Scriptures say nothing of the future condition of the brutal creation.

{1} "the whole creation" or, "every creature"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *And not only they*. Not only the creation in general.

But ourselves also. Christians.

Which have the first-fruits of the Spirit. The word used (*aparchn*) denotes, properly, the first-fruits of the harvest; the portion that was first collected and consecrated to God as an offering of gratitude, De 26:2 Ex 23:9; Nu 18:12.

Hence the word means that which is *first in order of time*. Here it means, as I suppose, that the Christians of whom Paul was speaking had partaken of the *first* influences of the Spirit, or had been among the first partakers of his influences in converting sinners. The Spirit had been sent down to attend the preaching of the gospel, and they were among the first who had partaken of those influences. Some, however, have understood the word to mean a pledge, or earnest, or foretaste of joys to come. This idea has been attached to the word because the first-fruits of the harvest were a pledge of the harvest, an evidence that it was ripe, etc. But the word does not seem to be used in this sense in the New Testament. The only places where it occurs are the following: Ro 8:23 11:16; Ro 16:5 1Co 15:20,23 16:15; Jas 1:18 Re 14:4.

Groan within ourselves. We sigh for deliverance. The expression denotes strong internal desire; the deep anguish of spirit when the heart is oppressed with anguish, and earnestly wishes for succour.

Waiting for the adoption. Waiting for the full blessings of the adoption. Christians are adopted when they are converted, (Ro 8:15) but they have not been yet admitted to the full privileges of their adoption into the family of God. Their adoption when they are converted is secret, and may at the time be unknown to the world. The fulness of the adoption, their complete admission to the privileges of the sons of God, shall be in the day of judgment, in the presence of the universe, and amidst the glories of the final con- summation of all things. This adoption is not different from the first, but is the completion of the act of grace when a sinner is received into the family of God.

The redemption of the body. The complete recovery of the body from death and corruption. The particular and striking act of the adoption in the day of judgment will be the raising up of the body from the grave, and rendering it immortal and eternally blessed. The particular effects of the adoption in this world are on *the soul*. The completion of it on the last day will be seen particularly in *the body*; and thus *the entire man* shall be admitted into the favour of God, and restored from all his sins and all the evil consequences of the fall. The apostle here speaks the language of every Christian. The Christian has joys which the world does not know; but he has also sorrows; he sighs over his corruption; he is in the midst of calamity; he is going to the grave; and he looks forward to that complete deliverance, and to that elevated state, when, in the presence of an assembled universe, he shall be acknowledged as a child of God. This elevated privilege gives to Christianity its high value; and the hope of being acknowledged in the presence of the universe as the child of God—the hope of the poorest and the humblest believer—is of infinitely more value than the prospect of the most princely inheritance, or of the brightest crown that a monarch ever wore.

{b} "first fruits of the Spirit" Eph 1:14 {c} "groan within ourselves" 2Co 5:2,4 {d} "redemption of our body" Lu 21:28

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *For we are saved by hope*. It cannot be said that *hope* is the instrument or condition of salvation. Most commentators have understood this as meaning that we have as yet attained salvation only *in* hope; that we have arrived only to a condition in which we hope for *future glory*; and that we are in an attitude of waiting for the future state of adoption. But perhaps the word *saved* may mean here simply, we are *kept, preserved, sustained* in our trials, by hope. Our trials axe so great that nothing but the prospect of future deliverance would uphold us; and the prospect is sufficient to enable us to bear them with patience. This is the proper meaning of the word *save*; and it is often thus used in the New Testament. See Mt 8:25 16:25; Mr 3:4 8:3,5.

The Syriac renders this, "For by hope we live." The Arabic, "We are preserved by hope." Hope thus sustains the soul in the midst of trials, and enables it to bear them without a murmur.

But hope that is seen. *Hope* is a complex emotion, made up of an earnest desire, and an expectation of obtaining an object. It has reference, therefore, to that which is at present unseen. But when the object is seen, and is in our possession, it cannot be said to be an object of hope. The word *hope* here means the *object* of hope, the thing hoped for.

What a man seeth. The word *seeth* is used here in the sense of possessing, or enjoying. What a man already possesses he cannot be said to hope for.

Why. How. What a man actually possesses, *how* can he look forward to it with anticipation ?

{e} "hope for" 2Co 5:7

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *But if we hope*, etc. The effect here stated is one which exists everywhere. Where there is a *strong desire* for an object, and a *corresponding expectation* of obtaining it—which constitutes true hope—then we can wait for it with patience. Where there is a strong desire without a corresponding expectation of obtaining it, there is *impatience*. As the Christian has a strong desire of future glory, and as he has an expectation of obtaining it just in proportion to that desire, it follows that he may bear trials and persecutions patiently in the hope of his future deliverance. Compared with our future glory, our present sufferings are light, and but for a moment, 2Co 4:17. In the hope of that blessed eternity which is before him, the Christian can endure the severest trial, and bear the intensest pain without a murmur.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Likewise the Spirit*. This introduces a new source of consolation and support, that which is derived from the Spirit. It is a continuation of the argument of the apostle, to show the sustaining power of the Christian religion. The "Spirit" here undoubtedly refers to the Holy Spirit, who dwells in us, and who strengthens us.

Helpeth. This word properly means, to sustain *with us*; to aid us in supporting. It is applied usually to those who *unite* in supporting or carrying a burden. The meaning may be thus expressed: "he greatly assists or aids us."

Our infirmities. Assists us in our infirmities, or aids us to bear them. The word *infirmities* refers to the weaknesses to which we are subject, and to our various trials in this life. The Spirit helps us in this,

(1.) by giving us strength to bear them;

(2.) by exciting us to make efforts to sustain them;

(3.) by ministering to us consolations, and truths, and views of our Christian privileges, that enable us to endure our trials.

For we know not, etc. This is a *specification* of the aid which the Holy Spirit renders us. The reasons why Christians do not know what to pray for may be,

(1.) that they do not know what would be really best for them.

(2.) They do not know what God might be willing to grant them.

(3.) They are to a great extent ignorant of the character of God, the reason of his dealings, the principles of his government, and their own real wants.

(4.) They are often in real, deep perplexity. They are encompassed with trials, exposed to temptations, feeble by disease, and subject to calamities. In these circumstances, ff left alone, they would neither be able to bear theft trials, nor know what to ask at the hand of God.

But the Spirit itself. The Holy Spirit, Ro 8:9-11.

Maketh intercession. The word here used—(*uperentugcanei*)——occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. The word—(*entugcanw*)—however, is used several times. It means, properly, to be present with any one for the purpose of aiding, as an advocate does in a court of justice; hence to intercede for any one, or to aid or assist in any manner. In this place it simply means that the Holy Spirit greatly assists or aids us; not by praying for us, but in our prayers and infirmities.

With groanings. With *sighs*, or that deep feeling and intense anxiety which exists in the oppressed and burdened heart of the Christian.

Which cannot be uttered. Or rather, perhaps, which is *not* uttered: those emotions which are too deep for utterance, or for expression in articulate language. This does not mean that the Spirit *produces* these groanings; but that in these deep-felt emotions, when the soul is oppressed and overwhelmed, he lends us his assistance and sustains us. The phrase may be thus translated: "The Spirit greatly aids or supports us in those deep emotions, those intense feelings, those inward sighs, which cannot be expressed in language, but which he enables us to bear, and which are understood by Him that searcheth the hearts."

{f} "the Spirit" Zec 12:10

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *And he that searcheth the hearts*. God. To search the heart is one of his attributes which cannot be communicated to a creature, Jer 17:10.

Knoweth what is *the mind of the Spirit*. Knows the desires which the Holy Spirit excites and produces in the heart. He does not need that those deep emotions should be expressed in words; he does not need the eloquence of language to induce him to hear; but he sees the anxious feelings of the soul, and is ready to aid and to bless.

Maketh intercession for the saints. Aids and directs Christians.

According to the will of God. Greek, "According to God." It is according to his will in the following respects:

(1.) The Spirit is given according to his will. It is his gracious purpose to grant his aid to all who truly love him.

(2.) The desires which he excites in the heart of the Christian are those which are according to his will; they are such as God wishes to exist —the contrite, humble, and penitent pleading of sinners for mercy.

(3.) He superintends and guards Christians in their prayers. It is not meant that they are infallible, or that they never make an improper petition, or have an improper desire; but that he has a *general* superintendence over their minds, and that so far as they will yield themselves to his direction, they shall not be led into error. That man is most safe who yields himself most entirely to the influence of the Holy Spirit. And the doctrine here stated is one that is full of consolation to the Christian. We are poor, and needy, and ignorant, and blind; we are the creatures of a day, and are crushed before the moth. But in the midst of our feebleness, we may look to God for the aid of his Spirit, and rejoice in his presence, and in his power to sustain us in our sighings, and to guide us in our wanderings.

{g} "he that searcheth" Jer 17:10 Re 2:23 {1} "because" or, "that" {h} "according to" 1Jo 5:14

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *And we know*. This verse introduces another source of consolation and support, drawn from the fact that all things are under the direction or an infinitely wise Being, who has purposed the salvation of the Christian, and who has so appointed all things that they shall contribute to it.

All things. All our afflictions and trials; all the persecutions and calamities to which we are exposed. Though they are numerous and long-continued, yet they are among the means that are appointed for our welfare.

Work together for good. They shall co-operate; they shall mutually contribute to our good. They take off our affections from this world; they teach us the truth about our frail, transitory, and dying condition; they lead us to look to God for support, and to heaven for a final home; and they produce a subdued spirit, a humble temper, a patient, tender, and kind disposition. This has been the experience of all saints; and at the end of life they have been able to say it was good for them to be afflicted, Ps 119:67,71; Jer 31:18,19; Heb 12:11.

For good. For our real welfare; for the promotion of true piety, peace, and happiness in our hearts.

To them that love God. This is a characteristic of true piety. To them, afflictions are a blessing; to others, they often prove otherwise. On others they are sent as chastisements; and they produce murmuring, instead of peace; rebellion, instead of submission; and anger, impatience, and hatred, instead of calmness, patience, and love. The Christian is made a better man by receiving afflictions as they should be received, and by desiring that they should accomplish the purpose for which they are sent; the sinner is made more hardened by resisting them, and refusing to submit to their obvious intention and design.

To them who are the called. Christians are often represented as called of God. The word (*klhtoiv*) is sometimes used to denote an external invitation, offer, or calling, Mt 20:16 22:14. But excepting in these places, it is used in the New Testament to denote those who had accepted the call, and were true Christians, Ro 1:6,7; 1Co 1:2,24; Re 17:14.

It is evidently used in this sense here—to denote those who were true Christians. The connexion, as well as the usual meaning of the word, requires us thus to understand it. Christians are said to be *called* because God has invited them to be saved, and has sent into their hearts such an influence as to make the call effectual to their salvation. In this way their salvation is to be traced entirely to God.

According to his purpose. The word here rendered *purpose* (*proyesin*) means, properly, a *proposition*, or a laying down anything in view of others; and is thus applied to the bread that was laid on the table of shew-bread, Mt 12:4 Mr 2:26; Lu 6:4.

Hence it means, when applied to the mind, a plan or purpose of mind. It implies that God had a *plan*, or *purpose*, or intention, in regard to all who became Christians. They are not saved by chance or hap-hazard. God does not convert men without design; and his designs are not new, but are eternal. What he does, he always meant to do. What it is right for him to do, it was right always to *intend* to do. What God always meant to do, is his purpose or plan. That he *has* such a purpose, in regard to the salvation of his people, is often affirmed, Ro 9:11 Eph 1:11, 3:11 2Ti 1:9; Jer 31:3.

This *purpose* of saving his people is

(1.) one over which a creature can have no control; it is according to the counsel of his own will, Eph 1:11.

(2.) It is without any merit on the part of the sinner—a purpose to save him by grace, 2Ti 1:9.

(3.) It is eternal, Eph 3:11.

(4.) It is such as should excite lively gratitude in all who have been inclined by the grace of God to accept the offers of eternal life. They owe it to the mere mercy of God, and they should acknowledge *him* as the fountain and source of all their hopes of heaven.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *For whom he did foreknow*. The word used here (*proegnw*) has been the subject of almost endless disputes in regard to its meaning in this place. The *literal* meaning of the word cannot be a matter of dispute. It denotes, properly, to *know beforehand*; to be acquainted with future events. But whether it means here simply to know that certain persons *would* become Christians, or to ordain and constitute them to be Christians, and to be saved, has been a subject of almost

endless discussion. Without entering at large into an investigation of the word, perhaps the following remarks may throw light on it.

(1.) It does not here have reference to *all* the human family; for all are not, and have not been, conformed to the image of his Son. It has reference, therefore, only to those who would become Christians, and be saved.

(2.) It implies *certain knowledge*. It was certainly foreseen, in some way, that they would believe, and be saved. There is nothing, therefore, in regard to them that is *contingent*, or subject to doubt in the Divine Mind, since it was certainly foreknown.

(3.) The event which was thus foreknown must have been, for some cause, *certain* and *fixed*; since an uncertain event could not be possibly foreknown. To talk of foreknowing a *contingent* event—that is, of foreknowing an event as certain which may or may not exist—is an absurdity.

(4.) In what way such an event became certain is not determined by the use of this word. But it must have been somehow in connexion with a Divine appointment or arrangement, since in no other way can it be conceived to be certain. While the *word* used here, therefore, does not of necessity mean to decree, yet its use supposes that there *was* a purpose or plan; and the phrase is an explanation of what the apostle had just said, that it *was according to the purpose of God* that they were called. This passage does not affirm *why*, or *how*,or on what grounds God foreknew that some of the human family would be saved. It simply affirms the fact; and the mode in which those who will believe were designated must be determined from other sources. This passage simply teaches that he knew them; that his eye was fixed on them; that he regarded them as to be conformed to his Son; and that, thus knowing them, he designated them to eternal life. The Syriac renders it in accordance with this interpretation: "And from the beginning he knew them, and sealed them with the image of his Son,' etc. As, however, none *would* believe but by the influences of his Spirit, it follows that they were not foreknown on account of any faith which they would themselves exercise, or any good works which they would themselves perform, but according to the purpose or plan of God himself.

He also did predestinate. See the meaning of the original of this word explained **See Barnes "Ro 1:4"**.

See Barnes "Ac 4:28, and 1Co 2:7. In these places the word evidently means to determine, purpose, or decree beforehand; and it *must* have this meaning here. No other idea could be consistent with the proper meaning of the word, or be intelligible. It is clear, also, that it does not refer to external privileges, but to real conversion and piety: since that to which they were predestinated was not the external privilege of the gospel, but conformity to his Son, and salvation. See Ro 8:30. No passage could possibly teach in stronger language that it was God's purpose to save those who will be saved. Eph 1:5, "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself." Eph 1:11, "Being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

To be conformed to the image of his Son. To resemble his Son; to be of like form with the image of his Son. We may learn here,

(1.) that God does not determine to save men, whatever their character may be. The decree is not to save them in their sins, or whether they be sinful or holy. But it has primary respect to their character. It is that they *should be holy*; and, as a consequence of this, that they should be saved.

(2.) The only evidence which we can have that we are the subjects of his gracious purpose is, that we are *in fact* conformed to the Lord Jesus Christ. For this was the design of the decree. This

is the only satisfactory proof of piety; and by this alone can we determine that we are interested in his gracious plan of saving men.

That he might be the first-born. The *first-born* among the Hebrews had many peculiar privileges. The idea here is,

(1.) that Christ might be preeminent as the model and exemplar; that he might be clothed with peculiar honours, and be so regarded in his church; and yet,

(2,) that he might still sustain a fraternal relation to them; that he might be one in the same great family of God, where all are sons. Comp. Heb 2:12-14.

Many brethren. Not a few. The purpose of God is that many of the human family shall be saved.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *Moreover*, etc. In this verse, in order to show to Christians the true consolation to be derived from the fact that they are predestinated, the apostle states the connexion between that predestination and their certain salvation. The one implied the other.

Whom he did predestinate. All whom he did predestinate.

Them he also called. Called by his Spirit to become Christians. He called, not merely by an *external* invitation, but in such a way as that they in fact were justified. This cannot refer simply to an *external* call of the gospel, since those who are here said to be called are said also to be justified and glorified. The meaning is, that there is a certain connexion between the predestination and the call, which will be manifested in due time. The connexion is so certain that the one infallibly secures the other.

He justified. **See Barnes "Ro 3:24"**.

Not that he justified them *from eternity*, for this was not true; and *if* it were, it would also follow that he *glorified* them from eternity, which would be an absurdity. It means that there is a regular *sequence* of events—the predestination precedes and secures the calling, and the calling precedes and secures the justification. The one is connected in the purpose of God with the other; and the one, *in fact*, does not take place without the other. The purpose was *in eternity*; the calling and justifying *in time*.

Them he also glorified. This refers probably to heaven. It means that there is a connexion between justification and glory. The one does not exist without the other in its own proper time; as the calling does not subsist without the act of justification. This *proves*, therefore, the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. There is a connexion infallible and everexisting between the predestination and the final salvation. They who are subjects of the one are partakers of the other. That this is the sense is clear,

(1.) because it is the natural and obvious meaning of the passage;

(2.) because this only would meet the design of the argument of the apostle. For how would it be a source of consolation to say to them, that whom God foreknew he predestinated, and whom he predestinated he called, and whom he called he justified, and whom he justified *might fall away and be lost for ever*?

{l} "called" Heb 9:15 {m} "justified" 1Co 6:11 {n} "glorified" Joh 17:22

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *What shall we then say*, etc. What fairly follows from the facts stated? or what conclusion shall we draw in regard to the power of the Christian religion to support us in our trials from the considerations which have been stated? What the influence is he proceeds to state.

If God be for us. Be on our side, or is our friend, as he has shown himself to be by adopting us, (Ro 8:15) by granting to us his Spirit, (Ro 8:16,17,26,27) and by his gracious purpose to save us, (Ro 8:29,30.)

Who can be against us? Who can injure or destroy us? Sinners may be against us, and so may the great enemy of our souls, but their power to destroy us is taken away. God is more mighty than all our foes; and he can defend and save us. See Ps 118:6, "The Lord is on my side, I will not fear what man can do unto me." The proposition advanced in this verse Paul proceeds to illustrate by various specifications, which continue to the end of the chapter.

{n} "If God" Ps 118:6

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *He that spared not*. Who did not retain, or keep from suffering and death.

His own Son. Who thus gave the *highest* proof of love that a father could give, and the highest demonstration of his willingness to do good to those for whom he gave him.

But delivered him up. Gave him into the hands of men, and to a cruel death. **See Barnes "Ac 2:23"**.

For us all. For all Christians. The connexion requires that this expression should be understood here with this limitation. The argument for the security of *all* Christians is here derived from the fact, that God had shown them equal love in giving his Son for them. It was not merely for the apostles; not only for the rich, and the great; but for the most humble and obscure of the flock of Christ. For them he endured as severe pangs, and expressed as much love, as for the rich and the great that shall be redeemed. The most humble and obscure believer may derive consolation from the fact that Christ died for him, and that God has expressed the highest love for him which we can conceive to be possible.

How shall he not. His giving his Son is a proof that he *will* give to us all things that we need. The argument is from the greater to the less. He that has given the greater gift will not withhold the less.

All things. All things that may be needful for our welfare. These things he will give *freely*; without money and without price. His first great gift, that of his Son, was a free gift; and all others that we may need will be given in a similar manner. It is not by money, nor by our merit, but it is by the mere mercy of God; so that from the beginning to the end of the work it is all of grace. We see here

(1.) the privilege of being a Christian. He has the friendship of God; has been favoured with the highest proofs of Divine love; and has assurance that he shall receive all that he needs.

(2.) He has evidence that God will continue to be his friend. He that has given *his* Son to die for his people will not withdraw the lesser mercies that may be necessary to secure their salvation.

The argument of the apostle here, therefore, is one that strongly shows that God will not forsake his children, but will keep them to eternal life.

{p} "spared not" Ro 5:6-10

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 33

Verse 33. Verse 33. *Who shall lay any thing to the charge*? This expression is taken from courts of law, and means, who shall accuse, or condemn, or so charge with crime before the tribunal of God as to cause their condemnation?

God's elect. His chosen people. Those who have been chosen according to his eternal purpose. **See Barnes "Ro 8:28"**.

As they are the chosen of God, they are dear to him; and as he purposed to save them, he will do it in such a way as that none can bring against them a charge that would condemn them.

It is God that justifieth. That is, who has pardoned them, and admitted them to his favour; and pronounced them just in his sight. **See Barnes "Ro 1:17"**; **See Barnes** "Ro 3:24".

It would be absurd to suppose that he would again condemn them. The fact that he has justified them is, therefore, a strong proof that they will be saved. This may be read with much force as a question, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? Shall God who justifieth " The Greek will bear either mode of rendering. The passage implies that there would be a high degree of absurdity in supposing that the same Being would both justify and condemn the same individual. The Christian, therefore, is secure.

{q} "Who shall lay" Isa 1:8,9 {r} "It is God" Re 12:10,11

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *Who is he that condemneth*? Who shall pass sentence of condemnation, and consign to perdition? The office of passing sentence of condemnation on men shall pertain to Christ, the Judge of quick and dead, and the apostle proceeds to say that it was certain that he would not condemn the elect of God. They were therefore secure,

It is *Christ that died*. Or, as it may be rendered, "Shall Christ, who has died, condemn them?" The argument here is, that as Christ died to save them, and not to destroy them, he will not condemn them. His death *for* them is a security that he will not condemn them. As he died to save them, and as they have actually embraced his salvation, there is the highest security that he will not condemn them. This is the first argument for their security from the death of Christ.

Yea rather, that is risen again. This is a *second* consideration for their security from his work. He rose for their justification, **See Barnes "Ro 4:25"**

and as this was the object which he had in view, it follows that he will not condemn them.

Who is even at the right hand of God. Invested with power, and dignity, and authority in heaven. This is a *third* consideration to show that Christ will not condemn us, and that Christians are secure. He is clothed with power; he is exalted to honour; he is placed at the head of all things. And this

solemn enthronement and investiture with power over the universe, is with express reference to the salvation of his church and people, Mt 28:18,19; Joh 17:2 Eph 1:20-23.

The Christian is, therefore, under the *protection* of Christ, and is secure from being condemned by him.

Who also maketh intercession for us. **See Barnes "Ro 8:26".**

Who pleads our cause; who aids and assists us; who presents our interests before the mercy-seat in the heavens, for this purpose he ascended to heaven, Heb 7:25. This is the *fourth* consideration which the apostle urges for the security of Christians drawn from the work of Christ. By all these, he argues their complete security from being subject to condemnation by him who shall pronounce the doom of all mankind, and therefore their complete safety in the day of judgment. Having the Judge of all for our friend, we are safe.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *Who shall separate us*. That is, finally or entirely separate us. This is a new argument of the apostle, showing his strong confidence in the safety of the Christian.

From the love of Christ. This expression is ambiguous; and may mean either our love to Christ, or his love to us. I understand it in the former sense, and suppose it means, "Who shall cause us to cease to love the Saviour?" In other words, the love which Christians have for their Redeemer is so strong, that it will surmount and survive all opposition and all trials. The reason for so understanding the expression is, that it is not conceivable how afflictions, etc., should have any tendency to alienate Christ's love *from us*; but the supposed tendency to alienate our love from him might be very strong. They are endured in his cause. They are caused, in a good degree, by professed attachment to him. The persecutions and trials to which Christians are exposed on account of their professed attachment to him, might be supposed to make them weary of a service that involved so many trials. But no, says the apostle. Our love for him is so strong that we are willing to bear all; and nothing that these foes of our peace can do, can alienate us from him and from his cause. The argument, therefore, is drawn from the strong love of a Christian to his Saviour; and from the assurance that nothing would be able to separate him from that love.

Shall tribulation. (*yliqiv*) **See Barnes "Ro 2:9".**

The word properly refers to pressure from without; affliction arising from external causes. It means however, not unfrequently, trial of any kind.

Or distress. (*stenocwria*). This word properly means, *narrowness of place*; and then, great anxiety and distress of mind, such as arises when a man does not know where to turn himself, or what to do for relief. It refers, therefore, to distress or anxiety of mind—such as the early Christians were often subject to from their trials and persecutions. 2Co 7:5, "Without were fightings, *within were fears*." **See Barnes** "Ro 2:9.

Or persecution. **See Barnes "Mt 5:11".**

To these the early Christians were constantly exposed.

Or famine. To this they were also exposed as the natural result of being driven from home, and of being often compelled to wander amidst strangers, and in deserts and desolate places.

Or peril. Danger of any kind.

Or sword. The sword of persecution; the danger of their lives to which they were constantly exposed. As all these things happened to them in consequence of their professed attachment to Christ, it might be supposed that they would tend to alienate their minds from him. But the apostle was assured that they had not this power, but that their love to the Saviour was so strong as to overcome all, and to bind them unalterably to his cause in the midst of the deepest trials. The fact is, that the more painful the trials to which they are exposed on his account, the more strong and unwavering is their love to him, and their confidence in his ability to save.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *As it is written*. Ps 44:22. This passage the apostle quotes not as having originally reference to Christians, but as *aptly* descriptive of their condition. The condition of saints in the time of the psalmist was similar to that of Christians in the time of Paul. The same language would express both.

For thy sake. In thy cause; or on account of attachment to thee.

we are killed. We are subject to, or exposed to death. We endure suffering equivalent to dying. Comp. 1Co 4:9, "God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death."

All the day long. Continually; constantly. There is no intermission to our danger, and to our exposure to death.

We are accounted. We are reckoned; we are regarded, or dealt with. That is, our enemies judge that we ought to die, and deem us the appropriate subjects of slaughter, with as little concern or remorse as the lives of sheep are taken.

{s} "For thy sake" Ps 44:22 1Co 15:30,31

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *Nay*. But. Notwithstanding our severe pressures and trials.

In all these things. In the very midst of them; while we are enduring them, we are able to triumph. Comp. 1Co 15:57.

We are more than conquerors. We gain the victory. That is, they have not power to, subdue us; to alienate our love and confi- dence; to produce apostasy. *We* are the victors, not *they*. Our faith is not destroyed; our love is not diminished; our hope is not blasted. But it is not simple victory; it is not mere life, and continuance of what we had before; it is more than simple triumph; it augments our faith, increases our strength, expands our love to Christ. The word used here is a strong, emphatic expression, such as the apostle Paul often employs, (comp. 2Co 4:17) and which is used with great force and appropriateness here.

Through him, etc. Not by their own strength or power. It was by the might of the Saviour, and by his power pledged to them, and confirmed by the love evinced when he gave himself for them. Comp. Php 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

{t} "in all these things" 1Co 15:57 {u} "through him" Jude 1:24

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *For I am persuaded*. I have a strong and unwavering confidence. Latin Vulgate, "I am certain." The expression here implies unwavering certainty.

Neither death. Neither the fear of death, nor all the pains and tortures of the dying scene, even in the most painful trials of persecution; death in no form.

Nor life. Nor the hope of life; the love of life; the offer of life made to us by our persecutors, on condition of abjuring our Christian faith. The words evidently refer to times of persecution; and it was not uncommon for persecutors to offer life to Christians, on condition of their renouncing attachment to the Saviour, and offering sacrifice to idols. All that was demanded in the times of persecution under the Roman emperors was, that they should throw a few grams of incense on the altar of a heathen god, as expressive of homage to the idol. But even this they would not do. The hope of life on so very easy terms would not, could not, alienate them from the love of Christ.

Nor angels. It seems to be apparent that good angels cannot be intended here. The apostle was saying that nothing would separate Christians from the love of Christ. Of course, it would be implied that the things which he specifies might be supposed to have some power or tendency to do it. But it is not conceivable that good angels, who are "sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation," (Heb 1:14) should seek to alienate the minds of Christians from the Saviour, or that their influence should have any such tendency. It seems to be clear, therefore, that he refers to the designs and temptations of evil spirits. The word *angels* is applied to evil spirits in Mt 25:41 1Co 6:3.

Nor principalities, (*arcai*). This word usually refers to magistrates and civil rulers. But it is also applied to evil angels, as having dominion over men. Eph 6:12, "For we wrestle against—*principalities*." Col 2:15, "And having spoiled principalities." 1Co 15:24, "When he shall have put down *rule*," Greek, (*archn*). Some have supposed that it refers here to magistrates, and those in authority, who persecuted Christians; but the connexion of the word with angels seems to require us to understand it of evil spirits.

Nor powers. This word (*dunameiv*) is often applied to magistrates; but it is also applied to evil spirits that have dominion over men, 1Co 15:24. The ancient rabbins also give the name *powers* to evil angels. (*Schleusner*.) There can be no doubt that the Jews were accustomed to divide the angels of heaven into various ranks and orders, traces of which custom we find often in the Scriptures. And there is also reason to suppose that they made such a division with reference to evil angels, regarding Satan as their leader, and other evil spirits, divided into various ranks, as subordinate to him. See Mt 25:41 Eph 6:12; Col 2:15. To such a division there is probably reference here; and the meaning is, that no order of evil angels, however powerful, artful, or numerous, would be able to alienate the hearts of Christians from their Redeemer.

Nor things present. Calamities and persecutions to which we are now subject.

Nor things to come. Trials to which we may be yet exposed. It evinced strong confidence to say that no possible trials should be sufficient to destroy their love for Christ.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *Nor height*. This has been variously understood. Some have regarded it as referring to evil spirits in the air; others, to high and lofty speculations in doctrine; others, to heaven—to all that is in heaven. I regard it here as synonymous with prosperity, honour, elevation in this life. The meaning is, that no possible circumstances in which Christians could be placed, though surrounded with wealth, honour, splendour, and though elevated to rank and office, could alienate them from the love of Christ. The tendency of these things to alienate the mind, to engross the affections, and to occupy the time, all know; but the apostle says that even these would not be sufficient to withdraw their strong love from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Nor depth. Nor the lowest circumstances of depression, poverty, contempt, and want; the very lowest rank of life.

Nor any other creature. Nor any other created thing; any other thing in the universe; anything that can occur. This expresses the most unwavering confidence that all who were Christians would certainly continue to love the Lord Jesus, and be saved.

Shall be able. Shall have *power* to do it. The love to Christ is stronger than any influence which they can exert on the mind.

The love of God. The love which we have to God.

Which is in Christ Jesus. Which is produced and secured by his work. Of which he is the bond, the connecting link. It was caused by his mediation; it is secured by his influence; it is in and through him, and him alone, that men love God. There is no true love of God which is not produced by the work of Christ. There is no man who truly loves the Father, who does not do it in and by the Son.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 8

Perhaps there is no chapter in the Bible on the whole so interesting and consoling to the Christian as this; and there certainly is not to be found anywhere a specimen of more elevated, animated, and lofty eloquence and argumentation. We may remark in view of it,

(1.) that it is the highest honour that can be conferred on mortal man to be a Christian.

(2.) Our trials in this life are scarcely worth regarding in comparison with our future glory.

(3.) Calamities should be borne without a murmur; nay, without a sigh.

(4.) The Christian has every possible security for his safety. The purposes of God, the work of Christ, the aid of the Holy Ghost, and the tendency of all events under the direction of his Father and Friend, conspire to secure his welfare and salvation.

(5.) With what thankfulness, then, should we approach the God of mercy. In the gospel we have a blessed and cheering hope, which nothing else can produce, and which nothing can destroy. Safe in the hands of God our Redeemer, we may commit our way to him, whether it lead through persecutions, or trials, or sickness, or a martyr's grave; and triumphantly we may wait until the day of our complete adoption—the entire redemption of soul and body —shall fully come.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 9

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 1

ROMANS Chapter 9 Introduction

THIS chapter opens, in some degree, a new train of thought and argumentation. Its main design probably was to meet objections which would be alleged against the positions advanced and defended in the previous parts of the epistle. In the previous chapters, Paul had defended the position, that the barrier between the Jews and Gentiles had been removed; that the Jews could not be saved by any external advantages which they possessed; that all were alike guilty before God; and that there was but one way for Jews and Gentiles of salvation—by faith in Jesus Christ, chapters 1-3. He had stated the benefits of this plan, (chap. 5.,) and showed its bearing in accomplishing what the law of Moses could not effect in overcoming sin, chap. 6,7. In chap. 8. he had stated also on what principles this was clone; that it was according to the purpose of God—the principle of electing mercy applied indiscriminately to the mass of guilty Jews and Gentiles. To this statement two objections might arise: first, that it was unjust; and second, that the whole argument involved a departure from the promises made to the Jewish nation. It might further be supposed that the apostle had ceased to feel an interest in his countrymen, and had become the exclusive advocate of the Gentiles. To meet these objections and feelings seems to have been the design of this chapter. He shows them,

(1.) his unabated love for his countrymen, and regard for their welfare, (Ro 9:1-5)

(2.) He shows them, from their own writings, that the principle of election had existed in former times—in the case of Isaac, (Ro 9:7-13) in the writings of Moses, (Ro 9:15) in the case of Pharaoh, (Ro 9:17) and in the prophecies of Hosea and Isaiah, (Ro 9:25-29.)

(3.) He takes occasion, throughout the chapter, to vindicate this principle of the Divine administration; to answer objections; and to show that, on the acknowledged principles of the Old Testament, a *part* of the Jewish nation might be rejected; and that it was the purpose of God to call others to the privileges of the people of God, Ro 9:16,19-23,25,26,29-33.

The chapter, therefore, has not reference to national election, or to choice to external privileges, but has direct reference to the doctrine of the election to salvation which had been stated in chap. 8. To suppose that it refers merely to external privileges, and *national* distinctions, makes the whole discussion unconnected, unmeaning, and unnecessary.

Verse 1. *I say the truth*. In what I am about to affirm respecting my attachment to the nation and people.

In Christ. Most interpreters regard this as a form of an oath, as equivalent to calling Christ to witness. It is certainly to be regarded, in its obvious sense, as an appeal to Christ as the searcher of the heart, and as the judge of falsehood. Thus the word translated "in" (*en*) is used in the form of an oath in Mt 5:34-36 Re 10:6, Greek. We are to remember that the apostle was addressing those who had been Jews; and the expression has all the force of an oath *by the Messiah*. This shows that it *is right*, on great and solemn occasions, and in a solemn manner, AND THUS ONLY, to appeal to Christ for the sincerity of our motives, and for the truth of what we say. And it shows, further, that *it is right* to regard the Lord Jesus Christ as present with us, as searching the heart, as capable of detecting insincerity, hypocrisy, and perjury, and as therefore Divine.

My conscience. Conscience is that act of judgment of the mind by which we decide on the lawfulness or unlawfulness of our actions, and by which we instantly approve or condemn them. It exists in every man, and is a strong witness to our integrity or to our guilt.

Bearing me witness. Testifying to the truth of what I say.

In the Holy Ghost. He does not say that he speaks the truth by or in the Holy Ghost, as he had said of Christ; but that the conscience pronounced its concurring testimony by the Holy Ghost; that is, conscience as enlightened and influenced by the Holy Ghost. It was not simply natural conscience, but it was conscience under the full influence of the Enlightener of the mind and Sanctifier of the heart. The reasons of this solemn asseveration are probably the following:

(1.) His conduct and his doctrines had led some to believe that he was an apostate, and had lost his love for his countrymen. He had forsaken their institutions, and devoted himself to the salvation of the Gentiles. He here shows them that it was from no want of love to them.

(2.) The doctrines which he was about to state and defend were of a similar character; he was about to maintain that no small part of his own countrymen, notwithstanding their privileges, would be rejected and lost. In this solemn manner, therefore, he assures them that this doctrine had not been embraced because: he did not love them, but because it was solemn, though most painful-truth. He proceeds to enumerate their privileges as a people, and to show to them the strength and tenderness of his love.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Great heaviness*. Great grief.

Continual sorrow. The word rendered *continual* here must be taken in a popular sense. Not that he was literally all the time pressed down with this sorrow, but that whenever he thought on this subject he had great grief; as we say of a painful subject, it is a source of constant pain. The cause of this grief, Paul does not expressly mention, though it is implied in what he immediately says. It was the fact that so large a part of the nation would be rejected and cast off.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *For I could wish*, etc. This passage has been greatly controverted. Some have proposed to translate it, "I *did* wish," as referring to a former state, when he renounced Christ, and sought to advance the interests of the nation by opposing and defying him. But to this interpretation there are insuperable objections.

(1.) The object of the apostle is not to state his former feelings, but his present attachment to his countrymen, and willingness to suffer for them.

(2.) The proper grammatical construction of the word used here is not I *did* wish, but I *could* desire; that is, if the thing were possible. It is not I *do* wish, or *did* wish, but I *could desire*, (*hucomhn*) implying that he was willing now to endure it; that his present love for them was so strong, that he would, if practicable, save them from the threatened ruin and apostasy.

(3.) It is not *true* that Paul ever *did* wish before his conversion to be accursed by Christ, i.e. by the Messiah. He opposed Jesus of Nazareth; but he did not believe that he was the Messiah. At no time would he have wished to be devoted to destruction *by the Messiah, or by Christ*. Nothing would have been more terrible to a Jew; and Saul of Tarsus never doubted that he was the friend

of the promised Messiah, and was advancing the true interests of his cause, and defending the hopes of his nation against an impostor. The word, therefore, expresses a feeling which the apostle had, when writing this epistle, in regard to the condition and prospects of the nation.

Were accursed from Christ. Might be anathema by Christ (*anayema einai apo tou cristou*). This passage has been much controverted. The word rendered *accursed* (anathema) properly means,

(1.) anything that was *set up*, or set apart, or consecrated to the gods in the temples, as spoils of war, images, statues, etc. This is its classical Greek meaning. It has a similar meaning among the Hebrews. It denoted that which was set apart or consecrated to the service of God, as sacrifices or offerings of any kind. In this respect it is used to express the sense of the Hebrew word

HEBREW, anything devoted to Jehovah, without the possibility of redemption, Le 27:21,28,29

Nu 18:14 De 7:26; Jos 6:17,18, 7:1 1Sa 15:21; Eze 44:29.

(2.) As that which was thus dedicated to Jehovah was alienated from the use of him who devoted it, and was either burnt or slain, and devoted to destruction as an offering, the word came to signify a devotion of anything to destruction, or to complete ruin. And as whatever is devoted to destruction may be said to be subject to a *curse*, or to be accursed, the word comes to have this signification, 1Ki 20:42; Isa 34:5. But in none of these cases does it denote eternal death. The idea, therefore, in these places is simply, "I could be willing to be destroyed, or devoted to death, for the sake of my countrymen." And the apostle evidently means to say that he would be willing to suffer the bitterest evils, to forego all pleasure, to endure any privation and toil, nay, to offer his *life*, so that he might be wholly devoted to sufferings, as an offering, if he might be the means of benefiting and saving the nation. For a similar case, see Ex 32:32. This does *not* mean that Paul would be willing to be damned for ever. For,

(1.) the words do not imply that, and will not bear it.

(2.) Such a destruction could in no conceivable way benefit the Jews.

(3.) Such a willingness is not and cannot be required. And,

(4.) it would be impious and absurd. No man has a right to be willing to be the *eternal enemy* of God; and no man ever yet was, or could be, willing to endure everlasting torments.

From Christ. By Christ. Grotius thinks it means from the church of Christ. Others think it means "after the example of Christ;" and others, *from* Christ for ever. But it evidently means that he was willing to be devoted by Christ; i.e. to be regarded by him, and appointed *by* him, to suffering and death, if by that means he could save his countrymen. It was thus the highest expression of true patriotism and benevolence. It was an example for all Christians and Christian ministers. *They* should be willing to be devoted to pain, privation, toil, and death, if by that they could save others from ruin.

My kinsmen, etc. My countrymen; all of whom he regarded as his kinsmen, or relations, as descended from the same ancestors.

According to the flesh. By birth. They were of the same blood and parentage, though not now of the same religious belief.

{w} "could wish" Ex 32:32 {1} "accursed" or, "separated"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Who are Israelites*. Descended from Israel, or Jacob; honoured by having such an ancestor, and by bearing a name so distinguished as that of his descendants. It was formerly the honourable appellation of the people of God.

To whom pertaineth. To whom it belongs. It was their elevated external privilege.

The adoption. Of the nation into the family of God, or to be regarded as his peculiar people, De 7:6.

And the glory. The symbol of the Divine presence that attended them from Egypt, and that finally rested over the ark in the first temple —*the Shekinah*, Ex 13:21,22, 25:22.

And the covenants. The various compacts or promises which had been made from time to time with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and with the nation; the pledges of the Divine protection.

The giving of the law. On Mount Sinai, Ex 20:1. Comp. Ps 147:19.

And the service of God. The temple service; regarded by them as the pride and ornament of their nation.

And the promises. Of the Messiah; and of the spread of the true religion from them as a nation.

{x} "adoption" De 7:6 {y} "glory" Ps 90:16 Isa 60:19 {1} "covenants" or, "testaments" {z} "covenants" Ge 17:2 De 29:14; Jer 31:33

{a} "law" Ps 147:19 Ro 3:2 {b} "service of God" Ex 12:25 {c} "promises" Eph 2:12

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Whose are the fathers*. Who have been honoured with so illustrious an ancestry. Who are descended from Abraham, Isaac, etc. On this they highly valued themselves, and, in a certain sense, not unjustly. Comp. .

Of whom. Of whose nation. This is placed as the crowning and most exalted privilege, that their nation had given birth to the long-expected Messiah, the hope of the world.

As concerning the flesh. So far as his human nature was concerned. The use of this language supposes that there was a *higher* nature, in respect to which he was not of their nation. **See Barnes "Ro 1:3".**

Christ came. He had already come; and it was their high honour that he was one of their nation.

Who is over all. This is an appellation that belongs only to the true God. It implies supreme Divinity; and is full proof that the Messiah is Divine. Much effort has been made to show that this is not the true rendering, but without success. There are no various readings in the Greek MSS. of any consequence; and the connexion here evidently requires us to understand this of a nature that is not "according to the flesh," i.e., as the apostle here shows, of the Divine nature.

God blessed for ever. This is evidently applied to the Lord Jesus; and it proves that he is Divine. If the translation is fairly made,—and it has never been proved to be erroneous,—it demonstrates that he is God as well as man. The doxology "blessed for ever" was usually added by the Jewish writers after the mention of the name God, as an expression of reverence. (See the various interpretations that have been proposed on this passage examined in Prof Stuart's Notes on this verse.)

{d} "fathers" Ro 11:28 {e} "as concerning" Lu 3:23 {f} "is over all" Joh 1:1

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Not as though*, etc. Not as though the promise of God had entirely failed. Though I grieve thus, (Ro 9:2,3) though I am deeply apprehensive for the nation, yet I do not affirm that all the nation is to be destroyed. The promise of God will not entirely fail.

Not all Israel. Not all the descendants of Jacob have the true spirit of Israelites, or are Jews in the scriptural sense of the term. **See Barnes** "Ro 2:28,29.

{g} "none effect" Isa 55:11 {h} "for they are not" Ro 2:28,29

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 7

Verse 7. Are they *all children*. Adopted into the true family of God. Many of the descendants of Abraham were rejected.

But in Isaac. This was the promise, Ge 21:12.

Shall thy seed, etc. Thy true people. This implied a selection, or choice; and, therefore, the doctrine of election was illustrated in the very commencement of the history of the nation; and as God had then made such a distinction, he might still do it. As he had then rejected a part of the natural descendants of Abraham, so he might, still do it. This is the argument which the apostle is pursuing.

{i} "In Isaac" Isa 55:11

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *They which are the children of the flesh*. The natural descendants.

These are not the children of God. Are not of necessity the adopted children of God; or are not so in virtue of their descent merely. This was in opposition to one of the most settled and deeply-cherished opinions of the Jews. They supposed that the mere fact of being a Jew entitled a man to the blessings of the covenant, and to be regarded as a child of God. But the apostle shows them that it was not by their natural descent that these spiritual privileges were granted; that they were not conferred on men simply from the fact that they were Jews; and that consequently those who were not Jews might become interested in those spiritual blessings.

But the children of the promise. The descendants of Abraham on whom the promised blessings would be bestowed. The sense is, that God at first contemplated a distinction among the descendants of Abraham, and intended to confine his blessings to such as he chose; that is, to those to whom the promise particularly appertained, to the descendants of Isaac. The argument of the apostle is, that the *principle* was thus established that a distinction might be made among those who were Jews; and as that distinction had been made in former times, so it might be under the Messiah.

Are counted. Are regarded, or reckoned. God reckons things as they are; and therefore designed that they should be his true children.

As the seed. The spiritual children of God; the partakers of his mercy and salvation. This refers, doubtless, to spiritual privileges and to salvation; and therefore has relation not to nations as such, but to individuals.

{k} "children of the promise" Ga 4:28

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *For this is the word of promise*. This is the promise made to Abraham. The design of the apostle, in introducing this, is doubtless to show to whom the promise appertained; and by specifying this, he shows that it had not reference to Ishmael, but to Isaac.

At this time. Greek, According to this time. See Ge 8:10,14. Probably it means at the exact time promised; I will fulfil the prediction at the very time. Comp. 2Ki 4:16.

{l} "At this time" Ge 18:10,14

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *And not only this*. Not only is the *principle* of making a distinction among the natural descendants of Abraham thus settled by the promise, but it is still further seen and illustrated in the birth of the two sons of Isaac. He had shown that the principle of thus making a distinction among the posterity of Abraham was recognized in the original promise, thus proving that all the descendants of Abraham were not of course to be saved; and he now proceeds to show that the principle was recognized in the case of his posterity in the family of Isaac. And he shows that it is not according to any natural principles that the selection was made; that he not only made a distinction between Jacob and Esau, but that he did it according to his good pleasure, choosing the younger to be the object of his favour, and rejecting the elder, who, according to the custom of the times, was supposed to be entitled to peculiar honour and rights. And, in order to prove that this was done according to his own pleasure, he shows that the distinction was made before they were born; before they had formed any character; and, consequently, in such a way that it could not be pretended that it was in consequence of any works which they had performed.

But when Rebecca. The wife of Isaac. See Ge 25:21,23.

{m} "Rebecca" Ge 25:21,23

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *For* the children *being not yet born*. It was not, therefore, by any works of theirs. It was not because they had formed a character and manifested qualities which made this distinction

proper. It was laid back of any such character, and therefore had its foundation in the purpose or plan of God.

Neither having done any good or evil. That is, when the declaration (Ro 9:12) was made to Rebecca. This is a very important passage in regard to the question about the purposes of God.

(1.) They had done nothing good or bad; and when that is the case, there can be, properly speaking, no moral character, for "a *character* is not formed when the person has not acquired stable and distinctive qualities." Webster.

(2.) That the period of moral agency had not yet commenced. Comp. Ge 25:22,23. When that agency commences we do not know; but here is a case of which it is affirmed that it had not commenced.

(3.) The purpose of God is antecedent to the formation of character, or the performance of any actions, good or bad.

(4.) It is not a purpose formed *because* he sees anything in the individuals as a ground for his choice, but for some reason which he has not explained, and which in the Scripture is simply called *purpose*, and *good pleasure*, Eph 1:5.

(5.) If it existed in this case, it does in others. If it was right then, it is now. And if God then dispensed his favours on this principle, he will now. But

(6) this affirmation respecting Jacob and Esau does not prove that they had not a nature inclined to evil; or a corrupt and sensual propensity; or that they would not sin as soon as they became moral agents. It proves merely that they had not yet committed *actual* sin. That they, as well as all others, *would* certainly sin as soon as they committed moral acts at all, is proved everywhere in the sacred Scriptures.

The purpose of God. **See Barnes** "Ro 8:28.

According to election. To dispense his favours according to his sovereign will and pleasure. Those favours were not conferred in consequence of the merits of the individuals, but according to a wise plan *lying back* of the formation of their characters, and before they had done good or evil. The favours were thus conferred according to his choice, or election.

Might stand. Might be confirmed; or might be proved to be true. The case shows that God dispenses his favours as a sovereign. The purpose of God was thus proved to have been formed without respect to the merits of either.

Not of works. Not by anything which they had done either to merit his favour or to forfeit it. It was formed on other principles than a reference to their works. So it is in relation to all who shall be saved. God has good reasons for saving those who shall be saved. What the reasons are for choosing some to life he has not revealed; but he *has* revealed to us that it is *not* on account of their works, either performed or foreseen.

But of him that calleth. According to the will and purpose of him that chooses to dispense those favours in this manner. It is not by the merit of man, but it is by a purpose having its origin with God, and formed and executed according to his good pleasure. It is also implied here, that it is formed in such a way as to secure his glory as the primary consideration.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *It was said unto her*. By Jehovah. See Ge 25:23.

The elder. The eldest son, which was Esau. By the law of primogeniture among the Hebrews, he would have been entitled to peculiar honours and privileges. But it was said that in his case this custom should be reversed, and that he should take the rank of the younger.

Should serve. Shall be subject to; shall not have the authority and priority, but should be inferior to. The passage in Ge 25:23 shows that this had reference particularly to the posterity of Esau, and not to him as an individual. The sense is, that the descendants of Esau, who were Edomites, should be inferior to, and subject to the descendants of Jacob. Jacob was to have the priority; the promised land; the promises; and the honour of being regarded as the chosen of God. There was reference here, therefore, to the whole train of temporal and spiritual blessings which were to be connected with the two races of people. If it be asked how this bears on the argument of the apostle, we may reply,

(1.) that it settles *the principle* that God might make a distinction among men, in the same nation, and the same family, without reference to their works or character.

(2.) That he might confer his blessings on such as he pleased.

(3.) If this is done in regard to nations, it may be in regard to individuals. The principle is the same, and the justice the same. If it be supposed to be unjust in God to make such a distinction in regard to individuals, it is surely not less so to make a distinction in nations. The fact that numbers are thus favoured does not make it the more proper, or remove any difficulty.

(4.) If this distinction may be made in regard to *temporal* things, why not in regard to *spiritual* things? The *principle* must still be the same. If unjust in one case, it would be in the other. The fact that it is done in one case proves also that it will be in the other; for the same great principle will run through all the dealings of the Divine government. And as men do not and cannot complain that God makes a distinction among them in regard to talents, health, beauty, prosperity, and rank, neither can they complain if he acts also as a sovereign in the distribution of his spiritual favours. They, therefore, who regard this as referring only to temporal and national privileges, gain no relief in respect to the real difficulty in the case, for the unanswerable question would still be asked, why has not God made all men equal in everything? Why has he made any distinction among men? The only reply to all such inquiries is, "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight," Mt 11:26.

{1} "elder" or, "greater" {2} "younger" or, "lesser"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *As it is written*. Mal 1:2,3. That is, the distribution of favours is on the principle advanced by the prophet, and is in accordance with the declaration that God had, in fact, loved the one and hated the other.

Jacob. This refers, doubtless, to the posterity of Jacob.

Have I loved. I have shown affection for that people; I have bestowed on them great privileges and blessings, as proofs of attachment. I have preferred Jacob to Esau.

Esau. The descendants of Esau, the Edomites. See Mal 1:4.

Have I hated. This does not mean any *positive* hatred; but that he had preferred Jacob, and had *withheld* from Esau those privileges and blessings which he had conferred on the posterity of Jacob.

This is explained in Mal 1:3, "And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness," Comp. Jer 49:17,18; Eze 35:3.

It was common among the Hebrews to use the terms *love* and *hatred* in this comparative sense, where the former implied strong *positive* attachment, and the latter, not positive hatred, but merely as a less love, or the withholding of the expressions of affection. Comp. Ge 29:30,31; Pr 13:24.

"He that spareth his rod *hateth* his son; but he that *loveth* him chasteneth him betimes." Mt 6:24. "No man can serve two masters, for either he will *hate* the one and *love* the other," etc. Lu 14:26, "If any man come to me, and *hate* not his father and mother," etc.

{n} "Jacob" Mal 1:2,3

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *What shall we say then*? What conclusion shall we draw from these acknowledged facts, and from these positive declarations of Scripture?

Is there unrighteousness with God? Does God do injustice or wrong? This charge has often been brought against the doctrine here advanced. But this charge the apostle strongly repels. He meets it by further showing that it is the doctrine explicitly taught in the Old Testament, (Ro 9:15,17,) and that it is founded on the principles of equity, and on just views of the sovereignty of God, Ro 9:19-23.

God forbid. **See Barnes "Ro 3:4"**.

{o} "unrighteousness" De 32:4

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *For he saith to Moses*. Ex 33:19.

I will have mercy. This is said by God when he declared expressly that he would make all his *goodness* pass before Moses, (Ex 33:19) and when, therefore, it was regarded not as a proof of stern and inexorable justice, but as *the very proof of his benevolence*, and the highest which he thought proper to exhibit. When men, therefore, under the influence of an unrenewed and hostile heart, charge this as an unjust and arbitrary proceeding, they are resisting and perverting that which God regards as the very demonstration of his benevolence. The sense of the passage clearly is, that he would choose the objects of his favour, and bestow his mercies as he chose. None of the human race deserved his favour; and he had a right to pardon whom he pleased, and to save men on his own terms, and according to his sovereign will and pleasure.

On whom I will have mercy. On whom I choose to bestow mercy. The *mode* he does not explain. But there could not be a more positive declaration of these truths,

(1.) that he does it as a sovereign, without giving an account of the reason of his choice to any.

(2.) That he does it without regard to any claim on the part of man; or that man is regarded as destitute of merit, and as having no right to his mercy.

(3.) That he will do it to any extent which he pleases, and in whatever time and manner may best accord with his own good pleasure.

(4.) That he has regard to a definite number; and that on that number he intends to bestow eternal life; and,

(5.) that no one has a right to complain. It is proof of his benevolence that *any* are saved; and where none have a claim, where all are justly condemned, he has a right to pardon whom he pleases. The executive of a country may select any number of criminals whom he may see fit to pardon, or in consistency with the supremacy of the laws and the welfare of the community, and none has a right to murmur; but every good citizen should rejoice that any may be pardoned with safety. So in the moral world, and under the administration of its holy Sovereign, it should be a matter of joy that any can be pardoned and saved; and not a subject of murmuring and complaint that those who shall finally deserve to die shall be consigned to woe.

{p} "I will have mercy" Ex 33:19

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *So then*. It follows as a consequence from this statement of God to Moses. Or, it is a doctrine established by that statement.

Not of him that willeth. This does not mean that he that becomes a Christian, and is saved, does not *choose* eternal life; or is not made willing; or that he is *compelled* to enter heaven against his own choice. It is true that men by nature have no desire of holiness, and do not choose eternal life. But the effect of the influences of God's Spirit on the heart is to make it "willing in the day of his power," Ps 110:3. The meaning here is, evidently, that eternal life is not bestowed because man had any original willingness or disposition to be saved; it is not because *he* commences the work, and is himself disposed to it; but it is because God inclines him to it, and disposes him to seek for mercy, and then confers it in his own way. The word willeth here denotes wish or desire.

Nor of him that runneth. This denotes *strenuous, intense effort*, as when a man is anxious to obtain an object, or hastens from danger. The meaning is not that the sinner does not make an effort to be saved; nor that all who become Christians do not in fact strive to enter into the kingdom, or earnestly desire salvation; for the Scriptures teach the contrary, Lu 16:16; Lu 13:24.

There is no effort more intense and persevering, no struggle more arduous or agonizing, than when a sinner seeks eternal life. Nor does it mean that they who strive in a proper way, and with proper effort, shall not obtain eternal life, Mt 7:7. But the sense is,

(1.) that the sinner would not put forth any effort himself. If left to his own course he would never seek to be saved.

(2.) That he is pardoned, not *on account* of his effort; not *because* he makes an exertion; but because God chooses to pardon him. There is no merit in his anxiety, and prayers, and agony, on account of which God would forgive him; but he is still dependent on the mere mercy of God to save or destroy him at his will. The sinner, however anxious he may be, and however much or long he may strive, does not bring God under an obligation to pardon him, anymore than the condemned criminal, trembling with the fear of execution, and the consciousness of crime, lays the judge or the jury under an obligation to acquit him. This fact it is of great importance for an awakened sinner

to know. Deeply anxious he should be, but there is no *merit* in his distress. Pray he should, but there is no merit in his prayers. Weep and strive he may, but in this there is no ground of claim on God for pardon; and, after all, he is dependent on his mere sovereign mercy, as a lost, ruined, and helpless sinner, to be saved or lost at his will.

But of God that sheweth mercy. Salvation, in its beginning, its progress, and its close, is of him. He has a right, therefore, to bestow it when and where he pleases. All our mercies flow from his mere love and compassion, and not from our deserts. The essential idea here is, that *God* is the original fountain of all the blessings of salvation.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *For the Scripture saith*. Ex 9:16. That is, God saith to Pharaoh *in* the Scriptures, Ga 3:8,22. This passage is designed to illustrate the doctrine that God shows mercy according to his sovereign pleasure by a reference to one of the most extraordinary cases of hardness of heart which has ever occurred. The design is to show that God has a right to pass by those to whom he does not choose to show mercy; and to place them in circumstances where they shall develop their true character, and where in fact they shall become more hardened and be destroyed, Ro 9:18.

Unto Pharaoh. The haughty and oppressive king of Egypt: thus showing that the most mighty and wicked monarchs are at his control. Comp. Isa 10:5-7.

For this same purpose, for the design, or with the intent that is immediately specified. This was the leading purpose or design of his sustaining him.

Have I raised thee up. Margin, in Ex 9:16, "made thee stand," i.e. sustained thee. The Greek word used by the apostle (*exhgeira*) means, properly, *I have excited, roused, or stirred thee up*; but it may also have the meaning, "I have sustained or supported thee." That is, I have kept thee from death; I have preserved thee from ruin; I have ministered strength to thee, so that thy full character has been developed. It does not mean that God had infused into his mind any positive evil, or that by any direct influence he had excited any evil feelings, but that he had kept him in circumstances which were fitted to develop his true character. The meaning of the word and the truth of the case may be expressed in the following particulars:

(1.) God meant to accomplish some great purposes by his existence and conduct.

(2.) He kept him, or sustained him, with reference to that.

(3.) He had control over the haughty and wicked monarch. He could take his life, or he could continue him on earth. As he had control over all things that could affect the pride, the feelings, and the happiness of the monarch, so he had control over the monarch himself.

(4.) *He placed him in circumstances just fitted to develop his character*. He kept him amidst those circumstances until his character was fully developed.

(5.) He did not exert a positive influence on the mind of Pharaoh; for,

(6.) in all this the monarch acted freely. He did that which he chose to do. He pursued his own course. He was voluntary in his schemes of oppressing the Israelites. He was voluntary in his opposition to God. He was voluntary when he pursued the Israelites to the Red Sea. In all his doings he acted as he chose to do, and with a determined *choice of evil*, from which neither warning nor judgment would turn him away. Thus he is said to have hardened his own heart, Ex 8:15.

(7.) Neither Pharaoh nor any sinner can justly blame God for placing them in circumstances where they shall develop their own character, and show what they are. It is not the fault of God, but their own fault. The sinner is not compelled to sin; nor is God under obligation to save him contrary to the prevalent desires and wishes of the sinner himself.

My power in thee. Or, by means of thee, By the judgments exerted in delivering an entire oppressed people from thy grasp. God's most signal acts of *power* were thus shown in consequence of his disobedience and rebellion.

My name. The name of Jehovah, as the only true God, and the deliverer of his people.

Throughout all the earth. Or throughout all the land of Egypt. **See Barnes "Lu 2:1"**.

We may learn here,

(1.) that a leading design of God in the government of the world is to make his power, and name, and character known.

(2.) That this is often accomplished in a most signal manner by the destruction of the wicked.

(3.) That wicked men should be alarmed, since *their* arm cannot contend with God, and since his enemies shah be destroyed.

(4.) It is right that the incorrigibly wicked should be cut off. When a man's character is fully developed; when he is fairly tried; when, in all circumstances, he has shown that he *will* not obey God, neither justice nor mercy hinders the Almighty from cutting him down, and consigning him to death.

{q} "saith unto Pharaoh" Ex 9:16

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Therefore hath he mercy*, etc. This is a conclusion stated by the apostle as the result of all the argument.

Whom he will he hardeneth. This is not stated in what the Scripture said to Pharaoh, but is a conclusion to which the apostle had arrived, in view of the case of Pharaoh. The word hardeneth means only to harden in the manner specified in the case of Pharaoh. It does not mean to exert a positive influence, but to leave a sinner to his own course, and to place him in circumstances where the character will be more and more developed. **See Barnes "Joh 12:40"**.

It implies, however, an act of sovereignty on the part of God in thus leaving him to his chosen Course, and in not putting forth that influence by which he could be saved from death. Why this is, the apostle does not state. We should, however, not dispute a fact everywhere prevalent; and should have sufficient confidence in God to believe that it is in accordance with infinite wisdom and rectitude.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Thou wilt say then unto me*. The apostle here refers to an objection that might be made to his argument. If the position which he had been endeavouring to establish were true; if

God had a purpose in all his dealings with men: if all the revolutions among men happened according to his decree, so that he was not disappointed, or his plan frustrated; and if his own glory was secured in all this, why could he blame men?

Why doth he yet find fault? Why does he blame men, since their conduct is in accordance with his purpose, and since he bestows mercy according to his sovereign will? This objection has been made by sinners in all ages. It is the standing objection against the doctrines of grace. The objection is founded,

(1.) on the difficulty of reconciling the purposes of God with the free agency of man.

(2.) It *assumes*, what cannot be proved, that a plan or purpose of God must destroy the freedom of man.

(3.) It is said that if the *plan* of God is accomplished, then that which is best to be done is done, and, of course, man cannot be blamed. These objections are met by the apostle in the following argument.

Who hath resisted his will? That is, who has *successfully opposed* his will, or frustrated his plan? The word translated *resist* is commonly used to denote the resistance offered by soldiers or armed men. Thus, Eph 5:13, "Take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to *withstand* (*resist*, or successfully oppose) in the evil day." See Lu 21:15, "I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or *resist*." See also Ac 6:10 13:8, "But Elymas— *withstood* them," etc. The same Greek word, Ro 13:2 Ga 2:11. This does not mean that no one has offered resistance or opposition to God, but that no one had done it successfully. God had accomplished his purposes *in spite* of their opposition. This was an established point in the sacred writings, and one of the admitted doctrines of the Jews. To establish it had even been a part of the apostle's design; and the difficulty now was to see how, *this* being admitted, men could be held chargeable with crime. That it was the doctrine of the Scriptures, see 2Ch 20:6, "In thine hand *is there not* power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee? Da 4:35, "He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and *among* the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" See also the case of Joseph and his brethren, Ge 1:20, "As for you, ye thought evil against me; *but* God meant it unto good."

{r} "who hath resisted his will" 2Ch 20:6 Da 4:35

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Nay but, O man*, etc. To this objection the apostle replies in two ways; first, by asserting the sovereignty of God, and affirming that he had a *right* to do it, (Ro 9:20,21) and, secondly, by showing that he did it according to the principles of justice and mercy, or that it was *involved* of necessity in his dispensing *justice* and *mercy* to mankind, Ro 9:22-24.

Who art thou, etc. Paul here strongly reproves the impiety and wickedness of arraigning God. This impiety appears,

(1.) because man is a creature of God, and it is improper that he should arraign his Maker.

(2.) He is *unqualified* to understand the subject. "Who art thou ?" What qualifications has a creature of a day,—a being just in the *infancy* of his existence; of so limited faculties; so perverse,

blinded, and interested as man—to sit in judgment on the doings of the Infinite Mind? Who gave him the authority, or invested him with the prerogatives of a *judge* over his Maker's doings?

(3.) Even if man *were* qualified to investigate those subjects, what right has he to reply against God, to arraign him, or to follow out a train of argument tending to involve his Creator in shame and disgrace? Nowhere is there to be found a more cutting or humbling reply to the pride of man than this. And on no subject was it more needed. The experience of every age has shown that this has been a prominent topic of objection against the government of God; and that there has been no point in the Christian theology to which the human heart has been so ready to make objections as to the doctrine of the sovereignty of God.

Repliest against God. Margin, "Answerest again; or, disputest with God." The passage conveys the idea of *answering* again; or of arguing to the dishonour of God. It implies, that when God declares his will, man should be still. God has his own plans of infinite wisdom, and it is not ours to reply against him, or to arraign him of injustice, when we cannot see the reason of his doings.

Shall the thing formed, etc. This sentiment is found in Isa 29:16. See also Isa 45:9. It was peculiarly proper to adduce this to a *Jew*. The objection is one which is supposed to be made by a Jew, and it was proper to reply to him by a quotation from his own Scriptures. Any being has a right to fashion his work according to his own views of what is best; and as this right is not denied to *men*, we ought not to blame the infinitely wise God for acting in a similar way. They who have received every blessing they enjoy from him, ought not to blame him for not making them different.

{1} "repliest" or, "answerest again" or, "disputest with God." {s} "shall the thing formed" Isa 29:16.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Hath not the potter*, etc. This same sovereign right of God the apostle proceeds to urge from another illustration, and another passage from the Old Testament, Isa 64:8, "But now, O Lord, thou art our Father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand." This passage is preceded in Isaiah by one declaring *the depravity of man*. Isa 64:6, "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." As they were polluted with sin, as they had transgressed the law of God, and had *no claim* and *no merit*, God might bestow his favours as he pleased, and mould them as the potter did the clay. He would do no injury to those who were left, and *who had no claim to his mercy*, if he bestowed favours on others, any more than the potter would do injustice to one part of the mass, if he put it to an ignoble use, and moulded another part into a vessel of honour. This is still the condition of sinful men. God does no injustice to a man if he leaves him to take his own course to ruin, and makes another, equally undeserving, the recipient of his mercy, he violated none of my rights by not conferring on me the talents of Newton or of Bacon; or by not placing me in circumstances like those of Peter and Paul. Where *all* are undeserving, the utmost that can be demanded is, that he should not treat them with *injustice*. And this is secured even in the case of the lost. No man will suffer more than he deserves; nor will any man go to perdition feeling that he has *a claim* to better treatment than he receives. The same sentiment is found in Jer 18:6, "O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold,

as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in my hand, O house of Israel. At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation," etc. The passage in Isaiah proves that God has the right of a sovereign over guilty *individuals*; that in Jeremiah, that he has the same right over nations: thus meeting the whole case as it was in the mind of the apostle. These passages, however, assert only the *right* of God to do it, without affirming anything about the *manner* in which it is done, In fact, God bestows his favours in a *mode* very different from that in which a potter moulds his clay. God does not create holiness by a mere act of power, but he produces it in a manner consistent with the moral agency of men; and bestows his favours not to *compel* men, but to incline them to be willing to receive them. Ps 110:3, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." It should be further remarked, that the argument of the apostle here does not refer to *the original creation* of men, as if God had then made them one for honour and another for dishonour, he refers to man as fallen and lost. His argument is this: "Man is in ruins; he is fallen; he has no claim on God; all deserve to die. On this *mass*, where none have any claim, he may bestow life on whom he pleases, without injury to others; he may exercise the right of a sovereign to pardon whom he pleases; or of a potter to mould any part of the useless mass to purposes of utility and beauty."

Potter. One whose occupation it is to make earthen vessels.

Power. This word denotes here not merely *physical power*, but authority, right. See Mt 7:29, translated "authority;" Mt 21:23 2Th 3:9; Mr 2:10 Lu 5:24, "The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins," etc.

Lump. Mass. It denotes anything that is reduced to a fine consistency, and mixed, and made soft by water; either clay, as in this place, or the mass produced of grain pounded and mixed with water. Ro 11:16, "If the first-fruit be holy, the lump is also holy." 1Co 5:6, "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole *lump*?"

One vessel. A cup, or other utensil, made of clay.

Unto honour. Fitted to an honourable use, or designed for a more useful and refined purpose.

Unto dishonour. To a meaner service, or more common use. This is a common mode of expression among the Hebrews. The *lump* here denotes the mass of men, sinners, having no claim on God. The potter illustrates God's right over that mass, to dispose of it as seems good in his sight. The doctrine of the passage is, that men have no right to complain if God bestows his blessings where and when he chooses.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 22

Verses 22,23. *What if God*, etc. If God does what the apostle supposes, what then? Is it not right? This is the second point in the answer to the objection in Rom 9:19. The answer has respect to the two classes of men which actually exist on the earth—the righteous and the wicked. And the question is, whether *in regard to these two classes God does In Fact do wrong*? If he does not, then the doctrine of the apostle is established, and the objection is not valid. It is assumed here, as it must be, that the world is *in fact* divided into two classes—saints and sinners. The apostle considers the case of sinners in Ro 9:22.

Willing. Being disposed; having an inclination to. It denotes an inclination of mind towards the thing proposed. If the thing itself was right; if it was *proper to "show* his wrath," then it was proper to be WILLING to do it. If it is right *to do* a thing, it is right to purpose or intend to do it.

His wrath, (*thn orghn*) This word occurs *thirty-five* times in the New Testament. Its meaning is derived from the idea of earnestly desiring or reaching for an object, and properly denotes, in its general sense, a vehement desire of attaining anything. Hence it comes to denote an earnest desire of revenge, or of inflicting suffering on those who have injured us, Eph 4:31, "Let all bitterness and wrath," etc.; Col 3:8 1Ti 2:8. Hence it denotes *indignation* in general, which is not joined with a desire of revenge, Mr 3:5, "He looked round about on them with *anger*." It also denotes punishment for sin—the anger or displeasure of God against transgression. **See Barnes "Ro 1:18"**; **See Barnes** "Lu 3:7; **See Barnes** "Lu 21:23, etc. In this place it is evidently used to denote *severe displeasure against sin*. As sin is an evil of so great magnitude, *it is right* for God to be *willing* to evince his displeasure against it; and just in proportion to the extent of the evil. This displeasure, or wrath, it is proper that God should *always* be willing to show; nay, it would not be right for him *not* to show it, for that would be the same thing as to be *indifferent* to it, or to approve it. In this place, however, it is *not* affirmed,

(1.) that God has any pleasure in sin, or its punishment; nor

(2.) that he exerted any agency to *compel* man to sin. It affirms only that God is willing to show his hatred of incorrigible and long-continued wickedness when it actually exists.

To make his power known. This *language* is the same as that which was used in relation to Pharaoh, ro 9:17; Ex 9:16. But it is not probable that the apostle intended to confine it to the Egyptians only. In the following verse he speaks of "the vessels of mercy prepared *unto glory*;" which cannot be supposed to be language adapted to the *temporal* deliverance of the Jews. The case of Pharaoh was *one instance*, or *illustration*, of the general principle on which God would deal with men. His government is conducted on great and uniform principles; and the case of Pharaoh was a development of the great laws on which he governs the universe.

Endured. Bore with; was patient, or forbearing, Re 2:3, "And hast borne, and hast patience," etc. 1Co 13:7, "Charity (love) beareth all things." Lu 18:7

"Shall not God avenge his own elect, though he bear long with them?"

With much long-suffering. With much patience. He suffered them to live, while they deserved to die. God bears with all sinners with much patience; he spares them amid all their provocations, to give them opportunity of repentance; and though they are fitted for destruction, yet he prolongs their lives, and offers them pardon, and loads them with benefits. This fact is a complete vindication of the government of God from the aspersions of all his enemies.

Vessels of wrath. The word *vessel* means a cup, etc., made of earth. As the human body is frail, easily broken and destroyed, it comes to signify also the body. 2Co 4:7: "We have this treasure in earthen vessels." 1Th 4:4, "That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour" that every one should keep *his body* from the indulgence of unlawful passions. Comp. Ro 9:3. Hence also it means the *man himself*. Ac 9:15, "He is a chosen vessel unto me," etc. Comp. Isa 13:3. In this place there is, doubtless, allusion to what he had just said of clay in the hands of the potter. The phrase "vessels of wrath" denotes wicked men against whom it is *fit* or proper that wrath should be shown; as Judas is called "the son of perdition." **See Barnes "Joh 17:12"**.

This does not mean that men by their very *creation*, or their physical nature, are thus denominated; but men who, from long continuance in iniquity, *deserve* to experience wrath; as Judas was not called "son of perdition" by any arbitrary appointment, or as an *original* designation, but because, in consequence of his avarice and treason, this was the name which in fact actually described him, or fitted his case.

Fitted, (*kathrtismena*). This word properly means to *restore*; *to place in order; to render complete; to supply a defect*; *to fit to, or adapt to, or prepare for*. See Mt 4:21, "Were mending theft nets." Ga 6:1, "Restore such an one," etc. In this place it is a *participle*, and means those who are fitted for or *adapted* to destruction—those whose characters are such as to *deserve* destruction, or as to make destruction proper. See the same use of the word in Heb 11:3, "Through faith we understand that the worlds were *framed*"—-beautifully fitted up in proper proportions, one part adapted to another—" by the word of God." Heb 10:5, "A body hast thou *prepared for me*;" fitted, or adapted to me. Comp. Ps 68:10 74:16. In this place there is not the semblance of a declaration that God *had* PREPARED *them, or FITTED them for destruction*. It is a simple declaration that they were IN FACT fitted for it, without making an affirmation about the manner in which they became so. A reader of the English Bible may, perhaps, sometimes draw the impression that God had fitted them for this. But this is not affirmed; and there is an evident design in *not* affirming it, and a distinction made between them and the vessels of mercy which ought to be regarded. In relation to the latter it is expressly *affirmed* that *God* fitted or *prepared* them for glory. See Ro 9:23, "Which HE had afore prepared unto glory." The same distinction is remarkably striking in the account of the last judgment in Mt 25:34-41. To the righteous, Christ will say, "Come, ye blessed of my rather, inherit the kingdom prepared FOR YOU," etc. To the wicked, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared FOR THE DEVIL AND HIS ANGELS;" not said to have been originally prepared *for them*. It is clear, therefore, that God intends to keep the great truth in view, that *he* prepares his people by direct agency for heaven; but that he exerts *no such agency* in preparing the wicked for destruction.

For destruction, (*eiv apwleian*). This word occurs in the New Testament no less than twenty times. Mt 7:13, "Which leadeth to destruction." Joh 17:12, "Son of perdition." Ac 8:20, "Thy money *perish* with thee;" Greek, be for *destruction* with thee; Ac 25:16. Php 1:28, "Token of perdition;" Php 3:19, "Whose end is destruction:" 2Th 2:3, "The son of perdition." 1Ti 6:9, "Which drown men in destruction and perdition." Heb 10:39, "Who draw back unto perdition." See also 2Pe 2:1,3, 3:7,16, etc. In these places it is clear that the reference is to the future punishment of wicked men, and in *no instance* to national calamities. No such use of the word is to be found in the New Testament; and this is further clear from the contrast with the word "glory" in the next verse. We may remark here, that if men are *fitted* or prepared for destruction; if future torment is adapted to them, and they to it; if it is fit that they should be subjected to it; then God will do what is *fit* or *right* to be done, and, unless they repent, they must perish. Nor would it be right for God to take them to heaven as they are; to a place for which they are not *fitted*, and which is not adapted to their feelings, their character, or their conduct.

{u} "if God" Pr 16:4 {v} "vessels of wrath" 2Ti 2:20 {1} "fitted to destruction" or, "made up"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *And that he might make known*. That he might manifest or display. The apostle had shown (Ro 9:22) that the dealings of God towards the wicked were not liable to the objection made in Ro 9:19. In this verse he proceeds to show that the objection could not lie against his dealings with the other class of men—the righteous. If his dealings towards *neither* were liable to the objection, then he *has met the whole case*, and the Divine government is vindicated. This he proves by showing that for God to show the riches of his glory towards those whom he has prepared for it cannot be regarded as unjust.

The riches of his glory. This is a form of expression common among the Hebrews, meaning the same as *his rich* or *his abundant glory*. The same expression occurs in Eph 1:18.

On the vessels of mercy. Men towards whom his mercy was to be displayed, (Ro 9:22) that is, on those towards whom he has purposed to display his mercy.

Mercy. Favour, or pity shown to the miserable. Grace is favour to the *undeserving*; mercy, favour to those in distress. This distinction is not, however, always strictly observed by the sacred writers.

Which he had afore prepared. We are here brought to a remarkable difference between God's mode of dealing with them and with the wicked. Here it is expressly affirmed that God himself had prepared them for glory. In regard to the wicked, it is simply affirmed that they *were fitted* for destruction, without affirming anything of the *agency* by which it was done. That *God* prepares his people for glory—commences and continues the work of their redemption— is abundantly taught in the Scriptures, 1Th 5:9, "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." 2Ti 1:9, "Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." See also Eph 1:4,5,11 Ro 8:28,29,30; Ac 13:48; Joh 1:13. As the renewing of the heart and the sanctifying of the soul is an act of goodness, it is worthy of God, and of course no objection could lie against it. No man could complain of a course of dealings designed to make men *better*; and as this is the sole design of the electing love of God, his dealings with this class of men are easily vindicated. No Christian can complain that God has chosen him, renewed him, and made him pure and happy. And as this was an important part of the plan of God, it is easily defended from the objection in Ro 9:19.

Unto glory. To happiness; and especially to the happiness of heaven. Heb 2:10, "It became him, in bringing many sons unto glory," etc. Ro 5:2, "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God." 2Co 4:17, "Our light affliction worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." 2Th 2:14 2Ti 2:10; 1Pe 5:4.

This eternal state is called "glory," because it blends together everything that constitutes honour, dignity, purity, love, and happiness. All these significations are in various places attached to this word, and all mingle in the eternal state of the righteous. We may remark here,

(1.) that this word "glory" is not used in the Scriptures to denote any *external national privileges*; or to describe any external call of the gospel. No such instance is to be found. Of course the apostle here, by vessels of mercy, meant *individuals* destined to eternal life, and not *nations* externally called to the gospel. No instance can be found where God speaks of nations called to external privileges, and speaks of them as "prepared unto glory."

(2.) As this word refers to the future state of individuals, it shows what is meant by the word "destruction" in Ro 9:22. That term stands contrasted with glory; and describes, therefore, the future condition of individual wicked men. This is also its uniform meaning in the New Testament. On this vindication of the apostle we may observe,

(1.) that all men will be treated as they ought to be treated. Men will be dealt with according to their characters at the end of life.

(2.) If men will suffer no injustice, then this is the same as saying that they will be treated justly; But what is this? That the wicked shall be treated as they deserve. What they deserve God has told us in the Scriptures: "These shall go away into everlasting punishment."

(3.) God has a right to bestow his blessings as he chooses. Where *all* are undeserving, where none have any claim, he may confer his favours on whom he pleases.

(4.) He actually *does* deal with men in this way. The apostle takes this for granted. He does not deny it, He most evidently believes it, and labours to show that it is *right* to do so. If he did not believe it, and meant to teach it, he would have said so. It would have met the objection at once, and saved all argument. He reasons as if he did believe it; and this settles the question that the doctrine is true.

{w} "riches of his glory" Eph 1:18 {x} "which he had afore" 1Th 5:9

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 24

Verse 24. Even us, etc. See Ro 1:16 2:10, 3:29,30.

To prove that the Gentiles might be called as well as the Jews, was a leading design of the epistle.

Us. Christians, selected from both Jews and Gentiles. This proves that he did not refer to nations primarily, but to *individuals* chosen *out of* nations. Two things are established here.

(1.) That the grace of God was not confined to the Jewish people, as they supposed, so that it could be conferred on no others.

(2.) That God was not bound to confer grace on all the descendants of Abraham, as he bestowed it on those selected from the mass, according to his own will, and not of necessity on the mass itself.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *As he saith also*. The doctrine which he had established he proceeds now to confirm by quotations from the writings of *Jews*, that he might remove *every* objection. The doctrine was,

(1.) that God intended to call his people from the Gentiles as well as the Jews.

(2.) That he was bound by no promise and no principle of obligation to bestow salvation on all the Jews.

(3.) That therefore it was right for him to reject any or all of the Jews, if he chose, and cut them off from their privileges as a people, and from salvation.

In Osee. This is the Greek form of writing the Hebrew word *Hosea*. It means in the book of Hosea, as *in David* means in the book of David, or by David, Heb 4:7. The passage is found in Hos 2:23. This quotation is not made according to the *letter*, but the sense of the prophet is preserved. The meaning is the same in Hosea and in this place, that God would bring those into a covenant relation to himself, who were before deemed outcasts and strangers. Thus he supports his main position that God would choose his people from among the Gentiles as well as the Jews, or would exercise towards both his right as a sovereign, bestowing or withholding his blessings as he pleases.

{y} "Osee" Hos 2:23

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *And it shall come to pass*. It shall happen, or take place. This is a continuation of the quotation from the prophet Hosea, (Ro 1:10) designed to confirm the doctrine which he was establishing. Both these quotations have the same design, and are introduced for the same end. In Hosea they did not refer to the calling Of the Gentiles, but to the recalling the rejected Jews. God says, after the Jews had been rejected and scattered for their idolatry; after they had forfeited his favour, and been cast off as if they were not his people, he would *recall* them, and bestow them again the appellation of sons. The apostle does not quote this as having original reference to the Gentiles, but for the following purposes:—

(1.) If God formerly purposed to recall to himself a people whom he had rejected; if he bestowed favours on his own people after they had forfeited his favour, and ceased to be entitled to the name of "his people " then the same thing was not to be regarded as absurd if he dealt in a similar manner with the Gentiles, also a part of his original great family—the family of man—but long since rejected and deemed strangers.

(2.) The dealings of God towards the Jews in the time of Hosea settled a *general principle of government*. His treatment of them in this manner was a part of his great plan of governing the world. On the same plan he now admitted the Gentiles to favour. And as this *general principle* was established; as the history of the Jews themselves was a precedent in the case, it ought not to be objected in the time of Paul that the *same principle* should be carried out to meet the case also of the Gentiles.

In the place. The place where they may be scattered, or where they may dwell. Or rather, perhaps, in those nations which were not regarded as the people of God, there shall be a people to whom this shall apply.

Where it was said unto them. Where the proper appellation of the people was, that they were not the people of God; where they were idolatrous, sinful, aliens, strangers; so that they had none of the marks of the children of God.

Ye are not my people. People in covenant with God; under his protection, as *their* Sovereign, and keeping his laws.

There shall they be called. That is, there they *shall be*. The verb *to call*, in the Hebrew writings, means often the same as *to be*. It denotes that this shall be the appellation which properly expresses their character. It is a figure perhaps almost peculiar to the Hebrews; and it gives additional interest to the case. Instead of saying coldly and abstractedly, "they *are* such," it introduces also the idea that such is the *favourable judgment* of God in the case. See Mt 5:9, "Peacemakers—shall be called the children of God." **See Barnes "Mt 5:9"; also Ro 9:19** Mt 21:13, "My house shall be called the house of prayer." Mr 11:17 Lu 1:32,35 76 Isa 56:7.

The children of, etc. Greek, *Sons*. **See Barnes "Mt 1:1"**.

Living God. Called *living* God in opposition to dead idols. **See Barnes "Mt 16:16"**

also Mt 26:63; Joh 6:69 Ac 14:15; 1Th 1:9, "Turn from idols to serve the living and true God " Jer 10:10. This is a most honourable and distinguished appellation. No higher favour can be conferred on mortals than *to be* the sons of the living God, members of his family, entitled to his protection, and secure of his watch and care. This was an object of the highest desire with the saints of old. See Ps 42:2 84:2, "My soul thirsteth for God, the *living* God;" "My heart and my flesh cry out for the *living* God."

{z} "it shall come" Hos 1:10

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 27

Verse 27,28. *Esias*. The Greek way of writing the word *Isaiah*.

Crieth. Isa 10:22,23. Exclaims, or speaks aloud or openly. Comp. Joh 1:15. Isaiah brings forth the doctrine fully, and without any concealment or disguise. This doctrine related to the rejection of the Jews; a far more difficult point to establish than was that of the calling of the Gentiles. It was needful, therefore to fortify it by some explicit passage of the Scriptures.

Concerning Israel. Concerning *the Jews*. It is probable that Isaiah had reference primarily to the Jews of his own time; to that wicked generation that God was about to punish, by sending them captive into other lands. The case was one, however, which settled a *general principle of the Jewish government*; and therefore it was applicable to the case before the apostle. If the thing for which he was contending—that the Jews might be rejected—-existed in the time of Isaiah, and was settled then as a precedent, it might exist also in his time and under the gospel.

As the sand of the sea. This expression is used to denote an indefinite or an innumerable multitude. It often occurs in the sacred writings. In the infancy of society, before the art of numbering was carried to a great extent, men were obliged to express themselves very much in this manner. Ge 22:17, "I will multiply thy seed—as the sand which is upon the sea-shore;" Ge 32:12.- Isaiah doubtless had reference to this promise: "Though all that was promised to Abraham shall be fulfilled, and his seed shall be as numerous as God declared, yet a remnant only," etc. The apostle thus shows that his doctrine does not conflict at all with the *utmost* expectation of the Jews drawn from the

promises of God. See a similar use of the term sand in Jud 7:12 1Sa 13:5; 2Sa 17:11, etc. In the same manner great numbers were denoted by *the stars of heaven*, Ge 22:17 15:5.

A remnant shall be saved. Meaning a remnant *only*. This implies that great multitudes of them *would be cast off, and be not saved*. If only *a remnant* was to be saved, many must be lost; and this was just the point which the apostle was endeavouring to establish. The word remnant means *that which is left*, particularly what may remain after a battle or a great calamity, 2Ki 19:31 10:11; Jud 5:13

Isa 14:22. In this place, however, it means a small part or portion. Out of the great multitude there shall be so few left as to make it proper to say that it was a mere remnant. This implies, of course, that the great mass should be cast away or rejected. And this was the use which the apostle intended to make of it. Comp. the Wisdom of Sirach xliv. 17, "Noah—was left unto the earth as a *remnant* when the flood came."

Shall be saved. Shall be preserved, or kept from destruction. As Isaiah had reference to the captivity of Babylon, this means that only a remnant should return to their native land. The great mass should be rejected and cast off. This was the case with the ten tribes, and also with many others who chose to remain in the land of their captivity. The use which the apostle makes of it is this: In the history of the Jews, by the testimony of Isaiah, a large part of the Jews of that time were rejected, and cast off from being the peculiar people of God. It is clear, therefore, that God has brought himself under no obligation to save *all* the descendants of Abraham. This case settles the principle. If God did it *then*, it was equally consistent for him to do it in the time of Paul, under the gospel. The conclusion, therefore, to which the apostle came, that it was the intention of God to reject and cast off the Jews as a people, was in strict accordance with their own history and the prophecies. It was still true that a remnant was to be saved, while the great mass of the people was rejected. The apostle is not to be understood here as affirming that the passage in Isaiah had reference to the gospel, but only that it *settled one great principle of the Divine administration in regard to the Jews, and that their rejection under the gospel was strictly in accordance with that principle.*

{a} "Esias also crieth" Isa 10:22,23

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *He will finish the work*. This is taken from the Septuagint translation of Isa 10:23. The Hebrew is, "The Lord God of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined, in the midst of all the land." Or, as it may be rendered, "Destruction is decreed which shall make justice overflow; yea, destruction is verily determined on; the Lord Jehovah will execute it in the midst of all the land." (Stuart.) The Septuagint and the apostle adhere to *the sense* of the passage, but do not follow the *words*. The phrase, *will finish the work*, means, *he will bring the thing to an end*, or will accomplish it. It is an expression applicable to a firm purpose to accomplish an object. It refers here to his *threat* of cutting off the people; and means that he will fulfil it.

Cut it short. This word here means to execute it speedily. The destruction shall not be delayed.

In righteousness. So as to manifest his own justice. The work, though apparently severe, yet shall be a *just* expression of God's abhorrence of the sins of the people.

Because a short work. The word here rendered "short" means, properly, that which is *determined on* or *decreed*. This is the sense of the Hebrew; and the phrase here denotes *the purpose which was determined on* in relation to the Jews.

Upon the earth. Upon the *land* of Israel. **See Barnes "Mt 5:5"; See Barnes** "Mt 4:8".

The design for which the apostle introduces this passage is to show that God of old destroyed many of the Jews for their sin; and that, therefore, the doctrine of the apostle was no new thing, that *the Jews* might be excluded from the peculiar privileges of the children of God.

{1} "the work" or, "the account" {a} "because a short work" Isa 28:22

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *And as Esaias said*. Isa 1:9.

Before. The apostle had just cited one prediction from the tenth chapter of Isaiah. He now says that Isaiah had affirmed the same thing in a previous part of his prophecy.

Except the Lord of Sabaoth. In Isaiah, the Lord of Hosts. The word *Sabaoth* is the Hebrew word rendered *hosts*. It properly denotes *armies* or military hosts organized for war. Hence it denotes *the hosts of heaven*, and means

(1.) the *angels*, who are represented as *marshalled* or arranged into military orders, Eph 1:21 3:10, 6:12 Col 1:16, 2:15 Jude 1:6

1Ki 22:19, "I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him" Ps 103:21 148:2.

(2.) The stars, Jer 33:22, "As the host of heaven cannot be numbered," etc.; Isa 40:26 De 4:19, etc. God is called the Lord of hosts, as being at the head of all these armies; their King and their Commander. It is a phrase properly expressive of his majesty and power, and is appropriately introduced here, as the act of saving "the seed" was a signal *act of power* in the midst of great surrounding wickedness.

Had left. Had *preserved*, or kept from destruction. Here their preservation is ascribed to God, and it is affirmed that if God had not interposed, *the whole nation* would have been cut off. This fully establishes the doctrine of the apostle, that God might cast off the Jews, and extend the blessings to the Gentiles.

A seed. The Hebrew in Isaiah means *one surviving or escaping*, corresponding with the word *remnant*. The word *seed* commonly means, in the Scriptures, *descendants, posterity*. In this place it means *a part, a small portion; a remnant*, like the small portion of the harvest which is reserved for sowing.

We had been as Sodoma. The nation was so wicked, that unless God had preserved a small number who were pious from the general corruption of the people, they would have been swept off by judgment, like Sodom and Gomorrah. We are told that ten righteous men would have saved Sodom, Ge 18:32. Among the Israelites, in a time of great general depravity, a small number of holy men were found who preserved the nation. The design of the apostle here was the same as in the previous verses—to show that it was settled in the Jewish history that God *might* cast off the people, and reject them from enjoying the peculiar privileges of his friends. It is true that in Isaiah he has reference to the *temporal* punishment of the Jews. But it settles *a great principle*, for which

Paul was contending, that God might cast off the nation consistently with his promises and his plans.—We may learn here,

(1.) that the existence of religion among a people is owing to the love of God. "Except the Lord *had left us*," etc.

(2.) It is owing to his mercy that *any men* are kept from sin, and any nation from destruction.

(3.) We see the value of religion and of pious men in a nation. Ten such would have saved Sodom; and a few such saved Judea. Comp. Mt 5:13,14.

(4.) God has a right to withdraw his mercies from any other people, however exalted their privileges, and leave them to ruin; and we should not be high-minded, but fear, Ro 10:20.

{c} "Except the Lord" Isa 1:9 La 3:22 {d} "we had been as" Ge 19:24,25; Isa 13:19

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *What shall we say then*? What conclusion shall we draw from the previous train of remarks? To what results have we come by the passages adduced from the Old Testament? This question is asked prepatory to his summing up the argument; and he had so stated the argument that the conclusion which he was about to draw was inevitable.

The Gentiles. That *many* of the Gentiles; or that the way was open for them, and many of them had actually embraced the righteousness of faith. This epistle was written as late as the year 57, (see Introduction,) and at that time multitudes of heathens had embraced the Christian religion.

Which followed not after righteousness. The apostle does not mean that none of the pagans had any solicitude about right and wrong, or that there were no anxious inquiries among them; but he intends particularly to place them in contrast with the Jew. They had not made it their main object to justify themselves; they were not filled with prejudice and pride as the Jews were, who supposed that they *had* complied with the law, and who felt no need of any other justification; they were sinners, and they felt it, and had no such mighty obstacle in a system of self-righteousness to overcome as the Jew had. Still it was true that they were excessively wicked, and that the prevailing characteristic among them was that they did not follow after righteousness. See Ro 1:1 and following. The word "followed" here often denotes to pursue with intense energy, as a hunter pursues his game, or a man pursues a flying enemy. The Jews had sought righteousness in that way; the Gentiles had not. The word *righteousness* here means the same as *justification*. The Gentiles, which sought not justification, have obtained justification.

Have attained to righteousness, have become justified. This was a matter of fact; and this was what the prophet had predicted. The apostle does not say that the sins of the Gentiles, or their indifference to the subject, was any *reason* why God justified them, or that men would be as safe in sin as in attempting to seek for salvation. He establishes the doctrine, indeed, that God is a sovereign; but still it is implied that the gospel had not the *peculiar obstacle* to contend with among the Gentiles that it had among the Jews. There was less pride, obstinacy, self-confidence; and men were more easily brought to see that they were sinners, and to feel their need of a Saviour. Though God dispenses his favours as a sovereign, and though *all* are opposed by nature to the gospel, yet it is always true that the gospel finds *more* obstacles among some men than among others. This

was a most cutting and humbling doctrine to the pride of a Jew; and it is no wonder, therefore, that the apostle guarded it as he did.

Which is of faith. Justification by faith in Christ. **See Barnes "Ro 1:17,31"**.

{e} "the Gentiles" Ro 10:20 {f} "the righteousness which is of faith" Ro 1:17 Php 3:9

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *But Israel*. The Jews. The apostle does not mean to affirm that *none* of the Jews had obtained mercy, but that *as a people*, or acting according to the prevalent principles of the nation to work out their own righteousness, they had not obtained it.

Which followed after the law of righteousness. The phrase, "the law of righteousness," means the law of justice, or *the just law*. That law demands perfect purity; and even its external observance demanded holiness. The Jews supposed that they rendered such *obedience* to that law as to constitute a meritorious ground of justification. This they had *followed after*; that is, pursued zealously and unremittingly. The reason why they did not obtain justification in that way is fully stated in chapters 1-3., where it is shown that the law demands perfect compliance with its precepts; and that Jews, as well as Gentiles, had altogether failed in rendering such compliance.

Hath not attained to the law of righteousness. They have not come to yield *true* obedience to the law, even though imperfect; not such obedience as to give *evidence* that they have been justified. We may remark here,

(1.) that no conclusion could have been more humbling to a Jew than this. It constituted the whole of the prevalent religion, and was the object of their incessant toils.

(2.) As they made the experiment fully, and failed; as they had the best advantages for it, and did not succeed, but reared only a miserable and delusive system of self-righteousness, (Php 3:4-9); it follows, that all similar experiments must fail, and that none now can be justified by the law.

(3.) Thousands fail in the same attempt. They seek to justify themselves before God. They attempt to weave a righteousness of their own. The moral man does this. The *immoral* man attempts it as much as the moral man, and is as confident in his own righteousness. The troubled sinner does this; and this it is which keeps him so long from the cross of Christ. All this must be renounced; and man must come as a poor, lost, ruined sinner, and throw himself upon the mere mercy of God in Christ for justification and life.

{g} "which followed after the law" Ro 10:2 11:7

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *Wherefore*? Why. The apostle proceeds to state the reason why so uniform and remarkable a result happened.

They sought it not by faith, etc. They depended on their own righteousness, and not on the mercy of God to be obtained by faith.

By the works of the law. By complying with *all* the demands of the law, so that they might *merit* salvation. Their attempted obedience included their prayers, fastings, sacrifices, etc., as well as compliance with the demands of the moral law. It may be asked here, perhaps, how the Jews could know any better than this? How should they know anything about justification by faith. To this I answer,

(1.) that the doctrine was stated in the Old Testament. See Hab 2:4. Comp. Ro 1:17. Ps 32; Ps 130; Ps 14. Comp. Ro 3 Job 9:2.

(2.) The sacrifices had reference to a future state of things, and were doubtless so understood. See the epistle to the Hebrews.

(3.) The *principle* of justification, and of living by faith, had been *fully* brought out in the lives and experience of the saints Of old. See Ro 4 Heb 11.

They stumbled. They fell; or failed; or *this was the cause* why they did not obtain it.

At that stumbling-stone. To wit, at that which he specifies in the following verse. A *stumbling-stone* is a stone or impediment in the path, over which men may fall. Here it means *that obstacle which prevented their attaining the righteousness of faith; and which was the occasion of their fall, rejection, and ruin*. That was the rejection and the crucifixion of their own Messiah; their unwillingness to be saved by him; their contempt of him and his message. For this God withheld from them the blessings of justification, and was about to cast them off as a people. This also the apostle proceeds to prove was foretold by the prophets.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *As it is written*. See Isa 8:14 28:16. The quotation here is made up of both these passages, and contains the substance of both. Comp. also Ps 118:22 1Pe 2:6.

Behold I lay in Sion. Mount Zion was the hill or eminence in Jerusalem, over against Mount Moriah, on which the temple was built. On this was the palace of David, and this was the residence of the court, 1Ch 11:5-8. Hence the whole city was often called by that name, Ps 48:12 69:35, 87:2.

Hence also it came to signify the capital, the glory of the people of God, the place of solemnities; and hence also the church itself, Ps 2:6 51:18, 102:13 137:3; Isa 1:27 52:1

Isa 59:20; etc. In this place it means the church. God will place or establish in the midst of that church.

A stumbling-stone and rock of offence. Something over which men shall fall. **See Barnes "Mt 5:29"**.

This is, by Paul, referred to the Messiah. He is called *rock of stumbling*, not because it was the *design* of sending him that men *should* fall, but because such *would* be the result. The application of the term *rock* to the Messiah is derived from the custom of *building*, as he is the *cornerstone* or the *immovable foundation* on which the church is to be built. It is not on human merits, but by the righteousness of the Saviour, that the church is to be reared. See 1Pe 2:6, "I lay in Sion a *chief corner-stone*." Ps 118:22, "The stone which the builders rejected is become the head stone of the corner." Eph 2:20, "Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone." This rock, *designed* as a corner-stone to the church, became, by the wickedness of the Jews, the block over which they fall into ruin, 1Pe 2:8.

Shall not be ashamed. This is taken substantially from the Septuagint translation of Isa 28:16, though with some variation. The Hebrew is, "shall not make haste," as it is in our English version. This is the literal meaning of the Hebrew word; but it means also *to be afraid*, as one who makes haste often is; to be agitated with fear or fright; and hence it has a signification nearly similar to that of shame. It expresses the substance of the same thing, Viz., *failure of obtaining expected success and happiness*. The meaning here is, that the man who believes shall not be agitated, or thrown into commotion, by fear of want of success; shall not be disappointed in his hopes; and: of course, he shall never be ashamed that he became a Christian. They who do *not* believe in Christ shall be agitated, fall, and sink into eternal shame and contempt, Da 12:2. They who *do* believe shall be confident; shall not be deceived, but shall obtain the object of their desires. It is clear that Paul regarded the passage in Isaiah as referring to the Messiah. The same also is the case with the other sacred writers who have quoted it, 1Pe 2:5-8. See also Mt 21:42 Lu 20:17,18 2:34.

The ancient Targum of Jonathan translates the passage, Isa 28:16, "Lo, I will place in Zion a king, a king strong, mighty, and terrible;" referring doubtless to the Messiah. Other Jewish writings also show that this interpretation was formerly given by the Jews to the passage in Isaiah.

In View of this argument of the apostle we may remark,

(1.) that God is a Sovereign, and has a right to dispose of men as he pleases.

(2) The doctrine of election was manifest in the case of the Jews as an established principle of the Divine government, and is therefore true,

(3.) It argues great want of proper feeling to be opposed to this doctrine. It is saying, in other words, that we have not confidence in God; or that we do not believe that he is qualified to direct the affairs of his own universe as well as we.

(4.) The doctrine of election is a doctrine which is not *arbitrary*; but which will yet be seen to be wise, just, and good. It is the source of all the blessings that any mortals enjoy; and, in the case before us, it can be seen to be benevolent as well as just. It is *better* that God should cast off a part of the small nation of the Jews, and extend these blessings to the Gentiles, than that they should always have been confined to Jews. The world is better for it, and more good has come out of it.

(5.) The fact, that the gospel has been extended to all nations, is proof that it is from heaven. To a Jew there was no motive to attempt to break down all the existing institutions of his nation, and make the blessings of religion common to all nations, unless he knew that the gospel system was true. Yet the apostles were Jews; educated with all the prejudices of the Jewish people.

(6.) The interests of Christians are safe. They shall not be ashamed or disappointed, God will keep them, and bring them to his kingdom.

(7.) Men still are offended at the cross of Christ. They contemn and despise him. He is to them as a root out of dry ground, and they reject him, and fall into ruin. This is the cause why sinners perish; and this only. Thus as the ancient Jews brought ruin on themselves and their country, so do sinners bring condemnation and woe on their souls. And as the ancient despisers and crucifiers of the Lord Jesus perished, so will all those who work iniquity and despise him now.

{h} "As it is written" Ps 118:22 Isa 8:14.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 10

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 1

ROMANS Chapter 10

Verse 1. *Brethren*. This expression seems intended particularly for the Jews, his ancient friends, fellow-worshippers, and kinsmen, but Who had embraced the Christian faith. It is an expression of tenderness and affection, denoting his deep interest in their welfare.

My heart's desire. The word "desire" (*eudokia*) means benevolence; and the expression, *my heart's desire*, means my earnest and sincere wish.

Prayer to God. He not only cherished this feeling, but he expressed it ill a desire to God. He had no desire that his kinsmen should be destroyed; no pleasure in the appalling doctrine which he had been defending. He still wished their welfare; and could still pray for them that they might return to God. Ministers have no pleasure in proclaiming the truth that men must be lost. Even when they declare the truths of the Bible that some *will* be lost; when they are constrained, by the unbelief and wickedness of men, to proclaim it of *them*, they still can sincerely say that they seek their salvation.

For Israel. For the Jewish nation.

That they might be saved. This clearly refers to salvation from the sin of unbelief, and the consequences of sin in hell. It does not refer to the temporal calamities which were coming upon them, but to preservation from the eternal anger of God. Comp. Ro 11:26 1Ti 2:4. The reasons why the apostle commences this chapter in this tender manner are the following:

(1.) Because he had stated and defended one of the most offensive doctrines that could be preached to a Jew; and he was desirous to show them that it was not from any want of affection for them, but that he was urged to it by the pressure of truth.

(2.) He was regarded by them as all apostate. He had abandoned them when bearing their commission, and while on his way to execute their favourite purposes, and had preached the doctrine which they had sent him to destroy. Comp. Ac 9. He had opposed them everywhere; had proclaimed their pride, self-righteousness, and crime, in crucifying their Messiah; had forsaken all that they valued—their pomp of worship, their city, and their temple; and had gone to other lands to bear the message of mercy to the nations that they despised. He was willing to show them that this proceeded from no want of affection for them, but that he still retained towards them the feelings of a Jew, and could give them credit for much that they valued themselves on, Ro 10:2.

(3.) He was aware of the deep and dreadful condemnation that was coming on them. In view of that he expressed his tender regard for their welfare, and his earnest prayer to God for their salvation. And we see here the proper feelings of a minister of the gospel when declaring the most terrible of the truths of the Bible. Paul was tender, affectionate, kind; convincing by cool argument, and not harshly denouncing; stating the appalling truth, and then pouring out his earnest desires to God that he would avert the impending doom. So should the awful doctrines of religion be preached by all the ambassadors of God.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *For I bear them record*. To bear record, means to be a witness; to give evidence. This, Paul was well qualified to do. He had been a Jew of the strictest order, (Ac 26:6; Php 3:5,) and he well knew the extraordinary exertions which they put forth to obey the commands of the law.

A zeal of God. A zeal *for* God, Thus, Joh 2:17, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up;" An earnest desire for the honour of the sanctuary has wholly absorbed my attention. Comp. Ps 69:9 Ac 21:20, "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe, and they are all zealous of the law;" Ac 22:3, "And was zealous toward God as ye all are this day." Zeal for God here means passionate ardour in the things pertaining to God, or in the things of religion. In this they were doubtless, many of them, sincere; but sincerity does not of itself constitute true piety. Joh 16:2, The time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he, doeth God service." This would be an instance of extraordinary zeal, and in this they would be sincere; but persecution to death of apostles cannot be true religion. See also Mt 23:15; Ac 26:9, "I thought that *I ought* to do," etc. So many persons suppose that, provided they are *sincere and zealous*, they must of course be accepted of God. But the zeal which is acceptable is that which aims at the glory of God, and which is founded on true benevolence to the universe; and which does not aim primarily to establish a system of self-righteousness, as did the Jew, or to build up *our own sect*, as many others do. We may remark here, that Paul was not insensible to what the Jews did, and was not unwilling to give them credit for it. A minister of the gospel should not be blind to the amiable qualities of men, or to their zeal; and should be willing to speak of it tenderly, even when he is proclaiming the doctrine of depravity, or denouncing the just judgments of God.

Not according to knowledge. Not an enlightened, discerning, and intelligent zeal. Not that which was founded on correct views of God and of religious truth. Such zeal is enthusiasm, and often becomes persecuting. Knowledge without zeal becomes cold, abstract, calculating, formal; and may be possessed by devils as well as men. It is the union of the two —the action of the man called forth to intense effort by just *views* of truth, and by rightfeeling—that constitutes true religion. This was the zeal of the Saviour and of the apostles.

{i} "zeal" Ac 21:20

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *For they being ignorant*. The ignorance of the Jews was voluntary, and therefore criminal. The apostle does not affirm that they could not have known what the plan of God was; for he says, (Ro 10:18-21) that they had full opportunity of knowing. An attentive study of their own Scriptures would have led them to the true knowledge of the Messiah and his righteousness. See Joh 5:39. Comp. Isa 53, etc. Yet the fact that they were ignorant, though not an excuse, is introduced here, doubtless, as a mild and mitigating circumstance that should take off the severity of what he might appear to them to be saying, 1Ti 1:13. "But I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly, in unbelief." Lu 23:34, "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Ac 7:60. Involuntary ignorance excuses from guilt; but ignorance produced by our sin or our indolence is no excuse for crime.

Of God's righteousness. Not of the personal holiness of God, but *of God's plan of justifying men, or of declaring them righteous by faith in his Son*. **See Barnes "Ac 1:17"**.

Here God's plan stands opposed to their efforts to make themselves righteous by their own works.

And seeking to establish, etc. Endeavouring *to confirm* or *make valid* their own righteousness; to render it such as to constitute a ground of justification before God; or to make good their own claims to eternal life by their merits. This stands opposed to the justification by grace, or to God's plan. And they must *ever* be opposed. This was the constant effort of the Jews; and in this they supposed they had succeeded. See Paul's experience in Php 3:4-6; Ac 26:5. Instances of their belief on this subject occur in all the gospels, where our Saviour combats their notions of their own righteousness. See particularly their views and evasions exposed in Mt 23. Comp. Mt 5:20, etc.; Mt 6:2-5. It was this which mainly opposed the Lord Jesus and his apostles; and it is this confidence in their own righteousness which still stands in the way of the progress of the gospel among men.

Have not submitted themselves. Confident in their own righteousness, they have not yielded their hearts to a plan which requires them to come confessing that they have no merit, and to be saved by the merit of another. No obstacle to salvation by grace is so great as the self-righteousness of the sinner.

Righteousness of God. His plan or scheme of justifying men.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *For Christ*. This expression implies *faith* in Christ. This is the design of the discussion, to show that justification cannot be obtained by our own righteousness, but by faith in Christ. As no direct benefit results to men from Christ unless they believe on him, faith in him is implied where the word occurs in this connexion.

Is the end of the law. The word translated "end" means that which *completes* a thing, or renders it perfect; also the boundary, issue, or termination of anything, as the end of life, the result of a prophecy, etc., Joh 13:1 Lu 22:37. It also means the *design or object* which is had in view; the principal purpose for which it was undertaken. 1Ti 1:5, "The end of the commandment is charity;" the main design or purpose of the command is to produce love. 1Pe 1:9, "The *end* of your faith, the salvation of your souls; "the main design or purpose of faith is to secure salvation. Ro 14:9, "To this end Christ both died," etc.; for this design or purpose. This is doubtless its meaning here. *The main design or object which the perfect obedience of the law would accomplish, is accomplished by faith in Christ*. That is, perfect obedience to the law would accomplish justification before God, secure his favour and eternal life. The same end is now accomplished by faith in Christ. The great desire of both is the same; and the same great end is finally gained. This was the subject of discussion between the apostle and the Jews; and this is all that is necessary to understand in the case. Some have supposed that the word *end* refers to the ceremonial law; that Christ fulfilled it, and brought it to an end. Others, that he perfectly fulfilled the moral law. And others, that the law *in the end* leads us to Christ, or that its design is to point us to him. all this is true, but not the truth taught in this passage. That is simple and plain, that by faith in Christ the same end is accomplished in regard to our justification, that would be by perfect obedience to the moral law.

For righteousness. Unto justification, or acceptance with God.
To every one that believeth. **See Barnes "Ro 1:17".**
{l} "end of the law" Heb 10:14.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 5

Verse 5. For Moses describeth, etc. This is found in Le 18:5, "Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, which if a man do he shall live in them." This appeal is made to Moses, both in regard to the righteousness of the law and that of faith, in accordance with the usual manner of Paul to sustain all his positions by the Old Testament, and to show that he was introducing no new doctrine. He was only affirming that which had been long before taught in the writings of the Jews themselves. The word *describeth* is, literally, *writes*, (*grafei*) a word often used in this sense.

The righteousness, etc. The righteousness which a perfect obedience to the law of God would produce. That consisted in perfectly doing all that the law required.

The man which doeth these things. The man who shall perform or obey what was declared in the previous statutes. Moses here had reference to all the commandments which God had given, moral and ceremonial. And the doctrine of Moses is that which pertains to all laws, that he who shall render *perfect* and continued compliance with *all* the statutes made known, shall receive the reward which the law promises. This is a first principle of *all* law; for all law holds a man to be innocent, and, of course, entitled to whatever immunities and rewards it has to confer, until he is *proved* to be guilty. In this case, however, Moses did not affirm that *in fact* any one either had yielded or would yield perfect obedience to the law of God. The Scriptures elsewhere abundantly teach that it never *has* been done.

Doeth. Obeys, or yields obedience. So also Mt 5:19, "Shall *do* and teach them;" Mt 7:24,26. "Whosoever heareth these sayings—and *doeth* them;" Mt 23:3 Mr 3:35, 6:20 Lu 6:46,47 49.

Shall live. Shall obtain felicity. Obedience shall render him happy, and entitled to the rewards of the obedient. Moses doubtless referred here to *all* the results which would follow obedience. The *effect* would be to produce happiness in this life and in the life to come. The *principle* on which happiness would be conferred, would be the same whether in this world or the next. The tendency and result of obedience would be to promote order, health, purity, benevolence; to advance the welfare of man, and the honour of God, and thus *must* confer happiness. The idea of happiness is often in the Scriptures represented by the word *life*. **See Barnes "Joh 5:24".**

It is evident, moreover, that the Jews understood Moses here as referring to more than temporal blessings. The ancient Targum of Onkelos renders the passage in Leviticus thus —"The man who does these things shall live in them to eternal life." So the Arabic version is, "The retribution of him who works these things is that he shall live an eternal life."

By them. (*en autoiv*). In them. *In* their observance he shall find happiness. Not simply as a *result, or reward*, but *the very act of obeying* shall carry its own reward. This is the case with all true religion. This declaration of Moses is still true. If perfect obedience were rendered, it would, from the nature of the case, confer happiness and life as long as the obedience was rendered. God would not punish the innocent. But in this world it never has been rendered, except in the case of

the Lord Jesus; and the consequence is, that the course of man has been attended with pain, sorrow, and death.

{m} "righteousness" Le 18:5

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *But the righteousness which is of faith*. It is observable here that Paul does not affirm that *Moses* describes anywhere the righteousness by faith, or the effect of the scheme of justification by faith. His object was different, to give the law and state its demands and rewards. Yet though he had not *formally* described the plan of justification by faith, yet he had used language which would *fitly express* that plan. The scheme of justification by faith is here *personified* as if it were living, and describing its own effects and nature. One describing it would say, Or the plan itself speaks in this manner. The words here quoted are taken from De 30:11-14. The original meaning of the passage is this: Moses near the end of his life, having given his commandments to the Israelites, exhorts them to obedience. To do this, he assures them that his commands are reasonable, plain, intelligible, and accessible. They did not require deep research, long journeys, or painful toil. There was no need of crossing seas, and going to other lands; of looking into the profound mysteries of the high heavens, or the deep abyss; but they were near them, had been plainly set before them, and were easily understood. To see the excellency of this characteristic of the Divine law, it may be observed, that, among the ancients, it was not uncommon for legislators and philosophers to travel to distant countries in pursuit of knowledge. They left their country, encountered dangers on the sea and land, to go to distant regions that had the reputation of wisdom. Egypt was peculiarly a land of such celebrity; and in subsequent times Pythagoras, and the principal philosophers of Greece, travelled into that country to converse with their priests, and to bear the fruits of their wisdom to benefit their native land. And it is not improbable that this had been done to some extent even in or before the time of Moses. Moses says that *his* precepts were to be obtained by no such painful and dangerous journeys. They were near them, plain, and intelligible. This is the general meaning of this passage. Moses dwells on the thought, and places it in a variety of forms by the questions, "Who shall go up to heaven for us," etc.; and Paul regards this as *appropriately* describing the language of Christian faith; but without affirming that Moses himself had any reference in the passage to the faith of the gospel.

On this wise. In this manner.

Say not in thine heart. The expression, *to say in the heart*, is the same as *to think*. Do not think, or suppose, that the doctrine is so difficult to be understood, that one must ascend to heaven in order to understand it.

Who shall ascend into heaven? This expression was used among the Jews, to denote any difficult undertaking. To say that it was high as heaven, or that it was necessary to ascend to heaven to understand it, was to express the highest difficulty. Thus Job 11:7, "Canst thou by searching find out God? It is high as heaven, what canst thou do?:" etc. Moses says it was not so with his doctrine. It was not impossible to be understood, but was plain and intelligible.

That is, to bring Christ, etc. Paul does not here affirm that it was the original design of *Moses* to affirm this of Christ. His words related to his own doctrine. Paul makes this use of the words, because

(1.) they appropriately *expressed* the language of faith.

(2.) If this might be affirmed of the doctrines of Moses, much more might it of the Christian religion. Religion had no such difficult work to do as to ascend to heaven to bring down a Messiah. That work was already accomplished when God gave his Son to become a man, and to die. To save man it was indeed indispensable that Christ should have come down from heaven, But the language of faith was that this had already been done. Probably the word *Christ* here includes all the *benefits* mentioned in Ro 10:4, as resulting from the work of Christ.

{n} "Say not in thine heart" De 30:12-14

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Or who shall descend into the deep?* These words are also a part of the address of Moses, De 30:13. But it is not literally quoted. The Hebrew is, "Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us," etc. The *words* of the quotation are changed, but not the sense; and it is to be remembered, that Paul is not professing to quote the words of Moses, but to *express the language of faith*; and this he does mainly by words which Moses had used, which also expressed *his* meaning. The words, as used by Moses, refer to that which is *remote* and therefore difficult to be obtained. To cross the sea in the early times of navigation involved the highest difficulty, danger, and toil. The sea which was in view was doubtless the Mediterranean, but the crossing of that was an enterprise of the greatest difficulty, and the regions *beyond* that were regarded as being at a vast distance. Hence it is spoken of as being the *widest* object with which they were acquainted, and the fairest illustration of infinity, Job 11:9. In the same sense Paul uses the word deep—(*abusson*)—*the abyss*. This word is applied to anything the depth or bottom of which is not known. It is applied to the ocean, (in the Septuagint,) Job 41:31, "He maketh the deep to boil as a pot." Isa 44:27, "That saith to the deep, Be dry," etc.; Ge 7:11; Ge 8:2.

To a broad place, (Job 36:16) and to the *abyss* before the world was formed, Ge 1:2. In the New Testament it is not applied to *the ocean*, unless in the passage Lu 8:31, **See Barnes** "Lu 8:31, but to the abode of departed spirits; and particularly to the dark, deep, and bottomless pit, where the wicked are to dwell for ever. Re 9:1,2, "And to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit," Greek, *The pit of the abyss*. Re 11:7 17:8, 20:1,3.

In these places the word means the deep, awful regions of the nether world. The word stands opposed to heaven; as deep as that is high; as dark as that is light; while the one is as vast as the other. In the place before us it is opposed to heaven; and to descend there to bring up one, is supposed to be as impossible as to ascend to heaven to bring one down. Paul does not affirm that Christ descended to those regions; but he says that there is no such difficulty in religion *as if one were required* to descend into those profound regions to call back a departed spirit. That work was *in fact* done, when Jesus was recalled from the dead, and now the work of salvation is easy. The word *abyss* here, therefore, answers to *hades*, or the dark regions of departed spirits.

That is, to bring up Christ, etc. Justification by faith had no such difficult and impossible work to perform as would be an attempt for man to raise the dead. That would be impossible; but the work of religion is easy. *Christ, the ground of hope, is not by OUR EFFORTS to be brought down from heaven to save us, for that is done; nor BY OUR EFFORTS to be raised from the dead, for that is done; and what remains for us—that is, TO BELIEVE—is easy, and is near us*. This is the meaning of the whole passage.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 8

Verse 8. But what saith it? That is, what is the language of the doctrine of justification by faith? Or what is to be done according to that doctrine?

The word is nigh thee. This is still a use of the language of Moses, De 30:14. The meaning is, the doctrine is not difficult to be understood and embraced. What is nigh us may be easily obtained; what is remote, with difficulty. The doctrine of Moses and of the gospel was nigh; that is, it was easily obtained, embraced, and understood.

In thy mouth. This is taken from the Septuagint, De 30:14. The meaning is, that the doctrine was already so familiar, and so well understood, that it was actually in their mouth; that is, their language, their common conversation. Moses had so often inculcated it, that it was understood and talked about by the people, so that there was no need to search in distant climes to obtain it. The same was true of the gospel. The facts were so well known by the preaching of the apostles, that they might be said to be in every man's mouth.

In thy heart. The word *heart* is very variously used in the sacred Scriptures. As used by Moses in this place, it evidently means that his doctrines were in their mind, or were a subject of meditation and reflection. They already possessed them, and talked and thought about them; so that there was no need of going to distant places to learn them. The same was true of the doctrine requiring faith in Christ. It was already among them by the preaching of the apostles, and was a subject of conversation and of thought.

That is. This is the use which the apostle makes of it; not that Moses referred to the gospel. His *language* conveys the main idea which Paul wished to do, that the doctrine was plain and intelligible.

The word of faith. The doctrine which requires faith, i.e., the gospel. Comp. 1Ti 4:6. The gospel is called the *word* of faith, the word of God, as being that which was *spoken*, or communicated by God to man, Ro 10:17; Heb 6:5 11:3.

Which we preach. Which is proclaimed by the apostles, and made known to Jews and Gentiles. As this was now made known to all, as the apostles preached it everywhere, it could be said to be nigh them; there was no need of searching other lands for it, or regarding it as a hidden mystery, for it was plain and manifest to all. Its simplicity and plainness he proceeds immediately to state.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *That if thou shalt confess*. The word here rendered confess—(*omologhshv*)—is often rendered profess. Mt 7:23, "Then will I profess to them I never knew you." Tit 1:16; Tit 3:14; Ro 1:22; 1Ti 2:10 6:12,13,21 Heb 3:1, etc. It properly means, *to speak that which agrees with something which others speak or maintain*. Thus confession or profession expresses our *agreement or concord with what God holds to be true, and what he declares to be true*. It denotes a public declaration or assent to that, here expressed by the words "with thy mouth." A profession of religion then denotes a public declaration of our agreement with what God has declared, and extends to *all* his declarations about our lost estate, our sin, and need of a Saviour; to his doctrines about his own nature, holiness, and law; about the Saviour and the Holy Spirit; about the necessity of a change of heart and holiness of life; and about the grave and the judgment; about heaven and hell. As the doctrine respecting a Redeemer is the main and leading doctrine, it is put here by way of eminence, as *in fact* involving all others; and publicly to express our assent to this, is to declare our agreement with God on all kindred truths.

With thy mouth. To profess a thing with the mouth is to speak of it; to declare it; to do it openly and publicly.

The Lord Jesus. Shalt openly acknowledge attachment to Jesus Christ. The meaning of it may be expressed by regarding the phrase, "the Lord," as the *predicate*; or the thing to be confessed is, that *he is Lord*. Comp. Ac 2:36 Php 2:11, "And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord." Here it means to acknowledge him as Lord, i.e., as having a right to rule over the soul.

Shalt believe in thy heart. Shalt *sincerely and truly* believe this, so that the external profession shall correspond with the real, internal feelings. Where this is not the case, it would be hypocrisy; where this *is* the case, there would be the highest sincerity, and this religion requires.

That God hath raised him. This fact, or article of Christian belief, is mentioned here because of its great importance, and its bearing on the Christian system. If this be true, then *all* is true. Then it is true that he came forth from God; that he died for sin; and that God approved and accepted his work. Then it is true that he ascended to heaven, and is exalted to dominion over the universe, and that he will return to judge the quick and the dead. For all this was professed and taught; and all this was regarded as depending on the truth of his having been raised from the dead. See Php 2:8-11; Eph 1:21; Ac 2:24,32,33 17:31 2Co 4:14 1Co 15:13-20.

To profess this doctrine was, therefore, virtually to profess *all* the truths of the Christian religion. No man could believe this who did not also believe all the truths dependent on it. Hence the apostles regarded this doctrine as so important, and made it so prominent in their preaching. **See Barnes "Ac 1:3"**.

Thou shalt be saved. From sin and hell. This is the doctrine of the gospel throughout; and all this shows that salvation by the gospel was easy.

{a} "thou shalt confess" 1Jo 4:2.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *For with the heart*. Not with the understanding merely, but with such a faith as shall be sincere, and shall influence the life. There *can be* no other genuine faith than that which influences the whole mind.

Believeth unto righteousness. Believes so that justification is obtained. (*Stuart*.) In God's plan of justifying men, this is the way by which we may be declared just or righteous in his sight. The moment a sinner believes, therefore, he is justified; his sins are pardoned; and he is introduced into the favour of God. No man can be justified without this; for this is God's plan, and he will not depart from it.

With the mouth confession is made, etc. That is, confession or profession is so made as to obtain salvation. He who in all appropriate ways professes his attachment to Christ shall be saved. This profession is to be made in all the proper ways of religious duty; by an avowal of our sentiments; by declaring on all proper occasions our belief of the truth; and by an unwavering adherence to them in all persecutions, oppositions, and trials. He who *declares* his belief makes a profession. He who associates with Christian people does it. He who acts with them in the prayer-meeting, in the sanctuary, and in deeds of benevolence, does it. He who is baptized, and commemorates the death of the Lord Jesus, does it. And he who leads a humble, prayerful, spiritual life, does it. He shows his regard to the precepts and example of Christ Jesus; his regard for them more than for the pride, and pomp, and allurements of the world. All these are included in a profession of religion. In whatever way we can manifest attachment to it, it must be done. The reason why this is made so important is, that there *can be* no true attachment to Christ which will not manifest itself in the life. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. It is impossible that there should be true belief in the heart of man, unless it should show itself in the life and conversation. This is the only test of its existence and its power; and hence it is made so important in the business of religion. And we may here learn,

(1.) that a *profession* of religion is, by Paul, made as really indispensable to salvation as believing. According to him it is connected with salvation as really as faith is with justification; and this accords with all the declarations of the Lord Jesus. Mt 10:32; Mt 25:34-46 Lu 12:8.

(2.) There can be no religion where there is not a willingness to confess the Lord Jesus. There is no true repentance where we are not willing to *confess* our faults. There is no true attachment to a father, or mother, or friend, unless we are willing, on all proper occasions, to avow it. And so there can be no true religion where there is too much pride, or vanity, or love of the world, or fear of shame to confess it.

(3.) Those who never profess any religion have none; and they are not safe. To deny God the Saviour before men is not safe. They who do not profess religion, profess the opposite. The real feelings of the heart will be expressed in the life. And they who profess by their lives that they have no regard for God and Christ, for heaven and glory, must expect to be met in the last day as those who deny the Lord that bought them, and who bring upon themselves quick destruction, 2Pe 2:1.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *For the Scripture saith*, etc. Isa 28:16. This was the uniform doctrine of the Scripture, that he who holds an opinion on the subject of religion will not be ashamed to avow it. This is the nature of religion, and without this there can be none. See this passage explained in Ro 9:33.

{q} "Whosoever believeth" Isa 28:16 49:23

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *For there is no difference*. In the previous verse Paul had quoted a passage from Isa 28:16, which says that *every one* (*pav*) that believeth shall not be ashamed; that is, every one of every nation and kindred. This implies that it was not to be confined to the *Jews*. This thought he now *further* illustrates and confirms by expressly declaring that there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek. This doctrine it was one main design of the epistle to establish, and it is fully proved in the course of the argument in Romans chapters 1-4. See particularly Ro 3:26-30. When the apostle says there is *no difference* between them, he means in regard to the subject under discussion. In many respects there might be a difference; but not *in the way of justification before God*. There *all* had sinned; all had failed of obeying the law; and all must be justified in the same way, by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The word difference (*diastolh*) means *distinction, diversity*. It also means *eminence, excellence, advantage*. There is no eminence or *advantage* which the Jew has over the Greek in regard to justification before God.

The Jew. That portion of mankind which professed to yield obedience to the law of Moses.

The Greek. Literally, those who dwelt in Greece, or those who spoke the Greek language. As the Jews, however, were acquainted chiefly with the Greeks, and knew little of other nations, the name Greek among them came to denote all who were not Jews; that is, the same as the Gentiles. The terms "Jew and Greek," therefore, include all mankind. There is no difference among men about the terms of salvation; they are the same to all. This truth is frequently taught. It was a most important doctrine, especially in a scheme of religion that was to be preached to all men. It was very offensive to the Jews, who had always regarded themselves as a peculiarly favoured people. Against this, all their prejudices were roused, as it completely overthrew all their own views of national eminence and pride, and admitted despised Gentiles to the same privileges with the long-favoured and chosen people of God. The apostles, therefore, were at great pains fully to establish it. Ac 10:9 Ga 3:28.

For the same Lord over all, etc. For there is the same Lord of all; that is, the Jews and Gentiles have one common Lord. Comp. Ro 3:29,30. The same God had formed them and ruled them; and God now opened the same path to life. See this fully presented in Paul's address to the people of Athens, in Ac 17:26-30. See also 1Ti 2:5. As there was but *one* God; as all, Jews and Gentiles, were his creatures; as one law was applicable to all; as all had sinned; and as all were exposed to wrath; so it was reasonable that there should be the same way of return—through the mere mercy of God. Against this the Jew ought not to object; and in this he and the Greek should rejoice.

Is rich unto all. (*ploutwn eiv pantav*). The word *rich* means to *have abundance*, to have in store much more than is needful for present or personal use. It is commonly applied to wealth. But applied to God, it means that he *abounds* in mercy or goodness towards others. Thus, Eph 2:4, "God, who is rich in mercy," etc.; 1Ti 6:17,18, "Charge them that are rich in this world—that they be rich in good works;" Jas 2:5, "God hath chosen the poor—*rich in faith*;" that is, *abounding* in faith and good works, etc. Thus God is said to be *rich* towards all, as he abounds in mercy and goodness towards them in the plan of salvation.

That call upon him. This expression means, properly, *to supplicate, to invoke*, as in prayer. As prayer constitutes no small part of religion, and as it is a *distinguishing characteristic* of those who are true Christians, (Ac 9:11, "Behold he prayeth,") to call on the name of the Lord is put for religion itself, and is descriptive of acts of devotion towards God. 1Pe 1:17, "And if ye call on the Father,"

etc.; Ac 2:21 9:14, "He hath authority to bind all *that call on thy name;* Ac 7:59 22:16; Ge 4:26, "Then began men to call on the name of the Lord."

{s} "the same Lord" 1Ti 2:5

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *For whosoever shall call*, etc. This sentiment is found substantially in Joe 2:32, "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered." This is expressly applied to the times of the gospel by Peter, in Ac 2:21. **See Barnes "Ac 2:21".**

To call on *the name* of the Lord is the same as to call on the Lord himself. The word *name* is often used in this manner. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower," etc., Pr 18:10; "The name of the God of Jacob defend thee," Ps 20:1. That is, God *himself* is a strong tower, etc. It is clear, from what follows, that the apostle applies this to Jesus Christ; and this is one of the numerous instances in which the writers of the New Testament apply to him expressions which in the Old Testament are applicable to God. See 1Co 1:2.

Shall be saved. This is the uniform promise. See Ac 2:21; Ac 22:16, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, *calling on the name of the Lord*." This is proper and indispensable, because

(1.) we have sinned against God, and it is right that we should confess it.

(2.) Because he only can pardon us, and it is fit, that if we obtain pardon, we should ask it of God.

(3.) To call upon him is to acknowledge him as our Sovereign, our Father, and our Friend; and it is right that we render him our homage. It is *implied* in this, that we call upon him with right feelings; that is, with a humble sense of our sinfulness and our need of pardon, and with a willingness to receive eternal life as it is offered us in the gospel. And if this be done, this passage teaches us that *all* may be saved who will do it. He will cast none away who come in this manner. The invitation and the assurance extend to all nations, and to men of all times.

{t} "whosoever" Joe 2:32 {u} "upon the name of the Lord" 1Co 1:2

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *How then shall they call*, etc. The apostle here adverts to an objection which might be urged to his argument. His doctrine was, that faith in Christ was essential to justification and salvation; and that this was needful for all; and that, without this, man must perish. The objection was, that they could not call on him in whom they had not believed; that they could not believe in him of whom they had not heard; and that this was *arranged by God himself*; so that a large part of the world was destitute of the gospel and *in fact* did not believe, Ro 10:16,17. The objection had *particular* reference to the Jews; and the ground of injustice which a Jew would complain of would be, that the plan made salvation dependent on *faith*, when a large part of the nation had not heard the gospel, and had had no opportunity to know it. This objection the apostle meets, so far as it was of importance to his argument, in Ro 10:18-21. The first part of the objection is, that they could

"not call on him in whom they had not believed." That is, how could they call on one in whose existence, ability, and willingness to help, they did not believe? The objection is, that in order to our calling on one for help, we must be satisfied that there *is* such a being, and that he is able to aid us. This remark is just, and every man feels it. But the point of the objection is, that *sufficient evidence of the Divine mission and claims of Jesus Christ had not been given to authorize the doctrine that eternal salvation depended on in him, or that it would be right to suspend the eternal happiness of Jew and Gentile on this*.

How shall they believe in him, etc. This position is equally undeniable, that men could not believe in a being of whom they had not heard. And the implied objection was, that men could not be expected to believe in one of whose existence they knew nothing, and, of course, that they could not be blamed for not doing it. It was not right, therefore, to make eternal life depend, both among Jews and Gentiles, on faith in Christ.

And how shall they hear, etc. How *can* men hear, unless some one *proclaim* to them, or preach to them, that which is to be heard and believed? This is also true. The *objection* thence derived is, that it is not right to condemn men for not believing what has never been proclaimed to them; and, of course, that the doctrine that eternal life is suspended on faith cannot be just and right.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *And how shall they preach*. In what way shall there be preachers, unless they are commissioned by God? The word "*how*" does not refer to the *manner* of preaching, but to the fact that there would be no preachers at all unless they were sent forth. To *preach* means to proclaim in a public manner, as a *crier* does. In the Scriptures it means to proclaim the gospel to men.

Except they be sent. That is, except they are divinely commissioned, and sent forth by God. This was an admitted doctrine among the Jews, that a proclamation of a Divine message must be made by one who was commissioned by God for that purpose, Jer 23:21 1:7, 14:14,15

Jer 7:25. He who sends a message to men can alone designate the proper persons to bear it. The point of the objection, therefore, was this: Men could not believe unless the message was sent to them; yet God had *not* actually sent it to all men: it could not therefore be *just*, to make eternal life depend on so impracticable a thing as *faith*, since men had not the means of believing.

As it is written. In Isa 52:7.

How beautiful, etc. The reason why this passage is introduced here is, that it confirms what had just been advanced in the objection—the *importance* and *necessity* of there being messengers of salvation. That importance is seen in the high encomium which is passed on them in the sacred Scriptures. They are regarded as objects peculiarly attractive; their necessity is fully recognized; and a distinguished rank is given to them in the oracles of God.

How beautiful. How attractive; how lovely. This is taken from the Hebrew, with a slight variation. In the Hebrew, the words "upon the mountains" occur, which makes the passage more picturesque, though the sense is retained by Paul. The image in Isaiah is that of a herald seen at first leaping or running on a distant hill, when he first comes in sight, with tidings of joy from a field of battle, or from a distant land. Thus, the appearance of such a man to those who were in captivity, would be an image full of gladness and joy.

Are the feet. Many have supposed that the meaning of this expression is this: The *feet* of a herald, naked and dusty from travelling, would be *naturally* objects of disgust; but that which would be naturally disagreeable is thus made pleasant by the joy of the message. But this explanation is far-fetched, and wants parallel instances. Besides, it is a violation of the image which the apostle had used. That was a distant object—a herald running on the distant hills; and it supposes a picture too remote to observe distinctly the feet, whether attractive or not. The meaning of it is clearly this: "How beautiful is the *coming* or the *running* of such a herald." The feet are emblematic of his coming. Their rapid motion would be seen; and their rapidity would be beautiful from the desire to hear the message which he brought. The whole meaning of the passage, then, as applied to ministers of the gospel, is, that their coming is an attractive object, regarded with deep interest, and productive of joy—an honoured and a delightful employment.

That preach, etc. Literally, "that evangelize peace." That proclaim the good news of peace; or bring the glad message of peace.

And bring glad tidings, etc. Literally, "and evangelize good things;" or that bring the glad message of good things. *Peace* here is put for good of any kind; and as the apostle uses it, for the news of reconciliation with God by the gospel. *Peace*, at the end of the conflicts, distresses, and woes of war, is an image of all blessings. Thus it is put to denote the blessings when a stoner ceases to be the enemy of God, obtains pardon, and is admitted to the joys of those who are his children and friends. The coming of those messengers who proclaim it is joyful to the world. It fills the bosom of the anxious sinner with peace; and they and their message will be regarded with deep interest, as sent by God, and producing joy in an agitated bosom, and peace to the world. This is an illustration of the proper feeling with which we should regard the ministers of religion. This passage in Isaiah is referred by the Jews themselves to the times of the gospel. (*Rosenmuller*.)

{v} "How beautiful" Isa 52:7 Nah 1:15

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *But they have not all obeyed the gospel*. It is not easy to see the connexion of this; and it has been made a question whether this is to be regarded as a *continuation* of the objection of the Jew, or as a part of the answer of the apostle. After all the attention which I have been able to give it, I am inclined to regard it as an *admission* of the apostle, as if he had said, "It must be *admitted* that all have not obeyed the gospel. So far as the objection of the Jew arises from *that fact*, and so far as that fact can bear on the case, it is to be conceded that *all* have not yielded obedience to the gospel. For this was clearly declared even by the prophet." Comp. Ac 28:24 Heb 4.

For Esaias saith. Isa 53:1.

Who hath believed our report? That is, Isaiah complains that his declarations respecting the Messiah had been rejected by his countrymen. The form of expression, "Who hath believed?" is a mode of saying *emphatically* that few or none had done it. The great mass of his countrymen had rejected it. This was an example to the purpose of the apostle. In the time of Isaiah this fact existed; and it was not a new thing that it existed in the time of the gospel.

Our report. Our message; or that which is delivered to be heard and believed. It originally means the doctrine which Isaiah delivered about the Messiah; and implies that the same thing would occur when the Messiah should actually come. Hence in the 53rd chapter he proceeds to give the reasons why the report would not be credited, and why the Messiah would be rejected. It would be because he was a root out of a dry ground; because he was a man of sorrows, etc. And this actually took place. Because he did not come with splendour and pomp, as a temporal prince, he was rejected, and put to death. On substantially the same grounds he is even yet rejected by thousands. The force of this verse, perhaps, may be best seen by including it in a parenthesis, "How beautiful are the feet," etc.; how important is the gospel ministry —(*although* it must be admitted, that all have not obeyed, for this was predicted also by Isaiah, etc.)

{w} "they have not all obeyed" Ac 28:24 Heb 4:2 {x} "Lord, who hath" Isa 53:1 Joh 12:38 {1} "believed" or, "the hearing of us" {2} "our report" or, "preaching"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *So then faith cometh*, etc. This I take to be clearly the language of the objector. As if he had said, by the very quotation which you have made from Isaiah, it appears that *a report* was necessary, life did not condemn men for not believing what they had not heard; but he complains of those who did not believe a message actually delivered to them. Even by this passage, therefore, it seems that a message was necessary, that faith comes by *hearing*, and hearing by the Divine message. It could not be right, therefore, to condemn those who had not *obeyed* the gospel, because they had not *heard* it; and hence not right to make salvation dependent on a condition which was, by the arrangement of God, put beyond their power. The very quotation from Isaiah, therefore, goes to confirm the objection in the 14th and 15th verses.

By hearing. Our translation has varied the expression here, which is the same in two places in the Greek: "Isaiah said, Who hath believed our report. (*th akoh*). So then, you must admit that faith comes *by that report*, (*ex akohv*) and therefore this report or message is necessary." When it is said that faith cometh *by hearing*, it is not meant that all who hear actually believe, for that is not true; but that faith does not exist unless there is a message, or report, to be heard or believed. It cannot come otherwise than *by* such a message; in other words, unless there is something *made known to be believed*. And this shows us at once the importance of the message, and the fact that men are converted by the instrumentality of truth, and of truth only.

And hearing. And the *report*, or the message, (*h akoh*) is by the word of God; that is, the message is sent by the command of God. It is *his* word, sent by his direction, and therefore, if withheld by him, those who did not believe could not be blamed. The argument of the objector is, that God could not justly condemn men for not believing the gospel.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *But I say*. But to this Objection I, the apostle, reply, The objection had been carried through the previous verses. The apostle comes now to reply to it. In doing this, he does not deny the *principle* contained in it, that the gospel should be *preached* in order that men might be justly condemned for not believing it; not that the messengers must be sent by God; not that faith comes by hearing. All this he fully admits. But he proceeds to show, by an ample quotation from the Old Testament, that this had been actually furnished to the Jews and to the Gentiles, and that they were actually in possession of the message, and could not plead that they had never heard it. This is the substance of his answer.

Have they not heard? A question is often, as it is here, an emphatic way of affirming a thing. The apostle means to *affirm* strongly that they had heard. The word "they," in this place, I take to refer to the *Gentiles*. What was the fact in regard to *Israel*, or the Jew, he shows in the next verses. One main design was to show that the same scheme of salvation extended to both Jews and Gentiles. The objection was, that it had not been made known to either, and that therefore it could not be maintained to be just to condemn those who rejected it. To this the apostle replies that *then* it was extensively known to both; and if so, then the objection in Ro 10:14,15, was not well founded, for *in fact* the thing existed which the objector maintained to be necessary; to wit, that they *had* heard, and that preachers had been sent to them.

Yes, verily. In the original, a single word, (*menounge*), compounded of (*men*) and (*oun*) and (*ge*). An *intense* expression, denoting strong affirmation.

Their sound went, etc. These *words* are taken in substance from Ps 19:4. The psalmist employs them to show that the *works* of God, the heavens and the earth, proclaim is existence everywhere. By using them here, the apostle does not affirm that David had reference to the gospel in them, but *he uses them to express his own meaning*; he makes an affirmation about the gospel in language used by David on another occasion, but without intimating or implying that David had such a reference. In this way we often quote the language of others as expressing in a happy way our own thoughts, but without supposing that the author had any such reference. The meaning here is, that that may be affirmed *in fact* of the gospel which David affirmed of the works of God, that their sound had gone into all the earth.

Their sound. Literally, the sound or tone which is made by a stringed instrument, (*fyoggov*). Also a *voice*, a report. It means here they *have spoken*, or declared truth. As applied to the heavens, it would mean that they speak, or proclaim, the wisdom or power of God. As used by Paul, it means that the message of the gospel had been *spoken*, or proclaimed, far and wide. The Hebrew is, "their *line*," etc. The Septuagint translation is the same as that of the apostle—their voice, (*o fyoggov autwn*). The Hebrew word may denote the *string* of an instrument, of a harp, etc., and then the *tone* or sound produced by it; and thus was understood by the Septuagint. The apostle, however, does not affirm that this was the meaning of the Hebrew; but he conveyed his doctrine in language which aptly expressed it.

Into all the earth. In the psalm, this is to be taken in its utmost signification. The works of God *literally* proclaim his wisdom to all lands and to all people. As applied to the gospel, it means that it was spread far and wide, that it had been extensively preached in all lands.

Their words. In the psalm, the heavens are represented as *speaking*, and teaching men the knowledge of the true God. But the meaning of the apostle is, that the message of the gospel *had* sounded forth; and he referred doubtless to the labours of the apostles in proclaiming it to the heathen nations. This epistle was written about the year 57. During the time which had elapsed

after the ascension of Christ, the gospel had been preached extensively in all the known nations; so that it might be said that it was proclaimed in those regions designated in the Scripture as the uttermost parts of the earth. Thus it had been proclaimed in Jerusalem, Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, Rome, Arabia, and in the islands of the Mediterranean. Paul, reasoning before Agrippa, says, that *he* could not be ignorant of those things, for they had not been done in a corner, Ac 26:26. In Col 1:23, Paul says that the gospel had been preached to every creature which is under heaven. See Col 1:6. Thus the great facts and doctrines of the gospel had *in fact* been made known, and the objection of the Jew was met. It would be *sufficiently* met by the declaration of the psalmist, that the true God was made known by his works, and that therefore they were without excuse, (comp. Ro 1:20) but *in fact* the *gospel* had been preached, and its great doctrine and duties had been proclaimed to all nations far and near.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *But I say*, etc. Still further to meet the objection, he shows that the doctrine which he was maintaining was *actually* taught in the Old Testament.

Did not Israel know? Did not the *Jews* understand? Is it not recorded in their books, etc., that they had full opportunity to be acquainted with this truth? This *question* is an emphatic way of affirming that they *did* know. But Paul does not here state *what* it was that they knew. That is to be gathered from what he proceeds to say. From that it appears that he referred to the fact that the gospel was to be preached to the *Gentiles*, and that the *Jews* were to be cast off. This doctrine followed from what he had already maintained in Ro 10:12,13, that there was no difference in regard to the terms of salvation, and that the Jew had no particular privileges. If so, then the barrier was broken down; and ff the Jews did not believe in Jesus Christ, they must be rejected. Against this was the objection in Ro 10:14,15, that they could not believe; that they had not heard; and that a preacher had not been sent to them. If now the apostle could show that it was an *ancient* doctrine of the Jewish prophets that the Gentiles *should* believe, and that the Jews *would not* believe, the whole force of the objection would vanish. Accordingly, he proceeds to show that this doctrine was distinctly taught in the Old Testament.

First. First in order; as we say, *in the first place*.

I will provoke you. These words are taken from De 32:21. In that place the declaration refers to the idolatrous and wicked conduct of the Jews. God says that they had *provoked* him, or excited his indignation, by worshipping that which was not God, that is, by *idols*; and *he*, in turn, would excite *their* envy and indignation by showing favours to those who were not regarded as a people; that is, to the Gentiles. *They* had shown *favour*, or affection, for that which was not God, and by so doing had provoked him to anger; and *he* also would show favour to those whom *they* regarded as no people, and would thus excite *their* anger. Thus he would illustrate the great principle of his government in 2Sa 22:26,27, "With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful;— with the pure thou wilt show thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt show thyself unsavoury," i.e., froward, Ps 18:26. In this passage the great doctrine which Paul was defending is abundantly established—that the Gentiles were to be brought into the favour of God; and the *cause* also is suggested to be the obstinacy and rebellion of the Jews. It is not clear that Moses had particularly in view the times of

the gospel; but he affirms *a great principle* which is applicable to those times —that if the Jews should be rebellious, and prove themselves unworthy of his favour, that favour would be withdrawn, and conferred on other nations. The effect of this would be, of course, to excite their indignation. This *principle* the apostle applies to his own times; and affirms that it ought to have been understood by the Jews themselves.

That are *no people*. That is, those whom you regard as unworthy the name of a people. Those who have no government, laws, or regular organization; who wander in tribes and clans, and who are under no settled form of society. This was the case with most barbarians; and the Jews evidently regarded all ancient nations in this light, *as unworthy the name of a people*.

A foolish nation. The word *fool* means one void of understanding. But it also means one who is *wicked*, or *idolatrous*; one who contemns God. Ps 14:1, "The *fool* hath said in his heart, There is no God." Pr 1:7, "Fools despise wisdom and instruction." Here it means a nation who had *no understanding* of the true God, *asunetw*

I will anger. My bestowing favours on them will excite your anger. We may remark here,

(1.) that God is a sovereign, and has a right to bestow his favours on whom he pleases.

(2.) That when men abuse his mercies, become proud, or cold, or dead in his service, he often takes away their privileges, and bestows them on others.

(3.) That the *effect* of his sovereignty is to excite men to anger. Proud and wicked men are always enraged that he bestows his favours on others; and the effect of his sovereign dealings is to provoke to anger the very men who by their sins have rejected his mercy. Hence there is no doctrine that proud man hates so cordially as he does the doctrine of Divine sovereignty; and none that will so much test the character of the wicked.

{z} "I will provoke" De 32:21 {a} "a foolish nation" Tit 3:3

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *But Esaias*, Isa 65:1,2.

Is very bold. Expresses the doctrine openly, boldly, without any reserve. The word (*apotolma*) means, *to dare*, to be venturesome, to be bold. It means here, that however unpopular the doctrine might be, or however dangerous it was to avow that the Jews were extremely wicked, and that God for their wickedness would cast them off, yet that Isaiah had long since done it. This was the point which Paul was establishing; and against this the objection was urged, and all the Jewish prejudices excited. This is the reason why he so much insists on it, and is so anxious to defend every part by the writings of acknowledged authority among the Jews—the Old Testament. The quotation is made from the Septuagint, with only a slight change in the *order* of the phrases. The meaning is, that God was found, or the true knowledge of him was obtained, by those who had not sought after him; that is, by the Gentiles, who had worshipped idols, and who had not sought for the true God. This does not mean that *we* are to expect to find God if we do not *seek* for him; or that *in fact* any become Christians who do not *seek* for it, and make an effort. The contrary is abundantly taught in the Scriptures, Heb 11:6 1Ch 28:8,9 Mt 6:33, 7:7 Lu 11:9.

But it means, that the *Gentiles*, whose characteristic was not that they sought God, would have the gospel sent to them, and would embrace it. The phrase, "I *was* found," in the *past* tense here,

is in the *present* in the Hebrew, intimating that the time would come when God would say this of himself; that is, that the time would come when the Gentiles would be brought to the knowledge of the true God. This doctrine was one which Isaiah had constantly in his eye, and which he did not fear to bring openly before the Jews.

{b} "I was found" Isa 65:1,2

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *But to Israel he saith*. The preceding quotation established the doctrine that the Gentiles were to be called. But there was still an important part of his argument remaining—that the Jews were to be rejected. This he proceeds to establish; and he here, in the language of Isaiah, (Isa 65:2) says that while the *Gentiles* wound be obedient, the character of the Jews was, that they were a disobedient and rebellious people.

All day long. Continually, without intermission; implying that their acts of rebellion were not momentary; but that this was the established character of the people.

I have stretched forth my hands. This denotes an attitude of entreaty; a willingness and earnest desire to receive them to favour, to invite and entreat. Pr 1.24.

A disobedient. In the Hebrew, *rebellious, contumacious*. The Greek answers substantially to that; *disbelieving*, not confiding or obeying.

Gainsaying. *Speaking against*; resisting, opposing. This is not in the Hebrew, but the substance of it was implied. The prophet Isaiah proceeds to *specify* in what this rebellion consisted, and to show that this was their character. Isa 65:2-7. The argument of the apostle is this; viz., the ancient character of the people was that of wickedness; God is represented as stretching out his hands in vain; they rejected him, and he was sought and found by others. It was *implied*, therefore, that the rebellious Jews would be rejected; and, of course, the apostle was advancing and defending no doctrine which was not found in the writings of the Jews themselves. And thus, by a different course of reasoning, he came to the same conclusion which he had arrived at in the first four chapters of the epistle, that the Gentiles and Jews were on the same level in regard to justification before God.

In the closing part of this chapter, the great doctrine is brought forth and defended, that the way of salvation is open for all the world. This, in the time Of Paul, was regarded as a novel doctrine. Hence he is at so much pains to illustrate and defend it. And hence, with so much zeal and self-denial, the apostles of the Lord Jesus went and proclaimed it to the nations. This doctrine is not the less important now. And from this discussion we may learn the following truths:

(1.) the heathen world is *in danger* without the gospel. They are sinful, polluted, wretched. The testimony of all who visit pagan nations accords most strikingly with that of the apostles in their times. Nor is there *any* evidence that the great mass of heathen population has changed for the better.

(2.) The provisions of the gospel are ample for them—for all. Its power has been tried on many nations; and its mild and happy influence is seen in meliorated laws, customs, habits; in purer institutions; in intelligence and order; and in the various blessings conferred by a pure religion. The same gospel is fitted to produce on the wildest and most wretched population the same comforts which are now experienced in the happiest part of our own land.

(3.) The command of Jesus Christ remains still the same, *to preach the gospel to every creature*. That command has never been repealed or changed. The apostles met the injunction, and performed what they could. It remains for the church to act as they did, to feel as they did, and put forth their efforts as they did, in obeying one of the most plain and positive laws of Jesus Christ.

(4.) If the gospel is to be proclaimed everywhere, men must be sent forth into the vast field. Every nation must have an opportunity to say, "How beautiful are the feet of him that preaches the gospel of peace." Young men, strong and vigorous in the Christian course, must give themselves to this work, and devote their lives in an enterprise which the apostles regarded as honourable to them; and which Infinite Wisdom did not regard as unworthy the toils, and tears, and self-denials of the Son of God.

(5.) The church, in training young men for the ministry, in fitting her sons for these toils, is performing a noble and glorious work; a work which contemplates the triumph of the gospel among all nations. Happy will it be when the church shall feel the full pressure of this great truth, that the gospel MAY BE, preached to every son and daughter of Adam; and when every man who enters the ministry shall count it not self-denial, but a glorious privilege to be permitted to tell dying pagan men that a Saviour bled for ALL, sinners. And happy that day when it can be said with literal truth, that their sound has gone out into all the earth; and that as far as the sun in his daily course sheds his beams, so far the Sun of righteousness sheds also his pure and lovely rays into the abodes of men. And we may learn, also, from this,

(6.) that God will withdraw his favours from those nations that are disobedient and rebellious. Thus he rejected the ancient Jews; and thus also he will forsake all who abuse his mercies; who become proud, luxurious, effeminate, and wicked. In this respect it becomes the people of this favoured land to remember the God of their fathers; and not to forget, too, that national sin provokes God to withdraw, and that a nation that forgets God must be punished.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 11

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 1

ROMANS Chapter 11

Verse 1. *I say then*. This expression is to be regarded as conveying the sense of an objection. Paul, in the previous chapters, had declared the doctrine that all the Jews were to be rejected. To this a Jew might naturally reply, Is it to be believed, that God would cast off his people whom he had once chosen; to whom pertained the adoption, and the promises, and the covenant, and the numer- ous blessings conferred on a favourite people? It was natural for a Jew to make such objections. And it was important for the apostle to show that *his* doctrine was consistent with all the promises which God had made to his people. The objection, as will be seen by the answer which Paul makes, is formed on the supposition that God had rejected *all his people, or cast them off entirely*. This objection he answers by showing,

(1.) that God had saved *him*, a Jew, and therefore that he could not mean that God had east off all Jews, (Ro 11:1)

(2.) that now, as in former times of great declension, God *had* reserved a remnant, (Ro 11:2-5)

(3.) that it accorded with the Scriptures, that a *part* should be hardened, (Ro 11:6-10)

(4.) that the design of the rejection was not final, but was to admit the Gentiles to the privileges of Christianity, (Ro 11:11-24;)

(5.) that the Jews should yet return to God, and be reinstated in his favour: so that it could not be objected that God had *finally* and *totally* cast off his people, or that he had violated his promises. At the same time, however, the doctrine which Paul had maintained was true, that God had taken away their exclusive and peculiar privileges, and had rejected a large part of the nation.

Cast away. Rejected, or put off. Has God so renounced them that they cannot be any longer his people?

His people. Those who have been long in the covenant relation to him; that is, the Jews.

God forbid. Literally, *it may not, or cannot be*. This is an expression strongly denying that this could take place; and means that Paul did not intend to advance such a doctrine, Lu 20:16; Ro 3:4,6,31 6:2,15 7:7,13.

For I also am an Israelite. To show them that he did not mean to affirm that *all Jews* must of necessity be cast off, he adduces his own case. He was a Jew; and yet he looked for the favour of God, and for eternal life. That favour he hoped now to obtain by being a Christian; and if *he* might obtain it, others might also. "If I should say that all Jews must be excluded from the favour of God, then I also must be without hope of salvation, for I am a Jew."

Of the seed of Abraham. Descended from Abraham. The apostle mentions this to show that he was a Jew in every respect; that he had a title to all the privileges of a Jew, and must be exposed to all their liabilities and dangers. If the seed of Abraham must of necessity be cut off, he must be himself rejected. The Jews valued themselves much on having been descended from so illustrious an ancestor as Abraham, (Mt 3:9) and Paul shows them that he was entitled to all the privileges of such a descent. Comp. Php 3:4,5.

Of the tribe of Benjamin. This tribe was one that was originally located near Jerusalem. The temple was built on the line that divided the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. It is not improbable that it was regarded as a peculiar honour to have belonged to one of those tribes. Paul mentions it here in accordance with their custom; for they regarded it as of great importance to preserve their genealogy, and to be able to state not only that they were *Jews*, but to designate the tribe and family to which they belonged.

{c} "Hath God cast away" 1Sa 12:22 Ps 77:7,8 89:31,37.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *God hath not cast away*. This is an explicit denial of the objection.

Which he foreknew. The word *foreknew* is expressive not merely of *foreseeing* a thing, but implies in this place a previous purpose or plan. **See Barnes "Ro 8:29"**.

The meaning of the passage is simply, God has not cast off those whom he had before purposed or designed to be his people. It is the declaration of a great principle of Divine government that

God is not changeable; and that he would not reject those whom he had purposed should be his people. Though the mass of the nation, therefore, should be cast off, yet it would not follow that God had violated any promise or compact; or that he had rejected *any* whom he had foreknown as his true people. God makes no covenant of salvation with those who are in their sins; and if the unbelieving and the wicked, however many external privileges they may have enjoyed, are rejected, it does not follow that he has been unfaithful to one whom he had foreknown or designated as an heir of salvation. It follows from this, also, that it is one principle of the Divine government that God *will not* reject those who are foreknown or designated as his friends. It is a part of the plan, therefore, that those who are truly renewed shall persevere, and obtain eternal life.

Wot ye not. *Know* ye not.

What the Scripture saith. The passage here quoted is found in 1Ki 19:10-18.

Of Elias. Of *Elijah*. Greek, "*In* Elijah (*en hlia*). This does not mean that it was said *about* Elijah, or *concerning* him; but the reference is to the usual manner of quoting the Scriptures among the Jews. The division into chapters and verses was to them unknown. (See the Introduction to the Notes on Matthew.) Hence the Old Testament was divided into portions designated by subjects. Thus Lu 20:37 Mr 12:26, "At the bush," means the passage which contains the account of the burning bush. **See Barnes "Lu 20:37"; See Barnes "Mr 12:26"**.

Here it means, in that passage or portion of Scripture which gives an account of Elijah.

He maketh intercession to God against Israel. The word translated *maketh intercession* (*entugcanei*) means, properly, to come to the aid of any one; to transact the business of any one; especially to discharge the office of an advocate, or to plead one's cause in a court of justice. In a sense similar to this it is applied to Christ in his office of making intercession for us in heaven, Heb 7:25 Isa 53:12. In the English language, the word is constantly used in a good sense, to plead *for* one; never to plead *against* one; but the Greek word may imply either. It expresses the office of one who manages the business of another; and hence one who manages the business of the state *against* a criminal; and when followed by the preposition *for*, means to intercede or plead *for* a person; when followed by *against*, (*kata*) it means to *accuse* or *arraign*. This is its meaning here. He accuses or arraigns the nation of the Jews before God; he charges them with crime; the crime is specified immediately.

{d} "Wot ye not" Ro 8:29 {1} "of Elias" or, "in Elias"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Lord, they have killed*, etc. This is taken from 1Ki 19:10. The quotation is not literally made, but the sense is preserved. This was a charge which Elijah brought against the whole nation; and the act of killing the prophets he regarded as expressive of the character of the people, or that they were universally given to wickedness. The fact was true that they had killed the prophets, etc., (1Ki 18:4,13) but the *inference* which Elijah seems to have drawn from it, that there were no pious men in the nation, was not well founded.

And digged down. Altars, by the law of Moses, were required to be made of earth or unhewn stones, Ex 20:24,25. Hence the expression, *to dig* them down, means completely to demolish or destroy them.

Thine altars. There was one great altar in the front of the tabernacle and the temple, on which the daily sacrifices of the Jews were to be made. But they were not forbidden to make altars also elsewhere, Ex 20:25. And hence they are mentioned as existing in other places, 1Sa 7:17 16:2,3 1Ki 18:30,32.

These were the altars of which Elijah complained as having been thrown down by the Jews; an act which was regarded as expressive of signal impiety.

I am left alone. I am the only prophet which is left alive. We are told that when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the Lord, Obadiah took a hundred of them and hid them in a cave, 1Ki 18:4. But it is not improbable that they had been discovered and put to death by Ahab. The account which Obadiah gave Elijah when he met him, (1Ki 18:13) seems to favour such a supposition.

Seek my life. That is, Ahab and Jezebel seek to kill me. This they did because he had overcome and slain the prophets of Baal, 1Ki 19:1,2. There could scarcely be conceived a time of greater distress and declension in religion than this. It has not often happened that so many things that were disheartening have occurred to the church at the same period of time. The prophets of God were slam; but one lonely man appeared to have zeal for true religion; the nation was running to idolatry; the civil rulers were criminally wicked, and were the leaders in the universal apostasy; and all the influences of wealth and power were setting in against the true religion to destroy it. It was natural that the solitary man of God should feel disheartened and lonely in this universal guilt; and should realize that *he* had no power to resist this tide of crime and calamities.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *The answer of God*, (*o crhmatismov*). This word is used nowhere else in the New Testament. It means, *an oracle*, a divine response. It does not indicate the *manner* in which it was done, but implies only that it was an oracle, or answer made to his complaint by God. Such an answer, at such a time, would be full of comfort, and silence every murmur. The way in which this answer was in fact given, was not in a storm, or an earth- quake, but in a still, small voice, 1Ki 19:11,12.

I have reserved. The Hebrew is, "I have caused *to remain*," or to be reserved. This shows that it was of God that this was done. Amidst the general corruption and idolatry *he* had restrained a part, though it was a remnant. The honour of having done it he claims for himself, and does not trace it to any goodness or virtue in them. So in the case of all those who are saved from sin and pain, the honour belongs not to man, but to God.

To myself. For my own service and glory. I have kept them steadfast in my worship, and have not suffered them to become idolaters. *Seven thousand men*. *Seven* is often used in the Scriptures to denote an indefinite or round number. Perhaps it may be so here, to intimate that there was a considerable number remaining. This should lead us to hope that, even in the darkest times in the church, there may be many more friends of God than we suppose. Elijah supposed he was alone; and yet at that moment there were thousands who were the true friends of God: a *small* number, indeed, compared with the multitude of idolaters; but *large* when compared with what was supposed to be remaining by the dejected and disheartened prophet.

Who have not bowed the knee. To bow or bend the knee is an expression denoting worship, Php 2:10 Eph 3:14; Isa 45:23.

To Baal. The word *Baal* in Hebrew means lord, or master. This was the name of an idol of the Phenicians and Canaanites, and was worshipped also by the Assyrians and Babylonians under the name of Bel. (Comp. the Book of Bel in the Apocrypha.) This god was represented under the image of a *bull*, or a *calf*; the one denoting the sun, the other the moon. The prevalent worship in the time of Elijah was that of this idol.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *At this present time*. In the time when the apostle wrote. Though the mass of the nation was to be rejected, yet it did not follow that *all* were to be excluded from the favour of God. As in the time of Elijah, when all appeared to be dark, and *all* the nation, except one, seemed to have become apostate, yet there was a considerable number of the true friends of God; so in the time of Paul, though the nation had rejected their Messiah,—though, as a consequence, *they* were to be rejected as a people; and though they were eminently wicked and corrupt,—yet it did not follow that *all* were cast off, or that any were excluded on whom God had purposed to bestow salvation.

A remnant. That which is left or reserved, Ro 9:27. He refers here, doubtless, to that part of the nation which was truly pious, or which had embraced the Messiah.

According to the election of grace. By a gracious or merciful *choosing*, or election; and not by any merit of their own. As in the time of Elijah, it was because *God had reserved them unto himself* that any were saved from idolatry, so now it was by the same gracious sovereignty that *any* were saved from the prevalent unbelief. The apostle here does not specify the number, but there can be no doubt that a multitude of Jews had been saved by becoming Christians, though compared with the *nation—the multitude* who rejected the Messiah—it was but a remnant.

The apostle thus shows that neither *all* the ancient people of God were east away, nor that *any* whom *he foreknew* were rejected. And though he had proved that a large part of the Jews were to be rejected, and though infidelity was prevalent, yet still there were some who had been Jews who were truly pious, and entitled to the favour of God. Nor should they deem this state of things remarkable, for a parallel case was recorded in their own Scriptures. We may learn from this narrative,

(1.) that it is no unparalleled thing for the love of many to wax cold, and for iniquity to abound.

(2.) The tendency of this is to produce deep feeling and solicitude among the true friends of God. Thus David says, "Rivers of waters run down mine eyes because they keep not thy law," Ps 119:136. Comp. Jer 9:1 Lu 19:41.

(3.) That in these darkest tunes we should not be discouraged. There *may* be much more true piety in the world than, in our despondency, we may suppose. We should take courage in God, and believe that he will not forsake any that are his true friends, or on whom he has purposed to bestow eternal life.

(4.) It is of God that *all* are not corrupt and lost. It is owing only to the election of grace, to his merciful choosing, that *any* are saved. And as in the darkest times he has reserved a people to

himself, so we should believe that he will still meet abounding evil, and save those whom he has chosen from eternal death.

{f} "then at this present time" Ro 9:27

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *And if by grace*, etc. If the fact that any are reserved be by grace, or favour, then it cannot be as a reward of merit. Paul thus takes occasion *incidently* to combat a favourite notion of the Jews, that we are justified by obedience to the law. He reminds them, that in the time of Elijah it was because God had reserved them; that the same was the case now; and therefore their doctrine of *merit* could not be true. See Ro 4:4,5; Gal 5:4 Eph 2:8,9.

Otherwise grace, etc. If men are justified by their *works*, it could not be a matter of *favour*, but was a *debt*. If it could be that the doctrine of justification by grace could be held, and yet at the same time that the Jewish doctrine of merit was true, then it would follow that grace had changed its nature, or was a different thing from what the word properly signified. The idea of being saved by *merit* contradicts the very idea of *grace*. If a man owes me a *debt*, and pays it, it cannot be said to be done by *favour*, or by *grace*. I have a *claim* on him for it, and there is no *favour* in his paying his just dues.

But if it be of works, etc. Works here mean conformity to the law; and to be saved *by works* would be to be saved *by* such conformity as the *meritorious* cause. Of course there could be no *grace* or *favour* in giving what was *due*; if there was favour, or grace, then *works* would lose their essential characteristic, and cease to be the meritorious cause of procuring the blessings. What is paid as a *debt* is not conferred as a *favour*.

And from this it follows that salvation cannot be *partly* by grace and *partly* by works. It is not because men can advance *any* claims to the favour of God; but from his mere unmerited grace. He that is not willing to obtain eternal life in that way, cannot obtain it at all. The doctrines of election, and of salvation by mere grace, cannot be more explicitly stated than they are in this passage.

{g} "if by grace" Ro 4:5 Gal 5:4; Eph 2:8

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *What then*? What is the proper conclusion from this argument?

Israel hath not obtained. That is, the Jews as a people have not obtained that which they sought. They sought the favour of God by their own merit; and as it was impossible to obtain it in that manner, they have, *as a people*, failed of obtaining his favour at all, and will be rejected.

That which he seeketh for. To wit, salvation by their own obedience to the law.

The election hath. The *purpose of choosing*, on the part of God, has obtained, or secured, that which the *seeking* on the part of the Jews could not secure. Or the abstract here may be put for the concrete, and the word "election" may mean the same as *the elect*. The *elect*, the *reserved*, the chosen part of the people, have obtained the favour of God.

Hath obtained it. That is, the favour or mercy of God.

The rest. The great mass of the people who remained in unbelief, and had rejected the Messiah.

Were blinded. The word in the original means, also, *were hardened*, (*epwrwyhsan*). It comes from a word which signifies, properly, to become *hard*, as bones do which are broken and are then united; or as the joints sometimes do when they become callous or stiff. "It was probably applied also to the formation of a hard substance in the eye, a, cataract; and then means the same as to be blinded. Hence, applied to the mind, it means that which is *hard, obdurate, insensible, stupid*. Thus it is applied to the Jews, and means that they were blind and obstinate. See Mr 6:52, "Their heart was hardened." Ro 8:17 Joh 12:40. The word does not occur in any other place in the New Testament. This verse affirms simply, that "the rest *were* hardened," but it does not affirm anything about the *mode* by which it was done. In regard to "the election," it is affirmed that it was *of God*, Ro 11:4. Of the remainder, *the fact* of their blindness is simply mentioned, without affirming anything of the cause. See Ro 11:8.

{h} "Israel hath not obtained" Ro 9:31 {1} "blinded" or, "hardened".

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *According as it is written*. That is, they are blinded in accordance with what is written. The *fact* and the manner accord with the ancient declaration. This is recorded in Isa 29:10, and in De 29:4. The same sentiment is found also substantially in Isa 6:9,10. The principal place referred to here, however, is doubtless Isa 29:10,

"For the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep
sleep, and hath closed your eyes; the prophets and your
rulers hath he covered."

The quotation is not, however, *literally* made either from the Hebrew or the Septuagint; but *the sense* is preserved. The phrase "according as" means, *upon the same principle*, or in the same manner.

God hath given. Expressions like this are common in the Scriptures, where *God* is represented as having an agency in producing the wickedness and stupidity of sinners. See Ro 9:17,18. **See Barnes "Mt 13:16"**; **See Barnes** "Mr 4:11, **See Barnes "Mr 4:12"**; also **See Barnes** "2Th 2:11".

This quotation is not made literally. The Hebrew in Isaiah is, God has *poured upon* them the spirit of slumber. The sense, however, is retained.

The spirit of slumber. The *spirit* of slumber is not different from slumber itself. The word *spirit* is often used thus. The word *slumber* here is a literal translation of the Hebrew. The Greek word, however, (*katanuxewv*), implies also the notion of compunction; and hence in the margin is is rendered *remorse*. It means any emotion, or *any* influence whatever, that shall *benumb* the faculties, and make them insensible. Hence it here means simply insensibility.

Eyes that they should not see, etc. This expression is not taken literally from any *single* place in the Old Testament; but expresses the general sense of several passages, Isa 6:10 De 29:4. It denotes a state of mind not different from a spirit of slumber. When we sleep, the eyes are insensible to surrounding objects, and the ear to sounds. Though in themselves the organs may be perfect, yet the mind is as though they were not; and we have eves which then do not see, and ears which do

not hear. Thus with the Jews. Though they had all the proper faculties for understanding and receiving the gospel, yet they rejected it. They were stupid, and insensible to its claims and its truths.

Unto this day. Until the day that Paul wrote. The characteristic of the Jews that existed in the time of Isaiah, existed also in the time of Paul. It was a trait of the people; and their insensibility to the demands of the gospel developed nothing new in them.

{1} "slumber" or, "remorse" {i} "eyes" Isa 29:10 {k} "should not see" De 29:4

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 9

Verses 9,10. *And David saith*, etc. This quotation is made from Ps 69:22,23. This psalm is repeatedly quoted as having reference to the events recorded in the New Testament. **See Barnes "Ac 1:20".**

This quotation is introduced *immediately* after one that undoubtedly refers to the Lord Jesus. Ro 11:21, "They gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." The passage here quoted immediately follows as an *imprecation* of vengeance for their sins. "Let their table," etc. The quotation is not made, however, either literally from the Hebrew or from the Septuagint, but the *sense* only is retained. The Hebrew is, "Let their table before them be for a snare, and for those at peace let it be for a gin." The Septuagint is, "Let their table before them be for a snare, and for a stumbling-block, and for an offence." The ancient Targum is, "Let their table which they had prepared before me be for a snare, and *their sacrifices* be for an offence." The meaning is this: The word *table* denotes food, In this they expected pleasure and support. David prays that even this, where they expected joy and refreshment, might prove to them the means of punishment and righteous retribution, A *snare* is that by which birds or wild beasts were taken. They are decoyed into it, or walk or fly carelessly into it, and it is sprung suddenly on them. So of the Jews. The petition is, that *while they* were seeking refreshment and joy, and anticipating at their table no danger, it might be made the means of their ruin. The only way in which this could be done would be, that their *temporal* enjoyments would lead them away from God, and produce stupidity and indifference to their spiritual interests. This is often the result of the pleasures of the *table*, or of seeking sensual gratifications. The apostle does not say whether this prayer was right or wrong. The use which he seems to make of it is this, that David's imprecation was to be regarded in *the light of a prophecy*; that what he prayed for would come to pass; and that this *had actually* occurred in the time of the apostle: that their very enjoyments, their national and private privileges, had been the means of alienating them from God, had been a snare to them, and was the cause of their blindness and infidelity. This also is introduced in the psalm as a *punishment* for giving him vinegar to drink; and their treatment of the Messiah was the immediate cause why all this blindness had come upon the Jews.

A trap. This properly means anything by which *wild beasts* are taken in hunting. The word *snare* more properly refers to birds. ¶

And a stumblingblock. Anything over which one stumbles or falls. Hence anything which occasions us to sin, or to ruin ourselves.

And a recompence. The Hebrew word translated "that which should have been for their welfare," is capable of this meaning, and may denote their recompense, or that which is appropriately rendered to them. It means, here, that their ordinary comforts and enjoyments, instead of promoting their permanent welfare, may be the occasion of their guilt and ruin. This is often the effect of earthly comforts. They *might* lead us to God, and *should* excite our gratitude and praise; but they are often abused to our spiritual slumber and guilt, and made the occasion of our ruin. The rich are thus often most forgetful of God; and the very abundance of their blessings made the means of darkness of mind, ingratitude, prayerlessness, and ruin. Satisfied with them, they forget the Giver; and while they enjoy many earthly blessings, God sends barrenness into their souls. This was the guilt of Sodom, "pride, and fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness," (Eze 16:49) and against this Moses solemnly warned the Jews, De 6:11,12, 8:10-12.

This same caution might be extended to the people of this land, and especially to those who are rich, and are blessed with all that their hearts have wished. From the use which the apostle makes of this passage in the Psalms, it is clear that he regarded it rather *as a prophetic denunciation* for their sins —a prediction of what *would be*— than as *a prayer*. In his time it had been fulfilled; and the very national privileges of the Jews, on which they so much prided themselves, and which might have been so great blessings, were the occasion of their greater sin in rejecting the Messiah, and of their greater condemnation. Thus their table was made a trap, etc.

{l} "Let their table" Ps 69:22,23

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 10

Verse 10. Let their eyes be darkened. This is taken literally from the psalm, and was evidently the main part of the passage which the apostle had in his eye. This was fulfilled in the insensibility and blindness of the Jews. And the apostle shows them that it was long ago predicted, or *invoked*, as a punishment on them for giving the Messiah vinegar to drink, Ps 69:21,23.

And bow down their back alway. The Hebrew (Ps 69:23) is, "Let their loins totter or shake;" that is, as one does when he has on him a heavy burden. The apostle has retained this sense. It means, let them be called to bear heavy and oppressive burdens; let them be subjected to toil or servitude, as a reward for their sins. That this had come upon the Jews in the time of Paul is clear; and it is further clear that it came upon them, as it was implied in the psalm, in consequence of their treatment of the Messiah. Much difficulty has been felt in reconciling the petitions in the Psalms for calamities on enemies, with the Spirit of the New Testament. Perhaps they cannot all be thus reconciled; and it is not at all improbable that many of those imprecations were wrong. David was not a perfect man; and the Spirit of inspiration is not responsible for his imperfections. Every *doctrine* delivered by the sacred writers is true; every fact recorded is recorded as it was. But it does not follow that all the *men* who wrote, or about whom a narrative was given, were perfect. The reverse is the fact. And it does not militate against the inspiration of the Scriptures that we have a *record* of the failings and imperfections of those men. When they uttered improper sentiments; when they manifested improper feelings; when they performed wicked actions, it is no argument against the inspiration of the Scriptures that they were recorded. All that is done in such a case, and all that inspiration demands, is that they be recorded *as they are*. We wish to see human

nature as it is; and one design of making the record of such failings is to show what *man* is, even under the influence of religion; not as a *perfect* being, for that would not be true; but as he actually exists, mingled with imperfection. Thus many of the wishes of the ancient saints, imperfect as they were, are *condemned* as sinful by the spirit of the Christian religion. They were never *commended* or *approved*, but they are recorded just to show us what was *in fact* the character of man, even partially under the influence of religion. Of this nature, probably, were many of the petitions in the Psalms; and the Spirit of God is no more answerable for the feeling because it is recorded, than he is for the feelings of the Edomites when they said, "Rase it, rase it to the foundation," Ps 137:7. Many of those prayers, however, were imprecations on his enemies as a public man, as the magistrate of the land. As it is *right* and *desirable* that the robber and the pirate should be detected and punished; as all good men seek it, and it is indispensable for the welfare of the community, where is the impropriety of *praying* that it may be done? Is it not right to pray that the laws may be executed; that justice may be. maintained; and that restraint should be imposed on the guilty? Assuredly this may be done with a very different spirit from that of *revenge*. It may be the prayer of the magistrate that God will help him in that which he is appointed to do, and in what ought to be done. Besides, many of these imprecations were regarded as simply *predictions* of what *would be* the effect of sin; or of what God *would* do to the guilty. Such was the case we are now considering, as understood by the apostle. But in a *prediction* there can be nothing wrong.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Have they stumbled that they should fall*? This is to be regarded as an objection, which the apostle proceeds to answer. The meaning is, Is it the design of God that the Jews should totally and irrecoverably be cast off? Even admitting that they are now unbelieving, that they have rejected the Messiah, that they have stumbled, is it the purpose of God finally to exclude them from mercy? The expression to *stumble* is introduced because he had just mentioned *a stumbling-stone*. It does not mean to fall down to the ground, or to fall so that a man may not recover himself; but to strike the foot against an obstacle, to be arrested in going, and to be in danger of falling. Hence it means to *err*, to *sin*, to be in danger. To *fall* expresses the state when a man pitches over an obstacle so that he cannot recover himself, but falls to the ground. Hence to err, to sin, or to be cast off irrecoverably. The apostle shows that this last was not the way in which the Jews had fallen, that they were not to be cast off for ever, but that occasion was taken *by* their fall to introduce the Gentiles to the privileges of the gospel, and then they should be restored.

God forbid. By no means. Ro 11:1.

But rather *through their fall*. By means of their fall. The word *fall* here refers to all their conduct and doom at the coming of the Messiah, and in the breaking up of their establishment as a nation. Their rejection of the Messiah; the destruction of their city and temple; the ceasing of their ceremonial rites; and the rejection and dispersion of their nation by the Romans, all enter into the meaning of the word *fall* here, and were all the occasion of introducing salvation to the Gentiles.

Salvation. The Christian religion, with all its saving benefits. It does not mean that all the Gentiles were to *be saved*, but that the way was open; they might have access to God, and obtain his favour through the Messiah.

The Gentiles. All the world that were not Jews. The rejection and fall of the Jews contributed to the introduction of the Gentiles in the following manner:

(1.) It broke down the barrier which had long subsisted between them.

(2.) It made it consistent and proper, as *they* had rejected the Messiah, to send the knowledge of him to others.

(3.) It was connected with the destruction of the temple: and the rites of the Mosaic law; and taught them, and all others, that the worship of God was not to be confined to any single place.

(4.) The calamities that came upon the Jewish nation scattered the inhabitants of Judea, and with the Jews also those who had become Christians, and thus the gospel was carried to other lands.

(5.) These calamities, and the conduct of the Jews, and the close of the Jewish economy, were the means of giving to apostles, and other Christians, right views of the true design of the Mosaic institutions. If the temple had remained; if the nation had continued to flourish, it would have been long before they would have been effectually detached from those rites. Experience showed, even as it was, that they were slow in learning that the Jewish ceremonies were to cease. Some of the most agitating questions in the early church pertained to this; and if the temple had not been destroyed, the contest would have been much longer and more difficult.

For to provoke them to jealousy. According to the prediction of Moses, De 32:21. See Ro 10:19.

{m} "Gentiles" Ac 13:46 28:24-28; Ro 10:19

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *If the fall of them*. If their lapse, or falling. If their temporal rejection, and being cast off for a time, has already accomplished so much.

Be the riches of the world. The word *riches* means *wealth*, *abundance* of property; more than is necessary to the supply of our wants. Hence it means, also, anything that may promote our comfort or happiness, as wealth is the *means* of securing our welfare. The gospel is called *riches*, as it is the means of our highest enjoyment and eternal welfare. It is the means of conferring numberless spiritual blessings on the *Gentile* world; and as this was done by the fall of the Jews, so it could be said that their fall was the riches of the world. It was the *occasion* or *means* without which the blessings of the gospel could not be conferred on the world.

The diminishing of them. Margin, *Decay*. Loss (*htthma*). This word means *diminution, defect, that which is lacked or wanting*. Hence also judgment, condemnation. Here it means their degradation; the withdrawing of their special privileges; their rejection. It stands opposed to "their fulness."

The riches of the Gentiles. The means of conferring important blessings on the Gentiles.

How much more their fulness. The word *fulness* (*plhrwma*) means that which *fills up*, or completes anything. Thus it is applied to that which fills a vessel or cup; also to the piece of cloth which is put in to fill up the rent in a garment, Mt 9:16. To the fragments which were left when Christ had fed the five thousand, Mr 8:20; Ro 13:10, "Love is the fulfilling of the law," i.e., it is the *filling up* of the law, or that which renders the obedience complete. See Ga 5:14. Here it stands opposed to their *fall*, and their *diminution*, and evidently means their complete restoration to the favour of God; their recovery from unbelief and apostasy. That there *will* be such a recovery the

apostle proceeds to show. The sentiment is, If their rejection and punishment—their being cut off from the favour of God—an event apparently so unlikely to promote the spread of true religion; if their being *withdrawn* from all active influence in spreading the true knowledge of God, be yet the occasion of so many blessings to mankind as have attended the spread of the gospel in consequence of it, how much more shall we expect when they shall be restored—when the energy and zeal of the Jewish nation shall *unite* with the efforts of others in spreading the knowledge of the true Messiah?" In what way, or when this shall be, we know not. But it is easy to see, that if the Jewish people should be converted to the Christian faith, they would have facilities for spreading the truth which the church has never had without them.

(1.) They are scattered in all nations, and have access to all people.

(2.) Their conversion, after so long unbelief, would have all the power and influence of *a miracle* performed in view of all nations. It would be seen *why* they had been preserved, and their conversion would be a most striking fulfillment of the prophecies.

(3.) They are familiar with the languages of the world, and their conversion would *at once* establish many Christian missionaries in *the heart* of all the kingdoms of the world. It would be kindling at once a thousand lights fix all the dark parts of the earth.

(4.) The Jews have shown that they are eminently fitted to spread the true religion. It was by *Jews*, converted to Christianity, that the gospel was first spread. Each of the apostles was a Jew; and they have lost none of the ardour, enterprise, and zeal, that always characterized their nation. Their conversion would be, therefore, to give to the Christian church a host of missionaries prepared for their work, familiar with all customs, languages, and climes, and already in the heart of all kingdoms, and with facilities for their work *in advance*, which others must gain only by the slow toil of many years.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *For I speak to you Gentiles*. What I am saying respecting the Jews, I say with reference to you who are Gentiles, to show you in what manner you have been admitted to the privileges of the people of God; to excite your gratitude; to warn you against abusing those mercies, etc. As Paul also was *appointed* to preach to them, he had a right to speak to them with authority.

I am the apostle of the Gentiles. The apostle of the Gentiles, not because *other* apostles did not preach to Gentiles, for they all did, except perhaps James; nor because Paul did not himself preach occasionally among the Jews; but because he was especially called to carry the gospel to the Gentiles, and that this was his original commission, (Ac 9:15) because he was principally employed in collecting and organizing churches in heathen lands; and because the charge of the Gentile churches was especially entrusted to him, while that of the Jewish churches was especially entrusted to Peter. See Ga 1:16 Eph 3:8; Ga 2:7,8.

As Paul was especially appointed to this office, he claimed special authority to address, those who were gathered into the Christian church from heathen lands.

I magnify mine office. I honour (*doxazw*) my ministry; I esteem it of great importance; and by thus showing that the gospel is to be preached to the Gentiles, that the barrier between them and the Jews is to be broken down, that the gospel may be preached to all men, I show that the office

which *proclaims* this is one of signal honour. A minister may not magnify *himself*, but he may magnify *his office*. He may esteem *himself* as less than the least of all saints, and unworthy to be called a servant of God, (Eph 3:8) yet he may feel that he is an ambassador of Christ, entrusted with a message of salvation, entitled to the respect due to an ambassador, and to the honour which is appropriate to a messenger of God. To unite these two things constitutes the dignity of the Christian ministry.

{n} "apostle of the Gentiles" Ac 9:15 Ga 1:16; Eph 3:8

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *If by any means*. If even by stating unpleasant truths, if by bringing out all the counsel of God, even that which threatens their destruction, I may arrest theft attention, and save them.

I may provoke to emulation. I may awaken up to zeal, or to an earnest desire to obtain the like blessings. This was in accordance with the prediction of Moses, that the calling in of the Gentiles would excite their attention, and provoke them to deep feeling. **See Barnes "Ro 10:19"**.

The apostle expected to do this by calling their attention to the ancient prophecies; by alarming their fears about their own danger; and by showing them the great privileges which Gentiles might enjoy under the gospel; thus appealing to them by every principle of benevolence, by all their regard for God and man, to excite them to seek the same blessings.

My flesh. My countrymen. My kinsmen. Those belonging to the same family or nation, Ro 9:3 Ge 29:14; Jud 9:2 2Sa 5:1; Isa 58:7.

And save some of them. This desire the apostle often expressed. (See Ro 9:2,3, 10:1,2.

) We may see here,

(1.) that it is the earnest wish of the ministry to save the souls of men.

(2.) That they should urge every argument and appeal with reference to this.

(3.) That even the most awful and humbling truths *may* have this tendency. No truth could be more likely to irritate and offend than that the Jews would be cast off; and yet the apostle used this so faithfully, and yet so tenderly, that he expected and desired it might be the means of saving the souls of his countrymen. Truth often irritates, enrages, and thus excites the attention. Thought or inquiry, *however* it may be excited, may result in conversion. And thus, even restlessness, and vexation, and anger, may be the means of leading a sinner to Jesus Christ. It should be no part of a minister's object, however, to *produce* anger. It is a bad emotion; in itself it is evil; and if men can be won to embrace the Saviour *without* anger, it is better. No wise man would excite a storm and tempest that might require infinite power to subdue, when the same object could be gained with comparative peace, and under the mild influence of love.

(4.) It is right to use all the means in our power, not absolutely wicked, to save men. Paul was full of devices; and much of the success of the ministry will depend on a wise use of plans that may, by the Divine blessing, arrest and save the souls of men.

{o} "save some of them" 1Co 7:16

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *For if the casting away of them*. If their rejection as the peculiar people of God—their exclusion from their national privileges, on account of their unbelief. It is the same as "the *fall* of them," Ro 11:12.

Be the reconciling of the world. The word *reconciliation* (*katallagh*) denotes, commonly, a *pacification* of contending parties; a removing the occasion of difference, so as again to be united. 1Co 7:11, "Let her remain unmarried, or be *reconciled* to her husband." It is commonly applied to the *reconciliation*, or pacification, produced between man and God by the gospel. They are brought to union, to friendship, to peace, by the intervention of the Lord Jesus Christ, Ro 5:10 2Co 5:18,19, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." Hence the ministry is called the "ministry of reconciliation," 2Co 5:18. And hence this word is used to express the *atonement*. Ro 5:11, "By whom we have now received the *atonement*," (the *reconciliation*.) In this place it means, that many of the Gentiles—the world —had become reconciled to God as the *result* of the casting off of the Jews. By *their* unbelief, the way had been opened to preach the gospel to the Gentiles; it was *the occasion* by which God sent it to the nations of the earth. Comp. Ac 13:46.

The receiving of them. The same as was denoted (Ro 11:12) by *their fulness*. If the casting them off—an event so little likely, apparently, to produce any good effect—was nevertheless *overruled* so as to produce important benefits in the spread of the gospel, how much more may we expect will be accomplished by their conversion and return—an event *fitted in itself* to produce an important influence on mankind. One would have *supposed* that *their* rejection of the Messiah would have been an important obstacle in the way of the gospel. It was overruled, however, to promote its increase. Their *return* will have a *direct* tendency to spread it. How much more, therefore, may we expect to be accomplished by that?

But life from the dead. This is an instance of the peculiar, glowing, and vigorous manner of the apostle Paul. His mind catches at the thought of what may be produced by the recovery of the Jews, and no ordinary language would convey his idea. He had already exhausted the usual forms of speech by saying that even their rejection had *reconciled* the world, and that it was the *riches* of the Gentiles. To say that their *recovery*—a striking and momentous event; an event so much better fitted to produce important results —would be attended by the conversion of the world, would be insipid and tame. He uses, therefore, a most bold and striking figure. The *resurrection of the dead* was an image of the most vast and wonderful event that could take place. This image, therefore, in the apostle's mind, was a striking illustration of the great change and reformation which should take place when the Jews should be restored, and the effect should be felt in the conversion also of the Gentile world. Some have supposed that the apostle here refers to a *literal* resurrection of the dead, as the conversion of the Jews. But there is not the slightest evidence of this. He refers to the recovery of the nations from the *death of sin*, which shall take place when the Jews shah be converted to the Christian faith. The prophet Ezekiel (Eze 37:1-14) has also used the same image of the resurrection of the dead to denote a great moral change among a people. It is clear here, that the apostle fixed his eye on a future conversion of the Yews to the gospel, and expected that their conversion would *precede* the universal conversion of the Gentiles to the Christian faith. There could be no event that would make so immediate and decided an impression on the pagan world as the conversion of the Jews. They are scattered everywhere; they have access to all people; they

understand all languages; and their conversion would be like kindling up thousands of lights at once in the darkness of the pagan world.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *For if the firstfruit be holy*. The word firstfruit (*aparch*) used here denotes the *firstling* of fruit or grain which was separated from the mass, and presented as an offering to God. The Jews were required to present such a portion of theft harvest to God, as an expression of gratitude, and of their sense of dependence, Nu 15:19-21. Till this was done, it was not lawful to partake of the harvest. The offering of this was regarded as rendering the mass *holy*, i.e., it was lawful then to partake of it. The firstfruits were regarded as among the best portions of the harvest; and it was their duty to devote to God that which would be the best expression of their thanksgiving. This was the general practice in relation to all that the land produced. The expression here, however, has reference to the small portion of *dough* or kneaded meal that was offered to God; and then the mass or *lump* (*furama*) was left for the use of him who made the offering, Nu 15:20.

Be holy. Be set apart, or consecrated to God, as he commanded.

The lump. The *mass*. It refers here, properly, to the *dough* of which a part had been offered. The same was true also in relation to the harvest, after the *waive-sheaf* had been offered; of the flock, after the first male had been offered, etc.

Is *also* holy. It is lawful then for the owner to partake of it. The offering of *a part* has consecrated the whole. By this illustration Paul doubtless means to say that the *Jewish nation*, as a people, were set apart to the service of God, and were so regarded by him. Some have supposed, that by the *firstfruit* here the apostle intends to refer to the early converts made to the Christian faith in the first preaching of the gospel. But it is more probable that he refers to the *patriarchs*, the pious men of old, as the *firstfruits* of the Jewish nation. See Ro 11:28. By *their* piety the nation was in a manner sanctified, or set apart to the service of God; implying that yet tile great mass of them would be reclaimed and saved.

If the root be holy. This figure expresses the same thing as is denoted in the first part of the verse. The *root* of a tree is the source of nutritious juices necessary for its growth, and gives its character to the tree. If that be sound, pure, vigorous, we expect the same of the branches. A root bears a similar relation to the tree that the firstfruit does to the mass of bread. Perhaps there is allusion here to Jer 11:16, where the Jewish nation is represented under the image of "a green olive tree, fair, and of goodly fruit." In this place the reference is doubtless to Abraham and the patriarchs, as the *root* or founders of the Jewish nation. If they were holy, it is to be expected that the distant branches, or descendants, would also be so regarded. The mention of the *root* and *branches* of a tree gives the apostle occasion for an illustration of the relation at that time of the Jews and Gentiles to the church of Christ.

{p} "the firstfruit" Le 23:10 Nu 15:18-21

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *If some of the branches*. The illustration here is taken from the practice of those who ingraft trees. The useless branches, or those which bear poor fruit, are cut off, and a better kind inserted. "If some of the natural descendants of Abraham, the holy root, are cast off because they are unfruitful, that is, because of unbelief and sin."

And thou. The word *thou* here is used to denote the *Gentile*, whom Paul was then particularly addressing.

Being a wild olive tree. From this passage it would seem that the olive tree was sometimes cultivated, and that cultivation was necessary in order to render it fruitful. The cultivated olive tree is

"of a moderate height, its trunk knotty, its bark smooth
and ash-coloured, its wood is solid and yellowish, the
leaves are oblong, and almost like those of the willow,
of a green colour, etc. The wild olive is smaller in all
its parts," (*Calmet*.)

The wild olive was unfruitful, or its fruit very imperfect and useless. The ancient writers explain this word by "unfruitful, barren" (*Schleusner*.) This was used, therefore, as the emblem of unfruitfulness and barrenness, while the cultivated olive produced much fruit. The meaning here is, that the Gentiles had been like the wild olive, unfruitful in holiness; that they had been uncultivated by the institutions of the true religion, and consequently had grown up in the wildness and sin of nature. The Jews had been like a cultivated olive, long under the training and blessing of God.

Wert grafted in. The process of grafting consists in inserting a scion or a young shoot into another tree. To do this, a useless limb is removed; and the ingrafted limb produces fruit according to its new nature or kind, and not according to the tree in which it is inserted. In this way a tree which bears no fruit, or whose branches are decaying, may be recovered, and become valuable. The figure of the apostle is a very vivid and beautiful one. The ancient root or stock, that of Abraham, etc., was good. The branches—the Jews in the time of the apostle—had become decayed and unfruitful, and broken off. The Gentiles had been grafted into this stock, and had restored the decayed rigour of the ancient people of God; and a fruitless church had become vigorous and flourishing. But the apostle soon proceeds to keep the Gentiles from exaltation on account of this.

Among them. Among the branches, so as to partake *with* them of the juices of the root.

Partakest of the root. The ingrafted limb would derive nourishment from the root as much as though it were a natural branch of the tree. The Gentiles derived now the benefit of Abraham's faith and holy labours, and of the promises made to him and to his seed.

Fatness of the olive tree. The word *fatness* here means

fertility, fruitfulness—the rich juices of the olive producing fruit. See Jud 9:9.

{q} "be broken off" Jer 11:16 {r} "being a wild olive" Eph 2:12,13 {1} "in" or, "for"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Boast not*, etc. The tendency of man is to triumph over one that is fallen and rejected. The danger of pride and boasting on account of privileges is not less in the church than elsewhere. Paul saw that some of the Gentiles *might* be in danger of exaltation over the fallen Jews, and therefore cautions them against it. The ingrafted shoot, deriving all its vigour and fruitfulness from the stock of another tree, ought not to boast against the branches.

But if thou boast. If thou art so inconsiderate and Wicked, so devoid of humility, and lifted up with pride, as to boast, yet know that there is no occasion for it. If there were occasion for boasting, it would rather be in the root or stock which sustains the branches; least of all can it be in those which were grafted in, having been before wholly unfruitful.

Thou bearest not the root. The source of all your blessings is in the ancient stock. It is clear from this, that the apostle regarded the church as one; and that the Christian economy was only a prolongation of the ancient dispensation. The tree, even with a part of the branches removed, and others ingrafted, retains its identity, and is never regarded as a different tree.

{s} "Boast not against" 1Co 10:12

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Thou wilt say then*. Thou who art a Gentile.

The branches were broken off, etc. The Jews were rejected in order that the gospel might be preached to the Gentiles. This would seem to follow from what the apostle had said in Ro 11:11,12. Perhaps it might be said that there was some ground of exultation from the fact that God had rejected his ancient people for the sake of making a way open to admit the Gentiles to the church. The objection is, that the branches were broken off *in order that* others might be grafted in. To this Paul replies in the next verse, that this was not the *reason* why they were rejected, but their *unbelief* was the cause.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Well*. True. It is true they were broken off; but in order to show that there was no occasion for boasting, he adds that they were not rejected *in order* to admit others, but because of their unbelief, and that *their* fate should have a salutary impression on those who had no occasion for boasting, but who might be rejected for the same cause. This is an instance of remarkable *tact* and delicacy in an argument, admitting the *main* force of the remark, but giving it a slight change in accordance with the truth, so as to parry its force, and give it a practical bearing on the very point which he wished to enforce.

Thou standest by faith. The continuance of these mercies to you depends on your fidelity. If you are faithful, they will be preserved; if, like the Jews, you become unbelieving and unfruitful, like them you will be also rejected. This fact should repress boasting, and excite to anxiety and caution.

Be not highminded. Do not be elated in the conception of your privileges, so as to produce vain self-confidence and boasting.

But fear. This *fear* stands opposed to the spirit of boasting and self-confidence, against which he was exhorting them. It does not mean *terror* or *horror*, but it denotes humility, watchfulness, and solicitude to abide in the faith. Do not be haughty and high-minded against the Jew, who has been east off, but "demean yourself as a humble believer, and one who has need to be continually on his guard, and to fear lest he may fall through unbelief, and be cast off." (*Stuart*.) We may here learn,

(1.) that there is danger lest those who are raised to eminent privileges should become unduly exalted in their own estimation, and despise others.

(2.) The tendency of *faith* is to promote humility, and a sense of our dependence on God.

(3.) The system of salvation by faith produces that solicitude, and careful guarding and watchfulness, which is necessary to preserve us from apostasy and ruin.

{f} "Fear" Php 2:12

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *For if God*, etc. If God did not refrain from rejecting the Jews Who became unbelievers, assuredly he will not refrain from rejecting you in the same circumstances. It may be supposed that he will be quite as ready to reject the *ingrafted* branches, as to east off those which belonged to *the parent stock*. The situation of the Gentiles is not such as to give them any security over the condition of the rejected Jew.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Behold therefore*, etc. Regard, or contemplate, for purposes of your own improvement and benefit, the dealings of God. We should look on *all* his dispensations of judgment or of mercy, and derive lessons from all to promote our own steadfast adherence to the faith of the gospel.

The goodness. The benevolence or mercy of God towards you in admitting you to his favour. This calls for gratitude, love, confidence. It demands expressions of thanksgiving. It should be highly prized, in order that it may excite to diligence to secure its continuance.

The severity of God. That is, towards the Jews. The word *severity* now suggests sometimes the idea of *harshness*, or even of *cruelty*. (*Webster*.) But nothing of this kind is conveyed in the original word here. It properly denotes *cutting off*— (*apotomian*)—from (*apotemnw*), to cut off; and is commonly applied to the act of the gardener or vine dresser in trimming trees or vines, and cutting off the decayed or useless branches. Here it refers to the act of God in *cutting off* or rejecting the Jews as useless branches; and conveys no idea of injustice, cruelty, or harshness. It was a just act, and consistent with all the perfections of God. It indicated a purpose to do that which was *right*, though the inflictions might *seem* to be severe, and though they *must* involve them in many heavy calamities.

On them which fell, severity. On the Jews, who had been rejected because of their unbelief.

But towards thee, goodness. Towards the Gentile world, benevolence. The word *goodness* properly denotes *benignity, or benevolence*. Here it signifies the kindness of God in bestowing these favours on the Gentiles.

If thou continue in his goodness. The word "his" is not in the original. And the word goodness may denote integrity, probity, uprightness, as well as favour. Ro 3:12, "There is none that doeth *good*." The Septuagint often thus uses the word, Ps 14:1,3, etc. This is probably the meaning here; though it may mean, "if thou dost continue in a state of favour;" that is, if your faith and good conduct shall be such as to make God continue his kindness towards you. Christians do not *merit* the favour of God by their faith and good works; but their obedience is an indispensable condition on which that favour is to be continued. It is thus that the grace of God is magnified, at the same time that the highest good is done to man himself.

Otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. Comp. Joh 15:2. The word *thou* refers here to the Gentile churches. In relation to them the favour of God was dependent on their fidelity. If they became disobedient and unbelieving, then the same *principle* which led him to withdraw his mercy from the Jewish people would lead also to their rejection and excision. And on this principle God has acted in numberless cases. Thus his favour was withdrawn from the seven churches of Asia, Revelation chapters 1-3, from Corinth, from Antioch, from Philippi, and even from Rome itself.

{u} "thou continue" Heb 3:6,14, 10:23,38

{v} "also shalt be cut off" Joh 15:2

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *And they also*. The Jews.

If they bide not, etc. If they do not continue in wilful obstinacy and rejection of the Messiah. As their unbelief was the sole cause of their rejection, so, if that be removed, they may be again restored to the Divine favour.

For God is able, etc. He has

(1.) *power* to restore them; to bring them back, and replace them in his favour.

(2.) He has not *bound* himself *utterly* to reject them, and for ever to exclude them. In this way the apostle reaches his purpose, which was to show them that God had not cast away his people, or finally rejected the Jewish nation, Ro 11:1,2. That God has this power, the apostle proceeds to show in the next verse.

{w} "if they bide" 2Co 3:16

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *For if thou*. If you who are Gentiles.

Wert cut out of. Or, if thou wert of the cutting of the wild olive tree.

Which is wild by nature. Which is uncultivated and unfruitful. That is, if you were introduced into a state of favour with God from a condition which was one of enmity and hostility to him. The argument here is, that it was in itself as difficult a thing to *reclaim* them, and change them from opposition to God to friendship, as it would seem difficult or impossible to reclaim and make fruitful the wild olive tree.

And wert grafted contrary to nature. Contrary to your natural habits, thoughts, and practices. There was, among the Gentiles, no inclination or tendency towards God. This does not mean that they were *physically* depraved, or that their disposition was *literally* like the wild olive; but it is used, for the sake of illustration, to show that their moral character and habits were unlike those of the friends of God.

How much more, etc. The meaning of this whole verse may be thus expressed: "If God had mercy on the Gentiles, who were outcasts from his favour, shall he not much rather on those who were so long his people, to whom had been given the promises, and the covenants, and the law, whose ancestors had been so many of them his friends and among whom the Messiah was born?" In some respects there are facilities among the Jews for their conversion, which had not existed among the Gentiles. They worship one God; they admit the authority of revelation; they have the Scriptures of the Old Testament; they expect a Messiah; and they have a *habit* of professed reverence for the will of God.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Ignorant of this mystery*. The word mystery means, properly, that which is *concealed, hidden, or unknown*. And it especially refers, in the New Testament, to the truths or doctrines which God had reserved to himself, or had not before communicated. It does not mean, as with us often, that there was anything *unintelligible or inscrutable* in the nature of the doctrine itself, for it was commonly perfectly plain when it was made known. Thus the doctrine, that the division between the Jews and the Gentiles was to be broken down, is called a *mystery*, because it had been, to the times of the apostles, concealed, and was then revealed fully for the first time, Ro 16:25 Col 1:26,27.

Comp. 1Co 15:51 Mr 4:11; Eph 1:9 3:3.

Thus the doctrine which the apostle was stating was one that until then had been concealed, or had not been made known. It does not mean that there was anything unintelligible or incomprehensive in it, but until then it had not been made known.

Lest ye should be wise in your own conceits. Paul communicated the truth in regard to this, lest they should attempt to inquire into it; should speculate about the reason why God had rejected the Jews; and should be elated with the belief that they had, by their own skill and genius, ascertained the cause. Rather than leave them to vain speculations and self-gratification, he chose to cut short all inquiry, by stating the truth about their present and future state.

Blindness. Or *hardness*. Ro 11:7.

In part. Not *totally*, or entirely. They are not absolutely or completely blinded. This is a qualifying expression; but it does not denote *what* part or portion, or for what time it is to continue. It means, that the blindness in respect to the whole nation was only partial. Some were then enlightened, and had become Christians; and many more would be.

To Israel. To the Jews.

Until the fulness of the Gentiles, etc. The word *fulness*, in relation to the Jews, is used in Ro 11:12. It means, until the abundance or the great multitude of the Gentiles shall be converted. The word is not elsewhere used in respect to the Gentiles; and it is difficult to fix its meaning definitely. It doubtless refers to the future spread of the gospel among the nations; to the time when it may be said that the *great mass*, the abundance of the nations, shall be converted to God. At present they are, as they were in the times of the apostle, idolaters, so that the *mass* of mankind are far from God. But the Scriptures have spoken of a time when the gospel shall spread and prevail among the nations of the earth; and to this the apostle refers, he does not say, however, that the Jews may not be converted until *all* the Gentiles become Christians; for he expressly supposes (Ro 11:12-15) that the conversion of the Jews will have an important influence in extending the gospel among the Gentiles. Probably the meaning is, that this blindness is to continue until *great numbers* of the Gentiles shall be converted; until the gospel shall be extensively spread; and *then* the conversion of the Jews will be *a part* of the rapid spread of the gospel, and will be among the most efficient and important aids in completing the work. If this is the ease, then Christians may labour still for their conversion. They may *seek* that in connexion with the effort to convert the heathen; and they may toil with the expectation that the conversion of the Jews and Gentiles will not be separate, independent, and distinct events; but will be intermingled, and will be perhaps simultaneous. The word *fulness* may denote such a *general* turning to God, without affirming that each individual shall be thus converted to the Christian faith.

{1} "blindness" or, "hardness" {x} "is happened" Ro 11:7 2Co 3:14 {y} "of the Gentiles" Lu 21:24

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *And so*. That is, in this manner; or when the great abundance of the Gentiles shall be converted, then all Israel shall be saved.

All Israel. All the Jews. It was a maxim among the Jews, that "every Israelite should have part in the future age." (*Grotius*.) The apostle applies that maxim to his own purpose; and declares the sense in which it would be true. He does not mean to say that *every* Jew of every age would be saved; for he had proved that a large portion of them would be, in his time, rejected and lost. But the time would come when, *as a people*, they would be recovered; when the nation would turn to God; and when it could be said of them, that, *as a nation*, they were restored to the Divine favour. It is not clear that he means that even then every *individual* of them would be saved, but the body of them; the great *mass* of the nation would be. Nor is it said when this would be. This is one of the things which "the Father hath put in his own power," Ac 1:7. He has given us the assurance that it *shall* be done to encourage us in our efforts to save them; and he has concealed the time when it shall be, lest we should relax our efforts, or feel that no exertions were needed to accomplish what must take place at a fixed time.

Shall be saved. Shall be recovered from their rejection; be restored to the Divine favour; become followers of the Messiah, and thus be saved as all other Christians are.

As it is written. Isa 59:20. The quotation is not literally made, but the sense of the passage is preserved. The Hebrew is, "There shall come to Zion a Redeemer, and for those who turn from ungodliness in Jacob." There can be no doubt that Isaiah refers here to the times of the gospel.

Out of Zion. *Zion* was one of the hills of Jerusalem. On this was built the city of David. It came thus to denote, in general, the church, or people of God. And when it is said that the Redeemer should *come out of Zion*, it means that he should arise among that people, be descended from themselves, or should not be a foreigner. The Seventy, however, render it, "the Redeemer shall come *on a mount of Zion*." So the Chaldee paraphrase, and the Latin Vulgate.

And shall turn away, etc. The Hebrew is, "to those forsaking ungodliness in Jacob." The Septuagint has rendered it in the same manner as the apostle.

{x} "There shall come" Isa 59:20

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *For this is my covenant*, etc. This expression is found immediately following the other in Isa 59:21. But the apostle connects with it a part of *another* promise taken from Jer 31:33,34; or rather he *abridges* that promise, and expresses *its substance*, by adding, "when I shall take away their sins." It is clear that he intended to express the general sense of the promises, as they were well known to the Jews, and it was a point concerning which he did not need to argue or reason with them, that God had made a covenant with them, and intended to restore them if they were cast off, and should then repent and turn to him. The time and manner in which this shah be, is not revealed. It may be remarked, however, that that passage does *not* mean that the Redeemer shall come *personally* and preach to them, or reappear for the purpose of recalling them to himself; nor does it mean that they will be restored to the land of their fathers. Neither of these ideas is contained in the passage. God will doubtless convert the Jews, as he does the Gentiles, by human means, and in connexion with the prayers of his people; so that the Gentiles shall yet *repay* the toil and care of the ancient Jews in preserving the Scriptures, and preparing the way for the Messiah; and *both* shall rejoice that they were made helps in spreading the knowledge of the Messiah.

{a} "this is my covenant" Jer 31:31 Heb 10:16

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *As concerning the Gospel*. So far as the gospel is concerned; or, in order to promote its extension and spread through the earth.

They are enemies. The word *enemies* here stands opposed to "beloved;" and as in *one* respect, to wit, on account of" election," they were still beloved, i.e. beloved *by God*; so in another respect they were his enemies, i.e. opposed to him, or cast off from him. The enemies of God denote all who are not his true friends, Col 1:21 Ro 5:10, comp. Ro 11:8. The word here is applied to the Jews because they had rejected the Messiah; had become opposed to God; and were therefore rejected by him.

For your sakes. For your advantage. Their rejection has become the occasion by which the gospel has been preached to you. Comp. Ro 11:11,19,20.

As touching the election. So far as the purpose of election is concerned. That is, the election of their fathers and of the nation to be the peculiar people of God.

They are beloved. God still regards them with interest; has purposes of mercy towards them; intends still to do them good. This does not mean that he *approved* of their conduct or character, or that he had for them the same kind of affection which he would have had if they had been obedient. God does not love a sinful character; but he may have still purposes of mercy, and regard men with deep interest on whom he intends yet to bestow mercy.

For the fathers' sakes. Comp. De 10:15. He had chosen their fathers to be his peculiar people. He had made many promises to Abraham respecting his seed, and extended these promises to his remotest posterity. Though salvation is by grace, and not from human merit, yet God has respect to his covenant made with the fathers, and will not forget his promises. It is not on account of any *merit* of the fathers or of ancient saints, but solely because God had made a covenant with them; and this purpose of *election* would be manifest to their children in the latest times. As those contemplated in the covenant made with Abraham, God retained for them feelings of peculiar interest; and designed their recovery to himself. It is clear here that the word *election* does not refer to *external* privileges; for Paul is not teaching the doctrine that they shall be restored to the external privileges of Jews, but that they shall be truly converted to God. Yet this should not be abused by others to lead them to security in sin. No man has any security of happiness, and of the favour of God, but he who complies with the terms of his mercy. His commands are explicit to repent and believe, nor can there be safety except in entire compliance with the terms on which he is willing to bestow eternal life.

{b} "for the father's sakes" De 10:15

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *For the gifts*. The favours or benefits which God bestows on men. The word (*carisma*) properly denotes any benefit which is conferred on another as a mere matter of favour, and not of reward. See Ro 5:15,10, 6:23.

Such are all the favours which God bestows on sinners, including pardon, peace, joy, sanctification, and eternal life.

And calling of God. The word calling (*klhsiv*) here denotes that act of God by which he extends an invitation to men to come and partake of his favours, whether it be by a personal revelation as to the patriarchs, Or by the promises of the gospel, or by the influences of his Spirit. All such invitations or callings imply a pledge that he will bestow the favour, and will not repent, or turn from it. God never draws or invites sinners to himself without being willing to bestow pardon and eternal life. The word *calling* here, therefore, has not respect to external privileges, but to that choosing of a sinner, and influencing him to come to God, which is connected with eternal life.

Without repentance. This does not refer to man, but to God. It does not mean that God confers his favours on man without his exercising repentance, but that God does not repent, or change, in his purposes of bestowing his gifts on man. What he promises he will fulfil; what he purposes to

do, he will not change from or repent of. As he made promises to the fathers, he will not repent of them, and will not depart from them; they shall all be fulfilled; and thus it was certain that the ancient people of God, though many of them had become rebellious, and had been cast off, should not be forgotten and abandoned. This is a *general* proposition respecting God, and one repeatedly made of him in the Scriptures. See Nu 23:19, "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he not said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" Eze 24:14 1Sa 15:29; Ps 89:35,36; Tit 1:2 Heb 6:18; Jas 1:17.

It follows from this,

(1.) that all the promises made to the people of God shall be fulfilled.

(2.) That his people need not be discouraged or desponding in times of persecution and trial.

(3.) That none who become his true friends will be forsaken, or cast off. God does not bestow the gift of repentance and faith, of pardon and peace, on men, for a temporary purpose; nor does he capriciously withdraw them, and leave the soul to ruin. When he renews a soul, it is with reference to his own glory; and to withdraw those favours, and leave such a soul once renewed to go down to hell, would be as much a violation of all the principles of his nature as it would be to all the promises of the Scripture.

(4.) For God to forsake such a soul, and leave it to ruin, would imply that he *did* repent. It would suppose a *change* of purpose and of feeling. It would be the character of a capricious being, with no settled plan or principles of action; no confidence could be reposed in him, and his government would be unworthy the affections and trust of his intelligent creation.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *For as ye*. You who were Gentiles.

In times past. Before the gospel was preached. This refers to the former idolatrous and sinful state of the heathen world. Comp. Eph 2:2; Ac 14:16.

Have not believed God. Or have not *obeyed* God. This was the character of all the heathen nations.

Yet have now obtained mercy. Have been pardoned and admitted to the favour of God.

Through their unbelief. By means of the unbelief and rejection of the Jews. **See Barnes** "Ro 11:11.

{d} "Times past have not" Eph 2:2 {1} "believed" or, "obeyed"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *Even so have these*, etc. That is, the Jews.

That through your mercy, etc. The *immediate* effect of the unbelief of the Jews was to confer salvation on the Gentiles or to open the way for the preaching of the gospel to them. But its *remote* effect would be to secure the preaching of the gospel again to the Jews. Through the *mercy*, that is, the *compassion* or deep feeling of the converted Gentiles; through the deep and tender pity which

they would feel for the blinded and degraded Jews, the gospel should be again carried to them, and they should be recalled to the long-lost favour of God. Each party should thus cause salvation to come to the other—the Jews to the Gentiles by their *unbelief*; but the Gentiles, in their turn, to the Jews by their *belief*. We may here learn,

(1.) that the Jews are to be converted by the instrumentality of the Gentiles. It is not to be by miracle, but by the regular and common way in which God blesses men.

(2.) That this is to be done by the *mercy* or *compassion* of the Gentiles; by their taking pity on the lost and 'wretched condition of the Jewish people.

(3.) It is to be when the *abundance* of the Gentiles—that is, when great numbers of the Gentiles—shall be called in. It may be asked here, whether the time is not approaching for the Gentiles to make efforts to being the Jews to the knowledge of the Messiah. Hitherto those efforts have been unsuccessful; but it will not always be so; the time is coming when the promises of God in regard to them shall be fulfilled. Christians shall be moved with deep compassion for the degraded and forsaken Jews, and they shall be called into the kingdom of God, and made efficient agents in extending the gospel through the whole world. May the time soon come when they shall feel as they should for the rejected and forsaken children of Abraham, and when their labours for their conversion shall be attended with success.

{1} "believed" or, "obeyed"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *For God hath concluded*, etc. The word here translated "concluded" (*sunekleise*), is rendered in the margin, "shut them all up together." It is properly used in reference to those who are shut up in prison, or to those in a city who are shut up by a besieging army, 1 Mac. v. 5; vi. 18; xi. 65; xv. 25; Jos 6:1 Isa 45:1. It is used in the New Testament of *fish* taken in a net. Lu 5:6, "They *enclosed* a great multitude of fishes." Ga 3:22, "But the Scripture hath *concluded* all under sin, that the promise," etc. In this place the Scripture is declared to have *shut them up* under sin, that is, declared them to be sinners; gave no hope of rescue by any works of their own; and thus kept them (Ro 11:23) "shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed." All are represented, therefore, as in *prison*, enclosed or confined by God, and to be liberated only in his own way and time. In regard to the *agency* of God in this, we may remark,

(1.) that the word does not mean that God *compelled* them to disbelieve the gospel. When, in Ga 3:22, the Scripture is said to have *included* all under sin, it is not meant that the Scripture *compelled* them not to believe.

(2.) The word does not imply that the sin and unbelief for which they were shut up were not voluntary. Even when a man is committed to prison, the crime which brought him there is voluntary, and for it he is responsible.

(3.) The keeper of a prison does no wrong in confining a criminal; or the judge in condemning him; or the executioner in fulfilling the sentence of the law. So of God. What he does is not to *compel* men to remain under unbelief, but to *declare* that they are so; so to encompass them with the proof of it that they shall realize that there is no escape from the evidence of it, and thus to *press*

on them the evidence of their need of a Saviour. This he does in relation to all sinners who ever become converted.

(4.) Yet God permitted this; suffered Jews and Gentiles to fall into unbelief, and to be concluded under it, because he had a special purpose to answer in leaving man to the power of sin and Unbelief. One of those purposes was, doubtless, to manifest the power of his grace and mercy in the plan of redemption.

(5.) In all this, and in all other sin, man is voluntary. He chooses his course of evil, and God is under no obligation to *compel* him to do otherwise. Being *under* unbelief, God declares the *fact*, and avails himself of it, in the plan of salvation by grace.

Them all. Both Jews and Gentiles.

In unbelief. (*eiv*) *Unto* unbelief. He has delivered them over *unto* unbelief, as a man is delivered over into prison. This is the literal meaning of the expression.

That he might have mercy upon all. *Mercy* is favour shown to the undeserving. It could not have been shown to the Jews and the Gentiles unless it was before proved that they were guilty, for this purpose proof was furnished that they were all in unbelief. It was clear, therefore, that if favour was shown to either, it must be on the same ground, that of mere undeserved *mercy*. Thus all men were on a level; and thus all might be admitted to heaven without any invidious distinctions, or any dealings that were not in accordance with mercy and love. "The emphasis in this verse is on the word MERCY. It signifies that God is under obligation to no one, and therefore that all are saved by grace, because all are equally ruined." *Calvin*. It does not prove that all men will be saved; but that those who *are* saved shall be alike saved by the mercy of God; and that he intends to confer salvation on Jews and Gentiles on the same terms. This is properly the close of the argument of this epistle. By several independent trains of reasoning, the apostle had come to the same conclusion, that the Jews had no peculiar privileges in regard to religion, that all men were on a level, and that there was no hope of salvation for any but in the mercy of a sovereign God. This conclusion, and the wonderful train of events which had led to this state of things, give rise to the exclamations and ascriptions of praise with which the chapter closes.

{e} "God hath concluded" Ro 3:9 Ga 3:22 {1} "concluded" or "shut them all up together"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 33

Verse 33. O the depth; etc. This passage should have been translated, "O the depth of the riches, *and* of the wisdom, and of the knowledge of God." The apostle has *three* subjects of admiration. Our translation, by the word "both" introduced here, confines it to two. The apostle wishes to express his admiration of the riches, *and* the wisdom, and the knowledge of God. So the Syriac, Arabic, etc. Our translation has followed the Latin Vulgate. The word *depth* is applied in the Scriptures to anything vast and incomprehensible. As the *abyss* or the *ocean* is unfathomable, so the word comes to denote that which words cannot express, or that which we cannot comprehend. Ps 36:6, "Thy judgments are a great deep." 1Co 2:10, "The Spirit searcheth—the deep things of God." Re 2:24, "The *depths* of Satan"—the deep, profound, cunning, and wicked plans of Satan.

Riches. **See Barnes "Ro 11:12"**.

The word denotes the abundant blessings and mercies which had been conferred on sinful men by the gospel. These were vast and wonderful. The pardon of sin; the atonement; the hope of heaven; the peace of the gospel; all bestowed on the sinful, the poor, the wretched, and the dying, all bespeak the great mercy and *rich* grace of God. So every pardoned sinner may still exclaim. The grace of God which pardons him is felt to be indeed wonderful, and past comprehension. It is beyond the power of language to express; and all that the Christian can do, is to follow the example of the apostle, and sit down in profound admiration of the rich grace of God. The expression "the depth of the riches" is a Hebraism, meaning the deep or profound riches.

The wisdom. Wisdom is the choice of the best means to accomplish the best ends. The end or design which God had in view was to bestow mercy on all; i.e., to save men by *grace*, and not by their own works, Ro 11:32. He intended to establish a glorious system that should present his *mercy* as the prominent attribute, standing out in living colours in all the scheme of salvation. This was to be alike shown in relation to Jews and Gentiles. The wonderful wisdom with which this was done is the object of the apostle's profound admiration. This wisdom was seen,

(1.)in adapting the plan to the condition of man. All were sinners. The apostle in this epistle has fully shown that all had come short of the glory of God. Man had no power to save himself by his own wisdom. The Jews and Gentiles in different ways had sought to justify themselves, and had both failed. God had suffered both to make the experiment in the most favourable circumstances. He had left the world for four thousand years to make the trial, and then introduced the plan of Divine wisdom, just so as to meet the manifest wants and woes of men.

(2.) This was shown in his making the *Jews* the occasion of spreading the system among the Gentiles. They were cast off, and rejected; but the God of wisdom had made even this an occasion of spreading his truth.

(3.) The same wisdom was yet to be seen in his appointing the Gentiles to carry the gospel back to the Jews. Thus they were to be mutual aids; until all their interests should be blended, and the entire race should be united in the love of the same gospel, and the service of the same God and Saviour. When, therefore, this profound and wonderful plan is contemplated, and its history traced from the commencement to the end of time, no wonder that the apostle was fixed in admiration at the amazing wisdom of him who devised it, and who has made all events subservient to its establishment and spread among men.

And knowledge. That is, foreknowledge, or omniscience. This *knowledge* was manifest,

(1.) in the profound view of man, and acquaintance with all his wants and woes.

(2.) In a view of the precise scheme that would be fitted to recover and save.

(3.) In a view of the time and circumstances in which it would be best to introduce the scheme.

(4.) In a discernment of the effect of the rejection of the Jews, and of the preaching of the gospel among the Gentiles. Who but God could see that such effects would follow the rejection of the Jews? Who but he could *know* that the gospel should yet prevail among all the nations? We have only to think of the changes in human affairs; the obstacles to the gospel; the difficulties to be surmounted; and the vast work yet to be done, to be amazed at the knowledge which can adapt such a scheme to men, and which can certainly predict its complete and final spread among all the families of man.

How unsearchable. The word *unsearchable* means that which cannot be investigated or fully understood.

His judgments. This word, in this place, evidently means his *arrangement*, his *plan*, or *proceeding*. It sometimes refers to laws; at other times to the decision or determination of God; at others to the inflictions of his justice. In this last sense it is now commonly used. But in the case before us, it means his arrangements for conferring the gospel on men. Comp. Ps 36:6, "His judgments are a great deep."

His ways. The word rendered *ways* properly denotes a *path*, or *road* on which one travels. Hence it comes also to denote the *course* or manner of life in which one moves; or his principles, or morals; his doctrine or teaching, etc. Applied to God, it denotes his mode or manner of doing things; the order, etc., of his Divine providence; his movements, in his great plans, through the universe. Ac 13:10, "Wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" to oppose, or to render vain, his plan of guiding and saving man. Heb 3:10, "They have not known my ways." Ps 77:19, "Thy way is in the sea, thy footsteps are not known." Here it refers particularly to his *way* or plan of bringing all nations within the reach of his mercy in the gospel.

Past finding out. Literally, which cannot be *tracked or traced* out. The footsteps cannot be followed. As if his path were in the sea, (Ps 77:19) and the waves closed immediately, leaving no track, it cannot be followed or sought out. It is known that he has passed, but there is no way of tracing his goings. This is a beautiful and striking figure. It denotes that God's plans are deep, and beyond our comprehension. We can see the proofs that he is everywhere; but *how* it is, we cannot comprehend. We are permitted to see the vast movements around us; but the invisible hand we cannot see, nor trace the footsteps of that mighty God who performs his wonders on the ocean and on the land.

{g} "unsearchable" Job 11:7 Ps 92:5

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *For who hath known*, etc. This verse is a quotation, with a slight change, from Isa 40:13, "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him?" It is designed to express the *infinite* wisdom and knowledge of God, by affirming that no being could teach him, or counsel him. Earthly monarchs have counsellors of state, whom they may consult in times of perplexity or danger. But God has no such council. He sits alone; nor does he call in any or all of his creatures to advise him. All created beings are not qualified to contribute *any* thing to enlighten or to direct him. It is also designed to silence all opposition to his plans, and to hush all murmurings. The apostle had proved that this *was* the plan of God. However mysterious and inscrutable it might appear to the Jew or the Gentile, yet it was his duty to submit to God, and to confide in his wisdom, though he was not able to trace the reason of his doings.

{h} "who hath known" Isa 40:13 Jer 23:18

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *Or who hath*, etc. The sentiment in this verse is found substantially in Job 41:11, "Who hath prevented me, that I should repay him?" The Hebrew word "prevented" means to *anticipate*, to *go before*; and God asks, "Who has anticipated me; who has conferred favours on me before I have on him; who has thus laid me under *oblation* to him? This is the sense in which the apostle uses the word here. Who has, by his services, laid God under obligation to recompense or pay him again? It is added in Job, "Whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine." Thus Paul, contrary to the prevailing doctrine of the Jews, shows that no one could plead his own merits, or advance with a *claim* on God. All the favours of salvation must be bestowed by mercy or grace; God owned them all; and he had a right to bestow them when and where he pleased. The same claim to all things is repeatedly made by God, Ex 19:5 De 10:14; Ps 24:1 Ps 50:12.

Shall be recompensed. Repaid as a matter of debt. None of God's mercies can be conferred in that way; If they could, man could bring God under obligation, and destroy the freeness and benevolence of his favours.

{i} "who hath first given to him" Job 41:11

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *For of him*, (*ex autou*) Comp. 1Co 1:30 8:6. This expression doubtless means, that he is the original Source and Fountain of all blessings. He is the Creator of all, the rich "Fountain from which all streams of existence take their rise." The design of this verse is to show that no creature has any *claim* on God. Jews and Gentiles must alike receive salvation on the ground of his *mercy*. So far from having a *claim* on God, the apostle here affirms that *all* things have come from him, and therefore all must be derived to us. Nothing has been produced by chance, or haphazard; nothing by created skill or might. All has been formed by God; and therefore he has a right to dispose of all.

And through him, (*di autou*). That is, by his immediate operating agency. The former expression, "of him," affirmed that he was the original Source of all things; this declares that all are *by* him, or through him, as their *immediate* cause. It is not merely by his plan or purpose; it is by his agency, by the direct exertion of his power in their creation and bestowment. By his power they are still directed and controlled. Human agency, therefore, could not lay him under any obligation. He does not need the aid of man; and he did not call in that aid in the creation and government of the world. He is the independent Creator and Lord, and on him none can have a claim.

To him, (*eiv auton*). This expression denotes the *final cause*, the reason or end for which all things were formed. It is to promote his honour and glory. It is to manifest his praise, or to give a proper putting forth of the glorious attributes of God; that the exceeding greatness, and goodness, and grandeur of his character might be evinced. It is not to promote his *happiness*, for he was eternally happy; not to *add* anything to him, for he is infinite; but that he might act *as God*, and have the honour and praise that is due to God. As this was the design of all things, so it followed that the bestowment of his favours must be in accordance with this—in such a way as to promote *his* glory; and not so as to consult the feelings or views of either Jews or Gentiles.

All things. The universe; the creation; or, still more particularly, the things of which the apostle is discoursing. He does not affirm that he is the author of sin, or of sinful thoughts; not that he

creates evil, or that evil is designed to promote his glory. The apostle is not discoursing of these, but of his method of bestowing his favours; and he says that *these* are to be conferred in such a way as to promote *his* honour, and to declare the praise of him who is the original Source, the Creator and the Proprietor of all things.

To whom be glory. This ascription of praise is the appropriate close of the *argumentative* part of the epistle, as well as appropriate to the train of remarks into which the apostle had fallen. It expresses his hearty *amen* in concurrence with this view; the deep desire, of a pious man that all *might* be to God's glory and honour. He had not merely come to it by *reasoning*, but it was the sincere desire of his soul that it *might* be so. The Christian does not merely *admit* this doctrine; he is not merely *driven* to it by argument, but it finds a hearty response in his bosom. He rejoices in it; and sincerely desires that all may be to the honour of God. Sinners are often *compelled* by argument to admit it, but they do not love it. They would rejoice were it otherwise, and be glad if they were permitted rather to seek their own glory than that of the living God.

Glory. Praise, honour.

For ever. Not merely amid transitory events now, but ever onward to eternity. This will be the case. There never will be a time when the affairs of the universe shall not be conducted with reference to the glory of God. That honour and glory shall shine brighter and brighter, and all worlds shall be perfectly adapted to show his praise, and to evince his greatness, goodness, power, and love, for ever and ever. Thus let it be, is the language of every one that truly loves him.

{k} "of him" 1Co 8:6 Col 1:16 {1} "whom" "Him" This closes the argumentative part of the epistle. From the close of this chapter we may make the following observations :—

1. God is infinitely wise, and just, and good. This is seen in all his plans and doings, and especially in the glorious plan of saving men.

2. It becomes man to be *humble*, he can see but few of the reasons of the doings of an infinite God. He is not qualified to sit in judgment on his plans. He is not fitted to arraign him. There is nothing more absurd than for a man to contend with God, or to find fault with his plans; and yet there is nothing more common. Man speaks, and thinks, and reasons on the great things pertaining to the Divine mind and plan, as if he were qualified to counsel the Being of infinite wisdom, and to arraign at the bar of his own reason the Being of infinite goodness.

3. It is our duty to be submissive to God. His plans may often require him to cross the path of our pleasures, or to remove some of our enjoyments. He tries us by requiring us to put confidence in him where we cannot see the reason of his doings, and to believe that he is qualified for universal empire. In all such cases it is our duty to submit to his will. Hie is seeking a grander and nobler object than our private good. He is seeking the welfare of a vast universe; and he best knows in what way that can be promoted.

4. God is the Creator and Proprietor of all things. It would be possible to prove this from his works. But his word unequivocally asserts it. He has formed, and he upholds, and he directs all things for his glory. He who formed all has a right to all. He who is the Source of life has the right to direct it, or to withdraw the gift. He on whom all depend has a right to homage and praise.

5. He has formed a universe that is eminently adapted to declare his glory. It evinces infinite power in its creation; and it is fitted to fill the mind with evergrowing wonder and gladness in its contemplation. The sacred writers were filled with rapture when they contemplated it; and all the discoveries of astronomy, and geology, and science in general, in modern times, are fitted to carry forward the wonder, and fill the lips with new expressions of praise. The universe is vast and grand

enough to occupy the thoughts for ever. How little do we know of the wonders of his creation, even pertaining to this little world; to our own bodies and souls; to the earth, the ocean, the beast and the reptile, the bird and the insect; how much less of that amazing view of worlds and systems which modern astronomy has opened to our view— the vast starry frame which the eye can penetrate for millions and millions of miles, and where it finds world piled on world, and system rising above system, in wonderful order and grandeur, and where the utmost power of the telescope can as yet find no bounds!

6. Equally true is this in his moral government. The system is such as to excite our wonder and praise. The creation and control of free, and active, and mighty minds, is as wonderful as the creation and control of matter, even the vast masses of the planetary systems. Creation is filled with minds. God has peopled the worlds with conscious, free, and active intelligences. The wonderful wisdom by which he controls them; the amazing moral power by which he guards and binds them to himself, by which he restrains and awes the rebellious; and the complete subjection by which he will bring all yet at his feet, is as much replete with wonder as the wisdom and skill by which he framed the heavens. To govern *mind* requires more wisdom and skill than to govern matter. To control angels and men evinces more glory than to roll the streams or the ocean, or than to propel and guide the planets. And especially is this true of the plan of salvation. That wondrous scheme is adapted to call forth eternal praise, and to show for ever the wisdom and mercy of God. Without such a plan, we cannot see how the Divinity could be fully manifested; with that, we see God as God, vast, grand, mighty, infinite; but still seeking to do good, and having power to enter any vast mass of iniquity, and to diffuse purity and peace over the face of an alienated and dying world.

7. The salvation of sinners is not to promote their own glory primarily, but that of God. "He is first, and he last; he is midst, and without end," in their salvation. God seeks his own honour, and seeks it by their return and their obedience. But if they *will* not promote his glory in that way, they must be made to promote it in their ruin.

8. It is the duty of men to seek the honour of this infinitely wise and holy God. It commends itself to every man's conscience. God has formed us all; and man can have no higher destiny and honour than to be permitted to promote and spread abroad through all the universe the knowledge of a Being whose character is infinitely lovely, whose government is right, and whose presence and favour will diffuse blessings of salvation and eternal peace on all the wide creation that will be obedient to his will.

[A.D. 57. depend has a right to homage and praise.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 12

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 1

ROMANS Chapters 12

Verse 1. *I beseech you*. The apostle, having finished the *argument of* this epistle, proceeds now to close it with a *practical or hortatory* application, showing its bearing on the duties of life, and the practical influence of religion. None of the doctrines of the gospel are designed to be cold and barren speculations. They bear on the hearts and lives of men; and the apostle therefore calls on those to whom he wrote to dedicate themselves without reserve unto God.

Therefore. As the effect or result of the argument or doctrine. In other words, the whole argument of the eleven first chapters is fitted to show the obligation on us to devote ourselves to God. From expressions like these, it is clear that the apostle never supposed that the tendency of the doctrines of grace was to lead to licentiousness. Many have affirmed that such was the tendency of the doctrines of justification by faith, of election and decrees, and of the perseverance of the saints. But it is plain that Paul had no such apprehensions. After having fully stated and established those doctrines, he concludes that we ought *therefore* to lead holy lives; and on the ground of them he exhorts men to do it.

By the mercies of God. The word *by*—(*dia*)—denotes here the reason why they should do it, or the *ground of appeal*. So great had been the mercy of God, that this constituted a *reason why* they should present their bodies, etc. See 1Co 1:10; Ro 15:30. The word *mercies* here denotes favour shown to the undeserving, or kindness, compassion, etc. The plural is used in imitation of the Hebrew word for mercy, which has no singular. The word is not often used in the New Testament. See 2Co 1:3, where God is called "the Father of mercies." Php 2:1 Col 3:12; Heb 10:28.

The particular mercy to which the apostle here refers, is that shown to those whom he was addressing. He had proved that all were by nature under sin; that they had no claim on God; and that he had showed great compassion in giving his Son to die for them in this state, and in pardoning their sins. This was a ground or reason why *they* should devote themselves to God.

That ye present. The word used here commonly denotes the action of bringing and presenting an animal or other sacrifice before an altar. It implies that the action was a free and voluntary offering. Religion is free; and the act of devoting ourselves to God is one of the most free that we ever perform.

Your bodies. The *bodies* of animals were offered in sacrifice. The apostle specifies their *bodies* particularly in reference to that fact. Still the entire animal was devoted; and Paul evidently meant here the same as to say, *present YOURSELVES*, your entire person, to the service of God. Comp. 1Co 6:16 Jas 3:6. It was not customary or proper to speak of a sacrifice as art offering of a soul or spirit, in the common language of the Jews; and hence the apostle applied their which Christians were to make of themselves to God.

A living sacrifice. A *sacrifice* is an offering made to God as an atonement for sin; or any offering made to him and his service as an expression of thanksgiving or homage. It implies, that he who offers it presents it *entirely*, releases all claim or right to it, and leaves it to be disposed of for the honour of God. In the case of an *animal*, it was slain, and the blood offered; in the case of any other offering, as the firstfruits, etc., it was set apart to the service of God; and he who offered it released all claim on it, and submitted it to God, to be disposed of at his will. This is the offering which the apostle entreats the Romans to make; to devote themselves to God, as if they had no longer any *claim* on themselves; to be disposed of by him; to suffer and bear all that he might appoint; and to promote *his* honour in any way which *he* might command. This is the nature of true religion.

Living. (*zwsan*). The expression probably means, that they were to devote the vigorous, active powers of their bodies and souls to the service of God. The Jew offered his victim, slew it, and

presented it dead. It could not be presented again. In opposition to this, we are to present ourselves with all our living, vital energies. Christianity does not require a service of death or inactivity. It demands vigorous and active powers in the service of God the Saviour. There is something very affecting in the view of such a sacrifice; in regarding life, with all its energies, its intellectual, and moral, and physical powers, as one long *sacrifice*—one continued offering unto God. An immortal being *presented* to him; presented voluntarily, with all his energies, from day to day, until life shall close, so that it may be said that he has lived and died an offering made freely unto God. This is religion.

Holy. This means, properly, without blemish or defect. No other sacrifice could be made to God. The Jews were expressly forbid to offer that which was lame, or blind, or in any way deformed, De 15:21; Le 1:3,10, 3:1 22:20; De 17:1.

Comp. Mal 1:8. If offered without any of these defects, it was regarded as *holy*, i.e., appropriately set apart, or consecrated to God. In like manner we are to consecrate to God our best faculties; the rigour of our minds, and talents, and time. Not the feebleness of sickness merely; not old age alone; not time which we cannot otherwise employ; but the first rigour and energies of the mind and body—our youth, and health, and strength. Our sacrifice to God is to be not divided, separate; but it is to be entire and complete. Many are expecting to be Christians in sickness; many in old age; thus purposing to offer unto him the blind and the lame. The sacrifice is to be free from sin. It is not to be a divided, and broken, and polluted service. It is to be with the best affections of our hearts and lives.

Acceptable unto God. They are exhorted to offer such a sacrifice as *will be* acceptable to God; that is, such an one as he had just specified, one that was living and holy. No sacrifice should be made which is not acceptable to God. The offerings of the heathen' the pilgrimages of Mohammedans; the self-inflicted penalties of the Roman Catholics, uncommanded by God, cannot be acceptable to him. Those services will be acceptable to God, and those only, which he appoints. Comp. Col 2:20-23. Men are not to *invent* services; or to *make* crosses; or to seek persecutions and trials; or to *provoke* opposition. They are to do just what God requires of them, and that will be acceptable to God. And this fact, that what we do is acceptable to God, is the highest recompense we can have. It matters little what *men* think of us, if God approves what we do. To please *him* should be our highest aim; the fact that we *do* please him is our highest reward.

Which is your reasonable service. The word rendered *service*— (*latreian*)—properly denotes *worship*, or the *homage* rendered to God. The word *reasonable*, with us, means that which is "governed by reason; thinking, speaking, or acting conformably to the dictates of reason," (*Webster*) or that which can be shown to be rational or proper. This does not express the meaning of the original. That word (*logikhn*) denotes that which pertains to the mind, and a reasonable service means that which is mental, or pertaining to reason. It stands opposed not to that which is foolish or unreasonable, but to the *external* service of the Jews, and such as they relied on for salvation. The worship of the Christian is that which pertains to the mind, or is spiritual; that of the Jew was *external*. Chrysostom renders this phrase, "your spiritual ministry." The Syriac, "that ye present your bodies, etc., *by a rational ministry*."

We may learn from this verse,

(1.)that the proper worship of God is the free homage of the mind. It is not forced or constrained. The offering of ourselves should be voluntary. No other can be a true offering, and none other can be acceptable.

(2.) We are to offer our entire selves, all that we have and are, to God. No other offering can be such as he will approve.

(3.) The character of God is such as should lead us to that. It is a character of mercy—of long-continued and patient forbearance—and it should influence us to devote ourselves to him.

(4.) It should be done without delay. God is as *worthy* of such service *now* as he ever will or can be. He has every possible *claim* on our affections and our hearts.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And be not conformed*, etc. The word rendered *conformed* properly means, to put on the *form, fashion, or appearance* of another. It may refer to anything pertaining to the habit, manner, dress, style of living, etc., of others.

To this world. (*tw aiwni toutw*). The word which is commonly rendered *world*, when applied to the material universe, is (*kosmov*), cosmos. The word used here properly denotes an *age*, or *generation* of men. It may denote a *particular* generation, or it may be applied to the race. It is sometimes used in each of these senses. Thus here it may mean, that Christians should not conform to the maxims, habits, feelings, etc., of a wicked, luxurious, and idolatrous age, but should be conformed solely to the precepts and laws of the gospel; or the same principle may be extended to *every age*, and the direction may be, that Christians should not conform to the prevailing habits, style, and manners of the world—the people who know not God. They are to be governed by the laws of the Bible; to fashion their lives after the example of Christ; and to form themselves by principles different from those which prevail in the world. In the *application* of this rule there is much difficulty. Many may think that *they* are not conformed to the world, while they can easily perceive that their neighbour is. They indulge in many things which others may think to be conformity to the world, and are opposed to many things which others think innocent. The design of this passage is doubtless to produce a spirit that should not find *pleasure* in the pomp and vanity of the world; and which will regard all vain amusements and gaieties with disgust, and lead the mind to find pleasure in better things.

Be ye transformed. The word from which the expression here is derived means *form, habit*, (*morfh*). The direction is, "put on another *form*, change the form of the world for that of Christianity." This word would properly refer to the *external appearance*, but the expression which the apostle immediately uses, "renewing of the mind," shows that he did not intend to use it with reference to that only, but to the change of the whole man. The meaning is, do not cherish a spirit devoid to the world, following its vain fashions and pleasures, but cultivate a spirit attached to God, and his kingdom and cause.

By the renewing. By the *making new*; the changing into new views and feelings. The Christian is often represented as a *new creature*, 2Co 5:17 Ga 6:15; Eph 4:24 1Pe 2:2.

Your mind. The word translated *mind* properly denotes *intellect*, as distinguished from the will and affections. But here it seems to be used as applicable to the whole spirit as distinguished from the body, including the understanding, will, and affections. As if he had said, let not this change appertain to the *body* only, but to the *soul*. Let it not be a mere *external* conformity, but let it have its seat in the spirit. All external changes, if the mind was not changed, would be useless, or would

be hypocrisy. Christianity seeks to reign in the *soul*; and having its seat there, the external conduct and habits will be regulated accordingly.

That ye may prove. The word used here (*dokimazein*) is commonly applied to *metals*, to the operation of testing, or trying them by the severity of fire, etc. Hence it also means to explore, investigate, ascertain. This is its meaning here. The sense is, that such a *renewed* mind is essential to a successful inquiry after the will of God. Having a *disposition* to obey him, the mind will be prepared to understand his precepts. There will be a *correspondence* between the feelings of the heart and his will; a nice *tact* or taste, which will admit his laws, and see the propriety and beauty of his commands. A renewed heart is the best preparation for studying Christianity; as a man who is *temperate* is the best fitted to understand the ance; the man who is chaste has most clearly and forcibly the arguments for chastity, etc. A heart in love with the fashions and follies of the world is ill-fitted to appreciate the arguments for humility, prayer, etc. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God," Joh 7:17. The *reason why* the heart is renewed is, that we may do the will of God; the heart that is renewed is best fitted to appreciate and understand his will.

That good, etc. This part of the verse might be rendered, that ye may investigate the will of God, or ascertain the will of God—that which is good, and perfect, and acceptable. The *will of God* relates to his commands in regard to our conduct, his doctrines in regard to our belief, his providential dealings in relation to our external circumstances. It means what God demands of us, in whatever way it may be made known. They do not err from his ways who seek his guidance, and who, not confiding in their own wisdom, but in God, commit their way to him. "The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way," Ps 25:9. The word *good* here is not an *adjective* agreeing with "will," but a *noun*. "That ye may find the will of God, that which is good and acceptable." It implies that that thing which is *good is* his will; or that we may find his will by finding that which is good and perfect. That is good which promotes the honour of God, and the interests of his universe.

Perfect. Free from defect, stain, or injury. That which has all its parts complete, or which is not disproportionate. Applied to religion, it means that which is *consistent*, which is *carried out*; which is evinced in all the circumstances and relations of life.

Acceptable. That which will be pleasing to God, or which he will approve. There is scarcely a more difficult text in the Bible than this, or one that is more full of meaning. It involves the main *duty* of religion to be separated from the world; and expresses the *way* in which that duty may be performed, and in which we may live so as to ascertain and do the will of God. If all Christians would obey this, religion would be everywhere honoured. If all would separate from the vices and follies, the amusements and gaieties of the world, Christ would be glorified. If all were truly renewed in their minds, they would lose their relish for such things; and seeking only to do the will of God, they would not be slow to find it.

{m} "be not conformed" 1Jo 2:15

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *For I say*. The word "for" shows that the apostle is about to introduce some additional considerations to enforce what he had just said; or to show how we may evince a mind that is not con- formed to the world.

Through the grace. Through the *favour*, or in virtue of the favour of the apostolic of[ice. By the *authority* that is conferred on me to declare the will of God as an apostle. **See Barnes "Ro 1:5"**.

See also Ga 1:6,15, 2:9 Eph 3:8; 1Ti 1:14.

Not to think, etc. Not to *over-estimate* himself, or to think more of himself than he ought to. What is the true standard by which we ought to estimate ourselves he immediately adds. This is a caution against *pride*; and an exhortation not to judge of ourselves by our talents, wealth, or office, but to form another standard of judging of ourselves, by our Christian character. The Romans would probably be in much danger from this quarter. The prevailing habit of judging among them was according to rank, or wealth, or eloquence, or office. While this habit of judging prevailed in the world around them, there was danger that it might also prevail in the church. And the exhortation was, that they should not judge of their own characters by the usual modes among men, but by their Christian attainments. There is no sin to which men are more prone than an inordinate self-valuation and pride. Instead of judging by that which constitutes true excellence of character, they pride themselves on that which is of no intrinsic value—on rank, and titles, and external accomplishments; or on talents, learning, or wealth. The only true standard of character pertains to the principles of action, or to that which constitutes the moral nature of the man; and to that the apostle calls the Roman people.

But to think soberly. Literally, "to think so as to act soberly or wisely." So to estimate ourselves as to act or demean ourselves wisely, prudently, modestly. Those who over-estimate themselves are proud, haughty, foolish in their deportment. Those who think of themselves as they ought, are modest, sober, prudent. There is no way to maintain a wise and proper conduct so certain, as to form a humble and modest estimate of our own character.

According as God hath dealt. As God has measured to each one, or apportioned to each one. In this place, *the faith* which Christians have is traced to God as its Giver. This *fact*, that *God* has given it, will be itself one of the most effectual promoters of humility and right feeling. Men commonly regard the objects on which they pride themselves as things of their own creation, or as depending on themselves. But let an object be regarded as the gift of God, and it ceases to excite *pride*, and the feeling is at once changed into *gratitude*. He therefore who regards *God* as the Source of all blessings, and he only, will be a humble man.

The measure of faith. The word *faith* here is evidently put for *religion*, or Christianity. Faith is a main thing in religion. It constitutes its *first* demand; and the Christian religion, therefore, is characterized by its *faith*, or its confidence in God. See Mr 16:16. Comp. Heb 11 Ro 4.

We are not therefore to be elated in our view of ourselves; we are not to judge of our own characters by wealth, or talent, or learning; but by our attachment to God, and by the influence of faith on our minds. The meaning is, judge yourselves, or estimate yourselves, by your *piety*. The propriety of this rule is apparent,

(1.) because no other standard is a correct one, or one of value. Our talent, learning, rank, or wealth, is a very improper rule by which to estimate ourselves. All may be wholly unconnected with moral worth; and the worst as well as the best men may possess them.

(2.) God will judge us in the day of judgment by our attachment to Christ and his cause, (Mt 25) and that is the true standard by which to estimate ourselves here.

(3.) Nothing else will secure and promote humility but this. All other things may produce or promote pride, but this will effectually secure humility. The fact that *God* has given all that we have; the fact that the poor and obscure may have as true an elevation of character as ourselves; the consciousness of our own imperfections and short-comings in the Christian faith; and the certainty that we are soon to be arraigned to try this great question, whether we have evidence that we are the friends of God, will all tend to promote humbleness of mind, and to bring down our usual inordinate self-estimation. If all Christians judged themselves in this way, it would remove at once no small part of the pride of station and of life from the world, and would produce deep attachment for those who are blessed with the faith of the gospel, though they may be unadorned by any of the wealth or trappings which now promote pride and distinctions among men.

{o} "more highly" Ro 11:20 {1} "to think soberly" "to sobriety"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *For*. This word here denotes a further *illustration* or proof of what he had just before said. The duty to which he was exhorting the Romans was, not to be unduly exalted or elevated in their own estimation. In order to produce proper humility, he shows them that God has appointed certain orders or grades in the church; that all are useful in their proper place; that we should seek to discharge our duty in our appropriate sphere; and *thus* that due subordination and order would be observed. To show this, he introduces a beautiful comparison drawn from the human body. There are various members in the human frame; all useful and honourable in their proper place; and all designed to promote the order, and beauty, and harmony of the whole. So the church is one body, consisting of many members, and each is fitted to be useful and comely in its proper place. The same comparison he uses with great beauty and force in 1Co 12:4-31; also Eph 4:25 Eph 5:30. In that chapter the comparison is carried out to much greater length, and its influence shown with great force.

Many members. Limbs, or parts; feet, hands, eyes, ears, etc., 1Co 12:14,15.

In one body. Constituting one body; or united in one, and making one person. Essential to the existence, beauty, and happiness of the one body or person.

The same office. The same use or design; not all appointed for the same thing; one is to see, another to hear, a third to walk with, etc., 1Co 12:14-23.

{q} "many members" 1Co 12:4,12

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *So we*, being *many*. We who are Christians, and who are numerous as individuals.

Are one body. Are united together, constituting one society or one people, mutually dependent, and having the same great interests at heart, though to be prompted by us according to our peculiar talents and opportunities. As the welfare of the same body is to be promoted in one manner by the

feet, in another by the eye, etc., so the welfare of the body of Christ is to be promoted by discharging our duties in our appropriate sphere, as God has appointed us.

In Christ. One body, *joined* to Christ, or connected with him as the head. Eph 1:22,23, "And gave him to be *head* over all things to the church, which is his *body*." Comp. Joh 15:1-7. This does not mean that there is any *physical* or *literal* union, or any destruction of personal identity, or anything particularly mysterious or unintelligible. Christians acknowledge him as their *head*, i. e. their Lawgiver; their Counsellor, Guide, and Redeemer. They are bound to him by peculiarly tender ties of affection, gratitude, and friendship; they are united *in him*, i.e. in acknowledging him as their common Lord and Saviour. Any other union than this is impossible; and the sacred writers never intended that expressions like these should be explained *literally*. The union of Christians to Christ is the most tender and interesting of any in this world, but no more mysterious than that which binds friend to friend, children to parents, or husbands to their wives. Comp. Eph 5:23-33.

And every one members one of another. Comp. 1Co 12:25,26. That is, we are so fitted as to be mutually dependent; each one is of service to the other; and the existence and office of the one is necessary to the usefulness of the other. Thus the members of the body may be said to be members one of another; as the feet could not, for example, perform their functions, or be of use, if it were not for the eye; the ear, the hand, the teeth, etc., would be useless if it were not for the other members, which go to make up the entire person. Thus in the church, every individual is not only necessary in his place as an individual, but is needful to the proper symmetry and action of the whole. And we may learn here,

(1.) that no member of the church of Christ should esteem himself to be of no importance. In his own place he may be of as much consequence as the man of learning, wealth, and talent may be in his.

(2.) God designed that there should be differences of endowments of nature and of grace in the church; just as it was needful that there should be differences in the members of the human body.

(3.) No one should despise or lightly esteem another. All are necessary. We can no more spare the foot or the hand than we can the eye; though the latter may be much more curious and striking as a proof of Divine skill. We do not despise the hand or the foot any more than we do the eye; and in all we should acknowledge the goodness and wisdom of God. See these thoughts carried out in 1Co 12:21-25.

{r} "one body in Christ" Eph 1:23.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Having then gifts*. All the endowments which Christians have are regarded by the apostle as *gifts*. God has conferred them; and this fact, when properly felt, tends much to prevent our thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, Ro 12:3. For the use of the word rendered *gifts*, see Ro 1:11 5:15,16 6:23, 11:29 1Co 7:7, 12:4,9,28, etc. It may refer to natural endowments, as well as to the favours of grace; though in this place it refers doubtless to the distinctions conferred on Christians in the churches.

Differing. It was never designed that all Christians should be equal. God designed that men should have different endowments. The very nature of society supposes this. There never was a

state of perfect equality in anything; and it would be impossible that there should be, and yet preserve society. In this, God exercises a sovereignty, and bestows his favours as he pleases, injuring no one by conferring favours on others; and holding *me* responsible for the right use of what I have, and not for what may be conferred on my neighbour.

According to the grace. That is, the *favour*, the *mercy* that is bestowed on us. As all that we have is a matter of grace, it should keep us from pride; and it should make us willing to occupy our appropriate place in the church. True honour consists not in splendid endowments, or great wealth and office. It consists in rightly discharging the duties which God requires of us in our appropriate sphere. If all men held their talents as the gift of God; if all would find and occupy in society the place for which God designed them, it would prevent no small part of the uneasiness, the restlessness, the ambition, and misery of the world.

Whether prophecy. The apostle now proceeds to *specify* the different classes of gifts or endowments which Christians have, and to exhort them to discharge aright the duty which results from the rank or office which they held in the church. The first is prophecy. This word properly means, to predict *future events*; but it also means, to declare the Divine will; to interpret the purposes of God; or to make known in any way the truth of God, which is designed to influence men. Its *first* meaning is to *predict* or *foretell* future events; but as those who did this were messengers of God, and as they commonly connected with such predictions instructions and exhortations in regard to the sins, and dangers, and duties of men, the word came to denote *any* who warned, or threatened, or in any way communicated the will of God; and even those who uttered devotional sentiments or praise. The name in the New Testament is commonly connected with *teachers*. Ac 13:1, "There were in the church at Antioch certain prophets and teachers, as Barnabas," etc.; Ac 15:32, "And Judas and Silas, being prophets themselves," etc.; Ac 21:10, "A certain prophet named Agabus." In 1Co 12:28,29, *prophets* are mentioned as a class of teachers immediately after apostles. "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily *prophets*, thirdly teachers," etc. The same class of persons is again mentioned in 1Co 14:29-32,39. In this place they are spoken of as being under the influence of *revelation*: "Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge, if anything be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets." 1Co 14:39, "Covet to *prophesy*, and forbid not to speak with tongues." In this place endowments are mentioned under the name of *prophecy*, evidently in advance even of the power of speaking with tongues. Yet all these were to be subject to the authority of the apostle, 1Co 14:37. In Eph 4:11, they are mentioned again in the same order: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers," etc. From these passages the following things seem clear in relation to this class of persons:

(1.) They were an order of teachers distinct from the apostles, and *next* to them in authority and rank.

(2.) They were under the influence of revelation, or inspiration, in a certain sense.

(3.) They had power of *controlling* themselves, and of speaking or keeping silence as they chose. They had the power of using their prophetic gifts as we have the ordinary faculties of our minds; and of course of *abusing* them also. This abuse was apparent also in the case of those who had the power of speaking with tongues, 1Co 14:2,4,6,11, etc.

(4.) They were subject to the apostles.

(5.) They were *superior* to the other teachers and pastors in the church.

(6.) The office or the endowment was *temporary*, designed for the settlement and establishment of the church; and then, like the apostolic office, having accomplished its purpose, to be disused, and to cease, from these remarks, also, will be seen the propriety of *regulating* this office by apostolic authority; or stating, as the apostle does here, the *manner* or *rule* by which this gift was to be exercised.

According to the proportion. This word (*analogian*) is nowhere else used in the New Testament. The word properly applies to mathematics, (*Schleusner*,) and means the ratio or proportion which results from comparison of one number or magnitude with another. In a large sense, therefore, as applied to other subjects, it denotes *the measure of anything*. With us it means *analogy*, or the congruity or resemblance discovered between one thing and another, as we say there is an *analogy* or *resemblance* between the truths taught by reason and revelation. (See Butler's *Analogy*.) But this is not its meaning here, It means the *measure*, the *amount* of faith bestowed on them; for he was exhorting them to Ro 12:3 "think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the *measure of faith*." The word *faith* here means, evidently, not the truths of the Bible elsewhere revealed; nor their *confidence* in God; nor their personal piety; but the *extraordinary endowment* bestowed on them by the gifts of prophecy. They were to *confine* themselves strictly to that; they were not to *usurp* the apostolic authority, or to attempt to exercise their peculiar office; but they were to *confine* themselves *strictly* to the functions of their office according to the measure of their faith, i.e. the extraordinary endowment conferred on them. The word *faith* is thus used often to denote that extraordinary confidence in God which attended the working of miracles, etc., Mt 17:20 21:21; Lu 17:6.

If this be the fair interpretation of the passage, then it is clear that the interpretation, which applies it *to systems of theology*, and which demands that we should interpret the Bible so as to accord with the system, is one that is wholly unwarranted. It is to be referred solely to this class of religious teachers, without reference to any system of doctrine, or to anything which had been revealed to any other class of men; or without affirming that there is any resemblance between one truth and another. All that may be true, but it is not the truth taught in this passage. And it is equally clear that the passage is not to be applied to teachers now, except as an illustration of the *general principle* that even those endowed with great and splendid talents are not to over-estimate them, but to regard them as the gift of God; to exercise them in subordination to his appointment; and to seek to employ them in the manner, the place, and to the purpose that shall be according to his will. *They are to employ them in the purpose for which God gave them; AND FOR NO OTHER*.

{s} "according to the grace" 1Pe 4:10,11

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Or ministry*, (*diakonian*). This word properly means *service* of any kind, Lu 10:40. It is used in religion to denote the *service* which is rendered to Christ as the *Master*. It is applied to *all* classes of ministers in the New Testament, as denoting their being the *servants* of Christ; and it is used particularly to denote that class who, from this word, were called *deacons*, i.e. those who had the care of the poor, who provided for the sick, and who watched over the *external* matters of the church. In the following places it is used to denote the *ministry*, or *service*, which Paul and the

other apostles rendered in their public work, Ac 1:17,25; Ac 6:4 12:25, 20:24 21:19; Ro 11:13 15:31; 2Co 5:18 6:3; Eph 4:12; 1Ti 1:12. In a few places this word is used to denote the office which the *deacons* fulfilled, Ac 6:1 11:29; 1Co 16:15 2Co 11:8.

In this sense the word *deacon* (*diakonov*) is most commonly used, as denoting the office which was performed in providing for the poor, and administering the alms of the church. It is not easy to say in what sense it is used here. I am inclined to the opinion that he did *not* refer to those who were appropriately called *deacons*, but to those engaged in the office of the *ministry of the word*; whose business it was to preach, and thus to serve the churches. In this sense the word is often used in the New Testament, and the connexion seems to demand the same interpretation here.

On our ministering. Let us be wholly and diligently occupied in this. Let this be our great business, and let us give entire attention to it. Particularly the connexion requires us to understand this as directing those who *ministered* not to aspire to the office and honours of those who prophesied. Let them not think of themselves more highly than they ought, but be engaged entirely in their own appropriate work.

He that teacheth. This word denotes those who *instruct*, or communicate knowledge. It is clear that it is used to denote a class of persons different, in some respects, from those who *prophesied* and from those who *exhorted*. But in what this difference consisted is not clear. *Teachers* are mentioned in the New Testament in the grade next to the *prophets*, Ac 13:1 1Co 12:28,29 Eph 4:11.

Perhaps the difference between the *prophets*, the *ministers*, the *teachers*, and the *exhorters*, was this—that the first spake by inspiration; the second engaged in all the functions of the ministry, properly so called, including the administration of the sacraments; the teachers were employed in communicating instruction simply, teaching the *doctrines* of religion, but without assuming the office of ministers; and the fourth *exhorted*, or entreated Christians to lead a holy life, without making it a particular subject to *teach*, and without pretending to administer the ordinances of religion. The fact that *teachers*, are so often mentioned in the New Testament, shows that they were a class by themselves. It may be worthy of remark, that the churches in New England had, at first, a class of men who were called *teachers*. One was appointed to this office in every church, distinct from the pastor, whose proper business it was to *instruct* the congregation in the *doctrines* of religion. The same thing exists substantially now in most churches, in the appointment of Sunday-school *teachers*, whose main business it is to *instruct* the children in the doctrines of the Christian religion. It is an office of great importance to the church; and the exhortation of the apostle may be applied to them: that they should be assiduous, constant, diligent in their teaching; that they should confine themselves to their appropriate place; and should feel that their office is of great importance in the church of God; and remember that this is *his* arrangement, designed to promote the edification of his people.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *He that exhorteth*. This word properly denotes one who urges to *the practical duties*, of religion, in distinction from one who teaches its *doctrines*. One who presents the warnings and the promises of God, to excite men to the discharge of their duty. It is clear that there were persons who were recognised as engaging especially in this duty, and who were known by this appellation,

as distinguished from prophets and teachers. How long this was continued there is no means of ascertaining; but it cannot be doubted that it may still be expedient, in many times and places, to have persons designated to this work. In most churches this duty is now blended with the other offices of the ministry.

He that giveth. Margin, "*imparteth*." The word denotes the person whose office it was to distribute; and probably, designates him who distributed the *alms* of the church, or him who was the *deacon* of the congregation. The *connexion* requires that this meaning should be given to the passage; and the word rendered *giveth* may denote one who imparts or distributes that which has been *committed to him for that purpose*, as well as one who gives out of his private property. As the apostle is speaking here of *offices* in the church, the former is evidently that which is intended. It was deemed an important matter among the early Christians to impart liberally of their substance to support the poor, and provide for the needy, Ac 2:44-47 4:34-37, 5:1-11 Ga 2:10; Ro 15:26 2Co 8:8, 9:2,12.

Hence it became necessary to appoint persons over these contributions, who should be especially charged with the management of them, and who would see that they were properly distributed, Ac 6:1-6. *These* were the persons who were denominated deacons, Php 1:1 1Ti 3:8,12.

Hence it became necessary to appoint persons over these contributions, who should be especially charged with the management of them, and who would see that they were properly distributed, Ac 6:1-6. *These* were the persons who were denominated *deacons*, Php 1:1 1Ti 3:8,12

With simplicity. See Mt 6:22, "If thine eye be *single*," etc.; Lu 11:34. The word *simplicity* (*aplothv*)is used in a similar sense to denote *singleness*, honesty of aim, purity, integrity, without any mixture of a base, selfish, or sinister end. It requires the bestowment of a favour without seeking any *personal* or selfish ends; without partiality; but actuated only by the desire to bestow them in the best possible maimer to promote the object for which they were given, 2Co 8:2 9:11,13 1:12; Eph 6:5 Col 3:22.

It is plain that when *property* was entrusted to them, there would be danger that they might be tempted to employ it for selfish and sinister ends, to promote their influence and prosperity; and hence the apostle exhorted them to do it with a *single aim* to the object for which it was given. Well did he know that there was nothing more tempting than the possession of wealth, though given to be appropriated to others. And this exhortation is applicable not only to the deacons of the churches, but to all who in this day of Christian benevolence are entrusted with money to advance the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He that ruleth. This word properly designates one who is set over others, or who presides or rules, or one who attends with diligence and care to a thing. In 1Th 5:12, it is used in relation to ministers in general: "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and *are over you* in the Lord." 1Ti 3:4,5,12, it is applied to the head of a family, or one who diligently and faithfully performs the duty of a father: "One that ruleth well his own house." 1Ti 5:17, it is applied to "*elders*" in the church: "Let the elders that rule well," etc. It is not elsewhere used except in Tit 3:8,14, in a different sense, where it is translated "*to maintain* good works." The prevailing sense of the word, therefore, is to *rule*, to *preside over*, or to have the management of. But to what class of persons reference is had here, and what was precisely their duty, has been made a matter of controversy, and it is not easy to determine. Whether this refers to a *permanent* office in the church, or to an *occasional* presiding in their assemblies convened for business, etc., is not settled

by the use of the word. It has the idea of *ruling*, as in a family, or of *presiding*, as in a deliberative assembly; and either of these ideas would convey all that is implied in the original word. Comp. 1Co 12:28.

With diligence. This word properly means *haste*, (Mr 6:25; Lu 1:39) but it also denotes *industry, attention, care*. 2Co 7:11, "What *carefulness* it wrought in you;" 2Co 7:12, "That our *care* for you in the sight of God," etc.; Ro 8:7,8, (Gr.) Heb 6:11. It means here, that they should be *attentive* to the duties of their vocation, mid engage with *ardour* in that which was committed to them to do.

He that sheweth mercy. It is probable, says Calvin, that this refers to those who had the care of the sick and infirm, the aged and the needy; not so much to *provide* for them by charity, as to attend on them in their affliction, and to take care of them. To the *deacons* was committed the duty of distributing alms, but to others that of personal attendance This can hardly be called an *office*, in the technical sense; and yet it is not improbable that they were designated to this by the church, and requested to perform it. There were no hospitals and no almshouses. Christians felt it their duty to show personal attention to the infirm and the sick; and so important was their office, that it was deemed worthy of notice in a general direction to the church.

With cheerfulness. The direction given to those who distributed alms was to do it *with simplicity*, with an honest aim to meet the purpose for which it was entrusted to them. The direction here varies according to the duty to be performed. It is to be done with cheerfulness, pleasantness, joy; with a kind, benign, and happy temper. The importance of this direction to those in this situation is apparent. Nothing tends so much to enhance the value of personal attendance on the sick and afflicted, as a kind and cheerful temper. If anywhere a mild, amiable, cheerful, and patient disposition is needed, it is near a sick bed and when administering to the wants of those who are in affection. And whenever we may be called to such a service, we should remember that this is indispensable. If moroseness, or impatience, or fretfulness is discovered in us, it will pain those whom we seek to benefit, embitter their feelings, and render our services of comparatively little value. The needy and infirm, the feeble and the aged, have enough to bear without the impatience and harshness of professed friends. It may be added, that the example of the Lord Jesus Christ is the brightest which the world has furnished of this temper. Though constantly encompassed by the infirm and the afflicted, yet he was always kind, and gentle, and mild, and has left before us *exactly* what the apostle meant when he said, "he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness." The example of the good Samaritan is also another instance of what is intended by this direction. Comp. 2Co 9:7. This direction is particularly applicable to a physician.

We have here an account of the establishment, the order, and the duties of the different members of the Christian church. The amount of it all is, that we should discharge with fidelity the duties which belong to us in the sphere of life in which we are placed; and not despise the rank which God has assigned us; not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought; but to act well our part, according to the station where we are placed, and the talents with which we are endowed. If this were done, it would put an end to discontent, ambition, and strife, and would produce the blessings of universal peace and order.

{1} "giveth" or, "imparteth" {2} "simplicity" or, "liberally" {t} "that ruleth" Ps 111 {u} "cheerfulness" 2Co 9:7

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Let love*. The apostle proceeds to specify the duties of Christians in general, that they might secure the beauty and order of the church. The first which he specifies is *love*. This word here evidently refers to benevolence, or to good-will toward all mankind. In Ro 12:10, he specifies the duty of brotherly love; and there can be no doubt that he here refers to the benevolence which we ought to cherish towards all men, A similar distinction is found in 2Pe 1:7, "And to brotherly kindness add charity," i.e., benevolence, or good will, and kind feelings to others.

Without dissimulation. Without *hypocrisy*. Let it be sincere and unfeigned. Let it not consist in words or professions only, but let it be manifested in acts of kindness and in deeds of charity, 1Jo 3:18, Comp. 1Pe 1:22. Genuine benevolence is not that which merely professes attachment, but which is evinced by acts of kindness and affection.

Abhor that which is evil. The word *abhor* means, to hate; to turn from; to avoid. The word *evil* here has reference to malice, or unkindness, rather than to evil in general. The apostle is exhorting to *love*, or kindness; and *between* the direction to love all men, and the particular direction about brotherly love, he places this general direction to abhor that which is evil—that which is evil in relation to *the subject under discussion*, that is, *malice* or *unkindness*. The word *evil* is not unfrequently used, in this limited sense, to denote some particular or special evil, Mt 5:37,39, etc. Comp. Ps 34:14 2Ti 2:19; Ps 97:10 1Th 5:22.

Cleave to that which is good. The word rendered *cleave to* denotes, properly, the act of *gluing*, or uniting firmly by glue. It is then used to denote a very firm adherence to an object; to be firmly fitted to it. There it means, that Christians should be firmly attached to that which is good, and not separate or part from it. The *good* here referred to is particularly that which pertains to *benevolence* —to all men, and especially to Christians. It should not be occasional only, or irregular; but it should be constant, active, decided.

{v} "dissimulation" 1Pe 1:22 {w} "that which is evil" Ps 34:14

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Be kindly affectioned*. The word here used occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It properly denotes tender affection, such as that which subsists between parents and children; and it means, that Christians should have similar feelings towards each other, as belonging to the same family, and as united in the same principles and interests. The Syriac renders this, "Love your brethren, and love one another." Comp. 1Pe 2:17.

With brotherly love. Or, in love to the brethren. The word denotes the affection which subsists between *brethren*. The duty is one which is often presented in the New Testament, and which our Saviour intended should be regarded as a badge of discipleship. **See Barnes** "Joh 13:34,35, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another;" Joh 15:12,17; Eph 5:2; 1Th 4:9 1Pe 1:22; 1Jo 2:7,8, 3:11,23, 4:20,21.

The apostle Paul in this place manifests his peculiar manner of writing, he does not simply enjoin brotherly love, but he adds that it should be *kindly affectioned*. It should be with the *tenderness* which characterizes the most endearing natural relationship. This he expresses by a word which is

made for the occasion, (*filostorgoi*) blending love with natural affection, and suffering it to be manifest in your intercourse with one another.

In honour. In *showing* or *manifesting* respect or honour. Not in *seeking* honour, or striving after respect, but in showing it to one another.

Preferring one another. The word *preferring* means going before, leading, setting an example. Thus in showing mutual respect and honour, they were to strive to excel; not to see which could *obtain* most honour, but which could *confer* most, or manifest most respect. Comp. 1Pe 5:5 Eph 5:21. Thus they were to be studious to show to each other all the respect which was due in the various relations of life; children to show proper respect to parents, parents to children, servants to their masters, etc.; and *all* to strive, by mutual kindness, to promote the happiness of the Christian community. How different this from the spirit of the world; the spirit which seeks not to confer honour, but to obtain it; which aims not to diffuse respect, but to attract all others to give honour to us. If this single direction were to be obeyed in society, it would put an end at once to no small part of the envy, and ambition, and heart-burning, and dissatisfaction of the world. It would produce contentment, harmony, love, and order in the community; and stay the progress of crime, and annihilate the evils of strife, and discord, and malice. And especially, it would give order and beauty to the church. It would humble the ambition of those who, like Diotrephes, love to have the preeminence, (3Jo 1:9) and make every man willing to occupy the place for which God has designed him, and rejoice that his brethren may be exalted to higher posts of responsibility and honour.

{x} "affectioned" 1Pe 2:17 {1} "brotherly love" or, "in the love of the brethren"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Not slothful*. The word rendered *slothful* refers to those who are slow, idle, destitute of promptness of mind and activity. Comp. Mt 25:26.

In business, (*th spoudh*). This is the same word which, in Ro 12:88, is rendered *diligence*. It properly denotes *haste intensity, ardour of mind*; and hence it also denotes *industry, labour*. The direction means, that we should be diligently occupied in our proper employment. It does not refer to any *particular* occupation, but is used, in a *general sense*, to denote *all* the labour which we may have to do; or is a direction to be faithful and industrious in the discharge of all our appropriate duties. Comp. Ec 9:10. The tendency of the Christian religion is to promote *industry*.

(1.) It teaches the value of time.

(2.) Presents numerous and important things to be done.

(3.) It inclines men to be conscientious in the improvement of each moment.

(4.) And it takes away the mind from those pleasures and pursuits which generate and promote indolence. The Lord Jesus was constantly employed in filling up the great duties of his life; and the effect of his religion has been to promote industry wherever it has spread, both among nations and individuals. An *idle* man and a *Christian* are names which do not harmonize. Every Christian has enough to do to occupy *all* his time; and he whose life is spent in ease, and in doing nothing, should doubt altogether his religion. God has assigned us much to accomplish; and he will hold us answerable for the faithful performance of it. Comp. Joh 5:17 9:14; 1Th 4:11 2Th 3:10,12.

All that would be needful to transform the idle, and vicious, and wretched, into sober and useful men, would be to give to them the spirit of the Christian religion. See the example of Paul, Ac 20:34,35.

Fervent. This word is usually applied to water, or to metals so *heated* as to bubble, or boil. It hence is used to denote *ardour*, *intensity*, or, as we express it, a *glow*—meaning intense zeal, Ac 18:25.

In spirit. In your mind or heart. The expression is used to denote a mind filled with intense ardour in whatever it is engaged. It is supposed that Christians would first find appropriate objects for their labour, and then engage in them with intense ardour and zeal.

Serving. Regarding yourselves as the servants of the Lord. This direction is to be understood as connected with the preceding, and as growing out of it. They were to be diligent and fervid, and in *doing so* were to regard themselves as *serving* the Lord, or to do it inobedience to the command of God, and to promote his glory. The propriety of this caution may easily be seen.

(1.) The tendency of worldly employments is to take off the affections from God.

(2.) Men are prone to forget God when deeply engaged in their worldly employments. It is proper to recall their attention to him.

(3.) The right discharge of our duties in the various employments of life is to be regarded as serving God. He has arranged the order of things in this life to promote employment. He has made industry essential to happiness and success; and hence to be industrious, from proper motives, is to be regarded as acceptable service of God.

(4.) He has *required* that all such employments should be conducted with reference to his will and to his honour, 1Co 10:31 Eph 6:5; Col 3:17,22-24 1Pe 4:11.

The meaning of the whole verse is, that Christians should be *industrious*, should be ardently engaged in some lawful employment, and that they should pursue it with reference to the will of God, in obedience to his commands, and to his glory.

{z} "fervent" Ac 20:34,35 {a} "in spirit" Col 4:12 {b} "serving the Lord" Heb 12:22

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Rejoicing in hope*. That is, in the hope of eternal life and glory which the gospel produces. **See Barnes "Ro 5:2,3".**

Patient in tribulation. In affliction, patiently enduring all that may be appointed. Christians may be enabled to do this by the sustaining influence of their *hope* of future glory; of being admitted to that world where there shall be no more death, and where all tears shall be wiped away from their eyes, Re 21:4 7:17. Comp. Jas 1:4. See the influence of hope in sustaining us ia affliction more fully considered in the Notes on Ro 8:18-28.

Continuing instant in prayer. That is, be *persevering* in prayer. See Col 4:2. **See Barnes "Lu 18:1".**

The meaning of this direction is, that in order to discharge aright the duties of the Christian life, and especially to maintain a joyful hope, and to be sustained in the midst of afflictions, it is necessary to cherish a spirit of prayer, and to live near to God. How *often* a Christian should pray, the Scriptures do not inform us. Of David. we are told that he prayed seven times a day, (Ps 119:164) of Daniel,

that he was accustomed to pray three times a day, (Da 6:10) of our Saviour we have repeated instances of his praying mentioned; and the same of the apostles, The following rules, perhaps, may guide us in this:

(1.) Every Christian should have some *time*, allotted for this service, and some *place* where he may be alone with God.

(2.) It is not easy, perhaps not possible, to maintain a life of piety without *regular* habits of secret devotion.

(3.) *The morning*, when we have experienced God's protecting care, when the mind is fresh, and the thoughts are as yet clear and unoccupied with the world, when we go forth to the duties, trials, and temptations of the day; and the *evening*, when we have again experienced his goodness, and are about to commit ourselves to his protecting care, and when we need his pardoning mercy for the errors and follies of the day, seem to be times which commend themselves to all as appropriate seasons for private devotion.

(4.) Every person will also find other times when private prayer will be needful, and when he will be inclined to it. In affliction, in perplexity, in moments of despondency, in danger, and want, in disappointment, and in the loss of friends, we shall feel the propriety of drawing near to God, and of pouring out the heart before him.

(5.) Besides this, every Christian is probably conscious of times when he feels *peculiarly inclined* to pray; *he feels just like praying*; he has a spirit of supplication; and nothing *but* prayer will meet the instinctive desires of his bosom. We are often conscious of an earnest desire to see and converse with an absent friend, to have communion with those we love; and we value such fellowship as among the happiest moments of life. So with the Christian. He may have an earnest desire to have communion with God; his heart pants for it; and he cannot resist the propensity to seek him, and pour out his desires before him. Compare the feelings expressed by David in Ps 42:1,2,

"As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my
soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the
living God: when shall I come and appear before God?"

Comp. Ps 63:1. Such seasons should be improved; they are the "spring-times" of our piety; and we should expand every sail, that we may be "filled with all the fulness of God." They are happy, blessed moments of our life; and *then* devotion is sweetest and most pure; and then the soul knows what it is to have *fellowship* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, 1Jo 1:3.

(6.) In addition to all this, Christians may be in the habit of praying to God without the formality of retirement. God looks upon the heart; and the *heart* may pour forth its secret desires to Him even when in business, when conversing with a friend, when walking, when alone, and when in society. Thus the Christian may live a life of prayer; and it shall be one of the characteristics of his life that *he prays!* By this he shall be known; and in this he shall learn the way to possess peace in religion.

"In every joy that crowns my days,
In every pain I bear,
My heart shall find delight in praise,
Or seek relief in prayer.

"When gladness wings my favour'd hour,
Thy love my thoughts shall fill;
Resigned when storms of sorrow lower,

My soul shall meet thy will.

"My lifted eye, without a tear,
The gathering storm shall see;
My steadfast heart shall know no fear:
That heart shall rest on thee."

{c} "in hope" Ro 5:2,3 {d} "in tribulation" Jas 1:4 {e} "instant in prayer" Lu 18:1

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Distributing*. The word used here denotes having things in *common*, (*koinwnountev*). It means, that they should be communicative, or should regard their property as so far *common* as to supply the wants of others. In the earliest times of the church, Christians had all things in common, **See Barnes "Ac 2:44"**

and felt themselves bound to meet all the wants of their brethren. One of the most striking effects of Christianity was to loosen their grasp on *property*, and dispose them to impart liberally to those who had need. The direction here does not mean that they should *literally* have all things *in common*; that is, to go back to a state of savage barbarity; but that they should be liberal, should *partake* of their good things with those who were needy. Comp. Ga 6:6 Ro 15:27; Php 4:15 1Ti 6:18.

To the necessity. To the *wants*. That is, distribute to them such things as they *need*—food, raiment, etc. This command, of course, has reference to the *poor*.

Of saints. Of Christians, or the friends of God. They are called *saints* as being holy, (*agioi*) or consecrated to God. This duty of rendering aid to *Christians* especially, does not interfere with the general love of mankind. The law of the New Testament is, (Ga 6:10) "As we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, especially to them who are of the household of faith." The Christian is indeed to love all mankind, and to do them good as far as may be in his power, Mt 5:43,44; Tit 3:8 1Ti 6:18; Heb 13:16.

But he is to show *particular* interest in the welfare of his brethren, and to see that the poor members of the church are provided for; for

(1.) they are our brethren; they are of the same family; they are attached to the same Lord; and to do good to them is to evince love to Christ, Mt 25:40 Mr 9:41.

(2.) They are left especially to the care of the church; and if the church neglects them, we may be sure the world will also, Mt 26:11. Christians, especially in the time of the apostles, had reason to expect little compassion from the men of the world. They were persecuted and oppressed; they would be embarrassed in their business, perhaps thrown out of occupation, by the opposition of their enemies: and it was therefore peculiarly incumbent on their brethren to aid them. To a certain extent it is always true, that the world is reluctant to aid the friends of God; and hence the poor followers of Christ are in a peculiar manner thrown on the benefactions of the church,

(3.) It is not improbable that there might be a peculiar reason at that time for enjoining this on the attention of the Romans. It was a time of persecution, and perhaps of extensive distress. In the

days of Claudius, (about A.D. 50,) there was a famine in Judea which produced great distress, and many of the poor and oppressed might flee to the capital for aid. We know, from other parts of the New Testament, that at that time the apostle was deeply interested in procuring aid for the poor brethren in Judea, Ro 15:25,26. Comp. Ac 19:21 2Co 8:1-7; 2Co 9:2-4. But the same reasons for aiding the *poor* followers of Christ will exist substantially in every age; and one of the most precious privileges conferred on men, is to be permitted to assist those who are the friends of God, Ps 41:1-3 Pr 14:21.

Given to hospitality. This expression means that they should *readily and cheerfully* entertain strangers. This is a duty which is frequently enjoined in the Scriptures. Heb 13:2, "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." 1Pe 4:9, "Use hospitality one to another without grudging." Paul makes this especially the duty of a Christian bishop: 1Ti 3:2, "A bishop then must—be given to hospitality;" Tit 1:8. Hospitality is especially enjoined by the Saviour, and its exercise commanded: Mt 10:40,42, "He that receiveth you receiveth me," etc. The want of hospitality is one of the charges which the Judge of mankind will allege against the wicked, and on which he will condemn them: Mt 25:43, "I was a stranger, and ye took me not in." It is especially commended to us by the example of Abraham, (Ge 18:1-8,) and of Lot, (Ge 19:1,2,) who thus received angels unawares. It was one of the virtues on which *Job* particularly commended himself, and which he had not failed to practise. Job 31:16,17, "If I have withheld the poor from theft desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail; *or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof*," etc. In the time of our Saviour it was, evidently practised in the most open and frank manner. Lu 10:7, "And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give." A remarkable instance is also mentioned in Lu 11:5. This virtue is no less common in eastern nations at present than it was in the time of Christ. It is *eminently* the virtue of oriental nations, of their ardent and open temperament. It springs up naturally in countries thinly settled, where the sight of a stranger would be therefore peculiarly pleasant; in countries, too, where the occupation was chiefly to attend flocks, and where there was much leisure for conversation; and where the population was too sparse, and the travellers too infrequent, to justify *inn-keeping* as *a business*. From all these causes, it has happened that there are, properly speaking, no *inns or taverns* in the regions around Palestine. It was customary, indeed, to erect places for lodging and shelter at suitable distances, or by the side of springs or watering-places, for travellers to lodge in. But they are built at the public expense, and are unfurnished. Each traveller carries his own bed and clothes and cooking utensils, and such places are merely designed as a *shelter* for caravans. (See *Robinson's Calmet*, Art. Caravanserai.) It is still so; and hence it becomes, in their view, a virtue of high order to entertain, at their own tables, and in their families, such *strangers* as may be travelling. Niebuhr says, that "the hospitality of the Arabs has always been the subject of promise; and I believe that those of the present day exercise this virtue no less than the ancients did. There are, in the villages of Tehama, houses which are public, where travellers may lodge and be entertained some days *gratis*, if they will be content with the fare; and they are much frequented. When the Arabs are at table, they invite those who happen to come to eat with them, whether they be Christians or Mohammedans, gentle or simple." "The primitive Christians," says Calmet, "considered one principle part of their duty to consist in showing hospitality to strangers. They were, in fact, so ready in discharging this duty, that the very heathen admired them for it. They were hospitable to all strangers, but especially to those who were of the household of faith. Believers scarcely ever travelled without letters of communion, which testified the purity of their faith, and

procured for them a favourable reception wherever the name of Jesus Christ was known." (*Calmet*, Dict.) Calmet is also of opinion that the two minor epistles of John may be such letters of recommendation and communion. Comp. 2Jo 1:10. It may be added, that it would be particularly expected of Christians that they should show hospitality to the ministers of religion. They were commonly poor; they received no fixed salary; they travelled from place to place; and they would be dependent for support on the kindness of those who loved the Lord Jesus Christ. This was particularly intended by our Saviour's instructions on the subject, Mt 10:11-13,40-42.

The duty of *hospitality* is still binding on Christians and all men. The law of Christ is not repealed. The customs of society are indeed changed; and one evidence of advancement in commerce and in security is furnished in the fact that *inns* are now provided and patronized for the traveller in all Christian lands. Still this does not lessen the obligations to show hospitality. It is demanded by the very genius of the Christian religion; it evinces proper love towards mankind; it shows that there is a feeling of *brotherhood* and kindness towards others, when such hospitality is shown. It unites society, creates new bonds of interest and affection, to show kindness to the stranger and to the poor. To what extent this is to be done, is one of those questions which are to be left to every man's conscience and views of duty. No *rule* can be given on the subject. Many men have not the means to be extensively hospitable; and many are not placed in situations that require it. No rules *could* be given that should be applicable to *all* cases; and hence the Bible has left the *general* direction, has furnished examples where it was exercised, has recommended it to mankind, and then has left every man to act on the rule, as he will answer it to God. See Mt 25:34-46.

{f} "to the necessity of saints" Ps 41 Heb 13:16

{g} "to hospitality" Heb 13:2 1Pe 4:9

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Bless them*, etc. **See Barnes "Mt 5:44"**.

Comp. Lu 6:28.

Bless, and curse not. Bless only; or continue to bless, however long or aggravated may be the injury. Do not be provoked to anger, or to cursing, by any injury, persecution, or reviling. This is one of the most severe and difficult duties of the Christian religion; and it is a duty which nothing else *but* religion will enable men to perform. To *curse* denotes, properly, *to devote to destruction*. Where there is power to do it, it implies the destruction of the object. Thus the fig-tree that was cursed by the Saviour soon withered away, Mr 11:21. Thus those whom God curses will be certainly destroyed, Mt 25:41. Where there is not *power* to do it, to curse implies the invoking of the aid of God to devote to destruction. Hence it means, to imprecate; to implore a curse from God to rest on others; to pray that God would destroy them. In a larger sense still, it means to abuse by reproachful words; to calumniate; or to express one's self in a violent, profane, and outrageous manner. In this passage it seems to have especial reference to this.

{h} "Bless them which persecute you" Mt 5:44

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Rejoice with them*, etc. This command grows out of the doctrine stated in Ro 12:4,5 that the church is *one*; that it has one interest; and therefore that there should be common sympathy in its joys and sorrows. Or, enter into the welfare of your fellow- Christians, and show your attachment to them by rejoicing that *they* are made happy. Comp. 1Co 12:26. "And whether— one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it." In this way happiness diffuses and multiplies itself. It becomes expanded over the face of the whole society; and the *union* of the Christian body tends to enlarge the sphere of happiness, and to prolong the joy conferred by religion. God has bound the family of man together by these sympathies, and it is one of the happiest of all devices to perpetuate and extend human enjoyments.

Weep, etc. **See Barnes "Joh 11:35"**.

At the grave of Lazarus our Saviour evinced this in a most tender and affecting manner. The design of this direction is to produce mutual kindness and affection, and to divide our sorrows by the sympathies of friends. Nothing is so well fitted to do this as the sympathy of those we love. All who are afflicted know how much it diminishes theft sorrow to see others sympathizing with them, and especially those who evince in theft sympathies the Christian spirit, How sad would be a suffering world if there were none who regarded our griefs with interest or with tears! if every sufferer were left to bear his sorrows unpitied and alone! and if all the ties of human sympathy were rudely cut at once, and men were left to suffer in solitude, and unbefriended! It may be added, that it is the special duty of Christians to sympathize in each other's griefs,

(1.) because their Saviour set them the example;

(2) because they belong to the same family;

(3) because they are subject to similar trials and afflictions; and

(4) because they cannot expect the sympathy of a cold and unfeeling world.

{i} "Rejoice with them" 1Co 12:26.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Be of the same mind*, etc. This passage has been variously interpreted. "Enter into each other's circumstances, in order to see how you would yourself feel." *Chrysostom*. "Be agreed in your opinions and views." *Stuart*. "Be united or agreed with each other." *Flatt*. Comp. .

A literal translation of the Greek will give somewhat a different sense, but one evidently correct. "Think of, that is, regard, or seek after the same thing for each other; that is, what you regard or seek for *yourself*, seek also for your brethren. Do not have divided interests; do not be pursuing different ends and aims; do not indulge counter plans and purposes; and do not seek honours, offices, for yourself, which you do not seek for your brethren; so that you may still regard yourselves as brethren on a level, and aim at the same object." The Syriac has well rendered the passage: "And what you think concerning yourselves, the same also think concerning your brethren; neither think with an elevated or ambitious mind, but accommodate yourselves to those who are of humbler condition." Comp. 1Pe 3:8.

Mind not high things. Greek, Not thinking of high things. That is, not seeking them, or aspiring after them. The connexion shows that the apostle had in view those things which pertained to worldly offices and honours—wealth, and state, and grandeur. They were not to seek them for themselves; nor were they to court the society or the honours of the men in an elevated rank in life. Christians were commonly of the poorer ranks, and they were to seek their companions and joys there, and not to aspire to the society of the great and the rich. Comp. Jer 45:5, "And seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not." Lu 12:15.

Condescend. (*sunapagomenoi*). Literally, "*being led away by*, or *being conducted by*." It does not properly mean to *condescend*, but denotes a *yielding*, or being guided and led in the thoughts, feelings, plans, by humble objects. Margin, "*Be contented with mean things*."

To men of low estate. In the Greek the word here is an adjective, (*tapeinoiv*) and may refer either to *men* or to *things*, either in the masculine or neuter gender. The sentiment is not materially changed, whichever interpretation is adopted. It means, that Christians should seek the objects of interest and companionship not among the great, the rich, and the noble, but among the humble and the obscure. They should do it because their Master did it before them; because his friends are most commonly found among those in humble life; because Christianity prompts to benevolence, rather than to a fondness for pride and display; and because of the influence on the mind produced by an attempt to imitate the great, to seek the society of the rich, and to mingle with the scenes of gaiety, folly, and ambition.

Be not wise, etc. Comp. Isa 5:21, "Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight." **See Barnes "Ro 11:25"**.

The meaning is, Do not trust in the conceit of your own superior skill and understanding, and refuse to hearken to the counsel of others.

In your own conceits. Greek, *Among yourselves*. Syriac, "In your own opinion." The direction here accords with that just given; and means, that they should not be elated with pride above theft brethren, or be headstrong and self-confident. The tendency of religion is to produce a low estimate of our own importance and attainments.

{k} "Be of the same mind" 1Pe 3:8 {l} "not high things" 2Co 8:21. {1} "condescend" or, "be contented with mean things" {m} "Be not wise" Isa 5:21

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Recompense*. Render, give, or return. **See Barnes "Mt 5:39"**.

This is probably one of the most difficult precepts of Christianity; but the law of Christ on the subject is unyielding. It is a solemn demand made on all his followers, and it must be obeyed.

Provide. The word rendered *provide* means, properly, to *think* or *mediate beforehand*. Make it a matter of previous thought, of settled plan, of design. This direction would make it a matter of principle and fixed purpose to do that which is right; and not to leave it to the fluctuations of feeling, or to the influence of excitement. The same direction is given in 2Co 8:21.

Things honest. Literally, things *beautiful*, or *comely*. The expression here does not refer to *property*, or to *provision* made for a family, etc. The connexion requires us to understand it respecting conduct, and especially our *conduct* towards those who injure us. It requires us to evince a spirit

and to manifest a deportment, in such cases, that shall be *lovely* and *comely* in the view of others; such as all men will approve and admire. And the apostle wisely cautions us to *provide* for this, i.e. to think of it beforehand, to make it a matter of fixed principle and purpose, so that we shall not be overtaken and excited by passion. If left to the time when the offence shall be given, we may be excited and off our guard, and may therefore evince an improper temper. All persons who have ever been provoked by injury (and who has not been?) will see the profound wisdom of this caution to *discipline* and *guard* the temper by previous purpose, that we may not evince an improper spirit.

In the sight of all men. Such as all must approve; such that no man can blame; and, therefore, such as shall do no discredit to religion. This expression is taken from Pr 3:4. The passage shows that men may be expected to approve a mild, kind, and patient temper in the reception of injuries; and facts show that this is the case. The Christian spirit is one that the world *must* approve, however little it is disposed to act on it.

{n} "Recompense to man evil" Mt 5:39 1Pe 3:9 {o} "Provide things honest" 2Co 8:21

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *If it be possible*. If it can be done. This expression implies that it could not always be done. Still it should be an object of desire; and we should endeavour to obtain it.

As much as lieth in you. This implies two things:

(1.)We are to do our utmost endeavours to preserve peace, and to appease the anger and malice of others.

(2.) We are not to *begin* or to *originate* a quarrel. So far as *we* are concerned, we are to seek peace. But then it does not always depend on us. Others may oppose and persecute us; they will hate religion, and may slander, revile, and otherwise injure us; or they may commence an assault on our persons or property. For *their* assaults we are not answerable; but we *are* answerable for our conduct towards them; and on no occasion are we to commence a warfare with them. It may not be *possible* to prevent their injuring and opposing us; but it is possible not to begin a contention with them; and *when they* have commenced a strife, to seek peace, and to evince a Christian spirit. This command doubtless extends to everything connected with strife; and means, that we are not to *provoke* them to controversy, or to prolong it. when it is commenced. See Ps 34:14 Mt 5:9,39-41 Heb 12:14.

If all Christians would follow this command, if they would never *provoke* to controversy, if they would injure no man by slander or by unfair dealing, if they would compel none to prosecute them in law by want of punctuality in payment of debts or honesty in business, if they would do nothing to irritate, or to prolong a controversy when it is commenced, it would put an end to no small part of the strife that exists in the world.

{p} "live peaceably" Ps 34:14

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Dearly beloved*. This expression of tenderness was peculiarly appropriate in an exhortation to peace. It reminded them of the affection and friendship which ought to subsist among them as brethren.

Avenge not yourselves. To *avenge* is to take satisfaction for an injury by inflicting punishment on the offender. To take such satisfaction for injuries done to society is lawful and proper for a magistrate, Ro 13:4; and to take satisfaction for injuries done by sin to the universe is the province of God. But the apostle here is addressing private individual Christians. And the command is, to avoid a spirit and purpose of revenge. But this command is not to be so understood that we may not seek for *justice*, in a regular and proper way, before civil tribunals. If our character is assaulted, if we are robbed and plundered, if we are oppressed contrary to the law of the land, religion does not require us to submit to such oppression and injury without seeking our rights in an orderly and regular manner. If it did, it would be to give a premium to iniquity, to countenance wickedness, and require a man, by becoming a Christian, to abandon his rights. Besides, the magistrate is appointed for the praise of those who do well, and to punish evil-doers, 1Pe 2:14. Further, our Lord Jesus did not surrender his rights, (Joh 18:23;) and Paul demanded that he himself should be treated according to the rights and privileges of a Roman citizen, Ac 16:37. The command here *not to avenge ourselves* means, that we are not to take it out of the hands of God, or the hands of the law, and to inflict it ourselves. It is well known that where there are no laws, the business of vengeance is pursued by individuals in a barbarous and unrelenting manner. In a state of savage society, vengeance is *immediately* taken, if possible, or it is pursued for years, and the offended man is never satisfied until he has imbrued his hands in the blood of the offender. Such was eminently the case among the Indians of this country. But Christianity seeks the ascendency of the laws; and in cases which do not admit or require the interference of the laws, in private assaults and quarrels, it demands that we bear injury with patience, and commit our cause unto God. See Le 19:18.

But rather *give place unto wrath*. This expression has been interpreted in a great variety of ways. Its obvious design is to induce us not to attempt to avenge ourselves, but to leave it with God. To *give place*, then, is to leave it for God to come in and execute wrath or vengeance on the enemy. Do not execute wrath; leave it to God; commit all to him; leave yourself and your enemy in his hands, assured that he will vindicate you and punish him.

For it is written. De 32:35.

Vengeance is mine. That is, it belongs to me to inflict revenge. This expression implies that it is *improper* for men to interfere with that which properly belongs to God. When we are angry, and attempt to avenge ourselves, we should remember, therefore, that we are infringing on the prerogatives of the Almighty.

I will repay, etc. This is said in substance, though not in so many words, in De 32:35,36. Its design is to assure us, that those who deserve to be punished, shall be; and that, therefore, the business of revenge may be safely left in the hands of God. Though *we* should not do it, yet, if it ought to be done, it will be done. This assurance will sustain us, not in the *desire* that our enemy shall be punished, but in the belief that God will take the matter in his own hands; that he call administer it better than we can; and that if our enemy *ought* to be punished, he will be. We, therefore, should leave it all with God. That God will vindicate his people, is clearly and abundantly proved in 2Th 1:6-10 Re 6:9-11; De 32:40-43.

{q} "avenge not yourselves" Le 19:18 {r} "Vengeance is mine" De 32:35

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Therefore if thine enemy hunger*, etc. This verse is taken almost literally from Pr 25:21,22. Hunger and thirst here are put for want in general. If thine enemy is needy in any way, do him good, and supply his wants. This is, in spirit, the same as the command of the Lord Jesus, (Mt 5:44,) "Do good to them that hate you," etc.

In so doing. It does not mean that we are to do this *for the sake* of heaping coals of fire on him, but that this will be the result.

Thou shalt heap, etc. Coals of fire are doubtless emblematical of pain. But the idea here is not that in so doing we shall call down Divine vengeance on the man; but the apostle is speaking of the natural effect or result of showing him kindness. Burning coals heaped on a man's head would be expressive of intense agony. So the apostle says that the *effect* of doing good to an enemy would be to produce pain. But the pain will result from shame, remorse of conscience, a conviction of the evil of his conduct, and an apprehension of Divine displeasure that may lead to repentance. To do this, is not only perfectly right, but it is desirable. If a man can be brought to reflection and true repentance, it should be done. In regard to this passage we may remark,

(1.) that the way to promote peace is to do good even to enemies.

(2.) The way to bring a man to repentance is to do him good. On this principle God is acting continually. He does good to all, even to the rebellious; and he designs that his goodness should lead men to repentance, Ro 2:4. Men will resist wrath, anger, and power; but *goodness* they cannot resist; it finds its way to the heart; and the conscience does its work, and the sinner is overwhelmed at the remembrance of his crimes.

(3.) If men would act on the principles of the gospel, the world would soon be at peace. No man would suffer himself many times to be overwhelmed in this way with coals of fire. It is not human nature, bad as it is; and if Christians would meet all unkindness with kindness, all malice with benevolence, and all wrong with right, peace would soon pervade the community, and even opposition to the gospel might soon die away.

{g} "If thine enemy hunger" Pr 25:21,22; Mt 5:44

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Be not overcome of evil*. Be not *vanquished or subdued* by injury received from others. Do not suffer your temper to be excited; your Christian principles to be abandoned; your mild, amiable, kind, and benevolent temper to be ruffled by any opposition or injury which you may experience. Maintain your Christian principles amidst all opposition, and thus show the power of the gospel. They are overcome by evil who suffer theft temper to be excited, who become enraged and revengeful, and who engage in contention with those who injure them, Pr 16:32.

But overcome evil with good. That is, subdue or vanquish evil by doing good to others. Show them the loveliness of a better spirit; the power of kindness and benevolence; the value of an amiable, Christian deportment. So doing, you may disarm them of their rage, and be the means of bringing them to better minds.

This is the noble and grand sentiment of the Christian religion. Nothing like this is to be found in the heathen classics; and nothing like it ever existed among pagan nations. Christianity alone has brought forth this lovely and mighty principle; and one design of it is to advance the welfare of man by promoting peace, harmony, and love. The idea of *overcoming evil with good* never occurred to men until the gospel was preached. It never has been acted on except under the influences of the gospel. On this principle God shows kindness; on this principle the Saviour came, and bled, and died; and on this principle all Christians should act in treating theft enemies, and in bringing a world to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus. If Christians will show benevolence, if they will send forth proofs of love to the ends of the earth, the evils of the world will be overcome. Nor can the nations be converted until Christians act on this great and most important principle of their religion, *on the largest scale possible*, TO "OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD."

{g} "Be not overcome of evil" Pr 16:32

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 13

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 1

ROMANS Chapter 13

Verse 1. *Let every soul*. Every person. In the first seven verses of this chapter, the apostle discusses the subject of the duty which Christians owe to civil government; a subject which is extremely important, and at the same time exceedingly difficult. There is no doubt that he had express reference to the peculiar situation of the Christians at Rome; but the subject was of so much importance that he gives it a *general* bearing, and states the great principles on which all Christians are to act. The circumstances which made this discussion proper and important were the following:

(1.) The Christian religion was designed to extend throughout the world. Yet it contemplated the rearing of a kingdom amid other kingdoms, an empire amid other empires. Christians professed supreme allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ; he was their Lawgiver, their Sovereign, their Judge. It became, therefore, a question of great importance and difficulty, *what kind* of allegiance they were to render to earthly magistrates.

(2.) The kingdoms of the world were then pagan Kingdoms. The laws were made by pagans, and were adapted to the prevalence of heathenism. Those kingdoms had been generally founded in conquest, and blood, and oppression. Many Of the monarchs were blood-stained warriors; were unprincipled men; and were polluted in their private, and oppressive in their public character. Whether Christians were to acknowledge the laws of such kingdoms, and of such men, was a serious question, and one which could not but occur very early. It would occur also very soon, in circumstances that would be very affecting and trying. Soon the hands of these magistrates were to be raised against Christians in the fiery scenes of persecution; and the duty and extent of submission to them became a matter of very serious inquiry.

(3.) Many of the early Christians were composed of Jewish converts. Yet the Jews had long been under Roman oppression, and had borne the foreign yoke with great uneasiness. The whole

heathen magistracy they regarded as founded in a system of idolatry; as opposed to God and his kingdom; and as abomination in his sight. With these feelings they had become christians; and it was natural that their former sentiments should exert an influence on them after their conversion. How far they should submit, if at all, to heathen magistrates, was a question of deep interest; and there was danger that the *Jewish* converts might prove to be disorderly and rebellious citizens of the empire.

(4.) Nor was the case much different with the *Gentile* converts. They would naturally look with abhorrence on the system of idolatry which they had just forsaken. They would regard all as opposed to God. They would denounce the *religion* of the pagans as abomination; and as that religion was interwoven with the civil institutions, there was danger also that they might denounce the government altogether, and be regarded as opposed to the laws of the land.

(5.) There were cases where it was right to resist the laws. This the Christian religion clearly taught; and, in cases like these, it was indispensable for Christians to take a stand. When the laws interfered with the rights of conscience; when they commanded the worship of idols, or any moral wrong, then it was their duty to refuse submission. Yet, in what cases this was to be done, where the line was to be drawn, was a question of deep importance, and one which was not easily settled. It is quite probable, however, that the main danger was, that the early Christians would err in *refusing* submission, even when it was proper, rather than in undue conformity to idolatrous rites and ceremonies.

(6.) In the *changes* which were to occur in human governments, it would be an inquiry of deep interest, what part Christians should take, and what submission they should yield to the various laws which might spring up among the nations. The *principles* on which Christians should act are settled in this chapter. *Be subject*. Submit. The word denotes that kind of submission which soldiers render to their officers. It implies *subordination*; a willingness to occupy our proper place, to yield to the authority of those over us. The word used here does not designate the *extent* of the submission, but merely enjoins it in general. The general principle will be seen to be, that we are to obey in all things which are not contrary to the law of God.

The higher powers. The magistracy; the supreme government. It undoubtedly here refers to the Roman magistracy, and has relation not so much to the *rulers* as to the supreme *authority* which was established as the constitution of government. Comp. Mt 10:1; Mt 28:18.

For. The apostle gives a *reason* why Christians should be subject; and that reason is, that magistrates have received their appointment from God. As Christians, therefore, are to be subject to God, so they are to honour *God* by honouring the arrangement which he has instituted for the government of mankind. Doubtless, he here intends also to repress the vain curiosity and agitation with which men are prone to inquire into the *titles* of their rulers; to guard them from the agitations and conflicts of party, and of contentions to establish a favourite on the throne. It might be, that those in power had not a proper title to their office; that they had secured it, not according to justice, but by oppression; but into that question Christians were not to enter. The government was established, and they were not to seek to overturn it.

No power. No office; no magistracy; no civil rule.

But of God. By God's permission, or appointment; by the arrangements of his providence, by which those in office had obtained their power. God often claims and asserts that *He* sets up one, and puts down another, Ps 75:7 Da 2:21, 4:17,26,34,35.

The powers that be. That is, all the civil magistracies that exist; those who have the rule over nations, by whatever means they may have obtained it. This is equally true at all times, that the powers that exist, exist by the permission and providence of God.

Are ordained of God. This word *ordained* denotes the *ordering or arrangement* which subsists in a *military* company or army. God sets them *in order*, assigns them their location, changes and directs them as he pleases. This does not mean that he *originates* or causes the evil dispositions of rulers, but that he *directs and controls* their appointment. By this we are not to infer,

(1.) that he approves their conduct; nor,

(2,) that what they do is always right; nor,

(3.) that it is our duty *always* to submit to them. Their requirements *may* be opposed to the law of God, and then we are to obey God rather than man, Ac 4:19 5:29. But it is meant that the power is entrusted to them by God; and that he has the authority to remove them when he pleases. If they abuse their power, however, they do it at their peril; and *when* so abused, the obligation to obey them ceases. That this is the case is apparent, further, from the nature of the *question* which would be likely to arise among the early Christians. It *could not be* and *never was* a question, whether they should obey a magistrate when he commanded a thing that was plainly contrary to the law of God. But the question was, whether they should obey a heathen magistrate *at all*. This question the apostle answers in the affirmative, because *God* had made government necessary, and because it was arranged and ordered by his providence. Probably, also, the apostle had another object in view. At the time in which he wrote this epistle, the Roman empire was agitated with civil dissensions. One emperor followed another in rapid succession. The throne was often seized, not by right, but by crime. Different claimants would rise, and their claims would excite controversy. The object of the apostle was to prevent Christians from entering into those disputes, and from taking an active part in a political controversy. Besides, the throne had been usurped by the reigning emperors, and there was a prevalent disposition to rebel against a tyrannical government. Claudius had been put to death by poison; Caligula in a violent manner; Nero was a tyrant; and, amidst these agitations, and crimes, and revolutions, the apostle wished to guard Christians from taking an active part in political affairs.

{v} "For there is no power" Da 2:21 {1} "Ordained" or, "ordered"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Whosoever therefore resisteth*, etc. That is, they who rise up against *government itself*; who seek anarchy and confusion; and who oppose the regular execution of the laws. It is implied, however, that those laws shah not be such as to violate the rights of conscience, or oppose the laws of God.

Resisteth the ordinance of God. What God has ordained, or appointed. This means, clearly, that we are to regard *government* as instituted by God, and as agreeable to his will. *When* established, we are not to be agitated about the *titles* of the rulers; not to enter into angry contentions, or to refuse to submit to them, because we are apprehensive of a defect in their *title*, or because they may have obtained it by oppression. If the government is established, and if its decisions are not a manifest violation of the laws of God, we are to submit to them.

Shall receive to themselves damnation. The word damnation we apply now exclusively to the punishment of hell; to future torments. But this is not necessarily the meaning of the word which is here used, (*krima*). It often simply denotes *punishment*, Ro 3:8; 1Co 11:29 Ga 5:10. In this place the word implies *guilt* or *criminality* in resisting the ordinance of God, and affirms that the man that does it shall be punished. Whether the apostle means that he shall be punished by *God*, or by the *magistrate*, is not quite clear. Probably the *latter*, however, is intended. Comp. Ro 13:4. It is also true, that such resistance shall be attended with the displeasure of God, and be punished by him.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *For rulers*. The apostle here speaks of rulers in general. It may not be *universally* true that they are not a terror to good works, for many of them have *persecuted* the good; but it is generally true that they who are virtuous have nothing to fear from the laws. It is *universally* true, that the design of their appointment by God was not to injure and oppress the good, but to detect and punish the evil. Magistrates, *as such*, are not a terror to good works.

Are not a terror, etc. Are not appointed to *punish the good*. Their appointment is not to inspire terror in those who are virtuous and peaceable citizens. Comp. 1Ti 1:9.

But to the evil. Appointed to detect and punish evil-doers; and therefore an object of terror to them. The design of the apostle here is, evidently, to reconcile Christians to submission to the government, from its *utility*. It is appointed to protect the good against the evil; to restrain oppression, injustice, and fraud; to bring offenders to justice, and thus promote the peace and harmony of the community. As it is designed to promote order and happiness, it should be submitted to; and so long as *this* object is pursued, and obtained, government should receive the countenance and support of Christians. But if it departs from this principle, and becomes the protector of the evil and the oppressor of the good, the case is reversed, and the obligation to its support must cease.

Wilt thou not, etc. If you do evil by resisting the laws, and in any other manner, will you not fear the power of the government? Fear is *one* of the means by which men are restrained from crime in a community. On many minds it operates with much more power than any other motive. And it is one which a magistrate must make use of to restrain men from evil.

Do that which is good. Be a virtuous and peaceable citizen; abstain from crime, and yield obedience to all the just laws of the land.

And thou shalt have praise of the same. Comp. 1Pe 2:14,15. You shall be unmolested and uninjured, and shall receive the commendation of being peaceable and upright citizens. The prospect of that protection, and even of that reputation, is not an unworthy motive to yield obedience to the laws. Every Christian should desire the reputation of being a man seeking the welfare of his country, and the just execution of the laws.

{w} "do that which is good" 1Pe 2:14

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *The minister of God*. The *servant* of God. He is appointed by God to do his will, and to execute his purposes.

To thee. For your benefit.

For good. That is, to protect you in your rights; to vindicate your name, person, or property; and to guard your liberty, and secure to you the rewards of your industry. The magistrate is not appointed directly to *reward* men, but they *practically* furnish a reward by protecting and defending them, and securing to them the interests of justice.

If thou do that, etc. That is, if any citizen should do evil. *Be afraid*. Fear the just vengeance of the laws.

For he beareth not the sword in vain. The *sword* is an instrument of punishment, as well as an emblem of war. Princes were accustomed to wear a sword as an emblem of their authority; and the *sword* was often used for the purpose of *beheading*, or otherwise punishing the guilty. The meaning of the apostle is, that he does not wear this badge of authority as an unmeaning show, but that it will be used to execute the lairs. As this is the design of the power entrusted to him, and as he will *exercise* his authority, men should be influenced *by fear* to keep the law, even if there were no better motive.

A revenger, etc. In Ro 12:19, vengeance is said to belong to God. Yet he executes his vengeance by means of subordinate agents. It belongs to him to take vengeance by direct judgments, by the plague, famine, sickness, or earthquakes; by the appointment of magistrates; or by letting loose the passions of men to prey upon each other. When a magistrate inflicts punishment on the guilty, it is to be regarded as the act of God taking vengeance *by him*; and on this principle only is it right for a judge to condemn a man to death. It is not because one man has by nature any right over the life of another, or because *society* has any right collectively which it has not as individuals; but because *God* gave life, and because he has chosen to take it away when crime is committed, by the appointment of magistrates, and not by coming forth himself visibly to execute the laws. Where *human* laws fail, however, he often takes vengeance into his own hands; and by the plague, or some signal judgments, sweeps the guilty into eternity.

To execute wrath. For an explanation of the word *wrath*, **See Barnes "Ro 1:18"**.

It denotes here *punishment*, or the just execution of the laws. It may be remarked that this verse is an *incidental* proof of the propriety of *capital punishment*. The *sword* was undoubtedly an instrument for this purpose, and the apostle mentions its use without any remark of *disapprobation*. He enjoins subjection to those who *wear the sword*, that is, to those who execute the laws by that; and evidently intends to speak of the magistrate with the sword, or in inflicting capital punishment, as having received the appointment of God. The tendency of society now is *not* to too sanguinary laws. It is rather to forget that God has doomed the murderer to death; and though humanity should be consulted in the execution of the laws, yet there is no humanity in suffering the murderer to live to infest society, and endanger many lives, in the place of his own, which was forfeited to justice. Far better that one murderer should die, than that he should be suffered to live, to imbrue his hands perhaps in the blood of many who are innocent. But the authority of God has settled this question, (Ge 9:5,6) and it is neither right nor safe for a community to disregard his solemn decisions. See Blackstone's Commentaries, vol. iv. p. 8, [9.]

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Wherefore*, (*dio*). The *reasons* why we should be subject, which the apostle had given, were two:

(1.) That government was appointed by God.

(2.) That violation of the laws would necessarily expose to punishment.

Ye must needs be. It is *necessary* (*anagkh*) to be. This is a word stronger than that which implies mere *fitness* or propriety. It means, that it is a matter of high obligation and of necessity to be subject to the civil ruler.

Not only for wrath. Not only on account of the fear of punishment; or the fact that wrath will be executed on evil doers.

For conscience' sake. As a matter of conscience, or *of duty to God*, because *he* has appointed it, and made it necessary and proper. A good citizen yields obedience because it is the will of God; and a Christian makes it a part of his religion to maintain and obey the just laws of the land. See Mt 22:21. Comp. Ec 8:2, "I counsel them to keep the king's commandments, and *that in regard of the oath of God*."

{y} "ye must needs be subject" Ex 8:2

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *For this cause*. Because they are appointed by God; for the sake of conscience, and in order to secure the execution of the laws. As they are appointed by God, the tribute which is needful for their support becomes an act of homage to God, an act performed in obedience to his will, and acceptable to him.

Tribute also. Not only be subject, (Ro 12:5,) but pay what may be necessary to support the government. *Tribute* properly denotes the *tax*, or annual compensation, which was paid by one province or nation to a superior, as the price of protection, or as an acknowledgment of subjection. The Romans made all conquered provinces pay this *tribute*; and it would become a question whether it was *right* to acknowledge this claim, and submit to it. Especially would this question be agitated by the Jews and by Jewish Christians. But on the principle which the apostle had laid down, Ro 12:1,20 it was right to do it, and was demanded by the very purposes of government. In a larger sense, the word *tribute* means any tax paid on land or personal estate for the support of the government.

For they are God's ministers. His servants; or they are appointed by him. As the government is his appointment, we should contribute to its support as a matter of conscience, because we thus do honour to the arrangement of God. It may be observed here, also, that the fact that civil rulers are the ministers of God, invests their character with great sacredness, and should impress upon *them* the duty of seeking to do his will, as well as on others the duty of submitting to them.

Attending continually. As they attend to this, and devote their time and talents to it, it is proper that they should receive a suitable support. It becomes, then, a duty for the people to contribute cheerfully to the necessary expenses of the government. If those taxes should be unjust and

oppressive, yet, like other evils, they are to be submitted to, until a remedy can be found in a proper way.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Render therefore*, etc. This injunction is often repeated in the Bible. **See Barnes "Mt 22:21".**

See also Mt 17:25-27; 1Pe 2:13-17 Pr 24:21. It is one of the most lovely and obvious of the duties of religion. Christianity is not designed to break in upon the proper order of society, but rather to establish and confirm that order. It does not rudely assail existing institutions; but it comes to put them on a proper footing, to diffuse a mild and pure influence over all, and to secure *such* an influence in all the relations of life as shall tend best to promote the happiness of man and the welfare of the community.

Is due. To whom it properly belongs by the law of the land, and according to the ordinance of God. It is represented here as a matter of *debt*, as something which is *due* to the ruler; a fair *compensation* to him for the service which he renders us by devoting his time and talents to advance *our* interests, and the welfare of the community. As taxes are a *debt*, a matter of strict and just obligation, they should be paid as conscientiously and as cheerfully as any other just debts, however contracted.

Custom, (*telov*). The word rendered *tribute* means, as has been remarked, the tax which is paid by a *tributary* prince or dependent people; also the tax imposed on land or real estate. The word here translated *custom* means, properly, the revenue which is collected on *merchandise*, either imported or exported.

Fear. See Ro 13:4. We should stand in awe of those who wear the sword, and who are appointed to execute the laws of the land. As the execution of their office is fitted to excite *fear*, we should render to them that reverence which is appropriate to the execution of their office. It means, a solicitous anxiety lest we do anything to offend them.

Honour. The difference between this and *fear* is, that this rather denotes *reverence, veneration, respect* for their names, offices, rank, etc. The former is the *fear* which arises from the dread of punishment. Religion gives to men all their just titles, recognizes their rank and office, and seeks to promote due subordination in a community. It was no part of the work of our Saviour, or of his apostles, to quarrel with the mere *titles* of men, or to withhold from them the customary tribute of respect and homage. Comp. Ac 24:3 26:25; Lu 1:3 1Pe 2:17.

In this verse there is summed up the duty which is owed to magistrates. It consists in rendering to them proper honour; contributing cheerfully and conscientiously to the necessary expenses of the government, and in yielding obedience to the laws. These are made a part of the duty which we owe to God, and should be considered as enjoined by our religion.

On the subject discussed in these seven verses, the following *principles* seem to be settled by the authority of the Bible, and are now understood:

(1.) That government is essential; and its necessity is recognized by God, and it is arranged by his Providence. God has never been the patron of anarchy and disorder.

(2.) Civil rulers are dependent on God. He has the entire control over them, and can set them up or put them down when he pleases.

(3.) The authority of God is superior to that of civil rulers. They have no right to make enactments which interfere with *his* authority.

(4.) It is not the business of civil rulers to regulate or control religion. That is a distinct department, with which they have no concern, except to protect it.

(5.) The rights of all men are to be preserved. Men are to be allowed to worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience, and to be protected in those rights, provided they do not violate the peace and order of the community

(6.) Civil rulers have no right to persecute Christians, or to attempt to secure conformity to their views by force. The conscience can not be compelled; and in the affairs of religion man must be free. In view of this subject we may remark,

(1,) that the doctrines respecting the rights of civil rulers, and the line which is to be drawn between their powers and the rights of conscience, have been slow to be understood. The struggle has been long; and a thousand persecutions have shown the anxiety of the magistrate to rule the conscience, and to control religion. In pagan countries it has been conceded that the civil ruler had a right to control the *religion* of the people: church and state there have been one. The same thing was attempted under Christianity. The magistrate still claimed this right, and attempted to enforce it. Christianity resisted the claim, and asserted the independent and original rights of conscience. A conflict ensued, of course, and the magistrate resorted to persecutions, to *subdue* by force the claims of the new religion, and the rights of conscience. Hence the ten fiery and bloody persecutions of the primitive church. The blood of the early Christians flowed like water; thousands and tens of thousands went to the stake, until Christianity triumphed, and the right of religion to a free exercise was acknowledged throughout the empire.

(2.) It is matter of devout thanksgiving that the subject is now settled, and the principle is now understood. In our own land there exists the happy and bright illustration of the true principle on this great subject. The rights of conscience are regarded, and the laws peacefully obeyed. The civil ruler understands his province; and Christians yield a cheerful and cordial obedience to the laws. The church and state move on in their own spheres, united only in the purpose to make men happy and good; and divided only as they relate to different departments; and contemplate, the one, the rights of civil society—the other, the interests

of eternity. Here, every man worships God according to his own views of duty; and, at the same time, here is rendered the most cordial and peaceful obedience to the laws of the land. Thanks should be rendered without ceasing to the God of our fathers for the wondrous train of events by which this contest has been conducted to its issue; and for the clear and full understanding which we now have of the different departments pertaining to the church and the state.

{y} "all their dues" Mt 22:21

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Owe no man any thing*. Be not in *debt* to any one. In the previous verse the apostle had been discoursing of the duty which we owe to magistrates, he had particularly enjoined on Christians to pay to *them* their just dues. From this command to discharge fully this obligation, the transition was natural to the subject of debts *in general*, and to an injunction not to be indebted to *any one*. This law is enjoined in this place,

(1.) because it is a part of our duty as good citizens; and

(2.) because it is a part of that law which teaches us to love our neighbour, and to *do no injury to him*, Ro 13:10. The interpretation of this command is to be taken with this limitation, that we are not to be indebted to him so as to *injure* him, or to work *ill* to him.

This rule, together with the other rules of Christianity, would propose a remedy for all the evils of bad debts in the following manner:

(1.) It would teach men to be *industrious*, and this would commonly prevent the *necessity* of contracting debts.

(2.) It would make them *frugal, economical, and humble* in their views and manner of life.

(3.) It would teach them to bring up their families in habits of industry. The Bible often enjoins that. **See Barnes** "Ro 12:11, comp. Php 4:8 Pr 24:30-34; 1Th 4:11 2Th 3:10; Eph 4:28;

(4.) Religion would produce sober, chastened views of the end of life, of the great design of living; and would take off the affections from the splendour, gaiety, and extravagances which lead often to the contraction of debts, 1Th 5:6,8; 1Pe 1:13 4:7; Tit 2:12 1Pe 3:3,5; 1Ti 2:9.

(5.) Religion would put a period to the *vices* and unlawful desires which now prompt men to contract debts.

(6.) It would make them *honest* in paying them. It would make them conscientious, prompt, friends of truth, and disposed to keep their promises.

But to love one another. Love is a debt which can, never be discharged. We should feel that we *owe* this to all men; and though by acts of kindness we may be constantly discharging it, yet we should feel that it can *never* be fully met while there is opportunity to do good.

For he that loveth, etc. In what way this is done is stated in Ro 13:10. The law in relation to our neighbour is there said to be simply that we do no *ill* to him. Love to him would prompt to no injury. It would seek to do him good, and would thus fulfil all the purposes of justice and truth which we owe to him. In order to illustrate this, the apostle, in the next verse, runs over the laws

of the ten commandments in relation to our neighbour, and shows that all those laws proceed on the principle that we are to *love* him, and that love would prompt to them all.

{z} "for he that loveth" Jas 2:8

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *For this*. *This* which follows is the sum of the laws. This is to regulate us in our conduct towards our neighbour. The word *this* here stands opposed to "that" in Ro 13:11. *This* law of love would prompt us to seek our neighbour's good; *that* fact, that our salvation is near, would prompt us to be active and faithful in the discharge of all the duties we owe to him.

Thou shalt not commit adultery. All the commands which follow are designed as an illustration of the duty of loving our neighbour. See these commands considered in the Notes on Mt 19:18,19. The apostle has not enumerated *all* the commands of the second table. He has shown generally what they required. The command to honour our parents he has omitted. The reason might have been, that it was not so immediately to his purpose when discoursing of love to a *neighbor* —a word which does not immediately suggest the idea of near relatives. The expression, "Thou shalt not bear false witness," is rejected by the best critics as of doubtful authority, but it does not materially affect the spirit of the passage. It is wanting in many Mss., and in the Syriac version.

If there be *any other commandment*. The law respecting parents; or if there be any duty which does not seem to be specified by these laws, it is implied in the command to love our neighbour as ourselves.

It is briefly comprehended. Greek, It may be reduced to *this head*; or it is summed up in this.

In this saying. This word, or command.

Thou shalt love, etc. This is found in Le 19:18. **See Barnes "Mt 19:19"**.

If this command were fulfilled, it would prevent all fraud, injustice, oppression, falsehood, adultery, murder, theft, and covetousness. It is the same as our Saviour's golden rule. And if every man would do to others as he would wish them to do to him, all the design of the law would be at once fulfilled.

{a} "Thou shalt not commit adultery" Ex 20:13 {b} "Namely, Thou shalt love" Le 19:18 Mt 22:39,40

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Love worketh no ill*, etc. Love would seek to do him good; of course it would prevent all dishonesty and crime towards others. It would prompt to justice, truth, and benevolence. If this law were engraven on every man's heart, and practised in his life, what a change would it immediately produce in society. If all men would at once *abandon* that which is fitted to *work ill* to others, what an influence would it have on the business and commercial affairs of men. How many plans of fraud and dishonesty would it at once arrest! How many schemes would it crush! It would silence the voice of the slanderer; it would stay the plans of the seducer and the adulterer; it would put an

end to cheating, and fraud, and all schemes of dishonest gain. The gambler desires the property of his neighbour without any compensation, and thus works *ill* to him. The dealer in *lotteries* desires property for which he has never toiled, and which must be obtained at the expense and loss of others. And there are many *employments* all whose tendency is to work *ill* to a neighbour. This is pre-eminently true of the traffic *in ardent spirits*. It cannot do him good, and the almost uniform result is to deprive him of his property, health, reputation, peace, and domestic comfort. He that sells his neighbour liquid fire, knowing what *must* be the result of it, is not pursuing a business which works no *ill* to him; and love to that neighbour would prompt him to abandon the traffic. See Hab 2:15, "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness."

Therefore, etc. *Because* love does no harm to another, it is therefore the fulfilling of the law: implying that all that the law requires is to love others.

Is the fulfilling. Is the *completion*, or meets the requirements of the law. The law of God on this *head*, or in regard to our duty to our neighbour, requires us to do justice towards him, to observe truth, etc. *All* this will be met by *love*; and if men truly *loved* others, all the demands of the law would be satisfied.

Of the law. Of the law of Moses, but particularly the ten commandments.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *And that*. The word "that" in this place, is connected in signification with the word "this" in Ro 13:9. The meaning may be thus expressed: All the requirements of the law towards our neighbour may be met by two things: one is Ro 13:9,10 by love; the other is Ro 13:11-14 by remembering that we are near to eternity; keeping a deep sense of *this* truth before the mind. This will prompt to a life of honesty, truth, and peace, and contentment, Ro 13:13. The doctrine in these verses Ro 13:11-14 therefore is, *that a deep conviction of the nearness of eternity will prompt to an upright life in the intercourse of man with man*.

Knowing the time. Taking a proper *estimate* of the time. Taking just views of the shortness and the value of time; of the design for which it was given, and of the fact that it is, in regard to us, rapidly coming to a close. And still further considering, that the time in which you live is the time of the gospel, a period of light and truth, when you are particularly called on to lead holy lives, and thus to do justly to all. The *previous* time had been a period of ignorance and darkness, when oppression, and falsehood, and sin abounded. This, the time of the *gospel*, when God had *made known* to men his will that they should be pure.

High time. Greek, "the hour."

To awake, etc. This is a beautiful figure. The dawn of day, the approaching light of the morning, is the time to arouse from slumber. In the darkness of night men sleep. So says the apostle. The world has been sunk in the *night* of heathenism and sin. At that time it was to be expected that they would sleep the sleep of spiritual death. But now the morning light of the gospel dawns. The Sun of righteousness has arisen. It is *time*, therefore, for men to cast off the deeds of darkness, and rise to life, and purity, and action. Comp. Ac 17:30,31. The same idea is beautifully presented in 1Th 5:5-8. The meaning is, "Hitherto we have walked in darkness and in sin. Now we walk in the light

of the gospel. We know our duty. We are sure that the God of light is around us, and is a witness of all we do. We are going soon to meet him, and it becomes us to rouse, and to do those deeds, and those only, which will bear the bright shining of the light of truth, and the scrutiny of him who is 'light, and in whom is no darkness at all,'" 1Jo 1:5.

Sleep. Inactivity; insensibility to the doctrines and duties of religion. Men, by nature, are active only in deeds of wickedness. In regard to religion they are insensible, and the slumbers of night are on their eyelids. Sleep is "the kinsman of death," and it is the emblem of the insensibility and stupidity of sinners. The deeper the ignorance and sin, the greater is this insensibility to spiritual things: and to the duties which we owe to God and man.

For now is our salvation, The word *salvation* has been here variously interpreted. Some suppose that by it the apostle refers to the personal reign of Christ on the earth. (Tholuck, and the Germans generally.) Others suppose it refers to deliverance from *persecutions*. Others, to increased *light* and knowledge of the gospel, so that they could more dearly discern their duty than when they became believers. (*Rosenmuller*.) It probably, however, has its usual meaning here, denoting that deliverance from sin and danger which awaits Christians in heaven; and is thus equivalent to the expression, "You are advancing nearer to heaven. You are hastening to the world of glory. Daily we are approaching the kingdom of light; and in prospect of that state, we ought to lay aside every sin, and live more and more in preparation for a world of light and glory."

Than when we believed. Than when we *began* to believe. Every day brings us nearer to a world of perfect light.

{c} "awake out of sleep" 1Th 4:5-8

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *The night*. The word *night*, in the New Testament, is used to denote *night* literally, (Mt 2:14, etc.;) the starry heavens, (Re 8:12;) and then it denotes a state of *ignorance* and *crime*, and is synonymous with the word darkness, as such deeds are committed commonly in the night, 1Th 5:5. In this place it seems to denote our present imperfect and obscure condition in this world as contrasted with the pure light of heaven. The night, the time of comparative security and sin in which we live even under the gospel, is far gone in relation to us, and the pure splendours of heaven are at hand.

Is far spent. Literally, "is cut off." It is becoming *short*; it is hastening to a close.

The day. The full splendours and glory of redemption in heaven. Heaven is often thus represented as a place of pure and splendid day, Re 21:23,25, 22:5.

The times of the *gospel* are represented as times of *light*, (Isa 60:1,2,19,20, etc.;) but the reference here seems to be rather to the still brighter glory and splendour of heaven, as the place of pure, unclouded, and eternal day.

Is at hand. Is near; or is drawing near. This is true respecting all Christians. The day is near, or the time when they shall be admitted to heaven is not remote. This is the uniform representation of the New Testament, Heb 10:25 1Pe 4:7; Jas 5:8 Re 22:20; 1Th 5:2-6 Php 4:5.

That the apostle did not mean, however, that the end of the world was near, or that the day of judgment would come soon, is clear from his own explanations. See 1Th 5:2-6. Comp. 2Th 2.

Let us therefore. As we are about to enter on the glories of that eternal day, we should be pure and holy. The *expectation* of it will teach us to *seek* purity; and a pure life alone will fit us to enter there, Heb 12:14.

Cast off. Lay aside, or put away.

The works of darkness. Dark, wicked deeds, such as are specified in the next verse. They are called *works of darkness*, because darkness in the Scriptures is an emblem of crime, as well as of ignorance, and because such deeds are commonly committed in the night. 1Th 5:7, "They that be drunken, are drunken *in the night*." Comp. Joh 3:20 Eph 5:11-13.

Let us put on. Let us clothe ourselves with.

The armour of light. The word *armour*—(*opla*)—properly means *arms*, or instruments of war, including the helmet, sword, shield, etc., Eph 6:11-17. It is used in the New Testament to denote the *aids* which the Christian has, or the *means of defence* in his warfare, where he is represented as a soldier contending with his foes, and includes truth, righteousness, faith, hope, etc., as the instruments by which he is to gain his victories. In 2Co 6:7, it is called "the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left." It is called armour of *light*, because it is not to accomplish any deeds of darkness or of crime; it is appropriate to one who is pure, and who is seeking a pure and noble object. Christians are represented as the *children of light*, 1Th 5:5. Note, Lu 16:8. By the armour of light, therefore, the apostle means those graces which stand opposed to the deeds of darkness, (Ro 13:13;) those graces of faith, hope, humility, etc., which shall be appropriate to those who are the children of the day, and which shall be their defence in their struggles with their spiritual foes. See the description in full in Eph 6:11-17.

{d} "therefore cast off" Eph 5:11 {e} "put on the armour of light" Eph 6:13

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Let us walk*. To walk is an expression denoting *to live*; let us *live*, or *conduct*, etc.

Honestly. The word here used means, rather, in a *decent* or *becoming* manner; in a manner *appropriate* to those who are the children of light.

As in the day. As if all our actions were seen and known. Men by day, or in open light, live decently; their foul and wicked deeds are done in the night. The apostle exhorts Christians to live as if all their conduct were seen, and they had nothing which they wished to conceal.

In rioting. Revelling; denoting the licentious conduct, the noisy and obstreperous mirth, the scenes of disorder and sensuality, which attend luxurious living.

Drunkenness. Rioting and drunkenness constitute the *first* class of sins from which he would keep them. It is scarcely necessary to add, that these were common crimes among the heathen.

In chambering. "Lewd, immodest behaviour." (Webster.) The Greek word includes illicit indulgences of all kinds, adultery, etc. The words chambering and wantonness constitute the *second* class of crimes from which the apostle exhorts Christians to abstain. That these were common crimes among the heathen it is not necessary to say. See Barnes on Romans chapter 1; also **See Barnes "Eph 5:12"**.

It is not possible, nor would it be proper, to describe the scenes of licentious indulgence of which all pagans are guilty. As Christians were to be a peculiar people, therefore, the apostle enjoins on them purity and holiness of life.

Not in strife. Strife and envying are the *third* class of sins from which the apostle exhorts them. The word *strife* means *contention, disputes, litigations*. The exhortation is, that they should live in peace.

Envying. Greek, Zeal. It denotes any intense, vehement, *fervid* passion. It is not improperly rendered here by envying. These vices are properly introduced in connexion with the others. They usually accompany each other. Quarrels and contentions come out of scenes of drunkenness and debauchery. But for such scenes there would be little contention, and the world would be comparatively at peace.

{e} "walk honestly" or, "decently" {f} "not in rioting" Php 4:8 1Pe 2:12 {g} "and drunkenness" 1Pe 4:3 {h} "chambering and wantonness" 1Co 6:9,10

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *But put ye on*. Comp. Ga 3:27. The word rendered "put ye on" is the same as used in Ro 13:12, and is commonly employed in references to *clothing* or *apparel*. The phrase *to put on* a person, which seems a harsh expression in our language, was one not unfrequently used by Greek writers; and means, to imbibe his principles, to imitate his example, to copy his spirit, to become like him. Thus in Dionysius Halicarnassus the expression occurs, "having *put on* or clothed themselves with Tarquin;" i.e. they imitated the example and morals of Tarquin. So Lucian says, "having *put on* Pythagoras;" having received him as a teacher and guide. So the Greek writers speak of putting on Plato, Socrates, etc., meaning to take them as instructers, to follow them as disciples. (See *Schleusner*.) Thus, to put on the Lord Jesus means, to take him as a pattern and guide, to imitate his example, to obey his precepts, to become like him, etc. In all respects the Lord Jesus was unlike what had been specified in the previous verse. He was temperate, chaste, pure, peaceable, and meek; and to *put him on* was to imitate him in these respects. Heb 4:15 7:26; 1Pe 2:22 Isa 53:9; 1Jo 3:5.

And make not provision. The word *provision* here is that which is used to denote *provident care*, or preparation for future wants. It means, that we should not make it an object to gratify our lusts, or study to do this by laying up anything beforehand with reference to this design.

For the flesh. The word *flesh* is used here evidently to denote the corrupt propensities of the body, or those which he had specified in Ro 13:13.

To fulfil the lusts thereof. With reference to its corrupt desires. The gratification of the flesh was the main object among the Romans. Living in luxury and licentiousness, they made it their great object of study to multiply and prolong the means of licentious indulgence. In respect to this, Christians were to be a separate people, and to show that they were influenced by a higher and purer desire than this grovelling propensity to minister to sensual gratification. It is right, it is a Christian duty, to labour to make provision for all the *real* wants of life. But the real wants are few; and, with a heart disposed to be pure and temperate, the necessary wants of life are easily satisfied, and the mind may be devoted to higher and purer purposes.

{i} "put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ" Ga 3:27 {k} "not provision for the flesh" Ga 5:16

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 14

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 1

ROMANS Chapter 14

THE fourteenth chapter is designed to settle some difficult and delicate questions that could not but arise between the Jews and Gentiles respecting food and the observance of particular days, rites, etc. The *occasions* of these questions were these: The converts to Christianity were from both Jews and Gentiles. There were many Jews in Rome; and it is probable that no small part of the church was composed of them. The New Testament everywhere shows that they were disposed to bind the Gentile converts to their own customs, and to insist on the observance of the peculiar laws of Moses. See Ac 15:1,2, etc.; Ga 2:3,4. The *subjects* on which questions of this kind would be agitated, were circumcision, days of fasting, the distinction of meats, etc. A part of these only are discussed in this chapter. The views of the apostle in regard to *circumcision* had been stated in chapters 3 and 4. In *this* chapter he notices the disputes which would be likely to arise on the following subjects:

(1.) The use of *meat*—evidently referring to the question whether it was lawful to eat the meat that was offered in sacrifice to idols, Ro 14:2.

(2.) The distinctions and observances of the days of Jewish fastings, etc., Ro 14:5,6.

(3.) The laws observed by the Jews in relation to animals as *clean* or *unclean*, Ro 14:14. It is probable that these are mere *specimens* adduced by the apostle to settle *principles* of conduct in regard to the Gentiles, and to show to each party how they ought to act in *all* such questions.

The apostle's design here is to allay all these contentions by producing peace, kindness, charity. This he does by the following considerations, viz.:

(1.) That we have no right to *judge* another man in this case, for he is the servant of God, Ro 14:3,4.

(2.) That whatever course is taken in these questions, it is done conscientiously, and with a desire to glorify God. In such a case there should be kindness and charity, Ro 14:6, etc.

(3.) That we must stand at the judgment-seat of Christ, and give an account *there*; and that *we*, therefore, should not usurp the office of judging, Ro 14:10-13.

(4.) That there is really nothing unclean of itself, Ro 14:14.

(5.) That religion consisted in more important matters than *such* questions, Ro 14:17,18.

(6.) That we should follow after the things of peace, etc., Ro 14:19-23. The principles of this chapter are applicable to all *similar* cases of difference of opinion about rites and ceremonies, and unessential doctrines of religion; and we shall see that if they were honestly applied, they would settle no small part of the controversies in the religious world.

Verse 1. *Him that is weak*. The design here is to induce Christians to receive to their fellowship those who had scruples about the propriety of certain things, or that might have peculiar prejudices

and feelings as the result of education or former habits of belief. The apostle, therefore, begins by admitting that such an one may be *weak*, i.e., not fully established, or not with so clear and enlarged views about Christian liberty as others might have.

In the faith. In believing. This does not refer to *saving faith* in Christ, for he might have that; but to belief in regard *to the things which the apostle specifies*, or which would come into controversy. Young converts have often a peculiar delicacy or sensitiveness about the lawfulness of many things in relation to which older Christians may be more fully established. To produce peace, there must be kindness, tenderness, and faithful teaching; not denunciation, or harshness, on one side or the other.

Receive ye. Admit to your society or fellowship; receive him kindly, not meet with a cold and harsh repulse. Comp. Ro 15:7.

Not to doubtful disputations. The plain meaning of this is, "Do not admit him to your society for the purpose of debating the matter in an angry and harsh manner; of repelling him by denunciation; and thus, *by the natural reaction of such a course*, confirming him in his doubts." Or, "do not deal with him in such a manner as shall have a tendency to increase his scruples about meats, days, etc." (*Stuart*.) The *leading* idea here—which all Christians should remember—is, that a harsh and angry denunciation of a man in relation to things not morally wrong, but where he may have honest scruples, will only tend to confirm him more and more in his doubts. To denounce and abuse him will be to confirm him. To receive him affectionately, to admit him to fellowship with us, to talk freely and kindly with him, to do him good, will have a far greater tendency to overcome his scruples. In questions which now occur about modes of *dress*, about *measures* and means of promoting revivals, and about rites and ceremonies, this is by far the wisest course, if we wish to overcome the scruples of a brother, and to induce him to think as we do.—Greek, "Unto doubts or fluctuations of opinions or reasonings." Various senses have been given to the words, but the above probably expresses the true meaning.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 2

2. *For one believeth*. This was the case with the Gentiles in general, who had none of the scruples of the Jew about the propriety of eating certain kinds of meat. Many of the converts who had been Jews might also have had the same view—as the apostle Paul evidently had—while the great mass of Jewish converts might have cherished these scruples.

May eat all things. That is, he will not be restrained by any scruples about the lawfulness of certain meats, etc.

Another, who is weak. There is reference here, doubtless, to the Jewish convert. The apostle admits that he was *weak*, i.e., not fully established in the views of Christian liberty. The question with the Jew doubtless was, whether it was lawful to eat the meat which was offered in sacrifice to idols. In those sacrifices a part only of the animal was offered, and the remainder was eaten by the worshippers, or offered for sale in the market like other meat. It became an inquiry whether it was lawful to eat this meat; and the question in the mind of a Jew would arise from the express command of his law, Ex 34:15. This question the apostle discussed and settled in 1Co 10:20-32, which see. In that place the general principle is laid down, that it was lawful to partake of that meat

as a man would of any other, *unless it was expressly pointed out to him as having been sacrificed to idols, and unless his partaking of it would be considered as countenancing the idolaters in their worship*, 1Co 10:28. But with this principle many Jewish converts might not have been acquainted; or what is quite as probable, they might not have been disposed to admit its propriety.

Eateth herbs. Herbs or *vegetables* only; does not partake of meat at all, for *fear* of eating that, inadvertently, which had been offered to idols. The Romans abounded in sacrifices to idols; and it would not be easy to be certain that meat which was offered in the market, or on the table of a friend, had *not* been offered in this manner. To avoid the possibility of partaking of it, even ignorantly, they chose to eat no meat at all. The scruples of the Jews on the subject might have arisen in part from the fact, that sins of *ignorance* among them subjected them to certain penalties, Le 4:2,3, etc.; Le 5:15 Nu 15:24,27-29.

Josephus says, (Life, % 3,) that in his time there were certain priests of his acquaintance who "supported themselves with figs and nuts." These priests had been sent to Rome to be tried on some charge before Caesar; and it is probable that they abstained from meat because it might have been offered to idols. It is expressly declared of Daniel when in Babylon, that he lived on pulse and water, that he might not "defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank," Da 1:8-16.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Let not him that eateth*. That is, he who has no scruples about eating *meat*, etc., who is not restrained by the law of the Jews respecting the clean and unclean, or by the fact that meat *may* have been offered to idols.

Despise him. Hold him in contempt, as being unnecessarily scrupulous, etc. The word *despise* here is happily chosen. The Gentile would be very likely to *despise* the Jew as being restrained by foolish scruples and mere distinctions in matters of no importance.

Him that eateth not. Him that is restrained by scruples of conscience, and that will eat only *vegetables*, Ro 14:2. The reference here is doubtless to the Jew.

Judge him. To *judge* here has the force of *condemn*. This word also is very happily chosen. The Jew would not be so likely to *despise* the Gentile for what he did as to *judge* or condemn him. He would deem it too serious a matter for contempt. He would regard it as a violation of the law of God, and would be likely to assume the right of *judging* his brother, and pronouncing him guilty. The apostle here has happily met the whole case in all disputes about rites, and dress, and scruples in religious matters that are not essential. One party commonly *despises* the other as being needlessly and foolishly scrupulous; and the other makes it a matter of *conscience*, too serious for ridicule and contempt; and a matter, to neglect which is, in their view, deserving of condemnation. The true direction to be given in such a case is, *to the one party*, not to treat the scruples of the other with derision and contempt, but with tenderness and indulgence. Let him have his way in it. If he can be *reasoned* out of it, it is well; but to attempt to *laugh* him out of it is unkind, and will tend only to confirm him in his views. And *to the other party* it should be said, they have no right to judge or condemn another. If I cannot see that the Bible requires a particular cut to my coat, or makes it my duty to observe a particular festival, he has no right to judge me harshly, or to suppose that I

am to be rejected and condemned for it. He has a right to *his* opinion; and while I do not despise him, he has no right to *judge* me. This is the foundation of true charity; and if this simple rule had been followed, how much strife, and even bloodshed, would it have spared in the church. Most of the contentions among Christians have been on subjects of this nature. Agreeing substantially in the *doctrines* of the Bible, they have been split up into sects on subjects just about as important as those which the apostle discusses in this chapter.

For God hath received him. This is the same word that is translated "receive" in Ro 14:1. It means here, that God hath received him kindly; or has acknowledged him as his own friend; or he is a true Christian. These scruples, on the one side or the other, are not inconsistent with true piety; and as *God* has acknowledged him as *his*, not-withstanding his opinions on these subjects, so we also ought to recognise him as a Christian brother. Other denominations, though they may differ from us on some subjects, may give evidence that they are recognised by God as his, and where there is this evidence, we should neither despise nor judge them.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Who art thou*, etc. That is, who gave you this right to sit in judgment on others? Comp. Lu 12:14. There is reference here particularly to the *Jew*, who on account of his ancient privileges, and because he had the law of God, would assume the prerogative of *judging* in the case, and insist on conformity to his own views. See Ac 15. The doctrine of this epistle is, uniformly, that the Jew had no such privilege, but that in regard to Salvation he was on the same level with the Gentile.

That judgest, etc. Comp. Jas 4:12. This is a principle of common sense and common propriety. It is not ours to sit in judgment on the servant of another man. He has the control over him; and if *he* chooses to forbid his doing anything, or to allow him to do anything, it pertains to *his* affairs, not ours. To attempt to control him, is to intermeddle improperly, and to become a "busy-body in other men's matters," 1Pe 4:15. Thus Christians are the servants of God; they are answerable to him; and *we* have no right to usurp his place, and to act as if we were "lords over his heritage," 1Pe 5:3.

To his own master. The servant is responsible to his master only. So it is with the Christian in regard to God.

He standeth or falleth. He shall be approved or condemned. If his conduct is such as pleases his master, he shall be approved; if not, he will be condemned.

Yea, he shall be holden up. This is spoken of the Christian only. In relation to the servant, he might stand or fall, he might be approved or condemned. The master had no power to keep him in a way of obedience, except by the hope of reward, or the fear of punishment. But it was not so in regard to the Christian. The Jew, who was disposed to *condemn* the Gentile, might say that he admitted the general principle which the apostle had stated about the servant; that it was just what he was saying, that he might *fall*, and be condemned. But no, says the apostle, this does not follow in relation to the Christian. He shall not fall. God has power to make him stand; to hold him; to keep him from error, and from condemnation, and *he shall be holden up*.

He shall not be suffered to fall into condemnation, for it is the purpose of God to keep him. Comp. Ps 1:3. This is one of the incidental but striking evidences that the apostle believed that all Christians should be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Is able. See Joh 10:29. Though a master cannot exert such an influence over a servant as to *secure* his obedience, yet *God* has this power over his people, and will preserve them in a path of obedience.

{l} "Who art thou that" Jas 4:12 {m} "God is able" Isa 40:29

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *One man esteemeth*. Gr., *judgeth*, (*krinei*). The word is here properly translated *esteemeth*. Comp. Ac 13:46 16:15. The word originally has the idea of *separating*, and then *discerning*, in the act of judging. The expression means, that one would set a higher value on one day than on another, or would regard it as more sacred than others. This was the case with the *Jews* uniformly, who regarded the days of their festivals, and fasts, and Sabbaths as peculiarly sacred, and who would retain, to no inconsiderable degree, their former views, even after they became converted to Christianity.

Another esteemeth. That is, the *Gentile* Christian. Not having been brought up amidst the Jewish customs, and not having imbibed their opinions and prejudices, they would not regard these days as having any special sacredness. The appointment of those days had a special reference *to the Jews*. They were designed to keep them as a separate people, and to prepare the nation for the *reality*, of which their rites were but the shadow. When the Messiah came, the passover, the feast of tabernacles, and the other peculiar festivals of the Jews, of course vanished; and it is perfectly clear that the apostles never intended to inculcate their observance on the Gentile converts. See this subject discussed in the second chapter of the epistle to the Galatians.

Every day alike. The word "alike" is not in the original, and it may convey an idea which the apostle did not design. The passage means, that he regards *every day* as consecrated to the Lord, Ro 14:6. The question has been agitated, whether the apostle intends in this to include the Christian Sabbath. Does he mean to say that it is a matter of *indifference* whether this day be observed, or whether it be devoted to ordinary business or amusements? This is a very important question in regard to the Lord's day. That the apostle did *not* mean to say that it was a matter of indifference whether it should be kept as holy, or devoted to business or amusement, is plain from the following considerations:

(1.) The discussion had reference only to the peculiar customs of the *Jews*, to the rites and practices which *they* would attempt to impose on the Gentiles, and not to any questions which might arise among Christians *as Christians*. The inquiry pertained to *meats*, and festival observances among the Jews, and to their scruples about partaking of the food offered to idols, etc.; and there is no more propriety in supposing that the subject of the Lord's day is introduced here than that he advances principles respecting *baptism* and *the Lord's Supper*.

(2.) The *Lord's day* was doubtless observed by all Christians, whether converted from Jews or Gentiles. See 1Co 16:2 Ac 20:7 Re 1:10. **See Barnes "Joh 20:26".**

The propriety of observing *that day* does not appear to have been a matter of controversy. The only inquiry was, whether it was proper *to add* to that the observance of the Jewish Sabbaths, and days of festivals and fasts.

(3.) It is expressly said, that those who did not regard the day regarded it as not to God, or to honour God, Ro 4:6. They did it as a matter of respect to him and his institutions, to promote his glory, and to advance his kingdom. Was this ever done by those who disregard the Christian Sabbath? Is their design ever to promote his honour, and to advance in the knowledge of him, by *neglecting* his holy day? Who knows not that the Christian Sabbath has *never* been neglected or profaned by any design to glorify the Lord Jesus, or to promote his kingdom? It is for purposes of business, gain, war, amusement, dissipation, visiting, crime. Let the heart be filled with a sincere desire to *honour the Lord Jesus*, and the Christian Sabbath will be reverenced, and devoted to the purposes of piety. And if any man is disposed to plead *this passage* as an excuse for violating the Sabbath, and devoting it to pleasure or gain, let him quote it, *just as it is*, i. e., let *him neglect the from a conscientious desire to honour Jesus Christ*. Unless *this* is his motive, the passage cannot avail him. But this motive never yet influenced a *Sabbath-breaker*.

Let every man, etc. That is, subjects of this kind are not to be pressed as matters of conscience. Every man is to examine them for himself, and act accordingly. This direction pertains to the subject under discussion, and not to any other. It does not refer to subjects that were *morally* wrong, but to ceremonial observances. If the *Jew* esteemed it wrong to eat meat, he was to abstain from it; if the Gentile esteemed it right, he was to act accordingly. The word "*be fully persuaded*" denotes the highest conviction—not a matter of opinion or prejudice, but a matter on which the mind is made up by examination. See Ro 4:21 2Ti 4:5. This is the general principle on which Christians are called to act in relation to festival days and fasts in the church. If some Christians deem them to be for edification, and suppose that their piety will be promoted by observing the days which commemorate the birth, and death, and temptations of the Lord Jesus, they are not to be reproached or opposed in their celebration. Nor are they to attempt to impose them on others as a matter of conscience, or to reproach others because they do not observe them.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *He that regardeth*. Greek, *Thinketh of*; or pays attention to; that is, he that *observes* it as a festival, or as holy time.

The day. Any of the days under discussion; the days that the Jews kept as religious occasions.

Regardeth it unto the Lord. Regards it as *holy*, or as set apart to the service of God. He believes that he is *required* by God to keep it, i.e., that the laws of Moses in regard to such days are binding on him.

He that regardeth not the day. Or who does not observe such distinctions of days as are demanded in the laws of Moses.

To the Lord, etc. That is, he does not believe that God requires such an observance.

He that eateth. The Gentile Christian, who freely eats all kinds of meat, Ro 14:2.

Eateth to the Lord. Because he believes that God does not forbid it; and because he desires, in doing it, to glorify God, 1Co 10:31. To *eat to the Lord*, in this case, is to do it believing that such

is his will. In all other cases, it is to do it feeling that we receive our food from him; rendering thanks for his goodness, and desirous of being strengthened that we may do his commands.

He giveth God thanks. This is an incidental proof that it is our duty to give God thanks at our meals for our food. It shows that it was the *practice* of the early Christians, and has the commendation of the apostle. It was also uniformly done by the Jews, and by the Lord Jesus, Mt 14:19 26:26; Mr 6:41 14:22; Lu 9:16 24:30.

To the Lord he eateth not. He abstains from eating because he believes that God requires him to do it, and with a desire to obey and honour him.

And giveth God thanks. That is, the Jew thanked God for the law, and for the favour he had bestowed on him in giving him more light than he had the Gentiles. For this privilege they valued themselves highly, and this feeling, no doubt, the converted Jews would continue to retain; deeming themselves as specially favoured in having a *peculiar* acquaintance with the law of God.

{1} "regardeth" or "observeth"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *For none of us*, etc. Whether by nature Jews or Gentiles. In the great principles of religion we are now united. Where there was evidence of a sincere desire to do the will of God there should be charitable feeling, though there was difference of opinion and judgment in many smaller matters. The meaning of the expression is, that no Christian lives to gratify his own inclinations or appetites. He makes it his great aim to do the will of God; to subordinate all his desires to his law and gospel; and though, therefore, one should eat flesh, and should feel at liberty to devote to common employments time that another deemed sacred, yet it should not be uncharitably set down as a desire to indulge his sensual appetites, or to become rich. Another motive *may be* supposed, and where there is not positive *proof* to the contrary, *should* be supposed. See the beautiful illustration of this in 1Co 13:4-8. To live *to ourselves* is to make it the great object to become rich or honoured, or to indulge in the ease, comfort, and pleasures of life. These are the aim of all men but Christians; and in nothing else do Christians more differ from the world than in this. See 1Pe 4:1,2; 2Co 5:15 1Co 6:19,20 Mt 10:38; Mt 16:24 Mr 8:34, 10:21 Lu 9:23.

On no point does it become Christians more to examine themselves than on this.

To live to ourselves is an evidence that we are strangers to piety. And if it be the great motive of our lives to live at ease, (Am 6:1)—to gratify the flesh, to gain property, or to be distinguished in places of fashion and amusement—it is evidence that we know nothing of the power of that gospel which teaches us *to deny ourselves, and take up our cross daily*.

No man. No *one*, the same Greek word (*oudeiv*) which is used in the former part of the verse. The word is used only in reference to *Christians* here, and makes no affirmation about other men.

Dieth to himself. See Ro 4:8. This expression is used to denote the *universality* or the *totality* with which Christians belong to God. Everything is done and suffered with reference to his will. In our conduct, in our property, in our trials, in our death, we are *his*; to be disposed of as he shall please. In the grave, and in the future world, we shall be equally his. As this is the great principle on which *all* Christians live and act, we should be kind and tender towards them, though in some respects they differ from us.

{o} "none of use" 1Pe 4:2

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *For whether we live*. As long as we live.

We live unto the Lord. We live to do his will, and to promote his glory. This is the grand purpose of the life of the Christian. Other men live to gratify themselves; the Christian to do those things which the Lord requires. By *the Lord* here the apostle evidently intends the Lord Jesus, as it is evident from Ro 14:9; and the truth taught here is, that it is the leading and grand purpose of the Christian to do honour to the Saviour. It is this which constitutes his peculiar character, and which distinguishes him from other men.

Whether we die. In the dying state, or in the state of the dead; in the future world. We are *nowhere* our own. In all conditions we are his, and bound to do his will. The connexion of this declaration with the argument is this:—Since we belong to another in every state, and are bound to do his will, we have no right to assume the prerogative of sitting in judgment on another. *We* are subjects, and are bound to do the will of Christ. All other Christians are subjects in like manner, and are answerable, not to us, but directly to the Lord Jesus, and should have the same liberty of conscience that we have. The passage proves also that the soul does not cease to be conscious at death. We are still the Lord's; his even when the body is in the grave; and his in all the future world. See Ro 14:9.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *For to this end*. For this purpose or design. The apostle does not say that this was the *only* design of his death, but that it was a main purpose, or an object which he had distinctly in view. This declaration is introduced in order to confirm what he had said in the previous verse, that in all circumstances we are the Lord's. This he shows by the fact that Jesus died *in order* that we *might* be his,

And rose. This expression is rejected by most modern critics. It is wanting in many manuscripts, and has been probably introduced in the text from the margin.

And revived. There is also a variation in the Greek in this place, but not so great as to change the sense materially. It refers to his *resurrection*, and means that he was *restored to life* in order that he might exercise dominion over the dead and the living.

That he might be Lord. Greek, That he might *rule over*. The Greek word used here implies the idea of his being *proprietor* or *owner*, as well as *ruler*. It means, that he might exercise entire dominion over all, as the sovereign Lawgiver and Lord.

Both of the dead. That is, of those who *are* deceased, or who have gone to another state of existence. This passage proves that those who die are not annihilated; that they do not cease to be conscious; and that they still are under the dominion of the Mediator. Though their bodies moulder

in the grave, yet the spirit lives, and is under his control. And though the body dies and returns to its native dust, yet the Lord Jesus is still its Sovereign, and shall raise it up again.

"God our Redeemer lives;
And often from the skies
Looks down and watches all our dust,
Till he shall bid it rise."

It gives an additional sacredness to the grave when we reflect that the tomb is under the watchful care of the Redeemer. Safe in his hands, the body may sink to its native dust with the assurance that in his own time he will again call it forth, with renovated and immortal powers, to be for ever subject to his will. With this view, we can leave our friends with confidence in his hands when they die, and yield our own bodies cheerfully to the dust when he shall call our spirits hence. But it is not only over the *body* that his dominion is established. This passage proves that the departed souls of the saints are still subject to him. Comp. Mt 22:32 Mr 12:27. He not only has dominion over those spirits, but he is their Protector and Lord. They are safe under his universal dominion. And it does much to alleviate the pains of separation from pious, beloved friends, to reflect that they depart still to love and serve the same Saviour in perfect purity, and unvexed by infirmity and sin. Why should we wish to recall them from his perfect love in the heavens to the poor and imperfect service which they would render if in the land of the living?

And living. To the redeemed, while they remain in this life. He died to *purchase* them to himself, that they might become his obedient subjects; and they are bound to yield obedience by all the sacredness and value of the price which he paid, even his own precious blood. Comp. 1Co 6:20, "For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's;" Ro 7:23 Re 14:4, (Greek, *bought*;) 1Pe 2:9, (Greek, *purchased*.) If it be asked how this *dominion over the dead and the living* is connected with the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, we may reply,

(1.) that it is secured over Christians from the fact that they are *purchased* or *ransomed* by his precious blood; and that they are bound by this sacred consideration to live to him. This obligation every Christian feels, (1Pe 1:18) and its force is continually resting on him. It was by the love of Christ that he was ever brought to love God at all; and his deepest and tenderest obligations to live to him arise from this source, 2Co 5:14,15

(2.) Jesus, by his death and resurrection, established a dominion over the grave. He destroyed him that had the power of death, (Heb 2:14) and triumphed over him, Col 2:15. Satan is a humbled foe; and his sceptre over the grave is wrested from his hands. When Jesus rose, in spite of all the power of Satan and of men, he burst the bands of death, and made an invasion on the dominions of the dead, and showed that he had power to control all.

(3.) This dominion of the Lord Jesus is felt by the spirits on high. They are subject to him *because* he redeemed them, Re 5:9.

(4.) It is often revealed in the Scriptures that *dominion* was to be given to the Lord Jesus as the reward of his sufferings and death. **See Barnes "Joh 17:2"; also** Joh 17:4,5, 5:26-29

Php 2:5-11 Eph 1:20,21 Heb 2:9,10 12:2.

The *extent* of his dominion as Mediator is affirmed, in this place, only to be over the dead and the living; that is, over the human race. Other passages of the Scripture, however, seem to imply that it extends over all worlds.

{p} "For to this end" Php 2:9-11.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *But why*, etc. Since we are all subjects and servants alike, and must all stand at the same tribunal, what right have we to sit in judgment on others?

Thou judge. Thou who art a *Jewish* convert, why dost thou attempt to arraign the *Gentile* disciple, as if he had violated a law of God? Comp. Ro 14:3.

Thy brother. God has recognised him as his friend, (Ro 14:3,) and he should be regarded by thee as a brother in the same family.

Or why dost thou set at nought. Despise, (Ro 14:3) why dost thou, who art a *Gentile* convert, despise the Jewish disciple as being unnecessarily scrupulous and superstitious?

Thy brother. The Jewish convert is now a brother; and all the contempt which you Gentiles once cherished for the Jew should cease, from the fact that *he* is now a *Christian*. Nothing will do so much, on the one hand, to prevent a censorious disposition, and, on the other, to prevent contempt for those who are in a different rank in life, as to remember that they are *Christians*, bought with the same blood, and going to the same heaven as ourselves.

We shall all stand, etc. That is, we must all be tried alike at the same tribunal; we must answer for our conduct, not to our fellow-men, but to Christ; and it does not become us to sit in judgment on each other.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *For it is written*. This passage is recorded in Isa 45:23. It is not quoted literally, but the sense is preserved. In Isaiah there can be no doubt that it refers to Jehovah. The speaker expressly calls himself JEHOVAH, the name which is appropriate to God alone, and which is never applied to a creature, Isa 45:18,21, Isa 45:24,25. In the place before us, the words are applied by Paul expressly to Christ. Comp. Ro 14:10. This mode of quotation is a strong incidental proof that the apostle regarded the Lord Jesus as Divine. On no other principle could he have made these quotations.

As I live. The Hebrew is, "I have sworn by myself." One expression is equivalent to the other. An *oath* of God is often expressed by the phrase "as I live," Nu 14:21 Isa 49:18; Eze 5:11 14:16, etc.

Saith the Lord. These words are not in the Hebrew text, but are added by the apostle to show that the passage quoted was spoken by the Lord, the Messiah. Comp. Isa 45:18,22.

Every knee shall bow to me. To *bow the knee* is an act expressing homage, submission, or adoration. It means, that every person shall acknowledge him as God, and admit his right to universal dominion. The passage in Isaiah refers particularly to the homage which *his own people* should render to him; or rather, means that all who are saved shall acknowledge *him* as their God and Saviour. The original reference was not to *all men*, but only to those who should be saved, Isa 45:17,21,22,24.

In this sense the apostle uses it; not as denoting that *all men* should confess to God, but that *all Christians*, whether Jewish or Gentile converts, should alike give account to him. *They* should all bow before their common God, and acknowledge *his* dominion over them. The passage originally did not refer particularly to the day of judgment, but expressed the truth that all believers should

acknowledge his dominion. It is as applicable, however, to the judgment, as to any other act of homage which his people will render.

Every tongue shall confess to God. In the Hebrew, "Every tongue shall swear." Not swear *by* God, but *to* him; that is, pay to him our vows, or *answer to him on oath* for our conduct; and this is the same as *confessing* to him, or acknowledging him as our Judge.

{q} "As I live" Isa 14:23.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *So then*. Wherefore; or according to the doctrine of the Old Testament.

Every one of us. That is, every Christian; for the connexion requires us to understand the argument only of Christians. At the same time it is a truth abundantly revealed elsewhere, that *all men* shall give account of their conduct to God, 2Co 5:10 Mt 25 Ec 12:14.

Give account of himself". That is, of his character and conduct; his words and actions; his plans and purposes. In the fearful arraignment of that day, every work and purpose shall be brought forth, and tried by the unerring standard of justice. As we shall be called to so fearful an account with God, we should not be engaged in condemning our brethren, but should examine whether we are prepared to give up our account with joy, and not with grief.

To God. The judgment will be conducted by the Lord Jesus, Mt 25:31-46 Ac 17:31. All judgment is committed to the Son, Joh 5:22,27. Still we may be said to give account to God,

(1.) because he *appointed* the Messiah to be the Judge, (Ac 17:31) and,

(2.) because the Judge himself is Divine. The Lord Jesus being God as well as man, the account will be rendered directly to the Creator as well as the Redeemer of the world. In this passage there are *two* incidental proofs of the Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. *First*, the fact that the apostle applies to him language which in the prophecy is expressly spoken by *Jehovah*; and, *secondly*, the fact that Jesus is declared to be the Judge of all. No being that is not *omniscient* can be qualified to judge the secrets of all men. None who has not *seen* human purposes at all times, and in all places; who has not been a witness of the conduct by day and by night; who has not been present with all the race at all times; and who, in the great day, cannot discern the true character of the soul, can be qualified to conduct the general judgment. Yet none can possess these qualifications but God. The Lord Jesus, "the Judge of quick and dead," (2Ti 4:1,) is therefore Divine.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Let us not therefore judge*, etc. Since we are to give account of ourselves at the same tribunal; since we must be there on the same level, let us not suppose that we have a right here to sit in judgment on our fellow-Christians.

But judge this rather. If disposed to *judge*, let us be employed in a better kind of judging; let us come *to a determination* not to injure the cause of Christ. This is an instance of the happy turn which the apostle would give to a discussion. Some men have an irresistible propensity to sit in

judgment, to pronounce opinions. Let them make good use of that. It will be well to exercise it on that which can do no injury, and which may turn to good account. Instead of forming a judgment about *others*, let the man form a determination about his own conduct.

That no man, etc. A stumbling-block literally means anything laid in a man's path, over which he may fail. In the Scriptures, however, the word is used commonly in a figurative sense, to denote anything which shall cause him to *sin*, as sin is often represented by *falling*. **See Barnes "Mt 5:29"**.

And the passage means, that we should resolve to act so as not *by any means* to be the occasion of leading our brethren into sin, either by our example, or by a severe and harsh judgment, provoking them to anger, or exciting jealousies, and envyings, and suspicions. No better rule than this could be given to promote peace. If every Christian, instead of judging his brethren severely, would resolve that he would so live as to promote peace, and so as not to lead others into sin, it would tend more, perhaps, than any other thing to advance the harmony and purity of the church of Christ.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *I know*. This is an admission made to the *Gentile* convert, who believed that it was lawful to partake of food of every kind. This the apostle concedes; and says he is fully apprized of this. But though he knew this, yet he goes on to say, (Ro 14:15) that it would be well to regard the conscientious scruples of others on the subject. It may be remarked here, that the apostle Paul had formerly quite as many scruples as any of his brethren had then. But his views had been changed.

And am persuaded. Am convinced.

By the Lord Jesus. This does not mean by any personal instruction received from the Lord Jesus; but by all the knowledge which he had received, by inspiration, of the nature of the Christian religion. The *gospel* of Jesus had taught him that the rites of the Mosaic economy had been abolished, and among those rites were the rules respecting clean and unclean beasts, etc.

There is *nothing unclean*. Greek, *common*. This word was used by the Jews to denote that which was *unclean*, because, in their apprehension, whatever was partaken by the multitude, or all men, must be impure. Hence the words *common* and *impure* are often used as expressing the same thing. It denotes that which was forbidden by the laws of Moses.

To him that esteemeth, etc. He makes it a matter of conscience. He regards certain meats as forbidden by God; and while he so regards them, it would be wrong for him to partake of them. Man may be in error, but it would not be proper for him to act in violation of what he supposes God requires.

{1} "common" or, "unclean"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *But if thy brother*, etc. This address is to the Gentile convert. In the previous verse, Paul admitted that the prejudice of the Jew was not well founded. But, admitting that, still the

question was *how* he should be treated while he had that prejudice. The apostle here shows the Gentile that *he* ought not so to act as necessarily to wound his feelings, or to grieve him.

Be grieved. Be pained; as a conscientious man always is, when he sees another, and especially a Christian brother, do anything which he esteems to be wrong. The *pain* would be real, though the *opinion* from which it arose might not be well founded.

With thy *meat*. Greek, On account of meat, or food; that is, because *you* eat that which he regards as unclean.

Now walkest. To *walk*, in the sacred Scriptures, often denotes to act, or to do a thing, Mr 7:5 Ac 21:21; Ro 6:4 8:1,4.

Here it means, that *if* the Gentile convert persevered in the use of such food, notwithstanding the conscientious scruples of the Jew, he violated the law of love.

Charitably. Greek, According to charity, or love; that is, he would violate that law which required him to sacrifice his own comfort to promote the happiness of his brother, 1Co 13:5 10:24,28,29

Php 2:4,21.

Destroy not him. The word *destroy* here refers, doubtless, to the ruin of the soul in hell. It properly denotes ruin or destruction, and is applied to the *ruin* or *corruption* of various things, in the New Testament. To *life*, (Mt 10:39) to a reward, in the sense of *losing* it, (Mr 9:41 Lu 15:4) to food, (Joh 6:27) to the Israelites represented as *lost* or wandering, (Mt 10:6) to *wisdom* that is rendered vain,

(1.) 1Co 1:19) to *bottles* rendered useless, (Mt 9:17) etc. But it is also frequently applied to destruction in hell, to the everlasting ruin of the soul. Mt 10:28, "Who is able to destroy both soul and body in *hell*." Mt 18:14 Joh 3:15; Ro 2:12.

That this is its meaning here is apparent from the parallel place in 1Co 8:11, "And through thy knowledge shall thy weak brother *perish*?" If it be asked how the eating of meat by the Gentile convert could be connected with the perdition of the Jew, I reply, that the apostle supposes that in this way an occasion of stumbling would be afforded to him, and he would come into condemnation. He might be led by example to partake against his own conscience, or he might be excited to anger, disgust, and apostasy from the Christian faith. Though the apostle believed that all who were true Christians would be saved, Ro 8:30-39, yet he believed that it would be brought about by the use of means, and that nothing should be done that would tend to hinder or endanger their salvation, Heb 6:4-9 2:1. God does not bring his people to heaven without the use of *means adapted to the end*; and one of those means is that employed here to warn professing Christians against such conduct as might jeopard the salvation of their brethren. *For whom Christ died*. The apostle speaks here of the possibility of endangering the salvation of those for whom Christ died, just as he does respecting the salvation of those who are in fact Christians. By those for whom Christ died, he undoubtedly refers here to *true Christians*, for the whole discussion relates to them, and them only. Comp. Ro 14:3,4,7,8.

This passage should not be brought, therefore, to prove that Christ died for all men, or for any who shall finally perish. Such a doctrine is undoubtedly true, (comp. 2Co 5:14,15; 1Jo 2:2; 2Pe 2:1,) but it is not the truth which is taught here. The design is to show the criminality of a course that would tend to the ruin of a brother. For these weak brethren, Christ laid down his precious life. He loved them; and shall we, to gratify our appetites, pursue a course which will tend to defeat the work of Christ, and ruin the souls redeemed by his blood?

{2} "charitably" or "according to charity" {r} "destroy not him" 1Co 8:11

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Let not then your good*, etc. That which you esteem to be right, and which may be right in itself. You are not bound by the ceremonial law. You are free from the yoke of bondage. This freedom you esteem to be *a good*—a favour—a high privilege. And so it is; but you should not make such a use of it as to do injury to others.

Be evil spoken of. Greek, *Be blasphemed*. Do not so use your Christian liberty as to give occasion for railing and unkind remarks from your brethren, so as to produce contention and strife, and thus to give rise to evil reports among the wicked about the tendency of the Christian religion, as if it were adapted only to promote controversy. How much strife would have been avoided if all Christians had regarded this plain rule. In relation to dress, and rites, and ceremonies in the church, we may be conscious that we are right; but an obstinate adherence to them may only give rise to contention and angry discussion, and to evil reports among men, of the tendency of religion. In such a case we should yield our private, unimportant, personal indulgence to the good of the cause of religion and of peace.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *For the kingdom of God*. For an explanation of this phrase, **See Barnes "Mt 3:2"**.

Here it means, that the *peculiarities* of the kingdom of God, or of the church of Christ on earth, do not consist in observing the distinctions between meats and drinks. It was true that by these things the Jews had been particularly characterized, but the Christian church was to be distinguished in a different manner.

Is not. Does not consist in. or is not distinguished by.

Meat and drink. In observing distinctions between different kinds of food, or making such observances a matter of conscience, as the Jews did. Moses did not prescribe any particular drink, or prohibit any; but the Nazarites abstained from wine, and all kinds of strong liquors; and it is not improbable that the Jews had invented some distinctions on this subject which they judged to be of importance. Hence it is said in Col 2:16, "Let no man judge you in meat or *in drink*." Comp. 1Co 8:8 4:20.

But righteousness. This word here means *virtue, integrity*, a faithful discharge of all the duties which we owe to God or to our fellow-men. It means, that the Christian must so live as to be appropriately denominated a righteous man, and not a man whose whole attention is absorbed by the mere ceremonies and outward forms of religion. To produce this, we are told, was the main design and the principal teaching of the gospel, Tit 2:12. Comp. Ro 8:13 1Pe 2:11. Thus it is said, (1Jo 2:2) "Every one that doeth righteousness is born of God;" 1Jo 3:10, "Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God." Comp. 1Jo 3:7 1Co 15:34; 2Co 3:9; 2Co 6:7,14; Eph 5:9 6:14; 1Ti 6:11 1Pe 2:24; Eph 4:24.

He that is a righteous man, whose characteristic it is to lead a holy life, is a Christian. If his great aim is to do the will of God, and if he seeks to discharge with fidelity all his duties to God and man, he is renewed. On that righteousness he will not *depend* for salvation, (Php 3:8,9) but he will regard this character and this disposition as evidence that he is a Christian, and that the Lord Jesus is made unto him "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption," 1Co 1:30.

And peace. This word, in this place, does not refer to the internal *peace* and happiness which the Christian has in his own mind, (comp. **See Barnes "Ro 5:1"**) but to peace or concord in opposition to *contention* among brethren. The tendency and design of the kingdom of God is to produce concord and love, and to put an end to alienation and strife. Even though, therefore, there might be ground for the opinions which some cherished in regard to rites, yet it was of more importance to maintain peace than obstinately to press those matters at the expense of strife and contention. That the tendency of the gospel is to promote peace, and to induce men to lay aside all causes of contention and bitter strife, is apparent from the following passages of the New Testament: 1Co 7:15 14:33; Ga 5:22 Eph 4:3; 1Th 5:13; 2Ti 2:22 Jas 3:18; Mt 5:9 Eph 4:31,32 Col 3:8; Joh 13:34,35, 17:21-23.

This is the second evidence of piety on which Christians should examine their hearts—a disposition to promote the peace of Jerusalem, Ps 122:6 37:11. A contentious, quarrelsome spirit; a disposition to magnify trifles; to make the shibboleth of party an occasion of alienation, and heart-burning, and discord; to sow dissensions on account of unimportant points of doctrine or of discipline, is full proof that there is no attachment to Him who is the Prince of Peace. Such a disposition does infinite dishonour to the cause of religion, and perhaps has done more to retard its progress than all other causes put together. Contentions commonly arise from some small matter in doctrine, in dress, in ceremonies; and often the smaller the matter the more fierce the controversy, till the spirit of religion disappears, and desolation comes over the face of Zion.

"the Spirit, like a peaceful dove,
Flies from the reahns of noise and strife."

And joy. This refers, doubtless, to the *personal* happiness produced in the mind by the influence of the gospel. **See Barnes "Ro 5:1"; also** Ro 5:2-5.

In the Holy Ghost. Produced *by* the Holy Ghost, Ro 5:5. Comp. Ga 5:22,23.

{s} "the kingdom of God" Mt 6:33

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *In these things*. In righteousness, peace, and joy.

Serveth Christ. Or obeys Christ, who has commanded them. He receives Christ as his Master or Teacher, and does his will in regard to them. To do these things is to do honour to Christ, and to show the excellency of his religion.

Is acceptable to God. Whether he be converted from the Jews or the Gentiles.

And approved of men. That is, men will *approve* of such conduct; they will esteem it to be right, and to be in accordance with the spirit of Christianity. He does not say that the wicked world will *love* such a life, but it will commend itself to them as such a life as men *ought* to lead.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Let us therefore follow*, etc. The object of this verse is to persuade the church at Rome to lay aside theft causes of contention, and to live in harmony. This exhortation is founded on the considerations which the apostle had presented, and may be regarded as the conclusion to which the argument had conducted him.

The things which make for peace. The high purposes and objects of the Christian religion, and not those smaller matters which produce strife. If men aim at the great objects proposed by the Christian religion, they will live in peace. If they seek to promote theft private ends, to follow their own passions and prejudices, they will be involved in strife and contention. There *are* great common objects before *all* Christians in which they can unite, and in the pursuit of which they will cultivate a spirit of peace. Let them all strive for holiness; let them seek to spread the gospel; let them engage in circulating the Bible, or in doing good in any way to others, and their smaller matters of difference will sink into comparative unimportance, and they will unite in one grand purpose of saving the world. Christians have more things in which they *agree* than in which they differ. The points on which they are agreed are of infinite importance; the points on which they differ are commonly some minor matters in which they may "agree to differ," and still cherish love for all who bear the image of Christ.

And things wherewith, etc. That is, those things by which we may render *aid* to our brethren; the doctrines, exhortations, counsels, and other helps which may benefit them in their Christian life.

May edify. The word *edify* means, properly, to *build*, as a house; then to *rebuild* or *reconstruct*; then to adorn or ornament; then to do anything that will confer favour or advantage, or which will further an object. Applied to the church, it means, to do anything by teaching, counsel, advice, etc., which will tend to promote its great object; to aid Christians, to enable them to surmount difficulties, to remove theft ignorance, etc., Ac 9:31; 1Co 8:1 14:4. In these expressions the idea of a *building* is retained, reared on a firm, tried corner-stone the Lord Jesus Christ, Eph 2:20 Isa 28:16. Comp. Ro 9:33. Christians are thus regarded, according to Paul's noble idea, (Eph 2:20-22,) as one great temple erected for the glory of God, having no separate interest, but as united for one object, and therefore bound to do all that is possible that each other may be fitted to their appropriate place, and perform their appropriate function in perfecting and adorning this temple of God.

{w} "Let us therefore follow" Ps 34:14 Heb 12:14 {x} "things wherewith one edify" 1Co 14:12

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *For meat*. By your obstinate, pertinacious attachment to your own opinions about the distinctions of meats and drinks, do not pursue such a course as to lead a brother into sin, and ruin his soul. Here is a new argument presented why Christians should pursue a course of charity—that the opposite would tend to the ruin of the brother's soul.

Destroy not. The word here is that which properly is applied to pulling down an edifice; and the apostle continues the figure which he used in the previous verse. Do not pull down or destroy the *temple* which God is rearing.

The work of God. The work of God is that which God does, and here especially refers to his work in rearing his church. The *Christian* is regarded peculiarly as the work of God, as God renews his heart, and makes him what he is. Hence he is called God's "building," (1Co 3:9) and his "workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works," (Eph 2:10) and is denominated "a new creature," 2Co 5:17. The meaning is, "Do not so conduct yourself, in regard to the distinction of meats into clean and unclean, as to cause your brother to sin, and to impair or ruin the work of religion which God is carrying on in his soul." The expression does not refer to *man* as being the work of God, but to the *piety* of the Christian; to that which God, by his Spirit, is producing in the heart of the believer.

All things indeed are *pure*. Comp. Ro 14:14. This is a concession to those whom he was exhorting to peace. All things under the Christian dispensation are lawful to be eaten. The distinctions of the Levitical law are not binding on Christians.

But it is evil. Though pure in itself, yet it may become an occasion of sin, if another is grieved by it. It is evil to the man who pursues a course that will give offence to a brother; that will pain him, or tend to drive him off from the church, or lead him away into sin.

With offence. So as to offend a brother, such as *he* esteems to be sin, and by which he will be grieved.

{y} "are pure; but it is" Tit 1:15 {z} "evil for that man" 1Co 8:10-13

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *It is good*. It is right; or it is better. This verse is an explanation or enlarged specification of the meaning of the former.

To eat flesh. That is, such flesh as the *Jewish* convert regarded as unclean, Ro 14:2.

Nor to drink wine. Wine was a common drink among the Jews, and usually esteemed lawful. But the Nazarites were not allowed to drink it, (Nu 6:3) and the Rechabites (Jer 35) drank no wine; and it is possible that some of the early converts regarded it as unlawful for Christians to drink it. Wine was, moreover, used in libations in heathen worship, and perhaps the Jewish converts might be scrupulous about its use from this cause. The caution here shows us what should be done *now* in regard to the use of wine. It may not be possible to prove that wine is absolutely unlawful, but still many friends of *temperance* regard it as such, and are grieved at its use. They esteem the habit of using it as tending to intemperance, and as encouraging those who cannot afford expensive liquors. Besides, the wines which are now used are different from those which were common among the ancients. That was the pure juice of the grape. That which is now in common use is mingled with alcohol, and with other intoxicating ingredients. Little or none of the wine which comes to this country is pure. And in this state of the case, does not the command of the apostle here require the friends of temperance to abstain even from the use of wine?

Nor any thing. Any article of food or drink, or any course of conduct. So valuable is peace, and so desirable is it not to offend a brother, that we should rather deny ourselves to any extent, than be the occasion of offences and scandals in the church.

Stumbleth. For the difference between this word and the word *offended*, **See Barnes "Ro 11:11"**.

It means here that, by eating, a Jewish convert might be led to eat also, contrary to his own conviction of what was right, and thus be led into sin.

Or is made weak. That is, shaken, or rendered less stable in his opinion or conduct. By being led to imitate the Gentile convert, he would become less firm and established; he would violate his own conscience; his course would be attended with regrets and with doubts about its propriety, and thus he would be made *weak*. In this verse we have an eminent instance of the charity of the apostle, and of his spirit of concession and kindness. If this were regarded by all Christians, it would save no small amount of strife, and heart-burnings, and contention. Let a man begin to act on the principle that peace is to be promoted, that other Christians are not to be offended, and what a change would it at once produce in the churches, and what an influence would it exert over the life!

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Hast thou faith!* The word *faith* here refers only to the subject under discussion—to the subject of meats, drinks, etc. Do you believe that it is right to eat all kinds of food? etc. The apostle had admitted that this was the true doctrine; but he maintains that it should be so held as not to give offence.

Have it to thyself. Do not obtrude your faith or opinion on others. Be satisfied with cherishing the opinion, and acting on it in private, without bringing it forward to produce disturbance in the church.

Before God. Where God only is the witness. God sees your sincerity, and will approve your opinion. That opinion cherish and act on, yet so as not to give offence, and to produce disturbance in the church. God sees your sincerity; he sees that you are right; and you will not offend him. Your brethren do *not* see that you are right, and *they* will be offended.

Happy is he, etc. This state of mind, the apostle says, is one that is attended with peace and happiness; and this is a *further* reason why they should indulge their opinion in private, without obtruding it on others. They were conscious of doing right, and that consciousness was attended with peace. This fact he states in the form of a universal proposition, as applicable not only to *this* case, but to *all* cases. Comp. 1Jo 3:21.

Condemneth not himself. Whose conscience does not reprove him.

In that thing which he alloweth. Which he *approves*, or which he *does*. Who has a clear conscience in his opinions and conduct. Many men indulge in practices which their consciences condemn, many in practices of which they are in doubt. But the way to be happy is to have a *clear conscience* in what we do; or, in other words, if we have *doubts* about a course of conduct, it is not safe to indulge in that course, but it should be at once abandoned. Many men are engaged in *business* about which they have many doubts; many Christians are in doubt about certain courses of life. But they can have *no doubt* about the propriety of abstaining from them. They who are engaged in the slave-trade; or they who are engaged in the manufacture or sale of ardent spirits; or they who frequent the theatre or the ball-room, or who run the round of fashionable amusements, if professing Christians, MUST often be troubled with *many* doubts about the propriety of their manner of life. But they can have no doubt about the propriety of an *opposite* course. Perhaps a single inquiry would settle all debate in regard to these things: *Did any one ever become a slave-dealer, or a*

dealer in ardent spirits, or go to the theatre, or engage in scenes of splendid amusements, with any belief that he was imitating the Lord Jesus Christ, or with any desire to honour him or his religion? But one answer would be given to this question; and in view of it, how striking is the remark of Paul, "Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth."

{a} "Happy is he that condemneth" 1Jo 3:21

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 23

Verse 23. He that doubteth, he that is not fully satisfied in his mind; who does not do it with a clear conscience. The margin has it rendered correctly, "He that discerneth and putteth a difference between meats." He that conscientiously believes, as the Jew did, that the Levitical law respecting the difference between meats was binding on Christians.

Is damned. We apply this word almost exclusively to the future punishment of the wicked in hell. But it is of importance to remember, in reading the Bible, that this is not of necessity its meaning. It means, properly, *to condemn*; and here it means only that the person who should thus violate the dictates of his conscience would incur guilt, and would be blameworthy in doing it. But it does not affirm that he would inevitably sink to hell. The same construction is to be put on the expression in 1Co 11:29, "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself."

For whatsoever, etc. *Whatever is not done with a full conviction that it is right, is sinful; whatever is done when a man doubts whether it is right, is sin*. This is evidently the fair interpretation of this place. Such the connexion requires. It does not affirm that all or any of the actions of impenitent and unbelieving men are sinful, which is true, but not the truth taught here; nor does it affirm that all acts which are not performed by those who have faith in the Lord Jesus are sinful; but the discussion pertains to Christians; and the whole scope of the passage requires us to understand the apostle as simply saying that a man should not do a thing doubting its correctness; that he should have a strong conviction that what he does is right; and that if he has *not* this conviction, it is sinful. The rule is of universal application. In all cases, if a man does a thing which he does not *believe* to be right, it is a sin, and his conscience will condemn him for it. It may be proper, however, to observe, that the converse of this is not always true, that if a man believes a thing to be right, that therefore it is not sin. For many of the persecutors were conscientious, (Joh 16:2 Ac 26:9) and the murderers of the Son of God did it ignorantly, (Ac 3:17 1Co 2:8) and yet were adjudged as guilty of enormous crimes. Comp. Lu 11:50,51; Ac 2:23,37.

In this chapter we have a remarkably fine discussion of the nature of Christian charity. Differences of *opinion* will arise, and men will be divided into various sects; but if the rules which are laid down in this chapter were followed, the contentions, and altercations, and strifes among Christians would cease. Had these rules been applied to the controversies about rites, and forms, and festivals, that have arisen, peace might have been preserved. Amid all such differences, the great question is, whether there is true love to the Lord Jesus. If there is, the apostle teaches us that we have no right to judge a brother, or despise him, or contend harshly with him. Our object should be to promote peace, to aid him in his efforts to become holy, and to seek to build him up in holy faith.

{1} "doubteth is damned" or, "discerneth and putteth a difference"
"between meats."

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 15

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 1

ROMANS Chapter 15

It may be of importance to state, that between the last verse of the preceeding chapter and the first verse of this, the Arabic version, some Mss., and many of the Greek fathers, as Chrysostom, Theodoret, Theophylact, etc., have introduced Ro 16:25-27. Why this was done has been a matter of controversy. The discussion, however, is of no practical importance, and most critics concur in the opinion that the present arrangement of the Greek text is genuine.

Verse 1. *We then that are strong*. The apostle resumes the subject of the preceding chapter; and continues the exhortation to brotherly love and mutual kindness and forbearance. By the *strong* here he means the strong in faith in respect to the matters under discussion; those whose minds were free from doubts and perplexities. His own mind was free from doubt, and there were many others, particularly of the Gentile converts, that had the same views. But many also, particularly of the *Jewish* converts, had many doubts and scruples.

Ought to bear. This word *bear* properly means to *lift up, to bear away, to remove*. But here it is used in a larger sense; *to bear with, to be indulgent to, to endure patiently, not to contend with*, Ga 6:2 Re 2:2, "Thou canst not bear them that are evil."

And not to please ourselves. Not to make it our main object to gratify our own wills. We should be willing to deny ourselves, if by it we may promote the happiness of others. This refers particularly to *opinions* about meats and drinks; but it may be applied to Christian conduct generally, as denoting that we are not to make our own happiness or gratification the standard of our conduct, but are to seek the welfare of others. See the example of Paul, 1Co 9:19,22; see also Php 2:4 1Co 13:5, "Love seeketh not her own;" 1Co 10:24, "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth." Also Mt 6:24.

{c} "to bear the infirmities" Ro 14:1 Ga 6:2

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Please his neighbour*. That is, all other persons, but especially the friends of the Redeemer. The word *neighbour* here has especial reference to the members of the church. It is often used, however in a much larger sense. See Lu 10:36.

For his good. Not to seek to secure for him indulgence in those things which would be injurious to him, but in all these things which his welfare would be promoted.

To edification. **See Barnes "Ro 14:19"**.
{d} "neighbour for his good" 1Co 9:19 Php 2:4,5

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *For even Christ*. The apostle proceeds, in his usual manner, to illustrate what he had said by the example of the Saviour. To a Christian, the example of the Lord Jesus will furnish the most ready, certain, and happy illustration of the nature and extent of his duty.

Pleased not himself. This is not to be understood as if the Lord Jesus did not voluntarily and cheerfully engage in his great work. He was not *compelled* to come and suffer. Nor is it to be understood as if he did not *approve* the work, or see its propriety and fitness. If he had not, he would never have engaged in its sacrifices and self-denials. But the meaning may be expressed in the following particulars:

(1.) He came to do the will or desire of God, in *undertaking* the work of salvation. It was the will of God; it was agreeable to the Divine purposes, and the Mediator did not consult his own happiness and honour in heaven, but cheerfully came to *do the will* of God, Ps 40:7,8. Comp. Heb 10:4-10 Php 2:6; Joh 17:5

Christ, when on earth, made it his great object to do the will of God, to finish the work which God had given him to do, and not to seek his own comfort and enjoyment. This he expressly affirms, Joh 6:38; Joh 5:30:

(3.) He was willing for this to endure whatever trials and pains the will of God might demand, not seeking to avoid them, or to shrink from them. See particularly his prayer in the garden, Lu 22:42.

(4.) In his life he did not seek personal comfort, wealth, or friends, or honours. He denied himself to promote the welfare of others; he was poor that they might be rich; he was in lonely places that he might seek out the needy and provide for them. Nay, he did not seek to preserve his own life when the appointed time came to die, but gave himself up for all.

(5.) There may be another idea which the apostle had here. He bore with patience the ignorance, blindness, erroneous views, and ambitious projects of his disciples. He evinced kindness to them when in error; and was not harsh, censorious, or unkind, when they were filled with vain projects of ambition, or perverted his words, or were dull of apprehension. So, says the apostle, we ought to do in relation to our brethren.

But as it is written. Ps 69:9. This psalm, and the former part of this verse, is referred to the Messiah. Comp. Ps 69:21 with Mt 27:34,48.

The reproaches. The calumnies, censures, harsh, opprobrious speeches.

Of them that reproached thee. Of the wicked, who vilified and abused the law and government of God.

Fell on me. In other words, Christ was willing to suffer reproach and contempt in order to do good to others. He endured calumny and contempt all his life, from those who by their lips and lives calumniated God, or reproached their Maker. We may learn here,

(1.) that the contempt of Jesus Christ is contempt of him who appointed him.

(2.) We may see the kindness of the Lord Jesus in being willing thus to *throw himself* between the sinner and God; to *intercept*, as it were, our sins, and to bear the effects of them in his own person. He stood between *us* and God; and both the reproaches and the Divine displeasure due to them, *met* on his sacred Person, and produced the sorrows of the atonement—his bitter agony in the garden and on the cross. Jesus thus showed his love of God in being willing to bear the reproaches aimed at him; and his love to *men* in being willing to endure the sufferings necessary to atone for these very sins.

(3.) If Jesus thus bore reproaches, *we* should be willing also to endure them. We suffer in the cause where he has gone before us, and where he has set us the example; and as *he* was abused and vilified, we should be willing to be so also.

{e} "Christ pleased not himself" Joh 6:28 {f} "The reproaches of them" Ps 69:9

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *For whatsoever things*, This is a *general* observation which struck the mind of the apostle, from the particular case which he had just specified. He had just made use of a striking passage in the Psalms to his purpose. The thought seems suddenly to have occurred to him that *all* the Old Testament was admirably adapted to express Christian duties and doctrine, and he therefore turned aside from his direct argument to express this sentiment. It should be read as a parenthesis.

Were written aforetime. That is, in ancient times; in the Old Testament.

For our learning. For our *teaching* or instruction. Not that this was the only purpose of the writings of the Old Testament, to instruct Christians; but that all the Old Testament might be useful *now* in illustrating and enforcing the doctrines and duties of piety towards God and man.

Through patience. This does not mean, as our translation might seem to suppose, patience *of the Scriptures*; but it means, that by patiently enduring sufferings, in connexion with the consolation which the Scriptures furnish, we might have hope. The *tendency* of patience, the apostle tells us, (Ro 5:4,) is to produce hope. **See Barnes "Ro 5:4"**.

And comfort of the Scriptures. By means of the consolation which the writings of the Old Testament furnish. The word rendered *comfort* means also *exhortation* or *admonition*. If this is its meaning here, it refers to the admonitions which the Scriptures suggest, instructions which they impart, and the exhortations to patience in trials. If it means *comfort*, then the reference is to the examples of the saints in affliction; to their recorded expressions of confidence in God in their trials, as of Job, Daniel, David, etc. Which is the precise meaning of the word here, it is not easy to determine.

Might have hope. **See Barnes "Ro 5:4"**.

We may learn here,

(1.) that afflictions may prove to be a great blessing.

(2.) That the proper tendency is to produce *hope*.

(3.) That the way to find support in afflictions is to go to the Bible. By the example of the ancient saints, by the expression of their confidence in God, by their patience, *we* may learn to suffer, and may not only be *instructed*, but may find *comfort* in all our trials. See the example of Paul himself in 2Co 1:3-11.

{g} "whatsoever things" 1Co 10:11 2Ti 3:16,17

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Now the God of patience*. The God who is *himself* long-suffering, who bears patiently with the errors and faults of his children, and who can *give* patience, may he give you of his Spirit, that you may bear patiently the infirmities and errors of each other. The example of God here, who bears long with his children, and is not angry soon at their offences, is a strong argument why Christians should bear with each other. If God bears long and patiently with *our* infirmities, *we* ought to bear with each other.

And consolation. Who gives or imparts consolation.

To be like-minded, etc. Gr., To think the same thing; that is, to be united, to keep from divisions and strifes.

According to Christ Jesus. According to the example and spirit of Christ; his was a spirit of peace. Or, according to what his religion requires. The name of Christ is sometimes thus put for his religion, 2Co 11:4 Eph 4:20. If all Christians would imitate the example of Christ, and follow his instructions, there would be no contentions among them. He earnestly sought in his parting prayer their unity and peace, Joh 17:21-23.

{h} "one toward another" 1Co 1:10 {1} "according to Christ Jesus" or, "after the example of"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *That ye may with one mind*. The word here used is translated "with one accord," Ac 1:14 2:1, 4:24.

It means unitedly, with one purpose, without contentions, and strifes, and jars.

And one mouth. This refers, doubtless, to their prayers and praises. That they might join, without contention and unkind feeling, in the worship of God. Divisions, strife, and contention in the church prevent union in worship. Though the *body* may be there, and the church *professedly* engaged in public worship, yet it is a *divided* service; and the prayers of strife and contention are not heard, Isa 58:4.

Glorify God. Praise or honour God. This would be done by their union, peace, and harmony; thus showing the tendency of the gospel to overcome the sources of strife and contention among men, and to bring them to peace.

Even the Father, etc. This is an addition designed to produce love.

(1.) He is *a Father*; we then, his children, should regard him as pleased with the union and peace of his family.

(2.) He is the Father of our LORD; our *common* Lord; our Lord who has commanded us to be united, and to love one another. By the desire of honouring *such* a Father, we should lay aside contentions, and be united in the bands of love.

{i} "one mind" Ac 4:24,32

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Wherefore*. In view of all the considerations, tending to produce unity and love, which have been presented. He refers to the various arguments in this and the preceding chapter.

Receive ye one another. Acknowledge one another as Christians, and treat one another as such, though you may differ in opinion about many smaller matters. See Ro 14:3.

As Christ also received us. That is, received us as his friends and followers. See Ro 14:3.

To the glory of God. In order to promote his glory. He has redeemed us, and renewed us, in order to promote the honour of God. Comp. Eph 1:6. As Christ has received us in order to promote the glory of God, so ought we to treat each other in a similar manner for a similar purpose. The exhortation in this verse is to those who had been divided on various points pertaining to rites and ceremonies; to those who had been converted from among *Gentiles* and *Jews*; and the apostle here says that Christ had received *both*. In order to enforce this, and especially to show the *Jewish* converts that they ought to receive and acknowledge their *Gentile* brethren, he proceeds to show, in the following verses, that Christ had reference to *both* in his work. He shows this in reference to the *Jews* Ro 15:8 and to the *Gentiles* Ro 15:9-12. Thus he draws all his arguments from the work of Christ.

{k} "received us" Eph 1:6

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Now I say*. I affirm, or maintain. I, a *Jew*, admit that his work had reference to the Jews; I affirm also that it had reference to the Gentiles.

That Jesus Christ. That *the Messiah*. The force of the apostle's reasoning would often be more striking if he would retain the word *Messiah*, and not regard the word Christ as a mere surname. It is the name of his office; and to a Jew the name *Messiah* would convey much more than the idea of a mere proper name.

Was a minister of the circumcision. Exercised his office—the office of the Messiah—among the Jews, or with respect to the Jews, for the purposes which he immediately specifies. Hie was born a Jew; was circumcised; came *to* that nation; and died in their midst, without having gone himself to any other people.

For the truth of God. To confirm or establish the truth of the promises of God. He remained among them in the exercise of his ministry to show that God was *true*, who had said that the Messiah should come to them.

To confirm the promises, etc. To *establish*, or to show that the promises were true. **See Barnes "Ac 3:25, also** Ac 3:26. The *promises* referred to here, are those particularly which related to the coming of the Messiah. By thus admitting that the Messiah was the minister of the circumcision, the apostle conceded all that the Jew could ask, that he was to be peculiarly their Messiah. **See Barnes "Lu 24:47".**

{l} "confirm the promises" Ac 3:25,26

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *And that the Gentiles*, etc. The benefits of the gospel were not to be confined to *the Jews*; and as God *designed* that those benefits should be extended to the *Gentiles*, so the Jewish converts ought to be willing to admit them, and treat them as brethren. That God *did* design this, the apostle proceeds to show.

Might glorify God. Might *praise*, or give thanks to God. This implies that the favour shown to them was a great favour.

For his mercy. Greek, On account of the mercy shown to them.

As it is written. Ps 18:49. The expression there is one of David's. He says that he will praise God for his mercies *among* the heathen, or when surrounded *by* the heathen; or that he would confess and acknowledge the mercies of God to him, as we should say, *to all the world*. The apostle, however, uses it in this sense, that the *Gentiles would participate* with the Jew in offering praise to God, or that they would be united. This does not appear to have been the original design of David in the psalm, but the *words* express the idea of the apostle.

And sing, etc. Celebrate thy praise. This supposes that *benefits* would be conferred on them, for which they would celebrate his goodness.

{m} "For this cause" Ps 18:49

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *And again*, etc. De 32:43. In this place, the *nations* or Gentiles are called on to rejoice with tile Jews, for the interposition of God in their behalf. The design of the quotation is to show that the Old Testament speaks of the Gentiles as called on to celebrate the praises of God; of course, the apostle infers that they are to be introduced to the same privileges as his people.

{n} "Rejoice, ye Gentiles" De 32:43

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *And again.* Ps 117:1. The object in this quotation is the same as before. The apostle accumulates quotations to show that it was the common language of the Old Testament, and that he was not depending on a single expression for the truth of his doctrine.

All ye Gentiles. In the psalm, "all ye *nations;* but the original is the same.

And laud him. Praise him. The psalm is directly in point. It is a call on *all* nations to praise God; the very point in the discussion of the apostle.

{o} "Praise the Lord" Ps 117:1.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Esaias saith*. Isa 11:1,10.

There shall be a root. A descendant, or one that should proceed from him when he was dead. When a tree dies, and falls, there may remain a root which shall retain life, and which shall send up a sprout of a similar kind. So Job says, (Job 14:7,) "For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease." So in relation to Jesse. Though *he* should fall, like an aged tree, yet his name and family should not be extinct. There should be a descendant who should rise, and reign over the Gentiles. The Lord Jesus is thus called also the "root and the offspring of David," Re 22:16 5:5.

Of Jesse. The father of David, 1Sa 17:58. The Messiah was thus descended front Jesse.

He that shall rise. That is, as a sprout springs up from a decayed or fallen tree. Jesus thus *rose* from the family of David, that had fallen into poverty and humble life in the time of Mary.

To reign over the Gentiles. This is quoted from the Lxx. of Isa 11:10. The Hebrew is, "Which shall stand up for an ensign of the people;" that is, a standard to which they shall flock. Either the Septuagint or the Hebrew would express the idea of the apostle. The *substantial* sense is retained, though it is not literally quoted. The idea of his *reigning* over the Gentiles is one that is fully expressed in the second psalm.

In him, etc. Hebrew, "To it shall the Gentiles seek." The sense, however, is the same. The design of this quotation is the same as the preceding, to show that it was predicted in the Old Testament that the Gentiles should be made partakers of the privileges of the gospel. The argument of the apostle is, that if this was designed, then converts to Christianity from among the *Jews* should lay aside their prejudices, and receive them as their brethren, entitled to the same privileges of the gospel as themselves. The *fact* that the Gentiles would be admitted to these privileges, the apostle had more fully discussed in chapters 10 and 11.

{p} "There shall be" Isa 11:1,10 {q} "of Jesse" Re 5:5 22:16

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Now the God of hope*. The God who *inspires*, or *produces* the Christian hope.

All joy and peace. Ro 14:17. If they were filled with this, there would be no strife and contention.

In believing. The effect of believing is to produce this joy and peace.

That ye may abound, etc. That your hope may be steadfast and strong.

Through the power, etc. By means of the powerful operation of the Holy Spirit. It is by his power alone that the Christian has the hope of eternal life. See Eph 1:13,14; Ro 8:24.

{r} "all joy" Ro 14:17

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *And I myself also*. The apostle here proceeds to show them why he had written this epistle, and to state his confidence in them. He had exhorted them to peace; he had opposed some of their strongest prejudices; and in order to secure their obedience to his injunctions, he now shows them the deep interest which he had in their welfare, though he had never seen them.

Am persuaded. He had never seen them, (Ro 1:10-13,)but he had full confidence in them. This confidence he had expressed more fully in the first chapter.

Of you. Concerning you. I have full confidence in you.

My brethren. An address of affection; showing that he was not disposed to assume undue authority, or to lord it over their faith.

Are full of goodness. Filled with *kindness or benevolence*. That is, they were *disposed* to obey any just commands; and that consequently any errors in their opinions and conduct had not been the effect of obstinacy or perverseness. There was indeed danger, in the city of Rome, of pride and haughtiness; and among the Gentile converts there might have been some reluctance to receive instruction from a foreign Jew. But the apostle was persuaded that all this was overcome by the mild and humbling spirit of religion, and that they were disposed to obey any just commands. He made this observation, therefore, to conciliate respect to his authority as an apostle.

Filled with all knowledge. That is, instructed in the doctrines and duties of the Christian religion. This was true; but there might be still some comparatively unimportant and non-essential points, on which they might not be entirely clear. On these the apostle had written; and written, not professedly to communicate *new* ideas, but to *remind* them of the great principles on which they were before instructed, Ro 15:15.

Able also, etc. That is, you are so fully instructed in Christian principles, as to be able to give advice and counsel, if it is needed. From this verse we may learn,

(1.) that when it is our duty to give instruction, admonition, or advice, it should be in a kind: conciliating manner; not with harshness, or with the severity of authority. Even *an apostle* did not assume harshness or severity in his instructions.

(2.) There is no impropriety in speaking of the good qualities of Christians in their presence; or even of *commending and praising* them when they deserve it. The apostle Paul was as far as possible from always dwelling on the faults of Christians. When it was necessary to reprove them, he did it, but did it with tenderness and tears. When he could commend, he preferred it; and never hesitated to give them credit to the utmost extent to which it could be rendered. He did not *flatter*, but he told the truth; he did not commend to excite pride and vanity, but to encourage, and to prompt to still more active efforts. The minister who always censures and condemns, whose ministry is made up of complaints and lamentations, who never speaks of Christians but in a strain of fault-finding, is unlike the example of the Saviour and of Paul, and may expect little success in his work. Comp. Ro 1:8 16:19; 1Co 1:6 2Co 8:7, 9:2 Php 1:8-7; Heb 6:9 2Pe 1:12.

{s} "persuaded of you" Heb 6:9 2Pe 1:12 {t} "able also to admonish" 1Co 8:1,7,10

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Nevertheless*. Notwithstanding my full persuasion of your knowledge, and your purpose to do right. Perhaps he refers also to the fact that he was a stranger to them.

The more boldly. More boldly than might have been expected from a stranger. The reason why he showed this boldness in declaring his sentiments he immediately states—that he had been specially called to the office of instructing the Gentiles.

In some sort, (*apo merouv*). In part. Some have supposed that he referred to a *party* at Rome—the Gentile party. (*Whitby*.) Some refer it to different parts of his epistle—on some subjects. (*Stuart*.) Probably the expression is designed to qualify the phrase more boldly. The phrase, says Grotius, *diminishes* that of which it is spoken, as 1Co 13:9,12; 2Co 1:14 2:5; and means the same as "somewhat more freely;" that is, I have been induced to write the more freely, *partly* because I am appointed to this very office. I write somewhat more freely to a church among the Gentiles than I even should to one among the Jews, *because* I am appointed to this very office.

As putting you in mind. Greek, Calling to your *remembrance*, or *reminding* you. Comp. 2Pe 1:12,13. This was a delicate way of communicating instruction. The apostles presumed that all Christians were acquainted with the great doctrines of religion; but they did not command, enjoin, or assume a spirit of dictation. How happy would it be if all teachers would imitate the example of the *apostles* in this, and be as modest and humble *as they were*.

Because of the grace, etc. Because God has conferred the *favour* on me of appointing me to this office. **See Barnes "Ro 1:5"**.

{u} "because of the grace" Eph 3:7,8.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *The minister*, (*leitourgon*). This is not the word which is commonly translated *minister*, (*diakonov*). This word is properly appropriated to those who minister in public offices or the affairs of the state. In the New Testament it is applied mainly to the Levitical priesthood, who ministered and served at the altar, Heb 10:11. It is, however, applied to the ministers of the New Testament, as discharging *substantially* the same offices towards the church which were discharged by the Levitical priesthood; i. e., as engaged in promoting the welfare of the church, occupied in holy things, etc. Ac 13:2, "As they ministered to the Lord and fasted," etc. It is used in a larger sense still in Ro 15:27; 2Co 9:12.

To the Gentiles. Comp. Ro 1:6 Ac 9:15.

Ministering, (*ierourgounta*). Performing the office of a priest in respect to the gospel of God. The office of a *priest* was to offer sacrifice. Paul here retains the *language*, though without affirming or implying that the ministers of the New Testament were literally *priests* to offer sacrifice. The word used here occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. Its meaning here is to be determined from the connexion. The question is, what is the sacrifice of which he speaks? It is the *offering up*—the sacrifice of the Gentiles. The Jewish sacrifices were abolished. The Messiah had fulfilled the design of their appointment, and they were to be done away. (See the epistle to the Hebrews.) There was to be no further *literal* sacrifice. But now the offerings of the Gentiles were to be as acceptable as had been the offerings of the Jews. God made no distinction; and in speaking of these offerings, Paul used *figurative* language drawn from the Jewish rites. But assuredly he did not mean that the offerings of the Gentiles were *literal* sacrifices to expiate sins; nor did he mean that there was to be an order of men who were to be called *priests* under the New Testament. If this passage

did prove that, it would prove that it should be confined to the *apostles*, for it is of them only that he uses it. The meaning is this: "Acting in the Christian church substantially as the priests did among the Jews: that is, endeavouring to secure the acceptableness of the offerings which the Gentiles make to God."

That the offering up. The word here rendered *offering up*, (*prosfora*), commonly means *a sacrifice* or an *expiatory* offering, and is applied to Jewish sacrifices, Ac 21:26 24:17. It is also applied to the sacrifice which was made by our Lord Jesus Christ when he offered himself on the cross for the sins of men, Eph 5:2; Heb 10:10. It does not always mean *bloody* sacrifices, but it is used to denote *any* offering to God, Heb 10:5,8,14,18.

Hence it is used in this large sense to denote the *offering* which the Gentiles who were converted to Christianity made of themselves; their devoting or dedicating themselves to God. The *language* is derived from the customs of the Jews; and the apostle represents himself *figuratively* as a *priest* presenting this offering to God.

Might be acceptable. Or, approved by God. This was in accordance with the prediction in Isa 66:20, "They shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations," etc. This does not mean that it was by any *merit* of the apostle that this offering was to be rendered acceptable; but that he was appointed to prepare the way, so that *their* offering, as well as that of the *Jews*, might come up before God.

Being sanctified. That is, *the offering* being sanctified, or made holy. The sacrifice was *prepared* or made fit *to be* an offering, among the Jews, by salt, oil, or frankincense, according to the nature of the sacrifice, Le 6:14, etc. In allusion to this, the apostle says that the offering of the Gentiles was rendered holy, or fit to be offered, by the converting and purifying influences of the Holy Spirit. They were prepared, not by salt and frankincense, but by the cleansing influences of God's Spirit. The same idea, substantially, is expressed by the apostle Peter in Ac 10:46 11:17.

{1} "offering up" or, "sacrificing" {v} "up of the Gentiles" Isa 66:20 {w} "sanctified by the Holy Ghost" Ac 20:32

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *I have therefore*, etc. I have cause of glorying. I have cause of rejoicing that God has made me a minister to the Gentiles, and that he has given me such success among them. The ground of this he states in Ro 15:18-22.

Glory. Of *boasting*, (*kauchsin* the word usually rendered *boasting*,) Jas 4:16 Ro 3:27; 2Co 7:14 8:24, 9:3,4, 10:15 11:10,17.

It means also *praise, thanksgiving, and joy*, 1Co 15:31 2Co 1:12, 7:4 8:24; 1Th 2:19

This is its meaning here, that the apostle had great cause of *rejoicing or praise* that he had been so highly honoured in the appointment to this office, and in his success in it.

Through Jesus Christ. By the assistance of Jesus Christ; ascribing his success among the Gentiles to the aid which Jesus Christ had rendered him.

In those things which pertain to God. Comp. Heb 5:1. The things of religion; the things which God has commanded, and which pertain to his honour and glory. They were not things which pertained to Paul, but to God; not wrought *by* Paul, but *by* Jesus Christ; yet he might rejoice that

he had been the means of diffusing so far those blessings. The success of a minister is not for *his own* praises, but for the honour of God; not by *his* skill or power, but by the aid of Jesus Christ; yet he may rejoice that *through* him such blessings are conferred on men.

{x} "glory through Jesus Christ" 2Co 12:1 {y} "which pertain to God" Heb 5:1

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *For I will not dare to speak*. I should be restrained; I should be afraid to speak, if the thing were not as I have stated. I should be afraid to set up a claim beyond that which is strictly in accordance with the truth.

Which Christ hath not wrought by me. I confine myself *strictly* to what *I* have done. I do not arrogate to myself what Christ has done by others. I do not exaggerate my own success, or claim what others have accomplished.

To make the Gentiles obedient. To bring them to obey God in the gospel.

By word and deed. By *preaching*, and by all other means; by miracle, by example, etc. The *deeds*, that is, the *lives* of Christian ministers are often as efficacious in bringing me to Christ as their public ministry.

{z} "make the Gentiles obedient"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Through mighty signs and wonders*. By stupendous and striking miracles. **See Barnes "Ac 2:43"**.

Paul here refers, doubtless, to the miracles which he had himself wrought. See Ac 19:11,12, "And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul," etc.

By the power of the Spirit of God. This may either be connected with *signs and wonders*, and then it will mean that those miracles were performed by the power of the Holy Spirit; or it may constitute a new subject, and refer to the gift of prophecy, the power of speaking other languages. Which is its true meaning cannot, perhaps, be ascertained. The interpretations *agree* in this, that he traced his success in *all* things to the aid of the Holy Spirit.

So that from Jerusalem. Jerusalem, as a *centre* of his work; the centre of all religious operations and preaching under the gospel. This was not the place where *Paul* began to preach, (Ga 1:17,18) but it was the place where the *gospel* was first preached, and the apostles began to reckon their success from that as a point. Comp. **See Barnes "Lu 24:49"**.

And round about. (*kai kuklw*) In a circle. That is, taking Jerusalem as a centre, he had fully preached round that centre until you come to Illyricum.

Unto Illyricum. Illyricum was a province lying to the northwest of Macedonia, bounded north by a part of Italy and Germany, east by Macedonia, south by the Adriatic, west by Istria. It comprehended the modern Croatia and Dalmatia. So that, taking Jerusalem as a centre, Paul preached not only in Damascus and Arabia, but in Syria, in Asia Minor, in all Greece, in the Grecian Islands,

and in Thessaly and Macedonia. This comprehended no small part of the then known world; *all* of which had heard the gospel by the labours of one indefatigable man. There is nowhere in the *Acts* express mention of Paul's going into Illyricum; nor does the expression imply that he preached the gospel within it, but only *unto* its borders. It may have been, however, that when in Macedonia, he crossed over into that country; and this is rendered somewhat probable from the fact that Titus is mentioned as having gone into *Dalmatia*, (2Ti 4:10) which was a part of Illyricum.

I have fully preached. The word here used means, properly, *to fill up*, (*peplhrwkenai*), *to complete*, and here is used in the sense of *diffusing abroad*, or of filling up all that region with the gospel. Comp. 2Ti 4:17. It means, that he had faithfully diffused the knowledge of the gospel in all that immense country.

{a} "signs and wonders" Ac 19:11 {b} "I have fully preached" Ro 1:14-16

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Yea, so have I strived*. The word used here (*filotimoumenon*) means, properly, *to be ambitious, to be studious of honour*; and then to *desire* earnestly. In that sense it is used here. He earnestly desired; he made it a point for which he struggled, to penetrate into regions which had not heard the gospel.

Not where Christ was named. Where the gospel had not been before preached.

Lest I should build, etc. That is, he desired to found churches himself; he regarded himself as particularly called to this. Others might be called to edify the church, but he regarded it as *his* office to make known the name of the Saviour where it was not before known. This work was particularly adapted to the ardour, zeal, energy, and bravery of such a man as Paul. Every man has his proper gift; and there are some particularly fitted to *found* and establish churches; others to edify and comfort them. Comp. 2Co 10:13-16. The apostle chose the higher honour, involving most danger and responsibility; but still *any* office in building up the church is honourable.

{c} "lest I should build" 2Co 10:13-16

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *But as it is written*. Isa 52:15. This is not literally quoted but the sense is retained. The design of quoting it is to justify the principle on which the apostle acted. It was revealed that the gospel should be preached to the Gentiles; and he regarded it as a high honour to be the instrument of carrying this prediction into effect.

{d} "To whom he was not spoken of" Isa 52:15

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *For which cause*. I have been so entirely occupied in this leading purpose of my life, that I have not been able to come to you.

Much hindered. Many ways; not many times. I had so frequent and urgent demands on my time elsewhere, that I could not come to you.

From coming to you. Where the gospel has been preached. I have desired to come, but have been unable to leave the vast region where I might preach the gospel to those who had never heard it.

{1} "much hindered" or, "many ways" or, "oftentimes" {e} "from coming to you" 1Th 2:18

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *But now*, etc. Having no further opportunity in these regions to preach to those who have never heard the gospel.

In these parts. In the regions before specified, he had gone over them, had established churches, had left them in the care of elders, (Ac 20:17) and was now prepared to penetrate into some new region, and lay the foundation of other churches.

And having a great desire, etc. See Ro 1:9-13.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Whensoever I take my journey into Spain*. Ancient Spain comprehended the modem kingdoms of Spain and Portugal, or the whole of the Spanish peninsula. It was then subject to the Romans. It is remarkable, even here, that the apostle does not say that his principal object was to visit the church at Rome, much as he desired that, but only to *take it in his way* in the fulfillment of his higher purpose to preach the gospel in regions where Christ was not named. Whether he ever fulfilled his purpose of visiting *Spain* is a matter of doubt. Some of the fathers, Theodoret (on Php 1:25 2Ti 4:17) among others, say that after he was released from his captivity, when he was brought before Nero, he passed two years in Spain. If he was imprisoned a *second* time at Rome, such a visit is not improbable as having taken place *between* the two imprisonments. But there is no certain evidence of this. Paul probably projected many journeys which were never accomplished.

To be brought on my way, etc. To be assisted by you in regard to this journey; or to be accompanied by you. This was the custom of the churches, Ac 15:3 17:14,16 20:38, 21:5 1Co 16:6,11 3Jo 1:6.

If first, etc. If on my journey, before I go into Spain.

Somewhat. Greek, *In part*. As though he could not be *fully satisfied* with their company, or could not hope to enjoy their society as fully and as long as he could desire. This is a very tender and delicate expression.

Filled. This is a strong expression, meaning to be *satisfied*, to enjoy. To be *filled* with a thing is to have great satisfaction and joy in it.

With your company. Greek, With *you*; meaning, in your society. The expression *to be filled* with one, in the sense of being gratified, is sometimes used in the classic writers. (See *Clarke* on this verse.)

{f} "brought on my way" Ac 15:3 3Jo 1:6 {1} "with your company" "with you"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 25

Verse 25. But now I go, etc. I am about to go now. The mention of this intended journey to Jerusalem is introduced in several other places, and is so mentioned that Dr. Paley has derived from it a very strong argument for the genuineness of this epistle.* This intended journey is mentioned in Ac 19:21, "Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, *to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome*." See also Ac 20:2,3. That he *went* to Jerusalem, according to his purpose, is recorded in his defence before Felix, (Ac 24:17,) "Now after many years, I came to bring aims to my nation, and offerings."

To minister to the saints. To supply their necessities by bearing the contribution which the churches have made for them.

{*} Paley's Horae Paulinae, chap 2, no 1. {g} "go unto Jerusalem" Ac 19:21

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *For it hath pleased them of Macedonia*. That is, they have done it *cheerfully and voluntarily*. See their liberality and cheerfulness commended by the apostle in 2Co 8:1-6 9:2. Paul had been at much pains to obtain this collection, but still they did it freely. See 2Co 9:4-7. It was with reference to this collection that he directed them to lay by for this purpose as God had prospered them, on the first day of the week, 1Co 16:2.

Of Macedonia. That is, the Christians in Macedonia—those who had been Gentiles, and who had been converted to the Christian religion, Ro 15:27. Macedonia was a country of Greece, bounded north by Thrace, south by Thessaly, west by Epirus, and east by the AEgean Sea. It was an extensive region, and was the kingdom of Philip, and his son Alexander the Great. Its capital was Philippi, at which place Paul planted a church. A church was also established at Thessalonica, another city of that country, Ac 16:9,etc.; comp. Ac 18:5 19:21; 2Co 7:5 1Th 1:1,7,8 4:10.

And Achaia. Achaia, in the largest sense, comprehended *all* ancient Greece. Achaia Proper, however, was a province of Greece, embracing the western part of the Peloponnesus, of which Corinth was the capital. **See Barnes "Ac 18:12"**.

This place is mentioned as having been concerned in this collection, in 2Co 9:2.

The poor saints, etc. The Christians who were in Judea were exposed to peculiar trials. They were condemned by the sanhedrim, opposed by the rulers, and persecuted by the people. See Ac 8:1, Ac 12:1, etc. Paul sought not only to relieve them by this contribution, but also to promote fellow-feeling between them and the Gentile Christians. And *this* circumstance would tend much to enforce what he had been urging in chapters 14 and 15 on the duty of kind feeling between the

Jewish and Gentile converts to Christianity. Nothing tends so much to wear off prejudice, and to prevent unkind feeling in regard to others, as to see about some purpose *to do them good*, or to unite *with* them in doing good.

{h} "Macedonia and Achia" 2Co 8:1 9:2,12

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THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *Their debtors*. The reason he immediately states. Comp. Ro 1:14.

Of their spiritual things. Have received the gospel by the instrumentality of those who had been Jews; and were admitted now to the same privileges with them.

Carnal things. Things pertaining to the flesh; that is, to this life. On this ground the apostle puts the obligation to support the ministers of the gospel, 1Co 9:11. It becomes a matter of *debt* where the hearer of the gospel *receives*, in spiritual blessings, far more than he confers by supporting the ministry. Every man who contributes his due proportion to support the gospel may receive far more, in return, in his own peace, edification, and in the order and happiness of his family, than his money could purchase in any other way. The *gain* is on his side, and the money is not lost. The minister is not a beggar; and that which is necessary to his support is not almsgiving. He has an equitable claim—as much as a physician, or a lawyer, or a teacher of youth has—on the necessaries and comforts of life.

{i} "duty is also to minister" 1Co 9:11.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *Have sealed to them*. That is, have *secured it* to them. To seal an instrument of writing, a contract, deed, etc., is to *authenticate it*, to make it *sure*.. In this sense it is used here. Paul was going himself to see that it was placed *securely* in their hands.

This fruit. This result of the liberality of the Gentile churches— the fruit which their benevolence had produced.

I will come, etc. This was Paul's purpose; but it is not clear that he ever accomplished it. **See Barnes "Ro 15:24".**

By you. Taking Rome in my way.

{k} "I will come by you into Spain" Php 4:17.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *I am sure*. Greek, *I know*; expressing the fullest confidence, a confidence that was greatly confirmed by the success of his labours elsewhere.

In the fulness of the blessing, etc. This is a Hebrew mode of expression, where one noun performs the purpose of an adjective, and means *with a full or abundant blessing*. This confidence he expressed in other language in Ro 1:11,12. **See Barnes "Ro 1:11"**

Of the gospel of Christ. Which the gospel of Christ is fitted to impart. Thus every minister of the gospel should wish to go. This should be his ever-burning desire in preaching. Paul went to Rome; but he went in bonds, Acts chapters 27 and 28. But though he went in this manner, he was permitted there to preach the gospel for at least two years; nor can we doubt that his ministry was attended with the anticipated success, Ac 28:30,31. God may disappoint us in regard to the *mode* in which we purpose to do good; but if we really desire it, he will enable us to do it in *his own way*. It *may* be better to preach the gospel in *bonds* than at liberty; it *is* better to do it even in a prison, than not at all. Bunyan wrote the Pilgrim's Progress to amuse his heavy hours during a twelve years' cruel imprisonment, If he had been at liberty, he probably would not have written it at all. The great desire of his heart was accomplished, but a *prison* was the place in which to do it. Paul preached; but preached in chains.

{l} "I come unto you" Ro 1:11,12

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *For the Lord Jesus Christ's sake*. Greek, By or through (*dia*) our Lord Jesus Christ. It means, probably, out of love and regard to him; in order to promote his honour and glory, and to extend his kingdom among men. Paul desired to be delivered from the hands of the Jews, that he might promote the honour of Jesus Christ among the Gentiles.

And for the love of the Spirit, (*dia*). By the mutual love and sympathy which the Spirit of God produces in the minds of all who are the friends of God. I beseech you now to manifest that love by praying earnestly for me.

That ye strive together with me. That you unite with me in earnest prayer. The word *strive* denotes intense *agony* or effort, such as was used by the wrestlers in the Greek games; and then the *agony*, or strong effort, which a man makes in prayer, who is earnestly desirous to be heard. The use of the word here denotes Paul's earnest desire that they should make an *intense* effort in their prayers that he might be delivered. Christians, though at a distance from each other, may unite their prayers for a common object. Christians everywhere *should* wrestle in prayer for the ministers of the gospel, that they may be kept from temptations; and especially for those who are engaged, as the apostle was, in arduous efforts among the heathen, that they may be kept from the many dangers to which they are exposed in their journeyings in pagan lands.

{m} "love of the Spirit" Php 2:1 {n} "together" Col 4:12

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *That I may be*, etc. The unbelieving Jews in Judea had been opposed to Paul's conversion. They could not forget that he had borne letters of commission from them to persecute the Christians at Damascus. They regarded him as an apostate. They had heard of his success among the Gentiles; and they had been informed that he "taught all the Jews among the Gentiles to forsake the laws of Moses," Ac 21:21. Hence the apostle could not but be aware that, in returning to Judea, he exposed himself to peculiar dangers. His fears, as the result showed, were well founded. They evinced all the opposition to him which he had ever anticipated, Ac 21:21.

And that my service. My ministry; or the act of service which I am going to perform for them; referring to the contribution which he was bearing for the poor saints at Jerusalem.

For Jerusalem. For the poor Christians in Jerusalem.

May be accepted of the saints. That the poor Christians there may be willing to receive it. The grounds of *doubt* and *hesitation*, whether they would be willing to receive this, seem to have been two:

(1.) Many, even among Christians, might have had their minds filled with prejudice against the apostle, from the reports constantly in circulation among the Jews, that he was opposing and denouncing the customs of Moses. Hence, in order to satisfy them, when he went up to Jerusalem, he actually performed a *vow*, in accordance with the law of Moses, to show that he did not intend to treat his laws with contempt, Ac 21:22,23,26,27.

(2.) Many of the converts from Judaism might be indisposed to receive an offering made by *Gentiles*. They might have retained many of their former feelings—that the Gentiles were polluted, and that they ought to have no fellowship with them. Early opinions and prejudices wear off by slow degrees. Christians retain former notions long after their conversion; and often many years are required to teach them enlarged views of Christian charity. It is not wonderful that the Christians in Judea should have been slow to learn all the ennobling lessons of Christian benevolence, surrounded as they were by the institutions of the Jewish religion, and having been themselves educated in the strictest regard for those institutions.

{o} "that I may be delivered" 2Th 3:2 {1} "do not believe" or, "are disobedient"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *That I may come unto you*. That I may not be impeded in my intended journey by opposition in Judea.

With joy. Joy to myself in being permitted to come and producing joy to you by my presence.

By the will of God. If God will; If God permit. After all his desires, and all their prayers, it still depended on the will of God; and to that the apostle was desirous to submit. This should be the end of our most ardent desires, and this the object of all our prayers, that the will of God should be done. Comp. Jas 4:14,15. Paul *did* go by the will of God; but he went in bonds.

And be refreshed. Greek, May find *rest* or *solace* with you.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *Now the God of peace*. God, the author or promoter of peace and union. In Ro 15:13 he is called the God of hope. Here the apostle desires that the God who gives peace would impart to them union of sentiment and feeling, particularly between the Jewish and Gentile Christians—the great object for which he laboured in his journey to Judea, and which he had been endeavouring to promote throughout this epistle. See 1Co 14:33 Heb 13:20.

This is the close of the doctrinal and hortatory parts of this epistle. The remainder is made up chiefly of salutations. In the verses concluding this chapter, Paul expressed his earnest desire to visit Rome. He besought his brethren to pray that he might be delivered from the unbelievers among the Jews. His main desire was granted. He was permitted to visit Rome; yet the very thing from which he sought to be delivered, the very opposition of the Jews, made it necessary for him to appeal to Caesar, and this was the means of his accomplishing his desire. (See the closing chapters of the Acts of the Apostles.) God thus often grants our *main* desire; he hears our prayer; but he may make use of that from which we pray to be delivered as the *means* of fulfilling our own requests. The Christian prays that he may be sanctified; yet at the same time he may pray to be delivered from affliction. God will hear his *main* desire, to be made holy; will convert that which he fears into a blessing, and make it the means of accomplishing the great end. It is right to express our *desires—all* our desires—to God; but it should be with a willingness that he should choose his own means to accomplish the object of our wishes. Provided the *God of peace* is with us, all is well.

{p} "peace be with you all" 1Co 14:33 Heb 13:20

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 16

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 1

ROMANS Chapter 16

THE epistle concludes with various salutations. The *names* which occur in this chapter are chiefly *Greek*; and the persons designated had been, probably, inhabitants of Greece, but had removed to Rome for purposes of commerce, etc. Possibly some of them had been converted under the ministry of the apostle himself during his preaching in Corinth and other parts of Greece. It is remarkable that the name of *Peter* does not occur in this catalogue; which is conclusive evidence, contrary to the Papists, that Peter was not then known by Paul to be in Rome.

Verse 1. *I commend*. It was common then, as now, to bear letters of introduction to strangers, commending the person thus introduced to the favourable regards and attentions of those to whom the letters were addressed, 2Co 3:1 Ac 18:27. This epistle, with the apostle's commendation, was designed thus to introduce its bearer to the Roman Christians. The mention of Phebe in this manner leaves it beyond a doubt that she was either the bearer of this epistle, or accompanied those who bore it to Rome. The epistle was therefore written, probably, at Corinth. (See Introduction.)

Our sister. A member of the Christian church.

Which is a servant. Greek, "Who is a *deaconess*." It is clear, from the New Testament, that there was an order of women in the church known as *deaconesses*, Reference is made to a class of females whose duty it was to *teach* other females, and to take the general superintendence of that part of the church, in various places in the New Testament; and their existence is expressly affirmed in early ecclesiastical history. They appear to have been commonly aged and experienced widows, sustaining a fair reputation, and fitted to guide and instruct those who were young and inexperienced. Comp. 1Ti 5:3,9-11 Tit 2:4.

The Apostolical Constitutions, Book iii., say, "Ordain a deaconess who is faithful and holy, for the ministries toward the women." Pliny, in his celebrated letter to Trajan, says, when speaking of the efforts which he made to obtain information respecting the opinions and practices of Christians, "I deemed it necessary to put two maid-servants who are called *ministrae* [that is, *deaconesses*] to the torture, in order to ascertain what is the truth." The reasons of their appointment among the Gentiles were these:

(1.) The females were usually separate from the men. They were kept secluded, for the most part, and not permitted to mingle in society with men, as is the custom now.

(2.) It became necessary, therefore, to appoint aged and experienced females to instruct the young, to visit the sick, to provide for them, and to perform for them the services which male deacons performed for the whole church. It is evident, however, that they were confined to these offices, and that they were never regarded as an order of ministers, or suffered *to preach* to congregations, 1Ti 2:12; 1Co 14:34.

Of the church, etc. This is the only mention which occurs of a church at that place. It was probably collected by the labours of Paul.

At Cenchrea. This was the *sea-port* of Corinth. Corinth was situated on the middle of the isthmus, and had *two* harbours, or ports: *Cenchrea* on the east, about eight or nine miles from the city; and *Lechaeum* on the west. Cenchrea opened into the AEgean Sea, and was the principal port. It was on this *isthmus*, between these two ports, that the *Isthmian* games were celebrated, to which the apostle refers so often in his epistles.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *That ye receive her*, etc. That you acknowledge her as being in the Lord, or as being a servant of the Lord; that is, as a Christian. Comp. Ro 14:3 Php 2:29.

As becometh saints. As it is proper that Christians should treat their brethren.

She hath been a succourer of many. The word used here *prostativ*) means, properly, *a patron, a help*, and was applied by the Greeks to one who *presided* over an assembly; to one who became *a patron* of others; who aided or defended them in their cause; and especially one who undertook to manage the cause of *strangers* and foreigners before the courts. It was, therefore, an honourable appellation. Applied to Phebe, it means probably that she had shown great kindness in various ways to the apostle, and to other Christians; probably by receiving them into her house; by administering to the sick, etc. Such persons have a claim on the respect and Christian attentions of others.

{q} "receive her in the Lord" Php 2:29

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Greet Priscilla and Aquila*. Salute; implying the apostle's kind remembrance of them, and his wishes for their welfare.

Priscilla. Priscilla was the wife of Aquila. They are mentioned in Ac 18:2,26; 1Co 16:19.

Paul at first found them at Corinth. Aquila was a Jew, born in Pontus, who had resided at Rome, and who had left Rome, and come to Corinth, when Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome. **See Barnes "Ac 18:2".**

It is probable that they were converted under the preaching of Paul. Paul lived with them, and they had the advantage of his private instruction, Ac 18:3; comp. Ro 16:26. At the death of Claudius, or whenever the decree for the expulsion of the Jews was repealed, it is probable that they returned to Rome.

My helpers. My fellow-workers. They had aided him in his work. A particular instance is mentioned in Ac 18:26. They are mentioned as having been with Paul when he wrote the first epistle to the Corinthians, 1Co 16:19.

In Christ Jesus. In the Christian cause.

{r} "Priscilla and Aquila" Ac 18:2

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Who have for my life*. In order to save my life.

Laid down their own necks. To *lay down the neck* is to lay the head on a block to be cut off with the axe; or to bow down the head as when the neck was exposed to be cut off by the sword of the executioner The meaning is, that they had hazarded their lives, had exposed themselves to imminent danger, to save the life of Paul. On what occasion this was done is not known, as it is not elsewhere referred to in the New Testament. As Paul, however, lived with them, (Ac 18:3) and as he was often persecuted by the Jews, it is probable that he refers to some such period when he was persecuted, when Aquila and Priscilla took him into their house at the imminent hazard of their lives.

All the churches of the Gentiles. All the churches that had been founded by the apostles. They felt their obligation to them for having saved the life of him who had been their founder and who was their spiritual father.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *The church that is in their house*. Aquila and Priscilla are mentioned (Ac 18:26) as having received *Apollos* into their family, to instruct him more perfectly. The church in their house is also mentioned, 1Co 16:19. This may mean either the church that was accustomed to assemble for worship at their hospitable mansion; or it may mean their own family with their guests, regarded

as a church. In those times Christians had no houses erected for public worship, and were therefore compelled to meet in their private dwellings.

Salute. The same word before translated "*greet*."

Who is the firstfruits. One who first embraced Christianity under my preaching in Achaia. The *first-fruits* were a small part of the harvest, which was first gathered and offered to the Lord, Ex 22:29 23:10; Le 2:12 De 18:4.

In allusion to this, Paul calls Epenetus the first fruits of the great spiritual harvest which had been gathered in Achaia.

Achaia. **See Barnes "Ro 15:26"**.

This name and those which follow are chiefly *Greek*, but we know little of the persons mentioned, except what is here recorded.

{s} "Salute my well-beloved Epenatus" 1Co 16:19

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Who bestowed much labour on us*. Who laboured much for us. Nothing more is known of her but this honourable mention of her name. It is probable that these persons were formerly residents in Greece, and that the apostle had there become acquainted with them, but that they had now removed to Rome.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *My kinsmen*. In Ro 9:3, the apostle calls *all* the Jews *his kinsmen*, and it has been doubted whether he means anything more here than that they were *fellow-Jews*. But as many others who were Jews are mentioned here without this appellation, and as he especially designates these persons, and Herodian, (Ro 16:11,) it seems probable that they were remote relatives of the apostle.

My fellow prisoners. Paul was often in prison; and it is probable that on some of those occasions they had been confined with him. Comp. 2Co 11:23, "In prisons more frequent."

Who are of note. The word translated *of note*, (*epishmoi*) denotes, properly, those who are *marked*, designated, or distinguished in any way; used either in a good or bad sense. Comp. Mt 27:16. Here it is used in a good sense.

Among the apostles. This does not mean that they *were* apostles, as has been sometimes supposed. For,

(1.) there is no account of their having been appointed as such.

(2.) The expression is not one which would have been used if they *had* been. It would have been, "who were distinguished *apostles*." Comp. Ro 1:1 1Co 1:1; 2Co 1:1 Col 1:1.

(3.) It by no means implies that they were apostles. All that the expression fairly implies is, that they were known to the other apostles; that they were regarded by them as worthy of their affection and confidence; that they had been known by them, as Paul immediately adds, before *he* was himself

converted. They had been converted *before* he was, and were distinguished in Jerusalem among the early Christians, and honoured with the friendship of the other apostles.

(4.) The design of the office of *apostles* was to bear *witness* to the life, death, resurrection, doctrines, and miracles of Christ. Comp. Mt 10 Ac 1:21,22, 22:15.

As there is no evidence that they had been *witnesses* of these things, or appointed to it, it is improbable that they were set apart to the apostolic office,

(5.) The word *apostles* is used sometimes to designate *messengers* of churches; or those who were *sent* from one church to another on some important business; and *if* this expression meant that they *were* apostles, it could only be in some such sense as having obtained deserved credit and eminence in that business. See Php 2:25 2Co 8:23.

Who were in Christ, etc. Who *were* converted before I was. The meaning is clear. The expression, *in Christ*, means to be united to him, to be interested in his religion, to be Christians.

{t} "in Christ" Ga 1:22

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 8

Verse 8. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 9

Verse 9. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Approved in Christ*. An approved or tried Christian; approved and beloved by Christ.

{1} "household", or "friends"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 11

Verse 11. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Tryphena and Tryphosa*. These names, with the participle rendered "who labour," are in the feminine gender, and these were probably two holy women, who performed the office

of deaconesses, or who ministered to the sick, and who with Persis, thus by example, and perhaps by instruction, laboured to promote the spread of Christianity. Pious females then, as now, were able to do much in their proper sphere to extend the truths and blessings of the gospel.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Chosen in the Lord*. *Elect* in the Lord; that is, a chosen follower of Christ.

And his mother and mine. "His mother in a literal sense, and mine in a figurative one." An instance of the delicacy and tenderness of Paul; of his love for this disciple and his mother, as if he were of the same family, Religion binds the hearts of all who embrace it tenderly together. It makes them feel that they are one great family, united by tender ties, and joined by peculiar attachments. See what the Lord Jesus declared in Mt 12:47-50, and his tender address to John when he was on the cross, Joh 19:28,27.

{u} "chosen in the Lord" Eph 1:4 2Jo 1:1

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 14

Verse 14. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 15

Verse 15. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Salute one another*. Greet one another in an affectionate manner; that is, treat each other with kindness and love, and evince all proper marks of affection.

With an holy kiss. This mode of salutation has been practised at all times; and particularly in eastern nations. It was even practised by *men*. **See Barnes "Lu 22:47,48"**.

The use of the word *holy* here serves to denote that Paul intended it as an expression of *Christian* affection; and to guard against all improper familiarity and scandal. It was common, according to Justin Martyr, (Apology,) for the early Christians to practise it in their religious assemblies.

The churches of Christ. That is, the churches in the vicinity of the place where the apostle wrote this epistle; probably the churches particularly in Achaia.

{y} "The churches of Christ" 1Co 16:20 1Pe 5:14

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Now I beseech you*. One great object of this epistle had been to promote *peace* between the Jewish and Gentile converts. So much did this subject press upon the mind of the apostle, that he seems unwilling to leave it. Re returns to it again and again; and even after the epistle is apparently concluded, he returns to it, to give them a new charge on the subject.

Mark them. Observe attentively, cautiously, and faithfully, (Php 3:17) be on your guard against them. Ascertain *who are* the real causes of the divisions that spring up, and avoid them.

Which cause. Who make. Probably he refers here to *Jewish* teachers, or those who insisted strenuously on the observance of the rites of Moses, and who setup a claim for greater purity and orthodoxy than those possessed who received the Gentile converts as Christian brethren. The Jews were perpetually thus recalling the Christian converts to the law of Moses; insisting on the observance of those rites; troubling the churches, and producing dissensions and strifes, Ga 3:1 5:1-8; Ac 15:1,24.

Divisions. Dissensions; parties; factions, 1Co 3:3 Ga 5:20. The very *attempt* to form such parties was evil, no matter what the pretence. They who attempt to form parties in the churches are commonly actuated by some evil or ambitious design.

And offences. Scandals; or that give occasion for others to fall into sin. These two things are different. The first means parties; the other denotes such a course of life as would head others into sin. The *Jew* would form parties, on the pretence of superior holiness; the Gentiles, or some bold Gentile convert, might deride the scrupulous feelings of the Jew, and might thus lead him into *sin* in regard to what his conscience really forbade. See Ro 14:15. These persons on both sides were to be avoided, and they were to refuse to follow them, and to cultivate the spirit of unity and peace.

Contrary to the doctrine. To the *teaching* which you have received in this epistle and elsewhere; the teaching that these divisions should cease; that the Jewish ceremonies are not binding; that all should lay aside their causes of former difference, and be united in one family. See Romans chapters 14 and 15.

And avoid them. Give them no countenance or approbation. Do not follow them. Comp. 1Ti 6:3,4,6 2Jo 1:10 Ga 1:8,9.

That is, avoid them *as teachers*; do not follow them. It does not mean that they were to be treated harshly; but that they were to be avoided in their *instructions*. They were to disregard all that they could say tending to produce alienation and strife; and resolve to cultivate the spirit of peace and union. This would be an admirable rule if always followed. Let men make *peace* their prime object; resolve to love all who *are* Christians, and it will be an infallible gauge by which to measure the arguments of those who seek to promote alienations and contentions.

{w} "and offenses" 1Ti 6:3-5 {x} "avoid them" Mt 18:17 1Co 5:11; 2Th 3:6,14

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Serve not*. Obey not. Though they are professedly, yet they are not his real friends and followers.

But their own belly. Their own lusts; their own private interests; they do this to obtain support. The authors of parties and divisions, in church and state, have this usually in view. It is for the indulgence of some earthly appetite; to obtain office or property; or to gratify the love of dominion.

And by good words. Mild, fair, plausible speeches; with an appearance of great sincerity, and regard for the truth. Comp. Col 2:4 2Pe 2:3. Men who cause divisions commonly make great pretensions to peculiar love of truth and orthodoxy; and put on the appearance of great sincerity, sanctity, and humility.

And fair speeches. Greek, (*eulogiav*) eulogy, praise, flattery. This is another very common art. *Flattery* is one of the most powerful means of forming parties in the church; and *a little special attention*, or promise of an office, or commendation for talents or acquirements, will secure many to the purposes of party, whom no regard for truth or orthodoxy could influence a moment.

Deceive the hearts of the simple. The minds of the unsuspecting, or those who are without guile, (*twn akakwn*). The apostle means to designate those who are simple-hearted, without any disposition to deceive others themselves, and of course without any suspicions of the *designs* of others. He has thus drawn the art of making parties with the hand of a master. First, there are smooth, plausible pretences, as of great love for truth. Then, an artful mingling of attentions and flatteries; and all this practised on the minds of the unsuspecting, drawing their *hearts* and *affections* towards themselves. Happy would it have been if the art had been confined to his own times.

{y} "and by good words" Php 3:19 {z} "fair speeches" Col 2:4 2Pe 2:3

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *For your obedience*, etc. Ro 1:8. Your mild, obedient disposition to learn, and to obey the precepts of the teachers of religion.

I am glad, etc. I rejoice that you evince such a disposition. But he immediately adds, that *this* was just the temper to be imposed upon, and cautions them against that danger.

Wise unto that which is good. Evince understanding of that which is adapted to promote good and worthy ends.

Simple concerning evil. Greek, *harmless*. Not disposed to do wrong; having no plan, and yielding to none of the allurements of evil. You have shown your wisdom in *obeying* the gospel. I would have you still evince wisdom towards *every good* design; but to be unacquainted with any plan of evil. Do not yield to those plans, or follow those who would lead you into them.

{a} "abroad unto all men" Ro 1:8 {b} "wise unto that which is good" Mt 10:16 {1} "simple" or, "harmless"

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *And the God of peace*. The God who promotes peace, Ro 15:33.

Shall bruise. The *language* here refers to the prediction in Ge 3:15. It here means *to subdue, to gain the victory over*. It denotes Paul's confidence that they would gain the victory, and would be

able to overcome all the arts of those who were endeavouring to sow discord and contention among them.

Satan. The word *Satan* is Hebrew, meaning, originally, *an accuser*, *a calumniator*, and then *an enemy*. It is given to the prince of evil spirits from his enmity to God and men. He is here regarded as the *author* of all attempts to promote discord in the church, by whomsoever those attempts were made. Hence they who attempt to produce divisions are called "his ministers," 2Co 11:15. God would disappoint their malignant purposes, and promote the prevalence of peace.

The grace. The favour; the mercy, etc. The Lord Jesus is the Prince of Peace, (Isa 9:6 comp. Lu 2:14 Joh 14:27); and this expression is *a prayer to him*, or an earnest wish expressed, that the design of his coming might be accomplished in promoting the prevalence of order and peace. Comp. 1Co 16:23 Re 22:21.

{c} "God of peace" Ro 15:33 {2) "bruise" or, "tread" {d} "Satan" Ge 3:15 {e} "shortly" Re 12:10 {f} "Amen" 1Co 16:23 Re 22:21

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Timotheus*. Timothy; to whom the epistles which bear his name were written. He was long the companion of Paul in his labours, Ac 16:1 1Co 16:10; 2Co 1:1,19; Php 2:19 1Th 3:2; 1Ti 1:2 Heb 13:23.

And Lucius. He is mentioned in Ac 13:1 as a prophet and teacher, a native of Cyrene. Nothing more is known of him.

My kinsmen. Ro 16:7

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 22

Verse 23. *I Tertius*. Of Tertius nothing more is known than is mentioned here.

Who wrote this. It is evident that Paul employed an amanuensis to write this epistle, and perhaps he commonly did it. Tertius, who thus wrote it, joins with the apostle in affectionate salutations to the brethren at Rome. To the epistle Paul signed his own name, and added a salutation in his own hand-writing. Col 3:18, "The salutation by the hand of me Paul;" and in 2Th 3:17, he says that this was done in every epistle. 1Co 16:21.

In the Lord. As Christian brethren.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Gaius mine host*. Who has received me into his house, and shown me hospitality. The word *host* means one who entertains another at his own house without reward.

And of the whole church. Who has opened his house to entertain *all* Christians; or to show hospitality to them all. He was baptized by Paul himself at Corinth, (1Co 1:14) and was so highly esteemed by the church, that John wrote an epistle to him, 3Jo 1:1. He was probably a wealthy citizen of Corinth, who freely opened his house to entertain Christians, and for the purpose of religious worship.

Erastus. Erastus is mentioned (Ac 19:22) as having been sent by Paul with Timothy into Macedonia. He is also mentioned (2Ti 4:20) as having resided at Corinth.

The chamberlain. A *chamberlain* is, properly, an officer who has charge of a chamber, or of chambers. In England, the lord chamberlain is the sixth officer of the crown, and has charge of the king's lodgings and wardrobe, etc. He has also an important rank on days of public solemnities, as the coronation day, etc. The word used here is commonly in the New Testament translated *steward*. It properly means one who has charge of domestic affairs, to provide for a family, to pay the servants, etc. In this place it means one who presided over the pecuniary affairs of the *city*; and should have been translated the *treasurer; the city treasurer*; an office of trust and of some importance, showing that *all* who were converted at Corinth were not of the lowest rank. This is implied in 1Co 1:26, "Not *many* wise men, not *many* mighty, not *many* noble, are called," implying that there were *some* such.

Quartus, a brother, A fellow-Christian.

{g} "Gaius" 1Co 1:14 3Jo 1:1 {h} "Erastus" Ac 19:22

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 24

Verse 24. No Barnes text on this verse.

{i} "grace of our Lord"

Ro 16:20

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Now to him*. This and the two following verses are found in many manuscripts at the close of the fourteenth chapter. Its proper place, however, is here; and the apostle thus concludes the whole epistle with an ascription of praise.

To him, etc. To God; be glory, Ro 16:20.

Is of power. Greek, Is able; who has power, Eph 3:20; Jude 1:24, "Now unto him that is able to keep you from failing," etc. God only can keep Christians in the path of salvation; and it was well to bring that truth prominently into view at the close of the epistle.

To stablish you. To strengthen and confirm you.

According to my Gospel. According to the gospel which I preach; the doctrines which I have been defending in this epistle. It is called *his* gospel, not because he was the author of it, or because others did not preach it also, but because he had been *particularly* defending it in this epistle. The doctrines which he had advanced were just those which were fitted to strengthen and confirm

them—the doctrine of justification, of election, of perseverance, and of the protection and favour of God to both Jews and Gentiles. These were the doctrines which he had defended; and it might easily be shown that *these* are the doctrines that give stability to the Christian faith, hope, and love.

And the preaching of Jesus Christ. Not his *personal* preaching; but according to that preaching of which Christ is the author and the subject; and particularly, as the following clause shows, to the doctrines by which the partition between the Jews and the Gentiles was broken down, and by which they were admitted to the same privileges and hopes.

According to the revelation. According to the communication of that which has been so long concealed, but which is now made manifest. The word *revelation*, refers to the *publication* of the plan by the gospel.

Of the mystery. The word *mystery* means, properly, that which *is hidden* or *concealed*, and is thus applied to any doctrine which was not before known. It does not mean necessarily that which is *unintelligible*; but that which had not been before revealed. **See Barnes "Mt 13:11"**.

The word here seems to refer to the principal doctrines of the gospel; its main truths, which had been concealed, especially from the entire Gentile world, but which were now made known.

Which was kept secret. Which was kept in silence, Greek, (*sesighmenou*) were not divulged or proclaimed.

Since the world began. In all past times. This refers particularly to the Gentiles. The Jews had some obscure intimations of these truths, but they were now made known to all the world. The phrase "since the world began" is, in Greek, "in eternal times;" that is, in *all* past times; or, as we should say, they have been *always* concealed.

{j} "to him that is of power" Eph 3:20 Jude 1:24 {k} "revelation of the mystery" Eph 1:9 Col 1:26,27

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *But now is made manifest*. Is revealed, or made known; that which was so long concealed is now divulged, i.e. God's plan of saving men is now made known to all nations.

And by the Scriptures, etc. By the *writings* of the prophets. The prophetic writings contained the doctrines, obscurely indeed, but so as to be an important means of disseminating and confirming the truth, that the Gentiles should be made acquainted with the gospel. To those writings the apostle had repeatedly appealed in his defence of the proposition, that the gospel was to be preached to the Gentile world, chapters 10, 11, 15. The prophetic writings, moreover were extensively scattered among the Gentile nations, and thus were readily appealed to in defence of this position. Their writings being thus translated, and read, were an important means of propagating the truths of the Christian religion.

According to the commandment, etc. By his command through Jesus Christ; made known in the gospel of his Son.

The everlasting God. God who is *eternal*, and therefore unchanged. He who has indeed *concealed* this truth, but who has always *intended* that it should be revealed.

To all nations. Mt 28:19. Comp. Col 1:23.

{l} "all nations" Mt 28:19

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *To God only wise*. The apostle here resumes the doxology which had been interrupted by the parenthesis. The attribute of *wisdom* is here brought into view, because it had been particularly displayed in this plan which was now revealed. It evinced, in an eminent degree, the *wisdom* of God. That wisdom was evinced in devising the plan; in adapting it to the renewing of the heart; the justification of the sinner; his preservation, guidance, and sanctification; and in the manner in which the Divine attributes had all been seen to harmonize. All this the apostle had illustrated in the previous parts of the epistle; and now, full of the convictions of this wisdom, he desires that all the praise and honour should be to God. The *tendency* of the plan is to promote His glory. The *obligation* on all who are benefited by it is to give him praise.

Be glory. Praise; honour.

Through Jesus Christ. By means of the work which Jesus Christ has performed; through him now as Mediator and Intercessor in the heavens.

The subscription, "written to the Romans," etc., is evidently added by some other hand, but by whom is unknown. Paul assuredly would not write this to inform the Romans that it was sent by Phebe, whom he had just commended to their kindness. It has been shown, moreover, that no reliance is to be placed on any of the subscriptions to the epistles. Some of them are known to be false. By whom they were added is unknown. In this case, however, the fact which it states is correct, that it was written from Corinth, and sent by Phebe.

THE END

{m} "To God only wise" 1Ti 1:17 Jude 1:25

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 1

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

INTRODUCTION

I.—THE SITUATION OF CORINTH, AND THE CHARACTER OF ITS INHABITANTS

CORINTH was, properly, a small dynasty or territory in Greece, bounded on the east by the gulf of Saron; on the south by the kingdom of Argos; on the west by Sicyon; and on the north by the kingdom of Megaris, and upper part of the isthmus and bay of Corinth, the latter of which is now called the Golfo de Lepanto, or the gulf of Lepanto. This tract, or region, not large in size, possessed a few rich plains, but was in general uneven, and the soil of an indifferent quality. The city of Corinth was the capital of this region. It stood near the middle of the isthmus, which in the narrowest part was about six miles wide, though somewhat wider where Corinth stood. Here was the natural *carrying-place*, or portage, from the Ionian sea on the west, to the AEgean on the east. Many efforts were made by the Greeks, and afterwards by the Romans, to effect a communication between the AEgean and Adriatic seas by cutting across this isthmus; and traces still remain of these attempts. Means were even contrived for transporting vessels across. This isthmus was also particularly important, as it was the key of the Peloponnesus; and attempts were often made to fortify it. The city had two harbours—Lechseum on the gulf of Corinth, or sea of Crissa on the west, to which it was joined by a double wall, twelve stadia, or about a mile and a half in length; and Cenchrea on the sea of Saron on the east, distant about seventy stadia, or nearly nine miles. It was a situation, therefore, peculiarly favourable for commerce, and highly important in the defence of Greece.

The city is said to have been founded by Sisyphus, long before the siege of Troy, and was then called Ephyra. The time when it was founded is, however, unknown. The name *Corinth* was supposed to have been given to it from Corin— thus, who, by different authors, is said to have been the son of Jupiter, or of Marathon, or of Pelops, who is said to have rebuilt and adorned the city.

The city of Corinth was built at the foot of a high hill, on the top of which stood a citadel. This hill, which stood on the south of the city, was its defence in that quarter, as its sides were extremely steep. On the three other sides it was protected by strong and lofty ramparts. The circumference of the city proper was about forty stadia, or five miles. Its situation gave it great commercial advantages. As the whole of that region was mountainous and rather barren, and as the situation gave the city

extraordinary commercial advantages, the inhabitants early turned their attention to commerce, and amassed great wealth. This fact was, to no inconsiderable extent, the foundation of the luxury, effeminacy, and vices, for which the city afterwards became so much distinguished.

The merchandise of Italy, Sicily, and the western nations, was landed at Lechseum on the west; and that of the islands of the AEgean sea, of Asia Minor, and of the Phoenicians, and other oriental nations, at Cenchrea on the east. The city of Corinth thus became the mart of Asia and Europe, covered the sea with its ships, and formed a navy to protect its commerce. It was distinguished by building galleys and ships of a new and improved form; and its naval force procured it respect from other nations. Its population and its wealth were thus increased by the influx of foreigners. It became a city rather distinguished by its wealth, and naval force, and commerce, than by its military achievements, though it produced a few of the most valiant in the armies of and distinguished leaders in the armies of Greece.

Its population was increased, and its character somewhat formed, from another circumstance. In the neighbourhood of the city the *Isthmian games* were celebrated, which attracted so much attention, and which drew so many strangers from distant parts of the world. To those games the apostle Paul not infrequently refers, when recommending Christian energy and activity. **See Barnes** "1Co 9:24, **See Barnes** "1Co 9:26, **See Barnes "1Co 9:27".**

Comp. Heb 12:1.

From these causes, the city of Corinth became eminent among all ancient cities for wealth, and luxury, and dissipation. It was the mart of the world. Wealth flowed into it from all quarters. Luxury, amusement, and dissipation, were the natural consequents, until it became the most gay and dissolute city of its times—*the Paris of antiquity*.

There was another cause which contributed to its character of dissoluteness and corruption. I refer to its religion. The principal deity worshipped in the city was Venus; as Diana was the principal deity worshipped at Ephesus, Minerva at Athens, etc. Ancient cities were devoted usually to some particular god or goddess, and were supposed to be under their peculiar protection. **See Barnes "Ac 14:13".**

Corinth was devoted, or dedicated, thus to the goddess of love, or licentious passion; and the effect may be easily conceived The temple of Venus was erected on the north side or slope of the Acrocorinthus, a mountain about half a mile in height on the south of the city; and from the summit of which a magnificent prospect opened on the north to Parnassus and Helicon, to the eastward the island of AEgina and the citadel of Athens, and to the west the rich and beautiful plains of Sicyon. This mountain was covered with temples and splendid houses; but was especially devoted to Venus, and was the place of her worship. Her shrine appeared above those of the other gods; and it was enjoined by law, that one thousand beautiful females should officiate as courtesans, or public prostitutes, before the altar of the goddess of love. In a time of public calamity and imminent danger, these women attended at the sacrifices, and walked with the other citizens singing sacred hymns. When Xerxes invaded Greece, recourse was had to their intercession to avert the impending calamity. They were supported chiefly by foreigners; and from the avails of their vice a copious revenue was derived to the city. Individuals, in order to insure success in their undertakings, vowed to present to Venus a certain number of courtesans, which they obtained by sending to distant countries. Foreign merchants were attracted in this way to Corinth; and in a few days would be stripped of all their property. It thus became a proverb, "It is not for every one to go to Corinth" *ou pantov androv eiv korinyon estin o plouv*. The effect of this on the morals of the city can be easily

understood. It became the most gay, dissipated, corrupt, and ultimately the most effeminate and feeble portion of Greece. It is necessary to make these statements because they go to show the exceeding grace of God in collecting a church in such a city; the power of the gospel in overcoming the strongest and most polluted passions of our nature: and because no small part of the irregularities which arose in the church at Corinth, and which gave the apostle occasion to write this epistle, were produced by this prevailing licentiousness of the people; and by the fact, that gross and licentious passions had received the countenance of law and the patronage of public opinion. See chap. v.—vii. See article *Lais* in the Biographical Dictionaries.

Though Corinth was thus dissipated and licentious in its character, yet it was also distinguished for its refinement and learning. Every part of literature was cultivated there; so that before its destruction by the Romans, Cicero (*pro lege* Man. cap. v.) scrupled not to call it totius Grantee lumen—the light of all Greece.

Corinth was, of course, exposed to all the changes and disasters which occurred to the other cities of Greece. After a variety of revolutions in its government, which it is not necessary here to repeat, it was taken by the Roman consul, L. Mummius, 147 years before Christ. The riches which were found in the city were immense. During the conflagration, it is said that all the metals which were there were melted and run together, and formed that valuable compound which was so much celebrated as Corinthian brass. Others, however, with more probability, say that the Corinthian artists were accustomed to form a metal, by a mixture of brass with small quantities of gold and silver, which was so brilliant as to cause the extraordinary estimate in which this metal was held. Corinth, however, was again rebuilt, in the time of Julius Caesar, it was colonized by his order, and soon again resumed something of its former magnificence. By the Romans, the whole of Greece was divided into two provinces, Macedonia and Achaia. Of the latter, Corinth was the capital; and this was its condition when it was visited by Paul. With its ancient splendour, it also soon relapsed into its former dissipation and licentiousness; and when Paul visited it, it was perhaps as dissolute as at any former period of its history. The subsequent history of Corinth it is not necessary to trace. On the division of the Roman empire, it fell, of course, to the eastern empire; and when this was overthrown by the Turks, it came into their hands, and it remained under their dominion until the recent revolution in Greece. It still retains its ancient name; but with nothing of its ancient grandeur. A single temple, itself dismantled, it is said, is all that remains, except the ruins, to mark the site of one of the most splendid cities of antiquity. For the authorities of these statements, see Travels of Anacharsis, vol. iii. pp. 369—388; Edin. Ency. art. Corinth; Lempriere's Classical Dictionary; and Bayle's Dictionary, art. Corinth.

II.—THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH AT CORINTH

THE apostle Paul first visited Corinth about A.D. 52. (Lardner.) See Ac 18:1. He was then on his way from Macedonia to Jerusalem. He had passed some time at Athens, where he had preached the gospel, but not with such success as to warrant him to remain, or to organize a church. **See Barnes** "Ac 17:1, and following. He was alone at Athens, having expected to have been joined there by Silas and Timothy; but in that he was disappointed. Ac 17:15; comp. Ac 18:5. He came to Corinth alone, but found Aquila and Priscilla there, who had lately come from Rome, and with them he waited the arrival of Silas and Timothy. When they arrived, Paul entered on the great work of preaching the gospel in that splendid and dissipated city, first to the Jews, and when it was rejected by them, then to the Greeks, Ac 18:5,6. His feelings when he engaged in this work he has himself stated in 1Co 16:2-5. (See Note on that place.) His embarrassment and discouragements were met

by a gracious promise of the Lord that he would be with him, and would not leave him; and that it was his purpose to collect a church there. **See Barnes "Ac 18:9,10"**.

In the city, Paul remained eighteen months, (Ac 18:11,) preaching without molestation, until he was opposed by the Jews under Sosthenes their leader, and brought before Gallio. When Gallio refused to hear the cause, and Paul was discharged, it is said that he remained there yet "a good while," (Ac 18:18,) and then sailed into Syria.

Of the size of the church that was first organized there, and of the general character of the converts, we have no other knowledge than that which is contained in the epistle. There is reason to think that Sosthenes, who was the principal agent of the Jews in arraigning Paul before Gallio, was converted, (see 1Co 1:1,) and perhaps some other persons of distinction; but it is evident that the church was chiefly composed of those who were in the more humble walks of life. **See Barnes "1Co 1:26"**

and following. It was a signal illustration of the grace of God, and the power of the gospel, that a church was organized in that city of gaiety, fashion, luxury, and licentiousness; and it shows that the gospel is adapted to meet and overcome all forms of wickedness, and to subdue all classes of people to itself. If a church was established in the gay and dissolute capital of Achaia, then there is not now a city on earth so gay and so profligate that the same gospel may not meet its corruptions, and subdue it to the cross of Christ. Paul subsequently visited Corinth about A. D. 58, or six years after the establishment of the church there. He passed the winter in Greece—doubtless in Corinth and its neighbourhood—on his journey from Macedonia to Jerusalem, the fifth time in which he visited the latter city. During this stay at Corinth, he wrote the Epistle to the Romans. See the Introduction to the Epistle to the Romans.

III.—THE TIME AND PLACE OF WRITING THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

IT has been uniformly supposed that this epistle was written at Ephesus. The circumstances which are mentioned incidentally in the epistle itself, place this beyond a doubt. The epistle purports to have been written, not like that to the Romans, without having been at the place to which it was written, but *after* Paul had been at Corinth. "I, brethren, *when I came to you*, came not with excellency of speech," etc., 1Co 2:1. It also purports to have been written when he was about to make another visit to that church. 1Co 4:19, "But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will." 1Co 16:5, "Now I will come unto you when I pass through Macedonia: for I do pass through Macedonia." Now, the history in the Acts of the Apostles informs us that Paul did in fact visit Achaia, and, doubtless, Corinth twice. See Ac 17:1, etc.; Ac 20:1-3. The same history also informs us that it was from Ephesus that Paul went into Greece; and as the epistle purports to have been written a short time before that journey, it follows, to be consistent with the history, that the epistle must have been written while he was at Ephesus. The narrative in the Acts also informs us, that Paul had passed two years in Ephesus before he set out on his second journey into Greece.

With this supposition, all the circumstances relating to the place where the apostle then was which are mentioned in this epistle agree. "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not?" 1Co 15:32. It is true, as Dr. Paley remarks, (*Horae Paulinae*,) that the apostle might say this wherever he was; but it was much more natural, and much more to the purpose to say it, if he was at Ephesus at the time, and in the midst of those conflicts to which the expression relates. "The churches of Asia salute you," 1Co 16:19. It is evident from this, that Paul was near those churches, and that he had intercourse with them. But Asia, throughout the Acts of the Apostles, and in the epistles of Paul, does not mean commonly the whole

of Asia, nor the whole of Asia Minor, but a district in the interior of Asia Minor, of which Ephesus was the capital. **See Barnes "Ac 2:9"; also** Ac 6:9 16:6, 20:16.

"Aquila and Priscilla salute you," 1Co 16:19. Aquila and Priscilla were at Ephesus during the time in which I shall endeavour to show this epistle was written, Ac 18:26. It is evident, if this were so, that the epistle was written at Ephesus. "But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost," 1Co 16:8. This is almost an express declaration that he was at Ephesus when the epistle was written. "A great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries," 1Co 16:9. How well this agrees with the history may be seen by comparing it with the account in Acts, when Paul was at Ephesus. Ac 19:20, "So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed." That there were "many adversaries," may be seen from the account of the same period in Ac 19:9: "But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples." Comp. Ac 19:23-41. From these circumstances, it is put beyond controversy that the epistle was written

from Ephesus. These circumstantial and undesigned coincidences, between a letter written by Paul and an independent history by Luke, is one of those strong evidences so common in genuine writings, which go to show that neither is a forgery. An impostor in forging a history like that of the Acts and then writing an epistle, would not have thought of these coincidences, or introduced them in the manner in which they occur here.

It is perfectly manifest that the notes of the time, and place, and circumstances in the history, and in the epistle, were not introduced to correspond with each other, but have every appearance of genuineness and truth. See Paley's Horae Paulinae, on this epistle.

The circumstances which have been referred to in regard to the *place* where this epistle was written, serve also to fix the *date* of its composition. It is evident, from 1Co 16:8, that Paul purposed to tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost. But this must have been written and sent away before the riot which was raised by Demetrius, (Ac 19:23-41;) for, immediately after that, Paul left Ephesus and went to Macedonia, Ac 20:1,2. The reason why Paul purposed to remain in Ephesus until Pentecost, was the success which he had met with in preaching the gospel, Ac 16:9. But after the riot excited by Demetrius, this hope was in a measure defeated, and he soon left the city. These circumstances serve to fix the time when this epistle was written to the interval which elapsed between what is recorded in Ac 19:22,23. This occurred about A.D. 56 or 57. Pearson and Mill place the date in the year 57; Lardner, in the spring of the year 56.

It has never been doubted that Paul was the author of this epistle. It bears his name; has internal evidence of having been written by him; and is ascribed to him by the unanimous voice of antiquity. It has been made a question, however, whether this was the *first* letter which Paul wrote to them; or whether he had previously written an epistle to them which is now lost. This inquiry has been caused by what Paul says in 1Co 5:9, "I wrote unto you in an epistle," etc. Whether he there refers to another epistle, which he wrote to them before this, and which they had disregarded; or whether to the previous chapters of this epistle; or whether to a letter to some other church which they had been expected to read, has been made a question. This question will be considered in the note on that verse.

IV.—THE OCCASION ON WHICH THIS EPISTLE WAS WRITTEN,

IT is evident that this epistle was written in reply to one which had been addressed by the church at Corinth to Paul: 1Co 7:1, "Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me," etc. That letter had been sent to Paul while at Ephesus by the hands of Stephanas, and Fortunatus, and Achaicus,

who had come to consult with him respecting the state of the church at Corinth, 1Co 16:17,18. In addition to this, Paul had heard various reports of certain disorders which had been

introduced into the church at Corinth, and which required his attention and correction. Those disorders, it seems, as was natural, had not been mentioned in the letter which they sent to him, but he had heard of them incidentally by some members of the family of Chloe, 1Co 1:11. They pertained to the following subjects:

(1.) The divisions which had arisen in the church by the popularity of a teacher who had excited great disturbance, 1Co 1:12,13. Probably this teacher was a Jew by birth, and not improbably of the sect of the Sadducees, (2Co 11:22;) and his teaching might have been the occasion why in the epistle Paul entered so largely into the proof of the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead, 1Co 15.

(2.) The Corinthians, like all other Greeks, were greatly in danger of being deluded, and carried away by a subtle philosophy, and by a dazzling eloquence; and it is not improbable that the false teacher there had taken advantage of this, and made it the occasion of exciting parties, and of creating a prejudice against Paul, and of undervaluing his authority because he had made no pretensions to these endowments. It was of importance, therefore, for Paul to show the true nature and value

of their philosophy, and the spirit which should prevail in receiving the gospel, 1Co 1:18-31; 1Co 2, 1Co 3;

(3.) Paul's authority had been called in question as an apostle, and not improbably by the false teacher, or teachers, that had caused the parties

which had been originated there. It became necessary, therefore, for him

to vindicate his authority, and show by what right he had acted in organizing the church, and in the directions which he had given for its discipline and purity, 1Co 4, 1Co 9.

(4.) A case of incest had occurred in the church, which had not been made the subject of discipline, 1Co 5. This case was a flagrant violation of the gospel; and yet it is not improbable that it had been palliated, or vindicated, by the false teachers; and it is certain that it excited no shame in the church itself. Such cases were not regarded by the dissolute Corinthians as criminal. In a city dedicated to Venus, the crimes of licentiousness had been openly indulged, and this was one of the sins to which they were particularly exposed. It became necessary, therefore, for Paul to exert his apostolic authority, and to remove the offender in this case from the communion of the church, and to make him an example of the severity of Christian discipline.

(5.) The Corinthians had evinced a litigious spirit, a fondness for going

to law, and for bringing their causes before heathen tribunals, to the great scandal of religion, instead of endeavouring to settle their difficulties among themselves. Of this the apostle had been informed, and this called also for his authoritative interposition, 1Co 6:1-8.

(6.) Erroneous views and practices had arisen, perhaps under the influence of the false teachers, on the subject of temperance, chastity,

etc. To the vices of intemperance, licentiousness, and gluttony, the Corinthian Christians, from their former habits, and from the customs of their countrymen, were particularly exposed. Those vices had been judged harmless, and had been freely indulged in; and it is not improbable that the views of the apostle had been ridiculed as unnecessarily stern, and severe, and rigid. It became necessary, therefore, to correct their views, and to state the true nature of the Christian requirements, 1Co 6:8-19.

(7.) The apostle having thus discussed those things of which he had incidentally heard, proceeds to notice particularly the things respecting which they had consulted him by letter. Those were,

(a.) *Marriage*, and the duties in regard to it in their circumstances,

(b.) *The eating of things offered to idols*, 1Co 8. In order to enforce his views of what he had said on the duty of abstaining from the

use of certain food, if it was the occasion of giving offence, he shows them, (1Co 9,) *that it was the great principle on which he had*

acted in his ministry; that he was not imposing on them anything which he did not observe himself; that though he had full authority as an apostle to insist on *a support* in preaching, yet, for the sake of peace and the prosperity of the church, he had voluntarily relinquished his *rights*, and endeavoured by all means to save some, 1Co 9. By this example, he seeks to persuade them to a course of life as far as possible from a life of gluttony, and fornication, and self-indulgence; and to assure them that although they had been highly favoured, as the Jews had been also, yet like them they might also fall, 1Co 10:1-12. These principles he illustrates by a reference to their

joining in feasts and celebrations with idols, and the dangers to which they would subject themselves by so doing; and concludes that it would be *proper* in those circumstances wholly to abstain from partaking of the meat offered in sacrifice to idols, if it were known to be such. This was to be done on the principle that no offence was to be given. And thus the *second* question referred to him was disposed of, 1Co 10:13-13-33.

In connexion with this, and as an illustration of

the principle on which he acted, and on which he wishes them to act, that of promoting mutual edification, and avoiding offence, he refers (1Co 11) to two other subjects: the one, the proper relation of the woman to the man, and the general duty of her being in subjection to him, 1Co 11:1-16; and the other, a far more important matter, the proper

mode of celebrating the Lord's Supper, (1Co 11:17-34.) He had been led to speak of this, probably, by the discussion to which he had been invited on the subject of their *feasts*; and the discussion of that subject naturally led to the consideration of the much more important subject of their mode of celebrating the Lord's Supper. That had been greatly abused to purposes of riot and disorder, an abuse which had grown directly out of their former views and habits in public festivals. Those views and habits they had transferred to the celebration of the Eucharist. It became necessary, therefore, for the apostle to correct those views, to state the true design of the ordinance, to show the consequences of an improper mode of celebration, and to endeavour to reform them in their mode of observing it, 1Co 11:17-34.

(c.) Another subject which had probably been submitted to him in the letter, was the nature of spiritual gifts; the design of the power of speaking with tongues, and the proper order to be observed in the church

on this subject. These powers seem to have been imparted to the Corinthians in a remarkable degree; and like most other things had been abused to the promotion of strife and ambition—to pride in their possession, and to irregularity and disorder in their public assemblies. This whole subject the apostle discusses, (chap. xii., xiii., xiv.) He states the design of imparting this gift; the use which should be made

of it in the church, the necessity of due subordination in all the members and officers; and, in a chapter unequalled in beauty in any language, 1Co 13 shows the inferiority of the highest of these endowments to a kind catholic spirit—to the prevalence of charity—and thus endeavours to allay

all contentions and strifes for ascendency, by the prevalence of the spirit of LOVE. In connexion with this 1Co 14 he reproves the abuses which had arisen on *this* subject, as he had done on others, and seeks to repress all disorders.

(8.) A very important subject the apostle reserved to the close of the epistle—the resurrection of the dead, 1Co 15. *Why* he chose to discuss it in this place, is not known. It is quite probable that he had not been *consulted* on this subject in the letter which had been sent to him. It is evident, however, that erroneous opinions had been entertained on the subject, and probably inculcated by the religious teachers at Corinth. The philosophic minds of the Greeks we know were much disposed to deride this doctrine, (Ac 17:32;) and in the Corinthian church it had been either called in question, or greatly perverted, 1Co 15:12. That the same body would be raised up had been denied; and the doctrine that came to be believed was, probably, simply that there would be a future state, and that the only resurrection was the resurrection of the soul from sin, and that this was past. Compare 2Ti 2:18. This subject the apostle had not before taken up, probably because he had not been consulted on it, and because it would find a more appropriate place *after* he had reproved their disorders, and answered their questions. After all those discussions, after examining all the opinions and practices that prevailed among them, it was proper *to place the great argument for the truth of the religion which they all professed on a permanent foundation, and to close the epistle by reminding them, and proving to them, that the religion which they professed, and which they had so much abused, was from heaven*. The proof of this was the resurrection of the Saviour from the dead. It was indispensable to hold that in its obvious sense; and holding that, the truth of their own resurrection was demonstrated, and the error of those who denied it was apparent.

(9.) Having finished this demonstration, the apostle closes the epistle 1Co 16 with some miscellaneous directions and salutations..

..... Remainder of Introductory Notes and Information on Verse 1 located in **See Barnes "1Co 1:2"**

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THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 2

Introductory Notes Continued from Verse 1..... (At end of Introduction See Verse Notes for Verses 1 and 2 of 1st Corinthians, Chapter 1)

V..—DIVISlONS OF THE EPISTLE

THE divisions of this epistle, as of the other books of the Bible, into chapters and verses, is arbitrary, and often not happily made. See the Introduction to the Notes on the Gospels. Various divisions of the epistle have been proposed, in order to present a proper analysis to the mind. The division which is submitted here is one that arises from the previous statement of the scope and design of the epistle, and will famish the basis of my analysis. According to this view, the body of this epistle may be divided into three parts, viz.:

I. The discussion of irregularities and abuses prevailing in the church at Corinth, of which the apostle had incidentally learned by report, chap. i.—vi.

II. The discussion of various subjects which had been submitted to him in a letter from the church, and of points which grew out of those inquiries, chap. vii.—xiv.

III. The discussion of the great doctrine of the resurrection of Christ —the foundation of the hope of man—and the demonstration arising from that that the Christian religion is true, and the hopes of Christians well founded, chap. xv. (See the "Analysis" prefixed to the Notes.)

VI.—THE MESSENGERS BY WHOM THIS EPISTLE WAS SENT TO THE CHURCH AT CORINTH, AND ITS SUCCESS

IT is evident that Paul felt the deepest solicitude in regard to the state of things in the church at Corinth. Apparently as soon as he had heard of their irregularities and disorders through the members of the family of Chloe, (chap. i., ii.,) he had sent Timothy to them, if possible, to repress the growing dissensions and irregularities, (1Co 4:17.) In the mean time the church at Corinth wrote to him to ascertain his views on certain matters submitted to him, 1Co 7:1; and the reception of this letter gave him occasion to enter at length into the subject of their disorders and difficulties. Yet he wrote the letter under the deepest solicitude about the manner of its reception, and its effect on the church: 2Co 2:4, "For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears," etc. Paul had another object in view which was dear to his heart, and which he was labouring with all diligence to promote, which was the collection which he proposed to take up for the poor and afflicted saints at Jerusalem. **See Barnes "Ro 15:25"**.

This object he wished to press at this time on the church at Corinth, 1Co 16:1-4. In order, therefore, to insure the success of his letter, and to facilitate the collection, he sent Titus with the letter to the church at Corinth, with instructions to have the collection ready, (2Co 7:7,8,13,15.

) This collection Titus was requested to finish, (2Co 8:6.) With Titus, Paul sent another brother, perhaps a member of the church at Ephesus, 2Co 12:18, a man whose praise, Paul says, was in all the churches, and who had been already designated by the churches to bear the contribution to Jerusalem, 2Co 8:18,19. By turning to Ac 21:29, we find it incidentally mentioned that "Trophimus an Ephesian" was with Paul in Jerusalem, and undoubtedly this was the person here designated. This is one of the undesigned coincidences between Paul's epistle and the Acts of the Apostles, of which Dr. Paley has made so much use in his *Horae Paulinae* in proving the genuineness of these writings. Paul did not deem it necessary or prudent for him to go himself to Corinth, but chose to remain in Ephesus. The letter to Paul 1Co 7:1 had been brought to him by Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, 1Co 16:17; and it is probable that they accompanied Titus and the other brother with him who bore Paul's reply to their inquiries.

The success of this letter was all that Paul could desire. It had the effect to repress their growing strifes, to restrain their disorders, to produce true repentance, and to remove the person who had been guilty of incest in the church. The whole church was deeply affected with his reproofs, and engaged in hearty zeal in the work of reform, 2Co 7:9-11. The authority of the apostle was recognised, and his epistle read with fear and trembling, 2Co 7:15. The act of discipline which he had required on the incestuous person was inflicted by the whole church, 2Co 2:6. The collection which he had desired, 1Co 16:1-4, and in regard to which he had boasted of their liberality to others, and expressed the utmost confidence that it would be liberal, 2Co 9:2,3, was taken up agreeably to his wishes, and their disposition on the subject was such as to furnish the highest satisfaction to his mind, 2Co 7:13,14. Of the success of his letter, however, and of their disposition to take up the collection, Paul was not apprized until he had gone into Macedonia, where Titus came to him, and gave him information of the happy state of things in the church at Corinth, 2Co 7:4-7,13. Never

was a letter more effectual than this was, and never was authority in discipline exercised in a more happy and successful way.

VII.—GENERAL CHARACTER AND STRUCTURE OF THE EPISTLE

THE general style and character of this epistle is the same as in the other writings of Paul. See Introduction to the Epistle to the Romans. It evinces the same strong and manly style of argument and language, the same structure of sentences, the same rapidity of conception, the same overpowering force of language and thought, and the same characteristics of temper and spirit in the author. The main difference between the style and manner of this epistle, and the other epistles of Paul, arises from the scope and design of the argument. In the epistle to the Romans, his object led him to pursue a close and connected train of argumentation. In this, a large portion of the epistle is occupied with reproof, and it gives occasion for calling into view at once the authority of an apostle, and the spirit and manner in which reproof is to be administered. The reader of this epistle cannot but be struck with the fact, that it was no part of Paul's character to show indulgence to sin; that he had no design to flatter; that he neither "cloaked nor concealed transgression;" that in the most open, firm, and manly manner possible, it was his purpose to rebuke them for their disorders, and to repress their growing irregularities. At the same time, however, there is full opportunity for the display of tenderness, kindness, love, charity, and for Christian instruction—an opportunity for pouring forth the deepest feelings of the human heart—an opportunity which Paul never allowed to escape unimproved. Amidst all the severity of reproof, there is the love of friendship; amidst the rebukes of an apostle, the entreaties and tears of a father. And we here contemplate Paul, not merely as the profound reasoner, not simply as a man of high intellectual endowments, but as evincing the feelings of the man, and the sympathies of the Christian.

Perhaps there is less difficulty in understanding this epistle than the epistle to the Romans. A few passages indeed have perplexed all commentators, and are to this day not understood. See 1Co 5:9 11:10, 15:29.

But the general meaning of the epistle has been much less the subject of difference of interpretation. The reasons have probably been the following:

(1.) The subjects here are more numerous, and the discussions more brief. There is, therefore, less difficulty in following the author than where the discussion is protracted, and the manner of his reasoning more complicated.

(2.) The subjects themselves are far less abstruse and profound than those introduced into the epistle to the Romans. There is, therefore, less liability to misconception.

(3.) The epistle has never been made the subject of theological warfare. No system of theology has been built on it, and no attempt made to press it into the service of abstract dogmas. It is mostly of a practical character; and there has been, therefore, less room for contention in regard to its meaning.

(4.) No false and unfounded theories of philosophy have been attached to this epistle, as have been to the epistle to the Romans. Its simple sense, therefore, has been more obvious; and no small part of the difficulties in the interpretation of that epistle are wanting in this.

(5.) The apostle's design has somewhat varied his style. There are fewer complicated sentences, and fewer parentheses—less that is abrupt and broken, and elliptical—less that is rapid, mighty, and over-powering in argument. We see the point of a reproof at once, but we are often greatly embarrassed in a complicated argument. The fifteenth chapter, however, for closeness and strength of argumentation, for beauty of diction, for tenderness of pathos, and for commanding and

overpowering eloquence, is probably unsurpassed by any other part of the writings of Paul, and unequalled by any other composition.

(6.) It may be added, that there is less in this epistle that opposes the native feelings of the human heart, and that humbles the pride of the human intellect, than in the epistle to the Romans. One great difficulty in interpreting that epistle has been that the doctrines relate to those high subjects that rebuke the pride of man, demand prostration before his Sovereign, require the submission of the understanding and the heart to God's high claims, and throw down every form of self-righteousness. While substantially the same features will be found in all the writings of Paul, yet his purpose in this epistle led him less to dwell on those topics than in the epistle to the Romans. The result is, that the *heart* more readily acquiesces in these doctrines and reproofs, and the general strain of this epistle; and as the *heart* of man has usually more agency in the interpretation of the Bible than the understanding, the obstacles in the way of a correct exposition of this epistle are proportionably fewer than in the epistle to the Romans.

The same spirit, however, which is requisite in understanding the epistle to the Romans, is demanded here. In all Paul's epistles, as in all the Bible, a spirit of candour, humility, prayer, and industry, is required. The knowledge of God's truth is to be acquired only by toil and candid investigation. The mind that is filled with prejudices is rarely enlightened. The proud, unhumbled spirit seldom receives benefit from reading the Bible, or any other book. He acquires the most complete, and the most profound knowledge of the doctrines of Paul, and of the Book of God in general, who comes to the work of interpretation with the most humble heart, and the deepest sense of his dependence in the aid of that Spirit by whom originally the Bible was inspired. For "the meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way," Ps 25:9.

END OF Introductory Notes:

- Verse 1.

Paul, called to be an apostle. **See Barnes** "Ro 1:1,

Through the will of God. Not by human appointment, or authority; but in accordance with the will of God, and his command. That will was made known to him by the special revelation granted to him at his conversion, and call to the apostleship, Ac 9. Paul often refers to the fact that he had received a direct commission from God, and that he did not act on his own authority. Compare Ga 1:11,12; 1Co 9:1-6 2Co 11:22-33; 2Co 12:1-12. There was a special reason why he commenced this epistle by referring to the fact that he was divinely called to the apostleship. It arose from the fact that his apostolic authority had been called in question by the false teachers at Corinth. That this was the case is apparent from the general strain of the epistle, from some particular expressions, 2Co 10:8-10, and from the fact that he is at so much pains throughout the two epistles to establish his Divine commission.

And Sosthanes, Sosthenes is mentioned in Ac 18:17, as "the chief ruler of the synagogue" at Corinth. He is there said to have been beaten by the Greeks before the judgment-seat of Gallio because he was a Jew, and because he had joined with the other Jews in arraigning Paul, and had thus produced disturbance in the city. **See Barnes "Ac 18:17"**.

It is evident that at that time he was not a Christian. When he was converted, or why he left Corinth and was now with Paul at Ephesus, is unknown. Why Paul associated him with himself in writing this epistle is not known. It is evident that Sosthenes was not an apostle, nor is there any reason to think that he was inspired. Some circumstances are known to have existed respecting Paul's manner of writing to the churches, which may explain it.

(1.) He was accustomed to employ an amanuensis or scribe in writing his epistles, and the amanuensis frequently expressed his concurrence or approbation in what the apostle had indicted. **See Barnes "Ro 16:22"**.

Comp. Col 4:18, "The salutation by the hand of me Paul;" 2Th 3:17; 1Co 16:21. It is possible that Sosthenes might have been employed by Paul for this purpose.

(2.) Paul not unfrequently associated others with himself in writing his letters to the churches, himself claiming authority as an apostle; and the others expressing their concurrence, 2Co 1:1. Thus in Ga 1:2, "All the brethren" which were with him, are mentioned as united with him in addressing the churches of Galatia, Php 1:1; Col 1:1 1Th 1:1.

(3.) Sosthenes was well known at Corinth. He had been the chief ruler of the synagogue there. His conversion would, therefore, excite a deep interest; and it is not improbable that he had been conspicuous as a preacher. All these circumstances would render it proper that Paul should associate him with himself in writing this letter. It would be bringing in the testimony of one well known as concurring with the views of the apostle, and tend much to conciliate those who were disaffected towards him.

{a} "to be an apostle" Ro 1:1 {b} "Sosthenes, our Brother" Ac 18:17

Verse 2. *Unto the church of God which is at Corinth*. For an account of the time and manner in which the church was established in Corinth, see the Introduction, and **See Barnes "Ac 18:1-17"**.

The church is called "the church of God," because it has been founded by his agency, and was devoted to his service. It is worthy of remark, that although great disorders had been introduced into that church; that there were separations and erroneous doctrines; though there were some who gave evidence that they were not sincere Christians, yet the apostle had no hesitation in applying to them the name of a church God.

To them that are sanctified. To those who are made holy. This does not refer to the profession of holiness, but implies that they were *in fact* holy. The word means that they were *separated* from the mass of heathens around them, and devoted to God and his cause. Though the word used here *hgiasmenoiv* has this idea of *separation* from the mass around them, yet it is separation on account of their being *in fact*, and not in profession merely, different from others, and truly devoted to God. **See Barnes "Ro 1:7"**.

In Christ Jesus. That is, by *en* the agency of Christ. It was by his authority, his power, and his Spirit, that they had been separated from the mass of heathens around them, and devoted to God. Comp. Joh 17:19.

Called to be saints. The word *saints* does not differ materially from the word *sanctified* in the former part of the verse. It means those who are separated from the world, and set apart to God as holy. The idea which Paul introduces here is, that they became such because they were *called* to be such. The idea in the former part of the verse is, that this was done "by Christ Jesus;" here he says, that it was because they were *called* to this privilege. He doubtless means to say, that it was not by any native tendency in themselves to holiness, but because God had called them to it. And this calling does not refer merely to an external invitation, but it was that which was made *effectual* in their case, or that on which the fact of their being saints could be predicated. Comp. 1Co 1:9. See 2Ti 1:9: "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace," etc.; 1Pe 1:15; **See Barnes** "Ro 1:6, **See Barnes** "Ro 1:7; **See Barnes "Ro 8:28"**; **See Barnes "Eph 4:1"**; **See Barnes** "1Ti 6:12"; **See Barnes "1Pe 2:9"**.

With all, etc. This expression shows,

(1.) that Paul had the same feelings of attachment to all Christians in every place; and,

(2.) that he expected that this epistle would be read, not only by the church at Corinth, but also by other churches. That this was the uniform intention of the apostle in regard to his epistles, is apparent from other places. Comp. 1Th 5:27: "I charge you by the Lord, that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren." Col 4:16: "And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans." It is evident that Paul expected that his epistles would obtain circulation among the churches; and it was morally certain that they would be soon transcribed, and be extensively read. The ardent feelings of Paul embraced all Christians in every nation. He knew nothing of the narrowness of exclusive attachment to *sect*. His heart was full of love; and he loved, as we should, all who bore the Christian name, and who evinced the Christian spirit.

Call upon the name of Jesus Christ. To call upon *the name* of any person, in Scripture language, is to call on the person himself. Compare Joh 3:18. **See Barnes "Ac 4:12"**.

The expression, "*to call upon* the name," *epikaloumenoiv*, to invoke the name, implies worship and prayer; and proves,

(1.) that the Lord Jesus is an object of worship; and

(2.) that one characteristic of the early Christians, by which they were known and distinguished, was their calling upon the name of the Lord Jesus, or their offering worship to him. That it implies worship, **See Barnes "Ac 7:59"**; and that the early Christians called on Christ by prayer, and were distinguished by that, **See Barnes** "Ac 7:59, and compare **See Barnes "Ac 1:24"**; **See Barnes** "Ac 2:21"; **See Barnes "Ac 9:14"**; **See Barnes** "Ac 22:16"; **See Barnes "2Ti 2:22"**.

Both their's and our's. The Lord of all—both Jews and Gentiles—of all who profess themselves Christians, of whatever country or name they might have originally been. Difference of nation or birth gives no pre-eminence in the kingdom of Christ, but all are on a level, having a common Lord and Saviour. Comp. Eph 4:5.

{c} "Corinth" Ac 18:1 {d} "to them" Jude 1:1 {e} "sanctified" Joh 17:19 {f} "called to be saints" 2Ti 1:9 1Pe 1:15 {g} "call upon the name" 2Ti 1:9 1Pe 1:15

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Grace be unto you*, etc. **See Barnes "Ro 1:7"**.

{h} "Grace" 1Pe 1:2

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *I thank my God*, etc. No small part of this epistle is occupied with reproofs for the disorders which had arisen in the church at Corinth. Before proceeding, however, to the specific statement of those disorders, (ver. 10, seq.,) the apostle *commends* them for the attainments which

they had really made in Divine knowledge, and thus shows that he was disposed to concede to them all that he could. It was no part of the disposition of Paul to withhold commendation where it was due. On the contrary, as he was disposed to be faithful in reproving the errors of Christians, he was no less disposed to commend them when it could be done. Compare **See Barnes "Ro 1:8"**.

A willingness to commend those who do well is as much in accordance with the gospel, as a disposition to reprove where it is deserved; and a minister, or a parent, may frequently do as decided good by judicious commendation as by reproof, and much more than by fault-finding and harsh crimination.

On your behalf. In respect to you; that God has conferred these favours on you.

For the grace of God. On account of the favours which God has bestowed on you through the Lord Jesus. Those favours are specified in the following verses. For the meaning of the word *grace*, **See Barnes "Ro 1:7"**.

{a} "thank my God" Ro 1:8 {*} "behalf" "account"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *That in every thing*. In every respect, or in regard to all the favours conferred on any of his people. You have been distinguished by him in all those respects in which he blesses his own children.

Ye are enriched by him. **See Barnes "Ro 2:4"**.

The meaning of this expression is, "you *abound* in these things; they are conferred abundantly upon you." By the use of this word, the apostle intends doubtless to denote *the fact* that these blessings had been conferred on them abundantly; and also that this was a *valuable* endowment, so as to be properly called *a treasure*. The mercies of God are not only conferred abundantly on his people, but they are a bestowment of inestimable value. Comp. 2Co 6:10.

In all utterance. With the power of speaking various languages, *en panti logw*. That this power was conferred on the church at Corinth, and that it was highly valued by them, is evident from 1Co 14. Compare 2Co 8:7. The power of speaking those languages the apostle regarded as a subject of thanksgiving, as it was a proof of the Divine favour to them. See 1Co 14:5,22,39.

And in all knowledge. In the knowledge of Divine truth. They had understood the doctrines which they had heard, and had intelligently embraced them. This was not true of *all* of them, but it was of the body of the church; and the hearty commendation and thanksgiving of the apostle for these favours, laid the foundation for the remarks which he had subsequently to make, and would tend to conciliate their minds, and dispose them to listen attentively, even to the language of reproof.

{b} "utterance" 2Co 8:7.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Even as*. *kaywv*. The force of this expression seems to be this: "The gospel of Christ was at first established among you by means of the miraculous endowments of the Holy Ghost. Those same endowments are still continued among you, and now furnish evidence of the Divine favour, and of the truth of the gospel to you, *even as*—i.e., in the same measure as they did when the gospel was first preached." The power to speak with tongues, etc., (chap. xiv.,) would be a *continued miracle*, and would be demonstration to them then of the truth of Christianity as it was at first.

The testimony of Christ. The gospel. It is here called "the testimony of Christ," because it bore witness to Christ—to his Divine nature, his miracles, his Messiahship, his character, his death, etc. The message of the gospel consists in bearing witness to Christ and his work. See 1Co 15:1-4 2Ti 1:8.

Was confirmed. Was established, or proved. It was proved to be Divine, by the miraculous attestations of the Holy Spirit. It was confirmed, or made certain to their souls, by the agency of the Holy Spirit, sealing it on their hearts. The word translated *confirmed*, *ebebaiwyh* is used in the sense of establishing, confirming, or demonstrating by miracles, etc., in Mr 16:20, Compare Heb 13:9 Php 1:7.

In you. *en umin*. Among you as a people, or in your hearts. Perhaps the apostle intends to include both. The gospel had been established among them by the demonstrations of the agency of the Spirit in the gift of tongues, and had at the same time taken deep root in their hearts, and was exerting a practical influence on their lives.

{+} "confirmed in" "among"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *So that*. God has so abundantly endowed you with his favours.

Ye come behind. *ustereisyai*. You are not wanting, or deficient. The word is usually applied to destitution, want, or poverty; and the declaration here is synonymous with what he had said, 1Co 1:5, that they abounded in everything.

In no gift. In no favour, or gracious endowment. The word used here *carisma* does not refer necessarily to extraordinary and miraculous endowments, but includes also all the kindnesses of God towards them in producing peace of mind, constancy, humility, etc. And the apostle meant evidently to say that they possessed, in rich abundance, all those endowments which were bestowed on Christians.

Waiting for. Expecting, or looking for this coming with glad and anxious desire. This was, certainly, one of the endowments to which he referred; to wit, that they had grace given them earnestly to desire, and to wait for the second appearing of the Lord Jesus. An earnest wish to see him, and a confident expectation and a firm belief that he will return, is an evidence of a high state of piety. It demands strong faith, and it will do much to elevate the feelings above the world, and to keep the mind in a state of peace.

The coming, etc. Greek, the revelation—*thn apokaluqin*—the manifestation of the Son of God. That is, waiting for his return to judge the world, and for his approbation Of his people in that day.

The earnest expectation of the Lord Jesus became one of the marks of early Christian piety. This return was promised by the Saviour to his anxious disciples, when he was about to leave them, Joh 14:3. The promise was renewed when he ascended to heaven, Ac 1:11. It became the settled hope and expectation of Christians that he would return, Tit 2:13 2Pe 3:12; Heb 9:28.

And with the earnest prayer that he would quickly come, John closes the volume of inspiration, Re 22:20.

{++} "behind" "are inferior" {c} "waiting" Tit 2:13 2Pe 3:12 {1} "for the coming" "revelation" {&} "coming" "Earnestly expecting the manifestation"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Who shall also confirm you*. Who shall establish you in the hopes of the gospel. He shall make you *firm bebaiwsei* amidst all your trials, and all the efforts which may be made to shake your faith, and to remove you from that firm foundation on which you now rest.

Unto the end. That is, to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. He would keep them to the end of life in the path of holiness, so that at the coming of the Lord Jesus they might be found blameless. Comp. Joh 13:1. The sense is, that they should be kept, and should not be suffered to fall away and perish;—and is one of the many places which express the strong confidence of Paul, that those who are true Christians shall be preserved unto everlasting life. Comp. Ph 1:6.

That ye may be blameless. The word rendered *blameless anegklhtouv* does not mean perfect, but properly denotes those against whom there is no charge of crime; who are unaccused, and against whom there is no ground of accusation. Here it does not mean that they were personally perfect, but that God would so keep them, and enable them to evince a Christian character, as to give evidence that they were his friends, and completely escape condemnation in the last day. **See Barnes "Ro 8:33,34"**.

There is no man who has not his faults; no Christian who is not conscious of imperfection; but it is the design of God so to keep his people, and so to justify and sanctify them through the Lord Jesus, that the church may be presented "a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle" Eph 5:27 in the day of judgment.

In the day, etc. In the day when the Lord Jesus shall come to judge the world; and which will be called his day, because it will be the day in which he will be the great and conspicuous object, and which is especially appointed to glorify him. See 2Th 1:10: "When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe."

{|} "confirm" "establish" {d} "confirm you" 1Th 3:13 5:23,24

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *God is faithful*. That is, God is true, and constant, and will adhere to his promises. He will not deceive. He will not promise, and then fail to perform; he will not commence anything which he will not perfect and finish. The object of Paul, in introducing the idea of the *faithfulness* of God, here is, to show the reason for believing that the Christians at Corinth would be kept unto everlasting life. The evidence that they will persevere depends on the fidelity of God; and the argument of the apostle is, that as they had been called by him into the fellowship of his Son, his faithfulness of character would render it certain that they would be kept to eternal life. The same idea he has presented in Php 1:6: "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will also perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

Ye were called.

The word "called" here does not refer merely to an invitation or an offer of life, but to the effectual influence which had been put forth; which had inclined them to embrace the gospel. **See Barnes** "Ro 8:30; **See Barnes "Ro 9:12"**.

See Mr 2:17 Lu 5:32; Ga 1:6,7, 5:8,13; Eph 1:4 Col 3:16. In this sense the word often occurs in the Scriptures, and is designed to denote a power, or influence, that goes forth with the external invitation, and that makes it effectual. That power is the agency of the Holy Spirit.

Unto the fellowship of his Son. To participate with his Son Jesus Christ; to be partakers with him. **See Barnes "Joh 15:1"**

and following. Christians participate with Christ

(1.) in his feelings and views, Ro 8:9.

(2.) In his trials and sufferings, being subjected to temptations and trials similar to his. 1Pe 4:13: "But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings;" Col 1:24 Php 3:10.

(3.) In his heirship to the inheritance and glory which awaits him. Ro 8:17: "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ;" 1Pe 1:4.

(4.) In his triumph in the resurrection and future glory. Mt 19:28: "Ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Joh 14:19: "Because I live, ye shall live also." Re 3:21: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." From all this, the argument of the apostle is, that as they partake with Christ in these high privileges, and hopes, and promises, they will be kept by a faithful God unto eternal life. God is faithful to his Son; and will be faithful to all who are united to him. The argument for the perseverance of the saints is, therefore, sure.

{*} "unto" "into" {a} "fellowship" 1Jo 1:3

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Now I beseech you, brethren*. In this verse the apostle enters on the discussion respecting the irregularities and disorders in the church at Corinth, of which he had incidentally heard. See 1Co 1:11. The first of which he had incidentally learned, was that which pertained to the divisions and strifes which had arisen in the church. The consideration of this subject occupies him to 1Co 1:17, as those divisions had been caused by the influence of philosophy, and the ambition

for distinction, and the exhibition of popular eloquence among the Corinthian teachers, this fact gives occasion to him to discuss that subject at length, 1Co 1:17-31; 1Co 11; in which he shows that the gospel did not depend for its success on the reasonings of philosophy, or the persuasions of eloquence. This part of the subject he commences with the language of entreaty:—"I beseech you, brethren", the language of affectionate exhortation, rather than of stern command. Addressing them as his brethren, as members of the same family with himself, he conjures them to take all proper measures to avoid the evils of schism and of strife.

By the name. By the authority of his name; or from reverence for him as the common Lord of all.

Of our Lord Jesus Christ. The reasons why Paul thus appeals to his name and authority here, maybe the following:

(1.) Christ should be regarded as the supreme Head and Leader of all the church. It was improper, therefore, that the church should be divided into portions, and its different parts enlisted under different banners.

(2.) "The whole family in heaven and earth" should be "named" after him, Eph 3:15, and should not be named after inferior and subordinate teachers. The reference to "the venerable and endearing name of Christ here stands beautifully and properly opposed to the various human names under which they were so ready to enlist themselves."—*Doddridge*. "There is scarce a word or expression that he [Paul] makes use of, but with relation and tendency to his present main purpose; as here, intending to abolish the names of leaders they had distinguished them- selves by, he beseeches them by the name of Christ, a form that I do not remember he elsewhere uses."—Locke.

(3.) The prime and leading thing which Christ had enjoined on his church, was union and mutual love, Joh 13:34 15:17; and for this he had most earnestly prayed in his memorable prayer, Joh 17:21-23. It was well for Paul thus to appeal to the name of Christ—the sole Head and Lord of his church, and the Friend of union, and thus to rebuke the divisions and strifes which had arisen at Corinth.

That ye all speak the same thing. "That ye hold the same doctrine." —*Locke*. This exhortation evidently refers to their holding and expressing the same religious sentiments, and is designed to rebuke that kind of contention and strife which is evinced where different opinions axe held and expressed. To "speak the same thing" stands opposed to speaking different and conflicting things, or to controversy; and although *perfect* uniformity of opinion cannot be expected among men on the subject of religion any more than on other subjects, yet, on the great and fundamental doctrines of Christianity, Christians may be agreed; on all points in which they differ, they may evince a good spirit; and on all subjects they may express their sentiments in the language of the Bible, and thus "speak the same thing."

And that there be no divisions among you. Greek, *scismata —schisms*. No divisions into contending parties and sects. The church was to be regarded as one, and indivisible, and not to be rent into different factions, and ranged under the banners of different leaders. Comp. Joh 9:16 1Co 11:18, 12:25.

But that ye be perfectly joined together. *hte de kathrtismenoi*. The word here used, and rendered "perfectly joined together," denotes, properly, to restore, mend, or repair that which is rent or disordered, Mt 4:21 Mr 1:19; to amend or correct that which is morally evil and erroneous, Ga 6:1; to render perfect or complete, Lu 6:40; to fit or adapt anything to its proper place, so that it shall be complete in all its parts, and harmonious, Heb 11:5; and thence to compose and settle

controversies, to produce harmony and order. The apostle here evidently desires that they should be united in feeling; that every member of the church should occupy his appropriate place, as every member of a well-proportioned body, or part of a machine, has its appropriate place and use. See his wishes more fully expressed in 1Co 12:12-31.

In the same mind. *noi*. See Ro 15:5. This cannot mean that they were to be united in precisely the same shades of opinion, which is impossible; but that their minds were to be disposed towards each other with mutual good will, and that they should live in harmony. The word here rendered mind, denotes not merely the intellect itself, but that which is in the mind—the thoughts, counsels, plans, Ro 11:34; Ro 14:5 1Co 2:16; Col 2:18.

(*Bretschneider*.)

And in the same judgment. *gnwmh*. This word properly denotes science, or knowledge; opinion, or sentiment; and sometimes, as here, the purpose of the mind, or will. The sentiment of the whole is, that in their understandings and their volitions, they should be united and kindly disposed towards each other. Union of feeling is possible even where men differ much in their views of things. They may love each other much, even where they do not see alike. They may give each other credit for honesty and sincerity, and may be willing to suppose that others *may be right*, and *are honest*, even where their own views differ. The foundation of Christian union is not so much laid in uniformity of intellectual perception, as in right feelings of the heart. And the proper way to produce union in the church of God, is not to begin by attempting to equalize all intellects on the bed of Procrustes, but to produce supreme love to God, and elevated and pure Christian love to all who bear the image and the name of the Redeemer.

{b} "Lord Jesus Christ" 2Co 13:11 1Pe 3:8 {1} "divisions" "schisms"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *For it hath been declared unto me*. Of the contentions existing in the church at Corinth, it is evident that they had not informed him in the letter which they had sent. 1Co 7:1; comp. the Introduction. He had incidentally heard of their contentions.

My brethren. A token of affectionate regard, evincing his love for them, and his deep interest in their welfare, even when he adminis- tered a needed rebuke.

Of the house of Chloe. Of the family of Chloe. It is most probable that Chloe was a member of the church at Corinth, some of whose family had been at Ephesus when Paul was, and had given him information of the state of things there. Who those members of her family were, is unknown. Grotius conjectures that they were Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, mentioned in 1Co 16:17, who brought the letter of the church at Corinth to Paul. But of this there is no certain evidence; perhaps not much probability. If the information had been obtained from them, it is probable that it would have been put in the letter which they bore. The probability is, that Paul had received this information before they arrived.

{++} "House" "household"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Now this I say*. This is what I mean; or I give this as an instance of the contentions to which I refer.

That every one of you saith. That you are divided into different factions, and ranged under different leaders. the word translated "that" *oti* might be translated hers *because* or *since*, as giving a reason for his affirming 1Co 1:11 that there were contentions there. "Now I say that there are contentions, because you are ranged under different leaders," etc.—*Calvin*.

I am of Paul. It has been doubted whether Paul meant to affirm that the parties had actually taken the names which he here specifies, or whether he uses these names as illustrations, or suppositions, to show the absurdity of their ranging themselves under different leaders. Many of the ancient interpreters supposed that Paul was unwilling to specify the real names of the false teachers and leaders of the parties, and that he used these names simply by way of illustration. This opinion was grounded chiefly on What he says in 1Co 4:6, "And these things, brethren, I have *in a figure* transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes," etc. But in this place Paul is not referring so particularly to the factions or parties existing in the church, as he is to the necessity of modesty and humility; and in order to enforce this, he refers to himself and Apollos to show that even those most highly favoured should have a low estimate of their importance, since all their success depends on God. See 1Co 3:4-6. It can scarcely be doubted that Paul here meant to say that there were parties existing in the church at Corinth, who were called by the names of himself, of Apollos, of Cephas, and of Christ. This is the natural construction; and this was evidently the information which he had received by those who were of the family of Chloe. *Why* the parties were ranged under *these* leaders, however, can be only a matter of conjecture. Lightfoot suggests that the church at Corinth was composed partly of Jews and partly of Gentiles. See Ac 18. The Gentile converts, he supposes, would range themselves under Paul and Apollos as their leaders, and the Jewish under Peter and Christ. Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles, and Peter particularly the apostle to the Jews, Ga 2:7; and this circumstance might give rise to the division. Apollos succeeded Paul in Achaia, and laboured successfully there. See Ac 18:27,28. These two original parties might be again subdivided. A part of those who adhered to Paul and Apollos might regard Paul with chief veneration, as being the founder of the church, as the instrument of their conversion, as the chief apostle, as signally pure in his doctrine and manner; and a part might regard Apollos as the instrument of their conversion, and as being distinguished for eloquence. It is evident that the main reason why Apollos was regarded as the head of a faction was on account of his extraordinary eloquence; and it is probable that his followers might seek particularly to imitate him in the graces of popular elocution.

And I of Cephas. Peter. Comp. Joh 1:42. He was regarded particularly as the apostle to the Jews, Ga 2:7. He had his own peculiarity of views in teaching, and it is probable that his teaching was not regarded as entirely harmonious with that of Paul. See Ga 2:11-17. Paul had everywhere among the Gentiles taught that it was not necessary to observe the ceremonial laws of Moses; and, it is probable, that Peter was regarded by the Jews as the advocate of the contrary doctrine. Whether Peter had been at Corinth is unknown. If not, they had heard of his name and character; and those who had come from Judea had probably reported him as teaching a doctrine on the subject of the observance of Jewish ceremonies unlike that of Paul.

And I of Christ. Why this sect professed to be the followers of Christ, is not certainly known. It probably arose from one of the two following causes:

(1.) Either that they had been in Judea and had seen the Lord Jesus, and thus regarded themselves as particularly favoured and distinguished; or,

(2.) more probably, because they refused to call themselves by any inferior leader, and wished to regard Christ alone as their Head, and possibly prided themselves on the belief that they were more conformed to him than the other sects.

{&} "I say" "I mean" {a} "of Apollos" Ac 19:1 {b} "of Cephas" Joh 1:42

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Is Christ divided*? Paul, in this verse, proceeds to show the impropriety of their divisions and strifes. His general argument is, that Christ alone ought to be regarded as their Head and Leader, and that his claims, arising from his crucifixion, and acknowledged by their baptism, were so pre-eminent that they could not be divided, and the honours due to him should not be rendered to any other. The apostle therefore asks, with strong emphasis, whether Christ was to be regarded as divided? Whether this single supreme Head and Leader of the church had become the head of different contending factions? The strong absurdity of supposing that, showed the impropriety of their ranging themselves under different banners and leaders.

Was Paul crucified for you? This question implies that the crucifixion of Christ had an influence in saving them which the sufferings of no other one *could* have, and that those sufferings were in fact the peculiarity which distinguished the Work of Christ, and rendered it of so much value. The atonement was the grand, crowning work of the Lord Jesus. It was through this that all the Corinthian Christians had been renewed and pardoned. That work was so pre-eminent that it could not have been performed by an other. And as they had *all* been saved by that alone-as they were alike dependent on his merits for salvation—it was improper that they should be rent into contending factions, and ranged under different leaders. If there is anything that will recall Christians of different names and of contending sects from the heat of strife, it is the recollection of the fact that they have been purchased by the same blood, and that the same Saviour died to redeem them all. If this fact could be kept before their minds, it would put an end to angry strife everywhere in the church, and produce universal Christian love.

Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? Or *into*, or *unto* the name of Paul. **See Barnes "Mt 28:19".**

To be baptized *into*, or *unto* any one, is to be devoted to him, to receive and acknowledge him as a teacher, professing to receive his rules, and to be governed by his authority.—*Locke*. Paul here solemnly reminds them that their *baptism* was an argument why they should not range themselves under different leaders. By that, they had been solemnly and entirely devoted to the service of the only Saviour. "Did I ever," was the implied language of Paul, "baptize in my own name"? Did I ever pretend to organize a sect, announcing myself as a leader? Have not I always directed you to that Saviour into whose name and service you have been baptized?" It is remarkable here, that Paul refers to himself, and not to Apollos or Peter. He does not insinuate that the claims of Apollos or

Peter were to be disparaged, or their talents and influence to be undervalued, as a jealous rival would have done; but he numbers himself first, and alone, as having no claims to be regarded as a religious leader among them, or the founder of a sect. Even he, the founder of the church, and their spiritual father, had never desired or intended that they should call themselves by *his* name; and he thus showed the impropriety of their adopting the name of any man as the leader of a sect.

{*} "in" "into"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *I thank God*, etc. Why Paul did not himself baptize, see in

@1Co 1:17.

To him it was now a subject of grateful reflection that he had not done it. He had not given any occasion for the suspicion that he had intended to set himself up as a leader of a sect or party.

But Crispus. Crispus had been the chief ruler of the synagogue at Corinth, Acts 18:8.

And Gaius. Gaius resided at Corinth, and at his house Paul resided when he wrote the epistle to the Romans, Ro 16:23. It is also possible that the third epistle of John was directed to this man. See 3Jo 1:1. And if so, then probably Diotrephes, 3Jo 1:9, who is mentioned as one who loved "to have the pre-eminence," had been one cause of the difficulties at Corinth. The other persons at Corinth had been probably baptized by Silas and Timothy.

{c} "Crispus" Ac 18:8 {d} "Gaius" Ro 16:23 3Jo 1:1

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Lest any should say*. Lest any of those who had been baptized should pervert his design, and say that Paul had baptized them unto himself; or, lest any others should, with any appearance of truth, say that he had sought to make disciples to himself. The Ethiopic version renders this, "That ye should not say we were baptized in his name." Many of the ancient MSS. read this, "Lest any should say that ye were baptised into my name."—*Mill*

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *And I baptised also the household*. The family. Whether there were any infants in the family, does not appear. It is certain that the family was among the first converts to Christianity in Achaia, and that it had evinced great zeal in aiding those who were Christians. See 1Co 16:15. From the manner in which Paul mentions this, it is probable that Stephanas did not reside at Corinth when he was baptized, though he might have subsequently removed there. "I baptized none *of you*,

1Co 1:14, i.e., none of those who permanently dwelt at Corinth, or who were members of the original church there, but Crispus and Gaius—but I baptized also the family of Stephanas, *now* of your number." Or it may mean, "I baptized none of you *who are adult members of the church*, but Crispus and Gaius, though I also baptized the *family* of Stephanas." If this be the true interpretation, then it forms an argument to prove that Paul practised household baptism, or the baptism of the families of those who were themselves believers. Or the expression may simply indicate a *recollection* of the true circumstances of the case— a species of *correction* of the statement in 1Co 1:14, "I recollect now also that I baptized the family of Stephanas."

Household. *aikon*. The house; the family. The word comprises the whole family, including adults, domestics, slaves, and children. It includes,

(1.) the *men* in a house, Act 7:10 1Ti 3:4,5,12;

(2.)*domestics*, Ac 10:2 11:14, 16:15,31; 1Ti 3:4;

(3.)*the family* in general, Lu 10:5 16:27. (*Bretschneider*.) It was the custom, doubtless, for the apostles to baptize the entire *household*, whatever might be the age, including domestics, slaves, and children. The head of a family gave up the entire *household* to God.

Of Stephanas. Who Stephanas was, is not known. The Greek commentators say that he was the jailer of Philippi, who, after he had been baptized, (Ac 16:33,) removed with his family to Corinth. But of this there is no certain evidence.

Besides. Besides these.

I know not, etc. I do not know whether I baptized any others who are now members of that church. Paul would, doubtless, recollect that he had baptized others in other places, but he is speaking here particularly of Corinth. This is not to be urged as an argument against the *inspiration of Paul*, for

(1) it was not the design of inspiration to free the memory from defect in ordinary transactions, or in those things which were not to be received for the instruction of the church.

(2.) The meaning of Paul may simply be, "I know not who of the original members of the church at Corinth may have removed, or who may have died; I know not who may have removed *to* Corinth from other places where I have preached and baptized, and consequently I cannot know whether I may not have baptized some others of your present number." It is evident, however, that if he had baptized any others, the number was small.

{a} "besides" 1Co 16:15,17

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *For Christ sent me not to baptize*. That is, not to baptize as my main business. Baptism was not his principal employment, though he had a commission in common with others to administer the ordinance, and occasionally did it. The same thing was true of the Saviour, that he did not personally baptize, Joh 4:2. It is probable that the business of baptism was entrusted to the ministers of the church of inferior talents, or to those who were connected with the churches permanently, and not to those who were engaged chiefly in travelling from place to place. The reasons of this may have been,

(1.) that which Paul here suggests, that if the apostles had themselves baptized, it might have given occasion to strifes, and the formation of parties, as those who had been baptized by the apostles might claim some superiority over those who were not.

(2.) It is probable that the rite of baptism was preceded or followed by a course of instruction adapted to it; and as the apostles were ravelling from place to place, this could be better entrusted to those who were to be with them as their ordinary religious teachers. It was an advantage that those who imparted this instruction should also administer this ordinance.

(3.) It is not improbable, as Doddridge supposes, that the administration of this ordinance was entrusted to inferiors, because it was commonly practised by immersion, and was attended with some trouble and inconvenience, while the time of the apostles might be more directly occupied in their, main work.

But to preach the gospel. As his main business; as the leading, grand purpose of his ministry. This is the grand object of all ministers. It is not to build up a sect or party; it is not to secure simply the *baptism* of people in this or that communion; it is to make known the glad tidings of salvation, and call men to repentance and to God.

Not with wisdom of words. *ouk en sofia logou*. Not in wisdom of speech, (margin.) The expression here is a Hebraism, or a form of speech common in the Hebrew writings, where a noun is used to express the meaning of an adjective; and means, not in wise words or discourse. The wisdom here mentioned refers, doubtless, to that which was common among the Greeks, and which was so highly valued. It included the following things:

(1.) Their subtle and learned mode of disputation, or that which was practised in their schools of philosophy.

(2.) A graceful and winning eloquence; the arts by which they sought to commend their sentiments, and to win others to their opinions. On this also the Greek rhetoricians greatly valued themselves; and this, probably, the false teachers endeavoured to imitate.

(3.) That which is elegant and finished in literature, in style and composition. On this the Greeks greatly valued themselves, as the Jews did on miracles and wonders. Comp. 1Co 1:22. The apostle means to say, that the success of the gospel did not depend on these things; that he had not sought them; nor had he exhibited them in his preaching. His doctrine and his manner had not been such as to appear wise to the Greeks, and he had not depended on eloquence or philosophy for his success. Longinus (on the Sublime) enumerates Paul among men distinguished for eloquence; but it is probable that he was not distinguished for the graces of *manner*, (comp. 2Co 10:1,10) so much as the strength and power of his reasoning.

Paul here introduces a new subject of discourse, which he pursues through this and the two following chapters—the effect of philosophy on the gospel, or the estimate which ought to be formed in regard to it. The *reasons* why he introduces this topic, and dwells upon it at such length, are not perfectly apparent. They are supposed to have been the following:

(1.) He had incidentally mentioned his own preaching, and his having been set apart particularly to that, 1Co 1:17.

(2.) His authority, it is probable, had been called in question by the false teachers at Corinth.

(3.) The ground of this, or the reason why they undervalued him, had been, probably, that he had not evinced the eloquence of manner and the graces of oratory on which they so much valued themselves.

(4.) They had depended for their success on captivating the Greeks by the charms of graceful rhetoric and the refinements of subtle argumentation.

(5.) In every way, therefore, the deference paid to rhetoric and philosophy in the church, had tended to bring the pure gospel into disrepute; to produce faction; and to destroy the authority of the apostle. It was necessary, therefore, thoroughly to examine the subject, and to expose the real influence of the philosophy on which they placed so high a value.

Lest the cross of Christ. The simple doctrine that Christ was crucified to make atonement for the sins of men. This was the peculiarity of the gospel; and on this doctrine the gospel depended for success in the world.

Should be made of none effect. Should be rendered vain and ineffectual. That is, lest the success which might attend the preaching of the gospel should be attributed to the graces of eloquence, the charms of language, or the force of human argumentation, rather than to its true cause, the preaching of Christ crucified; or lest the *attempt* to recommend it by the charms of eloquence should divert the attention from the simple doctrines of the cross, and the preaching be really vain. The preaching of the gospel depends for its success on the simple power of its truths, borne by the Holy Spirit to the hearts of men; and not on the power of argumentation, and the charms of eloquence. To have adorned the gospel with the charms of Grecian rhetoric, would have obscured its wisdom and efficacy, just as the gilding of a diamond would destroy its brilliancy. True eloquence, and real learning, and sound sense, are not to be regarded as valueless; but their use in preaching is to convey the truth with plainness; to fix the mind *on* the pure gospel; and to leave the conviction on the heart, that this system is the power of God. The design of Paul here cannot be to condemn true eloquence and just reasoning, but to rebuke the vain parade, and the glittering ornaments, and dazzling rhetoric which were objects of so much esteem in Greece. A real belief of the gospel, a simple and natural statement of its sublime truths, will admit of, and prompt to, the most manly and noble kind of eloquence. The highest powers of mind, and the most varied learning, may find ample scope for the illustration and the defence of the simple doctrines of the gospel of Christ. But it does not depend for its success on these, but on its pure and heavenly truths, borne to the mind by the agency of the Holy Spirit.

{*} "not to baptize" "no so much to baptize" {+} "but to" "As to"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *For the preaching of the cross*. Greek, "the word *o logov* of the cross;" i.e., the doctrine of the cross; or the doctrine which proclaims salvation only through the atonement which the Lord Jesus Christ made on the cross. This cannot mean that the statement that Christ died *as a martyr* on a cross appears to be foolishness to men; because, if that was all, there would be nothing that would appear contemptible, or that would excite their opposition more than in the death of any other martyr. The statement that Polycarp, and Ignatius, and Paul, and Cranmer, died as martyrs, does not appear to be foolishness, for it is a statement of an historical truth, and their death excites the high admiration of all men. And if, in the death of Jesus on the cross, there had been nothing

more than a mere martyr's death, it would have been equally the object of admiration to all men. But the "preaching of the cross" must denote more than that; and must mean,

(1.) that Christ died as an atoning sacrifice for the sins of men, and that it was this which gave its peculiarity to his sufferings on the cross.

(2.) That men can be reconciled to God, pardoned, and saved only by the merits and influence of this atoning sacrifice.

To them that perish. *toiv men apollumeniov*. To those who are about to perish, or to those who have a character fitting them for destruction; i.e., to the wicked. The expression stands in contrast with those who are "saved," i.e., those who have seen the beauty of the cross of Christ, and who have fled to it for salvation.

Foolishness. Folly. That is, it appears to them to be contemptible and foolish, or unworthy of belief. To the great mass of the Jews, and to the heathen philosophers, and indeed to the majority of the men of this world, it has ever appeared foolishness, for the following reasons:

(1.) The humble origin of the Lord Jesus. They despise him that lived in Nazareth; that was poor; that had no home, and few friends, and no wealth, and little honour among his own countrymen.

(2.) They despise him who was put to death as an impostor, at the instigation of his own countrymen, in an ignominious manner on the cross—the usual punishment of slaves.

(3.) They see not why there should be any particular efficacy in his death. They deem it incredible that he who could not save himself should be able to save them; and that glory should come from the ignominy of the cross.

(4.) They are blind to the true beauty of his personal character; to the true dignity of his nature; to his power over the sick, the lame, the dying, and the dead; they see not the bearing of the work of atonement on the law and government of God; they believe not in his resurrection, and his present state of exalted glory. The world looks only at the fact that the despised man of Nazareth was put to death on a cross, and smiles at the idea that such a death could have any important influence on the salvation of man. It is worthy of remark, also, that to the ancient philosophers this doctrine would appear still more contemptible than it does to the men of these times. Everything that came from Judea they looked upon with contempt and scorn; and they would spurn, above all things else, the doctrine that they were to expect salvation only by the crucifixion of a Jew. Besides, the account of the crucifixion has now lost to us no small part of its reputation of ignominy. Even around the cross there is conceived to be no small amount of honour and glory. There is now a sacredness about it, from religious associations; and a reverence which men in Christian lands can scarcely help feeling when they think of it. But to the ancients it was connected with every idea of ignominy. It was the punishment of slaves, impostors, and vagabonds; and had even a greater degree of disgrace attached to it than the gallows has with us. With them, therefore, the death on the cross was associated with the idea of all that is shameful and dishonourable; and to speak of salvation only by the sufferings and death of a crucified man, was fitted to excite in their bosoms only unmingled scorn.

But unto us which are saved. This stands opposed to "them that perish." It refers, doubtless, to Christians, as being saved from the power and condemnation of sin; and as having a prospect of eternal salvation in the world to come.

It is the power of God. **See Barnes "Ro 1:16".**

This may either mean that the gospel is called "the power of God," because it is the medium through which God exerts his power in the salvation of sinners; or, the gospel is adapted to the condition of man, and is efficacious in renewing him, and sanctifying him, It is not an inert, inactive

letter, but is so fitted to the understanding, the heart, the hopes, the fears of men, and all their great constitutional principles of action, that it actually overcomes their sin, and diffuses peace through the soul. This efficacy is not unfrequently attributed to the gospel, Joh 17:17 Heb 4:12; Jas 1:18 1Pe 1:22,23.

When the gospel, however, or the preaching of the cross, is spoken of as effectual or powerful, it must be understood of all the agencies which are connected with it; and does not refer to simple, abstract propositions, but to the truth as it comes attended with the influences which God sends down to accompany it. It includes, therefore, the promised agency of the Holy Spirit, without which it would not be effectual. But the agency of the Spirit is designed to give efficacy to that which is *really adapted* to produce the effects, and not to act in an arbitrary manner. All the effects of the gospel on the soul —in regeneration, repentance, faith, sanctification; in hope, love, joy, peace, patience, temperance, purity, and devotedness to God—are only such *as the gospel is fitted to produce*. It has a set of truths and promises just adapted to each of these effects; just fitted to the soul by Him who knows it; and adapted to *produce* just these results. The Holy Spirit secures their influence on the mind; and is the grand living agent of accomplishing just what the truth of God is *fitted originally* to produce, Thus the preaching of the cross is "the power of God;" and every minister may present it with the assurance that he is presenting, not "a cunningly devised fable," but a system *really fitted* to save men; and yet, that its reception by the human mind depends on the promised presence of the Holy Spirit.

{c} "is to them that perish" 2Co 2:15 {a} "power of God" Ro 1:16

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *For it is written*. This passage is quoted from Isa 29:14, The Hebrew of the passage, as rendered in the English version, is, "The wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." The version of the Seventy is, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the understanding of the prudent I will hide," *kruqw* corresponding substantially with the quotation by Paul. The sense in the Hebrew is not materially different. The meaning of the passage as used by Isaiah is, that such was the iniquity and stupidity of "Ariel," Isa 29:1, that is, Jerusalem, that God would so execute his judgments as to confound their wise men, and overwhelm those who boasted of their understanding. Those in whom they had confided, and on whom they relied, should appear to be bereft of their wisdom; and they should be made conscious of their own want of counsel to meet and remove the impending calamities. The apostle does not affirm that this passage in Isaiah refers to the times of the gospel. The contrary is manifestly true. But it expresses a general principle of the Divine administration—*that the coming forth of God is often such as to confound human prudence; in a manner which human wisdom would not have devised; and in such a way as to show that he is not dependent on the wisdom of man*. As such, the sentiment is applicable to the gospel; and expresses just the idea which the apostle wished to convey—that the wisdom of the wise should be confounded by the plan of God; and the schemes of human devising be set at nought.

I will destroy. That is, I will abolish; or will not be dependent on it; or will show that my plans are not derived from the counsels of men.

The wisdom of the wise. The professed wisdom of philosophers.

And will bring to nothing. Will show it to be of no value in this matter.

The prudent. The men professing understanding; the sages of the world. We may remark,

(1.) that the plan of salvation was not the contrivance of human wisdom.

(2.) It is *unlike* what men have themselves devised as systems of religion. It did not occur to the ancient philosophers; nor has it occurred to the modern.

(3.) It may be expected to excite the opposition, the contempt, and the scorn of the wise men of this world; and the gospel makes its way usually, not with their friendship, but in the face of their opposition.

(4.) Its success is such as to confound and perplex them. They despise it, and they see not its secret power: they witness its effects, but are unable to account for them. It has always been a question with philosophers why the gospel met with such success; and the various accounts which have been given of it by its enemies, show how much they have been embarrassed. The most elaborate part of Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" is contained in his attempt to state the causes of the early propagation of Christianity, in chap. xv., xvi.; and the obvious failure of the account shows how much the mind of the philosophic sceptic was embarrassed by the fact of the spread of Christianity.

(5.) The reception of the gospel demands an humble mind, Mr 10:16. Men of good sense, of humble hearts, of child, like temper, embrace it; and they see its beauty, and are won by its loveliness, and controlled by its power. They give themselves to it; and find that it is fitted to save their souls.

(6.) In this, Christianity is like all science. The discoveries in science are such as to confound the wise in their own conceits, and overthrow the opinions of the prudent, just as much as the gospel does, and thus show that both are from the same God, the God who delights to pour such a flood of truth on the mind as to overwhelm it in admiration of himself, and with the conviction of its own littleness. The profoundest theories in science, and the most subtle speculations of men of genius, in regard to the causes of things, are often overthrown by a few simple discoveries—and discoveries which are at first despised as much as the gospel is. The invention of the telescope by Galileo was, to the theories of philosophers and astronomers, what the revelation of the gospel was to the systems of ancient learning, and the deductions of human wisdom. The one confounded the world as much as the other; and both were at first equally the object of opposition or contempt.

{b} "it is written" Isa 29:14 Jer 8:9

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Where is the wise*? Language similar to this occurs in Isa 33:18, "Where is the scribe? where is the receiver? where is he that counted the towers?" Without designing to *quote* these words as having an original reference to the subject now under consideration, Paul uses them as any man does language where he finds words with which he or his readers are familiar, that will convey his meaning. A man familiar with the Bible will naturally often make use of Scripture expressions in

conveying his ideas. In Isaiah the passage refers to the deliverance of the people from the threatened invasion of Sennacherib. The 18th verse represents the people as meditating on the threatened terror of the invasion; and then, in the language of exultation and thanksgiving at their deliverance, saying," Where is the wise man that laid the plan of destroying the nation? Where the inspector-general, (see my Note on the passage in Isaiah,) employed in arranging the forces? Where the receiver, (margin, the *weigher*,) the paymaster of the forces? Where the man that counted the towers Of Jerusalem, and calculated on their speedy overthrow? All baffled and defeated; and their schemes have all come to nought." So the apostle uses the same language in regard to the boasted wisdom of the world in reference to salvation. It is all baffled, and is all shown to be of no value.

The wise. *sofov*. The sage. At first the Greek men of learning were called *wise men*, *sofoi* like the magicians of the East. They afterwards assumed a more *modest* appellation, and called themselves the *lovers of wisdom*, *filosofoi*, or *philosophers*. This was the name by which they were commonly known in Greece, in the time of Paul.

Where is the scribe? *grammateuv*. The scribe among the Jews was a learned man, originally employed in transcribing the law; but subsequently the term came to denote a learned man in general. Among the Greeks the word was used to denote a public notary; or a transcriber of the laws; or a secretary. It was a term, therefore, nearly synonymous with a man of learning; and the apostle evidently uses it in this sense in this place. Some have supposed that he referred to the Jewish men of learning here; but he probably had reference to the Greeks.

Where is the disputer of this world? The acute and subtle sophist of this age. The word *disputer*, *suzhththv*, properly denotes one who *inquires* carefully into the causes and relations of things; one who is a subtle and abstruse investigator. It was applied to the ancient sophists and disputants in the Greek academies; and the apostle refers, doubtless, to them. The meaning is, that in all their professed investigations, in all their subtle and abstruse inquiries, they had failed of ascertaining the way in which man could be saved; and that God had devised a plan which had baffled all their wisdom, and in which their philosophy was disregarded. The term *world* here, *aiwnov* refers, probably, not to the world as a physical structure—though Grotius supposes that it does—but to that *age*; the disputer of that *age*, or generation; an age eminently wise and learned.

Hath not God made foolish, etc, That is, has he not by the originality and superior efficacy of his plan of salvation, poured contempt on all the schemes of philosophers, and evinced their folly? Not only without the aid of those schemes of men, but in opposition to them, he has devised a plan for human salvation that evinces its efficacy and its wisdom in the conversion of sinners, and in destroying the power of wickedness. Paul here, possibly, had reference to the language in Isa 44:25: God "turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish."

{d} "foolish" Isa 44:25

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *For after that*. *epeidh*. Since; or seeing that it is true that the world by wisdom knew not God. After all the experience of the world it was ascertained that men would never by their

own wisdom come to the true knowledge of God, and it pleased him to devise another plan for salvation.

In the wisdom of God. This phrase is susceptible of two interpretations.

(1.) The first makes it refer to "the wisdom of God" evinced in the works of Creation—the demonstration of his existence and attributes found there: and, according to that, the apostle means to say, that the world by a survey of the works of God did not know him; or Were, notwithstanding those works, in deep darkness. This interpretation is adopted by most commentators—by Lightfoot, Rosenmuller, Grotius, Calvin, etc. According to this interpretation, the word *en* (in) is to be translated *by*, or *through*.

(2.) A second interpretation makes it refer to the wise arrangement or government of God, by which this was permitted: "For when, by the wise arrangement or government of God, after a full and fag trial of the native, unaided powers of man, it was ascertained that the true knowledge of God would not be arrived at by man, it pleased him," etc. This appears to be the correct interpretation, because it is the most obvious one, and because it suits the connexion best. It is, according to this, a reason why God introduced a new method, of saving men. This may be said to have been accomplished by a plan of God, which was wise, because

(1) it was desirable that the powers of man should be *fully tried* before the new plan was introduced, in order to show that it was not dependent on human wisdom, that it was not originated by man, and that there was really need of such all interposition.

(2.) Because *sufficient* time had been furnished to make the experiment. An opportunity had been given for four thousand years, and still it had failed.

(3.) Because the experiment had been made in the most favourable circumstances. The human faculties had had time to ripen and expand; one generation had had an opportunity of profiting by the observation of its predecessor; and the most mighty minds had been brought to bear on the subject. If the sages of the east, and the profound philosophers of the west, had not been able to come to the true knowledge of God, it was in vain to hope that more profound minds could be brought to bear on it, or that more careful investigation would be bestowed on it. The experiment had been fairly made, and the result was before the world. **See Barnes "Ro 1:1"**

The world. The men of the world; particularly the philosophers of the world.

My wisdom. By their own wisdom, or by the united investigations of the works of nature.

Knew not God. Obtained not a true knowledge of him. Some denied his existence; some represented him under the false and abominable forms of idol worship; some ascribed to him horrid attributes; all showed that they had no true acquaintance with a God of purity, with a God who could pardon sin, or whose worship conduced to holiness of life. **See Barnes "Ro 1:1"**.

It pleased God. God was disposed, or well-pleased. The plan of salvation originated in his good pleasure, and was such as his wisdom approved. God chose this plan, so unlike all the plans of men.

By the foolishness of preaching. Not "by foolish preaching," but by the preaching of the cross, which was regarded as foolish and absurd by the men of the world. The plan is wise, but it has been esteemed by the mass of men, and was particularly so esteemed by the Greek philosophers, to be egregiously foolish and ridiculous. **See Barnes "1Co 1:18"**.

To save them that believe. That believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. **See Barnes "Mr 16:16"**.

This was the peculiarity and essence of the plan of God; and this has appeared to the mass of men to be a plan devoid of wisdom, and unworthy of God. The preaching of the cross, which is thus esteemed foolishness, is made the means of saving them, because it sets forth God's only plan of mercy, and states the way in which lost sinners may become reconciled to God.

{b} "sign" Mt 12:38 {a} "After that in the wisdom" Lu 10:21 Ro 1:20,22,28

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *For the Jews require a sign*. A miracle, a prodigy, an evidence of Divine interposition' This was the characteristic of the Jewish people. God had manifested himself to them by miracles and wonders in a remarkable manner in past times, and they greatly prided themselves on that fact, and always demanded it when any new messenger came to them, professing to be sent from God. This propensity they often evinced in their intercourse with the Lord Jesus, Mt 12:38 16:1; Mr 8:11 Lu 11:16, 12:54-56.

Many MSS., instead of "*sign*" here in the singular, read *signs* in the plural; and Griesbach has introduced that reading into the text. The sense is nearly the same, and it means that it was a characteristic of the Jews to demand the constant exhibition of miracles and wonders; and it is also implied here, I think, by the reasoning of the apostle, that they believed that the communication of such signs to them as a people, would secure their salvation, and they therefore despised the simple preaching of a crucified Messiah. They expected a Messiah that should come with the exhibition of some stupendous signs and wonders from heaven, Mt 12:38, etc., as above; they looked for the displays of amazing power in his coming, and they anticipated that he would deliver them from their enemies by mere power; and they, therefore, were greatly offended 1Co 1:23 by the simple doctrine of a crucified Messiah.

And the Greeks, etc. Perhaps this means the heathen in general, in opposition to the Jews. **See Barnes "Ro 1:16".**

It was, however, peculiarly the characteristic of the Greek philosophers. They seek for schemes of philosophy and religion that shall depend on human wisdom, and they therefore despise the gospel.

{b} Mt 12:38

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *But we*. We who are Christian preachers make Christ crucified the grand subject of our instructions and our aims, in contradistinction from the Jew and the Greek. *They seek*, the one miracles, the other wisdom; *we* glory only in the cross.

Christ crucified. The word Christ, the Anointed, is the same as the Hebrew name Messiah. The *emphasis* in this expression is on the word *crucified*. The Jews would make the Messiah whom

they expected no less an object of glorifying than the apostles, but they spurned the doctrine that he was to be *crucified*. Yet in that the apostles boasted; proclaiming him crucified, or *having been crucified*, as the only hope of man. This must mean more than that Christ was distinguished for moral worth, more than that he died as a martyr; because, if that were all, no reason could be given why the cross should be made so prominent an object. It must mean that Christ was crucified for the sins of men, as an atoning sacrifice in the place of sinners. "We proclaim a crucified Messiah as the only Redeemer of lost men."

To the Jews a stumbling-block. The Word *stumbling-block skandalon* means, properly, anything in the way over which one may fall; then anything that gives offence, or that causes one to fall into sin, Here it means that, to the Jews, the doctrine that the Messiah was to be crucified gave great offence; excited, irritated, and exasperated them; that they could not endure the doctrine, and treated it with scorn. Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 9:33** 1Pe 2:8.

It is well known that to the Jews no doctrine was more offensive than this, that the Messiah was to be put to death, and that there was to be salvation in no other way. It was so in the times of the apostles, and it has been so since. They have, therefore, usually called the Lord Jesus, by way of derision,

HEBREW, *tolvi—the man that was hanged,* that is, on a cross; and Christians they have usually denominated, for the same reason,

HEBREW

' "*abdai tolvi—-servants of the man that was hanged*. The reasons of this feeling are obvious.

(1.) They had looked for a magnificent temporal prince; but the doctrine that their Messiah was crucified dashed all their expectations. And they regarded it with contempt and scorn, just in proportion as their hopes had been elevated, and these high expectations cherished.

(2.) They had the common feelings of all men, the native feelings of pride and self-righteousness, by which they rejected the doctrine that we are dependent for salvation on one who was crucified.

(3.) They regarded Jesus as one given over by God for an enormous attempt at imposition, as having been justly put to death, and the object of the curse of the Almighty. Isa 53:4, "We did esteem him stricken, *smitten* of God? They endeavoured to convince themselves that he was the object of the Divine dereliction and abhorrence; and they, therefore, rejected the doctrine of the cross with the deepest feelings of detestation.

To the Greeks. To the Gentiles in general. So the Syriac, the Vulgate, the Arabic, and the AEthiopic versions all read it. The term *Greek* denotes all who were not Jews; thus the phrase, "the Jews and the Greeks," comprehended the whole human family, 1Co 1:22.

Foolishness. **See Barnes "1Co 1:18"**.

They regarded it as folly,

(1.) because they esteemed the whole account a fable, and an imposition.

(2.) It did not accord with their own views of the way of elevating the condition of man.

(3.) They saw no efficacy in/he doctrine, no tendency in the statement, that a man of humble birth was put to death in an ignominious manner in Judea to make men better, or to receive pardon.

(4.) They had the common feelings of unrenewed human nature; blind to the beauty of the character of Christ, and blind to the design of his death; and they therefore regarded the.whole statement as folly. We may remark here, that the feelings of the Jews and of the Greeks on this subject, are the common feelings of men. Everywhere sinners have the same views of the cross; and everywhere the human heart, if left to itself, rejects it, as either a stumbling-block or as folly.

But the doctrine should be preached, though it is an offence, and though it appears to be folly. It is the only hope of man; and by the preaching of the cross alone can sinners be saved.

{a} "stumbling block" Isa 8:14 1Pe 2:8.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *But unto them which are called*. To all true Christians. **See Barnes "1Co 1:9"**.

Both Jews and Greeks. Whether originally of Jewish or Gentile extraction, they have here a common, similar view of the crucified Saviour.

Christ the power of God. Christ *appears* to them as the power of God; or it is through him that the power of salvation is communicated to them. **See Barnes "1Co 1:18"**.

And the wisdom of God. The way in which God evinces his wisdom in the salvation of men. They see the plan to be *wise*. They see that it is adapted to the end. They see it to be fitted to procure pardon, and sanctification, and eternal life. It is God's wine plan for the salvation of men; and it is *seen*, by those who are Christians, to be *adapted* to this end. They see that there is a beauty in his character; an excellency in his doctrines; and an efficacy in his atonement, to secure their salvation. We may remark on this verse,

(1.) that when men become Christians, their hearts are changed. The views of Christians are here represented as diametrically opposite to those of other men. To one class, Christ is a stumbling-block; to others, folly; to Christians, he is full of beauty. But those views of the Christian can be obtained only by a change of heart. And the change from regarding an object or being as *foolishness* to regarding it as full of beauty, must be a radical and a mighty change.

(2.) All Christians have similar views of the Saviour. It matters not whether they were Jew or Greek; it matters not whether they were born in a northern or southern clime; "whether an Indian or an African sun has burned upon them;" whether they speak the same or different languages; whether they were born amidst the same or different denominations of Christians; whether in the same or different countries; or whether they are men in the same or different Christian communities, they have the same views of the Saviour. They see him to be the power and the wisdom of God. They are united in him, and therefore united to each other; and should regard themselves as belonging to the same family, and as bound to the same eternal home.

(3.) There is *real efficacy* in the plan of salvation. It is a scheme of power. It is adapted to the end, and is admirably fitted to accomplish the great effects which God designs to accomplish. It is not a scheme intended to show its own imbecility, and the need of another and an independent agent to accomplish the work. All the effects which the Holy Ghost produces on the soul are such, and *only* such, as the truth of the gospel is *adapted* to produce in the mind. The gospel is God's plan of putting forth *power* to save men. It seizes upon great elements in human nature; and is adapted to enlist them in the service of God. It is just *fitted* to man as a being capable of reasoning, and susceptible of emotion; as a being who may be influenced by hope and fear; who may be excited and impelled to duty by conscience; and who may be roused from a state of lethargy and sin by the prospect of eternal life, and the apprehension of eternal death. As *such* it should always be

preached—as a system *wise*, and *adapted* to the great end in view—as a system most powerful, and "mighty to the pulling down of strong holds."

{b} "the power of God" 1Co 1:18

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Because the foolishness of God*. That which God appoints, requires, commands, does, etc., which appears to men to be foolish. The passage is not to be understood as affirming that it is really foolish or unwise; but that it appears so to men. Perhaps the apostle here refers to those parts of the Divine administration where the wisdom of the plan is not seen; or where the reason of what God does is concealed.

Is wiser than men. Is better adapted to accomplish important ends, and more certainly effectual, than the schemes of human wisdom. This is especially true of the plan of salvation—a plan apparently foolish to the mass of men, yet indubitably accomplishing more for the renewing of men, and for their purity and happiness, than all the schemes of human contrivance. They have accomplished nothing towards men's salvation; this accomplishes everything. They have always failed; this never falls.

The weakness of God. There is really no weakness in God, any more than there is folly. This must mean, therefore, the things of his appointment which *appear* weak and insufficient to accomplish the end. Such are these facts—that God should seek to save the world by Jesus of Nazareth, who was supposed unable to save himself, Mt 27:40-43; and that he should expect to save men by the gospel, by its being preached by men who were without learning, eloquence, wealth, fame, or power. The instruments were feeble; and men judged that this was owing to the weakness or want of power in the God who appointed them.

Is stronger than men. Is able to accomplish more than the utmost might of man. The feeblest agency that God puts forth— so feeble as to be esteemed weakness—is able to effect more than the utmost might of man. The apostle here refers particularly to the work of redemption; but it is true everywhere. We may remark,

(1.) that God often effects his mightiest plans by that which seems to men to be weak, and even foolish. The most mighty revolutions arise often from the slightest causes; his most vast operations are often connected with very feeble means. The revolution of empires; the mighty effects of the pestilence; the advancement in the sciences and arts; and the operations of nature, are often brought about by means apparently as little fitted to accomplish the work as those which are employed in the plan of redemption.

(2.) God is great. If his feeblest powers, put forth, surpass the mightiest powers of man, how great must be his might! If the powers of man, who rears works of art, who levels mountains and elevates vales—if the power which reared the pyramids be as nothing when compared with the feeblest putting forth of Divine power, how mighty must be his arm! How vast that strength which made, and which upholds the rolling worlds! How safe are his people in his hand! And how easy for him to crush all his foes in death!

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *For ye see your calling*. You know the general character and condition of those who are Christians among you, that they have not been generally taken from the wise, the rich, and the learned, but from humble life. The design of the apostle here is to show that the gospel did not depend for its Success on human wisdom. His argument is, that in fact those who were blessed by it had not been of the elevated ranks of life mainly, but that God had shown his Power.by choosing those who were ignorant, and vicious, and abandoned, and by reforming and purifying their lives The verb "ye see," *blepete* is ambiguous, and may be either in the indicative mood, as our translators have rendered it, "ye do see; you are well apprized of it, and know it;" or it may be in the imperative, "see, contemplate your condition ;" but the sense is substantially the same. Your calling, *thn klhsin*, means "those who are called," 1Co 1:9; as "the circumcision" means those who are circumcised, Ro 3:30. The sense is, "Look upon the condition of those who are Christians."

Not many wise men. Not many who are regarded as wise; or who are ranked with philosophers. This supposes that there were *some* of that description, though the mass of Christians were then, as now, from more humble ranks of life. That there were *some* of high rank and wealth at Corinth who became Christians, is well known. Crispus and Sosthenes, rulers of the synagogue there, (Ac 18:8,17, comp. 1Co 1:1;) Gaius, rich, hospitable man, Ro 16:23; and Erastus, the chancellor of the city of Corinth, Ro 16:23, had been converted, and were members of the church. Some have supposed (*Macknight*) that this should be rendered, "not many mighty, wise, etc., *call you*; that is, God has not employed the wise and the learned *to call* you into his kingdom." But the sense in our translation is evidently the correct interpretation, it is the *obvious* sense; and it agrees with the design of the apostle, which was to show that God had not consulted the wisdom, and power, and wealth of men, in the establishment of his church. So the Syriac and the Vulgate render it.

After the flesh. According to the maxims and principles of a sensual and worldly policy; according to the views of men when under the influence of those principles; i.e., who are unrenewed. The flesh here stands opposed to the spirit; the views of the men of this world in contradistinction from the wisdom that is from above.

Not many mighty. Not many men of power; or men sustaining important *offices* in the state. Comp. Re 6:15. The word may refer to those who wield power of any kind, whether derived from office, from rank, from wealth, etc.

Not many noble. Not many of illustrious birth, or descended from illustrious families *eugeneiv*, *well-born*. In respect to each of these classes, the apostle does not say that there were no men of wealth, and power, and birth, but that the mass or body of Christians was not composed of such. They were made up of those who were in humble life. There were a few, indeed, of rank and property, as there are now; but then, as now, the great mass were composed of those who were from the lower conditions of society. The reason why God had chosen his people from that rank is stated in 1Co 1:29. The character of many of those who composed the church at Corinth, before their conversion, is stated in 1Co 6:9-11, which see.

{a} "not many wise" Zep 3:12 Joh 7:48

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *But God hath chosen*. The fact of their being in the church at all was the result of his choice. It was owing entirely to his grace.

The foolish things. The things esteemed foolish among men. The expression here refers to those who were destitute of learning, rank, wealth, and power, and who were esteemed as fools, and were despised by the rich and the great.

To confound. To bring to shame; or that he might make them ashamed; i.e., humble them by showing them how little he regarded their wisdom; and how little their wisdom contributed to the success of his cause. By thus overlooking them, and bestowing his favours on the humble and the poor; by choosing his people from the ranks which they despised, and bestowing on them the exalted privilege of being called the sons of God, he had poured dishonour on the rich and the great, and overwhelmed them, and their schemes of wisdom, with shame. It is also true, that those who are regarded as fools by the wise men of the world, are able often to confound those who boast of their wisdom; and that the arguments of plain men, though unlearned except in the school of Christ—of men of sound, common sense, under the influence of Christian principles—have a force which the learning and talent of the men of this world cannot gainsay or resist. They have *truth* on their side; and truth, though dressed in a humble garb, is more mighty than error, though clothed with the brilliancy of imagination, the pomp of declamation, and the cunning of sophistry.

The weak things. Those esteemed weak by the men of the world.

The mighty. The great, the noble, the learned.

{b} "But God" Ps 8:2 Mt 11:25

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *And base things of the world*. Those things which by the world are esteemed ignoble. Literally, those which are not of noble or illustrious birth, *ta agenh*.

Things which are despised. Those which the world regards as objects of contempt. Comp. Mr 9:12 Lu 18:19; Ac 14:11.

Yea. The introduction of this Word by the translators does nothing to illustrate the sense, but rather enfeebles it. The language here is a striking instance of Paul's manner of expressing himself with great strength. He desires to convey, in the strongest terms, the fact that God had illustrated his plan by choosing the objects of least esteem among men. He is willing to admit all that could be said on this point. He says, therefore, that he had chosen the things of ignoble birth and rank—the base things of the world; but this did not fully express his meaning. iowa He had chosen objects of contempt among men; but this was not strong enough to express his idea. He adds, therefore, that he had chosen those things which were absolutely *nothing* which had no existence; which could not be supposed to influence him in his choice.

And things which are not. *ta mh onta*. That which is nothing; which is worthless; which has no existence; those things which were below contempt itself; and which, in the estimation of the world,

were passed by as having no existence-as not having sufficient importance to be esteemed worthy even of the slight notice which is implied in contempt. For a man who despises a thing must at least notice it, and esteem it worth *some* attention. But the apostle here speaks of things *beneath* even that slight notice; as completely and totally disregarded, as having no existence. The language here is evidently that of hyperbole, **See Barnes "Joh 21:25".**

It was a figure of speech common in the East, and not unusual in the sacred writings. Comp. Isa 40:17:

"All nations before him are as nothing,
And they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity."

See also Ro 4:17: "God, who calleth those things which be not as though they were." This language was strongly expressive of the estimate which the Jews fixed on the Gentiles, as being a despised people, as being in fact *no* people; a people without laws, and organization, and religion, and privileges. See Hos 1:10 2:23; Ro 9:25 1Pe 2:10.

"When a man of rank among the Hindoos speaks of low-caste persons, of notorious profligates, or of those whom he despises, he calls them *alla-tha-varkal*, i.e., *thou who are not*. The term does not refer to life or existence, but to a quality or disposition, and is applied to those who are vile and abominable in all things. 'My son, my son, go not among them *who are not*.' 'Alas! alas! those people are all *alla-tha-varkal*' When wicked men prosper, it is said, 'This is the time for those *who are not*.' 'Have you heard that those who are not are now acting righteously? 'Vulgar and indecent expressions are also called words that are not.' To address men in the phrase are not, is provoking beyond measure."—*Roberts*, as quoted in Bush's illustrations of Scripture.

To bring to nought. To humble and subdue. To show them how vain and impotent they were.

Things that are. Those who, on account of their noble birth, high attainments, wealth, and rank, placed a high estimate on themselves, and despised others.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *That no flesh*. That no men; no class of men. The word flesh is often thus used to denote men, Mt 24:22 Lu 3:6; Joh 17:2

Ac 2:17 1Pe 1:24, etc.

Should glory. Should boast, Ro 3:27.

In his presence. Before him. That man should *really* have nothing of which to boast; but that the whole scheme should be adapted to humble and subdue him. On these verses we may observe,

(1.) that it is to be expected that the great mass of Christian converts will be found among those who am of humble life; and it may be observed also, that true virtue and excellence, honesty, sincerity, and amiableness, are usually found there also.

(2.) That while the mass of Christians are found there, there are also those of noble birth, and rank, and wealth, who become Christians. The aggregate of those who, from elevated ranks and distinguished talents, have become Christians, has not been small. It is sufficient to refer to such names as Pascal, and Bacon, and Boyle, and Newton, and Locke, and Hale, and Wilberforce, to show that religion can command the homage of the most illustrious genius and rank.

(3.) The *reasons* why those of rank and wealth do not become Christians, are many and obvious.

(a) They are beset with peculiar temptations.

(b) They are usually satisfied *with* rank and wealth, and do not feel their need of a hope of heaven.

(c) They are surrounded with objects which flatter their vanity, which minister to their pride, and which throw them into the circle of alluring and tempting pleasures.

(d) They are drawn away from the means of grace and the places of prayer, by fashion, by business, by temptation.

(e) There is something about the pride of learning and philosophy which usually makes those who possess it unwilling to sit at the feet of Christ; to acknowledge their dependence on any power; and to confess that they are poor, and needy, and blind, and naked before God.

(4.) The gospel is designed to produce humility, and to place all men on a level in regard to salvation. There is no royal way to the favour of God. No monarch is saved because he is a monarch; no philosopher because he is a philosopher; no rich man because he is rich; no poor man because he is poor. All are placed on a level. All are to be saved in the same way. All are to become willing to give the entire glory to God. All are to acknowledge him as providing the plan, and as furnishing the grace that is needful for salvation. God's design is to bring down the pride of man, and to produce everywhere a willingness to acknowledge him as the Fountain of blessings, and the God of all.

{c} "no flesh" Ro 3:27

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *But of him*. That is, by his agency and power. It is not by philosophy; not from ourselves; but by his mercy. The apostle keeps it prominently in view, that it was not of their philosophy, wealth, or rank, that they had been raised to these privileges, but of God as the author.

Are ye. Ye are what you are by the mercy of God, 1Co 15:10. You owe your hopes to him. The emphasis in this verse is to be placed on this expression, "are ye." You are Christians, not by the agency of man, but by the agency of God.

In Christ Jesus. **See Barnes "1Co 1:4"**.

By the medium, or through the work of Christ, this mercy has been conferred on you.

Who of God. From God, *apo yeou*. Christ is given to us by God, or appointed by him to be our wisdom, etc. God originated the scheme, and God gave him for this end.

Wisdom. That is, he is to us the Source of wisdom; it is by him that we are made wise. This cannot mean that his wisdom becomes strictly and properly ours; that it is set over to us, and reckoned as our own; for that is not true. But it must mean simply, that Christians have become *truly wise* by the agency, the teaching, and the work of Christ. Philosophers had attempted to become wise by their own investigations and inquiries. But Christians had become wise by the work of Christ; that is, it had been by his instructions that they had been made acquainted with the true character of God, with his law, with their own condition, and with the great truth that there was a glorious immortality beyond the grave. None of these truths had been obtained by the investigations of philosophers, but by the instructions of Christ. In like manner it was that through him they had

been made practically wise unto salvation. Comp. Col 2:3: "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." He is the great Agent by whom we become truly wise. Christ is often represented as eminently wise, and as the Source of all true wisdom to his people, Isa 11:1 Mt 13:54; Lu 2:40,52

1Co 1:24 3:10: "Ye are wise in Christ." Many commentators have supposed that the beautiful description of wisdom, in Pr 8, is applicable to the Messiah. Christ may be said to be made wisdom to us, or to communicate wisdom,

(1.) because he has in his own ministry instructed us in the true knowledge of God, and of those great truths which pertain to our salvation.

(2.) Because he has by his word and Spirit led us to see our true situation, and made us "wise unto salvation." He has turned us from the ways of folly, and inclined us to walk in the path of true wisdom.

(3.) Because he is to his people now the Source of wisdom. He enlightens their mind in the time of perplexity; guides them in the way of truth; and leads them in the path of real knowledge. It often happens that obscure and ignorant men, who have been taught in the school of Christ, have more true and real knowledge of that which concerns their welfare, and evince more real, practical wisdom, than can be learned in all the schools of philosophy and learning on the earth. It is wise for a sinful and dying creature to prepare for eternity. But none but those who are instructed by the Son of God become thus wise.

And righteousness. By whom we become righteous in the sight of God. This declaration simply affirms that we become righteous through him, as it is affirmed that we become wise, sanctified, and redeemed through him. But neither of the expressions determine anything as to the *mode* by which it is done. The leading idea of the apostle, which should never be lost sight of, is, that the Greeks by their philosophy did not become truly wise, righteous, sanctified, and redeemed; but that this was accomplished through Jesus Christ. But *in what way* this was done, or by what process or mode, is not here stated; and it should be no more *assumed* from this text that we became *righteous* by the imputation of Christ's righteousness, than it should be that we became wise by the *imputation* of his wisdom, and sanctified by the imputation of his holiness. If this passage would prove one of these points, it would prove all. But as it is absurd to say that we became wise by the imputation of the personal wisdom of Christ, so this passage should not be brought to prove that we became righteous by the imputation of his righteousness. Whatever may be the truth of that doctrine, this passage does not prove it. By turning to other parts of the New Testament to learn in what way we are made righteous through Christ, or in what way he is made unto us righteousness, we learn that it is in two modes:

(1.) because it is by his merits alone that our sins are pardoned, and we are justified, and treated as righteous, **See Barnes "Ro 3:26"**

See Barnes "Ro 3:27"; and,

(2.) because by his influence, and work, and Spirit, and truth, we are made personally holy in the sight of God. The former is doubtless the thing intended here, as sanctification is specified after. The apostle here refers simply to the *fact*, without specifying the mode in which it is done. That is, to be learned from other parts of the New Testament. Comp. Note, **See Barnes "Ro 4:25"**.

The doctrine of justification is, that God regards and treats those as righteous who believe on his Son, and who are pardoned on account of what he has done and suffered. The several steps in the process may be thus stated:

(1.) The sinner is by nature exposed to the wrath of God. He is lost and ruined. He has no merit of his own. He has violated a holy law, and that law condemns him, and he has no power to make an atonement or reparation. He can never be pronounced a just man on his own merits. He can never *vindicate* his conduct, as a man can do in a court of justice where he is unjustly accused, and so be pronounced just.

(2.) Jesus Christ has taken the sinner's place, and died in his stead. He has honoured a broken law; he has rendered it consistent for God to pardon. By his dreadful sufferings, endured in the sinner's place, God has shown his hatred of sin, and his willingness to forgive. His truth will be vindicated, and his law honoured, and his government secured, if now he shall pardon the offender when penitent. As he endured these sorrows for others, and not for him, self, they can be so reckoned, and are so judged by God. All the *benefits* or *results* of that atonement, therefore, as it was made for others, can be applied to them; and all the advantage of such substitution in their place can be made over to them, as really *as* when a man pays a note of hand for a friend, or when he pays for another a ransom. The price is reckoned *as* paid for them, and the *benefits* flow to the debtor and the captive. It is not reckoned that *they* paid it, for that is not true; but that it was done *for* them, and the benefit may be theirs, which *is* true.

(3.) God has been pleased to promise that these benefits may be conferred on him who believes in the Saviour. The sinner is *united* by faith to the Lord Jesus, and is so adjudged, or reckoned. God *esteems* or judges him to be a believer according to the promise. And so believing, and so repenting, he deems it consistent to pardon and justify him who is so united to his Son by faith. He is justified, not by the act of faith; not by any merits of his own, but by the merits of Christ. He has no other ground, and no other hope. Thus he is *in fact* a pardoned and justified man; and God so reckons and judges. God's law is honoured, and the sinner is pardoned and saved; and it is now as consistent for God to treat him as a righteous man, as it would be if he had never sinned—since there is as high honour shown to the law of God, as there would have been had he been personally obedient, or had he personally suffered its penalty. And as, through the death of Christ, the same *results* are secured in upholding God's moral government as would be by his condemnation, it is *consistent* and *proper* for God to forgive him, and treat him as a righteous man; and to do so accords with the infinite benevolence of his heart.

And sanctification. By him we are sanctified, or made holy. This does not mean, evidently, that his personal holiness is reckoned to us; but that, by his work applied to our hearts, we become personally sanctified or holy. Comp. Eph 4:24. This is done by the agency of his Spirit applying truth to the mind, Joh 17:19; by the aid which he furnishes in trials, temptations, and conflicts, and by the influence of hope in sustaining, elevating, and purifying the soul. All the *truth* that is employed to sanctify, was taught primarily by him; and all the means that may be used are the purchase of his death, and are under his direction; and the Spirit, by whose agency Christians are sanctified, was sent into the world by him, and in answer to his prayers, Joh 14:16 15:26.

And redemption. *apolutrwsiv*. For the meaning of this word, **See Barnes "Ro 3:24"**.

Here it is evidently used in a larger sense than it is commonly in the New Testament. The things which are specified above, "justification and sanctification," are a part of the work of redemption. Probably the word is used here in a wide sense, as denoting the whole group, or class of influences by which we are brought at last to heaven; so that the apostle refers not only to his atonement, but to the work by which we are *in fact* redeemed from death, and made happy in heaven. Thus in Ro 8:23, the word is applied to the resurrection, "the *redemption* of our body." The sense is, "It is by

Christ that we are redeemed; by him that an atonement is made; by him that we are pardoned; by him that we are delivered from the dominion of sin, and the power of our enemies; and by him that we shall be rescued from the grave, and raised up to everlasting life." Thus the whole work depends on him; and no part of it is to be ascribed to the philosophy, the talent, or the wisdom of men. He does not merely *aid*us;—he does not complete that which is imperfect; he does not come in to do a part of the work, or to supply our defects;—but it is all to be traced to him. See Col 2:10: "And ye are complete in him."

{a} "in Christ Jesus" 2Co 5:17 Eph 1:3,10

{b} "wisdom" Eph 1:17 Col 2:3 {c} "righteousness" Isa 14:24 Jer 23:5,6 Ro 4:25

{d} "sanctification" Joh 17:19 {e} "redemption" Eph 1:7

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *As it is written*. This is evidently a quotation made from Jer 9:23,24. It is not made literally; but the apostle has condensed the sense of the prophet into a few words, and has retained essentially his idea.

He that glorieth. He that boasts or exults.

In the Lord. Not ascribing his salvation to human abilities, or learning, or rank, but entirely to God. And from this we see,

(1.) that the design of the plan of salvation is to exalt God in view of the mind.

(2.) That the design is to make us humble; and this is the design also of all his works no less than of the plan of salvation. All just views of the creation tend to produce true humility.

(3.) It is an evidence of piety when we are thus disposed to exalt God, and to be humble. It shows that the heart is changed; and that we are truly disposed to honour him.

(4.) We may rejoice in God. We have no strength, and no righteousness of which to boast; but we may rejoice in him. He is full of goodness and mercy. He is able to save us. He can redeem us out of the hand of all our enemies. And when we are conscious that we are poor, and feeble, and helpless—when oppressed with a sense of sin—we may rejoice in him as our God, and exult in him as our Saviour and Redeemer. True piety will delight to come and lay everything at his feet; and whatever may be our rank, or talent, or learning, we shah rejoice to come with the temper of the humblest child of poverty, and sorrow, and want, and to say, "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake," Ps 115:1.

"Not to our names, thou only just and true.
Not to our worthless names is glory due;
Thy power and grace, thy truth and justice claim
Immortal honours to thy sovereign name."—*Watts*

{f} "it is written" Jer 9:23,24

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 2

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 1

1st Corinthians Chapter II

THE design of this chapter is the same as the concluding part of 1Co 1:17-31, to show that the gospel does not depend for its success on human wisdom, or the philosophy of men. This position the apostle further confirms,

(1.) 1Co 2:1-5, by a reference to his own example, as having been successful among them, and yet not endowed with the graces of elocution, or by a commanding address; yet,

(2.) lest it should be thought that the gospel was real folly, and should be contemned, he shows in the remainder of the chapter, 1Co 2:6-16, that it contained true wisdom; that it was a profound scheme—rejected, indeed, by the men of the world, but *see* to be wise by those who were made acquainted with its real nature and value, 1Co 2:5-16.

The first division of the chapter 1Co 2:1-5 is a continuation of the argument to show that the success of the gospel does not depend on human wisdom or philosophy. This he proves,

(1.) by the fact that when he was among them, though his preaching was attended with success, yet he did not come with the attractions of human eloquence, 1Co 2:1.

(2.) This was in accordance with his purpose, not designing to attempt anything like that, but having another object, 1Co 1:2.

(3.) In fact, he had not evinced that, but the contrary, 1Co 2:3,4.

(4.) His design was that their conversion should not appear to have been wrought by human wisdom or eloquence, but to have been manifestly the work of God, 1Co 2:5.

Verse 1. *And I, brethren*. Keeping up the tender and affectionate style of address.

When I came to you. When I came at first to preach the gospel at Corinth, Ac 18:1, etc.

Came not with excellency of speech. Came not with graceful and attractive eloquence. The apostle here evidently alludes to that nice and studied choice of language, to those gracefully formed sentences, and to that skill of arrangement in discourse and argument, which was so much and object of regard with the Greek rhetoricians. It is probable that Paul was never much distinguished for these, (comp. 2Co 10:10) and it is certain he never made them an object of intense study and solicitude. Comp. 1Co 2:4,13.

Or of wisdom. Of the wisdom of this world; of that kind of wisdom which was sought and cultivated in Greece.

The testimony of God. The testimony or the witnessing which God has borne to the gospel of Christ by miracles, and by attending it everywhere with his presence and blessing. In 1Co 1:6, the gospel is called "the testimony of Christ;" and here it may either mean the witness which the gospel bears to the true character and plans of God, or the witnessing which God had borne to the gospel by miracles, etc. The gospel contains the testimony of God in regard to his own character and plans; especially in regard to the great plan of redemption through Jesus Christ. Several MSS., instead of

"testimony of God," here read "the mystery of God." This would accord well with the scope of the argument; but the present reading is probably the correct one. See *Mill*. The Syriac version has also *mystery*.

{a} "came not" 1Co 2:4,13

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *For I determined*. I made a resolution. This was my fixed, deliberate purpose when I came there. It was not a matter of accident, or chance, that I made Christ my great and constant theme, but it was my deliberate purpose. It is to be recollected that Paul made this resolution, knowing the peculiar fondness of the Greeks for subtle disquisitions, and for graceful and finished elocution; that he formed it when his own mind, as we may judge from his writings, was strongly inclined by nature to an abstruse and metaphysical kind of discussion, which could not have failed to attract the attention of the acute and subtle reasoners of Greece; and that he made it when he must have been fully aware that the theme which he had chosen to dwell upon would be certain to excite derision and con- tempt. Yet he formed and adhered to this resolution, though it might expose him to contempt, and though they might reject and despise his message.

Not to know. The word *know* here *eidenai* is used probably in the sense of *attend to, be engaged in, or regard*. I resolved not to give my time and attention while among you to the laws and traditions of the Jews; to your orators, philosophers, and poets; to the beauty of your architecture or statuary; to a contemplation of your customs and laws; but *to attend* to this only—making known the cross of Christ. The word *eidw* (*to know*) is sometimes thus used. Paul says that he designed that this should be the only thing on which his mind should be fixed; the only object of his attention; the only object on which he there sought that knowledge should be diffused. Doddridge renders it, "appear to know."

Any thing among you. Anything while I was with you; or, anything that may exist among you, and that may be objects of interest to you. I resolved to know nothing of it, whatever it might be. The former is, probably, the correct interpretation.

Save Jesus Christ. Except Jesus Christ. This is the only thing of which I purposed to have any knowledge among you.

And him crucified. Or, "*even* (*kai*) him that was crucified." He resolved not only to make the *Messiah* the grand object of his knowledge and attention there, but *EVEN a crucified* Messiah; to maintain the doctrine that the Messiah *was to be* crucified for the sins of the world; and that he who *had been* crucified was in fact the Messiah. **See Barnes "1Co 1:23"**.

We may remark here,

(1.) that this should be the resolution of every minister of the gospel. This is *his* business. It is not to be a politician; not to engage in the strifes and controversies of men; it is not to be a good farmer or scholar merely; not to mingle with his people in festive circles and enjoyments; not to be a man of taste and philosophy, and distinguished mainly for refinement of manners; not to be a profound philosopher or metaphysician; but to make Christ crucified the grand object of his attention, and seek always and everywhere to make him known.

(2.) He is not to be ashamed anywhere of the humbling doctrine that Christ was crucified. In this he is to glory. Though the world may ridicule; though philosophers may sneer; though the rich and the gay may deride it, yet this is to be the grand object of interest to him; and at no time, *and in no society*, is he to be ashamed of it.

(3.) It matters not what are the amusements of society around him; what fields of science, of gain, or ambition, are open before him; the minister of Christ is to know Christ and him crucified alone. If he cultivates science, it is to be that he may the more successfully explain and vindicate the gospel. If he becomes in any manner familiar with the works of art and of taste, it is that he may more successfully show to those who cultivate them the superior beauty and excellency of the cross. If he studies the plans and the employments of men, it is that he may more successfully meet them in those plans, and more successfully speak to them of the great plan of redemption. (4.) The preaching of the cross is the only kind of preaching that will be attended with success. That which has in it much respecting the Divine mission, the dignity, the works, the doctrines, the person, and the atonement of Christ, will be successful. So it was in the time of the apostles; so it was in the reformation; so it was in the Moravian missions; so it has been in all revivals of religion. There is a power about that kind of preaching which philosophy and human reason have not. "Christ is God's great ordinance" for the salvation of the world; and we meet the crimes and alleviate the woes of the world, just in proportion as we hold the cross up as appointed to overcome the one, and to pour the balm of consolation into the other.

{*} "know" "make known" {b} "save Jesus Christ" Ga 6:14

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And I was with you*. Paul continued there at least a year and six months, Ac 18:2

In weakness. In conscious feebleness; diffident of my own powers, and not trusting to my own strength.

And in fear, and in much trembling. Paul was sensible that he had many enemies to encounter, Ac 18:6; and he was sensible of his own natural disadvantages as a public speaker, 2Co 10:10. He knew, too, how much the Greeks valued a manly and elegant species of oratory; and he, therefore, delivered his message with deep and anxious solicitude as to the success. It was at this time, and in view of these circumstances, that the Lord spoke to him by night in a vision, and said, "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace; for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city," Ac 18:9,10. If Paul was conscious of weakness, well may other ministers be; and if Paul sometimes trembled in deep solicitude about the result of his message, well may other ministers tremble also. It was in such circumstances, and with such feelings, that the Lord met him to encourage him. And it is when other ministers feel thus, that the promises of the gospel are inestimably precious. We may add, that it is *then*, and then only, that they are successful. Notwithstanding all Paul's fears, he was successful there. And it is commonly, perhaps always, when ministers go to their work conscious of their own weakness; burdened with the weight of their message; diffident of their own powers; and deeply solicitous about the result of their labours, that God sends down his Spirit, and converts sinners to God. The most successful ministers

have been men who have evinced most of this feeling; and most of the revivals of religion have commenced, and continued, just as ministers have preached, conscious of their own feebleness, distrusting their own powers, and looking to God for aid and strength.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And my speech*. The word *speech* here—if it is to be distinguished from preaching—refers, perhaps, to his more private reasonings; his preaching, to his public discourses.

Not with enticing words. Not with persuasive reasonings *peiyoiv logoiv* of the wisdom of men. Not with that kind of oratory that was adapted to captivate and charm, and which the Greeks so much esteemed.

But in demonstration. In the showing, *apodeixei* or in the testimony or evidence which the spirit produced. The meaning is, that the spirit furnished the evidence of the Divine origin of the religion which he preached, and that it did not depend for its proof on his own reasonings or eloquence. The proof, the demonstration which the Spirit furnished, was, undoubtedly, the miracles which were wrought, the gift of tongues, and the remarkable conversions which attended the gospel. The word Spirit here refers, doubtless, to the Holy Spirit; and Paul says that this Spirit had furnished demonstration of the Divine origin and nature of the gospel. This had been by the gift of tongues, 1Co 2:5-7, comp. 1Co 14, and by the effects of his agency in renewing and sanctifying the heart.

And of power. That is, of the power of God, 1Co 1:5; the Divine power and efficacy which attended the preaching of the gospel there. Comp. 1Th 1:5. The *effect* of the gospel is the evidence to which the apostle appeals for its truth. That effect was seen,

(1.) in the conversion of sinners to God, of all classes, ages, and conditions, when all human means of reforming them was vain.

(2.) In its giving them peace, joy, and happiness; and in its transforming their lives.

(3.) In making them different men—in making the drunkard, sober; the thief, honest; the licentious, pure; the profane, reverent; the indolent, industrious; the harsh and unkind, gentle and kind; and the wretched, happy.

(4.) In its diffusing a mild and pure influence over the laws and customs of society; and in promoting human happiness everywhere. And in regard to this evidence to which the apostle appeals, we may observe,

(1,) that [it] is a kind of evidence which any one may examine, and which no one can deny. It does not need laboured, abstruse argumentation, but it is everywhere in society. Every man has witnessed the effects of the gospel in reforming the vicious, and no one can deny that it has this power.

(2.) It is a mighty display of the power of God. There is no more striking exhibition of his power over mind than in a revival of religion. There is nowhere more manifest demonstration of his presence than when, in such a revival, the proud are humbled, the profane are awed, the blasphemer is silenced, and the profligate, the abandoned, and the moral are converted unto God, and are led as lost sinners to the same cross, and find the same peace.

(3.) The gospel has thus evinced from age to age that it is from God. Every converted sinner furnishes such a demonstration, and every instance where it produces peace, hope, joy, shows that it is from heaven.

{1} "enticing words" "persuasible" {a} "man's wisdom" 2Pe 1:16 {b} "demonstration" 1Th 1:5

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *That your faith*. That is, that your belief of the Divine origin of the Christian religion.

Should not stand. Greek, "should not *be*;" that is, should not rest upon this, or be sustained by this. God intended to furnish you a firm and solid demonstration that the religion which you embraced was from him; and this could not be if its preaching had been attended with the graces of eloquence, or the abstractions of refined metaphysical reasoning. It would then appear to rest on human wisdom.

In the power of God. In the evidence of Divine power accompanying the preaching of the gospel. The power of God would attend the exhibition of truth everywhere; and would be a demonstration that would be irresistible, that the religion was not originated by man, but was from heaven. That power was seen in changing the heart; in overcoming the strong propensities of our nature to sin; in subduing the soul, and making the sinner a new creature in Christ Jesus. Every Christian has thus, in his own experience, furnished demonstration that the religion which he loves is from God, and not from man. *Man* could not subdue these sins; and man could not so entirely transform the soul. And although the unlearned Christian may not be able to investigate *all* the evidences of religion; although he cannot meet *all* the objections of cunning and subtle infidels; although he may be greatly perplexed and embarrassed by them, yet he may have the fullest proof that he loves God, that he is different from what he once was, and that all this has been accomplished by the religion of the cross. The blind man that was made to see by the Saviour, (Joh 9) might have been wholly unable to tell *how* his eyes were opened, and unable to meet all the cavils of those who might doubt it, or all the subtle and cunning objections of physiologists; but of one thing he certainly could not doubt, that whereas he was blind, he then saw, Joh 9:25. A man may have no doubt that the sun shines, that the wind blows, that the tides rise, that the blood flows in his veins, that the flowers bloom, and that this could *not* be except it was from God, while he may have no power to explain these facts, and no power to meet the objections and cavils of those who might choose to embarrass him. So men may know that their hearts are changed; and it is on this ground that no small part of the Christian world, as in everything else, depend for the most satisfactory evidence of their religion. On this ground humble and unlearned Christians have been often willing to go to the stake as martyrs—just as a humble and unlearned *patriot* is willing to die for his country. He *loves* it; and he is willing to die for it. A Christian *loves* his God and Saviour; and is willing to *die* for his sake.

{2} "stand" "be"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Howbeit*. But, *de*. This commences the *second* head or argument in this chapter, in which Paul shows that if human wisdom *is* wanting in his preaching, it is not devoid of true, and solid, and even Divine wisdom.—*Bloomfield*.

We speak wisdom. We do not admit that we utter foolishness. We have spoken of the foolishness of preaching, 1Co 1:21; and of the estimate in which it was held by the world, 1Co 1:22-28; and of our own manner among you as not laying claim to human learning or eloquence; but we do not design to admit that we have been really speaking folly. We have been uttering that which is truly wise, but which is seen and understood to be such only by those who are had explained and defended—the plan of salvation by the cross of Christ.

Among them that are perfect. *en toiv teleioiv*. This word "perfect" is here evidently applied to Christians, as it is in Php 3:15: "Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded." And it is clearly used to denote those who were advanced in Christian knowledge; who were qualified to understand the subject; who had made progress in the knowledge of the mysteries of the gospel; and who thus saw its excellence. It does not mean here that they were *sinless*, for the argument of the apostle does not bear on that inquiry; but that they were qualified to understand the gospel, in contradistinction from the gross, the sensual, and the carnally-minded, who rejected it as foolishness. There is, perhaps, here an allusion to the heathen *mysteries*, where those who had been fully initiated were said to be *perfect*—fully instructed in those rites and doctrines. And if so, then this passage means, that those only who have been fully instructed in the knowledge of the Christian religion will be qualified to see its beauty and its wisdom. The gross and sensual do not see it, and those only who are enlightened by the Holy Spirit are qualified to appreciate its beauty and its excellency.

Not the wisdom of this world. Not that which this world has originated or loved.

Nor of the princes of this world. Perhaps intending chiefly here the rulers of the Jews. See 1Co 2:8. They neither devised it, nor loved it, nor saw its wisdom, 1Co 2:8. *That come to nought*. That is, whose plans fail; whose wisdom vanishes; and who themselves, with all their pomp and splendour, come to nothing in the grave. Comp. Isa 14. All the plans of human wisdom shall fail; and this which is originated by God only shall stand.

{*} "Howbeit" "However" {c} "among them" Php 3:15 {*} "that" "who" {a} "nought" Ps 33:10

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *But we speak*. We who have preached the gospel.

The wisdom of God. We teach or proclaim the wise plan of God for the salvation of men; we make known the Divine wisdom in regard to the scheme of human redemption. This plan was of God, in opposition to other plans which were of men.

In a mystery, even the hidden wisdom. *en musthriw thn apokekrummenhn*. The words "even" and "wisdom" in this translation have been supplied by our translators; and the sense would be more perspicuous if they were omitted, and the translation should be literally made— "We proclaim

the Divine wisdom hidden in a mystery." The apostle does not say that their *preaching* was mysterious, nor that their doctrine was unintelligible; but he refers to the fact that this wisdom had been *hidden in a mystery* from men until that time, but was *then* revealed by the gospel. In other words, he does not say that what they then declared was hidden in a mystery, but that they made known the Divine wisdom which *had been* concealed from the minds of men. The word *mystery* with us is commonly used in the sense of that which is beyond comprehension; and it is often applied to such doctrines as exhibit difficulties which we are not able to explain. But this is not the sense in which it is commonly used in the Scriptures. **See Barnes "Mt 13:11"**.

Comp. Campbell on the gospels, Diss. ix. part i. The word properly denotes that which is *concealed* or *hidden*; that which has not yet been known; and is applied to those truths which, until the revelation of Jesus Christ, were *concealed* from men, which were either *hidden* under obscure types and shadows or prophecies, or which had been altogether unrevealed, and unknown to the world. The word stands opposed to that which and unknown to the world. The word stand opposed to that which is *revealed*, not to that which is in itself plain. The doctrines to which the word relates may in themselves clear and simple, but they are hidden *in* mystery until they are revealed. From this radical idea in the word *mystery*, however, it came also to be applied not only to those doctrines which *had not* been made known, but to those also which were in themselves deep and difficult; to that which is enigmatical and obscure, 1Co 14:2 1Ti 3:16. It is applied also to the secret designs and purposes of God, Re 10.7.

The word is most commonly applied by Paul to the secret and long concealed design of God to make known his gospel to the Gentiles; to break down the wall between them and the Jews; and to spread the blessings of the true religion everywhere, Ro 11:25 16:25; Eph 1:9 3:9, 6:19.

19. Here it evidently means the beauty and excellency of the person and plans of Jesus Christ, but which were *in fact* unknown to the princes of this world. It does not imply, of necessity, that they *could* not have understood them, nor that they were unintelligible; but that, *in fact*, whatever was the cause, they were concealed from them. Paul says, 1Co 2:8, that *had* they known his wisdom, they would not have crucified him—which implies at least that it was not in itself unintelligible; and he further says, that this mystery had been revealed to Christians by the Spirit of God, which proves that he does not here refer to that which is in itself unintelligible, 1Co 2:10. "The apostle has here especially in view the all-wise counsel of God for the salvation of men by Jesus Christ, in the writings of the Old Testament only obscurely signified, and to the generality of men utterly unknown.", *Bloomfield*.

Which God ordained. Which plan, so full of wisdom, God appointed in his own purpose before the foundation of the world; that is, it was a plan which from eternity he determined to execute. It was not a new device; it had not been got up to serve an occasion; but it was a plan laid deep in the eternal counsel of God, and on which he had his eye for ever fixed. This passage proves that God had a plan, and that this plan was eternal. This is all that is involved in the doctrine of eternal decrees or purposes. And if God had a plan about this, there is the same reason to think that he had a plan in regard to all things.

Unto our glory. In order that we might be honoured or glorified. This may refer either to the honour which was put upon Christians in this life, in being admitted to the privileges of the sons of God; or, more probably, to that "eternal weight of glory" which remains for them in heaven, 2Co 4:17. One design of that plan was to raise the redeemed to "glory, and honour, and immortality." It should greatly increase our gratitude to God, that it was a subject of eternal design; that he always

has cherished this purpose; and that he has loved us with such love, and sought our happiness and salvation with such intensity, that in order to accomplish it he was willing to give his own Son to die on a cross.

{+} "mystery" "Which is unknown" {b} "hidden wisdom" Eph 3:5,9

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Which none of the princes*. None of those rulers who were engaged in the crucifixion of the Messiah—referring both to the Jewish rulers and the Roman governor.

Knew. They did not perceive or appreciate the excellency of his character, the wisdom of his plan, the glory of his scheme of salvation. Their ignorance arose from not understanding the prophecies, and from an unwillingness to be convinced that Jesus of Nazareth had been truly sent by God. In Ac 3:17, Peter says that it was through ignorance that the Jews had put him to death. **See Barnes "Ac 3:17".**

For had they known it. Had they fully understood his character, and seen the wisdom of his plan and his work, they would not have put him to death. **See Barnes "Ac 3:17".**

Had they seen the hidden wisdom in that plan—had they understood the glory of his real character, the truth respecting his incarnation, and the fact that he was the long-expected: Messiah of their nation, they would not have put him to death. It is incredible that they would have crucified their Messiah, knowing him to be such. They *might* have known it, but they were unwilling to examine the evidence. They expected a *different* Messiah, and were unwilling to admit the claims of Jesus of Nazareth. For *this* ignorance, however, there was no excuse. If they had not a full knowledge, it was their own fault. Jesus had performed miracles which were a complete attestation to his Divine mission, Joh 5:36 Joh 10:25; but they closed their eyes on those works, and were unwilling to be convinced. God always gives to men sufficient demonstration of the truth, but they close their eyes, and are *unwilling* to believe. This is the sole reason why they are not converted to God, and saved.

They would not have crucified. It is perfectly manifest that the Jews would not have crucified their own Messiah, *knowing him to be such*. He was the hope and expectation of their nation. All their desires were centered in him. And to him they looked for deliverance from all their foes.

The Lord of glory. This expression is a Hebraism, and means "the glorious Lord;" or the "Messiah." Expressions like this, where a noun performs the office of an adjective, are common in the Hebrew language. Grotius supposes that the expression is taken from that of "the King of glory," in Ps 24:7-9:

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
Be ye Lift up, ye everlasting doors;
And the King of glory shall come in.
Who is this King of glory?
JEHOVAH, strong and mighty;
JEHOVAH, mighty in battle.
Lift up your heads, O ye gates;

Lift them up, ye everlasting doors;
And the King of glory shall come in.
Who is this King of glory?
JEHOVAH of hosts, he is the King of glory."

God is called "the God of glory" in Ac 7:2. The fact that this appellation is given to JEHOVAH in the Old Testament, and to the Lord Jesus in the verse before us, is one of those incidental circumstances which show how the Lord Jesus was estimated by the apostles; and how familiarly they applied to him names and titles which belong only to God. The foundation of this appellation is laid in his exalted perfections; and in the honour and majesty which he had with the Father before the world was, Joh 17:1-5.

{++} "princes" "rulers" {c} "for had they known it" Lu 23:34

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *But, as it is written*. This passage is quoted from Isa 44:4. It is not quoted literally; but the sense only is given. The words are found in the apocryphal books of Elijah; and Origen and Jerome supposed that Paul quoted from those books. But it is evident that Paul had in his eye the passage in Isaiah; and intended to apply it to his present purpose. These words are often applied by commentators and others to the future life, and are supposed by them to be descriptive of the state of the blessed there. But against the supposition that they refer directly to the future state, there are insuperable objections.

(1.) The first is, that the passage in Isaiah has no such reference. In that place it is designed clearly to describe the blessedness of those who were admitted to the Divine favour; who had communion with God; and to whom God manifested himself as their Friend. That blessedness is said to be superior to all that men elsewhere enjoy; to be such as could be found nowhere else but in God. See Isa 44:1,4,6,8.

It is used there, as Paul uses it, to denote the happiness which results from the communication of the Divine favour to the soul.

(2.) The object of the apostle is not to describe the future state of the redeemed. It is to prove that those who are Christians have true wisdom, 1Co 2:6,7; or that they have views of truth, and of the excellence of the plan of salvation, which the world has not, and which those who crucified the Lord Jesus did not possess. The thing which he is describing here is not merely the *happiness* of Christians, but their views of the wisdom of the plan of salvation. They have views of that which the eyes of other men have not seen; a view of wisdom, and fitness, and beauty, which can be found in no other plan. It is true that this view is attended with a high degree of comfort; but the comfort is not the immediate thing in the eye of the apostle.

(3.) The declaration in 1Co 2:10 is conclusive proof that Paul does not refer to the happiness of heaven. He there says that God *has* revealed these things to Christians by his Spirit. But if *already* revealed, assuredly it does not refer to that which is yet to come. But although this does not refer directly to heaven, there may be an application of the passage to a future state in an *indirect* manner,

which is not improper. If there are such manifestations of wisdom in the plan here; if Christians see so much of its beauty here on earth; and if their views so far surpass all that the world sees and enjoys, how much greater and purer will be the manifestations of wisdom and goodness in the world of glory.

Eye hath not seen. This is the same as saying, that no one had ever fully perceived and understood the value and beauty of those things which God had prepared for his people. All the world had been strangers to this, until God made a revelation to his people by his Spirit. The blessedness which the apostle referred to had been unknown alike to the Jews and the Gentiles.

Nor ear heard. We learn the existence and quality of objects by the external senses; and those senses are used to denote any acquisition of knowledge. To say that the eye had not seen, nor the ear heard, was, therefore, the same as saying that it was not known at all. All men had been ignorant of it.

Neither have entered into the heart of man. No man has conceived it; or understood it. It is new; and is above all that man has seen, and felt, and known.

The things which God hath prepared. The things which God "has held in reserve," *Bloomfield*; that is, what God has appointed in the gospel for his people. The thing to which the apostle here refers particularly, is the wisdom which was revealed in the gospel; but he also intends, doubtless, to include *all* the provisions of mercy and happiness which the gospel makes known to the people of God. Those things relate to the pardon of sin; to the atonement, and to justification by faith; to the peace and joy which religion imparts; to the complete and final redemption from sin and death which the gospel is fitted to produce, and which it will ultimately effect. In all these respects, the blessings which the gospel confers surpass the full comprehension of men, and are infinitely beyond all that man could know or experience without the religion of Christ. And if on earth the gospel confers such blessings on its friends, how much higher and purer shall be the joys which it shall bestow in heaven!

{a} "Eye" Isa 44:4

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *But God hath revealed them*. That is, those elevated views and enjoyments to which men everywhere else had been strangers, and which have been under all other forms of religion unknown, have been communicated to us by the revelation of God. This verse commences the *third* part of this chapter, in which the apostle shows how these truths, so full of wisdom, had been communicated to Christians. It had not been by any native endowments of theirs; not by any strength of faculties or powers, but solely by revelation from God.

Unto us. That is, first to the apostles; secondly, to all Christians—to the church and the world *through* their inspired instructors; and, thirdly, to all Christians, by the illuminating agency of the Spirit on their hearts. The connexion shows that he did not mean to confine this declaration to the apostles merely, for his design was to show that all Christians had this knowledge of the true wisdom. It was true that this was revealed in an eminent manner to the apostles, and through their inspired preaching and writings; but it is also true, that the same truths are communicated by the

agency of the same Spirit to all Christians, Joh 16:12-14. No truth is now communicated to Christians which was not revealed to and by the inspired writers; but the same truths are imparted by means of their writings, and by the illumination of the Spirit, to all the true friends of God.

By his Spirit. By the Holy Spirit, that was promised by the Saviour, Joh 14:26 15:26,27 16:7-14.

This proves,

(1.) that men by nature are not able to discover the deep things of God—the truths which are needful to salvation,

(2.) That the apostles were inspired by the Holy Ghost; and if so, then the Scriptures are inspired.

(3.) That all Christians are the subjects of the teaching of the Holy Spirit; that these truths are made known to them by his illumination; and that but for this, they would remain in the same darkness as other men.

For the Spirit. The Holy Spirit, or the Spirit of God. 1Co 2:11.

Searcheth. This word does not fully express the force of the original, *ereuna*. It means to search accurately, diligently, so as fully to understand; such profound research as to have thorough knowledge. So David uses the Hebrew word

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in Ps 139:1. So the word is used to denote a careful and accurate investigation of secret and obscure things, in 1Pe 1:11. Comp. Joh 7:52; Ro 8:27 Re 2:23, where it is used to denote that profound and accurate search by which the desires and feelings of the *heart* are known—implying the most profound knowledge of which we can have any conception. See Pr 20:27. Here it means, that the Holy Spirit has an intimate knowledge of all things. It is not to be supposed that he searches or inquires as men do who are ignorant: but that he has an intimate and profound knowledge, such as is usually the result of a close and accurate search. The *result* is what the apostle means to state—the accurate, profound, and thorough knowledge, such as usually attends research. He does not state the mode in which it is obtained; but the fact. And he uses a word more emphatic than simple *knowledge*, because he designs to indicate that his knowledge is profound, entire, and thorough.

All things. All subjects; all laws; all events; all beings.

The deep things of God. He has a thorough knowledge of the hidden counsels or purposes of God; of all his plans and purposes. He sees all his designs. He sees all his counsels; all his purposes in regard to the government of the universe, and the scheme of salvation. He knows all whom God designs to save; he sees all that they need; and he sees how the plan of God is fitted to their salvation. This passage proves,

(1.) that the Spirit is, in some respects, *distinct* from the Father, or from him who is here called God. Else how could he be said to *search* all things, even the deep purposes of God? To *search* implies *action, thought, personality*. An attribute of God cannot be said to *search*. How could it be said of the justice, the goodness, the power, or the wisdom of God, that it *searches*, or *acts*? To search, is the action of an intelligent agent, and cannot be performed by an attribute.

(2.) The Spirit is omniscient. He searches or clearly understands "all things"—the very definition of omniscience. He understands all the profound plans and counsels of God. And how can there be a higher demonstration of omniscience than to *know God*? But if omniscient, the Holy Spirit is Divine—for this is one of the incommunicable attributes of God, 1Ch 28:9 Ps 139:1; Jer 17:10;

(3.) He is *not* a distinct *being* from God. There is a *union* between him and God, such as may be compared to the union between a man and his soul, 1Co 2:11. God is one; and though he subsists

as Father, Son, and Spirit, yet he is one God, De 6:4. This passage is, therefore, a very important and a decisive one, in regard to the personality and divinity of the Holy Spirit.

{b} "but God" Joh 16:13 {c} "deep things of God" Ro 11:33

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *For what man*, etc. The design of this is to illustrate what he had just said by a reference to the way in which man acquires a knowledge of himself. The purpose is to show that the Spirit has an *exact and thorough* knowledge of the things of God; and this is done by the very striking thought that no man can know his own mind, his own plans and intentions, but himself—his own spirit. The essential idea is, that no man can know another; that his thoughts and designs can only be known by himself, or by his own spirit; and that unless he chooses to reveal them to others, they cannot ascertain them. So of God. No man can penetrate his designs; and, unless he chooses to make them known by his Spirit, they must for ever remain inscrutable to human view.

The things of a man. The "deep things"—the hidden counsels, thoughts, plans, intentions.

Save the spirit of man, etc. Except his own mind; i.e., himself. No other man can fully know them. By the spirit of man here, Paul designs to denote the human soul—or the intellect of man. It is not to be supposed that he here intends to convey the idea that there is a perfect resemblance between the relation which the soul of man bears to the man, and the relation which the Holy Spirit bears to God. The illustration is to be taken in regard to the point immediately before him; which is, that no one could know and communicate the deep thoughts and plans of God except his Spirit; just as no one could penetrate into the intentions of a man, and fully know them, but himself. The passage proves, therefore, that there is a knowledge which the Spirit has of God, which no man, no angel can obtain; just as every man's spirit has a knowledge of his own plans which no other man can obtain; that the Spirit of God can *communicate* his plans and deep designs, just as a man can communicate his own intentions; and, consequently, that while there is a *distinction* of some kind between the Spirit of God and God, as there is a distinction which makes it proper to say that a man has an intelligent soul, yet there is such a profound and intimate knowledge of God by the Spirit, that he must be equal with him; and such an intimate union, that he can be called" the Spirit of God," and be one with God, as the human soul can be called "the spirit of the man," and be one with him. In all respects we are not to suppose that there is a similarity. In these points there is. It may be added, that the *union*, the *oneness* of the Spirit of God with God, is no more absurd or inexplicable than the union of the spirit of man with the man; or the oneness of the complex person made up of body and soul, which we call *man*. When men have explained all the difficulties about themselves, in regard to their own bodies and spirits, it will be time to advance objections against the doctrines here stated in regard to God.

Even so. To the same extent; in like manner.

The things of God. His deep purposes and plans.

Knoweth no man. Man cannot search into them, any more than one man can search the intentions of another.

{a} "man" Pr 14:10 {b} "so the things" Ro 11:33,34

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Now we have received*. We who are Christians; and especially we the apostles. The following verse shows that he had himself and the other apostles chiefly in view; though it is true of all Christians that they have received, not the spirit of this world, but the Spirit which is of God.

Not the spirit of the world. Not the wisdom and knowledge which this world can give; not the learning and philosophy which were so much valued in Greece. The views of truth which we have, are not such as this world gives, but are such as are communicated by the Spirit of God.

But the Spirit which is of God. We are under the teachings and influence of the Holy Spirit.

That we might know. That we might fully understand and appreciate. The Spirit is given to us, in order that we might fully understand the favours which God has conferred on us in the gospel. It was not only necessary that God should grant the blessings of redemption by the gift of his Son; but, such was the hardness and blindness of the human heart, it was needful that he should grant his Holy Spirit also, that men might be brought fully to see and appreciate the value of those favours. For men do not see them by nature; neither does any one see them who is not enlightened by the Holy Spirit of God.

The things that are freely given us. That are conferred on us as a matter of grace or favour. He here refers to the blessings of redemption; the pardon of sin, justification, sanctification, the Divine favour and protection, and the hope of eternal life. These things we know; they are not matters of conjecture, but are surely and certainly confirmed to us by the Holy Spirit. It is possible for all Christians to know and be fully assured of the truth of those things, and of their interest in them.

{c} "the spirit" Ro 8:15 {d} "we might know" 1Jo 5:20 {*} "of God" "By God"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Which things also we speak*. Which great, and glorious, and certain truths, we, the apostles, preach and explain.

Not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth. Not such as human philosophy or eloquence would dictate. They do not have their origin in the devices of human wisdom, and they are not expressed in such words -of dazzling and attractive rhetoric as would be employed by those who pride themselves on the wisdom of this world.

But which the Holy Ghost teacheth. That is, in the words which the Holy Ghost imparts to us. Locke understands this as referring to the fact, that the apostles used "the language and expressions "which the Holy Ghost had taught in the revelations of the Scriptures. But this is evidently giving a narrow view of the subject. The apostle is speaking of the whole course of instruction by which the deep things of God were made known to the Christian church; and all this was not made known in the very words which were already contained in the Old Testament. He evidently refers to the fact that the apostles were themselves under the direction of the Holy Spirit, in the words and doctrines which they imparted; and this passage is a full proof that they laid claim to Divine inspiration. It is further observable that he says that this was done in such "words" as the Holy

Ghost taught—referring not to the doctrines or subjects merely, but to the manner of expressing them. It is evident here that he lays claim to an inspiration in regard to the words which he used, or to the manner of his stating the doctrines of revelation. Words are the signs of thoughts; and if God designed that his truth should be accurately expressed in human language, there must have been a supervision over the *words* used, that such should be employed, and such only, as should accurately express the sense which he intended to convey.

Comparing spiritual things with spiritual. *pneumatikoiv pneumatika sugkrinontev*. This expression has been very variously interpreted; and is very difficult of explanation. Le Clerc renders it, "Speaking spiritual things to spiritual men." Most of the Fathers rendered it, "Comparing the things which were written by the Spirit of the Old Testament, with what is now revealed to us by the same Spirit, and confirming our doctrine by them." Calvin renders the word "*comparing*," by *fitting*, or adapting, (*aptare*,) and says that it means, that "he adapted spiritual things to spiritual men, while he accommodated words to the thing; that is, he tempered that celestial wisdom of the Spirit with simple language, and which conveyed by itself the native energy of the Spirit. Thus, he says, he reproves the vanity of those who attempted to secure human applause by a turgid and subtle mode of argument. Grotius accords with the Fathers, and renders it, "Explaining those things which the prophets spake by the Spirit of God, by those things which Christ has made known to us by his Spirit." Macknight renders it, "Explaining spiritual things in words taught by the Spirit." So Doddridge. The word rendered "*comparing*," *sugkrinontev*, means, properly, to collect, join, mingle, unite together; then to separate or distinguish parts of things, and unite them into one; then to judge of the qualities of objects by carefully separating or distinguishing; then to *compare* for the purpose of judging, etc. As it means to compare one thing with another for the purpose of explaining its nature, it comes to signify, to *interpret*, to *explain*; and in this sense it is often used by the LXX. as a translation of

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—*Phathar*—-to open, unfold, explain, (see Ge 40:8,16,22 41:12,15;) also of

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to explain, (Nu 15:34;) and of the Chaldee,

HEBREW, (Da 5:15,17.) See also Da 2:4-7,9,16,24,26,30,36,45

Da 4:3,4,6,16,17 5:7,8,13,16,18,20 7:16; in all which places the noun, *sugkrisiv* is used in the same sense. In this sense the word is, doubtless, used here, and is to be interpreted in the sense of *explaining, unfolding*. There is no reason, either in the word here used, or in the argument of the apostle, why the sense of comparing should be retained.

Spiritual things. (*pneumatika*.) Things, doctrines, subjects that pertain to the teaching of the Spirit. It does not mean things spiritual in opposition to *fleshly; or intellectual* in opposition to things pertaining to *matter*; but spiritual as the things referred to were such as were wrought, and revealed by the Holy Spirit—his doctrines on the subject of religion under the new dispensation, and his influence on the heart.

With spiritual. (*pneumatikoiv*.) This is an adjective; and may be either masculine or neuter. It is evident that some noun is understood. That may be either,

(1.) *anyrwpoiv men*—and then it will mean, "to spiritual men"—that is, to men who are enlightened or taught by the Spirit—and thus many commentators understand it; or,

(2,) it may be *logoiv*, *words*; and then it may mean, either that the "spiritual things" were explained by "words" and illustrations drawn from the writings of the Old Testament, inspired by

the Spirit—as most of the Fathers and many moderns understand it; or that the "things spiritual" were explained by words which the Holy Spirit then communicated, and which were adapted to the subject—simple, pure, elevated; not gross, not turgid, not distinguished for rhetoric, and not such as the Greeks sought, but such as became the Spirit of God communicating great, sublime, yet simple truths to men. It will then mean, "Explaining *doctrines* that pertain to the Spirit's teaching and influence in *words* that are taught by the same Spirit, and that are fitted to convey in the most intelligent able manner those doctrines to men." Here the idea of the Holy Spirit's present agency is kept up throughout; the idea that he communicates the doctrine, and the mode of stating it to man. The supposition that *logoiv* (words) is the word understood here, is favoured by the fact that it occurs in the previous part of this verse. And if this be the sense, it means that the words which were used by the apostles were pure, simple, unostentatious, and undistinguished, by display—such as became *doctrines* taught by the Holy Spirit, when communicated in words suggested by the same Spirit.

{e} "not in the words" 1Co 1:17

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 14

Verse 14. But the natural man. (*qucikov de anyrwpov*.) The word *natural* here stands opposed evidently to spiritual. It denotes those who are governed and influenced by the natural instincts; the animal passions and desires, in opposition to those who are influenced by the Spirit of God. It refers to unregenerate men; but it has also not merely the idea of their being unregenerate, but that of their being influenced by the animal passions or desires. **See Barnes "1Co 15:44"**.

The word *sensual* would correctly express the idea. The word is used by the Greek writers to denote that which man has in common with the brutes; to denote that they are under the influence of the senses, or the mere animal nature, in opposition to reason and conscience. *Bretschneider*. See 1Th 5:23. Here it denotes that they are under the influence of the senses, or the animal nature, in opposition to being influenced by the Spirit of God. Macknight and Doddridge render it, "the animal man." Whitby understands by it the man who rejects revelation, the man who is under the influence of carnal wisdom. The word occurs but six times in the New Testament: 1Co 15:44 twice, 1Co 15:46 Jas 3:15 Jude 1:19. In 1Co 15:44,46, it is rendered "natural," and is applied to the body as it exists before death, in contradistinction from that which shall exist after the resurrection—called a spiritual body. In James 3:15, it is applied to wisdom: "This wisdom is earthly, surreal, devilish." In Jude 1:19, it is applied to sensual persons, or those who are governed by the senses, in opposition to those who are influenced by the Spirit: "These be they who separate themselves, *sensual*, having not the Spirit." The word here evidently denotes those who are under the influence of the senses; who are governed by the passions and the animal appetites, and natural desires; and who are uninfluenced by the Spirit of God. And it may be observed that this was the case with the great mass of the heathen world, even including the philosophers.

Receiveth not. *ou decetai*. Does not *embrace* or *comprehend* them. That is, he rejects them as folly; he does not perceive their beauty or their wisdom; he despises them. He loves other things better. A man of intemperance does not receive or love the arguments for temperance; a man of

licentiousness, the arguments for chastity; a liar, the arguments for truth. So a sensual or worldly man does not receive or love the arguments for religion.

The things of the Spirit of God. The doctrines which are inspired by the Holy Spirit, and the things which pertain to his influence on the heart and life. The things of the Spirit of God here denote all the things which the Holy Spirit produces.

Neither can he know them. Neither can he understand or comprehend them. Perhaps, also, the word *know* here implies also the idea of *loving*, or *approving* of them, as it often does in the Scripture. Thus, to know the Lord often means to love him, to have a full, practical acquaintance with him. When the apostle says that the animal or sensual man cannot know those things, he may have reference to one of two things. Either,

(1.) that those doctrines were not discoverable by human wisdom, or by any skill which the natural man may have, but were to be learned only by revelation. This is the main drift of his argument, and this sense is given by Locke and Whitby. Or,

(2.) he may mean that the sensual, the unrenewed man cannot perceive their beauty and their force, even *after* they are revealed to man, unless the mind is enlightened and inclined by the Spirit of God. This is probably the sense of the passage. This is the simple affirmation of a *fact*, that while the man remains sensual and carnal, he cannot perceive the beauty of those doctrines. And this is a simple and well-known fact. It is a truth—universal and lamentable-that the sensual man, the worldly man, the proud, haughty, and self-confident man; the man under the influence of his animal appetites—licentious, false, ambitious, and vain—*does not* perceive any beauty in Christianity. So the intemperate man perceives no beauty in the arguments for temperance; the adulterer, no beauty in the arguments for chastity; the liar, no beauty in the arguments for truth. It is a simple fact, that while he is intemperate, or licentious, or false, he *can* perceive no beauty in these doctrines. But this does not prove that he has no natural faculties for perceiving the force and beauty of these arguments; or that he *might* not apply his mind to their investigation, and be brought to embrace them; or that he *might* not abandon the love of intoxicating drinks, and sensuality, and falsehood, and be a man of temperance, purity, and truth. He has all the natural faculties which are requisite in the case; and all the inability is his *strong love* of intoxicating drinks, or impurity, or falsehood. So of the sensual sinner. While he thus remains in love with sin, he cannot perceive the beauty of the plan of salvation, or the excellency of the doctrines of religion. He needs just the *love* of these things, and the *hatred* of sin. He needs to cherish the influences of the Spirit; to *receive* what he has taught, and not to reject it through the love of sin; he needs to yield himself to their influences, and then their beauty will be seen. The passage here proves that, while a man is thus sensual, the things of the Spirit will appear to him to be folly; it proves nothing about his ability, or his natural faculty, to see the excellency of these things, and to turn from his sin. It is the affirmation of a simple fact everywhere discernible, that the natural man *does* not perceive the beauty of these things; that while he remains in that state he *cannot*; and that if he is ever brought to perceive their beauty, it will be by the influence of the Holy Spirit. Such is his love of sin, that he never *will* be brought to see their beauty except by the agency of the Holy Spirit. "For wickedness perverts the judgment, and makes men err with respect to practical principles; so that no one can be wise and judicious who is not good."—*Aristotle*, as quoted by Bloomfield.

They are spiritually discerned. That is, they are perceived by the aid of the Holy Spirit enlightening the mind and influencing the heart.

{*} "natural man" "Carnal" {a} "receiveth not" Mt 13:11 Ro 8:5,7

{+} "discerned" "discerneth"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *But he that is spiritual*. The man who is enlightened by the Holy Spirit, in contradistinction from him who is under the influence of the *senses* only.

Judge. Greek, *Discerneth*, (margin;) the same word as in the previous verse. It means, that the spiritual man has a discernment of those truths in regard to which the sensual man was blind and ignorant.

All things. Not absolutely all things; or not that he is omniscient; but that he has a view of those things to which the apostle had reference—that is, to the things which are revealed to man by the Holy Spirit.

Yet he himself is judged. Greek, as in the margin, "is discerned;" that is, his feelings, principles, views, hopes, fears, joys, cannot be fully understood and appreciated by any natural or sensual man. He does not comprehend the principles which actuate him; he does not enter into his joys; he does not sympathize with him in his feelings. This is a matter of simple truth and universal observation. The reason is added in the following verse—that as the Christian is influenced by the Lord, and as the natural man does not know him, so he cannot know him who is influenced by him that is, the Christian.

{b} "he that is spiritual" Pr 28:5 {1} "judgeth" "discerneth" {++} "all things" "searcheth out" {+} "discerned" "searched out"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *For who hath known*, etc. This passage is quoted from Isa 40:13. The interrogative form is a strong mode of denying that any one has ever known the mind of the Lord. The argument of Paul is this: "No one can understand God. No one can fully comprehend his plans, his feelings, his views, his designs. No one by nature, under the influence of sense and passion, is either disposed to investigate his truths, or loves them when they are revealed. But the Christian is influenced by God. He has his Spirit. He has the mind of Christ, who had the mind of God. He sympathizes with Christ; he has his feelings, desires, purposes, and plans. And as no one can fully understand God by nature, so neither can he understand him who is influenced by God, and is like him; and it is not to be wondered at that he regards the Christian religion as folly, and the Christian as a fool.

The mind of Christ. The views, feelings, and temper of Christ. We are influenced by his Spirit.

REMARKS

(1.) Ministers of the gospel should not be too anxious to be distinguished for excellency of speech or language, 1Co 2:1. Their aim should be to speak the simple truth, in language pure and

intelligible to all. Let it be remembered, that if there ever was any place where it would be proper to seek such graces of eloquence, it was Corinth. If in any city now, or in any refined and genteel society, it would be proper, it would have been proper in Corinth. Let this thought rebuke those who, when they preach to a gay and fashionable auditory, seek to fill their sermons with ornament rather than with solid thought; with the tinsel of rhetoric, rather than with pure language. Paul was *right* in his course, and was *wise*. True taste abhors meretricious ornaments, as much as the gospel does. And the man who is called to preach in a rich and fashionable congregation should remember that he is stationed there not to please the ear, but to save the soul; that his object is not to display his talent or his eloquence, but to rescue his hearers from ruin. This purpose will make the mere ornaments of rhetoric appear small. It will give seriousness to his discourse; gravity to his diction; unction to his eloquence; heart to his arguments; and success to his ministry.

(2.) The purpose of every minister should be like that of Paul, to preach Christ and him crucified only. **See Barnes "1Co 2:2"**.

(3.) If Paul trembled at Corinth in view of dangers and difficulties; if he was conscious of his own weakness and feebleness, then we should learn also to be humble. He is not much in danger of erring who imitates the example of this great apostle. And if he who had received a direct commission from the great Head of the church, and who was endowed with such mighty powers, was modest, unassuming, and diffident, then it becomes ministers of the gospel now, and all others, to be humble also. We should not, indeed, be afraid of men; but we should be modest, humble, and lowly; much impressed, as if conscious of our mighty charge; and anxious to deliver just such a message as God will approve and bless,

"Would I describe a preacher, such as Paul.
Were he on earth, would hear, approve, and own,
Paul should himself direct me. I would trace
His master-strokest and draw from his design.
I would express him simple, grave, sincere;
In doctrine uncorrupt; in language plain:
And plain in manner; decent, solemn, chaste,
And natural in gesture; much impress'd
Himself, as conscious of his awful charge;
And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds
May feel it too. Affectionate in look,
And tender in address, as well becomes
A messenger of grace to guilty men."—*Cowper's Task*, b. ii

Our aim should be to commend our message to every man's conscience; and to do it with humility towards God, and deep solicitude; with boldness towards our fellow-men—respectfully towards them—but still resolved to tell the truth, 1Co 2:3.

(4.) The faith of Christians does not stand in the wisdom of man. Every Christian has evidence in his own heart, in his experience, and in the transformation of his character, that none but God could have wrought the change on his soul. His hopes, his joys, his peace, is sanctification, his love of prayer, of the Bible, of Christians, of God, and of Christ, are all such as nothing could have produced but the mighty power of God. All these bear marks of their high origin. They are the work of God on the soul. And as the Christian is fully conscious that these are not the *native* feelings of his heart— that if left to himself he would never have had them—so he has the fullest demonstration

that they are to be traced to a Divine Source. And can he be mistaken about their existence? Can a man doubt whether he *has* joy, and peace, and happiness? Is the infidel to tell him coolly that he must be mistaken in regard to the existence of these emotions, and that it is all delusion.a Can a child doubt whether it loves a parent; a husband whether he loves his wife; a friend, a friend; a man, his country? And can he doubt whether this emotion produces joy ? And can a man doubt whether he loves God. Whether he has different views from what he once had? Whether he has peace and joy in view of the character of God and the hope of heaven? And by what right shall the infidel tell him that he is mistaken, and that all this is delusion? How can *he* enter into the soul, and pronounce the man who professes to have these feelings mistaken? What should we think of the man who should tell a wife that she did not love her husband; or a father that he did not love his children? How can he know this? And, in like manner, how can an infidel and a scoffer say to a Christian, that all his hopes and joys, his love and peace, are delusion and fanaticism? The truth is, that the great mass of Christians are just as well satisfied of the truth of religion, as they are of their own existence; and that a Christian will die for his love to the Saviour, just as he will die for his wife, and children, and country. Martyrdom in the one case is on the same principle as martyrdom in the other. Martyrdom in either is noble and honourable, and evinces the highest qualities and principles of the human mind.

(5.) Christians are influenced by true wisdom, 1Co 6. They are not fools, though they appear to be to their fellow-men. They see a *real* beauty and wisdom in the plan of redemption which the world does not discern. It is not the wisdom of this world; but it is the wisdom which looks to eternity. Is a man a fool who acts with reference to the future? Is he a fool who behaves that he shall live to all eternity, and who regards it as proper to make preparation for that eternity? Is he a fool who acts as if he were to die—to be judged—to enter on an unchanging destiny? Folly is manifested in closing the eyes on the reality of the condition; not in looking at it as it is. The man who is sick, and who strives to convince himself that he is well; the man whose affairs are in a state of bankruptcy, and who is unwilling to know it, is a fool. The man who is willing to know all about his situation, and to act accordingly, is a wise man. The one represents the conduct of a sinner, the other that of a Christian. A man who should see his child drowning, or his house on fire, or the pestilence breathing around him, and be unconcerned, or *dance* amidst such scenes, would be a fool or a madman. And is not the sinner who is gay and thoughtless over the grave and over *hell* equally foolish and mad? And if there be a God, a heaven, a Saviour, and a hell; if men are to die, and to be judged, is he not wise who acts *as if* it were so, and who lives accordingly? While Christians, therefore, may not be distinguished for the wisdom of this world —while many are destitute of learning, science, and eloquence, they have a wisdom which shall survive when all other is vanished away.

(6.) All the wisdom of this world shall come to nought, 1Co 2:6. What will be the value of political sagacity, when all governments shall come to an end but the Divine government? What the value of eloquence and graceful diction, when we stand at the judgment-seat of Christ? What the value of science in this world, when all shall be revealed with the clearness of noonday? How low will appear *all* human attainments in that world, when the light of eternal day shall be shed over all the works of God! How little can human science do to advance the eternal interests of man! And how shall all fade away in the future world of glory—just as the feeble glimmering of the stars fades away before the light of the morning sun! How little, therefore, should we pride ourselves on the highest attainments of science, and the most elevated distinctions of learning and eloquence.

(7.) God has a purpose in regard to the salvation of men, 1Co 2:7. This scheme was ordained before the world. It was not a new device. It was not the offspring of chance, an accident, or an after thought. It was because God purposed it *from eternity*. God has a plan; and this plan contemplates the salvation of his people. And it greatly enhances the value of this benevolent plan in the eyes of his people, that it has been the object of *the eternal earnest desire and purpose of God*. How much a gift is enhanced in value from the fact that it has been long the purpose of a parent to bestow it; that he has toiled for it; that he has made arrangements for it; and that this has been the chief object of his efforts and his plan for years. So the favours of eternal redemption are bestowed on Christians as the fruit of the eternal purpose and desire of God. And how should our hearts rise in gratitude to him for his unspeakable gift!

(8.) One great and prominent cause of sin is the fact that men are blind to the reality and beauty of spiritual objects. So it was with those who crucified the Lord, 1Co 2:8. Had they seen his glory as it was, they would not have crucified him. And so it is now. When men blaspheme God, they see not his excellency; when they revile religion, they know not its real value; when they break the laws of God, they do not fully discern their purity and their importance. It is true they are wilfully ignorant, and their crime is often enhanced by this fact; but it is equally true that "they know not what they do." For such poor, blind, deluded mortals the Saviour prayed; and for such we should all pray. The man that curses God has no just sense of what he is doing. The man who is profane, and a scoffer, and a liar, and an adulterer, has no just sense of the awful nature of his crime; and is an object of commiseration —while his *sin* should be *hated*—and is a proper subject of prayer.

(9.) Men are often committing the most awful crimes when they are unconscious of it, 1Co 2:8. What crime could compare with that of crucifying the only Son of God? And what crime could be attended with more dreadful consequences to its perpetrators? So of sinners now. They little know what they do; and they little know the consequences of their sins. A man may curse his Maker, and say it is in sport!—But how will it be regarded in the day of judgment? A man may revile the Saviour!—But how will it appear when he dies? It is a solemn thing to trifle with God, and with his laws. A man is safer when he sports on a volcano, or when he makes a jest of the pestilence or the forked lightnings of heaven, than when he sports with religion and with God! In a world like this, men should be serious, and fear God. A single deed, like that of the crucifixion of Christ, may be remembered when all the circumstances of sport and mockery shall have passed away—remembered when the world shall be destroyed, and stars and suns shall rush to ruin.

(10.) Christians have views of the beauties of religion, and have consolations arising from these views, which the world has not, 1Co 2:9. They have different views of God, of Christ, of heaven, of eternity. They see a beauty in all these things, and a wisdom in the plan of salvation, which the men of the world do not see. The contemplations of this beauty and wisdom, and the evidence which they have that they are interested in all this, gives them a joy which the world does not possess. They see what the eye has not elsewhere seen; they enjoy what men elsewhere have not enjoyed; and they are elevated to privileges which men elsewhere do not possess. On earth they partake of happiness which the world never can give; and in heaven they shall partake of the fairness of that joy—of pleasures there which the eye had not before seen, nor the ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived. Who would not be a Christian?

(11.) The Holy Ghost is, in some sense, distinct from the Father. This is implied in his action as an agent—in searching, knowing, etc., 1Co 2:10,11. An attribute, a quality, does not search and know.

(12.) The Holy Spirit is Divine. None can know God but one equal to himself. If the Spirit intimately knows the wisdom, the goodness, the omniscience, the eternity, the power of God, he must be Divine. No created being can have this intelligence, 1Co 2:10,11.

(13.) Christians are actuated by a different spirit from the men of this world, 1Co 2:12. They are influenced by a regard to God and his glory. The men of the world are under the influence of pride, avarice, sensuality, ambition, and vainglory.

(14.) The sinner does not perceive the beauty of the things of religion. To all this beauty he is blind. This is a sober and a most melancholy fact. Whatever may be the cause of it, the fact is undeniable and sad. It is so with the sensualist; with the men of avarice, pride, ambition, and licentiousness. The gospel is regarded as folly, and is despised and scorned by the men of this world. This is true in all places, among all people, and at all times. To this there are no exceptions in human nature; and over this we should sit down and weep.

(15.) The *reason* of this is, that men love darkness. It is not that they are destitute of the natural faculties for loving God, for they have as strong native powers as those who become Christians. It is because they *love sin*—and this simple fact, carried out into all its bearings, will account for all the difficulties in the way of the sinner's conversion. There is nothing else; and,

(16.) We see here the value of the influences of the Spirit. It is by this Spirit alone that the mind of the Christian is enlightened, sanctified, and comforted. It is by him alone that he sees the beauty of the religion which he loves; it is by his influence alone that he differs from his fellow-men. And no less important is it for the sinner. Without the influences of that Spirit his mind will always be in darkness, and his heart will always hate the gospel. How anxiously, therefore, should he cherish his influences! How careful should he be not to grieve him away!

(17.) There is a difference between Christians and other men. One is enlightened by the Holy Spirit, the other not; one sees a beauty in religion, to the other it is folly; the one has the mind of Christ, the other has the spirit of the world; the one discerns the excellency of the plan of salvation, to the other all is darkness and folly. How could beings differ more in their moral feelings and views than do Christians and the men of this world?

{a} "who hath" Isa 40:13 Jer 23:18 {1} "he may instruct him" "shall" {b} "the mind of Christ" Joh 17:8

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 1

CHAPTER 3

THE design of this chapter is substantially the same as the former. It is to reprove the pride, the philosophy, the vain wisdom on which the Greeks so much rested; and to show that the gospel was not dependent on that for its success, and that that had been the occasion of no small part of

the contentions and strifes which had arisen in the church at Corinth. The chapter is occupied mainly with an account of his own ministry with them; and seems designed to meet an objection which either *was* made, or *could have been made by* the Corinthians themselves, or by the false teacher that was among them. In 1Co 2:12-16, he had affirmed that Christians were in fact under the influence of the Spirit of God; that they were enlightened in a remarkable degree; that they understood all things pertaining to the Christian religion. To this, it either was or could have been objected that Paul, when among them, had not instructed them fully in the more deep and abstruse points of the gospel; and that he had confined his instructions to the very rudiments of the Christian religion. Of this, probably, the false teachers who had formed parties among them had taken the advantage, and had pretended to carry the instruction to a much greater length, and to explain many things which Paul had left unexplained. Hence this division into parties. It became Paul, therefore, to state why he had confined his instructions to the rudiments of the gospel among them—and this occupies the first part of the chapter, vers. 1—11.

The *reason* was, that they were not prepared to receive higher instruction, but were carnal, and he could not address them as being prepared to enter fully into the more profound doctrines of the Christian religion. The *proof* that this was so, was found in the fact that they had been distracted with disputes and strifes, which demonstrated that they were not prepared for the higher doctrines of Christianity. He then *reproves* them for their contentions, on the ground that it was of little consequence by what instrumentality they had been brought to the knowledge of the gospel, and that there was no occasion for their strifes and sects. ALL success, whoever was the instrument, was to be traced to God, 1Co 3:5-7; and the fact that one teacher or another had first instructed them, or that one was more eloquent than another, should not be the foundation for contending sects. God was the Source of all blessings. Yet, in order to show the real nature of his own work, in order to meet the whole of the objection, he goes on to state that he had done the most important part of the work in the church himself. He had laid the foundation; and all the others were but rearing the superstructure. And much as *his* instructions might appear to be elementary and unimportant, yet it had been done with the same skill which an architect evinces who labours that the foundation may be well laid and firm, 1Co 3:10,11. The others who had succeeded him, whoever they were, were but builders upon this foundation. The foundation had been well laid, and they should be careful how they built on it, 1Co 3:12-16. The mention of this fact—that he had laid the foundation, and that that foundation was Jesus Christ, and that they had been reared upon that as a church—leads him to the inference, 1Co 3:16,17, that they should be holy as the temple of God; and the conclusion from the whole is,

(1.) that no man should deceive himself, of which there was so much danger, 1Co 3:18-20; and,

(2.) that no Christian should glory in men, for all things were theirs. It was no matter who had been their teacher on earth, all belonged to God; and they had a common interest in the most eminent teachers of religion, and they should rise above the petty rivalships of the world, and rejoice in the assurance that all things belonged to them, 1Co 3:21-23.

Verse 1. *And I, brethren*. See 1Co 2:1. This is designed to meet an implied objection. He had said, 1Co 2:14-16, that Christians were able to understand all things. Yet, they would recollect that he had not addressed them as such, but had confined himself to the more elementary parts of religion when he came among them. He had not entered upon the abstruse and difficult points of theology —the points of speculation in which the subtle Greeks so much abounded and so much delighted. He now states the reason why he had not done it. The reason was one that was most humbling to

their pride; but it was the true reason, and faithfulness demanded that it should be stated. It was, that they were carnal, and not qualified to understand the deep mysteries of the gospel; and the *proof* of this was unhappily at hand. It was too evident in their contentions and strifes, that they were under the influence of carnal feelings and views.

Could not speak unto you as unto spiritual. "I could not regard you as divested of the feelings which influence carnal men, the men of the world, and I addressed you accordingly. I could not discourse to you as to far-advanced and well-informed Christians. I taught you the *rudiments* only of the Christian religion." He refers here, doubtless, to his instructions when he founded the church at Corinth. **See Barnes** "1Co 2:13-15.

But as unto carnal. The word *carnal* here, *sarkikoi* is not the same which in 1Co 2:14 is translated *natural*, *qucikov*. *That* refers to one who is unrenewed, and who is wholly under the influence of his sensual or animal nature, and is nowhere applied to Christians. *This* is applied here to Christians—but to those who have much of the remains of corruption, and who are imperfectly acquainted with the nature of religion; babes in Christ. It denotes those who still evinced the feelings and views which pertain to the flesh, in these unhappy contentions, and strifes, and divisions. The works of the flesh are "hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, envyings," Ga 5:19-21, and these they had evinced in their divisions; and Paul knew that their danger lay in this direction, and he therefore addressed them according to their character. Paul applies the word to himself, Ro 7:14, "but I am carnal;" and here it denotes that they were as yet under the influence of the corrupt passions and desires which the flesh produces.

As unto babes in Christ. As unto those recently born into his kingdom, and unable to understand the profounder doctrines of the Christian religion. It is a common figure to apply the term infants and children to those who are feeble in understanding, or unable, from any cause, to comprehend the more profound instructions of science or religion.

{a} "unto spiritual" 1Co 2:14,15 {b} "babes" Heb 5:12,13; 1Pe 2:2

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *I have fed you with milk*. Paul here continues the metaphor, which is derived from the custom of feeding infants with the lightest food, Milk here evidently denotes the more simple and elementary doctrines of Christianity—the doctrines of the new birth, of repentance, faith, etc. The same figure occurs in Heb 5:11-14; and also in classical writers. See Wetstein.

And not with meat. Meat here denotes the more sublime and mysterious doctrines of religion.

For hitherto. Formerly, when I came among you, and laid the foundations of the church.

Not able to bear it. You were not sufficiently advanced in Christian knowledge to comprehend the higher mysteries of the gospel.

Neither yet now, etc. The reason why they were not then able he proceeds immediately to state.

{a} "hitherto" Joh 16:12

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *For ye are yet carnal*. Though you are Christians, and are the friends of God in the main, yet your divisions and strifes show that you are yet, in some degree, under the influence of the principles which govern the men of this world. Men who are governed solely by the principles of this world evince a spirit of strife, emulation, and contention; and just so far as you are engaged in strife, just so far do you show that you are governed by their principles and feelings.

For whereas. In proof that you are carnal, I appeal to your contentions and strifes.

Envying. *zhlov*. Zeal; used here in the sense of envy, as it is in Jas 3:14,16. It denotes, properly, any *fervour* of mind, (from *zew*) and may be applied to any exciting and agitating passion. The envy here referred to, was that which arose from the superior advantages and endowments which some claimed or possessed over others. Envy everywhere is a fruitful cause of strife. Most contentions in the church are somehow usually connected with envy.

And strife. Contention and dispute.

And divisions. Dissensions and quarrels. The margin correctly renders it *factions*. The idea is, that they were split up into parties, and that those parties were embittered with mutual recriminations and reproaches, as they always are in a church.

And walk as men. Marg., *according to man*. The word *walk* is used often in the Scriptures in the sense of *conduct* or *act*. You *conduct* [yourselves] as men, i.e., as men commonly do; you evince the same spirit that the great mass of men do. Instead of being filled with love, of being united and harmonious as the members of the same family ought to be, you are split up into factions as the men of the world are.

{b} "whereas" Jas 3:16 {1} "divisions" "factions" {2} "walk" "According to man"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *For while one saith*, etc. **See Barnes "1Co 1:12"**.

{c} "I am of Paul" 1Co 1:12

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Who then is Paul*, etc. **See Barnes "1Co 1:13"**.

Why should a party be formed which should be named after Paul? What has he done or taught that should lead to this? What eminence has he that should induce any to call themselves by his name? He is on a level with the other apostles; and all are but ministers, or servants, and have no claim to the honour of giving names to sects and parties. God is the fountain of all your blessings,

and whoever may have been the instrument by whom you have believed, it is improper to regard them as in any sense the fountain of your blessings, or to arrange yourselves under their name.

But ministers. Our word *minister*, as now used, does not express the proper force of this word. We, in applying it to preachers of the gospel, do not usually advert to the original sense of the word, and the reasons why it was given to them. The original word *diakonoi* denotes, properly, *servants*, in contradistinction from masters, (Mt 20:26 23:11; Mr 9:35 10:43;) and denotes those of course who are in an inferior rank of life. They had not command, or authority, but were subject to the command of others. It is applied to the preachers of the gospel, because they are employed in the service of God; because they go at his command, and are subject to his control and direction. They have not original authority, nor .are they the source of influence or power. The idea here is, that they were' the mere instruments or servants by whom God conveyed all blessings to the Corinthians; that they as ministers were on a level, were engaged in the same work, and that therefore it was improper for them to form parties that should be called by their names.

By whom. Through whom, *di wn*, by whose instrumentality. They were not the original source of faith, but were the mere servants of God in conveying to them the knowledge of that truth by which they were to be saved.

Even as the Lord gave to every man. God is the original Source of faith; and it is by his influence that any one is brought to believe. **See Barnes "Ro 12:3,6"**.

There were diversities of gifts among the Corinthian Christians, as there are in all Christians. And it is here implied,

(1.) that all that any one had was to be traced to God as its Author;

(2.) that he is a Sovereign, and dispenses his favours to all as he pleases;

(3.) that since God had conferred those favours, it was improper for the Corinthians to divide themselves into sects, and call themselves by the name of their teachers, for all that they had was to be traced to God alone. This idea, that all the gifts and graces which Christians had were to be traced to God alone, was one which the apostle Paul often insisted on; and if this idea had been kept before the minds and hearts of all Christians, it would have prevented no small part of the contentions in the church, and the formation of no small part of the sects in the Christian world.

{d} "even as the Lord" Ro 12:3,6; 1Pe 4:11.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *I have planted*. The apostle here compares the establishment of the church at Corinth to the planting of a vine, a tree, or of grain. The figure is taken from agriculture, and the meaning is obvious. Paul established the church. He was the first preacher in Corinth; and if any distinction was due to any one, it was rather to him than to the teachers who had laboured there subsequently; but he regarded himself as worthy of no such honour as to be the head of a party, for it was not himself, but God who had given the increase.

Apollos watered. This figure is taken from the practice of watering a tender plant, or of watering a garden or field. This was necessary in a special manner in eastern countries. Their fields became parched and dry from their long droughts, and it was necessary to irrigate them by artificial means.

The sense here is, that Paul had laboured in establishing the church at Corinth; but that subsequently Apollos had laboured to increase it, and to build it up. It is certain that Apollos did not go to Corinth until after Paul had left it. See Ac 18:18,27.

God gave the increase. God caused the seed sown to take root and spring up; and God blessed the irrigation of the tender plants as they sprung up, and caused them to grow. This idea is still taken from the husbandman. It would be vain for the farmer to sow his seed unless God should give it life. There is no life in the seed, nor is there any inherent power in the earth to make it grow. God only, the giver of all life, can quicken the germ in the seed, and make it live. So it would be in vain for the farmer to water his plant unless God should bless it. There is no living principle in the water; no inherent power in the rains of heaven to make the plant grow. It is adapted, indeed, to this, and the seed would not germinate if it was not planted, nor grow if it was not watered; but the life is still from God. He arranged these means, and he gives life to the tender blade, and sustains it. And so it is with the word of life. It has no inherent power to produce effect by itself. The power is not in the naked word, nor in him that plants, nor in him that waters, nor in the heart where it is sown, but in God. But there is a *fitness* of the means to the end. The word is adapted to save the soul. The seed must be sown, or it will not germinate. The truth must be sown in *the heart*, and the heart must be prepared for it—as the earth must be ploughed and made mellow, or it will not spring up. It must be cultivated with assiduous care, or it will produce nothing. But still it is all of God mss much so as the yellow harvest of the field, after all the toils of the husbandman, is of God. And as the farmer who has just views, will take no praise to himself because his corn and his vine start up and grow after all his care, but will ascribe all to God's unceasing, beneficent agency; so will the minister of religion, and so will every Christian, after all their care, ascribe all to God.

{e} "God gave the increase" 1Co 15:10

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Any thing*. This is to be taken *comparatively*. They are nothing ia comparison with God. Their agency is of no importance compared with his. **See Barnes "1Co 1:28"**.

It does mean that their agency ought not to be performed; that it is not important, and indispensable in its place; but that the honour is due to God. Their agency is indispensable. God *could* make seed or a tree grow if they were not planted in the earth. But he does not do it. The agency of the husbandman is indispensable in the ordinary operations of his providence. If he does not plant, God will not make the grain or the tree grow. God *blesses* his labours; he does not work a miracle. God attends *effort* with success; he does not interfere in a miraculous manner to accommodate the *indolence* of men. So in the matter of salvation. The efforts of ministers would be of no avail without God. They could do nothing in the salvation of the soul, unless he should give the increase. But *their* labours are as indispensable and as necessary, as are those of the farmer in the production of a harvest. And as every farmer could say, "my labours are *nothing* without God, who alone can give the increase," so it is with every minister of the gospel.

{a} "neither" Joh 15:5 2Co 12:9-11

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Are one*. *en eisin*. They are not the same person; but they are one in the following respects:

(1.) They are *united* in reference to the same work. Though they are engaged in different things—for planting and watering are different kinds of work—yet it is one in regard to the end to be gained. The employments do not at all *clash*, but tend to the same end. It is not as if one planted, and the other was engaged in pulling up.

(2.) Their work is *one*, because one is as necessary as the other. If the grain was not planted, there would be no use in pouring water there; if not watered, there would be no use in planting. The work of one is as needful, therefore, as the other; and the one should not undervalue the labours of the other.

(3.) They are *one* in regard to God. They are *both* engaged in performing one work; God is performing another. There are not three parties or portions of the work, but two. They two perform one part of the work; God *alone* performs the other. Theirs would be useless without him; he would not ordinarily perform his, without their performing their part. They *could* not do his part, if they would—as they cannot make a plant *grow*; he *could* perform their part—as he could plant and water without the farmer; but it is not in accordance with his arrangements to do it.

And every man. The argument of the apostle here has reference only to ministers; but it is equally true of all men, that they shall receive their proper reward.

Shall receive. In the day of judgment, when God decides the destiny of men. The decisions of that day will be simply determining what every moral agent ought to receive.

His own reward. His fit or proper *ton idion* reward; that which pertains to him, or which shall be a proper expression of the character and value of his labour. The word *reward misyon* denotes, properly, that which is given by contract for service rendered; an equivalent in value for services or for kindness. **See Barnes "Ro 4:4"**.

In the Scriptures it denotes pay, wages, recompense given to day-labourers, to soldiers, etc. It is applied often, as here, to the retribution which God will make to men in the day of judgment; and is applied to the *favours* which he will then bestow on them, or to the *punishment* which he will inflict as the reward of their deeds. Instances of the former sense occur in Mt 5:12, Mt 6; Lu 6:23,35; Re 11:18; of the latter in 2Pe 2:13,15. In regard to the righteous, it does not imply *merit*, or that they deserve heaven; but it means that God will render to them that which, according to the terms of his new covenant, he has promised, and which shall be a fit expression of his acceptance of their services. It is *proper*, according to these arrangements, that they should be blessed in heaven. It would *not* be proper that they should be cast down to hell. Their original and their sole *title* to eternal life is the grace of God through Jesus Christ; the *measure*, or *amount* of the favours bestowed on them there, shall be according to the services which they render on earth. A parent may resolve to divide his estate among his sons, and their title to *anything* may be derived from his mere favour; but he may determine that it shall be divided *according* to their expressions of attachment, and to their obedience to him.

{b} "every man" Ps 62:12 Re 22:12

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *For we are labourers together with God*. *yeou gar esmen sunergoi*. We are God's co-workers. A similar expression occurs in 2Co 6:1, "We then, as workers together with him," etc. This passage is capable of two significations: *first*, as in our translation, that they were co-workers with God; engaged with him in his work; that he and they co-operated in the production of the effect; or that it was a *joint-work*; as we speak of a partnercy, or of joint-effort among men. So many interpreters have understood this. If this is the sense of the passage, then it means that as a farmer may be said to be a co-worker with God when he plants and tills his field, or does that without which God would not work in that case, or without which a harvest would not be produced, so the Christian minister co-operates with God in producing the same result. He is engaged in performing that which is indispensable to the end; and God also, by his Spirit, co-operates with the same design. If this be the idea, it gives a peculiar sacredness to the work of the ministry, and indeed to the work of the farmer and the vine-dresser. There is no higher honour than for a man to be engaged in doing the same things which God does, and participating with him in accomplishing his glorious plans. But doubts have been suggested in regard to this interpretation.

(1.) The Greek does not of necessity imply this. It is literally, not we are his co-partners, but we are his fellow-labourers, i.e., fellow-labourers in his employ, under his direction—as we say of servants of the same rank they are fellow-labourers of the same master, not meaning that the master was engaged in working with them, but that they were fellow-labourers one with another in his employment.

(2.) There is no expression that is parallel to this. There is none that speaks of God's operating *jointly* with his creatures in producing the *same* result. They may be engaged in regard to the same end; but the sphere of God's operations and of their operations is distinct. God does one thing, and they do another, though they may contribute to the same result. The sphere of God's operations in the growth of a tree is totally distinct from that of the man who plants it. The man who planted it has no agency in causing the juices to circulate; in expanding the bud or the leaf; that is, in the proper work of God. In 3Jo 1:8, Christians are indeed said to be "fellow-helpers to the truth"—*sunergoi th alhyeia*; that is, they operate with the truth, and contribute by their labours and influence to that effect. In Mark also, Mr 16:20, it is said that the apostles "went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them"— *tou kuriou sunergountov*, —where the phrase means that the Lord co-operated with them by miracles, etc. The Lord, by his own proper energy, and in his own sphere, contributed to the success of the work in which they were engaged.

(3.) The main design and scope of this whole passage is to show that God is all—that the apostles are nothing; to represent the apostles not as joint-workers with God, but as working by themselves, and God as alone giving efficiency to all that was done. The idea is that of depressing or humbling the apostles, and of exalting God; and this idea would not be consistent with the interpretation that they were *joint*-labourers with him. While, therefore; the Greek would bear the interpretation conveyed in our translation, the sense may perhaps be, that the apostles were joint-labourers with each other in God's service; that they were united in their work, and that God was all in all; that they were like servants employed in the service of a master, without saying that the master participated with them in their work. This idea is conveyed in the translation of Doddridge, "We are the fellow-labourers of God." So Rosenmuller. Calvin, however, Grotius, Whitby, and

Bloomfield, coincide with our version in the interpretation. The Syriac renders it, "We work with God." The Vulgate, "We are the aids of God."

Ye are *God's husbandry*. *gewrgion*. Marg., *tillage*. This word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It properly denotes a *tilled* or cultivated field; and the idea is, that the church at Corinth was the field on which God had bestowed the labour of tillage, or culture, to produce fruit. The word is used by the Seventy in Ge 26:14, as the translation of

HEBREW, "For he had *possession* of flocks," etc.; in Jer 51:23, as the translation of

HEBREW, *a yoke*; and in Pr 24:30 31:16, as the translation of

HEBREW, *a field*; "I went by the *field* of the slothful," etc. The sense here is, that all their culture was of God; that as a church they were under his care; and that all that had been produced in them was to be traced to his cultivation.

God's building. This is another metaphor. The object of Paul was to show that all that had been done for them had been really accomplished by God. For this purpose he first says that they were God's cultivated field; then he changes the figure; draws his illustration from architecture, and says, that they had been *built* by him, as an architect rears a house. It does not rear itself; but it is reared by another. So he says of the Corinthians, "Ye are the building which God erects." The same figure is used in 2Co 6:16 Eph 2:21. See also Heb 3:6 1Pe 2:5. The idea is, that God is the supreme Agent in the founding and establishing of the church, in all its gifts and graces.

{c} "labourers together" 2Co 12:9-11 {1} "husbandry" "tillage" {a} "building" Heb 3:6

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *According to the grace of God*. By the favour of God which is given to me. All that Paul had done had been by the mere favour of God. His appointment was from him; and all the skill which he had shown, and all the agency which he had employed, had been from him. The architectural figure is here continued with some striking additions and illustrations. By the "grace of God" here, Paul probably means his apostleship to the Gentiles, which had been conferred on him by the mere favour of God, and all the wisdom, and skill, and success which he had evinced in founding the church.

As a wise master-builder. Greek, *Architect*. The word does not imply that Paul had any pre-eminence over his brethren, but that he had proceeded in his work as a skilful architect, who secures first a firm foundation. Every builder begins with the foundation; and Paul had proceeded in this manner in laying first a firm foundation on which the church could be reared. The word *wise* here means skilful, judicious, Comp. Mt 7:24.

I have laid the foundation. *What* this foundation was he states in 1Co 3:11. The meaning here is, that the church at Corinth had been at first established by Paul. See Ac 18:1, etc.

And another. Other teachers. I have communicated to the church the first elements of Christian knowledge. Others *follow out* this instruction, and edify the church. The discussion here undergoes a slight change. In the former part of the chapter, *Christians* are compared to a building; here the doctrines which are taught in the church are compared to various parts of a building.—*Grotius*. See similar instances of translation in Mt 13; Mr 4; Joh 10

But let every man, etc. Every man who is a professed teacher. Let him be careful what instructions he shall give to a church that has been founded by apostolic hands, and that is established on the only true foundation. This is designed to guard against false instruction, and the instructions of false teachers. Men should take heed what instruction they give to a church,

(1.) because of the fact that the church belongs to God, and they should be cautious what directions they give to it.

(2.) Because it is important that Christians should not only be on the true foundation, but that they should be fully instructed in the nature of their religion, and the church should be permitted to rise in its true beauty and loveliness.

(3.) Because of the evils which result from false instruction. Even when the foundation is firm, incalculable evils will result from the want of just and discriminating instruction. Error sanctifies no one. The effect of it even on the minds of true Christians is to mar their piety; to dim its lustre; and to darken their minds. No Christian can enjoy religion except under the full-orbed shining of the word of truth; and every man, therefore, who gives false instruction, is responsible for all the darkness he causes, and for all the want of comfort which true Christians under his teaching may experience.

(4.) Every man must give an account of the nature of his instructions; and he should therefore take heed unto himself, and unto his doctrine, (1Ti 4:16,) and preach such doctrine as shall bear the test of the great day. And from this we learn, that it is important that the church should be built on the true foundation; and, that it is scarcely less important that it should be built up in the knowledge of the truth. Vast evils are constantly occurring in the church, for the want of proper instruction to young converts. Many seem to feel that provided the foundation be well laid, that is all that is needed. But the grand thing which is wanted at the present time is, that those who *are* converted should, as soon as possible, be instructed FULLY in the nature of the religion which they have embraced. What would be thought of a farmer who should plant a tree, and never water or trim it; who should plant his seed, and never cultivate the corn as it springs up; who should sow his fields, and then think that all is well, and leave it to be overrun with weeds and thorns? Piety is often stunted, its early shootings blighted, its rapid growth checked, for the want of early culture in the church. And, perhaps, there is no one thing in which pastors more frequently fail than in regard to the culture which ought to be bestowed on those who are converted—especially in early life. Our Saviour's views on this were expressed in the admonition to Peter, "Feed my lambs," Joh 21:15.

{b} "According" Ro 12:3

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *For other foundation*. It is implied, by the course of the argument here, that this was the foundation which had been laid at Corinth, and on which the church there had been reared. And it is *affirmed* that no other foundation can be laid. A foundation is that on which a building is reared: the foundation of a church is the doctrine on which it is established; that is, the doctrines which its

members hold—those truths which lie at the basis of their hopes, and by embracing which they have been converted to God.

Can no man lay. That is, there is no other true foundation.

Which is Jesus Christ. Christ is often called the foundation; the stone; the corner stone on which the church is reared, Isa 28:16; Mt 21:42 Ac 4:11; Eph 2:20 2Ti 2:19; 1Pe 2:6.

The meaning is, that no true church can be reared which does not embrace and hold the true doctrines respecting him—those which pertain to his incarnation, his Divine nature, his instructions, his example, his atonement, his resurrection, and his ascension. The reason why no true church can be established without embracing the truth as it is in Christ, is, that it is by him only that men can be saved; and where this doctrine is wanting, all is wanting that enters into the essential idea of a church. The fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion must be embraced, or a church cannot exist; and where those doctrines axe denied, no association of men can be recognised as a church of God. Nor can the foundation be modified or shaped so as to suit the wishes of men. It must be laid as it is in the Scriptures; and the superstructure must be reared on that alone.

{c} "that is laid" Isa 28:16 Mt 16:18; Eph 2:20 2Ti 2:19

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Now if any man*. If any teacher in the doctrines which he inculcates; or any private Christian in the hopes which he cherishes. The main discussion, doubtless, has respect to the teachers of religion, Paul carries forward the metaphor in this and the following verses with respect to the building. He supposes that the *foundation* is laid; that it is a true foundation; that the essential doctrines in regard to the Messiah are the real basis on which the edifice is reared. But, he says, that even admitting that, it is a subject of vast importance to attend to the kind of structure which shall be reared on that; whether it shall be truly beautiful and valuable in itself, and such as shall abide the trial of the last great day, or whether it be mean, worthless, erroneous, and such as shall at last be destroyed. There has been some difference of opinion in regard to the interpretation of this passage, arising from the question whether the apostle designed to represent one or two buildings. The former has been the more common interpretation; and the sense according to that is, "The true foundation is laid; but on that it is improper to place vile and worthless materials. It would be absurd to work them in with those which are valuable; it would be absurd to work in, in rearing a building, wood, and hay, and stubbles with gold, and silver, and precious stones; there would be a want of continuity and beauty in this. So in the spiritual temple. There is an impropriety, an unfitness, in rearing the spiritual temple, to interweave truth with error, sound doctrine with false." See Calvin and Macknight. Grotius renders it, "Paul feigns to himself an edifice, partly regal, and partly rustic. He presents the image of a house, whose walls are of marble, whose columns are made partly of gold and partly of silver, whose beams are of wood, and whose roof thatched with straw." Others, among whom are Wetstein, Doddridge, Rosenmuller, suppose that he refers to two buildings that might be reared on this foundation—either one that should be magnificent and splendid, or one that should be a rustic cottage, or mean hovel, thatched with straw, and made of planks of wood. Doddridge paraphrases the passage, "*If any man build*, I say, *upon this foundation*, let him look to

the materials and the nature of his work; whether he raise a stately and magnificent temple upon it, adorned as it were like the house of God at Jerusalem, with gold and silver, and large, beautiful, and costly stones; or a mean hovel, consisting of nothing better than planks of wood roughly put together, and thatched with hay and stubble. That is, let him look to it, whether he teach the substantial, vital truths of Christianity, and which it was intended to support and illustrate; or set himself to propagate vain subtilities and conceits on the one hand, or legal rites and Jewish traditions on the other; which, although they do not entirely destroy the foundation, disgrace it, as a mean edifice would do a grand and extensive foundation laid with great pomp and solemnity." This probably expresses the correct sense of the passage. The foundation may be well laid; yet on this foundation an edifice may be reared that shall be truly magnificent, or one that shall be mean and worthless. So the true foundation of a church may be laid, or of individual conversion to God, in the true doctrine respecting Christ. That church or that individual *may be* built up and adorned with all the graces which truth is fitted to produce; or there may be false principles and teachings superadded; doctrines that shall delude and lead astray; or views and feelings cultivated *as* piety, and believed *to be* piety, which may be no part of true religion, but which are mere delusion and fanaticism.

Gold, silver. On the meaning of these words it is not necessary to dwell, or to lay too much stress. Gold is the emblem of that which is valuable and precious, and may be the emblem of that truth and holiness which shall bear the trial of the great day. In relation to the figure which the apostle here uses, it may refer to the fact that columns or beams in an edifice might be gilded; or, perhaps, as in the temple, that they might be solid gold, so as to bear the action of intense heat, or so that fire would not destroy them. So the precious doctrines of truth, and all the feelings, views, opinions, habits, practices, which truth produces in an individual or a church, will bear the trial of the last great day.

Precious stones. By the stones here referred to, are not meant *gems*, which are esteemed of so much value for ornaments, but beautiful and valuable marbles. The word *precious* here *timiouv* means those which are obtained at a *price*, which are costly and valuable; and is particularly applicable, therefore, to the costly marbles which were used in building. The figurative sense here does not differ materially from that conveyed by the silver and gold. By this edifice thus reared on the true foundation, we are to understand,

(1.) the true doctrines which should be employed to build up a church—doctrines which would bear the test of the trial of the last day; and,

(2.) such views in regard to piety and to duty, such feelings and principles of action, as should be approved, and seen to be genuine piety in the day of judgment.

Wood. That might be easily burned. An edifice reared of wood instead of marble, or slight buildings, such as were often, put up for temporary purposes in the east—as cottages, places for watching their vineyards, etc. **See Barnes "Isa 1:8"**.

Hay, stubble. Used for thatching the building, or for a roof. Perhaps, also, grass was sometimes employed in some way to make the walls of the building. Such an edifice would burn readily; would be constantly exposed to take fire. By this is meant,

(1.) errors and false doctrines, such as will not be found to be true in the day of judgment, and as will then be swept away.

(2.) Such practices and mistaken views of piety, as shall grow out of false doctrines and errors. The foundation may be firm. Those who are referred to may be building on the Lord Jesus, and

may be true Christians. Yet there is much error among those who are not Christians. There are many things mistaken for piety which will yet be seen to be false. There is much enthusiasm, wildfire, fanaticism, bigotry; much affected humility; much that is supposed to be orthodoxy; much regard to forms and ceremonies; to "days, and months, and times, and years," Ga 4:10; much overheated zeal, and much precision, and solemn sanctimoniousness; much regard for external ordinances where the heart is wanting, that shah be found to be false, and that shall be swept away in the day of judgment.

{*} "hay" "grass"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Every man's work shall be made manifest*. What every man has built on this foundation shall be seen. Whether he has held truth or error; whether he has had correct views of piety or false; whether what he has done has been what he *should* have done or *not*.

For the day. The day of judgment. The great day which shall reveal the secrets of all hearts, and the truth in regard to what every man has done. The event will show what edifices on the true foundation are firmly, and what are weakly built. *Perhaps* the word *day* here may mean *time* in general, as we say, "time will show;" and as the Latin adage says, *dies doeebit*; but it is more natural to refer it to the day of judgment.

Because it shall be revealed by fire. The work, the edifice which shah be built on the true foundation, shall be made known amidst the fire of the great day. The *fire* which is here referred to is, doubtless, that which shall attend the consummation of all things—the close of the world. That the world shall be destroyed by fire, and that the solemnities of the judgment shah be ushered in by a universal conflagration, is fully and frequently revealed. See Isa 66:15; 2Th 1:8 2Pe 3:7,10,11.

The burning fires of that day, Paul says, shall reveal the character of every man's work, as fire sheds light on all around, and discloses the true nature of things. It may be observed, however, that many critics suppose this to refer to the fire of persecution, etc. (*Macknight*.) Whitby supposes that the apostle refers to the approaching destruction of Jerusalem. Others, as Grotius, Rosenmuller, etc., suppose that the reference is to time in general; it shall be declared ere long; it shall be seen whether those things which are built on the true foundation, are true by the test of time, etc. But the most natural interpretation is that which refers it to the day of judgment.

And the fire shall try every man's work. It is the property of fire to test the qualities of objects. Thus, gold and silver, so far from being destroyed by fire, are purified from dross. Wood, hay, stubble, are consumed. The power of fire to try or test the nature of metals, or other objects, is often referred to in the Scripture. Comp. Isa 4:4; Isa 24:15 Mal 3:2; 1Pe 1:7.

It is not to be supposed here that the material fire of the last day shall have any tendency to purify the soul, or to remove that which is unsound; but that the investigations and trials of the judgment shall remove all that is evil, as fire acts with reference to gold and silver. As they are not burned, but purified; as they pass unhurt through the intense heat of the furnace, so shall all that is genuine pass through the trials of the last great day, of which trials the burning world shall be the antecedent and the emblem. That great day shall show what is genuine and what is not.

{1} "it" "is" {a} "the fire" Zec 13:9 1Pe 1:7, 4:12

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *If any man's work abide*, etc. If it shall appear that he has taught the true doctrines of Christianity, and inculcated right practices and views of piety, and himself cherished right feelings; if the trial of the great day, when the real qualities of all objects shall be known, shall show this;

He shall receive a reward. According to the nature of his work. **See Barnes "1Co 3:8"**.

This refers, I suppose, to the proper rewards on the day of judgment, and not to the honours and the recompense which he may receive in this world. If all that he has taught and done shall be proved to have been genuine and pure, then his reward shall be in proportion.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *If any man's work shall be burned*. If it shall not be found to bear the test of the investigation of that day—as a cottage of wood, hay, and stubble would not bear the application of fire. If his doctrines have not been true; if he has had mistaken views of piety; if he has nourished feelings which *he* thought were those of religion, and inculcated practices which, however well meant, are not such as the gospel produces; if he has fallen into error of opinion, feeling, practice, however conscientious, yet he shall suffer loss.

He shall suffer loss.

(1.) He shall not be elevated to as high a rank and to as high happiness as he otherwise would. That which he supposed would be regarded as acceptable by the Judge, and rewarded accordingly, shall be stripped away, and shown to be unfounded and false; and, in consequence, he shall not obtain those elevated rewards which he anticipated. This, compared with what he expected, may be regarded as a loss.

(2.) He shall be injuriously affected by this for ever. It shall be a *detriment* to him to all eternity. The effects shall be felt in all his residence in heaven; not producing misery, but attending him with the consciousness that he *might* have been raised to superior bliss in the eternal abode. The phrase here literally means, "he shall be mulcted," The word is a law term, and means that he shall be fined ; i.e., he shall suffer detriment.

But he himself shall be saved. The apostle all along has supposed that the true foundation was laid, (1Co 3:11;) and if that is laid, and the edifice is reared upon that, the person who does it shall be safe. There may be much error, and many false views of religion, and much imperfection; still the man that is building on the true foundation shall be safe. His errors and imperfections shall be removed, and he may occupy a lower place in heaven, but he shall be safe.

Yet so as by fire, wv dia purov. This passage has greatly perplexed commentators; but probably without any good reason. The apostle does not say that Christians will be doomed to the fires of purgatory; nor that they will pass through fire; nor that they will be exposed to pains and punishment at all; but he *simply carries out the figure* which he commenced, and says that they will be saved, *as if* the action of fire had been felt on the edifice on which he is speaking. That is, as fire would consume the wood, hay, and stubble, so on the great day everything that is erroneous and imperfect in Christians shall be removed, and that which is true and genuine shall be preserved, as if it had passed through fire. Their whole character and opinions shall be investigated; and that which is good shall be approved; and that which is false and erroneous be removed. The idea is not that of a man whose house is burnt over his head, and who escapes through the flames; nor that of a man who is subjected to the pains and fires of purgatory; but that of a man who had been spending his time and strength to little purpose; who had built, indeed, on the true foundation, but who had reared So much on it which was unsound, and erroneous, and false, that he himself would be saved with great difficulty, and with the loss of much of that reward which he had expected, *as if* the fire had passed over him and his works. The simple idea therefore is, that that which is genuine and valuable in his doctrines and works shall be rewarded, and the man shall be saved; that which is not sound and genuine shall be removed, and he shall suffer loss. Some of the Fathers, indeed, admitted that this passage taught that all men would be subjected to the action of fire in the great conflagration with which the world shall close; that the wicked shall be consumed; and that the righteous are to suffer, some more and some less, according to their character. On passages like the, the Romish doctrine of purgatory is based. But we may observe,

(1.) that this passage does not necessarily or naturally give any such idea. The interpretation stated above is the *natural* interpretation, and one which the passage will not only bear, but which it demands.

(2.) *If* this passage would give any countenance to the absurd and unscriptural idea that the souls of the righteous at the day of judgment are to be reunited to their bodies, in order to be subjected to the action of intense heat—to be brought from the abodes of bliss, and compelled to undergo the burning fires of the last conflagration—-still it would give no countenance to the still more absurd and unscriptural opinion that those fires have been and are still burning; that all souls are to be subjected to them; and that they can be removed only by masses offered for the dead, and by the prayers of the living. The idea of danger and peril is, indeed, in this text; but the idea of personal salvation is retained and conveyed.

{b} "so as by fire" Zec 3:2 Jude 1:23

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Know ye not*, etc. The apostle here carries forward and completes the figure which he had commenced in regard to Christians. His illustrations had been drawn from architecture; and he here proceeds to say that Christians are that building, 1Co 3:9; that they were the sacred temple which God had reared; and that, therefore, they should be pure and holy. This is a practical application of what he had been before saying.

Ye are the temple of God. This is to be understood of the community of Christians, or of the church, as being the place where God dwells on the earth. The idea is derived from the mode of speaking among the Jews, where they are said often in the Old Testament to be the temple and the habitation of God. And the allusion is probably to the fact that God dwelt by a visible symbol—*the Shechinah*—-in the temple, and that his abode was there. As he dwelt there among the Jews—-as he had there a temple, a dwelling place—so he dwells among Christians. *They* are his temple, the place of his abode. His residence is with them; and he is in their midst. This figure the apostle Paul several times uses, 1Co 6:19 2Co 6:16; Eph 2:20-22.

A great many passages have been quoted by Elsner and Wetstein, in which a virtuous mind is represented as the temple of God, and in which the obligation to preserve that inviolate and unpolluted is enforced. The figure is a beautiful one, and very impressive. A *temple* was an edifice erected to the service of God. The temple at Jerusalem was not only most magnificent, but was regarded as most sacred,

(1.) from the fact that it was devoted to his service; and,

(2.) from the fact that it was the peculiar residence of JEHOVAH. Among the heathen, also, temples were regarded as sacred. They were supposed to be inhabited by the divinity to whom they were dedicated. They were regarded as inviolable. Those who took refuge there were safe. It was a crime of the highest degree to violate a temple, or to tear a fugitive who had sought protection there from the altar. So the apostle says of the Christian community. They were regarded as *his temple* —God dwelt among them—and they should regard themselves as holy, and as consecrated to his service. And so it is regarded as a species of sacrilege to violate the temple, and to devote it to other uses, 1Co 6:19. 1Co 3:17.

And that the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity. This is conclusively proved by 1Co 6:19, where he is called "the Holy Ghost."

Dwelleth in you. As God dwelt formerly in the tabernacle, and afterwards in the temple, so his Spirit now dwells among Christians. This cannot mean

(1.) that the Holy Spirit is *personally united* to Christians, so as to form a personal union; or

(2.) that there is to Christians any communication of his nature or personal qualities; or

(3.) that there is any union of essence or nature with them, for God is present in all places, and can, as God, be no more present at one place than at another. The only sense in which he can be peculiarly present in any place is by his *influence*, or *agency*. And the idea is one which denotes agency, influence, favour, peculiar regard; and in that sense only can he be present with his church, The expression must mean,

(1.) that the church is the seat of his operations, the field or abode on which he acts on earth;

(2.) that his influences are there, producing the appropriate effects of his agency, "love, joy, peace, longsuffering," etc., Ga 5:22,23;

(3.) that he produces there consolations, that he sustains and guides his people;

(4.) that they are regarded as dedicated or consecrated to him;

(5.) that they are especially *dear* to him—that he loves them, and thus makes his abode with them. **See Barnes "Joh 14:23"**.

{a} "ye are" 2Co 6:16 {*} "in" "among"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *If any man defile*, etc. Or, *destroy, corrupt, fyeirei*. The Greek word is the same in both parts of the sentence. "If any man *destroy* the temple of God, God shall *destroy* him." This is presented in the form of an adage or proverb. And the truth here stated is based on the fact that the temple of God was inviolable; that temple was holy; and if any man subsequently destroyed it, it might be presumed that God would destroy him. The figurative sense is, "If any man by his doctrines or precepts shall pursue such a course as *tends* to destroy the church, God shall severely punish him."

For the temple of God is holy. The temple of God is to be regarded as sacred and inviolable. This was unquestionably the common opinion among the Jews respecting the temple at Jerusalem; and it was the common doctrine of the Gentiles respecting their temples. Sacred places were regarded as inviolable; and this general truth Paul applies to the Christian church in general. Locke supposes that Paul had particular reference here to the false teachers in Corinth. But the expression, "If any man," is equally applicable to all other false teachers as to him.

Which temple ye are. This proves that though Paul regarded them as lamentably corrupt in some respects, he still regarded them as a true church—as a part of the holy temple of God.

{1} "defile" "destroy"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Let no man deceive himself*. The apostle here proceeds to make a practical application of the truths which he had stated, and to urge on them humility, and to endeavour to repress the broils and contentions into which they had fallen. Let no man be puffed up with vain conceit of his own wisdom, for this had been the real cause of all the evils which they had experienced. Grotius renders this, "See that you do not attribute too much to your wisdom and learning, by resting on it, and thus deceive your own selves." "All human philosophy," says Grotius, "that is repugnant to the gospel, is but vain deceit." Probably there were many among them who would despise this admonition as coming from Paul, but he exhorts them to take care that they did not deceive themselves. We are taught here,

(1.)the danger of self-deception—a danger that besets all on the subject of religion.

(2.) The fact that false philosophy is the most fruitful source of self-deception in the business of religion So it was among the Corinthians; and so it has been in all ages since.

If any man among you. Any teacher, whatever may be his rank or his confidence in his own abilities; or any private member of the church.

Seemeth to be wise. Seems to himself, or is thought to be; has the credit or reputation of being wise. The word *seems dokei* implies this idea: If any one seems, or is supposed to be a man of wisdom; if this is his reputation; and if he seeks that this should be his reputation among men. See instances of this construction in Bloomfield.

In this world. In this *age*, or *world en tw aiwni toutw*. There is considerable variety in the interpretation of this passage among critics. It may be taken either with the preceding or the following words. Origen, Cyprian, Beza, Grotius, Hammond, and Locke, adopt the latter method, and understand it thus: "If any man among you thinks himself to be wise, let him not hesitate to be a fool in the opinion of this age, in order that he may be truly wise." But the interpretation conveyed in our translation is probably the correct one: "If any man has the reputation of wisdom among the men of this generation, and prides himself on it," etc. If he is esteemed wise in the sense in which the men of this world are—as a philosopher, a man of science, learning, etc.

Let him become a fool.

(1.) Let him be willing to be regarded as a fool.

(2.) Let him sincerely embrace this gospel, which will inevitably expose him to the charge of being a fool.

(3.) Let all his earthly wisdom be esteemed in his own eyes as valueless and as folly in the great matters of salvation.

That he may be wise. That he may have true wisdom—that which is of God. It is implied here,

(1.) that the wisdom of this world will not make a man truly wise.

(2.) That a *reputation* for wisdom may contribute nothing to a man's true wisdom, but may stand in the way of it.

(3.) That for such a man to embrace the gospel, it is necessary that he should be willing to cast away dependence on his own wisdom, and come with the temper of a child to the Saviour.

(4.) That to do this will expose him to the charge of folly, and the derision of those who are wise in their own conceit.

(5.) That true wisdom is found only in that science which teaches men to live unto God, and to be prepared for death and for heaven—and that science is found only in the gospel.

{b} "deceive himself" Pr 26:12

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *For the wisdom of this world*. That which is esteemed to be wisdom by the men of this world on the subject of religion. It does not mean that true wisdom is foolishness with him. It does not mean that science, and prudence, and law—that the knowledge of his works—that astronomy, and medicine, and chemistry, are regarded by him as folly, and as unworthy the attention of men. God is the Friend of truth, on all subjects; and he requires us to become acquainted with his works, and commends those who search them, Ps 92:4 111:2. But the apostle refers here to that which was esteemed to be wisdom among the ancients, and in which they so much prided themselves—their vain, self-confident, and false opinions on the subject of religion; and especially those opinions when they were opposed to the simple but sublime truths of revelation. **See Barnes "1Co 1:20,21"**.

Is foolishness with God. Is esteemed by him to be folly. **See Barnes "1Co 1:20-24"**.

For it is written", etc. Job 5:13. The word rendered "taketh," here denotes to clench with the fist, gripe, grasp. And the sense is,

(1.) however crafty, or cunning, or skilful they may be, however self-confident, yet that they cannot deceive or impose upon God. He can thwart their plans, overthrow their schemes, defeat their counsels, mid foil them in their enterprises, Job 5:12.

(2.) He does it by their own cunning or craftiness. He allows them to involve themselves in difficulties, or to entangle each other. He makes use of even their own craft and cunning to defeat their counsels. He allows the plans of one wise man to come in conflict with those of another, and thus to destroy one another. Honesty in religion, as in everything else, is the best policy; and a man who pursues a course of conscientious integrity may expect the protection of God; but he who attempts to carry his purposes by craft and intrigue— who depends on skill and cunning, instead of truth and honesty— will often find that he is the prey of his own cunning and duplicity.

{a} "it is written" Job 5:13

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *And again*. Ps 94:11.

The Lord knoweth. God searches the heart. The particular thing which it is here said that he knows, is, that the thoughts of man are vain. They have this quality; and this is that which the psalmist here says that God sees. The affirmation is not one respecting the *omniscience* of God, but with respect to what God sees of the nature of the thoughts of the wise.

The thoughts of the wise. Their plans, purposes, designs.

That they are vain. That they lack real wisdom; they are foolish; they shall not be accomplished as they expect, or be seen to have that wisdom which they now suppose they possess.

{b} "again" Ps 94:11

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Therefore*, etc. Paul here proceeds to apply the principles which he had stated above. Since all were ministers or servants of God; since God was the Source of all good influences; since, whatever might be the pretensions to wisdom among men, it was all foolishness in the sight of God, the inference was clear, that no man should glory in man. They were all alike poor, frail, ignorant, erring, dependent beings. And hence, also, as *all* wisdom came from God, and as Christians partook *alike* of the benefits of the instruction of the most eminent apostles, they ought to regard this as belonging to them in common, and not to form parties with these names at the head.

Let no man glory in men. 1Co 1:29. Comp. Jer 9:23,24. It was common among the Jews to range themselves under different leaders—as Hillel and Shammai; and for the Greeks, also, to boast themselves to be the followers of Pythagoras, Zeno, Plato, etc. The same thing began to be manifest in the Christian church; and Paul here rebukes and opposes it.

For all things are your's. This is a *reason* why they should not range themselves in parties or factions under different leaders. Paul specifies what he means by "all things" in the following verses. The sense is, that since they had an interest in all that could go to promote their welfare; as they were *common* partakers of the benefits of the talents and labours of the apostles; and as they belonged to Christ, and all to God, it was improper to be split up into factions, *as if* they derived any *peculiar* benefit from one set of men, or one set of objects. In Paul, in Apollos, in life, death, etc., they had a common interest, and no one should boast that he had any special proprietorship in any of these things.

{c} "let no man glory" Jer 9:23,24

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Whether Paul, or Apollos*. The sense of this is clear. Whatever advantages result from the piety, self-denials, and labours of Paul, Apollos, or any other preacher of the gospel, are *yours*—you have the benefit of them. One is as much entitled to the benefit as another; and all partake alike in the results of their ministration. You should therefore neither range yourselves into parties with their names given to the parties, nor suppose that one has any peculiar interest in Paul, or another in Apollos. Their labours belonged to the church in general. *They* had no partialities—no rivalship—no desire to make parties. They were united, and desirous of promoting the welfare of the *whole* church of God. The doctrine is, that ministers belong to the church, and should devote themselves to its welfare; and that the church enjoys, in common, the benefits of the learning, zeal, piety, eloquence, talents, example of the ministers of God. And it may be observed, that it is no small privilege thus to be permitted to regard *all* the labours of the most eminent servants of God as designed for our welfare; and for the humblest saint to feel that the labours of apostles, the self-denials and sufferings, the pains and dying agonies of martyrs, have been for *his advantage*.

Or Cephas. Or Peter. (Joh 1:42.)

Or the world. This word is doubtless used, in its common signification, to denote the things which God has made; the universe, the things which pertain to this life. And the meaning of the apostle probably is, that all things pertaining to this world which God has made—all the events which are occurring in his providence were so far theirs, that they would contribute to their advantage and their enjoyment. This general idea may be thus expressed:

(1.) The world was made by God, their common Father, and they have an interest in it as his children, regarding it as the work of his hand, and seeing him present in all his works. Nothing contributes so much to the true *enjoyment* of the world—to comfort in surveying the heavens, the earth, the ocean, hills, vales, plants, flowers, streams, in partaking of the gifts of Providence, as this feeling, that *all* are the works of the Christian's Father, and that they may all partake of these favours as his children.

(2.) The frame of the universe is sustained and upheld for their sake. The universe is kept by God; and one design of God in keeping it is to protect, preserve, and redeem his church and people. To this end he defends it by day and night; he orders all things; he keeps it from the storm and

tempest, from flood and fire, and from annihilation. The sun, and moon, and stars, the times and seasons, are all thus ordered, that his church may be guarded, and brought to heaven.

(3.) The course of providential events are ordered for their welfare also, Ro 8:28. The revolutions of kingdoms, the various persecutions and trials, even the rage and fury of wicked men, are all overruled, to the advancement of the cause of truth, and the welfare of the church.

(4.) Christians have the promise of *as much* of this world as shall be needful for them; and in this sense "the world" is theirs. See Mt 6:33 Mr 10:29,30 1Ti 4:8, "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." And such was the result of the long experience and observation of David. Ps 37:25, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." Isa 33:16.

Or life. Life is theirs, because

(1.) they *enjoy* life. It is real life to them, and not a vain show. They live for a *real* object, and not for vanity. Others live for parade and ambition—Christians live for the great purposes of life; and life to them has reality, as being a state preparatory to another and a higher world. Their life is not an endless circle of unmeaning ceremonies— of false and hollow pretensions to friendship—of a vain pursuit of happiness, which is never found; but is passed in a manner that is rational, and sober, and that truly deserves to be called *life*.

(2.) The various events and occurrences of life shall all tend to promote their welfare, and advance their salvation.

Death. They have an *interest, a property* even in death, usually regarded as a calamity and a curse. But it is theirs,

(1.) because they shall have *peace* and support in the dying hour.

(2.) Because it has no terrors for them. It shall take away nothing which they are not willing to resign.

(3.) Because it is the avenue which leads to their rest; and it is *theirs* just in the same sense in which we say that "this is *our* road" when we have been long absent, and are inquiring the way to our homes.

(4.) Because they shall triumph over it. It is subdued by their Captain, and the grave has been subjected to a triumph by his rising from its chills and darkness.

(5.) Because death is the means—the occasion of introducing them to their rest. It is the *advantageous circumstance* in their history, by which they are removed from a world of ills, and translated to a world of glory. It is to them a source of inexpressible *advantage*, as it translates them to a world of light and eternal felicity; and it may truly be called *theirs*.

Or things present, or things to come. Events which are now happening, and all that can possibly occur to us. **See Barnes "Ro 8:38"**.

All the calamities, trials, persecutions—all the prosperity, advantages, privileges of the present time, and all that shall yet take place, shall tend to promote our welfare, and advance the interests of our souls, and promote our salvation.

All are your's. All shall tend to promote your comfort and salvation.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *And ye are Christ's*. You belong to him; and should not, therefore, feel that you are devoted to any earthly leader, whether Paul, Apollos, or Peter. As you belong to Christ by redemption, and by solemn dedication to his service, so you should feel that you are his alone. You are his property, his people, his friends. You should regard yourselves as such, and feel that you all belong to the same family, and should not, therefore, be split up into contending factions and parties.

Christ is God's. Christ is the Mediator between God and man. He came to do the will of God. He was, and is still, devoted to the service of his Father; God has a proprietorship in all that he does, since Christ lived, and acted, and reigns to promote the glory of his Father. The argument here seems to be this: "You belong to Christ, and he to God. You are bound, therefore, not to devote yourselves to a man, whoever he may be; but to Christ, and to the service of that one true God, in whose service even Christ was employed. And as Christ sought to promote the glory of his Father, so should you in all things." This implies no inferiority of nature of Christ to God. It means only that he was employed in the service of his Father, and sought his glory—a doctrine everywhere taught in the New Testament. But this does not imply that he was inferior in his nature. A son may be employed in the service of his father, and may seek to advance his father's interests. But this does not prove that the son is inferior in nature to his father. It proves only that he is inferior in some respects—in office. So the Son of God consented to take an inferior office or rank; to become a Mediator, to assume the form of a servant, and to be a man of sorrows; but this proves nothing in regard to his original rank or dignity. That is to be learned from the numerous passages which affirm that in nature he was equal with God. **See Barnes "Joh 1:1".**

{a} "Ye are Christ's" Ro 14:8

REMARKS ON 1ST CORINTHIANS, CHAPTER 3

(1.) Christians, when first converted, may be well compared to infants, 1Co 3:1. They are in a new world. They just open their eyes on truth. They see new objects, and have new objects of attachment. They are feeble, weak, helpless, And though they often have high joy, and even great self-confidence, yet they are in themselves ignorant and weak, and in need of constant teaching. Christians should not only possess the spirit, but they should feel that they are *like* children. They are like them not only in their temper, but in their ignorance, and weakness, and helplessness.

(2.) The instructions which are imparted to Christians should be adapted to their capacity, 1Co 3:2. Skill and care should be exercised to adapt that instruction to the wants of tender consciences, and to those who are feeble in the faith. It would be no more absurd to furnish strong food to the new-born babe, than it is to present some of the higher doctrines of religion to the tender minds of converts. The *elements* of knowledge must be first learned; the tenderest and most delicate food must first nourish the body. And perhaps in nothing is there more frequent error than in presenting the higher and more difficult doctrines of Christianity to young converts; and because they have a difficulty in regard to them, or because they even reject them, pronouncing them destitute of piety. Is the infant destitute of life because it cannot digest the solid food which nourishes the man of fifty years? Paul adapted his instructions to the delicacy and feebleness of infantile piety; and those

who are like Paul will feed with great care the lambs of the flock. All young converts should be placed under a course of instruction adapted to their condition, and should secure the careful attention of the pastors of the churches.

(3.) Strife and contention in the church is proof that men are under the influence of carnal feelings. No matter what is the cause of the contention—the very fact of the existence of such strife is a proof of the existence of such feelings somewhere, 1Co 3:3,4. On what side soever the original fault of the contention may be, yet its existence in the church is always proof that *some*—if not all— of those who are engaged in it are under the influence of carnal feelings. Christ's kingdom is designed to be a kingdom of peace and love; and divisions and contentions are always attended with evils, and with injury to the spirit of true religion.

(4.) We have here a rebuke to that spirit which has produced the existence of sects and parties, 1Co 3:4. The practice of naming sects after certain men, we see, began early, and was as early rebuked by apostolic authority. Would not the same apostolic authority rebuke the spirit which now calls one division of the church after the name of Calvin, another after the name of Luther, another after the name of Arminius? Should not, and will not, all these divisions yet be merged in the high and holy name of Christian? Our Saviour evidently supposed it possible that his church should be one, Joh 17:21-23; and Paul certainly supposed that the church at Corinth might be so united. So the early churches were; and is it too much to hope that some way may yet be discovered which shall break down the divisions into sects, and unite Christians, both in feeling and in name, in spreading the gospel of the Redeemer everywhere? Does not every Christian sincerely desire it? And may there not yet await the church such a union as shall concentrate all its energies in saving the world? How much effort, how much talent, how much wealth and learning are now wasted in contending with other denominations of the great Christian family! How much would this wasted—and worse than wasted—wealth, and learning, and talent, and zeal do in diffusing the gospel around the world! Whose heart is not sickened at these contentions and strifes; and whose soul will not breathe forth a pure desire to heaven, that the time may soon come when all these contentions shall die away, and when the voice of strife shall be hushed; and when the united host of God's elect shall go forth to subdue the world to the gospel of the Saviour?

(5.) The *proper* honour should be paid to the ministers of the gospel, 1Co 3:5-7. They should not be put in the place of God; nor should their services, however important, prevent the supreme recognition of God in the conversion of souls. God is to be all and in all. It is proper that the ministers of religion should be treated with respect, (1Th 5:12,13;) and ministers have a right to expect and to desire the affectionate regards of those who are blessed by their instrumentality. But Paul—eminent and successful as he was—would do nothing that would diminish or obscure the singleness of view with which the agency of God should be regarded in the work of salvation. He regarded himself as nothing compared with God; and his highest desire was that God in all things might be honoured.

(6.) God is the Source of all good influence, and of all that is holy in the church. He only gives the increase. Whatever of humility, faith, love, joy, peace, or purity we may have, is all to be traced to him. No matter who plants, or who waters—*God* gives life to the seed; God rears the stalk; God expands the leaf; God opens the flower, and gives it its fragrance; and God forms, preserves, and ripens the fruit. So in religion. No matter who the minister may be; no matter how faithful, learned, pious, or devoted; yet if any success attends his labours, it is all to be traced to God. This truth is

never to be forgotten; nor should any talents or zeal, however great, ever be allowed to dim or obscure its lustre in the minds of those who are converted.

(7.) Ministers are on a level, 1Co 3:8,9. Whatever may be their qualifications or their success, yet they can claim no pre-eminence over one another. They are fellow-labourers— engaged in one work, accomplishing the same object, though they may be in different parts of the same field. The man who plants is as necessary as he that waters; and both are inferior to God, and neither could do anything without him.

(8.) Christians should regard themselves as a holy people, 1Co 3:9. They are the cultivation of God. All that they have is from him. His own agency has been employed in their conversion; his own Spirit operates to sanctify and save them. Whatever they have is to be traced to God; and they should remember that they are, therefore, consecrated to him.

(9.) No other foundation can be laid in the church except that of Christ, 1Co 3:10,11. Unless a church is founded on the true doctrine respecting the Messiah, it is a false church, and should not be recognised as belonging to him. There can be no other foundation, either for an individual sinner, or for a church. How important, then, to inquire whether we are building our hopes for eternity on this tried foundation! How faithfully should we examine this subject, lest our hopes should all be swept away in the storms of Divine wrath! Mt 7:26,27. How deep and awful will be the disappointment of those who suppose they have been building on the true foundation, and who find, in the great day of judgment, that all has been delusion!

(10.) We are to be tried at the day of judgment, 1Co 3:13,14. All are to be arraigned, not only in regard to the *foundation* of our hopes for eternal life, but in regard to the superstructure—the nature of our opinions and practices in religion. Everything shall come into judgment.

(11.) The trial will be such as to test our character. All the trials through which we are to pass are designed to do this. Affliction, temptation, sickness, death, are all intended to produce this result, and all have a tendency to this end. But pre-eminently is this the case with regard to the trial at the great day of judgment. Amidst the light of the burning world, and the terrors of the judgment; under the blazing throne, and the eye of God, every man's character shall be seen, and a just judgment shall be pronounced.

(12.) The trial shall remove all that is impure in Christians, 1Co 3:14. They shall then see the truth; and in that world of truth, all that was erroneous in their opinions shall be corrected. They shall be in a world where fanaticism cannot be mistaken for the love of truth, and where enthusiasm cannot be substituted for zeal. All true and real piety shall there abide; all which is false and erroneous shall be removed.

(13.) What a change will then take place in regard to Christians. *All* probably cherish some opinions which are unsound; all indulge in *some* things now supposed to be piety, which will not then bear the test. The great change will then take place from impurity to purity; from imperfection to perfection. The very passage from this world to heaven will secure this change; and what a vast revolution will it be, thus to be ushered into a world where all shall be pure in sentiment, all perfect in love.

(14.) Many Christians may be much disappointed in that day. Many who are now zealous for *doctrines*, and who pursue with vindictive spirit others who differ from them, shall then "suffer loss," and find that the *persecuted* had more real love of truth than the *persecutor*. Many who are now filled with zeal, and who denounce the comparatively leaden and tardy pace of others; many whose bosoms glow with rapturous feeling, and burn, as they suppose, with a seraph's love, shall

find that *all* this was not piety—that animal feeling was mistaken for the love of God; and that a zeal for sect, or for the triumph of a party, was mistaken for love to the Saviour; and that the kindlings of an ardent imagination had been often substituted for the elevated emotions of pure and disinterested love.

(15.) Christians, teachers, and people should examine themselves, and see what *is* the building which they are rearing on the true foundation. Even where the foundation of a building is laid broad and deep, it is of much importance whether a stately and magnificent palace shall be reared on it, suited to the nature of the foundation, or whether a mud-walled and a thatched cottage shall be all. Between the foundation and the edifice in the one case, there is the beauty of proportion and fitness; in the other, there is incongruity and unfitness. Who would lay such a deep and broad foundation as the basis on which to rear the hut of the savage, or the mud cottage of the Hindoo? Thus in religion. The foundation to all who truly believe in the Lord Jesus is broad, deep, firm, magnificent. But the superstructure—the piety, the advancement in knowledge, the life—is often like the cottage that is reared on the firm basis, that every wind shakes, and that the fire would soon consume. As the *basis* of the Christian hope is firm, so should the superstructure be large, magnificent, and grand.

(16.) Christians are to regard themselves as holy and pure, 1Co 3:16,17. They are the temple of the Lord—the dwelling-place of the Spirit. A temple is sacred and inviolable. So should Christians regard themselves. They are dedicated to God. He dwells among them. And they should deem themselves holy and pure; and should preserve their minds from impure thoughts, from unholy purposes, from selfish and sensual desires. They should be, in all respects, such as will be the fit abode for the Holy Spirit of God. How pure should men be in whom the Holy Spirit dwells! How single should be their aims! How constant their self-denials! How single their desire to devote all to his service, and to live always to his glory! How heavenly should they be in their feelings; and how should pride, sensuality, vanity, ambition, covetousness, and the love of gaiety, be banished from their bosoms! Assuredly, in God's world there should be one place where he will delight to dwell —one place that shall remind of heaven; and that place should be the church which has been purchased with the purest blood of the universe.

(17.) We see what is necessary if a man would become a Christian, 1Co 3:18. He must be willing to be esteemed a feel; to be despised; to have his name cast out as evil; and to be regarded as even under delusion and deception. Whatever may be his rank, or his reputation for wisdom, and talent, and learning, he must be willing to be regarded as a fool by his former associates and companions; to cast off all reliance on his own wisdom; and to be associated with the poor, the persecuted, and the despised followers of Jesus. Christianity knows no distinctions of wealth, talent, learning. It points out no royal road to heaven. It describes but one way; and whatever contempt an effort to be saved may involve us in, it requires us to submit to that, and even to rejoice that our names are cast out as evil.

(18.) This is a point on which men should be especially careful that they are not deceived, 1Co 3:18. There is nothing on which they are more likely to be than this. It is not an easy thing for a proud man to humble himself; it is not easy for men who boast of their wisdom to be willing that their names should be cast out as evil. And there is great danger of a man's flattering himself that he is willing to be a Christian, who would *not* be willing to be esteemed a fool by the great and the gay men of this world. He still intends to be a Christian and be saved, and yet to keep up his reputation for wisdom and prudence. Hence everything in religion which is not consistent with such a reputation for prudence and wisdom he rejects. Hence he takes sides with the world. As far

as the world will admit that a man ought to attend to religion, he will go. Where the world would pronounce anything to be foolish, fanatical, or enthusiastic, he pauses. And his religion is not shaped by the New Testament, but by the opinions of the world. Such a man should be cautious that he is not deceived. All *his* hopes of heaven are probably built on the sand.

(19.) We should not overvalue the wisdom of this world, 1Co 3:18,19. It is folly in the sight of God. And we, therefore, should not over-estimate it, or desire it, or be influenced by it. True wisdom on any subject we should not despise; but we should especially value that which is connected with salvation.

(20.) This admonition is of especial applicability to ministers of the gospel. They are in special danger on the subject; and it has been by *their* yielding themselves so much to the power of speculative philosophy that parties have been formed in the church, and that the gospel has been so much corrupted.

(21.) These considerations should lead us to live above contention, and the fondness of party. Sect and party in the church are not formed by the love of the pure and simple gospel, but by the love of some philosophical opinion, or by an admiration of the wisdom, talents, learning, eloquence, or success of some Christian teacher,.Against this the apostle would guard us; and the considerations presented in this chapter should elevate us above all the causes of contention and the love of sect, and teach us to love as brothers all who love our Lord Jesus Christ.

(22.) Christians have an interest in all things that can go to promote their happiness. Life and death, things present and things to come—all shall tend to advance their happiness, and promote their salvation, 1Co 3:21-23.

(23.) Christians have nothing to fear in death. Death is theirs, and shall be a blessing to them. Its sting is taken away; and it shall introduce them to heaven. What have they to fear? Why should they be alarmed? Why afraid to die? Why unwilling to depart and to be with Christ?

(24.) Christians Should regard themselves as devoted to the Saviour. they are his, and he has the highest conceivable claim on their time, their talents, their influence, and their wealth. To him, therefore, let us be devoted, and to him let us consecrate all that we have.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 1

1st Corinthians CHAPTER 4

THIS chapter is a continuation of the subject discussed in those which go before, and of the argument which closes the last chapter. The proper division would have been at verse 6. The design of the first six verses is to show the real estimate in which the apostles ought to be held as the ministers of religion. The remainder of the chapter (1Co 4:7-21) is occupied in setting forth further the claims of the apostles to their respect in contradistinction from the false teachers, and in reproving

the spirit of vain boasting and confidence among the Corinthians. Paul 1Co 4:7 reproves their boasting by assuring them that they had no ground for it, since all that they possessed had been given to them by God. In 1Co 4:8, he reproves the same spirit with cutting irony, as if they claimed to be eminently wise. Still further to reprove them, he alludes to his own self-denials and sufferings, as contrasted with their ease, and safety, and enjoyment, 1Co 4:9-14. He then shows that his labours and self-denials, in their behalf, laid the foundation for his speaking to them with authority as a father, 1Co 4:15,16. And to show them that he claimed that authority over them as the founder of their church, and that he was not afraid to discharge his duty towards them, he informs them that he had sent Timothy to look into their affairs, 1Co 4:17, and that himself would soon follow; and assures them that he had power to come to them with the severity of Christian discipline, and that it depended on their conduct whether he should come with a rod, or with the spirit of meekness and love, 1Co 4:21.

Verse 1. *Let a man*. Let all; let this be the estimate formed of us by each one of you.

So account of us. So think of us, the apostles.

As of the ministers of Christ. As the servants of Christ. Let them form a true estimate of us and our office—not as the head of a faction; not as designing to form parties, but as unitedly and entirely the servants of Christ. See 1Co 3:5.

And stewards. Stewards were those who presided over the affairs of a family, and made provision for it, etc. **See Barnes "Lu 16:1"**.

It was an office of much responsibility; and the apostle by using the term here seems to have designed to elevate those whom he seemed to have depreciated in 1Co 3:5.

Of the mysteries of God. Of the gospel. **See Barnes "1Co 2:7"**.

The office of steward was to provide those things which were necessary for the use of a family. And so the office of a minister of the gospel, and a steward of its mysteries, is to dispense such instructions, guidance, counsel, etc., as may be requisite to build up the church of Christ; to make known those sublime truths which are contained in the gospel, but which had not been made known before the revelation of Jesus Christ, and which are, therefore, called *mysteries*. It is implied in this verse,

(1.) that the office of a minister is one that is *subordinate* to Christ—they are his servants.

(2.) That those in the office should not attempt to be the head of sect or party in the church.

(3.) That the office is honourable, as that of a steward is. And,

(4.) that Christians should endeavour to form and cherish just ideas of ministers; to give them their true honour; but not to overrate their importance.

{*} "mysteries" "revealed truths"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Moreover*, etc. The fidelity required of stewards seems to be adverted to here, in order to show that the apostles acted from a higher principle than a desire to please man, or to be regarded as at the head of a party; and they ought so to esteem them as bound, like all stewards, to be faithful to the Master whom they served.

It is required, etc. It is expected of them; it is the *main* or *leading* thing in their office. Eminently in that office fidelity is required as an indispensable and cardinal virtue. Fidelity to the master, faithfulness to his trust, as THE virtue which by way of eminence is demanded there. In other offices other virtues may be particularly required. But here fidelity is demanded. This is required particularly because it is an office of trust; because the master's goods are at his disposal; because there is so much opportunity for the steward to appropriate those goods to his own use, so that his master cannot detect it. There is a strong similarity between the office of a steward and that of a minister of the gospel. But it is not needful here to dwell on the resemblance. The idea of Paul seems to be,

(1.) that a minister, like a steward, is devoted to his Master's service, and should regard himself as such.

(2.) That he should be faithful to that trust, and not abuse or violate it.

(3.) That he should not be judged by his fellow-stewards, or fellow-servants, but that his main desire should be to meet with the approbation of his Master. A minister should be faithful for obvious reasons: because

(a) he is appointed by Jesus Christ;

(b) because he must answer to him;

(c) because the honour of Christ, and the welfare of his kingdom, are entrusted to him; and

(d) because of the importance of the matter committed to his care; and the importance of fidelity can be measured only by the consequences of his labours to those souls in an eternal heaven or an eternal hell.

{b} "in stewards" Lu 12:42 Tit 1:7; 1Pe 4:10

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *But with me*. In my estimate; in regard to myself. That is, I esteem it a matter of no concern. Since I am responsible as a steward to my Master only, it is a matter of small concern what men think of me, provided I have his approbation. Paul was not insensible to the good opinion of men. He did not despise their favour, or court their contempt. But this was not the principal thing which he regarded; and we have here a noble elevation of purpose and of aim, which shows how direct was his design to serve and please the Master who had appointed him to his office.

That I should be judged. The word rendered *judged* here properly denotes to examine the qualities of any person or thing; and sometimes, as here, to express the *result* of such examination or judgment. Here it means to *blame* or *condemn*.

Of you. By you. Dear as you are to me as a church and a people, yet my main desire is not to secure your esteem, or to avoid your censure, but to please my Master, and secure his approbation.

Or of man's judgment. Of *any* man's judgment. What he had just said, that he esteemed it to be a matter not worth regarding, whatever might be their opinion of him, might seem to look like arrogance, or appear as if he looked upon them with contempt. In order to avoid this construction of his language, he here says that it was not because he despised them, or regarded their opinion as of less value than that of others, but that he had the same feelings in regard to all men. Whatever

might be their rank, character, talent, or learning, he regarded it as a matter of the least possible consequence what they thought of him. He was answerable not to them, but to his Master; and he could pursue an independent course, whatever they might think of his conduct. This is designed also evidently to reprove them for seeking so much the praise of each other. The Greek here is, "of man's *day*," where *day* is used, as it often is in Hebrew, to denote the day of trial; the day of judgment; and then simply judgment. Thus the word

HEBREW

—*day*— is used in Job 24:1 Ps 37:13; Joe 1:15 2:1.

Yea, I judge not mine own self. I do not attempt to pronounce a judgment on myself. I am conscious of imperfection, and of being biased by self-love in my own favour. I do not feel that my judgment of myself would be strictly impartial, and in all respects to be trusted. Favourable as may be my opinion, yet I am sensible that I may be biased. This is designed to soften what he had just said about their judging him, and to show further the little value which is to be put on the judgment which man may form. "If I do not regard my own opinion of myself as of high value, I cannot be suspected of undervaluing you when I say that I do not much regard your opinion; and if I do not estimate highly my own opinion of myself, then it is not to be expected that I should set a high value on the opinions of others." God only is the infallible Judge; and as we and our fellow-men are liable to be biased in our opinions, from envy, ignorance, or self-love, we should regard the judgment of the world as of little value.

{1} "judgment" "day"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *For I know nothing by myself*. There is evidently here an ellipsis to be supplied, and it is well supplied by Grotius, Rosenmuller, Calvin, etc.: "I am not conscious of *evil*, or *unfaithfulness* to myself; that is, in my ministerial life." It is well remarked by Calvin, that Paul does not here refer to the whole of his life, but only to his apostleship. And the sense is, "I am conscious of integrity in this office. My own mind does not condemn me of ambition or unfaithfulness. Others may accuse me, but I am not conscious of that which should condemn me, or render me unworthy of this office." This appeal Paul elsewhere makes to the integrity and faithfulness of his ministry. So his speech before the elders of Ephesus at Miletus, Ac 20:18,19,26,27; Compare 2Co 7:2; 2Co 12:17.

It was the appeal which a holy and faithful man could make to the integrity of his public life, and such as every minister of the gospel ought to be able to make.

Yet am I not hereby justified, I am not justified because I am not conscious of a failure in my duty, I know that God the Judge may see imperfections where I see none. I know that I may be deceived; and, therefore, I do not pronounce a judgment on myself as if it were infallible and final. It is not by the consciousness of integrity and faithfulness that I expect to be saved; and it does not follow that I claim to be free from all personal blame. I know that partiality to ourselves will often teach us to overlook many faults that others may discern in us.

He that judgeth me is the Lord. By his judgment I am to abide; and by his judgment I am to receive my eternal sentence, and not by my own view of myself. He searcheth the hearts. He may see evil where I see none. I would not, therefore, be self-confident; but would, with humility, refer the whole case to him. Perhaps there is here a gentle and tender reproof of the Corinthians, who were so confident in their own integrity; and a gentle admonition to them to be more cautious, as it was *possible* that the Lord would detect faults in them where they perceived none.

{+} "by myself" "For I am not conscious of any evil" {c} "by myself" Ps 143:2

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Therefore*. In view of the danger of being deceived in your judgment, and the impossibility of certainly knowing the failings of the heart.

Judge nothing. Pass no decided opinion. **See Barnes "Mt 7:1"**.

The apostle here takes occasion to inculcate on them an important lesson—one of the leading lessons of Christianity—not to pass a harsh opinion on the conduct of any man, since there are so many things that go to make up his character which we cannot know, and so many secret failings and motives which are all concealed from us.

Until the Lord come. The Lord Jesus at the day of judgment, when all secrets shall be revealed, and a true judgment shall, be passed on all men.

Who both will bring to light. **See Barnes "Ro 2:16"**.

The hidden things of darkness. The secret things of the heart which have been hidden, as it were, in darkness. The subsequent clause shows that this is the sense. He does not refer to the deeds of night, or those things which were wrought in the secret places of idolatry, but to the secret designs of the heart; and perhaps means gently to insinuate that there were many things about the character and feelings of his enemies which would not well bear the revelations of that day.

The counsels of the hearts. The purposes, designs, and intentions of men. All their plans shall be made known in that day. And it is a most fearful and alarming truth, that no man can conceal his purposes beyond the day of judgment.

And then shall every man have praise of God. The word here rendered *praise*, *epainov*, denotes in this place reward, or that which is due to him; the just sentence which ought to be pronounced on his character. It does not mean, as our translation would imply, that every man will then receive the Divine approbation-which will not be true; but that every man shall receive what is due to his character, whether good or evil. So Bloomfield and Bretschneider explain it. Hesychius explains it by *judgment*, *krisiv*. The word must be limited in its signification according to the subject or the connexion. The passage teaches,

(1.) that we should not be guilty of harsh judgment of others.

(2.) The reason is, that we cannot know their feelings and motives.

(3.) That all secret things will be brought forth in the great day, and nothing be concealed beyond that time.

(4.) That every man shall receive justice there. He shall be treated as he ought to be. The destiny of no one will be decided by the opinions of men; but the doom of all will be fixed by God. How

important is it, therefore, that we be prepared for that day; and how important to cherish such feelings, and form such plans, that they may be developed without involving us in shame and contempt!

{a} "judge nothing" Mt 7:1 {b} "who both" Ro 2:16 Re 20:12

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *And these things*. The things which I have written respecting religious teachers, 1Co 2:5,6, and the impropriety of forming sects called after their names.

I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos. The word here used, *meteschmatisa* denotes, properly, to put on another form or figure; *to change*, Php 3:21, "who shall *change* our vile body;" to *transform*, 2Co 11:13, "transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ;" and then to apply in the way of a figure of speech. This may mean that neither Paul, Apollos, nor Peter, were set up among the Corinthians as heads of parties; but that Paul here made use of their names to show how improper it would be to make them the head of a party, and hence how improper it was to make any religious teacher the head of a party; or Paul may mean to say that he had mentioned himself and Apollos *particularly*, to show the impropriety of what had been done; since, if it was improper to make them heads of parties, it was much more so to make inferior teachers the leaders of factions. Locke adopts the former interpretation. The latter is probably the true interpretation; for it is evident, from 1Co 1:12,13, that there were parties in the church at Corinth that were called by the names of Paul, and Apollos, and Peter; and Paul's design here was to show the impropriety of this by mentioning *himself, Apollos, and Peter*, and thus by transferring the whole discussion from *inferior* teachers and leaders to show the impropriety of it. He might have argued against the impropriety of following other leaders. He might have mentioned their names. But this would have been invidious and indelicate. It would have excited *their* anger. He therefore says that he had transferred it all to himself and Apollos; and it *implied* that if it were improper to split themselves up into factions with *them* as leaders, much more was it improper to follow others; i.e., it was improper to form parties at all in the church. "I mention this of *ourselves*; out of delicacy I forbear to mention the names of others." And this was one of the instances in which Paul showed great tact in accomplishing his object, and avoiding offence.

For your sakes. To spare your feelings; or to show you in an inoffensive manner what I mean. And particularly by this that you may learn not to place an inordinate value on men.

That ye might learn in us. Or *by* our example and views.

Not to think, etc. Since you see the plan which we desire to take; since you see that we who have the rank of apostles, and have been so eminently favoured with endowments and success, do not wish to form parties, that you may also have the same views in regard to others.

Above that which is written. Probably referring to what he had said in 1Co 3:5-9,21, 4:1.

Or it *may* refer to the general strain of Scripture, requiring the children of God to be modest and humble.

That no one of you be puffed up. That no one be proud or exalted in self-estimation above his neighbour. That no one be disposed to look upon others with contempt, and to seek to depress and

humble them. They should regard themselves as brethren, and as all on a level. The *argument* here is, that if Paul and Apollos did not suppose that *they* had a right to put themselves at the head of parties, *much less* had any of them a right to do so. The *doctrine* is,

(1.) that parties are improper in the church;

(2.) that Christians should regard themselves as on a level; and,

(3.) that no one Christian should regard others as beneath him, or as the object of contempt.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *For who maketh*, etc. This verse contains a *reason* for what Paul had just said; and the reason is, that all that any of them possessed had been derived from God, and no endowments whatever, which they had, could be laid as the foundation for self-congratulation and boasting. The apostle here doubtless has in his eye the teachers in the church of Corinth, and intends to show them that there was no occasion of pride or to assume pre-eminence. As all that they possessed had been given of God, it could not be the occasion of boasting or self-confidence.

To differ from another. Who has *separated* you from another; or who has made you superior to others. This may refer to everything in which one was superior to others, or distinguished from them. The apostle doubtless has reference to those attainments in piety, talents, or knowledge, by which one teacher was more eminent than others. But the same question may be applied to native endowments of mind; to opportunities of education; to the arrangements by which one rises in the world; to health; to property; to piety; to eminence and usefulness in the church. It is God who makes one, in any of these respects, to differ from others; and it is especially true in regard to personal piety. Had not *God* interfered and made a difference, all would have remained alike under sin. The race would have together rejected his mercy; and it is only by his distinguishing love that *any* are brought to believe and be saved.

And what hast thou. Either talent, piety, or learning.

That thou didst not receive? From God. By whatever means you have obtained it, it has been the gift of God.

Why dost thou glory, etc. Why dost thou boast as if it were the result of your own toil, skill, or endeavour. This is not designed to discourage human exertion; but to discourage a spirit of vainglory and boasting. A man who makes the most painful and faithful effort to obtain anything good, will, if successful, trace his success to God. He will still feel that it is God who gave him the disposition, the time, the strength, the success. And he will be *grateful* that he was enabled to make the effort; not vain, or proud, or boastful, because that he was successful. This passage states a general doctrine, that the reason why one man differs from another is to be traced to God; and that this fact should repress all boasting and glorying, and produce true humility in the minds of Christians. It may be observed, however, that it is as true of intellectual rank, of health, of wealth, of food, of raiment, of liberty, of peace, as it is of religion, that *all* come from God; and as this fact, which is so obvious and well known, does not repress the exertions of men to preserve their health and to obtain property, so it should not repress their exertions to obtain salvation. God governs the world on the same good principles everywhere; and the fact that he is the Source of all blessings should not operate to

discourage, but should prompt to human effort. The hope of his aid and blessing is the only ground of encouragement in any undertaking.

{1} "who maketh" "distinguisheth thee" {c} "what hast thou" Jas 1:17

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Now ye are full*. It is generally agreed that this is spoken in irony, and that it is an indignant sarcasm uttered against the false and self-confident teachers in Corinth. The design is to contrast them with the apostles; to show how self-confident and vain the false teachers were, and how laborious and self-denying the apostles were; and to show to them how little claim *they* had to authority in the church, and the *real* claim which the apostles had from their self-denials.and labours. The whole passage is an instance of most pungent and cutting sarcasm, and shows that there may be occasions when irony may be proper, though it should be rare. An instance of cutting irony occurs also in regard to the priests of Baal, in 1Ki 18:27. The word translated "ye are full," *kekoresmenoi* occurs only here, and in Ac 27:38, "And when they had eaten enough." It is usually applied to a feast, and denotes those who are satiated or satisfied. So here it means, "You think you have enough. You are satisfied with your conviction of your own knowledge, and do not feel your need of anything more.

Ye are rich. This is presenting the same idea in a different form. "You esteem yourselves to be rich in spiritual gifts and graces, so that you do not feel the necessity of any more."

Ye have reigned as kings. This is simply carrying forward the idea before stated; but in the form of a *climax*. The first metaphor is taken from person *filled with food*; the second from those who are so rich that they do not feel their want of more; the third from those who are raised to a *throne*, the highest elevation, where there was nothing further to be reached or desired. And the phrase means, that they had been fully satisfied with their condition and attainments, with their knowledge and power, that they lived like rich men and princes —revelling, as it were, on spiritual enjoyments, and disdaining all foreign influence, and instruction, and control.

Without us. Without our counsel and instruction. You have taken the whole management of matters on yourselves, without any regard to our advice or authority. You did not feel your need of our aid; and you did not regard our authority. You supposed you could get along as well without us as with us.

And I would to God ye did reign. Many interpreters have understood this as if Paul had really expressed a wish that their were literal princes, that they might afford protection to him in his persecution and troubles. Thus Grotius, Whitby, Locke, Rosenmuller, and Doddridge. But the more probable interpretation is, that Paul here drops the *irony*, and addresses them in a sober, earnest manner. It is the expression of a wish that they were as truly happy and blessed as they thought themselves to be. "I wish that you *were* so abundant in all spiritual improvements; I wish that you *had* made such advances that you could be represented as full, and as rich, and as princes, needing nothing, that when I came I might have nothing to do but to partake of your joy." So Calvin, Lightfoot, Bloomfield. It implies,

(1.) a *wish* that they were truly happy and blessed;

(2.) a doubt implied whether they *were* then so; and,

(3.) a desire on the part of Paul to *partake* of their real and true joy, instead of being compelled to come to them with the language of rebuke and admonition. See 1Co 4:19,21.

{a} "ye are rich" Re 3:17

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *For I think*. It seems to me. Grotius thinks that this is to be taken *ironically*, as if he had said, "It seems, then, that God has designed that we, the apostles, should be subject to contempt and suffering, and be made poor and persecuted, while you are admitted to high honours and privileges." But probably this is to be taken as a *serious* declaration of Paul, designed to show their actual condition and trials, while others were permitted to live in enjoyment. Whatever might be *their* condition, Paul says that the condition of himself and his fellow-labourers was one of much contempt and sufferings; and the inference seems to be, that they ought to doubt whether they were in a right state, or had any occasion for their self-congratulation, since they so little resembled those whom God had set forth.

Hath set forth. Has *showed* us; or placed us in public view.

The apostles last. Marg., Or, *the last apostles*, *touv apostolouv escatouv*. Grotius supposes that this means, in the lowest condition; the humblest state; a condition like that of beasts. So Tertullian renders it. And this interpretation is the correct one, if the passage be ironical. But Paul may mean to refer to the custom of bringing forth those in the amphitheatre, at the *conclusion* of the spectacles, who were to fight with other men, and who had no chance of escape. These inhuman games abounded everywhere; and an allusion to them would be well understood, and is indeed often made by Paul. Comp. 1Co 9:26 1Ti 6:12; 2Ti 4:7.

See Seneca, Epis. chap. vii. This interpretation receives support from the words which are used here, "God hath exhibited," "spectacle," or *theatre*, which are all applicable to such an exhibition. Calvin, Locke, and others, however, suppose that Paul refers to the fact that he was the *last* of the apostles; but this interpretation does not suit the connexion of the passage.

As it were. *wv*. Intimating the *certainty* of death.

Appointed to death, *epiyanatiouv*. Devoted to death. The word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It denotes the certainty of death; or the fact of being destined to death; and implies that such were their continued conflicts, trials, persecutions, that it was morally certain that they would terminate in their death, and only *when* they died, as the last gladiators on the stage were destined to contend until they should die. This is a very strong expression; and denotes the continuance, the constancy, and the intensity of their sufferings in the cause of Christ.

We are made a spectacle. Marg., *theatre*. *yeatron*. The theatre, or amphitheatre of the ancients, was composed of an *arena*, or level floor, on which the combatants fought, and which was surrounded by circular seats rising above one another to a great height, and capable of containing many thousand spectators. Paul represents himself as on this arena or stage, contending with foes, and destined to death. Around him and above him are an immense host of men and angels, looking on at the conflict, and awaiting the issue. He is not alone or unobserved. He is made public; and

the universe gazes on the struggle. Angels and men denote the universe, as gazing upon the conflicts and struggles of the apostles. It is a vain inquiry here, whether he means good or bad angels. The expression means that he was *public* in his trials, and that this was exhibited to the universe. The whole verse is designed to convey the idea that God had, for wise purposes, appointed them in the sight of the universe, to pains, and trials, and persecutions, and poverty, and want, which would terminate only in their death. See Heb 12:1, etc. What these trials were he specifies in the following verses.

{1} "apostles" "the last apostles" {*} "appointed" "devoted" {b} "we are" Heb 10:33 {2} "spectacle" "theatre"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *We are fools*. This is evidently ironical. "We are doubtless foolish men, but ye are wise in Christ. We, Paul, Apollos, and Barnabas [Cephas], have no claims to the character of wise men—we are to be regarded as fools, unworthy of confidence, and unfit to instruct; but you are full of wisdom."

For Christ's sake. *dia criston*. On account of Christ; or in reference to his cause, or in regard to the doctrines of the Christian religion.

But ye are wise in Christ. The phrase, "*in* Christ," does not differ in signification materially from the one above, "for Christ's sake." This is wholly ironical, and is exceedingly pungent. "You, Corinthians, boast of your wisdom and prudence. You are to be esteemed very wise. You are unwilling to submit to be esteemed fools. You are proud of your attainments. We, in the mean time, who are apostles, and who have founded your church, are to be regarded as fools, and as unworthy of public confidence and esteem. The whole design of irony is to show the folly of their boasted wisdom. That they only should be wise and prudent, and the apostles fools, was in the highest degree absurd; and this absurdity the apostle puts in a strong light by his irony.

We are weak. We are timid and feeble, but you are daring, bold, and fearless. This is irony. The very reverse was probably true. Paul was bold, daring, fearless in declaring the truth, whatever opposition it might encounter; and probably many of them were timid and time-serving, and endeavouring to avoid persecution, and to accommodate themselves to the prejudices and opinions of those who were wise in their own sight; the prejudices and opinions of the world.

Ye are honourable. Deserving of honour, and obtaining it. Still ironical. You are to be esteemed as worthy of praise.

We are despised. *atimoi*. Not only actually contemned, but worthy to be so. This was irony also. And the design was to show them how foolish was their self-confidence and self-flattery, and their attempt to exalt themselves.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Even unto this present hour*. Paul here drops the irony, and begins a serious recapitulation of his actual sufferings and trials. The phrase here used, "unto this present hour," denotes that these things had been incessant through all their ministry. They were not merely at the commencement of their work, but they had continued and attended them everywhere. And even then they were experiencing the same thing. These privations and trials were still continued, and were to be regarded as a part of the apostolic condition.

We both hunger and thirst. The apostles, like their Master, were poor; and, in travelling about from place to place, it often happened that they scarcely found entertainment of the plainest kind, or had money to purchase it. It is no dishonour to be poor, and especially if that poverty is produced by doing good to others. Paul might have been rich, but he chose to be poor for the sake of the gospel. To enjoy the luxury of doing good to others, we ought to be willing to be hungry and thirsty, and to be deprived of our ordinary enjoyments.

And are naked. In travelling, our clothes become old and worn out, and we have no friends to replace them, and no money to purchase new. It is no discredit to be clad in mean raiment, if that is produced by self-denying toils in behalf of others. There is no honour in gorgeous apparel; but there is real honour in voluntary poverty and want, when produced in the cause of benevolence. Paul was not ashamed to travel, to preach, and to appear before princes and kings, in a soiled and worn-out garment, for it was worn out in the service of his Master, and Divine Providence had arranged the circumstances of his life. But how many a minister now would be ashamed to appear in such clothing! How many professed Christians are ashamed to go to the house of God because they cannot dress well, or be in the fashion, or outshine their neighbours! If an apostle was willing to be meanly clad in delivering the message of God, then assuredly we should be willing to preach, or to worship him in such clothing as he provides. We may add here, what a sublime spectacle was here; and what a glorious triumph of the truth? Here was Paul with an impediment in his speech; with a personage small and mean rather than graceful, and in a mean and tattered dress, and often in chains, yet delivering truth before which kings trembled, and which produced everywhere a deep impression on the human mind. Such was the power of the gospel *then*! And such triumph did the truth then have over men. See Doddridge.

And are buffeted. Struck with the hand, **See Barnes "Mt 26:67"**.

Probably it is here used to denote harsh and injurious treatment in general. Comp. 2Co 12:7.

And have no certain dwelling-place. No fixed or permanent home. They wandered to distant lands; threw themselves on the hospitality of strangers, and even of the enemies of the gospel; when driven from one place they went to another; and thus they led a wandering, uncertain life, amidst strangers and foes. They who know what are the comforts of home; who are surrounded by beloved families; who have a peaceful and happy fireside; and who enjoy the blessings of domestic tranquillity, may be able to appreciate the trials to which the apostles were subjected. All this was for the sake of the gospel; all to purchase the blessings which we so richly enjoy.

{a} "naked" Ro 8:35 {*} "buffeted" "beaten"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *And labour*, etc. This Paul often did. **See Barnes "Ac 18:3"**.

Comp. Ac 20:34 1Th 2:9; 2Th 3:8.

Being reviled. That they were often reviled or reproached, their history everywhere shows. See the Acts of the Apostles. They were reviled or ridiculed by the Gentiles as Jews; and by all as Nazarenes, and as deluded followers of Jesus; as the victims of a foolish superstition and enthusiasm.

We bless. We return good for evil. In this they followed the explicit direction of the Saviour. **See Barnes "Mt 5:44"**.

The main idea in these passages is, that they, were reviled, were persecuted, etc. The other clauses, "we bless," "we suffer it," etc., seem to be thrown in *by the way* to show how they bore this ill-treatment. As if he had said, "We are reviled; and what is more, we bear it patiently, and return good for evil." At the same time that he was recounting his trials, he was, therefore, incidentally instructing them in the nature of the gospel, and showing how their sufferings were to be borne; and how to illustrate the excellency of the Christian doctrine.

Being persecuted. **See Barnes "Mt 5:11"**.

We suffer it. We sustain it; we do not revenge it; we *abstain* from resenting or resisting it.

{b} "labour" Ac 20:34 {c} "reviled" Mt 5:44 Ac 7:60 {+} "suffer" "bear"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Being defamed*. Greek, Blasphemed, i.e., spoken of and to, in a harsh, abusive, and reproachful manner. The original and proper meaning of the word is, to speak in a reproachful manner of any one, whether of God or man. It is usually applied to God, but it may also be used of men.

We entreat. Either God in their behalf, praying him to forgive them, or we entreat them to turn from their sins, and become converted to God. Probably the latter is the sense. They besought them to examine more candidly their claims, instead of reviling them; and to save their souls by embracing the gospel, instead of destroying them by rejecting it with contempt and scorn.

We are made. We became; we are so regarded or esteemed. The word here does not imply that there was any positive agency in making them such, but simply that they were in fact so regarded.

As the filth of the earth. It would not be possible to employ stronger expressions to denote the contempt and scorn with which they were everywhere regarded. The word *filth perikayarmata* occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It properly denotes filth, or that which is collected by sweeping a house; or that which is collected and cast away by purifying or cleansing anything: hence any vile, worthless, and contemptible object. Among the Greeks, the word was used to denote the victims which were offered to *expiate crimes*; and particularly men of ignoble rank, and of a worthless and wicked character, who were kept to be offered to the gods in a time of pestilence, to appease their anger, and to *purify* the nation. (Bretschneider and Schleusner.) Hence it was applied by them to men of the most vile, abject, and worthless character. But it is not certain that Paul had

any reference to that sense of the word. The whole force of the expression may be met by the supposition that he uses it in the sense of that filth or dirt which is collected by the process of cleansing or scouring anything, as being vile, contemptible, worthless. So the apostles were regarded. And by the use of the word *world* here, he meant to say that they were regarded as the most vile and worthless men which the *whole world* could furnish; not only the refuse of Judea, but of all the nations of the earth. As if he had said, "More vile and worthless men could not be found on the face of the earth."

And are *the off-scouring of all things*. This word *periqhma* occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It does not differ materially from the word rendered *filth*. It denotes that which is rubbed off by scouring or cleaning anything; and hence anything vile or worthless; or a vile and worthless man. This term was also applied to vile and worthless men who were sacrificed or thrown into the sea as an expiatory offering, as it were, to purify the people. Suidas remarks, that they said to such a man, "Be then our *periqhma*," our redemption, and then flung him into the sea as a sacrifice to Neptune. See Whitby, Calvin, Doddridge.

Unto this day. Continually. We have been constantly so regarded. See 1Co 4:11.

{++} "entreat" "exhort" {&} "earth" "As the vilest of the world" {d} "off-scouring" La 3:45

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *To shame you*. It is not my design to put you to shame by showing you how little you suffer in comparison with us. This is not our design, though it may have this effect. I have no wish to make you ashamed, to appear to triumph over you, or merely to taunt you. My design is higher and nobler than this.

But as my beloved sons. As my dear children. I speak as a father to his children, and I say these things for your good. No father would desire to make his children ashamed. In his counsels, entreaties, and admonitions, he would have a higher object than that.

I warn you. I do not say these things in a harsh manner, with a severe spirit of rebuke; but in order to *admonish you*, to suggest counsel, to instil wisdom into the mind. I say these things not to make you blush, but with the hope that they may be the means of your reformation, and of a more holy life. No man, no minister, ought to reprove another merely to overwhelm him with shame, but the object should always be to make a brother better; and the admonition should be so administered as to have this end, not sourly or morosely, but in a kind, tender, and affectionate manner.

{|} "sons" "children" {e} "I warn you" 1Th 2:11

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *For though ye have ten thousand instructors*. Though you may have, or though you should have. It matters not how many you have, yet it is still true that I only sustain the relation to you of spiritual father; and whatever respect it is proper for you to have toward them, yet there is a peculiar right which I have to admonish you, and a peculiar deference which is due to me, from my early labours among you, and from the fact that you are my spiritual children.

Instructors. Greek, Pedagogues; or those who conducted children to school, and who superintended their conduct out of school-hours. Hence those who had the care of children, or teachers in general. It is then applied to instructors of any kind.

In Christ. In the Christian system or doctrine. The authority which Paul claims here, is that which a father has in preference to such an instructor.

Not many fathers. Spiritual fathers. That is, you have but one. You are to remember that however many teachers you have, yet that I alone am your spiritual father.

In Christ Jesus. By the aid and authority of Christ. I have begotten you by preaching his gospel and by his assistance.

I have begotten you. I was the instrument of your conversion.

Through the gospel. By means of the gospel; by preaching it to you; that is, by the truth.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Wherefore*. Since I am your spiritual father.

Be ye followers of me. Imitate me; copy my example; listen to my admonitions. Probably Paul had particularly in his eye their tendency, to form parties; and here admonishes them that *he* had no disposition to form sects, and entreats them in this to imitate his example. A minister should always so live as that he can, without pride or ostentation, point to his own example; and entreat his people to imitate him. He should have such a confidence in his own integrity; he should lead such a blameless life; and he *should be assured that his people have so much evidence of his integrity*, that he can point them to his own example, and entreat them to live like himself. And to do this, he should live a life of piety, and should furnish such evidence of a pure conversation, that his people may have reason to regard him as a holy man.

{*} "followers" "imitators"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *For this cause*. In order to remind you of my doctrines and my manner Of life. Since I am hindered from coming myself, I have sent a fellow-labourer as my messenger, well acquainted with my views and feelings, that he might do what I would do if I were present.

Have I sent unto you Timotheus. Timothy, the companion and fellow-labourer of Paul. This was probably when Paul was at Ephesus. He sent Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia, probably

with instructions to go to Corinth if convenient. Yet it was not quite certain that Timothy would come to them; for, in 1Co 16:10, he expresses a doubt whether he would. Paul was probably deeply engaged in Asia, and did not think it proper then for him to leave his field of labour. He probably supposed also, that Timothy, as his ambassador, would be able to settle the difficulties in Corinth as well as if he were himself present.

My beloved son. In the gospel. See Ac 16:1-3 1Ti 1:2. He supposed, therefore, that they would listen to him with great respect.

And faithful in the Lord. A true Christian and a faithful servant of Christ; and who is, therefore, worthy of your confidence.

Of my ways. My doctrine, my teaching, my mode of life.

Which be in Christ. That is, my Christian life; my ministry; or my conduct as a Christian and a follower of the Saviour.

As I teach every where, etc. This was designed probably to show them that he taught them no new or peculiar doctrines; he wished them simply to conform to the common rules of the churches, and to be like their Christian brethren everywhere. The Christian church is founded everywhere on the same doctrines; is bound to obey the same laws; and is fitted to produce and cherish the same sprat. The same spirit that was required in Ephesus or Antioch, was required at Corinth; the same spirit that was required at Corinth, at Ephesus, or at Antioch, is required now.

{+} "Timotheus" "Timothy" {++} "remembrance" "Who will remind you"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Now some are puffed up*. They are puffed up with vain confidence; they say that I would not dare to come; that I would be afraid to appear among them, to administer discipline, to rebuke them, or to supersede their authority, Probably he had been detained by the demand on his services in other places, and by various providential hinderances from going there, until they supposed that he stayed away from fear. And possibly he might apprehend that they would think he had sent Timothy because he was afraid to come himself. Their conduct was an instance of the haughtiness and arrogance which men will assume when they suppose they are in no danger of reproof or punishment.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *But I will come*. It is from no fear of them that I am kept away; and to convince them of this I will come to them speedily.

If the Lord will. If the Lord permit; if by his providence he allows me to go. Paul regarded the entering on a journey as dependent on the will of God; and felt that God had all in his hand. No

purpose should be formed without a reference to his will; no plan without feeling that he can easily frustrate it, and disappoint us. See Jas 4:15.

And will know. I will examine; I will put to the test; I will fully understand.

Not the speech, etc. Not their vain and empty boasting; not their confident assertions, and their self-complacent views.

But the power. Their real power. I will put their power to the proof; I will see whether they are able to effect what they affirm; whether they have more real power than I have. I will enter fully into the work of discipline, and will ascertain whether they have such authority in the church, such a power of party and of combination, that they can resist me, and oppose my administration of the discipline which the church needs. "A passage," says Bloomfield, "which cannot, in nerve and rigour, or dignity and composed confidence, be easily paralleled, even in Demosthenes himself."

{a} "if the Lord" Jas 4:15 {&} "will" "permit" {b} "but the power" Ga 2:6

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *For the kingdom of God*. The reign of God in the church, **See Barnes "Mt 3:2"**; meaning here, probably, the power or authority which was to be exercised in the government and discipline of the church. Or it may refer to the manner in which the church had been established. "It has not been set up by empty boasting; by pompous pretensions; by confident assertions. Such empty boasts would do little in the great work of founding, governing, and preserving the church; and unless men have some higher powers than this, they are not qualified to be religious teachers and guides."

But in power.

(1.) In the miraculous power by which the church was established—the power of the Saviour and of the apostles in working miracles.

(2.) In the power of the Holy Ghost in the gift of tongues, and in his influence on the heart in converting men. **See Barnes "1Co 1:18"**.

(3.) In the continual power which is needful to protect, defend, and govern the church. Unless teachers showed that they had *such* power, they were not qualified for their office.

{c} "kingdom of God" Ro 14:17 {|} "word" "speech"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *What will ye*. It depends on yourselves how I shall come. If you lay aside your contentions and strifes; if you administer discipline as you should; if you give yourselves heartily and entirely to the work of the Lord, I shall come, not to reprove or to punish, but as a father and a friend. But if you do not heed my exhortations, or the labours of Timothy; if you still, continue your contentions, and do not remove the occasions of offence, I shall come with severity and the language of rebuke.

With a rod. To correct and punish.

In the spirit of meekness. Comforting and commending, instead of chastising. Paul intimates that this depended on themselves. They had the power, and it was their duty to administer discipline; but if they would not do it, the task would devolve on him as the founder and father of the church, and as entrusted with power by the Lord Jesus, to, administer the severity of Christian discipline, or to punish those who offended by bodily suffering. See 1Co 5:6 11:30. See also the case of Ananias and Sapphira, Ac 5:1, etc., and of Elymas the sorcerer, Ac 13:10,11.

{*} "ye" "imitators" {d} "shall I come" 2Co 13:10

REMARKS ON 1st Corinthians Chapter 4

(1.) We should endeavour to form a proper estimate of the Christian ministry, 1Co 4:1. We should regard ministers as the servants of Jesus Christ, and honour them for their Master's sake; and esteem them also in proportion to their fidelity. They are entitled to respect as the ambassadors of the Son of God; but that respect also should be in proportion to their resemblance of him, and their faithfulness in their work. They who love the ministers of Christ, who are like him, and who are faithful, love the Master that sent them; they who hate and despise them, despise him. See Mt 10:40-42.

(2.) Ministers should be faithful, 1Co 4:2. They are the stewards of Christ. They are appointed by him. They are responsible to him. They have a most important trust—more important than any other stewards; and they should live in such a manner as to receive the approbation of their Master.

(3.) It is of little consequence what the world thinks of us, 1Co 4:3. A good name is on many accounts desirable; but it should not be the leading consideration; nor should we do anything merely to obtain it. Desirable as is a fair reputation, yet the opinion of the world is not to be too highly valued; for,

1st, it often misjudges;

2nd, it is prejudiced for or against us;

3rd, it is not to decide our final destiny;

4th, to desire that simply is a selfish and base passion.

(4.) The esteem even of *friends* is not to be the leading object of life, 1Co 4:2. This is valuable, but not so valuable as the approbation of God. Friends are partial; and even where they do not approve our course, if we are conscientious, we should be willing to bear with their disapprobation. A good conscience is everything. The approbation even of friends cannot help us in the day of judgment.

(5.) We should distrust ourselves, 1Co 4:3,4. We should not pronounce too confidently on our motives or our conduct. We may be deceived. There may be much even in our own motives that may elude our most careful inquiry, This should teach us humility, and self-distrust, and charity. Knowing our *own* liableness to misjudge ourselves, we should look with kindness on the faults and feelings of others.

(6.) We see here the nature of the future judgment, 1Co 4:5.

1st. The hidden things of darkness will be brought out—all the secret crimes, and plans, and purposes of men, will be developed. All that has been done in secret, in darkness, in the night, in palaces and in prisons, will be developed. What a development will take place in the great day

when the secret crimes of a world shall be revealed; and when all that has now escaped the notice of men, and the punishment of courts, shall be brought out!

2nd. Every man's secret thoughts shall be revealed. There will be no concealment then. All that we have devised or desired; all the thoughts that we have forgotten, shall there be brought out to noonday. How will the sinner tremble when all his thoughts are made known! Suppose, unknown to him, some person had been writing down all that a man has *thought* for a day, a week, or a year, and should begin to *read* it to him. Who is there that would not hang his head with shame, and tremble at such a record? Yet at the day of judgment the thoughts of *the whole life* will be revealed.

3rd. Every man shall be judged as he *ought* to be. God is impartial. The man that *ought* to be saved, will be; the man that *ought not*, will not be. How solemn will be the *impartial trial of the world*! Who can think of it but with alarm!

(7.) We have no occasion for pride or vain-boasting, 1Co 4:7. All that we have of beauty, health, wealth, honour, grace, has been given to us by God. For what he has given us we should be grateful; but it should not excite pride. It is indeed valuable, *because* God gives it; and we should remember his mercies, but we should-not boast. We have nothing to boast of. Had we our deserts, we should be driven away in his wrath, and made wretched. That any are out of hell is matter of thankfulness; that one possesses more than another, proves that God is a sovereign, and not that we are more worthy than another, or that there is by nature any ground of preference which one has over another.

(8.) Irony and sarcasm are sometimes lawful and proper, 1Co 4:8-10. But it is not often as safe as it was in the hands of the apostle Paul. Few men can regulate the talent properly; few should allow themselves to indulge in it. It is *rarely* employed in the Bible; and it is rarely employed elsewhere where it does not do injury. The cause of truth can be usually sustained by sound argument; and that which cannot be thus defended is not worth defence. Deep wounds are often made by the severity of wit and irony; and an indulgence in this usually prevents a man from having a single friend.

(9.) We see from this chapter what religion has cost, 1Co 4:9-13. Paul states the sufferings that he and the other apostles endured in order to establish it. They were despised, and persecuted, and poor, and regarded as the refuse of the world. The Christian religion was founded on the blood of its Author, and has been reared amidst the sighs and tears of its friends. All its early advocates were subjected to persecution and trial; and to engage in this work involved the certainty of being a martyr. We enjoy not a blessing which has not thus been purchased; and which has not come to us through the self-denials and toils of the best men that the earth has known. Persecution raged around all the early friends of the church; and it rose and spread while the fire of martyrdom spread, and while its friends were everywhere cast out as evil, and called to bleed in its defence.

(10.) We have here an illustrious instance of the manner in which reproach, and contempt, and scorn should be borne, 1Co 4:12,13. The apostles imitated the example of their Master, and followed his precepts. They prayed for their enemies, persecutors, and slanderers. There is nothing but religion that can produce this spirit; and this can do it always. The Saviour evinced it; his apostles evinced it; and all *should* evince it, who profess to be its friends. We may remark:

1st. This is not produced by nature. It is the work of grace alone.

2nd. It is the very spirit and genius of Christianity to produce it.

3rd. Nothing but religion will enable a man to bear it, and will produce this temper and spirit.

4th. We have an instance here of what all Christians should evince. All should be in this like the apostles. All should be like the Saviour himself.

(11.) We have an argument here for the truth of the Christian religion. The argument is founded on the fact that the apostles were willing to suffer so much in order to establish it. They professed to have been eye-witnesses of what they affirmed. They had nothing to gain by spreading it, if it was not true. They exposed themselves to persecution on this account, and became willing to die rather than deny its truth. Take, for example, the case of the apostle Paul.

1st. He had every prospect of honour and of wealth in his own country. He had been liberally educated, and had the confidence of his countrymen. He might have risen to the highest station of trust or influence. He had talents which would have raised him to distinction anywhere.

2nd. He could not have been mistaken in regard to the events connected with his conversion, Ac 9. The scene, the voice, the light, the blindness, were all things which could not have been counterfeited. They were open and public. They did not occur "in a corner."

3rd. He had no earthly motive to change his course. Christianity was despised when he embraced it; its friends were few and poor; and it had no prospect of spreading through the world. It conferred no wealth; bestowed no diadem; imparted no honours; gave no ease; conducted to no friendship of the great and the mighty. It subjected its friends to persecution, and tears, and trials, and death. What should induce such a man to make such a change? Why should Paul have embraced this, but from a conviction of its truth? How could he be convinced of that truth except by some argument that should be *so strong* as to overcome his hatred to it, make him willing to renounce all his prospects for it—to encounter all that the world could heap upon him, and even death itself, rather than deny it? But such a religion had a higher than any earthly origin, and must have been from God.

(12.) We may expect to suffer reproach. It has been the common lot of all, from the time of the Master himself to the present. Jesus was reproached; the apostles were reproached; the martyrs were reproached; and we are not to be surprised that ministers and Christians are called to like trials now. It is enough "for the disciple that he be as his Master, and the servant as his Lord."

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 5

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 1

Introduction to 1st Corinthians Chapter 5

CHAPTER V

This chapter is entirely occupied with a notice of an offence which existed in the church at Corinth, and with a statement of the measures which the apostle expected them to pursue in regard to it. Of the existence of this offence he had been informed, probably by "those of the house of Chloe," 1Co 1:11, and there is reason to suppose that they had not even alluded to it in the letter which they had sent to him asking advice. See 1Co 7:1. Comp. the Introduction. The apostle 1Co

5:1 reproves them for tolerating a species of licentiousness which was not tolerated even by the heathens; he reproves them 1Co 5:2 for being puffed up with pride even while this scandal existed in their church; he ordered them forthwith to purify the church by removing the incestuous person, 1Co 5:4,5 and exhorted them to preserve themselves from the influence which a single corrupt person might have, operating like leaven in a mass 1Co 5:6,7. Then, lest they should mistake his meaning, and suppose that by commanding them not to keep company with licentious persons, 1Co 5:9, he meant to say, that they should withdraw from all intercourse with the heathen, who were known to be idolaters and corrupt, he says that that former command was not designed to forbid *all* intercourse with them, 1Co 5:9-12); but that he meant his injunction now to extend particularly to such as as were professed members of the church; that they were not to cut off all intercourse with society at large because it was corrupt; that if any man professed to be a Christian and yet was guilty of such practices, they were to disown him, 1Co 5:11; that it was not his province, nor did he assume it, to judge the heathen world which was *without* the church, 1Co 5:12; but that this was entirely consistent with the view that eh had a right to exercise discipline *within* the church, on such as professed to be Christians; and that therefore they were bound to put away that wicked person.

Verse 1. *It is reported*. Greek, It is heard. There is a rumour. That rumour had been brought to Paul, probably by the members of the family of Chloe, 1Co 1:11.

Commonly. *olwv*. Everywhere. It is a matter of common fame. It is so public that it cannot be concealed; and so certain that it cannot be denied. This was an offence, he informs us, which even the heathen would not justify or tolerate; and, therefore, the report had spread not only in the churches, but even among the heathen, to the great scandal of religion. When a report obtains such a circulation, it is certainly time to investigate it, and to correct the evil.

That there is *fornication*. **See Barnes "Ac 15:20"**.

The word is here used to denote incest; for the apostle immediately explains the nature of the offence.

And such fornication, etc. An offence that is not tolerated or known among the heathen. This greatly aggravated the offence, that in a Christian church a crime should be tolerated among its members which even gross heathens would regard with abhorrence. That this offence was regarded with abhorrence by even the heathens has been abundantly proved by quotations from classic writers. See Weststein, Bloomfield, and Whitby. Cicero says of the offence, expressly, that "it was an incredible and unheard-of crime." Pro Cluen. 6, 6. When Paul says that it was not "so much as named among the Gentiles," he doubtless uses the word *onomazetai* in the sense of *named with approbation, tolerated, or allowed*. The crime was known in a few instances, but chiefly of those who were princes and rulers; but it was nowhere regarded with approbation, but was always treated as abominable wickedness. All that the connexion requires us to understand by the word "named" here is, that it was not tolerated or allowed; it was treated with abhorrence, and it was therefore more scandalous that it was allowed in a Christian church. Whitby supposes that this offence that was tolerated in the church at Corinth gave rise to the scandals that were circulated among the heathen respecting the early Christians, that they allowed of licentious intercourse among the members of their churches. This reproach was circulated extensively among the heathen, and the primitive Christians were at much pains to refute it.

That one should have. Probably as his wife; or it may mean simply that he had criminal intercourse with her. Perhaps some man had parted with his wife, on some account, and his Son

had married her, or maintained her for criminal intercourse. It is evident from 2Co 7:12, that the person who had suffered the wrong, as well as he who had done it, was still alive. Whether this was marriage or concubinage has been disputed by commentators, and it is not possible, perhaps, to determine. See the subject discussed in Bloomfield.

{*} "fornication" "impurity" {a} "one should" De 27:20

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And ye are puffed up*. **See Barnes "1Co 4:18"**.

You are filled with pride, and with a vain conceit of your own wisdom and purity, notwithstanding the existence of this enormous wickedness in your church. This does not mean that they were puffed up, or proud *on account* of the existence of this wickedness, but they were filled with pride notwithstanding, or in spite of it. They ought to have been a troubled people. They *should* have mourned; and should have given their first attention to the removal of the evil. But instead of this, they had given indulgence to proud feeling, and had become elated with a vain confidence in their spiritual purity. Men are always elated and proud when they have the least occasion for it.

And have not rather mourned, etc. Have not rather been so afflicted and troubled as to take the proper means for removing the offence. The word *mourn* here is taken in that large sense. Ye have not been *so much* afflicted—so troubled with the existence of this wickedness, as to take the proper measures to remove the offender. Acts of discipline in the church should always commence with *mourning* that there is occasion for it. It should not be *anger*, or pride, or revenge, or party feeling, which prompt to it. It should be deep *grief* that there is occasion for it; and tender compassion for the offender.

Might be taken away. By excommunication. He should not, while he continues in this state, be allowed to remain in your communion.

{b} "mourned" 2Co 7:7

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *For I verily*. But I, whatever it may cost me; however you may esteem my interference; and whatever personal ill-will may be the result towards me, have adjudged this case to be so flagrant as to demand the exercise of discipline; and since the church to whom it belongs have neglected it, I use the authority of an apostle, and of a spiritual father, in directing it to take place. This was not a formal sentence of excommunication; but it was the declared opinion of an apostle that such a sentence *should* be passed, and an *injunction* on the church to exercise this act of discipline.

As absent in body. Since I am not personally present with you, I express my opinion in this manner. I am absent in body from you, and cannot, therefore, take those steps in regard to it which I could were I present.

But present in spirit. My heart is with you; my feelings are with you; I have a deep and tender interest in the case; and I judge *as if* I were personally present. Many suppose that Paul by this refers to a power which was given to the apostles, though at a distance, to discern the real circumstances of a case by the gift of the Spirit. Comp. Col 2:5 2Ki 5:26, 6:12.

(Whitby, Doddridge, etc.) But the phrase does not demand this interpretation. Paul meant, probably, that though he was absent, yet his mind and attention had been given to this subject; he felt as deeply as though he were present, and would act in the same way. He had, in some way, been fully apprized of all the circumstances of the case, and he felt it to be his duty to express his views on the subject.

Have judged already. Margin, *Determined, kekrika*. I have made up my mind; have decided, and do decide. That is, he had determined what *ought* to be done in the case. It was a case in which the course which ought to be pursued was plain, and on this point his mind was settled. What that course should be, he states immediately.

As though I were present. As though I had a personal knowledge of the whole affair, and were with you to advise. We may be certain that Paul had the fullest information as to this case; and that the circumstances were well known. Indeed, it was a case about *the facts* of which there could be no doubt. They were everywhere known, 1Co 5:1, and there was no need, therefore, to attempt to establish them by formal proof.

{+} "verily" "truly" {1} "judged" "determined"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *In the name*, etc. By the authority; or in the behalf; or acting by his commission or power, 2Co 2:10. **See Barnes "Ac 3:6"**.

This does not refer to Paul alone in declaring his opinion, but means that they were to be assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus, and that they were to proceed to exercise discipline by his authority. The idea is, that the authority to administer discipline is derived from the Lord Jesus Christ, and is to be exercised in his name, and to promote his honour.

When ye are gathered together. Or, "You being assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus." This is to be connected with the previous words, and means,

(1.) that they were to be assembled for the purpose of administering discipline; and

(2.) that this was to be done in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus.

And my spirit. 1Co 5:3. As if I were with you; that is, with my declared opinion; knowing what I would advise, were I one of you; or, I being *virtually* present with you by having delivered my opinion. It cannot mean that Paul's soul would be really present with them; but that, knowing his views and feelings, and what he would do, and knowing his love for them, they could act as if he were there. This passage proves that discipline belongs to the church itself; and so deep was Paul's conviction of this, that even *he* would not administer it without their concurrence and action. And

if Paul would not do it, and in a case, too, where bodily pains were to be inflicted by miraculous agency, assuredly no other ministers have a right to assume the authority to administer discipline without the action and the concurrence of the church itself.

With the power, etc. This phrase is to be connected with the following verse. "I have determined what ought to be done. The sentence which I have passed is this: You are to be assembled in the name and authority of Christ. I shall be virtually present. And you are to deliver such a one to Satan, *by the power of our Lord Jesus Christ*." That is, it is to be done by you; and the *miraculous* power which will be evinced in the case will proceed from the Lord Jesus. The word *power dunamei* is used commonly in the New Testament to denote some miraculous and extraordinary power; and here evidently means that the Lord Jesus would put forth such a power in the infliction of pain, and for the preservation of the purity of his church.

{d} "name of" 2Co 2:9,10 {e} "power" Mt 16:19 Joh 20:23

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *To deliver*. This is the sentence which is to be executed. You are to deliver him to Satan, etc.

Unto Satan. Beza, and the Latin Fathers, suppose that this is only an expression of excommunication. They say, that in the Scriptures there are but two kingdoms recognised—the kingdom of God, or the church, and the kingdom of the world, which is regarded as under the control of Satan; and that to exclude a man from one, is to subject him to the dominion of the other. There is some foundation for this opinion; and there can be no doubt that *excommunication* is here intended; and that, *by* excommunication, the offender was in some sense placed under the control of Satan. It is further evident, that it is here supposed that by being thus placed under him the offender would be subject to corporal inflictions by the agency of Satan, which are here called the "destruction of the flesh." Satan is elsewhere referred to as the author of bodily diseases. Thus in the case of Job, Job 2:7. A similar instance is mentioned in 1Ti 1:20, where Paul says he had delivered Hymeneus and Alexander "to Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme." It may be observed here, that though this was to be done by the concurrence of the church, as having a right to administer discipline, yet it was directed by apostolic authority; and there is no evidence that this was the usual form of excommunication, nor ought it now to be used. There was evidently *miraculous* power evinced in this case, and that power has long since ceased in the church.

For the destruction of the flesh. We may observe here,

(1.) that this does not mean that the man was *to die* under the infliction of the censure, for the object was to recover him; and it is evident that, whatever he suffered as the consequence of this, he survived it, and Paul again instructed the Corinthians to admit him to their fellowship, 2Co 2:7.

(2.) It was designed to punish him for licentiousness of life—-often called in the Scriptures one of the sins or works of the flesh, Ga 5:19 and the design was, that the punishment should follow *in the line of the offence*, or be a just retribution, as punishment often does. Many have supposed that, by the "destruction of the flesh," Paul meant only the destruction of his fleshly appetites or carnal affections; and that he supposed that this would be effected by the act of excommunication. But it

is very evident from the Scriptures that the apostles were imbued with the power of inflicting diseases or bodily calamities for crimes. See Ac 13:11 1Co 11:30. What this bodily malady was, we have no means of knowing. It is evident that it was not of very long duration, since when the apostle exhorts them 2Co 2:7 again to receive him, there is no mention made of his suffering then under it. This was an extraordinary and miraculous power. It was designed for the government of the church in its infancy, when everything was fitted to show the direct agency of God; and it ceased, doubtless, with the apostles. The church now has no such power. It cannot now work miracles; and all its discipline now is to be *moral* discipline, designed not to inflict bodily pain and penalties, but to work a moral reformation in the offender.

That the spirit may be saved. That his soul might be saved; that he might be corrected, humbled, and reformed by these sufferings, and recalled to the paths of piety and virtue. This expresses the true design of the discipline of the church; and it ought *never* to be inflicted but with a direct intention to benefit the offender, and to save the soul. Even when he is cut off and disowned, the design should not be vengeance, or punishment merely, but it should be to recover him and save him from ruin.

In the day of the Lord Jesus. The day of judgment, when the Lord Jesus shall come, and shall collect his people to himself.

{a} "deliver such a one" 1Ti 1:20 {b} "the spirit" 1Co 11:32

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Your glorying*. Your boasting; or confidence in your present condition as if you were eminent in purity and piety.

Is not good. Is not well, proper, right. Boasting is never good; but it is especially wrong when, as here, there is an existing evil, that is likely to corrupt the whole church. When men are disposed to boast, they should at once make the inquiry whether there is not some sin indulged in, on account of which they should be humbled and subdued. If all individual Christians, and all Christian churches, and all men of every rank and condition, would look at things as they are, they would never find occasion for boasting. It is only when we are blind to the realities of the case, and overlook our faults, that we are disposed to boast. The reason why this was improper in Corinth, Paul states—that any sin would tend to corrupt the whole church, and that therefore they ought not to boast until that was removed.

A little leaven, etc. A small quantity of leaven or yeast will pervade the entire mass of flour, or dough, and diffuse itself through it all. This is evidently a proverbial saying. It occurs also in Ga 5:9. Comp. **See Barnes "Mt 13:33"**.

A similar figure occurs also in the Greek classic writers. By *leaven* the Hebrews metaphorically understood whatever had the power of corrupting, whether doctrine, or example, or anything else. **See Barnes "Mt 16:6"**.

The sense here is plain. A single sin indulged in, or allowed in the church, would act like leaven—it would pervade and corrupt the whole church, unless it was removed. On this ground, and for this reason, discipline should be administered, and the corrupt member should be removed.

{c} "glorying" Jas 4:16 {d} "leaveneth" Lu 13:21

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Purge out therefore*, etc. Put away; free yourselves from.

The old leaven. The apostle here takes occasion, from the mention of leaven, to exhort the Corinthians to put away vice and sin. The figure is derived from the custom of the Jews in putting away leaven at the celebration of the passover. By the old leaven he means vice and sin; and also here the person who had committed the sin in their church. As the Jews, at the celebration of the passover, gave all diligence in removing leaven from their houses—searching every part of their dwellings with candles, that they might remove every particle of leavened bread from their habitations—so the apostle exhorts them to use all diligence to search out and remove all sin.

That ye may be a new lump. That you may be like a new mass of flour, or dough, before the leaven is put into it. That you may be pure and free from the corrupting principle.

As ye are unleavened. That is, as ye are bound by your Christian profession to be unleavened, or to be pure. Your very *profession* implies this, and you ought, therefore, to remove all impurity, and to become holy. Let there be no impurity, and no mixture inconsistent with that holiness which the gospel teaches and requires. The apostle here does not refer merely to the case of the incestuous person, but he takes occasion to exhort them to put away *all* sin. Not only to remove this occasion of offence, but to remove all impurity, that they might become entirely and only holy. The doctrine is, that Christians are by their profession holy, and that therefore they ought to give all diligence to remove everything that is impure.

For even Christ, etc. As the Jews, when their paschal lamb was slain, gave great diligence to put away all leaven from their dwellings, so we Christians, since our passover is slain, ought to give the like diligence to remove all that is impure and corrupting from our hearts. There can be no doubt here that the paschal lamb was a type of the Messiah; and as little that the leaven was understood to be emblematic of impurity and sin, and that their being required to put it away was intended to be an emblematic action designed to denote that all sin was to be removed and forsaken.

Our passover. Our *paschal lamb*, for so the word *pasca* usually signifies. The sense is, "We Christians have a paschal lamb; and that lamb is the Messiah. And as the Jews, when their paschal lamb was slain, were required to put away all leaven from their dwellings, so we, when our paschal lamb is slain, should put away all sin from our hearts and from our churches." This passage proves that Paul meant to teach that Christ had *taken the place* of the paschal lamb—that that lamb was designed to adumbrate or typify him—and that consequently when *he* was offered, the paschal offering was designed to cease. Christ is often in the Scriptures compared to a *lamb*. See Isa 53:7 Joh 1:29; 1Pe 1:19 Re 5:6,12.

Is sacrificed for us. Margin, Or *slain—etuyh*. The word *yuw* may mean simply to slay or kill; but it is also used often in the sense of making a sacrifice as an expiation for sin, Ac 14:13,18; 1Co 10:20.

Comp. Ge 31:54 46:1; Ex 3:18 5:3,8,17; Ex 8:8,25-29 13:15 20:24, where it is used as the translation of the word

HEBREW, to sacrifice. It is used as the translation of this word no less than ninety-eight times in the Old Testament, and perhaps always in the sense of a *sacrifice*, or bloody offering. It is also used as the translation of the Hebrew word

HEBREW, and

HEBREW, to slay, to kill, etc., in Ex 12:21 1Ki 11:19; 2Ch 29:22, etc.; in all, in eleven places in the Old Testament. It is used in a similar sense in the New Testament, in Mt 22:4 Lu 15:23,27,30 Joh 10:10 Ac 10:13, 11:7.

It occurs nowhere else in the New Testament than in the places which have been specified. The true sense of the word here is, therefore, to be found in the doctrine respecting the passover. That that was intended to be a sacrifice for sin is proved by the nature of the offering, and by the account which is everywhere given of it in the Old Testament. The paschal lamb was slain as a sacrifice. It was slain in the temple; its blood was poured out as an offering; it was sprinkled and offered by the priests in the same way as other sacrifices. See Ex 23:18 34:25; 2Ch 30:15,16.

And if so, then this passage means that Christ was offered *as a sacrifice for sin*—in accordance with the numerous passages of the New Testament, which speak of his death in this manner, **See Barnes "Ro 3:25"**; and that his offering was designed to take the place of the paschal sacrifice, under the ancient economy.

For us. For us who are Christians. He died in our stead; and as the Jews, when celebrating their paschal feast, put away all leaven, so we, as Christians, should put away all evil from our hearts, since that sacrifice has now been made once for all.

{*} "Purge" "Cleanse" {e} "Christ" Isa 53:7 1Pe 1:19; Re 5:6,12

{1} "sacrificed" "slain"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Let us keep the feast*. Margin, *Holy day—eortazwmen*. This is language drawn from the paschal feast, and is used by Paul frequently to carry out and apply his illustration. It does not mean literally the paschal supper here—for that had ceased to be observed by Christians—nor the Lord's Supper particularly; but the sense is, "As the Jews when they celebrated the paschal supper, on the slaying and sacrifice of the paschal lamb, put away all leaven as emblematic of sin, so let us, in the slaying of our sacrifice, and in all the duties, institutions, and events consequent thereon, put away all wickedness from our hearts as individuals, and from our societies and churches. Let us engage in the service of God by putting away all evil."

Not with old leaven. Not under the influence, or in the indulgence of the feelings of corrupt and unrenewed human nature. The word leaven is very expressive of that former or *old* condition, and denotes the corrupt and corrupting passions of our nature before it is renewed.

The leaven of malice. Of unkindness and evil—which would diffuse itself, and invade the mass of Christians. The word *malice—kakiv*—denotes *evil* in general,

And wickedness. Sin; evil. There is a *particular* reference here to the case of the incestuous person. Paul means that all wickedness should be put away from those who had been saved by the sacrifice of their passover, Christ; and, therefore, this sin in a special manner.

But with the unleavened bread, etc. That is, with sincerity and truth. Let us be sincere, and true, and faithful; as the Jews partook of bread unleavened, which was emblematic of purity, so let us be sincere and true. It is implied here that this could not be done unless they would put away the incestuous person. No Christians can have or give evidence of sincerity, who are not willing to put away all sin.

{1} "feast" "holyday" {a} "feast" Ex 13:6 {b} "leaven of malice" Mt 16:6,12

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *I wrote unto you*. I have written. *egraqa*. This word may either refer to this epistle, or to some former epistle. It simply denotes that he had written to them; but whether in the former part of this, or in some former epistle which is now lost, cannot be determined by the use of this word.

In an epistle, *en th epistolh*. There has been considerable diversity of opinion in regard to this expression. A large number of commentators—as Chrysostom, Theodoret, Oecumenius, most of the Latin commentators, and nearly all the Dutch commentators—suppose that this refers to the same epistle, and that the apostle means to say that in the former part of this epistle 1Co 5:2 he had given them this direction. And in support of this interpretation they say that *th*, here, is used for *tauth*, and appeal to the kindred passages in Ro 16:2; Col 4:6 1Th 5:27; 2Th 3:3,4.

Many others—as Grotius, Doddridge, Rosenmuller, etc.—suppose it to refer to some other epistle which is now lost, and which had been sent to them before their messengers had reached him. This epistle might have been very brief, and might have contained little more than this direction. That this is the correct opinion, may appear from the following considerations, viz.:

(1.) It is the *natural and obvious* interpretation —one that would strike the great mass of men. It is just such an expression as Paul *would* have used on the supposition that he had written a previous epistle.

(2.) It is the very expression which he uses in 2Co 7:8, where he is referring to this epistle as one which he had sent to them.

(3.) It is not true that Paul had in any former part of this epistle given this direction. He had commanded them to remove an incestuous person, and such a command might seem to imply that they ought not to keep company with such a person; but it was not a general command *not* to have intercourse with them.

(4.) It is altogether probable that Paul would write more letters than we have preserved. We have but fourteen of his remaining. Yet he laboured many years; founded many churches; and had frequent occasion to write to them.

(5.) We know that a number of books have been lost which were either inspired or which were regarded as of authority by inspired men. Thus the books of Jasher, of Iddo the seer, etc., are referred to in the Old Testament; and there is no improbability that similar instances may have occurred in regard to the writers of the New Testament.

(6.) In 1Co 5:11, he expressly makes a distinction between the epistle which he was then writing and the former one. "But now," i.e., in this epistle, "I have written *egraqa* to you," etc., an expression

which he would not use if 1Co 5:9 referred to the same epistle. These considerations seem to me to be unanswerable, and to prove that Paul had sent another epistle to them in which he had given this direction.

(7.) This opinion accords with that of a very large number of commentators. As an instance, Calvin says, "The epistle of which he here speaks is not now extant. Nor is it to be doubted that many others have perished; but it is sufficient that these survive to us which the Lord saw to be needful." If it be objected that this may affect the doctrine of the inspiration of the New Testament, since it is not to be supposed that God would suffer the writings of inspired men to be lost, we may reply,

(a.) that there is no evidence that these writings were inspired. Paul often makes a distinction in regard to his own words and doctrines, as inspired or uninspired, see 1Co 7; and the same thing may have occurred in his writings.

(b.) This does not affect the inspiration of the books which remain, even on the supposition that those which were lost were inspired. It does not prove that these are not from God. If a man loses a guinea, it does not prove that those which he has not lost are counterfeit or worthless.

(c.) If inspired, they may have answered the purpose which was designed by their inspirations and then have been suffered to be lost—as all inspired books will be destroyed at the end of the world.

(d.) It is to be remembered that a large part of the *discourses* of the inspired apostles, and even the Saviour himself, Joh 21:25, have been lost. And why should it be deemed any more wonderful that inspired books should be lost, than inspired oral teaching? Why more wonderful that a brief letter of Paul should be destroyed, than that numerous discourses of Him "who spake as never man spake" should be lost to the world?

(e.) We should be thankful for the books that remain, and we may be assured that all the truth that is needful for our salvation has been preserved, and is in our hands. That any inspired books have been preserved amidst the efforts which have been made to destroy them all, is more a matter of wonder than that a few have been lost; and should rather lead us to gratitude that we have them, than to grief that a few, probably relating to local and comparatively unimportant matters, have been destroyed.

Not to company, etc. Not to associate with. See Eph 5:11; 2Th 3:14. This, it seems, was a general direction on the subject. It referred to *all* who had this character. But the direction which he now 1Co 5:11 proceeds to give, relates to a different matter —the proper degree of intercourse with those who were in the church.

{c} "epistle" Eph 5:11 {*} "fornicators" "The impure"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Yet not altogether*, etc. In my direction not "to company" with them, I did not mean that you should refuse *all* kinds of intercourse with them; that you should not treat them with civility, or be engaged with them in any of the transactions of life, or in the ordinary intercourse of society between man and man, for this would be impossible; but that you should not so associate with them

as to be esteemed to belong to them, or so as to be corrupted by their example. You are not to make them companions and friends.

With the fornicators. Most heathen were of this description, and particularly at Corinth. See the Introduction to this epistle.

Of this world. Of those who are out of the church; or who are not professed Christians.

Or with the covetous. The avaricious; those greedy of gain. Probably his direction in the former epistle had been that they should avoid them.

Or extortioners. Rapacious persons; greedy of gain, and oppressing the poor, the needy, and the fatherless, to obtain money.

Or with idolaters. All the Corinthians before the gospel was preached there worshipped idols.

Then must ye needs, etc. It would be necessary to leave the world. The world is full of such persons. You meet them everywhere. You cannot avoid them in the ordinary transactions of life, unless you either destroy yourselves, or withdraw wholly from society. This passage shows,

(1.) that that society was *full* of the licentious and the covetous, of idolaters and extortioners. **See Barnes "Ro 1:1"**.

(2.) That it is not right either to take our own lives to avoid them, or to withdraw from society and become monks; and, therefore, that the whole monastic system is contrary to Christianity. And,

(3.) that it is needful we should have some intercourse with the men of the world; and to have dealings with them as neighbours, and as members of the community. *How far* we are to have intercourse with them is not settled here. The general principles may be,

(1.) that it is only so far as is necessary for the purposes of good society, or to show kindness to them as neighbours and as members of the community.

(2.) We are to deal *justly* with them in all our transactions.

(3.) We may be connected with them in regard to the things which *we have in common*—as public improvements, the business of education, etc.

(4.) We are to *endeavour* to do them good, and for that purpose we are not to shun their society. But,

(5.) we are not to make them our companions; or to associate with them in their wickedness, or as idolaters, or covetous, or licentious; we are not to be known as partakers with them in these things. And for the same reason we are not to associate with the gay in their gaiety; with the proud in their pride; with the fashionable in their regard to fashion; with the friends of the theatre, the ball-room, or the splendid party, in their attachment to these amusements. In all these things we are to be separate; and are to be connected with them only in those things which we may have *in common* with them, and which are not inconsistent with the holy rules of the Christian religion.

(6.) We are not so to associate with them as to be corrupted by their example; or so as to be led by that example to neglect prayer and the sanctuary, and the deeds of charity, and the effort to do good to the souls of men. We are to make it a great point that our *piety* is not to suffer by that intercourse; and we are never to do anything, or conform to any custom, or to have any such intercourse with them as to *lessen* our growth in grace; divert our attention from the humble duties of religion; or mar our Christian enjoyment.

{*} "fornicators" "The impure" {+} "extortioners" "Oppressors"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *But now*. In this epistle. This shows that he had written a former letter.

I have written unto you. Above. I have *designed* to give this injunction that you are to be entirely separated from one who is a professor of religion, and who is guilty of these things.

Not to keep company. To be wholly separated and withdrawn from such a person. Not to associate with him in any manner.

If any man that is called a brother. Any professing Christian; any member of the church.

Be a fornicator, etc. Like him who is mentioned, 1Co 5:1.

Or an idolater. This must mean those persons who while they professed Christianity still attended the idol feasts, and worshipped there. Perhaps a few such may have been found who had adopted the Christian profession hypocritically.

Or a railer. A reproachful man; a man of coarse, harsh, and bitter words; a man whose characteristic it was to abuse others; to vilify their character, and wound their feelings. It is needless to say how much this is contrary to the spirit of Christianity, and to the example of the Master, "who when he was reviled, reviled not again."

Or a drunkard. Perhaps there might have been some then in the church, as there are now, who were addicted to this vice. It has been the source of incalculable evils to the church; and the apostle, therefore, solemnly enjoins on Christians to have no fellowship with a man who is intemperate.

With such an one no not to eat. To have no intercourse or fellowship with him of any kind; not to do anything that would seem to acknowledge him as a brother; with such an one not even to eat at the same table. A similar course is enjoined by John, 2Jo 1:10,11. This refers to the intercourse of common life, and not particularly to the communion. The true Christian was wholly to disown such a person, and not to do anything that would seem to imply that he regarded him as a Christian brother. It will be seen here that the rule was much more strict in regard to one who professed to be a Christian than to those who were known and acknowledged heathens. The reasons may have been:

(1.) The necessity of keeping the church pure, and of not doing anything that would seem to imply that Christians were the patrons and friends of the intemperate and the wicked.

(2.) In respect to the heathen, there could be no danger of its being supposed that Christians regarded them as brethren, or showed to them any more than the ordinary civilities of life; but in regard to those who professed to be Christians, but who were drunkards, or licentious, if a man was on terms of intimacy with them, it would seem as if he acknowledged them as brethren, and recognised them as Christians.

(3.) This entire separation and withdrawing from *all* communion was necessary in these times to save the church from scandal, and from the injurious reports which were circulated. The heathen accused Christians of all manner of crime and abominations. These reports were greatly injurious to the church. But it was evident that currency and plausibility would be given to them if it was known that Christians were on terms of intimacy and good fellowship with heathens and intemperate persons. Hence it became necessary to withdraw *wholly* from them; to withhold even the ordinary courtesies of life; and to draw a line of total and entire separation. Whether this rule in its utmost strictness is demanded now, since the nature of Christianity is known, and since religion cannot be in so much danger from such reports, may be made a question. I am inclined to the opinion that

the ordinary civilities of life may be shown to such persons; though certainly nothing that would seem to *recognise* them as Christians. But as neighbours and relatives; as those who may be in distress and want, we are assuredly not for bidden to show towards them the offices of kindness and compassion. Whitby and some others, however, understand this of the communion of the Lord's Supper, and of that only.

{a} "if any man" Ro 16:17 2Jo 1:10 {*} "fornicator" "impure" {+} "railer" "reviler" {+} "extortioner" "Oppressor"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *For what have I to do*, etc. I have no authority over them; and can exercise no jurisdiction over them. All my rules, therefore, must have reference only to those who are within the church.

To judge. To pass sentence upon; to condemn; or to punish. As a Christian apostle, I have no jurisdiction over them.

Them also that are without. Without the pale of the Christian church; heathens; men of the world; those who did not profess to be Christians.

Do not ye judge, etc. Is not your jurisdiction as Christians confined to those who are *within* the church, and professed members of it? *Ought* you not to exercise discipline there, and inflict punishment on its unworthy members? Do you not in fact thus exercise discipline, and separate from your society unworthy persons— and ought it not to be done in this instance, and in reference to the offender in your church?

{b} "without" Mr 4:11

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *But them*, etc. They who are unconnected with the church are under the direct and peculiar government of God. They are, indeed sinners, and they deserve punishment for their crimes. But it is not ours to pronounce sentence upon them, or to inflict punishment. God will do that. Our province is in regard to the church. We are to judge these; and these alone. All others we are to leave entirely in the hands of God.

Therefore. Greek, *And—kai*. "Since it is yours to judge the members of your own society, do you exercise discipline on the offender, and put him away."

Put away from among yourselves. Excommunicate him; expel him from your society. This is the utmost power which the church has; and this the church is bound to exercise on all those who have openly offended against the laws of Jesus Christ.

{c} "away from" Mt 18:17

REMARKS

(1.) A public rumour with regard to the existence of an offence in the church should lead to discipline. This is due to the church itself, that it may be pure and uninjured; to the cause, that religion may not suffer by the offence; and to the individual, that he may have justice done him, and his character vindicated if he is unjustly accused; or that if guilty he may be reclaimed and reformed. Offences should not be *allowed* to grow until they become scandalous; but when they *do*, every consideration demands that the matter should be investigated, 1Co 5:1.

(2.) Men are often filled with pride when they have least occasion for it, 1Co 5:2. This is the case with individuals—who are often elated when their hearts are full of sin—when they are indulging in iniquity; and it is true of churches also, that they are most proud when the reins of discipline are relaxed, and their members are cold in the service of God, or when they are even living so as to bring scandal and disgrace on the gospel.

(3.) We see in what way the Christian church should proceed in administering discipline, 1Co 5:2. It should not be with harshness, bitterness, revenge, or persecution. It should be with *mourning* that there is necessity for it; with tenderness toward the offender; with *deep grief* that the cause of religion has been injured; and with *such grief* at the existence of the offence as to lead them to prompt and decided measures to remove it.

(4.) The exercise of discipline belongs to the church itself, 1Co 5:4. The church at Corinth was to be assembled with reference to this offence, and was to remove the offender. Even Paul, an apostle, and the spiritual father of the church, did not claim the authority to remove an offender except *through* the church. The church was to take up the case; to act on it; to pass the sentence; to excommunicate the man. There could scarcely be a stronger proof that the power of discipline is in the church, and is not to be exercised by any independent individual, or body of men, foreign to the church, or claiming an: independent right of discipline. If *Paul* would not presume to exercise such discipline independently of the church, assuredly no. minister, and no body of ministers, have any such right now. Either by themselves in a collective congregational capacity, or through their representatives in a body of elders, or in a committee appointed by them; every church is *itself* to originate and execute all the acts of Christian discipline over its members.

(5.) We see the *object* of Christian discipline, 1Co 5:5. It is not revenge, hatred, malice, or the mere exercise of power that is to lead to it; it is *the good of the individual* that is to be pursued and sought. While the church endeavours to remain pure, its aim and object should be mainly to correct and reform the offender, that his spirit may be saved. When discipline is undertaken from any other motive than this; when it is pursued from private pique, or rivalship, or ambition, or the love of power; when it seeks to overthrow the influence or standing of another, it is wrong. The salvation of the offender and the glory of God should prompt to all the measures which should be taken in the case.

(6.) We see the danger of indulging in *any* sin—both in reference to ourselves as individuals, or to the church, 1Co 5:6. The smallest sin indulged in will spread pollution through the whole body, as a little leaven will affect the largest mass.

(7.) Christians should be pure, 1Co 5:7,8. Their Saviour, their paschal lamb, was pure; and he died that they might be pure. He gave himself that his people might be holy; and by all the purity of his character—by all the labours and self-denials of his life—by all his sufferings and groans in our behalf, are we called on to be holy.

(8.) We are here presented with directions in regard to our intercourse with those who are not members of the church, 1Co 5:10. There is nothing that is more difficult to be understood than the duty of Christians respecting such intercourse. Christians often feel that they are in danger from it, and are disposed to withdraw almost entirely from the world. And they ask with deep solicitude often, what course they are to pursue? Where shall the line be drawn? How far shall they go? And where shall they deem the intercourse with the world unlawful or dangerous? A few remarks here as rules may aid us in answering these questions: 1st. Christians are not *wholly* to withdraw from intercourse with the people of this world. This was the error of the monastic system, and this error has been the occasion of innumerable corruptions and abominations in the papal church. They are not to do this, because

(a.) it is impossible. They must needs then, says Paul, go out of the world.

(b.) Because religion is not to be regarded as dissocial, and gloomy, and unkind.

(c.) Because they have many interests in common with those who are unconnected with the church, and they are not to abandon them. The interests of justice, and liberty, and science, and morals, and public improvements, and education, are all interests in which they share in common with others.

(d) Many of their best friends—a father, a mother, a son, a daughter—may be out of the church, and religion does not *sever* those ties, but binds them more tenderly and closely.

(e) Christians are inevitably connected in commercial dealings with those who are not members of the church; and to cease to have any connexion with them would be to destroy their own business, and to throw themselves out of employment, and to break up society.

(f) It would prevent the possibility of doing much good either to the bodies or the souls of men. The poor, the needy, and the afflicted, are, many of them, out of the church; and they have a claim on the friends of Christ, and on their active beneficence.

(g) It would break up and destroy the church altogether. Its numbers are to be increased and replenished from age to age by the efforts of Christians; and this demands that Christians should have *some* intercourse with the men of the world, whom they hope to benefit.

(h) An effort to withdraw wholly from the world injures religion. It conveys the impression that religion is morose, severe, misanthropic; and all *such* impressions do immense injury to the cause of God and truth.

2nd. The *principles* on which Christians should regulate their intercourse with the world, are these:

(a) They are not to be conformed to the world; they are not to do anything that shall countenance the views, feelings, principles of the world *as such*, or as distinguished from religion. They are not to do anything that would show that they *approve* of the peculiar fashions, amusements, opinions of the people of the world; or to leave the impression that *they* belong to the world.

(b) They are to do justice and righteousness to every man, whatever may be his rank, character, or views. They are not to do anything that will be calculated to give an unfavourable view of the religion which they profess to the men of the world.

(c) They are to discharge with fidelity all the duties of a father, husband, son, brother, friend, benefactor, or recipient of favours, towards those who are out of the church, or with whom they may be connected.

(d) They are to do good to all men—to the poor, the afflicted, the needy, the widow, the fatherless.

(e) They are to endeavour so to live and act, so to converse, and so to form their plans, as to promote the salvation of all others. They are to seek their spiritual welfare; and to endeavour by example and by conversation, by exhortation and by all the means in their power, to bring them to the knowledge of Christ. For this purpose they are kept on the earth instead of being removed to heaven; and to this object they should devote their lives.

(9.) We see from this chapter who are *not* to be regarded as Christians, whatever may be their professions, 1Co 5:11. A man who is

(1) a fornicator, or

(2) COVETOUS, or

(3) an idolater, or

(4) a *railer*, or

(5) a drunkard, or

(6) an *extortioner*, is not to be owned as a Christian brother.

Paul has placed the covetous man, and the railer, and extortioners, in most undesirable company. They are ranked with fornicators and drunkards. And yet how many such persons there are in the Christian church—and many, too, who would regard it as a special insult to be ranked with a drunkard or an adulterer. But in the eye of God both are alike unfit for his kingdom, and are to be regarded as having no claims to the character of Christians.

(10.) God will judge the world, 1Co 5:12,13. The world that is *without* the church—the mass of men that make no profession of piety—must give an account to God. They are travelling to his bar; and judgment in regard to them is taken into God's own hands, and he will pronounce their doom. It is a solemn thing *to be judged* by a holy God; and they who have no evidence that they are Christians should tremble at the prospect of being soon arraigned at his bar.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 6

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 1

1st Corinthians CHAPTER 6

The main design of this chapter is to reprove the Corinthians for the practice of going to law before heathen courts or magistrates, instead of settling their differences among themselves. It seems that after their conversion they were still in the habit of carrying their causes before heathen tribunals, and this the apostle regarded as contrary to the genius and spirit of the Christian religion, and as tending to expose religion to contempt in the eyes of the men of the world. He, therefore, 1Co 6:1-7, reproves this practice, and shows them that their differences should be settled among themselves. It seems also that the spirit of litigation and of covetousness had led them in some instances to practise fraud and oppression of each other; and he therefore takes occasion 1Co 6:8-11 to show that this was wholly inconsistent with the hope of heaven and the nature of Christianity.

It would seem, also, that some at Corinth had not only indulged in these and kindred vices, but had actually defended them. This was done by plausible, but sophistical arguments, drawn from the strong passions of men; from the fact that the body was made for eating and drinking, etc. To these arguments the apostle replies in the close of the chapter, 1Co 6:12-20, and especially considers the sin of fornication, to which they were particularly exposed in Corinth, and shows the heinousness of it, and its entire repugnance to the pure gospel of Christ.

Verse 1. *Dare any of you*. The *reasons* why the apostle introduced this subject here may have been,

(1.) that he had mentioned the subject of judging, 1Co 5:13, and that naturally suggested the topic which is here introduced; and

(2.) this might have been a prevailing evil in the church of Corinth, and demanded correction. The word *dare* here implies that it was inconsistent with religion, and improper. "*Can* you do it; is it proper or right; or do you presume so far to violate all the principles of Christianity as to do it?"

Having a matter. A subject of litigation; or a suit. There may be differences between men in regard to property and right, in which there shall be no blame on either side. They may both be desirous of having it equitably and amicably adjusted. It is not a *difference* between men that is in itself wrong, but it is the spirit with which the difference is adhered to, and the unwillingness to have justice done, that is so often wrong.

Against another. Another member of the church. A Christian brother. The apostle here directs his reproof against the plaintiff, as having the choice of the tribunal before which he would bring the cause.

Before the unjust. The heathen tribunals; for the word *unjust* here evidently stands opposed to the saints. The apostle does not mean that they were always unjust in their decisions, or that equity could in no case be hoped from them, but that they were classed in that division of the world which was different from the saints, and is synonymous with unbelievers, as opposed to believers.

And not before the saints. Before Christians. Can you not settle your differences among yourselves as Christians, by leaving the cause to your brethren, as arbitrators, instead of going before heathen magistrates? The Jews would not allow any of their causes to be brought before the Gentile courts. Their rule was this: "He that tries a cause before the judges of the Gentiles, and before their tribunals, although their judgments are as the judgments of the Israelites, so this is an ungodly man," etc. Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrim, chap. xxvi. § 7. They even looked no such an action as bad as profaning the name of God.

{*} "unjust" "unrighteous"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Do ye not know*, etc. The object of this verse is evidently to show that Christians were qualified to determine controversies which might arise among themselves. This the apostle shows by reminding them that they shall be engaged in determining matters of much more moment than those which could arise among the members of a church on earth; and that if qualified for that, they

must be regarded as qualified to express a judgment on the questions which might arise among their brethren in the churches.

The saints. Christians, for the word is evidently used in the same sense as in 1Co 6:1. The apostle says that they knew this, or that this was so well established a doctrine that none could doubt it, It was to be admitted on all hands.

Shall judge the world. A great variety of interpretations has been given to this passage. Grotius supposes it means that they shall be first judged by Christ, and then act as assessors to him in the judgment, or join with him in condemning the wicked; and he appeals to Mt 19:28; Lu 22:30, where Christ says that they which have followed him should "sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." **See Barnes "Mt 19:28"**.

Whitby supposes that it means that Christians are to judge or condemn the world by their example, or that there shall be Christian magistrates, according to the prophecy of Isaiah, Isa 49:23, and Daniel, Da 7:18. Rosenmuller supposes it means that Christians are to judge the errors and sins of men pertaining to religion, as in 1Co 2:13,16; and that they ought to be able, therefore, to judge the smaller matters pertaining to this life. Bloomfield, and the Greek Fathers, and commentators, suppose that this means, that the saints will furnish matter to *condemn* the world; that is, by their lives and example they shall be the occasion of the greater condemnation of the world. But to this there are obvious objections.

(1.) It is an unusual meaning of the word *judge*.

(2.) It does not meet the case before us. The apostle is evidently saying that Christians will occupy so high and important a station in the work of judging the world, that they ought to be regarded as qualified to exercise judgment on the things pertaining to this life; but the fact that their holy lives shall be the occasion of the deeper condemnation of the world, does not seem to furnish any plain reason for this. To the opinion also of Whitby, Lightfoot, Vitringa, etc., that it refers to the fact that Christians would be magistrates, and governors, etc., according to the predictions of Isaiah and Daniel, there are obvious objections.

(1.) The judgment to which Paul in this verse refers is different from that pertaining to things of this life, 1Co 6:3; but the judgment which Christian magistrates would exercise, as such, would relate to them.

(2.) It is not easy to see in this interpretation how, or in what Sense, the saints shall judge the angels, 1Co 6:3. The common interpretation, that of Grotius, Beza, Calvin, Doddridge, etc., is that it refers to the future judgment, and that Christians will in that day be employed in some manner in judging the world. That this is the true interpretation is apparent, for the following reasons.

(1.) It is the *obvious* interpretation—that which will strike the great mass of men, and is likely, therefore, to be the true one.

(2.) It accords with the account in Mt 19:28, and Lu 22:30,

(3.) It is the only one which gives a fair interpretation to the declaration that the saints should judge angels, in 1Co 6:3. If asked *in what way* this is to be done, it may be answered, that it may be meant simply that Christians shall be exalted to the right hand of the Judge, and shall encompass his throne; that they shall assent to and approve of his judgment; that they shall be elevated to a post of honour and favour, AS IF they were associated with him in the judgment. They shall then be regarded as his friends, and express their approbation, and that *with a deep sense of its justice*, of the condemnation of the wicked. Perhaps the idea is, not that they shall *pronounce* sentence, which will be done by the Lord Jesus, but that they shall then be qualified to see the justice of the

condemnation which shall be passed on the wicked; they shall have a clear and distinct view of the case; they shall even see the propriety of their everlasting punishment, and shall not only approve it, but be qualified to enter into the subject, and to pronounce upon it intelligently. And the argument of the apostle is, that if they would be qualified to pronounce on the eternal doom of men and angels; if they had such views of justice and right, and such integrity as to form an opinion and express it in regard to the everlasting destiny of an immense host of immortal beings, assuredly they ought to be qualified to express their sense of the smaller transactions in this life, and pronounce an opinion between man and man.

Are ye unworthy. Are you disqualified.

The smallest matters. Matters of least consequence—matters of little moment, scarcely worth naming, compared with the great and important realities of eternity. The "smallest matters" here mean the causes, suits, and litigations relating to property, etc.

{a} "saints shall judge" Da 7:22 Mt 19:28; Jude 1:14,15; Re 20:4

{*} "matters" "causes"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Shall judge angels*. All the angels that shall be judged, good or bad. Probably the reference is to fallen angels, as there is no account that holy angels will then undergo a trial, The sense is, "Christians will be qualified to see the justice of even the sentence which is pronounced on fallen angels. They will be able so to embrace and comprehend the nature of law, and the interests of justice, as to see the propriety of their condemnation. And if they can so far enter into these important and eternal relations, assuredly they ought to be regarded as qualified to discern the nature of justice among men, and to settle the unimportant differences which may arise in the church." Or, perhaps, this may mean that the saints shall in the future world be raised to a rank m some respects more elevated than even the angels in heaven. (Prof. Stuart.) In what respects they will be thus elevated, if this is the true interpretation, can be only a matter of conjecture. It may be supposed that it will be because they have been favoured by being interested in the plan of salvation—a plan that has done so much to honour God; and that *to have been* thus saved by the *immediate* and *painful* intervention of the Son of God, will be a higher honour than all the privileges which beings can enjoy who are innocent themselves.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Ye have judgments*. Causes; controversies; suits.

Things pertaining to this life. Property, etc.

Set them to judge, etc. The verb translated *set—kayizete* may be either in the imperative mood, as in our translation, and then it will imply a command; or it may be regarded as in the indicative,

and to be rendered interrogatively, "Do ye set or appoint them to judge who are of little repute for their wisdom and equity?" i.e., heathen magistrates. The latter is probably the correct rendering, as according to the former no good reason can be given why Paul should command them to select as judges those who had little repute for wisdom in the church. Had he designed this as a command, he would doubtless have directed them to choose their most aged, wise, and experienced men, instead of those "least esteemed." It is manifest, therefore, that this is to be read as a question'. "Since you are abundantly qualified yourselves to settle your own differences, do you employ the heathen magistrates, in whom the church can have little confidence for their integrity and justice? It is designed, therefore, as a severe reproof for what they had been accustomed to do; and an implied injunction that they should do it no more.

Who are least esteemed: *exouyenhmenouv*. Who are *contemned*, or regarded as of no value or worth; in whose judgment and integrity you can have little or no confidence. According to the interpretation given above of the previous part of the verse, this refers to the heathen magistrates into men in whose virtue, piety, and qualifications for just judgment Christians could have little confidence; and whose judgment *must* be regarded as in fact of very little value, and as very little likely to be correct. That the heathen magistrates were in general very corrupt there can be no doubt. Many of them were men of abandoned character, of dissipated lives, men who were easily bribed, and men, therefore, in whose judgment Christians could repose little confidence. Paul reproves the Corinthians for going before them with their disputes when they could better settle them themselves. Others, however, who regard this whole passage as an *instruction* to Christians to appoint those to determine their controversies who were least esteemed, suppose that this refers to the *lowest orders* of judges among the Hebrews; to those who were least esteemed, or who were almost despised; and that Paul directs them to select *even* them in preference to the heathen magistrates. See Lightfoot. But the objection to this is obvious and insuperable. Paul would not have recommended this class of men to decide their causes, but would have recommended the selection of the most wise and virtuous among them. This is proved by 1Co 6:5, where, in directing them to settle their matters among themselves, he asks whether there is not a "wise man" among them, clearly proving that he wished their difficulties adjusted, not by the most obscure and the least respected members of the church, but by the most wise and intelligent members.

In the church. By the church. That is, the heathen magistrates evince such a character as not to be worthy of the confidence of the church in settling matters of controversy.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *I speak to your shame*. I declare that which is a reproach to you, that your matters of dispute are carried before heathen tribunals.

Is it so, etc. Can it be that in the Christian church—the church collected in refined and enlightened Corinth—there is not a single member so wise, intelligent, and prudent, that his brethren may have confidence in him, and refer their causes to him? Can this be the case in a church that boasts so much of its wisdom, and that prides itself so muck in the number and qualifications of its intelligent members?

{*} "judge" "Decide"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *But brother*, etc. One Christian goes to law with another. This is designed as a reproof. This was wrong,

(1.) because they ought rather to take wrong and suffer themselves to be injured, 1Co 6:7;

(2.) because they might have chosen some persons to settle the matter by arbitration, without a formal trial; and,

(3.) because the civil constitution would have allowed them to have settled all their differences without a lawsuit. Josephus says that the Romans (who were now masters of Corinth) permitted the Jews in foreign countries to decide private affairs, where nothing capital was in question, among themselves. And Dr. Lardner observes, that the Christians might have availed themselves of this permission to have settled their disputes in the same manner. Credibility, vol. i. p. 165.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *There is utterly a fault*. There is altogether a fault; or, you are entirely wrong in this thing.

Because ye go to law, etc. That is, in the sense under discussion, or before heathen magistrates. This was the point under discussion, and the interpretation should be limited to this. Whatever may be the propriety or impropriety of going to law before Christian magistrates, yet the point which the apostle refers to was that of going to law before heathens. The passage, therefore, should not be interpreted as referring to *all* litigation, but only of that which was the subject of discussion. The apostle says that that was wholly wrong; that they ought by no means to go with their causes against their fellow Christians before heathen magistrates; that whoever had the right side of the question, and whatever might be the decision, *the thing itself* was unchristian and wrong; and that rather than dishonour religion by a trial or suit of this kind, they ought to be willing to *take* wrong, and to suffer any personal and private injustice. The argument is, that greater evil would be done to the cause of Christ by the fact of Christians appearing before a heathen tribunal with their disputes, than could result to either party from the injury done by the other. And this is probably always the case; so that although the apostle refers here to heathen tribunals, the same reasoning, on the principle, would apply to Christians carrying their causes into the courts at all.

Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do you not suffer yourself to be injured, rather than to dishonour the cause of religion by your litigations? They should do this,

(1.) because religion requires its friends to be willing to suffer wrong patiently, Pr 22:22 Mt 5:39,40 Ro 12:17,19 1Th 5:15.

(2.) Because great injury results to the cause of religion from such trials. The private wrong which an individual would suffer, in perhaps all cases, would be a less evil on the whole than the *public* injury which is done to the cause of piety by the litigations and strifes of Christian brethren before a civil court.

(3.) The differences among Christians could be adjusted among themselves, by a reference to their brethren. In ninety-nine cases of a hundred, the decision would be more likely to be just and satisfactory to all parties from an amicable reference, than from the decisions of a civil court. In *the very few cases* where it would be otherwise, it would be better for the individual to suffer, than for the cause of religion to suffer. Christians ought to love the cause of their Master more than their own individual interest. They ought to be more afraid that the cause of Jesus Christ would be injured than that they should be a few pounds poorer from the conduct of others, or than that they should individually suffer in their character from the injustice of others.

To be defrauded? Receive injury; or suffer a loss of property. Grotius thinks that the word "take wrong" refers to personal insult; and the word "defrauded" refers to injury in property. Together, they are probably designed to refer to all kinds of injury and injustice. And the apostle means to say, that they had better submit to any kind of injustice than carry the cause against a Christian brother before a heathen tribunal. The doctrine here taught is, that Christians ought by no means to go to law with each other before a heathen tribunal; that they ought to be willing to suffer any injury from a Christian brother rather than do it. And by *implication* the same thing is taught in regard to the duty of all Christians, *that they ought to suffer any injury to their persons and property rather than dishonour religion by litigations before civil magistrates*. It may be asked, then, whether lawsuits are never proper; or whether courts of justice are never to be resorted to by Christians to secure their rights? To this question we may reply, that the discussion of Paul relates only to Christians, when both parties are Christians, and that it is designed to prohibit such an appeal to courts by them. If *ever* lawful for Christians to depart from this rule, or for Christians to appear before a civil tribunal, it is conceived that it can be only in circumstances like the following:

(1.) Where two or more Christians may have a difference, and where they know not what is right, and what the law is in a case. In such instances there may be a reference to a civil court to determine it— to have what is called *an amicable suit*, to ascertain from the proper authority what the law is, and what is justice in the case.

(2.) When there are causes of difference between Christians and the men of the world. As the men of the world do not acknowledge the propriety of submitting the matter to the church, it may be proper for a Christian to carry the matter before a civil tribunal, Evidently, there is no other way, in such cases, of settling a cause; and this mode may be resorted to, not with a spirit of revenge, but with a spirit of love and kindness. Courts are instituted for the settlement of the rights of *citizens*, and men by becoming Christians do not alienate their rights as citizens. Even these cases, however, might commonly be adjusted by a reference to impartial men, better than by the slow, and expensive, and tedious, and often irritating process of carrying a cause through the courts.

(3.) Where a Christian is injured in his person, character, or property, he has a right to seek redress. Courts are instituted for the protection and defence of the innocent and the peaceable against the fraudulent, the wicked, and the violent. And a Christian owes it to his country, to his family, and to himself, that the man who has injured him should receive the proper punishment. The peace and welfare of the community demand it. If a man murders my wife or child, I owe it to the laws and to my Country, to justice and to God, to endeavour to have the law enforced. So if a man robs

my property, or injures my character, I may owe it to others as well as to myself that the law in such a case should be executed, and the rights of others also be secured. But in all these cases a Christian should engage in such prosecutions, not with a desire of revenge, not with the love of litigation, but with the love of justice, and of God, and with a mild, tender, candid, and forgiving temper, with a real desire that the opponent may be benefited, and that all his rights also should be secured. **See Barnes "Ro 13:1"**

and following.

{a} "take wrong" Pr 20:22 Mt 5:39,40 Ro 12:17,19 1Th 5:15

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Nay, ye do wrong*, etc. Instead of enduring wrong patiently and cheerfully, they were themselves guilty of injustice and fraud.

And that your brethren. Your fellow Christians. As if they had injured those of their own family—those to whom they ought to be attached by most tender ties. The offence in such cases is aggravated, not because it is in itself any worse to injure a Christian than another man, but because it shows a deeper depravity, when a man overcomes all the ties of kindness and love, and injures those who are near to him, than it does where no such ties exist. It is for this reason that parricide, infanticide, etc., are regarded everywhere as crimes of peculiar atrocity, because a child or a parent must have sundered all the tenderest cords of virtue before it could be done.

{a} "defraud" 1Th 4:6

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Know ye not*", etc. The apostle introduces the declaration in this verse to show the *evil* of their course, and especially of the injustice which they did one to another, and their attempt to enforce and maintain the evil by an appeal to the heathen tribunals. He assures them, therefore, that the unjust could not be saved.

The unrighteous. The unjust *adikoi*—such as he had just mentioned—they who did injustice to others, and attempted to do it under the sanction of the courts.

Shall not inherit. Shall not possess; shall not enter into. The kingdom of heaven is often represented as an inheritance, Mt 9:29; Mt 25:34 Mr 10:17; Lu 10:25 18:18; 1Co 15:50 Eph 1:11,14 5:5.

The kingdom of God. Cannot be saved; cannot enter into heaven. **See Barnes "Mt 3:2"**.

This may refer either to the kingdom of God in heaven, or to the church on earth—most probably the former. But the sense is the same essentially, whichever is meant. The man who is not fit to enter into the one, is not fit to enter into the other. The man who is fit to enter the kingdom of God on earth, shall also enter into that in heaven.

Be not deceived. A most important direction to be given to all. It implies,

(1.) that they were in danger of being deceived.

(a) Their own *hearts* might have deceived them.

(b) They might be deceived by their false opinions on these subjects.

(c) They might be in danger of being deceived by their *leaders*, who perhaps held the opinion that some of the persons who practised these things could be saved.

(2.) It implies, that there was no *necessity* of their being deceived. They might know the truth. They might easily understand these matters. It *might* be plain to them that those who indulged in these things could not be saved.

(3.) It implies that it was of high *importance* that they should not be deceived. For

(a) the soul is of infinite value.

(b) To lose heaven—to be *disappointed* in regard to that, will be a tremendous loss.

(c) To inherit hell and its woes will be a tremendous curse. Oh, how anxious should all be that they be not deceived, and that while they *hope* for life, they do not sink down to everlasting death!

Neither fornicators. See Ga 5:19-21 Eph 5:4,5 Heb 12:14, 13:4.

See Barnes "Ro 1:29.

Nor effeminate, *malakoi*. This word occurs in Mt 11:8, and Lu 7:25, where it is applied to clothing, and translated "*soft* raiment;" that is, the light, thin garments worn by the rich and great. It occurs nowhere else in the New Testament except here. Applied to morals, as it is here, it denotes those who give themselves up to a soft, luxurious, and indolent way of living; who make self-indulgence the grand object of life; who can endure no hardship, and practise no self-denial in the cause of duty and of God. The word is applied in the classic writers to the Cinaedi, the Pathics, or Catamites; those who are given up to wantonness and sensual pleasures, or who are kept to be prostituted to others. Diog. Laer. vii. 5, 4; Xenoph. Mem. iii. 7, 1; Ovid, Fast. iv. 342. The connexion here seems to demand such an interpretation, as it occurs in the description of vices of the same class—sensual and corrupt indulgences. It is well known that this vice was common among the Greeks—and particularly prevailed at Corinth.

Abusers of themselves with mankind. *arsenokoitai*. Paederastae, or Sodomites. Those who indulged in a vice that was common among all the heathen. **See Barnes "Ro 1:27"**.

{b} "fornicators" Ga 5:19-21 Eph 5:4,5 Heb 12:14,18 13:4; Re 22:15

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Nor covetous* **See Barnes "1Co 5:10"**.

It is remarkable that the apostle always rank *the covetous* with the most abandoned classes of men.

Nor revilers. The same word, which, in 1Co 5:11 is rendered *railer*. **See Barnes "1Co 5:11"**.

Nor extortioners. **See Barnes "1Co 5:11"**.

Shall inherit. Shall enter; shall be saved, 1Co 6:9.

{*} "extortioners" "Oppressors"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *And such*. Such drunkards, lascivious and covetous persons. This shows

(1) the exceeding grace of God, that could recover even such persons from sins so debasing and degrading.

(2.) It shows that we are not to despair of reclaiming the most abandoned and wretched men.

(3.) It is well for Christians to look back on what they once were. It will produce

(a) humility,

(b) gratitude,

(c) a deep sense of the sovereign mercy of God,

(d) an earnest desire that others may be recovered and saved in like manner. Comp. Eph 2:1,2, 5:8 Col 3:7; Tit 3:3-6.

The *design* of this is to remind them of what they were, and to show them that they were now under obligation to lead better lives—by all the mercy which God had shown in recovering them from sins so degrading, and from a condition so dreadful.

But ye are washed. Heb 10:22. Washing is an emblem of purifying. They had been made pure by the Spirit of God. They had been indeed baptized, and their baptism was an emblem of purifying; but the thing here particularly referred to is not baptism, but it is something that had been done by the Spirit of God, and must refer to his agency on the heart in cleansing them from these pollutions. Paul here uses *three* words—*washed, sanctified, justified*—to denote the various agencies of the Holy Spirit by which they had been recovered from sin. The first, that of washing, I understand of that work of the Spirit by which the process of purifying was commenced in the soul, and which was especially signified in baptism—the work of regeneration or conversion to God. By the agency of the Spirit, the defilement of these pollutions had been washed away or removed—as filth is removed by ablution. The agency of the Holy Ghost in regeneration is elsewhere represented by washing. Tit 3:5, "The washing of regeneration." Compare Heb 10:22.

Ye are sanctified. This denotes the progressive and advancing process of purifying which succeeds regeneration in the Christian. Regeneration is the commencement of it—its close is the perfect purity of the Christian in heaven. **See Barnes "Joh 17:17"**.

It does not mean that they were perfect—for the reasoning of the apostle shows that this was far from being the case with the Corinthians; but that the work was advancing, and that they were in fact under a process of sanctification.

But ye are justified. Your sins are pardoned, and you are accepted as righteous, and will be treated as such on account of the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ. **See Barnes** "Ro 1:17"; **See Barnes** "Ro 3:25, **See Barnes "Ro 3:26"**; **See Barnes** "Ro 4:3".

The apostle does not say that this was *last* in the order of time, but simply says that this was done to them. Men are justified *when* they believe, and when the work of sanctification commences in the soul

In the name of the Lord Jesus. That is, by the Lord Jesus; by his authority, appointment, influence. **See Barnes "Ac 3:6"**.

All this had been accomplished *through* the Lord Jesus; that is, in his name remission of sins had been proclaimed to them, Lu 24:47; and by his merits all these favours had been conferred on them.

And by the Spirit of our God. The Holy Spirit. All this had been accomplished by his agency on the heart. This verse brings in the whole subject of redemption, and states in a most emphatic manner the various stages by which a sinner is saved; and by this single passage a man may obtain all the essential knowledge of the plan of salvation. All is condensed here in few words.

(1.) He is by nature a miserable and polluted sinner—without merit, and without hope.

(2.) He is renewed by the Holy Ghost, and washed by baptism.

(3.) He is justified, pardoned, and accepted as righteous, through the merits of the Lord Jesus alone.

(4.) He is made holy—becomes sanctified—and more and more like God, and fit for heaven.

(5.) All this is done by the agency of the Holy Ghost.

(6.) The *obligation* thence results that he should lead a holy life, and forsake sin in every form.

{c} "such were" Eph 2:1,2, 5:8 Col 3:7; Tit 3:3-6

{d} "washed" Heb 10:22 {e} "sanctified" Heb 2:11 {f} "justified" Ro 8:30

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *All things are lawful unto me*. The apostle here evidently makes a transition to another subject from that which he had been discussing—a consideration of the propriety of using certain things which had been esteemed lawful. The expression, "all things are lawful," is to be understood as used by those who palliated certain indulgences, or who vindicated the vices here referred to, and Paul designs to reply to them. His reply follows. He had been reproving them for their vices, and had specified several. It is not to be supposed that they would indulge in them without some show of defence; and the declaration here has much the appearance of a proverb, or a common saying—that all things were lawful; that is, "God has formed all things for our use, and there can be no evil if we use them." By the phrase "all things" here, perhaps, may be meant many things; or things in general; or there is nothing in itself unlawful. That there were many vicious persons who held this sentiment there can be no doubt; and though it cannot be supposed that there were any in the Christian church who would openly advocate it, yet the design of Paul was to *cut up* the plea altogether, *wherever it might be urged*, and to show that it was false and unfounded. The particular things which Paul here refers to, are those which have been called *adiaphoristic*, or indifferent; i.e., pertaining to certain meats and drinks, etc. With this Paul connects also the subject of fornication—the subject particularly under discussion. *This* was defended as "lawful," by many Greeks, and was practised at Corinth; and was the vice to which the Corinthian Christians were particularly exposed. Paul designed to meet *all* that could be said on this subject; and to show them that these indulgences could *not* be proper for Christians, and could not in any way be defended. We are not to understand Paul as admitting that fornication is in any case lawful; but he designs to show that the practice cannot possibly be defended in any way, or by any of the arguments which had been or could be used. For this purpose he observes,

(1.) that *admitting* that all things were lawful, there were many things which ought not to be indulged in;

(2.) that *admitting* that they were lawful, yet a man ought not to be under the power of any improper indulgence, and should abandon any habit when it had the mastery.

(3.) That fornication was positively wrong, and against the very nature and essence of Christianity, 1Co 6:13-20.

Are not expedient. This is the first answer to the objection. Even should we admit that the practices under discussion are lawful, yet there are many things which are not expedient; that is, which do not *profit*, for so the word *sumferei* properly signifies; they are injurious and hurtful. They might injure the body; produce scandal; lead others to offend or to sin. Such was the case with regard to the use of certain meats, and even with regard to the use of wine. Paul's rule on this subject is stated in 1Co 8:13. That if these things did injury to others, he would abandon them for ever; even though they were in themselves lawful. **See Barnes "1Co 8:1"**

and following, and **See Barnes "Ro 14:14"**

and following. There are many customs which, perhaps, cannot be strictly proved to be unlawful or sinful, which yet do injury in some way if indulged in; and which, as their indulgence can do no good, should be abandoned. Anything that does evil—however small—and no good, should be abandoned at once.

All things are lawful. Admitting this; or even on the supposition that all things are in themselves right.

But I will not be brought under the power. I will not be subdued by it; I will not become the slave of it.

Of any. Of any custom, or habit, no matter what it is. This was Paul's rule; the rule of an independent mind. The principle was, that even admitting that certain things were in themselves right, yet his grand purpose was *not to be the slave of habit*, not to be subdued by any practice that might corrupt his mind, fetter his energies, or destroy his freedom as a man and as a Christian. We may observe,

(1.) that this is a good rule to act on. It was Paul's rule, 1Co 9:27, and it will do as well for us as for him.

(2.) It is the true rule of an independent and noble mind. It requires a high order of virtue; and is the only way in which a man may be useful and active.

(3.) It may be applied to *many things* now. Many a Christian and Christian minister *is a slave*; and is completely under the *power* of some habit that destroys his usefulness and happiness. He is the SLAVE of indolence, or carelessness, or of some VILE HABIT—as the use of tobacco or of wine. He has not independence enough to break the cords that bind him; and the consequence is, that life is passed in indolence or in self-indulgence, and time, and strength, and property are wasted, and religion blighted, and souls ruined.

(4.) The man that has not courage and firmness enough to act on this rule should doubt his piety. If he is a voluntary slave to some idle and mischievous habit, how can he be a Christian? If he does not love his Saviour and the souls of men enough to break off from such habits which he knows are doing injury, how is he fit to be a minister of the self-denying Redeemer?

{a} "power" 1Co 9:27

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Meats for the belly*, etc. This has every appearance of being an adage or proverb. Its meaning is plain. "God has made us with appetites for food, and he has made food adapted to such appetites; and it is right, therefore, to indulge in luxurious living." The word *belly* here, *koilia* denotes the *stomach*; and the argument is, that as God had created the natural appetite for food, and had created food, it was right to indulge in eating and drinking to any extent which the appetite demanded. The word *meats* here, *brwmata*, does not denote animal food particularly, or flesh, but any kind of food. This was the sense of the English word formerly, Mt 3:4 6:25, 9:10 10:10 14:9, etc.

But God shall destroy. This is the reply of Paul to the argument. This reply is, that as both are so soon to be destroyed, they were unworthy of the care which was bestowed on them, and that attention should be directed to better things. It is unworthy the immortal mind to spend its time and thought in making provision for the body which is soon to perish. And especially a man should be willing to abandon indulgences in these things when they tended to injure the mind, and to destroy the soul. It is unworthy a mind that is to live for ever, thus to be anxious about that which is so soon to be destroyed in the grave. We may observe here:

(1.) This *is* the great rule of the mass of the world. The pampering of the appetites is the great purpose for which they live, and the only purpose.

(2.) It is folly. The body will soon be in the grave; the soul in eternity. How low and grovelling is the passion which leads the immortal mind always to anxiety about what the body shall eat and drink!

(3.) Men should act from higher motives. They should be thankful for *appetites* for food; and that God *provides* for the wants of the body; and should eat to obtain strength to serve him, and to discharge the duties of life. Man often degrades himself below—far below—the brutes in this thing. *They* never pamper their appetites, or *create artificial* appetites. Man, in death, sinks to the same level; and all the record of his life is, that "he lived to eat and drink, and died as the brute dieth." How low is human nature fallen! How sunken is the condition of man!

Now the body is not, etc. "But *de* the body is not designed for licentiousness, but to be devoted to the Lord." The remainder of this chapter is occupied with an argument against indulgence in licentiousness—a crime to which the Corinthians were particularly exposed. See the Introduction to this epistle. It cannot be supposed that any members of the church would indulge in this vice, or would vindicate it; but it was certain,

(1.) that it was *the* sin to which they were particularly exposed;

(2.) that they were in the midst of a people who did both practise and vindicate it. Comp. Re 2:14,15. Hence the apostle furnished them with *arguments* against it, as well to *guard* them from temptation, as to enable them to meet those who did defend it, and also to settle the morality of the question on an immovable foundation. The *first* argument is here stated, that the body of man was designed by its Maker to be devoted to him, and should be consecrated to the purposes of a pure and holy life. We are, therefore, bound to devote our animal as well as our rational powers to the service of the Lord alone.

And the Lord for the body. "The Lord is, in an important sense, for the body; that is, he acts, and plans, and provides for it. He sustains and keeps it; and he is making provision for its immortal

purity and happiness in heaven. It is not right, therefore, to take the body, which is nourished by the kind and constant agency of a holy God, and to devote it to purposes of pollution." That there is a reference in this phrase to the resurrection, is apparent from the following verse. And as God will exert his mighty power in raising up the body, and will make it glorious, it ought not to be prostituted to purposes of licentiousness.

{b} "belly" Mt 15:17,20; Ro 14:17

{c} "fornication" 1Th 4:3,7 {d} "lord" Ro 12:1 {e} "Lord" Eph 5:23

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *And God hath both raised up*, etc. This is the *second* argument against indulgences in this sin. It is this: "We are united to Christ. God has raised him from the dead, and made his body glorified. Our bodies will be like his, (comp. Php 3:21;) and since our body is to be raised up by the power of God; since it is to be perfectly pure and holy; and since this is to be done by his agency, it is wrong that it should be devoted to purposes of pollution and lust." It is unworthy

(1.) of our *connexion* with that pure Saviour who has been raised from the dead, the image of our resurrection from the death and defilements of sin, **See Barnes "Ro 6:1"**

and following and

(2) unworthy of the hope that our bodies shall be raised up to perfect and immortal purity in the heavens. No argument could be stronger. A deep sense of our union with a pure and risen Saviour, and a lively hope of immortal purity, would do more than all other things to restrain from licentious indulgences.

{f} "God hath" Ro 6:5,8

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 15

Verses 15, 16. *Know ye not*, etc. This is the *third* argument against licentiousness. It is, that we, as Christians, are united to Christ, (comp. **See Barnes** "Joh 15:1, etc.;) and that it is abominable to take the members of Christ, and subject them to pollution and sin. Christ was pure, wholly pure. We are professedly united to him. We are bound therefore to be pure, as he was. Shall that which is a part, as it were, of the pure and holy Saviour, be prostituted to impure and unholy embraces?

God forbid. **See Barnes "Ro 3:4"**.

This expresses the deep abhorrence of the apostle at the thought. It needed not *argument* to show it. The whole world revolted at the idea; and language could scarcely express the abomination of the very thought.

Know ye not, etc. This is designed to confirm and strengthen what he had just said.

He which is joined. Who is attached to; or who is connected with.

Is one body. That is, is to be regarded as one; is closely and intimately united. Similar expressions occur in classic writers. See Grotius and Bloomfield.

For two, saith he, etc. This Paul illustrates by a reference to the formation of the marriage connexion in Ge 2:24. He cannot be understood as affirming that that passage had original reference to illicit connexions; but he uses it for purposes of illustration. God had declared that the man and his wife became one; in a similar sense, in unlawful connexions the parties became one.

{a} "members of Christ" Eph 5:30

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 16

Verse 16. No Barnes text on this verse.

See Barnes "1Co 6:15"

{b} "for two" Ge 2:24 Mt 19:5

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *But he that is joined to the Lord*. The true Christian, united by faith to the Lord Jesus. See Joh 15:1, seq.

Is one spirit. That is, in a sense similar to that in which a man and his wife are one body. It is not to be taken literally; but the sense is, that there is a close and intimate union; they are united in feeling, spirit, intention, disposition. The argument is beautiful. It is, "As the union of souls is more important than that of bodies; as that union is more lasting, dear, and enduring than any union of body with body can be; and as our union with him is with a Spirit pure and holy, it is improper that we should *sunder* that tie, and break that sacred bond, by being joined to a harlot. The union with Christ is more intimate, entire, and pure, than that can be between a man and woman; and that union should be regarded as sacred and inviolable." Oh, if all Christians felt and regarded this as they should, how would they shrink from the connexions which they often form on earth! Comp. Eph 4:4.

{c} "one spirit" Joh 17:21-23 Eph 4:4

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Flee fornication*. A solemn command of God—as explicit as any that thundered from Mount Sinai. None can disregard it with impunity—none can violate it without being exposed to

the awful vengeance of the Almighty. There is force and emphasis in the word *flee*, *feugete*. Man should *escape* from it; he should not stay to *reason* about it—to debate the matter—or even to contend with his propensities, and to try the strength of his virtue. There are some sins which a man can *resist*; some about which he can reason without danger of pollution. But this is a sin where a man is safe only when he flies; free from pollution only when he refuses to entertain a thought of it; secure when he seeks a victory by flight, and a conquest by retreat. Let a man turn away from it without reflection on it, and he is safe. Let him think, and reason, and he may be ruined. "The very passage of an impure thought through the mind leaves pollution behind it." An argument on the subject often leaves pollution; a description ruins; and even the presentation of motives against it may often fix the mind with dangerous inclination on the crime. There is no way of avoiding the pollution but in the manner prescribed by Paul; there is no man safe who will not follow his direction. How many a young man would be saved from poverty, want, disease, curses, tears, and hell, could these TWO WORDS be made to blaze before him like the writing before the astonished eyes of Belshazzar, Da 5 and could they terrify him from even the *momentary* contemplation of the crime.

Every sin, etc. This is to be taken *comparatively*. Sins in general; the common sins which men commit, do not *immediately* and directly affect the *body*, or waste its energies, and destroy life. Such is the case with falsehood, theft, malice, dishonesty, pride, ambition, etc. They do *not* immediately and directly impair the constitution, and waste its energies.

Is without the body. Does not immediately and directly affect the body. The more immediate effect is on the mind; but the sin under consideration produces an immediate and direct effect on the body itself.

Sinneth against his own body. This is the *fourth* argument against indulgence in this vice; and it is more striking and forcible. The sense is, "It wastes the bodily energies; produces feebleness, weakness, and disease; it impairs the strength, enervates the man, and shortens life." Were it proper, this might be *proved* to the satisfaction of every man by an examination of the effects of licentious indulgence. Those who wish to see the effects stated, may find them in Dr. Rush on the Diseases of the Mind. Perhaps no single sin has done so much to produce the most painful and dreadful diseases, to weaken the constitution, and to shorten life, as this. Other vices, as gluttony and drunkenness, do this also; and all sin has *some* effect in destroying the body; but it is true of this sin in an eminent degree.

{d} "Flee fornication" Pr 6:25-32 7:24-27

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *What? know ye not*, etc. This is the *fifth* argument against this sin. The Holy Ghost dwells in us; our bodies are his temples, and they should not be defiled and polluted by sin. **See Barnes "1Co 3:16,17"**.

As this Spirit is in us, and as it is given us by God, we ought not to dishonour the gift and the Giver by pollution and vice.

And ye are not your own. This is the *sixth* argument which Paul uses. We are purchased; we belong to God; we are his by redemption; by a precious price paid; and we are bound, therefore,

to devote ourselves, body, soul, and spirit, as he directs, to the glory of his name, not to the gratification of the flesh. **See Barnes "Ro 14:7,8".**

{e} "your body" 2Co 6:16 {f} "not your own" Ro 14:7,8 {*} "Holy Ghost" "Spirit"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *For ye are bought*. Ye Christians are *purchased*; and by right of purchase should therefore be employed as he directs. This doctrine is often taught in the New Testament; and the argument is often urged, that therefore Christians should be devoted to God. 1Co 7:23 1Pe 1:18,19 2:9; 2Pe 2:1 Re 5:9.

See Barnes "Ac 20:28".

With a price. *timhv*. A *price* is that which is *paid* for an article, and which, in the view of the seller, is a fair compensation, or a valuable consideration why he should part with it; that is, the price paid is as valuable to him as the thing itself would be. It may not be the same thing either in quality or quantity, but it is that which to him is a sufficient consideration why he should part with his property. When an article is bought for a valuable consideration, it becomes wholly the property of the purchaser. He may keep it, direct it, dispose of it. Nothing else is to be allowed to control it without his consent. The language here is figurative. It does not mean that there was strictly a *commercial* transaction in the redemption of the church, a literal *quid pro quo*, for the thing spoken of pertains to moral government, and not to commerce. It means,

(1.) that Christians have been redeemed, or recovered to God.

(2.) That this has been done by a *valuable consideration*, or that which, in his view, was a full equivalent for the sufferings that they would have endured if their had suffered the penalty of the law.

(3.) That this valuable consideration was the blood of Jesus, as an stoning sacrifice, an offering, a ransom, *which would accomplish the same great ends in maintaining the truth and honour of God, and the majesty of his law, as the eternal condemnation of the sinner would have done*; and which, therefore, may be called, *figuratively*, the price which was paid. For if the same ends of justice could be accomplished by his atonement which would have been by the death of the sinner himself, then it was consistent for God to pardon him.

(4.) Nothing else could or would have done this. There was no *price* which the sinner could pay, no atonement which he could make; and, consequently, if Christ had not died, the sinner would have been the slave of sin, and the servant of the devil for ever.

(5.) As the Christian is thus purchased, ransomed, redeemed, he is bound to devote himself to God only, and to keep his commands, and to flee from a licentious life.

Glorify God. Honour God; live to him. **See Barnes "Mt 5:16"**; **See Barnes "Joh 12:28"**; **See Barnes** "Joh 17:1".

In your body, etc. Let your entire person be subservient to the glory of God. Live to him: let your life tend to his honour. No stronger arguments could be adduced for purity of life, and they are such as all Christians must feel.

{g} "bought" Ac 20:28 1Pe 1:18,19 Re 5:9

{h} "glorify God" 1Pe 2:9

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REMARKS

(1.) We see from this chapter 1Co 6:1-8 the evils of lawsuits, and of contentions among Christians. Every lawsuit between Christians is the means of greater or less dishonour to the cause of religion. The contention and strife; the time lost, and the money wasted; the hard feelings engendered, and bitter speeches caused; the ruffled temper, and the lasting animosities that are produced, always injure the cause of religion, and often injure it for years. Probably no lawsuit was ever engaged in by a Christian that did not do *some* injury to the cause of Christ. Perhaps no lawsuit was ever conducted between Christians that ever did any good to the cause of Christ.

(2.) A contentious spirit, a fondness for the agitation, the excitement, and the strife of courts, is inconsistent with the spirit of the gospel. Religion is retiring, peaceful, calm. It seeks the peace of all, and it never rejoices in contentions.

(3.) Christians should do nothing that will tend to injure the cause of religion in the eye of the world, 1Co 6:7,8. How much better is it that I should lose a few pounds, than that my Saviour should lose his honour! How much better that my purse should be empty of glittering dust, even by the injustice of others, than that a single gem should be taken from his diadem! And how much better even that I should lose all, than that my hand should be reached out to pluck away one jewel, by my misconduct, from his crown! Can silver, can gold, can diamonds be compared in value to the honour of Christ and of his cause?

(4.) Christians should *seldom* go to law, even with others; never, if they can avoid it. Every other means should be tried first; and the law should be resorted to only when all else fails. How few lawsuits there would be if man had no bad passions! How seldom is the law applied to from the simple love of justice; how seldom from pure benevolence; how seldom for the glory of God! In nearly all cases that occur between men, a friendly reference to others would settle all the difficulty; always if there were a right spirit between the parties. Comparatively *few* suits at law will be approved of, when men come to die; and the man who has had the least to do with the law, will have the least, usually, to regret when he enters the eternal world.

(5.) Christians should be honest—strictly honest—always honest, 1Co 6:8. They should do justice to all; they should defraud none. Few things occur that do more to disgrace religion than the suspicions of *fraud*, and overreaching, and deception, that often rest on professors of religion. How can a man be a Christian, and not be an honest man? Every man who is not strictly honest and honourable in his dealings should be regarded, whatever may be his pretensions, as an enemy of Christ and his cause.

(6.) The unholy cannot be saved, 1Co 6:9,10. So God has determined; and this purpose cannot be evaded or escaped. It is fixed; and men may think of it as they please, still it is true that there are large classes of men who, if they continue such, cannot inherit the kingdom of God. The fornicator, the idolater, the drunkard, and the covetous, cannot enter heaven. So the Judge of all has said, and who can unsay it? So he has decreed, and who can change his fixed decree? And so it should be. What a place would heaven be, if the drunkard, and the adulterer, and the idolater were there! How impure and unholy would it be! How would it destroy all our hopes, dim all our prospects, mar all our joys, if we were told that they should sit down with the just in heaven! Is it not one of our fondest hopes that heaven will be pure, and that *all* its inhabitants shall be holy? And *can* God admit to his eternal embrace, and treat as his eternal friend, the man who is unholy;

whose life is stained with abomination; who loves to corrupt others; and whose happiness is found in the sorrows, and the wretchedness, and vices of others? No; religion is pure, and heaven is pure; and whatever men may think, of one thing they may be assured, that the fornicator, and the drunkard, and the reviler, shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

(7.) If none of these *can* be saved as they are, what a host are travelling down to hell! How large a part of every community is made up of such persons! How vast is the number of drunkards that are known! How vast the host of extortioners, and of covetous men, and revilers of all that is good! How many curse their God and their fellow-men! How difficult to turn the corner of a street without hearing an oath! How necessary to guard against the frauds and deceptions of others! How many men and women are known to be impure in their lives! In all communities, how much does this sin abound! and how many shall be revealed at the great day as impure, who are now unsuspected I how many disclosed to the universe as all covered with pollution, who now boast even of purity, and who are received into the society of the virtuous and the lovely! Verily, the broad road to hell is thronged! And verily, the earth is pouring into hell a most dense and wretched population, and rolling down a tide of sin and misery that shall fill it with groans and gnashing of teeth for ever.

(8.) It is well for Christians to reflect on their former course of life, as contrasted with their present mercies, 1Co 6:11. Such were they, and such they would still have been but for the mercy of God. Such as IS the victim of uncleanness and pollution, such as is the profane man and the reviler, such we should have been but for the mercy of God. That alone has saved us, and that only can keep us. How should we praise God for his mercy, and how are we bound to love and serve him for his amazing compassion in raising us from our deep pollution, and saving us from hell!

(9.) Christians should be pure, 1Co 6:11-19. They should be above suspicion. They should avoid the appearance of evil. No Christian can be *too* pure; none can feel too much the obligation to be holy. By every sacred and tender consideration, God urges it on us; and by a reference to our own happiness, as well as to his own glory, he calls on us to be holy in our lives.

(10.) May we remember that we are not our own, 1Co 6:20. We belong to God. We have been ransomed by sacred blood. By a reference to the value of that blood; by all its preciousness and worth; by all the sighs, and tears, and groans that bought us; by the agonies of the cross, and the bitter pains of the death of God's own Son, we are bound to live to God, and to him alone. When we are tempted to sin, let us think of the cross. When Satan spreads out his allurements, let us recall the remembrance of the sufferings of Calvary, and remember that all these sorrows were endured that we might be pure. Oh, how would sin appear were we *beneath* the cross, and did we feel the warm blood from the Saviour's open veins trickle upon us! Who would *dare* indulge in sin there? Who *could* do otherwise than devote himself, body and soul and spirit, unto God?

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 1

1st Corinthians CHAPTER VII, Introduction

THIS chapter commences the *second* part or division of this epistle, or, *the discussion of those points which had been submitted to the apostle in a letter from the church at Corinth, for his instruction and advice*. See the Introduction to the epistle. The letter in which they proposed the questions which are here discussed, has been lost. It is manifest that, if we now had it, it would throw some light on the answers which Paul has given to their inquiries in this chapter. The *first* question which is discussed, 1Co 7:1-9, is, whether it were lawful and proper to enter into the marriage relation. How this question had arisen, it is not now possible to determine with certainty. It is probable, however, that it arose from disputes be- tween those of Jewish extraction, who held not only the lawfulness, but the importance of the marriage relation, according to the doctrines of the Old Testament, and certain followers or friends of some Greek philosophers, who might have been the advocates of celibacy. But *why* they advocated that doctrine is unknown. It is known, however, that many even of the Greek philosophers, among whom were Lycurgus, Thales, Antiphanes, and Socrates, (see Grotius,) thought that, considering "the untractable tempers of women, and how troublesome and fraught with danger was the education of children," it was the part of wisdom not to enter into the marriage relation. From them may have been derived the doctrine of celibacy in the Christian church; a doctrine that has been the cause of so much corruption in the monastic system, and in the celibacy of the clergy among the papists. The Jews, however, everywhere defended the propriety and duty of marriage. They regarded it as an ordinance of God. And to this day they hold that a man who has arrived at the age of twenty years, and who has not entered into this relation, unless prevented by natural defects, or by profound study of the law, sins against God. Between these two classes, or those in the church who had been introduced there from these two classes, the question would be agitated whether marriage was lawful and advisable.

Another question which, it seems, had arisen among: them was, whether it was proper to continue *in* the married state in the existing condition of the church, as exposed to trials and persecutions; or whether it was proper for those who had become converted to continue their relations in life with those who were unconverted. This the apostle discusses in 1Co 7:10-24. Probably many supposed that it was unlawful to live with those who were not Christians; and they thence inferred that the relation which subsisted *before* conversion should be dissolved. And this doctrine they carried to the relation between master and servant, as well as between husband and wife. The general doctrine which Paul states in answer to this is, that the wife was not to depart from her husband, 1Co 7:10; but if she did, she was not at liberty to marry again, since her former marriage was still binding, 1Co 7:11. He added that a believing man, or Christian, should not put away his unbelieving wife, 1Co 7:12, and that the relation *should* continue, notwithstanding a difference of religion; and that *if* a separation ensued, it should be in a peaceful manner, and the parties were not at liberty to marry again, 1Co 7:13-17. So, also, in regard to the relation of master and slave. It was not to be violently sundered. The relations of life were not to be broken up by Christianity; but every man was to remain in that rank of life in which he was when he was converted, unless it could be changed in a peaceful and lawful manner, 1Co 7:18-24.

A *third* subject submitted to him was, whether it was advisable, in existing circumstances, that the unmarried virgins who were members of the church should enter into the marriage relation, 1Co 7:25-40. This the apostle answers in the remainder of the chapter. The *sum* of his advice on that question is, that it would be lawful for them to marry, but that it was not then advisable; and

that, at all events, they should so act as to remember that life was short, and so as not to be too much engrossed with the affairs of this life, but should live for eternity. He said that though it was *lawful*, yet,

(1.) in their present distress it might be unadvisable, 1Co 7:26.

(2.) That marriage tended to an increase of care and anxiety, and it might not be proper then to enter into that relation, 1Co 7:32-35.

(3.) That they should live to God, 1Co 7:29-31.

(4.) That a man should not be oppressive and harsh towards his daughter, or towards one under his care; but that, if it would be severe in him to forbid such a marriage, he should allow it, 1Co 7:36. And

(5.) that on the whole it was advisable, under existing circumstances, not to enter into the marriage relation, 1Co 7:38-40.

Verse 1. *Now concerning*, etc. In reply to your inquiries. The first, it seems, was in regard to the propriety of marriage; that is, whether it was lawful and expedient.

It is good. It is well. It is fit, convenient; or, it is suited to the present circumstances; or, the thing itself is well and expedient in certain circumstances. The apostle did not mean that marriage was unlawful, for he says, Heb 13:4, that "marriage is honourable in all." But he here admits, with one of the parties in Corinth, that it was well and proper, in some circumstances, not to enter into the marriage relation. See

@1Co 7:7,8,26,28,31,32.

Not to touch a woman. Not to be connected with her by marriage. Xenophon, (Cyro., b. 1,) uses the same word (*aptw*, *to touch*) to denote marriage. Compare Ge 20:4,6, 26:11 Pr 6:29.

{*} "to touch" "Not to take a wife"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Nevertheless*. But, (*de*.) Though this is to be admitted as proper where it can be done, when a man has entire control of himself and his passions, and though in present circumstances it would be expedient, yet it may be proper also to enter into the marriage connexion.

To avoid fornication. Greek, On account of (*dia*) fornication. The word fornication is used here in the large sense of licentiousness in general. For the sake of the purity of society, and to avoid the evils of sensual indulgence, and the corruptions and crimes which attend an illicit intercourse, it is proper that the married state should be entered. To this vice they were particularly exposed in Corinth. See the Introduction. Paul would keep the church from scandal. How much evil, how much deep pollution, how many abominable crimes would have been avoided, which have since grown out of the monastic system, and the celibacy of the clergy among the papists, if Paul's advice had been followed by all professed Christians! Paul says that marriage is honourable, and that the relations of domestic life should be formed, to avoid the evils which would otherwise result. The world is the witness of the evils which flow from the neglect of his advice. Every community where the marriage tie has been lax and feeble, or where it has been disregarded or dishonoured, has been

full of pollution, and it ever will be. Society is pure and virtuous, just as marriage is deemed honourable, and as its vows are adhered to and preserved.

Let every man, etc. Let the marriage vow be honoured by all.

Have his own wife. And one wife, to whom he shall be faithful. Polygamy is unlawful under the gospel; and divorce is unlawful. Let every man and woman, therefore, honour the institution of God, and avoid the evils of illicit indulgence.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Let the husband*, etc. "Let them not imagine that there is any virtue in living separate from each other, as if they were in a state of celibacy."—Doddridge. They are bound to each other; in every way they are to evince kindness, and to seek to promote the happiness and purity of each other. There is a great deal of *delicacy* used here by Paul, and his expression is removed as far as possible from the *grossness* of heathen writers. His meaning is plain; but instead of using a word to express it which would be indelicate and offensive, he uses one which is not indelicate in the slightest degree, The word which he uses (*eunoian*, *benevolence*) denotes kindness, good-will, affection of mind. And by the use of the word "*due*," (*ofeilomenhn*,) he reminds them of the sacredness of their vow, and of the fact that in person, property, and in every respect, they belong to each other. It was necessary to give this direction, for the contrary might have been regarded as proper by many, who would have supposed there was special virtue and merit in living separate from each other; — as facts have shown that many *have* imbibed such an idea;—and it was not possible to give the rule with more *delicacy* than Paul has done. Many Mss., however, instead of "due benevolence," read *ofeilhn*, *a debt*, or *that which is owed*; and this reading has been adopted by Griesbach in the text. Homer, with a delicacy not unlike the apostle Paul, uses the word *filothta*, *friendship*, to express the same idea.

{a} "husband" Ex 21:10 1Pe 3:7 {+} "benevolence" "What is due to the wife"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *The wife hath not power*, etc. By the marriage covenant that power, in this respect, is transferred to the husband.

And likewise also the husband. The equal rights of husband and wife, in the Scriptures, are everywhere maintained. They are to regard themselves as united in the most intimate union, and in the most tender ties.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Defraud ye not*, etc. Of the right mentioned above. Withdraw not from the society of each other.

Except it be with consent. With a mutual understanding, that you may engage in the extraordinary duties of religion. Comp. Ex 19:15.

And come together again, etc. Even by mutual consent, the apostle would not have this separation to be perpetual; since it would expose them to many of the evils which the marriage relation was designed to avoid.

That Satan, etc. That Satan take not advantage of you, and throw you into temptation, and fill you with thoughts and passions which the marriage compact was designed to remedy.

{b} "with consent" Joe 2:16 {c} "Satan" 1Th 3:5

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *But I speak this by permission*, etc. It is not quite certain whether the word "*this*," (*touto*) in this verse, refers to what precedes, or to what follows. On this commentators are divided, the more natural and obvious interpretation would be to refer it to the preceding statement. I am inclined to think that the more natural construction is the true one, and that Paul refers to what he had said in 1Co 7:5. Most recent commentators, as Macknight and Rosenmuller, however, suppose it refers to what follows, and appeal to similar places in Joe 1:2 Ps 49:2; 1Co 10:23.

Calvin supposes it refers to what was said in 1Co 7:1

By permission. *suggnwmhn*. This word means *indulgence*, or *permission*, and stands opposed to that which is expressly enjoined. Comp. 1Co 7:25: "I am *allowed* to say this; I have no express command on the subject; I give it as my opinion; I do not speak it directly under the influence of Divine inspiration." See 1Co 7:10,25,40.

Paul here does not claim to be under inspiration in these directions which he specifies. But this is no argument against his inspiration in general, but rather the contrary. For,

(1.) it shows that he was an honest man, and was disposed to state the exact truth. An impostor, pretending to inspiration, would have claimed to have been *always* inspired. Who ever heard of a *pretender* to Divine inspiration admitting that in *anything* he was not under Divine guidance? Did Mohammed ever do this? Do impostors now ever do it?

(2.) It shows that in other cases, where no exception is made, he *claimed* to be inspired. These few exceptions, which he expressly makes, prove that in everywhere else he claimed to be under the influence of inspiration.

(3.) We are to suppose, therefore, that in all his writings where he makes no express exceptions, (and the exceptions are *very few* in number,) Paul claimed to be inspired. Macknight, however, and some others, understand this as mere *advice*, as an inspired man, though not as a command.

Not of commandment. Not by express instruction from the Lord. See 1Co 7:25. I do not claim in this to be under the influence of inspiration; and supposed that it was unlawful for a Christian

wife or husband to be my counsel here may be regarded, or not, as you may be able able to receive it.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *For I would*, etc. I would prefer.

That all men, etc. That Paul was unmarried is evident from 1Co 9:5. But he does not refer to this fact here. When he wishes that all men were like himself, he evidently does not intend that he would prefer that all should be unmarried, for this would be against the Divine institution, and against his own precepts elsewhere. But he would be glad if all men had control over their passions and propensities as he had; had the gift of continence, and could abstain from marriage when circumstances of trial, etc., would make it proper. We may add, that when Paul wishes to exhort to anything that is difficult, he usually adduces *his own example* to show that it may be done; an example which it would be well for all ministers to be able to follow.

But every man hath his proper gift. Every man has his own peculiar talent, or excellence. One man excels in one thing, and another in another. One may not have this particular virtue, but he may be distinguished for another virtue quite as valuable. The *doctrine* here is, therefore, that we are not to judge of others by ourselves, or measure their virtue by ours. We may excel in some one thing, they in another. And because they have not our peculiar virtue, or capability, we are not to condemn or denounce them. Comp. Mt 19:11,12.

Of God. Bestowed by God, either in the original endowments and faculties of body or mind, or by his grace. In either case it is the gift of God. The virtue of continence is his gift as well as any other; and Paul had reason, as any other man must have, to be thankful that God had conferred it on him. So if a man is naturally amiable, kind, gentle, large-hearted, tender, and affectionate, he should regard it as the gift of God, and be thankful that he has not to contend with the evils of a morose, proud, haughty, and severe temper. It is true, however, that all these virtues may be greatly strengthened by discipline, and that religion gives rigour and comeliness to them all. Paul's virtue in this was strengthened by his resolution; by his manner of life; by his frequent fastings and trials, and *by the abundant employment* which God gave him in the apostleship. And it is true still, that if a man is desirous to overcome the lusts of the flesh, industry, and hardship, and trial, and self-denial will enable him, by the grace of God, to do it. *Idleness* is the cause of no small part of the corrupt desires of men; and God kept Paul from these, (1.) by giving him enough *to do*; and, (2.) by giving him enough *to suffer*.

{a} "every man" Mt 19:11,12

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *To the unmarried*. The word *unmarried* (*agamoiv*) may refer either to those who had never been married, or to widowers. It here means simply those who were at that time unmarried, and his reasoning applies to both classes.

And widows. The apostle specifies these, though he had not specified widowers particularly. The reason of this distinction seems to be, that he considers more particularly the case of those females who had never been married, in the close of the chapter, 1Co 7:25.

It is good for them. It may be advisable, in the present circumstances of persecution and distress, not to be encumbered with the cares and anxieties of a family. 1Co 7:26,32-34.

If they abide. That they remain, in the present circumstances, unmarried. See 1Co 7:26.

{*} "unmarried and widows" "Or to widowers"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *But if they cannot contain*. If they have not the gift of continence; if they cannot be secure against temptation; if they have not strength of virtue enough to preserve them from the danger of sin, and of bringing reproach and scandal on the church.

It is better. It is to be preferred.

Than to burn. The passion here referred to is often compared to a fire. See Virg. AEn. iv. 68. It is better to marry, even with all the inconveniences attending the marriage life in a time of distress and persecution in the church, 1Co 7:26, than to be the prey of raging, consuming, and exciting passions.

{+} "contain" "have not continence" {b} "let them marry" 1Ti 5:14

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *And unto the married*. This verse commences the *second* subject of inquiry; to wit, whether it was proper, in the existing state of things, for those who were married to continue this relation, or whether they ought to separate. The reasons why any may have supposed that it was best to separate, may have been,

(1.) that their troubles and persecutions might be such that they might judge it best that families should be broken up; and,

(2.) probably many supposed that it was unlawful for a Christian wife or husband to be connected at all with a heathen and idolator.

I command, yet *not I, but the Lord*. Not I so much as the Lord. This injunction is not to be understood as advice merely, but as a solemn divine command, from which you are not at liberty to depart. Paul here professes to utter the language of inspiration, and demands obedience. The express command of "the Lord" to which he refers, is probably the precept recorded in Mt 5:32 19:3-10. These precepts of Christ asserted that the marriage tie was sacred and inviolable.

Let not the wife depart, etc. Let her not prove faithless to her marriage vows; let her not, on any pretence, desert her husband. Though she is a Christian, and he is not, yet let her not seek, on that account, to be separate from him. The law of Moses did not permit a wife to divorce herself from her husband, though it was sometimes done, (comp. Mr 10:12; but the Greek and Roman laws allowed it.—*Grotius*. But Paul here refers to a formal and legal separation before the magistrates, and not to a voluntary separation, without intending to be formally divorced. The reasons for this opinion are,

(1.) that such divorces were known and practised among both Jews and heathens.

(2.) It was important to settle the question whether they were to be allowed in the Christian church.

(3.) The claim would be set up, probably, that it might be done.

(4.) The question whether a *voluntary separation* might not be proper, where one party was a Christian and the other not, he discusses in the following verses, 1Co 7:12-17. Here, therefore, he solemnly repeats the law of Christ, that divorce, under the Christian economy, was not to be in the power either of the husband or wife.

{c} "Let not the wife" Mal 2:14-16 Mt 19:6,9

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *But and if she depart*. If she have withdrawn by a rash and foolish act; if she has attempted to dissolve the marriage vow, she is to remain unmarried, or be reconciled. She is not at liberty to marry another. This may refer, I suppose, to instances where wives, ignorant of the rule of Christ, and supposing that they had a right to separate themselves from their husbands, had rashly left them, and had supposed that the marriage contract was dissolved. Paul tells them that this was impossible; and that if they had so separated from their husbands, the pure laws of Christianity did not recognise this right, and they must either be reconciled to their husbands or remain alone. The marriage tie was so sacred that it could not be dissolved by the will of either party.

Let her remain unmarried. That is, let her not marry another.

Or be reconciled to her husband. Let this be done, if possible. If it cannot be, let her remain unmarried. It was a *duty* to be reconciled, if it was possible. If not, she should not violate her vows to her husband so far as to marry another. It is evident that this rule is still binding, and that no one who has separated from her husband, whatever be the cause, unless there be a regular divorce, according to the law of Christ, (Mt 5:32,) can be at liberty to marry again.

And let not the husband. **See Barnes "Mt 5:32"**.

This right, granted under the Jewish law, and practised among all the heathen, was to be taken away wholly under the gospel. The marriage tie was to be regarded as sacred; and the tyranny of man over woman was to cease;

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *But to the rest*. "I have spoken in regard to the duties of the unmarried, and the question whether it is right and advisable that they should marry, 1Co 7:1-9. I have also uttered the command of the Lord in regard to those who are married, and the question whether separation and divorce were proper. Now in regard to *the rest of the persons and cases* referred to, I will deliver my opinion." The *rest*, or remainder, here referred to, relates particularly to the cases in which one party was a Christian, and the other not. In the previous verses he had delivered the solemn, explicit law of Christ, that divorce was to take place on neither side, and in no instance, except agreeably to the law of Christ, Mt 5:32. That was settled by Divine authority. In the subsequent verses he discusses a different question; whether a *voluntary separation* was not advisable and proper when the one party was a Christian and the other not, The word rest refers to these instances, and the questions which would arise under this inquiry.

Not the Lord. **See Barnes "1Co 7:6"**.

"I do not claim, in this advice, to be under the influence of inspiration; I have no express command on the subject from the Lord; but I deliver my opinion as a servant of the Lord; 1Co 7:40, and as having a right to offer advice, even when I have no express command from God, to a church which I have founded, and which has consulted me on the subject." This was a case in which both he and they were to follow the principles of Christian prudence and propriety, when there was no express commandment. Many such cases may occur. But few, perhaps none, can occur in which some Christian principle shall not be found, that will be sufficient to direct the anxious inquirer after truth and duty.

If any brother. Any Christian.

That believeth not. That is not a Christian; that is a heathen.

And if she be pleased. If it seems best to her; if she consents; approves of living together still. There might be many cases where the wife or the husband, that was not a Christian, would be so opposed to Christianity, and so violent in their opposition, that they would not be willing to live with a Christian. When this was the case, the Christian husband or wife could not prevent the separation. When this was *not* the case, they were not to seek a separation themselves.

To dwell with him. To remain in connexion with him as his wife, though they differed on the subject of religion.

Let him not put her away. Though she is a heathen, though opposed to his religion, yet the marriage vow is sacred and inviolable. It is not to be sundered by any change which can take place in the opinions of either party. It is evident, that if a man were at liberty to dissolve the marriage tie, or to discard his wife when his own opinions were changed on the subject of religion, that it would at once destroy all the sacredness of the marriage union, and render it a nullity. Even, therefore, when there is a difference of opinion on the vital subject of religion, the tie is not dissolved; but the only effect of religion should be, to make the converted husband or wife more tender, kind, affectionate, and faithful, than they were before; and all the more so, as their partners are without the hopes of the gospel, and as they may be won to love the Saviour, 1Co 7:16.

{d} "not the Lord" Ezr 10:11, etc.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Let her not leave him*. A change of phraseology from the last verse, to suit the circumstances. The wife had not power to put away the husband, and expel him from his own home; but she might think it her duty to be separated from him. The apostle counsels her not to do this; and this advice should still be followed. She should still love her husband, and seek his welfare; she should be still a kind, affectionate, and faithful wife; and all the more so, that she may show him the excellence of religion, and win him to love it. She should even bear much, and bear it long; nor should she leave him unless her life is rendered miserable, or in danger; or unless he wholly neglects to make provision for her, and leaves her to suffering, to want, and to tears. In such a case, no precept of religion forbids her to return to her father's house, or to seek a place of safety and of comfort. But even then it is not to be a separation on account of a difference of religious sentiment, but for brutal treatment. Even then the marriage tie is not dissolved, and neither party are at liberty to marry again.

{*} "him" "not put him away"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *For the unbelieving husband*. The husband that is not a Christian; who still remains a heathen, or an impenitent man. The apostle here states *reasons* why a separation should not take place when there was a difference of religion between the husband and the wife. The first is, that the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife. And the *object* of this statement seems to be, to meet an objection which might exist in the mind, and which might, perhaps, be urged by some, "Shall I not be *polluted* by such a connexion? Shall I not be defiled, in the eye of God, by living in a close union with a heathen, a sinner, an enemy of God, and an opposer of the gospel?" This objection was natural, and is, doubtless, often felt. To this the apostle replies, "No; the contrary may be true. The connexion produces a species of sanctification, or diffuses a kind of holiness over the unbelieving party by the believing party, so far as to render their children holy, and therefore it is improper to seek for a separation."

Is sanctified. *hgiastai*. There has been a great variety of opinions in regard to the sense of this word. It does not comport with my design to state these opinions. The usual meaning of the word is, to make holy; to set apart to a sacred use; to consecrate, etc. **See Barnes "Joh 17:17".**

But the expression cannot mean here,

(1.) that the unbelieving husband would become holy, or be a Christian, *by the mere fact* of a connexion *with* a Christian, for this would be to do violence to the words, and would be contrary to facts everywhere; nor,

(2.) that the unbelieving husband *had been* sanctified by the Christian wife, (Whitby,) for this would not be true in all cases; nor,

(3.) that the unbelieving husband would gradually become more favourably inclined to Christianity, by observing its effects on the wife, (according to Semler;) for though this might be

true, yet the apostle was speaking of something then, and which rendered their children at that time holy; nor,

(4.) that the unbelieving husband *might* more easily be sanctified, or become a Christian, by being connected with a Christian wife, (according to Rosenmuller and Schleusner,) because he is speaking of something in the connexion which made the children holy; and because the word *agiazw* is not used in this sense elsewhere. But it is a good rule of interpretation, that the words which are used in any place are to be limited in their signification by the connexion; and all that we are required to understand here is, that the unbelieving husband was sanctified *in regard to the subject under discussion*; that is, in regard to the question whether it was proper for them to live together, or whether they should be separated or not. And the sense may be, "They are by the marriage tie one flesh. They are indissolubly united by the ordinance of God. As they are one by his appointment, as they have received his sanction to the marriage union, and as one of them is holy, so the other is to be regarded as sanctified, or made *so* holy by the Divine sanction to the union, that it is proper for them to live together in the marriage relation." And in proof of this, Paul says if it were *not* so, if the connexion was to be regarded as impure and abominable, then their children were to be esteemed as illegitimate and unclean. But now they were *not* so regarded, and *could* not so be; and hence it followed that they might lawfully continue together. So Calvin, Beza, and Doddridge interpret the expression.

Else were your children unclean, akayarta. Impure; the opposite of what is meant by holy. Here observe,

(1.) that this is a reason why the parents, one of whom was a Christian and the other not, should not be separated; and,

(2.) the reason is founded on the fact, that if they were separated, the offspring of such a union must be regarded as illegitimate, or unholy; and,

(3.) it *must* be improper to separate in such a way, and for such a reason, because even *they* did not believe, and could not believe, that their children were defiled, and polluted, and subject to the shame and disgrace attending illegitimate children. This passage has often been interpreted, and is often adduced to prove that children are "federally holy," and that they are entitled to the privilege of baptism on the ground of the faith of one of the parents. But against this interpretation there are insuperable objections.

(1.) The phrase "federally holy" is unintelligible, and conveys no idea to the great mass of men. It occurs nowhere in the Scriptures, and what can be meant by it?

(2.) It does not accord with the scope and design of the argument. There is not one word about baptism here; not one allusion to it; nor does the argument in the remotest degree bear upon it. The question was not whether children should be baptized, but it was whether there should be a separation between man and wife, where the one was a Christian and the other not. Paul states, that *if* such a separation should take place, it would *imply* that the marriage was improper; and *of course* the children must be regarded as unclean. But how would the supposition that they were federally holy, and the proper subjects of baptism, bear on this? Would it not be equally true that it was proper to baptize the children whether the parents were separated or not? Is it not a doctrine among Paedobaptists everywhere, that the children are entitled to baptism on the faith of *either* of the parents, and that that doctrine is not affected by the question here agitated by Paul? Whether it was proper for them to live together or not, was it not equally true that the child of a believing parent was to be baptised? But

(3.) the supposition that this means that the children would be regarded as *illegitimate* if such a separation should take place, is one that accords with the whole scope and design of the argument. "When one party is a Christian and the other not, shall there be a separation?" This was the question. "No," says Paul; "if there *be* such a separation, it must be because the marriage *is improper*; because it would be wrong to live together in such circumstances." What would follow from this? Why, that all the children that have been born since the one party became a Christian, must be regarded as having been born while a connexion existed that was improper, and unchristian, and unlawful, and of course they must be regarded as illegitimate. But, says he, you do not *believe* this yourselves. It follows, therefore, that the connexion, even according to your own views, is proper.

(4.) This accords with the meaning of the word *unclean*, *akayarta*

(a.) in a Levitical sense, Le 5:2;

(b.) in a moral sense, Ac 10:28 2Co 6:17; Eph 5:5.

The word will appropriately express the sense of illegitimacy; and the argument, I think, evidently requires this. It may be summed up in a few words. "Your separation would be a proclamation to all, that you regard the *marriage* as invalid and improper. From this it would follow that the offspring of such a marriage would be illegitimate. But you are not prepared to admit this; you do not believe it. Your children you esteem to be legitimate, and they are so. The marriage tie, therefore, should be regarded as binding, and separation unnecessary and improper." See, however, Doddridge and Bloomfield for a different view of this subject. I believe infant baptism to be proper and right, and an inestimable privilege to parents and to children [This is Barnes' opinion, not necessarily the opinion of Online Bible]. But a good cause should not be made to rest on feeble supports, nor on forced and unnatural interpretations of the Scriptures. And such I regard the usual interpretation placed on this passage.

But now are they holy. Holy in the same sense as the unbelieving husband is *sanctified* by the believing wife; for different forms of the same word are usual. That is, they are legitimate. They are not to be branded and treated as bastards, as they would be by your separation. "*You* regard them as having been born in lawful wedlock, and they *are* so; and they should be treated as such by their parents, and not be exposed to shame and disgrace by your separation.

{a} "now are they holy" Mal 2:15,16

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *But if the unbelieving depart*. If they choose to leave you.

Let him depart. You cannot prevent it, and you are to submit to it patiently, and bear it as a Christian.

A brother or a sister is not under bondage, etc. Many have supposed that this means that they would be at liberty to marry again when the unbelieving wife or husband had gone away; as Calvin, Grotius, Rosenmuller, etc. But this is contrary to the strain of the argument of the apostle. The sense of the expression, "is not bound," etc. is that *if* they forcibly depart, the one that is left is not bound by the marriage tie to make provision for the one that departed; to do acts that might be prejudicial

to religion by a violent effort to compel the departing husband or wife to live with the one that is forsaken; but is at liberty to live separate, and should regard it as proper so to do.

God hath called us to peace. Religion is peaceful. It would prevent contentions and broils. This is to be a grand principle. If it cannot be obtained by living together, there should be a peaceful separation; and where such a separation has taken place, the one which has departed should be suffered to remain separate in peace. God has called us to live in peace with all if we can. This is the general principle of religion on which we are always to act. In our relation to our partners in life, as well as in all other relations and circumstances, this is to guide us. Calvin supposes that this declaration pertains to the former part of this verse; and that Paul means to say, that if the unbelieving depart, he is to be suffered to do so peaceably, rather than to have contention and strife, for God has called us to a life of peace.

{*} "bondage" "Not enslaved" {a} "called" Ro 12:18 14:19; Heb 12:14

{1} "to peace" "in peace"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *For what knowest thou*, etc. The apostle here assigns a reason why the believing party should not separate from the other needlessly, or why he should not desire to be separated. The reason is, the possibility or the probability that the unbelieving party might be converted by the example and entreaties of the other.

Whether thou, etc., How do you know *but* this may be done? Is there not a possibility, nay, a probability of it, and is not this a sufficient reason for continuing together?

Save thy husband. Gain him over to the Christian faith; be the means of his conversion and salvation. Comp. Ro 11:26. We learn from this verse,

(1.) that there is a possibility that an unbelieving partner in life may be converted by example of the other.

(2.) That this should be an object of intense interest to the Christian husband or wife, because

(a) it will promote the happiness of the other;

(b) it will promote their usefulness;

(c) it will be the means of blessing their family; for parents should be *united* on the subject of religion, and in their example and influence in training up their sons and daughters; and

(d) because the salvation of a beloved husband or wife should be an object of intense interest.

(3.) This object is of so much importance, that the Christian should be willing to submit to much, to bear much, and to bear long, in order that it may be accomplished. Paul said it was desirable even to live with a heathen partner to do it; and so also it is desirable to bear much, very much, with even an unkind and fretful temper, with an unfaithful and even an intemperate husband, or with a perverse and peevish wife, if there is a prospect that they may be converted.

(4.) This same direction is elsewhere given, 1Pe 3:1,2.

(5.) It is often done. It is not hopeless. Many a wife has thus been the means of saving a husband; many a husband has been the means of the salvation of the wife. In regard to the means by which this is to be hoped for, we may observe that it is not by a harsh, fretful, complaining temper; it is

to be by kindness, and tenderness, and love. It is to be by an exemplification of the excellency of religion by example—by patience when provoked, meekness when injured, love when despised, forbearance when words of harshness and irritation are used, and by showing *how* a Christian *can* live, and what is the true nature of religion; by kind and affectionate conversation when alone, when the heart is tender, when calamities visit the family, and when the thoughts are drawn along by the events of Providence towards death. Not by harshness or severity of manner is the result to be hoped for; but by tender entreaty, and mildness of life, and by prayer. Preeminently this is to be used. When a husband will not hear, God can hear; when he is angry, morose, or unkind, God is gentle, tender, and kind; and when a husband or a wife turn away from the voice of gentle entreaty, God's ear is open, and God is ready to hear and to bless. Let one thing guide the life. We are never to cease to set a Christian example; never to cease to live as a Christian should live; never to cease to pray fervently to the God of grace, that the partner of our lives may be brought under the full influence of Christian truth, and meet us in the enjoyments of heaven.

{b} "save thy husband" 1Pe 3:1,2 {2} "how knowest" "What"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *But as God hath distributed*, etc. As God hath *divided— emerisen*; i.e., given, imparted to any one. As God has given grace to every one. The words *ei mh* denote simply *but* in the beginning of this verse. The apostle here introduces a new subject; or an inquiry varying somewhat from that preceding, though of the same general nature. He had discussed the question whether a husband and wife ought to be separated on account of a difference in religion. He now says that the general principle there stated ought to rule everywhere; that men who become Christians ought not to seek to change their condition or calling in life, but to remain in that situation in which they were when they became Christians, and show the excellence of their religion IN that particular calling. The *object* of Paul, therefore, is to preserve order, industry, faithfulness in the relations of life, and to show that Christianity does not design to break up the relations of social and domestic intercourse. This discussion continues to 1Co 7:24. The phrase, as God hath distributed," refers to the rendition in which men are placed in life, whether as rich or poor, in a state of freedom or servitude, of learning or ignorance, etc. And it implies that *God* appoints the lot of men, and orders the circumstances of their condition; that religion is not designed to interfere directly with this; and that men should seek to show the real excellence of religion in the particular sphere in which they may have been placed by Divine Providence *before* they became converted.

As the Lord hath called every one. That is, in the condition or circumstances in which any one is when he is called by the Lord to be a Christian.

So let him walk. In that sphere of life; in that calling, 1Co 7:20; in that particular relation in which he was, let him remain, unless he can consistently change it for the better, and THERE let him illustrate the true beauty and excellence of religion. This was designed to counteract the notion that the fact of embracing a new religion dissolved the relations of life which existed before. This idea probably prevailed extensively among the Jews. Paul's object is to show that the gospel, instead

of dissolving those relations, only strengthened them, and enabled those who were converted the better to discharge the duties which grow out of them.

And so ordain I, etc. This is no peculiar rule for you Corinthians. It is the universal rule which I everywhere inculcated. It is not improbable that there was occasion to insist everywhere on this rule, and to repress disorders which might have been attempted by some who might suppose that Christianity dissolved the former obligations of life.

{c} "as the Lord" 1Co 7:20,24 {d} "And so ordain" 1Co 4:17 2Co 11:28 {+} "ordain" "Appoint"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Is any man called*. Does any one become a Christian. **See Barnes "1Co 7:26"**.

Being circumcised. Being a native-born Jew, or having become a Jewish proselyte, and having submitted to the initiatory rite of the Jewish religion.

Let him not become uncircumcised. This could not be literally done. But the apostle refers here to certain efforts which were made to remove the marks of circumcision which were often attempted by those who were ashamed of having been circumcised. The practice is often alluded to by Jewish writers, and is described by them. Comp. 1 Mac. i. 15. It is not decorous or proper here to show how this was done. The process is described in Cels. de Med. 7.25. See Grotius and Bloomfield.

Is any called in uncircumcision? A Gentile, or one who had not been circumcised.

Let him not be circumcised. The Jewish rites are not binding, and are not to be enjoined on those who have been converted from the Gentiles. **See Barnes** "Ro 2:27, seq.

{e} "uncircumcision" Ac 15:1 Ga 5:2

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Circumcision is nothing*, etc. It is of no consequence in itself. It is not that which God requires now. And the mere external rite can be of no consequence one way or the other. The heart is all; and that is what God demands. **See Barnes "Ro 2:29"**.

But the keeping of the commandments of God. Is something, is the main thing, is everything; and this can be done whether a man is circumcised or not.

{a} "Circumcision" Ga 5:6 6:15 {b} "keeping" Joh 15:14

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Let every man abide*. Let him remain or continue.

In the same calling. The same occupation, profession, rank of life. We use the word *calling* in the same sense to denote the occupation or profession of a man. Probably the original idea which led men to designate a profession as a *calling* was the belief that God called every man to the profession and rank which he occupies; that is, that it is by his *arrangement*, or *providence*, that he occupies that rank rather than another. In this way every man has a *call* to the profession in which he is engaged as really as ministers of the gospel; and every man should have as clear evidence that *God* has *called* him to the sphere of life in which he moves, as ministers of the gospel should have that God has called them to their appropriate profession. This declaration of Paul, that every one is to remain in the same occupation or rank in which he was when he was converted, is to be taken in a general and not in an unqualified sense. It does not design to teach that a man is in no situation to seek a *change* in his profession when he becomes pious. But it is intended to show that religion was the friend of order; that it did not disregard or disarrange the relations of social life; that it was fitted to produce *contentment* even in an humble walk, and to prevent repinings at the lot of those who were more favoured or happy. That it did not design to prevent all change is apparent from the next verse, and from the nature of the case. *Some* of the circumstances in which a change of condition, or of calling, may be proper when a man is converted, are the following:

(1.) When a man is a *slave*, and he can obtain his freedom, 1Co 7:21.

(2.) When a man is pursuing a *wicked* calling or course of life when he was converted, even if it is lucrative, he should abandon it as speedily as possible. Thus if a man is engaged, as John Newton was, in the slave-trade, he should at once abandon it. If he is engaged in the manufacture or sale of ardent spirits, he should at once forsake the business, even at great personal sacrifice, and engage in a lawful and honourable employment. **See Barnes "Ac 19:19"**.

No considerations can justify a continuance in a course of life like this after a man is converted. No consideration can make a business which is "evil, and only evil, and that continually," proper or right.

(3.) Where a man can increase his usefulness by choosing a new profession. Thus the usefulness of many a man is greatly promoted by his leaving an agricultural or mechanical employment; or by his leaving the bar, or the mercantile profession, and becoming a minister of the gospel. In such situations, religion not only *permits* a man to change his profession, but it *demands* it; nor will God smile upon him, or bless him, unless the change is made. An opportunity to become more useful imposes an obligation to change the course of life. And no man is permitted to waste his life and talents in a mere scheme of money-making, or in self-indulgence, when by changing his calling he can do more for the salvation of the world.

{c} "abide" Pr 27:8

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Being a servant*. *doulov*. A slave. Slaves abounded in Greece, and in every part of the heathen world. Athens, e.g., had, in her best days, twenty thousand freemen, and four hundred thousand slaves. See the condition of the heathen world on this subject illustrated at length, and in a very learned manner, by Rev. B. B. Edwards, in the Bib. Repository for Oct. 1835, pp. 411—436.

It was a very important' subject to inquire what *ought* to be done in such instances. Many slaves who had been converted might argue that the institution of slavery was contrary to the rights of man; that it destroyed their equality with other men; that it was cruel, and oppressive, and unjust in the highest degree; and that therefore they ought not to submit to it, but that they should burst their bonds, and assert their rights as freemen. In order to prevent restlessness, uneasiness, and insubordination; in order to preserve the peace of society, and to prevent religion from being regarded as disorganizing and disorderly, Paul here states the principle on which the slave was to act. And by referring to this case, which was the strongest which could occur, he designed doubtless to inculcate the duty of order, and contentment in general, in all the other relations in which men might be when they were converted.

Care not for it. Let it not be a subject of deep anxiety and distress; do not deem it to be disgraceful; let it not affect your spirits; but be content in the lot of life where God has placed you. If you can in a proper way obtain your freedom, do it; if not, let it not be a subject of painful reflection. In the sphere of life where God by his providence has placed you, strive to evince the Christian spirit, and show that you are able to bear the sorrows and endure the toils of your humble lot with submission to the will of God, and so as to advance in that relation the interest of the true religion. *In* that calling do your duty, and evince always the spirit of a Christian. This duty is often enjoined on those who were servants, or slaves, Eph 6:5; Col 3:22 1Ti 6:1; Tit 2:9 1Pe 2:18.

This duty of the slave, however, does not make the oppression of the master right or just, any more than the duty of one who is persecuted or reviled to be patient and meek makes the conduct of the persecutor or reviler just or right; nor does it prove that the master has a *right* to hold the slave as *property*, which can never be right in the sight of God; but it requires simply that the slave should evince, even in the midst of degradation and injury, the spirit of a Christian, just as it is required of a man who is injured in any way to bear it as becomes a follower of the Lord Jesus. Nor does this passage prove that a slave ought not to *desire* freedom if it can be obtained, for this is supposed in the subsequent clause. Every human being has a right to desire to be free, and to seek liberty. But it should be done, in accordance with the rules of the gospel; so as not to dishonour the religion of Christ, and so as not to injure the true happiness of others, or overturn the foundations of society.

But if thou mayest be made free. If thou *canst—dunasai*if it is in your power to become free. That is, if your master or the laws set you free; or if you can purchase your freedom; or if the laws can be changed in a regular manner. If freedom *can* be obtained in any manner that is not *sinful*. In many cases a Christian master might set his slaves free; in others, perhaps, the laws might do it; in some, perhaps, the freedom of the slave might be purchased by a Christian friend. In all these instances it would be proper to embrace the opportunity of becoming free. The apostle does not speak of insurrection, and the whole scope of the passage is against an attempt on their part to obtain freedom by force and violence. He manifestly teaches them to remain in their condition, to bear it patiently and submissively, and *in* that relation to bear their hard lot with a Christian spirit, unless their freedom could be obtained without *violence* and *bloodshed*. And the same duty is still binding. Evil as slavery is, and always evil and only evil, yet the Christian religion requires patience, gentleness, forbearance; not violence, war, insurrection, and bloodshed. Christianity would teach *masters* to be kind, tender, and gentle; to liberate their slaves, and to change the laws so that it may be done; to be *just* towards those whom they have held in bondage. It would not teach the slave to

rise on his master, and imbrue his hands in his blood; to break up the relations of society by violence; or to dishonour his religion by the indulgence of the feelings of revenge and by murder.

Use it rather. Avail yourselves of the privilege if you can, and be a freeman. There are disadvantages attending the condition of a slave; and if you can escape from them, in a proper manner, it is your privilege and your duty to do it.

{d} "care not" Heb 13:5

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *For he that is called in the Lord*. He that is called by the Lord; he that becomes a Christian.

Being a servant. A slave when he is converted.

Is the Lord's freeman. Marg., *Made free*. *apeleuyerov*. Is manumitted, made free, endowed with liberty by the Lord. This is designed evidently to comfort the heart of the slave, and to make him contented with his condition; and it is a most delicate, happy, and tender argument. The sense is this: "You are blessed with freedom from the bondage of sin by the Lord. You were formerly a slave to sin, but now you are liberated. That bondage was far more grievous, and far more to be lamented, than the bondage of the body. But from that long, grievous, and oppressive servitude, you are now free. Your condition, even though you are a slave, is far better than it was before; *nay*, you are now the true freeman, the freeman of the Lord. Your spirit is free; while those who are not slaves, and perhaps your own masters, are even now under a more severe and odious bondage than yours. You should rejoice, therefore, in deliverance from the greater evil, and be glad that in the eye of God you are regarded as his freeman, and endowed by him with more valuable freedom than it would be to be delivered from the bondage under which you are now placed. Freedom from sin is the highest blessing that can be conferred on men; and if that is yours, you should little regard your external circumstances in this life. You will soon be admitted to the eternal liberty of the saints in glory, and will forget all your toils and privations in this world."

Is Christ's servant. Is the *slave* (*doulov*) of Christ; is bound to obey law, and to submit himself, as you are, to the authority of another. This, too, is designed to promote *contentment* with his lot, by the consideration that all are bound to obey law; that there is no such thing as absolute independence; and that, since law is to be obeyed, it is not degradation and ignominy to submit to those which God has imposed on us by his providence in an humble sphere of life. Whether a freeman or a slave, we are bound to yield obedience to law, and everywhere must obey the laws of God. It is not, therefore, degradation to submit to *his* laws in a state of servitude, though these laws come to us through an earthly master. In this respect, the slave and the freeman are on a level, as both are required to submit to the laws of Christ; and, even if freedom could be obtained, there is no such thing as absolute independence. This is a very beautiful, delicate, and happy argument; and perhaps no consideration could be urged that would be more adapted to produce contentment.

{e} "is the Lord's freeman" Joh 8:36 Ro 6:18,22

{1} "freeman" "made free" {a} "Christ's servant" Ps 116:16 1Pe 2:16

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Ye are bought with a price*. Though you are slaves to men, yet you have been purchased for God by the blood of his Son. **See Barnes "1Co 6:20"**.

You are, therefore, m his sight, of inestimable worth, and are bound to be his.

Be not ye the servants of men. That is, "Do not *regard yourselves* as the slaves OF MEN. Even in your humble relation of life, even as servants under the laws of the land, regard yourselves as the servants of God, as obeying and serving him *even in this relation*, since all those who are bought with a price—all Christians, whether bond or free—are in fact the servants (slaves, *douloi*) of God, yet. 22. *In* this relation, therefore, esteem yourselves as the servants of God, as bound by his laws, as subject to him, and as really serving him, while you yield all proper obedience to your master." Rosenmuller, Grotius, and some others, however, think that this refers to Christians in general; and that the apostle means to caution them against subjecting themselves to needless rites and customs which the false teachers would impose on them. Others have supposed (as Doddridge) that it means that they should not sell themselves into slavery; but assuredly a caution of this kind was not needful. The view given above I regard as the interpretation demanded by the connexion. And in this view it would promote contentment, and would even prevent their taking any improper measures to disturb the relations of social life, by the high and solemn consideration that even *in* that relation they were, in common with all Christians, the true and real servants of God. They belonged to God, and they should serve *him*. In all things which their masters commanded, that were in accordance with the will of God, and that could be done with a quiet conscience, they were to regard themselves as serving God: if at any time they were commanded to do that which God had forbidden, they were to remember that they were the servants of GOD, and that he was to be obeyed rather than man.

{b} "bought with a price" 1Co 6:20

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Brethren*, etc. **See Barnes "1Co 7:20"**.

{c} "let every men" 1Co 7:17,20

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Now concerning virgins*. This commences the *third* subject on which the opinion of Paul seems to have been asked by the church at Corinth—whether it was proper that those who had unmarried daughters, or wards, should give them in marriage. The reason why this question

was proposed may have been, that many in the church at Corinth were the advocates of celibacy, and this, perhaps, on two grounds:

(1.) Some may have supposed that in the existing state of things—the persecutions and trials to which Christians were exposed—it would be advisable that a man who had unmarried daughters, or wards, should keep them from the additional cares and trials to which they would be exposed with a family; and,

(2.) some may have already been the advocates for celibacy, and have maintained that that state was more favourable to piety, and was altogether to be preferred. It is known that that opinion had an early prevalence, and gave rise to the establishment of nunneries in the papal church; an opinion that has everywhere been attended with licentiousness and corruption. It is not improbable that there may have been advocates for this opinion even in the church of Corinth; and it was well, therefore, that the authority of an apostle should be employed to sanction and to honour the marriage union.

I have no commandment, etc. No positive, express revelation. **See Barnes** "1Co 7:6, **See Barnes "1Co 7:10"**.

Yet I give my judgment. I give my opinion, or advice. **See Barnes "1Co 2:6"**.

As one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord. As a Christian; one who has been pardoned, whose mind has been enlightened, and who has been endued with the grace of God.

To be faithful. Faithful to my God. As one who would not give advice for any selfish, or mercenary, or worldly consideration; as one known to act from a desire to. honour God, and to seek the best interests of the church, even though there is no explicit command. The advice of *such* a man—a devoted, faithful, self-denying, experienced Christian—is entitled to respectful deference, even where there is no claim to inspiration. Religion qualifies to give advice; and the advice of a man who has no selfish ends to gratify, and who is known to seek supremely the glory of God, should not be disregarded or slighted. Paul had a special claim to give this advice, because he was the founder of the church at Corinth.

{*} "virgins" "Single persons" {d} "commandment" 1Co 7:6,10,40

{e} "faithful" 1Ti 1:12

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *I suppose*. I think; I give the following advice.

For the present distress. In the present state of trial. The word *distress*, *anagkhn*, *necessity*, denotes calamity, persecution, trial, etc. See Lu 21:23. The word rendered *present*, (*enestwsan*,) denotes that which urges on, or that which at that time presses on, or afflicts. Here it is implied,

(1.) that at that time they were subject to trials so severe as to render the advice which he was about to give proper; and,

(2.) that he by no means meant that this should be a *permanent arrangement* in the church, and of course it cannot be urged as an argument for the monastic system. What the *urgent distress* of this time was, is not certainly known. If the epistle was written about A.D. 59, (see the Introduction,) it was in the time of Nero; and probably he had already begun to oppress and persecute Christians.

At all events, it is evident that the Christians at Corinth were subject to some trials which rendered the cares of the marriage life undesirable.

It is good for a man so to be. The emphasis here is on the word *so*, (*outwv*;) that is, it is best for a man to conduct [himself] *in the following manner*; the word *so* referring to the advice which follows. "I advise that he conduct [himself] in the following manner, to wit." Most commentators suppose that it means, as he is; i.e., unmarried; but the interpretation proposed above best suits the connexion. The advice given is in the following verses.

{f} "that it is good" 1Co 7:1,8

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *Art thou bound unto a wife*? Art thou already married? Marriage is often thus represented as *a tie*, *a bond*, etc. **See Barnes "Ro 7:2"**.

Seek not to be loosed. Seek not a *dissolution* (*lusin*) of the connexion, either by divorce or by a separation from each other. **See Barnes "1Co 7:10, also** 1Co 7:11-17.

Art thou loosed from a wife? Art thou unmarried? It should have been rendered, *free from a wife*; or, art thou single? It does not imply of necessity that the person had been married, though it *may* have that meaning, and signify those who had been separated from a wife by her death. There is no necessity of supposing that Paul refers to persons who had divorced their wives. So Grotius, Schleusner, Doddridge, etc,

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *Thou hast not sinned*. There is no express command of God on this subject, The counsel which I give is mere advice, and it may be observed or not, as you shall judge best. Marriage is honourable and lawful; and though there may be circumstances where it is *advisable* not to enter into this relation, yet there is no law which prohibits it. The same advice would be proper now, if it were a time of persecution; or if a man is poor, and cannot support a family, or if he has already a dependent mother and sisters to be supported by him, it would be well to follow the advice of Paul. So also when the cares of a family would take up a man's time and efforts; when but for this he might give himself to a missionary life, the voice of wisdom may be in accordance with that of Paul; that a man may be free from these cares, and may give himself with more undivided interest and more successful toil to the salvation of man.

Such shall have trouble in the flesh. They shall have anxiety, care, solicitude, trials. Days of persecution are coming on, and you may be led to the stake; and in those fiery trials, your families may be torn asunder, and a part be put to death. Or you may be poor, and oppressed, and driven from your homes, and made wanderers and exiles, for the sake of your religion.

But I spare you. I will not dwell on the melancholy theme. I will not pain your hearts by describing the woes that shall ensue. I will not do anything to deter you from acting as you deem right. If you choose to marry, it is lawful; and I will not imbitter your joys and harrow up your feelings by the description of your future difficulties and trials. The word *flesh* here denotes outward circumstances, in contradistinction from the mind. They might have peace of mind, for religion would furnish that; but they would be exposed to poverty, persecution, and calamity.

{g} "thou hast not sinned" {*} "shall" "will"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *But this I say*. Whether you are married or not, or in whatever condition of life you may be, I would remind you that life hastens to a close, and that its grand business is to be prepared to die. It matters little in what condition or rank of life we are, if we are ready to depart to another and a better world.

The time is short. The time is *contracted, drawn into a narrow space*, (*sunestalmenov*.) The word which is here used is commonly applied to the act of *furling* a sail, i.e., reducing it into a narrow compass; and is then applied to anything that is reduced within narrow limits. Perhaps there was a reference here to the fact that the time was *contracted*, or made short, by their impending persecutions and trials. But it is always equally true that time is short. It will soon glide away, and come to a close. The idea of the apostle here is, that the plans of life should all be formed in view of this truth, THAT TIME IS SHORT. No plan should be adopted which does not contemplate this; no engagement of life made when it will not be appropriate to think of it; no connexion entered into when the thought, "time is short," would be an unwelcome intruder. See 1Pe 4:7 2Pe 3:8,9.

It remaineth. *to loipon*. The remainder is; or this is a consequence from this consideration of the shortness of time.

Both they that have wives, etc. This does not mean that they are to treat them with unkindness or neglect, or fail in the duties of love and fidelity. It is to be taken in a general sense, that they were to live above the world; that they were not to be unduly attached to them; that they were to be ready to part with them; and that they should not suffer attachment to them to interfere with any duty which they owed to God. They were in a world of trial; and they were exposed to persecution; and as Christians they were bound to live entirely to God; and they ought not, therefore, to allow attachment to earthly friends to alienate their affections from God, or to interfere with their Christian duty. In one word, they ought to be *just as faithful to God*, and *just as pious*, in every respect, as if they had no wife and no earthly friend. Such a consecration to God is difficult, but not impossible. Our earthly attachments and cares draw away our affections from God, but they need not do it. Instead of being the occasion of *alienating* our affections from God, they should be, and they might be, the means of binding us more firmly and entirely to him and his cause. But alas! how many professing Christians live *for* their wives and children only, and not *for* God in these relations! How many suffer these earthly objects of attachment to alienate their minds from God, rather than make them the occasion of uniting them more tenderly to him and his cause!

{a} "time is short" 1Pe 4:7 2Pe 3:8,9

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *And they that weep*. They who are afflicted.

As though they wept not. Restraining and moderating their grief by the hope of the life to come. *The general idea in all these expressions is, that in whatever situation Christians are, they should be dead to the world, and not improperly affected by passing events*. It is impossible for human nature not to feel when persecuted, maligned, slandered, or when near earthly friends are taken away. But religion will calm the troubled spirit; pour oil on the agitated waves; light up a smile in the midst of tears; cause the beams of a calm and lovely morning to rise on the anxious heart; silence the commotions of the agitated soul, and produce joy even in the midst of sorrow. Religion will keep us from immoderate grief, and sustain the soul even when in distress nature forces us to shed the tear of mourning. Christ sweat great drops of blood, and Christians often weep; but the heart may be calm, peaceful, elevated, confident in God, in the darkest night and the severest tempest of calamity.

And they that rejoice. They that are happy; they that are prospered; that have beloved families around them; that are blessed with success, with honour, with esteem, with health. They that have occasion of rejoicing and gratitude.

As though they rejoiced not. Not rejoicing with excessive or immoderate joy; not with riot or unholy mirth; not satisfied with these things, though they may rejoice in them; not forgetting that they must soon be left; but keeping the mind in a calm, serious, settled, thoughtful state, in view of the fact that all these things must soon come to an end. Oh, how would this thought silence the voice of unseemly mirth! How would it produce calmness, serenity, heavenly joy, where is now often unhallowed riot; and true peace, where now there is only forced and boisterous revelry!

As though they possessed not. It is right to buy and to obtain property; but it should be held with the conviction that it is by an uncertain tenure, and must soon be left. Men may give a deed that shall secure from their fellow-men; but no man can give a title that shall not be taken away by death. Our lands and houses, our stocks and bonds and mortgages, our goods and chattels, shall soon pass into other hands. Other men will plough our fields, reap our harvests, work in our shops, stand at our counters, sit down at our firesides, eat on our tables, lie upon our beds. Others will occupy our places in society, have our offices, sit in our seats in the sanctuary. Others will take possession of our gold, and appropriate it to their own use; and we shall have no more interest in it, and no more control over it, than our neighbour has now, and no power to eject the man that has taken possession of our houses and our lands. Secure, therefore, as our titles are, safe as are our investments, yet how soon shall we lose all interest in them by death; and how ought this consideration to induce us to live above the world, and to secure a treasure in that world where no thief approaches, and no moth corrupts.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *And they that use this world*. That make a necessary and proper use of it to furnish raiment, food, clothing, medicine, protection, etc. It is right so to *use* the world, for it was made for these purposes. The word *using* here refers to the lawful use of it, (*crwmenoi*.)

As not abusing it. *katacrwmenoi*. The preposition *kata*, in composition, here has the sense of *too much, too freely*, and is taken not merely in an intensive sense, but to denote evil, the abuse of the world. It means that we are not to use it to excess; we are not to make it a mere matter of indulgences, or to make that the main object and purpose of our living. We are not to give our appetites to indulgence our bodies to riot; our days and nights to feasting and revelry.

For the fashion of this world. *to schma*. The form, the appearance. In 1Jo 2:17, it is said that "the world passeth away and the lust thereof." The word "fashion" here is probably taken from the shifting scenes of the drama; where, when the scene changes, the imposing and splendid pageantry passes off. The form, the fashion of the world is like a splendid, gilded pageant. It is unreal and illusive. It continues but a little time; and soon the scene changes, and the fashion that allured and enticed us now passes away, and we pass to other scenes.

Passeth away. *paragei*. Passes off like the splendid, gaudy, shifting scenes of the stage. What a striking description of the changing, unstable, and unreal pageantry of this world! Now it is gay, splendid, gorgeous, lovely; tomorrow it is gone, and is succeeded by new actors and new scenes. Now all is busy with one set of actors; tomorrow a new company appears, and again they are succeeded by another, and all are engaged in scenes that are equally changing, vain, gorgeous, and delusive. A similar idea is presented in the wellknown and beautiful description of the great British dramatist:

"All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players.
They have their exits and their entrances.
And one man in his time plays many parts."

If such be the character of the scenes in which we are engaged, how little should we fix our affections on them, and how anxious should we be to be prepared for the real and unchanging scenes of another world!

{b} "fashion" Ps 39:6 Jas 4:14; 1Pe 4:7 1Jo 2:17

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *But I would have you*. I would advise you to such a course of life as should leave you without carefulness. My advice is regulated by that wish, and that wish guides me in giving it.

Without carefulness, *amerimnouv*. Without anxiety, solicitude, care; without such a necessary attention to the things of this life as to take off your thoughts and affections from heavenly objects. **See Barnes "Mt 6:25"**

and Mt 6:26-31.

Careth for the things that belong to the Lord. Marg., "The things of the Lord ;" the things of religion. His attention is not distracted by the cares of this life; his time is not engrossed, and his

affections alienated, by an attendance on the concerns of a family, and especially by solicitude for them in times of trial and persecution. He can give his *main* attention to the things of religion. He is at leisure to give his chief thoughts and anxieties to the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom. Paul's own example showed that this was the course which *he* preferred; and showed also that in some instances it was lawful and proper for a man to remain unmarried, and to give himself entirely to the work of the Lord. But the Divine commandment, (Ge 1:28,) and the commendation everywhere bestowed upon marriage in the Scriptures, as well as the nature of the case, show that it was not designed that celibacy should be general.

{*} "carefulness" "Anxious care" {a} "unmarried" 1Ti 5:5 {1} "things" "Of the Lord, as 1Co 7:34"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *Careth for the things that are of the world*. Is under a necessity of giving attention to the things of the world; or cannot give his undivided attention and interest to the things of religion. This would be especially true in times of persecution.

How he mast please his wife. How he may gratify her; how he may accommodate himself to her temper and wishes, to make her happy. The apostle here plainly intimates that there would be *danger* that the man would be so anxious to gratify his wife, as to interfere with his direct religious duties. This may be done in many ways.

(1.) The affections may be taken off from the Lord, and bestowed upon the wife. She may become the object of even improper attachment, and may take the place of God in the affections.

(2.) The *time* may be taken up in devotion to her, which should be given to secret prayer, and to the duties of religion.

(3.) She may demand his *society* and *attention* when he ought to be engaged in doing good to others, and endeavouring to advance the kingdom of Christ.

(4.) She may be gay and fashionable, and may lead him into improper expenses, into a style of living that may be unsuitable for a Christian, and into society where his piety will be injured, and his devotion to God lessened; or,

(5.) she may have erroneous opinions on the doctrines and duties of religion; and a desire to please her may lead him insensibly to modify his views, and to adopt more lax opinions, and to pursue a more lax course of life in his religious duties. Many a husband has thus been injured by a gay, thoughtless, and imprudent wife; and though that wife *may* be a Christian, yet her course may be such as shall greatly retard his growth in grace, and mar the beauty of his piety.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *Between a wife and a virgin*. Between a woman that is married and one that is unmarried. The apostle says, that a similar difference between the condition of her that is married and her that is unmarried takes place, which had been observed between the married and the unmarried man. The Greek word here (*memeristai*) may mean, *is divided*, and be rendered, "the wife and the virgin are *divided* in the same manner;" i.e., there is the same difference in their case as exists between the married and the unmarried man.

The unmarried woman, etc. Has more advantages for attending to the things of religion; has fewer temptations to neglect her proper duty to God.

Both in body and in spirit. Entirely holy; that she may be entirely devoted to God. Perhaps in her case the apostle mentions the "body," which he had not done in the case of the man, because her temptation would be principally in regard to that—the danger of endeavouring to decorate and adorn her person to please her husband.

How she may please her husband. The apostle here intends, undoubtedly, to intimate that there were dangers to personal piety in the married life, which would not occur in a state of celibacy; and that the unmarried female would have greater opportunities for devotion and usefulness than if married. And he intimates that the married female would be in danger of losing her zeal, and marring her piety, by attention to her husband, and by a constant effort to please him. Some of the ways in which this might be done are the following:

(1.) As in the former case, 1Co 7:33, her *affections* might be transferred from God to the partner of her life.

(2.) Her *time* will be occupied by an attention to him and to his will; and there would be danger that that attention would be allowed to interfere with her hours of secret retirement and communion with God.

(3.) Her time would be necessarily broken in upon by the cares of a family; and she should therefore guard with peculiar vigilance, that she may *redeem* time for secret communion with God.

(4.) The time which she before gave to benevolent objects may now be given to please her husband. Before her marriage she may have been distinguished for zeal, and for active efforts in every plan of doing good; subsequently, she may lay aside this zeal, and withdraw from these plans, and be as little distinguished as others.

(5.) Her piety may be greatly injured by false notions of what should be done to please her husband. If he is a worldly and fashionable man, she may seek to please him by "gold, and pearls, and costly array." Instead of cultivating the ornament of "a meek and quiet spirit," her main wish may be to decorate her person, and render herself attractive by the adorning of her *person* rather than of her *mind*.

(6.) If he is opposed to religion, or if he has lax opinions on the subject, or if he is skeptical and worldly, she will be in danger of relaxing in *her* views in regard to the strictness of Christianity, and of becoming conformed to his. She will insensibly become *less* strict in regard to the Sabbath, the Bible, the prayer-meeting, the Sabbath-school, the plans of Christian benevolence, the *doctrines* of the gospel.

(7.) To please him, she will be found in the gay circle—perhaps in the assembly room, or even the theatre, or amidst companies of gaiety and amusement—and will forget that she is professedly devoted only to God. And,

(8.) she is in danger, as the result of all this, of forsaking her old religious friends, the companions of purer, brighter days, the humble and devoted friends of Jesus; and of seeking society among the

gay, the rich, the proud, the worldly. Her piety thus is injured; she becomes worldly and vain, and less and less like Christ; until Heaven, perhaps, in mercy smites her idol; and he dies, and leaves her again to the blessedness of single-hearted devotion to God. Oh, how many a Christian female has thus been injured by an unhappy marriage with a gay and worldly man! How often has the church occasion to mourn over piety that is dimmed, benevolence that is quenched, zeal that is extinguished, by devotion to a gay and worldly husband! How often does humble piety weep over such a scene! How often does the cause of sacred charity sigh! How often is the Redeemer wounded in the house of his friends! And oh, how often does it become NECESSARY for God to interpose, and to remove by death the object of the affection of his wandering child, and to clothe her in the habiliments of mourning, and to bathe her cheeks in tears, that "by the sadness of the countenance her heart may be made better!" Who can tell how many a widow is made sucK from this cause? Who can tell how much religion is injured by thus stealing away the affections from God?

{b} "married" Lu 10:40-42

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *For your own profit*. That you may avail yourselves of all your advantages and privileges, and pursue such a course as shall tend most to advance your personal piety and salvation.

Not that I may cast a snare upon you. The word rendered *snare* (*brocon*) means a cord, a rope, a bond; and the sense is, that Paul would not bind them by any rule which God had not made; or that he would not restrain them from that which is lawful, and which the welfare of society usually requires. Paul means, that his object in his advice was their welfare; it was not by any means to bind, fetter, or restrain them from any course which would be for their real happiness, but to promote their real and permanent advantage, The idea which is here presented by the word *snare*, is usually conveyed by the use of the word *yoke*, Mt 11:29 Ac 15:10; Ga 5:1, and sometimes by the word *burden*, Mt 23:4 Ac 15:28.

But for that which is comely. (*euschmon*.) Decorous, fit, proper, noble. For that which is best fitted to your present condition, and which, on the whole, will be best, and most for your own advantage. There would be a fitness and propriety in their pursuing the course which he recommended.

That ye may attend upon the Lord. That you may engage in religious duties and serve God.

Without distraction. Without being drawn away, (*aperispastwv*;) without care, interruption, and anxiety. That you may be free to engage with undivided interest in the service of the Lord.

{+} "profit" "Advantage" {*} "comely" "becoming"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *That he behaveth himself uncomely*. Acts an unbecoming part; imposes an unnecessary, painful, and improper constraint; crosses her inclinations which are in themselves proper.

Toward his virgin. His daughter, or his ward, or any unmarried female committed to his care.

If she pass the flower of her age. If she pass the marriageable age, and remains unmarried. It is well known that in the east it was regarded as peculiarly dishonourable to remain unmarried; and the authority of a father, therefore, might be the means of involving his daughter in shame and disgrace. When this would be the case, it would be wrong to prohibit her marriage.

And need so require. And she ought to be allowed to marry. If it will promote her happiness; and if she would be unhappy, and regarded as dishonoured, if she remained in a state of celibacy.

Let him do what he will. He has the authority in the case; for in the east the authority resided with the father. He may either give her in marriage or not, as he pleases. But in this case it is advisable that she should marry.

He sinneth not. He errs not; he will do nothing positively wrong in the case. Marriage is lawful, and in this case it is advisable; and he may consent to it, for the reasons above stated, without error or impropriety.

{+} "uncomely" "unbecoming" {++} "virgin" "virgin daughter"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *Nevertheless*. But. The apostle in this verse states *some* instances where it would *not* be proper to give a daughter in marriage; and the verse is a kind of summing up of all that he had said on the subject.

That standeth steadfast in his heart, etc. Most commentators have understood this of the father of the virgin, and suppose that it refers to his purpose of keeping her from the marriage connexion. The phrase, to stand stedfast, is opposed to a disposition that is vacillating, unsettled, etc., and denotes a man who has command of himself, who adheres to his purpose, a man who has *hitherto* adhered to his purpose, and to whose happiness and reputation it is important that he should be known as one who is not vacillating, or easily moved.

Having no necessity. Where there is nothing in her disposition or inclination that would make marriage necessary, or when there is no *engagement or obligation* that would be violated if she did not marry.

But hath power over his own will. Hath power to do as he pleases; is not bound in the case by another. When there is no engagement, or contract, made in childhood, or promise made in early life that would bind him. Often daughters were espoused, or promised, when they were very young; and in such a case a man would be bound to adhere to his engagement; and much as he might *desire* the reverse, and her celibacy, yet he would not have power over his own will, or be at liberty to withhold her.

¶*And hath so decreed in his heart*. Has so *judged*, determined, resolved.

That he will keep his virgin. His daughter, or ward, in an unmarried state. He has *power* and *authority* to do it, and if he does it he will not sin.

Doeth well. In either of these cases, he does well. If he has a daughter, and chooses to retain her in an unmarried state, he does well or right.

{&} "decreed" "determined"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *Doeth well*. Does right; violates no law in it, and is not to be blamed for it.

Doeth better. Does that which is on the whole to be preferred, if it can be done. He more certainly, in the present circumstances, consults here happiness by withholding her from the marriage connexion than he could by allowing her to enter it.

{a} "So then" Ro 7:2

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *The wife is bound*, etc. **See Barnes "Ro 7:2"**.

Only in the Lord. That is, only to one who is a Christian; with a proper sense of her obligations to Christ, and so as to promote his glory. The apostle supposed that could not be done if she were allowed to marry a heathen, or one of a different religion. The same sentiment he advances in 2Co 6:14; and it was his intention, undoubtedly, to affirm that it was proper for a widow to marry no one who was not a Christian. The reasons at that time would be obvious.

(1.) They could have no sympathy and fellow-feeling on the most important of all subjects, if the one was a Christian and the other a heathen. See 2Co 6:14,15, etc.

(2.) If she should marry a heathen, would it not be showing that she had not as deep a conviction of the importance and truth of her religion as she ought to have? If Christians were required to be "separate," to be "a peculiar people," not "to be conformed to the world," how could these precepts be obeyed if the society of a heathen was voluntarily chosen, and if she became united to him for life?

(3.) She would in this way greatly hinder her usefulness; put herself in the control of one who had no respect for her religion, and who would demand her time and attention, and thus interfere with her attendance on the public and private duties of religion, and the offices of Christian charity.

(4.) She would thus greatly endanger her piety. There would be danger from the opposition, the taunts, the sneers of the enemy of Christ; from the secret influence of living with a man who had no respect for God; from his introducing her into society thus was irreligious, and that would tend to mar the beauty of her piety, and to draw her away from simple-hearted devotion to Jesus Christ? And do not these *reasons* apply to similar cases now? And if so, is not the law still binding? Do not such unions now, as really as they did then, place the Christian where there is no mutual sympathy on the subject dearest to the Christian heart? Do they not show that she who forms such a union has not as deep a sense of the importance of piety, and of the pure and holy nature of her

religion, as she ought to have? Do they not take time from God and from charity? break up plans of usefulness, and lead away from the society of Christians, and from the duties of religion? Do they not expose often to ridicule, to reproach, to persecution, to contempt, and to pain? Do they not often lead into society, by a desire to please the partner in life, where there is no religion, where God is excluded, where the name of Christ is never heard, and where the piety is marred, and the beauty of simple Christian piety is dimmed? *And if so*, are not such marriages contrary to the law of Christ? I confess that this verse, to my view, proves that all such marriages are a violation of the New Testament; and if they are, they should not on any plea be entered into; and it will be found, in perhaps nearly *all* instances, that they are disastrous to the piety of the married Christian, and the occasion of ultimate regret, and the cause of a loss of comfort, peace, and usefulness in the married life.

{b} "The wife is bound" Ro 7:2 {c} "only in the Lord" 2Co 6:14

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 40

Verse 40. *If she so abide*. If she remain a widow, even if she could be married to a Christian.

After my judgment. In my opinion, 1Co 7:25.,

And I think also that I have the Spirit of God. Macknight and others suppose that this phrase implies entire certainty; and that Paul means to affirm that in this he was clear that he was under the influence of inspiration. He appeals for the use of the term (*dokw*) to Mr 10:42 Lu 8:18; 1Co 4:9 8:2, 11:16 Heb 4:1, etc. But the word does not usually express absolute certainty. It implies a doubt, though there may be a strong persuasion or conviction; or the best judgment which the mind can form in the case. See Mt 6:7 26:53; Mr 6:49

Lu 8:18 10:36, 12:51 13:2,4 22:24 Ac 17:18 25:27; 1Co 12:22, etc. It implies here a belief that Paul was under the influence of the infallible Spirit, and that his advice was such as accorded with the will of God. Perhaps he alludes to the fact that the teachers at Corinth deemed themselves to be under the influence of inspiration; and Paul said that he judged also of himself that he was divinely guided and directed in what he said.—*Calvin*. And as Paul in this could not be mistaken; as his *impression* that he was under the influence of that Spirit was, in fact, a claim to Divine inspiration, so this advice should be regarded as of Divine authority, and as binding on all. This interpretation is further demanded by the circumstances of the case. It was necessary that he should assert Divine authority to counteract the teaching of the false instructors in Corinth; and that he should interpose that authority in prescribing rules for the government of the church there, in view of the peculiar temptations to which they were exposed.

{d} "my judgment" 1Co 7:25 {e} I think" 2Pe 3:15

REMARKS On 1st Corinthians CHAPTER 7

We learn from this chapter,

(1.) The sacredness of the marriage union; and the nature of the feelings with which it should be entered, 1Co 7:1-13. On a most delicate subject Paul has shown a seriousness and delicacy of expression which can be found in no other writings, and which demonstrate how pure his own mind

was, and how much it was filled with the fear of God. In all things his aim is to promote purity, and to keep from the Christian church the innumerable evils which everywhere abounded in the pagan world. The marriage connexion should be formed in the fear of God. In all that union, the parties should seek the salvation of the soul; and so live as not to dishonour the religion which they profess.

(2.) The duty of labouring earnestly for the conversion of the party in the marriage connexion that may be a stranger to piety, 1Co 7:16. This object should lie very near the heart; and it should be sought by all the means possible. By a pure and holy life; by exemplifying the nature of the gospel; by tenderness of conversation and of entreaty; and by fidelity in all the duties of life, we should seek the conversion and salvation of our partners in the marriage connexion. Even if both are Christians, this great object should be one of constant solicitude-to advance the piety and promote the usefulness of the partner in life.

(3.) The duty of contentment in the sphere of life in which we are placed, 1Co 7:18, etc. It is no disgrace to be poor, for Jesus chose to be poor, It is no disgrace, though it is a calamity, to be a slave. It is no disgrace to be in an humble rank of life. It is disgraceful only to be a sinner, and to murmur and repine at our allotment. God orders the circumstances of our life; and they are well-ordered when under the direction of his hand. The great object should be to do right in the relation which we sustain in life. If poor, to be industrious, submissive, resigned, virtuous; if rich, to be grateful, benevolent, kind. If a slave or a servant, to be faithful, kind, and obedient; using liberty, if it can be lawfully obtained; resigned, and calm, and gentle, if by the providence of God such must continue to be the lot in life.

(4.) The duty of preserving the order and regularity of society, 1Co 7:20-23. The design of the gospel is not to produce insubordination or irregularity. It would not break up society; does not dissolve the bonds of social life; but it cements and sanctifies the ties which connect us with those around us. It is designed to promote human happiness; and that is promoted, not by resolving society into its original elements; not by severing the marriage tie, as atheists would do; not by teaching children to disregard and despise their parents, or the common courtesies of life, but by teaching them to maintain inviolate all these relations. Religion promotes the interests of society; it does not, like infidelity, dissolve them. It advances the cause of social virtue; it does not, like atheism, retard and annihilate it. Every Christian becomes a better parent, a more affectionate child, a kinder friend, a more tender husband or wife, a more kind neighbour, a better member of the community.

(5.) Change in a man's calling should not be made from a slight cause. A Christian should not make it unless his former calling were wrong, or unless he can by it extend his own usefulness, But when that can be done, he should do it, and do it without delay. If the course is wrong, it should be forthwith abandoned. No consideration can make it right to continue it for a day or an hour; no matter what may be the sacrifice of property, it should be done. If a man is engaged in the slave-trade, or in smuggling goods, or in piracy, or in highway robbery, or in the manufacture and sale of poison, it should be at once and for ever abandoned. And in like manner, if a young man who is converted can increase his usefulness by changing his plan of life, it should be done as soon as practicable. If by becoming a minister of the gospel he can be a more useful man, every consideration demands that he should leave any other profession, however lucrative or pleasant, and submit to the self-denials, the cares, the trials, and the toils which attend a life devoted to Christ in the ministry, in Christian or pagan lands. Though it should be attended with poverty, want, tears, toil, or shame,

yet the single question is, "Can I be more useful to my Master there than in my present vocation? " If he *can* be, that is an indication of the will of God which he cannot disregard with impunity.

(6.) We should live above this world, 1Co 7:29,30. We should partake of all our pleasures, and endure all our sufferings, with the deep feeling that we have here no continuing city, and no abiding place. Soon all our earthly pleasures will fade away; soon all our earthly sorrows will be ended. A conviction of the shortness of life will tend much to regulate our desires for earthly comforts, and will keep us from being improperly attached to them; and it will diminish our sorrows by the prospect that they will soon end.

(7.) We should not be immoderately affected with grief, 1Co 7:30. It will all soon end, in regard to Christians. Whether our tears arise from the consciousness of our sins, or the sins of others; whether from persecution, or contempt of the world; or whether from the loss of health, property, or friends, we should bear it all patiently, for it will soon end; a few days, and all will be over; and the *last* tear shall fall on our cheeks, and the *last* sigh be heaved from our bosom.

(8.) We should not be immoderate in our joy, 1Co 7:30. Our highest earthly joys will soon cease. Mirth, and the sound of the harp and the viol, the loud laugh and the song, will soon close. What a change should this thought make in a world of gaiety, and mirth, and song. It should not rage men gloomy and morose; but it should make them serious, calm, thoughtful. Oh, did all feel that death was near, that the solemn realities of eternity were approaching, what a change would it make in a gay and thoughtless world! How would it close the theatre and the ball-room; how would it silence the jest, the jeer, and the loud laugh; and how would it diffuse seriousness and calmness over a now gay and thoughtless world! "Laughter is mad," says Solomon; and in a world of sin, and sorrow, and death, assuredly seriousness and calm contemplation are demanded by every consideration.

(9.) What an effect would the thought that "time is short," and that "the fashion of this world passeth away," have on the lovers of wealth! It would,

1st, teach them that property is of little value.

2nd. That the possession of it can constitute no distinction beyond the grave; the rich man is just as soon reduced to dust, and is just as offensive in his splendid mausoleum, as the poor beggar.

3rd. A man feeling this, would be led (or *should* be) to make a good use of his property on earth. **See Barnes "Lu 16:1"**

and Lu 16:2-9.

4th. He would be led to seek a better inheritance—an interest in the treasures that no moth corrupts, and that never fade away. **See Barnes "Mt 6:20"**.

This single thought, that the fashion of this world is soon to pass away—an idea which no man can doubt or deny, if allowed to take firm hold of the mind—would change the entire aspect of the world.

(10.) We should endeavour so to live in all things, as that our minds should not be oppressed with undue anxiety and care, 1Co 7:32. In all our arrangements and plans, and in all the relations of life, our grand object should be to have the mind free for the duties and privileges of religion. We should seek not to be encumbered with care; not to be borne down with anxiety; not to be unduly attached to the things of this life.

(11.) We should enter into the relations of life so as not to interfere with our personal piety or usefulness, but so as to promote both, 1Co 7:32-35. All our arrangements should be so formed as that we may discharge our religious duties, and promote our usefulness to our fellow-men. But

alas! how many enter into the marriage relation with unchristian companions, whose active zeal is for ever quenched by such a connexion! How many form commercial connexions or partnerships in business with those who are not Christians, where the result is to diminish their zeal for God, and to render their whole lives useless to the church! And how much do the cares of life, in all its relations, interfere with simple-hearted piety, and with the faithful discharge of the duties which we owe to God and to a dying world! May God of his mercy enable us so to live in all the relations of life, as that our usefulness shall not be retarded, but augmented; and so to live that we can see, without one sigh of regret, the "fashion of this world pass away;" our property or our friends removed; or even the magnificence of the entire world, with all its palaces, and temples, and "cloud-capped towers," passing away amidst the fires that shall attend the consummation of all things!

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 8

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 1

Introduction to 1st Corinthians Chapter 8

IN this chapter another subject is discussed, which had been proposed by the church at Corinth for the decision of the apostle:

Whether it was right for Christians to partake of the meat that had been offered in sacrifice to idols? On this question there would be doubtless a difference of opinion kmong the Corinthian Christians. When those sacrifices were made to heathen gods, a part of the animal was given to the priest that officiated, a part was consumed on the altar, and a part (probably the principal part) was the property of him who offered it. This part was either eaten by him at home, as food which had been in some sense consecrated or blessed by having been offered to an idol; or it was partaken of at a feast in honour of the idol; or it was in some instances exposed for sale in the market, in the same way as other meat. Whether, therefore, it would be right to partake of that food, either when invited to the house of a heathen friend, or when it was exposed for sale in the market, was a question which could not but present itself to a conscientious Christian. The *objection* to partaking of it would be, that to partake of it either in the temples or at the feasts of their heathen neighbours, would be to lend their countenance to idolatry. On the other hand, there were many who supposed that it was always lawful, and that the scruples of their brethren were needless. Some of their arguments Paul has alluded to in the course of the chapter: they were, that an idol was nothing in the world; that there was but one God, and that every one must know this; and that, therefore; there was no danger that any worshipper of the true God could be led into the absurdities of idolatry, 1Co 8:4-6. To this the apostle replies, that though there *might* be this knowledge, yet

(1.) knowledge sometimes puffed up, and made us proud, and that we should be careful lest it should lead us astray by our vain self-confidence, 1Co 8:1,2,7.

(2.) That *all* had not that knowledge, (1Co 8:7) and that they even then, notwithstanding all the light which had been shed around them by Christianity, and notwithstanding the absurdity of idolatry, still regarded an idol as a real existence, as a god, and worshipped it as such; and that it would be highly improper to countenance in any way that idea. He left the inference, therefore, that it was not proper, *from this argument*, to partake of the sacrifices to idols.

A second argument in favour of partaking of that food is alluded to in 1Co 8:8; to wit, that it must be in itself a matter of indifference; that it could make no difference before God, where all depended on *moral* purity and holiness of heart, whether a man had eaten *meat* or not; that we were really no better or worse for it; and that, therefore, it was proper to partake of that food. To this Paul replies,

(1.) that though this was true, as an abstract proposition, yet it might be the occasion of leading others into sin, 1Co 8:9.

(2.) That the effect on a weak brother would be to lead him to suppose that an idol *was* something, and to confirm him in his supposition that an idol should have some regard, and be worshipped in the temple, 1Co 8:10.

(3.) That the consequence might be, that a Christian of little information and experience might be drawn away and perish, 1Co 8:11.

(4.) That this would be to sin against Christ, if a feeble Christian should be thus destroyed, 1Co 8:12. And,

(5.) that as for himself, if indulgence in meat was in any way the occasion of making another sin, he would eat no meat as long as the world stood, (1Co 8:13;) since to abstain from meat was a far less evil than the injury or destruction of an immortal soul.

Verse 1. *Now as touching*. In regard to; in answer to your inquiry whether it is right or not to partake of those things.

Things offered unto idols. Sacrifices unto idols. Meat that had been offered in sacrifice, and then either exposed to sale in the market, or served up at the feasts held in honour of idols at their temples, or at the houses of their devotees. The priests, who were entitled to a part of the meat that was offered in sacrifice, would expose it to sale in the market; and it was a custom with the Gentiles to make feasts in honour of the idol gods on the meat that was offered in sacrifice. See 1Co 8:10 of this chapter, and 1Co 10:20,21. Some Christians would hold that there could be no harm in partaking of this meat any more than any other meat, since an idol was nothing; and others would have many scruples in regard to it, since it would seem to countenance idol worship. The request made of Paul was, that he should settle some *general principle* which they might all safely follow.

We know. We admit; we cannot dispute; it is so plain a case that no one can be ignorant on this point. Probably these are the words of the Corinthians, and perhaps they were contained in the letter which was sent to Paul. They would affirm that they were not ignorant in regard to the nature of idols; they were well assured that they were nothing at all; and hence they seemed to *infer* that it might be right and proper to partake of this food anywhere and everywhere, even in the idol temples themselves. See 1Co 8:10. To this Paul replies in the course of the chapter, and particularly in 1Co 8:7.

That we all have knowledge. That is, on this subject; we are acquainted with the true nature of idols, and of idol worship; we *all* esteem an idol to be nothing, and cannot be in danger of being led into idolatry, or into any improper views in regard to this subject, by participating of the food

and feasts connected with idol worship. This is the statement and argument of the Corinthians. To this Paul makes two answers.

(1.) In a *parenthesis* in 1Co 8:1-3, to wit, that it was not safe to rely on mere *knowledge* in such a case, since the effect of mere knowledge was often to puff men up and to make them proud, but that they ought to act rather from "charity," or love; and,

(2.) that though the mass of them might have this knowledge, yet that all did not possess it, and they might be injured, 1Co 8:7. Having stated this argument of the Corinthians, that all had knowledge, in 1Co 8:1, Paul then in a parenthesis states the usual effect of knowledge, and shows that it is not a safe guide, 1Co 8:1-3. In 1Co 8:4, he *resumes* the statement (commenced in 1Co 8:1) of the Corinthians, but which, in a mode quite frequent in his writings, he had broken off by his parenthesis on the subject of knowledge; and in 1Co 8:4-6, he states the argument more at length—concedes that there was to them but one God, and that the majority of them must know that; but states in 1Co 8:7, that *all* had not this knowledge, and that those who *had* knowledge ought to act so as not to injure those who had not.

Knowledge puffeth up. This is the beginning of the parenthesis. It is the reply of Paul to the statement of the Corinthians, that all had knowledge. The sense is, "Admitting that you all have knowledge; that you know what is the nature of an idol, and of idol worship; yet mere *knowledge* in this case is not a safe guide; its effect *may* be to puff up, to fill with pride and self-sufficiency, and to lead you astray. *Charity*, or love, as well as knowledge, should be allowed to come in as a guide in such cases, and will be a safer guide than mere *knowledge*." There had been some remarkable proofs of the impropriety of relying on mere knowledge as a guide in religious matters among the Corinthians, and it was well for Paul to remind them of it. These pretenders to uncommon wisdom had given rise to their factions, disputes, and parties, (see chap. i.—iii. ;) and Paul now reminds them that it was not safe to rely on such a guide. And it is no more safe now than it was then. Mere *knowledge*, or science, when the heart is not right, fills with pride; swells a man with vain self-confidence and reliance in his own powers, and very often leads him entirely astray. Knowledge combined with right feelings, with pure principles, with a heart filled with love to God and men, may be trusted; but not mere intellectual attainments—mere abstract science—the mere cultivation of the intellect. Unless the *heart* is cultivated *with* that, the effect of knowledge is to make a man a pedant; to fill him with vain ideas of his own importance; and thus to lead him into error and to sin.

But charity edifieth. Love, (*h agaph*;) so the word means; and so it would be well to translate it. Our word *charity* we now apply almost exclusively to alms, giving, or to the favourable opinion which we entertain of others when they seem to be in error or fault. The word in the Scripture means simply *love*. **See Barnes "1Co 13:1"**

and following. The sense here is, "Knowledge is not a safe guide, and should not be trusted. *Love* to each other and to God, true Christian affection, will be a safer guide than mere knowledge. Your conclusion on this question should not be formed from mere abstract *knowledge*; but you should ask what LOVE to others—to the peace, purity, happiness, and salvation of your brethren—would demand. If *love* to them would prompt to this course, and permit you to partake of this food, it should be done; if not, if it would injure them, whatever mere *knowledge* would dictate, it should not be done." The doctrine is, that love to God and to each other is a better guide in determining what to do than mere knowledge. And it is so. It will prompt us to seek the welfare of others, and to avoid what would injure them. It will make us tender, affectionate, and kind; and

will better tell us *what* to do, and *how* to do it in the best way, than all the abstract knowledge that is conceivable. The man who is influenced by love, ever pure and ever glowing, is not in much danger of going astray, or of doing injury to the cause of God. The man who relies on his knowledge is heady, high-minded, obstinate, contentious, vexatious, perverse, opinionated; and most of the difficulties in the church arise from such men. Love makes no difficulty, but heals and allays all: mere knowledge heals or allays none, but is often the occasion of most bitter strife and contention. Paul was wise in recommending that the question should be settled by love; and it would be wise if all Christians would follow his instructions.

{a} "unto idols" Ac 15:10,19 {b} "knowledge" Ro 14:14,22 {c} "puffeth" Isa 47:10 {*} "charity" "love" {d} "edifieth" 1Co 13

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And if any man think*, etc. The connexion and the scope of this passage require us to understand this as designed to condemn that vain conceit of knowledge, or self-confidence, which would lead us to despise others, or to disregard their interests. "If any one is any one is conceited of his knowledge, is so vain, and proud, and self-confident, that he is led to despise others, and to disregard their true interests, he has not yet learned the very first elements of true knowledge as he ought to learn them. True knowledge will make us humble, modest, and kind to others. It will not puff us up, and it will not lead us to overlook the real happiness of others." See Ro 11:25.

Any thing. Any matter pertaining to science, morals, philosophy, or religion. This is a general maxim pertaining to all *pretenders* to knowledge.

He knoweth nothing yet, etc. He has not known what is most necessary to be known on tile subject; nor has he known the true use and design of knowledge, which is to edify and promote the happiness of others. If a man has not so learned anything as to make it contribute to the happiness of others, it is a proof that he has never learned the true design of the first elements of knowledge. Paul's design is to induce them to seek the welfare of their brethren. Knowledge, rightly applied, will promote the happiness of all. And it is true now as it was then, that if a man is a *miser* in knowledge, as in wealth; if he lives to accumulate, never to impart; if he is filled with a vain conceit of his wisdom, and seeks not to benefit others by enlightening their ignorance, and guiding them in the way of truth, he has never learned the true use of science, any more than the man has of wealth who always hoards, never gives. It is valueless unless it is diffused, as the light of heaven would be valueless unless diffused all over the world, and the waters would be valueless if always preserved in lakes and reservoirs, and never diffused over hills and vales to refresh the earth.

{e} "man think" Ro 11:25 Ga 6:3; 1Ti 6:3,4

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *But if any man love God*. If any man is truly attached to God; if he seeks to serve him, and to promote his glory. The sense seems to be this: "There is no true and real knowledge which is not connected with love to God. This will prompt a man also to love his brethren, and will lead him to promote their happiness. A man's course, therefore, is not to be regulated by mere knowledge, but the grand principle is love to God and love to man. Love edifies; love promotes happiness; love will prompt to what is right; and love will secure the approbation of God." Thus explained, this difficult verse accords with the whole scope of the parenthesis, which is to show that a man should not be guided in his intercourse with others by mere knowledge, however great that may be; but that a safer and better principle was *love, charity*, (*agaph*) whether exercised towards God or man. Under the guidance of this, man would be in little danger of error. Under the direction of mere knowledge, he would never be sure of a safe guide. See 1Co 13.

The same is known of him. The words "is known," (*egnwstai*,) I suppose to be taken here in the sense of "is approved by God; is loved by him; meets with his favour," etc. In this sense the word known is often used in the Scriptures. **See Barnes "Mt 7:23"**.

The sense is, "If any man acts under the influence of sacred charity, or love to God, and consequent love to man, he will meet with the approbation of God. He will seek his glory, and the good of his brethren; he will be likely to do right; and God will approve of his intentions and desires, and will regard him as his child. Little distinguished, therefore, as he may be for human knowledge, for that science which puffs up with vain self-confidence, yet he will have a more truly elevated rank, and will meet with the approbation and praise of God. This is of more value than mere knowledge, and this love is a far safer guide than any mere intellectual attainments. So the world would have found it to be if they had acted on it; and so Christians would always find it.

{a} "known of him" Na 1:7 2Ti 2:19

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *As concerning therefore*, etc. The parenthesis closes with 1Co 8:3. The apostle now proceeds to the real question in debate, and repeats in this verse the question, and the admission that all had knowledge. The admission that all had knowledge proceeds through 1Co 8:4,5,6; and in 1Co 8:7, he gives the answer to it. In 1Co 8:4-6, everything is admitted by Paul which they asked in regard to the real extent of their knowledge on this subject; and in 1Co 8:7 he shows that, even on the ground of this admission, the conclusion would not follow that it was right to partake of the food offered in sacrifice in the temple of an idol.

The eating of those things, etc. Whether it is right to eat them. Here the question is varied somewhat from what it was in 1Co 8:1, but substantially the same inquiry is stated. The question was, whether it was right for Christians to eat the meat of animals that had been slain in sacrifice to idols.

We know. 1Co 8:1. We Corinthians know; and Paul seems fully to admit that they had all the knowledge which they claimed, 1Co 8:7. But his object was to show that even admitting that, it would not follow that it would be right to partake of that meat. It is well to bear in mind, that the

object of their statement in regard to knowledge was to show that there could be no impropriety in partaking of the food. This argument the apostle answers in 1Co 8:7.

That an idol is nothing. Is not the true God; is not a proper object of worship. We are not so stupid as to suppose that the block of wood, or the carved image, or the chiseled marble is a real intelligence, and is conscious and capable of receiving worship, or benefiting its rotaries. We fully admit, and know, that the whole thing is delusive; and there can be no danger that, by partaking of the food offered in sacrifice to them, we should ever be brought to a belief of the stupendous falsehood that they *are* true objects of worship, or to deny the true God. There is no doubt that the more intelligent heathen had this knowledge; and doubtless nearly all Christians possessed it, though a few who had been educated in the grosser views of heathenism might still have regarded the idol with a superstitious reverence. For whatever might have been the knowledge of statesmen and philosophers on the subject, it was still doubtless true that the great mass of the heathen world *did* regard the dumb idols as the proper objects of worship, and supposed that they were inhabited by invisible spirits—the gods. For purposes of state, and policy, and imposition, the lawgivers and priests of the pagan world were careful to cherish this delusion. See 1Co 8:7.

Is nothing. Is delusive; is imaginary. There may have been a reference here to the name of all idol among the Hebrews. They called idols

HEBREW

(*Elilim*,) or, in the singular,

HEBREW, (*Elil*,) vain, null, nothing-worth, nothingness, vanity, weakness, etc.; indicating their vanity and powerlessness, Le 26:1 1Ch 16:26; Isa 2:8,18-20 10:10 19:1,3 31:7 Ps 96:5 Eze 30:13; Hab 2:18; Zec 11:17, etc.

In the world. It is nothing at all; it has no power over the world; no real existence anywhere. There *are* no such gods as the heathens pretend to worship. There is but *one* God; and that fact is known to us all. The phrase "in the world" seems to be added by way of emphasis, to show the utter nothingness of idols; to explain in the most emphatic manner the belief that they had no real existence.

And that there is none other God but one. This was a great cardinal truth of religion. **See Barnes** "Mr 12:29.

Comp. De 6:4,5. To keep this great truth in mind was the grand object of the Jewish economy; and this was so plain and important, that the Corinthians supposed that it must be admitted by all. Even though they should partake of the meat that was offered in sacrifice to idols, yet they supposed it was not possible that any of them could forget the great cardinal truth that there was but one God.

{b} "idol" Is 41:24

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *That are called gods*. Gods so called. The heathens everywhere worshipped multitudes, and gave to them the name of gods.

Whether in heaven. Residing in heaven, as a part of the gods were supposed to do. Perhaps there may be allusion here to the sun, moon, and stars; but I rather suppose that reference is made

to the celestial deities, or to those who were supposed to *reside* in heaven, though they were supposed occasionally to visit the earth, as Jupiter, Juno, Mercury, etc.

Or in earth. Upon the earth; or that reigned particularly over the earth, or sea, as Ceres, Neptune, etc. The ancient heathens worshipped some gods that were supposed to dwell in heaven; others that were supposed to reside on earth; and others that presided over the inferior regions, as Pluto, etc.

As there be gods many, (*wsper*,) etc. As there are, in fact, many which are so called or regarded. It is a fact that the heathens worship many whom they esteem to be gods, or whom they regard as such. This cannot be an admission of Paul that they were truly gods, and ought to be worshipped; but it is a declaration that they *esteemed* them to be such, or that a large number of imaginary beings were thus adored. The emphasis should be placed on the word many; and the design of the parenthesis is to show that the number of these that were worshipped was not a few, but was immense; and that they were *in fact* worshipped as gods, and allowed to have the influence over their minds and lives which they *would* have if they were real; that is, that the *effect* of this popular belief was to produce just as much fear, alarm, superstition, and corruption, as though these imaginary gods had a real existence. So that though the more intelligent of the heathen put no confidence in them, yet the effect on the great mass was the same as if they had had a real existence, and exerted over them a real control.

And lords many, (*kurioi polloi*) Those who had a *rule* over them; to whom they submitted themselves; and whose laws they obeyed. This name *lord* was often given to their idol gods. Thus among the nations of Canaan their idols were called

HEBREW, (*Baal*, or *lord*,) the tutelary god of the Phenicians and Syrians, Jud 8:33 9:4,46.

It is used here with reference to the *idols*, and means that the laws which they were supposed to give in regard to their worship had control over the minds of their worshippers.

{d} "are called gods" Joh 10:34,35

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *But to us*. Christians. We acknowledge but one God. Whatever the heathen worship, we know that there is but one God; and he alone has a right to rule over us.

One God, the Father. Whom we acknowledge as the Father of all; Author of all things; and who sustains to all his works the relation of a father. The word "Father" here is not used as applicable to the first person of the Trinity, as distinguished from the second, but is applied to God as God; not as the Father in contradistinction from the Son, but to the Divine nature as such, without reference to that distinction—the Father as distinguished from Ms offspring, the works that owe their origin to him. This is manifest,

(1.) because the apostle does not use the correlative term "Son," when he comes to speak of the "one Lord Jesus Christ;" and,

(2.) because the scope of the passage requires it. The apostle speaks of God, of the Divine nature, the one infinitely holy Being, as sustaining the relation of Father *to his creatures*. He produced them. He provides for them. He protects them, as a father does his children. He regards

their welfare; pities them in their sorrows; sustains them in trial; shows himself to be their friend. The name *Father* is thus given frequently to God, as applicable to the one God, the Divine Being, Ps 103:13 Jer 31:9; Mal 1:6 2:10; Mt 6:9 Lu 11:2, etc. In other places it is applied to the first person of the Trinity as distinguished from the second; and in these instances the correlative Son is used, Lu 10:22 22:42; Joh 1:18 3:35, 5:19-23,26,30,36 Heb 1:5; 2Pe 1:17, etc.

Of whom. *ex ou*. From whom, as a fountain and source; by whose counsel, plan, and purpose. He is the great source of all; and all depend on him. It was by his purpose and power that all things were formed, and *to* all he sustains the relation of a Father. The agent in producing all things, however, was the Son, Col 1:16. **See Barnes "Joh 1:3"**.

Are all things. These words evidently refer to the whole work of creation, as deriving their origin from God, Ge 1:1. Everything has thus been formed in accordance with his plan; and all things now depend on him as their Father.

And we. We Christians. We are what we are by him. We owe our existence to him; and by him we have been regenerated and saved. It is owing to his counsel, purpose, agency, that we have an existence; and owing to him that we have the hope of eternal life. The leading idea here is, probably, that to God Christians owe their hopes and happiness.

In him. *eiv auton*; or rather, *unto* him: that is, we are formed for hun, and should live to his glory. We have been made what we are, as Christians, that we may promote his honour and glory.

And one Lord, etc. One Lord, in contradistinction from the "many lords" whom the heathens worshipped. The word *Lord* here is used in the sense of *proprietor*, ruler, governor, or king; and the idea is, that Christians acknowledge subjection to him alone, and not to many sovereigns, as the heathens did. Jesus Christ is the Ruler and Lord of his people. They acknowledge their allegiance to him as their supreme Lawgiver and King. They do not acknowledge subjection to *many* rulers, whether imaginary gods or men; but receive their laws from him alone. The word "Lord" here does not imply of necessity any inferiority to God; since it is a term which is frequently applied to God himself. The idea in the passage is, that from God, the Father of all, we derive our existence, and all that we have; and that we acknowledge *immediate* and *direct* subjection to the Lord Jesus as our Lawgiver and Sovereign. From him Christians receive their laws, and to him they submit their lives. And this idea is so far from supposing *inferiority* in the Lord Jesus to God, that it rather supposes equality; since a right to give laws to men, to rule their consciences, to direct their religious opinions, and their lives, can appropriately appertain only to one who has equality with God.

By whom, etc. *di ou*. By whose *agency*; or through whom, as the agent. The word "*by*" (*di*) stands in contradistinction from "*of*" (*ex*) in the former part of the verse; and obviously means, that though "all things" derived their existence *from* God, as the Fountain and Author, yet it was "*by*" the agency of the Lord Jesus. This doctrine, that the Son of God was the great agent in the creation of the world, is elsewhere abundantly taught in the Scriptures. **See Barnes "Joh 1:3"**.

Are all things. The universe; for so the phrase *ta panta*, properly means. No words could better express the idea of the universe than these; and the declaration is therefore explicit that the Lord Jesus created all things. Some explain this of the "new creation;" as if Paul had said that *all things* pertaining to our salvation were from him. But the objections to this interpretation are obvious.

(1.) It is not the natural signification.

(2.) The phrase "all things" naturally denotes the universe.

(3.) The scope of the passage requires us so to understand it. Paul is not speaking of the new creature; but he is speaking of the question whether there is more than one God, one Creator, one

Ruler, over the wide universe. The heathen said there was; Christians affirmed that there was not. The scope, therefore, of the passage requires us to understand this of the vast material universe; and the obvious declaration here is, that the Lord Jesus was the Creator of all.

And we. We Christians, (1Pe 1:21;) or, we as men; we have derived our existence "*by*" (*di*) or *through* him. The expression will apply either to our original creation, or to our hopes of heaven, as being by him; and is equally true respecting both. Probably the idea is, that all that we have, as men and as Christians, our lives and our hopes, are *through* him, and by his agency.

By him. (*di autou*) By his agency. Paul had said, in respect to God the Father of all, that we were *unto* (*eiv*) him; he here says that in regard to the Lord Jesus, we are *by* (*di*) him, or by his agency. The sense is, "God is the author, the former of the plan; the source of being and of hope; and we are to live to him: but Jesus is the agent by whom all these things are made, and through whom they are conferred on us." Arians and Socinians have made use of this passage to prove that the Son was inferior to God; and the argument is, that the name God is not given to Jesus, but another name implying inferiority; and that the design of Paul was to make a *distinction* between God and the Lord Jesus. It is not the design of these Notes to examine opinions in theology; but in reply to this argument we may observe briefly,

(1.) that those who hold to the divinity of the Lord Jesus do not deny that there is a *distinction* between him and the Father: they fully admit and maintain it, both in regard to his eternal existence, (i.e., that there is an eternal distinction of persons in the Godhead,) and in regard to his office as Mediator.

(2.) The term "Lord," given here, does not of necessity suppose that he is inferior to God.

(3.) The *design* of the passage supposes that there was equality in some respects. God the Father and the Lord Jesus sustain relations to men that in some sense correspond to the "many gods" and the "many lords" that the heathen adored; but they were equal in nature.

(4.) The work of creation is expressly in this passage ascribed to the Lord Jesus. But the work of creation cannot be performed by a creature. There can be no delegated God, and no delegated *omnipotence*, or delegated infinite wisdom and omnipresence. The work of creation implies divinity; or it is impossible to prove that there *is* a God: and if the Lord Jesus made "ALL THINGS," he must be God.

{a} "to us" Mal 2:10 Eph 4:6 {1} "we in him" "for" {b} "by whom" Joh 1:3 Heb 1:2

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Howbeit*. But. In the previous verses Paul had stated the argument of the Corinthians—that they all knew that an idol was nothing; that they worshipped but one God; and that there could be no danger of their falling into idolatry, even should they partake of the meat offered in sacrifice to idols. Here he replies, that though this might be generally true, yet it was not universally; for that some were ignorant on this subject, and supposed that an idol had a real existence, and that to partake of that meat would be to confirm them in their superstition. The *inference* therefore is, that on their account they should abstain. See 1Co 8:11-13.

There is not, etc. There are some who are weak and ignorant; who have still remains of heathen opinions and superstitious feelings.

That knowledge. That there is but one God; and that an idol is nothing.

For some, with conscience of the idol. From conscientious regard to the idol; believing that an idol god has a real existence; and that his favour should be sought, and his wrath be deprecated. It is not to be supposed that converted men would regard idols as the *only* God; but they might suppose that they were *intermediate* beings, good or bad angels, and that it was proper to seek their favour or avert their wrath. We are to bear in mind that the heathen were exceedingly ignorant; and that their former notions and superstitious feelings about the gods whom their fathers worshipped, and whom they had adored, would not soon leave them, even on their conversion to Christianity. This is just one instance, like thousands, in which former erroneous opinions, prejudices, or superstitious views may influence those who are truly converted to God, and greatly mar and disfigure the beauty and symmetry of their religious character.

Eat it aa a thing, etc. As offered to an idol who was entitled to adoration; or as having a right to their homage. They supposed that some invisible spirit was present with the idol; and that his favour should be sought, or his wrath averted, by sacrifice.

And their conscience being weak. Being unenlightened on this subject; and being too weak to withstand the temptation in such a case. Not having a conscience sufficiently clear and strong to enable them to resist the temptation; to overcome all their former prejudices and superstitious feelings; and to act in an independent manner, as if an idol were nothing. Or their conscience was morbidly sensitive and delicate on this subject: they might be disposed to do right, and yet not have sufficient knowledge to convince them that an idol was nothing, and that they ought not to regard it.

Is defiled. Polluted; contaminated. By thus countenancing idolatry he is led into sin, and contracts guilt that will give him pain when his conscience becomes more enlightened, 1Co 8:11,13. From superstitious reverence of the idol, he might think that he was doing right; but the effect would be to lead him to a conformity to idol worship that would defile his conscience, pollute his mind, and ultimately produce the deep and painful conviction of guilt. The general reply, therefore, of Paul to the first argument in favour of partaking of the meat offered in sacrifice to idols is, that all Christians have not full knowledge on the subject; and that to partake of that might lead them into the sin of idolatry, and corrupt and destroy their souls.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *But meat commendeth us not to God*. This is to be regarded as the view presented by the Corinthian Christians, or by the advocates for partaking of the meat offered in sacrifice to idols. The sense is, "Religion is of a deeper and more spiritual nature than a mere regard to circumstances like these, God looks at the heart. He regards the motives, the thoughts, the moral actions of men, The mere circumstance of eating meat, or abstaining from it, cannot make a man better or worse in the sight of a holy God. The acceptable worship of God is not placed in such things. It is more spiritual; more deep; more important. And *therefore*, the inference is, "it cannot be a matter of much

importance whether a man eats the meat offered in sacrifice to idols, or abstains." To this argument the apostle replies, (1Co 8:9-13,) that, although this might be true in itself, yet it might be the occasion of leading others into sin, and it would then become a matter of great importance in the sight of God, and should be in the sight of all true Christians. The word "commendeth" (*paristhsi*) means, properly, to introduce to the favour of any one, as a king or ruler; and here means to recommend to the favour of God. God does not regard this as a matter of importance. He does not make his favour depend on unimportant circumstances like this.

Neither if we eat. If we partake of the meat offered to idols.

Are we the better. Margin, Have we the more. Gr., Do we abound, (*perisseuomen*;) that is, in moral worth or excellence of character. **See Barnes "Ro 14:17"**.

Are we the worse. Margin, Have we the less. Greek, Do we lack or want, (*usteroumeya*;) that is, in moral worth or excellence.

{a} "meat commendeth" Ro 14:17 {1} "we eat" "have we the more" {2} "we eat not" "have we the less"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *But take heed*. This is the reply of Paul to the argument of the Corinthians in 1Co 8:8. "Though all that you say should be admitted to be true, as it must be; though a man is neither morally better nor worse for partaking of meat or abstaining from it; yet the grand principle to be observed is, so to act as not to injure your brethren. Though you may be no better or worse for eating or not eating, yet, if your conduct shall injure others, and lead them into sin, *that* is a sufficient guide to determine you what to do in the case. You should abstain entirely. It is of far more importance that your brother should not be led into sin, than it is that you should partake of meat which you acknowledge (1Co 8:8) is in itself of no importance."

Lest by any means. *mhpwv*. You should be careful that by no conduct of yours your brother be led into sin. This is a general principle that is to regulate Christian conduct in all matters that are in themselves indifferent.

This liberty of your's. This which you claim as a right; this power which you have, and the exercise of which is in itself lawful. The *liberty* or power (*exousia*) here referred to was that of partaking of the meat that was offered in sacrifice to idols, 1Co 8:8. A man may have a *right* abstractedly to do a thing, but it may not be prudent or wise to exercise it.

Become a stumbling-block. An occasion of sin. **See Barnes** "Mt 5:29, also, **See Barnes "Ro 14:13"**.

See that it be not the occasion of leading others to sin, and to abandon their Christian profession, 1Co 8:10.

To them that are weak. To those professing Christians who are not fully informed or instructed in regard to the true nature of idolatry, and who still may have a superstitious regard for the gods whom their fathers worshipped.

{3} "this liberty" "power" {b} "liberty" Ro 14:13,20; Gal 5:13

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *For if any man*. Any Christian brother who is ignorant, or any one who might otherwise become a Christian.

Which hast knowledge. Who are fully informed in regard to the real nature of idol worship. You will be looked up to as an example. You will be presumed to be partaking of this feast in honour of the idol. You will thus encourage him, and he will partake of it with a conscientious regard to the idol.

Sit at meat. Sitting down to an entertainment in the temple of the idol. Feasts were often celebrated, as they are now among the heathen, in honour of idols. Those entertainments were either in the temple of the idol, or at the house of him who gave it.

Shall not the conscience of him which is weak. Of the man who is not fully informed, or who still regards the idol with superstitious feelings. See 1Co 8:7.

Be emboldened. Margin, *Edified*. *oikodomhyhsetai*. Confirmed; established. So the word *edify* is commonly used in the New Testament, Ac 9:31 Ro 14:19; Eph 4:12 1Th 5:11.

The sense here is, "Before this he had a superstitious regard for idols. He had the remains of his former feelings and opinions. But he was not *established* in the belief that an idol was anything; and his superstitious feelings were fast giving way to the better Christian doctrine that they were nothing. But *now*, by your example, he will be fully *confirmed* in the belief that an idol is to be regarded with respect and homage. He will see you in the very temple, partaking of a feast in honour of the idol; and he will infer not only that it is right, but that it is a matter of conscience with you, and will follow your example."

{4} "be emboldened" "edified"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *And through thy knowledge*. Because you knew that an idol was nothing, and that there could be really no danger of falling into idolatry from partaking of these entertainments. You will thus be the means of deceiving and destroying him. The *argument* of the apostle here is, that *if this* was to be the result, the duty of those who had this knowledge was plain.

Shall the weak brother. The uninformed and ignorant Christian. That it means a real Christian there can be no doubt. For,

(1.) it is the usual term by which Christians are designated—the endearing name of brother; and,

(2.) the scope of the passage requires it so to be understood. **See Barnes "Ro 14:20"**.

Perish. Be destroyed; ruined; lost. **See Barnes "Joh 10:28"**.

So the word *apoleitai* properly and usually signifies. The sense is, that the *tendency* of this course would be, to lead the weak brother into sin, to apostasy, and to ruin. But this does not prove that any who were truly converted should apostatize and be lost; for,

(1.) there may be a *tendency* to a thing, and yet that thing may never happen. It may be arrested, and the event not occur.

(2.) The *warning* designed to prevent it may be effectual, and be the means of saving. A man in a canoe floating down the Niagara river may have a *tendency* to go over the falls; but he may be hailed from the shore, and the hailing may be effectual, and he may be saved. The call to him was *designed* to save him, and actually had that effect. So it may be in the warnings to Christians.

(3.) The apostle does not say that any true Christian would be lost. He puts a question; and affirms that if *one* thing was done, *another might* follow. But this is not affirming that any one *would* be lost. So I might say, that *if* the man *continued* to float on towards the falls of Niagara, he would be destroyed. If one thing was done, the other would be a consequence. But this would be very different from a statement that a man *had actually* gone over the falls, and been lost.

(4.) It is elsewhere abundantly proved, that no one who has been truly converted will apostatize and be destroyed. **See Barnes "Joh 10:28"**.

Comp. **See Barnes "**Ro 8:29, **See Barnes "Ro 8:30"**.

For whom Christ died? This is urged as an argument why we should not do anything that would tend to destroy the souls of men. And no stronger argument could be used. The argument is, that we should not do anything that would tend to frustrate the work of Christ, that would render the shedding of his blood vain. The *possibility* of doing this is urged; and that bare possibility should deter us from a course of conduct that might have this tendency. It is an appeal drawn from the deep and tender love, the sufferings, and the dying groans of the Son of God. If *he* endured so much to save the soul, assuredly we should not pursue a course that would tend to destroy it. If he *denied* himself so much to *redeem*, we should not, assuredly, be so fond of self-gratification as to be unwilling to abandon anything that would tend to *destroy*.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *But when ye sin so against the brethren*. This is designed further to show the evil of causing others to sin; and hence the evil which might arise from partaking of the meat offered to idols. The word *sin* here is to be taken in the sense of *injuring*, *offending*, *leading* into sin. You violate the law which requires you to love your brethren, and to seek their welfare, and thus you sin against them. Sin is properly against God; but there may be a course of injury pursued against men, or doing them injustice or wrong, and this is sin against them. Christians are bound to do right towards all.

And wound their weak conscience. The word wound here (*tuptontev*, *smiting*, *beating*) is taken in the sense of injure. Their consciences are ill-informed. They have not the knowledge which you have. And by your conduct they are led farther into error, and believe that the idol is something, and is to be honoured. They are thus led into sin, and their conscience is more and more perverted, and oppressed more and more with a sense of guilt.

Ye sin against Christ. Because,

(1.) Christ has commanded you to love them, and seek their good, and not to lead them into sin; and,

(2.) because they are so intimately united to Christ, **See Barnes** "Joh 15:1, etc., that to offend them is to offend him; to injure the members is to injure the Head; to destroy their souls is to pain his heart and to injure his cause. **See Barnes "Mt 10:40"**.

Comp. Lu 10:16.

{a} "But when" Mt 25:40,45

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Wherefore*. As the conclusion of the whole matter.

If meat, etc. Paul here proposes his own views and feelings, or tells them how he would act, in order to show them how they should act in these circumstances.

Make my brother to offend. Lead him into sin; or shall be the cause of leading him into error and guilt. It does not mean, if the eating of meat should enrage or irritate another; but if it is the occasion of his being led into transgression. How this might be done is stated in 1Co 8:10.

I will eat no flesh, etc. My eating meat is a matter of comparative unimportance. I can dispense with it. It is of much less importance to me than happiness, a good conscience, and salvation are to my brother. And the law of love therefore to him, requires me to deny myself rather than to be the occasion of leading him into sin. This is a noble resolution; and marks a great, disinterested, and magnanimous spirit. It is a spirit that seeks the good of all; that can deny itself; that is supremely anxious for the glory of God and the salvation of man, and that can make personal comfort and gratification subservient to the good of others. It was the principle on which Paul always acted; and is the very spirit of the self-denying Son of God.

While the world standeth. Greek, For ever. The phrase, "I will *never* eat meat," would express the idea.

Lest I make, etc. Rather than lead him into sin, by my indulging in eating the meat offered in sacrifice to idols.

{b} "lest" 1Co 9:22

REMARKS on 1st Corinthians Chapter 8

This chapter is very important, as it settles some *principles* in regard to the conduct of Christians; and shows how they should act in reference to things that are *indifferent*; or which in themselves can be considered as neither right nor wrong; and in reference to those things which may be considered in themselves as *right* and *lawful*, but whose indulgence might injure others. And from the chapter we learn:

(1.) That Christians, though they are truly converted, yet may have many erroneous views and feelings in reference to many things, 1Co 8:6. This was true of those converted from ancient heathenism, and it is true of those who are *now* converted from heathenism, and of all young converts. Former opinions, and prejudices, and even superstitions, abide long in the mind, and cast a long and withering influence over the regions of Christian piety. The morning dawn is at first very obscure. The change from night to daybreak is at first scarcely perceptible. And so it may be in conversion. The views which a heathen entertained from his childhood could not at once be

removed. The influence of corrupt opinions and feelings, which a sinner has long indulged, may *travel over* in his conversion, and may long endanger his piety and destroy his peace. Corrupt and infidel thoughts, associations of pollution, cannot be destroyed at once; and we are not to expect from a child in the Christian life, the full vigour, and the elevated principle, and the strength to resist temptation, which we expect of the man matured in the service of the Lord Jesus. This should lead us to *charity* in regard to the imperfections and failings of young converts; to a willingness to aid and counsel them; to *carefulness* not to lead them into sin; and it should lead us *not* to expect the same amount of piety, zeal, and purity in converts from degraded heathens, which we expect in Christian lands, and where converts have been trained up under all the advantages of Sabbath-schools and Bible-classes.

(2.) Our opinions should be formed, and our treatment of others regulated, not by abstract *knowledge*, but by love, 1Co 8:1. A man is usually much more likely to act right who is influenced by charity and love, than one who is guided by simple knowledge, or by self-confidence. One is humble, kind, tender towards the frailties of others, sensible himself of infirmity, and is *disposed* to do right; the other may be vain, harsh, censorious, unkind, and severe. Knowledge is useful; but for the practical purposes of life, in an erring and fallen world, love is more useful; and while the one often leads astray, the other seldom errs. Whatever *knowledge* we may have, we should make it a point from which we are never to depart, that our opinions of others, and our treatment of them, should be formed under the influence of love.

(3.) We should not be self-confident of our wisdom, 1Co 8:2. Religion produces humility. Mere knowledge may fill the heart with pride and vanity. True knowledge is not inconsistent with humility; but it must be joined with a *heart* that is right. The men that have been most eminent in knowledge have also been distinguished for humility; but the heart was right, and they saw the folly of depending on mere knowledge.

(4.) There is but one God, 1Co 8:4-6. This great truth lies at the foundation of all true religion; and yet is so simple that it may be known by all Christians, however humble, and is to be presumed to be known by all. But though simple, it is a great and glorious truth. To keep this before the minds of men, was one great purpose of all God's revelations; and to communicate it to men is now the grand object of all missionary enterprises. The world is full of idols and idolaters; but the knowledge of this simple truth would change the moral aspect of the entire globe. To spread this truth should be the great aim and purpose of all true Christians; and when this truth is spread, the idols of the heathen will fall to the dust.

(5.) Christians acknowledge one and only one Lord, 1Co 8:6. He rules over them. His laws bind them. He controls them. He has a right to them. He can dispose of them as he pleases. They are not their own; but are bound to live entirely to him, and for the promotion of his cause.

(6.) It becomes Christians to exercise continual care, lest their conduct, even in things which are in themselves lawful, should be the occasion of leading others into sin, 1Co 8:9. Christians very often pursue a course of conduct which may not be in itself unlawful but which may lead others who have not their intelligence, or strength of principle, into error. One man may be safe where another man is in danger. One man may be able to resist temptations which would entirely overcome another. A course of life may, perhaps, be safe for a man of years and of mature judgment, which would be ruinous to a young man. And the grand principle here should be, not to do that, even though it may be lawful itself, which would, be the occasion of leading others into sin.

(7.) We see here the importance and the power of example, 1Co 8:10,11. Nothing is of more value than a correct Christian example. And this applies particularly to those who are in the more elevated ranks of life; who occupy stations of importance; who are at the head of families, colleges, and schools. The ignorant will be likely to follow the example of the learned; the poor of the rich; those in humble life will imitate the manners of the great. Even in things, therefore, which may not be in themselves unlawful in these circumstances, they should set an example of self-denial, of plainness, of abstinence, for the sake of those beneath them. They should so live that it would be safe and right for all to imitate their example, Christ, though he was rich, yet so lived that all may safely imitate him, though he was honoured of God, and exalted to the highest office as the Redeemer of the world, yet he lived so that all in every rank may follow him; though he had all power, and was worshipped by angels, yet so lived that he might teach the most humble and lowly how to live; and so lived that it is safe and proper for all to live as he did. So should every monarch, and prince, and rich man; every noble, and every learned man; every man of honour and office; every master of a family, and every man of age and wisdom, live that all others may learn of them *how* to live, and that they may safely walk in their footsteps.

(8.) We have here a noble instance of the principles on which Paul was willing to act, 1Co 8:13. He was willing to deny himself of any gratification, if his conduct was likely to be the occasion of leading others into sin. Even from that which was in itself lawful he would abstain for ever, if by indulgence he would be the occasion of another's falling into transgression. But how rare is this virtue! How seldom is it practised! How few Christians and Christian ministers are there who deny themselves any gratification in things in themselves right, lest they should induce others to sin. And yet this is the grand principle of Christianity; and this should influence and guide all the professed friends and followers of Christ. This *principle* might be applied to many things in which many Christians now freely indulge; and, *if* applied, would produce great and important changes in society.

1st. Entertainments and feasts which, perhaps, you may be able to *afford*, (that is, *afford* in the supposition that what you have is yours, and not the Lord's,) may lead many of those who cannot afford it to imitate you, and to involve themselves in debt, in extravagance, in ruin.

2nd. You might *possibly* be safe at a festival, at a public dinner, or in a large party; but your example would encourage others where they would not be safe; and yet, how could you reply should they say that you were there, and that they were encouraged by you?

3rd. On the supposition that the use of wine and other fermented liquors may be in themselves lawful, and that you *might* be safe in using them, yet others may be led by your example to an improper use of them, or contract a taste for stimulating drinks that may end in their ruin. Would it be right for *you* to continue the use of wine in such circumstances? Would Paul have done it? Would he not have adopted the noble principle in this chapter, that he would not touch it while the world stands, if it led him to sin?

4th. You might be safe in a party of amusement, in the circle of the gay, and in scenes of merriment and mirth. I say you *might* be, though the supposition is scarcely *possible* that Christian piety is ever safe in such scenes, and though it is certain that Paul or the Saviour would not have been found there. But how will it be for the young, and for those of less strength of Christian virtue? Will they be safe there? Will they be able to guard against these allurements as you could? Will they not be led into the love of gaiety, vanity, and folly? And what would Paul have done in such cases? What would Jesus Christ have done? What should Christians now do? This single principle,

if fairly applied, would go far to change the aspect of the Christian world. If all Christians had Paul's delicate sensibilities, and Paul's strength of Christian virtue, and Paul's willingness to deny himself to benefit others, the aspect of the Christian world would soon change. How many practices, now freely indulged in, would be abandoned! And how soon would every Christian be seen to set such an example that all others could safely follow it!

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 1

1st Corinthians CHAPTER 9

THE apostle had, in 1Co 8:13, mentioned his willingness to deny himself, if he might be the means of benefiting others. On this principle he had acted; and on this he purposed to act, The mention of this principle of action seems to have led him to a further illustration of it in his own case, and in the illustration to meet an objection that had been urged against him at Corinth; and the scope of this chapter seems to have been not only to give an *illustration* of this principle, (1Co 9:27,) but to show that this principle on which he acted would account for his conduct when with them, and would meet all the objections which had been made against his apostleship. These objections seem to have been,

(1) that he had not seen Jesus Christ; and, therefore, *could* not be an apostle, 1Co 9:1.

(2.) That he did not live like the other apostles, that he was unmarried, was a solitary man, and a wanderer, and was unlike the other apostles in his mode of life, not indulging as apostles *might* do in the ordinary comforts of life, 1Co 9:4,6.

(3.) That he and Barnabas were compelled to labour for their support, and were *conscious*, therefore, that they had no pretensions to the apostolic office, 1Co 9:6. And,

(4.) that the fact that he was unsupplied; that he did not apply to Christians for his maintenance; that he did not urge this as a *right*, showed that he was conscious that he had no claims to the apostolic character and rank.

To all this he replies in this chapter; and the main drift and design of his reply is to show that he acted on the principle suggested in 1Co 8:13, that of denying himself; and consequently, that though he had a *right* to maintenance, yet that the fact that he did not *urge* that right was no proof that he was not sent from God, but was rather a proof of his being actuated by the high and holy principles which *ought* to influence those who were called to this office. In urging this reply, he shows:

(1.) That he *had* seen Jesus Christ, and had this qualification for the office of an apostle, 1Co 9:1.

(2.) That he had the power like others to partake of the common enjoyments of life, and that his *not* doing it was no proof that he was not an apostle, 1Co 9:4.

(3.) That he was not prohibited from entering the domestic relations as others had done, but had the right to enjoy the same privileges if he chose; and that his *not* doing it was no proof that he was not an apostle, but was an instance of his denying himself for the good of others, 1Co 9:5.

(4.) That he was not under a *necessity* of labouring with his own hands, but that he might have required support as others did; that his labouring was only another instance of his readiness to deny himself to promote the welfare of others, 1Co 9:6.

This sentiment he illustrates through the remainder of the chapter, by showing that he had a right to support in the work of the apostle:- ship, and that his not insisting on it was an instance of his being willing to deny himself that he might do good to others; that he did not urge this right, because to do that might injure the cause, (1Co 9:12,16;) and that whether he received support or not, he was bound to preach the gospel. In this he shows

(a.) that *God* gave him the *right* to support if he chose to exercise it, (1Co 9:7-10,13;)

(b.) that it was *equitable* that he should be supported, (1Co 9:11;)

(c.) that the Lord had ordained this as a general law, that they which preached the gospel should live by it, (1Co 9:14;)

(d.) that he had not chosen to avail himself of it because it might do injury, (1Co 9:12,16;)

(e.) that necessity was laid upon him at all events to preach the gospel, (1Co 9:16;)

(f.) that if he did this without an earthly reward, he would be rewarded in heaven in a distinguished manner, (1Co 9:17,18;)

(g.) that he had made it the grand principle of his life, not to make money, but to save souls, and that he had sought this by a course of continued self-denial, (1Co 9:19-22;)

(h.) that all this was done for the sake of the gospel, (1Co 9:23;) and

(i.) that he had a grand and glorious object in view, which required him, after the manner of the Athletae, to keep his body under, to practise self-denial, to be temperate, to forego many comforts of which he might otherwise have partaken, and that the grandeur and glory of this object was enough to justify all his self-denial, and to make all his sacrifices pleasant, 1Co 9:24-27.

Thus the whole chapter is an *incidental* discussion of the subject of his apostleship, in *illustration* of the sentiment advanced in 1Co 8:13, that he was willing to practise self-denial for the good of others; and is one of the most elevated, heavenly, and beautiful discussions in the New Testament; and contains one of the most ennobling descriptions of the virtue of self-denial, and of the principles which should actuate the Christian ministry, anywhere to be found. All classic writings would be searched in vain, and all records of profane history, for an instance of such pure and elevated principle as is presented in this chapter.

Verse 1. *Am I not an apostle*? This was the point to be settled; and it is probable that some at Corinth had denied that he *could* be an apostle, since it was requisite, in order to that, to have seen the Lord Jesus; and since it was supposed that Paul had not been a witness of his life, doctrines, and death.

Am I not free? Am I not a free man; have I not the liberty which all Christians possess, and especially which all the apostles possess? The liberty referred to here is doubtless the privilege or right of abstaining from labour; of enjoying, as others did, the domestic relations of life: and of a support as a public minister and apostle. Probably some had objected to his claims of apostleship that he had not used this right, and that he was conscious that he had no claim to it. By this mode of interrogation, he strongly *implies* that he was a freeman, and that he had this right.

Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Here it is implied, and seems to be admitted by Paul, that in order to be an *apostle* it was necessary to have seen the Saviour. This is often declared expressly. **See Barnes** "Ac 1:21,22.

The *reason* of this was, that the apostles were appointed to be WITNESS of the life, doctrines, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and that in their *being witnesses* consisted the PECULIARITY of the apostolic office. That this was the case is abundantly manifest from Mt 28:18,19; Lu 24:48 Ac 1:21,22 2:32; Ac 10:39-41. Hence it was essential, in order that any one should be such a witness, and an apostle, that he should have *seen* the Lord Jesus. In the case of Paul, therefore, who was called to this office *after* the death and resurrection of the Saviour, and who had not therefore had an opportunity of seeing and hearing him when living, this was provided for by the fact that the Lord Jesus showed himself to him *after* his death and ascension, in order that he might have this qualification for the apostolic office, Ac 9:3-5,17. To the fact of his having been thus in a miraculous manner *qualified* for the apostolic office, Paul frequently appeals, and always with the same view, that it was necessary to have seen the Lord Jesus to qualify one for this office, Ac 22:14,15, 26:16 1Co 15:8.

It follows from this, therefore, that no one was an *apostle* in the strict and proper sense who had not seen the Lord Jesus. And it follows, also, that the apostles could have no successors in that which constituted the PECULIARITY of their office; and that the office must have commenced and ended with them.

Are not ye my work in the Lord? Have you not been converted by my labours, or under my ministry; and are you not a proof that the Lord, when I have been *claiming* to be an apostle, has owned me *as an apostle*, and blessed me in this work? God would not give his sanction to an impostor, and a false pretender; and as Paul had laboured there *as* an apostle, this was an argument that he had been truly commissioned of God. A minister may appeal to the blessing of God on his labours in proof that he is sent of him. And one of the best of all arguments that a man is sent from God exists where multitudes of souls are converted from sin, and turned to holiness, by his labours. What better credentials than this can a man need, that he is in the employ of God? What more consoling to his own mind? What more satisfactory to the world?

{a} "not seen" Ac 9:3,17 {b} "my work" 1Co 4:15

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *If I be not an apostle unto others*. "If I have not given evidence to others of my apostolic mission; of my being sent by the Lord Jesus, yet I have to you. Assuredly you, among whom I have laboured so long and so successfully, should not doubt that I am sent from the Lord. You have been well acquainted with me; you have witnessed my endowments, you have seen my success, and you have had abundant evidence that I have been sent on this great work. It is therefore strange in you to doubt my apostolic commission; and it is unkind in you so to construe my declining to accept your contributions and aid for my support, as if I were conscious that I was not entitled to that."

For the seal of mine apostleship; Your conversion is the demonstration that I am an apostle. Paul uses strong language. He does not mean to say that their conversion furnished some evidence

that he was an apostle; but that it was absolute proof, and irrefragable demonstration, that he was an apostle. A *seal* is that which is affixed to a deed, or other instrument, to make it firm, secure, and indisputable. It is the proof or demonstration of the validity of the conveyance, or of the writing. **See Barnes "Joh 3:33"; See Barnes "Joh 6:27".**

The sense here is, therefore, that the conversion of the Corinthians was a certain demonstration that he was an apostle, and should be so regarded by them, and treated by them. It was such a proof,

(1.) because Paul *claimed* to be an apostle while among them, and God blessed and owned this claim.

(2.) Their conversion could not have been accomplished by man. It was the work of God. It was the evidence then which God gave to Paul and to them, that he was with him, and had sent him.

(3.) They knew him, had seen him, heard him, were acquainted with his doctrines and manner of life, and could bear testimony to what he was, and what he taught. We may remark, that the conversion of sinners is the best evidence to a minister that he is sent of God. The Divine blessing on his labours should cheer his heart, and lead him to believe that God has sent and that he approves him. And every minister should so live and labour, should so deny himself, that he may be able to appeal to the people among whom he labours, that he is a minister of the Lord Jesus.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Mine answer*. Greek, *emh apologia* My apology; my defence. The same word occurs in Ac 22:1 25:16; 2Co 7:11 Php 1:7,17 2Ti 4:16

1Pe 3:15. **See Barnes "Act 22:1".**

Here it means his answer or defence against those who sat in judgment on his claims to be an apostle.

To them that do examine me. To those who *inquire* of me; or who censure and condemn me as not having any claims to the apostolic office. The word used here (*anakrinw*) is properly a *forensic* term, and is usually applied to judges in courts; to those who sit in judgment, and investigate and decide in litigated cases brought before them, Lu 23:14 Ac 4:9, 12:19 24:8.

The apostle here may possibly allude to the *arrogance* and pride of those who presumed to sit as judges on *his* qualification for the apostolic office. It is not meant that this answer had been given by Paul before this, but that this was the defence which he had to offer.

Is this. This which follows; the statements which are made in the following verses. In these statements (1Co 9:4-6, etc.) he seems to have designed to take up their objections to his apostolic claims one by one, and to show that they were of no force.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Have we not power*, *exousian*. Have we not the *right*. The word *power* here is evidently used in the sense of *right*, (comp. Joh 1:12, *margin*;) and the apostle means to say that though they had not exercised this *right* by *demanding* a maintenance, yet it was not because they were conscious that they had no such right, but because they chose to forego it for wise and important purposes.

To eat and to drink. To be maintained at the expense of those among whom we labour. Have we not a right to demand that they shall yield us a proper support? By the interrogative form of the statement, Paul intends more strongly to affirm that they had such a right. The interrogative mode is often adopted to express the strongest affirmation. The *objection* here urged seems to have been this: "You, Paul and Barnabas, labour with your own hands, Ac 18:3. Other religious teachers lay claim to maintenance, and are supported without personal labour. This is the case with pagan and Jewish priests, and with Christian teachers among us. You must be conscious, therefore, that you are not apostles, and that you have no claim or right to support. To this the answer of Paul is, "We admit that we labour with our own hands. But your inference does not follow. It is not because we have not a *right* to such support, and it is not because we are *conscious* that we have no such claim, but it is for a higher purpose. It is because it will do good if we should not urge this right, and enforce this claim." That they *had* such a right, Paul proves at length in the subsequent part of the chapter.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Have we not power*? Have we not a right? The objection here seems to have been, that Paul and Barnabas were unmarried, or at least that they travelled without wives. The objectors urged that others had wives, and that they took them with them, and expected provision to be made for them as well as for themselves. They therefore showed that they felt that they had a claim to support for their families, and that they were conscious that they were sent of God. But Paul and Barnabas had no families. And the objectors inferred that they were *conscious* that they had no claim to the apostleship, and no right to support. To this Paul replies as before, that they had a *right* to do as others did, but they chose *not* to do it for other reasons than that they were conscious that they had no such right.

To lead about. To have in attendance with us; to conduct from place to place; and to have them maintained at the expense of the churches amongst which we labour.

A sister, a wife. Margin, "*or woman*." This phrase has much perplexed commentators. But the simple meaning seems to be, "A wife who should be a Christian and regarded as sustaining the relation of a Christian sister." Probably Paul meant to advert to the fact that the wives of the apostles *were* and *should* be Christians; and that it was a matter of course, that if an apostle led about a wife she would be a Christian; or that he would marry no other. Comp. 1Co 7:11.

As well as other apostles. It is evident from this that the apostles generally were married. The phrase used here is *oi loipoi apostoloi*, (*the remaining apostles*, or the other apostles.) And if they were married, it is right and proper for ministers to marry now, whatever the papist may say to the contrary. It is safer to follow the example of the apostles than the opinions of the papal church. The *reasons* why the apostles had wives with them on their journeys may have been various, They may

have been either to give instruction and counsel to those of their own sex to whom the apostles could not have access, or to minister to the wants of their husbands as they travelled. It is to be remembered that they travelled among heathens; they had no acquaintance and no friends there; they therefore took with them their female friends and wives to minister to them, and sustain them in sickness, trial, etc. Paul says that he and Barnabas had a *right* to do this; but they had not used this right because they chose rather to make the gospel without charge, (1Co 9:18,) and that thus they judged they could do more good. It follows from this,

(1.) that it is right for ministers to marry, and that the papal doctrine of the celibacy of the clergy is contrary to apostolic example.

(2.) It is *right* for missionaries to marry, and to take their wives with them to heathen lands. The apostles were missionaries, and spent their lives in heathen nations, as missionaries do now, and there may be as good reasons for missionaries, marrying now as there were then.

(3.) Yet there are men, like Paul, who can do more good without being married. There *are* circumstances, like his, where it is not advisable that they should marry, and there can be no doubt that Paul regarded the unmarried state for a missionary as preferable and advisable. Probably the same is to be said of most missionaries at the present day, that they could do more good if unmarried, than they can if burdened with the cares of families.

And as the brethren of the Lord. The brothers of the Lord Jesus—James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas, Mt 13:55. It seems from this, that although at first they did not believe in him, (Joh 7:5,) and had regarded him as disgraced, (Mr 3:21,) yet that they had subsequently become converted, and were employed as ministers and evangelists. It is evident also from this statement, that they were married, and were attended with their wives in their travels.

And Cephas. Peter. **See Barnes "Joh 1:42"**.

This proves,

(1.) as well as the declaration in Mt 8:14, that Peter *had been* married.

(2.) That he had a wife after he became an apostle, and while engaged in the work of the ministry.

(3.) That his wife accompanied him in his travels.

(4.) That it is right and proper for ministers and missionaries to be married now. Is it not strange that the *pretended* successor of Peter, the pope of Rome, should forbid marriage, when Peter himself was married? Is it not a proof how little the papacy regards the Bible, and the example and authority of those from whom it pretends to derive its power? And is it not strange that this doctrine of the celibacy of the clergy, which has been the source of abomination, impurity, and licentiousness everywhere, should have been sustained and countenanced at all by the Christian world? And is it not strange that this, with all the other corrupt doctrines of the papacy, should be attempted to be imposed on the enlightened people of the United States, [or of Great Britain,] as a part of the religion of Christ?

{*} "wife" "woman"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Or I only and Barnabas*. Paul and Barnabas had wrought together as tent-makers at Corinth, Ac 18:3. From this fact it had been inferred that they knew that they had no claim to a support.

Power to forbear working? To abstain from labour, and to receive support as others do. The question implies a strong affirmation that they *had* such power. The sense is, "Why should *I* and Barnabas be regarded as having no right to support? Have we been less faithful than others? Have we done less? Have we given fewer evidences that we are sent by the Lord, or that God approves us in our work? Have we been less successful? Why, then, should *we* be singled out—and why should it be supposed that we are obliged to labour for our support? *Is there no other conceivable reason* why we should support ourselves than a consciousness that we have no right to support from the people with whom we labour? It is evident from 1Co 9:12, that Barnabas as well as Paul relinquished his right to a support, and laboured to maintain himself. And it is manifest from the whole passage, that there was some peculiar "spleen" (*Doddridge*) against these two ministers of the gospel. What it was we know not. It might have arisen from the enmity and opposition of Judaizing teachers, who were offended at their zeal and success among the Gentiles, and who could find no other cause of complaint against them than that they chose to support themselves, and not live in idleness, or to tax the church for their support. That must have been a bad cause which was sustained by such an argument.

{a} "we power" 2Th 3:8,9

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Who goeth a warfare*, etc. Paul now proceeds to illustrate the RIGHT which he knew ministers had to a support, (1Co 9:7-14) and then to show the REASON why he had not availed himself of that right, 1Co 9:15-23. The *right* he illustrates from the nature of the case, (1Co 9:7,11;) from the authority of Scripture, (1Co 9:8-10;) from the example of the priests under the Jewish law, (1Co 9:13;) and from the authority of Jesus Christ, 1Co 9:14. In this verse (1Co 9:7) the right is enforced by the nature of the case, and by three illustrations. The first is, the right of a soldier or warrior to his wages. The Christian ministry is compared to a warfare, and the Christian minister to a soldier. Comp. 1Ti 1:18. The soldier had a right to receive pay from him who employed him. He did not go at his own expense. This was a matter of common equity; and on this principle all acted who enlisted as soldiers. So Paul says it is but equitable also that the soldier of the Lord Jesus should be sustained, and should not be required to support himself. And why, we may ask, should he be, any more than the man who devotes his strength, and time, and talents to the defence of his country? The work of the ministry is as arduous, and as self-denying, and perhaps as dangerous, as the work of a soldier; and common justice, therefore, demands that he who devotes his youth, and health, and life to it, for the benefit of others, should have a competent support. Why should not he receive a competent support who seeks to *save* men, as well as he who lives to *destroy* them? Why not he who endeavours to recover them to God, and make them pure and happy, as well as he who lives to destroy life, and pour out human blood, and to fill the air with the shrieks of new-made widows and orphans? Or why not he who seeks, though in another mode, to defend the

great interests of his country, and to maintain the interests of justice, truth, and mercy, for the benefit of mankind, as well as he who is willing in the tented field to spend his time, or exhaust his health and life in protecting the rights of the nation?

At his own charges? His own expense. On the meaning of the word "charges"—*oqwnioiv*—see **See Barnes "Lu 3:14".**

Compare Ro 6:23 2Co 11:8. The word does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament.

Who planteth a vineyard, etc. This is the *second* illustration from the nature of the case, to show that ministers of the gospel have a right to support. The argument is this: "It is reasonable that those who labour should have a fair compensation. A man who plants a vineyard does not expect to labour for nothing; he expects support from that labour, and looks for it *from* the vineyard. The vineyard owes its beauty, growth, and productiveness to him. It is reasonable, therefore, that *from* that vineyard he should receive a support, as a compensation for his toil. So *we* labour for your welfare. You derive advantage from our toil. We spend our time, and strength, and talent for your benefit; and it is reasonable that we should be supported while we thus labour for your good." The church, of God is often compared to a *vineyard*; and this adds to the beauty of this illustration. See Isa 5:1-4. **See Barnes "Lu 20:9, and** Lu 20:10-16.

Who feedeth a flock, etc. This is the *third* illustration drawn from the nature of the case, to show that ministers have a right to support. The word "feedeth"—*poimainei*—denotes not only to *feed*, but to guard, protect, defend, as a shepherd does his flock. **See Barnes "Joh 21:15,** Joh 21:16-17. "The wages of the shepherds in the East do not consist of ready money, but in a part of the milk of the flocks which they tend. Thus Spon says of the shepherds in modern Greece, 'These shepherds are poor Albanians, who feed the cattle, and live in huts built of rushes: they have a tenth part of the milk, and of the lambs, which is their whole wages: the cattle belong to the Turks.' The shepherds in Ethiopia, also, according to Alvarez, have no pay except the milk and butter which they obtain from the cows, and on which they and their families subsist."—*Rosenmuller*. The church is often compared to a flock. **See Barnes** "Joh 10:1, etc. The argument here is this: A shepherd spends his days and nights in guarding his folds. He leads his flock to green pastures, he conducts them to still waters, (comp. Ps 23:2;) he defends them from enemies; he guards the young, the sick, the feeble, etc. He spends his time in protecting it and providing for it. He expects support, when in the wilderness or in the pastures, mainly from the milk which the flock should furnish. He labours for their comfort; and it is proper that he should derive a maintenance from them, and he has a right to it. So the minister of the gospel watches for the good of souls. He devotes his time, strength, learning, talents, to their welfare. He instructs, guides, directs, defends; he endeavours to guard them against their spiritual enemies, and to lead them in the path of comfort and peace. He lives to instruct the ignorant; to warn and secure those who are in danger; to guide the perplexed; to reclaim the wandering; to comfort the afflicted; to bind up the broken in heart; to attend on the sick; to be an example and an instructor to the young; and to be a counsellor and a pattern to all. As he labours for their good, it is no more than equal and right that they should minister to his temporal wants, and compensate him for his efforts to promote their happiness and salvation. And can any man say that this is NOT right and just?

{b} "warfare" 1Ti 1:18 {c} "vineyard" De 20:6 Pr 27:18 {d} "feedeth" 1Pe 5:2

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Say I these things as a man*? Do I speak this on my own authority, or without the sanction of God? Is not this, which appears to be so reasonable and equitable, also supported by the authority of God?

Or saith not the law the same also? The law of Moses, to which the Jewish part of the church at Corinth—which probably had mainly urged these objections—professed to bow with deference. Paul was accustomed, especially in arguing with the Jews, to derive his proofs from the Old Testament. In the previous verse he had shown that it was equitable that ministers of the gospel should be supported. In this and the following verses he shows that the same principle was recognised and acted on under the Jewish dispensation. He does not mean to say, by this example of the ox treading out the corn, that the law as given by Moses referred to the Christian ministry; but that the principle there was settled that the labourer should have a support, and that a suitable provision should not be withheld even from an ox; and if God so regarded the welfare of a brute when labouring, it was much more reasonable to suppose that he would require a suitable provision to be made for the ministers of religion.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 9

Verse 9. For it is written. De 25:4.

In the law of Moses. **See Barnes "Lu 24:44"**.

Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth, etc. To muzzle, means "to bind the mouth; to fasten the mouth to prevent eating or biting."— *Webster*. This was done either by passing straps around the mouth, or by placing, as is now sometimes done, a small basket over the mouth, fastened by straps to the horns of the animal, so as to prevent its eating, but not to impede its breathing freely. This was an instance of the humanity of the laws of Moses. The idea is, that the ox should not be prevented from eating when it was in the midst of food; and that as it laboured for its owner, it was *entitled* to support; and there was a propriety that it should be permitted to partake of the grain which it was threshing.

That treadeth, etc. This was one of the common modes of threshing in the east, as it is with us. **See Barnes "Mt 3:12"**.

The corn. The grain, of any kind; wheat, rye, barley, etc. Maize, to which we apply the word *corn*, was then unknown. **See Barnes "Mt 12:1"**.

Doth God take care for oxen? Doth God take care for oxen ONLY? Or is not this rather a *principle* which shows God's care for *all* that labour, and the humanity and equity of his laws? And if he is so solicitous about the welfare of brutes as to frame an express law in their behalf, is it not to be presumed that the same principle of humanity and equity will run through all his dealings and requirements? The apostle does not mean to deny that God does take care for oxen, for the very law was proof that he did; but he means to ask whether it is to be supposed that God would regard the comfort of oxen and not of men also? whether we are not to suppose that the same principle

would apply also to those who labour in the service of God? He uses this passage, therefore, not as originally having reference to men, or to ministers of the gospel, which cannot be; but as establishing a general *principle* in regard to the equity and humanity of the Divine laws; and as thus showing that the *spirit* of the law of God would lead to the conclusion that God intended that the labourer everywhere should have a competent support.

{a} "written in the law" De 25:4 1Ti 5:18

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Or saith he it altogether for our sakes*? The word "altogether" —*pantwv*—cannot mean that this was the *sole* and *only* design of the law, to teach that ministers of the gospel were entitled to support; for,

(1.) this would be directly contrary to the law itself, which had some direct and undoubted reference to oxen;

(2.) the scope of the argument here does not require this interpretation, since the whole object will be met by supposing that this settled a principle of humanity and equity in the Divine law, according to which it was proper that ministers should have a support; and,

(3.) the word "altogether"—*pantwv*—does not of necessity require this interpretation. It may be rendered *chiefly, mainly, principally*, or *doubtless*. Lu 4:23, "Ye will *surely* (*pantwv*, certainly, surely, doubtless) say unto me this proverb," etc. Ac 18:21, "I must by all means (*pantwv*, certainly, surely) keep this feast." Ac 21:22, "The multitude *must needs* (*pantwv*, will certainly, surely, inevitably) come together," etc. Ac 28:4, "*No doubt* (*pantwv*) this man is a murderer," etc. The word here therefore means, that the *principle* stated in the law about the oxen was so broad and humane, that it might *certainly, surely, particularly* be regarded as applicable to the case under consideration. An important and material argument might be drawn from it; an argument from the less to the greater. The precept enjoined justice, equity, humanity; and that was *more* applicable to the case of the ministers of the gospel than to the case of oxen.

For our sakes, etc. To show that the laws and requirements of God are humane, kind, and equitable; not that Moses had Paul or any other minister in his eye, but the *principle* was one that applied particularly to this case.

That he that ploweth, etc. The Greek in this place would be more literally and more properly rendered, "For (*oti*) he that plougheth OUGHT (*ofeilei*) to plough in hope;" i.e., in hope of reaping a harvest, or of obtaining success in his labours; and the sense is, "The man who cultivates the earth, in order that he may be excited to industry and diligence, ought to have a reasonable prospect that he shall himself be permitted to enjoy the fruit of his labours. This is the case with those who do plough; and if this should be the case with those who cultivate the earth, it is as certainly reasonable that those who labour in God's husbandry, and who devote their strength to his service, should be encouraged with a reasonable prospect of success and support."

And that he that thresheth, etc. This sentence, in the Greek, is very elliptical and obscure; but the sense is, evidently, "He that thresheth *ought* to partake of his hope; i.e., of the fruits of his hope, or of the result of his labour. It is fair and right that he should enjoy the fruits of his toil. So in God's

husbandry; it is right and proper that they who toil for the advancement of his cause should be supported and rewarded." The same sentiment is expressed in 2Ti 2:6, "The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits."

{b} "he that ploweth" 2Ti 2:6

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *If we have sown unto you spiritual things*. If we have been the means of imparting to you the gospel, and bestowing upon you its high hopes and privileges. **See Barnes "Ro 15:27"**.

The figure of *sowing*, to denote the preaching of the gospel, is not unfrequently employed in the Scriptures. See Joh 4:37; and the parable of the sower, Mt 13:3, etc.

Is it a great thing, etc. **See Barnes "Ro 15:27"**.

Is it to be regarded as unequal, unjust, or burdensome? Is it to be supposed that we are receiving that for which we have not rendered a valuable consideration? The sense is, "We impart blessings of more value than we receive. We receive a supply of our temporal wants. We impart to you, under the Divine blessing, the gospel, with all its hopes and consolations. We make you acquainted with God; with the plan of salvation; with the hope of heaven. We instruct your children; we guide you in the path of comfort and peace; we raise you from the degradations of idolatry and of sin; and we open before you the hope of the resurrection of the just, and of all the bliss of heaven: and to do this, we give ourselves to toil and peril by land and by sea. And can it be made a matter of question whether all these high and exalted hopes are of as much value to dying man as the small amount which shall be needful to minister to the wants of those who are the means of imparting these blessings? Paul says this, therefore, from the reasonableness of the case. The propriety of support *might* be further urged,

(1.) because without it the ministry would be comparatively useless. Ministers, like physicians, lawyers, and farmers, should be allowed to attend mainly to the great business of their lives, and to their appropriate work. No physician, no farmer, no mechanic, could accomplish much, if his attention was constantly turned off from his appropriate business to engage in something else. And how can the minister of the gospel, if his time is nearly all taken up in labouring to provide for the wants of his family?

(2.) The great mass of ministers spend their early days, and many of them all their property, in preparing to preach the gospel to others. And as the mechanic, who has spent his early years in learning a trade, and the physician and lawyer in preparing for their profession, receive support in that calling, why should not the minister of the gospel?

(3.) Men, in other things, cheerfully *pay* those who labour for them. They compensate the schoolmaster, the physician, the lawyer, the merchant, the mechanic; and they do it cheerfully, because they suppose they receive a valuable consideration for their money. But is it not so with regard to ministers of the gospel? Is not a *man's* family as *certainly* benefited by the labours of a faithful clergyman and pastor, as by the skill of a physician or a lawyer, or by the service of the schoolmaster? Are not the affairs of the soul and of eternity as important to a man's family as those of time and the welfare of the body? So the music-master and the dancing-master are paid, and

paid cheerfully and liberally; and yet can there be any comparison between the value of their services and those of the minister of the gospel?

(4.) It might be added, that society is benefited in a *pecuniary* way by the service of a faithful minister to a far greater extent than the amount of compensation which he receives. One drunkard, reformed under his labours, may earn and save to his family and to society as much as the whole salary of the pastor. The promotion of order, peace, sobriety, industry, education, and regularity in business, and honesty in contracting and in paying debts, saves much more to the community at large, than the cost of the support of the gospel. In regard to this, any man may make the comparison at his leisure, between those places where the ministry is established, and where temperance, industry, and sober habits prevail, and those places where there is *no* ministry, and where gambling, idleness, and dissipation abound. It is always a matter of *economy* to a people, in the end, to support schoolmasters and ministers as they ought to be supported.

Reap your carnal things. Partake of those things which relate to the present life; the support of the body, i.e., food and raiment.

{c} "if we" Ro 15:27 {*} "carnal" "worldly"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *If others*. Other teachers living with you. There can be no doubt that the teachers in Corinth urged this right, and received a support.

Be partakers of this power. Of this right to a support and maintenance.

Are not we rather? We the apostles; we who have laboured for your conversion; who have founded your church; who have been the first and the most laborious in instructing you, and imparting to you Spiritual blessings? Have not we a better claim than they?

Nevertheless we have not used this power. We have not urged this claim; we have chosen to forego this right, and to labour for our own support. The reason why they had done this, he states in the subsequent part of the chapter. See 2Co 11:7-9 12:14. Comp. Ac 18:3; Ac 20:34,35.

But suffer all things. Endure all privations and hardships; we subject ourselves to poverty, want, hunger, thirst, nakedness, rather than urge a claim on you, and thus leave the suspicion that we are actuated by mercenary motives. The word used here (*stegomen*, suffer) means, properly, *to cover*, to keep off, as rain, etc., and then to *contain, to sustain, tolerate, endure*. Here it means, to bear or endure all hardships. Comp. **See Barnes** "1Co 4:11-13.

Lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. Paul here states the reason why he had not urged a claim to support in preaching the gospel. It was not because he was not entitled to a full support, but it was that by denying himself of this right he could do good, and avoid some evil consequences which would have resulted if he had strenuously urged it. His conduct therefore in this was just one illustration of the principle on which he said (1Co 8:13) he would always act: a readiness to deny himself of things lawful, if by that he could promote the welfare of others. The reasons why his urging this claim might have hindered the gospel, may have been many.

(1.) It might have exposed him and the ministry generally to the charge of being mercenary.

(2.) It would have prevented his presenting in bold relief the fact that he was bound to preach the gospel at all events, and that he was actuated in it by a simple conviction of its truth.

(3.) It might have alienated many minds, who might otherwise have been led to embrace it.

(4.) It would have prevented the exercise of self-denial in him, and the benefits which resulted from that self-denial, etc., 1Co 9:17,18,23,27.

{*} "power" "right" {a} "Nevertheless" 2Co 11:7-9 12:14

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Do ye not know*, etc. In this verse Paul illustrates the doctrine that the ministers of religion were entitled to a support from the fact that those who were appointed to offer sacrifice received a maintenance in their work.

They which minister about holy things. Probably the *Levites*. Their office was to render assistance to the priests, to keep guard around the tabernacle, and subsequently around the temple. It was also their duty to see that the temple was kept clean, and to prepare supplies for the sanctuary, such as oil, wine, incense, etc. They had the care of the revenues; and, after the time of David, were required to sing in the temple, and to play upon instruments, Nu 3:1-36 4:1,30,35,42; Nu 8:5-22 1Ch 23:3-5,24,27 24:20-31.

Live of the things of the temple? Marg., *Feed*; i.e., are supported in their work by the offerings of the people, and by the provisions which were made for the temple service. Nu 18:24-32.

And they which wait at the altar. Probably the priests who were employed in offering sacrifice.

Are partakers with the altar? That is, a part of the animal offered in sacrifice is burned as an offering to God, and a part becomes the property of the priest for his support; and thus the altar and the priest become joint, participators of the sacrifice. From these offerings the priests derived their maintenance. See Nu 18:8-19 De 18:1, etc. The argument of the apostle here is this: "As the ministers of religion under the Jewish dispensation were entitled to support by the authority and the law of God, that fact settles a general principle which is applicable also to the gospel, that he intends that the ministers of religion should derive their support in their work. If it was reasonable then, it is reasonable now. If God commanded it then, it is to be presumed that he intends to require it now.

{1} "live" "feed" {b} "they which wait" Nu 18:8 De 18:1

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Even so*. In the same manner, and for the same reasons.

Hath the Lord ordained. Hath the Lord appointed, commanded, arranged that it should be so, (*dietaxe*.) The word here means, that he has made this a law, or has required it; The word "Lord" here doubtless refers to the Lord Jesus, who has sent forth his ministers to labour in the great harvest of the world.

That they which preach the gospel. They who are sent forth by him; who devote their lives to this work; who are called and employed by him in this service. This refers, therefore, not only to the apostles, but to all who are duly called to this work, and who are his ambassadors.

Should live of the gospel. Should be supported and. maintained in this work. Paul here probably refers to the appointment of the Lord Jesus, when he sent forth his disciples to preach, Mt 10:10; Lu 10:8. Compare Ga 6:6. The man may be said to "live in the gospel" who is supported while he preaches it, or who derives his maintenance in that work. Here we may observe,

(1.) that the command is, that they shall *live* (*zhn*) of the gospel. It is not that they should grow rich, or lay up treasures, or speculate in it, or become merchants, farmers, teachers, or book-makers for a living; but it is, that they should have such a maintenance as to constitute a livelihood. They should be made comfortable, not rich. They should receive so much as to keep their minds from being harassed with cares, and their families from want; not so much as to lead them to forget their dependence on God, or on the people. Probably the true rule is, that they should be able to live as the *mass* of the people among whom they labour live; that they should be able to receive and entertain the poor, and be willing to do it; and so that the rich also may not despise them, or turn away from their dwelling.

(2.) This is a *command* of the Lord Jesus; and if it is a command, it should be obeyed as much as any other law of the Redeemer. And if this is a command, then the minister is *entitled* to a support; and then also a people are not at liberty to withhold it. Further, there are as strong reasons why they should support him, as there are why they should pay a schoolmaster, a lawyer, a physician, or a day-labourer. The minister usually toils as hard as others; expends as much in preparing for his work; and does as much good. And there is even a higher claim in this case. God has given an *express* command in this case; he has not in the others.

(3.) The salary of a minister should not be regarded as a *gift* merely, any more than the pay of a congress-man, a physician, or a lawyer. He has a claim to it; and God has commanded that it should be paid. It is, moreover, a matter of stipulation and of compact, by which a people agree to compensate him for his services. And yet, is there anything in the shape of debt where there is so much looseness as an regard to this subject? Are men usually as conscientious in this as they are in paying a physician or a merchant? Are not ministers often in distress for that which has been promised them, and which they have a right to expect? And is not their usefulness, and the happiness of the people, and the honour of religion, intimately connected with obeying the rule of the Lord Jesus in this respect?

{c} "Lord ordained" Lu 10:7 {+} "ordained" "appointed" {d} "that they" Gal 6:6

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *But I have used none of these things*. I have not urged and enforced this right. I have chosen to support myself by the labour of my own hands. This had been objected to him as a reason why he could not be an apostle. He here shows that *that* was not the reason why he had not urged this claim; but that it was because in this way he could do most to honour the gospel and save the souls of men. Comp. Ac 20:33 2Th 3:8. The sense is, "Though my right to a support is established,

in common with others, both by reason, the nature of the case, the examples in the law, and the command of the Lord Jesus, yet there are reasons why I have not chosen to avail myself of this right, and why I have not urged these claims."

Neither have I written these things, etc. "I have not presented this argument now in order to induce you to provide for me. I do not intend now to ask or receive a support from you. I urge it to show that I feel that I have a right to it; that my conduct is not an argument that I am conscious I am not an apostle; and that I might urge it were there not strong reasons which determine me not to do it. I neither ask you to send me now a support, nor, if I visit you again, do I expect you will contribute to my maintenance."

For it were better for me to die, etc. There are advantages growing out of my not urging this claim which are of more importance to me than life. Rather than forego these advantages, it would be better for me—it would be a thing which I would prefer—to pine in poverty and want; to be exposed to peril, and cold, and storms, until life should close. I esteem my "glorying," the advantages of my course, to be of more value than life itself.

Than that any man should make my glorying void. His glorying, or boasting, or *joying*, as it may be more properly rendered, (*to kauchma mou* comp. Php 1:26 Heb 3:6,) was,

(1.) that he had preached the gospel without expense to anybody, and had thus prevented the charge of avarice, (1Co 9:18;) and

(2.) that he had been able to keep his body under, and pursue a course of self-denial that would result in his happiness and glory in heaven, 1Co 9:23-27. "Any man" would have made that "void," if he had supported Paul; had prevented the necessity of his labour, and had thus exposed him to the charge of having preached the gospel for the sake of gain.

{e} "I have used" 2Co 11:10

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *For though I preach the gospel*, etc. This, with the two following verses, is a very difficult passage, and has been very variously understood by interpreters. The general scope and purpose of the passage is to show what was the ground of his "glorying," or of his hope of "reward" in preaching the gospel. In 1Co 9:15, he had intimated that he had cause of "glorying," and that that cause was one which he was determined no one should take away. In this passage, (1Co 9:16-18,) he states what that was. He says, it was not simply that he preached; for there was a necessity laid on him, and he could not help it: his call was such, the command was such, that his life would be miserable if he did not do it. *But* all idea of "glorying," or of "reward," must be connected with some *voluntary* service—something which would show the inclination, disposition, desire of the soul. And as that in his case could not be well shown, where a "necessity" was laid on him, it could be shown only in his submitting *voluntarily* to trials; in denying himself; in being willing to forego comforts which he *might* lawfully enjoy; and in thus furnishing a full and complete test of his readiness to do anything to promote the gospel. The essential idea here is, therefore, that there was such a *necessity* laid on him in his call to preach the gospel, that his compliance with that call could not be regarded as appropriately connected with reward; and that in his case the

circumstance which showed that reward would be proper, was, his denying himself, and making the gospel without charge. This would show that *his heart was in the thing*; that he was not urged on by necessity; that he loved the work; and that it would be consistent for the Lord to reward him for his self-denials and toils in his service.

I have nothing to glory of. The force of this would be better seen by a more literal translation. "It is not to me glorying;" i.e., this is not the cause of my glorying, or rejoicing, (*ouk esti moi kauchma*.) In 1Co 9:15, he had said that he *had* a cause of glorying, or of joy, (*kauchma*.) He here says that *that* joy or glorying did not consist in the simple fact that he *preached* the gospel; for necessity was laid on him: there was some *other* cause and source of his joy or glorying than that simple fact, 1Co 9:18. Others preached the gospel also: in common with them, it might be a source of joy to him that he preached the gospel; but it was not the source of his *peculiar* joy for *he* had been called into the apostleship in such a manner as to render it inevitable that he should preach the gospel. *His* glorying was of another kind.

For necessity is laid upon me. My preaching is in a manner inevitable, and cannot therefore be regarded as that in which I peculiarly glory. I was called into the ministry in a miraculous manner; I was addressed personally by the Lord Jesus; I was arrested when I was a persecutor; I was commanded to go and preach; I had a direct commission from heaven. There was no room for hesitancy or debate on the subject, (Gal 1:16,) and I gave myself at once and entirely to the work, Ac 9:6. I have been urged to this by a direct call from heaven; and to yield obedience to this call cannot be regarded as evincing such an inclination to give myself to this work as if the call had been in the usual mode, and with less decided manifestations. We are not to suppose that Paul was *compelled* to preach, or that he was not voluntary in his work, or that he did not prefer it to any other employment: but he speaks in a popular sense, as saying that he "could not help it;" or that the evidence of his call was irresistible, and left no room for hesitation. He was free; but there was not the slightest room for debate on the subject. The evidence of his call was so strong that he could not but yield. Probably none now have evidences of their call to the ministry as strong as this. But there are many, very many, who feel that a kind of *necessity* is laid on them to preach. Their consciences urge them to it. They would be miserable in any other employment. The course of Providence has shut them up to it. Like Saul of Tarsus, they may have been persecutors, or revilers, or "injurious," or blasphemers, (1Ti 1:13;) or they may, like him, have commenced a career of ambition; or they may have been engaged in some scheme of money-making or of pleasure; and in an hour when they little expected it, they have been arrested by the truth of God, and their attention directed to the gospel ministry. Many a minister has, before entering the ministry, formed many other purposes of life; but the providence of God barred his way, hemmed in his goings, and constrained him to become an ambassador of the cross.

Yea, woe is unto me, etc. I should be miserable and wretched if I did not preach. My preaching, therefore, in itself considered, cannot be a subject of glorying. I am shut up to it. I am urged to it in every way. I should be wretched were I not to do it, and were I to seek any other calling. My conscience would reproach me. My judgment would condemn me. My heart would pain me. I should have no comfort in any other calling; and God would frown upon me. Learn hence,

(1.) That Paul had been converted. Once he had no love for the ministry, but persecuted the Saviour. With the feelings which he *then* had, he would have been wretched in the ministry; with those which he *now* had, he would have been wretched *out* of it. His heart, therefore, had been wholly changed.

(2.) All ministers who are duly called to the work can say the same thing. They would be wretched in any other calling. Their conscience would reproach them. They would have no interest in the plans of the world; in the schemes of wealth, and pleasure, and fame. Their heart is in *this* work, and in this alone. In this, though amidst circumstances of poverty, persecution, nakedness, cold, peril, sickness, they have comfort. In any other calling, though surrounded by affluence, friends, wealth, honours, pleasures, gaiety, fashion, they would be miserable.

(3.) A man whose heart is not in the ministry, and who would be as happy in any other calling, is not fit to be an ambassador of Jesus Christ. Unless his *heart* is there, and he *prefers* that to any other calling, he should never think of preaching the gospel.

(4.) Men who *leave* the ministry, and voluntarily devote themselves to some other calling when they might preach, never had the proper spirit of an ambassador of Jesus. If for the sake of ease or gain; if to avoid the cares and anxieties of the life of a pastor; if to make money, or secure money when made; if to cultivate a farm, to teach a school, to write a book, to live upon an estate, or to *enjoy life*, they lay aside the ministry, it is proof that they never had a call to the work. So did not Paul; and so did not Paul's Master and ours. They loved the work, and they left it not till death. Neither for ease, honour, nor wealth; neither to avoid care, toil, pain, or poverty, did they cease in their work, until the one could say, "I have fought a good fight, *I have finished my course*, I have kept the faith," (2Ti 4:7;) and the other, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do," Joh 17:4.

(5.) We see the reason why men are sometimes *miserable* in other callings. They *should* have entered the ministry. God called them to it; and they became hopefully pious. But they chose the law, or the practice of medicine, or chose to be farmers, merchants, teachers, professors, or statesmen. And God withers their piety, blights their happiness, follows them with the reproaches of conscience, makes them sad, melancholy, wretched. They do no good; and they have no comfort in life. Every man should do the will of God, and then every man would be happy.

{a} "necessity" Jer 1:17 20:9

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *For if I do this thing willingly*. If I preach so as to show that my heart is in it; that I am not compelled. If I pursue such a course as to show that I prefer it to all other employments. If Paul took a compensation for his services, he could not well do this; if he did not, he showed that his heart was in it, and that he preferred the work to all others. Even though he had been in a manner compelled to engage in that work, yet he so acted in the work as to show that it had his hearty preference. This was done by his submitting to voluntary self-denials and sacrifices, in order to spread the Saviour's name.

I have a reward. I shall meet with the approbation of my Lord, and shall obtain the reward in the world to come which is promised to those who engage heartily, and laboriously, and successfully in turning sinners to God, Pr 11:30 Da 12:3; Mt 13:43 25:21-23; Jas 5:20.

But if against my will. *akwn*. If under a necessity, (1Co 9:16;) if by the command of another,—(*Grotius*;) if I do it by the fear of punishment, or by any strong necessity which is laid on me.

A dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me. I am entrusted with (*pepisteumai*) this dispensation, office, economy (*oikonomian*) of the gospel. It has been laid upon me; I have been called to it; I *must* engage in this Work; and if I do it from mere compulsion, or in such a way that my will shall not acquiesce in it, and concur with it, I shall have no distinguished reward. The work *must* be done; I *must* preach the gospel; and it becomes me so to do it as to show that my heart and will entirely concur; that it is not a matter of compulsion, but of choice. This he proposed to do by so denying himself, and so foregoing comforts which he might lawfully enjoy, and so subjecting himself to perils and toils in preaching the gospel, as to show that his heart was *in* the work, and that he truly loved it.

{b} "dispensation" Col 1:25

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *What is my reward then*? What is the source of my reward? or what is there in my conduct that will show that I am entitled to reward? What is there that will demonstrate that my heart is in the work of the ministry; that I am free and voluntary, and that I am not urged by mere necessity? Though I have been called by miracle, and though necessity is laid upon me, so that I cannot *but* preach the gospel, yet how shall I so do it as to make it proper for God to reward me as a voluntary agent? Paul immediately states the circumstance that showed that he was entitled to the reward; and that was, that he denied himself, and was willing to forego his lawful enjoyments, and even his rights, that he might make the gospel without charge.

I may make the gospel of Christ without charge. Without expense to those who hear it. I will support myself by my own labour, and will thus show that I am not urged to preaching by mere "necessity," but that I love it. Observe here,

(1.) that Paul did not give up a support because he was not entitled to it.

(2.) He does not say that it would be well or advisable for others to do it.

(3.) It is right, and well for a man, if he chooses, and can do it, to make the gospel without charge, and to support himself.

(4.) All that *this* case proves is, that it would be proper only where a "necessity" was laid on a man, as it was on Paul; when he could not otherwise show that his heart was in the work, and that he was voluntary and loved it.

(5.) This passage cannot be urged *by a people* to prove that ministers ought not to have a support. Paul says they have a *right* to it. A man may forego a right if he pleases. He may *choose* not to urge it; but no one can demand of him that he should not urge it; much less have they a *right* to demand that he should give up *his* rights.

(6.) It is best in general that those who hear the gospel should contribute to its support. It is not only equal and right, but it is best for them. We generally set very little value on that which costs us nothing; and the very way to make the gospel contemptible, is to have it preached by those who

are supported by the state, or by their own labour in some other department; or by men who neither by their talents, their learning, nor their industry, have any claim to a support. All ministers are not like Paul. They have neither been called as he was, nor have they his talent, his zeal, or his eloquence. Paul's example, then, should not be urged as an authority for a people to withhold from their pastor what is his due; nor, because Paul *chose* to forego his rights, should people now demand that a minister should devote his time, and health, and life to their welfare for naught.

That I abuse not my power in the gospel. Paul had a right to a support. This power he might urge. But to urge it in his circumstances would be a hinderance of the gospel. And to do that would be to abuse his power, or to pervert it to purposes for which it was never designed.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *For though I be free*. I am a freeman. I am under obligation to none. I am not bound to give them my labours, and at the same time to toil for my own support. I have claims like others, and could urge them; and no man could demand that I should give myself to a life of servitude, and comply with their prejudices and wishes, as if I were a slave, in order to their conversion. Compare 1Co 9:1. **See Barnes "1Co 6:12".**

From all men. *ek pantwn*. This may either refer to all *persons* or to all *things*. The word *men* is not in the original. The connexion, however, seems to fix the signification to *persons*. "I am a freeman. And although I have conducted [myself] like a slave, yet it has been done voluntarily."

I have made myself servant unto all. Greek, "I have enslaved myself (*emauton edoulwsa*) unto all." That is,

(1.) I *labour* for them, or in their service, and to promote their welfare.

(2.) I do it, as the slave does, without reward or hire. I am not paid for it, but submit to the toil, and do it without receiving pay.

(3.) Like the slave who wishes to gratify his master, or who is compelled from the necessity of the case, I comply with the prejudices, habits, customs, and opinions of others as far as I can with a good conscience. The *slave is subject to the master's will*. That will must be obeyed. The whims, prejudices, caprices of the master must be submitted to, even if they are *mere* caprice, and wholly unreasonable. So Paul says that he had voluntarily put himself into this condition, a condition making it necessary for him to suit himself to the opinions, prejudices, caprices, and feelings of all men, so far as he could do it with a good conscience, in order that he might save them. We are not to understand here that Paul embraced any opinions which were false in order to do this, or that he submitted to anything which is morally wrong. But he complied with their customs, and habits, and feelings, as far as it could lawfully be done. He did not needlessly offend them, or run counter to their prejudices.

That I might gain the more. That I might gain more to Christ; that I might be the means of saving more souls. What a noble instance of self-denial and true greatness is here! How worthy of religion! How elevated the conduct! How magnanimous, and how benevolent! No man would do this who had not a greatness of intellect that would rise above narrow prejudices; and who had not a nobleness of heart that would seek at personal sacrifice the happiness of all men. It is said that

not a few early Christians, in illustration of this principle of conduct, actually sold themselves into slavery in order that they might have access to and benefit slaves—an act to which nothing would prompt a man but the religion of the cross. Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 1:14"**.

{a} "servant" Ro 1:14 Ga 5:13

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *And unto the Jews*. In this verse, and the two following, Paul states more at length the conduct which he had exhibited, and to which he refers in 1Co 9:19. He had shown this conduct to all classes of men. He had preached much to his own countrymen, and had evinced these principles there.

I became as a Jew. I complied with their rites, customs, prejudices, as far as I could with a good conscience. I did not needlessly offend them. I did not attack and oppose their views, when there was no danger that my conduct should be mistaken. For a full illustration of Paul's conduct in this respect, and the principles which influenced him, **See Barnes "Ac 16:3"; See Barnes** "Ac 18:18"; **See Barnes "Ac 21:21"; also** Ac 21:22-27 **See Barnes "Ac 23:1"; also** Ac 23:5-6.

To those that are under the law. This I understand as another form of saying that he conformed to the rites, customs, and even prejudices of the Jews. The phrase, "under the law," means undoubtedly the law of Moses; and probably he here refers particularly to those Jews who lived in the land of Judea, as being more *immediately and entirely* under the law of Moses, than those who lived among the Gentiles.

As under the law. That is, I conformed to their rites and customs as far as I could do it. I did not violate them unnecessarily. I did not disregard them for the purpose of offending them; nor refuse to observe them when it could be done with a good conscience. There can be no doubt that Paul, when he was in Judea, submitted himself to the laws, and lived in conformity with them.

That I might gain. That I might obtain their confidence and affection. That I might not outrage their feelings, excite their prejudices, and provoke them to anger; and that I might thus have access to their minds, and be the means of converting them to the Christian faith.

{b} "unto the Jews" Ac 16:3 21:23-26

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *To them that are without law*. To the Gentiles, who have not the law of Moses. **See Barnes "Ro 2:12,14"**.

As without law. Not practicing the peculiar rites and ceremonies enjoined in the law of Moses. Not insisting on them, or urging them; but showing that the *obligation* to those rites had been done away; and that they were not binding, though when among the Jews I might still continue to observe them. **See Barnes "Ac 15:1"**

and following: and the argument of Paul in Gal 2:11-18. I neglected the ceremonial precepts of the Mosaic law, when I was with those who had not *heard* of the law of Moses, or those who did not observe them, because I knew that the binding obligation of these ceremonial precepts had ceased. I did not, therefore, *press* them upon the Gentiles, nor did I superstitiously and publicly practise them. In all this, Paul has reference only to those things which he regarded as in themselves *indifferent*, and not a matter of conscience; and his purpose was not needlessly to excite the prejudice or the opposition of the world. Nothing is ever gained by *provoking* opposition for the mere sake of opposition. Nothing tends more to hinder the gospel than that. In all things of *conscience* and *truth* a man should be firm, and should lose his life rather than abandon either; in all things of indifference, of mere custom, of prejudice, he should yield, and accommodate himself to the modes of thinking among men, and adapt himself to their views, feelings, and habits of life, that he may win them to Christ.

Being not without law to God. Not regarding myself as being absolutely without law, or as being freed from obligation to obey God. Even in all this, I endeavoured so to live as that it might be seen that I felt myself bound by law to God. I was not a despiser, and contemner and neglecter of *law, as such*, but only regarded myself as not bound by the peculiar ceremonial law of Moses. This is an instance of Paul's conscientiousness. He would not leave room to have it supposed for a moment that he disregarded all law. He was bound to God by law; and in the conduct to which he was referring, he felt that he was obeying *him*. He was bound by higher law than those ceremonial observances which were now to be done away. This passage would destroy all the refuges of the Antinomians. Whatever privileges the gospel has introduced, it has not set us free from the restraints and obligations of law. That is binding still; and no man is at liberty to disregard the moral law of God. Christ came to magnify, strengthen, and to honour the law, not to destroy it.

But under the law to Christ. Bound by the law enjoined by Christ; under the law of affectionate gratitude and duty to him. I obeyed his commands; followed his instructions; sought his honour; yielded to his will. In this he would violate none of the rules of the moral law. And he here intimates, that his grand object was to yield obedience to the law of the Saviour, and that this was the governing purpose of his life. And this *would* guide a man right. In doing this, he would never violate any of the precepts of the moral law, for Christ obeyed them, and enjoined their observance. He would never feel that he was without law to God, for Christ obeyed God, and enjoined it on all. He would never feel that religion came to set him free from law, or to authorize licentiousness; for its grand purpose and aim is to make men holy, and to bind them everywhere to the observance of the pure law of the Redeemer.

{a} "being not without law" 1Co 7:22

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *To the weak*. **See Barnes "Ro 15:1"**.

To those weak in faith; scrupulous in regard to certain observances; whose consciences were tender and unenlightened, and who would be offended even by things which might be in themselves

lawful. He did not lacerate their feelings, and run counter to their prejudices, for the mere sake of doing it.

Became I as weak. I did not shock them. I complied with their customs. I conformed to them in my dress, habits, manner of life, and even in the services of religion. I abstained from food which they deemed it their duty to abstain from; and where, if I had partaken of it, I should have offended them. Paul did not do this to gratify himself, or them, but to do them good. And Paul's example should teach us not to make it the main business of life to gratify ourselves: and it should teach us not to lacerate the feelings of others; not to excite their prejudices needlessly; not to offend them where it will do no good. If truth offends men, we cannot help it. But in matters of ceremony, and dress, and habits, and customs, and forms, we should be willing to conform to them, as far as can be done, and for the sole purpose of saving their souls.

I am made all things to all men. I *become* all things; that is, I accommodate myself to them in all things, so far as can be done with a good conscience.

That I might by all means. *pantwv*. That I might use every possible endeavour that some at least might be saved. It is implied here that the opposition to the gospel was everywhere great; that men were reluctant to embrace it; that the great mass were going to ruin, and that Paul was willing to make the highest possible exertions, to deny himself, and practise every innocent art, that he might save *a few at least* out of the innumerable multitudes that were going to death and hell. It follows from this,

(1.) that men are in danger of ruin.

(2.) We should make an effort to save men. We should deny ourselves, and give ourselves to toil and privation, that we may save some at least from ruin.

(3.) The doctrine of universal salvation is not true. If it were, what use or propriety would there have been in these efforts of Paul? If *all* were to be saved, why should he deny himself, and labour and toil to save "*SOME*?" Why should a man make a constant effort to save *a few at least*, if he well knew that all were to be saved? Assuredly Paul did not know or believe that all men would be saved; but if the doctrine is true, he would have been quite as likely to have known it as its modern advocates and defenders.

{b} "weak" Ro 15:1 2Co 11:29 {c} "I am made" 1Co 10:33 {d} "that I might" Ro 11:14

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *For the gospel's sake*. That it may be advanced, and may be successful.

That I might be partaker thereof with you. You hope to be saved. You regard yourselves as Christians; and I wish to give evidence also that *I* am a Christian, and that I shall be admitted to heaven to partake of the happiness of the redeemed. This he did, by so denying himself as to give evidence that he was truly actuated by Christian principles.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Know ye not*, etc. In the remainder of this chapter, Paul illustrates the general sentiment on which he had been dwelling— the duty of practicing self-denial for the salvation of others—by a reference to the well-known games which were celebrated near Corinth. Throughout the chapter, his object had been to show that in declining to receive a support for preaching, he had done it, not because he was conscious that he had no claim to it, but because by doing it he could better advance the salvation of men, the furtherance of the gospel, and, in his peculiar case, (1Co 9:16,17,) could obtain better evidence, and furnish to others better evidence that he was actuated by a sincere desire to honour God in the Gospel. He had denied himself. He had voluntarily submitted to great privations. He had had a great object in view in doing it. And he now says, that in the well-known athletic games at Corinth, the same thing was done by the *racers*, (1Co 9:24,) and by *wrestlers*, or *boxers*, 1Co 9:25. If *they* had done it, for objects so comparatively unimportant as the attainment of an *earthly* garland, assuredly it was proper for him to do it to obtain a crown which should never fade away. This is one of the most beautiful, appropriate, vigorous, and bold illustrations that can anywhere be found; and is a striking instance of the force with which the most vigorous and self-denying efforts of Christians can be vindicated, and can be *urged* by a reference to the conduct of men in the affairs of this life. By the phrase, "know ye not," Paul intimates that those games to which he alludes, were well known to them, and that they must be familiar with their design, and with the manner in which they were conducted. The games to which the apostle alludes were celebrated with extraordinary pomp and splendour, every fourth year, on the Isthmus which joined the Peloponnesus to the main land, and on a part of which the city of Corinth stood. There were in Greece four species of games: the Pythian, or Delphic; the Isthmian, or Corinthian; the Nemean, and the Olympic. On these occasions persons were assembled from all parts of Greece, and the time during which they continued was devoted to extraordinary festivity and amusement. The Isthmian or Corinthian games were celebrated in the narrow part of the Isthmus of Corinth, to the north of the city, and were doubtless the games to which the apostle more particularly alluded, though the games in each of the places were substantially of the same nature, and the same illustration would in the main apply to all. The *Nemean* games were celebrated at Nemaea, a town of Argolis, and were instituted by the Argives in honour of Archemorus, who died by the bite of a serpent, but were renewed by Hercules. They consisted of horse and foot races, of boxing, leaping, running, etc. The conqueror was at first rewarded with a crown of olive, afterwards of green parsley. They were celebrated every third, or, according to others, every fifth year. The *Pythian* games were celebrated every four years at Delphi, in Phocis, at the foot of Mount Parnassus, where was the seat of the celebrated Delphic oracle. These games were of the same character substantially as those celebrated in other places, and attracted persons not only from other parts of Greece, but from distant countries. See Travels of Anacharsis, vol. ii. pp. 375—418. The *Olympic* games were celebrated in Olympia, a town of Elis, on the southern bank of the Alphiss river, on the western part of the Peloponnesus. They were on many accounts the most celebrated of any in Greece. They were said to have been instituted by Hercules, who planted a grove called *Altis*, which he dedicated to Jupiter. They were attended not only from all parts of Greece, but from the most distant countries. These were celebrated every fourth year; and hence, in Grecian chronology, a period of four years was called an Olympiad. See Anacharsis, vol. iii. 434, seq. It thus happened that in one or more of

these places, there were games celebrated every year, to which no small part of the inhabitants of Greece were attracted. Though the apostle probably had *particular* reference to the *Isthmian* games celebrated in the vicinity of Corinth, yet his illustration is applicable to them all; for in all the exercises were nearly the same. They consisted chiefly in leaping, running, throwing the discus or quoit, boxing, wrestling, and were expressed in the following line:

alma, podwkeihn, diskon, akonta, palhn:

Leaping, running, throwing the quoit, darting, wrestling. Connected with these were also, sometimes, other exercises, as races of chariots, horses, etc. The apostle refers to but *two* of these exercises in his illustration.

They which run. This was one of the principal exercises at the games. Fleetness or swiftness was regarded as an extraordinary virtue; and great pains were taken in order to excel in this. Indeed, they regarded it so highly, that those who prepared themselves for it thought it worth while to use means to burn their spleen, because it was believed to be a hinderance to them, and to retard them in the race. (Rob. Cal.) Homer tells us that swiftness was one of the most excellent endowments with which a man can be blessed.

"No greater honour e'er has been attain'd,

Than what strong hands or nimble feet have gain'd."

One reason why this was deemed so valuable an attainment among the Greeks was, that it fitted men eminently for war as it was then conducted. It enabled them to make a sudden and unexpected onset, or a rapid retreat. Hence the character which Homer constantly gives of Achilles is, that he was swift of foot. And thus David, in his poetical lamentations over Saul and Jonathan, takes special notice of this qualification of theirs, as fitting them for war.

"They were swifter than eagles,
Stronger than lions."—2Sa 1:23

For these races they prepared themselves by a long course of previous discipline and exercise; and nothing was left undone that might contribute to secure the victory.

In a race. *en stadiw*. In the *stadium*. The stadium, or running-ground, or place in which the boxers contended, and where races were run. At Olympia the stadium was a causeway 604 feet in length, and of proportionable width. (Herod. lib. 2. c. 149.) It was surrounded by a terrace, and by the seats of the judges of the games. At one end was fixed the boundary or goal to which they ran.

Run all. All run who have entered the lists. Usually there were many racers who contended for the prize.

But one receiveth the prize? The victor, and he alone. The prize which was conferred was a wreath of olive at the Olympic games; a wreath of apple at Delphi; of pine at the Isthmian; and of parsley at the Nemean games.—*Addison*. Whatever the prize was, it was conferred on the successful champion on the last day of the games, and with great solemnity, pomp, congratulation, and rejoicing. \-

"Every one thronged to see and congratulate them;
their relations, friends, and countrymen, shedding tears of
tenderness and joy, Lifted them on their shoulders to show
them to the crowd, and held them up to the applauses of the

whole assembly, who strewed handfuls of flowers over them."

(Anachar. iii. 448.) Nay, at their return home, they rode in a triumphal chariot; the walls of the city were broken down to give them entrance; and in many cities a subsistence was given them out of the public treasury, and they were exempted from taxes. Cicero says that a victory at the Olympic games was not much less honourable than a triumph at Rome. see Anachar. iii. 469, and Rob. Cal., art. *Race*."

When Paul says that but one receives the prize, he does not mean to say that there will be the same small proportion among those who shall enter into heaven, and among Christians. But his idea is, that as they make an effort to obtain the prize, so should we; as many who strive for it then lose it, it is possible that we may; and that therefore we should strive for the crown, and make an effort for it, as if but one out of many could obtain it. This, he says, was the course which he pursued; and it shows, in a most striking manner, the fact that an effort may be made, and should be made, to enter into heaven.

So run, that ye may obtain. So run in the Christian race, that you may obtain the prize of glory, the crown incorruptible. So live, so deny yourselves, so make constant exertion, that you may not fail of that prize, the crown of glory, which awaits the righteous in heaven. Comp. Heb 12:1. Christians may do this when

(1.) they give themselves wholly to God, and make this the grand business of life;

(2.) "when they lay aside every weight," (Heb 12:1,) and renounce all sin and all improper attachments;

(3.) when they do not allow themselves to be *diverted* from the object, but keep the goal constantly in view;

(4.) when they do not flag, or grow weary in their course;

(5.) when they deny themselves; and

(6.) when they keep their eye fully fixed on Christ (Heb 12:2) as their example and their strength, and on heaven as the end of their race, and on the crown of glory as their reward.

{a} "So run, that ye" Php 2:16 3:14; 1Ti 6:12 2Ti 2:5

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *And every man that striveth for the mastery*. *o agwnizomenov*. That *agonizes*; that is, that is engaged in the exercise of wrestling, boxing, or pitching the bar or quoit. **See Barnes "Lu 13:24"**.

The sense is, every one who endeavours to obtain a victory in these athletic exercises.

Is temperate in all things. The word which is rendered "is temperate," (*egkrateuetai*,) denotes abstinence from all that would excite, stimulate, and ultimately enfeeble; from wine, from exciting and luxurious living, and from licentious indulgences. It means that they did all they could to make

the body vigorous, active, and supple. They pursued a course of entire temperate living. Comp. Ac 24:25 1Co 7:9; Gal 5:23 2Pe 1:6.

It relates not only to indulgences unlawful in themselves, but to abstinence from many things that were regarded as *lawful*, but which were believed to render the body weak and effeminate. The phrase, "in all things," means that this course of temperance or abstinence was not confined to one thing, or to one class of things, but to every kind of food and drink, and every indulgence that had a tendency to render the body weak and effeminate. The preparations which those who proposed to contend in these games made is well known, and is often referred to by the classic writers. Epictetus, as quoted by Grotius, (in loco,) thus speaks of these preparations. "Do you wish to gain the prize at the Olympic games? consider the requisite preparations and the consequence. You must observe a strict regimen; must live on food which is unpleasant; must abstain from all delicacies; must exercise yourself at the prescribed times in heat and in cold; you must drink nothing cool, (*qucron*;) must take no wine as usual; you must put yourself under a pugilist, as you would under a physician, and afterwards enter the lists." (Epiet., oh. 35.) Horace has described the preparations necessary in the same way.

Qui studet optatam cursu contingere metam
Multa tulit fecitque puer; sudavit, et alsit,
Abstinuit Venere et Baccho.—*De ARTE Poet*. 412

A youth who hopes the Olympic prize to gain,
All arts must try, and every toil sustain;
The extremes of heat and cold must often prove,
And shun the weakening joys of wine and love.—*Francis*

To obtain a corruptible crown. A garland, diadem, or civic wreath, that must soon fade away. The garland bestowed on the victor was made of olive, pine, apple, laurel, or parsley. That would soon lose its beauty and fade; of course, it could be of little value. Yet we see how eagerly they sought it; how much self-denial those who entered the lists would practise to obtain it; how long they would deny themselves of the common pleasures of life, that they might be successful. So much temperance would heathens practise to obtain a fading wreath of laurel, pine, or parsley! Learn hence,

(1.) the duty of denying ourselves to obtain a far more valuable reward, the incorruptible crown of heaven.

(2.) The duty of all Christians, who strive for that crown, to be temperate in all things. If the heathens practised temperance to obtain a fading laurel, should not we to obtain one that never fades?

(3.) How much *their* conduct puts to shame the conduct of many professing Christians and Christian ministers. *They* set such a value on a civic wreath of pine or laurel, that they were willing to deny themselves, and practise the most rigid abstinence. *They* knew that indulgence in WINE and in luxurious living unfitted them for the struggle and for victory; they knew that it enfeebled their powers, and weakened their frame; and, like men intent on an object dear to them, they abstained wholly from these things, and embraced the principles of total abstinence. Yet how many professed Christians, and Christian ministers, though striving for the crown that fadeth not away, indulge in wine, and in the filthy, offensive, and disgusting use of tobacco; and in luxurious living,

and in habits of indolence and sloth! How many there are that WILL not give up these habits, though they know that they are enfeebling, injurious, offensive, and destructive to religious comfort and usefulness. Can a man be truly in earnest in his professed religion; can he be a sincere Christian, who is not willing to abandon anything and everything that will tend to impair the rigour of his mind, and weaken his body, and make him a stumbling-block to others?

(4.) The value of temperance is here presented in a very striking and impressive view. When even the heathens wished to accomplish anything that demanded skill, strength, power, rigour of body, they saw the necessity of being temperate, and they were so. And this *proves* what all experiment has proved, that if men wish to *accomplish* much, they must be temperate. It *proves* that men can do more without intoxicating drink than they can with it. The example of these Grecian *Athletae*—their wrestlers, boxers, and racers—is *against* all the farmers, and mechanics, and seamen, and day-labourers, and *gentlemen*, and *clergymen*, and *lawyers*, who plead that stimulating drink is necessary to enable them to bear cold and heat, and toil and exposure. A little *experience* from men like the Grecian wrestlers, who had something that they wished to do, is much better than a great deal of philosophy and sophistical reasoning from men who wish to drink, and to find some argument for drinking that shall be a salvo to their consciences. Perhaps the world has furnished no stronger argument in favour of *total abstinence* than the example of the Grecian *Athletae*. It is certain that their example, the example of men who wished to accomplish much by bodily rigour and health, is an effectual and irrefragable argument against all those who plead that stimulating drinks are desirable or necessary in order to increase the rigour of the bodily frame.

But we. We Christians.

An incorruptible. An incorruptible, an unfading crown. The blessings of heaven that shall be bestowed on the righteous are often represented under the image of a crown or diadem; a crown that is unfading and eternal, 2Ti 4:8; Jas 1:12; 1Pe 5:4 Re 2:10, 3:11 4:4.

The doctrine here taught is, the necessity of making an effort to secure eternal life. The apostle never thought of entering heaven by indolence, or by inactivity. He urged, by every possible argument, the necessity of making an exertion to secure the rewards of the just. His *reasons* for this effort are many. Let a few be pondered.

(1.) The work of salvation is difficult. The thousand obstacles arising, the love of sin, and the opposition of Satan and of the world, are in the way.

(2.) The *danger* of losing the crown of glory is great. Every moment exposes it to hazard, for at any moment we may die.

(3.) The *danger* is not only great, but it is *dreadful*. If anything should arouse man, it should be the apprehension of eternal damnation and everlasting wrath.

(4.) Men in this life, in the games of Greece, in the career of ambition, in the pursuit of pleasure and wealth, make immense efforts to obtain the fading and perishing object of their desires. Why should not a man be willing to make *as great* efforts at least to secure eternal glory?

(5.) The value of the interest at stake. Eternal happiness is before those who will embrace the offers of life. If a man should be influenced by anything to make an effort, should it not be by the prospect of eternal glory? What should influence him if this should not?

{b} "incorruptible" 2Ti 4:8 Jas 1:12; 1Pe 5:4 Re 2:10, 3:11

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *I therefore so run*. In the Christian race; in my effort to obtain the prize, the crown of immortality. I exert myself to the utmost, that I may not fail of securing the crown.

Not as uncertainly; *ouk adhlwv*. This word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It usually means, in the classic writers, *obscurely*. Here it means that he did not run as not knowing to what object he aimed. "I do not run at hap-hazard; I do not exert myself for naught; I know at what I aim, and I keep my eye fixed on the object; I have the goal and the crown in view." Probably also the apostle intended to convey this idea, "I so live and act that I am sure of obtaining the crown. I make it a great and grand point of my life so to live that there may be no room for doubt or hesitancy about this matter. I believe it *may* be obtained; and that by a proper course there may be a constant certainty of securing it; and I so LIVE." Oh, how happy and blessed would it be if all Christians thus lived! How much doubt, and hesitancy, and despondency would it remove from many a Christian's mind! And yet it is morally certain that if every Christian were to be only as anxious and careful as were the ancient Grecian wrestlers and racers in the games, they would have the undoubted assurance of gaining the prize. Doddridge and Macknight, however, render this, "as not out of view;" or as not distinguished; meaning that the apostle was not unseen, but that he regarded himself as constantly in the view of the judge, the Lord Jesus Christ. I prefer the other interpretation, however, as best according with the connexion and with the proper meaning of the word.

So fight I. outw pukteuw. This word is applied to the boxers, or the pugilists, in the Grecian games. The exercise of boxing, or fighting with the fist, was a part of the entertainment with which the enlightened nations of Greece delighted to amuse themselves.

Not as one that beateth the air. The phrase here is taken from the habits of the pugilists or boxers, who were accustomed, before entering the lists, to exercise their limbs with the gauntlet, in order to acquire greater skill and dexterity. There was also, before the real contest commenced, a play with their fists and weapons, by way of show or bravado, which was called *skiamacia*, a mock-battle, or a fighting the air. The phrase also is applicable to a missing the aim, when a blow was struck in a real struggle, and when the adversary would elude the blow, so that it would be spent in the empty air. This last is the idea which Paul means to present. He did not miss his aim; he did not exert himself and spend his strength for naught. Every blow that he struck *told*; and he did not waste his energies on that which would produce no result. He did not strive with rash, ill-advised, or uncertain blows; but all his efforts were directed, with good account, to the grand purpose of subjugating his enemy—sin, and the corrupt desires of the flesh—and bringing everything into captivity to God. Much may be learned from this. Many an effort of Christians is merely beating the air. The energy is expended for naught. There is a want of wisdom, or skill, or perseverance; there is a failure of plan; or there is a mistake in regard to what is to be done, and what should be done. There is often among Christians very little aim or object; there is no *plan*; and the efforts are wasted, scattered, inefficient efforts; so that, at the close of life, many a man may say that he has spent his ministry or his Christian course mainly, or entirely, in *beating the air*. Besides, many a one sets up a man of straw, and fights that. He fancies error and heresy in others, and opposes that. He becomes a *heresy-hunter*; or he opposes some irregularity in religion that, if left alone, would die of itself; or he fixes all his attention on some minor evil, and devotes his life to the destruction of that alone. When death comes, he may have never struck a blow at one of the *real* and dangerous

enemies of the gospel; and the simple record on the tombstone of many a minister and many a private Christian might be, "Here lies one who spent his life in beating the air."

{a} "beateth" "striketh"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *But I keep under my body*. *upwpiazw*. This word occurs in the New Testament only here and in Lu 18:5, "Lest by her continual coming she *weary* me." The word is derived probably from *upwpoin*, the part of the face under the eye, (*Passow*;) and means, properly, to strike under the eye, either with the fist or the cestus, so as to render the part livid, or, as we say, black and blue; or, as is vulgarly termed, to give any one a black eye. The word is derived, of course, from the athletic exercises of the Greeks. It then comes to mean, *to treat any one with harshness, severity, or cruelty*; and thence also so to treat any evil inclinations or dispositions; or to subject one's self to mortification or self-denial, or to a severe and rigid discipline, that all the corrupt passions might be removed. The word here means, that Paul made use of all possible means to subdue his corrupt and carnal inclinations; to show that he was not under the dominion of evil passions, but was wholly under the dominion of the gospel.

And bring it into subjection, *doulagwgw*. This word properly means, to reduce to servitude or slavery; and probably was usually applied to the act of subduing an enemy, and leading him captive from the field of battle; as the captives in war were regarded as slaves. It then means, effectually and totally to subdue, to conquer, to reduce to bondage and subjection. Paul means by it, the purpose to obtain a complete *victory* over his corrupt passions and propensities, and a design to gain the mastery over all his natural and evil inclinations.

Lest that by any means. **See Barnes "1Co 9:22"**.

Paul designed to make every possible effort to be saved. He did not mean to be lost, but he meant to be saved. He felt that there was danger of being deceived and lost; and he meant by some means to have evidence of piety that would abide the trial of the day of judgment.

When I have preached to others. Doddridge renders this, "lest after having served as a herald to others, I should myself be disapproved;" and supposes that there was allusion in this to the Grecian *herald*, whose business it was to proclaim the conditions of the games, to display the prizes, etc. In this interpretation, also, Macknight, Rosenmuller, Koppe, and most of the modern interpreters agree. They suppose, therefore, that the allusion to the games is carried through all this description. But there is this difficulty in this interpretation, that it represents the apostle as *both* a herald and a contender in the games, and thus leads to an inextricable confusion of metaphor. Probably, therefore, this is to be taken in the usual sense of the word *preaching* in the New Testament; and the apostle here is to be understood as *dropping* the metaphor, and speaking in the usual manner. He had preached to others, to many others. He had proclaimed the gospel far and near. He had preached to many thousands, and had been the means of the conversion of thousands. The contest, the agony, the struggle in which he had been engaged, was that of preaching the gospel in the most effectual manner. And yet he felt that there was a *possibility* that even after all this he might be lost.

I myself should be a castaway. This word (*adokimov*) is taken from *bad metals*, and properly denotes those which will not bear the test that is applied to them; that are found to be base and worthless, and are therefore rejected and cast away. The apostle had subjected himself to trials. He had given himself to self-denial and toil; to persecution and want; to perils, and cold, and nakedness, and hunger. He had done this, among other things, to give his religion a fair trial, to see whether it would bear all these tests—as metal is cast into the fire to see whether it is genuine, or is base and worthless. In doing this, he had endeavoured to subdue his corrupt propensities, and bring everything into captivity to the Redeemer, that it might be found that he was sincere, and humble, and devoted Christian. Many have supposed that the word "cast-away" here refers to those who had entered the lists, and had contended, and who had then been examined as to the manner in which they had conducted the contest, and had been found to have departed from the rules of the games, and who were then rejected. But this interpretation is too artificial and unnatural. The simple idea of Paul is, that he was afraid that he should be disapproved, rejected, cast off; that it would appear, after all, that he had no religion, and would then be cast away as unfit to enter into heaven.

From the many remarks which might be made from this interesting chapter, we may select the following:

(1.) We see the great anxiety which Paul had to save souls. This was his grand purpose; and for this he was willing to deny himself and to bear any trial.

(2.) We should be kind to others; we should not needlessly offend them; we should conform to them, as far as it can be done consistently with Christian integrity.

(3.) We should make an effort to be saved. Oh, if men made such exertions to obtain a corruptible crown, how much greater should we make to obtain one that fadeth not away!

(4.) Ministers, like others, are in danger of losing their souls. If *Paul* felt this danger, who is there among the ministers of the cross who should not feel it? If Paul was not safe, who is?

(5.) The fact that a man has preached to many is no certain evidence that he will be saved, 1Co 9:27. Paul had preached to thousands, and yet he felt that after all this there was a possibility that he might be lost.

(6.) The fact that a man has been very successful in the ministry is no certain evidence that he will be saved. God converts men; and he may sometimes do it by the instrumentality of those who themselves are deceived, or are deceivers. They may preach much truth; and God may bless that truth, and make it the means of saving the soul. There is no conclusive evidence that a man is a Christian simply because he is a successful and laborious preacher, any more than there is that a man is a Christian because he is a good farmer, and because God sends down the rain and the sunshine on his fields. Paul felt that even his success was no certain evidence that he would be saved. And if Paul felt thus, who should *not* feel that after the most distinguished success, he may himself be at last a cast-away?

(7.) It will be a solemn and awful thing for a minister of the gospel, and a *successful* minister, to go down to hell. What more fearful doom can be conceived, than after having led others in the way to life; after having described to them the glories of heaven; after having conducted them to the "sweet fields beyond the swelling flood" of death, he should find himself shut out, rejected, and cast down to hell! What more terrible can be imagined in the world of perdition than the doom of one who was once a minister of God, and once esteemed as a light in the church and a guide of souls, now sentenced to inextinguishable fires, while multitudes saved by him shall have gone to heaven ! How fearful is the condition, and how solemn the vocation, of a minister of the gospel!

(8.) Ministers should be solicitous about their personal piety. Paul, one might suppose, might have rested contented with the remarkable manner of his conversion. He might have supposed that that put the matter beyond all possible doubt. But he did no such thing. He felt that it was necessary to have evidence day by day that he was then a Christian. Of all men, Paul was perhaps *least* disposed to live on past experience, and to trust to such experience. Of all men, he had perhaps most reason to trust to such experience; and yet how seldom does he refer to it, how little does he regard it! The great question with him was, "Am I *now* a Christian? am I living as a Christian should *now*? am I evincing to others, am I giving to myself daily, constant, growing evidence that I am actuated by the pure principles of the gospel, and that that gospel is the object of my highest preference, and my holiest and constant desire?"

Oh, how holy would be the ministry, if all should endeavour every day to live and act for Christ and for souls with as much steadiness and fidelity as did the apostle Paul!

{a} "I keep" Ro 8:12 {+} "castaway" "rejected"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 1

1st Corinthians CHAPTER 10

IN regard to the design of this chapter commentators have not been agreed. Some have supposed that there is no connexion with the preceding, but that this is a digression. The ancient Greek expositors generally, and some of the moderns, as Grotius, supposed that the connexion was this: Paul had in the previous chapter described himself as mortifying his flesh, and keeping his body under, that he might gain the prize. In this chapter they suppose that his object is to exhort the Corinthians to do the same; and that in order to do this, he admonishes them not to be lulled into security by the idea of the many spiritual gifts which had been conferred upon them. This admonition he enforces by the example of the Jews, who had been highly favoured also, but who had nevertheless been led into idolatry. This is also the view of Doddridge, Calvin, and others. Macknight regards the chapter as an independent discussion of the three questions, which he supposes had been submitted to Paul:

(1.) Whether they might innocently go with their friends into the heathen temples, and partake of the feasts which were there made in honour of the idol.

(2.) Whether they might buy and eat meat sold in the markets which had been sacrificed to idols.

(3.) Whether, when invited to the houses of the heathens, they might partake of the meat sacrificed to idols, and which was set before them as a common meal. I regard this chapter as having a very close connexion with

1Co 8.

In the close of chapter 8, (1Co 9:13,) Paul had stated, when examining the question whether it was right to eat meat offered in sacrifice to idols, that the grand principle on which *he* acted, and on which *they* should act, was that of *self-denial*. To illustrate this he employs the ninth chapter, by showing how he acted on it in reference to a maintenance; showing that it was this principle that led him to decline a support to which he was really entitled. Having illustrated that, he returns in this chapter to the subject which he was discussing in chapter 8; and the design of this chapter is further to explain and enforce the sentiments advanced there, and to settle some other inquiries pertaining to the same general subject. The *first* point, therefore, on which he insists is, *the danger of relapsing into idolatry*—a danger which would arise, should they be in the habit of frequenting the temples of idols, and of partaking of the meats offered in sacrifice, 1Co 10:1-24. Against this he had cautioned them in general, in 1Co 8:7,9-12.

This danger he now sets forth by a variety of illustrations. He first shows them that the Jews had been highly favoured, had been solemnly consecrated to Moses and to God, and had been under the Divine protection and guidance, (1Co 10:1-4;) yet that this had not kept them from the displeasure of God when they sinned, 1Co 10:5. He shows that, notwithstanding their privileges, they had indulged in inordinate desires, 1Co 10:6; that they had become idolaters, 1Co 10:7; that they had been guilty of licentiousness, 1Co 10:8; that they had tempted their leader and guide, 1Co 10:9; that they had murmured, 1Co 10:10; and that, as a consequence of this, many of them had been destroyed. In view of all this, Paul cautions the Corinthians not to be self-confident, or to feel secure; and not to throw themselves in the way of temptation by partaking of the feasts of idolatry, 1Co 10:12-14. This danger he further illustrates (1Co 10:15-24) by showing that if they partook of those sacrifices, they in fact became identified with the worshippers of idols. This he proved by showing that in the Christian communion, those who partook of the Lord's Supper were identified with Christians, 1Co 10:16,17; that in the Jewish sacrifices the same thing occurred, and those who partook of them were regarded as Jews, and as worshippers of the same God with them, 1Co 10:18; and that the same thing must occur, in the nature of the case, by partaking of the sacrifices offered to idols. They were *really* partaking of that which had been offered to *devils*; and against any such participation Paul would solemnly admonish them, 1Co 10:19-22. Going on the supposition, therefore, that there was nothing wrong in itself in partaking of the meat that had been thus killed in sacrifice, yet Paul says (1Co 10:23) that it was not expedient thus to expose themselves to danger; and that the grand principle should be to seek the comfort and edification of others, 1Co 10:24. Paul thus strongly and decisively admonishes them not to enter the temples of idols to partake of those feasts; not to unite with idolaters in their celebration; not to endanger their piety by these temptations.

There were, however, two other questions on the subject which it was important to decide, and which had probably been submitted to him in the letter which they had sent for counsel and advice. The first was, whether it was right to purchase and eat the meat which had been sacrificed, and which was exposed indiscriminately with other meat in the market, 1Co 10:25. To this Paul replies, that as no evil could result from this, as it could not be alleged that they purchased it as meat sacrificed to idols, and as all that the earth contained belonged to the Lord, it was not wrong to purchase and to use it. Yet if even this was pointed out to them as having been sacrificed to idols, he then cautioned them to abstain from it, 1Co 10:28. The other question was, whether it was right for them to accept the invitation of a heathen, and to partake of meat then that had been offered in sacrifice, 1Co 10:27. To this a similar answer was returned. The general principle was, that no

questions were to be asked in regard to what was set before them; but if the food was expressly pointed out as having been offered in sacrifice, then to partake of it would be regarded as a public recognition of the idol, 1Co 10:28-30. Paul then concludes the discussion by stating the noble rule that is to guide in all this: that everything is to be done to the glory of God, 1Co 10:31; and that the great effort of the Christian should be so to act in all things as to honour his religion, as not to lead others into sin, 1Co 10:32,33.

Verse 1. *Moreover, brethren*. But, or now, (*de*.) This verse, with the following illustrations, (1Co 10:1-4,) is properly connected in Paul's argument with the statements which he had made in 1Co 8:8, etc., and is designed to show the danger which would result from their partaking of the feasts that were celebrated in honour of idols. It is not improbable, as Mr. Locke supposes, that the Corinthians might have urged that they were constantly solicited by their heathen friends to attend those feasts; that in their circumstances it was scarcely possible to avoid it; that there could be no danger of their relapsing into idolatry; and their doing so could not be offensive to God, since they were known to be Christians; since they had been baptized, and purified from sin; since they were devoted to his service; since they knew that an idol was nothing in the world; and since they had been so highly favoured, as the people of God, with so many extraordinary endowments, and were so strongly guarded against the possibility of becoming idolaters. To meet these considerations, Paul refers them to the example of the ancient Jews. They also were the people of God. They had been solemnly dedicated to Moses and to God. They had been peculiarly favoured with spiritual food from heaven, and with drink miraculously poured from the rock. Yet, notwithstanding this, they had forgotten God, had become idolaters, and had been destroyed. By their example, therefore, Paul would warn the Corinthians against a similar danger.

I would not that ye should be ignorant. A large part of the church at Corinth were Gentiles. It could hardly be supposed that they were well informed respecting the ancient history of the Jews. Probably they had read these things in the Old Testament; but they might not have them distinctly in their recollection. Paul brings them distinctly before their minds, as an illustration and an admonition. The sense is, "I would not have you unmindful or forgetful of these things; I would have you recollect this case, and suffer their example to influence your conduct. I would not have you suppose that even a solemn consecration to God and the possession of distinguished tokens of Divine favour are a security against the danger of sin, and even apostasy; since the example of the favoured Jews shows that even in such circumstances there is danger."

How that all our fathers. That is, the fathers of the Jewish community; the fathers of us who are Jews. Paul speaks here as being himself a Jew, and refers to his own ancestors as such. The word "all" here seems to be introduced to give emphasis to the fact that even those who were destroyed (1Co 10:5) also had this privilege. It could not be pretended that *they* had not been devoted to God, since all of them had been thus consecrated professedly to his service. The entire Jewish community which Moses led forth from Egypt had thus been devoted to him.

Were under the cloud. The cloud—the *Shechinah*—the visible symbol of the Divine presence and protection that attended them out of Egypt. This went before them by day as a cloud to guide them, and by night it became a pillar of fire to give them light, Ex 13:21,22. In the dangers of the Jews, when closely pressed by the Egyptians, it went *behind* them, and became dark to the Egyptians, but light to the Israelites, thus constituting a defence, Ex 14:20. In the wilderness, when travelling through the burning desert, it seems to have been expanded over the camp as a covering, and a defence from the intense rays of a burning sun. Nu 10:34, "And the cloud of JEHOVAH was upon

them by day." Nu 14:14, "Thy cloud standeth over them." To this fact the apostle refers here. It was a symbol of the Divine favour and protection. Comp. Isa 4:5§. It was a guide, a shelter, and a defence. The Jewish rabbins say that "the cloud *encompassed* the camp of the Israelites as a wall encompasses a city, nor could the enemy come near them."—Pirke Eleazar, c. 44, as quoted by Gill. The probability is, that the cloud extended over the whole camp of Israel, and that to those at a distance it appeared as *a pillar*.

And all passed through the sea. The Red Sea, under the guidance of Moses, and by the miraculous interposition of God, Ex 14:21,22. This was also a proof of the Divine protection and favour, and is so adduced by the apostle. His object is to *accumulate* the evidences of the Divine favour to them, and to show that they had as many securities against apostasy as the Corinthians had, on which they so much relied.

{a} "under the cloud" Ex 13:21,22; Nu 9:18-22

{b} "all passed" Ex 14:19-22,29

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And were all baptized*. In regard to the meaning of the word baptized, **See Barnes "Mt 3:6"**.

We are not to suppose that the rite of baptism, as we understand it, was formally administered by Moses, or by any other person, to the Jews, for there is not the least evidence that any such rite was then known; and the very circumstances here referred to forbid such an interpretation. They were baptized "in the cloud" and "in the sea," and this cannot be understood as a religious rite administered by the hand of man. It is to be remembered that the word *baptism* has two senses—the one referring to the application of water as a religious rite, in whatever mode it is done; and the other the sense of *dedicating, consecrating, initiating into*, or bringing under obligation to. And it is evidently in this latter sense that the word is used here, as denoting that they were *devoted* to Moses as a leader, they were brought under his laws, they became bound to obey him, they were placed under his protection and guidance by the miraculous interposition of God. This was done by the fact that their passing through the sea and under the cloud, in this manner, brought them under the authority and direction of Moses as a leader, and was a public recognition of their being his followers, and being bound to obey his laws.

Unto Moses, (*eiv*.) This is the same preposition which is used in the form of baptism prescribed in Mt 28:19. **See Barnes "Mt 28:19"**.

It means that they were thus devoted or dedicated to Moses; they received and acknowledged him as their ruler and guide; they professed subjection to his laws, and were brought under his authority. They were thus *initiated into* his religion, and thus recognized his Divine mission, and bound themselves to obey his injunctions. —*Bloomfield*.

In the cloud. This cannot be proved to mean that they were enveloped, and, as it were, immersed in the cloud, for there is no evidence that the cloud thus enveloped them, or that they were *immersed* in it as a person is in water. The whole account in the Old Testament leads us to suppose that the cloud either passed before them as a pillar, or that it had the same form in the rear of their camp,

or that it was suspended over them, and was thus the symbol of the Divine protection. It would be altogether improbable that the dark cloud would *pervade* the camp. It would thus embarrass their movements, and there is not the slightest intimation in the Old Testament that it did. Nor is there any probability in the supposition of Dr. Gill and others, that the cloud, as it passed from the rear to the front of the camp, "let down a plentiful rain upon them, whereby they were in such a condition as if they had been all over dipped in water." For,

(1.) there is not the slightest intimation of this in the Old Testament.

(2.) The supposition is contrary to the very design of the cloud. It was not a natural cloud, but was a symbol of the Divine presence and protection. It was not to give rain on the Israelites, or on the land, but it was to guide, and to be an emblem of the care of God.

(3.) It is doing violence to the Scriptures to introduce suppositions in this manner without the slightest authority. It is further to be observed, that this supposition does by no means give any aid to the cause of the Baptist after all. In what conceivable sense were they, even on this supposition, *immersed*? Is it *immersion in water* when one is exposed to a shower of rain? We speak of being *sprinkled* or *drenched* by rain, but is it not a violation of all propriety of language to say that a man is *immersed* in a shower? If the supposition, therefore, is to be admitted, that rain fell from the cloud as it passed over the Jews, and that this is meant here by "baptism unto Moses," then it would follow that *sprinkling* would be the mode referred to, since this is the only form that has resemblance to a falling shower. But the supposition is not necessary. Nor is it needful to suppose that water was applied to them at all. The thing itself is improbable, and the whole case is met by the simple supposition that the apostle means that they were initiated in this way into the religion of Moses, recognized his Divine mission, and under the cloud became his followers and subject to his laws. And if this interpretation is correct, then it follows that the word *baptize* does not of necessity mean to *immerse*.

And in the sea. This is another expression that goes to determine the sense of the word *baptize*. The sea referred to here is the Red Sea, and the event was the passage through that sea. The fact in the case was, that the Lord caused a strong east wind to blow all night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided, (Ex 14:21,) and the waters were a wall unto them on the right hand and on the left, Ex 14:22. From this whole narrative it is evident that they passed through the sea without being *immersed* in it. The waters were driven into high adjacent walls for the very purpose that they might pass between them dry and safe. There is the fullest proof that they were not submerged in the water. Dr. Gill supposes that the water stood up above their heads, and that "they seemed to be immersed in it." This might be true; but this is to give up the idea that the word baptize means always to immerse in water, since it is a fact, according to this supposition, that they were not thus immersed, but only seemed to be. And all that can be meant therefore is, that they were in this manner initiated into the religion of Moses, convinced of his Divine mission, and brought under subjection to him as their leader, lawgiver, and guide. This passage is a very important one to prove that the word baptism does not necessarily mean entire immersion in water. It is perfectly clear that neither the cloud nor the waters touched them. "They went through the midst of the sea on *dry* ground." It remains only to be asked whether, if immersion was the only mode of baptism known in the New Testament, the apostle Paul would have used the word not only so as not necessarily to imply that, but as *necessarily* to mean something else?

{a} "same" Ex 16:15,35; Neh 9:15,20; Ps 78:24,25

{*} "meat" "food"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And did all eat the same spiritual meat*. That is, *manna*; Ex 16:15,35; Neh 9:15,20.

The word *meat* here is used in the old English sense of the word, to denote *food* in general. They lived on *manna*. The word *spiritual* here is evidently used to denote that which was given by the Spirit, or by God; that which was the result of his miraculous gift, and which was not produced in the ordinary way, and which was not the gross food on which men are usually supported. It had an excellency and value from the fact that it was the immediate gift of God, and is thus called "angel's food," Ps 78:25. It is called by Josephus, "Divine and extraordinary food," Ant. iii. 1. In the language of the Scriptures, that which is distinguished for excellence, which is the immediate gift of God, which is unlike that which is gross and of earthly origin, is called *spiritual*, to denote its purity, value, and excellence. Comp. Ro 7:14 1Co 3:1, 15:44,46; Eph 1:3.

The idea of Paul here is, that all the Israelites were nourished and supported in this remarkable manner by food given directly by God; that they all had thus the evidence of the Divine protection and favour, and were all under his care.

{a} "same" Ex 16:15,35; Neh 9:15,20; Ps 78:24,25

{*} "meat" "food"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And did all drink the same spiritual drink*. The idea here is essentially the same as in the previous verse, that they had been highly favoured of God, and enjoyed tokens of the Divine care and guardianship. That was manifested in the miraculous supply of water in the desert, thus showing that they were under the Divine protection, and were objects of the Divine favour. There can be no doubt that by "spiritual drink" here the apostle refers to the water that was made to gush from the rock that was smitten by Moses, Ex 17:6 Nu 20:11. Why this is called "spiritual" has been a subject on which there has been much difference of opinion. It cannot be because there was anything peculiar in the nature of the water, for it was evidently real water, fitted to allay their thirst. There is no evidence, as many have supposed, that there was a reference in this to the drink used in the Lord's Supper. But it must mean that it was bestowed in a miraculous and supernatural manner; and the word "spiritual" must be used in the sense of supernatural, or that which is immediately given by God. Spiritual blessings thus stand opposed to natural and temporal blessings, and the former denote those which are immediately given by God as an evidence of the Divine favour. That the Jews used the word "spiritual" in this manner is evident from the writings of the Rabbins. Thus they called the manna "spiritual food," (Yade Mose in Shemor Rabba, fol. 109, 3 ;) and their sacrifices they called "spiritual bread," (Tzeror Hammor, fol. 93,2.)—*Gill*. The drink therefore, here referred to, was that bestowed in a supernatural manner, and as a proof of the Divine favour.

For they drank of that spiritual Rock. Of the waters which flowed from that rock. The Rock here is called "spiritual," not from anything peculiar in the nature of the rock, but because it was

the source to them of supernatural mercies, and became thus the emblem and demonstration of the Divine favour, and of spiritual mercies, conferred upon them by God.

That followed them. Margin, *Went with*, (*akolouyoushv*.) This evidently cannot mean that the rock itself literally followed them, any more than that they literally drank the rock; for one is as expressly affirmed, if it be taken literally, as the other. But as when it is said they "drank of the rock," it must mean that they drank of the water that flowed from the rock; so when it is said that the "rock followed" or accompanied them, it must mean that the water that flowed from the rock accompanied them. This figure of speech is common everywhere. Thus the Saviour said, (1Co 11:25,) "This cup is the new testament," that is, the wine in this cup represents my blood, etc.; and Paul says, (1Co 11:25,27,) "Whosoever shall drink this cup of the Lord unworthily," that is, the wine in the cup, etc., and, "as often as ye drink this cup," etc., that is, the wine contained in the cup. It would be absurd to suppose that the rock that was smitten by Moses literally followed them in the wilderness; and there is not the slightest evidence in the Old Testament that it did. Water was twice brought out of a rock to supply the wants of the children of Israel. Once at Mount Horeb, as recorded in Ex 17:6, in the wilderness of Sin, in the first year of their departure from Egypt. The second time water was brought from a rock about the time of the death of Miriam, at Kadesh, and probably in the fortieth year of their departure from Egypt, Nu 20:1. It was to the former of these occasions that the apostle evidently refers. In regard to this we may observe,

(1.) that there must have been furnished a large quantity of water to have supplied the wants of more than two millions of people.

(2.) It is expressly stated, (De 9:21,) that "the brook (

HEBREW) stream, torrent, or river, see Nu 34:5 Jos 15:4,47; 1Ki 8:65 2Ki 24:7 descended out of the mount," and was evidently a stream of considerable size.

(3.) Mount Horeb was higher than the adjacent country; and the water that thus gushed from the rock, instead of collecting into a pool and becoming stagnant, would flow off in the direction of the sea.

(4.) The sea to which it would naturally flow would be the Red Sea, in the direction of the Eastern or Elanitic branch of that sea.

(5.) The Israelites would doubtless, in their journeyings, be influenced by the natural direction of the water, or would not wander far from it, as it was daily needful for the supply of their wants.

(6.) At the end of thirty-seven years we find the Israelites at Ezion-geber, a seaport on the eastern branch of the Red Sea, where the waters probably flowed into the sea, Nu 33:36. In the fortieth year of their departure from Egypt, they left this place to go into Canaan by the country of Edom, and were immediately in distress again by the want of water. It is thus *probable* that the water from the rock continued to flow, and that it constituted a stream, or river; that it was near their camp all the time till they came to Ezion-geber; and that thus, together with the daily supply of manna, it was a proof of the protection of God, and an emblem of their dependence. If it be said that there is now no such stream to be found there, it is to be observed that it is represented as miraculous, and that it would be just as reasonable to look for the daily descent of manna there in quantities sufficient to supply more than two millions of men, as to expect to find the gushing and running river of water. The only question is, whether God can work a miracle, and whether there is evidence that he has done it. This is not the place to examine that question. But the evidence is as strong that he wrought this miracle as that he gave the manna, and neither of them is inconsistent with the power, the wisdom, or the benevolence of God.

And that Rock was Christ. This cannot be intended to be understood literally, for it was not literally true. The rock from which the water flowed was evidently an ordinary rock, a part of Mount Horeb; and all that this can mean is, that that rock, with the stream of water thus gushing from it, was a *representation* of the Messiah. The word *was* is thus often used to denote similarity or representation, and is not to be taken literally. Thus, in the institution of the Lord's Supper, the Saviour says of the bread, "This is my body," that is, it *represents* my body. Thus also of the cup, "This cup is the new testament in my blood," that is, it represents my blood, 1Co 11:24,25. Thus the gushing fountain of water might be regarded as a representation of the Messiah, and of the blessings which result from him. The apostle does not say that the Israelites knew that this was designed to be a representation of the Messiah, and of the blessings which flow from him, though there is nothing improbable in the supposition that they so understood and regarded it, since all their institutions were probably regarded as typical. But he evidently does mean to say that the rock was a vivid and affecting representation of the Messiah; that the Jews *did* partake of the mercies that flow from him; and that even in the desert they were under his care, and had in fact among them a vivid representation of him, in some sense corresponding with the emblematic representation of the same favours which the Corinthian and other Christians had in the Lord's Supper. This representation of the Messiah, perhaps, was understood by Paul to consist in the following things:

(1.) Christians, like the children of Israel, are passing through the world as pilgrims, and to them that world is a wilderness—a desert.

(2.) They need continued supplies, as the Israelites did, in their journey. The world, like that wilderness, does not meet their necessities, or supply their wants.

(3.) That rock was a striking representation of the fulness of the Messiah, of the abundant grace which he imparts to his people.

(4.) It was an illustration of their continued and constant dependence on him for the daily supply of their wants. It should be observed, that many expositors understand this literally. Bloomfield translates it, "And they were supplied with drink from the spiritual Rock which followed them, even Christ." So Rosenmuller, Calvin, Glass, etc. In defence of this interpretation, it is said, that the Messiah is often called "a rock" in the Scriptures; that the Jews believed that the "angel of JEHOVAH" who attended them, (Ex 3:2, and other places,) was the Messiah; and that the design of the apostle was to show that this *attending Rock*, the Messiah, was the source of all their blessings, and particularly of the water that gushed from the rock. But the interpretation suggested above seems to me to be most natural. The *design* of the apostle is apparent. It is to show to the Corinthians, who relied so much on their privileges, and felt themselves so secure, that the Jews *had the very same privileges*— had the highest tokens of the Divine favour and protection, were under the guidance and grace of God, and were partakers constantly of that which adumurated or typified the Messiah, in a manner as real, and in a form as much fitted to keep up the remembrance of their dependence, as even the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper.

{b} "spiritual drink" Ex 17:6 Nu 20:11 {1} "followed" "went with"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *But with many of them*, etc. That is, with their conduct. They rebelled and sinned, and were destroyed. The design of the apostle here is to remind them, that although they enjoyed so many privileges, yet they were destroyed; and thus to admonish the Corinthians that *their* privileges did not constitute an absolute security from danger, and that they should be cautious against the indulgence of sin. The phrase rendered here "with many," (*en toiv pleiosin*,) should have been rendered, "with most of them ;" literally, "with the many;" and it means, that with the greater part of them God was not well pleased; that is, he was pleased with but few of them.

Was not well pleased.

Was offended with their ingratitude and rebellion.

For they were overthrown, etc. That is, by the pestilence, by wars, or died by natural and usual diseases, so that they did not reach the land of Canaan. But two men of that generation, Caleb and Joshua, were permitted to enter the land of promise, Nu 14:29,30.

{*} "many" "most" {+} "overthrown" "Destroyed" {a} "in the wilderness" Nu 14:29-35 26:64,65 Heb 3:17; Jude 1:5

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Now these things*. The judgments inflicted on them by God for their sins.

Were our examples. Greek, *Types*, (*tupoi*;) margin, *Figures*. They were not *designed* to be types of us, but they are to be held up as furnishing an admonition to us, or a warning that we do not sin in the same way. The same God directs our affairs that ordered theirs; and if we sin as they did, we also must expect to be punished, and excluded from the favour of God, and from heaven.

Lust after evil things. Desire those things which are forbidden, and which would be injurious. They lusted after flesh, and God granted them their desires; and the consequence was a plague, and the destruction of multitudes, Nu 11:4,31-34.

So Paul infers that the Corinthian Christians should not lust after, or desire the meat offered in sacrifice to idols, lest it should lead them also to sin and ruin.

{1} "examples" "the figures" {&} "lust after" "desire" {b} "they also lusted" Nu 11:4,33,34

{|} "lusted" "desired"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 7

Verse 7. Neither be ye idolaters. This caution is evidently given in view of the danger to which they would be exposed if they partook of the feasts that were celebrated in honour of idols in their temples. The particular idolatry which is referred to here is, the worship of the golden calf that was made by Aaron, Ex 32:1-6.

As it is written. Ex 32:6.

The people sat down to eat and drink. To worship the golden calf. They partook of a feast in honour of that idol. I have already observed, that it was common to keep a feast in honour of an idol, and that the food which was eaten on such an occasion was mainly the meat which had been offered in sacrifice to it. This instance was particularly to the apostle's purpose, as he was cautioning the Corinthians against the danger of participating in the feasts celebrated in the heathen temples.

And rose up to play. *paizein*. The Hebrew word used in Ex 32:6, (

HEBREW,) means to laugh, to sport, to jest, to mock, to insult, (Ge 21:9;) and then to engage in dances accompanied with music, in honour of an idol. This was often practised, as the worship of idols was celebrated with songs and dances. This is particularly affirmed of this instance of idol worship, (Ex 32:19;) and this was common among ancient idolaters; and this mode of worship was even adopted by David before the ark of the Lord, 2Sa 6:6 1Ch 13:8, 15:29.

All that the word "to play" here necessarily implies is, that of choral songs and dances, accompanied with revelry in honour of the idol. It was however the fact, that such worship was usually accompanied with much licentiousness; but that is not necessarily implied in the use of the word. Most of the oriental dances were grossly indecent and licentious; and the word here may be designed to include such indelicacy and licentiousness.

{c} "as it is written" Ex 32:6

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Neither let us commit fornication*, etc. The case referred to here was that of the licentious intercourse with the daughters of Moab, referred to in Nu 25:1-9.

And fell in one day. Were slain for their sin by the plague that prevailed.

Three and twenty thousand. The Hebrew text in Nu 25:9, is twenty-four thousand. In order to reconcile these statements, it may be observed, that perhaps twenty-three thousand fell directly by the plague, and one thousand were slain by Phinehas and his companions, (*Grotius*;) or it may be that the number was between twenty-three and twenty-four thousand, and it might be expressed in round numbers by either. —*Macknight*. At all events, Paul has not exceeded the truth. There were at least twenty-three thousand that fell, though there might have been more. The *probable* supposition is, that the three and twenty thousand fell immediately by the hand of God in the plague, and the other thousand by the judges; and as Paul's design was particularly to mention the proofs of the immediate Divine displeasure, he refers only to those who fell by that, in illustration of his subject. There was a particular reason for this caution in respect to licentiousness.

(1.) It was *common* among all idolaters; and Paul, in cautioning them against idolatry, would naturally warn them of this danger.

(2.) It was common at Corinth. It was the prevalent vice there. To *Corinthianize* was a term synonymous among the ancients with licentiousness.

(3.) So common was this at Corinth, that, as we have seen, (see the Introduction,) not less than a thousand prostitutes were supported in a single temple there; and the city was visited by vast multitudes of foreigners, among other reasons on account of its facilities for this sin. Christians,

therefore, were in a peculiar manner exposed to it; and hence the anxiety of the apostle to warn them against it.

{d} "some of them" Nu 25:1-9

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Neither let us tempt Christ*, etc. The word *tempt*, when applied to man, means to present motives or inducements to sin: when used with reference to God, it means, to try his patience, to provoke his anger, or to act in such a way as to see how much he will bear, and how long he will endure the wickedness and perverseness of men. The Israelites tempted him, or *tried his patience and forbearance*, by rebellion, murmuring, impatience, and dissatisfaction with his dealings. In what way the Corinthians were in danger of tempting Christ is not known, and can only be conjectured. It may be that the apostle cautions them against exposing themselves to temptation in the idol temples—placing themselves, as it were, under the unhappy influence of idolatry, and thus needlessly *trying*, the strength of their religion, and making an experiment on the grace of Christ, as if he were bound to keep them even in the midst of dangers into which they needlessly ran. They would have the promise of grace to keep them only when they were in the way of their duty, arid using all other precautions. To go beyond this, to place themselves in needless danger, to presume on the grace of Christ to keep them in all circumstances, would be to tempt him, and provoke him to leave them. **See Barnes "Mt 4:7"**.

As some of them also tempted. There is evidently here a word to be understood, and it may be either "Christ" or "God." The construction would naturally require the former; but it is not certain that the apostle meant to say that the Israelites tempted Christ. The main idea is that of *temptation*, whether it be of Christ or of God; and the purpose of the apostle is to caution them against the danger of tempting Christ, from the fact that the Israelites were guilty of the sin of tempting their leader and protector, and thus exposing themselves to his anger. It cannot be denied, however, that the more natural construction of this place is that which supposes that the word "Christ" is understood here rather than" God." In order to relieve this interpretation from the difficulty that the Israelites could not be said with any propriety to have tempted "*Christ*," since he had not then come in the flesh, two remarks may be made: First, by the "angel of the covenant," and the "angel of his presence," (Ex 23:20,23, 32:34

Ex 33:2 Nu 20:16; Isa 63:9 Heb 11:26,) that went with them, and delivered them from Egypt, there is reason to think the sacred writers understood the Messiah to be intended; and that he who subsequently became incarnate was he whom they tempted. And, secondly, we are to bear in mind that the term *Christ* has acquired with us a signification somewhat different from that which it originally had in the New Testament. *We* use it as *a proper name*, applied to Jesus of Nazareth. But it is to be remembered that it is the mere Greek word for the Hebrew "Anointed," or the "Messiah;" and by retaining this signification of the word here, no small part of the difficulty will be avoided; and the expression then will mean simply that the Israelites "tempted *the Messiah*;" and the idea will be that he who conducted them, and against whom they sinned, and whom they tempted, was *the Messiah* who afterwards became incarnate; an idea that is in accordance with the

ancient ideas of the Jews respecting this personage, and which is not forbidden, certainly, in any part of the Bible.

And were destroyed of serpents. Fiery serpents. Nu 21:6.

{e} "tempt Christ" Ex 17:2,7 {f} "serpents" Nu 21:6

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Neither murmur ye*. Do not repine at the allotments of Providence, or complain of his dealings.

As some of them also murmured. Nu 14:2. The ground of their murmuring was, that they had been disappointed; that they had been brought out of a land of plenty into a wilderness of want; and that instead of being conducted at once to the land of promise, they were left to perish in the desert. They therefore complained of their leaders, and proposed to return again into Egypt.

And were destroyed of the destroyer. That is, they were doomed to die in the wilderness without seeing the land of Canaan, Nu 14:29. The "destroyer" here is understood by many to mean *the angel of death*, so often referred to in the Old Testament, and usually called by the Jews *Sammael*. The work of death, however, is attributed to an angel in Ex 12:23. Compare Heb 11:28. It was customary for the Hebrews to regard most human events as under the direction of angels. In Heb 2:14, he is described as he "that had the power of death." Comp. the Book of Wisdom, xviii. 22, 25. The simple idea here however is, that they died for their sin, and were not permitted to enter the promised land.

{a} "murmured" Nu 14:2,29 {b} "destroyer" 2Sa 24:16

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *For ensamples*. Greek, *Types*. (*tupoi*). The same word which is used in 1Co 10:6. This verse is a repetition of the admonition contained in that verse, in order to impress it more deeply on the memory. **See Barnes "1Co 10:6"**.

The sense is, not that these things took place simply and solely to be examples, or admonitions, but that their occurrence illustrated great principles of human nature and of the Divine government; they showed the weakness of men, and their liability to fall into sin, and their need of the Divine protection, and they might thus be used for the admonition of succeeding generations.

They are written for our admonition. They are recorded in the writings of Moses, in order that we and all others might be admonished not to confide in our own strength. The admonition did not pertain merely to the Corinthians, but had an equal applicability to Christians in all ages of the world.

Upon whom the ends of the world are come. This expression is equivalent to that which so often occurs in the Scriptures, as "the last time," "the latter day," etc. See it fully explained **See Barnes "Ac 2:17".**

It means the last dispensation; or, that period and mode of the Divine administration under which the affairs of the world would be wound up. There would be no mode of administration beyond that of the gospel. But it by no means denotes necessarily that the continuance of this period called "the last times," and "the ends of the world," would be brief, or that the apostle believed that the world would soon come to an end. It might be the *last* period, and yet be longer than any one previous period, or than all the previous periods put together. There may be a last dynasty in an empire, and yet it may be longer than any previous dynasty, or than all the previous dynasties put together. The apostle Paul was at special pains in 2Th 2 to show, that by affirming that the last time had come, he did not mean that the world would soon come to an end.

{*} "things" "types" {1} "ensamples" "examples"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Wherefore*. As the result of all these admonitions. Let this be the effect of all that we learn from the unhappy self-confidence of the Jews, to admonish us not to put reliance on our own strength.

That thinketh he standeth. That supposes himself to be firm in the love of God, and in the knowledge of his truth; that regards himself as secure, and that will be therefore disposed to rely on his own strength.

Take heed lest he fall. Into sin, idolatry, or any other form of iniquity. We learn here,

(1.) that a confidence in our own security is no evidence that we are safe.

(2.) Such a confidence may be one of the strongest evidences that we are in danger. Those are most safe who feel that they are weak and feeble, and who feel their need of Divine aid and strength. They will then rely on the true source of strength; and they will be secure.

(3.) All professed Christians should be admonished. All are in danger of falling into sin, and of dishonouring their profession; and the exhortation cannot be too often or too urgently pressed, that they should take heed lest they fall into sin. The leading and special idea of the apostle here should not be forgotten or disregarded. It is, that Christians in *their favoured moments*, when they are permitted to approach near to God, and when the joys of salvation fill their hearts, should exercise peculiar caution. For

(a.) then the adversary will be peculiarly desirous to draw away their thoughts from God, and to lead them into sin, as their fall would most signally dishonour religion;

(b.) then they will be less likely to be on their guard, and more likely to feel themselves strong, and not to need caution and solicitude. Accordingly, it often happens that Christians, after they have been peculiarly favoured with the tokens of the Divine favour, soon relapse into their former state, or fall into some sin that grieves the hearts of their brethren, or wounds the cause of religion. So it is in revivals; so it is in individuals. Churches that are thus favoured are filled with joy, and love, and peace. Yet they become self-confident and elated; they lose their humility and their sense

of their dependence; they cease to be watchful and prayerful, supposing that all is safe; and the result often is, that a season of revival is succeeded by a time of coldness and declension. And thus, too, it is with individuals. Just the opposite effect is produced from what should be, and from what need be. Christians should then be peculiarly on their guard; and if they then availed themselves of their elevated advantages, churches might be favoured with continued revivals and ever-growing piety; and individuals might be filled with joy, and peace, and holiness, and ever-expanding and increasing love.

{c} "Wherefore" Pr 28:14 Ro 11:20

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *There hath no temptation taken you*. What temptation the apostle refers to here is not quite certain. It is probable, however, that he refers to such as would, in their circumstances, have a tendency to induce them to forsake their allegiance to their Lord, and to lead them into idolatry and sin. These might be either open persecutions, or afflictions on account of their religion; or they might be the various allurements which were spread around them from the prevalence of idolatry. They might be the open attacks of their enemies, or the sneers and the derision of the gay and the great. The design of the apostle evidently is to show them that, if they were faithful, they had nothing to fear from any such forms of temptation, but that God was able to bring them through them all. The sentiment in the verse is a very important one, since the general principle here stated is as applicable to Christians now as it was to the Corinthians.

Taken you. Seized upon you, or assailed you. As when an enemy grasps us, and attempts to hold us fast.

But such as is common to man. (*ei mh anywpinov*.) Such as is human. Margin, *Moderate*. The sense is evident. It means such as human nature is liable to, and has been often subjected to; such as the human powers, under the Divine aid, may be able to resist and repel. The temptations which they had been subjected to were not such as would be fitted to angelic powers, and such as would require angelic strength to resist; but they were such as human nature had been often subjected to, and such as man had often contended with successfully. There is therefore, here, a recognition of the doctrine that man has natural ability to resist all the temptations to which he is subject; and that consequently, if he yields, he is answerable for it. The *design* of the apostle is to comfort the Corinthians, and to keep their minds from despondency. He had portrayed their danger; he had shown them how others had fallen; and they might be led to suppose that in such circumstances they could not be secure. He therefore tells them that they might still be safe, for their temptations were such as human nature had often been subject to, and God was able to keep them from falling.

But God is faithful. This was the only source of security; and this was enough. If they looked only to themselves, they would fall. If they depended on the faithfulness of God, they would be secure. The sense is, not that God would keep them without any effort of their own; not that he would secure them if, they plunged into temptation; but that if they used the proper means, if they resisted temptation, and sought his aid, and depended on his promises, then he would be faithful. This is everywhere implied in the Scriptures; and to depend on the faithfulness of God, otherwise

than in the proper use of means and in avoiding the places of temptation, is to *tempt him*, and provoke him to wrath. **See Barnes "Mt 4:1"**

and following.

Who will not suffer you to be tempted, etc. This is a general promise, just as applicable to all Christians as it was to the Corinthians. It implies,

(1.) that all the circumstances, causes, and agents that lead to temptation, are under the control of God. Every man that tempts another; every fallen spirit that is engaged in this; every book, picture, place of amusement; every charm of music and of song; every piece of indecent statuary; and every plan of business, Of gain, or ambition, are all under the control of God. He can check them; he can control them; he can paralyze their influence; he can destroy them. Comp. Mt 6:13.

(2.) When men are *tempted*, it is because God *suffers* or permits it. He does not himself tempt men, (Jas 1:13;) he does not infuse evil thoughts into the mind; he does not create an object of temptation to place in our way, but he suffers it to be placed there by others. When we are tempted, therefore, we are to remember that it is because he *suffers* or *permits* it; not because he does it. His agency is that of sufferance, not of creation. We are to remember, too, that there is some good reason why it is thus permitted; and that it may be turned in some way to his glory, and to our advancement in virtue.

(3.) There is a certain extent to which we are *able* to resist temptation. There is a *limit* to our power. There is a point beyond which we are not *able* to resist it. We have not the strength of angels.

(4.) That limit will, in all cases, be beyond the point to which we are tempted. If not, there would be no sin in falling, any more than there is sin in the oak when it is prostrated before the tempest.

(5.) If men fall into sin, under the power of temptation, they only are to blame. They have strength to resist all the temptations that assail them, and God has given the assurance that no temptation shall occur which they shall not be able, by his aid, to resist. In all instances, therefore, where men fall into sin—in all the yielding to passion, to allurement, and to vice—man is to blame, and must be responsible to God. And this is especially true of Christians, who, whatever may be said of others, cannot plead that there was not power sufficient to meet the temptation, or to turn aside its power.

But will with the temptation, etc. He will, at the same time that he suffers the trial or temptation to befall us, make a way of deliverance; he will save us from being entirely overcome by it.

That ye may be able to bear it. Or, that you may be able to bear up under it, or endure it. God knows what his people are *able* to endure, and as he has entire control of all that can effect them, he will adapt all trials to their strength, and will enable them to bear all that is appointed to them. This is a general promise, and is as applicable to other Christians as it was to the Corinthians. It was to them a positive promise, and to all in the same circumstances it may be regarded as such now. It may be used therefore,

(1.) as a ground of encouragement to those who are in temptation and trial. God knows what they are able to endure; and he will sustain them in their temptations. It matters not how severe the trial; or how long it may be continued; or how much they may feel their own feebleness; yet he who has appointed the trial is abundantly able to uphold them. They may, therefore, repose their all upon him, and trust to his sustaining grace.

(2.) It may be used as an argument, that none who are true Christians, and who are thus tried, shall ever fall away, and be lost. The promise is positive and certain, that a way shall be made for

their escape, and they shall be able to bear it. God is faithful to them; and though he *might* suffer them to be tempted beyond what they are able to bear, yet he will not, but will secure an egress from all their trials. With this promise in view, how can it be believed that any true Christians who are tempted will be suffered to fall away and perish? If they do, it must be from one of the following causes: either because God is *not* faithful; or because he will suffer them to be tempted above what they are able to bear; or because he will not make a way for their escape. As no Christian can believe either of these, it follows that they who are converted shall be kept unto salvation.

{2} "common" "moderate" {a} "who will not suffer" Da 3:17 2Pe 2:9 {b} "able" Jas 5:11

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Wherefore*. In view of the dangers and temptations that beset you; in view of your own feebleness, and the perils to which you would be exposed in the idol temples, etc.

Flee from idolatry. Escape from the service of idols; from the feasts celebrated in honour of them; from the temples where they are worshipped. This was one of the dangers to which they were peculiarly exposed; and Paul therefore exhorts them to escape from everything that would have a tendency to lead them into this sin. He had told them, indeed, that God was faithful; and yet he did not expect God would keep them without any effort of their own. He therefore exhorts them to flee from all approaches to it, and from all the customs which would have a tendency to lead them into idolatrous practices. He returns, therefore, in this verse, to the particular subject discussed in chapter 8—the propriety of partaking of the feasts in honour of idols; and shows the danger which would follow such a practice. That danger he sets forth in view of the admonitions contained in this chapter, from 1Co 10:1-12. The remainder of the chapter is occupied with a discussion of the question stated in 1Co 8, whether it was right for them to partake of the meat which was used in the feasts of idolaters.

{c} "beloved" 1Jo 5:21

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *I speak as to wise men*. I speak to men qualified to understand the subject; and present *reasons* which will commend themselves to you. The reasons referred to are those which occupy the remainder of the chapter.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *The cup of blessing which we bless*. The design of this verse and the following verses seems to be, to prove that Christians, by partaking of the Lord's Supper, are solemnly set apart to the service of the Lord Jesus; that they acknowledge *him* as their Lord, and dedicate themselves to him; and that, as they could not and ought not to be devoted to idols and to the Lord Jesus at the same time, so they ought not to participate in the feasts in honour of idols, or in the celebrations in which idolaters would be engaged. 1Co 10:21. He states therefore,

(1.) that Christians are *united* and dedicated to Christ in the communion, 1Co 10:16,17.

(2.) That this was true of the Israelites, that they were one people, devoted by the service of the altar to the same God, 1Co 10:18.

(3.) That though an idol was nothing, yet the heathen actually sacrificed to devils, and Christians ought not to partake with them, 1Co 10:19-21. The phrase, "cup of blessing," evidently refers to the wine used in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. It is called "the cup of blessing" because over it Christians praise or bless God for his mercy in providing redemption. It is not because it is the means of conveying a blessing to the souls of those who partake of it—though that is true—but because thanksgiving, blessing, and praise were rendered to God in the celebration, for the benefits of redemption. **See Barnes "Mt 26:26"**

Or it may mean, in accordance with a well-known Hebraism, *the blessed cup*; the cup that is blessed. This is the more literal interpretation; and it is adopted by Calvin, Beza, Doddridge, and others.

Which we bless. Grotius, Macknight, Vetablus, Bloomfield, and many of the Fathers suppose that this means, "over which we bless God;" or, "for which we bless God." But this is to do violence to the passage. The more obvious signification is, that there is a sense in which it may be said that the cup is blessed, and that by prayer and praise it is set apart and rendered in some sense sacred to the purposes of religion. It cannot mean that the cup has undergone any physical change, or that the wine is anything but wine; but that it has been solemnly set apart to the service of religion, and by prayer and praise designated to be used for the purpose of commemorating the Saviour's love. That may be said to be blessed which is set apart to a sacred use, (Ge 2:3 Ex 20:11;) and in this sense the cup may be said to be blessed. See Lu 9:16: "And he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed THEM," etc. Comp. Ge 14:9 27:23,33,41 28:1 Le 9:22,23; 2Sa 6:18 1Ki 8:14.

Is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? Is it not the emblem by which the blood of Christ is exhibited, and the means by which our union through that blood is exhibited? Is it not the means by which we express our attachment to him as Christians; showing our union to him and to each other; and showing that we partake in common of the benefits of his blood? The main idea is, that by partaking of this cup they showed that they were united to him and to each other; and that they should regard themselves as set apart to him. We have communion with one, (*koinwnia*, that which is in *common*, that which pertains to all, that which evinces fellowship,) when we partake together; when all have an equal right, and all share alike; when the same benefits or the same obligations are extended to all. And the sense here is, that Christians *partake alike* in the benefits of the blood of Christ; they share the same blessings; and they *express* this together, and in common, when they partake of the communion.

The bread, etc. In the communion. It shows, since we all partake of it, that we share alike in the benefits which are imparted by means of the broken body of the Redeemer. In like manner it is implied, that if Christians should partake with idolaters in the feasts offered in honour of idols,

that they would be regarded as partaking with them in the services of idols, or as united to them, and therefore such participation was improper.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *For we*. We Christians.

Being many. Greek, *The many*. *oi polloi*. The idea is not, as our translation would seem to indicate, that Christians were numerous, but that all (for *oi polloi* is here evidently used in the sense of *pantev*, all) were united, and constituted one society.

Are one bread. One loaf; one cake. That is, we are united, or are one. There is evident allusion here to the fact that the loaf or cake was composed of many separate grains of wheat, or portions of flour united in one; or, that as one loaf was broken and partaken by all, it was implied that they were all one. We are all one society; united as one, and for the same object. Our partaking of the same bread is an emblem of the fact that we are one. In almost all nations the act of eating together has been regarded as a symbol of unity or friendship.

And one body. One society; united together.

For we are all partakers, etc. And we thus show publicly that we are united, and belong to the same great family. The argument is, that if we partake of the feasts in honour of idols with their worshippers, we shall thus show that we are a part of their society.

{*} "one bread" "Loaf"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Behold Israel*. Look at the Jews. The design here is to illustrate the sentiment which he was establishing, by a reference to the fact that among the Jews those who partook of the same sacrifices were regarded as being one people, and as worshipping one God. So, if they partook of the sacrifices offered to idols, they would be regarded also as being fellow-worshippers of idols with them.

After the flesh. See Ro 4:1. The phrase, "after the flesh," is designed to denote the Jews who were not converted to Christianity; the natural descendants of Israel, or Jacob.

Are not they which eat of the sacrifices. A portion of the sacrifices offered to God was eaten by the offerer, and another portion by the priests. Some portions of the animal, as the fat, were burnt; and the remainder, unless it was a holocaust, or whole burnt-offering, was then the property of the priests who had officiated, or of the persons who had brought it, Ex 29:13,22; Le 3:4,10,15 4:9 7:3,4 8:26.

The right shoulder and the breast was the part which was assigned to the priests; the remainder belonged to the offerer.

Partakers of the altar? Worshippers of the same God. They are united in their worship, and are so regarded. And in like manner, if you partake of the sacrifices offered to idols, and join with their worshippers in their temples, you will be justly regarded as united with them in their worship, and partaking with them in their abominations.

{a} "after the flesh" Ro 4:1,12 {b} "are not" 1Co 9:13

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *What say I then*? This is in the present tense: *ti oun fhmi*, what do I say? What is my meaning ? What follows from this? Do I mean to say that an idol is anything; that it has a real existence? Does my reasoning lead to that conclusion—and am I to be understood as affirming that an idol is of itself of any consequence? It must be recollected that the Corinthian Christians are introduced by Paul (1Co 8:4) as saying that they knew that an idol was nothing in the world. Paul did not *directly* contradict that; but his reasoning had led him to the necessity of calling the propriety of their attending on the feasts of idols in question; and he introduces the matter now by asking these questions, thus leading the mind to it rather than directly affirming it at once. "Am I in this reasoning to be understood as affirming that an idol is anything, or that the meat there offered differs from other meat? No; you know, says Paul, that this is not my meaning. I admit that an idol in itself is nothing: but I do *not* admit, therefore, that it is right for you to attend in their temples; for though the *idol* itself—the block of wood or stone—is nothing, yet the offerings are really made to devils; and I would not have you engage in such a service," 1Co 10:20,21.

That the idol is any thing? That the block of wood or stone is a real living object of worship, to be dreaded or loved? **See Barnes "1Co 8:4"**.

Or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? Or that the meat which is offered *differs* from that which is not offered; that the mere act of offering it changes its qualities? I do not admit or suppose this.

{c} 1Co 8:4

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *But*. The negative here is omitted, but is understood. The ellipsis of a negative after an interrogative sentence is common in the classical writers, as well as in the Scriptures.—*Bloomfield*. The sense is, "No; I do not say this, but I say that there are reasons why you should not partake of those sacrifices; and one of those reasons is, that they have been really offered to devils."

They sacrifice to devils, (*daimonioiv*, demons.) The heathens used the word demon either in a good or a bad sense. They applied it commonly to spirits that were supposed to be inferior to the supreme God: genii; attending spirits; or, as they called them, divinities, or gods. A part were in their view good, and a part evil. Socrates supposed that such a *demon* or genius attended him, who

suggested good thoughts to him, and who was his protector. As these beings were good and well disposed, it was not supposed to be necessary to offer any sacrifices in order to appease them. But a large portion of those genii were supposed to be evil and wicked, and hence the necessity of attempting to appease their wrath by sacrifices and bloody-offerings. It was therefore true, as the apostle says, that the sacrifices of the heathen were made, usually at least, to devils or to evil spirits. Many of these spirits were supposed to be the souls of departed men, who were entitled to worship after death, having been enrolled among the gods. The word "demons," among the Jews, was employed only to designate evil beings. It is not applied in their writings to good angels or to blessed spirits, but to evil angels, to idols, to false gods. Thus in the Seventy, the word is used to translate

HEBREW, *Elilim, idols*, (Ps 96:5 Isa 65:10;) and *Shaid*, as in De 32:17, in a passage which Paul has here almost literally used, "They sacrificed unto devils, not to God." Nowhere in the Septuagint is it used in a good sense. In the New Testament the word is uniformly used also to denote evil spirits, and those usually which had taken possession of men in the time of the Saviour, Mt 7:22 9:33,34 10:8, 11:18; Mr 1:34,39, et alii. See also Campbell on the Gospels, Pre. Diss. vi., part i., & 14—16. The precise force of the original is not, however, conveyed by our translation. It is not true that the heathens sacrificed *to devils*, in the common and popular sense of that word, meaning thereby the apostate angel and the spirits under his direction; for the heathens were as ignorant of their existence as they were of the true God; and it is not *true* that they designed to worship such beings. But it is true,

(1.) that they did not worship the supreme and the true God. They were not acquainted with his existence; and they did not profess to adore him.

(2.) They worshipped *demons*; beings that they regarded as inferior to the true God; created spirits, or the spirits of men that had been enrolled among the number of the gods.

(3.) It was true that many of these beings were supposed to be malign and evil in their nature, and that their worship was designed to deprecate their wrath. So that, although an idol was nothing in itself, the gold or wood of which it was made was inanimate, and incapable of aiding or injuring them; and although there were no real beings such as the heathens supposed—no *genii* or inferior gods—yet they *designed* to offer sacrifice to such beings, and to deprecate their wrath. To join them in this, therefore, would be to express the belief that there were such beings, and that they ought to be worshipped, and that their wrath should be deprecated.

I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. I would not that you should have communion with demons. I would not have you express a belief of their existence; or join in worship to them; or partake of the spirit by which they are supposed to be actuated— a spirit that would be promoted by attendance on their worship. I would not have you, therefore, join in a mode of worship where such beings are acknowledged. You are solemnly dedicated to Christ; and the homage due to him should not be divided with homage offered to devils, or to imaginary beings.

{a} "devils" Le 17:7 De 32:17; Ps 106:37

{*} "devils" "demons"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord*, etc. This does not mean that they had no physical ability to do this, or that it was a natural impossibility; for they certainly had power to do it. But it must mean that they could not consistently do it. It was not fit, proper, decent. They were solemnly bound to serve and obey Christ: they had devoted themselves to him; and they could not, consistently with these obligations, join in the worship of demons. This is a striking instance in which the word cannot is used to denote not natural but moral inability.

And the cup of devils. Demons, 1Co 10:20. In the feasts in honour of the gods, wine was poured out as a libation, or drunk by the worshippers. See Virg. AEn. viii. 273. The custom of drinking *toasts* at feasts and celebrations arose from this practice of pouring out wine, or drinking in honour of the heathen gods; and is a practice that partakes still of the nature of heathenism. It was one of the abominations of heathenism to suppose that their gods would be pleased with the intoxicating draught. Such a pouring out of a libation was usually accompanied with a *prayer* to the idol god, that he would accept the offering; that he would be propitious; and that he would grant the desire of the worshipper. From that custom the habit of expressing a sentiment, or proposing a toast, uttered in drinking wine, has been derived. The toast or sentiment which now usually accompanies the drinking of a glass in this manner, if it mean anything, is now also *a prayer*: but to whom? to the god of wine? to a heathen deity? Can it be supposed that it is a prayer offered to the true God—the God of purity? Has Jehovah directed that *prayer* should be offered to him in such a manner? Can it be acceptable to him? Either the sentiment is unmeaning, or it is a prayer offered to a heathen god, or it is mockery of JEHOVAH; and in either case it is improper and wicked. And it may as truly be said now of Christians as in the time of Paul, "Ye cannot consistently drink the cup of the Lord at the communion table, and the cup where a PRAYER, is offered to a false god, or to the dead, or to the air; or when, if it means anything, it is a mockery of JEHOVAH." Now, can a Christian with any more consistency or propriety join in such celebrations, and in such unmeaning or profane libations, than he could go into the temple of an idol, and partake of the idolatrous celebrations there?

And of the table of devils. Demons. It is not needful to the force of this that we should suppose that the word means necessarily evil spirits. They were not God; and to worship theta was idolatry. The apostle means that Christians could not consistently join in the worship that was offered to them, or in the feasts celebrated in honour of them.

{b} "cup" De 32:38 {*} "devils" "demons"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy*? That is, shall we, by joining in the worship of idols, *provoke* or *irritate* God, or excite him to anger? This is evidently the meaning of the word, *parazhloumen* rendered "provoke to jealousy." The word

HEBREW, usually rendered by this word by the seventy, has this sense in De 32:21; 1Ki 14:22 Eze 8:3; Ps 78:58.

There is a reference here, doubtless, to the truth recorded in Ex 20:5, that God "is a jealous God," and that he regards the worship of idols as a direct affront to himself. The sentiment of Paul

is, that to join in the worship of idols, or in the observance of their feasts, would be to participate in that which had ever been regarded by God with peculiar abhorrence, and which more than anything else tended to provoke his wrath. We may observe, that any course of life that tends to alienate the affections from God, and to fix them on other beings or objects, is a sin of the same kind as that referred to here. Any inordinate love of friends, of property, of honour, has substantially the same idolatrous nature, and will tend to provoke him to anger. And it may be asked of Christians now, whether they will by such inordinate attachments provoke the Lord to wrath? whether they will thus excite his displeasure, and expose themselves to his indignation? Very often Christians *do* thus provoke him. They become unduly attached to a friend, or to wealth, and God in anger takes away, that friend by death, or that property by the flames: or they conform to the world, and mingle in its scenes of fashion and gaiety, and forget God; and in displeasure he visits them with judgments, humbles them, and recalls them to himself.

Are we stronger than he? This is given as a reason why we should not provoke his displeasure. We cannot contend successfully with him; and it is therefore madness and folly to contend with God, or to expose ourselves to the effects of his indignation.

{c} "provoke" De 32:21 Job 9:4; Eze 22:14

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *All things are lawful for me*. **See Barnes "1Co 6:12"**.

This is a repetition of what he had said before; and it is here applied to the subject of eating the meat that had been offered to idols. The sense is, "Though it may be admitted that it was strictly *lawful* to partake of that meat, yet there were strong reasons why it was inexpedient; and those reasons ought to have the binding force of law."

All things edify not. All things do not tend to build up the church, and to advance the interests of religion; and when they do not have this effect, they are not expedient, and are improper. Paul acted for the welfare of the church. His object was to save souls. Anything that would promote that object was proper; any thing which would hinder it, though in itself it might not be strictly unlawful, was in his view improper. This is a simple rule, and might be easily applied by all. If a man has his heart on the conversion of men and the salvation of the world, it will go far to regulate his conduct in reference to many things concerning which there may be no exact and positive law. It will do much to regulate his dress; his style of living; his expenses; his entertainments; his mode of intercourse with the world. He may not be able to fix his finger on any positive law, and to say that this or that article of dress is improper; that this or that piece of furniture is absolutely forbidden; or that this or that manner of life is contrary to any explicit law of JEHOVAH; but he may see that it will interfere with his great and main purpose, *to do good on the widest scale possible*; and THEREFORE to him it will be inexpedient and improper. Such a grand leading purpose is a much better guide to direct a man's life than would be exact positive statutes to regulate everything, even if such minute statutes were possible.

{d} "things" 1Co 6:12

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Let no man seek his own*. This should be properly interpreted of the matter under discussion, though the direction assumes the form of a general principle. Originally it meant, "Let no man, in regard to the question about partaking of the meat offered in sacrifice to idols, consult his own pleasure, happiness, or convenience; but let him, as the leading rule on the subject, ask what will be for the welfare of others. Let him not gratify his own taste and inclinations, regardless of their feelings, comfort, and salvation; but let him in these things have a primary reference to their welfare." He may dispense with these things without danger or injury; he cannot indulge in them without endangering the happiness or purity of others. His duty, therefore, requires him to abstain. The injunction, however, has a general form, and is applicable to all Christians, and to all cases *of a similar kind*. It does not mean that a man is not in any instance to regard his own welfare, happiness, or salvation; it does not mean that a man owes no duty to himself or family, or that he should neglect all these to advance the welfare of others; but the precept means, that *in cases like that under consideration*, when there is no positive law, and when a man's example would have a great influence, he should be guided in his conduct, not by a reference to his own ease, comfort, or gratification, but by a reference to the purity and salvation of others. And the observance of this simple rule would make a prodigious change in the church and the world.

But every man another's wealth. The word *wealth* is not in the Greek. Literally, "that which is of another;" the word *to* referring to anything and everything that pertains to his comfort, usefulness, happiness, or salvation. The sentiment of the whole is, *when a man is bound and directed by no positive law, his grand rule should be the comfort and salvation of others*. This is a simple rule; it might be easily applied; and this would be a sort of balance-wheel in the various actions and plans of the world. If every man would adopt this rule, he could not be in much danger of going wrong; he would be certain that he would not live in vain.

{e} "Let no man" Php 2:4,21

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Whatsoever is sold in the shambles*. In the market. The meat of animals offered in sacrifice would be exposed there to sale as well as other meat. The apostle says that it might be purchased, since the mere fact that it had been offered in sacrifice could not change its quality, or render it unfit for use. They were to abstain from attending on the feasts of the idols in the temple, from partaking of meat that had been offered them, and from celebrations observed expressly in honour of idols; but lest they should become too scrupulous, the apostle tells them that if the meat was offered indiscriminately in the market with other meat, they were not to hesitate to purchase it, or eat it.

Asking no question for conscience sake. Not hesitating or doubting as if it might possibly have been offered in sacrifice. Not being scrupulous, as if it were *possible* that the conscience should be defiled. This is a good rule still, and may be applied to a great many things. But,

(1.) that which is purchased should be in itself lawful and right. It would not be proper for a man to use ardent spirits or any other intoxicating drinks because they were offered for sale, any more than it would be to commit suicide because men offered pistols, and bowie-knives, and halters to sell.

(2.) There are many things now concerning which similar questions may be asked; as, e.g., is it right to use the productions of slave-labour, the sugar, cotton, etc., that are the price of blood? Is it right to use that which is known to be made on the Sabbath; or that which it is known a man has made by a life of dishonesty sad crime? The consciences of many persons are tender on all such questions; and the questions are not of easy solution. Some rules may perhaps be suggested arising from the case before us.

(a.) If the article is exposed indiscriminately with others in the market, if it be in itself lawful, if there is no ready mark of distinction, then the apostle would direct us not to hesitate.

(b.) If the use and purchase of the article would go directly and knowingly to countenance the existence of slavery, to encourage a breach of the Sabbath, or to the continuance of a course of dishonest living, then it would seem equally clear that it is not right to purchase or to use it. If a man abhors slavery, and Sabbath-breaking, and dishonesty, then how can he knowingly partake of that which goes to patronize and extend these abominations?

(c.) If the article is expressly pointed out to him as an article that has been made in this manner, and his partaking of it will be construed into a participation of the crime, then he ought to abstain. See 1Co 10:28. No man is at liberty to patronize slavery, Sabbath-breaking, dishonesty, or licentiousness in any form. Every man can live without doing it; and where it can be done, it should be done. And perhaps there will be no other way of breaking up many of the crimes and cruelties of the earth than for good men to act conscientiously, and to refuse to partake of the avails of sin, and of gain that results from oppression and fraud.

{a} "Whatsoever" 1Ti 4:4

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *For the earth is the Lord's*. This is quoted from Ps 24:1. The same sentiment is also found in Ps 50:12, and in De 10:14. It is here urged as a reason why it is right to partake of the meat offered in the market. It all belongs to the Lord. It does not really belong to the idol, even though it has been offered to it. It may, therefore, be partaken of as his gift, and should be received with gratitude.

And the fulness thereof. All that the earth produces belongs to him. He causes it to grow; and he has given it to be food for man; and though it may have been devoted to an idol, yet its nature is not changed. It is still the gift of God; still the production of his hand; still the fruit of his goodness and love.

{b} "the earth" De 10:14 Ps 24:1, 50:12

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *If any of them that believe not*. That are not Christians; that are still heathens.

Bid you to a feast. Evidently not a feast in the temple of an idol, but at his own house. If he ask you to partake of his hospitality.

And ye be disposed to go. Greek, "And you will to go." It is evidently implied here that it would be not improper to go. The Saviour accepted such invitations to dine with the Pharisees, (**See Barnes "Lu 11:37"**;) and Christianity is not designed to abolish the courtesies of social life; or to break the bonds of intercourse; or to make men misanthropes or hermits. It allows and cultivates, under proper Christian restraints, the intercourse in society which will promote the comfort of men, and especially that which may extend the usefulness of Christians. It does not require, therefore, that we should withdraw from social life, or regard as improper the courtesies of society. **See Barnes "1Co 5:10"**.

Whatsoever is set before you, etc. Whether it has been offered in sacrifice or not; for so the connexion requires us to understand it.

Eat. This should be interpreted strictly. The apostle says "*eat*," not "*drink*;" and the principle will not authorize us to drink whatever is set before us, asking no questions for conscience sake; for while it was a matter of indifference in regard to eating, whether the meat had been sacrificed to idols or not, it is *not* a matter of indifference whether a man may drink intoxicating liquor. *That* is a point on which the *conscience* should have much to do; and on which its honest decisions, and the will of the Lord, should be faithfully and honestly regarded.

{*} "bid" "ask" {c} "is set" Lu 10:7

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *But if any man*. If any fellow guest; any scrupulous fellow Christian who may be present. That the word "any" (*tiv*) refers to a fellow guest seems evident; for it is not probable that the *host* would point out any part of the food on his own table, of the lawfulness of eating which he would suppose there was any doubt. Yet there might be present some scrupulous fellow Christian who would have strong doubts of the propriety of partaking of the food, and who would indicate it to the other guests.

For his sake that shewed it. Do not offend him; do not lead him into sin; do not pain and wound his feelings.

And for conscience sake". Eat not, out of respect to the conscientious scruples of him that told thee that it had been offered to idols. The word *conscience* refers to the conscience of the informer, (1Co 10:29;) still he should make it a matter of conscience not to wound his weak brethren, or lead them into sin.

For the earth is the Lord's, etc. See 1Co 10:26. These words are wanting in many MSS., (see Mill's Greek Testament,) and in the Vulgate, Syriac, Coptic, and Arabic versions; and are omitted by Griesbach. Grotius says that they should be omitted. There might easily have been a mistake in transcribing them from 1Co 10:26. The authority of the Mss., however, is in favour of retaining

them; and they are quoted by the Greek fathers and commentators. If they are to be retained, they are to be interpreted, probably, in this sense: "There is no *necessity* that you should partake of this food. All things belong to God; and he has made ample provision for your wants without subjecting you to the necessity of eating this. Since this is the case, it is best to regard the scruples of those who have doubts of the propriety of eating *this* food, and to abstain."

{d} "not" 1Co 8:10,12 {e} "the earth" 1Co 10:26

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Conscience, I say, not thine own*. I know that you may have no scruples on the subject. I do not mean, that with you this need be a matter of conscience. I do not put it on that ground, as if an idol were anything, or as if it were in itself wrong, or as if the quality of the meat so offered had been changed; but I put it on the ground of not wounding the feelings of those who are scrupulous, or of leading them into sin.

For why is my liberty, etc. There is much difficulty in this clause; for as it now stands, it seems to be entirely contradictory to what the apostle had been saying: He had been urging them to have respect to other men's consciences, and in some sense to give up their liberty to their opinions and feelings. Macknight and some others understand it as an objection: "Perhaps you will say, But why is my liberty to be ruled by another man's conscience?" Doddridge supposes that this and 1Co 10:30 come in as a kind of parenthesis, to prevent their extending his former caution beyond what he designed. "I speak only of acts obvious to human observation; for as to what immediately lies between God and my own soul, why is my liberty to be judged, arraigned, condemned at the bar of another man's conscience?" But it is probable that this is not an objection. The sense may be thus expressed: "I am free; I have liberty to partake of that food, if I please; there is no law against it, and it is not morally wrong: but if I do, when it is pointed out to me as having been sacrificed to idols, my liberty—the right which I exercise—will be *misconstrued, misjudged, condemned* (for so the word *krinetai* seems to be used here) by others. The weak and scrupulous believer will censure, judge, condemn me as regardless of what is proper, and as disposed to fall in with the customs of idolaters; and will suppose that I cannot have a good conscience. Under these circumstances, why should I act so as to expose myself to this censure and condemnation? It is better for me to abstain, and not to use this liberty in the case, but to deny myself for the sake of others."

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *For if I by grace be a partaker*. Or rather, "If I *partake* by grace—if, by the grace and mercy of God, I have a *right* to partake of this—yet why should I so conduct as to expose myself to the reproaches and evil surmises of others? Why should I lay myself open to be blamed

on the subject of eating, when there are so many bounties of Providence for which I may be thankful, and which I may partake of without doing injury, or exposing myself in any manner to be blamed?"

Why am I evil spoken of. Why should I pursue such a course as to expose myself to blame or censure?

For that for which I give thanks. For my food. The phrase, "for which I give thanks," seems to be a periphrasis for *food*, or for that of which he partook to nourish life. It is implied that he always gave thanks for his food; and that this was with him such a universal custom, that the phrase, "for which I give thanks," might be used as convenient and appropriate phraseology to denote his ordinary food. The idea in the verse, then, is this: "By the favour of God, I have a *right* to partake of this food. But if I did, I should be evil spoken of, mid do injury, And it is unnecessary. God has made ample provision elsewhere for my support, for which I may be thank. I will not therefore expose myself to calumny and reproach, or be the occasion of.injury to others by partaking of the food offered in sacrifice to idols."

{1} "grace" "thanksgiving" {a} "give thanks" Ro 14:6

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *Whether therefore ye eat, or drink*. This direction should be strictly and properly applied to the case in hand; that is, to the question about eating and drinking the things that had been offered in sacrifice to idols. Still, however, it contains a general direction that is applicable to eating and drinking at all times; and the phrase, "whatsoever ye do," is evidently designed by the apostle to make the direction universal.

Or whatsoever ye do. In all the actions and plans of life; whatever be your schemes, your desires, your doings, let all be done to the glory of God.

Do all to the glory of God. The phrase, "the glory of God," is equivalent to the honour of God; and the direction is, that we should so act in all things as to honour him as our Lawgiver, our Creator, our Redeemer; and so as to lead others by our example to praise him and to embrace his gospel. A child acts so as to honour a father when he always cherishes reverential and proper thoughts of him; when he is thankful for his favours; when he keeps his laws; when he endeavours to advance his plans and his interests;; and when he so acts as to lead all around him to cherish elevated opinions of the character of a father. He *dishonours* him when he has no respect to his authority; when he breaks his laws; when he leads others to treat him with disrespect. In like manner, we live to the glory of God when we honour him in all the relations which he sustains to us; when we keep his laws; when we partake of his favours with thankfulness, and with a deep sense of our dependence; when we pray unto him; and when we so live as to lead those around us to cherish elevated conceptions of his goodness, and mercy, and holiness. Whatever plan or purpose will tend to advance his kingdom, and to make him better known and loved, will be to his glory. We may observe in regard to this,

(1.) that the rule is *universal*. It extends to everything. If in so small matters as eating and drinking we should seek to honour God, assuredly we should in all other things.

(2.) It is designed that this should be the constant rule of conduct, and that we should be often reminded of it. The acts of eating and drinking must be performed often; and the command is attached to that which must often occur, that we may be often reminded of it, and that we may be kept from forgetting it.

(3.) It is intended that we should honour God in our families and among our friends. We eat with them; we share together the bounties of Providence; and God designs that we should honour him when we partake of him mercies, and that thus our daily enjoyments should be sanctified by a constant effort to glorify him.

(4.) We should devote the strength which we derive from the bounties of his hand to his honour and in his service. He gives us food; he makes it nourishing; he invigorates our frame; and that strength should not be devoted to purposes of sin, and profligacy, and corruption. It is an act of high dishonour to God, when HE gives us strength, that we should at once devote that strength to pollution and to sin.

(5.) This rule is designed to be one of the chief directors of our lives. It is to guide all our conduct, and to constitute a test by which to try our actions. Whatever can be done to advance the honour of God is right; whatever cannot be done with that end is wrong. Whatever plan a man can form that will have this end is a good plan; whatever cannot be made to have this tendency, and that cannot be commenced, continued, and ended with a distinct and definite desire to promote his honour, is wrong, and should be forthwith abandoned.

(6.) What a change would it make in the world if this rule were everywhere followed! How differently would even professing Christians live! How many of their plans would they be constrained at once to abandon! And what a mighty revolution would it at once make on earth, should all the actions of men begin to be performed to promote the glory of God!

(7.) It may be added, that sentiments like that of the apostle were found among the Jews, and even among heathens. Thus Maimonides, as cited by Grotius, says, "Let everything be in the name of Heaven ;" i.e., in the name of God. Capellus cites several of the rabbinical writers who say that all actions, even eating and drinking, should be done *in the name of God*. See the *Critici Sacri*. Even the heathen writers have something that resembles this. Thus Arrian (Eph 1:19) says, "Looking unto God in all things, small and great." Epictetus, too, on being asked how any one may eat so as to please God, answered, "By eating justly, temperately, and thankfully."

{b} "Whether" Col 3:17

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *Give none offence*. Be inoffensive; that is, do not act so as to lead others into sin. **See Barnes "Ro 14:13"**.

Neither to the Jews, etc. To no one, though they are the foes of God or strangers to him. To the Jews be inoffensive, because they think that the least approach to idol worship is to be abhorred. Do not *so* act as to lead them to think that you connive at or approve idol worship, and so as to prejudice them the more against the Christian religion, and lead them more and more to oppose it. In other words, do not attend the feasts in honour of idols.

Nor to the Gentiles. Greek, *Greeks*. To the pagans who are unconverted. They are attached to idol worship. They seek every way to justify themselves in it. Do not countenance them in it, and thus lead them into the sin of idolatry.

Nor to the church of God. To Christians. Many of them are weak. They may not be as fully instructed as you are. Your example would lead them into sin. Abstain, therefore, from things which, though they are in themselves strictly *lawful*, may yet be the occasion of leading others into sin, and endangering their salvation.

{c} "none offence" Ro 14:13 2Co 6:3 {2} "Gentiles" "Greeks"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *Even as I*, etc. Paul here proposes his own example as their guide. The example which he refers to is that which he had exhibited as described in this and the preceding chapters. *His* main object had been to please all men; i.e., not to alarm their prejudices, or needlessly to excite their opposition, (**See Barnes "1Co 10:19"**) ; also 1Co 10:20-23", while he made known to them the truth, and sought their salvation. It is well when a minister can without ostentation appeal to his own example, and urge others to a life of self-denial and holiness, by his own manner of living, and by what he is himself in his daily walk and conversation.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 1

1st Corinthians Chapter 11

THE first verse in this chapter properly belongs to the preceding, and is the conclusion of the discussion which the apostle had been carrying on in that and the previous chapters. It has been improperly separated from that chapter, and in reading should be read in connexion with it. The remainder of the chapter is properly divided into two parts:

I. A discussion respecting the impropriety of a woman's praying or prophesying with her head uncovered, (1Co 11:2-16;) and,

II. A reproof of their irregularities in the observance of the Lord's Supper, 1Co 11:17-34.

I. In regard to the first, it seems probable that some of the women who, on pretence of being inspired, had prayed or prophesied in the Corinthian church, had cast off their veils after the manner Of the heathen priestesses. This indecent and improper custom, the apostle reproves. He observes, therefore, that the pre-emmence belongs to man over the woman, even as pre-eminence belonged

to Christ over the man; that it was a dishonour to Christ when a man prayed or prophesied with his head covered, and in like manner it was regarded everywhere as dishonourable and improper for a woman to lay. aside the appropriate symbol of her sex, and the emblem of subordination, and to be uncovered in the presence of the man, (1Co 11:3-6;) that if a woman was not veiled, if she laid aside the appropriate emblem of her sex and of her subordinate condition, she might as well part with her hair, which all knew would be dishonourable and improper, (1Co 11:6;) that the woman had been created for a subordinate station, and should observe it, (1Co 11:7-9;) that she should have power on her head because of the angels, (1Co 11:10;) and yet, lest this should *depress* her, and seem to convey the idea of her utter inferiority and unimportance, he adds, that in the plan of salvation they are in many respects on an equality with the man, that the same plan was adapted to both, that the same blessings are appointed for both sexes, and the same high hopes are held out to both, (1Co 11:11,12;) and that nature on this subject was a good instructor, and showed that it was uncomely for a woman to pray with her head uncovered, that her hair had been given her for an ornament and for beauty, and that, as it would be *as* improper for her to remove her veil as to cut off her hair, nature itself required that this symbol of her subordination should not be laid aside in public, 1Co 11:13-16.

II. Next, as to the irregularities in the observance of the Lord's Supper, the apostle observes, (1Co 11:17,) that he could not commend them for what he was about to say. There had been, and there were, irregularities among them, which it was his duty to reprove. In 1Co 11:18-22, he states what those irregularities were. He then (1Co 11:23-26) states the true nature and design of the Lord's Supper, as it was very evident that they had not understood it, but supposed it was a common feast, such as they had been accustomed to observe in honour of idols. In 1Co 11:27-29, he states the consequences of observing this ordinance in an improper manner, and the proper way of approaching it; and in 1Co 11:30-32, observes that their improper mode of observing it was the cause of the punishment which many of them had experienced. He then concludes by directing them to celebrate the Lord's Supper *together*; to eat at home when they were hungry; and not to abuse the Lord's Supper by making it an occasion of feasting; and assures them that the other matters of irregularity he would set in order when he should come among them.

Verse 1. *Be ye followers of me*. Imitate my example in the matter now under discussion. As I deny myself; as I seek to give no offence to any one; as I endeavour not to alarm the prejudices of others, but in all things to seek their salvation, so do you. This verse belongs to the previous chapter, and should not have been separated from it. It is the close of the discussion there.

Even as I also am of Christ. I make Christ my example. He is my model in all things; and if you follow him, and follow me as far as I follow him, you will not err. This is the only safe example; and if we follow this, we can never go astray.

{a} "ye followers" Eph 5:1 1Th 1:6 {*} "followers" "Imitators"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Now I praise you, brethren*. Paul always chose to commend Christians when it could be done, and never seemed to suppose that such praise would be injurious to them. **See Barnes "1Co 1:4"**; **See Barnes "1Co 1:5"**.

On this occasion he was the more ready to praise them, as far as it could be done, because there were some things in regard to them in which he would have occasion to reprove them.

That ye remember me in all things. That you are disposed to regard my authority and seek my direction in all matters pertaining to the good order of the church. There can be little doubt that they had consulted him in their letter (1Co 7:1) about the proper manner in which a woman ought to demean herself if she was called upon, under the influence of Divine inspiration, to utter anything in public. The question seems to have been, whether, since she was inspired, it was proper for her to retain the marks of her inferiority of rank, and remain covered; or whether the fact of her inspiration did not release her from that obligation, and make it proper that she should lay aside her veil, and appear as public speakers did among men. To this the apostle refers, probably, in the phrase "all things," that even in matters of this kind, pertaining to the good order of the church, they were disposed to regard his authority.

And keep the ordinances. Margin, *Traditions*, (*tav paradoseiv*). The word does not refer to anything that had been delivered down from a former generation, or from former times, as the word *tradition* now usually signifies; but it means that which had been delivered to them, (*paradidwmi*;) i.e., by the apostles. The apostles had *delivered* to them certain doctrines, or rules, respecting the good order and the government of the church; and they had in general observed them, and were disposed still to do it. For this disposition to regard his authority, and to keep what he had enjoined, he commends them. He proceeds to specify what would be proper in regard to the particular subject on which they had made inquiry.

{b} "that ye" 1Co 4:17 {c} "keep" Lu 1:6 {1} "ordinances" "traditions"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *But I would have you know*. "I invite your attention particularly to the following considerations, in order to form a correct opinion on this subject." Paul does not *at once* answer the inquiry, and determine what ought to be done; but he invites their attention to a series of remarks on the subject, which led *them* to draw the conclusion which he wished to establish. The phrase here is designed to call the attention to the subject, like that used so often in the New Testament, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

That the head, etc. The word *head*, in the Scriptures, is designed often to denote *master, ruler, chief*, The word *Greek* is often thus used in the Old Testament. See Nu 17:3 25:15; De 28:13,44

Jud 10:18 11:8,11 1Sa 15:17; 2Sa 22:44.

In the New Testament the word is used in the sense of lord, ruler, chief, in Eph 1:22 4:15; Eph 5:23 Col 2:10. Here it means that Christ is the Ruler, Director, or Lord of the Christian man. This truth was to be regarded in all their feelings and arrangements, and was never to be forgotten. Every Christian should recollect the relation in which he stands to him, as one that is fitted to produce the strictest decorum, and a steady sense of subordination.

Of every man. Every Christian. All acknowledge Christ as their Ruler and Master. They are subject to him; and in all proper ways recognize their subordination to him.

And the head of the woman is the man. The sense is, she is subordinate to him; and in all circumstances-in her demeanour, her dress, her conversation, in public and in the family circle—should recognize her subordination to him. The particular thing here referred to is, that if the woman is inspired, and speaks or prays in public, she should by no means lay aside the usual and proper symbols of her subordination. The danger was, that those who were under the influence of inspiration would regard themselves as freed from the necessity of recognizing that, and would lay aside the *veil*, the usual and appropriate symbol of their occupying a rank inferior to the man. This was often done in the temples of the heathen deities by the priestesses, and it would appear also that it had been done by Christian females in the churches.

And the head of Christ is God. Christ, as Mediator, has consented to assume a subordinate rank, and to recognize God the Father as superior in office. Hence he was obedient in all things as a Son; he submitted to the arrangement required in redemption; he always recognized his subordinate rank as Mediator, and always regarded God as the Supreme Ruler, even in the matter of redemption. The sense is, that Christ, throughout his entire work, regarded himself as occupying a subordinate station to the Father; and that it was proper from his example to recognize the propriety of rank and station everywhere.

{d} "head of every man" Eph 5:23 {e} "Christ" Ge 3:16 1Pe 3:1,5,6

{f} "the man" Joh 14:28 1Co 15:27,28

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Every man praying or prophesying*. The word *prophesying* here means, evidently, *teaching*; or publicly speaking to the people on the subject of religion. **See Barnes "Ac 2:17".**

See also the subject considered more at length in the Notes on chapter 14. Whether these persons who are here said to prophesy were all inspired, or claimed to be inspired, may admit of a question. The simple idea here is, that they spoke in the public assemblies, and professed to be the expounders of the Divine will.

Having his head covered. With a veil, or turban, or cap, or whatever else is worn on the head. To remove the hat, the turban, or the covering of the head, is a mark of respect for a superior when in his presence.

Dishonoureth his head. Does dishonour to Christ as his head, (1Co 11:2;) that is, he does not, in his presence and in his service, observe the usual and proper custom by which a subordinate station is recognised, and which indicates respect for a superior. In the presence of a prince or a nobleman, it would be considered as a mark of disrespect should the head be covered. So in the presence of Christ, in whose name he ministers, it is a mark of disrespect if the head is covered. This illustration is drawn from the customs of all times and countries, by which respect for a superior is indicated by removing the covering from the head. This is one reason why a man should not cover his head in public worship. Another is given in 1Co 11:7. Other interpretations of the passage may be seen in Bloomfield's Critical Digest.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth*. In the Old Testament, prophetesses are not unfrequently mentioned. Thus Miriam is mentioned, (Ex 15:20;) Deborah, (Jud 4:4;) Huldah, (2Ki 22:14;) Nosdish, (Ne 6:14.) So also in the New Testament, Anna is mentioned as a prophetess, Lu 2:36. That there were females in the early Christian church who corresponded to those known among the Jews in some measure as endowed with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, cannot be doubted. What was their precise office, and what was the nature of the public services in which they were engaged, is not however known. That they prayed is clear; and that they publicly expounded the will of God is apparent also. **See Barnes "Ac 2:17"**.

As the presumption is, however, that they were inspired, their example is no warrant now for females to take part in the public services of worship, unless they also give evidence that they are under the influence of inspiration, and the more especially as the apostle Paul has expressly forbidden their becoming public teachers, 1Ti 2:12. If it is now pleaded, from this example, that women should speak and pray in public, yet it should be just so far only *as this example goes*, and it should be only when they have the qualifications that the early prophetesses had in the Christian church. If there are any such; if any are directly inspired by God, there then will be an evident propriety that they should publicly proclaim his will, and not till then. It may be further observed, however, that the fact that Paul here mentions the custom of women praying or speaking publicly in the church, does not prove that it was right or proper. His immediate object now was not to consider whether the practice was itself right, but to condemn the manner of its performance as a violation of all the proper rules of modesty and of subordination. On another occasion, in this very epistle, he fully condemns the practice in any form, and enjoins silence on the female members of the church in public, 1Co 14:34.

With her head uncovered. That is, with the veil removed which she usually wore. It would seem from this that the women removed their veils, and wore their hair dishevelled, when they pretended to be under the influence of Divine inspiration. This was the case with the heathen priestesses; and in so doing, the Christian women imitated them. On this account, if on no other, Paul declares the impropriety of this conduct. It was, besides, a custom among ancient females, and one that was strictly enjoined by the traditional laws of the Jews, that a woman should not appear in public unless she was veiled. See this proved by Lightfoot *in loco*.

Dishonoureth her head. Shows a want of proper respect to man—to her husband, to her father, to the sex in general. The veil is a token of modesty and of subordination. It is regarded among Jews, and everywhere, as an emblem of her sense of inferiority of rank and station. It is the customary mark of her sex, and that by which she evinces her modesty and sense of subordination. To remove that, is to remove the appropriate mark of such subordination, and is a public act by which she thus shows dishonour to the man. And as it is proper that the grades and ranks of life should be recognised in a suitable manner, so it is improper that, even on pretence of religion, and of being engaged in the service of God, these marks should be laid aside.

For that is even all one as if she were shaven. As if her long hair, which nature teaches her she should wear for a veil, (1Co 11:15, margin,) should be cut off. Long hair is, by the custom of the times, and of nearly all countries, a mark of the sex, an ornament of the female, and judged to be beautiful and comely. To remove that is to appear, in this respect, like the other sex, and to lay

aside the badge of her own. This, says Paul, all would judge to be improper. You yourselves would not allow it. And yet to lay aside the veil—the appropriate badge of the sex, and of her sense of subordination—would be an act of the same kind. It would indicate the same feeling, the same forgetfulness of the proper sense of subordination; and if that is laid aside, ALL the usual indications of modesty and subordination might be removed also. Not even under religious pretences, therefore, are the usual marks of sex, and of propriety of place and rank, to be laid aside. Due respect is to be shown, in dress, and speech, and deportment, to those whom God has placed above us; and neither in language, in attire, nor in habit, are we to depart from what all judge to be proprieties of life, or from what God has judged and ordained to be the proper indications of the regular gradations in society.

{a} "woman" Ac 21:9

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *For if the woman be not covered*. If her head be not covered with a veil.

Let her also be shorn. Let her long hair be cut off. Let her lay aside all the usual and proper indications of her sex and rank in life. If it is done in one respect, it may with the same propriety be done in all. See Note above.

But if it be a shame, etc. If custom, nature, and habit; if the common and usual feelings and views among men would pronounce this to be a shame, the other would be pronounced to be a shame also by the same custom and common sense of men.

Let her be covered. With a veil. Let her wear the customary attire indicative of modesty and a sense of subordination. Let her not lay this aside even on any pretence of religion.

{b} "shorn" Nu 5:18 De 21:12

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *For a man indeed ought not to cover his head*. That is, with a veil; or in public worship; when he approaches God, or when in his name he addresses his fellow-men. It is not fit and proper that he should be covered. The reason why it is not proper, the apostle immediately states:

Forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God. The phrase "the image of God" refers to the fact that man was made in the likeness of his Maker, (Ge 1:27;) and proves that, though fallen, there is a sense in which he is still the image of God. It is not because man is holy or pure, and thus resembles his Creator; but it evidently is because he was invested by his Maker with authority and dominion: he was superior to all other creatures, Ge 1:28. This is still retained; and this the apostle evidently refers to in the passage before us, and this he says should be recognised and regarded. If he wore a veil or turban, it would be a mark of servitude or inferiority. It was therefore improper that he should appear in this manner; but he should be so clad as not to obscure or hide the great

truth that he was the direct representative of God on the earth, and had a superiority to all other creatures.

And glory of God. The word *glory* in the classic writers means,

(1.) opinion, sentiment, etc.;

(2.) fame, reputation. Here it means, as it often does, splendour, brightness, or that which stands forth to *represent* God, or by which the glory of God is known. Man was created first; he had dominion given him; by him, therefore, the Divine authority and wisdom first shone forth; and this fact should be recognised in the due subordination of rank, and even in the apparel and attire which shall be worn. The impression of his rank and superiority should be everywhere retained.

But the woman is the glory of the man. The honour, the ornament, etc. She was made *for* him; she was made after he was; she was taken from him, and was "bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh." All her comeliness, loveliness, and purity, are therefore an expression of his honour and dignity, since all that comeliness and loveliness were made of him and for him. This, therefore, ought to be acknowledged by a suitable manner of attire; and in his presence this sense of her inferiority of rank and subordination should be acknowledged by the customary use of the veil. She should appear with the symbol of modesty and subjection, which are implied by the head being covered. This sense is distinctly expressed in the following verse.

{c} "image" Ge 5:1

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *For the man is not of the woman*. The man was not formed from the woman.

But the woman of the man. From his side, Ge 2:18,22,23.

{d} "For the man" Ge 2:18.22,23

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Neither was the man created for the woman*, etc. This is a simple statement of what is expressed in Genesis. The woman was made for the comfort and happiness of the man. Not to be a slave, but a help-meet; not to be the minister of his pleasures, but to be his aid and comforter in life; not to be regarded as of inferior nature and rank, but to be his friend, to divide his sorrows, and to multiply and extend his joys; yet still to be in a station subordinate to him. He is to be the head; the ruler; the presider in the family circle; and she was created to aid him in his duties, to comfort him in his afflictions, to partake with him of his pleasures. Her rank is therefore honourable, though it is subordinate. It is, in some respects, the more honourable because it is subordinate; and as her happiness is dependent on him, she has the higher claim to his protection and his tender care. The whole of Paul's idea here is, that her situation and rank as subordinate should be recognised

by her at all times, and that in his presence it was proper that she should wear the usual symbol of modesty and subordination, the veil.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *For this cause*, etc. There is scarcely any passage in the Scriptures which has more exercised the ingenuity of commentators than this verse. The various attempts which have been made to explain it may be seen in Pool, Rosenmuller, Bloomfield, etc. After all the explanations which have been given of it, I confess I do not understand it. It is not difficult to see what the connexion requires us to suppose in the explanation. The obvious interpretation would be, that a woman should have a veil on her head because of the angels who were supposed to be present, observing them in their public worship; and it is generally agreed that the word *power* (*exousian*) denotes a veil, or a covering for the head. But the word *power* does not occur in this sense in any classic writer. Bretschneider understands it of a veil, as being a defence or guard to the face, lest it should be seen by others. Some have supposed that it was the name of a female ornament that was worn on the head, formed of braids of hair set with jewels. Most commentators agree that it means a veil, though some think (see Bloomfield) that it is called *power* to denote the veil which was worn by married women, which indicated the superiority of the married woman to the maiden. But it is sufficient to say in reply to this, that the apostle is not referring to married women in contradistinction from those who are unmarried, but is showing that *all* women who prophesy or pray in public should be veiled. There can, perhaps, be no doubt that the word "power" has reference to a veil, or to a covering for the head; but why it is called *power* I confess I do not understand; and most of the comments on the word are, in my view, egregious trifling.

Because of the angels. Some have explained this of good angels who were supposed to be present in their assemblies, (see Doddridge;) others refer it to evil angels; and others to messengers or spies who, it has been supposed, were present in their public assemblies, and who would report greatly to the disadvantage of the Christian assemblies if the women were seen to be unveiled. I do not know what it means; and I regard it as one of the very few passages in the Bible whose meaning as yet is wholly inexplicable. The most natural interpretation seems to me to be this: "A woman in the public assemblies, and in speaking in the presence of men, should wear a veil—the usual symbol of modesty and subordination —because the angels of God are witnesses of your public worship, (Heb 1:14,) and because they know and appreciate the propriety of subordination and order in public assemblies." According to this, it would mean that the simple reason would be that the angels were witnesses of their worship; and that they were the friends of propriety, due subordination, and order; and that they ought to observe these in all assemblies convened for the worship of God. I do not know that this sense has been proposed by any commentator; but it is one which strikes me as the most obvious and natural, and consistent with the context. The following remarks respecting the ladies of Persia may throw some light on this subject:— "The head-dress of the women is simple: their hair is drawn behind the head, and divided into several tresses: the beauty of this head-dress consists in the thickness and length of these tresses, which should fall even down to the heels—in default of which, they lengthen them with tresses of silk. The ends of

these tresses they decorate with pearls and jewels, or ornaments of gold or silver. The head is covered, *under* the veil or kerchief, (*couvre chef*), only by the end of a small *bandeau*, shaped into a triangle: this *bandeau*, which is of various colours, is thin and light. The *bandalette* is embroidered by the needle, or covered with jewelry, according to the quality of the wearer. This is, in my opinion, the ancient *tiara*, or *diadem*, of the queens of Persia: only married women wear it; and it is the mark by which it is known that they are under subjection, (*c'est ld la marque a laquelle on reeonnoit qu'elles sont Sous PUISSANCE—-power*.) The girls have little *caps*, instead of this kerchief or tiara; they wear no veil at home, but let two tresses of their hair fall under their cheeks. The caps of girls of superior rank are tied with a row of pearls. Girls are not shut up in Persia till they attain the age of six or seven years; before that age they go out of the seraglio, sometimes with their father, so that they may then be seen. I have seen some wonderfully pretty. They show the neck and bosom; and more beautiful cannot be seen.'—*Chardin*. "The wearing of a veil by a married woman was a token of her being under power. The Hebrew name of the veil signifies dependence. Great importance was attached to this part of the dress in the East. All the women of Persia are pleasantly apparelled. When they are abroad in the streets, all, both rich and poor, are covered with a great veil, or sheet of very fine white cloth, of which one half, like a forehead cloth, comes down to the eyes, and, going over the head, reaches down to the heels; and the other half muffles up the face below the eyes, and being fastened with a pin to the left side of the head, falls down to their very shoes, even covering their hands, with which they hold that cloth by the two sides; so that, except the eyes, they are covered all over with it. Within doors they have their faces and breasts uncovered; but the Armenian women in their houses have always one half of their faces covered with a cloth, that goes athwart their noses, and hangs over their chin and breasts, except the maids of that nation, who, within doors, cover only the chin until they are married."—*Thevenot*.

{1} "power" "a covering, in sign that she is under the power of her"

"husband"; Ge 24:55

{*} "on" "A veil on"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Nevertheless*. Lest the man should assume to himself too much superiority, and lest he should regard the woman as made solely for his pleasure, and should treat her as in all respects inferior, and withhold the respect that is due to her. The design of this verse and the following is to show that the man and woman are united in the most tender interests; that the one cannot live comfortably without the other; that one is necessary to the happiness of the other; and that though the woman was formed from the man, yet it is also to be remembered that the man is descended from the woman. She should therefore be treated with proper respect, tenderness, and regard.

Neither is the man without the woman, etc. The man and the woman were formed for union and society. They are not in any respect independent of each other. One is necessary to the comfort of the other; and this fact should be recognised in all their intercourse.

In the Lord. By the arrangements or direction of the Lord. It is the appointment and command of the Lord that they should be mutual helps, and should each regard and promote the welfare of the other.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *As the woman is of the man*. In the original creation, she was formed from the man.

So is the man also by the woman. Is born of the woman, or descended from her. The sexes are dependent on each other, and should therefore cultivate an indissoluble union.

But all things of God. All things were created and arranged by him. This expression seems designed to suppress any spirit of complaint or dissatisfaction with this arrangement; to make the woman contented in her subordinate station, and to make the man humble by the consideration that it is all owing to the appointment of God. The woman should therefore be contented, and the man should not assume any improper superiority, since the whole arrangement and appointment is of God.

{a} "all things" Ro 11:36

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Judge in yourselves*. Or, "Judge among yourselves." I appeal to you. I appeal to your natural sense of what is proper and right. Paul had used various arguments to show them the impropriety of their females speaking unveiled in public. He now appeals to their natural sense of what was decent and right, according to established and acknowledged customs and habits.

Is it comely? etc. Is it decent, or becoming? The Grecian women, except their priestesses, were accustomed to appear in public with a veil.—*Doddridge*. Paul alludes to that established and proper habit, and asks whether it does not accord with their own views of propriety that women in Christian assemblies should also wear the same symbol of modesty.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Doth not even nature itself*. The word *nature* (*fusiv*) denotes evidently that sense of propriety which all men have, and which is expressed in any prevailing or universal custom. That which is universal we say is according to nature. It is such as is demanded by the natural sense of fitness among men. Thus we may say that nature demands that the sexes should wear different kinds of dress; that nature demands that the female should be modest and retiring; that nature demands that the toils of the chase, of the field, of war —the duties of office, of government, and

of professional life, should be discharged by men. Such are in general the customs the world over; and if any reason is asked for numerous habits that exist in society, no better answer can be given than that nature, as arranged by God, has demanded it. The word in this place, therefore, does not mean the constitution of the sexes, as Locke, Whitby, and Pierce maintain: nor reason and experience, as Macknight supposes; nor simple use and custom, as Grotius, Rosenmuller, and most recent expositors suppose; but it refers to a deep internal sense of what is proper and right—a sense which is expressed extensively in all nations, showing what that sense is. No *reason* can be given, in the nature of things, why the woman should wear long hair and the man not; but the custom prevails extensively everywhere, and nature, in all nations, has prompted to the same course. "Use is second nature;" but the usage in this case is not arbitrary, but is founded ill an anterior universal sense of what is proper and right. A few, and only a few, have regarded it as comely for a man to wear his hair long. Aristotle tells us, indeed, (Rhet. i.—see Rosenmuller,) that among the Lacedemonians, freemen wore their hair long. In the time of Homer, also, the Greeks were called by him *karhkomowntev acaioi*, long-haired Greeks; and some of the Asiatic nations adopted the same custom. But the general habit among men has been different. Among the Hebrews, it was regarded as disgraceful to a man to wear his hair long, except he had a vow as a Nazarite, Nu 6:1-6 Jud 13:6; Jud 16:17 1Sa 1:11. Occasionally, for affectation or singularity, the hair was suffered to grow, as was the case with Absalom, (2Sa 14:26;) but the traditional law of the Jews on the subject was strict. The same rule existed among the Greeks; and it was regarded as disgraceful to wear long hair in the time of AElian, (Hist. lib. ix. c. 14; Eustath. on Hom. ii. v.)

It is a shame unto him. It is improper and disgraceful. It is doing that which almost universal custom has said appropriately belongs to the female sex.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *It is a glory to her*. It is an ornament and adorning. The same instinctive promptings of nature which make it proper for a man to wear short hair, make it proper that the woman should suffer hers to grow long.

For a covering. Margin, *Veil*. It is given to her as a sort of natural veil, and to indicate the propriety of her wearing a veil. It answered the purposes of a veil when it was suffered to grow long, and to spread over the shoulders and over parts of the face, before the arts of dress were invented or needed. There may also be an allusion here to the fact that the hair of women naturally grows longer than that of men. See Rosenmuller. The value which eastern females put on their long hair may be learned from the fact that when Ptolemy Euergetes, king of Egypt, was about to march against Seleucus Callinicus, his queen Berenice vowed, as the most precious sacrifice which she could make, to cut off and consecrate her hair if he returned in safety. "The eastern ladies," says Harmer, "are remarkable for the length and the great number of the tresses of their hair. The men there, on the contrary, wear very little hair on their heads." Lady M. W. Montague thus speaks concerning the hair of the women: "Their hair hangs at full length behind, divided into tresses, braided with pearl or riband, which is always in great quantity. I never saw in my life so many fine heads of hair. In one lady's I have counted one hundred and ten of these tresses, all natural; but it

must be owned that every kind of beauty is more common here than with us." The men there, on the contrary, shave all the hair off their heads, excepting one lock; and those that wear hair are thought effeminate. Both these particulars are mentioned by Chardin, who says they are agreeable to the custom of the East: "The men are shaved; the women nourish their hair with great fondness, which they lengthen by tresses and tufts of silk, down to the heels. The young men who wear their hair in the East are looked upon as effeminate and infamous."

{1} "covering" "veil"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *But if any man seem to be contentious*. The sense of this passage is probably this: "If any man, any teacher, or others, is *disposed* to be strenuous about this, or to make it a matter of difficulty; if he is disposed to call in question my reasoning, and to dispute my premises and the considerations which I have advanced, and to maintain still that it is proper for women to appear unveiled in public, I would add, that in Judea we have no such custom, neither does it prevail among any of the churches. This, therefore, would be a sufficient reasons why it should not be done in Corinth, even if the abstract reasoning should not convince them of the impropriety. It would be singular; would be contrary to the usual custom; would offend the prejudices of many; and should, therefore, be avoided."

We have no such custom. We the apostles in the churches which we have elsewhere founded; or we have no such custom in Judea. The sense is, that it is contrary to custom there for women to appear in public unveiled. This custom, the apostle argues, ought to be allowed to have some influence on the church of Corinth, even though they should not be convinced by his reasoning.

Neither the churches of God. The churches elsewhere. It is customary there for the woman to appear veiled. If at Corinth this custom is not observed, it will be a departure from what has elsewhere been regarded as proper; and will offend these churches. Even, therefore, if the *reasoning* is not sufficient to silence all cavils and doubts, yet the propriety of uniformity in the habits of the churches, the fear of giving offence, should lead you to discountenance and disapprove the custom of your females appearing in public without their veil.

{a} "But if any man" 1Ti 6:4

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Now in this that I declare*. In this that I am about to state to you; to wit, your conduct in regard to the Lord's Supper. Why this subject is introduced here is not very apparent. The connexion may be this. In the subjects immediately preceding he had seen much to commend, and he was desirous of commending them as far as it could be done. In 1Co 11:2 of this chapter he commends them in general for their regard to the ordinances which he had appointed when he was

with them. But while he thus commended them, he takes occasion to observe that there was *one* subject on which he could not employ the language of approval or praise. Of their irregularities in regard to the Lord's Supper he had probably heard by rumour, and as the subject was of great importance, and their irregularities gross and deplorable, he takes occasion to state to them again more fully the nature of that ordinance, and to reprove them for the manner in which they had celebrated it.

That ye come together. You assemble for public worship.

Not for the better, but for the worse. Your meetings, and your observance of the ordinances of the gospel, do not promote your edification, your piety, spirituality, and harmony; but tend to division, alienation, and disorder. You *should* assemble to worship God, and promote harmony, love, and piety; the actual effect of your assembling is just the reverse. In what way this was done he states in the following verses. These evil consequences were chiefly two: first, divisions and contentions; and, secondly, the abuse and profanation of the Lord's Supper.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *For first of all*. That is, I mention as the first thing to be reproved.

When ye come together in the church. When you come together in a religious assembly; when you convene for public worship. The word *church* here does not mean, as it frequently does with us, a *building*. No instance of such a use of the word occurs in the New Testament; but it means, when they came together as a Christian assembly; when they convened for the worship of God. These divisions took place *then*; and from some cause which it seems then operated to produce alienations and strifes.

I hear. I have learned through some members of the family of Chloe, 1Co 1:11.

That there be divisions among you. Greek, as in the margin, Schisms. The word properly means a rent, such as is made in cloth, (Mt 9:16 Mr 2:21;) and then a division, a split, a faction among men, Joh 7:43 9:16, 10:19.

It does not mean here that they had proceeded so far as to form separate churches, but that there was discord and division in the church itself. **See Barnes** "1Co 1:10, 1Co 1:11.

And I partly believe it. I credit a part of the reports; I have reason to think, that, though the evil may have been exaggerated, yet that it is true at least in part. I believe that there are dissensions in the church that should be reproved.

{b} "hear" 1Co 1:11,12 {2} "divisions" "schisms"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *For there must be*. It is necessary, (*dei*;) it is to be expected; there are reasons why there should be. What these reasons are he states in the close of the verse. Comp. Mt 18:7 2Pe 2:1,2.

The meaning is not that divisions are inseparable from the nature of the Christian religion, not that it is the design and wish of the Author of Christianity that they should exist, and not that they are physically impossible, for then they could not be the subject of blame; but that such is human nature, such are the corrupt passions of men, the propensity to ambition and strifes, that they are to be expected, and they serve the purpose of showing who are, and who are not, the true friends of God.

Heresies. Margin, *Sects*. Greek, *aireseiv*. **See Barnes "Ac 24:14"**.

The words *heresy* and *heresies* occur only in these places, and in Ga 5:20 2Pe 2:1. The Greek word occurs also in Ac 5:17, (translated *sect*;) Ac 15:6; Ac 24:5 26:6, 28:22; in all which places it denotes, and is translated, *sect*. We now attach to the word usually the idea of a fundamental error in religion, or some *doctrine*, the holding of which will exclude from salvation. But there is no evidence that the word is used in this signification in the New Testament. The only place where it can be supposed to be so used, unless this is one, is in Ga 5:20; where, however, the word *contentions* or *divisions* would be quite as much in accordance with the connexion. That the word here does not denote error in doctrine, but schism, division, or *sects*, as it is translated in the margin, is evident from two considerations.

(1.) It is the proper philological meaning of the word, and its established and common signification in the Bible.

(2.) It is the sense which the connexion here demands. The apostle had made no reference to error of doctrine, but is discoursing solely of *irregularity in conduct*; and the first thing which he mentions is, that there were schisms, divisions, strifes. The idea that the word here refers to doctrines, would by no means suit the connexion, and would indeed make nonsense. It would then read, "I hear that there are divisions or parties among you, and this I cannot commend you for. For it must be expected that there would be *fundamental errors of doctrine* in the church." But *Paul* did not reason in this manner. The sense is, "There are divisions among you. It is to be expected; there are causes for it; and it cannot be avoided that there should be, in the present state of human nature, divisions and sects formed in the church; and this is to be expected, in order that those who are true Christians should be separated from those who are not." The *foundation* of this necessity is not in the Christian religion itself, for that is pure, and contemplates and requires union; but the existence of sects, and denominations, and contentions, may be traced to the following causes:

(1.) The love of power and popularity. Religion may be made the means of power; and they who have the control of the consciences of men, and of their religious feelings and opinions, can control them altogether.

(2.) Showing more respect to a religious teacher than to Christ. **See Barnes "1Co 1:12"**.

(3.) The multiplication of tests, and the enlargement of creeds and confessions of faith. The consequence is, that every new doctrine that is incorporated into a creed gives occasion for those to separate who cannot accord with it.

(4.) The passions of men—their pride, and ambition, and bigotry, and unenlightened zeal. Christ evidently meant that his church should be one; and that all who were his true followers should be admitted to her communion, and acknowledged everywhere as his own friends. And the time may yet come when this union shall be restored to his long-distracted church; and that while there may be an honest difference of opinion maintained and allowed, still the bonds of Christian love shall secure union of *heart* in all who love the Lord Jesus, and union of *effort* in the grand enterprise in

which ALL can unite—that of making war upon sin, and securing the conversion of the whole world to God.

That they which are approved. That they who are approved of God, or who are his true friends, and who are disposed to abide by his laws.

May be made manifest. May be known; recognised; seen. The effect of divisions and separations would be to show who were the friends of order, and peace, and truth. It seems to have been assumed by Paul, that they who made divisions could not be regarded as the friends of order and truth; or that their course *could* not be approved by God. The effect of these divisions would be to show who they were. So in all divisions, and all splitting into factions, where the great truths of Christianity are held, and where the corruption of the mass does not require separation, such divisions show who are the restless, ambitious, and dissatisfied spirits; who they are that are *indisposed* to follow the things that make for peace, and the laws of Christ enjoining union; and who they are who are gentle and peaceful, and disposed to pursue the way of truth, and love, and order, without contentions and strifes. This is the effect of schisms in the church; and the whole strain of the argument of Paul is, to reprove and condemn such schisms, and to hold up the authors of them to reproof and condemnation. See Ro 16:17: "Mark them which cause divisions, and AVOID THEM.

{a} "must be" Mt 18:7 2Pe 2:1,2

{1} "heresies" "sects" {b} "that they" Lu 2:35

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *When ye come together therefore*, etc. When you are assembled as a church. Comp. Heb 10:25, and **See Barnes "Ac 2:1"**.

Christians were constantly in the habit of assembling for public worship. It is probable that at this early period all the Christians in Corinth were accustomed to meet in the same place. The apostle here particularly refers to their assembling to observe the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. At that early period it is probable that this was done on every Lord's day.

This is not, etc. Margin, "Ye cannot eat." The meaning of this expression seems to be this: "Though you come together professedly to worship God, and to partake of the Lord's Supper, yet this cannot be the real design which you have in view. It cannot be that such practices as are allowed among you can be a part of the celebration of that supper, or consistent with it. Your greediness, (1Co 11:21;) your intemperance, (1Co 11:21;) your partaking of the food separately, and not in common, cannot be a celebration of the Lord's Supper. Whatever, therefore, you may profess to be engaged in, yet really and truly you are not celebrating the Lord's Supper."

The Lord's supper. That which the Lord Jesus instituted to commemorate his death. It is called "the Lord's," because it is his appointment, and is in honour of him; it is called "supper," (*deipnon*,) because the word denotes the evening repast. It was instituted in the evening; and it is evidently most proper that it should be observed in the after part of the day. With most churches the time is improperly changed to the morning—a custom which has no sanction in the New Testament; and which is a departure from the very idea of a supper.

{2} "one place" "ye cannot eat"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *For in eating*. When you eat, having professedly come together to observe this ordinance. In order to understand this, it seems necessary to suppose that they had in some way made the Lord's Supper either connected with a common feast, or that they regarded it as a mere common festival to be observed in a way similar to the festivals among the Greeks. Many have supposed that this was done by making the observance of the Supper follow a festival, or, what were afterwards called, *love-feasts*, (*agapai* —Agapae). Many have supposed that that custom was derived from the fact that the Saviour instituted the Supper *after* a festival, a feast in which he had been engaged with his disciples, and that thence the early Christians derived the custom of observing such a festival, or common meal, before they celebrated the Lord's Supper. But it may be observed, that the passover was not a mere preliminary festival, or feast. It had no resemblance to the so-called love-feasts, It was itself a religious ordinance; a direct appointment of God; and was never regarded as designed to be *preliminary* to the observance of the Lords Supper, but was always understood as designed to be *superseded* by that. Besides, I know not that there is the slightest evidence, as has been often supposed, that the observance of the Lord's Supper was *preceded*, in the times of the apostles, by such a festival as a love-feast. There is no evidence in the passage before us; nor is any adduced from any other part of the New Testament. To my mind it seems altogether improbable that the disorders in Corinth would assume this form—that they would *first* observe a common feast, and then the Lord's Supper in the regular manner. The statement before us leads to the belief that all was irregular and improper; that they had entirely mistaken the nature of the ordinance, and had converted it into an occasion of ordinary festivity, and even intemperance; that they had come to regard it as a feast in honour of the Saviour on some such principles as they observed feasts in honour of idols, and that they observed it in some such manner; and that all that was supposed to make it unlike those festivals was, that it was in honour of Jesus rather than an idol, and was to be observed with some reference to his authority and name.

Every one taketh before other his own supper. That is, each one is regardless of the wants of the others; instead of making even a meal in common, and when all could partake together, each one ate by himself, and ate that which he had himself brought. They had not only erred, therefore, by misunderstanding altogether the nature of the Lord's Supper, and by supposing that it was a common festival like those which they had been accustomed to celebrate; but they had also entirely departed from the idea that it was a festival to be partaken of in common, and at a common table. It had become a scene where every man ate by himself; and where the very idea that there was anything like a *common* celebration, or a celebration *together*, was abandoned. There is allusion here, doubtless, to what was a custom among the Greeks, that when a festival was celebrated, or a feast made, it was common for each person to provide, and carry a part of the things necessary for the entertainment. These were usually placed in common, and were partaken of alike by all the company. Thus Xenophon (Mem lib. iii. cap. xiv.) says of Socrates, that he was much offended with the Athenians for their conduct at their common suppers, where some prepared for themselves in a delicate and sumptuous manner, while others were poorly provided for. Socrates endeavoured, he adds, to shame them out of this indecent custom by offering his provisions to all the company.

And one is hungry. Is deprived of food. It is all monopolized by others.

And another is drunken. The word here used (*meyuei*) means, properly, to become inebriated, or intoxicated; and there is no reason for understanding it here in any other sense. There can be no doubt that the apostle meant to say, that they ate and drank to excess; and that their professed celebration of the Lord's Supper became a mere revel. It may seem remarkable that such scenes should ever have occurred in a Christian church, or that there could have been such an entire perversion of the nature and design of the Lord's Supper. But we are to remember the following things:

(1.) These persons had recently been heathens, and were grossly ignorant of the nature of true religion when the gospel was first preached among them.

(2.) They had been accustomed to such revels in honour of idols under their former modes of worship, and it is the less surprising that they transferred their views to Christianity.

(3.) When they had once so far misunderstood the nature of Christianity as to suppose the Lord's Supper to be like the feasts which they had formerly celebrated, all the rest followed as a matter of course. The festival would be observed in the same manner as the festivals in honour of idolaters; and similar scenes of gluttony and intemperance would naturally follow.

(4.) We are to bear in mind, also, that they do not seem to have been favoured with pious, wise, and prudent teachers. There were false teachers; and there were those who prided themselves on their wisdom, and who were self-confident, and who doubtless endeavoured to model the Christian institutions according to their own views; and they thus brought them, as far as they could, to a conformity with pagan customs and idolatrous rites. We may remark here:

(1.) We are not to expect perfection at once among a people recently converted from paganism,

(2.) We see how prone men are to abuse even the most holy rites of religion, and hence how corrupt is human nature.

(3.) We see that even Christians, recently converted, need constant guidance and superintendence; and that if left to themselves, they soon, like others, fall into gross and scandalous offences.

{c} "another is drunken" 2Pe 2:13 Jude 1:12

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *What*? This whole verse is designed to convey the language of severe rebuke for their having so grossly perverted the design of the Lord's Supper.

Have ye not houses, etc. Do you not know that the church of God is not designed to be a place of feasting and revelry, nor even a place where to partake of your ordinary meals? Can it be that you will come to the places of public worship, and make them the scenes of feasting and riot? Even on the supposition that there had been no disorder, no revelry, no intemperance, yet on every account it was grossly irregular and disorderly to make the place of public worship a place for a festival entertainment.

Or despise ye the church of God. The phrase, "church of God," Grotius understands of the place. But the word church (*ekklhsia*) is believed not to be used in that sense in the New Testament; and it is not necessary to suppose it here. The sense is, that their conduct was such as if they had held

in contempt the whole church of God, in all places, with all their views of the sacredness and purity of the Lord s Supper.

And shame them that have not? Margin, *Are poor*. Something must here be understood, in order to make out the sense. Probably it meant something like *possessions, property, conveniences, accommodations*. The connexion would make it most natural to understand "houses to eat and drink in;" and the sense then would be, "Do you thus expose to public shame those who have no accommodations at home—who are destitute and poor? You thus reflect publicly upon their poverty and want, while you bring your own provisions, and fare sumptuously, and while those who are thus unable to provide for themselves are thus seen to be poor and needy." It is hard enough, the idea is, to be poor, and to be destitute of a home. But it greatly aggravates the matter to be publicly treated in that manner; to be exposed publicly to the contempt which such a situation implies. Their treatment of the poor in this manner would be a public exposing them to shame; and the apostle regarded this as particularly dishonourable, and especially in a Christian church, where all were professedly on an equality.

What shall I say to you? etc. How shall I sufficiently express my surprise at this, and my disapprobation at this course? It cannot be possible that this is right. It is not possible to conceal surprise and amazement that this custom exists, and is tolerated in a Christian church.

{1} "that have not" "are poor"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *For*, etc. In order most effectually to check the evils which existed, and to bring them to a proper mode of observing the Lord's Supper, the apostle proceeds to state distinctly and particularly its design. They had mistaken its nature. They supposed it might be a common festival. They had made it the occasion of great disorder. He therefore adverts to the solemn circumstances in which it was instituted; the particular object which it had in view—the commemoration of the death of the Redeemer; and the purpose which it was designed to subserve—which was not that of a festival, but to keep before the church and the world a constant remembrance of the Lord Jesus, until he should again return, 1Co 11:26. By this means the apostle evidently hoped to recall them from their irregularities, and to bring them to a just mode of celebrating this holy ordinance. He did not, therefore, denounce them even for their irregularity and gross disorder; he did not use harsh, violent, vituperative language; but he expected to reform the evil by a mild and tender statement of the truth, and by an appeal to their consciences as the followers of the Lord Jesus.

I have received of the Lord. This cannot refer to tradition, or mean that it had been communicated to him through the medium of the other apostles; but the whole spirit and scope of the passage seems to mean, that he had derived the knowledge of the institution of the Lord's Supper *directly* from the Lord himself. This might have been when on the road to Damascus, though that does not seem probable, or it may have been among the numerous revelations which at various times had been made to him. Comp. 2Co 12:7. The reason why he here says that he had received it directly from the Lord is, doubtless, that he might show them that it was of Divine authority. "The institution to which I refer is what I myself received an account of *from personal and direct communication*

with the Lord Jesus himself, who appointed it. It is not, therefore, of human authority. It is not of my devising, but is of Divine warrant, and is holy in its nature, and is to be observed in the exact manner prescribed by the Lord himself."

That which also I delivered, etc. Paul founded the church at Corinth; and of course he first instituted the observance of the Lord's Supper there.

The same night in which he was betrayed. By Judas. See Mt 26:23-25, 48-50.

Paul seems to have mentioned the fact that it was on the very night on which he was betrayed, in order to throw around it the idea of greater solemnity. He wished evidently to bring before their minds the deeply affecting circumstances of his death; and thus to show them the utter impropriety of their celebrating the ordinance with riot and disorder. The idea is, that in order to celebrate it in a proper manner, it was needful *to throw themselves as much as possible into the very circumstances in which it was instituted*; and one of these circumstances most fitted to affect the mind deeply, was the fact that he was betrayed by a professed friend and follower. It is also a circumstance the memory of which is eminently fitted to prepare the mind for a proper celebration of the ordinance now,

Took bread. Evidently the bread which was used at the celebration of the paschal supper. He took the bread which happened to be before him—such as was commonly used. It was not a wafer, such as the papists now use; but was the ordinary bread which was eaten on such occasions. **See Barnes "Mt 26:26"**.

{a} "I have received" 1Co 15:3 {b} "the Lord Jesus" Mt 26:26 {*} "bread" "loaf"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *And when he had given thanks*. **See Barnes "Mt 26:26"**.

Matthew reads it, "and blessed it." The words here used are, however, substantially the same as there; and this fact shows that, since this was communicated to Paul directly by the Saviour, and in a manner distinct from that by which Matthew learned the mode of the institution, the Saviour designed that the exact form of the words should be used in its observance, and should thus be constantly borne in mind by his people.

Take, eat, etc. **See Barnes "Mt 26:26"**.

{2} "do in" "for a"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *After the same manner*. In like manner; likewise. With the same circumstances, and ceremonies, and designs. The purpose was the same.

When he had supped. That is, all this occurred *after* the observance of the usual paschal supper. It could not, therefore, be a part of it, nor could it have been designed to be a festival or feast merely.

The apostle introduces this evidently in order to show them that it could not be, as they seemed to have supposed, an occasion of feasting. It was *after* the supper, and was therefore to be observed in a distinct manner.

Saying, This cup, etc. **See Barnes "Mt 26:27,28"**.

Is the new testament. The new covenant which God is about to establish with men. The word "testament" with us properly denotes *a will*—an instrument by which a man disposes of his property after his death. This is also the proper classic meaning of the Greek word here used, *diayhkh*, (*diatheke*.) But this is evidently not the sense in which the word is designed to be used in the New Testament. The idea of a *will or testament*, strictly so called, is not that which the sacred writers intend to convey by the word. The idea is evidently that of a compact, agreement, COVENANT, to which there is so frequent reference in the Old Testament, and which is expressed by the word

HEBREW

—*Berith*—a compact, a covenant. Of that word the proper translation in Greek would have been *sunyhkh*, a covenant, agreement. But it is remarkable that that word never is used by the Seventy to denote the covenant made between God and man. That translation uniformly employs for this purpose the word *diayhkh*—a will, or a testament—as a translation of the Hebrew word, where there is a reference to the covenant which God is represented as making with men. The word *sunyhkh* is used by them but three times, Isa 28:15 30:1; Da 11:6, and in neither instance with any reference to the *covenant* which God is represented as making with man. The word *diayhkh*, as the translation of

HEBREW

—*Berith*—occurs more than two hundred times. (See Trommius' Concord.) Now this must have evidently been of design. What the reason was which induced them to adopt this can only be conjectured. It may have been that, as the translation was to be seen by the Gentiles as well as by the Jews, (if it were not expressly made, as has been affirmed by Josephus and others, for the use of Ptolemy,) they were unwilling to represent the eternal and infinite JEHOVAH as entering into *a compact, an agreement*, with his creature man. They therefore adopted a word which would represent him as expressing *his will* to them in a book of revelation. The version by the Seventy was evidently in use by the apostles, and by the Jews everywhere. The writers of the New Testament, therefore, adopted the word as they found it; and spoke of the new dispensation as a new *testament* which God made with man. The meaning is, that this was the new compact or covenant which God was to make with man in contradistinction from that made through Moses.

In my blood. Through my blood; that is, this new compact is to be sealed with my blood, in allusion to the ancient custom of sealing an agreement by a sacrifice. **See Barnes "Mt 26:28"**.

This do ye. Partake of this bread and wine; that is, celebrate this ordinance.

As oft as ye drink it. Not prescribing any time; and not even specifying the frequency with which it was to be done; but leaving it to themselves to determine how often they would partake of it. The time of the passover had been fixed by positive statute; the more mild and gentle system of Christianity left it to the followers of the Redeemer themselves to determine how often they would celebrate his death. It was commanded them to do it; it was presumed that their love to him would be so strong as to secure a frequent observance; it was permitted to them, as in prayer, to celebrate it on any occasion of affliction, trial, or deep interest, when they would feel their need of it, and when they would suppose that its observance would be for the edification of the church.

In remembrance of me. This expresses the whole design of the ordinance. It is a simple memorial, or remembrancer, designed to recall, in a striking and impressive manner, the memory of the Redeemer. It does this by a tender appeal to the senses—by the exhibition of the broken bread, and by the wine. The Saviour knew how prone men would be to forget him; and he therefore appointed this ordinance as a means by which his memory should be kept up in the world. The ordinance is rightly observed when it recalls the memory of the Saviour; and when its observance is the means of producing a deep, and lively, and vivid impression on the mind, of his death for sin. This expression, at the institution of the Supper, is used by Luke, (Lu 22:19;) though it does not occur in Matthew, Mark, or John.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *For as often*. Whenever you do this.

Ye eat this bread. This is a direct and positive refutation of the doctrine of the papists, that the bread is changed into the real body of the Lord Jesus. Here it is expressly called bread—bread still—bread after the consecration. Before the Saviour instituted the ordinance he took "bread"—it was bread then; it was "bread" which he "blessed" and "brake;" and it was bread when it was given to them; and it was bread when Paul here says they *ate*. How, then, can it be pretended that it is anything else but bread? And what an amazing and astonishing absurdity it is to believe that that bread is changed into the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ!

Ye do shew the Lord's death. You set forth or exhibit, in an impressive manner, the fact that he was put to death; you exhibit the emblems of his broken body and shed blood, and your belief of the fact that he died. This shows that the ordinance was to be so far public as to be a proper showing forth of their belief in the death of the Saviour. It should be public. It is one mode of professing attachment to the Redeemer; and its public observance often has a most impressive effect on those who witness its observance.

Till he come. Till he return to judge the world. This demonstrates

(1.) that it was the steady belief of the primitive church that the Lord Jesus would return to judge the world; and

(2.) that it was designed that this ordinance should be perpetuated, and observed to the end of time. In every generation, therefore, and in every place where there are Christians, it is to be observed, until the Son of God shall return; and the necessity of its observance shall cease only when the whole body of the redeemed shall be permitted to see their Lord, and there shall be no need of those emblems to remind them of him, for all shall see him as he is.

{1} "ye do shew" "shew ye"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *Wherefore*. *wste*. So that; or it follows from what has been said. If this be the origin and intention of the Lord's Supper, then it follows that whoever partakes of it in an improper manner is guilty of his body and blood. The design of Paul is to correct their improper mode of observing this ordinance; and having showed them the true nature and design of the institution, he now states the consequences of partaking of it in an improper manner.

Shall eat this bread. 1Co 11:26. Paul still calls it bread, and shows thus that he was a stranger to the doctrine that the bread was changed into the very body of the Lord Jesus. Had the papal doctrine of transubstantiation been true, Paul could not have called it bread. The Romanists do not believe that it is bread, nor would they call it such; and this shows how needful it is for them to keep the Scriptures from the people, and how impossible to express their dogmas in the language of the Bible. Let Christians adhere to the simple language of the Bible, and there is no danger of their falling into the errors of the papists.

Unworthily. Perhaps there is no expression in the Bible that has given more trouble to weak and feeble Christians than this. It is certain that there is no one that has operated to deter so many from the communion; or that is so often made use of as an excuse for not making a profession of religion. The excuse is, "I am unworthy to partake of this holy ordinance. I shall only expose myself to condemnation. I must therefore wait until I become more worthy, and better prepared to celebrate it." It is important, therefore, that there should be a correct understanding of this passage. Most persons interpret it as if it were *unworthy*, and not *unworthily*; and seem to suppose that it refers to their personal qualifications, to their *unfitness* to partake of it, rather than to the *manner* in which it is done. It is to be remembered, therefore, that the word here used is an *adverb*, and not an *adjective*, and has reference to the manner of observing the ordinance, and not to their personal qualifications or fitness. It is true that in ourselves we are all *unworthy* of an approach to the table of the Lord; *unworthy* to be regarded as his followers; unworthy of a title to everlasting life: but it does not follow that we may not partake of this ordinance in a worthy, i.e., a proper manner, with a deep sense of our sinfulness, our need of a Saviour, and with some just views of the Lord Jesus as our Redeemer. Whatever may be our consciousness of personal unworthiness and unfitness—and that consciousness cannot be too deep—yet we may have such love to Christ, and such a desire to be saved by him, and such a sense of *his* worthiness, as to make it proper for us to approach and partake of this ordinance. The term *unworthily* (*anaxiwv*) means, properly, *in an unworthy or improper MANNER; in a manner unsuitable to the purposes for which it was designed or instituted*; and may include the following things, viz.:

(1.) Such an irregular and indecent observance as existed in the church of Corinth, where even gluttony and intemperance prevailed under the professed design of celebrating the Supper.

(2.) An observance of the ordinance where there should be no distinction between it and common meals, **See Barnes "1Co 11:29"**; where they did not regard it as designed to show forth the death of the Lord Jesus. It is evident that where such views prevailed, there could be no proper qualification for this observance; and it is equally clear that such ignorance can hardly be supposed to prevail now in those lands which are illuminated by Christian truth.

(3.) When it is done for the sake of mockery, and when the purpose is to deride religion, and to show a marked contempt for the ordinances of the gospel. It is a remarkable fact that many infidels have been so full of malignity and bitterness against the Christian religion as to observe a mock celebration of the Lord's Supper. There is no profounder depth of depravity than this; there is nothing that can more conclusively or painfully show the hostility of man to the gospel of God.

It is a remarkable fact, also, that not a few such persons have died a most miserable death. Under the horrors of an accusing conscience, and the anticipated destiny of final damnation, they have left the world as frightful monuments of the justice of God. It is *also* a fact that not a few infidels who have been engaged in such unholy celebrations have been converted to that very gospel which they were thus turning into ridicule and scorn. Their consciences have been alarmed; they have shuddered at the remembrance of the crime; they have been overwhelmed with the consciousness of guilt, and have found no peace until they have found it in that blood whose shedding they were thus profanely celebrating.

Shall be guilty. *enocov*. This word properly means, obnoxious to punishment for personal crime. It always includes the idea of ill-desert, and of exposure to punishment on account of crime or ill-desert, Mt 5:22 Ex 22:3, 34:7 Nu 14:18, 35:27 Le 20:9.

See also De 19:10 Mt 26:66.

Of the body and blood of the Lord. Commentators have not been agreed in regard to the meaning of this expression. Doddridge renders it, "Shall be counted guilty of profaning and affronting, in some measure, that which is intended to represent the body and blood of the Lord." Grotius renders it, "He does the same thing as if he should slay Christ." Bretschneider (Lex.) renders it, "Injuring by crime the body of the Lord." Locke renders it, "Shall be guilty of a misuse of the body and blood of the Lord ;" and supposes it means that they should be liable to the punishment due to one who made a wrong use of the sacramental body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper. Rosenmuller renders it, "He shall be punished for such a deed as if he had affected Christ himself with ignominy." Bloomfield renders it, "He shall be guilty respecting the body, i.e., guilty of profaning the symbols of the body and blood of Christ, and consequently shall be amenable to the punishment due to such an abuse of the highest means of grace." But it seems to me that this does not convey the fulness of the meaning of the passage. The obvious and literal sense is, evidently, that they should by such conduct be involved in the sin of putting the Lord Jesus to death. The phrase "the body and blood of the Lord," in this connexion, obviously, I think, refers to his death—to the fact that his body was broken, and his blood shed, of which the bread and wine were symbols; and to be *guilty* of that, means to be guilty of putting him to death; that is, to be involved in the crime, or to do a thing which should involve the same criminality as that. To see this, we are to remember,

(1.) that the bread and wine were symbols or emblems of that event, and designed to set it forth.

(2.) To treat with irreverence and profaneness the bread which was an emblem of his broken body, was to treat with irreverence and profaneness the body itself; and in like manner the wine, the symbol of his blood.

(3.) Those, therefore, who treated the symbols of his body and blood with profaneness and contempt were *united in spirit* with those who put him to death. They evinced the same feelings towards the Lord Jesus that his murderers did. They treated him with scorn, profaneness, and derision; and showed that with the same spirit they would have joined in the act of murdering the Son of God. They would evince their hostility to the Saviour himself as far as they could do, by showing contempt for the memorials of his body and blood. The apostle does by no means, however, as I understand him, mean to say that any of the Corinthians had been thus guilty of his body and blood. He does not charge on them this murderous-intention. But he states what is the fair and obvious construction which is to be put on a wanton disrespect for the Lord's Supper. And the design is to guard them, and all others, against this sin. There can be no doubt that those who celebrate his death in mockery and derision are held guilty of his body and blood. They show that

they have the spirit of his murderers; they evince it in the most awful way possible; and they who would thus join in a profane celebration of the Lord's Supper would have joined in the cry, "Crucify him, crucify him." For it is a most fearful and solemn act to trifle with sacred things; and especially to hold up to derision and scorn, the bitter sorrows by which the Son of God accomplished the redemption of the world.

{b} "unworthily" Joh 6:63,64; 1Co 10:21

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *But let a man examine himself*. Let him search and see if he have the proper qualifications—if he has knowledge to discern the Lord's body, (**See Barnes "1Co 11:29";**) if he has true repentance for his sins, true faith in the Lord Jesus, and a sincere desire to live the life of a Christian, and to be like the Son of God, and be saved by the merits of his blood. Let him examine himself, and see whether he have the right feelings of a communicant, and can approach the table in a proper manner. In regard to this we may observe,

(1.) that this examination should include the great question about his personal piety, and about his particular and special fitness for this observance. It should go back into the great inquiry whether he has ever been born again; and it should also have special reference to his immediate and direct preparation for the ordinance. He should not only be able to say *in general* that he is a Christian, but he should be able to say that he has then a particular preparation for it. He should be in a suitable frame of mind for it. He should have personal evidence that he is a penitent; that he has true faith in the Lord Jesus; that he is depending on him, and is desirous of being saved by him.

(2.) This examination should be minute and particular. It should extend to the words, the thoughts, the feelings, the conduct. We should inquire whether in our family and in our business, whether among Christians and with the world, we have lived the life of a Christian. We should examine our private thoughts; our habits of secret prayer and of searching the Scriptures. Our examination should be directed to the inquiry whether we are gaining the victory over our easily besetting sins, and becoming more and more conformed to the Saviour. It should, in short, extend to all our Christian character; and everything which goes to make up or to mar that character should be the subject of faithful and honest examination.

(3.) It should be done, because

(a.) it is well to pause occasionally in life, and take an account of our standing in the sight of God. Men make advances in business and in property only when they often examine their accounts, and know just how they stand.

(b.) Because the observance of the Lord's Supper is a solemn act, and there will be fearful results if it is celebrated in an improper manner.

(c.) Because self-examination supposes seriousness and calmness, and prevents precipitation and rashness—states of mind entirely unfavourable to a proper observance of the Lord's Supper.

(d.) Because by self-examination one may search out and remove those things that are offensive to God, and the sins which so easily beset us may be known and abandoned.

(e.) Because the approach to the table of the Lord is a solemn approach to the Lord himself; is a solemn profession of attachment to him; is an act of consecration to his service in the presence of angels and of men; and this should be done in a calm, deliberate, and sincere manner—such a manner as may be the result of a prayerful and honest self-examination.

And so let him eat, etc. And as the result of such examination, or after such an examination; that is, let the act of eating that bread be always preceded by a solemn self-examination. Bloomfield renders it, "and then," "then only." The sense is plain, that the communion should *always* be preceded by an honest and prayerful self-examination.

{a} "examine himself" 2Co 13:5 1Jo 3:20,21

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *For he that eateth*, etc. In order to excite them to a deeper reverence for this ordinance, and to a more solemn mode of observing it, Paul in this verse states another consequence of partaking of it in an improper and irreverent manner. Comp. 1Co 11:27.

Eateth and drinketh damnation. This is evidently a figurative expression, meaning that by eating and drinking improperly he incurs condemnation-which is here expressed by eating and drinking condemnation itself. The word damnation we now apply, in common language, exclusively to the future and final punishment of the wicked in hell. But the word here used does not of necessity refer to that; and, according to our use' of the word now, there is a harshness and severity in our translation which the Greek does not require, and which probably was not conveyed by the word "damnation" when the translation was made. In the margin it is correctly rendered "judgment." The word here used (*krima*) properly denotes *judgment*; the result of judging, that is, a sentence; then a sentence by which one is condemned, or condemnation; and then punishment. See Ro 3:8 13:2. It has evidently the sense of judgment here; and means that, by their improper manner of observing this ordinance, they would expose themselves to the Divine displeasure, and to punishment. And it refers, I think, to the punishment or judgment which the apostle immediately specifies, 1Co 11:30,32. It means a manifestation of the Divine displeasure which might be evinced in this life; and which, in the case of the Corinthians, was manifested in the judgments which God had brought upon them. It cannot be denied, however, that a profane and intentionally irreverent manner of observing the Lord's Supper will meet with the Divine displeasure in the eternal world, and aggravate the doom of those who are guilty of it. But it is clear that this was not the punishment which the apostle had here in his eye. This is apparent,

(1.) because the Corinthians *did* eat unworthily, and yet the judgments inflicted on them were only temporal-that is, weakness, sickness, and temporal death, (1Co 11:30;) and,

(2.) because the reason assigned for these judgments is, that they might not be condemned with the wicked; i.e., as the wicked are in hell, 1Co 11:32.—*Whitby*. Comp. 1Pe 4:17.

Not discerning the Lord's body. Not *discriminating mh diakrinwn* between the bread which is used on this occasion, and common and ordinary food. Not making the proper difference and distinction between this and common meals. It is evident that this was the leading offence of the Corinthians, **See Barnes "1Co 11:20,21"**

and this is the proper idea which the original conveys. It does not refer to any intellectual or physical power to perceive that that bread represented the body of the Lord; not to any spiritual perception which it is often supposed that piety has to distinguish this; not to any view which faith may be supposed to have to discern the body of the Lord through the elements; but to the fact that they did not *distinguish or discriminate* between this and common meals. They did not regard it in a proper manner, but supposed it to be simply an historical commemoration of an event, such as they were in the habit of observing in honour of an idol or a hero by a public celebration. They, therefore, are able to "discern the Lord s body" in the sense intended here, who with a serious mind regard it as an institution appointed by the Lord Jesus to commemorate his death; and who *distinguish* thus between this and ordinary meals, and all festivals and feasts designed to commemorate other events. In other words, who deem it to be designed to show forth the fact that his body was broken for sill, and who desire to observe it as such. It is evident that all true Christians may have ability of this kind, and need not incur condemnation by any error in regard to this. The humblest and obscurest follower of the Saviour, with the feeblest faith and love, may regard it as designed to set forth the death of his Redeemer; and observing it thus, will meet with the Divine approbation.

{1} "drinketh damnation" "judgment" Ro 13:2

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *For this cause*. On account of the improper manner of celebrating the Lord's Supper. See 1Co 11:21.

Many are weak. *asyeneiv*. Evidently referring to prevailing bodily sickness and disease. This is the natural and obvious interpretation of this passage. The sense clearly is, that God had sent among them bodily distempers as an expression of the Divine displeasure and judgment for their improper mode of celebrating the Lord's Supper. That it was not uncommon in those times for God in an extraordinary manner to visit men with calamity, sickness, or death, for their sins, is evident from the New Testament.

See Barnes "1Co 5:5"; See Barnes "Ac 5:1"

and Ac 5:2-10. **See Barnes "Ac 13:11"; See Barnes** "1Ti 1:20, and, perhaps, **See Barnes** "1Jo 5:16, and **See Barnes** "Jas 5:14,15.

It may possibly have been the case, that the intemperance and gluttony which prevailed on these occasions was the direct cause of no small part of the bodily disease which prevailed, and which in some cases terminated in death.

And many sleep. Have died. The death of Christians, in the Scriptures, is commonly represented under the image of sleep, Da 12:2 Joh 11:11,12 1Co 15:51; 1Th 4:14 5:10.

Perhaps it may be implied by the use of this mild term here, instead of the harsher word *death*, that these were true Christians. This sentiment is in accordance with all that Paul states in regard to the church at Corinth. Notwithstanding all their irregularities, he does not deny that they were sincere Christians, and all his appeals and reasonings proceed on that supposition, though there was among them much ignorance and irregularity. God often visits his own people with trial; and though they are his children, yet this does not exempt them from affliction and discipline on account

of their imperfections, errors, and sins. The *practical lesson* taught by this is, that Christians should serve God with purity; that they should avoid sin in every form; and that the commission of sin will expose them, as well as others, to the Divine displeasure. The *reason* why this judgment was inflicted on the Corinthians was, that there might be a suitable impression made of the holy nature of that ordinance, and that Christians might be led to observe it in a proper manner. If it be asked whether God ever visits his people now with his displeasure for their improper manner of observing this ordinance, we may reply,

(1.) that we have no reason to suppose that he inflicts *bodily* diseases and corporeal punishments on account of it. But,

(2.) there is no reason to doubt that the improper observance of the Lord's Supper, like the improper observance of any other religious duty, will be followed with the expression of God's displeasure, and with a spiritual blighting on the soul. This may be evinced in the following modes:

(a.) In hardening the heart by an improper familiarity with the most sacred and solemn ordinances of religion.

(b.) Increased coldness and deadness in the service of God. If the ordinances of the gospel are not the means of making us better, they are the means of making us worse.

(c.) The loss of the favour of God, or of those pure, and spiritual, and elevated joys which we might have obtained by a proper observance of the ordinance. There is no reason to doubt that God may make it the occasion of *manifesting* his displeasure. It may be followed by a want of spiritual comfort and peace; by a loss of communion with God; and by a withholding of those comforts from the soul which *might* have been enjoyed, and which are imparted to those who observe it in a proper manner. The general principle, is, that an improper discharge of any duty will expose us to his displeasure, and to the certain loss of all those favours which might have resulted from a proper discharge of the duty, and to the tokens of the Divine displeasure. And this is as true of prayer, or of any other religious duty, as of an improper observance of the Lord's Supper.

{*} "sleep" "are dead"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *For if we would judge ourselves*. If we would examine ourselves, (1Co 11:28;) if we would exercise a strict scrutiny over our hearts, and feelings, and conduct, and come to the Lord's table with a proper spirit, we should escape the condemnation to which they are exposed who observe it in an improper manner. If we would exercise proper *severity* and *honesty* in determining our own character and fitness for the ordinance, we should not expose ourselves to the Divine displeasure.

We should not be judged. We should not be exposed to the expression of God's disapprobation. He refers here to the punishment which had come upon the Corinthians for their improper manner of observing the ordinance; and he says that if they had properly examined themselves, and had understood the nature of the ordinance, that they would have escaped the judgments that had come upon them. This is as true now as it was then. If we wish to escape the Divine displeasure; if we wish the communion *to be followed* with joy, and peace, and growth in grace, and not with blighting

and spiritual barrenness, we should exercise a severe judgment on our character, and feelings, and motives; and should come to it with a sincere desire to honour Christ, and to advance in the Divine life.

{a} "we would judge" Ps 32:5 1Jo 1:9

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *But when we are judged*. This is added, evidently, to console those who had been afflicted on account of their improper manner of observing the Lord's Supper. The sense is, that though they were thus afflicted by God; though he had manifested his displeasure at the manner in which they had observed the ordinance, yet the Divine judgment in the case was not inexorable. They were not regarded by God as wholly strangers to piety, and would not be lost for ever. They should not be alarmed, therefore, as if there was no mercy for them; but they should rather regard their calamities as the chastening of the Lord on his own children, and as designed for their salvation.

We are chastened of the Lord. It is his act; and it is not vengeance and wrath; but it is to be regarded as the chastisement of a father's hand, *in order* that We should not be condemned with the wicked. We are *under the discipline* (*paideuomeya*) of the Lord; we are dealt with as children, and are corrected as by the hand of a father. Compare Heb 12:5-10 2Co 6:9. The *design* of God's correcting his children is, that they should be *reclaimed*, and not *destroyed*.

That we should not be condemned with the world. It is implied here,

(1.) that the world—those who were not Christians—would be condemned;

(2.) that Paul regarded the Corinthians, whom he addressed, and who had even been guilty of this improper manner of observing the Lord's Supper, and who had been punished for it, as true Christians; and,

(3.) that the purpose which God had in view in inflicting these judgments on them was, that they might be purified, and enlightened, and recovered from their errors, and saved. This is the design of God in the calamities and judgments which he brings on his own children. And so now, if he afflicts us, or leave us to darkness, or follows the communion with the tokens of his displeasure, it is that we may be recovered to a deeper sense of our need of him; to juster views of the ordinance; and to a more earnest wish to obtain his favour.

{b} "we are chastened" Ps 94:12,13; Heb 12:5-11

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *When ye come together to eat*. Professedly to eat the Lord's Supper.

Tarry one for another. Do not be guilty of disorder, intemperance, and gluttony. **See Barnes "1Co 11:21".**

Doddridge understands this of the feast that he supposes to have preceded the Lord's Supper. But the more obvious interpretation is, to refer it to the Lord's Supper itself; and to enjoin perfect order, respect, and sobriety. The idea is, that the table was common for the rich and the poor; and that the rich should claim no priority or precedence over the poor.

{*} "tarry" "wait"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *And if any man hunger*, etc. The Lord's Supper is not a common feast; it is not designed as a place where a man may gratify his appetite. It is designed as a simple *commemoration*, and not as a *feast*. This remark was designed to correct their views of the Supper, and to show them that it was to be distinguished from the ordinary idea of a feast or festival.

That ye come not together unto condemnation. That the effect of your coming together for the observance of the Lord's Supper be not to produce condemnation. **See Barnes "1Co 11:29"**.

And the rest will I set in order, etc. Probably he refers here to other matters on which he had been consulted; or other things which he knew required to be adjusted. The *other* matters pertaining to the order and discipline of the church I will defer until I can come among you, and personally arrange them. It is evident from this, that Paul at this time purposed soon to go to Corinth. See 2Co 1:15,16. It was doubtless true that there might be many things which it was desirable to adjust in the church there, which could not be so well done by letter. The main things, therefore, which it was needful to correct immediately, he had discussed in this letter; the other matters he reserved to be arranged by himself when he should go among them. Paul was disappointed in his expectations of returning among them as soon as he had intended, (see 2Co 1:17,) and under this disappointment he forwarded to them another epistle. If all Christians would follow implicitly his directions here in regard to the Lord's Supper, it would be an ordinance full of comfort. May all so understand its nature, and so partake of it, that they shall meet the approbation of their Lord, and so that it may be the means of saving grace to their souls.

{1} "unto condemnation" "judgment"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 1

1st Corinthians CHAPTER 12

THIS chapter commences a new subject, the discussion of which continues to the close of the fourteenth chapter. The general subject is that of spiritual endowments, or the right mode of exercising their spiritual gifts, and the degree of honour which was due to those who had been distinguished by God by the special influences of his Spirit. It is evident that many in the church at Corinth had been thus favoured; and it is evident that they had greatly abused these endowments, and that those who were thus favoured had claimed a precedency of honour above those who had been less distinguished. It is not improbable that they had, in their letter to Paul, (1Co 7:1,) requested his counsel on this subject, and asked him to teach them what measure of honour should be given to those who had been thus endowed. This subject, as it was of importance not only for them, but for the church at large in all future times, he proceeds to discuss in this and the two following chapters; and this discussion closes the *second* part of the epistle. See the Introduction. The general scope of these chapters is this:

(1.) He shows that all those endowments were conferred by the Holy Ghost, and were all for the use of the church; that the church was one, but that there was a necessity for diversified operations in that church; and that, therefore, no one should value himself on that gift above his brother, and no one should feel himself dishonoured because he had not been thus favoured. All filled important places in the church, just as the various members and parts of the human system were necessary for its symmetry, action, and health; and all, therefore, should be willing to occupy the place which God had assigned them, 1Co 12.

(2.) In 1Co 13 he recommends *love*, or charity, as of more value than all other spiritual gifts put together, and therefore recommends that that should be especially the object of their desire.

(3.) In 1Co 14 he gives particular rules about the proper exercise of spiritual gifts in their public assemblies. This chapter, therefore, is occupied in stating and illustrating the position that all spiritual gifts are conferred by the Holy Ghost, and that no one should so value himself on this gilt as to despise those who had not been thus endowed; and that no one who had not thus been favoured should be dejected, or regard himself as dishonoured. This statement is illustrated in the following manner:

(1.) Paul states the importance of the subject, 1Co 13:1.

(2.) He reminds them that they were formerly in a state of ignorance, sin, and idolatry, 1Co 13:2.

(3.) He states *one* mark of being under the influence of the Spirit of God; that is, that it would lead them to acknowledge and honour Jesus Christ. If the spirit by which they were influenced led them to this, it was proof that it was the Holy Ghost, 1Co 13:3. If any pretenders to inspiration were in the habit of speaking disrespectfully of Jesus Christ, or of calling him "accursed," it proved that they were not under the influence of the Holy Ghost.

(4.) There were *diversities* in the operations of the Spirit; but however various were these operations, they all proceeded from the same agent, 1Co 13:4-11. All were not, therefore, to expect precisely the same influences or operations; nor were they to suppose that because there were various operations, that therefore they were not influenced by the Spirit of God.

(5.) Paul states and illustrates the truth that the church is one, 1Co 12:12-27. As the body is one, yet has many members, so is it with the church, 1Co 12:12. The body has many members, and no members in the body are useless, but all perform important parts, however unimportant they may seem to be; and no one member can say that it has no need of the others. So it is in the church, 1Co 12:13-27.

(6.) This beautiful allegory, drawn from the functions of the various parts of the human body, Paul applies now to the church, and shows (1Co 12:28-30) that the same thing should be expected in the church of Christ. It followed, therefore, that those who were not as highly favoured as others, should not regard themselves as useless, and decline their station in the church. It followed, also, that those who were in inferior stations should not envy those who had been more highly favoured; and that those who were in more elevated stations, and who had been more signally favoured, should not look down on those beneath them with contempt. It followed, also, that they should regard themselves as one body, and love and cherish each other with constant Christian affection.

(7.) Paul tells them that it was not improper to desire the highest endowments, but says that he will propose an object of desire to be preferred to these gifts—and that is LOVE, 1Co 12:31.

Verse 1. *Now concerning*. It is now time that I should speak of spiritual endowments. He had no doubt been consulted in regard to them, and probably various questions had been proposed, which he now proceeded to answer.

Spiritual gifts. The word "gifts" is not in the original. The Greek refers to "spiritual" things in general, or to anything that is of a spiritual nature. The whole discussion, however, shows that he refers to the various endowments, gifts, or graces that had been bestowed in different degrees on the members of the church—including the distinctions in graces, and in degrees of office and rank, which had been made in the Christian church in general, 1Co 12, as well as the extraordinary endowments of the gift of tongues, which had been bestowed upon many, 1Co 14.

I would not have you ignorant. The subject is of so much importance, that it demands particular attention and special care. **See Barnes "1Co 10:1"**.

I would not have you ignorant in regard to the nature of those endowments; the spirit with which they should be received; the rules to which they who are thus favoured should be subjected; and the feelings and views which should be cherished in all the members of the church in regard to them. Nothing is of more importance in the church than the doctrine respecting the influences and endowments of the Holy Spirit.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 2

Verse 2.

Ye know, etc. This verse is regarded by many as a parenthesis. But it is not necessary to suppose that it is so, or that it does not cohere with that which follows. The design seems to be to remind them of their former miserable condition as idolaters, in order to make them more sensible of their advantages as Christians, and that they might be led more highly to appreciate their present condition. Paul often refers Christians to their former condition, to excite in them gratitude for the mercies that God has conferred on them in the gospel. **See Barnes "1Co 6:11"**.

Comp. Ro 6:17 Eph 2:11,12; Tit 3:3.

That ye were Gentiles. Heathen; worshippers of idols. The idea is, that they were pagans; that they had no Knowledge of the true God, but were sunk in miserable superstition and idolatry.

Carried away. Led along; that is, deluded by your passions, deluded by your priests, deluded by your vain and splendid rites of worship. The whole system made an appeal to the senses, and

bore along its rotaries as if by a foreign and irresistible impulse. The word which is used (*apagomenoi*) conveys, properly, the idea of being carried into bondage, or being led to punishment; and refers here, doubtless, to the strong means which had been used by crafty politicians and priests in their former state to delude and deceive them.

Unto these dumb idols. These idols which could not speak—an attribute which is often given to them, to show the folly of worshipping them, Ps 115:5 135:15; Hab 2:18,19.

The ancient priests and politicians deluded the people with the notion that oracles were uttered by the idols whom they worshipped, and thus they maintained the belief in their divinity. The idea of Paul here seems to be,

(1.) that their idols never could have uttered the oracles which were ascribed to them, and consequently that they had been deluded.

(2.) That these idols could never have endowed them with such spiritual privileges as they now had, and consequently that their present state was far preferable to their former condition.

Even as ye were led. Were led by the priests in the temples of the idols. They were under strong delusions, and the arts of cunning and unprincipled men. The idea is, that they had been under a strong infatuation, and were entirely at the control of their spiritual leaders—a description remarkably applicable now to all forms of imposture in the world. No System of paganism consults the freedom and independence of the mind of man; but it is everywhere characterized as a system of *power*, and not of *thought*; and all its arrangements are made to secure that power without an intelligent assent of the understanding and the heart.

{a} "dumb idols" 1Th 1:9

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Wherefore I give you to understand*. I make known to you. The force of this expression is, *I give you this rule to distinguish*, or by which you may know what influences and operations are from God. The design of the passage is to give them some simple general guide by which they could at once recognize the operations of the Spirit of God, and determine whether they who claimed to be under that operation were really so. That rule was, that all who were truly influenced by the Holy Ghost would be disposed to acknowledge and to know Jesus Christ; and where this disposition existed, it was of itself a clear demonstration that it was the operation of the Spirit of God. The same rule substantially is given by John, (1Jo 4:2,) by which to test the nature of the spirit by which men profess to be influenced: "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every, spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God." **See Barnes "Mt 16:17".**

That no man. No one, (*oudeiv*). It may refer to a man, or to demons, or to those who pretended to be under inspiration of any kind. And it may refer to the Jews who may have pretended to be under the influence of God's Spirit, and who yet anathematized and cursed the name of Jesus. Or it may be intended simply as a general rule; meaning, that *if any one*, whoever he might be, should blaspheme the name of Jesus, whatever were his pretensions, whether professing to be under the influence of the Holy Spirit among the Jews, or to be inspired among the Gentiles, it was full proof

that he was an impostor. The argument is, *that the Holy Spirit in all instances would do honour to Jesus Christ, and would prompt all who were under his influence to love and reverence his name*.

Speaking by the Spirit of God. Under the influence of inspiration.

Calleth. Says, or would say; that is, no such one would use the language of anathema in regard to him.

Accursed. Marg., *Anathema*, (*anayema*). **See Barnes "Ac 23:14"**.

See Barnes "Ro 9:3".

Compare 1Co 16:22 Ga 1:8,9.

The word is one of execration, or cursing; and means, that no one under the influence of the Holy Spirit could curse the name of Jesus, or denounce him as execrable, and as an impostor. The effect of the influences of the Spirit would be, in all instances, to inspire reverence for his name and work. It is probable that the *Jews* were here principally intended, since there is a bitterness and severity in the language which accords with all their expressions of feeling towards Jesus of Nazareth. It is possible also, and indeed probable, that the priests and priestesses of the pagan gods, who pretended to be under the influence of inspiration, might denounce the name of Jesus, because they would all be opposed to the purity of his religion.

And that no man can say, etc. That is, that it cannot occur, or even happen, that any one will acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah who is not influenced by the Holy Ghost. The meaning is not that no one has physical ability *to say* that Jesus is Lord unless aided by the Holy Ghost, since all men can say this; but that no one will be disposed heartily to say it; no one will acknowledge him as their Lord; it can never happen that any one will confess him as the true Messiah who has not been brought to this state by the agency of the Holy Ghost.

Is the Lord. Is the Messiah; or shall acknowledge him as their Lord.

But by the Holy Ghost. Unless he is influenced by the Holy Spirit. This is a very important verse, not only in regard to the particular subject under consideration in the time of Paul, but also in its practical bearing at present. We may learn from it,

(1.) that it is a proof that any man is under the influence of the Holy Spirit who is heartily disposed to honour the name and work of Jesus Christ.

(2.) Those forms and modes of religion, those religious opinions and practices, will be most in accordance with the designs of the Spirit of God, which do most to honour the name and work of Jesus Christ.

(3.) It is true that no man will ever cherish a proper regard for Jesus Christ, nor love his name and work, unless he is influenced by the Holy Ghost. No man loves the name and work of the Redeemer by following simply the inclinations of his own corrupt heart. In all instances of those who have been brought to a willingness to honour him, it has been by the agency of the Holy Ghost.

(4.) If any man, in any way, is disposed to disparage the work of Christ, to speak lightly of his person or his name, or holds doctrines that infringe on the fairness of the truth respecting his Divine nature, his purity, his atonement, it is proof that he is not under the influence of the Spirit of God. Just in proportion as he shall disparage that work or name, just in that proportion does he live evidence that he is not influenced by the Divine Spirit; but by proud reason, or by imagination, or by a heart that is not reconciled to God.

(5.) All true religion is the production of the Holy Spirit. For religion consists essentially in a willingness to honour, and love, and serve the Lord Jesus Christ; and where *that* exists, it is produced by the Holy Spirit.

(6.) The influence of the Holy Spirit should be cherished. To grieve away that Spirit is to drive all proper knowledge of the Redeemer from the soul; to do this is to leave the heart to coldness, and darkness, and barrenness, and spiritual death.

{a} "speaking by the Spirit" Mr 9:39 1Jo 4:2,3

{1} "accursed" "anathema" {b} "that no man" Mt 16:17 {*} "Holy Ghost" "Spirit"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Now there are diversities of gifts*. There are different endowments conferred on Christians. For the meaning of the word gifts, **See Barnes "Ro 1:11"**.

Comp. Ro 5:15,16, 6:23 11:29, 12:6; 1Co 1:7 7:7.

But the same Spirit. Produced by the same Spirit—the Holy Ghost. What those diversities of gifts are, the apostle enumerates in 1Co 12:8-11. The design for which he refers to these various endowments is evidently to show those whom he addressed, that since they are all produced by the same Holy Spirit, have all the same Divine origin, and are all intended to answer some important purpose and end in the Christian church, that therefore none are to be despised; nor is one man to regard himself as authorized to treat another with contempt. The Spirit has divided and conferred those gifts according to his sovereign will; and his arrangements should be regarded with submission, and the favours which he confers should be received with thankfulness. That the Holy Spirit—the Third Person of the adorable Trinity—is here intended, by the word "Spirit," seems to be manifest on the face of the passage, and has been the received interpretation of the church until it was called in question by some recent German commentators, at the head of whom was Eichhorn. It is not the design of these Notes to go into an examination of questions of criticism, such as an inquiry like this would involve. Nor is it necessary. Some of the arguments by which the common interpretation is defended are the following:

(1.) It is the obvious interpretation. It is that which occurs to the great mass of readers, as the true and correct exposition.

(2.) It accords with the usual meaning of the word Spirit. No other intelligible sense can be given to the word here. To say, with Eichhorn, that it means "nature," that there are the same natural endowments, though cultivated in various measures by art and education, makes manifest nonsense, and is contrary to the whole structure and scope of the passage.

(3.) It accords with all the other statements in the New Testament, where the endowments here referred to—"wisdom," "knowledge," "faith," "working of miracles," etc.— are traced to the Holy Spirit, and are regarded as his gift.

(4.) The harmony, the concinnity of the passage is destroyed by supposing that it refers to anything else than the Holy Spirit. In this verse the agency of the Spirit is recognised, and *his* operations on the mind referred to; in the next verse the agency of the Son of God (**See Barnes "1Co 12:4"**

on the verse) is referred to; and in the following verse the agency of God—evidently the Father—is brought into view; and thus the entire passage (1Co 12:4-6) presents a connected view of the operations performed by the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in the work of redemption. To

deny that this verse refers to the Holy Spirit is to break up the harmony of the whole passage, and to render it in no small degree unmeaning. But if this refers to the Holy Spirit, then it is an unanswerable argument for his personality, and for his being on an equality with the Father and the Son.

{c} "of gifts" Heb 2:4 1Pe 4:10

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Of administrations*. Marg., *Ministries*. The word properly denotes *ministries*; so that there are different ranks and grades in the ministries which Christ has appointed, to wit, those specified in 1Co 12:9,10,28.

But the same Lord. This refers evidently to the Lord Jesus, by whom these various orders of ministers were appointed, and under whose control they are. **See Barnes "Ac 1:24".**

Comp. Eph 4:5. The term *Lord*, when it stands by itself in the New Testament, usually refers to the Lord Jesus, the name by which he was commonly known by the disciples. See Joh 20:25. The fact also that this stands between the mention of the work of the Spirit (1Co 4:4) and the work of God, (1Co 12:6,) and the fact that to the Lord Jesus appertained the appointment of these various grades of officers in the church, (comp. Mt 10:1 Lu 10:1, seq. is further proof that this refers to him. The design of the verse is to show that all these offices had their appointment from him; and that since all were his appointment, and all were necessary, no one should be proud of an elevated station; no one should be depressed, or feel himself degraded, because he had been designated to a more humble office.

{1} "administrations" "ministries"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Of operations*. Of works; to wit, of miracles, such as God produces in the church, in the establishment and defence of his religion. There are different operations on the mind and heart; and different powers given to man, or different qualifications in building up and defending his cause. Or it may be, possibly, that Paul here refers to the works of God mainly for mere *illustration*; and by the word "operations" means the works which God has performed in creation and providence. His works are various. They are not all alike, though they come from the same hand. The sun, the moon, the stars, the earth, are different; the trees of the forest, the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, the inhabitants of the deep, are different; the flowers, and shrubs, and herbs, are different from each other; yet, however much they may vary, they are formed by the same hand, are the productions of the same God, are to be regarded as proofs of the same wisdom and power. The same thing should be expected in his church; and we should anticipate that the endowments of its members would be various.

But it is the same God. The same Father; all these operations are produced by the same God. They should not, therefore, be undervalued or despised; nor should any one be unduly elated, or pride himself on what has been conferred by God alone.

All in all. All these operations are to be traced to him. His agency is everywhere. It is as really seen in the insect's wing as in the limbs of the mammoth; as really in the humblest violet as in the loftiest oak of the forest. All, therefore, should regard themselves as under his direction, and should submit to his arrangements. If men regard their endowments as the gift of God, they will be thankful for them, and they will not be disposed to despise or undervalue others who have been placed in a more humble condition and rank in the church.

{a} "of operations" Ro 12:6

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *But the manifestation of the Spirit*. The word "manifestation" (*fanerwsiv* means, properly, that which makes manifest, conspicuous, or plain; that which illustrates, or makes anything seen or known. Thus conduct manifests the state of the heart; and the actions are a manifestation, or *showing forth*, of the real feelings. The idea here is, that there is given to those referred to, such gifts, endowments, or graces, as shall *manifest* the work and nature of the Spirit's operations on the mind; such endowments as the Spirit makes himself known by to men. All that he produces in the mind is a manifestation of his character and work, in the same way as the works of God, in the visible creation, are a manifestation of his perfections.

Is given to every man. To every man whose case is here under consideration. The idea is not at all that the manifestation of the Spirit is given to all men indiscriminately—to pagans, and infidels, and scoffers, as well as to Christians. The apostle is discoursing only of those who are Christians, and his declaration should be confined to them alone. Whatever may be true of other men, this statement should be confined wholly to Christians; and means simply that the Spirit of God gives to each Christian such graces and endowments as he pleases; that he distributes his gifts to all, not equally, but in a manner which he shall choose; and that the design of this is, that all Christians should use his endowments for the common good. This passage, therefore, is very improperly adduced to prove that the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit are conferred alike on all men, and that pagans, and blasphemers, and sinners in general, are under his enlightening influences. It has no reference to any such doctrine, but should be interpreted as referring solely to Christians, and the various endowments which are conferred on them.

To profit withal. *prov to sumferon*. Unto profit; that is, for utility, or use; or to be an advantage to the church; for the common good of all. This does not mean that each one must cultivate and improve his graces and gifts, however true that may be, but that they are to be used for the common good of the church; they are bestowed for *utility*, or *profit*; they are conferred in such measures, and in such a manner, as are best adapted to be useful, and to do good. They are bestowed not on all equally, but in such a manner as shall best subserve the interests of piety and the church, and as shall tend harmoniously to carry on the great interests of religion, and further the welfare of the whole Christian body. The doctrine of this verse is, therefore,

(1.) that the Holy Spirit bestows such endowments on all Christians as he pleases; and

(2.) that the design is, in the best manner to promote the common welfare—the peace and edification of the whole church. It follows from this,

(1.) that no Christian should be unduly elated, as if he were more worthy than others, since his endowments are the simple gift of God;

(2.) that no Christian should be depressed and disheartened, as if he occupied an inferior or unimportant station, since his place has also been assigned him by God;

(3.) that all should be contented and satisfied with their allotments in the church, and should strive only to make the best use of their talents and endowments; and

(4.) that all should employ their time and talents for the common utility; for the furtherance of the common welfare, and the advancement of the kingdom of Christ on earth.

{b} "profit withal" Eph 4:7

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *For to one is given*. In order to show what endowments he refers to, the apostle here particularizes the various gifts which the Holy Spirit imparts in the church.

By the Spirit. By the Holy Ghost; by his agency on the mind and heart.

The word of wisdom. One he has endowed with wisdom, or has made distinguished for wise, and prudent, and comprehensive views of the scheme of redemption, and with a faculty of clearly explaining it to the apprehension of men. It is not certain that the apostle meant to say that this was the most important or most elevated endowment because he places it first in order. His design does not seem to be to observe the order of importance and value; but to state, as it occurred to him, the fact that these various endowments *had* been conferred on different men in the church. The sense is, that one man would be prominent and distinguished as a wise man—a prudent counsellor, instructor, and adviser.

To another the word of knowledge. Another would be distinguished for knowledge. He would be learned; would have a clear view of the plan of salvation, and of the doctrines and duties of religion. The same variety is observed in the ministry at all times. One man is eminent as a wise man; another as a man of intelligence and knowledge; and both may be equally useful in their place in the church.

By the same Spirit. All is to be traced to the same Spirit; all, therefore, may be really useful and necessary; and the one should not pride himself in his endowments above the other.

{c} "the word of wisdom" Isa 11:2,3 {d} "to another" 1Co 2:6,7 {e} "by the same Spirit" 1Co 13:2

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *To another faith*. Another shall be distinguished for simple confidence in God; and his endowment is also given by the same Spirit. Many of the most useful men in the church are distinguished mainly for their simple confidence in the promises of God; and often accomplish more by prayer and by their faith in God than others do who are distinguished for their wisdom and learning. Humble piety and reliance in the Divine promises, and that measure of ardour, fearlessness, and zeal, which result from such confidence; that belief that all obstacles *must* be and *will* be overcome that oppose the gospel, and that God will secure the advancement of his cause, will often do infinitely more in the promotion of his kingdom than the most splendid endowments of learning and talent. Indeed, if a man were disposed to do good on the widest scale possible, to do the utmost that he possibly could in saving men, he would best accomplish it by seeking simple *faith* in God's aid and promises, and then, under the influence of this, engage with ardour in doing what he could. Faith is one of the highest endowments of the Christian life; and yet, though all may attain it, it is one of the rarest endowments. Perhaps by many it is despised, *because* it may be obtained by all because it is a grace in which the poor and the humble may be as much distinguished as the man of splendid talents and profound learning.

To another the gifts of healing. See Mr 16:18. This was promised to the disciples of the Saviour; and in the early church was conferred on many. Comp. Ac 5:12,15,16 19:12.

It would seem from this passage that the gift of healing was conferred on some in a more eminent degree than on others.

{f} "faith" Eph 2:8 {g} "healing" Mr 16:18 Jas 5:14

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *To another the working of miracles*. Commentators have felt some perplexity in distinguishing this from what is mentioned in 1Co 12:9 of the gift of healing. It is evident that the apostle there refers to the power of working miracles in healing inveterate and violent diseases. The expression here used, "working of miracles," (*energhmata dunamewn*,) refers probably to the more *extraordinary* and *unusual* kinds of miracles; to those which were regarded as in advance of the power of healing diseases. It is possible that it may denote what the Saviour had reference to in Mr 16:18, where he said they should take up serpents, and if they drank any deadly thing it should not hurt them; and possibly also to the power of raising up the dead. That this power was possessed by the apostles is well known; and it is possible that it was possessed by others also of the early Christians. It is clear from all this that there was a *difference* even among those who had the power of working miracles, and that this power was conferred in a more eminent degree on some than on others. Indeed, the *extraordinary* endowments conferred on the apostles and the early Christians seem to have been regulated, to a remarkable degree, in accordance with the rule by which *ordinary* endowments are conferred upon men. Though all men have understanding, memory, imagination, bodily strength, etc., yet one has these in a more eminent degree than others; and one is characterized for the possession of one of those qualities more than for another. Yet all are bestowed by the same God; So it was in regard to the extraordinary endowments conferred on the early Christians. Comp. 1Co 14, especially 1Co 14:32.

To another prophecy. **See Barnes "Ro 12:6".**

To another discerning of spirits. Comp. 1Jo 4:1. This must refer to some power of searching into the secrets of the heart; of knowing what were a man's purposes, views, and feelings. It may relate either to the power of determining by what spirit a man spoke who pretended to be inspired, whether he was truly inspired or whether he was an impostor, or it may refer to the power of seeing whether a man was sincere or not in his Christian profession. That the apostles had this power, is apparent from the case of Ananias and Sapphira, (Ac 5:1-10,) and from the case of Elymas, Ac 13:9-11. It is evident that where the gift of prophecy and inspiration was possessed, and where it would confer such advantages on those who possessed it, there would be many pretenders to it; and that it would be of vast importance to the infant church, in order to prevent imposition, that there should be a power in the church of detecting the imposture.

To another divers kinds of tongues. The power of speaking various languages. See Ac 2:4,7-11.

This passage also seems to imply that the extraordinary endowments of the Holy Spirit were not conferred on all alike.

To another the interpretation of tongues. The power of interpreting foreign languages; or of interpreting the language which might be used by the "prophets" in their communications. **See Barnes "1Co 14:27".**

This was evidently a faculty different from the power of speaking a foreign language; and yet it might be equally useful. It would appear possible that some might have had the power of speaking foreign languages who were not themselves apprized of the meaning, and that interpreters were needful in order to express the sense to the hearers.

Or it may have been that in a promiscuous assembly, or in an assembly made up of those who spoke different languages, a part might have understood what was uttered, and it was needful that an interpreter should explain it to the other portion. **See Barnes "1Co 14:28".**

{a} "discerning of spirits" 1Jo 4:1 {b} "of tongues" Ac 2:4,7-11

{*} "tongues" "Languages"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *But all these*. All these various endowments.

Worketh. Produces. All these are to be traced to him.

That one and the selfsame Spirit. The Holy Spirit, Ac 2. They were all, though so different in themselves to be traced to the Holy Ghost, just as all the natural endowments of men—their strength, memory, judgment, etc.—though so various in themselves, are to be traced to the same God.

Dividing to every man severally. Conferring on each one as he pleases. He confers on each one that which he sees to be best and most wise and proper.

As he will. As he chooses; or as in his view seems best. Dr. Doddridge remarks, that this word does "not so much express arbitrary pleasure, as a determination founded on wise counsel." It implies, however, that he does it as a sovereign; as he sees to be right and best. He distributes these favours as to him seems best adapted to promote the welfare of the whole church, and to advance his cause. Some of the doctrines which are taught by this verse are the following:

(1.) The Holy Ghost is a *person*. For he acts as a person; distributes favours, confers endowments and special mercies "as he will." This proves that he is, in some respects, distinguished from the Father and the Son. It would be absurd to say of an *attribute* of God, that it confers favours, and distributes the various endowments of speaking with tongues, and raising the dead. And if so, then the Holy Ghost is not an attribute of God.

(2.) He is a sovereign. He gives to an as he pleases. In regard to spiritual endowments of the highest order, he deals with men as he does in the common endowments bestowed on men, and as he does in temporal blessings. He does not bestow the same blessings on an, nor make all alike. He dispenses his favours by a rule which he has not made known, but which, We may be assured, is in accordance with wisdom and goodness. He wrongs no one; and he gives to all the favours which might be connected with eternal life.

(3.) No man should be proud of his endowments. Whatever they may be, they are the gifts of God, bestowed by his sovereign will and mercy. But assuredly we should not be proud of that which is the mere *gift* of another; and which has been bestowed, not in consequence of any merit of ours, but according to his mere sovereign will.

(4.) No man should be depressed, or should despise his own gifts, however humble they may be. In their own place, they may be as important as the higher endowments of others. That God has placed him where he is, or has given less splendid endowments than he has to others, is no fault of his. There is no crime in it; and he should, therefore, strive to improve his "one talent," and to make himself useful in the rank where he is placed. And,

(5.) no man should despise another because he is in a more humble rank, or is less favoured than himself. God has made the difference, and we should respect and honour his arrangements, and should show that *respect* and *honour* by regarding with kindness, and treating as fellow-labourers with us, all who occupy a more humble rank than we do.

{c} "dividing to every man" 1Co 12:6

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *For as the body is one*. The general sentiment which the apostle had been illustrating and enforcing was, that all the endowments which were possessed in the church were the work of the same Holy Spirit, and that they ought to be appropriately cherished and prized, as being all useful and valuable in their places. This sentiment he now illustrates (1Co 12:12-27) by a beautiful similitude taken from the mutual dependence of the various parts of the human body. The human body is one, and yet is composed of various members and parts that all unite harmoniously in one whole.

Being many. Or, although they are many; or while they are in some respects separate, and perform distinct and different functions, yet they all unite in one harmonious whole.

So also is Christ. The church is represented as the body of Christ, (1Co 12:27,) meaning that it is one, and that he sustains to it the relation of Head. Comp. Eph 1:22,23. As the head is the most important part of the body, it may be put for the whole body; and the name Christ here, the head of the church, is put for the whole body of which he is the head; and means here the Christian

society, or the church. This figure, of a part for the whole, is one that is common in all languages. **See Barnes "Ro 12:4,5".**

{d} "so also is Christ" 1Co 12:27

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *For by one Spirit*. That is, by the agency or operation of the same Spirit, the Holy Ghost, we have been united into one body. The idea here is the same as that presented above, (1Co 12:7-11,) by which all the endowments of Christians are traced to the same Spirit. Paul here says, that that Spirit had so endowed them as to fit them to constitute one body, or to be united in one, and to perform the various duties which resulted from their union in the same Christian church. The idea of its having been done by one and the same Spirit is kept up, and often presented, in order that the endowments conferred on them might be duly appreciated.

Are we all. Every member of the church, whatever may be his rank or talents, has received his endowments from the same Spirit.

Baptized into one body. Many suppose that there is reference here to the ordinance of baptism by water. But the connexion seems rather to require us to understand it of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, (Mt 3:11;) and if so, it means, that by the agency of the Holy Spirit they had all been fitted, each to his appropriate place, to constitute the body of Christ—the church. If, however, it refers to the ordinance of baptism, as Bloomfield, Calvin, Doddridge, etc. suppose, then it means, that by the very profession of religion as made at baptism, by there being but one baptism, (Eph 4:5,) they had all professedly become members of one and the same body. The former interpretation, however, seems to me best to suit the connexion.

Whether we be Jews or Gentiles. There is no difference. All are on a level. In regard to the grand point, no distinction is made, whatever may have been our former condition of life.

Bond or free. It is evident that many who were slaves were converted to the Christian faith. Religion, however, regarded all as on a level; and conferred no favours on the free which it did not on the slave. It was one of the happy lessons of Christianity, that it taught men that in the great matters pertaining to their eternal interests they were on the same level. This doctrine would tend to secure, more than anything else could, the proper treatment of those who were in bondage, and of those who were in humble ranks of life. At the same time it would not diminish, but would increase *their* real respect for their masters, and for those who were above them, if they regarded them as fellow Christians, and destined to the same heaven. **See Barnes "1Co 7:22".**

And have been all made to drink, etc. This probably refers to their partaking together of the cup in the Lord's Supper. The sense is, that by their drinking of the same cup commemorating the death of Christ, they had partaken of the same influences of the Holy Ghost, which descend alike on all who observe that ordinance in a proper manner. They had shown, also, that they belonged to the same body, and were all united together; and that, however various might be their graces and endowments, yet they all belonged to the same great family.

{a} "all baptized" Joh 1:16 Eph 4:5 {1} "Gentiles" "Greeks" {b} "drink into one Spirit" Joh 7:37-39

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *For the body*, etc. The body is made up of many members, which have various offices. So it is in the church. We are to expect the same variety there; and we are not to presume either that all will be alike, or that any member that God placed there will be useless.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *If the foot shall say*, etc. The same figure and illustration which Paul here uses occurs also in heathen writers. It occurs in the apologue which was used by Menenius Agrippa, as related by Livy, (lib. ii. cap. 32,) in which he attempted to repress a rebellion which had been excited against the nobles and senators, as useless and cumbersome to the state. Menenius, in order to show the folly of this, represents the different members of the body as conspiring against the stomach, as being inactive, and as refusing to labour, and consuming everything. The consequence of the conspiracy which the feet, and hands, and mouth entered into, was a universal wasting away of the whole frame, for want of the nutriment which would have been supplied from the stomach. Thus he argued it would be by the conspiracy against the nobles, as being inactive, and as consuming all things. The representation had the desired effect, and quelled the rebellion. The same figure is used also by AEsop. The idea here is, that as the foot and the ear could not pretend that they were not parts of the body, and even not important, because they were not the eye, etc., that is, were not more honourable parts of the body, so no Christian, however humble his endowments, could pretend that he was useless because he was not more highly gifted, and did not occupy a more elevated rank.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 16

Verse 16. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *If the whole body*, etc. The idea in this verse is, that all the parts of the body are useful in their proper place, and that it would be as absurd to require or expect that all the members of the church should have the same endowments, as it would be to attempt to make the body all eye. If all were the same, if all had the same endowments, important offices which are now secured by

the other members would be unknown. All, therefore, are to be satisfied with their allotment; all are to be honoured in their appropriate place.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Hath God set the members*, etc. God has formed the body, with its various members, as he saw would best conduce to the harmony and usefulness of all.

{c} "set the members" 1Co 12:28. {d} "as it hath" 1Co 12:11 Ro 12:3

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *And if all were one member*. If there were nothing but an eye, an ear, or a limb, there would be no body. The idea which this seems intended to illustrate is, that if there was not variety of talent and endowment in the church, the church could not itself exist. If, for example, there were nothing but apostles, or prophets, or teachers; if there were none but those who spoke with tongues or could interpret them, the church could not exist. A variety of talents and attainments in their proper places is as useful as are the various members of the human body.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 20

Verse 20. No Barnes text on this verse.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *And the eye cannot say to the hand*, etc. The hand in its place is as needful as the eye; and the feet as the head. Nay, the eye and the head could not perform their appropriate functions, or would be in a great measure useless, but for the aid of the hands and feet. Each is useful in its proper place. So in the church. Those that are most talented, and most richly endowed with gifts, cannot say to those less so, that there is no need of their aid. All are useful in their place. Nay, those who are most richly endowed could very imperfectly perform their duties, without the aid and co-operation of those of more humble attainments.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Which seem to be more feeble*. Weaker than the rest; which seem less able to bear fatigue and to encounter difficulties; which are more easily injured, and which become more easily affected with disease. It is possible that Paul may here refer to the brain, the lungs, the heart, etc., as more feeble in their structure, and more liable to disease, than the hands and the feet, etc., and in reference to which disease is more dangerous and fatal.

Are necessary. The sense seems to be this: A man can live though the parts and members of his body which are more strong were removed; but not if those parts which are more feeble. A man can live if his arm or leg be amputated; but not if his brain, his lungs, or his heart be removed. So that, although these parts are more feeble, and more easily injured, they are really more necessary to life, and therefore more useful, than the more vigorous portions of the frame. Perhaps the idea is—and it is a beautiful thought—that those members of the church which are most retiring and feeble apparently; which are concealed from public view, unnoticed and unknown—the humble, the meek, the peaceful, and the prayerful—are often more necessary to the true welfare of the church than those who are eminent for their talent and learning. And it is so. The church can better spare many a man, even in the ministry, who is learned, and eloquent, and popular, than some obscure and humble Christian, that is to the church what the heart and the lungs are to the life. The one is strong, vigorous, active, like the hands or the feet, and the church often depends on them; the other is feeble, concealed, yet vital, like the heart or the lungs. The vitality of the church could be continued though the man of talent and learning should be removed—as the body may live when the arm or the leg is amputated; but that vitality could not continue, if the saint of humble and retiring piety and of fervent prayerfulness were removed, any more than the body can live when there is no heart and no lungs.

{e} "those members" Ec 4:9-12 9:14,15

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *We bestow more abundant honour*. Marg., "Put on." The words rendered "abundant honour" here refer to clothing. We bestow upon them more attention and honour than we do on the face that is deemed comely, and that is not covered and adorned as the other parts of the body are.

More abundant comeliness. We adorn and decorate the body with gay apparel. Those parts which decency requires us to conceal we not only cover, but we endeavour as far as we can to adorn them. The face in the mean time we leave uncovered. The idea is, that in like manner we should not despise or disregard those members of the church who are of lower rank, or who are less favoured than others with spiritual endowments.

{1} "bestow" "put on" {*} "parts" "members"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *For our comely parts*. The face, etc.

Have no need. No need of clothing or ornament,

But God hath tempered the body together. Literally, *mingled* or mixed; that is, has made to coalesce, or strictly and closely joined, he has formed a strict union; he has made one part dependent on another, and necessary to the harmony and proper action of another. Every part is useful, and all are fitted to the harmonious action of the whole. God has so arranged it, in order to produce harmony and equality in the body, that those parts which are less comely by nature should be more adorned and guarded by apparel.

Having given more abundant honour, etc. By making it necessary that we should labour in order to procure for it the needful clothing; thus making it more the object of our attention and care. We thus bestow more abundant honour upon those parts of the body which a suitable protection from cold, and heat, and storms, and the sense of comeliness, requires us to clothe and conceal. The "more abundant honour," therefore, refers to the greater attention, labour, and care which we bestow on those parts of the body.

{*} "parts" "members" {+} "part" "member" {++} "lacked" "wanted"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *That there should be no schism*. Marg., *Division*. **See Barnes "1Co 11:18"**.

The sense here is, that the body might be united, and be one harmonious whole; that there should be no separate interests; and that all the parts should be equally necessary, and truly dependent on each other; and that no member should be regarded as separated from the others, or as needless to the welfare of all. The sense to be illustrated by this is, that no member of the church, however feeble, or illiterate, or obscure, should be despised or regarded as unnecessary or valueless; that all are needful in their places; and that it should not be supposed that they belonged to different bodies, or that they could not associate together, any more than the less honourable and comely parts of the body should be regarded as unworthy or unfit to be united to the parts that were deemed to be more beautiful and honourable.

Should have the same care. Should care for the same thing; should equally regard the interests of all, as we feel an equal interest in all the members and parts of the body, and desire the preservation, the healthy action, and the harmonious and regular movement of the whole. Whatever part of the body is affected with disease or pain, we feel a deep interest in its preservation and cure. The idea is, that no member of the church should be overlooked or despised; but that the whole church should feel a deep interest for, and exercise a constant solicitude over, all its members.

{2} "schism" "division"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *And whether one member suffer*. One member, or part of the body.

All the members suffer with it. This, we all know, is the case with the body. A pain in the foot, the hand, or the head, excites deep solicitude. The interest is not confined to the part affected; but we feel that we ourselves are affected, and that our body, as a whole, demands our care. The word" suffer" here refers to disease, or sickness. It is true, also, that not only we feel an interest in the part that is affected, but that disease in any one part tends to diffuse itself through, and to affect the whole frame. If not arrested, it is conveyed by the blood through all the members, until life itself is destroyed. It is not by mere interest then, or sympathy, but it is by the natural connexion and the inevitable result that a diseased member tends to affect the whole frame. There is not, indeed, in the church, the same *physical* connexion and *physical* effect; but the union is really not less close and important, nor is it the less certain that the conduct of one member will affect all. It is implied here, also, that we should feel a deep interest in the welfare of all the members of the body of Christ. If one is tempted, or afflicted, the other members of the church should feel it, and "bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil his law." If one is poor, the others should aid him, and supply his wants; if one is persecuted and opposed for righteousness' sake, the others should sympathize with him, and make common cause with him. In all things pertaining to religion and to their mutual welfare, they should feel that they have a common cause, and regard it as a privilege to aid one another. Nor should a man regard it as any more a burden and hardship to aid a poor or afflicted brother in the church, than it should be deemed a hardship that the head, and the heart, and the hands should sympathize when any other member of the body is diseased.

Or one member be honoured. If applied to the body, this means, if one member or part be regarded and treated with special care; be deemed honourable; or be in sound, healthy, and vigorous condition. If applied to the church, it means, if one of its members should be favoured with extraordinary endowments; or be raised to a station of honour and influence above his brethren.

All the members rejoice with it. That is, in the body, all the other members partake of the benefit and honour. If one member be sound and healthy the benefit extends to all. If the hands, the feet, the heart, the lungs, the brain be in a healthy condition, the advantage is felt by all the members, and all derive advantage from it. So in the church. If one member is favoured with remarkable talent, or is raised to a station of influence, and exerts his influence in the cause of Christ, all the members of the church partake of the benefit. It is for the common good; and all should rejoice in it. This consideration should repress envy at the elevation of others, and should lead all the members of a church to rejoice when God, by his direct agency, or by the arrangements of his providence, confers extraordinary endowments, or gives opportunity for extended usefulness to others.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *Now ye*. Ye Christians of Corinth, as a part of the whole church that has been redeemed.

Are the body of Christ. The allusion to the human body is here kept up. As all the members of the human body compose one body, having a common head, so it is with all the members and parts of the Christian church. The specific idea is, that Christ is the head of the whole church; that he presides over all; and that all its members sustain to each other the relation of fellow-members in the same body, and are subject to the same head. **See Barnes "1Co 11:3"**.

The church is often called the body of Christ, Eph 1:23 Col 1:18,24.

And members in particular. You are, as individuals, members of the body of Christ; or each individual is a member of that body.

{a} "members" Eph 5:30 {&} "particular" "in part"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *And God hath set*. That is, has appointed, constituted, ordained. He has established these Various orders or ranks in the church. The apostle, having illustrated the main idea that God had conferred various endowments on the members of the church, proceeds here to specify particularly what he meant, and to refer more directly to the various ranks which existed in the church.

Some in the church. The word "some," in this place, (*ouv*) seems to mean rather "*whom*" and "whom God hath placed in the church;" or, they whom God hath constituted in the church in the manner above mentioned are, first, apostles, etc.

First apostles. In the first rank or order; or as superior in honour and in office. He has given them the highest authority in the church; he has more signally endowed them and qualified them than he has others.

Secondarily prophets. As second in regard to endowments and importance. For the meaning of the word "prophets," **See Barnes "Ro 12:6"**.

Thirdly teachers. As occupying the third station in point of importance and valuable endowments. On the meaning of this word, and the nature of this office, **See Barnes "Ro 12:7"**.

After that miracles. Power. *dunameiv*. Those who had the power of working miracles— referred to in 1Co 12:10.

Then gifts of healings. The power of healing those who were sick. **See Barnes "1Co 12:9"**.

Compare Jas 5:14,16.

Helps. *antilhqeiv*. This word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It is derived from *antilambanw*, and denotes, properly, *aid*, *assistance*, *help*; and then those who render aid, assistance, or help; helpers. *Who* they were, is not known. They might have been those to whom was entrusted the care of the poor, and the sick, and strangers, widows, and orphans, etc.; i.e., those who performed the office of deacons. Or they may have been those who attended on the apostles to aid them in their work, such as Paul refers to in Ro 16:3, "Greet Priscilla, and Aquila, my *helper*" in Christ Jesus;" and in Ro 16:9, "Salute Urbane, our *helper* in Christ." **See Barnes "Ro 16:3"**.

It is not possible, perhaps, to determine a precise meaning of the word, or the nature of the office which they discharged; but the word means, in general, those who in any way aided or rendered assistance in the church, and may refer to the temporal affairs of the church, to the care

of the poor, the distribution of charity and alms, or to the instruction of the ignorant, or to aid rendered directly to the apostles. There is no evidence that it refers to a distinct and permanent *office* in the church; but may refer to aid rendered by any class in any way. Probably many persons were profitably and usefully employed in various ways as aids in promoting the temporal or spiritual welfare of the church.

Governments. *kubernhseiv*. This word is derived from *kubernaw*, *to govern*; and is usually applied to the government or steering of a ship. The word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, though the word *kubernhthv* (governor) occurs in Ac 27:11, rendered "master," and in Re 18:17, rendered "ship-master." It is not easy to determine what particular office or function is here intended. Doddridge, in accordance with Amyraut, supposes that distinct offices may not be here referred to, but that the same persons may be denoted in these expressions as being distinguished in various ways; that is, that the same persons were called "helpers" in reference to their skill in aiding those who were in distress, and "governments" in regard to their talent for doing business, and their ability in presiding in counsels for deliberation, and in directing the affairs of the church. There is no reason to think that the terms here used referred to permanent and established ranks and orders in the ministry and in the church; or in permanent offices which were to continue to all times as an essential part of its organization. It is certain that the "order" of *apostles* has ceased, and also the "order" of *miracles*, and the "order" of *healings*, and of *diversity of tongues*. And it is certain that in the use of these terms of office, the apostle does not affirm that they *would* be permanent, and essential to the very existence of the church; and from the passage before us, therefore, it cannot be argued that there was to be an order of men in the church who were to be called *helps*, or *governments*. The truth probably was, that the circumstances of the primitive churches required the aid of many persons in various capacities which might not be needful or proper in other times and circumstances. Whether, therefore, this is to be regarded as a permanent arrangement that there should be "governments" in the church, or an order of men entrusted with the sole office of governing, is to be learned not from this passage, but from other parts of the New Testament. Lightfoot contends, that the word which is here used and translated "governments" does not refer to the power of *ruling*, but to a person endued with a deep and comprehensive mind, one who is wise and prudent; and in this view Mosheim, Macknight, and Bishop Horsley coincide. Calvin refers it to the elders, to whom the exercise of discipline was entrusted. Grotius understands it of the pastors, (Eph 4:1,) or of the elders who presided over particular churches, Ro 12:8. Locke supposes that they were the same as those who had the power of discerning spirits. The simple idea, however, is that of *ruling*, or exercising government; but whether this refers to a permanent office, or to the fact that some were specially qualified by their wisdom and prudence, and in virtue of this usually regulated or directed the affairs of the church by giving council, etc., or whether they were selected and appointed for this purpose for a time; or whether it refers to the same persons who might also have exercised other functions, and this in addition, cannot be determined from the passage before us. All that is clear is, that there were those who administered government in the church. But the passage does not determine the form, or manner; nor does it *prove*—whatever may be true—that such an office was to be permanent in the church.

Diversities of tongues. Those endowed with the power of speaking various languages. **See Barnes "1Co 12:10".**

{b} "first apostles" Lu 6:13 {|} "secondarily" "secondly" {c} "prophets" Ac 13:1 {a} "healings" 1Co 12:10 {b} "helps" 1Co 12:9 {c} "governments" Nu 11:17 {d} "diversities" He 13:17,24 {1} "diversities" "kinds" {e} "tongues" Ac 2:8-11 {*} "tongues" "Languages"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Are all apostles*? etc. These questions imply, with strong emphasis, that it could not be, and ought not to be, that there should be perfect equality of endowment. It was not a matter of fact that all were equal, or that all were qualified for the offices which others sustained. Whether the arrangement was approved of or not, it was a simple matter of fact, that some were qualified to perform offices which others were not; that some were endowed with the abilities requisite to the apostolic office, and others not; that some were endowed with prophetic gifts, and others were not; that some had the gift of healing, or the talent of speaking different languages, or of interpreting, and that others had not.

{2} "all workers" "powers"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 30

Verse 30. No Barnes text on this verse.

{+} "tongues" "Different languages"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *But covet earnestly*. Greek, "Be zealous for," (*zhloute*) This word, however, may be either in the indicative mood, (ye do covet earnestly,) or in the imperative, as in our translation. Doddridge contends that it should be rendered in the indicative mood; for he says it seems to be a contradiction that after the apostle had been showing that these gifts were not at their own option, and that they ought not to emulate the gifts of another, or aspire to superiority, to undo all again, and give them such contrary advice. The same view is given by Locke, and so Macknight. The Syriac renders it, "Because you are zealous of the best gifts, I will show to you a more excellent way." But there is no valid objection to the common translation in the imperative; and indeed the connexion seems to demand it. Grotius renders it, "Pray to God that you may receive from him the best, that is, the most useful endowments." The sense seems to be this: "I have proved that all endowments in the church are produced by the Holy Spirit; and that he confers them as he pleases. I have been showing that no one should be proud or elated on account of extraordinary endowments; and that, on the other hand, no one should be depressed, or sad, or discontented, because he has a

more humble rank. I have been endeavouring to repress and subdue the spirit of discontent, jealousy, and ambition; and to produce a willingness in all to occupy the station where God has placed you. But I do not intend to deny that it is proper to desire the most useful endowments; that a man should wish to be brought under the influence of the Spirit, and qualified for eminent usefulness. I do not mean to say that it is wrong for a man to regard the higher gifts of the Spirit as valuable and desirable, if they may be obtained; nor that the spirit which seeks to excel in spiritual endowments and in usefulness is improper. Yet all cannot be apostles; all cannot be prophets. I would not have you, therefore, seek ruth offices, and manifest a spirit of ambition. I would seek to regulate the desire which I would not repress as improper; and in order to that, I would show you that, instead of aspiring to offices and extraordinary endowments, which are beyond your grasp, there is a way, more truly valuable, that is open to you all, and where all may excel." Paul thus endeavours to give a practicable and feasible turn to the whole subject, and further to repress the longings of ambition and the contentions of strife, by exciting emulation to obtain that which was accessible to them all, and *which, just in the proportion in which it was obtained*, would repress discontent, and strife, and ambition, and produce order, and peace, and contentedness with their endowments and their lot—the main thing which he was desirous of producing in this chapter. This, therefore, is one of the *happy turns* in which the writings of Paul abound He did not denounce their zeal as wicked. He did not attempt at once to repress it. He did not say that it was wrong to desire high endowments. But he showed them an endowment which was more valuable than all the others; which was accessible to all; and which, if possessed, would make them contented, and produce the harmonious operation of all the parts of the church. That endowment was LOVE.

A more excellent way. See the next chapter. "I will show you a more excellent way of evincing your zeal than by aspiring to the place of apostles, prophets, or rulers; and that is, by cultivating universal charity or love."

{h} "covet earnestly" 1Co 14:39 {i} "best gifts" Mt 5:6 Lu 10:42

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 13

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 1

1st Corinthians Chapter 13

This chapter is a continuation of the subject commenced in chapter 12. In that chapter Paul had introduced the subject of the various endowments which the Holy Spirit confers on Christians, and had shown that these endowments, however various they were, were conferred in such a manner as best to promote the edification and welfare of the church. In the close of that chapter (1Co 12:31) he had said that it was lawful for them to desire the most eminent of the gifts conferred by the Spirit; and yet says that there was one endowment that was more valuable than all others, and that might be obtained by all, and that he proposed to recommend to them. That was Love; sold to

illustrate its nature, excellency, and power, is the design of this exquisitely beautiful and tender chapter. In doing this, he dwells particularly on three points or views of the excellency of love; and the chapter may be regarded as consisting of three portions.

I. The excellency of love above the power of speaking the languages of men and of angels; above the power of understanding all mysteries; above all faith, even of the highest kind; and above the virtue of giving all one's goods to feed the poor, or one's body to be burned. All these endowments would be valueless without love, 1Co 13:1-3.

II. A statement of the characteristics of love; or its happy influences on the mind and heart, 1Co 13:4-7.

III. A comparison of love with the gift of prophecy, and with the power of speaking foreign languages, and with knowledge, 1Co 13:8-13. In this portion of the chapter, Paul shows that love is superior to them all. It will live in heaven; and will constitute the chief glory of that world of bliss.

Verse 1. *Though I speak with the tongues of men*. Though I should be able to speak all the languages which are spoken by men. To speak foreign languages was regarded then, as it is now, as a rare and valuable endowment. Comp. Virg. AEn. vi. 625, seq. The word *I*, here, is used in a popular sense; and the apostle designs to illustrate, as he often does, his idea by a reference to himself, which, it is evident, he wishes to be understood as applying to those whom he addressed. It is evident that among the Corinthians the power of speaking a foreign language was regarded as a signally valuable endowment; and there can be no doubt that some of the leaders in that church valued themselves especially on it. See chapter 14. To correct this, and to show them that all this would be vain without love, and to induce them, therefore, to seek for love as a more valuable endowment, was the design of the apostle in this passage. Of this verse Dr. Bloomfield, than whom perhaps there is no living man better qualified to give such an opinion, remarks, that "it would be difficult to find a finer passage than this in the writings of Demosthenes himself."

And of angels. The language of angels; such as they speak. Were I endowed with the faculty of eloquence and persuasion which we attribute to them; and the power of speaking to any of the human family with the power which they have. The language of angels here seems to be used to denote the highest power of using language, or of the most elevated faculty of eloquence and speech. It is evidently derived from the idea that the angels are superior, in all respects, to men; that they must have endowments in advance of all which man can have. It may possible have reference to the idea that they must have some mode of communicating their ideas one to another, and that this dialect or mode must be far superior to that which is employed by man. Man is imperfect. All his modes of communication are defective. We attribute to the angels the idea of perfection; sold the idea here is, that even though a man had a far higher faculty of speaking languages than would be included in the endowment of speaking all the languages of men, as men speak them, and even had the higher and more perfect mode of utterance which the angels have, and yet were destitute of love, all would be nothing. It is possible that Paul may have some allusion here to what he refers to in 2Co 12:4, where he says that when he was caught up into Paradise, he heard unspeakable words, which it was not possible for a man to utter. To this higher, purer language of heaven he may refer here by the language of the angels. It was not with him mere *conjecture* of what that language might be; it was language which he had been permitted himself to hear. Of that scene he would retain a most deep and tender recollection; and to that language he now refers, by saying that even that elevated language would be valueless to a creature if there were not love.

And have not charity. *agaphn de mh ecw*. And have not LOVE. This is the proper and usual meaning of the Greek word. The English word *charity* is used in a great variety of senses; and some of them cannot be included in the meaning of the word here. It means,

(1.) in a general sense, love, benevolence, good-will;

(2.) in theology, it includes supreme love to God, and universal good-will to men;

(3.) in a more particular sense, it denotes the love and kindness which springs from the natural relations, as the *charities* of father, son, brother;

(4.) liberality to the poor, to the needy, and to objects of beneficence, as we speak commonly of charity, meaning almsgiving, and of charitable societies;

(5.) candour, liberality in judging of men's actions; indulgence to their opinions; attributing to them good motives and intentions; a disposition to judge of them favourably, and to put on their words and actions the best construction. This is a very common signification of the word in our language now; and this is one modification of the word love, as all such charity is supposed to proceed from love to our neighbour, and a desire that he should have a right to his opinions, as well as we to ours. The Greek word *agaph* means, properly, love, affection, regard, good-will, benevolence. It is applied,

(a.) to love in general;

(b.) to the love of God and of Christ;

(c.) the love which God or Christ exercises towards Christians, Rom 5:5 Eph 2:4; 2Th 3:5;

(d.) the effect or proof of beneficence, favour conferred, Eph 1:15 2Th 2:10; 1Jo 3:1.

—*Rob. Lex*. In the English word charity, therefore, there are now some ideas which are not found in the Greek word, and especially the idea of *almsgiving*, and the common use of the word among us in the sense of *candour, or liberality in judging*. Neither of these ideas, perhaps, are to be found in the use of the word in the chapter before us; and the more proper translation would have been, in accordance with the usual mode of translation in the New Testament, LOVE. Tindal, in his translation, renders it by the word *love*. The love which is referred to in this chapter, and illustrated, is mainly love to man, (1Co 13:4-7;) though there is no reason to doubt that the apostle meant also to include in the general term love to God, or love in general. His *illustrations*, however, are chiefly drawn from the effects of love towards men. It properly means love to the whole church; love to the whole world; love to all creatures, which arises from true piety, and which centres ultimately in God.—*Doddridge*. It is this love whose importance Paul, in this beautiful chapter, illustrates as being more valuable than the highest possible endowments without it. It is not necessary to suppose that any one *had* these endowments, or had the power of speaking with the tongues of men and angels, or had the gift of prophecy, or had the highest degree of faith, who had no love. The apostle *supposes* a case; and says that if it were so, if all these were possessed without love, they would be comparatively valueless; or that love was a more valuable endowment than all the others would be without it.

I am become. I am. I shall be.

As sounding brass. Probably a trumpet. The word properly means *brass*; then that which is made of brass; a trumpet, or wind instrument of any kind, made of brass or copper. The sense is that of a sounding or resounding instrument, making a great noise, apparently of great importance, and yet without vitality; a mere instrument; a base metal that merely makes a sound. Thus noisy, valueless, empty, and without vitality, would be the power of speaking all languages without love.

Or a tinkling cymbal. A cymbal giving a clanging, clattering sound. The word rendered "tinkling," (*alalazon*) from *alalh* or *alala*, a war-cry,) properly denotes a loud cry, or shout, such as is used in battle; and then also a loud cry or mourning, cries of lamentation or grief; the loud *shriek* of sorrow: Mr 5:38, "Them that wept, and *wailed* greatly." It then means a clanging or clattering sound, such as was made on a cymbal. The cymbal is a well-known instrument, made of two pieces of brass or other metal, which, being struck together, gives a tinkling or clattering sound. Cymbals are commonly used in connexion with other music. They make a tinkling, or clanging, with very little variety of sound. The music is little adapted to produce emotion, or to excite feeling. There is no melody, and no harmony. They were therefore well adapted to express, the idea which the apostle wished to convey. The sense is, "If I could speak all languages, yet if I had not love, the faculty would be like the clattering, clanging sound of the cymbal, that contributes nothing to the welfare of others. It would all be hollow, vain, useless. It could neither save me nor others, any more than the notes of the trumpet, or the jingling of the cymbal, would promote salvation. *Love* is the vital principle; it is that without which all other endowments are useless and vain."

{*} "tongues" "In the languages" {a} "angels" 2Co 12:4 {+} "charity" "Love" {b} "I am become" 1Pe 4:8

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And though I have the gift of prophecy*. **See Barnes "1Co 12:10"**; **See Barnes** "1Co 14:1".

And understand all mysteries. On the meaning of the word mystery, **See Barnes "1Co 2:7"**.

This passage proves that it was one part of the prophetic office, as referred to here, to be able to understand and explain the mysteries of religion; that is, the things that were before unknown, or unrevealed. It does not refer, to the prediction of future events, but to the great and deep truths connected with religion; the things that were unexplained in the old economy, the meaning of types and emblems; and the obscure portions of the plan of redemption. All these might be plain enough if they were revealed; but there were many things connected with religion which God had not chosen to reveal to men.

And all knowledge. **See Barnes "1Co 12:8"**.

Though I knew everything. Though I were acquainted fully with all the doctrines of religion; and were with all sciences and arts.

And though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains. Though I should have the highest kind of faith. This is referred to by the Saviour, (Mt 17:20,) as the highest kind of faith; and Paul here had this fact doubtless in his eye.

I am nothing. All would be of no value. It would not save me. I should still be an unredeemed, unpardoned sinner. I should do good to no one; I should answer none of the great purposes which God has designed; I should not by all this secure my salvation. All would be in vain in regard to the great purpose of my existence. None of these things could be placed before God as a ground of acceptance in the day of judgment. Unless I should have *love*, I should still be lost. A somewhat similar idea is expressed by the Saviour, in regard to the day of judgment, in Mt 7:22,23: "Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name

have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

{c} "prophecy" 1Co 14:1 {*} "mysteries" "unknown truths" {a} "move mountains" Mt 17:20 {+} "charity" "love" {b} "I am nothing" Mt 21:19

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And though I bestow*. The Greek word here used (*qwmizw*), from *qaw*, to break off) meant, properly, to break off, and distribute in small portions; to feed by morsels; and may be applicable here to distributing one's property in small portions. Charity, or alms to the poor, was usually distributed at one's gate, (Lu 16:20,) or in some public place. Of course, if property was distributed in this manner, many more would be benefited than if all were given to one person. There would be many more to be thankful, and to celebrate one's praises. This was regarded as a great virtue; and was often performed in a most ostentatious manner. It was a gratification to wealthy men who desired the praise of being benevolent, that many of the poor flocked daily to their houses to be fed; and against this desire of distinction the Saviour directed some of his severest reproofs. See Mt 6:1-4. TO make the case as strong as possible, Paul says that if ALL that a man had were dealt out in this way, in small portions, so as to benefit as many as possible, and yet were not attended *with true love towards God and towards man*, it would be all false, hollow, hypocritical, and really of no value in regard to his own salvation. It would profit nothing. It would not be such an act as God would approve; it would be no evidence that the soul would be saved. Though good might be done to others, yet where the motive was wrong, it could not meet with the Divine approbation, or be connected with his favour.

And though I give my body to be burned. Evidently as a martyr, or a witness to the truth of religion. Though I should be willing to lay down my life in the most painful manner, and have not charity, it would profit me nothing. Many of the ancient prophets were called to suffer martyrdom, though there is no evidence that any of them were burned to death as martyrs. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were indeed thrown into a fiery furnace, because they were worshippers of the true God; but they were not consumed in the flame, Da 3:19-26. Comp. Heb 11:34. Though Christians were early persecuted, yet there is no evidence that they were burned as martyrs as early as this epistle was written. Nero is the first who is believed to have committed this horrible act; and under his reign, and during the persecution which he excited, Christians were covered With pitch, and set on fire to illuminate his gardens. It is possible that some Christians had been put to death in this manner when Paul wrote this epistle; but it is more probable that he refers to this as *the most awful kind of death*, rather than as anything which had really happened. Subsequently, however, as all know, this was often done; and thousands, and perhaps tens of thousands, of Christians have been called to evince their attachment to religion in the flames.

And have not charity. Have no love to God or to men; have no true piety. If I do it from any selfish or sinister motive; if I do it from fanaticism, obstinacy, or vain-glory; if I am deceived in regard to my character, and have never been born again. It is not *necessary* to an explanation of this passage to suppose that this ever had been done, for the apostle only puts a supposable case.

There is reason, however, to think that it has been done frequently; and that when the desire of martyrdom became the *popular passion*, and was believed to be connected infallibly with heaven, not a few have been willing to give themselves to the flames, who never knew anything of love to God or true piety. Grotius mentions the instance of Calanus, and of Peregrinus the philosopher, who did it. Although this was not the common mode of martyrdom in the time of Paul, and although it was then perhaps unknown, it is remarkable that he should have referred to that which in subsequent times became the common mode of death on account of religion. In his time, and before the common mode was by stoning, by the sword, or by crucifixion. Subsequently, however, all these were laid aside, and *burning* became the common way in which martyrs suffered. So it was, extensively, under Nero; and so it was, exclusively, under the Inquisition; and so it was in the persecutions in England in the time of Mary. Paul seems to have been *directed* to specify this rather than stoning, the sword, or crucifixion, in order that, in subsequent times, martyrs might be led to examine themselves, and to see whether they were actuated by true love to God in being willing to be consumed in the flames.

It profiteth me nothing. If there is no true piety, there can be no benefit in this to my soul. It will not save me. If I have no true love to God, I must perish, after all. *Love*, therefore, is more valuable and precious than all these endowments. Nothing can supply its place; nothing can be connected with salvation without it.

{c} "I bestow" Mt 6:1,2 {d} "though I give my body" Mt 7:22-23 Jas 2:14 {+} "charity" "love"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Charity suffereth long*. Paul now proceeds to illustrate the nature of love, or to show how it is exemplified. His illustrations are all drawn from its effect in regulating our conduct towards others, or our intercourse with them. The *reason* why he made use of this illustration, rather: than its nature as evinced towards *God*, was, probably, because it was especially necessary for them to understand in what way it should be manifested towards each other. There were contentions and strifes among them; there were of course suspicions, and jealousies, and heart-burnings; there would be unkind judging, the imputation of improper motives, and selfishness; there were envy, and pride, and boasting, all of which were inconsistent with love; and Paul therefore evidently designed to correct these evils, and to produce a different state of things by showing them what would be produced by the exercise of love. The word here used (*makroyumei* denotes *longanimity*, slowness to anger or passion; long-suffering, patient endurance, forbearance It is opposed to *haste*; to passionate expressions and thoughts, and to irritability. It denotes the State of mind which can BEAR LONG when oppressed, provoked, calumniated, and when one seeks to injure us. Comp. 2:4 9:22 2Co 6:6 Ga 5:22; Eph 4:2 Col 3:12

1Ti 1:16 2Ti 3:10, 4:2 1Pe 3:20; 2Pe 3:15.

And is kind. The word here used denotes to be good-natured, gentle, tender, affectionate. Love is benignant. It wishes well. It is not harsh, sour, morose, in-natured. Tindal renders it, "is courteous." The idea is, that under all provocations and ill-usage it is gentle and mild. *Hatred* prompts to harshness, severity, unkindness of expression, anger, and a desire of revenge. But love is the reverse

of all these. A man who truly loves another will be kind to him, desirous of doing him good; will be *gentle*, not severe and harsh; will be courteous because he desires his happiness, and would not pain his feelings. And as religion is love, and prompts to love, so it follows that it requires courtesy or true politeness, and will secure it. See 1Pe 3:8. If all men were under the influence of true religion, they would always be truly polite and courteous; for true politeness is nothing more than an expression of benignity, or a desire to promote the happiness of all around us.

Envieth not. ou zhloi. This word properly means to be zealous for or against any person or thing; i.e., to be eager for, or anxious for or against any one. It is used often in a good sense, (1Co 12:31); **See Barnes** "1Co 14:1, **See Barnes** "1Co 14:39; **See Barnes "2Co 11:2"**; but it may be used in a bad sense—to be zealous against a person; to be jealous of; to envy Ac 7:9 17:5; Jas 4:2, "Ye kill and *envy*." It is in this sense, evidently, that it is used here—as denoting zeal, or ardent desire *against* any person. The sense is, love does not envy others the happiness which they enjoy; it delights in their welfare; and as their happiness is increased by their endowments, their rank, their reputation, their wealth, their health, their domestic comforts, their learning, etc., those who are influenced by love *rejoice* in all this. They would not diminish it; they would not embarrass them in the possession; they would not detract from that happiness; they would not murmur or repine that they themselves are not SO highly favoured. To envy, is to feel uneasiness, mortification, or discontent at the sight of superior happiness, excellence, or reputation enjoyed by another; to repine at another's prosperity; and to fret one's self on account of his real or fancied superiority. Of course, it may be excited by *anything* in which another excels, or in which he is more favoured than we are. It may be excited by superior wealth, beauty, learning, accomplishment, reputation, success. It may extend to any employment, or any rank in life. A man may be envied because he is happy, while we are miserable; well, while we are sick; caressed, while we are neglected or overlooked; successful, while we meet with disappointment; handsome, while we are ill-formed; honoured with office, while we are overlooked, he may be envied because he has a better farm than we have, or is a more skilful mechanic, or a more successful physician, lawyer, or clergyman. *Envy commonly lies in the same line of business, occupation, or rank*. We do not usually envy a monarch, a conqueror, or a nobleman, unless we are *aspiring* to the same rank. The farmer does not usually envy the blacksmith, but another farmer; the blacksmith does not usually envy the schoolmaster or the lawyer, but another man in the same line of business with himself. The physician envies another physician more learned or more successful; the lawyer, another lawyer; the clergyman, another clergyman. The fashionable female, who seeks admiration or flattery on account of accomplishment or beauty, envies another who is more distinguished and more successful in those things. And so the poet envies a rival poet; and the orator, a rival orator; and the statesman, a rival statesman. The correction of all these things is *love*. If we loved others—if we rejoiced in their happiness, we should not envy them. *They are not to blame* for these superior endowments; but if those endowments are the direct gift of God, *we* should be thankful that he has made others happy; if they are the fruit of their own industry, and virtue, and skill, and application, we should esteem them the more, and value them the more highly. They have not injured *us*; and *we* should not be unhappy, or seek to injure them, because God has blessed them, or because they have been more industrious, virtuous, and successful than we have. Every man should have his own level in society, and we should rejoice in the happiness of all. Love will produce another effect. We should not *envy* them, because he that is under the influence of Christian love is more happy than those in the world who are usually the objects of envy. There is often much wretchedness under a clothing of "purple and fine linen." There is not

always happiness in a splendid mansion; in the caresses of the great; in a post of honour; in a palace, or on a throne. Alexander the Great wept on the throne of the world. Happiness is in the heart; and content- ment, and the love of God, and the hope of heaven, produce happiness which rank, and wealth, and fashion, and earthly honour cannot purchase. And could the sad and heavy hearts of those in elevated ranks of life be always seen, and especially could their end be seen, there would be no occasion or disposition to envy them.

Lord, what a thoughtless wretch was I,
To mourn, and murmur, and repine,
To see the wicked placed on high,
In pride and robes of honour shine !

But oh! their end, their dreadful end!
Thy sanctuary taught me so;
On slippery rocks I see them stand,
And fiery billows roll below.

Now let them boast how tall they rise,
I'll never envy them again;
There they may stand with haughty eyes,
Till they plunge deep in endless pain,

Their fancied Joys how fast they flee,
Like dreams as fleeting and as vain;
Their songs of softest harmony
Are but a prelude to their pain.

Now I esteem their mirth and wine
Too dear to purchase with my blood;
Lord. 'tis enough that thou art mine,
My life, my portion, and my God.

Vaunteth not itself. (*perpereuetai*, from *perperov*, a boaster, braggart. —*Robinson*.) The idea is that of boasting, bragging, vaunting. The word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. Bloomfield supposes that it has the idea of acting precipitously, inconsiderately, incautiously; and this idea our translators have placed in the margin, "*he is not rash*." But most expositors suppose that it has the notion of boasting, or vaunting of one's own excellences or endowments. This spirit proceeds from the idea of *superiority* over others; and is connected with a feeling of contempt or disregard for them. Love would correct this, because it would produce a desire that they should be happy—and to treat a man with contempt is not the way to make him happy; love would regard others with esteem—and to boast over them is not to treat them with esteem; it would teach us to treat them with affectionate regard—and no man who has affectionate regard for others is disposed to boast of his own qualities over them. Besides, love produces a state of mind just the opposite of a disposition to boast. It receives its endowments with gratitude; regards them as the gift of God; and is disposed to employ them not in vain boasting, but in purposes of utility, in doing good to all others On as wide a scale as possible. The boaster is not a man who does good. To boast of talents

is not to employ them to advantage to others. It will be of no account in feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, comforting the sick and afflicted, or in saving the world. Accordingly, the man who does the most good is the least accustomed to boast; the man who boasts may be regarded as doing nothing else.

Is not puffed up. *fusioutai*. This word means, to blow, to puff, to pant; then to inflate with pride, and vanity, and self-esteem. See the word explained: **See Barnes "1Co 8:1"**.

It perhaps differs from the preceding word, inasmuch as that word denotes the *expression* of the feelings of pride, vanity, etc., and this word the feeling itself. A man may be very proud and vain, and not express it in the form of boasting. That state is indicated by this word. If he gives expression to this feeling, and boasts of his endowments, that is indicated by the previous word. Love would prevent this, as it would the former, it would destroy the *feeling*, as well as the *expression* of it. It would teach a man that others had good qualities as well as he; that they had high endowments as well as he; and would *dispose* him to concede to them full credit for all that they have, and not to be vainglorious of his own. Besides, it is not the *nature* of love to fill the mind in this manner. Pride, vanity, and even knowledge (1Co 8:1) may swell the mind with the conviction of self-importance; but love is humble, meek, modest, unobtrusive. A brother that loves a sister is not filled with pride or vanity on account of it; a man that loves the whole world, and desires its salvation, is not filled with pride and vanity on account of it. Hence the Saviour, who had most love for the human race, was at the farthest possible remove from pride and vanity.

{+} "Charity" "Love" {e} "suffereth long" Pr 10:12 {a} "envieth" Jas 3:16 {b} "puffed up" Col 2:18 {1} "vaunteth" "is not rash"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Doth not behave itself unseemly*, *ouk aschmonei*. This word occurs in 1Co 7:36. **See Barnes "1Co 7:36"**.

It means, to conduct improperly, or disgracefully, or in a manner to deserve reproach. Love seeks that which is proper or becoming in the circumstances and relations of life in which we are placed. It prompts to the due respect for superiors, producing veneration and respect for their opinions; and it prompts to a proper regard for inferiors, not despising their rank, their poverty, their dress, their dwellings, their pleasures, their views of happiness; it prompts to the due observance of all the *relations* of life, as those of a husband, wife, parent, child, brother, sister, son, daughter, and produces a proper conduct and deportment in all these relations. The proper idea of the phrase is, that it prompts to all that is fit and becoming in life; and would save from all that is unfit and unbecoming. There may be included in the word also the idea that it would prevent anything that would be a violation of decency or delicacy. It is well known that the Cynics were in the habit of setting at defiance all the usual ideas of decency; and indeed this was, and is, commonly done in the temples of idolatry and pollution everywhere. Love would prevent this, because it teaches to promote the *happiness* of all, and of course to avoid everything that would offend purity of taste and mar enjoyment. In the same way it prompts to the fit discharge of all the relative duties, because it leads to the desire to promote the happiness of all. And in the same manner it would lead a man

to avoid profane and indecent language, improper allusions, double meanings and innuendoes, coarse told vulgar expressions, because such things pain the ear and offend the heart of purity and delicacy. There is much that is indecent and unseemly still in society that would be corrected by Christian love. What a change would be produced, if, under the influence of that love, nothing should be said or done in the various relations of life but what would be *seemly, fit, and decent*! And what a happy influence would the prevalence of this love have on the intercourse of mankind!

Seeketh not her own. There is, perhaps, not a more striking or important expression in the New Testament than this; or one that more beautifully sets forth the nature and power of that love which is produced by true religion. Its evident meaning is, that it is not selfish; it does not seek its own happiness exclusively or mainly; it does not seek its own happiness to the injury of others. This expression is not, however, to be pressed as if Paul meant to teach that a man should not regard his own welfare at all; or have no respect to his health, his property, his happiness, or his salvation. Every man is bound to pursue such a course of life as will ultimately secure his own salvation. But it is not simply or mainly that he may be happy that he is to seek it, it is, that he may thus glorify God his Saviour; and accomplish the great design which his Maker has had in view in his creation and redemption. If his happiness is the main or leading thing, it proves that he is supremely selfish; and selfishness is not religion. The expression here used is *comparative*, and denotes that this is not the main, the chief, the only thing which one who is under the influence of love or true religion will seek. True religion, or love to others, will prompt us to seek their welfare with self-denial and personal sacrifice and toil. Similar expressions, to denote comparison, occur frequently in the sacred Scriptures. Thus, where it is said, (Hos 6:6 Mic 6:8; Mt 9:13,) "I desired mercy, and not sacrifice;" it is meant, "I desired mercy *more* than I desired sacrifice; I did not wish that mercy should be forgotten or excluded in the attention to the mere ceremonies of religion." The sense here is, therefore, that a man under the influence of true love or religion does not make his own happiness or salvation the main or leading thing; he does not make all other things subservient to this; he seeks the welfare of others, and desires to promote their happiness and salvation, even at great personal sacrifice and self-denial. It is the *characteristic* of the man, not that he promotes his own worth, health, happiness, or salvation, but that he lives to do good to others. Love to others will prompt to that, and that alone. There is not a particle of selfishness in true love. It seeks the welfare of others, and of all others. That true religion will produce this, is evident everywhere in the New Testament; and especially in the life of the Lord Jesus, whose whole biography is comprehended in one expressive declaration, "who went about DOING GOOD," Ac 10:38. It follows from this statement,

(1.) that no man is a Christian who lives for himself alone; or who makes it his main business to promote his own happiness and salvation.

(2.) No man is a Christian who does not deny himself; or no one who is not willing to sacrifice: his own comfort, time, wealth, and ease, to advance the welfare of mankind.

(3.) It is this principle which is yet to convert the world. Long since the whole world would have been converted, had all Christians been under its influence. And when ALL Christians make it their grand object not to seek their own, but the good of others; when true charity shall occupy its appropriate place in the heart of every professed child of God, then this world will be speedily converted to the Saviour. Then there will be no want of funds to spread Bibles and tracts; to sustain missionaries, or to establish colleges and schools; then there will be no want of men who shall be willing to go to any part of the earth to preach the gospel; and then there will be no want of prayer

to implore the Divine mercy on a ruined and perishing world. Oh, may the time soon come when all the selfishness in the human heart shall be dissolved, and when the whole world shall be embraced in the benevolence of Christians, and the time, and talent, and wealth of the whole church shall be regarded as consecrated to God, and employed and expended under the influence of Christian love! **See Barnes "1Co 10:24".**

Is not easily provoked, *paroxunetai*. This word occurs in the New Testament only in one other place. Ac 17:16: "His spirit was stirred within him when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry." **See Barnes "Ac 17:16".**

The word properly means, to sharpen by, or with, or on anything, (from *oxuv*, *sharp*,) and may be applied to the act of sharpening a knife or sword; then it means, to sharpen the mind, temper, courage of any one; to excite, impel, etc. Here it means, evidently, to rouse to anger; to excite to indignation or wrath. Tindal renders it, "Is not provoked to anger." Our translation does not exactly convey the sense. The word "easily" is not expressed in the original. The translators have inserted it to convey the idea that he who is under the influence of love, though he may be provoked—that is, injured—or though there might be incitements to anger, yet that he would not be roused, or readily give way to it. The meaning of the phrase in the Greek is, that a man who is under the influence of love or religion is not *prone* to violent anger or exasperation; it is not his character to be hasty, excited, or passionate. He is calm, serious, patient. He looks soberly at things; and though he may be injured yet he governs his passions, restrains his temper, subdues his feelings. This, Paul says, would be produced by love. And this is apparent. If we are under the influence of benevolence or love to any one, we shall not give way to sudden bursts of feeling. We shall look kindly on his actions; put the best construction on his motives; deem it possible that we have mistaken the nature or the reasons of his conduct; seek or desire explanation, (Mt 5:23,24;) wait till we can look at the case in all its bearings; and suppose it possible that he may be influenced by good motives, and that his conduct will admit a satisfactory explanation. That true religion is designed to produce this, is apparent everywhere in the New Testament, and especially from the example of the Lord Jesus; that it actually does produce it, is apparent from all who come under its influence in any proper manner. The effect of religion is nowhere else more striking and apparent than in changing a temper naturally quick, excitable, and irritable, to one that is calm, and gentle, and subdued. A consciousness of the presence of God will do much to produce this state of mind; and if we truly loved all men, we should be soon angry with none.

Thinketh no evil. That is, puts the best possible construction on the motives and the conduct of others. This expression also is comparative. It means that love, or that a person under the influence of love, is not malicious, censorious, disposed to find fault, or to impute improper motives to others. It is not only "not easily provoked," not soon excited, but it is not disposed to *think* that there was any evil intention even in cases which might tend to irritate or exasperate us. It is not disposed to think that there was any evil in the case; or that what was done was with any improper intention or design; that is, it puts the best possible construction on the conduct of others, and supposes, as far as can be done, that it was in consistency with honesty, truth, friendship, and love. The Greek word (*logizetai*) is that which is commonly rendered *impute*, and is correctly rendered here *thinketh*. It means, does not reckon, charge, or impute to a man any evil intention or design. We desire to think well of the man whom we love; nor will we think ill of his motives, opinions, or conduct, until we are compelled to do so by the most irrefragable evidence. True religion, therefore, will prompt to

charitable judging; nor is there a more striking evidence of the destitution of true religion, than a disposition to impute the worst motives and opinions to a man.

{c} "not her own" 1Co 10:24 {d} "not easily provoked" Pr 14:17

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Rejoiceth not in iniquity*. Does not rejoice over the *vices* of other men; does not take delight when they are guilty of crime, or when, in any manner, they fall into sin. It does not find pleasure in hearing others accused of sin, and in having it proved that they have committed it. It does not find a malicious pleasure in the *report* that they have done wrong; or in following up that report, and finding it established. Wicked men often find pleasure in this, (Ro 1:32,) and rejoice when others have fallen into sin, and have disgraced and ruined themselves. Men of the world often find a malignant pleasure in the report and in the evidence that a member of the church has brought dishonour on his profession. A man often rejoices when an enemy, a persecutor, or a alandeter, has committed some crime, and when he has shown an improper spirit, uttered a rash expression, or taken some step which shall involve him in ignominy. But love does none of these things. It does not desire that an enemy, a persecutor, or a slanderer should do evil, or should disgrace and ruin himself. It does not rejoice, but grieves, when a professor of religion, or an enemy of religion, when a personal friend or foe, has done anything wrong. It neither loves the wrong, nor the fact that it has been done. And perhaps there is no greater triumph of the gospel than in its enabling a man to rejoice that even his enemy and persecutor in any respect does well; or to rejoice that he is in any way honoured and respected among men. Human nature, without the gospel, manifests a different feeling; and it is only as the heart is subdued by the gospel, and filled with universal benevolence, that it is brought to rejoice when all men do well.

Rejoiceth in the truth. The word *truth* here stands opposed to iniquity, and means virtue, piety, goodness. It does not rejoice in the vices, but in the *virtues* of others. It is pleased, it rejoices when they do well. It is pleased when those who differ from us conduct [themselves] in any manner in such a way as to please God, and to advance their own reputation and happiness. They who are under the influence of that love rejoice that good is done, and the truth defended and advanced, whoever may be the instrument; rejoice that others are successful in their plans of doing good, though they do not act with us; rejoice that other men have a reputation well earned for virtue and purity of life, though they may duffer from us in opinion, and may be connected with a different denomination. They do not rejoice when other denominations of Christians fall into error; or when their plans are blasted; or when they are calumniated, and oppressed, and reviled. By whomsoever good is done, or where. soever, it is to them a matter of rejoicing; and by whomsoever evil is done, or wheresoever, it is to them a matter of grief. See Php 1:14-18. The *reason* of this is, that all sin, error, and vice, will ultimately ruin the happiness of any one; and as/eve desires their happiness, it desires that they should walk in the ways of virtue, and is grieved when they do not. What a change would the prevalence of this feeling produce in the conduct and happiness of mankind! How much ill-natured joy would it repress at the faults of others! How much would it do to repress the pains which a man often takes to circulate reports disadvantageous to his adversary; to find out and

establish some flaw in his character; to prove that he has said or done something disgraceful and evil! And how much would it do even among Christians, in restraining them from rejoicing at the errors, mistakes, and improprieties of the friends of revivals of religion, and in leading them to mourn over their errors in secret, instead of taking a malicious pleasure in promulgating them to the world! This would be a very different world if there were none to rejoice in iniquity; and the church would be a different church if there were none in its bosom but those who rejoiced in the truth, and in the efforts of humble and self-denying piety:

{a} "Rejoiceth not" Ro 1:32 {1} "in" "with"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Beareth all things*. **See Barnes "1Co 9:12"**.

Doddridge renders this, "covers all things." The word here used (*stegei*) properly means, *to cover*, (from *stegh*, a covering, roof; Mt 8:8 Lu 7:6;) and then to hide, conceal, not to make known. If this be the sense here, then it means that love is disposed to *hide* or conceal the faults and imperfections of others; not to promulgate or blazon them abroad, or to give any undue publicity to them. Benevolence to the individual or to the public would require that these faults and errors should be concealed. If this is the sense, then it accords nearly with what is said in the previous verse. The word may also mean, to forbear, bear with, endure. Thus it is used in 1Th 3:1,5. And so our translators understand it here, as meaning that love is patient, long-suffering, not soon angry, not disposed to revenge. And if this is the sense, it accords with the expression in 1Co 13:4, "Love suffers long." The more usual classic meaning is the former; the usage in the New Testament seems to demand the latter. Rosenmuller renders it, "*bears* all things;" Bloomfield prefers the other interpretation. Locke and Macknight render it, "cover." The real sense of the passage is not materially varied, whichever interpretation is adopted. It means, that in regard to the errors and faults of others, there is a disposition not to notice or to revenge them. There is a willingness to conceal, or to bear with them patiently.

All things. This is evidently to be taken in a popular sense, and to be interpreted in accordance with the connexion. All universal expressions of this kind demand to be thus limited. The meaning must be, "As far as it can consistently or lawfully be done." There are offences which it is not proper or right for a man to conceal, or to suffer to pass unnoticed. Such are those where the laws of the land are violated, and a man is called on to testify, etc. But the phrase here refers to private matters; and indicates a disposition not to make public, or to avenge the faults committed by others.

Believeth all things. The whole scope of the connexion and the argument here requires us to understand this of the conduct of others. It cannot mean that the man who is under the influence of love is a man of *universal credulity*; that he makes no discrimination in regard to things to be believed; and is as prone to believe a falsehood as the truth; or that he is at no pains to inquire what is true and what is false, what is right and what is wrong. But it must mean, that in regard to the conduct of others, there is a disposition to put the best construction on it; to believe that they may be actuated by good motives, and that they intend no injury; and that there is a willingness to suppose, as far as can be, that what is done is done consistently with friendship, good feeling, and

virtue. Love produces this, because it rejoices in the happiness and virtue of others, and will not believe the contrary except on irrefragable evidence.

Hopeth all things. Hopes that all will turn out well. This must also refer to the conduct of others; and it means, that however dark may be appearances; how much soever there may be to produce the fear that others are actuated by improper motives or are bad men, yet that there is a *hope* that matters may be explained and made clear; that the difficulties may be made to vanish; and that the conduct of others may be made to *appear* to be fair and pure. Love will *hold on to this hope* until all possibility of such a result has vanished, and it is compelled to believe that the conduct is not susceptible of a fair explanation. This hope will extend to *all things*—to words, and actions, and plans; to public and to private intercourse; to what is said and done in our own presence, and to what is said and done in our absence. Love will do this, because it delights in the virtue and happiness of others, and will not credit anything to the contrary unless compelled to do so.

Endureth all things. Bears up under, sustains, and does not murmur. Bears up under all persecutions at the hand of man; all efforts to injure the person, property, or reputation; and bears all that may be laid upon us in the providence and by the direct agency of God. Comp. Job 13:15. The connexion requires us to understand it principally of our treatment at the hands of our fellow-men.

{*} "Beareth" "covereth" {b} "all things" Ro 15:1 {c} "believeth" Ps 119:65 {d} "hopeth" Ro 8:24 {e} "endureth" Job 13:15

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Charity never faileth*. Paul here proceeds to illustrate the value of love, from its permanency as compared with other valued endowments. It is valuable, and is to be sought, because it will always abide; may be always exercised; is adapted to all circum- stances, and to all worlds in which we may be placed, or in which we may dwell. The word rendered *faileth* (*ekpiptei*) denotes, properly, to fall out of, to fall from or off; and may be applied to the stars of heaven falling, (Mr 13:25,) or to flowers that fall or fade, (Jas 1:11 1Pe 1:24,) or to chains falling from the hands, etc., Ac 12:7. Here it means to fall away, to fail; to be without effect, to cease to be in existence. The expression *may* mean that it will be adapted to all the situations of life, and is of a nature to be always exercised; or it may mean that it will continue to all eternity, and be exercised in heaven for ever. The connexion demands that the latter should be regarded as the true interpretation. 1Co 13:13. The sense is, that while other endowments of the Holy Spirit must soon cease and be valueless, LOVE would abide, and would always exist. The *argument* is, that we ought to Seek that which is of enduring value; and that, therefore, love should be preferred to those endowments of the Spirit on which so high a value had been set by the Corinthians.

But whether there be prophecies. That is, the *gift* of prophecy, or the power of speaking as a prophet; that is, of delivering the truth of God in an intelligible manner under the influence of inspiration; the gift of being a public speaker; of instructing and edifying the church, and foretelling future events. **See Barnes "1Co 14:1".**

They shall fail. The gift shall cease to be exercised; shall be abolished, come to naught. There shall be no further use for this gift in the light and glory of the world above, and it shall cease. God shall be the teacher there. And as there will be no need of confirming the truth of religion by the prediction of future events, and no need of warning against impending dangers there, the gift of foretelling future events will be of course unknown. In heaven, also, there will be no need that the faith of God's people shall be encouraged, or their devotions excited, by such exhortations and instructions as are needful now; and the endowment of prophecy will be, therefore, unknown.

There be tongues. The power of speaking foreign languages.

They shall cease. Macknight supposes this means that they shall cease in the church after the gospel shall have been preached to all nations. But the more natural interpretation is, to refer it to the future life; since the main idea which Paul is urging here is the value of love above all other endowments, from the fact that it would be abiding, or permanent—an idea which is more certainly and fully met by a reference to the future world, than by a reference to the state of things in the church on earth. If it refers to heaven, it means that the power of communicating thoughts there will not be by the medium of learned and foreign tongues. What *will* be the mode is unknown. But as the diversity of tongues is one of the fruits of sin, (Ge 11,) it is evident that in those who are saved there will be deliverance from all the disadvantages which have resulted from the confusion of tongues. Yet LOVE will not cease to be necessary; and Lees will live for ever.

Whether there be knowledge. **See Barnes "1Co 14:8".**

This refers, I think, to knowledge as *we now possess it*. It cannot mean that there will be no knowledge in heaven; for there must be a vast increase of knowledge in that world among all its inhabitants. The idea in the passage here, I think, is: "All the knowledge which we now possess, valuable as it is, will be obscured and lost, and rendered comparatively valueless, in the fuller splendours of the eternal world—as the feeble light of the stars, beautiful and valuable as it is, *vanishes*, or is lost in the splendour of the rising sun. The knowledge which we now have is valuable, as the gift of prophecy and the power of speaking foreign languages is valuable, but it will be lost in the brighter visions of the world above." That this is the sense is evident from what Paul says in illustration of the sentiment in 1Co 13:9,10. *Now* we know in part. What we deem ourselves acquainted with, we imperfectly understand. There are many obscurities and many difficulties. But in the future world we shall know distinctly and clearly, (1Co 13:12;) and then the knowledge which we now possess will appear so dim and obscure, that it will seem to have vanished away and disappeared,

"As a dim candle dies at noon."

Macknight and others understand this of the knowledge of the mysteries of the Old Testament, or "the inspired knowledge of the ancient revelations, which should be abolished when the church should have attained its mature state;" a most meager, jejune, and frigid interpretation. It is true, also, that not only shall our imperfect knowledge seem to have vanished in the superior light and glory of the eternal world, but that much of that which here passes for knowledge shall be then unknown. Much of that which is called science is "falsely so called ;" and much that is connected with literature that has attracted so much attention, will be unknown in the eternal world. It is evident that much that is connected with criticism, and the knowledge of language, with the different systems of mental philosophy which are erroneous—perhaps much that is connected with anatomy, physiology, and geology, and much of the science which now is connected with the arts, and which is of use only as tributary to the arts—will be then unknown. Other subjects may rise into importance

which are now unknown; and possibly things connected with science which are now regarded as of the least importance will then become objects of great moment, and ripen and expand into sciences that shall contribute much to the eternal happiness of heaven. The essential idea in this passage is, that all the knowledge which we now possess shall lose its effulgence, be dimmed and lost in the superior light of heaven. But LOVE shall live there; and we should, therefore, seek that which is permanent and eternal.

{*} "Charity" "love" {+} "tongues" "languages"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *For we know in part*. Comp. **See Barnes "1Co 12:27".**

This expression means, "only in part;" that is, imperfectly. Our knowledge here is imperfect and obscure. It may, therefore, all vanish in the eternal world amidst its superior brightness; and we should not regard that as of such vast value which is imperfect and obscure. Comp. **See Barnes "1Co 8:2".**

This idea of the obscurity and imperfection of our knowledge, as compared with heaven, the apostle illustrates (1Co 13:11) by comparing it with the knowledge which a child has, compared with that in maturer years; and (1Co 13:12) by the knowledge which we have in looking through a glass—an imperfect medium—compared with that which we have in looking closely and directly at an object without any medium.

And we prophesy in part. This does not mean that we partly know the truths of religion, and partly conjecture or guess at them; or that we know only a part of them, and conjecture the remainder. But the apostle is showing the imperfection of the prophetic gift; and he observes, that there is the same imperfection which attends knowledge. It is only in part; it is imperfect; it is indistinct, compared with the full view of truth in heaven; it is obscure; and all that is imparted by that gift will soon become dim and lost, in the superior brightness and glory of the heavenly world. The argument is, that we ought not to seek so anxiously that which is so imperfect and obscure, and which must soon vanish away; but we should rather seek that love which is permanent, expanding, and eternal.

{a} "in part" 1Co 8:2

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *But when that which is perfect is come*. Does come; or shall come. This proposition is couched in a general form. It means that when *anything* which is perfect is seen or enjoyed, then that which is imperfect is forgotten, laid aside, or vanishes. Thus, in the full and perfect light of day, the imperfect and feeble light of the stars vanishes. The sense here is, that in heaven—a state of absolute perfection—that which is "in part," or which is imperfect, shall be lost in superior

brightness. All imperfection will vanish. And all that we here possess that is obscure shall be lost in the superior and perfect glory of that eternal world. All our present unsatisfactory modes of obtaining knowledge shall be unknown. All shall be clear, bright, and eternal.

{b} "But when" 1Jo 3.2

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *When I was a child*. The idea here is, that the knowledge which we now have, compared with that which we shall have in heaven, is like that which is possessed in infancy, compared with that we have in manhood; and that as when we advance in years we lay aside, as unworthy of our attention, the views, feelings, and plans which we had in boyhood, and which we then esteemed to be of so great importance, so, when we reach heaven, we shall lay aside the views, feelings, and plans which we have in this life, and which we now esteem so wise and so valuable. The word *child* here (*nhpiov*) denotes, properly, a babe, an infant, though without any definable limitation of age. It refers to the first periods of existence, before the period which we denominate boyhood, or youth. Paul here refers to a period when he could *speak*, though evidently a period when his speech was scarcely intelligible—when he first began to articulate.

I spake as a child. Just beginning to articulate, in a broken and most imperfect manner. The idea here is, that our knowledge at present, compared with the knowledge of heaven, is like the broken and scarcely intelligible efforts of a child to speak, compared with the power of utterance in manhood.

I understood as a child. My understanding was feeble and imperfect. I had narrow and imperfect views of things. I knew little. I fixed my attention on objects which I now see to be of little value. I acquired knowledge which has vanished, or which has sunk in the superior intelligence of riper years. "I was affected as a child. I was thrown into a transport of joy or grief on the slightest occasions, which manly reason taught me to despise."—*Doddridge*.

I thought as a child. Marg., *reasoned*. The word may mean either. I thought, argued, reasoned in a weak and inconclusive manner. My thoughts, and plans, and argumentations were puerile, and such as I now see to be short-sighted and erroneous. Thus it will be with our thoughts, compared to heaven. There will be, doubtless, *as much* difference between our present knowledge, and plans, and views, and those which we shall have in heaven, as there is between the plans and views of a child and those of a man. Just before his death, Sir Isaac Newton made this remark: "I do not know what I may appear to the world; but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the sea-shore, and diverting myself by now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, while the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me."—Brewster's Life of Newton, pp. 300, 301, edit. New York, 1832.

{1} "thought" "reasoned"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *For now we see through a glass*. Paul here makes use of another illustration to show the imperfection of our knowledge here. Compared with what it will be in the future world, it is like the imperfect view of an object which we have in looking through an obscure and opaque medium, compared with the view which we have when we look at it "face to face." The word *glass* here (*esoptron*) means, properly, a mirror, a looking-glass. The mirrors of the ancients were usually made of polished metal, Ex 38:8 Job 37:18. Many have supposed, (see Doddridge, *in loc.*, and Robinson's Lexicon,) that the idea here is that of seeing objects by reflection from a mirror, which reflects only their imperfect forms. But this interpretation does not well accord with the apostle's idea of seeing things obscurely. The most natural idea is that of seeing objects by an imperfect medium, by looking *through* something in contemplating them. It is therefore probable that he refers to those transparent substances which the ancients had, and which they used in their windows occasionally; such as thin plates of horn, transparent stone, etc. Windows were often made of the *lapis specularis*, described by Pliny, (xxxvi. 22,) which was pellucid, and which admitted of being split into thin laminae or scales, probably the same as mica. Humboldt mentions such kinds of stone as being used in South America in church windows.—*Bloomfield*. It is not improbable, I think, that even in the time of Paul the ancients had the knowledge of glass, though it was probably at first very imperfect and obscure. There is some reason to believe that glass was known to the Phenicians, the Tyrians, and the Egyptians. Pliny says that it was first discovered by accident. A merchant vessel, laden with nitre or fossil alkali, having been driven on shore on the coast of Palestine near the river Belus, the crew went in search of provisions, and accidentally supported the kettles on which they dressed their food upon pieces of fossil alkali. The river sand, above which this operation was performed, was vitrified by its union with the alkali, and thus produced glass.—See Edin. Ency., art. *Glass*. It is known that glass was in quite common use about the commencement of the Christian era. In the reign of Tiberius, an artist had his house demolished for making glass malleable. About this time, drinking vessels were made commonly of glass; and glass bottles for holding wine and flowers were in common use. That glass was in quite common use has been proved by the remains that have been discovered in the ruins of Herculaneum and Pompeii. There is, therefore, no impropriety in supposing that Paul here may have alluded to the imperfect and discoloured glass which was then in extensive use; for we have no reason to suppose that it was then as transparent as that which is now made. It was, doubtless, an imperfect and obscure medium, and therefore well adapted to illustrate the nature of our knowledge here, compared with what it will be in heaven.

Darkly. Marg., *in a riddle, en ainigmati*. The word means a fiddle, an enigma; then an obscure intimation. In a riddle, a statement is made with some resemblance to the truth; a puzzling question is proposed, and the solution is left to conjecture. Hence it means, as here, obscurely, darkly, imperfectly. Little is known; much is left to conjecture: a very accurate account of most of that which passes for knowledge. Compared with heaven, our knowledge here much resembles the obscure intimations in an enigma compared with clear statement and manifest truth.

But then. In the fuller revelations in heaven.

Face to face. As when one looks upon an object openly, and not through an obscure and dark medium. It here means, therefore, *clearly, without obscurity*.

I know in part. 1Co 13:9.

But then shall I know. My knowledge shall be clear and distinct. I shall have a clear view of those objects which are now so indistinct and obscure. I shall be in the presence of those objects about which I now inquire; I shall see them; I shall have a clear acquaintance with the Divine perfections, plans, and character. This does not mean that he would know everything, or that he would be omniscient; but that in regard to those points of inquiry in which he was then interested, he would have a view that would be distinct and clear—a view that would be clear, arising from the fact that he would be present with them, and permitted to see them, instead of surveying them at a distance, and by imperfect mediums.

Even as also I am known. In the same manner, (*kaywv*,) *not to the same extent*. It does not mean that he would know God as clearly and as fully as God would know him; for his remark does not relate to the *extent*, but to the manner and the comparative *clearness* of his knowledge. He would see things as he was now seen and would be seen there. It would be face to face. He would be in their presence. It would not be where he would be seen clearly and distinctly, and himself compelled to look upon all objects confusedly and obscurely, and through an imperfect medium. But he would be with them; would see them face to face; would see them without any medium; would see them in *the same manner* as they would see him. Disembodied spirits, and the inhabitants of the heavenly world, have this knowledge; and when we are there, we shall see the truths, not at a distance and obscurely, but plainly and openly.

{a} "through a glass" 2Co 3:18 {*} "darkly" "a dim glass"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *And now abideth*. Remains, (*menei*). The word means, properly, to remain, continue, abide; and is applied to persons remaining in a place, in a state or condition, in contradistinction from removing or changing their place, or passing away. Here it must be understood to be used to denote *permanency*, when the other things of which he had spoken had passed away; and the sense is, that faith, hope, and love would *remain* when the gift of tongues should cease, and the need of prophecy, etc.; that is, these should survive them all. And the connexion certainly requires us to understand him as saying that faith, hope, and love would survive all those things of which he had been speaking, and must therefore include knowledge, (1Co 13:8,9,) as well as miracles, and the other endowments of the Holy Spirit. They would survive them all; would be valuable when they should cease; and should, therefore, be mainly sought; and of these the greatest and most important is love. Most commentators have supposed that Paul is speaking here only of this life, and that he means to say that in this life these three exist; that "faith, hope, and charity exist in this scene *only*, but that in the future world faith and hope will be done away, and therefore the greatest of these is charity."—*Bloomfield*. See also Doddridge, Macknight, Rosenmuller, Clarke, etc. But to me it seems evident that Paul means to say that faith, hope, and love, will survive *all* those other things of which he had been speaking; that they would vanish away, or be lost in superior attainments and endowments; that the time would come when they. would be useless; but that faith, hope, and love would then remain; but of these, for important reasons, love was the most valuable. Not because it would *endure* the longest, for the apostle does not intimate that; but because it is more important

to the welfare of others, and is a more eminent virtue than they are. As the strain of the argument requires us to look to another state, to a world where prophecy shall cease and knowledge shall vanish away, so the same strain of argumentation requires us to understand him as saying, that faith, and hope, and love will subsist there; and that there, as here, LOVE will be of more importance than faith and hope. It cannot be objected to this view that there will be no occasion for faith and hope in heaven. That is assumed without evidence, and is not affirmed by Paul. He gives no such intimation. Faith is *confidence* in God and in Christ; and there will be as much necessity *of confidence* in heaven as on earth. Indeed, the great design of the plan of salvation is to restore *confidence* in God among alienated creatures; and heaven could not subsist a moment without *confidence*; and faith, therefore, must be eternal. No society—be it a family, a neighbourhood, a church, or a nation; be it mercantile, professional, or a mere association of friendship—can subsist a moment without mutual *confidence* or faith; and in heaven such confidence in God MUST subsist for ever. And so of hope. It is true that many of the objects of hope will then be realized, and will be succeeded by possession. But will the Christian have nothing to hope for in heaven? Will it be nothing to expect and desire greatly augmented knowledge, eternal enjoyment, perfect peace in all coming ages, and the happy society of the blessed for ever? All heaven cannot be enjoyed at once; and if there is anything *future* that is an object of desire, there will be hope. *Hope* is a compound emotion, made up of a *desire* for an object and an *expectation* of obtaining it. But both these will exist in heaven. It is folly to say that a redeemed saint will not *desire* there eternal happiness; it is equal folly to say that there will be no strong expectation of obtaining it. All that is said, therefore, about faith as about to cease, and hope as not having an existence in heaven, is said without the authority of the Bible, and in violation of what must be the truth, and is contrary to the whole scope of the reasoning of Paul here.

But the greatest of these is charity. Not because it is to endure the longest, but because it is the more important virtue; it exerts a wider influence; it is more necessary to the happiness of society; it overcomes more evils. It is *the* great principle which is to bind the universe in harmony; which unites God to his creatures, and his creatures to himself; and which binds and confederates all holy beings with each other. It is therefore more important, because it pertains to society, to the great kingdom of which God is the head, and because it enters into the very conception of a holy and happy organization. Faith and hope rather pertain to individuals; love pertains to *society*, and is that without which the kingdom of God cannot stand. Individuals may be saved by faith and hope; but the whole immense kingdom of God depends on Low. It is, therefore, of more importance than all other graces and endowments; more important than prophecy and miracles, and the gift of tongues and knowledge, because it will SURVIVE them all; more important than faith and hope, because, although it may co- exist with them, and though they all shall live for ever, yet LOVE enters into the very nature of the kingdom of God; binds society together; unites the Creator and the creature; and blends the interests of all the redeemed, and of the angels, and of God, INTO ONE.

{+} "abideth" "remaineth" {b} "faith" He 10:35,39; 1Pe 1:21

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 1

1st Corinthians CHAPTER 14

THIS chapter is a continuation of the subject commenced in chapter 12, and pursued through chapter 13. In chapter 12. Paul had entered on the discussion of the various endowments which the Holy Spirit confers on Christians, and had shown that these endowments were bestowed in a different degree on different individuals, and yet so as to promote, in the best way, the edification of the church. It was proper, he said, (1Co 12:31,) to desire the more eminent of these endowments; and yet there was one gift of the Spirit of more value than all others, which might be obtained by all, and which should be an object of desire to all. That was LOVE; and to show the nature, power, and value of this, was the design of the thirteenth chapter—certainly one of the most tender and beautiful portions of the Bible. In this chapter the subject is continued with special reference to the subject of prophecy, as being the most valuable of the miraculous endowments, or the extraordinary gifts of Spirit.

In doing this, it was necessary to correct an erroneous estimate which they had placed on the power of speaking foreign languages. They had prized this, perhaps, because it gave them importance in the eyes of the heathen. And in proportion as they valued this, they undervalued the gift of being able to edify the church by speaking in a known and intelligible language. To correct this misapprehension; to show the relative value of these endowments, and especially to recommend the gift of "prophecy" as the more useful and desirable of the gifts of the Spirit, was the leading design of this chapter. In doing this, Paul first directs them to seek for charity. He also recommends to them, as in 1Co 12:31, to desire spiritual endowments, and of these endowments especially to desire prophecy, 1Co 14:1. He then proceeds to set forth the advantage of speaking in intelligible language, or of speaking so that the church may be edified, by the following considerations, which comprise the chapter:—

(1.) The advantage of being understood, and of speaking for the edification of the church, 1Co 14:2-5.

(2.) No man could be useful to the church except he delivered that which was understood, any more than the sound of a trumpet in times of war would be useful, unless it were so sounded as to be understood by the army, 1Co 14:6-11.

(3.) It was the duty of all to seek to edify the church and *if* a man could speak in an unknown tongue, it was his duty also to seek to be able to interpret what he said, 1Co 14:12-15.

(4.) The use of tongues would produce embarrassment and confusion, since those who heard them speak would be ignorant of what was said, and be unable to join in the devotions, 1Co 14:16,17.

(5.) Though Paul himself was more signally endowed than any of them, yet he prized far more highly the power of promoting the edification of the church, though he uttered but five words, if

they were understood, than all the power which he possessed of speaking foreign languages, 1Co 14:18,19.

(6.) This sentiment illustrated from the Old Testament, 1Co 14:20,21.

(7.) The real use of the power of speaking foreign languages was to be a sign to unbelievers—an evidence that the religion was from God, and not to be used among those who were already Christians, 1Co 14:22.

(8.) The effect of their all speaking with tongues would be to produce confusion and disorder, and disgust among observers, and the conviction that they were deranged; but the effect of order, and of speaking intelligibly, would be to convince and convert them, 1Co 14:23-25.

(9.) The apostle then gives rules in regard to the proper conduct of those who were able to speak foreign languages, 1Co 14:26-32.

(10.) The great rule was, that order was to be observed, and that God was the Author of peace, 1Co 14:33.

(11.) The apostle then gives a positive direction that on no pretence are women to be allowed to speak in the church, even though they should claim to be inspired, 1Co 14:34,35.

(12.) He then required all to submit to his authority, and to admit that what he had spoken was from the Lord, 1Co 14:36,37. And then,

(13.) Concludes with directing them to desire to prophesy, and not to forbid speaking with tongues on proper occasions, but to do all things in decency and order, 1Co 14:38-40.

Verse 1. *Follow after charity*. Pursue love, (1Co 13:1;) that is, earnestly desire it; strive to possess it; make it the object of your anxious and constant solicitude to obtain it, and to be influenced by it always. Cultivate it in your own hearts, as the richest and best endowment of the Holy Spirit, and endeavour to diffuse its happy influence on all around you.

And desire spiritual gifts. I do not forbid you, while you make the possession of love your great object, and while you do not make the desire of spiritual gifts the occasion of envy or strife, to desire the miraculous endowments of the Spirit, and to seek to excel in those endowments which he imparts. **See Barnes "1Co 12:31".**

The main thing was to cultivate a spirit of love. Yet it was not improper also to desire to be so endowed as to promote their highest usefulness in the church. On the phrase, "spiritual gifts," **See Barnes "1Co 12:1".**

But rather that ye may prophesy. But especially, or particularly, desire to be qualified for the office of prophesying. The apostle does not mean to say that prophecy is to be preferred to love or charity; but that, of the spiritual gifts which it was proper for them to desire and seek, prophecy was the most valuable. That is, they were not most earnestly and especially to desire to be able to speak foreign languages, or to work miracles; but they were to desire to be qualified to speak in a manner that would be edifying to the church. They would naturally, perhaps, most highly prize the power of working miracles and of speaking foreign languages. The object of this chapter is to show them that the ability to speak in a plain: clear, instructive manner, so as to edify the church and convince stoners, was a more valuable endowment than the power of working miracles, or the power of speaking foreign languages. On the meaning of the word *prophesy*, **See Barnes "Ro 12:6".**

To what is said there on the nature of this office, it seems necessary only to add an idea suggested by Professor Robinson, (Gr. and Eng. Lexicon, Art. *profhthv*,) that the prophets were distinguished from the teachers, (*didaskaloi*,) "in that, while the latter spoke in a calm, connected, didactic discourse, adapted to instruct and enlighten the hearers, the prophet spoke more from the impulse

of sudden inspiration, from the light of a sudden revelation at the moment, (1Co 14:30, *apokalufyh*;) and his discourse was probably more adapted, by means of powerful exhortation, to awaken the feelings and conscience of the hearers." The idea of speaking from *revelation*, he adds, seems to be fundamental to the correct idea of the nature of the prophecy here referred to. Yet the communications of the prophets were always in the vernacular tongue, and were always in intelligible language, and in this respect different from the endowments of those who spoke foreign languages. The same truth might be spoken by both; the influence of the Spirit was equally necessary in both; both were inspired; and both answered important ends in the establishment and edification of the church. The gift of tongues, however, as it was the most striking and remarkable, and probably the most rare, was most highly prized and coveted. The object of Paul here is to show that it was really an endowment of less value, and should be less desired by Christians, than the gift of prophetic instruction, or the ability to edify the church in language intelligible and understood by all, under the immediate influences of the Holy Spirit.

{a} "spiritual gifts" Eph 1:3

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue*. This verse is designed to show that the faculty of speaking intelligibly, and to the edification of the church, is of more value than the power of speaking a foreign language. The reason is, that however valuable may be the endowment in itself, and however important the truth which he may utter, yet it is as if he spoke to God only. No one could understand him.

Speaketh not unto men. Does not speak so that men can understand him. His address is really not made to men, that is, to the church. He might have this faculty without being able to speak to the edification of the church. It is possible that the power of speaking foreign languages and of prophesying were sometimes united in the same person; but it is evident that the apostle speaks of them as different endowments, and they probably were found usually in different individuals.

But unto God. It is as if he spoke to God. No one could understand him but God. This must evidently refer to the addresses *in the church*, when Christians only were present, or when those only were present who spoke the same language, and who were unacquainted with foreign tongues. Paul says that *there* that faculty would be valueless compared with the power of speaking in a manner that should edify the church. He did not undervalue the power of speaking foreign languages when foreigners were present, or when they went to preach to foreigners. See 1Co 14:22. It was only when it was needless, when all present spoke one language, that he speaks of it as of comparatively little value.

For no man understandeth him. That is, no man in the church, since they all spoke the same language, and that language was different from what was spoken by him who was endowed with the gift of tongues. As God only could know the import of what he said, it would be lost upon the church, and would be useless.

Howbeit in the spirit. Although, by the aid of the Spirit, he should, in fact, deliver the most important and sublime truths. This would doubtless be the case, that those who were thus endowed

would deliver most important truths, but they would be lost upon those who heard them, because they could not understand them. The phrase "in the Spirit" evidently means "by the Holy Spirit," i. e., by his aid and influence. Though he should be really under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and though the important truth which he delivers should be imparted by his aid, yet all would be valueless unless it were understood by the church.

He speaketh mysteries. For the meaning of the word *mystery*, **See Barnes "1Co 2:7"**.

The word here seems to be synonymous with sublime and elevated truth; truth that was not before known, and that might be of the utmost importance.

{b} "speaketh not unto men" Ac 10:46 {c} "for no man" Ac 22:9 {1} "understandeth" "heareth" {*} "howbeit" "However"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 3

Verse 3. But he that prophesieth. 1Co 14:1. He that speaks under the influence of inspiration in the common language of his hearers. This seems to be the difference between those who spoke in foreign languages and those who prophesied. Both were under the influence of the Holy Spirit; both might speak the same truths; both might occupy an equally important and necessary place in the church; but the language of the one was intelligible to the church, the other not; the one was designed to edify the church, the other to address those who spoke foreign tongues, or to give demonstration, by the power of speaking foreign languages, that the religion was from God.

Speaketh unto men. So as to be understood by those who were present.

To edification. **See Barnes "1Co 10:23"**.

Speaks so as to enlighten and strengthen the church.

And exhortation. **See Barnes "Ro 12:8"**.

He applies and enforces the practical duties of religion, and urges motives for a holy life.

And comfort. Encouragement. That is, he presents the promises and the hopes of the gospel; the various considerations adapted to administer comfort in the time of trial. The other might do this, but it would be in a foreign language, and would be useless to the church.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Edifieth himself*. That is, the truths which are communicated to him by the Spirit, and which he utters in an unknown language, may be valuable, and may be the means of strengthening his faith, and building him up in the hopes of the gospel, but they can be of no use to others. His own holy affections might be excited by the truths which he would deliver, and the consciousness of possessing miraculous powers might excite his gratitude. And yet, as Doddridge has well remarked, there might be danger that a man might be injured by this gift when exercised in this ostentatious manner.

{*} "tongue" "Language"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *I would that ye all spake with tongues*. "It is an important endowment, and is not, in its place, to be undervalued. It may be of great service in the cause of truth, and if properly regulated, and not abused, I would rejoice if these extraordinary endowments were conferred on all. I have no envy against any who possess it; no opposition to the endowment; but I wish that it should not be overvalued; and would wish to exalt into proper estimation the more useful but humble gift of speaking for the edification of the church."

Greater is he that prophesieth. This gift is of more value, and he really occupies a more elevated rank in the church. He is more *useful*. The idea here is, that talents are not to be estimated by their *brilliancy*, but by their *usefulness*. The power of speaking in an unknown tongue was certainly a more striking endowment than that of speaking so as simply to be useful; and yet the apostle tells us that the latter is the more valuable. So it is always. A man who is useful, however humble and unknown he may be, really occupies a more elevated and venerable rank than the man of most splendid talents and dazzling eloquence, who accomplishes nothing in saving: the souls of men.

Except he interpret. However important and valuable the truth might be which he uttered, it would he useless to the church, unless he should explain it in language which they could understand. In that case, fire apostle does not deny that the power of speaking foreign languages was a higher endowment and more valuable than the gift of prophecy. That the man who spoke foreign languages had: the power of interpreting, is evident from this verse. From 1Co 14:27, it appears that the office of interpreting was sometimes performed by others.

{+} "tongues" "Different languages" {a} "edifying" 1Co 14:26

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Now, brethren, if I come unto you*, etc. The truth which the apostle had been illustrating in an abstract manner, he proceeds to illustrate by applying it to himself, If he should come among them speaking foreign languages, it could be of no use unless it were interpreted to them.

Speaking with tongues. Speaking foreign languages; that is, speaking them only, without any interpreter. Paul had the power of speaking foreign languages, (1Co 14:18); but he did not use this power for ostentation or display, but merely to communicate the gospel to those who did not understand his native tongue.

Either by revelation. Macknight renders this, "speak INTELLIGIBLY;" that is, as he explains it, "by the revelation peculiar to an apostle." Doddridge, "by the revelation of some gospel doctrine re and mystery." Locke interprets it, that you might understand the revelation, or knowledge," etc.; but says in a note, that we cannot now certainly understand the difference between the meaning of

the four words here used. "It is sufficient," says he, "to know that these terms stand for some intelligible discourse tending to the edification of the church." Rosenmuller supposes the word *revelation* stands for some "clear and open knowledge of any truth arising from meditation." It is probable that the word here does not refer to Divine inspiration, as it usually does, but that it stands opposed to that which is unknown and unintelligible, as that which is *revealed apokaluqiv* stands opposed to what is unknown, concealed, *hidden*, obscure. Here, therefore, it is synonymous, perhaps, with *explained*. "What shall it profit, unless that which I speak be brought out of the obscurity and darkness of a foreign language, and uncovered or explained?" The original sense of the word *revelation* here is, I suppose, intended, (*apokaluqiv*, from *apokaluptw*, *to uncover*;) and means, that the sense should be uncovered, i.e., explained, or what was spoken could not be of value.

Or by knowledge. By making it intelligible. By so explaining it as to make it understood. Knowledge here stands opposed to the ignorance and obscurity which would attend a communication in a foreign language.

Or by prophesying. **See Barnes "1Co 14:1"**.

That is, unless it be communicated, through interpretation, in the manner in which the prophetic teachers spoke; that is, made intelligible, and explained, and actually brought down to the usual characteristics of communications made in their own language.

Or by doctrine? By teaching, (*didach*.) By instruction; in the usual mode of plain and familiar instruction. The sense of this passage, therefore, is clear. Though Paul should utter among them, as he had abundant ability to do, the most weighty and important truths, yet, unless he interpreted what he said in a manner clear from obscurity, like *revelation*; or intelligibly, and so as to constitute knowledge; or in the manner that the prophets spoke, in a plain and intelligible manner; or in the manner usual in simple and plain *instruction*, it would be useless to them. The perplexities of commentators may be seen stated in Locke, Bloomfield, and Doddridge.

{+} "tongues" "different languages" {b} "revelation" 1Co 14:26

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Things without life*. Instruments of music.

Whether pipe. This instrument (*aulov*) was usually made of reeds, and probably had a resemblance to a flageolet.

Or harp. This instrument (*kiyara*) was a stringed instrument, and was made in the same way as a modern harp. It usually had ten strings, and was struck with the plectrum, or with a key. It was commonly employed in praise.

Except they give a distinction in the sounds. Unless they give a difference in the tones, such as are indicated in the gamut for music.

How shall it be known, etc. That is, there would be no time, no music. Nothing would be indicated by it. It would not be fitted to excite the emotions of sorrow or of joy. All music is designed to excite emotions; but if there be no difference in the tones, no emotion would be produced. So it would be in words uttered. Unless there was something that was fitted to excite thought or emotion;

unless what was spoken was made *intelligible*, no matter how important in itself it might be, yet it would be useless.

{1} "sounds" "tunes"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound*. The trumpet was used commonly in war. It is a well-known wind instrument, and was made of brass, silver, etc. It was used for various purposes in war—to summon the soldiers; to animate them in their march; to call them forth to battle; to sound a retreat; and to signify to them what they were to do in battle, whether to charge, advance, or retreat, etc. It therefore employed a *language* which was intelligible to an army. An uncertain sound was one in which none of these things were indicated, or in which it could not be determined what was required.

Who shall prepare himself, etc. The apostle selects a single instance of what was indicated by the trumpet, as an illustration of what he meant. The idea is, that foreign tongues spoken in their assembly would be just as useless in regard to their duty, their comfort, and edification, as would be the sound of a trumpet when it gave one of the usual and intelligible sounds by which it was known what the soldiers were required to do. Just as we would say, that the mere beating on a drum would be useless, unless some tune was played by which it was known that the soldiers were summoned to the parade, to advance, or to retreat.

{c} "trumpet" Nu 10:9

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *So likewise ye*, etc. To apply the case. If you use a foreign language, how shall it be known what is said, or of what use will it be, unless it is made intelligible by interpretation?

Utter by the tongue. Unless you speak.

Words easy to be understood. Significant words, (margin;) words to which your auditors are accustomed.

For ye shall speak into the air. You will not speak so as to be understood; and it will be just the same as if no one was present, and you spoke to the air. We have a proverb that resembles this: "You may as well speak to the winds; that is, you speak where it would not be understood, or where the words would have no effect. It may be observed here, that the practice of the papists accords with what the apostle here condemns, where worship is conducted in a language not understood by the people; and that there is much of this same kind of speaking now, where unintelligible terms are used, or words are employed that are above the comprehension of the people; or where doctrines are discussed which are unintelligible, and which are regarded by them without interest. All preaching should be plain, simple, perspicuous, and adapted to the capacity of the hearers.

{1} "words easy to be understood" "significant"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *There are, it may be*, etc. There has been considerable variety in the interpretation of this expression. Rosenmuller renders it, "For the sake of example." Grotius supposes that Paul meant to indicate that there were, perhaps, or might be, as many languages as the Jews supposed, to wit, seventy. Beza and others suppose it means, that there may be as many languages as there are nations of men. Bloomfield renders it, "Let there be as many kinds of languages as you choose." Macknight, "There are, no doubt, as many kinds of languages in the world as ye speak." Robinson (Lex.) renders it, "If so happen, it may be; perchance, perhaps;" and says the phrase is equivalent to "for example." The sense is, "There are perhaps, or for example, very many kinds of voices in the world; and all are significant. None are used by those who speak them without meaning; none speak them without designing to convey some intelligible idea to their hearers." The *argument* is, that as all the languages that are in the world, however numerous they are, are for *utility*, and as none are used for the sake of mere display, so it should be with those who had the power of speaking them in the Christian church. They should speak them only when and where they would be understood.

Voices. Languages.

{*} "voices" "Languages"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *The meaning of the voice*. Of the language that is uttered, or the sounds that are made.

I shall be unto him, etc. What I say will be unintelligible to him, and what he says will be unintelligible to me. We cannot understand one another any more than people can who speak different languages.

A barbarian. **See Barnes "Ro 1:14"**.

The word means one who speaks a different or a foreign language.

{+} "voice" "language" {a} "barbarian" Ro 1:14

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Even so ye*. Since you desire spiritual gifts, I may urge it upon you to seek to be able to speak in a clear and intelligible manner, that you may edify the church. This is one of the most valuable endowments of the Spirit; and this should be earnestly desired.

Forasmuch as ye are zealous. Since you earnestly desire. **See Barnes "1Co 12:31"**.

Spiritual gifts. The endowments conferred by the Holy Spirit. **See Barnes "1Co 12:1"**.

Seek that ye may excel, etc. Seek that you may be able to convey truth in a clear and plain manner; seek to be distinguished for that. It is one of the most rare and valuable endowments of the Holy Spirit.

{2} "spiritual gifts" "spirits"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Pray that he may interpret*. Let him ask of God ability that he may explain it clearly to the church. It would seem probable that the power of speaking foreign languages, and the power of conveying truth in a clear and distinct manner, were not always found in the same person, and that the one did not of necessity imply the other. The truth seems to have been, that these extraordinary endowments of the Holy Spirit were bestowed on men in some such way as *ordinary* talents and mental powers are now conferred; and that they became in a similar sense *the characteristic mental endowments of the individual*, and of course were subject to the same laws, and liable to the same kinds of abuse, as mental endowments are now. And as it now happens that one man may have a peculiar faculty for acquiring and expressing himself in a foreign language who may not be by any means distinguished for clear enunciation, or capable of conveying his ideas in an interesting manner to a congregation, so it was then. The apostle therefore directs such, if any there were, instead of priding themselves on their endowments, and instead of always speaking in an unknown tongue, which would be useless to the church, to *pray* for the more useful gift of being able to convey their thoughts in a clear and intelligible manner in their vernacular tongue. This would be useful. The truths, there- fore, that they had the power of speaking with eminent ability in a foreign language, they ought to desire to be able to *interpret* so that they would be intelligible to the people whom they addressed in the church. This seems to me to be the plain meaning of this passage, which has given so much perplexity to commentators. Macknight renders it, however, "Let him who prayeth in a foreign language, pray so as SOME ONE may interpret;" meaning that he who prayed in a foreign language was to do it by two or three sentences at a time, so that he might be followed by an interpreter. But this is evidently forced. In order to this, it is needful to suppose that the phrase *o lalwn*, "that speaketh," should be rendered, contrary to its obvious and usual meaning, "who prays," and to supply *tiv*, *some one*, in the close of the verse. The obvious interpretation is that which is given above; and this proceeds only on the supposition that the power of speaking foreign languages and the power of interpreting were not always united in the same person—a supposition that is evidently true, as appears from 1Co 12:10.

{+} "unknown tongue" "Language"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *For if I pray*, etc. The reference to prayer here, and to singing in 1Co 14:15, is designed to illustrate the propriety of the general sentiment which he is defending, that public worship should be conducted in a language that would be intelligible to the people. However well meant it might be, or however the *heart* might be engaged in it, yet, unless it was intelligible, and the understanding could join in it, it would be vain and profitless.

My spirit prayeth. The word *spirit* here (*pneuma*) has been variously understood. Some have understood it of the Holy Spirit—the Spirit by which Paul says he was actuated. Others of the *spiritual gift*, or that spiritual influence by which he was endowed. Others of the mind itself. But it is probable that the word "spirit" refers to the *will*; or to the mind, as the seat of the affections and emotions; i.e., to the heart, desires, or intentions. The word *spirit* is often used in the Scriptures as the seat of the affections, emotions, and passions of various kinds. See Mt 5:3, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." Lu 10:21, "Jesus rejoiced in spirit." So it is the seat of ardour or fervour, (Lu 1:17 Ac 18:25; Ro 12:11;) of grief or indignation, Mr 8:12 Joh 11:33, 13:21 Ac 17:16.

It refers also to feelings, disposition, or temper of mind, in Lu 9:55 Ro 8:15. Here it refers, it seems to me, to the heart, the will, the disposition, the feelings, as contradistinguished from the understanding; and the sense is, "My feelings find utterance in prayer; my heart is engaged in devotion; my prayer will be acceptable to God, who looks upon the feelings of the heart, and I may have true enjoyment; but my understanding will be unfruitful, that is, will not profit others. What I say will not be understood by them; and of course, however much benefit *I* might derive from my devotions, yet they would be useless to others."

But my understanding. *o de nouv mou*. My intellect, my mind; my mental efforts and operations.

Is unfruitful. Produces nothing that will be of advantage to them. It is like a barren tree; a tree that bears nothing that can be of benefit to others. They cannot understand what I say, and, of course, they cannot be profited by what I utter.

{+} "unknown tongue" "Language" {++} "unfruitful" "but not being understood is without fruit"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *What is it then*? What shall I do? What is the proper course for me to pursue? What is my practice and my desire? See the same form of expression in Ro 3:9 6:15. It indicates the conclusion to which the reasoning had conducted him, or the course which he would pursue in view of all the circumstances of the case.

I will pray with the spirit, etc. I will endeavour to *blend* all the advantages which can be derived from prayer; I will *unite* all the benefits which can result to myself and to others. I deem it of vast importance to pray with the spirit in such a way that the *heart* and the *affections* may be engaged, so that I may myself derive benefit from it; but I will also unite with that, utility to others; I will use such language that they may understand it, and be profited.

And I will pray with the understanding also. So that others may understand me. I will make the appropriate use of the intellect, so that it may convey ideas, and make suitable impressions on the minds of others.

I will sing with the spirit. It is evident that the same thing might take place in singing which occurred in prayer. It might be in a foreign language, and might be unintelligible to others. The affections of the man himself might be excited, and his heart engaged in the duty, but it would be profitless to others. Paul, therefore, says that he would so celebrate the praises of God, as to excite the proper affections in his own mind, and so as to be intelligible and profitable to others. This passage proves,

(1.) that the praises of God are to be celebrated among Christians, and that it is an important part of worship;

(2.) that the heart should be engaged in it, and that it should be so performed as to excite proper affections in the hearts of those who are engaged in it; and,

(3.) that it should be so done as to be *intelligible* and edifying to others. The *words* should be so uttered as to be distinct and understood. There should be clear enunciation as well as in prayer and preaching, since the design of sacred music in the worship of God is not only to utter praise, but it is to impress the sentiments which are sung on the heart, by the aid of musical sounds and expression, more deeply than could otherwise be done. If this is not done, the singing might as well be in a foreign language. Perhaps there is no part of public worship in which there is greater imperfection than in the mode of its psalmody. At the same time, there is scarcely any part of the devotions of the sanctuary that may be made more edifying or impressive. It has the *advantage*—an advantage which preaching and praying have not—of using the sweet tones of melody and harmony to *impress* sentiment on the heart; and it should be done.

{a} "spirit" Joh 4:24 {b} "sing" Eph 5:19 Col 3:16 {c} "understanding" Ps 46:7

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Else*. *epei*. Since; if this is not done; if what is said is not intelligible, how shall the unlearned be able appropriately to express his assent, and join in your devotions?

When thou shalt bless. When thou shalt bless God, or give thanks to him. If thou shalt lead the devotions of the people in expressing thanksgiving for mercies and favours. This may refer to a part of public worship, or to the thanks which should be expressed at table, and the invocation of the Divine blessing to attend the bounties of his providence. Paul had illustrated his subject by prayer and by singing; he now does it by a reference to the important part of public worship expressed in giving thanks.

With the spirit. In the manner referred to above; that is, in an unknown tongue, in such a way that your own *heart* may be engaged in it, but which would be unintelligible to others.

He that occupieth the room. Is in the place, or the seat of the unlearned; that is, he who is unlearned. On the meaning of the word *room*, **See Barnes "Lu 14:8"**.

To *fill a place* means, to occupy a station, or to be found in a state or condition.

Of the unlearned, *tou idiwtou*. On the meaning of this word, **See Barnes "Ac 4:13"**.

Here it means, one who was unacquainted with the foreign language spoken by him who gave thanks. It properly denotes a man in *private*, in contradistinction from a man in *public* life; and hence a man who is ignorant and unlettered, as such men generally were.

Say Amen. This word means *truly, verily*; and is an expression of affirmation (Joh 3:6) or of assent. Here it means *assent*. How can he pronounce *the AMEN*; how can he express his assent; how can he join in the act of devotion? This might have been, and probably *was*, expressed aloud; and there is no impropriety in it. It *may*, however, be *mental*—a silent assent to what is said, and a silent uniting in the act of thanksgiving. In one way or the other, or in both, the assent should always be expressed by those who join in acts of public worship.

{d} "giving of thanks" 1Co 11:24

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *For thou verily givest thanks well*. That is, even if you use a foreign language. You do it with the heart; and it is accepted by God as your offering; but the other, who cannot understand it, cannot be benefited by it.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *I thank my God*. Paul here shows that he did not undervalue or despise the power of speaking foreign languages. It was with him a subject of thanksgiving that he could speak so many; but he felt that there were more valuable endowments than this. See the next verse.

With tongues more than ye all. I am able to speak more foreign languages than all of you. How many languages Paul could speak, he has nowhere told us. It is reasonable, however, to presume that he was able to speak the language of any people to whom God in his providence, and by his Spirit, called him to preach. He had been commissioned to preach to the *Gentiles*, and it is probable that he was able to speak the languages of all the nations among whom he ever travelled. There is no account of his being under a necessity of employing an interpreter wherever he preached.

{*} "more" "In more languages"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Yet in the church*. In the Christian assembly. The word *church* does not refer to the *edifice* where Christians worshipped, but to the organized body of Christians.

I had rather, etc. It is probable that in the Christian assembly, usually, there were few who understood foreign languages. Paul, therefore, would not speak in a foreign language when its only use would be mere display.

With my understanding. So as to be intelligible to others; so that I might understand it, and so that at the same time others might be benefited.

{+} "understanding" "So as to be understood" {++} "unknown tongue" "Language"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Brethren, be not children in understanding*. Be not childish; do not behave like little children. They admire, and are astonished at what is striking, novel, and what may be of no real utility. They are pleased with anything that will amuse them, and at little things that afford them play and pastime. So your admiration of a foreign language, and of the ability to speak it, is of as little solid value as the common sports and plays of boys. This, says Doddridge, is an admirable stroke of oratory, and adapted to bring down their pride by showing them that those things on which they were disposed to value themselves were really *childish*. It is sometimes well to appeal to Christians in this manner, and to show them that what they are engaged in is *unworthy* the dignity of the understanding— unfit to occupy the time and attention of an immortal mind. Much, alas! very much, of that which engages the attention of Christians is just as unworthy of the dignity of mind, and of their immortal nature, as were the aims and desires which the apostle rebuked among the Christians at Corinth. Much that pertains to dress, to accomplishment, to living, to employment, to amusement, to conversation, will appear, when we come to die, to have been like the playthings of *children*; and we shall feel that the immortal mind has been employed, and the time wasted, and the strength exhausted, in that which was foolish and puerile.

Howbeit in malice be ye children. This is one of Paul's most happy turns of expression and of sentiment. He had just told them that in one respect they ought not to be children. Yet, as if this would appear to be speaking lightly of children—and Paul would not speak lightly of any one, even of a child—he adds, that in another respect it would be well to be like them—nay, not only like children, but like infants. The phrase, "be ye children," here, does not express the force of the original, *nhpiazete*. It means, "*be infants*," and is emphatic; and was used evidently, by the apostle, of design. The meaning may be thus expressed: "Your admiration of foreign languages is like the sports and plays of *childhood*. In this respect be not children, (*paidia*;) be men. Lay aside such childish things. Act worthy of the *understanding* which God has given you. I have mentioned children. Yet I would not speak unkindly or with contempt even of them. *In one respect* you may imitate them. Nay, you should not only be like *children*, that are somewhat advanced in years, but like *infants*. Be as free from malice, from any ill-will toward others, from envy, and every improper passion, as they are: This passage, therefore, accords with the repeated declaration of the Saviour, that in order to enter into heaven, it was needful that we should become as little children, Mt 18:3.

Be men. Margin, "*Perfect, or of a ripe age*. *teleioi*. The word means, *full-grow men*. Act like those whose understandings are mature and ripe.

{e} "not children" Eph 4:14,15; Heb 6:1-3

{f} "ye children" Ps 131:2 Mt 18:3; Ro 16:19 1Pe 2:2

{&} "howbeit" "yet" {|} "children" "infants" {1} "be" "perfect or, of a ripe age" {g} "men" Ps 119:99

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *In the law it is written*. This passage is found in Isa 28:11,12. The word *law* here seems to mean the same as revelation; or is used to denote the Old Testament in general. A similar use occurs in Joh 10:34 15:25.

With men of other tongues, etc. This passage, where it occurs in Isaiah, means, that God would teach the rebellious and refractory Jews submission to himself, by punishing them amidst a people of another language, by removing them to a land—the land of Chaldea—where they would hear only a language that to them would be unintelligible and barbarous. Yet, notwithstanding this discipline, they would be still, to some extent, a rebellious people. The passage in Isaiah has no reference to the miraculous gift of tongues, and cannot have been used by the apostle as containing any intimation that such miraculous gifts would be imparted. It seems to have been used by Paul, because the words which occurred in Isaiah would *appropriately express* the idea which he wished to convey, **See Barnes** "Mt 1:23,) that God would make use of foreign languages for *some valuable purpose*. But he by no means intimates that Isaiah had any such reference; nor does he quote this as a fulfilment of the prophecy; nor does he mean to say, that God would accomplish *the same purpose* by the use of foreign languages, which was contemplated in the passage in Isaiah. The sense is, as God accomplished an important purpose by the use of a foreign language in regard to his ancient people, as recorded in Isaiah, so he will make use of foreign languages to accomplish important purposes still. They shall be used in the Christian church to effect important objects, though not in the same manner, nor for the same end, as in the time of the captivity. What the design of making use of foreign languages was, in the Christian church, the apostle immediately states, 1Co 14:22,23.

Yet for all that, etc. Notwithstanding all this chastisement that shall be inflicted on the Jews in a distant land, and among a people of a different language, they will still be a rebellious people. This is the sense of the passage, as it is used by Isaiah. Isa 28:12. It is not quoted literally by the apostle, but the main idea is retained. He does not appear to design to apply this to the Corinthians, unless it may be to intimate that the power of speaking foreign languages did not of necessity secure obedience. It might be that this power might be possessed, and yet they be a sinful people; just as the Jews were admonished by the judgments of God, inflicted by means of a people speaking a foreign language, and yet were not reformed or made holy.

{a} "law" Joh 10:34 {b} "it is written" Isa 28:11,12 {*} "tongues" "languages" {+} "hear" "hearken to"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Wherefore*. Thus, (*wste*) or wherefore. The apostle does not mean to say that what he was about to state was a direct conclusion from the passage of Scripture which he had quoted, but that it followed from all that he had said, and from the whole view of the subject. "The true statement or doctrine is, that tongues are for a sign," etc.

Tongues. The power of speaking foreign languages.

Are for a sign. An indication, an evidence, or a proof that God has imparted this power, and that he attends the preaching of the gospel with his approbation. It is a *sign*, or a miracle, which, like all other miracles, may be designed to convince the unbelieving world that the religion is from God.

Not to them that believe. Not to Christians. They are already convinced of the truth of religion, and they would not be benefited by that which was spoken in a language which they could not understand.

But to them that believe not. It is a miracle designed to convince them of the truth of the Christian religion. God alone could confer the power of thus speaking; and as it was conferred expressly to aid in the propagation of the gospel, it proved that it was from God. **See Barnes "Ac 2:1-15"**.

But prophesying. Speaking in a calm, connected, didactic manner, in language intelligible to all under the influence of inspiration. **See Barnes "1Co 14:1"**.

For them that believe not. Is not particularly intended for them; but is intended mainly for the edifying of the church. It is not so striking, so replete with proofs of the Divine presence and power, as the gift of tongues. Though it may be really under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and may be really by inspiration, yet it is not so evidently such as is the power of speaking foreign languages. It was, therefore, better adapted to edify the church than to convince gainsayers. At the same time the truths conveyed by it, and the consolations administered by it, might be as clear evidence to the church of the attending power, and presence, and goodness of God, as the power of speaking foreign languages might be to infidels.

{c} "for a sign" Mr 16:17 Ac 2:16 {d} "them that believe" 1Ti 1:9

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Be come together into one place*. For public worship.

And all speak with tongues. All speak with a variety of unknown tongues; all speak foreign languages. The idea is, that the church would usually speak the same language with the people among whom they dwelt; and if they made use of foreign languages which were unintelligible to their visitors, it would leave the impression that the church was a bedlam.

And there come in those that are unlearned. Those that are unacquainted with foreign languages, and to whom, therefore, what was said would be unintelligible.

Or unbelievers. Heathen, or Jews, who did not believe in Christ. It is evident from this, that such persons often attended on the worship of Christians. Curiosity might have led them to it; or the fact that they had relatives among Christians might have caused it.

That ye are mad? They will not understand what is said; it will be a confused jargon; and they will infer that it is the effect of insanity. Even though it might not, therefore, be in itself improper, yet a regard to the honour of Christianity should have led them to abstain from the use of such languages in their worship when it was needless. The apostles were charged, from a similar cause, with being intoxicated. See Ac 2:13.

{++} "tongues" "In unknown languages" {e} "mad" Ac 2:13

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *But if all prophesy*. **See Barnes "1Co 14:1"**.

If all, in proper order and time, shall utter the truths of religion in a language intelligible to all.

Or one unlearned. One unacquainted with the nature of Christianity, or the truths of the gospel.

He is convinced of all. He will be convinced by all that speak. He will understand what is said; he will see its truth and force, and he will be satisfied of the truth of Christianity. The word here rendered *convinced* (*elegcetai*) is rendered *reprove* in Joh 16:8: "And when he is come, he will *reprove* the world of sin," etc. Its proper meaning is to *convict*, to show one to be wrong; and then to rebuke, reprove, admonish, etc. Here it means, evidently, that the man would be convicted or convinced of his error and of his sin; he would see that his former opinions and practice had been wrong; he would see and acknowledge the force and truth of the Christian sentiments which should be uttered, and would acknowledge the error of his former opinions and life. The following verse shows that the apostle means something more than a mere convincing of the understanding, or a mere conviction that his opinions had been erroneous. He evidently refers to what is now known also as conviction for sin; that is, a deep sense of the depravity of the heart, of the errors and fellice of the past life, accompanied with mental anxiety, distress, and alarm. The force of truth, and the appeals which should be made, and the observation of the happy effects of religion, would convince him that he was a sinner, and show him also his need of a Saviour.

He is judged by all. By all that speak; by all that they say. The *effect* of what they say shall be, as it were, to pass a judgment on his former life, or to condemn him. What is said will be approved by his own conscience, and will have the effect to condemn him, in his own view, as a lost sinner. This is now the effect of faithful preaching, to produce deep self-condemnation in the minds of sinners.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest*. Made manifest to himself in a surprising and remarkable manner. He shall be led to see the real designs and motives of his heart. His conscience would be awakened; he would recall his former course of life; he would see that it was evil; and the present state of his heart would be made known to himself. It is possible that he would suppose that the speaker was aiming directly at him, and *revealing* his feelings to others; for such an effect is often produced. The convicted sinner often supposes that the preacher particularly intends him, and wonders that he has such an acquaintance with his feelings and his life; and often supposes that he is designing to disclose his feelings to the congregation. It is *possible* that Paul here may mean that the prophets, by inspiration, would be able to reveal some secret facts in regard to the stranger; or to state the ill design which he might have had in coming into the assembly; or to state some things in regard to him which could be known only to himself; as was the case with Ananias and Sapphira, (Ac 5:1), seq.;) but perhaps it is better to understand this in a more general sense, as describing the proper and more common effect of truth, when it is applied by a man's own conscience. Such effects are often witnessed now; and such effects show the truth of religion; its adaptedness to men; the omniscience and the power of God; the design of the conscience, and its use in the conversion of sinners.

And so falling down on his face.The usual posture of worship or reverence in eastern countries. It was performed by sinking on the knees and hands, and then placing, the face on the ground. This might be done publicly; or the apostle may mean to say that it would lead him to do it in private.

He will worship God. He will be converted, and become a Christian.

And report that God, etc. Will become your friend, and an advocate for the Christian religion. An enemy will be turned to a friend. Doubtless this was often done. It is now often done. Paul's argument is, that they should so conduct their public devotions as that they should be adapted to produce this result.

{a} "God is" Isa 45:15 Zec 8:23 {*} "in" "among"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *How is it then, brethren*? **See Barnes "1Co 14:15"**.

What is the fact? What actually occurs among you? Does that state of things exist which I have described? Is there that order in your public worship which is demanded and proper? It is implied in his asking this question that there might be some things among them which were improper, and which deserved reproof.

When ye come together. For worship.

Every one of you, etc. That is, all the things which are specified would be found among them. It is evidently not meant that all these things would be found in the same person, but would all exist at the same time; and thus confusion and disorder would be inevitable. Instead of waiting for an intimation from the presiding officer in the assembly, or speaking in succession and in order, each one probably regarded himself as under the influence of the Holy Spirit; as having an important message to communicate, or as being called on to celebrate the praises of God; and thus confusion and disorder would prevail. Many would be speaking at the same time, and a most unfavourable

impression would be made on the minds of the strangers who should be present, 1Co 14:23. This implied reproof of the Corinthians is certainly a reproof of those public assemblies where many speak at the same time; or where a portion are engaged in praying, and others in exhortation. Nor can it be urged that in such cases those who engage in these exercises are under the influence of the Holy Spirit; for, however true that may be, yet it is no more true than it was in Corinth, and yet the apostle reproved the practice there. The Holy Spirit is the Author of order, and not of confusion, 1Co 14:33; and true religion prompts to peace and regularity, and not to discord and tumult.

Hath a psalm. Is disposed to sing; is inclined to praise; and, however irregular or improper, expresses his thanks in a public manner. **See Barnes "1Co 14:16"**.

Hath a doctrine. Has some religious truth on his mind which he deems it of special importance to inculcate. **See Barnes "1Co 14:6"**.

Hath a tongue. Has something made known to him in a foreign language; or has a power of speaking a foreign language, and exercises it, though it produces great confusion.

Hath a revelation. Some truth which has been particularly revealed to him; perhaps an explanation of some mystery, (*Doddridge*;) or a revelation of some future event, (*Macknight*;) or a prophecy, (*Bloomfield*;) or a power of explaining some of the truths couched in the types and figures of the Old Testament, (*Grotius*.)

Hath an interpretation. An explanation of something that has been uttered by another in a foreign language. **See Barnes "1Co 12:10"**.

Let all things, etc. Let this be the great principle, to promote the edification of the church. **See Barnes "1Co 14:12"**.

If this rule were followed, it would prevent confusion and disorder.

{b} "doctrine" 1Co 14:6 {+} "tongue" "Language" {c} "Let all things" 1Co 14:40

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *Let it be by two, or at the most by three*. That is, two, or at most three in one day, or in one meeting. So Grotius, Rosenmuller, Doddridge, Bloomfield, and Locke understand it. It is probable that many were endowed with the gift of tongues; and it is certain that they were disposed to exercise the gift even when it could be of no real advantage, and when it was done only for ostentation. Paul had shown to them (1Co 14:22) that the main design of the gift of tongues was to convince unbelievers; he here shows them that if that gift was exercised in the church, it should be in such a way as to promote edification. They should not speak at the same time; nor should they regard it as necessary that all should speak at the same meeting. It should not be so as to produce disorder and confusion; nor should it be so as to detain the people beyond a reasonable time. The speakers, therefore, in any one assembly, should not exceed two or three.

And that by course. Separately; one after another. They should not all speak at the same time.

And let one interpret. One who has the gift of interpreting foreign languages, (**See Barnes** "1Co 12:10,) so that they may be understood, and the church be edified.

{+} "tongue" "language" {++} "by course" "In succession"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *But if there be no interpreter*. If there be no one present who has the gift of interpretation.

And let him speak to himself, and to God. 1Co 14:2,4. Let him commune with himself, and with God; let him meditate on the truths which are revealed to him, and let him in secret express his desires to God.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Let the prophets*. **See Barnes "1Co 14:1".**

Speak two or three. On the same days, or at the same meeting. **See Barnes "1Co 14:27".**

And let the other judge. The word "*other*" (*oi alloi*, the others) Bloomfield supposes refers to the other *prophets*; and that the meaning is, that they should decide whether what was said was dictated by the Holy Spirit or not. But the more probable sense, I think, is that which refers it to the rest of the congregation, and which supposes that they were to compare one doctrine with another, and deliberate on what was spoken, and determine whether it had evidence of being in accordance with the truth. It may be that the apostle here refers to those who had the gift of discerning spirits, and that he meant to say that they were to determine by what spirit the prophets who spoke were actuated. It was possible that those who claimed to be prophets might err; and it was the duty of all to examine whether that which was uttered was in accordance with truth. And if this was a duty then, it is a duty now; if it was proper even when the teachers claimed to be under Divine inspiration, it is much more the duty of the people now. No minister of religion has a right to demand that all that he speaks shall be regarded as truth, unless he can give good reasons for it; no man is to be debarred from the right of canvassing freely, and comparing with the Bible, and with sound reason, all that the minister of the gospel advances. No minister who has just views of his office, and a proper acquaintance with the truth, and confidence in it, would desire to prohibit the people from the most full and free examination of all that he utters. It may be added, that the Scripture everywhere encourages the most full and free examination of all doctrines that are advanced; and that true religion advances just in proportion as this spirit of candid, and earnest, and prayerful examination prevails among a people. **See Barnes "Ac 17:11".**

Comp. 1Th 5:21.

{d} "Let the prophets" 1Co 14:39 1Th 5:19,20

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *If any thing be revealed to another*. If, while one is speaking, an important truth is revealed to another, or is suggested to his mind by the Holy Spirit, which he feels it to be important to communicate.

Let the first hold his peace. That is, let him that was speaking conclude his discourse, and let there not be the confusion arising from two persons speaking at the same time. Doddridge understands this as meaning, that he to whom the revelation wag made should sit still, until the other was done speaking, and not rise and rudely interrupt him. But this is to do violence to the language. So Macknight understands it, that the one who was speaking was first to finish his discourse, and be silent, before the other began to speak. But this is evidently a forced construction. Locke understands it as meaning, that if, while one was speaking, the meaning of what he said was revealed to another, the first was to cease speaking until the other had interpreted or explained it. But the obvious meaning of the passage is, that the man who was speaking was to close his discourse and be silent. It does not follow, however, that he was to be rudely interrupted. He might close his discourse deliberately, or perhaps by an intimation from the person to whom the revelation was made. At any rate, two were not to speak at the same time, but the one who was speaking was to conclude before the other addressed the assembly.

{e} "the first" Job 32:11 {&} "hold his peace" "Be silent"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *For ye may all prophesy*, etc. There is time enough for all; there is no need of speaking in confusion and in disorder. Every person may have an opportunity of expressing his sentiments at the proper time.

That all may learn. In such a manner that there may be edification. This might be done if they would speak one at a time in their proper order.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *And the spirits of the prophets*. **See Barnes "1Co 14:1"**

for the meaning of the word prophets. The evident meaning of this is, that they were able to *control* their inclination to speak; they were not under a *necessity* of speaking, even though they might be inspired. There was no need of disorder. This verse gives confirmation to the supposition, that the extraordinary endowments of the Holy Spirit were subjected to substantially the same laws as a man's natural endowments. They were conferred by the Holy Ghost; but they were conferred on free agents, and did not interfere with their free agency. And as a man, though of the most splendid talents and commanding eloquence, has *control* over his own mind, and is not *compelled* to speak, so it was with those who are here called prophets. The immediate reference of the passage is to those who are called prophets in the New Testament; and the interpretation should be confined

to them. It is not improbable, however, that the same thing was true of the prophets of the Old Testament; and that it is really true as a general declaration of *all* the prophets whom God has inspired, that they *had* control over their own minds, and could speak or be silent at pleasure. In this the spirit of true inspiration differed essentially from the views of the heathen, who regarded themselves as driven on by a wild, controlling influence, that *compelled* them to speak even when they were unconscious of what they said. Universally, in the heathen world, the priests and priestesses supposed or reigned that they were under an influence which was incontrollable; which took away their powers of self-command, and which made them the mere organs or unconscious instruments of communicating the will of the gods. The Scripture account of inspiration is, however, a very different thing. In whatever way the mind was influenced, or whatever was the mode in which the truth was conveyed, yet it was not such as to destroy the conscious powers of free agency, nor such as to destroy the individuality of the inspired person, or to annihilate what was peculiar in his mode of thinking, his style, or his customary manner of expression.

{a} "spirits of" 1Jo 4:1

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *God is not the author of confusion*. Marg., *Tumult*, or *unquietness*. His religion cannot tend to produce disorder. He is the God of peace; and his religion will tend to promote order. It is calm, peaceful, thoughtful. It is not boisterous and disorderly.

As in all churches of the saints. As was everywhere apparent in the churches. Paul here appeals to them, and says that this was the fact wherever the true religion was spread, that it tended to produce peace and order. This is as true now as it was then. And we may learn, therefore,

(1.) that where there is disorder, there is little religion. Religion does not *produce it*; and the tendency of tumult and confusion is to drive religion away.

(2.) True religion will not lead to tumult, to outcries, or to irregularity. It will not prompt many to speak or pray at once; nor will it justify tumultuous and noisy assemblages.

(3.) Christians should regard God as the Author of peace. They should always in the sanctuary demean themselves in a reverent manner, and with such decorum as becomes men when they are in the presence of a holy and pure God, and engaged in his worship.

(4.) All those pretended conversions, however sudden and striking they may be, which are attended with disorder, and confusion, and public outcries, are to be suspected. Such excitement may be *connected with* genuine piety, but it is no part of pure religion. That is calm, serious, orderly, heavenly. No man who is under its influence is disposed to engage in scenes of confusion and disorder. Grateful he may be, and he may and will express his gratitude; prayerful he will be, and he will pray; anxious for others he will be, and he will express that anxiety; but it will be with seriousness, tenderness, love; with a desire for the order of God's house, and not with a desire to break in upon and disturb all the solemnities of public worship.

{1} "author of confusion" "tumult or unquietness"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *Let your women keep silence*, etc. This rule is positive: explicit and universal. There is no ambiguity in the expressions; and there can be no difference of opinion, one would suppose, in regard to their meaning. The sense evidently is, that in all those things which he had specified, the women were to keep silence; they were to take no part. He had discoursed of speaking foreign languages, and of prophecy; and the evident sense is, that in regard to all these they were to keep silence, or were not to engage in them. These pertained solely to the male portion of the congregation. These things constituted the business of the public teaching; and in this the female part of the congregation were to be silent. "They were not to teach the people, nor were they to interrupt those who were speaking."—Rosenmuller. It is probable that, on pretence of being inspired, the women had assumed the office of public teachers. In 1Co 11 Paul had argued against their doing this in a certain manner—without their veils, (1Co 11:5;) and he had shown that, *on that account, and in that manner*, it was improper for them to assume the office of public teachers, and to conduct the devotions of the church. The force of the argument in 1Co 11 is, that what he there states would be a sufficient reason against the practice, even if there were no other. It was contrary to all decency and propriety that they should appear *in that manner* in public. He here argues against the practice ON EVERY GROUND; forbids it altogether; and shows that on every consideration it was to be regarded as improper for them even so much as *to ask a question* in time of public service. There is, therefore, no inconsistency between the argument in 1Co 11 and the statement here; and the force of the whole is, that *on every consideration* it was improper, and to be expressly prohibited, for women to conduct the devotions of the church. It does not refer to those only who claimed to be inspired, but to all; it does not refer merely to acts of public preaching, but to all acts of speaking, or even asking questions, when the church is assembled for public worship. No rule in the New Testament is more positive than this; and however plausible may be the reasons which may be urged for disregarding it, and for suffering women to take part in conducting public worship, yet the authority of the apostle Paul is positive, and his meaning cannot be mistaken. Comp. 1Ti 2:11,12.

To be under obedience. To be subject to their husbands; to acknowledge the superior authority of the man. **See Barnes "1Co 11:3"**.

As also saith the law. Ge 3:16, "And thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."

{c} "Let your women" 1Ti 2:11,12 {d} "under obedience" Eph 5:22 Tit 2:5; 1Pe 3:1

{e} "saith the law" Ge 3:16 Nu 30:3-12; Es 1:20

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *And if they will learn any thing*. If anything has been spoken which they do not understand; or if on any particular subject they desire more full information, let them inquire of their husbands in their own dwelling. They may there converse freely; and their inquiries will not

be attended with the irregularity and disorder which would occur, should they interrupt the order and solemnity of public worship.

For it is a shame. It is disreputable and shameful; it is a breach of propriety. Their station in life demands modesty, humility, and they should be free from the ostentation of appearing so much in public as to take part in the public services of teaching and praying. It does not become their rank in life; it is not fulfilling the object which God evidently intended them to fill. He has appointed men to rule; to hold offices; to instruct and govern the church; and it is improper that women should assume that office upon themselves. This evidently and obviously refers to the church assembled for public worship, in the ordinary and regular acts of devotion. There the assembly is made up of males and females, of old and young, and there it is improper for them to take part in conducting the exercises. But this cannot be interpreted as meaning that it is improper for females to speak or to pray in meetings of their own sex, assembled for prayer or for benevolence; nor that it is improper for a female to speak or to pray in a Sabbath-school. Neither of these come under the apostle s idea of a church. And in such meetings, no rule of propriety or of the Scriptures is violated in their speaking for the edification of each other, or in leading in social prayer. It may be added here, that on this subject the Jews were very strenuous, and their laws were very strict. The Rabbins taught that a woman should know nothing but the use of the distaff; and they were specially prohibited from asking questions in the synagogue, or even from reading.—See *Lightfoot*. The same rule is still observed by the Jews in the synagogues.

{*} "shame" "unbecoming"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *What? came the word of God out from you*? The meaning of this is, "Is the church at Corinth the *mother church*? Was it first established; or has it been alone in sending forth the word of God? You have adopted customs which are unusual. You have permitted women to speak in a manner unknown to other churches. See 1Co 11:16. You have admitted irregularity and confusion unknown in all the others. You have allowed many to speak at the same time, and have tolerated confusion and disorder. Have you any right thus to differ from others? Have you any authority, as it were, to dictate to them, to teach them, contrary to their uniform custom, to allow these disorders? Should you not rather be conformed to them, and observe the rules of the churches which are older than yours?" The *argument* here is, that the church at Corinth was not the first that was established; that it was one of the last that had been founded; and that it could, therefore, claim no right to differ from others, or to prescribe to them. The same argument is employed in 1Co 11:16. **See Barnes "1Co 11:16"**.

Or came it unto you only? As you are not the first of those who believed, neither are you the only ones. God has sent the same gospel to others, and it is travelling over the world. Others, therefore, have the same right as you to originate customs and peculiar habits; and as this would be attended with confusion and disorder, you should all follow the same rule, and the customs which do not prevail in other churches should not be allowed in yours.

{a} "came it" 1Co 4:7

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *If any man think himself to be a prophet*. **See Barnes "1Co 14:1".**

If any man claim to be divinely endowed. Macknight renders it, "be really a prophet." But the more correct meaning here is, doubtless, "If any man *profess* to be a prophet; or is *reputed* to be a prophet." —Bloomfield. The proper meaning of the word *dokew* is, to seem to one's self; to be of opinion, to suppose, believe, etc.; and the reference here is to one who should *regard himself*, or who should believe and profess to be thus endowed.

Or spiritual. Regarding himself as under the extraordinary influence of the Spirit.

Let him acknowledge, etc. He will show that he is truly under the influence of the Holy Spirit, by acknowledging my authority, and by yielding obedience to the commands which I utter in the name and by the authority of the Lord. All would probably be disposed to acknowledge the right of Paul to speak to them; all would regard him as an apostle; and all would show that God had influenced their hearts, if they listened to his commands, and obeyed his injunctions. I do not speak by my own authority, or in my own name, says Paul. I speak in the name of the Lord; and to obey the commands of the Lord is a proof of being influenced by his Spirit. True religion everywhere, and the most ardent and enthusiastic zeal that is prompted by true religion, will show their genuineness and purity by a sacred and constant regard for the commands of the Lord. And that zeal which disregards those commands, and which tramples down the authority of the Scriptures, and the peace and order of the church, gives demonstration that it is not genuine. It is false zeal, and, however ardent, will not ultimately do good to the cause.

{b} "any man" 2Co 10:7 1Jo 4:6

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *But if any man be ignorant*, etc. If any one affects to be ignorant of my authority, or whether I have a right to command. If he affects to *doubt* whether I am inspired, and whether what I utter is in accordance with the will of God.

Let him be ignorant. At his own peril, let him remain so, and abide the consequences. I shall not take any further trouble to debate with him. I have stated my authority. I have delivered the commands of God. And now, if he disregards them, and still doubts whether all this is said by Divine authority, let him abide the consequences of rejecting the law of God. I have given full proof of my Divine commission. I have nothing more to say on that head. And now, if he chooses to remain in ignorance or incredulity, the fault is his own, and he must answer for it to God.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *Covet to prophesy*. **See Barnes "1Co 14:1".**

This is the summing up of all that he had said. It was desirable that a man should wish to be able to speak, under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, in such a manner as to edify the church.

And forbid not, etc. Do not suppose that the power of speaking foreign languages is useless, or is to be despised, or that it is to be prohibited. In its own place it is a valuable endowment; and on proper occasions the talent should be exercised. See in 1Co 14:22.

{*} "tongues" "in different languages"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 14 - Verse 40

Verse 40. *Let all things be done decently and in order*. Let all things be done in an *appropriate and becoming* manner; decorously, as becomes the worship of God. Let all be done in *order, regularly*, without confusion, discord, tumult. The word used here (*kata taxin*) is, properly, a military term, and denotes the order and regularity with which an army is drawn up. This is a general rule, which was to guide them. It was simple, and easily applied. There might be a thousand questions started about the modes and forms of worship, and the customs in the churches, and much difficulty might occur in many of these questions; but here was a simple and plain rule, which might be easily applied. Their good sense would tell them what became the worship of God; and their pious feelings would restrain them from excesses and disorders. This rule is still applicable, and is safe in guiding us in many things in regard to the worship of God. There are many things which cannot be subjected to rule, or exactly prescribed; there are many things which may and must be left to pious feeling, to good sense, and to the views of Christians themselves, about what will promote their edification and the conversion of sinners. The rule in such questions is plain. Let all be done *decorously*, as becomes the worship of the great and holy God; let all be without confusion, noise, and disorder.

In view of this chapter, we may remark:

(1.) That public worship should be in a language understood by the people; the language which they commonly employ. Nothing can be clearer than the sentiments of Paul on this. The whole strain of the chapter is to demonstrate this, in opposition to making use of a foreign and unintelligible language in any part of public worship. Paul specifies in the course of the discussion every part of public worship; *public preaching*, (1Co 14:2,3,5,13,19;) *prayer*, (1Co 14:14,15;) *singing*, (1Co 14:15;) and insists that all should be in a language that should be understood by the people. It would almost seem that he had anticipated the sentiments and practice of the Roman Catholic denomination. It is remarkable that a practice should have grown up, and have been defended, in a church professedly Christian, so directly in opposition to the explicit meaning of the New Testament. Perhaps there is not, even in the Roman Catholic denomination, a more striking instance of a custom or doctrine in direct contradiction to the Bible. If anything is plain and obvious, it is that worship, in order to be edifying, should be in a language that is understood by the people. Nor can that service be acceptable to God which is not understood by those who offer it; which conveys no idea to their minds, and which cannot, therefore, be the homage of the heart. Assuredly, God does not require the offering of unmeaning words. Yet this has been a grand device of the great enemy of man. It has contributed to keep the people in ignorance and superstition; it has prevented the mass of the

people from seeing how utterly unlike the New Testament are the sentiments of the papists; and it has, in connexion with the kindred doctrine that the Scripture should be withheld from the people, contributed to perpetuate that dark system, and to bind the human mind in chains. Well do the Roman Catholics know, that if the Bible were given to the people, and public worship conducted in a language which they could understand, the system would soon fall. It could not live in the midst of light. It is a system which lives and thrives only in darkness.

(2.) Preaching should be simple and intelligible. There is a great deal of preaching which might as well be in a foreign tongue as in the language which is actually employed. It is dry, abstruse, metaphysical, remote from the common manner of expression, and the common habits of thought among men. It may be suited to schools of philosophy, but it cannot be suited to the pulpit. The preaching of the Lord Jesus was simple, and intelligible even to a child. And nothing can be a greater error, than for the ministers of the gospel to adopt a dry and metaphysical manner of preaching. The most successful preachers have been those who have been most remarkable for their simplicity and clearness. Nor are simplicity and intelligibleness of manner inconsistent with bright thought and profound sentiments. A diamond is the most pure of all minerals; a river may be deep, and yet its water so pure that the bottom may be seen at a great depth; and glass in the window is most valuable the clearer and purer it is, when it is itself least seen, and when it gives no obstruction to the light. If the purpose is that the glass may be *itself* an ornament, it may be well to stain it; if to give light, it should be pure. A very shallow stream may be very muddy; and because the bottom cannot be seen, it is no evidence that it is deep. So it is with style. If the purpose is to convey thought, to enlighten and save the soul, the style should be plain, simple, pure. If it be to bewilder and confound, or to be admired as unintelligible, or perhaps as profound, then an abstruse and metaphysical, or a flowery manner, may be adopted in the pulpit.

(3.) We should learn to value *useful* talent more than that which is splendid and showy, 1Co 14:3. The whole scope of this chapter goes to demonstrate that we should more highly prize and desire that talent which may be *useful* to the church, or which may be useful in convincing unbelievers, (1Co 14:24,25,) than that which merely dazzles, or excites admiration. Ministers of the gospel who preach as they should do, engage in their work to win souls to Christ, not to induce them to admire eloquence; they come to teach men to adore the great and dreadful God, not to be loud in their praises of a mortal man.

(4.) Ministers of the gospel should not aim to be admired. They should seek to be useful. Their aim should not be to excite admiration of their acute and profound talent for reasoning; of their clear and striking power of observation; of their graceful manner; of their glowing and fervid eloquence; of the beauty of their words, or the eloquence of their well-turned periods. They should seek to build up the people of God in holy faith, and so to present truth as that it shall make a deep impression on mankind. No work is so important, and so serious in its nature and results, as the ministry of the gospel; and in no work on earth should there be more seriousness, simplicity: exactness, and correctness of statement, and invincible and unvarying adherence to simple and unvarnished truth. Of all places, the pulpit is the last in which to seek to excite admiration, or where to display profound learning, or the powers of an abstract and subtle argumentation, *for the sake* of securing a reputation. Cowper has drawn the character of what a minister of the gospel should be, in the well-known and most beautiful passage in the "Task:" \-

Would I describe a preacher, such as Paul,
Were he on earth, would hear, approve, and own,

Paul should himself direct me. I would trace
His master strokes, and draw from his design.
I would express him simple, grave, sincere;
In doctrine uncorrupt; in language plain;
And plain in manner; decent, solemn, chaste,
And natural in gesture; much impress'd
Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,
And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds
May feel it too; affectionate in look.
And tender in address, as well becomes
A messenger of grace to guilty men.

He stablishes the strong, restores the weak,
Reclaims the wanderer, binds the broken heart;
And, arm'd himself, in panoply complete
Of heavenly temper, furnishes with arms,
Bright as his own, and trains, by every rule
Of holy discipline, to glorious war,
The sacramental host of God's elect.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 1

1st Corinthians Chapter 15

This important and deeply interesting chapter, I have spoken of as the *third* part of the epistle. See the Introduction. It is more important than any other portion of the epistle, as it contains a connected, and laboured, and unanswerable argument for the main truth of Christianity, and, consequently, for Christianity itself; and it is more interesting to us as mortal beings, and as having an instinctive dread of death, than any other portion of the epistle. It has always, therefore, been regarded with deep interest by expositors, and it is worthy of the deepest attention of all. If the argument in this chapter is solid, then Christianity is true; and if true, then this chapter unfolds to us the most elevated and glorious prospect which can be exhibited to dying, yet immortal man.

There were, probably, two reasons why the apostle introduced here this discussion about the resurrection.

First. It was desirable to introduce a condensed and connected statement of the main argument for the truth of Christianity. The Corinthians had been perplexed with subtle questions, and torn by sects and parties; and it was possible that in their zeal for sect and party, they would lose their

hold on this great and vital argument for the truth of religion itself. It might be further apprehended, that the enemies of the gospel, from seeing the divisions and strifes which existed there, would take advantage of these contentions, and say that a religion which produced such fruits could not be from God. It was important, therefore, that they should have access to an argument plain, clear, and unanswerable, for the truth of Christianity; and that thus the evil effects of their divisions and strifes might be counter- acted.

Secondly. It is evident, from 1Co 15:12, that the important doctrine of the resurrection of the dead had been denied at Corinth, and that this error had obtained a footing in the church itself. On what grounds, or by what portion or party it was denied, is unknown. It may have been that the influence of some Sadducean teacher may have led to the rejection of the doctrine; or it may have been the effect of philosophy. From Ac 17:32, we know that among some of the Greeks, the doctrine of the resurrection was regarded as ridiculous; and from 2Ti 2:18, we learn that it was held by some that the resurrection was passed already, and, consequently, that there was nothing but a spiritual resurrection. To counteract these errors, and to put the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead on a firm foundation, and thus to furnish a demonstration of the truth of Christianity, was the design of this chapter.

The chapter may be regarded as divided into four parts, and four questions in regard to the resurrection are solved.

(1.) Whether there is any resurrection of the dead? 1Co 15:1-34.

(2.) With what body will the dead rise? 1Co 15:35-51.

(3.) What will become of those who shall be alive when the Lord Jesus shall come to judge the world? 1Co 15:51-54.

(4.) What are the practical bearings of this doctrine? 1Co 15:55-58.

I. The dead will be raised, 1Co 15:1-34. This Paul proves by the following arguments, and illustrates in the following manner:

(1.) By adducing reasons to show that Christ rose from the dead, 1Co 15:1-11.

(a.) From the Scripture, 1Co 15:1-4.

(b.) From the testimony of eye-witnesses, 1Co 15:5-11.

(2.) By showing the absurdity of the contrary doctrine, 1Co 15:12-34.

(a.) If the dead do not rise, it would follow that Christ has not risen, 1Co 15:13.

(b.) If Christ is not risen, he is preached in vain, and faith is reposed in him for nought, 1Co 15:14.

(c.) It would follow that the apostles would be false witnesses and wicked men; whereas, the Corinthians had abundant reason to know the contrary, 1Co 15:15.

(d.) The faith of the Corinthians must be vain if he was not risen, and they must regard themselves as still unpardoned sinners, since all their hope of pardon must arise from the fact that his work was accepted, and that he was raised up, 1Co 15:16,17.

(e.) If Christ was not risen, then all their pious friends who had believed in him must be regarded as lost, 1Co 15:18.

(f.) It would follow that believers in Christ would be in a more miserable condition than any others, if there was no resurrection, 1Co 15:19.

(g.) Baptism for the resurrection of the dead would be absurd and in vain, unless the dead arose; it would be vain to be baptized with the belief, and on the ground of the belief that Christ rose, and on the ground of the hope that they would rise, 1Co 15:29.

(h.) It would be in vain that the apostles and others had suffered so many toils and persecutions, unless the dead should rise, 1Co 15:30-32.

In the course of this part of his argument, (1Co 15:20-28,) Paul introduces an *illustration* of the doctrine, or a statement of an important fact in regard to it—thus *separating* the argument in 1Co 15:19 from the text, which occurs in 1Co 15:29. Such interruptions of a train of thinking are not uncommon in the writings of Paul, and indicate the *fulness and richness* of his conceptions, when some striking thought occurs, or some plausible objection is to be met, and when he suspends his argument in order to state it. This interjected portion consists of the following items:

(1.) A triumphant and joyful assurance that Christ had in fact risen; as if his mind was full, and he was impatient of the delay caused by the necessity of slow argumentation, 1Co 15:19,20.

(2.) He *illustrates* the doctrine, or shows that it is reasonable that the certainty of the resurrection should be demonstrated by one in human nature, since death had been introduced by man, 1Co 15:21,22. This is an argument from *analogy*, drawn from the obvious propriety of the doctrine, that man should be raised up in a manner somewhat similar to the mode in which he had been involved in ruin.

(3.) He states the *order* in which all this should be done, 1Co 15:23-28. It is possible that some may have held that the resurrection must have been already passed, since it depended so entirely and so closely on the resurrection of Christ. Compare 2Ti 2:18. Paul, therefore, meets this objection; and shows that it must take place in a regular order; that Christ rose first, and that they who were his friends should rise at his coming. He then states what would take place at that time, when the work of redemption should have been consummated by the resurrection of the dead, and the entire recovery of all the redeemed to God, and the subjection of every foe.

II. What will be the nature of the bodies that shall be raised up? 1Co 15:35-51. This inquiry is illustrated,

(1.) By a reference to grain that is sown, 1Co 15:36-38.

(2.) By a reference to the fact that there are different kinds of flesh, 1Co 15:39.

(3.) By a reference to the fact that there *are* celestial bodies and earthly bodies, 1Co 15:40.

(4.) By the fact that there is a difference between the sun, and moon, and stars, 1Co 15:41.

(5.) By a *direct statement*; for which the mind is prepared by these illustrations, of the important changes which the body of man must undergo, and of the nature of that body which he will have in heaven, 1Co 15:42-50. It is

(a.) incorruptible, 1Co 15:42;

(b.) glorious, 1Co 15:43;

(c.) powerful, 1Co 15:43;

(d.) a spiritual body, 1Co 15:44;

(e.) it is like the body of the second man, the Lord from heaven, 1Co 15:45-50.

III. What will become of those who shall be alive when the Lord Jesus shall return to raise the dead?

Ans. They shall be changed instantly, and fitted for heaven, and made like the glorified saints that shall be raised from the dead, 1Co 15:51-54.

IV. The practical consequences or influences of this doctrine, 1Co 15:55-58.

(1.) The doctrine is glorious and triumphant; it overcame all the evils of sin, and should fill the mind with joy, 1Co 15:55-57.

(2.) It should lead Christians to diligence, and firmness of faith, and patience, since their labour was not to be in vain, 1Co 15:58.

Verse 1. *Moreover*. But, (*de*). In addition to what I have said; or in that which I am now about to say, I make known the main and leading truth of the gospel. The particle *de* is "strictly adversative, but more frequently denotes transition and conversion, and serves to introduce *something else*, whether opposite to what precedes, or simply continuative or explanatory."—*Robinson*. Here it serves to introduce another topic that was not properly a continuation of what he had said, but which pertained to the same general subject, and which was deemed of great importance.

I declare unto you. *gnwrizw*. This word properly means, to make known, to declare, to reveal, (Lu 2:15; Ro 9:22,23;) then to tell, narrate, inform, (Eph 6:21 Col 4:7,9;) and also to put in mind of, to impress, to confirm. **See Barnes "1Co 12:3"**.

Here it does not mean that he was communicating to them any new truth, but he wished to remind them of it; to state the arguments for it, and to impress it deeply on their memories. There is an *abruptness* in our translation which does not exist in the original. *Bloomfield*.

The gospel. **See Barnes "Mr 1:1"**.

The word here means the *glad announcement*, or *the good news* about the coming of the Messiah, his life, and sufferings, and death, and especially his resurrection. The main subject to which Paul refers in this chapter is the resurrection; but he includes in the word gospel, here, the doctrine that he died for sins, and was buried, as well as the doctrine of his resurrection. See 1Co 15:3,4.

Which I preached unto you. Paul founded the church at Corinth, Ac 18:1, seq. It was proper that he should remind them of what he had taught them at first; of the great elementary truths on which the church had been established, but from which their minds had been diverted by the other subjects that had been introduced as matters of debate and strife. It was fair to presume that they would regard with respect the doctrines which the founder of their church had first proclaimed, if they were reminded of them; and Paul, therefore, calls their attention to the great and vital truths by which they had been converted, and by which the church had thus far prospered. It is well, often, to remind Christians of the truths which were preached to them *when* they were converted, and which were instrumental in their conversion. When they have gone off from these doctrines, when they have given their minds to speculation and philosophy, it has a good effect to *remind* them that they were converted by the simple truths that Christ died, and was buried, and rose again from the dead. The argument of Paul here is, that they owed all the piety and comfort which they had to these doctrines; and that, therefore, they should still adhere to them as the foundation of all their hopes.

Which also ye have received. Which you embraced; which you all admitted as true; which were the means of your conversion. I would remind you that, however that truth may now be denied by you, it was once received by you, and you professed to believe in the fact that Christ rose from the dead, and that the saints would rise.

And wherein ye stand. By which your church was founded, and by which all your piety and hope has been produced, and which is at the foundation of all your religion. You were built up by this, and by this only can you stand as a Christian church. This doctrine was vital and fundamental. This demonstrates that the doctrines that Christ died "for sins," and rose from the dead, are fundamental truths of Christianity. They enter into its very nature; and without them there can be no true religion.

{a} "I declare" Gal 1:11 {b} "which also ye have received" 1Co 4-8

{c} "wherein ye stand" 1Pe 5:12

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *By which also ye are saved*. On which your salvation depends; the belief of which is indispensable to your salvation. **See Barnes "Mr 16:16"**.

The apostle thus shows the *importance* of the doctrine. In every respect it demanded their attention. It was that which was first preached among them; that which they had solemnly professed; that by which they had been built up; and that which was connected with their salvation. It does not mean simply that by this they were brought into a salvable state, (Clarke, Macknight, Whitby, Bloomfield, etc.;) but it means that their hopes of eternal life rested on this; and by this they were then, in fact, saved from the condemnation of sin, and were in the possession of the hope of eternal life.

If ye keep in memory. Margin, as in the Greek, *if ye hold fast*. The idea is, that they were saved by this, or would be, if they faithfully retained or held the doctrine as he delivered it; if they observed it, and still believed it, notwithstanding all the efforts of their enemies, and all the arts of false teaching to wrest it from them. There is a doubt delicately suggested here, whether they did in fact still adhere to his doctrine, or whether they had not abandoned it in part for the opposite.

Unless ye have believed in vain. You will be saved by it, if you adhere to it, unless it shall turn out that it was vain to believe, and that the doctrine was false. That it was not false, he proceeds to demonstrate. Unless all your trials, discouragements, and hopes were to no purpose, and all have been the result of imposture; and unless all your profession is false and hollow, you will be saved by this great doctrine which I first preached to you.

{d} "if ye" Heb 3:6 {1} "keep" "hold fast" {2} "what I preached" "by what speech"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *For I delivered unto you*. **See Barnes "1Co 11:23"**.

First of all. Among the first doctrines which I preached. As the leading and primary doctrines of Christianity.

That which I also received. Which had been communicated to me. Not doctrines of which I was the author, or which were to be regarded as my own. Paul here refers to the fact that he had received these doctrines from the Lord Jesus by inspiration. **See Barnes "1Co 11:23"**.

See Barnes "Ga 1:12".

This is one instance in which he claims to be under the Divine guidance, and to have received his doctrines from God.

How that Christ died for our sins. The Messiah, the Lord Jesus, died as an expiatory offering on account of our sins. They caused his death; for them he shed his blood; to make expiation for

them, and to wipe them away, he expired on the cross. This passage is full proof that Christ did not die merely as a martyr, but that his death was to make atonement for sin. That he died as an atoning sacrifice, or as a vicarious offering, is here declared by Paul to be among the *first* things that he taught; and the grand fundamental truth on which the church at Corinth had been founded, and by which it had been established, and by which they would be saved. It follows that there can be no true church, and no well-founded hope of salvation, where the doctrine is not held that Christ died for sin.

According to the Scriptures. The writings of the Old Testament. **See Barnes "Joh 5:39".**

It is, of course, not certain to what parts of the Old Testament Paul here refers. He teaches simply that the doctrine is contained there that the Messiah would die for sin; and, in his preaching, he doubtless adduced and dwelt upon the particular places. Some of the places where this is taught are the following: Ps 22 Isa 53 Da 9:26 Zec 12:10; Lu 24:26,46.

See also Hengstenberg's Christology of the Old Test., vol. i., pp. 187, 216, translated by Keith.

{*} "first of all" "Among the chief things" {f} "according to the scriptures" Ge 3:15 Ps 22 Da 9:26 Zec 13:7

Lu 24:26,46

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And that he was buried*. That is, evidently, according to the Scriptures. See Isa 53:9.

And that he rose again the third day, etc. That is, that he should rise from the dead was foretold in the Scriptures. It is not of necessity implied that it was predicted that he should rise on the third day, but that he should rise from the dead. See the argument for this stated in the discourse of Peter, in Ac 2:24-32. The particular passage which is there urged in proof of his resurrection is derived from Ps 16:10.

{g} "according to the scriptures" Ps 16:10 Hos 6:2

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And that he was seen of Cephas*. Peter. **See Barnes "Joh 1:42".**

The resurrection of Christ was a fact to be proved, like all other facts, by competent and credible witnesses. Paul, therefore, appeals to the witnesses who had attested, or who yet lived to attest, the truth of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and shows that it was not possible that so many witnesses should have been deceived. As this was not the first time in which the evidence had been stated to them, and as his purpose was merely to *remind* them of what they had heard and believed, he does not adduce all the witnesses to the event, but refers only to the more important ones. He does not, therefore, mention the woman to whom the Saviour first appeared, nor does he refer to all the times when the Lord Jesus manifested himself to his disciples. But he does not refer to them in *general*

merely, but mentions names, and refers to persons who were then alive, who could attest the truth of the resurrection. It may be observed, also, that Paul observes probably the *exact* order in which the Lord Jesus appeared to the disciples, though he does not mention *all* the instances. For an account of the persons to whom the Lord Jesus appeared after his resurrection, and the order in which it was done, see the Harmony at the end of Notes on Matthew.

Then of the twelve. The apostles, still called "the twelve," though Judas was not one of them. It was common to call the apostles "the twelve." Jesus appeared to the apostles at one time in the absence of Thomas, (Joh 20:19,24;) and also to them when Thomas was present, Joh 20:24-29. Probably Paul here refers to the latter occasion, when all the surviving apostles were present.

{h} "Cephas" Lu 24:34

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Above five hundred brethren at once*. More than five hundred Christians or followers of Jesus at one time. This was *probably* in Galilee, where the Lord Jesus had spent the greater part of his public ministry, and where he had made most disciples. The place, however, is not designated, and of course cannot be known. It is remarkable that this fact is omitted by all the evangelists; but why they should have omitted so remarkable a proof of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus is unknown. There is a slight circumstance hinted at in Mt 28:10, which may throw some light on this passage. After his resurrection, Jesus said to the women who were at the sepulchre, "Go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me." And in Mt 28:16 it is said, "The eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them." Jesus had spent most of his public life in Galilee. He had made most of his disciples there. It was proper, therefore, that those disciples who would of course hear of his death, should have some public confirmation of the fact that he had risen. It is very probable, also, that the eleven who went down into Galilee after he rose would apprize the brethren there of what had been said to them, that Jesus would meet them on a certain mountain; and it is morally certain that they who had followed him in so great numbers in Galilee would be drawn together by the report that the Lord Jesus, who had been put to death, was about to be seen there again alive. Such is human nature, and such was the attachment of these disciples to the Lord Jesus, that it is morally certain a large concourse would assemble on the slightest rumour that such an occurrence was to happen. Nothing more would be necessary anywhere to draw a concourse of people than a rumour that one who was dead would appear again; and in this instance, where they ardently loved him, and when, perhaps, many believed that he would rise, they would naturally assemble in great numbers to see him once more. One thing is proved by this, that the Lord Jesus had many more disciples than is generally supposed. If there were five hundred who could be assembled at once in a single part of the land where he had preached, there is every reason to suppose that there were many more in other parts of Judea.

The greater part remain unto this present. Are now alive, and can be appealed to, in proof that they saw him. What more conclusive argument for the truth of his resurrection *could* there be than that five hundred persons had seen him, who had been intimately acquainted with him in his life, and who had become his followers? If the testimony of five hundred could not avail to prove his

resurrection, no number of witnesses could. And if five hundred men could thus be deceived, any number could; and it would be impossible to substantiate any simple matter of fact by the testimony of eye-witnesses.

But some are fallen asleep. Have died. This is the usual expression employed in the Scriptures to describe the death of saints. It denotes

(1.) the calmness and peace with which they die, like sinking into a gentle sleep;

(2.) the hope of a resurrection, as we sink to sleep with the expectation of again awaking. **See Barnes "Joh 11:11"; See Barnes "1Co 11:30".**

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *After that, he was seen of James*. This appearance is not recorded by the evangelists. It is mentioned in the fragment of the apocryphal gospel according to the Hebrews, which is, however, of no authority. It is probable that the Lord Jesus appeared often to the disciples, as he was forty days on earth after his resurrection, and the evangelists have only mentioned the more prominent instances, and enough to substantiate the fact of his resurrection. This James, the Fathers say, was James the Less, the brother or cousin-german of the Lord Jesus. The other James was dead (see Ac 12:1) when this epistle was written. This James, the author of the epistle that bears his name, was stationed in Jerusalem. When Paul went there, after his return from Arabia, he had an interview with James, (Ga 1:19, "But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother;") and it is highly probable that Paul would state to him the vision which he had of the Lord Jesus on his way to Damascus, and that James also would state to Paul the fact that he had seen him after he rose. This may be the reason why Paul here mentions the fact, because he had it from the lips of James himself.

Then of all the apostles. By all the apostles. Perhaps the occasion at the sea of Galilee, recorded in Joh 21:14. Or it is possible that he frequently met the apostles assembled together; and that Paul means to say, that during the forty days after his resurrection he was often seen by them.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *And last of all*. After all the other times in which he appeared to men; after he had ascended to heaven. This passage proves that the apostle Paul saw the same Lord Jesus, the same *body* which had been seen by the others, or else his assertion would be no proof that he was risen from the dead. It was not a fancy, therefore, that he had seen him; it was not the work of imagination; it was not even a *revelation* that he had risen; it was a real vision of the ascended Redeemer.

He was seen of me also. On the way to Damascus. See Ac 9:3-6,17.

As of one born out of due time. Marg., Or, an *abortive*. Our translation, to most readers, probably, would not convey the real meaning of this place. The expression, "as of one born out of due time,"

would seem to imply that Paul meant to say that there was some unfitness *as to the time* when he saw the Lord Jesus; or that it was *too late* to have as clear and satisfactory a view of him as those had who saw him before his ascension. But this is by no means the idea in the passage. The word here used (*ektrwma*) properly means an abortion, one born prematurely. It is found nowhere else in the New Testament; and here it means, as the following verse shows, one that was *exceedingly unworthy*; that was not worth regard; that was unfit to be employed in the service of the Lord Jesus; that had the same relation to that which was worthy of the apostolic office which an abortion has to a living child. The word occurs (in the Septuagint) in Job 3:16; Ec 6:3, as the translation of

HEBREW, *nephel*, an abortion, or untimely birth. The expression seems to be proverbial, and to denote anything that is vile, offensive, loathsome, unworthy. See Nu 12:12. The word, I think, has no reference to the mode of *training* of the apostle, as if he had not had the same opportunity as the others had, and was, therefore, compared with their advantages, like an untimely child compared with one that had come to maturity before its birth, as Bloomfield supposes; nor does it refer to his diminutive stature, as Wetstein supposes; but it means that he felt himself *vile*, guilty, unworthy, abominable as a persecutor, and as unworthy to be an apostle. The verse following shows that this is the sense in which the word is used.

{a} "last of all" Ac 9:17 {1} "one born" "an abortive"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *For*. A reason for the appellation which he had given to himself in 1Co 15:8.

I am the least of the apostles. Not on account of any defect in his commission, or any want of qualification to bear witness ia what he saw; but on account of *the* great crime of his life, the fact that he had been a persecutor. Paul could never forget that; as a man who has been profane and a scoffer, when he becomes converted, can never forget the deep guilt of his former life. The effect will be to produce humility, and a deep sense of unworthiness, ever onward.

Am not meet to be called an apostle. Am not fit to be regarded as a follower of the Lord Jesus, and as appointed to defend his cause, and to bear his name among the Gentiles. Paul had a deep sense of his unworthiness; and the memory of his former life tended ever to keep him humble. Such should be, and such will be, the effect of the remembrance of a life of sin on those who become converted to the gospel, and especially if they are intrusted with the high office of the ministry and occupy a station of importance in the church of God.

Because I persecuted the church of God. See Ac 9. It is evident, however, that deeply as Paul might feel his unworthiness, and his unfitness to be called an apostle, yet that this did not render him an incompetent witness of what he had seen. He was unworthy; but he had no doubt that he had seen the Lord Jesus; and amidst all the expressions of his deep sense of his unfitness for his office, he never once intimates the slightest doubt that he had seen the Saviour. He felt himself fully qualified to testify to that; and with unwavering firmness he *did* testify to it to the end of life. A man may be deeply sensible that he is unworthy of an elevated station or office, and yet not the less qualified to be a witness. Humility does not disqualify a man to give testimony, but rather furnishes an additional qualification. There is no man to whom we listen more attentively, or whose

words we more readily believe, than the modest and humble man—the man who has had abundant opportunities to observe that of which he testifies, and yet who is deeply humble. Such a man was the apostle Paul; and he evidently felt that, much as he felt his unworthiness, and ready as he was to confess it, yet his testimony on the subject of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus ought to have, and would have, great weight in the church at Corinth. **See Barnes "Ac 9:19"**.

{b} "least" Eph 3:7,8

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *But by the grace of God I am what I am*. By the favour or mercy of God. What I have is to be traced to him, and not to any native tendency to goodness, or any native inclination to his service, or to any merit of my own. All my hopes of heaven; all my zeal; all my success; all my piety; all my apostolic endowments, are to be traced to him. Nothing is more common in the writings of Paul, than a disposition to trace all that he had to the *mere* mercy and grace of God. And nothing is a more certain indication of true piety than such a disposition. The reason why Paul here introduces the subject seems to be this: He had incidentally, and undesignedly, introduced a comparison *in one respect* between himself and the other apostles. He had not had the advantages which they had. Most of all, he was overwhelmed with the recollection that he had been a persecutor. He felt, therefore, that there was a peculiar obligation resting on him to make up by diligence for the want of their advantages of an early personal conversation with the Lord Jesus, and to express his gratitude that so great a sinner had been made an apostle, he, therefore, says that he had not been idle. He had been enabled, by the grace of God, to labour more than all the rest, and he had thus shown that he had not been insensible of his obligations.

But I laboured more abundantly, etc. I was more diligent in preaching; I encountered more perils; I have exerted myself more. The records of his life, compared with the records of the other apostles, fully show this.

Yet not I. I do not attribute it to myself. I would not boast of it. The fact is plain and undeniable, that I have so laboured. But I would not attribute it to myself. I would not be proud or vain. I would remember my former state; would remember that I was a persecutor; would remember that all my disposition to labour, and all my ability, and all my success, are to be traced to the mere favour and mercy of God. So every man who has just views feels, who has been favoured with success in the ministry. If a man has been successful as a preacher; if he has been self-denying, laborious, and the instrument of good, he cannot be insensible to the fact, and it would be foolish affectation to pretend ignorance of it. But he may feel that it is all owing to the mere mercy of God; and the effect will be to produce humility and gratitude, not pride and self-complacency.

{a} "not I" Mt 10:20

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Therefore whether it were I or they*. I or the other apostles. It is comparatively immaterial by whom it was done. The establishment of the truth is the great matter; and the question by whom it is done is one of secondary importance.

So we preach. So we all preach. We all defend the same great doctrines; we all insist on the fact that the Lord Jesus died and rose; and this doctrine you all have believed. This doctrine is confirmed by all who preach; and this enters into the faith of *all* who believe. The design of Paul is to affirm that the doctrines which he here refers to were great, undeniable, and fundamental doctrines of Christianity; that they were proclaimed by all the ministers of the gospel, and believed by all Christians. They were, therefore, immensely important to all; and they must enter essentially into the hopes

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Now if Christ*, etc. Paul, having (1Co 15:1-11) stated the direct evidence for the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, proceeds here to demonstrate that the dead would rise, by showing how it followed from the fact that the Lord Jesus had risen, and by showing what consequences would follow from denying it. The whole argument is based on the fact that the Lord Jesus had risen. If *that* was admitted, he shows that it must follow that his people would also rise.

Be preached. The word *preached* here seems to include the idea of so preaching as to be believed; or so as to *demonstrate* that he did rise. If this was the doctrine on which the church was based, that the Lord Jesus rose from the dead, how could the resurrection of the dead be denied?

How say. How can any say; how can it be maintained?

Some among you. See the introduction to the chapter. Who these were is unknown. They may have been some of the philosophic Greeks, who spurned the doctrine of the resurrection, (Ac 17:32;) or they may have been some followers of Sadducean teachers; or it may be that the Gnostic philosophy had corrupted them. It is most probable, I think, that the denial of the resurrection was the result of reasoning after the manner of the Greeks, and the effect of the introduction of philosophy into the church. This has been the fruitful source of most of the errors which have been introduced into the church.

That there is no resurrection of the dead? That the dead cannot rise. How can it be held that there can be no resurrection, while yet it is admitted that Christ rose? The argument here is twofold.

(1.) That Christ rose was one *instance* of a fact which demonstrated that there *had been* a resurrection, and of course that it was possible.

(2.) That such was the connexion between Christ and his people that the admission of this fact involved also the doctrine that all his people would also rise. This argument Paul states at length in the following verses. It was probably held by them that the resurrection was *impossible*. To all this, Paul answers in accordance with the principles of inductive philosophy as now understood, by demonstrating *a fact*, and showing that such an event *had* occurred, and that consequently all

the difficulties were met. Facts are unanswerable demonstrations; and when a fact is established, all the obstacles and difficulties in the way must be admitted to be overcome. So philosophers now reason; and Paul, in accordance with these just principles, laboured simply to establish *the fact* that one had been raised, and thus met at once all the objections which could be urged against the doctrine. It would have been most in accordance with the philosophy of the Greeks to have gone into a metaphysical discussion to show that it was not impossible or absurd, and this might have been done. It was most in accordance with the principles of true philosophy, however, to establish *the fact* at once, and to argue *from* that, and thus to meet all the difficulties at once. The doctrine of the resurrection, therefore, does not rest on a metaphysical subtilty; it does not depend on human reasoning; it does not depend on analogy; it rests just as the sciences of astronomy, chemistry, anatomy, botany, and natural philosophy do, *on well ascertained facts*; and it is now a well understood principle of all true science, that no difficulty, no obstacle, no metaphysical subtilty, no embarrassment about being able to see how it is, is to be allowed to destroy the conviction in the mind which the facts are fitted to produce.

{b} "how say" Ac 26:8

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *But if there be no resurrection of the dead*. If the whole subject is held to be impossible and absurd, then it must follow that Christ is not risen, since there were the same difficulties in the way of raising him up which will exist in any case. He was dead; and was buried. He had lain in the grave three days. His human soul had left the body. His frame had become cold and stiff. The blood had ceased to circulate, and the lungs to heave. In his case there was the same difficulty in raising him up to life that there is in any other; and if it is held to be impossible and absurd that the dead should rise, then it must follow that Christ has not been raised. This is the first consequence which Paul states as resulting from the denial of this doctrine, and this is inevitable. Paul thus shows them that the denial of the doctrine, or the maintaining the general proposition, "that the dead would not rise," led also to the denial of the *fact* that the Lord Jesus had risen, and, consequently, to the denial of Christianity altogether, and the annihilation of all their hopes. There was, moreover, such a close connexion between Christ and his people, that the resurrection of the Lord Jesus made their resurrection certain. See 1Th 4:14. **See Barnes "Joh 14:19"**.

{c} "but if there be no resurrection" 1Th 4:14

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain*. Another consequence which must follow if it be held that there was no resurrection, and consequently that Christ was not risen. It would be vain and useless to preach. The substance of their preaching was, that Christ was raised

up; and all their, preaching was based on that. If that were not true, the whole system was false, and Christianity was an imposition. The word *vain* here seems to include the idea of useless, idle, false. It would be *false* to affirm that the Christian system was from heaven; it would be useless to proclaim such a system, as it could save no one.

And your faith is also vain. It is useless to believe. It can be of no advantage. If Christ was not raised, he was an impostor, since he repeatedly declared that he would rise, (Mt 16:21 17:22,23 Lu 9:22) ; and since the whole of his religion depended on that. The system could not be true unless Christ had been raised, as he said he would be; and to believe a false system could be of no use to any man. The argument here is one addressed to all their feelings, their hopes, and their belief. It is drawn from all their convictions that the system was true. Were they, could they be prepared to admit a doctrine which involved the consequence that all the evidences which they had that the apostles preached the truth were delusive, and that all the evidences of the truth of Christianity which had affected their minds and won their hearts were false and deceptive? If they were not prepared for this, then it followed that they should not abandon or doubt the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead.

{a} "if Christ" Ac 17:31

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Yea, and we are found*. We are; or we shall be proved to be. It will follow, if the Lord Jesus was not raised up, that we have been false witnesses.

Of God. Respecting God. It will be found that we have affirmed that which is not true of God; or have said that he has done that which he has not done. Nothing could be regarded as a greater crime than this, whatever might be the immediate subject under consideration. To bear false witness of a man, or to say that a man has done what he has not done, is regarded as a grievous crime. How much more so to bear false testimony of God.

Because we have testified of God. Or, rather, *against* God, (*kata tou yeou*.) Our evidence has been against him. We have affirmed that which is not true; and this is against God. It is implied here, that it would be a *crime* to testify that God had raised up the Lord Jesus if he had not done it; or that it would be affirming that of God which would be against his character, or which it would be improper for him to do. This would be so,

(1.) because it would be wrong to bear any false witness of God, or to affirm that he had done what he had not done;

(2.) because *if* the Lord Jesus had not been raised up, it would prove that he was an impostor, since he had declared that he would be raised up; and to affirm of God that he had raised up an *impostor* would be *against* him, and would be highly dishonourable to him.

If the dead rise not. If there is, and can be no resurrection. If this general proposition is true, that there can be no resurrection, then it will apply to Christ as well as any others, and must prove that he did not rise. The argument in this verse is this:

(1.) If it was denied that Christ was raised, it would prove that all the apostles were false witnesses of the worst character—false witnesses against God.

(2.) This the apostle seems to have presumed they *could not* believe. They had had too many evidences that they spoke the truth; they had seen their uniform respect for God, and desire to bear witness of him and in his favour; they had had too conclusive evidence that they were inspired by him, and had the power of working miracles; they were too fully convinced of their honesty, truth, and piety, ever to believe that they could be false witnesses against God. They had had ample opportunity to know whether God did raise up the Lord Jesus; and they were witnesses who had no inducement to bear a false witness in the case.

{*} "witnesses of God" "concerning"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *For if the dead rise not*, etc. This is a repetition of what is said in 1Co 15:13. It is repeated her, evidently, because of its importance. It was a great and momentous truth which would *bear* repetition, that if there was no resurrection, as some held, then it would follow that the Lord Jesus was not raised up.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Your faith is vain*. 1Co 15:14. The meaning of this passage here is, that their faith was vain, because, if Christ was not raised up, they were yet unpardoned sinners. The pardon of sin was connected with the belief of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and, if he was not raised, they were still in a state of sin.

Ye are yet in your sins. Your sins are yet unpardoned. They can be forgiven only by faith in him, and by the efficacy of his blood. But if he was not raised, he was an impostor; and, of course, all your hopes of pardon by him, and through him, must be vain. The argument in this verse consists in an appeal to their Christian experience and their hopes. It may be thus expressed:

(1.) You have reason to believe that your sins are forgiven. You cherish that belief on evidence that is satisfactory to you. But if Christ is not raised, that cannot be true. He was an impostor, and sins cannot be forgiven by him. As you are not, and cannot be prepared to admit that your sins are not forgiven, you cannot admit a doctrine which involves that.

(2.) You have evidence that you are not under the dominion of sin. You have repented of it; have forsaken it; and are leading a holy life. You know that, and cannot be induced to doubt this fact. But all that is to be traced to the doctrine that the Lord Jesus rose from the dead. It is only by believing that, and the doctrines which are connected with it, that the power of sin in the heart has been destroyed. And as you *cannot* doubt that under the influence of *that truth* you have been enabled to break off from your sins, so you cannot admit a doctrine which would involve it as a consequence that you are yet under the condemnation and the dominion of sin. You must believe, therefore, that the Lord Jesus rose; and that, if he rose, others will also. This argument is good also

now, just so far as there is evidence that, through the belief of a risen Saviour, the dominion of sin has been broken; and every Christian is, therefore, in an important sense, a witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus,—a living proof that a system which can work so great changes, and produce such evidence that sins are forgiven as are furnished in the conversion of sinners, must be from God; and, of course, that the work of the Lord Jesus was accepted, and that he was raised up from the dead.

{b} "your faith" Ro 4:25

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Then they also*, etc. This verse contains a statement of another consequence which must follow from the denial of the resurrection-that all Christians who had died had faded of salvation, and were destroyed.

Which are fallen asleep in Christ. Which have died as Christians. **See Barnes "1Co 15:6"**; **See Barnes** "1Th 4:15".

Are perished. Are destroyed; are not saved. They hoped to have been saved by the merits of the Lord Jesus; they trusted to a risen Saviour, and fixed all their hopes of heaven there; but if he did not rise, of course the whole system was delusion, and they have failed of heaven, and been destroyed. Their bodies lie in the grave, and return to their native dust without the prospect of a resurrection, and their souls axe destroyed. The *argument* here is mainly an appeal to their feelings: "Can you believe it possible that the good men who have believed in tile Lord Jesus are destroyed? Can you believe that your best friends, your kindred, and your fellow Christians who have died, have gone down to perdition? Can you believe that they will sink to woe with the impenitent, and the polluted, and abandoned? If you *cannot*, then it must follow that they are saved. And then it will follow that you cannot embrace a doctrine which involves this consequence." And this argument is a sound one still. There are multitudes who are made good men by the gospel. They are holy, humble, self-denying, and prayerful friends of God. *They have become such by the belief of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus*. Can it be believed that they will be destroyed? That they will perish with the profane, and licentious, and unprincipled . That they will go down to dwell with the polluted and the wicked? "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Ge 18:25. If it *cannot* be so believed, then they will be saved; and *if* saved, it follows that the system is true which saves them, and, of course, that the Lord Jesus rose from the dead. We may remark here, that a denim of the truth of Christianity involves the belief that its friends will perish with others; that all their hopes are vain; and that their expectations are delusive. He, therefore, who becomes an infidel, believes that his pious friends—his sainted father, his holy mother, his lovely Christian sister or child—are deluded and deceived; that they will sink down to the grave to rise no more; that their hopes of heaven will all vanish, and that they will be destroyed with the profane, the impure, and the sensual. And if infidelity demands *this* faith of its votaries, it is a system which strikes at the very happiness of social life, and at all our convictions of what is true and right. It is a system that is withering and blighting to the best hopes of men. *Can* it be believed that God will destroy those who are living to his honour; who are pure in heart, and lovely in life, *and who have been made*

such by the Christian religion? If it cannot, then every man knows that Christianity *is not false*, and that infidelity IS NOT TRUE.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *If in this life only we have hope in Christ*. If our hope in Christ shall not be followed by the resurrection of the dead and future glory, and if all our hopes shall be disappointed.

We are, etc. Doddridge, Macknight, Grotius, and some others, suppose that this refers to the apostles only; and that the sense is, that if there was no resurrection, they, of all men, would be most to be pitied, since they had exposed themselves to such a variety of dangers and trials, in which nothing could sustain them but the hope of immortality. If they failed in that, they failed in everything. They were regarded as the most vile of the human family; they suffered more from persecution, poverty, and perils, than other men; and if, after all, they were to be deprived of all their hopes, and disappointed in their expectation of the resurrection, their condition would be more deplorable than that of any other men. But there is no good reason for supposing that the word "we," here, is to be limited to the apostles. For,

(1.) Paul had not mentioned the apostles particularly in the previous verses; and,

(2.) the argument demands that it should be understood of all Christians, and the declaration is as true, substantially, of all Christians as it was of the apostles.

Of all men most miserable. More to be pitied or commiserated than any other class of men. The word here used (*eleeinoteroi*) means, properly, more deserving of pity, more pitiable. It may mean, sometimes, more wretched, or unhappy; but this is not necessarily its meaning, nor is it its meaning here. It refers rather to their condition and hopes than to their personal feeling; and does not mean that Christians are unhappy, or that their religion does not produce comfort, but that their condition would be most deplorable; they would be more deserving of pity than any other class of men. This would be,

(1.) because no other men had so elevated hopes, and, of course, no others could experience so great disappointment.

(2.) They were subjected to more trials than any other class of men. They were persecuted and reviled, and subjected to toil, and privation, and want, on account of their religion; and if, after all, they were to be disappointed, their condition was truly deplorable.

(3.) They do not indulge in the pleasures of this life; they do not give themselves, as others do, to the enjoyments of this world. They voluntarily subject themselves to trial and self-denial; and if they are not admitted to eternal life, they are not only disappointed in this, but they are cut off from the sources of happiness which their fellow-men enjoy in this world.—*Calvin*.

(4.) On the whole, therefore, there would be disappointed hopes, and trials, and poverty, and want, and all for nought; and no condition could be conceived to be more deplorable than where a man was looking for eternal life, and for it subjecting himself to a life of want, and poverty, and persecution, and tears, and should be finally disappointed. This passage, therefore, does not mean that virtue and piety are not attended with happiness; it does not mean that, even if there were no future state, a man would not be more happy if he walked in the paths of virtue, than if he lived a

life of sin; it does not mean that the Christian has no happiness in *religion itself*—in the love of God, and in prayer and praise, and in purity of life. In all this he has enjoyment; and even if there were no heaven, a life of virtue and piety would be more happy than a life of sin. But it means that the condition of the Christian would be more *deplorable* than that of other men; he would be more to be pitied. All his high hopes would be disappointed. Other men have no such hopes to be dashed to the ground; and, of course, no other men would be such objects of pity and compassion. The *argument* in this verse is derived from the high hopes of the Christian. "Could they believe that all their hopes were to be frustrated? Could they subject themselves to all these trials and privations, without believing that they would rise from the dead?

Were they prepared, by the denial of the doctrine of the resurrection, to put themselves in the condition of the most miserable and wretched of the human family—to *admit* that they were in a condition most to be deplored?

{a} "we are of" Joh 16:2 1Co 4:13; 2Ti 3:12

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *But now is Christ risen*, etc. This language is the bursting forth of a full heart and of overpowering conviction. It would seem as if Paul were *impatient* of the slow process of argument; weary of meeting objections, and of stating the consequences of a denial of the doctrine; and longing to give utterance *to what he knew*, that Christ was risen from the dead. That was a point on which he was certain. He had seen him after he was risen; and he could no more doubt this fact than he could any other which he had witnessed with his own eyes. He makes, therefore, this strong affirmation; and in doing it, he at the same time affirms that the dead will also rise, since he had shown (1Co 15:12-18) that all the objection to the doctrine of the resurrection was removed by the *fact* that Christ had risen, and had shown that his resurrection involved the certainty that his people also would rise. There is peculiar force in the word "*now*" in this verse. The meaning may be thus expressed: "I have shown the consequences which would follow from the supposition that Christ was not raised up. I have shown how it would destroy all our hopes, plunge us into grief, annihilate our faith, make our preaching vain, and involve us in the belief that our pious friends have perished, and that we are yet in our sins. I have shown how it would produce the deepest disappointment and misery. *But*, all this was mere supposition. There is no reason to apprehend any such consequences, or to be thus alarmed. *Christ is risen*. Of that there is no doubt. That is not to be called in question. It is established by irrefragable testimony; and *consequently* our hopes are not vain, our faith is not useless, our pious friends have not perished, and we shall not be disappointed."

And become the firstfruits. The word rendered *firstfruits* (*aparch* occurs in the New Testament in the following places: Ro 8:23, **See Barnes "Ro 8:23, Ro 11:16 16:5;** 1Co 15:20,23

Jas 1:18 Re 14:4. It occurs often in the Seventy as the translation of

HEBREW, *fat*, or fatness, (Nu 18:12,29,30,32;) as the translation of

HEBREW, the tenth, or tithe, (De 12:6;) of

HEBREW, iniquity, (Nu 18:1;) of

HEBREW, the beginning, the commencement, the first, (Ex 23:19 Le 23:10; Nu 15:18,19, etc.;) of

HEBREW, oblation, offering; lifting up; of that which is lifted up or waved as the first sheaf of the harvest, etc., Ex 25:2,3, 35:5

Nu 5:9 18:8, etc. The first-fruits, or the first sheaf of ripe grain, was required to be offered to the Lord, and was waved before him by the priest, as expressing the sense of gratitude by the husbandman, and his recognition of the fact that God had a right to all that he had, Le 23:10-14. The word, therefore, comes to have two senses, or to involve two ideas:

(1.) That which is *first*, the beginning, or that which has the priority of time; and

(2) that which is a part and portion of the whole which is to follow, and which is the earnest or pledge of that; as the first sheaf of ripe grain was not only the *first* in order of time, but was the earnest or pledge of the entire harvest which was soon to succeed. In allusion to this, Paul uses the word here. It was not merely or mainly that Christ was the first in order of time that rose from the dead—for Lazarus and the widow's son had been raised before him—but it was that he was chief in regard to the dignity, value, and importance of his rising; he was connected with all that should rise, as the first sheaf of the harvest was with the crop; he was a *part* of the mighty harvest of the resurrection, and his rising was *a portion* of that great rising, as the sheaf was a portion of the harvest itself; and he was so connected with them all, and their rising so depended on his, that his resurrection was a demonstration that they would rise. It may also be implied here, as Grotius and Schoettgen have remarked, that he is the first of those who were raised so as not to die again; and that, therefore, those raised by Elisha and by the Saviour himself do not come into the account. They all died again; but the Saviour will not die, nor will those whom he will raise up in the resurrection die any more. He is, therefore, the first of those that thus rise, and a portion of that great host which shall be raised to die no more. *May* there not be another idea? The first sheaf of the harvest was consecrated to God, and then all the harvest was regarded as consecrated to him. May it not be implied that, by the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, all those of whom he speaks are regarded as sacred to God, and as consecrated and accepted by the resurrection and acceptance of Him who was the first-fruits?

Of them that slept. Of the pious dead. **See Barnes "1Co 15:6"**.

{b} "now is" 1Pe 1:3 {c} "first fruits" Ac 26:23 Col 1:18; Re 1:5

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *For since by man came death*. By Adam, or by means of his transgression. See 1Co 15:22. The sense is, evidently, that in consequence of the sin of Adam all men die, or are subjected to temporal death. Or, in other words, man would not have died had it not been for the crime of the first man. **See Barnes "Ro 5:12"**.

This passage may be regarded as proof that death would not have entered the world had it not been for transgression; or, in other words, if man had not sinned, he would have remained immortal on the earth, or would have been translated to heaven, as Enoch and Elijah were, without seeing death. The apostle here, by "man," undoubtedly refers to Adam; but the particular and specific idea

which he intends to insist on is, that as death came by human nature, or by a human being, by a man, so it was important and proper that immortality, or freedom from death, should come in the same way, by one who was a man. Man introduced death; man also would recover from death. The evil was introduced by one man; the recovery would be by another.

By man came also. By the Lord Jesus, the Son of God in human nature. The resurrection came by him, because he first rose—first of those who should not again die; because he proclaimed the doctrine, and placed it on a firm foundation; and because by his power the dead will be raised up. Thus he came to counteract the evils of the fall, and to restore man to more than his primeval dignity and honour. The resurrection through Christ win be with the assurance that all who are raised up by him shall never die again.

{d} "For since" Ro 5:12,17 {e} "came death, by man" Joh 11:25

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *For as in Adam*. *en tw adam*. By Adam; by the act, or by means of Adam; as a consequence of his act. His deed was the procuring cause, or the reason, why all are subjected to temporal death. See Ge 3:19. It does not mean that all men became actually dead when he sinned, for they had not then an existence; but it must mean that the death of all can be traced to him as the procuring cause, and that his act made it certain that all that came into the world would be mortal. The sentence which went forth against him (Ge 3:19) went forth against all; affected all; involved all in the certainty of death; as the sentence that was passed on the serpent (Ge 3:14) made it certain that all serpents would be "cursed above all cattle," and be prone upon the earth; the sentence that was passed upon the woman (Ge 3:16) made it certain that all women would be subjected to the same condition of suffering to which Eve was subjected; and the sentence that was passed on man, (Ge 3:17)—that he should cultivate the ground in sorrow all the days of his life, that it should bring forth thistles and thorns to him, (Ge 3:18,) that he should eat bread in the sweat of his brow, (Ge 3:19)—made it certain that this would be the condition of all men as well as of Adam. It was a blow at the head of the human family, and they were subjected to the same train of evils as he was himself. In like manner they were subjected to death. It was done in Adam, or *by* Adam, in the same way as it was in him, or by him, that they were subjected to toil, and to the Necessity of procuring food by the sweat of the brow. **See Barnes** "Ro 5:12, also notes on Ro 5:13-19. See 1Co 15:47,48.

All die. All mankind are subjected to temporal death; or are mortal. This passage has been often adduced to prove that all mankind became sinful in Adam, or in virtue of a covenant transaction with him; and that they are subjected to spiritual death as a punishment for his sins. But, whatever may be the truth on that subject, it is clear that *this* passage does not relate to it, and should not be adduced as a proof text. For

(1.) the words *die* and *dieth* obviously and usually refer to temporal death; and they should be so understood, unless there is something in the connexion which requires us to understand them in a figurative and metaphorical sense. But there is, evidently, no such necessity here.

(2.) The context requires us to understand this as relating to temporal death. There is not here, as there is in Ro 5, any intimation that men became sinners in consequence of the transgression of Adam; nor does the course of the apostle's argument require him to make any statement on that subject. His argument has reference to the subject of temporal death, and the resurrection of the dead; and not to the question in what way men became sinners.

(3.) The whole of this argument relates to the *resurrection of the dead*. That is the main, the leading, the exclusive point. He is demonstrating that the dead would rise. He is showing how this would be done. It became, therefore, important for him to show in what way men were subjected to temporal death. His argument, therefore, requires him to make a statement on that point, and that only; and to show that the resurrection by Christ was adapted to meet and overcome the evils of the death to which men were subjected by the sin of the first man. In Ro 5 the design of Paul is to prove that the effects of the work of Christ were more than sufficient to meet ALL the evils introduced by the sin of Adam. This leads him to an examination there of the question in what way men became sinners. *Here* the design is to show that the work of Christ is adapted to overcome the evils of the sin of Adam in *one specific matter—the matter under discussion*; that is, on the point of the resurrection; and his argument therefore requires him to show only that temporal death, or mortality, was introduced by the first man, and that this has been counteracted by the second; and to this specific point the interpretation of this passage should be confined. Nothing is more important in interpreting the Bible than to ascertain the specific point in the argument of a writer to be defended or illustrated, and then to confine the interpretation to that. The argument of the apostle here is ample to prove that all men are subjected to temporal death by the sin of Adam; and that this evil is counteracted fully by the resurrection of Christ, and the resurrection through him. And to this point the passage should be limited.

(4.) If this passage means that in Adam, or by him, all men became sinners, then the correspondent declaration, "all shall be made alive," must mean that all men shall become righteous, or that all shall be saved. This would be the natural and obvious interpretation; since the words "be made alive" must have reference to the words "all die," and must affirm the correlative and opposite fact. If the phrase "all die" there means all become sinners, then the phrase "all be made alive" must mean all shall be made holy, or be recovered from their spiritual death; and thus an obvious argument is furnished for the doctrine of universal salvation, which it is difficult, if not impossible, to meet. It is not a sufficient answer to this to say that the word "all," in the latter part of the sentence, means all the elect, or all the righteous; for its most natural and obvious meaning is, that it is co-extensive with the word "all" in the former, part of the verse. And although it has been held by many who suppose that the passage refers only to the resurrection of the dead, that it means that all the righteous shall be raised up, or all who are given to Christ, yet that interpretation is not the obvious one, nor is it yet sufficiently clear to make it the basis of an argument, or to meet the strong argument which the advocate of universal salvation will derive from the former interpretation of the passage. It *is* true *literally* that ALL the dead will rise; it is *not* true literally that all who became mortal, or became sinners by means of Adam, will be saved. And it must be held as a great principle, that this passage is not to be so interpreted as to teach the doctrine of the salvation of all men. At least, this may be adopted as a principle in the argument with those who adduce it to prove that all men became sinners by the transgression of Adam. This passage, therefore, should not be adduced in proof of the doctrine of imputation, or as relating to the question how men became sinners, but should be limited to the subject that was immediately under discussion in the argument of the apostle. *That*

object was, to show that the doctrine of the resurrection by Christ was such as to meet the obvious doctrine that men became mortal by Adam; or that the one was adapted to counteract the other.

Even so. *outw*. In this manner; referring not merely to the certainty of the event, but to the mode or manner. As the death of all was occasioned by the sin of one, even so, in like manner, the resurrection of all shall be produced by one. His resurrection shall meet and counteract the evils introduced by the other, so far as the subject under discussion is concerned; that is, so far as relates to temporal death.

In christ. By Christ; in virtue of him; or as the result of his death and resurrection. Many commentators have supposed that the word "all" here refers only to believers, meaning all who were united to Christ, or all who were his friends; all included in a covenant with him; as the word "all," in the former member of the sentence, means all who were included in the covenant with Adam—that is, all mankind. But to this view there are manifest objections.

(1.) It is not the *obvious* sense; it is not that which will occur to the great mass of men who interpret the Scriptures on the principles of common sense; it is an interpretation which is to be made out by reasoning and by theology—always a suspicious circumstance in interpreting the Bible.

(2.) It is not necessary. All the wicked will be raised up from the dead, as well as all the righteous, Da 12:2 Joh 5:28,29.

(3.) The form of the passage requires us to understand the word "all" in the same sense in both members, unless there be some indispensable necessity for limiting the one or the other.

(4.) The argument of the apostle requires this. For his object is to show that the effect of the sin of Adam, by introducing *temporal* death, will be counteracted by Christ in raising up all who die; which would not be shown if the apostle meant to say that only a part of those who had died in consequence of the sin of Adam would be raised up. The argument would then be inconclusive. But now it is complete, if it be shown that *all* shall be raised up, whatever may become of them afterwards. The sceptre of death shall be broken, and his dominion destroyed, by the fact that ALL shall be raised up from the dead.

Be made alive. Be raised from the dead; be made alive, in a sense contradistinguished from that in which he here says they were subjected to death by Adam. If it should be held that *that* means that all were made sinners by him, then this means, as has been observed, that all shall be made righteous—and the doctrine of universal salvation has an unanswerable argument; if it means, as it obviously does, that all were subjected to temporal death by him, then it means that all shall be raised from the dead by Christ.

{*} "in Christ" "by Christ"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *But every man*. Every one, including Christ as well as others.

In his own order. In his proper order, rank, place, time. The word *tagma* usually relates to military order or array; to the arrangement of a cohort, or band of troops; to their being properly marshalled with the officers at the head, and every man in his proper place in the ranks. Here it

means that there was a proper *order* to be observed in the resurrection of the dead. And the design of the apostle is, probably, to counteract the idea that the resurrection was passed already, or that there was no future resurrection to be expected. The *order* which is here referred to is, doubtless, mainly that of *time*; meaning that Christ would be first, and then that the others would follow. But it also means that Christ would be first, because it was *proper* that he should be first. He was first in rank, in dignity, and in honour; he was the leader of all others, and their resurrection depended on his. And as it was proper that a leader or commander should have the first place on a march, or in an enterprise involving peril or glory, so it was proper that Christ should be first in the resurrection, and that the others should follow on in due order and time.

Christ the first-fruits. Christ first in time, and the pledge that they should rise. **See Barnes "1Co 15:20".**

Afterward. After he has risen. Not before, because their resurrection depended on him.

They that are Christ's. They who are Christians. The apostle, though in 1Co 15:22 he had stated the truth that all the dead would rise, yet here only mentions Christians, because to them only would the doctrine be of any consolation, and because it was to them particularly that this whole argument was directed.

At his coming. When he shall come to judge the world, and to receive his people to himself. This proves that the dead will not be raised until Christ shall reappear. He shall come for that purpose; and he shall assemble all the dead, and shall take his people to himself. See Mt 25. And this declaration fully met the opinion of those who held that the resurrection was past already. See 2Ti 2:18.

{a} "But every man" 1Th 4:15-17

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Then cometh the end*. Then *is* the end; or then is the consummation. It does not mean that the end, or consummation, is to follow that event; but that this will be the ending, the winding up, the consummation of the affairs under the mediatorial reign of Christ. The word *end* (*telov*) denotes, properly, a limit, termination, completion of anything. The proper and obvious meaning of the word here is, that then shall be the end or completion of the work of redemption. That shall have been done which was intended to be done by the incarnation and the work of the atonement; the race shall be redeemed; the friends of God shall be completely recovered; and the administration of the affairs of the universe shall be conducted as they were before the incarnation of the Redeemer. Some understand the word "end" here, however, as a metaphor, meaning "the last, or the rest of the dead;" but this is a forced and improbable interpretation. The word end here may refer to the end of human affairs, or the end of the kingdoms of this world; or it may refer to the end of the mediatorial kingdom of the Redeemer— the consummation of his peculiar reign and work resulting in the surrender of the kingdom to the Father. The connexion demands the last interpretation, though this involves also the former.

When he shall have delivered up. *paradw*. This word means, properly, to give *near*, *with*, or *to* any one; to give over, to deliver up. —*Robinson*. It is applied to the act of delivering up persons to

the power or authority of others—as, e.g., to magistrates for trial and condemnation, (Mt 5:25 Mr 15:1; Lu 20:20;) to lictors, or soldiers, for punishment, (Mt 18:34;) or to one's enemies, Mt 26:15. It is applied also to persons or things delivered over or surrendered, to do or suffer anything, Ac 14:26 1Co 13:3; Eph 4:19.

It is also applied to persons or things delivered over to the care, charge, or supervision of any one, in the sense of giving up, intrusting, committing, Mt 11:27 25:14; Lu 4:6 10:22.

Here the obvious sense is that of surrendering, giving back, delivering up, rendering up that which had been received, implying that an important trust had been received, which was now to be rendered back. And according to this interpretation it means,

(1.) that the Lord Jesus had received or been intrusted with an important power or office as Mediator, **See Barnes "Mt 18:18"**;

(2.) that he had executed the purpose implied in that trust or commission; and,

(3.) that he was now rendering back to God that office or authority which he had received at his hands. As the work had been accomplished which had been contemplated in his design; as there would be no further necessity for mediation when redemption should have been made, and his church recovered from sin and brought to glory, there would be no further need of that *peculiar* arrangement which had been implied in the work of redemption, and, of course, all the intrustment of power involved in that would be again restored to the hands of God. The idea, says Grotius, is, that he would deliver up the kingdom as the governors of provinces render again or deliver up their commission and authority to the Caesars who appointed them. There is no absurdity in this view. For if the world was to be redeemed, it was necessary that the Redeemer should be intrusted with power sufficient for his work. When that work was done, and there was no further need of that peculiar exercise of power, then it would be proper that it should be restored, or that the government of God should be administered as it was before the work of redemption was undertaken; that the Divinity, or the God-head, as such, should preside over the destinies of the universe. Of course, it will not follow that the Second Person of the Trinity will surrender all power, or *cease* to exercise government. It will be that power only which he had as Mediator; and whatever part in the administration of the government of the universe he shared as Divine before the incarnation, he will *still* share, with the additional *glory and honour* of having redeemed a world by his death.

The kingdom. This word means properly dominion, reign, the exercise of kingly power. In the New Testament it means commonly the reign of the Messiah, or the dominion which God would exercise through the Messiah; the reign of God over men by the laws and institutions of the Messiah. **See Barnes "Mt 3:2"**.

Here it means, I think, evidently, dominion in general. It cannot denote the peculiar administration over the world involved in the work of mediation, for that will be ended; but it means that the empire, the sovereignty, shall have been delivered up to God. His enemies shall have been subdued. His power shall have been asserted. The authority of God shall have been established, and the kingdom, or the dominion, shall be in the hands of God himself; and he shall reign, not in the peculiar form which existed in the work of mediation, but absolutely, and as he did over obedient minds before the incarnation.

To God. To God *as* God; to the Divinity. The Mediator shall have given up the peculiar power and rule as Mediator, and it shall be exercised by God as God.

Even the Father. And (*kai*) the Father. The word *Father*, as applied to God in the Scriptures, is used in two senses: to designate *the* Father, the first person of the Trinity as distinguished from

the Son; and in a broader, wider sense, to denote God as sustaining the relation of a Father to his creatures—as the Father of all. Instances of this use are too numerous to be here particularly referred to. It is in this latter sense, perhaps, that the word is used here—not to denote that the second person of the Trinity is to surrender all power into the hands of the first, or that he is to cease to exercise dominion and control; but that the power is to be yielded into the hands of God as God, i.e., as the universal Father, as the Divinity, without being exercised in any peculiar and special manner by the different persons of the Godhead, as had been done in the work of redemption. At the close of the work of redemption this peculiar arrangement would cease; and God, as the universal Father and Ruler of all, would exercise the government of the world. **See Barnes "1Co 15:28"**.

When he shall have put down. When he shall have *abolished*, or brought to nought, all that opposed the reign of God.

All rule, etc. All those mighty powers that opposed God and resisted his reign. The words here used do not seem intended to denote the several departments or forms of opposition, but to be general terms, meaning that whatever opposed God should be subdued. They include, of course, the kingdoms of this world; the sins, pride, and corruption of the human heart; the powers of darkness-the spiritual dominions that oppose God on earth and in hell, and death and the grave. All shall be completely subdued, and cease to interpose any obstacles to the advancement of his kingdom and to his universal reign. A monarch reigns when all his enemies are subdued or destroyed; or when they are prevented from opposing his will, even though all should not voluntarily submit to his will. The following remarks of Prof. Bush present a plausible and ingenious view of this difficult passage, and they are, therefore, subjoined here.

"If the opinion of the eminent critic, Storr, may be admitted, that the kingdom here said to be delivered up to the Father is *not* the kingdom of Christ, but the rule and dominion of all adverse powers,—an opinion rendered very probable by the following words: 'when he shall have *put down* (Gr., done away, abolished) all rule, and all authority and power' — and 1Co 15:25, 'till he hath put all enemies under his feet,'—then is the passage of identical import with Re 11:15, referring to precisely the same period:' And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.' It is therefore, we conceive, but a peculiar mode of denoting the *transfer*, the *making over* of the kingdoms of this world from their former despotic and antichristian rulers to the sovereignty of Jesus Christ, the appointed heir and head of all things, whose kingdom is to be everlasting. If this interpretation be correct, we are prepared to advance a step farther, and suggest that the phrase, *he shall have delivered up*, (Greek, paradw,) be understood as an instance of the idiom in which the verb

is used without any personal nominative, but has reference to the *purpose of God as expressed in the Scriptures*; so that the passage may be read, Then cometh the end, (i.e., not the close, the final winding up, but the perfect development, expansion, completion, consummation of the Divine plans in regard to this world,) when the prophetic announcements of the Scriptures require the delivering up (i.e., the making over) of all adverse dominion into the hands of the Messiah, to whose supremacy we are taught to expect that everything will finally be made subject."—

Illustrations of Scripture. A more extended examination of this difficult passage may be seen in Storr's Opuscala, vol. i., pp. 274—282. See also Biblical Repository, vol. iii., pp. 748—755.

{a} "kingdom to God" Da 7:14,27

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *For he must reign*. It is fit, or proper, (*dei*,) that he should reign till this is accomplished. It is proper that the mediator kingdom should continue till this great work is effected. The word "must" here refers to the propriety of this continuance of his reign, and to the fact that this was contemplated and predicted as the work which he would accomplish. He came to subdue all his enemies. See Ps 2:6-10 90:1, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Paul, doubtless, had this passage in his eye as affirming the necessity that he should reign until all his foes should be subdued. That this refers to the Messiah is abundantly clear from Mt 22:44,45.

{a} "he must reign" Ps 2:6-10 45:3-6, 90:1 Eph 1:22; Heb 1:13

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death*. The other foes of God should be subdued before the final resurrection. The enmity of the human heart should be subdued by the triumphs of the gospel. The sceptre of Satan should be broken and wrested from him. The false systems of religion that had tyrannized over men should be destroyed. The gospel should have spread everywhere, and the world be converted to God. And nothing should remain but to subdue or destroy death, and that would be by the resurrection. It would be,

(1.) because the resurrection would be a *triumph* over death, showing that there was one of greater power, and that the sceptre would be wrested from the hands of death.

(2.) Because death would cease to reign. No more would ever die. All that should be raised up would live for ever; and the effects of sin and rebellion in this world would be thus for ever ended, and the kingdom of God restored. Death is here personified as a tyrant, exercising despotic power over the human race; and he is to be subdued.

{b} "be destroyed is death" Hos 13:14 2Ti 1:10; Re 20:14

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *For he hath put*. God has put by promise, purpose, or decree.

All things under his feet. He has made all things subject to him; or has appointed him to be head over all things. Compare Mt 28:18 Joh 17:2; Eph 1:20-22.

It is evident that Paul here refers to some promise or prediction respecting the Messiah, though he does not expressly quote any passage, or make it certain to what he refers. The *words* "hath put all things under his feet" are found in Ps 8:6, as applicable to man, and as designed to show the dignity and dominion of man. Whether the psalm has any reference to the Messiah has been made a question. Those who are disposed to see an examination of this question may find it in Stuart on the Hebrews, on chap. ii. 6—8; and in Excursus ix. of the same work, pp. 568—570; Ed. 1833. In the passage before us, it is not *necessary* to suppose that Paul meant to say that the psalm had a particular reference to the Messiah. All that is implied is, that it was the intention of God to subdue all things to him; this was the general strain of the prophecies in regard to him; this was the purpose of God; and this idea is accurately expressed in the words of the psalm; or these words will convey the *general sense* of the prophetic writings in regard to the Messiah. It may be true, also, that although the passage in Ps 8 has no immediate and direct reference to the Messiah, yet it *includes* him as one who possessed human nature. The psalm may be understood as affirming that all things were subjected to *human nature*; i.e., human nature had dominion and control over all. But this was more particularly and eminently true of the Messiah than of any other man. In all other cases, great as was the dignity of man, yet his control over "all things" was limited and partial. In the Messiah it was to be complete and entire. His dominion, therefore, was a complete *fulfilment*, i. e., *filling up* (*plhrwma*) of the words in the psalm. Under Him alone was there to be an entire accomplishment of what is there said; and as that psalm was to be fulfilled, as it was to be true that it might be said of man that all things were subject to him, it was to be fulfilled mainly in the person of the Messiah, whose human nature was to be exalted above all things. Compare Heb 2:6-9.

But when he saith. When God says; or when it is said; when that promise is made respecting the Messiah.

It is manifest. It must be so; it must be so understood and interpreted.

That he is excepted, etc. That God is excepted; that it cannot mean that the appointing power is to be subject to him. Paul may have made this remark for several reasons. Perhaps,

(1.) to avoid the possibility of cavil, or misconstruction of the phrase, "all things," as if it meant that God would be included, and would be subdued to him; as, among the heathen, Jupiter is fabled to have expelled his father Saturn from his throne and from heaven.

(2.) It might be to prevent the supposition, from what Paul had said of the extent of the Son's dominion, that he was in any respect superior to the Father. It is implied by this exception here, that when the necessity for the peculiar mediatorial kingdom of the Son should cease, there would be a resuming of the authority and dominion of the Father, in the manner in which it subsisted before the incarnation.

(3.) The expression may also be regarded as intensive or emphatic; as denoting, in the most absolute sense, that there was *nothing* in the universe, but God, which was not subject to him. God was the *only* exception; and his dominion, therefore, was absolute over all other beings and things.

{c} "he hath put" Ps 8:6

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *And when*, etc. In this future time, when this shall be accomplished. This implies that the time has not yet arrived, and that his dominion is now exercised, and that he is carrying forward his plans for the subjugation of all things to God.

Shall be subdued unto him. Shall be brought under subjection. When all his enemies shall be overcome and destroyed; or when the hearts of the redeemed shall be entirely subject to God. When God's kingdom shall be fully established over the universe. It shall then be seen that he is Lord of all. In the previous verses he had spoken of the promise that all things should be subjected to God; in this he speaks of its being actually done.

Then shall the Son also himself be subject, etc. It has been proposed to render this, "even then shall the Son," etc.; implying, that he *had* been all along subject to God; had acted under his authority; and that this subjection would continue even then in a sense similar to that in which it had existed; and that Christ would then continue to exercise a delegated authority over his people and kingdom. See an article "on the duration of Christ's kingdom," by Prof. Mills, in Bib. Rep. vol. iii. p. 748, seq. But to this interpretation there are objections.

(1.) It is not the obvious interpretation.

(2.) It does not seem to comport with the design and scope of the passage, which most evidently refers to some change, or rendering back of the authority of the Messiah; or to some resumption of authority by the Divinity, or by God as God, in a different sense from what existed under the Messiah.

(3.) Such a statement would be unnecessary and vain. Who could reasonably doubt that the Son would be as much subject to God when all things had been subdued to him as he was before?

(4.) It is not necessary to suppose this in order to reconcile the passage with what is said of the perpetuity of Christ's kingdom and his eternal reign. That he would reign—that his kingdom would be perpetual, and that it would be unending—was indeed clearly predicted. See 2Sa 7:16 Ps 45:6; Isa 9:6,7; Da 2:44 7:14; Lu 1:32,33; Heb 1:8.

But these predictions may be all accomplished on the supposition that the peculiar mediatorial kingdom of the Messiah shah be given up to God, and that he shall be subject to him. For

(a.) his kingdom will be perpetual, in contradistinction from the kingdoms of this world. They are fluctuating, changing, short in their duration. His shall not cease, and shall continue to the end of time.

(b.) His kingdom shall be perpetual, because those who are brought under the laws of God, by him, shall remain subject to those laws for ever. The sceptre never shall be broken, and the kingdom shall abide to all eternity.

(c.) Christ, the Son of God, in his Divine nature, *as God*, shall never cease to reign. As Mediator, he may resign his commission and his peculiar office, having made an atonement, having recovered his people, having protected and guided them to heaven. Yet, as one with the Father, as the "Father of the everlasting age," (Isa 9:6,) he shall not cease to reign. The functions of a peculiar office may have been discharged, and delegated power laid down, and that which appropriately belongs to him in virtue of his own nature and relations may be resumed and executed for ever; and it shall still be true that the reign of the Son of God, in union, or in oneness with the Father, shall continue for ever.

(5.) The interpretation which affirms that the Son shall then be subject to the Father, in the sense of laying down his delegated authority, and ceasing to exercise his mediatorial reign, has been the common interpretation of all times. This remark is of value only because, in the interpretation of plain words, it is not probable that men of all classes and ranks in different ages would err.

The Son also himself. The term "Son of God" is applied to the Lord Jesus with reference to his human nature, his incarnation by the Holy Ghost, and his resurrection from the dead. **See Barnes "Ro 1:4".**

It refers, I apprehend, to that in this place. It does not mean that the second person in the Trinity, as such, should be subject to the first; but it means the incarnate Son, the Mediator,—the man that was born and that was raised from the dead, and to whom this wide dominion had been given,—should resign that dominion, and that the government should be reassumed by the Divinity as God. As man, he shall cease to exercise any distinct dominion. This does not mean, evidently, that the union of the divine and human nature will be dissolved; nor that important purposes may not be answered by that continued union for ever; nor that the divine perfections may not shine forth in some glorious way through the man Christ Jesus; but that *the purpose of government* shall no longer be exercised in that way; the mediatorial kingdom, as such, shall no longer be continued, and power shall be exercised by God as God. The redeemed will still adore their Redeemer as their incarnate God, and dwell upon the remembrance of his work and upon his perfections, (Re 1:5,6, 5:12 11:16;) but not as exercising the peculiar power which he now has, and which was needful to effect their redemption.

That God may be all in all. That God may be SUPREME; that the Divinity, the Godhead, may rule; and that it may be seen that he is the Sovereign over all the universe. By the word "God" (*o yedv*) Whitby and Hammond, I think correctly, understand the Godhead, the Divine Nature, the Divinity, consisting of the Three Persons, without respect to any peculiar office or kingdom.

{d} "shall be subdued" Php 3:21 {a} "unto him that put" 1Co 11:3

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Else what shall they do*, etc. The apostle here resumes the argument for the resurrection which was interrupted at 1Co 15:19. He goes on to state further consequences which must follow from the denial of this doctrine, and thence infers that the doctrine must be true. There is, perhaps, no passage of the New Testament in respect to which there has been a greater variety of interpretation than this; and the views of expositors now by no means harmonize in regard to its meaning. It is possible that Paul may here refer to some practice or custom which existed in his time respecting baptism, the knowledge of which is now lost. The various opinions which have been entertained in regard to this passage, together with an examination of them, may be seen in Pool's Synopsis, Rosenmuller, and Bloomfield. It may be not useless just to refer to some of them, that the perplexity of commentators may be seen.

(1.) It has been held by some, that by "the dead" here is meant the Messiah who was put to death, the plural being used for the singular, meaning "the dead one."

(2.) By others, that the word baptized here is taken in the sense of washing, cleansing, purifying, as in Mr 7:4 Heb 9:10 and that the sense is, that the dead were carefully washed and purified when buried, with the hope of the resurrection, and, as it were, preparatory to that.

(3.) By others, that to be baptized for the dead means to be baptized *as* dead, being baptized into Christ, and buried with him in baptism, and that by their immersion they were regarded as dead.

(4.) By others, that the apostle refers to a custom of vicarious baptism, or being baptized for those who were dead, referring to the practice of having some person baptized in the place of one who had died without baptism. This was the opinion of Grotius, Michaelis, Tertullian, and Ambrose. Such was the estimate which was formed, it is supposed, of the importance of baptism, that when one had died without being baptized, some other person was baptized over his dead body in his place. That this custom prevailed in the church after the time of Paul has been abundantly proved by Grotius, and is generally admitted. But the objections to this interpretation are obvious.

(a.) There is no evidence that such a custom prevailed in the time of Paul.

(b.) It cannot be believed that Paul would give countenance to a custom so senseless and so contrary to the Scripture, or that he would make it the foundation of a solemn argument.

(c.) It does not accord with the strain and purpose of his argument, If this custom had been referred to, his design would have led him to say, "What will become of them *for whom* others have been baptized? Are we to believe that they have perished?"

(d.) It is far more probable that the custom referred to in this opinion arose from an erroneous interpretation of this passage of Scripture, than that it existed in the time of Paul.

(5.) There remain two other opinions, both of which are plausible, and one of which is probably the true one. One is, that the word *baptized* is used here as it is in Mt 20:22,23; Mr 10:39

Lu 12:50, in the sense of being overwhelmed with calamities, trials, and sufferings; and as meaning that the apostles and others were subjected to great trials on account of the dead, i.e., in the hope of the resurrection, or with the expectation that the dead would rise. This is the opinion of Lightfoot, Rosenmuller, Pearce, Hornberg, Krause, and of Prof. Robinson, (Lex. art. *baptizw*) and has much that is plausible. That the word is thus used to denote a deep sinking into calamities, there can be no doubt. And that the apostles and early Christians subjected themselves, or were

subjected, to great and overwhelming calamities on account of the hope of the resurrection, is equally clear. This interpretation also agrees with the general tenor of the argument; and is an argument for the resurrection. And it implies that this was the full and constant belief of all who endured these trials, that there would be a resurrection of the dead. The *argument* would be, that they should be slow to adopt an opinion which would imply that all their sufferings were endured for nought, and that God had supported them in this in vain; that God had plunged them into all these sorrows, and had sustained them in them only to disappoint them. That this view is plausible, and that it suits the strain of remark in the *following* verses, is evident. But there are objections to it.

(a.) It is not the usual and natural meaning of the word baptize.

(b.) A metaphorical use of a word should not be resorted to unless necessary.

(c.) The literal meaning of the word here will as well meet the design of the apostle as the metaphorical.

(d.) This interpretation does not relieve us from any of the difficulties in regard to the phrase "for the dead;" and

(e.) it is altogether more natural to suppose that the apostle would derive his argument from the baptism of *all* who were Christians, than from the figurative baptism of a few who went into the perils of martyrdom. The other opinion therefore is, that the apostle here refers to *baptism* as administered to all believers. This is the most correct opinion; is the most simple, and best meets the design of the argument. According to this, it means that they had been baptized with the hope and expectation of a resurrection of the dead. They had received this as one of the leading doctrines of the gospel when they were baptized. It was a part of their full and firm belief that the dead would rise. The *argument* according to this interpretation is, that this was an essential article of the faith of a Christian; that it was embraced by all; that it constituted a part of their very profession; and that for any one to deny it, was to deny that which entered into the very foundation of the Christian faith. If they embraced a different doctrine, if they denied the doctrine of the resurrection, they struck a blow at the very nature of Christianity, and dashed all the hopes which had been cherished and expressed at their baptism. And what could they do? What would become of them? What would be the destiny of all who were thus baptized? Was it to be believed that all their hopes at baptism were vain, and that they would all perish? As such a belief could not be entertained, the apostle infers that, if they held to Christianity at all, they must hold to this doctrine as apart of their very profession. According to this view, the phrase "for the dead" means, with reference to the dead; with direct allusion to the condition of the dead, and their hopes; with a belief that the dead will rise. It is evident that the passage is elliptical, and this seems to be as probable as any interpretation which has been suggested. Mr. Locke says, frankly, "What this baptizing for the dead was, I know not; but it seems, by the following verses, to be something wherein they exposed themselves to the danger of death." Tindal translates it, "*over* the dead." Doddridge renders it, "*in the room of the dead*, who are just fallen in the cause of Christ, but are yet supported by a succession of new converts, who immediately offer themselves to fill up their places, as ranks of soldiers that advance to the combat in the room of their companions who have just been slain in their sight."

{b} "which are baptized" Ro 6:3,4 {*} "for the dead" "in the place of"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *And why stand we in jeopardy*. Why do we constantly risk our lives, and encounter danger of every kind. This refers particularly to Paul himself and the other apostles, who were constantly exposed to peril by land or by sea in the arduous work of making known the gospel. The argument here is plain. It is, that such efforts would be vain, useless, foolish, unless there was to be a glorious resurrection. They had no other object in encountering these dangers than to make known the truths connected with that glorious future state; and if there were no such future state, it would be wise for them to avoid these dangers. "It would not be supposed that we would encounter these perils constantly, unless we were sustained with the hope of the resurrection, and unless we had evidence which convinced our own minds that there would be such a resurrection."

Every hour? Constantly. Comp. 2Co 11:26. So numerous were their dangers, that they might be said to occur every hour. This was particularly the case in the instance to which he refers in Ephesus, 1Co 15:32.

{a} "in jeopardy" 2Co 11:26 {*} "jeopardy" "danger"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *I protest, nh*. This is a particle of swearing, and denotes a strong asseveration. The subject was important; it deeply interested his feelings; and he makes in regard to it a strong protestation. Compare Joh 3:5. "I solemnly affirm, or declare."

By your rejoicing. Many Mss. here read "by *our* rejoicing," but the correct reading is, doubtless, that which is in the present Greek text, "by your rejoicing." The meaning of the phrase, which is admitted by all to be obscure, is probably, "I protest, or solemnly declare by the glorying or exultation which I have on your account; by all my ground of glorying in you; by all the confident boasting and expectation which I have of your salvation." He hoped for their salvation. He had laboured for that. He had boasted of it, and confidently believed that they would be saved. Regarding that as safe and certain, he says it was just as certain that he died daily on account of the hope and belief of the resurrection. "By our hopes and joys as Christians; by our dearest expectations and grounds of confidence, I swear, or solemnly declare, that I die daily." Men swear or affirm by their objects of dearest affection and desire; and the meaning here is, "So certainly as I confidently expect your salvation, and so certainly as we look to eternal life, so certain is it that I am constantly exposed to die, and suffer that which may be called a daily death?"

Which I have in Christ Jesus. The rejoicing, boasting, glorying in regard to you which I am permitted to cherish through the grace and favour of the Saviour. His boasting, or confident expectation in regard to the Corinthians, he enjoyed only by the mercy of the Lord Jesus, and he delighted to trace it to him.

I die daily. Comp. Ro 8:36. I endure so many sufferings and persecutions, that it may be said to be a daily dying. I am constantly in danger of my life; and my sufferings each day are equal to the pains of death. Probably Paul here referred particularly to the perils and trials which he then

endured at Ephesus; and his object was to impress their minds with the firmness of his belief in the certainty of the resurrection, on account of which he suffered so much, and to show them that all their hopes rested also on this doctrine.

{1} "your" "Some read *our*" {+} "rejoicing" "My glorying on your account" {b} "rejoicing" Php 3:3 {c} "die daily" Ro 8:36

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *If after the manner of men*. Marg., *To speak after the manner of men*. *kata anyrwpon*. There has been a great difference of opinion in regard to the meaning of these words. The following are some of the interpretations proposed:

(1.) If I have fought after the manner of men, who act only with reference to this life, and on the ordinary principles of human conduct, as men fought with wild beasts in the amphitheatre.

(2.) Or if, humanly speaking, or speaking after the manner of men, I have fought, referring to the fact that he had contended with men who should be regarded as wild beasts.

(3.) Or, that I may speak of myself as men speak, that I may freely record the events of my life, and speak of what has occurred.

(4.) Or, I have fought with wild beasts as far as it was possible for man to do it while life survived.

(5.) Or, as much as was in the power of man, who had destined me to this; if, so far as depended on man's will, I fought, supposing that the infuriated multitude demanded that I should be thus punished. So Chrysostom understands it.

(6.) Or, that Paul actually fought with wild beasts at Ephesus.

(7.) Others regard this as a *supposable case*; on the supposition that I *had* fought with wild beasts at Ephesus. Amidst this variety of interpretation, it is not easy to determine the true sense of this difficult passage. The following thoughts, however, may perhaps make it clear:

(1.) Paul refers to some *real* occurrence at Ephesus. This is manifest from the whole passage. It is not a supposable case.

(2.) It was some *one* case when his life was endangered, and when it was regarded as remarkable that he escaped and survived. Comp. 2Co 1:8-10.

(3.) It was *common* among the Romans, and the ancients generally, to expose criminals to fight with wild beasts in the amphitheatre for the amusement of the populace. In such cases it was but another form of dooming them to certain death, since there was no human possibility of escape. See Adams' Rom. Ant., p. 344. That this custom prevailed at the East, is apparent from the following extract from Rosenmuller; and there is no improbability in the supposition that Paul was exposed to this:—

> "The barbarous custom of making men combat with wild beasts
> has prevailed in the East down to the most modern times.
> Jurgen Andersen, who visited the states of the great mogul
> in 1646, gives an account in his Travels of such a combat
> with animals, which he witnessed at Agra, the residence

of the great mogul. His description affords a lively image of those bloody spectacles in which ancient Rome took so much pleasure, and to which the above words of the apostle refer. Alamardan-chan, the governor of Cashmire, who sat among the chans, stood up, and exclaimed, 'It is the will and desire of the great mogul, Schah Choram, that if there be any valiant heroes who will show their bravery by combating with wild beasts, armed with shield and sword, let them come forward; if they conquer, the mogul will load them with great favour, and clothe their countenance with gladness.' Upon this three persons advanced, and offered to undertake the combat. Alamardan-chan again cried aloud, 'None should have any other weapon than a shield and a sword; and whosoever has any breast-plate under his clothes should lay it aside, and fight honourably. Hereupon a powerful lion was let into the garden, and one of the three men above mentioned advanced against him; the lion, on seeing his enemy, ran violently up to him; the man, however, defended himself bravely, and kept off the lion for a good while, till his arms grew tired; the lion then seized the shield with one paw, and with the other his antagonist's right arm, so that he was not able to use his weapon; the latter, seeing his life in danger, took with his left hand his Indian dagger, which he had sticking in his girdle, and thrust it as far as possible into the lion's mouth; the lion then let him go; the man, however, was not idle, but cut the lion almost through with one stroke, and after that entirely to pieces. Upon this victory the common people began to shout, and call out, 'Thank God, he has conquered.' But the mogul said, smiling, to this conqueror, 'Thou art a brave warrior, and hast fought admirably. But did I not command to fight honourably only with shield and sword? But, like a thief, thou hast stolen the life of the lion with thy dagger.' And immediately he ordered two men to rip up his belly, and to place him upon an elephant, and, as an example to others, to lead him about, which was done on the spot. Soon after a tiger was set loose; against which a tall, powerful man advanced with an air of defiance, as if he would cut the tiger up. The tiger, however, was far too sagacious and active; for, in the first attack, he seized the combatant by the neck, tore his throat, and then his whole body in pieces. This enraged another good fellow, but little, and of mean appearance, from whom one would not have expected it: he rushed forward like one mad, and the

tiger on his part undauntedly flew at his enemy; but the man
at the first attack cut off his two fore paws, so that he fell,
and the man cut his body to pieces. Upon this the king cried,
'What is your name?' He answered, 'My name is Geyby.' Soon after
one of the king's servants came and brought him a piece of
gold brocade, and said, 'Geyby, receive the robe of honour
with which the mogul presents you.' He took the garment with
great reverence, kissed it three times, pressing it each time
to his eyes and breast, then held it up, and in silence put
up a prayer for the health of the mogul; and when he
concluded it he cried, "May God let him become as great as
Tamerlane, from whom he is descended. May he live seven
hundred years, and his house continue to eternity!
Upon this he was summoned by a chamberlain to go from the
garden up to the king; and when he came to the entrance, he
was received by two chans, who conducted him between them to
kiss the mogul's feet. And when he was going to retire, the
king said to him, 'Praised be thou, Geyby-chan, for thy
valiant deeds, and this name shalt thou keep to eternity.
I am your gracious master, and thou art my slave.'"
—*Bush's Illustrations*.

(4.) It is the most natural interpretation to suppose that Paul, on some occasion, had such a contest with a wild beast at Ephesus. It is that which would occur to the great mass of the readers of the New Testament as the obvious meaning of the passage.

(5.) The state of things in Ephesus when Paul was there, (Ac 19), was such as to make it nowise improbable that he would be subjected to such a trial.

(6.) It is no objection to this supposition that Luke has not recorded this occurrence in the Acts of the Apostles. No conclusion adverse to this supposition can be drawn from the *mere* silence of the historian. Mere silence is not a contradiction. There is no reason to suppose that Luke designed to record *all* the perils which Paul endured. Indeed, we know from 2Co 11:24-27, that there must have been many dangers which Paul encountered which are not referred to by Luke. It must have happened, also, that many important events must have taken place during Paul's abode at Ephesus which are not recorded by Luke, Ac 19. Nor is it any objection to this supposition that Paul does not, in 2Co 11:24-27 mention particularly this contest with a wild beast at Ephesus. His statement there is general. He does not descend into particulars. Yet, in 2Co 11:23, he says that he was "in deaths oft" —a statement which is in accordance with the supposition that in Ephesus he may have been exposed to death in some cruel manner.

(7.) The phrase *kata anyrwpon* (*as a man*) may mean, that to human appearance, or so far as man was concerned, had it not been for some Divine interposition, he would have been a prey to the wild beasts. Had not God interposed and kept him from harm, as in the case of the viper at Melita, (Ac 28:5,)he would have been put to death. He was sentenced to this; was thrown to the wild beast; had every human prospect of dying; it was done on account of his religion; and, but for the interposition of God, he would have died. This I take to be the fair and obvious meaning of this

passage, demanded alike by the language which is used, and by the tenor of the argument in which it is found.

What advantageth it me? What benefit shall I have? Why should I risk my life in this manner? **See Barnes** "1Co 15:19.

Let us eat and drink. These words are taken from Isa 22:13. In their original application they refer to the Jews when besieged by Sennacherib and the army of the Assyrians. The prophet says, that instead of weeping, and fasting, and humiliation, as became them in such circumstances, they had given themselves up to feasting and revelry, and that their language was, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall die;" that is, there is no use in offering resistance, or in calling upon God. We must die; and we may as well enjoy life as long as it lasts, and give ourselves up to unrestrained indulgence. Paul does not quote these words as having any original reference to the subject of the resurrection, but as language appropriately expressing the idea, that if there is no future state; if no resurrection of the dead; if no happy result of toils and sufferings in the future world, it is vain and foolish to subject ourselves to trials and privations here. We should rather make the most of this life; enjoy all the comfort we can; and make pleasure our chief good, rather than look for happiness in a future state. This seems to be the language of the great mass of the world. They look to no future state. They have no prospect, no desire of heaven; and they, therefore, seek for happiness here, and give themselves up to unrestrained enjoyment in this life.

Tomorrow. Very soon. We have no security of life; and death is so near that it may be said we must die tomorrow.

We die. We must die. The idea here is, we must die, without the prospect of living again, unless the doctrine of the resurrection be true.

{2} "If after the manner" "to speak after" {d} "eat and drink" Ec 2:24 Isa 22:13

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *Be not deceived*. By your false teachers, and by their smooth and plausible arguments. This is an *exhortation*. He had thus far been engaged in an *argument* on the subject. He now entreats them to beware lest they be deceived—a danger to which they were very liable from their circumstances. There was, doubtless, much that was plausible in the objections to the doctrine of the resurrection; there was much subtilty and art in their teachers, who denied this doctrine; perhaps there was something in the character of their own minds, accustomed to subtle and abstruse inquiry rather than to an examination of simple facts, that exposed them to this danger.

Evil communications. The word rendered "communications" means, properly, a being together; companionship; close intercourse; converse. It refers not to *discourse* only, but to intercourse, or companionship. Paul quotes these words from Menander, (in Sentent. Comicor. Gr. p. 248, ed. Steph.,) a Greek poet. He thus shows that he was, in some degree at least, familiar with the Greek writers. **See Barnes "Ac 17:28"**.

Menander was a celebrated comic poet of Athens, educated under Theophrastus. His writings were replete with elegance, refined wit, and judicious observations. Of one hundred and eight comedies which he wrote, nothing remains but a few fragments. He is said to have drowned himself,

in the fifty-second year of his age, B. C. 293, because the compositions of his rival, Philemon, obtained more applause than his own. Paul quoted this sentiment from a Greek poet, perhaps, because it might be supposed to have weight with the Greeks. It was a sentiment of one of their own writers, and here was an occasion in which it was exactly applicable. It is implied in this, that there were some persons who were endeavouring to corrupt their minds from the simplicity of the gospel. The sentiment of the passage is, that the intercourse of evil-minded men, or that the close friendship and conversation of those who hold erroneous opinions, or who are impure in their lives, tends to corrupt the morals, the heart, the sentiments of others. The particular thing to which Paul here applies it, is the subject of the resurrection. Such intercourse would tend to corrupt the simplicity of their faith, and pervert their views of the truth of the gospel, and thus corrupt their lives. It is *always* true that such intercourse has a pernicious effect on the mind and the heart. It is done,

(1.) by their direct effort to corrupt the opinions, and to lead others into sin.

(2.) By the secret, silent influence of their words, and conversation, and example. We have less horror at vice by becoming familiar with it; we look with less alarm on error when we hear it often expressed; we become less watchful and cautious when we are constantly with the gay, the worldly, the unprincipled, and the vicious. Hence Christ sought that there should be a pure society, and that his people should principally seek the friendship, and conversation of each other, and withdraw from the world. It is in the way that Paul here refers to, that Christians embrace false doctrines; that they lose their spirituality, love of prayer, fervour of piety, and devotion to God. It is in this way that the simple are beguiled, the young corrupted, and that vice, and crime, and infidelity spread over the world.

{a} "communications" 1Co 5:6

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *Awake to righteousness*. **See Barnes "Ro 13:11"**.

The word here translated "awake" denotes, properly, to awake up from a deep sleep or torpor; and is usually applied to those who awake, or become sober after drunkenness. The phrase "to righteousness"—*dikaiwv* may mean either "rouse to the ways of righteousness, to a holy life, to sound doctrine," etc., or it may mean "as it is right and just that you should be." Probably the latter is the correct idea, and then the sense will be, "Arouse from stupidity on this subject; awake from your conscious security; be alarmed, as it is *right and proper* that you should be, for you are surrounded by dangers, and by those who would lead you into error and vice; rouse from such wild and delusive opinions as these persons have, and exercise a constant vigilance as becomes those who are the friends of God and the expectants of a blessed resurrection."

And sin not. Do not err; do not depart from the truth and from holiness; do not embrace a doctrine which is not only erroneous, but the tendency of which is to lead into sin. It is implied here, that, if they suffered themselves to embrace a doctrine which was a denial of the resurrection, the effect would be that they would fall into sin; or that a denial of that doctrine led to a life of self-indulgence and transgression. This truth is everywhere seen; and against this, effect Paul sought to guard them.

He did not regard the denial of the doctrine of the resurrection as a harmless speculation, but as leading to most dangerous consequences in regard to their manner of life or their conduct.

For some have not. Some among you. You are surrounded by strangers to God; you have those among you who would lead you into error and sin.

I speak this to your shame. To your shame as a church; because you have had abundant opportunities to know the truth, and because it is a subject of deep disgrace that there are any in your bosom who deny the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, and who are strangers to the grace of God.

{b} "to righteousness" Ro 13:11 Eph 5:14 {c} "speak this" 1Co 6:5

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *But some man will say*. An objection will be made to the statement that the dead will be raised. This verse commences the second part of the chapter, in which the apostle meets the objections to the argument, and shows in what manner the dead will be raised. See the Analysis. That objections were made to the doctrine is apparent from 1Co 15:12.

How are the dead raised up? *pwv*. In what way or manner; by what means. This I regard as the first objection which would be made, or the first inquiry on the subject which the apostle answers. The question is one which would be likely to be made by the subtle and doubting Greeks. The apostle, indeed, does not draw it out at length, or state it fully, but it may be regarded probably as substantially the same as that which has been made in all ages. "How is it possible that the dead should be raised? They return to their native dust. They become entirely disorganized. Their dust may be scattered; how shall it be recollected? Or they may be burned at the stake, and how shall the particles which composed their bodies be recollected and reorganized? Or they may be devoured by the beasts of the field, the fowls of heaven, or the fishes of the sea, and their flesh may have served to constitute the food of other animals, and to form *their* bodies; how can it be recollected and reorganized? Or it may have been the food of plants, and like other dust have been used to constitute the leaves or the flowers of plants, and the trunks of trees; and *how* can it be remoulded into a human frame?" This objection the apostle answers in 1Co 15:36-38.

And with what body do they come? This is the second objection or inquiry which he answers. It may be understood as meaning, "What will be the form, the shape, the size, the organization of the new body? Are we to suppose that all the matter which at any time entered into its composition here is to be recollected, and to constitute a colossal frame? Are we to suppose that it will be the same as it is here, with the same organization, the same necessities, the same wants? Are we to suppose that the aged will be raised as aged, and the young as young, and that infancy will be raised in the same state, and remain such for ever? Are we to suppose that the bodies will be gross, material, and needing support and nourishment, or, that there will be a new organization?" All these and numerous other questions have been asked, in regard to the bodies at the resurrection; and it is by no means improbable that they were asked by the subtle and philosophizing Greeks, and that they constituted a part of the reasoning of those who denied the doctrine of the resurrection. This question, or objection, the apostle answers, 1Co 15:39-50. It has been doubted, indeed, whether he refers in

this verse to *two* inquiries—to the *possibility* of the resurrection, and to the *kind* of bodies that should be raised; but it is the most obvious interpretation of the verse, and it is certain that in his argument he discusses both these points.

{d} "How are" Eze 37:3

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *Thou fool*. Foolish, inconsiderate man! The meaning is, that it was foolish to make this objection, when the same difficulty existed in an undeniable *fact* which fell under daily observation. A man was a fool to urge that as an objection to religion, which must exist in the undeniable and every-day facts which they witnessed. The idea is, "The same difficulty may be started about the growth of grain. Suppose a man, who had never seen it, were to be told that it was to be put into the earth; that it was to die; to be decomposed; and that from the decayed kernel there should be seen to start up first a slender, green, and tender spire of grass, and that this was to send up a strong stalk, and was to produce hundreds of similar kernels at some distant period. These facts would be as *improbable* to him as the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. When he saw the kernel laid in the ground; when he saw it decay; when apparently it was returning to dust, he would ask, How CAN these be connected with the production of similar grain? Are not all the indications that it will be totally corrupted or destroyed? "Yet, says Paul, this is connected with the hope of the harvest, and this fact should remove all the objection which is derived from the fact that the body returns to its native dust. The idea is, that there is an analogy, and that the *main* objection in the one case would lie equally well against the acknowledged and indisputable fact in the other. It is evident, however, that this argument is of a popular character, and is not to be pressed to the quick; nor are we to suppose that the resemblance will be in all respects the same. It is to be used as Paul used it. The objection was, that the body died, and returned to dust, and could not, therefore, rise again. The reply of Paul is, "You may make the same objection to grain that is sown. That dies also. The main body of the kernel decays. *In itself* there is no prospect that it will spring up. Should it *stop here*, and had you *never seen* a grain of wheat grow— had you only seen it in the earth, as you have seen the body in the grave—there would be the same difficulty as to HOW it would produce other grains, which there is about the resurrection of the body."

Is not quickened. Does not become alive; does not grow.

Except it die. **See Barnes "Joh 12:24"**.

The main body of the grain decays, that it may become food and nourishment to the tender germ. *Perhaps* it is implied here, also, that there was a fitness that men should die in order to obtain the glorious body of the resurrection, in the same way as it is fit that the kernel should die, in order that there may be a new and beautiful harvest.

{a} "which thou sowest" Joh 12:24

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *And that which thou sowest*. The seed which is sown.

Not that body that shall be. You sow one kernel which is to produce many others. They shall not be the same that is sown. They will be new kernels raised from that; of the same kind, indeed, and showing their intimate and necessary connexion with that which is sown. It is implied here, that the body which will be raised will not be the same in the sense that the same particles of matter shall compose it, but the same only in the sense that it will have sprung up from that; will constitute the same order, rank, species of being, and be subject to the same laws, and deserve the same course of treatment as that which died; as the grain produced is subject to the same laws, and belongs to the same rank, order, and species as that which is sown. And as the same particles of matter which: are sown do not enter into that which shall be in the harvest, so it is taught that the same particles of matter which constitute the body when it dies, do not constitute the new body at the resurrection.

But bare grain. Mere grain; a mere kernel, without any husk, leaf, blade, or covering of any kind. Those are added in the process of reproduction. The design of this is to make it appear more remarkable, and to destroy the force of the objection. It was not only not the grain that should be produced, but it was without the appendages and ornaments of blade, and flower, and beard of the new grain. How could any one tell but what it would be so in the resurrection? How could any know but what there might be appendages and ornaments there, which were not connected with the body that died?

It may chance of wheat, etc. For example; or suppose it be wheat or any other grain. The apostle adduces this merely for an *example*; not to intimate that there is any *chance* about it.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *But God giveth it a body*, etc. God gives to the seed sown its own proper body, formation, and growth. The word *body* here, as applied to grain, seems to mean the whole *system*, or arrangement of roots, stalks, leaves, flowers, and kernels that start out of the seed that is sown. The meaning is, that such a form is produced from the seed sown as God pleases. Paul here traces the result to God, to show that there is no chance, and that it did not depend on the nature of things, but was dependent on the wise arrangement of God. There was nothing in the decaying kernel itself that would produce this result; but God chose that it should be so. There is nothing in the decaying body of the dead which in itself should lead to the resurrection; but God chose it should be so.

As it hath pleased him. As he chose. It is by his arrangement and agency. Though it is by regular laws, yet it is as God pleases. He acts according to his own pleasure, in the formation of each root, and stalk, and kernel of grain. It is, probably, here intimated that God would give to each one of the dead at the resurrection such a body as he should choose, though it will be, doubtless, in accordance with general laws.

And to every seed his own body. That which appropriately belongs to it; which it is fitted to produce; which is of the same kind. He does not cause a stalk of rye to grow from a kernel of wheat;

nor of maize from barley; nor of hemp from lentiles. He has fixed proper laws, and he takes care that they shall be observed. So it will be in the resurrection. Every one shall have his own, i.e. his proper body—a body which shall belong to him, and be fitted to him. The wicked shall not rise with the body of the just, or with a body adapted to heaven; nor shall the saint rise with a body adapted to perdition. There shall be a fitness or appropriateness in the new body to the character of him who is raised. The *argument* here is designed to meet the inquiry HOW should the body be raised; and it is, that there is nothing more remarkable and impossible in the doctrine of the resurrection than in the fact constantly before us, that grain that seems to rot sends up a shoot or stalk, and is reproduced in a wonderful and beautiful manner. In a manner similar to this, the body will be raised; and the illustration of Paul meets all the difficulties about the *fact* of the resurrection. It cannot be shown that one is more difficult than the other; and as the facts of vegetation are constantly passing before our eyes, we ought not to deem it strange if similar facts shall take place hereafter in regard to the resurrection of the dead.

{b} "giveth it" Ge 1:11,12

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *All flesh is not the same flesh*. This verse and the following are designed to answer the question, 1Co 15:35, "with what bodies do they come?" And the argument here is, that there are *many kinds* of bodies; that all are not alike; that while they are *bodies*, yet they partake of different qualities, forms, and properties; and that, therefore, it is not absurd to suppose that God may transform the human body into a different form, and cause it to be raised up with somewhat different properties in the future world. Why, the argument is, why should it be regarded as impossible? Why is it to be held that the human body may not undergo a transformation, or that it will be absurd to suppose that it may be different in some respects from what it is now? Is it not a matter of fact that there is a great variety of bodies even on the earth? The word *flesh* here is used to denote body, as it often is, 1Co 5:5 2Co 4:11, 7:1; Php 1:22,24; Col 2:5 1Pe 4:6.

The idea here is, that although all the bodies of animals may be composed essentially of the same elements, yet God has produced a wonderful variety in their organization, strength, beauty, colour, and places of abode, as the air, earth, and water, it is not *necessary*, therefore, to suppose that the body that shall be raised shah be precisely like that which we have here. It is certainly *possible* that there may be *as great a* difference between that and our present body, as between the most perfect form of the human frame here and the lowest reptile. It would still be a *body*, and there would be no absurdity in the transformation. The body of the worm, the chrysalis, and the butterfly is the same. It is the same animal still. Yet how different the gaudy and gay butterfly from the creeping and offensive caterpillar! So there *may* be a similar change in the body of the believer, and yet be still the same. Of a sceptic on this subject we would ask, whether, if there had been a *revelation* of the changes which a caterpillar might undergo before it became a butterfly—-a new species of existence adapted to a new element, requiring new food, and associated with new and other beings—if he had never *seen* such a transformation, would it not be attended with all the difficulty which now encompasses the doctrine of the resurrection? The sceptic would no more

have believed it *on the authority of revelation* than he will believe the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. And no infidel can prove that the one is attended with any more difficulty or absurdity than the other.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 40

Verse 40. *There are also celestial bodies*. The planets; the stars; the host of heaven. See 1Co 15:41.

And bodies terrestrial. On earth; earthly. He refers here to the bodies of men, beasts, birds, etc.; perhaps, also, of trees and vegetables. The sense is,

"There is a great variety of bodies. Look upon the heavens, and see the splendour of the sun, the moon, and the stars. And then look upon the earth, and see the bodies there—the bodies of men, and brutes, and insects. You see here two entire *classes* of bodies. You see how they differ. Can it be deemed strange if there should be a difference between our bodies when on earth and when in heaven? Do we not, *in fact*, see a vast difference between what strikes our eye here on earth and in the sky? And why should we deem it strange that between bodies adapted to live here and bodies adapted to live in heaven there should be a difference, like that which is seen between the objects which appear on earth and those which appear in the sky?"

The argument is a popular one; but it is striking, and meets the object which he has in view.

The glory of the celestial is one. The splendour, beauty, dignity, magnificence of the heavenly bodies differs much from those on earth. That is *one thing*; the beauty of earthly objects is *another* and a *different thing*. Beautiful as may be the human frame; beautiful as may be the plumage of birds; beautiful as may be the flowers, the fossil, the mineral, the topaz, or the diamond, yet they *differ* from the heavenly bodies, and are not to be compared with them. Why should we deem it strange that there may be a similar difference between the body as adapted to its residence here and as adapted to its residence in heaven?

{a} "are also celestial" Ge 1:16

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 41

Verse 41. *There is one glory of the sun*, etc. The sun has one degree of splendour, and the moon another, and so also the stars. They differ from each other in magnitude, in brightness, in beauty.

The idea in this verse differs from that in the former. In that 1Co 15:40, Paul says, that there was a difference between the different *classes* of bodies; between those in heaven and those on earth. He here says, that in the former class, in the heavenly bodies themselves, there was a difference. They not only differed from those on earth, but they differed from each other. The sun was more splendid than the moon, and one star more beautiful than another. The idea here is, therefore, not only that the bodies of the saints in heaven shall differ from those on earth, but that they shall differ among themselves, in a sense somewhat like the difference of the splendour of the sun, the moon, and the different stars. Though *all* shall be unlike what they were on earth, and all shall be glorious, yet there may be a difference in that splendour and glory. The *argument* is, since we see so great differences in fact in the works of God, why should we doubt that he is able to make the human body different from what it is now, and to endow it with immortal and eternal perfection.

{b} "and another" Ps 19:4,5

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 42

Verse 42. *So also is the resurrection*. In a manner similar to the grain that is sown, and to the different degrees of splendour and magnificence in the bodies in the sky and on the earth. The dead shall be raised in a manner analogous to the springing up of grain; and there shall be a difference between the body here and the body in the resurrection.

It is sown. In death. As we sow or plant the kernel in the earth.

In corruption. In the grave; in a place where it shall be corrupt; in a form tending to putrefaction, disorganization, and dust.

It is raised in incorruption. It will be so raised, In the previous verses (1Co 15:36-41) he had reasoned from analogy, and had demonstrated that it was *possible* that the dead should rise, or that there was no greater difficulty attending it than actually occurred in the events which were in fact constantly taking place. He here states positively what would be, and affirms that it was not only possible, but that such a resurrection would actually occur. The body would be raised "in incorruption," "uncorruptible," 1Co 15:52; that is, no more liable to decay, sickness, disorganization, and putrefaction. This is *one* characteristic of the body that shall be raised, that it shall be no more liable, as here, to wasting sickness, to disease, and to the loathsome corruption of the grave. That God can form a body of that kind, no one can doubt; that he actually will, the apostle positively affirms. That such *will* be the bodies of the saints is one of the most cheering prospects that can be presented to those who are here wasted away by sickness, and who look with dread and horror on the loathsome putrefaction of the tomb.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 43

Verse 43. *It is sown in dishonour*. In the grave, where it is shut out from human view; hurried away from the sight of friends; loathsome and offensive as a mass turning to decay. There is, moreover, a kind of disgrace and ignominy attending it here, as under the curse of God, and, on account of sin, sentenced to the offensiveness of the grave.

It is raised in glory. In honour; in beauty; honoured by God by the removal of the curse, and in a form and manner that shall be glorious. This refers to the fact that everything like dishonour, vileness, ignominy, which attends it here, shall be removed there, and that the body shall bear a resemblance to the glorified body of Jesus Christ, Eph 3:21. It shall be adapted to a world of glory; and everything which here rendered it vile, valueless, cumbersome, offensive, or degraded, shall be there removed. Of course, every idea which we can get from this is chiefly negative, and consists in denying that the body will have there the qualities which here render it vile or loathsome. The word glory (*doxh*) means dignity, splendour, honour, excellence, perfection; and is here used as denoting the *combination* of all those things which shall rescue it from ignominy and disgrace.

It is sown in weakness. Weak, feeble, liable to decay. Here disease prostrates the strength, takes away its power, consigns it to the dust. It denotes the many weaknesses, frailties, and liabilities to sickness, to which we are here exposed. Its feeble powers are soon prostrate; its vital functions soon cease in death.

It is raised in power.

This does not denote power like that of God, nor like the angels. It does not affirm that it shall be endued with remarkable and enormous physical strength, or that it shall have the power of performing what would now be regarded as miraculous. It is to be regarded as the opposite of the word "weakness," and means that it shall be no longer liable to disease; no more overcome by the attacks of sickness; no more subject to the infirmities and weaknesses which it here experiences. It shall not be prostrate by sickness, nor overcome by fatigue. It shall be capable of the service of God without weariness and languor; it shall need no rest as it does here, (Re 7:15 22:5;) but it shall be in a world where there shall be no fatigue, lassitude, disease; but where there shall be ample power to engage in the service of God for ever. There is, however, no improbability in supposing that the physical powers of man, as well as his intellectual, may be greatly augmented in heaven. But on this point there is no revelation.

{c} "sown in dishonour" Da 12:3 Mt 13:43; Php 3:21

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 44

Verse 44. *It is sown a natural body*. *swma qucikon*. This word "natural" denotes, properly, that which is endowed with animal life, having breath, or vitality. The word from which it is derived (*quch* denotes, properly, the breath; vital breath; the soul, as the vital principle; the animal soul, or the vital spirit; the soul, as the seat of the sentient desires, passions, and propensities; and then a living thing, an animal. It may be applied to any animal, or any living thing, whether brutes or men. It is distinguished from the soul or spirit, (*pneuma*,) inasmuch as that more commonly denotes the *rational* spirit, the immortal soul; that which thinks, reasons, reflects, etc. The word "natural" here, therefore, means that which has animal life; which breathes and acts by the laws of the animal

economy; that which draws in the breath of life; which is endowed with senses, and which has need of the *supports* of animal life, and of the refreshments derived from food, exercise, sleep, etc. The apostle here, by affirming that the body will be spiritual, intends to deny that it will need that which is now necessary to the support of the animal functions; it will not be sustained in that way; it will lay aside these peculiar animal organizations, and will cease to convey the idea which we now attach to the word animal, or to possess that which we now include under the name of *vital functions*. Here the body of man is endowed simply with animal functions. It is the dwelling-place, indeed, of an immortal mind; but as a body it has the properties of animal life, and is subject to the same laws and inconveniences as the bodies of other animals. It is sustained by breath, and food, and sleep; it is endowed with the organs of sense, the eye, the ear, the smell, the touch, by which alone the soul can hold communication with the external world; it is liable to disease, languor, decay, death. These *animal or vital* functions will cease in heaven, and the body be raised in a different mode of being, and where all the inconveniences of this mere animal life shall be laid aside.

It is raised a spiritual body. Not a mere spirit, for then it would not be a body. The word *spiritual pneumatikon* here stands opposed to the word *natural, or animal*. It will not be a body that is subject to the laws of the vital functions, or organized or sustained in that way. It will still be a "body," (*swma*,) but it will have *so far* the nature of spirit as to be *without* the vital functions which here control the body. This is all that the word here means. It does not mean refined, sublimated, or transcendental; it does not mean that it will be without shape or form; it does not mean that it will not be properly a *body*. The idea of Paul seems to be this: "We conceive of soul or spirit as not subject to the laws of vital or animal agency. It is independent of them. It is not sustained or nourished by the functions of the animal organization. It has an economy of its own; living without nourishment; not subject to decay; not liable to sickness, pain, or death. So will be the body in the resurrection. It will not be subject to the laws of the vital organization. It will be so much LIKE A SPIRIT as to be continued without food or nutriment; to be destitute of the peculiar physical organization of flesh, and blood, and bones; of veins, and arteries, and nerves, as here, (1Co 15:50;) and it will live in the manner in which we conceive spirits to live; sustained, and exercising its powers, without waste, weariness, decay, or the necessity of having its powers recruited by food and sleep." All, therefore, that has been said about a refined body, a body that shall be spirit, a body that shall be pure, etc., whatever may be its truth, is not sustained by this passage. It will be a body without the vital functions of the animal economy; a body sustained in the manner in which we conceive the spirit to be.

There is a natural body. This seems to be added by Paul in the way of strong affirmation arising from earnestness, and from a desire to prevent misconception. The affirmation is, that there is a natural body; that is apparent; it is everywhere seen. No one can doubt it. So, with equal certainty, says Paul, there is a spiritual body. It is just as certain and indisputable. This assertion is made, not because the evidence of both is the same, but is made on his apostolic authority, and is to be received on that authority. That there was an animal body was apparent to all; that there was a spiritual body was a position which he affirmed to be as certain as the other. The only proof which he alleges is in 1Co 15:46, which is the proof arising from revelation.

{*} "natural body" "An animal" {a} "spiritual body" Lu 24:31 Joh 20:19,26

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 45

Verse 45. *And so it is written*. Ge 2:7. It is only the first part of the verse which is quoted.

The first man Adam was made a living soul. This is quoted exactly from the translation by the Seventy, except that the apostle has added the words "first" and "Adam." This is done to designate whom he meant. The meaning of the phrase "was made a living soul" (*egeneto eiv quchn zwsan*

HEBREW

in Hebrew), is, became a living, animated being; a being endowed with life. The use of the word "soul" in our translation, for *quch* and

HEBREW, (*nephesh*,) does not quite convey the idea. We apply the word *soul*, usually, to the intelligent and the immortal part of man; that which reasons, thinks, remembers, is conscious, is responsible, etc. The Greek and Hebrew words, however, more properly denote that which is alive, which is animated, which breathes, which has an animal nature. See Barnes "1Co 15:44".

And this is precisely the idea which Paul uses here, that the first man was made an animated being by having breathed into him the breath of life, (Ge 2:7,) and that it is the image of this animated or vital being which we bear, 1Co 15:48. Neither Moses nor Paul deny that, in addition to this, man was endowed with a rational soul, an immortal nature; but that is not the idea which they present in the passage in Genesis which Paul quotes.

The last Adam. The second Adam, or the "second man," 1Co 15:47. That Christ is here intended is apparent, and has been usually admitted by commentators. Christ here seems to be called *Adam* because he stands in contradistinction from the first Adam; or because, as we derive our animal and dying nature from the one, so we derive our immortal and undying bodies from the other. From the one we derive an animal or vital existence; from the other we derive our immortal existence, and resurrection from the grave. The one stands at the head of all those who have an existence represented by the words, "a living soul;" the other of all those who shall have a spiritual body in heaven. He is called "the last Adam;" meaning that there shall be no other after him who shall affect the destiny of man in the same way, or who shall stand at the head of the race in a manner similar to what had been done by him and the first father of the human family. They sustain peculiar relations to the race; and in this respect they were "the first" and "the last" in the peculiar economy. The name "Adam" is not elsewhere given to the Messiah, though a comparison is several times instituted between him and Adam. See Ro 5:12-19.

A quickening spirit, eiv pneuma zwopoioun. A vivifying spirit; a spirit giving or imparting life. Not a being having mere vital functions, or an animated nature, but a being who has the power of imparting life. This is not a quotation from any part of the Scriptures, but seems to be used by Paul either as affirming what was true on his own apostolic authority, or as conveying the *substance* of what was revealed respecting the Messiah in the Old Testament. There may be also reference to what the Saviour himself taught, that he was the source of life; that he had the power of imparting life, and that he gave life to all whom he pleased. **See Barnes "Joh 1:4"**; **See Barnes** "Joh 5:26".

"For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;" 1Co 15:21, "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will." The word "spirit," here applied to Christ, is in contradistinction from "a living being," as applied to Adam, and seems to be used in the sense of spirit of life, as raising the bodies

of his people from the dead, and imputing life to them. He was constituted not as having life merely, but as endowed with the power of imparting life; as endowed with that spiritual or vital energy which was needful to impart life. All life is the creation or production of spirit, (*pneuma*;) as applied to God the Father, or the Son, or the Holy Spirit. *Spirit* is the source of all vitality. God is a Spirit, and God is the source of all life. And the idea here is, that Christ had such a spiritual existence, such power as a spirit; that he was the source of all life to his people. The word spirit is applied to his exalted spiritual nature, in distinction from his human nature, in Ro 1:4 1Ti 3:16; 1Pe 3:18.

The apostle does not here affix that he had not a human nature, or a vital existence as a man; but that his main characteristic in contradistinction from Adam was, that he was endowed with an elevated spiritual nature, which was capable of imparting vital existence to the dead.

{b} "The first man Adam" Ge 2:7 {c} "The last Adam" Joh 5:21 6:33,40

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 46

Verse 46. *Howbeit*. There is a due order observed, 1Co 15:23. The decaying, the dying, the weak, the corruptible, in the proper order of events, was first. This order was necessary, and this is observed everywhere. It is seen in the grain that dies in the ground, and in the resurrection of man. The imperfect is succeeded by the perfect; the impure by the pure; the vile and degraded by the precious and the glorious. The idea is, that there is a tendency towards perfection, and that God observes the proper order by which that which is most glorious shall be secured. It was not his plan that all things in the beginning should be perfect; but that perfection should be the work of time, and should be secured in an appropriate *order* of events. The design of Paul in this verse seems to be to vindicate the statement which he had made, by showing that it was in accordance with what was everywhere observed, that the proper *order* should be maintained. This idea is carried through the following verses.

{*} "Howbeit" "However" {+} "natural" "Animal"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 47

Verse 47. *The first man*. Adam.

Is of the earth. Was made of the dust. See Ge 2:7.

Earthy. Partaking of the earth; he was a mass of animated clay, and could be appropriately called "DUST," Ge 3:19. Of course, he must partake of a nature that was low, mean, mortal, and corruptible.

The second man. Christ. **See Barnes "1Co 15:45".**

He is called the second man, as being the second who sustained a relation to men that Was materially to affect their conduct and destiny; the second and the last 1Co 15:45 who should sustain a peculiar headship to the race.

The Lord from heaven. Called in 1Co 2:8, the "Lord of glory." **See Barnes "1Co 2:8"**.

This expression refers to the fact that the Lord Jesus had a heavenly origin, in contradistinction from Adam, who was formed from the earth. The Latin Vulgate renders this, "the second man from heaven is heavenly;" and this idea seems to accord with the meaning in the former member of the verse. The sense is, evidently, that as the first man had an earthly origin, and was therefore earthy, so the second man being from heaven, as his proper home, would have a body adapted to that abode; unlike that which was earthy, and which would be fitted to his exalted nature, and to the world where he would dwell. And while, therefore, the phrase "from heaven" refers to his heavenly origin, the essential idea is, that he would have a body that was adapted to such an origin and such a world—a body unlike that which was earthy. That is, Christ had a glorified body, to which the bodies of the saints must yet be made like.

{a} "first man" Joh 3:13,21

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 48

Verse 48. *As is the earthy*. Such as Adam was.

Such are they also, etc. Such are all his descendants; all who derive their nature from him. That is, they are frail, corruptible, mortal; they live in an animal body as he did; and, like him, they are subject to corruption and decay.

And as is the heavenly. As is he who was from heaven; as is the Lord Jesus now in his glorified body.

Such are they also, etc. Such will they be also. They will be like him; they will have a body like his. This idea is more fully expressed in Php 3:21, "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body."

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 49

Verse 49. *And as we have borne the image of the earthy*. As, like our first father, we are frail, decaying, dying; as we are so closely connected with him as to be like him. This does not refer, mainly, to one bearing his moral character, but to the fact that we are, like him, subject to sickness, frailty, sorrow, and death.

We shall also bear the image of the heavenly. The Lord Jesus Christ, who was from heaven, and who is in heaven. As we are so closely connected with Adam as to resemble him, so by the Divine arrangement, and by faith in the Lord Jesus, we are so closely connected with him that we shall resemble him in heaven. And as he is now free from frailty, sickness, pain, sorrow, and death, and as he has a pure and spiritual body, adapted to a residence in heaven, so shall we be in that future world. The argument here is, that the connexion which is formed between the believer and the Saviour is as close as that which subsisted between him and Adam; and as that connexion with

Adam involved the certainty that he would be subjected to pain, sin, sickness, and death, so the connexion with Christ involves the certainty that he will, like him, be free from sin, sickness, pain, and death, and, like him, will have a body that is pure, incorruptible, and immortal.

{b} "also bear" Ro 8:29

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 50

Verse 50. *Now this I say, brethren*. "I make this affirmation in regard to this whole subject. I do it as containing the substance of all that I have said. I do it in order to prevent all mistake in regard to the nature of the bodies which shall be raised up." This affirmation is made respecting all the dead and all the living, that there must be a material and important change in regard to them before they can be prepared for heaven. Paul had proved in the previous verses that it was possible for God to give us bodies different from those which we now possess; he here affirms, in the most positive manner, that it was indispensable that we should have bodies different from what we now have.

Flesh and blood. Bodies organized as ours now are. "Flesh and blood" denotes such bodies as we have here—bodies that are fragile, weak, liable to disease, subject to pain and death. They are composed of changing particles; to be repaired and strengthened daily; they are subject to decay, and are wasted away by sickness, and of course they cannot be fitted to a world where there shall be no decay and no death.

Cannot inherit. Cannot be admitted as heir to the kingdom of God. The future world of glory is often represented as an heirship. **See Barnes "Ro 8:17"**.

The kingdom of God. Heaven; appropriately called his kingdom, because he shall reign there in undivided and perfect glory for ever.

Neither doth corruption, etc. Neither can that which is in its nature corruptible, and liable to decay, be adapted to a world where all is incorruptible. The apostle here simply states the fact. He does not tell us why it is impossible. It may be because the mode of communication there is not by the bodily senses; it may be because such bodies as ours would not be fitted to relish the pure and exalted pleasures of an incorruptible world; it may be because they would interfere with the exalted worship, the active service, and the sleepless employments of the heavenly world; it may be because such a body is constituted to derive pleasure from objects which shall not be found in heaven. It is adapted to enjoyment in eating and drinking, and the pleasures of the eye, the ear, the taste, the touch; in heaven the soul shall be awake to more elevated and pure enjoyments than these, and, of course, such bodies as we here have would impede our progress and destroy our comforts, and be ill-adapted to all the employments and enjoyments of that heavenly world.

{c} "flesh and blood" Joh 3:3,5

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 51

Verse 51. *Behold, I shew you*. This commences the *third* subject of inquiry in the chapter—the question, what will become of those who are alive when the Lord Jesus shall return to raise the dead? This was an *obvious* inquiry, and the answer was, perhaps, supposed to be difficult. Paul answers it directly, and says that they will undergo an instantaneous change, which will make them like the dead that shall be raised.

A mystery. On the meaning of this word, **See Barnes "1Co 2:7"**.

The word here does not mean anything which was in its nature unintelligible, but that which to them had been hitherto unknown. "I now communicate to you a truth which has not been brought into the discussion, and in regard to which no communication has been made to you." On this subject there had been no revelation. Though the Pharisees held that the dead would rise, yet they do not seem to have made any statement in regard to the living who should remain when the dead should rise. Nor, perhaps, had the subject occupied the attention of the apostles; nor had there been any direct communication on it from the Lord Jesus himself. Paul then here says, that he was about to communicate a great truth, which till then had been unknown, and to resolve a great inquiry on which there had as yet been no revelation.

We shall not all sleep. We Christians; grouping all together who then lived and should live afterwards, for his discussion has relation to them all. The following remarks may, perhaps, remove some of the difficulty which attends the interpretation of this passage. The *objection* which is made to it is, that Paul expected to live until the Lord Jesus should return; that he, therefore, expected that the world would soon end, and that in this he was mistaken, and could not be inspired. To this we may reply:

(1.) He is speaking of Christians as such—of the whole church that had been redeemed—of the entire mass that should enter heaven; and he groups them all together, and connects himself with them, and says, "We shall not die; we Christians, including the whole church, shall not *all* die," etc. That he did not refer only to those whom he was then addressing, is apparent from the whole discussion. The argument relates to Christians—to the church at large; and the affirmation here has reference to that church, considered as one church, that was to be raised up on the last day.

(2.) That Paul did not expect that the Lord Jesus would soon come, and that the world would soon come to an end, is apparent from a similar place in the epistle to the Thessalonians. In 1Th 4:15, he uses language remarkably similar to that which is here used: "*We* which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord," etc. This language was interpreted by the Thessalonians, as teaching that the world would soon come to an end, and the effect had been to produce a state of alarm. Paul was therefore at special pains to show, in his second epistle to them, that he did not mean any such thing. He showed them (2Th 2) that the end of the world was *not* near; that very important events were to occur before the world would come to an end; and that his language did not imply any expectation on his part that the world would soon terminate, or that the Lord Jesus would soon come.

(3.) Parallel expressions occur in the other writers of the New Testament, and with a similar signification. Thus, John (1Jo 2:18) says, "It is the last time." Comp. Heb 1:2. But the meaning of this is not that the world would soon come to an end. The prophets spoke of a period which they called "the last days," (Isa 2:2 Mic 4:1; in Hebrew, "the after days,") as the period in which the

Messiah would live and reign. By it they meant the dispensation which should be the *last*; that under which the world would close; the reign of the Messiah, which would be the last economy of human things. But it did not follow that this was to be a short period; or that it might not be longer than any one of the former, or than all the former put together. This was that which John spoke of as the last time.

(4.) I do not know that the proper doctrine of inspiration suffers, if we admit that the apostles were ignorant of the exact time when the world would close; or even that in regard to the precise period when that would take place, they might be in error. The following considerations may be suggested on this subject, showing that the claim to inspiration did not extend to the knowledge of this fact.

(a.) That they were not omniscient; and there is no more absurdity in supposing that they were ignorant on *this* subject than in regard to any other.

(b.) Inspiration extended to the *order* of future events, and not to the *times*. There is in the Scriptures no statement of the time when the world would close. Future events were made to pass before the minds of the prophets, as in *a landscape*. The *order* of the images may be distinctly marked, but the times may not be designated. And even events which may occur in fact at distant periods, may in vision appear to be near each other; as in a landscape, objects which are in fact separated by distant intervals, like the ridges of a mountain, may appear to lie close to each other.

(c.) The Saviour expressly said, that it was not designed that they should *know* when future events would occur. Thus, after his ascension, in answer to an inquiry whether he then would restore the kingdom to Israel, he said, (Ac 1:7,) "It is not *for you* to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power." **See Barnes "Ac 1:7"**.

(d.) The Saviour said, that even he himself, as man, was ignorant in regard to the exact time in which future events would occur. "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father," Mr 13:32.

(e.) The apostles were *in fact* ignorant, and mistaken in regard to, at least, the time of the occurrence of one future event, the death of John; Joh 21:23. There is, therefore, no departure from the proper doctrine of inspiration, in supposing that the apostles were not inspired on these subjects, and that they might be ignorant like others. The proper *order* of events they state truly and exactly; the exact time God did not, for wise reasons, intend to make known.

Shall not all sleep. Shall not all die. **See Barnes "1Co 11:30"**.

But we shall all be changed. There is considerable variety in the reading of this passage. The Vulgate reads it, "We shall all indeed rise, but we shall not all be changed." Some Greek mss. read it, "We shall all sleep, but we shall not all be changed." Others, as the Vulgate, "We shall all rise, but we shall not all be changed." But the present Greek text contains, doubtless, the true reading; and the sense is, that all who are alive at the coming of the Lord Jesus shall undergo such a change as to fit them for their new abode in heaven; or such as shall make them like those who shall be raised from the dead. This change will be instantaneous, (1Co 15:52,) for it is evident that God can as easily change the living as he can raise the dead; and as the affairs of the world will then have come to an end, there will be no necessity that those who are then alive should be removed by death; nor would it be proper that they should go down to lie any time in the grave. The ordinary laws, therefore, by which men are removed to eternity, will not operate in regard to them, and they will be removed at once to their new abode.

{++} "mystery" "secret" {d} "We shall not all sleep" 1Th 4:15-17

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 52

Verse 52. *In a moment. en atomw*. In an *atom*, scil. of time; a point of time which cannot be cut or divided, (a priv. and *tomh* from *temnw* to cut.) A single instant; immediately. It will be done instantaneously.

In the twinkling of an eye. This is an expression also denoting the least conceivable duration of time. The *suddenness* of the coming of the Lord Jesus is elsewhere compared to the coming of a thief in the night, 2Pe 3:10. The word rendered "twinkling," (*riph*, from *riptw*, to throw, cast,) means a throw, cast, jerk, as of a stone; and then a jerk of the eye, i.e., a wink.—*Robinson*.

At the last trump. When the trumpet shall sound to raise the dead. The word "last" here does not imply that any trumpet shall have been before sounded at the resurrection, but is a word denoting that this is the consummation or close of things; it will end the economy of this world; it will be connected with the last state of things.

For the trumpet shall sound. **See Barnes "Mt 24:31"**.

And the dead shall be raised. **See Barnes "Joh 5:25"**.

{a} "in the twinkling" 2Pe 3:10 {*} "last trump" "trumpet" {b} "trumpet" Zec 9:14 Mt 24:31 {c} "shall be raised" Joh 5:25

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 53

Verse 53. *For this corruptible*, etc. It is necessary that a change should take place, either by dying and then being raised, or by being changed without seeing death; for we cannot enter heaven as we are now.

Must put on. The word here used (*endunw*) properly means, to go in, to envelope, to put on as a garment; and then to put on anything; as the soul is, as it were, clothed with, or invested with a body; and here it means, must be endued with, or furnished with. It is equivalent to saying that this corruptible must become incorruptible, and this mortal must become immortal. We must cease to be corruptible and mortal, and must become incorruptible and immortal. The righteous who remain till the coming of Christ, shall be at once changed, and invested, as Enoch and Elijah were, with incorruption and immortality.

{d} "must put on" 2Co 5:4

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 54

Verse 54. *So when*, etc. In that future glorious world, when all this shall have been accomplished.

Then shall be brought to pass. Then shall be fully accomplished; these words shall then receive their entire fulfilment; or this event shall meet all that is implied in these words.

The saying that is written. What is written, or the record which is made. These words are quoted from Isa 25:8; and the fact that Paul thus quotes them, and the connexion in which they stand, prove that they had reference to the times of the gospel, and to the resurrection of the dead. Paul does not quote directly from the Hebrew, or from the Seventy, but gives the substance of the passage.

Death. Referring here, undoubtedly, to death in the proper sense; death as prostrating the living, and consigning them to the grave.

Is swallowed up. *katepoyh* (from *katapinw*, to drink down, to swallow down) means to absorb, (Re 12:16;) to overwhelm, to drown, (Heb 11:29;) and then to destroy or remove. The idea may be taken from a whirlpool, or maelstrom, that absorbs all that comes near it; and the sense is, that he will abolish or remove death; that is, cause it to cease from its ravages and triumphs.

In victory, *eiv nikov*. Unto victory; so as to obtain a complete victory. The Hebrew (Isa 25:8) is

HEBREW.

The Seventy often render the word

HEBREW, which properly means splendour, purity, trust, perpetuity, eternity, perfection, by *nikov*, victory, 2Sa 2:26 Job 36:7; La 3:18 5:20; Am 1:11 8:7.

The Hebrew word here may be rendered either *unto the end*, i.e., to completeness or perfection, or unto victory, with triumph. It matters little which is the meaning, for they both come to the same thing. The idea is, that the power and dominion of death shall be entirely destroyed, or brought to an end.

{e} "is swallowed up" Isa 25:8

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 55

Verse 55. *O death*. This triumphant exclamation is the commencement of the fourth division of the chapter—the practical consequences of the doctrine. It is such an exclamation as every man with right feelings will be disposed to make, who contemplates the ravages of death; who looks upon a World where in all forms he has reigned, and who then contemplates the glorious truth, that a complete and final triumph has been obtained over this great enemy of the happiness of man, and that man would die no more. It is a triumphant view which bursts upon the soul as it contemplates the fact that the work of the second Adam has repaired the ruins of the first, and that man is redeemed; his body will be raised; not another human being should die, and the work of death should be ended. Nay, it is more. Death is not only at an end; it shall not only cease, but its evils shall be repaired; and the glory and honour shall encompasse the body of man, such as would have been unknown had there n no death. No commentary can add to the beauty and force of the language in this verse; and the best way to see its beauty, and to enjoy it, is to sit down and think of DEATH; of what death has been, and has done; of the millions and millions that have died; of the earth strewed with the dead, and "arched with graves;" *of our own death*; the certainty that we must die, and our parents, and brothers, and sisters, and children, and friends; that all, all must die;—and *then* to suffer the truth, in its full-orbed splendour, to rise upon us, that the time will come when

DEATH SHALL, BE AT AN END. Who, in such contemplation, can refrain from the language of triumph, and from hymns of praise?

Where is thy sting? The word which is here rendered sting (*kentron*) denotes, properly, a prick, a point; hence a goad or stimulus; i.e., a rod or staff with an iron point, for goading oxen, **See Barnes "Ac 9:5"**;) and then a *sting* properly, as of scorpions, bees, etc. It denotes here a venomous thing, or weapon, applied to death personified, as if death employed it to destroy life, as the sting of a bee or a scorpion is used, The idea is derived from the venomous sting of serpents, or other reptiles, as being destructive and painful. The language here is the language of exultation, as if that was taken away or destroyed.

O grave, adh. Hades, the place of the dead. It is not improperly rendered, however, *grave*. The word properly denotes a place of darkness; then the world, or abodes of the dead. According to the Hebrews, hades, or sheol, was a vast subterranean receptacle, or abode, where the souls of the dead existed. It was dark, deep, still, awful. The descent to it was through the grave; and the spirits of all the dead were supposed to be assembled there; the righteous occupying the *upper* regions, and the wicked the lower. **See Barnes "Isa 14:9"**.

Compare Lowth, Lect. on Heb. Poet. vii. Campbell, Prel. Diss. vi. part 2, & 2. It refers here to the dead; and means that the grave, or hades, should no longer have a victory.

Thy victory? Since the dead are to rise; since all the graves are to give up all that dwell in them; since no man will die after that, where is its victory? It is taken away. It is despoiled. The power of death and the grave is vanquished, and Christ is triumphant over all. It has been well remarked here, that the words in this verse rise above the plain and simple language of prose, and resemble a hymn, into which the apostle breaks out in view of the glorious truth which is here presented to the mind. The whole verse,is indeed a somewhat loose quotation from Hos 13:14, which we translate—-

"O death, I will be thy plagues;
O grave, I will be thy destruction."

But which the Seventy render-

"O death, where is thy punishment?
O grave, where is thy sting?"

Probably Paul did not intend this as a direct quotation; but he spoke as a man naturally does who is familiar with the language of the Scriptures, and used it to express the sense which he intended, without meaning to make a direct and literal quotation. The form which Paul uses is so poetic in its structure, that Pope has adopted it, with only a change in the location of the members, in the "Dying Christian:"

"O grave, where is thy victory!
O death, where is thy sting."

{a} "death" Hos 13:14 {1} "grave" "hell"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 56

Verse 56. *The sting of death*. The sting which death bears; that with which he effects his: purpose; that which is made use of to inflict death; or that which is the cause of death. There would be no death without sin. The apostle here *personifies* death, as if it were a living being, and as making use of sin to inflict death, or as being the sting, or envenomed instrument, with which he inflicts the mortal agony. The idea is, that sin is the cause of death. It introduced it; it makes it certain; it is the cause of the pain, distress, agony, and horror which attends it. Had there been no sin, men would not have died. If there were no sin, death would not be attended with horror or alarm. For why should innocence be afraid to die? What has innocence to fear anywhere in the universe of a just God? The fact, therefore, that men die, is proof that they are sinners; the fact that they feel horror and alarm, is proof that they feel themselves to be guilty, and that they are afraid to go into the presence of a holy God. If *this* be taken away, if sin be removed, of course the horror, and remorse, and alarm which it is fitted to produce will be removed also.

Is sin. Sin is the cause of it. **See Barnes "Ro 5:12"**.

The strength of sin. Its power over the mind; its terrific and dreadful energy; and *especially* its power to produce alarm in the hour of death.

Is the law. The pure and holy law of God. This idea Paul has illustrated at length in Ro 7:9-13. **See Barnes** "Ro 7:9, and Ro 7:10-13, he probably made the statement here in order to meet the Jews, and to show that the law of God had no power to take away the fear of death; and that, therefore, there was need of the gospel, and that this alone could do it. The Jews maintained that a man might be justified and saved by obedience to the law. Paul here shows that it is the law which gives its chief rigour to sin, and that it does not tend to subdue or destroy it; and that power is seen most strikingly in the pangs and horrors of a guilty conscience on the bed of death. There was need, therefore, of the gospel, which alone could remove the cause of these horrors, by taking away sin, and thus leaving the pardoned man to die in peace. **See Barnes "Ro 4:15"**.

{b} "sting" Ro 6:23 {c} "strength" Ro 4:15

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 57

Verse 57. *But thanks be to God*. **See Barnes "Ro 7:25"**.

Which giveth us the victory. Us who are Christians; all Christians. The victory over sin, death, and the grave. God alone is the author of this victory. He formed the plan; he executed it in the gift of his Son; and' he gives it to us personally when we come to die.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ. By his death, thus destroying the power of death; by his resurrection and triumph over the grave; and by his grace imparted to us to enable us to sustain the pains of death, and giving to us the hope of a glorious resurrection. **See Barnes "Ro 7:25"**; **See Barnes** "Ro 8:37".

{d} "be to God" Ro 7:25 {e} "through our" Ro 8:37 1Jo 5:4,5

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 15 - Verse 58

Verse 58. *Therefore, my beloved brethren*. In view of the great and glorious truths which have been revealed to us respecting the resurrection. Paul closes the whole of this important discussion with an exhortation to that firmness in the faith which ought to result from truths so glorious, and from hopes so elevated as these truths are fitted to impart. The exhortation is so plain, that it needs little explanation; it so obviously follows from the argument which Paul had pursued, that there is little need to attempt to enforce it.

Be ye steadfast. *edraioi*, from *edra*. Seated, sedentary, (Robinson;) perhaps with an allusion to a *statue*, (Bloomfield;) or perhaps to wrestling, and to standing one's ground, (Wolf.) Whatever may be the allusion, the sense is clear. Be firm, strong, confident in the faith, in view of the truth that you will be raised up. Be not shaken or agitated with the strifes; the temptations, and the cares of life. Be fixed in the faith, and let not the power of sin, or the sophistry of pretended philosophy, or the arts of the enemy of the soul, seduce you from the faith of the gospel.

Unmoveable. Firm, fixed, stable, unmoved. This is probably a stronger expression than the former, though meaning substantially the same thing—that we are to be firm and unshaken in our Christian hopes, and in our faith in the gospel.

Always abounding in the work of the Lord. Always engaged in doing the will of God; in promoting his glory, and advancing his kingdom. The phrase means, not only to be engaged in this, but to be engaged diligently, laboriously; excelling in this. The "work of the Lord" here means, that which the Lord requires; all the appropriate duties of Christians. Paul exhorts them to practise every Christian virtue, and to do all that they could do to further the gospel among men.

Forasmuch as ye know. Greek, *Knowing*. You know it by the arguments which have been urged for the truth of the gospel; by your deep conviction that that gospel is true.

Your labour is not in vain. It will be rewarded. It is not as if you were to die and never live again. There will be a resurrection, and you will be suitably recompensed then. What you do for the honour of God will not only be attended with an approving conscience, and with happiness here, but will be met with the glorious and eternal rewards of heaven.

In the Lord. This probably means, "Your labour or work in the Lord—i. e., in the cause of the Lord—will not be in vain." And the sentiment of the whole verse is, that the hope of the resurrection and of future glory should stimulate us to great and self-denying efforts in honour of Him who has revealed that doctrine, and who purposes graciously to reward us there. Other men are influenced and excited to great efforts by the hope of honour, pleasure, or wealth. Christians should be excited to toil and self-denial by the prospect of immortal glory; and by the assurance that their hopes are not in vain, and will not deceive them.

Thus closes this chapter of inimitable beauty, and of unequalled power of argumentation. Such is the prospect which is before the Christian. He shall indeed die like other men. But his death is a sleep—a calm, gentle, undisturbed sleep, in the expectation of being again awaked to a brighter day, 1Co 15:6. He has the assurance that his Saviour rose, and that his people shall therefore also rise, 1Co 15:12-20. He encounters peril, and privation, and persecution; he may be ridiculed and despised; he may be subjected to danger, or doomed to fight with wild beasts, or to contend with men who resemble wild beasts; he may be doomed to the pains and terrors of a martyrdom at the stake; but he has the assurance that all these are of short continuance, and that before him there is

a world of eternal glory, 1Co 15:29-32. He may be poor, unhonoured, and apparently without an earthly friend or protector, but his Saviour and Redeemer reigns, 1Co 15:25. He may be opposed by wicked men, and his name slandered, and body tortured, and his peace marred, but his enemies shall all be subdued, 1Co 15:26,27. He will himself die, and sleep in his grave, but he shall live again, 1Co 15:22,23. He has painful proof that his body is corruptible, but it will be incorruptible; that it is now vile, but it will be glorious; that it is weak, frail, feeble, but it will yet be strong, and no more subject to disease or decay, 1Co 15:42,43. And he will be brought under the power of death, but death shall be robbed of its honours, and despoiled of its triumph. Its sting from the saint is taken away, and it is changed to a blessing. It is now not the dreaded monster, the king of terrors; it is a friend that comes to remove him from a world of toil to a world of rest; from a life of sin to a life of glory. The grave is not to him the gloomy *abode*, the permanent resting-place of his body; it is a place of rest for a little time; grateful like the bed of down to a wearied frame, where he may lie down and repose after the fatigues of the day, and gently wait for the morning. He has nothing to fear in death; nothing to fear in the dying pang, the gloom, the chill, the sweat, the paleness, the fixedness of death; nothing to fear in the chillness, the darkness, the silence, the corruption of the grave. All this is in the way to immortality, and is closely and indissolubly connected with immortality, 1Co 15:55-57. And in view of all this, we should be patient, faithful, laborious, self-denying; we should engage with zeal in the work of the Lord; we should calmly wait till our change come, 1Co 15:58. No other system of religion has any such hopes as this; no other system does anything to dispel the gloom, or drive away the horrors of the grave. How foolish is the man who rejects the gospel— the only system which brings life and immortality to light! How foolish to reject the doctrine of the resurrection, and to lie down in the grave without peace, without hope, without any belief that there will be a world of glory; living without God, and dying like the brute. And yet infidelity seeks and claims its chief triumphs in the attempt to convince poor dying man that he has no solid ground of hope; that the universe is "without a Father and without a God;" that the grave terminates the career of man for ever; and that in the grave he sinks away to eternal annihilation. Strange that man should seek such degradation! Strange that all men, conscious that they must die, do not at once greet Christianity as their best friend, and hail the doctrine of the future state, and of the resurrection, as that which is adapted to meet the deeply-felt evils of this world; to fill the desponding mind with peace; and to sustain the soul in the temptations and trials of life, and in the gloom and agony of death!

{f} "be ye steadfast" 2Pe 3:14

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 16

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 1

1st Corinthians CHAPTER 16

The *doctrinal* part of this epistle was closed at the end of the 15th chapter. See the Introduction. Before closing the epistle, Paul adverts to some subjects of a miscellaneous nature, and particularly to the subject of a collection for the poor and persecuted Christians in Judea, on which his heart was much set, and to which he several times adverts in his epistles. **See Barnes "1Co 16:1"**.

This subject he had suggested to them when he was with them, and they had expressed, some time before, the utmost readiness to make the collection, and Paul had commended their readiness when he was urging the same subject in Macedonia. See 2Co 9. It is evident, however, that for some cause, perhaps owing to the divisions and contentions in the church, this collection had not yet been made. Paul, therefore, calls their attention to it, and urges them to make it, and to forward it either by him alone, or with others, whom they might designate, to Judea, 1Co 16:1-4. In connexion with this, he expresses his intention of coming to Corinth, and perhaps of passing the winter with them. He was then in Ephesus. He was expecting to go to Macedonia, probably on the business of the collection. He purposed not to visit them on his way to Macedonia, but on his return. He had formerly intended to pass through Corinth on his way to Macedonia, and had perhaps, given them such an intimation of his purpose, 2Co 1:16,17. But from some cause, **See Barnes "2Co 1:15, also** 2Co 1:16-23 he tells the Christians that he had abandoned the purpose of seeing them on the way to Macedonia, though he still intended to go to Macedonia, trod would see them on his return, 1Co 16:5-7. At that time there was a state of things in Ephesus which required his presence. His labours were greatly blessed; and, as a consequence which often attends the successful preaching of the gospel, there was much opposition. He had resolved, therefore, to remain in Ephesus until Pentecost, 1Co 16:8,9. In the mean time, to show them his deep interest in them, he informed them that Timothy was coming among them, for whom he asked a kind and cordial reception, and assured them that he had endeavoured to persuade Apollos to visit them, but was not able, 1Co 16:10-12. Paul then urges them to watch, and be firm, and live in love, 1Co 16:13,14;) and then besought them to show particular attention to the family of Stephanas, the first fruits of Achaia, 1Co 16:15,16;) and expresses his gratitude that Stephanas, and Fortunatus, and Achaicus had come to him at Ephesus, 1Co 16:17,18. They were probably the persons by whom the Corinthians had sent their letter, 1Co 7:1, and by whom Paul sent this epistle. He then closes the whole epistle with Christian salutations; with an expression of regard in his own handwriting; with a solemn charge to love the Lord Jesus Christ, as the great thing to be done, and with the assurance that, if not done, it would expose the soul to a dreadful curse when the Lord should come; with an invocation of the grace of the Lord Jesus to be with them; and with a tender expression of his own love to them all, 1Co 16:19-24.

Verse 1. *Now concerning the collection for the saints*.The use of the article here shows that he had mentioned it to them before, and that it was a subject which they would readily understand. It was not new to them, but it was needful only to give some instructions in regard to the *manner* in which it should be done, and not in regard to the occasion for the collection, or the duty of making it, Accordingly, all his instructions relate simply to the *manner* in which the collection should be made. The word rendered *collection* (*logiav*) does not occur anywhere else in the New Testament, and is not found in the classic writers. It is from *legw*, to collect, and, undoubtedly, here refers to a contribution, or collection of money for a charitable purpose. The word *saints* (*agiouv*) here refers, doubtless, to *Christians*; to the persecuted Christians in Judea. There were many there; and they were generally poor, and exposed to various trials. In regard to the meaning of this word, and the circumstances and occasion of this collection, **See Barnes** "Ro 15:25, **See Barnes "Ro 15:26"**.

As I have given order. *dietaxa*. As I have directed, enjoined, commanded, arranged. It does not mean that he had assumed the authority to tax them, or that he had commanded them to make a collection, but that he had left directions as to the best manner and time in which it should be done. The collection was voluntary and cheerful in all the churches, Ro 15:26,27; 2Co 9:2; and Paul did not assume authority to impose it on them as a tax. Nor was it necessary. Self-denial and liberality were among the distinguishing virtues of the early Christians; and to be a Christian then implied that a man would freely impart of his property to aid the poor and the needy. The order related solely to the manner of making the collection; and as Paul had suggested one mode to the churches in Galatia, he recommended the same now to the Corinthians.

To the churches of Galatia. Galatia was a province in Asia Minor. On its situation, **See Barnes "Ac 16:6".**

There were evidently several churches planted in that region. See Ga 1:2. At what time he gave this order to the churches is not mentioned; though it was doubltless on occasion of a visit to the churches there. See Ac 16:6.

{a} "as I have given order" Ga 2:10 {*} "order" "appointed"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Upon the first day of the week*. Greek, "On one of the Sabbaths." The Jews, however, used the word *Sabbath* to denote the week; the period of seven days, Mt 28:1 Mr 16:9; Lu 18:12 24:1

Joh 20:1,19. Comp. Le 23:15 De 16:9. It is universally agreed that this here denotes the first day of the week, or the Lord's-day.

Let every one of you. Let the collection be universal. Let each one esteem it his duty and his privilege to give to this object. It was not to be confined to the rich on]y, but was the common duty of all. The poor, as well as the rich, were expected to contribute according to their ability.

Lay by him in store. *par eautw tiyetw yhsaurizwn*. Let him lay up at home, treasuring up as he has been prospered. The Greek phrase, "by himself," means, probably, the same as at home. Let him set it apart; let him designate a certain portion; let him do this *by himself*, when he is at home, when he can calmly look at the evidence of his prosperity. Let him do it, not under the influence of pathetic appeals, or for the sake of display when he is with others; but let him do it as a matter of principle, and when he is by himself. The phrase in Greek, "treasuring up," may mean that each one was to put the part which he had designated into the common *treasury*. This interpretation seems to be demanded by the latter part of the verse. They were to lay it by, and to put it into the common treasury, that there might be no trouble of collecting when he should come. Or it may, perhaps, mean that they were individually to *treasure it up*, having designated in their own mind the sum which they could give, and have it in readiness when he should come. This was evidently to be done not on one Sabbath only, but was to be done on each Lord's-day until he should come.

As God hath prospered him. The word "God" is not in the original, but it is evidently understood, and necessary to the sense. The word rendered "hath prospered" (*euodwtai*) means, properly, to set forward on one's way; to prosper one's journey; and then to prosper, or be prospered. This is the

rule which Paul lays down here to guide the Christians at Corinth in giving alms—a rule that is as applicable now, and as valuable now, as it was then.

That there be no gatherings when I come. No collections, (*logiai*,) 1Co 16:1. The apostle means that there should be no trouble in collecting the small sums; that it should all be prepared; that each one might have laid by what he could give; and that all might be ready to be handed over to him, or to whomsoever they might choose to send with it to Jerusalem, 1Co 16:3.

In view of this important verse, we may remark,

(1.) that there is here clear proof that the first day of the week was observed by the church at Corinth as holy time. If it was not, there can have been no propriety in selecting that day in preference to any other in which to make the collection. It was the day which was set apart to the duties of religion, and therefore an appropriate, day for the exercise of charity and the bestowment of alms. There can have been no reason why this day should have been designated except that it was a day set apart to religion, and therefore deemed a proper day for the exercise of benevolence towards others.

(2.) This order extended also to the churches in Galatia, proving also that the first day of the week was observed by them, and was regarded as a day proper for the exercise of charity towards the poor and the afflicted. And if the first day of the week was observed, by apostolic authority, in those churches, it is morally certain that it was observed by others. This consideration, therefore, demonstrates that it was the custom to observe this day, and that it was observed by the authority of the early founders of Christianity.

(3.) Paul intended that they should be *systematic* in their giving, and that they should give from principle, and not merely under the impulse of feeling.

(4.) Paul designed that the habit of doing good with their money should be *constant*. He, therefore, directed that it should be on the return of each Lord's-day, and that the subject should be constantly before their minds.

(5.) It was evident that Paul in this way would obtain *more* for his object than he would if he waited that they should give all at once. He therefore directed them honestly to lay by each week what they could *then* give, and to regard it as a sacred *treasure*. How much would the amount of charities in the Christian churches be swelled if this were the practice now, and if all Christians would lay by *in store* each week what they could then devote to sacred purposes.

(6.) The true rule of giving is, "as the Lord has prospered us." If he has prospered us, we owe it to him as a debt of gratitude. And according to our prosperity and success, we should honestly devote our property to God.

(7.) It is right and proper to lay by of our wealth for the purposes of benevolence on the Sabbath-day. It is right to do good then, (Mt 12:12;) and one of the appropriate exercises of religion is to look at the evidence of our prosperity with a view to know what we may be permitted to give to advance the kingdom of the Lord Jesus.

(8.) If every Christian would honestly do this every week, it would do much to keep down the spirit of worldliness that now prevails everywhere in the Christian church; and if every Christian would conscientiously follow the direction of Paul here, there would be no want of funds for any well-directed plan for the conversion of the world.

{a} "first day" Ac 20:7 Re 1:10 {*} "gatherings" "collections"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters*. There has been great variety of opinion in regard to the proper construction of this verse. Macknight supposes that the "letters" here referred to were not letters either to or from the apostle, but letters signed and sent by the church at Corinth, designating their appointment and their authority. With this interpretation Doddridge coincides; and this is required by the usual pointing of the Greek text, where the comma is inserted after the word letters, as in our translation. But a different interpretation has been proposed by inserting the comma after the word "approve," so that it shall read, "Whom you approve, or designate, them I will send *with letters* to convey your charity to Jerusalem." This is followed by Griesbach, Locke, Rosenmuller, Bloomfield, Beza, Eammond, Grotius, Whitby, etc. Certainly this accords better with the design of the passage. For it is evident (1Co 16:4) that, though Paul was willing to go, yet he was not expecting to go. If he did not go, what was more natural than that he should offer to give them letters of commendation to his brethren in Judea? Mill has doubted whether this construction is in accordance with Greek usage; but the names above cited are sufficient authority on that subject. The proper construction therefore is, that Paul would give them letters to his friends in Jerusalem, and certify their appointment to dispense the charity, and commend the persons sent to the favour and hospitality of the church there.

Your liberality. Margin, *Gift*. Your donation; your alms. The Greek word *carin* usually signifies grace, or favour, here it means an act of grace or favour; kindness; a favour conferred; benefaction. Comp. 2Co 8:4,6,7,19.

{b} "ye shall approve" 2Co 8:19 {1} "liberality" "gift"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And if it be meet*, etc. If it be judged desirable and best. If my presence can further the object; or will satisfy you better; or will be deemed necessary to guide and aid those who may be sent, I will be willing to go also. For some appropriate and valuable remarks in regard to the apostle Paul's management of pecuniary matters, so as not to excite suspicion, and to preserve a blameless reputation, see Paley's Horae Paulinae, chap. iv., No. 1, 3, Note.

{+} "meet" "proper"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Now I will come unto you*. I purpose to come unto you. He had expected to see them on his way to Macedonia, but, on some account, had been induced to abandon that design. **See Barnes "2Co 1:16"**; **See Barnes** "2Co 1:17".

When I shall pass through Macedonia. When I shall have passed through Macedonia. He proposed to go to Macedonia first, and, having passed through that country, visiting the churches, to go to Corinth. For the situation of Macedonia, **See Barnes "Ac 16:9"**.

For I do pass through Macedonia. I design to do it. It is my present intention. Though he had abandoned, from some cause, the design of passing through Corinth on his way to Macedonia, yet he had not given up the design itself. It was still his intention to go there.

{c} "when I shall" 2Co 1:15,16 {++} "do pass" "I intend to"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *That ye may bring me on my journey*. That you may accompany me, or aid me, and furnish me the means of going on my journey. It was customary for the apostles to be attended by some members of the churches and friends in their travels. **See Barnes "Ac 10:23"**.

On my journey, etc. Probably to Judea. This was evidently his intention. But wherever he should go, it would be gratifying to him to have their aid and companionship.

{&} "abide" "remain" {|} "journey" "conduct me on my way"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *For I will not see you now by the way*. On the way to Macedonia. Something had occurred to change his mind, and to induce him to go to Macedonia by another way.

But I trust to tarry a while with you. That is, on my return from Macedonia, 1Co 16:5. Greek, "I hope to remain with you a little while."

If the Lord permit. The apostle did not use the language of certainty and of confidence. He felt his dependence on God, and regarded all as under his direction. See the same form of expression in 1Co 4:19, **See Barnes "1Co 4:19"**.

{*} "tarry" "remain"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *But I will tarry at Ephesus*. This passage proves that this letter was written from Ephesus. It is by such indications as this, usually, that we are able to determine the place where the epistles were written. In regard to the situation of Ephesus, **See Barnes "Ac 18:19"**.

Until Pentecost. This was a Jewish festival occurring fifty days after the Passover; and hence called the Pentecost. **See Barnes "Ac 2:1"**.

As there were Jews at Corinth, and doubtless in the church, they would understand the time which Paul referred to; and as he was a Jew, he naturally used their mode of reckoning time, where it would be understood. Doubtless the great festivals of the Jews were well known among most of the cities of Greece, as there were Sews in them an who were scrupulous in their observances. It is no improbable supposition, also, that Christians everywhere regarded this day with deep interest, as being the day on which the Holy Spirit descended on the apostles and on the people of Jerusalem, Ac 2.

{*} "tarry" "remain"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *For a great door*. There is abundant opportunity for usefulness. The word door is used evidently to denote an occasion or an opportunity for doing anything. It is the means by which we have entrance or access; and hence denotes facility in doing anything when there is no obstruction. See Ac 14:27 2Co 2:12; Col 4:3.

And effectual. That is, *effective*, or adapted to success; presenting opportunity for great effects. There is abundant opportunity to preach the gospel; there is attention to what is spoken, and great interest in it; there is great encouragement to labour. It is possible that this was one of the reasons why Paul had changed his mind about passing through Corinth on his way to Macedonia. It would require time to visit Corinth, as he would wish to remain there; and an unexpected opportunity having arisen for doing good, he judged it best to remain at Ephesus as long as practicable, and then to go at once to Macedonia.

And there are many adversaries. Many opposers; many who resist the gospel. These were doubtless in part Jews who excited opposition to him, and in part the friends of Demetrius. See Ac 19. That Paul had great success in Ephesus, and that his labours were attended with a great revival of religion there, is manifest from that chapter. We may remark here,

(1.) that such a work of grace, such a setting open of a great and effectual door, is often the occasion of increased opposition to the gospel. It is no uncommon thing that the adversaries of Christ should be excited at such times; and we are not to be surprised if the same thing should occur now which occurred in the time of Paul.

(2.) This was regarded by Paul as no reason why he should leave Ephesus, but rather as a reason why he should remain there. It was regarded by him as an evidence that the Holy Spirit was there. It was proof that the enemies of God were alarmed, and that the kingdom of Christ was advancing. His presence also would be needed there, to encourage and strengthen the young converts who would be attacked and opposed; and he deemed it his duty to remain. A minister should never wish to make enemies to the gospel, nor seek to excite them to make opposition; but such opposition is often evidence that the Spirit of God is among a people; that the consciences of sinners are aroused and alarmed; and that the great enemy of God and man is making, as he was at Ephesus, a desperate effort to preserve his kingdom from being destroyed.

(3.) A minister should regard it as his duty in a special manner to be among his people when there is such opposition excited. His presence is needed to comfort and encourage the church; and

when the minds of men are excited, it is often the best time to present truth, and to defend successfully the great doctrines of the Bible.

(4.) Ministers should not be *discouraged* because there is opposition to the gospel. It is one ground of encouragement. It is an indication of the presence of God in awakening the conscience. And it is far more favourable as a season to do good than a dead calm, and when there is universal stagnation and unconcern.

{a} "great door" 2Co 2:12 Re 3:8 {d} "adversaries" Php 3:18

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Now if Timotheus come*. Paul had sent Timothy to them, **See Barnes** "1Co 4:17, **See Barnes** "1Co 4:18, but as he had many churches to visit, it was not absolutely certain that he would go to Corinth.

May be with you without fear. Let him be received kindly and affectionately. Timothy was then a young man, Ac 16:1-3; 1Ti 4:12. There might be some danger that he might feel himself embarrassed among the rich, the gay, and the great. Paul, therefore, asks them to encourage him, to receive him kindly, and not to embarrass him. Perhaps, also, there may be some reference to the false teachers whom Timothy might be called on to oppose. They were powerful, and they might endeavour to intimidate and alarm him. Paul, therefore, asks the church to sustain him in his efforts to defend the truth.

For he worketh the work of the Lord. He is engaged in the service of the Lord; and he is worthy of your confidence, and worthy to be sustained by you.

{c} "Timotheus come" Ac 19:22 {d} "worketh the work" Php 2:19-22

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Let no man therefore despise him*. Let no one despise him on account of his youth and inexperience. It is probable that some of the more wealthy and proud, some who valued themselves on their wisdom and experience, would be disposed to look upon him with contempt. On another occasion, he directed Timothy so to live as that no one should have occasion to despise him on account of his youth, 1Ti 4:12; and he here urges on the Corinthians, that they should not despise him because he was a young man, and comparatively inexperienced. A minister of the gospel, though young, should receive the respect that is due to his office; and if he conducts himself in accordance with his high calling, his youth should be no barrier to the confidence and affection of even aged and experienced Christians. It should be rather a reason why they should treat him with affection, and encourage him in his work.

But conduct him forth in peace. That is, when he leaves you. Attend him on his way, and help him forward on his journey to me. **See Barnes "1Co 16:6"**.

For I look for him with the brethren. Erastus accompanied Timothy in this journey, (Ac 19:22,) and probably there were others with him. Titus also had been sent to Corinth, (2Co 12:17,18;) and it is not improbable that Paul had desired Titus to bring with him to Ephesus some of the Corinthian brethren, as he might need their assistance there. —*Grotius*.

{e} "despise him" 1Ti 4:12 {f} "conduct him forth in peace" 1Ti 4:12

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *As touching our brother Apollos*. Tindal renders this, "To speak of brother Apollo." In regard to Apollos, **See Barnes "1Co 1:12"**.

His will was not at all to come at this time. It is probable that there were matters which detained him, or which required his presence in Ephesus. It is not known why Apollos had left Corinth, but it has been supposed that it was on account of the dissensions which existed there. For the same reason he might not be induced to return there while those dissensions lasted, and there might be employment which he had where he then was which rendered his presence there important. The Latin fathers say that Apollos did after this return to Corinth, when the religious differences had been settled.— *Bloomfield*. It is probable that the Corinthians had requested, by the messengers who carried their letter to Paul, that either he or Apollos would come and visit them. Paul states, in reply, that he had endeavoured to prevail on Apollos to go, but had not succeeded.

He will come when he shall have convenient time. The Greek word means, when he should have leisure, or a good opportunity. He might then be engaged; or he might be unwilling to go while their contentions lasted. They had probably (1Co 1:12) endeavoured to make him the head of a party, and on that account he might have been unwilling to return at present among them. But Paul assures them that he designed to come among them at some future time. This was said probably to show them that he still retained his affection for them, and had a tender solicitude for their peace and prosperity. Had this not been said, they might, perhaps, have inferred that he was offended, and had no desire to come among them.

{g} "Apollos, I greatly" 1Co 1:12

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Watch ye*. The exhortation in, this and the following verse is given evidently in view of the peculiar dangers and temptations which surrounded them. The word here used (*grhgoreite*) means, to keep awake, to be vigilant, etc.; and this may, perhaps, be a military metaphor derived from the duty of those who are stationed as sentinels to guard a camp, or to observe the motions of an enemy. The term is frequently used in the New Testament, and the duty frequently enjoined, Mt 24:41,42, 25:13 Mr 13:35; Lu 21:36 Ac 20:31; 1Th 5:6 2Ti 4:5.

The sense here is, that they were to watch, or be vigilant, against all the evils of which he had admonished them—the evils of dissension, of erroneous doctrines, of disorder, of false teachers, etc. They were to watch lest their souls should be ruined, and their salvation endangered; lest the enemies of the truth and of holiness should steal silently upon them, and surprise them. They were to watch with the same vigilance that is required of a sentinel who guards a camp, lest an enemy should come suddenly upon them, and surprise the camp when the army was locked in sleep.

Stand fast in the faith. Be firm in holding and defending the truths of the gospel. Do not yield to any foe, but maintain the truth, and adhere to your confidence in God and to the doctrines of the gospel with unwavering constancy. **See Barnes "1Co 15:1"**.

Be firm in maintaining what you believe to be true, and in holding on to your personal confidence in God, notwithstanding all the arts, insinuations, and teachings of seducers and the friends of false doctrine.

Quit you like men. *andrizesye*, (from *anhr*, a man.) The word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. In the Seventy it occurs in Jos 1:6,7,9,18 1Ch 28:20 2Ch 32:7; Neh 2:1; and in eighteen other places. See Trommius' Concordance. It occurs also in the classic authors. See Xen. Oec. v. 4. It means, to render one manly or brave; to show one's self a man; that is, not to be a coward, or timid, or alarmed at enemies, but to be bold and brave. We have a similar phrase in common use: "Be a man," or "Show yourself a man;" that is, be not mean, or be not cowardly.

Be strong. Be firm, fixed, steadfast. Comp. Eph 6:10, "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."

{a} "Watch ye" 1Pe 5:8 {b} "stand fast" 2Th 2:15 {c} "like men" 1Co 14:20 {d} "be strong" Eph 6:10

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Let all your things*, etc. All that you do. This direction is repeated on account of its great importance, and because it is a summing up of all that he has said in this epistle. See 1Co 13; 1Co 14:1. Here he says, that charity, or love, was to regulate all that they did. This was a simple rule; and if this was observed, everything would be done well.

{e} "Let all your" 1Pe 4:8 {*} "charity" "love"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *I beseech you, brethren*. The construction here is somewhat involved, but the sense is plain. The words, "I beseech you," in this verse, are evidently to be taken in connexion with 1Co 16:16. "I beseech you that ye submit yourselves unto such," etc. The design is, to exhort them to pay proper deference to Stephanas, and to all who sustained the same rank and character; and the

remainder of 1Co 16:15 is designed to state the reason why they should show respect and kindness to the household of Stephanas.

Ye know the house. You are acquainted with the household, or family Probably a considerable portion, or all, of the family of Stephanas had been converted to the christian faith.

Of Stephanas. **See Barnes "1Co 1:16".**

Paul there says, that he had baptized his family.

That it is the first fruits of Achaia. They were the first converted to the Christian religion in Achaia. **See Barnes "Ro 16:5".**

Respecting Achaia, **See Barnes "Ac 18:12".**

That they have addicted themselves, etc. That they have devoted themselves to the service of Christians. That is, by aiding the ministry; by showing hospitality; by providing for their wants; by attending and aiding the apostles in their journeys, etc.

{f} "first fruits of Achaia" Ro 16:5 {+} "ministry" "service"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *That ye submit yourselves*, etc. The word used here means, evidently, that you would show them proper deference and regard; that you would treat them with distinguished respect and honour for what they have done.

And to every one that helpeth with us, etc. Every one that aids us in the ministry, or provides for our wants, etc. It is possible that Stephanas lived among them at this time, **See Barnes** "1Co 1:16, though he had been converted in Achaia; and it is probable that, as Corinth was a central place and a thoroughfare, others might come among them who were the personal friends of Paul, and who had aided him in the ministry. Towards all such he bespeaks their kind, and tender, and respectful regards.

{g} "submit yourselves" Heb 13:17

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *I am glad of the coming*. That is, I am glad that they have come to me at Ephesus. I rejoice that he who was converted by my ministry in Achaia, and who has so long shown himself to be a personal friend to me, and an aid in my work, came where I am.

Stephanas. The same person evidently mentioned in the previous verses. Probably he, as one of the oldest and most respected members of the church, had been selected to carry the letter of the Corinthians 1Co 7:1 to Paul, and to consult with him respecting the affairs of the church there.

Fortunatus and Achaicus. These persons are not referred to anywhere else in the New Testament. It appears that Fortunatus survived Paul, for he was subsequently the messenger of the church at

Corinth to that at Rome, and bore back to the Corinthians the epistle which Clement of Rome sent to them. See that epistle, & 59.

For that which was lacking, etc. The word which is here used, and rendered" that which was lacking," (*usterhma*,) does not occur in the classic writers. It means, properly, that which is wanting, want, lack. —*Robinson*. It may be used to denote a want or lack of any kind, whether of support, sustenance, aid, consolation, information, or counsel. See Lu 21:4 Php 2:30; 1Th 3:10.

What this was which the Corinthians had neglected or failed to furnish Paul, and which had been supplied by the presence of these persons, can be only a matter of conjecture; and different commentators have supposed different things. It might be a neglect to provide for his wants, or a defect of informing him about their affairs in the letter which they had sent him; or it might be that these persons had furnished, by their presence and conversation, those consolations and friendly offices which the church at Corinth would have rendered had they been all present; and Paul may mean to say, that he had enjoyed with them that friendly intercourse and Christian communion which he had desired with them, but which was lacking; i.e., which he had not been permitted to enjoy by reason of his absence. This is the view which is given by Rosenmuller, Doddridge, and Bloomfield; and as Paul does not seem here inclined to blame them, this view is most in accordance with the general strain of the passage.

{h} "lacking" Php 2:30 {++} "lacking" "wanting"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *For they have refreshed my spirit*. By their presence and conversation. They have given me information respecting the state of things in the church; and their society has been with me of the most gratifying and cheering kind.

And your's. "By removing," says locke, "those suspicions and fears that were on both sides." By this supplying your absence, they have benefited us both. For Paul gained information of those absent, and they gained in the counsel afforded to them by the apostle."—*Bloomfield*.

"For they refreshed my spirit by their obliging behaviour and edifying conversation, as, I doubt not, they have often refreshed yours by their ministrations among you."—*Doddridge*. The sense seems to be, that their visit to him would be a benefit to both; would result in imparting comfort, a good understanding, an increase of their mutual attachment, and ultimately a large accession to their mutual joy when they should again meet.

Therefore acknowledge ye them that are such. Receive affectionately; recognise as brethren; cherish, treat kindly all that evince such a spirit. **See Barnes "1Co 16:15"**.

See Barnes "1Co 16:16".

The apostle here designs, evidently, that the Corinthians should receive them kindly on their return, and regard with deference and respect the counsel which they might offer, and the message which they might bear from him.

{i} "acknowledge ye them" 1Th 5:12

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *The churches of Asia*. The word "Asia" in the New Testament usually denotes Asia Minor in general. **See Barnes "Ac 2:9"**.

It was sometimes used in a more limited sense, to denote the region around Ephesus, and of which Ephesus was the centre and capital. **See Barnes "Ac 16:6"**.

This is the region undoubtedly which is intended here.

Salute you. Greet you; send respectful and affectionate Christian regards. **See Barnes "Ro 16:3"**.

Aquila and Priscilla. **See Barnes "Ac 18:26"**.

Much in the Lord. With affectionate Christian salutations; or as Christians. Wishing the blessing and favour of the Lord.

With the church that is in their house. **See Barnes "Ro 16:5"**.

{k} "Aquila and Priscilla" Ro 16:5,15

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *All the brethren*, etc. All the Christians with whom Paul was connected in Ephesus. They felt a deep interest in the church at Corinth, and sent to them Christian salutations.

With an holy kiss. **See Barnes "Ro 16:16"**.

{*} "greet" "salute"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand*. It is evident that Paul was accustomed to employ an amanuensis in penning his epistles, **See Barnes "Ro 16:22"**

though he signed his own name, and expressed his Christian salutation in every epistle, 2Th 3:17 Col 4:18. This gave a sanction to what was written; was a proof that it was his own, and was a valuable token of affectionate regard. It was a proof that there was no fraud or imposition. Why he employed an amanuensis is not known.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ*. This is a most solemn and affecting, close of the whole epistle. It was designed to direct them to the great and essential matter of religion, the

love of the Lord Jesus; and was intended, doubtless, to turn away their minds from the subjects which had agitated them, the disputes and dissensions which had rent the church into factions, to the great inquiry whether they truly loved the-Saviour. It is implied that there was danger, in their disputes and strifes about minor matters, of neglecting the love of the Lord Jesus, or of substituting attachment to a party in the place of that love to the Saviour, which alone could be connected with eternal life.

Let him be Anathema. On the meaning of the word *anathema*, **See Barnes "1Co 12:3"**.

The word properly means accursed, or devoted to destruction; and the idea here is, that he who did not believe in the Lord Jesus, and love him, would be, and ought to be, devoted to destruction, or accursed of God. It expresses what *ought* to be done; it expresses a truth in regard to God's dealings, not the desire of the apostle. No matter what any man's endowments might be; no matter what might be his wealth, his standing, or his talent; no matter if he were regarded as a ruler in the church, or at the head of a party; yet, if he had not true love to the Lord Jesus, he could not be saved. This sentiment is in accordance with the declaration of the Scripture everywhere. See, particularly, Joh 3:36 Mr 16:16; **See Barnes "Mr 16:16"**.

Maran-atha. These are Syriac words, *Moran Etho*—" the Lord comes;" .i.e., will come. The reason why this expression is added may be,

(1.) to give the greater *solemnity* to the declaration of the apostle; i. e.,. to give it an emphatic form.

(2.) To intimate that, though there were no earthly power to punish a want of love to the Saviour; though the state could not, and ought not to punish it; and though the church could not exclude all who did not love the Lord Jesus from its bosom, yet they could not escape. For the Lord would himself come to take vengeance on his enemies; and no one could escape. Though, therefore, those who did not love the Lord Jesus could not be punished by men, yet they could not escape Divine condemnation. The Lord would come to execute vengeance himself, and they could not escape. It is probable (see Lightfoot in loco) that the Jews were accustomed to use such a form in their greater excommunication; and that they meant by it, that the person who was thus devoted to destruction, and excommunicated, *must* be destroyed; for the Lord would come to take vengeance on all his enemies. "It certainly was not now, for the first time, used as a new kind of cursing by the apostle; but was the application of a current mode of speech to the purpose he had in contemplation. Perhaps, therefore, by inspecting the manners of the East, we may illustrate the import of this singular passage. The nearest approach to it that I have been able to discover, is in the following extract from Mr. Bruce; and though, perhaps, this does not come up to the full power of the apostle's meaning, yet, probably, it gives the idea which was commonly attached to the phrase among the public. Mr. Bruce had been forced by a pretended saint, in Egypt, to take him on board his vessel, as if to carry him to a certain place—whereas, Mr. Bruce meant no such thing; but, having set him on shore at some little distance from whence he came, 'we slacked our vessel down the stream a few yards, filling our sails, and stretching away. On seeing this, our saint fell into a desperate passion, cursing, blaspheming, and stamping with his feet; at every word crying, "Shar Ulah!" i.e., *May God send, and do justice*!' This appears to be the strongest execration this passionate Arab could use; i.e., 'To punish you adequately is out of my power: I remit you to the vengeance of God.' Is not this the import of *anathema maranatha*?" — *Taylor*, in Calmet. This solemn declaration, or denunciation, the apostle wrote with his own hand, as the summary of all that he had said, in order that it might be attentively regarded. There is not a more solemn declaration in the Bible; there is

not a more fearful denunciation; there is no one that will be more certainly executed. No matter *what* we may have—be it wealth, or beauty, or rigour, or accomplishment, or adorning, or the praise and flattery of the world; no matter if we are elevated high in office and in rank; no matter if we are honoured by the present age, or gain a reputation to be transmitted to future times; yet, if we have not love to the Saviour, we cannot be saved. We must be devoted to the curse; and the Lord Jesus will soon return to execute the tremendous sentence on a guilty world. How important, then, to ask whether we have that love? Whether we are attached to the Lord Jesus in such a manner as to secure his approbation? Whether we so love him as to be prepared to hail his coming with joy, and to be received into his everlasting kingdom. In the close of the Notes on this epistle, I may ask any one who shall read these pages, whether he has this love? And I may press it upon the attention of each one, though I may never see his face in the flesh, as the great inquiry which is to determine his everlasting destiny. The solemn declaration stands here, that if he does not love the Lord Jesus, he will be, and he ought to be, devoted to destruction. The Lord Jesus will soon return to make investigation, and to judge the world, There will be no escape; and no tongue can express the awful horrors of an ETERNAL CURSE, PRONOUNCED BY THE LIPS OF THE SON OF GOD!

{a} "love not the Lord Jesus" Eph 6:24 {b} "Anathema Maran-atha" Ga 1:8,9 {c} "Maran-atha" Jude 1:14,15

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *The grace*, etc. **See Barnes "Ro 16:20".**

{d} "grace of" Ro 16:20

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 16 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *In Christ Jesus*. Through Christ Jesus; or in connexion with your love to him; i.e., as Christians. This is an expression of tender regard to them as Christian brethren; of his love for the church; and his earnest desire for their welfare. It is in accordance with the usual manner in which he closes his epistles; and it is peculiarly tender, affectionate, and beautiful here, when we consider the manner in which he had been treated by many of the Corinthians; and as following the solemn declaration in 1Co 16:22. Paul loved them; loved them intensely, and was ever ready to express his affectionate regard for them *all*, and his earnest desire for their salvation.

The subscription to the epistle, "The first epistle to the Corinthians," etc., was evidently written by some other hand than that of Paul, and has no claim to be regarded as inspired. Probably these subscriptions were added a considerable time after the epistles were first written; and in some instances evidently by some person who was not well informed on the subject. See the Note at the end of the Epistle to the Romans. In this instance, the subscription is evidently in its main statement false. The epistle bears internal marks that it was written from Ephesus, though there is every

probability that it was sent by three of the persons who are here mentioned. It is absurd, however, to suppose that *Timothy* was concerned in bearing the epistle to them, since it is evident, that when it was written he was already on a visit to the churches, and on his way to Corinth. **See Barnes** "1Co 16:10, **See Barnes "1Co 16:11"**; **See Barnes** "1Co 4:17".

There is not the slightest internal evidence that it was written from Philippi; but everything in the epistle concurs in the supposition that it was sent from Ephesus. See the Introduction to the epistle. There is, however, a considerable variety among the Mss. in regard to the subscription. They are evidently none of them of any authority; and as these subscriptions generally mislead the reader of the Bible, it would have been better had they been omitted.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 1

The Second Epistle
of
PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS
INTRODUCTION
I. THE DESIGN OF THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

In the Introduction to the First Epistle to the Corinthians, the situation and character of the city of Corinth, the history of the church there, and the design which Paul had in view in writing to them at first, have been fully stated. In order to a full understanding of the design of this epistle, those facts should be borne in distinct remembrance; and the reader is referred to the statement there made as material to a correct understanding of this epistle. It was shown there that an important part of Paul's design at that time was to reprove the irregularities which existed in the church at Corinth. This he had done with great fidelity. He had not only answered the inquiries which they proposed to him, but he had gone with great particularity into an examination of the gross disorders of which he had learned by some members of the family of Chloe. A large part of the epistle, therefore, was the language of severe reproof. Paul felt its necessity; and he had employed that language with unwavering fidelity to his Master.

Yet it was natural that he should feel great solicitude in regard to the reception of that letter, and to its influence in accomplishing what he wished. That letter had been sent from Ephesus, where Paul proposed to remain until after the succeeding Pentecost, (1Co 16:8;) evidently hoping by that time to hear from them, and to learn what had been the manner of the reception of his epistle. He proposed then to go to Macedonia, and from that place to go again to Corinth, (1Co 16:5-7;) but he was evidently desirous to learn in what manner his first epistle had been received, and what was its effect, before he visited them. He sent Timothy and Erastus before him to Macedonia and Achaia, (Ac 19:22 1Co 16:10,) intending that, they should visit Corinth, and commissioned Timothy to regulate the disordered affairs in the church there. It would appear also that he sent Titus to the church there in order to observe the effect which his epistle would produce, and to return and report to him, 2Co 2:13 7:6-16 Evidently, Paul felt much solicitude on the subject; and the manner in which they received his admonitions would do much to regulate his own future movements. An important case of discipline; his authority as an apostle; and the interests of religion in an important city, and in a church which he had himself founded, were all at stake. In this state of mind he himself

left Ephesus, and went to Troas on his way to Macedonia, where it appears he had appointed Titus to meet him, and to report to him the manner in which his first epistle had been received. **See Barnes "2Co 2:13".**

Then his mind was greatly agitated and distressed because he did not meet Titus as he had expected, and in this state of mind he went forward to Macedonia. There he had a direct interview with Titus, (2Co 7:5,6,) and learned from him that his first epistle had accomplished all which he had desired, 2Co 7:7-16. The act of discipline which he had directed had been performed; the abuses had been in a great measure corrected; and the Corinthians had been brought to a state of true repentance for their former irregularities and disorders. The heart of Paul was greatly comforted by this intelligence, and by the signal success which had attended this effort to produce reform. In this state of mind he wrote to them this second letter.

Titus had spent some time in Corinth. He had had an opportunity of learning the views of the parties, and of ascertaining the true condition of the church. This epistle is designed to meet some of the prevailing views of the party which was opposed to him there, and to refute some of the prevailing slanders in regard to himself. The epistle, therefore, is occupied to a considerable extent in refuting the slanders which had been heaped upon him, and in vindicating his own character. This letter also he sent by the hands of Titus, by whom the former had been sent; and he designed, doubtless, that the presence of Titus should aid in accomplishing the objects which he had in view in the epistle, 2Co 8:17,18.

II.—-THE SUBJECTS TREATED OF IN THIS EPISTLE

It has been generally admitted that this epistle is written without much definite arrangement or plan. It treats on a variety of topics mainly as they occurred to the mind of the apostle at the time, and perhaps without having formed any definite arrangement before he commenced writing it. Those subjects are all important, and are all treated in the usual manner of Paul, and are all useful and interesting to the church at large; but we shall not find in this epistle the same systematic arrangement which is apparent in the epistle to the Romans, or which occurs in the first epistle to the Corinthians. Some of the subjects, of which it treats are the following:

(1.) He mentions his own sufferings, and particularly his late trials in Asia. For deliverance from these trials he expresses his gratitude to God; and states the design for which God called him to endure such trials to have been, that he might be better, qualified to comfort others who might be afflicted in a similar manner, 2Co 1:1-12.

(2.) He vindicates himself from one of the accusations which his enemies had brought against him, that he was unstable and fickle-minded. He had promised to visit them; and he had not yet fulfilled his promise. They took occasion, therefore, to say that he was unstable, and that he was afraid to visit them. He shows to them, in reply, the true reason why he had not come to them, and that his real object in not doing it had been "to spare" them, 2Co 1:13-24.

(3.) The case of the unhappy individual who had been guilty of incest had deeply affected his mind. In the first epistle he had treated of this case at large, and had directed that discipline should be exercised. He had felt deep solicitude in regard to the manner in which his commands on that subject should be received, and, had judged it best not to visit them until he should be informed of the manner in which they had complied with his directions. Since they had obeyed him, and had inflicted discipline on him, he now exhorts them to forgive the unhappy man, and to receive him again to their fellowship, 2Co 2:1-11.

(4.) He mentions the deep solicitude which he had on this subject, and his disappointment when he came to Troas and did not meet with Titus as he had expected, and had not been informed, as he hoped to have been, of the manner in which his former epistle had been received, 2Co 2:12-17. In view of the manner in which they had received his former epistle, and of the success of his efforts, which he learned when he reached Macedonia, he gives thanks to God that all his efforts to promote the welfare of the church had been successful, 2Co 2:14-17.

(5.) Paul vindicates his character, and his claims to be regarded as an apostle. He assures them that he does not need letters of commendation to them, since they were fully acquainted with his character, 2Co 3:1-6. This subject leads him into an examination of the nature of the ministry and its importance, which he illustrates by showing the comparative obscurity of the Mosaic ministrations, and the greater dignity and permanency of the gospel, 2Co 3:7-18.

(6.) In chapters 4 and 5 he states the principles by which he was actuated in the ministry. He and the other apostles were greatly afflicted, and were subjected to great and peculiar trims, but they had also great and peculiar consolations. They were sustained with the hope of heaven, and with the assurance that there was a world of glory. They acted in view of that world, and had gone forth in view of it to entreat men to be reconciled to God.

(7.) Having referred in chapter 5 to the nature and objects of the Christian ministry, he expatiates with great beauty on the temper with which he and his brethren, in the midst of great trials and afflictions, executed this important work, 2Co 6:1-10.

(8.) Having in this manner pursued a course of remark that was calculated to conciliate their regard, and to show his affection for them, he exhorts them (2Co 6:11-18) to avoid those connexions which would injure their piety, and which were inconsistent with the gospel which they professed to love. The connexions to which he particularly referred, were improper marriages and ruinous alliances with idolaters, to which they were particularly exposed.

(9.) In 2Co 7 he again makes a transition to Titus, and to the joy which he had brought him in the intelligence which he gave of the manner in which the commands of Paul in the first epistle had been received, and of its happy effect on the minds of the Corinthians.

(10.) In chapters 8 and 9 Paul refers to and discusses the subject on which his heart was so much set-the collection for the poor and afflicted Christians in Judea. He had commenced the collection in Macedonia, and had boasted to them that the Corinthians would aid largely in that benevolent work, and he now sent Titus to complete it in Corinth.

(11.) In chapter 10, he enters upon a vindication of himself, and of his apostolic authority, against the accusation of his enemies; and pursues the subject through chapter 11 by a comparison of himself with others, and in chapter 12 by an argument directly in favour of his apostolic authority from the favours which God had bestowed on him, and the evidence which he had given of his having been commissioned by God. This subject he pursues also in various illustrations to the end of the epistle.

The *objects* of this epistle, therefore, and subjects discussed, are various. They are to show his deep interest in their welfare; to express his gratitude that his former letter had been so well received, and had so effectually accomplished what he wished to accomplish; to carry forward the work of reformation among them which had been so auspiciously commenced; to vindicate his authority as an apostle from the objections which he had learned through Titus they had continued to make; to secure the collection for the poor saints in Judea, on which his heart had been so much set; and to assure them of his intention to come and visit them according to his repeated promises. The

epistle is substantially of the same character as the first. It was written to a church where great, dissensions and other evils prevailed; it was designed to promote a reformation, and is a model of the manner in which evils are to be corrected in a church. In connexion with the first epistle, it shows the manner in which offenders in the church are to be dealt with, and the spirit and design with which the work of discipline should be entered on and pursued. Though these were local evils, yet great principles are involved here of use to the church in all ages: and to these epistles the church must refer at all times, as an illustration of the proper manner of administering discipline, and of silencing the calumnies of enemies.

III.—THE TIME AND PLACE IN WHICH THE Epistle WAS WRITTEN

It is manifest that this epistle was written from Macedonia, (2Co 8:1-14 9:2,) and was sent by Titus to the church at Corinth. If so, it was written probably about a year after the former epistle. Paul was on his way to Corinth, and was expecting to go there soon. He had left Ephesus, where he was when he wrote the first epistle, and had gone to Troas, and from thence to Macedonia, where he had met with Titus, and had from him learned what was the effect of his first epistle. In the overflowing of his heart with gratitude for the success of that letter, and with a desire to carry forward the work of reformation in the church, and completely to remove all the objections which had been made to his apostolic authority, and to prepare for his own welcome reception when he went there, he wrote this letter—a letter which we cannot doubt was as kindly received as the former, and which, like that, accomplished the objects which he had in view.

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

THIS chapter consists of the following parts, or subjects:

(1.) The usual salutation and benediction in the introduction of the epistle, 2Co 1:1-2. This is found in all the epistles of Paul, and was at once an affectionate salutation and an appropriate expression of his interest in their welfare, and also an appropriate mode of commencing an address to them by one who claimed to be inspired and sent from God.

(2.) He refers to the consolation which he had had in his heavy trials, and praises God for that consolation, and declares that the reason for which he was comforted was, that he might be qualified to administer consolation to others in the same or in similar circumstances, 2Co 1:3-7.

(3.) He informs them of the heavy trials which he was called to experience when he was in Ephesus, and of his merciful deliverance from those trials, 2Co 1:8-12. He had been exposed to death, and had despaired of life, 2Co 1:8,9; yet he had been delivered, 2Co 1:10; he desired them to unite with him in thanksgiving on account of it, 2Co 1:11; and in all this he had endeavoured to keep a good conscience, and had that testimony that he had endeavoured to maintain such a conscience toward all, and especially toward them, 2Co 1:12.

(4.) He refers to the design which he had in writing the former letter, to them, 2Co 1:13,14. He had written to them only such things as they admitted to be true and proper; and such as he was persuaded they would always admit. They had always received his instructions favourably and kindly and he had always sought their welfare.

(5.) In this state of mind, Paul had designed to have paid them a second visit, 2Co 1:15,16. But he had not done it yet; and it appears that his enemies had taken occasion from this to say that he was inconstant and fickle-minded. He, therefore, takes occasion to vindicate himself, and to convince them that he was not faithless to his word and purposes, and to show them the true reason why he had not visited them, 2Co 1:17-24. He states, therefore, that his real intentions had been to visit

them, 2Co 1:15,16; that his failure to do so had not proceeded from either levity or falsehood, 2Co 1:17, as they might have known from the uniform doctrine which he had taught them, in which he had inculcated the necessity of a strict adherence to promises, from the veracity of Jesus Christ his great example, 2Co 1:18-20, and from the fact that God had given to him the Holy Spirit, and anointed him, 2Co 1:21,22; and he states therefore, that the true reason why he had not come to them was that he wished to spare them, 2Co 1:23,24 he was willing to remain away from them until they should have time to correct the evils which existed in their church, and prevent the necessity of severe discipline when he should come.

Verse 1. *Paul, an apostle*, **See Barnes** "Ro 1:1, **See Barnes "1Co 1:1"**.

By the will of God. Through, or agreeably to the will of God. **See Barnes "1Co 1:1"**.

And Timothy our brother. Paul was accustomed to associate some other person or persons with him in writing his epistles. Thus, in the first epistle to the Corinthians, Sosthenes was associated with him. For the reasons of this, **See Barnes "1Co 1:1"**.

The name of Timothy is associated with his in the epistles to the Philippians and Colossians. From the former epistle to the Corinthians, 1Co 16:10, we learn that Paul had sent Timothy to the church at Corinth, or that he expected that he would visit them. Paul had sent him into Macedonia in company with Erastus (Ac 19:21,22,) intending himself to follow them, and expecting that they would visit Achaia. From the passage before us, it appears that Timothy had returned from this expedition, and was now with Paul. The reason why Paul joined Timothy with him in writing this epistle may have been the following:

(1.) Timothy had been recently with them, and they had become acquainted with him; and it was not only natural that he should express his friendly salutations, but his name and influence among them might serve in some degree to confirm what Paul wished to say to them. Comp. **See Barnes "1Co 1:1"**.

(2.) Paul may have wished to give as much influence as possible to Timothy. He designed that he should be his fellow-labourer; and as Timothy was much younger than himself, he doubtless expected that he would survive him, and that he would in some sense succeed him in the care of the churches. He was desirous, therefore, of securing for him all the authority which he could, and of letting it be known that he regarded him as abundantly qualified for the great work with which he was intrusted.

(3.) The influence and name of Timothy might be supposed to have weight with the party in the church that had slandered Paul, by accusing him of insincerity or instability in regard to his purposed visit to them. Paul had designed to go to them directly from Ephesus, but he had changed his mind, and the testimony of Timothy might be important to prove that it was done from motives purely conscientious. Timothy was doubtless acquainted with the reasons; and his testimony might meet and rebut a part of the charges against him. See 2Co 1:13-16.

Unto the church of God, etc. **See Barnes "1Co 1:2"**.

With all the saints which are in all Achaia. Achaia, in the largest sense, included the whole of Greece. Achaia Proper, however, was the district or province of which Corinth was the capital. It comprehended the part of Greece lying between Thessaly and the southern part of the Peloponnesus, embracing the whole western part of the Peloponnesus. It is probable that there were not a few Christians scattered in Achaia, and not improbably some small churches that had been established by the labours of Paul or of others. From Ro 16:1, we know that there was a church at Cenchrea,

the eastern port of Corinth; and it is by no means improbable that there were other churches in that region. Paul doubtless designed that copies of this epistle should be circulated among them.

{a} "apostle of Jesus Christ" 1Ti 1:1 2Ti 1:1 {b} "saints which are in all Achia" Php 1:1 Col 1:2

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Grace be to you,* etc. This is the usual Christian salutation. **See Barnes "Ro 1:7"**; **See Barnes** "1Co 1:3"

{c} "Grace be to you" Ro 1:7

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Blessed be God*. This is the commencement, properly, of the epistle; and it is the language of a heart that is full of joy, and that bursts forth with gratitude in view of mercy. It may have been excited by the recollection that he had formerly written to them, and that during the interval which had elapsed between the time when the former epistle was written and when this was penned, he had been called to a most severe trial, and that from that trial he had been mercifully delivered. With a heart full of gratitude and joy for this merciful interposition, he commences this epistle. It is remarked by Doddridge, that eleven out of the thirteen epistles of Paul begin with exclamations of praise, joy, and thanksgiving. Paul had been afflicted, but he had also been favoured with remarkable consolations; and it was not unnatural that he should allow himself to give expression to his joy and praise in view of all the mercies which God had conferred on him. This entire passage is one that is exceedingly valuable, as showing that there may an elevated joy in the midst of deep affliction, and as showing what is the reason why God visits his servants with trials. The phrase "blessed be God" is equivalent to "praised be God," or is an expression of thanksgiving. It is the usual formula of praise, (compare Eph 1:3;) and shows his entire confidence in God, and his joy in him, and his gratitude for his mercies. It is one of innumerable instances which show that it is possible and proper to bless God in view of the trials with which he visits his people, and of the consolations which he causes to abound.

The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is mentioned here in the relation of the "Father of the Lord Jesus," doubtless, because it was through the Lord Jesus, and him alone, that He had imparted the consolation which he had experienced, 2Co 1:5. Paul knew no other God than the "Father of the Lord Jesus;" he knew no other source of consolation than the gospel; he knew of no way in which God imparted comfort except through his Son. That is genuine Christian consolation which acknowledges the Lord Jesus as the medium by whom it is imparted; that is proper

thanksgiving to God which is offered through the Redeemer; that only is the proper acknowledgment of God which recognizes him as the "Father of the Lord Jesus."

The Father of mercies. This is a Hebrew mode of expression, where a noun performs the place of an adjective, and the phrase is synonymous nearly with "merciful Father." The expression has, however, somewhat more energy and spirit than the simple phrase "merciful Father." The Hebrews used the word *father* often to denote the author or source of anything; and the idea in phraseology like this is, that mercy proceeds from God, that he is the source of it, and that it is his nature to impart mercy and compassion, as if he originated it, or was the source and fountain of it—sustaining a relation to all true consolation analogous to that which a father sustains to his offspring. God has the paternity of all true joy. It is one of his peculiar and glorious attributes that he thus *produces* consolation and mercy.

And the God of all comfort, The source of all consolation. Paul delighted, as all should do, to trace all his comforts to God; and Paul, as all Christians have, had sufficient reason to regard God as the source of true consolation. There is no other real source of happiness but God; and he is able abundantly, and willing, to impart consolation to his people.

{d} "Blessed be God" Eph 1:3 1Pe 1:3

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Who comforteth us*. Paul here doubtless refers primarily to himself and his fellow-apostles as having been filled with comfort in their trials; to the support which the promises of God gave; to the influences of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter; and to the hopes of eternal life through the gospel of the Redeemer.

That we may be able to comfort, etc. Paul does not say that this was the only design which God had in comforting them, that they might be able to impart comfort to others; but he does say that this is an important and main purpose. It is an object which he seeks, that his people in their afflictions should be supported and comforted; and for this purpose he fills the hearts of his ministers with consolation; gives them personal experience of the sustaining power of grace in their trials; and enables them to speak of what they have felt in regard to the consolations of the gospel of the Lord Jesus.

By the comfort, etc. By the same topics of consolation; by the same sources of joy which have sustained us. They would have experience; and by that experience they would be able to minister consolation to those who were in any manner afflicted. It is only by personal experience that we are able to impart consolation to others. Paul refers here undoubtedly to the consolations which are produced by the evidence of the pardon of sin, and of acceptance with God, and the hope of eternal life. These consolations abounded in him and his fellow-apostles richly; and sustained by them he was able also to impart like consolation to others who were in similar circumstances of trial.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us*. As we are called to experience the same sufferings which Christ endured; as we are called to suffer in his cause, and in the promotion of the same object. The sufferings which they endured were in the cause of Christ and his gospel; were endured in endeavouring to advance the same object which Christ sought to promote; and were substantially of the same nature. They arose from opposition, contempt, persecution, trial, and want, and were the same as the Lord Jesus was himself subjected to during the whole of his public life. Comp. Col 1:24. Thus Peter says 1Pe 4:13 of Christians, that they were "partakers of Christ's sufferings."

So our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. By means of Christ, or through Christ, consolation is abundantly imparted to us. Paul regarded the Lord Jesus as the source of consolation, and felt that the comfort which he imparted, or which was imparted through him, was more than sufficient to overbalance all the trials which he endured in his cause. The comforts which he derived from Christ were those, doubtless, which arose from his presence, his supporting grace, from his love shed abroad in the heart, from the success which he gave to his gospel, and from the hope of reward which was held out to him by the Redeemer, as the result of all his sufferings. And it may be observed as an universal truth, that if we suffer in the cause of Christ, if we are persecuted, oppressed, and calumniated on his account, he will take care that our hearts shall be filled with consolation.

{a} "sufferings of Christ" Col 1:24

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *And whether we be afflicted*. If we are afflicted; or, our affliction is for this purpose. This verse is designed to show one of the reasons of the sufferings which the apostles had endured; and it is a happy specimen of Paul's skill in his epistles, he shows that all his trials were for their welfare, and would turn to their benefit. He suffered that they might be comforted; he was afflicted for their advantage. This assurance would tend to conciliate their favour, and strengthen their affection for him, as it would show them that he was disinterested. We are under the deepest obligations of gratitude to one who suffers for us; and there is nothing that will bind us more tenderly to any one than the fact that he has been subjected to great calamity and trial on our account. This is one of the reasons why the Christian feels so tenderly his obligation to the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is for your consolation and salvation. It will be *useful* for your consolation; or it is endured in order to secure your comfort, and promote your salvation. Paul had suffered in Ephesus, and it is to this that he here particularly refers. He does not mean to say that his sufferings there were particularly for the comfort of the Corinthians; but that they had been endured in the general purpose of promoting the salvation of men, and that they, together with others, would reap the benefit of his trials. He endured them in order to spread the true religion; and they would be benefited by that; and besides, he would be the better able by his trials to administer to them the true consolations of

the gospel in their sufferings; and his example, and experience, and counsel, would enable them to bear up under their own trials in a proper manner.

Which is effectual, etc. Margin, *wrought*. The Greek word *energoumenhv* denotes here *efficacious, operating to, producing*; and the phrase denotes that their salvation would be effected, wrought out, or secured by the patient endurance of such sufferings. Those sufferings were necessary; and a patient endurance of them would tend to promote their salvation. The doctrine that the patient endurance of affliction tends to promote salvation, is everywhere taught in the Bible. **See Barnes "Ro 5:3, also** Ro 5:4-5.

In the enduring. By your enduring; or by your patience in such sufferings. You are called to endure the same kind of sufferings; and patience in such trials will tend to promote your salvation.

Or whether we be comforted, etc. One design of our being comforted is, that we may be able to impart consolation to you in the times of similar trial and calamity. See 2Co 1:4. The sentiment of the whole passage is, that their eternal welfare would be promoted by the example of the apostles in their trials, and by the consolations which they would be able to impart as the result of their afflictions.

{b} "for your consolation" 2Co 4:15 {1} "effectual" "wrought"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *And our hope of you is steadfast*. We have a firm and unshaken hope in regard to you; we have a confident expectation that you will be saved. We believe that you will be enabled so to bear trial as to show that you are sustained by the Christian hope; and so as to advance your own piety, and confirm your prospect of heaven.

As ye are partakers of the sufferings. It is evident from this, that the Corinthians had been subjected to trials similar to those which the apostle had endured. It is not known to what afflictions they were then subjected; but it is not improbable that they were exposed to some kind of persecution and opposition. Such trials were common in all the early churches; and they served to unite all the friends of the Redeemer in common bonds, and to make them feel that they were one. They had united sorrows; and they had united joys; and they felt they were tending to the same heaven of glory. United sorrows and united consolations tend more than anything else to bind people together. We always have a brotherly feeling for one who suffers as we do; or who has the same kind of joy which we have.

{c} "ye are partakers" Ro 8:17

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *For we would not have you ignorant*. We wish you to be fully informed. **See Barnes "1Co 10:1"**; **See Barnes** "1Co 12:1".

The object of Paul here is to give a full explanation of the nature of his trials, to which he had referred in 2Co 1:4. He presumed that the Corinthians would feel a deep interest in him and in his trials; that they would sympathize with him, and would pray that those sufferings and that this deliverance might be attended with a blessing, 2Co 1:11 and perhaps he wished also to conciliate their kindness towards himself by mentioning more at length the, nature of the trials which he had been called to endure on account of the Christian religion, of which they were reaping so material benefits.

Of our trouble which came to us in Asia. The term *Asia* is often used to denote that part of Asia Minor of which Ephesus was the capital. **See Barnes "Ac 2:9"**.

There has been considerable diversity of opinion as to the "troubles" to which Paul here refers. Some have supposed that he refers to the persecutions at Lystra, Ac 14:6,19,20, from which he had been recovered as it were by miracle; but as that happened so long before this, it seems improbable that he should here refer to it. There is every mark of *freshness* and *recentness* about this event; and Paul evidently referred to some danger from which he had been *lately* delivered, and which made a deep impression on his mind when he wrote this epistle. Semler supposes that he refers to the lying in wait of the Jews for him when he was about to go to Macedonia, mentioned in Ac 20:3. Most commentators have supposed that he refers to the disturbances which were made at Ephesus by Demetrius and his friends, mentioned in Ac 19, and by reason of which he was compelled to leave the city. The only objection to this is, that which is mentioned by Whitby and Macknight, that as Paul did not go *into* the theatre there, Ac 19:31, he incurred no such risk of his life as to justify the strong expressions mentioned in 2Co 1:9,10. They suppose, therefore, that he refers to the danger to which he was exposed in Ephesus on another occasion, when he was compelled to fight there with wild beasts. See 1Co 15:32. But nearly all these opinions may be reconciled, perhaps, by supposing that he refers to the *group* of calamities to which he had been exposed in Asia, and from which he had just escaped by going to Macedonia—referring, perhaps, more particularly to the conflict which he had been compelled to have with the wild beasts there. There was the riot excited by Demetrius, Ac 19, in which his life had been endangered, and from which he had just escaped; and there had been the conflict with the wild beasts at Ephesus, **See Barnes** "1Co 15:32, which perhaps had occurred but just before; and there were the plots of the Jews against him, Ac 20:3, from which, also, he had just been delivered. By these trials his life had been endangered, perhaps, more than once, and he had been called to look death calmly in the face, and to anticipate the probability that he might soon die. Of these trials —of all these trials—he would not have the Corinthians ignorant; but desired that they should be fully apprized of them, that they might sympathize with him, and that through their prayers they might be turned to, his benefit.

That we were pressed out of measure. See Ac 19. We were borne down, or weighed down by calamity (*ebarhyhmen*,) exceedingly, (*kay uperbolhn*) super-eminently. The expression denotes excess, eminence, or intensity. It is one of Paul's common and very strong expressions to denote anything that is intensive or great. Ro 7:13 Ga 1:13; 2Co 4:17.

Above strength. Beyond our strength. More than in ourselves we were able to bear.

Insomuch that we despaired even of life. Either expecting to be destroyed by the wild beasts with which he had to contend, or to be destroyed by the people. This was one of the instances undoubtedly to which he refers in 2Co 11:23, where he says he had been "in deaths oft." And this was one of the many cases in which Paul was called on to contemplate death as near. It was doubtless one cause of his fidelity, and of his great success in his work, that he was thus called to regard death

as near at hand; and that, to use the somewhat unpoetical but deeply affecting lines of Baxter, expressing a sentiment which guided all *his* ministry, and which was one source of his eminent success, \-

He preach'd as though he ne'er would preach again
And as a dying man to dying men

{a} "trouble which came" Ac 19:23

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *But we had the sentence of death in ourselves*. Marg., "answer:" The word rendered "sentence" (*apokrima*) means, properly, an answer, judicial response, or sentence; and is here synonymous with *verdict*. It means that Paul felt that he was condemned to die; that he felt as if he were under sentence of death, and with no hope of acquittal; he was called to contemplate the hour of death as just before him. The words, "in ourselves," mean, against ourselves; or, we expected certainly to die. This seems as if he had been con- condemned to die; and may either refer to some instance when the popular fury was so great that he felt it was determined he should die, or, more probably, to a judicial sentence that he should be cast to the wild beasts, with the certain expectation that he would be destroyed, as was always the case with those who were subjected to the execution of such a sentence.

That we should not trust in ourselves. This is an exceedingly beautiful and important sentiment. It teaches that, in the time to which Paul refers, he was in so great danger, and had so certain a prospect of death, that he could put no reliance on himself, he felt that he must die; and that human aid was vain. According to every probability he would die; and all that he could do was to cast himself on the protection of that God who had power to save him even then, if he chose, and who, if he did it, would exert power similar to that which is put forth when the dead are raised. The *effect*, therefore, of the near prospect of death, was to lead him to put increased confidence in God. He felt that God only could save him; or that God only could sustain him if he should die. Perhaps, also, he means to say, that the effect of this was to lead him to put increased confidence in God *after* his deliverance; not to trust in his own plans, or to confide in his own strength; but to feel that all that he had was entirely in the hands of God. This is a common and a happy effect of the near prospect of death to a Christian; and it is well to contemplate the effect on such a mind as that of Paul in the near prospect of dying, and to see how instinctively then it clings to God. A true Christian in such circumstances will rush to His arms, and feel that there he is safe.

But in God which raiseth the dead. Intimating that a rescue in such circumstances would be like raising the dead. It is probable that on this occasion Paul was near dying; that he had given up all hope of life—perhaps, as at Lystra, (Ac 14:19,) he was supposed to be dead. He felt, therefore, that he was raised up by the immediate power of God, and regarded it as an exertion of the same power by which the dead are raised. Paul means to intimate, that so far as depended on any power of his own, he was dead. He had no power to recover himself; and but for the gracious interposition of God he would have died.

{b} "trust in ourselves" Jer 17:5,7

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Who delivered us from so great a death*. From a death so terrible, and from a prospect so alarming. It is intimated here by the word which Paul uses, that the death which he apprehended was one of a character peculiarly terrific—probably a death by wild beasts. **See Barnes "2Co 1:8"**.

He was near to death; he had no hope of rescue; and the manner of the death which was threatened was peculiarly frightful. Paul regarded rescue from such a death as a kind of *resurrection*; and felt that he owed his life to God *as if* he had raised him from the dead. All deliverance from imminent peril, and from dangerous sickness, whether of ourselves or our friends, should be regarded as a kind of resurrection from the dead. God could with infinite ease have taken away our breath, and it is only by his merciful interposition that we live.

And doth deliver. Continues yet to deliver us—or preserve us; intimating perhaps, that danger had continued to follow him after the signal deliverance to which he particularly refers, and that he had continued to be in similar peril of his life. Paul was daily exposed to danger; and was constantly preserved by the good providence of God. In what manner he was rescued from the peril to which he was exposed, he has nowhere intimated. It is implied, however, that it was by a remarkable Divine interposition; but whether by miracle, or by the ordinary course of Providence, he nowhere intimates. Whatever was the mode, however, Paul regarded *God* as the source of the deliverance, and felt that his obligations were due to him as his kind Preserver.

In whom we trust that he will yet deliver us. That he will continue to preserve us. We hope; we are accustomed to cherish the expectation that he will continue to defend us in the perils which we shall yet encounter. Paul felt that he was still exposed to danger. Everywhere he was liable to be persecuted, **See Barnes** "Ac 20:23,) and everywhere he felt that his life was in peril. Yet he had been thus far preserved in a most remarkable manner; and he felt assured that God would continue to interpose in his behalf, until his great purpose in regard to him should be fully accomplished, so that at the close of life he could look to God as his Deliverer, and feel that all along his perilous journey he had been his great Protector.

{c} "delivered us from" 2Pe 2:9 {*} "yet" "still"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Ye also helping together by prayer for us*. Tindal renders this, in connexion with the close of the previous verse, "we trust that yet hereafter he will deliver us, by the help of your prayer for us." The word rendered "helping together," means co-operating, aiding, assisting; and the idea is, that Paul felt that his trials might be turned to good account, and give occasion for thanksgiving; and that this was to be accomplished by the aid of the prayers of his fellow Christians. He felt that the church was one, and that Christians should sympathize with one another, He evinced deep humility and tender regard for the Corinthians when he called on them to aid him by their prayers. Nothing could be better calculated to excite their tender affection and regard than thus to call on

them to sympathize with him in his trials, and to pray that those trials might result in thanksgiving throughout the churches.

That for the gift bestowed upon us. The sentence which occurs here is very perplexing in the original, and the construction is difficult. But the main idea is not difficult to be seen. The "gift" here referred to (*to carisma*) means, doubtless, the *favour* shown to him in his rescue from so imminent a peril; and he felt that this was owing to the prayers of many persons on his behalf. He believed that he had been remembered in the petitions of his friends and fellow Christians, and that his deliverance was owing to their supplications.

By the means of many persons. Probably meaning that the favour referred to had been imparted by means of the prayers of many individuals who had taken a deep interest in his welfare. But it may also imply, perhaps, that he had been directly assisted, and had been rescued from the impending danger by the interposition of many friends who had come to his relief. The usual interpretation is, however, that it was by the prayers of many in his behalf.

Thanks may be given by many on our behalf. Many may be induced also to render thanks for my deliverance. The idea is, that as he had been delivered from great peril by the prayers of many persons, it was proper also that thanksgiving should be offered by as many in his behalf, or on account of his deliverance. "Mercies that have been obtained by prayer should be acknowledged by praise."— *Doddridge*. God had mercifully interposed in answer to the prayers of his people; and it was proper that his mercy should be as extensively acknowledged. Paul was desirous that God should not be forgotten; and that those who had sought his deliverance should render praise to God: perhaps intimating here, that those who had obtained mercies by prayer, were prone to forget their obligation to return thanks to God for his gracious and merciful interposition.

{a} "helping together" Ro 15:30 Php 1:19; Jas 5:16-18

{*} "gift" "benefit"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *For our rejoicing is this*. The source or cause of our rejoicing. "I have a just cause of rejoicing; and it is, that I have endeavoured to live a life of simplicity and godly sincerity, and have not been actuated by the principles of worldly wisdom." The connexion here is not very obvious, and it is not quite easy to trace it. Most expositors, as Doddridge, Locke, Macknight, Bloomfield, etc. suppose that he mentions the purity of his life as a reason why he had a right to expect their prayers, as he had requested in 2Co 1:11. They would not doubt, it is supposed, that his life had been characterized by great simplicity and sincerity, and would feel, therefore, a deep interest in his welfare, and be disposed to render thanks that he had been preserved in the day of peril. But the whole context and the scope of the passage are rather to be taken into view. Paul had been exposed to death, he had no hope of life. *Then* the ground of his rejoicing and of his confidence was, that he had lived a holy life. he had not been actuated by "fleshly wisdom," but he had been animated and guided by "the grace of God." His aim had been simple, his purpose holy, and he had the testimony of his conscience that his motives had been right; and he had, therefore, no concern about the result. A good conscience, a holy life through Jesus Christ, will enable a man always to

look calmly on death. What has a Christian to fear in death? Paul had kept a good conscience towards all; but he says that he had special and peculiar joy that he had done it towards the Corinthians. This he says, because many there had accused him of fickleness, and of disregard for their interests. He declares, therefore, that even in the prospect of death he had a consciousness of rectitude towards them, and proceeds to show 2Co 1:13-23 that the charge against him was not well-founded. I regard this passage, therefore, as designed to express the fact that Paul, in view of sudden death, had a consciousness of a life of piety, and was comforted with the reflection that he had not been actuated by the "fleshly wisdom" of the world.

The testimony of our conscience. An approving conscience. It does not condemn me on the subject. Though others might accuse him, though his name might be calumniated, yet he had comfort in the approval which his own conscience gave to his course. Paul's conscience was enlightened, and its decisions were correct. Whatever others might charge him with, he *knew* what had been the aim and purpose of his life; and the consciousness of upright aims, and of such plans as the "grace of God" would prompt to, sustained him. An approving conscience is of inestimable value when we are calumniated—and when we draw near to death.

That in simplicity. *en aplothti*. Tindal renders this forcibly, "without doubleness." The word means sincerity, candour, probity, plain-heartedness, Christian simplicity, frankness, integrity. See 2Co 11:3. It stands opposed to double-dealings and purposes; to deceitful appearances, and crafty plans; to mere policy, and craftiness in accomplishing an object. A man under the influence of this, is straightforward, candid, open, frank; and he expects to accomplish his purpose by integrity and fair dealing, and not by stratagem and cunning. Policy, craft, artful plans, and deep-laid schemes of deceit belong to the world; simplicity of aim and purpose are the true characteristics of a real Christian.

And godly sincerity. Greek, "Sincerity of God." This may be a Hebrew idiom, by which the superlative degree is indicated; when, in order to express the highest degree, they added the name of God, as in the phrases "mountains of God," signifying the highest mountains, or "cedars of God," denoting lofty cedars. Or it may mean such sincerity as God manifests and approves; such as he, by his grace, would produce in the heart; such as the religion of the gospel is fitted to produce. The word used here, *eilikrineia*, and rendered *sincerity*, denotes, properly, *clearness*, such as is judged of or discerned in sunshine, (from *eilh* and *krinw*,) and thence pureness, integrity. It is most probable that the *phrase* here denotes that sincerity which God produces and approves; and the sentiment is, that pure religion, the religion of God, produces entire sincerity in the heart. Its purposes and aims are open and manifest, *as if seen in the sunshine*. The plans of the world are obscure, deceitful, and dark, *as if in night*.

Not with fleshly wisdom. Not with the wisdom which is manifested by the men of this world; not by the principles of cunning, and mere policy, and expediency, which often characterize them. The phrase here stands opposed to simplicity and sincerity, to openness and straightforwardness. And Paul means to disclaim for himself, and for his fellow-labourers, all that carnal policy which distinguishes the mere men of the world. And if Paul deemed such policy improper for him, we should deem it improper for us; if he had no plans which he wished to advance by it, we should have none; if he would not employ it in the promotion of good plans, neither should we. It has been the curse of the church and the bane of religion; and it is to this day exerting a withering and blighting influence on the church. The moment that such plans are resorted to, it is proof that the vitality of religion is gone; and any man who feels that his purposes cannot be accomplished but

by such carnal policy, should set it down as full demonstration that his plans are wrong, and that his purpose should be abandoned.

But by the grace God. This phrase stands opposed, evidently, to "fleshly wisdom." It means that Paul had been influenced by such sentiments and principles as would be suggested or prompted by the influence of his grace. Locke renders it, "By the favour of God directing me." God had shown him *favour*; God had directed him; and he had kept him from the crooked and devious ways of mere worldly policy. The idea seems to be not merely that he had pursued a correct and upright course of life, but that he was indebted for this to the mere grace and favour of God—an idea which Paul omitted no opportunity of acknowledging.

We have had our conversation. We have conducted ourselves, (*anestrafhmen*.) The word here used means, literally, to turn up, to overturn; then to turn back, to return, and, in the middle voice, to turn one's self around, to turn one's self to anything, and, also, to move about in, to live in, to be conversant with, to conduct one's self. In this sense it seems to be used here. Comp. Heb 10:33, 13:18; 1Ti 3:15 1Pe 1:17.

The word *conversation* we usually apply to oral discourse; but in the Scriptures it means conduct; and the sense of the passage is, that Paul had conducted himself in accordance with the principles of the grace of God, and had been influenced by that.

In the world. Everywhere; wherever I have been. This does not mean in the world, as contradistinguished from the church; but in the world at large, or wherever he had been, as contradistinguished from the church at Corinth. It had been his common and universal practice.

And more abundantly to you-ward. Especially towards you. This was added, doubtless, because there had, been charges against him in Corinth, that he had been crafty, cunning, deceitful, and especially that he had deceived them, 2Co 1:17, in not visiting them as he had promised. He affirms, therefore, that in all things he had acted in the manner to which the grace of God prompted, and that his conduct, in all respects, had been that of entire simplicity and sincerity.

{+} "rejoicing" "glorying" {b} "not with fleshly" 1Co 2:4,13 {c} "Grace of God" 1Co 15:10 {++} "fleshly" "carnal" {&} "conversation" "Behaved ourselves" {|} "to you-ward" "Towards you"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *For we write none other things*, etc. There has been much variety in the interpretation of this passage; and much difficulty felt in determining what it means. The sense seems to me to be this: Paul had just declared that he had been actuated by pure intentions and by entire sincerity, and had in all things been influenced by the grace of God. This he had shown everywhere, but more particularly among them at Corinth. That they fully knew. In making this affirmation they had full evidence, from what they had known of him in former times, that such had been his course of life; and he trusted that they would be able to acknowledge the same thing to the end, and that they would never have any occasion to form a different opinion of him. It will be recollected that it is probable that some at Corinth had charged him with insincerity; and some had accused him of fickleness in having promised to come to Corinth and then changing his mind, or had charged him with never having intended to come to them. His object in this verse is to refute such slanders; and

he says, therefore, that all that he affirmed in his writings about the sincerity and simplicity of his aims, was such as they knew from their past acquaintance with him to be true; and that they knew that he was a man who would keep his promises. It is an instance of a minister who was able to appeal to the people among whom he had lived and laboured in regard to the general sincerity and uprightness of his character—such an appeal as every minister *ought* to be able to make to refute all slanders; and such as he will be able to make successfully, if his life, like that of Paul, is such as to warrant it. Such seems to me to be the sense of the passage, Beza, however, renders it, "I write no other things than what ye read, or may understand ;" and so Rosenmuller, Wetstein, Macknight, and some others interpret it; and they explain it as meaning, "I write nothing secretly, nothing ambiguously, but I express myself dearly, openly, plainly, so that I may be read and understood by all." Macknight supposes that they had charged him with using ambiguous language, that he might afterwards interpret it to suit his own purpose. The objection to this is, that Paul never adverts to the obscurity or perspicuity of his own language. It was his conduct that was the main subject on which he was writing; and the connexion seems to demand that we understand him as affirming that they had abundant evidence that what he affirmed of his simplicity of aim and integrity of life was true.

Than what ye read. *anaginwskete*. This word properly means, to *know accurately*; to distinguish; and in the New Testament usually to know by reading. Doddridge remarks, that the word is ambiguous, and may signify either to acknowledge, to know, or to read. He regards it as here used in the sense of knowing. It is probably used here in the sense of knowing accurately, or surely; of *recognising* from their former acquaintance with him. They would *see* that the sentiments which he now expressed were such as accorded with his character and uniform course of life.

Or acknowledge. *epiginwskete*. The preposition *epi* in composition here is *intensive*; and the word denotes, to know fully; to receive full knowledge of; to know well; or to recognise. It here means that they would fully recognise, or know entirely to their satisfaction, that the sentiments which he here expressed were such as accorded with his general manner of life. From what they knew of him, they could not but admit that he had been influenced by the principles stated.

And I trust ye shall acknowledge. I trust that my conduct will be such as to convince you always that I am actuated by such principles. I trust you will never witness any departure from them—the language of a man of settled principle, and of fixed aims and honesty of life. An honest man can always use such language respecting himself.

Even to the end. To the end of life; always. "We trust that you will never have occasion to think dishonourably of us; or to reflect on any inconsistency in our behaviour."—*Doddridge*.

{*} "read" "know"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *As also ye have acknowledged us*. You have had occasion to admit my singleness of aim, and purity of intention and of life, by your former acquaintance with me; and you have cheerfully done it.

In part. *apo merouv*. Tindal renders this, "as ye have found us partly." The sense seems to be, "as part of you acknowledge;" meaning that a portion of the church was ready to concede to him the praise of consistency and uprightness, though there was a faction, or a part, that denied it.

That we are your rejoicing. That we are your joy, and your boasting. That is, you admit me to be an apostle; you regard me as your teacher and guide; you recognise my authority, and acknowledge the benefits which you have received through me.

Even as ye also are our's. Or, as you will be our rejoicing in the day when the Lord Jesus shall come to gather his people to himself. Then it will be seen that you were saved by our ministry; and then it will be an occasion of abundant and eternal thanksgiving to God that you were converted by our labours. And as you now regard it as a matter of congratulation and thanksgiving that you have such teachers as we are, so shall we regard it as a matter of congratulation and thanksgiving—as our chief joy—that we were the instruments of saving *such* a people. The expression implies that there was mutual confidence, mutual love, and mutual cause of rejoicing, it is well when ministers and people haw such confidence in each other, and have occasion to regard their connexion as a mutual cause of rejoicing and of *kauchma* or boasting.

{a} "that we are your" Php 4:1 {+} "rejoicing" "grace"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *And in this confidence*. In this confidence of my integrity, and that you had this favourable opinion of me, and appreciated the principles of my conduct, I did not doubt that you would receive me kindly, and would give me again the tokens of your affection and regard. In this Paul shows, that however *some* of them might regard him, yet that he had no doubt that the majority of the church there would receive him kindly.

I was minded. I willed, (*eboulomhn*;) it was my intention.

To come unto you before. Tindal renders this, "the other time." Paul refers doubtless to the time when he wrote his former epistle, and when it was his serious purpose, as it was his earnest wish, to visit them again, See 1Co 16:6. In this purpose he had been disappointed, and he now proceeds to state the reasons why he had not Visited them as he had purposed, and to show that it did not arise from any fickleness of mind. His purpose had been at first to pass through Corinth on his way to Macedonia, and to remain some time with them. See 2Co 1:16. Comp. 1Co 16:5,6. This purpose he had now changed; and instead of passing *through* Corinth on his way to Macedonia, he had gone *to* Macedonia by the way of Troas, (2Co 2:12;) and the Corinthians having, as it would seem, become acquainted with this fact, had charged him with insincerity in the promise, or fickleness in regard to his plans. Probably it had been said by some of his enemies that he had never intended to visit them.

That ye might have a second benefit. Marg., *grace*. The word here used (*carin*) is that which is commonly rendered *grace*, and means probably favour, kindness, good-will, beneficence; and especially favour to the undeserving. Here it is evidently used in the sense of gratification, or pleasure. And the idea is, that they had been formerly gratified and benefited by his residence among them; he had been the means of conferring important favours them, and he was desirous of

being again with them, in order, to gratify them by his presence, and that he might, be the means of imparting to them other favours. Paul presumed that his presence with them would be to them a source of pleasure, and that his coming would do them good. It is the language of a man who felt assured that he enjoyed, after all, the confidence of the mass of the church there, and that they would regard his being with them as a favour. He had been with them formerly almost two years. His residence there had been pleasant to them and to him; and had been the occasion of important benefits to them, He did not doubt that it would be so again. Tindal renders this, "that you might have had a double pleasure." It may be remarked here, that several Mss. instead of *carin*, *grace*, read *caran*, *joy*.

{++} "minded" "desirous" {&} "before" "formerly" {1} "benefit" "grace"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *And to pass by you*. Through (*di*) you; that is, through your city, or province; or to take them, as we say, in his way. His design was to pass through Corinth and Achaia on his journey. This was not the direct way from Ephesus to Macedonia. An inspection of a map (see the map of Asia Minor prefixed to the Notes on the Acts of the Apostles) will show at one view that the direct way was that which he concluded finally to take—that by Troas. Yet he had designed to go out of his way in order to make them a visit; and intended also, perhaps, to make them a longer visit on his return, The former part of the plan he had been induced to abandon.

Into Macedonia. A part of Greece having Thrace on the north, Thessaly south, Epirus west, and the AEgean Sea east. **See Barnes "Ac 16:9"**.

And of you to be brought on my way. By you. **See Barnes "1Co 16:6"**.

Toward Judea. His object in going to Judea was to convey the collection for the poor saints which he had been at so much pains to collect throughout the churches of the Gentiles. **See Barnes** "Ro 15:25, **See Barnes "Ro 15:26"**.

Comp. 1Co 16:3,4.

{*} "brought" "conducted" {a} "my way" Ac 21:5

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *When I therefore was thus minded*. When I formed this purpose; when I willed this, and expressed this intention.

Did I use lightness? The word *elafria* (from *elafrov*) means, properly, *lightness* in weight. Here it is used in reference to the mind; and in a sense similar to our word *levity*, as denoting lightness of temper or conduct; inconstancy, changeableness, or fickleness. This charge had been probably made, that he had made the promise without any due consideration, or without any real purpose of

performing it; or that he had made it in a trifling and thoughtless manner. By the interrogative form here, he sharply denies that it was a purpose formed in a light and trifling manner.

Do I purpose according to the flesh. In such a manner as may suit my own convenience and carnal interest. Do I form plans adapted only to promote my own ease and gratification, and to be abandoned when they are attended with inconvenience? The phrase "according to the flesh" here seems to mean, "in such a way as to promote my own ease and gratification; in a manner such as the men of the world form; such as would be formed under the influence of earthly passions and desires, and to be forsaken when those plans would interfere with such gratifications." Paul denies in a positive manner that he formed such plans; and they should have known enough of his manner of life to be assured that that was not the nature of the schemes which he had devised? Probably no man ever lived who formed his plans of life *less* for the gratification of the flesh than Paul.

That with me there should be yea, yea, and nay, nay! There has been a great variety in the interpretation of this passage. See Bloomfield, Crit. Dig. *in loco*. The meaning seems to be, "That there should be such inconstancy and uncertainty in my counsels and actions, that no one could depend on me, or know what he had to expect from me." Bloomfield supposes that the phrase is a proverbial one, and denotes a headstrong, self-willed spirit, which will either do things or not do them, as he pleases, without giving any reasons. He supposes that the *repetition* of the words yea and nay is designed to denote *positiveness* of assertion—such positiveness as is commonly shown by such persons, as in the phrases, "what I have written I have written," "what I have done I have done." It seems more probable however, that the phrase is designed to denote the *ready compliance* which an inconstant and unsettled man is accustomed to make with the wishes of others; his expressing a ready assent to what they propose; falling in with their views; readily making promises; and instantly, through some whim, or caprice, or wish of others, saying "yea, nay," to the same thing; that is, changing his mind, and altering his purpose without any good reason, or in accordance with any fixed principle or settled rule of action. Paul says that this was not his character. He did not affirm a thing at one time and deny it at another; he did. not promise to do a thing one moment and refuse to do it the next.

{+} "thus minded" "thus purposed" {b} "according to the flesh" 2Co 10:2 {++} "flesh" "after the manner of men"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *But as God is true*. Tindal renders this, in accordance more literally with the Greek, "God is faithful; for our preaching unto you was not yea and nay." The phrase seems to have the form of an oath, or to be a solemn appeal to God as a witness, and to be equivalent to the expression "the Lord liveth," or, "as the Lord liveth." The idea is, "God is faithful and true. He never deceives; never promises that which he does not perform. So true is it that I am not fickle and changing in my purposes." The idea of the faithfulness of God is the argument which Paul urges why he felt himself bound to be faithful also. That faithful God he regarded as a witness, and to that God he could appeal on the occasion.

Our word. Marg., *preaching*, (*o logov*). This may refer either to his preaching, to his promises of visiting them, or his declarations to them in general on any subject. The particular subject under discussion was the promise which he had made to visit them. But he here seems to make his affirmation general, and to say universally of his promises, and his teaching, and of all his communications to them, whether orally or in writing, that they were not characterized by inconstancy and changeableness. It was not his character to be fickle, unsettled, and vacillating.

{1} "our word" "preaching"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *For the Son of God*. In this verse and the following, Paul states that he felt himself bound to maintain the strictest veracity, for two reasons: the one, that Jesus Christ always evinced the strictest veracity, 2Co 1:19; the other, God was always true to all the promises that he made, (ver. 20 ;) and as he felt himself to be the servant of the Saviour and of God, he was bound by the most sacred obligations also to maintain' a character irreproachable in regard to veracity. On the meaning of the phrase "Son of God," **See Barnes "Ro 1:4"**.

Jesus Christ. It is agreed, says Bloomfield, by the best commentators, ancient and modern, that by Jesus Christ is here meant his doctrine. The sense is, that, the preaching respecting Jesus Christ did not represent him as fickle and changeable—as unsettled, and as unfaithful; but as TRUE, consistent, and faithful. As that had been the regular and constant representation of Paul and his fellow-labourers in regard to the Master whom they served, it was to be inferred that they felt themselves bound sacredly to observe the strictest constancy and veracity.

By us, etc. Silvanus, here mentioned, is the same person who in the Acts of the Apostles is called *Silas*. He was with Paul at Philippi, and was imprisoned there with him, Ac 16 and was afterwards with Paul and Timothy at Corinth when he first visited that city, Ac 18:5. Paul was so much attached to him, and had so much confidence in him, that he joined his name with his own in several of his epistles, 1Th 1:1 2Th 1:1.

Was not yea and nay. Our representation of him was not that he was fickle and changeable.

But in him was yea. Was not one thing at one time, and another at another. He is the same yesterday, today, and for ever. All that he says is true; all the promises that he makes are firm; all his declarations are faithful. Paul may refer to the fact that the Lord Jesus when on earth was eminently characterized by TRUTH. Nothing was more striking than his veracity. He, called himself the truth," as being eminently true in all his declarations. "I am the way, and THE TRUTH, and the life," Joh 14:6 Re 3:7. And thus (Re 3:14) he is called the faithful and true Witness." In all his life he was eminently distinguished for that. His declarations were simple truth; his narratives were simple, unvarnished, uncoloured: unexaggerated statements of what actually occurred. He never disguised the truth; never prevaricated; never had any mental reservation; never deceived; never used any word, or threw in any circumstance, that was fitted to lead the mind astray. He himself said that this was the great object which he had in view in coming into the world. "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth," Joh 18:37. As Jesus Christ was thus distinguished for simple truth, Paul felt that he was under sacred obligations

to imitate him and always to evince the same inviolable fidelity. The most felt obligation on earth is that which the Christian feels to imitate the Redeemer.

{d} "Son of God" Mr 1:1 Ro 1:4

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *For all the promises of God in him*. All the promises God has made through him. This is another reason why Paul felt himself bound to maintain a character of the strictest veracity. The reason was, that *God* always evinced that; and that as none of promises failed, he felt himself sacredly bound to imitate him, to adhere to all his. The promises of God which are made through Christ, relate to the pardon of sin to the penitent; the sanctification of his people; support in temptation and trial; guidance in perplexity; peace in death, and eternal glory beyond the grave. All of these are made through a Redeemer, and none of these shall fail,

Are yea. Shall all be certainly fulfilled. There shall be no vacillation on the part of God; no fickleness; no abandoning of his gracious intention.

And in him Amen. In Re 3:14, the Lord Jesus is called the Amen. The word means true, faithful, certain; and the expression here means that all the promises which are made to men through a Redeemer shall be certainly fulfilled. They are promises which are confirmed and established, and which shall by no means fail.

Unto the glory of God by us. Either by us ministers and apostles, or by us who are Christians. The latter, I think, is the meaning; and Paul means to say, that the fulfillment of all the promises which God has made to his people shall result in his glory and praise as a God of condescension and veracity. The fact that he has made such promises is an act that tends to his own glory—since it was of his mere grace that they were made; and the fulfillment of these promises in and through the church, shall also tend to produce elevated views of his fidelity and goodness.

{e} "in him" Ro 15:8,9; Heb 13:8

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Now he which stablisheth us*. He who makes us *firm*, (*o bebaiwn hmav*;) that is, he who has confirmed us in the hopes of the gospel, and who gives us grace to be faithful, and them in our promises. The object of this is to trace all to God, and to prevent the appearance of self-confidence or of boasting. Paul had dwelt at length on his own fidelity and veracity. He had taken pains to prove that he was not inconstant and fickle-minded. He here says, that this was not to be traced to himself, or to any native goodness, but was all to be traced to God. It was God who had given them all confident hope in Christ; and it was-God who had given him grace to adhere to his promises, and to maintain a character for veracity. The first "us," in this verse, refers probably to Paul himself; the second includes also the Corinthians, as being also anointed and sealed.

And hath anointed us. Us who are Christians. It was customary to *anoint* kings, prophets, and priests, on their entering on their office, as a part of the ceremony of inauguration. The word *anoint* is applied to a priest, Ex 28:41 40:15 to a prophet, 1Ki 19:16; Isa 61:1; to a king, 1Sa 10:1 15:1; 2Sa 2:4 1Ki 1:34.

It is applied often to the Messiah as being, set apart or consecrated to his office as prophet, priest, and king—i. e., as appointed by God to the highest office ever held in the world. It is applied also to Christians as being consecrated or set apart to the service of God by the Holy Spirit—a use of the word which is derived from the sense of *consecrating*, or setting apart, to the service of God. Thus in 1Jo 2:20, it is said, "But we have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things." So in 1Jo 2:27, "But the anointing which ye have received abideth in you," etc. The anointing which was used in the consecration of prophets, priests, and kings, seems to have been designed to be emblematic of the influences of the Holy Spirit, who is often represented as *poured* upon those who are under his influence, (Pr 1:23 Isa 44:3; Joe 2:28,29; Zec 12:10 Ac 10:45,) in the same way as water or oil is poured out. And as Christians are everywhere represented as being under the influence of the Holy Spirit, as being those on whom the Holy Spirit is *poured*, they are represented as "anointed." They are in this manner solemnly set apart, and consecrated to the service of God.

Is God. God has done it. All is to be traced to him. It is not by any native goodness which we have, or any inclination which we have by nature to his service. This is one of the instances which abound so much in the writings of Paul, where he delights to trace all good influences to God.

{a} "stablisheth us" 2Th 2:17 1Pe 5:10 {b} "anointed us" 1Jo 2:20,27; Re 3:18

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Who hath also sealed us*. The word used here (from *sfragizw*) means, to seal up; to close and make fast with a seal, or signet—as, e.g., books, letters, etc., that they may not be read. It is also used in the sense of setting a mark on anything, or a seal, to denote that it is genuine, authentic, confirmed, or approved—as when a deed, compact, or agreement is sealed. It is thus made sure; and is confirmed, or established. Hence it is applied to *persons*, as denoting that they are approved, as in Re 7:3: "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." Comp. Eze 9:4. **See Barnes** "Joh 6:27, where it is said of the Saviour, "for him hath God the Father *sealed*." Comp. Joh 3:33. In a similar manner Christians are said to be sealed; to be sealed by the Holy Spirit, Eph 1:13 4:30; that is, the Holy Spirit is given to them to confirm them as belonging to God. He grants them his Spirit. He renews and sanctifies them. He produces in their hearts those feelings, hopes, and desires which are an *evidence* that they are approved by God; that they are regarded as his adopted children; that their hope is genuine; and that their redemption and salvation are SURE—in the same way as a seal makes a will or an agreement sure. God grants to them his Holy Spirit as the certain pledge that they are his, and shall be approved and saved in the last day. In this there is nothing miraculous, or in the nature of direct revelation. It consists of the ordinary operations of the Spirit on the heart, producing repentance, faith, hope, joy, conformity to God, the love of prayer and praise, and the Christian virtues generally;

and *these things* are the evidences that the Holy Spirit has renewed the heart, and that the Christian is sealed for the day of redemption.

And given the earnest of the Spirit. The word here used (*arrabwna*) from the Heb.

HEBREW

means, properly, a pledge given to ratify a contract; a part of the price, or purchase-money; a first payment; that which confirms the bargain, and which is regarded as a pledge that all the price will be paid. The word occurs in the Septuagint and Hebrew, in Ge 38:17,18,20.

In the New Testament it occurs only in this place, and in 2Co 5:5 Eph 1:14—in each place in the same connexion as applied to the Holy Spirit, and his influences on the heart. It refers to those influences as a *pledge* of the future glories which await Christians in heaven. In regard to the "earnest," or the part of a price which was paid in a contract, it may be remarked,

(1.) that it was of the same nature as the full price, being regarded as a part of it;

(2.) it was regarded as a pledge or assurance that the full price would be paid. So the "earnest of the Spirit" denotes that God gives to his people the influences of his Spirit; his operation on the heart as a part or pledge that all the blessings of the covenant of redemption shall be given to them. And it implies,

(1.) that the comforts of the Christian here are of the same nature as they will be in heaven. Heaven will consist of *like* comforts; of love, and peace, and joy, and purity begun here, and simply *expanded* there to complete and eternal perthetlon. The joys of heaven differ only in *degree*, not in *kind*, from those of the Christian on earth. That which is begun here is perfected there; and the feelings and views which the Christian has here, if expanded and carried out, would constitute heaven.

(2.) These comforts, these influences of the Spirit, are a pledge of heaven. They are the security which God gives us that we shall be saved. If we are brought under the renewing influences of the Spirit here; if we are made meek, and humble, and prayerful by his agency; if we are made to partake of the joys which result from pardoned sin; if we are filled with the hope of heaven, it is all produced by the Holy Spirit; and is a *pledge* or earnest, of our future inheritance—as the first sheaves of a harvest are a pledge of a harvest, or the first payment under a contract a pledge that all will be paid. God thus gives to his people the assurance that they shall be saved; and by this "pledge" makes their title to eternal life sure.

{c} "sealed us" Eph 1:13,14, 4:30 2Ti 2:19

{d} "Spirit" Ro 8:9,14-16

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul*. It is well remarked by Rosenmuller, that the second chapter should have commenced here, since there is here a transition in the subject more distinct than where the second chapter is actually made to begin. Here Tindal commences the second chapter. This verse, with the subsequent statements, is designed to show them the true reason why he had changed his purpose, and had not visited them according to his first proposal. And that reason was not that he was fickle and inconstant; but it was that he apprehended that if he should

go to them in their irregular and disorderly state, he would be under a necessity of resorting to harsh measures, and to a severity of discipline that would be alike painful to them and to him. Dr. Paley has shown with great plausibility, if not with moral certainty, that Paul's change of purpose about visiting them was made *before* he wrote his first epistle; that he had at first resolved to visit them, but that, on subsequent reflection, he thought it would be better to try the effect of *a faithful letter to them*, admonishing them of their errors, and entreating them to exercise proper discipline themselves on the principal offender; that with this feeling he wrote his first epistle, in which he does not state to them as yet his change of purpose, or the reason of it; but that now, after he had written that letter, and after it had had all the effect which he desired, he states the true reason why he had not visited them. It was now proper to do it. And that reason was, that he desired to spare them the severity of discipline, and had resorted to the more mild and affectionate measure of sending them a letter, and thus not making it *necessary* personally to administer discipline. See Paley's Horae Paulinae, on 2Co 4, 2Co 5. The phrase, "I call God for a record upon my soul," is, in the Greek, "I call God for a witness *against* my soul." It is a solemn oath, or appeal to God; and implies, that if he did not in that case declare the truth, he desired that God would be a witness against him, and would punish him accordingly. The *reason* why he made this solemn appeal to God, was the importance of his vindicating his own character before the church, from the charges which had been brought against him.

That to spare you. To avoid the necessity of inflicting punishment on you; of exercising severe and painful discipline. If he went among them in the state of irregularity and disorder which prevailed there, he would feel it to be necessary to exert his authority as an apostle, and remove at once the offending members from the church, he expected to avoid the necessity of these painful acts of discipline, by sending to them a faithful and affectionate epistle, and thus inducing them to reform, and to avoid the necessity of a resort to that which would have been so trying to him and to them. It was not, then, a disregard for them, or a want of attachment to them, which had led him to change his purpose, but it was the result of tender affection. This cause of the change of his purpose, of course, he would not make known to them in his first epistle, but now that that letter had accomplished all he had desired, it was proper that they should be apprized of the reason why he had resorted to this instead of visiting them personally.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Not for that we have dominion*, etc. The sense of this passage I take to be this: "The course which we have pursued has been chosen, not because we wish to lord it over your faith, to control your belief, but because we desired to promote your happiness. had the former been our object, had we wished to set up a lordship or dominion over you, we should have come to you with our apostolical authority, and in the severity of apostolic discipline. We had power to command obedience, and to control your faith. But we chose not to do it. Our object was to promote your highest happiness. We, therefore, chose the mildest and gentlest manner possible; we did not exercise authority in discipline, we sent an affectionate and tender letter." While the apostles had the right to prescribe the articles of belief, and to propound the doctrines of God, yet they would not do even

that in such a manner as to seem to "lord it over God's heritage," (*ou kurieuomen*;) they did not set up absolute authority, or prescribe the things to be believed in a lordly and imperative manner; nor would they make use of the severity of power to enforce what they taught. They appealed to reason; they employed persuasion; they made use of light and love to accomplish their desires.

Are helpers of your joy. This is our main object, to promote your joy. This object we have pursued in our plans; and in order to secure this, we forbore to come to you, when, if we *did* come at that time, we should have given occasion perhaps to the charge that we sought to lord it over your faith.

For by faith ye stand. **See Barnes "1Co 15:1"**.

This seems to be a kind of proverbial expression, stating a general truth, that it was by faith that Christians were to be established or confirmed. The connexion here requires us to understand this as a reason why he would not attempt to lord it over their faith; or to exercise dominion over them. That reason was, that thus far they *had* stood firm, in the main, in the faith, (1Co 15:1;) they had adhered to the truths of the gospel, and *in a special manner now, in yielding obedience to the commands and entreaties of Paul in the first epistle*, they had showed that they were in the faith, and firm in the faith. "It was not necessary or proper, therefore, for him to attempt to exercise lordship over their belief; but all that was needful was to help forward their joy, for they were firm in the faith. We may observe,

(1.) that it is a part of the duty of ministers to help forward the joy of Christians.

(2.) This should be the object even in administering discipline and reproof.

(3.) If even Paul would not attempt to lord it over the faith of Christians, to establish a domination over their belief, how absurd and wicked is it for uninspired ministers now— for individual ministers, for conferences, conventions, presbyteries, synods, councils, or for the pope—to attempt to establish a spiritual dominion in *controlling* the faith of men. The great evils in the church have arisen from their attempting to do what Paul *would* not do; from attempting to establish a dominion which Paul never sought, and which Paul would have abhorred. Faith must be free, and religion must be free, or they cannot exist at all.

{a} "have dominion" 1Co 3:5 1Pe 5:3 {b} "by faith" Ro 11:20 1Co 15:1

REMARKS on 2nd Corinthians Chapter One

In view of this chapter we may remark,

(1.) God is the only true and real source of comfort in times of trial, 2Co 1:3. It is from him that all real consolation must come, and he only can meet and sustain the soul when it is borne down with calamity. All persons are subjected to trial, and, at some periods of their lives, to severe trial, Sickness is a trial; the death of a friend is a trial; the loss of property or health, disappointment, and reproach, and slander, and poverty, and want, are trials to which we are all more or less exposed. In these trials, it is natural to look to some source of consolation; some way in which they may be borne. Some seek consolation in philosophy, and endeavour to blunt their feelings and destroy their sensibilities, as the ancient stoics did. But "to destroy sensibility is not to produce comfort." —*Dr. Mason*. Some plunge deep into pleasures, and endeavour to drown their sorrows in the intoxicating draught; but this is not to produce comfort to the soul, even were it possible in such pleasures to forget their sorrows. Such were the ancient epicureans. Some seek consolation in their surviving friends, and look to them to comfort and sustain the sinking heart. But the arm of an earthly friend is feeble, when God lays his hand upon us. It is only the hand that smites that can heal; only the

God that sends the affliction that can bind up the broken spirit. He is the "Father or mercies," and he "the God of ALL consolation ;" and in affliction there is no true comfort but in him.

(2.) This consolation in God is derived from many sources.

(a.) He is the "Father of mercies," and we may be assured, therefore, that he does nothing inconsistent with MERCY.

(b.) We may be assured that he is right—always right—and that he does nothing *but* right. We may not be able to see the reason of his doings, but we may have the assurance that it is all right, and will yet be seen to be right.

(c.) There is comfort in the fact that our afflictions are ordered by an *intelligent* Being, by one who is all-wise and all-knowing. They are not the result of blind chance; but they are ordered by one who is wise to know what *ought* to be done, and who is so just that he will do nothing wrong. There could be no consolation in the feeling that mere *chance* directed our trials; nor can there be consolation except in the feeling that a Being of intelligence and goodness directs and orders all. The true comfort, therefore, is to be found in religion, not in atheism and philosophy.

(3.) It is possible to bless God in the midst of trials, and as the result of trial. It is possible so clearly to see his hand, and to be so fully satisfied with the wisdom and goodness of his dealings, even when we are severely afflicted, as to see that he is worthy of our highest confidence and most exalted praise, 2Co 1:3. God may be seen, then, to be the "Father of mercies;" and he may impart, even then, a consolation which we never experienced in the days of prosperity. Some of the purest and most elevated joys known upon earth, are experienced in the very midst of outward calamities; and the most sincere and elevated thanksgivings which are offered to God, are often those which are the result of sanctified afflictions. It is when we are brought out from such trials, where we have experienced the rich consolations and the sustaining power of the gospel, that we are most disposed to say with Paul, "Blessed be God;" and can most clearly see that he is the "Father of mercies." No Christian will ever have occasion to regret the trials through which God has brought him. I never knew a sincere Christian who was not finally benefited by trials.

(4.) Christian joy is not *apathy*, it is *comfort*, 2Co 1:4,6. It is not insensibility to suffering; it is not stoical indifference. The Christian *feels* his sufferings as keenly as others. The Lord Jesus was *as* sensitive to suffering as any one of the human family ever was; he was as susceptible of emotion from reproach, contempt, and scorn, and he as keenly felt the pain of the scourge, the nails, and the cross, as any one could. But there is *positive* joy, there is true and solid comfort. There is substantial, pure, and elevated happiness, Religion does not blunt the feelings, or destroy the sensibility, but it brings in consolations which enable us to bear our pains, and to endure persecution without murmuring. In this, religion differs from all systems of philosophy. The one attempts to *blunt* and destroy our sensibilities to suffering; the other, while it makes us more delicate and tender in our feelings, gives consolation *adapted* to that delicate sensibility, and fitted to sustain the soul, *notwithstanding* the acuteness of its sufferings.

(5.) Ministers of the gospel may expect to be *peculiarly* tried and afflicted, 2Co 1:5. So it was with Paul and his fellow-apostles; and so it has been since. They are the special objects of the hatred of sinners, as they stand in the way of the sinful pursuits and pleasures of the world; and they are, like their Master, especially hated by the enemy of souls. Besides, they are, by their office, required to minister consolation to others who are afflicted; and it is so ordered in the providence of God, that they are subjected to peculiar trials often, *in order* that they may be able to impart peculiar consolations. They are to be the examples and the guides of the church of God; and God takes care

that they shall be permitted to show by their example, as well as by their preaching, the supporting power of the gospel in times of trial.

(6.) If we suffer much in the cause of the Redeemer, we may also expect much consolation, 2Co 2:5. Christ will take care that our hearts shall be filled with joy and peace. As our trials in his cause are, so shall our consolations be. If we suffer much, we shall enjoy much; if we are persecuted much, we shall have much support; if our names, are cast out among men for his sake, we shall have increasing evidence that they are written in his book of life. There *are* things in the Christian religion which can be learned only in the furnace of affliction; and he who has never been afflicted on account of his attachment to Christ, is a stranger yet to much, very much of the fulness and beauty of that system of religion which has been appointed by the Redeemer, and to much, very much, of the beauty and power of the promises of the Bible. No man will ever understand *all* the Bible who is not favoured with much persecution and many trials.

(7.) We should be willing to suffer, 2Co 1:3-5. If we are willing *to be happy*, we should also be willing to suffer. If we *desire* to be happy in religion, we should be willing to suffer. If we *expect* to be happy, we should also be willing to endure much. Trials fit us for enjoyment here, as well as for heaven hereafter.

(8.) One great design of the consolation which is imparted to Christians in the time of affliction is, that they may be able to impart Consolation also to others, 2Co 1:4,6,7.

God designs that we should thus be mutual aids. And he comforts a pastor in his trials, that he may, by his own experience, be able to minister consolation to the people of his charge; he comforts a parent, that he may administer consolation to his children; a friend, that he may comfort a friend. He who attempts to administer consolation should be able to speak from experience; and ,God, therefore, afflicts and comforts all his people, that they may know how to administer consolation to those with whom they are connected.

(9.) If we have experienced peculiar consolations ourselves in times of trial, we are under obligations to seek out and comfort others who are afflicted. So Paul felt. We should feel that God has qualified us for this work; and having qualified us for it, that he calls on us to do it. The consolation which God gives in affliction is a rich treasure which we are bound to impart to others; the experience which we have of the true sources of consolation is an inestimable talent which we are to use for the promotion of his glory. No man has a talent for doing more direct good than he who can go to the afflicted, and bear testimony, from his own experience, to the goodness of God. And every man who *can* testify that God is good, and is able to support the soul in times of trial,—and what Christian cannot do it who has ever been afflicted?—should regard himself as favoured with a peculiar talent for doing good, and should rejoice in the privilege of using it to the glory of God. For there is no talent more honourable than that of being able to promote the Divine glory, to comfort the afflicted, or to be able, from personal experience, to testify that God is good—always good. "The *power* of doing good, always implies an obligation to do it."—*Cotton Mather*.

(10.) In this chapter, we have a case of a near contemplation of death, 2Co 1:8,9. Paul expected soon to die. He had the sentence of death in himself. He saw no human probability of escape. He was called, therefore, calmly to look death in the face, and to contemplate it as an event certain and near. Such a condition is deeply interesting; it is *the* important crisis of life. And yet it is an event which all must soon contemplate. We all, in a short period, each one for himself, must look upon death as certain, and as near to us; as an event in which we are personally interested, and from

which we cannot escape. Much as we may turn away from it in health, and unanxious as we may be then in regard to it, yet by no possibility can we long avert our minds from the subject. It is interesting, then, to inquire how Paul felt when he looked at death; how we should feel; and how we actually *shall* feel when we come to die.

(11.) A contemplation of death as near and certain, is fitted to lead us to trust in God. This was the effect in the case of Paul, 2Co 1:9. He had learned in health to put his trust in him; and now, when the trial was apparently near, he had nowhere else to go, and he confided in him alone. He felt that if he was rescued, it could be only by the interposition of God; and that there was none but God who could sustain him if he should die. And what event can there be that is so well fitted to lead us to trust in God as death And where else can we go in view of that dark hour? For

(a.) we know not what death is. We have not tried it; nor do we know what grace may be necessary for us in those unknown pangs and sufferings; in that deep darkness, and that sad gloom.

(b.) Our friends cannot aid us then. They will, they must, then give us the parting hand; and as we *enter* the shades of the dark valley, they must bid us farewell. The skill of the physician then will fail Our worldly friends will forsake us when we come to die. They do not love to be in the room of death, and they can give us no consolation if they are there. Our pious friends cannot attend us far in the dark valley. They may pray, and commend us to God, but even they must leave us to die alone. Who but God *can* attend us? Who but he can support us then?

(c.) God only knows what is *beyond* death. How do we know the way to his bar, to his presence, to his heaven? How can we direct our own steps in that dark and unknown world? None but God our Saviour can guide us there; none else can conduct us to his abode.

(d.) None but God can *sustain* us in the pain, the anguish, the feebleness, the sinking of the powers of body and of mind in that distressing hour. He *can* uphold us then; and it is an unspeakable privilege to be permitted then, "when heart and flesh faint," to say of him, God is the strength of our heart, and our portion for ever, Ps 73:26.

(12.) We should regard a restoration from dangerous sickness, and from imminent peril of death, as a kind of resurrection. So Paul regarded it, 2Co 1:9. We should remember how easy it would have been for God to have removed us; how rapidly we were tending to the grave; how certainly we should have descended there, but for his interposition. We should feel, therefore, that we owe our lives to him as really and entirely as though we had been raised up from the dead; and that the same kind of power and goodness have been evinced as would have been had God given us life anew. Life is God's gift; and every instance of recovery from peril, or from dangerous illness, is as really an interposition of his mercy as though we had been raised up from the dead.

(13.) We should, in like manner, regard a restoration of our friends from dangerous sickness, or peril of any kind, as a species of resurrection from the dead. When a parent, a husband, a wife, or a child has been dangerously ill, or exposed to some imminent danger, and has been recovered, we cannot but feel that the recovery is entirely owing to the interposition of God. With infinite ease he could have consigned them to the grave; and had he not mercifully interposed, they would have died. As they were originally his gift to us, so we should regard each interposition of that kind as a *new gift*, and receive the recovered and restored friend as a fresh gift from his hand.

(14.) We should feel that lives thus preserved, and thus recovered from danger, belong to God. He has preserved them. In the most absolute sense they belong to him, and to him they should be consecrated. So Paul felt; and his whole life shows how entirely he regarded himself as bound to devote a life often preserved in the midst of peril, to the service of his kind Benefactor. There is

no claim more absolute than that which God has on those whom he has preserved from dangerous situations, or whom he has raised up from the borders of the grave. All the strength which he has imparted, all the talent, learning, skill which he has thus preserved, should be regarded in the most absolute sense as his, and should be honestly and entirely consecrated to him. *But* for him we should have died; and he has a right to our services and obedience, which is entire, and which should be felt to be perpetual. And it may be added, that the right is not less clear and strong to the service of those whom he keeps without their being exposed to such peril, or raised up from such beds of sickness. A very few only of the interpositions of God in our behalf are seen by us. A small part of the perils to which we may be really exposed are seen. And it is no less owing to his preserving care that we are *kept* in health, and strength, and in the enjoyment of reason, than it is that we are *raised* up from dangerous sickness. Man is as much bound to devote himself to God for preserving him *from* sickness and danger, as he is for raising him up when he has been sick, and defending him in danger.

(15.) We have here an instance of the *principle* on which Paul acted, 2Co 1:12. In his *aims*, and in the *manner* of accomplishing his aims, he was guided only by the principles of simplicity and sincerity, and by the grace of God. He had no sinister and worldly purpose; he had no crooked and subtle policy by which to accomplish his purposes. He sought simply the glory of God and the salvation of man; and he sought this in a manner plain, direct, honest, and straightforward. He admitted none of the principles of worldly policy which have been so often acted on since in the church; he knew nothing of "pious frauds," which have so often disgraced the *professed* friends of the Redeemer; he admitted no form of deception and delusion, even for the promotion of objects which were great, and good, and desirable. He knew that all that *ought* to be done could be accomplished by straightforward and simple-hearted purposes; and that a cause which depended on the carnal and crooked policy of the world was a bad cause; and that such policy would ultimately ruin the best of causes. How happy would it have been if these views had always prevailed in the church!

(16.) We see the value of a good conscience, 2Co 1:12. Paul had the testimony of an enlightened conscience to the correctness and uprightness of his course of life everywhere. He felt assured that his aims had been right; and that he had endeavoured in all simplicity and sincerity to pursue a course of life which such a conscience would approve. Such a testimony, such an approving conscience, is of inestimable value. It is worth more than gold, and crowns, and all that the earth can give. When like Paul we are exposed to peril, or trial, or calamity, it matters little, if we have an approving conscience. When like him we are persecuted, it matters little, if we have the testimony of our own minds that we have pursued an upright and an honest course of life. When like him we look death in the face, and feel that we "have the sentence of death in ourselves," of what inestimable value then will be an approving conscience! How unspeakable the consolation if we can look back then on a life spent in conscious integrity—a life spent in endeavouring to promote the glory of God and the salvation of the world!

(17.) Every Christian should feel himself sacredly bound to maintain a character of veracity, 2Co 1:19,20. Christ was always true to his word; and all that God has promised shall be certainly fulfilled. And as a Christian is a professed follower of Him who was "the Amen and the true witness," he should feel himself bound by the most sacred obligations to adhere to all his promises, and to fulfil all his word. No man can do any good who is not a man of truth; and in no way can Christians more dishonour their profession, and injure the cause of the Redeemer, than by a want of character

for unimpeachable veracity. If they make promises which are never fulfilled; if they state that as true which is not true; if they overload their narratives with circumstances which had no existence; if they deceive and defraud others; and if they are so loose in their statements that no one believes them, it is impossible for them to do good in their Christian profession. Every Christian should have—as he easily may have—such a character for veracity that every man shall put implicit confidence in all his promises and statements; so implicit that they shall deem his word as good as an oath, and his promise as certain as though it were secured by notes and bonds in the most solemn manner. The word of a Christian should need no strengthening by oaths and bonds; it should be such that it could really not be strengthened by anything that notes and bonds could add to it.

(18.) All Christians should regard themselves as consecrated to God, 2Co 1:21. They have been anointed, or set apart to his service. They should feel that they are as really set apart to his service as the ancient prophets, priests, and kings were to their appropriate offices by the ceremony of anointing. They belong to God, and are under every sacred and solemn obligation to live to him, and him alone.

(19.) It is an inestimable *privilege* to be a Christian, 2Co 1:21,22. It is regarded as a privilege to be an heir to an estate, and to have an assurance that it will be ours. But the Christian has an "earnest," a pledge, that heaven is his. He is anointed of God; he is sealed for heaven. Heaven is his home; and God is giving to him daily evidence in his own experience that he will soon be admitted to its pure and blissful abodes.

(20.) The joys of the Christian on earth are of the same *nature* as the joys of heaven. These comforts are an "earnest" of the future inheritance; a part of that which the Christian is to enjoy for ever. His joys on earth are "heaven begun;" and all that is needful to constitute heaven is that these joys should be expanded and perpetuated. There will be no other heaven than that which would be constituted by the expanded joys of a Christian.

(21.) No one is a Christian, no one is fitted for heaven, who has not such principles and joys as being fully expanded and developed would constitute heaven. The joys of heaven are not to be *created* for us as some new thing; they are not to be such as we have had no foretaste, no conception of; but they are to be such as will be produced of necessity, by removing imperfection from the joys and feelings of the believer, and carrying them out without alloy, and without interruption, and without end. The man, therefore, who has such a character that, if fairly developed, would not constitute the joys of heaven, is not a Christian. He has no evidence that he has been born again; and all his joys are fancied and delusive.

(22.) Christians should be careful not to grieve the Holy Spirit. Comp. Eph 4:30. It is by that Spirit that they are "anointed" and "sealed," and it is by his influences that they have the earnest of their future inheritance. All good influences on their minds proceed from that Spirit; and it should be their high and constant aim not to grieve him. By no course of conduct, by no conversation, by no impure thought, should they drive that Spirit from their minds. All their peace and joy is dependent on their cherishing his sacred influences; and by all the means in their power they should strive to secure his constant agency on their souls.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 2

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 1

Introduction to 2nd Corinthians Chapter 2

IN this chapter Paul continues the discussion of the subject which had been introduced in the previous chapter. At the close of that chapter, he had stated the reasons why he had not visited the church at Corinth. **See Barnes "**2Co 1:23, **See Barnes "2Co 1:24"**.

The main reason was that instead of coming to them in that disordered and irregular state, he had preferred to send them an affectionate letter. Had he come to them personally, he would have felt himself called on to exercise the severity of discipline. He chose, therefore, to try what the effect would be of a faithful and kind epistle. In this chapter, he prosecutes the same subject. He states, therefore, more at length the reason why he had not come to them, 2Co 2:1-5. The reason was, that he resolved not to come to them, if he could avoid it, with severity; that his heart was pained even with the necessity of sending such a letter; that he wrote it with much anguish of spirit; yet that he cherished towards them the most tender love. In his former epistle (1Co 5) he had directed them to exercise discipline on the offending person in the church. This had been done according to his direction; and the offender had been suitably punished for his offence. He had been excommunicated; and it would seem that the effect on him had been to induce him to forsake his sin, and probably to put away his father's wife, and he had become a sincere penitent. Paul, therefore, in the next place, (2Co 2:6-11,) exhorts them to receive him again into fellowship with the church. The punishment he says had been sufficient, (2Co 2:6;) they ought now to be kind and forgiving to him, lest he should be overwhelmed with his sorrow, (2Co 2:7) he says that he had forgiven him, so far as he was concerned, and he entreated them to do the same, (2Co 2:10;) and says that they ought, by all means, to pursue such a course that Satan could' get no advantage of them, 2Co 2:11. Paul then states the disappointment which he had had at Troas in not seeing Titus, from whom he had expected to learn what was the state of the church at Corinth, and what was the reception of his letter there; but that not seeing him there, he had gone on to Macedonia, 2Co 2:12,13. There, it would seem, he met Titus, and learned that his letter had had all the success which he could have desired. It had been kindly received; and all that he had wished in regard to discipline had been performed, 2Co 2:14. The hearing of this success gives him occasion to thank God for it, as one among many instances in which his efforts to advance his cause had crowned with success. God had made him everywhere successful; and had made him triumph in Christ in every place. This fact gives him occasion 2Co 2:15,16 to state the general effect of his preaching and his labours. His efforts, he says, were always acceptable to God—though he could not be ignorant that in some cases the gospel which he preached was the occasion of the aggravated condemnation of those who heard and rejected it. Yet he had the consolation of reflecting that it was by no fault of his, 2Co 2:17. It was not because he had corrupted the word of God; it was not because he was unfaithful; it was not because he was not sincere. He had a good conscience— a conscience which assured

him that he spoke in sincerity, and as in the sight of God—though the unhappy effect might be that many would perish from under his ministry.

Verse 1. *But I determined this with myself*. I made up my mind on this point; I formed this resolution in regard to my course.

That I would not come again to you in heaviness. In grief, (*en luph*) would not come, if I could avoid it, in circumstances which must have grieved both me and you. I would not come while there existed among you such irregularities as must have pained my heart, and as must have compelled me to resort to such acts of discipline as would be painful to you. I resolved, therefore, to endeavour to remove these evils before I came, that when I did come, my visit might be mutually agreeable to us both. For that reason I changed my purpose about visiting you, when I heard of those disorders, and resolved to send an epistle. If *that* should be successful, then the way would be open for an agreeable visit to you." This verse, therefore, contains the statement of the principal reason why he had not come to them as he had at first proposed. It was really from no fickleness, but it was from love to them, and a desire that his visit should be mutually agreeable. Comp. **See Barnes "2Co 1:23".**

{a} "heaviness" 2Co 1:23 12:20,21 13:10

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *For if I make you sorry*. "If when I should come among you I should be called on to inflict sorrow by punishing your offending brethren by an act of severe discipline as soon as I came, who would there be to give me comfort but those very persons whom I had affected with grief? How little prepared would they be to make me happy, and to comfort me, amidst the deep sorrow which I should have caused by an act of severe discipline. After such an act—an act that would spread sorrow through the whole church, how could I expect that comfort which I should desire to find among you? The whole church would be affected with grief; and though I might be sustained by the sound part of the church, yet my visit would be attended with painful circumstances. I resolved, therefore, to remove all cause of difficulty, if possible, before I came, that my visit might be pleasant to us all." The idea is, that there was such a sympathy between him and them—that he was so attached to them— that he could not expect to be happy unless they were happy; that though he might be conscious he was only discharging a duty, and that God would sustain him in it, yet that it would mar the pleasure of his visit, and destroy all his anticipated happiness by the general grief.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And I wrote this same unto you*. The words "this same" (*touto auto*) refer to what he had written to them in the former epistle, particularly to what he had written in regard to the

incestuous person, requiring them to excommunicate him. Probably the expression also includes the commands in his former epistle to reform their conduct in general, and to put away the abuses and evil practices which prevailed in the church there.

Lest, when I came, etc. Lest I should be obliged, if I came personally, to exercise the severity of discipline, and thus to diffuse sorrow throughout the entire church.

I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice. Lest I should have grief in the church. Lest the conduct of the church, and the abuses which prevail in it, should give me sorrow. I should be grieved with the existence of these evils; and I should be obliged to resort to measures which would be painful to me, and to the whole church. Paul sought to avoid this by persuading them before he came to exercise the discipline themselves, and to put away the evil practices which prevailed among them.

Having confidence in you all. Having confidence that this is your general character, that whatever adds to my joy, or promotes my happiness, would give joy to you all. Paul had enemies in Corinth; he knew that there were some there whose minds were alienated from him, and who were endear outing to do him injury. Yet he did not doubt that it was the general character of the church that they wished him well, and would desire to make him happy; that what would tend to promote his happiness would also promote theirs; and, therefore, that they would be willing to do anything that would make his visit agreeable to him when he came among them. He was therefore persuaded, that if he wrote them an affectionate letter, they would listen to his injunctions, that thus all that was painful might be avoided when he came among them.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *For out of much affliction*. Possibly Paul's enemies had charged him with being harsh and overbearing. They may have said that there was much needless severity in his letter. He here meets that, and says, that it was with much pain and many tears that he was constrained to write as he did. He was pained at their conduct, and at the necessity which existed for such an epistle. This is an eminently beautiful instance of Paul's kindness of heart, and his susceptibility to tender impressions. The evil conduct of others gives pain to a good man; and the necessity of administering reproof and discipline is often as painful to him who does it, as it is to those who are the subjects of it.

And anguish of heart. The word rendered "anguish" (*sunochv*) means, properly, a holding together or shutting up; and then pressure, distress, anguish—an affliction of the heart by which one feels tightened or constrained; such a pressure as great grief causes at the heart.

I wrote unto you with many tears. With much weeping and grief that I was constrained to write such a letter. This was an instance of Paul's great tenderness of heart—a trait of character which he uniformly evinced. With all his strength of mind, and all his courage and readiness to face danger. Paul was not ashamed to weep; and especially if he had any occasion of censuring his Christian brethren, or administering discipline, Comp. Php 3:18 Ac 20:31. This is also a specimen of the manner in which Paul met the faults of his Christian brethren. It was not with bitter denunciation. It was not with sarcasm and ridicule. It was not by blazoning those faults abroad to others. It was

not with the spirit of rejoicing that they had committed errors, and had been guilty of sin. It was not as if he was glad of the opportunity of administering rebuke, and took pleasure in denunciation and in the language of reproof. All this is often done by others; but Paul pursued a different course. He sent an affectionate letter to the offenders themselves; and he did it with many tears. IT WAS DONE WEEPING. Admonition would always be done right if it was done with tears. Discipline would always be right, and would be effectual, if it were administered with tears. Any man will receive an admonition kindly, if he who administers it does it weeping; and the heart of an offender will be melted, if he who attempts to reprove him comes to him with tears. How happy would it be if all who attempt to reprove should do it with Paul's spirit. How happy, if all discipline should be administered in the church in his manner. But, we may add, how seldom is this done ! How few are there who feel themselves called on to reprove an offending brother, or to charge a brother with heresy or crime, that do it with tears!

Not that ye should be grieved. It was not my object to give you pain.

But that ye might know the love, etc. This was one of the best evidences of his great love to them which he could possibly give. It is proof of genuine friendship for another, when we faithfully and affectionately admonish him of the error of his course; it is the highest proof of affection when we do it with tears. It is cruelty to suffer a brother to remain in sin unadmonished; it is cruel to admonish him of it in a harsh, severe, and authoritative tone; but it is proof of tender attachment when we go to him with tears, and entreat him to repent and reform. No man gives higher proof of attachment to another than he who affectionately admonishes him of his sin and danger.

{a} "love which" 2Co 11:2

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *If any have caused grief*. There is doubtless here an allusion to the incestuous person. But it is very delicately done. He does not mention him by name. There is not anywhere an allusion to his name; nor is it possible now to know it. Is this not a proof that the names of the offending brethren in a church should not be put on the records of sessions, and churches, and presbyteries, to be handed down to posterity? Paul does not here either *expressly* refer to such a person. He makes his remark general, that it might be *as* tender and kind to the offending brother as possible. They would know whom he meant, but they had already punished him, as Paul supposed, enough; and now all that he said in regard to him was as tender as possible, and fitted, as much as possible, to conciliate his feelings and allay his grief. He did not harshly charge him with sin; he did not use any abusive or severe epithets; but he gently insinuates that he "had caused grief;" he had pained the hearts of his brethren.

He hath not grieved me, but in part. He has not particularly offended or grieved me. He has grieved me only in common with others, and as apart of the church of Christ. All have common cause of grief; and I have no interest in it which is not common to you all. I am but one of a great number who have felt the deepest concern on account of his conduct.

That I may not overcharge you all. That I may not *bear hard* (*epibarw*) on you all; that I may not accuse you all of having caused me grief. The sense is, "Grief has been produced. I, in common

with the church, have been pained, and daily pained, with the conduct of the individual referred to; and with that of his abettors and friends. But I would not charge the whole church with it; or seem to bear hard on them, or overcharge them with want of zeal for their purity, or unwillingness to remove the evil." They had shown their willingness to correct the evil by promptly removing the offender when he had directed it. The *sense* of this verse should be connected with the verse that follows; and the idea is, that they had promptly administered sufficient discipline, and that they were not now to be charged severely with having neglected it. Even while Paul said he had been pained and grieved, he had seen occasions not to bear hard on the whole church, but to be ready to commend them for their promptness in removing the cause of the offence.

{b} "if any" Ga 5:10 {c} "but in part" Ga 4:12

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Sufficient to such a man*. The incestuous person that had been by Paul's direction removed from the church. The object of Paul here is to have him again restored. For that purpose he says that the punishment which they had indicted on him was "sufficient." It was

(1.) a sufficient expression of the evil of the offence, and of the readiness of the church to preserve itself pure; and

(2.) it was a sufficient punishment to the offender. It had accomplished all that he had desired. It had humbled him, and brought him to repentance; and doubtless led him to put away his. wife. Compare **See Barnes "1Co 5:1"**.

As that had been done, it was proper now that he should be again restored to the privileges of the church. No evil would result from such a restoration, and their duty to their penitent brother demanded it. Mr. Locke has remarked, that Paul conducts this subject here with very great tenderness and delicacy. The entire passage, from 2Co 2:5-10, relates solely to this offending brother; yet he never once mentions his name, nor does he mention his *crime*. He speaks of him only in the soft terms of "such a one" and "any one." Nor does he use an epithet which would be calculated to wound his feelings, or to transmit his name to posterity, or to communicate it to other churches. So that though this epistle should be read, as Paul doubtless intended, by other churches, and be transmitted to future times, yet no one would ever be acquainted with the name of the individual. How different this from the temper of those who would blazon abroad the names of offenders, or make a permanent record to carry them down with dishonour to posterity.

Which was inflicted of many. By the church, in its collective capacity. **See Barnes "1Co 5:4"**.

Paul had required the church to administer this act of discipline, and they had promptly done it. It is evident that the *whole* church was concerned in the administration of the act of discipline; as the words "of many" (*upo twn pleionwn*) are not applicable either to a single "bishop," or a single minister, or a presbytery, or a bench of elders: nor can they be so regarded, except by a forced and unnatural construction. Paul had directed it to be done by the assembled church, 1Co 5:4, and this phrase shows that they had followed his instructions. Locke supposes that the phrase means, "by the majority;" Macknight renders it, "by the greater number;" Bloomfield supposes that it means that the punishment was carned rate effect by all. Doddridge paraphrases it, "by the whole body of

your society." The expression proves beyond a doubt that the whole body of the society was concerned in the act of the excommunication, and that that is a proper way of administering discipline. Whether it proves, however, that that is the mode which is to be observed in all instances, may admit of a doubt, as the example of the early churches, ha a particular case,does not prove that that mode has the force of a binding rule on all.

{1} "this punishment" "censure" {d} "was inflicted of many" 1Co 5:4,5; 1Ti 5:20

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *So that contrariwise*. On the other hand; on the contrary. That is, instead of continuing the punishment. Since the punishment was sufficient, and has answered all the purpose of bearing your testimony against the offence, and of bringing him to repentance, you ought again to admit him to your communion.

Ye ought rather to forgive him. Rather than continue the pain and disgrace of excommunication. It follows from this,

(1.) that the proper time for restoring an offender is only when the punishment has answered the purpose for which it was designed; that is, has shown the just abhorrence of the church against the sin, and has reformed the offender; and

(2.) that *when* that is done, the church ought to forgive the offending brother, and admit him again to their fellowship. *When* it can be ascertained that the punishment has been effectual in reforming him, may depend somewhat on the nature of the offence. In this case, it was sufficiently shown by his putting away his wife, and by the manifestations of sorrow. So, in other cases, it may be shown by a man's abandoning a course of sin, and reforming his life. If he has been unjust, by his repairing the evil; if he has been pursuing an unlawful business, by abandoning it; if he has pursued a course of vice, by his forsaking it, and by giving satisfactory evidences of sorrow and of reformation, for a period sufficiently long to show his sincerity. The time which will be required in each case must depend, of course, somewhat on the nature of the offence, the previous character of the individual, the temptations to which he may be exposed, and the disgrace which he may have brought on his Christian calling. It is to be observed, also, that *then* his restoration is to be regarded as an act of *forgiveness*, a layout, (*carisasyai*, that is, *cariv*, favour, grace,) on the part of the church. It is not a matter of justice, or of claim on his part; for having once dishonoured his calling, he has forfeited his right to a good standing among Christians; but it is a matter of favour, and he should be willing to humble himself before the church, and make suitable acknowledgment for his offences.

And comfort him. There is every reason to think that this man became a sincere penitent. If so, he must have been deeply pained at the remembrance of his sin, and the dishonour which he had brought on his profession, as well as at the consequences in which he had been involved. In this deep distress, Paul tells them that they ought to comfort him. They should receive him kindly, as God receives to his favour a penitent sinner. They should not cast out his name as evil; they should not reproach him for his sins; they should not harrow up his recollection, of the offence by often referring to it; they should be willing to bury it in lasting forgetfulness, and treat him now as a brother. It is a duty of a church to treat with kindness a true penitent, and receive him to their

affectionate embrace. The offence should be forgiven and forgotten. The consolations of the gospel, adapted to the condition of penitents, should be freely administered; and all should be done that can be, to make the offender, when penitent, happy and useful in the community.

Lest perhaps such a one. Still forbearing to mention his name; still showing towards him the utmost tenderness and delicacy.

Should be swallowed up, etc. Should be overcome with grief; and should be rendered incapable of usefulness by his excessive sorrow. This is a strong expression, denoting intensity of grief. We speak of a man's being drowned in sorrow; or overwhelmed with grief; of grief preying upon him. The figure here is probably taken from deep waters, or from a whirlpool which seems to swallow up anything that comes within reach. Excessive grief or calamity, in the Scriptures, is often compared to such waters. See Ps 124:2-5, "If it had not been the LORD who was on our side when men rose up against us, then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us; then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul; then the proud waters had gone over our soul." See Ps 69:1, "Save me, O God, for the waters are come into my soul." Paul apprehended that, by excessive grief, the offending brother would be destroyed. His life would waste away under the effect of his excommunication and disgrace, and the remembrance of his offence would prey upon him, and sink him to the grave.

{a} "so that" Ga 6:1 {*} "contrariwise" "on the contrary"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him*. The word here rendered confirm, (*kurwsai*) occurs in the New Testament only here and in Ga 3:15. It means, to give authority, to establish as valid, to confirm; and here means that they should give strong expressions and assurances of their love to him; that they should pursue such a course as would leave no room for doubt in regard to it. Tindal has well rendered it, "Wherefore I exhort you that love may have strength over him." Paul referred doubtless, here, to some public act of the church by which the sentence of excommunication might be removed, and by which the offender might have a public assurance of their favour.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *For to this end also did I write*. The apostle did not say that this was the only purpose of his writing, to induce them to excommunicate the offender, he does not say that he wished, in an arbitrary manner, to test their willingness to obey him, or to induce them to do a thing in itself wrong, in order to try their obedience. But the meaning is this: This was the main reason why he *wrote* to them, rather than to come personally among them. The thing ought to have been done; the offender ought to be punished; and Paul says that he adopted the method of writing to them, rather

than of coming among them in person, in order to give them an opportunity to show whether they were disposed to be obedient. And the sense is, "You may now forgive him. He has hot only been sufficiently punished, and he has not only evinced suitable penitence, but also another object which I had in view has been accomplished. I desired to see whether you were, as a church, disposed to be obedient. That object, also, has been accomplished. And now, since everything aimed at in the case of discipline has been secured, you may forgive him, and should, without hesitation, again receive him to the bosom of the church."

{b} "obedient" 2Co 7:15

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *To whom ye forgive any thing*. The sense here is, "I have confidence in you as a Christian society; and such confidence, that if you forgive an offence in one-of your members, I shall approve the act, and shall also be ready to forgive." He refers, doubtless, to this particular case; but he makes his remark general. It is implied here, I think, that the Corinthians were *disposed* to forgive the offending brother; and Paul here assures them that they had his hearty assent to this, and that if they did forgive him, he was ready to join them in the act, and to forgive him also.

For if I forgave any thing. If I *forgive* anything; if I remit any of the punishments which have been inflicted by my authority.

For your sakes. It is not on account of the offender alone; it is in order to promote the happiness and purity of the church.

In the person of Christ. Locke paraphrases this, "By the authority, and in the name of Christ." Doddridge, "As in the person of Christ, and by the high authority with which he has been pleased to invest me." Tindal, "In the room of Christ." The word rendered *person* (marg., *sight proswpw*, from *prov* and *wq*) means, properly, the part towards, at, and around the eye.—*Robinson*. Then it means the face, visage, countenance; then the presence, person, etc. Here it probably means, in the presence of Christ; with his eye upon me, and conscious that I am acting before him, and must give account to him. It implies, undoubtedly, that Paul acted by his authority, and felt that he was doing that which Christ would approve.

{1} "the person" "sight"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Lest Satan*. The devil. The name Satan denotes an adversary, an accuser, an enemy. It is the usual proper name which is given to the devil, the great adversary of God and man.

Should get an advantage of us. The literal translation of the Greek would be, "That we may not be defrauded by Satan," *ina mh pleonekthywmen upo tou satana*. The verb here used denotes, *to have more than another*; then to gain, to take advantage of one, to defraud. And the idea is, that

they should at once re-admit the penitent offender to their communion, lest, if they did not do it, Satan would take advantage of it to do injury to him and them. It is a reason given by Paul why they should lose no time in restoring him to the church. What the advantage was which Satan might gain, Paul does not specify. It might be this: That under pretence of duty, and seeking the purity of the church, Satan would tempt them to harsh measures; to needless severity of discipline; to an unkind and unforgiving spirit; and thus, at the same time, injure the cause of religion, and ruin him who had been the subject of discipline.

For we are not ignorant of his devices. We know his plans, his thoughts, his cunning, his skill. We are not ignorant of the great number of stratagems which he is constantly using to injure us, and to destroy the souls of men. He is full of wiles; and Paul had had abundant occasion to be acquainted with the means which he had used to defeat his plans, and to destroy the church. The church, at all times, has been subjected to the influence of those wiles, as well as individual Christians And the church, therefore, as well as individual Christians, should be constantly on its guard against those snares. Even the best and purest efforts of the church are often perverted, as in the case of administering discipline, to the worst results; and by the imprudence and want of wisdom—by the rashness or overheated zeal—by the pretensions to great purity and love of truth —and by a harsh, severe, censorious spirit, Satan often takes advantage of the Church, and advances his own dark and mischievous designs.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Furthermore*. But, (*de*.) This particle is properly adversative; but frequently denotes transition, and serves to introduce something else, whether opposite to what precedes, or simply continuative or explanatory. Here it is designed to *continue* or *explain* the statement before made of his deep affection for the church, and his interest in its affairs. He therefore tells them that when he came to Troas, and was favoured there with great success, and was engaged in a manner most likely of all others to interest his feelings and to give him joy, yet he was deeply distressed because he had not heard, as he expected, from them; but so deep was his anxiety, that he left Troas, and went into Macedonia.

When I came to Troas. This was a city of Phrygia, or Mysia, on the Hellespont, between Troy on the north, and Asses on the south. **See Barnes "Ac 16:8"**.

It was on the regular route from Ephesus to Macedonia. Paul took that route because on his journey to Macedonia he had resolved, for the reasons above stated, not to go to Corinth.

To preach Christ's gospel. Greek, "For (*eiv*) the gospel of Christ;" that is, on account of his gospel; or to promote it. Why he selected Troas, or the region of the Troad, **See Barnes "Ac 16:8"**

as the field of his labours, he does not say. It is probable that he was waiting there to hear from Corinth by Titus, and while there he resolved not to be idle, but to make known as much as possible the gospel.

And a door was opened unto me. **See Barnes "1Co 16:9"**.

There was an opportunity of doing good, and the people were disposed to hear the gospel. This was a work in which Paul delighted to engage, and in which he usually found his highest comfort. It was of all things the most adapted to promote his happiness.

{a} "when I came to Troas" Ac 16:8 {b} "a door" 1Co 16:9

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *I had no rest in my spirit*. I was disappointed, sad, deeply anxious. Though the work in which I was engaged was that which usually gives me my highest joy, yet such was my anxiety to learn the state of things in Corinth, and the success of my letter, and to see Titus, whom I was expecting, that I had comparatively no peace, and no comfort.

But taking my leave of them. Though so many considerations urged me to stay; though there was such a promising field of labour, yet such was my anxiety to hear from you, that I left them.

I went from thence into Macedonia. **See Barnes "Ac 16:9"**.

I went over where I expected to find Titus, and to learn the state of your affairs. This is one of the few instances in which Paul left an inviting field of labour, and where there was a prospect of signal success, to go to another place. It is adduced *here* to show the deep interest which he had in the church at Corinth, and his anxiety to learn what was their condition. It shows that there may be cases where it is proper for ministers to leave a field of great and inviting usefulness, to go to another field, and to engage in another part of the great vineyard.

{c} "no rest in my spirit" 2Co 7:5,6

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Now thanks be unto God*, etc. There seem to have been several sources of Paul's joy on this occasion. The principal was his constant and uniform success in endeavouring to advance the interests of the kingdom of the Redeemer. But in particular he rejoiced,

(1.) because Titus had come to him there, and had removed his distress, compare 2Co 2:13;

(2.) because he learned from him that his efforts in regard to the church at Corinth had been successful, and that they had hearkened to his counsels in his first letter; and,

(3.) because he was favoured with signal success in Macedonia. His being compelled, therefore, to remove from Tress and to go to Macedonia had been to him ultimately the cause of great joy and consolation. These instances of success Paul regarded as occasions of gratitude to God.

Which always causeth us. Whatever may be our efforts, and wherever we are. Whether it is in endeavouring to remove the errors and evils existing in a particular church,, or whether it be in preaching the gospel in places where it has been unknown, still success crowns our efforts, and we have the constant evidence of Divine approbation. This was *Paul's* consolation in the midst of his many trials; and it proves that, whatever may be the external circumstances of a minister, whether

poverty, want, persecution, or distress, he will have abundant occasion to give thanks to God if his efforts as a minister are crowned with success.

To triumph in Christ. To triumph through the aid of Christ, or in promoting the cause of Christ. Paul had no joy which was not connected with Christ, and he had no success which he did not trace to him. The word which is here rendered *triumph* (*yriambeuonti*), from *yriambeuw* occurs in no other place in the New Testament, except in Col 2:15. It is there rendered "*triumphing* over them in it," that is, triumphing over the principalities and powers which he had spoiled, or plundered; and it there means that Christ led them in triumph after the manner of a conqueror. The word is here used in a causative sense—the sense of the Hebrew Hiphil conjugation. It properly refers to a triumph; or a triumphal procession. Originally the word *yriambov* meant a hymn which was sung in honour of Bacchus; then the tumultuous and noisy procession which constituted the worship of the god of wine; and then any procession of a similar kind.—*Passow*. It was particularly applied, among both the Greeks and the Romans, to a public and solemn honour conferred on a victorious general on a return from a successful war, in which he was allowed a magnificent entrance into the capital. In these triumphs, the victorious commander was usually preceded or attended by the spoils of war; by the most valuable and magnificent articles which he had captured; and by the princes, nobles, generals, or people whom he had subdued. The victor was drawn in a magnificent chariot, usually by two white horses. Other animals were sometimes used. "When Pompey triumphed over Africa, his chariot was drawn by elephants; that of Mark Antony by lions; that of Heliogabalus by tigers; and that of Aurelius by deer."—. *Clark*. The people of Corinth were not unacquainted with the nature of a triumph. About one hundred and forty-seven years before Christ, Lucius Mummius, the Roman consul, had conquered all Achaia, and had destroyed Corinth, Thebes, and Colchis, and by order of the Roman senate was favoured with a triumph, and was surnamed *Achaicus*. Tindal renders this place, "Thanks be unto God, which always giveth us the victory in Christ." Paul refers here to a victory which he had, and a triumph with which he was favoured by the Redeemer. It was a victory over the enemies of the gospel; it was success in advancing the interests of the kingdom of Christ; and he rejoiced in that victory, and in that success, with more solid and substantial joy than a Roman victor ever felt on returning from his conquests over nations, even when attended with the richest spoils of victory, and by humbled princes and kings in chains, and when the assembled thousands shouted *Io triumphe*!

And maketh manifest. Makes known; spreads abroad—as a pleasant fragrance is diffused through the air.

The savour. *osmhn*. The smell; the fragrance. The word in the New Testament is used to denote a pleasant or fragrant odour, as of incense or aromatics, Joh 12:3 Eph 5:2; Php 4:18.

There is an allusion here, doubtless, to the fact that in the triumphal processions fragrant odours were diffused around; flowers, diffusing a grateful smell, were scattered in the way; and on the altars of the gods incense was burned during the procession, and sacrifices offered, and the whole city was filled with the smoke of sacrifices, and with perfumes. So Paul speaks of *knowledge*—the knowledge of Christ. In his triumphings, the knowledge of the Redeemer was diffused abroad, like the odours which were diffused in the triumphal march of the conqueror. And that odour or savour was acceptable to God—as the fragrance of aromatics and of incense was pleasant in the triumphal procession of the returning victor. The phrase, "makes manifest the savour of his knowledge," therefore means, that the knowledge of Christ was diffused everywhere by Paul, as the grateful smell of aromatics was diffused all around the triumphing warrior and victor. The effect of Paul's

conquests everywhere was to diffuse the knowledge of the Saviour—and this was acceptable and pleasant to God— though there might be many who would not avail themselves of it, and would perish. See 2Co 2:15.

{d} "God, which always" {*} "savour" "odour" {a} "savour of his knowledge" So 1:3

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *For we are unto God*. We who are his ministers, and who thus triumph. It is implied here that Paul felt that ministers were labouring *for* God, and felt assured that their labours would be acceptable to him. The object of Paul in the statement, in this and in the following verses, is undoubtedly to meet the charges of his detractors and enemies, he says, therefore, that whatever was the result of his labours in regard to the future salvation of men, yet that his well-meant endeavours, and labours, and self-denials in preaching the gospel, were acceptable to God. The measure of God's approbation in the case was not his *success*, but his fidelity, his zeal, his self-denial, whatever might be the reception of the gospel among those who heard it.

A sweet savour. Like the smell, of pleasant incense, or of grateful aromatics, such as were burned in the triumphal processions of returning conquerors. The meaning is, that their labours were acceptable to God; he was pleased with them, and would bestow on them the smiles and proofs of his approbation. The word here rendered "sweet savour" (*euwdia* occurs only in this place, and in Eph 5:2; Php 4:18; and is applied to persons or things well-pleasing to God. It properly means good odour, or fragrance; and in the Septuagint it is frequently applied to the incense that was burnt in the public worship of God, and to sacrifices in general, Ge 8:21 Ex 29:18,25,41; Le 1:9,13,17 2:2,9,12 3:5,16 4:31, etc. Here it means that the services of Paul and the other ministers of religion were as grateful to God as sweet incense, or acceptable sacrifices.

Of Christ. That is, we are Christ's sweet savour to God; we are that which he has appointed, and which he has devoted and consecrated to God; we are the offering, so to speak, which he is continually making to God.

In them that are saved. In regard to them who believe the gospel through our ministry, and who are saved. Our labour in carrying the gospel to them, and in bringing them to the knowledge of the truth, is acceptable to God. Their salvation is an object of his highest desire, and he is gratified with our fidelity, and with our success. This reason why their work was acceptable to God is more fully stated in the following verse, where it is said that in reference to them they were the "savour of life unto life." The word "saved" here refers to all who become Christians, and who enter heaven; and as the salvation of men is an object of such desire to God, it cannot but be that all who bear the gospel to men are engaged in an acceptable serried, and that all their efforts will be pleasing to him, and approved in his sight. In regard to this part of Paul's statement there can be no difficulty.

And in them that perish. In reference to them who reject the gospel, and who are finally lost. It is implied here,

(1.) that some *would* reject the gospel and perish, with whatever fidelity and self-denial the ministers of religion might labour.

(2.) That though this would be the result, yet the labours of the ministers of religion would be acceptable to God. This is a fearful and awful declaration, and has been thought by many to be attended with difficulty. A few remarks may present the true sense of the passage, and remove the difficulty from it.

(1.) It is not affirmed or implied here that the destruction of those who would reject the gospel, and who would perish, was *desired* by God, or would be pleasing to him. This is nowhere affirmed or implied in the Bible.

(2.) It is affirmed only that the labours of the ministers of religion in endeavouring to save them would be acceptable and pleasing to God. Their labours would be in order to save them, not to destroy them. *Their* desire was to bring all to heaven—and this was acceptable to God. Whatever might be the result, whether successful or not, yet God would be pleased with self-denial, and toil, and prayer that was honestly and zealously put forth to save others from death. They would be approved by God in proportion to the amount of labour, zeal, and fidelity which they evinced.

(3.) It would be by no fault of faithful ministers that men would perish. Their efforts would be to save them, and those efforts would be pleasing to God.

(4.) It would be by no fault of the gospel that men would perish. The regular and proper tendency of the gospel is to save, not to destroy men; as the tendency of medicine is to heal them, of food to support the body, of air to give vitality, of light to give pleasure to the eye, etc. It is provided for all, and is adapted to all. There is a sufficiency in the gospel for all men, and in its nature it is as really fitted to save one as another. Whatever may be the manner in which it is received, it is always in itself the same pure and glorious system; full of benevolence and mercy. *The bitterest enemy of the gospel can, not point to one of its provisions that is adapted or designed to make men miserable, and to destroy them*. All its provisions are adapted to salvation; all its arrangements are those of benevolence; all the powers and influences which it originates, are those which are fitted to save, not to destroy men. The gospel is what it is in itself pure, holy, and benevolent system, and is answerable only for effects which a pure, holy, and benevolent system is fitted to produce. To use the beautiful language of Theodoret, as quoted by Bloomfield,

"We indeed bear the sweet odour of Christ's gospel to all;
but all who participate in it do not experience its
salutiferous effects. Thus to diseased eyes even the light
of heaven is noxious; yet the sun does not bring the injury.
And to those in a fever, honey is bitter; yet it is sweet,
nevertheless. Vultures too, it is said, fly from sweet
odours of myrrh; yet myrrh is myrrh, though the vultures
avoid it. Thus, if some be saved, though others perish, the
gospel retains its own virtue, and we the preachers of it
remain just as we are; and the gospel retains its odorous
and salutiferous properties, though some may disbelieve
and abuse it, and perish."

Yet

(5.) it is implied that the gospel would be the occasion of heavier condemnation to some, and that they would sink into deeper ruin in consequence of its being preached to them. This is implied in the expression in 2Co 2:16, "to the one we are a savour of death unto death." In the explanation of this we may observe,

(a.) that those who perish would have perished at any rate. All were under condemnation whether the gospel had come to them or not. None will perish in consequence of the gospel's having been sent to them who would not have perished had it been unknown. Men do not perish because the gospel is sent to them, but for their own sins.

(b.) It is in fact by their own fault that men reject the gospel, and that they are lost. They are voluntary in this; and, whatever is their final destiny, they are not under compulsion. The gospel compels no one against his will either to go to heaven or to hell.

(c.) Men under the gospel sin against greater light than they do without it. They have more to answer for. It increases their responsibility. If, therefore, they reject it, and go down to eternal death, they go from higher privileges; and they go, of course, to meet a more aggravated condemnation. For condemnation will always be in exact proportion to guilt; and guilt is in proportion to abused light and privileges.

(d.) The preaching of the gospel, and the offers of life, are often the occasion of the deeper guilt of the sinner. Often he becomes enraged. He gives vent to the deep malignity of his soul. He opposes the gospel with malice and infuriated anger, his eye kindles with indignation, and his lip curls with pride and scorn. He is profane and blasphemous; and the offering of the gospel to him is the occasion of exciting deep and malignant passions against God, against the Saviour, against the ministers of religion. Against the gospel men often manifest the same malignity and scorn which they did against the Saviour himself. Yet this is not the fault of the gospel, nor of the ministers of religion. It is the fault of sinners themselves; and while there can be no doubt that such a rejection of the gospel will produce their deeper condemnation, and that it is a savour of death unto death unto them, still the gospel is good and benevolent, and still God will be pleased with those who faithfully offer its provisions, and who urge it on the attention of men.

{b} "them that are save" 1Co 1:18

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *To the one*. To those who perish.

We are the savour of death unto death. We are the occasion of deepening their condemnation, and of sinking them lower into ruin. The expression here used means, literally, "to the one class we bear a death- conveying odour leading to their death"—a savour, a smell which, under the circumstances, is destructive to life, and which leads to death. Mr. Locke renders this, "To the one my preaching is of ill-savour, unacceptable and offensive, by their rejecting whereof they draw death on themselves." Grateful as their labours were to God, and acceptable as would be their efforts, whatever might be the results, yet Paul could not be ignorant that the gospel would in fact be the means of greater condemnation to many, **See Barnes "2Co 2:15"**.

It was indeed by their own fault; yet wherever the gospel was preached, it would to many have this result. It is probable that the language here used is borrowed from similar expressions which were common among the Jews. Thus in Debarim Rabba, &1, fol. 248, it is said, "As the bee brings home honey to the owner, but stings others, so it is with the words of the law." "They (the words of the law) are a savour of life to Israel, but a savour of death to the people of this world." Thus in

Taarieth, fol. 7, 1, "Whoever gives attention to the law on account of the law itself, to him it becomes an aromatic of life, (

HEBREW,) but to him who does not attend to the law on account of the law itself, to him it becomes an aromatic of death, (

HEBREW) the idea of which is, that as medicines skilfully applied will heal, but if unskillfully applied will aggravate a disease, so it is with the words of the law. Again, "The word of the law which proceeds out of the mouth of God is an odour of life to the Israelites, but an odour of death to the Gentiles." See Rosenmuller and Bloomfield. The sense of the passage is plain, that the gospel, by the wilful rejection of it, becomes the means of the increased guilt and condemnation of many of those who hear it.

And to the other. To those who embrace it, and are saved.

The savour of life. An odour, or fragrance producing life, or tending to life. It is a living, or life-giving savour. It is in itself grateful and pleasant.

Unto life. Tending to life; or adapted to produce life. The word life here, as often elsewhere, is used to denote salvation. It is life,

(1.) in opposition to the death in sin in which all are by nature;

(2.) in opposition to death in the grave—as it leads to a glorious resurrection;

(3.) in opposition to eternal death—to the second dying—as it leads to life and peace and hey in heaven. See the words "life" and "death" explained **See Barnes "Ro 6:23"**.

The gospel is "the savour of life unto life," because

(1.) it is its nature and tendency to produce life and salvation. It is adapted to that; and is designed to that end.

(2.) Because it actually results in the life and salvation of those who embrace it. It is the immediate and direct cause of their salvation; of their recovery from sin; of their glorious resurrection; of their eternal life in heaven.

And who is sufficient for these things? For the arduous and responsible work of the ministry; for a work whose influence must be felt either in the eternal salvation, or the eternal ruin of the soul. Who is worthy of so important a charge? Who can undertake it without trembling? Who can engage in it without feeling that he is in himself unfit for it, and that he needs constant Divine grace? This is an exclamation which any one may well make in view of the responsibilities of the work of the ministry. And we may remark,

(1.) if *Pau*l felt this, assuredly others should feel it also. If, with all the Divine assistance which he had—all the proofs of the peculiar presence of God, and all the mighty miraculous powers conferred on him—Paul had such a sense of unfitness for this great work, then a consciousness of unfitness, and a deep sense of responsibility, may well rest on all others.

(2.) It was this sense of the responsibility of the ministry, which contributed much to Paul's success. It was a conviction that the results of his work must be seen in the joys of heaven, or the woes of hell, that led him to look to God for aid, and to devote himself so entirely to his great work. Men will not feel much concern unless they have a deep sense of the magnitude and responsibility of their work. Men who feel as they should about the ministry will look to God for aid, and will feel that he alone can sustain them in their arduous duties.

{a} "To the one" Joh 9:39 1Pe 2:7,8

{*} "savour" "odour" {b} "who is sufficient"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 17

Verse 17.*For we are not as many*. This refers doubtless to the false teachers at Corinth; and to all who mingled human philosophy or tradition with the pure word of truth. Paul's design in the statement in this verse seems to be to affirm that he had such a deep sense of the responsibility of the ministerial office, and of its necessary influence on the eternal destiny of man, that it led him to preach the simple gospel, the pure word of God. He did not dare to dilute it with any human mixture, he did not dare to preach philosophy or human wisdom. He did not dare to mingle with it the crude conceptions of man. He sought to exhibit the simple truth as it was in Jesus; and so deep was his sense of the responsibility of the office, and so great was his desire on the subject, that he had been enabled to do it, and to triumph always in Christ. So that, although he was conscious that he was in himself unfit for these things, yet by the grace of God he had been able always to exhibit the simple truth, and his labours had been crowned with constant and signal success.

Which corrupt the word of God. Margin, "deal deceitfully with." The word here used (*kaphleuontev*) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, and does not occur in the Septuagint. The word is derived from *kaphlov*, which signifies, properly, a huckster, or a *retailer of wine*; a petty chapman; who buys up articles for the purpose of selling them again. it also means sometimes a vintner, or an innkeeper. The proper idea is that of a small dealer, and especially in wine. Such persons were notorious, as they, are now, for diluting their wines with water, (comp. Sept. in Isa. i. 22;) and for compounding wines of other substances than the juice of the grape, for purposes of gain. Wine, of all substances in trade, perhaps, affords the greatest facilities for such dishonest tricks; and accordingly the dealers in that article have generally been most distinguished for fraudulent practices and corrupt and diluted mixtures, hence the word comes to denote to adulterate, to corrupt, etc. It is here applied to those who adulterated or corrupted the pure word of God in any way, and for any purpose. It probably has particular reference to those who did it either by Judaizing opinions, or by the mixtures of a false and deceitful philosophy. The latter mode would be likely to prevail among the subtle and philosophizing Greeks. It is in such ways that the gospel has been usually corrupted.

(1.) It is done by attempting to attach a philosophical explanation to the facts of revelation, and making *the theory* as important as the *fact*.

(2.) By attempting to explain away the offensive, points of revelation by the aid of philosophy.

(3.) By attempting to make the facts of Scripture accord with the prevalent notions of philosophy, and by applying a mode of interpretation to the Bible which would fritter away its meaning, and make it mean anything or nothing at pleasure. In these, and in various other ways, men have corrupted the word of God; and of all the evils which Christianity has ever sustained in this world, the worst have been those which it has received from philosophy, and from those teachers who have corrupted the word of God. The fires of persecution it could meet, and still be pure; the utmost efforts of princes, and monarchs, and of Satan to destroy it, it has outlived, and has shone purely, and brightly amidst all these efforts; but, when corrupted by philosophy, and by "science falsely so called," it has been dimmed in its lustre, paralyzed in its aims, and shorn of its power, and has ceased to be mighty in pulling down the strongholds of Satan's kingdom. Accordingly, the enemy of God has ceased to excite persecution, and now aims in various ways to *corrupt* the gospel by the admixture of philosophy, and of human opinions. Tindal renders this passage, "For we are not

as many are which *choppe and chaunge* with the word of God"—an idea which is important and beautiful—but this is one of the few instances in which he mistook the sense of the original text. In general, the accuracy of his translation, and his acquaintance with the true sense of the Greek text, are very remarkable.

But as of sincerity. Sincerely; actuated by unmingled honesty and simplicity of aim. **See Barnes "2Co 1:12".**

As of God. As influenced by him; as under his control and direction; as having been sent by him; as acting by his command. **See Barnes "Ac 1:12".**

In the sight of God. As if we felt that his eye was always on us. Nothing is better fitted to make a man sincere and honest than this.

Speak we in Christ. In the name, and in the service of Christ, We deliver our message with a deep consciousness that the eye of the all-seeing God is on us; that we can conceal nothing from him; and that we must soon give up our account to him.

{1} "which corrupt" "deal deceitfully" 2Co 4:2 {+} "corrupt" "adulterate" {c} "sight of God" Heb 11:27 {2} "we in Christ" "of"

REMARKS on 2nd Corinthians Chapter 2.

(1.) In this chapter, and in the management of the whole case to which Paul here refers, we have an instance of his *tenderness* in administering discipline. This tenderness was manifested in many ways.

1st. He did nothing to wound the feelings of the offending party.

2nd. He did nothing in the way of punishment which a stern sense of duty did not demand.

3rd. He did it all with many tears. He wept at the necessity of administering discipline at all. He wept over the remissness of the church. He wept over the fall of the offending brother.

4th. He did not mention even the name of the offender. He did not blazon his faults abroad; nor has he left any clue by which it can be known; nor did he take any measures which were fitted to pain, unnecessarily, the feelings of his friends. If all discipline in the church were conducted in this manner, it would probably always be effectual and successful, 2Co 2:1-10.

(2.) We ought cordially to receive and forgive an offending brother, as soon as he gives evidence of repentance. We should harbour no malice against him; and if, by repentance, he has put away his sins, we should hasten to forgive him. This we should do as individuals, and as churches. God cheerfully forgives us, and receives us into favour on our repentance; and we should hail *the privilege* of treating all our offending brethren in the same manner, 2Co 2:7,8.

(3.) *Churches* should be careful that Satan should not get an advantage over them, 2Co 2:11. In every way possible he will attempt it; and perhaps in few modes is it more often done than in administering discipline. In such a case, Satan gains an advantage over a church in the following ways:

1st. In inducing it to *neglect* discipline. This occurs often because an offender is rich, or talented, or is connected with influential families; because there is a fear of driving off such families from the church; because the individual is of elevated rank, and the church suffers him to remain in her bosom. The laws of the church, like other laws, are often like cobwebs: great flies break through, and the smaller ones are caught. The consequence is, that Satan gains an immense advantage. Rich and influential offenders remain in the church; discipline is relaxed; the cause of Christ is scandalized; and the church at large feels the influence, and the work of God declines.

2nd. Satan gains an advantage in discipline, sometimes, by too great *severity* of discipline. If he cannot induce a church to relax altogether, and to suffer offenders to remain, then he excites them to improper and needless severity. He drives them on to harsh discipline for small offences. He excites a spirit of persecution. He enkindles a false zeal on account of the shibboleth of doctrine. He excites a spirit of party, and causes the church to mistake it for zeal for truth. He excites a spirit of persecution against some of the best men in the church, on account of pretended errors in doctrine, and kindles the flames of intestine war; and breaks the church up into parties and fragments. Or he urges on thee church, even in cases where discipline is proper, to needless and inappropriate severity; drives the offender from its bosom; breaks his spirit; and prevents ever onward his usefulness, his return, and his happiness. One of the chief arts of Satan has been to cause the church, in cases of discipline, to use *severity* instead of *kindness*; to excite a spirit of persecution instead of love. Almost all the evils which grow out of attempts at discipline might have been prevented by a spirit of LOVE.

3rd. Satan gains an advantage in cases of discipline, when the church is unwilling to re-admit to fellowship an offending but a penitent member. His spirit is broken; his usefulness is destroyed. The world usually takes sides with him against the church, and the cause of religion bleeds.

(4.) *Individual Christians*, as well as churches, should be careful that Satan does not get an advantage over them, 2Co 2:11. Among the ways in which he does this are the following:

1st. By inducing them to conform to the world. This is done under the plea that religion is not gloomy, and morose, and ascetic. Thence he often leads professors into all the gaieties, and amusements, and follies of which the world partake. Satan gains an immense advantage to his cause when this is done for all the influence of the professed Christian is with him.

2nd. By producing laxness of opinion in regard to doctrine. Christ intends that his cause shall advance by the influence of truth; and that his church shall be the witness of the truth. The cause of Satan advances by error and falsehood; and when professed Christians embrace falsehood, or are indifferent to truth, their whole influence is on the side of Satan, and his advantage is immense when they become the advocates of error.

3rd. By producing among Christians despondency, melancholy, and despair. Some of the best men are often thus afflicted and thrown into darkness, as Job was, Job 23:8,9. Indeed, it is commonly the best members of a church that have doubts in this manner, and that fall into temptation, and that are left to the buffetings of Satan. Your gay, and worldly, and fashionable Christians have usually no such troubles—except when they lie on a bed of death. They are not in the way of Satan. They do not oppose him, and he will not trouble them. It is your humble, praying, self-denying Christians that he dreads and hates; and it is these that he is suffered to tempt, and to make sad, and to fill with gloom and doubt. And when this is done, it is an immense advantage to his cause. It produces the impression that religion is nothing but gloom and melancholy, and the people of the world are easily led to hate and avoid it. Christians, therefore, *should* be cheerful, and benevolent, and happy—as they may be —lest Satan should get an advantage over them.

4th. By fanaticism. For when Satan finds that he can get no advantage over Christians by inducing them to do *nothing*, or to do anything positively wrong or immoral, he drives them on with over-heated and ill-timed zeal; he makes them unreasonably strenuous for some single opinion or measure; he disposes them to oppose and persecute all who do not fall into their views, and feel as they feel.

5th. By contentions and strifes. Satan often gets an advantage in that way. No matter what the cause may be, whether it be for doctrines, or for any other cause, yet the very fact that there are contentions among the professed followers of "the Prince of peace" does injury, and gives Satan an advantage. No small part of his efforts, therefore, have been to excite contentions among Christians—an effort in which he has been, and is still, eminently successful.

(5.) Satan gets an advantage over sinners, and *they* should be on their guard. He does it,

1st, by producing a sense of security in their present condition; and by leading them to indifference in regard to their eternal condition. In this he is eminently successful; and when this is gained, all is gained that his cause demands. It is impossible to conceive of greater success in anything than Satan has in producing a state of indifference to the subject of religion among men.

2nd. By inducing them to *defer* attention to religion to some future time. This is an advantage, because

(a.) it accomplishes all he wishes at present;

(b.) because it is usually successful altogether. It is usually the same thing as resolving not to attend to religion at all.

3rd. By producing false views of religion. He represents it at one time as gloomy, sad, and melancholy; at another, as so easy that it may be obtained whenever they please; at another, by persuading them that their sins are so great that they cannot be forgiven. One great object of Satan is to blind the minds of sinners to the true nature of religion; and in this he is usually successful.

4th. He deludes the aged by telling them it is too late; and the young by telling them that now is the time for mirth and pleasure, and that religion may be attended to at some future period of life.

5th. He gains an advantage by plunging the sinner deeper and deeper in sin; inducing him to listen to the voice of temptation; by making him the companion of the wicked; and by deluding him with the promises of pleasure, honour, and gain in this world until it is too late, and he dies.

(6.) Ministers of the gospel *may* have occasion to triumph in the success of their work. Paul always met with success of some kind; always had some cause of triumph. In all his trials, he had occasion of rejoicing, and always was assured that he was pursuing that course which would lead him ultimately to triumph, 2Co 2:14.

(7.) The gospel may be so preached as to be successful, 2Co 2:14. In the hands of Paul it was successful. So it was with the other apostles. So it was with Luther, Knox, Calvin. So it was with Whitefield, Edwards, Wesley, and Payson. If ministers are successful, it is not the fault of the gospel. It is adapted to do good, and to save men; and it may be so preached as to accomplish those great ends. If all ministers were as self-denying, and laborious, and prayerful as were these men, the gospel would be as successful now as it has ever been.

(8.) Much of the work of the ministry is pleasant and delightful. It is the savour of life unto life, 2Co 2:15,16. There is no joy on earth of a higher and purer character than that which the ministers of the gospel have in the success of their work. There is no work more pleasant than that of imparting the consolations of religion to the sick and the afflicted—than that of directing inquiring sinners to the Lamb of God; no joy on earth so pure and elevated as that which a pastor has in a revival of religion. In the evidence that God accepts his labours, and that to many his message is a savour of life unto life, there is a joy which no other pursuit can furnish a joy, even on earth, which is more than a compensation for all the toils, self-denials, and trials of the ministry.

9. In view of the *happy* and *saving* results of the work of the ministry, we see the importance of the work. Those results are to be seen in heaven. They are to enter into the eternal destiny of the righteous. They are to be seen in the felicity and holiness of those who shall be redeemed from death. The very happiness of heaven, therefore, is dependent on the fidelity and success of the ministry. This work stretches beyond the grave. It reaches into eternity. It is to be seen in heaven. Other plans and labours of men terminate at death. But the work of the ministry reaches in its results into the skies; and is to be seen ever onward in eternity. Well might the apostle ask, "Who is sufficient for these things ?"

10.) The ministers of the gospel will be accepted of God if faithful, whatever may be the result of their labours; whether seen in the salvation, or the augmented condemnation of those who hear them, 2Co 2:15. They are a sweet savour to God. Their acceptance with him depends not on the measure of their success, but on their fidelity. If men reject the gospel, and make it the occasion of their greater condemnation, the fault is not that of ministers, but is their own. If men are faithful, God accepts their efforts; and even if many reject the message and perish, still a-faithful ministry will not be to blame. That such results *should* follow from their ministry, indeed, increases their responsibility, and makes their office more awful, but it will not render them less acceptable in their labours in the sight of God.

(11.) We are to anticipate that the ministry will be the means of the deeper condemnation of many who hear the gospel, 2Co 2:16. The gospel is to them a savour of death unto death. We are to expect that many will reject and despise the message, and sink into deeper sin, and condemnation, and woe. We are not to be disappointed, therefore, when we see such effects follow, and when the sinner sinks into a deeper hell from under the ministry of the gospel. It always has been the case, and we have reason to suppose it always will be and painful as is the fact, yet ministers must make up their minds to witness this deeply painful result of their work.

(12.) The ministry is a deeply and awfully responsible work, 2Co 2:16. It is connected with the everlasting happiness, or the deep and eternal condemnation, of all those who hear the gospel. Every sermon that is preached is making an impression that will never be obliterated, and producing an effect that will never terminate. Its effects will never all be seen until the day of judgment, and in the awful solemnities of the eternal world. Well might Paul ask, "Who is sufficient for these things?

(13.) It is a solemn thing to hear the gospel. If it is solemn for a minister to dispense it, it is not less solemn to hear it. It is connected with the eternal welfare of those who hear. And thoughtless as are multitudes who hear it, yet it is deeply to affect them hereafter. If they ever embrace it, they will owe their eternal salvation to it; if they continue to neglect it, it will sink them deep and for ever in the world of woe. Every individual, therefore, who hears the gospel dispensed, no matter by whom, should remember that he is listening to God's solemn message to men; and that it will and must exert a deep influence on his eternal doom.

(14.) A people should pray much for a minister. Paul often entreated the churches to which he wrote to pray for him. If *Paul* needed the prayers of Christians, assuredly Christians now do. Prayer for a minister is demanded because,

1st, he has the same infirmities, conflicts, and temptations which other Christians have.

2nd. He has those which are *peculiar*, and which grow out of the very nature of his office; for the warfare of Satan is carried on mainly with the leaders of the army of God.

3rd. He is engaged in a great and most responsible work—the greatest work ever committed to mortal man.

4th. His success will be generally in proportion as a people pray for him. The welfare of a people, therefore, is identified with their praying for their minister. He will preach better, and they will hear better, just in proportion as they pray for him. His preaching will be dull, dry, heavy—will be without unction, spirituality, and life—unless they pray for him; and their hearing will be dull, lifeless, and uninterested, unless they pray for him. No people will hear the gospel to much advantage who do not feel anxiety enough about it to pray for their minister.

(15.) The interview between a minister and his people in the day of judgment will be a very solemn one. Then the effect of his ministry will be seen. Then it will be known to whom it was a savour of life unto life, and to whom it was a savour of death unto death. Then the eternal destiny of all will be settled. Then the faithful minister will be attended to heaven by all to whom his ministry has been a savour of life unto life; and then he will part for ever with all whom he so often warned and entreated in vain. In distant worlds—worlds for ever separated—shall be experienced the result of his labours. Oh, how solemn must be the scene when he must give up his account for the manner in which he has preached, and they for the manner in which they attended on his ministry!

(16.) Let all ministers, then, be careful that they do not corrupt. the word of God, 2Co 2:17. Let them preach it in simplicity and in truth. Let them not preach philosophy, or metaphysics, or their own fancy, or the tradition of men, or the teaching of the schools; but the simple truth as it is in Jesus. Let them preach as sent *by* God; as in the sight of God; as commissioned by Christ to deliver a simple, plain, pure message to mankind, whether they will hear or forbear. Their *success* will be in proportion to the simplicity and purity of the gospel which they present; their peace and joy in death and in heaven will be just as they shall have evidence then that in simplicity and sincerity they have endeavoured to present everywhere, and to all, the pure and simple gospel of Jesus Christ. As ministers, therefore, desire acceptance with God and success in the work, let them preach the pure gospel; not adulterating it with foreign admixtures; not endeavouring to change it so as to be palatable to the carnal mind; not substituting philosophy for the gospel, and not withholding anything in the gospel because men do not love it; and let the people of God everywhere sustain the ministry by their prayers, and aid them in their work by daily commending them to the God of grace. So shall they be able to perform the solemn functions of their office to Divine acceptance; and so shall ministers and people find the gospel to be "a savour of life unto life."

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 1

Introduction to 2nd Corinthians Chapter 3

THIS chapter is closely connected in its design with the preceding. Paul had said in that chapter, (

@@Co 2:14,) that he had always occasion to triumph in the success which, he had, and that God always blessed his labours; and especially had spoken, in the close of the previous chapter, (2Co 2:17,) of his sincerity as contrasted with the conduct of some who corrupted the word of God. This *might* appear to some as if he designed to commend himself to them, or that he had said this for the purpose of securing their favour. It is probable, also, that the false teachers at Corinth had been introduced there by letters of recommendation, perhaps from Judea. In reply to this, Paul intimates (2Co 3:1) that this was not his design; 2Co 3:2 that he had no need of letters of recommendation to them, since (2Co 3:2,3) they were his commendatory epistle; they were themselves the best evidence of his zeal, fidelity, and success in his labours. He could appeal to them as the best proof that he was qualified for the apostolic office. His success among them, he says, (2Co 3:4,) was a ground of his trusting in God, an evidence of his acceptance. Yet, as if he should seem to rely on his own strength, and to boast of what he had done, he says (2Co 3:5) that his success was not owing to any strength which he had, or to any skill of his own, but entirely to the aid which he had received from God. It was God, he says, (2Co 3:6,) who had qualified him to preach, and had given him grace to be an able minister of the New Testament.

It is not improbable that the false teachers, being of Jewish origin, in Corinth, had commended the laws and institutions of Moses as being of superior clearness, and even as excelling the gospel of Christ. Paul takes occasion, therefore, (2Co 3:7-11,) to show that the laws and institutions of Moses were far inferior, in this respect, to the gospel. His was a ministration of death, (2Co 3:7;) though glorious, it was to be done away, (2Co 3:7;) the ministration of the Spirit was therefore to be presumed to be far more glorious, (2Co 3:8;) the one was a ministration to condemnation, the other of righteousness, (2Co 3:9;) the one had comparatively no glory, being so much surpassed by the other, (2Co 3:10;) and the former was to be done away, while the latter was to remain, and was therefore far more glorious, 2Co 3:11.

This statement of the important difference between the laws of Moses and the gospel is further illustrated, by showing the *effect* which the institutions of Moses had had on the Jews themselves, (2Co 3:12-15.) That effect was to blind them. Moses had put a veil over his face, (2Co 3:13;) and the effect had been that the nation was blinded in reading the Old Testament, and had no just views of the true meaning of their own Scriptures, 2Co 3:14,15.

Yet, Paul says, that that veil should be taken away, 2Co 3:16-18. It was the *intention* of God that it should be removed. When that people should turn again to the Lord, it should be taken away, 2Co 3:16. It was done where the Spirit of the Lord *was*, 2Co 3:17. It was done, *in fact*, in regard to all true Christians, 2Co 3:18. They were permitted to behold the glory of the Lord as in a glass, and they were changed into the same manner. The same subject is continued in 2Co 4, where Paul illustrates the *effect* of this clear revelation of the gospel, as compared with the institutions of Moses, on the Christian ministry.

Verse 1. *Do we begin again*. This is designed evidently to meet an objection. He had been speaking of his triumph in the ministry, (2Co 2:14,) and of his sincerity and honesty as contrasted with the conduct of many who corrupted the word of God, 2Co 2:17. It might be objected that he was magnifying *himself* in these statements, and designed to commend himself in this manner to the Corinthians. To this he replies in the following verses.

To commend ourselves? To recommend ourselves; do we speak this in our own praise, in order to obtain your favour?

Or need we, as some others. Probably some who had brought letters of recommendation to them from Judea. The false teachers at Corinth had been originally introduced there by commendatory letters from abroad. These were letters of introduction, and were common among the Greeks, the Romans, and the Jews, as they are now. They were usually given to persons who were about to travel, as there were no inns, and as travellers were dependent on the hospitality of those among whom they travelled.

Of commendation from you? To other churches. It is implied here by Paul, that he sought no such letters; that he travelled without them; and that he depended on his zeal, and self-denial, and success to make him known, and to give him the affections of those to whom he ministered —a much better recommendation than mere introductory letters. Such letters were, however, sometimes given by Christians, and are by no means improper, Ac 18:27. Yet they do not appear to have been sought or used by the apostles generally. They depended on their miraculous endowments, and on the attending grace of God to make them known,

{a} "commend ourselves" 2Co 5:12 {b} "epistles of commendation" Ac 18:27

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Ye are our epistle*. Comp. 1Co 9:2. This is a most beautiful and happy turn given to the whole subject. The sense is plain. It is, that the conversion of the Corinthians, under the faithful labours of the apostle, was a better testimonial of his character and fidelity than any letters could be. To see the force of this, it must be remembered,.

(1.) that Corinth was an exceedingly dissolute and abandoned place, (see the Introduction to the first epistle;)

(2.) that a large number of them had been converted, and a church organized;

(3.) that their conversion, and the organization of a church in *such* a city, were events that would be known abroad; and

(4.) that it had been accomplished entirely under the labour of Paul and his companions. To their knowledge of him, therefore, and to his success there, he could confidently appeal as a testimonial of his character. The *characteristics* of this commendatory epistle he proceeds immediately to state. The general sense is, that they were the letter of recommendation which God had given to him; and that their conversion under his ministry was the public testimonial of his character, which all might see and read.

Written in our hearts. A few Mss. and versions read thus, " your hearts;" and Doddridge has adopted this reading, and supposes that it means that the change produced not only in their external conduct, but in their inward temper, was so great, that all must see that it was an unanswerable attestation to his ministry. But there is not sufficient authority for changing the text; nor is it necessary. The sense is, probably, that this letter was, as it were, written on *his* heart. It was not merely that Paul had a tender affection for them, as Clarke supposes; nor was it that he regarded them as "a copy of the letter of recommendation from Christ written in his heart," according to the

fanciful conceit of Macknight; but Paul's idea seems to have been this: He is speaking of the testimonial which he had from God. That testimonial consisted in the conversion of the Corinthians. This he says was written on his heart. It was not a cold letter of introduction, but it was such as, while it left him no room to doubt that God had sent him, also affected his feelings, and was engraven on his soul. It was to him, therefore, far more valuable than any mere letter of commendation or of introduction could be. It was a direct testimonial from God to his own heart of his approbation, and of his having appointed him to the apostolic office. All the difficulty, therefore, which has been felt by commentators on this passage, may be obviated by supposing that Paul here speaks of this testimonial or epistle as addressed to *himself*, and as satisfactory to *him*. In the other characteristics which he enumerates, he speaks of it as fitted to be a letter commendatory *of* himself to others.

Known and read of all men. Corinth was a large, splendid, and dissipated city. Their conversion, therefore, would be known afar. All men would hear of it; and their reformation, their subsequent life under the instruction of Paul, and the attestation which God had given among them to his labours, was a sufficient testimonial to the world at large, that God had called him to the apostolic office.

{a} "Ye are our epistle" 1Co 9:2

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared*. You are made manifest as the epistle of Christ; or you, being made manifest, are the epistle, etc. They had been made manifest to be such by their conversion. The sense is, It is plain, or evident, that ye are the epistle of Christ.

To be the epistle of Christ. That which Christ has sent to be our testimonial, he has given this letter of recommendation. He has converted you by our ministry, and that is the best evidence which we can have that we have been sent by him, and that our labour is accepted by him. Your conversion is his work, and it is his public attestation to our fidelity in his cause.

Ministered by us. The idea here is, that Christ had employed their ministry in accomplishing this. They were Christ's letter, but it had been prepared by the instrumentality of the apostles. It had not been prepared by him independently of their labours, but in connexion with, and as the result of, those labours. Christ, in writing this epistle, so to speak, has used our aid; or employed us as amanuenses.

Written not with ink. Paul continues and varies the image in regard to this "epistle," so that he may make the testimony borne to his fidelity and success more striking and emphatic, he says, therefore, that it was not written as letters of introduction are, with ink—by traces drawn on a lifeless substance, and in lines that easily fade, or that may become easily illegible, or that can be read only by a few, or that may be soon destroyed.

But with the Spirit of the living God. In strong contrast thus with letters written with ink. By the Spirit of God moving on the heart, and producing that variety of graces which constitute so striking and so beautiful an evidence of your conversion. If written by the Spirit of the living God, it was far more valuable, and precious, and permanent, than any record which could be made by ink. Every trace of the Spirit's influences on the heart was an undoubted proof that God had sent

the apostles; and was a proof which they would much more sensibly and tenderly feel than they could any letter of recommendation written in ink.

Not in tables of stone. It is generally admitted that Paul here refers to the evidences of the Divine mission of Moses which was given by the law engraven on tablets of stone. Comp. 2Co 3:7. Probably those who were false teachers among the Corinthians were Jews, and had insisted much on the Divine origin and permanency of the Mosaic institutions. The law had been engraven on stone by the hand of God himself; and had thus the strongest proofs of Divine origin, and the Divine attestation to its pure and holy nature. To this fact the friends of the law, and the advocates for the permanency of the Jewish institutions, would appeal. Paul says, on the other hand, that the testimonials of the Divine favour through him were not on tablets of stone. *They* were frail, and easily broken. There was no life in them, (comp. 2Co 3:6,7;) and valuable and important as they were, yet they could not be compared with the testimonials which God had given to those who successfully preached the gospel.

But in fleshy tables of the heart. In truths engraven on the heart. This testimonial was of more value than an inscription on stone, because

(1.) no hand but that of God could reach the heart, and inscribe these truths there.

(2.) Because it would be attended with a life-giving and living influence. It was not a mere dead letter.

(3.) Because it would be permanent. Stones, even where laws were engraven by the finger of God, would moulder and decay, and the inscription made there would be destroyed. But not so with that which was made on the heart. It would live for ever. It would abide in other worlds. It would send its influence into all the relations of life; into all future scenes in this world; and that influence would be seen and felt: in the world that shall never end. By all these considerations, therefore, the testimonials which Paul had of the Divine approbation were more valuable than any mere letters of introduction or human commendation could have been; and more valuable even than the attestation which was given to the divine mission of Moses himself.

{b} "tables of stone" Ex 24:12 {c} "fleshy tables" Jer 31:33 Eze 11:19

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And such trust have we*. Such confidence have we that we are appointed by God, and that he accepts our work. Such evidence have we in the success of our labours—such irrefragable proof that God blesses us—that we have trust, or confidence, that we are sent by God, and are owned by him in our ministry. His confidence did not rest on letters of introduction from men, but in the evidence of the Divine Presence, and the Divine acceptance of his work.

Through Christ. By the agency of Christ. Paul had no success which he did not trace to him; he had no joy of which he was not the source; he had no confidence, or trust in God, of which Christ was not the author; he had no hope of success in his ministry which did not depend on him.

To Godward. Toward God; in regard to God. *prov ton yeon*. Our confidence relates to God. It is confidence that he has appointed us, and sent us forth; and confidence that he will still continue to own and to bless us.

{*} "trust"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Not that we are sufficient of ourselves*. This is evidently designed to guard against the appearance of boasting, or of self-confidence. He had spoken of his confidence; of his triumph; of his success; of his undoubted evidence that God had sent him. He here says, that he did not mean to be understood as affirming that any of his success came from himself, or that he was able by his own strength to accomplish the great things which had,. been effected by his ministry. He well knew that he had no such self-sufficiency; and he would, not insinuate, in the slightest manner, that he believed himself to be invested with any such power. **See Barnes "Joh 15:5"**.

To think any thing. *logisasyai ti*. The word here used means, properly, to reason, think, consider; and then to reckon, count to, or *impute* to any one. It is the word which is commonly rendered impute. See it explained more fully **See Barnes "Ro 4:1"**.

Robinson (*Lexicon*) renders it in this place, "To reason out, to think out, to find out by thinking." Doddridge renders it, "To reckon upon anything as from ourselves." Whitby renders it, "To reason;" as if the apostle had said, We are unable by any reasoning of our own to bring men to conversion. Macknight gives a similar sense. Locke renders it, "Not as if I were sufficient of myself, to reckon upon anything as from myself;" and explains it to mean that Paul was not sufficient of himself, by any strength of natural parts, to attain the knowledge of the gospel truths which he preached. The word may be rendered here, to reckon, reason, think, etc.; *but it should be confined to the immediate subject under consideration*. It does not refer to thinking in general; or to the power of thought on any, and on all subjects—however true it may be in itself; but to the preaching the gospel. And the expression may be regarded as referring to the following points, which are immediately under discussion:

(1.) Paul did not feel that he was sufficient of himself to have *reasoned* or *thought out* the truths of the gospel. They were communicated by God.

(2.) He had no power by reasoning to convince or convert sinners. That was all of God.

(3.) He had no right to reckon on success by any strength of his own. All success was to be traced to God. It is, however, also true, that all our powers of thinking and reasoning are from God; and that we have no ability to think clearly, to reason calmly, closely, and correctly, unless he shall preside over our minds and give us clearness of thought. How easy is it for God to disarrange all our faculties, and produce insanity! How easy to suffer our minds to become unsettled, bewildered, and distracted with a multiplicity of thoughts! How easy to cause everything to appear cloudy, and dark, and misty! How easy to affect our *bodies* with weakness, languor, disease, and through them to destroy all power of close and consecutive thought! No one who considers on how many things the power of dose thinking depends, can doubt that all our sufficiency in this is from God; and that we owe to him every clear idea on the subjects of common life, and on scientific subjects, no less certainly than we do in the truths of religion. Comp. the case of Bezaleel and Aholiab in common arts, Ex 31:1-6 Job 32:8.

{a} "sufficient of ourselves" Joh 15:5 {b} "but our sufficiency" 1Co 15:10 Php 2:13

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Who also hath made us able ministers*, etc. This translation does not *quite* meet the force of the original. It would seem to imply that Paul regarded himself and his fellow-labourers as men of talents, and of signal ability; and that he was inclined to boast of it. But this is not the meaning. It refers properly to his sense of the responsibility and difficulty of the work of the ministry, and to the fact that he did not esteem himself to be sufficient for this work in his own strength, (2Co 2:16 3:5;) and he here says that God had made him *sufficient*—not able, talented, learned, but sufficient, (*ikanwsen hmav*;) he has supplied our deficiency; he has rendered us competent, or fit: if a word may be coined after the manner of the Greek here, "he has *sufficienced* us for this work."' There is no assertion therefore, here, that they were men of talents or peculiar ability, but only that God had qualified them for their work, and made them by his grace sufficient to meet the toils and responsibilities of this arduous office.

Of the new testament. Of the new covenant, **See Barnes** "Mt 21:28, in contradistinction from the old covenant, which was established through Moses. They were appointed to go forth and make the provisions of that new covenant known to a dying world.

Not of the letter. Not of the literal or verbal meaning, in contradistinction from the spirit. **See Barnes** "Ro 2:27, **See Barnes "Ro 2:29"**; **See Barnes** "Ro 7:6".

This is said, doubtless, in opposition to the Jews and Jewish teachers. They insisted much on the letter of the law, but entered little into its real meaning. They did not seek out the true spiritual sense of the Old Testament; and hence they rested on the mere literal observance of the rites and ceremonies of religion, without understanding their true nature and design. Their service, though in many respects conformed to the letter of the law, yet became cold, formal, and hypocritical; abounding in mere ceremonies, and where the heart had little to do. Hence there was little pure spiritual worship offered to God; and hence also they rejected the Messiah whom the old covenant prefigured, and was designed to set forth.

For the letter killeth. Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 4:15"**; **See Barnes "Ro 7:9,10"**.

The mere letter of the law of Moses. The effect of it was merely to produce condemnation; to produce a sense of guilt, and danger, and not to produce pardon, relief, and joy. The law denounced death; condemned sin in all forms; and the effect of it was to produce a sense of guilt and condemnation.

But the spirit giveth life. The spirit, in contradistinction front the mere literal interpretation of the Scriptures. The Spirit, that is, Christ, says Locke. Comp. 2Co 3:17. The spirit here means, says Bloomfield, that new spiritual system, the gospel. The Spirit of God speaking in us, says Doddridge. The spirit here seems to refer to the new testament, or the new dispensation, in contradistinction from the old. That was characterized mainly by its strictness of law, and by its burdensome rites, and by the severe tone of its denunciation for sin. It did not in itself provide a way of pardon and peace. Law condemns; it does not speak of forgiveness. On the contrary, the gospel, a spiritual system, is designed to impart life and comfort to the soul. It speaks peace. It comes not to condemn, but to save. It discloses a way of mercy, and it invites all to partake and live. It is called "spirit," probably because its consolations are imparted and secured by the Spirit of God—the source of all true life to the soul. It is the dispensation of the Spirit; and it demands a spiritual service—a service

that is free, and elevated, and tending eminently to purify the heart and to save the soul. **See Barnes "2Co 3:17".**

{c} "able ministers" Eph 3:7 1Ti 1:12 {d} "the new testament" Mt 26:28 He 8:6-10 {e} "but of the spirit" Ro 2:28,29 {f} "letter killeth" Ro 4:15 7:9,10

{g} "spirit giveth" Joh 6:63 Ro 8:2 {1} "giveth life" "quickeneth"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *But if the ministration of death*. In the previous verses, Paul had referred incidentally to the institutions of Moses, and to the superiority of the gospel. He had said that the former were engraven on stones, but the latter on the heart, (2Co 3:3;) that the letter of the former tended to death, but the latter to life, (2Co 3:6.) This sentiment he proceeds further to illustrate, by showing in what the superior glory of the gospel consisted. The *design* of the whole is to illustrate the nature and to show the importance of the ministerial office, and the manner in which the duties of that office were to be performed. That the phrase "ministration of death" refers to the Mosaic institutions, the connexion sufficiently indicates, 2Co 3:13-15. The word "ministration" (*diakonia*) means, properly, ministry; the office of ministering in Divine things. It is usually applied to the officers of the church in the New Testament, Ac 1:17,25; Ro 11:13 1Co 12:5.

The word here, however, seems to refer to the whole arrangement, under the Mosaic economy, by which his laws were promulgated and perpetuated. The expression, "ministrations— written and engraven on stone," is somewhat harsh; but the sense evidently is, the ministration of a covenant, or of laws, written on stones, The word "ministration"' there refers to the arrangement, office, etc., by which the knowledge of these laws was maintained; the *ministering* under a system like that of the Jewish; or, *more strictly*, the act and occasion on which Moses himself ministered, or promulgated that System to the Jews, and when the glory of the work was irradiated even from his countenance. And the purpose of the apostle is to show that the ministry of the gospel is more glorious than even the ministry of Moses, when he was admitted near to God on the holy mount; and when such a glory attended his receiving and promulgating the law. It is called the "ministration of death,"' because it tended to condemnation; it did not speak of pardon; it was fitted only to deepen the sense of sin, and to produce alarm and dread. **See Barnes** "2Co 3:6.

Written and engraven in stones. The ten commandments—the substance of all the Mosaic institutes, and the principal laws of his economy— were written, or engraven, on tables of stone.

Was glorious. Was attended with magnificence and splendour. The glory here referred to consisted in the circumstance of sublimity and grandeur in which the law of Moses was given. It was

(1.) the glory of God, as he was manifested on Mount Sinai, as the Lawgiver and Ruler of the people.

(2.) The glory of the attending circumstances, of thunder, fire, etc., in which God appeared. The law was given in these circumstances. *Its giving*—called here the "ministration"—was amidst such displays of the glory of God. It was

(3.) a high honour and glory for Moses to be permitted to approach so near to God; to commune with him; and to receive at his hand the law for his people, and for the world. These were circumstances of imposing majesty and grandeur, which, however, Paul says were eclipsed and surpassed by the ministry of the gospel.

So that the children of Israel, etc. In Ex 34:29,30, it is said, that "when Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone, while he talked with him. And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him." The word rendered "stedfastly behold" (*atenisai*) means, to gaze intently upon; to look steadily, or constantly, or fixedly. **See Barnes "Ac 1:10"**.

There was a dazzling splendour, an irradiation; a diffusion of light, such that they could not look intently and steadily upon it—as we cannot look steadily at the sun. *How* this was produced is not known. It cannot be accounted for from natural causes; and was doubtless designed to be to the Israelites an attestation that Moses had been with God, and was commissioned by him. They would see

(1.) that it was unnatural, such as no known cause could produce; and,

(2.) not improbably, they would recognise a resemblance to the manner in which God usually appeared—the glory of the Shechinah in which he so frequently manifested himself to them. It would be to them, therefore, a demonstration that Moses had been with God.

Which glory was to be done away. The splendour of that scene was transitory. It did not last. It was soon destroyed, (*thn katargoumenhn*). It was not adapted or designed long to continue. This does not mean, as Doddridge supposes, "soon to be abolished in death;" or, as others, "ceasing with youth;" but it means, that the shining or the splendour was transitory; it was soon to cease; it was not designed to be permanent. Neither the wonderful scenes accompanying the giving of the law on Sinai, nor the shining on the countenance of Moses, was designed to abide. The thunders of Sinai would cease to roll; the lightnings to play; the visible manifestations of the presence of God would all be gone; and the supernatural illumination of the face of Moses also would soon cease—*perhaps* as Macknight, Bloomfield, and others suppose, as a prefiguration of the abrogation of the glory of the whole system of the Levitical law. Paul certainly means to say, that the glory of Moses, and of his dispensation, was a fading glory; but that the glory of the gospel would be permanent, and increasing for ever.

{*} "children of Israel" "Israelites" {a} "for the glory" Ex 34:1,29-35

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *How shall not the ministration of the Spirit*. This is an argument from the less to the greater. Several things in it are worthy of notice.

(1.) The proper contrast to the "ministration of death," (2Co 3:7,) would have been "ministration of life." But Paul chose rather to call it the "ministration of the Spirit "—as the source of life, or as conferring higher dignity on the gospels than to have called it simply the ministration of life.

(2.) By the "Spirit" here is manifestly meant the Holy Spirit; and the whole phrase denotes the gospel, or the preaching of the gospel, by which eminently the Holy Spirit is imparted.

(3.) It is the high honour of the gospel ministry, that it is the means by which the Holy Spirit is imparted to men. It is designed to secure the salvation of men by his agency; and-it is through the ministry that the Holy Spirit is imparted, the heart renewed, and the soul saved. The work of the ministry is, therefore, the most important and honourable in which man can engage.

Be rather glorious?

(1.) Because that of Moses tended to death; this to life.

(2.) Because that was engraven on stone; this is engraven on the heart.

(3.) Because that was the mere giving of a law; this is connected with the renovating influences of the Holy Spirit.

(4.) Because that was soon to pass away. All the magnificence of the scene was soon to vanish. But this is to remain. Its influence and effect are to be everlasting. It is to stretch into eternity; and its main glory is to be witnessed in souls renewed and saved, and amidst the splendours of heaven. "The work of the Spirit of God on the heart of a rational being, is much more important than any dead characters which can be engraved on insensible stones."—Doddridge.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *For if the ministration of condemnation*. Of Moses, in giving the law, the effect of which is to produce condemnation. Law condemns the guilty; it does not save them. It denounces punishment; it contains no provisions of pardon. To *pardon* is to depart from the law; and must be done under the operation of another system—since a law which contains a provision for the pardon of offenders, and permits them to escape, would be a burlesque in legislation. The tendency of the Mosaic institutions, therefore, was to produce a sense of condemnation. And so it will be found by all who attempt to be justified by the law. It will tend to, and result in their condemnation.

Be glory. Be glorious; or be glory itself. It was glorious as a manifestation of the holiness and justice of God; and glorious in the attending circumstances. No event in our world has been more magnificent in the circumstances of external majesty and splendour than the giving of the law on Mount Sinai.

The ministration of righteousness. The gospel; the promulgation of the plan of mercy. It is called "the ministration of righteousness," in contradistinction from the law of Moses, which was a "ministration of condemnation." The word " righteousness," however, does not exactly express the force of the original word. That word is *dikaiosunhv*, and it stands directly opposed to the word *katakrisewv*, condemnation. It should be rendered, "the ministration of *justification*;" the plan by which God justifies men. **See Barnes "Ro 1:17"**.

The law of Moses *condemns*; the gospel is the plan by which man is justified. And if that which *condemns* could be glorious, much more must that be by which men can be justified, acquitted, and saved. The superior glory of the gospel, therefore, consists in the fact that it is a scheme to justify and save lost sinners. And this glory consists,

(1.) in *the fact* that it can be done when all law condemns.

(2.) In the showing forth of the Divine character while it is done, as just, and merciful, and benevolent in doing it—blending all his great and glorious attributes together; while the law discloses only *one* of his attributes—his justice.

(3.) In the *manner* in which it is done. It is by the incarnation of the Son of God—a far more glorious manifestation of Deity than was made on Mount Sinai. It is by the toils, and sufferings, and death of Him who made the atonement, and by the circumstances of awful and imposing grandeur which attended his death, when the sun was darkened, and the rocks were rent—far more grand and awful scenes than occurred when the law was given. It is by the resurrection and ascension of the Redeemer—scenes far more sublime than all the external glories of Sinai when the law was given.

(4.) In the *effects*, or results. The one condemns; the other justifies and saves. The effect of the one is seen in the convictions of conscience, in alarm, in a sense of guilt, in the conscious desert of condemnation, and in the apprehension of eternal punishment. The other is seen in sins forgiven; in peace of conscience; in the joy of pardon; in the hope of heaven; in comfort and triumph on the bed of death, and amidst the glories of heaven.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *For even that which was made glorious*. *to dedoxasmenon*. That was splendid, excellent, or glorious. This refers, doubtless, to the laws and institutions of Moses, especially to the primary giving of the law. Paul does not deny that it had an honour and majesty such, in some respects, as the Jews claimed for it. It was glorious in the manner in which it was given; it was glorious in the purity of the law itself; and it was glorious, or splendid, in the magnificent and imposing ritual in which the worship of God was celebrated. But all this was surpassed in the brighter glory of the gospel.

Had no glory. Greek, Was not glorious, or splendid, (*oude dedoxastai*.) Had comparatively no glory, or splendour. Its glory was all eclipsed. It was like the splendour of the moon and stars compared with the bright light of the sun.

By reason of the glory that excelleth. In the gospel; in the incarnation, life, sufferings, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus; in the pardon of sin; in the peace and joy of the believer; and in the glories of the heavenly world to which the gospel elevates dying men.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *For if that which is done away*, etc. The splendour that attended the giving of the law; the bright shining of the face of Moses; and the ritual institutions of his religion. It was *to be* done away. It was never designed to be permanent. Everything in it had a transient existence, and was so designed. Yet it was attended, Paul admits, with much that was magnificent and splendid,

He had, in the previous verses, stated several important differences between the law and the gospel, he here states another. The law he calls (*to katargoumenon*) *the* thing which was to be made to cease; to be put an end to; to be done away with; to be abolished. It had no permanency; and it was designed to have none. Its glory, therefore, great as in many respects it might be, could not be compared with that which was to be permanent— as the light of the stars fades away at the rising sun. It is implied here, that it was originally designed that the Mosaic institutions should not be permanent; that they should be mere shadows and types of better things; and that when the things which they adumbrated should appear, the shadows would vanish of course. This idea is one which prevails everywhere in the New Testament, and which the sacred writers are often at great pains to demonstrate.

Was glorious. Greek, *By glory*. *dia doxhv*. That is, it was attended by glory; it was introduced by glory, it was encompassed with glory when it was established. The idea here is, not that it was glorious *in itself*, but that it was accompanied with splendour and majesty.

That which remaineth. The gospel, (*to menon*.) The thing that is to remain; that is permanent, abiding, perpetual; that has no principle of decay; and whose characteristic it is, that it is everlasting. The gospel is permanent, or abiding,

(1.) because it is designed to remain immutable through the remotest ages. It is not to be superseded by any new economy or institution. It is *the* dispensation under which the affairs of the world are to be wound up, and under which the world is to close. **See Barnes "1Co 15:51"**.

(2.) Its effects on the heart are permanent. It is complete in itself. It is not to be succeeded by any other system, and it looks to no other system in order to complete or perfect its operations on the soul.

(3.) Its effects are to abide for ever. They will exist in heaven. They are to be seen in the soul that shall be recovered from sin, and that shall be glorious in the bosom of God for ever and ever. The Mosaic system—glorious as it was—shall be remembered as *introducing* the gospel; the gospel shall be remembered as directly fitting for heaven. Its most great and glorious results shall be seen in the permanent and eternal joys of heaven. The gospel contemplates a great, permanent, and eternal good, adapted to all ages, all climes, all people, and all worlds. It is, therefore, so much more glorious than the limited, temporary, and partial good of the Mosaic system, that that may be said in comparison to have had no glory.

{b} "if that" Ro 5:20,21

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Seeing then that we have such hope*. Hope properly is a compound emotion, made up of a *desire* for an object, and an expectation of obtaining it. If there is no desire for it, or if the object is not pleasant and agreeable, there is no hope, though there may be expectation -as in the expectation of the pestilence, of famine, or sickness, or death. If there is no expectation of it, but a strong desire, there is no hope, as in eases where there is a strong desire of wealth, or fame, or pleasure; or where a man is condemned for murder, and has a strong desire, but no prospect of pardon; or where a man is shipwrecked, and has a strong desire, but no expectation of again seeing

his family and friends. In such cases, despondency or despair is the result. It is the union of the two feelings in proper proportions which constitutes hope. There has been considerable variety of views among expositors in regard to the proper meaning of the word in this place. Mr. Locke supposes that Paul here means the honourable employment of an apostle and minister of the gospel, or the glory belonging to the ministry in the gospel; and that his calling it "hope" instead of "glory," which the connexion would seem to demand, is the language of modesty. Rosenmuller understands it of the hope of the perpetual continuance of the gospel dispensation. Macknight renders it "persuasion" and explains it as meaning the full persuasion or assurance that the gospel excels the law in the manner of its introduction; its permanency, etc. A few remarks may, perhaps, make it clear.

(1.) It refers primarily to Paul, and the other ministers of the gospel. It is not properly the *Christian hope*, as such, to which he refers, but it is that which the ministers of the gospel had.

(2.) It refers to *all* that he had said before about the superiority of the gospel to the law; and is designed to express the *result* of all that on his mind, and on the minds of his fellow-labourers.

(3.) It refers to the *prospect*, confidence, persuasion, anticipation which he had as the effect of what he had just said, It is the prospect of eternal life; the clear expectation of acceptance, and the anticipation of heaven, based on the fact that this was a ministry of the Spirit, (2Co 3:8;) that it was a ministry showing the way of justification, (2Co 3:9;) and that it was never to be done away, but to abide for ever, 2Co 3:11. On all these this strong hope was founded; and in view of these, Paul expressed himself clearly, not enigmatically; and not in types and figures, as Moses did. Everything about the gospel was clear and plain; and this led to the confident expectation and assurance of heaven. The word *hope* therefore, in this place, will express the effect on the mind of Paul in regard to the work of the ministry, produced by the *group* of considerations which he had suggested, showing that the gospel was superior to the law; and that it was the ground of more clear and certain confidence and hope than anything which the law could furnish.

We use. We employ; we are accustomed to. He refers to the manner in which he preached the gospel.

Great plainness of speech. Marg., *boldness*. We use the word "plainness," as applied to speech, chiefly in two senses:

(1.) to denote boldness, faithfulness, candour, in opposition to trimming, timidity, and unfaithfulness; and,

(2.) to denote clearness, intelligibleness, and simplicity, in opposition to obscurity, mist, and highly-wrought and laboured forms of expression. The connexion here shows that the latter is the sense in which the phrase here is to be understood. See 2Co 3:13. It denotes openness, simplicity, freedom from the obscurity which arises from enigmatical, and parabolical, and typical modes of speaking. This stands in opposition to figure, metaphor and allegory—to an affected and laboured concealment of the idea in the manner which was common among the Jewish doctors and heathen philosophers, where their meaning was carefully concealed from the vulgar, and from all except the *initiated*. It stands opposed also to the necessary obscurity arising from typical institutions like those of Moses. And the doctrine of the passage is, that such is the clearness and fulness of the Christian revelation, arising from the fact that it is the last economy, and that it does not look to the future, that its ministers may and should use clear and intelligible language. They should not use language abounding in metaphor and allegory. They should not use unusual terms. They should not draw their words and illustrations from science. They should not use mere technical language. They should not attempt to vail or cloak their meaning. They should not seek a refined and

overwrought style. They should use expressions which other men use; and express themselves as far as possible in the language of common life. What is preaching worth that is not understood? Why should a man talk at all, unless he is intelligible? Who was ever more plain and simple in his words and illustrations than the Lord Jesus?

{1} "plainness of speech" "boldness"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *And not as Moses*. Our conduct is not like that of Moses. We make no attempt to conceal anything in regard to the nature, design, and duration of the gospel. We leave nothing designedly in mystery.

Which put a vail over his face. That is, when he came down from Mount Sinai, and when his face shone: Ex 34:33, "And till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a vail on his face." This vail he put off when he went to speak with God, but put on again when he delivered his commands to the people. What was the *design* of this, Moses has not himself declared. The statement which he makes in Exodus would lead us to suppose that it was on account of the exceeding brightness and dazzling splendour which shone around him, and which made it difficult to look intently upon him; and that this was in part the reason, even Paul himself seems to intimate in 2Co 3:7. He, however, in this verse intimates that there was another design, which was that he might be, as Doddridge expresses it, "a kind of type and figure of his own dispensation."

That the children of Israel. Mr. Locke understands this of the apostles, and supposes that it means, "We do not vail the light so that the obscurity of what we deliver should hinder the children of Israel from seeing in the law, which was to be done away, Christ who is the end of the law." But this interpretation is forced and unnatural. The phrase rendered "that" (*prov to*) evidently connects what is affirmed here with the statement about Moses; and shows that the apostle means to say that Moses put the vail on face *in order* that the children of Israel should not be able to see to the end of his institutions. That Moses had such a design, and that the putting on of the vail was emblematic of the nature of his institutions, Paul here distinctly affirms. No one can prove that this was not his design; and in a land and time when types, and emblems, and allegorical modes of speech were much used, it is highly probable that Moses meant to intimate that the end and full purpose of his institutions were designedly concealed.

Could not stedfastly look. Could not gaze intently upon, (*atenisai*.) **See Barnes "2Co 3:7"**.

They could not clearly discern it; there was obscurity arising from the fact of the designed concealment. He did not *intend* that they should clearly see the full purport and design of the institutions which he established.

To the end. *eiv to telov*. Unto the end, purpose, design, or ultimate result of the law which he established. A great many different interpretations have been proposed of this. The meaning seems to me to be this: There was a glory and splendour in that which the institutions of Moses typified, which the children of Israel were not permitted then to behold. There was a splendour and lustre in the face of Moses, which they could not gaze upon, and therefore he put a vail over it to diminish its intense brightness. In like manner there was a glory and splendour in the ultimate design and

scope of his institutions, in that to which they referred, which they were not then *able*, i.e. prepared to look on, and the exceeding brightness of which he of design concealed. This was done by obscure types and figures, that resembled a vail thrown over a dazzling and splendid object. The word "end," then, I suppose, does not refer to termination, or close, but to the *design*, *scope*, or *purpose* of the Mosaic institutions; to that which they were intended to introduce and adumbrate. THAT END was the Messiah, and the glory of his institutions. **See Barnes** "Ro 10:4, "Christ is the end of the law." And the meaning of Paul, I take to be, is, that there was a splendour and a glory in the gospel which the Mosaic institutions were designed to typify, which was so great that the children of Israel were not fully prepared to see it, and that he designedly threw over that glory, the vail of obscure types and figures; as he threw over his face a vail that partially concealed its splendour. Thus interpreted there is a consistency in the entire passage, and very great beauty. Paul, in the following verses, proceeds to state that the vail to the view of the Jews of his time was not removed; that they still looked to the obscure types and institutions of the Mosaic law, rather than on the glory which they were designed to adumbrate; *as if* they should choose to look on the vail on the face of Moses, rather than on the splendour which it concealed.

Of that which is abolished. Or rather, *to be abolished*, (*tou katargoumenou*;) whose nature, design, and intention it was that it should be abolished. It was never designed to be permanent; and Paul speaks of it here as a thing that was known and indisputable that the Mosaic institutions were designed to be abolished.

{*} "children of Israel" "Israelites" {a} "to the end of that" Ro 10:4

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *But their minds were blinded*. The word here used (*pwrow*) means rather to harden; to make hard like stone; and then to make dull or stupid. It is applied to the heart, in Mr 6:52 8:17; to persons, in Ro 11:7; and to the eyes, in Job 17:7. Paul refers here to the act that the understandings of the Jews were stupid, dull, and insensible, so that they did not see clearly the design and end of their own institutions. He states simply the fact; he does not refer to the cause of it. The fact that the Jews were thus stupid and dull is often affirmed in the New Testament.

For until this day, etc. The sense of this is, that even to the time when Paul wrote, it was a characteristic of the great mass of the Jewish people, that they did not understand the true sense of their own Scriptures. They did not understand its doctrines in regard to the Messiah. vail seems to be thrown over the Old Testament when they read it, as there was over the face of Moses, so that the glory of their own Scriptures is concealed from their view, as the glory of the face of Moses was hidden.

Of the old testament. Greek, "of the old covenant." See this Word "testament," or covenant, explained **See Barnes** "1Co 11:25.

This, I believe, is the only instance in which the Scriptures of the Jews are called the "Old Testament," or covenant, in the Bible. It was, of course, not a name which they used, or would use; but it is now with Christians the common appellation. No doubt can be entertained but that Paul

uses the terms in the same manner in which we now do, and refers to all the inspired writings of the Jews.

Which vail is done away in Christ. In the manifestation, or appearance of Jesus the Messiah, the vail is removed. The obscurity which rested on the prophecies and types of the former dispensation is withdrawn; and as the face of Moses could have been distinctly seen if the vail on his face had been removed, so it is in regard to the true meaning of the Old Testament by the coming of the Messiah. What was obscure is now made clear; and the prophecies are so completely fulfilled in him, that his coming has removed the covering, and shed a clear light over them all. Many of the prophecies, for example, until the Messiah actually appeared, appeared obscure, and almost contradictory. Those which spoke of him, for illustration, as man and as God; as suffering, and yet reigning; as dying, and yet as ever-living; as a mighty Prince, a Conqueror, and a King, and yet as a man of sorrows; as humble, and yet glorious: all seemed difficult to be reconciled until they were seen to harmonize in Jesus of Nazareth. Then they were plain, and the vail was taken away. Christ is seen to answer all the previous descriptions of him in the Old Testament; and his coming casts a clear light on all which was before obscure.

{a} "for until this day remaineth" Ro 11:7,8,25

{*} "which vail" "covenant"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *But even unto this day*. To the time when Paul wrote this epistle, about thirty years after Christ was put to death. But it is still as true as it was in the time of Paul; and the character and conduct of the Jews now so entirely accords with the description which he gives of them in his time, as to show that he drew from nature, and as to constitute one of the strong incidental proofs that the account in the New Testament is true. Of no other people on earth, probably, would a description be accurate eighteen hundred years after it was made.

When Moses is read. When the five books of Moses are read, as they were regularly and constantly in their synagogues. **See Barnes "Lu 4:16"**.

The vail is upon their heart. They do not see the true meaning and beauty of their own Scriptures—a description as applicable to the Jews now as it was to those in the time of Paul.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Nevertheless*. This is not always to continue. The time is coming when they shall understand their own Scriptures, and see their true beauty.

When it shall turn to the Lord. When the Jewish people shall be converted. The word "it" here refers undoubtedly to "Israel" in 2Co 3:13; and the sense is, that their blindness is not always to remain; there is to be a period when they shall turn to God, and shall understand his promises, and

become acquainted with the true nature of their own religion. This subject the apostle has discussed at much greater length in the eleventh chapter of the epistle to the Romans. See Notes on that chapter.

The vail shall be taken away. They shall then understand the true meaning of the prophecies, and the true nature of their own institutions. They shall see that they refer to the Lord Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, and the true Messiah. The genuine sense of their sacred oracles shall break upon their view with full and irresistible light. There may be an allusion in the language here to the declaration in Isa 25:7: "And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations." This verse teaches,

(1.) that the time will come when the Jews shall be converted to Christianity; expressed here by their turning unto the Lord, that is, the Lord Jesus. **See Barnes "Ac 1:24"**.

(2.) It seems to be implied that their conversion will be a conversion of *the people* at large; a conversion that shall be nearly simultaneous; a conversion *en masse*. Such a conversion we have reason to anticipate of the Jewish nation.

(3.) The effect of this will be to make them acquainted with the true sense of their own Scriptures, and the light and beauty of the sayings of their own prophets. Now they are in deep darkness on the subject; then they will see how entirely they meet and harmonize in the Lord Jesus.

(4.) The true and only way of having a correct and full meaning of the Bible is by turning unto God. Love to him, and a disposition to do his will, is the best means of interpreting the Bible.

{b} "Taken away" Isa 25:7

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Now the Lord is that Spirit*. The word "Lord" here evidently refers to the Lord Jesus. 2Co 3:16. It may be observed in general in regard to this word, that where it occurs in the New Testament, unless the connexion requires us to understand it of God, it refers to the Lord Jesus. It was the common name by which he was known. See Joh 20:13 21:7,12 Eph 4:1,5.

The *design* of Paul in this verse seems to be to account for the "liberty" which he and the other apostles had, or for the boldness, openness, and plainness (2Co 2:12) which they evinced in contradistinction from the Jews, who so little understood the nature of their institutions. He had said, (2Co 3:6,) that he was a minister "not of the letter, but of the Spirit;" and he had stated that the Old Testament was not understood by the Jews who adhered to the literal interpretation of the Scriptures. He here says, that the Lord Jesus was "the Spirit" to which he referred, and by which he was enabled to understand the Old Testament so as to speak plainly, and without obscurity. The sense is, that Christ was the Spirit; i.e., the sum, the substance of the Old Testament. The figures, types, prophecies, etc., all centered in him, and he was the end of all those institutions. If contemplated as having reference to him, it was easy to understand them. This I take to be the sentiment of the passage, though expositors have been greatly divided in regard to its meaning. Thus explained, it does not mean absolutely and abstractly that the Lord Jesus was "a Spirit," but that he was the sum, the essence, the end, and the purport of the Mosaic rites, the spirit of which Paul had spoken in 2Co 3:6, as contradistinguished from the letter of the law.

And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. This is a general truth designed to illustrate the particular sentiment which he had just advanced. The word "liberty" here *eleuyeria* refers, I think, to freedom in speaking; the power of speaking openly and freely, as in 2Co 3:12. It states the general truth, that the effect of the Spirit of God was to give light and clearness of view; to remove obscurity from a subject, and to enable one to see it plainly. This would be a truth that could not be denied by the Jews, who held to the doctrine that the spirit of God revealed truth, and it must be admitted by all. Under the influence of that Spirit, therefore, Paul says that he was able to speak with openness and boldness; that he had a clear view of truth, which the mass of the Jews had not; and that the system of religion which he preached was open, plain, and clear. The word "freedom" would, perhaps, better convey the idea. "There is freedom from the dark and obscure views of the Jews; freedom from their prejudices, and their superstitions; freedom from the slavery and bondage of sin; the freedom of the children of God, who have clear views of him as their Father and Redeemer, and who are enabled to express those views openly and boldly to the world."

{c} "Lord is that Spirit" 1Co 15:45 {d} "Spirit of the Lord" Ro 8:2

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *But we all*. All Christians. The discussion in the chapter has related Mainly to the apostles'; but this declaration seems evidently to refer to all Christians, as distinguished from the Jews.

With open face. **See Barnes "1Co 13:12"**.

Tindal renders this, "And now the Lord's glory appeareth in us all as in a glass. The sense is, "with unvailed face," alluding to the fact 2Co 3:13 that the face of Moses was vailed, so that the Children of Israel could not steadfastly look on it. In contradistinction from that, Paul says that Christians are enabled to look upon the glory of the Lord in the gospel without a vail—without any obscure, intervening medium.

Beholding as in a glass. On the word *glass*, and the sense in which it is used in the New Testament, **See Barnes "1Co 13:12"**.

The word here used (*katoptrizomenoi*) has been very variously rendered. Macknight renders it, "We all reflecting as mirrors the glory of the Lord." Doddridge, "Beholding as by a glass." Locke, "With open countenances as mirrors, reflecting the glory of the Lord." The word *katoptrizw* occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It properly means, to look in a mirror; to behold as in a mirror. The mirrors of the ancients were made of burnished metal, and they reflected images with great brilliancy and distinctness. And the meaning is, that the gospel reflected the glory of the Lord; it was, so to speak, the mirror—the polished, burnished substance in which the glory of the Lord shone, and where that glory was irradiated and reflected so that it might be seen by Christians. There was no vail over it; no obscurity; nothing to break its dazzling splendour, or to prevent its meeting the eye. Christians, by looking on the gospel, could see the glorious perfections and plans of God, as bright, and clear, and brilliant as they could see a light reflected from the burnished surface of the mirror. So to speak, the glorious perfections of God shone from heaven, beamed upon the gospel, and were thence reflected to the eye and the heart of the Christian, and had the

effect of transforming them into the same image. This passage is one of great beauty, and is designed to set forth the gospel as being *the reflection* of the infinite glories of God to the minds and hearts of men.

The glory of the Lord. The splendour, majesty, and holiness of God as manifested in the gospel, or of the Lord as incarnate. The idea is, that God was clearly and distinctly seen in the gospel. There was no obscurity, no vail, as in the case of Moses. In the gospel they were permitted to look on the full splendour of the Divine perfections—the justice, goodness, mercy, and benevolence of God—to see him as he is with undimmed and unvailed glory. The idea is, that the perfections of God shine forth with splendour and beauty in the gospel, and that we are permitted to look on them clearly and openly.

Are changed into the same image. It is possible that there may be an allusion here to the effect which was produced by looking into an ancient mirror. Such mirrors were made of burnished metal, and the reflection from them would be intense. If a strong light were thrown on them, the rays would be cast by reflection on the face of him who looked on the mirror, and it would be strongly illuminated. And the idea may be, that the glory of God, the splendour of the Divine perfections, was thrown on the gospel, so to speak, like a bright light on a polished mirror; and that that glory was reflected from the gospel on him who contemplated it, so that he appeared to be transformed into the same image. Locke renders it, "We are changed into his very image by a continued succession of glory, as it were, streaming upon us from the Lord." The figure is one of great beauty; and the idea is, that by placing ourselves within the light of the gospel—by contemplating the glory that shines there—we become changed into the likeness of the same glory, and conformed to that which shines there with so much splendour. By contemplating the resplendent face of the blessed Redeemer, we are changed into something of the same image. It is a law of our nature that we are moulded, in our moral feelings, by the persons with whom we associate, and by the objects which we contemplate. We become insensibly assimilated to those with whom we have intercourse, and to the objects with which we are familiar. We imbibe the opinions, we copy the habits, we imitate the manners, we fall into the customs of those with whom we have daily conversation, and whom we make our companions and friends. Their sentiments insensibly become our sentiments, and their ways our ways. It is thus with the *books* with which we are familiar. We are insensibly but certainly moulded into conformity to the opinions, maxims, and feelings which are there expressed. Our own sentiments undergo a gradual change, and we are likened to those with which in this manner we are conversant: So it is in regard to the opinions and feelings which from any cause we are in the habit of bringing before our minds. It is the way by which men become corrupted in their sentiments and feelings in their contact with the world; it is the way in which amusements, and the company of the gay and the dissipated, possess so much power; it is the way in which the young and inexperienced are beguiled and ruined; and it is the way in which Christians dim the lustre of their piety, and obscure the brightness of their religion, by their contact with the gay and fashionable world. And it is on the same great principle that Paul says that, by contemplating the glory of God in the gospel, we become insensibly but certainly conformed to the same image, and made like the Redeemer. His image will be reflected on us. We shall imbibe his sentiments, catch his feelings, and be moulded into the image of his own purity. Such is the great and wise law of our nature; and it is on this principle, and by this means, that God designs we should be *made* pure on earth, and kept pure in heaven for ever.

From glory to glory. From one degree of glory to another. "The more we behold this brilliant and glorious light, the more do rove reflect back its rays; that is, the more we contemplate the great truths of the Christian religion, the more do our minds become imbued with its spirit."—*Bloomfield*. This is said in contradistinction probably to Moses. The splendour on his face gradually died away. But not so with the light reflected from the gospel. It becomes deeper and brighter constantly. This sentiment is parallel to that expressed by the psalmist: "They go from strength to strength," Ps 84:7; that is, they go from one degree of strength to another, or one degree of holiness to another, until they come to the full vision of God himself in heaven. The idea in the phrase before us is, that there is a continual increase of moral purity and holiness under the gospel, until it results in the perfect glory of heaven. The *doctrine* is, that Christians advance in piety; and that this is done by the contemplation of the glory of God as it is revealed in the gospel.

As by the Spirit of the Lord. Marg.; "Of the Lord the Spirit." Greek, "As from the Lord the Spirit." So Beza, Locke, Wolf, Rosenmuller, and Doddridge render it. The idea is, that it is by the Lord Jesus Christ the spirit of the law, the spirit, referred to by Paul above, 2Co 3:6,17. It is done by the Holy Spirit procured or imparted by the Lord Jesus. This sentiment is in accordance with that which prevails everywhere in the Bible, that it is by the Holy Spirit alone that the heart is changed and purified. And the object of the statement here is, doubtless, to prevent the supposition that the change from "glory to glory" was produced in any sense by the mere contemplation of truth, or by any physical operation of such contemplation on the mind. It was by the Spirit of God alone that the heart was changed even under the gospel, and amidst the full blaze of its truth. Were it not for his agency, even the contemplation of the glorious truths of the gospel would be in vain, and would produce no saving effect on the human heart.

{a} "a glass the glory" 1Co 13:12 {b} "same image" Ro 8:29 {c} "glory to glory" Ps 84:7 {1} "by the Spirit" "of the Lord the Spirit"

REMARKS on 2nd Corinthians Chapter 3

(1.) The best of all evidences of a call to the office of the ministry is the Divine blessing resting on our labours, 2Co 3:1,2. If sinners are converted; if souls are sanctified; if the interest, of pure religion are advanced; if by humble, zealous, and self-denying efforts a man is enabled so to preach as that the Divine blessing shall rest constantly on his labours, it is among the best of all evidences that he is called of God, and is approved by him. And though it may be true, and is true, that men who are self-deceived, or are hypocrites, are sometimes the means of doing good, yet it is still true, as a general rule, that eminent and long-continued success in the ministry is an evidence of God's acceptance, and that he has called a minister to this office. *Paul* felt this, and often appealed to it; and why may not others also?

(2.) A minister may appeal to the effect of the gospel among his own people as a proof that it is from God, 2Co 3:2,3. Nothing else would produce such effects as were produced at Corinth but the power of God. If the wicked are reclaimed; if the intemperate and licentious are made temperate and pure; if the dishonest are made honest, and the scoffer learns to pray, under the gospel, it proves that it is from God. To such effects a minister may appeal as proof that the gospel which he preaches is from heaven. A system which will produce these effects must be true.

(3.) A minister should *so* live among a people as to be able to appeal to them with the utmost confidence in regard to the purity and integrity of his own character, 2Co 3:1,2. He should so live, and preach, and act, that he will be under no necessity of adducing testimonials from abroad in

regard to his character. The effect of his gospel, and the tenor of his life, should be his best testimonial and to that he should be able to appeal. A man who is under a necessity constantly, or often, of defending his-own character; of bolstering it up by testimonials from abroad; who is obliged to spend much of his time in defending his reputation, or who chooses to spend much of his time in defending it, has usually a character and reputation *not worth defending*. Let a man live as he ought to do, and he will, in the end, have a good reputation. Let him strive to do the will of God, and save souls, and he will have all the reputation which he ought to have. God will take care of his character; and will give him just as much reputation as it is desirable that he should have. See Ps 37:5,6.

(4.) The church is, as it were, an epistle sent by the Lord Jesus, to show his character and will, 2Co 3:3. It is his representative on earth. It holds his truth. It is to imitate his example. It is to show how he lived. And it is to accomplish that which he would accomplish were he personally on earth, and present among men— as a letter is designed to accomplish some important purpose of the writer when absent. The church, therefore, *should* be such as shall appropriately express the will and desire of the Lord Jesus. It should resemble him. It should hold his truth; and it should devote itself with untiring diligence to the great purpose of advancing his designs, and spreading his gospel around the world.

(5.) Religion has its seat in the heart, 2Co 3:3. It is engraven there. It is written not with ink, or engraven on stone, but it is written by the Spirit of God on the heart. That professed religion, therefore, which does not reach the heart, and which is not felt there, is false and delusive. There is no true religion which does not reach and affect the heart.

(6.) We should feel our dependence on God in all things, 2Co 3:5. We are dependent on him,

1st, for revelation itself. Man had no power of originating the truths which constitute revelation. They are the free and pure gift of God.

2nd. For success in saving souls. God only can change the heart. It is not done by human reasoning; by any power of man; by any eloquence of persuasion. It is by the power of God; and if a minister of religion meets with any success, it will be by the presence and by the power of God alone.

3rd. We are dependent on him for the power of thought at all; for clearness of intellect; for such a state of bodily health as to permit us to think; for bright conceptions; for ability to arrange our thoughts; for the power of expressing them clearly; for such a state of mind as shall be free from vain fancies, and vagaries, and eccentricities; and for such a state as shall mark our plans as those of common sense and prudence. On such plans much of the comfort of life depends; and on such plans depends also nearly all the success which men ever meet with in any virtuous and honourable calling. And if men felt, as they should do, how much they are dependent on God for the power of *clear thinking*, and for the characteristics of sound sense in their schemes, they would pray for it more than they do; and would be more grateful that such a rich blessing is so extensively conferred on men.

(7.) Religion has a living power, 2Co 3:6. It is not the letter, but the spirit. It is not made up of forms and ceremonies. It does not consist in Cold, external rites, however regular they may be; nor in formal prayer, or in stated seasons of devotion. All these will be dead and vain, unless the heart is given to God and to his service. If these are all, there is no religion. And if we have no better religion than that, we should at once abandon our hopes, and seek for that which does not kill, but which makes alive.

(8.) The office of the ministers of the gospel is glorious, and most honourable, 2Co 3:7-9. It is *far more* honourable than was the office of Moses; and their work is far more glorious than was his. *His* consisted in giving the law on tables of stone; in the external splendour which attended its promulgation; and in introducing a system which must be soon done away. His was a ministry "of death" and of "condemnation." *Theirs* is a ministration by which the Holy Spirit is communicated to men—*through* them as channels, or organs, by which the saving grace of that Spirit is imparted, it is a work by which men are made righteous, justified, and accepted; it is a work whose effects are never to fade away, but which are to live amidst the splendours of heaven.

(9.) The responsibility and solemnity of the work of the ministry. It was a solemn and responsible work for Moses to give the law amidst the thunders of Sinai to the children of Israel. It is much more solemn to be the medium by which the eternal truths of the gospel are made known to men. The one, imposing as it was, was designed to be temporary, and was soon to pass away; the other is to be eternal in its effects, and is to enter vitally and deeply into the eternal destiny of man. The one pertained to laws written on stone; the other to influences that are deeply and for ever to affect the heart. No work can be more solemn and responsible than that through which the Holy Spirit, with renewing and sanctifying power, is conveyed to man; that which is connected with the justification of sinners; and that which in its effects is to be permanent as the soul itself, and to endure as long as God shall exist.

(10.) We see the folly of attempting to be justified by the law, 2Co 3:7,9. It is the ministration of death and of condemnation. It speaks only to condemn. Law knows nothing of pardon. It is not given for that purpose; and no perfect law can contain within itself provisions for pardon. Besides, no one has ever complied with all the demands of the law; no one ever will. All have sinned. But if ALL the demands of the law be not complied with, it speaks only to condemn, Jas 2:10. If a man in other respects has been ever so good a citizen, and yet has committed murder, he must die. So says the law. If a man has been ever so valiant, and fought ever so bravely, and yet is guilty of an act of treason, he must die. The question is not what he has been in other respects, or what else he may or may not have done, but has he committed *this* offence? If he has, the law knows no forgiveness, and pronounces his condemnation. If pardoned, it must be by some other system than by the regular operation of law. So with the sinner against God. If the law is violated, it speaks only to condemn. If he is pardoned, it can be only by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

(11.) The danger of grieving the Holy Spirit, 2Co 3:8. The gospel is the field of the operations of the Holy Spirit in our world. It is the ministration of the Spirit. It is the channel by which his influences descend on man. To reject that gospel is to reject him, *and to cut off the soul from all possibility of being brought under his saving influence and power for ever*. He strives with men only in

connexion with the gospel; and all hope, therefore, of being brought under his saving power, is in attending to that gospel, and embracing its provisions. The multitudes, therefore, who are rejecting or neglecting that gospel, are throwing themselves beyond his saving influences, and placing themselves beyond the possibility of salvation,

(12.) We see the *guilt* of neglecting or rejecting the gospel. It is the scheme, and the only scheme, for pardon, 2Co 3:8-10. It is a far more glorious manifestation of the goodness of God than the law of Moses. It is the glorious and benevolent manifestation of God, through the incarnation, the sufferings, and the death of his Son. It is the ONLY plan of pardoning mercy that has been or that will be revealed. If men are not pardoned through that, they are not pardoned at all. If they are not

saved *by* that, they must die for ever. What guilt is there, therefore, in neglecting and despising it! What folly is there in turning away from its provisions of mercy,and neglecting to secure an interest in what it provides!

(13.) The gospel is to spread around the world, and endure to the end of time, 2Co 3:11. It is not like the institutions of Moses, to endure for a limited period, and then to be done away. The cloud and tempest, the thunder and lightning on Mount Sinai, which attended the giving of the law, soon disappeared. The unusual and unnatural splendour on the countenance of Moses soon vanished away. All the magnificence of the Mosaic ritual also soon faded away. But not so the gospel. That abides. That is the *last* dispensation; the *permanent* economy; that under which the affairs of the world are to be brought to an end. That is to pervade all lands; to bless all people; to survive all revolutions; to outlive all the magnificence of courts, and all the splendour of mighty dynasties, and is to endure till this world shall come to an end, and live in its glorious effects for ever and ever. It is, therefore, to be the fixed principle, on which all Christians are to act, that the gospel is to be permanent, and is to spread over all lands, and yet fill all nations with joy. And if so, how fervent and unceasing should be their prayers and efforts to accomplish this great and glorious result!

(14.) We learn from this chapter the duty of preaching in a plain, simple, intelligible manner, 2Co 3:12. Preaching should always be characterized indeed by good sense, and ministers should show that they are not fools, and their preaching should be such as to interest thinking men—for there is no folly or nonsense in the Bible. But their preaching should not be obscure, metaphysical, enigmatical, and abstruse. It should be so simple that the unlettered may learn the plan of salvation; so plain that no one shall mistake it except by his own fault. The *hopes* of the gospel are so clear that there is no need of ambiguity or enigma; no need of abstruse metaphysical reasoning in the pulpit. Nor should there be an attempt to *appear* wise or profound, by studying a dry, abstruse, and cold style and manner. The preacher should be open, plain, simple, sincere; he should *testify* what he feels; should be able to speak as himself animated by *hope*, and to tell of a world of glory to which he is himself looking forward with unspeakable joy.

(15.) It is the privilege of the Christian to look on the unvailed and unclouded glory of the gospel, 2Co 3:12,13. He does not look at it through types and shadows. He does not contemplate it when a vail of obscurity is drawn designedly over it. He sees it in its true beauty and splendour. The Messiah has come, and he may contemplate openly and plainly his glory, and the grandeur of his work. The Jews looked upon it in the light of *prophecy*; to us it is history. They saw it only through obscure shadows, types, and figures; we see it in open day, may survey at leisure its full beauty, and contemplate in the fulness of its splendour the gospel of the blessed God. For this we cannot be too thankful; nor can we be too anxious lest we undervalue our privileges, and abuse the mercies that we enjoy.

(16.) In reading the Old Testament, we see the importance of suffering the rejected light of the New Testament to be thrown upon it, in order correctly to understand it, 2Co 3:13,14. It is our privilege to know what the institutions of Moses meant; to see the and which he contemplated. And it is our privilege to see what they referred to, and how they prefigured the Messiah and his gospel. In reading the Old Testament, therefore, there is no reason why we should not take with us the knowledge which we have derived from the New, respecting the character, work, and doctrines of the Messiah; and to suffer them to influence our understanding of the laws and institutions of Moses. Thus shall we treat the Bible *as a whole*, and allow one part to throw light on another—a privilege

which we always concede to any book, There is no reason why Christians in reading the Old Testament should remain in the same darkness as the ancient or the modern Jews.

(17.) Thus read, the Old Testament will be to us of inestimable value, 2Co 3:14. It is of value not only as *introducing* the gospel; as furnishing predictions whose fulfillment are full demonstration of the truth of religion; as containing specimens of the sublimest and purest poetry in the world; but it is of value as embodying, though amidst many types and shadows and much obscurity, all the great doctrines of the true religion. Though to the Jews, and to the world, there is a vail cast over it, yet to the Christian there is a beauty and splendour on all its pages—for the coming of Christ has removed that vail, and the sense of those ancient writings is now fully seen. True piety will value the Old Testament, and will find there, in the sweetest poetry in the world, the expression of feelings which the religion of the Messiah only can produce; and pure and elevated thoughts which could have been originated by nothing but his anticipated coming. It is no mark of piety or of wisdom to disparage the Jewish Scriptures. But the higher the attainments in Christian feeling, the more will the writings of Moses and the prophets be loved.

(18.) Men may have the Bible, and may read it long, and much, and yet not understand it, 2Co 3:15. So it was, and is, with the Jews. The Scriptures were attentively read by them, and yet they did not understand them. So it is still. There is a vail on their heart, and they are blinded. So it is often now with others. Men often read the Bible, and see little beauty in it. They read, and they do not understand it. The reason is, the heart is not right. There should be a correspondence of feeling between the heart and the Bible, or a congeniality of view in order to appreciate its value and its truth. No man can understand or appreciate Milton or Cowper who has not a taste like theirs. No man can understand and appreciate a a poem or an essay on patriotism, who is not a lover of his country; or on chastity, who is impure; or on temperance, who is intemperate; or on virtue in general, who is a stranger to virtue in every form. And so in reading the Bible. To appreciate and understand fully the writings of David, Isaiah, Paul, or John, we must have their feelings; our hearts must glow with their love to God and the Redeemer; we must feel as they did the guilt and burden of sin; and we must rejoice as they did in the hope of deliverance, and in the prospect of heaven. Till men have these feelings, they are not to wonder that the Bible is to them a dead letter, or a sealed book, and that they do not understand it, or see any beauty in its pages.

(19.) This chapter furnishes an argument for the fidelity and truth of the statement of Paul, 2Co 3:15. The argument is, that his description is as applicable to the Jews now as it was in his own time—and that, therefore, it must have been drawn from nature. The same vail is on their hearts now as in his time; there is the same blindness arid darkness in regard to the true meaning of their Scriptures. The language of Paul will accurately express that blindness now; and his description, therefore, is not drawn from fancy, but from fact. It is true now in regard to that singular people, and it was true in his own time; and the lapse of eighteen hundred years has only served to confirm the truth of his description in regard to the people of his own nation and time.

(20.) That vail is to be removed only by their turning to God, 2Co 3:16. It is only by true conversion that the mind can be brought to a full and clear understanding of the Scriptures; and that event will yet take place in regard to the Jews. They shall yet be converted to the Messiah whom their fathers slew, and whom they have So long rejected; and when that event shall occur, they shall see the beauty of their own Scriptures, and rejoice in the promises and glorious hopes which they hold out to the view.

(21.) The duty of *meditating* much on the glory of the gospel, 2Co 3:18. It is by that we are purified. It is by keeping it constantly before the mind; dwelling on its splendour; thinking of its glorious truths, that we become transformed into the same image, and made like God. If the character is formed by the objects which we contemplate, and with which we are familiar; if we are insensibly moulded in our feelings and principles by that with which we constantly associate, then we should *think* much of the truths of the gospel. We should *pray* much—for thus we come in contact with God and his truth. We should read the Scripture much. We should commune with the good and the pure. We should make our companions of those who most love the Lord Jesus, and most decidedly bear his image. We should think much of a pure heaven. Thus shall we be moulded, insensibly it may be, but certainly, into the image of a holy God and Saviour, and be prepared for a pure and holy heaven.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 1

Introduction to 2nd Corinthians Chapter 4

THIS chapter is intimately connected with the preceding; and is, indeed, merely a statement of the consequences or results of the doctrine advanced there. In that chapter, Paul had stated the clearness and plainness of the gospel as contrasted with the institutions of Moses, and particularly that the Christian ministry Was a ministration more glorious than that of Moses. It was more clear, It was a ministration of justification, (2Co 3:9,) and of the Spirit, (2Co 3:8,) and was a ministration where they were permitted to look upon the unvailed and unclouded glories of God, 2Co 3:18. In this chapter he states some of the consequences, or results, of their being called to this ministry: and the design is, to magnify the office of the ministry; to show the sustaining power of the truths which they preached; the interest which the Corinthian Christians and all other Christians had in the ministry, and thus to conciliate their favour; and to show what there was to comfort them in the various trials to which as ministers they were exposed, Paul states therefore in this chapter-

(1.) That these clear and elevated views of the gospel sustained him; kept him from fainting; preserved, him from deceit and all improper acts.; made him open and honest; since he had no necessity for craft and guilt, but proclaimed a system of religion which could be commended to every man's conscience, and be seen to be true, 2Co 4:1,2.

(2.) That if any persons were lost, it was not the fault of the gospel, 2Co 4:3,4. That was clear, open, plain, glorious, and might be understood; and if they were lost, it was to be traced to the malign influence of the god of this world, and not to the gospel.

(3.) That the great purpose of Paul and his associates was to make known this clear and glorious truth of the gospel; and that, therefore, the apostles did not preach themselves, but Christ Jesus, the

revealer and source of all this glory, 2Co 4:5,6. Their sole object was to show forth this pure and glorious light of the gospel.

(4.) That it was so arranged by God's appointment and providence that all the glory of the results of the ministry should be his, 2Co 4:7-11. He had taken especial care that they should have no cause of self-exultation or glorying in preaching the gospel; and had taken effectual means that they should be humbled, and not lifted up with pride from the fact that they were commissioned to make known such glorious truths, and had a ministry more honourable than that of Moses. He had, therefore, committed the treasure to earthen vessels; to frail, weak, dying men, and to men in humble life, (2Co 4:7,) and he had called them to submit to constant trials of persecution, poverty, peril, and want, in order that they might be humbled, and that God might manifestly have all the glory, 2Co 4:8-11.

(5.) All this was for the sake of the church—a fact which was adapted to conciliate the favour of Christians, and excite their sympathy in the sufferings of the apostles, and to lead them to honour the ministry in a proper manner, 2Co 4:12-15. It was not for their own welfare, happiness, honour, or emolument, that they endured these trials in the ministry; it was that the church might be benefited, and thus abundant praise redound to God.

(6.) These considerations sustained them in their trials, 2Co 4:16-18. They *had* comfort in all their afflictions. They felt that they were doing and suffering these things for the salvation of souls and the glory of God, (2Co 5:16); they had inward strength given them every day, though the outward man perished, (2Co 4:16;) they knew that the result of this would be an eternal weight of glory, (2Co 4:17;) and they were enabled to look to another and a better world; to keep the eye on heaven, and to contemplate by faith the things which were unseen and eternal, 2Co 4:18. These things supported them; and thus upheld, they went cheerfully to their great work, and met with calmness and joy all the trials which it involved.

Verse 1. *Therefore*, *dia touto*. On account of this. That is, because the light of the gospel is so clear; because it reveals so glorious truths, and all obscurity is taken away, and we are permitted to behold as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, 2Co 3:18. Since the glories of the gospel dispensation are so great, and its effects on the heart are so transforming and purifying, the object is to show the *effect* of being intrusted with such a ministry on the character of his preaching.

Seeing we have this ministry. The gospel ministry, so much more glorious than that of Moses, (2Co 3:6;) which is the ministry by which the Holy Spirit acts on the hearts of men, 2Co 3:8 which is the ministry of that system by which men are justified, (2Co 3:9;) and which is the ministry of a system so pure and unclouded, 2Co 3:9-11,18.

As we have received mercy. Tindal renders, this, "even as mercy is sure in us." The idea is, that it was by the mere mercy and favour of God that he had been intrusted with the ministry; and the object of Paul is doubtless to prevent the appearance of arrogance and self-confidence, by stating that it was to be traced entirely to God that he was put into the ministry. He doubtless had his eye on the fact that he had been a persecutor and blasphemer; and that it was by the mere favour of God that he had been converted and intrusted with the ministry, 1Ti 1:13. Nothing will more effectually humble a minister, and prevent his assuming any arrogant and self-confident airs, than to look over his past life; especially if his life was one of blasphemy, vice, or infidelity; and to remember that it is by the mere mercy of God that he is intrusted with the high office of an ambassador of Jesus Christ. Paul never forgot to trace his hope, his appointment to the ministerial office, and his success, to the mere grace of God.

We faint not. This is one of the *effects* of being intrusted with such a ministry. The word here used (*ekkakoumen*) means, properly, to turn out a coward; to lose one's courage; then to be faint-hearted, to faint, to despond, in view of trial, difficulty, etc.—*Robinson*. Here it means, that by the mercy of God he was not disheartened by the difficulties which he met; his faith and zeal did not flag; he was enabled to be faithful, and laborious, and his courage always kept up, and his mind was filled with cheerfulness. **See Barnes "2Co 2:14"**.

He was deterred by no difficulties; embarrassed by no opposition; driven from his purpose by no persecution; and his strength did not fail under any trims. The consciousness of being intrusted with such a ministry animated him; and the mercy and grace of God sustained him.

{a} "received mercy" 1Co 7:25

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *But have renounced*. *apeipameya*, from *apo* and *eipon*. The word means, properly, to speak out or off; to refuse or deny; to interdict or forbid. Here it means, to renounce, or disown; to spurn, or scorn with aversion. It occurs nowhere else in the New Testament; and the sense here is, that the apostles had such a view of the truth of religion, and the glory of the Christian scheme, 2Co 3:13-18, as to lead them to discard everything that was disguised, and artful, and crafty; everything like deceit and fraud. The religions of the heathen were made up mainly of trick, and were supported by deception practised on the ignorant, and on the mass of men. Paul says, that he and his fellow-labourers had such views of, the truth, and glory, and holiness of the Christian scheme, as to lead them solemnly to abjure and abhor all such dishonest tricks and devices. Truth never needs such arts; and no cause will long succeed by mere trick and cunning.

The hidden things of dishonesty. Marg., *shame*. The Greek word most commonly means shame, or disgrace. The hidden things of shame here mean disgraceful conduct; clandestine and secret arts, which were ill themselves shameful and disgraceful. They denote all *underhanded* dealings; all dishonest artifices and plans, such as were common, among the heathen, and such probably as the false teachers adopted in the propagation of their opinions at Corinth. The expression here does not imply that the apostles ever had anything to do with such arts; but that they solemnly abjured and abhorred them. Religion is open, plain, straightforward. It has no alliance with cunning, and trick, and artifice. It should be defended openly; stated clearly; and urged with steady argument. It is a work of light, and not of darkness.

Not walking in craftiness. Not acting craftily; not behaving in a crafty manner. The word here used, (*panourgia*, from *pan*, *all*, *ergon work*, i.e., doing everything, or capable of doing anything,) denotes shrewdness, cunning, and craft. This was common; and this was probably practised by the false teachers in Corinth. With this Paul says he had nothing to do. He did not adopt a course of carnal wisdom and policy, **See Barnes "2Co 1:12"**; he did not attempt to impose upon them, or to deceive them; or to make his way by subtle and deceitful arts. True religion can never be advanced by trick and craftiness.

Nor handling the word of God deceitfully. *dolountev*. Not falsifying; or deceitfully corrupting or disguising the truth of God. The phrase seems to be synonymous with that used in 2Co 2:17, and rendered, "corrupt the word of God." **See Barnes "2Co 2:17"**

on that verse. It properly means to falsify, adulterate, corrupt, by Jewish traditions, etc., (Robinson, Bloomfield, Doddridge), etc. or it may mean, as in our translation, to handle in a deceitful manner; to make use of trick and art in propagating and defending it. Tindal renders it, "neither corrupt we the word of God."

But by manifestation of the truth. By making the truth manifest; i.e., by a simple exhibition of the truth. By stating it just as it is, in an undisguised and open manner. Not by adulterating it with foreign mixtures; not by mingling it with philosophy or traditions; not by blunting its edge, or concealing anything, or explaining it away; but by an open, plain, straight-forward exhibition of it as it is in Jesus. Preaching should consist in a simple exhibition of the truth. There is no deceit in the gospel itself; and there should be none in the manner of exhibiting it. It should consist of a simple statement of things as they are. The whole design of preaching is to make known the truth. And this is done in an effectual manner only when it is simple, open, undisguised, without craft, and without deceit.

Commending ourselves to every man's conscience. That is, so speaking the truth that every man's conscience shall approve it *as* true; every man shall see it to be true, and to be in accordance with what he knows to be right. Conscience is that faculty of the mind which distinguishes between right and wrong, and which prompts us to choose the former and avoid the latter, Joh 8:9. **See Barnes "Ro 2:15"**; **See Barnes** "1Co 10:25, **See Barnes** "1Co 10:27, **See Barnes** "1Co 10:27,29; **See Barnes "2Co 1:12"**.

It is implied here,

(1.) that a course of life and a manner of preaching that shall be free from dishonesty, and art, and trick, will be such as the consciences of men will approve. Paul sought such a course of life as should accord with their sense of *right*, and thus serve to commend the gospel to them.

(2.) That the gospel may be so preached as to be seen by men to be true; so as to be approved as right; and so that every man's conscience shall bear testimony to its truth. Men do not *love* it, but they may see that it is *true*; they may hate it, but they may see that the truth which condemns their practices is from heaven. This is an exceedingly important principle in regard to preaching, and vastly momentous in its bearing on the views which ministers should have of their own work. The gospel is reasonable. It may be seen to be true by every man to whom it is preached. And it should be the aim of every preacher so to preach it, as to enlist the consciences of his hearers in his favour. And it is a very material fact that *when* so preached the conscience and reason of every man is in its favour, and they know that it is true even when it pronounces their own condemnation, and denounces their own sins. This passage proves, therefore, the following things:

(1.) That the gospel may be so preached as to be seen to be true by all men. Men are capable of seeing the truth; and even when they do not love it, they can perceive that it has demonstration that it is from God. It is a system so reasonable; so well established by evidence; so fortified by miracles and the fulfillment of prophecies; so pure in its nature; so well adapted to man; so fitted to his condition, and so well designed to make him better; and so happy in its influence on society, that men may be led to see that it is *true*. And this I take to be the case with almost all those who habitually attend on the preaching of the gospel. Infidels do not *often* visit the sanctuary; and when they are in the habit of doing it, it is a fact that they gradually come to the conviction that the

Christian religion is true. It is rare to find professed infidels in our places of worship; and the great mass of those who attend on the preaching of the gospel may be set down as *speculative* believers in the truth of Christianity.

(2.) The consciences of men are on the side of truth, and the gospel may be so preached as to enlist their consciences in its favour. Conscience prompts to do right, and condemns us if we do wrong. It can never be made to approve of wrong, never to give a man peace if he does that which he knows to be evil. By no art or device; by no system of laws, or bad government; by no training or discipline, can it be made the advocate of sin. In all lands, at all times, and in all circumstances, it prompts a man to do what is right, and condemns him if he does wrong. It may be silenced for a time; it may be "seared as with a hot iron," and for a time be insensible, but if it speak at all, it speaks to prompt a man to do what he believes to be right, and condemns him if he does that which is wrong. The consciences of men are on the side of the gospel; and it is only their hearts which are opposed to it. Their consciences are in favour of the gospel in the following, among other respects:

(a.) They approve of it as a just, pure, holy, and reasonable system; as in accordance with what they feel to be right; as recommending that which ought to be done, and forbidding that which ought not to be done.

(b.) In its special requirements on themselves. Their consciences tell them that they *ought* to love God with all the heart; to repent of their sins; to trust in that Saviour who died for them, and to lead a life of prayer and of devotedness to the service of God; that they ought to be sincere and humble Christians, and prepare to meet God in peace.

(c.) Their consciences approve the truth that condemns them. No matter how strict it may seem to be; no matter how loud its denunciation against their sins; no matter how much the gospel may condemn their pride, avarice, sensuality, levity, dishonesty, fraud, intern, perance, profaneness, blasphemy, or their neglect of their soul, yet their consciences approve of it as right, and proclaim that these things ought to be condemned, and ought to be abandoned. The heart may love them, but the conscience cannot be made to approve them. And the minister of the gospel may always approach his people, or an individual man, with the assurance that however much they may love the ways of sin, yet that he has their consciences in his favour; and that in urging the claims of God on them, their consciences will always coincide with his appeals.

(3.) The *way* in which a minister is to commend himself to the consciences of men, is that which was pursued by Paul. He must

(a.) have a clear and unwavering conviction of the truth himself. On this subject he should have no doubt. He should be able to look on it as on a burnished mirror, **See Barnes** "2Co 3:18, and to see its glory as with open face.

(b.) It should be by the simple statement of the truth of the gospel. Not by preaching philosophy, or metaphysics, or the traditions of man, or the sentiments of theologians, but the simple truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Men may be made to see that these are truths, and God will take care that the reason and consciences of men shall be in their favour.

(c.) By the absence of all trick and cunning, and disguised and subtle arts. The gospel has nothing of these in itself, and it will never approve of them, nor will God bless them. A minister of Jesus should be frank, open, undisguised, and candid. He should make a sober and elevated appeal to the reason and conscience of man. The gospel is not "a cunningly devised fable;" it has

no trick in itself, and the ministers of religion should solemnly abjure all the hidden things of dishonesty.

In the sight of God. As in the immediate presence of God. We act as if we felt that his eye was upon us; and this consideration serves to keep us from the hidden things of dishonesty, and from improper arts in spreading the true religion. **See Barnes "2Co 2:17"**.

{1} "dishonesty" "shame" {b} "God deceitfully" 2Co 2:17 {*} "deceitfully" "corrupting the word of God"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *But if our gospel be hid*. Paul here calls it his gospel, because it was that which he preached, or the message which he bore. **See Barnes "Ro 16:5"**.

The sense here is, "if the gospel which I preach is not understood; if its meaning is obscure or hidden; if its glory is not seen." It is *implied* here, that to many the beauty and glory of the gospel was not perceived. This was undeniable, not withstanding the plainness and fulness with which its truths were made known. The object of Paul here is to state that this fact was not to be traced to any want of clearness in the gospel itself, but to other causes—and thus probably to meet an objection which might be made to his argument about the clearness and fulness of-the revelation in the gospel. In the language which Paul uses here, there is undoubted allusion to what he had said respecting Moses, who put a vail on his face, 2Co 3:13. He had hid or concealed his face, as emblematic of the nature of his institutions, **See Barnes "2Co 3:14"**; and here Paul says that it was not to be denied that the gospel was vailed also to some. But it was not from the nature of the gospel. It was not because God had purposely concealed its meaning. It was not from any want of clearness in itself. It was to be traced to other causes.

It is hid to them that are lost. On the meaning of the word here rendered "lost," **See Barnes** "2Co 2:15, there rendered "perish." It is hid among them, who are about to perish; who are perishing, (*en toiv apollumenoiv*;) those who deserve to perish. It is concealed only among that class who may be designated as the perishing, or as the lost. Grotius explains this, "those who deserve to perish, who foster their vices, and will not see the truth which condemns those vices." And he adds, that this might very well be; for, "however conspicuous the gospel was in itself, yet like the sun it would not be visible to the blind." The cause was not in the gospel, but in themselves. This verse teaches, therefore,

(1.) that the beauty of the gospel may be hidden from many of the human family. This is a matter of simple fact. There are thousands and millions to whom it is preached who see no beauty in it, and who regard it as foolishness.

(2.) That there is a class of men who may be called, even now, *the lost*. They are lost to virtue, to piety, to happiness, to hope. They deserve to perish; and they are hastening to merited ruin. This class in the time of Paul was large; and it is large now. It is composed of those to whom the gospel is hidden, or to whom it appears to be vailed, and who see no beauty in it. It is made up indeed of all the profane, polluted, and vile; but their *characteristic* feature is, that the gospel is hidden from them, and that they see no beauty and glory in it.

(3.) This is not the fault of the gospel. It is not the fault of the sun where men shut their eyes and will not see it. It is not the fault of a running stream, or a bubbling fountain, if men will not drink of it, but rather choose to die of thirst. The gospel does not obscure and conceal its own glory any more than the sun does. It is in itself a clear and full revelation of God and his grace; and that glory is adapted to shed light upon the benighted minds of men.

{*} "hid" "covered" {a} "that are lost" 2Th 2:10

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *In whom*. In respect to whom; among whom; or in whose hearts. The design of this verse is to *account* for the fact that the glory of the gospel was not seen by them. It is to be traced entirely to the agency of him whom Paul here calls "the god of this world."

The god of this world. There can be no doubt that Satan is here designated by this appellation; though some of the Fathers supposed that it means the true Gods and *Clarke* inclines to this opinion. In Joh 12:31, he is called "the prince of this world." In Eph 2:2, he is called "the prince of the power of the air." And in Eph 6:1,2, the same bad influence is referred to under the names of "principalities and powers," "the rulers of the darkness of this world," and "spiritual wickedness in high places." The name "god" is here given to him, not because he has any divine attributes, but because he actually has the homage of the men of this world as their god, as the being who is really worshipped, or who has the affections of their hearts in the same way as it is given to idols. By "this world" is meant the wicked world; or the mass of men. He has dominion over the world. They obey his will; they execute his plans; they further his purposes, and they are his obedient subjects. He had subdued the world to himself, and was really adored in the place of the true God. **See Barnes "1Co 10:20".**

"They sacrificed to devils and not to God." Here it is meant by the declaration that Satan is the god of this world.

(1.) that the world at large was under his control and direction. He secured the apostasy, of man, and early brought him to follow his plans; and he has maintained his sceptre and dominion since. No more abject submission could be desired by him than has been rendered by the mass of men.

(2.) The idolatrous world particularly is under his control, and subject to him, 1Co 10:20. He is worshipped there; and the religious rites and ceremonies of the heathen are in general just such as a mighty being who hated human happiness, and who sought pollution, obscenity, wretchedness, and blood, would appoint; and over all the heathen world his power is absolute. In the time of Paul, all the world, except the Jews and Christians, was sunk in heathen degradation.

(3.) He rules in the hearts and lives of all wicked men—and the world is full of wicked men. They obey him, and submit to his will in executing fraud, and rapine, and piracy, and murder, and adultery, and lewdness; in wars and fightings; in their amusements and pastimes; in dishonesty and falsehood. The dominion of Satan over this world has been, and is still, almost universal and absolute; nor has the lapse of eighteen hundred years rendered the appellation improper as descriptive of his influence, that he is the god of this world. The world pursues his plans; yields to his temptations; neglects or rejects the reign of God as he pleases; and submits to his sceptre, and is still full of abomination, cruelty, and pollution, as he desires it to be.

Hath blinded the minds of them which believe not. Of all who discern no beauty in the gospel, and who reject it. It is implied here,

(1.) that the minds of unbelievers are blinded; that they perceive no beauty in the gospel. This is often affirmed of those who reject the gospel, and who live m sin. **See Barnes "2Co 2:13"**.

See Mt 23:16,17,26 Lu 4:18 Joh 9:39, 12:40 Ro 11:7.

The sense is, that they did not see the spiritual beauty and glory of the plan of redemption. They act in reference to that as they would in reference to this world if a bandage were over their eyes, and they saw not the light of the sun, the beauty of the landscape, the path in which they should go, or the countenance of a friend". All is dark, and obscure, and destitute of beauty to *them*, however much beauty may be seen in all these objects by others.

(2.) That this is done by the agency of Satan; and that his dominion is secured by keeping the world in darkness. The affirmation is direct and positive, that it is by his agency that it is done. Some of the *modes* in which it is done are the following:

(a.) By a direct influence on the minds of men. I do not know why it is absurd to suppose that one intellect may, in some way unknown to us, have access to another, and have power to influence it: nor can it be proved that Satan may not have power to pervert the understanding; to derange its powers; to distract its attention; and to give in view of the mind a wholly delusive relative importance to objects. In the time of the Saviour it cannot be doubted that, in the numerous cases of demoniacal possessions, Satan directly affected the minds of men; nor is there any reason to think that he has ceased to delude and destroy them.

(b.) By the false philosophy which has prevailed—a large part of which seems to have been contrived as if on purpose to deceive the world, and destroy the peace and happiness of men.

(c.) By the systems of superstition and idolatry. All these seem to be under the control of one master mind. They are so well conceived and adapted to prostrate the moral powers; to fetter the intellect; to pervert the will; to make men debased, sunken, polluted, and degraded; and they so uniformly accomplish this effect, that they have all the marks of being under the control of one mighty mind, and of having been devised to accomplish his purposes over men.

(d.) By producing in the minds of men a wholly disproportionate view of the value of objects. *A very small object held before the eye will shut out the light of the sun.* A piece of money of the smallest value laid on the eye will make everything appear dark, and prevent all the glory of mid-day from reaching the seat of vision. And so it is with the things of this world. They are placed directly before us, and are placed directly between us and the glory of the gospel. And the trifles of wealth and of fashion, the objects of pleasure and ambition, are made to assume an importance in view of the mind which wholly excludes the glory of the gospel, and shuts out all the realities of the eternal world. And he does it

(e.) by the blinding influence of passion and vice. Before a vicious mind, all is dark and obscure. There is no beauty in truth, in chastity or honesty, or in the fear and love of God. Vice always renders the mind blind, and the heart hard, and shrouds everything in the moral world in midnight. And in order to blind the minds of men to the glory of the gospel, Satan has only to place splendid schemes of speculation before men; to tempt them to climb the steeps of ambition; to entice them to scenes of gaiety; to secure the erection of theatres, and gambling-houses, and houses of infamy and pollution; to fill the cities and towns of a land with taverns and dram-shops; and to give opportunity everywhere for the full play and unrestrained indulgence of passion—and the glory of the gospel will be as effectually *unseen* as the glory of the sun is in the darkest night.

Lest the light, etc. This passage states the design for which Satan blinds the minds of men. It is because he hates the gospel, and wishes to prevent its influence and spread in the world. Satan has always hated and opposed it, and all his arts have been employed to arrest its diffusion on earth. The word *light* here means excellence, beauty, or splendour. Light is the emblem of knowledge, purity, or innocence; and is here and elsewhere applied to the gospel, because it removes the errors, and sins, and wretchedness of men, as the light of the sun scatters the shades of night. This purpose of preventing the light of the gospel shining on men, Satan will endeavour to accomplish by all the means in his power. It is his grand object in this world, because it is by the gospel only that man can be saved; by that that God is glorified on earth more than by anything else; and because, therefore, if he can prevent sinners from embracing that, he will secure their destruction, and most effectually show his hatred of God. And it is to Satan a matter of little importance what men *may be*, or *are*, provided they are NOT Christians. They may be amiable, moral, accomplished, rich, honoured, esteemed by the world, because in the possession of all these he may be equally sure of their ruin, and because, also, these things may contribute somewhat to turn away their minds from the gospel. Satan, therefore, will not oppose plans of gain or ambition; he will not oppose purposes of fashion and amusement; he may not oppose schemes by which we desire to rise in the world; he will not oppose the theatre, the ball-room, the dance, or the song; he will not oppose thoughtless mirth; but the moment the gospel begins to shine on the benighted mind, that moment he will make resistance, and then all his power will be concentrated.

The glorious gospel. Greek, "The gospel of the glory of Christ"—a Hebraism for the glorious gospel. Mr. Locke renders it, "the glorious brightness of the light of the gospel of Christ," and supposes it means the brightness, or clearness, of the doctrine wherein Christ is manifested in the gospel. It is all light, and splendour, and beauty, compared with the dark systems of philosophy and heathenism. It is glorious, for it is full of splendour; makes known the glorious God; discloses a glorious plan of salvation; and conducts ignorant, weak, and degraded man to a world of light. No two words in our language are so full of rich and precious meaning, as the phrase "glorious gospel."

Who is the image of God. Christ is called the image of God,

(1.) in respect to his Divine nature, his exact resemblance to God in his Divine attributes and perfections, (see Col 1:15 Heb 1:3); and

(2.) in his moral attributes as Mediator, as showing forth the glory of the Father to men. He *resembles* God; and in him we see the Divine glory and perfections embodied, and shine forth. It is from his *resemblance* to God in all respects that he is called his image; and it is through him that the Divine perfections are made known to men. It is an object of especial dislike and hatred to Satan that the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on men, and fill their hearts. Satan hates that image; he hates that men should become like God; and he hates all that has a resemblance to the great and glorious Jehovah.

{b} "god of this world" Joh 12:31,40 {a} "image of God" Joh 1:14,18

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *For we preach not ourselves*. The connexion here is not very apparent, and the design of this verse has been variously understood. The connexion seems to me to be this: Paul gives here a reason for what he had said in the previous parts of the epistle respecting his conduct in the ministry, he had said that his course had been open and pure, and free from all dishonest arts and tricks, and that he had not corrupted the word of God, or resorted to any artifice to accomplish his designs, 2Co 2:17 4:1,2.

The *reason* of this he here says is, that he had not preached himself, or sought to advance his own interest, he regarded himself as sent to make known a Saviour; himself as bound by all means to promote his cause, and to imitate him. Other men—the false teachers, and the cunning priests of the heathen religions sought to advance their own interest, and to perpetuate a system of delusion that would be profitable to themselves; and they therefore resorted to all arts, and stratagems, and cunning devices, to perpetuate their authority and extend their influence. But the fact that Paul and his associates went forth to make known the Lord Jesus, was a reason why they avoided all such dishonest arts and artifices. "We are merely the *ambassadors* of another. We are not *principals* in this business, and do not despatch it as a business of our own, but we transact it as the *agents* for another, that is, for the Lord Jesus, and we feel ourselves bound, therefore, to do it as he would have done it himself; and as he was free from all trick and dishonest art, we feel bound to be also." This seems to me to be the design of this passage. Ministers may be said to preach themselves in the following ways:

(1.) When their preaching has a primary reference to their own interest; and when they engage in it to advance their reputation, or to secure in some way their own advantage. When they aim at exalting their authority, extending their influence, or in any way promoting their own welfare.

(2.) When they proclaim their own opinions, and not the gospel of Christ; when they derived their doctrines from their own reasonings, and not from the Bible.

(3.) When they put themselves forward; speak much of themselves; refer often to themselves; are wain of their powers of reasoning, of their eloquence, and of their learning, and seek to make these known rather than the simple truths of the gospel. In one word, when self is primary, and the gospel is secondary; when they prostitute the ministry to gain popularity; to live a life of ease; to be respected; to obtain a livelihood; to gain influence; to rule over a people; and to make the preaching of the gospel merely *an occasion* of advancing themselves in the world. Such a plan, it is implied here, would lead to dishonest arts and devices, and to trick and stratagem to accomplish the end in view. And it is implied here, also, that to avoid all such tricks and arts, the true way is not to preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ.

But Christ Jesus the Lord. This Paul states to be the only purpose of the ministry. It is so far the sole design of the ministry, that had it not been to make known the Lord Jesus, it would never have been established; and whatever other objects are secured by its appointment, and whatever other truths are to be illustrated and enforced by the ministry, yet, if this is not the primary subject, and if every other object is not made subservient to this, the design of the ministry is not secured. The word "Christ" properly means the Anointed; that is, the Messiah, the Anointed of God for this great office, **See Barnes "Mt 1:1"**

but it is used in the New Testament as a proper name, the name that was appropriate to *Jesus*. Still it may be used with a reference to the fact of the Messiahship, and not merely as a proper name; and in this place it may mean that they preached Jesus as the Messiah, or the Christ, and defended his claims to that high appointment. The word "Lord," also, is used to designate him, Mr

11:3 Joh 20:25; and when it stands by itself in the New Testament, it denotes the Lord Jesus, **See Barnes "Ac 1:24"**; but it properly denotes one who has rule, or authority, or proprietorship; and it is used here not merely as a part of the appropriate title of the Saviour, but with reference to the fact that he had the supreme headship or lordship over the church and the world. This important passage therefore means, that they made it their sole business to make known Jesus the Messiah, or the Christ, as the supreme liege and Lord of his people; that is, to set forth the Messiahship and the lordship of Jesus of Nazareth, appointed to these high offices by God. To do this, or to preach Jesus Christ the Lord, implies the following things:

(1.) To prove that he is the Messiah so often predicted in the Old Testament, and so long expected by the Jewish people. To do this was a very vital part of the work of the ministry in the time of the apostles, and was essential to their success in all their attempts to convert the Jews; and to do this will be no less important in all attempts to bring the Jews now or in future times to the knowledge of the truth. No man can be successful among them who is not able to prove that Jesus is the Messiah. It is not indeed so vital and leading a point now in reference to those to whom the ministers of the gospel usually preach; and it is probable that the importance of this argument is by many overlooked, and that it is not urged as it should be by those who "preach Christ Jesus the Lord." It involves the whole argument for the truth of Christianity. It leads to all the demonstrations that this religion is from God; and the establishment of the proposition that Jesus is the Messiah, is one of the most direct and certain ways of proving that his religion is from heaven. For

(a.) it contains the argument from the fulfillment of the prophecies—one of the main evidences of the truth of revelation; and

(b.) it involves an examination of all the evidences that Jesus gave that he was the Messiah sent from God, and of course an examination of all the miracles that he wrought in attestation of his Divine mission. The first object of a preacher, therefore, is to demonstrate that Jesus is sent from God, in accordance with the predictions of the prophets.

(2.) To proclaim the truths that he taught. To make known his sentiments and his doctrines, and not our own. This includes, of course, all that he taught respecting God, and respecting man; all that he taught respecting his own nature, and the design of his coming; all that he taught respecting the character of the human heart, and about human obligation and duty; all that he taught respecting death, the judgment, and eternity —respecting an eternal heaven, and an eternal hell. To explain, enforce, and vindicate his doctrines, is one great design of the ministry; and were there nothing else, this would be a field sufficiently ample to employ the life; sufficiently glorious to employ the best talents of man. The minister of the gospel is to teach the sentiments and doctrines of Jesus Christ, in contradistinction from all his own sentiments, and from all the doctrines of mere philosophy. He is not to teach science, or mere morals, but he is to proclaim and defend the doctrines of the Redeemer.

(3.) He is to make known *the facts* of the Saviour's life. He is to show how he lived—to hold up his example in all the trying circumstances in which he was placed. For he came to show by his life what the law required; and to show how men should live. And it is the office of the Christian ministry, or a part of their work in preaching "Christ Jesus the Lord," to show how he lived, and to set forth his self-denial, his meekness, his purity, his blameless life, his spirit of prayer, his submission to the Divine will, his patience in suffering, his forgiveness of his enemies, his tenderness to the afflicted, the weak, and the tempted, and the manner of his death. Were *this* all, it would be enough to employ the whole of a minister's life, and to command the best talents of the world. For

he was the only perfectly pure model; and his example is to be followed by all his people, and his example is designed to exert a deep and wide influence on the world. Piety flourishes just in proportion as the pure example of Jesus Christ is kept before a people; and the world is made happier and better, just as that example is kept constant in view. To the gay and the thoughtless, the ministers of the gospel are to show how serious and calm was the Redeemer; to the worldly-minded, to show how he lived above the world; to the avaricious, how benevolent he was; to the profane and licentious, how pure he was; to the tempted, how he endured temptation; to the afflicted, how patient and resigned; to the dying, how he died; to all, to show how holy, and heavenly-minded, and prayerful, and pure he was, in order that they may be won to the same purity, and be prepared to dwell with him in his kingdom.

(4.) To set forth the design of his death. To show why he came to die; and what was the great object to be effected by his sufferings and death. To exhibit, therefore, the sorrows of his life; to describe his many trials; to dwell upon his sufferings in the garden of Gethsemane, and on the cross. To show why he died, and what was to be the influence of his death on the destiny of man. To show how it makes an atonement for sin; how it reconciles God to man; how it is made efficacious in the justification and the sanctification of the sinner. And were there nothing else, this would be sufficient to employ all the time and the best talents in the ministry. For the salvation of the soul depends on the proper exhibition of the design of the death of the Redeemer. There is no salvation but through his blood; and hence the nature and design of his atoning sacrifice is to be exhibited to every man, and the offers of mercy through that death to be pressed upon the attention of every sinner.

(5.) To set forth the truth and the design of his resurrection. To *prove* that he rose from the dead, and that he ascended to heaven; and to show the influence of his resurrection on our hopes and destiny. The whole structure of Christianity is dependent on making out the fact that he rose; and *if* he rose, all the difficulties in the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead are removed at once, and his people will also rise. The influence of that fact, therefore, on our hopes and on our prospects for eternity, is to be shown by the ministry of the gospel; and were there nothing else, this would be ample to command all the time and the best talents of the ministry.

(6.) To proclaim him as "Lord." This is expressly specified in the passage before us. "For we preach Christ Jesus THE LORD ;" we proclaim him as the Lord. That is, he is to be preached as having dominion over the conscience; as the supreme Ruler in his church; as above all councils, and synods, and conferences, and all human authority; as having a right to legislate for his people; a right to prescribe their mode of worship; a right to define and determine the doctrines which they shall believe, he is to be proclaimed also as ruling over all, and as exalted in his mediatorial character over all worlds, and as having all things put beneath his feet, Ps 2:6 Isa 9:6,7 Mt 28:18; Joh 17:2 Eph 1:20; Heb 2:8.

And ourselves your servants, etc. So far as we make any mention of ourselves, it is to declare that we are your servants, and that we are bound to promote your welfare in the cause and for the sake of the Redeemer. That is, they were their, servants in all things in which they could advance the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom among them. The doctrine is, that they regarded themselves as under obligation not to seek their own interest, or to build up their own reputation and cause; but to seek the welfare of the church, and promote its interests, as a servant does that of his master. They should not seek to lord it over God's heritage, and to claim supreme and independent authority.

They were not masters, but servants. The church at large was the master, and they were its servants. This implies the following things:

(1.) That the *time* of ministers belongs to the church, and should be employed in its welfare. It is not their own; and it is not to be employed in farming, or in speculating, or in trafficking, or in idleness, or in lounging, or in unprofitable visiting, or in mere science, or in reading or making books that will not advance the interests of the church. The time of the ministry is not for ease, or ambition, or self-indulgence, but is to promote the interests of the body of Christ. So Paul felt, and so he lived. (2.) Their *talents* belong to the church. All their original talents, and all that they can acquire, should be honestly devoted to the welfare of the church of the Redeemer.

(3.) Their best efforts and plans, the avails of their best thoughts and purposes, belong to the church, and should be honestly devoted to it. Their strength, and rigour, and influence should be devoted to it, as the rigour, and strength, and talent, and skill of a servant belong to the master. See Ps 137:5,6. The language of the ministry, as of every Christian, should be—

I love thy church, O God
Her walls before thee stand,
Dear as the apple of thine eye,
and graven on thy hand.

If e'er to bless thy sons
My voice or hands deny,
These bauds let useful skill forsake,
This voice in silence die.

If e'er my heart forget
Her welfare or her woe,
Let every joy this heart forsake,
And every grief o'erflow.

For her my tears shall fall,
For her my prayers ascend,
To her my cares and toils be given,
Till toils and cares shall end.

And it implies,

(4.) that they are the servants of the church in time of trial, temptation, and affliction. They are to devote themselves to the comfort of the afflicted. They are to be the guide to the perplexed. They are to aid the tempted. They are to comfort those that mourn, and they are to sustain and console the dying. They are to regard themselves as the servants of the church to accomplish these great objects; and are to be willing to deny themselves, and to take up their cross, and to consecrate their time to the advancement of these great interests. And they are, in all respects, to devote their time, and talents, and influence to the welfare of the church, with as much single-mindedness as the servant is to seek the interest of his master. It was in this way eminently that Paul was favoured with the success with which God blessed him in the ministry; and so every minister will be

successful, just in proportion to the single-mindedness with which he devotes himself to the work of preaching Jesus Christ THE Lord.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *For God, who commanded*, etc. The design of this verse seems to be, to give a reason why Paul and his fellow-apostles did not preach themselves, but Jesus Christ the Lord, 2Co 4:5. That reason was, that their minds had been so illuminated by that God who had commanded the light to shine out of darkness, that they had discerned the glory of the Divine perfections shining in and through the Redeemer, and they therefore gave themselves to the work of making him known among men. The doctrines which they preached they had not derived from men in any form. They had not been elaborated by human reasoning or science, nor had they been imparted by tradition. They had been communicated directly by the Source of all light—the true God—who had shined into the hearts that were once benighted by sin. Having been thus illuminated, they had felt themselves bound to go and make known to others the truths which God had imparted to them.

Who commanded the light, etc. Ge 1:3. God caused it to shine by his simple command. He *said*, "Let there be light, and there was light." The fact that it was produced by *his saying so* is referred to here by Paul, by his use of the phrase, (*o eipwn*,) "Who *saying*," or speaking the light to shine from darkness. The passage in Genesis is adduced by Longinus as a striking instance of the sublime.

Hath shined in our hearts. Marg., "*Is he* who hath." This is more in accordance with the Greek; and the sense is, "The God who at the creation bade the light to shine out of darkness, is he who has shined into our hearts; or it is the same God who has. illuminated us, who commanded the light to shine at the creation." *Light* is everywhere in the Bible the emblem of knowledge, purity, and truth; as darkness is the emblem of ignorance, error, sin, and wretchedness. **See Barnes** "Joh 1:4, **See Barnes "Joh 1:5".**

And the sense here is, that God had removed this ignorance, and poured a flood of light and truth on their minds. This passage teaches, therefore, the following important truths in regard to Christians—since it is as applicable to all Christians as it was to the apostles:

(1.) That the mind is by nature ignorant and benighted—to an extent which may be properly compared with the darkness which prevailed before God commanded the light to shine. Indeed, the darkness which prevailed before the light was formed, was a most striking emblem of the darkness which exists in the mind of man before it is enlightened by revelation, and by the Holy Spirit. For

(a.) in all minds by nature there is deep ignorance of God, of his law and his requirements; and

(b.) this is often greatly deepened by the course of life which men lead; by their education; or by their indulgence in sin, and by their plans of life; and especially by the indulgence of evil passions. The tendency of man, if left to himself, is to plunge into deeper darkness, and to involve his mind more entirely in the obscurity of moral midnight. "Light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil," Joh 3:19.

(2.) This verse teaches the fact, that the minds of Christians are illuminated. They are enabled to see things as they are. This fact is often taught in the Scriptures. See 1Jo 2:20 1Co 2:12-15. They

have different views of things from their fellow-men, and different from what they once had. They perceive a beauty in religion which others do not see, and a glory in truth, and in the Saviour, and in the promises of the gospel, which they did not see before they were converted. This does not mean

(a.) that they are superior in their powers of understanding to other men —for the reverse is often the fact; nor

(b.) that the effect of religion is at once to enlarge their own intellectual powers, and make them different from what they were before in this respect. But it means that they have clear and consistent views; they look at things as they are; they perceive a beauty in religion and in the service of God which they did not before. They see a beauty in the Bible, and in the doctrines of the Bible, which they did not before, and which sinners do not see. The temperate man will see a beauty in temperance, and in an argument for temperance, which the drunkard will not; the benevolent man will see a beauty in benevolence, which the churl will not; and so of honesty, truth, and chastity. And especially will a man who is *reformed* from intemperance, impurity, dishonesty, and avarice, see a beauty in a virtuous life which he did not before see. There is indeed no *immediate* and *direct* enlargement of the intellect; but there is an effect on the heart which produces an appropriate and indirect effect on the understanding. It is at the same time true, that the practice of virtue, that a pure heart, and that the cultivation of piety, all tend to regulate, strengthen, and expand the intellect; as the ways of vice, and the indulgence of evil passions and propensities tend to enfeeble, paralyze, darken, and ruin the understanding; so that, other things being equal, the man of most decided virtue, and most calm and elevated piety, will be the man of the clearest and best regulated mind. His powers will be the most assiduously, carefully, and conscientiously cultivated, and he will feel himself bound to make the most of them. The influence of piety in giving light to the mind is often strikingly manifested among unlettered and ignorant Christians. It often happens, as a matter of fact, that they have by far clearer and more just and elevated views of truth than men of the most mighty intellects, and most highly cultivated by science and adorned with learning, but who have no piety; and a practical acquaintance with their own hearts, and a practical experience of the power of religion in the days of temptation and trial, is a better enlightener of the mind on the subject of religion than all the learning of the schools.

(3.) This verse teaches that it is the same God who enlightens the mind of the Christian, that commanded the light at first to shine, he is the Source of all light. He formed the light in the natural world; he gives all light and truth on all subjects to the understanding; and he imparts all correct views of truth to the heart. Light is not originated by man; and man, on the subject of religion, no more creates the light which beams upon his benighted mind, than he created the light of the sun when it first shed its beams over the darkened earth. "All truth is from the sempiternal source of light divine;" and it is no more the work of man to enlighten the mind, and dissipate the darkness from the soul of a benighted sinner, than it was of man to scatter the darkness that brooded over the creation, or than he can now turn the shades of midnight to noonday. All this work lies beyond the proper province of man; and is all to be traced to the agency of God—the great Fountain of light.

(4.) It is taught here that it is the *same power* that gives light to the mind of the Christian, which at first commanded the light to shine out of darkness. It requires the exertion of the same Omnipotence; and the change is often as remarkable and surprising. Nothing can be conceived to be more grand than the first creation of light—when by axe word the whole solar system was in a

blaze. And nothing in the moral world is more grand than when by a word God commands the light to beam on the soul of a benighted sinner. Night is at once changed to day; and all things are seen in a blaze of glory. The works of God appear different; the word of God appears different; and a new aspect of beauty is diffused over all things. If it be asked IN WHAT WAY God thus imparts light to the mind, we may reply:

(1.) By his written and preached word. All spiritual and saving light to the minds of men has come through his revealed truth. Nor does the Spirit of God now give or reveal any light to the mind which is not to be found in the word of God, and which not imparted through that medium.

(2.) God makes use of providential dealings to give light to the minds of men. They are then,by sickness, disappointment, and pain, made to see the folly and vanity of the things of this world, and to see the necessity of a better portion.

(3.) It is done especially and mainly by the influences of the Holy Spirit. It is directly by his agency that the heart becomes affected, and the mind enlightened. It is his province in the world to prepare the heart to receive the truth; to dispose the mind to attend to it; to remove the obstructions which existed to its clear perception; to enable the mind clearly to see the beauty of truth, and of the plan of salvation through a Redeemer. And whatever may be the means which may be used, it is still true that it is only by the Spirit of God that men are ever brought to see the truth clearly and brightly. The same Spirit that inspired the prophets and apostles also illuminates the minds of men now, removes the darkness from their minds, and enables them clearly to discover the truth as it is in Jesus. **See Barnes** "1Co 2:10, and 1Co 2:11-15.

To give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God. This shows the object, or the effect of enlightening the mind. It is that Christians may behold the Divine glory. The meaning is, that it is for the purpose of enlightening and instructing them concerning the knowledge of the glory of God.—*Bloomfield*. Doddridge renders it, "The lustre of the knowledge of God's glory." Tindal, "To give the light of the knowledge of the glorious God." The sense is, that the purpose of his shining into their hearts was to give light, (*prov fwtismon*,) i.e., unto the enlightening; and the purpose of that light was to acquaint them with the knowledge of the Divine glory.

In the face of Jesus Christ. That is, that they might obtain the knowledge of the Divine glory as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ; or as it is reflected on the face, or the person of the Redeemer. There is undoubted allusion here to what is said of Moses (2Co 3:13) when the Divine glory was reflected on his face, and produced such a splendour and magnificence that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look upon it. The sense here is, that in the face or the person of Jesus Christ the glory of God shone clearly, and the Divinity appeared without a vail. The Divine perfections, as it were, illuminated him, as the face of Moses was illuminated; or they shone forth through him, and were seen in him. The word rendered "face" here, (*proswpon*,) may mean either face or person. **See Barnes "2Co 2:10".**

The sense is not materially affected, whichever translation is preferred. It is, that the Divine perfections shone in and through the Redeemer. This refers doubtless to the following truths:

(1.) That the glory of the Divine *nature* is seen in him, since he is "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person," Heb 1:3. And it is in and through him that the glory of the Divine perfections are made known.

(2.) That the glory of the Divine *attributes* is made known through him, since it is through him that the work of creation was accomplished, (Joh 1:3 Col 1:16;) and it is by him that the mercy and goodness of God have been manifested to men.

(3.) That the glory of the Divine *moral character* is seen through him, since when on earth he manifested the embodied Divine perfections; he showed what God is when incarnate; he lived as became the incarnate God—he was as pure and holy in human nature as God is in the heavens. And there is not, that we know of, one of the Divine attributes or perfections which has not at some period, or in some form, been evinced by Jesus Christ. If it be the prerogative of God to be eternal, he was eternal, Isa 9:6 Re 1:8,18.

If it be the prerogative of God to be the Creator, he was also the Creator, (Joh 1:3;) if to be omniscient, he, was omniscient, (Mt 11:27 Lu 10:22;) if to be omnipresent, he is omnipresent, (Mt 18:20;) if to be almighty, he was almighty, (Isa 9:6;) if to raise the dead, to give life, he did it, (Joh 5:21 11:43,44;) if to still waves and tempests, he did it, (Mr 4:39;) if to be full of benevolence, to be perfectly holy, to be without a moral stain or spot, then all this is found in Jesus Christ. And as the wax bears the perfect image of the seal—perfect not only in the outline, and in the general resemblance, but in the filling up, in all the lines, and features, and letters on the seal—so it is with the Redeemer. There is not one of the Divine perfections which has not the counterpart in him; and if the glory of the Divine character is seen at all, it will be seen in and through him.

{a} "commanded the light" Ge 1:3 {1} "hath shined" "Is he who hath"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *But we have this treasure*. The treasure of the gospel; the rich and invaluable truths which they were called to preach to others. The word "treasure" is applied to those truths on account of their inestimable worth. Paul in the previous verses had spoken of the gospel, the knowledge of Jesus Christ, as full of glory, and infinitely precious. This rich blessing had been committed to him and his fellow.labourers, to dispense it to others, and to diffuse it abroad. His purpose in this and the following verses is to show that it had been so intrusted to them as to secure all the glory of its propagation to God, and so also as to show its unspeakable value. For this purpose, he not only affirms that it is a treasure, but says that it had been so intrusted to them as to show the power of God in its propagation; that it had showed its value in sustaining them in their many trials; and they had showed their sense of its worth by being willing to endure all kinds of trial in order to make it everywhere known, 2Co 4:8-11. The expression here is similar to that which the Saviour uses when he calls the gospel "the pearl of great price," Mt 13:46.

In earthen vessels. This refers to the apostles and ministers of religion, as weak and feeble; as having bodies decaying and dying; as fragile, and liable to various accidents, and as being altogether unworthy to hold a treasure so invaluable; as if valuable diamonds and gold were placed in vessels of earth of coarse composition, easily broken, and liable to decay. The word *vessel* (*skeuov*) means, properly, any utensil or instrument; and is applied usually to utensils of household furniture, or, hollow vessels for containing things, Lu 8:16 Joh 19:29. It is applied to the human body, as made of clay, and therefore frail and feeble, with reference to its *containing* anything, as, e.g., treasure. Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 9:22"**.

The word rendered earthen, (*ostrakinoiv*,) means that which is made of shells, (from *ostrakon*;) and then burnt clay, probably because vessels were at first made of burnt shells. It is fitted well to

represent the human body-frail, fragile, and easily reduced again to dust. The purpose of Paul here is to show that it was by no excellency of his nature that the gospel was originated; it was in virtue of no rigour and strength which he possessed that it was propagated; but that it had been, of design, committed by God to weak, decaying, and crumbling instruments, in order that it might be seen that it was by the power of God that such instruments were sustained in the trials to which they were exposed, and in order that it might be manifest to all that it was not originated and diffused by the power of those to whom it was intrusted. The idea is, that they were altogether insufficient of their own strength to accomplish what was accomplished by the gospel. Paul uses a metaphor similar to this in 2Ti 2:20.

That the excellency of the power. An elegant expression, denoting the exceeding great power. The great power referred to here was that which was manifested in connexion with the labours of the apostles—the power of healing the sick, raising the dead, and casting out devils; the power of bearing persecution and trial; and the power of carrying the gospel over Sea and land, in the midst of danger, and in spite of all the opposition which men could make, whether as individuals or as combined; and especially the power of converting the hearts of sinners, of humbling the proud, and leading the guilty to the knowledge of God anal the hope of heaven. The idea is, that all this was manifestly beyond human strength; and that God had of design chosen weak and feeble instruments *in order* that it might be everywhere seen that it was done not by human power, but by his own. The instrumentality employed was altogether *disproportionate* in its nature to the effect produced.

May be of God. May evidently appear to be of God; that it may be manifest to all that it is God's power, and not ours. It was one great purpose of God that this should be kept clearly in view. And it is still done. God takes care that this shall be apparent. For

(1.) it is always true, whoever is employed, and however great may be the talents, learning, or zeal of those who preach, -that it is by the power of God that men are converted. Such a work cannot be accomplished by man. It is not by might or by strength; and between the conversion of a proud, haughty, and abandoned sinner, and the power of him who is made the instrument, there is such a manifest disproportion, that it is evident it is the work of God. The conversion of the human heart is not to be accomplished by man.

(2.) Ministers are frail, imperfect, and sinful, as they were in the time of Paul. When the imperfections of ministers are considered; when their frequent errors, and their not unfrequent moral obliquities are contemplated; when it is remembered how far many of them live from what they ought to, and how few of them live in any considerable degree as becometh the followers of the Redeemer, it is wonderful that God blesses their labours as he does; and the matter of amazement is not that no more are converted under their ministry, but it is that so many are converted, or that any are converted; and it is manifest that it is the mere power of God.

(3.) He often makes use of the most feeble, and unlearned, and weak of his servants, to accomplish the greatest effects. It is not splendid talents, or profound learning, or distinguished eloquence that is always or even commonly most successful. Often the ministry of such is entirely barren; while some humble and obscure man shall have constant success, and revivals shall attend him wherever he goes. It is the man of faith, and prayer, and self-denial that is blessed; and the purpose of God in the ministry, as in everything else, is to "*stain the pride of all human glory*," and to show that He is all in all.

{a} "excellency of the power" 1Co 2:5

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *We are troubled*. We the apostles. Paul here refers to some of the *trials* to which he and his fellow-labourers were subjected in making known the gospel. The *design* for which he does it seems to be, to show them

(1.) what they endured in preaching the truth;

(2.) to show the sustaining power of that gospel in the midst of afflictions; and

(3.) to conciliate their favour, or to remind them that they had endured these things on their account, 2Co 4:12-15. Perhaps one leading design was to recover the affections of those of the Corinthians whose hearts had been alienated from him, by showing them how much he had endured on their account. For this purpose he freely opens his heart to them, and tenderly represents the many and grievous pressures and hardships to which love to souls, and theirs among the rest, had exposed him.—*Doddridge*. The whole passage is one of the most pathetic and beautiful to be found in the New Testament. The word rendered troubled (*ylibomenoi*, from *ylibw*) may have reference to wrestling, or to the contests in the Grecian games. It properly means, to press, to press together; then to press as in a crowd where there is a throng, (Mr 3:9;) then to compress together, (Mt 7:14;) and then to oppress, or compress with evils, to distress, to afflict, 2Th 1:6 2Co 1:6. Here it may mean, that he was encompassed with trials, or placed in the midst of them, so that they pressed upon him as persons do in a crowd, or, possibly, as a man was close pressed by an adversary in the games. He refers to the fact that he was called to endure a great number of trials and afflictions. Some of those trials he refers to in 2Co 7:5: "When we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears."

On every side. In every respect. In every way. We are subjected to all kinds of trial and affliction.

Yet not distressed. This by no means expresses the force of the original; nor is it possible perhaps to express it in a translation. Tindal renders it, "yet we are not without our shift." The Greek word here used (*stenocwroumenoi*) as a relation to the word which is rendered "troubled." It properly means, to crowd into a narrow place; to straiten as to room; to be so straitened as not to be able to turn one's self. And the idea is, that though he was close pressed by persecutions and trials, yet he was not so hemmed in that he had no way to turn himself; his -trials did not wholly prevent motion and action, he was not *so* closely pressed as a man would be who was so straitened that he could not move his body, or stir hand or foot. He had still resources; he was permitted to move; the energy of his piety, and the rigour of his soul, could not be entirely cramped and impeded by the trials which encompassed him. The Syriac renders it, "In all things we are pressed, but are not suffocated." The idea is, he was not wholly discouraged, and disheartened, and overcome. He had resources in his piety which enabled him to bear up under these trials, and still to engage in the work of preaching the gospel.

We are perplexed, *aporoumenoi*. This word (from *aporov*, without resource, which is derived from *a*, priv., and *porov*, way, or exit) means, to be without resource; to know not what to do; to hesitate; to be in doubt and anxiety, as a traveller is, who is ignorant of the way, or who has not the means of prosecuting his journey. It means here, that they were often brought into circumstances of great embarrassment, where they hardly knew what to do, or what course to take. They were surrounded by foes; they were in want; they were in circumstances which they had not anticipated, and which greatly perplexed them.

But not in despair. In the margin, "not altogether without help or means." Tindal renders this, "We are in poverty, but not utterly without somewhat." In the word here used, (*exaporoumenoi*,) the preposition is intensive or emphatic, and means *utterly, quite*. The word means, to be utterly without resource; to despair altogether; and the idea of Paul here is, that they were not left *entirely* without resource. Their wants were provided for; their embarrassments were removed; their grounds of perplexity were taken away; and unexpected strength and resources were imparted to them. When they did not know what to do, when all resources seemed to fail them, in some unexpected manner they would be relieved and saved from absolute despair. How often does this occur in the lives of all Christians! And how certain is it, that in all such cases God will interpose by his grace and aid his people, and save them from absolute despair.

{a} "troubled on every side" 2Co 7:5 {1} "not in despair" "not altogether without help or means"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Persecuted*.Often persecuted; persecuted in all places. The "Acts of the Apostles" show how true this was.

But not forsaken. Not deserted; not left by God. Though persecuted by men, yet they experienced the fulfillment of the Divine promise that he would never leave or forsake them. God always interposed to aid them; always saved them from the power of their enemies; always sustained them in the time of persecution. It is still true. people have been often persecuted. Yet God has often interposed to save them from the hands of their enemies; and where he has not saved them from their hands, and preserved their lives, yet he has never left them, but has sustained, upheld, and comforted them even in the dreadful agonies of death.

Cast down. Thrown down by our enemies, perhaps in allusion to the contests of wrestlers, or of gladiators.

But not destroyed. Not killed. They rose again; they recovered their strength; they were prepared for new conflicts. They surmounted every difficulty, and were ready to engage in new strifes, and to meet new trials and persecutions.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Always bearing about in the body*. The expression here used is designed to show the great perils to which Paul was exposed. And the idea is, that he had on his body the marks, the stripes and marks of punishment and persecution, which showed that he was exposed to the same violent death which the Lord Jesus himself endured. Comp. Ga 6:17: "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." It is a strong energetic mode of expression, to denote the severity of the trials to which he was exposed; and the meaning is, that his body bore the marks of his being exposed

to the same treatment as the Lord Jesus was; and evidence that he was probably yet to die in a similar manner under the hands of persecutors. Comp. Col 1:24.

The dying of the Lord Jesus. The death; the violent death. A death similar to that of the Lord Jesus. The idea is, that he was always exposed to death, and always suffering, in a manner that was equivalent to dying. The expression is parallel to what he says in 1Co 15:31, "I die daily;" and in 2Co 11:23, where he says, "in deaths oft." It does not mean that he bore about *literally* the dying of the Lord Jesus, but that he was exposed to a similar death, and had marks on his person which showed that he was always exposed to the same violent death. This did not occur once only, or at distant intervals, but it occurred constantly; and wherever he was, it was still true that he was exposed to violence, and liable to suffer in the same manner that the Lord Jesus did.

That the life also of Jesus, etc. This passage has received, a considerable variety of interpretation. Grotius renders it, "Such a life as was that of Christ, immortal, blessed, heavenly." Locke, "That also the life of Jesus, risen from the dead, may be made manifest by the energy that accompanies my preaching in this frail body." Clarke supposes that it means, that he might be able in this manner to show that Christ was risen from the dead. But perhaps Paul does not refer to one single thing in the life of the Lord Jesus, but means that he did this in order that in all things the same life, the same kind of living which characterized the Lord Jesus, might be manifested in him or that he resembled him in his sufferings and trials, in order that in all things he might have the same life in his body. Perhaps, therefore, it may include the following things as objects at which the apostle aimed:

(1.) A desire that his *life* might resemble that of the Lord Jesus. That there might be the same self-denial; the same readiness to suffer; the same patience in trials; the same meekness, gentleness, zeal, ardour, love to God, and love to men evinced in his body, which was in that of the Lord Jesus. Thus understood, it means that he placed the Lord Jesus before him as the model of his life; and deemed it an object to be attained, even by great self-denial and sufferings, to be conformed to him.

(2.) A desire to attain to the same life in the resurrection which the Lord Jesus had attained to. A desire to be made like him; and that in his body, which bore about the dying of the Lord Jesus, he might again live after death as the Lord Jesus did. Thus understood, it implies an earnest wish to attain to the resurrection of the dead, and accords with what he says in Php 3:8-11, which may perhaps be considered as Paul's own commentary on this passage, which has been so variously and so little understood by expositors: "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ. That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." Comp. Col 1:24. It intimates Paul's earnest desire and longing to be made like Christ in the resurrection, (comp. Php 3:21;) his longing to rise again in the last day, (comp. Ac 26:7;) his sense of the importance of the doctrine of the resurrection, and his readiness to suffer anything if he might at last attain to the resurrection of the just, and be ready to enter with the Redeemer into a world of glory. The attainment of this is the high object before the Christian, and to be made like the Redeemer in heaven, to have a body like his, is the grand purpose for which they should live; and sustained by this hope they should be willing to endure any trials, and meet any sufferings, if they may come to that same "life" and blessedness above.

{b} "about in the body" Ga 6:17 {c} "that the life" 2Ti 2:11,12

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *For we which live*. Those of us, the apostles and ministers of the Redeemer, who still survive. James the brother of John had been put to death, (Ac 12:2;) and it is probable also that some other of the apostles had been also. This verse is merely explanatory of the previous verse.

Are alway delivered unto death. Exposed constantly to death. This shows what is meant, in 2Co 4:10, by bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus. **See Barnes "1Co 15:31"**.

In our mortal flesh. In our body. In our life on earth; and in our glorified body in heaven. **See Barnes "2Co 4:10"**.

{*} "live" "are alive" {a} "alway delivered" 1Co 15:31,49

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *So then death worketh in us*. We are exposed to death. The preaching of the gospel exposes us to trials which may be regarded as death working in us. Death has an energy over us, (*energeitai* is at work, is active, or operates; it is constantly employed in inflicting pains on us, and subjecting us to privation and trims. This is a strong and emphatic mode of saying that they were always exposed to death. We are called to serve and glorify the Redeemer, as it were, By repeated deaths and by constantly dying.

But life in you. You live as the effect of our being constantly exposed to death. You reap the advantage of all our exposure to trials, and of all our sufferings. You are comparatively safe; are freed from this exposure to death; and will receive eternal life as the fruit of our toils and exposures. Life, here, may refer either to exemption from danger and death, or it may refer to the life of religion, the hopes of piety, the prospect of eternal salvation. To me it seems most probable that Paul means to use it in the latter sense, and that he designs to say that while he was exposed to death, and called to endure constant trial, the effect would be that they would obtain, in consequence of his sufferings, the blessedness of eternal life. Comp. 2Co 4:15. Thus understood, this passage means that the sufferings and self-denials of the apostles were for the good of others, and would result in their benefit and salvation; and the design of Paul here is to remind them of his sufferings in their behalf, in order to conciliate their favour, and bind them more closely to him by the remembrance of his sufferings on their account.

{b} "then death" 2Co 13:9

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *We having the same spirit of faith*. The same spirit that is expressed in the quotation which he is about to make; the same faith which the psalmist had. We have the Very spirit of faith

which is expressed by David. The sense is, We have the same spirit of faith which he had who said, "I believed," etc. The phrase "spirit of faith" means substantially the same as faith itself—a believing sense or impression of the truth.

According as it is written. This passage is found in Ps 116:10. When the psalmist uttered the words, he was greatly afflicted. See 2Co 4:3,6-8.

In these circumstances he prayed to God, and expressed confidence in him, and placed all his reliance on him. In his affliction he spoke to God; he spoke of his confidence in him; he proclaimed his reliance on him; and his having spoken in this manner was the result of his belief, or of his putting confidence in God. Paul, in quoting this, does not mean to say that the psalmist had any reference to the preaching of the gospel; nor does he mean to say that his circumstances were, in all respects, like those of the psalmist. The circumstances resembled each other only in these respects:

(1.) That Paul, like the psalmist, was in circumstances of trial and affliction; and

(2) that the language which both used was that which was prompted by faith—faith, which led them to give utterance to the sentiments of their hearts: the psalmist to utter his confidence in God, and the hopes by which he was sustained, and Paul to utter his belief in the glorious truths of the gospel, to speak of a risen Saviour, and to show forth the consolations which were thus set before men in the gospel. The sentiments of both were the language of faith. Both, in afflictions, uttered the language of faith; and Paul uses here, as he often does, the language of the Old Testament, as *exactly* expressing his feelings, and the principles by which he was actuated.

We also believe, etc. We believe in the truths of the gospel; we believe in God, in the Saviour, in the atonement, in the resurrection, etc. The sentiment is, that they had a firm confidence in these things, and that, as the result of that confidence, they boldly delivered their sentiments. It prompted them to give utterance to their feelings. "Out of the abundance of the heart," said the Saviour, "the mouth speaketh," Mt 12:34. No man should attempt to preach the gospel who has not a firm belief of its truths; and he who does believe its truths will be prompted to make them known to his fellow-men. All successful preaching is the result of a firm and settled conviction of the truth of the gospel; and when such a conviction exists, it is natural to give utterance to the belief, and such an expression will be attended with happy influences on the minds of other men. **See Barnes "Ac 4:20".**

{c} "same spirit" 2Pe 1:1 {d} "I believed" Ps 116:10

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Knowing*. Being fully confident; having the most entire assurance. It was the assured hope of the resurrection which sustained them in all their trials. This expression denotes the full and unwavering belief in the minds of the apostles, that the doctrines which they preached were true. They knew that they were revealed from heaven, and that all the promises of God would be fulfilled.

Shall raise up us also. All Christians. In the hope of the resurrection they were ready to meet trials, and even to die. Sustained by this assurance, the apostles went forth amidst persecutions and

opposition, for they knew that their trials would soon end, and that they would be raised up, in the morning of the resurrection, to a world of eternal glory.

By Jesus. By the power or the agency of Jesus. Christ will raise up the dead from their graves, Joh 5:25-29.

And shall present us with you. Will present us before the throne of glory with exceeding joy and honour. He will present us to God as those who have been redeemed by his blood. He will present us in the courts of heaven, before the throne of the eternal Father, as his ransomed people; as recovered from the ruins of the fall; as saved by the merits of his blood. They shall not only be raised up from the dead, but they shall be publicly and solemnly presented to God as his, as recovered to his service, and as having a title in the covenant of grace to the blessedness of heaven.

{e} "Knowing that he which" 2Co 5:1-4

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *For all things are for your sakes*. All these things; these glorious hopes, and truths, and prospects; these self-denials of the apostles, and these provisions of the plan of mercy.

For your sakes. On your account. They are designed to promote your salvation. They are not primarily for the welfare of those who engage in these toils and self-denials; but the whole arrangement and execution of the plan of salvation, and all the self-denial evinced by those who are engaged in making that plan known, are in order that you might be benefited. One object of Paul in this statement, doubtless, is to conciliate their favour, and remove the objections which had been made to him by a faction in the church at Corinth.

That the abundant grace. Grace abounding, or overflowing. The rich mercy of God that should be manifested by these means. It is implied here, that grace would abound by means of these labours and self-denials of the apostles. The grace referred to here is that which would be conferred on them in consequence of these labours.

Through the thanksgiving of many. That many may have occasion of gratitude to God; that by these labours more persons may be led to praise him. It was an object with Paul so to labour that as many as possible might be led to praise God, and have occasion to thank him to all eternity.

Redound to the glory of God. That God may have augmented praise; that his glory in the salvation of men may abound. The sentiment of the passage is, that it would be for the glory of God that as many as possible should be brought to live praise and thanksgivings to him; and that therefore Paul endeavoured to make as many converts as possible. He denied himself; he welcomed toil; he encountered enemies; he subjected himself to dangers; and he sought by all means possible to bring as many as could be brought to praise God. The word "redound," (*perisseush*,) here means abound, or be abundant; and the sense is, *that the overflowing grace thus evinced in the salvation of many would so abound as to promote the glory of God*.

{f} "all things" 1Co 3:21,22 {g} "grace might" 2Co 8:19

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *For which cause*. With such an object in view, and sustained by such elevated purposes and desires. The sense is, that the purpose of trying to save as many as possible would make toil easy, privations welcome, and would be so accompanied by the grace of God, as to gird the soul with strength, and fill it with abundant consolations.

We faint not. For an explanation of the word here used, **See Barnes "2Co 4:1"**.

We are not exhausted, desponding, or disheartened. We are sustained, encouraged, emboldened by having such an object in view.

But though our outward man perish. By "outward man," Paul evidently means the body. By using the phrases, "the outward man," and the "inward man," he shows that he believed that man was made up of two parts, body and soul. He was no materialist. He has described two parts as constituting man, so distinct, that while the one perishes, the other is renewed; while the one is enfeebled, the other is strengthened; while the one grows old and decays, the other renews its youth and is invigorated. of course the soul is not dependent on the body for its rigour and strength, since it expands while the body decays; and of course the soul may exist independently of the body, and in a separate state.

Perish. Grows old; becomes weak and feeble; loses its rigour and elasticity under the many trials which we endure, and under the infirmities of advancing years. It is a characteristic of the "outer man" that it thus perishes. Great as may be its rigour, yet it must decay and die. It cannot long bear up under the trials of life, and the wear and tear of constant action, but must soon sink to the grave.

Yet the inward man. The soul; the undecaying, the immortal part.

Is renewed. Is renovated, strengthened, invigorated. His powers of mind expanded; his courage became bolder; he had clearer views of truth; he had more faith in God. As he drew nearer to the grave and to heaven, his soul was more raised above the world, and he was more filled with the joys and triumphs of the gospel. The understanding and the heart did not sympathize with the suffering and decaying body; but, while that became feeble, the soul acquired new strength, and was fitting for its flight to the eternal world. This verse is an ample refutation of the doctrine of the materialist, and proves that there is in man something that is distinct from decaying and dying matter, and that there is a principle which may gain augmented strength and power, while the body dies. Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 7:22"**.

Day by day. Constantly. There was a daily and constant increase of inward rigour. God imparted to him constant strength in his trials, and sustained him with the hopes of heaven, as the body was decaying, and tending to the grave. The sentiment of this verse is, that in an effort to do good, and to promote the salvation of man, the soul will be sustained in trials, and will be comforted and invigorated even when the body is weary, grows old, decays, and dies. It is the testimony of Paul respecting his own experience; and it is a fact which has been experienced by thousands in their efforts to do good, and to save the souls of men from death.

{a} "cause we faint" 1Co 15:58 {b} "inward man" Ro 7:22

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *For our light affliction*. This verse, with the following, is designed to show further the sources of consolation and support which Paul and his fellow-labourers had in their many trials. Bloomfield remarks on this passage, that, "in energy and beauty of expression, it is little inferior to any in Demosthenes himself, to whom, indeed, and to Thucydides in his orations, the style of the apostle, when it rises to the oratorical, bears no slight resemblance." The passage abounds with intensive and emphatic expressions, and manifests that the mind of the writer was labouring to convey ideas which language, even after all the energy of expression which he could command, would very imperfectly communicate. The trials which Paul endured, to many persons would have seemed to be anything else but light. They consisted of want, and danger, and contempt, and stoning, and toil, and weariness, and the scorn of the world, and constant exposure to death by land or by sea. See 2Co 4:7-10; comp. 2Co 11:23-27. Yet these trials, though continued through many years, and constituting, as it were, his very life, he speaks of as the lightest conceivable thing when compared with that eternal glory which awaited him. He strives to get an expression as emphatic as possible to show that, in his estimation, they were not worthy to be named in comparison with the eternal weight of glory. It is not sufficient to say that the affliction was "light," or was a mere trifle; but he says that it was to endure but for a moment. Though trials had followed him ever since he began to make known the Redeemer, and though he had the firmest expectation that they would follow him to the end of life and everywhere, (Ac 20:23,) yet all this was a *momentary trifle* compared with the eternal glory before him. The word rendered "light," (*elafron*) means that which is easy to bear, and is usually applied to a burden. See Mt 11:30 2Co 1:17.

Which is but for a moment. The Greek word here used (*parautika*) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It is an adverb, from *autika, autov*, and means, properly, *at this very instant, immediately*. Here it seems to qualify the word "light," and to be used in the sense of momentary, transient. Bloomfield renders it, "for the at present lightness of our affliction." Doddridge, "for this momentary lightness of our affliction, which passes off so fast, and leaves so little impression, that it may be called levity itself". The apostle evidently wished to express two ideas in as emphatic a manner as possible; first, that the affliction was light, and, secondly, that it was transient, momentary, and soon passing away. His object is to contrast this with the glory that awaited him, as being heavy, and as being also eternal.

Worketh for us. **See Barnes "2Co 4:12"**.

Will produce, will result in. The effect of these afflictions is to produce eternal glory. This they do

(1.) by their tendency to wean us from the. world;

(2.) to purify the heart, by enabling us to break off from the sins on account of which God afflicts us;

(3.) by disposing us to look to God for consolation and support in our trials;

(4.) by inducing us to contemplate the glories of the heavenly world, and thus winning us to seek heaven as our home; and

(5.) because God has graciously promised to reward his people in heaven as the result of their bearing trials in this life. It is by affliction that he purifies them, (Isa 48:10;) and by trial that he

takes their affections from the objects of time and sense, and gives them a relish for the enjoyments which result from the prospect of perfect and eternal glory.

A far more exceeding. *kay uperbolhn eiv uperbolhn*. There is not to be found anywhere a more energetic expression than this. The word *uperbolhn* here used, (whence our word *hyperbole*,) means, properly, a throwing, casting, or throwing beyond. In the New Testament it means excess, excellence, eminence. See 2Co 4:7, "The *excellency* of the power." The phrase *kay uperbolhn* means exceedingly, super-eminently, Ro 7:13 1Co 12:31; 2Co 1:8 Ga 1:13.

This expression would have been by itself intensive in a high degree. But this was not sufficient to express Paul's sense of the glory which was laid up for Christians. It was not enough for him to use the ordinary highest expression for the superlative to denote the value of the object in his eye. He therefore coins an expression, and adds *eiv uperbolhn*. It is not merely eminent, but it is eminent *unto* eminence; excess unto excess; a hyperbole unto hyperbole—one hyperbole heaped on another; and the expression means that it is "exceeding exceedingly" glorious; glorious in the highest possible degree— *Robinson*. Mr. Slade renders it, "infinitely exceeding." The expression is the Hebrew form of denoting the highest superlative; and it means that all hyperboles fail of expressing that eternal glory which remains for the just. It is infinite and boundless. You may pass from one degree to another; from one sublime height to another; but still an infinity remains beyond. Nothing can describe the uppermost height of that glory; nothing can express its infinitude.

Eternal. This stands in contrast with the affliction that is for a moment, (*parautika*.) The one is momentary, transient—so short, even in the longest life, that it may be said to be an instant; the other has no limits to its duration. It is literally everlasting.

Weight. *barov*. This stands opposed to the (*elafron*) light affliction. That was so light that it was a trifle. It was easily borne. It was like the most light and airy objects, which constitute no burden. It is not even here called *a burden*, or said to be heavy in any degree. This is so heavy as to be *a burden*. Grotius thinks that the image is taken from gold or silver articles, that are solid and heavy, compared with those that are mixed or plated. But why may it not refer to the insignia of glory and honour—a robe heavy with gold, or a diadem or crown heavy with gold or diamonds—glory so rich, so profuse as to be heavy? The affliction was light; but the crown, the robe, the adornings in the glorious world were not trifles, or baubles, but solid, substantial, weighty. We apply the word weighty now to that which is valuable and important, compared with that which is of no value, probably because the precious metals and jewels are heavy; and it is by them that we usually estimate the value of objects.

Of glory. *doxhv*. The Hebrew word

HEBREW

denotes weight as well as glory. And perhaps Paul had that use of the word in his eye in this strong expression. It refers here to the splendour, magnificence, honour, and happiness of the eternal world. In this exceedingly interesting passage, which is worthy of the deepest study of Christians. Paul has set in most beautiful and emphatic contrast the trials of this life and the glories of heaven. It may be profitable to contemplate at a single glance the view which he had of them, that they may be brought distinctly before, the mind.

THE ONE IS,

1. AFFLICTION,

yliqewv

2. *Light*,
elafron.
3. For a moment,
parautika.

THE OTHER IS, by contrast,

1. GLORY,
doxa.
2. Weight,
barov.
3. Eternal,
aiwnion.
4. Eminent, or excellent,
kay uperbolhn.
5. Infinitely excellent, eminent in the highest degree,
eiv uperbolhn.

So the *account* stands in the view of Paul; and with this balance in favour of the eternal glory, he regarded afflictions as mere trifles, and made it the grand purpose of his life to gain the glory of the heavens. What wise man, looking at the account, would not do likewise?

{c} "light affliction" Ro 8:18,34

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 18

Note: This Verse is too large for one note: Continued at 2Co 5:1

Verse 18. *While we look*, etc. Or, rather, we not looking at the things which are seen. The design of this is to show in what way the afflictions which they endured became in their view light and momentary. It was by looking to the glories of the future world, and thus turning away the attention from the trials and sorrows of this life. If we look directly at our trials—if the mind is fixed wholly on them, and we think of nothing else—they often appear heavy and long. Even comparatively light and brief sufferings will appear to be exceedingly difficult to bear. But if we can turn away the mind from them, and contemplate future glory; if we can compare them with eternal blessedness, and feel that they will introduce us to perfect and everlasting happiness, they will appear to be transitory, and will be easily borne. And Paul here has stated the true secret of bearing trials with patience. It is to look at the things which are unseen. To anticipate the glories of the heavenly world. To fix the eye on the eternal happiness which is beyond the grave; and to reflect how short these trials are, compared with the eternal glories of heaven; and how short they will *seem* to be when we are there.

The things which are seen. The things here below; the things of this life—poverty, want, care, persecution, trial, etc.

The things which are not seen. The glories of heaven. Comp. Heb 11:1.

The things which are seen are temporal. This refers particularly to the things which they *suffered*. But it is as true of all things here below. Wealth, pleasure, fame, the three idols which the people of this world adore, are all to endure but for a little time. They will all soon vanish away. So it is with pain, and sorrow, and tears. All that we enjoy, and all that we suffer here, must soon vanish and disappear. The most splendid palace will decay; the most costly pile will moulder to dust; the most magnificent city will fall to ruins; the most exquisite earthly pleasures will soon come to an end; and the most extended possessions can be enjoyed but a little time. So the acutest pain will soon be over; the most lingering disease will soon cease; the evils of the deepest poverty, want, and suffering will soon be passed. There is nothing on which the eye can fix, nothing that the heart can desire here, which will not soon fade away; or, if it survives, it is temporary in regard to us. We must soon leave it to others; and if enjoyed, it will be enjoyed while our bodies are slumbering in the grave, and *our souls* engaged in the deep solemnities of eternity. How foolish, then, to make these our portion, and to fix our affections supremely on the things of this life! How foolish also to be very deeply affected by the trials of this life, which at the furthest CAN be endured but a little longer before we shall be for ever beyond their reach!

The things which are not seen are eternal. Everything which pertains to that state beyond the grave.

(1.) God is eternal; not to leave us as our earthly friends do.

(2.) The Saviour is eternal—to be our ever-lasting Friend.

(3.) The companions and friends there are eternal. The angels who are to be our associates, and the spirits of the just with whom we shall live, are to exist for ever. The angels never die; and the pious dead shall die no more. There shall be then no separation, no death-bed, no grave, no sad vacancy and loss caused by the removal of a much-loved friend.

(4.) The joys of heaven are eternal. There shall be no interruption, no night; no cessation; no end. Heaven and all its joys shall be everlasting; and he s who enters there shall have the assurance that those joys shall endure and increase while eternal ages shall roll away.

(5.) It may be added, also, that the woes of hell shall be eternal. They are now among the things which to us "are not seen;" and they, as well as the joys of heaven, shall have no end. Sorrow there shall never cease; the soul shall there never die; the body that shall be raised up "to the resurrection of damnation" shall never again expire. And when all these things are contemplated, well might Paul say of the things of this life—the sorrows, trials, privations, and persecutions which he endured—that they were "light" and were "for a moment." How soon will they pass away! How soon shall we all be engaged amidst the unchanging and eternal realities of the things which are not seen!

{a} "not seen" Heb 11:1

REMARKS on 2nd Corinthians Chapter 4

(1.) Ministers of the gospel have no cause to faint or to be discouraged, 2Co 4:1. Whatever may be the reception of their message, and whatever the trials to which they may be subjected, yet there are abundant sources of consolation and support in the gospel which they preach. They have the consciousness that they preach a system of truth; that they are proclaiming that which God has revealed; and, if they are faithful, that they have his smiles and approbation. Even, therefore, if men reject and despise their message, and if they are called to endure many privations and trims,

they should not faint. It is enough for them that they proclaim the truth which God loves, and that they meet with his approbation and smiles. Trials will come in the ministry as everywhere else, but there are also peculiar consolations. There may be much opposition and resistance to the message, but we should not faint or be discouraged. We should do our duty, and commit the result to God.

(2.) The gospel should be embraced by those to whom it comes, 2Co 4:2. If it has their reason and conscience in its favour, then they should embrace it without delay. They are under the most sacred obligation to receive it, and to become decided Christians. Every man is bound, and may be urged to pursue, that course which his conscience approves; and the gospel may thus be pressed on the attention of all to whom it comes.

(3.) If men wish peace of conscience, they should embrace the gospel, 2Co 4:2. They can never find it elsewhere. No man's conscience is at peace from the fact that he does not repent, and love God and obey his gospel. His *heart* may love sin; but his conscience cannot approve it. That is at peace only in doing the work of God; and that can find self-approbation only when it submits to him, and embraces the gospel of his Son. Then the conscience is at ease. *No man ever yet had a troubled conscience from the fact that he had embraced the gospel, and was an humble and decided Christian*. Thousands and millions have had a troubled conscience from the fact that they have neglected it. No man on a death-bed ever had a troubled conscience because he embraced religion too early in life. Thousands and millions have been troubled when they came to die, because they neglected it so long, or rejected it altogether. No ,man when death approaches has a troubled conscience because he has lived *too much* devoted to God the Saviour, and been too active as a Christian. But oh, how many have been troubled then because they have been worldly-minded, and selfish, and vain, and proud! The conscience gives peace just in proportion as we serve God faithfully; nor can all the art of man or Satan give peace to one conscience in the ways of sin, and in the neglect of the soul.

(4.) Ministers should preach the truth—the simple truth—and nothing but the truth, 2Co 4:2. They should make use of no false art, no deception, no trick, no disguise. They should be open, sincere, plain, pure in all their preaching, and in their manner of life. Such was the course of the Saviour; such the course of Paul; and such a course only will God approve and bless.

(5.) This is a deluded world, 2Co 4:4. It is blinded and deceived by him who is here called the "god of this world." Satan rules in in the hearts of men; and he rules by deceiving them, and in order to deceive them. Everything which operates to prevent men from embracing the gospel has a tendency to blind the mind. The man who is seeking wealth as his only portion, is blinded and deceived in regard to its value. The man who is purding the objects of ambition as his main portion, is deceived in regard to the true value. of things. And he, or she, who pursues pleasure as the main business of life, is deceived in regard to the proper value of objects. It is impossible to conceive of a world more deluded than this. We can conceive of a world more sinful, and more miserable—and such is hell; but there is no delusion and deception there. Things are seen as they are; and no one is deceived in regard to his character or prospects there. But here, every impenitent man is deceived and blinded. He is deceived about his own character; about the relative value of objects; about his prospects for eternity; about death, judgment, heaven, hell. On none of these points has he any right apprehension; and on none is it possible for any human power to break the deep delusion, and to penetrate the darkness of his mind.

(6.) Men are in danger, 2Co 4:4. They are under deep delusion, and they tread unconcerned near to ruin. They walk in darkness —blinded by the god of this world—and are very near a

precipice, and nothing will rouse them from their condition. It is like children gathering flowers near a deep gulf, when the pursuit of one more flower may carry them too far, and they will fall to rise no more. The delusion rests on every unsanctified mind; and it needs to remain but a little longer, and the soul will be lost. That danger deepens every day and every hour. If it is continued but a little longer it will be broken in upon by the sad realities of death, judgment, and hell. But then it will be too late. The soul will be lost —*deluded* in the world of probation; sensible of the truth only in the world of despair.

(7.) Satan will practise every device and art possible to prevent the gospel from shining upon the hearts of men. That light is painful and hateful to his eyes, and he will do all that can be done to prevent its being diffused. Every art which long-tried ingenuity and skill can devise, will be resorted to; every power which he can put forth will be exerted. If he can blind the minds of men, he will do it. If men can be hoodwinked, and gulled, it will be done. If error can be made to spread, and be embraced—error smooth, plausible, cunning—it will be diffused. Ministers will be raised up to preach it; and the press will be employed to accomplish it. If sinners can be deceived, and made to remain at ease in their sins, by novels and seductive poetry—by books false in sentiments, and perverse in morals—the press will be made to groan under the works of fiction. If theatres are necessary to cheat and beguile men, they will be reared; and the song and the dance, the ball and the splendid party, will alike contribute to divert the attention from the cross of Christ, the worth of the soul, and the importance of a pre- preparation to die. No art has been spared, or will be spared, to deceive men; and the world is full of the devices of Satan to hoodwink and blind the perishing, and lead them down to hell.

(8.) Yet, Satan is not alone to blame for this. He does all he can, and he has consummate skill and art. Yet, let not the deluded sinner take comfort to himself because Satan is the tempter, and because he is deluded. The bitterness of death is not made sweet to a young man because he has been deluded by the arts of the veteran in temptation; and the fires of hell will not burn amy the less fiercely because the sinner suffered himself to be deluded, and chose to go there through the ball-room or the theatre. The sinner is, after all, *voluntary* in his delusions. He does, or he might, know the truth. He goes voluntarily to the place of amusement; voluntarily forms the plans of gain and ambition which deceive and ruin the soul; goes voluntarily to the theatre, and to the haunts of vice; and chooses this course in the face of many warnings and remonstrances. Who is to blame if he is lost? Who but himself?

(9.) Sinners should be entreated to rouse from this delusive and false security. They are now blinded, and deceived. Life is too short and too uncertain to be playing such a game as the sinner does. There are too many realities here to make it proper to pass life amidst deceptions and delusions. Sin is real, and danger is real, and death is real, and eternity is real; and man should rouse his delusions, and look upon things as they are. Soon he will be on a bed of death, and then he will look over the follies of his life. Soon he will be at the judgment bar, and from that high and awful place look on the past and the future, and see things as they are. But, alas! it will be too late then to repair the errors of a life; and amidst the realities of those scenes, all that he may be able to do, will be to sigh unavailingly that he suffered himself to be deluded, deceived, and destroyed in the only world of probation, by the trifles and baubles which the great deceiver placed before him to beguile him of heaven, and to lead him down to hell!

(10.) The great purpose of the ministry is to make known in any and every way the Lord Jesus Christ, 2Co 4:5. To this the ministers of the gospel are to devote themselves. It is not to cultivate

farms; to engage in traffic; to shine in the social circle; to be distinguished for learning; to become fine scholars; to be profoundly versed in science; or to be distinguished as authors, that they are set apart; but it is in every way possible to make known the Lord Jesus Christ. Whatever other men do, or not do—however the world may choose to be employed—their work is simple and plain, and it is not to cease or be intermitted till death shall close their toils. Neither by the love of ease, of wealth, or pleasure, are they to turn aside from their work, or to forsake the vocation to which God has called them.

(11.) We see the responsibility of the ministry, 2Co 4:5. On the ministry devolves the work of making the Saviour known to a dying world. If they will not do it, the world will remain in ignorance of the Redeemer, and will perish. *If there is one soul to whom they might make known the Saviour, and to whom they do not make him known, that soul will perish, and the responsibility will rest on the minister of the Lord Jesus*. And, oh! how great is this responsibility! And who is sufficient for these things?

(12.) Ministers of the gospel should submit to any self-denial in order that they may do good. Their Master did; and Paul and the other apostles did. It is sufficient for the disciple that he be as the Master; and the ministers of the gospel should regard themselves as set apart to a work of self-denial, and called to a life of toil, like their Lord. Their rest is in heaven, not on the earth. Their days of leisure and repose are to be found in the skies when their work is done, and not in a world perishing in sin.

(13.) The ministry is a glorious work, 2Co 4:5. What higher honour is there on earth than to make known a Redeemer? What pleasure more exquisite can there be than to speak of pardon to the guilty?. What greater comfort than to go to the afflicted and bind up their hearts; to pour the balm of peace into the wounded spirit, and to sustain and cheer the dying? The ministry has its own consolations amidst all its trials; its own honour amidst the contempt and scorn with which it is often viewed by the world.

(14.) The situation of man would have been dreadful and awful had it not been for the light which is imparted by revelation, and by the Holy Spirit, 2Co 4:6. Man would have ever remained like the dark night, before God said "Let there be light;" and his condition would have been thick darkness, where not a ray of light would have beamed on his benighted way. Some idea of what this was, and would have continued to be, we have now in the heathen world, where thick darkness reigns over nations, though it has been somewhat broken in upon by the dim light which tradition has diffused there.

(15.) God has power to impart light to the most dark and benighted mind. There is no one to whom he cannot reveal himself and make his truth known, 2Co 4:6. With as much ease as he commanded light to shine out of darkness at first can he command the pure light of truth to shine on the minds of men; and on minds most beclouded by sin he can cause the Sun of Righteousness to shine with healing in his beams.

(16.) We should implore the enlightening influence of the Spirit of truth, 2Co 4:6. If God is the source of light, we should seek it at his hands. Nothing to man is so valuable as the light of truth; nothing of so much worth as the knowledge of the true God; and with the deepest solicitude, and the most fervent prayer, should we seek the enlightening influences of his Spirit, and the guidance of his grace.

(17.) There is no true knowledge of God except that which shines in the face of Jesus Christ, 2Co 4:6. He came to make known the true God. He is the exact image of God. He resembles him

in all things. And he who does not love the character of Jesus Christ, therefore, does not love the character of God. He who does not seek to be like Jesus Christ, does not desire to be like God. He who does not bear the image of the Redeemer, does not bear the image of God. To be a moral man merely, therefore, is not to be like God. To be amiable and honest, merely, is not to be like God. Jesus Christ, the image of God, was more than this. He was religious. He was holy. He was, as a man, a man of prayer, and filled with the love of God, and was always submissive to his holy will. He sought his honour and glory; and he made it the great purpose of his life and death to make known his existence, perfections, and name. To imitate him in this, is to have the knowledge of the glory of God; and no man is like God who does not bear the image of the Redeemer. No man is like God, therefore, who is not a Christian. Of course, no man can be prepared for heaven who is not a friend and follower of Jesus Christ.

(18.) God designs to secure the promotion of his own glory in the manner in which religion is spread in the world, 2Co 4:7. For this purpose, and with this view, he did not commit it to angels, nor has he employed men of rank, or wealth, or profound scientific attainments to be the chief instruments in its propagation. He has committed it to frail, mortal men; and often to men of humble rank, and even humble attainments—except attainments in piety. In fitting them for their work his grace is manifest; and in all the success which attends their labours it is apparent that it is by the mere grace and mercy of God that it is done.

(19.) We see what our religion has cost, 2Co 4:8,9. Its extension in the world has been everywhere connected with sufferings, and toil, and tears. It began in the labours, sorrows, self-denials, persecutions, and dying agonies of the Son of God; and to *introduce* it to the world cost his life. It was spread by the toils, and sacrifices, and sufferings of the apostles. It was kept up by the dying groans of martyrs. It has been preserved and extended on earth by the labours and prayers of the Reformers, and amidst scenes of persecution everywhere; and it is now extending through the earth by the sacrifices of those who are willing to leave country and home, to cross oceans and deserts, and to encounter the perils of barbarous climes, that they may make it known to distant lands. If estimated by what it has cost, assuredly no religion, no blessing is so valuable as Christianity. It is above all human valuation; and it should be a matter of unfeigned thankfulness to us that God has been pleased to raise up men who have been *willing* to suffer so much that it might be perpetuated and extended on the earth; and we should be willing also to imitate their example, and deny ourselves, that we may make its inestimable blessings known to those who are now destitute. To us, it is worth all it has cost—all the blood of apostles and martyrs; to others, also, it would be worth all that it *would* cost to send it to them. How can we better express our sense of its worth, and our gratitude to the dying Redeemer, and our veneration for the memory of self-denying apostles and martyrs, than by endeavouring to diffuse the religion for which they died all over the world? See Continuation at 2Co 5:1

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 5

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 1

Continuation of Notes of 2 Corinthians 4:18

(20.) We have in this chapter an illustration of the sustaining power of religion in trials, 2Co 4:8,9. The friends of Christianity have been called to endure every form of suffering. Poverty, want, tears, stripes, imprisonments, and deaths have been their portion. They have suffered under every form of torture which men could inflict on them. And yet the power of religion has never failed them. It has been amply tried; and has shown itself able to sustain them always, and to enable them always to triumph. Though troubled, they have not been so close pressed that they had no room to turn; though perplexed, they have not been without some resource; though persecuted by men, they have not been forsaken by God; though thrown down in the conflict, yet they have recovered strength, and been prepared to renew the strife, and to engage in new contentions with the foes of God. Who can estimate the value of a religion like this? Who does not see that it is adapted to man in a state of trial, and that it furnishes him with just what he needs in this world?

(21.) Christianity will live, 2Co 4:8,9. Nothing can destroy it. All the power that *could* be brought to bear on it to blot it from the earth *has* been tried, and yet it survives. No new attempt to destroy it can prevail; and it is now settled that this religion-is to live to the end of time. It has *cost* much to obtain this demonstration; but it is worth all it has cost, and the sufferings of apostles and martyrs, therefore, have not been for nought.

(22.) Christians should be willing to endure anything in order that they may become like Christ on earth, and be like him in heaven, 2Co 4:10. It is worth all their efforts, and all their sell-denials. It is the grand object before us; and we should deem no sufferings too severe, no sell-denial or sacrifice too great, if we may become like him here below, and may live with him above, 2Co 4:10,11.

(23.) In order to animate us in the work to which God has called us; to encourage us in our trials; and to prompt us to a faithful discharge of our duties, especially those who like Paul are called to preach the gospel, we should have, like him, the following views and feelings—views and feelings adapted to sustain us in all our trials, and to uphold us in all the conflicts of life:

1st. A firm and unwavering belief of the truth of the religion which we profess, and of the truth which we make known to others, 2Co 4:12. No man can preach successfully, and no man can do much good, whose mind is vacillating and hesitating; who is filled with doubts, and who goes timidly to work or who declares that of which he has no practical acquaintance, and no deep-felt conviction, and who knows not whereof he affirms. A man to do good must have a faith which never wavers; a conviction of truth which is constant; a belief settled like the everlasting hills, which nothing can shake or overturn. With such a conviction of the truth of Christianity, and of the great doctrines which it inculcates, he *cannot but speak* of it, and make known his convictions. He that believes that men are in fact in danger of hell, WILL tell them of it; he that believes there is an awful bar of judgment, will tell them of it; he that believes that the Son of God became incarnate and died for men, will tell them of it; he that believes that there is a heaven, will invite them to it. And one reason why professing Christians are so reluctant to speak of these things is, that they have no very settled and definite conviction of their truth, and no correct view of their relative importance.

2nd. We should have a firm assurance that God has raised up the Lord Jesus, and that we also shall be raised from the dead, 2Co 4:14. The hope and expectation of the resurrection of the dead was one of the sustaining principles which upheld Paul in his labours, and to attain to this was one of the grand objects of his life, Ac 23:6 Php 3:11. Under the influence of this hope and expectation, he was willing to encounter any danger, and to endure any trial. The prospect of being raised up to eternal life and glory was all that was needful to make trials welcome, and to uphold him in the midst of privations and toils. And so we, if we are assured of this great truth, shall welcome trial also, and shall be able to endure afflictions and persecutions. They will soon be ended; and the eternal glory in the morning of the resurrection shall be more than a compensation for all that we shall endure in this life.

3rd. We should have a sincere desire to promote the glory of God, and to bring as many as possible to join in his praise, and to celebrate his saving mercy, 2Co 4:15. It was this which sustained and animated Paul; and a man who has this as the leading object of his life, and his great purpose and aim, will be willing to endure much trial, to suffer much persecution, and to encounter many dangers. No object is so noble as that of endeavouring to promote the Divine glory; and he who is influenced by that, will care little how many sufferings he is called to endure in this life.

(24.) Christians should have such a belief of the truth of their religion as to be willing to speak of it at all times, and in all places, 2Co 4:13. If we have such a belief we shall be willing to speak of it. We cannot help it. We shall so see its value, and so love it, and our hearts will be so full of it, and we shall see so much the danger of our fellow-men, that we shall be instinctively prompted to go to them and warn them of their danger, and tell them of the glories of the Redeemer.

(25.) Christians may expect to be supported and comforted in the trials and toils of life, 2Co 4:16. The "outward man" will indeed perish and decay. The body will become feeble, weary, jaded, decayed, decrepit. It will be filled with pain, and will languish under disease, and will endure the mortal agony, and will be corrupted in the tomb. But the "inward man" will be renewed. The faith will be invigorated, the hope become stronger, the intellect brighter, the heart better, the whole soul be more like God. While the body, therefore, the less important part, decays and dies, the immortal part shall live and ripen for glory. Of what consequence is it, therefore, how soon or how much the body decays— or when, and where, and how it dies? Let the immortal part be preserved, let that live, and all is well. And while this is done, we should not, we shall not "faint." We shall be sustained; and shall find the consolations of religion to be fitted to all our wants, and adapted to all the necessities of our condition as weak, and frail, and dying creatures.

(26.) We learn from this chapter how to bear affliction in a proper manner, 2Co 4:17,18. It is by looking at eternity, and comparing our trials with the eternal weight of glory that awaits us. In themselves afflictions often seem heavy and long. Human nature is often ready to sink under them. The powers of the body fail, and the mortal frame is crushed. The day seems long while we suffer; and the night seems often to be almost endless, De 28:67. But compared with eternity, how short are all these trials! Compared with the weight of glory which awaits the believer, what a trifle are the severest sufferings of this life. Soon the ransomed spirit will be released, and will be admitted to the full fruition of the joys of the world above. In that world, all these sorrows will seem like the sufferings of childhood, that we have.now almost forgotten, and that now seem to us like trifles.

(27.) We should not look to the things which are seen as our portion, 2Co 4:17,18. They are light in their character, and are soon to fade away. Our great interests are beyond the grave. There all is weighty, and momentous, and eternal. Whatever great interests we have, are there. Eternity

is stamped upon all the joys and all the sorrows which are beyond this life. Here all is temporary, changing, decaying, dying. There all is fixed, settled, unchanging, immortal. It becomes us then, as rational creatures, *to look* to that world, to act with reference to it, to feel and act *as if* we felt that all our interests were there. Were this life all, everything in relation to us would be trifling. But when we remember that there is an eternity; that we are near it; and that our conduct here is to determine our character and destiny there, life becomes invested with infinite importance. Who can estimate the magnitude of the interests at stake? Who can appreciate aright the importance of every step we take, and every plan we form?

(28.) All here below is temporary, decaying, dying, 2Co 4:17,18. Afflictions are temporary. They are but for a moment, and will soon be passed away. Our sorrows here will soon be ended. The last sigh on earth will soon be heaved; the last tear will have fallen on the cheek; the last pain will have shot across the seat of life! The last pang of parting with a beloved friend will soon have been endured; and the last step which we are to take in "the valley of the shadow of death" will soon have been trod. And in like manner we shall soon have tasted the last cup of earthly joy. All our comforts here below will soon pass from us. Our friends will die. Our sources of happiness will be dried up. Our health will fail, and darkness will come over our eyes, and we shall go down to the dead. All our property must be left, and all our honours be parted with for ever. In a little time—oh, how brief!—we shall have gone from all these, and shall be engaged in the deep and awful solemnities of the unchanging world. How vain and foolish, therefore, the attachment to earthly objects! How important to secure an interest in that future inheritance which shall never fade away!

(29.) Let it not be inferred, however, that *all* affliction shall be light, and for a moment, or that all earthly trial shall of course work out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. There are sorrows, beyond the grave, compared with which the most heavy and most protracted woes this side the tomb are "light," and are "but for a moment." And there are sorrows in this life—deep and prolonged afflictions—which by no means tend to prepare the soul for the "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Such are those afflictions where there is no submission to the will of God; where there is murmuring, repining, impatience, and increased rebellion; where there is no looking to God for comfort, and no contemplation of eternal glory. Such are those afflictions where men look to philosophy or to earthly friends to comfort them; or where they plunge deeper into the business, the gaiety, or the vices of the world, to drown their sorrows and to obliterate the sense of their calamities. This is "the sorrow of the world which worketh death," 2Co 7:10. In afflictions, therefore, it should be to us a matter of deep and anxious solicitude to know whether we have the right feelings, and whether we are seeking the right sources of consolation. And in such seasons it shall be the subject of our deep and earnest prayer to God that our trials may, by his grace, be made to work our for us "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." All are afflicted; all suffer in various ways; and all may find these trials terminate in eternal blessedness beyond the grave.

Introduction to 2nd Corinthians Chapter 5

THIS chapter is closely connected with the former; and indeed has been improperly separated from it, as is manifest from the word "For" (*gar*) with which it commences. It contains a further statement of reasons for what had been said in the previous chapter. The main subject there was the MINISTRY: the honesty and fidelity with which Paul and his fellow-labourers toiled, 2Co 5:1-3; the trials and dangers which they encountered in the work of the ministry, 2Co 5:7-12; and

the consolations and supports which they had in its various trials, 2Co 5:13-18. This chapter contains a continuation of the same subject, and a further statement of the motives which prompted them to their work, and of the supports which upheld them in the arduous duties to which they were called. It is a chapter full of exquisite beauties of sentiment and of language, and as well adapted to give consolation and support to all Christians now as it is to ministers; and the sentiments are as well adapted to sustain the humblest believer in his trials as they were to sustain the apostles themselves. The following are the points of consolation and support, and reasons for their zeal and self-denial, to which the apostle refers.

(1.) They had the assured prospect of the resurrection, and of eternal life, 2Co 5:1-4. The body might decay, and be worn but; it might sigh and groan; but they had a better home, a mansion of eternal' rest in the heavens. It was their earnest desire to reach heaven; though not such a desire as to make them unwilling to endure the toils, and trials which God should appoint to them here below, but still an earnest, anxious wish to reach safely their eternal home in the skies. In the prospect of their heavenly home, and their eternal rest, they were willing to endure all the trials which were appointed to them.

(2.) God had appointed them to this; he had fitted them for these trials; he had endowed them with the graces of his Spirit; and they were, therefore, willing to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord, 2Co 5:5-8. They had such a view of heaven, as their home, that they were willing at any time to depart and enter the world of rest; and they did not, therefore, shrink from the trials and dangers which would be likely soon to bring them there.

(3.) They had a deep and constant conviction that they must soon appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, 2Co 5:9-11. They laboured that they might be accepted by him, 2Co 5:9; they knew that they must give a solemn accost to him, 2Co 5:10; they had a clear view, and a-deep impression of the awful terrors of that day; and they laboured, therefore, to save as many as possible from the condemnation of the great Judge of all, and endeavoured to "persuade" them to be prepared for that scene, 2Co 5:11.

(4.) Though, to some they might appear to be under the influence of improper excitement, and even to be deranged, 2Co 5:14, yet they were acting only under the proper influence of the love of Christ, 2Co 5:14,15. They were constrained and urged on by his love; they knew that he had died for all, and that all men were dead in sin; and they felt themselves the constraining influence of that love prompting them to deny themselves, and to devote their all to his service and cause.

(5.) Their views of all things had been changed, 2Co 5:16,17. They had ceased to act under the influences which govern other men; but their own hearts had been changed, and they had become new creatures in Christ, and in. their lives they evinced the spirit which should govern those who were thus renewed.

(6.) They had been solemnly commissioned by God as his ambassadors in this cause. They had been sent to make known the terms and the way of reconciliation, and their felt it to be their duty to proclaim those terms on as wide a scale as possible, and with the utmost zeal and self-denial. It was God's glorious plan of reconciliation; and on the ground of the atonement made by the Redeemer, they could now offer salvation to all mankind; and as all might be saved, they felt themselves bound to offer the terms of salvation to as many as possible, 2Co 5:18-21. The grand argument for urging sinners to be reconciled to God, is the fact that Christ has died for their sins; and therefore the apostles, apprized of this fact, sought to urge as many as possible to become him friends, 2Co 5:21.

Verse 1. For we know. We who are engaged in the work of the gospel ministry. Paul is giving a reason whir he and his fellow-labourers did not become weary and faint in their work. The reason was, that they knew that even if their body should die, they had, an inheritance reserved for them in heaven. The expression "we know" is the language of strong and unwavering assurance. They had no doubt on the subject. And it proves that there may be the assurance of eternal life; or such evidence of acceptance with God as to leave no doubt of a final admission into heaven. This language was often used by the Saviour in reference to the truths which he taught, Joh 3:11 4:22 and it is, used by the sacred writers in regard to the truths which they recorded, and in regard to their own personal piety, Joh 21:24 1Jo 2:3,5,18; 1Jo 3:2,14,19,24 4:6,13 5:2,15,19,20.

That if our earthly house. The word "earthly" here (*epigeiov*) stands opposed to "heavenly," or to the "house eternal (*en toiv ouranoiv*?) in the heavens." The word properly means, "upon earth, terrestrial, belonging to the earth, or on the earth;" and is applied to bodies, 1Co 15:40; to earthly things, Joh 3:12; to earthly, or worldly wisdom, Jas 3:15. The word house here refers doubtless to the body, as the habitation, or the dwelling-place, of the mind or soul. The soul dwells in it as we dwell in a house, or tent.

Of this tabernacle. This word means a booth, or tent—a movable dwelling. The use of the word here is not a mere redundancy; but the idea which Paul designs to convey is, doubtless, that the body—the house of the soul—was not a *permanent* dwelling-place, but was of the same nature as a booth or tent, that was set up for a temporary purpose, or that was easily taken down in migrating from one place to another. It refers here to the body as the frail and temporary abode of the soul. It is not a permanent dwelling—a fixed habitation; but is liable to be taken down at any moment, and was fitted up with that view. Tindal renders it, "if our earthly mansion wherein we now dwell." The Syriac renders it, "for we know that if our house on earth, which is our body, were dissolved." The idea is a beautiful one, that the body is a mere unfixed, movable dwelling-place; liable to be taken down at any moment, and not designed, any more than a tent is, to be a permanent habitation.

Were dissolved. *kataluyh*. This word means, properly, to disunite the parts of anything; and is applied to the act of throwing down, or destroying a building is applied here to the body, regarded as a temporary dwelling that might be taken down.; and it refers, doubtless, to the dissolution of the body in the grave. The idea is, that if this body should moulder back to dust, and be resolved into its original elements; or if by great zeal and labour it should be exhausted and worn out. Language like this is used by Eliphaz, the Temanite, in describing the body of man. "How much less in those that dwell in houses of clay," etc., Job 4:19 2Pe 1:13,14.

We have a building of God. Robinson (*Lexicon*) supposes that it refers to "the future spiritual body as the abode of the soul." Some have supposed that it refers to some "celestial vehicle" with which God invests the soul during the intermediate state. But the Scripture is silent about any such celestial vehicle. It is not easy to tell what was the precise idea which Paul here designed to convey, Perhaps a few remarks may enable us to arrive at the meaning.

(1.) It was not to be temporary; not a tent or tabernacle that could be taken down.

(2.) It was to be eternal-in the heavens.

(3.) It was to be such as to constitute a dwelling; a *clothing*, or such a protection as should keep the soul from being "naked."

(4.) It was to be such as should constitute "life" in contradistinction from "mortality." These things will better agree with the supposition of its referring to the future body of the saints than anything else; and probably the idea of Paul is, that the body there will be incorruptible and immortal.

When he says it is a "building of God," (*ek yeou*,) he evidently means that it is made *by* God; that he is the architect of that future and eternal dwelling. Macknight and some others, however, understood this of the mansions which God has fitted up for his people in heaven, and which the Lord Jesus has gone to prepare for them. Comp. Joh 14:2. But **See Barnes "2Co 5:3"**.

An house. A dwelling; an abode; that is, according to the interpretation above, a celestial, pure, immortal body; a body that shall have God for its immediate author, and that shall be fitted to dwell in heaven for ever.

Not made with hands. Not constructed by man; a habitation not like those which are made by human skill, and which are therefore easily taken down or removed, but one that is made by God himself. This does not imply that the "earthly house" which is to be superseded by that in heaven is made with hands; but the idea is, that the earthly dwelling has things about it which *resemble* that which is made by man, or *as if* it were made with hands; i.e., it is temporary, frail, easily taken down or removed. But that which is in heaven is permanent, fixed, eternal, *as if* made by God.

Eternal in the heavens. Immortal; to live for ever. The future body shall never be taken down or dissolved by death. It is eternal, of course, only in respect to the future, and not in respect to the past. And it is not only eternal, but it is to abide for ever in the heavens—in the world of glory. It is never to be subjected to a dwelling on the earth; never to be in a world of sin, suffering,, and death.

{a} "this tabernacle were dissolved" Job 4:19 {b} "an house not made with hands" 1Pe 1:4

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *For in this*. In this tent, tabernacle, or dwelling. In our body here.

We groan. **See Barnes "Ro 8:22"**.

The sense is, that we are subjected to so many trials and afflictions in the present body; that the body is subjected to so many pains, and to so much suffering, as to make us earnestly desire to be invested with that body which shall be free from all susceptibility to suffering.

Earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house, etc. There is evidently here a change of the metaphor, which gives an apparent harshness to the construction. One idea of the apostle is, that the body here, and the spiritual body hereafter, is a house or a dwelling. Here he speaks of it as *a garment* which may be put on or laid off; and of himself as earnestly desiring to put on the immortal clothing or vestment which was in heaven. Both these figures are common in ancient writings; and a change in this manner in the popular style is not unusual. The Pythagoreans compared the body to a tent or hut for the soul; the Platonists liken it to a vestment.—*Bloomfield*. The Jews speak of a vestment to the soul in this world and the next. They affirm that the soul had a covering when it was under the throne of God, and before it was clothed with the body. This *vestment*, they say, was "the image of God," which was lost by Adam. After the fall, they say, Adam and all his posterity were regarded as naked. In the future world they say the good will be clothed with a vestment for the soul, which they speak of as lucid and radiant, and such as no one on earth can attain.—*Schoettgen*. But there is no reason to think that Paul referred to any such trifles as the Jews have believed on this subject. He evidently regarded man as composed of body and soul. The soul

was the more important part, and the body constituted its mere habitation or dwelling. Yet a body was essential to the idea of the complete man; and since this was frail and dying; he looked forward to a union with the body that should be eternal in the heavens, as a more desirable and perfect habitation of the soul. Mr. Locke has given an interpretation of this in which he is probably alone, but which has so much appearance of plausibility that it is not improper to refer to it. He supposes that this whole passage has reference to the fact that at the coming of the Redeemer the body will be changed without experiencing death, (comp. 1Co 15:51,52;) that Paul expected that this might soon occur; and that he earnestly desired to undergo this transformation without experiencing the pains of dying. He therefore paraphrases it, "For in this tabernacle I groan, earnestly desiring, without putting off this mortal, earthly body by death, to have that celestial body superinduced, if so be the coming of Christ shall overtake me in this life, before I put off this body"

With our house. The phrase "to be clothed upon with our house" seems to be harsh and unusual. The sense is plain, however, that Paul desired to be invested with that pure, spiritual, and undecaying body which, was to be the eternal abode of his soul in heaven. That he speaks of as a house, (*oikhthrion*,) a more permanent and substantial dwelling than a tent, or tabernacle.

{a} "earnestly desiring" Rom 8:23

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *If so be that being clothed*. This passage has been interpreted in a great many different ways. The view of Locke is given above. Rosenmuller renders it, "For in the other life we shall not be wholly destitute of a body, but we shall have a body." Tindal renders it, "If it happen that we be found clothed, and not naked." Doddridge supposes it to mean, "Since being so clothed upon, we shall not be found naked, and exposed to any evil and inconvenience, how, entirely soever we may be stripped of everything we can call our own here below." Hammond explains it to mean, "If, indeed, we shall happily be among the number of those faithful Christians, who will be found clothed upon, not naked." Various other expositions may be seen in the larger commentaries. The meaning is probably this:

(1.) The word "clothed" refers to the future spiritual body of believers; the eternal habitation in which they shall reside.

(2.) The expression implies an earnest desire of Paul to be thus invested with that body.

(3.) It is the language of humility and of deep solicitude, as if it were possible that they *might* fail, and as if it demanded their utmost care and anxiety that they might thus be clothed with the spiritual body in heaven.

(4.) It means that in that future state the soul will not be naked; that is, destitute of any body or covering. The present body will be laid aside. It will return to corruption, and the disembodied spirit will ascend to God and to heaven. It will be disencumbered of the body with which it has been so long clothed. But we are not thence to infer that it will be destitute of a body; that it will remain a naked soul. It will be clothed there in its appropriate glorified body; and will have an appropriate habitation there. This does not imply, as Bloomfield supposes, that the souls of the wicked will be destitute of any such habitation as the glorified body of the saints—which may be

true; but it means simply that the soul shall not be destitute of an appropriate body in heaven, but that the union of body and soul there shall be known as well as on earth.

{b} "found naked" Re 3:18 16:15

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *For we*. We who are Christians. All Christians.

That are in this tabernacle. This frail and dying body. **See Barnes "2Co 5:1"**.

Do groan. See 2Co 5:2. This is a further explanation of what is said in 2Co 5:2. It implies an ardent and earnest desire to leave a world of toil and pain, and to enter into a world of rest and glory.

Being burdened. Being borne down by the toils, and trials, and calamities of this life. **See Barnes "2Co 4:7,** 2Co 4:8-10.

Not for that we would be unclothed. Not that we are impatient, and unwilling to bear these burdens as long as God shall appoint. Not that we merely wish to lay aside this mortal body. We do not desire to die and depart merely because we suffer much, and because the body here is subjected to great trials. This is not the ground of our wish to depart. We are willing to bear trials. We are not impatient under, afflictions. The sentiment here is, that the mere fact that we may be afflicted much and long, should not be the principal reason why we should desire to depart. We should be willing to bear all this as long as God shall choose to appoint. The anxiety of Paul to enter the eternal world was from a higher motive than a mere desire to get away from trouble.

But clothed upon. To be invested with our spiritual body. We desire to be clothed with that body. We desire to be in heaven, and to be clothed with immortality. We wish to have a body that shall be pure, undecaying, ever glorious. It was not, therefore, a mere desire to be released from sufferings; it was an earnest wish to be admitted to the glories of the future world, and partake of the happiness which he would enjoy there. This is *one* of the reasons why Paul wished to be in heaven. *Other* reasons he has stated elsewhere. Thus in Php 1:23 he says he had "a desire to depart and to *be with Christ*." So in 2Co 5:8 of this chapter he says he was "willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." In 2Ti 4:6-8, he speaks of the "crown of righteousness" laid up for him as a reason why he was willing to die.

That mortality might be swallowed up of life. On the meaning of the word rendered "swallowed up," (*katapoyh*) **See Barnes "1Co 15:54"**.

The meaning here is, that it might be completely absorbed; that it might cease to be; that there might be no more mortality, but that he might pass to the immortal state —to the condition of eternal life in the heavens. The body here is mortal—the body there will be immortal; and Paul desired to pass away from the mortal state to one that shall be immortal —a world where there shall be no more death. Comp. 1Co 15:53.

{c} "mortality" 1Co 15:53

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing*. The phrase "self-same thing" here means *this very thing*, i.e., the thing to which he had referred—the preparation for heaven, or the heavenly dwelling. The word "wrought" here (*katergasamenov*) means, that God had *formed*, or made them for this; that is, he had by the influences of the Spirit, and by his agency on the heart, created them, as it were, for this, and adapted them to it. God has destined us to this change from corruption to incorruption; he has adapted us to it; he has formed us for it. It does not refer to the original creation of the body and the soul for this end; but it means that God, by his own renewing, and sanctifying, and sustaining agency, had formed them for this, and adapted them to it. The *object* of Paul in stating that it was done by God, is to keep this truth prominently before the mind. It was not by any native inclination, or strength, or power which they had, but it was all to be traced to God. Comp. Eph 2:10.

Who also hath given. In addition to the fitting for eternal glory he has given us the earnest of the Spirit to sustain us here. We are not only prepared to enter into heaven, but we have here also the support produced by the earnest of the Spirit.

The earnest of the Spirit. On the meaning of this, **See Barnes** "2Co 1:22

". He has given to us the Holy Spirit as the pledge or assurance of the eternal inheritance.

{a} "wrought us" Isa 29:23 Eph 2:10 {b} "earnest of" Eph 1:14

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Therefore we are always confident*. The word here used *yarrountev* means, to be of good cheer; to have good courage; to be full of hope. The idea is, that Paul was not dejected, cast down, disheartened, discouraged. He was cheerful and happy. He was patient in his trials, and diligent in his calling. He was full of hope, and of the confident expectation of heaven; and this filled him with cheerfulness and with joy. Tindal renders it, "We are always of good cheer." And this was not occasional and transitory, it was constant, it was uniform, it always *pantote* existed. This is an instance of the uniform cheerfulness which will be produced by the assured prospect of heaven. It is an instance, too, when the hope of heaven will enable a man to face danger with courage; to endure toil with patience; and to submit to trials in any form with cheerfulness.

Knowing. 2Co 5:1. This is another instance in which the apostle expresses undoubted assurance.

Whilst we are at home in the body. The word here used (*endhmountev*) means, literally, to be among one's own people, to be at home; to be present at any place. It is here equivalent to saying, "while we dwell in the body." 2Co 5:1. Doddridge renders it, "sojourning in the body;" and remarks that it is improper to render it "at home in the body," since it is the apostle's design to intimate that this is not our home. But Bloomfield says that the word is never used in the sense of sojourning. The idea is not that of being "at home"—for this is an idea which is the very opposite of that which the apostle wishes to convey. His purpose is not at all to represent the body here as our *home*, and

the original word does not imply that. It means here simply to be *in* the body; to be present in the body; that is, while we are in the body.

We are absent from the Lord. The Lord Jesus. **See Barnes** "Ac 1:24.

Comp. Php 1:23. Here he was in a strange world, and among strangers. His great desire and purpose was to be with the Lord; and hence he cared little how soon the frail tabernacle of the body was taken down, and was cheerful amidst all the labours and sufferings that tended to bring it to the grave, and to release him to go to his eternal home where he would be present for ever with the Lord.

{*} "confident" "of good courage"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *For we walk*. To walk, in the Scriptures, often denotes to live, to act, to conduct [one's self] in a certain way. **See Barnes "Ro 4:12"**; **See Barnes** "Ro 6:4".

It has reference to the fact that life is a journey, or a pilgrimage, and that the Christian is travelling to another country. The sense here is, that we conduct ourselves in our course of life with reference to the things which are unseen, and not with reference to the things which are seen.

By faith. In the belief of those things which we do not see. We believe in the existence of objects which are invisible, and we are influenced by them. To walk by faith, is to live in the confident expectation of things that are to come; in the belief of the existence of unseen realities; and suffering them to influence us as if they were seen. The people of this world are influenced by the things that are seen. They live for wealth, honour, splendour, praise, for the objects which this world can furnish, and as if there were nothing which is unseen, or as if they ought not to be influenced by the things which are unseen. The Christian, on the contrary, has a firm conviction of the reality of the glories of heaven; of the fact that the Redeemer is there; of the fact that there is a crown of glory; and he lives and acts *as if* that were all real, and as if he saw it all. The simple account of faith, and of living by faith is, that we live and act *as if* these things were true, and suffer them to make an impression on our mind according to their real nature. **See Barnes "Mr 16:16"**.

It is contradistinguished from living simply under the influence of things that are seen. God is unseen—but the Christian lives, and thinks, and acts as if there were a God, and as if he saw him. Christ is unseen now by the bodily eye; but the Christian lives and acts as if he were seen; that is, as if his eye were known to be upon us, and as if he was now exalted to heaven, and was the only Saviour. The Holy Spirit is unseen; but he lives and acts as if there were such a Spirit, and as if his influences were needful to renew and purify the soul. Heaven is unseen; but the Christian lives, and thinks, and acts as if there were a heaven, and as if he now saw its glories. He has confidence in these and in kindred truths, and he acts *as if* they were real. Could man see all these—were they visible to the naked eye as they are to the eye of faith, no one would doubt the propriety of living and acting with reference to them. But *if* they exist, there is no more impropriety in acting with reference to them than if they were seen. Our seeing or not seeing them does not alter their nature or importance; and the fact that they are not seen does not make it improper to act with reference to them. There are many ways of being convinced of the existence and reality of objects besides

seeing them; and it may be as rational to be influenced by the reason, the judgment, or by strong confidence, as it is to be influenced by sight. Besides, all men are influenced by things which they have not seen. They hope for objects that are future. They aspire to happiness which they have not yet beheld. They strive for honour and wealth which are unseen, and which are in the distant future. They live and act—influenced by strong faith and hope—*as if* these things were attainable; and they deny themselves, and labour, and cross oceans and deserts, and breathe in pestilential air, to obtain those things which they have not seen, and which to them are in the distant future. And why should not the Christian endure like labour, and be willing to suffer in like manner, to gain the unseen crown which is incorruptible, and to acquire the unseen wealth which the moth does not corrupt? And further still, the men of this world strive for those objects which they have not beheld, without any promise or any assurance that they shall obtain them. No being, able to grant them, has promised them; no one has assured them that their lives shall be lengthened out to obtain them. In a moment they may be cut off, and all their plans frustrated; or they may be utterly disappointed, and all their plans fail; or *if* they gain the object, it may be unsatisfactory, and may furnish no pleasure such as they had anticipated. But not so the Christian. He has

(1.) the promise of life.

(2.) He has the assurance that sudden death cannot deprive him of it. It at once removes him to the object of pursuit, not *from* it.

(3.) He has the assurance that when obtained, it shall not disgust, or satiate, or decay, but that it shall meet all the expectations of the soul, and shall be eternal.

Not by sight. This may mean either that we are not influenced by a sight of these future glories, or that we are not influenced by the things which we see. The main idea is, that we are not influenced and governed by the sight. We are not governed and controlled by the things which we see, and we do not see those things which actually influence and control us. In both it is *faith* that controls us, and not sight.

{c} "For we walk" Ro 8:24,25

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *We are confident*. 2Co 5:6. We are cheerful, and courageous, and ready to bear our trial. Tindal renders it, "We are of good comfort."

And willing rather to be absent from the body. We would prefer to die. The same idea occurs in Php 1:23: "Having a desire to depart and to be with Christ; which is far better." The sense is, that Paul would have *preferred* to die, and to go to heaven, rather than to remain in a world of sin and trial.

To be present with the Lord. The Lord Jesus. **See Barnes "Ac 1:24"**.

Comp. Php 1:23. The idea of Paul is, that the Lord Jesus would constitute the main glory of heaven, and that to be with him was equivalent to being in a place of perfect bliss. He had no idea of any heaven where the Lord Jesus was not; and to be with him was to be in heaven. That world where the Redeemer is, is heaven. This also proves that the spirits of the saints, when they depart, are with the Redeemer; that is, are at once taken to heaven. It demonstrates

(1.) that they are not annihilated.

(2.) That they do not *sleep*, and remain in an unconscious state, as Dr. Priestly supposes.

(3.) That they are not in some intermediate state—either in a state of purgatory, as the Papists suppose, or a state where all the souls of the just and the unjust are assembled in a common abode, as many Protestants have supposed—but

(4.) that they dwell WITH Christ; they are WITH the Lord, (*prov ton kurion*.) They abide in his presence; they partake of his joy and his glory; they are permitted to sit with him in his throne, Re 3:21. The same idea the Saviour expressed to the dying thief, when he said, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise," Lu 23:43.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Wherefore*. *dio*. In view of the facts stated above. Since we have the prospect of a resurrection and of future glory; since we have the assurance that there is a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; and since God has given to us this hope, and has granted to us the earnest of the Spirit, we make it our great object so to live as to be accepted by him.

We labour. The word here used (*filotimoumeya*, from *filov* and *timh*, loving honour) means, properly, to love honour; to be ambitious. This is its usual classical signification. In the New Testament, it means to be ambitious to do anything; to exert one's self; to strive, as if from a love or sense of honour. As in English, *to make it a point of honour to do so and so*.—*Robinson*, (Lex.) See Ro 15:20 1Th 4:11. It means here, that Paul made it a point of constant effort; it was his leading and constant aim to live so as to be acceptable to God, and to meet his approbation wherever he was.

Whether present or absent. Whether present with the Lord, (2Co 5:8,) or absent from him, (2Co 5:6;) that is, whether in this world or the next; whether we are here, or removed to heaven. Wherever we are, or may be, it is and will be our main purpose and object so to live as to secure his favour. Paul did not wish to live on earth regardless of his favour, or without evidence that he would be accepted by him. He did not make the fact that he was absent from him, and that he did not see him with the bodily eye, an excuse for walking in the ways of ambition, or seeking his own purposes and ends. The idea is, that *so far as this point was concerned*, it made no difference with him whether he lived or died; whether he was on earth or in heaven; whether in the body or out of the body; it was the great fixed principle of his nature so to live as to secure the approbation of the Lord. And this is the true principle on which the Christian should act, and will act. The fact that he is now absent from the Lord will be to him no reason why he should lead a life of sin and self-indulgence, any more than he would if he were in heaven; and the fact that he is soon to be with him is not the main reason why he seeks to live so as to please him. It is because this has become the fixed principle of the soul; the very purpose of the life; and this principle and this purpose will adhere to him and control him wherever he may be placed, or in whatever world he may dwell.

We may be accepted of him. The phrase here used (*euarestoi einai*) means to be well-pleasing; and then to be acceptable, or approved, Ro 12:1 14:18; Eph 5:10 Php 4:18; Tit 2:9.

The sense here is, that Paul was earnestly desirous of so living as to please God, and to receive from him the tokens and marks of his favour. And the truth taught in this verse is, that this will be the great purpose of the Christian's life, and that it makes no difference as to the existence and operation of this principle whether a man is on earth or in heaven. He will equally desire it, and strive for it; and this is one of the ways in which religion makes a man conscientious and holy; and is a better guard and security for virtue than all human laws, and all the restraints which can be imposed by man.

{1} "we labour" "endeavour" {*} "labour" "strive"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *For we must*. *dei*. It is proper, fit, necessary that we should all appear there. This fact to which Paul now refers is *another* reason why it was necessary to lead a holy life, and why Paul gave himself with so much diligence and self-denial to the arduous duties of his office. There is a necessity or a fitness that we should appear there to give up our account, for we are here on trial; we are responsible moral agents; we are placed here to form characters for eternity. Before we receive our eternal allotment, it is *proper* that we should render our account of the manner in which we have lived, and of the manner in which we have improved our talents and privileges. In the nature of things, it is proper that we should undergo a trial before we receive our reward, or before we are punished; and God has made it necessary and certain, by his direct and positive appointment, that we should stand at the bar of the final Judge. See Ro 14:10.

All. Both Jews and Gentiles; old and young; bond and free; rich and poor; all of every class, and every age, and every nation. None shall escape by being unknown; none by virtue of their rank or wealth; none because they have a character too pure to be judged; All shall be arraigned in one vast assemblage, and with reference to their eternal doom. See Re 20:12. Rosenmuller supposes that the apostle here alludes to an opinion that was common among the Jews, that the Gentiles only would be exposed to severe judgments in the future world, and that the Jews would be saved as a matter of course. But the idea seems rather to be, that as the trial of the great day was the most important that man could undergo, and as all must give account there, Paul and his fellow-labourers devoted themselves to untiring diligence and fidelity that they might be accepted in that great day.

Appear. *fanerwyhnai*. This word properly means, to make apparent, manifest, known; to show openly, etc. Here it means that we must be manifest, or openly shown; that is, we must be seen there, and be *publicly tried*. We must not only *stand* there, but our character will be seen, our desert will be known, our trial will be public. All will be brought from their graves, and from their places of concealment, and will be seen at the judgment-seat. The secret things of the heart and the life will all be made manifest and known.

The judgment seat of Christ. The tribunal of Christ, who is appointed to be the Judge of quick and dead. **See Barnes "Joh 5:25"**

See Barnes "Ac 10:42"; **See Barnes** "Ac 17:31".

Christ is appointed to judge the world; and for this purpose he will assemble it before him, and assign to all their eternal allotments. See Mt 25.

That every one may receive. The word rendered *may receive* (*komishtai*) means, properly, to take care of, to provide for; and in the New Testament, to bear, to bring, (Lu 7:37,) to acquire, to obtain, to receive. This is the sense here. Every individual shall take, receive, or *bear away* the appropriate reward for the transactions of this life of probation. See Eph 6:8 Col 3:25.

The things. The appropriate *reward* of the actions of this life.

Done in his body. Literally, "the things by or through (*dia*) the body." Tindal renders it, "the works of his body." The idea is, that every man shall receive an appropriate reward for the actions of this life. Observe here,

(1.) that it is the works done *in or through* the body; not which the body itself has done. It is the *mind*, the man that has lived in the body, and acted by it, that is to be judged.

(2.) It is to be for the deeds of this life; not for what is done *after death*. Men are not to be brought into judgment for what they do *after* they die. All beyond the grave is either reward or punishment; it is not probation. The destiny is to be settled for ever by what is done in this world of probation.

(3.) It is to be for *all* the deeds done in the body; for all the thoughts, plans, purposes, words, as well as for all the outward actions of the man. All that has been thought or done must come into review, and man must give account for all.

According to that he hath done. As an exact retribution for all that has been done. It is to be a *suitable and proper recompense*. The retribution is to be measured by what has been done in this life. Rewards shall be granted to the friends, and punishment to the foes of God, just in proportion to, or suitably to, their deeds in this life. Every man shall receive just what, under all the circumstances, he OUGHT to receive, and what will be impartial justice in the case. The judgment will be such that it will be capable of being seen to be right; and such as the universe at large, and as the individuals themselves, will see OUGHT to be rendered.

Whether it be good or bad. Whether the life has been good or evil. The good will have no wish to escape the trial; the evil will not be able. No power of wickedness, however great, will be able to escape from the trial of that day; no crime that has been concealed in this life will be concealed there; no transgressor of law who may have long escaped the punishment due to his sins, and who may have evaded all human tribunals, will be able to escape there.

{a} "For we must" Ro 14:10 {b} "the things" Eph 6:8 Re 22:12

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Knowing therefore*. We who are apostles, and who are appointed to preach the gospel, having the fullest assurance of the terrors of the day of judgment, and of the wrath of God, endeavour to persuade men to be prepared to meet Him, and to give up their account.

The terror of the Lord. That is, of the Lord Jesus, who will be seated on the throne of judgment, and who will decide the destiny of all men, 2Co 5:10

Mt 25.

The sense is, knowing how much the Lord is to be feared; what an object of terror and alarm it will be to stand at the judgment-seat; how fearful and awful will be the consequences of the trial

of that day. The Lord Jesus will be an object of terror and alarm or it will be a subject inspiring terror and alarm to stand there on that day, because

(1.) he has all power, and is appointed to execute judgment;

(2.) because all must there give a strict and impartial account of all that they have done;

(3.) because the wrath of God will be shown in the condemnation of the guilty. It will be a day of awful wailing and alarm when all the living and the dead shall be arraigned on trial with reference to their eternal destiny; and when countless hosts of the guilty and impenitent shall be thrust down to an eternal hell. Who can describe the amazing terror of the scene? Who can fancy the horrors of the hosts of the guilty and the wretched who shall then hear that their doom is to be fixed for ever in a world of unspeakable woe? The *influence* of the knowledge of the terror of the Lord on the mind of the apostle'seems to have been two-fold: first, an apprehension of it as a personal concern, and a desire to escape it, which led him to constant self-denial and toil; and, secondly, a desire to save others from being overwhelmed in the wrath of that dreadful day.

We persuade men. We endeavour to persuade them to flee from the wrath to come; to be prepared to stand before the judgment-seat, and to be fitted to enter into heaven. Observe here the peculiarity of the statement. It is not, we drive men; or we endeavour to alarm men; or we frighten men; or we appeal merely to their fears; but it is, we PERSUADE men—we endeavour to induce them, by all the arts of persuasion and argument, to flee from the wrath to come. The future judgment, and the scenes of future woe, are not proper topics for mere declamation. To declaim constantly on hell-fire and perdition—to appeal merely to the fears of men—is not the way in which Paul and the Saviour preached the gospel. The knowledge that there would be a judgment, and that the wicked would be sent to hell, was a powerful motive for Paul to endeavour to "persuade" men to escape from wrath; and was a motive for the Saviour to weep over Jerusalem, and to lament its folly and its doom, Lu 19:41. But they who fill their sermons with the denunciations of wrath; who dwell on the words hell and damnation for the purpose of rhetoric or declamation, to round a period, or merely to excite alarm; and who "deal damnation around the land" as if they rejoiced that men were to be condemned, and in a tone and manner as if they would be pleased to execute it, have yet to learn the true nature of the way to win men to God, and the proper effect of those awful truths on the mind. The true effect is to produce tenderness, deep feeling, and love; to prompt to the language of persuasion and of tender entreaty; to lead men to weep over dying sinners rather than to denounce them; to pray to God to have mercy on them rather than to use the language of severity, or to assume tones as if they would be pleased to execute the awful wrath of God.

But we are made manifest unto God. The meaning of this is, probably, that God sees that we are sincere and upright in our aims and purposes. He is acquainted with our hearts. All our motives are known to him, and he sees that it is our aim to promote his glory, and to save the souls of men. This is probably said to counteract the charge which might have been brought against him by some of the disaffected in Corinth, that he was influenced by improper motives and guns. To meet this, Paul says that God knew that he was endeavouring to save souls, and that he was actuated by a sincere desire to rescue them from the impending terrors of the day of judgment.

And I trust also, etc. And I trust also you are convinced of our integrity and uprightness of aim. The same sentiment is expressed in other words in 2Co 4:2. It is an appeal which he makes to them, and the expression of an earnest and confident assurance that they knew and felt that his aim was upright, and his purpose sincere.

{a} "terror of the Lord" Heb 10:31 Jude 1:23 {b} "but we are made" 2Co 4:2

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *For we commend not ourselves again unto you*. This refers to what he had said in the previous verse. He had there said that he had such a consciousness of integrity that he could appeal to God, and that he was persuaded that the Corinthians also approved his course, or admitted that he was influenced by right motives. He here states the reason why he had said this. It was not to commend himself to them. It was not to boast of his own character, nor was it in order to secure their praise or favour. Some might be disposed to misrepresent all that Paul said of himself, and to suppose that it was said for mere vain-glory, or the love of praise. He tells them, therefore, that his sole aim was necessary self-defence, and in order that they might have the fullest evidence that he, by whom they had been converted, was a true apostle; and that he whom they regarded as their friend and father in the gospel was a man of whom they need not be ashamed.

But give you occasion. This is a very happy turn of expression. The sense is, "You have been converted under my labours. You profess to regard me as your spiritual father and friend. I have no reason to doubt of your attachment to me. Yet you often hear my name slandered, and hear me accused of wanting the evidence of being an apostle, and of being vain-glorious, and self-seeking. I know your desire to vindicate my character, and to show that you are my friends; I therefore say these things in regard to myself in order that. you may be thus able to show your respect for me, and to vindicate me from the false and slanderous accusations of my enemies. Thus doing, you will be able to answer them; to show that the man whom you thus respect is worthy of your confidence and esteem."

On your behalf. For your own benefit, or as it were in self-vindication for adhering to me, and evincing attachment to me,"

That ye may have somewhat to answer them. That you may be furnished with a ready reply when you are charged with adhering to a man who has no claims to the apostleship,'or who is slandered in any other way.

Which glory in appearance. The false teachers in Corinth. Probably they boasted of their rank, their eloquence, their talents, their external advantages; but not in the qualities of the heart—in sincerity, honesty, real love for souls. Their consciences would not allow them to do this; and they knew themselves that their boasting was mere vain pretence, and that there was no real and solid ground for it. The margin is, "in the face." The meaning is, probably, that their ground of boasting was external, and was such as can be seen of men; and was not rather the secret consciousness of right, which could exist only in the conscience and the heart. Paul, on the other hand, gloried mainly in his sincerity, his honesty, his desire for their salvation; in his conscious integrity before God; and not in any mere external advantages or professions, in his rank, eloquence, or talent. Accordingly, all his argument here turns on his sincerity, his conscious uprightness, and his real regard for their welfare. And the truth taught here is, that sincerity and conscious integrity are more valuable than any or all external advantages and endowments.

{c} "For we commend" 2Co 3:1 {1} "appearance" "the face"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *For whether we be beside ourselves*. This is probably designed to meet some of the charges which the false teachers in Corinth brought against him, and to furnish his friends there with a ready answer, as well as to show them the true principles on which he acted, and his real love for them. It is altogether probable that he was charged with being deranged; that many who boasted themselves of prudence, and soberness, and wisdom, regarded him as acting like a madman. It has not been uncommon, by any means, for the cold and the prudent, for formal professors and for hypocrites, to regard the warm-hearted and zealous friends of religion as maniacs. Festus thought Paul was deranged, when he said, "Paul, thou art beside thyself, much learning doth make thee mad," (Ac 26:24;) and the Saviour himself was regarded by his immediate relatives and friends as beside himself, Mr 3:21. And at all times there have been many, both in the church and out of it, who have regarded the friends of revivals, and of missions, and all those who have evinced any extraordinary zeal in religion, as deranged. The object of Paul here is to show, whatever might be the appearance or the estimate which they affixed to his conduct, what were the real principles which actuated him. These were zeal for God, love to the church, and the constraining influences of the love of Christ, 2Co 5:14,15. The word here rendered "be beside ourselves" (*exesthmen*, from *existhmi*) means, properly, to put out of place; to be put out of place; and then to be put out of one's self, to astonish, to fill with wonder, Lu 24:22 Ac 8:9,11; and then to be out of one's mind, to be deranged. Here it means that they were charged with being deranged; or that others esteemed, or professed to esteem, Paul and his fellow-labourers deranged.

It is to God. It is in the cause of God, and from love to him. It is such a zeal for him; such an absorbing interest in his cause; such love prompting to so great self-denial, and teaching us to act so much unlike other men, as to lead them to think that we are deranged. The doctrine here is, that there may be such a zeal for the glory of God, such an active and ardent desire to promote his honour, as to lead others to charge us with derangement. It does not *prove*, however, that a man is deranged on the subject of religion because he is unlike others, or because he pursues a course of life that differs materially from that of other professors of religion, and from the man of the world. *He* may be the truly sane man after all; and all the madness that may exist may be where there is a profession of religion without zeal; a professed belief in the existence of God and in the realities of eternity, that produces no difference in the conduct between the professor and other men; or an utter unconcern about eternal realities when a man is walking on the brink of death and of hell. There are few men that become deranged by religion; there are millions who act as madmen who have no religion. And the highest instances of madness in the world are those who walk over an eternal hell without apprehension or alarm.

Or whether we be sober. Whether we are sane, or of sound mind. Comp. Mr 5:15. Tindal renders this whole passage, "For if we be too fervent, to God we are too fervent; if we keep measure, for our cause keep we measure." The sense seems to be, "If we are esteemed to be sane, and sober-minded, as we trust you will admit us to be, it is for your sake. Whatever may be the estimate in which we are held, we are influenced by love to God, and love to man. In such a cause, we cannot but evince zeal and self-denial which may expose us to the charge of mental derangement; but still we trust that by you we shall be regarded as influenced by a sound mind. We seek your welfare.

We labour for you. And we trust that you will appreciate our motives, and regard us as truly sober-minded."

{*} "beside" "transported beyond" {d} "it is" 2Co 11:1,16,17

{**} "sober" "sober-minded"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *For the love of Christ*. In this verse, Paul brings into view the principle which actuated him; the reason of his extraordinary and disinterested zeal. That was, that he was influenced by the love which Christ had shown in dying for all men, and by the argument which was furnished by that death respecting the actual character and condition of man, (in this verse;) and of the obligation of those who professed to be his true friends, 2Co 5:15. The phrase "the love of Christ" (*agaph tou cristou*) may denote either the love which Christ bears toward us, and which he has manifested, or our love toward, him. In the former sense the phrase "the love of God" is used in Ro 5:8 2Co 13:13; and the phrase "love of Christ" in Eph 3:17. The phrase is used in the latter sense in Joh 15:9,10, and Ro 8:35. It is impossible to determine the sense with certainty, and it is only by the view which shall be taken of the connexion and of the argument which will in any way determine the meaning. Expositors differ in regard to it. It seems to me that the phrase here means the love which Christ had toward us. Paul speaks of his dying for all as the reason why he was urged on to the course of self-denial which he evince& Christ died for all. All were dead. Christ evinced his great love for us, and for all, by giving himself to die; and it was this love which Christ had shown that impelled Paul to his own acts of love and self-denial. He gave himself to his great work, impelled by that love which Christ had shown; by the view of the ruined condition of man which that work furnished; and by a desire to emulate the Redeemer, and to possess the same spirit which he evinced.

Constraineth us. *sunecei*. This word (*sunecw*) properly means, to hold together, to press together, to shut up; then to press on, urge, impel, or excite. Here it means, that the impelling, or exciting motive in the labours and self-denials of Paul, was the love of Christ—the love which he had showed to the children of men. Christ so loved the world as to give himself for it. His love for the world was a demonstration that men were dead in sins. And we, being urged by the same love, are prompted to like acts of zeal and self-denial to save the world from ruin.

Because we thus judge. Greek, "We judging this;" that is, we thus determine in our own minds, or we thus decide; or this is our firm conviction and belief—we come to this conclusion.

That if one died for all. On the supposition that one died for all; or taking it for granted that one died for all, then it follows that all were dead. The "one" who died for all here is undoubtedly the Lord Jesus. The word "for" (*uper*) means, in the place of, in the stead of. See Phm 1:13, and 2Co 5:20 of this chapter. It means that Christ took the place of sinners, and died in their stead; that he endured what was an ample equivalent for all the punishment which would be inflicted if they were to suffer the just penalty of the law; that he endured so much suffering, and that God by his great substituted sorrows made such an expression of his hatred of sin, as to answer the same end in expressing his sense of the evil of sin, and in restraining others from transgression, the guilty were personally to suffer the full penalty of the law. If this was done, of course the guilty might be

pardoned and saved, since all the ends which could be accomplished by their destruction have been accomplished by the substituted sufferings of the Lord Jesus. **See Barnes** "Ro 3:25, **See Barnes** "Ro 3:26, where this subject is considered at length, The phrase "for all," (*uper pantwn*,) obviously means for all mankind; for every man. This is an exceedingly important expression in regard to the extent of the atonement which the Lord Jesus made; and while it proves that his death was vicarious, that is, in the place of others, and for their sakes, it demonstrates also that the atonement was general, and had, in itself considered, no limitation, and no particular reference to any class or condition of men, and no particular applicability to one class more than to another. There was nothing in the nature of the atonement that limited it to any one class or condition; there was nothing in the design that made it, in itself, any more applicable to one portion of mankind than to another. And whatever may be true in regard. to *the fact* as to its actual applicability, or in regard to *the purpose of God to apply it*, it is demonstrated by this passage that his death had an original applicability to all, and that the merits of that death were sufficient to save all. The argument in favour of the general atonement, from this passage, consists in the following points:

(1.) That Paul *assumes* this as a matter that was well known, indisputable, and universally admitted, that Christ died for all. He did not deem it necessary to enter into the argument to prove it, nor even to *state* it formally. It was so well known, and so universally admitted, that he made it a *first principle*—an elementary position— a maxim on which to base another important doctrine—to wit, that all were dead. It was a point which he assumed that no one would call in question; a doctrine which might be laid down as the *basis* of an argument—like one of the first principles or maxims in science.

(2.) It is the plain and obvious meaning of the expression—the sense which strikes *all* men, unless they have some theory to support to the contrary; and it requires all the ingenuity which men can ever command to make it appear even *plausible* that this is consistent with the doctrine of a limited atonement—much more to make it out that it does not mean all. If a man is told that *all* the human family must die, the obvious interpretation is, that it applies to every individual. If told that all the passengers on board a steamboat were drowned, the obvious interpretation is, that every individual was meant. If told that a ship was wrecked, and that all the crew perished, the obvious interpretation would be that none escaped. If told that all the inmates of an hospital were sick, it would be understood that there was not an individual that was not sick. Such is the view which would be taken by nine hundred and ninety-nine persons out of a thousand, if told that Christ died for all; nor could they conceive how this could be consistent with the statement that he died only for the elect, and that the elect was only a small part of the human family.

(3.) This interpretation is in accordance with all the explicit declarations on the design of the death of the Redeemer. Heb 2:9, "That he, by the grace of, God, should taste death for every man." Comp. Joh 3:16, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." 1Ti 2:6, "Who gave himself a ransom for all." See Mt 20:28, "The Son of man came to give his life a ransom for many." 1Jo 2:2, "And he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

(4.) The fact also, that on the ground of the atonement made by the Redeemer salvation is offered unto all men *by God*, is a proof that he died for all. The apostles were directed to go "into all the world, and to preach the gospel *to every creature,"* with the assurance that "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," Mr 16:16, and everywhere in the Bible the most full and free offers of salvation are made to all mankind. Comp. Isa 55:1 Joh 7:37; Re 22:17.

These offers are made on the ground that the Lord Jesus died for men, Joh 3:16. They are offers of salvation through the gospel, of the pardon of sin, and of eternal life to be made "to every creature." But if Christ died only for a part; if there is a large portion of the human family for whom he died in no sense whatever; if there is no provision of any kind made for them, then God must know this, and then the offers cannot be made with sincerity, and God is tantalizing them with the offers of that which does not exist, and which he knows does not exist. It is of no use here to say that the preacher does not know who the elect are, and that he is obliged to make the offer to all in order that the elect may be reached. For it is not the preacher only who offers the gospel. It is God who does it, and he knows who the elect are, and yet *he* offers salvation to all. And if there is no salvation provided for all, and no possibility that all to whom the offer comes should be saved, then God is insincere; and there is no way possible of vindicating his character.

(5.) If this interpretation is not correct, and if Christ did not die for all, then the argument of Paul here is a non sequitur, and is worthless. The demonstration that all are dead, according to him, is that Christ died for all. But suppose that he meant, or that he knew, that Christ died only for a part—for the elect—then how would the argument stand, and what would be its force? "Christ died only for a portion of the human race, *therefore ALL* are sinners. Medicine is provided only for a part of mankind, therefore all are sick. Pardon is offered to part only, therefore all are guilty." But Paul never reasoned in this way. He believed that Christ died for all mankind, and on the ground of that he inferred at once that all needed such an atonement; that all-were sinners, and that all were exposed to the wrath of God. And the argument is in this way, and in this way only, sound. But still it may be asked, what is the force of this argument ? How does the fact that Christ died for all prove that all were sinners, or dead in sin? I answer,

(a.) In the same way as to provide medicine for all, proves that all are sick, or liable to be sick; and to offer pardon to all who are in a prison, proves that all there are guilty. What insult is it to offer medicine to a man in health; or pardon to a man who has violated no law! And there would be the same insult in offering salvation to a man who was not a sinner, and who did not need forgiveness.

(b.) The dignity of the Sufferer, and the extent of his sufferings, prove that all were under a deep and dreadful load of guilt. Such a Being would not have come to die unless *the race* had been apostate; nor would he have endured so great sorrows unless a deep and dreadful malady had spread over the world. The deep anxiety, the tears, the toils, the sufferings, and the groans of the Redeemer, show what was *his* sense of the condition of man, and prove that *he* regarded them as degraded, fallen, and lost. And if the Son of God, who knows all hearts, regarded them as lost, they *are* lost. He was not mistaken in regard to the character of man, and he did not lay down his life under the influence of delusion and error. If to the view which has been taken of this important passage it be objected that the work of the atonement must have been to a large extent in vain; that it has been actually applied to but comparatively a small portion of the human family, and that it is unreasonable to suppose that God would suffer so great sorrows to be endured for nought, we may reply,

(1.) that it may not have been in vain, though it may have been rejected by a large portion of mankind. There may have been other purposes accomplished by it besides the direct salvation of men. It was doing much when it rendered it consistent for God to offer salvation to all; it is much that God could be seen to be just, and yet pardoning the sinner; it was much when his determined hatred of sin, and his purpose to honour his law, were evinced; and in regard to the benevolence and justice of God to other beings and to other worlds, much, very much was gained, though all

the human race had rejected the plan and been lost; and in regard to *all* these objects, the plan was not in vain, and the sufferings of the Redeemer were not for nought. But

(2.) it is in accordance with what we see everywhere, when much that God does seems to our eyes, though not to his, to be in vain. How much rain falls on ever sterile sands or on barren rocks, to our eyes in vain! What floods of light are poured each day on barren wastes, or untraversed oceans, to our eyes in vain! How many flowers shed forth their fragrance in the wilderness, and "waste their sweetness on the desert air," to us apparently for nought! How many pearls lie useless in the ocean; how much gold and silver in the earth; how many diamonds amidst rocks to us unknown, and apparently in vain! How many lofty trees rear their heads in the untraversed wilderness, and after standing for centuries fall on the earth and decay, to our eyes in vain! And how much *medicinal* virtue is created by God each year in the vegetable world that is unknown to man, and that decays and is lost without removing any disease, and that seems to be created in vain! And how long has it been before the most valuable medicines have been found out, and applied to alleviating pain, or removing disease! Year after year, and age after age, they existed in a suffering world, and men died perhaps within a few yards of the medicine which would have relieved or saved them, but it was unknown, or, if known, disregarded. But times were coming when their value would be appreciated, and when they would be applied to benefit the sufferer. So with the plan of salvation. It may be rejected, and the sufferings of the Redeemer may seem to have been for nought. But they will yet be of value to mankind; and when the time shall come for the whole world to embrace the Saviour, there will be found no want of sufficiency in the plan of redemption, and in the merits of the Redeemer, to save all the race.

Then were all dead. All dead in sin; that is, all were sinners. The fact that he died for all proves that all were transgressors. The word "dead" is not unfrequently used in the Scriptures to denote the condition of sinners. See Eph 2:1. It means not that sinners are in all senses and in all respects like a lifeless corpse, for they are not. They are still moral agents, and have a conscience, and are capable of thinking, and speaking, and acting. It does not mean that they have no more power, than one in the grave, for they have more power. But it means that there is a striking similarity, in some respects, between one Who is dead and a sinner. That similarity does not extend to everything, but in many respects it is very striking.

(1.) The sinner is as insensible to the glories of the heavenly world, and the appeals of the gospel, as a corpse is to what is going on around or above it. The body that lies in the grave is insensible to the voice of friendship, and the charms of music, and the hum of business, and the plans of gain and ambition; and so the sinner is insensible to all the glories of the heavenly world, and to all the appeals that are made to him, and to all the warnings of God. He lives as though there were no heaven and no hell; no God and no Saviour.

(2.) There is need of the same Divine power to convert a sinner which is needful to raise up the dead. The same cause does not exist, making the existence of that power necessary; but it is *a fact* that a sinner will no more be converted by his own power than a dead man will rise from the grave by his own power. No man ever yet was converted without direct Divine agency, any more than Lazarus was raised without Divine agency. And there is no more just or melancholy description which can be given of man, than to say that he is *dead in sins*. He is insensible to all the appeals that God makes to him; he is insensible to all the sufferings of the Saviour, and to all the glories of heaven; he lives as though these did not exist, or as though he had no concern in them; his eyes see no more beauty in them than the sightless eyeballs of the dead do in the material world; his ear is

as inattentive to the calls of God and the gospel as the ear of the dead is to the voice of friendship or the charms of melody; and in a world that is full of God, and that might be full of hope, he is living without God and without hope.

{a} "of Christ" So 8:6 {b} "then were all dead" Ro 5:15

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *And that he died for all, etc*. This verse is designed still farther to explain the reasons of the conduct of the apostle. He had not lived for himself. He had not lived to amass wealth, or to enjoy pleasure, or to obtain a reputation. He had lived a life of self-denial and of toil; and he here states the reason why he had done it. It was because he felt that the great purpose of the death of the Redeemer was to secure this result. To that Saviour, therefore, who died for all, he consecrated his talents and his time, and sought in every way possible to promote *his* glory.

That they which live. They who are true Christians; who are made alive unto God as the result of the dying love of the Redeemer. Sinners are dead in sins. Christians are alive to the worth of the soul, the presence of God, the importance of religion, the solemnities of eternity; i.e., they act and feel as if these things had a real existence, and as if they should exert a constant influence upon the heart and life. It is observable that Paul makes a distinction here between those for whom Christ died and those who actually "live;" thus demonstrating that there may be many for whom he died who do not live to God, or who are not savingly benefited by his death. The atonement was for all, but only apart are actually made alive to God, Multitudes reject it; but the fact that he died for all, that he tasted death for every man, that he not only died for the elect but for all others, that his benevolence was so great as to embrace the whole human family in the design of his death, is a reason why they who are actually made alive to God should consecrate themselves entirely to his service. The fact that he died for all erinted such unbounded and infinite benevolence, that it should induce us who are actually benefited by his death, and who have any just views of it, to devote all that we have to his service.

Should not henceforth live unto themselves. Should not seek our own ease and pleasure; should not make it our great object to promote our own interest; but should make it the grand purpose of our lives to promote his honour, and to advance his cause. This is a vital principle in religion; and it is exceedingly important to know what is meant by living to ourselves, and whether we do it. It is done in the following, and perhaps in some other ways:

(1.) When men seek pleasure, gain, or reputation, as the controlling principle of their lives.

(2.) When they are regardless of the rights of others, and sacrifice all the claims which others have on them in order to secure the advancement of their own purposes and ends.

(3.) When they are regardless of the wants of others, and turn a deaf ear to all the appeals which charity makes to them, and have no time to give to serve them, and no money to spare to alleviate their wants; and especially when they turn a deaf ear to the appeals which are made for the diffusion of the gospel to the benighted and perishing.

(4.) When their main purpose is the aggrandizement of their own families —for their families are but a diffusion of self. And

(5.) when they seek their own salvation only from selfish motives, and not from a desire to honour God. Multitudes are selfish even in their religion; and the main purpose which they have in view is to promote their own objects, and not the honour of the Master whom they profess to serve. They seek and profess religion only because they desire to escape from wrath, and to obtain the happiness of heaven, and not from any love to the Redeemer, or any desire to honour him. Or they seek to build up the interests of their own church and party, and all their zeal is expended on that, and that alone, without any real desire to honour the Saviour. Or though in the church, they are still selfish and live wholly to themselves. They live for fashion, for gain, for reputation. They practise no self-denial; they make no effort to advance the cause of God the Saviour.

But unto him, etc. Unto the Lord Jesus Christ. To live to him is the opposite to living unto ourselves. It is to seek his honour; to feel that we belong to him; that all our time and talents—all our strength of intellect and body—all the avails of our skill and toil—all belong to him, and should be employed in his service. If we have talents by which we can influence other minds, they should be employed to honour the Saviour. If we have skill, or strength to labour, by which we can make money, we should feel that it all belongs to him, and should be employed in his service. If we have property, we should feel that it is his, and that he has a claim upon it all, and that it should be honestly consecrated to his cause. And if we are endowed with a spirit of enterprise, and are fitted by nature to encounter perils in distant and barbarous climes, as Paul was, we should feel like him that we are bound to devote all entirely to his service, and to the promotion of his cause. A servant, a slave, does not live to himself, but to his master. His person, his time, his limbs, his talents, and the avails of his industry are not regarded as his own. He is judged incapable of holding any property which is not at the disposal of his master. If he has strength, it is his master's. If he has skill, the avails of it are his master's. If he is an ingenious mechanic, or labours in any department; if he is amiable, kind, gentle, and faithful, and adapted to be useful in an eminent degree, it is regarded as all the property of his master. He is bound to go where his master chooses; to execute the task which he assigns; to deny himself at his master's will; and to come and lay the avails of all his toil and skill at his master's feet. He is regarded as having been purchased with money; and the purchase-money is supposed to give a right to his time, his talents, his services, and his soul. Such as the slave is supposed to become by purchase, and by the operation of human laws, the Christian becomes by the purchase of the Son of God, and by the voluntary recognition of him as the Master, and as having a right to all that we have and are. To him all belongs; and all should be employed in endeavouring to promote his glory, and in advancing his cause.

Which died for them, and rose again. Paul here states the grounds of the obligation under which he felt himself placed, to live not unto himself but unto Christ.

(1.) The first is, the fact that Christ had died for him, and for all his people. The effect of that death was the same as a purchase. It was a purchase. **See Barnes "1Co 6:20"**

See Barnes "1Co 7:23".

Comp. 1Pe 1:18,19.

(2.) The second is, that he had risen again from the dead. To this fact Paul traced all his hopes of eternal life, and of the resurrection from the dead. See Ro 4:25. As we have the hope of the resurrection from the dead only from the fact that he rose; as he has "brought life and immortality to light," and hath in this way "abolished death," (2Ti 1:10;) as all the prospect of entering a world where there is no death and no grave is to be traced to the resurrection of the Saviour, so we are bound by every obligation of gratitude to devote ourselves without any reserve to him. To him, and

him alone, should we live; and in his cause our lives should be, as Paul's was, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable in his sight.

{a} "that they which" Ro 14:7-9 1Co 6:19,20

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Wherefore henceforth*. In view of the fact that the Lord Jesus died for all men, and rose again. The effect of that has been to change all our feelings, and to give us entirely new views of men, of ourselves, and of the Messiah, so that we have become new creatures. The word "henceforth" (*apo tou nun*) means, properly, from the present time; but there is no impropriety in supposing that Paul refers to the time when he first obtained correct views of the Messiah, and that he means from that time. His mind seems to have been thrown back to the period when these new views burst upon his soul; and the sentiment is, that from the time when he obtained those new views, he had resolved to know no one after the flesh.

Know we no man. The word *know* here (*oidamen*,) is used in the sense of, we form our estimate of; we judge; we are influenced by. Our estimate of man is formed by other views than according to the flesh.

After the flesh. A great many different interpretations have been proposed of this expression, which it is not needful here to repeat. The meaning is, probably, that in his estimate of men he was not influenced by the views which are taken by those who are unrenewed, and who are unacquainted with the truths of redemption. It may include a great many things, and perhaps the following:

(1.) He was not influenced in his estimate of men by a regard to their birth or country, he did not form an attachment to a Jew because he was a Jew, or to a Gentile because he was a Gentile. He had learned that Christ died for all, and he felt disposed to regard all alike.

(2.) He was not influenced in his estimate of men by their rank, and wealth, and office. Before his conversion he had been; but now he learned to look on their moral character, and to regard that as making the only permanent and really important distinction among men. He did not esteem one man highly because he was of elevated rank, or of great wealth, and another less because he was of a different rank in life.

(3.) It may also include the idea, that he had left his own kindred and friends on account of superior attachment to Christ. He had parted from them to preach the gospel. He was not restrained by their opinions; he was not kept from going from land to land by love to them. is probable that they remained Jews. It may be that they were opposed to him, and to his efforts in the cause of the Redeemer. It may be that they would have dismissed him from a work so self-denying, and so arduous, and where he would be exposed to so much persecution and contempt. It may be that they would have set before him the advantages of his birth and education; would have reminded him of his early brilliant prospects; and would have used all the means possible to dissuade him from embarking in a cause like that in which he was engaged. The passage here means that Paul was influenced by none of these considerations. In early life he had been. He had prided himself on rank, and on talent. He was proud of his own advantages as a Jew; and he estimated worth by rank, and by national distinction, Php 3:4-6. He had despised Christians on account of their being the

followers of the Man of Nazareth; and there can be no reason to doubt that he partook of the common feelings of his countrymen, and held in contempt the whole Gentile world. But his views were changed—so much changed as to make it proper to say that he was a new creature, 2Co 5:17. When converted, he did not confer with flesh and blood, (Ga 1:16;) and in the school of Christ, he had learned that if a man was his disciple, he must be willing to forsake father, and mother, and sister, and brother, and to hate his own life that he might honour him, Lu 14:26. He had formed his principle of action now from a higher standard than any regard to rank, or wealth, or national distinction, and had risen above them all; and now estimated men, not by these external and factitious advantages, but by a reference to their personal character and moral worth.

Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh. Though in common with the Jewish nation we expected a Messiah who would be a temporal prince, and who would be distinguished for the distinctions which are valued among men, yet we have changed our estimate of him, and judge of him in this way no longer. There can be no doubt that Paul, in common with his countrymen, had expected a Messiah who would be a magnificent temporal prince and conqueror, one who they supposed would be a worthy successor of David and Solomon. The coming of such a prince, Paul had confidently expected, he expected no other Messiah. He had fixed his hopes on that. This is what is meant by the expression "to know Christ after the flesh." It does not mean that he had seen him in the flesh, but that he had formed, so to speak, carnal views of him, and such as men of this world regard as grand and magnificent in a monarch and conqueror. He had had no correct views of his spiritual character, and of the pure and holy purposes for which he would come into the world.

Yet now henceforth know we him no more. We know him no more in this manner. Our conceptions and views of him are changed. We no more regard him according to the flesh; we no longer esteem the Messiah who was to come as a temporal prince and warrior; but we look on him as a spiritual Saviour, a Redeemer from sin. The idea is, that his views of him had been entirely changed. It does not mean, as our translation would seem to imply, that Paul would have no further acquaintance with Christ, but it means that from the moment of his conversion he had laid aside all his views of his being a temporal sovereign, and all his feelings that he was to be honoured only because he supposed that he would have an elevated rank among the monarchs of the earth. Locke and Macknight, it seems to me, have strangely mistaken this passage. The former renders it, "For if I myself have gloried in this, that Christ was himself circumcised as I am, and was of my blood and nation, I do so now no more any longer." The same substantially is the view of Macknight. Clarke as strangely mistakes it, when he says that it means that Paul could not prize now a man who was a sinner because he was allied to the royal family of David, nor prize a man because he had seen Christ in the flesh. The correct view, as it seems to me, is given above. And the doctrine which is taught here is, that at conversion the views are essentially changed, and that the converted man has a view of the Saviour entirely different from what he had before. He may not, like Paul, have regarded him as a temporal prince; he may not have looked to him as a mighty monarch; but his views in regard to his person, character, work, and loveliness will be entirely changed. He will see a beauty in his character which he never saw before. Before, he regarded him as a root out. of dry ground; as the despised man of Nazareth; as having nothing in his character to be desired, or to render him lovely, (Isa 53;) but at conversion the views are changed. He is seen to be the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely; as pure, and holy, and benevolent; as mighty, and great, and glorious; as infinitely benevolent; as lovely in his precepts, lovely in his life, lovely in his death,

lovely in his resurrection, and as most glorious as he is seated on the right hand of God. He is seen to be a Saviour exactly adapted to the condition and wants of the soul; and the soul yields itself to him to be redeemed by him alone. There is no change of view so marked and decided as that of the sinner in regard to the Lord Jesus Christ at his conversion; and it is a clear proof that we have never been born again if our views in reference to him have never undergone any change. "What think ye of Christ?" is a question the answer to which will determine any man's character, and demonstrate whether he is or is not a child of God. Tindal has more correctly expressed the sense of this than our translation: "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, now henceforth know we him so no more."

{*} "know" "regard" {+} "have known" "regarded"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Therefore if any man be in Christ*. The phrase, to "be in Christ," evidently means to be united to Christ by faith; or to be in him as the branch is in the vine—that is, so united to the vine, or so in it, as to derive all its nourishment and support from it, and to be sustained entirely by it. Joh 15:2, "Every branch in me;" Joh 15:4, "Abide *in* me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me." See also Joh 15:5-7.

See Barnes "Joh 15:2".

To be "in Christ" denotes a more tender and close union; and implies that all our support is from him. All our strength is derived from him; and denotes further that we shall partake of his fulness, and share in his felicity and glory, as the branch partakes of the strength and rigour of the parent vine. The word "therefore" (*wste*) here implies, that the reason why Paul infers that any one is a new creature who is in Christ is that which is stated in the previous verse; to wit, the change of views in regard to the Redeemer to which he there refers, and which was so great as to constitute a change like a new creation. The affirmation here is universal, "if any man be in Christ;" that is, all who become true Christians— undergo such a change in their views and feelings as to make it proper to say of them that they are new creatures. No matter what they have been before, whether moral or immoral; whether infidels or speculative believers; whether amiable, or debased, sensual, and polluted, yet if they become Christians they all experience such a change as to make it proper to say they are a new creation.

He is a new creature. Marg., "Let him be." This is one of the instances in which the margin has given a less correct translation than is in the text. The idea evidently is, not that he *ought* to be a new creature, but that he is in fact; not that he *ought* to live as becomes a new creature—which is true enough—but that he will in fact live in that way, and manifest the characteristics of the new creation. The phrase "a new creature" (*kainh ktisiv*) occurs also in Ga 6:15. The word rendered "creature" (*ktisiv*) means, properly, in the New Testament, *creation*. It denotes

(1.) the act of creating, Ro 1:20;

(2.) a created thing, a creature, Ro 1:25; and refers

(a.) to the universe, or creation in general, Mr 10:6 13:19; 2Pe 3:4;

(b.) to man, mankind, Mr 16:15 Col 1:23. Here it means a new creation in a moral sense; and the phrase "new creature" is equivalent to the expression in Eph 4:24: "The new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." It means, evidently, that there is a change produced in the renewed heart of man that is equivalent to the act of creation, and that bears a strong resemblance to it—a change, so to speak, as if the man was made over again, and had become new. The mode or manner in which it is done is not described; nor should the words be pressed, to the quick, as if the process were the same in both cases—for the words are here evidently figurative. But the phrase implies evidently the following things:

(1.) That there is an exertion of Divine power in the conversion of the sinner as really as in the act of creating the world out of nothing, and that this is as indispensable in the one case as in the other.

(2.) That a change is produced so great as to make it proper to say that he is a new man. He has new views, new motives, new principles, new objects and plans of life. He seeks new purposes, and he lives for new ends. If a drunkard becomes reformed, there is no impropriety in saying that he is a new man. If a man who was licentious becomes pure, there is no impropriety in saying that he is not the same man that he was before. Such expressions are common in all languages, and they are as proper as they are common. There is such a change as to make the language proper. And so in the conversion of a sinner. There is a change so deep, so clear, so entire, and so abiding, that it is proper to say, here is a new creation of God—a work of the Divine power as decided and as glorious as when God created all things out of nothing. There is no other moral change that takes place on earth so deep, and radical, and thorough, as the change at conversion. And there is no other where there is so much propriety in ascribing it to the mighty power of God.

Old things are passed away. The old views in regard to the Messiah, and in regard to men in general, 2Co 5:16. But Paul also gives this a general form of expression, and says that old things in general have passed away—referring to everything. It was true of all who were converted that old things had passed away. And it may include the following things:

(1.) In regard to the Jews—that their former prejudices against Christianity, their natural pride, and spirit of seducing others, their attachment to their rites and ceremonies, and dependence on them for salvation, had all passed away. They now renounced that dependence, relied on the merits of the Saviour, and embraced all as brethren who were of the family of Christ.

(2.) In regard to the Gentiles—their attachment to idols, their love of sin, and degradation, their dependence on their own works, had passed away, and they had renounced all these things, and had come to mingle their hopes with those of the converted Jews, and with all who were the friends of the Redeemer.

(3.) In regard to all, it is also true that old things pass away. Their former prejudices, opinions, habits, attachments pass away. Their supreme love of self passes away. Their love of sin passes away. Their love of the world passes away. Their supreme attachment to their earthly friends rather than God passes away. Their love of sin—their sensuality, pride, vanity, levity, ambition—passes away. There is a deep and radical change on all these subjects—a change which *commences* at the new birth; which is *carried on* by progressive sanctification; and which is consummated at death and in heaven.

Behold, all things are become new. That is, all things in view of the mind. The purposes of life, the feelings of the heart, the principles of action, all become new. The understanding is consecrated to new objects, the body is employed in new service, the heart forms new attachments. Nothing

can be more strikingly descriptive of the facts in conversion than this; nothing more entirely accords with the feelings of the new-born soul. All is new. There are new views of God and of Jesus Christ; new views of this world and of the world to come; new views of truth and of duty; and everything is seen in a new aspect and with new feelings. Nothing is more common in young converts than such feelings, and nothing is more common than for them to say that all things are new. The Bible seems to be a new book; and though they may have often read it before, yet there is a beauty about it which they never saw before, and which they wonder they have not before perceived. The whole face of nature seems to them to be changed, and they seem to be in a new world. The hills, and vales, and streams; the sun, the stars, the groves, the forests, seem to be new. A new beauty is spread over them all; and they now see them to be the work of God, and his glory is spread over them all, and they can *now* say—-

"My Father made them all."

The heavens and the earth are filled with new wonders, and all things seem now to speak forth the praise of God. Even the very countenances of friends seem to be new; and there are new feelings towards all men; a new kind of love to kindred and friends; a love before unfelt for enemies; and a new love for all mankind.

{1} "he is" "Let him be" {a} "new creature" Joh 3:3 Ga 6:15 {b} "all things are become new" Isa 65:17 Re 21:5

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *And all things are of God*. This refers particularly to the things in question, the renewing of the heart, and the influences by which Paul had been brought to a state of willingness to forsake all, and to devote his life to the self-denying labours involved in the purpose of making the Saviour known. He makes the statement general, however, showing his belief that not only these things were produced by God, but that all things were under his direction, and subject to his control. Nothing that he had done was to be traced to his own agency or power, but God was to be acknowledged everywhere. This great truth Paul never forgot; and he never suffered himself to lose sight of it. It was in his view a cardinal and glorious truth; and he kept its influence always before his mind and his heart. In the important statement which follows, therefore, about the ministry of reconciliation, he deeply feels that the whole plan, and all the success which had attended the plan, was to be traced not to his zeal; or fidelity, or skill, but to the agency of God. **See Barnes "1Co 3:6,7".**

Who hath reconciled us to himself. The word *us* here includes, doubtless, all who were Christians—whether Jews or Gentiles, or whatever was their rank. They had all been brought into a state of reconciliation, or agreement with God,,through the Lord Jesus Christ. Before, they were opposed to God. They had violated his laws. They were his enemies. But by the means of the plan of salvation they had been brought into a state of agreement, or harmony, and were united in feeling and in aim with him. Two men who have been alienated by prejudice, by passion, or by interest, are reconciled when the cause of their alienation is removed, on whichever side it may have existed, or if on both sides, and when they lay aside their enmity and become friends. Thenceforward they

are agreed, and live together without alienation, heart-burnings, jealousies, and strife. So between God and man. There was a variance; there was an alienation. Man was alienated from God. He had no love for him. He disliked his government and laws. He was unwilling to be restrained. He sought his own pleasure. He was proud, vain, self-confident. He was not pleased with the character of God, or with his claims or his plans. And in like manner, God was *displeased* with the pride, the sensuality, the rebellion, the haughtiness of man. He was displeased that his law had been violated, and that man had cast off his government. Now reconciliation could take place only when these causes of alienation should be laid aside, and when God and man should be brought to harmony; when man should lay aside his love of sin, and should be pardoned, and when, therefore, God could consistently treat him as a friend. The Greek word which is here used (*katallassw*) means, properly, to change against anything; to exchange for anything, for money, or for any article.—*Robinson*. In the New Testament it means, to change one person towards another; that is, to reconcile to any one. **See Barnes "Ro 5:10".**

It conveys the idea of producing a change so that one who is alienated should be brought to friendship. Of course, all the *change* which takes place must be on the part of man, for God will not change, and the purpose of the plan of reconciliation is to effect such a *change* in man as to make him in fact reconciled to God, and at agreement with him. There were indeed obstacles to the reconciliation on the part of God, but they did not arise from any unwillingness to be reconciled; from any reluctance to treat his creature as his friend; but they arose from the fact that man had sinned, and that God was just; that such is the perfection of God that he *cannot* treat the good and evil alike; and that therefore, if he should treat man as his friend, it was necessary that in some proper way he should maintain the honour of his law, and show his hatred of sin, and should secure the conversion and future obedience of the offender. All this God purposed to secure by the atonement made by the Redeemer, rendering it consistent for him to exercise the benevolence of his nature, and to pardon the offender. But God is not changed. The plan of reconciliation has made no change in his character. It has not made him a different being from what he was before. There is often a mistake on this subject; and men seem to suppose that God was originally stern, and unmerciful, and inexorable, and that he has been made mild and forgiving by the atonement. But it is not so. No change has been made in God; none needed to be made; none could be made. He was *always* mild, and merciful, and good; and the gift of a Saviour and the plan of reconciliation *is just an expression of his original willingness to pardon*. When a father sees a child struggling in the stream, and in danger of drowning, the peril and the cries of the child make no *change* in the character of the father; but such was his former love for the child that he would plunge into the stream at the hazard of his own life to save him. So it is with God. Such was his original love for man, and his disposition to show mercy, that he would submit to any sacrifice, except that of truth and justice, in order that he might save him. Hence he sent his only Son to die—not to change his own character; not to make himself a different Being from what he was, but *in order* to show his love and his readiness to forgive when it could be consistently, done. "*God so loved the world THAT he sent his only begotten Son*," Joh 3:16.

By Jesus Christ. By the agency or medium of Jesus Christ. He was the Mediator to interpose in the work of reconciliation. And he was abundantly qualified for this work, and was the only Being that has lived in this world who was qualified for it. For

(1.) he was endowed with a Divine and human nature—the nature of both the parties at issue, God and man, and thus, in the language of Job, could "lay his hand upon both," Job 9:33.

(2.) He was intimately acquainted with both the parties, and knew what was needful to be done. He knew God the Father so well that he could say, "No man knoweth the Father but the Son," Mt 11:27. And he knew man so well that it could be said of him, he "needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man," Joh 2:25. No one can be a mediator who is not acquainted with the feelings, views, desires, claims, or prejudices of both the parties at issue.

(3.) He was the *Friend* of both the parties. *He loved God*. No man ever doubted this, or had any reason to call it in question; and he was always desirous of securing all that God claimed, and of vindicating him, and he never abandoned anything that God had a right to claim. And *he loved man*. He showed this in all his life. He sought hiss welfare in every way possible, and gave himself for him. Yet no one is qualified to act the mediator's part who is not the common friend of both the parties at issue, and who will not seek the welfare, the right, or the honour of both.

(4.) He was willing to suffer anything from either party in order to produce reconciliation. From the hand of God he was willing to endure all that he deemed to be necessary, in order to show his hatred of sin by his vicarious sufferings, and to make an atonement; and from the hand of man he was willing to endure all the reproach, and contumely, and scorn which could be possibly involved in the work of inducing man to be reconciled to God. And

(5.) he has removed all the obstacles which existed to a reconciliation. On the part of God, he has made it consistent for him to pardon. He has made an atonement so that God can be just while he justifies the sinner. He has maintained his truth, and justice, and secured the stability of his moral government, while he admits offenders to his favour. And on the part of man, he, by the agency of his Spirit, overcomes the unwillingness of the sinner to be reconciled, humbles his pride, shows him his sin, changes his heart, subdues his enmity against God, and secures *in fact* a harmony of feeling and purpose between God and man, so that they shall be reconciled for ever.

And hath given to us. To us the apostles and our fellow-labourers.

The ministry of reconciliation. That is, of announcing to men the nature and the conditions of this plan of being reconciled. We have been appointed to make this known, and to press its acceptation on men. See 2Co 5:20.

{a} "reconciled us" Col 1:20

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *To wit*. Greek, *wv oti*, *namely*. This verse is designed further to state the nature of the plan of reconciliation, and of the message with which they were intrusted. It contains an abstract, or an epitome of the whole plan; and is one of those emphatic passages in which Paul compresses into a single sentence the substance of the whole plan of redemption.

That God was in Christ. That God was *by* Christ, (*en cristw*,) by means of Christ; by the agency or mediatorship of Christ. Or it may mean that God was united to Christ, and manifested himself by him. So Doddridge interprets it. Christ was the Mediator by means of whom God designed to accomplish the great work of reconciliation.

Reconciling the world unto himself. The world here evidently means the human race generally, without distinction of nation, age, or rank. The whole world was alienated from him, and he sought

to have it reconciled. This is one incidental proof that God designed that the plan of salvation should be adapted to all men. **See Barnes "2Co 5:14".**

It may be observed further, that God sought that the world should be reconciled. Man did not seek it. He had no plan for it. He did not desire it. He had no way to effect it. It was the *offended* party, not the *offending*, that sought to be reconciled; and this shows the strength of his love. It was love for enemies and alienated beings, and love evinced to them by a most earnest desire to become their friend, and to be at agreement with them. **See Barnes "Ro 5:8".**

Tindal renders this very accurately, "For God was in Christ, and made agreement between the world and himself, and imputed not their sins unto them.

Not imputing their trespasses. Not reckoning their transgressions to them; that is, forgiving them, pardoning them. On the meaning of the word *impute*, **See Barnes "Ro 4:3".**

The idea here is, that God did not charge on them with inexorable severity and stern justice their offences, but graciously provided a plan of pardon, and offered to remit their sins on the conditions of the gospel. The plan of reconciliation demonstrated that he was not *disposed* to impute their sins to them, as he might have done, and to punish them with unmitigated severity for their crimes, but was more disposed to pardon and forgive. And it may be here asked, if God was not disposed to charge with unrelenting severity *their own sins* to their account, but was rather disposed to pardon them, can we believe that he is disposed to charge on them *the sin of another*? If he does not charge on them with inexorable and unmitigated severity their own transgressions, will he charge on them with unrelenting severity—*or at all*—the sin of Adam? **See Barnes "Ro 5:19".**

The sentiment here is, that God is not disposed or inclined to charge the transgressions of men upon them; he has no pleasure in doing it; and *therefore* he has provided a plan by which they may be pardoned. At the same time it is true that, unless their sins are pardoned, justice will charge or impute their sins to them, and will exact punishment to the uttermost.

And hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Marg., "put in us." Tindal renders this, "and hath committed unto us the preaching of the atonement." The meaning is, that the office of making known the nature of this plan, and the conditions on which God was willing to be reconciled to man, had been committed to the ministers of the gospel.

{a} "trespasses" Ro 3:24,25 {1} "committed" "put in us"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Now then we are ambassadors for Christ*. We are the ambassadors whom Christ has sent forth to negotiate with men in regard to their reconciliation to God. Tindal renders this, "Now then are we messengers in the room of Christ." The word here used (*presbeuomen*, from *presbuv*, an aged man, an elder, and then an ambassador) means, to act as an ambassador, or sometimes merely to deliver a message for another, without being empowered to do anything more than to explain or enforce it.—*Bloomfield*. See Thucyd. 7, 9. An ambassador is a minister of the highest rank, employed by one prince or state at the court of another, to manage the concerns of his own prince or state, and representing the dignity and power of his sovereign.— *Webster*. He is sent to do what the sovereign would himself do were he present. They are sent to make known the will of

the sovereign, and to negotiate matters of commerce, of war, or of peace, and in general everything affecting the interests of the sovereign among the people to whom they are sent. At all times, and in all countries, an ambassador is a sacred character, and his person is regarded as inviolable, he is bound implicitly to obey the instructions of his sovereign, and as far as possible to do only what the sovereign would do were he, himself present. Ministers are ambassadors for Christ, as they are sent to do what he would do were he personally present. They are to make known, and to explain, and enforce the terms on which God is willing to be reconciled to men. They are not to negotiate on any new terms, nor to change those which God has proposed, nor to follow their own plans or devices; but they are simply to urge, explain, state, and enforce the terms on which God is willing to be reconciled. Of course they are to seek the honour of the Sovereign who has sent them forth, and to seek to do only his will. They go not to promote their own welfare; not to seek honour, dignity, or emolument; but they go to transact the business which the Son of God would engage in were he again personally on the earth. It follows that their office is one of great dignity, and great responsibility, and that respect should be showed them as the ambassadors of the King of kings.

As though God did beseech you by us. Our message is to be regarded as the message of God. It is God who speaks. What we say to you is said in his name and on his authority, and should be received with the respect which is due to a message directly from God. The gospel message is God speaking to men through the ministry, and entreating them to be reconciled. This invests the message which, the ministers of religion bear with infinite dignity and solemnity; and it makes it a fearful and awful thing to reject it.

We pray you in Christ's stead. *uper cristou*. In the place of Christ; or doing what he did when on earth, and what he would do were he where we are.

Be ye reconciled to God. This is the sum and burden of the message which the ministers of the gospel bear to their fellow-men. **See Barnes "2Co 5:19"**.

It implies that man has something to do in this work. *He* is to be reconciled to God, he is to give up his opposition, he is to submit to the terms of mercy. All the change in the case is to be in him, for God cannot change. God has removed all the obstacles to reconciliation which existed on *his* part. He has done all that he will do, all that needed to be done; in order to render reconciliation as easy as possible. And now it remains that man should lay aside his hostility, abandon his sins, embrace the terms of mercy, and become in fact reconciled to God. And the great object of the ministers of reconciliation is to urge this duty on their fellow-men. They are to do it in the name of Christ. They are to do it as if Christ were himself present, and were himself urging the message. They are to use the arguments which he would use; evince the zeal which he would show; and present the motives which he would present, to induce a dying world to become in fact reconciled to God.

{b} "ambassadors" Job 33:23 Mal 2:7; Eph 6:20

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 21

Note: The notes on this verse are too large for a single file, they are continued on 2Co 6:1

Verse 21. *For he hath made him to be sin for us*. The Greek here is, "For him who knew no sin, he hath made sin, or a sin-offering for us." The *design* of this very important verse is to urge the strongest possible reason for being reconciled to God. This is implied in the word (*gar*) *for*. Paul might have urged other arguments, and presented other strong considerations; but he chooses to present this fact, that Christ has been made sin for us, as embodying and concentrating all. It is the most affecting of all arguments; it is the one that is likely to prove most effectual. It is not indeed improper to urge on men every other consideration to induce them to be reconciled to God. It is not improper to appeal to them by the conviction of duty; to appeal to their reason and conscience; to remind them of the claims, the power, the goodness, and the fear of the Creator; to remind them of the awful consequences of a continued hostility to God; to persuade them by the hope of heaven, and by the fear of hell, (2Co 5:11) to become his friends; but, after all, the strongest argument, and that which is most adapted to melt the soul, is, the fact that the Son of God has become incarnate for our sins, and has suffered and died in our stead. When all other appeals fail, this is effectual; and this is in fact the strong argument by which the mass of those who become Christians are induced to abandon their opposition, and to become reconciled to God.

To be sin. The words "to be" are not in the original. Literally it is, "he has made him sin, or a sin-offering," (*amartian epoihsen*.) But what is meant by this? What is the exact idea which the apostle intended to convey? I answer—It cannot be

(1.) that he was literally *sin* in the abstract, or sin as such. No one can pretend this. The expression must be therefore, in some sense, figurative. Nor

(2.) can it mean that he was a sinner, for it is said in immediate connexion that he "knew no sin," and it is everywhere said that he was holy, harmless, undefiled. Nor

(3.) can it mean that lie was, in any proper sense of the word, *guilty*, for no one is truly guilty who is not personally a transgressor of the law; and if he was, in any proper sense, *guilty*, then he deserved to die, and his death could have no more merit than that of any other guilty being; and if he was properly guilty, it would make no difference in this respect whether it was by his own fault or by imputation: a guilty being deserves to be punished; and where there is desert of punishment there can be no merit in sufferings. But all such views as go to make the holy Redeemer a sinner, or guilty, or deserving of the sufferings which he endured, border on blasphemy, and are abhorrent to the whole strain of the Scriptures. In no form, in no sense possible, is it to be maintained that the Lord Jesus was sinful or guilty. It is a corner-stone of the whole system of religion, that in all conceivable senses of the expression he was holy, and pure, and the object of the Divine approbation. And every view which *fairly leads* to the statement that he was in any sense guilty, or which implies that he deserved to die, is prima facie a false view, and should be at once abandoned. But

(4.) if the declaration that he was made "sin" (*amartian*) does not mean that he was sin itself, or a sinner, or guilty, then it must mean that he was a *sin-offering*—an offering or a sacrifice for sin; and this is the interpretation which is now generally adopted by expositors; or it must be taken as an abstract for the concrete, and mean that God *treated him as if he were a sinner*. The former interpretation, that it means that God made him a sin-offering, is adopted by Whitby, Doddridge, Macknight, Rosenmuller, and others; the latter, that it means that God treated him as a sinner, is adopted by Vorstius, Schoettgen, Robinson, (Lex.,) Bishop Bull, and others. There are many passages in the Old Testament where the word "sin" (*amartian*) is used in the sense of sin-offering, or a sacrifice for sin. Thus, Hos 4:8. "They eat up the sin of, my people;" i.e., the sin-offerings. See Eze 43:22,25, 44:29 45:22,23,25.

See Whitby's Notes on this verse. But whichever meaning is adopted, whether it means that he was a sacrifice for sin, or that God treated him *as if* he were a sinner, i.e., subjected him to sufferings which, if he had been personally a sinner, would have been a proper expression of his hatred of transgression, and a proper punishment for sin, in either case it means that he made an atonement; that he died for sin; that his death was not merely that of a martyr; but that it was designed by substituted sufferings to make reconciliation between man and God. Locke renders this, probably expressing the. true sense, "For God hath made him subject to suffering and death, the punishment and consequence of sin, as if he had been a sinner, though he were guilty of no sin." To me it seems probable that the sense is, that God treated him as if he had been a sinner; that he subjected him to such pains and woes as would have been a proper punishment if he had been guilty; that while he was, in fact, in all senses perfectly innocent, and while God knew this, yet that in consequence of the voluntary assumption of the place of man which the Lord Jesus took, it pleased the Father to lay on him the deep sorrows which would be the proper expression of his sense of the evil of sin; that he endured so much suffering, as would answer the same great ends in maintaining the truth, and honour, and justice of God, as if the guilty had themselves endured the penalty of the law. This, I suppose, is what is usually meant when it is said "our sins were imputed to him;" and though this language is not used in the Bible, and though it is liable to great misapprehension and perversion, yet if this is its meaning, there can be no objection to it.

Who knew no sin. He was not guilty. He was perfectly holy and pure. This idea is thus expressed by Peter, (1Pe 2:22;) "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth;" and in Heb 7:26, it is said, he was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." In all respects, and in all conceivable senses, the Lord Jesus was pure and holy. If he had not been, he would not have been qualified to make an atonement. Hence the sacred writers are everywhere at great pains to keep this idea prominent, for on this depends the whole superstructure of the plan of salvation. The phrase "knew no sin" is an expression of great beauty and dignity. It indicates his entire and perfect purity. He was altogether unacquainted with sin; he was a stranger to transgression; he was conscious of no sin; he committed none. He had a mind and heart perfectly free from pollution, and his whole life was perfectly pure and holy in the sight of God.

That we might be made the righteousness of God. This is a Hebraism, meaning the same as divinely righteous. It means that we are made righteous in the sight of God; that is, that we are accepted as righteous, and treated as righteous by God on account of what the Lord Jesus has done. There is here an evident and beautiful contrast between what is said of Christ, and what is said of us. He was made *sin*—we are made *righteousness*; that is, he was treated *as if* he were a sinner, though he was perfectly holy and pure—we are treated as if we were righteous, though we are defiled and depraved. The idea is, that on account of what the Lord Jesus has endured in our behalf we are treated as if we had ourselves entirely fulfilled the law of God, and had never become exposed to its penalty. In the phrase" righteousness *of God*" there is a reference to the fact that this is *his* plan of making men righteous, or of justifying them. They who thus become righteous, or are justified, are justified on his plan, and by a scheme which he has devised. Locke renders this, "that we, in and by him, might be made righteous, by a righteousness imputed to us by God." The idea is, that all our righteousness in the sight of God we receive in and through a Redeemer. All is to be traced to him. This verse contains a beautiful epitome of the whole plan of salvation, and the peculiarity of the Christian scheme. On the one hand, one who was perfectly innocent, by a voluntary substitution, is treated AS IF he were guilty; that is, is subjected to pains and sorrows which, *if he*

were guilty, would be a proper punishment for sin: and on the other, they who are guilty, and who deserve to be punished, are treated, through his vicarious sufferings, as if they were perfectly innocent; that is, in a manner which would be a proper expression of God's approbation if they had not sinned. The whole plan, therefore, is one of substitution; and without such substitution there can be no salvation. Innocence voluntarily suffers for guilt, and the guilty are thus made pure and holy, and are saved. The greatness of the Divine compassion and love is thus shown for the guilty; and on the ground of this it is right and proper for God to call on men *to be* reconciled to him. It is the strongest argument that can be used. When God has given his only Son to the bitter suffering of death on the cross in order that we may be reconciled, it is the highest possible argument which can be used why we should cease our opposition to him, and become his friends.

{c} "he hath made" Isa 53:6,9,12 Ga 3:13 1Pe 2:22,24

{d} "the righteousness of God" Ro 5:19

REMARKS on 2nd Corinthians Chapter 5

(1.) It is possible for Christians to have the assurance that they shall enter into heaven, 2Co 5:1. Paul said that he knew this; John knew this, (**See Barnes "2Co 5:1"**;) and there is no reason why others should not know it. If a man hates sin, he may know that as well as anything else; if he loves God, why should he not know that as well as to know that he loves an earthly friend? If he desires to be holy, to enter heaven, to be eternally pure, why should he have any doubt about that? If he loves to pray, to read the Bible, to converse of heaven—if his heart is truly in these things, he may *know* it, as well as know anything else about his own character or feelings.

(2.) If a Christian may know it, he *should know* it. No other knowledge is so desirable as this. Nothing will produce so much comfort as this. Nothing will contribute so much to make him firm, decided, and consistent in his Christian walk as this. No other knowledge will give him so much support in temptation; so much comfort in trial; so much peace in death. And *if* a man is a Christian, he should give himself no rest till he obtains assurance on this subject; if he is not a Christian, he cannot know that too soon, or take too early measures to flee from the wrath to come.

(3.) The body will soon be dissolved in death, 2Co 5:1. It is a frail, crumbling, decaying dwelling, that must soon be taken down. It has none of the properties of a permanent abode. It *can* be held together but a little time. It is like a hut or cottage that is shaken by every gust of wind; like a tent when the pins are loose, and the cords unstranded, or rotten, and when the wind will soon sweep it away. And since this is the fact, we may as well know it, and not attempt to conceal it from the mind. All truth may be looked at calmly, and should be; and a man who is residing in a frail and shattered dwelling should be looking out far one that is more permanent and substantial. Death should be looked at. The fact that this tabernacle shall be taken down should be looked at; and every man should be asking with deep interest the question, whether there is not a more permanent dwelling for him in a better world.

(4.) This life is burdened, and is full of cares, 2Co 5:2,4. It is such as is fitted to make us desire a better state. We groan here under sin, amidst temptation, encompassed by the cares and toils of life. We are burdened with duties, and we are oppressed by trials; and under all we are sinking to the grave. Soon, under the accumulated burdens, the body will be crushed, and sink back to the dust. Man cannot endure the burden long, and he must soon die. These accumulated trials and cares are such as are adapted to make him desire a better inheritance, and to look forward to a better

world. God designs that this shall be a world of care and anxiety, in order that we may be led to seek a better portion beyond the grave.

(5.) The Christian has a permanent home in heaven, 2Co 5:1,2,4.

There is a house not made with hands; an eternal home; a world where mortality is unknown. There is his home; that is his eternal dwelling. Here he is a stranger, among strangers, in a strange world. In heaven is his home. The body here may be sick, feeble, dying; there it shall be vigorous, strong, immortal. He may have no comfortable dwelling here; he may be poor and afflicted; there he shall have an undecaying dwelling, an unchanging home. Who in a world like this should not desire to be a Christian? What other condition of life is so desirable as that of the man who is *sure* that after a few more days he shall be admitted to an eternal home in heaven, where the body never dies, and where sin and sorrow are known no more ?

(6.) The Christian should be willing to bear all the pain and sorrow which God shall appoint, 2Co 5:1-4. Why should he not? He knows not only that God is good in all this; but he knows that it is but for a moment; that he is advancing toward heaven, and that he will soon be at home. Compared with that eternal rest, what trifles are all the sufferings' of this mortal life!

(7.) We should not desire to die merely to get rid of pain, or to be absent from the body, 2Co 5:4. It is not merely in order that we may be "unclothed," or that we may get away from a suffering body, that we should be willing to die. Many a sinner suffers so much here that he is willing to plunge into an awful eternity, as he supposes, to get rid of pain, when, alas ! he plunges only into deeper and eternal woe. We should be willing to bear as much pain, and to bear it as long as God shall be pleased to appoint. We should submit to all without a murmur. We should submit to all without a murmur. We should be anxious to be relieved only when God shall judge it best for us to be away from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

(8.) In a mere readiness to die there is no evidence that we are prepared for heaven. Comp. 2Co 5:4. Many a man supposes that because he is ready to die, that therefore he is prepared. Many a one takes comfort because a dying friend was ready and willing to die. But in a mere willingness to die there is no evidence of a preparation for death, because a hundred causes may conspire to produce this besides piety. And let us not be deceived by supposing that because we have no alarm about death, and are willing to go to another world, that therefore we are prepared. It may be either stupidity, or insensibility; it may be a mere desire to get rid of suffering; it may be because we are cherishing a hope of heaven which is altogether vain and illusive.

(9.) The Christian should and may desire to depart, and to be in heaven, 2Co 5:2. Heaven is his home; and it is his privilege to desire to be there. Here he is in a world of trial and of sin. There he shall be in a world of joy and of holiness. Here he dwells in a frail, suffering, decaying body. There he shall be clothed with immortality. It is his privilege, therefore, to desire, as soon as it shall be the will of God, to depart, and to enter on his eternal inheritance in heaven. He should have a strong, fixed, firm desire for that world; and should be ready at the shortest notice to go and to be for ever with the Lord.

(10.) The hopes and joys of Christians, and all their peace and calmness in the prospect of death, are to be traced to God, 2Co 5:5. It is not that they are not naturally as timid and fearful of dying as others; it is not that they have any native courage or strength; but it is to be traced entirely to the mercy of God, and the influence of his Spirit, that they are enabled to look calmly at death, at the grave, at eternity. With the assured prospect of heaven, they have nothing to fear in dying; and if

we have the "earnest of the Spirit"— the pledge that heaven is ours—we have nothing to fear in the departure from this world.

(11.) The Christian should be, and may be, always cheerful, 2Co 5:6. Paul said that he was always confident, or cheerful. Afflictions did not depress him; trials did not cast him down. He was not disheartened by opposition; he did not lose his courage by being reviled and persecuted. In all this he was cheerful and bold. There is nothing in religion to make us melancholy and sad. The assurance of the favour of God, and the hope of heaven, should have, and will have, just the opposite effect. A sense of the presence of God, a conviction that we are sinners, a deep impression of the truth that we are to die, and of the infinite interest of the soul at stake, will indeed make us serious and solemn, and should do so. But this is not inconsistent with *cheerfulness*, but is rather fitted to produce it. It is favourable to a state of mind where all irritability is suppressed, and where the mind is made calm and settled; and this is favourable to cheerfulness. Besides, there is much, very much in religion to prevent sadness, and to remove gloom from the soul. The hope of heaven, and the prospect of dwelling with God and with holy beings for ever, is the best means of expelling the gloom which is caused by the disappointments and cares of the world. And much as many persons suppose that religion *creates* gloom, it is certain that nothing in this world has done so much to lighten care, to break the force of misfortune and disappointment, to support in times of trial, and to save from despair, as the religion of the Redeemer. And it is moreover certain, that there are no persons so habitually calm in their feelings, and cheerful in their tempers, as consistent and devoted Christians. If there are some Christians, like David Brainerd, who are melancholy and sad, as there are undoubtedly, it should be said,

1st: that they are few in number;

2nd: that their gloom is to be traced to constitutional propensity, and not to religion;

3rd: that they have, even with all their gloom, joys which the world never experiences, and which can never be found in sin; and,

4th: that their gloom is not produced by religion, but *by the want of more of it*.

(12.) It is noble to act with reference to things unseen and eternal, 2Co 5:7. It elevates the soul; lifts it above the earth; purifies the heart; and gives to man a new dignity. It prevents all the grovelling effect of acting from a view of present objects, and with reference to the things which are just around us. "Whatever withdraws us," says Dr. Johnson, "from the power of our senses; whatever makes the past, the distant, or the future, predominate over the present, advances us in the dignity of thinking beings."— *Tour to the Hebrides*, p. 322, ed. Phil. 1810. Whatever directs the eye and the heart to heaven; whatever may make man feel and believe that there is a God, a Saviour, a heaven, a world of glory, elevates him with the consciousness of his immortality, and raises him above the grovelling objects that wither and debase the soul. Man should act with reference to eternity. He should be conscious of immortality. He should be deeply impressed with that high honour that awaits him of standing before God. He should feel that he may partake in the glories of the resurrection; that he may inherit an eternal heaven. Feeling thus, what trifles are the things of the earth! How little should he be moved by its trials! How little should he be influenced by its wealth, its pleasures, and its honours!

(13.) The Christian, when he leaves the body, is at once with the Lord Jesus, 2Co 5:8. He rushes, as it were instinctively, to his presence, and casts himself at his feet. He has no other home than where the Saviour is; he thinks of no future joy or glory but that which is to be enjoyed with him. Why, then, should we fear death! Lay out of view, as we may, the momentary pang, the chilliness,

and the darkness of the grave, and think of that which will be the moment after death—the view of the Redeemer, the sight of the splendours of the heavenly world, the angels, the spirits of the just made perfect, the river of the paradise of God, and the harps of praise—and what has man to fear in the prospect of dying!

Why should I shrink at pain or woe,
Or feel at death dismay?
I've Canaan's goodly land in view,
And realms of endless day.

Apostles, martyrs, prophets there,
Around my Saviour stand;
And soon my friends in Christ below
Will join the glorious band.

Jerusalem, my happy home!
My soul still pants for thee;
When shall my labours have an end
In joy, and peace, and thee!
C. Wesley

The notes on this verse are continued on 2Co 6:1

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 6

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 1

Continuation of Notes on 2Co 5:21

(14.) We should act feeling that we are in the immediate presence of God, and so as to meet his acceptance and approbation, whether we remain on earth, or whether we are removed to eternity, 2Co 5:9. The prospect of being with him, and the consciousness that his eye is fixed upon us, should make us diligent, humble, and laborious. It should be the great purpose of our lives to secure his favour, and meet with his acceptance; and it should make no difference with us, in this respect, where we are—whether on earth or in heaven; with the prospect of long life, or of an early death, in society or in solitude; at home or abroad; on the land or on the deep; in sickness or in health; in prosperity or in adversity, it should be our great aim so to live as to be "accepted of him." And the Christian *will* so act. To act in this manner is the very nature of true piety; and where this desire does not exist, there can be no true religion.

(15.) We must appear before the judgment-seat, 2Co 5:10. We must *all* appear there. This is inevitable. There is not one of the human family that can escape. Old and young; rich and poor;

bond and free; all classes, all conditions, all nations must stand there, and give an account for all the deeds done in the body, and receive their eternal doom. How solemn is the thought of being *arraigned*! How deeply affecting the idea that on the issue of *that one trial* will depend our eternal weal or woe! How overwhelming the reflection that from that sentence there can be no appeal; no power of reversing it; no possibility of afterwards changing our destiny!

(16.) We shall soon be there, 2Co 5:10. No one knows when he is to die; and death, when it comes, will remove us at once to the judgment-seat. A disease that may carry us off in a few hours may take us there; or death that may come in an instant shall bear us to that awful bar. How many are stricken down in a moment; how many are hurried without any warning to the solemnities, of the eternal world! So we may die. No one can *insure* our lives; no one can guard us from the approach of the invisible king of terrors.

(17.) We should be ready to depart. If we *must* stand at that awful bar; and if we may be summoned there any moment, assuredly we should lose no time in being ready to go. It is our great business in life; and it should claim our first attention, and all other things should be postponed that we may be ready to die. It should be the first inquiry every morning, and the last subject of thought every evening— for who knows when he rises in the morning but that before night he may stand at the judgment-seat! Who, when he lies down on his bed at night, knows but that in the silence of the night-watches he may be summoned to go alone—-to leave his family and friends, his home and his bed, to answer for all the deeds done in the body?

(18.) We should endeavour to save others from eternal death, 2Co 5:11. If we have ourselves any just views of the awful terrors of the day of judgment, and if we have any just views of the wrath of God, we should endeavour "to persuade" others to flee from the wrath to come. We should plead with them; we should entreat them; we should weep over them; we should pray for them, that they may be saved from going up to meet the awful wrath of God. If our friends are unprepared to meet God; if they are living in impenitence and sin, and if we have any influence over others in any way, we should exert it all to induce them to come to Christ, and to save themselves from the awful terrors of that day. Paul deemed no self-denial and no sacrifice too great, if he might persuade them to come to God, and to save their souls. And who that has any just views of the awful terrors of the day of judgment, of the woes of an eternal hell, and of the glories of an eternal heaven, can deem that labour too great which shall be the means of saving immortal souls! Not to frighten them should we labour; not to alarm them merely should we plead with them; but we should endeavour by all means to persuade them to come to the Redeemer. We should not use tones of harshness and denunciation; we should not speak of hell as if we would rejoice to execute the sentence; but we should speak with tenderness, earnestness, and with tears, (comp. Ac 20:31,) that we may induce our friends and fellow-sinners to be reconciled to God.

(19.) We should not deem it strange or remarkable if we are charged with being deranged for being active and zealous in the subject of religion, 2Co 5:13. There will always be enough, both *in* the church and *out* of it, to charge us with over-heated zeal; with want of prudence; or with decided mental alienation. But we are not to forget that Paul was accused of being—"mad ;" and even the Redeemer was thought to be "beside himself." "It is sufficient for the disciple that he be as his Master, and the servant as his Lord;" and ff the Redeemer was charged with derangement on account of his peculiar views and his zeal, we should not suppose that any strange thing had happened to us if we are accused in like manner.

(20.) The gospel should be offered to all men, 2Co 5:14. If Christ died for all, then salvation is provided for all; and then it should be offered to all freely and fully. It should be done without any mental reservation, for God has no such mental reservation; without any hesitation or misgiving; without any statements that would break the force, or weaken the power of such an offer on the consciences of men. If they reject it, they should be left to see that they reject that which is *in good faith* offered to them, and that for this they must give an account to God. Every man who preaches the gospel should feel that he is not only *permitted* but REQUIRED to preach the gospel "to every creature;" nor should he embrace any opinion whatever which will, in form or in fact, cramp him or restrain him in thus offering salvation to all mankind. The fact that Christ died for all, and that all may be saved, should be a fixed and standing point in all systems of theology, and should be allowed to shape every other opinion, and to shed its influence over every other view of truth.

(21.) All men by nature are dead in sins, 2Co 5:14. They are insensible to their own good; to the appeals of God; to the glories of heaven, and to the terrors of hell. They do not act for eternity; they are without concern in regard to their everlasting destiny. They are as insensible to all these things, until aroused by the Spirit of God, as a dead man in his grave is to surrounding objects. And there is nothing that ever did arouse such a man, or ever could, but the same power that made the world, and the same voice that raised Lazarus from his grave. This melancholy fact strikes us everywhere; and we should be deeply humbled that it is our condition by nature, and should mourn that it is the condition of our fellow-men everywhere.

(22.) We should form our estimate of objects, and of their respective value and importance, by other considerations than those which are derived from their temporal nature, 2Co 5:16. It should not be simply according to the flesh. It should not be as they estimate them who are living for this world. It should not be by their rank, their splendour, or their fashion. It should be by their reference to eternity, and their bearing on the state of things there.

(23.) It should be with us a very serious inquiry whether our views of Christ are such as they have who are living after the flesh, or such only as the unrenewed mind takes, 2Co 5:16. The carnal mind has no just views of the Redeemer. To every impenitent sinner he is "a root out of a dry ground." There is no beauty in him. And to every hypocrite, and every deceived professor of religion, there is really no beauty seen in him. There is no spontaneous, elevated, glowing attachment to him. It is all forced and unnatural. But to the true Christian there is a beauty seen in his character that is not seen in any other; and the whole soul loves him, and embraces him. His character is seen to be most pure and lovely; his benevolence boundless; his ability and willingness to save infinite. The renewed soul desires no other Saviour; and rejoices that he is just what he is—rejoices in his humiliation as well as his exaltation; in his poverty as well as his glory; rejoices in the privilege of being saved by him who was spit upon, and mocked, and crucified, as well as by him who is at the right hand of God. One thing is certain, unless we have just views of Christ we can never be saved.

(24.) The new birth is a great and most important change, 2Co 5:17. It is not in name or in profession merely, but it is a deep and radical change of the heart. It is so great that it may be said of each one, that he is *a new creation of God*; and in relation to each one, that old things are passed away, and all things are become new. How important it is that we examine our hearts and see whether this change has taken place, or whether we are still living without God and without hope. It is indispensable that we be born again, Joh 3. If we are not born again, and if we are not new creatures in Christ, we must perish for ever. No matter what our wealth, talent, learning, accomplishment, reputation, or morality, unless we have been so changed that it may be said, and

that we can say, "old things are passed away, and all things are become new," we must perish for ever. *There is no power in the universe that can save a man who is not born again*.

(25.) The gospel ministry is a most responsible and important work, 2Co 5:18,19. There is no other office of the same importance; there is no situation in which man can be placed more solemn than that of making known the terms on which God is willing to bestow favour on apostate man.

(26.) How amazing is the Divine condescension, that God should have ever proposed such a plan of reconciliation, 2Co 5:20,21. That he should not only have been *willing* to be reconciled, but that he should have sought, and have been *so anxious* for it as to be willing to send his own Son to die to secure it! It was pure, rich, infinite benevolence. God was not to be *benefited* by it. He was infinitely blessed and happy, even though man should have been lost. He was pure, and just, and holy, and it was not necessary to resort to this in order to vindicate his own character, he had done man no wrong; and if man had perished in his sins, the throne of God would have been pure and spotless. It was love—mere love. It was pure, holy, disinterested, infinite benevolence. It was worthy of God; and it has a claim to the deepest gratitude of man. Let us then, in view of this whole chapter, seek to be reconciled to God. Let us lay aside all our opposition to him. Let us embrace his plans. Let us be willing to submit to him, and to become his ETERNAL FRIENDS. Let us seek that heaven to which he would raise us; and though our earthly house of this tabernacle must be dissolved, let us be prepared, as we may be, for that eternal habitation which he has fitted up for all who love him in the heavens.

INTRODUCTION To 2nd Corinthians Chapter 6

THIS chapter, closely connected in sense with the preceding, is designed as an address to the Corinthian Christians, exhorting them to act worthily of their calling, and of their situation under such a ministry as they had enjoyed. In the previous chapters, Paul had discoursed at length of the design and of the labours of the ministry. The main drift of all this was to show them the nature of reconciliation and the obligation to turn to God, and to live to him. This idea is pursued in this chapter; and in view of the labours and self- denials of the ministry, Paul urges on the Corinthian Christians the duty of coming out from the world, and of separating themselves entirely from all evil. The chapter may be conveniently contemplated in the following parts :—

I. Paul states that he and his associates were fellow-labourers with God, and he exhorts the Corinthians not to receive the grace of God in vain. To induce them to make a wise improvement of the privileges which they enjoyed, he quotes a passage from Isaiah, and applies it as meaning that it was then an acceptable time, and that they might avail themselves of mercy, 1Co 6:1,2.

II. He enumerates the labours and self-denials of the ministry. He refers to their sincerity, zeal, and honesty of life. He shows how much they had been willing to endure in order to convey the gospel to others, and how much they had in fact endured, and how much they had-benefited others. He speaks of their afflictions in a most tender and beautiful manner, and of the happy results which had followed from their self-denying labours, 2Co 6:3-10. The design of this is, evidently, to remind them of what their religion had cost, and to appeal to them in view of all this to lead holy and pure lives.

III. Paul expresses his ardent attachment for them, and says that if they were straitened, if they did not live as they should do, it was not because he and his fellow-labourers had not loved them, and sought their welfare, but from a defect in themselves, 2Co 6:11,12.

IV. As a *reward* for all that he had done and suffered for them, he now asked only that they should live as became Christians, 2Co 6:13-18. He sought not silver, or gold, or apparel. He had not laboured as he had done with any view to a temporal reward. And he now asked simply that they should come out from the world, and be dissociated from everything that was evil. He demanded that they should be separate from all idolatry, and idolatrous practices; assures them that there can be no union between light and darkness; righteousness and unrighteousness; Christ and Belial; that there can be no agreement between the temple of God and idols; reminds them of the fact that they are the temple of God; and encourages them to do this by the assurance that God would be their God, and that they should be his adopted sons and daughters. The chapter is one of great beauty; and the argument for a holy life among Christians is one that is exceedingly forcible and tender.

Verse 1. *We then, as workers together with him*. On the meaning of this expression, **See Barnes "1Co 3:9".**

The Greek here is, *sunergountev* "working together;" and may mean either-that the apostles and ministers to whom Paul refers were joint labourers in entreating them not to receive the grace of God in vain, or it may mean that they co-operated with God, or were engaged with him in endeavouring to secure the reconciliation of the world to himself. Tindal renders it, "we as helpers." Doddridge, "we then as the joint-labourers of God." Most expositors have concurred in this interpretation. The word properly means, to work together; to co-operate in producing any result. Macknight supposes that the word here is in the vocative, and is an address to the fellow-labourers of Paul, entreating them not to receive the grace of God in vain. In this opinion he is probably alone, and has manifestly departed from the scope and design of the passage. Probably the most *obvious* meaning is that of our translators, who regard it as teaching that Paul was a joint-worker with God in securing the salvation of men.

That ye receive not the grace of God in vain. The "grace of God" here means evidently the gracious offer of reconciliation and pardon. And the sense is, "We entreat you not to neglect or slight this offer of pardon, so as to lose the benefit of it, and be lost. It is offered freely and fully. It may be partaken of by all, and all may be saved. But it may also be slighted, and all the benefits of it will then be lost." The sense is, that it was possible that this offer might be made to them, they might hear of a Saviour, be told of the plan of reconciliation, and have the offers of mercy pressed on their attention and acceptance, and yet all be in vain. They might, not-withstanding all this, be lost; for simply to *hear* of the plan of salvation or the offers of mercy, will no more save a sinner than to hear of medicine will save the sick. It must be embraced and applied, or it will be in vain. It is true that Paul probably addressed this to those who were professors of religion; and the sense is, that they should use all possible care and anxiety lest these offers should have been made in vain. They should examine their own hearts; they should inquire into their own condition; they should guard against self-deception. The same persons (2Co 5:20) Paul had exhorted also to be reconciled to God; and the idea is, that he would earnestly entreat even professors of religion to give all diligence to secure an interest in the saving mercy of the gospel, and to guard against the possibility of being self-deceived and ruined.

{a} "workers together" 2Co 5:21 {b} "in vain" Heb 12:15

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *For he saith*. See Isa 49:8. In that passage the declaration refers to the Messiah, and the design is there to show that God would be favourable to him; that he would hear him when he prayed, and would make him the medium of establishing a covenant with his own people, and of spreading the true religion around the earth. See my Note on that place. Paul quotes the passage here, not as affirming that he used it in exactly the sense, or with reference to the same design for which it was originally spoken, but as expressing the idea which he wished to convey, or in accordance with the general principle implied in its use in Isaiah. The general idea there, or the principle involved was, that under the Messiah God would be willing to hear; that is, that he would be disposed to show mercy to the Jew and to the Gentile. This is the main idea of the passage as used by Paul. Under the Messiah, it is said by Isaiah, God would be willing to show mercy. That would be an acceptable time. That time, says Paul, has arrived. The Messiah has come, and now God is willing to pardon and save. And the doctrine in this verse is, *that under the Messiah, or in the time of Christ, God is willing to show mercy unto men*. In him alone is the throne of grace accessible; and now that he has come, God is willing to pardon, and men should avail themselves of the offers of mercy.

I have heard thee. The Messiah. I have listened to thy prayer for the salvation of the heathen world. The *promise* to the Messiah was, that the heathen world should be given to him; but it was a promise that it should be in answer to his prayers and intercessions: "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession," Ps 2:8. The salvation of the heathen world, and of all who are saved, is to be in answer to the prevalent intercession of the Lord Jesus.

In a time accepted. In Isaiah, "in an acceptable time." The idea is, that he had prayed in a time when God *was disposed* to show mercy; the time when in his wise arrangements he had designed that his salvation should be extended to the world. It is a time which he had fixed as the appropriate period for extending the knowledge of his truth and his salvation; and it proves that there was to be a period which was the *favourable* period of salvation, that is, which God esteemed to be the proper period for making his salvation known to men. At such a period the Messiah would pray, and the prayer would be answered.

In the day of salvation. In the time when I am disposed to show salvation.

Have I succoured thee. The Messiah. I have sustained thee, that is, in the effort to make salvation known. God here speaks of there being an accepted time, a limited period, in which petitions in favour of the world would be acceptable to him. That time Paul says had come; and the idea which he urges is, that men should avail themselves of that, and embrace now the offers of mercy.

Behold now is the accepted time, etc. The meaning of this passage is, "The Messiah is come. The time referred to by Isaiah has arrived. It is now a time when God is ready to show compassion, to hear prayer, and to have mercy on mankind. Only through the Messiah, the Lord Jesus, does he show mercy, and men should therefore now embrace the offers of pardon." The doctrine taught here therefore is, that through the Lord Jesus, and where he is preached, God is willing to pardon and save men; and this is true wherever he is preached, and as long as men live under the sound of the gospel. The world is under a dispensation of mercy, and God is willing to show compassion; and while this exists, that is, while men live, the offers of salvation are to be freely made to them.

The time *will* come when it will not be an acceptable time with God. The day of mercy will be closed; the period of trial will be ended; and men will be removed to a world where no mercy is shown, and where compassion is unknown. This verse, which should be read as a parenthesis, is designed to be connected with the argument which the apostle is urging, and which he presented in the previous chapter. The general doctrine is, that men should seek reconciliation with God. To enforce that, he here says, that it was now the acceptable time, the time when God was willing to be reconciled to men. The general sentiment of this passage may be thus expressed:

(1.) Under the gospel it is an acceptable time, a day of mercy, a time when God is willing to show mercy to men.

(2.) There may be special seasons which may be peculiarly called the acceptable or accepted time.

(a.) When the gospel is pressed on the attention by the faithful preaching of his servants, or by the urgent entreaties of friends;

(b.) when it is brought to our attention by any striking dispensation of Providence;

(c.) when the Spirit of God strives with us, and brings us to deep reflection, or to conviction for sin;

(d.) in a revival of religion, when many are pressing into the kingdom: it is at all such seasons an accepted time, a day of salvation, a day which we should improve. It is "NOW" such a season, because

(1.) the time of mercy will pass by, and God will not be willing to pardon the sinner who goes unprepared to eternity.

(2.) Because we cannot calculate on the future. We have no assurance, no evidence that we shall live another day or hour.

(3.) It is taught here, that the time will come when it will not be an accepted time. Now Is the accepted time; at some future period it will NOT be. If men grieve away the Holy Spirit; if they continue to reject the gospel; if they go unprepared to eternity, no mercy can be found. God does not design to pardon beyond the grave. He has made no provision for forgiveness there; and they who are not pardoned in this life must be unpardoned for ever.

{c} "I have heard" Isa 49:8

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Giving no offence in any thing*. We the ministers of God, 2Co 6:1. The word rendered *offence* means, properly, *stumbling*; then offence, or cause of offence, a falling into sin. The meaning here is, "giving no occasion for contemning or rejecting the gospel; and the idea of Paul is, that he and his fellow-apostles so laboured as that no one who saw or knew them should have occasion to reproach the ministry, or the religion which they preached; but so that in their pure and self-denying lives, the strongest argument should be seen for embracing it. Comp. Mt 10:16 1Co 8:13, 10:32,33.

See Barnes "Php 2:16"; **See Barnes** "1Th 2:10, **See Barnes "1Th 5:22"**.

How they conducted [themselves] so as to give no offence he states in the following verses.

That the ministry be not blamed. The phrase, "the ministry," refers here not merely to the ministry of Paul, that is, it does not mean merely that *he* would be subject to blame and reproach, but that the *ministry itself* which the Lord Jesus had established would be blamed, or would be reproached by the improper conduct of any one who was engaged in that work. The idea is, that the misconduct of one minister of the gospel would bring a reproach upon the profession itself, and would prevent the usefulness and success of others, just as the misconduct of a physician exposes the profession to reproach, or the bad conduct of a lawyer reflects itself in some degree on the entire profession. And it is so everywhere. The errors, follies, misconduct, or bad example of one minister of the gospel brings a reproach upon the sacred calling itself, and prevents the usefulness of many others. Ministers do not stand alone. And though no one can be responsible for the errors and failings of others, yet no one can avoid suffering in regard to his usefulness by the sins of others. Not only, therefore, from a regard to his personal usefulness should every minister be circumspect in his walk, but from respect to the usefulness of all others who sustain the office of the ministry, and from respect to the success of religion all over the world. Paul made it one of the principles of his conduct so to act that no man should have cause to speak reproachfully of the ministry on his account. In order to this, he felt it to be necessary not only to claim and assert honour for the ministry, but to lead such a life as should deserve the respect of men. If a man wishes to secure respect for his calling, it must be by living in the manner which that calling demands, and then respect and honour will follow as a matter of course. See *Calvin*.

{d} "no offense" 1Co 10:32

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *But in all things*. In every respect. In all that we do. In every way, both by words and deeds. *How* this was done, Paul proceeds to state in the following verses.

Approving ourselves as the ministers of God. Marg., "Commending." Tindal renders it, "In all things let us behave ourselves as the ministers of God." The idea is, that Paul and his fellow-labourers endeavoured to live as became the ministers of God, and so as to commend the ministry to the confidence and affection of men. They endeavoured to live as was appropriate to those who were the ministers of God, and so that the world would be disposed to do honour to the ministry.

In much patience. In the patient endurance of afflictions of all kinds. Some of his trials he proceeds to enumerate. The idea is, that a minister of God, in order to do good and to commend his ministry, should set an example of patience. He preaches this as a duty to others; and if, when he is poor, persecuted, oppressed, calumniated, or imprisoned, he should murmur, or be insubmissive, the consequence would be that he would do little good by all his Preaching. And no one can doubt that God often places his ministers in circumstances of peculiar trial, among other reasons, in order that they may illustrate their own precepts by their example and show to their people with what temper and spirit they may and ought to suffer. Ministers often do a great deal more good by their example in suffering than they do in their preaching. It is easy to preach to others; it is not so easy to manifest just the right spirit in time of persecution and trial. Men too can resist preaching, but they cannot resist the effect and power of a good example in times of suffering. In regard to the

manner in which Paul says that the ministry may commend itself, it may be observed, that he groups several things together; or mentions several *classes* of influences or means. In this and the next verse he refers to various kinds of afflictions. In the following verses he groups several things together, pertaining to a holy life and a pure conversation.

In afflictions. In all our afflictions; referring to all the afflictions and trials which they were called to bear. The following words, in the manner of a climax, specify more particularly the kinds of trials which they were called to endure.

In necessities. This is a stronger term than afflictions, and denotes the distress which arose from want. He everywhere endured adversity. It denotes unavoidable distress and calamity.

In distresses. The word here used (*stenocwria*) denotes, properly, *straitness of place*, want of room; then straits, distress, anguish. It is a stronger word than either of those which he had before used. See it explained **See Barnes "Ro 2:9"**.

Paul means that in all these circumstances he had evinced patience, and had endeavoured to act as became a minister of God.

{a} "ministers of God" 1Co 4:1

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *In stripes*. In this verse, Paul proceeds to specifications of what he had been called to endure. In the previous verse, he had spoken of his afflictions in general terms. In this expression, he refers to the fact that he and his fellow-labourers were scourged in the synagogues and cities as if they had been the worst of men. In 2Co 11:23-25, Paul says that he had been scourged five times by the Jews, and had been thrice beaten with rods. **See Barnes "2Co 11:23"**.

In imprisonments. As at Philippi, Ac 16:24, seq. It was no uncommon thing for the early preachers of Christianity to be imprisoned.

In tumults. Marg., *Tossings to and fro*. The Greek word (*akatastasia*) denotes, properly, *instability*; thence disorder, tumult, commotion, here it means they in the various tumults and commotions which were produced by the preaching of the gospel, Paul endeavoured to act as became a minister of God. Such tumults were excited at Corinth, (Ac 18:6;) at Philippi, (Ac 16:19,20;) at Lystra and Derbe, (Ac 14:19;) at Ephesus, (Ac 19;) and in various other places. The idea is, that if the ministers of religion are assailed by a lawless mob, they are to endeavour to show the spirit of Christ there, and to evince all patience, and to do good even in such a scene. Patience and the Christian spirit may often do more good in such scenes than much preaching would do elsewhere.

In labours. Referring probably to the labours of the ministry, and its incessant duties, and perhaps also to the labours which they performed for their own support, as it is well known that Paul, and probably also the other apostles, laboured often to support themselves.

In watchings. In wakefulness, or want of sleep. He probably refers to the fact that in these arduous duties, and in his travels, and in anxious cares for the churches, and for the advancement of religion, he was often deprived of his ordinary rest. He refers to this again in 2Co 11:27.

In fastings. Referring probably not only to the somewhat frequent fasts to which he voluntarily submitted as acts of devotion, but also to the fact that in his travels, when abroad and among strangers, he was often destitute of food. To such trials, those who travelled as Paul did, among strangers, and without property, would be often compelled to submit; and such trials, almost without number, the religion which we now enjoy has cost. It at first cost the painful life, the toils, the anxieties, and the sufferings of the Redeemer; and it has been propagated and perpetuated amidst the deep sorrows, the sacrifices, and the tears and blood of those who have contributed to perpetuate it on earth. For such a religion—originated, extended, and preserved in such a manner—we can never express suitable gratitude to God. Such a religion we cannot over-estimate in value; and for the extension and perpetuity of such a religion, we also should be willing to practise unwearied self-denial.

{b} "in imprisonments" 2Co 11:23 {2} "in tumults" "in tossings to and fro"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *By pureness*. Paul, having in the previous verses grouped together some of the sufferings which he endured, and by which he had endeavoured to commend and extend the true religion, proceeds here to group together certain other influences by which he had sought the same object. The substance of what he here says is, that it had not only been done by sufferings and trials, but by a holy life, and by entire consecration to the great cause to which he had devoted himself, he begins by stating that it was by pureness, that is, by integrity, sanctity, a holy and pure life. All preaching and all labours would have been in vain without this; and Paul well knew that if he succeeded in the ministry, he must be a good man. The same is true in all other professions. One of the essential requisites of an orator, according to Quintilian, is, that he must be a good man; and no man may expect ultimately to succeed in any calling of life unless he is *pure*. But however this may be in other callings, no one will doubt it in regard to the ministry of the gospel.

By knowledge. Interpreters have differed much in the interpretation of this. Rosenmuller and Schleusner understand by it *prudence*. Grotius interprets it as meaning a knowledge of the law. Doddridge supposes that it refers to a solicitude to improve in the knowledge of those truths which they were called to communicate to others. Probably the idea is a very simple one. Paul is showing how he endeavoured to commend the gospel to others, 2Co 6:4. He says, therefore, that one way was by communicating knowledge, true knowledge. He proclaimed that which was true, and which was real knowledge, in opposition to the false science of the Greeks, and in opposition to those who would substitute declamation for argument, and the mere ornaments of rhetoric for truth. The idea is, that the ministry should not be *ignorant*; but that if they wished to commend their office, they should be well-informed, and should be men of good sense. Paul had no belief that an ignorant ministry was preferable to one that was characterized by true knowledge; and *he* felt that if he was to be useful, it was to be by his imparting to others truth that would be useful. "The priest's lips should keep knowledge," Mal 2:7.

By long-suffering. By patience in our trials, and in the provocations which we meet with. We endeavour to obtain and keep a control over our passions, and to keep them in subjection. See this word explained **See Barnes "1Co 13:4".**

By kindness. **See Barnes "1Co 13:4".**

By gentleness of manner, of temper, and of spirit. By endeavouring to evince this spirit to all, whatever may be their treatment of us, and whatever may be our provocations. Paul felt that if a minister would do good, he must be kind and gentle to all.

By the Holy Ghost. By the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit. By those graces and virtues which it is his office peculiarly to produce in the heart. Comp. Ga 5:22,23. Paul here evidently refers not to the miraculous agency of the Holy Spirit, but he is referring to the Spirit which he and his fellow-ministers manifested—and means here, doubtless, that they evinced such feelings as the Holy Spirit produced in the hearts of the children of God.

By love unfeigned. Sincere, true, ardent love to all. By undissembled, pure, and genuine affection for the souls of men. What good can a minister do, if he does not love his people and the souls of men? The prominent characteristic in the life of the Redeemer was love—love to all. So if we are like him, and if we do any good, we shall have love to men. No man is useful without it; and ministers, in general, are useful just in proportion as they have it. It will prompt to labour, self-denial, and toil; it will make them patient, ardent, kind; it will give them zeal, and will give them access to the heart; it will accomplish what no eloquence, labour, or learning will do without it. He who shows that he loves me has access at once to my heart; he who does not, cannot make a way there by any argument, eloquence, denunciation, or learning. No minister is useful without it; no one with it can be otherwise than useful.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *By the word of truth*. That is, by making known the truths of the gospel. It was his object to make known the simple truth. He did not corrupt it by false mixtures of philosophy and human wisdom, but communicated it as it had been revealed to him. The object of the appointment of the Christian ministry is to make known the truth; and when that is done, it cannot but be that they will commend their office and work to the favourable regards of men.

By the power of God. By the Divine power which attended the preaching of the gospel. Most of the ancient commentators explain this of the power of working miracles.—*Bloomfield*. But it probably includes all the displays of Divine power which attended the propagation of the gospel, whether in the working of miracles, or in the conversion of men. If it be asked how Paul used this power so as to give no offence in the work of the ministry, it may be replied, that the miraculous endowments bestowed upon the apostles, the power of speaking foreign languages, etc., seem to have been bestowed upon them to be employed in the same way as were their natural faculties. **See Barnes "1Co 14:32".**

The idea here is, that they used the great powers intrusted to them by God, not as impostors would have done, for the purposes of gain and ambition, or for vain display, but solely for the furtherance of the true religion, and the salvation of men. They thus showed that they were sent

from God, as well by the nature of the powers with which they were intrusted, as by the manner in which they used them.

By the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left. Interpreters have varied much in the exposition of this passage; and many have run into utter wildness. Grotius says that it refers to the manner in which the ancient soldiers were armed. They bore a spear in their right hand, and a shield in the left. With the former they attacked their foes, with the latter they made defence. Some have supposed that it refers to the fact that they were taught to use the sword with the left hand as well as with the right. The simple idea is, that they were completely armed. To be armed on the right hand and on the left, is to be well armed, or entirely equipped. They went forth to conflict. They met persecution, opposition, and slander. As the soldier went well armed to battle, so did they. But the armour with which they met their foes, and which constituted their entire panoply, was a holy life. With that they met all the assaults of their enemies; with that all slander and persecution. That was their defence, and by that they hoped and expected to achieve their conquests. They had no swords, and spears, and helmets, and shields; no carnal weapons of offence and defence; but they expected to meet all their assaults, and to gain all their victories, by an upright and holy life.

{a} "word of truth" 2Co 4:2 {b} "power of God" 1Co 2:4 {c} "armour of righteousness" Eph 6:11

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *By honour and dishonour*. The apostle is still illustrating the proposition that he and his fellow-labourers endeavoured to give no offence, (2Co 6:3,) and to commend themselves as the ministers of God, 2Co 6:4. He here (2Co 6:8-10) introduces another *group* of particulars in which it was done. The main idea is, that they endeavoured to act in a manner so as to commend the ministry and the gospel, whether they were in circumstances of honour or dishonour, whether lauded or despised by the world. The word rendered "by" (*dia*) does not here denote the *means* by which they commended the gospel, but the *medium*. In the midst of honour and dishonour, whatever might be the esteem in which they were held by the world, they gave no offence. The first is, "by honour." They were not everywhere honoured, or treated with respect. Yet they were sometimes honoured by men. The churches which they founded would honour them, and as the ministers of religion they would be by them treated with respect. Perhaps occasionally also they might be treated with great attention and regard by the men of the world on account of their miraculous powers. Comp. Ac 28:7. So now, ministers of the gospel are often treated with great respect and honour. They are beloved and venerated, caressed and flattered, by the people of their charge. As ministers of God, as exercising a holy function, their office is often treated with great respect by the World. If they are eloquent or learned, or if they are eminently successful, they are often highly esteemed and loved. It is difficult in such circumstances to "commend themselves as the ministers of God." Few are the men who are not injured by honour; few who are not corrupted by flattery. Few are the ministers who are proof against this influence, and who in such circumstances can honour the ministry. If done, it is by showing that they regard such things as of little moment; by showing that

they are influenced by higher considerations than the love of praise; by not allowing this to interfere with their duties, or to make them less faithful and laborious; but rather by making this the occasion of increased fidelity and increased zeal in their Master's cause. Most ministers do more to "give offence" in times when they are greatly honoured by the world than when they are despised. Yet it is possible for a minister who is greatly honoured to make it the occasion of commending himself more and more as a minister of God. And he should do it; as Paul said he did. The other situation was "in dishonour." It is needless to say, that the apostles were often in situations where they had opportunity thus to commend themselves as the ministers of God. If *sometimes* honoured, they were *often* dishonoured. If the world sometimes flattered and caressed them, it often despised' them, and cast out their names as evil. **See Barnes "1Co 4:13"**.

And perhaps it is so substantially now with those who are faithful. In such circumstances, also, Paul sought to commend himself as a minister of God. It was by receiving all expressions of contempt with meekness; by not suffering them to interfere with the faithful discharge of his duties; by rising above them, and showing the power of religion to sustain him; and by returning good for evil, prayers for maledictions, blessings for curses, and by seeking to save, not injure and destroy, those who thus sought to overwhelm him with disgrace. It may be difficult to do this, but it can be done; and when done, a man always does good.

By evil report. The word here used (*dusfhmia*) means, properly, ill-omened language, malediction, reproach, contumely. It refers to the fact that they were often slandered and calumniated. Their motives were called in question, and their names aspersed. They were represented as deceivers and impostors, etc. The statement here is, that in such circumstances, and when thus assailed and reproached, they endeavoured to commend themselves as the ministers of God. Evidently they endeavoured to do this by not slandering or reviling in return; by manifesting a Christian spirit; by *living down* the slanderous accusation, and by doing good, if possible, even to their calumniators. It is more difficult, says Chrysostom, to bear such reports than it is pain of body; and it is consequently more difficult to evince a Christian spirit then. To human nature it is trying to have the name slandered and cast out as evil when we are conscious only of a desire to do good. But it is sufficient for the disciple that he be as his Master; and if they called the Master of the house Beelzebub, we must expect they will also those of his household. It is a fine field for a Christian minister, or any other Christian, to do good when his name is unjustly slandered. It gives him an opportunity of showing the true excellency of the Christian spirit; *and it gives him the inexpressible privilege of being like Christ*—like him in his suffering and in the moral excellence of character. A man should be willing to be anything if it will make him like the Redeemer— whether it be in suffering or in glory. See Php 3:10 1Pe 4:13.

And good report. When men speak well of us; when we are commended, praised, or honoured. To honour the gospel then, and to commend the ministry, is

(1.) to show that the earth is not set on this, and does not seek it;

(2.) to keep the heart from being puffed up with pride and self-estimation;

(3.) not to suffer it to interfere with our fidelity to others, and with our faithfully presenting to them the truth. Satan often attempts to *bribe* men by praise, and to neutralize the influence of ministers by flattery. It seems hard to go and proclaim to men painful truths, who are causing the incense of praise to ascend around us. And it is commonly much easier for a minister of the gospel to commend himself as a minister, of God when he is slandered than when he is praised; when his name is cast out as evil, than when the breezes of popular favour are wafted upon him. Few men

can withstand the influence of flattery, but many men can meet persecution with a proper spirit; few men comparatively can always evince Christian fidelity to others when they live always amidst the influence of "good report," but there are many who can be faithful when they are poor, and despised, and reviled. Hence it has happened, that God has so ordered it that his faithful servants have had but little of the "good report" which this world can furnish, but that they have been generally. subjected to persecution and slander.

As deceivers. That is, we are regarded and treated as if we were deceivers, and as if we were practicing an imposition on mankind, and as if we would advance our cause by any trick or fraud that would be possible. We are regarded and treated as deceivers. Perhaps this refers to some charges which had been brought against them by the opposing faction at Corinth, (Locke,) or perhaps to the opinion which the Jewish priests and heathen philosophers entertained of them. The idea is, that though they were extensively regarded and treated as impostors, yet they endeavoured to live as became the ministers of God. They bore the imputation with patience, and they applied themselves diligently to the work of saving souls. Paul seldom turned aside to vindicate himself from such charges, but pursued his Master's work, and evidently felt that if he *had* a reputation that was worth anything, or deserved any reputation, God would take care of it. Comp. Ps 37:1-4. A man, especially a minister, who is constantly endeavouring to vindicate his own reputation, usually has a reputation which is not worth vindicating. A man who deserves a reputation will ultimately obtain just as much as is good for him, and as will advance the cause in which he is embarked.

And yet true. We *are not* deceivers and impostors. Though we are regarded as such, yet we show ourselves to be true and faithful ministers of Christ.

{d} "yet true" Joh 7:12,17

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *As unknown*. As those who are deemed to be of an obscure and ignoble rank in life, unknown to the great, unknown to fame. The idea, I think, is, that they went as *strangers*, as persons unknown, in preaching the gospel. Yet, though thus unknown, they endeavoured to commend themselves as the ministers of God. Though among strangers; though having no introduction from the great and the noble, yet they endeavoured so to act as to convince the world that they were the ministers of God. This could be done only by a holy life, and by the evidence of the Divine approbation which would attend them in their work. And by this the ministers of religion, if they are faithful, may make themselves known even among those who were strangers, and may live so as to "give no offence." Every minister and every Christian, even when they are "unknown," and when among strangers, should remember their high character as the servants of God and should so live as to commend the religion which they profess to love, or which they are called on to preach. And yet how often is it that ministers, when among strangers, seem to feel themselves at liberty to lay aside their ministerial character, and to engage in conversation, and even partake of amusements, which they themselves would regard as wholly improper if it were known that they were the ambassadors of God! And how often is it the case that professing Christians when travelling, when among strangers, when in foreign lands, forget their high calling, and conduct [themselves] in a

manner wholly different from what they did when surrounded by Christians, and when restrained by the sentiments and by the eyes of a Christian community!

And yet well known. Our sentiments and our principles are well known. We have no concealments to make. We practice no disguise. We attempt to impose on no one. Though obscure in our origin; though without rank, or wealth, or power, or patronage, to commend ourselves to favour, yet we have succeeded in making ourselves known to the world. Though obscure in our origin, we are not obscure now. Though suspected of dark designs, yet our principles are all well known to the world. No men of the same obscurity of birth ever succeeded in making themselves more extensively known than did the apostles. The world at large became acquainted with them; and by their self-denial, zeal, and success, they extended their reputation around the globe.

As dying. That is, regarded by others as dying. As condemned often to death; exposed to death; in the midst of trials that expose us to death, and that are ordinarily followed by death. **See Barnes** "1Co 15:31, on the phrase, "I die daily." They passed through so many trials, that it might be said that they were constantly dying.

And, behold, we live. Strange as it may seem, we still survive. Through all our trials we are preserved; and, though often exposed to death, yet we still live. The idea here is, that in all these trials, and in these exposures to death, they endeavoured to commend themselves as the ministers of God. They bore their trials with patience; submitted to these exposures without a murmur; and ascribed their preservation to the interposition of God.

As chastened. The word *chastened* (*paideuomenoi*) means *corrected, chastised*. It is applied to the chastening which God causes by affliction and calamities, 1Co 11:32 Re 3:19 Heb 12:6. It refers here, not to the scourgings to which they were subjected in the synagogues and elsewhere, but to the chastisements which God inflicted, the trials to which he subjected them. And the idea is, that in the midst of these trials they endeavoured to act as became the ministers of God. They bore them with patience. They submitted to them as coming from his hand. They felt that they were right, and they submitted without a murmur.

And not killed. Though severely chastened, yet we are not put to death. We survive them—preserved by the interposition of God.

{a} "as unknown" 1Co 4:9 {b} "as chastened" Ps 118:18

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *As sorrowful, lupoumenoi*. Grieving, afflicted, troubled, sad. Under these sufferings we seem always to be cast down and sad. We endure afflictions that usually lead to the deepest expressions of grief. If the world looks only upon our trials, we must be regarded as always suffering, and always sad. The world will suppose that we have cause for continued lamentation, (*Doddridge*,) and they will regard us as among the most unhappy of mortals. Such, perhaps, is the estimate which the world usually affixes to the Christian life. They regard it as a life of sadness and of gloom—of trial and of melancholy. They see little in it that is cheerful, and they suppose that a heavy burden presses constantly on the heart of the Christian. Joy they think pertains to the gaieties and pleasures of this life; sadness to religion. And perhaps a more comprehensive statement of the feelings with

which the gay people of the world regard Christians cannot be found than in this expression, "*as sorrowful*." True, they are not free from sorrow. They are tried like others. They have peculiar trials arising from persecution; opposition, contempt, and from the conscious and deep-felt depravity of their hearts. They ARE serious; and their seriousness is often interpreted as gloom. But there is another side to this picture; and there is much in the Christian character and feelings unseen or unappreciated by the world. For they are

Alway rejoicing. So Paul was, notwithstanding the fact that he always appeared to have occasion for grief. Religion had a power not only to sustain the soul in trial, but to fill it with positive joy. The sources of his joy were doubtless the assurances of the Divine favour, and the hopes of eternal glory. And the same is true of religion always. There is an internal peace and joy which the world may not see or appreciate, but which is far more than a compensation for all the trials which the Christian endures.

As poor. The idea is, we are poor, yet in our poverty we endeavour "to give no offence, and to commend ourselves as the ministers of God." This would be done by their patience and resignation; by their entire freedom from everything dishonest and dishonourable; and by their readiness, when necessary, to labour for their own support. There is no doubt that the apostles were poor. Comp. Ac 3:6. The little property which some of them had, had all been forsaken in order that they might follow the Saviour, and go and preach his gospel. And there is as little doubt that the mass of ministers are still poor, and that God designs and desires that they should be. It is in such circumstances that he designs they should illustrate the beauty and the sustaining power of religion, and be examples to the world.

Yet making many rich. On the meaning of the word rich, **See Barnes "Ro 2:4"**.

Here the apostle means that he and his fellow-labourers, though poor themselves, were the instruments of conferring durable and most valuable possessions on many persons. They had bestowed on them the true riches. They had been the means of investing them with treasures infinitely more valuable than any which kings and princes could bestow. They to whom they ministered were made partakers of the treasure where the moth doth not corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.

As having nothing. Being utterly destitute. Having no property. This was true, doubtless, in a literal sense, of most of the apostles.

And yet possessing all things. That is,

(1.) possessing a portion of all things that may be necessary for our welfare, as far as our heavenly Father shall deem to be necessary for us.

(2.) Possessing an interest in all things, so that we can enjoy them. We can derive pleasure from the works of God—the heavens, the earth, the hills, the streams, the cattle on the mountains or in the vales, as the works of God. We have a *possession* in them so that we can enjoy them as his works, and can say, "Our Father made them all." They are given to man to enjoy. They are a part of the inheritance of man. And though we cannot call them our own in the legal sense, yet we can call them ours in the sense that we can derive pleasure from their contemplation, and see in them the proofs of the wisdom and the goodness of God. The child of God that looks upon the hills and vales, upon an extensive and beautiful farm or landscape, *may* derive more pleasure from the contemplation of them as the work of God, and his gift to men, than the real owner does, if irreligious, from contemplating all this as his own. And so far as mere happiness is concerned, the

friend of God who sees in all this the proofs of God's beneficence and wisdom, may have a more valuable *possession* in those things than he who holds the title-deeds.

(3.) Heirs of all things. We have a title to immortal life—a promised part in all that the universe can furnish that can make us happy.

(4.) In the possession of pardon and peace, of the friendship of God and the knowledge of the Redeemer, we have the possession of all things. This comprises all. He that has this, what need has he of more? This meets all the desires; satisfies the soul; makes the man happy and blessed. He that has God for his portion may be said to have all things, for he is "all in all." He that has the Redeemer for his Friend has all things that he needs, for "he that spared not his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Ro 8:32.

{c} "possessing all things" Ps 84:11

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you*. We speak freely and fully. This is an affectionate address to them, and has reference to what he had just said. It means, that when the heart was full on the subject, words would flow freely, and that he had given vent to the fervid language which he had just used because his heart was full. He loved them; he felt deeply; and he spoke to them with the utmost freedom of what he had thought, and purposed, and done.

Our heart is enlarged. We have deep feelings, which naturally vent themselves in fervent and glowing language. The main idea here is, that he had a strong affection for them; a heart which embraced and loved them all, and which expressed itself in the language of deep emotion, he had loved them so that he was willing to be reproached, and to be persecuted, and to be poor, and to have his name cast out as evil. "I cannot be silent. I conceal or dissemble nothing. I am full of ardent attachment, and that naturally vents itself in the strong language which I have used." True attachment will find means of expressing itself. A heart full of love will give vent to its feelings. There will be no dissembling and hypocrisy there. And if a minister loves the souls of his people, he will pour out the affections of his heart in strong and glowing language.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Ye are not straitened in us*. That is, you do not possess a narrow or contracted place in our affections. We love you fully, ardently, and are ready to do all that can be done for your welfare. There is no want of room in our affections towards you. It is not narrow, confined, pent up. It is ample and free.

But ye are straitened in your own bowels. That is, in the affections of your hearts. The word here used (*splagcnoiv*) commonly means, in the Bible, the tender affections. The Greek word properly denotes the *upper viscera*; the heart, the lungs, the liver. It is applied by Greek writers to

denote those parts of victims which were eaten during or after the sacrifice.—*Robinson*, (Lex.) Hence it is applied to the *heart*, as the seat of the emotions and passions; and especially the gentler emotions, the tender affections—compassion, pity, love, etc. *Our* word "bowels" is applied usually to the lower viscera, and by no means expresses the idea of the word which is used in Greek. The idea here is, that they were straitened or were confined in their affections for him. It is the language of reproof, meaning that he had not received from them the demonstrations of attachment which he had a right to expect, and which was a fair and proportionate return for the love bestowed on them. Probably he refers to the fact that they had formed parties; had admitted false teachers; and had not received his instructions as implicitly and as kindly as they ought to have done.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Now for a recompence, in the same*. "By way of recompense, open your hearts m the same manner towards me as I have done toward you. It is all the reward or compensation which I ask of you; all the return which I desire. I do not ask silver or gold, or any earthly possessions. I ask only a return of love, and a devotedness to the cause which I love, and which I endeavour to promote."

I speak as unto my children. I speak as a parent addressing children. I sustain toward you the relation of a spiritual father, and I have a right to require and expect a return of affection.

Be also enlarged. Be not straitened in your affections. Love me as I love you. Give to me the same proofs of attachment which I have given you. The idea in this verse is, that the only compensation or remuneration which he expected for all the love which he had shown them, and for all his toils and self-denials in their behalf, (2Co 6:4,5,) was, that they would love him, and yield obedience to the laws of the gospel requiring them to be separate from the world, (2Co 6:14-18.) One ground of the claim which he had to their affection was, that he sustained toward them the relation of a father, and that he had a right to require and to expect such a return of love. The Syriac renders it well, "Enlarge your love towards me." Tindal renders it, "I speak unto you as unto children, which have like reward with us; stretch yourselves therefore out; bear not the yoke with unbelievers."

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers*. This is closely connected in sense with the previous verse. The apostle is there stating the nature of the remuneration or recompense which he asks for all the love which he had shown to them, He here says, that one mode of remuneration would be to yield obedience to his commands, and to separate themselves from all improper alliance with unbelievers. "Make me this return for my love. Love me also; and as a proof of your affection, be not improperly united with unbelievers. Listen to me as a father

addressing his children, and secure your own happiness and piety by not being unequally yoked with those who are not Christians." The word which is here used (*eterozugew*) means, properly, to bear a different yoke, to be yoked heterogeneously.—*Robinson*, (Lex.) It is applied to the custom of yoking animals of different kinds together, (*Passow*;) and as used here means not to mingle together, or be united with unbelievers. It is implied in the use of the word that there is a dissimilarity between believers and unbelievers so great, that it is as improper for them to mingle together as it is to yoke animals of different kinds and species. The ground of the injunction is, that there is a difference between Christians and those who are not so great as to render such unions improper and injurious. The direction here refers, doubtless, to all kinds of improper connexions with those who were unbelievers. It has been usually supposed by commentators to refer particularly to marriage. But there is no reason for confining it to marriage. It doubtless includes that; but it may as well refer to any other intimate connexion, or to intimate friendships, or to participation in their amusements and employments, as to marriage. The radical idea is, that they were to abstain from all connexions with unbelievers—with infidels, and heathens, and those who were not Christians—-which would *identify* them with them; or they were to have no connexion with them *in anything* as unbelievers, heathens, or infidels; they were to partake with them in nothing that was peculiar to them as such. They were to have no part with them in their heathenism, unbelief, and idolatry, and infidelity; they were not to be united with them in any way or sense where it would necessarily be understood that they were partakers with them in those things. This is evidently the principle here laid down, and this principle is as applicable now as it was then. In the remainder of this verse and the following verses, (2Co 6:15,16,) he states *reasons* why they should have no such intercourse. There is no principle of Christianity that is more important than that which is here stated by the apostle; and none in which Christians are more in danger of erring, or in which they have more difficulty in determining the exact rule which they are to follow. The questions which arise are very important. Are we to have no intercourse with the people of the world? Are we cut loose from all our friends who are not Christians? Are we to become monks, and live a recluse and unsocial life? Are we never to mingle with the people of the world in business, in innocent recreation, or in the duties of citizens, and as neighbours and friends? It is important, therefore, in the highest degree, to endeavour to ascertain what are the principles on which the New Testament requires us to act in this matter. And in order to a correct understanding of this, the following principles may be suggested:

I. There is a large field of action, pursuit, principle, and thought, over which infidelity, sin, heathenism, and the world as such, have the entire control. It is wholly without the range of Christian law, and stands opposed to Christian law. It pertains to a different kingdom; is conducted by different principles; and tends to destroy and annihilate the kingdom of Christ. It cannot be reconciled with Christian principle, and cannot be conformed to but in entire violation of the influence of religion. Here the prohibition of the New Testament is absolute and entire. Christians are not to mingle with the people of the world in these things; and are not to partake of them. This prohibition, it is supposed, extends to the following, among other things:

(1.) To idolatry. This was plain. On no account or pretence were the early Christians to partake of that, or to countenance it. In primitive times, during the Roman persecutions, all that was asked was that they should cast a little incense on the altar of a heathen god. They refused to do it; and because they refused to do it, thousands perished as martyrs. They judged rightly; and the world has approved their cause.

(2.) Sins vice, licentiousness. This is also plain. Christians are in no way to patronize them, or to lend their influence to them, or to promote them by their name, their presence, or their property. "Neither be partaker of other men's sins," 1Ti 5:22 2Jo 1:11.

(3.) Arts and acts of dishonesty, deception, and fraud, in traffic and trade, Here the prohibition also must be absolute. No Christian can have a right to enter into partnership with another where the business is to be conducted on dishonest and unchristian principles, or where it shall lead to the violation of any of the laws of God. If it involves deception and fraud in the principles on which it is conducted; if it spreads ruin and poverty—as the distilling and vending of ardent spirits does; if it leads to the necessary violation of the Christian Sabbath, then the case is plain. A Christian is to have no "fellowship with such unfruitful works of darkness, but is rather to reprove them," Eph 5:11.

(4.) The amusements and pleasures that are entirely worldly, and sinful in their nature; that are wholly under worldly influence, and which cannot be brought under Christian principles. Nearly all amusements are of this description. The rate principle here seems to be, that if a Christian. in such a place is expected to lay aside his Christian principles, and if it would be deemed indecorous and improper for him to introduce the subject of religion, or if religion would be regarded as entirely inconsistent with the nature of the amusement, then he is not to be found there, The world reigns there; and if the principles of his Lord and Master would be excluded, he should not be there. This applies of course to the theatre, the circus, the ball-room, and to large and splendid parties of pleasure. We are not to associate with idolaters in their idolatry; nor with the licentious in their licentiousness; nor with the infidel in his infidelity; nor with the proud in their pride; nor with the gay in their gaiety; nor with the friends of the theatre, or the ball-room, or the circus, in their attachment to these places and pursuits. And whatever *other* connexion we are to have with them as neighbours, citizens, or members of our families, we are not to participate with them IN *these things*. Thus far all seems to be clear; and this rule is a plain one, whether it applies to marriage, or to business, or to religion, or to pleasure. Comp. **See Barnes "1Co 5:10"**.

II. There is a large field of action, thought, and plan, which may be said to be *common* with the Christian and the world; that is, where the Christian is not expected to abandon his own principles, and where there will be, or need be, no compromise of the sternest views of truth, or the most upright, serious, and holy conduct. He may carry his principles with him; may always manifest them if necessary; and may even commend them to others. A few of these may be referred to.

(1.) Commercial transactions and professional engagements that are conducted on honest and upright principles, even when those with whom we act are not Christians.

(2.) Literary and scientific pursuits, which never, when pursued with a right spirit, interfere with the principles of Christianity, and never are contrary to it.

(3.) The love and affection which are due to relatives and friends. Nothing in the Bible assuredly will prohibit a pious son from uniting with one who is not pious in supporting an aged and infirm parent, or a much loved and affectionate sister. The same remark is true also respecting the duty which a wife owes to a husband, a husband to a wife, or a parent to a child, though one of them should not be a Christian. And the same observation is true also of neighbours, who are not to be prohibited from uniting as neighbours in social intercourse, and in acts of common kindness and charity, though all are not Christians.

(4.) As citizens. We owe duties to our country; and a Christian need not refuse to act with others in the elective franchise, or in making or administering the laws. Here, however, it is clear that he

is not at liberty to violate the laws and the principles of the Bible. He *cannot* be at liberty to unite with them in political schemes that are contrary to the law of God, or in elevating to office men whom he cannot vote for with a good conscience as qualified for the station.

(5.) In plans of public improvement; in schemes that go to the advancement of the public welfare, when the schemes do not violate the laws of God. But *if* they involve the necessity of violating the Sabbath, or any of the laws of God, assuredly he cannot consistently participate in them.

(6.) In doing good to others. So the Saviour was with sinners; so he ate, and drank, and conversed with them: So we may mingle with them, without partaking of their wicked feelings and plans, so far as we can do them good, and exert over them a holy and saving influence. In all the situations here referred to, and in all the duties growing out of them the Christian may maintain his principles, and may preserve a good conscience. Indeed, the Saviour evidently contemplated that his people would have such intercourse with the world, and that in it they would do good. But in none of these is there to be any compromise of principle; in none to be any yielding to the opinions and practices that are contrary to the laws of God.

III. There is a large field of action, conduct, and plan, where Christians only will act together. These relate to the peculiar duties of religion—to prayer, Christian fellowship, the ordinances of the gospel, and most of the plans of Christian beneficence. Here the world will not intrude; and here assuredly there will be no necessity of any compromise of Christian principle.

For what fellowship. Paul proceeds here to state reasons why there should be no such improper connexion with the world. The main reason, though under various forms, is, that there can be no fellowship, no communion, nothing in common between them; and that therefore they should be separate. The word fellowship (*metoch*) means partnership, participation. What is there in common? or how can the one partake with the other? The interrogative form here is designed to be emphatic, and to declare, in the strongest terms, that there can be no such partnership.

Righteousness. Such as you Christians are required to practise; implying that all were to be governed by the stern and uncompromising principles of honesty and justice.

With unrighteousness. Dishonesty, injustice, sin; implying that the world is governed by such principles.

And what communion, koinwnia. Participation, communion—that which is *in common*. What is there in common between light and darkness? What common principle is there of which they both partake? There is none. There is a total and eternal separation.

Light. The emblem of truth, virtue, holiness. **See Barnes "Mt 4:16"**; **See Barnes** "Joh 5:16"

See Barnes "Joh 1:4; **See Barnes "Rom 2:19"**

See Barnes "2Co 4:4,6".

It is implied here that Christians are enlightened, and walk in the light. Their principles are pure and holy— principles of which light is the proper emblem.

Darkness. The emblem of sin, corruption, ignorance; implying that the world to which Paul refers was governed and influenced by these. The idea is, that as there is an entire separation between light and darkness in their nature—as they have nothing in common—so it is and should be between Christians and sinners. There should be a separation. There can be nothing in common between holiness and sin; and Christians should have nothing to do "with the unfruitful works of darkness," Eph 5:11.

{b} "Be ye not" De 7:2,3; 1Co 7:29

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *And what concord*. *sumfwnhsiv*. Sympathy; unison. This word refers, properly, to the unison or harmony produced by musical instruments, where there is *a chord*. What accordance, what unison is there; what strings are there which being struck will produce a chord of harmony? The idea is, then, there is *as much* that is discordant between Christ and Belial as there is between instruments of music that produce only discordant and jarring sounds.

Hath Christ. What is there in common between Christ and Belial, implying that Christians are governed by the principles, and that they follow the example of Christ.

Belial. *belial*, or *beliar*, as it is found in some of the late editions. The form *Beliar* is Syriac. The Hebrew word (

HEBREW) means, literally, *without profit; worthlessness*; wickedness. It is here evidently applied to Satan. The Syriac translates it "Satan." The idea is, that the persons to whom Paul referred, the heathen wicked unbelieving world, were governed by the principles of Satan, and were "taken captive by him at his will. (2Ti 2:26; comp. Joh 8:44); and that Christians should be separate from the wicked world, as Christ was separate from all the feelings, purposes, and plans of Satan. He had no participation in them; he formed no union with them; and so it should be with the followers of the one in relation to the followers of the other.

Or what part. *meriv*. Portion, share, participation, fellowship. This word refers usually to a division of an estate, Lu 10:42; **See Barnes "Ac 8:21"**; **See Barnes** "Col 1:12".

There is no participation; nothing in common.

He that believeth. A Christian; a man the characteristic of whom it is that he believes on the Lord Jesus.

With an infidel. A man who does not believe—whether a heathen idolater, a profane man, a scoffer, a philosopher, a man of science, a moral man, or a son or daughter of gaiety. The idea is, that on the subject of religion there is no union; nothing in common; no participation. They are governed by different principles; have different feelings; are looking to different rewards; and are tending to a different destiny. The believer, therefore, should not select his partner in life and his chosen companions and friends from this class, but from those with whom he has sympathy, and with whom he has common feelings and hopes.

{*} "infidel" "unbeliever"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *And what agreement*. *sugkatayesiv*. Assent, accord, agreement;

what *putting or laying down together* is there? What is there in one that resembles the other?

The temple of God. What has a temple of God to do with idol worship? It is erected for a different purpose, and the worship of idols in it would not be tolerated. It is implied here that Christians are themselves the temple of God—a fact which Paul proceeds immediately to illustrate; and that it is as absurd for them to mingle with the infidel world, as it would be to erect the image of a heathen

god in the temple of JEHOVAH. This is strong language; and we cannot but admire the energy and copiousness of the expressions used by Paul, "which cannot," says Bloomfield, "be easily paralleled in the best classical writers."

With idols. Those objects which God hates, and on which he cannot look but with abhorrence. The sense is, that for Christians to mingle with the sinful world—to partake of their pleasures, pursuits, and follies—is as detestable and hateful in the sight of God, as if his temple were profaned by erecting a deformed, and shapeless, and senseless block in it as an object of worship. And assuredly, if Christians had such a sense of the abomination of mingling with the world, they would feel the obligation to be separate and pure.

For ye are the temple of the living God. See this explained **See Barnes** "1Co 3:16, **See Barnes "1Co 3:17"**

The idea is, that as God dwells with his people, they ought to be separated from a sinful and polluted world.

As God hath said. The words here quoted are taken substantially from Ex 29:45 Le 26:12; Eze 37:27.

They are not literally quoted, but Paul has thrown together the substance of what occurs in several places. The sense, however, is the same as occurs in the places referred to.

I will dwell in them. *enoikhsw*. I will take up my indwelling in them. There is an allusion, doubtless, to the fact that he would be present among his people by the Shechinah, or the visible symbol of his presence. **See Barnes** "1Co 3:16, **See Barnes "1Co 3:17"**.

It implies, when used with reference to Christians, that the Holy Spirit would abide with them, and that the blessing of God would attend them. See Ro 8 Col 3:16 2Ti 1:14.

And walk in them. That is, I will walk among them. I will be one of their number. He was present among the Jews by the public manifestation of his presence by a symbol; he is present with Christians by the presence and guidance of his Holy Spirit.

And I will be their God. Not only the God whom they worship, but the God who will protect and bless them. I will take them under my peculiar protection, and they shall enjoy my favour. This is certainly as true of Christians as it was of the Jews, and Paul has not departed from the spirit of the promise in applying it to the Christian character. His object in quoting these passages is to impress on Christians the solemnity and importance of the truth that God dwelt among them and with them; that they were under his care and protection; that they belonged to him, and that they therefore should be separate from the world.

{a} "ye are the temple" 1Co 3:16,17, 6:19 Eph 2:21,22

{b} "I will dwell " Ex 29:45 Le 26:12; Jer 31:1,33, 32:38 Eze 11:20

Eze 36:28 27:26,27 Zec 8:8

{**} "in" "among"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Wherefore*. Since you are a peculiar people. Since God, the holy and blessed God, dwells with you and among you.

Come out from among them. That is, from among idolaters and unbelievers; from a gay and vicious world. These words are taken, by a slight change, from Isa 52:11. They are there applied to the Jews in Babylon, and are a solemn call which God makes on them to leave the place of their exile, to come out from among the idolaters of that city, and return to their own land. **See Barnes "Isa 52:11".**

Babylon, in the Scriptures, is the emblem of whatever is proud, arrogant, wicked, and opposed to God; and Paul, therefore, applies the words here with great beauty and force to illustrate the duty of Christians in separating themselves from a vain, idolatrous, and wicked world.

And be ye separate. Separate from the world, and all its corrupting influences.

Saith the Lord. See Isa 52:11. Paul does not use this language as if it had original reference to Christians, but he applies it as containing an important principle that was applicable to the case which he was considering, or as language that would appropriately express the idea which he wished to convey. The language of the Old Testament is often used in this manner by the writers of the New.

And touch not the unclean thing. In Isaiah, "touch no unclean thing;" that is, they were to be pure, and to have no connexion with idolatry in any of its forms. So Christians were to avoid all unholy contact with a vain and polluted world. The sense is, "Have no close connexion with an idolater, or an unholy person. Be pure; and feel that you belong to a community that is under its own laws, and that is to be distinguished in moral purity from all the rest of the world."

And I will receive you. That is, I will receive and recognize you as my friends and my adopted children. This could not be done until they were separated from an idolatrous and wicked world. The fact of their being received by God, and recognized as his children, depended on their coming out from the world. These words, with the verse following, though used evidently somewhat in the form of a quotation, yet are not to be found in any single place in the Old Testament. In 2Sa 7:14, God says of Solomon, "I will be his Father, and he shall be my son." In Jer 31:9, God says, "For I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first-born." It is probable that Paul had such passages in his eye, yet he doubtless designed rather to express the general sense of the promises of the Old Testament than to quote any single passage. Or why may it not be that we should regard Paul here himself as speaking as an inspired man directly, and making a promise then first communicated immediately from the Lord? Paul was inspired as well as the prophets; and it may be that he meant to communicate a promise directly from God. Grotius supposes that it was not taken from any particular place in the Old Testament, but was a part of a hymn that was in use among the Hebrews.

{c} "come out from" Isa 52:11 2Co 7:1; Re 18:4

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *And will be a Father unto you*. A father is the protector, counsellor, and guide of his children, he instructs them, provides for them, and counsels them in time of perplexity. No relation is more tender than this. In accordance with this, God says, that he will be to his people their

Protector, Counsellor, Guide, and Friend. He will cherish towards them the feelings of a father; he will provide for them, he will acknowledge them as his children. No higher honour can be conferred on mortals than to be adopted into the family of God, and to be permitted to call the Most High *our Father*. No rank is so elevated as that of being the sons and the daughters of the Lord Almighty. Yet this is the common appellation by which God addresses his people; and the most humble in rank, the most poor and ignorant of his friends on earth, the most despised among men, may reflect that they are the children of the ever-living God, and have the Maker of the heavens and the earth as their Father and their eternal Friend. How poor are all the honours of the world compared with this!

The Lord Almighty. The word here used (*pantokratwr*) occurs nowhere except in this place and in the book of Revelation, Re 1:8 4:8; Re 11:17 15:3, 16:7,14, 19:6,15 21:22.

It means one who has all power; and is applied to God in contradistinction from idols that are weak and powerless. God is able to protect his people, and they who put their trust in him shall never be confounded. What has he to fear who has a Friend of almighty power?

{d} "will be a Father" Jer 31:1,9; Re 21:7

REMARKS on 2nd Corinthians Chapter 6

(1.) It is right and proper to exhort Christians not to receive the grace of God in vain, 2Co 6:1. Even they sometimes abuse their privileges; become neglectful of the mercy of God; undervalue the truths of religion, and do not make as much as they should do of the glorious truths that are fitted to sanctify and to save. *Every Christian should endeavour to make just as much as possible of his privileges, and to become just as eminent as he can possibly be in his Christian profession*.

(2.) The benefits of salvation to this world come through the intercession of Jesus Christ, 2Co 6:2. It is because God is pleased to hear him; because he calls on God in an accepted time, that we have any hope of pardon. The sinner enjoys no offer of mercy, and no possibility of pardon, except what he owes to Jesus Christ. Should he cease to plead for men, the offers of salvation would be withdrawn, and the race would perish for ever.

(3.) The world is under a dispensation of mercy, 2Co 6:2. Men maybe saved. God is willing to show compassion, and to rescue them from ruin.

(4.) How important is the present moment! 2Co 6:2. How important is each moment! It may be the last period of mercy. No sinner can calculate with any certainty on another instant of time. God holds his breath, and with infinite ease he can remove him to eternity. Eternal results hang on the present, the fleeting moment—and yet how unconcerned are the mass of men about their present condition; how unanxious about what may possibly or probably occur the next moment! Now the sinner may be pardoned; the next moment he may be beyond the reach of forgiveness. This instant the bliss of heaven is offered him; the next he may be solemnly excluded from hope and heaven!

(5.) The ministers of the gospel should give no occasion of offence to any one, 2Co 6:3. On each one of them depends a portion of the honour of the ministry in this world, and of the honour of Jesus Christ among men. How solemn is this responsibility! How pure, and holy, and unblamable should they be!

(6.) Ministers and all Christians should be willing to suffer in the cause of the Redeemer, 2Co 6:4,5. If the early ministers and other Christians were called to endure the pains of imprisonment

and persecution for the honour of the gospel, assuredly we should be willing also to suffer. Why should there be any more reason for their suffering than for ours?

(7.) We see what our religion has cost, 2Co 6:4,5. It has come down to us through suffering. *All* the privileges that we enjoy have been the fruit of toil, and blood, and tears, and sighs. The best blood in human veins has flowed to procure these blessings; the holiest men on earth have wept, and been scourged, and tortured, that we might possess these privileges. What thanks should we give to God for all this! How highly should we prize the religion that has cost so much!

(8.) In trial we should evince such a spirit as not to dishonour, but to honour our religion, 2Co 6:3-5. This is as incumbent on all Christians as it is on ministers of the gospel. It is in such scenes that the reality of religion is tested. It is then that its power is seen. It is then that its value may be known. Christians and Christian ministers often do good in circumstances of poverty, persecution, and sickness, which they never do in health, and in popular favour, and in prosperity. And God often places his people in trial that they may do good then, expecting that they will accomplish more then than they could in prosperous circumstances. They whose aim it is to do good have often occasion to bless God that they were subjected to trial. Bunyan wrote the "Pilgrim's Progress" in a dungeon; and almost all the works of Baxter were written when he was suffering under persecution, and forbidden to preach the gospel. The devil is often foiled in this way. He persecutes and opposes Christians —and on the rack and at the stake they do most to destroy his kingdom; he throws them into dungeons—and they make books which go down even to the millennium, making successful war on the empire of darkness. Christians, therefore, should esteem it a privilege to be permitted to suffer on account of Christ, Php 1:29.

(9.) If ministers and other Christians do any good, they must be pure, 2Co 6:6,7. The gospel is to be commended by pureness, and knowledge, and the word of truth, and the armour of righteousness. It is in this way that they are to meet opposition; in this way that they are to propagate their sentiments. No man need expect to do good in the ministry or as a private Christian, who is not a holy man. No man who is a holy man can help doing good. It will be a matter of course that he will shed a healthful moral influence around him. And he will no more live without effect, than the sun sheds its steady beams on the earth without effect. His influence may be very noiseless and still, like the sunbeams or the dew, but it will be felt in the world. Wicked men can resist anything else better than they can a holy example. They can make a mock of preaching; they can deride exhortation; they can throw away a tract; they can burn the Bible; but what can they do against a holy example? No more than they can against the vivifying and enlightening beams of the sun; and a man who leads a holy life cannot help doing good, and cannot be prevented from doing good.

(10.) They who are Christians must expect to meet with much dishonour, and to be subjected often to the influence of evil report, 2Co 6:8. The world is unfriendly to religion, and its friends must never be surprised if their motives are impeached, and their names calumniated.

(11.) Especially is this the case with ministers, 2Co 6:8. They should make up their minds to it, and they should not suppose that any strange thing had happened to them if they are called thus to suffer.

(12.) They who are about to make a profession of religion, and they who are about entering on the work of the ministry, or who are agitating the question whether they should be ministers, should ask themselves whether they are prepared for this. They should count the cost; nor should they either make a profession of religion or think of the ministry as a profession, unless they are willing

to meet with dishonour, and to go through evil report; to be poor, (2Co 6:10,) and to be despised and persecuted, or to die in the cause which they embrace.

(13.) Religion has power to sustain the soul in trials, 2Co 6:10. Why should he be sad who has occasion to rejoice always? Why should he deem himself poor, though he has slender earthly possessions, who is able to make many rich? Why should he be melancholy as if he had nothing, who has Christ as his portion, and who is an heir of all things? Let not the poor, who are rich in faith, despond as though they had nothing. They have a treasure which gold cannot purchase, and which will be of infinite value when all other treasure fails. He that has an everlasting inheritance in heaven cannot be called a poor man. And he that can look to such an inheritance should not be unwilling to part with his earthly possessions. Those who seem to be most wealthy are often the poorest of mortals; and those who seem to be poor, or who are in humble circumstances, often have an enjoyment of even this world which is unknown in the palaces and at the tables of the great. They look on all things as the work of their Father; and in their humble dwellings, and with their humble fare, they have an enjoyment of the bounties of their heavenly Benefactor, which is not experienced often in the dwellings of the great and the rich.

(14.) A people should render to a minister and a pastor a return of love and confidence that shall be proportionate to the love which is shown to them, 2Co 6:12. This is but a reasonable and fair requital; and this is necessary, not only to the comfort, but to the success of a minister. What good can he do unless he has the affections and confidence of his people?

(15.) The compensation or recompense which a minister has a right to expect and require for arduous toil, is that his people should be "enlarged" in love towards him, and that they should yield themselves to the laws of the Redeemer, and be separate from the world, 2Co 6:13. And this is an ample reward. It is what he seeks, what he prays for, what he most ardently desires. If he is worthy of his office, he will seek not theirs but them, (2Co 12:14,) and he will be satisfied for all his toils if he sees them walking in the truth, (3Jo 1:4,) and showing in their lives the pure and elevated principles of the gospel which they profess to love.

(16.) The welfare of religion depends on the fact that Christians should be separate from a vain, and gay, and wicked world, 2Co 6:14-16. Why should they partake of those things in which they can, if Christians, have nothing in common? Why attempt to mingle light with darkness? to form a compact between Christ and Belial? or to set up a polluted idol in the temple of the living God? The truth is, there are great and eternal principles in the gospel which should not be surrendered, and which cannot be broken down. Christ intended to set up a kingdom that should be unlike the kingdoms of this world. And he designed that his people should be governed by different principles from the people of this world.

(17.) They who are about to make a profession of religion, should resolve to separate themselves from the world, 2Co 6:14,15. Religion cannot exist where there is no such separation; and they who are unwilling to forsake infidel companions and the gay amusements and vanities of life, and to find their chosen friends and pleasures among the people of God, can have no evidence that they are Christians. The world, with all its wickedness and its gay pleasures, must be forsaken, and there must be an effectual line drawn between the friends of God and the friends of sin.

Let us, then, who profess to be the friends of the Redeemer, remember how pure and holy we should be. It should not be indeed with the spirit of the Pharisee; it should not be with a spirit that will lead us to say, Stand by, for I am holier than thou;" but it should be, while we discharge all our duties to our impenitent friends, and while in all our intercourse with the world we should be

honest and true, and while we do not refuse to mingle with them as neighbours and citizens as far as we can without compromitting Christian principles, still our chosen friends and our dearest friendships should be with the people of God. For, his friends should be our friends; our happiness should be with them, and the world should see that *we prefer* the friends of the Redeemer to the friends of gaiety, ambition, and sin.

(18.) Christians are the holy temple of God, 2Co 6:16. How pure should they be! How free should they be from sin! How careful to maintain consciences void of offence!

(19.) What an inestimable privilege it is to be a Christian! (2Co 6:18;) to be a child of God! to feel that he is a Father and a Friend! to feel that though we may be forsaken by all others, though poor and despised, yet there is one who never forsakes—one who never forgets that he has sons and daughters dependent on him, and who need his constant care! Compared with this, how small the honour of being permitted to call the rich our friends, or to be regarded as the sons or daughters of nobles and of princes! Let the Christian then most highly prize his privileges, and feel that he is raised above all the elevations of rank and honour which this world can bestow. All these shall fade away, and the highest and the lowest shall meet on the same level in the grave, and alike return to dust. But the elevation of the child of God shall only begin to be visible and appreciated when all other honours fade away.

(20.) Let all seek to become the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. Let us aspire to this rather than to earthly honours; let us seek this rather than to be numbered with the rich and the great. All cannot be honoured in this world, and few are they who can be regarded as belonging to elevated ranks here. But all may be the children of the living God, and be permitted to call the Lord Almighty their Father and their Friend. Oh! if men could as easily be permitted to call themselves the sons of monarchs and princes; if they could as easily be admitted to the palaces of the great, and sit down at their tables, as they can enter heaven, how greedily would they embrace it! And yet how poor and paltry would be such honour and pleasure compared with that of feeling that we are the adopted children of the great and the eternal God!

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 1

Introduction to 2nd Corinthians Chapter 7

THE first verse of this chapter properly belongs to the previous chapter, and should have been attached to that. It is an exhortation made in view of the promises there referred to, to make every effort to obtain perfect purity, and to become entirely holy.

In 2Co 7:2,3, he entreats the Corinthians, in accordance with the wish which he had expressed in 2Co 6:13, to receive him as a teacher and a spiritual father; as a faithful apostle of the Lord Jesus. To induce them to do this, he assures them that he had given them, at no time, any occasion of

offence. He had injured no man; he had wronged no man. Possibly some might suppose that he had injured them by the sternness of his requirements in forbidding them to contract friendships and alliances with infidels; or in the case of discipline in regard to the incestuous person. But he assures them that all his commands had been the fruit of most tender love for them, and that he was ready to live and die with them.

The remainder of the chapter (2Co 7:4-15) is occupied mainly in stating the *joy* which he had at the evidence which they had given that they were ready to obey his commands. He says, therefore, (2Co 7:4,) that he was full of comfort and joy; and that in all his tribulation, the evidence of their obedience had given him great and unfeigned satisfaction. In order to show them the extent of his joy, he gives a pathetic description of the anxiety of mind which he had on the subject; his troubles in Macedonia, and particularly his distress on not meeting with Titus as he had expected, 2Co 7:5. But this distress had been relieved by his coming, and by the evidence which was furnished through him that they were ready to yield obedience to his commands, 2Co 7:6,7. This joy was greatly increased by his hearing from Titus the effect which his former epistle to them had produced, 2Co 7:8-13. He had felt deep anxiety in regard to that. He had even regretted, it would seem, (2Co 7:8,) that he had sent it. He had been deeply pained at the necessity of giving them pain, 2Co 7:8. But the effect had been all that he had desired; and when he learned from Titus the effect which it had produced—the deep repentance which they had evinced, and the thorough reformation which had occurred, (2Co 7:9-11,) he had great occasion to rejoice that he had sent the epistle to them. This new and distinguished instance of their obedience had given him great joy, and confirmed him in the proof that they were truly attached to him. The apostle adds, in the conclusion of the chapter, that his joy was greatly increased by the joy which Titus manifested, and his entire satisfaction in the conduct of the Corinthians, and the treatment which he had received from them, 2Co 7:13 so that though he Paul, had often had occasion to speak in the kindest terms of the Corinthians, all that he had ever said in their favour Titus had realized in his own case 2Co 7:14 and the affection of Titus for them had been greatly increased by his visit to them, 2Co 7:15. The whole chapter, therefore, is eminently adapted to produce good feeling in the minds of the Corinthians toward the apostle, and to strengthen the bonds of their mutual attachment.

Verse 1. *Having therefore these promises*. The promises referred to in 2Co 6:17,18; the promise that God would be a Father, a Protector, and a Friend. The idea is, that as we have a promise that God would dwell in us, that he would be our God, that he would be to us a Father, we should remove from us whatever is offensive in his sight, and become perfectly holy.

Let us cleanse ourselves. Let us purify ourselves. Paul was not afraid to bring into view the agency of Christians themselves in the work of salvation. He therefore says, "let us purify ourselves," as if Christians had much to do; as if their own agency was to be employed; and as if their purifying was dependent on their own efforts. While it is true that all purifying influence and all holiness proceed from God, it is also true that the effect of all the influences of the Holy Spirit is to excite us to diligence, to purify our own hearts, and to urge us to make strenuous efforts to overcome our own sins. He who expects to be made pure without any effort of his own, will never become pure; and he who ever becomes holy, will become so in consequence of strenuous efforts to resist the evil of his own heart, and to become like God. The *argument* here is, that we have the promises of God to aid us. We do not go about the work in our own strength. It is not a work in which we are to have no aid. But it is a work which God desires, and where he will give us all the aid which we need.

From all filthiness of the flesh. The noun here used (*molusmou*) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. The *verb* occurs in 1Co 8:7 Re 3:4, 14:4; and means to stain, defile, pollute, as a garment; and the word here used means a soiling, hence defilement, pollution, and refers to the defiling and corrupting influence of fleshly desires and carnal appetites. The filthiness of the flesh here denotes, evidently, the gross and corrupt appetites and passions of the body, including all such actions of all kinds as are inconsistent with the virtue and purity with which the body, regarded as the temple of the Holy Ghost, should be kept holy—all such passions and appetites as the Holy Spirit of God would not produce.

And spirit. By "filthiness of the spirit," the apostle means, probably, all the thoughts or mental associations that defile the man. Thus the Saviour (Mt 15:19) speaks of evil thoughts, etc., that proceed out of the heart, and that pollute the man. And probably Paul here includes all the sins and passions which appertain particularly to mind or to the soul rather than to carnal appetites—such as the desire of revenge, pride, avarice, ambition, etc. These are in themselves as polluting and defiling as the gross sensual pleasures. They stand as much in the way of sanctification, they are as offensive to God, and they prove as certainly that the heart is depraved, as the grossest sensual passions. The main difference is, that they are more decent in the external appearance; they can be better concealed; they are usually indulged by a more elevated class in society; but they are not the less offensive to God. It may be added, also, that they are often conjoined in the same person; and that the man who is defiled in his "spirit"is often a man most corrupt and sensual in his "flesh." Sin sweeps with a desolating influence through the whole frame; and it usually leaves no part unaffected, though some part may be more deeply corrupted than others.

Perfecting. This word (*epitelountev*) means, properly, to bring to an end, to finish, complete. The idea here is, that of carrying it out to the completion. Holiness had been commenced in the heart; and the exhortation of the apostle is, that they should make every effort that it might be complete in all its parts. He does not say that this work of perfection had ever been accomplished—nor does he say that it had not been. He only urges the obligation to make an effort to be entirely holy; and this obligation is not affected by the inquiry whether any one has been or has not been perfect. It is an obligation which results from the nature of the law of God, and his unchangeable claims on the soul. The fact that no one has been perfect does not relax the claim; the fact that no one will be in this life, does not weaken the obligation. It proves only the deep and dreadful depravity of the human heart, and should humble us under the stubbornness of guilt. The obligation to be perfect is one that is unchangeable and eternal. See Mt 5:48 1Pe 1:15. Tindal renders this, "And grow up to full holiness in the fear of God." The unceasing and steady aim of every Christian should be perfection—perfection in all things—in the love of God, of Christ, of man; perfection of heart, and feeling, and emotion; perfection in his words, and plans, and dealings with men; perfection in his prayers, and in his submission to the will of God. No man can be a Christian who does not sincerely desire it, and who does not constantly aim at it. No man is a friend of God who can acquiesce in a state of sin, and who is satisfied and contented that he is not as holy as God is holy. And any man who has no desire to be perfect as God is, and who does not make it his daily and constant aim to be as perfect as God, may set it down as demonstrably certain that he has no true religion, How can a man be a Christian who is willing to acquiesce in a state of sin, and who does not desire to be just like his Master and Lord? *In the fear of God*. Out of fear and reverence of God. From a regard to his commands, and a reverence for his name. The idea seems to be, that we are always in the presence of God; we are professedly under his law; and we should be awed

and restrained by a sense of his presence from the commission of sin, and from indulgence in the pollutions of the flesh and spirit. There are many sins that the presence of a child will restrain a man from committing; and how should the conscious presence of a holy God keep us from sin! If the fear of a man or of a child will restrain us, and make us attempt to be holy and pure, how should the fear of the all-present and the all-seeing God keep us, not only from outward sins, but from polluted thoughts and unholy desires!

{a} "these promises" 2Co 6:17,18; 1Jo 3:3

{b} "filthiness" Ps 51:10 Eze 36:25,26 1Jo 1:7,9

{*} "filthiness" "defilement"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Receive us*. Tindal renders this, "understand us." The word here used (*cwrhsate*) means, properly, give space, place, or room; and it means here, evidently, make place or room for us in your affections; that is, admit or receive us as your friends. It is an earnest entreaty that they would do what he had exhorted them to do in 2Co 6:13. **See Barnes "2Co 6:13"**.

From that he had digressed in the close of the last chapter. He here returns to the subject, and asks an interest in their affections and their love.

We have wronged no man. We have done injustice to no man. This is given as a reason why they should admit him to their full confidence and affection. It.is not improbable that he had been charged with injuring the incestuous person by the severe discipline which he having found it necessary to inflict on him. **See Barnes "1Co 5:5"**.

This charge would not improbably be brought against him by the false teachers in Corinth. But Paul here says, that whatever was the severity of the discipline, he was conscious of having done injury to no member of that church. It is possible, however, that he does not here refer to any such charge, but that he says in general that he had done no injury, and that there was no reason why they should not receive him to their entire confidence. It argues great consciousness of integrity when a man who has spent a considerable time, as Paul had, with others, is able to say that he had wronged no man in any way. Paul could not have made this solemn declaration unless he w as certain he had lived a very blameless life. Comp. Ac 20:33.

We have corrupted no man. This means that he had corrupted no man in his morals, either by his precept or by his example. The word (*fyeirw*) means, in general, to bring into a worse state or condition, and is very often applied to morals. The idea is, here, that Paul had not, by his precept or example, made any man the worse. He had not corrupted his principles or his habits, or led him into sin.

We have defrauded no man. We have taken no man's property, by cunning, by trick, or by deception. The word *pleonektew* means, literally, to have more than another; and then to take advantage, to seek unlawful gain, to circumvent, defraud, deceive. The idea is that Paul had taken advantage of no circumstances to extort money from them, to overreach them, or to cheat them. It is the conviction of a man who was conscious that he had lived honestly, and who could appeal to them all as full proof that his life among them had been blameless.

{a} "we have defrauded no man" 1Sa 12:3,4; Ac 20:33 2Co 12:17

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *I speak not this to condemn you*. I do not speak this with any desire to reproach you. I do not complain of you for the purpose of condemning, or because I have a desire to find fault, though I am competed to speak, in some respect of your want of affection and liberality towards me. It is not because I have no love for you, and wish to have occasion to use words implying complaint and condemnation.

For I have said before. 2Co 7:11,12.

That ye are in our hearts. That is, we are so much attached to you; or you have such a place in our affections.

To die and live with you. If it were the will of God, we would be glad to spend our lives among you, and to die with you: an expression denoting most tender attachment. A similar well-known expression occurs in Horace:

Tecum vivere amem, teeurn obeam l ibens.

Odes, B. III. IX. 24

With the world I live, with the world I die.

This was an expression of the tenderest attachment. It was true that the Corinthians had not shown themselves remarkably worthy of the affections of Paul, but from the beginning he had felt towards them the tenderest attachment. And if it had been the will of God that he should cease to travel, and to expose himself to perils by sea and land to spread the knowledge of the Saviour, he would gladly have confined his labours to them, and there have ended his days.

{b} "said before" 2Co 6:11,12

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Great is my boldness of speech toward you*. This verse seems designed to soften the apparent harshness of what he had said, (2Co 6:12,) when he intimated that there was a want of love in them towards him, (*Bloomfield*,) as well as to refer to the plainness which he had used all along in his letters to them. He says, therefore, that he speaks freely; he speaks as a friend; he speaks with the utmost openness and frankness; he conceals nothing from them. tie speaks freely of their faults, and he speaks freely of his love to them; and he as frankly commends them and praises them. It is the open, undisguised language of a friend, when he throws open his whole soul and conceals nothing.

Great is my glorying of you. I have great occasion to commend and praise you, and I do it freely. He refers here to the fact that he had boasted of their liberality in regard to the proposed collection

for the poor saints of Judea, 2Co 9:4; that he had formerly boasted much of them to Titus, and of their readiness to obey his commands, 2Co 7:14; and that now he had had abundant evidence, by what he had heard from Titus, (2Co 7:5, seq.,) that they were disposed to yield to his commands, and obey his injunctions. He had probably often had occasion to boast of their favourable regard for him.

I am filled with comfort. That is, by the evidence which I have received of your readiness to obey me.

I am exceeding joyful. I am overjoyed. The word here used occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, except in Ro 5:20. It is not found in the classic writers; and is a word which Paul evidently compounded, (from *uper* and *perisseuw*,) and means to superabound over, to superabound greatly or exceedingly. It is a word which would be used only when the heart was full, and when it would be difficult to find words to express its conceptions. Paul's heart was full of joy; and he pours forth his feelings in the most fervid and glowing language. I have joy which cannot be expressed.

In all our tribulation. **See Barnes "2Co 1:4".**

{c} "is my glorying" 1Co 1:4 {d} "joyful in all our tribulations" Php 2:17 Col 1:24

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *For, when we were come into Macedonia*. For the reasons which induced Paul to go into Macedonia, **See Barnes "2Co 1:16".**

Comp. **See Barnes "2Co 2:12"; See Barnes** "2Co 2:13".

Our flesh had no rest. We were exceedingly distressed and agitated. We had no rest. The causes of his distress he immediately states.

But we were troubled on every side. In every way. We had no rest in any quarter. We were obliged to enter into harassing labours and strifes there, and we were full of anxiety in regard to you.

Without were fightings. Probably he here refers to fierce opposition, which he met with in prosecuting his work of preaching the gospel. He met there, as he did everywhere, with opposition from pagans, Jews, and false brethren. Tumults were usually excited wherever he went; and he preached the gospel commonly amidst violent opposition.

Within were fears, Referring probably to the anxiety which he had in regard to the success of the epistle which he had sent to the church at Corinth. He felt great solicitude on the subject. He had sent Titus there to see what was the state of the church, and to witness the effect of his instructions. Titus had not come to him as he had expected, at Troas, (2Co 2:13,) and he felt the deepest anxiety in regard to him and the success of his epistle. His fears were probably that they would be indisposed to exercise the discipline on the offender; or lest the severity of the discipline required should alienate them from him; or lest the party under the influence of the false teachers should prevail. All was uncertainty, and his mind was filled with the deepest apprehension.

{e} "were fightings" De 32:25

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *God that comforteth those that are cast down*. Whose characteristic is, that he gives consolation to those who are anxious and depressed. All his consolation was in God; and by whatever instrumentality comfort was administered, he regarded and acknowledged God as the Author. **See Barnes "2Co 1:4".**

By the coming of Titus. To Macedonia. He rejoiced not only in again seeing him, but especially in the intelligence which he brought respecting the success of his epistle, and the conduct of the church at Corinth.

{a} "Titus" 2Co 2:13

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *And not by his coming only*. Not merely by the fact that he was restored to me, and that my anxieties in regard to him were now dissipated. It is evident that Paul, not having met with Titus as he had expected, at Troas, had felt much anxiety on his account, perhaps apprehending that he was sick, or that he had died.

But by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you. Titus was satisfied and delighted with his interview with you. He had been kindly treated, and he had seen all the effect produced by the letter which he had desired, he had, therefore, been much comforted by his visit to Corinth; and this was a source of additional joy to Paul. He rejoiced at what he had witnessed among you, and he imparted the same joy to me also. The joy of one friend will diffuse itself through the heart of another. Joy is diffusive; and one Christian cannot well be happy without making others happy also.

When he told us your earnest desire. Either to rectify what was amiss, (Doddridge, Clarke ;) or to see me, (Macknight: Rosenmuller, Bloomfield.) It seems to me that the connexion requires us to understand it of their desire, their anxiety to comply with his commands, and to reform the abuses which existed in the church, and which had given him so much pain.

Your mourning. Produced by the epistle. Your deep repentance over the sins which had prevailed in the church.

Your fervent mind toward me. Greek, "Your zeal for me." It denotes that they evinced great ardour of attachment to him, and an earnest desire to comply with his wishes.

So that I rejoiced the more. I not only rejoiced at his coming, but I rejoiced the more at what he told me of you. Under any circumstances the coming of Titus would have been an occasion of joy; but it was especially so from the account which he gave me of you.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *For though I made you sorry*, etc. That is, in the first epistle which he had sent to them. In that epistle he had felt it necessary to reprove them for their dissensions and other disorders which had occurred, and which were tolerated in the church. That epistle was fitted to produce pain in them—as severe and just reproof always does; and Paul felt very anxious about its effect on them. It was painful to him to write it, and he was well aware that it must cause deep distress among them to be thus reproved.

I do not repent. I have seen such happy effects produced by it; it has so completely answered the end which I had in view; it was so kindly received, that I do not regret now that I wrote it. It gives me no pain the recollection, but I have occasion to rejoice that it was done.

Though I did repent. Doddridge renders this, "however anxious I may have been." The word here used does not denote repentance in the sense in which that word is commonly understood, as if any wrong had been done. It is not the language of remorse. It can denote here nothing more than "that uneasiness which a good man feels, not from the consciousness of having done wrong, but from a tenderness for others, and a fear lest that which, prompted by duty, he had said, should have too strong an effect upon them."—Campbell, diss. vi. part iii. & 9. See the meaning of the word further illustrated in the same dissertation. The word (*metamelomai*) denotes, properly, to change one's purpose or mind after having done anything, (*Robinson*;) or an uneasy feeling of regret for what has been done, without regard either to duration or effects.—*Campbell*. Here it is not to be understood that Paul meant to say he had done anything wrong. He was an inspired man, and what he had said was proper and right. But he was a man of deep feeling, and of tender affections. He was pained at the necessity of giving reproof. And there is no improbability in supposing that after the letter had been sent off, and he reflected on its nature and on the pain which it would cause to those whom he tenderly loved, there might be some misgiving of heart about it, and the deepest anxiety and regret at the necessity of doing it. What parent is there who has not had the same feeling as this? He has felt it necessary to correct a beloved child, and has formed the purpose, and has executed it. But is there no misgiving of heart? No question asked whether it might not have been dispensed with? No internal struggle; no sorrow?; no emotion which may be called *regret* at the resolution which has been taken? Yet there is no *repentance* as if the parent had done wrong, he feels that he has done what was right and necessary. He approves his own course, and has occasion of rejoicing at the good effects Which follow. Such appears to have been the situation of the apostle Paul in this case; and it shows that he had a tender heart, that he did not delight in giving pain, and that he had no desire to overwhelm them with grief. When the effect was seen, he was not unwilling that they should be apprized of the pain which it had cost him. When a parent has corrected a child, no injury is done if the child becomes acquainted with the strugglings which it has cost him, and the deep pain and anxiety caused by the necessity of resorting to chastisement.

For I perceive, etc. I perceive the good effect of the epistle. I perceive that it produced the kind of sorrow in you which I desired. I see that it has produced permanent good results. The sorrow, which it caused in you is only for a season; the good effects will be abiding. I have, therefore, great occasion to rejoice that I sent the epistle. It produced permanent repentance and reformation, (2Co 7:9,) and thus accomplished all that I wished or desired.

{*} "sorry" "grieved you" {b} "I did repent" 2Co 2:4 {+} "season" "For a short time only"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry*, etc. I have no pleasure in giving pain to any one, or in witnessing the distress of any. When men are brought to repentance under the preaching of the gospel, the ministers of the gospel do not find pleasure in their grief as such. They are not desirous of making men unhappy by calling them to repentance, and they have no pleasure in the deep distress of mind which is often produced by their preaching, in itself considered. It is only because such sorrow is an indication of their return to God, and will be followed by happiness and by the fruits of good living, that they find any pleasure in it, or that they seek to produce it.

But that ye sorrowed to repentance: It was not mere grief; it was not sorrow producing melancholy, gloom, or despair; it was not sorrow which led you to be angry at him who had reproved you for your errors—as is sometimes the case with the sorrow that is produced by reproof; but it was sorrow that led to a change and reformation. It was sorrow that was followed by a putting away of the evil for the existence of which there had been occasion to reprove you. The word here rendered "repentance" (*metanoian*) is a different word from that which, in 2Co 7:8, is rendered, "I did repent," and indicates a different state of mind. It properly means a change of mind or purpose. Comp. Heb 12:17. It denotes a change for the better; a change of mind that is durable and productive in its consequences; a change which amounts to a permanent reformation. See Campbell's Diss. ut supra. The sense here is, that it produced a change, a reformation. It was such sorrow for their sin as to lead them to reform, and to put away the evils which had existed among them. It was this fact, and not that they had been made sorry, that led Paul to rejoice.

After a godly manner. Marg., "According to God." **See Barnes "2Co 7:10"**.

That ye might receive damage by us in nothing. The Greek word rendered "receive damage" (*zhmiwyhte*) means, properly, to bring loss upon any one; to receive loss or detriment. **See Barnes "1Co 3:15"**.

Comp. Php 3:8. The sense here seems to be, "So that on the whole no real injury was done you in any respect by me. You were indeed put to pain and grief by my reproof. You sorrowed. But it has done you no injury on the whole. It has been a benefit to you. If you had not reformed; if you had been pained without putting away the sins for which the reproof was administered; if it had been mere grief without any proper fruit, you might have said that you would have suffered a loss of happiness, or you might have given me occasion to inflict severer discipline. But now you are gainers in happiness by all the sorrow which I have caused. Sinners are gainers in happiness, in the end, by all the pain of repentance produced by the preaching of the gospel. No man suffers loss by being told of his faults if he repents; and men are under the highest obligations to those faithful ministers and other friends who tell them of their errors, and who are the means of bringing them to true repentance.

{*} "sorry" "grieved you" {1} "after a godly manner" "For a short time only"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *For godly sorrow*. "Sorrow according, to God," (*h gar kata yeon luph*) That is, such sorrow as has respect to God, or is according to his will, or as leads the soul to him. This is a very important expression in regard to true repentance, and shows the exact nature of that sorrow which is connected with a return to God. The phrase may be regarded as implying the following things:

(1.) Such sorrow as God *approves*, or such as is suitable to, or conformable to his will and desires., It cannot mean that it is such sorrow or grief as God has, for he has none; but such as shall be in accordance with what God *demands* in a return to him. It is a sorrow which his truth is fitted to produce on the heart; such a sorrow as shall appropriately arise from viewing sin as God views it; such sorrow as exists in the mind when our views accord with his in regard to the existence, the extent, the nature, and the ill-desert of sin. Such views will lead to sorrow that it has ever been committed; and such views will be "according to God."

(2.) Such sorrow as shall be exercised *towards* God in view of sin; which shall arise from a view of the evil of sin as committed against a holy God. It is not mainly that it will lead to pain; that it will overwhelm the soul in disgrace; that it will forfeit the favour or lead to the contempt of man; or that it will lead to an eternal hell; but, it is such as arises from a view of the evil of sin as committed against a holy and just God. It is not mainly from the fact that it is an offence against his infinite majesty. Such sorrow David had (Ps 51:4) when he said, "Against thee, thee only have I sinned;" when the offence regarded as committed against man, enormous as it was, was lost and absorbed in its greater evil when regarded as committed against God. So all true and genuine repentance is that which regards sin as deriving its main evil from the fact that it is committed *against* God.

(3.) That which leads *to God*. It leads to God to obtain forgiveness —to seek for consolation. A heart truly contrite and penitent seeks God, and implores pardon from him. Other sorrow in view of sin than that which is genuine repentance, leads the person away from God. He seeks consolation in the world; he endeavours to drive away his serious impressions, or to drown them in the pleasures and the cares of life. But genuine sorrow for sin leads the soul to God, and conducts the sinner, through the Redeemer, to him to obtain the pardon and peace which he only can give to a wounded spirit. In God alone can pardon and true peace be found; and godly sorrow for sin will seek them there.

Worketh repentance. Produces a change that shall be permanent; a reformation. It is not mere regret; it does not soon pass away in its effects, but it produces permanent and abiding changes. A man who mourns over sin as committed against God, and who seeks to God for pardon, will reform his life, and truly repent. He who has grief for sin only because it will lead to disgrace or shame, or because it will lead to poverty or pain, will not necessarily break off from it and reform. It is only when it is seen that sin is committed against God, and is evil in his sight, that it leads to a change of life.

Not to be repented of. *ametamelhton* **See Barnes "2Co 7:8"**.

Not to be regretted. It is permanent and abiding. There is no occasion to mourn over such repentance and change of life. It is that which the mind approves, and which it will always approve. There will be no reason for regretting it, and it will never be regretted. And it is so. Who ever yet repented of having truly repented of sin? Who is there, who has there ever been, who became a true penitent, and a true Christian, who ever regretted it? Not an individual has ever been known who regretted his having become a Christian. Not one who regretted that he had become one too soon in life, or that he had served the Lord Jesus too faithfully or too long.

But the sorrow of the world. All sorrow which is not toward God, and which does not arise from just views of sin as committed, against God, or lead to God. Probably Paul refers here to the sorrow which arises from worldly causes, and which does not lead to God for consolation. Such may be the sorrow which arises from the loss of friends or property; from disappointment, or, from shame and disgrace. Perhaps it may include the following things:

(1.) Sorrow arising from losses of property and friends, and from disappointment.

(2.) Sorrow for sin or vice when it overwhelms the mind with the consciousness of guilt, and when it does not lead to God, and when there is no contrition of soul from viewing it as an offence against God. Thus a female who has wandered from the paths of virtue, and involved her family and herself in disgrace; or a man who has been guilty of forgery, or perjury, or any other disgraceful crime, and who is detected; a man who has violated the laws of the land, and who has involved himself and family in disgrace, will often feel regret, and sorrow, and remorse, but it arises wholly from worldly considerations, and does not lead to God.

(3.) When the sorrow arises from a view of worldly consequences merely, and when there is no looking to God for pardon and consolation. Thus men, when they lose their property or friends, often pine in grief without looking to God. Thus when they have wandered from the path of virtue, and have fallen into sin, they often look merely to the *disgrace* among men, and see their names blasted, and their comforts gone, and pine away in grief. There is no looking to God for pardon or for consolation. The sorrow arises from this world, and it terminates there. It is the loss of what they valued pertaining to this world, and it is all which they had, and it produces death. It is sorrow such as the men of this World have—begins with this world, and terminates with this world.

Worketh death. Tends to death, spiritual, temporal, and eternal. It does not tend to life.

(1.) It produces distress only. It is attended with no consolation.

(2.) It tends to break the spirit, to destroy the peace, and to mar the happiness.

(3.) It often leads to death itself. The spirit is broken, and the heart pines away under the influence of the unalleviated sorrow; or under its influence men often lay violent hands on themselves, and take their lives. Life is *often* closed under the influence of such sorrow.

(4.) It tends to eternal death. There is no looking to God; no looking for pardon. It produces murmuring, repining, complaining, fretfulness against God, and thus leads to his displeasure, and to the condemnation and ruin of the soul.

{a} "sorrow worketh repentance" Jer 31:9 Eze 7:16 {b} "sorrow of the world" Pr 17:22

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *For behold this self-same thing*. For see in your own case the happy effects of godly sorrow. See the effects which it produced; see an illustration of what it is fitted to produce. The construction is, "For, lo! this very thing, to wit, your sorrowing after a godly manner, wrought carefulness, clearing of yourselves," etc. The object of Paul is to illustrate the effects of godly sorrow, to which he had referred in 2Co 7:10. He appeals, therefore, to their own case, and says that it was beautifully illustrated among themselves.

What carefulness. *spoudhn*. This word properly denotes *speed*, *haste*; then diligence, earnest effort, forwardness. Here it, is evidently used to denote the diligence and the great anxiety which they manifested to remove the evils which existed among them. They went to work to remove them. They did not sit down to mourn over them merely, nor did they *wait* for God to remove them, nor did they plead that they could do nothing; but they set about the work as though they believed it might be done. When men are thoroughly convinced of sin, they will set about removing it with the utmost diligence. They will feel that this can be done, an,d must be done, or that the soul will be lost.

What clearing of yourselves, *apologian*. Apology. This word properly means a plea or defence before a tribunal or elsewhere, Ac 22:1 2Ti 4:16. Tindal renders it, "Yea, it caused you to clear yourselves." The word here properly means *apology* for what had been done; and it probably refers here to the effort which would be made by the sounder part of the church to clear themselves from blame in what had occurred. It does not mean that the guilty, when convicted of sin, will attempt to vindicate themselves, and to apologize to God for what they have done; but it means that the church at Corinth were anxious to state to Titus all the mitigating circumstances of the case; they showed great solicitude to free themselves, as far as could be done, from blame; they were anxious, as far as could be, to show that they had not; approved of what had occurred, and perhaps that it had occurred only because it could not have been prevented. We are not to suppose that all the things here referred to occurred in the same individual, and that the same persons precisely evinced diligence, and made the apology, etc. It was done by the church; all evinced deep feeling; but some manifested it in one way, and some in another. The whole church was roused; and all felt, and all endeavoured, in the proper way, to free themselves from the blame, and to remove the evil from among them.

Yea, what indignation. Indignation against the sin, and perhaps against the persons who had drawn down the censure of the apostle. One effect of true repentance is to produce decided hatred of sin. It is not mere regret, or sorrow; it is positive hatred. There is a deep indignation against it as an evil and a bitter thing.

Yea, what fear. Fear lest the thing should be repeated. Fear lest it should not be entirely removed. Or it may possibly mean fear of the displeasure of Paul, and of the punishment which would be inflicted if the evil were not removed. But it more probably refers to the anxious state of mind that the whole evil might be corrected, and to the dread of having any vestige of the evil remaining among them.

Yea, what vehement desire. This may either mean their fervent wish to remove the cause of complaint, or their anxious desire to see the apostle. It is used in the latter sense in 2Co 7:7, and according to Doddridge and Bloomfield this is the meaning here. Locke renders it, "desire of satisfying me." It seems to me more probable that Paul refers to their anxious wish to remove the sin, since this is the topic under consideration. The point of his remarks in this verse is not so much their affection for him, as their indignation against their sin, and their deep grief that sin had existed and had been tolerated among them.

Yea, what zeal. Zeal to remove the sin, and to show your attachment to me. They set about the work of reformation in great earnest.

Yea, what revenge! Tindal renders this, "it caused punishment." The idea is, that they immediately set about the work of inflicting punishment on the offender. The word here used (*ekdikhsin*) properly

denotes *maintenance of right, protection*; then it is used in the sense of *avengement, or vengeance*; and then of penal retribution or punishment. See Lu 21:22 2Th 1:8; 1Pe 2:14.

In all things, etc. The sense of this is, "You have entirely acquitted yourselves of blame in this business." The apostle does not mean that none of them had been to blame, or that the church had been free from fault, for a large part of his former epistle is occupied in reproving them for their faults in this business; but he means that, by their zeal and their readiness to take away the cause of complaint, they had removed all necessity of further blame, and had pursued such a course as entirely to meet his approbation. They had cleared themselves of any further blame in this business, and had become, so far as this was concerned, "clear," (*agnouv*,) or pure.

{c} "godly sort" Isa 66:2 {d} "carefulness it wrought" Tit 3:8 {e} "clearing of yourselves" Eph 5:11 {f} "indignation" Eph 4:26 {g} "fear" Heb 4:1 {a} "yea, what zeal" Ps 52:1 130:6 {b} "zeal" Re 3:19 {c} "revenge" Mt 5:29,30 {d} "to be clear" Ro 14:18

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Wherefore, though I wrote unto you*, etc. In this verse Paul states the main reason why he had written to them on the subject. It was not principally on account of the man who had done the wrong, or of him who had been injured; but it was from tender anxiety for the whole church, and in order to show the deep interest which he had in their welfare.

Not for his cause that had done the wrong. Not mainly or principally on account of the incestuous person, 1Co 5:1. It was not primarily with reference to him as an individual that I wrote, but from a regard to the whole church.

Nor for his cause that suffered wrong. Not merely that the wrong which he had suffered might be rectified, and that his rights might be restored, valuable and desirable as was that object. The offence was, that a man had taken his father's wife as his own, (1Co 5:1;) and the person injured, therefore, was his father. It is evident from this passage, I think, that the father was living at the time when Paul wrote this epistle.

But that our care, etc. I wrote mainly that I might show the deep interest which I had in the church at large, and my anxiety that it might not suffer by the misconduct of any of its members. It is from a regard to the welfare of the whole church that discipline should be administered, and not simply with reference to an individual who has done wrong, or an individual who is injured. In church discipline, such *private* interests are absorbed in the general interest of the church at large.

{e} "our care for you" 2Co 2:4

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Therefore we were comforted in your comfort*. The phrase, "your comfort," here seems to mean the happiness which they had, or might reasonably be expected to have, in obeying the directions of Paul, and in abe repentance which they had manifested. Paul had spoken of no other consolation or comfort than this; and the idea seems to be, that they were a happy people, and would be happy by obeying the commands of God. This fact gave Paul additional joy; and he could not but rejoice that they had removed the cause of the offence, and that they would not thus be exposed to the displeasure of God. Had they not repented and put away the evil, the consequences to them must have been deep distress. As it was, they would be blessed and happy.

And exceedingly the more, etc. Titus had been kindly received, and hospitably entertained, and had become much attached to them. This was to Paul an additional occasion of joy. See 2Co 7:7.

{f} "refreshed by you all" Ro 15:32

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *For if I have boasted any thing to him*, etc. This seems to imply that Paul had spoken most favourably to Titus of the Corinthians before he went among them. He had probably expressed his belief that he would be kindly received; that they would be disposed to listen to him, and to comply with the directions of the apostle; perhaps he had spoken to him of what he anticipated would be their liberality in regard to the collection which he was about to make for the poor saints at Jerusalem.

I am not ashamed. It has all turned out to be true. He has found it as I said it would be. All my expectations are realized; and you have been as kind, and hospitable, and benevolent as I assured him you would be.

As we spake all things to you in truth. Everything which I said to you was said in truth. All my promises to you, and all my commands, and all my reasonable expectations expressed to you, were sincere. I practised no disguise, and all that I have said thus far turned out to be true.

Even so our boasting, etc. My boasting of your character, and of your disposition to do right, which I made before Titus, has turned out to be true. It was as I said it would be. I did not commend you too highly to him, as I did not overstate the matter to you in my epistle.

{*} "boasted" "gloried" {+} "boasting" "glorying"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *And his inward affection*, etc. He has become deeply and tenderly attached to you. His affectionate regard for you has been greatly increased by his visit. On the meaning of the word here rendered "inward affection," (*splagcna*, Marg., *bowels*,) **See Barnes "2Co 6:12"**.

It denotes here deep, tender attachment, or love.

How with fear and trembling ye received him. With fear of offending, and with deep apprehension of the consequences of remaining in sin. He saw what a fear there was of doing wrong, and what evidence there was, therefore, that you were solicitous to do right.

{1} "inward affections" "bowels" {g} "fear" Php 2:12

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 7 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *I rejoice, therefore, that I have confidence*, etc. I have had the most ample proof that you are disposed to obey God, and to put away everything that is offensive to him. The address of this part of the epistle, says Doddridge, is wonderful. It is designed, evidently, not merely to commend them for what they had done, and to show them the deep attachment which he had for them, but in a special manner to prepare them for what he was about to say in the following chapter respecting the collection which he had so much at heart for the poor saints at Jerusalem. What he here says was admirably adapted to introduce that subject. They had thus far showed the deepest regard for him. They had complied with all his directions. All that he had said of them had proved to be true. And as he had boasted of them to Titus, (2Co 7:14,) and expressed his entire confidence that they would comply with his requisitions, so he had also boasted of them to the churches of Macedonia, and expressed the utmost confidence that they would be liberal in their benefactions, 2Co 9:2. All that Paul here says in their favour, therefore, was eminently adapted to excite them to liberality, and to prepare them to comply with his wishes in regard to that contribution.

{h} "confidence in you" 2Th 3:4 Phm 8:21

REMARKS on 2nd Corinthians Chapter 7

(1.) Christians are bound, by every solemn and sacred consideration, to endeavour to purify themselves, 2Co 7:1. They who have the promises of eternal life, and the assurance that God will be to them a Father, and evidence that they are his sons and daughters, should not indulge in the filthiness of the flesh and spirit.

(2.) Every true Christian will aim at perfection, 2Co 7:1. He will desire to be perfect; he will strive for it; he will make it a subject of unceasing and constant prayer. No man can be a Christian to whom it would not be a pleasure to be at once as perfect as God. And if any man is conscious that the idea of being made at once perfectly holy would be unpleasant or painful, he may set it down as certain evidence that he is a stranger to religion.

(3.) No man can be a Christian who voluntarily indulges m sin, or in what he knows to be wrong, 2Co 7:1. A man who does that, cannot be aiming at perfection. A man who does that, shows that he has no real desire to be perfect.

(4.) How blessed will be heaven! 2Co 7:1. There we shall be perfect. And the crowning glory of heaven is not that we shall be *happy*, but that we shall be *holy*. Whatever there is in the heart that is good, shall there be perfectly developed; whatever there is that is evil shall be removed, and the whole soul will be like God. The Christian desires heaven, because he will be there perfect. He desires no other heaven. He could be induced to accept no other if it were offered to him. He blesses

God day by day that there is such a heaven, and that there is no other—that there is one world which sin does not enter, and where evil shall be unknown.

(5.) What a change will take place at death! 2Co 7:1. The Christian will be there made perfect. *How* this change will be there produced we do not know. Whether it will be by some extraordinary influence of the Spirit of God on the heart, or by the mere removal from the body, and from a sinful world to a world of glory, we know not. The fact seems to be clear, that at death the Christian will be made at once as holy as God is holy, and that he will ever continue to be in the future world.

(6.) What a desirable thing it is to die! 2Co 7:1. Here, should we attain to the age of the patriarchs, like them we should continue to be imperfect. Death only will secure our perfection; and death, therefore, is a desirable event. The perfection of our being could not be attained but for death; *and every Christian should rejoice that he is to die*. It is better to be in heaven than on earth; better to be with God than to be away from him; better to be made perfect than to be contending here with internal corruption, and to struggle with our sins. "I would not live always," was the language of holy Job; "I desire to depart, and to be with Christ," was the language of holy Paul.

(7.) It is often painful to be compelled to use the language of reproof, 2Co 7:8. Paul deeply regretted the necessity of doing it in the case of the Corinthians, and expressed the deepest anxiety in regard to it. No man, no minister, parent, or friend can use it but with deep regret that it is necessary. But the painfulness of it ahould not prevent our doing it. It should be done tenderly, but faithfully. If done with the deep feeling, with the tender affection of Paul, it will be done right; and when so done, it will produce the desired effect, and do good. No man should use the language of reproof with a hard heart, or with severity of feeling. If he is, like Paul, ready to weep when he does it, it will do good. If he does it because he *delights* in it, it will do evil.

(8.) It is a subject of rejoicing where a people exercise repentance, 2Co 7:8. A minister has pleasure not in the pain which his reproofs cause; not in the deep anxiety and distress of the sinner; and not in the pain which Christians feel under his reproofs; but he has joy in the happy results or the fruits which follow from it. It is only from the belief that those tears will produce abundant joy that he has pleasure in causing them, or in witnessing them.

(9.) The way to bring men to repentance, is to present to them the simple and unvarnished truth, 2Co 7:8,9. Paul stated simple and plain truths to the Corinthians. He did not abuse them; he did not censure them in general terms; he stated things just as they were, and specified the things on account of which there was occasion for repentance. So if ministers wish to excite repentance in others, they must specify the sins over which others should weep; if we wish, as individuals, to feel regret for our sins, and to have true repentance toward God, we must dwell on those particular sins which we have committed, and should endeavour so to reflect on them that they may make an appropriate impression on the heart. No man will truly repent by general reflections on his sin; no one who does not endeavour so to dwell on his sins as that they shall make the proper impression, which each one is fitted to produce on the soul. Repentance is that state of mind which a view of the truth in regard to our own depravity is fitted to produce.

(10.) There is a great difference between godly sorrow and the sorrow of the world, 2Co 7:10. All men feel sorrow. All men, at some period of their lives, grieve over their past conduct. Some in their sorrow are pained because they have offended God, and go to God, and find pardon and peace in him. That sorrow is unto salvation. But the mass do not look to God. They turn away from him even in their disappointments, and in their sorrows, and in the bitter consciousness of sin. They

seek to alleviate their sorrows in worldly company, in pleasure, in the intoxicating bowl; and such sorrow works death. It produces additional distress, and deeper gloom here, and eternal woe hereafter.

(11.) We may learn what constitutes true repentance, 2Co 7:11. There should be, and there will be, deep feeling. There will be "carefulness" deep anxiety to be freed from the sin; there will be a desire to remove it; "indignation" against it; "fear" of offending God; "earnest desire" that all that has been wrong should be corrected; "zeal" that the reformation should be entire; and a wish that the appropriate "revenge" or expression of displeasure should be excited against it. The true penitent hates nothing so cordially as he does his sin. He hates nothing but sin. And his warfare with that is decided, uncompromising, inexorable, and eternal.

(12.) It is an evidence of mercy and goodness in God that the sorrow which is felt about sin may be made to terminate in our good, and to promote our salvation, 2Co 7:10,11. If sorrow for sin had been suffered to take its own course, and had proceeded unchecked, it would in all cases have produced death. If it had not been for the merciful interposition of Christianity, by which even sorrow might be turned to joy, this world would have been everywhere a world of sadness and of death, Man would have suffered. Sin always produces, sooner or later, woe. Christianity has done nothing to make men wretched, but it has done everything to bind up broken hearts. It has revealed a way by which sorrow may be turned into joy, and the bitterness of grief may be followed by the sweet calm and sunshine of peace.

(13.) The great purpose of Christian discipline is to benefit the whole church, 2Co 7:12. It is not merely on account of the offender, nor is it merely that the injured may receive a just recompense. It is primarily that the church may be pure, and that the cause of religion may not be dishonoured. When the work of discipline is entered on from any private and personal motives, it is usually attended with bad feeling, and usually results in evil. When it is entered on with a desire to honour God, and to promote the purity of the church; when the whole aim is to deliver the church from opprobrium and scandal, and to have just such a church as Jesus Christ desires, then it will be prosecuted with good temper, and with right feeling, and then it will lead to happy results. Let no man institute a process of discipline on an offending brother from private, personal, and revengeful feelings. Let him first examine his own heart, and let him be sure that his aim is solely the glory of Christ, before he attempts to draw down the censure of the church on an offending brother. How many cases of church discipline would be arrested if this simple rule were observed! And while the case before us shows that it is important in the highest degree that discipline should be exercised on an offending member of the church; while no consideration should prevent us from exercising that discipline; and while every man should feel desirous that the offending brother should be reproved or punished, yet this case also shows that it should be done with the utmost tenderness, the most strict regard to justice, and the deepest anxiety that the general interests of religion should not suffer by the manifestation of an improper-spirit, or by improper motives in inflicting punishment on an offending brother.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 8

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 1

Introduction of 2nd Corinthians Chapter 8

IN the previous chapter the apostle had expressed his entire confidence in the ready obedience, of the Corinthians in all things. To this confidence he had been led by the promptitude with which they had complied with his commands in regard to the case of discipline there, and by the respect which they had shown to Titus, whom he had sent to them. All that he had ever said in their favour had been realized; all that had ever been asked of them had been accomplished. The object of his Statement in the close of 2Co 7 seems to have been to excite them to diligence in completing the collection which they had begun for the poor and afflicted saints of Judea. On the consideration of that subject, which lay so near his heart, he now enters; and this chapter and the following are occupied with suggesting arguments and giving directions for a liberal contribution.

Paul had given directions for taking up this collection in the first epistle. See 2Co 8:1, seq. Comp. Ro 15:26. This collection he had given Titus direction to take up when he went to Corinth. See 2Co 8:6-17. But from some cause it had not been completed, 2Co 8:10,11. What that cause was, is not stated; but it may have been possibly the disturbances which had existed there, or the opposition of the enemies of Paul, or the attention which was necessarily bestowed in regulating the affairs of the church. But in order that the contribution might be made, and might be a liberal one, Paul presses on their attention several considerations designed to excite them to give freely. The chapter is, therefore, of importance to us, as it is a statement of the duty of giving liberally to the cause of benevolence, and of the motives by which it should be done. In the presentation of this subject, Paul urges upon them the following considerations:

He appeals to the very liberal example of the churches of Macedonia, where, though they were exceedingly poor, they had contributed with great cheerfulness and liberality to the object, 2Co 8:1-5.

From their example he had been induced to desire Titus to lay the subject before the church at Corinth, and to finish the collection which he had begun, 2Co 8:6.

He directs them to abound in this, not as a matter of commandment, but excited by the example of others, 2Co 8:7,8.

He appeals to them by the love of the Saviour; reminds them that though he was rich, yet he became poor, and that they were bound to imitate his example, 2Co 8:9.

He reminds them of their intention to make such a contribution, and of the effort which they had made a year before; and though they had been embarrassed in it, and might find it difficult still to give as much as they had intended, or as much as they would wish, still it would be acceptable to God. For if there was a willing mind, God accepted the offering,2Co 8:10-12.

He assures them that it was not his wish to burden or oppress them. All that he desired was that there should be an equality in all the churches, 2Co 8:13-15.

To show them how much he was interested in this, he thanks God that he had put it into the heart of Titus to engage in it. And in order more effectually to secure it, he says that he had sent with Titus a brother who was well known, and whose praise was in all the churches. He had done this in order that the churches might have entire confidence that the contribution would be properly distributed. Paul did not wish it to be intrusted to himself. He would leave no room for suspicion

in regard to his own character; he would furnish the utmost security to the churches that their wishes were complied with. He desired to act honestly not only in the sight of the Lord, but to furnish evidence of his entire honesty to men, 2Co 8:16-21.

To secure the same object he had also sent another brother; and these three brethren he felt willing to recommend as faithful and tried—as men in whom the church at Corinth might repose the utmost confidence, 2Co 8:22-24.

Verse 1. *Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit*. We make known to you; we inform you. The phrase, "we do you to Wit," is used in Tindal's translation, and means, "we cause you to know." The *purpose* for which Paul informed them of the liberality of the churches of Macedonia was to excite them to similar liberality.

Of the grace of God, etc. The favour which God had shown them in exciting a spirit of liberality, and in enabling them to contribute to the fund for supplying the wants of the poor saints at Jerusalem. The word "grace" (*carin*) is sometimes used in the sense of gift, and the phrase "gift of God" some have supposed mast mean very great gift, where the words "of God" may be designed to mark anything very eminent or excellent, as in the phrase "cedars of God," "mountains of God," denoting very great cedars, very great mountains. Some critics (as Macknight, Bloomfield, Locke, and others) have supposed that this means that the churches of Macedonia had been able to contribute largely to the aid of the saints at Judea. But the more obvious and correct interpretation, as I apprehend, is that which is implied in the common version, that the phrase "grace of God" means that God had bestowed on them grace to give according to their ability in this cause. According to this it is implied,

(1.) that a disposition to contribute to the cause of benevolence is to be traced to God. He is its Author. He excites it. It is not a plant of native growth in the human heart; but a large and liberal spirit of benevolence is one of the effects of his grace, and is to be traced to him.

(2.) It is a *favour* bestowed on a church when God excites in it a spirit of benevolence. It is one of the evidences of his love. And indeed there cannot be a higher proof of the favour of God, than when by his grace he inclines and enables us to contribute largely to meliorate the condition, and to alleviate the wants of our fellow-men. Perhaps the apostle here meant delicately to hint this. He did not therefore say coldly that the churches of Macedonia had contributed to this object, but he speaks of it as a favour shown to them by God that they were able to do it. And he meant, probably, gently to intimate to the Corinthians that it would be an evidence that they were enjoying the favour of God, if they should contribute in like manner.

The churches of Macedonia. Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea. For an account of Macedonia, **See Barnes "Ac 16:9"**; **See Barnes "Ro 15:26"**.

Of these churches, that at Philippi seems to have been most distinguished for liberality, (Php 4:10,15,16,18,) though it is probable that other churches contributed according to their ability, as they are commended (comp. 2Co 9:2) without distinction.

{*} "to wit" "We make known to you" {a} "churches of Macedonia" 2Co 9:2,4

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *How that, in a great trial of affliction*. When it might be supposed they were unable to give; when many would suppose they needed the aid of others; or when it might be supposed their minds would be wholly engrossed with their own concerns. The trial to which the apostle here refers was doubtless some persecution which Was excited against them, probably by the Jews. Ac 16:20 17:5.

The abundance of their joy. Their joy arising from the hopes and promises of the gospel. Notwithstanding their persecutions, their joy has abounded, and the effect of their joy has been seen in the liberal contribution which they have made. Their joy could not be repressed by their persecution, and they cheerfully contributed largely to the aid of others.

And their deep poverty. Their very low estate of poverty was made to contribute liberally to the wants of others. It is implied here,

(1.) that they were very poor—a fact arising probably from the consideration that the poor generally embraced the gospel first, and also because it is probable that they were molested and stripped of their property in persecutions. Comp. Heb 10:34.

(2.) That notwithstanding this they were enabled to make a liberal contribution—a fact demonstrating that a people can do much even when poor, if all feel disposed to do it, and that afflictions are favourable to the effort. And,

(3.) that one cause of this was the *joy* which they had even in their trials. If a people have the joys of the gospel; if they have the consolations of religion themselves, they will somehow or other find means to contribute to the welfare of others. They will be willing to labour with reference to it, or they will find something which they can sacrifice or spare. Even their deep poverty will abound in the fruits of benevolence.

Abounded. They contributed liberally. Their joy was manifested in a large donation, notwithstanding their poverty.

Unto the riches of their liberality, Marg., "simplicity." The word (*aplothv*) here used, means properly sincerity, candour, probity; then Christian simplicity, integrity; then liberality. See Ro 12:8, (Marg.;) 2Co 9:11,13. The phrase, "riches of liberality," is a Hebraism, meaning rich or abundant liberality; The sense is, their liberality was much greater than could be expected from persons so poor; and the object of the apostle is to excite the Corinthians to give liberally by their example.

{b} "deep poverty" Mr 12:44 {1} "liberality" "simplicity"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *For to their power*. To the utmost of their ability.

I bear record. Paul had founded those churches, and had spent much time with them. He was therefore well qualified to bear testimony in regard to their condition.

Yea, and beyond their power. Beyond what could have been expected; or beyond what it would have been thought possible in their condition. Doddridge remarks that this is a noble hyperbole, similar to that used by Demosthenes when he says, "I have performed all, even with an industry beyond my power." The sense is, they were willing to give more than they were well able. It shows

the strong interest which they had in the subject, and the anxious desire which they had to relieve the wants of others.

Of themselves, auyairetoi. Acting from choice; self-moved; voluntarily; of their own accord. They did not wait to be urged and pressed to do it. They rejoiced in the opportunity of doing it. They came forward of their own accord and made the contribution. "God loveth a cheerful giver," 2Co 9:7; and from all the accounts which we have of these churches in Macedonia, it is evident that they were greatly distinguished for their cheerful liberality.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Praying us with much entreaty*. Earnestly entreating me to receive the contribution, and convey it to the poor and afflicted saints in Judea.

And take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. Greek, "that we would take the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints." They asked of us to take part in the labour of conveying it to Jerusalem. The occasion of this distress which made the collection for the saints of Judea necessary, was probably the famine which was predicted by Agabus, and which occurred in the time of Claudius Caesar. **See Barnes "Ac 11:28"**.

Barnabas was associated with Paul in conveying the contribution to Jerusalem, Ac 11:30. Paul was unwilling to do it unless they particularly desired it, and he seems to have insisted that some person shoed be associated with him, 2Co 8:20 1Co 16:3,4.

{e} "fellowship" Ac 11:29 Ro 15:25,26

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And this they did*, etc. They did not give what we expected only. We knew their poverty, and we expected only a small sum from them.

Not as we hoped. Not according to the utmost of our hopes. We were greatly disappointed in the amount which they gave, and in the manner in which it was done.

But first gave their own selves to the Lord. They first made an entire consecration of themselves and all that they had to the Lord. They kept nothing back. They felt that all they had was his. And where a people honestly and truly devote themselves to God, they will find no difficulty in having the means to contribute to the cause of charity.

And unto us by the will of God. That is, they gave themselves to us to be directed in regard to the contribution to be made. They complied with our wishes and followed our directions. The phrase, "by the will of God," means evidently that God moved them to this, or that it was to be traced to his direction and providence. It is one of the instances in which Paul traces everything that is right and good to the agency and direction of God.

{*} "Hoped" "expected"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Insomuch*. The sense of this passage seems to be this: "We were encouraged by this unexpected success among the Macedonians. We were surprised at the extent of their liberality. And encouraged by this, we requested Titus to go among you and finish the collection which you had proposed, and which you had begun. Lest you should be outstripped in liberality by the comparatively poor Macedonian Christians, we were anxious that you should perform what you had promised and contemplated; and we employed Titus, therefore, that he might go at once and finish the collection among you."

The same grace also. Marg., "*gift*." **See Barnes "2Co 8:1"**.

The word refers to the contribution which he wished to be made.

{1} "same grace" "gift" {+} "grace also" "liberally"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Therefore, as ye abound in every thing*. **See Barnes "1Co 1:6"**.

Paul never hesitated to commend Christians, where it could be done with truth; and the fact that they were eminent in some of the Christian duties and graces, he makes the ground of the exhortation that they would abound in all. From those who had so many eminent characteristics of true religion he had a right to expect much; and he therefore exhorts them to manifest a symmetry of Christian character.

In faith. In the full belief of the truth and obligation of the gospel.

And utterance. In the ability to instruct others; perhaps referring to their power of speaking foreign languages, 1Co 14.

And knowledge. The knowledge of God, and of his truth.

And in all diligence. Diligence or readiness in the discharge of every duty. Of this, Paul had full evidence in their readiness to comply with his commands in the case of discipline to which so frequent reference is made in this epistle.

And in your love to us. Manifested by the readiness with which you received our commands. See 2Co 7:4,6,7,11,16.

See that ye abound in this grace also. The idea here is, that eminence in spiritual endowments of any kind, Or in any of the traits of the Christian character, should lead to great benevolence, and that the character is not complete unless benevolence be manifested toward every good object that may be presented.

{a} "abound" 1Co 1:5 {++} "grace" "liberality"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *I speak not by commandment*. This does not mean that he had no express command of God in the case, but that he did not mean to command them; he did not speak authoritatively; he did not intend to prescribe what they should give. He used only moral motives, and urged the considerations which he had done to persuade rather than to command them to give. 2Co 8:10. He was endeavoring to induce them to give liberally, not by abstract command and law, but by showing them what others had given who had much less ability and much fewer advantages than they had. Men cannot be induced to give to objects of charity by command, or by a spirit of dictation and authority. The only successful, as well as the only lawful appeal, is to their hearts, and consciences, and sober judgments. And if an apostle did not take upon himself the language of authority and command in matters of Christian benevolence, assuredly ministers and ecclesiastical bodies now have no right to use any such language.

But by occasion of the forwardness of others. I make use of the example of the churches of Macedonia as an argument to induce you to give liberally to the cause.

And to prove the sincerity of your love. The apostle does not specify here what "love" he refers to, whether love to God, to Christ, to himself, or to the church at large. It may be that he designedly used the word in a general sense to denote love to any good object; and that he meant to say that liberality in assisting the poor and afflicted people of God would be the best evidence of the sincerity of their love to God, to the Redeemer, to him, and to the church. Religion is love; and that love is to be manifested by doing good to all men as we have opportunity. The most substantial evidence of that love is when we are willing to part with our property, or with whatever is valuable to us, to confer happiness and salvation on others.

{b} "by commandment" 1Co 7:6 {&} "commandment" "by way of commandment" {|} "frowardness" "diligence"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *For ye know*, etc. The apostle Paul was accustomed to illustrate every subject, and to enforce every duty, where it could be done, by a reference to the life and sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ. The design of this verse is apparent. It is to show the duty of giving liberally to the objects of benevolence, from the fact that the Lord Jesus was willing to become poor in order that he might benefit others. The idea is, that he who was Lord and Proprietor of the universe, and who possessed all things, was willing to leave his exalted station in the bosom of the Father and to become poor, in order that we might become rich in the blessings of the gospel, in the means of grace, and as heirs of all things; and that we who are thus benefited, and who have such an example, should be willing to part with our earthly possessions in order that we may benefit others.

The grace. The benignity, kindness, mercy, goodness. His coming in this manner was a proof of the highest benevolence.

Though he was rich. The riches of the Redeemer here referred to, stand opposed to that poverty which he assumed and manifested when he dwelt among men. It implies

(1.) his pre-existence, for he became poor. He had been rich; yet not in this world. He did not lay aside wealth here on earth after he had possessed it, for he had none. He was not first rich and then poor on earth, for he had no earthly wealth. The Socinian interpretation is, that he was "rich in power and in the Holy Ghost;" but it was not true that he laid these aside, and that he became poor in either of them. He *had* power, even in his poverty, to still the waves, and to raise the dead, and he was always full of the Holy Ghost. His family was poor; and his parents were poor; and he was himself poor all his life. This, then, *must* refer to a state of antecedent riches before his assumption of human nature; and the expression is strikingly parallel to that in Php 2:6, seq. "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation," etc.

(2.) He was rich as the Lord and Proprietor of all things. He was the Creator of all, (Joh 1:3 Col 1:16;) and as Creator he had a right to all things, and the disposal of all things. The most absolute right which can exist is that acquired by the act of creation; and this right the Son of God possessed over all gold, and silver, and diamonds, and pearls; over all earth and lands; over all the treasures of the ocean, and over all worlds. The extent and amount of his riches, therefore, is to be measured by the extent of his dominion over the universe; and to estimate his riches, therefore, we are to conceive of the sceptre which he sways over the distant worlds. What wealth has man that can compare with the riches of the Creator and Proprietor of all? How poor and worthless appears all the gold that man can accumulate, compared with the wealth of Him whose are the silver, and the gold, and the cattle upon a thousand hills?

Yet for your sakes. That is, for your sakes as a part of the great family that was to be redeemed. In what respect it was for their sake, the apostle immediately adds when he says, it was that they might be made rich. It was not for his own sake, but it was for our.

He became poor. In the following respects:

(1.) He chose a condition of poverty, a rank of life that was usually that of poverty. He "took upon himself the form of a servant," Php 2:7.

(2.) He was connected with a poor family. Though of the family and lineage of David, (Lu 9:4) yet the family had fallen into decay, and was poor. In the Old Testament he is beautifully represented as a shoot or sucker that starts up from the root of a decayed tree. **See Barnes "Isa 11:1"**.

(3.) His whole life was a life of poverty. He had no home, Lu 9:58. He chose to be dependent on the charity of the few friends that he drew around him, rather than to *create* food for the abundant supply of his own wants. He had no farms or plantations; he had no splendid palaces; he had no money hoarded in useless coffers or in banks; he had no property to distribute to his friends. His mother he commended when he died to the charitable attention of one of his disciples,. (Joh 19:27;) and all his personal property seems to have been the raiment which he wore, and which was divided among the soldiers that crucified him. Nothing is more remarkable than the difference between the plans of the Lord Jesus and those of many of his followers and professed friends. He formed no plan for becoming rich, and he always spoke with the deepest earnestness of the dangers which attend an effort to accumulate property. He was among the most poor of the sons of men in his life; and few have been the men on earth who have not had as much as he had to leave to surviving friends, or to excite the cupidity of those who should fall heirs to their property when dead.

(4.) He died poor. He made no will in regard to his property, for he had none to dispose of. He knew well enough the effect which would follow if he had amassed wealth, and had left it to be divided among his followers. They were very imperfect; and even around the cross there might have been anxious discussion, and perhaps strife about it, as there is often now over the coffin and the unclosed grave of a rich and foolish father who has died. Jesus intended that his disciples should never be turned away from the great work to which he called them, by any wealth which he would leave them; and he left them not even a keepsake as a memorial of his name. All this is the more remarkable, from two considerations:

(a.) That he had it in his power to choose the manner in which he would come. He might have come in the condition of a splendid prince. He might have rode in a chariot of ease, or have dwelt in a magnificent palace. He might have lived with more than the magnificence of an oriental prince; and might have bequeathed treasures greater than those of Croesus or Solomon to his followers. But he *chose* not to do it.

(b.) It would have been as right and proper for *him* to have amassed wealth, and to have sought princely possessions, as for any of his followers. What is right for them would have been right for him. Men often mistake on this subject; and though it cannot be demonstrated that all his followers should aim to be as poor as he was, yet it is undoubtedly true that he meant that his example should operate constantly to check their desire of amassing wealth. In him it was voluntary; in us there should be always a *readiness to be poor*, if such be the,will of God; nay, there should be rather a *preference* to be in moderate circumstances, that we may thus be like the Redeemer.

That ye through his poverty might be rich. That is, might have durable and eternal riches, the riches of God's everlasting favour. This includes

(1.) the present possession of an interest in the Redeemer himself. "Do you see these extended fields?" said the owner of a vast plantation to a friend. "They are mine. All this is mine." "Do you see yonder poor cottage?" was the reply of the friend, as he directed his attention to the abode of a poor widow. "She has more than all this. She has CHRIST as her portion; and that is more than all." He who has an interest in the Redeemer has a possession that is of more value than all that princes can bestow.

(2.) The heirship of an eternal inheritance, the prospect of immortal glory, Ro 8:17.

(3.) Everlasting treasures, in heaven. Thus the Saviour compares the heavenly blessings to treasures, Mt 6:20. Eternal and illimitable wealth is theirs in heaven; and to raise us to that blessed inheritance was the design of the Redeemer in consenting to become poor. This, the apostle says, was to be secured by his poverty. This includes probably the two following things, viz.:

(1.) That it was to be by the *moral influence* of the fact that he was poor, that men were to be blessed. He designed by his example to counteract the effect of wealth; to teach men that this was not the thing to be aimed at; that there were more important purposes of life than to obtain money; and to furnish a perpetual reproof of those who are aiming to amass riches. The example of the Redeemer thus stands before the whole church and the world as a living and constant memorial of the truth that men need other things than wealth; and that there are objects that demand their time and influence other than the accumulation of property. It is well to have such an example; well to have before us the example of one-who never formed any plan for gain, and who constantly lived above the world. In a world where gain is the great object, where all men are forming plans for it, it is well to have one great model that shall continually demonstrate the folly of it, and that shall point to better things.

(2.) The word "poverty" here may include more than a mere want of property. It may mean all the circumstances of his low estate and humble condition; his sufferings and his woes. The whole train of his privations was included in this; and the idea is, that he gave himself to this lowly condition in order that by his sufferings he might procure for us a part in the kingdom of heaven. His poverty was a part of the sufferings included in the work of the atonement. For it was not the sufferings of the garden merely, or the pangs of the cross, that constituted the atonement; it was the series of sorrows and painful, acts of humiliation which so thickly crowded his life. By all these he designed that we should be made rich; and in view of all these the argument of the apostle is, we should be willing to deny ourselves to do good to others.

{c} "rich" Joh 1:1 {d} "became poor" Lu 9:58 Php 2:6,7

{e} "rich" Re 3:18

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *And herein I give my advice*. Not undertaking to command them, or to prescribe how much they should give. Advice will go much farther than commands on the subject of charities.

For this is expedient for you. *sumferei*. That is, this will be of advantage to you; it will be profitable; it will be becoming. The idea is, that they were bound by a regard to consistency and to their own welfare, to perform what they had purposed. It became them; it was proper, and was demanded; and there would have been manifest disadvantages if it had not been done.

Who have begun before. Who commenced the collection a year before. See 2Co 8:6. It had been commenced with fair prospects of success, but had been interrupted probably by the dissensions which arose in the church there.

Not only to do. Not merely to accomplish it as if by constraint, or as a matter of compulsion and drudgery.

But also to be forward. Marg., "*willing*." So the Greek, (*to yelein*). They were voluntary in this, and they set about it with vigorous and determined zeal and courage. There was a resolute determination in the thing, and a willingness and heartiness in it which showed that they were actuated by Christian principle. Consistency, and their own reputation and advantage, now demanded that they should complete what they had begun.

{1} "forward" "willing"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *As there was a readiness to will*. Now accomplish the thing, and be not satisfied with having begun it. Do not suppose that the intention was sufficient, or that you are now released from the obligation. A year indeed has elapsed; but the necessity of the aid for the poor has not ceased. The sentiment here is, that if we have felt it our duty to aid in a cause of benevolence, and have

commenced it, and have then been interrupted in executing our purpose, we should seize the first favourable opportunity to accomplish what we had designed. We should not regard ourselves as released from our obligation; but should, from a regard to consistency and our obligation to God, accomplish what we had intended.

Out of that which ye have. According to your ability. See 2Co 8:12. It should be in proportion to your means.

{a} "perform the doing" 1Ti 6:19 Heb 13:16; Jas 2:15,16

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *For if there be first a willing mind*. If there is a readiness, (*proyumia*,) a disposition to give; if the heart is in it, then the offering will be acceptable to God, whether you be able to give much or little. A willing mind is the first consideration. No donation, however large, can be acceptable where that does not exist; none, however small, can be otherwise than acceptable where that is found. This had relation, as used by Paul, to the duty of almsgiving; but the *principle* is as applicable to everything in the way of duty. A willing mind is the first and main thing. It is that which God chiefly desires, and that without which everything else will be offensive, hypocritical, and vain. **See Barnes "2Co 9:7"**.

It is accepted. Doddridge, Rosenmuller, Macknight, and some others apply this to the person, and render it, "he is accepted;" but the more usual, and the more natural interpretation, is to apply it to the gift—*it* is accepted. God will approve of it, and will receive it favourably.

According to that a man hath, etc. He is not required to give what he has not. His obligation is proportioned to his ability. His offering is acceptable to God according to the largeness and willingness of his heart, and not according to the narrowness of his fortune.—*Locke*. If the means are small, if the individual is poor, and if the gift shall be therefore small in amount, yet it may be proof of a larger heart, and of more true love to God and his cause, than when a much more ample benefaction is made by one in better circumstances. This sentiment the Saviour expressly stated and defended in the case of the poor widow, Mr 12:42-44 Lu 21:1-4. She who had cast in her two mites into the treasury, had put in more than all which the rich men-had contributed, for they had given of their abundance, but she had cast in all that she had, even all her living. The great and obviously just and equal principle here stated, was originally applied by Paul to the duty of giving alms. But it is equally true and just as applied to all the duties which we owe to God. He demands

(1.) a willing mind, a heart disposed to yield obedience. He claims that our service should be voluntary and sincere, and that we should make an unreserved consecration of what we have.

(2.) He demands only what we have power to render. He requires a service strictly according to our ability, and to be measured by that. He demands no more than our powers are fitted to produce; no more than we are able to render. *Our obligations in all cases are limited by our ability*. This is obviously the rule of equity; and this is all that is anywhere demanded in the Bible, and this is everywhere demanded. Thus our love to Him is to be in proportion to our ability, and not to be graduated by the ability of angels or other beings. "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with ALL THY heart, and with all THY soul, and with all THY mind, and with all THY strength," Mr 12:30.

Here the obligation is limited by the ability, and the love is to be commensurate with the ability. So of repentance, faith, and of obedience in any form. None but a tyrant ever demands more than can be rendered; and to demand more is the appropriate description of a tyrant, and cannot appertain to the ever-blessed God.

(3.) If there is any service rendered to God, according to the ability, it is accepted of him. It may not be as much or as valuable as may be rendered by beings of higher powers; it may not be as much as we would desire to render, but it is all that God demands, and is acceptable to him. The poor widow was not able to give as much as the rich man; but her offering was equally acceptable, and might be more valuable, for it would be accompanied with her prayers. The service which we can render to God may not be equal to that which the angels render; but it may be equally appropriate to our condition and our powers, and may be equally acceptable to God. God may be *as well pleased* with the sighings of penitence, as the praises of angels; with the offerings of a broken and a contrite heart, as with the loud hallelujahs of unfallen beings in heaven.

{b} "if there be first" Lu 21:3

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *For I mean not that other men be eased*, etc. I do not intend that others should be eased in order to relieve you. Literally, "Not that there should be *rest* (*anesiv*, *a letting loose*, *remission*, *relaxation*) to others, but affliction (*yliqiv*) to you." Probably the Corinthians were able to contribute more than many other churches, certainly more than the churches of Macedonia, (2Co 8:2;) and Paul therefore presses upon them the duty of giving according to their means, yet he by no means intended that the entire burden should come on them.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *But by an equality*. On just and equal principles.

That now at this time, etc. That at the present time your abundance may be a supply for your wants. The idea is this: Corinth was then able to give liberally, but many of the other churches were not. They were poor, and perhaps persecuted and in affliction. But there might be great reverses in their condition. Corinth might be reduced from its affluence, and might itself become dependent on the aid of others, or might be unable to contribute any considerable amount for the purposes of charity. The members of the church in Corinth, therefore, should so act in their circumstances of prosperity, that others would be disposed to aid them should their condition ever be such as to demand it. And the doctrine here taught is,

(1.) that the support of the objects of benevolence should be on equal principles. The rich should bear an equal and fair proportion; and if more frequent demands are made on their benefaction than on others, they should not complain.

(2.) Christians should contribute liberally while they have the means. In the vicissitudes of life, no one can tell how soon he may be unable to contribute, or may even be dependent on the charity of others himself. A change in the commercial world; losses by fire or at sea; want of success in business; loss of health, and the failure of his plans, may soon render him unable to aid the cause of benevolence. While he is prospered, he should embrace every opportunity to do good to all. Some of the most painful regrets which men ever have, arise from the reflection that when prospered they were indisposed to give to benefit others, and when their property is swept away they become unable. God often sweeps away the property which they were *indisposed* to contribute to aid others, and leaves them to penury and want. Too late they regret that they were not the liberal patrons of the objects of benevolence when they were able to be.

That there may be equality. That all may be just and equal. That no unjust burden should be borne by any one portion of the great family of the redeemed. Every Christian brother should bear his due proportion.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *As it is written*. See Ex 16:18.

He that had gathered much, etc. This passage was originally applied to the gathering of manna by the children of Israel. The manna which fell around the camp of Israel was gathered every morning. All that were able were employed in gathering it; and when it was collected, it was distributed in the proportion of an omer, or about five pints to each man. Some would be more active and more successful than others. Some by age or infirmity would collect little; probably many by being confined to the camp would collect none. They who had gathered more than an omer, therefore, would in this way contribute to the wants of others, and would be constantly manifesting a spirit of benevolence. And such was their willingness to do good in this way, such their readiness to collect more than they knew would be demanded for their own use, and such the arrangement of Providence in furnishing it, that there was no want; and there was no more gathered than was needful to supply the demands of the whole. Paul applies this passage, therefore, in the very spirit in which it was originally penned, he means to say that the rich Christians at Corinth should impart freely to their poorer brethren. They had gathered more wealth than was immediately necessary for their families or themselves. They should, therefore, impart freely to those who had been less successful. Wealth, like manna, is the gift of God. It is like that spread by his hand around us every day. Some are able to gather much more than others. By their skill, their health, their diligence, or by providential arrangements, they are eminently successful. Others are feeble, or sick, or aged, or destitute of skill, and are less successful. All that is obtained is by the arrangement of God. The health, the strength, the skill, the wisdom by which we are enabled to obtain it, are all his gift. That which is thus honestly obtained, therefore, should be regarded as his bounty, and we should esteem it a privilege daily to impart to others less favoured and less successful. Thus society will be bound more closely together. There will be, as there was among the Israelites, the feelings of universal brotherhood. There will be on the one hand the happiness flowing from the constant exercise of the benevolent feelings; on the other the strong ties of gratitude. On the one hand the

evils of poverty will be prevented, and on the other the not less, though different, evils resulting from superabundant wealth. Is it a forced and unnatural analogy also to observe, that wealth, like manna, corrupts by being kept in store? Manna, if kept more than a single day, became foul and loathsome. Does wealth, hoarded up when it might be properly employed—wealth that should have been distributed to relieve the wants of others—become corrupting in its nature, and offensive in the sight of holy and benevolent minds? Comp. Jas 5:2-4. Wealth, like manna, should be employed in the service which God designs—employed to diffuse everywhere the blessings of religion, comfort, and peace.

{a} "written" Ex 16:18 {*} "lack" "want"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *But thanks be to God*. Paul regarded every right feeling, and every pure desire—every inclination to serve God or to benefit a fellow-mortal—as the gift of God. He therefore ascribes the praise to Him that Titus was disposed to show an interest in the welfare of the Corinthians.

The same earnest care. The earnest care here referred to was that the Corinthians might complete the collection, and finish what they had proposed. Titus was willing to undertake this, and see that it was done.

For you. For your completing the collection. Paul represents it as being done for them, or for their welfare. The poor saints in Judea, indeed, were to have the immediate benefit of the contribution; but it was a privilege for them to give, and Paul rejoiced that they had that privilege. A man who presents to Christians a feasible object of benevolence, and who furnishes them an opportunity of doing good to others, is doing good to them, and they should esteem it an act of kindness done to them.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *For indeed he accepted the exhortation*. He cheerfully complied with the exhortation which I gave him, to wit, to visit you, and excite you to this good work.

But being more forward. More disposed to do this than I had supposed. The idea here is, that he was very ready to engage in this; he was more ready to engage in it than Paul was to exhort him to it; he anticipated his request; he had already resolved to engage in it.

Of his own accord he went, etc. he went voluntarily, and without urging. The ground of Paul's thankfulness here seems to have been this: he apprehended, probably, some difficulty in obtaining the collection there, he was acquainted with the distracted state of the church, and feared that Titus might have some reluctance to engage in the service, lie was therefore very agreeably surprised when he learned that Titus was willing to make another journey to Corinth, and to endeavour to complete the collection.

{b} "brother" 2Co 12:18 {c} " " 1Co 16:3,4

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *And we have sent with him the brother*. It has been generally supposed that this anonymous brother was Luke. Some have supposed, however, that it was Mark; others that it was Silas or Barnabas. It is impossible to determine with certainty who it was; nor is it material to know. Whoever it was, it was some one well known, in whom the church at Corinth could have entire confidence. It is remarkable that though Paul mentions him again, 2Co 12:18, he does it also in the same manner, without specifying his name. The only circumstances that can throw any light on this are,

(1.) that Luke was the companion and intimate friend of Paul, and attended him in his travels. From Ac 16:10,11, where Luke uses the term "we," it appears that he was with Paul when he first went into Macedonia; and, from Ac 16:16, it is clear that he went with Paul to Philippi. From Ac 17:1, where Luke alters his style, and uses the term "they," it is evident that he did not accompany Paul and Silas when they went to Thessalonica, but either remained at Philippi, or departed to some other place, he did not join them again until they went to Troas, on the way to Jerusalem, Ac 20:5. In what manner Luke spent the interval is not known. Macknight supposes that it might have been in multiplying copies of his gospel for the use of the churches. Perhaps also he might have been engaged in preaching, and in services like that in the case before us.

(2.) It seems probable that Luke is the person referred to by the phrase, "whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches." This would be more likely to be applied to one who had written a gospel, or a life of the Redeemer, that had been extensively circulated, than to any other person. Still it is by no means *certain* that he is the person here referred to, nor is it of material consequence.

Whose praise. Who is well known and highly esteemed.

Is in the gospel. Either for writing the gospel, or for preaching the gospel. The Greek will bear either construction. In some way he was celebrated for making known the truths of the gospel.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *And not that only*. Not only is he esteemed on account of other services which he has rendered by his preaching and writings; but he has had a new mark of the confidence of the churches in being appointed to convey the collection to Jerusalem.

Chosen of the churches. Chosen by the churches. Many concurred in the choice, showing that they had entire confidence in him. Paul had been unwilling to have charge of this contribution alone, 1Co 16:3,4, comp. 2Co 8:20, and he had procured the appointment of some one to undertake it. Probably he expected that the church at Corinth would concur in this appointment.

With this grace. Marg. "gift." See 2Co 8:1. The word here refers to the alms, or the collection which had been made.

Which is administered by us. That is, which is undertaken by us. Paul had been the instrument of procuring it.

To the glory of the same Lord. The Lord of us all. The design was to promote the glory of the Lord, by showing the influence of religion in producing true benevolence.

And declaration of your ready mind. That is, to afford you an opportunity of evincing your readiness to do good to others, and to promote their welfare.

{1} "grace" "gift" {d} "to the glory of the same Lord" 2Co 4:15

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Avoiding this*. That is, I intend to prevent any blame from being cast upon me in regard to the management of these funds. For this purpose Paul had refused to have the entire management of the funds, (see 1Co 16:3,4,) and had secured the appointment of one who had the entire confidence of all the churches.

That no man should blame us. That no one should have any occasion to say that I had appropriated it to my own use, or contrary to the will of the donors. Paul felt how dangerous it was for ministers to have much to do with money matters, he had a very deep impression of the necessity of keeping his own character free from suspicion on this subject, he knew how easy it might be for his enemies to raise the charge that he had embezzled the funds, and appropriated them to his own use. He therefore insisted on having associated with him some one who had the entire confidence of the churches, and who should be appointed by them, and thus he was certain of being for ever free from blame on the subject: a most important example for all ministers in regard to the pecuniary benefactions of the churches.

In this abundance, etc. In this large amount which is contributed by the churches, and committed to our disposal. Large sums of money are in our time committed to the ministers of the gospel, in the execution of the objects of Christian benevolence. Nothing can be more wise than the example of Paul here, that they should have associated with them others who have the entire confidence of the churches, that there may not be occasion for slander to move her poisonous tongue against the ministers of religion.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Providing for honest things*. The expression here used occurs Ro 12:17. **See Barnes "Ro 12:17".**

In that place, however, it refers to the manner in which we are to treat those who injure us; here it refers to the right way of using property; and it seems to have been a kind of maxim by which

Paul regulated his life—a *vade mecum* that was applicable to everything. The sentiment is, that we are to see to it beforehand, that all our conduct shall be comely or honest. The word rendered "providing for," (*pronooumenoi*,) means foreseeing, or perceiving beforehand; and the idea is, that we are to make it a matter of previous calculation, a settled plan, a thing that is to be attended to of set design. In the middle voice, the form in which it occurs here, it means to provide for in one's own behalf; to apply one's self to anything; to practise diligently.—*Robinson*. The word rendered "things honest" (*kala*) means, properly, beautiful or comely. The idea which is presented here is, that we are to see beforehand, or we are to make it a matter of set purpose, that what we do shall be comely; that is, just, honourable, correct, not only in the sight of the Lord, but in the sight of men. Paul applies this in his own case to the alms which were to be intrusted to him. His idea is, that he meant so to conduct [himself] in the whole transaction, as that his conduct should be approved by God, but that it should also be regarded as *beautiful* or correct in the sight of men. He knew how much his own usefulness depended on an irreproachable character. He, therefore, procured the appointment of one who had the entire confidence of the churches to travel with him. But there is no reason for confining this to the particular case under consideration. It seems to have been the leading maxim of the life of Paul, and it should be of ours. The maxim may be applied to everything which we have to do; and should constantly regulate us. It may be applied to the acquisition and use of property; to the discharge of our professional duties; to our intercourse with others; to our treatment of inferiors and dependents; to our charities, etc.: in all of which we should make it a matter of previous thought, of earnest diligence, that our conduct should be perfectly honest and comely before God and man. Let us learn from this verse also, that ministers of the gospel should be especially careful that their conduct in money matters, and especially in the appropriation of the charities of the church, should be above suspicion. Much is often intrusted to their care, and the churches and individual Christians often commit much to their discretion. Their conduct in this should be without reproach; and in order to this, it is well to follow the example of Paul, and to insist that others who have the entire confidence of the churches should be associated with them. Nothing is easier than to raise a slanderous report against a minister of the gospel; and nothing gratifies a wicked world more than to be able to do it—and perhaps especially if it pertains to some improper use of money. It is not easy to meet such reports when they are started; and a minister, therefore, should be guarded, as Paul was, at every possible point, that he may be freed from that "whose breath outvenoms all the worms of Nile"— SLANDER.

{e} "honest things" Ro 12:17 Php 4:8; 1Pe 2:12

{*} "things" "things which are good"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *And we have sent with them our brother*. Who this was is wholly unknown, and conjecture is useless. Some have supposed that it was Apollos, others Silas, others Timothy. But there are no means of ascertaining who it was; nor is it material. It was some one in whom Paul had entire confidence.

Whom we have oftentimes proved diligent. Of whom we have evidence that he has been faithful. It is evident, therefore, that he had been the companion and fellow-labourer of Paul.

But now much more diligent, etc. Who will now prove himself much more diligent than ever before.

Upon the great confidence, etc. Marg., "he hath." The margin is doubtless the 'more correct reading' here. The idea is, that this brother had great confidence in the Corinthians that they would give liberally, and that he would, therefore, evince special diligence in the business.

{1} "I have" or "he hath"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Whether any do enquire of Titus*. It is to be observed that the words "any do inquire" are not in the original; nor is it clear that these are the most proper words to be introduced here. The Greek may mean either "if any do inquire about Titus," or it may mean "if anything is to be said about Titus." The sense of the passage may either be, that some of the faction at Corinth might be disposed to inquire about the authority of Titus to engage in this work, or that Paul having said, so much in commendation of the persons who went with Titus, it seemed proper to say something in his favour also. The idea is, "If any inquiry is made from any quarter about him, or if it is necessary from any cause to say anything about him, I would say he is my partner," etc.

He is my partner, etc. He partakes with me in preaching the gospel, and in establishing and organizing churches. Comp. Tit 1:5. To the Corinthians this fact would be a sufficient commendation of Titus.

Or our brethren be enquired of. That is, the brethren who accompanied Titus. If any inquiry was made about their character, or if it was necessary to say anything in regard to them.

They are the messengers of the churches. They have the entire confidence of the churches, having been selected and appointed by them to a work of labour and responsibility. Comp. Php 2:25. The words here rendered "messengers of the churches," are in the original "apostles of the churches," (*apostoloi ekklhsiwn*.) The word *apostles* here is used evidently in its proper sense, to denote one who is sent out to transact any business for others, or as an agent or legate. These persons were not apostles in the technical sense: and this is an instance where the word is applied in the New Testament to those who had no claim to the apostolic office. It is also applied in a similar way to Apollos and Barnabas, though neither, strictly speaking, was an apostle.

And the glory of Christ. That is, they have a character so well known and established for piety, they are so eminent Christians, and do such honour to the Christian name and calling, that they may be Called the glory of Christ. It is an honour to Christ that he has called such persons into his church, and that he has so richly endowed them. Every Christian should so live as that it would appear to all the world that it was an honour and glory to the Redeemer that he had such followers; an honour to his gospel that it had converted such and brought them into his kingdom. It is sufficient honour, moreover, to any man to say that he is "the glory of Christ." Such a character should be, and will be, as it was ere, a recommendation sufficient for any to secure them the confidence of others.

{a} "messengers" Php 2:25

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 8 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Wherefore shew ye to them*, etc. By a liberal contribution in the cause in which they are engaged, and for which they have come among you now, furnish the evidence that you love me and the Christian cause, and show that I have not boasted of you in vain.

The proof of your love. Your love to me, to God, to the cause of religion. **See Barnes "2Co 8:8".**

And of our boasting, etc. My boasting that you would give liberally to the object. **See Barnes "2Co 7:14".**

Let it now be seen that my boasting was well founded, and that I properly understood your character, and your readiness to contribute to the objects of Christian benevolence.

{b} "boasting" 2Co 7:14 {*} "behalf" "account"

REMARKS on 2nd Corinthians Chapter 8

(1.) Let us bear in mind that a disposition to be liberal proceeds only from God, 2Co 8:1. The human heart is by nature selfish, and indisposed to benevolence. It is only by the grace of God that men are excited to liberality; and we should therefore *pray* for this, as well as for all other graces. We should beseech God to remove selfishness from our minds; to dispose us to feel as we should feel for the wants of others, and to incline us to give just what we *ought* to give to relieve them in trouble, and to promote their temporal and eternal welfare.

(2.) It is an inestimable blessing when God gives a spirit of liberality to the church, 2Co 8:1. It should be regarded as a proof of his special favour, and as an evidence of the prevalence of the principles of true religion.

(3.) Men are often most liberal when in circumstances of distress, perplexity, and affliction, 2Co 8:2. Prosperity often freezes the heart, but adversity opens it. Success in life often closes the hand of benevolence, but adversity opens it. We are taught to feel for the sufferings of others by suffering ourselves; and in the school of adversity we learn invaluable lessons of benevolence which we should never acquire in prosperity. If you want the tear of sympathy, if you want aid in a good cause, go to a man in affliction, and his heart is open. And hence it is that God often suffers his people to pass through trials in order that they may possess the spirit of large and active benevolence.

(4.) If Christians desire to be liberal they must *first* devote themselves to God, 2Co 8:5. If this is not done they will have no heart to give, and they will not give. They will have a thousand excuses ready, and there will be no ground of appeal which we can make to them: True liberality is always based on the fact that we have given ourselves wholly to God.

(5.) When Christians have honestly devoted *themselves* to God, it will be easy to contribute liberally to the cause of benevolence, 2Co 8:5. They will find something to give; or if they have nothing now, they will labour and deny themselves in order that they may have something to give. If every professed Christian on earth had honestly given himself to God, and should act in accordance with this, the channels of benevolence would never be dry.

(6.) We should compare ourselves in the matter of benevolence with the churches here referred to, 2Co 8:3. They were poor; they were in deep affliction, and yet they contributed all in their power, and beyond their power. Do we do this? Do we give according to our ability? Do we deny ourselves one comfort—withhold one gratification— curtail one expense which fashion demands, in order that we may have the means of doing good? Oh, if every Christian would give according to his ability to the sacred cause of charity, how soon would the means be ample to place the Bible in every family on the globe, to preach the gospel in every country, and to maintain all the institutions which the cause of humanity needs in this and in other lands!

(7.) The Christian character is incomplete unless there is a spirit of large and liberal beneficence, 2Co 8:7. This is indispensable to the proper symmetry of the Christian graces, and this should be cultivated in order to give beauty and completeness to the whole. Yet it cannot be denied that there are true Christians where this is wanting. There are those who give every other evidence of piety; who are men of prayer, and who evince humility, and who are submissive in trials, and whose conversation is that of Christians, who are yet sadly deficient in this virtue. Either by an original closeness of disposition, or by a defect of education, or by want of information in regard to the Objects of Christian benevolence, they are most stinted in their benefactions, and often excite the amazement of others that they give so little to the cause of benevolence. Such persons should be entreated to carry out their Christian character to completion. As they abound in other things, they should abound in this grace also. They are depriving themselves of much comfort, and are bringing much injury on the cause of the Redeemer while they refuse to sustain the great objects of Christian charity: No Christian character is symmetrical or complete, unless it is crowned with the spirit of large and comprehensive benevolence towards every object that tends to promote the temporal and eternal welfare of man.

(8.) The sincerity of our love should be tested, and will be, by our readiness to deny ourselves to do good to others, 2Co 8:8. The love of the Lord Jesus was tested in that way; and there can be no true love to God or man, where there is not a readiness to contribute of our means for the welfare of others. If we love the Redeemer, we shall devote all to his service; if we love our fellow-men, we shall evince our "sincerity" by being willing to part with our earthly substance to alleviate their woes, enlighten their ignorance, and save their souls.

(9.) Let us imitate the example of the Lord Jesus, 2Co 8:9. He was rich, yet he became poor; and, oh! How POOR! Let the rich learn to copy his example, and be willing to part with their abundant and superfluous wealth in order that they may relieve and benefit others. That man is most happy, as well as most useful, who most resembles the Redeemer; that man will be most happy who stoops from the highest earthly elevation to the lowest condition, that he may minister to the welfare of others.

(10.) Charity should be voluntary, 2Co 8:12. It should be the free and spontaneous offering of the heart; and the first promptings of the heart, before the pleadings of avarice come in, and the heart grows cold by the influence of returning covetousness, are likely to be the most correct.

(11.) Charity should be in an honest proportion to our means, 2Co 8:12. It should be according to what a man hath. God has left the determination of this proportion to every individual, responsible to him alone. He has not told us how much we shall give, or in what proportion we shall give; but he has left it for every individual to decide what he may give, and what he ought to give.

(12.) If men do not give according to their means, they must answer for it to God. Every man may have opportunity to contribute to relieve others, if he will open his heart and ears to the cries

of a suffering and a dying world. No man can complain that he has no opportunity to give; or that he may not procure for his own soul all the blessings which can be produced by the most large and liberal benevolence.

(13.) Men have no excuse for being lost, 2Co 8:12. If God required more of them than they could render, they would have. They would not be to blame. They might be sufferers and martyrs in hell, but no one would blame them. But the sinner can never have any such excuse. God never required any more of him than he had power to render; and if he dies, it will be his own fault, and the throne of God will still be spotless and pure.

(14.) God's government is an equal, and just, and good government, 2Co 8:12. What can be more equitable than the principle that a man is accepted according to what he has? What ground of complaint can the sinner have in regard to this administration?

(15.) The churches should bear their just proportion in the cause of Christian beneficence, 2Co 8:13-15. There are great interests of charity which MUST be sustained. The world cannot do without them. Not only must the poor be provided for, but the cause of temperance, and of Sabbath-schools, and of missions must be sustained. Bibles must be distributed, and men must be educated for the ministry, and the widow and the fatherless must be the objects of Christian benevolence. These burdens, if they are burdens, should be equally distributed. The rich should furnish their fair proportion in sustaining them; and those in more moderate circumstances must do their fair proportion also in sustaining them. If this were done, all the objects of Christian benevolence could be sustained, and they would in fact not be burdensome to the churches. With infinite ease all might be contributed that is necessary to send the gospel around the world.

(16.) Ministers of the gospel should have as little as possible to do with money matters, 2Co 8:19-21. While they should be willing, if it is necessary, to be the almoners of the churches, and should esteem it a privilege to be the means of conveying to the poor and needy, and to the great cause of benevolence, what the churches may choose to commit to them, yet they should not covet this office; they should not show any particular desire for it; nor should they do it unless, like Paul, they have the most ample security that the voice of slander can never be raised in regard to their management. Let them see to it that they have persons associated with them who have the entire confidence of the churches; men who will be responsible also, and who will be competent witnesses of the manner in which they discharge their duty. In all things ministers should be pure. On few points is there more danger that the enemy will endeavour to take advantage, and to injure their character, than in regard to their abuse of funds intrusted to their care.

(17.) Let all Christians so live that it may be honestly said of them, they are "the glory of Christ," 2Co 8:23. Let them aim so to live that it will be esteemed to be an honour to the Redeemer that he called them into his kingdom, and that he so richly endowed them by his grace. This would be a commendation to all men where they might go; to say this is enough to say of any man. None can have a higher character than to have it said with truth of him, "He is the glory of Christ; he is an honour to his Redeemer and to his cause."

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 1

INTRODUCTION to 2nd Corinthians Chapter 9

IN this chapter the apostle continues the subject which he had discussed in 2Co 8 —the collection which he had purposed to make for the poor saints in Judea. The deep anxiety which he had that the collection should be liberal; that it should not only be such as to be really an aid to those who were suffering, but be such as would be an expression of tender attachment to them on the part of the Gentile converts, was the reason, doubtless, why Paul urged this so much on their attention. His primary wish undoubtedly was to furnish aid to those who were suffering. But in connexion with that, he also wished to excite a deep interest among the Gentile converts in behalf of those who had been converted to Christianity among the Jews. He wished that the collection should be so liberal as to show that they felt that they were united as brethren, and that they were grateful that they had received the true religion from the Jews. And he doubtless wished to cement as much as possible the great body of the Christian brotherhood, and to impress on their minds the great truths, that whatever was their national origin, and whatever were their national distinctions, yet in Christ they were one. For this purpose he presses on their attention a great variety of considerations why they should give liberally: and this chapter is chiefly occupied in stating reasons for that, in addition to those which had been urged in the previous chapter. The following view will present the main points in the chapter :—

(1.) He was aware of their readiness to give; and knowing this, he had boasted of it to others, and others had been excited to give liberally from what the apostle had said of them, 2Co 9:1,2. The argument here is, that Paul's veracity and their own character were at stake, and depended on their now giving liberally.

(2.) He had sent the brethren to them in order that there might by no possibility be a *failure*, 2Co 9:3-5. Though he had the utmost confidence in them, and fully believed that they were disposed to give liberally, yet he knew also that something might prevent it, unless messengers went to secure the contributions; and that the consequence might be, that he and they would be "ashamed" that he had boasted so much of their readiness to give.

(3.) To excite them to give liberally, Paul advances the great principles that the reward in heaven will be in proportion to the liberality evinced on earth, and that God loves one who gives cheerfully, 2Co 9:6,7. By the prospect, therefore, of an ample reward, and by the desire to meet with the approbation of God, he calls upon them to contribute freely to aid their afflicted Christian brethren.

(4.) He further excites them to liberal giving by the consideration that, if they contributed liberally, God was able to furnish them abundantly with the means of doing good on a large scale in time to come, 2Co 9:8-11. In this way he would enable them to do good hereafter, in proportion as they were disposed to do good now; and the result of all would be, that abundant thanks would

be rendered to God—thanks from those who were aided, and thanks from those who had aided them that they had been enabled to contribute to supply their wants.

(5.) As a final consideration inducing them to give, the apostle states that not only would they thus do good, but would show the power of the gospel, and the affection which they had for the Jewish converts, and would thus contribute much in promoting the glory of God. The Jewish converts would see the power of the gospel on their Gentile brethren; they would feel that they now appertained to one great family; they would praise God for imparting his grace in this manner; and they would be led to pray much for those who had thus contributed to alleviate their wants, 2Co 8:12-14.

(6.) Paul closes the whole chapter, and the whole discussion respecting the contribution about which he had felt so deep an interest, by rendering thanks to God for his "unspeakable gift," JESUS CHRIST, 2Co 9:15. Paul was ever ready, whatever was the topic before him, to turn the attention to him. He here evidently regards him as the Author of all liberal feeling, and of all true charity; and seems to imply that all that they could give would be small compared with the "unspeakable gift" of God, and that the fact that God had imparted such a *gift* to the world was a reason why they should be willing to devote all they had to his service.

Verse 1. *For as touching the ministering to the saints*. In regard to the collection that was to be taken up for the aid of the poor Christians in Judea. **See Barnes "Ro 15:26** 1Co 16:11 2Co 8".

It is superfluous, etc. It is needless to urge that matter on you, because I know that you acknowledge the obligation to do it, and have already purposed it.

For me to write to you. That is, to write more, or to write largely on the subject. It is unnecessary for me to urge arguments why it should be done; and all that is proper is to offer some suggestions in regard to the manner in which it shall be accomplished.

{*} "touching" "concerning" {a} "ministering to the saints" 2Co 8:4

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *For I know the forwardness of your mind*. I know your promptitude, or your readiness to do it. See 2Co 8:10. Probably Paul here means that he had had opportunity before of witnessing their readiness to do good, and that he had learned in particular of Titus that they had formed the plan to aid in this contribution.

For which I boast of you to them of Macedonia. To the church in Macedonia. See 2Co 8:1. So well assured was he that the church at Corinth would make the collection as it had proposed, that he boasted of it to the churches of Macedonia as if it were already done, and made use of this as an argument to stimulate them to make an effort.

That Achaia was ready a year ago. Achaia was that part of Greece of which Corinth was the capital. **See Barnes "Ac 18:12"**.

It is probable that there were Christians in other parts of Achaia besides Corinth, and indeed it is known that there was a church in Cenchrea, (see Ro 16:1,) which was one of the ports of Corinth. Though the contribution would be chiefly derived from Corinth, yet it is, probable that, the others also would participate in it. The phrase was ready means that they had been preparing themselves

for this collection, and doubtless Paul had stated that the collection was already made and was waiting. He had directed them (1Co 16:1) to make it on the first day of the week, and to lay it by in store, and he did not doubt that they had complied with his request.

And your zeal. Your ardour and promptitude. The readiness with which you entered into this subject, and your desire to relieve the wants of others.

Hath provoked. Has roused, excited, impelled to give. We use the word provoke commonly now in the sense of *to irritate*, but in the Scriptures it is confined to the signification of exciting, or rousing. The ardour of the Corinthians would excite others, not only by their promptitude, but because Corinth was a splendid city, and their example would be looked up to by Christians at a distance. This is one instance of the effect which will be produced by the example of a church in a city.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Yet have I sent the brethren*. The brethren referred to in 2Co 8:18,22,23.

Lest our boasting of you. That you were disposed to contribute, and that you were already prepared, and that the contribution was ready.

Should be in vain. Lest anything should have occurred to prevent the collection. I have sent them that they may facilitate it, and that it may be secure and certain.

In this behalf. In this respect. That is, lest our boasting of you, in regard to your readiness to contribute to relieve the wants of others, should be found to have been ill-grounded.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Lest haply if they of Macedonia*. If any of the Macedonians should happen to come with me, and should find that you had done nothing. He does not say that they would come with him, but it was by no means improbable that they would. It was customary for some of the members of the churches to travel with Paul from place to place, and the intercourse was constant between Macedonia and Achaia. Paul had, therefore, every reason to suppose that some of the Macedonians would accompany him when he should go to Corinth. At all events it was probable that the Macedonians would learn from some quarter whether the Corinthians were or were not ready when Paul should go to them.

We (that we say not, ye) should be ashamed, etc., In this," says Bloomfield, "one cannot but recognise a most refined and delicate turn, inferior to none of the best classical writers." Paul had boasted confidently that the Corinthians would be ready with their collection. He had excited and stimulated the Macedonians by this consideration, he had induced them in this way to give liberally, 2Co 8:1-4. If now it should turn out after all that the Corinthians had given nothing, or had given

stintedly, the character of Paul would suffer. His veracity and his judgment would be called in question, and he would be accused of trick, and artifice, and fraud, in inducing them to give. Or if he should not be charged with dishonesty, yet he would be humbled and mortified himself that he had made representations which had proved to be so unfounded. But this was not all. The character of the Corinthians was also at stake. They had purposed to make the collection. They had left the impression in the mind of Paul that it would be done. They had hitherto evinced such a character as to make Paul confident that the collection would be made. If now by any means this should fail, their character would suffer, and they would have occasion to be ashamed that they had excited so confident expectations of what they would do.

{b} "boasting" 2Co 8:24

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Therefore I thought it necessary*, etc. In order to secure the collection, and to avoid all unpleasant feeling on all hands.

That they would go before unto you. Before I should come.

And make up beforehand your bounty. Prepare it before I come. The word "bounty" is in the Marg. rendered "blessing." The Greek (*eulogian*) means, properly, commendation, *eulogy*. Then it means blessing, praise applied to God. Then *that which blesses*—a gift, donation, favour, bounty—whether of God to men, or of one man to another. Here it refers to their contribution as that which would be adapted to confer a blessing on others, or fitted to produce happiness.

That the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty. That it may truly appear as a liberal and voluntary offering, as an act of generosity, and not as *wrung* or extorted from you. That it may be truly a *blessing—a thank offering* to God, and adapted to do good to men.

And not as of covetousness. "And not like a sort of extortion, wrung from you by mere dint of importunity."—Doddridge. The word here used (*pleonexian*) means usually covetousness, greediness of gain which leads a person to defraud others. The idea here is, that Paul would have them give this as an act of bounty or liberality on their part, and not as an act of covetousness on his part, not as extorted by him from them.

{1} "bounty" "blessing" {2} "whereof ye had notice" "which hath been so much spoken of before"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *But this I say*. This I say in order to induce you to give liberally. This I say to prevent your supposing that because it is to be a voluntary offering you may give only from your superfluity, and may give sparingly.

He which soweth sparingly. This expression has all the appearance of a proverb, and doubtless is such. It does not Occur indeed elsewhere in the Scriptures, though substantially the same sentiment exciting to liberality often occurs. See Ps 41:1-3 Pr 11:24,25; Pr 19:17 22:9. Paul here says that it is in giving as it is in agriculture. A man that sows little, must expect to reap little. If he sows a small piece of land, he will reap a small harvest; or if he is niggardly in sowing, and wishes to save his seed and will not commit it to the earth, he must expect to reap little. So it is in giving. Money given in alms, money bestowed to aid the poor and needy, or to extend the influence of virtue and pure religion, is money bestowed in a way similar to the act of committing seed to the earth. It will be returned again in some way with an abundant increase. It shall not be lost. The seed may be buried long. It may lie in the ground with no indication of a return or of increase. One who knew not the arrangements of Providence might suppose it was lost and dead. But in due time it shall spring up and produce an ample increase. So with money given to objects of benevolence. To many it may seem to be a waste, or may appear to be thrown away. But in due time it will be repaid in some way with abundant increase. And the man who wishes to make the most out of his money for future use and personal comfort, will give liberally to deserving objects of charity—just as the man who wishes to make the most out of his grain will not suffer it to lie in his granary, but will commit the seed to the fertile earth. "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days," Ec 11:1, that is, when the waters, as of the Nile, have over flowed the banks, and flooded the whole adjacent country, then is the time to cast abroad thy seed. The waters will retire, and the seed will sink into the accumulated fertile mud that is deposited, and will spring up in an abundant harvest. So it is with that which is given for objects of benevolence.

Shall reap also sparingly. Shall reap in proportion to what he sowed. This every one knows is true in regard to grain that is sowed. It is also no less true in regard to deeds of charity. The idea is, that God will bestow rewards in proportion to what is given. These rewards may refer to results in this life, or to the rewards in heaven, or both. All who have ever been in the habit of giving liberally to the objects of benevolence can testify that they have lost nothing, but have reaped in proportion to their liberality. This follows in various ways.

(1.) In the *comfort* and peace which results from giving. If a man wishes to purchase happiness with his gold, he can secure the most by bestowing it liberally on objects of charity. It will produce him more immediate peace than it would to spend it in sensual gratifications, and far more than to hoard it up useless in his coffers.

(2.) In reflection on it hereafter. It will produce more happiness in remembering that he has done good with it, and promoted the happiness of others, than it will to reflect that he has hoarded up useless wealth, or that he has squandered it in sensual gratification. The one will be unmingled pleasure when he comes to die; the other will be unmingled self-reproach and pain.

(3.) In subsequent life, God will in some way repay to him far more than he has bestowed in deeds of charity. By augmented prosperity, by health and future comfort, and by raising up for us and our families, when in distress and want, friends to aid us, God can and often does abundantly repay the liberal for all their acts of kindness and deeds of beneficence.

(4.) God can and will reward his people in heaven abundantly for all their kindness to the poor, and all their self-denials in endeavouring to diffuse the influence of truth and the knowledge of salvation. Indeed, the rewards of heaven will be in no small degree apportioned in this manner, and determined by the amount of benevolence which we have shown on earth. See Mt 25:34-40. On all accounts, therefore, we have every inducement to give liberally. As a farmer who desires an

ample harvest scatters his seed with a liberal hand; as he does not grudge it though it falls into the earth; as he scatters it with the expectation that in due time it will spring up and reward his labours, so should we give with a liberal hand to aid the cause of benevolence; nor should we deem what we give to be lost or wasted though we wait long before we are recompensed, or though we should be in no other way rewarded than by the comfort which arises from the act of doing good.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Every man according as he purposeth in his heart*, etc. The main idea in this verse is, that the act of giving should be voluntary and cheerful. It should not seem to be extorted by the importunity of others, (

@Co 9:6;) nor should it be given from urgent necessity, but it should be given as an offering of the heart. On this part of the verse we may remark,

(1.) that the heart is usually more concerned in the business of giving than the head. If liberality is evinced, it will be the heart which prompts to it; if it is not evinced, it will be because the heart has some bad passions to gratify, and is under the influence of avarice, or selfishness, or some other improper attachment. Very often a man is convinced he ought to give liberally, but a narrow heart and a parsimonious spirit prevent it.

(2.) We should follow the dictates of the heart in giving. I mean that a man will usually give more correctly who follows the first promptings of his heart when an object of charity is presented, than be will if he takes much time to deliberate. The instinctive prompting of a benevolent heart is to give liberally. And the amount which should be given will usually be suggested to a man by the better feelings of his heart. But if he resolves to deliberate much, and if he suffers the heart to grow cold, and if he defers it, the pleadings of avarice will come in, or some object of attachment or plan of life will rise to view, or he will begin to compare himself with others, and he will give much less than he would have done if he had followed the first impulse of feeling. God implanted the benevolent feelings in the bosom that they should prompt us to do good; and he who acts most in accordance with them is most likely to do what he ought to do; and in general it is the safest and best rule for a man to give just what his heart prompts him to give when an object of charity is presented. Man at best is too selfish to be likely to give too much, or to go beyond his means; and if in a few instances it should be done, more would be gained in value in the cultivation of benevolent feeling than would be lost in money. I know of no better rule on the subject, than to cultivate as much as possible the benevolent feelings, and then to throw open the soul to every proper appeal to our charity, and to give just according to the instinctive prompting of the heart.

(3.) Giving should be voluntary and cheerful. It should be from the heart. Yet there is much, very much that is not so, and there is, therefore, much benevolence that is spasmodic and spurious; that cannot be depended on, and that will not endure. No dependence can be placed on a man in regard to giving, who does not do it from the steady influences of a benevolent heart. But there is much obtained in the cause of benevolence that is produced by a kind of extortion. It is given because others give, and the man would be ashamed to give less titan they do. Or, it is given because he thinks his rank in life demands it, and he is prompted to it by pride and vanity. Or, he gives from

respect to a pastor or a friend, or because he is warmly importuned to give; or because he is shut up to a kind of necessity to give, and must give or he would lose his character, and become an object of scorn and detestation. In all this there is nothing cheerful and voluntary; and there can be nothing in it acceptable to God. Nor can it be depended on permanently. The heart is not in it, and the man will evade the duty as soon as he can, and will soon find excuses for not giving at all.

Not grudgingly. Greek, "Not of grief," (*mh ek luphv*.) Not as if he were sorry to part with his money. Not as if he were constrained to do a thing that was extremely painful to him.

Or of necessity. As if he were compelled to do it. Let him do it cheerfully.

For God loveth a cheerful giver. And who does not? Valuable as any gift may be in itself, yet if it is forced and constrained; if it can be procured only after great importunity and persevering effort, who can esteem it as desirable? God desires the heart in every service. No service that is not cheerful and voluntary, none that does not arise from true love to him, can be acceptable in his sight. God loves it because it shows a heart like his own—a heart disposed to give cheerfully, and to do good on the largest scale possible; and because it shows a heart attached from principle to his service and cause. The expression here has all the appearance of a proverb, and expressions similar to this occur often in the Scriptures. In an uninspired writer, also, this idea has been beautifully expanded. "In all thy gifts show a cheerful countenance, and dedicate thy tithes with gladness. Give unto the Most High according as he hath enriched thee; and as thou hast gotten give with a cheerful eye. For the Lord recompenseth, and will give thee seven times as much."—Wisdom of the Son of Sirach, chap. xxxv. 9—11. In nothing, therefore, is it more important than to examine the motives by which we give to the objects of benevolence. However liberal may be our benefactions, yet God may see that there is no sincerity, and may hate the spirit with which it is done.

{a} "grudgingly" De 15:7,8 {*} "necessity" "by constraint" {b} "cheerful giver" Ex 35:5 Ro 12:8

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *And God is able*, etc. Do not suppose that by giving liberally you will be impoverished and reduced to want. You should rather confide in God, who is able to furnish you abundantly with what is needful for the supply of our necessities. Few persons are ever reduced to poverty by liberality. Perhaps in the whole circle of his acquaintance it would be difficult for an individual to point out one who has been impoverished or made the poorer in this way. Our selfishness is generally a sufficient guard against this; but it is also to be added, that the Divine blessing rests upon the liberal man, and that God keeps him from want. But in the mean time there are multitudes who are made poor by the want of liberality. They are parsimonious in giving, but they are extravagant in dress, and luxury, and in expenses for amusement or vice, and the consequence is poverty and want. "There is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty," Pr 11:24. The Divine blessing rests upon the liberal; and while every person should make a proper provision for his family, every one should give liberally, confiding in God that he will furnish the supplies for our

future wants. Let this maxim be borne in mind, that no one is usually made the poorer by being liberal.

All grace. All kinds of favour. He is able to impart to you those things which are needful for your welfare.

That ye always, etc. The sense is, "If you give liberally, you are to expect that God will furnish you with the means, so that you will be able to abound more and more in it. You are to expect that he will abundantly qualify you for doing good in every way, and that he will furnish you with all that is needful for this. The man who gives, therefore, should have faith in God. He should *expect* that God will bless him in it; and the experience of the Christian world may be appealed to in proof that men are not made poor by liberality.

{c} "God is able" Php 4:19 {+} "grace" "every blessing"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *As it is written*. Ps 112:9. The idea is, "in this way will the saying in the Scriptures be verified, or the promise confirmed." The psalmist is describing the character of the righteous man. One of his characteristics, he says, is, that he has scattered abroad, he has given liberally to the poor. On such a man a blessing is pronounced, (2Co 9:1;) and one of the blessings will be that he shall be prospered. Some difficulty has been felt by commentators to see how the quotation here made sustains the position of Paul that the liberal man would be blessed of God, and would receive an increase according to his liberality. In order to this, they have supposed (see Doddridge, Bloomfield, and Clarke) that the word "righteousness" means the same as almsgiving, or that "he would always have something to bestow." But I would suggest that perhaps Paul quoted this, as quotations are frequently made in the Scriptures, where a passage was familiar, he quotes only a part of the passage, meaning that the whole passage confirms the point under consideration. Thus the whole passage in the Psalm is, "he hath dispersed; he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour;" that is, he shall be abundantly blessed with prosperity and with the favour of God. Thus the entire promise sustains the position of Paul, that the liberal man would be abundantly blessed. The phrase "he hath dispersed," (*eskorpisen*,) may refer either to the act of sowing, as a man scatters seed upon the earth; or there may be an allusion to the oriental custom of scattering money among an assembled company of paupers. Comp. Pr 11:24.

His righteousness, his deeds of beneficence.

Remaineth. In its fruits and consequences; that is, either in its effects on others, or on himself. It may mean that the sums so distributed will remain with him for ever, inasmuch as he will be supplied with all that is needful to enable him to do good to others. This interpretation accords with the connexion.

{a} "He hath" Ps 112:9

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Now he that ministereth seed to the sower*. This is an expression of an earnest wish. In the previous verses he had stated the promises, or had shown what we had a right to expect as a consequence of liberality, he here unites the expression of an earnest desire that they might experience this themselves. The allusion is to the act of sowing seed. The idea is, that when a man scatters seed in his field, God provides him with the means of *sowing again*, he not only gives him a harvest to supply, his wants, but he blesses him also *in giving him the ability to sow again*. Such was the benevolent wish of Paul. He desired not only that God would supply their returning wants, but he desired also that he would give them the ability to do good again; that he would furnish them the means of future benevolence, he acknowledges God as the source of all increase, and wishes that they may experience the results of such increase. Perhaps in this language there is an allusion to Isa 55:10; and the idea is, that it is God who furnishes by his providence the seed to the sower. In like manner he will furnish you the means of doing good.

Minister bread for your food. Furnish you with an ample supply for your wants.

Multiply your seed sown. Greatly increase your means of doing good; make the results of all your benefactions so to abound that you may have the means of doing good again, and on a larger scale, as the seed sown in the earth is so increased that the farmer may have the means of sowing more abundantly again.

And increase the fruits of your righteousness. This evidently means, the results and effects of their benevolence. The word "righteousness" here refers to their liberality; and the wish of the apostle is, that the results of their beneficence might greatly abound, that they might have the means of doing extensive good, and that they might be the means of diffusing happiness from afar.

{b} "he that ministereth" Is 55:10 {c} "of your righteousness" Hos 10:12

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Being enriched in every thing*, etc. In all respects your riches are conferred on you for this purpose. The design of the apostle is to state to them the true reason why wealth was bestowed. It was not for the purposes of luxury and self-gratification; not to be spent in sensual enjoyment, not for parade and display; it was that it might be distributed to others in such a way as to cause thanksgiving to God. At the same time, this implies the expression of an earnest wish on the part of Paul. He did not desire that they should be rich for their own gratification or pleasure; he desired it only as the means of their doing good to others. Right feeling will desire property only as the means of promoting happiness and producing thanksgiving to God. They who truly love their children and friends will wish them to be successful in acquiring wealth only that they may have the means and the disposition to alleviate misery, and promote the happiness of all around them. No one who has true benevolence will desire that any one in whom he feels an interest should be enriched for the purpose of living amidst luxury, and encompassing himself with the indulgences

which wealth can furnish. If a man has not a disposition to do good with money, it is not true benevolence, to desire that he may possess it.

To all bountifulness. Marg., Simplicity, or liberality. The word (*aplothta*) means, properly, sincerity, candour, probity; then also simplicity, frankness, fidelity, and especially as manifesting itself in liberality. See Ro 12:8 2Co 8:2. Here it evidently means liberality; and the idea is, that property is given for this purpose, in order that there may be liberality evinced in doing good to others.

Which causeth through us, etc. That is, we shall so distribute your alms as to cause thanksgiving to God. The result will be, that by our instrumentality thanks will be given to the great Source and Giver of all wealth. Property should always be so employed as to produce thanksgiving. If it is made to contribute to our own support and the support of our families, it should excite thanksgiving. If it is given to others, it should be so given, if it is possible, that the recipient should be more grateful to God than to us; should feel that though we may be the honoured instrument in distributing it, yet the true benefactor is God.

{1} "all bountifulness" "simplicity, or liberality" {d} "causeth through us" 2Co 1:11 4:15

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *For the administration of this service*. The distribution of this proof of your liberality. The word *service* here, says Doddridge, intimates that this was to be regarded not merely as an act of *humanity, but religion*.

The want of the saints. Of the poor Christians in Judea on whose behalf it was contributed.

But is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God. Will abound unto God in producing thanksgivings. The result will be that it will produce abundant thanksgiving in their hearts to God.

{e} "the want of the saints" 2Co 8:14

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Whiles by the experiment*, etc. Or rather, by the *experience* of this ministration; the proof, (*dokimhv*,) the evidence here furnished of your liberality. They shall in this ministration have experience or proof of your Christian principle.

They glorify God. They will praise God as the source of your liberality, as having given you the means of being liberal, and having inclined your hearts to it.

For your professed subjection, etc. Literally, "For the obedience of your profession of the gospel." It does not imply merely that there was a profession of religion, but that there was a real subjection to the gospel which they professed. This is not clearly expressed in our translation. Tindal has expressed it better, "Which praise God for your obedience in acknowledging the gospel of Christ." There was a real and sincere submission to the gospel of Christ, and that was manifested

by their giving liberally to supply the wants of others. The doctrine is, that one evidence of true subjection to the gospel, one proof that our profession is sincere and genuine, is a willingness to contribute to relieve the wants of the poor and afflicted friends of the Redeemer.

And unto all men. That is, all others whom you may have the opportunity of relieving.

{*} "experiment" "experience" {f} "glorify God" mt 5:16

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *And by their prayer for you*. On the grammatical construction of this difficult verse, Doddridge and Bloomfield may be consulted. It is probably to be taken in connexion with 2Co 9:12, and 2Co 9:13 is a parenthesis. Thus interpreted, the sense will be, "The administration of this service 2Co 9:12 will produce abundant thanks to God. It will also 2Co 9:14 produce *another effect*. It will tend to excite the prayers of the saints for you, and thus produce important benefits to yourselves. They will earnestly desire your welfare; they will anxiously pray to be united in Christian friendship with those who have been so signally endowed with the grace of God." The sentiment is, that charity should be shown to poor and afflicted Christians because it will lead them to pray for us and to desire our welfare. The prayers of the poorest Christian for us are worth more than all we usually bestow on them in charity; and he who has secured the pleadings of a child of God, however humble, in his behalf, has made a good use of his money.

Which long after you. Who earnestly desire to see and know you. Who will sincerely desire your welfare, and who will thus be led to pray for you.

For the exceeding grace of God in you. On account of the favour which God has shown to you; the strength and power of the Christian principle, manifesting itself in doing good to those whom you have never seen. The apostle supposes that the exercise of a charitable disposition is to be traced entirely to God. God is the Author of all grace; he alone excites in us a disposition to do good to others.

{a} "grace of God" 2Co 8:1

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 9 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Thanks be unto God*. Whitby supposes that this refers to the charitable disposition which they had manifested; and that the sense is, that God was to be adored for the liberal spirit which they were disposed, to manifest, and the aid which they were disposed to render to others. But this, it is believed, falls far below the design of the apostle. The reference is rather to the inexpressible gift which God had granted to them in bestowing his Son to die for them; and this is one of the most striking instances which occur in the New Testament, showing that the mind of Paul was *full* of this subject; and that wherever he *began*, he was sure to end with a reference to the Redeemer. The invaluable gift of a Saviour was so familiar to his mind, and he was so accustomed

to dwell on that in his private thoughts, that the mind naturally and easily glanced on that whenever anything occurred that by the remotest allusion would suggest it. The idea is, "Your benefactions are indeed valuable; and for them, for the disposition which you have manifested, and for all the good which you will be enabled thus to accomplish, we are bound to give thanks to God. All this will excite the gratitude of those who shall be benefited. But how small is all this compared with the *great gift* which God has imparted in bestowing a Saviour! That is unspeakable. No words can express it, no language convey an adequate description of the value of the gift, and of the mercies which result from it."

His unspeakable gift. The word here used (*anekdihghtw*) means, what cannot be related, unutterable. It occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. The idea is, that no words can properly express the greatness of the gift thus bestowed on man. It is higher than the mind can conceive; higher than language can express.

On this verse we may observe,

(1.) that the Saviour is a *gift* to men. So he is uniformly represented. See Joh 3:16 Ga 1:4, 2:20 Eph 1:22; 1Ti 2:6 Tit 2:14.

Man had no claim on God. He could not compel him to provide a plan of salvation; and the whole arrangements the selection of the Saviour, the sending him into the world, and all the benefits resulting from his work, are all an undeserved gift to man.

(2.) This is a gift unspeakably great, whose value no language can express, no heart fully conceive. It is so because

(a.) of his own greatness and glory;

(b.) because of the inexpressible love which he evinced;

(c.) because of the unutterable sufferings which he endured;

(d.) because of the inexpressibly great benefits which result from his work. No language can do justice to this work in either of these respects; no heart in this world fully conceives the obligation which rests upon man in virtue of his work.

(3.) Thanks should be rendered to God for this. We *owe* him our highest praises for this. This appears,

(a.) because it was *mere benevolence* in God. We had no claim; we could not compel him to grant us a Saviour. The gift might have been withheld, and his throne would have been spotless. We owe no thanks where we have a claim; where we deserve nothing, then he who benefits us has a claim on our thanks.

(b.) Because of the benefits which we have received from him. Who can express this? All our peace and hope; all our comfort and joy in this life; all our prospect of pardon and salvation; all the offers, of eternal glory are to be traced to him. Man has no prospect of being happy when he dies, but in virtue of the "unspeakable gift" of God. And when he thinks of his sins, which may now be freely pardoned; when he thinks of an agitated and troubled conscience, which may now be at peace; when he thinks of his soul, which may now be unspeakably and eternally happy; when he thinks of the hell from which he is delivered, and of the heaven to whose eternal glories he may now be raised up by the gift of a Saviour, his heart should overflow with gratitude, and the language should be continually on his lips and in his heart, "THANKS BE UNTO GOD FOR HIS UNSPEAKABLE GIFT." Every other mercy should seem small compared with this; and every manifestation of right feeling in the heart should lead us to contemplate the source of it, and to feel, as Paul did, that all is to be traced to the unspeakable gift of God.

REMARKS on 2nd Corinthians Chapter 9

(1.) This chapter, with the preceding, derives special importance from the fact that it contains the most extended discussion of the principles of Christian charity which occurs in the Bible. No one can doubt that it was intended by the Redeemer that his people should be distinguished for benevolence. It was important, therefore, that there should be some portion of the New Testament where the principles on which charity should be exercised, and the motives by which Christians should be induced to give, should be fully stated. Such a discussion we have in these chapters; and they therefore demand the profound and prayerful attention of all who love the Lord Jesus.

(2.) We have here a striking specimen of the manner in which the Bible is written. Instead of abstract statements and systematic arrangement, the principles of religion are brought out in connexion with a case that actually occurred. But it follows that it is important to study attentively the Bible, and to be familiar with every part of it. In some part of the Scriptures, statements of the principles which should guide us in given circumstances will be found; and Christians should, therefore, be familiar with every part of the Bible.

(3.) These chapters are of special importance to the ministers of religion, and to all whose duty it is to press upon their fellow Christians the duty of giving liberally to the objects of benevolence. The principles on which it should be done are fully developed here. The motives which it is lawful to urge are urged here by Paul. It may be added, also, that the chapters are worthy of our profound study on account of the admirable tact and address which Paul evinces in inducing others to give. Well he knew human nature. Well he knew the motives which would influence others to give. And well he knew exactly how to shape his arguments and adapt his reasoning to the circumstances of those whom he addressed.

(4.) The summary of the motives presented in this chapter contains still the most important argument which can be urged to produce liberality. We cannot but admire the felicity of Paul in this address—a felicity not the result of craft and cunning, but resulting from his amiable feelings, and the love which he bore to the Corinthians and to the cause of benevolence. He reminds them of the high opinion which he had of them, and of the honourable mention which he had been induced to make of them, (2Co 9:1,2;) he reminds them of the painful result to his own feelings and theirs if the collection should in any way fail, and it should appear that his confidence in them had been misplaced, (2Co 9:3-5;) he refers them to the abundant reward which they might anticipate as the result of liberal benefactions, and of the fact that God loved those who gave cheerfully, (2Co 9:6,7;) he reminds them of the abundant grace of God, who was able to supply all their wants and to give them the means to contribute liberally to meet the wants of the poor, (2Co 9:8;) he reminds them of the joy which their liberality would occasion, and of the abundant thanksgiving to God which would result from it, (2Co 9:12,13;) and he refers them to the unspeakable gift of God, Jesus Christ as an example, and an argument, and as urging the highest claims in them, 2Co 9:15. "Who," says Doddridge, "could withstand the force of such oratory?" No doubt it was effectual in that case, and it should be in all others.

(5.) May the motives here urged by the apostle be effectual to persuade us all to liberal efforts to do good! Assuredly there is no less occasion for Christian liberality now than there was in the time of Paul. There are still multitudes of the poor who need the kind and efficient aid of Christians. And the whole world now is a field in which Christian beneficence may be abundantly displayed, and every land may and should experience the benefits of the charity to which the gospel prompts,

and which it enjoins. Happy are they who are influenced by the principles of the gospel to do good to all men! Happy they who have any opportunity, to illustrate the power of Christian principle in this; any ability to alleviate the wants of one sufferer, or to do anything in sending that gospel to benighted nations which alone can save the soul from eternal death!

(6.) Let us especially thank God for his unspeakable gift, Jesus Christ. Let us remember that to him we owe every opportunity to do good; that it was because he came that there is any possibility of benefiting a dying world; and that all who profess to love him are bound to imitate his example, and to show their sense of their obligation to God for giving a Saviour. How poor and worthless are all our gifts compared with the great gift of God; how slight our expressions of compassion, even at the best, for our fellow-men, compared with the compassion which he has shown for us ! When God has given his Son to die for us, what should we not be willing to give that we may show our gratitude, and that we may benefit a dying world!

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 1

INTRODUCTION to 2nd Corinthians Chapter 10

PAUL, having finished the subject of the duty of alms-giving in the previous chapter, enters in this on a vindication of himself from the charges of his enemies. His general design is to vindicate his apostolic authority, and to show that he had a right, as well as others, to regard himself as sent from God. This vindication is continued through chapters 11 and 12. In this chapter, the stress of the argument is, that he did not depend on anything external to recommend him on any "carnal weapons;" on anything which commended itself by the outward appearance; or on anything that was so much valued by the admirers of human eloquence and learning. He seems willing to admit all that his enemies could say of him on that head, and to rely on other proofs that he was sent from God. In chapter 11 he pursues the subject, and shows, by a comparison of himself with others, that he had as good a right certainly as they to regard himself as sent by God. In chapter 12 he appeals to another argument, to which none of his accusers were able to appeal, that he had been permitted to see the glories of the heavenly world, and had been favoured in a manner unknown to other men.

It is evident that there was one or more false teachers among the Corinthians, who called in question the Divine authority of Paul. These teachers were native Jews, 2Co 11:13,22, and they boasted much of their own endowments. It is impossible, except from the epistle itself, to ascertain the nature of their charges and objections against him. From the chapter before us it would seem that one principal ground of their objection was, that though he was bold enough in his letters, and had threatened to exercise discipline, yet that he would not dare to do it. They accused him of being, when present with them, timid, weak, mild, pusillanimous, of lacking moral courage to inflict the punishment which he had threatened in his letters: To this he replies in this chapter.

(1.) He appeals to the meekness and gentleness of Christ; thus indirectly and delicately vindicating his own mildness from their objections, and entreats them not to give him occasion to show the boldness and severity which he had purposed to do. He had no wish to be bold and severe in the exercise of discipline, 2Co 10:1,2.

(2.) He assures them that the weapons of his warfare were not carnal, but spiritual. He relied on the truth of the gospel, and on the power of motives; and these weapons were mighty, by the aid of God, to cast down all that offended him. Yet he was ready to revenge and punish all disobedience by severe measures, if it were necessary, 2Co 10:3-6.

(3.) They looked on the outward appearance. He cautioned them to remember that he had as good claims to be regarded as belonging to Christ as they had, 2Co 10:7. He had given proofs that he was an apostle; and the false teachers should look at those proofs, lest they should be found to be opposing God. He assured them that if he had occasion to exercise his power he would have no reason to be ashamed of it, 2Co 10:8. It would be found to be ample to execute punishment on his foes.

(4.) The false teachers had said that Paul was terrible only in his letters. He boasted of his power, but it was, they supposed, only *epistolary bravery*. He would not dare to execute his threatening. In reply to this, Paul, in a strain of severe irony, says that he would not seem to terrify them by mere letters. It would be by something far more severe. He advised such objectors, therefore, to believe that he would prove himself to be such as he had shown himself to be in his letters; to look at the evidence, since they boasted of their talent for reasoning, that he would show himself in fact to be what he had threatened to be, 2Co 10:9-12.

(5.) He pursues the strain of severe irony by secretly comparing himself with them, 2Co 10:12-16. They boasted much, but it was only by comparing themselves with one another, and not with any elevated standard of excellence. Paul admitted that he had not the courage to do that, 2Co 10:12. Nor did he dare to boast of things wholly beyond his ability, as they had done. He was contented to act only within the proper limits prescribed to him by his talents, and by the appointment of God. Not so they. They had boldness and courage to go far beyond that, and to boast of things wholly *beyond* their ability, and beyond the proper measure, 2Co 10:13,14. Nor had he courage to boast of entering into other men's labours. It required more courage than he had to make a boast of what he had done, if he had availed himself of things made ready to his hand, as if they were the fruit of his own labours, implying that *they* had done this; that they had come to Corinth, a church founded by his labours, and had quietly set themselves down there; and then, instead of going into other fields of labour, had called in question the authority of him who had founded the church, and who was labouring indefatigably elsewhere, 2Co 10:15,16. Paul adds, that such was not his intention, he aimed to preach the gospel beyond, to carry it to regions where it had not been spread. Such was the nature of his courage; such the kind of boldness which he had, and he was not ambitious to join them in *their* boasting.

(6.) He concludes this chapter with a very serious admonition. Leaving the strain of irony, he seriously says, that if any man were disposed to boast, it should be only in the Lord. He should glory not in self-commendation, but in the fact that he had evidence that the Lord approved him; not in his own talents or powers, but in the excellence and glory of the Lord, 2Co 10:17,18.

Verse 1. *Now I Paul myself beseech you*. I entreat you who are members of the church not to give me occasion for the exercise of severity in discipline. I have just expressed my confidence in the church in general, and my belief that you will act in accordance with the rules of the gospel.

But I cannot thus speak of all. There are some among you who have spoken with contempt of my authority and my claims as an apostle. Of them I cannot speak in this manner; but instead of *commanding* them, I *entreat* them not to give me occasion for the exercise of discipline.

By the meekness and gentleness of Christ. In view of the meekness and mildness of the Redeemer; or desiring to imitate his gentleness and kindness. Paul wished to imitate that. He did not wish to have occasion for severity, he desired at all times to imitate and to exhibit the gentle feelings of the Saviour. He had no pleasure in severity; and he did not desire to exhibit it.

Who in presence. Marg., *in outward appearance*. It may either mean that when present among them he appeared, according to their representation, to be humble, mild, gentle, 2Co 10:10, or that in his external appearance he had this aspect. **See Barnes "2Co 10:10"**.

Most probably it means that they had represented him as timid when among them, and afraid to exercise discipline, however much he had threatened it.

Am base among you. The word here used (*tapeinov*) usually means low, humble, poor. Here it means *timid, modest*, the opposite of boldness. Such was formerly the meaning of the English Word *base*. It was applied to those of low degree or rank; of humble birth; and stood opposed to those of elevated rank or dignity. Now it is commonly used to denote that which is degraded or worthless, of mean spirit, vile; and stands opposed to that which is manly and noble. But Paul did not mean to use it here in that sense. He meant to say that they regarded him as timid, and afraid to execute the punishment which he had threatened, and as manifesting a spirit which was the opposite of boldness. This was doubtless a *charge* which they brought against him; but we are not necessarily to infer that it was true. All that it proves is, that he was modest and unobtrusive, and that they interpreted this as timidity, and want of spirit.

But being absent am bold toward you. That is, in my letters. **See Barnes "2Co 10:10"**.

This they charged him with, that he was bold enough when away from them, but that he would be tame enough when he should meet them face to face, and that they had nothing to fear from him.

{a} "beseech you" Ro 12:1 {1} "in presence" "in outward appearance" {b} "am base" 2Co 10:10

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *That I may not be bold*. I entreat you so to act that I may not have occasion to exercise the severity which I fear I shall be compelled to use against those who accuse me of being governed wholly by worldly motives and policy. That I may not be compelled to be bold and decisive in my measures by your improper conduct.

Which think of us, Marg., *reckon*. They suppose this; or, they accuse me of it. By the word "us," here, Paul means himself, though it is possible also that he speaks in the name of his fellow-apostles and labourers who were associated with him, and the objections may have referred to all who acted with him.

As if we walked. As if we lived or acted. The word "walk," in the Scriptures, is often used to denote the course or manner of life. **See Barnes "Ro 4:12"**; **See Barnes** "2Co 5:7".

According to the flesh. **See Barnes "2Co 1:17".**

As if we were governed by the weak and corrupt principles of human nature. As if we had no higher motive than carnal and worldly policy. As if we were seeking our own advantage, and not the welfare of the world. The charge was, probably, that he was not governed by high and holy principles, but by the principles of mere worldly policy; that he was guided by personal interests, and by worldly views—by ambition, or the love of dominion, wealth, or popularity, and that he was destitute of every supernatural endowment, and every evidence of a Divine commission.

{c} "I think to be bold" 2Co 13:2,10 {2} "think of us" "reckon"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *For though we walk in the flesh*. Though we are mortal, like other men; though we dwell, like them, in mortal bodies, and necessarily must devote some care to our temporal wants; and though, being in the flesh, we are conscious of imperfections and frailties like others. The sense is, that he did not claim exemption from the common wants and frailties of nature. The best of men are subject to these wants and frailties; the best of men are liable to err.

We do not war after the flesh. The warfare in which he was engaged was with sin, idolatry, and all forms of evil. He means that in conducting this he was not actuated by worldly views or policy, or by such ambitious and interested aims as controlled the men of this world. This refers primarily to the warfare in which Paul was himself engaged as an apostle; and the idea is, that he went forth as a soldier under the great Captain of his salvation, to fight his battles, and to make conquests for him. A similar allusion occurs in 2Ti 2:3,4. It is true, however, that not only all ministers, but all Christians, are engaged in a warfare; and it is equally true that they do not maintain their conflict "after the flesh," or on the principles which govern the men of this, world. The warfare of Christians relates to the following points:

(1.) it is a warfare with the corrupt desires and sensual propensities of the heart; with internal corruption and depravity; with the remaining unsubdued propensities of a fallen nature.

(2.) With the powers of darkness—the mighty spirits of evil that seek to destroy us. See Eph 6:11-17.

(3.) With sin in all forms; with idolatry, sensuality, corruption, intemperance, profaneness, wherever they may exist. The Christian is opposed to all these; and it is the aim and purpose of his life, as far as he may be able, to resist and subdue them. He is a soldier, enlisted under the banner of the Redeemer, to oppose and resist all forms of evil. But his warfare is not conducted on worldly principles. Mohammed propagated his religion with the sword; and the men of this world seek for victory by arms and violence. The Christian looks for his conquests only by the force and power of truth, and by the agency of the Spirit of God.

{a} "after the flesh" Ro 8:13

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *For the weapons of our warfare*. The means by which we hope to achieve our victory.

Are not careful. Not those of the flesh. Not such as the men of the world use. They are not such as are employed by conquerors; nor are they such as men in general rely on to advance their cause. We do not depend on eloquence, or talent, or learning, or wealth, or beauty, or any of the external aids on which the men of this world rely. They are not such as derive advantage from any power inherent in themselves. Their strength is derived from God alone.

But mighty through God. Marg., "*to*" They are rendered mighty or powerful by the agency of God. They depend on him for their efficacy. Paul has not here specified the weapons on which he relied; but he had before specified them, 2Co 6:6,7, so that there was no danger of mistake. The weapons were such as were furnished by truth and righteousness, and these were rendered mighty by the attending agency of God. The sense is, that God is the Author of the doctrines which we preach, and that he attends them with the agency of his Spirit, and accompanies them to the hearts of men. It is important for all ministers to feel that their weapons are mighty ONLY through God. Conquerors and earthly warriors go into battle depending on the might of their own arm, and on the wisdom and skill which plans the battle. The Christian goes on his warfare, feeling that however well adapted the truths which he holds are to accomplish great purposes, and however wisely his plans are formed, yet that the efficacy of all depends on the agency of God. He has no hope of victory but in God. And if God does not attend him, he is sure of inevitable defeat.

To the pulling down of strong holds. The word here rendered "strongholds" (*ocurwma*) means, properly, a fastness, fortress, or strong fortification. It is here beautifully used to denote the various obstacles *resembling* a fortress which exist, and which are designed and adapted to oppose the truth and the triumph of the Christian's cause. All those obstacles are strongly *fortified*. The sins of his heart are fortified by long indulgence, and by the hold which they have on his soul. The wickedness of the world which he opposes is strongly fortified by the fact that it has seized on strong human passions; that one point strengthens another; that great numbers are united. The idolatry of the world was strongly fortified by prejudice, and long establishment, and the protection of laws, and the power of the priesthood; and the opinions of the world are entrenched behind false philosophy and the power of subtle argumentation. The whole world is fortified against Christianity; and the nations of the earth have been engaged in little else than in raising and strengthening such strongholds for the space of six thousand years. The Christian religion goes forth against all the combined and concentrated powers of resistance of the whole world; and the warfare is to be waged against every strongly fortified place of error and of sin. These strong fortifications of error and of sin are to be battered down and laid in ruins by our spiritual weapons.

{b} "weapons of our warfare" Eph 6:13 1Th 5:8 {c} "are not carnal" 1Ti 1:18 {1} "mighty" or "to" {d} "through God" 2Co 13:3,4 {e} "strong holds" Jer 1:10

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Casting down imaginations*. Marg., *reasonings*. The word is probably used here in the sense of *device*, and refers to all the plans of a wicked world—the various systems of false philosophy, and the reasonings of the enemies of the gospel. The various systems of false philosophy were so entrenched, that they might be called the stronghold of the enemies of God. The foes of Christianity pretend to a great deal of reason, and rely on that in resisting the gospel.

And every high thing, etc. Every exalted opinion respecting the dignity and purity of bunyan nature; all the pride of the human heart and of the understanding. All this is opposed to the knowledge of God, and all exalts itself into a vain self-confidence. Men entertain vain and unfounded opinions respecting their own excellency, and they feel that they do not need the provisions of the gospel, and are unwilling to submit to God.

And bringing into captivity, etc. The figure here is evidently taken from military conquests. The idea is, that all the strongholds of heathenism, and pride, and sin, would be demolished; and that when this was done, like throwing down the walls of a city, or making a breach, all the plans and purposes of the soul, the reason, the imagination, and all the powers of the mind, would be subdued or led in triumph by the gospel, like the inhabitants of a captured city. Christ was the great Captain in this warfare. In his name the battle was waged, and by his power the victory was won. The captives were made for him, and under his authority; and all were to be subject to his control. Every power of thought in the heathen world; all the systems of philosophy, and all forms of opinion among men; all the purposes of the soul; all the powers of reason, memory, judgment, fancy, in an individual, were all to come under the laws of Christ. All *doctrines* were to be in accordance with his will; philosophy should no longer control them, but they should be subject to the will of Christ. All the *plans of life* should be controlled by the will of Christ, and formed and executed under his control—as captives are led by a conqueror. All *the emotions and feelings of the heart* should be controlled by him, and led by him as a captive is led by a victor. The sense is, that it was the aim and purpose of Paul to accomplish this, and that it would certainly be done. The strongholds of philosophy, heathenism, and sin should be demolished, and all the opinions, plans, and purposes of the world should become subject to the all-conquering Redeemer.

{2} "imaginations" "reasonings" {f} "every high thing" 1Co 1:19 {g} "thing" Ps 18:27 Eze 17:24 {h} "captivity" Mt 11:29,30 {i} "to the obedience" Ge 8:21 Mt 15:19; Heb 4:12

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *And having in a readiness*, etc. I am ready to punish all disobedience, notwithstanding all that is said to the contrary. **See Barnes** "2Co 10:1, **See Barnes "2Co 10:2"**.

Clothed as I am with this power; aiming to subdue all things to Christ, though the weapons of my warfare are not carnal, and though I am modest or timid 2Co 10:1 when I am with you, I am prepared to take any measures of severity required by my apostolic, office, in order that I may inflict deserved punishment on those who have violated the laws of Christ. The design of this is to meet the objection of his enemies, that he would not dare to execute his threatenings.

When your obedience is fulfilled. Doddridge renders this, "Now your obedience is fulfilled, and the sounder part of your church restored to due order and submission." The idea seems to be, that

Paul was ready to inflict discipline when the church had shown a readiness to obey his laws, and to do its own duty—delicately intimating that the reason why it was not done was the want of entire promptness in the church itself, and that it could not be done on any offender as long as the church itself was not prepared to sustain him. The church was to discountenance the enemies of the Redeemer; to show an entire readiness to sustain the apostle, and to unite with him in the effort to maintain the discipline of Christ's house.

{k} "obedience is fulfilled" 2Co 7:15

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Do ye look on things after the outward appearance*? This is addressed evidently to the members of the church, and with reference to the claims which had been set up by the false teachers. There can be no doubt that they valued themselves on their external advantages, and laid claim to peculiar honour in the work of the ministry, because they were superior in personal appearance, in rank, manners, or eloquence to Paul. Paul reproves them for thus judging, and assures them that this was not a proper criterion by which to determine on qualifications for the apostolic office. Such things were highly valued among the Greeks, and a considerable part of the effort of Paul in these letters is to show that these things constitute no evidence that those who possessed them were sent from God.

If any man trust to himself, etc. This refers to the false teachers who laid claims to be the followers of Christ by way of eminence. Whoever these teachers were, it is evident that they claimed to be on the side of Christ, and to be appointed by him. They were probably Jews, and they boasted of their talents and eloquence, and possibly that they had seen the Saviour. The phrase, "trust to himself," seems to imply that they relied on some special merit of their own, or some special advantage which they had.— *Bloomfield*. It may have been that they were of the same tribe that he was, or that they had seen him, or that they confided in their own talents or endowments as proof that they had been sent by him. It is not an uncommon thing for men. to have such confidence in their own gifts, and particularly in a power of fluent speaking, as to suppose that this is a sufficient evidence that they are sent to preach the gospel.

Let him of himself think this again. Since he relies so much on himself; since he has such confidence in his own powers, let him look at the evidence that I also am of Christ.

That, as he is Christ's, even so are we Christ's. That I have given as much evidence that I am commissioned by Christ as they can produce. It may be of a different kind. It is not in eloquence, and rank, and the gift of a rapid and ready elocution, but it may be superior to what they are able to produce. Probably Paul refers here to the fact that he had seen the Lord Jesus, and that he had been directly commissioned by him. The sense is, that no one could produce more proofs of being called to the ministry than he could.

{a} "appearance" Joh 7:24

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *For though I should boast*, etc. If I should make even higher claims than I have done to a Divine commission. I could urge higher evidence than I have done that I am sent by the Lord Jesus.

Of our authority. Of my authority as an apostle, my power to administer discipline, and to direct the affairs of the church.

Which the Lord hath given us for edification. A power primarily conferred to build up his people and save them, and not to destroy.

I should not be ashamed. It would be founded on good evidence, and sustained by the nature of my commission. I should also have no occasion to be ashamed of the manner in which it has been exercised —a power that has in fact been employed in extending religion and edifying the church, and not in originating and sustaining measures fitted to destroy the soul.

{*} "boast" "glory" {b} "authority" 2Co 13:2,3 {c} "and not for your destruction" 2Co 13:8

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *That I may not seem*, etc. The meaning of this verse seems to be this: "I say that I might boast more of my power in order that I may not appear disposed to terrify you with my letters merely. I do not threaten more than I can perform. I have it in my power to execute all that I have threatened,, and to strike an awe not only by my letters, but by the infliction of extraordinary miraculous punishments. And if I should boast that I had done this, and could do it again, I should have no reason to be ashamed. It would not be vain empty boasting; not boasting which is not well-founded."

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *For his letters*. The letters which he has sent to the church when absent. Reference is had here probably to the first epistle to the Corinthians. They might also have seen some of Paul's other epistles, and been so well acquainted with them as to be able to make the general remark that he had the power of writing in an authoritative and impressive manner.

Say they. Marg., *Saith he*. Gr., (*fhsi*) in the singular. This seems to have referred to some one person who had uttered the words— perhaps some one who was the principal leader of the faction opposed to Paul.

Are weighty and powerful. Tindal renders this, "sore and strong." The Greek is, "heavy and strong," (*bareiai kai iscurai*). The sense is, that his letters were energetic and powerful. They abounded with strong argument, manly appeals, and impressive reproof. This even his enemies

were compelled to admit, and this no one can deny who ever read them. Paul's letters comprise a considerable portion of the New Testament; and some of the most important doctrines of the New Testament are those which are advocated and enforced by him; and his letters have done more to give shape to the theological doctrines of the Christian world than any other cause whatever. He wrote fourteen epistles to churches and individuals on various occasions and on a great variety of topics; and his letters soon rose into very high repute among even the inspired ministers of the New Testament, 2Pe 3:15,16, and were regarded as inculcating the most important doctrines of religion. The general characteristics of Paul's letters are:

(1.) They are strongly argumentative. See especially the epistles to the Romans and the Hebrews.

(2.) They are distinguished for boldness and rigour of style.

(3.) They are written under great energy of feeling and of thought—a rapid and impetuous torrent that bears him forcibly along.

(4.) They abound more than most other writings in parentheses, and the sentences are often involved and obscure.

(5.) They often evince rapid transitions and departures from the regular current of thought. A thought strikes him suddenly, and he pauses to illustrate it, and dwells upon it long, before he returns to the main subject. The consequence is, that it is often difficult to follow him.

(6.) They are powerful in reproof—abounding with strokes of great boldness of denunciation, and also with specimens of most withering sarcasm and most delicate irony.

(7.) They abound in expressions of great tenderness and pathos. Nowhere can be found expressions of a heart more tender and affectionate than in the writings of Paul.

(8.) They dwell much on great and profound doctrines, and on the application of the principles of Christianity to the various duties of life.

(9.) They abound with references to the Saviour. He illustrates everything by his life, his example, his death, his resurrection. It is not wonderful that letters composed on such subjects and in such a manner, by an inspired man, produced a deep impression on the Christian world; nor that they should be regarded now as among the most important and valuable portions of the Bible. Take away Paul's letters, and what a chasm would be made in the New Testament! What a chasm in the religious opinions and in the consolations of the Christian world!

But his bodily presence. His personal appearance.

Is weak. Imbecile, feeble, (*asyenhv*,) a word often used to denote infirmity of body, sickness, disease, Mt 25.39,43,44; Lu 10:9; Ac 4:9 5:15,16 1Co 11:30.

Here it is to be observed that this is a mere charge which was brought-against him, and it is not of necessity to be supposed that it was true, though the presumption is that there was some foundation for it. It is supposed to refer to some bodily imperfections, and possibly to his diminutive stature. Chrysostom says that his stature was low, his body crooked, and his head bald. Lucian, in his Philopatris, says of him, Corpore erat parvo, contracto, incurvo, tricubitali—pobably an exaggerated description, perhaps a caricature, to denote one very diminutive, and having no advantages of personal appearance. According to Nicephorus, Paul "was a little man, crooked, and almost bent like a bow; with a pale countenance, long and wrinkled; a bald head; his eyes full of fire and benevolence; his beard long, thick, and interspersed with gray hairs, as was his head," etc. But there is no certain evidence of the truth of these representations. Nothing in the Bible would lead us to suppose that Paul was remarkably diminutive or deformed; and though there may be some foundation for the charge here alleged that his bodily presence was weak, yet we are to remember that this was

the accusation of his enemies, and that it was doubtless greatly exaggerated. Nicephorus was a writer of the sixteenth century, and his statements are worthy of no regard. That Paul was eminently an eloquent man may be inferred from a great many considerations; some of which are,

(1.) his recorded discourses in the Acts of the Apostles, and the effect produced by them. No one can read his defence before Agrippa or Felix, and not be convinced that as an orator he deserves to be ranked among the most distinguished of ancient times. No one who reads the account in the Acts can believe that he had any remarkable impediment in his speech, or that he was remarkably deformed.

(2.) Such was somehow his grace and power as an orator that he was taken by the inhabitants of Lycaonia as Mercury, the god of eloquence, Ac 14:12. Assuredly the evidence here is, that Paul was not deformed.

(3.) It may be added, that Paul is mentioned by Longinus among the principal orators of antiquity. From these circumstances, there is no reason to believe that Paul was remarkably deficient in the qualifications requisite for an orator, or that he was in any way remarkably deformed.

And his speech contemptible. To be despised. Some suppose that he had an impediment in his speech. But conjecture here is vain and useless. We are to remember that this is a charge made by his adversaries, and that it was made by the fastidious Greeks, who professed to be great admirers of eloquence, but who in his time confided much more in the mere art of the rhetorician than in the power of thought, and in energetic appeals to the reason and conscience of men. Judged by their standard, it may be that Paul had not the graces in voice or manner, or in the knowledge of the Greek language, which they esteemed necessary in a finished orator; but judged by his power of thought, and his bold and manly defence of truth, and his energy of character and manner, and his power of impressing truth on mankind, he deserves, doubtless, to be ranked among the first orators of antiquity. No man has left the impress of his own mind on more other minds than Paul.

{1} "say they" "saith he"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Let such an one think this*, etc. Let them not flatter themselves that there will be any discrepancy between my words and my deeds. Let them feel that all which has been threatened will be certainly executed, unless there is repentance. Paul here designedly contradicts the charge which was made against him; and means to say that all that he had threatened in his letters would be certainly executed, unless there was reform. I think that the evidence here is clear that Paul does not intend to admit what they said about his bodily presence to be true; and most probably all that has been recorded about his deformity is mere fable.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *For we dare not make ourselves of the number*. We admit that we are not bold enough for that. They had accused him of a want of boldness and energy when present with them, 1Co 10:1,10. Here, in a strain of severe but delicate irony, he says he was not bold enough to do things which they had done. He did not dare to do the things which, had been done among them. To such boldness of character, present or absent, he could lay no claim.

Or compare ourselves, etc. I am not bold enough for that. That requires a stretch of boldness and energy to which I can lay no claim.

That commend themselves. That put themselves forward, and that boast of their endowments and attainments. It is probable that this was commonly done by those to whom the apostle here refers; and it is certain that it is everywhere the characteristic of pride. To do this, Paul says, required greater boldness than he possessed, and on this point he yielded to them the palm. The satire here is very delicate, and yet very severe, and was such as would doubtless be felt by them.

But they measuring themselves by themselves. Whitby and Clarke suppose that this means that they compared themselves with each other; and that they made the false apostles particularly their standard. Doddridge, Grotius, Bloomfield, and some others suppose the sense to be, that they made themselves the standard of excellence. They looked continually on their own accomplishments, and did not look at the excellences of others. They thus formed a disproportionate opinion of themselves, and undervalued all others. Paul says that he had not boldness enough for that. It required a moral courage to which he could lay no claim. Horace (B. i. Ep. 7, 98) has an expression similar to this:

Metri se quemque suo modulo ac pede, veturn est.

The sense of Paul is, that they made themselves the standard of excellence; that they were satisfied with their own attainments; and that they overlooked the superior excellence and attainments of others. This is a graphic description of pride and self-complacency; and alas! it is what is often exhibited. How many there are, and it is to be feared even among professing Christians, who have no other standard of excellence than themselves. Their views are the standard of orthodoxy; their modes of worship are the standard of the proper manner of devotion; their habits and customs are in their own estimation perfect; and their own characters are the models of excellence, and they see little or no excellence in those who differ from them. They look on themselves as the true measure of orthodoxy, humility, zeal, and piety; and they condemn all others, however excellent they may be, who differ from them.

And comparing themselves, etc. Or rather comparing themselves with themselves. Themselves they make to be the standard, and they judge of everything by that.

Are not wise. Are stupid and foolish. Because

(1.) they had no such excellence as to make themselves the standard.

(2.) Because this was an indication of pride.

(3.) Because it made them blind to the excellences of others. It was to be presumed that others had endowments not inferior to theirs.

(4.) Because the requirements of God, and the character of the Redeemer, were the proper standard of conduct. Nothing is a more certain indication of folly than for a man to make himself the standard of excellence. Such an individual must be blind to his own real character; and the only thing certain about his attainments is that he is inflated with pride. And yet how common! How self-satisfied are most persons! How pleased with their own character and attainments! How grieved at any comparison which is made with others implying their inferiority! How prone to undervalue

all others simply because they differ from them! The margin renders this, "understand it not," that is, they do not understand their own character or their inferiority.

{a} "we dare not" 2Co 3:1 {1} "are not wise" "understand it not" {b} "wise" Pr 26:12

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *But we will not boast of things without our measure*. Tindal renders this, "But we will not rejoice above measure." There is great obscurity in the language here, arising from its brevity. But the general idea seems to be plain. Paul says that he had not boldness as they had to boast of things wholly *beyond* his proper rule and his actual attainments and influence: and, especially, that he was not disposed to enter into other men's labours; or to boast of things that had been done by the mere influence of his name, and beyond the proper limits of his personal exertions. He made no boast of having done anything where he had not been himself on the ground and laboured assiduously to secure the object. *They*, it is not improbable, had boasted of what had been done in Corinth as though it were really their work, though it had been done by the apostle himself. Nay more, it is probable that they boasted of what had been done by the mere influence of their name. Occupying a central position, they supposed that their reputation had gone abroad,and that the mere influence of their reputation had had an important effect. Not so with Paul. He made no boast of anything but what God had enabled him to do by his evangelical labours, and by personal exertions. He entered into no other men's labours, and claimed nothing that others had done as his own. He was not bold enough for that.

But according to the measure of the rule, etc. Marg., *or line*. The word rendered "*rule*," (*kanwn*, whence our English word *canon*,) means properly a *reed, rod, or staff* employed to keep anything stiff, erect, asunder, (Hom. Iliad, 8, 103 ;) then a measuring rod or line; then any standard or rule—its usual meaning in the New Testament, as, e.g., of life and doctrine, Ga 6:16; Php 3:16.—*Robinson's Lex*. Here it means the limit, boundary line, or sphere of action assigned to any one. Paul means to say that God had appropriated a certain line or boundary as the proper limit of his sphere of action; that his appropriate sphere extended to them; that in going to them, though they were far distant from the field of his early labours, he had confined himself within the proper limits assigned him by God; and that in boasting of his labours among them he was not boasting of anything which did not properly fall within the sphere of labour assigned to him. The meaning is, that Paul was especially careful not to boast of anything beyond his proper bounds.

Which God hath distributed to us. Which, in assigning our respective fields of labour, God has assigned unto me and my fellow-labourers. The Greek word here rendered "distributed" (*emerisen*) means, properly, to measure; and the sense is, that God had measured out or apportioned their respective fields of labour; that by his providence he had assigned to each one his proper sphere; and that, in the distribution, Corinth had fallen to the lot of Paul. In going there he had kept within the proper limits; in boasting of his labours and success there he did not boast of what did not belong to him.

A measure to reach even unto you. The sense is, "The limits assigned me include you, and I may therefore justly boast of what I have done among you as within my proper field of labour."

Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles, Ac 26:17,18; and the whole country of Greece, therefore, he regarded as falling within the limits assigned to him. No one therefore, could blame him for going there as if he was an intruder; no one assert that he had gone beyond the proper bounds.

{2} "the rule" "line"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *For we stretch not ourselves beyond our measure*. In coming to preach to you, we have not gone beyond the proper limits assigned us. We have not endeavoured to enlarge the proper boundaries, to *stretch the line* which limited us but have kept honestly within the proper limits.

As though we reached not unto you. That is, as if our boundaries did not extend so far as to comprehend you. We have not overstepped the proper limits as if Greece was not within the proper sphere of action.

For we are come as far as to you, etc. In the regular work of preaching the gospel we have come to you. We have gone from place to place preaching the gospel where we had opportunity; we have omitted no important places, until in the regular discharge of our duties in preaching we have reached you, and have preached the gospel to you. We have not omitted other places in order to come to you and enter into the proper field of labour of others; but in the regular work of making the gospel known as far as possible to all men, we have come to Corinth. Far as it is, therefore, from the place where we started, we have approached it in a regular manner, and have not gone out of our proper province in doing it.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Not boasting of things without our measure*. There is here probably an allusion to the false teachers at Corinth. They had come after Paul had been there and had entered into his labours. When he had founded the church; when he had endured trials and persecutions in order to reach Corinth; when he had laboured there for a year and a half, Ac 18:11, they came and entered the quiet and easy field, formed parties, and claimed the field as their own. Paul says that he had not courage to do that. **See Barnes "2Co 10:12".**

That required a species of boldness to which he could lay no claim; and he did not assume honour to himself like that.

That is, of other men's labours. Not intruding into churches which we did not establish, and claiming the right to direct their affairs, and to exclude the founders from all proper honours and all influence, and endeavouring to alienate the affections of Christians from their spiritual father and guide.

But having hope, etc. So far from this; so far from a desire to enter into the labours of others, and quietly enjoying the avails of their industry; and so far even from a desire to sit down ourselves

and enjoy the fruit of our own labours, I desire to penetrate other untrodden regions; to encounter new dangers; to go where the gospel has not been planted, and to rear other churches, there. I do not, therefore, make these remarks as if I wished even to dispossess the teachers that have entered into my labours. I make them because I wish to be aided by you in extending the gospel further; and I look to your assistance in order that I may have the means of going into the regions where I have not made Known the name of the Redeemer.

When your faith is increased. When you become so strong as not to need my presence and my constant care; and when you shall be able to speed me on my way, and to aid me on my journey. He expected to be assisted by them in his efforts to carry the gospel to other countries.

That we shall be enlarged. Marg., *Magnified in you*. Bloomfield supposes that this means, "to gain fame and glory by you;" that is, as the teacher may justly by his pupils. So Robinson renders it, "to make great, to praise." But to me the idea seems to be, that he wished them to enlarge or magnify him by introducing him to larger fields of action; by giving him a wider sphere of labour. It was not: that he wished to be magnified by obtaining a wider reputation, not as a matter of praise or ambition, but he wished to have his work and success greatly enlarged. This he hoped to be enabled to do partly by the aid of the church at Corinth. When they became able to manage their own affairs; when his time was not demanded to superintend them; when their faith became so strong that his presence was not needed; and when they should assist him in his preparations for travel, then he would enter on his wider field of labour. He had no intention of sitting down in ease, as the false teachers in Corinth seem disposed to have done.

According to our rule. Greek, "According to our canon." **See Barnes "2Co 10:13"**.

The sense is, according to the rule by which the sphere of his labours had been marked out. His rule was to carry the gospel as far as possible to the heathen world. He regarded the regions lying far beyond Corinth as coming properly within his limits; and he desired to occupy that field.

Abundantly. Greek, Unto abundance. So as to abound; that is, to occupy the field assigned as far as possible.

{*} "boasting" "glorying" {a} "other men's labours" Ro 15:20 {1} "enlarged" "magnified in you" {+} "rule" "line"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *To preach the gospel in the regions beyond you*. What regions are referred to here can be only a matter of conjecture. It may be that he wished to preach in other parts of Greece, and that he designed to go to Arcadia or Lacedaemon. Rosenmuller supposes that, as the Corinthians were engaged in commerce, the apostle hoped that by them some tidings of the gospel would reach the countries with which they were engaged in traffic. But I think it most probable that he alludes to Italy and Spain. It is certain that he had formed the design of visiting Spain, Ro 15:24,28; and he doubtless wished the Corinthians to aid him in that purpose, and was anxious to do this as soon as the condition of the eastern churches would allow it.

And not to boast in another man's line of things, etc. Marg., *rule*, the same word (*kanwn*) which occurs in 2Co 10:13. The meaning is, that Paul did not mean to boast of what properly belonged

to others. He did not claim what they had done as his own. He did not intend to labour within what was properly their bounds, and then to claim the field and the result of the labour as his. He probably means here to intimate that this had been done by the false teachers of Corinth; but so far was he from designing to do this, that he meant soon to leave Corinth, which was properly within his limits, and the church which he had founded there, to go and preach the gospel to other regions. Whether Paul ever went to Spain has been a question, **See Barnes "Ro 15:24"**.

but it is certain that he went to Rome, and that he preached the gospel in many other places after this besides Corinth.

{2} "line" "rule"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *But he that glorieth*, he that boasts. Whatever may be the occasion of his boasting, whether in planting churches or in watering them; whether in his purposes, plans, toils, or success. Paul himself did not deem it improper on some occasions to boast, 2Co 11:16 12:5, but it was not of his own power, attainments, or righteousness, he was disposed to trace all to the Lord, and to regard him as the Source of all blessing and all success.

Let him glory in the Lord. In this serious and weighty admonition, Paul designs, doubtless, to express the manner in which he was accustomed to glory, and to furnish an admonition to the Corinthians. In the previous part of the chapter there had been some severe irony. He closes the chapter with the utmost seriousness and solemnity of manner, in order to show on his part that he was not disposed to glory in his own attainments, and to admonish them not to boast of theirs. If they had anything valuable, they should regard the Lord as the Author of it. In this admonition it is probable that Paul had in his eye the passage in Jer 9:23,24, though he has not expressly quoted it: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth." The sentiment is a favourite one with Paul, as it should be with all Christians. **See Barnes "1Co 1:31"**.

On this verse we may here remark,

I. That nothing is more common than for men to boast or glory. Little as they really have in which to glory, yet there is no one probably who has not *something* of which he is proud, and of which he is disposed to boast. It would be difficult or impossible to find a person who had not something on which he prided himself; something in which he esteemed himself superior to others.

II. The things of which they boast are very various.

(1.) Many are proud of their personal beauty—many, too, who would be unwilling to be thought proud of it.

(2.) Many glory in their accomplishments; or, what is more likely, in the accomplishments of their children.

(3.) Many glory in their talents; talents for anything, valuable or not, in. which they suppose they surpass others. They glory in their talent for eloquence, or science, or gaining knowledge; or

in their talent for gaining property or keeping it; for their skill in their professions or callings; for their ability to run, to leap, or to practise even any trick or sleight of hand. There is nothing so worthless that it does not constitute a subject of glorying, *provided it be ours*.

If it belong to others, it may be valueless.

(4.) Many glory in their property; in fine houses, extended plantations, or in the reputation of being rich; or in gorgeous dress, equipage, and furniture. In short, there is nothing which men possess in which they are not prone to glory. Forgetful of God the giver; forgetful that all may be soon taken from them, or that they soon must leave all; forgetful that none of these things can constitute a distinction in the grave or beyond, they boast as if these things were to remain for ever, and as if they had been acquired independently of God. How prone is the man of talents to forget that God has given him his intellect, and that for its proper use he must give account! How prone is the rich man to forget that he must die! How prone the gay and the beautiful to forget that they will lie undistinguished in the grave; and that death will consume them as soon as the most vile and worthless of the species!

III. If we glory, it should be in the Lord. We should ascribe our talents, wealth, health, strength, salvation to him. We should rejoice

(1.) that we have such a Lord—so glorious, so full of mercy, so powerful, so worthy of confidence and love.

(2.) We should rejoice in our endowments and possessions as his gift. We should rejoice that we may come and lay everything at his feet; and whatever may be our rank, or talents, or learning, we should rejoice that we may come with the humblest child of poverty, and sorrow, and want, and say, "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake," Ps 115:1. **See Barnes "1Co 1:31"**.

{a} "he that glorieth" Jer 9:24

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 10 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *For not he who commendeth himself*, etc. Not he who boasts of his talents and endowments. He is not to be judged by the estimate which he shah place on himself, but by the estimate which God shall form and express.

Is approved. By God. It is no evidence that we shall be saved that we are prone to commend ourselves. See Ro 12:10.

But whom the Lord commendeth. **See Barnes "Ro 2:29"**.

The idea here is, that men are to be approved or rejected by God. He is to pass judgment on them, and that judgment is to be in accordance with his estimate of their character, and not according to their own. If he approves them, they will be saved; if he does not, vain will be all their empty boasting—vain all their reliance on their wealth, eloquence, learning, or earthly honours. None will save them from condemnation; not all these things can purchase for them eternal life. Paul thus seriously shows that we should be mainly anxious to obtain the Divine favour. It should be the grand aim and purpose of our life; and we should repress all disposition for vain-glory or

self-confidence; all reliance on our talents, attainments, or accomplishments for salvation. OUR BOAST IS THAT WE HAVE SUCH A REDEEMER; AND IN THAT WE ALL MAY GLORY.

{b} "whom the Lord commendeth"

REMARKS on 2nd Corinthians Chapter 10

(1.) We should have no desire to show off any peculiar boldness or energy of character which we may have, 2Co 10:1,2. We should greatly prefer to evince the gentleness and meekness of Christ. Such a character is in itself of far more value than one that is merely energetic and bold; that is rash, authoritative, and fond of display.

(2.) They who are officers in, the church should have no desire to administer discipline, 2Co 10:2. Some men are so fond of power, that they always love to exercise it. They are willing to show it even by inflicting punishment on others; and, "dressed in a little brief authority," they are constantly seeking occasion to show their consequence; they magnify trifles; they are unwilling to pass by the slightest offences. The reason is not that they love the truth, but that they love their own consequence, and they seek every opportunity to show it.

(3.) All Christians and all Christian ministers are engaged in a warfare, 2Co 10:3. They are at war with sin in their own hearts, and with sin wherever it exists on earth, and with the powers of darkness. With foes so numerous and so vigilant, they should not expect to live a life of ease or quietness. Peace, perfect peace, they may expect in heaven, not on earth. Here they are to fight the good fight of faith, and thus to lay hold on eternal life. It has been the common lot of all the children of God to maintain such a war, and shall we expect to be exempt? \-

Shall I be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize,
And sailed through bloody seas ?

Are there no foes for me to face—
Must I not stem the flood?
Is this vile world a friend to grace,
To help me on to God?"

(4.) The weapons of the Christian are not to be carnal, but are to be spiritual, 2Co 10:4. He is not to make his way by the exhibition of human passion; in bloody strife; and by acting under the influence of ambitious feelings. Truth is his weapon; and armed with truth, and aided by the Spirit of God, he is to expect the victory. How different is the Christian warfare from others! How different is Christianity from other systems! Mohammed made his way by arms, and propagated his religion amidst the din of battle. But not so Christianity. That is to make its way by the silent, but mighty operation of truth; and there is not a rampart of idolatry and sin that is not yet to fall before it.

(5.) The Christian should be a man of a pure spirit, 2Co 10:4. He is to make his way by the truth. He should therefore love the truth, and he should seek to diffuse it as far as possible. In propagating or defending it, he should be always mild, gentle, and kind. Truth is never advanced, and an adversary is never convinced, where passion is evinced; where there is a haughty manner, or a belligerent spirit. The apostolic precepts are *full of wisdom*—speaking the truth in love," Eph 4:15; "in MEEKNESS INSTRUCTING those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth," 2Ti 2:25.

(6.) In his warfare, the Christian shall conquer, 2Co 10:4,5. Against the truth of Christianity nothing has been able to stand. It made its way against the arrayed opposition of priests and emperors; against customs and laws; against inveterate habits and opinions; against all forms of sin, until it triumphed, and "the banners of the faith floated from the palaces of the Caesars." So it will be in all the conflicts with evil. Nothing is more certain than that the powers of darkness in this world are destined to fall before the power of Christian truth, and that every stronghold of sin shall yet be demolished. So it is in the conflicts of the individual Christian. He may struggle long and hard. He may have many foes to contend with. But he shall gain the victory. His triumph shall be secure; and he shall yet be enabled to say, "I have fought a good fight— *henceforth there is laid up for me a CROWN*"

"The saints in all this glorious war
Shall conquer, though they die;
They see the triumph from afar,
And seize it with their eye."

(7.) Yet all should feel their dependence on God, 2Co 10:4. It is only through him, and by his aid, that we have any power. Truth itself has no power except as it is attended and directed by God; and we should engage in our conflict feeling that none but God can give us the victory. If forsaken by him, we shall fall; if supported by him, we may face without fear a "frowning world," and all the powers of the "dark world of hell."

(8.) We should not judge by the outward appearance, 2Co 10:7. It is the heart that determines the character; and by that God shall judge us, and by that we should judge ourselves.

(9.) We should aim to extend the gospel as far as possible, 2Co 10:14-16. Paul aimed to go beyond the regions where the gospel had been preached, and to extend it to far-distant lands. So the "field" still "is the world." A large portion of the earth is yet unevangelized. Instead, therefore, of sitting down quietly in enjoyment and ease, let us, like him, earnestly desire to extend the influence of pure religion, and to bring distant nations to the saving knowledge of the truth.

(10.) Let us not boast in ourselves, 2Co 10:17. Not of our talents, wealth, learning, or accomplishments let us glory. But let us glory that we have such a God as JEHOVAH. Let us glory that we have such a Redeemer as Jesus Christ. Let us glory that we have such a sanctifier as the Holy Spirit. Let us acknowledge God as the Source of all our blessings, and to him let us honestly consecrate our hearts and our lives.

(11.) What a reverse of judgment there will yet be on human character! 2Co 10:17,18. How many now commend themselves who will be *condemned* in the last day! How many men boast of their talents and morals, and even their religion, who will then be involved in indiscriminate condemnation with the most vile and worthless of the race! How anxious should we be, therefore, to secure the approbation of God! and whatever our fellow-men may say of us, how infinitely desirable is it to be commended then by our heavenly Father!

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 1

Introduction to 2nd Corinthians Chapter 11

THIS chapter is connected in its general design with the preceding. The object of Paul is to vindicate himself from the charges which had been brought against him, and especially to vindicate his claims to the apostolic office. It is *ironical* in its character, and is of course severe upon the false teachers who had accused him in Corinth. The main purpose is to state his claims to the office of an apostle, and especially to show that when he mentioned those claims, or even boasted of his labours, he had ground for doing so. It would seem that they had charged him with "*folly*" in boasting as he had done. Probably the false teachers were loud in proclaiming their own praise, but represented Paul as guilty of folly in praising himself. He therefore 2Co 11:1 asks them if they could bear with him a little further in his folly, and entreats them to do it. This verse contains the scope of the chapter; and the remainder of the chapter is an enumeration of the causes which he had for his boasting, though probably each reason is adapted to some for of accusation brought against him.

Having entreated them to bear with him a little further, he states the reasons why he was disposed to go into this subject at all, 2Co 10:2-4. It was not because he was disposed to sound his own praise, but it was from love to them. He had espoused them as a chaste virgin to Christ. He was afraid that their affections would be alienated from the Redeemer. He reminded them of the manner in which Eve was tempted; and he reminded them that by the same smooth and plausible arts their affections might also be stolen away, and that they might be led into sin. He reminds them that there was danger of their receiving another gospel, and expresses the apprehension that they had done it, and that they had embraced a deceiver, 2Co 11:4.

Having made this general statement of his design, Paul now goes more into detail in answering the objections against him, and in showing the reasons which he had for boasting as he had done. The statement in answer to their objections relates to the following points :—

(1.) He had supposed that he was not behind the chiefest of the apostles. He had supposed that he had claims to the apostolic office of as high an order as any of them. Called to the work as he had been, and labouring as he had done, he had regarded himself as having an indisputable claim to the office of an apostle. True, they had charged him with being rude in speech—a charge which he was not disposed to deny; but in a far more important point than that he had showed that he was not disqualified for the apostolic office. In *knowledge*, the main qualification, he had not been deficient, as probably even his opponents were disposed to admit, 2Co 11:5,6.

(2.) He had not deprived himself of the claims to the office and honours of an apostle by declining to receive from them a compensation, and by preaching the gospel without charge, 2Co 11:7-9. Probably they had alleged that this was a proof that he knew that he had no claim to the honours of an apostle. He therefore states exactly how this was. He had *received* a support, but he had robbed other churches to do it. And even when he was with them, he had received supplies from a distant church, in order that he might not be burdensome to them. The charge was therefore groundless, that he *knew* that he had no right to the support due to an apostle.

(3.) He declares it to be his fixed purpose that no one should prevent his boasting in that manner. And this he did because he loved them, and because he would save them from the snares of those Who would destroy them. He therefore stated the true character of those who attempted to deceive

them. They were the ministers of Satan, appearing as the ministers of righteousness, as Satan himself was transformed into an angel of light, 2Co 11:10-15.

(4.) Paul claims the privilege of boasting as a fool a little further, 2Co 11:16. And he claims that as others boasted, and as they were allowed to do so by the Corinthians, he had also a right to do the same thing. They suffered them to boast; they allowed them to do it, even if they devoured them, and smote them, and took their property. It was but fair, therefore, that he should be allowed to boast a little of what he was, and of what he had done, 2Co 11:17-20.

(5.) He goes, therefore, into an extended and most tender description of what he had suffered, and of his claims to their favourable regard. He had all the personal advantages arising from birth which they could pretend to. He was a Hebrew, of the seed of Abraham, and a minister of Christ, 2Co 11:21-23. He had endured far more labours and dangers than they had done; and, in order to set this before them, he enumerates the trials through which he had passed, and states the labours which constantly came upon him, 2Co 11:23-30. Of these things, of his sufferings, and trials, and infirmities, he felt that he had a right to speak, and these constituted a far higher claim to the confidence of the Christian church than the endowments of which his adversaries boasted.

(6.) As another instance of peril and suffering, he refers to the fact that his life was endangered when he was in Damascus, and that he barely escaped by being lowered down from the wall of the city, 2Co 11:31-33. The conclusion which Paul doubtless intends should be derived from all this is, that he had far higher grounds of claim to the office of an apostle than his adversaries would admit, or than they could furnish themselves. He admitted that he was weak, and subject to infirmities; he did not lay claim to the graces of a polished elocution, as they did; but if a life of self-denial and toil, of an honest devotion to the cause of truth at imminent and frequent hazard of life, constituted an evidence that he was an apostle, he had that evidence. They appealed to their birth, their rank, their endowments as public speakers. In the quiet and comfort of a congregation and church established to their hands; in reaping the avails of the labours of others; and in the midst of enjoyments, they coolly laid claims to the honours of the ministerial office, and denied his claims. In trial, and peril, and labour, and poverty; in scourges, and imprisonments, and shipwrecks; in hunger and thirst; in unwearied travelling from place to place; and in the care of all the churches, were his claims to their respect and confidence, and he was willing that any one that chose should make the comparison between them. Such was his "foolish" boasting; such his claims to their confidence and regard.

Verse 1. *Would to God*. Greek, "I would," *ofelon*. This expresses earnest desire, but in the Greek there is no appeal to God. The sense would be well expressed by, "Oh that," or "I earnestly wish."

Ye could bear with me. That you would bear patiently with me; that you would hear me patiently, and suffer me to speak of myself.

In my folly. Folly in boasting. The idea seems to be, "I know that boasting is generally foolish, and that it is not to be indulged in; but though it is to be generally regarded as folly, yet circumstances compel me to it, and I ask your indulgence in it." It is possible also that his opponents accused him of folly in boasting so much of himself.

And indeed bear with me. Marg. *ye do bear*. But the text has probably the correct rendering. It is the expression of an earnest wish that they would tolerate him a little in this. He entreats them to bear with him, because he was constrained to it.

{*} "folly" "foolish boasting" {1} "bear with me" Hos 2:19,20

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *For I am jealous over you*. This verse expresses the reason why he was disposed to speak of his attainments, and of what he dad done. It was because he loved them, and because he feared that they were in danger of being seduced from the simplicity of the gospel. The phrase, "I am jealous," (*zhlw*,) means, properly, I ardently love you; I am full of tender attachment to you. The word was usual among the Greeks to denote an ardent affection of any kind, (from *zew*, to boil, to be fervid or fervent.) The precise meaning is to be determined by the connexion. **See Barnes "1Co 12:31".**

The word may denote the jealousy which is felt by an apprehension of departure from fidelity on the part of those whom we love; or it may denote a fervid and glowing attachment. The meaning here probably is, that Paul had a strong attachment to them.

With godly jealousy. Greek, "with the zeal of God," (*yeou zhlw*) That is, with very great or vehement zeal—in accordance with the Hebrew custom when the name God is used to denote anything signally great, as the phrase "mountains of God," meaning very elevated or lofty mountains. The mention of this ardent attachment suggested what follows. His mind reverted to the tenderness of the marriage relation, and to the possibility that in that relation the affections might be estranged. He makes use of this figure, therefore, to apprize them of the change which he apprehended.

For I have espoused you, etc. The word here used *armozw* means, properly, to adapt, to fit, to join together. Hence to join in wedlock, to marry. Here it means to marry to another; and the idea is, that Paul had been the agent employed in forming a connexion, similar to the marriage connexion, between them and the Saviour. The *allusion* here is not certain. It may refer to the custom which prevailed when friends made and procured the marriage for the bridegroom; or it may refer to some custom like that which prevailed among the Lacedemonians, where persons were employed to form the lives and manners of virgins, and prepare them for the duties of the married life. The sense is clear. Paul claims that it was by his instrumentality that they had been united to the Redeemer. Under him they had been brought into a relation to the Saviour, similar to that sustained by the bride to her husband; and he felt all the interest in them which naturally grew out of that fact, and from a desire to present them blameless to the pure Redeemer. The relation of the church to Christ is often represented by marriage. See Eph 5:23-33 Re 19:7, 21:9.

To one husband. To the Redeemer.

That I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. The allusion here, according to Doddridge, is to the custom among the Greeks "of having an officer whose business it was to educate and form young women, especially those of rank and figure, designed for marriage, and then to present them to those who were to be their husbands; and if this officer through negligence permitted them to be corrupted between the espousals and the consummation of the marriage, great blame would fall upon him." Such a responsibility Paul felt. So anxious was he for the entire purity of that church which was to constitute "the bride, the Lamb's wife;" so anxious that all who were connected with that church should be presented pure in heaven.

{a} "to one husband" Hos 2:19,20 {b} "chaste virgin" Le 21:13

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *But I fear*. Paul had just compared the church to a virgin, soon to be presented as a bride to the Redeemer. The mention of this seems to have suggested to him the fact, that the first woman was deceived and led astray by the tempter, and that the same thing might occur in regard to the church which he was so desirous should be preserved pure. The grounds of his fear were

(1.) that Satan had seduced the first woman, thus demonstrating that the most holy were in danger of being led astray by temptation; and

(2.) that special efforts were made to seduce them from the faith. The persuasive arts of the false teachers, the power of philosophy, and the attractive and corrupting influences of the world, he had reason to suppose, might be employed to seduce them from simple attachment to Christ.

Lest by any means. Lest somehow, (*mhpwv*.) It is implied that many means would be used; that all arts would be tried; and that in some way, which perhaps they little suspected, these arts would be successful, unless they were constantly put on their guard.

As the serpent beguiled Eve. See Ge 3:1-11. The word *serpent* here refers doubtless to Satan, who was the agent by whom Eve was beguiled. See Joh 8:44 1Jo 3:8; Re 12:9 20:2.

Paul did not mean that they were in danger of being corrupted in the same way, but that similar efforts would be made to seduce them. Satan adapts his temptations to the character and circumstances of the tempted. He varies them from age to age, and applies them in such a way as best to secure his object. Hence all should be on their guard. No one knows the mode in which he will approach him, but all may know that he will approach them in some way.

Through his subtilty. See Ge 3:1. By his craft, art, wiles, (*en th panourgia*.) The word implies that shrewdness, cunning, craft was employed. A tempter always employs cunning and art to accomplish his object. The precise mode in which Satan accomplished his object is not certainly known. Perhaps the cunning consisted in assuming an attractive form—a fascinating manner—a manner fitted to charm; perhaps in the idea that the eating of the forbidden fruit had endowed a serpent with the power of reason and speech above all other animals, and that it might be expected to produce a similar transformation in Eve. At all events, there were false pretences and appearances; and such Paul apprehended would be employed by the false teachers to seduce and allure them. **See Barnes** "2Co 11:13,14.

So your minds should be corrupted. So your thoughts should be perverted. So your hearts should be alienated. The mind is corrupted when the affections are alienated from the proper object, and when the soul is filled with unholy plans, and purposes, and desires.

From the simplicity that is in Christ.

(1.) From simple and single-hearted devotedness to him—from pure and unmixed attachment to him. The fear was that their affections would be fixed on other objects, and that the *singleness and unity* of their devotedness to him would be destroyed.

(2.) From his *pure doctrines*. By the admixture of philosophy, by the opinions of the world, there was danger that their minds should be turned away from their hold on the simple truths which Christ had taught.

(3.) From that simplicity of mind and heart; that, childlike candour and docility; that freedom from all guile, dishonesty, and deception, which so eminently characterized the Redeemer. Christ had a single.aim; was free from all guile; was purely honest; never made use of any improper arts;

never resorted to false appearances, and never deceived. His followers should, in like manner, be artless and guileless. There should be no mere cunning, no trick, no craft in advancing their purposes. There should be nothing but honesty and truth in all that they say. Paul was afraid that they would lose this beautiful simplicity and artlessness of character and manner; and that they would insensibly be led to adopt the maxims of mere cunning, of policy, of expediency, of seductive arts, which prevailed so much in the world—a danger which was imminent among the shrewd and cunning people of Greece, but which is confined to no time and no place. Christians should be more guileless than even children are; as pure and free from trick, and from art and cunning, as was the Redeemer himself.

(4.) From the simplicity *in worship* which the Lord Jesus commended and required. The worship which the Redeemer designed to establish was simple, unostentatious, and pure —strongly in contrast with the gorgeousness and corruption of the pagan worship, and even with the imposing splendour of the Jewish temple-service. He intended that it should be adapted to all lands, and such as could be offered by all classes of men—a pure worship, claiming first the homage of the heart, and then such simple external expressions as should best exhibit the homage of the heart. How easily might this be corrupted! What temptations were there to attempt to corrupt it by those who had been accustomed to the magnificence of the temple-service, and who would suppose that the religion of the Messiah could not be less gorgeous than that which was designed to shadow forth his coming; and by those who had been accustomed to the splendid rites of the pagan worship, and who would suppose that the true religion *ought* not to be less costly and splendid than the false religion had been! If so much expense had been lavished on false religions, how natural to suppose that equal costliness at least should be bestowed on the true religion! Accordingly, the history of the church, for a considerable part of its existence, has been little more than a record of the various forms in which the simple worship, instituted by the Redeemer, has been corrupted, until all that was gorgeous in pagan ceremonies, and splendid in the Jewish ritual, has been introduced as a part of Christian worship.

(5.) From simplicity in dress, and manner in living. The Redeemer's dress was simple. His manner of living was simple. His requirements demand great simplicity and plainness of apparel and manner of life, 1Pe 3:3-6 1Ti 2:9,10.

Yet how much proneness is there at all times to depart from this! What a besetting sin has it been, in all ages, to the church of Christ! And how much pains should there be that the very simplicity that is in Christ should be observed by all who bear the Christian name!

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *For if he that cometh*, etc. There is much difficulty in this verse in ascertaining the true sense, and expositors have been greatly perplexed and divided in opinion, especially with regard to the true sense of the last clause, "ye might well bear with him." It is difficult to ascertain whether Paul meant to speak ironically or seriously; and different views will prevail, as different views are taken of the design. If it be supposed that he meant to speak seriously, the sense will be, "If the false teacher could recommend a better Saviour than I have done, or a Spirit better able to

sanctify and save, then there would be a propriety in your receiving him, and tolerating his doctrines." If the former, then the sense will be, "You cannot well bear with me; but if a man comes among you preaching a false Saviour, and a false Spirit, and a false doctrine, then you bear with him without any difficulty." Another interpretation still has been proposed, by supposing that the word "me" is to be supplied at the close of the verse instead of "him;" and then the sense would be, "If you receive so readily one who preaches another gospel, one who comes with far less evidence that he is sent from God than I have, and if you show yourselves thus ready to fall in with any kind of teaching that may be brought to you, you might at least bear with me also." Amidst this variety it is not easy to ascertain the true sense. To me it seems probable, however, that Paul spoke seriously, and that our translation has expressed the true sense. The main idea doubtless is, that Paul felt that there was danger that they would be corrupted. If they could bring a better gospel, a more perfect system, and proclaim a more perfect Saviour, there would be no such change. But that could not be expected. It could not be done. If, therefore, they preached any other Saviour or any other gospel—if they departed from the truths which he had taught them—*it would be for the worse*. It could not be otherwise. The Saviour whom he preached was perfect, and was able to save. The Spirit which he preached was perfect, and able to sanctify. The gospel which he preached was perfect, and there was no hope that it could be improved. Any change must be for the worse; and as the false teachers varied from his instructions, there was every reason to apprehend that their minds would be corrupted from the simplicity that was in Christ. The principal idea therefore is, that the gospel which he preached was as perfect as it could be, and that any change would be for the worse. No doctrine which others brought could be recommended because it was better. By the phrase "he that cometh" is meant, doubtless, the false teacher in Corinth.

Preacheth another Jesus. Proclaims one who is more worthy of your love, and more able to save. If he that comes among you and claims your affections can point out another Christ who is more worthy of your confidence, then I admit that you do well to receive him. It is implied here that this could not be done. The Lord Jesus, in his character and work, is perfect. No Saviour superior to him has been provided; none but he is necessary.

Whom we have not preached. Let them show, if they can, that they have any Saviour to tell of whom we have not preached. We have given all the evidence that we are sent by God, and have laid all the claim to your confidence, which they can do for having made known the Saviour. They, with all their pretensions, have no Saviour to tell you of with whom we have not already made you acquainted. They have no claims therefore, from this quarter, which we have not also.

Or if ye receive another spirit, etc. If they can preach to you another Sanctifier and Comforter; or if under their ministry you have received higher proofs of the power of the Spirit in performing miracles, in the gift of tongues, in renewing sinners, and in comforting your hearts. The idea is, that Paul had proclaimed the existence and agency of the same Holy Spirit which they did; that his preaching had been attended with as striking proofs of the presence and power of that Spirit; that he had all the evidence of a Divine commission from such an influence attending his labours which they could possibly have. They could reveal no spirit better able to sanctify and save; none who had more power than the Holy Spirit which they had received under the preaching of Paul; and there was therefore no reason why they should be "corrupted" or seduced from the simple doctrines which they had received, and follow others.

Or another gospel, etc. A gospel more worthy of your acceptance —one more free, more full, more rich in promises; one that revealed a better plan of salvation, or that was more full of comfort and peace.

Ye might well bear with him. Marg.,"*with me*." The word "him" is not in the Greek; but is probably to be supplied. The sense is, There would then be some excuse for your conduct. There would be some reason why you should welcome such teachers; But if this cannot be done; if they can preach no other and no better gospel and Saviour than I have done, then there is no excuse. There is no reason why you should follow such teachers, and forsake those who were your earliest guides in religion. Let us never forsake the gospel which we have, till we are sure we can get a better. Let us adhere to the simple doctrines of the New Testament, until some one can furnish better and clearer doctrines. Let us follow the rules of Christ in our opinions and our conduct—our plans, our mode of worship, our dress, and our amusements, engagements, and company—until we can certainly ascertain that there are better rules. A man is foolish for making any change until he has evidence that he is likely to better himself: and it remains yet to be proved that any one has ever bettered himself or his family by forsaking the simple doctrines of the Bible, and embracing a philosophical speculation; by forsaking the scriptural views of the Saviour as the incarnate God, and embracing the views which represent him as a mere man; by forsaking the simple and plain rules of Christ about our manner of life, our dress, and our words and actions, and embracing those which are recommended by mere fashion and by the customs of a gay world.

{a} "gospel" Ga 1:7,8 {1} "with him" "with me"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *For I suppose*, etc. I think that I gave as good evidence that I was commissioned by God as the most eminent of the apostles. In the miracles which I performed; in the abundance of my labours, and in my success, I suppose that I did not fall behind any of them. If so, I ought to be regarded and treated as an apostle; and if so, then the false teachers should not be allowed to supplant me in your affections, or to seduce you from the doctrines which I have taught. On the evidence that Paul was equal to others in the proper proof of a commission from God, **See Barnes "2Co 11:21,** 2Co 11:22-30.

{a} "I was not" 1Co 15:10 2Co 12:11 {*} "whit" "in nothing"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *But though I be rude in speech*. **See Barnes "2Co 10:10".**

The word rendered *rude* here (*idiwthv*) means, properly, a private citizen, in opposition to one in a public station; then a plebeian, or one unlettered or unlearned, in opposition to one of more elevated rank, or one who is learned. **See Barnes "Ac 4:13"; See Barnes "1Co 14:16".**

The idea is, my language is that of a plain unlettered person. This was doubtless charged upon him by his enemies; and it may be that he designed in part to admit the truth of the charge.

Yet not in knowledge. I do not admit that I am ignorant of the religion which I profess to teach. I claim to be acquainted with the doctrines of Christianity. It does not appear that they charged him with ignorance. If it be asked how the admission that he was rude in speech consists with the fact that he was endowed by the Holy Spirit with the power of speaking languages, we may observe, that Paul had undoubtedly learned to speak Greek in his native place, (Tarsus in Cilicia,) and that the Greek which he had learned there was probably a corrupt kind, such as was spoken in that place. It was this Greek which he probably continued to speak; for there is no more reason to suppose that the Holy Spirit would aid him in speaking a language which he had thus early learned, than he would in speaking Hebrew. The endowments of the Holy Spirit were conferred to enable the apostles to speak languages which they had never learned, not in perfecting them in languages with which they were before acquainted. It may have been true, therefore, that Paul may have spoken some languages which he never learned with more fluency and perfection than he did those which he had learned to speak when he was young. See the remarks of the Archbishop of Cambray, as quoted by Doddridge *in loc*. It may be remarked, also, that some estimate of the manner of Paul on this point may be formed from his writings. Critics profoundly acquainted with the Greek language remark, that while there is great energy of thought and of diction in the writings of Paul, while he chooses or coins most expressive words, yet that there is everywhere a want of Attic elegance of manner, and of the smoothness and beauty which were so grateful to a Grecian ear.

But we have been throughly made manifest, etc. You have known all about me. I have concealed nothing from you, and you have had ample opportunity to become thoroughly acquainted with me. The meaning is, "I need not dwell on this. I need speak no more of my manner of speech or knowledge. With all that you are well acquainted."

{b} "I be rude" 1Co 1:17 2:1,13

{c} "in knowledge" Eph 3:4 {d} "among you" 2Co 12:12

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Have I committed an offence*. Have I done wrong. Greek, "Have I committed a sin." There is here a somewhat abrupt transition from the previous verse; and the connexion is not very apparent. *Perhaps* the connexion is this: "I admit my inferiority in regard to my manner of speaking. But this does not interfere with my full understanding of the doctrines which I preach, nor does it interfere with the numerous evidences which I have furnished that I am called to the office of an apostle. What then *is* the ground of offence? In what have I erred? Wherein have I shown that I was not qualified to be an apostle? Is it in the fact that I have not chosen to press my claim to a support, but have preached the gospel without charge? "There can be no doubt that they urged this as an objection to him, and as a proof that he was *conscious* that he had no claim to the office of an apostle. **See Barnes** "1Co 9:3, 1Co 9:4-18. Paul here answers this charge; and the sum of his reply is, that he had received a support, but that it had come from others, a support which they had furnished because the Corinthians had neglected to do it.

In abasing myself. By labouring with my own hands; by submitting to voluntary poverty, and by neglecting to urge my reasonable claims for a support.

That ye might be exalted. In spiritual blessings and comforts. I did it because I could thus better promote religion among you. I could thus avoid the charge of aiming at the acquisition of wealth; could shut the mouths of gainsayers, and could more easily secure access to you. Is it now to be seriously urged as a fault that I have sought your welfare, and that in doing it I have submitted to great self-denial and to many hardships? **See Barnes** "1Co 9:18, seq.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *I robbed other churches*. The churches of Macedonia and elsewhere, which had ministered to his wants. Probably he refers especially to the church at Philippi, (see Php 4:15,16,) which seems to have done more than almost any other church for his support. By the use of the word "robbed" here, Paul does not mean that he had obtained anything from them in a violent or unlawful, manner, or anything which they did not give voluntarily. The word (*esulhsa*) means, properly, "I spoiled, plundered, robbed;" but the idea of Paul here is, that he, *as it were*, robbed them, because he did not render an equivalent for what they gave him. They supported him when he was labouring for another people. A conqueror who plunders a country gives no equivalent for what he takes. In this sense only could Paul say that he had plundered the church at Philippi. His general principle was, that "the labourer was worthy of his hire," and that a man was to-receive his support from the people for whom he laboured, (1Co 9:7-14;) but this rule he had not observed in this case.

Taking wages of them. Receiving a support from them. They bore my expenses.

To do you service. That I might labour among you without being supposed to be striving to obtain your property, and that I might not be compelled to labour with my own hands, and thus to prevent my preaching the gospel as I could otherwise do. The supply from other churches rendered it unnecessary, in a great measure, that his time should be taken off from the ministry in order to obtain a support.

{+} "robbed" "spoiled"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *And when I was present with you*. When I was labouring in order to build up the church in Corinth.

I was chargeable to no man. I was burdensome to no one; or more literally, "I did not lie as a dead weight upon you." The word here used, which occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, (*katenarkhsa*,) means, literally, *to become torpid against*, i.e., to the detriment of any one; and hence to be burdensome. According to Jerome, its use here is a cilicism of Paul. The idea is, that

he did not lead a torpid, inactive life at the expense of others. He did not expect a support from them when he was doing nothing; nor did he demand support which would in any sense be a burden to them. By his own hands, (Ac 18:3,) and by the aid which he received from abroad, he was supported without deriving aid from the people of Corinth.

And in all things, etc. In all respects I have carefully kept myself from being a burden on the church. Paul had no idea of living at other men's expense when he was doing nothing.' He did not, as a general thing, mean to receive anything for which he had not rendered a fair equivalent—a just principle for ministers and for all other men. See 2Co 12:13.

{a} "was chargeable" Ac 18:3 1Th 2:9 {*} "lacking" "wanting" {b} "brethren" Php 4:10,15

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *As the truth of Christ is in me*. That is, I solemnly declare this as in the presence of Christ. As I am a Christian man; as I feel bound to declare the truth; and as I must answer to Christ. It is a solemn form of asseveration, equal to an oath. **See Barnes "Ro 9:1"**.

Comp. 1Ti 2:7.

No man shall stop me, etc. Marg., *this boasting shall not be stopped in me*. **See Barnes "Ro 9:15"**.

The idea here is, that Paul was solemnly determined that the same thing should continue. He had not been burdensome to any, and he was resolved that he would not be. Rather than be burdensome he had laboured with his own hands, and he meant to do it still. No man in all Achaia should ever have reason to say that he had been an idler, and had been supported by the churches when he was doing nothing. It was the fixed and settled purpose of his life never to be burdensome to any man. What a noble resolution! How fixed were the principles of his life! And what an instance of magnanimous self-denial and of elevated purpose! Every man, minister or otherwise, should adopt a similar resolution. He should resolve to receive nothing for which he has not rendered a fair equivalent; and resolve, if he has health, *never* to be a burden to his friends or to the church of God. And even if sick he may yet feel that he is not burdensome to others. If he is gentle and grateful; if he makes no unnecessary care; and especially if he furnishes an example of patience and piety, and seeks the blessing of God on his benefactors, he furnishes them what they will usually esteem an ample equivalent. No man need be burdensome to his friends; and all should resolve that by the grace of God they never will be. There is considerable variety in the MSS. here, (see Mill on the place,) but in regard to the general sense there can be no doubt. Nothing should ever hinder this boasting; nothing should deprive him of the privilege of saying that he had not been a burden.

In the regions of Achaia. Achaia was that part of Greece of which Corinth was the capital. **See Barnes "Ac 18:12"**.

{1} "no man" "this boasting shall not be stopped in me" {+} "boasting" "glorying"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Wherefore*, etc. It is not because I do not love you. It is not from pride, or because I would not as willingly receive aid from you as from any other. It is not because I am more unwilling to be under obligation to you than to others. I have a deep and tender attachment to you. But it is because I can thus best promote the gospel and advance the kingdom of the Redeemer. Possibly it might have been thought that his unwillingness, to receive aid from them was some proof of reserve towards them or want of affection, and this may have been urged against him. This he solemnly denies.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *But what I do*. The course of life which I have been pursuing I will continue to pursue. That is, I will continue to preach as I have done without demanding a support. I will labour with my own hands if necessary; I will preach without *demanding* rigidly what I might be entitled to.

That I may cut off occasion. That I may give them no opportunity of accusing me of desiring to grow rich, and of calumniating me. Paul meant that they should have no plausible pretext even for accusing him; that no man should be able to say that he was preaching merely for the hire.

Which desire occasion. No doubt his enemies eagerly sought opportunities of accusing him, and greatly wished for some plausible reason for charging him with that which would be disgraceful and ruinous to his character. Or it may mean that they desired opportunity from the example of Paul to justify themselves in their course; that they took wages from the church at Corinth largely, and desired to be able to say that they had his example.

That wherein they glory. Probably meaning that they boasted that they preached the gospel gratis; that they received nothing for their labours. Yet while they did this, it is not improbable that they received presents of the Corinthians, and under various pretences contrived to get from them an ample support, perhaps much more than would have been a reasonable compensation. Men who *profess* to preach the gospel gratis usually contrive in various ways to get more from the people than those who receive a regular and stipulated compensation. By taxing pretty liberally their hospitality; by accepting liberal presents; by frequent proclamation of their self-denial and their poverty, they usually filch large amounts from the people. No people were ever louder in praise of poverty, or in proclamation of their own self-denials, than some orders of monks, and that when it might be said almost that the richest possessions of Europe were passing into their hands. At all events, Paul meant that these men should have no opportunity from *his* course to take any such advantage. He knew what he had a right to, 1Co 9 but he had not urged the right. He had received nothing from the church at Corinth, and he meant to receive nothing. He had honestly preached the gospel to them without charge, and he meant still to do it, 1Co 9:18. They should, therefore, have no opportunity from his conduct either to accuse him of preaching for money, or of sheltering themselves under his example in pretending to preach for nothing, when they were in fact obtaining large sums from the people.

They may be found even as we. That they may be compelled honestly to pursue such a course as I do, and be found to be in fact what they pretend to be. The sense is, "I mean so to act that if they follow my example, or plead my authority, they may be found to lead an honest life; and that if they boast on this subject, they shall boast strictly according to truth. There shall be no trick; nothing underhanded or deceptive in what they do, so far as my example can prevent it."

{c} "which desire" Ga 1:7 Php 1:15

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *For such are false apostles*. They have no claim to the apostolic office. They are deceivers. They pretend to be apostles; but they have no Divine commission from the Redeemer. Paul had thus far argued the case without giving them an explicit designations deceivers. But here he says that men who had conducted [themselves] thus; who had attempted to impose on the people; who had brought another gospel, whatever pretences they might have—and he was not disposed to deny that there was much that was plausible—were really impostors, and the enemies of Christ. It is morally certain, from 2Co 11:22, that these men were Jews; but why they had engaged in the work of preaching, or why they had gone to Corinth, cannot with certainty be determined.

Deceitful workers. Impostors. Men who practise various arts to impose on others. They were crafty, and fraudulent, and hypocritical. It is probable that they were men who saw that great advantage might be taken of the new religion; men who saw the power which it had over the people, and who saw the confidence which the new converts were inclined to repose in their teachers; perhaps men who had seen the disciples to the Christian faith commit all their property to the hands of the apostles, or who had heard of their doing it, (comp. Ac 4:34,35,) and who supposed that by pretending to be apostles also they might come in for a share of this confidence, and avail themselves of this disposition to commit their property to their spiritual guides. To succeed, it was needful as far as possible to undermine the influence of the true apostles, and take their place in the confidence of the people. Thence they were "*deceitful* (*dolioi*) workers," full of trick, and cunning, and of plausible arts to impose on others.

Transforming themselves, etc. Pretending to be apostles. Hypocritical and deceitful, they yet pretended to have been sent by Christ. This is a direct charge of hypocrisy. They knew they were deceivers; and yet they assumed the high claims of apostles of the Son of God.

{d} "false apostles" Ga 2:4 2Pe 2:1; 1Jo 4:1 Re 2:2

{e} "deceitful workers" Php 3:2 Tit 1:10,11

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *And no marvel*. And it is not wonderful, 2Co 11:15. Since Satan himself is capable of appearing to be an angel of light, it is not to be deemed strange that those who are in his service also should resemble him.

For Satan himself is transformed, etc. That is, he who is an apostate angel; who is malignant and wicked; who is the prince of evil, assumes the appearance of a holy angel. Paul assumes this as an indisputable and admitted truth, without attempting to prove it, and without referring to any particular instances. Probably he had in his eye cases where Satan put on false and delusive appearances for the purpose of deceiving, or where he assumed the appearance of great sanctity and reverence for the authority of God. Such instances occurred in the temptation of our first parents, Ge 3:1-6, and in the temptation of the Saviour, Mt 4. The phrase, "an angel of light," means a pure and holy angel—light being the emblem of purity and holiness. Such are all the angels that dwell in heaven; and the idea is, that Satan assumes such a form as to appear to be such an angel. Learn here,

(1.) his power. He can assume such an aspect as he pleases. He can dissemble, and appear to be eminently pious. He is the prince of duplicity as well as of wickedness; and it is the consummation of bad power for an individual to be able to assume any character which he pleases.

(2.) His art. He is long practised in deceitful arts. For six thousand years he has been practicing the art of delusion; and with him it is perfect.

(3.) We are not to suppose that all that *appears* to be piety is piety. Some of the most plausible appearances of piety are assumed by Satan and his ministers. None ever professed a profounder regard for the authority of God than Satan did when he tempted the Saviour. And if the prince of wickedness can appear to be an angel of light, we are not to be surprised if those who have the blackest hearts appear to be men of most eminent piety.

(4.) We should be on our guard. We should not listen to suggestions merely because they *appear* to come from a pious man, nor because they *seem* to be prompted by a regard to the will of God. We may be always sure that if we are to be tempted, it will be by some one having a great appearance of virtue and religion.

(5.) We are not to expect that Satan will *appear* to man to be as bad as he is. He never shows himself openly to be a spirit of pure wickedness; or black and abominable in his character; or full of evil, and hateful. He would thus defeat himself. It is for this reason that wicked men do not believe that there is such a being as Satan. Though continually under his influence, and "led captive by him at his will," yet they neither see him nor the chains which lead them, nor are they willing to believe in the existence of the one or the other.

{*} "marvel" "wonder" {a} "Satan himself" Ge 3:1,5; Re 12:9

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Therefore it is no great thing*, etc. It is not to be deemed surprising. You are not to wonder if men of the basest, blackest character put on the appearance of the greatest sanctity, and even become eminent as professed preachers of righteousness.

Whose end shall be, etc. Whose final destiny. Their doom in eternity shall not be according to their fair professions and plausible pretences, for they cannot deceive God; but shall be according to their real character and their works. Their work is a work of deception, and they shall be judged according to that. What revelations there will be in the day of judgment, when all impostors shall be unmasked, and when all hypocrites and deceivers shall be seen in their true colours! And how desirable is it that there should be such a day to disclose all beings in their true character, and FOR EVER to remove. imposture and delusion from the universe!

{b} "end shall be according" Php 3:19

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *I say again*. I repeat it. He refers to what he had said in 2Co 11:1. The sense is, "I have said much respecting myself which may seem to be foolish. I admit that to boast in this manner of one's own self in general is folly. But circumstances compel me to it. And I entreat you to look at those circumstances, and not regard me as a fool for doing it."

If otherwise. If you think otherwise. If I cannot obtain this of you, that you will not regard me as acting prudently and wisely. If you will think me foolish, still I am constrained to make these remarks in vindication of myself.

Yet as a fool receive me. Marg., "suffer." See 2Co 11:1. Bear with me as you do with others. Consider how much I have been provoked to this; how necessary it is to my character; and do not reject and despise me because I am constrained to say that of myself which is usually regarded as foolish boasting.

That I may boast myself a little. Since others do it and are not rebuked, may I be permitted to do it also. See 2Co 11:18,19. There is something sarcastic in the words, "a little." The sense is, "Others are allowed to boast a great deal. Assuredly I may be allowed to boast a little of what I have done."

{c} "if otherwise" 2Co 12:6,11 {1} "receive" "suffer"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *That which I speak*. In praise of myself.

I speak it not after the Lord. **See Barnes "1Co 7:12".**

The phrase here may mean either, I do not speak this by inspiration, or claiming to be inspired by the Lord; or more probably it may mean, I do not speak this imitating the example of the Lord Jesus, or strictly as becomes his follower. He was eminently modest, and never vaunted or boasted. And Paul probably means to say, "I do not in this profess to follow him entirely. I admit that it is a departure from his pure example in this respect. But circumstances have compelled me; and much as I would prefer another strain of remark, and sensible as I am in general of the folly of boasting,

yet a regard to my apostolic office and authority urges me to this course." Bloomfield supposes that the apostle is not speaking seriously, but that he has an allusion to their view of what he was saying: "Be it so, if you think that what I speak, I speak not as I profess to do according to the Lord, or with a view to subserve the purposes of his religion, but *as it were* in folly, in the confidence of boasting, yet permit me to do it notwithstanding, since you allow others to do it." It is not easy to settle which is the true sense of the passage. I see no conclusive evidence against either. But the former seems to me to be most in accordance with the scope of the whole. Paul admitted that what he said was not in exact accordance with the spirit of the Lord Jesus; and in admitting this, he designed probably to administer a delicate hint that all *their* boasting was a wide departure from that spirit.

As it were foolishly. As in folly. It is to be admitted that to boast is in general foolish; and I admit that my language is open to this general charge.

In this confidence of boasting. In confident boasting. I speak confidently, and, I admit, in the spirit of boasting.

{d} "speak it not after" 1Co 7:12 {e} "confidence of boasting" 2Co 9:4 {++} "boasting" "glorying"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Seeing that many glory*, etc. The false teachers in Corinth. They boasted of their birth, rank, natural endowments, eloquence, etc. 2Co 11:22. Comp. Php 3:3,4.

I will glory also. I also will boast of my endowments, which, though somewhat different, yet pertain in the main to the *flesh* also. 2Co 11:23, seq. *His endowments in the flesh*, or what he had to boast of pertaining to the flesh, related not so much to birth and rank, though not inferior to them in these, but to what *the flesh* had endured—to stripes and imprisonments, and hunger and peril. This is an exceedingly delicate and happy turn given to the whole subject.

{f} "Seeing that many" Php 3:3,4; 1Co 4:10

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *For ye suffer fools gladly*. You tolerate or endure those who are really fools. This is perhaps, says Dr. Bloomfield, the most sarcastic sentence ever penned by the apostle Paul. Its sense is, "You profess to be wondrous wise. And yet you, who are so wise a people, freely tolerate those who are foolish in their boasting; who proclaim their own merits and attainments. You may allow me, therefore, to come in. for my share, and boast also, and thus obtain your favour." Or it may mean, "You are so profoundly wise, as easily to see who are fools. You have great power of discernment in this, and have found out that I am a fool, and also that other boasters are fools. Yet knowing this, you bear patiently with such fools; have admitted them to, your favour and friendship;

and I may come in among the rest of the fools, and partake also of your favours." They had borne with the false apostles who had boasted of their endowments, and yet they claimed to be eminent for wisdom and discernment.

{&} "suffer fools" "bear with fools"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *For ye suffer*, etc. You bear patiently with men who impose on you in every way, and who are constantly defrauding you, though you profess to be so wise; and you may bear with me a little, though I have no such intention. Seriously, if you bear with boasters who intend to delude and deceive you in various ways, you may bear with one who comes to you with no such intention, but with an honest purpose to do good.

If a man bring you into bondage. *katadouloi*. If a man, or if any one, (*ei tiv*,) make a slave of you, or reduce you to servitude. The idea is, doubtless, that the false teachers set up a lordship over their consciences; destroyed their freedom of opinion; and made them subservient to their will. They really took away their Christian freedom as much as if they had been slaves. In what way this was done is unknown. It may be that they imposed on them rites and forms, commanded expensive and inconvenient ceremonies, and required arduous services merely at their own will. A false religion always makes slaves. It is only true Christianity that leaves perfect freedom. All heathens are slaves to their priests; all fanatics are slaves to some fanatical leader; all those who embrace error are slaves to those who claim to be their guides. The papist everywhere is the slave of the priest, and the despotism there is as great as in any region of servitude whatever.

If a man devour you. This is exceedingly sarcastic. The idea is, "Though you are so wise, yet you in fact tolerate men who impose on you—no matter though they eat you up, or consume all that you have. By their exorbitant demands they would consume all you have; or, as we would say, eat you out of house and home." All this they took patiently; and freely gave all that they demanded. False teachers are always rapacious. They seek the *property*, not the *souls* of those to whom they minister. Not satisfied with a maintenance, they aim to obtain all, and their plans are formed to secure as much as possible of those to whom they minister.

If a man take of you. If he take and seize upon your possessions. If he comes and takes what he pleases, and bears it away as his own.

If a man exalt himself. If he set himself up as a ruler, and claim submission. No matter how arrogant his claims, yet you are ready to bear with him. You might, then, bear with me in the very moderate demands which I make on your obedience and confidence.

If a man smite you on the face. The word here rendered "smite" (*derei*) means, properly, to skin, to flay; but in the New Testament it means to beat, to scourge—especially so as to take off the skin, Mt 21:35 Mr 12:3,5.

The idea here is, if any one treats you with contumely and scorn—since there can be no higher expression of it than to smite a man on the face, Mt 26:67. It is not to be supposed that this occurred literally among the Corinthians; but the idea is, that the false teachers really treated them with as little respect as if they smote them on the face. In what way this was done is unknown; but probably

it was by their domineering manners, and the little respect which they showed for the opinions and feelings of the Corinthian Christians. Paul says that as they bore this very patiently, they might allow *him* to make some remarks about himself in self-commendation.

{*} "suffer" "Ye bear with it"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *I speak as concerning reproach*. I speak of disgrace. That is, says Rosenmuller, "I speak of your disgrace; or, as others prefer it, of the disgrace of the false apostles." Doddridge regards it as a question: "Do I speak this by way of dishonour, from an envious desire to derogate from my superiors, so as to bring them down to my own level?" But to me it seems that Paul refers to what he had been admitting respecting himself—to what he had evinced in rudeness of speech, 2Co 11:6, and to his not having urged his claims to the support which an apostle had a right to receive—to things, in short, which they esteemed to be disgraceful or reproachful. And his idea, it seems to me, is this: "I have been speaking of reproach or disgrace *as if* I was weak; that is, as if I was disposed to admit as true all that has been said of me as reproachful or disgraceful; all that has been said of my want of qualifications for the office, of my want of talent, or elevated rank, or honourable birth, etc. I have not pressed my claims, but have been reasoning *as if* all this were true; as if all that was honourable in birth and elevated in rank belonged to them—all that is mean and unworthy pertained to me. But it is not so. Whatever *they* have, *I* have. Whatever they can boast of, I can boast of in a more eminent degree. Whatever advantage there is in birth is mine; and I can tell of toils, and trials, and sufferings in the apostolic office which far surpass theirs." Paul proceeds, therefore, to a fur statement of his advantages of birth, and of his labours in the cause of the Redeemer.

As though we had been weak. As if I had no claims to urge; as if I had no just cause of boldness, but must submit to this reproach.

Howbeit. *de*. *But*. The sense is, If any one is disposed to boast, I am ready for him. I can tell also of things that have as high claims to confidence as they can. If they are disposed to go into a comparison on the points which qualify a man for the office of an apostle, I am ready to compare myself with them.

Whereinsoever. *en w*. In what. Whatever they have to boast of, I am prepared also to show that I am equal to them. Be it pertaining to birth, rank, education, labours, they will find that I do not shrink from the comparison.

Any is bold. *tiv tolma*. Any one dares to boast; any one is bold.

I speak foolishly. Remember now that I speak as a fool. I have been charged with this folly. Just now keep that in mind; and do not forget that it is only a fool who is speaking. Just recollect that I have no claims to public confidence; that I am destitute of all pretensions to the apostolic office; that I am given to a vain parade and ostentation, and to boasting of what does not belong to me; and when you recollect this, let me tell my story. The whole passage is ironical in the highest degree. The sense is, "It is doubtless all nonsense and folly for a man to boast who has only the

qualifications which I have. But there is a great deal of wisdom in their boasting who have so much more elevated endowments for the apostolic office."

I am bold also. I can meet them on their own ground, and speak of qualifications not inferior to theirs.

{+} "Howbeit" "Yet"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Are they Hebrews*? This proves that the persons who had made the difficulty in Corinth were those who were of Hebrew extraction, though it may be that they had been born in Greece, and had been educated in the Grecian philosophy and art of rhetoric. It is also clear that they prided themselves on being Jews—on having a connexion with the people and land from whence the religion which the Corinthian church now professed had emanated. Indications are apparent everywhere in the New Testament of the superiority which the Jewish converts to Christianity claimed over those converted from among the heathen. Their boast would probably be that they were the descendants of the patriarchs; that the land of the prophets was theirs; that they spake the language in which the oracles of God were given; that the true religion had proceeded from them, etc.

So am I. I have as high claims as any of them to distinction on this head. Paul had all their advantages of birth. He was an Israelite; of the honoured tribe of Benjamin; a Pharisee; circumcised at the usual time, Php 3:5 and educated in the best manner at the feet of one of their most eminent teachers, Ac 22:3.

Are they Israelites? Another name, signifying substantially the same thing. The only difference is, that the word "Hebrew" signified, properly, one who was from beyond (

HEBREW, from

HEBREW, to pass, to pass over—hence applied to Abraham, because he had come from a foreign land; and the word denoted, properly, *a foreigner*—a man from the land or country *beyond*,

HEBREW) the Euphrates. The name *Israelite* denoted, properly, one descended from Israel or Jacob; and the difference between them was, that the name Israelite, being a patronymic derived from one of the founders of their nation, was in use among themselves; the name *Hebrew* was applied by the Canaanite to them as having come from *beyond* the river, and was the current name among foreign tribes and nations. See Gesenius' Lexicon on the word (

HEBREW) *Hebrew*. Paul, in the passage before us, means to say that he had as good a claim to the honour of being a native-born descendant of Israel as could be urged by any of them.

Are they the seed of Abraham? Do they boast that they are descended from Abraham. This, with all the Jews, was regarded as a distinguished honour, (see Mt 3:9 Joh 8:39;) and no doubt the false teachers in Corinth boasted of it as eminently qualifying them to engage in the work of the ministry.

So am I. Paul had the same qualification. He was a Jew also by birth. He was of the tribe of Benjamin, Php 3:5.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Are they ministers of Christ*? Though Jews by birth, yet they claimed to be the ministers of the Messiah.

I speak as a fool. As if he had said, "Bear in mind, in what I am now about to say, that he who speaks is accused of being a feel in boasting. Let it not be deemed improper that I should act in this character; and since you regard me as such, let me speak like a fool." His frequent reminding them of this charge was eminently fitted to humble them that they had ever made it, especially when they were reminded by an enumeration of his trials of the character of the one against whom the charge was brought.

I am more. Paul was not disposed to deny that they were true ministers of Christ. But he had higher claims to the office than they had. He had been called to it in a more remarkable manner, and he had shown, by his labours and trials, that he had more of the true spirit of a minister of the Lord Jesus than they had. He therefore goes into detail, to show what he had endured in endeavouring to diffuse the knowledge of the Saviour—trials which he had borne probably while they had been dwelling in comparative ease, and in a comfortable manner, free from suffering and persecution.

In labours more abundant. In the kind of labour necessary in propagating the gospel. Probably he had now been engaged in the work a much longer time than they had, and had been far more indefatigable in it.

In stripes. In receiving stripes; that is, I have been more frequently scourged, 2Co 11:24. This was a proof of his being a minister of Christ, because eminent devotedness to him, at that time, of necessity subjected a man to frequent scourging. The ministry is one of the very few places—perhaps it stands alone in this—where it is proof of peculiar qualification for office that's man has been treated with all manner of contumely, and has even been often publicly whipped. What other office admits such a qualification as this?

Above measure. Exceedingly; far exceeding them. He had received far more than they had; and he judged, therefore, that this was one evidence that he had been called to the ministry.

In prisons more frequent. Luke, in the Acts of the Apostles, mentions only one imprisonment of Paul before the time when this epistle was written. That was at Philippi, with Silas, Ac 16:23; seq. But we are to remember that many things were omitted by Luke. He does not profess to give an account of all that happened to Paul; and an omission is not a contradiction. For anything that Luke says, Paul may have been imprisoned often. He *mentions* his having been in prison once; he does not deny that he had been in prison many times besides. **See Barnes "2Co 11:24"**.

In deaths oft. That is, exposed to death; or suffering pain equal to death. **See Barnes "2Co 1:9"**.

No one familiar with the history of Paul can doubt that he was often in danger of death.

{*} "fool" "as one foolish" {a} "more abundant" 1Co 15:10 {b} "above measure" Ac 9:16 20:23, 21:11

{c} "deaths oft" 1Co 15:30-32 {+} "oft" "often"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Of the Jews*, etc. On this verse and the following verse it is of importance to make a few remarks preliminary to the explanation of the phrases.

(1.) It is admitted that the particulars here referred to cannot be extracted out of the Acts of the Apostles. A few can be identified, but there are many more trims referred to here than are specified there.

(2.) This *proves* that this epistle was not framed from the history, but that they are written independently of one another.—*Paley*.

(3.) Yet they are not inconsistent one with the other. For there is no article in the enumeration here which is contradicted by the history; and the history, though silent with respect to many of these transactions, has left *space* enough to suppose that they may have occurred.

(a.) There is no *contradiction* between the accounts. Where it is said by Paul that he was thrice beaten with rods, though in the Acts but one beating is mentioned, yet there is no contradiction. It is only the *omission* to record *all* that occurred to Paul. But had the history, says Paley, contained an account of *four* beatings with rods, while Paul mentions here but three, there would have been a contradiction. And so of the other particulars.

(b.) Though the Acts of the Apostles be silent concerning many of the instances referred to, yet that silence may be accounted for on the plan and design of the history. The date of the epistle synchronizes with the beginning of the twentieth chapter of the Acts. The part, therefore, which precedes the twentieth chapter, is the only place in which can be found any notice of the transactions to which Paul here refers. And it is evident from the Acts that the author of that history was not with Paul until his departure from Troas, as related in Ac 16:10. **See Barnes "Ac 16:10"**.

From that time Luke attended Paul in his travels. From that period to the time when this epistle was written, occupies but four chapters of the history; and it is here, if anywhere, that we are to look for the minute account of the life of Paul. But here much may have occurred to Paul before Luke joined him. And as it was the design of Luke to give an account of Paul mainly *after* he joined him, it is not to be wondered at that many things may have been omitted of his previous life.

(c.) The period of time after the conversion of Paul to the time when Luke joined him at Troas is very succinctly given. That period embraced sixteen years, and is comprised in a few chapters. Yet in that time Paul was constantly travelling. He went to Arabia, returned to Damascus, went to Jerusalem, and then to Tarsus; and from Tarsus to Antioch, and thence to Cyprus, and then through Asia Minor, etc. In this time he must have made many voyages, and been exposed to many perils. Yet all this is comprised in a few chapters, and a considerable portion of them is occupied with an account of public discourses. In that period of sixteen years, therefore, there was ample opportunity for all the occurrences which are here referred to by Paul. See Paley's Horae Paulinae on 2 Cor., No. ix.

(d.) I may add, that from the account which *follows* the time when Luke joined him at Troas, (from Ac 16:10,) it is altogether probable that he *had* endured much before. After that time there is mention of *just such* transactions of scourging, stoning, etc., as are here specified, and it is altogether probable that he had been called to suffer them before. When Paul says "of the Jews," etc., he refers to this because this was a Jewish mode of punishment. It was usual with them to inflict but thirty-nine blows. The Gentiles were not limited by law in the number which they inflicted.

Five times. This was doubtless in their synagogues, and before their courts of justice. They had not the power of capital punishment, but they had the power of inflicting minor punishments. And though the *instances* are not specified by Luke in the Acts, yet the statement here by Paul has every degree of probability. We know that he often preached in their synagogues, (Ac 9:20 13:5,14,15 14:1 17:17 18:4) ; and nothing is more probable than that they would be enraged against him, and would vent their malice in every way possible. They regarded him as an apostate, and a ringleader of the Nazarenes, and they would not fail to inflict on him the severest punishment which they were permitted to.

Forty stripes save one. The word *stripes* does not occur in the original, but is necessarily understood. The law of Moses (De 25:3;) expressly limited the number of stripes that might be inflicted to forty. In no case might this number be exceeded. This was a humane provision, and one that was not found among the heathen, who inflicted any number of blows at discretion. Unhappily, it is not observed among professedly Christian nations where the practice of whipping prevails; and particularly in slave countries, where the master inflicts any number of blows at his pleasure. In practice among the Hebrews, the number of blows inflicted was, in fact, limited to thirty-nine, lest, by any accident in counting, the criminal should receive more than the number prescribed in the law. There was another reason still for limiting it to thirty-nine. They usually made use of a scourge with three thongs, and this was struck thirteen times. That it was usual to inflict but thirty-nine lashes is apparent from Josephus, Ant. book iv. chap. viii. & 21.

{d} "save once" De 25:3

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Thrice was I beaten with rods*. In the Acts of the Apostles there is mention made of his being beaten in this manner but once before the time when this epistle was written. That occurred at Philippi, Ac 16:22,23. But there is no reason to doubt that it was more frequently done. This was a frequent mode of punishment among the ancient nations; and as Paul was often persecuted, he would be naturally subjected to this shameful punishment.

Once was I stoned. This was the usual mode of punishment among the Jews for blasphemy. The instance referred to here occurred at Lystra, Ac 14:19. Paley (Horae Paulinae) has remarked that this, when confronted with the history, furnished the nearest approach to a contradiction, without a contradiction being actually incurred, that he ever had met with. The history (Ac 14:19) contains but one account of his being actually stoned. But prior to this, (Ac 14:5,) it mentions that "an assault was made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews with their rulers, to use them despitefully and to stone them, but they were aware of it, and fled to Lystra and Derbe." "Now," Paley remarks, "had the assault been completed; had the history related that a stone was thrown, as it relates that preparations were made both by Jews and Gentiles to stone Paul and his companions; or even had the account of this transaction stopped without going on to inform us that Paul and his companions were aware of their danger and fled, a contradiction between the history and the epistle would have ensued. Truth is necessarily consistent; but it is scarcely possible that independent accounts, not

having truth to guide them, should thus advance to the very brink of contradiction without falling into it."

Thrice I suffered shipwreck. On what occasions, or where, is now unknown, as these instances are not referred to in the Acts of the Apostles. The instance of shipwreck recorded there, (Ac 27,) which occurred when on his way to Rome, happened *after* this epistle was written, and should not be supposed to be one of the instances referred to here. Paul made many voyages in going from Jerusalem to Tarsus, and to Antioch, and to various parts of Asia Minor, and to Cyprus; and shipwrecks in those seas were by no means such unusual occurrences as to render this account improbable.

A night and a day, etc. The word here used (*nucyhmeron*) denotes a complete natural day, or twenty-four hours.

In the deep. To what this refers we do not now certainly know. It is probable, however, that Paul refers to some period when, having been shipwrecked, he was saved by supporting himself on a plank or fragment of the vessel until he obtained relief. Such a situation is one of great peril, and he mentions it, therefore, among the trials which he had endured. The supposition of some commentators, that he spent his time on some rock in the deep; or of others, that this means some deep dungeon; or of others, that he was swallowed by a whale, like Jonah, shows the extent to which the fancy is often indulged in interpreting the Bible.

{e} "with rods" Ac 16:22 {f} "stoned" Ac 14:19 {g} "night and a day" Ac 27

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *In journeyings often*. Of course subject to the fatigue, toil, and danger which such a mode of life involves.

In perils of waters. In danger of losing my life at sea, or by floods, or by crossing streams.

Of robbers. Many of the countries, especially Arabia, through which he travelled, were then infested, as they are now, with robbers. It is not impossible or improbable that he was often attacked, and his life endangered. It is still unsafe to travel in many of the places through which he travelled.

By mine own countrymen. The Jews. They often scourged him; laid wait for him; and were ready to put him to death. They had deep enmity against him as an apostate, and he was in constant danger of being put to death by them.

By the heathen. By those who had not the true religion. Several instances of his danger from this quarter are mentioned in the Acts.

In the city. In cities, as in Derbe, Lystra, Philippi, Jerusalem, Ephesus, etc.

In the wilderness. In the desert, where he would be exposed to ambushes, or to wild beasts, or to hunger and want. Instances of this are not recorded in the Acts, but no one can doubt that they occurred. The idea here is, that he had met with constant danger wherever he was, whether in the busy haunts of men, or in the solitude and loneliness of the desert.

In the sea. 2Co 11:25.

Among false brethren. This was the crowning danger and trial to Paul, as it is to all others. A man can better bear danger by land and water, among robbers and in deserts, than he can bear to

have his confidence abused, and to be subjected to the action and the arts of spies upon his conduct. *Who* these were he has not informed us. He mentions it as the chief trial to which he had been exposed, that he had met those who pretended to be his friends, and who yet had sought every possible opportunity to expose and destroy him. Perhaps he has here a delicate reference to the danger which he apprehended from the false brethren in the church at Corinth.

{a} "by mine own countrymen" Ac 14:5

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *In weariness*. Resulting from travelling, exposure, labour, and want. The word *kopw* (from *koptw*, to beat, to cut) means, properly, wailing and grief, accompanied with beating the breast. Hence the word means toil, labour, wearisome effort.

And painfulness. This word (*mocyw*) is a stronger term than the former. It implies painful effort; labour producing sorrow; and, in the New Testament, is uniformly connected with the word rendered "weariness," (1Th 2:9; 2Th 3:8,) rendered in both those places "travail."

In watchings often. In loss of sleep, arising from abundant toils and from danger. **See Barnes "2Co 6:5".**

In hunger and thirst. From travelling among strangers, and being dependent on them and on his own personal labours. **See Barnes "1Co 4:11".**

In fastings often. Either voluntary or involuntary. **See Barnes "2Co 6:5".**

In cold and nakedness. **See Barnes "1Co 4:11".**

{b} "watchings often" Ac 20:31 {c} "hunger and thirst" 1Co 4:11

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *Beside those things that are without*. In addition to these external trials, these trials pertaining' to the body, I have mental trials and anxieties resulting from the necessary care of all the churches. But on the meaning of these words, commentators are not agreed. Rosenmuller supposes that the phrase means, "Besides those things that come from other sources, "that I may omit other things.". Beza, Erasmus, Bloomfield, and some others, suppose that the passage means those things out of the regular routine of his office. Doddridge, "Besides foreign affairs." Probably the sense is, "Apart from the things beside," (*cwriv twn parektov*;) not to mention other matters; or, if other matters should be laid aside, there is this continually rushing anxiety arising from the care of all the churches. That is, this would be enough in itself. Laying aside all that arises from hunger, thirst, cold, etc., this continual care occupies my mind, and weighs upon my heart.

That which cometh upon me daily. There is great force in the original here. The phrase rendered "that which cometh upon me" means, properly, "that which rushes upon me." The word (*episustasiv* means, properly, a concourse, a crowd, hence a tumult; and the idea here is, that these cares rushed

upon him, or pressed upon him like a crowd of men or a mob that bore all before it. This is one of Paul's most energetic expressions, and denotes the incessant anxiety of mind to which he was subject.

The care of all the churches. The care of the numerous churches which he had established, and which needed his constant supervision. They were young; many of them were feeble; many were made up of heterogeneous materials; many composed of Jews and Gentiles mingled together, with conflicting prejudices, habits, preferences; many of them were composed of those who had been gathered from the lowest ranks of life; and questions would be constantly occurring, relating to their order and discipline, in which Paul would feel a deep interest, and which would naturally be referred to him for decision. Besides this, they had many trials. They were persecuted, and would suffer much. In their sufferings Paul would feel deep sympathy, and would desire, as far as possible, to afford them relief. In addition to the churches which he had planted, he would feel an interest in all others; and doubtless many cases would be referred to him, as an eminent apostle, for counsel and advice. No wonder that all this came rushing on him like a tumultuous assembly ready to overpower him.

{d} "care of all the churches" Ac 15:36-41

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Who is weak*, etc. I sympathize with all. I feel where others feel, and their sorrows excite deep sympathetic emotions in my bosom. Like a tender and compassionate friend I am affected when I see others in circumstances of distress. The word *weak* here may refer to any want of strength, any infirmity or feebleness arising either from body or mind. It may include all who were feeble by persecution or by disease; or it may refer to the weak in faith and doubtful about their duty, (1Co 9:22,) and to those who were burdened with mental sorrows. The idea is, that Paul had a deep sympathy in all who needed such sympathy from any cause. And the statement here shows the depth of feeling of this great apostle; and shows what should be the feeling of every pastor. **See Barnes "Ro 12:15"**.

And I am not weak? I share his feelings, and sympathize with him. If he suffers, I suffer. Bloomfield supposes that Paul means, that in the case of those who were weak in the faith he accommodated himself to their weakness, and thus became all things to all men. **See Barnes "1Co 9:22"**.

But it seems to me probable that he uses the phrase here in a more general sense, as denoting that he sympathized with those who were weak and feeble in all their circumstances.

Who is offended. *skandalizetai*. Who is *scandalized*. The word means, properly, to cause to stumble and fall; hence to be a stumbling-block to any one; to give or cause offence to any one. The idea here seems to be, "Who is liable to be led astray; who has temptations and trials that are likely to lead him to sin or to cause him to fall, and I do not burn with impatience to restore him, or with indignation against the tempter?" In all such cases Paul deeply sympathized with them, and was prompt to aid them.

And I burn not? That is, with anger or with great agitation of mind at learning that any one had fallen into sin. This may either mean that he would burn with indignation against those who had led them into sin, or be deeply excited in view of the disgrace which would be thus brought on the Christian cause. In either case it means that his mind would be in a glow of emotion; he would feel deeply; he could not look upon such things with indifference, or without being deeply agitated. With all he sympathized; and the condition of all, whether in a state of feeble faith, or feeble body, or falling into sin, excited the deepest emotions in his mind. The truth here taught is, that Paul felt a deep sympathy for all others who bore the Christian name, and this sympathy for others greatly increased the cares and toils of the apostolic office which he sustained. But having given this exposition, candour compels me to acknowledge that the whole verse may mean, "Who is feeble in the faith in regard to certain observances and rites and customs, (1Co 9:22,) and I do not also evince the same? I do not rouse their prejudices, or wound their feelings, or alarm them. On the other hand, who is scandalized, or led into sin by the example of others in regard to such custom; who is led by the example of others into transgression, and I do not burn with indignation?" In either case, however, the general sense is, that he sympathized with all others.

{e} "is weak" 1Co 9:22 {*} "offended" "stumbleth"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *If I must needs glory*. It is unpleasant for me to boast, but circumstances have compelled me. But since I am compelled, I will not boast of my rank, or talents, but of that which is regarded by some as an infirmity.

Mine infirmities. Greek, "the things of my weakness." The word here used is derived from the same word which is rendered "weak" in 2Co 11:29. He intends doubtless to refer here to what had preceded in his enumeration of the trials which he had endured. He had spoken of *sufferings*. He had endured much. He had also spoken of that tenderness of feeling which prompted him to sympathize so deeply when others suffered. He admitted that he often wept, and trembled, and glowed with strong feelings on occasions which perhaps to many would not seem to call for such strong emotions, and which they might be disposed to set down as a weakness or infirmity. This might especially be the case among the Greeks, where many philosophers, as the Stoics, were disposed to regard all sympathetic feeling, and all sensitiveness to suffering, as an infirmity. But Paul admitted that he was disposed to glory in this alone. He gloried that he *had suffered* so much; that he had endured so many trials on account of Christianity; and that he had a mind that was capable of feeling for others, and of entering into their sorrows and trials. Well might he do this; for there is no more lovely feature in the mind of a virtuous man, and there is no more lovely influence of Christianity than this, that it teaches us to "bear a brother's woes," and to sympathize in all the sorrows and joys of others. Philosophy and infidelity may be dissocial, cheerless, cold; but it is not so with Christianity. Philosophy may snap asunder all the cords which bind us to the living world; but Christianity strengthens these cords. Cold and cheerless atheism and scepticism may teach us to look with unconcern on a suffering world; but it is the glory of Christianity that it

teaches us to feel an interest in the weal or woe of the obscurest man that lives, to rejoice in his joy and to weep in his sorrows.

{a} "will glory" 2Co 12:5,9,10

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *The God and Father*, etc. Paul was accustomed to make solemn appeals to God for the truth of what he said, especially when it was likely to be called in question. See 2Co 11:10. Comp. Ro 9:1. The solemn appeal which he here makes to God is made in view of what he had just said of his sufferings, not of what follows—for there was nothing in the occurrence at Damascus that demanded so solemn an appeal to God. The *reason* of this asseveration is, probably, that the transactions to which he had referred were known to but few, and perhaps not all of them to even his best friends; that his trials and calamities had been so numerous and extraordinary that his enemies would say that they were improbable, and that all this had been the mere fruit of exaggeration; and as he had no *witnesses* to appeal to for the truth of what he said, he makes a solemn appeal to the ever-blessed God. This appeal is made with great *reverence*. It is not rash, or bold, and is by no means irreverent or profane, he appeals to God as the Father of the Redeemer whom he so much. venerated and loved, and as himself blessed for evermore. If all appeals to: God were made on as important occasions as this, and with the same profound veneration and reverence, such appeals would never be improper, and we should never be shocked, as we are often now, when men appeal to God. This passage *proves* that an appeal to God on great occasions is not improper; it proves also that it should be done with profound veneration.

{b} "God and Father" Ga 1:3 {c} "which is blessed" Ro 9:5 {d} "that I lie not" 1Th 2:5

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *In Damascus*. This circumstance is mentioned as an additional trial. It is evidently mentioned as an instance of peril which had escaped his recollection in the rapid account of his dangers enumerated in the previous verses. It is designed to show what imminent danger he was in, and how narrowly he escaped with his life. On the situation of Damascus, **See Barnes "Ac 9:2"**.

The transaction here referred to is also related by Luke, (Ac 9:24,25,) though without mentioning the name of the king, or referring to the fact that the governor kept the city with a garrison.

The governor. Greek, *o eynarchv, the ethnarch*; properly a ruler of the people, a prefect, a ruler, a chief. Who he was is unknown, though he was evidently some officer under the king. It is not improbable that he was a Jew, or at any rate he was one who could be influenced by the Jews, and who was doubtless excited by the Jews to guard the city, and if possible to take Paul as a malefactor. Luke informs us (Ac 9:23,24) that the Jews took counsel against Paul to kill him, and that they watched the gates night and day to effect their object. They doubtless represented Paul as an apostate,

and as aiming to overthrow their religion. He had come with an important commission to Damascus, and had failed to execute it; he had become the open friend of those whom he came to destroy; and they doubtless claimed of the civil authorities of Damascus that he should be given up and taken to Jerusalem for trial. It was not difficult, therefore, to secure the co-operation, of the governor of the city in the case, and there is no improbability in the statement.

Under Aretas the king. There were three kings of this name who are particularly mentioned by ancient writers. The first is mentioned in 2 Mac. v. 8, as the "king of the Arabians." He lived about one hundred and seventy years before Christ, and of course could not be the one referred to here. The second is mentioned in Josephus, Ant., b. xiii., chap. xv., & 2. He is first, mentioned as having reigned in Coelo-Syria, but as being called to the government of Damascus by those who dwelt there, on account of the hatred which they bore to Ptolemy Meneus. Whiston remarks in a note on Josephus, that this was the first king of the Arabians who took Damascus and reigned there, and that this name afterwards became common to such Arabian kings as reigned at Damascus and at Petra. See Josephus, Ant., b. xvi., chap. ix., §. 4. Of course this king reigned some time before the transaction here referred to by Paul. A third king of this name, says Rosenmuller, is the one mentioned here. He was the father-in-law of Herod Antipas. He made war with his son-in-law Herod, because he had repudiated his daughter, the wife of Herod. This he had done in order to marry his brother Philip's wife. **See Barnes "Mt 14:3"**.

On this account, Aretas made war with Herod; and in order to resist him, Herod applied to Tiberius the Roman emperor for. aid. Vitellius was sent by Tiberius to subdue Aretas, and to bring him dead or alive to Rome. But before Vitellius had embarked in the enterprise, Tiberius died, and thus Aretas was saved from ruin. It is supposed that in this state of things, when thus waging war with Herod, he made an incursion to Syria and seized upon Damascus, where he was reigning when Paul went there; or if not reigning there personally, he had appointed an ethnarch or governor, who administered the affairs of the city in his place.

Kept the city, etc. Luke (Ac 9:24) says that they watched the gates day and. night to kill him. This was probably the Jews. Meantime the ethnarch guarded the city, to prevent his escape. The Jews would have killed him at once; the ethnarch wished to apprehend him and bring him to trial. In either case Paul had much to fear, and he therefore embraced the only way of escape.

With a garrison. The word which is used here in the original (*frourew*) means simply to watch; to guard; to keep. Our translation would seem to imply that there was a body of men *stationed* in order to guard the city. The true idea is, that there were men who were appointed to guard the gates, of the city, and to keep watch lest he should escape them. Damascus was surrounded, as all ancient cities were, with high walls, and it did not occur to them that he could escape in any other way than by the gates.

{e} "the governor" Ac 9:24,25

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 11 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *And through a window*. That is, through a little door or aperture in the wall; perhaps something like an embrasure, that might have been large enough to allow a man to pass through

it. Luke says (Ac 9:25) that they let him down "by the wall." But there is no inconsistency. They doubtless first passed him *through* the embrasure or loop-hole in the wall, and then let him down gently by the side of it. Luke does not say it was over the top of the wall, but merely that he descended by the wall. It is not probable that an embrasure or opening would be near the bottom, and consequently there would be a considerable distance for him to descend by the side of the wall after he had passed through the window. Bloomfield, however, supposes that the phrase employed by Luke, and rendered "*by* the wall," means properly "*through* the wall." But I prefer the former interpretation.

In a basket. The word here used (*sarganh*) means anything braided or twisted; hence a rope-basket, a net-work of cords, or a wicker hamper. It might have been such an one as was used for catching fish, or it might have been made for the occasion. The word used by Luke (Ac 9:25) is *spuriv*-a word usually meaning a basket for storing grain, provisions, etc. Where Paul went immediately after he had escaped them, he does not here say. From Ga 1:17, it appears that he went into Arabia, where he spent some time, and then returned to Damascus, and after three years he went up to Jerusalem. It would not have been safe to have gone to Jerusalem at once; and he therefore waited for the passions of the Jews to have time to cool, before he ventured himself again in their hands.

Remarks on 2nd Corinthians Chapter 11

(1.) There may be circumstances, but they are rare, in which it may be proper to speak of our own attainments, and of our own doings, 2Co 11:1. Boasting is in general nothing but folly—the fruit of pride; but there may be situations when to state what we have done may be necessary to the vindication of our own character, and may tend to honour God. Then we should do it—not to trumpet forth our own fame, but to glorify God, and to advance his cause. Occasions occur but rarely, however, in which it is proper to speak in this manner of ourselves.

(2.) The church should be pure. It is the bride of the Redeemer; the "Lamb's wife," 2Co 11:2. It is soon to be presented to Christ, soon to be admitted to his presence. How holy should be that church which sustains such a relation! How anxious to be worthy to appear before the Son of God!

(3.) All the individual members of that church should be holy, 2Co 11:2. They, as individuals, are soon to be presented in heaven as the fruit of the labours of the Son of God, and as entitled to his eternal love. How pure should be the lips that are soon to speak his praise in heaven! How pure the eyes that are soon to behold his glory! how holy the feet that are soon to tread his courts in the heavenly world!

(4.) There is great danger of being corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ, 2Co 11:3. Satan desires to destroy us; and his great object is readily accomplished if he can seduce Christians from simple devotedness to the Redeemer; if he can secure corruption in doctrine or in the manner of worship, and can produce conformity in dress and in-the style of living to this world. Formerly, he excited persecution; but in that he was foiled. The more the church was persecuted, the more it grew. Then he changed his ground. What he could not do by persecution he sought to do by corrupting the church; and in this he has been by far more successful. This can be done slowly, but certainly; effectually, but without exciting suspicion. And it matters not to Satan whether the church is crippled by persecution, or its zeal destroyed by false doctrine and by conformity to the world. *His* aim is secured; and the power of the church destroyed. The form in which he now assails the

church is by attempting to seduce it from simple and hearty attachment to the Saviour. And, oh, in how many instances is he successful!

(5.) Our religion has cost much suffering, We have in this chapter a detail of extraordinary trials and sorrows in establishing it; and we have reason to be thankful, in some degree, that the enemies of Paul made it necessary for him to boast in this manner. We have thus some most interesting details of facts of which otherwise we should have been ignorant; and we see that the life of Paul was a life of continual self-denial and toil. By sea and land; at home and abroad; among his own countrymen and strangers, he was subjected to continued privations and persecution. So it has been always in regard to the establishment of the gospel. It began its career in the sufferings of its great Author, and the foundation of the church was laid in his blood. It progressed amidst sufferings; for all the apostles, except John, it is supposed, were martyrs. It continued to advance amidst sufferings—for ten fiery persecutions raged throughout the Roman empire, and thousands died in consequence of their professed, attachment to the Saviour. It has been always propagated in heathen lands by self-denials and sacrifices, for the life of a missionary is that of sacrifice and toil. How many such men as David Brainerd and Henry Martyn have sacrificed their lives in order to extend the true religion around the world!

(6.) All that *we* enjoy is the fruit of the sufferings, toils, and sacrifices of others. We have not one Christian privilege or hope which has not cost the life of many a martyr. How thankful should we be to God that he was pleased to raise up men who would be willing thus to suffer, and that he sustained and kept them until their work was accomplished!

(7.) We may infer the *sincerity* of the men engaged in propagating the Christian religion. What had Paul to gain in the sorrows which he endured? Why did he not remain in his own land, and reap the honours which were then fully within his grasp? The answer is an easy one. It was because he believed that Christianity was true; and believing that, he believed that it was of importance to make it known to the world. Paul did not endure these sorrows, and encounter these perils, for the sake of pleasure, honour, or gain. No man who reads this chapter can doubt that he was sincere, and that he was an honest man.

(8.) The Christian religion is therefore true. Not because the first preachers were sincere—for the advocates of error are often sincere, and are willing to suffer much, or even to die as martyrs; but because this was a case when their sincerity proved *the facts* in regard to the truth of Christianity. It was not sincerity in regard *to opinions* merely, it was in regard to facts. They not only *believed* that the Messiah had come, and died, and risen again, but they *saw* him— *saw* him when he lived; *saw* him die; *saw* him after he was risen; and it was in relation to these *facts* that they were sincere. But how could they be deceived here? Men may be deceived in their opinions; but how could John, e.g., be deceived in affirming that he was intimately acquainted—the bosom friend—with Jesus of Nazareth; that he saw him die; and that he had conversed with him *after* he had died? In this he could not be mistaken; and sooner than deny this, John would have spent his whole life in a cave in Patmos, or have died on the cross or at the stake. But if John saw all this, then the Christian religion is true.

(9.) We should be willing to suffer now. If Paul and the other apostles were willing to endure so much, why should not we be? If they were willing to deny themselves so much in order that the gospel should be spread among the nations, why should not we be? It is now just as important that it should be spread as it was then; and the church should be just as willing to sacrifice its comforts to make the gospel known as it was in the days of Paul. We may add, also, that if there was the

same devotedness to Christ evinced by all Christians now which is described in this chapter; if there was the same zeal and self-denial, the time would not be far distant when the gospel would be spread all around the world. May the time soon come when all Christians shall have the same self-denial as Paul; and especially when all who enter the ministry shall be WILLING to forsake country and home, and to encounter peril in the city and the wilderness, on the sea and the land—to meet cold, and nakedness, hunger, thirst, persecution, and death in any way—in order that they may make known the name of the Saviour to a lost world!

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 1

Introduction to 2nd Corinthians Chapter 12

THIS chapter is a continuation of the same general subject which was discussed in the two previous chapters. The general design of the apostle is to defend himself from the charges brought against him in Corinth; and especially, as would appear, from the charge that he had no claims to the character of an apostle. In the previous chapters he had met these charges, and had shown that he had just cause to be bold towards them; that he had in his life given evidence that he was called to this work; and especially that by his successes and by his sufferings he had shown that he had evidence that he had been truly engaged in the work of the Lord Jesus. This chapter contains the following subjects :—

(1.) Paul appeals to another evidence that he was engaged in the apostolic office—an evidence to which none of his accusers could appeals that he had been permitted to behold the glories of the heavenly world, 2Co 12:1-10. In the previous chapter he had mentioned his trials. Here he says, (2Co 12:1) that as they had compelled him to boast, he would mention the revelation which he had had of the Lord. He details, therefore, the remarkable vision which he had had several years before, (2Co 12:2-4,) when he was caught up to heaven, and permitted to behold the wonders there. Yet he says, that lest such an extraordinary manifestation should exalt him above measure, he was visited with a sore and peculiar trial—a trial from which he prayed earnestly to be delivered, but that he received answer that the grace of God would be sufficient to support him, 2Co 12:5-9. It was in view of this, he says, (2Co 12:10,) that he had pleasure in infirmities and sufferings in the cause of the Redeemer.

(2.) He then (2Co 12:11,12) sums up what he had said; draws the conclusion that he had given every sign or evidence that he was an apostle; that in all that pertained to toil, and patience, and miracles, he had shown that he was commissioned by the Saviour; though with characteristic modesty he said *he was nothing*.

(3.) He then expresses his purpose to come again and see them, and his intention then not to be burdensome to them, 2Co 12:13-15. He was willing to labour for them, and to exhaust his strength

in endeavouring to promote their welfare without receiving support from them; for he regarded himself in the light of a father to them, and it was not usual for children to support their parents.

(4.) In connexion with this, he answers another charge against himself. Some accused him of being crafty; that though he did not burden them, yet he knew well how to manage so as to secure what he wanted without burdening them, or seeming to receive anything from them, 2Co 12:16. To this he answers by an appeal to fact. Particularly he appeals to the conduct of Titus when with them, in full proof that he had no such design, 2Co 12:17-19.

(5.) In the conclusion of the chapter he expresses his fear that when he should come among them he would find much that would humble them, and give him occasion for severity of discipline, 2Co 12:20,21. This apprehension is evidently expressed in order that they might be led to examine themselves, and to put away whatever was wrong.

Verse 1. *It is not expedient*. It is not well; it does not become me. This may either mean that he felt and admitted that it did not become him to boast in this manner; that there was an impropriety in his doing it, though circumstances had compelled him—and in this sense it is understood by nearly, or quite, all expositors; or it may be taken ironically: "Such a man as I am ought not to boast. So you say, and so it would seem. A man who has done no more than I have; who has suffered nothing; who has been idle and at ease as I have been, ought surely not to boast. And since there is such an evident impropriety in my boasting and speaking about myself, I will turn to another matter, and inquire whether the same thing may not be said about visions and revelations. I will speak, therefore, of a man who had some remarkable revelations, and inquire whether *he* has any right to boast of the favours imparted to him." This seems to me to be the probable interpretation of this passage.

To glory. To boast, 2Co 10:8,13, 11:10.

One of the charges which they alleged against him was, that he was given to boasting without any good reason. After the enumeration in the previous chapter of what he had done and suffered, he says that this was doubtless very true. Such a man has nothing to boast of.

I will come. Marg., "For I will." Our translators have omitted the word (*gar*) *for* in the text, evidently supposing that it is a mere expletive. Doddridge renders it, "nevertheless." But it seems to me that it contains an important sense, and that it should be rendered by THEN: "Since it is not fit that I should glory, then I will refer to visions, etc. I will turn away, then, from that subject, and come to another." Thus the word (*gar*) is used in Joh 7:41, "Shall, THEN, (*mh gar*) Christ come out of Galilee?" Ac 8:31, "How can I, THEN, (*pwv gar*) except some man should guide me" See also Ac 19:35 Ro 3:3; Php 1:18.

To visions. The word *vision* is used in the Scriptures often to denote the mode in which Divine communications were usually made to men. This was done by causing some scene to appear to pass before the mind as in a landscape, so that the individual seemed to *see* a representation of what was to occur in some future period. It was usually applied to *prophecy*, and is often used in the Old Testament. **See Barnes** "Isa 1:1, and also **See Barnes "Ac 9:10"**.

The vision which Paul here refers to was that which he was permitted to have of the heavenly world, 2Co 12:4. He was permitted *to see* what perhaps no other mortal had seen, the glory of heaven.

And revelations of the Lord. Which the Lord had made. Or it may mean manifestations which the Lord had made of himself to him. The word rendered *revelations* means, properly, an *uncovering*, *apokaluqeiv*, from *apokaluptw*, to uncover; and denotes a removal of the vail of ignorance and

darkness, so that an object may be clearly seen; and is thus applied to truth revealed, because the obscurity is removed, and the truth becomes manifest.

{1} "I will come" "For I will"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *I knew a man in Christ*. I was acquainted with a Christian; the phrase, "in Christ," meaning nothing more than that he was united to Christ, or was a Christian. See Ro 16:7. The reason why Paul did not speak of this directly as a vision which he had himself seen, was probably that he was accused of boasting, and he had admitted that it did not become *him* to glory. But though it did not become him to boast directly, yet he could tell them of a man concerning whom there would be no impropriety evidently in boasting. It is not uncommon, moreover, for a man to speak of himself in the third person. Thus Caesar in his Commentaries uniformly speaks of himself. And so John in his Gospel speaks of himself, Joh 13:23,24, 19:26 21:20.

John did it on account of his modesty, because he would not appear to put himself forward, and because the mention of his own name, as connected with the friendship of the Saviour in the remarkable manner in which he enjoyed it, might have savoured of pride. For a similar reason Paul may have been unwilling to mention his own name here; and he may have abstained from referring to this occurrence elsewhere because it might savour of pride, and might also excite the envy or ill-will of others. Those who have been most favoured with spiritual enjoyments will not be the most ready to proclaim it. They will cherish the remembrance in order to excite gratitude in their own hearts, and support them in trial; they will not blazon it abroad as if they were more the favourites of Heaven than others are. That this refers to Paul himself is evident for the following reasons:

(1) His argument required that he should mention something that had occurred to himself. Anything that had occurred to another would not have been pertinent.

(2.) He applies it directly to himself, (

@Co 12:7,) when he says that God took effectual measures that he should not be unduly exalted in view of the abundant revelations bestowed on him.

About fourteen years ago. On what occasion, or where this occurred, or why he concealed the remarkable fact so long, and why there is no other allusion to it, is unknown; and conjecture is useless. If this epistle was written, as is commonly supposed, about the year 58, then this occurrence must have happened about the year 44. This was several years after his conversion, and of course this does not refer to the *trance* mentioned in Ac 9:9, at the time when he was converted. Dr. Benson supposes that this vision was made to him when he was praying in the temple after his return to Jerusalem, when he was directed to go from Jerusalem to the Gentiles, (Ac 22:17,) and that it was intended to support him in the trials which he was about to endure. There can be little danger of error in supposing that its object was to support him in those remarkable trials, and that God designed to impart to him such views of heaven and its glory, and of the certainty that he would soon be admitted there, as to support him in his sufferings, and make him willing to bear all that should be laid upon him. God often gives to his people some clear and elevated spiritual comforts *before* they

enter into trials, as well as while in them; he prepares them for them before they come. This vision Paul had kept secret for fourteen years. He had doubtless *often* thought of it; and the remembrance of that glorious hour was doubtless one of the reasons why he bore trials so patiently, and was willing to endure so much. But before this he had had no occasion to mention it. He had other proofs in abundance that he was called to the work of an apostle; and to mention this would savour of pride and ostentation. It was only when he was compelled to refer to the evidences of his apostolic mission that he refers to it here.

Whether in the body, I cannot tell. That is, I do not pretend to explain it. I do not know how it occurred. With the *fact* he was acquainted; but how it was brought about he did not know. Whether the body was caught up to heaven; whether the soul was for a time separated from the body; or whether the scene passed before the mind in a vision, so that he seemed to have been caught up to heaven, he does not pretend to know. The evident idea is, that at the time he was in a state of insensibility in regard to surrounding objects, and was unconscious of what was occurring, as if he had been dead. Where Paul confesses his own ignorance of what occurred to himself, it would be vain for us to inquire; and the question how this was done is immaterial. No one can doubt that God had power, if he chose, to transport the body to heaven; or that he had power for a time to separate the soul from the body; or that he had power to represent to the mind so clearly the view of the heavenly world, that he would appear to see it. See Ac 7:56. It is clear only that he lost all consciousness of anything about him at that time, and that he saw only the things in heaven. It may be added here, however, that Paul evidently supposed that his soul *might* be taken to heaven without the body, and that it might have separate consciousness, and a separate existence. He was not, therefore, a materialist, and he did not believe that the existence and consciousness of the soul was dependent on the body.

God knoweth. With the mode in which it was done, God only could be acquainted. Paul did not attempt to explain that. That was to him of comparatively little consequence, and he did not lose his time in a vain attempt to explain it. How happy would it be if all theologians were as ready to be satisfied with the knowledge of a *fact*, and to leave the mode of explaining it with God, as this prince of theologians was. Many a man would have busied himself with a vain speculation about the way in which it was done; Paul was contented with the fact that it had occurred.

Such an one caught up. The word which is here used (*arpazw*) means, to seize upon, to snatch away as wolves do their prey, (Joh 10:12;) or to seize with avidity or eagerness, Mt 11:12; or to carry away, to hurry off by force, or involuntarily. See Joh 6:15 Ac 8:39, 23:10.

In the case before us there is implied the idea that Paul was conveyed by a foreign force; or that he was suddenly seized and snatched up to heaven. The word expresses the suddenness and the rapidity with which it was done. Probably it was instantaneous, so that he appeared, at once to be in heaven. Of the mode in which it was done, Paul has given no explanations; and conjecture would be useless.

To the third heaven. The Jews sometimes speak of seven heavens, and Mohammed has borrowed this idea from the Jews. But the Bible speaks of but three heavens; and among the Jews in the apostolic ages, also, the heavens were divided into three:

(1.) The aerial, including the clouds and the atmosphere, the heavens above us, until we come to the stars.

(2.) The starry heavens—the heavens in which the sun, moon, and stars appear to be situated.

(3.) The heavens *beyond* the stars. That heaven was supposed to be the residence of God, of angels, and of holy spirits. It was this upper heaven, the dwelling-place of God, to which Paul was taken, and whose wonders he was permitted to behold—this region where God dwelt, where Christ was seated at the right hand of the Father, and where the spirits of the just were assembled. The fanciful opinions of the Jews about seven heavens may be seen detailed in Schoettgen or in Wetstein, by whom the principal passages from the Jewish writings relating to the subject have been collected. As their opinions throw no light on this passage, it is unnecessary to detail them here.

{a} "in Christ" Ro 16:7 {2} "fourteen years ago" "A.D. 46" Ac 22:17

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And I knew such a man*. It is not uncommon to repeat a solemn affirmation in order that it may be made more emphatic. This is done here. Paul repeats the idea, that he was intimately acquainted with such a man, and that he did not know whether he was in the body or out of the body. All that was known to God.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Into paradise*. The word paradise (*paradeison*) occurs but three times in the New Testament, Lu 23:43 Re 2:7; and in this place. It occurs often in the Septuagint, as the translation of the word *garden*, Ge 2:8-10,15,16 3:1-3,8,10,23,24 13:10 Nu 24:6; Eze 28:13 31:8,9 Joe 2:3.

And also Isa 1:30 Jer 29:5; and of the word *Pardes*

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in Ne 2:8 Ec 2:5; So 4:13.

It is a word which had its origin in the language of eastern Asia, and which has been adopted in the Greek, the Roman, and other western languages. In Sanscrit, the word *paradesha* means a land elevated and cultivated; in Armenian, *pardes* denotes a garden around the house planted with trees, shrubs, grass, for use and ornament. In Persia, the word denotes the *pleasure-gardens and parks* with wild animals around the country residences of the monarchs and princes. Hence it denotes in general a garden of pleasure; and in the New Testament is applied to the abodes of the blessed after death, the dwelling-place of God and of happy spirits; or to heaven as a place of blessedness. Some have supposed that Paul here, by the word "paradise," means to describe a different place from that denoted by the phrase "the third heaven;" but there is no good reason for this supposition. The only difference is, that this word implies the idea of a place of blessedness; but the same place is undoubtedly referred to.

And heard unspeakable words. The word which is here rendered "unspeakable," (*arrhta*) may either mean what *cannot* be spoken, or what *ought* not to be spoken. The word means unutterable, ineffable; and whichever idea we attach to it, Paul meant to say that he could not attempt by words

to do justice to what he saw and heard. The use of the word "words" here would seem to imply that he heard the *language* of exalted praise; or that there were truths imparted to his mind which he could not hope to convey in any language spoken by men.

Which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Marg., "*possible*." Witsius supposes that the word *exon* may include both, and Doddridge accords with the interpretation. See also Robinson's Lexicon. The word is most commonly used in the signification of *lawful*. Thus, Mt 14:4, "It is not lawful for thee to have her;" Ac 16:21, "Which it is not lawful for us to observe;" Ac 22:25, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman," etc. In the same sense of *lawful* it is used in Mt 12:2,10,12; Mt 20:15 Mr 2:26, 10:2.

When it refers to *possibility*, it probably means *moral* possibility; that is, propriety, or it means that it is right. It seems to me, therefore, that the word here rather means that it was not *proper* to give utterance to those things; it would not be *right* to attempt it. It might be also true that it would not have been possible for language to convey clearly the ideas connected with the things which Paul was then permitted to see; but the main thought is, that there was some reason why it would not be *proper* for him to have attempted to communicate those ideas to men at large. The Jews held that it was unlawful to pronounce the Tetragrammaton, i.e., the name of four letters, (

HEBREW,) JEHOVAH; and whenever that name occurred in their Scriptures, they substituted the name *Adonai* in its place. They maintain, indeed, that the true pronunciation is utterly lost, and none of them to this day attempt to pronounce it. But this was mere superstition; and it is impossible that Paul should have been influenced by any such reason as this.

The transaction here referred to is very remarkable. It is the only instance in the Scriptures of any one who was taken to heaven, either in reality or in vision, and who returned again to the earth, and was then qualified to communicate important truths about the heavenly world from personal observation. Enoch and Elijah were taken to heaven; but they returned not to converse with men. Elijah appeared with Moses in conversation with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration; but they conversed with him only about his decease, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem, Lu 9:31. There would have been no propriety for them to have spoken to Jesus of heaven, for he came down from heaven and was in heaven, (Joh 3:13,) and they were not permitted to speak to the disciples of heaven. Lazarus was raised from the dead, (Joh 11), and many of the saints which had slept in their graves arose at the death of Jesus, (Mt 27:52,) but there is no intimation that they communicated anything to the living about the heavenly world. Of all the millions who have been taken to heaven, not one has been permitted to return to bear his testimony to its glories; to witness for God that he is faithful to his promises; to encourage his pious friends to persevere; or to invite his impenitent friends to follow him to that glorious world. And so fixed is the law, so settled is the principle, that even Lazarus was not permitted to go, though at the earnest request of the rich man in hell, and warn his friends not to follow him to that world of woe, Lu 16:27-31. Mohammed, indeed, feigned that he had made a journey to heaven, and he attempts to describe what he saw; and the difference between *true inspiration and false or pretended inspiration* is strikingly evinced by the difference between Paul's dignified silence—*verba sacro digna silentio* (Horace)—and the puerilities of the prophet of Mecca. See the Koran, chap. xvii. As the difference between the true religion and imposture is strikingly illustrated by this, we may recur to the principal events which happened to the impostor on his celebrated journey. The whole account may be seen in Prideaux's Life of Mohammed, p. 43, seq. He solemnly affirmed that he had been translated to the heaven of

heavens; that on a white beast, less than a mule, but larger than an ass, he had been conveyed from the temple of Mecca to that of Jerusalem; had successively ascended the seven heavens with his companion Gabriel, receiving and returning the salutations of its blessed inhabitants; had then proceeded alone within two bow-shots of the throne of the Almighty, when he felt a cold which pierced him to the heart, and was touched on the shoulder by the hand of God, who commanded him to pray fifty times a day, but with the advice of Moses he was prevailed on to have the number reduced to five; and that he then returned to Jerusalem and to Mecca, having performed a journey of thousands of years in the tenth part of a night.

The fact that Paul was not permitted to communicate what he had seen is very remarkable. It is natural to ask why it is so? Why has not God sent down departed saints to *tell* men of the glories of heaven? Why does he not permit them to come and bear testimony to what they have seen and enjoyed? Why not come and clear up the doubts of the pious; why not come and convince a thoughtless world; why not come and bear honourable testimony for God that he is faithful to reward his people? And especially why did he not suffer Paul, whom he had permitted to behold the glories of paradise, to testify simply to what he had seen, and tell us what was there ?

To these questions, so obvious, it is impossible to give an answer that we can demonstrate to be the true one. But we may suggest *some* reasons which may furnish a plausible answer, and which may serve to remove some of the perplexity in the case. I would, therefore, suggest that the following may have been some of the reasons why Paul was not permitted to communicate what he saw to men:

(1.) It was designed for the support of Paul himself, in view of the very remarkable trials which he was about to endure. God had called him to great toils and self-denials. He was to labour much alone; to go to foreign lands; to be persecuted, and ultimately put to death; and it was his purpose to qualify him for this work by some peculiar manifestation of his favour. He accordingly gave him such views of heaven that he would be supported in his trials by a conviction of the undoubted truth of what he taught, and by the prospect of certain glory when his labours should end. It was one instance when God gave peculiar views to prepare for trials, as he often does to his people now, preparing them in a peculiar manner for peculiar trials. Christians, from some cause, often have more elevated views and deeper feeling *before* they are called to endure trials than they have at other times—peculiar grace to prepare them for suffering. But as this was designed in a peculiar manner for Paul alone, it was not proper for him to communicate what he saw to others.

(2.) It is probable that if there were a full revelation of the glories of heaven, we should not be able to comprehend it; or even if we did, we should be incredulous in regard to it. So unlike what we see; so elevated above our highest comprehension; probably so unlike what we now anticipate, is heaven, that we should be slow to receive the revelation. It is always difficult to describe what we have not seen, even on earth, so that we shall have any very clear idea of it: how much more difficult must it be to describe heaven! We are often incredulous about what is reported to exist in foreign lands on earth, which we have not seen, and a long time is often necessary before we will believe it. The king of Siam, when told by the Dutch ambassador that water became so hard in his country that men might walk on it, said, "I have often suspected you of falsehood, but now I know that you lie." So incredulous might we be, with our weak faith, if we were told what-actually exists in heaven. We should not improbably turn away from it as wholly incredible.

(3.) There are great truths which it is not the design of God to reveal to men. The object is to communicate *enough* to win us, to comfort us, to support our faith—not to reveal all. In eternity

there must be boundless truths and glories which are not *needful* for us to know now, and which, on many accounts, it would not be proper to be revealed to men. The question is not, do we know all, but have we *enough* safely to guide us to heaven, and to comfort us in the trials of life.

(4.) There *is* enough revealed of heaven for our guidance and comfort in this world. God has told us what it will be in general. It will be a world without sin; without tears; without wrong, injustice, fraud, or wars; without disease, pestilence, plague, death; and it is easy to fill up the picture sufficiently for all our purposes. Let us think of a world where all shall be pure and holy; of a world free from all that we now behold that is evil; free from pain, disease, death; a world where "friends never depart, foes never come;" a world where all shall be harmony and love—and where all this shall be ETERNAL; and we shall see that God has revealed enough for our welfare here. The highest hopes of man are met when we anticipate AN ETERNAL HEAVEN; the heaviest trials may be cheerfully borne when we have the prospect of EVERLASTING REST.

(5.) One other reason may be assigned why it was not proper for Paul to disclose what he saw, and why God has withheld more full revelations from men about heaven. It is, that his purpose is that we shall here walk by faith and not by sight. We are not to see the reward, nor to be told fully what it is. We are to have such confidence in God that we shall assuredly believe that he will fully reward and bless us, and under this confidence we are to live and act here below. God designs, therefore, to try our faith, and to furnish an abundant evidence that his people are *disposed* to obey his commands, and to put their trust in his faithfulness. Besides, if all the glories of heaven were revealed; if all were told that might be; and if heaven were made as attractive to mortal view as possible, then it might appear that his professed people were influenced *solely* by the hope of the reward. As it is, there is enough to support and comfort; not enough to make it the main and only reason why we serve God. It may be added,

(a.) that we have *all* the truth which we shall ever have about heaven here below. No other messenger will come; none of the pious dead will return. If men, therefore, are not willing to be saved in view of the truth which they have, they must be lost. God will communicate no more.

(b.) The Christian will soon know all about heaven. He will soon be there. He begins no day with any certainty that he may not close it in heaven; he lies down to rest at no time with any assurance that he will not wake in heaven, amidst its full and eternal splendours.

(c.) The sinner will soon know fully what it is to lose heaven. A moment may make him fully sensible of his loss—for he may die; and a moment may put him for ever beyond the possibility of reaching a world of glory.

{a} "and hear unspeakable words" Lu 23:43 Re 2:7 {1} "lawful" "possible"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Of such an one will I glory*. Of such a man it would be right to boast. It would be admitted that it is right to exult in such a man, and to esteem him to be peculiarly favoured by God. I will boast of him as having received peculiar honour from the Lord. Bloomfield, however, supposes that the words rendered "of such an one" should be translated "of such a thing," or of such a transaction; meaning, "I can indeed justly boast of my being caught up to heaven, as of a thing the

whole glory of which pertains to him who has thus exalted me; but of myself, or of anything in me, I will not boast." So Rosenmuller explains it. But it seems to me that the connexion requires that we should understand it of a person, and that the passage is partly ironical. Paul speaks in the third person. He chooses to keep himself directly out of view. And though he refers really to himself, yet he would not say this directly, but says that of such a man they would admit it would be proper to boast.

Yet of myself. Directly. It is not expedient for me to boast of myself. "You would allow me to boast of such a man as I have referred to; I admit that it is not proper for me to boast directly of myself."

But in mine infirmities. My weaknesses, trials, pains, sufferings; such as many regard as infirmities. **See Barnes "2Co 11:30".**

{a} "of myself" 2Co 12:9,10, 11:30

{*} "infirmities" "me weakness"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *For though I would desire to glory*. I take this to be a solemn and serious declaration of the irony which precedes; and that Paul means to say seriously, that if he had a wish to boast as other men boasted, if he chose to make much of his attainments and privileges, he would have enough of which to make mention. It would not be mere empty boasting without any foundation or any just cause, for he had as much of which to speak in a confident manner pertaining to his labours as an apostle, and his evidence of the Divine favour, as could be urged by any one. "I might go on to speak much more than I have done, and to urge claims which all would admit to be well-founded."

I shall not be a fool." It would not be foolish boasting; for it would be according to truth. I could urge much more than I have done; I could speak of things which no one would be disposed to call in question as laying the foundation of just claims to my being regarded as eminently favoured of God; I could seriously state what all would admit to be such."

For I will say the truth. That is, "Whatever I should say on this subject would be the simple truth. I should mention nothing which has not actually occurred. But I forbear, lest some one should form an improper estimate of me." The apostle seems to have intended to have added something more, but he was checked by the apprehension to which he here refers. Or perhaps he means to say, that if he should boast of the vision to which he had just referred, if he should go on to say how highly he had been honoured and exalted by it, there would be no impropriety in it. It was so remarkable, that if he confined himself strictly to the truth, as he would do, still it would be regarded by all as a very extraordinary honour, and one to which no one of the false teachers could refer as laying a foundation for his boasting.

Lest any man should think of me, etc. The idea in this part of the verse I take to be this: "I desire and expect to be estimated by my public life. I expect to be judged of men by my deeds, by what they see in me, and by my general reputation in respect to what I have done in establishing the Christian religion. I am willing that my character and reputation, that the estimate in which I shall

be held by mankind, shall rest on that. I do not wish that my character among men shall be determined by my secret feelings; or by any secret extraordinary communication from heaven which I may have, and which cannot be subjected to the observation of my fellow-men. I am willing to be estimated by my public life; and however valuable such extraordinary manifestations may be to me as an individual, or however much they may comfort me, I do not wish to make them the basis of my public reputation. I expect to stand and be estimated by my public deeds; by what all men see and hear of me; and I would not have them form even a favourable opinion of me beyond that." This is the noble language of a man who was willing to enjoy such a reputation as his public life entitled him to. He wished to have the basis of his reputation such that all men could see and examine it. Unlike enthusiasts and fanatics, he appealed to no secret impulses; did not rest his claims for public confidence on any peculiar communications from heaven; but wished to be estimated by his public deeds. And the important truth taught is, that however much communion we may have with God; however much comfort and support in prayer, and in our favoured moments of fellowship with God; or however much we may fancy in this way that we are the favourites of Heaven; and however much this may support us in trial, still this should not be made the foundation of claim to the favourable opinions of our fellow-men. By our public character; by our well-known actions; by our lives as seen by men, we should desire to be estimated, and we should be satisfied with such a measure of public esteem as our deportment shall fairly entitle us to. We should seldom, perhaps, refer to our moments of secret, happy, and most favoured communion with God. Paul kept his most elevated joys, in this respect, secret *for fourteen years*: what an example to those who are constantly blazoning their Christian experience abroad, and boasting of what they have enjoyed! We should never refer to such moments as a foundation for the estimate in which our character shall be held by our fellow-men. We should never make this the foundation of a claim to the public confidence in us. For all such claims, for all the estimate in which we shall be held by men, we should be willing to be tried by our lives. Paul would not even make a *vision of heaven— not even the privilege of having beheld the glories of the upper world, though a favour conferred on no other living man*—a ground of the estimate in which his character should be held! What an example to those who wish to be estimated by secret raptures, and by special communications to their souls from heaven! No. Let us be willing to be estimated *by men* by what they see in us; to enjoy such a reputation as our conduct shall fairly entitle us to. Let our communion with God cheer our own hearts; but let us not obtrude this on men as furnishing a claim for an exalted standing in their estimation.

{+} "say" "speak"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *And lest I should be exalted*. Lest I should be spiritually proud; lest I should become self-confident and vain, and suppose that I was a special favourite of Heaven. If Paul was in danger of spiritual pride, who is not? If it was necessary for God to adopt some special measures to keep him humble, we are not to be surprised that the same thing should occur in other cases. There is abundant reason to believe that Paul was naturally a proud man. He was by nature self-confident;

trusting in his own talents and attainments, and eminently ambitious. When he became a Christian, therefore, one of his besetting sins would be pride; and as he had been peculiarly favoured in his call to the apostleship; in his success as a preacher; in the standing which he had among the other apostles, and in the revelations imparted to him, there was also peculiar danger that he would become self-confident, and proud of his attainments. There is no danger that more constantly besets Christians, and even eminent Christians, than pride. There is no sin that is more subtle, insinuating, deceptive; none that lurks more constantly around the heart, and that finds a more ready entrance, than pride. He who has been characterized by pride before his conversion, will be in special danger of it afterwards; he who has eminent gifts in prayer, or in conversation, or in preaching, will be in special danger of it; he who is eminently successful will be in danger of it; and he who has any extraordinary spiritual comforts will be in danger of it. Of this sin he who lives nearest to God may be in most special danger; and he who is most eminent in piety should feel that he also occupies a position where the enemy will approach him in a sly and subtle manner, and where he is in peculiar danger of a fall. Possibly the fear that he might be in danger of being made proud by the flattery of his friends may have been one reason why Paul kept this thing concealed for fourteen years; and if men wish to keep themselves from the danger this sin, they should not be forward to speak even of the most favoured moments of their communion with God.

Through the abundance of the revelations. By my being raised thus to heaven, and by being permitted to behold the wonders of the heavenly world, as well as by the numerous communications which God had made to me at other times.

There was given to me. That is, God was pleased to appoint me. The word which Paul uses is worthy of special notice. It is that this "thorn in the flesh" was *given* to him, implying that it was a favour. He does not complain of it; he does not say it was sent in cruelty; he does not even speak of it as an affliction; he speaks of it as a *gift*, as any man would of a favour that had been bestowed. Paul had so clear a view of the benefits which resulted from it, that he regarded it as a favour, as Christians should every trial.

A thorn in the flesh. The word here used (*skoloq*) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means, properly, anything pointed or sharp, e.g., a stake or palisade, (Xen. Anab. 5,2,5;) or the point of a hook. The word is used in the Septuagint to denote a *thorn* or prickle, as a translation of

HEBREW, (*sir*) in Hos 2:6, "I will hedge up thy way with *thorns*;" to denote a pricking briar in Eze 28:24, as a translation of

HEBREW, (*sillon*,) meaning a thorn or prickle, such as is found in the shoots and twigs of the palm-tree; and to denote "pricks in the eyes," Nu 33:55, as a translation of

HEBREW, (*sikkim*,) thorns or prickles. So far as the *word* here used is concerned, it means a sharp thorn or prickle; and the idea is, that the trial to which he refers was as troublesome and painful as such a thorn would be in the flesh. But whether he refers to some infirmity or pain in the flesh or the body is another question, and a question in which interpreters have been greatly divided in opinion. Every one who has become familiar with commentaries knows that almost every expositor has had his own opinion about this, and also that no one has been able to give any good reason for his own. Most of them have been fanciful; and many of them eminently ridiculous. Even Baxter, who was subject himself to some such disorder, supposes that it might be the stone or gravel; and the usually very judicious Doddridge supposes that the view which he had of the glories of heavenly objects so affected his nerves as to produce a paralytic disorder, and particularly a stammering in his speech, and perhaps also a ridiculous

distortion of the countenance. This opinion was suggested by Whitby, and has been adopted also by Benson, Macknight, Slade, and Bloomfield. But though sustained by most respectable names, it would be easy to show that it is mere conjecture, and perhaps quite as improbable as any of the numerous opinions which have been maintained on the subject. If Paul's speech had been affected, and his face distorted, and his nerves shattered by such a sight, how could he doubt whether he was in the body or out of it when this occurred? Many of the Latin Fathers supposed that some unruly and ungovernable lust was intended. Chrysostom and Jerome suppose that he meant the headache; Tertullian, an earache; and Rosenmuller supposes that it was the gout in the head, (*kopfgicht,*) and that it was a periodical disorder such as affected him when he was with the Galatians, Ga 4:13. But all conjecture here is vain; and the numerous strange and ridiculous opinions of commentators is a melancholy attestation of their inclination to fanciful conjecture, where it is *impossible*, in the nature of the case, to ascertain the truth. All that can be known of this is, that it was some infirmity of the flesh, some bodily affliction or calamity, that was like the continual piercing of the flesh with a thorn, Ga 4:13; and that it was something that was *designed* to prevent spiritual pride. It is not indeed an improbable supposition that it was something that could be seen by others, and that thus tended to humble him when with them.

The messenger of Satan. Among the Hebrews it was customary to attribute severe and painful diseases to Satan. Comp. Job 2:6,7, **See Barnes "Lu 13:16"**.

In the time of the Saviour, malignant spirits are known to have taken possession of the body in numerous cases, and to have produced painful bodily diseases; and Paul here says that Satan was permitted to bring this calamity on him.

To buffet me. To buffet, means to smite with the hand; then to maltreat in any way. The meaning is, that the effect and design of this was deeply to afflict him. Doddridge and Clarke suppose that the reference is here to the false teacher whom Satan had sent to Corinth, and who was to him the source of perpetual trouble. But it seems more probable to me that he refers to some bodily infirmity. The general truth taught in this verse is, that God will take care that his people shall not be unduly exalted by the manifestations of his favour, and by the spiritual privileges which he bestows on them. He will take measures to humble them; and a large part of his dealings with his people is designed to accomplish this. Sometimes it will be done, as in the case of Paul, by bodily infirmity or trial, by sickness, or by long and lingering disease; sometimes by great poverty, and by an humble condition of life; sometimes by *reducing* us from a state of affluence, where we were in danger of being exalted above measure; sometimes by suffering us to be slandered and calumniated, by suffering foes to rise up against us who shall blacken our character, and in such a manner that we cannot meet it; sometimes by persecution; sometimes by want of success in our enterprises, and, if in the ministry, by withholding his Spirit; sometimes by suffering us to fall into sin, and thus greatly humbling us before the world. Such was the case with David and with Peter; and God often permits us to see in this manner our own weakness, and to bring us to a sense of our dependence and to proper humility by suffering us to perform some act that should be ever afterward a *standing source* of our humiliation; some act so base, so humiliating, so evincing the deep depravity of our hearts, as *for ever* to make and keep us humble. How could David be lifted up with pride after the murder of Uriah? How could Peter after having denied his Lord with a horrid oath? Thus many a Christian is *suffered* to fall by the temptation of Satan, to show him his weakness and to keep him from pride; many a fall is made the occasion of the permanent benefit of the offender. And perhaps

every Christian who has been much favored with elevated spiritual views and comforts can recall something which shall be to him a standing topic of regret and humiliation in his past life. We should be thankful for any calamity that will humble us; and we should remember that clear and elevated views of God and heaven are, after all, more than a compensation for all the sufferings which it may be necessary to endure in order to make us humble.

{a} "in the flesh" Eze 28:24 Ga 4:14 {b} "messenger of Satan" Job 2:7 Lu 13:16

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *For this thing*. On account of this; in order that this calamity might be removed.

I besought the Lord. The word "Lord" in the New Testament, when it stands without any other word in connexion to limit its signification, commonly denotes the Lord Jesus Christ. **See Barnes "Ac 1:24".**

The following verse here shows conclusively that it was the Lord Jesus to whom Paul addressed this prayer. The answer was, that his grace was sufficient for him; and Paul consoled himself by saying that it was a sufficient support if the power of Christ, implied in that answer, should rest on him. He would glory in trials if such was their result. Even Rosenmuller maintains that it was the Lord Jesus to whom this prayer was addressed, and says that the Socinians themselves admit it. So Grotius (on 2Co 12:9) says that the answer was given by Christ. But if this refers to the Lord Jesus, then it proves that it is right to go to him in times of trouble, and that it is right to worship him. Prayer is the most solemn act of adoration which we can perform; and no better authority can be required for paying Divine honours to Christ than the fact that Paul worshipped him, and called upon him to remove a severe and grievous calamity.

Thrice. This may either mean that he prayed for this *often*, or that he sought it on three set and solemn occasions. Many commentators have supposed that the former is meant. But to me it seems probable that Paul, on three special occasions, earnestly prayed for the removal of this calamity. It will be recollected that the Lord Jesus prayed three times in the garden of Gethsemane that the cup might be removed from him, Mt 26:44. At the third time he ceased, and submitted to what was the will of God. There is some reason to suppose that the Jews were in the habit of praying three times for any important blessing, or for the removal of any calamity; and Paul in this would not only conform to the usual custom, but especially he would be disposed to imitate the example of the Lord Jesus. Among the Jews *three* was a sacred number, and repeated instances occur where an important transaction is mentioned as having been done thrice. See Nu 22:28 24:10; 1Sa 3:8 20:41; 1Ki 18:34 Pr 22:20; Jer 7:4 22:29; Joh 21:17. The probability therefore is, that Paul on three different occasions earnestly besought the Lord Jesus that this calamity might be removed from him. It might have been exceedingly painful; or it might, as he supposed, interfere with his success as a preacher; or it might have been of such a nature as to expose him to ridicule; and he prayed, therefore, if it were possible that it might be taken away. The passage proves that it is right to pray earnestly and repeatedly for the removal of any calamity. The Saviour so prayed in the garden; and Paul so prayed here. Yet it also proves that there should be a limit to such prayers. The Saviour prayed three times; and Paul limited himself to the same number of petitions, and then submitted

to the will of God. This does not prove that we should be limited to exactly this number in our petitions; but it proves that there should be a limit; that we should not be over anxious; and that when it is plain from any cause that the calamity will not be removed, we should submit to it. The Saviour in the garden knew that the cup would not be removed, and he acquiesced. Paul was told indirectly that his calamity would not be removed, and he submitted. We may expect no such revelation from heaven, but we may know in other ways that the calamity will not be removed; and we should submit. The child or other friend for whom we prayed may die; or the calamity, as, e.g., blindness, or deafness, or loss of health, or poverty, may become permanent, so that there is no hope of removing it; and we should then cease to pray that it may be removed, and we should cheerfully acquiesce in the will of God. So David prayed most fervently for his child when it was alive; when it was deceased, and it was of no further use to pray for it, he bowed in submission to the will of God, 2Sa 12:20.

{a} "thing" De 3:23-27 Ps 77:2; La 3:8 Mt 26:44

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *And he said unto me*. The Saviour replied. In what way this was done, or whether it was done at the time when the prayer was offered, Paul does not inform us. It is possible, as Macknight supposes, that Christ appeared to him again, and spake to him in an audible manner. Grotius supposes that this was done by the

HEBREW

(*Bath-qol*— "daughter of the voice") so frequently referred to by the Jewish writers, and which they suppose to be referred to in 1Ki 19:12, by the phrase, "a still small voice." But it is impossible to determine in what way it was done, and it is not material. Paul was in habits of communion with the Saviour, and was accustomed to receive revelations from him. The material fact here is, that the request was not granted in the exact form in which he presented it, but that he received assurance of grace to support him in his trial. It is one of the instances in which the fervent prayer of a good man, offered undoubtedly in faith, was not answered in the form in which he desired, though substantially answered in the assurance of grace sufficient to support him. It furnishes, therefore, a very instructive lesson in regard to prayer, and shows us that we are not to expect as a matter of course that all our prayers will be literally answered, and that we should not be disappointed or disheartened if they are not. It is *a matter of fact* that not all the prayers even of the pious, and of those who pray having faith in God as a hearer of prayer, are literally answered. Thus the prayer of David (2Sa 12:16-20) was not literally answered: the child for whose life he so earnestly prayed died. So the Saviour's request was not literally answered, Mr 14:36. The cup of suffering which he so earnestly desired should be taken away, was not re- moved. So in the case before us. Compare also De 3:23-27; Job 30:20 La 3:8. So in numerous cases now, Christians pray with fervour and with faith for the removal of some calamity which is not removed; or for something which they regard as desirable for their welfare, which is withheld. Some of the *reasons* why this is done are obvious:

(1.) The grace that will be imparted if the calamity is not removed, will be of greater value to the individual than would be the direct answer to his prayer. Such was the case with Paul; so it was doubtless with David; and so it is often with Christians now. The removal of the calamity might be apparently a blessing, but it might also be attended with danger to our spiritual welfare; the grace imparted may be of permanent value, and may be connected with the development of some of the loveliest traits of Christian character.

(2.) It might not-be for the good of the individual who prays that the exact thing should be granted. When a parent prays with great earnestness and with *insubmision* for the life of a child, he knows not what he is doing. If the child lives, he may be the occasion of much more grief to him than if he had died. David had far more trouble from Absalom than he had from the death of the child for which he so earnestly prayed. At the same time, it may be better for the child that he should be removed. If he dies in infancy he will be saved. But who can tell what will be his character and destiny, should he live to be a man? So of other things.

(3.) God has often some better thing in store for us than would be the immediate answer to our prayer. Who can doubt that this was true of Paul? The promised grace of Christ as sufficient to support us, is of more value than would be the mere removal of any bodily affliction.

(4.) It would not be well for us, probably, should our petition be literally answered. Who can tell what is best for himself? If the thing were obtained, who can tell how soon we might forget the Benefactor, and become proud and self-confident? It was the design of God to *humble* Paul; and this could be much better accomplished by continuing his affliction, and by imparting the promised grace, than by withdrawing the affliction, and withholding the grace. The very thing to be done was to keep him humble; and this affliction could not be withdrawn without also foregoing the benefit. It is true, also, that where things are in themselves proper to be asked, Christians sometimes ask them in an improper manner, and this is one of the reasons why many of their prayers are not answered. But this does not pertain to the case before us.

My grace is sufficient for thee. A much better answer than it would have been to have removed the calamity; and one that seems to have been entirely satisfactory to Paul. The meaning of the Saviour is, that he would support him; that he would not suffer him to sink exhausted under his trials; that he had nothing to fear. The affliction was not indeed removed; but there was a promise that the favour of Christ would be shown to him constantly, and that he would find his support to be ample. If Paul had this support, he might well bear the trial; and if we have this assurance, as we may have, we may welcome affliction, and rejoice that calamities are brought upon us. It is a sufficient answer to our prayers if we have the solemn promise of the Redeemer that we shall be upheld, and never sink under the burden of our heavy woes.

My strength is made perfect in weakness. That is, the strength which I impart to my people is more commonly and more completely manifested when my people feel that they are weak. It is not imparted to those who feel that they are strong, and who do not realize their need of Divine aid. It is not so completely manifested to those who are vigorous and strong, as to the feeble. It is when we are conscious that we are feeble, and when we feel our need of aid, that the Redeemer manifests his power to uphold, and imparts his purest consolations. Grotius has collected several similar passages from the classic writers, which may serve to illustrate this expression. Thus Pliny, vii. Epis. 26, says, "We are best where we are weak." Seneca says, "Calamity is the occasion of virtue." Quintilian, "All temerity of mind is broken by bodily calamity." Minutius Felix, "Calamity is often the discipline of virtue." There are few Christians who cannot bear witness to the truth of what the

Redeemer here says, and who have not experienced the most pure consolations which they have known, and been most sensible of his comforting presence and power, in times of affliction.

Most gladly therefore, etc. I count it a privilege to be afflicted, if my trials may be the means of my more abundantly enjoying the favour of the Redeemer. His presence and imparted strength are more than a compensation for all the trials that I endure.

That the power of Christ. The strength which Christ imparts; his power manifested in supporting me in trials.

May rest upon me. *episkhnwsh*. The word properly means *to pitch a tent upon*; and then to dwell in or upon. Here it is used in the sense of abiding upon; or remaining with. The sense is, that the power which Christ manifested to his people rested with them, or abode with them in their trials, and *therefore* he would rejoice in afflictions, in order that he might partake of the aid and consolation thus imparted. Learn hence,

(1.) that a Christian never *loses* anything by suffering and affliction. If he may obtain the favour of Christ by his trials, he is a gainer. The favour of the Redeemer is more than a compensation for all that we endure in his cause.

(2.) The Christian is a *gainer* by trial. I never knew a Christian that was not ultimately benefited by trials. I never knew one who did not find that he had *gained* much that was valuable to him in scenes of affliction. I do not know that I have found one who would be willing to exchange the advantages he has gained in affliction for all that the most uninterrupted prosperity and the highest honours that the world could give would impart.

(3.) Learn to bear trials with joy. They are good for us. They develop some of the most lovely traits of character. They injure no one, if they are properly received. And a Christian should *rejoice* that he may obtain what he does obtain in affliction, cost what it may. It is worth more than it costs; and when we come to die, the things that we shall have most occasion to thank God for will be our afflictions. And, oh, if they are the means of raising us to a higher seat in heaven, and placing us nearer the Redeemer there, who will not rejoice in his trials ?

{*} "strength" "power" {b} "glory in my" 1Pe 4:14 {+} "infirmities" "weaknesses" {c} "power of Christ" 1Pe 4:14

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Therefore I take pleasure*. Since so many benefits result from trials; since my afflictions are the occasion of obtaining the favour of Christ in so eminent a degree, I rejoice in the privilege of suffering. There is often real *pleasure* in affliction, paradoxical as it may appear. Some of the happiest persons I have known are those who have been deeply afflicted; some of the purest joys which I have witnessed have been manifested on a sick bed, and in the prospect of death. And I have no doubt that Paul, in the midst of all his infirmities and reproaches, had a joy above that which all the wealth and honour of the world could give. See here the power of religion. It not only supports—it comforts. It not only enables one to bear suffering with resignation, but it enables him to *rejoice*. Philosophy blunts the feelings; infidelity leaves men to murmur and repine in trial; the

pleasures of this world have no power even to support or comfort in times of affliction; but Christianity. furnishes positive pleasure in trial, and enables the sufferer to smile through his tears.

In infirmities. In my weaknesses. **See Barnes "2Co 11:30"**.

In reproaches. In the contempt and scorn with which I meet as a follower of Christ. **See Barnes** "2Co 11:21.

In necessities. In want. **See Barnes** "2Co 6:4, **See Barnes "2Co 6:4,5"**.

In distresses for Christ's sake. **See Barnes "2Co 6:4"**.

In the various wants and difficulties to which I am exposed on account of the Saviour, or which I suffer in his cause.

For when I am weak, then am I strong. When I feel weak; when I am subjected to trial, and nature faints and fails, then strength is imparted to me, and I am enabled to bear all. The more I am borne down with trials, the more do I feel my need of Divine assistance, and the more do I feel the efficacy of Divine grace. Such was the promise in De 33:25, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." So in Heb 11:34, "Who out of weakness were made strong." What Christian has not experienced this, and been able to say that when he felt himself weak, and felt like sinking under the accumulation of many trials, he has found his strength according to his day, and felt an arm of power supporting him? It is then that the Redeemer manifests himself in a peculiar manner; and then that the excellency of the religion of Christ is truly seen, and its power appreciated and felt.

{*} "infirmities" "weaknesses"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *I am become a fool in glorying*. The meaning of this expression I take to be this: "I have been led along in speaking of myself until I admit I appear foolish in this kind of boasting. It is folly to do it, and I would not have entered on it unless I had been driven to it by my circumstances, and the necessity which was imposed on me of speaking of myself." Paul doubtless desired that what he had said of himself should not be regarded as an example for others to follow. Religion repressed all vain boasting and self-exultation; and to prevent others from falling into a habit of boasting, and then pleading his example as an apology, he is careful to say that he regarded it as folly; and that he would by no means have done it if the circumstances of the case had not constrained him. If any one, therefore, is disposed to imitate Paul in speaking of himself, and what he has done, let him do it only when he is in circumstances like Paul, and when the honour of religion and his usefulness imperiously demand it; and let him not forget that it was the deliberate conviction of Paul that boasting was the characteristic of a fool!

Ye have compelled me. You have made it necessary for me to vindicate my character, and to state the evidence of my Divine commission as an apostle.

For I ought to have been commended of you. By you. Then this boasting, so foolish, would have been unnecessary. What a delicate reproof! All the fault of this foolish boasting was theirs. They knew him intimately. They had derived great benefits from his ministry, and they were bound in gratitude, and from a regard to right and truth, to vindicate him. But they had not done it; and

hence, through their fault, he had been compelled to go into this unpleasant vindication of his own character.

For in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles. Neither in the evidences of my call to the apostolic office, 1Co 9:1, seq.; nor in the endowments of the Spirit; nor in my success; nor in the proofs of a Divine commission in the power of working miracles. **See Barnes "2Co 11:5".**

Though I be nothing. This expression was either used in sarcasm or seriously. According to the former supposition it means that he was regarded as nothing; that the false apostles spoke of him as a mere nothing, or as having no claims to the office of an apostle. This is the opinion of Clarke, and many of the recent commentators. Bloomfield inclines to this. According to the latter view, it is an expression of humility on the part of Paul, and is designed to express his deep sense of his unworthiness in view of his past life—a conviction deepened by the exalted privileges conferred on him, and the exalted rank to which he had been raised as an apostle. This was the view of most of the early commentators. Doddridge unites the two. It is not possible to determine with certainty which is the true interpretation; but it seems to me that the latter view best accords with the scope of the passage, and with what we have reason to suppose the apostle would say at this time. It is true that in this discussion (2Co 10, seq.) there is much that is sarcastic. But in the whole strain of the passage before us he is serious. He is speaking of his sufferings, and of the evidences that he was raised to elevated rank as an apostle, and it is not quite natural to suppose that he would throw in a sarcastic remark just in the midst of this discussion. Besides, this interpretation accords exactly with what he says in 1Co 15:9, "For I am the least of all the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle." If this be the correct interpretation, then it teaches,

(1.) that the highest attainments in piety are not inconsistent with the deepest sense of our nothingness and unworthiness.

(2.) That the most distinguished favours bestowed on us by God are consistent with the lowest humility.

(3.) That those who are most favoured in the Christian life, and most honoured by God, should not be unwilling to take a low place, and to regard and speak of themselves as nothing. Compared with God, what are they? Nothing. Compared with the angels, what are they? Nothing. As creatures compared with the vast universe, what are we. Nothing: an atom, a speck. Compared with other Christians, the eminent saints who have lived before us, what are we? Compared with what we ought to be, and might be, what are we? Nothing. Let a man look over his past life, and see how vile and unworthy it has been; let him look at God, and see how great and glorious he is; let him look at the vast universe, and see how immense it is; let him think of the angels, and reflect how pure they are; let him think of what he might have been, of how much more he might have done for his Saviour; let him look at his body, and think how frail it is, and how soon it must return to the dust; and no matter how elevated his rank among his fellow-worms, and no matter how much God has favoured him as a Christian or a minister, he will feel, if he feels right, that he is nothing. The most elevated saints are distinguished for the deepest humility; those who are nearest to God feel most their distance; they who are to occupy the highest place in heaven feel most deeply that they axe unworthy of the lowest.

{a} "in nothing" 2Co 11:5 {b} "I be nothing" Lu 17:10 1Co 3:7; Eph 3:8

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Truly the signs of an apostle*. Such miracles as the acknowledged apostles worked. Such "signs" or evidences that they were Divinely commissioned. **See Barnes "Mr 16:16"**; **See Barnes "Mr 16:17"**; **See Barnes** "Ro 15:19".

Were wrought among you. That is, by me. **See Barnes "1Co 9:2"**.

In all patience. I performed those works notwithstanding the opposition which I met with. I patiently persevered in furnishing the evidence of my Divine commission. There was a succession of miracles demonstrating that I was from God, notwithstanding the unreasonable opposition which I met with, until I convinced you that I was called to the office of an apostle.

In signs, and wonders. In working miracles. **See Barnes "Ac 2:22"**.

What these miracles at Corinth were, we are not distinctly informed. They probably, however, were similar to those wrought in other places, in healing the sick, etc.; the most benevolent, as it was one of the most decisive proofs of the Divine power.

{a} "signs of an apostle" 1Co 9:2

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *For what is it*, etc. This verse contains a striking mixture of sarcasm and irony, not exceeded, says Bloomfield, by any example in Demosthenes. The sense is, "I have given among you the most ample proofs of my apostolic commission. I have conferred on you the highest favours of the apostolic office. In these respects you are superior to all other churches. In one respect only are you *inferior*—it is in this, that you have not been *burdened* with the privilege of supporting me. If you had had this, you would have been inferior to no others. But this was owing to me; and I pray that you will forgive me this. I might have urged it; I might have claimed it; I might have given you the privilege of becoming equal to the most favoured in all respects. But I have not pressed it, and you have not done it, and I ask your pardon." There is a delicate insinuation that they had not contributed to his wants, **See Barnes "2Co 11:8"**; an intimation that it was a privilege to contribute to the support of the gospel, and that Paul might have been "burdensome to them," **See Barnes "1Co 9:1"**; and Barnes on 1Co 9:2-12 and an admission that he was in part to blame for this, and had not in this respect given them an opportunity to equal other churches in all respects.

Was not burdensome to you. **See Barnes "2Co 10:8"**.

Forgive me this wrong. "If it be a fault, pardon it. Forgive me that I did not give you this opportunity to be equal to other churches. It is a privilege to contribute to the support of the gospel, and they who are permitted to do it should esteem themselves highly favoured. I pray you to pardon me for depriving you of any of your Christian privileges." What the feelings of the Corinthians were about forgiving Paul for this, we know not; but most churches would be as ready to forgive a minister for this as for any other offence.

{b} "I, myself" 2Co 11:9

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you*. That is, this is the third time that I have purposed to come and see you, and have made preparation for it. He does not mean that he had been twice with them, and was now coming the third time; but that he had twice before intended to go, and had been disappointed. See 1Co 16:5 2Co 1:15,16.

His purpose had been to visit them on his way to Macedonia, and again on his return from Macedonia. lie had now formed a third resolution, which he had a prospect of carrying into execution.

And I will not be burdensome to you. I resolve still, as I have done before, not to receive a compensation that shall be oppressive to you. **See Barnes "2Co 11:9,10"**.

For I seek not your's, but you. I desire not to obtain your property, but to save your souls. This was a noble resolution; and it is the resolution which should be formed by every minister of the gospel. While a minister of Christ has a claim to a competent support, his main purpose should not be to obtain such a support. It should be the higher and nobler object of winning souls to the Redeemer. See Paul's conduct in this respect explained in the. **See Barnes "Ac 20:33"**.

For the children, etc. There is great delicacy and address in this sentiment. The meaning is, "It is not natural and usual for children to make provisions for their parents. The common course of events and of duty is for parents to make provision for their offspring. I, therefore, your spiritual father, choose to act in the same way. I make provision for your spiritual wants; I labour and toil for you as a father does for his children. I seek your welfare, as he does, by constant self-denial. In return, I do not ask you to provide for me, any more than a father ordinarily expects his children to provide for him. I am willing to labour as he does, content with doing my duty, and promoting the welfare of those under me." The words rendered "ought not" (*ou ofeilei*) are to be understood in a comparative sense. Paul does not mean that a child ought *never* to provide for his parents, or to lay anything up for a sick, a poor, and an infirm father; but that the duty of doing that was slight and unusual compared with the duty of a parent to provide for his children. The one was of comparatively rare occurrence; the other was constant, and was the ordinary course of duty. It is a matter of obligation for a child to provide for an aged and helpless parent; but commonly the duty is that of a parent to provide for his children. Paul felt like a father toward the church in Corinth; and he was willing, therefore, to labour for them without compensation.

{c} "I seek not your's" 1Co 10:33 1Th 2:8

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *And I will very gladly spend*. I am willing to spend my strength, and time, and life, and all that I have for your welfare, as a father cheerfully does for his children. Any expense which may be necessary to promote your salvation I am willing to submit to. The labour of a father for his children is cheerful and pleasant. Such is his love for them that he delights in toil for their sake, and that he may make them happy. The toil of a pastor for his flock should be cheerful. He should be willing to engage in unremitted efforts for their welfare; and if he has any right feeling he will

find a pleasure in that toil. He will not grudge the time demanded; he will not be grieved that it exhausts his strength, or his life, any more than a father will who toils for his family. And as the pleasures of a father who is labouring for his children are among the purest and most pleasant which men ever enjoy, so it is with a pastor. Perhaps, on the whole, the pleasantest employment in life is that connected with the pastoral office; the happiest moments known on earth are in the duties, arduous as they are, of the pastoral relation. God thus, as in the relation of a father, tempers toil and pleasure together; and accompanies most arduous labours with present and abundant reward.

Be spent. Be exhausted and worn out in my labours. So the Greek word means. Paul was willing that his powers should be entirely exhausted and his life consumed in this service.

For you. Marg., as in the Greek, for *your souls*. So it should have been rendered. So Tindal renders it. The sense is, that he was willing to become wholly exhausted if by it he might secure the salvation of their souls.

Though the more abundantly I love you, etc. This is designed doubtless as a gentle reproof. It refers to the fact that notwithstanding the tender attachment which he had evinced for them, they had not manifested the love in return which he had a right to expect. It is *possible* that there may be an allusion to the case of a fond, doting parent. It sometimes happens that a parent fixes his affections with undue degree on some one of his children; and in such cases it is not uncommon that the child evinces special ingratitude and want of love. Such may be the allusion here—that Paul had fixed his affections on them like a fond, doting father, and that he had met with a return by no means corresponding with the fervour of his attachment; yet still he was willing, like such a father, to exhaust his time and strength for their welfare. The doctrine is, that we should be willing to labour and toil for the good of others, even when they evince great ingratitude. The proper end of labouring for their welfare is not to excite their gratitude, but to obey the will of God; and no matter whether others are grateful or not; whether they love us or not; whether we can promote our popularity with them or not, let us do them good always. It better shows the firmness of our Christian principle to endeavour to benefit others when they love us the less for all our attempts, than it does to attempt to do good on the swelling tide of popular favour.

{1} "for you" "your souls"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *But be it so*. This is evidently a charge of his enemies; or at least a charge which it might be supposed they would make. Whether they ever in fact made it, or whether the apostle merely anticipates an objection, it is impossible to determine. It is clearly to be regarded as the language of objectors; for,

(1.) it can never be supposed that Paul would state as a serious matter that he had caught them with deceit or fraud.

(2.) He *answers* it as an objection in the following verse. The meaning is, "We admit that you did not burden us. You did not exact a support from us. But all this was mere trick. You accomplish the same thing in another way. You professed when with us not to seek our property but our souls. But in various ways you contrived to get our money, and to secure your object. You made others

the agents for doing this, and sent them among us under various pretexts to gain money from us." It will be remembered that Paul had sent Titus among them to take up the collection for the poor saints in Judea, 2Co 8:6; and it is not at all improbable that some there had charged Paul with making use of this pretence only to obtain money for his own private use. To guard against this charge was one of the reasons why Paul was so anxious to have some persons appointed by the church to take charge of the contribution. See 1Co 16:3, **See Barnes "2Co 8:19, also** 2Co 8:20-21.

Being crafty. Being cunning. That is, by sending persons to obtain money on different pretences.

I caught you with guile. I took you by deceit or fraud. That is, making use of fraud in pretending that the money was for poor and afflicted saints, when in reality it was for my own use. It is impossible that Paul should have ever admitted this of himself; and they greatly pervert the passage who suppose that it applies to him, and then plead that it is right to make use of guile in accomplishing their purposes. Paul never carried his measures by dishonesty, nor did he ever justify fraud. **See Barnes "Ac 23:6"**.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Did I make a gain*, etc. In refuting this slander, Paul appeals boldly to the facts, and to what they knew. "Name the man, says he, who has thus defrauded you under my instructions. If the charge is well-founded, let him be specified, and let the mode in which it was done be distinctly stated." The phrase "make a gain," (from *pleonektew*,) means, properly, to have an advantage; then to take advantage, to seek unlawful gain. Here Paul asks whether he had defrauded them by means of any one whom he had sent to them.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *I desired Titus*. To go and complete the collection which you had commenced. See 2Co 8:6.

And with him I sent a brother. **See Barnes "2Co 8:18"**.

Did Titus make a gain of you? They knew that he did not. They had received him kindly, treated him with affection, and sent him away with every proof of confidence and respect. 2Co 7:7. How then could they now pretend that he had defrauded them?

Walked we not in the same spirit? Did not all his actions resemble mine? Was there not the same proof of honesty, sincerity, and love which I have ever manifested? This is a very delicate turn. Paul's course of life when with them they admitted was free from guile and from any attempt to get money by improper means. They charged him only with attempting it by means of others. He now boldly appeals to them, and asks whether Titus and he had not in fact acted in the same manner; and whether they had not alike evinced a spirit free from covetousness and deceit?

{a} "Titus, and with him" 2Co 7:2 {b} "Did Titus" 2Co 8:6

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you*? **See Barnes "2Co 5:12"**.

The sense is, do not suppose that this is said from mere anxiety to obtain your favour, or to ingratiate ourselves into your esteem. This is said doubtless to keep himself from the suspicion of being actuated by improper motives, he had manifested great solicitude certainly in the previous chapters to vindicate his character; but he here says that it was not from a mere desire to show them that his conduct was right; it was from a desire to honour Christ.

We speak before God in Christ. We declare the simple and undisguised truth as in the presence of God. I have no mere desire to palliate my conduct; I disguise nothing; I conceal nothing; I say nothing for the mere purpose of self-vindication; but I can appeal to the Searcher of hearts for the exact truth of all that I say. The phrase "before God in Christ" means, probably, "I speak as in the presence of God and as a follower of Christ, as a Christian man." It is the solemn appeal of a Christian to his God for the truth of what he said, and a solemn asseveration that what he said was not for the mere purpose of excusing or *apologizing for* (Greek) his conduct.

But we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying. All that I have done has been for your welfare. My vindication of my character, and my effort to disabuse you of your prejudices, have been that you might have unwavering confidence in the gospel, and might be built up in holy faith. On the word *edify*, **See Barnes** "Ro 14:19, **See Barnes "1Co 8:1"**; **See Barnes** "1Co 10:23".

{*} "excuse" "defend" {c} "ourselves" 2Co 5:12

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *For I fear, lest, when I come*. 2Co 12:14.

I shall not find you such as I would. That is, walking in the truth and order of the gospel, he had feared that the disorders would not be removed, and that they would not have corrected the errors which prevailed, and for which he had rebuked them. It was on this account that he had said so much to them. His desire was that all these disorders might be removed, and that he might be saved from the necessity of exercising severe discipline when he should come among them.

And that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not. That is, that I shall be compelled to administer discipline, and that my visit may not be as pleasant to you as you would desire. For this reason he wished all disorder corrected, and all offences removed; that everything might be pleasant when he should come. See 1Co 4:21. **See Barnes "2Co 10:2"**.

Lest there be debates. I fear that there may be existing there debates, etc., which will require the interposition of the authority of an apostle. On the meaning of the word *debate*, see **See Barnes "Ro 1:29"**.

Envyings. **See Barnes "1Co 3:3"**.

Wraths. Anger or animosities between contending factions, the usual effect of forming parties.

Strifes. Between contending factions. **See Barnes "1Co 3:3"**.

Backbitings. **See Barnes "Ro 1:30"**.

Whisperings. **See Barnes "Ro 1:29"**.

Swellings. Undue elation; being puffed up, **See Barnes "2Co 8:1** 1Co 4:6,18,19 5:2; such as would be produced by vain self-confidence.

Tumults. Disorder and confusion arising from this existence of parties. Paul, deeply sensible of the evil of all this, had endeavoured in this correspondence to suppress it, that all things might be pleasant when he should come among them.

{d} "when I come" 1Co 4:21 2Co 13:2,10

{+} "debates" "contentions"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 12 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me*, etc. Lest I should, be compelled to inflict punishment on those whom I supposed to have been converted under my ministry. I had rejoiced in them as true converts. I had counted them as among the fruit of my ministry. Now to be compelled to inflict punishment on them as having no religion would mortify me and humble me. The infliction of punishment on members of the church is a sort of punishment to him who inflicts it as well as to him who is punished. Members of the church should walk uprightly, lest they overwhelm the ministry in shame.

And that I shall bewail many, etc. If they repented of their sin, he could still rejoice in them. If they continued in their sin, till he came, it would be to him a source of deep lamentation. It is evident from the word "many" here, that the disorders had prevailed very extensively in the church at Corinth. The word rendered "have sinned already" means, "who have sinned before;" and the idea is, that they were old offenders, and that they had not yet repented.

The uncleanness. **See Barnes "Ro 1:24"**.

And fornication, and lasciviousness, etc. **See Barnes "1Co 5:1"; See Barnes** "1Co 6:18".

This was the sin to which they were particularly exposed in Corinth, as it was the sin for which that corrupt city was distinguished. See the Introduction to the First Epistle. Hence the frequent cautions in these epistles against it; and hence it is not to be wondered at that some of those who had become professing Christians had fallen into it. It may be added, that it is still the sin to which converts from the corruptions and licentiousness of paganism are particularly exposed.

{a} "humble me" 2Co 2:1 {b} "repented of the uncleanness" Re 2:21 {c} "fornication and lasciviousness" 1Co 5:1

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 13

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 1

Introduction to 2nd Corinthians Chapter 13

THIS closing chapter of the epistle relates to the following subjects:

(1.) The assurance of Paul that he was about to come among them, 2Co 13:1-4, and that he would certainly inflict punishment on all who deserved it. His enemies had reproached him as being timid and pusillanimous. **See Barnes** "2Co 10:1,2,10,11.

They had said that he was powerful to threaten, but afraid to execute. It is probable that they had become more bold in this from the fact that he had twice purposed to go there and had failed. In reply to all this, he now in conclusion solemnly assures them that he was coming, and that in all cases where an offence was proved by two or three witnesses, punishment would be inflicted, 2Co 13:1. He assures them 2Co 13:2 that he would not spare; and that since they sought a proof that Christ had sent him, they should witness that proof in the punishment which he would inflict, 2Co 13:3; for that Christ was now clothed with power, and was able to execute punishment, though he had been crucified, 2Co 13:4.

(2.) Paul calls on them solemnly to examine themselves, and to see whether they had any true religion, 2Co 13:5,6. In the state of things which existed there, in the corruption which had abounded in the church, he solemnly commands them to institute a faithful inquiry to know whether they had been deceived; at the same time expressing the hope that it would appear, as the result of their examination, that they were not reprobates.

(3.) He earnestly prays to God that they might do no evil; that they might be found to be honest and pure, whatever might be thought of Paul himself, or whatever might become of him, 2Co 13:7. Their repentance would save Paul from exerting his miraculous power in their punishment, and might thus prevent the proof of his apostolic authority which they desired; and the consequence might be that they *might* esteem him to be a reprobate, for he could not exert his miraculous power except in the cause of truth, 2Co 13:8. Still he was willing to be esteemed an impostor if they would do no evil.

(4.) He assures them that he earnestly wished their perfection, and that the design of his writing to them, severe as he had appeared, was their edification, 2Co 8:9,10.

(5.) Then he bids them an affectionate and tender farewell, and closes with the usual salutations and benedictions, 2Co 13:11-14.

Verse 1. *This is the third time*, etc.

See Barnes "12:4".

For an interesting view of this passage, see Paley's Horae Paulinae on this epistle, No. xi. It is evident that Paul had been to Corinth but once before this, but he had resolved to go before a second time, but had been disappointed.

In the mouth of two or three witnesses, etc. This was what the law of Moses required, De 19:15. **See Barnes "Joh 8:17".**

Comp. Mt 18:16. But in regard to its application here, commentators are not agreed. Some suppose that Paul refers to his own epistles which he had sent to them as the two or three witnesses by which his promise to them would be made certain; that he had purposed it and promised it two or three times; and that as this was all that was required by the law, it would certainly be established.

This is the opinion of Bloomfield, Rosenmuller, Grotius, Hammond, Locke, and some others. But, with all the respect due to such great names, it seems to me that this would be trifling and childish in the extreme. Lightfoot supposes that he refers to Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, who would be witnesses to them of his purpose. See 1Co 16:17. But the more probable opinion, it seems to me, is that of Doddridge, Macknight, and others, that he anticipated that there would be necessity for the administration of discipline there, but that he would feel himself under obligation in administering it to adhere to the reasonable maxim of the Jewish law. No one should be condemned or punished where there were not at least two or three witnesses to prove the offence; but where there were, discipline would be administered,according to the nature of the crime.

{d} "In the mouth" De 19:15 Heb 10:28,29

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *I told you before*. That I would not spare offenders; that I would certainly punish them. He had intimated this before in the first epistle, 1Co 4:21 1Co 5.

And foretell you. Now apprize you of my fixed determination to punish every offender as he deserves.

As if I were present, the second time. The mention of the "second time" here proves that Paul had been with them but once before. He had formed the resolution to go to them, but had been disappointed. The time when he had been with them is recorded in Ac 18:1, seq. He now uses the same language to them which he says he would use if he were with them, as he had expected to be, the second time. See the remarks of Paley on this passage, referred to above.

And being absent. **See Barnes "1Co 5:3".**

To them which heretofore have sinned. To all the offenders in the church. They had supposed that he would not come to them, 1Co 4:18, or that if he came he would not dare to inflict punishment, 2Co 10:9-11. They had, therefore, given themselves greater liberty, and had pursued their own course, regardless of his authority and commands.

I will not spare. I will punish them. They shall not escape.

{e} "which heretofore" 2Co 12:21

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me*. See Barnes on previous chapters. They had called in question his apostolic authority; they had demanded the evidence of his Divine commission. He says that he would now furnish such evidence by inflicting just punishment on all offenders, and they should have abundant proof that Christ spoke by him, or that he was inspired.

Which to you-ward is not weak. Or who, that is, Christ, is not weak, etc. Christ has manifested his power abundantly towards you, that is, either by the miracles that had been wrought in his name;

or by the diseases and calamities which they had suffered on account of their disorders and offences, **See Barnes "1Co 11:30"**; **See Barnes "1Co 5:1"**; and following, or by the force and efficacy of his doctrine. The connexion, it seems to me, requires that we should understand it of the calamities which had been inflicted by Christ on them for their sins, and which Paul says would be inflicted again if they did not repent. The idea is, that they had had ample demonstration of the power of Christ to inflict punishment, and they had reason to apprehend it again.

{*} "you-ward" "towards you" {f} "mighty in you" 1Co 9:2

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *For though he was crucified through weakness*. Various modes have been adopted of explaining the phrase "through weakness." The most probable explanation is that which refers to the human nature which he had assumed, Php 2:7,8; 1Pe 3:18, and to the *appearance* of weakness which he manifested. He did not choose to exert his power. He appeared to his enemies to be weak and feeble. This idea would be an exact illustration of the point before the apostle. He is illustrating his own conduct, and especially in the fact that he had not exerted his miraculous powers among them in the punishment of offenders; and he does it by the example of Christ, who though abundantly able to have exerted his power and to have rescued himself from his enemies, yet was willing to *appear* weak, and to be crucified. It is very clear,

(1.) that the Lord Jesus seemed to his enemies to be weak and incapable of resistance.

(2.) That he did not put forth his power to protect his life. He in fact offered no resistance, as if he had no power.

(3.) He had a human nature that was peculiarly sensitive, and sensible to suffering; and that was borne down and crushed under the weight of mighty woes. **See Barnes "Isa 53:2,3"**.

From all these causes he *seemed* to be weak and feeble; and these appear to me to be the principal ideas in this expression.

Yet he liveth. He is not now dead. Though he was crucified, yet he now lives again, and is now capable of exerting his great power. He furnishes proof of his being alive, in the success which attends the gospel, and in the miracles which are wrought in his name and by his power. There is a *living* Redeemer in heaven; a Redeemer who is able to exert all the power which he ever exerted when on earth; a Redeemer, therefore, who is able to save the soul; to raise the dead; to punish all his foes.

By the power of God. In raising him from the dead, and placing him at his own right hand. See Eph 1:19-21. Through the power of God he was brought from the tomb, and has a place. assigned him at the head of the universe.

For we also are weak in him. Marg., "*with* him." We his apostles, also, are weak in virtue of our connexion with him. We are subject to infirmities and trials; we seem to have no power; we are exposed to contempt; and we appear to our enemies to be destitute of strength. Our enemies regard us as feeble; and they despise us.

But we shall live with him, etc. That is, that we shall show to you that we are alive. By the aid of the power of God we shall show that we are *not* as weak as our foes pretend; that we are invested

with power; and that we are able to inflict the punishment which we threaten. This is one of the numerous instances in which Paul illustrated the case before him by a reference to the example and character of Christ. The idea is, that Christ did not exert his power, and appeared to be weak, and was put to death. So Paul says that he had not exerted his power, and seemed to be weak. But, says he, Christ lives, and is clothed with strength; and so we, though we appear to be weak, shall exert among you, or towards you, the power with which he has invested us, in inflicting punishment on our foes.

{g} "he was crucified" Php 2:7,8; 1Pe 3:8

{1} "weak in him" "with"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Examine yourselves*. **See Barnes "1Co 11:28"**.

The particular reason why Paul calls on them to examine themselves was, that there was occasion to fear that many of them had been deceived. Such had been the irregularities and disorders in the church at Corinth; so ignorant had many of them shown themselves of the nature of the Christian religion, that it was important, in the highest degree, for them to institute a strict and impartial examination to ascertain whether they had not been altogether deceived. This examination, however, is never unimportant or useless for Christians; and an exhortation to do it is always in place. So important are the interests at stake, and so liable are the best to deceive themselves, that all Christians should be often induced to examine the foundation of their hope of eternal salvation.

Whether ye be in the faith. Whether you are true Christians. Whether you have any true faith in the gospel. Faith in Jesus Christ, and in the promises of God through him, is one of the distinguishing characteristics of a true Christian; and to ascertain whether we have any true faith, therefore, is to ascertain whether we are sincere Christians. For some reasons for such an examination, and some remarks on the mode of doing it, **See Barnes "1Co 11:28"**.

Prove your own selves. The word here used (*dokimazete*) is stronger than that before used, and rendered "examine," (*peirazete*.) This word, prove, refers to assaying or trying metals by the powerful action of heat; and the idea here is, that they should make the most thorough trial of their religion, to see whether it would stand the test. **See Barnes "1Co 3:13"**.

The *proof* of their piety was to be arrived at by a faithful examination of their own hearts and lives; by a diligent comparison of their views and feelings with the word of God; and especially by making trial of it in life. The best way to *prove* our piety is to subject it to *actual trial* in the various duties and responsibilities of life. A man who wishes to *prove* an axe, to see whether it is good or not, does not sit down and look at it, or read all the treatises which he can find on axe-making, and on the properties of iron and steel, valuable as such information would be; but he shoulders his axe, and goes into the woods, and puts it to the trial there. If it cuts well; if it does not break; if it is not soon made dull, he understands the quality of his axe better than he could in any other way. So if a man wishes to know what his religion is worth, let him *try* it in the places where religion is of any value. Let him go into the world with it. Let him go and try to do good; to endure affliction in a proper manner; to combat the errors and follies of life; to admonish sinners

of the error of their ways; and to urge forward the great work of the conversion of the world, and he will soon see there what his religion is worth—as easily as a man can test the qualities of an axe. Let him not merely sit down and think, and compare himself with the Bible, and look at his own heart—valuable as this may be in many respects; but let him treat his religion as he would anything else—let him subject it to actual experiment. That religion which will enable a man to imitate the example of Paul, or Howard, or the great Master himself, *in doing good*, is genuine. That religion which will enable a man to endure persecution for the name of Jesus; to bear calamity without murmuring; to submit to a long series of disappointments and distresses for Christ's sake, is genuine. That religion which will prompt a man unceasingly to a life of prayer and self-denial; which will make him ever conscientious, industrious, and honest; which will enable him to warn sinners of the error of their ways, and which will dispose him to seek the friendship of Christians, and the salvation of the world, is pure and genuine. *That will answer the purpose*. It is like the good axe with which a man can chop all day long, in which there is no flaw, and which does not get dull, *and which answers all the purposes of an axe*. Any other religion than this is worthless.

Know ye not your own selves. That is, "Do you not know yourselves?" This does not mean, as some may suppose, that they might know of themselves, without the aid of others, what their character was; or that they might themselves ascertain it; but it means that they might know themselves—that is, their character, principles, conduct. This proves that Christians may *know* their true character. If they are Christians, they may know it with as undoubted certainty as they may know their character on any other subject. Why should not a man be as able to determine whether he loves God, as whether he loves a child, a parent, or a friend? What greater difficulty need there be in understanding the character on the subject of religion than on any other subject; and why should there be any more reason for doubt on this than on any other point of character? And yet it is remarkable, that while a child has no doubt that he loves a parent, or a husband a wife, or a friend a friend, almost all Christians are in very great doubt about their attachment to the Redeemer, and to the great principles of religion. Such was not the case with the apostles and early Christians. "I know," says Paul, "whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him," etc., 2Ti 1:12. "We KNOW," says John, speaking in the name of the body of Christians, "that we have passed from death unto life," 1Jo 3:14. "We KNOW that we are of the truth," 1Jo 3:19. "We KNOW that he abideth in us," 1Jo 3:24. "We KNOW that we dwell in him," 1Jo 4:13. See also 1Jo 5:2,19,20.

So Job said, "I KNOW that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand in the latter day upon the earth," etc., Job 29:25. Such is the current language of Scripture. Where, in the Bible, do the sacred speakers and writers express doubts about their attachment to God and the Redeemer? Where is such language to be found as we hear from almost all professing Christians, expressing entire *uncertainty* about their condition; absolute doubt whether they love God or hate him; whether they are going to heaven or hell; whether they are influenced by good motives or bad; and even making it a matter of merit to be in such doubt, and thinking it wrong not to doubt? What would be thought of a husband that should make it a matter of merit to doubt whether he loved his wife; or of a child that should think it wrong *not* to doubt whether he loved his father or mother? Such attachments ought to be doubted—but they do not occur in the common relations of life. On the subject of religion men often act as they do on no other subject; and if it is right for one to be satisfied of the sincerity of his attachments to his best earthly friends, and to *speak* of such attachment without

wavering or misgiving, it cannot be wrong to be satisfied with regard to our attachment to God, and to speak of that attachment, as the apostles did, in language of undoubted confidence.

How that Jesus Christ is in you. To be in Christ, or for Christ to be in us, is a common mode in the Scriptures of expressing the idea that we are Christians. It is language derived from the close union which subsists between the Redeemer and his people. See the phrase explained **See Barnes "Ro 8:10".**

Except ye be reprobates? **See Barnes "Rom 1:28".**

The word rendered "reprobates," (*adokimoi*,) means, properly, *not approved, rejected*; that which will not stand the trial. It is properly applicable to metals, as denoting that they will not bear the tests to which they are subjected, but are found to be base or adulterated. The sense here is, that they might know that they were Christians, unless their religion was base, false, adulterated; or such as would not bear the test. There is no allusion here to the sense which is sometimes given to the word *reprobate*, of being cast off or abandoned by God, or doomed by him to eternal ruin in accordance with an eternal purpose. Whatever may be the truth on that subject, nothing is taught in regard to it here. The simple idea is, that they might know that they were Christians, unless their religion was such as would not stand the test, or was worthless.

{a} "yourselves" 1Co 11:28 1Jo 3:20,21

{b} "is in you" Ro 8:10 Ga 4:19 {c} "reprobates" 1Co 9:27 2Ti 3:8

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *But I trust*, etc. The sense of this verse is, "Whatever may be the result of your examination of yourselves, I trust (Gr., *I hope*) you will not find us false and to be rejected; that is, I trust you will find in me evidence that I am commissioned by the Lord Jesus to be his apostle." The idea is, that they would find, when he was among them, that he was endowed with all the qualifications needful to confer a claim to the apostolic office.

{*} "reprobates" "disapproved"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Now I pray to God that ye do no evil*. I earnestly desire that you may do right, and only right; and I beseech God that it may be so, whatever may be the result in regard to me, and whatever may be thought of my claims to the apostolic office. This is designed to mitigate the apparent severity of the sentiment in 2Co 13:6. There he had said that they would find him fully endowed with the power of an apostle. They would see that he was able abundantly to punish the disobedient. They would have ample demonstration that he was endowed by Christ with all the powers appropriate to an apostle, and that all that he had claimed had been well-founded, all that he threatened would be executed. But this *seemed* to imply that he *desired* that there should be occasion for the exercise

of that power of administering discipline; and he therefore, in this verse, removes all suspicion that such was his wish, by saying solemnly, that he prayed to God that they might never do wrong; that they might never give him occasion for the exercise of his power in that way, though as a consequence he would be regarded as a reprobate, or as having no claims to the apostolic office. He would rather be regarded as an impostor, rather lie under the reproach of his enemies that he had no claims to the apostolic character, than that they, by doing wrong, should give him occasion to show that he was not a deceiver.

Not that we should appear approved. My great object, and my main desire, is not to urge my claims to the apostolic office, and clear up my own character; it is that you should lead honest lives, whatever may become of me and my reputation.

Though we be as reprobates. I am willing to be regarded as rejected, disapproved, worthless, like base metal, provided you lead honest and holy lives. I prefer to be so esteemed, and to have you live as becomes Christians, [rather] than that you should dishonour your Christian profession, and thus afford me the opportunity of demonstrating, by inflicting punishment, that I am commissioned by the Lord Jesus to be an apostle. The sentiment is, that a minister of the gospel should desire that his people should walk worthy of their high calling, whatever may be the estimate in which he is held. He should never desire that they should do wrong—how can he do it?—in order that he may take occasion from their wrong-doing to vindicate, in any way, his own character, or to establish a reputation for skill in administering discipline, or in governing a church. What a miserable ambition it is—and as wicked as it is miserable—for a man to wish to take advantage of a state of disorder, or of the faults of others, in order to establish his own character, or to obtain reputation. Paul spurned and detested such a thought; yet it is to be feared it is sometimes, done.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *For we*. That is, we the apostles.

Can do nothing against the truth, etc. That is, we who are under the influence of the Spirit of God, who have been commissioned by him as apostles, can do nothing that shall be against that great system of truth which we are appointed to promulgate and defend. You need, therefore, apprehend no partial or severe discipline from us; no unjust construction of your conduct. Our aim is to promote the truth, and to do what is right; and we cannot, therefore, by any regard to our own reputation, or to any personal advantage, do what is wrong, or countenance or desire what is wrong in others. We *must* wish that which is right to be done by others, whatever may be the effect on us—whether we are regarded as apostles or deceivers. I suppose, therefore, that this verse is designed to qualify and confirm the sentiment in the previous verse, that Paul meant to do only right; that he wished all others to do right; and that whatever might be the effect on his own reputation, or however he might be regarded, he *could not* go against the great system of gospel truth which he preached, or even *desire* that others should ever do wrong, though it might in any way be for his advantage. It was a *fixed principle* with him to act only in accordance with truth; to do what was right.

{b} "even your perfection" 1Th 3:10 Heb 6:1

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *For we are glad, when we are weak*, etc. We rejoice in your welfare, and are willing to submit to self-denial and to infirmity, if it may promote your spiritual strength. In the connexion in which this stands it seems to mean, "I am content to appear *weak*, provided you do no wrong; I am willing *not* to have occasion to exercise my power in punishing offenders, and had rather lie under the reproach of being actually weak, than to have occasion to exercise my power by punishing you for wrong-doing; and provided you are strong in the faith and in the hope of the gospel, I am very willing, nay, I rejoice that I am under this necessity of appearing weak."

And this also we wish. I desire this in addition to your doing no evil.

Even your perfection. The word here used occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, though the verb from which it is derived (*katartizw*) occurs often, Mt 4:21 21:16; Mr 1:19 Lu 6:40; Rom 9:22 1Co 1:10

2Co 13:11 Ga 6:1; 1Th 3:10, et al. **See Barnes "2Co 13:11"**.

On the meaning of the word, see Ro 9:22. The idea of *restoring*, putting in order, fitting, repairing, is involved in the word always; and hence the idea of making perfect—i, e., of *completely restoring* anything to its proper place. Here it evidently means that Paul wished their *entire* reformation—so that there should be no occasion for exercising discipline. Doddridge renders it, "perfect good order." Macknight, "restoration." For this restoration of good order Paul had diligently laboured in these epistles; and this was an object near to his heart.

{b} "even your perfection" 1Th 3:10 Heb 6:1

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Therefore I write these things*, etc. This is a kind of apology for what he had said, and especially for the apparently harsh language which he had felt himself constrained to use. He had reproved them; he had admonished them of their faults; he had threatened punishment, all of which was designed to prevent the necessity of severe measures when he should be with them.

Lest being present I should use sharpness. In order that when I come may not have occasion to employ severity. See the sentiment explained in **See Barnes "2Co 10:2"**.

According to the power, etc. That I may not use the power with which Christ has invested me for maintaining discipline in his church. The same form of expression is found in 2Co 10:8. **See Barnes "2Co 10:8"**.

{c} "sharpness according" Tit 1:13 {d} "to the power" 2Co 10:8 {+} "to destruction" "for destruction" {++} "to edification" "for edification"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Finally, brethren*. *loipon*. The remainder; all that remains is for me to bid you an affectionate farewell. The word here rendered "farewell," (*cairete*,) means usually to joy and rejoice, or to be glad, Lu 1:14 Joh 16:20,22; and it is often used in the sense of "joy to you!" "hail!" as a salutation, Mt 26:49; Mt 27:29. It is also used as a salutation at the beginning of an epistle, in the sense of *greeting*, Ac 15:23 23:26; Jas 1:1.

It is generally agreed, however, that it is here to be understood in the sense of *farewell*, as a parting salutation, though it may be admitted that there is included in the word an expression of a wish for their happiness. This was among the last words which Cyrus, when dying, addressed to his friends.

Be perfect. **See Barnes** "2Co 13:9, **See Barnes "Ro 9:22"**.

It was a wish that every disorder might be removed; that all that was *out of joint* might be restored; that everything might be in its proper place; and that they might be just what they ought to be. A command to be perfect, however, does not prove that it has ever in fact been obeyed; and an earnest wish on the part of an apostle that others might be perfect,, does not demonstrate that they were; and this passage should not be adduced to prove that any *have* been free from sin. It may be adduced, however, to prove that an obligation rests on Christians to be perfect, and that there is no natural obstacle to their becoming such, since God never can command us to do an impossibility. Whether any one, but the Lord Jesus, *has been* perfect, however, is a question on which different denominations of Christians have been greatly divided. It is incumbent on the advocates of the doctrine of sinless perfection to produce *some one instance* of a perfectly sinless character. This has not yet been done.

Be of good comfort. Be consoled by the promises and supports of the gospel. Take comfort from the hopes which the gospel imparts. Or the word may possibly have a reciprocal sense, and mean, *comfort one another*. See Schleusner. Rosenmuller renders it, "receive admonition from all with a grateful mind, that you may come to greater perfection." It is, at any rate, the expression of an earnest wish, on the part of the apostle, that they might be happy.

Be of one mind. They had been greatly distracted, and divided into different parties and factions. At the close of the epistle he exhorts them, as he had repeatedly done before, to lay aside these strifes, and to be united, and manifest the same spirit. **See Barnes "Ro 12:16"**; **See Barnes** "Ro 15:5"; **See Barnes "1Co 1:10"**.

The sense is, that Paul desired that dissensions should cease, and that they should be united in opinion and feeling as Christian brethren.

Live in peace. With each other. Let contentions and strifes cease. To promote the restoration of peace had been the main design of these epistles.

And the God of love and peace. The God who is all love, and who is the Author of all peace. What a glorious appellation is this! There can be no more beautiful expression, and it is as true as it is beautiful, that God is a God of *love* and of *peace*. He is infinitely benevolent; he delights in exhibiting his love; and he delights in the love which his people evince for each other. At the same time he is the Author of peace, and he delights in peace among men. When Christians love each other, they have reason to expect that the God of love will be with them; when they live in peace, they may expect the God of peace will take up his abode with them. In contention and strife we

have no reason to expect his presence; and it is only when we are willing to lay aside all animosity that we may expect the God of peace will fix his abode with us.

{e} "perfect" 2Co 13:9 {a} "of one mind" Ro 12:16 15:5; Eph 4:3 Php 2:2; 1Pe 3:8

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Greet*. Salute. **See Barnes "Ro 16:3"**.

With an holy kiss. **See Barnes "Ro 16:16"**.

{b} "Greet" Ro 16:16

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *All the saints salute you*. That is, all who were with Paul, or in the place where he was. The epistle was written from Macedonia, probably from Philippi. See Introduction to Epistle, paragraph 3.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS - Chapter 13 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ*. **See Barnes "Ro 16:20"**.

This verse contains what is usually called *the apostolic benediction* the form which has been so long, and which is almost so universally used, in dismissing religious assemblies. It is properly a prayer; and it is evident that the optative *eih*, "May the grace," etc., is to be supplied. It is the expression of a desire that the favours here referred to may descend on all for whom they are thus invoked.

And the love of God. May the love of God towards you be manifest. This must refer peculiarly to the *Father*, as the Son and the Holy Spirit are mentioned in the other members of the sentence. The "love of God" here referred to is the manifestation of his goodness and favour in the pardon of sin, in the communication of his grace, in the comforts and consolations which he imparts to his people, in all that constitutes an expression of love. The love of God brings salvation; imparts comfort; pardons sin; sanctifies the soul; fills the heart with joy and peace; and Paul here prays that all the blessings which are the fruit of that love may be with them.

And the communion of the Holy Ghost. **See Barnes "1Co 10:16"**.

The word *communion* (*koinwnia*) means, properly, participation, fellowship, or having anything in common, Ac 2:42 Ro 15:26; 1Co 1:9 10:16; 2Co 6:14 8:4, 9:13 Ga 2:9; Eph 3:9 1Jo 1:3.

This is also a wish or prayer of the apostle Paul; and the desire is either that they might partake of the views and feelings of the Holy Ghost—that is, that they might have fellowship with him—or

that they might all in common partake of the gifts and graces which the Spirit of God imparts, lie gives love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, (Ga 5:22,) as well as miraculous endowments; and Paul prays that these things might be imparted freely to *all* the church *in common*, that all might participate in them, all might share them.

Amen. This word is wanting, says Clarke, in almost every Ms. of any authority. It was, however, early affixed to the epistle.

In regard to this closing verse of the epistle, we may make the following remarks:

(1.) It is a *prayer*; and if it is a prayer addressed to God, it is no less so to the Lord Jesus, and to the Holy Spirit. If so, it is right to offer worship to the Lord Jesus, and to the Holy Spirit.

(2.) There is a distinction in the Divine nature; or there is the existence of what is usually termed Three Persons in the God-head. If not, why are they mentioned in this manner? If the Lord Jesus is not Divine and equal with the Father, why is he mentioned in this connexion? How strange it would be for Paul, an inspired man, to pray in the same breath, "the grace of a man or an angel" and "the love of God" be with you! And if the "Holy Spirit" be merely an *influence* of God, or an *attribute* of God, how strange to pray that the "love of God" and the participation or fellowship of an "influence of God," or an "attribute of God," might be with them!

(3.) The Holy Spirit is a *person*, or has a distinct personality. He is not an attribute of God, nor a mere Divine influence. How could prayer be addressed to an attribute, or am influence? But here, nothing can be plainer than that there were favours which the Holy Ghost, as an intelligent and conscious agent, was expected to bestow. And nothing can be plainer than that they were favours in some sense *distinct* from those which were conferred by the Lord Jesus, and by the Father. Here is a *distinction* of some kind as real as that between the Lord Jesus and the Father; here are favours expected from him distinct from those conferred by the Father and the Son; and there is therefore, here, all the proof that there can be, that there is in some respects a distinction between the persons here referred to, and that the Holy Spirit is an intelligent, conscious agent.

(4.) The Lord Jesus is not inferior to the Father, that is, he has an equality with God. If he were not equal, how could he be mentioned, as he here is, as bestowing favours like God, and especially why is he mentioned *first*? Would Paul, in invoking blessings, mention the name of a mere man or an angel, before that of the eternal God?

(5.) The passage, therefore, furnishes a proof of the doctrine of the Trinity that has not yet been answered and, it is believed cannot be. On the supposition that there are three Persons in the adorable Trinity, united in essence, and yet distinct in some respects, all is plain and clear. But on the supposition that the Lord Jesus is a mere man, an angel, or an archangel, and that the Holy Spirit is an attribute, or an influence from God, how unintelligible, confused, strange does all become! That Paul, in the solemn close of the epistle, should at the same time invoke blessings from a mere creature, and from God, and from an *attribute*, surpasses belief. But that he should invoke blessings from him who was the equal with the Father, and from the Father himself, and from the sacred Spirit sustaining the same rank, and in like manner imparting important blessings, is in accordance with all that we should expect, and makes all harmonious and appropriate.

(6.) Nothing could be a more proper close of the epistle; nothing is a more appropriate close of public worship, than such an invocation. It is a prayer to the ever-blessed God, that all the rich influences which he gives as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, may be imparted; that all the benefits which God confers in the interesting relations in which he makes himself known to us, may descend and bless us. What more appropriate prayer can be offered prayer can be offered at the close of

public worship. How seriously should it be pronounced as a congregation is about to separate, perhaps to come together no more! With what solemnity should all join in it, and how devoutly should all pray, as they thus separate, that these rich and inestimable blessings may rest upon them! With hearts up-lifted to God it should be pronounced and heard; and every worshipper should leave the sanctuary deeply feeling that what he most needs, as he leaves the place of public worship—as he travels on the journey of life—as he engages in its duties or meets its trials—as he looks at the grave and eternity, is the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the blessings which the Holy Spirit imparts in renewing and sanctifying and comforting his people. What more appropriate prayer than this for the writer and reader of these Notes! May that blessing rest alike upon us, though we may be strangers in the flesh; and may those heavenly influences guide us alike to the same everlasting kingdom of glory!

In regard to the subscription at the end of this epistle, it may be observed, that it is wanting in a great part of the most ancient Mss., and is of no authority whatever. See Notes at the end of the epistle to the Romans, and 1 Corinthians. In this case, however, this subscription is in the main correct, as there is evidence that it was written from Macedonia, and not improbably from Philippi. See the Introduction to the epistle.

End of Barnes Notes on 2nd Corinthians

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 1

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 1

THE EPISTLE of PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS: INTRODUCTION

THE SITUATION OF GALATIA, AND THE CHARACTER OF THE PEOPLE

I.GALATIA was a province of Asia Minor, having Pontus on the east, Bithynia and Paphlagonia north, Cappadocia and Phrygia south, and Phrygia west. See the map prefixed to the Acts of the Apostles. In Tanner's Classical Atlas, however, it extends on the north to the Euxine or Black sea. It was probably about two hundred miles in its greatest extent from east to west, and varied in breadth from twelve to an hundred and fifty miles. It was one of the largest provinces of Asia Minor, and covered an extent of country almost as large as the State of New Jersey. It is probable, however, that the boundaries of Galatia varied at different times as circumstances dictated. It had no natural boundary, except on the north; and of course the limits may have been varied by conquests, or by the will of the Roman emperor, when it was erected into a province. The name Galatia is derived from the word Gaul, and was given to it because it had been conquered by the Gauls, who, having subdued the country, settled in it.—Pausanias, Attic. cap. iv. These were mixed with various Grecian families, and the country was also called Gallograecia.— Justin, lib. xxiv. 4; xxv. 2; xxvii. 3. This invasion of Asia Minor was made, according to Justin, (lib. xxv. cap. 2,) about the four hundred and seventy-ninth year after the founding of Rome, and, of course, about 272 years before Christ. They invaded Macedonia and Greece; and subsequently invaded Asia Minor, and became an object of terror to all that region. This expedition issued from Gaul, passed over the Rhine, along the Danube, through Noricum, Pannonia, and Moesia, and at its entrance into Germany, carried along with it many of the Tectosages. On their arrival in Thrace, Lutarius took them with him, crossed the Bosphorus, and effected the conquest of Asia Minor.—Liv. lib. xxxviii. c. 16. Such was their number, that Justin says, "they filled all Asia (i.e. all Asia Minor) like swarms of bees. Finally, they became so numerous that no kings of the east could engage in war without an army of Gauls; neither when driven from their kingdom could they flee to any other than to the Gauls. Such was the terror of the name of Gauls, and such the invincible felicity of their arms—*et armorurn invicta felicitas erat*—that they supposed that in no other way could their own majesty be protected, or being lost, could be recovered, without the aid of Gallic courage.

Their being called in by the king of Bithynia for aid, when they had gained the victory, they divided the kingdom with him, and called that region Gallograecia."—Justin, xxv. 2. Under the reign of Augustus Cesar, about 26 years before the birth of Christ, this region was reduced into the form of a Roman colony, and was governed by a proprietor, appointed by the emperor. Their original Gaulish language they retained so late as the fifth century, as appears from the testimony of Jerome,

who says that their dialect was nearly the same as that of the Treviri.—Tom. iv. p. 256. ed. Benedict. At the same time, they also spoke the Greek language in common with all the inhabitants of Lesser Asia, and therefore the epistle to them was written in Greek, and was intelligible to them as well as to others. The Galatians, like the inhabitants of the surrounding country, were heathens, and their religion was of a gross and debasing kind. They are said to have worshipped" the mother of the gods," under the name of Agdistis. Callimachus, in his hymns, calls them "a foolish people." And Hillary, himself a Gaul, calls them Gallos indociles—expressions which, says Galmet, may well excuse Paul's addressing them as "foolish," chap. iii. 1. There were few cities to be found among them, with the exception of Ancyra, Tavium, and Pessinus, which carried on some trade. The possessors of Galatia were of three different nations or tribes of Gauls; the Tolistobogi, the Trocmi, and the Tectosagi. There are imperial medals extant, on which these names are found. It is of some importance to bear in mind these distinctions. It is possible that while Peter was making converts in one part or Galatia, the apostle Paul was in another; and that some, claiming authority as from Peter, propagated opinions not conformable to the views of Paul, to correct and expose which was one design of this epistle.—*Calmet*. The Gauls are mentioned by ancient historians as a tall and valiant people. They went nearly naked. Their arms were only a sword and buckler. The impetuosity of their attack, it is said, was irresistible, and hence they became so formidable, and were usually so victorious. It is not possible to ascertain the number of the inhabitants of Galatia, at the time when the gospel was preached there, or when this epistle was written. In 2 Macc. viii. 20, it is said that Judas Maccabeus, exhorting his followers to fight manfully against the Syrians, referred to several instances of Divine interposition to encourage them" and among others, "he told them of the battle which they had in Babylon with the Galatians; how they came but eight thousand in all to the business, with four thousand Macedonians; and that the Macedonians being perplexed, the eight thousand destroyed an hundred and twenty thousand, because of the help which they had from Heaven, and so received a great booty." But it is not certain that this refers to those who dwelt in Galatia. It may refer to Gauls who at that time had overrun Asia Minor; the Greek word here used, *galatav*, being taken equally for either. It is evident, however, that there was a large population that went under this general name; and it is probable that Galatia was thickly settled at the time when the gospel was preached there. It was in a central part of Asia Minor, then one of the most densely populated parts of the world, and was a region singularly fertile.—Strabo, lib. xii. p. 567, 568, ed. Casaub. Many persons, also, were attracted there for the sake of commerce. That there were many Jews also, in all the provinces of Asia Minor, is apparent not only. from the Acts of the Apostles, but is expressly declared by Josephus, Ant. xvi. 6.

II.THE TIME WHEN THE GOSPEL WAS PREACHED IN GALATIA

THERE is no certain information as to the time when the gospel was first preached in Galatia, or the persons by whom it was done. There is mention, however, of Paul's having preached there several times, and several circumstances lead us to suppose that those churches were established by him, or that he was the first to carry the gospel to thean, or that he and Barnabas together preached the gospel there on the mission on which they were sent from Antioch, Acts xiii. 2, seq. In Ac 16:5,6, it is expressly said that they went "throughout Phrygia and the region Of Galatia." This journey was for the purpose of confirming the churches, and was undertaken at the suggestion of Paul, (Ac 15:36,) with the design of visiting their brethren in every city where they had preached the word of the Lord. It is true, that in the account of the mission of Paul and Barnabas, (Ac 14) it is not expressly said that they went into Galatia; but it is said (Ac 14:5,6,) that when they were in

Iconium, an assault was made on them, or a purpose formed to stone them, and that, being apprized of it, they fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, "and unto the region that lieth round about." Pliny, lib. v., c. 27, says, that a part of Lycaonia bordered on Galatia, and contained fourteen cities, of which Iconium was the most celebrated. Phrygia also was contiguous to Galatia, and to Lycaonia, and these circumstances render it probable that when Paul proposed to Barnabas to visit again the churches where they had preached, Galatia was included, and that they had been there betbre this visit referred to in Ac 16:6. It may be, also, that Paul refers to himself in the epistle, (Ga 1:6,) where he says, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that CALLED YOU into the grace of Christ unto another gospel;" and if so, then it is plain that he preached to them first, and founded the churches there. The same thing may be evinced also from the expression in Ga 4:15, where he says, "I bear you record, that if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me;" an expression which leads us to suppose that they had formed for him a peculiar attachment, because he had first preached the gospel to them, and that there had existed all the ardour of attachment implied in their first love. It is quite evident, therefore, I think, that the gospel was preached among the Galatians first by Paul, either alone or in company with some other one of the apostles. It is possible, however, as has been intimated above, that Peter also may have preached in one part of Galatia at the time that Paul was preaching in other parts. It is a circumstance also of some importance on this point, that Paul speaks in this epistle in a tone of authority, and with a severity of reproof which he would hardly have used unless he had at first preached there, and had a right to be regarded as the founder of the church, and to address it as its father. In this respect the tone here is quite different, as Mr. Locke has remarked, from what is observable in the epistle to the Romans. Paul had not been at Rome when he addressed the church there by letter, and his language differs materially from that which occurs in the epistles to the Corinthians and Galatians. It was to them the very respectful and mild language of a stranger; here it is respectful, but it is in the authoritative language of a father having a right to reprove.

III.THE DATE OF THIS EPISTLE

Many have supposed that this was the first epistle which Paul wrote. Tertullian maintained this, (See Lardnet, vol. vi. p. 7. ed. Lond. 1829,) and Epiphanius also. Theodoret and others suppose it was written at Rome, and was conse quently written near the close of the life of Paul, and was one of his last epistles. Lightfoot supposes also that it was written from Rome, and that it was among the first which Paul wrote there. Chrysostom says that this epistle was written before that to the Romans. Lewis Capellus, Witsius, and Wall suppose that it was written from Ephesus after the apostle had been a second time in Galatia. This also was the opinion of Pearson, who places it in the year 57, after the first epistle to the Corinthians, and before Paul left Ephesus. Grotius thought it difficult to assign the date of the epistle, but conjectures that it was written about the same time as that to the Romans. Mill supposes that it was not written until after that to the Romans, probably at Troas, or some other place in Asia, as Paul was going to Jerusalem. He dates the epistle in the year 58. Dr. Benson supposes that it was written at Corinth, when the apostle was first there, and made a long stay of a year and six months. While there, he supposes that Paul received tidings of the instability of the converts in Galatia, and wrote this epistle and sent it by one of his assistants. See these opinions examined in Lardner as quoted above. Lardner himself supposes that it was written from Corinth about the year 52, or the beginning of the year 53. Macknight supposes it was written from Antioch, after the council at Jerusalem, and before Paul and Silas undertook the journey in which they delivered to the churches the decrees which were ordained at Jerusalem, Ac 16:4.

Hug, in his Introduction, supposes that it was written at Ephesus in the year 57, and after the I. and II. Thess., and the epistle to Titus had been written. Mr. Locke supposes that Paul established churches in Galatia, in the year 51; and that this epistle was written between that time and the year 57. These opinions are mostly mere conjecture; and amidst such a variety of sentiment, it is evidently impossible to determine exactly at what time it was written. The only mark of time in the epistle itself occurs in Ac 1:6, where the apostle says, "I marvel that ye are *so soon outw tacewv*, removed from him that called you," etc.; where the words "so soon" would lead us to suppose that it was at no distant period after he had been among them. Still it might have been several years. The date assigned to it in the Polyglott Bible (Bagster's) is the year 58. The exact date of the epistle is of very little importance. In regard to the time when it was written the only arguments which seem to me to be of much weight are those advanced by Paley in his *Horae Paulinse*. "It will hardly be doubted," says he, "but that it was written whilst the dispute concerning the circumcision of Gentile converts was fresh in men"s minds; for even supposing it to have been a forgery, the only credible motive that can be assigned for the forgery, was to bring the name and authority of the apostle, into this controversy. No design can be so insipid, or so unlikely to enter into the thoughts of any man, as to produce an epistle written earnestly and pointedly on one side of a controversy, when the controversy itself was dead, and the question no longer interesting to any class of readers whatever. Now the controversy concerning the circumcision of Gentiles was of such a nature, that, if it arose at all, it must have arisen in the beginning of Christianity." Paley then goes on to show that it was natural that the Jews, and converts from the Jews, should start this question, and agitate it; and that this was much more likely to be insisted on while the temple was standing, and they continued as a nation, and sacrifices were offered, than after their city and temple were destroyed. It is therefore clear that the controversy must have been started, and the epistle written before the invasion of Judea, by Titus, and the destruction of Jerusalem. The internal evidence leads to this conclsion. On the whole, it is probable that the epistle was written somewhere about the year 53, or between that and 57; and was evidently designed to settle an important controversy in the churches of Galatia. The place where it was written, must be, I think, wholly a matter of conjecture. The subscription at the end, that it was written from Rome, is of no authority whatever; and there are no internal circumstances, which, so far as I can see, throw any light on the subject.

IV.THE DESIGN OF THE EPISTLE

IT is easy to discern from the epistle itself that the following circumstances existed in the churches of Galatia, and that it was written with reference to them.

(1.) That they had been at first devotedly attached to the apostle Paul, and had received his commands and instructions with implicit confidence when he was among them, Ga 4:14,15; Comp. Ga 1:6.

(2.) That they had been perverted from the doctrine which he taught them soon after he had left them, Ac 1:6

(3.) That this had been done by persons who were of Jewish origin, and who insisted on the observance of the rites of the Jewish religion.

(4.) That they claimed to have come directly from Jerusalem, and to have derived their views of religion and their authority from the apostles there.

(5.) That they taught that the apostle Paul was inferior to the apostles there; that he had been called more recently into the apostolic office; that the apostles at Jerusalem must be regarded as

the source of authority in the Christian church; and that, therefore, the teaching of Paul should yield to that which was derived directly from Jerusalem.

(6.) That the laws of Moses were binding, and were necessary in order to justification. That the rite of circumcision especially was of binding obligation; and it is probable (Ga 6:12) that they had prevailed on many of the Galatians to be circumcised, and certain that they had induced them to observe the Jewish festivals, Ac 4:10.

(7.) It would seem, also, that they urged that Paul himself had changed his views since he had been among the Galatians, and now maintained the necessity of circumcision, Ga 5:11. Perhaps they alleged this, from the undoubted fact, that Paul, when at Jerusalem, (Ac 21:26) had complied with some of the customs of the Jewish ritual.

(8.) That they urged that all the promises of God were made to Abraham, and that whoever would partake of those promnises, must be circumcised as Abraham Was. This Paul answers, Ge 3:7 4:7.

(9.) That in consequence of the promulgation of these views, great dissensions had arisen in the church, and strifes of an unhappy nature existed, greatly contrary to the spirit which should be manifested by those who bore the Christian name. From this description of the state of things in the churches of Galatia, the design of the epistle is apparent, and the scope of the argument will be easily seen. Of this state of things the apostle had been undoubtedly apprized, but whether by letters, or by messengers from the churches there, is not declared. It is not improbable, that some of his friends in the churches there had informed him of it, and he immediately set about a remedy to the evils existing there.

1. The first object, therefore, was to show that he had received his commission as an apostle, directby from God. He had not received it at all from man; he had not even been instructed by the other apostles; he had not acknowledged their superiority; he had not even consulted them. He did not acknowledge, therefore, that the apostles at Jerusalem possessed any superior rank or authority. His commission, though he had not seen the Lord Jesus before he was crucified, he had, nevertheless, derived immediately from him. The doctrine, therefore, which he had taught them, that the Mosaic laws were not binding, and that there was no necessity of being circumcised, was a doctrine which had been derived directly from God. In proof of this, he goes into an extended statement, (Ga 1) of the manner in which he had been called, and of the fact, that he had not consulted with the apostles at Jerusalem, or confessed his inferiority to them; of the fact that when they had become acquainted with the manner in which he preached, they approved his course, (Ga 1:24 2:1-10;) and of the fact that on one occasion, he had actually been constrained to differ from Peter, the oldest of the apostles, on a point in which he was manifestly wrong, and on one of the very points then under consideration.

II. The second great object, therefore, was to show the real nature and design of the law of Moses, and to prove that the peculiar rites of the Mosaic ritual, and especially the rite of circumcision, were not necessary to justification and salvation; and that they who observed that rite, did in fact renounce the Scripture method of justification; make the sacrifice of Christ of no value, and make slaves of themselves. This leads him into a consideration of the true nature of the doctrine of justification, and of the way of salvation by a Redeemer.

This point he shows in the following way :—

(1.) By showing that those who lived before Christ, and especially Abraham, were in fact justified, not by obedience to the ritual law of Moses, but by faith in the promises of God, Ga 3:1-18.

(2.) By showing that the design of the Mosaic ritual was only temporary, and that it was intended to lead to Christ, Ga 3:19-29; Ga 4:1-8.

(3.) In view of this, he reproves the Galatians for having so readily fallen into the observance of these customs, Ga 4:9-21.

(4.) This view of the design of the Mosaic law, and of its tendency, he illustrates by an allegory drawn from the case of Hagar, Ga 4:21-31. This whole discourse is succeeded by an affectionate exhortation to the Galatians, to avoid the evils which had been engendered; reproving them for the strifes existing, in consequence of the attempt to introduce the Mosaic rites, and earnestly entreating them to stand firm in the liberty which Christ had vouchsafed to them from the servitude of the Mosaic institutions, chapters 5 and 6.

The design of the whole epistle, therefore, is to state and defend the true doctrine of justification, and to show that it did not depend on.the observance of the laws of Moses. In this general purpose, therefore, it accords with the design of the epistle to the Romans. In one respect, however, it differs from the design of that epistle. That was written, to show that man could not be justified by any works of the law, or by conformity to any law, moral or ceremonial; the object of this is, to show that justification cannot be obtained by conformity to the ritual or ceremonial law; or that the observance of the ceremonial law is not necessary to salvation. In this respect, therefore, this epistle is of less general interest than that to the Romans. It is also, in some respects, more difficult. The argument, if I may so express myself, is more Jewish. It is more in the Jewish manner is designed to meet a Jew in his own way, and is, therefore, somewhat more difficult for all to follow. Still it contains great and vital statements on the doctrines of salvation, and, as such, demands the profound and careful attention of all who desire to be saved, and who would know the way of acceptance with God.

THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS

The main design of Paul, in this chapter, is to show that he had received his call to the apostleship, not from man, but from God. It had been alleged (see the Introduction) that the apostles at Jerusalem possessed the most elevated rank, and the highest authority in the Christian church; that they were to be regarded as the fountains and the judges of the truth; that Paul was inferior to them as an apostle; and that they who inculcated the necessity of circumcision, and the observance of the rites of Moses, were sustained by the authority and the examples of the apostles at Jerusalem. To meet this statement was the design of this first chapter. Paul's grand object was to show that he was not appointed by men; that he had not been commissioned by men; that he had not derived his instructions from men; that he had not even consulted with them; but that he had been commissioned and taught expressly by Jesus Christ; and that when the apostles at Jerusalem had become acquainted with him, and with his views and plans of labour, long after he had begun to preach, they had fully concurred with him. This argument comprises the following parts:—

I. The solemn declaration that he was not commissioned by men, and that he was not, in any sense, an apostle of man, together with the general salutation to the churches in Galatia, Ga 1:1-5.

II. The expression of his astonishment that the Galatians had so soon forsaken his instructions, and embraced another gospel; and a solemn declaration that whoever preached another gospel was to be held accursed, Ga 1:6-10. Twice he anathematizes those who attempt to declare any other way of justification than that which consisted in faith in Christ, and says that it was no gospel at all. It was to be held as a great and fixed principle, that there was but one way of salvation; and no matter who attempted to preach any other, he was to be held accursed.

III. To show, therefore, that he was not appointed by men, and that he had not received his instruction from men, but that he had preached the truth directly revealed to him by God, and that which was therefore immutable and eternal, he goes into a statement of the manner in which he was called into the ministry, and made acquainted with the gospel, vets. Ga 1:11-24.

(a) He affirms that he was not taught it by man, but by the express revelation of Jesus Christ, Ga 1:11,12.

(b) He refers to his former well-known life, and his zeal in the Jewish religion; showing how much he had been formerly opposed to the gospel, Ga 1:13,14.

(c) He says that he had been separated, by the Divine purpose, from his mother's womb, to be a preacher of the gospel; and that when he was called to the ministry, he had no conference with any human being, as to what he was to preach; he did not go up to Jerusalem to consult with those who were older apostles, but he retired far from them into Arabia, and thence again returned to Damascus, Ga 1:15-17.

(d) After three years, he says, he did indeed go to Jerusalem; but he remained there but fifteen days, and saw none of the apostles but Peter and James, Ga 1:18,19. His views of the gospel were formed before that; and that he did not submit implicitly to Peter, and learn of him, he shows in chapter 2, where, he says, he "withstood him to the face."

(e) After that, he says, he departed into the regions of Cilicia, in Asia Minor, and had no opportunity of conference with the churches which were in Judea. Yet they heard that he who had been formerly a persecutor had become a preacher, and they glorified God for it, Ga 1:20-24. Of course, he had had no opportunity of deriving his views of religion from them; he had been in no sense dependent on them; but, so far as they were acquainted with his views, they concurred in them. The sum of the argument, therefore, in this chapter is, that when Paul went into Cilicia and the adjacent regions, he had never seen but two of the apostles, and that but for a short time; he had never seen the apostles together, and he had never received any instructions from them. His views of the gospel, which he had imparted to the Galatians, he had derived directly from God.

**** Due to space limitations, See Notes on Verses 1 and 2 combined in Notes for Galatians Chapter 1, verse 2.********

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 2

Due to the length of Introductory Material to Chapter, Notes for Verses 1 and 2 have been combined in notes for Verse 2.

Verse 1. *Paul, an apostle*. **See Barnes "Ro 1:1".**

This is the usual form in which he commences his epistles; and it was of special importance to commence this epistle in this manner, because it was one design to vindicate his apostleship, or to show that he had received his commission directly from the Lord jesus.

Not of men. "Not from *ap*, men." That is, he was not from any body of men, or commissioned by men. The word apostle means *sent*; and Paul means to say, that he was not *sent* to execute any purpose of men, or commissioned by them. His was a higher calling—a, calling of God, and he had been sent directly *by* him. Of course, he means to exclude here all classes of men as having had anything to do in sending him forth; and especially he means to affirm, that he had not been

sent out by the body of apostles at Jerusalem. This, it will be remembered, (see the Introduction,) was one of the charges of those who had perverted the Galatians from the faith which Paul had preached to them.

Neither by man. "Neither by or through *di* the instrumentality of any man." Here he designs to exclude all men from having had any agency in his appointment to the apostolic office. He was neither sent out from any body of men to execute their purposes, nor did he receive his commission, authority, or ordination, through the medium of any man. A minister of the gospel now receives his call from God, but he is ordained or set apart to his office by man. Matthias, the apostle chosen in the place of Judas, (Ac 1:17,) received his call from God, but it was by the vote of the body of the apostles. Timothy was also called of God, but he was appointed to his office by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, 1Ti 4:14. But Paul here says that *he* received no such commission as that from the apostles. They were not the means or the medium of ordaining him to his work. He had, indeed, together with Barnabas, been set apart at Antioch by the brethren there, (Ac 13:1-3,) for a *special mission* in Asia Minor; but this was not an appointment to the apostleship. He had been restored to sight after the miraculous blindness produced by seeing the Lord Jesus on the way to Damascus, by the laying on of the hands of Ananias, and had received important instruction from him, (Ac 9:17;) but his commission as an apostle had been received directly from the Lord Jesus, without any intervening medium, or any form of human authority, Ac 9:15 22:17-21; 1Co 9:1.

But by Jesus Christ. That is, directly by Christ. He had been called by him, and commissioned by him, and sent by him, to engage in the work of the gospel.

And God the Father. These words were omitted by Marcion, because, says Jerome, he held that Christ raised himself from the dead. But there is no authority for omitting them. The sense is, that he had the highest possible authority for the office of an apostle; he had been called to it by God himself, who had raised up the Redeemer. It is remarkable here, that Paul associates Jesus Christ and God the Father as having called and commissioned him. We may ask here, of one who should deny the Divinity of Christ, how Paul could mention him as being equal with God in the work of commissioning him? We may further ask, how could he say that he had not received his, call to this office from a man, if Jesus Christ was a mere man? That he *was* called by Christ he expressly says, and strenuously maintains it as a point of great importance. And yet the very point and drift of his argument is to show that he was not called by man. How could this be if Christ was a mere man?

Who raised him from the dead. **See Barnes** "Ac 2:24, **See Barnes "Ac 2:32"**.

It is not quite clear why Paul introduces this circumstance here. It may have been

(1) because his mind was full of it, and he wished on all occasions to make that fact prominent;

(2) because this was the distinguishing feature of the Christian religion, that the Lord Jesus had been raised up from the dead; and he wished, in the outset, to present the superiority of that religion which had brought life and immortality to light; and

(3) because he wished to show that he had received his commission from that same God who had raised up Jesus, and who was, therefore, the Author of the true religion. His commission was from the Source of life and lights; the God of the living and the dead; the God who was the Author of the glorious scheme which revealed life and immortality.

{*} "of men" "from men" {a} "Jesus Christ" Ac 9:6,15 {b} "who raised" Ac 2:24

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Verse 2. *And all the brethren which are with me*. It was usual for Paul to associate with him the ministers of the gospel, or other Christians who were with him, in expressing friendly salutations to the churches to which he wrote, or as uniting with him, and concurring in the sentiments which he expressed. Though Paul claimed to be inspired, yet it would do much to conciliate favour for what he advanced, if others also concurred with what he said, and especially if they were known, to the churches to which the epistles were written. Sometimes the names of others were associated with his in the epistle. **See Barnes "1Co 1:1"**; **See Barnes** "Php 1:1"

See Barnes "Col 1:1"; **See Barnes** "1Th 1:1".

As we do not know where this epistle was written, of course we are ignorant who the "brethren" were who are here referred to. They may have been ministers with Paul, or they may have been the private members of the churches. Commentators have been much divided in opinion on the subject; but all is conjecture. It is obviously impossible to determine.

Unto the churches. How many churches there were in Galatia is unknown. There were several *cities* in Galatia, as Ancyria, Tavia, Pessinus, etc. It is not improbable that a church had been established in each of the cities, and as they were not far distant from each other, and the people had the same general character and habits, it is not improbable that they had fallen into the same errors. Hence the epistle is directed to them in common.

{a} "Galatia" Ac 16:6 18:23

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Grace be to you*, etc. This is the usual apostolic salutation, imploring for them the blessing of God. **See Barnes "Ro 1:7"**.

{b} "Grace" Ro 1:7

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Who gave himself for our sins*. The reason why Paul so soon introduces this important doctrine, and makes it here so prominent, probably is, that this was the cardinal doctrine of the Christian religion, the great truth which was ever to be kept before the mind, and because this truth had been in fact lost sight of by them. They had embraced doctrines which tended to obscure it, or to make it void. They had been led into error by the Judaizing teachers, who held that it was necessary to be circumcised, and to conform to the whole Jewish ritual. Yet the tendency of all this was to obscure the doctrines of the gospel, and particularly the great truth that men can be justified only by faith in the blood of Jesus, Ga 5:4. Comp. Ga 1:6,7. Paul, therefore, wished to make this prominent—the very *starting point* in their religion; a truth never to be forgotten, that Christ gave himself for their sins, that he might deliver them from all the bad influences of this world, and from all the false systems of religion engendered in this world. The expression "who gave" *tou dontov* is one that often occurs in relation to the work of the Redeemer, where it is represented as a gift, either on the part of God, or on the part of Christ himself. **See Barnes "Joh 3:16"**.

Comp. Joh 4:10 Ro 4:25; 2Co 9:15 Ga 2:20; Eph 5:25 Tit 2:14.

This passage proves,

(1.) that it was wholly voluntary on the part of the Lord Jesus. No one compelled him to come; no one could compel him. It is not too much to say, that God could not, and *would* not, COMPEL any innocent and holy being to undertake the great work of the atonement, and endure the bitter sorrows which were necessary to redeem man. God will *compel* the guilty to suffer, but he never will compel the innocent to endure sorrows, even in behalf of others. The whole work of redemption must be *voluntary*, or it could not be performed.

(2.) It evinced great benevolence on the part of the Redeemer. He did not come to take upon himself unknown and unsurveyed woes. He did not go to work in the dark. He knew what was to be done. He knew just what sorrows were to be endured—how long, how keen, how awful. And yet, knowing this, he came resolved and prepared to endure all those woes, and to drink the bitter cup to the dregs.

(3.) If there had not been this benevolence in his bosom, man must have perished for ever. He could not have saved himself; and he had no power or right to compel another to suffer in his behalf; and even God would not lay this mighty burden on any other, unless he was entirely willing to endure it. How much, then, do we owe to the Lord Jesus; and how entirely should we devote our lives to him who loved us, and gave himself for us! The word himself is rendered, by the Syriac, *his life*, (Naphshe) and this is in fact the sense of the Greek, that he gave his *life* for our sins, or that he died in our stead. He gave his *life* up to toil, tears, privation, sorrow, and death, that he might redeem us. The phrase, "*for our sins*," *uper twn amartiwn hmwn*, means the same as *on account of*; meaning, that the cause or reason why he gave himself to death was our sins; that is, he died because we are sinners, and because we could be saved only by his giving himself up to death. Many Mss., instead of *uper*, here read *peri*, ,but the sense is not materially varied. The Syriac translates it, "who gave himself *instead of*," by a word denoting that there was a *substitution* of the Redeemer in our place. The sense is, that the Lord Jesus became a vicarious offering, and died in the stead of sinners. It is not possible to express this idea more distinctly and unambiguously than Paul has done in this passage. Sin was the procuring cause of his death; to make expiation for sin was the design of his coming; and sin is pardoned and removed only by his substituted suffering.

That he might deliver us. The word here used *exelhtai*, properly means, to pluck out, to tear out; to take out from a number, to select; then to rescue or deliver. This is the sense here. He came and gave himself that he might *rescue* or *deliver* us from this present evil world. It does not mean to take away by death, or to remove to another world, but that he might effect a separation between us and what the apostle calls here, "this present evil world." The grand purpose was to rescue sinners from the dominion of this world, and separate them unto God.

This present evil world. See Joh 17:15,16. Locke supposes that by this phrase is intended the Jewish institutions, or the Mosaical age, in contradistinction from the age of the Messiah. Bloomfield supposes that it means "the present state of being, this life, filled as it is with calamity, sin, and sorrow; or, rather, the *sin itself*, and the misery consequent upon it." Rosenmuller understands by it, "the men of this age, Jews, who reject the Messiah; and Pagans, who are devoted to idolatry and crime." The word rendered *world*, *aiwn*, means properly *age*, an indefinitely long period of time; then eternity, for ever. It then comes to mean the world, either present or future; and then the present world, as it is, with its cares, temptations, and desires; the idea of evil, physical and moral, being everywhere implied, (*Robinson, Lex*.,) Mt 13:22 Lu 16:8; Lu 20:34 Ro 12:2. Here it means the

world as it is, without religion; a world of bad passions, false opinions, corrupt desires; a world full of ambition, and of the love of pleasure and of gold; a world where God is not loved or obeyed; a world where men are regardless of right, and truth, and duty; where they live for themselves, and not for God; in short, that great community, which in the Scriptures is called THE WORLD, in contradistinction from the kingdom of God. That world, that evil world, is full of sin; and the object of the Redeemer was to *deliver* us from that; that is, to effect a separation between his followers and that. It follows, therefore, that his followers constitute a peculiar community, not governed by the prevailing maxims, or influenced by the peculiar feelings of the people of this world. And it follows, also, that if there is not *in fact* such a separation, then the purpose of the Redeemer's death, in regard to us, has not been effected, and we are still a part of that great and ungodly community, *the world*.

According to the will of God, etc. Not by the will of man, or by his wisdom, but in accordance with the will of God. It was his purpose that the Lord Jesus should thus give himself; and his doing it was in accordance with his will, and was pleasing in his sight. The whole plan originated in the Divine purpose, and has been executed in accordance with the Divine will. If in accordance with *his* will, it is good, and is worthy of universal acceptation:

{c} "gave himself" Joh 10:17,18; Tit 2:14

{d} "deliver us" Joh 17:14 {e} "evil world" 1Jo 2:16 {f} "according" Ro 8:27

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *To whom be glory*, etc. Let him have all the praise and honour of the plan and its execution. It is not uncommon for Paul to introduce an ascription of praise in the midst of an argument. **See Barnes "Ro 1:25".**

It results from the strong desire which he had that all the glory should be given to God, and showed that he believed that all blessings had their origin in him, and that he should be always acknowledged.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *I marvel*. I wonder. It is remarked by Luther, (Com. in loco,) that Paul here uses as mild a word as possible. He does not employ the language of severe reproof, but he expresses his astonishment that the thing should have occurred. He was deeply affected and amazed that such a thing could have happened. They had cordially embraced the gospel; they had manifested the tenderest attachment for him; they had given themselves to God; and yet, in a very short time, they had been led wholly astray, and had embraced opinions which tended wholly to pervert and destroy the gospel. They had shown an instability and inconstancy of character which was to him perfectly surprising.

That ye are so soon. This proves that the epistle was written not long after the gospel was first preached to them. According to the general supposition, it could not have been more than from two

to five years. Had it been a long and gradual decline; had they been destitute for years of the privileges of the gospel; or had they had time to forget him who had first preached to them, it would not have been a matter of surprise. But when it occurred in a few months; when their once ardent love for Paul, and their confidence in him had so soon vanished, or their affections become alienated, and when they had so soon embraced opinions tending to set the whole gospel aside, it could not but excite his wonder. Learn hence that men, professedly pious, and apparently ardently attached to the gospel, may become soon perverted in their views, and alienated from those who had called them into the gospel, and whom they professed tenderly to love. The ardour of the affections becomes cool, and some artful, and zealous, and plausible teachers of error seduce the mind, corrupt the heart, and alienate the affections. Where there is the ardour of the first love to God, there is also an effort soon made by the adversary to turn away the heart from him; and young converts are commonly soon attacked in some plausible manner, and by art and arguments adapted to turn away their minds from the truth, and to alienate the affections from God.

So soon removed. This also, Luther remarks, is a mild and gentle term. It implies that *foreign* influence had been used to turn away their minds from the truth. The word here used *metatiyesye* means, to transpose, put in another place; and then, to go over from one party to another. Their affections had become transferred to other doctrines than those which they had at first embraced, and they had moved off from the only true foundation, to one which would give them no support.

From him, that called you. There has been great difference of opinion in regard to the sense of this passage. Some have supposed that it refers to God; others to Christ; others to Paul himself. Either supposition makes good sense, and conveys an idea not contrary to the Scriptures in other places. Doddridge, Chandler, Clarke, Macknight, Locke, and some others, refer it to Paul; Rosenmuller, Koppe, and others, suppose it refers to God; and others refer it to the Redeemer. The Syriac renders it thus: "I marvel that ye are so soon turned away from that Messiah (Christ) who has called you," etc. It is not possible, perhaps, to determine the true sense. It does not seem to me to refer to Paul, as the main object of the epistle is not to show that they had removed from *him*, but from the gospel—a far more grievous offence; and it seems to me that it is to be referred to God. The reasons are,

(1.) that he who had called them, is said to have called them "into the grace of Christ," which would be hardly said of Christ himself; and

(2) that the work of calling men is usually, in the Scriptures, attributed to God, 1Th 2:12 5:24; 2Th 2:14 2Ti 1:9.

Into the grace of Christ. Locke renders this, "into the covenant of grace which is by Christ." Doddridge understands it of the method of salvation which is *by* or through the grace of Christ. There is no doubt that it refers to the plan of salvation which is by Christ, or in Christ; and the main idea is, that the scheme of salvation which they had embraced under his instruction,, was one which contemplated salvation only by the grace or favour of Christ; and that from that they had been removed to another scheme, essentially different, where the grace of Christ was made useless and void. It is Paul's object to show that the true plan makes Christ the great and prominent object; and that the plan which they had embraced was, in this respect, wholly different.

Unto another gospel. A gospel which destroys the grace of Christ; which proclaims salvation on other terms than simple dependence on the merits of the Lord Jesus; and which has introduced the Jewish rites and ceremonies as essential, in order to obtain salvation. The apostle calls that scheme the *gospel*, because it pretended to be: it was preached by those who claimed to be preachers

of the gospel; who alleged that they had come direct from the apostles at Jerusalem, and who pretended to declare the method of salvation. It claimed to be the gospel, and yet it was essentially unlike the plan which he had preached as constituting the gospel. That which he preached, inculcated the entire dependence of the sinner on the merits and grace of Christ; that system had introduced dependence on the observance of the rites of the Mosaic system as necessary to salvation.

{*} "marvel" "wonder"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Which is not another*. There is also a great variety of views in regard to the meaning of this expression. Tindal translates it, "Which is nothing else, but there be some that trouble you." Locke, "Which is not owing to anything else, but only this, that ye are troubled with a certain sort of men who would overturn the gospel of Christ." But Rosenmuller, Koppe, Bloomfield, and others, give a different view; and according to them the sense is, "Which, however, is not another gospel, nor indeed the gospel at all, or true," etc. According to this, the design was to state that what they taught had none of the elements or characteristics of the gospel. It was a different system, and one which taught an entirely different method of justification before God. It seems to me that this is the true sense of the passage, and that Paul means to teach them that the system, though it was called the gospel, was essentially different from that which he had taught, and which consisted in simple reliance on Christ for salvation. The system which *they* taught was, in fact, the Mosaic system—the Jewish mode, depending on the rites and ceremonies of religion—and which, therefore, did not deserve to be called the *gospel*. It would load them again with burdensome rites, and with cumbrous institutions, from which it was the great purpose of the gospel to relieve them.

But there be some that trouble you. Though this is most manifestly another system, and not the gospel at all, yet there are some persons who are capable of giving trouble, and of unsettling your minds, by making it plausible. They pretend that they have come direct from the apostles at Jerusalem; that they have received their instructions from them, and that they preach the true gospel as they teach it. They pretend that Paul was called into the office of an apostle after them; that he had never seen the Lord Jesus; that he had derived his information only from others; and thus they are able to present a plausible argument, and to unsettle the minds of the Galatians.

And would pervert. That is, the tendency of their doctrine is wholly to turn away, *metastreqai*, to destroy, or render useless the gospel of Christ. It would lead, to the denial of the necessity of dependence on the merits of the Lord Jesus for salvation, and would substitute dependence on rites and ceremonies. This does not of necessity mean that such was the *design* of their teaching, for they might have been in the main honest; but that such was the *tendency and result* of their teaching. It would lead men to *rely* on the Mosaic rites for salvation.

{b} "which is not another" 2Co 11:4 {c} "pervert" Ac 15:1,24; 2Co 2:17 Ga 5:10,12

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *But though we*. That is, we the apostles. Probably he refers particularly to himself, as the plural is often used by Paul when speaking of himself. He alludes here, possibly, to a charge which was brought against him by the false teachers in Galatia, that he had changed his views since he came among them, and now preached differently from what he did then. See the Introduction. They endeavoured probably to fortify their own opinions in regard to the obligations of the Mosaic law, by affirming, that though Paul when he was among them had maintained that the observance of the law was not necessary to salvation, yet that he had changed his views, and now held the same doctrine on the subject which they did. What they relied on in support of this opinion is unknown. It is certain, however, that Paul *did*, on some occasions, (**See Barnes** "Ac 21:21-26,) comply with the Jewish rites; and it is not improbable that they were acquainted with that fact, and interpreted it as proving that he had changed his sentiments on the subject. At all events, it would make their allegation plausible that Paul was *now* in favour of the observance of the Jewish rites, and that if he had ever taught differently, he must new have changed his opinion. Paul, therefore, begins the discussion by denying this in the most solemn manner. He affirms that the gospel which he had at first preached to them was the true gospel. It contained the great doctrines of salvation. It was to be regarded by them as a fixed and settled point, that there was no other way of salvation but by the merits of the Saviour. No matter who taught anything else; no matter though it be alleged that he had changed his mind; no matter even though he *should* preach another gospel; and no matter though an angel from heaven should declare any other mode of salvation, it was to be held as a fixed and settled position, that the true gospel had been preached to them at first. We are not to suppose that Paul admitted that he had changed his mind, or that the inferences of the false teachers there were well-founded; but we are to understand this as affirming, in the most solemn manner, that the true gospel, and the only method of salvation, had been preached among them at first.

Or an angel from heaven. This is a very strong rhetorical mode of expression. It is not to be supposed that an angel from heaven would preach any other than the true gospel. But Paul wishes to put the strongest possible case, and to affirm, in the strongest manner possible, that the true gospel had been preached to them. The great system of salvation had been taught; and no other was to be admitted—no matter who preached it, no matter what the character or rank of the preacher, and no matter with what imposing claims he came. It follows from this, that the mere rank, character, talent, eloquence, or piety of a preacher, does not of necessity give his doctrine a claim to our belief, or prove that his gospel is true. Great talents maybe prostituted; and great sanctity of manner, and even holiness of character, may be in error; and no matter what may be the rank, and talents, and eloquence, and piety of the preacher, if he does not accord with the gospel which was first preached, he is to be held accursed.

Preach any other gospel, etc. **See Barnes "Ga 1:6"**.

Any gospel that differs from that which was first preached to you; any system of doctrines which goes to deny the necessity of simple dependence on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation.

Let him be accursed. Greek, *anayema*, (anathema.) On the meaning of this word, **See Barnes "1Co 12:3"**; **See Barnes** "1Co 16:22".

It is not improperly here rendered "accursed," or "devoted to destruction." The object of Paul is to express the greatest possible abhorrence of any other doctrine than that which he had himself preached. So great was his detestation of it, that, says Luther, "he casteth out very flames of fire; and his zeal is so fervent, that he beginneth almost to curse the angels." It follows from this,

(1.) that any other doctrine than that which is proclaimed in the Bible on the subject of justification, is to be rejected and treated with abhorrence, no matter what the.rank, talent, or eloquence of him who defends it.

(2.) That we are not to patronize or countenance such preachers. No matter what their zeal, or their apparent sincerity, or their apparent sanctity, or their apparent success, or their real boldness in rebuking vice, we are to withdraw from them. "Cease, my son," said Solomon, "to hear the instruction that causes to err from the words of knowledge," Pr 19:27. Especially are we to withdraw wholly from that instruction which goes to deny the great doctrines of salvation—that pure gospel which the Lord Jesus and the apostle taught. If Paul would regard even an angel as doomed to destruction, and as held accursed, should he preach any other doctrine, assuredly ice should not be found to lend our countenance to it, nor should we patronize it by attending on such a ministry. Who would desire to attend on the ministry of even an angel, if he was to be held accursed? How much less the ministry of a man preaching the same doctrine! It does not follow from this, however, that we are to treat others with severity of language, or with the language of cursing. They must answer to God. *We* are to withdraw from their teaching; we are to regard the *doctrines* with abhorrence; and we are not to lend our countenance to them. To their own Master they stand or fall; but what must be the doom of a teacher whom an inspired man has said should be regarded as "ACCURSED!" It may be added, how responsible is the ministerial office! How fearful the account which the ministers of religion must render! How much prayer, and study, and effort are needed that they may be able to understand the true gospel, and that they may not be led into error, or lead others into error!

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *As we said before*. That is, in the previous verse. It is equivalent to saying, "As I have just said." See 2Co 7:3. It cannot be supposed that he had said this when he was with them, as it cannot be believed that he then anticipated that his doctrines would be perverted, and that another gospel would be preached to them. The sentiment of Ga 1:8 is here repeated on account of its importance. It is common in the Scriptures, as indeed it is everywhere else, to repeat a declaration in order to deepen the impression of its importance and its truth. Paul would not be misunderstood on this point. He would leave no doubt as to his meaning. He would not have it supposed that he had uttered the sentiment in Ga 1:8 8 hastily; and he therefore repeats it with emphasis.

Than that ye have received. In the previous verse it is, "that which we have preached." By this change in the phraseology he designs, probably, to remind them that they had once solemnly professed to embrace that system. It had not only been *preached* to them, it had been *embraced* by them. The teachers of the new system, therefore, were really in opposition to the once avowed sentiments of the Galatians; to what they knew to be true. They were not only to be held accursed, therefore, because Paul so declared, but because they preached what the Galatians themselves knew to be false, or what was contrary to that which they had themselves professed to be true.

{b} "other gospel" De 4:2 Re 22:18

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *For do I now persuade men, or God*? The word "now" *arti* is used here, evidently, to express a contrast between his present and his former purpose of life. Before his conversion to Christianity, he impliedly admits, that it was his object to conciliate the favour of men; that he derived his authority from them, Ac 9:1,2; that he endeavoured to act so as to please them and gain their good esteem. But now he says, this was not his object. He had a higher aim. It was to please God, and to conciliate his favour. The object of this verse is obscure; but it seems to me to be connected with what follows, and to be designed to introduce that by showing that he had not *now* received his commission from men, but had received it from God. *Perhaps* there may be an allusion to an implied allegation in regard to him. It may have been alleged, (see Notes on the previous verses,) that even *he* had changed his mind, and was now himself an observer of the laws of Moses. To this perhaps he replies, by this question, that such conduct would not have been inconsistent, in his view, when it was his main purpose to please men, and when he derived his commission from them; but that now he had a higher aim. His purpose was to please God; and he was not aiming in any way to gratify men. The word which is rendered "persuade" here, *peiyw*, has been very variously interpreted. Tindal renders it, "Seek now the favour of men or of God?" Doddridge, "Do I now solicit the favour of men or of God ?" This also is the interpretation of Grotius, Hammond, Elsner, Koppe, Rosenmuller, Bloomfield, etc., and is undoubtedly the true explanation. The word properly means to persuade, or to convince, Ac 18:4; Ac 28:23; 2Co 5:11. But it also means, to bring over to kind feelings, to conciliate, to pacify, to quiet. Sept., 1Sa 24:8 2 Mac. iv. 25; Ac 12:20 1Jo 3:19. By the *question* here, Paul means to say, that his great object was now to *please God*. He desired his favour rather than the favour of man. He acted with reference to his will. He derived his authority from him, and not from the sanhedrim or any earthly council. And the purpose of all this is to say, that he had not received his commission to preach from man, but had received it directly from God.

Or do I seek to please men? It is not my aim or purpose to please men, and to conciliate their favour. Comp. 1Th 2:4.

For if I yet pleased men. If I made it my aim to please men; if this was the regulating principle of my conduct. The word "yet" here *eti*, has reference to his former purpose. It implies that this had once been his aim. But he says, if he had *pursued* that purpose to please men, if this had *continued* to be the aim of his life, he would not *now* have been a servant of Christ. He had been constrained to *abandon* that purpose, in order that he might be a servant of Christ; and the sentiment is, that in order that a man may become a Christian, it is necessary for him to abandon the purpose of pleasing men as the rule of his life. It may be implied also, that if *in fact* a man makes it his aim to please men, or if this is the purpose for which he lives and acts, and if he shapes his conduct with reference to that, he cannot be a Christian or a servant of Christ. A Christian *must* act from higher motives than those, and he who aims supremely at the favour of his fellow-men has full evidence that he is not a Christian. A friend of Christ must do his duty, and must regulate his conduct by the will of God, whether men are pleased with it or not. And it may be further implied, that the life and deportment of a sincere Christian *will not* please men. It is not that which they love. A holy, humble, spiritual life they do not love. It is true, indeed, that their consciences tell them that such a life is right; that they are often constrained to speak well of the life of Christians, and to commend it; it is true that they are constrained to respect a man who is a sincere Christian, and that

they often repose confidence in such a man; and it is true also that they often speak with respect of them when they are dead; but the life of an humble, devoted, and zealous Christian they do not *love*. It is contrary to their views of life. And especially if a Christian so lives and acts as to reprove them either by his words or by his life; or if a Christian makes his religion so prominent as to interfere with their pursuits or pleasures, they do not love it. It follows from this,

(1.) that a Christian is not to *expect* to please men. He must not be disappointed, therefore, if he does not. His Master did not please the world; and it is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master.

(2.) A professing Christian, and especially a minister, should be alarmed when the world flatters and caresses him. He should fear either

(a) that he is not living as he ought to, and that sinners love him *because* he is so much like them, and keeps them in countenance; or

(b) that they *mean* to make him betray his religion and become conformed to them. It is a great point gained for the gay world, when it can, by its caresses and attentions, get a Christian to forsake a prayer-meeting for a party, or surrender his deep spirituality to engage in some political project. "Woe unto you," said the Redeemer, "when all men speak well of you," Lu 6:26.

(3.) One of the main differences between Christians and the world is, that others *aim* to please men; the Christian *aims* to please God. And this is a *great* difference.

(4.) It follows that if men would become Christians, they must cease to make it their object to please men. They must be willing to be met with contempt and a frown; they must be willing to be persecuted and despised; they must be willing to lay aside all hope of the praise and the flattery of men, and be content with an honest effort to please God.

(5.) True Christians must differ from the world. Their aims, feelings, purposes must be unlike the world. They are *to be* a peculiar people; and they should be willing to be esteemed such. It does not follow, however, that a true Christian should not desire the good esteem of the world, or that he should be indifferent to an honourable reputation, (1Ti 3:7;) nor does it follow that a consistent Christian will not often command the respect of the world. In times of trial, the world will repose confidence in Christians; when any work of benevolence is to be done, the world will instinctively look to Christians; and notwithstanding, sinners will not *love* religion, yet they will secretly feel assured that some of the brightest ornaments of society are Christians, and that they have a *claim* to the confidence and esteem of their fellow-men.

The servant of Christ. A Christian.

{c} "to please men" 2Co 12:19 1Th 2:4 {d} "be the servant of Christ" Jas 4:4

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *But I certify you*. I make known to you; or, I declare to you. See 1Co 15:1. Doubtless this had been known to them before, but he now assures them of it, and goes into an extended illustration to show them that he had not received his authority from man to preach the gospel. To state and prove this is the main design of this chapter.

Is not after man. Greek, not according to man. See Ga 1:1. That is, he was not appointed by man, nor had he any human instructor to make known to him what the gospel was. He had neither

received it from man, nor had it been debased or adulterated by any human admixtures. He had received it directly from the Lord Jesus.

{*} "certify" "declare to"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *For I neither received it of man*. This is very probably said in reply to his opponents, who had maintained that Paul had derived his knowledge of the gospel from other men, as he had not been personally known to the Lord Jesus, or been of the number of those whom he called to be his apostles. In reply to this, he says, that he did not receive his gospel in any way from man.

Neither was I taught it. That is, by man. He was not taught it by any written account of it, or by the instruction of man in any way. The only plausible objection to this statement which could be urged would be the fact that Paul had an interview with Ananias Ac 9:17 before his baptism, and that he would probably receive instructions from him. But to this it may be replied,

(1.) that there is no evidence that Ananias went into an explanation of the nature of the Christian religion in his interview with Paul;

(2.) Paul had before this been taught what Christianity was by his interview with the Lord Jesus on the way to Damascus, Ac 9:5 26:14-18;

(3.) the purpose for which Ananias was sent to him in Damascus was that he might receive his sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost, Ac 9:17. Whatever instructions he may have received through Ananias, it is still true that his call was *directly from* the Lord Jesus, and his information of the nature of Christianity from *his* revelation.

But by the revelation of Jesus Christ. On his way to Damascus, and subsequently in the temple, Ac 22:17-21. Doubtless he received communications at various times from the Lord Jesus with regard to the nature of the gospel and his duty, The sense here is, that he was not indebted to *men* for his knowledge of the gospel, but had derived it entirely from the Saviour.

{a} "I neither received" 1Co 15:1-3 {b} "revelation" Eph 3:3

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *For ye have heard of my conversation*. My conduct, my mode of life, my deportment. **See Barnes "2Co 1:12".**

Probably Paul had himself made them acquainted with the events of his early years. The reason why he refers to this is to show them that he had not derived his knowledge of the Christian religion from any instruction which he had received in his early years, or any acquaintance which he had formed with the apostles, he had at first been decidedly opposed to the Lord Jesus, and had been converted only by his wonderful grace.

In the Jews' religion. In the belief and practice of *Judaism*; that is, as it was understood in the time when he was educated. It was not merely in the religion of Moses, but it was in that religion as understood and practised by the Jews in his time, when opposition to Christianity constituted a

very material part of it. In *that* religion Paul proceeds to show that he had been more distinguished than most persons of his time.

How that beyond measure. In the highest possible degree; beyond all limits or bounds; exceedingly. The phrase which Paul here uses, *kay uperbolhn by hyperbole*, is one which he frequently employs to denote anything that is excessive, or that cannot be expressed by ordinary language. See the Greek in Ro 7:13 1Co 12:31; 2Co 1:8 4:7,17.

I persecuted the church. See

@Ac 8:3 9:1.

And wasted it. Destroyed it. The word which is here used means, properly, to waste or destroy, as when a city or country is ravaged by an army or by wild beasts. His *purpose* was to utterly to root out and destroy the Christian religion.

{++} "beyond measure" "exceedingly" {c} "church of God" Ac 8:1,3, 9:1,2, 26:9

{&} "wasted it" "laid it waste"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *And profited*. Made advances and attainments. He made advances not only in the knowledge of the Jewish religion, but also he surpassed others in his zeal in defending its interests, he had had better advantages than most of his countrymen; and by his great zeal and characteristic ardour, he had been able to make higher attainments than most others had done.

Above many my equals. Marg. *equals in years*. This is the true sense of the original. It means that he surpassed those of the same age with himself. Possibly there may be a reference here to those of the same age who attended with him on the instructions of Gamaliel.

Being more exceedingly zealous. More studious of; more ardently attached to them; more anxious to distinguish himself in attainments in the religion in which he was brought up. All this is fully sustained by all that we know of the character of Paul, as at all times a man of singular and eminent zeal in all that he undertook.

Of the traditions of my fathers. Of the traditions of the Jews. **See Barnes "Mt 15:2"**.

A large part of the doctrines of the Pharisees depended on mere tradition; and Paul doubtless made this a special matter of study, and was particularly tenacious in regard to it. It was to be learned, from the very nature of it, only by *oral* teaching, as there is no evidence that it was then recorded. Subsequently these traditions were recorded in the *Mishna*, and are found in the Jewish writings. But in the time of Paul they were to be learned as they were handed down from one to another; and hence the utmost diligence was requisite to obtain a knowledge of them. Paul does not here say that he was zealous then for the practice of the new religion, nor for the study of the Bible. His object in going to Jerusalem, and studying at the feet of Gamaliel, was doubtless to obtain a knowledge of the traditions of the sect of the Pharisees. Had he been studying the Bible all that time, he would have kept from the fiery zeal which he evinced in persecuting the church, and would, if he had studied it right, have been saved from much trouble of conscience afterwards.

{|} "profited" "Made a proficiency" {1} "my equals" "equals in years" {d} "being more exceedingly zealous" Ac 22:3 Php 3:6 {e} "traditions" Mr 7:5-13

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *But when it pleased God*. Paul traced all his hopes of eternal life, and all the good influences which had ever borne upon his mind, to God.

Who separated me, etc. That is, who destined me; or who purposed from my very birth that I should be a preacher and an apostle. The meaning is, that God had in his secret purposes set him apart to be an apostle. It does not mean that he had actually called him in his infancy to the work, for this was not so, but that he designed him to be an important instrument in his hands in spreading the true religion. Jeremiah Jer 1:5 was thus set apart, and John the Baptist was thus early designated, for the work which they afterwards performed. It follows from this,

(1.) that God often, if not always, has *purposes* in regard to men from their very birth. He *designs* them for some important field of labour, and endows them at their creation with talents adapted to that.

(2.) It does not follow that because a young man has gone far astray; and has become even a blasphemer and a persecutor, that God has not destined him to some important and holy work in his service. How many men have been called, like Paul, and Newton, and Bunyan, and Augustine, from a life of sin to the service of God.

(3.) God is often training up men in a remarkable manner for future usefulness. His eye is upon them, and he watches over them, until the time comes for their conversion, His providence was concerned in the education and training of Paul. It was by the Divine intention with reference to his future work that he had so many opportunities of education, and was so well acquainted with the "traditions" of that religion which he was yet to demonstrate to be unfounded and false, he gave him the opportunity to cultivate his mind, and prepare to grapple with the Jew in argument, and show him how unfounded were his hopes. So it is often now. He gives to a young man an opportunity of a finished education. Perhaps he suffers him to fall into the snares of infidelity, and to become familiar with the arguments of skeptics, that he may thus be better prepared to meet their sophisms, and to enter into their feelings, His eye is upon them in their wanderings, and they are suffered often to wander far; to range the fields of science; to become distinguished as scholars, as Paul was; until the time comes for their conversion, and then, in accordance with the purpose which set them apart from the world, God converts them, and consecrates all their talents and attainments to his service.

(4.) We should never despair of a young man who has wandered far from God. If he has risen high in attainments; if his whole aim is ambition; or if he has become an infidel, still we are not to despair of him. It is possible still that God "separated" that talent to his service from the very birth, and that he means yet to call it all to his service, how easy it was to convert Saul of Tarsus when the proper period arrived. So it is of the now unconverted and unconsecrated, but cultivated talent among the young men of our land. Far as they may have wandered from God and virtue, yet much of that talent has been devoted to him in baptism, and by parental purposes and prayers; and, it may be—*as is morally certain from the history of the past*—that much of it is consecrated also by the Divine purpose and intention for the noble cause of virtue and pure religion. In that now apparently wasted talent; in that learning now apparently devoted to other aims and ends, there is much that *will* yet adorn the cause of virtue and religion; and how fervently should we pray that it may be "called" by the grace of God, and actually devoted to his service.

And called me *by his grace*. On the way to Damascus. It was special *grace*, because he was then engaged in bitterly opposing him and his cause.

{f} "pleased God" Isa 49:1 Jer 1:5; Ac 13:2 22:14,15 Ro 1:1

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *To reveal his Son in me*. This is to be regarded as connected with the first part of Ga 1:15: "When it pleased God to reveal his Son in me," i.e., on the way to Damascus. The phrase evidently means, to make me acquainted with the Lord Jesus, or to reveal his Son to me. Comp. the Greek in Mt 10:32, for a similar expression. The revelation here referred to was the miraculous manifestation which was made to Paul on his way to Damascus. Compare 2Co 4:6. That revelation was in order to convince him that he was the Messiah; to acquaint him with his nature, rank, and claims; and to qualify him to be a preacher to the heathen.

That I might preach him. In order that I might so preach him; or with a view to my being appointed to this work. This was the leading purpose for which Paul was converted, Ac 9:15 22:21.

The heathen. The Gentiles; the portion of the world that was not Jewish, or that was destitute of the true religion.

Immediately. Koppe supposes that this is to be connected with, "I went into Arabia," Ga 1:17. Rosenmuller supposes it means, "Immediately I *consented*." Dr. Wells and Locke suppose that it refers to the fact that he immediately went to Arabia. But this seems to me to be an unnatural construction. The words are too remote from each other to allow of it. The evident sense is, that he was at once *decided*. He did not take time to deliberate whether he should or should not become a Christian. He made up his mind at once, and on the spot. He did not consult with any one; he did not ask advice of any one; he did not wait to be instructed by any one. He was convinced by the vision in an overpowering manner that Jesus was the Messiah, and he yielded at once. The main idea is, that there was no delay, no consultation, no deferring it, that he might see and consult with his friends, or with the friends of Christianity. The object for which he dwells on this is to show that he did not receive his views of the gospel from man.

I conferred not. I did not *lay the case prosaneyemhn* before any man; I did not confer with any one.

Flesh and blood. Any human being: for so the phrase properly signifies. **See Barnes "Mt 16:17"**.

This does not mean here that Paul did not consult his own ease and happiness; that he was regardless of the sufferings which he might be called to endure; that he was willing to suffer, and was not careful to make provision for his own comforts which was true in itself; but that he did not lay the case before any man, or any body of men, for instruction or advice, he acted promptly and decisively, he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, Ac 26:19 but resolved at once to obey. Many suppose that this passage means that Paul did not take counsel of the evil passions and suggestions of his own heart, or of the feelings which would have prompted him to lead a life of ambition, or a life under the influence of corrupt desires. But however true this was in fact, no such thing is intended here. It means simply that he did not take counsel of any human being, he resolved at once to follow the command of the Saviour, and at once to obey him. The passage shows,

(1.) that when the Lord Jesus calls us to follow him, we should promptly and decidedly obey.

(2.) We should not delay even to take counsel of earthly friends, or wait for human advice, or consult their wishes, but should at once resolve to follow the Lord Jesus. Most persons, when they are awakened to see their guilt, and their minds are impressed on the subject of religion, are prone to *defer* it; to resolve to think of it at some future time; or to engage in some other business before they become Christians; or, at least, they wish to finish what they have on hand before they yield to God. Had Paul pursued this course, he would probably never have become a Christian. It follows, therefore,

(3.) that when the Lord Jesus calls us, we should at once abandon any course of life, however pleasant, or any plan of ambition, however brilliant, or any scheme of gain, however promising, in order that we may follow him. What a brilliant career of ambition did Paul abandon! and how promptly and decidedly did he do it! tie did not pause or hesitate a moment; but, brilliant as were his prospects, he at once forsook all—paused in mid-career in his ambition—and, without consulting a human being, at once gave his heart to God. Such a course should be pursued by all. Such a promptness and decision will prepare one to become an eminent Christian, and to be eminently useful.

{a} "reveal his Son" 2Co 4:6 {*} "in me" "to me" {b} "that I might" Ac 9:15 {c} "not with flesh and blood" 2Co 5:16

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Neither went I up to Jerusalem*. That is, I did not go there at once. I did not go to consult with the apostles there, or to be instructed by them in regard to the nature of the Christian religion. The design of this statement is to show that in no sense did he derive his commission from man.

To them which were apostles before me. This implies that Paul then regarded himself to be an apostle. They were, he admits, apostles before he was; but he felt also that he had original authority with them, and he did not go to them to receive instruction, or to derive his commission from them. Several of the apostles remained in Jerusalem for a considerable time after the ascension of the Lord Jesus, and it was regarded as the principal place of authority. See Ac 15.

But I went into Arabia. Arabia was south of Damascus, and at no great distance. The line indeed between Arabia Deserts and Syria is not very definitely marked, but it is generally agreed that Arabia extends to a considerable distance into the great Syrian desert. To what part of Arabia, and for what purpose Paul went, is wholly unknown. Nothing is known of the circumstances of this journey; nor is the time which he spent there known. It is known, indeed, Ga 1:18, that he did not go to Jerusalem until three years after his conversion; but how large a part of this time was spent in Damascus we have no means of ascertaining. It is probable that Paul was engaged during these three years in preaching the gospel in Damascus and the adjacent regions, and in Arabia. Comp. Ac 9:20,22,27.

The account of this journey into Arabia is wholly omitted by Luke in the Acts of the apostles; and this fact, as has been remarked by Paley, (Horae Paulinae, chap. v. No. 2,) demonstrates that the Acts and this epistle were not written by the same author, or that the one is independent of the other; because, "if the Acts of the Apostles had been a forged history, made up from the epistle, it

is impossible that this journey should have been passed over in silence; if the epistle had been composed out of what the author had read of St. Paul's history in the Acts, it is unaccountable that it should have been inserted." As to the reason why Luke omitted to mention the journey into Arabia, nothing is known. Various conjectures have been entertained, but they are *mere* conjectures. It is sufficient to say, that Luke has by no means recorded all that Paul or the other apostles did, nor has he pretended to do it. He has given the leading events in the public labours of Paul; and it is not at all improbable that he has omitted not a few short excursions made by him for the purpose of preaching the gospel. The journey into Arabia, probably, did not furnish any incidents *in regard to the success of the gospel there* which required particular record by the sacred historian; nor has Paul himself referred to it for any such reason, or intimated that it furnished any incidents or any facts that required particularly the notice of the historian. He has mentioned it for a different purpose altogether—to show that he did not receive his commission from the apostles, and that he did not go at once to consult them. He went directly the other way. As Luke, in the Acts, had no occasion to illustrate this, as he had no occasion to refer to this *argument*, it did not fall in with his design to mention the fact. Nor is it-known *why* Paul went into Arabia. Bloomfield supposes that it was in order to recover his health after the calamity which he suffered on the way to Damascus. But everything in regard to this is mere conjecture. I should rather think it was more in accordance with the general character of Paul that he made this short excursion for the purpose of preaching the gospel.

And returned again unto Damascus. He did not go to Jerusalem to consult with the apostles after his visit to Arabia, but returned again to the place where he was converted, and preached there, showing that he had not derived his commission from the other apostles.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Then after three years*. Probably three years after his departure from Jerusalem to Damascus, not after his return to Arabia. So most commentators have understood it.

Went up to Jerusalem. More correctly, as in the margin, *returned*.

To see Peter. Peter was the oldest and most distinguished of the apostles. In Ga 2:9, he, with James and John, is called a pillar. But why Paul went particularly to see *him* is not known. It was probably, however, from the celebrity and distinction which he knew Peter had among the apostles that he wished to become particularly acquainted with him. The word which is here rendered *to see*, *istorhsai* is by no means that which is commonly employed to denote that idea. It occurs nowhere else in the New Testament; and properly means, to ascertain by personal inquiry and examination, and then to *narrate*, as an historian was accustomed to do, whence our word *history*. The notion of personally seeing and examining is one that belongs essentially to the word, and the idea here is that of seeing or visiting Peter in order to a personal acquaintance.

And abode with him fifteen days. Probably, says Bloomfield, including three Lord's days. Why he departed then is unknown. Beza supposes that it was on account of the plots of the Grecians against him, and their intention to destroy him, Ac 9:29; but this is not assigned by Paul himself as a reason. It is probable that the purpose of his visit to Peter would be accomplished in that time, and he would not spend more time than was necessary with him. It is clear that in the short space

of *two weeks* he could not have been very extensively taught by Peter the nature of the Christian religion, and probably the time is mentioned here to show that he had not been under the teaching of the apostles.

{a} "Then after three years" Ac 9:26 {1} "I went" "returned"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Save James the Lord's brother*. That the James here referred to was an apostle is clear. The whole construction of the sentence demands this supposition. In the list of the apostles in Mt 10:2,3, two of this name are mentioned, James the son of Zebedee and brother of John, and James the son of Alphaeus. From the Acts of the Apostles it is clear that there were two of this name in Jerusalem. Of these, James the brother of John was slain by Herod, Ac 12:2 and the other continued to reside in Jerusalem, Ac 15:13 21:13. This latter James was called James the Less, Mr 15:40 to distinguish him from the other James, probably because he was the younger. It is probable that this was the James referred to here, as it is evident from the Acts of the Apostles that he was a prominent man among the apostles in Jerusalem. Commentators have not been agreed as to what is meant by his being the brother of the Lord Jesus. Doddridge understands it as meaning that he was "the near kinsman" or cousin-german to Jesus; for he was, says he, the son of Alphaeus and Mary, the sister of the virgin; and if there were but two of this name, this opinion is undoubtedly correct. In the Apostolical Constitutions (see Rosenmuller) three of this name are mentioned as apostles or eminent men in Jerusalem; and hence many have supposed that one of them was the son of Mary the mother of the Lord Jesus. It is said Mt 13:55 that the brothers of Jesus were James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas; and it is remarkable that three of the apostles bear the same names —James the son of Alphaeus, Simon Zelotes, and Judas, Joh 14:22. It is indeed *possible*, as Bloomfield remarks, that three brothers of our Lord and three of his apostles might bear the same names, and yet be different persons; but such a coincidence would be very remarkable, and not easily explained. But if it were not so, then the James here was the son of Alphaeus, and consequently a cousin of the Lord Jesus. The word *brother* may, according to Scripture usage, be understood as denoting a *near kinsman*. See Schleusner (Lex. 2) on the word *adelfov*. After all, however, it is not quite certain who is intended. Some have supposed that neither of the apostles of the name of James is intended, but another James who was the son of Mary the mother of Jesus. See Koppe, *in loc*. But it is clear, I think, that one of the apostles is intended. Why James is particularly mentioned here is unknown. As, however, he was a prominent man in Jerusalem, Paul would naturally seek his acquaintance. It is possible that the other apostles were absent from Jerusalem during the fifteen days when he was there.

{*} "save" "except" {b} "James the Lord's brother" Mr 6:3

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Behold, before God, I lie not*. This is an oath, or a solemn appeal to God. See Note, Ro 9:1. The design of this oath here is to prevent all suspicion of falsehood. It may seem to be remarkable that Paul should make this solemn appeal to God in this argument, and in the narrative of a plain fact, when his statement could hardly be called in question by any one. But we may remark,

(1.) that the oath here refers not only to the fact that he was with Peter and James but fifteen days, but to the *entire group* of facts to which he had referred in this chapter. "The things which I write unto you." It included, therefore, the narrative about his conversion, and the direct revelation which he had from the Lord Jesus.

(2.) There were no *witnesses* which he could appeal to in this case, and he could therefore only appeal to God. It was probably not practicable for him to appeal to Peter or James, as neither of them were in Galatia, and a considerable part of the transactions here referred to occurred where there were no witnesses. It pertained to the direct revelation of truth from the Lord Jesus. The only way, therefore, was for Paul to appeal directly to God for the truth of what he said.

(3.) The importance of the truth here affirmed was such as to justify this solemn appeal to God. It was an extraordinary and miraculous revelation of the truth by Jesus Christ himself. He received information of the truth of Christianity from no human being. He had consulted no one in regard to its nature. That fact was so extraordinary, and it was so remarkable that the system thus communicated to him should harmonize so entirely with that taught by the other apostles with whom he had had no intercourse, that it was not improper to appeal to God in this solemn manner. It was, therefore, no trifling matter in which Paul appealed to God; and a solemn appeal of the same nature, and in the same circumstances, can never be improper.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Afterwards I came*, etc. In this account he has omitted a circumstance recorded by Luke, Ac 9:29 of the controversy which he had with the Grecians or Hellenists, It was not material to the purpose which he has here in view, which is to state that he was not indebted to the apostles for his knowledge of the doctrines of Christianity. He therefore merely states that he left Jerusalem soon after he went there, and travelled to other places.

The regions of Syria. Syria was between Jerusalem and Cilicia. Antioch was the capital of Syria, and in that city and the adjacent places he spent considerable time. Comp. Ac 15:23,41.

Cilicia. This was a province of Asia Minor, of which Tarsus, the native place of Paul, was the capital. **See Barnes "Ac 6:9"**.

{c} "I came" Ac 9:30

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *And was unknown by face*, etc. Paul had visited Jerusalem only, and he had formed no acquaintance with any of the churches in the other parts of Judea. He regarded himself at the

first as called to preach particularly to the Gentiles, and he did not remain even to form an acquaintance with the Christians in Judea.

The churches of Judea. Those which were out of Jerusalem. Even at the early period of the conversion of Paul, there were doubtless many churches in various parts of the land.

Which were in Christ. United to Christ; or which were Christian churches. The *design* of mentioning this is to show that he had not derived his views of the gospel from any of them. He had neither been instructed by the apostles, nor was he indebted to the Christians in Judea for his knowledge of the Christian religion.

{d} "churches of Judea" 1Th 2:14

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 23

But they had heard only, etc. They had not seen me; but the remarkable fact of my conversions had been reported to them. It was a fact that they could hardly be concealed. **See Barnes "Ac 26:26"**.

{a} "heard only" Ac 9:13,26; 1Ti 1:13-16

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *And they glorified God in me*. They praised God on my account. They regarded me as a true convert and a sincere Christian; and they praised God that he had converted such a persecutor, and had made him a preacher of the gospel. The *design* for which this is mentioned is to show that though he was personally unknown to them, and had not derived his views of the gospel from them, yet that he had their entire confidence. They regarded him as a convert and an apostle, and they were disposed to praise God for his conversion. This fact would do much to conciliate the favour of the Galatians, by showing them that he had the confidence of the churches in the very-land where the gospel was first planted, and which was regarded as the source of ecclesiastical authority. In view of this we may remark,

(1.) that it is the duty of Christians kindly and affectionately to receive among their number those who have been converted from a career of persecution or of sin in any form. And it is always done by true Christians. It is easy to forgive a man who has been actively engaged in persecuting the church, or a man who has been profane, intemperate, dishonest, or licentious, if he becomes a true penitent, and confesses and forsakes his sins. No matter what his life has been; no matter how abandoned, sensual, or devilish; if he manifests true sorrow, and gives evidence of a change of heart, he is cordially received into any church, and welcomed as a fellow-labourer in the cause which he once destroyed. Here, at least, is one place where forgiveness is cordial and perfect. his former life is not remembered, except to praise God for his grace in recovering a sinner from such a course; the evils that he has done are forgotten; and he is henceforward regarded as entitled to all the privileges and immunities of a member of the household of faith. There is not on earth an infuriated persecutor or blasphemer who would not be cordially welcomed to any Christian church on the evidence of his repentance; not a man so debased and vile, that the most pure, and elevated,

and learned, and wealthy Christians would not rejoice to sit down with him at the same communion table, on the evidence of his conversion to God.

(2.) We should "glorify" or praise God for all such instances of conversion. We should do it because

(a) of the abstraction of the talents of the persecutor from the cause of evil. Paul could have done, and would have done, immense service to the enemies of Christianity, if he had pursued the career which he had commenced. But when he was converted, all that bad influence ceased. So when an infidel or a profligate man is converted now.

(b) Because now his talents will be consecrated to a better service. They will be employed in the cause of truth and salvation. All the power of the matured and educated talent will now be devoted to the interests of religion; and it is a fact for which we should thank God, that he often takes educated talent, and commanding influence, and an established reputation for ability, learning, and zeal, and devotes it to his own service.

(c) Because there will be a change of destiny; because the enemy of the Redeemer will now be saved. The moment when Saul of Tarsus was converted, was the moment which determined a change in his eternal destiny. Before, he was in the broad way to hell; henceforward he walked in the path of life and salvation. Thus we should always rejoice over a sinner returning from the error of his ways; and should praise God that he who was in danger of eternal ruin is now an heir of glory. Christians are not jealous in regard to the *numbers* who shall enter heaven. They feel that there is "room" for all; that the feast is ample for all; and they rejoice when any can be induced to come with them and partake of the happiness of heaven.

(3.) *We* may still glorify and praise God for the grace manifested in the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. What does not the world owe to him! What do we not owe to him! No man did as much in establishing the Christian religion as he did; no one among the apostles was the means of converting and saving so many souls; no one has left so many and so valuable writings for the edification of the church. To him we owe the invaluable epistles—so full of truth, and eloquence, and promises, and consolations—on which we are commenting; and to him the church owes, under God, some of its most elevated and ennobling views of the nature of Christian doctrine and duty. After the lapse, therefore, of eighteen hundred years, we should not cease to glorify God for the conversion of this wonderful man; and should feel that we have cause of thankfulness that he changed the infuriated persecutor to a holy and devoted apostle.

(4.) Let us remember that God has the same power now. There is not a persecutor whom he could not convert with the same ease with which he changed Saul of Tarsus. There is not a vile and sensual man that he could not make pure; not a dishonest man that his grace could not make honest; not a blasphemer that he could not teach to venerate his name; not a lost and abandoned sinner that he cannot receive to himself. Let us, then, without ceasing cry unto him, that his grace may be continually manifested in reclaiming such sinners from the error of their ways, and bringing them to the knowledge of the truth, and to a consecration of their lives to his service.

{b} "glorified God" Ac 21:19,20

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 2

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 1

GALATIANS CHAPTER 2

THE second chapter is closely connected *in sense* with the first, and is indeed a part of the same argument. Injury has been done by the division which is made. The proper division would have been at the close of the 10th verse of this chapter. The general scope of the chapter, like the first, is to show that he did not receive the gospel from man; that he had not derived it from the apostles; that he did not acknowledge his indebtedness to them for his views of the Christian religion; that they had not even set up *authority* over him; but that they had welcomed him as a fellow-labourer, and acknowledged him as a coadjutor in the work of the apostleship. In confirmation of this he states Ga 2:1 that he had indeed gone to Jerusalem, but that he had done it by express revelation, Ga 2:2; that he was cordially received by the apostles there—especially by those who were pillars in the church; and that so far from regarding himself as inferior to the other apostles, he had resisted Peter to his face at Antioch on a most important and vital doctrine.

The chapter, therefore, may be regarded as divided into two portions, viz.:

I. The account of his visit to Jerusalem, and of what occurred there, Ga 2:1-10.

(a) He had gone up fourteen years after his conversion, after having laboured long among the Gentiles in his own way, and without having felt his dependence on the apostles at Jerusalem, Ga 2:1,2.

(b) When he was there, there was no attempt made to compel him to submit to the Jewish rites and customs; and what was conclusive in the case was, that they had not even required Titus to be circumcised, thus proving that they did not assert jurisdiction over Paul, and that they did not intend to impose the Mosaic rites on the converts from among the Gentiles, Ga 2:3-5.

(c) The most distinguished persons among the apostles at Jerusalem, he says, received him kindly, and admitted him to their confidence and favour without hesitation. They added no heavy burdens to him, Ga 2:6; they saw evidence that he had been appointed to bear the gospel to the Gentiles, Ga 2:7,8; they gave to him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, Ga 2:9; and they asked only that they should remember and show kindness to the poor saints in Judea, and thus manifest an interest in those who had been converted from Judaism, or contribute their proper proportion to the maintenance of all, and show that they were not disposed to abandon their own countrymen, Ga 2:10. In this way they gave the fullest proof that they approved the course of Paul, and admitted him into entire fellowship with them as an apostle.

II. *The scene at Antioch, where Paul rebuked Peter for his dissimulation*, Ga 2:11-21. The main object of mentioning this seems to be to show, first, that he did not regard himself as inferior to the other apostles, or that he had not derived his views of the gospel from them; and, secondly, to state that the observance of the Jewish rites was not necessary to salvation, and that he had maintained that from the beginning, he had strongly urged it in a controversy with Peter, and in a case where

Peter was manifestly wrong; and it was no new doctrine on the subject of justification which he had preached to the Galatians. He states, therefore,

(a) That he had opposed Peter at Antioch, because he had dissembled there, and that even Barnabas had been carried away with the course which Peter had practised, Ga 2:11-14.

(b) That the Jews must be justified by faith, and not by dependence on their own law, Ga 2:15,16.

(c) That they who are justified by faith should act consistently, and not attempt to build again the things which they had destroyed, Ga 2:17,18.

(d) That the effect of justification by faith was to make one dead to the law that he might live unto God; that the effect of it was to make one truly alive and devoted to the cause of true religion; and to show this, he appeals to the effect on his own heart and life, Ga 2:19,20.

(e) And that if justification could be obtained by the law, then Christ had died in vain, Ga 2:21. he thus shows that the effect of teaching the necessity of the observance of the Jewish rites was to destroy the gospel, and to render it vain and useless.

Verse 1. *Then, fourteen years after*. That is, fourteen years after his first visit there subsequent to his conversion. Some commentators, however, suppose that the date of the fourteen years is to be reckoned from his conversion. But the more obvious construction is to refer it to the time of his visit there, as recorded in the previous chapter, Ga 2:18. This time was spent in Asia Minor, chiefly in preaching the gospel.

I went up again to Jerusalem. It is commonly supposed that Paul here refers to the visit which he made as recorded in Ac 20. The circumstances mentioned are substantially the same; and the object which he had at that time in going up was one whose mention was entirely pertinent to the argument here. He went up with Barnabas to submit a question to the assembled apostles and elders at Jerusalem in regard to the necessity of the observance of the laws of Moses. Some persons who had come among the Gentile converts from Judea had insisted on the necessity of being circumcised in order to be saved. Paul and Barnabas had opposed them; and the dispute had become so warm that it was agreed to submit the subject to the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. For that purpose Paul and Barnabas had been sent, with certain others, to lay the case before all the apostles. As the question which Paul was discussing in this epistle was about the necessity of the observance of the laws of Moses in order to justification, it was exactly in point to refer to a journey when this very question had been submitted to the apostles. Paul indeed had made another journey to Jerusalem before this, with the collection for the poor saints in Judea, Ac 11:29,30, 12:25; but he does not mention that here, probably because he did not then see the other apostles, or more probably because that journey furnished no illustration of the point now under debate. On the occasion here referred to, Ac 15 the very point under discussion here constituted the main subject of inquiry, and was definitely settled.

And took Titus with me also. Luke, in the Acts of the Apostles, Ac 15:2, says that there were others with Paul and Barnabas on that journey to Jerusalem. But who they were he does not mention. It is by no means certain that Titus was *appointed* by the church to go to Jerusalem; but the contrary is more probable. Paul seems to have taken him with him as a private affair; but the reason is not mentioned. It may have been to show his Christian liberty, and his sense of what he had a right to do; or it may have been *to furnish a case* on the subject of inquiry, and submit the matter to them whether Titus was *to be* circumcised. Hie was a Greek; but he had been converted to Christianity. Paul had not circumcised him; but had admitted him to the full privileges of the Christian church. Here, then, was *a case in point*; and it may have been important to have had such a case before

them that they might fully understand it. This, as Doddridge properly remarks, is the first mention which occurs of Titus. He is not mentioned by Luke in the Acts of the Apostles; and though his name occurs several times in the second epistle to the Corinthians, 2Co 2:13 7:6, 8:6,16,23 12:18, yet it is to be remembered that that epistle was written a considerable time after this to the Galatians. Titus was a Greek, and was doubtless converted by the labours of Paul, for he calls him his own son, Tit 1:4. He attended Paul frequently in his travels; was employed by him in important services, (see 2Co. in the places referred to above;) was left by him in Crete to set in order the things that were wanting, and to ordain elders there, Tit 1:5; subsequently he went into Dalmatia, 2Ti 4:10, and is supposed to have returned again to Crete, whence it is said he propagated the gospel in the neighbouring islands, and died at the age of ninety-four.—*Calmet*.

{a} "fourteen years after, I went" Ac 15:2

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And I went up by revelation*. Not for the purpose of receiving instruction from the apostles there in regard to the nature of the Christian religion. It is to be remembered that the design for which Paul states this is to show that he had not received the gospel from men. He is careful, therefore, to state that he went up by the express command of God. He did not go up to receive instructions from the apostles there in regard to his own work, or to be confirmed by them in his apostolic office; but he went to submit an important question pertaining to the church at large. In Ac 15:2, it is said that Paul and Barnabas went up by the appointment of the church at Antioch. But there is no discrepancy between that account and this; for though he was designated by the church there, there is no improbability in supposing that he was directed by a special revelation to comply with their request. The reason why he says that he went up by direct revelation seems to be, to show that he did not seek instruction from the apostles; he did not go of his own accord to consult with them, as if he were dependent on them; but even in a case when he went to advise with them he was under the influence of express and direct revelation, proving that he was as much commissioned by God as they were.

And communicated unto them that gospel, etc. Made them acquainted with the doctrines which he preached among the heathen. He stated fully the principles on which he acted; the nature of the gospel which he taught; and his doctrine about the exemption of the Gentiles from the obligations of the law of Moses. He thus satisfied them in regard to his views of the gospel; and showed them that he understood the system of Christianity which had been revealed. The result was, that they had entire confidence in him, and admitted him to entire fellowship with them, Ga 2:9.

But privately. Marg., *severally*. Gr., *kat idian* . The phrase means, that he did it not in a public manner; not before a promiscuous assembly; not even before all the apostles collected together, but in a private manner to a few of the leaders and chief persons, he made a private explanation of his motives and views, that they might understand it before it became a matter of public discussion. The *point* on which Paul made this private explanation was not whether the gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles, for on that they had no doubt after the revelation to Peter, Ac 10; but whether the rites of the Jews were to be imposed on the Gentile converts. Paul explained his views and his practice on that point, which were, that he did not *impose* those rites on the Gentiles; that

he taught that men might be justified without their observance; and that they were not necessary in order to salvation. The *reasons* why he sought this private interview with the leading men in Jerusalem he has not stated; but we may suppose that they were something like the following:

(1.) The Jews in general had very strong attachment to their own customs, and this attachment was found in a high degree among those who were converted from among them to the Christian faith. They would be strongly excited, therefore, by the doctrine that those customs were not necessary to be observed.

(2.) If the matter were submitted to a promiscuous assembly of converts from Judaism, it could not fail to produce great excitement. They could not be made readily to understand the reasons why Paul acted in this manner; there would be no possibility in an excited assemblage to offer the explanations which might be desirable; and after every explanation which could be given in this manner, they might have been unable to understand all the circumstances of the case.

(3.) If a few of the principal men were made to understand it, Paul felt assured that their influence would be such as to prevent any great difficulty, he therefore sought an early opportunity to lay the case before them in private, and to secure their favour; and this course contributed to the happy issue of the whole affair. See Ac 15. There was indeed much disputation when the question came to be submitted to "the apostles and elders," Ac 15:7; many of the sect of the Pharisees in that assembly maintained that it was needful to teach the Gentiles that the law of Moses was to be kept, Ac 15:5; and no one can tell what would have been the issue of that discussion among the excitable minds of the converts from Judaism, had not Paul taken the precaution, as he here says, to have submitted the case in private to those who were of "reputation," and if Peter and James had not in this manner been satisfied, and had not submitted the views which they did, as recorded in Ac 15:7-21, and which terminated the whole controversy. We may just remark here, that this fact furnishes an Horae Paulinae—though he has hot referred to this—of what he calls *undesigned coincidences*. The affair in Ac 15, and the course of the debate, looks very much as if Peter and James had had some conference with Paul in private, and had had an opportunity of understanding fully his views on the subject before the matter came before the "apostles and elders" in public, though no such private conference is there referred to by Luke. But on turning to the epistle to the Galatians, we find in fact that he had on one occasion before seen the same Peter and James, Ga 1:18,19; and that he had had a private interview with those "of reputation" on these very points, and particularly that James, Peter, and John had approved his course, and given to him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, Ga 2:9. Thus understood, the case here referred to was one of the most consummate instances of prudence that occurred in the life of Paul; and from this case we may learn,

(1.) that when a difficulty is to be settled involving great principles, and embracing a great many points, it is better to seek-an opportunity *of private explanation* than to submit it to a promiscuous multitude or to public debate. It is not well to attempt to settle important points when the passions of a promiscuous assembly may be excited, and where prejudices are strong. It is better to do it by private explanations, when there is an opportunity coolly to ask questions and to state the facts just as they are.

(2.) The importance of securing the countenance of influential men in a popular assembly; of having men in the assembly who would understand the whole case. It was morally certain that if such men as Peter and James were made to understand the case, there would be little difficulty in arriving at an amicable adjustment of the difficulty.

(3.) Though this passage does not refer to preaching the gospel in general, since the gospel here submitted to the men of reputation was the question referred to above, yet we may remark, that great prudence should be used in preaching; in stating truths that may excite prejudices, or when we have reason to apprehend prejudices; and that it is often best to preach the gospel to men of reputation *kat idian separately*, or *privately*. In this way the truth can be made to bear on the conscience; it may be better adapted to the character of the individual; he may put himself less in a state of defence, and guard himself less against the proper influences of truth. And especially is this true in *conversing* with persons on the subject of religion. It should be if possible *alone*, or *privately*. Almost any man may be approached on the subject of religion if it be done when he is alone, when he is at leisure, and if it be done in a kind spirit. Almost any man will become irritated if you address him personally in a promiscuous assembly, or even with his family around him. I have never in more than one or two instances been unkindly treated when I have addressed an individual on the subject of religion, if he was alone; and though a minister should never shrink from stating the truth, and should never be afraid of man, however exalted his rank, or great his talents, or vast his wealth, yet he will probably meet with most success when he discourses *privately* to "them which are of reputation."

To them which were of reputation. Meaning here the leading men among the apostles. Tindal renders this, "which are counted chief." Doddridge, "those of greatest note in the church.". The Greek is, literally, "those who seem;" more fully in Ga 2:6, "who seem to be something," i.e., who are persons of note, or who are distinguished,

Lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain. Lest the effects of my labours and journeys should be lost. Paul feared that if he did not take this method of laying the case before them privately, they would not understand it. Others might misrepresent him, or their prejudices might be excited; and when the ease came before the assembled apostles and elders, a decision might be adopted which would go to prove that he had been entirely wrong in his views, or which would lead those whom he had taught to believe that he was, and which would greatly hinder and embarrass him in his future movements. In order to prevent this, therefore, and to secure a just decision, and one which would not hinder his future usefulness, he had sought this private interview, and thus his object was gained.

{1} "privately" "severally" {b} "by any means" Php 2:16

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *But neither Titus, who was with me*. Paul introduces this case of Titus undoubtedly to show that circumcision was not necessary to salvation. It was a case just in point, lie had gone up to Jerusalem with express reference to this question, here was a man whom he had admitted to the Christian church without circumcising him. He claimed that he had a right to do so; and that circumcision was not necessary in order to salvation. If it were necessary, it would have been proper that Titus should have been compelled to submit to it. But Paul says this was not demanded; or if demanded by any, the point was yielded, and he was not compelled to be circumcised. It is to be remembered that this was at Jerusalem; that it was a case submitted to the apostles there; and that consequently the determination of this case settled the whole controversy about the obligation of

the Mosaic laws on the Gentile converts. It is quite evident from the whole statement here, that Paul did not intend that Titus should be circumcised; that he maintained that it was not necessary; and that he resisted it when it was demanded, Ga 2:4,5. Yet on another occasion he himself performed the act of circumcision on Timothy, Ac 16:3. But there is no inconsistency in his conduct. In the case of Titus it was *demanded* as a matter of right and as obligatory on him, and he resisted the principle as dangerous. In the case of Timothy, it was a voluntary compliance on his part with the usual customs of the Jews, where it was not pressed as a matter of obligation, *and where it would not be understood as indispensable to salvation*. No danger would follow from compliance with the custom, and it might do much to conciliate the favour of the Jews, and he therefore submitted to it. Paul would not have hesitated to have circumcised Titus in the same circumstances in which it was done to Timothy; but the circumstances were different; and when it was insisted on as a matter of principle and of obligation, it became a matter of principle and of obligation with him to oppose it.

Being a Greek. Born of Gentile parents, of course he had not been circumcised. Probably both his parents were Greeks. The case with Timothy was somewhat different. His mother was a Jewess, but his father was a Greek, Ac 16:3.

Was compelled to be circumcised. I think it is implied here that this was demanded and insisted on by some that he should be circumcised. It is also implied that Paul resisted it, and the point was yielded, thus settling the great and important principle that it was not necessary in order to salvation. Ga 2:5.

{*} "neither Titus" "Not even"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And that because of false brethren*. Who these false brethren were is not certainly known; nor is it known whether he refers to those who were at Jerusalem, or to those who were at Antioch. It is probable that he refers to *Judaizing Christians*, or persons who claimed to be Christians and to have been converted from Judaism. Whether they were dissemblers and hypocrites, or whether they wore so imperfectly acquainted with Christianity, and so obstinate, opinionated, and perverse, though really in some respects good men, that they were conscientious in this, it is not easy to determine. It is clear, however, that they opposed the apostle Paul; that they regarded him as teaching dangerous doctrines; that they perverted and misstated his views; and that they claimed to have clearer views of the nature of the true religion than he had. Such adversaries he met everywhere, 2Co 11:26; and it required all his tact and skill to meet their plausible representations. It is evident here that Paul is assigning a *reason* for something which he had done, and that reason was to counteract the influence of the "false brethren" in the case. But what is the thing concerning which he assigns a reason? It is commonly supposed to have been on account of the fact that he did not submit to the circumcision of Titus, and that he means to say that he resisted that in order to counteract their influence, and defeat their designs. But I would submit whether Ga 2:3 is not to be regarded as a parenthesis, and whether the fact for which he assigns a *reason* is not that he sought a private interview with the leading men among the apostles? Ga 2:2. The *reason* of his doing that would be obvious. In this way he could more easily counteract the influence of the false brethren,

he could make a full statement of his doctrines, he could meet their inquiries, and anticipate the objections of his enemies, he could thus secure the influence of the leading apostles in his favour, and effectually prevent all the efforts of the false brethren to impose the Jewish rites on Gentile converts.

Unawares brought in. The word rendered "unawares" *pareisaktouv* is derived from a verb meaning to lead in by the side of others, to introduce along with others; and then to lead or bring in by stealth, to smuggle in.—*Robinson, Lex*. The verb occurs nowhere in the New Testament but in 2Pe 2:1, where it is applied to heresies, and is rendered, "who privily shall bring in." Here it refers probably to men who had been artfully introduced into the ministry, who made pretensions to piety, but who were either strangers to it, or who were greatly ignorant of the true nature of the Christian system; and who were disposed to take every advantage, and to impose on others the observance of the peculiar rites of the Mosaic economy. *Into what* they were brought, the apostle does not say. It may have been that they had been introduced into the ministry in this manner, (*Doddridge*;) or it may be that they were introduced into the "assembly" where the apostles were collected to deliberate on the subject.—*Chandler*. I think it probable that Paul refers to the occurrences in Jerusalem, and that these false brethren had been introduced *from* Antioch or some other place where Paul had been preaching, or that they were persons whom his adversaries had introduced to demand that Titus should be circumcised, under the plausible pretence that the laws of Moses required it, but really in order that there might be such proof as they desired that this rite was to be imposed on the Gentile converts. If Paul was compelled to submit to this, if they could carry this point, it would be just such an instance as they needed, and would settle the whole inquiry, and prove that the Mosaic laws were to be imposed on the Gentile converts. This was the reason why Paul so strenuously opposed it.

To spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus. In the practice of the Christian religion. The liberty referred to was, doubtless, the liberty from the painful, expensive, and onerous rites of the Jewish religion. See Ga 5:1. Their object in spying out the liberty which Paul and others had, was, undoubtedly, to be witnesses of the fact that they did not observe the peculiar rites of the Mosaic system; to make report of it; to insist on their complying with those customs, and thus to secure the imposition of those rites On the Gentile converts. Their first object was to satisfy themselves of *the fact* that Paul did not insist on the observance of their customs; and then to secure, by the authority of the apostles, an injunction or order that Titus should be circumcised, and that Paul and the converts made under his ministry should be required to comply with those laws.

That they might bring us into bondage. Into bondage to the laws of Moses. **See Barnes "Ac 15:10"**.

{a} "false brethren" Ac 15:1,24 {+} "brought in" "artfully introduced" {b} "liberty" Ga 5:1.13 {c} "bondage" 2Co 11:29 Ga 4:3,9

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour*. We did not submit to this at all. We did not yield even for the shortest tune. We did not waver in our opposition to their demands, or in the slightest degree become subject to their wishes. We steadily opposed their claims, in order that the great principle might be for ever settled that the laws of Moses were not

to be imposed as obligatory on the Gentile converts. This I take to be the clear and obvious sense of this passage, though there has been a great variety of opinions on it. A considerable number of Mss. omit the words *oiv oude*, "to whom neither," (see Mill, Koppe, and Griesbach,) and then the sense would be reversed, that Paul *did* yield to them for or after a short time, in order that he might in this way better consult the permanent interests of the gospel. This opinion has been gaining ground for the last century, that the passage here has been corrupted; but it is by no means confirmed. The ancient versions, the Syriac, the Vulgate, and the Arabic, accord with the usual reading of the text. So also do by far the largest portion of Mss.; and such, it seems to me, is the sense demanded by the connexion. Paul means, in the whole passage, to say, that *a great principle* was settled. That the question came up fairly whether the Mosaic rites were to be imposed on Gentile converts. That false brethren were introduced who demanded it; and that he steadily maintained his ground. He did not yield a moment. He felt that a great principle was involved; and though on all proper occasions he was willing to yield and to become all things to all men, yet here he did not court them, or temporize with them in the least. The phrase "by subjection" here means, that he did not suffer himself to be *compelled* to yield. The phrase "for an hour" is equivalent to the shortest period of time. He did not waver or yield at all.

That the truth of the gospel might continue with you. That the great principle of the Christian religion which had been taught you might continue, and that you might enjoy the full benefit of the pure gospel, without its being intermingled with any false views. Paul had defended these same Jews among the Galatians, and he now sought that the same views might be confirmed by the clear decision of the college of apostles at Jerusalem.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *But of those who seemed to be somewhat*. Ga 2:2. This undoubtedly refers to those who were the most eminent among the apostles at Jerusalem. There is an apparent harshness in our common translation, which is unnecessary. The word here used *dokountwn* denotes those who were thought to be, or who were, of reputation; that is, men who were of note and influence among the apostles. The object of referring to them here, is to show that he had the concurrence and approbation of the most eminent of the apostles to the course which he had pursued.

Whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me. Tindal renders this, "What they were in time passed, it maketh no matter to me." The idea seems to be this: Paul means to say, that whatever was their real rank and standing, it did not in the least affect his authority as an apostle, or his argument. While he rejoiced in their concurrence, and while he sought their approbation, yet he did not admit for a moment that he was inferior to them as an apostle, or dependent on them for the justness of his views. What they were, or what they might be thought to be, was immaterial to his claims as an apostle, and immaterial to the authority of his own views as an apostle. He had derived his gospel from the Lord Jesus; and he had the fullest assurance that his views were just. Paul makes this remark evidently *in keeping* with all that he had said, that he did not regard himself as in any manner dependent on them for his authority. He did not treat them with disrespect; but he did not regard them as having a *right* to claim an authority over him.

God accepteth no man's person. **See Barnes "**Ac 10:34; **See Barnes "Ro 2:11"**.

This is a general truth, that God is not influenced in his judgment by a regard to the rank, or wealth, or external condition of any one. Its *particular* meaning here is, that the authority of the apostles was not to be measured, by their external rank, or by the measure of reputation which they had among men. If, therefore, it were to be admitted that he himself was not in circumstances of so much external honour as the other apostles, or that they were esteemed to be of more elevated rank than he was, still he did not admit that this gave them a claim to any higher authority. God was not influenced in *his* judgment by any such consideration; and Paul therefore claimed that all the apostles were in fact on a level in regard to their authority.

In conference. When I conferred with them, Ga 2:2. They did not then impose on me any new obligations; they did not communicate anything to me of which I was before ignorant.

{a} "seemed" Ga 6:3 {*} "somewhat" Of most reputation" {b} "God accepteth" Ac 10:34 Ro 2:11 {+} "to be somewhat" "of reputation"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *The gospel of the uncircumcision*. The duty of preaching the gospel to the uncircumcised part of the world; that is, to the Gentiles. Paul had received this as his peculiar office when he was converted and called to the ministry, see Ac 9:15 22:21; and they now perceived that he had been specially intrusted with this office, from the remarkable success which had attended his labours. It is evidently not meant here that Paul was to preach *only* to the Gentiles and Peter only to the Jews, for Paul often preached in the synagogues of the Jews, and Peter was the first who preached to a Gentile, Ac 10; but it is meant that it was the main business of Paul to preach to the Gentiles, or that this was especially intrusted to him.

As the gospel of the circumcision. As the office of preaching the gospel to the Jews.

Was unto Peter. Peter was to preach principally to the circumcised Jews. It is evident that until this time Peter had. been principally employed in preaching to the Jews. Paul selects Peter here particularly, doubtless because he was the oldest of the apostles, and in order to show that he was himself regarded as on a level, in regard to the apostleship, with the most aged and venerable of those who had been called to the apostolic office by the personal ministry of the Lord Jesus.

{++} "contrariwise" "On the contrary" {&} "committed" "intrusted" {c} "unto me, as the gospel" 1Th 2:4 1Ti 2:7

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *For he that wrought effectually in Peter*, etc. Or by the means or agency of Peter. The argument here is, that the same effects had been produced under the ministry of Paul among the Gentiles, which had been under the preaching of Peter among the Jews. It is inferred, therefore, that God had called both to the apostolic office. See this argument illustrated **See Barnes "Ac 11:17"**.

The same was mighty in me, etc. In enabling me to work miracles, and in the success which attended the ministry.

{|} "effectually in Peter" "By" {**} "mighty in me" "Wrought powerfully by me" {++} "toward the Gentiles" "in the conversion of the Gentiles"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars*. That is, pillars or supports in the church. The word rendered *pillars stuloi* means, properly, firm support; then persons of influence and authority, as in a church, or that support a church—as a pillar or column does an edifice. In regard to James, **See Barnes "Ga 1:19"**.

Comp. Ac 15:13. Cephas or Peter was the most aged of the apostles, and regarded as at the head of the apostolical college. John was the beloved disciple, and his influence in the church must of necessity have been great. Paul felt that if he had the countenance of these men, it would be an important proof to the churches of Galatia that he had a right to regard himself as an apostle. Their countenance was expressed in the most full and decisive manner.

Perceived the grace that was given unto me. That is, the favour that had been shown to me by the great Head of the church, in so abundantly blessing my lab ours among the Gentiles.

They gave unto me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship. The right hand, in token of fellowship or favour. They thus publicly acknowledged us as fellow-labourers, and expressed the utmost confidence in us. To give the right hand with us is a token of friendly salutation, and it seems that it was a mode of salutation not unknown in the times of the apostles. They were thus recognised as associated with the apostles in the great work of spreading the gospel around the world. Whether this was done in a public manner is not certainly known; but it was probably in the presence of the church, or possibly at the close of the council referred to in Ac 15.

That we should go unto the heathen. To preach the gospel, and to establish churches. In this way the whole matter was settled, and settled as Paul desired it to be. A delightful harmony was produced between Paul and the apostles at Jerusalem; and the result showed the wisdom of the course which he had adopted. There had been no harsh contention or strife. No jealousies had been suffered to arise. Paul had sought an opportunity of a full statement of his views to them in private, Ga 2:2, and they had been entirely satisfied that God had called him and Barnabas to the work of making known the gospel among the heathen. Instead of being jealous at their success, they had rejoiced in it; and instead of throwing any obstacle in their way, they cordially gave them the right hand. How easy would it be always to prevent jealousies and strifes in the same way! If there was, on the one hand, the same readiness for a full and frank explanation, and if, on the other, the same freedom from envy at remarkable success, how many strifes that have disgraced the church might have been avoided! The true way to avoid strife is just that which is here proposed. Let there be on both sides perfect frankness; let there be a willingness to explain and state things just as they are; and let there be a disposition to rejoice in the talents, and zeal, and success of others, even though it should far outstrip our own, and contention in the church would cease, and every devoted and successful minister of the gospel would receive the right hand of fellowship from all—however venerable by age or authority—who love the cause of true religion.

{a} "be pillars" Mt 16:18 Eph 2:20 {b} "the grace" Ro 1:5 12:3,6

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Only they would that we should remember the poor*. That is, as I suppose, the poor Christians in Judea. It can hardly be supposed that it would be necessary to make this an express stipulation in regard to the converts from among the Gentiles, and it would not have been very pertinent to the case before them to have done so. The object was, to bind together the Christians from among the heathen, and from among the Jews, and to prevent alienation and unkind feeling. It might have been alleged that Paul was disposed to forget his own countrymen altogether; that he regarded himself as so entirely the apostle of the Gentiles that he would become wholly alienated frown those who were his "kinsmen according to the flesh," and thus it might be apprehended that unpleasant feelings would be engendered among those who had been converted from among the Jews. Now nothing could be better adapted to allay this than for him to pledge himself to feel a deep interest in the poor saints among the Jewish converts; to remember them in his prayers; and to endeavour to secure contributions for their wants. Thus he would show that he was not alienated from his countrymen; and thus the whole church would be united in the closest bonds. It is probable that the Christians in Judea were at that time suffering the ills of poverty, arising either from some public persecution, or from the fact that they were subject to the displeasure of their countrymen. All who know the peculiar feelings of the Jews at that time in regard to Christians, must see at once that many of the followers of Jesus of Nazareth would be subjected to great inconveniences on account of their attachment to him. Many a wife might be disowned by her husband; many a child disinherited by a parent; many a man might be thrown out of employment by the fact that others would not countenance him; and hence many of the Christians would be poor. It became, therefore, an object of special importance to provide for them; and hence this is so often referred to in the New Testament. In addition to this, the church in Judea was afflicted with famine. Comp. Ac 11:30 Ro 15:25-27; 1Co 16:1,2; 2Co 8:1-7.

The same which I also was forward to do. See the passages just referred to. Paul interested himself much in the collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem, and in this way he furnished the fullest evidence that he was not alienated from them, but that he felt the deepest interest in those who were his kindred. One of the proper ways of securing union in the church is to have the poor with them, and depending on them for support; and hence every church has some poor persons as one of the bonds of union. The best way to unite all Christians, and to prevent alienation, and jealousy, and strife, is to have *a great common object of charity*, in which all are interested, and to which all may contribute. Such a common object for all Christians is a sinful world. All who bear the Christian name may unite in promoting its salvation, and nothing would promote union in the now divided and distracted church of Christ like a deep and common interest in the salvation of all mankind.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *But when Peter was come to Antioch*. On the situation of Antioch, **See Barnes "Ac 11:19".**

The *design* for which Paul introduces this statement here is evident. It is to show that he regarded himself as on a level with the chief apostles, and that he did not acknowledge his inferiority to any of them. Peter was the eldest, and probably the most honoured of the apostles. Yet Paul says that he did not hesitate to resist him in a case where Peter was manifestly wrong, and thus showed that he was an apostle of the same standing as the others. Besides, what he said to Peter on that occasion was exactly pertinent to the strain of the argument which he was pursuing with the Galatians, and he therefore introduces it Ga 2:14-21 to show that he had held the same doctrine all along, and that he had defended it in the presence of Peter, and in a case where Peter did not reply to it. The *time* of this journey of Peter to Antioch cannot be ascertained; nor the occasion on which it occurred. I think it is evident that it was after this visit of Paul to Jerusalem, and the occasion *may* have been to inspect the state of the church at Antioch, and to compose any differences of opinion which may have existed there. But everything in regard to this is mere conjecture; and it is of little importance to know when it occurred.

I withstood him to the face. I openly opposed him, and reproved him. Paul thus showed that he was equal with Peter in his apostolical authority and dignity. The instance before us is one of faithful public reproof; and every circumstance in it is worthy of special attention, as it furnishes a most important illustration of the manner in which such reproof should be conducted. The *first* thing to be noted is, that it was done openly, and with candour. It was reproof addressed to the offender himself. Paul did not go to others and whisper his suspicions; he did not seek to undermine the influence and authority of another by slander; he did not calumniate him, and then justify himself on the ground that what he had said was no more than true: he went to him at once, and he frankly stated his views, and reproved him in a case where he was manifestly wrong. This too was a case so public and well known, that Paul made his remarks before the church, Ga 2:14, because the church was interested in it, and because the conduct of Peter led the church into error.

Because he was to be blamed. The word used here may either mean because he had incurred blame, or because he *deserved* blame. The essential idea is, that he had done wrong, and that he was by his conduct doing injury to the cause of religion.

{d} "Antioch" Ac 15:35

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *For before that certain came*. Some of the Jews who had been converted to Christianity. They evidently observed in the strictest manner the rites of the Jewish religion.

From James. **See Barnes "Ga 1:19".**

Whether they were sent by James, or whether they came of their own accord, is unknown. It is evident only that they had been intimate with James at Jerusalem, and they doubtless pleaded his authority. James had nothing to do with the course which they pursued; but the sense of the whole passage is, that James was a leading man at Jerusalem, and that the rites of Moses were observed there. When they came down to Antioch, they of course observed those rites, and insisted that others should do it also. It is very evident that at Jerusalem the peculiar rites of the Jews were observed for a long time by those who became Christian converts. They would not at once cease to observe them, and thus needlessly shock the prejudices of their countrymen. **See Barnes "Ac 21:21"**

also Ac 21:22-25.

He did eat with the Gentiles. Peter had been taught that in the remarkable vision which he saw, as recorded in Ac 10. He had learned that God designed to break down the wall of partition between the Jews and the Gentiles, and he familiarly associated with them, and partook with them of their food. He evidently disregarded the peculiar laws of the Jews about meats and drinks, and partook of the common food which was in use among the Gentiles. Thus he showed his belief that all the race was henceforward to be regarded as on a level, and that the peculiar institutions of the Jews were not to be considered as binding, or to be imposed on others.

But when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself. He withdrew from the Gentiles, and probably from the Gentile converts to Christianity. The reason why he did this is stated. He feared those who were of the circumcision, or who had been Jews. Whether they demanded this of him; whether they encountered him in debate; or whether he silently separated himself from the Gentiles without their having said anything to him, is unknown. But he feared the effect of their opposition; he feared their reproaches; he feared the report which would be made to those at Jerusalem; and perhaps he apprehended that a tumult would be excited, and a persecution commenced at Antioch by the Jews who resided there. This is a melancholy illustration of Peter's characteristic trait of mind. We see in this act the same Peter who trembled when he began to sink in the waves; the same Peter who denied his Lord. Bold, ardent, zealous, and forward, he was at the same time timid and often irresolute; and he often had occasion for the deepest humility, and the most poignant regrets at the errors of his course. No one can read his history without loving his ardent and sincere attachment to his Master; and yet no one can read it without a tear of regret that he was left thus to do injury to his cause. No man loved the Saviour more sincerely than he did, yet his constitutional timidity and irresoluteness of character often led him to courses of life fitted deeply to wound his cause.

{a} "eat with Gentiles" Ac 11:3

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *And the other Jews*. That is, those who had been converted to Christianity. It is probable that they were induced to do it by the example of Peter, as they would naturally regard him as a leader.

Dissembled likewise with him. Dissembled or concealed their true sentiments. That is, they attempted to conceal from those who had come down from James the fact, that they had been in the habit of associating with the Gentiles, and of eating with them. From this it would appear that they intended to conceal this wholly from them, and that they withdrew from the Gentiles before anything had been said to them by those who came down from James.

Insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away, etc. Concerning Barnabas, **See Barnes "Ac 4:36"**.

Barnabas was the intimate friend of Paul. He had been associated with him in very important labours; and the fact, therefore, that the conduct of Peter was exciting so unhappy an influence as even to lead so worthy and good a man as he was into hypocrisy and error, made it the more proper that Paul should publicly notice and reprove the conduct of Peter. It could not but be a painful duty,

but the welfare of the church and the cause of religion demanded it, and Paul did not shrink from what was so obvious a duty.

{*} "insomuch that" "So that"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *But when I saw that they walked not uprightly*. To *walk*, in the Scriptures, is usually expressive of conduct or deportment; and the idea here is, that their conduct in this case was not honest.

According to the truth of the gospel. According to the true spirit and design of the gospel. That requires perfect honesty and integrity; and as that was the rule by which Paul regulated his life, and by which he felt that all ought to regulate their conduct, he felt himself called on openly to reprove the principal person who had been in fault. The spirit of the world is crafty, cunning, and crooked. The gospel would correct all that wily policy, and would lead man in a path of entire honesty and truth.

I said unto Peter before them all. That is, probably, before all the church, or certainly before all. who had offended with him in the case. Had this been a *private affair*, Paul would doubtless have sought a private interview with Peter, and would have remonstrated with him in private on the subject. But it was public. It was a case where many were involved, and where the interests of the church were at stake. It was a case where it was very important to establish some fixed and just principles, and he therefore took occasion to remonstrate with him in public on the subject. This might have been at the close of public worship; or it may have been that the subject came up for debate in some of their public meetings, whether the rites of the Jews were to be imposed on the Gentile converts. This was a question which agitated all the churches where the Jewish and Gentile converts were intermingled; and it would not be strange that it should be the subject of public debate at Antioch. The fact that Paul reproved Peter before "them all," proves,

(1.) that he regarded himself, and was so regarded by the church, as on an equality with Peter, and as having equal authority with him.

(2.) That public reproof is right when an offence has been public, and when the church at large is interested, or is in danger of being led into error. Comp. 1Ti 5:20, "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear."

(3.) That it is a duty to reprove those who err. It is a painful duty, and one much neglected; still it is a duty often enjoined in the Scriptures, and one that is of the deepest importance to the church. He does a favour to another man who, in a kind spirit, admonishes him of his error, and reclaims him from a course of sin. He does another the deepest injury, who suffers sin unrebuked to lie upon him, and who sees him injuring himself and others, and who is at no pains to admonish him for his faults.

(4.) If it is the duty of one Christian to admonish another who is an offender, and to do it in a kind spirit, it is the duty of him who has offended to *receive* the admonition in a kind spirit and with thankfulness. Excitable as Peter was by. nature, yet there is no evidence that he became angry here, or that he did not receive the admonition of his brother Paul with perfect good temper, and with an acknowledgment that Paul was right and that he was wrong. Indeed, the case was so

plain—as it usually is, if men would be honest—that he seems to have felt that it was right, and to have received the rebuke as became a Christian. Peter, unhappily, was accustomed to rebukes; and he was at heart too good a man to be offended when he was admonished that he had done wrong. A good man is willing to be reproved when he has erred, and it is usually proof that there is much that is wrong when we become excited and irritable if another admonishes us of our faults. It may be added here, that nothing should be inferred from this in regard to the *inspiration* or apostolic authority of Peter. The fault was not that he taught error *of doctrine*, but that he sinned *in conduct*. Inspiration, though it kept the apostles from teaching *error*, did not keep them necessarily from sin. A man may always *teach* the truth, and yet be far from perfection in practice. The case here proves that Peter was not perfect, a fact proved by his whole life; it proves that he was sometimes timid, and even, for a period, time-serving; but it does not prove that what he wrote for our guidance was false and erroneous.

If thou, being a Jew. A Jew by birth.

Livest after the manner of the Gentiles. In eating, etc., as he had done before Judaizing teachers came from Jerusalem, Ga 2:12.

And not as do the Jews. Observing their peculiar customs, and their distinctions of meats and drinks.

Why compellest thou the Gentiles, etc. As he would do, if he insisted that they should be circumcised, and observe the peculiar Jewish rites. The charge against him was gross inconsistency in doing this. "Is it not at least as lawful for them to neglect the Jewish observances, as it was for thee to do it but a few days ago?"—*Doddridge*. The word here rendered "compellest," means here *moral* compulsion or persuasion. The idea is, that the conduct of Peter was such as to lead the Gentiles to the belief that it was necessary for them to be circumcised in order to be saved. For a similar use of the word, see Mt 14:22 Lu 14:23; Ac 28:19.

{b} "truth of gospel" Ga 2:5 {c} "Peter before them" 1Ti 5:20 {+} "compellest" "urgest"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *We who are Jews by nature*. It has long been a question whether this and the following verses are to be regarded as a part of the address of Paul to Peter, or the words of Paul as a part of the epistle to the Galatians. A great variety of opinion has prevailed in regard to this. Grotius says, "Here the narrative of Paul being closed, he pursues his argument to the Galatians." In this opinion Bloomfield and many others concur. Rosenmuller, and many others, suppose that the address to Peter is continued to Ga 2:21. Such seems to be the most obvious interpretation, as there is no break or change in the style, nor any vestige of a transfer of the argument to the Galatians. But on the other hand it may be urged,

(1.) that Paul in his writings often changes his mode of address without indicating it.—*Bloomfield*.

(2.) That it is rather improbable that he should have gone into so long a discourse with Peter on the subject of justification; His purpose was answered by the reproof of Peter for his dissimulation; and there is something incongruous, it is said, in his instructing Peter at such length, on the subject of man's justification. Still it appears to me probable that this is to be regarded as a part of the

discourse of Paul to Peter, to the close of Ga 2:21. The following reasons seem to me to require this interpretation:

(1.) It is the most natural and obvious—usually a safe rule of interpretation. The discourse proceeds *as if* it were an address to Peter.

(2.) There *is* a change at the beginning of the next chapter where Paul expressly addresses himself to the Galatians.

(3.) As to the impropriety of Paul's addressing Peter at length on the subject of justification, we are to bear in mind that he did not address him alone. The *reproof* was addressed to Peter particularly, but it was "before them all," Ga 2:14; that is, before the assembled church, or before the persons who had been led astray by the conduct of Peter, and who were in danger of error on the subject of justification. Nothing, therefore, was more proper than for Paul to continue his discourse for their benefit, and to state to them fully the doctrine of justification. And nothing was more pertinent or proper for him now than to report this to the Galatians as a part of his argument to them, showing that he had always, since his conversion, held and defended the same doctrine on the subject of the way in which men are to be justified in the sight of God. It is therefore, I apprehend, to be regarded as an address to Peter and the other Jews who were present. "*We* who were born Jews."

By nature. By birth; or, we were born Jews. We were not born in the condition of the Gentiles.

And not sinners of the Gentiles. This cannot mean that Paul did not regard the Jews as sinners, for his views on that subject he has fully expressed in Ro 2, Ro 3. But it must mean that the Jews were not born under the disadvantages of the Gentiles in regard to the true knowledge of the way of salvation, They were not left wholly in ignorance about the way of justification, as the Gentiles were. They knew, or they might know, that men could not be saved by their own works. It was also true that they were under more restraint than the Gentiles were; and though they were sinners, yet they were not abandoned to so gross and open sensuality as was the heathen world. They were not idolaters, and wholly ignorant of the law of God.

{d} "sinners" Eph 2:3,12

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Knowing*. We who are Jews by nature, or by birth. This cannot mean that *all* the Jews knew this, or that he who was a Jew knew it as a matter of course, for many Jews were ignorant of it, and many opposed it. But it means that the persons here referred to, those who had been born Jews, and who had been converted to Christianity, had had an opportunity to learn and understand this, which the Gentiles had not. This gospel had been preached to them, and they had professedly embraced it. They were not left to the gross darkness and ignorance on this subject which pervaded the heathen world, and they had had a better opportunity to learn it than the converts from the Gentiles. They ought, therefore, to act in a manner becoming their superior light, and to show in all their conduct that they fully believed that a man could not be justified by obedience to the law of Moses. This rendered the conduct of Peter, and the other Jews who "dissembled" with him, so entirely inexcusable. They could not plead ignorance on this vital subject, and yet they were pursuing a course the tendency of which was to lead the Gentile converts to believe that it was indispensable to observe the laws of Moses, in order to be justified and saved.

That a man is not justified by the works of the law. **See Barnes "Ro 1:17 3:20,26 4:5".**

But by the faith of Jesus Christ. By believing on Jesus Christ. **See Barnes "Mr 16:16 Ro 3:22".**

Even we have believed in Jesus Christ. We are therefore justified. The object of Paul here seems to be to show, that as they had believed in the Lord Jesus, and thus had been justified, there was no necessity of obeying the law of Moses with any view to justification. The thing had been fully done without the deeds of the law, and it was now unreasonable and unnecessary to insist on the observance of the Mosaic rites.

For by the works of the law, etc. **See Barnes** "Ro 3:20, **See Barnes "Ro 3:27".**

In this verse, the apostle has stated in few words the important doctrine of justification by faith—the doctrine which Luther so justly called, *Articulus stantis, vel cadentis ecclesia*. In the notes referred to above, particularly in the notes on the epistle to the Romans, I have stated in various places what I conceive to be the true doctrine on this important subject. It may be useful, however, to throw together in one connected view, as briefly as possible, the leading ideas on the subject of justification, as it is revealed in the gospel.

I. Justification is properly a word applicable to courts of justice, but is used in a similar sense in common conversation among men. An illustration will show its nature. A man is charged, e.g., with an act of trespass on his neighbour's property. Now there are two ways which he may take *to justify himself*, or to meet the charge, so as to be regarded and treated as innocent. He may

(a) either deny that he performed the act charged on him, or he may

(b) admit that the deed was done, and set up as a defence that he *had a right* to do it. In either case, if the point be made out, he will be *just* or innocent in the sight of the law. The law will have nothing against him, and he will be regarded and treated in the premises as an innocent man; or he has justified himself in regard to the charge brought against him.

II. Charges of a very serious nature are brought against man by his Maker. He is charged with violating the law of God; with a want of love to his Maker; with a corrupt, proud, sensual heart; with being entirely alienated from God by wicked works; in one word, with being entirely depraved. This charge extends to all men; and to the entire life of every unrenewed man. It is not a charge merely affecting the external conduct, not merely affecting the heart; it is a charge of entire alienation from God—a charge, in short, of total depravity. See, especially, Rom 1, 2, 3. That this charge is a very serious one, no one can doubt. That it deeply affects the human character and standing, is as clear. It is a charge brought in the Bible; and God appeals in proof of it to the history of the world, to every man's conscience, and to the life of every one who has lived; and on these facts, and on his own power in searching the hearts, and in knowing what is in man, he rests the proofs of the charge.

III. It is impossible for man to vindicate himself from this charge. *He can neither show that the things charged have not been committed, nor that, having been committed, he had a right to do them*. He cannot *prove* that God is not right in all the charges which he has made against him in his word; and he cannot prove that it was right for him to do as he has done. The charges against him are facts which are undeniable, and the facts are such as cannot be vindicated. But if he can do neither of these things, then he cannot be justified by the law. The law will not acquit him. It holds him guilty. It condemns him. No *argument* which he can use will show that he is right, and that God is wrong. No *works* that he can perform will be any compensation for what he has already done. No *denial* of the existence of the facts charged will alter the case; and he must stand condemned by the law of God. In the legal sense he cannot be justified; and justification, if it ever exist at all,

must be in a mode that is a departure from the regular operation of law, and in a mode which the law did not contemplate, for no *law* makes any provision for the *pardon* of those who violate it. It must be by some system which is distinct from the law, and in which man may be justified on different principles than those which the law contemplates.

IV. This other system of justification is that which is revealed in the gospel by the faith of the Lord Jesus. It does NOT consist in either of the following things:

(1.) It is *not* a system or plan where the Lord Jesus takes the part of the sinner *against* the law or *against* God. He did not come to show that the sinner was right, and that God was wrong. He admitted most fully, and endeavoured constantly to show, that God was right, and that the sinner was wrong; nor can an instance be referred to where the Saviour took the part of the sinner against God, in any such sense that he endeavoured to show that the sinner had not done the things charged on him, or that he had a right to do them.

(2.) It is not that we are either innocent, or are declared to be innocent. God justifies the "ungodly," Ro 4:5. We are not innocent; we never have been; we never shall be; and it is not the design of the scheme to declare any such untruth as that we are not personally undeserving. It will be always true that the justified sinner has no claims to the mercy and favour of God.

(3.) It is not that we cease to be undeserving personally. He that is justified by faith, and that goes to heaven, will go there admitting that he *deserves* eternal death, and that he is saved wholly by favour and not by desert.

(4.) It is *not* a declaration on the part of God that *we* have wrought out salvation, or that *we* have any claim for what the Lord Jesus has done. Such a declaration would not be true, and would not be made.

(5.) It is not that the righteousness of the Lord Jesus is *transferred* to his people. Moral character cannot be transferred. It adheres to the moral agent as much as colour does to the rays of light which cause it. It is not true that we died for sin, and it cannot be so reckoned or imputed. It is not true that we have any merit, or any claim, and it cannot be so reckoned or imputed. All the imputations of God are according to truth; and he will always reckon us to be personally undeserving and sinful. But if justification be none of these things, it may be asked, what is it? I answer, *It is the declared purpose of God to regard and treat those sinners who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as if they had not sinned, on the ground of the merits of the Saviour*. It is not mere pardon. The main difference between pardon and justification respects the sinner contemplated in regard to his past conduct, and to God's *future dealings* with him. Pardon is a free forgiveness of past offences. It has reference to those sins as forgiven and blotted out. It is an act of remission on the part of God. Justification has respect to the law, and to God's *future dealings* with the sinner. It is an act by which God determines to treat him hereafter as a righteous man, or *as if* he had not sinned. The ground or reason of this is the merit of the Lord Jesus Christ; merit such that we can plead it as if it were our own. The *rationale* of it is, that the Lord Jesus has accomplished by his death the same happy effects in regard to the law and the government of God, which would be accomplished by the death of the sinner himself. In other words, nothing would be gained to the universe by the everlasting punishment of the offender himself, which will not be secured by his salvation on the ground of the death of the Lord Jesus. He has taken our place, and died in our stead; and he has met the descending stroke of justice, which would have fallen on our own head if he had not interposed, **See Barnes "Isa 53:1"**

and following, and now the great interests of justice will be as firmly secured if we are saved, as they would be if we were lost. The law has been fully obeyed by one who came to save us, and

as much honour has been done to it by his obedience as could have been by our own; that is, it as much shows that the law is *worthy* of obedience, to have it perfectly obeyed by the Lord Jesus, as it would if it were obeyed by us. It *as much* shows that the law of a sovereign is worthy of obedience, to have it obeyed by an only son, and an heir to the crown, as it does to have it obeyed by his subjects. And it has *as much* shown the evil of the violation of the law to have the Lord Jesus suffer death on the cross, as it would if the guilty had died themselves. If transgression whelm the innocent in calamity; if it extends to those who are perfectly *guiltless*, and inflicts pain and woe on them, it is as certainly an expression of the evil of transgression *as if* the guilty themselves suffer. And an impression as deep has been made of the evil of sin by the sufferings of the Lord Jesus in our stead, *as if* we had suffered ourselves. He endured on the cross as intense agony as we can conceive it possible for a sinner ever to endure; and the dignity of the Person who suffered—THE INCARNATE GOD—is more than an equivalent for the more lengthened sorrows which the penalty of the law exacts in hell. Besides, from the very dignity of the Sufferer in our place, an impression has gone abroad on the universe more deep and important than would have been by the sufferings of the individual himself in the world of woe. The sinner who is lost will be unknown to other worlds. His *name* may be unheard beyond the gates of the prison of despair. The *impression* which will be made on distant worlds by his individual sufferings will be as a part of *the aggregate of woe*, and his individual sorrows may make no impression on distant worlds. But not so with Him who took our place, He stood in the centre of the universe. The sun grew dark, and the dead arose, and angels gazed upon the scene; and from his cross *an impression* went abroad to the farthest part of the universe, showing the tremendous effects of the violation of law, when not one soul could be saved from its penalty without such sorrows of the Son of God. In virtue of all this, the offender, by believing on him, may be treated *as if* he had not sinned; and this constitutes justification. God admits him to favour *as if* he had himself obeyed the law, or borne its penalty, since as many good results will now follow from his salvation as could be derived from his punishment; and since all the additional happy results will follow which can be derived from the exercise of pardoning mercy. The character of God is thus revealed. His mercy is shown. His determination to maintain his law is evinced. The truth is maintained; and yet he shows the fulness of his mercy, and the richness of his benevolence.

{a} "a man" Ac 13:38,39; Ro 3:20

{b} "faith" Ro 5:1 Ga 3:11,24

{c} "for by works of the law" Ps 143:2 Heb 7:18,19

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *But if, while, we seek to be justified by Christ*. The connexion here is not very clear, and the sense of the verse is somewhat obscure. Rosenmuller supposes that this is an objection of a Jew, supposing that where the law of Moses is not observed there is no rule of life, and that therefore there must be sin; and that since the doctrine of justification by faith taught that there was no necessity of obeying the ceremonial law of Moses, therefore Christ, who had introduced that system, must be regarded as the author and encourager of sin. To me it seems probable that Paul here has reference to an objection which has in all ages been brought against the doctrine of

justification by faith, and which seems to have existed in his time, that the doctrine leads to licentiousness. The objections are, that it does not teach the necessity of the observance of the law in order to acceptance with God; that it pronounces a man justified and accepted who is a violator of the law; that his acceptance does not depend on moral character; that it releases him from the obligation of law; and that it teaches that a man may be saved though he does not conform to law. These objections existed early, and have been found everywhere where the doctrine of justification by faith has been preached. I regard this verse, therefore, as referring to these objections, and not as being peculiarly the objection of a Jew. The idea is, "You seek to be justified by faith without obeying the law, You professedly reject that, and do not hold that it is necessary to yield obedience to it. If now it shall turn out that you are sinners; that your lives are not holy; that you are free from the wholesome restraint of the law, and are given up to lives of sin, will it not follow that Christ is the cause of it, that he taught it, and that the system which he introduced is responsible for it? And is not the gospel therefore responsible for introducing a system that frees from the restraint of the law, and introduces universal licentiousness?" To this Paul replies by stating distinctly that the gospel has no such tendency, and particularly by referring in the following verses to his own case, and to the effect of the doctrine of justification on his own heart and life.

We ourselves also are found sinners. If it turns out that we are sinners, or if others discover by undoubted demonstration that we lead lives of sin; if they see us given up to a lawless life, and find us practicing all kinds of evil; if it shall be seen not only that we are not pardoned and made better by the gospel, but are actually made worse, and are freed from all moral restraint.

Is therefore Christ the minister of sin? Is it to be traced to him? Is it a fair and legitimate conclusion that this is the tendency of the gospel? Is it to be charged on him, and on the plan of justification through him, that a lax morality prevails, and that men are freed from the wholesome restraints of law?

God forbid. It is not so. This is not the proper effect of the gospel of Christ, and of the doctrine of justification by faith. The system is not fitted to produce such a freedom from restraint; and if such a freedom exists, it is to be traced to something else than the gospel.

{a} "ourselves also" 1Jo 3:9,10

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *For if I build again the things which I destroyed*. Paul here uses the first person; but he evidently intends it as a general proposition, and means that if any one does it he becomes a transgressor. The sense is, that if a man, having removed or destroyed that which was evil, again introduces it or establishes it, he does wrong, and is a transgressor of the law of God. The particular application here, as it seems to me, is to the subject of circumcision, and the other rites of the Mosaic law. They had been virtually abolished by the coming of the Redeemer, and by the doctrine of justification by faith. It had been seen that there was no necessity for their observance, and of that Peter and the others had been fully aware. Yet they were lending their influence again to establish them, or to "build" them up again. They complied with them, and they insisted on the necessity of their observance. Their conduct, therefore, was that of building up again that which had once been destroyed—destroyed by the ministry, and toils, and death of the Lord Jesus, and by the fair influence

of his gospel. To rebuild that again, to re-establish those customs, was wrong, and now involved the guilt of a transgression of the law of God. Doddridge supposes that this is an address to the Galatians, and that the address to Peter closed at the previous verse. But it is impossible to determine this; and it seems to me more probable that this is all a part of the address to Peter, or rather, perhaps, *to the assembly* when Peter was present.

See Barnes "Ga 2:15".

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *For I through the law*. On this passage the commentators are by no means agreed. It is agreed that in the phrase "am dead to the law," the law of Moses is referred to, and that the meaning is, that Paul had become dead to that as a ground or means of justification, lie acted as though it were not; or it ceased to have influence over him. A dead man is insensible to all around him. He hears nothing; sees nothing; and nothing affects him. So when we are said to be dead to anything, the meaning is, that it does not have an influence over us. In this sense Paul was dead to the law of Moses. He ceased to observe it as a ground of justification. It ceased, to be the grand aim and purpose of his life, as it had been formerly, to obey it. He had higher purposes than that, and truly lived to God. **See Barnes "Ro 6:2".**

But on the meaning of the phrase "through the law," *dia nomou* there has been a great variety of opinion. Bloomfield, Rosenmuller, and some others, suppose that he means the Christian religion; and that the meaning is, "By one law, or doctrine, I am dead to another;" that is, the Christian doctrine has caused me to cast aside the Mosaic religion. Doddridge, Clarke, Chandler, and most others, however, suppose that he here refers to the law of Moses, and that the meaning is, that by contemplating the true character of the law of Moses itself; by considering its nature and design; by understanding the extent of its requisitions, he had become dead to it; that is, he had laid aside all expectations of being justified by it. This seems to me to be the correct interpretation. Paul had formerly expected to be justified by the law. He had endeavoured to obey it. It had been the object of his life to comply with all its requisitions, in order to be saved by it, Php 3:4-6. But all this while he had not fully understood its nature; and when he was made fully to feel and comprehend its spiritual requirements, then all his hopes of justification by it died, and he became dead to it. See this sentiment more fully explained **See Barnes "Ro 7:9".**

That I might live unto God. That I might be truly alive, and might be found engaged in his service. He was dead to the law, but not to everything. He had not become literally inactive and insensible to all things, like a dead man, but he had become truly sensible to the commands and appeals of God, and had consecrated himself to his service. **See Barnes "Ro 6:11".**

{b} "For I through" Ro 7:4,10, 8:2

{c} "live unto God" Ro 6:11,14; 2Co 5:15

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *I am crucified with Christ*. In the previous verse, Paul had said that he was dead. In this verse he states what he meant by it, and shows that he did not wish to be understood as saying that he was inactive, or that he was literally insensible to the appeals made to him by other beings and objects. In respect to one thing he was dead; to all that was truly great and noble he was alive. To understand the remarkable phrase, "I am crucified with Christ," we may remark,

(1.) that this was the way in which Christ was put to death. He suffered on a cross, and thus became literally dead.

(2.) In a sense *similar* to this, Paul became dead to the law, to the world, and to sin. The Redeemer, by the death of the cross, became insensible to all surrounding objects, as the dead always are. He ceased to see and hear, and was as though they were not. Hie was laid in the cold grave, and they did not affect or influence him. So Paul says that he became insensible to the law as a means of justification; to the world; to ambition and the love of money; to the pride and pomp of life; and to the dominion of evil and hateful passions. They lost their power over him; they ceased to influence him.

(3.) This was *with* Christ, or by Christ. It cannot mean *literally* that he was put to death with him, for that is not true; but it means that the effect of the death of Christ on the cross was to make him dead to these things, in like manner as he, when he died, became insensible to the things of this busy world. This may include the following things:

(a) There was an *intimate union* between Christ and his people; so that what affected *him*, affected *them*. See Joh 15:5,6.

(b) The death of the Redeemer on the cross involved as a consequence the death of his people to the world and to sin. See Ga 5:24 6:14. It was like a blow at the root of a vine or a tree, which would affect every branch and tendril; or like a blow at the head, which affects every member of the body.

(c) Paul felt *identified* with the Lord Jesus; and he was willing to share in all the ignominy and contempt which was connected with the idea of the crucifixion. He was willing to regard himself as one with the Redeemer. If there was disgrace attached to the manner in which he died, he was willing to share it with him. He regarded it as a matter to be greatly desired to be made *just like Christ* in all things, and even in the manner of his death. This idea he has more fully expressed in Php 3:10, "That I may know him, [that is, I desire earnestly to know him,] and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, *being made conformable unto his death*." See also Col 1:24 1Pe 4:13.

Nevertheless I live. This expression is added, as in Ga 2:19, to prevent the possibility of mistake. Paul, though he was crucified with Christ, did not wish to be understood that he felt himself to be *dead*. He was not inactive; not insensible, as the dead are, to the appeals which are made from God, or to the great objects which ought to interest an immortal mind. He was still actively employed, and the more so from the fact that he was crucified with Christ. The object of all such expressions as this is to show that it was no design of the gospel to make men inactive, or to annihilate their energies. It was not to cause men to do nothing. It was not to paralyze their powers, or stifle their own efforts. Paul therefore says, "I am not dead. I am truly alive; and I live a better life than I did before." Paul was *as* active after conversion as he was before. Before, he was engaged in persecution; now, he devoted his great talents with as much energy, and with as untiring zeal, to the cause of the great Redeemer. Indeed, the whole narrative would lead us to suppose that he was *more* active and zealous *after* his conversion than he was before. The effect of religion is not to make one dead

in regard to the putting forth of the energies of the soul. True religion never made one lazy man; it has converted many a man of indolence, and effeminacy, and self-indulgence, to a man actively engaged in doing good. If a professor of religion is *less* active in the service of God than he was in the service of the world—less laborious, and zealous, and ardent than he was before his supposed conversion—he ought to set it down as full proof that he is an utter stranger to true religion.

Yet not I. This also is designed to prevent misapprehension. In the previous clause he had said that he lived, or was actively engaged. But lest this should be misunderstood, and it should be inferred that he meant to say it was by his own energy or powers, he guards it, and says it was not at all from himself. It was by no native tendency; no power of his own; nothing that could be traced to himself, he assumed no credit for any zeal which he had shown in the true life. He was disposed to trace it all to another. He had ample proof in his past experience that there was no tendency in himself to a life of true religion, and he therefore traced it all to another.

Christ liveth in me. Christ was the *source* of all the life that he had. Of course this cannot be taken literally that Christ had a residence in the apostle; but it must mean that his grace resided in him; that his principles actuated him; and that he derived all his energy, and zeal, and life from his grace. The union between the Lord Jesus and the disciple was so close that it might be said the one lived in the other. So the juices of the vine are in each branch, and leaf, and tendril, and live in them and animate them; the vital energy of the brain is in each delicate nerve—no matter how small—that is found in any part of the human frame. Christ was in him, as it were, the vital principle. All his life and energy were derived from him.

And the life which I now live in the flesh. As I now live on the earth, surrounded by the cares and anxieties of this life. I carry the life-giving principles of my religion to all my duties and all my trials.

I live by the faith of the Son of God. By confidence in the Son of God, looking to him for strength, and trusting in his promises and in his grace.

Who loved me, etc. He felt under the highest obligation to him, from the fact that he had loved him, and given himself to the death of the cross in his behalf. The conviction of obligation on this account Paul often expresses. \\See Barnes "Ro 6:8"\, and \\Ro 6:9-11\; **See Barnes "Ro 8:35, and** Ro 8:36-39; **See Barnes "2Co 5:15"**.

There is no higher sense of obligation than that which is felt towards the Saviour; and Paul felt himself bound, as we should, to live entirely to him who had redeemed him by his blood.

{a} "crucified with Christ" Ga 5:24 6:14 {b} "liveth in me" 1Th 5:10 1Pe 4:2 {c} "gave himself" Joh 10:11 Eph 5:2

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *I do not frustrate the grace of God*. The word rendered "frustrate" *ayetw* means, properly, to displace, abrogate, abolish; then to make void, to render null, Mr 7:9 Lu 7:30; 1Co 1:19.

The phrase, "the grace of God," here refers to the favour of God manifested in the plan of salvation by the gospel, and is another name for the gospel. The sense is, that Paul would not take any measures, or pursue any course, that would render that vain or inefficacious. Neither by his

own life, by a course of conduct which would show that it had no influence over the heart and conduct, nor by the observance of Jewish rites and customs, would he do anything to render that inefficacious. The design is to show that he regarded it as a great principle, that the gospel was efficacious in renewing and saving man, and he would do nothing that would tend to pre, vent that impression on mankind. A life of sin, of open depravity and licentiousness, would do that. And, in like manner, a conformity to the rites of Moses, as a ground of justification, would tend to frustrate the grace of God, or to render the method of salvation solely by the Redeemer nugatory. This is to be regarded, therefore, as at the same time a reproof of Peter for complying with customs which tended to frustrate the plan of the gospel, and a declaration that he intended that his own course of life should be such as to confirm the plan, and show its efficacy in pardoning the sinner, and rendering him alive in the service of God.

For if righteousness come *by the law*. If justification can be secured by the observance of *any law*—ceremonial or moral—then there was no need of the death of Christ as an atonement. This is plain. If man by conformity to any law could be justified before God, what need was there of an atonement? The work would then have been wholly in his own power, and the merit would have been his. It follows from this, that man cannot be justified by his own morality, or his almsdeeds, or his forms of religion, or his honesty and integrity. If he can, he needs no Saviour—he can save himself. It follows, also, that when men depend on their own amiableness, and morality, and good works, they would feel no need of a Saviour; and this is the true reason why the mass of men reject the Lord Jesus. They suppose they do not deserve to be sent to hell. They have no deep sense of guilt. They confide in their own integrity, and feel that God *ought* to save them. Hence they feel no need of a Saviour; for why should a man in health employ a physician? And confiding in their own righteousness, they reject the grace of God, and despise the plan of justification through the Redeemer. To feel the need of a Saviour, it is necessary to feel that we are lost and ruined sinners; that we have no merit on which we can rely; and that we are entirely dependent on the mercy of God for salvation. Thus feeling, we shall receive the salvation of the gospel with thankfulness and joy, and show that in regard to us Christ is not "dead in vain."

{*} "frustrate" "make void" {d} "if righteousness" Heb 7:11

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 3

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 1

GALATIANS CHAPTER III

The address of Paul to Peter, as I suppose, was closed at the last verse of chapter 2. The apostle in this chapter, in a direct address to the Galatians, pursues the argument on the subject of justification by faith. In the previous chapters he had shown them fully that he had received his views of 'the gospel directly from the Lord Jesus, and that he had the concurrence of the most eminent among the apostles themselves. He proceeds to state more fully what his views were; to confirm them by

the authority of the Old Testament; and to show the necessary effect of an observance of the laws of Moses on the great doctrine of justification by faith. This subject is pursued through this chapter and the following. This chapter comprises the following subjects:—

(1.) A severe reproof of the Galatians for having been so easily seduced, by the arts of cunning men, from the simplicity of the gospel, Ga 3:1. He says that Christ had been plainly set forth crucified among them, and it was strange that they had so soon been led astray from the glorious doctrine of salvation by faith.

(2.) He appeals to them to show that the great benefits which *they* had received had not been in consequence of the observance of the Mosaic rites, but had come solely by the hearing of the gospel, Ga 3:2-6. Particularly the Holy Spirit, with all his miraculous and converting and sanctifying influences, had been imparted only in connexion with the gospel. This was the most rich and most valuable endowment which they had ever received; and this was solely by the preaching of Christ and him crucified.

(3.) In illustration of the doctrine of justification by faith, and in proof of the truth of it, he refers to the case of Abraham, and shows that he was justified in this manner, and that the Scripture had promised that others would be justified in the same way, Ga 3:6-9.

(4.) He shows that the law pronounced a curse on all those who were under it, and that consequently it was impossible to be justified by it. But Christ had redeemed us from that curse, having taken the curse on himself, so that now we might be justified in the sight of God. In this way, says he, the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles, and they all might be saved in the same manner that he was, Ga 3:10-14.

(5.) This view he confirms by showing that the promise made to Abraham was made *before* the giving of the law. It was a mode of justification in existence *before* the law of Moses was given. It was of the nature of a solemn compact or covenant on the part of God. It referred particularly to the Messiah, and to the mode of justification in him. And as it was of the nature of a covenant, it was impossible that the law given many years after could disannul it, or render it void, Ga 3:15-18.

(6.) It might then be asked, what was the use of the law? Why was it given? It was *added*, Paul says, on account of transgressions, and was designed to restrain men from sin, and to show them their guilt. It was, further, not superior to the promise of a Mediator, or to the Mediator; for it was appointed by the instrumentality of *angels*, and it was in the hands of the Mediator himself, *under him*, and subject to him. It could not, therefore, he *superior* to him, and to the plan of justification through him, Ga 3:19,20.

(7.) Yet Paul answers an important objection here, and a very obvious and material inquiry. It is, whether he means to teach that the law of God is contradictory to his promises? Whether the law and the gospel are rival systems? Whether it is necessary in order to hold to the excellency of the one, to hold that the other is contradictory, evil, and worthless? To all this he answers; and says, by no means. He says the fault was not in the law. The view which he had taken, and which was revealed in the Bible, arose from the nature of the case. The law was as good a law as could be made, and it answered all the purposes of law. It was *so* excellent, that if it had been possible that men could be justified by law at all, that was the law by which it would have been done. But it was not possible. The effect of the law, therefore, was to show that all men were sinners, and to shut them up to the plan of justification by the work of a Redeemer. It was appointed, therefore, not to justify men, but to lead them to the Saviour, Ga 3:21-24.

(8.) The effect of the plan of justification by faith in the Lord Jesus was to make the mind free. It was no longer under a schoolmaster. They who are justified in this way become the children of God. They all become one in the Redeemer. There is neither Jew nor Greek, but they constitute one great family, and are the children of Abraham, and heirs according to the promise, Ga 3:25-29.

Verse 1. *O foolish Galatians*. That is, foolish for having yielded to the influence of the false teachers, and for having embraced doctrines that tended to subvert the gospel of the Redeemer. The original word here used *anohtai* denotes void of understanding; and they had shown it in a remarkable manner in rejecting the doctrine of the apostles, and in embracing the errors into which they had fallen. It will be remembered that this is an expression similar to what was applied to them by others. See the Introduction, § I. Thus Callimachus, in his hymns, calls them "a foolish people," and Hillary, himself a Gaul, calls them *Gallos indociles*—expressions remarkably in accordance with that used here by Paul. It is implied that they were without stability of character. The particular thing to which Paul refers here is, that they were so easily led astray by the arguments of the false teachers.

Who hath bewitched you. The word here used *ebaskane* properly means, to prate about any one; and then to mislead by preterites, as if by magic arts; to fascinate; to influence by a charm. The idea here is, that they had not been led by *reason* and by *sober judgment*, but that there must have been some charm or fascination to have taken them away in this manner from what they had embraced as true, and what they had the fullest evidence was true. Paul had sufficient confidence in them to believe that they had not embraced their present views under the unbiased influence of judgment and reason, but that there must have been some fascination or charm by which it was done. It was, in fact, accomplished by the arts and the plausible pretences of those who came from among the Jews.

That ye should not obey the truth. The truth of the gospel. That you should yield your minds to falsehood and error. It should be observed, however, that this phrase is wanting in many MSS. It is omitted in the Syriac version; and many of the most important Greek and Latin Fathers omit it. Mill thinks it should be omitted; and Griesbach has omitted it. It is not essential to the passage in order to the sense; and it conveys no truth which is not elsewhere taught fully. It is apparently added to show what was the effect of their being bewitched or enchanted.

Before whose eyes. In whose very presence. That is, it has been done so clearly that you may be said to have seen it.

Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth. By the preaching of the gospel. He has been so fully and plainly preached that you may be said to have seen him. The effect of his being preached in the manner in which it has been done, ought to have been as great as if you had seen him crucified before your eyes. The word rendered "hath been evidently set forth," *proegrafh* properly, *to write before* and then to announce beforehand in writing; or *to announce by posting up on a tablet*. The meaning here is, probably, that Christ had been announced among them crucified, as if the doctrine was set forth in a public written tablet.—*Robinson's Lex*. There was the utmost clearness and distinctness of view, so that they need not make any mistake in regard to him. The Syriac renders it, "Christ has been crucified before your eyes as if he had been represented by painting." According to this, the idea is, that it was as plain as if there had been a representation of him by a picture. This has been done chiefly by preaching. I see no reason, however, to doubt that Paul means also to include the celebration of the Lord's Supper, in which the Lord Jesus is so clearly exhibited as a crucified Saviour.

Crucified among you? That is, represented among you *as* crucified. The words "among you," however, are wanting in many MSS., and obscure the sense. If they are to be retained, the meaning is, that the representations of the Lord Jesus, as crucified, had been as clear and impressive among them as if they had seen him with their own eyes. The *argument* is, that they had so clear a representation of the Lord Jesus, and of the design of his death, that it was strange that they had so soon been perverted from the belief of it. Had they *seen* the Saviour crucified; had they stood by the cross and witnessed his agony in death on account of sin, how could they doubt what was the design of his dying, and how could they be seduced from faith in his death, or be led to embrace any other method of justification? How could they *now* do it, when, although they had not seen him die, they had the fullest knowledge of the object for which he gave his precious life? The doctrine taught in this verse is, that a faithful exhibition of the sufferings and death of the Saviour ought to exert an influence over our minds and-hearts as if we had seen him die; and that they to whom such an exhibition has been made should avoid being led astray by the blandishments of false doctrines, and by the arts of man. Had we *seen* the Saviour expire, we could never have forgotten the scene. Let us endeavour to cherish a remembrance of his sufferings and death as if we had seen him die.

{a} "Galatians" Mt 7:26 {*} "bewitched" "Imposed on" {b} "you" Ga 5:7

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *This only would I learn of you*. I would ask this of you: retaining still the language of severe reproof. The design here, and in the following verses, is to prove to them that the views which they had at first embraced were correct, and that the views which they now cherished were false. To show them this, he asks them the simple question, by what means they had obtained the exalted privileges which they enjoyed? Whether they had obtained them by the simple gospel, or whether by the observance of the law? The word "only" here, *monon*, implies that this was *enough* to settle the question. The argument to which he was about to appeal was *enough* for his purpose, he did not need to go any further. They had been converted. They had received the Holy Spirit. They had had abundant evidence of their acceptance with God; and the simple matter of inquiry now was, whether this had,occurred as the regular effect of the gospel, or whether it had been by obeying the law of Moses?

Received ye the Spirit. The Holy Spirit. He refers here, doubtless, to all the manifestations of the Spirit which had been made to them, in renewing the heart, in sanctifying the soul, in comforting them in affliction, and in his miraculous agency among them. The Holy Spirit had been conferred on them at their conversion, Ac 10:44 11:16; and this was to them proof of the favour of God, and of their being accepted by him.

By the works of the law. By obeying the law of Moses or of any law. It was in no way connected with their obeying the law. This must have been so clear to them that no one could have any doubt on the subject. The inestimably rich and precious gift of the Holy Spirit had not been conferred on them in consequence of their obeying the law.

Or by the hearing of faith? In connexion with hearing the gospel, requiring faith as a condition of salvation. The Holy Spirit was sent down only in connexion with the preaching of the gospel. It

was a matter of truth, and which could not be denied, that those influences had not been imparted under the law, but had been connected with the gospel of the Redeemer. Comp. Ac 2. The doctrine taught in this verse is, that the benefits resulting to Christians from the gift of the Holy Spirit are enough to prove that the gospel is from God, and therefore true. This was the case with regard to the miraculous endowments communicated in the early ages of the church by the Holy Spirit; for the miracles which were wrought, the knowledge of languages imparted, and the conversion of thousands from the error of their ways, proved that the system was from heaven; and it is true now. Every Christian has had ample proof, from the influences of the Spirit on his heart and around him, that the system which is attended with such benefits is from heaven. His own renewed heart; his elevated and sanctified affections; his exalted hopes; his consolations in trial; his peace in the prospect of death, and the happy influences of the system around him in the conversion of others, and in the intelligence, order, and purity of the community, are ample proof that the religion is true. Such effects do not come from any attempt to keep the law; they result from no other system.. No system of infidelity produces them; no mere system of infidelity can produce them. It is only by that pure system which proclaims salvation by the grace of God, which announces salvation by the merits of the Lord Jesus, that such effects are produced. The Saviour promised the Holy Spirit to descend after his ascension to heaven to apply his work; and everywhere, under the faithful preaching of the simple gospel, that Spirit keeps up the evidence of the truth of the system by his influences on the hearts and lives of men.

{a} "Received" Eph 1:13 {b} "or by" Ro 10:17

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Are ye so foolish*? *Can it be that you are so unwise*? The idea is, that Paul hardly thought it credible that they could have pursued such a course. They had so cordially embraced the gospel when he preached to them, they had given such evidences that they were under its influence, that he regarded it as hardly possible that they should have so far abandoned it as to embrace such a system as they had done.

Having begun in the Spirit. That is, when the gospel was first preached to them. They had commenced their professedly Christian life under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and with the pure and spiritual worship of God. They had known the power and spirituality of the glorious gospel. They had been renewed by the Spirit; sanctified in some measure by him; and had submitted themselves to the spiritual influences of the gospel.

Are ye now made perfect. Tindal renders this, "ye would now end." The word here used *epitelew*, means, properly, to bring through to an end, to finish; and the sense here has probably been expressed by Tindal. The idea of *perfecting*, in the sense in which we now use that word, is not implied in the original. It is that of finishing, ending, completing; and the sense is,

"You began your Christian career under the elevated and
spiritual influences of Christianity, a system so pure
and so exalted above the carnal ordinances of the Jews.
Having begun thus, can it be that you are finishing your
Christian course, or carrying it on to completion by the

observance of those ordinances, as if they were more pure
and elevating than Christianity? Can it be that you
regard them as an advance on the system of the gospel?"

By the flesh. By the observance of the carnal rites of the Jews—- for so the word here evidently means. This has not been an uncommon thing. Many have been professedly converted by the Spirit, and have soon fallen into the observance of mere rites and ceremonies, and depended mainly on them for salvation. Many churches have commenced their career in an elevated and spiritual manner, and have *ended* in the observance of mere forms. So many Christians begin their course in a spiritual manner, and end it "in the flesh" in another sense. They soon conform to the world. They are brought under the influence of worldly appetites and propensities. They forget the spiritual nature of their religion; and they live for the indulgence of ease, and for the gratification of the senses. They build themselves houses, and they "plant vineyards," and they collect around them the instruments of music, and the bowl and the wine is in their feasts, and they surrender themselves to luxury of living; and it seems as if they intended to *perfect* their Christianity by drawing around them as much of the world as possible. The beautiful simplicity of their early piety is gone. The blessedness of those moments when they lived by simple faith has fled. The times when they sought all their consolation in God are no more; and they now seem to differ from the world only in form. I dread to see a Christian inherit much wealth, or even to be thrown into very prosperous business. I see in it a temptation to build himself a splendid mansion, and to collect around him all that constitutes luxury among the people of the world. How natural for him to fed that if he has wealth like others, he should show it in a similar manner! And how easy for the most humble and spiritually-minded Christian, in the beginning of his Christian life, to become conformed to the world, (such is the weakness of human nature in its best forms;) and having begun in the Spirit, to end in the flesh !

{c} "begun" Ga 4:9 {d} "perfect" Heb 9:10

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Have ye suffered so many things in vain*? Paul reminds them of what they had endured on account of their attachment to Christianity, he assures them, that if the opinions on account of which they had suffered were false, then their sufferings had been in vain. They were of no use to them—for what advantage was it to suffer for a false opinion? The opinions for which they had suffered had not been those which they now embraced. They were not those connected with the observance of the Jewish rites. They had suffered on account of their having embraced the *gospel*—the system of justification by a crucified Redeemer; and now, if those sentiments were wrong, why their sufferings had been wholly in vain. See this argument pursued at much greater length in 1Co 15:18,19,29-32.

If it be yet in vain. That is,

"I trust it is not in vain. I hope you have not so far
abandoned the gospel, that all your sufferings in its
behalf have been of no avail. I believe the system is
true; and if true, and you are sincere Christians, it
will not be in vain that you have suffered in its behalf,

though you have gone astray. I trust, that although your principles have been shaken, yet they have not been wholly overthrown, and that you will yet reap the reward of your having suffered so much on account of the gospel."

{1} "so many" "great" {e} "in vain" 2Jo 1:8 {*} "it be yet" "Indeed"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *He therefore that ministereth*, etc. This verse contains substantially a repetition of the argument in ver. 2. The argument is, that the gift of the Holy Spirit to them was not imparted in consequence of the observance of the law of Moses, but in connexion with the preaching of the gospel. By the word "he," in this place, Clarke, Doddridge, Bloomfield, Chandler, Locke, and many others, suppose that the apostle means himself. Bloomfield says that it is the common opinion of" all the ancient commentators." But this seems to me a strange opinion. The obvious reference, it seems to me, is to God, who had furnished or imparted to them the remarkable influences of the Holy Spirit; and this had been done in connexion with the preaching of the gospel, and not by the observance of the law. If, however, it refers to Paul, it means that he had been made the agent or instrument in imparting to them those remarkable endowments, and that this had been done by one who had not enforced the necessity of obeying the law of Moses, but who had preached to them the simple gospel.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Even as Abraham believed God*, etc. See this passage fully explained **See Barnes "Ro 4:3"**.

The passage is introduced here by the apostle to show that the most eminent of the patriarchs was not saved by the deeds of the law. He was saved by faith, and this fact showed that it was possible to be saved in that way, and that it was the design of God to save men in this manner. Abraham believed God, and was justified, *before* the law of Moses was given. It could not, therefore, be pretended that the law was necessary to justification; for if it had been, Abraham could not have been saved. But if not necessary in his case, it was in no other; and this instance demonstrated that the false teachers among the Galatians were wrong even according to the Old Testament.

{b} "Abraham believed" Ge 15:6 {1} "was accounted" "imputed" {*} "righteous" "in order to"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Know ye therefore*, etc. Learn from this case. It is an inference which follows, that all they who believe are the children of Abraham.

They which are of faith. Who believe, and who are just died in this manner.

Are the children of Abraham. Abraham was the "father of the faithful." The most remarkable trait in his character was his unwavering confidence in God. They who evinced the same trait, therefore, were worthy to be called his children. They would be justified in the same way, and in the same manner meet the approbation of God. It is *implied* here, that it was sufficient for salvation to have a character which would render it proper to say that we are the children of Abraham. If we are like him, if we evince the same spirit and character, we may be sure of salvation.

{c} "children of Abraham" Joh 8:39 Ro 4:11-16

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *And the Scripture*. The word Scripture refers to the Old Testament. **See Barnes "Joh 5:39".**

It is here personified, or spoken of as *foreseeing*. The idea is, that he by whom the Scriptures were inspired foresaw that. It is agreeable, the meaning is, to the account on the subject in the Old Testament. The Syriac renders this, "Since God foreknew that the Gentiles would be justified by faith, he before announced to Abraham, as the Scripture saith, In thee shall all nations be blessed."

Foreseeing. That is, this doctrine is contained in the Old Testament. It was foreseen and predicted that the heathen would be justified by faith, and not by the works of the law.

That God would justify the heathen. Greek, The nations- *ta eynh* —the Gentiles. The fact that the heathen, or the Gentiles, would be admitted to the privileges of the true religion, and be interested in the benefits of the coming of the Messiah, is a fact which is everywhere abundantly predicted in the Old Testament. As an instance, see Isa 49:6,22,23

Isa 40. I do not know that it is anywhere distinctly foretold that the heathen would be justified by *faith*, nor does the argument of the apostle require us to believe this. He says that the Scriptures, that is, he who inspired the Scriptures, *foresaw* that fact, and that the Scriptures were written *as if* with the knowledge of that fact; but it is not directly affirmed. The whole structure and frame of the Old Testament, however, proceeds on the supposition that it would be so; and this is all that the declaration of the apostle requires us to understand.

Preached before the gospel. This translation does not convey quite the idea to us which the language of Paul, in the original, would to the people to whom he addressed it. We have affixed a technical *sense* to the phrase, "to preach the gospel." It is applied to the formal and public annunciation of the truths of religion, especially the "good news" of a Saviour's birth, and of redemption by his blood. But we are not required by the language used here to suppose that this was done to Abraham, or that "the gospel" was preached to him in the sense in which we all now use that phrase. The expression in Greek *proeuhggelisato* means, merely, "the joyful news was announced beforehand to Abraham;" *scil*, that in him should all the nations of the earth be blessed. It was *implied*, indeed, that it would be by the Messiah; but the distinct point of the "good news" was not the "gospel" as we understand it, but it was that somehow through him all the nations of

the earth would be made happy. Tindal has well translated it, "Showed beforehand glad tidings unto Abraham." This translation should have been adopted in our common version.

In thee shall all nations be blessed. **See Barnes "Ac 3:25"; See Barnes "Ro 4:13"**.

All nations should be made happy in him, or through him. The sense is, that the Messiah was to be descended from him; and the religion of the Messiah, producing peace and salvation, was to be extended to all the nations of the earth. See Ge 12:3. Comp. **See Barnes "Ga 3:16"**

of this chapter.

{d} "would justify" Ga 3:22 {e} "saying" Ge 12:3 22:18; Ac 3:25

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *So then they which be of faith*. They whose leading characteristic it is that they believe. This was the leading trait in the character of Abraham; and this is the leading thing required of those who embrace the gospel, and in the character of a true Christian.

Are blessed with faithful Abraham. In the same manner they are interested in the promises made to him, and they will be treated as he was. They are justified in the same manner, and admitted to the same privileges on earth and in heaven.

{f} "then they" De 27:26

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *For as many as are of the works of the law*. As many as are seeking to be justified by yielding obedience to the law—whether the moral law, or the ceremonial law. The proposition is general; and it is designed to show that, from the nature of the ease, it is impossible to be justified by the works of the law, since, under all circumstances of obedience which we can render, we are still left with its heavy curse resting on us.

Are under the curse. The curse which the law of God denounces. Having failed by all their efforts to yield perfect obedience, they must, of course, be exposed to the curse which the law denounces on the guilty. The word rendered curse *kataran*, means, as with us, properly, *imprecation or cursing*. It is used in the Scriptures particularly in the sense of the Hebrew

HEBREW

—malediction, or execration, Job 31:30 Jer 29:18; Da 9:11; of the word ,

HEBREW, Mal 2:2; Pr 3:33; and especially of the common Hebrew word

HEBREW

—a curse, Ge 27:12,13; De 11:26,28,29 23:5 27:13, *et sape al*. It is here used evidently in the sense of devoting to punishment or destruction; and the idea is, that all who attempt to secure salvation by the works of the law, must be exposed to its penalty. It denounces a curse on all who do not yield entire obedience; and no partial compliance with its demands can save from the penalty.

For it is written. The substance of these words is found in De 27:26 "Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them." It is the solemn close of a series of maledictions which

Moses denounces in that chapter on the violators of the law. In this quotation, Paul has given the sense of the passage, but he has quoted literally neither from the Hebrew nor from the Septuagint. The *sense*, however, is retained. The word "cursed" here means, that the violator of the law shall be devoted to punishment or destruction. The phrase, "that continueth not," in the Hebrew is "that confirmeth not"—that does not establish or confirm by his life. He would *confirm* it by *continuing* to obey it; and thus the sense in Paul and in Moses is substantially the same. The word "all" is not expressed in the Hebrew in Deuteronomy, but it is evidently implied, and has been inserted by the English translators. It is found, however, in six MSS. of Kennicott and De Rossi; in the Samaritan text; in the Septuagint; and in several of the Targums. —*Clarke*.

The book of the law. That is, in the law. This phrase is not found in the passage in Deuteronomy. The expression there is, "the words of this law." Paul gives it a somewhat larger sense, and applies it to the whole of the law of God. The meaning is, that the whole law must be obeyed, or man cannot be justified by it, or will be exposed to its penalty and its curse. This idea is expressed more fully by James, 2:10, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all;" that is, he is guilty of breaking the law *as a whole*, and must be held responsible for such violation. The sentiment here is one that is common to *all* law, and must be, from the nature of the case. The idea is, that a man who does not yield compliance to a whole law, is subject to its penalty, or to a curse. All law is sustained on this principle. A man who has been honest, and temperate, and industrious, and patriotic, if he commits a single act of murder, is subject to the curse of the law, and must meet the penalty. A man who has been honest and honourable in all his dealings, yet if he commit a single act of forgery, he must meet the curse denounced by the laws of his country, and bear the penalty. So in all matters pertaining to law: no matter what the integrity of the man, no matter how upright he has been, yet for *the one offence* the law denounces a penalty, and he must bear it. It is out of the question for him to be justified by it. He cannot plead as a reason why he should not be condemned for the act of murder or forgery, that he has in all other respects obeyed the law, or even that he has been guilty of no such offences before. Such is the idea of Paul in the passage before us. It was clear to his view that man had not, in all respects, yielded obedience to the law of God. If he had not done this, it was impossible that he should be justified by the law, and he must bear its penalty.

{g} "it is written" De 27:26

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *But that no man is justified*, etc. The argument which Paul has been pursuing he proceeds to confirm by an express declaration of the Bible. The argument is this: "It is impossible that a man should be justified by the law, because God has appointed another way of justification." But there cannot be two ways of obtaining life; and as he has appointed *faith* as the condition on which men shall *live*, he has precluded from them the possibility of obtaining salvation in any other mode.

For, The just shall live by faith. This is quoted from Hab 2:4. This passage is also quoted by Paul in Ro 1:17. **See Barnes "Ro 1:17".**

The sense here is, that life is promised to man only in connexion with faith. It is not by the works of the law that it is done. The condition of life is faith; and he lives who believes. The meaning is not, I apprehend, that the man who is justified by faith shall live; but that life is promised and exists only in connexion with faith, and that the just or righteous man obtains it only in this way. Of course it cannot be obtained by the observance of the law, but must be by some other scheme.

{a} "just shall live" Hab 2:4

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *And the law is not of faith*. The law is not a matter of faith; it does not relate to faith; it does not require faith; it deals in other matters, and it pertains to another system than to faith.

But, The man, etc. This is the language of the law, and this is what the law teaches. It does not make provision for faith, but it requires unwavering and perpetual obedience, if man would obtain life by it. See this passage explained **See Barnes "Ro 10:5"**

{b} "law is not of faith" Ro 10:5,6 {c} "The man that" Le 18:5 Eze 20:11 {*} "live in them" "by"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Christ hath redeemed us*. The word used here *exhgorasen* is not that which is usually employed in the New Testament to denote redemption. That word is *lutrow*. The difference between them mainly is, that the word used here more usually relates to a *purchase* of any kind; the other is used strictly with reference to a *ransom*. The word here used is more *general* in its meaning; the other is strictly appropriated to a ransom. This distinction is not observable here, however, and the word here used is employed in the proper sense of redeem. It occurs in the New Testament only in this place, and in Ga 4:5 Eph 5:16; Col 4:6.

It properly means, to purchase, to buy up; and then to purchase any one, to redeem, to set free. Here it means, that Christ had purchased or set us free from the curse of the law, by his being made a curse for us. On the meaning of the words redeem and ransom, **See Barnes "Ro 3:25"**; **See Barnes** "2Co 5:21"; **See Barnes "Isa 43:3"**.

From the curse of the law. The curse which the law threatens, and which the execution of the law would inflict; the punishment due to sin. This must mean, that he has rescued us from the consequences of transgression in the world of woe; he has saved us from the punishment which our sins have deserved. The word "us," here, must refer to all who are redeemed; that is, to the Gentiles as well as the Jews. The curse of the law is a curse which is due to sin, and cannot be regarded as applied particularly to any one class of men. All who violate the law of God, however that law may be made known, are exposed to its penalty. The word "law" here relates to the law of God in general, to all the laws of God made known to man. The law of God denounced death as the wages of sin. It threatened punishment in the future world for ever. That would certainly have

been inflicted, but for the coming and death of Christ. The world is lying by nature under this curse, and it is sweeping the race on to ruin.

Being made a curse for us. This is an exceedingly important expression. Tindal renders it, "And was made a curse for us." The Greek word is *katara*, the same word which is used in Ga 3:10. **See Barnes "Ga 3:10".**

There is scarcely any passage in the New Testament on which it is more important to have correct views than this; and scarcely any one on which more erroneous opinions have been entertained. In regard to it, we may observe that it does not mean,

(1.) that by being made a *curse*, his character or work were in any sense displeasing to God. He approved always of what the Lord Jesus did, and he regarded his whole character with love and approbation. The passage should never be so interpreted as to leave the impression that he was in any conceivable sense the object of the Divine displeasure.

(2.) He was not *ill-deserving*, he was not blameworthy. He had done no wrong, he was holy, harmless, undefiled. No crime charged upon him was proved; and there is no clearer doctrine in the Bible than that, in all his character and work, the Lord Jesus was perfectly holy and pure.

(3.) He was not *guilty*, in any proper sense of the word. The word guilty means, properly, to be bound to punishment for crime. It does not mean, properly, to be exposed to suffering; but it always, when properly used, implies the notion of personal crime. I know that theologians have used the word in a somewhat different sense, but it is contrary to the common and just apprehensions of men. When we say that a man is *guilty*, we instinctively think of his having committed a crime, or having done something wrong. When a jury finds a man *guilty*, it implies that the man has committed a crime, and *ought* to be punished. But in this sense, and in no conceivable sense, where the word is properly used, was the Lord Jesus guilty.

(4.) It cannot be meant that the Lord Jesus properly bore the penalty of the law. His sufferings were *in the place* of the penalty, not *the penalty itself*. They were a *substitution* for the penalty, and were, therefore, strictly and properly vicarious, and were not the identical sufferings which the sinner would himself have endured. There are some things in the penalty of the law which the Lord Jesus did not endure, and which a substitute or a vicarious victim could not endure, Remorse of conscience is a part of the inflicted penalty of the law, and will be a vital part of the sufferings of the sinner in hell—but the Lord Jesus did not endure that.

Eternity of sufferings is an essential part of the penalty of the law—but the Lord Jesus did not suffer for ever. Thus there are numerous sorrows connected with the consciousness of personal guilt, which the Lord Jesus did not and cannot endure.

(5.) He was not sinful, or a sinner, in any sense. He did not so take human guilt upon him, that the words *sinful* and *sinner* could with any propriety be applied to him. They are *not* applied to him in any way in the Bible; but the language there is undeviating. It is, that in all senses he was holy and undefiled. And yet language is often used on this subject which is horrible, and but little short of blasphemy, as if he was guilty, and as if he was even the greatest sinner in the universe. I have heard language used which sent a thrill of horror to my heart; and language may be found in the writings of those who hold the doctrine of imputation in the strictest sense, which is but little short of blasphemy. I have hesitated whether I should copy-expressions here on this subject from one of the greatest and best of men—I mean LUTHER—to show the nature of the views which men sometimes entertain on the subject of the imputation of sin to Christ. But as Luther deliberately published them to the world in his favourite book, which he used to call his "Catharine de Bora,"

after the name of his wife; and as similar views are sometimes entertained now; and as it is important that such views should be held up to universal abhorrence—no matter how respectable the source from which they emanate—I will copy a few of his expressions on this subject:

> "And this, no doubt, all the prophets did foresee in spirit, *that Christ should become the greatest transgressor, murderer, adulterer, thief, rebel, and blasphemer, THAT EVER WAS OR COULD BE IN THE WORLD*. For he, being made a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, is not now an innocent person, and without sins; is not now the Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary; but a sinner which hath and carrieth the sin of Paul, who was a blasphemer, an oppressor, and a persecutor; of Peter, which denied Christ; of David, which was an adulterer, a murderer, and caused the Gentiles to blaspheme the name of the Lord; and, briefly, which hath and beareth all the sins of all men in his body: not that he himself committed them, but for that he received them, being committed or done of us, and laid them upon his own body, that he might make satisfaction for them with his own blood. Therefore, this general sentence of Moses comprehendeth him also, (albeit in his own person he was innocent,) because it found him amongst sinners and transgressors; like as the magistrate taketh him for a thief, and punisheth him whom he findeth among other thieves and transgressors, though he never committed anything worthy of death. When the law, therefore, found him among thieves, it condemned and killed him as a thief."

"If thou wilt deny him to be a sinner and accursed, deny also that he was crucified and dead."

"But if it be not absurd to confess and believe that Christ was crucified between two thieves, then it is not absurd to say that he was accursed, and OF ALL SINNERS THE GREATEST."

"God, our most merciful Father, sent his only Son into the world, and laid upon him all the sins of all men, saying, be thou Peter, that denier; Paul, that persecutor, blasphemer, and cruel oppressor; David, that adulterer; that sinner which did eat the apple in paradise; that thief which hanged upon the cross; and briefly, be thou the person which hath committed the sins of all men: see, therefore, that thou pay and satisfy for them."—

Luther on the Galatians, chap. iii. 13, (pp. 213—215; Edit. Loud., 1838.)

Luther was a great and holy man. He held, as firmly as any one can, to the personal holiness of the Redeemer. But this language shows how imperfect and erroneous views may warp the language of holy men; and how those sentiments led him to use language which is little less than blasphemy. Indeed, we cannot doubt that if Luther had heard this very language used by one of the numerous enemies of the gospel in his time, as applicable to the Saviour, he would have poured out the full torrent of his burning wrath, and all the stern denunciations of his most impassioned eloquence, on the head of the scoffer and the blasphemer. It is singular, it is one of the remarkable facts in the history of mind, that a man with the New Testament before him, and accustomed to contemplate daily its language, could ever have allowed himself to use expressions like these of the holy and unspotted Saviour. But what *is* the meaning of the language of Paul, it will be asked, when he says that he was "made a curse for us?" In reply, I answer, that the meaning must be ascertained from the passage which Paul quotes in support of his assertion, that Christ was "made a curse for us." That passage is, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." This passage is found in De 21:23. It occurs in a law respecting one who was hanged for a "sin worthy of death," De 21:22. The law was, that he should be buried the same day, and that the body should not remain suspended over the night; and it is added, as a reason for this, that "he that is hanged is accursed of God;" or, as it is in the margin, "the curse of God." The meaning is, that when one was executed for crime in this manner, he was the object of the Divine displeasure and malediction. Regarded thus as an object accursed of God, there was a propriety that the man who was executed for crime should be buried as soon as possible, that the offensive object should be hidden from the view. In quoting this passage, Paul leaves out the words "of God," and simply says, that the one who was hanged on a tree was held accursed. The sense of the passage before us is, therefore, that Jesus was subjected to what was regarded as an accursed death. *He was treated in his death AS IF he had been a criminal*. He was put to death in the same manner as he would have been if he had himself been guilty of the violation of the law. Had he been a thief or a murderer, had he committed the grossest and the blackest crimes this would have been the punishment to which he would have been subjected. This was the mode of punishment adapted to those crimes, and he was treated as if all these had been committed by him. Or, in other words, had he been guilty of all these, or any of these, he could not have been treated in a more shameful and ignominious manner than he was; nor could he have been subjected to a more cruel death. As has already been intimated, it does not mean that he was guilty, nor that he was not the object of the approbation and love of God, but that his death was the same that it would have been if he had been the vilest of malefactors, and that that death was regarded by the law as accursed. It was by such substituted sorrows that we are saved; and he consented to die the most shameful and painful death, *as if* he were the vilest malefactor, in order that the-most guilty and vile of the human race might be saved. In regard to the way in which his death is connected with our justification, see **See Barnes "Ga 2:16"**.

It may be observed, also, that the punishment of the cross was unknown to the Hebrews in the time of Moses, and that the passage in De 21:23 did not refer originally to that. Nor is it known that hanging criminals alive was practised among the Hebrews. Those who were guilty of great crimes were first stoned or otherwise put to death, and then their bodies were suspended for a few hours on a gibbet. In many cases, however, merely the *head* was suspended utter it had been severed from the body, Ge 40:17-19; Nu 25:4,5. Crucifixion was not known in the time of the giving of the law; but the Jews gave such an extent to the law in De 21:23, as to include this mode of punishment. **See Barnes** "Joh 19:31, seq. The force of the argument here, as used by the apostle Paul, is, that if

to be suspended on a gibbet after having been put to death was regarded as a curse, it should not be regarded as a curse in a less degree to be suspended alive on a cross, and to be put to death in this manner. If this interpretation of the passage be correct, then it follows that this should never be used as implying, in any sense, that Christ was guilty, or that he was ill-deserving, or that he was an object of the Divine displeasure, or that he poured out on him all his wrath. He was, throughout, an object of the Divine love and approbation. God never loved him more, or approved what he did more, than when he gave himself to death on the cross. He had no hatred towards him; he had no displeasure to express towards him. And it is this which makes the atonement so wonderful and so glorious. Had he been displeased with him; had the Redeemer been properly an object of his wrath; had he in any sense *deserved* those sorrows, there would have been no merit in his sufferings; there would have been no atonement. What merit can there be when one suffers only what he deserves? But what made the atonement so wonderful, so glorious, so benevolent, what made it *an atonement at all*, was, that innocence was treated As IF it were guilt; that the most pure, and holy, and benevolent, and lovely Being on earth should *consent* to be treated, and should be treated by God and man, *As IF* he were the most vile and ill-deserving. This is the mystery of the atonement; this shows the wonders of the Divine benevolence; this is the nature of substituted sorrow; and this lays the foundation for the offer of pardon, and for the hope of eternal salvation.

{d} "Christ hath redeemed" 2Co 5:21 Ga 4:5 {e} "Cursed is " De 21:23

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *That the blessing of Abraham*. The blessing which Abraham enjoyed to wit, that of being justified by faith.

Might come on the Gentiles.

As well as on the Jews. Abraham was blessed in this manner *before* he was circumcised, Ro 4:11, and the same blessing might be imparted to others also who were not circumcised. See this argument illustrated **See Barnes "Ro 4:10"**.

Through Jesus Christ. Since he has been made a curse for all, and since he had no exclusive reference to the Jews or to any other class of men, all may come and partake alike of the benefits of his salvation.

That we might receive the promise of the Spirit. That all we who are Christian converts. The promise of the Spirit, or the promised Spirit, is here put for all the blessings connected with the Christian religion. It includes evidently the miraculous agency of the Holy Spirit; and all his influences in renewing the heart, in sanctifying the soul, and in comforting the people of God. These influences had been obtained in virtue of the sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus in the place of sinners, and these influences were the sum of all the blessings promised by the prophets.

{a} "blessing of Abraham" Ro 4:9,16 {b} "promise of the Spirit" Isa 44:3 Eze 36:27; Joe 2:28,29

{*} "through" "by"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Brethren, I speak after the manner of men*. I draw an illustration from what actually occurs among men. The illustration is, that when a contract or agreement is made by men involving obligations and promises, no one can add to it or take from it. It will remain as it was originally made. So with God. He made a solemn promise to Abraham. That promise pertained to his posterity. The blessing was connected with that promise, and it was of the nature of a compact with Abraham. But if so, then this could not be effected by the law which was four hundred years after, and the law must have been given to secure some different object from that designed by the promise made to Abraham, Ga 3:19. But the promise made to Abraham was designed to secure the "inheritance," or the favour of God; and if so, then the same thing could not be secured by the observance of the law, since there could not be two ways so unlike each other of obtaining tho. same thing. God cannot have two ways of justifying and saving men; and if he revealed a mode to Abraham, and that mode was by faith, then it could not be by the observance of the law which was given so long after. The main design of the argument and the illustration here, Ga 3:15 and following is to show that the promise made to Abraham was by no means made void by the giving of the law. The law had another design, which did not interfere with the promise made to Abraham. That stood on its own merits, irrespective of the demands and the design of the law. It is possible, as Rosenmuller suggests, that Paul may have had his eye on an objection to his view. The objection may have been, that there were important acts of legislation which succeeded the promise made to Abraham, and that that promise must have been superseded by the giving of the law. To this he replies, that the Mosaic law given at a late period could not take away or nullify a solemn promise made to Abraham, but that it was intended for a different object.

Though it be but a man's covenant. A compact or agreement between man and man. Even in such a case no one can add to it or take from it. The *argument* here is, that such a covenant or agreement must be much less important than a promise made by God. But even that could not be annulled. How much less, therefore, could a covenant made by God be treated as if it were vain. The word covenant here *diayhken* is, in the margin, rendered "testament;" i.e., will. So Tindal renders it. Its proper classical signification is *will* or *testament*, though in the Septuagint and in the New Testament it is the word which is used to denote a covenant or compact. **See Barnes "Ac 3:25"**.

Here it is used in the proper sense of the word covenant, or compact; a mutual agreement between man and man. The idea is, that where such a covenant exists, where the faith of a man is solemnly pledged in this manner, no change can be made in the agreement. It is ratified, and firm, and final.

If it be confirmed. By a seal or otherwise.

No man disannulleth, etc. It must stand. No one can change it. No new conditions can be annexed; nor can there be any drawing back from its terms. It binds the parties to a faithful fulfillment of all the conditions. This is well understood among men; and the apostle says that the same thing must take place in regard to God.

{1} "covenant" or "testament"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Now to Abraham and his seed*. To him and his posterity.

Were the promises made. The promise here referred to was that which is recorded in Ge 22:17,18:

"In blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will
multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand
which is upon the sea-shore; and in thy seed shall
all the nations of the earth be blessed."

He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, etc. He does not use the plural term, as if the promise extended to many persons; but he speaks in the singular number, as if but one was intended; and that one must be the Messiah. Such is Paul's interpretation; such is evidently the sentiment which he intends to convey, and the argument which he intends to urge. He designs evidently to be understood as affirming, that in the use of the *singular* number *sperma* (seed,) instead of the plural *spermata*, (seeds,), there is a fair ground of argument to demonstrate that the promise related to Christ, or the Messiah, and to him primarily, if not exclusively. Now, no one ever probably read this passage without feeling a difficulty, and without asking himself whether this argument is sound, and is worthy a man of candour, and especially of an inspired man. Some of the difficulties in the passage are these.-

(1.) The promise referred to in Genesis seems to have related to the posterity of Abraham at large, without any particular reference to an individual. It is to his seed; his descendants; to all his seed or posterity. Such would be the fair and natural interpretation, should it be read by hundreds or thousands of persons who had never heard of the interpretation here put upon it by Paul.

(2.) The argument of the apostle seems to proceed on the supposition that the word "seed," *sperma* i.e., posterity, here cannot refer to more than one person; if it had, says he, it would have been in the plural number. But the fact is, that the word is often used to denote posterity at large; to refer to descendants without limitation, just as the word posterity is with us; and it is a fact, moreover, that the word is not used in the plural at all to denote a posterity, the singular form being constantly employed for that purpose. Any one who will open Tromm's Concordance to the Septuagint, or Schmids' on the New Testament, will see the most ample confirmation of this remark. Indeed, the plural form of the word is never used, except in this place in Galatians. The difficulty therefore is, that the remark here of Paul appears to be a *trick* of argument, or a *quibble* more worthy of a trifling Jewish Rabbi, than of a grave reasoner or an inspired man. I have stated this difficulty freely, just as I suppose it has struck hundreds of minds, because I do not wish to shrink from any real difficulty in examining the Bible, but to see whether it can be fairly met. In meeting it, expositors have resorted to various explanations, most of them, as it seems to me, unsatisfactory, and it is not necessary to detail them. Bishop Burner, Doddridge, and some others, suppose that the apostle means to say that the promises made to Abraham were *not only* appropriated to one class of his descendants, that is, to those by Isaac, but that they centered in *one illustrious* person, through whom all the rest are made partakers of the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant. This Doddridge admits the apostle says in "*bad Greek*," but still he supposes that this is the true exposition. Noesselt and Rosenmuller suppose that by the word *sperma* (seed) here, is not meant the Messiah, but Christians in general; the body of believers. But this is evidently in contradiction of the apostle, who expressly affirms that Christ was intended. It is also liable to another objection that is fatal to the opinion. The very point of the argument of the apostle is, that the singular, and not the plural

form of the word, is used; and that, therefore, an *individual*, and not a *collective body*, or a number of individuals, is intended. But, according to this interpretation, the reference is, in fact, to a numerous body of individuals; to the whole body of Christians. Jerome affirms that the apostle made use of a false argument, which, although it might appear well enough to the stupid Galatians, would not be approved by wise or learned men.— *Chandler*. Borger endeavours to show that this was in accordance with the mode of speaking and writing among the Hebrews, and especially that the Jewish Rabbis were accustomed to draw an argument like this from the singular number, and that the Hebrew word

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seed is often used by them in this manner. See his remarks as quoted by Bloomfield in loc. But the objection to this is, that though this might be common, yet it is not the less a quibble on the word, for certainly the very puerile reasoning of the Jewish Rabbis is no good authority on which to vindicate the authority of an apostle. Locke and Clarke suppose that this refers to Christ, as the spiritual Head of the mystical body, and to all believers in him. Le Clerc supposes that it is an allegorical kind of argument, that was fitted to convince the Jews only, who were accustomed to this kind of reasoning. I do not know but this solution may be satisfactory to many minds, and that it is capable of vindication, since it is not easy to say how far it is proper to make use of methods of argument used by an adversary in order to convince them. The *argumenturn ad hominem* is certainly allowable to a certain extent, when designed to show the legitimate tendency of the principles advanced by an opponent. But here there is no evidence that Paul was reasoning with an adversary. He was showing the Galatians, not the Jews, what was the truth; and justice to the character of the apostle requires us to suppose that he would make use of only such arguments as are in accordance with the eternal principles of truth, and such as may be seen to be true in all countries and at all times. The question then is, whether the argument of the apostle here drawn from the use of the singular word *sperma*, (seed,) is one that can be seen to be sound? or is it a mere quibble, as Jerome and Le Clerc suppose? or is it to be left to be *presumed* to have had a force which we cannot now trace? for this is possible. Socrates and Plato may have used arguments of a subtle nature, based on some nice distinctions of words which were perfectly sound, but which we, from our necessary ignorance of the delicate shades of meaning in the language, cannot now understand. Perhaps the following remarks may show that there is *real* force and propriety, in the position which the apostle takes here. If not, then I confess my inability to explain the passage.

(1.) There can be no reasonable objection to the Opinion that the promise originally made to Abraham *included* the Messiah, and the promised blessings were to descend through him. This is so often affirmed in the New Testament, that to deny it would be to deny the repeated declarations of the sacred writers, and to make war on the whole structure of the Bible. See particularly Ro 4. Comp. Joh 8:56. If this general principle be admitted, it will remove much perplexity from the controversy.

(2.) The promise made to Abraham, Ge 22:18) "and in thy seed (

HEBREW, Sept. *en tw spermati sou*, where the words both in Hebrew and in Greek are in the singular number) shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," cannot refer to *all* the seed or the posterity of Abraham, taken collectively. He had two sons, Isaac by Rebecca, and Ishmael by Hagar, besides numerous descendants by Keturah, Ge 25:1, seq. Through a large part of these no particular blessings descended on the human family, and there is no sense in which all the families of the earth are particularly blessed in them. On any supposition,

therefore, there must have been *some* limitation of the promise; or the word "seed" was intended to include only *some* portion of his descendants— whether a particular branch, or an individual, does not yet appear. It must have referred to *a part* only of the posterity of Abraham; but to what part is to be learned only by subsequent revelations.

(3.) It was the *intention* of God to confine the blessing to one branch of the family—to *Isaac* and his descendants. The *peculiar* promised blessing was to be through him, and not through the family of Ishmael. This intention is often expressed, Ge 17:19-21; Ge 21:12; Ge 25:11. Comp. Ro 9:7 Heb 11:18. Thus the original promise of a blessing through the posterity of Abraham became somewhat *narrowed down*, so as to show that there was to be, a limitation of the promise to a particular portion of his posterity.

(4.) If the promise had referred to the two branches of the family, if it had been intended to include Ishmael as well as Isaac, then some term would have been used that would have expressed this. So unlike were Isaac and Ishmael; so different in the circumstances of their birth and their future life; so dissimilar were the prophecies respecting them, that it might be said that their descendants were two races of men; and in Scripture the race of Ishmael ceased to be spoken of as the descendants or the posterity of Abraham. There was a sense in which the posterity of Isaac was regarded as the seed or posterity of Abraham in which the descendants of Ishmael were not; and the term *sperma*, or "seed," therefore, properly designated the posterity of Isaac. It might be said, then, that the promise "to thy seed" did not refer to the two races, as if he had said *spermata* "seeds," but to *one*, *sperma*, "the seed" of Abraham, by way of eminence.

(5.) This promise was subsequently narrowed down still more, so as to include only one portion of the descendants of Isaac. Thus it was limited to the posterity of *Jacob*, Esau being excluded; subsequently the peculiar blessing was promised to the family of *Judah*, one of the twelve sons of *Jacob*, (Ge 49:10;) in subsequent times it was still further narrowed down, or limited to the family of *Jesse*; then to that of *David*; then to that of *Solomon*, until it terminated in the Messiah, The original intention of the promise was that there *should* be a limitation, and that limitation was made from age to age, until it terminated in the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. By being thus narrowed down from age to age, and limited by successive revelations, it was shown that the Messiah was eminently intended—which is what Paul says here. The promise was indeed, at first, general, and the term used was of the most general nature; but it was shown, from time to time, that God *intended* that it should be applied only to one branch or portion of the family of Abraham; and that limitation was finally so made as to terminate in the Messiah. This I take to be the meaning of this very difficult passage of Scripture; and though it may not be thought that all the perplexities are removed by these remarks, yet I trust they will be seen to be so far removed as that it will appear that there is real force in the argument of the apostle, and that it is not a mere trick of argument, or a quibble unworthy of him as an apostle and a man.

{a} "to Abraham" Ge 12:3,7, 17:7

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *The covenant that was confirmed before of God*. By God, in his promise to Abraham. It was confirmed *before* the giving of the law. The confirmation was the solemn promise which God made to him.

In Christ. With respect to the Messiah; a covenant relating to him, and which promised that he should descend from Abraham. The word "in," in the phrase "in Christ," does not quite express the meaning of the Greek, *eiv criston*. That means rather "*unto* Christ," or unto the Messiah; i.e., the covenant had respect to him. This is a common signification of the preposition *eiv*.

The law. The law given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai.

Which was four hundred and thirty years after. In regard to the difficulties which have been felt respecting the chronology referred to here, **See Barnes "Ac 7:6"**.

The exact time here referred to was probably when Abraham was called, and when the promise was first made to him. Assuming that as the time referred to, it is not difficult to make out the period of four hundred and thirty years. That promise was made when Abraham was seventy-five years old, Ge 12:3,4. From that time to the birth of Isaac, when Abraham was a hundred years old, was twenty-five years, Ge 21:5. Isaac was sixty when Jacob was born, Ge 25:26. Jacob went into Egypt when he was one hundred and thirty years old, Ge 47:9. And the Israelites sojourned there, according to the Septuagint, Ex 12:40, two hundred and fifteen years, which completes the number. See Doddridge, Whitby, and Bloomfield. This was doubtless the *common* computation in the time of Paul; and as his argument did not depend at all on the *exactness* of the reckoning, he took the estimate which was in common use, without pausing or embarrassing himself by an inquiry whether it was strictly accurate or not. His argument was the same, whether the law was given four hundred and thirty years after the promise, or only two hundred years. The argument is, that a law given *after* the solemn promise which had been made and confirmed, could not make that promise void. It would still be binding, according to the original intention; and the law must have been given for some purpose entirely different from that of the promise. No one can doubt the soundness of this argument. The promise to Abraham was of the nature of a compact. But no law given by one of the parties to a treaty or compact can disannul it. Two nations make a treaty of peace, involving solemn promises, pledges, and obligations. No *law* made afterwards by one of the nations can disannul or change that treaty. Two men make a contract with solemn pledges and promises. No act of one of the parties can change that, or alter the conditions. So it was with the covenant between God and Abraham. God made to him solemn promises, which could not be affected by a future giving of a law. God would feel himself to be under the most solemn obligation to fulfil all the promises which he had made to him.

{a} "which was" Ex 12:40,41

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *For if the inheritance*. The inheritance promised to Abraham. The sum of the promise was, that "he should be the heir of the world." See Ro 4:13, **See Barnes "Ro 4:13"**.

To that heirship or inheritance Paul refers here, and says that it was an essential part of it that it was to be in virtue of the promise made to him, and not by fulfilling the law.

Be of the law. If it be by observing the law of Moses; or if it come in any way by the fulfilling of law. This is plain. Yet the Jews contended that the blessings of justification and salvation were to be in virtue of the observance of the law of Moses. But if so, says Paul, then it could not be by the promise made to Abraham, since there could not be two ways of obtaining the same blessing.

But God gave it to Abraham by promise. That, says Paul, is a settled point. It is perfectly clear; and that is to be held as an indisputable fact, that the blessing was given to Abraham by a promise. That promise was confirmed and ratified hundreds of years before the law was given, and the giving of the law could not affect it. But that promise was, that he would be the ancestor of the Messiah, and that in him all the nations of the earth should be blessed. Of course, if they were to be blessed in this way, then it was not to be by the observance of the law, and the law must have been given for a different purpose. What that was, he states in the following verses.

{b} "if the inheritance" Ro 4:14

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Wherefore then serveth the law*? This is obviously an objection which might be urged to the reasoning which the apostle had pursued. It was very obvious to ask, if the principles which he had laid down were correct, of what use was the law? Why was it given at all? Why were there so many wonderful exhibitions of the Divine power at its promulgation? Why were there so many commendations of it in the Scriptures? And why were there so many injunctions to obey it? Are all these to be regarded as nothing, and is the law to be esteemed as worthless? To all this the apostle replies that the law was not useless, but that it was given by God for great and important purposes, and especially for purposes closely connected with the fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham and the work of the Mediator.

It was added, proseteyh. It was appended to all the previous institutions and promises. It was an *additional* arrangement, on the part of God, for great and important purposes. It was an arrangement *subsequent* to the giving of the promise, and was intended to secure important advantages until the superior arrangement under the Messiah should be introduced, and was with reference to that.

Because of transgressions. On account of transgressions, or with reference to them. The meaning is, that the law was given to show the true nature of transgressions, or to show what was sin. It was not to reveal a way of justification, but it was to disclose the true nature of sin; to deter men from committing it; to declare its penalty; to convince men of it, and thus to be "ancillary" to, and preparatory to, the work of redemption through the Redeemer. This is the true account of the law of God as given to apostate man, arid this use of the law still exists. This effect of the law is accomplished

(1) by showing us what God requires, and what is duty. It is the straight rule of what is right; and to depart from that is the measure of wrong.

(2.) It shows us the nature and extent of transgression, by showing us how far we have departed from it.

(3.) It shows what is the just penalty of transgression, and is thus fitted to reveal its true nature.

(4.) It is fitted to produce *conviction* for sin, and thus shows how evil and bitter a thing transgression is. **See Barnes "Ro 4:15"**; **See Barnes "Ro 7:7, also** Ro 7:8-11.

(5.) It thus shows its own inability to justify and save men, and is a preparatory arrangement to lead men to the cross of the Redeemer. **See Barnes "Ga 3:24"**.

At the same time,

(6.) the law was given with reference to transgressions, in order to keep men from transgression. It was designed to restrain and control them by its denunciations, and by the fear of its threatened penalties. When Paul says that the law was given on account of transgressions, we are not to suppose that this was the *sole* use of the law; but that this was a main or leading purpose. It may accomplish many other important purposes, (*Calvin*,) but this is one leading design. And this design it still accomplishes. It shows men their duty. It reminds them of their guilt. It teaches them how far they have wandered from God. It reveals to them the penalty of disobedience. It shows them that justification by the law is impossible, and that there must be some other way by which men must be saved. And since these advantages are derived from it, it is of importance that that law should be still proclaimed, and that its high demands and its penalties should be constantly held up to the view of men.

Till the seed should come, etc. The Messiah, to whom the promise particularly applied. See Ga 3:16. It is not implied here that the law would be of no use *after* that, but that it would accomplish important purposes *before* that. A large portion of the laws of Moses would then indeed cease to be binding. They were given to accomplish important purposes among the Jews until the Messiah should comic, and then they would give way to the more important institutions of the gospel. But the moral law would continue to accomplish valuable objects after his advent, in showing men the nature of transgression, and leading them to the cross of Christ. The essential idea of Paul here is, that the whole arrangement of the Mosaic economy, including all his laws, was with reference to the Messiah. It was a part of a great and glorious whole. It was not an independent thing. It did not stand by itself. It was incomplete, and in many respects unintelligible, until he came—as one part of a tally is unmeaning and useless until the other is found. In itself it did not justify or save men, but it served to introduce a system by which they could be saved. It contained no provisions for justifying men, but it was in the design of God an essential part of a system by which they could be saved. It was not a whole in itself, but it was a part of a glorious whole, and led to the completion and fulfillment of the entire scheme by which the race could be justified and brought to heaven.

And it was ordained by angels. That is, the law was ordained by angels. The word ordained, here, *diatageiv*, usually means to arrange; to dispose in order; and is commonly used with reference to the marshalling of an army. In regard to the sentiment here, that the law was ordained by angels, **See Barnes "Ac 7:13"**.

The Old Testament makes no mention of the presence of angels at the giving of the law; but it was a common opinion among the Jews, that the law was given by the instrumentality of angels, and arranged by them; and Paul speaks in accordance with this opinion. Comp. Heb 2:2. The sentiment here is, that the law was prescribed, ordered, or arranged by the instrumentality of the angels— an opinion, certainly, which none can prove *not* to be true. In itself considered, there is no more absurdity in the opinion that the law of God should be given by the agency of angels, than there is that it should be done by the instrumentality of man. In the Septuagint De 33:2 there is an allusion of the same kind. The Hebrew is, "From his right hand went a fiery law for them." The Seventy render this, "His angels with him on his right hand." Comp. Joseph. Ant. xv. 5, 3. That

angels were present at the giving of the law is more than implied, it is believed, in two passages of the Old Testament. The one is that which is referred to above, and a part of which the translators of the Septuagint expressly apply to angels, De 33:2. The Hebrew is, "Jehovah came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from Mount Paran, and he came [literally] with ten thousands of holiness;" that is, with his holy ten thousands, or with his holy myriads,

HEBREW

By the holy myriads here mentioned, what can be meant but the *angels*? The word "holy," in the Scriptures, is not given to storms, and winds, and tempests; and the natural interpretation is, that he was attended with vast hosts of intelligent beings. The same sentiment is found in Ps 68:17: "The chariots of God are myriads, thousands repeated; the Lord is in the midst of them, as in Sinai, as in his sanctuary." Does not this evidently imply, that when he gave the law on Mount Sinai he was surrounded by a multitude of angels? See Stuart on the Hebrews, Excursus viii. pp. 565—567. It may be added, that in the fact itself there is no improbability. What is more natural than to suppose that when the law of God was promulgated in such a solemn manner on Mount Sinai *to a world*, that the angels should be present? If any occasion on earth has ever occurred where their presence was allowable and proper, assuredly that was one. And yet the Scriptures abound with assurances that the angels are interested in human affairs, and that they have had an important agency in the concerns of man.

In the hand. That is, under the direction or control of. To be in the hand of one is to be under his control; and the idea is, that while this was done by the ordering of the angels, or by their disposition, it was under the control of a mediator. Rosenmuller, however, and others, suppose that this means simply *by*, (*per*;); that is, that it was done by the instrumentality of a mediator. But it seems to me to imply more than this; that the mediator, here referred to had some jurisdiction or control over the law thus given; or that it was subject to him, or with reference to him. The interpretation, however, will be affected by the view which is taken of the meaning of the word mediator.

Of a mediator. The word mediator *mesitou* means, properly, one who intervenes between two parties, either as an interpreter or *internuncius*, or as an intercessor or reconciler. In the New Testament, in all the places where it occurs, unless the passage before us be an exception, it is applied to the Lord Jesus, the great Mediator between God and man, 1Ti 2:5 Heb 8:6, 9:15 12:24.

There has been some difference of opinion as to the reference of the word here. Rosenmuller, Grotius, Doddridge, Bloomfield, Robinson, (*Lex*.,) Chandler, and many others, suppose that it refers to Moses. Calvin and many others suppose that the reference is to Christ. The common sentiment among expositors undoubtedly is, that the reference is to Moses; and it is by no means easy to show that that is not the correct opinion. But to me it seems that there are reasons why it should be regarded as having reference to the great Mediator between God and man. Some of the reasons which incline me to this opinion are,

(1.) that the name mediator is not, so far as I know, applied to Moses elsewhere in the Scriptures.

(2.) The name is appropriated to the Lord Jesus. This is certainly the case in the New Testament, unless the passage before us be an exception; and the name is not found in the Old Testament.

(3.) It is difficult to see the pertinency of the remark here, or the bearing on the argument on the supposition that it refers to Moses. How would it affect the drift and purport of the apostle's reasoning? How would it bear on the case? But on the supposition that it refers to the Lord Jesus, that would be a material fact in the argument. It would show that the law was subordinate to the

Messiah, and was with reference to him. It was not only subservient by being ordained by angels, but as being under the Mediator, and with reference to him, until he, the "promised seed," should come.

(4.) It is only by such an interpretation that the following "vexed" verse can be understood. If that be applied to Moses, I see not that any sense can be affixed to it that shall be pertinent or intelligible. These reasons may not appear satisfactory to others; and I admit they are not as clear as would be desirable that reasons should be in the exposition of the Bible, but they may be allowed perhaps to have *some* weight. If they are of weight, then the sentiment of the passage is, that the law was wholly subordinate, and could not make the promise of no effect. For

(1) it was given hundreds of years after the promise.

(2.) It was under the direction of angels, who must themselves be inferior to and subordinate to the Messiah, the Mediator between God and man. If given by their agency and instrumentality, however important it might be, it could not interfere with a direct promise made by God himself, but must be subordinate to that promise.

(3.) It was under the Mediator, the promised Messiah. It was in his hand, and subject to him. It was a part of the great plan which was contemplated in the promise, and was tributary to that, and must be so regarded. It was not an independent scheme; not a thing that stood by itself; but a scheme subordinate and tributary, and wholly under the control of the Mediator, and a part of the plan of redemption, and of course to be modified or abrogated just as that This should require, and to be regarded as wholly tributary, to it. This view will accord certainly with the argument of Paul, and with his design in showing, that the law could by no means, and in no way, interfere with the promise made to Abraham, but must be regarded as wholly subordinate to the plan of redemption.

{*} "serveth" "To what purpose then was" {c} "It was" Ro 5:20 {d} "seed" Ga 3:16 {a} "by angels" Ac 7:53 {b} "a mediator" Ex 20:19-22 De 5:22-31

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Now a mediator is not* a mediator *of one*, etc. This verse has given great perplexity to commentators. "There is, unquestionably," says Bloomfield, "no passage in the New Testament that has so much, and to so little purpose, exercised the learning and ingenuity of commentators as the present, which seems to defy all attempts to elicit any satisfactory sense, except by methods so violent as to be almost the same thing as writing the passage afresh." In regard, however, to the truth of the declarations here—that "a mediator is not a mediator of one," and that "God is one"—there cad be no doubt, and no difficulty. The very idea of a mediator supposes that there are two parties or persons between whom the mediator comes, either to reconcile them or to bear some message from the one to the other; and it is abundantly affirmed also, in the Old Testament, that there is but one God. See De 6:4. But the difficulty is, to see the pertinency or the bearing of the remark on the argument of the apostle. What does he intend to illustrate by the declaration? and how do the truths which he states illustrate the point before him? It is not consistent with the design of these Notes to detail the numerous opinions which have been entertained of the passage. They may be found in the larger commentaries, and particularly may be seen in Koppe, Excursus vii., on the Galatians. After referring to a number of works on the passage, Rosenmuller adopts the

following interpretation, proposed by Noesselt, as expressing the true sense: But he (i.e., Moses) is not a mediator of one race, (to wit, the Abrahamic,) but God is the same God of them and of the Gentiles. The sense according to this is, that Moses had not reference in his office as mediator or as *internuncius* to the descendants of Abraham, or to that *one seed* or race, referred to in the promise. He added the hard conditions of the law; required its stem and severe observances; his institutions pertained to the Jews mainly. They indeed might obtain the favour of God, but by compliance with the severe laws which he had ordained. But to the *one seed*, the whole posterity of Abraham, they concerning whom the promise was made, the Gentiles as well as the Jews, he had no reference in his institutions: all their favours, therefore, must depend on the fulfillment of the *promise* made to Abraham. But God is one and the same in reference to all. His promise pertains to all. He is the common God to the Jews and the Gentiles. There is great difficulty in embracing this view of the passage, but it is not necessary for me to state the difficulty, or to attempt to show that the view here proposed cannot be defended. Whitby has expressed substantially the same interpretation of this passage: "But this mediator (namely, Moses) was only the mediator of the Jews, and so was only the mediator of one party, to whom belonged the blessing of Abraham, Ga 3:8,14. But God, who made the promise, `That in one should all the families of the earth be blessed,' is one; the God of the other party, the Gentiles as well as the Jews, and so as ready to justify the one as the other." According to this interpretation, the sense is, that Moses was mediator of *one part* of Abraham's seed, the Israelites; but was not the mediator of the *other part* of that seed, the Gentiles; yet there was the same God to both parties, who was equally ready to justify both. Locke has expressed a view of the passage which differs somewhat from this, but which has quite as much plausibility. According to his exposition it means, that God was but one of the parties to the promise. The Jews and the Gentiles made up the other. But at the giving of the law, Moses was a mediator only between God and *the Israelites*, and, therefore, could not transact anything which would tend to the disannulling of the promise which was between God and *the Jews and Gentiles* together, the other party to the promise. Or in other words, at the covenant made on Mount Sinai, there was really present but one of the parties, and consequently nothing could be done that would affect the other. Moses did not appear in behalf of the Gentiles. They had no representative there. He was engaged only for the Jews, for *a part* only of the one party, and that part could not transact anything for the whole. The giving of the law, therefore, could not affect the promise which was made to Abraham, and which related to the Jews and the Gentiles as together constituting one party. This view is plausible. It has been adopted by Doddridge, and perhaps *may* be the true interpretation. No one can deny, however, that it is forced, and that it is far from being obvious. It seems to be *making a meaning for the apostle*, or furnishing him with an argument, rather than explaining the one which he has chosen to use; and it may be doubted whether Paul would have used an argument that required so much explanation as this before it could be understood. All these expositions proceed on the supposition that the word "mediator" here refers to Moses, and that the transaction here referred to was that on Mount Sinai. I would suggest a sense of the passage which I have found in none of the commentaries which I have consulted, and which I would, therefore, propose with diffidence. All that I can claim for it is, that it *may* possibly be the meaning. According to the view which I shall submit, the words here are to be regarded as used in their usual signification; and the simplest interpretation possible is to be given to the propositions in the verse. One proposition is, that a mediator is not appointed with reference to one party, but to two. This proposition is universal. Wherever there is a mediator, there are *always* two parties. The other proposition is, that God is

one; that is, that he is the same one God, in whatever form his will may be made known to men—whether by a promise as to Abraham, or by the law as to Moses. The interpretation which I would propose embraces the following particulars:

(1.) The *design* of the apostle is, to show that the giving of the law could not abrogate or affect the promise made to Abraham; and to show at the same time what is its true object. It could not annul the promises, says Paul. It was given long after, and could not affect them Ga 3:17. It was an *addition*, an *appendage*, a subsequent enactment for a specific purpose, yet a part of the same general plan, and subordinate to the Mediator, Ga 3:19. It was to be shown also that the law was not *against* the promises of God. It was a good law, Ga 3:21; and was not designed to be an opposing system, or intended to counteract the promise, or the scheme of salvation by promise, but was a part of the same great plan.

(2.) A mediator *always* supposes two parties. In all the transactions, therefore, where a mediator is employed, there is supposed to be two parties. When, therefore, the promise was made to Abraham with reference to the Messiah, the great Mediator, and when the law was given in the hand of the Mediator, and under his control, there is *always* supposed to be two parties.

(3.) The whole arrangement here referred to is under the Mediator, and with reference to him. The promise made to Abraham had reference to him, and to those who should believe on him; and the law given by Moses was also under him, and with reference to him. He was the grand object and agent of all. He was the Mediator with reference to both. Each transaction had reference to him, though in different ways; the transaction with Abraham relating to him in connexion with a promise; the transaction at the giving of the law being under his control *as* Mediator, and being a part of the one great plan. There was an *identity* of plan; and the plan had reference to the Messiah, the great Mediator.

(4.) God is one and the same. He is throughout one of the parties; *and he does not change*. However the arrangements may vary, whether in giving the law or imparting a promise, he is the same. There is but one God in all the transaction; and he, throughout, constitutes one of the parties. The other party is man, at first receiving the promise from this one God with reference to the Mediator through Abraham, and then receiving the law through the same Mediator on Mount Sinai. He is still the one party unchanged; and there is the same Mediator, implying all along that there are two parties.

(5.) It follows, therefore, agreeably to the argument of the apostle, that the law given so long after the promise could not abrogate it, because they pertained to the same plan, were under the same one God, who was one unchanging party in all this transaction, and had reference to the same Mediator, and were alike under his control. It followed, also, that the law was temporary, Ga 3:19 *interposed* for important purposes until the "seed should come," because it was a part of the same general arrangement, and was under the control of the same Mediator, and directed by the same one God, the unchanging one party in all these transactions. It followed, further, that the one could not be against the other, Ga 3:21, because they were a part of the same plan, under the control of the same Mediator, and where the same God remained unchanged as the one party. All that is assumed in this interpretation is,

(a.) that there was but *one* plan or arrangement, or that the transaction with Abraham and with Moses were parts of one great scheme; and,

(b.) that the Mediator here referred to was not Moses, but the Messiah, the Son of God. The following paraphrase will express the sense which I have endeavoured to convey:

"The giving of the law could not annul or abrogate the promise made to Abraham. It was long after that, and it was itself subservient to that. It was given by the instrumentality of angels, and it was entirely under the control of the Mediator, the Messiah. The plan was one; and all the parts of it, in the promise made to Abraham, and in the giving of the law, were subordinate to him. A mediator always supposes two parties; and the reference to the mediator, alike in the promise to Abraham and in the giving of the law, supposes that there were two parties. God is one party—the same unchanging God in all the forms of the promise and of the law. In this state of things, it is impossible that the law should clash with the promise, or that it should supersede or modify it. It was a part of the one great plan; appointed with reference to the work which the Mediator came to do, and in accordance with the promise made to Abraham; and therefore they could not be contradictory and inconsistent."

It is assumed in all this that the Messiah was contemplated in the whole arrangement, and that it was entered into with reference to him. That this may be assumed no one can deny who believes the Scriptures. The whole arrangement in the Old Testament, it is supposed, was designed to be ancillary to redemption; and the interpretation which has been submitted above is based on that supposition.

{c} "God is one" De 6:4

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 21

Verse 21. Is the law then against the promises of God? Is the law of Moses to be regarded as opposed to the promises made to Abraham? Does this follow from any view which can be taken of the subject? The object of the apostle in asking this question is, evidently, to take an opportunity to deny, in the most positive manner, that there can be any such clashing or contradiction. He shows, therefore, what was the design of the law, and declares that the object was to further the plan contemplated in the promise made to Abraham. It was an auxiliary to that. It was as good as a law could be; and it was designed to prepare the way for the fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham.

God forbid. It cannot be. It is impossible. I do not hold such an opinion. Such a sentiment by no means follows from what has been advanced. Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 3:4"**.

For if there had been a law given which could have given life. The law of Moses is as good as a law can be. It is pure, and holy, and good. It is not the design to insinuate anything against the law in itself, or to say that as a law it is defective. But law could not give life. It is not its nature; and man cannot be justified by obedience to it. No man ever has yielded perfect compliance with it, and no man, therefore, can be justified by it. **See Barnes** "Ga 2:16, **See Barnes "Ga 3:10"**.

Verily righteousness should have been by the law. Or justification would have been secured by the law. The law of Moses was as well adapted to this as a law could be. No better law could have been originated for this purpose; and if men were to *attempt* to justify themselves before God by their own works, the law of Moses would be as favourable for such an undertaking as any law which could be revealed. It is as reasonable, and equal, and pure. Its demands are as just, and its terms as favourable, as could be any of the terms of mere law. And *such* a law has been given, in part, in order to show that. justification by the law is out of the question. If men could not be justified by a law so pure, and equal, and just, so reasonable in all its requirements, and so perfect, how could they expect to be justified by conformity to any *inferior* or *less perfect* rule of life? The fact, therefore, that no one can be justified by the pure law revealed on Mount Sinai, for ever settles the question about the possibility of being justified by law.

{a} "against the promises" Mt 5:17 {b} "if there had been" Ga 2:21

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *But the Scripture*. The Old Testament, **See Barnes** "Joh 5:39, containing the law of Moses.

Hath concluded all under sin. Has *shut up sunekleisen* all under the condemnation of sin; that is, has declared all men, no matter what their rank and external character, to be sinners. Of course, they cannot be justified by that law which declares them to be guilty, and which condemns them, any more than the law of the land will acquit a murderer, and pronounce him innocent, at the same time that it holds him to be guilty. In regard to the meaning of the expression here used, **See Barnes "Ro 11:32"**.

Comp. Ro 3:9,19.

That the promise by faith of Jesus Christ, etc. That the promise referred to in the transaction with Abraham, the promise of justification and life by faith in the Messiah. Here we see *one* design of the law. It was to show that they could not be justified by their own works, *to hedge up their way* in regard to justification by their own righteousness, and to show them their need of a better righteousness. The law accomplishes the same end now. It shows men that they are guilty; and it does it in order that they may be brought under the influence of the pure system of the gospel, and become interested in the promises which are connected with eternal salvation.

{c} "all under sin" Ro 3:19,19,23

{d} "promise by faith" Ro 4:11,12,16

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *But before faith came*. That is, the system of salvation by faith in the Lord Jesus. Faith here denotes the Christian religion, because faith is its distinguishing characteristic.

We were kept under the law. We, who were sinners; we, who have violated the law. It is a general truth, that before the gospel was introduced, men were under the condemning sentence of the law.

Shut up unto the faith. Enclosed by the law with reference to the full and glorious revelation of a system of salvation by faith. The design and tendency of the law was to shut us up to that as the only method of salvation. All other means failed. The law condemned every other mode, and the law condemned all who attempted to be justified in any other way. Man, therefore, was shut up to that as his last hope; and could look only to that for any possible prospect of salvation. The word which in this verse is rendered "were kept," *efrouroumeya*, usually means to guard or watch, as in a castle, or as prisoners are guarded; and though the word should not be pressed too far in the interpretation, yet it implies that there was a rigid scrutiny observed; that the law guarded: them; that there was no way of escape; and that they were shut up, as prisoners under sentence of death, to the only hope, which was that of *pardon*.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster*. The word rendered *schoolmaster*, *paidagwgov*, whence the word *pedagogue*, referred originally to a slave or freedman, to whose care boys were committed, and who accompanied them to the public schools. The idea here is not that, of *instructor*, but there is reference to the office and duty of the *paedagogus* among the ancients. The office was usually intrusted to slaves or freedmen. It is true, that when the paedagogus was properly qualified, he assisted the children committed to his care in preparing their lessons. But still his main duty was not *instruction*, but it was to watch over the boys; to restrain them from evil and temptation; and to conduct them to the schools, where they might receive instruction. See, for illustrations of this, Wetstein, Bloomfield, etc. In the passage before us, the proper notion of *pedagogue* is retained. In our sense of the word *schoolmaster*, Christ is the schoolmaster, and not the law. The law performs the office of the ancient pedagogue, to *lead us* to the teacher or the instructor. That teacher or instructor is Christ. The ways in which the law does this may be the following:

(1.) It *restrains* us and rebukes us, and keeps us as the ancient pedagogue did his boys.

(2.) The whole law was designed to be introductory to Christ. The sacrifices and offerings were designed to shadow forth the Messiah, and to introduce him to the world.

(3.) The moral law—the law of God—shows men their sin and danger, and thus leads them to the Saviour. It condemns them, and thus prepares them to welcome the offer of pardon through a Redeemer.

(4.) It *still* does this. The whole economy of the Jews was designed to do this; and under the preaching of the gospel it is still done. Men see that they are condemned; they are convinced by the law that they cannot save themselves, and thus they are led to the Redeemer. The effect of the preached gospel is to showy men their sins, and thus to be preparatory, to the embracing of the offer of pardon. Hence the importance of preaching the law still; and hence it is needful that men should be made to feel that they are sinners, in order that they may be prepared to embrace the offers of mercy. Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 10:4"**.

{e} "the law" Col 2:17 Heb 9:9,10
{*} "schoolmaster" "Guide"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *But after that faith is come*. The scheme of salvation by faith. After that is revealed. **See Barnes "Ga 3:23"**.

We are no longer under a schoolmaster. Under the *pedagogus*, or pedagogue. We are not kept in restraint, and under bondage, and led along to another to receive instruction. We are directly under the great Teacher, the Instructor himself; and have a kind of freedom which we were not allowed before. The bondage and servitude have passed away; and we are free from the burdensome ceremonies and expensive rites (comp. **See Barnes "Ac 15:10"**) of the Jewish law, and from the sense of condemnation which it imposes. This was true of the converts from Judaism to Christianity—that they became free from the burdensome rites of the law; and it is true of all converts to the faith of Christ, that, having been made to see their sin by the law, and having been conducted by it to the cross of the Redeemer, they are now made free.

{*} "schoolmaster" "guide"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *For ye are all the children of God*, etc. All who bear the Christian name—the converts from among the Jews and Gentiles alike. **See Barnes "Joh 1:12"**.

The idea here is, that they are no longer under tutors and governors; they are no longer subject to the direction and will of the *paedagogus*; they are arrived at age, and are admitted to the privileges of sons. **See Barnes "Ga 4:1"**.

The language here is derived from the fact, that until the son arrived at age, he was in many respects not different from a servant. He was under laws and restraints, and subject to the will of another. When of age, he entered on the privileges of heirship, and was free to act for himself. Thus, under the law, men were under restraints, and subject to heavy exactions. Under the gospel, they are free, and admitted to the privileges of the sons of God.

{a} "children of God" Joh 1:12 1Jo 3:1,2

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *For as many of you*. Whether by nature Jews or Gentiles.

As have been baptized into Christ. Or *unto eiv*—the same preposition which, in Ga 3:24, is rendered *unto* Christ. That is, they were baptized *with reference* to him, or receiving him as the Saviour. See this explained **See Barnes "Ro 6:3"**.

Have put on Christ. That is, they have put on his sentiments, opinions, characteristic traits, etc., as a man clothes himself. This language was common among the ancient writers. **See Barnes "Ro 13:14".**

{c} "For as many of you" Ro 6:3

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *There is neither Jew nor Greek*. All are on a level; all are saved in the same way; all are entitled to the same privileges. There is no favoritism on account of birth, beauty, or blood. All confess that they are sinners; all are saved by the merits of the same Saviour; all are admitted to the same privileges as children of God. The word "Greek" here is used to denote the Gentiles generally; since the whole world was divided by the Jews into "Jews and Greeks"— the Greeks being the foreign nation best known to them. The Syriac renders it here "*Aramean*," using the word to denote the Gentiles generally. The meaning is, that whatever was the birth, or rank, or nation, or colour, or complexion, all under the gospel were on a level. They were admitted to the same privileges, and endowed with the same hopes of eternal life. This does not mean that all the civil distinctions among men are to be disregarded; it does not mean that no respect is to be shown to those in office, or to men in elevated rank; it does not mean that all are on a level in regard to talents, comforts, or wealth; but it means *only* that all men are on a level in *regard to religion*. This is the sole point under discussion; and the interpretation should be limited to this. It is not a fact that men are on a level in all things, nor is it a fact that the gospel designs to break down all the distinctions of society. Paul means to teach that no man has any preference or advantage in the kingdom of God because he is a rich man, or because he is of elevated rank; no one is under any disadvantage because he is poor, or because he is ignorant, or a slave. All at the foot of the cross are sinners; all at the communion table are saved by the same grace; all who enter into heaven, will enter clothed in the same robes of salvation, and arranged, not as princes and nobles, and rich men and poor men, in separate orders and ranks, but mingling together as redeemed by the same blood, and arranged in ranks according to their eminence in holiness. Comp. **See Barnes "Isa 56:8".**

There is neither bond nor free. The condition of a free man does not give him any peculiar claims or advantages in regard to religion; and the condition of a slave does not exclude him from the hope of heaven, or from being regarded as a child of God, on the same terms, and entitled to the same privileges as his master. In regard to religion, they are on the same level. They are alike sinners, and are alike saved by grace. They sit down at the same communion table; and they look forward to the same heaven. Christianity does not admit the one to favour because he is free, or exclude the other because he is a slave. Nor, when they are admitted to favour, does it give the one a right to lord it over the other, or to feel that he is of any more value in the eye of the Redeemer, or any nearer to his heart. The essential idea is, that they are on a level, and that they are admitted to the favour of God without respect to their external condition in society. I do not see any evidence in this passage that the Christian religion designed to abolish slavery, any more than I do in the following phrase, "there is neither male nor female," that it was intended to abolish the distinction of the sexes; nor do I see in this passage any evidence that there should not be proper respect shown by the servant to his master, though both of them are Christians, any more than there is in the

following phrase, that suitable respect should not be shown in the intercourse with the sexes. Comp. 1Ti 6:1-5. But the proof is explicit, that masters and slaves may alike become Christians on the same terms, and are, in regard to their religious privileges and hopes, on a level. No peculiar favour is shown to the one, in the matter of salvation, because he is free, nor is the other excluded because he is a slave. And from this it follows,

(1.) that they should sit down to the same communion table. There should be no invidious and odious distinctions there.

(2.) They should be regarded alike as Christian brethren in the house of God, and should be addressed and treated accordingly.

(3.) The slave should excite the interest, and receive the watchful care of the pastor, as well as his master. Indeed, he may need it more; and from his ignorance, and the fewness of his opportunities, it may be proper that special attention should be bestowed on him. In regard to this doctrine of Christianity, that there is neither "bond nor free" among those who are saved, or that all are on a level in regard to salvation, we may remark further,

(1.) that it is peculiar to Christianity. All other systems of religion and philosophy *make* different ranks, and endeavour to promote the distinctions of *caste* among men. They teach that certain men are the favourites of heaven, in virtue of their birth or their rank in life, or that they have peculiar facilities for salvation. Thus, in India, the Brahmin is regarded as, by his birth, the favourite of heaven, and all others are supposed to be of a degraded rank. The great effort of men, in their systems of religion and philosophy, has been to show that there are favoured ranks and classes, and to make permanent distinctions on account of birth and blood. Christianity regards all men as made of one blood to dwell on all the face of the earth, **See Barnes** "Ac 17:26, and esteems them all to be equal in the matter of salvation; and whatever notions of *equality* prevail in the world, are to be traced to the influence of the Christian religion.

(2.) If men are regarded as equal before God, and as entitled to the same privileges of salvation; if there is in the great work of redemption "neither bond nor free," and those who are in the church are on a level, then such a view will induce a master to treat his slave with kindness, when that relation exists. The master who has any right feelings will regard his servant as a Christian brother, redeemed by the same blood as himself, and destined to the same heaven. He will esteem him not as "a chattel," or "a thing," or as a piece "of property," but he will regard him as an immortal being, destined with himself to the same heaven, and about to sit down with him in the realms of glory. How can he treat such a brother with unkindness or severity? How can he rise from the same communion table with him, and give way to violent feelings against him, and regard him and treat him as if he were a brute? And Christianity, by the simple principle that "the slave is a brother in the Lord," will do more to mitigate the horrors of slavery than all the enactments that men can make, and all the other views and doctrines which can be made to prevail in society. See Phm 1:16.

(3.) This doctrine would lead to universal emancipation. All are on a level before God. In the kingdom of Jesus there is neither bond nor free. One is as much an object of favour as another. With this feeling, how can a Christian hold his fellow Christian in bondage? How can he regard as "a chattle," or "a thing," one who, like himself, is an heir of glory? How can he *sell* him on whom the blood of Jesus has been sprinkled? Let him feel that his slave is his equal in the sight of God; that with himself he is an heir of glory; that together they are soon to stand on Mount Sion above; that the slave is an immortal being, and has been redeemed by the blood of Calvary, and how *can* he hold such a being in bondage, and how can he transfer him from place to place, and from hand

to hand, for gold? If all masters and all slaves were to come Christians, slavery would at once cease; and the prevalence of the single principle before us would put an end to all the ways banished slavery from the Roman empire.

There is neither male nor female. Neither the male nor the female have any peculiar advantages for salvation. There are no favours shown on account of sex. Both sexes are, in this respect, on a level. This does not mean, of course, that the sexes are to be regarded as in all respects equal; nor can it mean that the two sexes may not have peculiar duties and privileges in other respects. It does not prove that one of the sexes may not perform important offices in the church, which would not be proper for the other. It does not prove that the duties of the ministry are to be performed by the female sex; nor that the various duties of domestic life, nor the various offices of society, should be performed without any reference to the distinction of sex. The interpretation should be confined to the matter under consideration; and the passage proves only that *in regard to salvation* they are on a level. One sex is not to be regarded as peculiarly the favourite of heaven, and the other to be excluded. Christianity thus elevates the female sex to an equality with the male, on the most important of all interests; and it has in this way made most important changes in the world wherever it has prevailed. Everywhere but in connexion with the Christian religion, woman has been degraded. She has been kept in ignorance. She has been treated as an inferior in all respects. She has been doomed to unpitied drudgery, and ignorance, and toil. So she was among the ancient Greeks and Romans; so she is among the savages of America; so she is in China, and India, and in the islands of the sea; so she is regarded in the Koran, and in all Mohammedan countries. It is Christianity alone which has elevated her; and nowhere on earth does man regard the mother of his children as an intelligent companion and friend, except where the influence of the Christian religion has been felt. At the communion table, at the foot of the cross, and in the hopes of heaven, she is on a level with man; and this fact diffuses a mild, and purifying, and elevating influence over all the relations of life. Woman has been raised from deep degradation by the influence of Christianity; and, let me add, she has everywhere acknowledged the debt of gratitude, and devoted herself, as under a deep sense of obligation, to lessening the burdens of humanity, and to the work of elevating the degraded, instructing the ignorant, and comforting the afflicted, all over the world. Never has a debt been better repaid, or the advantages of elevating one portion of the race been more apparent.

For ye are all one in Christ Jesus. You are all equally accepted through the Lord Jesus Christ; or you are all on the same level, and entitled to the same privileges in your Christian profession. Bond and free, male and female, Jew and Greek, are admitted to equal privileges, and are equally acceptable before God. And the church of God, no matter what may be the complexion, the country, the habits, or the rank of its members, IS ONE. Every man on whom is the image and the blood of Christ, is A BROTHER to every other one who bears that image, and should be treated accordingly. What an influence would be excited in the breaking up of the distinctions of rank and *caste* among men, what an effect in abolishing the prejudice on account of colour and country, if this were universally believed and felt!

{c} "neither Jew" Col 3:11

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *And if ye be Christ's*. If you belong to the Messiah, and are interested in his work.

Then are ye Abraham's seed. The promise made to Abraham related to the Messiah. It was a promise that in him all should be blessed. Abraham believed in that Messiah, and was distinguished for his faith in him who was to come. If they believed in Christ, therefore, they showed that they were the spiritual descendants of Abraham. No matter whether they were Jews or Gentiles—whether they had been circumcised or not—they had the same spirit which he evinced, and were interested in the promises made to him.

And heirs according to the promise. See Ro 8:17. Are heirs of God. You inherit the blessings promised to Abraham, and partake of the felicity to which he looked forward. You have become truly heirs of God, and this is in accordance with the promise made to Abraham. It is not by the obedience of the law; it is by faith—in the same way that Abraham possessed the blessing: an arrangement *before* the giving of the law, and therefore one that may include *all*, whether Jews or Gentiles. All are on a level; and all are alike the children of God, and in the same manner, and on the same terms that Abraham was.

{a} "Abraham's seed" Ga 3:7 {b} "heirs" Ro 8:17

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 4

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 1

GALATIANS CHAPTER IV

The design of this chapter is to show the effect of being under the law, and the inconsistency of that kind of bondage or servitude with the freedom which is vouchsafed to the true children of God by the gospel. It is in accordance with the whole drift of the epistle, to recall the Galatians to just views of the gospel, and to convince them of their error in returning to the practice of the Mosaic rites and customs. In the previous chapter he had shown them that believers in the gospel were the true children of Abraham; that they had been delivered from the curse of the law; that the law was a schoolmaster to lead them to Christ, and that they were all the children of God. To illustrate this further, and to show them the true nature of the freedom which they had as the children of God, is the design of the argument in this chapter. He therefore states:—

(1.) That it was under the gospel only that they received the full advantages of freedom, Ga 4:1-5. Before Christ came, indeed, there were true children of God, and heirs of life. But they were in the condition of *minors*, they had not the privileges of *sons*. An heir to a great estate, says the apostle, Ga 4:1,2, is treated substantially as if he were a servant. He is under tutors and governors; he is not permitted to enter on his inheritance; he is kept under the restraint of law. So it was with the people of God under the law of Moses. They were under restraints, and were admitted to comparatively few of the privileges of the children of God. But Christ came to redeem those who were under the law, and to place them in the elevated condition of adopted sons, Ga 4:4,5. They were no longer servants; and it was as unreasonable that they should conform again to the Mosaic

rites and customs, as it would be for the heir of full age, and who has entered on his inheritance, to return to the condition of minorship, and to be placed again under tutors and governors, and to be treated as a servant.

(2.) As sons of God, God had sent forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts, and they were enabled to cry, Abba, Father. They were no longer servants, but heirs of God, and should avail themselves of the privileges of heirs, Ga 4:6,7.

(3.) Sustaining this relation, and being admitted to these privileges, the apostle remonstrates with them for returning again to the "weak and beggarly elements" of the former dispensation—the condition of servitude to rites and customs in which they were before they embraced the gospel, Ga 4:8-11. When they were ignorant of God, they served those who were no gods, and there was some excuse for that, Ga 4:8. But now they had known God; they were acquainted with his laws; they were admitted to the privileges of his children; they were made free, and there could be no excuse for returning again to the bondage of those who had no true knowledge of the liberty which the gospel gave. Yet they observed days and times, as though these were binding, and they had never been freed from them, Ga 4:10; and the apostle says, that he is afraid that his labours bestowed on them, to make them acquainted with the plan of redemption, had been in vain.

(4.) To bring them to a just sense of their error, he reminds them of their former attachment to him, Ga 4:12-20. He had indeed preached to them amidst much infirmity, and much that was fitted to prejudice them against him, Ga 4:13; but they had disregarded that, and had evinced towards him the highest proofs of attachment —so much so, that they had received him as an angel of God, Ga 4:14, and had been ready to pluck out their own eyes to give them to him, Ga 4:15. With great force, therefore, he asks them why they had changed their views towards him, so far as to forsake his doctrines? Had he become their enemy by telling the truth? Ga 4:16. He tenderly addresses them, therefore, as little children, and says, that he has the deepest solicitude for their welfare, and the deepest anxiety on account of their danger—a solicitude which he compares Ga 4:19 with the pains of childbirth.

(5.) In order to enforce the whole subject, and to show the true nature of the conformity to the law compared with the liberty of the gospel, he allegorizes an interesting part of the Mosaic history—the history of the two children of Abraham, Ga 4:21-31. The condition of Hagar—a slave, under the command of a master, harshly treated, cast out and disowned—was an apt illustration of the condition of those who were under the servitude of the law. It would strikingly represent Mount Sinai, and the law that was promulgated there, and the condition of those who were under the law. That, too, was a condition of servitude. The law was stern, and showed no mercy. It was like a master of a slave, and would treat those who were under it with a rigidness that might be compared with the condition of Hagar and her son, Ga 4:24,25. That same Mount Sinai also was a fair representation of Jerusalem as it was then—a city full of rites and ceremonies, where the law reigned with rigour, where there was a burdensome and expensive system of religion, and where there was none of the freedom which the gospel would furnish, Ga 4:25. On the other hand, the children of the free woman were an apt illustration of those who were made from the oppressive ceremonies of the law by the gospel, Ga 4:22. That Jerusalem was free. The new system from heaven was one of liberty and rejoicing, Ga 4:26,27. Christians were, like Isaac, the children of promise, and were not slaves to the law Ga 4:28,31. And as there was a command Ga 4:30 to cast out the bondwoman and her son, so the command now was to reject all that would bring the mind into ignoble servitude, and prevent its enjoying the full freedom of the gospel. The whole argument, is, that it would be

as unreasonable for those who were Christians to submit again to the Jewish rites and ceremonies, as it would be for a freeman to sell himself into slavery. And the design of the whole is, to recall them from the conformity to Jewish rites and customs, and from their regarding them- as now binding on Christians.

VERSE 1. *Now I say*. He had before said; Ga 3:24,25, that while they were under the law they were in a state Of minority. This sentiment he proceeds further to illustrate by showing the true condition of one who was a minor.

That the heir. Any heir to an estate, or one who has a prospect of an inheritance. No matter how great is the estate; no matter how wealthy his father; no matter to how elevated a rank he may be raised on the moment that he enters on his inheritance, yet till that time he is in the condition of a servant.

As long as he is a child. Until he arrives at the age. The word rendered "child," *nhpiov*, properly means *an infant*; literally, one not speaking, (*nh*, insep, un, *epov*;) and hence a child, or babe, but without any definite limitation.—*Rob*. It is used as the word infant is with us in law, to denote a *minor*.

Differeth nothing from a servant. That is, he has no more control of his property; he has it not at his command. This does not mean that he does not differ *in any respect*, but only that in *the matter under consideration* he does not differ. He differs in his prospects of inheriting the property, and in the affections of the father, and usually in the advantages of education, and in the respect and attention shown him; but in regard to property he does not differ, and he is like a servant, under the control and direction of others.

Though he be lord of all. That is, in prospect. He has a prospective right to all the property, which no one else has. The word "lord" here, *kuriov*, is used in the same sense in which it is often in the Scriptures, to denote master or owner. The idea which this is designed to illustrate is, that the condition of the Jews before the coming of the Messiah was inferior, in many respects, to what the condition of the friends of God would be under him—as inferior as the condition of an heir was before he was of age, to what it would be when he should enter on his inheritance, The Jews claimed indeed, that they were the children or the sons of God—a title which the apostle would not withhold from the pious part of the nation; but it was a condition in which they had not entered on the full inheritance, and which was far inferior to that of those who had embraced the Messiah, and who were admitted to the full privileges of sonship. They were indeed heirs. They were interested in the promises. But still they were in a condition of comparative servitude, and could be made free only by the gospel.

{*} "lord" "Master"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *But is under*. Is subject to their control and direction.

Tutors. The word *tutor*, with us, properly means instructor. But this is not quite the sense of the original. The word *epitropov* properly means steward, manager, agent, Mt 20:8 Lu 8:3. As used here, it refers to one—usually a slave or a freedman—to whose care the boys of a family were

committed, who trained them up, accompanied them to school, or sometimes instructed them at home. Comp. **See Barnes "Ga 3:24"**.

Such a one would have the control of them.

And governors. This word *oikonomov* means a house-manager, an overseer, a steward. It properly refers to one who had authority over the slaves or servants of a family, to assign them their tasks and portions. They generally also had the management of the affairs of the household, and of the accounts. They were commonly slaves, who were intrusted with this office as a reward for fidelity; though sometimes free persons were employed, Lu 16:1,3,8.

These persons had also charge of the sons of a family, probably in respect to their *pecuniary* matters, and thus differed from those called *tutors*. It is not necessary, however, to mark the difference in the words with great accuracy. The general meaning of the apostle is, that the heir was under government and restraint.

Until the time appointed of the father. The time fixed for his entering on the inheritance. The time when he chose to give him his portion of the property. The law with us fixes the age at twenty-one when a son shall be at liberty to manage for himself. Other countries have affixed other times. But still the time when the son shall inherit the father's property must be fixed by the father himself, if he is living, or may be fixed by his will if he is deceased. The son cannot *claim the property* when he comes of age. {+} "governors" "guardians"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Even so we*. We who were Jews—for so I think the word here is to be limited, and not extended to the heathen, as Bloomfield supposes. The reasons for limiting it are,

(1.) that the heathens in no sense sustained such a relation to the law and promises of God as is here supposed;

(2.) such an interpretation would not be pertinent to the design of Paul. He is stating reasons why there should not be subjection to the laws of Moses; and his argument is, that that condition was like that of nonage or minorship.

When we were children, *nhpioi*. Minors. **See Barnes "Ga 4:1"**.

The word is not *uioi*—sons; but the idea is, that they were in a state of nonage; and though heirs, yet were under severe discipline and regimen. They were under a kind of government that was fitted to that state, and not to the condition of those who had entered on their inheritance.

Were in bondage. In a state of servitude. Treated as servants or slaves.

Under the elements of the world. Marg., *rudiments*. The word rendered elements, (sing., *stoiceion*,) properly means a row or series; a little step; a pin or peg, as the gnomen of a dial; and then anything *elementary*, as a sound, a letter. It then denotes the elements or rudiments of any kind of instruction, and in the New Testament is applied to the first lessons or principles of religion, Heb 5:1. It is applied to the elements or component parts of the physical world, 2Pe 3:10,12. Here the figure is kept up of the reference to the infant, Ga 4:1,3; and the idea is, that lessons were taught under the Jewish system adapted to their nonage—to a state of childhood. They were treated as children under tutors and governors. The phrase, "the elements of the world," occurs also in Col 2:8,20. In Ga 4:9 of this chapter, Paul speaks of these lessons as "beggarly elements," referring to

the same thing as here. Different opinions have been held as to the reason why the Jewish institutions are here called "the elements *of the world*." Rosenmuller supposes it was because many of those rites were common to the Jews and to the heathen—as they also had altars, sacrifices, temples, libations, etc. Doddridge supposes it was because those rites were adapted to the low conceptions of children, who are most affected with sensible objects, and have no taste for spiritual and heavenly things. Locke supposes it was because those institutions led them not beyond this world, or into the possession and taste of their heavenly inheritance. It is probable that there allusion to the Jewish manner of speaking, so common in the Scriptures, where this world is opposed to the kingdom of God, and where it is spoken of as transient and worthless compared with the future glory. The world is fading, unsatisfactory, temporary. In allusion to this common use of the word, the Jewish institutions are called the *worldly rudiments*. It is not that they were in themselves evil—for that is not true; it is not that they were adapted to foster a worldly spirit—for that is not true; it is not that they had their origin from this world—for that is not true; nor is it from the fact that they resembled the institutions of the heathen world—for that is as little true; but it is that, like the things of the world, they were transient, temporary, and of little value. They were unsatisfactory in their nature, and were soon to pass away, and to give place to a better system—as the things of this world are soon to give place to heaven.

{++} "bondage" "servitude" {1} "elements" "rudiments" Col 2:8,20

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *But when the fulness of the time was come*. The full time appointed by the Father; the completion (*filling up*, *plhrwma*) of the designated period for the coming of the Messiah. **See Barnes** "Isa 49:7, **See Barnes** "Isa 49:8, **See Barnes "2Co 6:2"**.

The sense is, that the time which had been predicted, and when it was proper that he should come, was complete. The exact period had arrived when all things were ready for his coming. It is often asked why he did not come sooner; and why mankind did not have the benefit of his incarnation and atonement immediately after the fall? Why were four thousand dark and gloomy years allowed to roll on, and the world suffered to sink deeper and deeper in ignorance and sin? To these questions perhaps no answer entirely satisfactory can be given. God undoubtedly saw reasons which we cannot see, and reasons which we shall approve if they are disclosed to us. It may be observed, however, that this delay of redemption was in entire accordance with the whole system of Divine arrangements, and with all the Divine interpositions in favour of men. Men are suffered long to pine in want, to suffer from disease, to encounter the evils of ignorance, before interposition is granted. On all the subjects connected with human comfort and improvement, the same questions may be asked as on the subject of redemption. Why was the invention of the art of printing so long delayed, and men suffered to remain in ignorance? Why was the discovery of vaccination delayed so long, and millions suffered to die who might have been saved? Why was not the bark of Peru sooner known, and why did so many millions die who might have been saved by its use? So of most of the medicines, and of the arts and inventions that go to ward off disease, and to promote the intelligence, the comfort, and the salvation of man. In respect to *all* of these, it may be true that they are made known *at the very best time*, the time that will on the whole most advance the welfare

of the race. And so of the incarnation and work of the Saviour. It was seen by God to be the *best* time; the time when, on the whole, the race would be most benefited by his coming. Even with our limited and imperfect vision, we can see the following things in regard to its being the most fit and proper time:

(1.) It was just the time when all the prophecies centered in him, and when there could be no doubt about their fulfillment. It was important that such an event should be predicted in order that there might be full evidence that he came from heaven; and yet, in order that prophecy may be seen to have been uttered by God, it must be so far before the event as to make it impossible to have been the result of mere human conjecture.

(2.) It was proper that the world should be brought to see its need of a Saviour, and that a fair and satisfactory opportunity should be given to men to try all other schemes of salvation, that they might be prepared to welcome this. This had been done. Four thousand years were sufficient to show to man his own powers, and to give him an opportunity to devise some scheme of salvation. The opportunity had been furnished under every circumstance that could be deemed favourable. The most profound and splendid talent of the world had been brought to bear on it, especially in Greece and Rome; and ample opportunity had been given to make a fair trial of the various systems of religion devised on national happiness and individual welfare; their power to meet and arrest crime, to purify the heart, to promote public morals, and to support man in his trials; their power to conduct him to the true God, and to give him a well-founded hope of immortality. All had failed; and then it was a proper time for the Son of God to come and to reveal a better system.

(3.) It was a time when the world was at peace. The temple of Janus, closed only in times of peace, was then shut, though it had been but once closed before during the Roman history. What an appropriate time for the "Prince of Peace" to come! The world was, to a great extent, under the Roman sceptre. Communications between different parts of the world were then more rapid and secure than they had been at any former period, and the gospel could be more easily propagated. Further, the Jews were scattered in almost all lands, acquainted with the promises, looking for the Messiah, furnishing facilities to their own countrymen, the apostles, to preach the gospel in numerous synagogues, and qualified, if they embraced the Messiah, to become most zealous and devoted missionaries. The same language, the Greek, was moreover, after the time of Alexander the Great, the common language of no small part of the world, or as least was spoken and understood, among a considerable portion of the nations of the earth. At no period before had there been so extensive a use of the same language.

(4.) It was a proper period to make the new system known. It accorded with the benevolence of God, that it should be delayed no longer than that the world should be in a suitable state for receiving the Redeemer. When that period, therefore, had arrived, God did not delay, but sent his Son on the great work of the world's redemption.

God sent forth his Son. This implies that the Son of God had an existence before his incarnation. See Joh 16:28. The Saviour is often represented as sent into the world, and as *coming forth* from God.

Made of a woman. In human nature; born of a woman. This also implies that he had another nature than that which was derived from the woman. On the supposition that he was a mere man, how unmeaning would this assertion be! How natural to ask, in what other way could he appear than to be born of a woman? Why was *he* particularly designated as coming into the world in this manner? How strange would it sound if it were said, "In the sixteenth century came Faustus' Socinus

preaching Unitarianism, "*made of a woman*!" Or, "In the eighteenth century came Dr. Joseph Priestley, *born of a woman*, preaching the doctrines of Socinus!" How else could they appear? would be the natural inquiry. What was there peculiar in their birth and origin that rendered such language necessary? The *language* implies that there were other ways in which the Saviour might have come; that there was something peculiar in the fact that he was born of a woman; and that there was some special reason why that fact should be made prominently a matter of record. The promise was, Ge 3:15, that the Messiah should be the "seed" or the descendant of woman; and Paul probably here alludes to the fulfillment of that promise.

Made under the law. As one of the human race, partaking of human nature, he was subject to the law of God. As a man he was bound by its requirements, and subject to its control. He took his place under the law, that he might accomplish an important purpose for those who were under it. He made himself subject to it that he might become one of them, and secure their redemption.

{*} "made of a woman" "born" {*} "made under the law" "born"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *To redeem them*. By his death as an atoning sacrifice. **See Barnes "Ga 3:13"**.

Them that were under the law. Sinners, who had violated the law, and who were exposed to its dread penalty.

That we might receive the adoption of sons. Be adopted as the sons or the children of God. **See Barnes "Joh 1:12 Ro 8:15"**.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *And because ye are sons*. As a consequence of your being adopted into the family of God, and being regarded as his sons. It follows as a part of his purpose of adoption that his children shall have the spirit of the Lord Jesus.

The Spirit of his Son. The spirit of the Lord Jesus; the spirit which animated him, or which he evinced. The idea is, that as the Lord Jesus was enabled to approach God with the language of endearment and love, so they would be. He, being the true and exalted Son of God, had the spirit appropriate to such a relation; they being adopted, and made like him, have the same spirit. The "spirit" here referred to does not mean, as I suppose, the Holy Spirit as such; nor the miraculous endowments of the Holy Spirit, but the spirit which made them like the Lord Jesus; the spirit by which they were enabled to approach God as his children, and use the reverent, and tender, and affectionate language of a child addressing a father. It is that language used by Christians when they have evidence of adoption; the expression of the warm, and elevated, and glowing emotions which they have when they can approach God as their God, and address him as *their* Father.

Crying. That is, the spirit thus cries, *pueuma—krazon*. Comp. **See Barnes** "Ro 8:26, **See Barnes "Ro 8:27"**.

In Ro 8:15, it is, "wherewith we cry."

Abba, Father. **See Barnes "Ro 8:15".**

It is said in the Babylonian Gemara, a Jewish work, that it was not permitted slaves to use the title of Abba in addressing the master of the family to which they belonged. If so, then the language which Christians are here represented as using is the language of freemen, and denotes that they are not under the servitude, of sin.

{a} "Spirit of his Son" Ro 8:15,17

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Wherefore*. In consequence of this privilege of addressing God as your Father.

Thou art no more. You who are Christians.

A servant. In the servitude of sin; or treated as a servant by being bound under the oppressive rites and ceremonies of the law. Comp. **See Barnes "Ga 4:3".**

But a son. A child of God, adopted into his family, and to be treated as a son.

And if a son, etc. Entitled to all the privileges of a son, and of course to be regarded as an heir through the Redeemer, and with him. See the sentiment here expressed explained: **See Barnes "Ro 8:17".**

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Howbeit*. But, *alla*. The address in this verse and the following is evidently to the portion of the Galatians who had been heathen. This is probably indicated by the particle *alla*, *but*, denoting a transition. In the previous verses Paul had evidently had the Jewish converts more particularly in his eye, and had described their former condition as one of servitude to the Mosaic rites and customs, and had shown the inconveniences of that condition, com- pared with the freedom imparted by the gospel. To complete the description, he refers also to the Gentiles, as a condition of worse servitude still, and shows Ga 4:9 the absurdity of *their* turning back to a state of bondage of any kind after the glorious deliverance which they had obtained from the degrading servitude of pagan rites. The sense is, "If the Jews were in such a state of servitude, how much more galling and severe was that of those who had been heathens. Yet from *that* servitude the gospel had delivered them, and made them freemen. How absurd now to go back to a state of vassalage, and to become servants under the oppressive rites of the Jewish law!"

When ye knew not God. In your state of heathenism, what you had no knowledge of the true God and of his service. The object, is not to apologize for what they did, because they did not know God; it is to state the fact that they were in a state of gross and galling servitude.

Ye did service. This does not express the force of the original. The meaning is, "Ye were *slaves* to *edouleusate* you were in a condition of *servitude*, as opposed to the freedom of the gospel." Compare Ga 4:3, where the same word is used to describe the state of the Jews. The drift of the apostle is, to show that the Jews and Gentiles, before their conversion to Christianity, were in a

state of vassalage or servitude, and that it was absurd in the highest degree to return to that condition again.

Unto them which by nature are no gods. Idols, or false gods. The expression "by nature," *fusei*, according to Grotius, means, *in fact*, *re ipsa*. The sense is, that they *really* had no pretensions to divinity. Many of them were imaginary beings; many were the objects of creation, as the sun, and winds, and streams; and many were departed heroes that had been exalted to be objects of worship. Yet the *servitude* was real. It fettered their faculties; controlled their powers; bound their imagination; and commanded their time and property, and made them slaves. Idolatry is always slavery; and the servitude of sinners to their passions and appetites, to lust, and gold, and ambition, is not less galling and severe than was the servitude to the pagan gods or the Jewish rites, or than is the servitude of the African now to a harsh and cruel master. Of all Christians it may be said that before their conversion they "did service," or were *slaves* to harsh and cruel masters; and nothing but the gospel has made them free. It may be added, that the chains of idolatry all over the world are as fast riveted and as galling as they were in Galatia; and that nothing but the same gospel which Paul preached there can break those chains, and restore man to freedom.

{+} "Howbeit then" "However at that time" {*} "them" "Ye saved those"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *But now*, etc. The sense is, that since they had been made free from their ignoble servitude in the worship of false gods, and had been admitted to the freedom found in the worship of the true God, it was absurd that they should return again to that which was truly slavery or bondage, the observance of the rites of the Jewish law.

That ye have known God. The true God, and the ease and freedom of his service in the gospel.

Or rather are known of God. The sense is, "Or, to speak more accurately or precisely, are known by God." The object of this correction is to avoid the impression which might be derived from the former phrase, that their acquaintance with God was owing to themselves. He therefore states, that it was rather that they were known of God; that it was all owing to him that they had been brought to an acquaintance with himself. Perhaps, also, he means to bring into view the idea that it was a favour and privilege to be known by God, and that, therefore it was the more absurd to turn back to the weak and beggarly elements.

How turn ye again, Marg., *back*. "How is it that you are returning to such a bondage?" The question implies surprise and indignation that they should do it.

To the weak and beggarly elements. To the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish law, imposing a servitude really not less severe than the customs of paganism. On the word *elements*, **See Barnes "Ga 4:3"**.

They are called "weak" because they had no power to save the soul; no power to justify the sinner before God. They are called "beggarly," (Greek, *ptwca*, poor,) because they could not impart spiritual riches. They really could confer few benefits on man. Or it may be, as Locke supposes, because the law kept men in the poor estate of pupils from the full enjoyment of the inheritance, Ga 4:1-3.

Whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage. As if you had a wish to be under servitude. The absurdity is as great as it would be for a man who had been freed from slavery to desire again his chains. They had been freed by the gospel from the galling servitude of heathenism, and they now again had sunk into the Jewish observances, *as if they preferred slavery to freedom*, and were willing to go from one form of it to another. The main idea is, that it is absurd for men who have been made free by the gospel to go back again into any kind of servitude or bondage. We may apply it to Christians now. Many sink into a kind of servitude not less galling than was that to sin before their conversion. Some become the slaves of mere ceremonies and forms in religion. Some are slaves to fashion, and the world yet rules them with the hand of a tyrant. They have escaped, it may be, from the galling chains of ambition, and degrading vice, and low sensuality; but they have become slaves to the love of money, or of dress, or of the fashions of the world, *as if they loved slavery and chains*; and they seem no more able to break loose than the slave is to break the bonds which bind him. And some are slaves to some expensive and foolish habit. Professed Christians, *and Christian ministers too*, become *slaves* to the disgusting and loathsome habit of using *tobacco*, bound by a servitude as galling and as firm as that which ever shackled the limbs of an African. I grieve to add, also, that many professed Christians are slaves to the habit of "sitting long at the wine," and indulging in it freely. Oh that such knew the liberty of Christian freedom, and would break away from all such shackles, and *show* how the gospel frees men from *all* foolish and absurd customs!

{1} "turn ye again" "back" {2} "beggarly elements" "rudiments" {+} "whereunto" "to which" {++} "bondage" "servitude"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Ye observe*. The object of this verse is to *specify* some of the things to which they had become enslaved.

Days. The days here referred to are doubtless the days of the Jewish festivals. They had numerous days of such observances; and in addition to those specified in the Old Testament, the Jews had added many others, as days commemorative of the destruction and rebuilding of the temple, and of other important events in their history. It is not a fair interpretation of this to suppose that the apostle refers to the *Sabbath*, properly so called, for this was a part of the Decalogue, and was observed by the Saviour himself, and by the apostles also. It is a fair interpretation to apply it to all those days which are not commanded to be kept holy in the Scriptures; and hence the passage is as applicable to the observance of saints' days, and days in honour of particular events in sacred history, as to the days observed by the Galatians. There is as real *servitude* in the observance of the numerous festivals and fasts in the Papal communion, and in some Protestant churches, as there was in the observance of the days in the Jewish ecclesiastical calendar; and, for anything that can see, such observances are as inconsistent now, with the freedom of the gospel, as they were in the time of Paul. We should observe as seasons of holy time what it can be proved God has commanded us, and no more.

And months, The festivals of the new moon, kept by the Jews, Nu 10:10 28:11-14. On this festival, in addition to the daily sacrifice, two bullocks, a ram, and seven sheep of a year old, were

offered in sacrifice. The appearance of the new moon was announced by the sound of trumpets. See Jahn, Archae, § 352.

And times. Stated times; festivals returning periodically, as the passover, the feast of Pentecost, and the feast of tabernacles: See Jahn, Archae., chap. iii. § 346—360.

And years. The sabbatical year, or the year of jubilee. See Jahn as above.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *I am afraid of you*, etc. I have fears respecting you. His fears were that they had no genuine Christian principle. They had been so easily perverted and turned back to the servitude of ceremonies and rites, that he was apprehensive that there could be no real Christian principle in the case, What pastor has not often had such fears of his people when he sees them turn to the weak and beggarly elements of the world, or when, after having "run well," he sees them become the slaves of fashion, or of some habit inconsistent with the simplicity of the gospel?

{&} "afraid of you" "I fear concerning you"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Brethren, I beseech you, be as, I am*, etc. There is great brevity in this passage, and no little obscurity, and a great many different interpretations have been given of it by commentators. The various views expressed may be seen in Bloomfield's Crit. Dig. Locke renders it, "Let you and I be as if we were all one. Think yourselves to be very me; as I, in my own mind, put no difference at all between you and myself." Koppe explains it thus:— "Imitate my example; for I, though a Jew by birth, care no more for Jewish rites than you." Rosenmuller explains it, "Imitate my manner of life, in rejecting the Jewish rites; as I having renounced the Jewish rites, was much like you when I preached the gospel to you." Other interpretations may be seen in Chandler, Doddridge, Calvin, etc. In our version there seems to be an impropriety of expression; for if he was as they were, it would seem to be a matter of course that they would be like him, or would resemble him. The sense of the passage, however, it seems to. me, cannot be difficult. The reference is doubtless to the Jewish rites and customs, and to the question whether they were binding on Christians. Paul's object is to persuade them to abandon them. He appeals to them, therefore, by his own example. And it means evidently, "Imitate me in this thing. Follow my example, and yield no conformity to those rites and customs." The *ground* on which he asks them to imitate him may be either,

(1.) that *he* had abandoned them, or

(2.) because he asks them *to yield a point* to him. He had done so in many instances for their welfare, and had made many sacrifices for their salvation; and he now asks them to yield this one point, and to become as he was, and to cease these Jewish observances, as he had done.

For I am as ye are. Greek, "For I as ye." This means, I suppose, "For I have conformed to your customs in many things. I have abandoned my own peculiarities; given up my customs as far as possible; conformed to you as Gentiles as far as I could do, in order to benefit and save you. I have

laid aside the peculiarity of the Jew on the principle of becoming all things to all men, **See Barnes "1Co 9:20, and** 1Co 9:21,22) in order that I might save you. I ask in return only the slight sacrifice that you will now become like me in the matter under consideration."

Ye have not injured me at all." It is not a personal matter. I have no cause of complaint. You have done me no personal wrong. There is no variance between us; no unkind feeling; no injury done as individuals. I may, therefore, with the more freedom, ask you to yield this point, when I assure you that I do not feel personally injured. I have no wrong, to complain of, and I ask it on higher grounds than would be an individual request: it is for your good, and the good of the great cause." When Christians turn away from the truth, and disregard the instructions and exhortations of pastors, and become conformed to the world, it is not a personal matter, or a matter of personal offence to them, painful as it may be to them. They have no peculiar reason-to say that they are personally injured. It is a higher matter. The cause suffers; the interests of religion are injured; the church at large is offended, and the Saviour is "wounded in the house of his friends." Conformity to the world, or a lapse into some sin, is a public offence, and should be regarded as an injury done to the cause of the Redeemer. It shows the magnanimity of Paul, that though they had abandoned his doctrines, and forgotten his love and his toils in their welfare, he did not regard it as a *personal* offence, and did not consider himself personally injured. An ambitious man, or an impostor, would have made that the main, if not the only thing.

{|} "I am as ye are" "were"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Ye know how*. To show them the folly of their embracing the new views which they had adopted, he reminds them of past times, and particularly of the strength of the attachment which they had evinced for him in former days.

Through infirmity of the flesh. Greek, Weakness, (*asyeneian*) Compare **See Barnes "1Co 2:3"**; **See Barnes** "2Co 10:10"; **See Barnes "2Co 12:7"**.

{a} "through" 1Co 2:3 {*} "infirmity" "in weakness"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *And my temptations*. My *trial*; the thing which was to me a trial and calamity. The meaning is, that he was afflicted with various calamities and infirmities, but that this did not hinder their receiving him as an angel from heaven. There is, however, a considerable variety in the Mss. on this verse. Many Mss., instead of "*my* temptation" read "*your* temptation;" and Mill maintains that this is the true reading. Griesbach hesitates between the two. But it is not very important to determine which is the true reading. If it should be "*your*," then it means that they were tempted by his infirmities to reject him; and so it amounts to about the same thing. The general sense is, that he had some bodily infirmity; perhaps some periodically returning disease, that was a great

trial to him, which they bore with, with great patience and affection. What that was he has not informed us, and conjecture is vain.

But received me as an angel of God. With the utmost respect, as if I had been an angel sent from God.

Even *as Christ Jesus*. As you would have done the Redeemer himself. Learn hence,

(1.) that the Lord Jesus is superior to an angel of God.

(2.) That the highest proof of attachment to a minister is to receive him as the Saviour would be received.

(3.) It showed their attachment to the Lord Jesus, that they received his apostle as they would have received the Saviour himself. Comp. Mt 10:40.

{b} "an angel of God" 2Sa 19:27 Mal 2:7 {c} "Christ Jesus" Mt 10:40

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Where is then the blessedness*. Margin, "What was"—in accordance with the Greek. The words "ye spake of" are not in the Greek, and should have been printed in Italic. But they obscure the sense, at any rate. This is not to be regarded as a question, asking what had become of the blessedness, implying that it had departed; but it is rather to be regarded as an *exclamation*, referring to the happiness of that moment, and their affection and joy when they thus received him. "What blessedness you had then! How happy was that moment! What tenderness of affection! What overflowing joy!" It was a time full of joy, and love, and affectionate confidence. So Tindal well renders it, "How happy were ye then!" In this interpretation, Doddridge, Rosenmuller, Bloomfield, Koppe, Chandler, and others concur. Locke renders it, "What benedictions did you then pour out on me!"

For I bear you record. I testify.

Ye would have plucked out your own eyes, etc. No higher proof of attachment could have been given. They loved him so much that they would have given to him *anything*, however dear; they would have done anything to contribute to his welfare, How changed, now that they had abandoned his doctrines, and yielded themselves to the guidance of those who taught a wholly different doctrine!

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Am I therefore become your enemy*, etc. Is my telling you the truth in regard to the tendency of the doctrines which you have embraced, and the character of those who have led you astray, and your own error, a proof that I have ceased to be your friend? How apt are we to feel that the man who tells us of our faults is our enemy! How apt are we to treat him coldly, and to "cut his acquaintance, and to regard him with dislike! The *reason* is, he gives us pain; and we cannot have pain given us, even by the stone against which we stumble, or by any of the brute creation, without momentary indignation, or regarding them for a time as our enemies. Besides, we do not like to have another person acquainted with our faults and our follies; and we naturally avoid the

society of those who are thus acquainted with us. Such is human nature; and it requires no little grace for us to overcome this, and to regard the man who tells us of our faults, or the faults of our families, as our friend. We love to be flattered, and to have our friends flattered; and we shrink with pain from any exposure, or any necessity for repentance. Hence we become alienated from him who is faithful in reproving us for our faults, lienee men become offended with their ministers when they reprove them for their sins. Hence they become offended at the truth, hence they resist the influences of the Holy Spirit, whose office it is to bring the truth to the heart, and to reprove men for their sins. There is nothing more difficult than to regard, with steady and unwavering affection, the man who faithfully tells us the truth at all times, when that truth is painful. Yet he is our best friend. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful," Pr 27:6. If I am in danger of falling down a precipice, he shows to me the purest friendship who tells me of it; if I am in danger of breathing the air of the pestilence, and it can be avoided, he shows to me pure kindness who tells me of it. So still more, if I am indulging in a course of conduct that may ruin me, or cherishing error that may endanger my salvation, he shows me the purest friendship who is most faithful in warning me, and apprizing me of what must be the termination of my course.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *They zealously affect you*. See 1Co 12:31, (Greek;) 1Co 14:39. The word here used, *zhlow*) means to be zealous towards; i.e., for or against any person or thing; usually, in a good sense, to be eager for here it means, that the false teachers made a show of zeal towards the Galatians, or professed affection for them in order to gain them as their followers. They were full of ardour, and professed an extraordinary concern for their welfare—as men always do who are demagogues, or who seek to gain proselytes. The object of the apostle in this is, probably, to say, that it was not wholly owing to themselves that they had become alienated from the doctrines which he had taught. Great pains had been taken to do it; and there had been a show of zeal which would be likely to endanger any person.

But not well. Not with good motives, or with good designs.

Yea, they would exclude you. Margin, *us*. A few printed editions of the New Testament have *hmav, us,* instead of *umav, you*.—*Mill*. The word *exclude* here probably means, that they endeavoured to exclude the Galatians from the love and affection of Paul. They would shut them out from that, in order that they might secure them for their own purposes. If the reading in the margin, however, should be retained, the sense would be clearer: "They wish to exclude us, i.e., me, the apostle, in order that they may have you wholly to themselves. If they can once get rid of your attachment to me, then they will have no difficulty in securing you for themselves." This reading, says Rosenmuller, is found "in many of the best codices, and versions, and fathers." It is adopted by Doddridge, Locke, and others. The main idea is clear: Paul stood in the way of their designs. The Galatians were truly attached to him; and it was necessary, in order to accomplish their ends, to withdraw their affections from him. When false teachers have designs on a people, they begin by alienating their confidence and affections from their pastors and teachers. They can hope for no success until this is done; and hence the efforts of errorists, and of infidels, and of scorners, is to undermine the confidence of a

people in the ministry; and when this is done, there is little difficulty in drawing them over to their own purposes.

That ye might affect them. The same word as in the former part of the verse—" that ye might zealously affect them;" i.e., that ye might show ardent attachment to them. Their *first* work is to manifest *special interest* for your welfare; their *second*, to alienate you from him who had first preached the gospel to you; their *object*, not your salvation, or your real good, but to secure your zealous love for themselves.

{d} "but not well" Ro 10:2 {2} "exclude *you*" "us"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *But it is good to be zealously affected*. The meaning of this is, "Understand me: I do not speak against zeal. I have not a word to say in its disparagement. In itself, it is good; and their zeal would be good if it were in a good cause." Probably, they relied much on their zeal; perhaps they maintained, as errorists and deceivers are very apt to do, that *zeal* was sufficient evidence of the goodness of their cause, and that persons who are so very zealous could not possibly be bad men. How often is this plea set up by the friends of errorists and deceivers!

And not only when I am present with you. It seems to me that there is great adroitness and great delicacy of irony in this remark; and that the apostle intends to remind them, as gently as possible, that it would have been as well for them to have shown their zeal in a good cause, when he was absent, as well as when he was with them. The sense may be, "You *were* exceedingly zealous in a good cause when I was with you. You loved the truth; you loved me. Since I left you, and as soon almost as I was out of your sight, your zeal died away, and your ardent love for me was transferred to others. Suffer me to remind you, that it would be well to be zealous of good when I am away, as well as when I am with you. There is not much true affection in that which dies away as soon as a man's back is turned." The *doctrine* is, that true zeal or love will live alike when the object is near, and when it is removed; when our friends are present with us, and when they leave us; when their eye is upon us, and when it is turned away.

{a} "always in a good thing" 1Co 15:58

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *My little children*. The language of tender affection, such as a parent would use towards his own offspring. **See Barnes "1Co 4:15"**.

Comp. Mt 18:3 Joh 13:33; 1Jo 2:1,12,13; 1Jo 4:4 5:21. The idea here is, that Paul felt that he sustained towards them the relation of a father, and he had for them the deep and tender feelings of a parent.

Of whom I travail in birth again. For whose welfare I am deeply anxious; and for whom I endure deep anguish. Comp. 1Co 4:15. His anxiety for them he compares to the deepest sufferings which

human nature endures; and his language here is a striking illustration of what ministers of the gospel should feel, and do sometimes feel, in regard to their people.

Until Christ be formed in you. The name *Christ* is often used to denote his religion, or the principles of his gospel. **See Barnes "Ro 13:14"**.

Here it means, until Christ reigns wholly in your hearts; till you wholly and entirely embrace his doctrines; and till you become wholly imbued with his Spirit. See Col 1:27.

{b} "My little children" 1Co 4:15

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *I desire to be present with you now*. They had lost much by his absence; they had changed their views; they had in some measure become alienated from him; and he wishes that he might be again with them, as he was before, he would hope to accomplish much more by his personal presence than he could by letter.

And to change my voice. That is, from complaint and censure, to tones of entire confidence.

For I stand in doubt of you. Marg., "*I am perplexed for you*." On the meaning of the word here used, **See Barnes "2Co 4:8"**.

The sense is plain. Paul had much reason to doubt the sincerity and the solidity of their Christian principles, and he was deeply anxious on that account.

{1} "stand in doubt" "I am perplexed for you."

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Tell me*, etc. In order to show fully the nature and the effect of the law, Paul here introduces an illustration from an important fact in the Jewish history. This *allegory* has given great perplexity to expositors, and, in some respects, it is attended with real difficulty. An examination of the difficulties will be found in the larger commentaries. My object, without examining the expositions which have been proposed, will be to state, in as few words as possible, the simple meaning and design of the allegory. The *design* it is not difficult to understand. It is *to show the effect of being under the bondage or servitude of the Jewish law, compared with the freedom which the gospel imparts*. Paul had addressed the Galatians as having a real desire to be under bondage, or to be servants. **See Barnes "Ga 4:9"**.

He had represented Christianity as a state of freedom, and Christians as the sons of God—not servants, but freemen. To show the difference of the two conditions, he appeals to two cases which would furnish a striking illustration of them. The one was the case of Hagar and her son. The effect of *bondage* was well illustrated there. She and her son were treated with severity, and were cast out and persecuted. This was *a fair illustration* of bondage under the law; of the servitude to the laws of Moses; and was a fit representation of Jerusalem as it was in the time of Paul. The other case was that of Isaac. He was the son of a free woman, and was treated accordingly. He was regarded as a son—not as a servant. And he was *a fair illustration* of the case of those who were

made free by the gospel. They enjoyed a similar freedom and sonship, and should not seek a state of servitude or bondage. The condition of Isaac was a fit illustration of the New Jerusalem; the heavenly city; the true kingdom of God. But Paul does not mean to say, as I suppose, that the history of the son of Hagar, and of the son of Rebecca, was *mere* allegory, or that the narrative by Moses was *designed* to represent the different condition of those who were under the law and under the gospel, He uses it simply *as showing the difference between servitude and freedom, and as a striking ILLUSTRATION of the nature of the bondage to the Jewish law, and of the freedom of the gospel*, just as any one may use a striking historical fact to illustrate a principle. These general remarks will constitute the basis of my interpretation of this celebrated allegory. The expression "tell me," is one of affectionate remonstrance and reasoning. See Lu 7:42: "Tell me, therefore, which of these will love him most?" Comp. Isa 1:18: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord."

Ye that desire to be under the law. **See Barnes "Ga 4:9".**

You who wish to yield obedience to the laws of Moses. You who maintain that conformity to those laws is necessary to justification.

Do ye not hear the law? Do you not understand what the law says? Will you not listen to its own admonitions, and the instruction which may be derived from the law on the subject? The word "law" here refers not to the commands that were uttered on Mount Sinai, but to the *book* of the law. The passage to which reference is made is in the book of Genesis; but all the five books of Moses were by the Jews classed under the general name of the law. **See Barnes "Lu 24:44".**

The sense is, "Will you not listen to a narrative found in one of the books of the law itself, fully illustrating the nature of that servitude which you wish?"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *For it is written*. Ge 16, Ge 21.

Abraham had two sons. Ishmael and Isaac. Abraham subsequently had several sons by Keturah, after the death of Sarah, Ge 25:1-6. But the two sons by Hagar and Sarah were the most prominent, and the events of their lives furnished the particular illustration which Paul desired.

The one by a bond-maid. Ishmael, the son of Hagar. Hagar was an Egyptian slave, whom Sarah gave to Abraham in order that he might not be wholly without posterity, Ge 16:3.

The other by a free-woman. Isaac, the son of Sarah, Ge 21:1,2.

{c} "one by a bond-maid" Ge 16:15 {d} "the other" Ge 21:1,2

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *But he who was of the bond-woman was born after the flesh*. In the ordinary course of nature, without any special promise, or any unusual Divine interposition, as in the case of Isaac.

But he of the free-woman, etc. The birth of Isaac was in accordance with a special promise, and by a remarkable Divine interposition. See Ge 18:10 21:1,2 Heb 11:11,12.

Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 4:19-21".**

The idea here of Paul is, that the son of the slave was in a humble and inferior condition from his very birth. There was no special promise attending him. He was *born* into a state of inferiority and servitude, which attended him through his whole life. Isaac, however, was met with promises as soon as he was born, and was under the benefit of those promises as long as he lived. The *object* of Paul is to state the truth in regard to a condition of servitude and slavery. It is attended with evils from beginning to end; from the birth to the grave. By this illustration he means to show them the folly of beaming the voluntary slaves of the law after they had once been made free. {e} "bond woman" Ro 9:7,8

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Which things*. The different accounts of Ishmael and Isaac.

Are an allegory. May be regarded allegorically, or as illustrating great principles in regard to the condition of slaves and freemen; and may therefore be used to illustrate the effect of servitude to the law of Moses compared with the freedom of the gospel. He does not mean to say that the historical record of Moses was not true, or was merely allegorical; nor does he mean to say that Moses *meant* this to be an allegory, or that he *intended* that it should be applied to the exact purpose to which Paul applied it. No such design is apparent in the narrative of Moses, and it is evident that he had no such intention. Nor can it be shown that Paul means to be understood as saying that Moses had any such design, or that his account was not a record of a plain historical fact. Paul uses it as he would any other historical fact that would illustrate the same principle, and he makes no more use of it than the Saviour did in his parables of real or fictitious narratives to illustrate an important truth, or than we always do of real history to illustrate an important principle. The word which is here used by Paul *allhgorew* is derived from *allov*, another, and *agoreuw*, to speak, to speak openly or in public. —*Passow*. It properly means to speak anything otherwise than it is understood, (*Passow*;) to speak allegorically; to allegorize. The word does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament, nor is it found in the Septuagint, though it occurs often in the classic writers. An allegory is a continued metaphor. See Blair's Lectures, xv. It is a figurative sentence or discourse, in which the principal object is described by another subject resembling it in its properties and circumstances.— *Webster*. Allegories are in words what hieroglyphics are in painting. The distinction between a *parable* and an *allegory* is said to be, that a parable is a *supposed* history to illustrate some important truth, as the parable of the good Samaritan, etc.; an allegory is based on *real facts*. It is not probable, however, that this distinction is always carefully observed. Sometimes the allegory is based on the resemblance to some inanimate object, as in the beautiful allegory in the eightieth Psalm. Allegories, parables, and metaphors abound in the writings of the East. Truth was more easily treasured up in this way, and could be better preserved and transmitted when it was connected with an interesting story. The lively fancy of the people of the East also led them to this mode of communicating truth; though a love for it is probably found in human nature. The best sustained allegory of any considerable length in the world is, doubtless, Bunyan's

Pilgrim's Progress; and yet this is among the most popular of all books. The ancient Jews were exceedingly fond of allegories, and even turned a considerable part of the Old Testament into allegory. The ancient Greek philosophers also were fond of this mode of teaching.

Pythagoras instructed his followers in this manner, and this was common among the Greeks, and was imitated much by the early Christians. —*Calmet*. Many of the Christian fathers, of the school of Origen, made the Old Testament almost wholly allegorical, and found mysteries in the plainest narratives. The Bible became thus with them a book of enigmas, and exegesis consisted in an ingenious and fanciful accommodation of all the narratives in the Scriptures to events in subsequent times. The most fanciful and the most ingenious man, on this principle, was the best interpreter; and as any man might attach any hidden mystery which he chose to the Scriptures, they became wholly useless as an infallible, guide. Better principles of interpretation now prevail; and the great truth has gone forth, never more to be recalled, that the Bible is to be interpreted on the same principle as all other books; that its language is to be investigated by the same laws as language in all other books; and that no more liberty is to be taken in allegorizing the Scriptures than may be taken with Herodotus or Livy. It is lawful to use narratives of real events to illustrate important principles always. Such a use is often made of history; and such a use, I suppose, the apostle Paul makes here of an important fact in the history of the Old Testament.

For these are. These may be used to represent the two covenants. The apostle *could not* mean that the sons of Sarah and of Hagar *were literally the two covenants*; for this could not be true, and the declaration would be unintelligible. In what sense could Ishmael be called a *covenant*? The meaning, therefore, must be, that they furnished an apt illustration or representation of the two covenants; they would show what the nature of the two covenants was. The words "are" and "is," are often used in this sense in the Bible, to denote that one thing represents another. Thus in the institution of the Lord's Supper: "Take, eat; this Is my body," (Mt 26:26;) i.e., this represents my body. The bread was not the living body that was then before them. So in Ga 4:28: "This is my blood of the new covenant;" i.e., this *represents* my blood. The wine in the cup *could not* be the living blood of the Redeemer that was then flowing in his veins. **See Barnes "Ge 41:26".**

The two covenants. Marg., *testaments*. The word means, here, covenants or compacts. **See Barnes "1Co 11:25".**

The two covenants here referred to are the one on Mount Sinai made with the Jews, and the other that which is made with the people of God in the gospel. The one resembles the condition of bondage in which Hagar and her son were; the other the condition of freedom in which Sarah and Isaac were.

The one from the mount Sinai. Marg., *Sin*. The Greek is *Sina*, though the word may be written either way.

Which gendereth to bondage. Which tends to produce bondage or servitude. That is, the laws are stern and severe; and the observance of them costly, and onerous, like a state of bondage. **See Barnes "Ac 15:10".**

Which is Agar: Which Hagar would appropriately represent. The condition of servitude produced by the law had a strong resemblance to her condition as a slave.

{a} "allegory" 1Co 10:11 {1} "covenants" "testaments" {2} "Sinai" "Sina" {b} "Sinai" De 33:2

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *For this Agar is mount Sinai*. This Hagar well represents the law given on Mount Sinai. No one can believe that Paul meant to say that Hagar was literally Mount Sinai. A great deal of perplexity has been felt in regard to this passage; and Bentley proposed to cancel it altogether as an interpolation. But there is no good authority for this. Several MSS. and versions read it, "For this Sinai is a mountain in Arabia;" others, "to this Hagar Jerusalem answereth," etc. Griesbach has placed these readings in the margin, and has marked them as not to be rejected as certainly false, but as worthy of a more attentive examination; as sustained by some plausible arguments, though not in the whole satisfactory. The word Hagar in Arabic is said to signify a rock; and it has been supposed that the name was appropriately given to Mount Sinai, because it was a pile of rocks, and that Paul had allusion to this meaning of the word here. So Chandler, Rosenmuller, and others interpret it. But I cannot find in Castell or Gesenius that the word Hagar in Arabic has this signification; still less is there evidence that the name was ever given to Mount Sinai by the Arabs, or that such a signification was known to Paul. The plainest and most obvious sense of a passage is generally the true sense; and the obvious sense here is, that Hagar was *a fair representation* of Mount Sinai, and of the law given there.

In Arabia. Mount Sinai is situated in Arabia Petraea, or the Rocky. Rosenmuller says that this means "in the Arabic language;" but probably in this interpretation he stands alone.

And answereth to Jerusalem. Marg., *Is in the same rank with*. The margin is the better translation. The meaning is, it is just like it, or corresponds with it. Jerusalem as it is now, (i.e., in the days of Paul,) is like Mount Sinai. It is subject to laws, and rites, and customs; bound by a state of servitude, and fear, and trembling, such as existed when the law was given on Mount Sinai. There is no freedom; there are no great and liberal views; there is none of the liberty which the gospel imparts to men. The word *sustoicei* (*answereth to*) means, properly, to advance in order together; to go together with, as soldiers march along in the same rank; and then to correspond to. It means here, that Mount Sinai and Jerusalem as it then was would be fitted *to march together* in the same platoon or rank. In marshalling an army, care is taken to place soldiers of the same height, and size, and skill, and courage, if possible, together. So here it means that they were *alike*. Both were connected with bondage, like Hagar. On the one, a law was given that led to bondage; and the other was in fact under a miserable servitude of rites and forms.

Which now is. As it exists now; that is, a slave to rites and forms, as it was in fact in the time of Paul.

And is in bondage. To laws and customs. She was under hard and oppressive rites, like slavery. She was also in bondage to sin, (Joh 8:33,34;) but this does not seem to be the idea here.

With her children. Her inhabitants. She is represented as a mother; and her inhabitants, the Jews, are in the condition of the son of Hagar. On this passage, comp. **See Barnes** "1Co 10:4, for a more full illustration of the principles involved here.

{3} "answereth" "is in the same rank with"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *But Jerusalem which is above*. The spiritual Jerusalem; the true church of God. Jerusalem was the place where God was worshipped, and hence it became synonymous with the

word church, or is used to represent the people of God. The word rendered "above" (*anw*) means, properly, up above, that which is above; and hence heavenly, celestial, Col 3:1,2; Joh 8:23.

Here it means, the heavenly or celestial Jerusalem. Re 21:2: "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God, out of heaven." He 12:22: "Ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." Here it is used to denote the church, as being of heavenly origin.

Is free. The spirit of the gospel is that of freedom. It is freedom from sin, freedom from the bondage of rites and customs, and it tends to promote universal freedom. **See Barnes "Ga 4:7"**.

Comp. Joh 8:32, Joh 8:36; **See Barnes "2Co 3:17"**.

Which is the mother of us all. Of all who are true Christians, whether we are by birth Jews or Gentiles. We should not, therefore, yield ourselves to any degrading and abasing servitude of any kind. Comp. **See Barnes "1Co 6:12"**.

{a} "Jerusalem" He 12:22 Re 21:2,10

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *For it is written*. This passage is found in Isa 44:1. For an exposition of its meaning as it occurs there, see my Notes on Isaiah. The *object* of the apostle in introducing it here seems to be to prove that the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, would partake of the privileges connected with the heavenly Jerusalem. He had in the previous verse spoken of the Jerusalem from above as the common mother of ALL true Christians, whether by birth Jews or Gentiles. This might be disputed or doubted by the Jews; and he therefore adduces this proof from the Old Testament. Or if it was not doubted, still the quotation was pertinent, and would illustrate the sentiment which he had just uttered. The mention of Jerusalem as a mother seems to have suggested this text. Isaiah had spoken of Jerusalem as a female that had been long desolate and childless, now rejoicing by a large accession from the Gentile world, and increased in numbers like a female who should have more children than one who had been long married. To this Paul appropriately refers when he says that the whole church, Jews and Gentiles, were the children of the heavenly Jerusalem, represented here as a rejoicing mother. He has not quoted literally from the Hebrew, but he has used the Septuagint version, and has retained the sense. The sense is, that the accession from the Gentile world would be far more numerous than the Jewish people had ever been—a prophecy that has been already fulfilled.

Rejoice thou barren that bearest not. As a woman who has had no children would rejoice. This represents probably the heathen world, as having been apparently forsaken and abandoned, and with whom there had been none of the true children of God.

Break forth and cry. Or, "break forth and exclaim;" i.e., break out into loud and glad exclamations at the remarkable accession. The *cry* here referred to was to be a joyful cry or shout; the language of exultation. So the Hebrew word in Isa 44:1,

HEBREW

means.

For the desolate. She who was desolate and apparently forsaken. It literally refers to a woman who had seemed to be desolate and forsaken, who was unmarried. In Isaiah it may refer to Jerusalem, long forsaken and desolate, or as some suppose to the Gentile world. **See Barnes "Isa 44:1"**.

Than she which hath an husband. Perhaps referring to the Jewish people as in covenant with God, and often spoken of as *married* to him, Isa 62:4,6, 44:5.

{b} "it is written" Isa 44:1

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *Now we, brethren*. We who are Christians.

Are the children of promise. We so far resemble Isaac, that there are great and precious promises made to use. We are not in the condition of Ishmael, to who no promise was made.

{c} "we, brethren" Ac 3:25 Ga 3:29

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *But as then he that was born after the flesh*. Ishmael. See Ga 4:23.

Persecuted him that was born after the Spirit. That is, Isaac. The phrase, "after the Spirit," here is synonymous with "according to the promise," in the previous verse. It stands opposed to the phrase, "after the flesh," and means that his birth was by the special or miraculous agency of God. See Ro 4. It was not in the ordinary course of events. The *persecution* here referred to, was the injurious treatment which Isaac received from Ishmael, or the opposition which subsisted between them. The *particular* reference of Paul is doubtless to Ge 21:9, where it is said that "Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had borne unto Abraham, mocking." It was on account of this, and at the special request of Sarah, that Hagar and her son were expelled from the house of Abraham, Ge 21:10.

Even so it is now. That is, Christians, the children of the promise, are persecuted by the Jews, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, "as it now is," and who are uninterested in the promises, as Ishmael was. For an illustration of this, see Paley's *Horae Pauline*, on this [Epistle, No. V. Dr. Paley has remarked, that it does not appear that the apostle Paul was ever set upon by the Gentiles, unless they were first stirred up by the Jews, except in two instances. One of these was at Philippi, after the cure of the Pythoness, (Ac 16:19;) and the other at Ephesus, at the instance of Demetrius, Ac 19:24. The persecutions of the Christians arose, therefore, mainly from the Jews—from those who were in bondage to the law, and to rites and customs; and Paul's allusion here to the case of the persecution which Isaac the free-born son endured, is exceedingly pertinent and happy.

{d} "he that was born" Ge 21:9 {e} "even so it is now" Joh 15:19

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *Nevertheless*. But, (*alla*.)

What saith the Scripture? What does the Scripture teach on the subject? What lesson does it convey in regard to the bondman?

Cast out the bond-woman and her son. This was the language of Sarah, in an address to Abraham, requesting him to cast out Hagar and Ishmael, Ge 21:10. That was done. Paul uses it here as applicable to the case before him. As used by him, the meaning is, that everything like servitude in the gospel is to be rejected, as Hagar and Ishmael were driven away. It does not mean, as it seems to me, that they were to expel the Jewish *teachers* in Galatia, but that they were to reject everything like servitude and bondage; they were to adhere only to that which was free. Paul cannot here mean that the passage in Ge 21:10 originally had reference to the gospel, for nothing evidently was farther from the mind of Sarah than any such reference; nor can it be shown that he meant to approve of or vindicate the conduct of Sarah; but he finds a passage applicable to his purpose, and he conveys his ideas in that language as exactly expressing his meaning. We all use language in that way wherever we find it.

{f} "what saith the Scripture" Ge 21:10,12

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *So then, brethren*. It follows from all this. Not from the allegory regarded as *an argument*—for Paul does not use it thus—but from the considerations suggested on the whole subject. Since the Christian religion is so superior to the Jewish; since we are by it freed from degrading servitude, and are not in bondage to rites and ceremonies; since it was designed to make us truly free, and since by that religion we are admitted to the privileges of sons, and are no longer under laws, and tutors, and governors, as if we were minors; from all this it follows, that we should feel and act, not as if we were children of a bond-woman, and born in slavery, but as if we were children of a free-woman, and born to liberty. It is the birthright of Christians to think, and feel, and act like freemen; and they should not allow themselves to become the slaves of customs, and rites, and ceremonies, but should feel that they are the adopted children of God.

Thus closes this celebrated allegory—an allegory that has greatly perplexed most expositors, and most readers of the Bible. In view of it, and of the exposition-above, there are a few remarks which which may not inappropriately be made.

(1.) It is by no means affirmed that the history of Hagar and Sarah in Genesis had any original reference to the gospel. The account there is a plain historical narrative, not *designed* to have any such reference.

(2.) The narrative contains important *principles*, that may be used as illustrating truth, and is so used by the apostle Paul. There are parallel points between the history and the truths of religion, where the one may be *illustrated* by the other.

(3.) The apostle does not use it at all in the way of *argument*, or as if that *proved* that the Galatians were not to submit to the Jewish rites and customs. It is an illustration of the comparative nature of servitude and freedom, and would, therefore, illustrate the difference between a servile compliance with Jewish rites, and the freedom of the gospel.

(4.) This use of an historical fact by the apostle does not make it proper for us to turn the Old Testament into allegory, or even to make a very free use of this mode of illustrating truth. That an allegory may be used sometimes with advantage no one can doubt, while the "Pilgrim's Progress" shall exist. Nor can any one doubt that Paul has here derived, in this manner, an important and striking illustration of truth from the Old Testament. But no one acquainted with the history of interpretation can doubt that vast injury has been done by a fanciful mode of explaining the Old Testament; by making every fact in its history an allegory; and every pin and pillar of the tabernacle and the temple a *type*. Nothing is better fitted to bring the whole science of interpretation into contempt, nothing more dishonours the Bible, than to make it a book of enigmas, and religion to consist in puerile conceits. The Bible is a book of sense; and all the doctrines essential to salvation are plainly revealed. It should be interpreted, not by mere conceit and by fancy, but by the sober laws according to which are interpreted other books. It should be explained, not under the influence of a vivid imagination, but under the influence of a heart imbued with a love of truth, and by an understanding disciplined to investigate the meaning of words and phrases, and capable of rendering a *reason* for the interpretation which is proposed. Men may abundantly use the facts in the Old Testament to illustrate human nature, as Paul did; but far distant be the day when the principles of Origen and of Cocceius shall again prevail, and when it shall be assumed that "the Bible means everything that it can be made to mean."

*See Appendix, pp. 1731 if., Note 57

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 5

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 1

GALATIANS CHAPTER 5

THIS chapter is, properly, a continuation of the argument in the previous chapter, and is designed to induce the Galatians to renounce their conformity to the JewiSh law, arid to become entirely con- formed to the gospel. In particular it seems to be designed to meet a charge that had been brought against him, that he had preached the necessity of circumcision, or that he had so practised it as to show that he believed that it was obligatory on others. Under his example, or pleading his authority, it seems the false teachers there had urged the necessity of its observance. Ga 5:11. The argument and the exhortation consist of the following parts:—

(1.) He exhorts them to stand firm in the liberty of Christianity, and not to be brought again under bondage, Ga 5:1.

(2.) He solemnly assures them, that if they depended on circumcision for salvation, they could derive no benefit from Christ. They put themselves into a perfect legal state, and must depend on that alone; and that was equivalent to renouncing Christ altogether, or to falling from grace, Ga 5:2-6.

(3.) He assures them that their present belief could not have come from him by whom they were originally brought to the knowledge of the truth; but must have been from some foreign influence, operating like leaven, Ga 5:7-9.

(4.) He says he had confidence in them, on the whole, that they would obey the truth, and that they would suffer him who had troubled them to bear his proper judgment, gently insinuating that he should be disowned or cut off, Ga 5:10,12.

(5.) He vindicates himself from the charge that he preached the necessity of circumcision. His vindication was, that if he had done that he would have escaped persecution, for then the offence of the cross would have ceased, Ga 5:11.

(6.) He assures them that they had been called unto liberty; that the gospel had made them free. Yet Paul felt how easy it was to abuse this doctrine, and to pretend that Christ had freed them from all restraint, and from the bondage of all law. Against this he cautions them. Their liberty was not licentiousness. It was not freedom from all the restraints of law. It was not that they might give indulgence to the passions of the flesh. It was designed that they should serve one another; and not fall into the indulgence of raging passions, producing strife and mutual hatred, Ga 5:13-15.

(7.) To illustrate this, and to show them the evils of giving indulgence to their appetites under the pretence that they were free, he proceeds to show what were the passions to which carnal indulgence would give rise, or what were the works of the flesh, Ga 5:16-21.

(8.) On the other hand, the Spirit produces a train of most lovely virtues, feelings, and affections, against which there could be no law, Ga 5:22,23.

(9.) They who were Christians had in fact crucified the flesh. They were bound to live after the teachings of the Spirit; and Paul, therefore, exhorts them to lay aside all vain-glory and envy, and to live in peace, Ga 5:24-26.

Verse 1. *Stand fast therefore*. Be firm and unwavering. This verse properly belongs to the previous chapter, and should not have been separated from it. The sense is, that they were to be firm and unyielding in maintaining the great principles of Christian liberty. They had been freed from the bondage of rites and ceremonies; and they should by no means, and in no form, yield to them again.

In the liberty, etc. Comp. Joh 8:32,36; Ro 6:18.

See Barnes "Ga 4:3".

And be not entangled again. Tindal renders this, "And wrap not yourselves again." The sense is, do not again allow such a yoke to be put on you; do not again become slaves to any rites, and customs, and habits.

The yoke of bondage. Of servitude to the Jewish laws. **See Barnes "Ac 15:10"**.

{a} "Stand fast" Eph 6:14 {b} "the liberty" Joh 7:32,36; Ac 15:10 Ro 6:18

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Behold, I Paul say unto you*. I, who at first preached the gospel to you; I, too, who have been circumcised, and who was formerly a strenuous asserter of the necessity of observing the laws of Moses; and I, too, who am charged Ga 5:11 with still preaching the necessity of circumcision, now solemnly say to you, that if you are circumcised with a view to being justified

by that, in whole or in part, it amounts to a rejection of the doctrine of justification by Christ, and an entire apostasy from him. He is to be "a whole Saviour." No one is to share with him in the honour of saving men; and no rite, no custom, no observance of law, is to divide the honour with his death. The design of Paul is to give them the most solemn assurance on this point; and by his own authority and experience to guard them from the danger, and to put the matter to rest.

That if ye be circumcised. This must be understood with reference to the subject under consideration. If you are circumcised with such a view as is maintained by the false teachers that have come among you; that is, with an idea that it is necessary in order to your justification. He evidently did not mean that if any of them had been circumcised before their conversion to Christianity; nor could he mean to say that circumcision, in all cases, amounted to a rejection of Christianity, for he had himself procured the circumcision of Timothy, Ac 16:3. If it was done, as it was then, for prudential considerations, and with a wish not unnecessarily to irritate the Jews, and to give one a more ready access to them, it was not to be regarded as wrong. But if, as the false teachers in Galatia claimed, as a thing *essential* to salvation, as *indispensable* to justification and acceptance with God, then the matter assumed a different aspect; and then it became, in fact, a renouncing of Christ as *himself sufficient* to save us. So with anything else. Rites and ceremonies in religion may be in themselves well enough, if they are *held* to be matters not essential; but the moment they are regarded as vital and essential, that moment they begin to infringe on the doctrine of justification by faith alone, and that moment they are to be rejected; and it is because of the danger that this *will* be the case, that they are to be used sparingly in the Christian church. Who does not know the danger of depending upon prayers, and alms, and the sacraments, and extreme unction, and penance, and empty forms, for salvation? And who does not know how much in the Papal communion the great doctrine of justification has been obscured by numberless such rites and forms?

Christ shall profit you nothing. Will be of no advantage to you. Your dependence on circumcision, in these circumstances, will in fact amount to a rejection of the Saviour, and of the doctrine of justification by him.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *For I testify again*. Probably he had stated this when he had preached the gospel to them at first, and he now solemnly bears witness to the same thing again. Bloomfield, however, supposes that the word again here *palin* means, on the other hand; or *furthermore*; or, as we would say, "and again."

That he is a debtor to do the whole law. He binds himself to obey all the law of Moses. Circumcision was the distinguishing badge of the Jews, as baptism is of Christians. A man, therefore, who became circumcised, became *a professor of the Jewish religion*, and bound himself to obey all its peculiar laws. This must be understood, of course, with reference to the point under discussion; and means, if he did it with a view to justification, or as a thing that was necessary and binding. It would not apply to such a case as that of Timothy, where it was a matter of mere expediency or prudence. **See Barnes "Ga 5:2"**.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Christ is become of no effect unto you*. You will derive no advantage from Christ. His work in regard to you is needless and vain. If you can be justified in any other way than by him, then of course you do not need him, and your adoption of the other mode is, in fact, a renunciation of him. Tindal renders this, "Ye are gone quite from Christ." The word here used *katargew* means, properly, to render inactive, idle, useless; to do away, to put an end to; and here it means that they had withdrawn from Christ, if they attempted to be justified by the law. They would not need him if they could be thus justified; and they could derive no benefit from him. A man who can be justified by his own obedience, does not need the aid or the merit of another; and ff it was true, as they seemed to suppose, that they could be justified by the law, it followed that the work of Christ was in vain so far as they were concerned.

Whosoever of you are justified by the law. On the supposition that any of you are justified by the law; or if, as you seem to suppose, any are justified by the law. The apostle does not say that this had in fact ever occurred; but he merely makes a supposition. If such a thing should or could occur, it would follow that you had fallen from grace.

Ye are fallen from grace. That is, this would mount to apostasy from the religion of the Redeemer, and would be in fact a rejection of the grace of the gospel. That this had ever in fact occurred among true Christians the apostle does not affirm, unless he affirmed that men can in fact be justified by the law, since he makes the falling from grace a consequence of that. But did Paul mean to teach that? Did he mean to affirm that any man in fact had been, or could be, justified by his own obedience to the law? Let his own writings answer. See especially Ro 3:20. But unless he held that, then this passage does not prove that any one who has ever been a true Christian has fallen away. The fair interpretation of the passage does not demand that. Its simple and obvious meaning is, that if a man who had been a professed Christian *should be* justified by his own conformity to the law, and adopt that mode of justification, then that would amount to a rejection of the mode of salvation by Christ, and would be a renouncing of the plan of justification by grace. The two systems cannot be united. The adoption of the one is, in fact, a rejection of the other. Christ will be "a whole Saviour," or none. This passage, therefore, cannot be adduced to prove that any true Christian has in fact fallen away from grace, unless it proves also that man may be justified by the deeds of the law, contrary to the repeated declarations of Paul himself. The word "grace," here, does not mean grace in the sense of *personal religion*; it means the system of salvation by grace, in contradistinction from that by merit or by works—the system of the gospel.

{a} "no effect" Ro 9:31,32 {b} "fallen from grace" Heb 12:15

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *For we*. We who are Christians. It is a characteristic of the true Christian.

Through the Spirit. The Holy Spirit. We expect salvation only by his aid.

Wait for. That is, we *expect* salvation in this way. The main idea is, not that of *waiting* as if the thing were *delayed*; it is that of *expecting*. The sense is, that true Christians have no other hope of salvation than by faith in the Lord Jesus. It is not by their own works, nor is it by any conformity

to the law. The object of Paul is to show them the true nature of the Christian hope of eternal life, and to recall them from dependence on their conformity to the law.

The hope of righteousness. The hope of justification. They had no other hope of justification than by faith fix the Redeemer. **See Barnes "Ro 1:17"**.

{c} "wait" Ro 8:25 {d} "righteousness" 2Ti 4:8

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *For in Jesus Christ*. In the religion which Christ came to establish.

Neither circumcision, etc. It makes no difference whether a man is circumcised or not. He is not saved because he is circumcised, nor is he condemned because he is not. The design of Christianity is to abolish these rites and ceremonies, and to introduce a way of salvation that shall be applicable to all mankind alike. **See Barnes "Ga 3:28"**; **See Barnes "1Co 7:19"**.

Comp. Ro 2:29.

But faith which worketh by love. Faith that evinces its existence by love to God, and benevolence to men. It is not a mere *intellectual* belief; but it is that which reaches the heart, and controls the affections. It is not a *dead* faith; but it is that which is operative, and which is seen in Christian kindness and affection. It is not mere belief of the truth, or mere *orthodoxy*; but it is that which produces true attachment to others. A mere intellectual assent to the truth may leave the heart cold and unaffected; mere orthodoxy, however bold, and self-confident, and "sound," may not be inconsistent with contentions, and strifes, and logomachies, and divisions. The true faith is that which is seen in benevolence, in love to God, in love to all who bear the Christian name; in a readiness to do good to all mankind. This shows that the heart is affected by the faith that is held; and this is the nature and design of all true religion. Tindal renders this, "faith, which by love is mighty in operation."

{f} "which worketh" 1Th 1:3 Jas 2:18-22

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Ye did run well*. The Christian life is often represented as a race. **See Barnes "1Co 9:24"; also** 1Co 9:25-26. Paul means here that they began the Christian life with ardour and zeal. Comp. Ga 4:1.

Who did hinder you. Marg., *drive you back*. The word used here *anakoptw* means, properly, to beat or drive back. Hence it means to hinder, check, or retard. Dr. Doddridge remarks that this is "an Olympic expression, and properly signifies *coming across the course* while a person is running in it, in such a manner as to jostle, and throw him out of the way." Paul asks, with emphasis, who it could have been that retarded them in their Christian course, implying that it could have been done only by their own consent, or that there was really no cause why they should not have continued as they began.

That ye should not obey the truth? The true system of justification by faith in the Redeemer. That you should have turned aside, and embraced the dangerous errors in regard to the necessity of obeying the laws of Moses.

{1} "hinder" "drive you back"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *This persuasion*. This belief that it is necessary to obey the laws of Moses, and to intermingle the observance of the Jewish rites with the belief of the Christian doctrines in order to be saved.

Not of him that calleth you. That is, of God, who had called them into his kingdom. That it refers to God, and not to Paul, is plain. They knew well enough that Paul had not persuaded them to it, and it was important now to show them that it could not be traced to God, though they who taught it pretended to be commissioned by him.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *A little leaven*, etc. This is evidently a proverbial expression. See it explained **See Barnes "1Co 5:6".**

Its meaning here is, that the embracing of the errors which they had adopted was to be traced to some influence existing among themselves, and acting like leaven. It may either mean that there was existing among them from the first a slight *tendency* to conform to rites and customs, and that this had now like leaven pervaded the mass; or it may mean that the false teachers there might be compared to leaven, whose doctrines, though they were few in number, had pervaded the mass of Christians; or it may mean, as many have supposed, that *any* conformity to the Jewish law was like leaven. If they practised circumcision, it would not stop there. The tendency to conform to Jewish rites would spread from that, until it would infect all the doctrines of religion, and they would fall into the observance of all the rites of the Jewish law. It seems to me that the second interpretation referred to above is the correct one; and that the apostle means to say, that the influence which had brought this change about was at first small and unimportant; that there might have been but a few teachers of that kind, and it might have not been deemed worthy of particular attention or alarm; but that the doctrines thus infused into the churches, had spread like leaven, until the whole mass had become affected.

{g} "little leaven" 1Th 1:3 Jas 2:18-22

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *I have confidence in you*, etc. Though they had been led astray, and had embraced many false opinions, yet, on the whole, Paul had confidence in their piety, and believed they would yet return and embrace the truth.

That ye will be none otherwise minded. That is, than you have been he taught by me; or than I think and teach on the subject. Paul doubtless means to say, that had full confidence that they would embrace the views which he was inculcating on the subject of justification, and he makes this remark in order to modify the severity of his tone of reprehension, and to show that, notwithstanding all he had said, he had confidence still in their piety. He believed that they would coincide with him in his opinion, alike on the general subject of justification, and in regard to the cause of their alienation from the truth. He, therefore, gently insinuates that it was not to be traced to themselves that they had departed from the truth, but to-the "little leaven" that had leavened the mass; and he adds, that whoever had done this should be held to be responsible for it.

But he that troubleth you. By leading you into error.

Shall bear his judgment. Shall be responsible for it, and will receive proper treatment from you. He gently states this general principle, which is so obvious; states that he does not believe that the defection is to be traced to themselves; and designs to prepare their minds for a proposition which he intends to submit, Ga 5:12, that the offending person or persons should be disowned and cut off.

Whosoever he be. "I do not know who he is. I mention no names; accuse no one by name; and advise no severe measures against any particular individual. I state only the obvious principle that every man should bear his own burden, and be held responsible for what he has done—no matter who he is."

{a} "his judgment" 2Co 10:6

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *And I, brethren*. Paul here proceeds to vindicate himself from giving countenance to the doctrines which they had advanced there. It is evident that the false teachers in Galatia appealed to Paul himself, and alleged that *he* insisted on the necessity of circumcision, and that they were teaching no more than he taught. On what they founded this, is unknown. It *may* have been mere slander; or it may have arisen from the fact that he had circumcised Timothy, Ac 16:3, and, possibly, that he may have encouraged circumcision in some other similar cases. Or it may have been inferred from the fact (which was undoubtedly true) that Paul in general complied with the customs of the Jews when he was with them. But his conduct and example had been greatly perverted. He had *never* enjoined circumcision as necessary to salvation; and had never complied with Jewish customs where there was any danger that it would be understood that he regarded them as at all indispensable, or as furnishing a ground of acceptance with God.

If I yet preach circumcision. If I preach it as necessary to salvation; or if I enjoin it on those who are converted to Christianity.

Why do I yet suffer persecution? That is, from the Jews. "Why do they oppose me? Circumcision is the peculiar badge of the Jewish religion; it implies all the rest, Ga 5:2; and if I preach the necessity of that, it would satisfy the Jews, and save me from persecution. They would never persecute one

who did that, as they do me; and the fact that I am thus persecuted by them, is full demonstration that I am not regarded as preaching the necessity of circumcision." It is remarkable that Paul does not expressly deny the charge. The reason may be, that his own word would be called in question, or that it night require much explanation to show why he had recommended circumcision in any case, as in the case of Timothy, Ac 16:3. But the fact that he was persecuted by the Jews settled the question, and showed that he did not preach the necessity of circumcision in any such sense as to satisfy them, or in any such sense as was claimed by the false teachers in Galatia. In regard to the fact that Paul was persecuted by the Jews, see Ac 14:1,2,19 17:4,5,13.

Comp. Paley, *Horae Paulinae*, Galat. No. v.

Then is the offence of the cross eased. "For if I should preach the necessity of circumcision, as is alleged, the offence of the cross of Christ would be removed. The necessity of depending on the merits of the sacrifice made on the cross would be taken away, since then men could be saved by conformity to the laws of Moses. The very thing that I have so much insisted on, and that has been such a stumbling-block to the Jews, **See Barnes** "1Co 1:23, that conformity to their rites was of no avail, and that they must be saved only by the merits of a crucified Saviour, would be done away with." Paul means that if this had been done, he would have saved himself from giving offence, and from the evils of persecution. He would have preached that men could be saved by conformity to Jewish rites, and that would have saved him from all the persecutions which he had endured in consequence of preaching the necessity of salvation by the cross.

{*} "yet suffer" "still" {b} "persecution" Ga 6:12 {c} "offense" 1Co 1:23

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *I would they were even cut off*. That is, as I understand it, from the communion of the church. So far am I, says Paul, from agreeing with them, and preaching the necessity of circumcision as they do, that I sincerely wish they were excluded from the church as unworthy a place among the children of God. For a very singular and monstrous interpretation of this passage, though adopted by Chrysostom, Theodoret, Theophylact, Jerome, Grotius, Rosenmuller, Koppe, and others, the learned reader may consult Koppe on this verse. To my amazement, I find that this interpretation has also been adopted by Robinson in his Lexicon, on the word *apokoptw*. I will state the opinion in the words of Koppe: *Non modo circumcidant se, sed, si velint, etiam mutilent se—ipsa genitalia resecent*. The simple meaning is, I think, that Paul wished that the authors of these errors and disturbances were excluded from the church.

Which trouble you. Who pervert the true doctrines of salvation, and who thus introduce error into the church. Error always, sooner or later, causes trouble. Comp. **See Barnes "1Co 5:7"**.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty*. Freedom from Jewish rites and ceremonies. **See Barnes "Ga 3:28"**; **See Barnes** "Ga 4:9, **See Barnes "Ga 4:21, also** Ga 4:22-31. The

meaning here is, that Paul wished the false teachers removed because true Christians had been called Unto liberty, and they were abridging and destroying that liberty. They were hot in subjection to the law of Moses, or to anything else that savoured of bondage. They were free; free from the servitude of sin, and free from subjection to expensive and burdensome rites and customs. They were to remember this as a great and settled principle: and so vital a truth was this, and so important that it should be maintained, and so great the evil of forgetting it, that Paul says he earnestly wishes Ga 5:12 that all who would reduce them to that state of servitude were cut off from the Christian church.

Only use not liberty, etc. The word use here, introduced by our translators, obscures the sense. The idea is, "You are called to liberty, but it is not liberty for an occasion to the flesh. It is not freedom from virtuous restraints, and from the laws of God. It is liberty from the servitude of sin, and religious rites and ceremonies, not freedom from the necessary restraints of virtue." It was necessary to give this caution, because

(1) there was a strong tendency in all converts from heathenism to relapse again into their former habits. Licentiousness abounded; and where they had been addicted to it before their conversion, and where they were surrounded by it on every hand, they were in constant danger of falling into it again. A bare and naked declaration, therefore, that they had been called to *liberty*, to freedom from restraint, might have been misunderstood, and some might have supposed that they were free from all restraints.

(2.) It is needful to guard the doctrine from abuse at all times. There has been a strong tendency, as the history of the church has shown, to abuse the doctrines of grace. The doctrine that Christians are "free," that there is liberty to them from restraint, has been perverted always by Antinomians, and been made the occasion of their indulging freely in sin. And the result has shown that nothing was more important than to guard the doctrine of *Christian liberty*, and to show exactly what Christians are *freed from*, and what laws are still binding on them, Paul is, therefore, at great pains to show that the doctrines which he had maintained did not lead to licentiousness, and did not allow the indulgence of sinful and corrupt passions.

An occasion. As allowing indulgence to the flesh, or as a furtherance or help to corrupt passions. See the word explained **See Barnes "Ro 7:8"**.

To the flesh. The word flesh is often used in the writings of Paul to denote corrupt and gross passions and affections. **See Barnes "Ro 7:18"**; **See Barnes** "Ro 8:1".

But by love serve one another. By the proper manifestation of love one to another, strive to promote each other's welfare. To do this will not be inconsistent with the freedom of the gospel. When there is *love*, there is no servitude. Duty is pleasant, and offices of kindness agreeable. Paul does not consider them as freed from *all* law and *all* restraint; but they are to be governed by the law of love. They were not to feel that they were so free that they might lawfully give indulgence to the desires of the flesh, but they were to regard themselves as under the law to love one another; and thus they would fulfil the law of Christian freedom.

{d} "use not liberty" 1Co 8:9 1Pe 2:16 {e} "serve one another" 1Jo 3:18

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *For all the law is fulfilled*, etc. That is, this expresses the substance of the whole law; it embraces and comprises all. The apostle, of course, here alludes to the law in regard to our duty to our fellow-men, since that was the point which he particularly enforces. He is saying that this law would counteract all the evil workings of the flesh; and, if this were fulfilled, all our duty to others would be discharged. A similar sentiment he has expressed in Ro 13:8-10. **See Barnes** "Ro 13:8, **See Barnes "Ro 13:9"; See Barnes "Ro 13:10".**

The *turn* here in the discussion is worthy of particular notice. With great skill he changes the subject from a doctrinal argument to a strain of practical remark, and furnishes most important lessons for the right mode of overcoming our corrupt and sensual passions, and discharging our duty to others.

Thou shalt love thy neighbour, etc. **See Barnes "Mt 19:19".**

{a} "This" Le 19:18 Mt 22:39,40 Jas 2:8

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *But if ye bite*. The word here used *daknw* means, properly, to bite, to sting; and here seems to be used in the sense of contending and striving—a metaphor not improbably taken from dogs and wild beasts.

And devour one another. As wild beasts do. The sense is, "if you contend with each other;" and the reference is, probably, to the strifes which would arise between the two parties in the churches—the Jewish and the Gentile converts.

Take heed that ye be not consumed, etc. As wild beasts contend sometimes until both are slain. Thus the idea is, in their contentions they would destroy the spirituality and happiness of each other; their characters would be ruined, and the church be overthrown. The readiest way to destroy the spirituality of a church, and to annihilate the influence of religion, is to excite a spirit of contention.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *This I say then*. This is the true rule about overcoming the propensities of your carnal natures, and of avoiding the evils of strife and contention.

Walk. The Christian life is often represented as a journey; and the word *walk*, in the Scripture, is often equivalent to *live*, Mr 7:5. **See Barnes "Ro 4:12"; See Barnes** "Ro 6:4"; **See Barnes "Ro 8:1".**

In the Spirit. Live under the influences of the Holy Spirit; admit those influences fully into your hearts. Do not resist him, but yield to all his suggestions. **See Barnes "Ro 8:1".**

What the Holy Spirit would produce, Paul states in Ga 5:22,23".

If a man would yield his heart to those influences, he would be able to overcome all his evil propensities; and it is because he resists that Spirit that he is ever overcome by the corrupt passions of his nature. Never was a better, safer, or a more easy rule given to overcome our corrupt and sensual desires than that here furnished. Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 8:1, and** Ro 8:2-13.

And ye shall not fulfil, etc. Marg., *Fulfil not*—as if it were a command. So Tindal renders it. But the more common interpretation, as it is the more significant, is that adopted by our translators. Thus it is not merely a command; it is the statement of an important and deeply interesting truth—that the only way to overcome the corrupt desires and propensities of our nature, is by submitting to the influences of the Holy Spirit. It is not by philosophy; it is not by mere resolutions to resist them; it is not by the force of education and laws; it is only by admitting into our souls the influence of religion, and yielding ourselves to the guidance of the Holy Spirit of God. If we live under the influences of that Spirit, we need not fear the power of the sensual and corrupt propensities of our nature.

{b} "Walk" Ro 8:1,4,13

{1} "ye shall not fulfill the lust" "fulfil not" {*} "lust" "desire"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit*. The inclinations and desires of the flesh are contrary to those of the Spirit. They draw as away in an opposite direction; and while the Spirit of God would lead us one way, our carnal nature would lead us another, and thus produce the painful controversy which exists in our minds. The word" Spirit" here refers to the Spirit of God, and to his influences on the heart.

And these are contrary, etc. They are opposite in their nature. They never can harmonize. See Ro 8:6,7. Compare below, Ga 5:19-23. The contrariety Paul has illustrated by showing what each produces; and they are as opposite as adultery, wrath, strife, murders, drunkenness, etc., are to love, joy, goodness, gentleness, and temperance.

So that ye cannot do the things that ye would. See this sentiment illustrated **See Barnes "Ro 7:15"** and Ro 7:15-19. The expression "cannot do" is stronger by far than the original, and it is doubted whether the original will bear this interpretation. The literal translation would be, "Lest what ye will, those things ye should do," *ina mh, a an yelhte, tauta poihte*. It is rendered by Doddridge, "So that ye do not the things that ye would." By Locke, "You do not the things that you propose to yourselves;" and Locke remarks on the passage, "Ours is the only translation that I know which renders it *cannot*." The Vulgate and the Syriac give a literal translation of the Greek, "So that you do not what you would." This is undoubtedly the true rendering; and, in the original, there is no declaration about the possibility or the impossibility, the ability or the inability, to do these things. It is simply a statement *of a fact*, as it is in Ro 7:15,19. That statement is, that in the mind of a renewed man there is a contrariety in the two influences which bear on his soul—the Spirit of God inclining him in one direction, and the lusts of the flesh in another; that one of these influences is so great, as, in fact, to restrain and control the mind, and prevent its doing what it would otherwise do; that when there is an inclination in one direction, there is a controlling and overpowering influence in another, producing a conflict, which prevents it, and which finally checks and restrains the mind. There is no reason for interpreting this, moreover, as seems always to be the case, of the overpowering tendency in the mind to evil, as if it taught that the Christian was desirous of doing good, but *could not*, on account of his indwelling corruption. So far as the language of Paul or the fact is concerned, it may be understood of just the opposite; and may mean, that such are the

restraints and influences of the Holy Spirit on the heart, that the Christian *does not* the evil which he otherwise would, and to which his corrupt nature inclines him. He (Paul) is exhorting them Ga 5:16 to walk in the Spirit, and assures them that thus they would not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. To encourage them to this, he reminds them that there were contrary principles in their minds —the influences of the Spirit of God, and a carnal and downward tendency of the flesh. These are contrary one to the other; and such are, in fact, the influences of the Spirit on the mind, that the Christian does not do the things which he otherwise would. So understood, or understood in any fair interpretation of the original, it makes no assertion about the ability or inability of man to do right or wrong. It affirms *as a fact*, that where these opposite principles exist, a man does not do the things which otherwise he would do. If a man *could* not do otherwise than he actually does, he would not be to blame. Whether a Christian *could* not resist the influences of the Holy Spirit, and yield to the corrupt desires of the flesh, or whether he *could* not overcome these evil propensities and do right always, are points on which the apostle here makes no affirmation. His is the statement of a *mere fact*, that where these counteracting propensities exist in the mind, there is a conflict, and that the man does not do what he otherwise would do.

{c} "For the flesh" Ro 7:21-23 {+} "lusteth" "desireth" {d} "contrary" Ro 8:6,7 {e} "ye cannot" Ro 7:15,19

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *But if ye be led of the Spirit*. If you submit to the teachings and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Ye are not under the law. You are under a different dispensation—the dispensation of the Spirit. You are free from the restraints and control of the Mosaic law, and are under the control of the Spirit of God.

{f} "if ye be" Ro 6:14 8:2

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Now the works of the flesh*. What the flesh, or what corrupt and unrenewed human nature produces.

Are manifest. Plain, well-known. The world is full of illustrations of what corrupt human nature produces; and as to the existence and nature of those works, no one can be ignorant, It is evident here that the word *sarx*, *flesh*, is used to denote *corrupt human nature*, and not merely the body; since many of the vices here enumerated are the passions of the mind, or the soul, rather than of the body. Such are "wrath," "strife," "heresies," "envyings," etc., which cannot be said to have their seat in the body. If the word, therefore, is used to denote human nature, the passage furnishes a sad commentary on its tendency, and on the character of man. It is closely parallel to the declaration of the Saviour in Mt 15:19. Of the *nature* of most of these sins, or works of the flesh, it is unnecessary to offer any comment. They are not so rare as not to be well known, and the meaning of the words

requires little exposition. In regard to the *existence* of these vices as the result of human nature, **See Barnes "Ro 1:1"**

and following; a single glance at the history of the past, or at the present condition of the heathen and a large part of the Christian world, would furnish an ample and a painful demonstration.

{g} "flesh" Mt 15:19 Eph 5:3-6; Col 3:5,6; Re 22:15

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Witchcraft*. Pretending to witchcraft. The apostle does not vouch for the actual existence of witchcraft; but he says that what was known as such was a proof of the corrupt nature of man, and was one of the fruits of it. No one can doubt it. It was a system of imposture and falsehood throughout; and nothing is a better demonstration of the depravity of the human heart than an extended and systematized attempt to impose on mankind. The word which is here used, (*farmakeia*, whence our word *pharmacy*, from *farmakon* a medicine, poison, magic potion,) means, properly, the preparing and giving of medicine. Then it means also poisoning, and also magic art, or enchantment; because in savage nations, pharmacy or medicine consisted much in magical incantations. Thence it means sorcery or enchantment, and it is so used uniformly in the New Testament. It is used only in Ga 5:20 Re 9:21; Re 18:23 21:8. Some have supposed that it means here *poisoning*, a crime often practised; but the more correct interpretation is, to refer it to the black art, or to pretensions to witchcraft, and the numerous delusions which have grown out of it, as a striking illustration of the corrupt and depraved nature of man.

Hatred. Gr., *hatreds*—in the plural. Antipathies, and want of love, producing contentions and strifes.

Variance. Contentions. **See Barnes "Ro 1:29"**.

Emulations, *zhloi* In a bad sense, meaning heart-burning, or jealousy, or perhaps inordinate ambition. The sense is, ardour or zeal in a bad cause, leading to strife, etc.

Wrath. This also is plural in the Greek, *yumoi*, meaning passions, bursts of anger. **See Barnes "2Co 12:20"**.

Strife. Also plural in the Greek. **See Barnes "2Co 12:20"**.

Seditions. **See Barnes "Ro 16:17"**.

Heresies. **See Barnes "Ac 5:17"**; **See Barnes** "1Co 11:19"

{*} "witchcraft" "sorcery" {+} "emulations" "rivalries" {++} "strife" "disputes" {**} "seditions" "factions" {|} "heresies" "sects"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Envyings*. **See Barnes "2Co 12:20"**.

Revellings. **See Barnes "2Co 12:20 Ro 13:13"**.

And such like. This class of evils, without attempting to specify all.

Of the which I tell you before. In regard to which I forewarn you.

As I have also told you in time past. When he was with them.

Shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Cannot possibly be saved. **See Barnes "1Co 6:9";** 1Co 6:10-11. In regard to this passage we may remark,

(1.) that it furnishes the most striking and unanswerable proof of human depravity. Paul represents these things as "the works of the flesh"— the works of the unrenewed nature of man. They are such as human nature, when left to itself, everywhere produces. The world shows that such is the fact; and we cannot but ask, is a nature producing this to be regarded as pure? Is man an unfallen being? Can he save himself? Does he need no Saviour?

(2.) This passage is full of fearful admonition to those who indulge in any or all of these vices. Paul, inspired of God, has solemnly declared that such cannot be saved. They *cannot* enter into the kingdom of heaven as they are. Nor is it *desirable* that they should. What would heaven be if filled up with adulterers, and fornicators, and idolaters, with the proud and envious, and with murderers and drunkards? To call such a place heaven, would be an abuse of the word. No one could wish to dwell there; and such men *cannot* enter into heaven.

(3.) The human heart must be changed, or man cannot be saved. This follows, of course. If such is its tendency, then there is a necessity for such a change as that in regeneration, in order that man may be happy and be saved.

(4.) We should rejoice that such men *cannot*, with their present characters, be admitted to heaven. We should rejoice that there is one world where these vices are unknown—a world of perfect and eternal purity. When we look at the earth; when we see how these vices prevail; when we reflect that every land is polluted, and that we cannot traverse a continent or an island, visit a nook or corner of the earth, dwell in any city or town, where these vices do not exist, oh how refreshing and invigorating is it to look forward to a pure heaven! How cheering the thought that there is one world where these vices axe unknown; one world, all whose ample plains may be traversed, and the note of blasphemy shall never fall on the ear; one world, where virtue shall be safe from the arts of the seducer; one world, where we may for ever dwell, and not one reeling and staggering drunkard shall ever be seen; where there shall be not one family in want and tears, from the vice of its unfaithful head! With what joy should we look forward to that world! With what ardour should we pant that it may be our own!

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *But the fruit of the Spirit*. That which the Holy Spirit produces. It is not without design, evidently, that the apostle uses the word "Spirit" here, as denoting that these things do not flow from our own nature. The vices above enumerated are the proper "works" or result of the operations of the human heart; the virtues which he enumerates are produced by a foreign influence—the agency of the Holy Spirit. Hence Paul does not trace them to our own hearts, *even when renewed*. He says that they are to be regarded as the proper result of the Spirit's operations on the soul.

Is love. To God and to men. Probably the latter here is particularly intended, as the fruits of the Spirit are placed in contradistinction from those vices which lead to strifes among men. On the

meaning of the word *love*, **See Barnes "1Co 13:1"**; and for an illustration of operations and effects, see the Notes on that whole chapter.

Joy. In the love of God; in the evidences of pardon; in communion with the Redeemer, and in his service; in the duties of religion, in trial, and in the hope of heaven. **See Barnes "Ro 5:2"**.

Comp. 1Pe 1:8.

Peace. As the result of reconciliation with God. **See Barnes "Ro 5:1"**.

Long-suffering. In affliction and trial, and when injured by others. **See Barnes "1Co 13:4"**.

Gentleness. The same word which is translated *kindness* in 2Co 6:6. **See Barnes "2Co 6:6"**.

The word means goodness, kindness, benignity; and is opposed to a harsh, crabbed, crooked temper. It is a disposition to be pleased; it is mildness of temper, calmness of spirit, an unruffled disposition, and a disposition to treat all with urbanity and politeness. This is one of the regular effects of the Spirit's operations on the heart. Religion makes no one crabbed, and morose, and sour. It sweetens the temper; corrects an irritable disposition; makes the heart kind; disposes us to make all around us as happy as possible. This is true politeness: a kind of politeness which can far better be learned in the school of Christ than in that of Chesterfield; by the study of the New Testament than under the direction of the dancing-master.

Goodness. **See Barnes "Ro 15:14"**.

Here the word seems to be used in the sense of *beneficence*, or a disposition to do good to others. The sense is, that a Christian must be a good man.

Faith. On the meaning of the word *faith*, **See Barnes "Mr 16:16"**.

The word here may be used in the sense of *fidelity*, and may denote that the Christian will be a *faithful man*—a man faithful to his word and promises; a man who can be trusted or confided in. It is probable that the word is used in this sense because the object of the apostle is not to speak of the feelings which we have towards God, so much as to illustrate the influences of the Spirit in directing and controlling our feelings towards men. True religion makes a man *faithful*. The Christian is faithful as a man; faithful as a neighbour, friend, father, husband, son. He is faithful to his contracts; faithful to his promises. No man can be a Christian who is not thus faithful; and all pretensions to being under the influences of the Spirit, when such fidelity does not exist, are deceitful and vain.

{a} "fruit" Joh 15:5 Eph 5:9

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Meekness*. **See Barnes "Mt 5:5"**

§.

Temperance. The word here used *egkrateia* means, properly, self-control, continence. It is derived from *en* and *kratov*, *strength*; and has reference to the power or ascendancy which we have over exciting and evil passions of all kinds. It denotes the self-rule which a man has over the evil propensities of his nature. Our word *temperance* we use now in a much more limited sense, as refering mainly to abstinence from intoxicating drinks. But the word here used is employed in a much more extended signification. It includes the dominion over all evil propensities; and may

denote continence, chastity, self-government, moderation in regard to all indulgences, as well as abstinence from intoxicating drinks. **See Barnes "Ac 24:25".**

The sense here is, that the influences of the Holy Spirit on the heart make a man *moderate* in all indulgences; teach him to restrain his passions, and to govern himself; to control his evil propensities, and to subdue all inordinate affection. The Christian will not only abstain from intoxicating drinks, but from all exciting passions; he will be temperate in his manner of living, and in the government of his temper. This *may* be applied to temperance properly so called with us; but it should not be limited to that. A Christian must be a temperate man; and if the effect of his religion is not to produce this, it is false and vain. Abstinence from intoxicating drinks, as well as from all improper excitement, is demanded by the very genius of his religion; and on this subject there is no danger of drawing the cords too close. No man was ever injured by the strictest temperance, by total abstinence from ardent spirits, and from wine as a beverage; no man is certainly safe who does not abstain; no man, it is believed, can be in a proper frame of mind for religious duties, who indulges in the habitual use of intoxicating drinks. Nothing does more scandal to religion than such indulgences; and, other things being equal, he is the most under the influence of the Spirit of God who is the most thoroughly a man of temperance.

Against such there is no law. That is, there is no law to condemn such persons. These are not the things which the law denounces. These, therefore, are the true freemen—free from the condemning sentence of the law, and free in the service of God. Law condemns sin; and they who evince the spirit here referred to are free from its denunciations.

{b} "against" 1Ti 1:9

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *And they that are Christ's*. All who are true Christians.

Have crucified the flesh. The corrupt passions of the soul have been put to death; that is, destroyed. They are as though they were dead, and have no power over us. **See Barnes "Ga 2:20".**

With the affections. Marg., *passions*. All corrupt desires.

And lusts. **See Barnes "Ro 1:24".**

{1} "affections" "passions" {*} "lusts" "passions and desires"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *If we live in the Spirit*. **See Barnes "Ga 5:16".**

The sense of this verse probably is, "We who are Christians profess to be under the influences of the Holy Spirit. By his influences and agency is our spiritual life. We profess not to be under the dominion of the flesh; hot to be controlled by its appetites and desires. Let us then act in this manner, and as if we believed this. Let us yield ourselves to his influences, and show that we are controlled by that Spirit." It is an earnest exhortation to Christians to yield wholly to the agency of the Holy Spirit on their hearts, and to submit to his guidance. **See Barnes "Ro 8:5,9".**

{a} "live in the Spirit" Ro 8:4,5

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Let us not be desirous of vain glory*. The word here used *kenodoxoi* means, proud or vain of empty advantages, as of birth, property, eloquence, or learning. The reference here is probably to the paltry competitions which arose on account of these supposed advantages. It is possible that this might have been one cause of the difficulties existing in the churches of Galatia, and the apostle is anxious wholly to check and remove it. The Jews prided themselves on their birth; and men are everywhere prone to over-value the supposed advantages of birth and blood. The doctrines of Paul are, that in great and most vital respects men are on a level; that these things contribute nothing to salvation, **See Barnes "Ga 3:28"**

; and that Christians should esteem them of little importance, and that they should not be suffered to interfere with their fellowship, or to mar their harmony and peace. Provoking one another. The sense is, that they who are desirous of vain glory, do provoke one another. They provoke those whom they regard as inferiors by a haughty carriage and a contemptuous manner towards them. They look upon-them often with contempt; pass them by with disdain; treat them as beneath their notice; and this *provokes*, on the other hand, hard feeling, and hatred, and a disposition to take revenge. When men regard themselves as equal in their great and vital interests; when they feel that they are fellow-heirs of the grace of life; when they feel that they belong to one great family, and are in their great interests on a level; deriving no advantage from birth and blood; on a level as descendants of the same apostate father; as being themselves sinners; on a level at the foot of the cross, at the communion table, on beds of sickness, in the grave, and at the bar of God; when they feel this, then the consequences here referred to will be avoided. There will be no haughty carriage such as to provoke opposition; and, on the other hand, there will be no envy on account of the superior rank of others.

Envying one another. On account of their superior wealth, rank, talent, learning. The true way to cure envy is to make men feel that in their great and important interests they are on a level. Their great interests are beyond the grave. The distinctions of this life are temporary, and are comparative trifles. Soon all will be on a level in the grave, and at the bar of God, and in heaven. Wealth, and honour, and rank do not avail there. The poorest man will wear as bright a crown as the rich; the man of most humble birth will be admitted as near the throne as he who can boast the longest line of illustrious ancestors. Why should a man who is soon to wear a "crown incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away," envy him who has a ducal coronet here, or a royal diadem—baubles that are soon to be laid aside for ever? Why should he, though poor here, who is soon to inherit the treasures of heaven, where "moth and rust do not corrupt," envy him who can walk over a few acres as his own, or who has accumulated a glittering pile of dust, soon to be left for ever? Why should he who is soon to wear the robes of salvation, made "white in the blood of the Lamb," envy him who is "clothed in purple and fine linen," or who can adorn himself and his family in the most gorgeous attire which art and skill can make, soon to give place to the winding-sheet, soon to be succeeded by the simple garb which the most humble wears in the grave? If men feel that their great interests are beyond the tomb; that in the important matter of salvation they are on a level;

that soon they are to be undistinguished beneath the clods of the valley, how unimportant comparatively would it seem to adorn their bodies, to advance their name and rank, and to improve their estates? The rich and the great would cease to look down with contempt on those of more humble rank; and the poor would cease to envy those above them, for they are soon to be their equals in the grave; their equals, perhaps their superiors, in heaven !

{b} "Let us not" Php 2:3

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 6

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 1

GALATIANS Chapter 6

This chapter is composed entirely of affectionate exhortation, and the expression of the apostle's earnest solicitude in the behalf of the Christians in Galatia. He exhorts them Ga 6:1 to bring back to the ways of virtue any one who through the strength of strong temptation had been led astray. He entreats them Ga 6:2) to bear one another's burdens, and thus to show that they were true friends of Christ, and governed by his laws. He entreats them not to be lifted up with pride, and not to affix an inordinate estimate to anything that they possessed, assuring them that their true estimate was to be formed from the character of their own works, Ga 6:3-5. He exhorts them to minister to the wants of their public teachers, the preachers of the gospel, Ga 6:6. In Ga 6:7-10, he reminds them of the solemn day of judgment, when all will be tried; assures them that men will be judged and rewarded according to their works; and entreats them not to be weary in well-doing, but to labour on patiently in doing good, with the assurance that they should reap in due season. In Ga 6:11, he shows them the interest which he felt in them by his having done what was unusual for him, and what perhaps he had done in no other instance—writing an entire letter in his own hand. He then states the true reason why others wished them to be circumcised. It was the dread of persecution, and not any real love to the cause of religion. They did not themselves keep the law, and they only desired to glory in the number of converts to their views, Ga 6:12,13. But Paul says that he would glory in nothing but in the cross of Christ. By that he had been crucified to the world, and the world had been crucified to him, Ga 6:14; and he repeats the solemn assurance, that in the Christian religion neither circumcision nor uncircumcision was of any importance whatever, Ga 6:15. This was the true rule of life; and on as many as walked according to this principle, he invokes the blessing of God, Ga 6:16. He closes the epistle by entreating them to give him no more trouble. He bore in his body already the marks or sufferings which he had received in the cause of the Lord Jesus. His trials already were sufficient; and he entreats them to spare him from future molestation, Ga 6:17, and closes with the benediction, Ga 6:18.

Verse 1. *Brethren, if a man be overtaken*. Marg., *although*. It is a case which the apostle supposes might happen, Christians were not perfect; and it was possible that they who were true Christians might be surprised by temptation, and fall into sin. The word rendered *be overtaken prolhfyh*, from

prolambanw means, properly, to take before another, to anticipate, 1Co 11:21; then to be before taken or caught; and may here mean either that one had been formerly guilty of sin, or had been recently hurried on by his passions or by temptations to commit a fault. It is probable that the latter here is the true sense, and that it means, if a man is found to be overtaken by any sin; if his passions, or if temptation get the better of him. Tindal renders it, "If any man be fallen by chance into any fault." It refers to cases of surprise, or of sudden temptation. Christians do not commit sin deliberately, and as a part of the plan of life; but they may be surprised by sudden temptation, or urged on by impetuous and headstrong passion, as David and-Peter were. Paul does not speak of the possibility of restoring one who deliberately forms the plan of sinning; he does not suppose that such a man could be a Christian, and that it would be proper to speak of *restoring* such a man.

Ye which are spiritual. Who are under the influences of the Holy Spirit. **See Barnes** "Ga 5:22, **See Barnes "Ga 5:23"**.

The apostle, in this verse, refers evidently to those who have fallen into some sensual indulgence, Ga 5:19-21; and says that they who have escaped these temptations, and who are under the influences of the Spirit, should recover such persons. It is a very important qualification for those who would recover others from sin, that they should not be guilty of the same sin themselves. Reformers should be holy men. Men who exercise discipline in the church should be "spiritual" men—men in whom implicit confidence may be properly reposed.

Restore such an one. On the meaning of the word here used, **See Barnes "2Co 13:11"**.

Here it means, not to restore him to the church after he has been excluded, but set him right, bring him back, recover him from his errors and his faults. The apostle does not say in what manner this is to be done; but it is usually to be done, doubtless, by affectionate admonition, by faithful instruction, and by prayer. Discipline or punishment should not be resorted to until the other methods are tried in vain, Mt 18:15-17.

In the spirit of meekness. With a kind, forbearing, and forgiving spirit. **See Barnes "Mt 5:5"**.

Not with anger; not with a lordly and overbearing mind; not with a love of finding others in fault, and with a desire for inflicting the discipline of the church; not with a harsh and unforgiving temper; but with love, and gentleness, and humility, and patience, and with a readiness to forgive when wrong has been done. This is an essential qualification for restoring and recovering an offending brother. No man should attempt to rebuke or admonish another who cannot do it in the spirit of meekness; no man should engage in any way in the work of reform who has not such a temper of mind.

Considering thyself, etc. Remembering how liable you are yourself to err; and how much kindness and indulgence should therefore be shown to others. You are to act as if you felt it possible that you might also be overtaken with a fault; and you should act as you would wish that others should do towards you. Pliny (Epis. viii. 22) has expressed a similar sentiment in the following beautiful language: "Atque ego optimum et emendatissimum existimo, qui caeteris ira ignoscit, tanquam ipsc quotidie peccet; ira peccatis abstinet, tanquam nemini ignoscat. Proinde hoc domi, hoc foris, hoc in onmi vitse genere teneamus, ut nobis implacabiles simus, exorabiles istis etiam, qui dare veniam nisi sibi nesciunt." The doctrine taught by Paul is, that such is human infirmity, and such the strength of human depravity, that no one knows into what sins he may himself fall. He may be tempted to commit the same sins which he endeavours to amend in others; he may be left to commit even worse sins. If this is the case, we should be tender, while we are firm; forgiving, while we set our faces against evil; prayerful, while we rebuke; and compassionate, when we are

compelled to inflict on others the discipline of the church. Every man who has any proper feelings, when he attempts to recover an erring brother, should pray for him and for himself also; and will regard his duty as only half done, and that very imperfectly, if he does not "consider also that he himself may be tempted."

{2} "if a man" "although" {c} "restore" Jas 5:19,20

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Bear ye one another's burdens*. **See Barnes "Ro 15:1".**

Bear with each other; help each other in the Divine life. The sense is, that every man has peculiar temptations and easily besetting sins, which constitute a heavy burden. We should aid each other in regard to these, and help one another to overcome them.

And so fulfil the law of Christ. The peculiar law of Christ, requiring us to love one another. **See Barnes "Joh 13:34".**

This was the distinguishing law of the Redeemer; and they could in no way better fulfil it than by aiding each other in the Divine life. The law of Christ would not allow us to reproach the offender, or to taunt him, or to rejoice in his fall. We should help him to take up his load of infirmities, and sustain him by our counsels, our exhortations, and our prayers. Christians, conscious of their infirmities, have a right to the sympathy and the prayers of their brethren. They should not be east off to a cold and heartless world; a world rejoicing over their fall, and ready to brand them as hypocrites. They should be pressed to the warm bosom of brotherly kindness; and prayer should be made to ascend without ceasing around an erring and a fallen brother. Is this the case in regard to all who bear the Christian name?

{a} "Bear ye" Ro 15:1

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *For if a man think himself to be something*, etc. See Ga 5:26. This is designed, evidently, to be another reason why we should be kind and tender to those who have erred. It is, that even those who are most confident may fall. They who feel secure, and think it impossible that they should sin, are not safe. They may be wholly deceived, and may be nothing, when they have the highest estimate of themselves. They may themselves fall into sin, and have need of all the sympathy and kindness of their brethren.

When he is nothing. When he has no strength, and no moral worth. When he is not such as he apprehends, but is lifted up with vain self-conceit.

He deceiveth himself. He understands not his own character. "The worst part of the fraud falls on his own head."—Doddridge. He does not accomplish what he expected to do; and instead of acquiring reputation from others, as he expected, he renders himself contemptible in their sight.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *But let every man prove*. That is, try or examine in a proper manner. Let him form a proper estimate of what is due to himself, according to his real character. Let him compare himself with the word of God, and the infallible rule which he has given, and by which we are to be judged in the last great day. Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 12:3"**; **See Barnes** "1Co 11:28;"; **See Barnes "2Co 13:5".**

His own work. What he does. Let him form a fair and impartial estimate of his own character.

And then shall he have rejoicing. That is, he will be appropriately rewarded, and will meet with no disappointment. The man who forms an improper estimate of his own character will be sure to be disappointed. The man who examines himself, and who forms no extravagant expectation in regard to what is due to himself, will be appropriately rewarded, and will be made happy. If, by the careful examination of himself, he finds his life to be virtuous, and his course of conduct pure; if he has done no wrong to others, and if he finds evidence that he is a child of God, then he will have cause of rejoicing.

In himself alone. Comp. Pr 14:14: "A good man shall be satisfied from himself." The sentiment is, that he will find in himself a source of pure joy. He will not be dependent on the applause of others for happiness. In an approving conscience; in the evidence of the favour of God; in an honest effort to lead a pure and holy life, he will have happiness. The source of his joys will be within; and he will not be dependent—as the man of ambition, and the man who thinks of himself more highly than he ought, will—on the favours of a capricious multitude, and on the breath of popular applause.

And not in another. He will not be dependent on others for happiness, Here is the true secret of happiness. It consists,

(1.) in not forming an improper estimate of ourselves; in knowing just what we are, and what is due to us; in not thinking ourselves to be something, when we are nothing.

(2.) In leading such a life that it may be examined *to the core*; that we may know exactly what we are, without being distressed or pained. That is, in having a good conscience, and in the honest and faithful discharge of our duty to God and man.

(3.) In not being dependent on the fickle applause of the world for our comfort. The man who has no internal resources, and who has no approving conscience; who is happy only when others smile, and miserable when they frown, is a man who can have no security for enjoyment. The man who has a good conscience, and who enjoys the favour of God, and the hope of heaven, carries with him the source of perpetual joy. He cannot be deprived of it. His purse may be taken, and his house robbed, but the highwayman cannot rob him of his comforts. He carries with him an unfailing source of happiness when abroad, and the same source of happiness abides with him at home: he bears it into society, and it remains with him in solitude; it is his companion when in health, and when surrounded by his friends; and it is no less his companion when his friends leave him, and when he lies upon a bed of death.

{b} "prove" 2Co 13:5 {c} "rejoicing" Pr 14:14

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *For every man shall bear his own burden*. This seems to be a kind of proverbial saying; and it means here, every man shall have his proper reward. If he is a virtuous man, he will be happy; if a vicious man, he will be miserable. If a virtuous man, he will have the source of happiness in himself; if a sinner, he must bear the proper penalty of his sin. In the great day, every man shall be properly rewarded. Knowing this, we should be little anxious about the sentiments of others, and should seek to maintain a good conscience towards God and man. The design of this passage is to prevent men from forming an improper estimate of themselves, and of the opinions of others. Let a man feel that he is soon to stand at the judgment-seat, and it will do much to keep him from an improper estimate of his own importance; let him feel that he must give an account to God, and that his great interests are to be determined by the estimate which *God* will affix to his character, and it will teach him that the opinion of the world is of little value. This will restrain his vanity and ambition. This will show him that the great business of life is to secure the favour of God, and to be prepared to give up his account; and there is no way so effectual of checking ambition, and subduing vanity and the love of applause, as to feel that we are soon to stand at the awful bar of God.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Let him that is taught in the word*. In the word of God; i.e., the gospel.

Communicate unto him. Let him share with him who teaches; let there be a common participation of all good things.

In all good things. In everything that is needful for their comfortable subsistence. On the duty here enjoined, **See Barnes "1Co 9:11, also** 1Co 9:12-13.

{a} "Let him" 1Co 9:11-14

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *But not deceived*. That is, in regard to your character, and your hopes for eternity. This is a formula of introduction to some admonition that is peculiarly weighty and important. It implies that there was *danger* that they would be deceived in reference to their character. The *sources* of the danger were the corruption of their own hearts, the difficulty of knowing their true character, the instructions of false teachers, etc. **See Barnes "1Co 6:9"**.

God is not mocked. He cannot be imposed on, or mocked. He knows what our real character is, and he will judge us accordingly. The word rendered *mocked mukthrizw* means, properly, to turn up the nose in scorn; hence to mock, or deride, or insult. The sense is, that God could not be imposed on, or could not be insulted with impunity, or successfully. To *mock* is, properly,

(1.) to imitate, to mimic; to imitate in contempt or derision.

(2.) To deride, to laugh at, to ridicule.

(3.) To defeat, or to illude, or to disappoint.

(4.) To fool, to tantalize—*Webster*. Here it cannot mean to *imitate*, or to *mimic*, but it refers to the principles of the Divine administration, and must mean that they could not be treated with contempt, or successfully evaded. They could not hope to illude or impose on God. His principles of government were settled, and they could not impose on him. To what the reference is here, is not perfectly plain. In the connexion in which it stands, it seems to refer to the support of the ministers of the gospel; and Paul introduces the general principle, that as a man sows he will reap, to show them what will be the effect of a liberal and proper use of their property. If they made a proper use of it; if. they employed it for benevolent purposes; if they appropriated what they should to the support of religion, they would reap accordingly. God could not be imposed on in regard to this. They could not make him think that they had true religion when they were sowing to the flesh, and when they were spending their money in purchasing pleasure, and in luxury and vanity. No zeal, however ardent; no prayers, however fervent or long; no professions, however loud, would impose on God. And to make such prayers, and to manifest such zeal and such strong professions, while the heart was with the world, and they were spending their money for everything else but religion, was mocking God. Alas, how much mockery of God like this still prevails! How much, when men *seem* disposed to make God believe that they are exceedingly zealous and devoted, while their heart is truly with the world! How many long prayers are offered; how much zeal is shown; how many warm professions are made, *as if* to make God and man believe that the heart was truly engaged in the cause of religion, while little or nothing is given in the cause of benevolence; while the ministers of religion are suffered to starve; and while the "loud professor" rolls in wealth, and is distinguished for luxury of living, for gaiety of apparel, for splendour of equipage, and for extravagance in parties of pleasure! Such professors attempt to mock God. They are really sowing to the flesh; and of the flesh they must reap corruption.

For whatsoever a man soweth, etc. **See Barnes "2Co 9:6".**

This figure is taken from agriculture. A man who sows wheat, shall reap wheat; he who sows barley, shall reap barley; he who sows cockle, shall reap cockle. Every kind of grain will produce grain like itself. So it is in regard to our works. He who is liberal, shall be dealt with liberally; he who is righteous, shall be rewarded; he who is a sinner, shall reap according to his deeds.

{*} "mocked" "not to be deluded"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *For he that soweth to his flesh*. That makes provision for the indulgence of fleshly appetites and passions. **See Barnes "Ga 5:19"; and** Ga 5:20-21. He who makes use of his property to give indulgence to licentiousness, intemperance, and vanity.

Shall of the flesh. From the flesh, or as that which indulgence in fleshly appetites properly produces. Punishment, under the Divine government, is commonly in the line of offences. The punishment of licentiousness and intemperance in this life is commonly loathsome and offensive disease; and, when long indulged, the sensualist becomes haggard, and bloated, and corrupted, and sinks into the grave. Such, also, is often the punishment of luxurious living, of a pampered appetite, of gluttony, as well as of intemperate drinking. But if the punishment does not follow in this life,

it will be sure to overtake the sensualist in the world to come. There he shall reap ruin final and everlasting.

Corruption.

(1.) By disease.

(2.) In the grave—the home to which the sensualist rapidly travels.

(3.) In the world of woe. There all shall be corrupt. His virtue, even the semblance of virtue, shall all be gone. His understanding, will, fancy—his whole soul—shall be debased and corrupt. No virtue will linger and live on the plains of ruin, but all shah be depravity and woe. Everything in hell is debased and. corrupt; and the whole harvest of sensuality, in this world and the world to come, is degradation and defilement.

But he that soweth to the Spirit. He who follows the leading and cultivates the affections which the Holy Spirit would produce. **See Barnes** "Ga 5:22,23.

Shall of the Spirit. As the result of following the leading of the Spirit.

Reap life everlasting. **See Barnes "Ro 2:7"**.

{b} "soweth to the flesh" Job 4:8 Pr 22:8; Hos 8:7

{+} "corruption" "destruction" {c} "to the Spirit" Pr 11:18 Jas 3:18

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *And let us not be weary in well doing*. **See Barnes "1Co 15:58"**.

The reference here is particularly to the support of the ministers of religion, Ga 6:6; but the apostle makes the exhortation general. Christians sometunes become weary. There is so much opposition to the best plans for doing good; there is so much to be done; there are so many calls on their time and their charities; and there is often so much ingratitude among those whom they endeavour to benefit, that they become disheartened. Such Paul addresses, and exhorts them not to give over, but to persevere.

For in due season. At the day of judgment. Then we shall receive the full reward of all our self-denials and charities.

We shall reap, if we faint not. If we do not give over, exhausted and disheartened. It is *implied* here, that unless a man perseveres in doing good to the end of life, he can hope for no reward. He who becomes disheartened, and who gives over his efforts; he that is appalled by obstacles, and that faints on account of the embarrassments thrown in his way; he that pines for ease, and withdraws from the field of benevolence, shows that he has no true attachment to the cause, and that his heart has never been truly in the work of religion. He who becomes a true Christian, becomes such FOR ETERNITY. He has enlisted, never to withdraw. He becomes pledged to do good and to serve God *always*. No obstacles are to deter, no embarrassments are to drive him from the field. With the rigour of his youth, and the wisdom and influence of his riper years; with his remaining powers when enfeebled by age; with the last pulsation of life here, and with his immortal energies in a higher world, he is to do good. For that he is to live. In that he is to die; and when he awakes in the resurrection with renovated powers, he is to awake to an everlasting service of doing good, as far as he may have opportunity, in the kingdom of God.

{d} "let us not be weary" 1Co 15:58 {e} "if we faint not" Heb 10:36 Re 2:10

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men*. This is the true rule about doing good. "The opportunity to do good," says Cotton Mather, "imposes the obligation to do it." The simple rule is, that we are favoured with the opportunity, and that we have the power. It is not that we are to do it when it is convenient; or when it will advance the interest of a party; or when it may contribute to our fame; the rule is, that we are to do it when we have the opportunity. No matter how often that occurs; no matter how many objects of benevolence are presented—the more the better; no matter how much self-denial it may cost us; no matter how little *fame* we may get by it; still, if we have the *opportunity* to do good, we are to do it, and should be thankful for the privilege. And it is to be done *to all men*. Not to our family only; not to our party; not to our neighbours; not to those of our own colour; not to those who live in the same land with us, but to all mankind. If we can reach and benefit a man who lives on the other side of the globe, whom we have never seen, and *shall* never see in this world or in the world to come, still we are to do him good. Such is Christianity. And in this, as in all other respects, it differs from the narrow and selfish spirit of clanship which prevails all over the world.

Especially. On the same principle that a man is bound particularly to benefit his own family and friends. In his large and expansive zeal for the world at large, he is not to forget or neglect them. He is to feel that they have peculiar claims on him. They are near him. They are bound to him by tender ties. They may be particularly dependent on him. Christianity does not relax the ties which bind us to our country, our family, and our friends. It makes them more close and tender, and excites us more faithfully to discharge the duties which grow out of these relations. But, in addition to that, it excites us to do good to all men, and to bless the stranger as well as the friend; the man who has a different colour from our own, as well as he who has the same; the man who lives in another clime, as well as he who was born in the same country in which we live.

Of the household of faith. Christians are distinguished from other men primarily by their believing the gospel, and by its influence on their lives.

{f} "opportunity" Ec 9:10 {g} "unto all men" Mt 5:43 Tit 3:8 {h} "unto them" 1Jo 3:14

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Ye see*. This might be rendered see, in the imperative. So Tindal renders it, "Behold." But it is more commonly supposed that it should be rendered in the indicative. The sense is not materially different, whichever translation is adopted. The *object* of the apostle is to direct their attention to the special proof of his love, which he had manifested in writing such a letter.

How large a letter. Considerable variety has existed in regard to the interpretation of this phrase. The word here used and translated *how large phlikoiv* means, properly, *how great*. Some have supposed that it *refers to the size of the letters* which Paul made in writing the epistle —the length and crudeness of the characters which he used. Such interpreters suppose that he was not well versed in writing Greek, and that he used large letters, and those somewhat rudely made, like the Hebrew. So Doddridge and Whitby interpret it; and so Theodoret, Jerome, Theophylact, and some others. He might not, says Doddridge, have been well versed in the Greek characters; or "this

inaccuracy of his writings might have been owing to the infirmity or weakness of his nerves, which he had hinted at before." Jerome says that Paul was a Hebrew, and that he was unacquainted with the mode of writing Greek letters; and that because necessity demanded that he should write a letter in his own hand, contrary to his usual custom, he was obliged to form his characters in this crude manner. According to this interpretation, it was

(1) a pledge to the Galatians that the epistle was genuine, since it bore the marks of his own handwriting; and

(2) it was proof of special affection for them that he was willing to undergo this labour on their account. Others suppose that he means to refer to the *size of the epistle* which he had written. Such is the interpretation of Grotius, Koppe, Bloomfield, Clarke, Locke, Chandler, and is, indeed, the common interpretation, as it is the obvious one. According to this, it was proof of special interest in them, and regard for them, that he had written to them a whole letter with his own hand. Usually he employed an amanuensis, and added his name, with a brief benediction or remark at the close. **See Barnes "Ro 16:22"; See Barnes "1Co 16:21".**

What *induced* him to depart from his usual custom here is unknown. Jerome supposes that he refers here to *what follows* from this verse to the end of the epistle, as that which he had written with his own hand; but the word *egraqa*, says Rosenmuller, refers rather to what he *had* written, than to that which he intended to write. On this verse, the reader may consult with advantage, Tholuck on the Life and Writings of Paul; German Selections, by Edwards and Park, Andover, 1839, pp. 35, 64, 65.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh*. To be distinguished for their conformity to external rites and customs. To be known for their zeal in this cause. They sought to show their zeal by making converts, and by inducing others also to conform to those customs. Paul here refers doubtless to the Jewish teachers, and he says that their main object was to evince their ,zeal in the observance of rites and ceremonies.

They constrain you. You who are Gentiles. They insist on circumcision as indispensable to salvation.

Only lest they should suffer persecution. It is not from any true love for the cause of religion. It is that they may avoid persecution from the Jews. If they should renounce the doctrine which taught that circumcision was indispensable, they would be exposed to the rage of the Jews, and would suffer persecution. Rather than do this, they make a show of great zeal in inducing others to be circumcised.

For the cross of Christ. From attachment to the cause of a crucified Saviour. If they insisted on entire dependence on the merits of his blood, and renounced all dependence on rites and ceremonies, they would suffer persecution. This verse shows the true cause of the zeal which the Judaizing teachers evinced. It was the fear of persecution. It was the want of independence and boldness in maintaining the doctrine that men.were to be saved only by the merits of the Lord Jesus. By attempting to blend together the doctrines of Judaism and Christianity; by maintaining that the observance of the Jewish rites was necessary, and yet that Jesus was the Messiah, they endeavoured

to keep in with both parties, and thus to escape the opposition of the Jews. It was an unhallowed compromise. It was an attempt to blend things together which could not be united. One *must* really displace the other. If men depended on the rites of Moses, they had no need of dependence on the Messiah; if they professed to depend on him, then to rely on anything else was, in fact, to disown and reject him. Embracing the one system was, in fact, renouncing the other. Such is the argument of Paul; and such his solemn remonstrance against embracing any doctrine which would obscure the glory of simple dependence on the cross of Christ.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *For neither they themselves who are circumcised*. The Jewish teachers, or perhaps *all Jews*. It was true in general that the Jews did not wholly and entirely obey the law of Moses; but it is probable that the apostle refers particularly here to the Judaizing teachers in Galatia.

Keep the law. The law of Moses, or the law of God. Paul's idea is, that if they were circumcised, they brought themselves under obligation to keep the whole law of God. **See Barnes "Ga 5:3"**.

But they did not do it.

(1.) No man *perfectly* observes the whole law of God.

(2.) The Jewish nation, as such, were very far from doing it.

(3.) It is probable that these persons did not pretend even to keep the whole law of Moses. Paul insists on it, that if they were circumcised, and depended on that for salvation, they were under obligation to keep the whole law. But *they* did not. Probably they did not offer sacrifice, or join in any of the numerous observances of the Jewish nation, except some of the more prominent, such as circumcision. This, says Paul, is inconsistent in the highest degree; and they thus *show* their insincerity and hypocrisy.

That they may glory in your flesh. In having you as converts, and in persuading you, to be circumcised, that they may show their zeal for the law, and thus escape persecution. The phrase "in your flesh," here is equivalent to "in your circumcision;" making use of your circumcision to promote their own importance, and to save themselves from persecution.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *But God forbid*. **See Barnes "Ro 3:4"**.

"For me it is not to glory, except in the cross of Christ." The *object* of Paul here is evidently to place himself in contrast with the Judaizing teachers, and to show his determined purpose to glory in nothing else but the cross of Christ. Well they knew that he had as much occasion for glorying in the things pertaining to the flesh, or in the observance of external rites and customs, as any of them. He had been circumcised. He had had all the advantages of accurate training in the knowledge of the Jewish law. He had entered on life with uncommon advantages, tie had evinced a zeal that was not surpassed by any of them; and his life, so far as conformity to the religion in which he had been trained was concerned, was blameless, Php 3:4-8. This must have been, to a great extent,

known to the Galatians; and by placing his own conduct in strong contrast with that of the Judaizing teachers, and showing that *he* had no ground of confidence in himself, he designed to bring back the minds of the Galatians to simple dependence on the cross.

That I should glory. That I should boast; or that I should rely on anything else. Others glory in their conformity to the laws of Moses; others in their zeal, or their talents, or their learning, or their orthodoxy; others in their wealth, or their accomplishments; others in their family alliances, and their birth; but the supreme boast and glorying of a Christian is in the cross of Christ.

In the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. In Jesus, the crucified Messiah. It is a subject of rejoicing and glorying that we have *such* a Saviour. The world looked upon him with contempt; and the cross was a stumbling-block to the Jew, and folly to the Greek. **See Barnes "1Co 1:23"**.

But to the Christian, that cross is the subject of glorying. It is so because

(1.) of the love of Him who suffered there;

(2.) of the purity and holiness of his character, for the innocent died there for the guilty;

(3.) of the honour there put on the law of God by his dying to maintain it unsullied;

(4.) of the reconciliation there made for sin, accomplishing what could be done by no other oblation, and by no power of man;

(5.) of the pardon there procured for the guilty;

(6.) of the fact that through it we become dead to the world, and are made alive to God;

(7.) of the support and consolation which goes from that cross to sustain us in trial; and,

(8.) of the fact that it procured for us admission into heaven, a title to the world of glory. All is glory around the cross. It was a glorious Saviour who died; it was glorious love that led him to die; it was a glorious object to redeem a world; and it is unspeakable glory to which he will raise lost and ruined sinners by his death. Oh, who would not glory in such a Saviour! Compared with this, what trifles are all the objects in which men usually beast! And what a lesson is here furnished to the true Christian! Let us not boast of our wealth. It will soon leave us, or we shall be taken from it, and it can aid us little in the great matters that are before us, It will not ward off disease; it will not enable us to bear pain; it will not smooth the couch of death; it will not save the soul. Let us not glory in our strength, for it will soon fail; in our beauty, for we shall soon be undistinguished in the corruption of the tomb; in our accomplishments, for they will not save us; in our learning, for it is not that by which we can be brought to heaven. But let us glory that we have for a Saviour the eternal Son of God—that glorious Being who was adored by the inhabitants of heaven; who made the worlds; who is pure, and lovely, and most holy; and who has undertaken our cause, and died to save us. I desire no higher honour than to be saved by the Son of God. It is the exaltation of my nature, and shows me more than anything else its true dignity, that one so great and glorious sought my redemption. That cannot be an object of temporary value which he sought by coming from heaven; and if there is any object of real magnitude in this world, it is the soul which the eternal Son of God died to redeem.

By whom the world is crucified unto me, etc, **See Barnes "Ga 2:20"**.

{a} "God forbid" Php 3:7,8,9

{1} "by whom" "whereby" {b} "crucified" Ga 2:20

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *For in Christ Jesus*. In his religion. **See Barnes "Ga 5:6"**.

But a new creature. The fact that a man is created anew, or born again constitutes the real difference between him and other men. This is what Christ requires; this is the distinction which he designs to make. It is not by conformity to certain rites and customs that a man is to be accepted; it is not by elevated rank, or by wealth, or beauty, or blood; it is not by the colour of the complexion; but the grand inquiry is, whether a man is born again, and is in fact a new creature in Christ Jesus. **See Barnes** "2Co 5:17, for an explanation of the phrase "a new creature."

{a} "For in Christ Jesus" Ga 5:6 {b} "new creature" 2Co 5:17

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *And as many as walk*. As many as live, for so the word walk is used in the Scriptures.

According to this rule. Gr., this *canon*. See the word explained **See Barnes "2Co 10:13"**.

Peace be on them. **See Barnes "Ro 15:33"**.

And upon the Israel of God. The true church of God; all who are his true worshippers. **See Barnes "Ro 2:28"**; **See Barnes "Ro 2:29"**; **See Barnes** "Ro 9:6".

{c} "peace be" 2Co 5:17

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *From henceforth*. For the remaining time; that is, during the remainder of my life.

Let no man trouble me. This implies that he had had trouble of some kind, and he earnestly desires that he may have no more. What particular trouble he here refers to is not certainly known, and commentators have not been agreed. It seems to me that the connexion requires us to understand it of the molestation which he had had in regard to his call to the apostolic office, and his authority to explain and defend the religion of the Redeemer. This had been one principal subject of this epistle. His authority had been called in question. He had felt it necessary to go into a vindication of it. His instructions had been departed from on the ground that he was not one of the original apostles, and that he differed from others. See Ga 1:11. Hence all the anxiety and trouble which he had had in regard to their departure from the doctrines which he had taught them. He closes the whole subject of the epistle by this tender and affecting language, the sense of which has been well expressed by Crellius: "I have shown my apostolic authority, and proved that I am commissioned by the Lord Jesus. I have stated and vindicated the great doctrine of justification by faith, and shown that the Mosaic law is not necessarily binding. On these points may I have no more trouble. I have enough for my nature to bear of other kinds. I bear in my body the impressive proofs that I am an apostle, and the sufferings that require all my fortitude to sustain them. These marks, received in the service of the Lord Jesus, and so strongly resembling those which *he* himself received, prove that I am truly engaged in his cause, and am commissioned by him. These wounds and sorrows are

so many, that I have need of the kindness and prayers of Christians, rather than to be compelled to vindicate myself, and to rebuke them for their own wanderings."

For I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. The word here rendered "*marks*" *stigmata* means, properly, the marks or brands which are pricked or burnt in upon the body. So Slaves were sometimes branded by their masters, to prevent their escape; and so devotees to an idol god sometimes caused to be impressed on themselves the name or image of the divinity which they adored. Herodotus (ii. 113) mentions a temple of Hercules in Egypt, in which if any slave took refuge, and had the sacred *brands* or marks impressed on him, *stigmata* he thereby devoted himself to the god, and it was not lawful for any one to injure him. Many have supposed that Paul here says, in allusion to such a custom, that he had the name of the Redeemer impressed on his body, and that he regarded himself as devoted to him and his cause. It seems to me that, by these *marks* or brands, he refers to the *weals* which he had received in his body; the marks of stripes and sufferings which he endured in the service of the Redeemer. Comp. 2Co 11:24,25. He had repeatedly been scourged. He bore the marks of that on his person now. They were the evidences that he was devoted to the Saviour. He had received them in his cause; and they were the proofs that he belonged to the Lord Jesus. He had suffered for him, and had suffered much. Having thus suffered, and having thus the evidence that he belonged to the Saviour, and having by his sufferings given ample proof of that to others, he asks to be freed from further molestation. Some had in their body the marks of circumcision, the evidence that they were disciples of the law of Moses; others had perhaps in their persons the image and name of an idol to which they were devoted; but the marks which he bore were the *weals* which he had received by being again and again whipped publicly in the cause of the Redeemer. To that Redeemer, therefore, he felt himself united, and from that attachment he would not allow himself to be diverted. How often has an old soldier shown his *scars* with pride and exultation as a proof of his attachment to his country! Numerous scars, the loss of an arm, an eye, or a leg, are thus the much-valued and vaunted pledges of attachment to liberty, and a passport to the confidence of every man who loves his country. "I prize this wound," said Lafayette, when struck in the foot by a musket-ball at Germantown, "as among the most valued of my honours." So Paul felt in regard to the scourges which he had receipted in the cause of the Lord Jesus. They were his boast and his glory; the pledge that he had been engaged in the cause of the Saviour, and a passport to all who loved the Son of God. Christians now are not subjected to such stripes and scourgings. But let us have *some* marks of our attachment to the Lord Jesus. By a holy life; by self-denial; by subdued animal affections; by zeal in the cause of truth; by an imitation of the Lord Jesus; and by the marks of suffering in our body, if we should be called to it, let us have some evidence that we are his; and be able to say, when we look on death and eternity, "we bear with us the evidence that we belong to the Son of God." To us, that will be of more value than any ribbon or star indicating elevated rank; more valuable than a ducal coronet; more valuable than the brightest jewel that ever sparkled on the brow of royalty.

{d} "bear" Col 1:24

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Brethren, the grace, etc.*

See Barnes "Ro 16:20".

{e} "the grace" 2Ti 4:22 Phm 1:25

INGENIOUS CONJECTURE ON PAUL'S THORN IN THE FLESH

"And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure."—

2Co 12:7.

"And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as angel of God,, even as Christ Jesus. Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me."—Ga 4:14,15.

ST. PAUL'S infirmity was one well known in hot climates, a chronical ophthalmia. Hence he was what is called "blear-eyed," and was often perhaps obliged to wear a shade. It made his personal appearance mean; it was a visible infirmity in his flesh; it hindered his usefulness, and therefore he besought the Lord anxiously that it might depart from him. It made it, for the most part, painful and difficult to write; hence he generally employed an amanuensis, and regarded it as a great matter when he used his own pen. The calling it "a messenger of Satan" is perfectly consistent with its being a bodily disease. Satan, in fifty places, is represented as the immediate author of corporeal defects and maladies. It is quite probable that the heavenly visions, or the supernatural light which blinded him at his conversion, might have left a weakness and disease in the organs immediately affected; and, unless the miracle which restored Paul to sight removed also a natural secondary defect of the temporary injury the organs had received, there must have been a predisposition afterwards to the complaint which he seems to have had. The metaphor by which St. Paul describes his infirmity is also worthy of notice, as having much weight. The pain of ophthalmia, when severe, exactly resembles the prick of a thorn or pin, and leaves its subsequent effect for years. As thorns in the eyes are figuratively used for troubles and temptations, (see Nu 33:55 Jos 23:13, if this metaphor had an affinity with the actual bodily sensations of the apostle, it was natural he should think of it and use it. But the strongest argument rests upon Ga 4:15 after praising them for not despising his "fleshly infirmity," he subjoins, "*I bear you record, that, if it had been possible*, ye would have *PLUCKED OUT YOUR OWN EYES, AND HAVE GIVEN THEM TO ME*." How natural this context on this hypothesis! How little so on any other! But, if the apostle was speaking of diseased eyes, which made his aspect unsightly, and prevented perhaps much of the natural effect of his preaching, to which they nevertheless respectfully listened, and with affectionate sympathy did all they could for his comfort and relief, how natural, how appropriate, this grateful close of the encomium—"In your generous and tender sympathy, you would have plucked out your own sound eyes, and have transferred them to my use!"—JAMES STEPHEN, ESQ., *from the Life of Mrs. Hannah More, added here by the EDITOR*.

EMINENT WRITERS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS

LUTHER On the Epistle to the Galatians is "a strong antidote against the popish notion of justification by works."

FERGUSON'S Brief Exposition of the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians, small 8vo, is a very pious and "uncommonly sensible" work. It bears date, Edinburgh, 1659.

CHANDLER'S "Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistles of St. Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians; with Doctrinal and Practical Observations, together with a Critical and Practical Commentary on the two Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians." This work has some valuable critical remarks; but the great doctrine inculcated by the apostle is coldly treated, and the whole bears the characteristic marks of an Arian author.

LOCKE's Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistles of St. Paul to the Galatians, Corinthians, Romans, and Ephesians. "This work," says Orem, "contains much important truth, and some very considerable errors. Locke read St. Paul with great attention, and yet missed his meaning on some leading subjects. His ideas of the person of Christ, of the doctrine of justification by faith, and the character and privileges of the Christian church, are grossly erroneous. But, apart from his theological errors, his work possesses very considerable merit."

WINER's Commentary on the Galatians is translated from the German by the Rev. W. Cunningham, and forms a part of the Edinburgh Biblical Cabinet. It is reckoned "a valuable work."—

EPHESIANS

EPHESIANS - Chapter 1

EPHESIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 1

INTRODUCTION to EPHESIANS

THE SITUATION OF EPHESUS, AND THE CHARACTER OF ITS PEOPLE.

This Epistle purports to have been written to the "saints at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus," though, as we shall see, the fact of its having been directed to the church at Ephesus has been called in question. Assuming now that it was sent to Ephesus, it is of importance to have a general view of the situation of that city, of the character of its people, and of the time and manner in which the gospel was introduced there, in order to a correct understanding of the epistle. Ephesus was a celebrated city of Ionia in Asia Minor, and was about 40 miles south of Smyrna, and near the mouth of the river Cayster. The river, though inferior in beauty to the Meander, which flows south of it, waters a fertile vale of the ancient Ionia. Ionia was the most beautiful and fertile part of Asia Minor; was settled almost wholly by Greek colonies; and embosomed Pergamos, Smyrna, Ephesus, and Miletus. See Travels of Anacharsis, i. 91,208; vi. 192, 97, 98. The climate of Ionia is represented as remarkably mild, and the air as pure and sweet, and this region became early celebrated for everything that constitutes softness and effeminacy in life. Its people were distinguished for amiableness and refinement of manners; and also for luxury, for music and dancing, and for the seductive arts that lead to vicious indulgence. Numerous festivals occupied them at home, or attracted them to neighbouring cities, where the men appeared in magnificent habits, and the women in all the elegance of female ornament, and with all the desire of pleasure.— *Anachar*.

Ephesus was not, like Smyrna, distinguished for commercial advantages. The consequence has been that, not having such advantage, it has fallen into total ruin, while Smyrna has retained some degree of its ancient importance It was in a rich region of country, and seems to have risen into importance mainly because it became the favourite resort of foreigners in the worship of Diana, and owed its celebrity to its temple more than to anything else. This city was once, however, the most splendid city in Asia Minor. Stephens, the geographer, gives it the title of *Epiphanestate*, or "Most Illustrious;" Pliny styles it "The Ornament of Asia." In Roman times it was the metropolis of Asia, and unquestionably rose to a degree of splendour that was surpassed by few, if any, oriental cities.

That for which the city was most celebrated was the temple of Diana. This temple was 425 feet in length, and 220 in breadth. It was encompassed by 127 pillars, each 60 feet in height, which were presented by as many kings. Some of those pillars, it is said, are yet to be seen in the mosque of St. Sophia at Constantinople, having been removed there when the church of St. Sophia was erected. These, however, were the pillars that constituted a part of the temple after it had been burned and was repaired, though it is probable that the same pillars were retained in the second

temple which had constituted the glory of the first. All the provinces of Asia Minor contributed to the erection of this splendid temple, and two hundred years were consumed in building it. This temple was set on fire by a man named Herostratus, who, when put to the torture, confessed that his only motive was to immortalize his name. The general assembly of the states of Ionia passed a decree to devote his name to oblivion; but the fact of the decree has only served to perpetuate it. Cicer. De Nat. Deor. 2, 27. Plutarch. Life of Alex. Comp. Anachar. vi. 189. The whole of the edifice was consumed, except the four walls and some of the columns. It was, however, rebuilt, with the same magnificence as before, and was regarded as one of the wonders of the world. It is now in utter ruin. After the temple had been repeatedly pillaged by the barbarians, Justinian removed the columns to adorn the church of St. Sophia at Constantinople. The place where it stood can now be identified certainly, if at all, only by the marshy spot on which it was erected, and by the prodigious arches raised above as a foundation. The vaults formed by them compose a sort of labyrinth, and the water is knee-deep beneath. There is not an apartment entire; but thick walls, shafts of columns, and fragments of every kind, are scattered around in confusion. Ency. Geog. ii. 273, 274.

In the reign of Tiberius, Ephesus was greatly damaged by an earthquake; but it was repaired and embellished by the emperor. In the war between Mithridates and the Romans, Ephesus took part with the former, and, massacred the Romans who dwelt in it. Syll severely punished this cruelty; but Ephesus was afterwards treated with lenity, and enjoyed its own laws, with other privileges. About the end of the eleventh century, it was seized by a pirate named Tangripermes, but he was routed by John Ducas, the Greek admiral, in a bloody battle. Theodorus Lascarus, a Greek, made himself master of it in 1206. The Mohammedans recovered it in 1283. In the year 1401, Tamerlane employed a whole month in plundering the city and the neighbouring country. Shortly after the city was set on fire, and was mostly burned in a combat between the Turkish governor and the Tartars. In 1405 it was taken by Mahomet I., and has continued since that time in the possession of the Turks. *Calmet*.

There is now a small and mean village named Ayasaluk, near the site of the ancient town, consisting of a few cottages, which is all that now represents this city of ancient splendour. Dr. Chavolla says, "The inhabitants are a few Greek peasants, living in extreme wretchedness, dependence, and insensibility; the representatives of an illustrious people, and inhabiting the wreck of their greatness-some in the substructions of the glorious edifices which they raised—some beneath the vaults of the Stadium, once the crowded scene of their diversions—and some by the abrupt precipice in the sepulchres which received their ashes. Its streets are obscured and overgrown. A herd of goats was driven to it for shelter from the sun at noon, and a noisy flight of crows, from the quarries, seemed to insult its silence. We heard the partridge call in the area of the theatre and the stadium. The glorious pomp of its heathen worship is no longer numbered; and Christianity which was here nursed by apostles, and fostered by general councils, until it increased to fulness of stature, barely lingers on in an existence hardly visible." Travels. p. 131. Oxford, 1775. A very full and interesting description of Ephesus, as it appeared in 1739 may be seen in Pococke's Travels, vol. ii. Part ii. pp. 45—53, ed. Lond. 1745. Several ruins are described by him, but they have mostly now disappeared. The temple of Diana was on the western side of the plain on which the city was built, and the site is now in the midst of a morass which renders access difficult. The ruins of several theatres and other buildings are described by Pococke.

In the year 1821, Mr Fisk, the American Missionary, visited the ruins of Ephesus, of which he has given the following account. "We sent back our horses to Aisaluck, and set out on foot to survey

the ruins of Ephesus. The ground was covered with high grass or grain, and a very heavy dew rendered the walking rather unpleasant. On the east side of the hill, we found nothing worthy of notice; no appearance of having been occupied for buildings. On the north side was the circus or stadium. Its length, from east to west, is forty rods or one stadium. The north or lower side was supported by arches, which still remain. The area, where the races used to be performed, is now a field of wheat. At the west end was the gate. The walls adjoining it are still standing, and are of considerable height and strength. North of the stadium, and separated only by a street, is a large square, inclined with fallen walls, and filled with the ruins of various edifices. A street running north and south divides this square in the centre. West of the stadium is an elevation of ground level at the top, with an immense pedestal in the centre of it. What building stood there it is not easy to say. Between this and the stadium was a street passing from the great plain north of Ephesus, into the midst of the city.

"I found on the plains of Ephesus some Greek peasants, men and women, employed in pulling up tares and weeds from the wheat. I ascertained, however, that they all belonged to villages at a distance, and came there to labour. Tournefort says that, when he was at Ephesus, there were thirty or forty Greek families there. Chandler found only ten or twelve individuals. Now no human being lives in Ephesus; and in Aisaluck, which may be considered as Ephesus under another name, though not on precisely the same spot of ground, there are merely a few miserable Turkish huts.

"The plain of Ephesus is now very unhealthy, owing to the fogs and mist which almost continually rest upon it. The land, however, is rich, and the surrounding country is both fertile and healthy. The adjacent hills would furnish many delightful situations for villages, if the difficulties were removed which are thrown in the way by a despotic government, oppressive argas, and wandering banditti." Missionary Herald for 1821, p. 219.

II.—-THE INTRODUCTION OF THE GOSPEL AT EPHESUS.

IT is admitted by all that the gospel was introduced into Ephesus by the apostle Paul. He first preached there when on his way from Corinth to Jerusalem, about the year 54. Ac 18:19. On this visit he went into the synagogue, as was his usual custom, and preached to his own countrymen, but he does not appear to have preached publicly to the heathen. He was requested to remain longer with them, but he said he must by all means be in Jerusalem at the approaching feast—probably the passover. Ac 18:21. He promised, however, to visit them again if possible, and sailed from Ephesus to Jerusalem. Two persons had gone with Paul from Corinth—Priscilla and Aquila—whom he appears to have left at Ephesus, or who at any rate soon returned there. Ac 18:18,26. During the absence of Paul, there came to Ephesus a certain Jew, born in Alexandria, named Apollos, an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures, who had received the baptism of John, and who taught the doctrine that John had taught. Ac 18:24,25. What was the precise nature of that doctrine it is difficult now to understand. It seems to have been, in substance, that repentance was necessary, that baptism was to be performed, and that the Messiah was about to appear. This doctrine Apollos had embraced with zeal, was ready to defend it, and was in just the state of mind to welcome the news that the Messiah had come. This zealous and talented man, Priscilla and Aquila instructed more fully in the doctrines of the Christian religion, and communicated to him the views which they had received from Paul. Ac 18:26. Paul having gone to Jerusalem as he purposed, returned again to Asia Minor, and taking Phrygia and Galatia in his way, revisited Ephesus, and remained there about three years. Ac 18:23 19:1, seq. It was during this time that the church was founded,

which afterwards became so prominent, and to which this epistle was written. The principal events in the life of Paul there were,

(1.) his baptizing the twelve persons whom he found there, who were disciples of John. **See Barnes "Ac 19:1"**

and following.

(2.) Paul went into the synagogue there, and engaged in an earnest discussion with the Jews, about three months, respecting the Messiah, Ac 19:8-10.

(3.) When many of the Jews opposed him, he left the synagogue, and obtained a place to preach in, in the school-room of a man by the name of Tyrannus. In this place he continued to preach without molestation for two years, and proclaimed the gospel, so that a large portion of the inhabitants had an opportunity of hearing it.

(4.) The cause of religion was greatly promoted by the miracles which Paul wrought, Ac 19:11-17.

(5.) Paul remained there until his preaching excited great commotion, and he was at last driven away by the tumult which was excited by Demetrius, Ac 19:23-41. At this time the gospel had secured such a hold on the people that there was danger that the temple of Diana would be forsaken, and that all who were dependent on the worship of Diana for a livelihood would be thrown out of employment. It is not probable that Paul visited Ephesus after this, unless it was after his first imprisonment at Rome. See Intro. to 2 Timothy. On his way from Macedonia to Jerusalem he came to Miletus, and sent for the elders of Ephesus, and gave them his deeply affecting parting address, expecting to see them no more, Ac 20:16, seq.

Paul remained longer at Ephesus than he did at any other one place preaching the gospel. He seems to have set himself deliberately to work to establish a church there which would ultimately overthrow idolatry. Several reasons may have led him to depart so far from his usual plan, by labouring so long in one place. One may have been that this was the principle seat of idolatry then in the world. The evident aim of Paul in his ministry was, to reach the centres of influence and power. Hence he mainly sought to preach the gospel in large cities, and thus it was that Antioch, and Ephesus, and Corinth, and Athens, and Philippi, and Rome, shared so largely in his labours. Not ashamed of the gospel anywhere, he yet sought mainly that its power should be felt where wealth, and learning, and genius, and talent were concentrated. The very places, therefore, where the most magnificent temples were erected to the gods, and where the worship of idols was celebrated with the most splendour and pomp, and where that worship was defended most strongly by the civil arm, were those in which the apostles sought first to preach the gospel. Ephesus, therefore, as the most splendid seat of idolatry at that time in the whole Pagan world, particularly attracted the attention of the apostle, and hence it was that he was willing to spend so large a part of his public life in that place. It may have been for this reason that John afterwards made it his permanent abode, and spent so many years there as the minister of the church which had been founded by Paul. See % 3. Another reason why Paul sought Ephesus as a field of labour may have been, that it was at that time not only the principal seat of idolatry, but was a place of great importance in the civil affairs of the Roman empire. It was the residence of the Roman proconsul, and the seat of the courts of justice in Asia Minor, and consequently was a place to which there would be attracted a great amount of learning and talent. *Macknight*. The apostle, therefore, seems to have been anxious that the full power of the gospel should be tried there, and that Ephesus should become as important as a centre of influence in the Christian world, as it had been in Paganism and in civil affairs.

III.—-NOTICES OF THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS.

THE church at Ephesus was one of the seven churches of Asia, and the first one mentioned to which John was directed to address an epistle from Patmos, Re 2:1-7. Little is said of it in the New Testament from the time when Paul left it until the book of Revelation was written. The *tradition* is, that Timothy was a minister at Ephesus, and was succeeded by the apostle John; but whether John came there while Timothy was living, or not until his removal or death, even *tradition* does not inform us. In the subscription to the second epistle to Timothy, it is said of Timothy that he was "ordained the first bishop of the church of the Ephesians;" but this is of no authority whatever. All that can be with certainty learned about the residence of Timothy at Ephesus is what the Apostle Paul says of him in his first epistle to Timothy, 1Ti 1:3: "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine." From this it would appear that the residence of Timothy at Ephesus was a temporary arrangement, designed to secure a result which Paul wished particularly to secure, and to avoid an evil which he had reason to dread would follow from his own absence. That it was a temporary arrangement is apparent from the fact, that Paul soon after desired him to come to Rome, 2Ti 4:9,11. The second epistle of Paul to Timothy was written but a few years after the first. According to Lardner, the first was written in the year 56, and the second in the year 62; according to Hug, the first was written in the year 59, and the second in the year 61; according to the editor of the Polyglott Bible, the first was written a.D. 65, and the second A.D. 66. According to either calculation, the time of the residence of Timothy in Ephesus was brief. There is not the slightest evidence, from the New Testament, that he was a permanent bishop of Ephesus, or indeed that he was a bishop at all, in the modern sense of the term. Those who may be disposed to look further into this matter, and to examine the relation which Timothy sustained to the church of Ephesus, and the claim which is sometimes set up for his having sustained the office of *a bishop*, may find an examination in the Review of Bishop Onderdonk's Tract on Episcopacy, published in the Quarterly Christian Spectator in March, 1834, and March, 1835, and republished in 1843 under the title of "The Organization and Government of the Apostolic Church," [pp. 91—114. London edition.]

Whatever was the relation which he sustained to the church in Ephesus, it is agreed on all hands that John the apostle spent there a considerable portion of his life. At what time he went to Ephesus, or why he did it, is not now known. The common opinion is, that he remained at or near Jerusalem for some fifteen years after the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus, during which time he had the special charge of Mary the mother of the Saviour; that he then preached the gospel to the Parthians and the Indians, and at he then returned and went to Ephesus, in or near which he spent his latter days, and in which, at a very advanced age, he died. It was from Ephesus that, under the Emperor Domitian, A.D. 95, he was banished to the island of Patmos, from which he returned A.D. 97, on the accession of Nerva to the crown, who recalled all who had been banished. John is supposed at that time to have been about ninety years of age. He is said to have died at Ephesus in the third year of Trajan, A.D. 100, aged about ninety-four years. For a full and interesting biography of the apostle John, the reader may consult the "Lives of the Apostles," by David Francis Bacon, pp. 307—376.

Of the subsequent history of the church at Ephesus little is known, and it would not be necessary to dwell upon it in order to an exposition of the epistle before us. It is sufficient to remark, that the "candlestick is removed out of its place," (Re 2:5,) and that all the splendour of the temple of Diana, all the pomp of her worship, and all the glory of the Christian church there, have alike faded away.

IV.—-THE TIME AND PLACE OF WRITING THE EPISTLE.

It has never been denied that the Apostle Paul was the author of this epistle, though it has been made a question whether it were written to the Ephesians or to the Laodiceans. See % v. Dr. Paley (*Horae Paulinae*) has shown that there is conclusive internal proof that this epistle was written by Paul. This argument is derived from the style, and is carried out by a comparison of this epistle with the other undoubted writings of the apostle. The historical evidence on this point also is undisputed.

It is generally supposed, and indeed the evidence seems to be clear, that this epistle was written during the imprisonment of the apostle at Rome; but whether it was during his first or his second imprisonment is not certain. Paul was held in custody for some two years in Cesarea (Ac 24:27,) but there is no evidence that during that time he addressed any epistle to the churches which he had planted. That this was written when he was a prisoner is apparent from the epistle itself. "The two years in which Paul was imprisoned at Cesarea," says Wall, as quoted by Lardner, "seem to have been the most inactive part of St. Paul's life. There is no account of any proceedings or disputations, or of any epistles written in this space." This may have arisen, Lardner supposes, from the fact that the Jews made such an opposition that the Roman governor would not allow him to have any intercourse with the people at large, or procure any intelligence from the churches abroad. But when he was at Rome he had more liberty. He was allowed to dwell in his own hired house, (Ac 28:30,) and had permission to address all who came to him, and to communicate freely with his friends abroad. It was during this period that he wrote at least four of his epistles—to the Ephesians, the Philippians, the Colossians, and Philemon. Grotius, as quoted by Lardner, says of these epistles, that though all Paul's epistles are excellent, yet he most admires those written by him when a prisoner at Rome. Of the epistle to the Ephesians, he says, it surpasses all human eloquence—rerum sublimitatem adsequans verbis sublimioribus, quam ulla unquam habuit lingua humana—-describing the sublimity of the things by corresponding words more sublime than are found else- where in human language. The evidence that it was written when Paul was a prisoner is found in the epistle itself. Thus, in Eph 3:1, he says, "I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ—*o desmiov tou cristou*—for you Gentiles." So he alludes to his afflictions in Eph 3:13: "I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you." In Eph 4:1, he calls himself the "prisoner of the Lord," or, in the margin, "in the Lord "—*o desmiov en kuriw*. And in Eph 6:19,20, there is an allusion which seems to settle the inquiry beyond dispute, and to prove that it was written while he was at Rome. He there says that he was an "ambassador *in bonds*"—-*en alusei in chains, manacles*, or *shackles*; and yet he desires (Eph 1:19,20) that they would pray for him, that utterance might be given him to open his mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, that he might speak boldly, as he ought to speak.

Now this is a remarkable circumstance. A man in custody, in bonds or chains, and that too for being an "ambassador," and yet asking the aid of their prayers, that in these circumstances he might have grace to be a bold Preacher of the gospel. If he was in prison this could not be. If he was under a strict prohibition it could not well be. The circumstances of the case tally exactly with the statement in the last chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, that Paul was in custody at Rome, that he was permitted to "dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him," Ac 28:16; that he was permitted to call the Jews together, and to debate with them freely, (Ac 28:17-28;) and that Paul dwelt in his own hired house for two years, and "received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God," etc., (Ac 28:30,31.) So exactly do these circumstances correspond, that I have no doubt that was the time when the epistle was written. And so unusual is such a train of circumstances—so unlikely would it be to occur to a man to *forge* such a coincidence, that it furnishes a striking proof

that the epistle was written, as it purports to be, by Paul. An impostor would not have thought of inventing such a coincidence. If it had occurred to him to make any such allusion, the place and time would have been more distinctly mentioned, and not have been left as a mere incidental allusion. The apostle Paul is supposed to have been at Rome as a prisoner twice, (comp. Intro. to 2 Tim.,) and to have suffered martyrdom there about A.D. 65 or 66. If the epistle to the Ephesians was written during his second imprisonment at Rome, as is commonly supposed, then it must have been somewhere between the years 63 and 65. Lardner and Hug suppose that it was written April, 61; Macknight supposes it was in 60 or 61; the editor of the Polyglott Bible places it at 64. The exact time when it was written cannot now be ascertained, and is not material.

V.—TO WHOM WAS THE EPISTLE WRITTEN?

The epistle purports to have been written to the Ephesians —"to the saints which are at Ephesus,"—Eph 1:1. But the opinion that it was written to the Ephesians, has been called in question by many expositors. Dr. Paley (*Hor. Paul.*) supposes that it was written to the Laodiceans. Wetstein also maintained the same opinion. This opinion was expressly stated also by Marcion, a "heretic" of the second century. Michaelis (Into.) supposes that it was a "circular" epistle," addressed not to any church in particular, but intended for the Ephesians, Laodiceans, and some other churches in Asia Minor. He supposes that the apostle had several copies taken; that he made it intentionally of a very general character, so as to suit all; that he affixed with his own hand the subscription, Eph 6:24, to each copy—"Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity;" that at the beginning of the epistle the name was inserted of the particular church to which it was to be sent—as "to the church in Ephesus"— "in Laodicea," etc. When the several works composing the New Testament were collected into a volume, he supposes that it so happened, that the copy of this epistle which was used, was one obtained from ephesus, containing a direction to the saints there. This is also the opinion of Archbishop Usher and Koppe. It does not comport with the design of these Notes, to go into an extended examination of the question; and after all that has been written on it, and the different opinions which have been entertained, it certainly does not become any one to be very confident. It is not a question of great importance, as it involves no point of doctrine or duty; but those who wish to see it discussed at length, can be satisfied by referring to Paley's *Horae Paulinae*; to Michaelis' Intro., vol iv., chap. xx., and tot he Prolegomena of Koppe. The arguments which are alluded to prove that it was addressed to the church at Laodicea, or at least *not* to the church at Ephesus, are summarily the following:—

(1.) The testimony of Marcion, a heretic of the second century, who affirms that it was sent to the church in Laodicea, and that instead of the reading (Eph 1:1) "in Ephesus," in the copy which he had it was, "in Laodicea." But the opinion of Marcion is now regarded as of little weight. It is admitted that he was in the habit of altering the Greek text to suit his own views. ——————————————————————————————————————— The text for Verse 1 is continue is continued in notes for Verse 2.

EPHESIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 2

Continuation of Notes for Verse 1. Note 2 Verse at end of this note.

(2.) The principal objection to the opinion that it was written to the church at Ephesus, is found in certain internal marks, and particularly in the want of any allusion to the fact that Paul had ever been there, or to anything that particularly related to the church there. This difficulty comprises several particulars:

(a.) Paul spent nearly three years in Ephesus, and was engaged there in deeply interest transactions and occurrences. He had founded the church, ordained its elders, taught them the doctrines which they held, and had at last been persecuted there and driven away. If the epistle was written to them, it is remarkable that there is in the epistle no allusion to any one of these facts or circumstances. This is the more remarkable, as it was his usual custom to allude to the events which had occurred in the churches which he had founded, (see the epistles to the Corinthians and Philippians,) and as on two other occasions at least he makes direct allusion to these transactions at Ephesus. See Ac 20:18-35 1Co 15:32.

(b.) In the other epistles which Paul wrote, it was his custom to salute a large number of persons by name; but in this epistle there is no salutation of any kind. There is a general invocation of "peace to the brethren," (Eph 6:23,) but no mention of an individual by name. There is not even an allusion to the "elders" whom, with so much affection, he had addressed at Miletus, (Ac 20,) and to whom he had given so solemn a charge. This is the more remarkable, as in this place he had spent three years in preaching the gospel, and must have been acquainted with all the leading members in the church. To the church at Rome, which he had never visited when he wrote his epistle to the Romans, he sends a large number of salutations, (Ro 16;) to the church at Ephesus, where he had spent a longer time than in any other place, he sends none.

(c.) The name of Timothy does not occur in the epistle. This is remarkable, because Paul had left him there with a special charge, (1Ti 1:3,) and if he was still there, it is singular that no allusion is made to him, and no salutation sent to him. If he had left Ephesus, and had gone to Rome to meet Paul as he requested, (2Ti 4:9,) it is remarkable that Paul did not join his name with his own in sending the epistle to the church, or at least allude to the fact that he had arrived. This is the more remarkable, because in the epistles to the Philippians, Colossians, and 1 and 2 Thessalonians, the name of Timothy is joined with that of Paul at, the commencement of the epistle.

(d.) Paul speaks of the persons to whom this epistle was sent, as if he had not been with them, or at least in a manner which is hardly conceivable on the supposition that he had been the founder of the church. Thus, in Eph 1:15,16, he says, "Wherefore also after I *heard* of your faith in Christ Jesus," etc. But this circumstance is not conclusive. Paul may have been told of the *continuance* of their faith, and of their *growing* love and zeal, and he may have alluded to that in this passage.

(e.) Another circumstance on which some reliance has been placed, is the statement in Eph 3:1,2, "For this cause, I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given to youward," etc. It is argued (see Michaelis) that this is not language which would have been employed by one who had founded the church, and with whom they were all acquainted. He would not have spoken in a manner implying any doubt whether they had ever *heard* of him and his labours in the ministry on account of the Gentiles. Such are the considerations relied on to show that the epistle could not have been written to the Ephesians.

On the other hand, there is proof of a very strong character that it was written to them. That proof is the following:—

1. The common reading in Eph 1:1, "To the saints which are in Ephesus." It is true, as we have seen, that this reading has been called in question. Mill says that it is omitted by Basil, (Lib. 2.

Adversus Eunomium,) as he says, "on the testimony of the fathers and of ancient copies." Griesbach marks it with the sign *om*., denoting that it was omitted by some, but that in his judgment it is to be retained. It is found in the Vulgate, the Syriac, the Arabic, and the Ethiopic in Walton's Polyglott. Rosenmuller remarks that "most of the ancient codices, and all the ancient versions, retain the word." To my mind this fact is conclusive. The testimony of Marcion is admitted to be of almost no authority; and as to the testimony of Basil, it is only one against the testimony of all the ancients, and is at best negative in its character. See the passage from Basil, quoted in Hug's Introduction.

2. A slight circumstance may be adverted to as throwing light incidentally on this question. This epistle was sent by Tychicus, Eph 6:21. The epistle to the Colossians was also sent from Rome by the same messenger, Col 4:7. Now there is a strong improbability in the opinion held by Michaelis, Koppe, and others, that this was a circular letter, sent to the churches at large, or that different copies were prepared, and the name Ephesus inserted in one, and Laodicea in another, etc. The improbability is this, that the apostle would at the same time send such a circular letter to several of the churches, and a *special* letter to the church at Colosse. What claim had *that* church to special notice? What pre-eminence had it over the church at Ephesus? And why should he send them a letter bearing so strong a resemblance to that addressed to the other churches, when the same letter would have suited the church at Colosse as well as the one which was actually sent to them; for there is a nearer resemblance between these two epistles than any other two portions of the Bible. Besides, in 2Ti 4:12, Paul says that he had sent "Tychicus *to Ephesus*;" and what is more natural than that, at that time, he sent this epistle by him?

3. There is the utter want of evidence from Mss. or versions, that this epistle was sent to Laodicea, or to any other church, except Ephesus. Not a Ms. has been found having the name *Laodicea* in Eph 1:1; and not one which omits the words "in Ephesus." If it had been sent to another church, or if it had been a circular letter addressed to no particular church, it is scarcely credible that this could have occurred.

These considerations make it plain to me that this epistle was addressed, as it purports to have been, to the church in Ephesus. I confess myself wholly unable, however, to explain the remarkable circumstances that Paul does not refer to his former residence there; that he alludes to none of his troubles or his triumphs; that he makes no mention of the "elders," and salutes no one by name; and that throughout he addresses them as if they were to him personally unknown. In this respect it is unlike all the other epistles which he ever wrote, and all which we should have expected from a man in such circumstances. May it not be accounted for from *this very fact*, that an attempt to specify individuals where so many were known, would protract the epistle to an unreasonable length? There is, indeed, one supposition suggested by Dr. Macknight, which may possibly explain to some extent the remarkable circumstances above referred to. It is that a direction may have been given by Paul to Tychicus, by whom he sent the letter, to send a copy of it to the Laodiceans, with an order to them to communicate it to the Colossians. In such a case every thing local would be designedly omitted, and the epistle would be of as general a character as possible. This is, however, mere conjecture, and does not remove the whole of the difficulty.

The rest of the material for this note is continued in note for Eph 1:2 due to space limitations for note.

VI.—THE OBJECT FOR WHICH THE EPISTLE WAS WRITTEN.

VERY various opinions have been formed in regard to the design for which this epistle was written. Macknight supposes that it was with reference to the Eleusinian mysteries, and to various

religious rites in the temple of Diana, and that Paul intended particularly to state the "mysteries" of the gospel in contradistinction from them. But there is no clear evidence that the apostle had any such object, and it is not necessary to go into an explanation of those mysteries in order to an understanding of the epistle. The epistle is such as might be addressed to any Christians, though there are allusions to customs which then prevailed, and to opinions then held, which it is desirable to understand in order to a just view of it. That there were Jews and Judaizing Christians in Ephesus, may be learned from the epistle itself. That there were those there who supposed that the Jews were to have a more elevated rank than the Gentiles, may also be learned from the epistle; and one object was to show that all true Christians, whether of Jewish or Heathen origin, were on a level, and were entitled to the same privileges. That there was the prevalence of a false and dangerous philosophy there, may also be learned from the epistle; and that there were those who attempted to cause divisions, and who had violated the unity of the faith, may also be learned from it.

The epistle is divided into two parts—

I. The doctrinal part, ch. i.—iii.; and,

II. The practical part, or the application, ch. iv.—vi.

I. The doctrinal part comprises the following topics.

(1.) Praise to God for the revelation of his eternal counsels of recovering mercy, Eph 1:3-14.

(2.) A prayer of the apostle, expressing his earnest desire that the Ephesians might avail themselves fully of all the advantages of this eternal purpose of mercy, Eph 1:15-23.

(3.) The doctrine of the native character of man, as being dead in sins, illustrated by the past lives of the Ephesians, Eph 2:1-3.

(4.) The doctrine of regeneration by the grace of God, and the advantages of it, Eph 2:4-7.

(5.) The doctrine of salvation by grace alone, without respect to our own works, Eph 2:8,9.

(6.) The privilege of being thus admitted to the fellow ship of the saints, Eph 2:11-22.

(7.) A full statement of the doctrine that God meant to admit the Gentiles to the privileges of his people, and to break down the barriers between the Gentiles and the Jews, Eph 3:1-12.

(8.) The apostle prays earnestly that they might avail themselves fully of this doctrine, and be able to appreciate fully the advantages which it was intended to confer; and with this prayer he closes the doctrinal part of the epistle, Eph 3:13-21.

II. The practical part of the epistle embraces the following topics,

(1.) Exhortation to unity, drawn from the consideration that there was one God, one faith, etc, Eph 4:1-16.

(2.) An exhortation to a holy life in general, from the fact that they differed from other Gentiles, Eph 4:17-24.

(3.) Exhortation to exhibit particular virtues—specifying what was required by their religion, and what they should avoid—particularly to avoid the vices of anger, lying, licentiousness, and intemperance, Eph 4:25-32 5:1-21.

(4.) The duties of husbands and wives, Eph 5:22-33.

(5.) The duties of parents and children, Eph 6:1-4.

(6.) The duties of masters and servants, Eph 6:5-9.

(7.) An exhortation to fidelity in the Christian warfare, Eph 6:10-20.

(8.) Conclusion, Eph 6:21-24.

The style of this epistle is exceedingly animated. The apostle is cheered by the intelligence which he had received of their deportment in the gospel, and is warmed by the grandeur of his

principal theme—the eternal purposes of Divine mercy. Into the discussion of that subject he throws his whole soul; and there is probably no part of Paul's writings where there is more ardour, elevation, and soul evinced, than in this epistle. The great doctrine of predestination he approaches as a most important and vital doctrine; states it freely and fully, and urges it as the basis of the Christian's hope, and the foundation of eternal gratitude and praise. Perhaps nowhere is there a better illustration of the power of that doctrine to elevate the soul and fill it with grand conceptions of the character of God, and to excite grateful emotions, than in this epistle; and the Christian, therefore, may study it as a portion of the sacred writings eminently fitted to excite his gratitude and to fill him with adoring views of God.

THE EPISTLE of PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER,

(1.) The salutation, verse 1, 2.

(2.) The doctrine of predestination, and its bearing and design, verses 3-14.

(a.) It is the foundation of praise to God, and is a source of gratitude, verse 3.

(b.) Christians have been chosen before the foundation of the world, verse 4.

(c.) The object was that they should be holy and blameless, verse 4.

(d.) They were predestinated to be the children of God, verse 5.

(e.) The cause of this was the good pleasure of God, or he did it according to the purpose of his will, verse 6.

(f.) The object of this was his own glory, verse 6.

(3.) The benefits of the plan of predestination to those who are thus chosen, verses 7-14.

(a.) They have redemption and the forgiveness of sins, verses 7, 8.

(b.) They are made acquainted with the mystery of the Divine will, verses 9, 10.

(c.) They have obtained an inheritance in Christ, verse 11.

(d.) The object of this was the praise of the glory of God, verse 12.

(e.) As the result of this, or in the execution of this purpose, they were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, verses 13, 14.

(4.) An earnest prayer that they might have a full understanding of the great and glorious plan of redemption, verses 15-23.

(a.) Paul says that he had been informed of their faith, verse 15.

(b.) He always remembered them in his prayers, verse 16.

(c.) His especial desire was that they might see the glory of the Lord Jesus, whom God had exalted to his own right hand in heaven, verses 17-23.

Verse 1. *Paul, an apostle*. **See Barnes "Ro 1:1"**.

By the will of God. **See Barnes "1Co 1:1"**.

To the saints. A name often given to Christians because they are holy. **See Barnes "1Co 1:2"**.

In Ephesus. See the Introduction, § 1, 5.

And to the faithful in Christ Jesus. This evidently refers to others than to those who were in Ephesus, and it is clear that Paul expected that this epistle would be read by others. He gives it a general character, as if he supposed that it might be transcribed, and become the property of the church at large. It was not uncommon for him thus to give a general character to the epistles which he addressed to particular churches, and so to write that others than those to whom they were particularly directed, might feel that they were addressed to them. Thus the first epistle to the

Corinthians was addressed to "the church of God in Corinth—with all that in every place call upon the name of Christ Jesus our Lord." The second epistle to the Corinthians, in like manner, was addressed to "the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia." Perhaps, in the epistle before us, the apostle referred particularly to the churches of Asia Minor, which he had not visited, but there is no reason for confining the address to them. All who are "faithful in Christ Jesus," may regard the epistle as addressed by the Holy Spirit to them, and may feel that they are as much interested in the doctrines, promises, and duties set forth in this epistle, as were the ancient Christians of Ephesus. The word "faithful" here is not used in the sense of *trust-worthy*, or in the sense of fidelity, as it is often employed, but in the sense of *believing*, or *having faith* in the Lord Jesus. The apostle addresses those who were firm in the faith—another name for true Christians. The epistle contains great doctrines about the Divine purposes and decrees in which they, as Christians, were particularly concerned; important "mysteries," (Eph 1:9,) of importance for them to understand, and which the apostle proceeds to communicate to them as such. The fact that the letter was designed to be published, shows that he was not unwilling that those high doctrines should be made known to the world at large; still they pertained particularly to the church, and they are doctrines which should be particularly addressed to the church. They are rather fitted to comfort the hearts of *Christians*, than to bring *sinners* to repentance. These doctrines may be addressed to the *church* with more prospect of securing a happy effect than to the world. In the church they will excite gratitude, and produce the hope which results from assured promises and eternal purposes; in the minds of sinners they may arouse envy, and hatred, and opposition to God.

{a} "saints" Ro 1:7 {b} "at Ephesus" Ac 19; Ac 20 {c} "faithful in Christ Jesus" Col 1:2

Verse 2. *Grace be to you*. **See Barnes "Ro 1:7".**

{d} "be to you" Gal 1:3

EPHESIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Blessed by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*. This commences a sentence which continues to the close of Verse 12. The length of the periods in the writings of Paul, is one cause of the obscurity of his style, and renders an explanation often difficult. The meaning of this phrase is, that God has laid a foundation for gratitude for what he has done. The ground or reason of the praise here referred to, is that which is stated in the following verses. The leading thing on which the apostle dwells is God's eternal purpose—his everlasting counsel in regard to the salvation of man. Paul breaks out into the exclamation that God is worthy of praise for such a plan, and that his eternal purposes, now manifest to men, give exalted views of the character and glory of God. Most persons suppose the contrary. They feel that the plans of God are dark, and stern, and forbidding, and such as to render his character anything but amiable. They speak of him, when he is referred to as a sovereign, as if he were tyrannical and unjust; and they never connect the idea of that which is amiable and lovely with the doctrine of eternal purposes. There is no doctrine that is usually so unpopular; none that is so much reproached; none that is so much abused. There is none that men desire so much to disbelieve or avoid; none that they are so unwilling to have preached; and none that they are so reluctant to find in the Scriptures. Even many Christians turn

away from it with dread; or if they *tolerate* it, they yet feel that there is something about it that is peculiarly dark and forbidding. Not so felt Paul. He felt that it laid the foundation for eternal praise; that it presented glorious views of God; that it was the ground of confidence and hope; and that it was desirable that Christians should dwell upon it, and praise God for it. Let us feel, therefore, as we enter upon the exposition of this chapter, that God is to be praised for ALL his plans, and that it is *possible* for Christians to have such views of the doctrine of *eternal predestination* as to give them most elevated conceptions of the glory of the Divine character. And let us also be willing to know the truth. Let us approach word after word, and phrase after phrase, and verse after verse, in this chapter, willing to know all that God teaches, to believe all that he has revealed, and ready to say, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ far all that he has done."

Who hath blessed us. Who does Paul mean here by "*us*?" Does he mean all the world? This cannot be, for all the world are not thus blessed with all spiritual blessings. Does he mean *nations*? For the same reason this cannot be. Does he mean the Gentiles, in contradistinction from the Jews? Why, then, does he use the word *us*,including himself, who was a Jew? Does he mean to say that they were blessed with external privileges, and that this was the only object of the eternal purposes of God? This cannot be, for he speaks of "spiritual blessings ;" he speaks of the persons referred to as having "redemption," and "the forgiveness of sins;" as having "obtained an inheritance," and as being sealed with the "Holy Spirit of promise." These appertain not to nations, or to external privileges, or the mere offers of the gospel, but to true Christians; to persons who have been redeemed. The persons referred to by the word "*us*," are those who are mentioned in Eph 1:1 1 as "*saints*"—*agioiv*; "*holy*" and "faithful"— *pistoiv—believing*, or *believers*. This observation is important, because it shows that the plan or decree of God had reference to individuals, and not merely to nations. Many have supposed (see Whitby, Dr. A. Clarke, Bloomfield, and others) that the apostle here refers to the *Gentiles*, and that his object is to show that they were now admitted to the same privileges as the ancient Jews, and that the whole doctrine of predestination here referred to, has relation to that fact. But, I would ask, were there no *Jews* in the church at Ephesus? See Ac 18:20,24, 19:1-8.

The matter of fact seems to have been, that Paul was uncommonly successful there among his own countrymen, and that his chief difficulty there arose, not from the Jews, but from the influence of the heathen, Ac 19:24. Besides, what evidence is there that the apostle speaks in this chapter peculiarly of the Gentiles, or that he was writing to that portion of the church at Ephesus which was of Gentile origin? And if he was, why did he name himself among them as one on whom this blessing had been bestowed? The fact is, that this is a mere supposition, resorted to without evidence, and in the face of every fair principle of interpretation, to avoid an unpleasant doctrine. Nothing can be clearer than that Paul meant to write to *Christians as such*; to speak of privileges which they enjoyed as peculiar to themselves; and that he had no particular reference to nations, and did not design merely to refer to external privileges.

With all spiritual blessings. Pardon, peace, redemption, adoption, the earnest of the Spirit, etc., referred to in the following verses— blessings which *individual Christians* enjoy, and not external privileges conferred on nations.

In heavenly places in Christ. The word *places* is here understood, and is not in the original. It may mean heavenly *places*, or heavenly *things*. The word *places* does not express the best sense. The idea seems to be, that God has blessed us in Christ in regard to heavenly subjects or matters. In Eph 1:20, the word "places" seems to be inserted with more propriety. The same phrase occurs

again in Eph 2:6 3:10; and it is remarkable that it should occur in the same elliptical form four times in this one epistle, and, I believe, in no other part of the writings of Paul. Our translators have, in each instance, supplied the word "places," as denoting the rank or station of Christians, of the angels, and of the Saviour, to each of whom it is applied. The phrase probably means, in things pertaining to heaven; fitted to prepare us for heaven; and tending toward heaven. It probably refers here to everything that was heavenly in its nature, or that had relation to heaven, whether gifts or graces. As the apostle is speaking, however, of the mass of Christians on whom these things had been bestowed, I rather suppose that he refers to what are called Christian graces, than to the extraordinary endowments bestowed on the few. The sense is, that *in* Christ, i.e., through Christ, or by means of him, God had bestowed all spiritual blessings that were fitted to prepare for heaven—such as pardon, adoption, the illumination of the Spirit, etc.

{e} "Blessed be the God" 2Co 1:3 1Pe 1:3 {1} "places" or "things"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *According as*. The importance of this verse will render proper a somewhat minute examination of the words and phrases of which it is composed. The general sense of the passage is, that these blessings pertaining to heaven were bestowed upon Christians in accordance with an eternal purpose. They were not conferred by chance or hap-hazard. They were the result of intention and design on the part of God. Their value was greatly enhanced from the fact that God had designed from all eternity to bestow them, and that they come to us as the result of his everlasting plan. It was not a recent plan; it was not an after-thought; it was not by mere chance; it was not by caprice; it was the fruit of an eternal counsel. Those blessings had all the value, and all the assurance of *permanency*, which must result from that fact. The phrase "according as" *kaywv*—implies that these blessings were in conformity with that eternal plan, and have flowed to us as the expression of that plan. They are limited by that purpose, for it marks and measures all. It was *as* God had chosen that it should be, and had appointed in his eternal purpose.

He hath chosen us. The word "*us*" here shows that the apostle had reference to individuals, and not to communities. It includes Paul himself as one of the "chosen," and those whom he addressed—the mingled Gentile and Jewish converts in Ephesus. That it must refer to individuals is clear. Of no *community*, as such, can it be said, that it was "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy." It is not true of the Gentile world as such, nor of any one of the nations making up the Gentile world. The word rendered here "hath chosen" - *exelexato*—is from a word meaning *to lay out together*, (*Passow*,) to choose out, to select. It has the idea of making a choice or selection among different objects or things. It is applied to things, as in Lu 10:42. "Mary *hath chosen* that good part;"—she has made a choice, or selection of it, or has shown a *preference* for it. 1Co 1:27: "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world ;" he has preferred to make use of them among all the conceivable things which might have been employed "to confound the wise." Comp. Ac 1:2,24, 6:5 15:22,25.

It denotes *to choose out* with the accessary idea of kindness or favour. Mr 13:20. "For the elect's sake whom *he hath chosen*, he hath shortened the days." Joh 13:18, "I know whom I have chosen." Ac 13:17. "The God of this people of Israel *chose* our fathers;" that is, selected them from the

nations to accomplish important purposes. This is evidently the sense of the word in the passage before us. It means to make a selection or choice, with the idea of favour or love, and with a view to impart important benefits on those whom he chose. The idea of making some distinction between them and others, is essential to a correct understanding of the passage— since there can be no choice where no such distinction is made. He who chooses one out of many things makes a difference, or evinces a preference—no matter what the ground or reason of his doing it may be. Whether this refers to communities and nations, or to individuals, still it is true that a distinction is made, or a preference given of one over another. It may be added, that so far as *justice* is concerned, it makes no difference whether it refers to nations or to individuals. If there is injustice in choosing an *individual* to favour, there cannot be less in choosing a *nation*—for a nation is nothing but a collection of individuals. Every objection which has ever been made to the doctrine of election as it relates to individuals, will apply with equal force to the choice of a nation to peculiar privileges. If a distinction is made, it may be made with as much propriety in respect to individuals as to nations.

In him. In Christ. The choice was not without reference to any means of saving them; it was not a mere purpose to bring a certain number to heaven; it was with reference to the mediation of the Redeemer, and his work. It was a purpose that they should be saved by him, and share the benefits of the atonement. The whole choice and purpose of salvation had reference to him, and out of him no one was chosen to life, and no one out of him will be saved.

Before the foundation of the world. This is a very important phrase in determining the time when the choice was made. It was not an *after-thought*. It was not commenced in time. The purpose was far back in the ages of eternity. But what is the meaning of the phrase "before the foundation of the world?" Dr. Clarke supposes that it means "from the commencement *of the religious system of the Jews*, which," says he, "the phrase some- times means." *Such* principles of interpretation are they compelled to resort to who endeavour to show that this refers to a national election to privileges, and who deny that it refers to individuals. On such principles the Bible may be made to signify any- thing and everything. Dr. Chandler, who also supposes that it refers to nations, admits, however, that the word "foundation" means the beginning of anything; and that the phrase here means, "before the world began." There is scarcely any phrase in the New Testament which is more clear in its signification than this. The word rendered "foundation"—*katabolh*—means, properly, a laying down, a founding, a foundation—as where the foundation of a building is laid; and the phrase "before the foundation of the world, " clearly means before the world was made, or before the work of creation. See Mt 13:35 25:34; Lu 11:50 Heb 9:26; Re 13:8, in all which places the phrase "the foundation of the world" means the beginning of human affairs; the beginning of the world; the beginning of history, etc. Thus, in Joh 17:24, the Lord Jesus says, "thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world," i.e. from eternity, or before the work of creation commenced. Thus Peter says (1Pe 1:20) of the Saviour, "who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world." It was the purpose of God before the worlds were made, to send him to save lost men. Comp. Re 17:8. Nothing can be clearer than that the phrase before us must refer to a purpose that was formed before the world was made. It is not a temporary arrangement; it has not grown up under the influence of vacillating purposes; it is not a plan newly formed, or changed with each coming generation, or variable like the plans of men. It has all the importance, dignity, and assurances of stability which necessarily result from a purpose that has been eternal in the mind of God. It may be observed here,

(1.) that if the plan was formed "before the foundation of the world," all objections to the doctrine of an *eternal* plan are removed. If the plan was formed *before* the world, no matter whether a moment, an hour, a year, or millions of years, the plan is equally fixed, and the event equally necessary. All the objections which will lie against an eternal plan, will lie against a plan formed a day or an hour before the event. The one interferes with our freedom of action as much as the other.

(2.) If the plan was formed "before the foundation of the world," *it was eternal*. God has no new plan. He forms no new schemes. He is not changing and vacillating. If we can ascertain what is the plan of God at any time, we can ascertain what his eternal plan was with reference to the event. It has always been the same— for "he is of ONE MIND, and who can turn him?" Job 23:13. In reference to the plans and purposes of the Most High, there is nothing better settled than that WHAT HE ACTUALLY DOES, HE ALWAYS MEANT TO Do—which is the doctrine of eternal decrees—-*and the whole of it*.

That we should be holy. Paul proceeds to state the *object* for which God had chosen his people. It is not merely that they should enter into heaven. It is not that they may live in sin. It is not that they may flatter themselves that they are safe, and then live as they please. The tendency among men has always been to abuse the doctrine of predestination and election; to lead men to say that if all things are fixed there is no need of effort; that if God has an eternal plan, no matter how men live, they will be saved if he has elected them, and that at all events they cannot change that plan, and they may as well enjoy life by indulgence in sin. The apostle Paul held no such view of the doctrine of predestination. In his apprehension it is a doctrine fitted to excite the gratitude of Christians; and the whole tendency and design of the doctrine, according to him, is to make men holy, and without blame before God in love.

And without blame before him in love. The expression "in love," is probably to be taken in connexion with the following verse, and should be tendered, "*In love*, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children." It is all to be traced to the love of God.

(1.) It was love for us which prompted to it.

(2.) It is the highest expression of love to *be ordained* to eternal life —for what higher love could God show us?

(3.) It is love on his part, because we had no claim to it, and had not deserved it. If this be the correct view, then the doctrine of predestination is not inconsistent with the highest moral excellence in the Divine character, and should never be represented as the offspring of partiality and injustice. Then, too, we should give thanks that "God *has, in love*, predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will."

{a} "chosen us in him" 1Pe 1:2 {b} "holy and without blame" Lu 1:75 Col 1:22

EPHESIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Having predestinated us*. On the meaning of the word here used, **See Barnes "Ro 1:4" See Barnes "Ro 8:29"**.

The word used (*proorizw*) means, properly, *to set bounds before*; and then *to predetermine*. There is the essential idea of setting bounds or limits, and of doing this beforehand. It is not that

God determined to do it when it was actually done, but that he intended to do it beforehand. No language could express this more clearly, and I suppose this interpretation is generally admitted. Even by those who deny the doctrine of particular election, it is not denied that the word here used means to *predetermine*; and they maintain that the sense is, that God had predetermined to admit the Gentiles to the privileges of his people. Admitting, then, that the meaning is to predestinate in the proper sense, the only question is, *who* are predestinated? To whom does the expression apply? Is it to nations, or to individuals? I In reply to this, in addition to the remarks already made, I would observe,

(1.) that there is no specification of nations here as such, no mention of the Gentiles in contradistinction from the Jews.

(2.) Those referred to were those included in the word "*us*," among whom Paul was one—but Paul was not a heathen.

(3.) The same objection will lie against the doctrine of predestinating nations which will lie against predestinating *individuals*.

(4.) Nations axe made up of individuals, and the predetermination must have had some reference to individuals. What is a nation but a collection of individuals? There is no such abstract being or thing as a nation; and if there was any purpose in regard to a nation, it must have had some reference to the individuals composing it. He that would act on the ocean, must act on the drops of water that make up the ocean; for besides the collection of drops of water there is no ocean. He that would remove a mountain, must act on the particles of matter that compose that mountain; for there is no such thing as an abstract mountain. Perhaps there was never a greater illusion than to suppose that all difficulty is removed in regard to the doctrine of election and predestination, by saying that it refers to *nations*. What difficulty is lessened? What is gained by it? How does it make God appear more amiable and good? Does it render him less partial to suppose that he has made a difference among nations, than to suppose he has made a difference among individuals? Does it remove any difficulty about the offer of salvation, to suppose that he has granted the knowledge of his truth to some *nations*, and withheld it from others? The truth is, that all the reasoning which has been founded on this supposition, has been merely throwing dust in the eyes. If there is any well-founded objection to the doctrine of decrees or predestination, it is to the doctrine at all, alike in regard to nations and individuals, and there are just the same difficulties in the one case as in the other. But there is no real difficulty in either. Who could worship or honour a God who had no plan, or purpose, or intention in what he did? Who can believe that the universe was formed and is governed without design? Who can doubt that what God *does* he always meant to do? When, therefore, he converts and saves a soul, it is clear that he always intended to do it. He has no new plan. It is not an after-thought. It is not the work of chance. If I can find out any thing that God has *done*, I have the most certain conviction that he always meant to do it—and this is all that is intended by the doctrine of election or predestination. What God does, he always meant to do. What he permits, he always meant to permit. I may add further, that if it is right to do it, it was right to *intend* to do it. If there is no injustice or partiality in the act itself, there is no injustice or partiality in the intention to perform it. If it is right to save a soul, it was always right to intend to save it. If it is right to condemn a sinner to woe, it was right to intend to do it. Let us, then, look *at the thing itself*; and if that is not wrong, we should not blame the purpose to do it, however long it has been cherished.

Unto the adoption, etc. **See Barnes "Joh 1:12"**; **See Barnes "Ro 8:15"**.

According to the good pleasure of his will. The word rendered "good pleasure"—(*eudokia*)—means *a being well pleased*; delight in any thing, favour, good-will, Lu 2:14 Php 1:15. Comp. Lu 12:32. Then it denotes purpose, or will, the idea of benevolence being included. *Robinson*. Rosenmuller renders the phrase, "from his most benignant decree." The evident object of the apostle is to state why God chose the heirs of salvation. It was done as it seemed good to him in the circumstances of the case. It was not that man had any control over him, or that man was consulted in the determination, or that it was based on the good works of man, real or foreseen. But we are not to suppose that there were no good reasons for what he has thus done. Convicts are frequently pardoned by an executive. He does it according to his own will, or as seems good in his sight. He is to be the judge, and no one has a right to control him in doing it. It may *seem* to be entirely arbitrary. The executive may not have communicated the reasons why he did it, either to those who are pardoned, or to the other prisoners, or to any one else. But we are not to infer that there was no *reason* for doing it. If he is a wise magistrate, and worthy of his station, it is to be presumed that there were reasons which, if known, would be satisfactory to all. But those reasons he is under no obligations to make known. Indeed, it might be improper that they should be known. Of that he is the best judge. Meantime, however, we may see what would be the effect in those who were not forgiven. It would excite, very likely, their hatred, and they would charge him with partiality or with tyranny. But they should remember that whoever might be pardoned, and on whatever ground it might be done, they could not complain. They would suffer no more than they deserve. But what if, when the act of pardon was made known to one part, it was offered to the others also on certain plain and easy conditions? Suppose it should appear that while the executive meant, for wise but concealed reasons, to forgive a part, he had also determined to offer forgiveness to all. And suppose that they were in fact disposed in the highest degree to neglect it, and that no inducements or arguments could prevail on them to accept of it. Who then could blame the executive? Now this is about the case in regard to God, and the doctrine of election. All men were guilty and condemned. For wise reasons, which God has not communicated to us, he determined to bring a portion at least of the human race to salvation. This he did not intend to leave to chance and hap-hazard. He saw that all would of themselves reject the offer, and that unless some efficient means were used, the blood of the atonement would be shed in vain. He did not make known to men who they were that he meant to save, nor the reason why *they* particularly were to be brought to heaven. Meantime he meant to make the offer universal; to make the terms as easy as possible, and thus to take away every ground of complaint. If men will not accept of pardon; if they prefer their sins; if nothing can induce them to come and be saved, why should they complain? If the doors of a prison are open, and the chains of the prisoners are knocked off, and they *will not* come out, why should they complain that others are in fact *willing* to come out and be saved? Let it be borne in mind, that the purposes of God correspond exactly to *facts* as they actually occur, and much of the difficulty is taken away. If in the *facts* there is no just ground of complaint, there can be none, because it was the *intention of God that the facts should be so*.

{a} "predestinated us" Ro 8:29,30 {b} "adoption of children" Joh 1:12"

{c} "pleasure of his will" Lu 12:32

EPHESIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *To the praise of the glory of his grace*. This is a Hebraism, and means the same as "to his glorious grace." The object was to excite thanksgiving for his glorious grace manifested in electing love. The real tendency of the doctrine, in minds that are properly affected, is not to excite opposition to God, or to lead to the charge of partiality, tyranny, or severity; it is to excite thankfulness and praise. In accordance with this, Paul introduced the statement (Eph 1:3) by saying that God was to be regarded as "blessed" for forming and executing this plan. The meaning is, that the doctrine of predestination and election lays the foundation of adoring gratitude and praise. This will appear plain by a few considerations.

(1.) It is the only foundation of hope for man. If he were left to himself all the race would reject the offers of mercy, and would perish. History, experience, and the Bible alike demonstrate this.

(2.) All the joys which any of the human race have, are to be traced to the purpose of God to bestow them. Man has no power of originating any of them, and ff God had not intended to confer them, none of them would have been possessed.

(3.) All these favours are conferred on those who had no claim on God. The Christian who is pardoned had no claim on God for pardon; he who is admitted to heaven could urge no claim for such a privilege and honour; he who enjoys comfort and peace in the hour of death, enjoys it only through the glorious grace of God.

(4.) *All* that is done by election is fitted to excite praise. Election is to life, and pardon, and holiness, and heaven. But why should not a man praise God for these things? God chooses men to be holy, not sinful; to be happy, not miserable; to be pure, not impure; to be saved, not to be lost. For these things he should be praised. He should be praised that he has not left the whole race to wander away and die. Had he chosen but one to eternal life, that one should praise him, and all the holy universe should join in the praise. Should he now see it to be consistent to choose but one of the fallen spirits, and to make him pure, and to readmit him to heaven, that one spirit would have occasion for eternal thanks, and all heaven might join in his praises. How much more is praise due to him, when the number chosen is not one or a few, but when millions which no man can number, shall be found to be chosen to life, Re 7:9.

(5.) The doctrine of predestination to life has added no pang of sorrow to any one of the human race. It has made millions happy who would not otherwise have been, but not one miserable. It is not a choice to sorrow, it is a choice to joy and peace.

(6.) No one has a right to complain of it. Those who are chosen assuredly should not complain of the grace which has made them what they are, and which is the foundation of all their hopes. And they who are not chosen have no right to complain; for

(a.) they have no claim to life.

(b.) They are, *in fact*; unwilling to come. They have no desire to be Christians and to be saved. Nothing can induce them to forsake their sins and come to the Saviour. Why, then, should they complain if others are *in fact* willing to be saved? Why should a man complain for being left to take his own course, and to walk in his own way? Mysterious, therefore, as is the doctrine of predestination, and fearful and inscrutable as it is in some of its aspects, yet, in a just view of it, it is fitted to excite the highest expressions of thanksgiving, and to exalt God in the apprehension of man. He who has been redeemed and saved by the love of God; who has been pardoned and made

pure by mercy; on whom the eye of compassion has been tenderly fixed, and for whom the Son of God has died, has abundant cause for thanksgiving and praise.

Wherein he hath made us accepted. Has regarded us as the objects of favour and complacency.

In the beloved. In the Lord Jesus Christ, the well-beloved Son of God. **See Barnes "Mt 3:17"**.

He has chosen us in him, and it is through him that these mercies have been conferred on us.

{a} "praise of the glory" 1Pe 2:9 {*} "grace" "of His glorious grace" {b} "accepted in the beloved" 1Pe 2:5

EPHESIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *In whom we have redemption*. On the meaning of the word here rendered redemption—(*apolutrwsiv*) — **See Barnes "Ro 3:24"**.

The word here, as there, denotes that deliverance from sin, and from the evil consequences of sin, which has been procured by the atonement made by the Lord Jesus Christ. This verse is one of the passages which prove conclusively that the apostle here does not refer to *nations* and to *national* privileges. Of what *nation* could it be said, that it had "redemption through the blood of Jesus, even the forgiveness of sins?"

Through his blood. By means of the atonement which he has made. See this phrase fully explained in the **See Barnes "Ro 3:25"**.

The forgiveness of sins. We obtain through his blood, or through the atonement he has made, the forgiveness of sins. We are not to suppose that this is *all* the benefit which we receive from his death, or that this is all that constitutes redemption. It is the main, and perhaps the most important thing. But we also obtain the hope of heaven, the influences of the Holy Spirit, grace to guide us and to support us in trial, peace in death, and perhaps many more benefits. Still *forgiveness* is so prominent and important, and the apostle has mentioned that as if it were all.

According to the riches of his grace. According to his rich grace. See a similar phrase explained **See Barnes "Ro 2:4"**.

The word *riches*, in the form in which it is used here, occurs also in several other places in this epistle, Eph 1:18 2:7, 3:8,16.

It is what Paley (*Horae Paul*) calls "a *cant* phrase," and occurs often in the writings of Paul. See Ro 2:4 9:23, 11:12,33; Php 4:19 Col 1:27, 2:2.

It is not found in any of the other writings of the New Testament, except once, in a sense somewhat similar, in James, (Jas 2:5,) "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith"? and Dr. Paley from this fact has constructed an argument to prove that this epistle was written by Paul. It is peculiar to him, and marks his style in a manner which cannot be mistaken. An impostor or a forger of the epistle would not have thought of introducing it, and yet it is just such a phrase as would naturally be used by Paul.

{c} "we have redemption" Heb 9:12 1Pe 1:18,19.

EPHESIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Wherein he hath abounded*. Which he has liberally manifested to us. This grace has not been stinted and confined, but has been liberal and abundant.

In all wisdom. That is, he has evinced great wisdom in the plan of salvation; wisdom in so saving men as to secure the honour of his own law, and in devising a scheme that was eminently adapted to save men. **See Barnes "1Co 1:24"**.

And prudence. The word here used (*fronhsiv*) means understanding, thinking, prudence. The meaning here is, that so to speak, God had evinced great *intelligence* in the plan of salvation. There was ample proof of *mind* and of *thought*, it was adapted to the end in view. It was far-seeing; skilfully arranged; and carefully formed. The sense of the whole is, that there was a wise design running through the whole plan, and abounding in it in an eminent degree.

EPHESIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Having made known to us the mystery of his will*. The word *mystery* (*musthrion*) means, literally, something into which one must be *initiated* before it is fully known (from *muew*, to initiate, to instruct;) and then anything which is concealed or hidden. We commonly use the word to denote that which is above our comprehension, or unintelligible. But this is never the meaning of the word in the New Testament. It means there some doctrine or fact which has been concealed, or which has not before been fully revealed, or which has been set forth only by figures and symbols. When the doctrine is made known, it may be as clear and plain as any other. Such was the doctrine that God meant to call the Gentiles, which was long concealed, at least in part, and which was not fully made known until the Saviour came, and which had been till that time *a mystery— concealed truth*— though, when it was revealed, there was nothing incomprehensible in it. Thus in Col 1:26, "The mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints." So it was in regard to the doctrine of election. It was a mystery until it was made known by the actual conversion of those whom God had chosen. So in regard to the incarnation of the Redeemer; the atonement; the whole plan of salvation. Over all these great points there was a veil thrown and men did not understand them until God revealed them. When they were revealed, the mystery was removed, and men were able to see clearly the manifestation of the will of God.

Which he hath purposed in himself. Without foreign aid or counsel. His purposes originated in his own mind, and were concealed until he chose to make them known. See 2Ti 1:9.

{+} "mystery" "secret" {d} "hath purposed" 2Ti 1:9

EPHESIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *That in the dispensation*. The word here rendered "dispensation," *oikonomian*, means, properly, *the management of household affairs*. Then it means stewardship or administration; a dispensation or arrangement of things; a scheme or plan. The meaning here is, that this plan was

formed in order (*eiv*) or *unto* this end, that in the full arrangement of times, or in the arrangements completing the filling up of the times, God might gather together in one all things. Tindal renders it, "to have it declared when the time was full come," etc.

The fulness of times. When the times were fully completed; when all the periods should have passed by which he had prescribed, or judged necessary to the completion of the object. The period referred to here is that when all things shall be gathered together in the Redeemer at the winding up of human affairs, or the consummation of all things. The arrangement was made with reference to that, and embraced all things which conduced to that. The plan stretched from before "the foundation of the world" to the period when all times should be completed; and of course all the events occurring in that intermediate period were embraced in the plan.

He might gather together in one. The word here used—*anakefalaiow* means, literally, to sum up, to recapitulate, as an orator does at the close of his discourse. It is from *kefalh* the head; or *kefalaion*, the sum, the chief thing, the main point. In the New Testament the word means to collect under one head, or to comprehend several things under one. Rom 13:9: "It is *briefly comprehended*, i.e. summed up under this one precept," sc., *love*. In the passage before us, it means that God would sum up, or comprehend all things in heaven and earth through the Christian dispensation; he would make one empire under one head, with common feelings, and under the same laws. The reference is to the unity which will hereafter exist in the kingdom of God, when all his friends on earth and in heaven shall be united, and all shall have a common head. Now there is alienation. The earth has been separated from other worlds by rebellion. It has gone off into apostasy and sin. It refuses to acknowledge the Great Head to which other worlds are subject, and the object is to restore it to its proper place, so that there shall be one great and united kingdom.

All things. *ta panta*. It is remarkable that Paul has here used a word which is in the neuter gender. It is not all *persons*, all angels, or all men, or all the elect, but all *things*. Bloomfield and others suppose that *persons* are meant, and that the phrase is used for *touv pantev*. But it seems to me that Paul did not use this word without design. All *things* are placed under Christ, (Eph 1:22 Mt 28:18,) and the design of God is to restore harmony in the universe. Sin has produced disorder not only in *mind*, but in *matter*. The world is disarranged. The effects of transgression are seen everywhere; and the object of the plan of redemption is to put things on their pristine footing, and restore them as they were at first. Everything is therefore put under the Lord Jesus, and all things are to be brought under his control, so as to constitute one vast harmonious empire. The amount of the declaration here is, that there is hereafter to be one kingdom, in which there shall be no jar or alienation; that the now separated kingdoms of heaven and earth shah be united under one head, and that henceforward all shall be harmony and love. The things which are to be united in Christ, are those which are "in heaven and which are on earth." Nothing is said of *hell*. Of course this passage cannot teach the doctrine of universal salvation, since there is *one* world which is not to have a part in this ultimate union.

In Christ. By means of Christ, or under him, as the great Head and King. He is to be the great Agent in effecting this, and he is to preside over this united kingdom. In accordance with this view the heavenly inhabitants, the angels as well as the redeemed, are uniformly represented as uniting in the same worship, and as acknowledging the Redeemer as their common head and king, Re 5:9,10,11,12.

Both which are in heaven. Marg. as in Gr., *in the heavens*. Many different opinions have been formed of the meaning of this expression. Some suppose it to mean the saints in heaven, who died

before the coming of the Saviour; and some that it refers to the Jews, designated as the *heavenly people*, in contradistinction from the Gentiles, as having nothing divine and heavenly in them, and as being *of the earth*. The more simple and obvious interpretation is however, without doubt, the correct one, and this is to suppose that it refers to the holy inhabitants of other worlds. The object of the plan of salvation is to produce a harmony between them and the redeemed on earth, or to produce, out of all, one great and united kingdom. In doing this, it is not necessary to suppose that any change is to be produced in the inhabitants of heaven. All the change is to occur among those on earth, and the object is to make, out of all, one harmonious and glorious empire.

And which are on earth. The redeemed on earth. The object is to bring them into harmony with the inhabitants of heaven. This is the great object proposed by the plan of salvation. It is to found one glorious and eternal kingdom, that shall comprehend all holy beings on earth and all in heaven. There is now discord and disunion. Man is separated from God, and from all holy beings. Between him and every holy being there is by nature discord and alienation. Unrenewed man has no sympathy with the feelings and work of the angels; no love for their employment; no desire to be associated with them. Nothing can be more unlike than the customs, feelings, laws, and habits which prevail on earth, from those which prevail in heaven. But the object of the plan of salvation is to restore harmony to those alienated communities, and produce eternal concord and love. Learn hence,

(1.) The greatness and glory of the plan of salvation. It is no trifling undertaking to *reconcile worlds*, and of such discordant materials to found one great, and glorious, and eternal empire.

(2.) The reason of the interest which angels feel in the plan of redemption, 1Pe 1:12. They are deeply concerned in the redemption of those who, with them, are to constitute that great kingdom which is to be eternal. Without envy at the happiness of others; without any feeling that the accession of others will diminish *their* felicity or glory, they wait to hail the coming of others, and rejoice to receive even one who comes to be united to their number.

(3.) This plan was worthy of the efforts of the Son of God. To restore harmony in heaven and earth; to prevent the evils of alienation and discord; to rear one immense and glorious kingdom, was an object worthy the incarnation of the Son of God.

(4.) The glory of the Redeemer. He is to be exalted as the Head of this united and ever-glorious kingdom, and all the redeemed on earth and the angelic hosts shall acknowledge him as their common Sovereign and Head.

(5.) This is the greatest and most important enterprize on earth. It should engage every heart, and enlist the powers of every soul. It should be the earnest desire of all to swell the numbers of those who shall constitute this united and ever-glorious kingdom, and to bring as many as possible of the human race into union with the holy inhabitants of the other world.

{1} "in heaven" "the heavens"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *In whom also we have obtained an inheritance*. We who are Christians. Most commentators suppose that by the word "*we*" the Jews particularly are intended, and that it stands in contradistinction from "ye," as referring to the Gentiles, in Eph 1:13. This construction, they suppose, is demanded by the nature of the passage. The meaning may then be, that the Jews who

were believers had *first* obtained a part in the plan of redemption, as the offer was first made to them, and then that the same favour was conferred also on the Gentiles. Or it may refer to those who had been first converted, without particular reference to the fact that they were Jews; and the reference may be to the apostle and his fellow-labourers. This seems to me to be the correct interpretation. "*We* the ministers of religion first believed, and have obtained all inheritance in the hopes of Christians, that we should be to the praise of God's glory; and *you* also, after hearing the word of truth, believed," Eph 1:13. The word which is rendered "obtained our inheritance" *klhrow*—means, literally, *to acquire by lot*, and then to obtain, to receive. Here it means that they had received the favour of being to the praise of his glory, for having first trusted in the Lord Jesus.

Being predestinated. Eph 1:5.

According to the purpose. On the meaning of the word *purpose*, see Notes on Ro 8:28.

Of him who worketh all things. Of God, the universal Agent. The affirmation here is not merely that God accomplishes the designs of salvation according to the counsel of his own will, but that he *does everything*. His agency is not confined to one thing, or to one class of objects. Every object and event is under his control, and is in accordance with his eternal plan. The word rendered *worketh energew*—-means, to work, to be active, to produce, Eph 1:20; Ga 2:8 Php 2:13. A universal agency is ascribed to him. "The same God which *worketh* all in all," 1Co 12:6. He has an agency in causing the emotions of our hearts. "God, who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure," Php 2:13. He has an agency in distributing to men their various allotments and endowments. "All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will," 1Co 12:11. The agency of God is seen everywhere. Every leaf, flower, rose-bud, spire of grass; every sunbeam, and every flash of lightning; every cataract and every torrent, all declare his agency; and there is not an object that we see that does not bespeak the control of an all-present God. It would be impossible to affirm more explicitly, that God's agency is universal, than Paul does in the passage before us. He does not attempt to prove it. It is one of those points on which he does not deem it necessary to pause and reason, but which may be regarded as a conceded point in the discussion of other topics, and which may be employed without hesitation in their illustration. Paul does not state the *mode* in which this is done. He affirms merely the fact. He does not say that he *compels* men, or that he overbears them by mere physical force. His agency he affirms to be universal; but it is undoubtedly in accordance with the nature of the object, and with the laws which he has impressed on them. His agency in the work of creation was absolute and entire; for there was nothing to act on, and no established laws to be observed. Over the mineral kingdom his control must also be entire, yet in accordance with the laws which he has impressed on matter. The crystal and the snow are formed by his agency; but it is in accordance with the laws which he has been pleased to appoint. So in the vegetable world his agency is everywhere seen; but the lily and rose blossom in accordance with uniform laws, and not in an arbitrary manner. So in the animal kingdom. God gives sensibility to the nerve, and excitability and power to the muscle, He causes the lungs to heave, and the arteries and veins to bear the blood along the channels of life; but it is not in an arbitrary manner. It is in accordance with the laws which he has ordained, and [which] he never disregards in his agency over these kingdoms. So in his government of mind. He "works" everywhere. But he does it in accordance with the laws of mind. His agency is not exactly of the same kind on the rose-bud that it is on the diamond; nor on the nerve that it is on the rose-bud; nor on the heart and will that it is on the nerve. In all these things he consults the laws which he has impressed on them; and as he chooses that the nerve should be affected in accordance with its laws and properties,

so it is with mind. God does not violate its laws. Mind is free. It is influenced by truth and motives. It has a sense of right and wrong. And there is no more reason to suppose that God disregards these laws of mind in controlling the intellect and the heart, than there is that he disregards the laws of crystallization in the formation of the ice, or of gravitation in the movements of the heavenly bodies. The general doctrine is, that God works in all things, and controls all; but that *his agency everywhere is in accordance with the laws and nature of that part of his kingdom where it is exerted*. By this simple principle we may secure the two great points which it is desirable to secure on this subject—

(1.) the doctrine of the universal agency of God; and

(2.) the doctrine of the freedom and responsibility of man.

After the counsel of his own will. Not by consulting his creatures, or conforming to their views, but by his own views of what is proper and right. We are not to suppose that this is by *mere* will, as if it were arbitrary, or that he determines anything without good reason. The meaning is, that his purpose is determined by what *he* views to be right, and without consulting his creatures or conforming to their views. His dealings often seem to us to be arbitrary. We are incapable of perceiving the reasons of what he does. He makes those his friends who we should have supposed would have been the last to have become Christians. He leaves those who seem to us to be on the borders of the kingdom, and they remain unmoved and uneffected. But we are not thence to suppose that he is arbitrary. In every instance, we are to believe that there is a good reason for what he does, and one which we may be permitted yet to see, and in which we shall wholly acquiesce. The phrase "counsel of his own will" is remarkable. It is designed to express in the strongest manner the fact that it is not by human counsel or advice. The word "counsel"—*boulh*—means, *a council* or *senate*; then a determination, purpose, or decree. See Rob. Lex. Here it means that his determination was formed by his own will, and not by human reasoning. Still, his will in the case may not have been arbitrary. When it is said of man that he forms his own purposes, and acts according to his own will, we are not to infer that he acts without reason, he may have the highest and best reasons for what he does, but he does not choose to make them known to others, or to consult others. So it may be of God, and so we should presume it to be. It may be added, that we ought to have such confidence in him as to believe that he will do all things well. The best possible evidence that anything is done in perfect wisdom and goodness, is the fact that God does it. When we have ascertained that, we should be satisfied that all is right.

{a} "being predestinated" Ac 20:22

EPHESIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *In whom ye also trusted*. This stands in contrast with those who had first embraced the gospel.

Heard the word of truth. The gospel; called the word or message of truth, the word of God, etc. See Ro 10:17. The phrase, "the word of truth," means "the true word or message." It was a message unmixed with Jewish traditions or Gentile philosophy.

The gospel of your salvation. The gospel bringing salvation to you.

In whom also. In the Lord Jesus. A little different translation of this verse will convey more clearly its meaning. "In whom also ye, having heard the word of truth, (the gospel of your salvation,)

in whom having also believed, ye were sealed," etc. The sealing was the result of believing, and that was the result of hearing the gospel. Comp. Ro 10:14,15.

Ye were sealed. On the meaning of the word *seal*, **See Barnes "Joh 3:33"**.

See Barnes "Joh 6:27"

With that holy Spirit of promise. With the Holy Spirit that was promised. See Joh 16:7-11,13; Joh 15:26 14:16,17.

It is not improbable, I think, that the apostle here refers particularly to the occurrence of which we have a record in Ac 19:1-6. Paul, it is there said, having passed through the upper provinces of Asia Minor, came to Ephesus. He found certain persons who were the disciples of John, and he asked them if they had received the Holy Ghost since they "believed," Eph 1:2. They replied that they had not heard whether there was any Holy Ghost, and that they had been baptized unto John's baptism. Paul taught them the true nature of the baptism of John; explained to them the Christian system; and they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and "the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spake with tongues, and prophesied." They were thus sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, "*after* they had believed," (Eph 1:13;) they had the full evidence of the favour of God in the descent of the promised Holy Spirit, and in his miraculous influences. If this be the true interpretation, it constitutes a striking coincidence between the epistle and the Acts, of such a nature as constitute the arguments in Paley's *Horae Paulinae*, (though he has not referred to this,) which shows that the epistle was not forged, The circumstance is such that it would not have been alluded to in this manner by one who should forge the epistle; and the mention of it in the epistle is so slight, that no one, from the account there, would think of forging the account in the Acts. The coincidence is just such as would occur on the supposition that the transaction actually occurred, and that both the Acts and the epistle are genuine. At the same time, there is a sealing of the Holy Spirit which is common to all Christians. **See Barnes "2Co 1:22"**.

{a} "heard the word of truth" Ro 10:17 {b} "sealed with that Holy Spirit" 2Co 1:22 {*} "promise" "The promised Holy Spirit"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Which is the earnest of our inheritance*. On the meaning of the, **See Barnes "2Co 1:22"**.

Until the redemption. **See Barnes "Ro 8:23"**.

The meaning here is, we have the Holy Spirit as the pledge that that shall be ours, and the Holy Spirit will be imparted to us until we enter on that inheritance.

Of the purchased possession. Heaven, purchased for us by the death of the Redeemer. The word here used—*peripoihsiv*—occurs in the following places in the New Testament: 1Th 5:9, rendered "to obtain salvation;" 2Th 2:14 to the *obtaining* of the glory of the Lord;" Heb 10:39, "to the *saving* of the soul;" 1Pe 2:9, "a *peculiar* people;" literally, a people of *acquirement* to himself; and in the passage before us. It properly means, an acquisition, an obtaining, a laying up. Here it means, the complete deliverance from sin, and the eternal salvation acquired for us by Christ. The influence of the Holy Spirit, renewing and sanctifying us, comforting us in trials, and sustaining us in afflictions, is the pledge that the redemption is yet to be wholly ours.

Unto the praise of his glory. See Eph 1:6

{c} "of our inheritance" 2Co 5:5 {a} "of the purchased" Ro 8:23 {b} "possession" Ac 20:28 {c} "of his glory" Eph 1:6,12

EPHESIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus*. This is one of the passages usually relied on by those who suppose that this epistle was not written to the Ephesians. The argument is, that he writes to them as if they were strangers to him, and that it is not language such as would be used in addressing a people among whom he had spent three years. See the Intro. § 5. But this inference is not conclusive. Paul had been some years absent from Ephesus when this epistle was written. In the difficult communication in those times between distant places, it is not to be supposed that he would hear often from them. Perhaps he had heard nothing after the time when he bade farewell to the elders of Ephesus at Miletus, (Ac 20,) until the time here referred to. It would be, therefore, a matter of great interest with him to hear from them; and when, in some way, intelligence was brought to him at Rome of a very gratifying character about their growth in piety, he says that his anxiety was relieved, and that he did not cease to give thanks for what he had heard, and to commend them to God in prayer.

EPHESIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Cease not to give thanks for you*. In the prosperity of the church at Ephesus he could not but feel the deepest interest, and their welfare he never forgot.

Making mention of you in my prayers. Paul was far distant from them, and expected to see them no more. But he had faith in prayer, and he sought that they might advance in knowledge and in grace. What was the particular subject of his prayers he mentions in the following verses.

EPHESIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ*. The God who has sent the Lord Jesus into the world, and appointed him as the Mediator between himself and man. The particular reason why Paul here speaks of him as "the God of the Lord Jesus" is, that he prays that they might be further acquainted with the Redeemer, and be enlightened in regard to the great work which he came to do.

The Father of glory. The glorious Father, that is, the Father who is worthy to be praised and honoured.

May give unto you the spirit of wisdom. May make you wise to understand the great doctrines of the religion of the Redeemer.

And revelation. That is, revealing to you more and more of the character of the Redeemer, and of the nature and results of his work. It is probable here that by the word "Spirit" the apostle refers to the Holy Spirit as the Author of all wisdom, and the Revealer of all truth. His prayer is, that God would grant to them the Holy Spirit to make them wise, and to reveal his will to them.

In the knowledge of him. Marg., *for the acknowledgment.* That is, in order that you may more fully acknowledge him, or know him more intimately and thoroughly. They had already made high attainments, (Eph 1:15,) but Paul felt that they might make still higher; and the idea here is, that however far Christians may have advanced in knowledge and in love, there is an unfathomed depth of knowledge which they may still explore, and which they should be exhorted still to attempt to fathom. How far was Paul from supposing that the Ephesians had attained to perfection!

{d} "God of our Lord Jesus Christ" Joh 20:17 {e} "wisdom and revelation" Col 1:9 {1} "in the knowledge" "for the acknowledgement"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *The eyes of your understanding being enlightened*. The construction here in the Greek is, probably, "that he may give you (*dwh*, Eph 1:17) the Spirit of wisdom, etc.—eyes of the understanding enlightened," etc. Or the phrase, "the eyes of your understanding being enlightened," may be in the accusative absolute, which Koppe and Bloomfield prefer. The phrase, "the eyes of the understanding," is a figure that is common in all languages. Thus Philo says, "What the eye is to the body, that is the mind to the soul." Comp. Mt 6:22. The eye is the instrument by which we see; and, in like manner, the understanding is that by which we perceive truth. The idea here is, that Paul not only wished their *hearts* to be right, but he wished their *understanding* to be right also. Religion has much to do in enlightening the mind. Indeed, its effect there is not less striking and decisive than it is on the heart. The understanding has been blinded by sin. The views which men entertain of themselves and of God are narrow and wrong. The understanding is enfeebled and perverted by the practice of sin. It is limited in its operations by the necessity of the case, and by the impossibility of fully comprehending the great truths which pertain to the Divine administration. One of the first effects of true religion is on the understanding. It enlarges its views of truth; gives it more exalted conceptions of God; corrects its errors; raises it up towards the great Fountain of love. And nowhere is the effect of the true religion more apparent than in shedding light on the intellect of the world, and restoring the weak and perverted mind to a just view of the proportion of things, and to the true knowledge of God.

That ye may know what is the hope of his calling. What is the full import of that hope to which he has called and invited you by his Spirit and his promises. The meaning here is, that it would be an inestimable privilege to be made fully acquainted with the benefits of the Christian hope, and to be permitted to understand fully what Christians have a right to expect in the world of glory. This is the *first* thing which the apostle desires they should fully understand.

And what the riches of the glory of his inheritance. This is the *second* thing which Paul wishes them to understand. There is a force in this language which can be found, perhaps, nowhere else than in the writings of Paul. His mind is full, and language is burdened and borne down under the weight of his thoughts. **See Barnes "2Co 4:17".**

On the word "riches" here used, **See Barnes "Eph 1:7"**.

The phrase "riches of glory" means *glorious wealth*; or, as we would say, "how rich and glorious!" The meaning is, that there is an abundance —an infinitude of wealth. It is not such a possession as man may be heir to in this world, which is always limited from the necessity of the case, and which cannot be enjoyed long; it is infinite and inexhaustible. **See Barnes "Ro 2:4"**.

The "inheritance" here referred to is eternal life. **See Barnes "Ro 8:17"**.

In the saints. Among the saints. **See Barnes "1Co 1:2"**.

{f} "of your understanding" Isa 42:7 {g} "of his calling" Eph 4:4 {h} "riches of the glory" Eph 3:16 {*} "glory" "The glorious riches"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *And what is the exceeding greatness of his power*. On the language here used, **See Barnes "2Co 4:17"**.

There is much emphasis and energy of expression here, as if the apostle were labouring under the greatness of his theme, and wanted words to express the magnitude of his conception. This is the *third* thing which he was particularly desirous they should know—that they should be fully acquainted with the *power* of God in the salvation of men. He refers not merely to the power which he *had* evinced in their salvation, but also to what the gospel was *able* to accomplish, and which they *might* yet experience. The "power" referred to here, as exercised towards believers, does not refer to one thing merely. It is the whole *series* of the acts of power towards Christians which results from the work of the Redeemer. There was power exerted in their conversion. There would be power exerted in keeping them. There would be power in raising them up from the dead, and exalting them with Christ to heaven. The religion which they professed was a religion of *power*. In all the forms and stages of it, the power of God was manifested towards them, and would be until they reached their final inheritance.

To us-ward. Towards us, or in relation to us.

Who believe. Who are Christians.

According to the working of his mighty power. Marg., *The might of his power*. This should be taken with the clause in the following verse, "which he wrought in Christ;" and the meaning is, that the power which God has exerted in us is in accordance with the power which was shown in raising up the Lord Jesus. It was the proper result of that, and was power of a similar kind. The same power is requisite to convert a sinner which is demanded in raising the dead. Neither will be accomplished but by omnipotence, **See Barnes "Eph 2:5"**; and the apostle wished that they should be fully apprised of this fact, and of the vast *power* which God had put forth in raising them up from the death of sin. To illustrate this sentiment is one of his designs in the following verses; and hence he goes on to show that men, before their conversion, were "dead in trespasses and sins;" that they had no spiritual life; that they were the "children of wrath;" that they were raised up from their death in sin by the same power which raised the Lord Jesus from the grave, and that they were wholly saved by grace, Eph 2:1-10. In order to set this idea of the *power* which God had put forth in their regeneration in the strongest light, he goes into a magnificent description of the resurrection and exaltation of the Lord Jesus, and shows how that was connected with the renewing of Christians.

God had set him over all things. He had put all things under his feet, and had made principalities and dominions everywhere subject to him. In this whole passage, Eph 1:19-23 2:1-10, *the main thing* to be illustrated is the POWER which God has shown in renewing and saving his people; and the leading sentiment is, that the SAME power is evinced in that which was required to raise up the Lord Jesus from the dead, and to exalt him over the universe.

{i} "to us-ward" Ps 110:3 {2} "mighty power" "the might of his power"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Which he wrought in Christ*. Which he exerted in relation to the Lord Jesus when he was dead. The *power* which was then exerted was as great as that of creation. It was imparting life to a cold and "mangled" frame. It was to open again the arteries and veins, and teach the heart to beat and the lungs to heave. It was to diffuse vital warmth through the rigid muscles, and to communicate to the body the active functions of life. It is impossible to conceive of a more direct exertion of *power* than in raising up the dead; and there is no more striking illustration of the nature of conversion than such a resurrection.

And set him at his own right hand. The idea is, that great *power* was displayed by this, and that a similar exhibition is made when man is renewed and exalted to the high honour of being made an heir of God. On the *fact* that Jesus was received to the right hand of God, **See Barnes "Mr 16:19"**

See Barnes "Ac 2:33".

In the heavenly places. **See Barnes "Eph 1:3"**.

The phrase here evidently means in heaven itself.

{a} "raised him from the dead" Ac 2:24,32

EPHESIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Far above all principality*. The general sense in this verse is, that the Lord Jesus was exalted to the highest conceivable dignity and honour. Comp. Php 2:9 Col 2:10. In this beautiful and most important passage, the apostle labours for words to convey the greatness of his conceptions, and uses those which denote the highest conceivable dignity and glory. The *main* idea is, that God had manifested great power in thus exalting the Lord Jesus, and that similar power was exhibited in raising up the sinner from the death of sin to the life and honour of believing. The work of religion throughout was a work of power; a work of exalting and honouring the dead, whether dead in sin or in the grave; and Christians ought to know the extent and glory of the power thus put forth in their salvation. The word rendered "far above"— *uperanw*—is a compound word, meaning *high above*, or greatly exalted. He was not merely *above* the ranks of the heavenly beings, as the head; he was not one of their own rank, placed by office a little above them, but he was infinitely exalted over them, as of different rank and dignity. How could this be if he were a mere man, or if he were an angel? The word rendered "principality" —*archv*—means, properly, *the beginning*; and then the first, the first place, power, dominion, pre-eminence, rulers, magistrates, etc. It may refer here

to any rank and power, whether among men or angels, and the sense is, that Christ is exalted above all.

And power. It is not easy to distinguish between the exact meaning of the words which the apostle here uses. The general idea is, that Christ is elevated above all ranks of creatures, however exalted, and by whatever name they may be known. As in this he refers to the "world that is to come," as well as this world, it is clear that there is a reference here to the ranks of the angels, and probably he means to allude to the prevailing opinion among the Jews, that the angels are of different orders. Some of the Jewish rabbis reckon four, others ten orders of angels, and they presume to give them names according to their different ranks and power. But all this is evidently the result of mere fancy. The Scriptures hint, in several places, at a difference of rank among the angels, but the sacred writers do not go into detail. It may be added that there is no improbability in such a subordination, but it is rather to be presumed to be true. The creatures of God are not made alike; and difference of degree and rank, as far as our observation extends, everywhere prevails. On this verse **See Barnes "Ro 8:38"**.

Dominion. Gr., *Lordship*.

And every name that is named. Every creature of every rank.

Not only in this world. Not only above all kings, and princes, and rulers of every grade and rank on earth

But also in that which is to come. This refers undoubtedly to heaven. The meaning is, that he is supreme over all.

{b} "above all principality" Php 2:9

EPHESIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *And hath put all things under his feet*. **See Barnes "1Co 15:27"**.

And gave him to be the head over all things. Appointed him to be the supreme Ruler.

To the Church. With reference to the church, or for its benefit and welfare. **See Barnes "Joh 17:2"**.

The universe is under his control and direction for the welfare of his people.

(1.) All the elements—the physical works of God—the winds and waves— the seas and rivers—-all are under him, and all are to be made tributary to the welfare of the church.

(2.) Earthly kings and rulers; kingdoms and nations are under his control. Thus far Christ has controlled all the wicked rulers of the earth, and they have not been able to destroy that church which he redeemed with his own blood.

(3.) Angels in heaven, with all their ranks and orders, are under his control with reference to the church. **See Barnes "Heb 1:14"**.

Comp. Mt 26:53.

(4.) Fallen angels are under his control, and shall not be able to injure or destroy the church. **See Barnes "Mt 16:18"**.

The church, therefore, is safe. All the great powers of heaven, earth, and hell, are made subject to its Head and King; and no weapon that is formed against it shall prosper.

{c} "all things" Ps 8:6 Mt 28:16 {*} "gave him" "appointed"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Which is his body*. This comparison of the church with a *person* or body, of which the Lord Jesus is the head, is not uncommon in the New Testament. **See Barnes "1Co 11:3"**; **See Barnes "1Co 12:27"**; **See Barnes** "Eph 4:15, **See Barnes "Eph 4:16"**.

The fulness of him. The word here rendered *fulness*— *plhrwma* means, properly, that with which anything is filled, the filling up, the contents. **See Barnes "Ro 11:12"**.

The exact idea here, however, is not very dear, and interpreters have been by no means united in their opinions of the meaning. It seems probable that the sense is, that the church is the *completion* or *filling up* of his power and glory. It is that without which his dominion would not be complete, he has control over the angels and over distant worlds, but his dominion would not be complete without the control over his church; and that is so glorious, that it *fills up* the honour of the universal dominion, and makes his empire complete. According to Rosenmuller, the word *fulness* here means a *great number* or multitude; a multitude, says he, which, not confined to its own territory, spreads afar, and fills various regions. Koppe also regards it as synonymous with *multitude* or *many*, and supposes it to mean *all* the dominion of the Redeemer over the body—the church. He proposes to translate the whole verse, "He has made him the Head over his church, that he might rule it as his own body—the whole wide state of his universal kingdom." "This," says Calvin, (*in loc*.,)" is the highest honour of the church, that the Son of God regards himself as in a sense imperfect unless he is joined to us. The church constitutes the *complete body* of the Redeemer. A body is complete when it has all its members and limbs in proper proportions; and those members might be said to be the *completion*, or the filling-up, or the *fulness—plhrwma*—of the body or the person. This language would not, indeed, be such as would usually be adopted to express the idea now; but this is evidently the sense in which Paul uses it here. The meaning is, that the church sustains the same relation to Christ which the body does to the head. It helps to form the entire person. There is a close and necessary union. The one is not complete without the other. And one is dependant on the other. When the body has all its members in due proportion, and is in sound and vigorous health, the whole person then is complete and entire. So it is to be in the kingdom of the Redeemer. He is the head; and that redeemed church is the body, the fulness, the completion, the filling-up of the entire empire over which he presides, and which he rules. On the meaning of the word *fulness plhrwma*-the reader may consult Storr's Opuscula, vol. i., pp. 144—187, particularly pp. 169—183. Storr understands the word in the sense of full or abundant mercy, and supposes that it refers to the great benignity which God has shown to his people, and renders it, "The great benignity of him who filleth all things with good, as he called Jesus from the dead to life, and placed him in heaven, so even you, sprung from the heathen, who were dead in sin on account of your many offences in which you formerly lived, etc.—hath he called to life by Christ." This verse, therefore, he would connect with the following chapter, and he regards it all as designed to illustrate the great power and goodness of God. Mr. Locke renders it, "Which is his body, which is completed by him alone," and supposes it means, that Christ is the head, who perfects the church by supplying all things to all its members which they need. Chandler gives an interpretation in accordance with that which I have first suggested, as meaning that the church is the full "complement" of the body of Christ; and refers to AElian and Dionysius Halicarnassus, who use the word "fulness" or *plhrwma* as referring to the rowers of a ship. Thus, also, we say that the ship's crew is its "complement," or that a ship or an army has its *complement* of men; that is, the ranks are filled up or complete. In like

manner, the church will be the filling-up, or the complement, of the great kingdom of the Redeemer—that which will give completion or perfectness to his universal dominion.

Of him. Of the Redeemer.

That filleth all in all. That fills all things, or who pervades all things. **See Barnes "1Co 12:6"**; **See Barnes** "1Co 15:28".

Comp. Col 3:11. The idea is, that there is no place where he is not, and which he does not fill; and that he is the source of all the holy and happy influences that are abroad in the works of God. It would not be easy to conceive of an expression more certainly denoting omnipresence and universal agency than this; and if it refers to the Lord Jesus, as seems to be indisputable, the passage teaches not only his supremacy, but demonstrates his universal agency, and his omnipresence—things that pertain only to God. From this passage we may observe,

(1.) that just views of the exaltation of the Redeemer are to be obtained only by the influence of the Spirit of God on the heart, Eph 1:17-19. Man, by nature, has no just conceptions of the Saviour, and has no desire to have. It is only as the knowledge of that great doctrine is imparted to the mind, by the Spirit of God, that we have any practical and saving acquaintance with such an exaltation. The Christian sees him, by faith, exalted to the right hand of God, and cheerfully commits himself and his all to him, and feels that all his interests are safe in his hands.

(2.) It is very desirable to have such views of an exalted Saviour. So Paul felt when he earnestly prayed that God would give such views to the Ephesians, Eph 1:17-20. It was desirable in order that they might have a right understanding of their privileges; in order that they might know the extent of the power which had been manifested in their redemption; in order that they might commit their souls with confidence to him. In my conscious weakness and helplessness; when I am borne down by the labours, and exposed to the temptations of life; when I contemplate approaching sickness and death, I desire to feel that that Saviour to whom I have committed my all is exalted far above principalities and powers, and every name that is named. When the church is persecuted and opposed; when hosts of enemies rise up against it, and threaten its peace and safety, I rejoice to feel assured the Redeemer and Head of the church is over all, and that he has power to subdue all her foes and his.

(3.) The church is safe. Her great Head is on the throne of the universe, and no weapon that is formed against her can prosper, he has defended it hitherto in all times of persecution, and the past is a pledge that he will continue to protect it to the end of the world. (4.) Let us commit our souls to this exalted Redeemer. Such a Redeemer we need—one who has all power in heaven and earth. Such a religion we need—that can restore the dead to life. Such hope and confidence we need as he can give—such peace and calmness as shall result from unwavering confidence in him who filleth all in all.

{d} "the fulness" 1Co 12:12 Col 1:18,24

EPHESIANS - Chapter 2

EPHESIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 1

Introduction to Ephesians Chapter 2

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER

THIS chapter is closely connected in sense with the preceding, and should not have been separated from it. The great object is to illustrate the subject which was commenced in the previous chapter, (Eph 1:19)—the greatness of the POWER of God, evinced in the salvation of his people. The *great* manifestation of his power had been in raising up the Lord Jesus from the dead. That had been connected with and followed by their resurrection from the death of sin; and the one had involved the exercise of a power similar to the other. In the illustration of this main idea, the apostle observes (Eph 2:1) that God had quickened those who had been dead in trespasses and sins, and proceeds (Eph 2:2,3) to show the condition which they were before their conversion. He then observes Eph 2:4-7 that God, of his infinite mercy, when they were dead in sin, had quickened them together with Christ, and had raised them up to sit with him in heavenly places. He then states that this was not by human power, but was the work of Divine power, and that they were the workmanship of God, Eph 2:8-10. The remainder of the chapter Eph 2:11-22 is occupied with a statement of the *privileges* resulting from the mercy of God in calling them into his kingdom. The apostle endeavours to impress their minds strongly with a sense of the mercy and love and power of God in thus calling them to himself. He reminds them of their former condition when Gentiles, as being without God, and that they were now brought nigh by the blood of Christ, Eph 2:11-13; he states that this had been done by one great Mediator, who came to break down the wall of partition between the Jews and Gentiles, and who had now made both one, Eph 2:14-18; and he compares them now to a temple raised for God, and to constitute the place of his dwelling on the earth, Eph 2:19-22. By all these considerations he endeavours to impress their minds with a sense of obligation, and to lead them to devote themselves to that God who had raised them from the dead, and had breathed into them the breath of immortal life.

Verse 1. *And you hath he quickened*. The words "hath he quickened," or *made to live*, are supplied, but not improperly, by our translators. The object of the apostle is to show the great power which God had evinced towards the people, Eph 1:19 and to show that this was put forth in connexion with the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and his exaltation to the right hand of God in heaven. **See Barnes "Ro 6:4, and** "Ro 6:5-11. Comp. Col 2:12,13, 3:1.

The words "hath he quickened" mean, hath he made alive, or made to live, Joh 5:21 Ro 4:17; 1Co 15:36.

Who were dead in trespasses and sins. On the meaning of the word *dead*, **See Barnes "Ro 5:12"**; **See Barnes** "Ro 6:2".

It is affirmed here of those to whom Paul wrote at Ephesus, that before they were converted they were "dead in sins." There is not anywhere a more explicit proof of depravity than this, and no stronger language can be used. They were *dead* in relation to that to which they afterwards became alive—-i. e., to holiness. Of course, this does not mean that they were in all respects dead. It does not mean that they had no animal life, or that they did not breathe, and walk, and act. Nor can it mean that they had no living intellect or mental powers, which would not have been true. Nor does it settle any question as to their ability or power while in that state. It simply affirms a fact—that in relation to real spiritual life they were, in consequence of sin, like a dead man in regard to the objects which are around him. A corpse is insensible. It sees not, and hears not, and feels

not. The sound of music, and the voice of friendship and of alarm, do not arouse it. The rose and the lily breath forth their fragrance around it, but the corpse perceives it not. The world is busy and active around it, but it is unconscious of it all. It sees no beauty in the landscape; hears not the voice of a friend; looks not upon the glorious sun and stars; and is unaffected by the running stream and the rolling ocean. So with the sinner in regard to the spiritual and eternal world, he sees no beauty in religion; he hears not the call of God; he is unaffected by the dying love of the Saviour; and he has no interest in eternal realities. In all these he feels no more concern, and sees no more beauty, than a dead man does in the world around him. Such is, *in fact*, the condition of a sinful world. There *is*, indeed, life and energy and motion. There are vast plans and projects, and the world is intensely active. But, in regard to religion, all is dead. The sinner sees no beauty there; and no human power can arouse him to act for God, any more than human power can rouse the sleeping dead, or open the sightless eye-balls on the light of day. The same power is needed in the conversion of a sinner which is needed in raising the dead; and one and the other alike demonstrate the omnipotence of him who can do it.

{a} "hath he quickened" Joh 5:24 Col 2:13 {*} "quickened" "made alive"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Wherein*. In which sins, or in the practice of which transgressions.

Ye walked. You lived, life being often compared to a journey or a race. **See Barnes "Ro 6:4"**.

According to the course of this world. In conformity with the customs and manners of the world at large. The word here rendered *world—course aiwn*—means properly *age*, but is often used to denote the present world, with its cares, temptations, and desires; and here denotes particularly the men of this world. The meaning is, that they had lived formerly as other men lived; and the idea is strongly conveyed that the course of the men of this world is to walk in trespasses and sins.

The sense is, that there was by nature no difference between them and others, and that all the difference which now existed had been made by grace.

According to the prince of the power of the air. See Eph 6:12. **See Barnes "2Co 4:4"**.

There can be no doubt that Satan is here intended, and that Paul means to say that they were under his control as their leader and prince. The phrase, "the prince of the power," may mean either "the powerful prince," or it may mean that this prince had power over the air, and lived and reigned there particularly. The word "prince"— *arcwn* — *Archon*, means one first in authority and power, and is then applied to any one who has the pre-eminence or rule. It is applied to Satan, or the chief of the fallen angels, as where he is called "the prince—*arcwn*— of the devils," Mt 9:34 12:24; Mr 3:22 Lu 11:15; "the prince of this world," Joh 12:31 14:30, 16:11.

But why he is here called the prince having power over the air, it is not easy to determine. Robinson (*Lex*.) supposes it to be because he is lord of the powers of the air; that is, of the demons who dwell and rule in the atmosphere. So Doddridge supposes that it means that he controls the fallen spirits who are permitted to range the regions of the atmosphere. It is generally admitted that the apostle here refers to the prevailing opinions both among the Jews and heathen, that the air was thickly peopled with spirits or demons. That this was a current opinion may be seen fully proved in Wetstein. Comp. Bloomfield, Grotius, and particularly Koppe. Why the region of the *air* was

supposed to be the dwelling-place of such spirits is now unknown. The opinion may have been either that such spirits *dwelt* in the air or that they had control over it, according to the later Jewish belief. Cocceius, and some others, explain the word *air* here as meaning the same as darkness, as in profane writers. It is evident to my mind that Paul does not speak of this as a mere tradition, opinion, or vagary of the fancy, ar as a superstitious belief; but that he refers to it as a thing which he regarded as true. In this opinion I see no absurdity that should make it impossible to believe it. For,

(1.) the Scriptures abundantly teach that there are fallen, wicked spirits; and the existence of fallen angels is no more improbable than the existence of fallen men.

(2.) The Bible teaches that they have much to do with this world. They tempted man; they inflicted disease in the time of the Saviour; they are represented as alluring and deceiving the race.

(3.) They must have *some* locality-some part of the universe where they dwell. That they were not confined down to hell in the time of the Redeemer is clear from the New Testament; for they are often represented as having afflicted and tortured men.

(4.) Why is there any improbability in the belief that their residence should have been in the regions of the air? That while they were suffered to be on earth to tempt and afflict men, they should have been permitted peculiarly to occupy these regions? Who can tell what may be in the invisible world, and what spirits may be permitted to fill up the vast space that now composes the universe? And who can tell what control may have been given to such fallen spirits over the regions of the atmosphere—over clouds, and storms, and pestilential air? *Men* have control over the earth, and pervert and abuse the powers of nature to their own ruin and the ruin of each other. The elements they employ for the purposes of ruin and of temptation. Fruit and grain they convert to poison; minerals, to the destruction caused by war. In itself considered, there is nothing more improbable that spirits of darkness may have had control over the regions of the air, than that fallen man has over the earth; and no more improbability that that power has been abused to ruin men, than that the power of men is abused to destroy each other. No one can *prove* that the sentiment here referred to by Paul is *not* true; and no one can show how the doctrine that fallen spirits may do mischief in any part of the works of God, is any more improbable than that wicked men should do the same thing. The word "*power*" here—" power of the air"—I regard as synonymous with *dominion or rule*: "a prince having dominion or rule over the air."

The spirit that now worketh. That still lives, and whose energy for evil is still seen and felt among the wicked. Paul here means undoubtedly to teach that there was such a spirit, and that he was still active in controlling men.

The children of disobedience. The wicked, Col 3:6.

{b} "in time past" Ac 19:35 {c} "of the air" Eph 6:12 {d} "of disobedience" Col 3:6

EPHESIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *We all had our conversion*. **See Barnes "2Co 1:12"**.

Comp. 1Pe 4:3.

In the lusts of our flesh. Living to gratify the flesh, or the propensities of a corrupt nature. It is observable here, that the apostle changes the form of the address from "*ye*" to "*we*," thus including

himself with others, and saying that this was true of all before their conversion. He means undoubtedly to say, that whatever might have been the place of their birth, or the differences of religion under which they had been trained, they were substantially alike by nature. It was a characteristic of all that they lived to fulfil the desires of the flesh and of the mind. The design of the apostle in thus grouping himself with them was, to show that he did not claim to be any better by nature than they were, and that all which any of them had of value was to be traced to the grace of God. There is much delicacy here on the part of the apostle. His object was to remind them of the former grossness of their life, and their exposure to the wrath of God. Yet he does not do it harshly. He includes himself in their number. He says that what he affirms of them was substantially true of himself —of all—that they were under condemnation, and exposed to the Divine wrath.

Fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind. Marg. as in Greek, *wills*. Complying with the wishes of a depraved nature. The "will of the flesh" is that to which the flesh, or the unrenewed nature of man, prompts; and Paul says that all had been engaged in fulfilling those fleshly propensities. This was clearly true of the heathen, and it was no less true of the unconverted Jew that he lived for himself, and sought to gratify the purposes of a depraved nature, though it might manifest itself in a way different from the heathen. The "will of the mind" referred to here relates to the wicked *thoughts* and *purposes* of the unrenewed nature—the sins which relate rather to the *intellect* than to the gross passions. Such, for instance, are the sins of pride, envy, ambition, covetousness, etc.; and Paul means to say, that before conversion they lived to gratify these propensities, and to accomplish these desires of the soul.

And were by nature, fusei. By birth, or before we were converted. By conversion and adoption they became the children of God; before that, they were all the children of wrath. This is, I think, the fair meaning of this important declaration. It does not affirm when they began to be such, or that they were such as soon as they were born, or that they were such before they became moral agents, or that they became such in virtue of theft connexion with Adam—whatever may be the truth on these points; but it affirms that before they were renewed, they were the children of wrath. So far as this *text* is concerned, this might have been true at their very birth; but it does not directly and certainly prove that. It proves that at no time before their conversion were they the children of God, but that their whole condition before that was one of exposure to wrath. Comp. Ro 2:14,27; 1Co 11:14; Ga 2:15. Some men are born Jews, and some heathen; some free, and some slaves; some white, and some black; some are born to poverty, and some to wealth; some are the children of kings, and some of beggars; but, whatever their rank or condition, they are born exposed to wrath, or in a situation which would render them liable to wrath. But *why* this is the apostle does not say. Whether for their own sins, or for the sins of another; whether by a corrupted soul, or by imputed guilt; whether they act as moral agents as soon as born, or at a certain period of childhood, Paul does not say.

The children of wrath. Exposed to wrath, or liable to wrath. They did not by nature inherit holiness; they inherited that which would subject them to wrath. The meaning has been well expressed by Doddridge, who refers it "to the original apostasy and corruption, in consequence of which men do, according to the course of nature, fall early into personal guilt, and so become obnoxious to the Divine displeasure." Many modern expositors have supposed that this has no reference to any original tendency of our fallen nature to sin, or to native corruption, but that it refers to the *habit* of sin, or to the fact of their having been the slaves of appetite and passion. I admit that the direct and immediate sense of the passage is, that they were, when without the gospel,

and before they were renewed, the children of wrath; but still the fair interpretation is, that they were born to that state, and that that condition was the regular result of their native depravity; and I do not know a more strong or positive declaration that can be made to show that men are by nature destitute of holiness, and exposed to perdition.

Even as others. That is, "do not suppose that you stand alone, or that you are the worst of the species. You are indeed, by nature, the children of wrath; but not you alone. All others were the same. You have a common inheritance with them. I do not mean to charge you with being the worst of sinners, or as being alone transgressors. It is the common lot of man—the sad, gloomy inheritance to which we all are born." The Greek is, *oi loipoi*— "*the remainder, or the others*," —including all. **See Barnes "Ro 5:1"**.

This doctrine, that men without the gospel are the children of wrath, Paul had fully defended in Romans, chapters 1-3. No truth, perhaps, is more frequently stated in the Bible; none is more fearful and awful in its character. What a declaration, that we "are by nature the children of wrath!" Who should not inquire what it means? Who should not make an effort to escape from the wrath to come, and become a child of glory and an heir of life?

{a} "all had" 1Pe 4:3 {*} "lusts" "desires" {1} "desires" "wills"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *But God, who is rich in mercy*. On the use of the word *rich* by Paul, **See Barnes "Eph 1:7"**.

It is a beautiful expression. "God is *rich* in mercy;" overflowing, abundant. Mercy is the riches or the wealth of God. Men are often rich in gold, and silver, and they pride themselves in these possessions; but God *is rich in mercy*. In that he abounds; and he is so rich in it he is willing to impart it to others; so rich that he can make all blessed.

For his great love. That is, his great love was the reason why he had compassion upon us. It is not that we had any claim, or deserved his favour; but it is, that God had for man original and eternal love, and that love led to the gift of a Saviour, and to the bestowment of salvation.

EPHESIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Even when we were dead in sins*. **See Barnes "Eph 2:1"**.

Comp. Ro 5:8. The construction here is— "God, who is rich in mercy, on account of the great love which he bare unto us, even being dead in sin, hath quickened us," etc. It does not mean that he quickened us when we were dead in sin, but that he loved us then, and made provision for our salvation. It was love to the children of wrath; love to those who had no love to return to him; love to the alienated and the lost. That is true love—the sincerest and the purest benevolence—love, not like that of men, but such only as God bestows. Man loves his friend, his benefactor, his kindred —God loves his foes, and seeks to do them good.

Hath quickened us. Hath made us alive. Eph 2:1.

Together with Christ. In connexion with him; or in virtue of his being raised up from the grave. The meaning is, that there was such a connexion between Christ and those whom the Father had given to him, thai his resurrection from the grave involved their resurrection to spiritual life. It was like raising up the head and the members—the whole body together. **See Barnes "Ro 6:5"**.

Everywhere in the New Testament, the close connexion of the believer with Christ is affirmed. We are crucified with him. We die with him. We rise with him. We live with him. We reign with him. We are joint heirs with him. We share his sufferings on earth, (1Pe 4:13;) and we share his glory with him on his throne, Re 3:21.

By grace ye are saved. Marg., *by* whose. **See Barnes "Ro 3:24"**.

Paul's mind was full of the subject of salvation by grace, and he throws it in here, even in an argument, as a point which he would never have them lose sight of. The subject before him was one eminently adapted to bring this truth to mind; and though, in the train of his arguments, he had no time now to dwell on it, yet he would not suffer any opportunity to pass without referring to it.

{a} "when we were dead" Ro 5:6,8,10

{*} "quickened us" "made us alive" {1} "by grace" "by whose" {b} "ye are saved" Ro 3:24

EPHESIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *And hath raised us up together*. That is, we are raised from the death of sin to the life of religion, in connexion with the resurrection of Jesus, and in virtue of that. So close is the connexion between him and his people, that his resurrection made theirs certain. Comp. Col 2:12. **See Barnes "Ro 6:5"**.

And made us sit together. Together with him. That is, we share his honours. So close is our connexion with him, that we shall partake of his glory, and in some measure do now. **See Barnes** "Mt 19:28, and **See Barnes "Ro 8:17"**.

In heavenly places. **See Barnes "Eph 1:3"**.

The meaning is, that he has gone to the heavenly world as our Head and Representative. His entrance there is a pledge that we shall also enter there. Even here we have the anticipation of glory, and are admitted to exalted honours, as if we sat in heavenly places, in virtue of our connexion with him.

In Christ Jesus. It is in connexion with him that we are thus exalted, and thus filled with joy and peace. The meaning of the whole is, "We are united to Christ. We die with him, and live with him. We share his sufferings, and we share his joys. We become dead to the world in virtue of his death; we become alive unto God in virtue of his resurrection; in heaven we shall share his glory and partake of his triumphs."

{c} "us up together" Col 2:12

EPHESIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *That in the ages to come*. In all future times. The sense is, that the riches of Divine grace, and the Divine benignity, would be shown in the conversion of Christians and their salvation to all future times. Such was his love to those who were lost, that it would be an everlasting monument of his mercy, a perpetual and unchanging proof that he was good. The sense is, we are raised up with Christ, and are made to partake of his honour and glory, in order that others may for ever be impressed with a sense of the Divine goodness and mercy to us.

The exceeding riches of his grace. The *abounding, overflowing* riches of grace. **See Barnes "Eph 1:7".**

This is Paul's favourite expression—an expression so beautiful and so full of meaning that it will bear often to be repeated. We may learn from this verse,

(1.) that one object of the conversion and salvation of sinners is to furnish a *proof* of the mercy and goodness of God.

(2.) Another object is, that their conversion may be an *encouragement* to others. The fact, that such sinners as the Ephesians had been, were pardoned and saved, affords encouragement also to others to come and lay hold on life. And so of all other sinners who are saved. Their conversion is a standing encouragement to all others to come in like manner; and now the history of the church for more than eighteen hundred years furnishes all the encouragement which we could desire.

(3.) The conversion of great sinners is a special proof of the Divine benignity. So Paul argues in the case before us; and so he often argued from his own case. **See Barnes "1Ti 1:16".**

(4.) Heaven, the home of the redeemed, will exhibit the most impressive proof of the goodness of God that the universe furnishes. There will be a countless host who were once polluted and lost; who were dead in sins; who were under the power of Satan, and who have been saved by the riches of Divine grace—a host now happy and pure, and free from sin, sorrow, and death—the living and eternal monuments of the grace of God.

{d} "kindness" Tit 3:4

EPHESIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *For by grace are ye saved*. By mere favour. It is not by your own merit; it is not because you have any claim. This is a favourite doctrine with Paul, as it is with all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity. **See Barnes "Ro 1:7 3:24".**

Through faith. Grace bestowed through faith, or in connexion with believing. **See Barnes "Ro 1:17"**; **See Barnes** "Ro 4:17".

And that not of yourselves. That is, salvation does not proceed from yourselves. The word rendered *that—touto*—is in the neuter gender, and the word *faith—pistiv* —is in the feminine. The word "that," therefore, does not refer particularly to faith, as being the gift of God, but to the *salvation by grace* of which he had been speaking. This is the interpretation of the passage which is the most obvious, and which is now generally conceded to be the true one. See Bloomfield. Many critics, however, as Doddridge, Beza, Piscator, and Chrysostom, maintain that the word "that" *touto* refers to "faith," (*pistiv*;) and Doddridge maintains that such a use is common in the New Testament. As a matter of *grammar* this opinion is certainly doubtful, if not untenable; but as a matter of *theology* it is a question of very little importance. Whether this passage proves it or not, it is certainly

true that faith is the gift of God. It exists in the mind only when the Holy Ghost produces it there, and is, in common with every other Christian excellence, to be traced to his agency on the heart. This opinion, however, does not militate at all with the doctrine that man himself *believes*. It is not God that believes for him, for that is impossible. It is *his own mind* that actually believes, or that exercises faith. **See Barnes "Ro 4:3"**.

In the same manner *repentance* is to be traced to God. It is one of the fruits of the operation of the Holy Spirit on the soul. But the Holy Ghost does not repent for us. It is *our own mind* that repents; our own heart that feels; our own eyes that weep—and without this there can be no true repentance. No one can repent for another; and God neither can nor ought to repent for us. He has done no wrong, and if repentance is ever exercised, therefore, it must be exercised by our own minds. So of faith. God cannot believe for us. *We* must believe, or we shall be damned. Still this does not conflict at all with the opinion, that if we exercise faith, the inclination to do it is to be traced to the agency of God on the heart. I would not contend, therefore, about the grammatical construction of this passage, with respect to the point of the theology contained in it; still it accords better with the obvious grammatical construction, and with the design of the passage to understand the word "that" as referring not to faith only, but to *salvation by grace*. So Calvin understands it, and so it is understood by Storr, Locke, Clarke, Koppe, Grotius, and others.

It is the gift of God. Salvation by grace is his gift. It is not of merit; it is wholly by favour.

{e} "are ye saved" 2Ti 1:9 {f} "and that not" Ro 4:16 {g} "of yourselves" Joh 6:44,65

EPHESIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Not of works*. **See Barnes "Ro 3:20"**.

See Barnes "Ro 3:27"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *For we are his workmanship*. We are his *making—poihma*. That is, we are *created* or *formed* by him, not only in the general sense in which all things are made by him, but in that peculiar sense which is denoted by the new creation. **See Barnes "2Co 5:17"**.

Whatever of peace, or hope, or purity we have, has been produced by his agency on the soul. There cannot be conceived to be a stronger expression to denote the agency of God in the conversion of men, or the fact that salvation is wholly of grace.

Created in Christ Jesus. On the word *created*, **See Barnes "2Co 5:17"**.

Unto good works. With reference to a holy life; or, the design for which we have been created in Christ is, that we should lead a holy life. The primary object was not to bring us to heaven. It was that we should be holy. Paul held perhaps more firmly than any other man to the position, that men are saved by the mere grace of God, and by a Divine agency on the soul; but it is certain that no man ever held more firmly that men must lead holy lives, or they could have no evidence that they were the children of God.

Which God hath before ordained. Marg., *prepared*. The word here used means to *prepare beforehand*, then to predestinate, or appoint before. The proper meaning of this passage is, "to which (*oiv*) good works God has predestinated us, or appointed us beforehand, that we should walk in them." The word here used—*proetoimazw*—occurs in the New Testament nowhere else, except in Ro 9:23, where it is rendered, "had afore prepared." It involves the idea of a previous determination, or an arrangement beforehand for securing a certain result. The previous preparation here referred to was the Divine intention; and the meaning is, that God had predetermined that we should lead holy lives. It accords, therefore, with the declaration in Eph 1:4, that he had chosen his people before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy. **See Barnes "Eph 1:4"**.

That we should walk in them. That we should live holy lives. The word *walk* is often used in the Scriptures to denote the course of life. **See Barnes "Ro 6:4"**.

{a} "God hath before ordained" Eph 1:4 {1} "ordained" "prepared"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Wherefore remember*. The design of this evidently is to excite a sense of gratitude in their bosoms for that mercy which had called them from the errors and sins of their former lives to the privileges of Christians. It is a good thing for Christians to "*remember*" what they were. No faculty of the mind can be better employed to produce humility, penitence, gratitude, and love, than the *memory*. It is well to recall the recollection of our former sins; to dwell upon our hardness of heart, our alienation, and our unbelief; and to remember our wanderings and our guilt, until the heart be affected, and we are made to feel. The converted Ephesians had much guilt to recollect and to mourn over in their former life; and so have all who are converted to the Christian faith.

That ye being in time past. Formerly—*pote*.

Gentiles in the flesh. You were Gentiles *in the flesh*, i.e., under the dominion of the flesh, subject to the control of carnal appetites and pleasures.

Who are called uncircumcision. That is, who are called "the uncircumcised." This was a term similar to that which we use when we speak of "the unbaptized." It meant that they were without the pale of the people of God; that they enjoyed none of the ordinances and privileges of the true religion; and was commonly a term of reproach. Comp. Jud 14:3 15:18; 1Sa 14:6 17:26; 1Sa 31:4 Eze 31:18.

By that which is called the Circumcision. By those who are circumcised, i.e., by the Jews.

In the flesh made by hands. In contradistinction from the circumcision of the heart. **See Barnes** "Ro 2:28, **See Barnes "Ro 2:29"**.

They had externally adopted the rites of the true religion, though it did not follow that they had the circumcision of the heart, or that they were the true children of God.

EPHESIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Ye were without Christ*. You were without the knowledge of the Messiah. You had not heard of him; of course you had not embraced him. You were living without any of the hopes and consolations which you now have, from having embraced him. The object of the apostle is to remind them of the deplorable condition in which they were by nature; and nothing would better express it than to say they were "without Christ," or that they had no knowledge of a Saviour. They knew of no atonement for sin. They had no assurance of pardon. They had no well-founded hope of eternal life. They were in a state of darkness and condemnation, from which nothing but a knowledge of Christ could deliver them. All Christians may, in like manner, be reminded of the fact that, before their conversion, they were "without Christ." Though they had heard of him, and were constantly under the instruction which reminded them of him, yet they were without any true knowledge of him, and without any of the hopes which result from having embraced him. Many were infidels. Many were scoffers. Many were profane, sensual, corrupt. Many rejected Christ with scorn; many by simple neglect. *All* were without any true knowledge of him; all were destitute of the peace and hope which result from a saving acquaintance with him. We may add, that there is no more affecting description of the state of man by nature than to say, he is without a Saviour. Sad would be the condition of the world without a Redeemer-sad *is* the state of that portion of mankind who reject him. Reader, are you without Christ?

Being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. This is the second characteristic of their state before their conversion to Christianity. This means more than that they were not *Jews*.

It means that they were strangers to that *polity—politeia* or arrangement by which the worship of the true God had been kept up in the world, and of course were strangers to the true religion. The arrangements for the public worship of JEHOVAH were made among the Jews. They had his law, his temple, his sabbaths, and the ordinances of his religion. **See Barnes "Ro 3:2".**

To all these the heathen had been strangers, and of course they were deprived of all the privileges which resulted from having the true religion. The word here rendered commonwealth—*politeia*—means, properly, citizenship, or the right of citizenship, and then a community, or state. It means here that arrangement or organization by which the worship of the true God was maintained. The word *aliens—aphllotriwmenoi*—here means merely that they were strangers to. It does not denote, of necessity, that they were hostile to it; but that they were ignorant of it, and were, therefore, deprived of the benefits which they might have derived from it, if they had been acquainted with it.

And strangers. This word —*xenov*—means, properly, a guest, or a stranger, who is hospitably entertained; then a foreigner, or one from a distant country; and here means that they did not belong to the community where the covenants of promise were enjoyed; that is, they were strangers to the privileges of the people of God.

The covenants of promise. **See Barnes "Ro 9:4".**

The covenants of promise were those various arrangements which God made with his people, by which he promised them future blessings, and especially by which he promised that the Messiah should come. To be in possession of them was regarded as a high honour and privilege; and Paul refers to it here to show that, though the Ephesians had been by nature without these, yet they had now been brought to enjoy all the benefits of them. On the word covenant, **See Barnes "Gal 3:15".**

It may be remarked, than Walton (Polyglott) and Rosenmuller unite the word "*promise*" here with the word "*hope*"—having no hope of the promise. But the more obvious and usual interpretation is that in our common version, meaning that they were not by nature favoured with the covenants

made with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc., by which there was a promise of future blessings under the Messiah.

Having no hope. The apostle does not mean to affirm that they did not cherish any hope, for this is scarcely true of any man; but that they were without any proper ground of hope. It is true of perhaps nearly all men that they cherish some hope of future happiness. But the ground on which they do this is not well understood by themselves, nor do they in general regard it as a matter worth particular inquiry. Some rely on morality; some on forms of religion; some on the doctrine of universal salvation; all who are impenitent believe that they do not *deserve* eternal death, and expect to be saved by *justice*. Such hopes, however, must be unfounded. No hope of life in a future world can be founded on a proper basis which does not rest on some promise of God, or some assurance that he will save us; and these hopes, therefore, which men take up they know not why, are delusive and vain.

And without God in the world. Gr., *ayeoi—atheists*; that is, those who had no knowledge of the true God. This is the last specification of their miserable condition before they were converted; and it is an appropriate crowning of the climax. What an expression! To be without God—without God in his own world, and where he is all around us! To have no evidence of his favour, no assurance of his love, no hope of dwelling with him! The meaning, as applied to the heathen Ephesians, was, that they had no knowledge of the true God. This was true of the heathen, and in an important sense also it is true of all impenitent sinners, and was once true of all who are now Christians They had no God. They did not worship him, or love him, or serve him, or seek his favours, or act with reference to him and his glory. Nothing can be a more appropriate and striking description of a sinner now than to say that he is "without God in the world." He lives, and feels, and acts, as if there were no God. He neither worships him in secret, nor in his family, nor in public. He acts with no reference to his will. He puts no confidence in his promises, and fears not when he threatens; and were it announced to him that there *is no God*, it would produce no change in his plan of life, or in his emotions. The announcement that the emperor of China, or the king of Siam, or the sultan of Constantinople, was dead, would produce *some* emotion, and *might* change some of his commercial arrangements; but the announcement that there is no God would interfere with none of his plans, and demand no change of life. And if so, what is man in this beautiful world without a God? A traveller to eternity without a God! Standing over the grave without a God! An immortal being without a God! A man—fallen, sunk, ruined, with no God to praise, to love, to confide in; with no altar, no sacrifice, no worship, no hope; with no Father in trial, no counsellor in perplexity, no support in death! Such is the state of man by nature. Such are the effects of sin.

{*} "commonwealth of Israel" "community"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *But now in Christ Jesus*. By the coming and atonement of the Lord Jesus, and by the gospel which he preached.

Ye who sometimes were far off. Who were *formerly—pote*. Tindal translates it, *a whyle agoo*. The phrase *far off—makran*—means that they were formerly far off from God and his people. The expression is derived from the custom of speaking among the Hebrews. God was supposed to reside

in the temple. It was a privilege to be near the temple. Those who were remote from Jerusalem and the temple were regarded as far off from God, and hence as peculiarly irreligious and wicked. **See Barnes "Isa 57:19".**

Are made nigh. Are admitted to the favour of God, and permitted to approach him as his worshippers.

By the blood of Christ. The Jews came near to the mercy-seat on which the symbol of the Divine presence rested, **See Barnes** "Ro 3:25, by the blood that was offered in sacrifice; that is, the high priest approached that mercy-seat with blood, and sprinkled it before God. Now we are permitted to approach him with the blood of the atonement. The shedding of that blood has prepared the way by which Gentiles as well as Jews may approach God, and it is by that offering that we are led to seek God.

{*} "sometimes" "formerly" {a} "blood of Christ" Heb 9:12

EPHESIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *For he is our peace*. There is evident allusion here to Isa 57:19. **See Barnes "Isa 57:19".**

The peace here referred to is that by which a union in worship and in feeling has been produced between the Jews and the Gentiles. Formerly they were alienated and separate. They had different objects of worship; different religious rites; different views and feelings. The Jews regarded the Gentiles with hatred, and the Gentiles the Jews with scorn. Now, says the apostle, they are at peace. They worship the same God. They have the same Saviour. They depend on the same atonement. They have the same hope. They look forward to the same heaven. They belong to the same redeemed family. Reconciliation has not only taken place with God, but with each other. *The best way to produce peace between alienated minds is to bring them to the same Saviour*. That will do more to silence contentions, and to heal alienations, than any or all other means. Bring men around the same cross; fill them with love to the same Redeemer, and give them the same hope of heaven, and you put a period to alienation and strife. The love of Christ is so absorbing, and the dependence in his blood so entire, that they will lay aside these alienations, and cease their contentions. The work of the atonement is thus designed not only to produce peace with God, but peace between alienated and contending minds. The feeling that we are redeemed by the same blood, and that we have the same Saviour, will unite the rich and the poor, the bond and the free, the high and the low, in the ties of brotherhood, and make them feel that they are one. This great work of the atonement is thus designed to produce peace in alienated minds everywhere, and to diffuse abroad the feeling of universal brotherhood.

Who hath made both one. Both Gentiles and Jews. He has united them in one society.

Having broken down the middle wall. There is an allusion here undoubtedly to the wall of partition in the temple, by which the court of the Gentiles was separated from that of the Jews. **See Barnes "Mt 21:12".**

The idea here is, that that was now broken down, and that the Gentiles had the same access to the temple as the Jews. The sense is, that in virtue of the sacrifice of the Redeemer they were admitted to the same privileges and hopes.

{b} "is our peace" Mic 5:5 {c} "one" Joh 10:16 Gal 3:28

EPHESIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Having abolished*. Having brought to naught or put an end to it—*katarghsav*.

In his flesh. By the sacrifice of his body on the cross. It was not by instruction merely; it was not by communicating the knowledge of God; it was not as a teacher; it was not by the mere exertion of power; it was by his flesh—his human nature—and this can mean only that he did it by his sacrifice of himself. It is such language as is appropriate to the doctrine of the atonement—not indeed teaching it directly—but still such as one would use who believed that doctrine, and such as no other one would employ. Who would now say of a moral teacher that he accomplished an important result *by his flesh*? Who would say of a man that was instrumental in reconciling his contending neighbors, that he did it *by his flesh*? Who would say of Dr. Priestly that he established Unitarianism *in his flesh*? No man would have ever used this language who did not believe that Jesus died as a sacrifice for sin.

The enmity. Between the Jew and the Gentile. Tindal renders this, "the cause of hatred, that is to say, the law of commandments contained in the law written." This is expressive of the true sense. The idea is, that the ceremonial law of the Jews, on which they so much prided themselves, was the cause of the hostility existing between them. That made them different people, and laid the foundation for the alienation which existed between them. They had different laws; different institutions; a different, religion. The Jews looked upon themselves as the favourites of Heaven, and as in possession of the knowledge of the only way of salvation; the Gentiles regarded their laws with contempt, and looked upon the peculiar institutions with scorn. When Christ came, and abolished by his death their peculiar ceremonial laws, of course the cause of this alienation ceased.

Even the law of commandments. The law of positive commandments. This does not refer to the *moral* law, which was not the cause of the alienation, and which was not abolished by the death of Christ, but to the laws commanding sacrifices, festivals, fasts, etc., which constituted the peculiarity of the Jewish system. These were the occasion of the enmity between the Jews and the Gentiles, and these were abolished by the great sacrifice which the Redeemer made; and of course when that was made, the purpose for which these laws were instituted was accomplished, and they ceased to be of value and to be binding. *Contained in ordinances*. In the Mosaic commandments. The word ordinance means decree, edict, law, Lu 2:1 Ac 16:4, 17:7 Col 2:14.

For to make in himself. By virtue of his death, or under him as the head.

Of twain one new man. Of the two—Jews and Gentiles—one new spiritual person; that they might be united. The idea is, that as two persons who had been at enmity might become reconciled, and become one in aim and pursuit, so it was in the effect of the work of Christ on the Jews and Gentiles. When they were converted they would be united and harmonious.

{d} "in his flesh" Col 2:14 {+} "contained" "consisting" {++} "twain" "the two into"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *And that he might reconcile both unto God*. This was another of the effects of the work of redemption, and indeed the main effect. It was not merely to make them harmonious, but it was that both, who had been alienated from God, should be reconciled to *him*. This was a different

effect from that of producing peace between themselves, though in some sense the one grew out of the other. They who are reconciled to God will be at peace with each other. They will feel that they are of the same family, and are all brethren. On the subject of reconciliation, **See Barnes "2Co 5:18"**.

In one body. One spiritual personage—the church. **See Barnes "Eph 1:23"**.

By the cross. By the atonement which he made on the cross. See Col 1:20. Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 3:2,5"**.

It is by the atonement only that men ever become reconciled to God.

Having slain the enmity. Not only the enmity between Jews and Gentiles, but the enmity between the sinner and God. He has by that death removed all the obstacles to reconciliation on the part of God and on the part of man. It is made efficacious in removing the enmity of the sinner against God, and producing peace.

Thereby. Marg., "in himself". The meaning is, in his cross, or by means of his cross.

{e} "both unto God" Col 1:20-22 {1} "enmity thereby" "in himself"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *And came and preached peace*. That is, the system of religion which he proclaimed was adapted to produce peace with God. This he preached personally to those who "were nigh," that is, the Jews; to those who were "afar off"—the Gentiles—he preached it by his apostles. He was the Author of the system which proclaimed salvation to both. The word *peace* here refers to reconciliation with God.

To you which were afar off, etc. **See Barnes "Eph 2:13"**.

{*} "preached" "proclaimed" {a} "which were afar off" Ac 2:39

EPHESIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *For through him*. That is, he has secured this result that we have access to God. This he did by his death—reconciling us to God; by the doctrines which he taught—acquainting us with God; and by his intercession in heaven—by which our "prayers gain acceptance" with him.

We both have access. Both Jews and Gentiles.

See Barnes "Ro 5:2".

We are permitted to approach God through him, or in his name. The Greek word here—*prosagwgh*—relates, properly, to the introduction to, or audience which we are permitted to have with a prince or other person of high rank. This must be effected through an officer of court to whom the duty is entrusted. *Rosenmuller*, Alt. und neu. Morgenland, in loc.

By one Spirit. By the aid of the same Spirit—the Holy Ghost. **See Barnes "1Co 12:4"**.

Unto the Father. We are permitted to come and address God as our Father. **See Barnes "Ro 8:15,16"**.

{b} "through him" Joh 14:6 1Pe 3:18

EPHESIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners*. You are reckoned with the people of God. You are entitled to their privileges, and are not to be regarded as outcasts and aliens. The meaning is, that they belonged to the same community—the same family, as the people of God. The word rendered *strangers—xenoi* —means, *foreigners in a state*, as opposed to citizens. The word rendered *foreigners—paroikoi*—means, *guests in a private family*, as opposed to the members of the family. Rosenmuller. Strangers, and such as proposed to reside for a short time in Athens, were permitted to reside in the city, and to pursue their business undisturbed, but they could perform no public duty; they had no voice in the public deliberations, and they had no part in the management of the state. They could only look on as spectators, without mingling in the scenes of state, or interfering in any way in the affairs of the government. They were bound humbly to submit to all the enactments of the citizens, and observe all the laws and usages of the republic. It was not even allowed them to transact any business in their own name, but they were bound to choose from among the citizens one to whose care they committed themselves as a patron, and whose duty it was to guard them against all injustice and wrong. Potter's Gr. Ant. 1, 55. Proselytes, who united themselves to the Jews, were also called, in the Jewish writings, *strangers*. All foreigners were regarded as "strangers," and Jews only were supposed to have near access to God. But now, says the apostle, this distinction is taken away, and the believing heathen, as well as the Jew, has the right of citizenship in the New Jerusalem, and one, as well as another, is a member of the family of God. *Burder*, Ros. Alt. u. neu. Morgenland, in loc. The meaning here is, that they had not come to *sojourn* merely as guests or foreigners, but were a part of the family itself, and entitled to all the privileges and hopes which others had.

But fellow-citizens with the saints. Belonging to the same community with the people of God.

And of the household of God. Of the same family. Entitled to the same privileges, and regarded by him as his children. Eph 3:15.

{c} "fellow citizens with the saints" Heb 12:22,23 {d} "household of God" Eph 3:15

EPHESIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *And are built upon the foundation*. The comparison of the church with a building is common in the Scriptures. **See Barnes "1Co 3:9,10"**.

The comparison was probably taken from the temple, and as that was an edifice of great beauty, expense, and sacredness, it was natural to compare the church with it. Besides, the temple was the sacred place where God dwelt on file earth; and as the church was the place where he delighted now to abide, it became natural to speak of his church as the temple, or the residence of God. **See Barnes "Isa 54:11,12"**.

That building, says Paul, was permanently founded, and was rising with great beauty of proportion, and with great majesty and splendour.

Of the apostles. The doctrines which they taught are the basis on which the church rests. It is *possible* that Paul referred here to a splendid edifice, particularly because the Ephesians were distinguished for their skill in architecture, and because the celebrated temple of Diana was among

them. An allusion to a building, however, as an illustration of the church, occurs several times in his other epistles, and was an allusion which would be everywhere understood.

And prophets. The prophets of the Old Testament—using the word, probably, to denote the Old Testament in general. That is, the doctrines of Divine revelation, whether communicated by prophets or apostles, were laid at the foundation of the Christian church. It was not founded on philosophy, or tradition, or on human laws, or on a venerable antiquity, but on the great truths which God had revealed. Paul does not say that it was founded on *Peter*, as the Papists do, but on the prophets and apostles in general. If Peter had been the "viceregent of Christ," and the head of the church, it is incredible that his brother Paul should not have given him some honourable notice in this place. Why did he not allude to so important a fact? Would one who believed it have omitted it? Would a Papist now omit it? Learn here,

(1.) that no reliance is to be placed on philosophy as a basis of religious doctrine.

(2.) That the traditions of men have no authority in the church, and constitute no part of the foundation.

(3.) That nothing is to be regarded as a fundamental part of the Christian system, or as binding on the conscience, which cannot be found in the "prophets and apostles;" that is, as it means here, in the Holy Scriptures. No decrees of councils; no ordinances of synods; no "standard" of doctrines; no creed or confession is to be urged as authority in forming the opinions of men. They may be valuable for some purposes, but not for this; they may be referred to as interesting parts of history, but not to form the faith of Christians; they may be used in the church to *express* its belief, but not to form it. What is based on the authority of apostles and prophets is true, and always true, and only true; what may be found elsewhere may be valuable and true or not, but, at any rate, is not to be used to control the faith of men.

Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. **See Barnes "Isa 28:16"**; **See Barnes** "Ro 9:33".

The corner-stone is the most important in the building.

(1.) Because the edifice rests mainly on the corner-stones. If they are small, and unstable, and settle down, the whole building is insecure; and hence care is taken to place a large stone firmly at each corner of an edifice.

(2.) Because it occupies a conspicuous and honourable place. If documents or valuable articles are deposited at the foundation of a building it is within the corner-stone. The Lord Jesus is called the "corner-stone," because the whole edifice rests on him, or he occupies a place relatively as important as the corner-stone of an edifice. Were it not for him the edifice could not be sustained for a moment. Neither prophets nor apostles alone could sustain it. **See Barnes "1Co 3:11"**.

Comp. 1Pe 2:6

{e} "upon" 1Co 3:9,10 {f} "foundation" Mt 16:18 Re 21:14 {g} "corner stone" Isa 28:16

EPHESIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *In whom*. That is, *by* whom, or *upon* whom. It was in connexion with him, or by being reared on him as a foundation.

All the building. The whole church of Christ.

Fitly framed together. The word here used means, *to joint together*, as a carpenter does the frame-work of a building. The materials are accurately and carefully united by mortices and tenons, so that the building shall be firm. Different materials may be used, and different kinds of timber may be employed; but one part shall be worked into another, so as to constitute a durable and beautiful edifice. So in the church. The different materials of the Jews and Gentiles; the people of various nations, though heretofore separated and discordant, become now united, and form an harmonious society. They believe the same doctrines; worship the same God; practise the same holiness, and look forward to the same heaven.

Groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord. **See Barnes "1Co 3:17"; See Barnes "2Co 6:16".**

{h} "holy temple" 1Co 3:17 2Co 6:16

EPHESIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *In whom*. In Christ, or on Christ, as the solid and precious foundation.

Ye also are builded together. You are built into that, or constitute a part of it. You are not merely *added* to it, but you constitute a part of the building.

For an habitation of God. For the indwelling, or the dwelling-place, of God. Formerly he dwelt in the temple; now he dwells in the church, and in the hearts of his people. **See Barnes "2Co 6:16".**

{i} "builded together" 1Pe 2:4,5

REMARKS.

(1.) We were by nature dead in sin, Eph 2:1. We had no spiritual life. We were insensible to the calls of God, to the beauty of religion, to the claims of the Creator. We were like corpses in the tomb, in reference to the gay and busy and happy world around them.—There we should have remained had not the grace of God given us life, just as the dead will remain in their graves for ever, unless God shall raise them up. How humble should we be at the remembrance of this fact! how grateful that God has not left us to sleep that sleep of death for ever!

(2.) Parents should feel deep solicitude for their children, Eph 2:3. They, in common with all others, are "children of wrath." They have a nature prone to evil; and that nature will develope itself in evil for ever, unless it is changed—just as the young thorn-bush will be a thorn-bush, and will put forth thorns, and not roses; and the Bohon Upas will be a Bohon Upas, and not an olive or an orange; and as the lion will be a lion, and the panther a panther, and not a lamb, a kid, or a gazelle. They will act out their nature, unless they are changed; and they will not be changed, but by the grace of God. I do not mean that their nature is in every sense like that of the lion or the asp; but I mean that they will be as certainly wicked, if unrenewed, as the lion will be ferocious, and the asp poisonous. And if so, what deep anxiety should parents feel for the salvation of their children! How solicitous should they be that, by the grace of God, the evil propensities of their nature may be eradicated, and that they become the adopted children of God?

(3.) The salvation of sinners involves all the exercise of power that is put forth in the resurrection of the dead, Eph 3:5. It is not a work to be performed by man; it is not a work of angelic might. None can impart spiritual life to the soul but he who gave it life at first. On that great Source of life we are dependant for our resurrection from spiritual death; and to God we must look for the grace

by which we are to live.—It is true that though we are by nature "dead in sins," we are not in all respects like the dead. Let not this doctrine be abused to make us secure in sin, or to prevent effort. The dead in the grave are dead in all respects. We, by nature, are dead only in sin. We are active in other things; and indeed the powers of man are not less active than they would be if he were holy. But it is a tremendous activity for evil, and for evil only. The dead in their graves hear nothing, see nothing, and feel nothing. Sinners hear, and see, and feel; but they hear not God, and they see not his glory, any more than if they were dead. To the dead in the grave, no command could with propriety be addressed; on them, no entreaty could be urged to rise to life. But the sinner may be commanded and entreated; for he has power, though it is misdirected; and what is needful is, that he should put forth his power in a proper manner. While, therefore, we admit, with deep humiliation, that we, our children, and friends, are by nature dead in sin, let us not abuse this doctrine as though we could be required to do nothing. It is with us wilful death. It is death because we do not choose to live. It is a voluntary closing our eyes, and stopping our ears, as if we were dead; and it is a voluntary remaining in this state, when we have all the requisite power to put forth the energies of life. Let a sinner be as active in the service of God as he is in the service of the devil and the world, and he would be an eminent Christian. Indeed, all that is required is, that the misdirected and abused energy of this world should be employed in the service of the Creator. Then all would be well.

(4.) Let us remember our former course of life, Eph 4:11,12. Nothing is more profitable for a Christian than to sit down and reflect on his former life—on his childhood, with its numerous follies and vanities; on his youth, with its errors, and passions, and sins; and on the ingratitude and faults of riper years. Had God left us in that state, what would be now our condition? Had he cut us off, where had been our abode? Should he now treat us as we deserve, what would be our doom? When the Christian is in danger of becoming proud and self-confident, let him REMEMBER what he was. Let him take some period of his life—some year, some month, or even some one day—and think it all over, and he will find enough to humble him. These are the uses which should be made of the past.

1st. It should make us humble. If a man had before his mind a vivid sense of all the past in his own life, he would never be lifted up with pride.

2nd. It should make us grateful. God cut off the companions of my childhood—why did he spare me? He cut down many of the associates of my youth in their sins—why did he preserve me? He has suffered many to live on in their sins, and they are in "the broad road"—why am I not with them, treading the path to death and hell?

3rd. The recollection of the past should lead us to devote ourselves to God. Professing Christian, "*remember*" how much of thy life is gone to waste! Remember thy days of folly and vanity! Remember the injury thou hast done by an evil example! *Remember* how many have been corrupted by thy conversation; perverted by thy opinions; led into sin by thy example; perhaps ruined in body and soul for ever by the errors and follies of thy past life! And then REMEMBER how much thou dost owe to God, and how solemnly thou art bound to endeavour to repair the evils of thy life, and to save *at least as many* as thou hast ruined !

(5.) Sinners are by nature without any well-founded hope of salvation, Eph 2:12. They are living without Christ, having no belief in him, and no hope of salvation through him. They are "aliens" from all the privileges of the friends of God. They have no "hope." They have no well-founded expectation of happiness beyond the grave. They have a dim and shadowy expectation that *possibly* they may be happy; but it is founded on no evidence of the Divine favour, and no promise of God.

They could not tell on what it is founded, if they were asked; and what is such a hope worth? These false and delusive hopes do not sustain the soul in trial; they flee away in death. And what a description is this! In a world like this, to be without hope! Subject to trial, exposed to death, and yet destitute of any well-founded prospect of happiness beyond the tomb! They are "without God" also. They worship no God; they confide in none. They have no altar in their families; no place of secret prayer. They form their plans with no reference to the will of God; they desire not to please him. There are multitudes who are living just as if there were no God. Their plans, their lives, their conversation, would not be different if they had the assurance that there was no God. All that they have ever asked of God, or that they would now ask of him, is, *that he would let them alone*. There are multitudes whose plans would be in no respect different, if it were announced to them that there was no God in heaven. The only effect might be to produce a more hearty merriment, and a deeper plunge into sin. What a world! How strange that in God's own world it should thus be! How sad the view of a world of atheists—a race that is endeavouring to feel that the universe is without a Father and a God! How wicked the plans which can be accomplished only by labouring to forget that there is a God; and how melancholy that state of the soul in which happiness can be found only in proportion as it believes that the universe is without a Creator, and moves on without the superintending care of a God!

(6.) The gospel produces peace, Eph 2:14-17.

1st. It produces peace in the heart of the individual, reconciling him to God.

2nd. It produces peace and harmony between different ranks and classes and complexions of men, causing them to love each other, and removing their alienations and antipathies. The best way of producing friendship between nations and tribes of men, between those of different complexions, pursuits, and laws, is to preach to them the gospel. The best way to produce harmony between the oppressor and the oppressed, is to preach to both of them the gospel of peace, and make them feel that they have a common Saviour.

3rd. It is fitted to produce peace among the nations. Let it spread, and wars will cease; right and justice will universally prevail, and harmony and concord will spread over the world. **See Barnes "Isa 2:4".**

(7.) Let us rejoice in the privileges which we now have as Christians. We have access to the Father, Eph 2:18. None are so poor, so ignorant, so down-trodden that they may not come to God. In all times of affliction, poverty, and oppression, we may approach the Father of mercies. Chains may bind the body, but no chain can fetter the soul in its intercourse with God. We may be thrown into a dungeon, but communion with God may be maintained there. We may be cast out and despised by men, but we may come at once unto God, and he will not cast us away. Further.—We are not now strangers and foreigners. We belong to the family of God. We are fellow-citizens with the saints, Eph 2:19. We are participants of the hope of the redeemed, and we share their honours and their joys. It is right that true Christians should rejoice; and their joy is of such a character that no man can take it from them.

(8). Let us make our appeal, on all doctrines and duties, to the Bible—to the prophets and the apostles, Eph 2:20. On them and their doctrine we can build. On them the church is reared. It is not on the opinion of philosophers and lawgivers; not on creeds, symbols, traditions, and the decisions of councils; it is on the authority of the inspired book of God. The church is in its most healthy state when it appeals for its doctrines most directly to the Bible. Individual Christians grow most in grace when they appeal most to this "Book of books." The church is in great danger of error

when it goes off from this pure "standard," and makes its appeal to other standards—to creeds and symbols of doctrine. "The Bible is the religion of Protestants;" and the church will be kept pure from error, and will advance in holiness, just as this is made the great principle which shah always govern and control it. If a doctrine is not found in the "apostles and prophets"—in some part of the Bible it is not to be imposed on the conscience. It may or may not be true; it may or may not be fitted to edify a people; but it is not to be an article of faith, or imposed on the consciences of men.

(9.) Let us evince always special regard for the Lord Jesus, Eph 2:20. He is the precious Corner-Stone on which the whole spiritual temple is reared. On him the church rests. How important then, that the church should have correct views of the Redeemer! How important that the true doctrine respecting his Divine nature, his atonement, his incarnation, his resurrection, should be maintained. It is not a matter of indifference whether he be God or man; whether he died as an atoning sacrifice, or as a martyr; whether he be the equal of God, or whether he be an archangel. Everything depends on the view which is held of that Redeemer—and as men entertain different opinions about him, they go off into different systems as wide from each other as the poles. Everything in the welfare of the church, and in the individual peace of its members, depends on proper views of the Lord Jesus.

(10.) The church is designed as the place of the special residence of the Holy Spirit on earth, Eph 2:21,22. It is the beautiful temple where he dwells; the edifice which is reared for his abode. How holy should that church be; how pure should be each Christian to be an appropriate habitation for such a guest! Holy should be the heart where the Spirit dwells. With what anxious care should we cherish the presence of such a guest; with what solicitude should we guard our conduct that we may not grieve away our friends from our dwellings! Should an illustrious guest become an inmate in our abode, how anxious should we be to do all that we can to please hin, and to retain him with us! How much more anxious should we be secure the indwelling of the eternal Spirit! How desirous that he should make our hearts and the church his constant abode!

EPHESIANS - Chapter 3

EPHESIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 1

Ephesians Chapter 3

ANALYSIS OF CHAPTER III.

THIS chapter consists, properly, of three parts :—

I. A statement that the Gentiles were to be made partakers of the gospel, and that the work of proclaiming this was especially entrusted to Paul, Eph 3:1-12. In illustrating this, Paul observes:—

(1.) That he was the prisoner of Jesus Christ in behalf of the Gentiles, Eph 3:1. He was in bonds for maintaining that the gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles, and for endeavouring to convey it to them.

(2.) He reminds them all of the fact that he was called, by special revelation, to make known this truth, and to convey to the Gentiles this gospel—supposing that they had heard of the manner of his conversion, Eph 3:2,3.

(3.) He refers them to what he had said before in few words on this point as proof of his acquaintance with this great plan of the gospel, Eph 3:3,4.

(4.) He speaks of this great truth as a "mystery"—the "mystery of Christ;" the great and important truth which was concealed until Christ came, and which was fully made known by him, Eph 3:4-6. This had been hidden for ages. But now it had been fully revealed by the Spirit of God to the apostles and prophets in the Christian church, that the great wall of partition was to be broken down, and the gospel proclaimed alike to all.

(5.) The apostle says, that to him especially was this office committed, to proclaim among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, Eph 3:8,9.

(6.) The *design* of this was to illustrate, in view of all worlds, the great wisdom of God in the plan of salvation, Eph 3:10-12. It was intended to show to other intelligent beings the glory of the Divine perfections, and to make manifestations of the Divine character which could be perceived nowhere else.

II. Paul expresses an earnest wish that they should comprehend the glory of this plan of salvation, Eph 3:13-19. Particularly he desires them not to faint on account of his afflictions in their behalf; declares that he bows his knees in prayer before the great Father of the redeemed family, that God would be pleased to strengthen them, and enlighten them, and give them clear views of the glorious plan.

III. The chapter concludes with an ascription of praise to God, in view of the great goodness which he had manifested, and of the glory of the plan of salvation, Eph 3:20,21.

Verse 1. *For this cause*. On account of preaching this doctrine; that is, the doctrine that the gospel was to be proclaimed to the Gentiles.

I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ. A prisoner in the service of the Lord Jesus; or made a prisoner in his cause. Not a prisoner for crime, or debt, or as a captive in war, but a captive in the service of the Redeemer. This proves that, at the time of writing this, Paul was in bonds, and there can be no question that he was in Rome. This would be more correctly rendered, "For this cause I, Paul, am the prisoner," etc. So Tindal renders it, "For this cause I, Paul, the servant of Jesus, am in bonds." So also Locke, Rosenmuller, Doddridge, Whitby, Koppe, and others understand it. By this construction the abruptness now manifest in our common version is avoided.

For you Gentiles. Made a prisoner at Rome on your behalf, because I maintained that the gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles. See Ac 22:21-23. He was taken first to Cesarea, and then to Rome. The cause of his imprisonment and of all his difficulties was, that he maintained that the gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles; that when the Jews rejected it, God rejected them; and that he was specially called to carry the message of salvation to the heathen world.

EPHESIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *If ye have heard*. *eige*. "*If at least, if indeed, if so be*, spoken of what is taken for granted." *Robinson*. Comp. 2Co 5:3 Ga 3:4; Eph 4:21 Col 1:23, for the use of the particle. The

particle here is not designed to express a doubt whether they had heard of it or not, for he takes it for granted that they had. Doddridge renders it, "Since I well know you have heard," etc. He had informed them of his being called to be the minister to the Gentiles, Eph 3:3, but still there was a possibility that they had not received the letter containing the information, and he goes, therefore, into another statement on the subject, that they might fully comprehend it. Hence this long parenthetical sentence—one of the longest that occurs in the writings of Paul, and expressed under the impulse of a mind full of the subject; so full, as we would say, that he did not know what to say first. Hence it is exceedingly difficult to understand the exact state of mind in which he was. It seems to me that the whole of this long statement grew out of the incidental mention Eph 3:1 of the fact that he was a prisoner for the Gentiles. Instantly he seems to have reflected that they would be grieved at the intelligence that he was suffering on their account. He goes, therefore, into this long account, to show them how it happened; that it was by the appointment of God; that it was in the evolving of a great and glorious mystery; that it was in a cause adapted to promote, in an eminent degree, the glory of God; that it was according to an eternal purpose; and he, therefore, Eph 3:13, says, that he desires that they would not "faint" or be unduly distressed on account of his sufferings for them, since his sufferings were designed to promote their "glory." *He* was comforted in the belief that he was making known the glorious and eternal plan of God, and in the belief that was for the welfare of mankind; and he, therefore, entreated then also not to be troubled inordinately at his sufferings.

The dispensation, Gr. *economy*; rendered *stewardship* Lu 16:2-4; and *dispensation*, Eph 1:10 3:2; Col 1:25.

See Barnes "Eph 1:10".

It means here, that this arrangement was made that he should be the apostle to the Gentiles. In the assignment of the different parts of the work of preaching the gospel, the office had been committed to him of making it known to the heathen.

Of the grace of God. In the arrangements of his grace.

Which is given me to you-ward. Toward you who are Gentiles. Not to the Ephesians particularly, but to the nations at large. **See Barnes "Gal 2:7".**

{*} "ye have heard" "since" {a} "dispensation of the grace" Col 1:25 {b} "of God" Ro 12:3.

EPHESIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *How that by revelation*. **See Barnes** "Gal 1:12.

He refers to the revelation which was made to him when he was called to the apostolic office, that the gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles, and that he was converted for the special purpose of carrying it to them. See Ac 9:15 22:21.

Unto me the mystery. The hitherto concealed truth that the gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles. **See Barnes** "Eph 1:9, on the meaning of the word mystery.

As I wrote afore in few words. Marg., *a little before*. To what this refers commentators are not agreed. Bloomfield, Doddridge, Rosenmuller, Erasmus, Grotius, Locke, and others, suppose that he refers to what he had written in the two previous chapters respecting the plan of God to call the Gentiles to his kingdom. Calvin supposes that he refers to some former epistle which he had written

to them, but which is now lost. He remarks in regard to this, "If the solicitude of Paul be rightly considered; if his vigilance and assiduity; if his zeal and studious habits; if his kindness and promptitude in assisting his brethren, it is easy to suppose that he wrote many epistles, publicly and privately, to this place and to that place. But those only which the Lord saw necessary to the welfare of his church has he taken care to have preserved." In this opinion there is nothing in itself improbable, - comp. Introduction to Isaiah, § 6,

(1.)—but it may be doubted whether Paul here refers to any such epistle. The addition which he makes, "whereby, when ye read," etc., seems rather to imply that he refers to what he had just written.

{c} "he made known" Gal 1:12 {+} "mystery" "Secret" {1} "afore" "a little before"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Whereby when ye read*. By the bare reading of which you may understand the view which I entertain of the plan of salvation, and the knowledge which I have of God's method of saving men, particularly of his intention in regard to the salvation of the Gentiles.

In the mystery of Christ. This does not refer to anything *mysterious* in the person of Christ; or the union of the Divine and human nature in him; or to anything difficult of apprehension in the work of the atonement. It means the hitherto concealed doctrine, that through the Messiah the Gentiles were to be received to the same privileges as the Jews, and that the plan of salvation was to be made equally free for all. This great truth had been hitherto concealed, or but partially understood, and Paul says that he was appointed to make it known to the world. His *knowledge* on the subject, he says, could be understood by what he had said, and from that they could judge whether he was qualified to state and defend the doctrines of the Gospel. Paul evidently supposed that the knowledge which he had on that subject was of eminent value; that it was possessed by few; that it was important to understand it. Hence he dwells upon it. He speaks of the glory of that truth. He traces it back to the counsels of God. He shows that it entered into his eternal plans; and he evidently felt that the truth which he had communicated in the former part of this epistle was among the most important that could come before the mind.

{a} "mystery" Eph 1:9 {*} "mystery" "secret"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Which in other ages*. The great purposes of God in regard to the salvation of mankind were not revealed. **See Barnes "Ro 16:25"**.

And prophets. Those who exercised the office of a prophet or inspired teacher in the Christian church. **See Barnes "1Co 12:1"**.

By the Spirit. This proves that those who exercised the office of prophet in the Christian church were inspired. They were persons endowed in this manner for the purpose of imparting to the newly-formed churches the doctrines of the Christian system. There is no evidence that this was

designed to be a permanent order of men in the church. They were necessary for settling the church on a permanent basis, in the absence of a full written revelation, and when the apostles were away. When the volume of revelation was finished, and the doctrines of the gospel were fully understood, the functions of the office ceased.

{b} "made known" Mt 13:17 Ro 16:25; 1Pe 1:10-12

EPHESIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs*. Fellow-heirs with the ancient people of god—the Jews—and entitled to the same privileges. **See Barnes "Ro 8:17 Eph 2:13-18"**

EPHESIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Whereof I was made a minister*. **See Barnes** "Eph 3:2.

According to the gift of the grace of God. It was not by my own seeking or merit; it was a free gift.

Of the grace of God. The sentiment is, that throughout it was a mere matter of grace that he was called into the ministry, and that so important an office was entrusted to him as that of bearing the gospel to the Gentiles.

By the effectual working of his power. Not by any native inclination which I had to the gospel, and not by any, power which I have put forth. It is by "the *energy* of his power. Comp. **See Barnes "Gal 2:8"**.

Locke understands this of the energy or power which God put forth in converting the Gentiles under his ministry. But it seems to me that it refers rather to the power which God put forth in the conversion of Paul himself, and putting him into the ministry. This is clear from the following verse. The meaning is, that such was his opposition to the gospel by nature, that nothing but the "energy of God" could overcome it, and that his conversion was to be traced to that alone.

{c} "effectual working" Isa 43:13

EPHESIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints*. This is one of the class of expressions peculiar to Paul. The ordinary terms of language do not express the idea which he wishes to convey, and a word is therefore coined to convey an idea more emphatically. Comp. **See Barnes "2Co 4:17"**.

The word here used—*elacistoterov*—does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It is a comparative made from the superlative. Similar expressions are found, however, in later Greek writers. See Bloomfield and Rosenmuller for examples. The word means here, "who am *incomparably* the least of all the saints; or who am not worthy to be reckoned among the saints." It is expressive of the deep sense which he had of the sinfulness of his past life; of his guilt in

persecuting the church and the Saviour; and perhaps of his sense of his low attainments in piety. **See Barnes "1Co 15:9".**

Paul never could forget the guilt of his former life; never forget the time when he was engaged in persecuting the church of God.

The unsearchable riches of Christ. On the word *riches*, as used by Paul, see **See Barnes "Eph 1:7".**

The word rendered *unsearchable*— *anexicniaston* occurs but once elsewhere in the New Testament, Ro 11:33, where it is rendered, *past finding out*. **See Barnes "Ro 11:33".**

It means that which cannot be *traced out*, or explored; Which is inscrutable, or incomprehensible. The meaning here is, that there was a *sufficiency* in Christ which could not be traced out or explored. It was wholly incomprehensible. The fulness of the riches in him could not be appreciated. There is no more emphatic expression in the New Testament than this. It shows that the heart of the apostle was full of admiration of the sufficiency and glory that was in the Saviour; that he wanted words to express it; and that he considered it the highest honour to be permitted to tell the world that there were such riches in the Redeemer.

{d} "less than the least" 1Co 15:9 {e} "riches of Christ" Col 1:27

EPHESIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *And to make all men see*. In order that the whole human family might see the gloW of God in the plan of salvation. Hitherto the revelation of his character and plans had been confined to the Jews. Now it was his design that all the race should be made acquainted with it.

What is the fellowship of the mystery. Instead of fellowship here—*koinwnia*—most Mss. and versions read *oikonomia dispensation*. See Mill. This reading is adopted by Griesbach, Tittman, Rosenmuller, Koppe, and is regarded by most critics as being the genuine reading. The mistake might easily have been made by a transcriber. The meaning then would be, "to enlighten all in respect to the dispensation of this mystery;" that is, to cause all to understand the manner in which this great truth of the plan of salvation is communicated to men. If the word *fellowship* is to be retained, it means that this doctrine, or secret counsel of God, was now *common* to all believers. It was not to be confined to any class or rank of men. Locke renders it, "and to make all men perceive how this mystery comes now to be communicated to the world." Archbishop Whately (Errors of Romanism, ii. § 1) renders it, "the common participation of the mystery;" that is, of truths formerly unknown, and which could not be known by man's unaided powers, but which were now laid open by the gracious dispensation of Divine Providence; no longer concealed, or confined to a few, but to be partaken of by all. The allusion, according to him, is to the mysteries of the ancient pagan religions; and he supposes that the apostle designs to contrast those "mysteries" with Christianity. In those "mysteries" there was a distinction between the initiated and uninitiated. There was a revelation, to some of the worshippers, of certain holy secrets from which others were excluded. There were in some of the mysteries, as the Eleusinian, *great* and *lesser* doctrines, in which different persons were initiated. In strong contrast with these, the "great mystery" in Christianity was made known to all. It was concealed from none, and there was no distinction made among those who were initiated. No truths which God had revealed were held back from any part, but there was a

common participation by all. Christianity has no hidden truths for a part only of its friends; it has no "*reserved*" doctrines; it has no truths to be entrusted only to a sacred priesthood. Its doctrines are to be published to the wide world, and every follower of Christ is to be a partaker of all the benefits of the truths which Christ has revealed. It is difficult to determine which is the true reading, and it is not very important. The general sense is, that Paul felt himself called into the ministry in order that all men might understand now that salvation was free for all a truth that had been concealed for ages. Bearing this great truth, he felt that he had a message of incalculable value to mankind, and he was desirous to go and proclaim it to the wide world. On the word *mystery*, **See Barnes "Eph 1:9".**

Hath been hid in God. With God. It has been concealed in his bosom. The plan was formed, but it had not before been made known.

Who created all things. This is plain enough; but it is not quite so plain why the declaration is introduced in this place. Locke and Rosenmuller suppose that it refers to the new creation, and that the sense is, that God frames and manages this new creation wholly by Jesus Christ. But the expression contains a truth of larger import, and naturally conveys the idea that *all* things were made by God, and that this was only a part of his great and universal agency. The meaning is, that God formed all things, and that this purpose of extending salvation to the world was a part of his great plan, and was under his control.

By Jesus Christ. As this stands in our common Greek text, as well as in our English version, there is a striking resemblance between the passage and that in Col 1:15,16. But the phrase is wanting in the Vulgate, the Syriac, the Coptic, and in several of the ancient MSS. Mill remarks, that it was probably inserted here by some transcriber from the parallel passage in Col 1:16; and it is rejected as an interpolation by Griesbach. It is not *very* material whether it be retained in this place or not, as the same sentiment is elsewhere abundantly taught. See Joh 1:3 Col 1:16 Heb 1:2. If it is to be retained, the sentiment is, that the Son of God—the Second Person of the Trinity—was the great and immediate Agent in the creation of the universe.

{f} "mystery" Eph 3:4,5 {*} "mystery" "secret" {a} "Jesus Christ" Ps 33:6

EPHESIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *To the intent*. Greek, "that"—*ina*. The sense is, that it was with this design, or that this was the purpose for which all things were made. One grand purpose in the creation of the universe was, that the wisdom of God might be clearly shown by the church. It was not enough to evince it by the formation of the sun, the stars, the earth, the seas, the mountains, the floods. It was not enough to show it by the creation of intelligent beings, the formation of immortal minds on earth, and the various ranks of the angelic world. There were views of the Divine character which could be obtained only in connexion with the redemption of the world. Hence the universe was created, and man was made upon the earth, not merely to illustrate the Divine perfections in the work of creation, but in a still more illustrious manner in the work of redemption. And hence the deep interest which the angelic hosts have ever evinced in the salvation of man.

That now. The word *now*—*nun*—is wanting in the Vulgate, Syriac, and Arabic; and is omitted by many of the Fathers. See Koppe. If it is to be retained, it means that this display is to be made

under the gospel. "Now, since the Messiah is come; now, under the Christian dispensation, this revelation is to be made to distant worlds."

Unto the principalities and powers. To the angelic hosts—the intelligent beings that surround the throne of God. **See Barnes "Eph 1:21"**.

By the Church. By the incarnation of the Redeemer to save it; by the mercy shown to it; by the wise arrangement made to recover his people from the fall; and by all the graces and beauties which that redeemed church will evince on earth and in heaven.

The manifold wisdom of God. Literally, *much-variegated*. It means the *greatly-diversified* wisdom. It does not mean merely that there was *great* wisdom, but that the wisdom shown was diversified and varied; like changing, variegated colours. There was a "beautiful and well-ordered variety of dispensations" towards that church, all of which tended to evince the wisdom of God. It is like a landscape, or a panoramic view passing before the mind, with a great variety of phases and aspects, all tending to excite admiration. In the redemption of the church, there is not merely one form or one phase of wisdom. It is wisdom, ever-varying, ever-beautiful. There was wisdom manifested when the plan was formed; wisdom in the selection of the Redeemer; wisdom in the incarnation; wisdom in the atonement; wisdom in the means of renewing the heart, and sanctifying the soul; wisdom in the various dispensations by which the Church is sanctified, guided, and brought to glory. The wisdom thus shown is like the ever-varying beauty of changing clouds, when the sun is reflected on them at evening. Each aspect is full of beauty. One bright cloud differs in appearance from others; yet all tend to fill the mind with elevated views of God.

EPHESIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *According to the eternal purpose*. **See Barnes** "Eph 1:4.

Literally, "the purpose of ages," or of eternity. Locke, Chandler, and Whitby render this, "according to that disposition or arrangement of the ages which he made in Jesus Christ, or through him." The object of such an interpretation seems to be to avoid the doctrine that God had a purpose or plan in the salvation of men, and hence such expositors suppose it refers to the arrangement of the ages of the world by which the plan of redemption was introduced. On the word here rendered *purpose—proyesiv*— **See Barnes "Ro 8:28"**.

Comp. Eph 1:11. It is rendered shewbread— "the bread of setting before," Mt 12:4 Mr 2:26; Lu 6:4 Heb 9:2; *purpose*, Ac 11:23 Ac 27:13; Ro 8:28 9:11; Eph 1:11 3:11; 2Ti 1:9; 2Ti 3:10. It does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. In most of these cases it refers to the *purpose* or *intention* of God; in not a single case does it mean *arrangement* or *disposition* in any sense like that of making an arrangement of *ages* or periods of the world; and the interpretation proposed by Whitby, Locke, Clarke, and others, is wholly at variance with the settled use of the word. The word rendered *eternal—aiwnwn*—may mean *ages*; but it also most usually means eternity. See Eph 3:9. Here it *may* mean "the purpose of *ages*;" i.e., the purpose formed in past ages; but the word is most commonly used in the New Testament in the sense of *ever*, and *for ever*. Comp. the following places, where it is so rendered in our common version, and beyond a doubt correctly: Mt 6:13 21:19; Mr 3:29 11:14; Lu 1:33,55; Joh 4:14 6:51,58 8:35, 14:16 Rom 1:25, 9:5 11:36, 16:27 2Co 9:9; 2Co 11:31 Ga 1:5. The fair meaning of the passage here is, that God had formed a plan which

was eternal in reference to the salvation of men; that that plan had reference to the Lord Jesus; and that it was now executed by the gospel. It is impossible to get away from the idea that God has *a plan*. It is too often affirmed in the Scriptures, and is too consonant with our reason to be disputed. It is as *undesirable* as it is impossible to escape from that idea. Who could respect or honour an intelligent Being that had no plan, no purpose, no intention, and that did all things by caprice and hap-hazard? If God has any plan, it must be eternal. He has no *new* schemes; he has no intentions which he did not always have.

Which he purposed. Literally, "which he *made*."

In Christ Jesus. With reference to him; or which were to be executed through him. The eternal plan had respect to him, and was to be executed by his coming and work.

{c} "eternal purpose" Eph 1:9

EPHESIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *We have boldness*. The word here used—*parrhsian*—means, properly, boldness of speaking, 2Co 7:4 Joh 7:26; Ac 4:13,29,31.

Here it seems to mean, "freedom of utterance;" and the idea is, that we may come to God now in prayer with confidence through the Lord Jesus. See Heb 4:16.

And access. **See Barnes "Eph 2:18"**.

By the faith of him. By faith in him. The sense is, that we may now come confidently and boldly to the throne of grace for mercy in the name of the Redeemer. Boldness is not rashness, and faith is not presumption; but we may come without hesitating, and with an assurance that our prayers will be heard.

{d} "boldness" Heb 4:16 {*} "boldness" "freedom of speech"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Wherefore I desire that ye faint not*. The connexion here is this. Paul was then a prisoner at Rome. He had been made such in consequence of his efforts to diffuse the Christian religion among the Gentiles. **See Barnes "Eph 3:1"**.

His zeal in this cause, and the opinions which he held on this subject, had roused the wrath of the Jews, and led to all the calamities which he was now suffering. Of that the Ephesians, he supposes, were aware. It was natural that they should be distressed at his sufferings, for all his privations were endured on their account. But here he tells them not to be troubled and disheartened. He was indeed suffering; but he was reconciled to it, and they should be also, since it was promoting their welfare. The word rendered "*faint*"- *ekkakew*—means, literally, to turn out a coward, or to lose one's courage; then to be faint-hearted, etc. **See Barnes "2Co 4:1"**.

It is rendered *faint* in Lu 18:1 2Co 4:1,16 Eph 3:13

and *weary* in Ga 6:9 2Th 3:13. It does not elsewhere occur. It is rendered here by Locke, *dismayed*. Koppe supposes it means that they should not suppose that the Christian religion was

vain and false because he was suffering so much from his countrymen on account of it. But it rather means that they might be in danger of being discouraged by the fact that *he* was enduring so much. They might become disheartened in their attachment to a system of religion which exposed its friends to such calamities. Paul tells them that this ought not to follow. They were to be profited by all *his* sufferings, and they should, therefore, hold fast to a religion which was attended with so many benefits to *them*—though he should suffer.

Which is your glory. Which tends to your honour and welfare. You have occasion to rejoice that you have a friend who is willing thus to suffer for you; you have occasion to rejoice in all the benefits which will result to you from his trials in your behalf.

{e} "where is your glory" 2Co 1:6

EPHESIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *For this cause*. Some suppose that this is a resumption of what he had commenced saying in Eph 3:1, but which had been interrupted by a long parenthesis. So Bloomfield explains it. But it seems to me more probable that he refers to what immediately precedes. "Wherefore, that the great work may be carried on and that the purposes of these my sufferings may be answered in your benefit and glory, I bow my knees to God, and pray to him:"

I bow my knees. I pray. The usual and the proper posture of prayer is to kneel. Comp. 2Ch 6:13 Da 6:10; Lu 22:41 Ac 7:60, 9:40; Ac 20:36 21:5. It is a posture which indicates reverence, and should, therefore, be assumed when we come before God. It has been an unhappy thing that the custom of kneeling in public worship has ever been departed from in the Christian churches.

Unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. To whom, undoubtedly, prayer should ordinarily be addressed. But this does not make it improper to address the Lord Jesus in prayer. **See Barnes** "Ac 1:24 7:59,60.

EPHESIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Of whom the whole family*. This expression, "of whom," may refer either to "the Father" or to the Lord Jesus. Commentators have been divided in opinion in regard to it. Bloomfield, Chandler, Erasmus, Koppe, and some others, refer it to the Father. Locke, Doddridge, Calvin, and some others, refer it to the Lord Jesus. This is the more natural interpretation. The whole "family of God" means all his children; and the idea is, that they all bear the same name, derived from the Redeemer; all are Christians. No matter where they are, in heaven or in earth; no matter from what nation they are converted, whether Jews or Gentiles, they an have one name, and one Redeemer, and all belong to one family. See Eph 4:4-6.

In heaven. Spirits of just men made perfect. It does not properly refer to angels, for he is not speaking of them, but of the family of the redeemed. If the phrase, "in heaven," could *ever* be taken to denote the Jews as contradistinguished from the Gentiles, I should think that this was one of the places. Many expositors have supposed that it is frequently so used in this epistle, but I see no clear

evidence of it, and no instance where it seems very probable, unless this should be one. And it is not necessary here, for it may mean *all* the redeemed, whether in heaven or earth, though the connexion would seem rather to have suggested a reference to the Jews and the Gentiles. An expression similar to this occurs in Col 1:20:—"To reconcile all things to himself, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." The passage before us is one that is commonly explained by a reference to Jewish opinions. The Jews were accustomed to call the angels in heaven God's *upper family*, and his people on earth his *lower family*. See the passages cited from the Rabbinical writers in Wetstein.

Is named. This means substantially the same as *is*. They are all of one family. They all have one Father, and are all of one community. The expression is taken from the custom in a family, where all bear the name of the *head* of the family; and the meaning is, that all in heaven and on earth are united under one head, and constitute one community. It does not mean that all are *called* by the same name, or that the name *Christian* is given to the angels, but that they all pertain to the same community, and constitute the same great and glorious brotherhood. Part are in heaven, near his throne; part in distant worlds; part are angels of light; part redeemed and happy spirits; part are in the church on earth; but they are all united as one family, and have one Head and Father. This glorious family will yet be gathered together in heaven, and will encompass the throne of their common Father rejoicing.

EPHESIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *According to the riches of his glory*. According to the glorious abundance of his mercy. See Php 4:19. Out of those stores of rich grace which can never be exhausted. The word *riches*, so often used by Paul, denotes abundance; and the idea here is, that his grace was inexhaustible and ample for all their wants.

To be strengthened with might. To be powerfully strengthened. That is, to give you abundant strength to bear trials; to perform your duties; to glorify his name.

In the inner man. In the heart, the mind, the soul. **See Barnes "Ro 7:22"**.

The body needs to be strengthened every day. In like manner the soul needs constant supplies of grace. Piety needs to be constantly invigorated, or it withers and decays. Every Christian needs grace given each day to enable him to bear trials, to resist temptation, to discharge his duty, to live a life of faith.

{a} "of his glory" Php 4:19 {b} "strengthened" Eph 6:10 Col 1:11 {c} "inner man" Ro 7:22

EPHESIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith*. **See Barnes "Eph 2:22"**.

Expressions like this often occur in the Scriptures, where God is said to dwell in us, and we are said to be the temples of the Holy Ghost. **See Barnes "Joh 14:23"**; **See Barnes "1Co 6:19"**.

That ye being rooted. Firmly established—as a tree is whose roots strike deep, and extend afar. The meaning is, that his love should be as firm in our hearts as a tree is in the soil, whose roots strike deep into the earth.

And grounded. *teyemeliwmenoi*—founded—as a building is on a foundation. The word is taken from architecture where a firm foundation is laid; and the meaning is, that he wished them to be as firm in the love of Christ, as a building is that rests on a solid basis.

In love. In love to the Redeemer—perhaps also in love to each other— and to all. Love was the great principle of the true religion, and the apostle wished that they might be fully settled in that.

{d} "dwell in your hearts" Joh 14:23 Eph 2:2 {e} "rooted" Col 2:7

EPHESIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *May be able to comprehend with all saints*. That all others with you may be able to understand this. It was his desire that others, as well as they, might appreciate the wonders of redemption.

What is the breadth, and length, etc. It has been doubted to what this refers. Locke says it refers to the mystery of calling the Gentiles as well as the Jews. Chandler supposes there is an allusion in all this to the temple at Ephesus. It was one of the wonders of the world—exciting admiration by its length, and height, and dimensions in every way, as well as by its extraordinary riches and splendour. In allusion to this, the object of so much admiration and pride to the Ephesians, he supposes that Paul desires that they should become fully acquainted with the extent and beauty of the spiritual temple. But I do not see that there is clear evidence that there is allusion here to the temple at Ephesus. It seems rather to be the language of a heart that was full of the subject, and impressed with its greatness; and the words are employed to denote the dimensions of that love, and are similar to what would be meant if he had said, "that you may know how *large*, or how *great* is that love." The apostle evidently meant to express the strongest sense of the greatness of the love of the Redeemer, and to show, in the most emphatic manner, how-much he wished that they should fully understand it. On the phrase "depth and height," **See Barnes "Ro 8:39"**.

EPHESIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *And to know the love of Christ*. The love of Christ towards us; the immensity of redeeming love. It is not merely the love which he showed for the Gentiles in calling them into his kingdom, which is here referred to; it is the love which is shown for the lost world in giving himself to die. This love is often referred to in the New Testament, and is declared to surpass all other which has ever been evinced. **See Barnes** "Ro 5:7, **See Barnes "Ro 5:8"; See Barnes "Joh 15:13"**.

To know this; to feel this; to have a lively sense of it, is one of the highest privileges of the Christian. Nothing will so much excite gratitude in our hearts; nothing will prompt us so much to a life of self-denial; nothing will make us so benevolent and so dead to the world. **See Barnes "2Co 5:14"**.

Which passeth knowledge. There *seems* to be a slight contradiction here in expressing a wish to know what cannot be known, or in a desire that they should understand that which cannot be understood. But it is the language of a man whose heart was full to overflowing. He had a deep sense of the love of Christ, and he expressed a wish that they should understand it. Suddenly he has such an apprehension of it, that he says it is indeed infinite. No one can attain to a full view of it. It had no limit. It was unlike anything which had ever been evinced before. It was love which led the Son of God to become incarnate; to leave the heavens; to be a man of sorrows; to be reviled and persecuted; to be put to death in the most shameful manner—ON A CROSS. Who could understand that Where else had there been anything like that? What was there with which to compare it? What was there by which it could be illustrated? And how could it be fully understood? Yet *something* of it might be seen, known, felt; and the apostle desired that, as far as possible, they should understand that great love which the Lord Jesus had manifested for a dying world.

That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. What an expression! How rich and glorious! Who can comprehend all that it implies? Let us inquire into its meaning. There *may* be here in these verses an allusion to the temple. The apostle had spoken of their being founded in love, and of surveying the length, and breadth, and depth, and height of that love, as of a vast and splendid edifice; and he now desires that those whom he addressed might be pervaded or filled with the indwelling of God. The language here is cumulative, and is full of meaning and richness.

(1.) They were to be *full of God*. That is, he would dwell in them.

(2.) They were to be filled with the fulness of God—*to plhrwma tou yeou*. On the word rendered *fulness*, **See Barnes** "Eph 1:10, **See Barnes "Eph 1:23"**.

It is a favourite word with Paul. Thus he speaks of the *fulness* of the Gentiles, Ro 11:25; the *fulness* of time, Ga 4:4; the *fulness* of him that filleth all in all, Eph 1:23; the *fulness* of Christ, Eph 4:13; the *fulness* of the Godhead in Christ, Col 1:19 2:9. It means here, "that you may have the richest measures of Divine consolation and of the Divine Presence; that you may partake of the entire enjoyment of God in the most ample measure in which he bestows his favours on his people."

(3.) It was to be with *all* the fulness of God; not with partial and stinted measures of his gracious presence, but with all which he ever bestows. Religion is not a name. It is not a matter of form. It is not a trifle. It is the richest, best gift of God to man. It ennobles our nature. It more clearly teaches us our true dignity than all the profound discoveries which men can make in science; for none of them will ever fill us with the ruiness of God. Religion is spiritual, elevating, pure, Godlike. We dwell with God; walk with God; live with God; commune with God; are like God. We become partakers of the Divine nature, (2Pe 1:4;) in rank we are associated with angels; in happiness and purity we are associated with God.

{a} "fulness of God" Joh 1:16

EPHESIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Now unto him*. It is not uncommon for Paul to utter an ascription of praise in the midst of an argument. See Ro 9:5; Ro 11:36 Ga 1:5. Here his mind is full of the subject; and in view of the fact that God communicates to his people such blessings, that they may become filled with all his fairness, he desires that praise should be given to him.

That is able to do. **See Barnes "Ro 16:25"**.

Exceeding abundantly. The compound word here used occurs only in this place, and in 1Th 3:10 5:13. It means, to an extent which we cannot express.

Above all that we ask or think. More than all that we can desire in our prayers; more than all that we can conceive. **See Barnes "1Co 2:9"**.

According to the power that worketh in us. The exertion of that same power can accomplish for us more than we can now conceive.

{b} "unto him" Ro 16:25 Heb 13:20,21 Jude 1:24

EPHESIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Unto him be glory*. **See Barnes "Ro 16:27"**.

In the church or, by the church, Eph 3:10. The church was to be the instrument by which the glory of God would be shown; and it was by the church that his praise would be celebrated.

Throughout all ages, world without end. There is a richness and amplification of language here which shows that his heart was full of the subject, and that it was difficult to find words to express his conceptions. It means, in the strongest sense, FOR EVER. It is one of "the apostle's self-invented phrases," (*Bloomfield*;) and Blackwall says that no version can fully express the meaning. It is, literally, "unto all generations of the age of ages," or "unto all the generations of the eternity of eternities, or the eternity of ages." It is the language of a heart FULL of the love of God, and desiring that he might be praised without ceasing for ever and ever.

REMARKS.

1. It is a great and glorious truth that the offers of the gospel are made to us, who are by nature Gentiles; and that those offers are confined to no class or condition of men—to no nation or tribe, Eph 3:1-6. This truth had been concealed for ages. The Jews regarded themselves as a peculiar people, and as exclusively the favourites of heaven. The great effort has been made everywhere to show that there was a favoured class of men—a class whom God regarded with peculiar affection, on account of their birth, or rank, or nation, or wealth, or complexion. In one nation, there has been a distinction of *caste* carefully kept up from age to age, and sustained by all the power of the priesthood and the laws; and it has been held that that one class was the favourite of heaven, and that every other was overlooked or despised. In another nation, it has been held that the services of an illustrious ancestry made a difference among men, and that this fact was to be regarded even in religion. In another, complexion has made a difference; and the feeling has insensibly grown up that one class were the favourites of heaven, because they had a skin not coloured like others, and that those not thus favoured might be doomed to hopeless toil and servitude. In another, the attempt is made to create such a distinction by wealth; and it is felt that the rich are the favourites of heaven. In all these cases there is the secret feeling, that in virtue of rank, or blood, or property, one class are the objects of Divine interest more than others; and that the same plan of salvation is not needed for them which is required for the poor, for the ignorant, and for the slave. The gospel regards all men as on a level; offers the same salvation to all; and offers it on the same terms. This is one of

its glories; and for this we should love it. It meets man as he is everywhere a fallen and a ruined being— and provides a plan adapted to raise all to the glories of the same heaven.

(2.) Humility becomes us. Eph 3:8. Paul felt that he was the least of all saints. He remembered his former life. He recalled the time when he persecuted the church, he felt that he was not worthy to be enrolled in that society which be had so greatly injured. If Paul was humble, who should not be? Who, since his time, has equalled his ardour, his zeal, his attainments in the divine life? Yet the remembrance of his former life served always to keep him humble, and operated as a check on all the tendencies to pride in his bosom. So it should be with us—with all Christians. There has been enough in our past lives to make us humble, if we would recall it, and to make us feel that we are not worthy to be enrolled among the saints. One has been an infidel; one licentious; one intemperate; one rash, revengeful, passionate; one has been proud and ambitious; one has been false, dishonest, faithless; all have had hearts opposed to God, alienated from good, and prone to evil; and there is not a Christian in the world who will not find enough in his past life to make him humble, if he will examine himself—enough to make him feel that he deserves not even the lowest place among the saints. So we shall feel if we look over our lives since we made a profession of religion. The painful conviction will come over our souls, that we have lived so far from God, and done so little in his cause, that we are not worthy of the lowest place among the blessed.

(3.) It is a privilege to preach the gospel, Eph 3:8. So Paul felt. It was an honour of which he felt that he was by no means worthy. It was proof of the favour of God towards him that he was permitted to do it. It *is* a privilege—an honour—to preach the gospel anywhere, and to any class of men. It is an honour to be permitted to preach in Christian lands; it is an honour to preach among the heathen. It is an honour far above that of conquerors; and he who does it will win a brighter and more glorious crown than he who goes forth to obtain glory by dethroning kings, and laying nations waste. The warrior goes with the sword in one hand and the torch in the other. His path is marked with blood, and with smouldering ruins. He treads among the slain; and the music of his march is made up of dying groans, and the shrieks of widows and orphans. Yet he is honoured, and his name is blazoned abroad; he is crowned with the laurel, and triumphal arches are reared, and monuments are erected to perpetuate his fame. The man who carries the gospel goes for a different purpose. He is the minister of peace. He goes to tell of salvation. He fires no city; lays waste no field; robs no one of a home, no wife of a husband, no child of a father, no sister of a brother; he goes to elevate the intellect, to mould the heart to virtue, to establish schools and colleges; to promote temperance, industry, and chastity; to wipe away tears, and to tell of heaven. *His* course is marked by intelligence and order; by peace and purity; by the joy of the domestic circle, and the happiness of a virtuous fireside; by consolation on the bed of pain, and by the hope of heaven that cheers the dying. Who would not rather be a preacher of the gospel than a blood-stained warrior? Who would not rather have the wreath that shall encircle the brows of Paul, and Swartz, and Martin, and Brainerd, than the laurels of Alexander and Caesar?

(4.) There is ample fulness in the plan of salvation by the Redeemer, Eph 3:8. In Christ there is unsearchable riches, None can understand the fulness that there is in him; none can exhaust it. Millions and hundreds of millions have been saved by the fulness of his merits; and still those merits are as ample as ever. The sun in the heavens has shone for six thousand years, and has shed light and comfort on countless millions; but his beams are not exhausted or diminished in splendour. To-day, while I write—-this beautiful, calm, sweet day (June 24, 1840)—his beams are as bright, as rich, as full, as they were when they were shed on Eden. So of the Sun of righteousness. Millions

have been enlightened by his beams; but to-day they are as full, and rich, and glorious, as they were when the first ray from that Sun reached the benighted mind of a penitent sinner. And that fulness is not *to be* exhausted. No matter how many partake of his abundance; no matter how many darkened minds are enlightened; no matter though nation after nation comes and partakes of his fulness, yet there is no approach to exhaustion. The sun in the heavens may waste his fires and burn out, and become a dark orb, diffusing horror over a cold and cheerless world; but not so with the Sun of righteousness. That will shine on in glory for ever and ever; and the last penitent sinner on earth who comes to partake of the riches of the grace of Christ shall find it as full and free as did the first who sought pardon through his blood. Oh, the UNSEARCHABLE RICHES of Christ! Who can understand this? Who can grow weary in its contemplation?

(5.) There is no good reason why any sinner should be lost, Eph 3:8. If the merits of the Saviour were limited; if his arm were a feeble human arm; if he died only for a part; and if his merit were already well-nigh exhausted, we might begin to despair. But it is not so. The riches of his grace are unbounded and inexhaustible. And why then does the sinner die? I can answer. He dies like the man who expires of thirst while fountains bubble and streams flow all around him; like him who is starving amidst trees loaded with fruit; like him who is dying of fever in the midst of medicines that would at once restore him; like him who holds his breath, and dies while the balmy air of heaven— pure, full, and free —floats all around him. If a man thus dies, who is to blame? If a man goes down to hell from lands where the gospel is preached, whose is the fault? It is not because the merits of Christ are limited; it is not because they are exhausted.

(6.) The church is designed to accomplish a most important purpose in the manifestation of the Divine glory and perfections, Eph 3:10. It is by that that his great wisdom is shown. It is by that entirely that his mercy is displayed, Eph 2:7. His power is shown in the creation and support of the worlds; his goodness in the works of creation and Providence; his truth in his promises and threatenings; his greatness and majesty are everywhere displayed in the universe which he has brought into being. His mercy is shown in the church; and there alone. Angels in heaven, not having sinned, have had no occasion for its exercise; and angels that are fallen have had no offer of pardon. Throughout the wide universe there has been, so far as we know, no exercise of mercy but in the church. Hence the interest which the angelic beings feel in the work of redemption. Hence they desire to look into these things, and to see more of the height and depth and length and breadth of the love of God evinced in the work of redemption. Hence the church is to be honoured for ever as the means of making known to distant worlds the way in which God shows mercy to rebellious creatures. It is honour enough for one world thus to be the sole means of making known to the universe one of the attributes of God; and while other worlds may contain more proofs of his power and greatness, it is enough for ours that it shows to distant worlds how he can exercise compassion.

(7.) All tribulation and affliction may be intended to do some good, and may benefit others, Eph 3:13. Paul felt that *his* sufferings were for the "glory"—the welfare and honour of the Gentiles in whose cause he was suffering. He was then a prisoner at Rome. He was permitted no longer to go abroad from land to land to preach the gospel. How natural would it have been for him to be desponding, and to feel that he was leading a useless life. But he did not feel thus. He felt that in some way he might be doing good. He was suffering in a good cause, and his trials had been brought on him by the appointment of God. He gave himself to writing letters; he talked with all who would come to him, Ac 28:30,31,) and he expected to accomplish something by his example in his sufferings. The sick, the afflicted, and the imprisoned, often feel that they are useless. They are laid

aside from public and active life, and they feel that they are living in vain. But it is not so. The long imprisonment of John Bunyan —so mysterious to him and to his friends—was the means of producing the Pilgrim's Progress, new translated into more than twenty languages, and already blessed to the salvation of thousands. The meekness, and patience, and kindness of a Christian on a bed of pain, may do more for the honour of religion than he could do in a life of health. It shows the sustaining power of the gospel; and this is much. It is worth much suffering to show to a world what the gospel can do in supporting the soul in times of trial; and he who is imprisoned or persecuted, who lies month after month, or year after year, on a bed of languishing, may do more for the honour of religion than by many years of active life.

(8.) There is but one family among the friends of God, Eph 3:15. They all have one Father, and all are brethren. In heaven and on earth they belong to the same family, and worship the same God. Let Christians, therefore, first love one another. Let them lay aside all contention and strife. Let them feel that they are brethren; that though they belong to different denominations, and are called by different names, yet they belong to the same family, and are united under the same glorious Head. Let them, secondly, realize how highly they are honoured. They belong to the same family as the angels of light and the spirits of just men made perfect. It is an honour to belong to such a family; an honour to be a Christian. Oh, if we saw this in its true light, how much more honourable would it be to belong to this "family" than to belong to the families of the great on earth, and to have our names enrolled with nobles and with kings!

(9.) Let us seek to know more of the love of Christ in our redemption into understand more of the extent of that love which he evinced for us, Eph 3:16-19. It is worth our study. It will reward our efforts. There are few Christians—if there are any—who understand the richness and fulness of the gospel of Christ; few who have such elevated views as they might have, and should have, of the glory of that gospel. It is wonderful that they who profess to love the Lord Jesus do not study that system more, and desire more to know the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of the love of Christ. True, it passes knowledge. We cannot hope fully to fathom it in this world. But we may know more of it than we do. We may aspire to being filled with all the fulness of God. We may long for it; pant for it; strive for it; pray for it—and we shall not strive in vain. Though we shall not attain all we wish; though there will be an infinity beyond what we can understand in this world, yet there will be enough attained to reward all our efforts, and to fill us with love and joy and peace. The love of God our Saviour is indeed an illimitable ocean; but we may see enough of it in this world to lead us to adore and praise God with overflowing hearts.

EPHESIANS - Chapter 4

EPHESIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 1

Ephesians Chapter 4

Analysis of the Chapter

THIS chapter is the commencement of the practical part of the epistle, and is made up, like the remaining chapters, of various exhortations. It is in accordance with the usual habit of Paul to conduct an argument in his epistles, and, then to enforce various practical duties, either growing out of the argument which he had maintained, or, more commonly, adapted to some particular state of things in the church to which he wrote. The points of exhortation in this chapter are, in general, the following:—

I. An exhortation to *unity*, Eph 4:1-6. He entreats them to walk worthy of their vocation, Eph 4:1; shows them how it could be done, or what he meant; and that, in order to that, they should show meekness and kindness, Eph 4:2 and particularly exhorts them to unity, Eph 4:3 for they had one God, one Saviour, one baptism, one religion, Eph 4:4-6.

II. He shows them that God had made ample provision for his people, that they might be sound in the faith, and in unity of life and of doctrine, and need not be driven about with every wind of opinion, Eph 4:7-16. He assures them that to every Christian is given grace in the Redeemer adapted to his circumstances, Eph 4:7; that the Lord Jesus ascended to heaven to obtain gifts for his people, Eph 4:8-10; that he had given apostles, prophets, and evangelists, for the very purpose of imparting instruction, and confirming them in the faith of the gospel, Eph 4:11,12; that this was in order that they might attain to the highest elevation in Christian knowledge and piety, Eph 4:13; and particularly that they might not be driven to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, Eph 4:14-16.

III. Having these arrangements made for their knowledge and piety,he exhorts them not to live as the heathen around them lived, but to show that they were under a better influence, Eph 4:17-24. Their understanding was darkened, and they were alienated from the life of God, or true religion, Eph 4:18; they were past feeling, and were given over to every form of sensuality, Eph 4:19. The Ephesians, however, had been taught a different thing, Eph 4:20,21; and the apostle exhorts them to lay aside everything pertaining to their former course of life, and to become wholly conformed to the principles of the new man, Eph 4:22-24.

IV. He exhorts them to perform particular Christian duties, and to put away certain evils, of which they and all others were in danger, Eph 4:25. In particular, he entreats them to avoid lying, Eph 4:25; anger, Eph 4:26; theft, Eph 4:28; corrupt and corrupting conversation, Eph 4:29; grieving the Holy Spirit, Eph 4:30;) bitterness, evil-speaking, and malice, Eph 4:31; and entreats them to manifest, in their intercourse with each other, a spirit of kindness and forgiveness, Eph 4:32.

Verse 1. *I therefore*. In view of the great and glorious truths which God has revealed, and of the grace which he has manifested towards you who are Gentiles. See the previous chapters. The sense of the word "therefore"—*oun*—in this place, is, "Such being your exalted privileges; since God has done so much for you; since he has revealed for you such a glorious system; since he has bestowed on you the honour of calling you into his kingdom, and making you partakers of his mercy, I entreat you to live in accordance with these elevated privileges, and to show your sense of his goodness by devoting your all to his service." The force of the word "*I*" they would all feel. It was the appeal and exhortation of the founder of their church—of their spiritual father—of one who had endured much for them, and who was now in bonds on account of his devotion to the welfare of the Gentile world.

The prisoner of the Lord. Marg., *in*. It means, that he was now a prisoner, or in confinement *in the cause* of the Lord; and he regarded himself as having been made a prisoner because the Lord had so willed and ordered it. He did not feel particularly that he was the prisoner of Nero; he was bound and kept because the *Lord* willed it, and because it was in his service. **See Barnes "Eph 3:1".**

Beseech you that ye walk worthy. That you live as becomes those who have been called in this manner into the kingdom of God. The word *walk* is often used to denote life, conduct, etc. **See Barnes "Ro 4:12"**; **See Barnes** "Ro 6:4"; **See Barnes "2Co 5:7"**.

Of the vocation. Of the *calling—thv klhsewv*. This word properly means *a call*, or *an invitation*—as to a banquet. Hence it means that Divine invitation or calling by which Christians are introduced into the privileges of the gospel. The word is translated *calling* in Ro 11:29 1Co 1:26, 7:20 Eph 1:18, 4:1,4; Php 3:14 2Th 1:11; 2Ti 1:9; Heb 3:1 2Pe 1:10. It does not elsewhere occur. The sense of the word, and the agency employed in calling us, are well expressed in the Westminster Shorter Catechism: "Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to us in the gospel." This *calling* or *vocation* is through the agency of the Holy Spirit, and is his appropriate work on the human heart. It consists essentially in influencing the mind to turn to God, or to enter into his kingdom. It is the exertion of *so much* influence on the mind as is necessary to secure the turning of the sinner to God. In this all Christians are agreed, though there have been almost endless disputes about the actual influence exerted, and the mode in which the Spirit acts on the mind. Some suppose it is by "moral suasion;" some by physical power; some by an act of creation; some by inclining the mind to exert its proper powers in right way, and to turn to God. What is the precise agency employed perhaps we are not to expect to be able to decide. See Joh 3:8. The great, the essential point is held, if it be maintained that it is by the agency of the Holy Spirit that the result is secured—and this I suppose to be held by all evangelical Christians. But though it is by the agency of the Holy Spirit, we are not to suppose that it is without the employment of *means*. It is not literally like the act of creation. It is preceded and attended with *means* adapted to the end; means which are almost as various as the individuals who are called into the kingdom of God. Among those means are the following.

(1.) *Preaching*. Probably more are called into the kingdom by this means than any other. It is "God's great ordinance for the salvation of men." It is eminently fitted for it. The pulpit has higher advantages for acting on the mind than any other means of affecting men. The truths that are dispensed; the sacredness of the place; the peace and quietness of the sanctuary; and the appeals to the reason, the conscience, and the heart—all are fitted to affect men, and to bring them to reflection. The Spirit makes use of the word preached, but in a great variety of ways. Sometimes many are impressed simultaneously; sometimes the same truth affects one mind, while others are unmoved; and sometimes truth reaches the heart of a sinner which he has heard a hundred times before, without being interested. The Spirit acts with sovereign power, and by laws which have never yet been traced out.

(2.) The events of Providence are used to call men into his kingdom. God appeals to men by laying them on a bed of pain, or by requiring them to follow a friend in the still and mournful procession to the grave. They feel that they must die, and they are led to ask the question whether they are prepared. Much fewer are affected in this way than we should suppose would be the case; but still there are many, in the aggregate, who can trace their hope of heaven to a fit of sickness, or to the death of a friend.

(3.) Conversation is one of the means by which sinners are called into the kingdom of God. In some states of mind, where the Spirit has prepared the soul like mellow ground prepared for the

seed, a few moments' conversation, or a single remark, will do more to arrest the attention than much preaching.

(4.) Reading is often the means of calling men into the kingdom. The Bible is the great means—and if we can get men to read that, we have very cheering indications that they will be converted. The profligate Earl of Rochester was awakened and led to the Saviour by reading a chapter in Isaiah. And who can estimate the number of those who have been converted by reading Baxter's Call to the Unconverted; Alleine's Alarm; the Dairy-man's Daughter; or the Shepherd of Salisbury Plain? He does good who places a good book in the way of a sinner. That mother or sister is doing good, and making the conversion of a son or brother *probable*, who puts a Bible in his chest when he goes to sea, or in his trunk when he goes on a journey. Never should a son be allowed to go from home without one. The time will come when, far away from home, he will read it he will read it when his mind is pensive and tender, and the Spirit may bear the truth to his heart for his conversion.

(5.) The Spirit calls men into the kingdom of Christ by presiding over and directing, in some unseen manner, their own reflections, or the operations of their own minds. In some way, unknown to us, he turns the thoughts to the past life; recalls forgotten deeds and plans; makes long past sins rise to remembrance; and overwhelms the mind with conscious guilt from the memory of crime, he holds this power over the soul; and it is among the most mighty and mysterious of all the influences that he has on the heart. *Sometimes*—a man can hardly tell how—the mind will be pensive, sad, melancholy; then conscious of guilt; then alarmed at the future. Often, by sudden transitions, it will be changed from the gay to the grave, and from the pleasant to the sad; and often, unexpectedly to himself, and by associations which he cannot trace out, the sinner will find himself reflecting on death, judgment, and eternity. It is the Spirit of God that leads the mind along. It is not by force; not by the violation of its laws, but in accordance with those laws, that the mind is thus led along to the eternal world. In such ways, and by such means, are men "called" into the kingdom of God. To "walk worthy of that calling," is to live as becomes a Christian, an heir of glory; to live as Christ did. It is,

(1.) to bear our religion with us to all places, companies, employments. Not merely to be a Christian on the Sabbath, and at the communion-table, and in our own land; but every day, and everywhere, and in any land where we may be placed. We are to live religion, and not merely to profess it. We are to be Christians in the counting-room, as well as in the closet; on the farm, as well as at the communion-table; among strangers, and in a foreign land, as well as in our own country and in the sanctuary.

(2.) It is to do nothing inconsistent with the most elevated Christian character. In temper, feeling, plan, we are to give expression to no emotion, and use no language, and perform no deed, that shall be inconsistent with the most elevated Christian character.

(3.) It is to do *right always*: to be just to all; to tell the simple truth; to defraud no one; to maintain a correct standard of morals; to be known to be honest. There is a correct standard of character and conduct; and a Christian should be a man so living, that we may always know *exactly where to find him*. He should so live, that we shall have no doubts that, however others may act, we shall find him to be the unflinching advocate of temperance, chastity, honesty, and of every good work—of every plan that is really fitted to alleviate human woe, and benefit a dying world.

(4.) It is to live as one should who expects soon to be *in heaven*. Such a man will feel that the earth not his home; that he is a stranger and a pilgrim here; that riches, honours, and pleasures are

of comparatively little importance; that he ought to watch and pray, and that he ought to be holy. A man who feels that he may die at any moment will watch and pray. A man who realizes that *to-morrow* he may be in heaven will feel that he ought to be holy. He who begins a day on earth, feeling that at its close he may be among the angels of God, and the spirits of just men made perfect; that before its close he *may* have seen the Saviour glorified, and the burning throne of God, will feel the importance of living a holy life, and of being wholly devoted to the service of God. Pure should be the eyes that are soon to look on the throne of God; pure the hands that are soon to strike the harps of praise in heaven; pure the feet that are to walk the "golden streets above."

{1} "prisoner *of*" "*in* {*} "of" "on account of"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *With all lowliness*. Humility. **See Barnes** "Ac 20:19, where the same Greek word is used. Compare, also, the following places, where the same Greek word occurs: Php 2:3, "in *lowliness* of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves;" Col 2:18, "in a voluntary *humility*;" Col 2:23 3:12; 1Pe 5:5.

The word does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. The idea is, that humility of mind becomes those who are "called," (Eph 4:1, and that we walk worthy of that calling when we evince it.

And meekness. **See Barnes "Mt 5:5".**

Meekness relates to the manner in which we receive injuries. We are to bear them patiently, and not to retaliate, or seek revenge. The meaning here is, that we adorn the gospel when we show its power in enabling us to bear injuries without anger or a desire of revenge, or with a mild and forgiving spirit. See 2Co 10:1 Gal 5:23, 6:1

2Ti 2:25 Tit 3:2; where the same Greek word occurs.

With longsuffering, etc. Bearing patiently with the foibles, faults, and infirmities of others. **See Barnes "1Co 13:4".**

The virtue here required is that which is to be manifested in our manner of receiving the provocations which we meet with from our brethren. No virtue, perhaps, is more frequently demanded in our intercourse with others. We do not go far with any fellow-traveller on the journey of life before we find there is great occasion for its exercise. He has a temperament different from our own. He may be sanguine, or choleric, or melancholy; while we may be just the reverse, lie has peculiarities of taste, and habits, and disposition, which differ much from ours. He has his own plans and purposes of life, and his own way and time of doing things. He may be naturally irritable, or he may have been so trained that his modes of speech and conduct differ much from ours. Neighbours have occasion to remark this in their neighbours; friends in their friends; kindred in their kindred; one church-member in another. A husband and wife—such is the imperfection of human nature-can find enough in each other to embitter life if they choose to magnify imperfections and to become irritated at trifles; and there is no friendship that may not be marred in this way, if we will allow it. Hence, if we would have life move on smoothly, we must learn to bear and forbear. We must indulge the friend that we love in the little peculiarities of saying and doing things which may be important to him, but which may be of little moment to us. Like children, we must suffer

each one to build his playhouse in his own way, and not quarrel with him because he does not think our way the best. All usefulness, and all comfort, may be prevented by an unkind, a sour, a crabbed temper of mind—a mind that can bear with no difference of opinion or temperament. A spirit of fault-finding; all unsatisfied temper; a constant irritability; little inequalities in the look, the temper, or the manner; a brow cloudy and dissatisfied—your husband or your wife cannot tell why—will more than neutralize all the good you can do, and render life anything but a blessing. It is in such gentle and quiet virtues as meekness and forbearance that the happiness and usefulness of life consist, far more than in brilliant eloquence, in splendid talent, or illustrious deeds that shall send the name to future times. It is the bubbling spring which flows gently; the little rivulet which glides through the meadow, and which runs along day and night by the farm-house, that is useful, rather than the swollen flood or the roaring cataract. Niagara excites our wonder; and we stand amazed at the power and greatness of God there, as he "pours it from his hollow hand." But one Niagara is enough for a continent or a world; while that same world needs thousands and tens of thousands of silver fountains, and gently-flowing rivulets, that shall water every farm, and every meadow, and every garden, and that shall flow on, every day and every night, with their gentle and quiet beauty. So with the acts of our lives. It is not by great deeds only, like those of Howard —not by great sufferings only, like those of the martyrs—that good is to be done; it is by the daily and quiet virtues of life—the Christian temper, the meek forbearance, the spirit of forgiveness in the husband, the wife, the father, the mother, the brother, the sister, the friend, the neighbour—that good is to be done; and in this all may be useful.

{a} "lowliness" Mt 11:29 {*} "lowliness" "humbleness of mind" {+} "forbearing" "bearing with"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *The unity of the Spirit.* A united spirit, or oneness of spirit. This does not refer to the fact that there is one Holy Spirit; but it refers to unity of affection, of confidence, of love. It means that Christians should be united in temper and affection, and not be split up in factions and parties. It may be implied here, as is undoubtedly true, that such a unity would be produced only by the Holy Spirit; and that, as there was but one Spirit which had acted on their hearts to renew them, they ought to evince the same feelings and views. There was occasion among the Ephesians for this exhortation; for they were composed of Jews and Gentiles, and there might be danger of divisions and strifes, as there had been in other churches. There is *always* occasion for such an exhortation; for

(1.) *unity* of feeling is eminently desirable to honour the gospel, **See Barnes "Joh 17:21"**; and

(2.) there is always danger of discord where men are brought together in one society. There are so many different tastes and habits; there is such a variety of intellect and feeling; the modes of education have been so various, and the temperament may be so different, that there is constant danger of division. Hence the subject is so often dwelt on in the scriptures, **See Barnes** "1Co 2:1, seq. and hence there is so much need of caution and of care in the churches.

In the bond of peace. This was to be by the cultivation of that peaceful temper which binds all together. The American Indians usually spoke of peace as a "chain of friendship" which was to be

kept bright. The meaning here is, that they should be bound or united together in the sentiments and affections of peace. It is not mere external unity; it is not a mere unity of creed; it is not a mere unity in the forms of public worship; it is such as the Holy Spirit produces in the hearts of Christians, when he fills them all with the same love, and joy, and peace in believing. The following verses contain the reasons for this.

EPHESIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *There is one body*. One church—for so the word *body* meats here—denoting the body of Christ. **See Barnes "Ro 12:5"**.

Comp. **See Barnes "Eph 1:23"**.

The meaning here is, that as there is really but one church on earth, there ought to be unity. The church is, at present, divided into many denominations. It has different forms of worship, and different rites and ceremonies. It embraces those of different complexions and ranks in life, and it cannot be denied that there are often unhappy contentions and jealousies in different parts of that church. Still, there is but one —"one holy, catholic (i.e., *universal*) church;" and that church should feel that it is one. Christ did not come to redeem and save different churches, and to give them a different place in heaven. He did not come to save the Episcopal communion merely, or the Presbyterian or the Methodist communions only; nor did he leave the world to fit up for them different mansions in heaven. He did not come to save merely the black man, or the red, or the white man; nor did he leave the world to set up for them separate mansions in the skies. He came that he might collect into one community a multitude of every complexion, and from every land, and unite them in one great brotherhood on earth, and ultimately assemble them in the same heaven. The church is one. Every sincere Christian is a brother in that church, and has an equal right with all others to its privileges. Being one by the design of the Saviour, they should be one in feeling; and every Christian, no matter what his rank, should be ready to hail every other Christian as a fellow-heft of heaven.

One Spirit. The Holy Spirit. There is one and the self-same Spirit that dwells in the church. The same Spirit has awakened all; enlightened all; convicted all; converted all. Wherever they may be, and whoever, yet there has been substantially the same work of the Spirit on the heart of every Christian. There are circumstantial differences arising from diversities of temperament, disposition, and education; there may be a difference in the depth and power of his operations on the soul; there may be a difference in the degree of conviction for sin and in the evidence of conversion, but still there are the same operations on the heart essentially, produced by the same Spirit. **See Barnes "1Co 12:6-11"**.

All the gifts of prayer, and of preaching; all the zeal, the ardour, the love, the self-denial in the church, are produced by the same Spirit. There should be, therefore, *unity*. The church is united in the agency by which it is saved; it should be united in the feelings which influence its members.

Even as ye are called. **See Barnes "Eph 4:1"**

The sense is, "There is one body and one spirit, *in like manner* as there is one hope resulting from your calling." The same notion of oneness is found in relation to each of these things.

In one hope of your calling. In one hope *resulting* from your being called into his kingdom. On the meaning of the word *hope*, **See Barnes "Eph 2:12"**.

The meaning here is, that Christians have the same hope, and they should therefore be one. They are looking forward to the same heaven; they hope for the same happiness beyond the grave. It is not as on earth among the people of the world, where there is a variety of hopes—where one hopes for pleasure, and another for honour, and another for gain; but there is the prospect of the same inexhaustible joy. This *hope* is fitted to promote union. There is no rivalry—for there is enough for all. *Hope* on earth does not always produce union and harmony. Two men hope to obtain the same office; two students hope to obtain the same honour in college; two rivals hope to obtain the same hand in marriage—and the consequence is jealousy, contention, and strife. The reason is, that but *one* can obtain the object. Not so with the crown of life—with the rewards of heaven. All may obtain *that* crown; all may share those rewards. How *can* Christians contend in an angry manner with each other, when the hope of dwelling in the same heaven swells their bosoms and animates their hearts?

EPHESIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *One Lord*. This evidently refers to the Lord Jesus. The "Spirit" is mentioned in the previous verse; the Father in the verse following. On the application of the word "Lord" to the Saviour, **See Barnes "Ac 1:24"**.

The argument here is, that there ought to be unity among Christians, because they have one Lord and Saviour. They have not different Saviours adapted to different classes; not one for the Jew, and another for the Greek; not one for the rich, and another for the poor; not one for the bond, and another for the free. There is but one. He belongs in common to all as their Saviour; and he has a right to rule over one as much as over another. There is no better way of promoting unity among Christians than by reminding them that they have the same Saviour. And when jealousies and heart-burnings arise; or when they are disposed to contend about trifles; when they magnify un important matters until they are in danger of rending the church asunder, let them feel that they have one Lord and Saviour, and they will lay aside their contentions, and be one again. Let two men, who have never seen each other before, meet in a distant land, and feel that they have the same Redeemer, and their hearts will mingle into one. They are not aliens, but friends. A cord of sympathy is struck more tender than that which binds them to country or home; and though of different nations, complexions, or habits, they will feel that they are one. Why should contentions ever arise between those who have the same Redeemer?

One faith. The same belief. That is, either the belief of the same doctrines, or faith of the same nature in the heart. The word may be taken in either sense. I see no reason why it should not include *both* here, or be used in the widest sense. If so used, it means that Christians should be united because they hold the same great doctrines; and, also, because they have the same confidence in the Redeemer in their hearts. They hold the same system as distinguished from Judaism, Paganism, Mohammedanism, Deism; and they should, therefore, be one. They have the same trust in Christ, as a living, practical principle— and they should, therefore, be one. They may differ in other

attachments; in temperament; in pursuit; in professions in life; but they have a common faith, and they should be ONE.

One baptism. This does not affirm that there is one *mode* of baptism, but it refers to the thing itself. They are all baptized in the name of the same Father, Saviour, Sanctifier. They have all in this manner been consecrated unto God, and devoted to his service. Whether by immersion, or by pouring, or by sprinkling, they have all been baptized with water; whether it is done in adult years, or in infancy, the same solemn act has been performed on all—the act of consecration to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. This passage cannot be adduced to prove that only one *mode* of baptism is lawful, unless it can be shown that the thing referred to here was the *mode* and not the *thing itself*; and unless it can be proved that Paul meant to build his argument for the unity of Christians on the fact that the same *form* was used in their baptism. But this is evidently not the point of his argument. The argument is, that there was really but *one baptism*—not that there was but one mode of baptism. I could not use this argument in this form—"Christians should be one because they have been all baptized *by sprinkling*;" and yet the argument would be just as forcible as to use it in this form— "Christians should be one because they have all been baptized by *immersion*." There is one *baptism*, not one *mode* of baptism; and no man has a right to *assume* that there can be but one mode, and then apply this passage to that. The *essential thing* in the argument before us is, that there has been a consecration to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, by the application of water. Thus understood, the argument is one that will be *felt* by all who have been devoted to God by baptism. They have taken the same vows upon them. They have consecrated themselves to the same God. They have made the same solemn profession of religion. Water has been applied to one and all as the emblem of the purifying influences of the Holy Spirit; and having been thus initiated in a solemn manner into the same profession of religion, they should be one.

EPHESIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *One God*. The same God; therefore there should be unity. Were there many gods to be worshipped, there could be no more hope of unity than there is among the worshippers of Mammon and Bacchus, and the various other idols that men set up. Men who have different pursuits, and different objects of supreme affection, can be expected to have no union. Men who worship many gods, cannot hope to be united. Their affections are directed to different objects, and there is no harmony or sympathy of feeling. But where there is one supreme object of attachment, there may be expected to be unity. The children of a family that are devoted to a parent will be united among themselves; and the fact, that all Christians have the same great object of worship, should constitute a strong bond of union among themselves—a chain always kept bright.

The Father of all. One God who is the Father of all; that is, who is a common Father to all who believe. That this refers to the Father, in contradistinction from the Son and the Holy Spirit, seems evident. The Spirit and the Son are mentioned in the previous verses. But the fact, that the "Father of all" is mentioned as "God," does not prove that the Spirit and the Son are not also endowed with Divine attributes. That question is to be determined by the attributes ascribed to the Son and the Holy Spirit in other places. All sincere Christians worship *one* God, and *but one*. But they suppose that this one God subsists as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, united in a mysterious manner, and

constituting THE one God, and that there is no other God. That the Father is Divine they all hold, as Paul affirms here; that the Son and the Holy Spirit are also Divine they also hold. **See Barnes "Joh 1:1"**; **See Barnes** "Heb 1:1"; **See Barnes "Php 2:6"**; **See Barnes** "Ro 9:5".

The meaning here is, that God is the common Father of *all* his people—of the rich and the poor; the bond and the free; the learned and the unlearned. He is no respecter of persons. Nothing would tend more to overcome the prejudices of colour, rank, and wealth, than to feel that we all have one Father; and that we are all equally the objects of his favour. Comp. **See Barnes "Ac 17:26"**.

Who is above all. Who is supreme; who presides over all things.

And through all. He pervades universal nature, and his agency is seen everywhere.

And in you all. There is no one in whose heart he does not dwell. You are his temple; and he abides in you. See Eph 2:22. **See Barnes "1Co 6:19"**.

The argument here is, that as the same God dwelt in every heart, they ought to be one. See this argument beautifully expressed in the Saviour's prayer, Joh 17:21. Comp. Joh 14:23.

EPHESIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *But unto every one of us*. Every Christian.

Is given grace. The favour of God; meaning here, that God had bestowed upon each sincere Christian the means of living as he ought to do, and had in his gospel made ample provision that they might walk worthy of their vocation. What are the endowments thus given the apostle states in the following verses. The *grace* referred to here, most probably, means *the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit*, or his operations on the heart in connexion with the use of the means which God has appointed.

According to the measure of the gift of Christ. Grace is bestowed upon all true Christians, and all have enough to enable them to live a life of holiness. Yet we are taught here,

(1.) that it is a *gift*. It is bestowed on us. It is not what is originated by ourselves.

(2.) It is by a certain *measure*. It is not unlisted, and without rule. There is a wise adaptation; an imparting it by a certain rule. The same grace is not given to all, but to all is given enough to enable them to live as they ought to live.

(3.) That measure is the gift of Christ, or what is given in Christ. It comes through him. It is what he has purchased; what he has obtained by his merits. All have enough for the purposes for which God has called them into his kingdom; but there are not the same endowments conferred on all. Some have grace given them to qualify them for the ministry; some to be apostles; some to be martyrs; some to make them eminent as public benefactors. All this has been obtained by Christ; and one should not complain that another has more distinguished endowments than he has. **See Barnes "Ro 12:3"**; **See Barnes** "Joh 1:16.

{a} "of the gift" Ro 12:3

EPHESIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Wherefore he saith*. The word "he" is not in the original; and it may mean "the Scripture saith," or "God saith." The point of the argument here is, that Christ, when he ascended to heaven, obtained certain *gifts* for men, and that those gifts are bestowed upon his people in accordance with this. To *prove* that, he adduces this passage from Ps 68:18. Much perplexity has been felt in regard to the principle on which Paul quotes this Psalm, and applies it to the ascension of the Redeemer. The Psalm seems to have been composed on the occasion of removing the ark of the covenant from Kirjath-jearim to Mount Zion, 2Sa 6:1, seq. It is a song of triumph, celebrating the victories of, JEHOVAH, and particularly the victories which had been achieved when the ark was at the head of the army. It *appears* to have no relation to the Messiah; nor would it probably occur to any one, on reading it, that it referred to his ascension, unless it had been so quoted by the apostle. Great difficulty has been felt, therefore, in determining on what principle Paul applied it to the ascension of the Redeemer. Some have supposed that the Psalm had a primary reference to the Messiah; some that it referred to him in only a secondary sense; some that it is applied to him by way of "accommodation;" and some that he merely uses the words as adapted to express him idea, as a man adopts words which are familiar to him, and which will express his thoughts, though not meaning to say that the words had any such reference originally. Storr supposes that the words were used by the Ephesian Christians in their *hymns*, and that Paul quoted them as containing a sentiment which was admitted among them. This is possible; but it is mere conjecture. It has been also supposed that the tabernacle was a type of Christ; and that the whole Psalm, therefore, having original reference to the tabernacle, might be applied to Christ as the antitype. But this both conjectural and fanciful. On the various modes adopted to account for the difficulty, the reader may consult Rosenmuller, *in loc*. To me it seems plain that the Psalm had original reference to the bringing up the ark to Mount Zion, and is a triumphal song. In the song or psalm, the poet shows why God was to be praised—on account of his greatness, and his benignity to men, Eph 4:1-6. He then recounts the doings of God in former times—particularly his conducting his people through the wilderness, and the fact that his enemies were discomfited before him, Eph 4:7-12. All this refers to the God, the symbols of whose presence were on the tabernacle, and accompanying the ark. He then speaks of the various fortunes that had befallen the ark of the covenant. It had lain among the pots, Eph 4:13, yet it had formerly been white as snow when God scattered kings by it, Eph 4:14. He then speaks of the hill of God—the Mount Zion to which the ark was about to be removed, and says that it is an "high hill"—" high as the hills of Bashan," the hill where God desired to dwell for ever, Eph 4:16. God is then introduced as ascending that hill, encompassed with thousands of angels, as in Mount Sinai; and the poet says that, in doing it, he had triumphed over his enemies, and had led captivity captive, Eph 4:18. The fact that the ark of God thus ascended the hill of Zion, the place of rest; that it was to remain there as its permanent abode, no more to be carried about at the head of armies, was the proof of its triumph. It had made everything captive; it had subdued every foe; and its ascent there would be the means of obtaining invaluable gifts for men. Mercy and truth would go forth from that mountain; and the true religion would spread abroad, even to the rebellious, as the results of the triumph of God, whose symbol was over the tabernacle and the ark. The placing the ark there was the proof of permanent victory, and would be connected with most important benefits to men. The "ascending on high," therefore, in the Psalm, refers, as it seems to me, to the ascent of the symbol of the Divine Presence accompanying the ark on Mount Zion, or to the placing it "on high" above all its foes. The remainder of the Psalm corresponds with this view. This ascent of the ark on Mount Zion; this evidence of its triumph over all the foes of

God; this permanent residence of the ark there; and this fact that its being established there would be followed with the bestowment of invaluable gifts to men, might be regarded as a BEAUTIFUL EMBLEM Of the ascension of the Redeemer to heaven. There were strong points of resemblance. He also ascended on high. His ascent was the proof of victory over his foes. He went there for a permanent abode. And his ascension was connected with the bestowment of important blessings to men. It is as such emblematic language, I suppose, that the apostle makes the quotation. It did not originally refer to this; but the events were so similar in many points that the one would suggest the other, and the same language would describe both. It was language familiar to the apostle; language that would aptly express his thoughts, and language that was not improbably applied to the ascension of the Redeemer by Christians at that time. The phrase, therefore, "he saith"—*legei*-or "it saith," or "the Scripture saith," means, "it is said;" or, "this language will properly express the fact under consideration, to wit, that there is grace given to each one of us, or that the means are furnished by the Redeemer for us to lead holy lives."

When he ascended up on high. To heaven. The Psalm is, "Thou hast ascended on high." Comp. Eph 1:20,21.

He led captivity captive. The meaning of this in the Psalm is, that he triumphed over his foes. The margin is, "*a multitude of captives*." But this, I think, is not quite the idea. It is language derived from a conqueror, who not only makes captives, but who makes captives of those who were then prisoners, and who conducts them as a part of his triumphal procession. He not only subdues his enemy, but he leads his captives in triumph. The allusion is to the public triumphs of conquerors, especially as celebrated among the Romans, in which captives were led in chains, (Tacitus, Ann. xii. 38,) and to the custom in such triumphs of distributing presents among the soldiers. Comp. also Jud 5:30, where it appears that this was also an early custom in other nations. *Burder*, in Ros. Alt. u. neu. Morgenland, *in loc*. When Christ ascended to heaven, he triumphed over all his foes. It was a complete victory over the malice of the great enemy of God, and over those who had sought his life. But he did more. He rescued those who were the captives of Satan, and led them in triumph. Man was held by Satan as a prisoner. His chains were around him. Christ rescued the captive prisoner, and designed to make him a part of his triumphal procession into heaven, that thus the victory might be complete—triumphing not only over the great foe himself, but swelling his procession with the attending hosts of those who had been the captives of Satan, now rescued and redeemed.

And gave gifts unto men. Such as he specifies in Eph 4:11.

{a} "When he ascended" Ps 68:18 {1} "captivity captive" "a multitude of captives"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Now that he ascended*. That is, it is affirmed in the Psalm that he *ascended*—"Thou hast ascended on high." This implies that there must have been a previous *descent*; or, as applicable to the Messiah, "*it is a truth* that he previously descended." It is by no means certain that Paul meant to say that the *word* "ascended" demonstrated that there must have been a previous descent; but he probably means, that in the case of Christ *there was*, in fact, a descent into the lower parts of the earth first. The language here used will appropriately express his decent to earth.

Into the lower parts of the earth. To the lowest state of humiliation. This seems to be the fair meaning of the words. Heaven stands opposed to earth. One is above; the other is beneath. From the one, Christ descended to the other; and he came not only *to* the earth, but he stooped to the most humble condition of humanity here. See Php 2:6-8. Comp. **See Barnes "Isa 44:23"**.

Some have understood this of the grave; others of the region of departed spirits; but these interpretations do not seem to be necessary. It is the earth itself that stands in contrast with the heavens; and the idea is, that the Redeemer descended from his lofty eminence in heaven, and became a man of humble rank and condition. Comp. Ps 139:15.

EPHESIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *He that descended is the same also that ascended*. The same Redeemer came down from God, and returned to him. It was not a different being, but the same.

Far above all heavens. **See Barnes "Eph 1:20-23"**.

Comp. Heb 7:26. He is gone above the visible heavens, and has ascended into the highest abodes of bliss. **See Barnes "2Co 12:2"**.

That he might fill all things. Marg., *fulfil*. The meaning is, "*that he might fill all things by his influence*", and direct and overrule all by his wisdom and power." *Doddridge*. **See Barnes "Eph 1:23"**.

{2} "fill all things" Eph 1:23.

EPHESIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *And he gave some, apostles*. He gave some to be apostles. The object here is to show that he has made ample provision for the extension and edification of his church. On the meaning of the word *apostles*, and on their appointment by the Saviour, **See Barnes "Mt 10:1"**.

And some, prophets, he appointed some to be prophets. **See Barnes "Ro 12:6"**; **See Barnes** "1Co 12:28"; **See Barnes "1Co 14:1"**.

And some, evangelists. **See Barnes "Ac 21:8"**.

Comp. 2Ti 4:5. The word does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. What was the precise office of the evangelist in the primitive church it is now impossible to determine. The evangelist *may* have been one whose main business was preaching, and who was not particularly engaged in the government of the church. The word properly means, "a messenger of good tidings;" and Robinson (Lex.) supposes that it denotes a minister of the gospel who was not located in any place, but who travelled as a missionary to preach the gospel, and to found churches. The word is so used now by many Christians; but it cannot be proved that it is so used in the New Testament. An explanation of the words which here occur may be found in Neander on the Primitive Church, in the Biblical Repository, vol. iv. p. 268, seq. The office was distinct from that of the *pastor*, the *teacher*, and the *prophet*; and was manifestly an office in which preaching was the main thing.

And some, pastors. Literally, *shepherds—poimenav*. Comp. Mt 9:36 25:32, 26:31 Mr 6:34, 14:27 Lu 2:8,16,18,20 Joh 10:2, Joh 10:11,12,14,16, where it is rendered *shepherd*, and *shepherds*;

also Heb 13:20 1Pe 2:25. In Mt 26:31 Mr 6:27 Heb 13:20; 1Pe 2:25, it is applied to the Lord Jesus as the *great Shepherd* of the flock—the church. It is rendered *pastors* only in the place before us. The word is given to ministers of the gospel with obvious propriety, and with great beauty. They are to exercise the same watchfulness and care over the people of their charge which a shepherd does over his flock. **See Barnes "Joh 21:15"; See Barnes "Joh 21:16".**

The meaning here is, that Christ exercised a special care for his church by appointing *pastors* who would watch over it as a shepherd does over his flock.

And teachers. **See Barnes "Ro 12:7".**

{b} "he gave some" "1Co 12:28"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *For the perfecting of the saints*. On the meaning of the word here rendered *perfecting—katartismon*—**See Barnes "2Co 13:9".**

It properly refers to *the restoring of anything to its place*; then putting in order, making complete, etc. Here it means that these various officers were appointed in order that everything in the church might be well arranged, or put into its proper place; or that the church might be *complete*. It is that Christians may have every possible advantage for becoming complete in love, and knowledge, and order.

For the work of the ministry. All these are engaged in the work of the ministry, though in different departments. Together they constituted THE *ministry* by which Christ meant to establish and edify the church. All these offices had an existence at that time, and all were proper; though it is clear that they were not all designed to be permanent. The apostolic office was of course to cease with the death of those who were *the witnesses* of the life and doctrines of Jesus, **See Barnes** "1Co 9:1; the office of *prophets* was to cease with the cessation of inspiration; and, in like manner, it is possible that the office of teacher or evangelist might be suspended, as circumstances might demand. But is it not clear, from this, that Christ did not appoint *merely* three orders of clergy to be permanent in the church? Here are *five* orders enumerated, and in 1Co 12:28 there are *eight* mentioned; and how can it be demonstrated that the Saviour intended that there should be three only, and that they should be permanent? The presumption is rather that he meant that there should be but one permanent order of ministers, though the departments of their labour might be varied according to circumstances, and though there might be helpers, as occasion should demand founding churches among the heathen, and in instructing and governing them there, there is need of reviving nearly all the offices of teacher, helper, evangelist, etc., which Paul has enumerated as actually existing in his time.

For the edifying. For building it up; that is, in the knowledge of the truth, and in piety. **See Barnes "Ro 14:19".**

The body of Christ. The church. **See Barnes "Eph 1:23".**

{*} "edifying" "Edification"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Till we all come*. Till all Christians arrive at a state of complete unity, and to entire perfection.

In the unity of the faith, marg. *into*. The meaning is, till we all hold the same truths, and the same confidence in the Son of God. **See Barnes "Joh 17:21-23"**.

And of the knowledge of the Son of God. That they might attain to the same practical acquaintance with the Son of God, and might thus come to the maturity of Christian piety. **See Barnes "Eph 3:19"**.

Unto a perfect man. Unto a complete man. This figure is obvious. The apostle compares their condition then to a state of childhood. The perfect man here refers to the man *grown up*—the man of mature life. He says that Christ had appointed pastors and teachers that the infant church might be conducted to *maturity*, or become strong—like a man. He does not refer to the doctrine of *sinless perfection*, but to the state of manhood as compared with that of childhood—-a state of strength, vigour, wisdom, when the full growth should be attained. See 1Co 14:20.

Unto the measure of the stature. Marg., or, *age*. The word *stature* expresses the idea. It refers to the growth of a man. The stature to be attained to was that of Christ. He was the standard—not in size, not in age, but in moral character. The measure to be reached was Christ; or we are to grow till we become like him.

Of the fulness of Christ. **See Barnes "Eph 1:23"**.

The phrase, "the measure of the fulness," means, probably, the "full measure "—by a form of construction that is common in the Hebrew writings, where two nouns are so used that one is to be rendered as an adjective— *as trees of greatness*—meaning great trees. Here it means, that they should so advance in piety and knowledge as to become wholly like him.

{1} "in the unity" "into" {a} "of the faith" Col 2:2 {b} "perfect man" Jas 1:6 {2} "stature" "age" {+} "Christ" "Full stature of Christ"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *That we henceforth be no more children*. In some respects Christians *are* to be like children. They are to be docile, gentle, mild, and free from ambition, pride, and haughtiness. **See Barnes "Mt 18:2"**; **See Barnes** "Mt 18:3".

But children have other characteristics besides simplicity and docility. They are often changeable, Mt 11:17; they are credulous, and are influenced easily by others, and led astray. In these respects, Paul exhorts the Ephesians to be no longer children, but urges them to put on the characteristics of manhood; and especially to put on the *firmness* in religious opinion which became maturity of life.

Tossed to and fro. *kludwnizomenoi*. This word is taken from waves or billows that are constantly tossed about—in all ages an image of instability of character and purpose.

And carried about with every wind of doctrine. With no firmness; no settled course; no helm. The idea is that of a vessel on the restless ocean, that is tossed about with every varying wind, and that has no settled line of sailing. So many persons are in regard to religious doctrines. They have no fixed views and principles. They hold no doctrines that are settled in their minds by careful and patient examination; and the consequence is, that they yield to every new opinion, and submit to

the guidance of every new teacher. The *doctrine* taught here is, that we should have settled religious opinions. We should carefully examine what is truth, and having found it, should adhere to it, and not yield on the coming of every new teacher. We should not, indeed, close our minds against conviction. We should be open to argument, and be willing to follow *the truth* wherever it will lead us. But this state of mind is not inconsistent with having settled opinions, and with being firm in holding them until we are convinced that we are wrong. No man can be useful who has not settled principles. No one who has not such principles can inspire confidence or be happy; and the first aim of every young convert should be to acquire settled views of the truth, and to become firmly grounded in the *doctrines* of the gospel.

By the sleight of men. The cunning, skill, *trickery* of men. The word used here—*kubeia*-is from a word *kubov* meaning a cube, a die, and properly means a game at dice. Hence it means game, gambling; and then anything that turns out by mere chance or hap-hazardous a game at dice does. It *may* possibly also denote the trick or fraud that is sometimes used in such games; but it seems rather to denote a man's forming his religious opinions by *the throw of a die*; or, in other words, it describes a man whose opinions seem to be the result of mere chance. Anything like casting a die, or like opening the Bible at random to determine a point of duty or doctrine may come under the description of the apostle here, and would all be opposed to the true mode, that by calm examination of the Bible, and by prayer. A man who forms his religious principles by chance, can *unform* them in the same way; and he who has determined his faith by one cast of the die, will be likely to throw them into another form by another. The phrase, "*the sleight of men*," therefore, I would render, "by the mere chance of men, or as you may happen to find men, one holding this opinion, and the next that, and allowing yourself to be influenced by them without any settled principles."

Cunning craftiness. Deceit, trick, art. See 2Co 12:16 Lu 20:23; 1Co 3:19. **See Barnes "2Co 4:2"**; **See Barnes** "2Co 11:3".

Whereby they lie in wait to deceive. Literally, "Unto the method of deceit;" that is, in the usual way of deceit. Doddridge, "In every method of deceit." This is the true idea. The meaning is, that men would use plausible pretences, and would, if possible, deceive the professed friends of Christ. Against such we should be on our guard; and not by their arts should our opinions be formed, but by the word of God.

{c} "carried about" Jas 1:6

EPHESIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *But speaking the truth in love*. Marg., *being sincere*. The translation in the text is correct—literally, *truthing in love —alhyeuontev*. Two things are here to be noted:

(1.) The truth is to be spoken—the simple, unvarnished truth. This is the way to avoid error, and this is the way to preserve others from error. In opposition to all trick, and art, and cunning, and fraud, and deception, Christians are to speak the simple truth, and nothing but the truth. Every statement which they make should be unvarnished truth; every promise which they make should be true; every representation which they make of the sentiments of others should be simple truth. Truth is the representation of things as they are; and there is no virtue that is more valuable in a Christian than the love of simple truth.

(2.) The second thing is, that the truth should be spoken *in love*. There *are* other ways of speaking truth. It is sometimes spoken in a harsh, crabbed, sour manner, which does nothing but disgust and offend. When we state truth to others, it should be with love to their souls, and with a sincere desire to do them good. When we admonish a brother of his faults, it should not be in a harsh and unfeeling manner, but in love. Where a minister pronounces the awful truth of God about depravity, death, the judgment, and future woe, it should be in love. It should not be done in a harsh and repulsive manner; it should not be done as if he rejoiced that men were in danger of hell, or as if he would like to pass the final sentence; it should not be with indifference, or in a tone of superiority. And in like manner, if we go to convince one who is in error, we should approach him in love. We should not dogmatize, or denounce, or deal out anathemas. Such things only repel. *He has done about half his work in convincing another of error, who has first convinced him that he LOVES him*; and if he does not do that, he may argue to the hour of his death, and make no progress in convincing him.

May grow up into him. Into Christ; that is, to the stature of a complete man in him.

Which is the head. **See Barnes "Eph 1:22"; See Barnes "1Co 11:3".**

{1} "speaking the truth" "being sincere" {a} "in love" 2Co 4:2 {b} "even Christ" Col 1:16,19

EPHESIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *From whom the whole body*. The church, compared with the human body. The idea is, that as the *head* in the human frame conveys vital influences, rigour, motion, etc., to every part of the body, so Christ is the source of life, and rigour, and energy, and increase, to the church. The sense is, "The whole human body is admirably arranged for growth and rigour. Every member and joint contributes to its healthful and harmonious action. One part lends rigour and beauty to another, so that the whole is finely proportioned and admirably sustained. All depend on the head with reference to the most important functions of life, and all derive their rigour from that. So it is in the church. It is as well arranged for growth and rigour as the body is. It is as beautifully organized in its various members and officers as the body is. Everything is designed to be in its proper place, and nothing by the Divine arrangement is wanting, in its organization, to its perfection. Its officers and its members are, in their places, what the various parts of the body are with reference to the human frame. The church depends on Christ, as the head, to sustain, invigorate, and guide it, as the body is dependant on the head." See this figure carried out to greater length in 1Co 12:12-26.

Fitly joined together. The body, whose members are properly united so as to produce the most beauty and rigour. Each member is in the best place, and is properly united to the other members. Let any one read Paley's Natural Theology, or any work on anatomy, and he will find innumerable instances of the truth of this remark; not only in the proper adjustment and placing of the members, but in the manner in which it is united to the other parts of the body. The foot, for instance, is in its proper place—it should not be where the head or the hand is. The eye is in its proper place—it should not be in the knee or the heel, The mouth, the tongue, the teeth, the lungs, the heart, are in their proper places—no other places would answer the purpose so well. The brain is in its proper place—-anywhere else in the body, it would be subject to compressions and injuries which would soon destroy life. And these parts are as admirably united to the other parts of the body as they axe

admirably located. Let any one examine, for instance, the tendons, nerves, muscles, and bones, by which the foot is secured to the body, and by which easy and graceful motion is obtained, and he will be satisfied of the wisdom by which the body is "joined together." How far the *knowledge* of the apostle extended on this point we have not the means of ascertaining; but all the investigations of anatomists only serve to give increased beauty and force to the general terms which he uses here. All that he says here of the human frame is strictly accurate, and is such language as may be used by an anatomist now. The word which is here used (*sunarmologew*) means, properly, to sew together; to fit together; to unite; to make one. It is applied often to musicians, who produce harmony of various parts of music. *Passow*. The idea of harmony, or appropriate union, is that in the word.

And compacted. *sumbibazomenon*. Tindal renders this, "knit together in every joint." The word properly means, to make to come together; to join or knit together. It means here that the different parts of the body are united and sustained in this manner.

By that which every joint supplieth. Literally, "through every joint of supply;" that is, which affords or ministers mutual aid. The word *joint* here—*afh*—(from *aptw* to fit)—means anything which *binds, fastens, secures*; and does not refer to the joint in the sense in which we commonly use it, as denoting *the articulation* of the limbs, or the joining of two or more bones; but rather that which *unites* or fastens together the different parts of the frame—the blood-vessels, cords, tendons, and muscles. The meaning is, that every such *means of connecting one part of the body with another* ministers nourishment, and that thus the body is sustained. One part is dependant on another; one part derives nourishment from another; and thus all become mutually useful as contributing to the support and harmony of the whole. Thus it furnishes an illustration of the connexion in the members of the church, and of the aid which one can render to another.

According to the effectual working. Gr., "According to the energy in the measure of each one part." Tindal, "According to the operation as every part has its measure." The meaning is, that each part contributes to the production of the whole result, or labours for this. This is in proportion to the "measure" of each" part; that is, in proportion to its power, every part labours to produce the great result, No one is idle; none is useless. But none are overtaxed or overworked. The support demanded and furnished by every part is in exact proportion to its strength. This is a beautiful account of the anatomy of the human frame.

(1.) Nothing is useless. Every part contributes to the general result— the health, and beauty, and rigour of the system. Not a muscle is useless; not a nerve, not an artery, not a vein. All are employed, and all have an important place, and all contribute something to the health and beauty of the whole. So numerous are the blood-vessels, that you cannot perforate the skin anywhere without piercing one; so numerous are the pores of the skin, that a gram of sand will cover thousands of them; so minute the ramifications of the nerves, that wherever the point of a needle penetrates, we feel it; and so numerous the absorbents, that millions of them are employed in taking up the chyme of the food, and conveying it to the veins. And yet all are employed—all are useful—all minister life and strength to the whole.

(2.) None are overtaxed. They all work according to the "measure" of their strength. Nothing is required of the minutest nerve or blood-vessel which it is not fitted to perform, and it will work on for years without exhaustion or decay. So of the church. There is no member so obscure and feeble that he may not contribute something to the welfare of the whole; and no one is required to labour beyond his strength in order to secure the great object. Each one *in his place*, and labouring as he should there, will contribute to the general strength and welfare; *out of his place*—like nerves

and arteries out of their place, and crossing and recrossing others—he will only embarrass the whole, and disarrange the harmony of the system.

Maketh increase of the body. The body grows in this manner.

Unto the edifying of itself. To building itself up—that is, it grows up to a complete stature.

In love. In mutual harmony. This refers to the *body*. The meaning is, that it seems to be made on the principle of love. There is no jar, no collision, no disturbance of one part with another. A great number of parts, composed of different substances, and with different functions— bones, and nerves, and muscles, and blood-vessels—are united in one, and live together without collision; and so it should be in the church. Learn hence,

(1.) that no member of the church need be useless, any more than a minute nerve or blood-vessel in the body need be useless. No matter how obscure the individual may be, he may contribute to the harmony and rigour of the whole.

(2.) Every member of the church should contribute something to the prosperity of the whole. He should no more be idle and unemployed than a nerve or a blood-vessel should be in the human system. What would be the effect if the minutest nerves and arteries of the body should refuse so perform their office? Languor, disease, and death. So it is in the church. The obscurest member may do *something* to destroy the healthful action of the church, and to make its piety languish and die.

(3.) There should be *union* in the church. It is made up of materials which differ much from each other, as the body is made up of bones, and nerves, and muscles. Yet, in the body these are united; and so it should be in the church. There need be no more jarring in the church than in the body; and a jar in the church produces the same effect as would be produced in the body if the nerves and muscles should resist the action of each other, or as if one should be out of its place, and impede the healthful functions of the other.

(4.) Every member in the church should keep his place, just as every bone, and nerve, and muscle in the human frame should. Every member of the body should be in its right position; the heart, the lungs, the eye, the tongue, should occupy their right place; and every nerve in the system should be laid down just where it is designed to be. If so, all is well. If not so, all is deformity, or disorder; just as it often is in the church.

{c} "the whole body fitly" Joh 15:5 {*} "measure" "according to the due operation"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord*. I bear witness in the name of the Lord Jesus, or ministering by his authority. The object of this is to exhort them to walk worthy of their high calling, and to adorn the doctrine of the Saviour. With this view, he reminds them of what they were before they were converted, and of the manner in which the heathen around them lived.

That ye henceforth walk not. That you do not henceforth live—the Christian life being often in the Scriptures compared to a journey.

As other Gentiles walk. This shows that probably the mass of converts in the church at Ephesus were from among the heathen, and Paul regarded them as Gentile converts. Or it may be that he

here addressed himself more particularly to that portion of the church, as especially needing his admonition and care.

In the vanity of their mind. In the way of folly, or in mental folly. What he means by this he specifies in the following verses. The word "vanity," in the Scriptures, means more than mere emptiness. It denotes moral wrong, being applied usually to those who worshipped vain idols, and then those who were alienated from the true God.

EPHESIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Having the understanding darkened*. That is, because they were alienated from the true God, and particularly because of "the blindness of their hearts." The apostle does not say that this was a "judicial" darkening of the understanding; or that they might not have perceived the truth; or that they had no ability to understand it. He speaks of a simple and well-known fact—a fact that is seen now as well as then—that the understanding becomes darkened by indulgence in sin. A man who is intemperate has no just views of the government of the appetites. A man who is unchaste has no perception of the loveliness of purity. A man who is avaricious or covetous has no just views of the beauty of benevolence. A man who indulges in low vices will weaken his mental powers, and render himself incapable of intellectual effort. Indulgence in vice destroys the intellect as well as the body, and unfits a man to appreciate the truth of a proposition in morals, or in mathematics, or the beauty of a poem, as well as the truth and beauty of religion. Nothing is more obvious than that indulgence in sin weakens the mental powers, and renders them unfit for high intellectual effort. This is seen all over the heathen world now— in the stolid, stupid mind; the perverted moral sense; the incapacity for profound or protracted mental effort, as really as it was among the heathens to whom Paul preached. The missionary who goes among the heathen has almost to create an *intellect* as well as a conscience, before the gospel will make an impression. It is seen, too, in all the intellect of the bar, the senate, the pulpit, and the medical profession, that is ruined by intemperance, and in the intellect of multitudes of young men wasted by licentiousness and drunkenness. I know that under the influence of ambition and stimulating drinks the intellect may seem to put forth unnatural efforts, and to glow with an intensity nowhere else seen; but it *soon burns out*—and the wastes of such an intellect become soon like the hardened scoriae of the volcano, or the cinders of the over-heated furnace. Learn hence, that if a man wishes to be blessed with a clear understanding, he should be a *good man*; he who wishes a mind well balanced and clear, should fear and love God; and had Christianity done no other good on earth than to elevate the *intellect* of mankind, it would have been the richest blessing which has ever been vouchsafed to the race. It follows, too, that as man has debased his *understanding* by sin, it is needful to make an exertion to elevate it again; and hence a large part of the efforts to save men must consist in patient instruction. Hence the necessity of *schools* at missionary stations.

Being alienated. **See Barnes "Eph 2:12"**.

From the life of God. From a life *like* that of God, or a life of which he is the source and author. The meaning is, that they lived a life which was unlike God, or which he' could not approve. Of the truth of this, in regard to the heathen every- where, there can be no doubt. **See Barnes "Ro 1:20"; and** Ro 1:21-23.

Through the ignorance that is in them. The ignorance of the true God, and of what constituted virtue. **See Barnes "Ro 1:20"**; and Ro 1:21-23.

Because of the blindness of their heart. Marg., *hardness*. Hardness is a better word. It is a better translation of the Greek; and it better accords with the design of the apostle. Here the reason is stated why they lived and acted as they did, and why the *understanding* was blinded. It is not that God has enfeebled the human intellect by a judicial sentence on account of the sin of Adam, and made it incapable of perceiving the truth; it is not that there is any deficiency or incapacity of natural powers; it is not that the truths of religion are so exalted that man has no natural ability to understand them, for they may be as well understood as any other truths, **See Barnes "1Co 2:14"**.

The simple reason is, "*the hardness of THE HEART*." That is the solution given by an inspired apostle, and that is enough. A man who has a blind and hard heart sees no beauty in truth, and feels not its force, and is insensible to all its appeals. Learn then,

(1.) that men are to blame for the blindness of their understanding. Whatever proceeds from a *wicked heart* they are responsible for. But for mere *inferiority* of *intellect* they would not be to blame.

(2.) They are under obligation to repent and love God. If it was required of them to enlarge their intellects, or create additional faculties of mind, they could not be bound to do it. But where the whole thing required is to have a *better heart*, they may be held responsible.

(3.) The way to elevate the understandings of mankind is to purify the heart. The approach must be made through the affections. Let the man *feel* right towards God, and they will soon *think* right; let the heart be pure, and the understanding will be clear.

{a} "darkened" Ac 26:18 {1} "blindness" "hardness"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Who being past feeling*. Wholly hardened in sin. There is a total want of all emotion on moral subjects. This is an accurate description of the state of a sinner. He has no *feeling*, no *emotion*. He often gives an intellectual assent to the truth, but it is without emotion of any kind: the heart is insensible as the hard rock.

Have given themselves over. They have done it voluntarily. In Ro 1:24, it is said that "*God* gave them up." There is no inconsistency. Whatever was the agency of God in it, they preferred it. **See Barnes "Ro 1:21"**.

Unto lasciviousness. **See Barnes "Ro 1:24,** Ro 1:25-26.

{b} "given themselves" Ro 1:24,25

EPHESIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *But ye have not so learned Christ*. You have been taught a different thing by Christ; you have been taught that his religion requires you to abandon such a coarse of life.

EPHESIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *If so be that ye have heard him*. If you have listened attentively to his instructions, and learned the true nature of his religion. There may be a slight and delicate doubt implied here whether they had attentively listened to his instructions. Doddridge, however, renders it, "Seeing ye have heard him." **See Barnes "Eph 3:2"**.

And have been taught by him. By his Spirit, or by the ministers whom he had appointed.

As the truth is in Jesus. If you have learned the true nature of his religion as he himself taught it. What the truth was which the Lord Jesus thought, or what his principles implied, the apostle proceeds to state in the following verses.

EPHESIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *That ye put off*. That you lay aside, or renounce. The manner in which the apostle states these duties renders it not improbable that there had been some instruction among them of a contrary character, and that it is possible there had been some teachers there who had not enforced, as they should have done, the duties of practical religion.

Concerning the former conversation. The word *conversation* here means *conduct*—as it commonly does in the Bible. **See Barnes "2Co 1:12"**.

The meaning here is, "With respect to your former conduct or habits of life, lay aside all that pertained to a corrupt and fallen nature. You are not to lay everything aside that formerly pertained to you. Your dress, and manners, and modes of speech and intercourse, might have been in many respects correct. But everything that proceeded from sin; every habit, and custom, and mode of speech and of conduct that, was the result of depravity, is to be laid aside. The peculiar characteristics of an unconverted man you are to put off, and are to assume those which are the proper fruits of a renewed heart."

The old man. **See Barnes "Ro 6:6"**.

Which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts. The meaning is,

(1.) that the unrenewed man is not under the direction of reason and sound sense, but is controlled by his *passions* and *desires*. The word *lusts* has a more limited signification with us than the original word. That word we now confine to one class of sensual appetites; but the original word denotes any passion or propermiry of the heart. It may include avarice, ambition, the love of pleasure or of gratification in any way; and the meaning here is, that the heart is by nature under the control of such desires.

(2.) Those passions are deceitful. They lead us astray. They plunge us into ruin. All the passions and pleasures of the world are illusive. They promise more than they perform; and they leave their deluded votaries to disappointment, and to tears. Nothing is more "deceitful" than the promised pleasures of this world; and all who yield to them find at last that they "flatter but to betray."

{c} "concerning" Col 3:8,9 {a} "which is corrupt" Ro 6:6

EPHESIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *And be renewed*. That is, it is necessary that a man who has been following these should become a new man. **See Barnes** "Joh 3:3, seq. Comp. **See Barnes "2Co 4:16"**.

The word here used—*ananeow*—does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament; but it has the same meaning as the word used in 2Co 4:16, and Col 3:10. It means to make new, and is descriptive of the work of regeneration. This was addressed to the church, and to those whom Paul regarded as Christians; and we may learn from this,

(1.) That it is necessary that man should be *renewed* in order to be saved.

(2.) That it is proper to exhort Christians to be renewed. They need renovated strength every day.

(3.) That it is a matter of *obligation* to be renewed. Men are bound thus to be renovated. And

(4.) that they have sufficient natural ability to change from the condition of the old to that of the new man, or they could not be exhorted to it.

In the spirit of your mind. In your temper; your heart; your nature.

{b} "in the spirit" Ro 12:2

EPHESIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *And that ye put on the new man*. The new man refers to the renovated nature. This is called, in other places, the "new creature, or the new creation," **See Barnes** "2Co 5:17, and refers to the condition after the heart is changed. The change is so great, that there is no impropriety in speaking of one who has experienced it as "a new man." He has new feelings, principles, and desires. He has laid aside his old principles and practices, and, in everything that pertains to moral character, he is new. His body is indeed the same; the intellectual structure of his mind the same; but there has been a change in his principles and feelings which make him, in all the great purposes of life, a new being. Learn, that regeneration is not a trifling change. It is not a mere change of relations, or of the outward condition. It is not merely being brought from the world into the church, and being baptized, though by the most holy hands; it is much more. None of these things would make proper the declaration, "he is a new man." Regeneration by the Spirit of God *does*.

After God. *kata yeon*. In respect to God. The idea is, evidently, that man is so renewed as to become *like God*, or the Divine image is restored to the soul. In the parallel passage in Colossians Col 3:10 the idea is expressed more fully—"renewed in knowledge after *the image* of him that created him." Man, by regeneration, is restored to the lost image of God. Comp. Ge 1:26.

Is created. A word that is often used to denote the new birth, from its strong resemblance to the first act of creation. See it explained **See Barnes "2Co 5:17"**.

In righteousness. That is, the renewed man is made to resemble God in righteousness. This proves that man, when he was made, was righteous; or that righteousness constituted a part of the image of God in which he was created. The object of the work of redemption is to restore to man the lost image of God, or to bring him back to the condition in which he was before he fell.

And true holiness. Marg., as in Greek, *holiness of truth*— standing in contrast with "lusts of deceit" (Greek) in Eph 4:22. Holiness properly refers to purity towards God, and righteousness to

integrity towards men; but it is not certain that this distinction is observed here. The general idea is, that the renovated man is made an upright and a pious man; and that therefore he should avoid the vices which are practised by the heathen, and which the apostle proceeds to specify. This phrase also proves that, when man was created, he was a holy being.

{c} "in righteousness" Gal 6:15 Eph 2:10 {1} "true holiness" "holiness of truth"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Wherefore putting away lying*. It may seem strange that the apostle should seriously exhort Christians to put away *lying*, implying that they were in the habit of indulging in falsehood. But we are to remember,

(1.) that lying is the universal vice of the heathen world. Among the ancient heathen, as among the moderns, it was almost universally practised. It has been remarked by a distinguished jurist who had spent much time in India, that he would not believe a Hindoo on his oath. The same testimony is borne, by almost all the missionaries, of the character of heathens everywhere. No confidence can be placed in their statements; and, where there is the slightest temptation to falsehood, they practise it without remorse.

(2.) The Ephesians had been recently converted, and were, to a great extent, ignorant of the requirements of the gospel. A *conscience* has to be *created* when heathens are converted, and it is long before they see the evils of many things which appear to us to be palpably wrong.

(3.) The effects of former habits abide long, often, after a man is converted. He who has been in the habit of profane swearing finds it difficult to avoid it; and he who has been all his life practising deception will find himself tempted to practise it still. It was for reasons such as these, probably, that the apostle exhorted the Ephesians to put away lying, and to speak the truth only. Nor is the exhortation now inappropriate to Christians; and there are many classes to whom it would now be proper—such as the following:

(1.) He who is in the habit of concealing the defects of an article in trade, or of commending it for more than its real value— *let him put away lying*.

(2.) He, or she, who instructs a servant to say that they are not at home, when they are at home; or that they are sick, when they are not sick; or that they are engaged, when they are not engaged—*let them put away lying*.

(3.) He that is in the habit of giving a colouring to his narratives; of conveying a false impression by the introduction or the suppression of circumstances that are important to the right understanding of an account—*let him put away lying*.

(4.) He that is at no pains to ascertain the exact truth in regard to any facts that may affect his neighbour; that catches up flying rumours without investigating them, and that circulates them as undoubted truth, though they may seriously affect the character and peace of another—*let him put away lying*.

(5.) He that is in the habit of making promises only to disregard them— *let him put away lying*. The community is full of falsehoods of that kind, and they are not *all* confined to the people of the world. Nothing is more important in a community than simple *truth*—and yet it is to be feared that nothing is more habitually disregarded. No professing Christian can do any good who has not an

unimpeachable character for integrity and truth—and yet who can lay his hand on his breast and say before God that he is, in all cases, a man that speaks the simple and unvarnished TRUTH?

For we are members one of another. We belong to one body—the church —which is the body of Christ. **See Barnes "Ro 5:12"**.

The idea is, that falsehood tends to loosen the bonds of brotherhood. In the *human body* harmony is observed. The eye never deceives the hand, nor the hand the foot, nor the heart the lungs. The whole move harmoniously as if the one could put the utmost confidence in the other—and falsehood in the church is as ruinous to its interests as it would be to the body if one member was perpetually practising a deception on another.

{d} "with his neighbor" Zec 8:16 {e} "are members" Ro 12:5

EPHESIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Be ye angry, and sin not*. It has been remarked that the direction here is conformable to the usage of the Pythagoreans, who were bound, when there were any differences among them, to furnish some token of reconciliation before the sun set. *Burder*, in Ros.Alt, u. neu. Morgenland, *in loc*. It is implied here,

(1.) that there *may* be anger without sin; and

(2.) that there is special danger, in *all* cases where there is anger, that it will be accompanied with sin. Anger is a passion too common to need any description. It is an excitement or agitation of mind, of more or less violence, produced by the reception of a real or supposed injury, and attended commonly with a desire or purpose of revenge. The desire of revenge, however, is not essential to the existence of the passion, though it is probably always attended with a disposition to express displeasure, to chide, rebuke, or punish. Comp. Mr 3:5. To a great extent the sudden excitement on the reception of an injury is involuntary, and consequently innocent. Anger is excited when a horse kicks us; when a serpent hisses; when we dash our foot against a stone; and so when a man raises his hand to strike us. The *object* or *final cause* of implanting this passion in the mind of man, is to rouse him to an immediate defence of himself when suddenly attacked, and before his reason would have time to suggest the proper means of defence. It prompts at once to self-protection; and when that is done its proper office ceases. If persevered in, it becomes sinful malignity, or revenge —always wrong. Anger may be excited against a *thing* as well as a *person*; as well against an *act* as a man. We are suddenly excited by a wrong *thing* without any malignancy against the man; we may wish to rebuke or chide *that*, without injuring *him*. Anger is sinful in the following circumstances:

(1.) When it is excited without any sufficient cause—when we are in no danger, and do not need it for a protection. We should be safe without it.

(2.) When it transcends the cause, if any cause really exists. All that is beyond the necessity of immediate self-protection is apart from its design, and is wrong.

(3.) When it is against *the person* rather than the *offence*. The object is not to injure another; it is to protect ourselves.

(4.) When it is attended with the desire of *revenge*. That is always wrong, Ro 12:17,19.

(5.) When it is cherished and heightened by reflection. And

(6.) when there is an unforgiving spirit; a determination to exact the utmost satisfaction for the injury which has been done. If men were perfectly holy, that sudden *arousing of the mind* in danger, or on the reception of an injury, which would serve to prompt us to save ourselves from danger, would exist, and would be an important principle of our nature as it is now, it is violent; excessive; incontrollable; persevered in—and is almost always wrong. If men were holy, this excitement of the mind would obey the first injunctions of reason, and be wholly under its control; as it is now, it seldom obeys reason at all—and is wholly wrong. Moreover, if *all* men were holy; if there were none disposed to do an injury, it would exist only in the form of a sudden arousing of the mind against immediate danger—which would all be fight. Now, it is excited not only in view of *physical* dangers, but in view of the *wrongs* done by others—and hence it terminates on the *person*, and not the *thing*, and becomes often wholly evil.

Let not the sun go down. Do not cherish anger. Do not sleep upon it. Do not harbour a purpose of revenge; do not cherish ill-will against another. *When the sun sets on a man's anger, he may be sure it is wrong*. The meaning of the whole of this verse then is, "*If* you be angry, which may be the case, and which may be unavoidable, see that the sudden excitement does not become sin. Do not let it overleap its proper bounds; do not cherish it; do not let it remain in your bosom even to the setting of the sun. Though the sun be sinking in the west, let not the passion linger in the bosom, but let his last rays find you always peaceful and calm.

{f} "not the sun" Ec 7:9

EPHESIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *Neither give place to the devil*. This has respect probably to the exhortation in the former verse. "Do not yield to the suggestions and temptations of Satan, who would take every opportunity to persuade you to cherish unkind and angry feelings, and to keep up a spirit of resentment among brethren." Many of our feelings, when we suppose we are merely defending our rights, and securing what is our own, are produced by the temptations of the devil. The heart is deceitful; and seldom more deceitful in any case than when a man is attempting to vindicate himself from injuries done to his person and reputation. The devil is always busy when we are angry, and in some way, if possible, will lead us into sin; and the best way to avoid his wiles is to curb the temper, and restrain even sudden anger. No man sins by restraining his anger; no man is certain that he will not who indulges it for a moment.

{a} "place" Jas 4:7 {*} "place" "advantage"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *Let him that stole steal no more*. Theft, like lying, was, and is, almost a universal vice among the heathen. The practice of pilfering prevails in probably every pagan community, and no property is safe which is not guarded, or so locked up as to be inaccessible. Hence as the Christian converts at Ephesus had been long addicted to it, there was danger that they would fall into it again;

and hence the necessity of special cautions on that head. We are not to suppose that *pilfering* was a common vice in the church; but the cautions on this point proceed on the principle that where a man has been long in the habit of a particular sin, he is in great danger of falling into it again. Hence we caution the man who has been intemperate against the least indulgence in intoxicating drinks; we exhort him not to touch that which would be so strong a temptation to him. The object of the apostle was to show that the gospel requires holy living in all its friends, and to entreat Christians at Ephesus in a special manner to avoid the vices of the surrounding heathen.

But rather let him labour. Let him seek the means of living in an honest manner, by his own industry, rather than by wronging others.

Working with his hands. Pursuing some honest employment. Paul was not ashamed to labour with "his own hands," 1Co 4:12; and no man is dishonoured by labour. God made man for toil, Ge 2:15; and employment is essential to the happiness of the race. No man, who is able to support himself, has a right to depend on others. **See Barnes "Ro 12:11"**.

That he may have to give to him that needeth. Marg., *distribute*. Not merely that he may have the means of support, but that he may have it in his power to aid others. The reason and propriety of this is obvious. The human race is one great brotherhood. A considerable part *cannot* labour to support themselves. They are too old, or too young; or they are crippled or feeble, or laid on beds of sickness. If others do not divide with them the avails of their labours, they will perish. We are required to labour in order that we may have the privilege of contributing to their comfort. Learn from this verse,

(1.) that every Christian should have some calling, business, or profession, by which he may support himself. The Saviour was a carpenter; Paul a tentmaker; and no man is disgraced by being able to build a house, or to construct a tent.

(2.) Christianity promotes industry. It is rare that an idle man becomes a Christian; but if he does, religion makes him industrious just in proportion as it has influence over his mind. To talk of a *lazy Christian* is about the same as to talk of *burning water* or *freezing fire*.

(3.) Christians should have some *useful* and *honest* employment. They should work "*that which is good*." They should not pursue an employment which will necessarily injure others. No man has a right to place a nuisance under the window of his neighbour; nor has he any *more* right to pursue an employment that shall lead his neighbour into sin, or ruin him. An honest employment benefits everybody. A good farmer is a benefit to his neighbourhood and country; and a good shoemaker, blacksmith, weaver, cabinet-maker, watchmaker, machinist, is a blessing to the community. He injures no one; he benefits all. How is it with the distiller, and the vender of alcoholic drinks? He benefits no one; he injures everybody. Every quart of intoxicating drink that is taken from his house does evil somewhere—evil, and only evil, and that continually. No one is made better, or richer; no one is made more moral or industrious; no one is helped on the way to heaven by it. Thousands are helped on the way to hell by it, who are already in the path; and thousands are *induced* to walk in the way to death who, but for that distillery, store, or tavern, might have walked in the way to heaven. Is this, then, "working that WHICH IS GOOD ?" Would Paul have done it? Would Jesus do it? Strange, that by a professing Christian it was ever done! See a striking instance of the way in which the Ephesian Christians acted when they were first converted, in Ac 19:19. **See Barnes "Ac 19:19"**.

(4.) The main business of a Christian is not *to make money*, and to become rich. It is that he may have the means of benefiting others. Beyond what he needs for himself, his poor, and sick,

and aged, and afflicted brother and friend has a claim on his earnings—and they should be liberally bestowed.

(5.) We should labour *in order* that we may have the means of doing good to others. It should be just as much a matter of plan and purpose to do this, as it is to labour in order to buy a goat, or to build a house, or to live comfortably, or to have the means of a decent burial. Yet how few are those who have any such end in view, or who pursue their daily toil definitely, *that they may have something to give away*. The world will be soon converted when all Christians make that the purpose **See Barnes "Ro 12:11".**

{b} "labour" Ac 20:35 {1} "give" "distribute"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Let no corrupt communication proceed*. **See Barnes "1Co 15:33".**

The word rendered "*corrupt*" *saprov* means *bad, decayed, rotten*, and is applied to putrid vegetables or animal substances. Then it is applied to a tree is of a useless character, that produces no good fruit, Mt 7:17. Then it is used in a moral sense, as our word "corrupt" is, to denote that which is depraved, evil, contaminating, and may denote here anything that is obscene, offensive, or that tends to corrupt others. The importance of this admonition will be appreciated when it is remembered,

(1.) that such obscene and filthy conversation prevailed everywhere, and does still among the heathen. So general is this, that at almost every missionary station it has been found that the common conversation is so corrupt and defiling, that missionaries have felt it necessary to send their children home to be educated, in order to secure them from the contaminating influence of those around them.

(2.) Those who have had the misfortune to be familiar with the common conversation of the lower classes in any community, and especially with the conversation of young men, will see the importance of this admonition. Scarcely anything can be conceived more corrupt or corrupting than that which often prevails among young men—and even young men in the academies and colleges of this land.

(3.) Its importance will be seen from the *influence* of such corrupt communications. "The passage of an impure thought through the mind leaves pollution behind it!" the expression of such a thought deepens the pollution on the soul, and corrupts others. It is like retaining an offensive carcase above ground, to pollute the air, and to diffuse pestilence and death, which should at once be buried out of sight. A Christian should be pure in his conversation. His Master was pure. His God is pure. The heaven to which he goes is pure. The religion which he professes is pure. NEVER should he indulge himself in an obscene allusion; never should retail anecdotes of all obscene character, or smile when they are retailed by others. Never should he indulge in a jest having a double meaning; never should he listen to a song of this character. If those with whom he associates have not sufficient respect for themselves and him to abstain from such corrupt and corrupting allusions, *he should at once leave them*.

But that which is good to the use of edifying. Marg., *to edify profitably*. Greek, "to useful edification ;" that is, adapted to instruct, counsel, and comfort others; to promote their intelligence

and purity. Speech is an invaluable gift; a blessing of inestimable worth. We may *so* speak as always to do good to others. We may give them some information which they have not; impart some consolation which they need; elicit some truth by friendly discussion which we did not know before, or recall by friendly admonition those who are in danger of going astray. He who talks for the mere sake of talking will say many foolish things; he whose great aim in life is to benefit others will not be likely to say that which he will have occasion to regret. Mt 12:36 Ec 5:2; Pr 10:19 Jas 1:19.

{c} "communication" Col 4:6 {*} "edifying" "edification" {+} "grace" "benefit"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *And grieve not the holy Spirit of God*. This is addressed to *Christians*, and it proves that it is possible for them to grieve the Holy Spirit. The word here used—*lupeite*, means, properly, to afflict with sorrow; to make sad or sorrowful. It is rendered, to make sorry, or sorrowful, Mt 14:9 17:23, 18:31 19:22 26:22,37

Mr 14:19 Joh 16:20; 2Co 2:2 6:10, 7:8,9,11 1Th 4:13.

It is rendered *grieved*, Mr 10:22 Joh 21:17; Ro 14:15 2Co 2:4,5 Eph 4:30; and once, "*in heaviness*," 1Pe 1:6. The verb does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. The common meaning is, to treat others so as to cause grief. We are not to suppose that the Holy Spirit literally endures grief, or pain, at the conduct of men. The language is such as is fitted to describe what men endure, and is applied to him to denote that kind of conduct which is *fitted* to cause grief; and the meaning here is, "do not pursue such a course as is fitted, in its own nature, to pain the benevolent heart of a holy being. Do not act towards the Holy Spirit in a manner which would produce pain in the bosom of a friend who loves you. There is a course of conduct which will drive that Spirit from the mind *as if* he were grieved and pained—as a course of ingratitude and sin would pain the heart of an earthly friend, and cause him to leave you." If asked what that conduct is, we may reply,

(1.) Open and gross sins. They are particularly referred to here; and the meaning of Paul is, that theft, falsehood, anger, and kindred vices, would grieve the Holy Spirit, and cause him to depart.

(2.) Anger, in all its forms. Nothing is more fitted to drive away all serious and tender impressions from the mind than the indulgence of anger.

(3.) Licentious thoughts and desires. The Spirit of God is pure, and he dwells not in a soul that is filled with corrupt imaginings.

(4.) Ingratitude. *We* feel ingratitude more than almost anything else; and why should we suppose that the Holy Spirit would not feel it also?

(5.) Neglect. The Spirit of God is grieved by that. Often he prompts us to pray; he disposes the mind to seriousness, to the perusal of the Bible, to tenderness and penitence. We neglect those favoured moments of our piety, and lose those happy seasons for becoming like God.

(6.) Resistance. Christians often resist the Holy Ghost. He would lead them to be dead to the world; yet they drive on their plans of gain. He would teach them the folly of fashion and vanity; yet they deck themselves in the gayest apparel. He would keep them from the splendid party, the theatre, and the ballroom; yet they go there. All that is needful for a Christian to do, in order to be eminent in piety, is to yield to the gentle influences which would draw him to prayer and to heaven.

Whereby ye are sealed. **See Barnes "2Co 1:22".**

Unto the day of redemption. **See Barnes "Eph 1:14"**.
{a} "grieve not" Isa 63:10 {b} "unto the day" Eph 1:13,14

EPHESIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *Let all bitterness*. **See Barnes "Eph 4:2"**.
And wrath. The word here does not differ essentially from anger.
Anger **See Barnes "Eph 4:26"**.
All cherished, unreasonable anger. And clamour. Noise, disorder, high words; such as men use in a brawl, or when they are excited. Christians are to be calm and serious. Harsh contentions and strifes; hoarse brawls and tumults, are to be unknown among them.
And evil speaking. Slander, backbiting, angry expressions, tale-bearing, reproaches, etc.
With all malice. Rather, "with all evil"—*kakia*. Every kind and sort of evil is to be put away, and you are to manifest only that which is good.
{c} "and wrath" Col 3:8 {d} "be put away" Tit 3:2

EPHESIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *And be ye kind one to another*. Benignant, mild, courteous, *polite—crhstoi*. 1Pe 3:8. Christianity produces true courteousness, or politeness. It does not make one rough, crabbed, sour; nor does it dispose its followers to violate the proper rules of social intercourse. The secret of true politeness is *benevolence*, or a desire to make others happy; and a Christian *should* be the most polite of men. There is no religion in a sour, misanthropic temper; none in rudeness, stiffness, and repulsiveness; none in violating the rules of good-breeding. There is a hollow-hearted politeness, indeed, which the Christian is not to aim at or copy. His politeness is to be based on *kindness*, Col 3:12. His courtesy is to be the result of love, good-will, and a desire of the happiness of all others; and this will prompt to the kind of conduct that will render his intercourse with others agreeable and profitable.
Tenderhearted. Having a heart disposed to pity and compassion, and especially disposed to show kindness to the faults of erring brethren, for so the connexion demands.
Forgiving one another. **See Barnes "Mt 6:12"**.
As God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. As God, on account of what Christ has suffered and done, has pardoned you. He has done it
(1.) freely—without merit on our part—when we were confessedly in the wrong.
(2.) *Fully*; he has forgiven *every* offence.
(3.) *Liberally*; he has forgiven *many* offences, for our sins have been innumerable. This is to be the rule which we are to observe in forgiving others. We are to do it *freely, fully, liberally*. The forgiveness is to be entire, cordial, constant. We are not to *rake up* old offences, and charge them again upon them; we are to treat them as though they had not offended, for so God treats us. Learn,
(1.) that the forgiveness of an offending brother is a DUTY which we are not at liberty to neglect.

(2.) The peace and happiness of the church depend on it. All are liable to offend their brethren, as all are liable to offend God; all need forgiveness of one another, as we all need it of God.

(3.) There is no danger of carrying it too far. Let the rule be observed—"*As God has forgiven you, so do you forgive others*." Let a man recollect his own sins and follies; let him look over his life, and see how often he has offended God; let him remember that *all* has been forgiven; and then, fresh with this feeling, let him go and meet an offending brother, and say, "My brother, I forgive you. I do it frankly, fully, wholly. So Christ has forgiven me; so I forgive you. The offence shall be no more remembered. It shall not be referred to in our intercourse to harrow up your feelings; it shall not diminish my love for you; it shall not prevent my uniting with you in doing good. Christ treats me, a poor sinner, as a friend; and *so* I will treat you."

{e} "one another" Mr 11:25,26

EPHESIANS - Chapter 5

EPHESIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 1

Ephesians Chapter 5

This chapter is a continuation of the practical exhortations commenced in chapter 4. It comprises the following points, or subjects:—

1. The exhortation to be followers of God, and to walk in love, Eph 5:1,2.

2. The duty of avoiding the impure practices of the surrounding heathen, and of wholly breaking off from the vices in which even they themselves had indulged, before their conversion to Christianity, Eph 5:3-17.

3. The apostle cautions them particularly against the use of wine, and the revelry which attends its use; and exhorts them rather to engage in the exercises to which the Holy Spirit would prompt them, and to the services of praise and thanksgiving, Eph 5:15-20.

4. He exhorts them to mutual subjection; and particularly enjoins on wives the duty of being subject to their husbands, Eph 5:21-24.

5. The chapter closes with a statement of the duty of husbands to love their wives, illustrated by that which Christ showed for the church, Eph 5:25-33.

Verse 1. *Be ye therefore followers of God*. Gr., "Be imitators— *mimhtai*—of God." The idea is not that they were to be the friends of God, or numbered among his followers, but that they were to imitate him in the particular thing under consideration. The word "therefore"—*oun*—connects this with the previous chapter, where he had been exhorting them to kindness, and to a spirit of forgiveness, and he here entreats them to imitate God, who was always kind and ready to forgive. Comp. Mt 5:44-47. As he forgives us, (Eph 4:32) we should be ready to forgive others; as he has borne with our faults, we should bear with theirs; as he is ever ready to hear our cry when we ask for mercy, we should be ready to hear others when they desire to be forgiven; and as he is never weary with doing us good, we should never be weary in benefiting them.

As dear children. The meaning is, "as those children which are beloved follow the example of a father, so we, who are beloved of God, should follow his example." What a simple rule this is! And how much contention and strife would be avoided if it were followed! If every Christian who is angry, unforgiving, and unkind, would just ask himself the question, "How does God treat me?" it would save all the trouble and heart-burning which ever exists in the church.

{*} "followers" "imitators"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And walk in love*. That is, let your lives be characterized by love; let that be evinced in all your deportment and conversation. **See Barnes "Joh 13:34"**.

As Christ also hath loved us. We are to evince the same love for one another which he has done for us. He showed *his* love by giving himself to die for us, and we should evince similar love to one another, 1Jo 3:16.

And hath given himself for us. This is evidently added by the apostle to show what he meant by saying that Christ loved us, and what we ought to do to evince our love for each other. The strength of his love was so great that he was willing to give himself up to death on our account; our love for our brethren should be such that we would be willing to do the same thing for them, 1Jo 3:16.

An offering. The word here used—*prosforan*—means, properly, that which is *offered to God*—in any way, or whatever it may be. It is, however, in the Scriptures, commonly used to denote an offering without blood—a thank-offering—and thus is distinguished from a sacrifice, or a bloody oblation. The word occurs only in Ac 21:26 24:17; Ro 15:16 Eph 5:2; Heb 10:5,8,10,14,18.

It means here that he regarded himself as an offering to God.

And a sacrifice, yusian. Christ is here expressly called a *Sacrifice*—the usual word in the Scriptures to denote a proper sacrifice. A sacrifice was an offering made to God by killing an animal and burning it on an altar, designed to make atonement for sin. It always implied the killing of the animal as an acknowledgment of the sinner that he deserved to die. It was the giving up of life, which was supposed to reside in the blood, (**See Barnes** "Ro 3:25,) and hence it was necessary that *blood* should be shed. Christ was such a sacrifice; and his love was shown in his being willing that his blood should be shed to save men.

For a sweet-smelling savour. **See Barnes** "2Co 2:15, where the word savour is explained. The meaning here is, that the offering which Christ made of himself to God was like the grateful and pleasant smell of incense, that is, it was acceptable to him. It was an exhibition of benevolence with which he was pleased, and it gave him the opportunity of evincing his own benevolence in the salvation of men. The meaning of this in the connexion here is, that the offering which Christ made was one of *love*. So, says Paul, do you love one another. Christ sacrificed himself by *love*, and that sacrifice was acceptable to God. So do you show love one to another. Sacrifice everything which opposes it, and it will be acceptable to God. He will approve all which is designed to promote love, as he approved the sacrifice which was made, under the influence of love, by his Son.

{a} "as Christ" Joh 13:34 {b} "sweet-smelling savour" Le 1:9

EPHESIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *But fornication*. A common vice among the heathen then as it is now, and one into which they were in special danger of falling. **See Barnes "Ro 1:29"**; **See Barnes** "1Co 6:18".

And all uncleanness. Impurity of life. **See Barnes "Ro 1:24"**.

Comp. Ro 6:9 Gal 5:19; Eph 4:19 Col 3:5.

Or covetousness. The connexion in which this word is found is remarkable. It is associated with the lowest and most debasing vices, and this, as well as those vices, was not once to be *named* among them. What was Paul's estimate, then, of covetousness? He considered it as an odious and abominable vice; a vice to be regarded in the same light as the most gross sin, and as wholly to be abhorred by all who bore the Christian name. See Eph 5:5. The covetous man, according to Paul, is to be ranked with the sensual, and with idolaters, (Eph 5:5,) and with those who are entirely excluded from the kingdom of God. Is this the estimate in which the vice is held now? Is it the view which professing Christians take of it? Do we not feel that there is a *great* difference between a covetous man and a man of impure and licentious life? Why is this? Because

(1.) it is so common;

(2.) because it is found among those who make pretensions to refinement and even religion;

(3.) because it is not so easy to define what is covetousness, as it is to define impurity of life; and

(4.) because the public conscience is seared, and the mind blinded to the low and groveling character of the sin. Yet is not the view of Paul the right view? Who is a covetous man? A man who, in the pursuit of gold, neglects his soul, his intellect, and his heart. A man who, in this insatiable pursuit, is regardless of justice, truth, charity, faith, prayer, peace, comfort, usefulness, conscience; and who shall say that there is any vice more debasing or degrading than this? The time *may* come, therefore, when the covetous man will be regarded as deserving the same rank in the public estimation with the most vicious, and when TO COVET will be considered as much opposed to the spirit of the gospel as any of the vices here named. When that time shall come, the world's conversion will probably be not a distant event.

Let it not be once named among you. That is, let it not exist; let there be no occasion for mentioning such a thing among you; let it be wholly unknown. This cannot mean that it is wrong to *mention* these vices for the purpose of rebuking them, or cautioning those in danger of committing them—for Paul himself in this manner mentions them here, and frequently elsewhere—but that they should not exist among them.

As becometh saints. As befits the character of Christians, who are regarded as holy. Literally, "as becometh *holy ones*"—*agioiv*.

{c} "and all uncleanness" 1Co 6:18 1Th 4:3 {d} "among you" Eph 5:12

EPHESIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Neither filthiness*. That is, obscene or indecent conversation. Literally, that which is shameful, or deformed— *aiscrothv*. The word does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament.

Nor foolish talking. This word—*mwrologia*—does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It means that kind of talk which is insipid, senseless, stupid, foolish; which is not fitted to instruct, edify, profit—the idle chit-chat which is so common in the world. The meaning is, that Christians should aim to have their conversation sensible, serious, sincere remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, "that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment," Mt 12:36.

Nor jesting. *eutrapelia*. This word occurs also nowhere else in the New Testament. It properly means, that which is *well-turned*, (*eu well*, and *trepw—to turn*;) and then that which is sportive, refined, courteous; and then *urbanity, humour, wit*; and then jesting, levity—which is evidently the meaning here. The apostle would not forbid courteousness, or refinement of manners, (comp. 1Pe 3:8;) and the reference, therefore, must be to that which is light and trifling in conversation; to that which is known among us as jesting. It may be observed,

(1.) that courteousness is not forbidden in the Scriptures, but is positively required, 1Pe 3:8.

(2.) *Cheerfulness* is not forbidden—for if anything can make cheerful, it is the hope of heaven.

(3.) *Pleasantry cannot be forbidden*. I mean that quiet and gentle humour that arises from good-nature, and that makes one good-natured in spite of himself. Such are many of the poems of Cowper, and many of the essays of Addison in the "Spectator"— benevolent humour which disposes us to smile, but not to be malignant; to be good-natured, but not to inspire levity. But levity and jesting, though often manifested by ministers and other Christians, are as inconsistent with true dignity as with the gospel. Where were they seen in the conversation of the Redeemer? Where in the writings of Paul?

Which are not convenient. That is, which are not fit or proper; which do not become the character of Christians. **See Barnes "Ro 1:28"**.

Christians should be grave and serious, though cheerful and pleasant. They should feel that they have great interests at stake, and that the world has too. They are redeemed—not to make sport; purchased with precious blood—for other purposes than to make men laugh. They are soon to be in heaven—and a man who has any impressive sense of that will habitually feel that he has muck else to do than to make men laugh. The true course of life is midway between moroseness and levity; sourness and lightness; harshness and jesting. Be benevolent, kind, cheerful, bland, courteous, but serious. Be solemn, thoughtful, deeply impressed with the presence of God and with eternal things, but pleasant, affable, and benignant. Think not a smile sinful; but think not levity and jesting harmless.

But rather giving of thanks. Thanks to God, or praises, are more becoming Christians than jesting. The idea here seems to be, that such employment would be far more appropriate to the character of Christians, than idle, trifling, and indelicate conversation. Instead, therefore, of meeting together for low wit and jesting; for singing songs, and for the vulgar discourse which often attends such "gatherings" of friends, Paul would have them come together for the purpose of praising God, and engaging in his service. Men are social in their nature; and if they do not assemble for good purposes, they will for bad ones. It is much more appropriate to the character of Christians to come together to sing praises to God, than to sing songs; to pray, than to jest; to converse of the things of redemption, than to tell anecdotes; and to devote the time to a contemplation of the world to come, than to trifles and nonsense.

{e} "which are not convenient" Ro 1:28

EPHESIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *For this ye know*. Be assured of this. The object here is, to deter from indulgence in those vices by the solemn assurance that no one who committed them could possibly be saved.

Nor unclean person. No one of corrupt and licentious life can be saved. See Re 22:15.

Nor covetous man, who is an idolater. That is, he bestows on money the affections due to God. See Col 3:5. To worship money is as real idolatry as to worship a block of stone. If this be so, what an idolatrous world is this! How many idolaters are there in professedly Christian lands! How many, it is to be feared, in the church itself! And since every covetous man is certainly to be excluded from the kingdom of God, how anxious should we be to examine our hearts, and to know whether this sin may not lie at our door!

Hath any inheritance, etc. Such an one shall never enter heaven. This settles the inquiry about the final destiny of a large portion of the world; and this solemn sentence our conscience and all our views of heaven approve. Let us learn hence,

(1.) that heaven will be *pure*.

(2.) That it will be a *desirable* place—for who would wish to live always with the licentious and the impure?

(3.) It is right to reprove these vices, and to preach against them. Shall we not be allowed to preach against those sins which will certainly exclude men from heaven?

(4.) A large part of the world is exposed to the wrath of God. What numbers are covetous! What multitudes are licentious! In how many places is licentiousness openly and unblushingly practised! In how many more places in secret! And in how many more is the *heart* polluted, while the external conduct is moral; the soul *corrupt*, while the individual moves in respectable society!

(5.) What a world of shame will hell be! How dishonourable and disgraceful to be damned for ever, and to linger on in eternal fires, because the man was TOO POLLUTED to be admitted into pure society! Here, perhaps, he moved in fashionable life, and was rich, and honoured, and flattered; there he will be sent down to hell because his whole soul was corrupt, and because God would not suffer heaven to be contaminated by his presence!

(6.) What a doom awaits the covetous man! He, like the sensualist, is to be excluded from the kingdom of God. And what is to be his doom? Will he have a place apart from the common damned—a golden palace and a bed of down in hell? No. It will be no small part of his aggravation that he will be doomed to spend an eternity with those in comparison with whom on earth, perhaps, he thought himself to be pure as an angel of light.

(7.) With this multitude of the licentious mad the covetous, will sink to hell all who are not renewed and sanctified. What a prospect for the gay, the fashionable, the moral, the amiable, and the lovely, who have no religion! For all the impenitent and the unbelieving, there is but one home in eternity. Hell is less terrible from its penal fires and its smoke of torment, than from its being made up of the profane, the sensual, and the vile; and its supremest horrors arise from its being the place where shall be gathered all the corrupt and unholy dwellers in a fallen world; all who are so impure that they cannot be admitted into heaven. Why, then, will the refined, the moral, and the amiable not be persuaded to seek the society of a pure heaven? to be prepared for the world where holy beings dwell?

{a} "no whoremonger" Heb 13:4 Re 22:15 {*} "whoremonger" "fornicator" {b} "an idolator" Col 3:5

EPHESIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Let no man deceive you*. Let no one, by artful plans, persuade you that there will be no danger from practising these vices. We may suppose that they would be under strong temptations to mingle in the gay and festive scenes where these vices were not frowned on, or where they were practised; or that they might be tempted to commit them by some of the plausible arguments which were then used for theft indulgence. Many of their friends may have been in these circles; and they would endeavour to convince them that such were the customs which had been long practised, and that there could be no harm still in theft indulgence. Not a few philosophers endeavoured, as is well known, to defend some of these practices, and even practised them themselves. **See Barnes "Ro 1:1"**

and following. It required, therefore, all the authority of an apostle to convince them, that however plausible were the arguments in defence of them, they certainly exposed those who practised them to the wrath of God.

For because of these things cometh the wrath of God. **See Barnes "Ro 1:18"**; **See Barnes** "Ro 2:8"; **See Barnes "Ro 2:9"**.

Upon the children of disobedience. **See Barnes "Mt 1:1"**; **See Barnes** "Ro 2:8".

{c} "with vain words" Jer 29:8,9 {1} "disobedience" "unbelief"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Be not ye therefore partakers with them*. Since these things displease God, and expose to his wrath, avoid them.

EPHESIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *For ye were sometimes darkness*. **See Barnes** "Eph 2:11, **See Barnes "Eph 2:12"**; **See Barnes "1Co 6:11"**.

The meaning here is, that they were themselves formerly sunk in the same ignorance, and practised the same abominations.

But now are ye light in the Lord. Light is the emblem of happiness, knowledge, holiness. The meaning is, that they had been enlightened by the Lord to see the evil of these practices, and that they ought, therefore, to forsake them.

Walk as children of light. **See Barnes** "Mt 1:1, on the use of the word son or children. The meaning here is, that they should live as became those who had been enlightened to see the evil of sin, and the beauty of virtue and religion. Comp. Joh 12:36, where the same phrase occurs.

{d} "ye were sometimes" Eph 2:11,12 {e} "in the lord" 1Th 5:5 {f} "of light" Joh 12:36

EPHESIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *For the fruit of the Spirit*. That is, since the Holy Spirit, through the gospel, produces goodness, righteousness, and truth, see that you exhibit these in your lives, and thus show that you are the children of light. On the fruits of the Spirit, **See Barnes "Gal 5:22,23"**.

Is in all goodness. Is seen in producing all kinds of goodness. He who is not good is not a Christian.

{g} "of the Spirit" Gal 5:22

EPHESIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord*. That is, "Walk as children of light, Eph 5:8, thus showing what is acceptable to the Lord." Rosenmuller supposes that the participle is used here instead of the imperative. The meaning is, that by so living you will make a fair trial of what is acceptable to the Lord. The result on your happiness, in this life and the next, will be such as to show that such a course is pleasing in his sight. Dr. Chandler, however, renders it as meaning that by this course they would show that they discerned and approved of what was acceptable to the Lord. **See Barnes** "Ro 12:2, where a similar form of expression occurs.

{h} "what is acceptable" Ro 12:2

EPHESIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *And have no fellowship*. See the sentiment here expressed fully explained **See Barnes "2Co 6:14"**

and following.

The unfruitful works. The deeds of darkness that produce no benefit to the body or the soul. The word *unfruitful* is here used in contrast with the "fruit of the Spirit," Eph 5:9.

But rather reprove them. By your life, your conversation, and all your influence. This is the business of Christians. Their lives should be a standing rebuke of a sinful world, and they should be ever ready to express their disapprobation of its wickedness in every form.

{a} "with the unfruitful works" 1Co 5:9,11 {b} "reprove them" 1Ti 5:20

EPHESIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *For it is a shame even to speak*, etc. Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 1:24"; also** Ro 1:25-32. It is still a shame to speak of the practices of the heathen. Missionaries tell us that they cannot describe the images on the car of Juggernaut, or tell us what is done in the idol temples. All over the world the same thing is true. The cheek of modesty and virtue would be suffused with shame at the very

mention of what is done by the worshippers of idols; and the same is true of what is done by multitudes in Christian lands, who are not worshippers of idols. Their deeds cannot be described in the circles of the refined and the delicate; they cannot be told in the presence of mothers and sisters. Is there not emphasis here in the words, "even to SPEAK of those things?" If the apostle would not allow, them to name those things, or to speak of them, is it wise or safe for Christians now to be familiar with the accounts of those practices of pollution, and for ministers to portray them in the pulpit, and for the friends of "moral reform" to describe them before the world? The very *naming* of those abominations often produces improper associations in the mind; the description creates polluting images before the imagination; the exhibition of pictures, even for the purpose of condemning them, defiles the soul. There are some vices which, from the corruptions of the human heart, cannot be safely described; and it is to be feared that, under the plea of faithfulness, many have done evil by exciting improper feelings, where they should only have alluded to the crime, and then spoken in thunder. Paul did not *describe* these vices, he denounced them; he did not dwell upon them long enough for the imagination to find employment, and to corrupt the soul. He mentioned the vice, and then he mentioned the wrath of God; he alluded to the sin, and then he spoke of the exclusion from heaven. Comp. **See Barnes** "1Co 6:18.

Which are done of them in secret. Many have supposed that there is an allusion here to the "mysteries" which were celebrated in Greece, usually at night, and far from the public eye. Many of these were indeed impure and abominable, but there is no necessity for supposing that there is such an allusion here. The reference may be to the vices which were secretly practised then as now; the abominations which flee from the eye of day, and which are performed far from the public gaze.

EPHESIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *But all things that are reproved*. Marg., *discovered*. The word here used properly means proved, demonstrated, reproved, or convicted, **See Barnes "Joh 16:8"**; but it seems here to be used in the sense of disclosed, or discovered. The sense is, that its true nature is demonstrated; that is, it is made known.

Are made manifest by the light. The sense is, "Light is the means of seeing what things are. We discern their form, nature, appearance by it. So it is with the gospel—-the light of the world. It enables us to see the true nature of actions. They are done in darkness, and are like objects in the dark. Their form and nature cannot then be known; but, when the light shines, we see what they are." Comp. **See Barnes** "Joh 3:20, **See Barnes "Joh 3:21"**.

For whatsoever doth make manifest is light. "Anything which will show the real form and nature of an object deserves to be called *light*." Of the *truth* of this no one can doubt. The meaning in this connexion is, that that system which discloses the true nature of what is done by the heathen deserves to be considered as light; and that the gospel, which does this, should be regarded as a system of light and truth. It discloses the odiousness and vileness, and it stands thus in strong contrast with all the false and abominable systems which have upheld or produced those vices.

{1} "reproved" "discovered" {c} "by the light" Joh 3:20,21

EPHESIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Wherefore he saith*. Marg., or *it. dio legei*. The meaning may be, either that the Lord says, or the Scripture. Much difficulty has been experienced in endeavouring to ascertain *where* this is said. It is agreed on all hands that it is not found, in so many words, in the Old Testament. Some have supposed that the allusion is to Isa 26:19, "Thy dead men shall live—awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust, for thy dew is as the dew of herbs," etc. But the objections to this are obvious and conclusive.

(1.) This is not a quotation of that place, nor has it a resemblance to it, except in the word" awake."

(2.) The passage in Isaiah refers to a different matter, and has a different sense altogether. **See Barnes "Isa 26:19".**

To make it refer to those to whom the gospel comes is most forced and unnatural. Others have supposed that the reference is to Isa 60:1-3, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come," etc. But the objection to this is not less decisive.

(1.) It is *not* a quotation of that passage, and the resemblance is very remote, if it can be seen at all.

(2.) *That* is addressed to the church, calling on her to let her light shine; *this*, to awake and arise from the dead, with the assurance that Christ would give them light. The exhortation here is to Christians, to *avoid the vices of the heathen around them*; the exhortation in Isaiah is to the church, to *rejoice* and exult in view of the fact that the day of triumph had come, and that the heathen were to be converted, and to come in multitudes and devote themselves to God. In the *design* of the two passages there is no resemblance. Some have supposed that the words are taken from some book among the Hebrews which is now lost. Epiphanius supposed that it was a quotation from a prophecy of Elijah; Syncellus and Euthalius, from some writing of Jeremiah; Hippolytus, from the writing of some now unknown prophet. Jerome supposed it was taken from some apocryphal writings. Grotius supposes that it refers to the word *light* Eph 5:13, and that the sense is, "That light says; that is, that a man who is pervaded by that light, let him so say to another." Heumann, and after him Storr, Michaelis, and Jenning, (Jewish Ant. ii. 252,) suppose that the reference is to a song or hymn that was sung by the early Christians, beginning in this manner, and that the meaning is, "Wherefore, as it is said in the hymns which we sing,

' Awake, thou that sleepest;
Arise from the dead;
Christ shall give thee light.'"

Others have supposed that there is an allusion to a sentiment which prevailed among the Jews, respecting the significancy of blowing the trumpet on the first day of the month, or the feast of the new moon. Maimonides conjectures that that call of the trumpet, especially in the month Tisri, in which the great day of atonement occurred, was designed to signify a special call to repentance; meaning, "You who sleep, arouse from your slumbers; search and try yourselves; think on your Creator; repent, and attend to the salvation of the soul." *Burder*, in Ros. Alt. u. neu. Morgenland, *in loc*. But all this is evidently conjecture. I see no evidence that Paul meant to make a quotation at all. Why may we not suppose that he speaks as an inspired man, and that he means to say, simply, that God now gives this command, or that God now speaks in this way? The sense then would be, "Be separate from sinners. Come out from among the heathen. Do not mingle with their

abominations; do not name them. You are the children of light; and God says to you, Awake from false security, rouse from the death of sin, and Christ shall enlighten you." Whatever be the origin of the sentiment in this verse, it is worthy of inspiration, and accords with all that is elsewhere said in the Scriptures.

Awake thou that sleepest. Arouse from a state of slumber and false security. *Sleep* and *death* are striking representations of the state in which men are by nature. In sleep we are, though living, insensible to any danger that may be near; we are unconscious of what may be going on around us; we hear not the voice of our friends; we see not the beauty of the grove or the landscape; we are forgetful of our real character and condition. So with the sinner. It is as if his faculties were locked in a deep slumber. He hears not when God calls; he has no sense of danger; he is insensible to the beauties and glories of the heavenly world; he is forgetful of his true character and condition. To see all this, he must be first awakened; and hence this solemn command is addressed to man. He must rouse from this condition, or he cannot be saved. But can he awaken himself? Is it not the work of God to awaken a sinner? Can he rouse himself to a sense of his condition and danger? How do we do in other things? The man that is sleeping on the verge of a dangerous precipice we would approach, and say, "Awake, you are in danger." The child that is sleeping quietly in its bed, while the flames are bursting into the room, we would rouse, and say, "Awake, or you will perish." Why not use the same language to the sinner slumbering on the verge of ruin, in a deep sleep, while the flames of wrath are kindling around him? We have no difficulty in calling on sleepers elsewhere to awake when in danger; how can we have any difficulty when speaking to the sinner?

And arise from the dead. The state of the sinner is often compared to death. **See Barnes "Eph 2:1"**.

Men are by nature dead in sins; yet they must rouse from this condition, or they will perish. How singular, it may be said, to call upon the dead to rise! How *could* they raise themselves up? Yet God speaks thus to men, and commands them to rise from the death of sin. Learn then,

(1.) that men are not dead in sin in any such sense that they are not moral agents, or responsible.

(2.) That they are not dead in any such sense that they have no power of any kind.

(3.) That it is right to call on sinners to arouse from their condition, and live.

(4.) That they must put forth their efforts as if they were to *begin* the work themselves, without waiting for God to do it for them. *They* are to awake; *they* are to arise. It is not God who is to awake; it is not Christ who is to arise. It is *the sinner* who is to awake from his slumber, and arise from the state of death; nor is he to wait for God to do the work for him.

And Christ shall give thee light. Christ is the light of the world. **See Barnes** "Joh 1:4, **See Barnes "Joh 1:9"**; **See Barnes "Joh 8:12"**; **See Barnes** "Heb 1:3".

The idea here is, that if they will use all the powers with which God has endowed them, and arouse from their spiritual slumber, and make an appropriate effort for salvation, then they may expect that Christ will shine upon them, and bless them in their efforts. This is just the promise that we need, and it is *all* that we need. All that man can ask is, that if he will make efforts to be saved, God will bless those efforts, so that they shah not be in vain. Faculties of mind have been given us to be employed in securing our salvation; and if we will employ them as they were intended to be employed, we may look for the Divine aid; if not, we cannot expect it. "God helps those who help themselves ;" and they who will make no effort for their salvation must perish, as they who will make no effort to provide food must starve. This command was indeed addressed at first to Christians; but it involves a principle which is applicable to all. Indeed, the *language* here is rather

descriptive of the condition of impenitent sinners than of Christians. In a far more important sense they are "asleep," and are "dead;" and with the more earnestness, therefore, should they be entreated to awake, and to rise from the dead, that Christ may give them light.

{2} "he saith" "it" {d} "Awake" Isa 60:1

EPHESIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *See then that ye walk circumspectly*. Carefully, anxiously, solicitous lest you fall into sin. The word rendered "circumspectly" —*akribwv*—means, *diligently*; and the idea here is, that they were to take special pains to guard against the temptations around them, and to live as they ought to.

Not as fools, but as wise. Not as the people of this world live, indulging in foolish pleasures and desires, but as those who have been taught to understand heavenly wisdom, and who have been made truly wise.

{a} "circumspectly" Col 4:5

EPHESIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Redeeming the time*. The word here rendered *redeeming*, means, *to purchase; to buy up* from the possession or power of any one; and then to redeem, to set free—as from service or bondage. **See Barnes "Gal 3:13"**.

Here it means, to rescue or recover our time from waste; to improve it for great and important purposes. *Because the days are evil*. Because the times in which you live are evil. There are many allurements and temptations that would lead you away from the proper improvement of time, and that would draw you into sin. Such were those that would tempt them to go to places of sinful indulgence and revelry, where their time would be wasted, and worse than wasted. As these temptations abounded, they ought therefore to be more especially on their guard against a sinful and unprofitable waste of time. This exhortation may be addressed to all, and is applicable to all periods. The sentiment is, that we ought to be solicitous to improve our time to some useful purpose, because *there are, in an evil world, so many temptations to waste it*. Time is given us for most valuable purposes. There are things enough to be done to occupy it all, and no one need have it hang heavy on his hands. He that has a soul to be saved from eternal death need not have one idle moment. He that has a heaven to win has enough to do to occupy all his time. Man has just enough given him to accomplish all the purposes which God designs, and God has not given him more than enough. They redeem their time who employ it

(1.) in gaining useful knowledge;

(2.) in doing good to others;

(3.) in employing it for the purpose of an honest livelihood for themselves and families;

(4.) in prayer and self-examination, to make the heart better;

(5.) in seeking salvation, and in endeavouring to do the will of God. They are to redeem time from all that would waste and destroy it—like recovering marshes and fens to make them rich meadows and vineyards. There is *time* enough wasted by each sinner to secure the salvation of the soul; time enough wasted to do all that is needful to be done to spread religion around the world, and to save the race. We should still endeavour to redeem our time for the same reasons which are suggested by the apostle—because the days are evil. There are evil influences abroad; allurements and vices that would waste time, and from which we should endeavour to rescue it. There are evil influences tending to waste time

(1.) in the allurements to pleasure and amusement in every place, and especially in cities;

(2.) in the temptations to novel-reading, consuming the precious hours of probation to no valuable purpose;

(3.) in the temptations of ambition, *most* of the time spent for which is wholly thrown away, for few gain the prize, and when gained, it is all a bauble, not worth the effort;

(4.) in dissipation—for who can estimate the amount of valuable tune that is worse than thrown away in the places of revelry and dissipation?

(5.) in wild and visionary plans—temptations to which abound in all lands, and pre-eminently in our own;

(6.) and in luxurious indulgence—in dressing, and eating, and drinking.

{b} "days are evil" Ps 37:19

EPHESIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Be ye not unwise*. Be not fools in the employment of your time, and in you manner of life. Show true wisdom by endeavouring to understand what the will of the Lord is, and then doing it.

{*} "unwise" "inconsiderate" {c} "the will" Joh 7:17

EPHESIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *And be not drunk with wine*. A danger to which they were exposed, and a vice to which those around them were much addicted. **See Barnes "Lu 21:34"**.

It is not improbable that in this verse there is an allusion to the orgies of Bacchus, or to the festivals celebrated in honour of that heathen god. He was "the god of wine," and, during those festivals, men and women regarded it as an acceptable act of worship to become intoxicated, and with wild songs and cries to run through streets, and fields, and vineyards. To these things the apostle opposes psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, as much more appropriate modes of devotion, and would have the Christian worship stand out in strong contrast with the wild and dissolute habits of the heathen. Plato says, that while those abominable ceremonies in the worship of Bacchus continued, it was difficult to find in all Attica a single sober man. Rosenmuller, Alt. u.

neu. Morgenland, *in loc*. On the subject of *wine*, and the wines used by the ancients, **See Barnes "**Joh 2:10, **See Barnes "Joh 2:11"**.

We may learn from this verse,

(1.) that it was not uncommon in those times to become intoxicated on wine; and,

(2.) that it was positively forbidden. *All* intoxication is prohibited in the Scriptures—no matter by what means it is produced. There is, *in fact*, but one thing that produces intoxication. It is *alcohol*—the poisonous substance produced by fermentation. This substance is neither created nor changed, increased nor diminished, by distillation. It exists in the cider, the beer, and the wine, after they are fermented, and the whole process of distillation consists in driving it off by heat, and collecting it in a concentrated form, and so that it may be preserved. But distilling does not *make* it, nor change it. Alcohol is precisely the same thing in the wine that it is in the brandy after it is distilled; in the cider or the beer that it is in the whisky or the rum; and why is it right to become intoxicated on it in one form rather than another? Since therefore there is danger of intoxication in the use of wine, as well as in the use of ardent spirits, why should we not abstain from one as well as the other? How can a man prove that it is *right* for him to drink alcohol in the form of wine, and that it is *wrong* for me to drink it in the form of brandy or rum?

Wherein is excess. There has been much difference of opinion about the word here rendered *excess—aswtia*. It occurs only in two other places in the New Testament, where it is rendered *riot*, Tit 1:6 1Pe 4:4. The adjective occurs once, Lu 15:13, where it is rendered *riotous*. The word (derived, according to *Passow*, from *a*, and *swzw to save, deliver* means that which is unsafe; not to be recovered; lost beyond recovery; then that which is abandoned to sensuality and lust; dissoluteness, debauchery, revelry. The meaning here is, that all this follows the use of wine. Is it proper, then, for Christians to be in the habit of drinking it? "Wine is so frequently the cause of this, by the ungrateful abuse of the bounty of Providence in giving it, that the enormity is represented, by a very strong and beautiful *figure*, as contamed in the *very liquor*." Doddridge.

But be filled with the Spirit. The Holy Spirit. How much more appropriate to Christians than to be filled with the spirit of intoxication and revelry! Let Christians, when about to indulge in a glass of wine, think of this admonition. Let them remember that their bodies should be the temple of the Holy Ghost, rather than a receptacle for intoxicating drinks. Was any man ever made a better Christian by the use of wine? Was any minister ever better fitted to counsel an anxious sinner, or to pray, or to preach the gospel, by the use of intoxicating drinks? Let the history of wine-drinking and inteperate clergymen answer.

{d} "drunk with wine" Lu 21:34 {+} "excess" "dissoluteness"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Speaking to yourselves*. Speaking among yourselves, that is, endeavouring to edify one another, and to promote purity of heart by songs of praise. This has the force of a command, and it is a matter of obligation on Christians. From the beginning, praise was an important part of public worship, and is designed to be to the end of the world. **See Barnes "1Co 14:16"**.

Nothing is more clear than that it was practised by the Saviour himself and the apostles, Mt 26:30, and by the primitive church, as well as by the great body of Christians in all ages.

In psalms. The Psalms of David were sung by the Jews at the temple, and by the early Christians, **See Barnes** "Mt 26:30, and the singing of those Psalms has constituted a delightful part of public worship in all ages. They speak the language of devotion at all times, and a large part of them are as well fitted to the services of the sanctuary now as they were when first composed.

And hymns. It is not easy to determine precisely what is the difference in the meaning of the words here used, or to designate the kind of compositions which were used in the early churches. A *hymn* is properly a song or ode in honour of God. Among the heathen it was a song in honour of some deity. With us now it denotes a short poem, composed for religious service, and sung in praise to God. Such brief poems were common among the heathen, and it was natural that Christians should early introduce and adopt them. Whether any of them were composed by the apostles it is impossible now to determine, though the presumption is very strong that, if they had been, they would have been preserved with as much care as their epistles, or as the Psalms. One thing is proved clearly by this passage, that there were other compositions used in the praise of God than the Psalms of David; and if it was right then to make use of such compositions, it is now. They were not merely "psalms" that were sung, but there were *hymns* and *odes*.

Spiritual songs. Spiritual *odes—wdaiv*. Odes or songs relating to spiritual things in contradistinction from those which were sung in places of festivity and revelry. An ode is properly a short poem or song adapted to be set to music, or to be sung; a lyric poem. In what way these were sung it is now vain to conjecture. Whether with or without instrumental accompaniment; whether by a choir or by the assembly; whether by an individual only, or whether they were by responses, it is not possible to decide from anything in the New Testament. It is probable that it would be done in the most simple manner possible. Yet, as music constituted so important a part of the worship of the temple, it is evident that the early Christians would be by no means indifferent to the nature of the music which they had in their churches. And as it was so important a part of the worship of the heathen gods, and contributed so much to maintain the influence of heathenism, it is not unlikely that the early Christians would feel the importance of making *their* music attractive, and of making it tributary to the support of religion. If there is attractive music at the banquet and in the theatre, contributing to the maintenance of amusements where God is forgotten, assuredly the music of the sanctuary should not be such as to disgust those of pure and refined taste.

Singing. *adontev*. The prevailing character of music in the worship of God should be *vocal*. If instruments are employed. they should be so subordinate that the service maybe characterized as *singing*.

And making melody. Melody is an agreeable succession of sounds; a succession so regulated and modulated as to please the ear. It differs from *harmony*, inasmuch as melody is an agreeable succession of sounds by a single voice; harmony consists in the accordance of different sounds. It is not certain, however, that the apostle here had reference to what is properly called *melody*. The word which he uses—*qallw* means to touch, twitch, pluck as the hair, the beard; and then to twitch a string—to *twang* it —as the string of a bow, and then the string of an instrument of music. It is most frequently used in the sense of touching or playing a lyre, or a harp; and then it denotes to make music in general, to sing—perhaps usually with the idea of being accompanied with a lyre or harp. It is used, in the New Testament, only in Ro 15:9 1Co 14:15, where it is translated *sing*; in Jas 5:13, where it is rendered *sing psalms*, and in the place before us. The idea here is that of singing in the heart, or praising God from the heart. The psalms, and hymns, and songs were to be

sung so that the heart should be engaged, and not so as to be mere music, or a mere external performance. On the phrase "in the heart," **See Barnes "1Co 14:15"**.

To the Lord. In praise of the Lord, or addressed to him. Singing, as here meant, is a direct and solemn act of worship, and should be considered such as really as prayer. In singing we should regard ourselves as speaking directly to God, and the words, therefore, should be spoken with a solemnity and awe becoming such a direct address to the great JEHOVAH. So Pliny says of the early Christians, *Carmenque Christo quasi Dee dicere secure invieem*—" and they sang among themselves hymns to Christ as God." If this be the true nature and design of public psalmody, then it follows

(1.) that all should regard it as an act of solemn worship in which they should engage—*in heart* at least, if they cannot themselves sing.

(2.) Public psalmody should not be entrusted wholly to the light and gay —to the trifling and careless part of a congregation.

(3.) They who conduct this part of public worship ought to be pious. The leader ought to be a Christian; and they who join in it *ought* also to give their hearts to the Redeemer. Perhaps it would not be proper to say absolutely that no one who is not a professor of religion should take part in the exercises of a choir in a church; but there can be no error in saying that such persons ought to give themselves to Christ, and to sing from the heart. Their voices would be none the less sweet; their music no less pure and beautiful; nor could their own pleasure in the service be lessened. A choir of sweet singers in a church— united in the same praises here—ought to be prepared to join in the same praises around the throne of God.

{a} "psalms" Col 3:16 {b} "singing" Ps 147:7 {c} "heart" Ps 57:7,8

EPHESIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Giving thanks always*. This is probably designed to be connected with the preceding verse, and to denote that the proper subject of psalms and hymns is thanksgiving and praise. This is indeed always the main design, and should be so regarded; and this part of worship should be so conducted as to keep up in the heart a lively sense of the mercy and goodness of God.

For all things. *uper pantwn* for all things, or all *persons*. Dr. Barrow supposes that the meaning here is, that they were to give thanks for all persons, and to regard themselves as under obligations to give thanks for the mercies bestowed upon *the human race*, in accordance with the idea expressed in the Liturgy of the Episcopal Church, "We, thine unworthy servants, do give thee most humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all men." This idea is beautiful; and it accords with the requirements of the Scriptures elsewhere. 1Ti 2:1, "I exhort, therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and *giving of thanks*, be made for all men." Such is the duty of Christians; and I see no departure from the fair meaning of the words here, in supposing that the apostle may have designed to express such an idea. The sense, according to this, would be, that we are to praise God for his general mercy to mankind; for all the happiness which mortals are permitted to enjoy; for the love of God to mankind in creation, in providence, and in redemption—just as a grateful child will give thanks for all the kindness shown to his brothers and sisters. One obvious effect of this would be to overcome selfishness, and to make us rejoice in

the happiness of others as well as in our own. Another effect would be to make us feel a deeper interest in the condition of our fellow-creatures. Another would be to elevate and enlarge our conceptions of the goodness or God—directing the mind to all the favours which he has bestowed on the race. Man has much for which to be grateful; and the duty of acknowledging the mercy of God to the race should not be forgotten. We are often prone so to magnify our calamities, and to contemplate the woes of the race, that we overlook the occasions for gratitude; and we should, therefore, look upon the mercies which we enjoy as well as the miseries which we endure, that our hearts may be right. He who looks only on his trials will soon find his mind soured and complaining; he who endeavours to find how many occasions for gratitude he has, will soon find the burden of his sorrows alleviated, and his mind tranquil and calm. Yet, if the words here are to be taken as in our translation, "for all things," they are full of force and beauty. At the close of life, and in heaven, we shall see occasion to bless God for all his dealings with us. We shall see that we have not suffered one pang too much, or been required to perform one duty too severe. We shall see that all our afflictions, as well as our mercies, were designed for our good, and were needful for us. Why, then, should we not bless God in the furnace, as well as in the palace; on a bed of pain, as well as on a bed of down; in want, as well as when sitting down at the splendid banquet? God knows what is best for us; and the way in which he leads us, mysterious though it seem to be now, will yet be seen to have been full of goodness and mercy.

Unto God and the Father. Or, "to God, even the Father." It cannot mean to God as distinguished from the Father, or first to God and then to the Father, as if the Father were distinct from God. The meaning is, that thanks are to be given specially to God the Father—the great Author of all mercies, and the Source of all blessings.

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. That is, through his mediation, or trusting in him. **See Barnes "Joh 14:13"**.

The meaning is, that we are always to approach God through the mediation of the Lord Jesus. When we ask for mercy, it is to be on his account, or through his merits; when we plead for strength and grace to support us in trial, it is to be in dependence on him; and when we give thanks, it is to be through him, and because it is through his intervention that we receive all blessings, and by his merits that even the gratitude of beings so sinful as we are can be accepted.

{d} "thanks always" Isa 63:7 {*} "Father" "even the Father"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Submitting yourselves one to another*. Maintaining due subordination in the various relations of life. This general principle of religion the apostle proceeds now to illustrate in reference to wives, Eph 5:22-24; to children, Eph 6:1-3; and to servants, Eph 6:5-8. At the same time that he enforces this duty of submission, however, he enjoins on others to use their authority in a proper manner, and gives solemn injunctions that there should be no abuse of power. Particularly he enjoins on husbands the duty of loving their wives with all tenderness, Eph 5:25-33; on fathers, the duty of treating their children so that they might easily obey them, Eph 6:4; and on masters, the duty of treating their servants with kindness, remembering that they have a Master also in heaven, Eph 6:9. The general meaning here is, that Christianity does not break up the relations of life, and produce

disorder, lawlessness, and insubordination; but that it will confirm every proper authority, and make every just yoke lighter. Infidelity is always disorganizing; Christianity never.

EPHESIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands*. On this passage, **See Barnes "1Co 11:3, also** 1Co 11:4-9. The duty of the submission of the wife to her husband is everywhere enjoined in the Scriptures. See 1Pe 3:1 Col 3:18; Tit 2:5.

While Christianity designed to elevate the character of the wife, and to make her a fit companion of an intelligent and pious husband, it did not intend to destroy all subordination and authority. Man, by the fact that he was first created; that the woman was taken from him; that he is better qualified for ruling than she is, is evidently designed to be at the head of the little community that constitutes a family. In many other things woman may be his equal; in loveliness, and grace, and beauty, and tenderness, and gentleness, she is far his superior; but these are not the qualities adapted for government. Their place is in another sphere; and *there*, man should be as cautious about invading her prerogative, or abridging her liberty, as she should be about invading the prerogative that belongs to him. In every family there should be a head—some one who is to be looked up to as the counsellor and the ruler; some one to whom all should be subordinate. God has given that prerogative to man; and no family prospers where that arrangement is violated. Within proper metes and limits, therefore, it is the duty of the wife to obey, or to submit herself to her husband. Those limits are such as the following:

1. In domestic arrangements, the husband is to be regarded as the head of the family; and he has a right to direct as to the style of living, the expenses of the family, the clothing, etc.

2. In regard to the laws which are to regulate the family, he is the head. It is his to say what is to be done; in what way the children are to employ themselves, and to give directions in regard to their education, etc.

3. In business matters, the wife is to submit to the husband. She may counsel with him, if he chooses; but the affairs of business and property are under his control, and must be left at his disposal.

4. In everything, except that which relates to *conscience* and *religion*, he has authority. But there his authority ceases. He has no right to require her to commit an act of dishonesty, to connive at wrong-doing, to visit a place of amusement which her conscience tells her is wrong, nor has he a right to interfere with the proper discharge of her religious duties. He has no right to forbid her to go to church at the proper and usual time, or to make a profession of religion when she pleases. He has no right to forbid her endeavouring to exercise a religious influence over her children, or to endeavour to lead them to God. She is bound to obey God, rather than any man, **See Barnes "Ac 4:19"**

and when even a husband interferes in such cases, and attempts to control her, he steps beyond his proper bounds, and invades the prerogative of God, and his authority ceases to be binding. It ought to be said, however, that in order to justify her acting independently in such a case, the following things are proper:

(1.) It should be *really* a case of conscience—a case where the Lord has plainly required her to do what she proposes to do—and not a mere matter of whim, fancy, or caprice.

(2.) When a husband makes opposition to the course which a wife wishes to pursue in religious duties, it should lead her to re-examine the matter, to pray much over it, and to see whether she cannot, with a good conscience, comply with his wishes.

(3.) If she is convinced that she is right, she should still endeavour to see whether it is not *possible* to win him to her views, and to persuade him to accord with her, see 1Pe 3:1. It is *possible* that, if she does right, he may be persuaded to do right also.

(4.) If she is constrained, however, to differ from him, it should be with mildness and gentleness. There should be no reproach, and no contention. She should simply state her reasons, and leave the event to God.

(5.) She should, *after* this, be a better wife, and put forth more and more effort to make her husband and family happy. She should show that the effect of her religion has been to make her love her husband and children more; to make her more and more attentive to her domestic duties, and more and more kind in affliction. By a *life* of pure religion, she should aim to secure what she could not by her entreaties—his consent that she should live as she thinks she ought to, and walk to heaven in the path in which she believes that her Lord calls her. While, however, it is to be conceded that the husband has authority over the wife, and a *right* to command in all cases that do not pertain to the conscience, it should be remarked,

(1.) that *his* command should be reasonable and proper.

(2.) He has no right to require anything wrong, or contrary to the will of God.

(3.) WHERE COMMANDS BEGIN *in this relation*, HAPPINESS USUALLY ENDS; and the moment a husband requires a wife to do anything, it is usually a signal of departing or departed affection and peace. When there are proper feelings in both parties in this relation, there will be no occasion either to command or to obey. There should be such mutual love and confidence, that the known *wish* of the husband should be a law to the wife; and that the known desires of the wife should be the rule which he would approve. A perfect government is that where the known wish of the lawgiver is a sufficient rule to the subject. Such is the government of heaven; and a family on earth should approximate as nearly as possible to that.

As unto the Lord. As you would to the Lord, because the Lord requires it, and has given to the husband this authority.

{a} "submit" 1Pe 3:1 Col 3:18

EPHESIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *For the husband is the head of the wife*. **See Barnes "1Co 11:3"**.

As Christ is the head of the church. As Christ rules over the church, and has a right to direct and control it.

And he is the saviour of the body. That is, of the church, represented as his body. **See Barnes "Eph 1:23"**.

The idea here seems to be, that as Christ gave himself to save his body, the church; as he practised self-denial, and made it an object of intense solicitude to preserve that church, so ought

the husband to manifest a similar solicitude to make his wife happy, and to save her from want, affliction, and pain. He ought to regard himself as her natural protector; as bound to anticipate and provide for her wants; as under obligation to comfort her in trial, even as Christ does the church. What a beautiful illustration of the spirit which a husband should manifest is the care which Christ has shown for his "bride," the church, **See Barnes "Eph 5:25"; also** Eph 5:26-29.

EPHESIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *In every thing*. In everything which is not contrary to the will of God. **See Barnes "Eph 1:23".**

EPHESIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Husbands, love your wives*. The duty of the wife is to obey; the right of the husband is to command. But the apostle would guard against the abuse of that right by enjoining the manifestation of such a spirit on the husband as would secure obedience on the part of the wife. He proceeds, therefore, to show that the husband, in all his intercourse with the wife, should manifest the same spirit which the Lord Jesus did towards the church; or, in other words, he holds up the conduct of the Redeemer towards the church as the model for a husband to imitate. If a husband wished a rule that would be short, simple, clear, and efficacious, about the manner in which he should regard and treat his wife, he could not find a better one than that here suggested.

Even as Christ loved the Church. This was the strongest love that has ever been evinced in this world. It follows, that a husband is in no danger of loving his wife too much, provided she be not loved more than God. We are to make the love which Christ had for the church the model.

And gave himself for it. Gave himself to die to redeem it. The meaning here is, that husbands are to imitate the Redeemer in this respect. As he gave himself to suffer on the cross to save the church, so we are to be willing to deny ourselves and to bear toil and trial, that we may promote the happiness of the wife. It is the duty of the husband to toil for her support; to provide for her wants; to deny himself of rest and ease, if necessary, in order to attend on her in sickness; to go before her in danger; to defend her if she is in peril; and to be ready to die to save her. Why should he not be? If they are shipwrecked, and there is a single plank on which safety can be secured, should he not be willing to place her on that, and see *her* safe at all hazards to himself? But there may be more implied in this than that a man is to toil, and even to lay down his life for the welfare of his wife. Christ laid down his life to *save* the church; and a husband should feel that it should be one great object of his life to promote the salvation of his wife. He is bound so to live as not to interfere with her salvation, but so as to promote it in every way possible. He is to furnish her all the *facilities* that she may need, to enable her to attend on the worship of God; and to throw no obstacles in her way. He is to set her the example; to counsel her if she needs counsel; and to make the path of salvation as easy for her as possible. If a husband has the spirit and self-denial of the Saviour, he will regard no sacrifice too great if he may promote the salvation of his family.

{*} "gave himself" "gave up himself"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *That he might sanctify*. The great object of the Redeemer was to purify and save the church. The meaning here is, that a husband is to manifest similar love towards his wife, and a similar desire that she should be prepared to "walk before him in white."

And cleanse it with the washing of water. In all this there is an allusion, doubtless, to the various methods of purifying and cleansing those who were about to be married, and who were to be united to monarchs as their brides. In some instances this previous preparation continued for twelve months. The means of purification were various, but consisted usually in the use of costly unguents. See Es 2:12—"Six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours, and with other things for the purifying of women." Comp. Ps 45:13,14; Eze 16:7-14.

As such a virgin was purified and prepared for her husband by washing and by anointing, so the church is to be prepared for Christ. It is to be made pure and holy. Outwardly there is to be the application of water—the symbol of purity; and within there is to be holiness of heart. **See Barnes** "2Co 11:2, where Paul says of the Corinthians, "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."

By the word. There has been much diversity of opinion respecting the meaning of this. Probably the sense of the expression is, that all this was to be accomplished by the instrumentality of the truth —the word of God. By that truth they were to be sanctified, Joh 17:17; and in accordance with that the whole work, from the commencement to the dose, was to be accomplished. It was not by external ceremonies, and not by any miraculous power on the heart, but by the faithful application of truth to the heart.

{a} "of water" Tit 3:5

EPHESIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *That he might present it to himself*. In the last day, when he shall receive the church as his spouse to heaven, Re 21:9. Perhaps the word *prepare* would better express the sense here than *present*—that he may prepare it for himself as a holy church. Tindal renders it, "to make it unto himself."

A glorious Church. A church full of honour, splendour, beauty. The idea of shining, or of being bright, would convey the sense here. Probably there is still here an allusion to a bride "adorned for her husband," Re 21:2 Ps 45:9-14; and the idea is, that the church will be worthy of the love of the Bridegroom, to whom it will then be presented.

Not having spot. Not having a stain, a defect, or any impurity—still retaining the allusion to a bride, and to the care taken to remove every blemish.

Or wrinkle. In the rigour and beauty of youth; like a bride in whom here is no wrinkle of age.

Or any such thing. Nothing to deform, disfigure, or offend. To this beautiful illustration of the final glory of the church, the apostle was led by the mention of the relation of the husband and the wife. It shows

(1.) the tendency of the thoughts of Paul. He delighted to allow the associations in his mind, no matter what the subject was, to draw him along to the Redeemer.

(2.) The passage here shows us what the church will yet be. There will be a period in its history when there shall not be any imperfection; when there shall be neither spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing. In heaven all will be pure. On earth we are preparing for that world of purity; and it cannot be denied that here there is much that is imperfect and impure. But in that future world, where the church shall be presented to Christ, clothed in the robes of salvation, there shall not be one unholy member, one deceiver or hypocrite, one covetous or avaricious man, one that shall pain the hearts of the friends of purity by an unholy life. And in all the millions that shall be gathered there out of every land, and people, and tongue, and age, there shall be no envy malice, backbiting, pride, vanity, worldliness; there shall be no annoying and vexing conflict in the heart with evil passions, "nor any such thing." How different from the church as it is now; and how we should pant for that blessed world!

{b} "it to himself" Jude 1:24 {c} "or wrinkles" So 4:7

EPHESIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies*. Because they are one flesh, Eph 5:31. This is the subject on which Paul had been speaking, and from which he had been diverted by the allusion to the glorified church. The doctrine here is, that a husband should have the same care for the comfort of his wife which he has. for himself. He should regard her as one with himself; and as he protects his own body from cold and hunger, and, when sick and suffering, endeavours to restore it to health, so he should regard and treat her.

He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

(1.) Because she is one with him, and their interests are identified.

(2.) Because, by this, he really promotes his own welfare, as much as he does when he takes care of his own body. A man's kindness to his wife will be more than repaid by the happiness which she imparts; and all the real solicitude which he shows to make her happy, will come to more than it costs. If a man wishes to pro- mote his own happiness in the most effectual way, he had better begin by showing kindness to his wife.

{*} "men" "husbands"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *For no man ever yet hated his own flesh*. This is urged as an argument why a man should love his wife, and show kindness to her. As no man disregards the happiness of his own body, or himself, so he should show equal care to promote the happiness of his wife. A sentiment

similar to this is found in the classic writers. Thus Curtius (lib. vii) says, *Corporibus nostris quea utique non odimus*—" We do not hate those things that pertain to our own bodies." So Seneca, (Epis. 14,) *Fateor insitam nobis esse corporia nostri charitatem*—" I confess that there is implanted in us the love of our own body." The word *nourishment* here means, properly, to bring up, as, e.g., children. The sense here is, that he provides for it, and guards it from exposure and want. The word *cherisheth yalpei* means, properly, *to warm*; and may mean here that he defends it from cold by clothing—and the two expressions denote mat he provides food and raiment for the body. So he is to do for his wife; and in like manner the Lord Jesus regards the church, and ministers to its spiritual necessities. But this should not be spiritualized too far. The *general* idea is all that we want—that Christ has a tender concern for the wants of the church, as a man has for his own body, and that the husband should show a similar regard for his wife.

EPHESIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *For we are members of his body*. Of the body of Christ. **See Barnes "1Co 11:3"**; **See Barnes** "1Co 12:27"; **See Barnes "Joh 15:1"; also** Joh 15:2-6; **See Barnes "Eph 1:23"**.

The idea here is, that there is a close and intimate union between the Christian and the Saviour—a union so intimate that they may be spoken of *as one*.

Of his flesh, and of his bones. There is an allusion here evidently to the language which Adam used respecting Eve, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh," Ge 2:23. It is language which is employed to denote the closeness of the marriage relation, and which Paul applies to the connexion between Christ and his people. Of course, it cannot be understood *literally*. It is not true, literally, that our bones are a part of the bones of Christ, or our flesh of his flesh; nor should language ever be used that would imply a miraculous union. It is not a physical union, but a union of attachment, of feeling, of love. If we avoid the notion of a *physical union*, however, it is scarcely possible to use too strong language in describing the union of believers with the Lord Jesus. The Scriptures make use of language which is stronger than that employed to describe any other connexion; and there is no union of affection so powerful as that which binds the Christian to the Saviour. So strong is it, that he is willing for it to forsake father, mother, and home; to leave his country, and to abandon his possessions; to go to distant lands, and dwell among barbarians, to make the Redeemer known; or to go to the cross or the stake from simple love to the Saviour. Account for it as men may, there has been manifested on earth nowhere else so strong an attachment as that which binds the Christian to the cross. It is stronger love than that which a man has for his own flesh and bones; for it makes him willing that his flesh should be consumed by fire, or his bones broken on the wheel, rather than deny him. Can the infidel account for this strength of attachment on any other principle than that it has a Divine origin ?

{d} "of his body" 1Co 12:27

EPHESIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *For this cause*. *anti toutou*. This verse is a quotation from Ge 2:24, and contains the account of the institution of marriage. The meaning of the phrase rendered "for this cause," is, "answerably to this;" or corresponding to this—that is, to what Paul had just said of the union of believers and the Redeemer. On the meaning of this verse, **See Barnes "Mt 19:6"**.

There is no evidence that the marriage connexion was originally designed to symbolize or typify this union, but it may be used to illustrate that connexion, and to show the strength of the attachment be- tween the Redeemer and his people. The comparison should be confined, however, strictly to the use made of it in the New Testament.

{a} "shall a man leave" Ge 2:24 {*} "unto" "cleave to" {b} "shall be one flesh" 1Co 6:16

EPHESIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *This is a great mystery*. The Latin Vulgate translates this, *sacramenturn hoc magnum est*—" this is a great *sacrament*"—and this is the proof, I suppose, and the only proof adduced by the Papists, that marriage is a sacrament. But the original here conveys no such idea. The word *mystery—musthrion*—means something which is concealed, hidden, before unknown; something into which one must be *initiated* or instructed before he can understand it. It does not mean that it is incomprehensible when it is disclosed, but that hitherto it, has been kept secret. When disclosed it may be as intelligible as any other truth. See the word explained **See Barnes "Eph 1:9"**.

Here it means, simply, that there was much about the union of the Redeemer with his people resembling the marriage connexion, which was not obvious, except to those who were instructed; which was obscure to those who were not initiated; which they did not understand who had not been *taught*. It does not mean that no one could understand it, but that it pertained to the class of truths into which it was necessary for one to be *initiated* in order to comprehend them. The truth that was so great a mystery was, that the eternal Son of God should form such an union with men; that he should take them into a connexion with himself, implying all ardour of attachment, and a strength of affection, superior to even that which exists in the marriage relation. This was a great and profound truth, to understand which it was necessary to receive instruction. No one would have understood it without a revelation; no one understands it now except they who are taught of God.

But I speak concerning Christ and the Church. This, it seems to me, is an explicit disclaimer of any intention to be understood as affirming that the marriage contract was designed to be a *type* of the union of the Redeemer and his people. The apostle says expressly, that his remarks do not refer to marriage at all when he speaks of the mystery. They refer solely to the union of the Redeemer and his people. How strange and unwarranted, therefore, are all the comments of expositors on this passage designed to explain marriage as a *mysterious type* of the union of Christ and the church! If men would allow the apostle to speak for himself, and not force on him sentiments which he expressly disclaims, the world would be saved from such insipid allegories as Macknight and others have derived from this passage. The Bible is a book of sense; and the time will come, it is hoped, when, freed from all such allegorizing expositions, it will commend itself to the good sense of mankind. Marriage is an important, a holy, a noble, a pure institution, altogether worthy of God; but it does not thence follow that marriage was designed to be a type of the union between Christ and the church, and it is certain that the apostle Paul meant to teach no such thing.

{+} "mystery" "secret"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *Nevertheless*. The apostle here resumes the subject which he had been discussing in Eph 5:21-29, and says that it was the duty of every man to love his wife as he did himself. This was the main topic, from which he had been directed by the discussion respecting the love which the Redeemer had shown for his church.

And the wife see that she reverence her husband. The word "*see*" is supplied by our translators. The meaning is, that it was the especial duty of the wife to show respect for her husband as the head of the family, and as set over her in the Lord. **See Barnes** "Eph 5:22, **See Barnes "Eph 5:23"**.

The word rendered *reverence*, is that which usually denotes *fear—fobhtai*. She is to *fear*, i.e., to honour, respect, obey the will of her husband. It is, of course, not implied that it is not also her duty to love her husband, but that there should be no usurping of authority; no disregard of the arrangement which God has made; and that order and peace should be secured in a family by regarding the husband as the source of law.

From what is here said of the duties of husband and wife we may remark:—

(1.) That the happiness of society depends on just views of the marriage relation. It is true the world over, that the views which prevail in regard to this relation, determine everything in reference to all other relations of life, and to all other sources of enjoyment.

(2.) God designed that woman should occupy a subordinate, though an important place in the relations of social life. This arrangement is never disregarded without evils which cannot be corrected until the original intention is secured. No imaginary good that can come out of the violation of the original design; no benefits which females, individual or associated, can confer on mankind by disregarding this arrangement, can be a compensation for the evil that is done, nor can the evil be remedied unless woman occupies the place which God designed she should fill. There nothing else can supply her place; and when she is absent from that situation—no matter what good she may be doing elsewhere —there is a silent evil reigning, which can be removed only by her return. It is not hers to fight battles, or to command armies and navies, or to control kingdoms, or to make laws. Nor is it hers to go forward as a public leader even in enterprises of benevolence, or in associations designed to act on the public mind. Her empire is the domestic circle; her first influence is there; and in connexion with that, in such scenes as she can engage in without trenching on the prerogative of man, or neglecting the duty which she owes to her own family.

(3.) It is not best that there should be the open exercise of authority in a family. When *commands* begin in the relation of husband and wife, *happiness* flies; and the moment a husband is disposed to COMMAND his wife, or is under a necessity of doing it that moment he may bid adieu to domestic peace and joy.

(4.) A wife, therefore, should never give her husband occasion to command her to do anything, or to forbid anything. His known wish, except in cases of conscience, should be law to her. The moment she can ascertain what his will is, that moment ought to settle her mind as to what is to be done.

(5.) A husband should never wish or expect anything that it may not be perfectly proper for a wife to render. He, too, should consult her wishes; and when he understands what they are, he should regard what she prefers as the very thing which he would command. The known wish and preference of a wife, unless there be something wrong in it, should be allowed to influence his mind, and be that which he directs in the family.

(6.) There is no danger that a husband will love a wife too much, provided his love be subordinate to the love of God. The command is, to love her as Christ loved the church. What love has ever been like that? How can a husband exceed it? What did not Christ endure to redeem the church? So should a husband be willing to deny himself to promote the happiness of his wife; to watch by her in sickness, and, if need be, to peril health and life to promote her welfare. Doing this, he will not go beyond what Christ did for the church. He should remember that she has a special claim of justice on him. For him she has left her father's home, forsaken the friends of her youth, endowed him with whatever property she may have, sunk her name in his, confided her honour, her character, and her happiness, to his virtue; and the least that he can do for her is to love her, and strive to make her happy. This was what she asked when she consented to become his; and a husband's love is what she still asks to sustain and cheer her in the trials of life. If she has not this, whither shall she go for comfort?

(7.) We may see, then, the guilt of those husbands who withhold their affections from their wives, and forsake those to whom they had solemnly pledged themselves at the altar; those who neglect to provide for their wants, or to minister to them in sickness; and those who become the victims of intemperance, and leave their wives to tears. There is much, much guilt of this kind on earth. There are many, many broken vows. There are many, many hearts made to bleed. There is many a pure and virtuous woman, who was once the object of tender affection, now, by no fault of hers, forsaken, abused, broken-hearted, by the brutal conduct of a husband.

(8.) Wives should manifest such a character as to be worthy of love. They owe this to their husbands. They demand the confidence and affection of man; and they should show that they are worthy of that confidence and affection. It is not possible to love that which is unlovely, nor to force affection where it is undeserved; and, as a wife expects that a husband will love her more than he does any other earthly being, it is but right that she should evince such a spirit as shall make that proper. A wife may easily alienate the affections of her partner in life. If she is irritable and fault-finding; if none of his ways please her; if she takes no interest in his plans, and in what he does; if she forsakes her home when she should be there, and seeks happiness abroad; or, if at home, she never greets him with a smile; if she is wasteful of his earnings, and extravagant in her habits, it will be impossible to prevent the effects of such a course of life on his mind. And when a wife perceives the slightest evidence of alienated affection in her husband, she should inquire at once whether she has not given occasion for it, and exhibited such a spirit as tended inevitably to produce such a result.

(9.) To secure mutual love, therefore, it is necessary that there should be mutual kindness, and mutual *loveliness* of character. Whatever is seen to be offensive or painful should be at once abandoned. All the little peculiarities of temper and modes of speech that are observed to give pain should be forsaken; and while one party should endeavour to tolerate them, and not to be offended, the other should make it a matter of conscience to remove them.

(10.) The great secret of conjugal happiness is in the cultivation of a proper temper. It is not so much in the great and trying scenes of life that the strength of virtue is tested; it is in the events that

are constantly occurring; the manifestation of kindness in the things that are happening every moment; the gentleness that flows along every day, like the stream that winds through the meadow and around the farm-house, noiseless but useful, diffusing fertility by day and by night. Great deeds rarely occur. The happiness of life depends little on them, but mainly on the little acts of kindness in life. We need them everywhere; we need them always. And eminently in the marriage relation there is need of gentleness and love, returning each morning, beaming in the eye, and dwelling in the heart through the livelong day.

EPHESIANS - Chapter 6

EPHESIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 1

EPHESIANS Chapter 6

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

THIS chapter comprises the following subjects:

(1.) An exhortation to children to obey their parents, with a promise of the blessing that would follow from obedience, Eph 6:1-3.

(2.) An exhortation to fathers to manifest such a character that children could properly obey them, and to train them up in a proper manner, Eph 6:4.

(3.) The duty of servants, Eph 6:6-8.

(4.) The duty of masters towards their servants, Eph 6:9.

(5.) An exhortation to put on the whole armour of God, with a description of the Christian soldier, and of the Christian panoply, Eph 6:10-17.

(6.) The duty of prayer, and especially of prayer for the apostle himself, that he might be enabled to speak with boldness in the cause of his Master, Eph 6:18-20.

(7.) In the conclusion, Eph 6:21-24, he informs them that if they wished to make any inquiries about his condition, Tychicus, who conveyed this letter, could acquaint them with his circumstances; and then closes the epistle with the usual benedictions.

Verse 1. *Children*. *tekna*. This word usually signifies those who are young; but it is here used, evidently, to denote those who were under the care and government of their parents, or those who were not of age.

Obey your parents. This is the first great duty which God has enjoined on children. It is to do what their parents command them to do. The God of nature indicates that this is duty, for he has impressed it on the minds of all in every age; and the Author of revelation confines it. It is particularly important,

(1.) because the good order of a family, and hence of the community, depends on it; no community or family being prosperous where there is not due subordination in the household.

(2.) Because the welfare of the child depends on it; it being of the highest importance that a child should be early taught obedience to law, as no one can be prosperous or happy who is not thus obedient.

(3.) Because the child is not competent, as yet, to reasons on what is right, or qualified to direct himself; and, while that is the case, he must be subject to the will of some other person.

(4.) Because the parent, by his age and experience, is to be presumed to be qualified to direct and guide a child. The love which God has implanted in the heart of a parent for a child secures, in general, the administration of this domestic government in such a way as not to injure the child. A father will not, unless under strong passion or the excitement of intoxication, abuse his authority. He loves the child too much. He desires his welfare; and the placing of the child under the authority of the parent is about the same thing, in regard to the welfare of the child, as it would be to endow the child at once with all the wisdom and experience of the parent himself.

(5.) It is important, because the family government is designed to be an imitation of the government of God. The government of God is what a perfect family government would be; and to accustom a child to be obedient to a parent is designed to be one method of leading him to be obedient to God. No child that is disobedient to a parent will be obedient to God; and that child that is most obedient to a father and mother will be most likely to become a Christian, and an heir of heaven. And it may be observed, in general, that no disobedient child is virtuous, prosperous, or happy. Every one foresees the ruin of such a child; and most of the cases of crime that lead to the penitentiary, or the gallows, commence by disobedience to parents.

In the Lord. That is, as far as their commandments agree with those of God, and no farther. No parent can have a right to require a child to steal, or lie, or cheat, or assist him in committing murder, or in doing any other wrong thing. No parent has a right to forbid a child to pray, to read the Bible, to worship God, or to make a profession of religion. The duties and rights of children, in such cases, are similar to those of wives, **See Barnes "Eph 5:22"**; and, in all cases, God is to be obeyed rather than man. When a parent, however, is opposed to a child; when he expresses an unwillingness that a child should attend a particular church, or make a profession of religion, such opposition should, in all cases, be a sufficient reason for the child to pause and re-examine the subject. He should pray much, and think much, and inquire much, before, in any case, he acts contrary to the will of a father or mother; and, when he *does* do it, he should state to them, with great gentleness and kindness, that he believes he ought to love and serve God.

For this is right. It is right,

(1.) because it is so appointed by God as a duty;

(2.) because children owe a debt of gratitude to their parents for what they have done for them;

(3.) because it will be for the good of the children themselves, and for the welfare of society.

{a} "obey your parents" Pr 23:22 col 3:20

EPHESIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Honour thy father and mother*. Ex 20:12. Comp. **See Barnes "Mt 15:4"**.

Which is the first commandment with promise. With a promise annexed to it. The promise was, that their days should be long in the land which the Lord their God would give them. It is not to be

supposed that the observance of the four first commandments would not be attended with a blessing, but no particular blessing is promised. It is true, indeed, that there is a general declaration annexed to the second commandment, that God would show mercy to thousands of generations of them that loved him, and that kept his commandments. But that is rather a declaration in regard to all the commands of God than a promise annexed to that specific commandment. It is an assurance that obedience to the law of God would be followed with blessings to a thousand generations, and is given in view of the first and second commandments together, because they related particularly to the honour that was due to God. But the promise in the fifth commandment is a special promise. It does not relate to obedience to God in general, but it is a particular assurance that they who honour their parents shall have a particular blessing as the result of that obedience.

{b} "thy father and mother" Ex 20:12

EPHESIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *That it may be well with thee*. This is found in the fifth commandment as recorded in De 5:16. The whole commandment as there recorded is, "Honour thy father and thy mother, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." The meaning here is, that they would be more happy, useful, and virtuous, if they obeyed their parents than if they disobeyed them.

And thou mayest live long on the earth. In the Commandment, as recorded in Ex 20:12, the promise is, "that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." This referred to the promised land—the land of Canaan. The meaning doubtless is, that there would be a special providence, to those who were obedient to parents length of days. Long regarded as a great blessing; and this blessing was promised. The apostle here gives to the promise a more general form, and says obedience to parents was connected at all times with long life. We may remark here,

(1.) that long life is a blessing. It affords a longer space to prepare for eternity; it enables a man to be more useful; and it furnishes a longer opportunity to study the works of God on earth. It is not improper to desire it; and we should make use of all the means in our power to lengthen out our days, and to preserve and protract our lives.

(2.) It is still true that obedience to parents is conducive to length of life, and that those are most obedient in early life, other things being equal, have prospect of living long. This occurs because

(a.) obedient are saved from the vices and crimes which shorten life. No parent will command his child to be a drunkard, a gambler, a spendthrift, a pirate, or a murderer. But these vices and crimes, resulting in most cases from disobedience to parents, all shorten they who early commit them are certain of an early grave. No child who disobeys a parent can have any *security* that he will not fall a victim to such vices and crimes.

(b.) Obedience to parents is connected with virtuous habits that are conducive to long life. It will make a child industrious, temperate, sober; it will lead him to restrain and govern his wild passions; it will lead him to form habits of self-government which will, in future life, save him from the snares of vice and temptation.

(c.) Many a life is lost early by disobeying a parent. A child disobeys a father, and goes into a dram-shop; or he goes to sea; or he becomes the companion of the wicked—and he may be wrecked

at sea, or his character on land may be wrecked for ever. Of disobedient children, there is perhaps not one in a hundred that ever reaches an honoured old age.

(d.) We may still believe that God, in his providence, will watch over those who are obedient to a father and mother. If he regards a falling sparrow, (Mt 10:29,) he will not be unmindful of an obedient child; if he numbers the hairs of the head, (Mt 10:30,) he will not be regardless of the little boy that honours him by obeying a father and mother.

{*} "earth" "land"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And ye fathers*. A command addressed particularly to *fathers* because they are at the head of the family, and its government is especially committed to them. The object of the apostle here is, to show parents that their commands should be such that they can be easily obeyed, or such as are entirely reasonable and proper. If children are required to obey, it is but reasonable that the commands of the parent should be such that they can be obeyed, or such that the child shall not be discouraged in his attempt to obey. This statement is in accordance with what he had said Eph 5:22-25 of the relation of husband and wife. It was the duty of the wife to obey —but it was the corresponding duty of the husband to manifest such a character that it would be pleasant to yield obedience—so to love her, that his known *wish* would be *law* to her. In like manner it is the duty of children to obey a parent; but it is the duty of a parent to exhibit such a character, and to maintain such a government, that it would be proper for the child to obey; to command nothing that is unreasonable or improper, but to train up his children in the ways of virtue and pure religion.

Provoke not your children to wrath. That is, by unreasonable commands; by needless severity; by the manifestation of anger. So govern them, and so punish them—if punishment is necessary —that they shall not lose their confidence in you, but shall love you. The apostle here has hit on the very danger to which parents are most exposed in the government of their children. It is that of souring their temper; of making them feel that the parent is under the influence of anger, and that it is right for them to be so too. This is done

(1.) when the commands of a parent are unreasonable and severe. The spirit of a child then becomes irritated, and he is "discouraged," Col 3:21.

(2.) When a parent is evidently *excited* when he punishes a child. The child then feels

(a.) that if his father is angry, it is not wrong for him to be angry; and

(b.) the very fact of anger in a parent kindles anger in his bosom—just as it does when two men are contending. If he submits in the case, it is only because the parent is the *strongest*, not because he is *right*; and the child cherishes anger, while he yields to *power*. There is no principle of parental government more important than that a father should command his own temper when he inflicts punishment. He should punish a child not because he is *angry*, but because it is *right*; not because it has become a matter of personal contest, but because God requires that he should do it, and the welfare of the child demands it. The moment when a child sees that a parent punishes him under the influence of anger, that moment the child will be likely to be angry too—and his anger will be as proper as that of the parent. And yet how often is punishment inflicted in this manner! And how often does the child feel that the parent punished him simply because he was the *strongest*, not

because it was right! And how often is the mind of a child left with a strong conviction that wrong has been done him by the punishment which he has received, rather than with repentance for the wrong that he has himself done!

But bring them up. Place them under such discipline and instruction that they shall become acquainted with the Lord.

In the nurture, *en paideia*. The word here used means, *training of a child*; hence education, instruction, discipline. Here it means that they are to train up their children in such a manner as the Lord approves; that is, they are to educate them for virtue and religion.

And admonition. The word here used—*nouyesia*—means, literally, a putting in mind; then warning, admonition, instruction. The sense here is, that they were to put them in mind of the Lord—of his existence, perfections, law, and claims on their hearts and lives. This command is positive, and is in accordance with all the requirements of the Bible on the subject. No one can doubt that the Bible enjoins on parents the duty of endeavouring to train up their children in the ways of religion, and of making it the grand purpose of this life to prepare them for heaven. It has been often objected that children should be left on religious subjects to form their own opinions when they are able to judge for themselves. Infidels and irreligious men always oppose or neglect the duty here enjoined; and the plea commonly is, that to teach religion to children is to make them prejudiced; to destroy their independence of mind; and to prevent their judging as impartially on so important a subject as they ought to. In reply to this, and in defence of the requirements of the Bible on the subject, we may remark,

(1.) that to suffer a child to grow up without any instruction in religion, is about the same as to suffer a garden to lie without any culture. Such a garden would soon be overrun with weeds, and briers, and thorns—but not sooner, or more certainly, than the mind of a child would.

(2.) Men *do* instruct their children in a great many things, and why should they not in religion? They teach them how to behave in company; the art of farming; the way to make or use tools; how to make money; how to avoid the arts of the cunning seducer. But why should it not be said that all this tends to destroy their independence, and to make them prejudiced? Why not leave their minds open and free, and suffer them to form their own judgments about farming and the mechanic arts when their minds are matured?

(3.) Men *do* inculcate their own sentiments in religion. An infidel is not usually *very* anxious to conceal his views from his children. Men teach by example, by incidental remarks, by the neglect of that which they regard as of no value. A man who does not pray, is teaching his children not to pray; he who neglects the public worship of God, is teaching his children to neglect it; he who does not read the Bible, is teaching his children not to read it. Such is the constitution of things, that it is impossible for a parent *not* to inculcate his own religious views on his children. Since this is so, all that the Bible requires is, that his instructions should be RIGHT,

(4.) To inculcate the truths of religion is not to make the mind narrow, prejudiced, and indisposed to perceive the truth. Religion makes the mind candid, conscientious, open to conviction, ready to follow the truth. Superstition, bigotry, infidelity, and *all* error and falsehood, make the mind narrow and prejudiced.

(5.) If a man does not teach his children *truth*, others will teach them *error*. The young sceptic that the child meets in the street; the artful infidel; the hater of God; the unprincipled stranger, *will* teach the child. But is it not better for a parent to teach his child the *truth* than for a stranger to teach him *error*.

(6.) Religion is the most important of all subjects, and *therefore* it is of most importance that children on that subject should be taught TRUTH. Of whom can God so properly require this as of a parent? If it be asked *in what way* a parent is to bring up his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, I answer,

1st. by directly inculcating the doctrines and duties of religion—just as he does anything else that he regards as of value.

2nd. By placing them in the Sabbath school, where he may have a guarantee that they will be taught the truth.

3rd. *By conducting* them—not merely *sending* them—to the sanctuary, that they may be taught in the house of God.

4th. By example—all teaching being valueless without that.

5th. By prayer for the Divine aid in his efforts, and for the salvation of their souls. These duties are plain, simple, easy to be performed, and are such as a man *knows* he ought to perform. If neglected, and the soul of the child be lost, a parent has a most fearful account to render to God.

{*} "nurture" "instruction"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Servants*. *oi douloi*. The word here used denotes one who is bound to render service to another, whether that service be free or voluntary; and may denote, therefore, either a slave, or one who binds himself to render service to another. It is often used in these senses in the New Testament, just as it is elsewhere. It cannot be demonstrated that the word here necessarily means *slaves*; though, if slavery existed among those to whom this epistle was written— as there can be little doubt that it did—it is a word which would apply to those in this condition. **See Barnes "1Co 7:21"**; **See Barnes "Gal 3:28"**.

On the general subject of slavery, and the Scripture doctrine in regard to it, **See Barnes "Isa 58:6"**.

Whether the persons here referred to were slaves, or were those who had bound themselves to render a voluntary servitude, the directions here given were equally appropriate. It was not the design of the Christian religion to produce a rude sundering of the ties which bind man to man, but to teach all to perform their duties aright in the relations in which Christianity found them, and gradually to modify the customs of society, and to produce ultimately the universal prevalence of that which is right.

Be obedient to them. This is the uniform direction in the New Testament. See 1Pe 2:18 1Ti 6:1-3. **See Barnes "1Co 7:21"**.

The idea is, that they were to show in that relation the excellence of the religion which they professed. If they could be made free, they were to prefer that condition to a state of bondage, 1Co 7:21; but while the relation remained, they were to be kind, gentle, and obedient, as became Christians. In the parallel place in Colossians, Col 3:22,) it is said that they were to obey their masters "in all things." But evidently this is to be understood with the limitations implied in the case of wives and children, **See Barnes "Eph 5:24"**; **See Barnes** "Eph 6:1, and a master would have no right to command that which was morally wrong.

According to the flesh. This is designed, evidently, to limit the obligation to obedience. The meaning is, that they had control over the *body, the flesh*. They had the power to command the service which the body could render; but they were not lords of the spirit. The soul acknowledged God as its Lord, and to the Lord they were to be subject in a higher sense than to their masters.

With fear and trembling. With reverence, and with a dread of offending them. They have authority and power over you, and you should be afraid to incur their displeasure. Whatever might be true about the propriety of slavery, and whatever might be the duty of the master about setting the slave free, it would be more to the honour of religion for the servant to perform his task with a willing mind, than to be contumacious and rebellious. He could do more for the honour of religion by patiently submitting to even what he felt to be wrong, than by being punished for what would be regarded as rebellion. It may be added here, that it was presumed that servants then could *read*. These directions were addressed to *them*, not to their masters. Of what use would be directions like these addressed to American slaves—scarce any of whom can read?

In singleness of your heart. With a simple, sincere desire to do what ought to be done.

As unto Christ. Feeling that by rendering proper service to your masters you are in fact serving the Lord, and that you are doing that which will be well-pleasing to him. **See Barnes "1Co 7:22"**.

Fidelity, in whatever situation we may be in life, is acceptable service to the Lord. A Christian may as acceptably serve the Lord Jesus in the condition of a servant, as if he were a minister of the gospel, or a king on a throne. Besides, it will greatly lighten the burdens of such a situation, and make the toils of an humble condition easy, to remember that we are then serving the Lord.

{a} "be obedient" 1Pe 2:18

EPHESIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Not with eyeservice*. That is, not with service rendered only under the eye of the master, or when his eye is fixed on you. The apostle has here adverted to one of the evils of involuntary servitude as it exists everywhere. It is, that the slave will usually obey only when the eye of the master is upon him. The freeman, who agrees to labour for stipulated wages, may be trusted when the master is out of sight; but not the slave. Hence the necessity, where there are slaves, of having "drivers" who shall attend them, and who shall compel them to work. This evil it is impossible to avoid, except where true religion prevails—and the extensive prevalence of true religion would set the slave at liberty. Yet, as long as the relation exists, the apostle would enjoin on the servant the duty of performing his work conscientiously, as rendering service to the Lord. This direction, moreover, is one of great importance to all who are employed in the service of others. They are bound to perform their duty with as much fidelity as though the eye of the employer was always upon them, remembering that though the eye of man may be turned away, that of God never is.

As men-pleasers. As if it were the main object to please men. The object should be rather to please and honour God.

But as the servants of Christ. **See Barnes "1Co 7:22"**.

Doing the will of God from the heart. That is, God requires industry, fidelity, conscientiousness, submission, and obedience in that rank of life. We render acceptable service to God when, from

regard to his will, we perform the services which are demanded of us in the situation in life where we may be placed, however humble that may be.

EPHESIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *As to the Lord*, and not to men. That is, he should regard his lot in life as having been ordered by Divine Providence for some wise and good purpose; and, until he may be permitted to enjoy his liberty in a quiet and peaceable manner, **See Barnes** "1Co 7:21, he should perform his duties with fidelity, and feel that he was rendering acceptable service to God. This would reconcile him to much of the hardships of his lot. The feeling that God has ordered the circumstances of our lives, and that he has some wise and good ends to answer by it, makes us contented there; though we may feel that our fellow-man may be doing us injustice. It was this principle that made the martyrs so patient under the wrongs done them by men; and this may make even a slave patient and submissive under the wrongs of a master. But let not a master think, because a pious slave shows this spirit, that therefore the slave feels that the master is right in withholding his freedom; nor let him suppose, because religion requires the slave to be submissive and obedient, that therefore it approves of what the master does. It does this no more than it sanctioned the conduct of Nero and Mary, because religion required the martyrs to be unresisting, and to allow themselves to be led to the stake. A conscientious slave may find happiness in submitting to God, and doing his will, just as a conscientious martyr may. But this does not sanction the wrong, either of the slave-owner or of the persecutor.

EPHESIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Knowing that whatsoever good thing*. Whatever a man does that is right, for that he shall be appropriately rewarded. No matter what his rank in life, if he discharges his duty to God and man. he will be accepted. A man in a state of servitude may so live as to honour God; and, so living, he should not be greatly solicitous about his condition. A master may fail to render suitable recompense to a slave; but, if the servant is faithful to God, he will recompense him in the future world. It is in this way that religion would make the evils of life tolerable, by teaching those who are oppressed to bear their trials in a patient spirit, and to look forward to the future world of reward, Religion does not approve of slavery. It is the friend of human rights. If it had full influence on earth, it would restore every man to freedom, and impart to each one his rights. Christianity nowhere requires its friends to make or to own a slave. No one under the proper influence of religion ever yet made a man a slave; there is no one under its proper influence who would not desire that all should be free; and just in proportion as true religion spreads over the world will universal freedom be its attendant. But Christianity would lighten the evils of slavery even while it exists, and would comfort those who are doomed to so hard a lot, by assuring them that there they may render acceptable service to God, and that they soon will be admitted to a world where galling servitude will be known no more. If they may not have freedom here, they may have contentment; if they

feel that wrong is done them by men, they may feel that right will be done them by God; if their masters do not reward them for their services here, God will; and if they may not enjoy liberty here, they will soon be received into the world of perfect freedom—*heaven*.

EPHESIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *And ye masters*. The object of this is to secure for servants a proper treatment. It is evident, from this, that there were in the Christian church those who were masters; and the most obvious interpretation is, that they were the owners of slaves. Some such persons would be converted, as such are now. Paul did not say that they could not be Christians. He did not say that they should be excluded at once from the communion. He did not hold them up to reproach, or use harsh and severe language in regard to them. He taught them their duty towards those who were under them, and laid down principles which, if followed, would lead ultimately to universal freedom.

Do the same things unto them. *ta auta*. The "same things," here, seem to refer to what he had said in the previous verses. They were, to evince towards their servants the same spirit which he had required servants to evince towards them —the same kindness, fidelity, and respect for the will of God. He had required servants to act conscientiously; to remember that the eye of God was upon them, and that in that condition in life they were to regard themselves as serving God, and as mainly answerable to him. The same things the apostle would have masters feel. They were to be faithful, conscientious, just, true to the interests of their servants, and to remember that they were responsible to God. They were not to take advantage of their power to oppress them, to punish them unreasonably, or to suppose that they were freed from responsibility in regard to the manner in which they treated them. In the corresponding passage in Colossians Col 4:1 this is, "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal." **See Barnes "Col 4:1"**

Forbearing threatening. Marg., *moderating*. The Greek word means, to *relax, loosen*; and then, to *omit, cease from*. This is evidently the meaning here. The sense is, that they were to be kind, affectionate, just. It does not mean that they were to remit punishment where it was deserved; but the object is to guard against that to which they were so much exposed in their condition—a fretful, dissatisfied temper; a disposition to govern by terror rather than by love. Where this unhappy state of society exists, it would be worth the trial of those who sustain the relation of masters to see whether it would not be *possible* to govern their servants, as the apostle here advises, by the exercise of *love*. Might not kindness, and confidence, and the fear of the Lord, be substituted for threats and stripes?

Knowing that your Master also is in heaven. Marg., "Some read, *both your and their*." Many Mss. have this reading. See Mill. The sense is not materially affected, further than, according to the margin, the effect would be to make the master and the servant feel that, in a most important sense, they were on an equality. According to the common reading, the sense is, that masters should remember that they were responsible to God, and this fact should be allowed to influence them in a proper manner. This it would do in two ways.

(1.) By the fact that injustice towards their servants would then be punished as it deserved—since there was no respect of persons with God.

(2.) It would lead them to act towards their servants as they would desire God to treat them. Nothing would be better adapted to do this than the feeling that they had a common Master, and that they were soon to stand at his bar.

Neither is there respect of persons with him. See this expression explained in the

See Barnes "Ro 2.11".

The meaning here is, that God would not be influenced in the distribution of rewards and punishments, by a regard to the rank or condition of the master or the slave. He would show no favour to the one because he was a master; he would withhold none from the other because he was a slave. He would treat both according to their character. In this world they occupied different ranks and

conditions; at his bar they would be called to answer before the same Judge. It follows from this,

(1.) that a slave is not to be regarded as a "chattel," or a "thing," or as "property." He is a man; a redeemed man; an immortal man. He is one for whom Christ died. But Christ did not die for "chattels" and "things,"

(2.) The master and the servant, in their great interests, are on a level. Both are sinners; both will soon die; both will moulder back in the same manner to dust; both will stand at the tribunal of God; both will give up their account. The one will not be admitted to heaven, because he is a master; nor will the other be thrust down to hell because he is a slave. If both are Christians, they will be admitted to a heaven where the distinctions of rank and colour are unknown. If the master is not a Christian and the servant is, he who has regarded himself as superior to the servant in this life, will see *him* ascend to heaven while he himself will be thrust down to hell.

(3.) Considerations like these will, if they have their proper influence, produce two effects.

(a.) They will lighten the yoke of slavery while it continues, and while it may be difficult to remove it at once. If the master and the slave were both Christians, even if the relation continued, it would be rather a relation of mutual confidence. The master would become the protector, the teacher, the guide, the friend; the servant would become the faithful helper—rendering service to one whom he loved, and to whom he felt himself bound by the obligations of gratitude and affection.

(b.) But this state of feeling would soon lead to emancipation. There is something shocking to the feelings of all, and monstrous to a Christian, in the idea of holding a *Christian brother* in bondage. So long as the slave is regarded as a "chattel" or a mere piece of "property," like a horse, so long men endeavour to content themselves with the feeling that he may be held in bondage. But the moment it is felt that he is a Christian brother—a redeemed fellow-traveller to eternity, a joint heir of life—that moment a Christian should feel that there is something that violates all the principles of his religion in holding him AS A SLAVE; in making a "chattel" of that for which Christ died; and in buying and selling, like a horse, an ox, or an ass, a child of God, and an heir of life. Accordingly, the prevalence of Christianity soon did away the evil of slavery in the Roman empire; and if it prevailed in its purity, it would soon banish it from the face of the earth.

{1} "forbearing threatening" "moderating" {2} "your Master" "Some read *both your and their* {a} "of persons" Ro 2:11

EPHESIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord*. Paul had now stated to the Ephesians the duties which they were to perform. He had considered the various relations of life which they sustained, and the obligations resulting from them. He was not unaware that, in the discharge of their duties, they would need strength from above. He knew that they had great and mighty foes, and that to meet them they needed to be clothed in the panoply of the Christian soldier. He closes, therefore, by exhorting them to put on all the strength which they could to meet the enemies with which they had to contend; and in the commencement of his exhortation he reminds them that it was only by the strength of the Lord that they could hope for victory. To be "strong in the Lord," is,

(1.) to be strong or courageous in his cause;

(2.) to feel that he is our strength, and to rely on him and his promises.

{*} "might" "in his mighty power"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Put on the whole armour of God*. The whole description here is derived from the weapons of an ancient soldier. The various parts of those weapons—constituting the "whole panoply"—are specified in Eph 6:14-17. The word rendered "whole armour," (*panoplian*, panoply,) means *complete armour*, offensive and defensive. See Lu 11:22. **See Barnes** "Ro 13:12, **See Barnes "2Co 6:7"**.

"The armour of *God*" is not that which God wears, but that which he has provided for the Christian soldier. The meaning here is,

(1.) that we are not to provide in our warfare such weapons as men employ in their contests, but such as God provides; that we are to renounce the weapons which are carnal, and put on such as God has directed for the achievement of the victory.

(2.) We are to put on the "*whole* armour." We are not to go armed partly with what God has appointed, and partly with such weapons as men use; nor are we to put on a *part* of the armour only, but the *whole* of it. A man needs all that armour if he is about to fight the battles of the Lord; and if he lacks one of the weapons which God has appointed, defeat may be the consequence.

That ye may be able to stand. The foes are so numerous and mighty, that, unless clothed with the Divine armour, victory will be impossible.

Against the wiles of the devil. The word rendered "*wiles*" *meyodeia* means, properly, that which is traced out with *method*; that which is *methodized*; and then that which is well laid—art, skill, cunning. It occurs in the New Testament only in Eph 4:14, and in this place. It is appropriately here rendered *wiles*, meaning cunning devices, arts, attempts to delude and destroy us. The wiles *of the devil* are the various arts and stratagems which he employs to drag souls down to perdition. We can more easily encounter open force than we can cunning; and we need the weapons of Christian armour to meet the attempts to draw us into a snare, as much as to meet open force. The idea here is, that Satan does not carry on an open warfare. He does not meet the Christian soldier face to face. He advances covertly; makes his approaches in darkness; employs cunning rather than power, and

seeks rather to deceive and betray than to vanquish by mere force. Hence the necessity of being *constantly* armed to meet him whenever the attack is made. A man who has to contend with a visible enemy may feel safe, if he only prepares to meet him in the open field. But far different is the case if the enemy is invisible; if he steals upon us slyly and stealthily; if he practices war only by ambushes and by surprises. Such is the foe that *we* have to contend with—and almost all the Christian struggle is a warfare against stratagems and wiles. Satan does not openly appear. He approaches us not in repulsive forms, but comes to recommend some plausible doctrine, to lay before us some temptation that shall not immediately repel us. He presents the world in an alluring aspect; invites to pleasures that seem to be harmless; and leads us in indulgence, until we have gone so far that we cannot retreat.

{b} "of God" Ro 13:12 2Co 6:7

EPHESIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *For we wrestle*. Gr., "The wrestling to us ;" or, "There is not to us a wrestling with flesh and blood." There is undoubtedly here an allusion to the ancient games of Greece, a part of the exercises in which consisted in wrestling. **See Barnes** "1Co 9:25, and following. The Greek word here used—*palh*—denotes a *wrestling*; and then a struggle, fight, combat, here it refers to the struggle or combat which the Christian is to maintain—the Christian warfare.

Not with flesh and blood. Not with men. **See Barnes "Gal 1:16"**.

The apostle does not mean to say that Christians had no enemies among men that opposed them, for they were exposed often to fiery persecution; nor that they had nothing to contend with in the carnal and corrupt propensities of their nature, which was true of them then as it is now; but that their main controversy was with the invisible spirits of wickedness that sought to destroy them. They were the source and origin of all their spiritual conflicts, and with them the warfare was to be maintained.

But against principalities. There can be no doubt whatever that the apostle alludes here to evil spirits. Like good angels, they were regarded as divided into ranks and orders, and were supposed to be under the control of one mighty leader. **See Barnes "Eph 1:21"**.

It is probable that the allusion here is to the ranks and orders which they sustained before their fall, something like which they may still retain. The word *principalities* refers to principal rulers, or chieftains.

Powers. Those who had power, or to whom the name of *powers* was given. Milton represents Satan as addressing the fallen angels in similar language :—

"Thrones, dominations, princedoms, virtues, powers."

Against the rulers of the darkness of this world. The rulers that preside over the regions of ignorance and sin with which the earth abounds. **See Barnes "Eph 2:2"**

Darkness is an emblem of ignorance, misery, and sin; and no description could be more accurate than that of representing these malignant spirits as ruling over a dark world. The earth—dark, and wretched, and ignorant, and sinful—is just such a dominion as they would choose, or as they would cause; and the degradation and woe of the heathen world are just such as foul and malignant spirits would delight in. It is a wide and a powerful empire. It has been consolidated by ages. It is sustained

by all the authority of law; by all the omnipotence of the perverted religious principle; by all the reverence for antiquity; by all the power of selfish, corrupt, and base passions. No empire has been so extended, or has continued so long, as that empire of darkness; and nothing on earth is so difficult to destroy. Yet the apostle says that it was on that kingdom they were to make war. Against that, the kingdom of the Redeemer was to be set up; and that was to be overcome by the spiritual weapons which he specifies. When he speaks of the Christian warfare here, he refers to the contest with the powers of this dark kingdom. He regards each and every Christian as a soldier to wage war on it in whatever way he could, and wherever he could attack it. The contest, therefore, was not primarily with *men*, or with the internal corrupt propensities of the soul; it was with this vast and dark kingdom that had been set up over mankind. I do not regard this passage, therefore, as having a primary reference to the struggle which a Christian maintains with his own corrupt propensities. It is a warfare on a large scale with the entire kingdom of darkness over the world. Yet, in *maintaining* the warfare, the struggle will be with such portions of that kingdom as we come in contact with, and will actually relate

(1.) to our own sinful propensities—which are a part of the kingdom of darkness;

(2.) with the evil passions of others—their pride, ambition, and spirit of revenge—which are also a part of that kingdom;

(3) with the evil customs, laws, opinions, employments, pleasures of the world—which are also a part of that dark kingdom;

(4) with error, superstition, false doctrine—which are also a part of that kingdom; and

(5) with the wickedness of the heathen world—the sins of benighted nations —-also a part of that kingdom. Wherever we come in contact with evil—whether in our own hearts or elsewhere—there we are to make war.

Against spiritual wickedness. Marg., "or wicked spirits." Literally, "the spiritual things of wickedness;" but the allusion is undoubtedly to evil spirits, and to their influences on earth.

In high places, *en toiv epouranioiv*, "in celestial, or heavenly places." The same phrase occurs in Eph 1:3 2:6, where it is translated, "in heavenly places." The word (*epouranioiv*) is used of those that dwell in heaven, Mt 18:35 Php 2:10; of those who come from heaven, 1Co 15:48 Php 3:21; of the heavenly bodies—the sun, moon, and stars, 1Co 15:40. Then the neuter plural of the word is used to denote the heavens; and then the *lower* heavens, the sky, the air, represented as the seat of evil spirits. **See Barnes "Eph 2:2"**.

This is the allusion here. The evil spirits are supposed to occupy the lofty regions of the air, and thence to exert a baleful influence on the affairs of man. What was the origin of this opinion it is not needful here to inquire. No one can prove, however, that it is incorrect. It is against such spirits, and all their malignant influences, that Christians are called to contend. In whatever way their power is put forth—whether in the prevalence of vice and error; of superstition and magic arts; of infidelity, atheism, or antinomianism; of evil customs and laws; of pernicious fashions and opinions, or in the corruptions of our own hearts, we are to make war on all these forms of evil, and never to yield in the conflict.

{1} "flesh" "blood and flesh" {a} "against powers" Ro 8:38 {*} "world" "The rulers of this dark world" {2} "spiritual wickedness" "wicked spirits" {3} "high places" "heavenly" {+} "places" "in heavenly things"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *In the evil day*. The day of temptation; the day when you are violently assaulted.

And having done all, to stand. Marg., "or overcome." The Greek word means, to work out, effect, or produce; and then to work up, to make an end of, to vanquish. *Robinson, Lex*. The idea seems to be, that they were to overcome or vanquish all their foes, and thus to stand firm. The whole language here is taken from war; and the idea is, that every foe was to be subdued—-no matter how numerous or formidable they might be. Safety and triumph could be looked for only when every enemy was slain.

{4} "done" "overcome" {+} "done all" "subdued"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Stand therefore*. Resist every attack—as a soldier does in battle. In what way they were to do this, and how they were to be armed, the apostle proceeds to specify; and, in doing it, gives a description of the ancient armour of a soldier.

Having your loins girt about. The *girdle*, or *sash*, was always with the ancients an important part of their dress, in war as well as in peace. They wore loose, flowing robes; and it became necessary to gird them up when they travelled, or ran, or laboured. The girdle was often highly ornamented, and was the place where they carried their money, their sword, their pipe, their writing instruments, etc. **See Barnes "Mt 5:38"**

and Mt 5:39-41. The" girdle" seems sometimes to have been a cincture of iron or steel, and designed to keep every part of the armour in its place, and to gird the soldier on every side.

With truth. It may not be easy to determine with entire accuracy the resemblance between the parts of the armour specified in this description, and the things with which they are compared; or to determine precisely why he compared truth to a girdle, and righteousness to a breast-plate, rather than why he should have chosen a different order, and compared righteousness to a girdle, etc. Perhaps in themselves there may have been no special reason for this arrangement, but the object may have been merely to specify the different parts of the armour of a soldier, and to compare them with the weapons which Christians were to use, though the comparison should be made somewhat at random. In some of the cases, however, we can see a particular significancy in the comparisons which are made; and it may not be improper to make suggestions of that kind as we go along. The idea here may be, that as the girdle was the bracer up, or support of the body, so truth is fitted to brace us up, and to gird us for constancy and firmness. The girdle kept all the parts of the armour in their proper place, and preserved firmness and consistency in the dress; and so truth might serve to give consistency and firmness to our conduct. "Great," says Grotius, "is the laxity of falsehood; truth binds the man." Truth preserves a man from those lax views of morals, of duty, and of religion, which leave him exposed to every assault. It makes the soul sincere, firm, constant, and always on its guard. A man who has no consistent views of truth, is just the man for the adversary successfully to assail.

And having on the breastplate. The word here rendered "breastplate" —*ywrax*—denoted the *cuirass*, (Lat., *lorica*,) or coat of mail; i.e., the armour that covered the body from the neck to the

thighs, and consisted of two parts, one covering the front and the other the back. It was made of rings, or in the form of scales, or of plates, so fastened together that they would be flexible, and yet guard the body from a sword, spear, or arrow. It is referred to in the Scriptures as a *coat of mail*, 1Sa 17:5; an *habergeon*, Ne 4:16, or as a *breastplate*. We are told that Goliath's coat of mail weighed five thousand shekels of brass, or nearly one hundred and sixty pounds. It was often formed of plates of brass, laid one upon another, like the scales of a fish. The cuts on the opposite page will give an idea of this ancient piece of armour.

Of righteousness. Integrity, holiness, purity of life, sincerity of piety. The breastplate defended the vital parts of the body; and the idea here may be, that integrity of life, and righteousness of character, is as necessary to defend us from the assaults of Satan, as the coat of mail was to preserve the heart from the arrows of an enemy. It was the incorruptible integrity of Job, and, in a higher sense, of the Redeemer himself, that saved them from the temptations of the devil. And it is as true now that no one can successfully meet the power of temptation unless he is righteous, as that a soldier could not defend himself against a foe without such a coat of mail. A want of integrity will leave a man exposed to the assaults of the enemy, just as a man would be whose coat of marl was defective, or some part of which was wanting. The king of Israel was smitten by an arrow sent from a bow, drawn at a venture, "between the joints of his harness," or the "breastplate," (margin,) \1Ki 22:34; and many a man who thinks he has on the *Christian* armour is smitten in the same manner. There is some defect of character; some want of incorruptible integrity; some point that is unguarded—and *that* will be sure to be the point of attack by the foe. So David was tempted to commit the enormous crimes that stain his memory, and Peter to deny his Lord. So Judas was assailed, for the want of the armour of righteousness, through his avarice; and so, by some want of incorruptible integrity in a single point, many a minister of the gospel has been assailed and has fallen. It may be added here, that we need a righteousness which God alone can give—the righteousness of God our Saviour—to make us perfectly invulnerable to all the arrows of the foe.

{b} "girt" Isa 11:5

EPHESIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *And your feet shod*. There is undoubtedly an allusion here to what was worn by the ancient soldier to guard his feet. The Greek is, literally, "having underbound the feet;" that is, having bound on the shoes, or sandals, or whatever was worn by the ancient soldier. The protection of the feet and ankles consisted of two parts:

(1.) the sandals, or shoes, which were probably made so as to cover the foot, and which often were fitted with nails, or armed with spikes, to make the hold firm in the ground; or

(2.) with *greaves* that were fitted to the legs, and designed to defend them from any danger. These *greaves*, or boots, 1Sa 17:6, were made of brass, and were in almost universal use among the Greeks and Romans. See the figure of the "Grecian warrior" on page 159.

With the preparation. Prepared with the gospel of peace. The sense is, that the Christian soldier is to be prepared with the gospel of peace to meet attacks similar to those against which the ancient soldier designed to guard himself by the sandals or *greaves* which he wore. The word rendered *preparation—etoimasia* means, properly, readiness, fitness for, alacrity; and the idea, according

to Robinson, (*Lex*.,) is, that they were to be ever ready to go forth to preach the gospel. Taylor (Fragments to Calmet's Dic., No. 219) supposes that it means, "Your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel; not iron, not steel— but patient investigation, calm inquiry, assiduous, laborious, lasting; or with *firm footing* in the gospel of peace." Locke supposes it to mean, "with a readiness to walk in the gospel of peace." Doddridge supposes that the allusion is to *greaves*, and the spirit recommended: is that peaceful and benevolent temper recommended in the gospel, and which, like the boots worn by soldiers, would bear them safe through many obstructions and trials that might be opposed to them, as a soldier might encounter sharp-pointed thorns that would oppose his progress. It is difficult to determine the exact meaning; and perhaps all expositors have erred in endeavouring to explain the reference of these parts of armour by some particular thing in the gospel. The apostle figured to himself a soldier, clad in the usual manner. Christians were to resemble him. One part of his dress or preparation consisted in the covering and defence of the foot. It was to preserve the foot from danger, and to secure the facility of his march, and perhaps to make him firm in battle. Christians were to have the principles of the gospel of peace—the peaceful and pure gospel—to facilitate them; to aid them in their marches; to make them firm in the day of conflict with their foes. They were not to be furnished with carnal weapons, but with the peaceful: gospel of the Redeemer; and, sustained by this, they were to go on in their march through the world. The principles of the gospel: were to do for them what the greaves and iron-spiked sandals did: for the soldier—to make them ready for the march, to make them firm in their foot-tread, and to be a part of their defence against their foes.

{a} "shod" So 7:1

EPHESIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Above all*. *epi pasin*. Not *above all* in point of importance or value, but over all, as a soldier holds his shield to defend himself. It constitutes a protection over every part of his body, as it can be turned in every direction. The idea is, that as the shield covered or protected the other parts of the armour, so faith had a similar importance in the Christian virtues.

The shield. **See Barnes "Isa 21:5"**.

The shield was usually made of light wood, or a rim of brass, and covered with several folds or thicknesses of stout hide, which was preserved by frequent anointing. It was held by the left arm, and was secured by straps, through which the arm passed, as may be seen in the annexed cut. The outer surface of the shield was made more or less rounding from the centre to the edge, and was polished smooth, or anointed with oil, so that arrows or darts would glance off, or rebound.

Of faith.On the nature of faith, **See Barnes "Mr 16:16"**.

Faith here is made to occupy a more important place than either of the other Christian graces. It bears, to the whole Christian character, the same relation which the shield does to the other parts of the armour of a soldier. It protects all, and is indispensable to the security of all, as is the case with the shield. The shield was an ingenious device by which blows and arrows might be parried off, and the whole body defended. It could be made to protect the head, or the heart, or thrown behind to meet an attack there. As long as the soldier had his shield, he felt secure; and as long as a Christian has faith, he is safe. It comes to his aid in every attack that is made on him, no matter

from what quarter; it is the defence and guardian of every other Christian grace; and it secures the protection which the Christian needs in the whole of the spiritual war.

Wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. Or, rather, "of the WICKED ONE", *tou ponhrou*. The allusion is undoubtedly to the great enemy of the people of God, called, by way of eminence, THE wicked one. Comp. 2Th 3:3. Mr. Locke renders this, "Wherein you may receive, and so render ineffectual," etc. There seems a little incongruity in the idea of *quenching* darts by a *shield*. But the word *quench*, here, means only that they would be put out by being thrown against the shield, as a candle would by being thrown against anything. The *fiery darts* that were used in war were small, slender pieces of cane, which were filled with combustible materials, and set on fire; or darts around which some combustible material was wound, and which were set on fire, and then shot *slowly* against a foe. The object was to make the arrow fasten in the body, and increase the danger by the burning; or, more frequently, those darts were thrown against ships, forts, tents, etc., with an intention to set them on fire. They were in common use among the ancients. Arrian (Expe. Alex. 11) mentions the *purfora belh*, the fire-bearing weapons; Thucydides, (ii. c. 75,) the *purforoi oistoi*, the fire-bearing arrows; and Livy refers to similar weapons as in common use in war, Lib. xxi. c. 8. By the "fiery darts of the wicked," Paul here refers, probably, to the temptations of the great adversary, which are like fiery darts; or those furious suggestions of evil, and excitements to sin, which he may throw into the mind like fiery darts. They are blasphemous thoughts, unbelief, sudden temptation to do wrong, or thoughts that wound and torment the soul. In regard to them, we may observe,

(1.) that they come suddenly, like arrows sped from a bow;

(2.) they come from unexpected quarters, like arrows shot suddenly from an enemy in ambush;

(3.) they pierce, and penetrate, and torment the soul, as arrows would that are on fire;

(4.) they set the soul on fire, and enkindle the worst passions, as fiery darts do a ship or camp against which they are sent. The only way to meet them is by the "shield of faith;" by confidence in God, and by relying on his gracious promises and aid. It is not by our own strength; and, if we have not faith in God, we are wholly defenseless. We should have a shield that we can turn in any direction, on which we may receive the arrow, and by which it may be put out.

{a} "wherewith" 1Jo 5:4 {*} "wicked" "Wicked one"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *And take the helmet*. The helmet was a cap made of thick leather, or brass, fitted to the head, and was usually crowned with a plume, or crest, as an ornament, Its use was to guard the head from a blow by a sword, or war-club, or battle-axe. The cuts on the opposite page will show its usual form. It may be seen, also, in the figure of the "Grecian warrior," on p. 159.

Of salvation. That is, *of the hope of salvation*; for so it is expressed in the parallel place in 1Th 5:8. The idea is, that a well-founded hope of salvation will preserve us in the day of spiritual conflict, and will guard us from the blows which an enemy would strike. The helmet defended the head, a vital part; and so the hope of salvation will defend the soul, and keep it from the blows of the enemy. A soldier would not fight well without a hope of victory. A Christian could not contend with his foes, without the hope of final salvation; but, sustained by this, what has he to dread?

And the sword. The sword was an essential part of the armour of an ancient soldier. His other weapons were the bow, the spear, or the battle-axe. But, without a sword, no soldier would have regarded himself as well armed. The ancient sword was short, and usually two-edged, and resembled very much a dagger, as may be seen in the engraving on page 166, representing Roman swords.

Of the Spirit. Which the Holy Spirit furnishes; the truth which he has revealed.

Which is the word of God. What God has spoken —his truth and promises. **See Barnes "Heb 4:12".**

It was with this weapon that the Saviour met the tempter in the wilderness, Mt 4. It is only by this that Satan can now be met. Error and falsehood will not put back temptation; nor can we hope for victory, unless we are armed with truth. Learn hence,

(1.) that we should study the Bible, that we may understand what the truth is.

(2.) We should have texts of Scripture at command, as the Saviour did, to meet the various forms of temptation.

(3.) We should not depend on our own reason, or rely on our own wisdom. A single text of Scripture is better to meet a temptation than all the philosophy which the world contains. The tempter can reason, and reason plausibly too. But he cannot resist a direct and positive command of the Almighty. Had Eve adhered simply to the word of God, and urged his command, without attempting to *reason* about it, she she would have been safe. The Saviour Mt 4:4,7,10

met the tempter with the word of God, and he was foiled. So *we* shall be safe if we adhere to the simple declarations of the bible, and oppose a temptation by a positive command of God. But the moment we leave we leave that, and begin to parley with sin, that moment we are gone. It is as if a man should throw away his sword, and use his naked hands only in meeting an adversary. Hence

(4.) we may see the importance of training up the young in the accurate study of the Bible. There is nothing which will furnish a better security to them in future life, when temptation comes upon them, than to have a pertinent text of Scripture at command. Temptation often assails us so suddenly that it checks at *reasoning*; but a text of Scripture will suffice to drive the tempter from us.

{b} "helmet" Isa 49:17 {c} "of the Spirit" Heb 4:12

EPHESIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Praying always*. It would be well for the soldier who goes forth to battle to pray—to pray for victory; or to pray that he may be prepared for death, should he fall. But soldiers do not often feel the necessity of this. To the Christian soldier, however, it is indispensable. Prayer crowns all lawful efforts with success, and gives a victory when nothing else would. No matter how complete the armour; no matter how skilled we maybe in the science of war; no matter how courageous we may be, we may be certain that without prayer we shall be defeated. God alone can give the victory; and when the Christian soldier goes forth armed completely for the spiritual conflict, if he looks to God by prayer, he may be sure of a triumph. This prayer is not to be intermitted. It is to be always. In every temptation and spiritual conflict we are to pray. **See Barnes "Lu 18:1".**

With all prayer and supplication. With all kinds of prayer; prayer in the closet, the family, the social meeting, the great assembly; prayer at the usual hours, prayer when we are specially tempted, and when we feel just like praying, **See Barnes "Mt 6:6"**; prayer in the form of supplication for ourselves, and in the form of intercession for others. This is, after all, the great weapon of our spiritual armour, and by this we may hope to prevail.

"Restraining prayer, we cease to fight;
Prayer makes the Christian armour bright;
And Satan trembles when he sees
The meanest saint upon his knees."

In the Spirit. By the aid of the Holy Spirit; or perhaps it may mean that it is not to be prayer of form merely, but when the spirit and the heart accompany it. The former idea seems, however, to be the correct one.

And watching thereunto. Watching for opportunities to pray; watching for the spirit of prayer; watching against all those things which would hinder prayer. **See Barnes** "Mt 26:38, **See Barnes "Mt 26:41"**.

Comp. 1Pe 4:7.

With all perseverance. Never becoming discouraged and disheartened. Comp. **See Barnes "Lu 18:1"**.

And supplication for all saints, for all Christians. We should do this

(1.) because they are our brethren—though they may have a different skin, language, or name.

(2.) Because, like us, they have hearts prone to evil, and need, with us, the grace of God.

(3.) Because nothing tends so much to make us love others, and to forget their faults, as to pray for them.

(4.) Because the condition of the church is always such that it greatly needs the grace of God. Many Christians have backslidden; many are cold or lukewarm; many are in error; many are conformed to the world; and we should pray that they may become more holy, and may devote themselves more to God.

(5.) Because each day many a Christian is subjected to some peculiar temptation or trial, and though he may be unknown to us, yet our prayers may benefit him.

(6.) Because each day and each night many Christians die. We may reflect each night as we lie down to rest, that while we sleep some Christians are kept awake by the prospect of death, and are now passing through the dark valley; and each morning we may reflect that *today* some Christian will die, and we should remember them before God.

(7.) Because we shall soon die, and it will be a comfort to us if we can remember then that *we* have often prayed for dying saints, and if we may feel that they are praying for us.

{a} "with all prayer" Lu 18:1 {b} "thereunto" Mt 26:41

EPHESIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *And for me*. Paul was then a prisoner at Rome. He specially needed the prayers of Christians,

(1.) that he might be sustained in his afflictions; and

(2.) that he might be able to manifest the spirit which he ought, and to do good as he had opportunity. Learn hence that we should pray for the prisoner, the captive, the man in chains, the slave. There are in *this* land constantly not far from ten thousand prisoners—husbands, fathers, sons, brothers; or wives, mothers, daughters. True, they are the children of *crime*, but they are also the children of sorrow; and in either case, or both, they need our prayers. There are in this land not far from three millions of slaves—and they need our prayers. They are the children of misfortune and of many wrongs; they are sunk in ignorance and want and woe; they are subjected to trials, and exposed to temptations to the lowest vices. But many of them, we trust, love the Redeemer; and whether they do or do not, they need an interest in the prayers of Christians.

That utterance may be given unto me. Paul, though a prisoner, was permitted to preach the gospel. **See Barnes** "Ac 28:30, **See Barnes "Ac 28:31"**.

That I may open my mouth boldly. He was in Rome. He was almost alone, he was surrounded by multitudes of the wicked. He was exposed to death. Yet he desired to speak boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and to invite sinners to repentance. A Christian in chains, and surrounded by the wicked, may speak boldly, and may have hope of success—for Paul was not an unsuccessful preacher ever when a captive at Rome. **See Barnes "Php 4:22"**.

The mystery of the Gospel. **See Barnes "Eph 1:9"**.

{c} "that utterance" 2Th 3:1 {*} "mystery" "truth"

EPHESIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *For which I am an ambassador in bonds*. In chains, (see the margin;) or in confinement. There is something peculiarly touching in this. He was an *ambassador* sent to proclaim peace to a lost world. But he was now in chains. An ambassador is a sacred character. No greater affront can be given to a nation than to put its ambassadors to death, or even to throw them into prison. But Paul says here that the unusual spectacle was witnessed of an ambassador seized, bound, confined, imprisoned; an ambassador who ought to have the privileges conceded to all such men, and to be permitted to go everywhere publishing the terms of mercy and salvation. See the word *ambassador* explained **See Barnes "2Co 5:20"**.

That therein. Marg., or *thereof*. Gr., *en autw- in it*; that is, says Rosenmuller, in the gospel. It means, that in speaking the gospel he might be bold.

I may speak boldly. Openly, plainly, without fear. **See Barnes "Ac 4:13"**; **See Barnes** "Ac 9:27"; **See Barnes "Ac 13:46"**; **See Barnes** "Ac 14:3"

See Barnes "Ac 18:26"; **See Barnes** "Ac 19:8"; **See Barnes "Ac 26:26"**.

As I ought to speak. Whether in bonds or at large. Paul felt that the gospel ought always to be spoken with plainness, and without the fear of man. It is remarkable that he did not ask them to pray that he might be released. *Why* he did not we do not know; but perhaps the desire of release did not He so near his heart as the duty of speaking the gospel with boldness. It may be of much more importance that we perform our duty aright when we axe afflicted, or are in trouble, than that we should be released.

{1} "bonds" "a chain" {2} "therein" "thereof" {d} "to speak" Isa 58:1

EPHESIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *But that ye may know my affairs*. May understand my condition, my feelings, and in what I am engaged. To them it could not but be a subject of deep interest,

And how I do. Gr., "*What I do*;" that is, how I am employed.

Tychicus. Tychicus was of the province of Asia, in Asia Minor, of which Ephesus was the capital. See Ac 20:4. It is not improbable that he was of Ephesus, and that he was well known to the church there. He also carried the letter to the Colossians, Col 4:7, and probably the second epistle to Timothy, 2Ti 4:12. Paul also proposed to send him to Crete to succeed Titus, Tit 3:12. He was high in the confidence of Paul, but it is not known when he was converted, or why he was now at Rome. The Greeks speak of him as one of the seventy disciples, and make him bishop of Colophon, in the province of Asia.

{a} "a beloved brother" Ac 20:4

EPHESIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Whom I have sent unto you*. The churches where Paul had preached, would feel a great interest in his welfare. He was a prisoner at Rome, and it was doubtful what the result would be. In this situation, he felt it proper to despatch a special messenger to give information about his condition; to state what was doing in Rome; to ask the prayers of the churches; and to administer consolation to them in their various trials. The same sentiment, in regard to the embassy of Tychicus, is expressed in the epistle to the Colossians, Col 4:7,8. No small part of the consolation a which he would impart to them would be found in these invaluable letters which he bore to them from the apostle.

{b} "have sent" Col 4:7,8

EPHESIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Peace be to the brethren*. The epistle is closed with the usual salutations. The expression, "*peace to you*," was the common form of salutation in the East, **See Barnes "Mt 10:13"**; **See Barnes "Lu 24:36"**; **See Barnes** "Ro 15:33"; comp. Gal 6:16 1Pe 5:14; 3Jo 1:14, and is still the "*salam*" which is used —the word *salam* meaning *peace*.

And love with faith. Love united with faith; not only desiring that they might have faith, but the faith which worked by love.

From God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. The Father and the Son are regarded as equally the author of peace and love. **See Barnes "2Co 13:14"**.

{c} "be to the brethren" 1Pe 5:14

EPHESIANS - Chapter 6 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Grace be*, etc. **See Barnes "Ro 16:20"**.

That love our Lord Jesus Christ. **See Barnes "1Co 16:22"**.

In sincerity. Marg., *with incorruption*. With a pure heart; without dissembling; with- out hypocrisy. There could not be a more appropriate close of the epistle than such a wish; there will be nothing more needful for us, when we come to the close of life, than the consciousness that we love the Lord Jesus Christ IN SINCERITY. To writer and reader may this be equally the inestimable consolation then! Better, far better then will be the evidence of such sincere love, than all the wealth which toll can gain, all the honours which the world can bestow—than the most splendid mansion, or the widest fame.

The subscription to this epistle, like those affixed to the other epistles, is of no authority, but in this instance there is every reason to believe that it is correct. Comp. Notes at the end of the epistle to the Romans and I Corinthians.

End of Barnes Notes on Ephesians

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 1

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 1

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

INTRODUCTION.

I. THE SITUATION OF PHILIPPI.

PHILIPPI is mentioned in the New Testament only in the following places and connexions. In Ac 16:11,12, it is said that Paul and his fellow-travellers "loosed from Troas, came with a straight course to Samothracia and Neapolis, and from thence to Philippi." It was at this time that the" Lord opened the heart of Lydia to attend to the things which were spoken by Paul," and that the jailer was converted under such interesting circumstances. In Ac 20:1-6, it appears that Paul again visited Philippi after he had been to Athens and Corinth, and when on his way to Judea. From Philippi he went to Troas. In 1Th 2:2, Paul alludes to the shameful treatment which he had received at Philippi, and to the fact, that having been treated in that manner at Philippi, he had passed to Thessalonica, and preached the gospel there.

Philippi received its name from Philip, the father of Alexander the Great. Before his time its history is unknown. It is said that it was founded on the site of an old Thasian settlement, and that its former name was Crenides, from the circumstance of its being surrounded by numerous rivulets and springs descending from the neighbouring mountains, (from *krhnh—krene*, a spring.) The city was also called Dathos, or Datos—*datov*. **See Barnes "Ac 16:12"**.

The Thasians, who inhabited the island of Thasus, lying off the coast in the AEgean Sea, had been attracted to the place by the valuable mines of gold and silver which were found in that region. It was a city of Macedonia, to the north-east of Amphipolis, and nearly east of Thessalonica. It was not far from the borders of Thrace. It was about fifteen or twenty miles from the AEgean Sea, in the neighbourhood of Mount Pangeeus, and had a small river or stream running near it which emptied into the AEgean Sea. Of the size of the city when the gospel was preached there by Paul we have no information.

This city was originally within the limits of Thrace. Philip of Macedon having turned his attention to Thrace, the situation of Crenides and Mount Pangeeus naturally attracted his notice. Accordingly he invaded this country, expelled the feeble Cotys from his throne, and then proceeded to found a new city, on the site of the old Thasian colony, which he called after his own name, *Philippi*. Anthon, Class. Die. When Macedonia became subject to the Romans, the advantages attending the situation of Philippi induced that people to send a colony there, and it became one of the most flourishing cities of the empire. Comp. Ac 16:12; Pliny, iv. 10. There is a medal of this city with the following inscription: COL. JUL. AUG. PHIL.; from which it appears that there was a colony sent there by Julius Caesar. *Michaelis*. The city derived considerable importance from the

fact that it was a principal thoroughfare from Asia to Europe, as the great leading road from one continent to the other was in the vicinity. This road is described at length by Appian, De Bell. Civ L. iv. e. 105, 106.

This city is celebrated in history from the fact that it was here that a great victory, deciding the fate of the Roman empire, was obtained by Octavianus (afterwards Augustus Ceesar) and Antony over the forces of Brutus and Cassius, by which the republican party was completely subdued. In this battle, Cassius, who was hard pressed and defeated by Antony, and who supposed that everything was lost, slew himself in despair. Brutus deplored his loss with tears of the sincerest sorrow, calling him "the last of the Romans." After an interval of twenty days, Brutus hazarded a second battle. Where he himself fought in person he was successful; but the army everywhere else gave way, and the battle terminated in the entire defeat of the republican party. Brutus escaped with a few friends, passed a night in a cave, and, seeing that all was irretrievably lost, ordered Strato, one of his attendants, to kill him. Strato for a long time refused; but seeing Brutus resolute, he turned away his face, and held his sword, and Brutus fell upon it. The city of Philippi is often mentioned by the Byzantine writers in history. Its ruins still retain the name of *Filibah*. Two American missionaries visited these ruins in May, 1834. They saw the remains of what might have been the forum or market-place, where Paul and Silas were beaten, Ac 16:19; and also the fragments of a splendid palace. The road by which Paul went from Neapolis to Philippi, they think, is the same that is now travelled, as it is cut through the most difficult passes in the mountains. It is still paved throughout.

II.—THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH IN PHILIPPI.

PHILIPPI was the first place in Europe where the gospel was preached; and this fact invests the place with more interest and importance than it derives from the battle fought there. The gospel was first preached here, in very interesting circumstances, by Paul and Silas. Paul had been called by a remarkable vision Ac 16:9 to go into Macedonia, and the first place where he preached was Philippi; having made his way, as his custom was, directly to the capital. The first person to whom he preached was Lydia, a seller of purple, from Thyatira, in Asia Minor. She was converted, and received Paul and Silas into her house, and entertained them hospitably. In consequence of Paul's casting out an evil spirit from a "damsel possessed of a spirit of divination," by which the hope of gain by those who kept her in their employ was destroyed, the populace was excited, and Paul and Silas were thrown into the inner prison, and their feet were made fast in the stocks. Here, at midnight, God interposed in a remarkable manner. An earthquake shook the prison; their bonds were loosened; the doors of the prison were thrown open; and their keeper, who before had treated them with peculiar severity, was converted, and all his family were baptized. It was in such solemn circumstances that the gospel was first introduced into Europe. After the tumult, and the conversion of the jailer, Paul was honourably released, and soon left the city, Ac 16:40. He subsequently visited Macedonia before his imprisonment, at Rome, and doubtless went to Philippi, Ac 20:1,2. It is supposed that after his first imprisonment at Rome, he was released, and again visited the churches which he had founded. In this epistle Php 1:25,26, 2:24, he expresses a confident hope that he would be released, and would be permitted to see them again; and there is a probability that his wishes in regard to this were accomplished. See Introduction to 2 Timothy.

III.—THE TIME WHEN THE EPISTLE WAS WRITTEN.

IT is evident that this epistle was written from Rome. This appears,

(1.) because it was composed when Paul was in" bonds," Php 1:13,14;

(2.) because circumstances are suggested, such as to leave no doubt that the imprisonment was at Rome. Thus, in chap. i. 13, he says that his "bonds were manifested *in all the palace*;" a phrase which would naturally suggest the idea of the Roman capitol; and, in Php 4:22, he says, "All the saints salute you, chiefly they that *are of Caesar's household*." It is further evident that it was after he had been imprisoned for a considerable time, and probably not long before his release. This appears from the following circumstances:

(1.) The apostle had been a prisoner so long in Rome, that the character which he had manifested in his trials had contributed considerably to the success of the gospel, Php 1:12-14. His bonds, he says, were manifest "in all the palace;" and many of the brethren had become increasingly bold by his "bonds," and had taken occasion to preach the gospel without fear.

(2.) The account given of Epaphroditus imports that, when Paul wrote this epistle, he had been a considerable time at Rome. He was with Paul in Rome, and had been sick there. The Philippians had received an account of his sickness, and he had again been informed how much they had been affected with the intelligence of his illness, Php 2:25,26. The passing and repassing of this intelligence, Dr. Paley remarks, must have occupied considerable time, and must have all taken place during Paul's residence at Rome.

(3.) After a residence at Rome, thus proved to have been of considerable duration, Paul, at the time of writing this epistle, regards the decision of his destiny as at hand. He anticipates that the matter would soon be determined. Php 2:23. "Him therefore (Timothy) I hope to send presently, so soon as I see how it will go with me." He had some expectation that he might be released, and be permitted to visit them again. Php 2:24. "I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly." Comp. Php 1:25,27. Yet he was not absolutely certain how it would go with him, and though in one place he speaks with great confidence that he would be released, Php 1:25, yet in another he suggests the possibility that he might be put to death. Php 2:17: "Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all." These circumstances concur to fix the time of writing the epistle to the period at which the imprisonment in Rome was about to terminate. From Ac 28:30, we learn that Paul was in Rome "two whole years;" and it was during the latter part of this period that the epistle was written. It is commonly agreed, therefore, that it was written about A.D. 61 or 62. Hug (Intro.) places it at the end of the year 61, or the beginning of the year 62; Lardner, at the close of the year 62. It is evident that it was written before the great conflagration at Rome in the time of Nero, (A.D. 64;) for it is hardly credible that Paul would have omitted a reference to such an event, if it had occurred. It is certain, from the persecution of the Christians which followed that event, that he would not have been likely to have represented his condition to be so favourable as he has done in this epistle. He could hardly have looked then for a release.

IV.—THE DESIGN AND CHARACTER OF THE EPISTLE

THE object of the epistle is apparent. It was sent by Epaphroditus, Php 2:25, who appears to have been a resident at Philippi, and a member of the church there, to express the thanks of the apostle for the favours which they had conferred on him, and to comfort them with the hope that he might be soon set at liberty. Epaphroditus had been sent by the Philippians to convey their benefactions to him in the time of his imprisonment, Php 4:18. While at Rome, he had been taken ill, Php 2:26,27. On his recovery, Paul deemed it proper that he should return at once to Philippi. It was natural that he should give them some information about his condition and prospects. A considerable part of the epistle, therefore, is occupied in giving an account of the effects of his

imprisonment in promoting the spread of the gospel, and of his own feelings in the circumstances in which he then was. He was not yet certain what the result of his imprisonment would be, Php 1:20; but he was prepared either to live or to die, Php 1:23. He wished to live only that he might be useful to others; and, supposing that he might be made useful, he had some expectation that he might be released from his bonds. There is, perhaps, no one of the epistles of the apostle Paul which is so tender, and which abounds so much with expressions of kindness, as this. In relation to other churches he was often under the necessity of using the language of reproof. The prevalence of some error, as in the churches of Galatia; the existence of divisions and strifes, or some aggravated case requiring discipline, or some gross irregularity, as in the church at Corinth, frequently demanded the language of severity. But, in the church at Philippi, there was scarcely anything which required rebuke; there was very much that demanded commendation and gratitude. Their conduct towards him, and their general deportment, had been exemplary, generous, noble. They had evinced for him the tenderest regard in his troubles: providing for his wants, sending a special messenger to supply him when no other opportunity occurred, Php 4:10, and sympathizing with him in his trials; and they had, in the order, peace, and harmony of the church, eminently adorned the doctrine of the Saviour. The language of the apostle, therefore, throughout the epistle, is of the most affectionate character—such as a benevolent heart would always choose to employ, and such as must have been exceedingly grateful to them. Paul never hesitated to use the language of commendation where it was deserved, as he never shrank from reproof where it was merited; and he appears to have regarded the one as a matter of duty as much as the other. We are to remember, too, the circumstances of Paul, and to ask what kind of an epistle an affectionate and grateful spiritual father would be *likely* to write to a much-beloved flock, when he felt that he was about to die and we shall find that this is just such an epistle as we should suppose such a man would write. It breathes the spirit of a ripe Christian, whose piety was mellowing for the harvest; of one who felt that he was not far from heaven, and might soon "be with Christ." Though there was some expectation of a release, yet his situation was such as led him to look death in the face. He was lying under heavy accusations; he had no hope of justice from his own countrymen; the character of the sovereign, Nero, was not such as to inspire him with great confidence of having justice done; and it is possible that the fires of persecution had already begun to burn. At the mercy of such a man as Nero; a prisoner; among strangers; and with death staring him in the face, it is natural to suppose that there would be a peculiar solemnity, tenderness, pathos, and ardour of affection, breathing through the entire epistle. Such is the fact; and in none of the writings of Paul are these qualities more apparent than in this letter to the Philippians. He expresses his grateful remembrance of all their kindness; he evinces a tender regard for their welfare; and he pours forth the full-flowing language of gratitude, and utters a father's feelings toward them by tender and kind admonitions. It is important to remember these circumstances in the interpretation of this epistle. It breathes the language of a father, rather than the authority of an apostle; the entreaties of a tender friend, rather than the commands of one in authority. It expresses the affections of a man who felt that he might be near death, and who tenderly loved them; and it will be, to all ages, a model of affectionate counsel and advice.

THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS. CHAPTER I.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

This chapter embraces the following points :—

I. The salutation to the church, Php 1:1,2.

II. Php 1:3-8, the apostle expresses his gratitude for the evidence which they had given of love to God, and for their fidelity in the gospel from the time when it was first proclaimed among them. He says that he was confident that this would continue, and that God, who had so mercifully imparted grace to them to be faithful, would do it to the end.

III. He expresses the earnest hope that they might abound more and more in knowledge, and be without offence to the day of Christ, Php 1:9-11.

IV. In Php 1:12-21, he states to them what had been the effect of his imprisonment in Rome—presuming that it would be grateful intelligence to them that even his imprisonment had been overruled for the spread of the gospel. His trials, he says, had been the means of the extension of the knowledge of Christ even in the palace, and many Christians had been emboldened by his sufferings to increased diligence in making known the truth. Some indeed, he says, preached Christ from unworthy motives, and with a view to increase his affliction, but in the great fact that Christ was preached he says he rejoiced. Forgetting himself, and any injury which they might design to do to him, he could sincerely rejoice that the gospel was proclaimed—no matter by whom or with what motives. The whole affair he trusted would be made conducive to his salvation. Christ was the great end and aim of his life; and if he were made known, everything else was of minor importance.

V. The mention of the fact, Php 1:21, that his great aim in living was "Christ," leads him to advert to the probability that he might soon be with him, Php 1:22-26. So great was his wish to be with him, that he would hardly know which to choose—whether to die at once, or to live and to make him known to others. Believing, however, that his life might be still useful to them, he had an expectation of considerable confidence that his life would be spared, and that he would be released.

VI. The chapter closes, Php 1:27-30, with an earnest exhortation that they would live as became the gospel of Christ. Whatever might befall him—whether he should be permitted to see them, or should hear of them—he entreated that he might know that they were living as became the gospel. They were not to be afraid of their adversaries; and if called to suffer, they were to remember that "it was given" them not only to believe on the Redeemer, but also to suffer in his cause.

Verse 1. *Paul and Timotheus*. Paul frequently unites some person with him in his epistles. **See Barnes "1Co 1:1"**.

It is clear, from this, that Timothy was with Paul at Rome. Why he was there is unknown. It is evident that he was not there as a prisoner with Paul; and the probability is, that he was one of the friends who had gone to Rome with a view to show his sympathy with him ill his sufferings. **See Barnes "2Ti 4:9"**.

There was special propriety in the fact that Timothy was joined with the apostle in writing the epistle, for he was with him when the church was founded, and doubtless felt a deep interest in its welfare, Ac 16. Timothy had remained in Macedonia after Paul went to Athens, and it is not improbable that he had visited them afterwards.

The servants of Jesus Christ. **See Barnes "Ro 1:1"**.

To all the saints in Christ Jesus. The common appellation given to the church, denoting that it was holy. **See Barnes "Ro 1:7"**.

With the Bishops. *sun episkopoiv*. **See Barnes "Ac 20:28"**.

The word here used occurs in the New Testament only in the following places: Ac 20:28, translated *overseers*, and Php 1:1 1Ti 3:2; Tit 1:7 1Pe 2:25, in each of which places it is rendered

bishop. The word properly means, *an inspector, overseer, or guardian*, and was given to the ministers of the gospel because they exercised this care over the churches, or were appointed to oversee their interests. It is a term, therefore, which might be given to any of the officers of the churches, and was originally equivalent to the term *presbyter*. It is evidently used in this sense here. It cannot be used to denote a *diocesan* bishop; or a bishop having the care of the churches in a large district of country, and of a superior rank to other ministers of the gospel; for the word is here used in the plural number, and it is in the highest degree improbable that there were *dioceses* in Philippi. It is clear, moreover, that they were the only officers of the church here, except "deacons;" and the persons referred to, therefore, must have been those who were invested simply with the pastoral office. thus Jerome, one of the early fathers, says respecting the word bishop:—"A presbyter is the same as a bishop. And until there arose divisions in religion, churches were governed by a common council of presbyters. But *afterwards*, it was everywhere decreed, that one person, elected from the presbyters, should be placed over the others." "Philippi," says he, "is a single city of Macedonia; and certainly there could not have been several like those who are now called bishops, at one time in the same city. But as, at that time, they called the same bishops whom they called presbyters also, the apostle spoke indifferently of bishops as of presbyters." Annotations on the Epistle to Titus, as quoted by Dr. Woods on Episcopacy, p. 68.

And Deacons. On the appointment of deacons, and their duty, **See Barnes "Ac 6:1"**.

The word *deacons* does not occur before this place in the common version of the New Testament, though the Greek word here rendered deacon frequently occurs. It is rendered *minister* and *ministers*, in Mt 20:26 Mr 10:43; Ro 13:4 15:8

1Co 3:5 2Co 3:6, 6:4 11:15,23 Gal 2:17; Eph 3:7 6:21; Col 1:7,23,25; Col 4:7 1Ti 4:6; *servant* and *servants*, Mt 22:13; Mt 23:11 Mr 9:35; Joh 2:5,9, 12:26 Ro 16:1; and *deacon* or *deacons*, Php 1:1 1Ti 3:8,12.

The word properly means servants, and is then applied to the ministers of the gospel as being the servants of Christ, and of the churches. Hence it came especially to denote those who had charge of the alms of the church, and who were the overseers of the sick and the poor. In this sense the word is probably used in the passage before us, as the officers here referred to were distinct in some way from the bishops. The apostle here mentions but two orders of ministers in the church at Philippi; and this account is of great importance in its bearing on the question about the way in which Christian churches were at first organized, and about the officers which existed in them. In regard to this we may remark,

(1.) that but two orders of ministers are mentioned. This is undeniable, whatever rank *they* may have held.

(1.) There is no intimation whatever that a minister like a prelatical bishop had ever been appointed there, and that the incumbent of the office was absent, or that the office was now vacant. If the *bishop* was absent, as Bloomfield and others suppose, it is remarkable that no allusion is made to him, and that Paul should have left the impression that there were, in fact, but two "orders" there. If there were a prelate there, why did not Paul refer to him with affectionate salutation? Why does he refer to the two other "orders of clergy," without the slightest allusion to the man who was set over them as "superior in ministerial rank and power?" Was Paul jealous of this prelate? But if they had a prelate, and the see was then vacant, why is there no reference to *this fact*? Why no condolence at their loss? Why no prayer that God would send them a man to enter into the vacant diocese? It is a mere assumption to suppose, as the friends of prelacy often do, that they *had* a

prelatical bishop, but that he was then absent. But even granting this, it is an inquiry which has never been answered, why Paul did not make some reference to this fact, and ask their prayers for the absent prelate.

(3.) The church was organized by the apostle Paul himself, and there can be no doubt that it was organized on the "truly primitive and apostolic plan."

(4.) The church at Philippi was in the centre of a large territory, was the capital of Macedonia, and was not likely to be placed fix subjection to the diocesan of another region.

(5.) It was surrounded by other churches, as we have express mention of the church at Thessalonica, and the preaching of the gospel at Berea, Ac 17.

(6.) There is more than one *bishop* mentioned as connected with the church at Philippi. But these could not have been bishops of the Episcopal or prelatical order. If Episcopalians choose to say that they were *prelates*, then it follows

(a.) that there was a plurality of such persons in the same diocese, the same city, and the same church—which is contrary to the fundamental idea of Episcopacy, It follows also,

(b.) that there was entirely wanting in the church at Philippi what the Episcopalians call the "second order" of clergy; that a church was organized by the apostles defective in one of the essential grades, with a body of prelates without presbyters—that is, an order of men of "superior" rank, designated to exercise jurisdiction over "priests" who had no existence. If there were such presbyters or "priests" there, why did not Paul name them? If their office was one contemplated in the church, and was then vacant, how did this happen? and if *this* were so, why is there no allusion to so remarkable a fact?

(7.) It follows, therefore, that in this church there were but two orders of officers; and, further, that it is right and proper to apply the term *bishop* to the ordinary ministers of the churches. As no mention is made of a prelate; as there are but two orders of men mentioned to whom the care of the church was entrusted, it follows that there was one church at least organized by the apostles without any prelate.

(8.) The same thing may be observed in regard to the distinction between" teaching" elders and "ruling" elders. No such distinction is referred to here; and however useful such an office as that of ruling elder may be, and certain as it is that such an office existed in some of the primitive churches, yet here is one church where no such officer is found; and this fact proves that such an officer is not essential to the Christian church.

{a} "with the bishops" Ac 16:12

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Grace be unto you*, etc. **See Barnes "Ro 1:7".**

{b} "be unto you" Eph 1:14 1Th 1:2

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *I thank my God upon every remembrance of you*. Marg., *mention*. The Greek word means *recollection, remembrance*. But this recollection may have been suggested either by his own reflections on what he had seen, or by what he had heard of them by others, or by the favours which they conferred on him reminding him of them. The meaning is, that as often as he thought on them, from whatever cause, he had occasion of thankfulness. He says that he thanked *his* God, intimating that the conduct of the Philippians was a proof of the favour of God to him; that is, he regarded their piety as one of the tokens of the favour of God to his own soul—for in producing that piety he had been mainly instrumental.

{1} "remembrance" "mention"

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Always*. There is much emphasis in the expressions which are here used. Paul labours to show them that he never forgot them; that he always remembered them in his prayers.

In every prayer of mine. This was a proof of particular and special affection, that while there were so many objects demanding his prayers, and so many other churches which he had founded, he never forgot them. The person or object that we remember in every prayer must be very dear to the heart.

For you all. Not for the church in general, but for the individual member. "He industriously repeats the word all, that he might show that he loved them all equally well, and that he might the more successfully excite them to the manifestation of the same love and benevolence." *Wetstein*.

Making request with joy. With joy at your consistent walk and benevolent lives—mingling thanksgiving with my prayers in view of your holy walk.

{b} "prayer of mine" Eph 1:14 1Th 1:2 {*} "request" "supplication"

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *For your fellowship in the Gospel*. "For your liberality towards me, a preacher of the gospel." Wetstein. There has been, however, no little difference of opinion about the meaning of this phrase. Many—as Doddridge, Koppe, and others—suppose it refers to the fact that they participated in the blessings of the gospel from the first day that he preached it until the time when he wrote this epistle. Others suppose that it refers to their constancy in the Christian faith. Others—as Pierce, Michaelis, Wetstein, Bloomfield, and Storr—suppose it refers to their liberality in contributing to the support of the gospel; to their *participating* with others, or sharing what they had *in common* with others, for the maintenance of the gospel. That this is the true sense seems apparent,

(1.) because it accords with the scope of the epistle, and what the apostle elsewhere says of their benefactions, he speaks particularly of their liberality, and indeed this was one of the principal occasions of his writing the epistle, Php 4:10-12,15-18.

(2.) It accords with a frequent meaning of the word rendered *fellowship—koinwnia*. It denotes that which is in common; that of which we participate with others, communion, fellowship, Ac

2:42 1Co 1:9, 10:16 Phm 1:6; then it means *communication, distribution, contribution,* Ro 15:26 2Co 9:13. That it cannot mean "accession to the gospel," as has been supposed, (see Rob. Lex.,) is apparent from what he adds— "from the first day until now." The fellowship must have been something constant, and continually manifest; and the general meaning is, that in relation to the gospel to its support, and privileges, and spirit—they all shared in common. They felt a common interest in everything that pertained to it, and they showed this in every suitable way, and especially in ministering to the wants of those who were ap- pointed to preach it.

From the first day. The time when it was first preached to them. They had been *constant*. This is honourable testimony. It is much to say of a church, or of an individual Christian, that they have been constant and uniform in the requirements of the gospel. Alas, of how *few* can this be said! On these verses Php 1:3-5 we may remark,

(1.) that one of the highest joys which a minister of the gospel can have, is that furnished by the holy walk of the people to whom he has ministered. Comp. 3Jo 1:4. It is joy like that of a farmer, when he sees his fields whiten for a rich harvest; like that of a teacher, in the good conduct and rapid progress of his scholars; like that of a parent, in the virtue, success, and piety of his sons. Yet it is superior to all that. The interests are higher and more important; the results are more far-reaching and pure; and the joy is more disinterested. Probably there is nowhere else on earth any happiness so pure, elevated, consoling, and rich, as that of a pastor in the piety, peace, benevolence, and growing zeal of his people.

(2.) It is right to commend Christians when they do well. Paul never hesitated to do this, and never supposed that it would do injury. Flattery would injure—but Paul never flattered. Commendation or praise, in order to do good, and not to injure, should be

(a.) the simple statement of the truth;

(b.) it should be without exaggeration;

(c.) it should be connected with an equal readiness to rebuke when wrong to admonish when in error, and to counsel when one goes astray. Constant fault-finding, scolding, or fretfulness, does no good in a family, a school, or a church. The tendency is to dishearten, irritate, and discourage. To commend a child when he does well, may be as important, and as much a duty, as to rebuke him when he does ill. God is as careful to commend his people when they do well, as he is to rebuke them when they do wrong—and that parent, teacher, or pastor, has much mistaken the path of wisdom, who supposes it to be his duty *always to find fault*. In this world there is nothing that goes so far in promoting happiness as a willingness to be pleased rather than displeased; to be satisfied rather than dissatisfied with the conduct of others.

(3.) Our absent friends should be remembered in our prayers. On our knees before God is the best place to remember them. We know not their condition. If they are sick, we cannot minister to their wants; if in danger, we cannot run to their relief; if tempted, we cannot counsel them. But God, who is with them, can do all this; and it is an inestimable privilege thus to be permitted to commend them to his holy care and keeping. Besides, it is a duty to do it. It is one way—and the best way—to repay their kindness. A child may always be repaying the kindness of absent parents by supplicating the Divine blessing on them each morning; and a brother may strengthen and continue his love for a sister, and in part repay her tender love, by seeking, when far away, the Divine favour to be bestowed on her.

{+} "fellowship" "participation"

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Being confident*. This is strong language. It means to be fully and firmly persuaded or convinced. Part. Mid. voice from *peiyw*—to persuade. Comp. Lu 16:31: "Neither will they be *persuaded*, though one rose from the dead;" that is, they would not be *convinced*. Ac 17:4 Heb 11:13; Ac 28:24.

It means here that Paul was *entirely convinced* of the truth of what he said. It is the language of a man who had no doubt on the subject.

That he which hath begun a good work in you. The "good work" here referred to, can be no other than religion, or true piety. This is called the work of God; the work of the Lord; or the work of Christ, Joh 6:29. Comp. 1Co 15:58 16:10; Php 2:30.

Paul affirms here that that work was begun by God. It was not by their own agency or will. **See Barnes "Joh 1:13".**

It was on the fact that it was begun by God, that he based his firm conviction that it would be permanent. Had it been the agency of man, he would have had no such conviction, for nothing that man does today can lay the foundation of a certain conviction that he will do the same thing to-morrow. If the perseverance of the Christian depended wholly on himself, therefore, there could be no sure evidence that he would ever reach heaven.

Will perform it. Marg., "or, *finish*." The Greek word—*epitelesei* —means that he would carry it forward to completion; he would perfect it. It is an intensive form of the word, meaning that it would be carried through *to the end*. It occurs in the following places: Lu 13:32, "I *do* cures;" Ro 15:28, "when *I have performed* this;" 2Co 7:1, "*perfecting* holiness ;" 2Co 8:6, "so he would also *finish* in you;" Php 1:11, "*perform* the doing of it;" Ga 3:3, "are ye now made *perfect* by the flesh;" Heb 8:6, "when he was about to *make* the tabernacle;" Heb 9:6, "*accomplishing* this service;" and 1Pe 5:9, "are *accomplished* in your brethren." The word occurs nowhere else; and here means that God would carry on the work which he had begun to completion. He would not leave it unfinished. It would not be commenced, and then abandoned. This would or could be "performed" or "finished" only

(1.) by keeping them from falling from grace, and

(2.) by their ultimate entire perfection.

Until the day of Jesus Christ. The day when Christ shall so manifest himself as to be the great attractive object, or the day when he shall appear to glorify himself, so that it may be said emphatically to be *his day*. That day is often called "*his* day," or "*the day of the Lord*," because it will be the day of his triumph and glory. It refers here to the day when the Lord Jesus will appear to receive his people to himself—the day of judgment. We may remark on this verse, that Paul believed in the *perseverance of saints*. It would be impossible to express a stronger conviction of the truth of that doctrine than he has done here. Language could not be clearer, and nothing can be more unequivocal than the declaration of his opinion that where God has begun a good work in the soul, it will not be finally lost. The *ground* of this belief he has not stated in full, but has merely hinted at it. It is based on the fact that God had begun the good work. That ground of belief is something like the following.

(1.) It is in God alone. It is not in man in any sense. No reliance is to be placed on man in keeping himself. He is too weak; too changeable; too ready to be led astray; too much disposed to yield to temptation.

(2.) The reliance, therefore, is on God; and the evidence that the renewed man will be kept is this:

(a.) God *began* the work of grace in the soul.

(b.) He had a *design* in it. It was deliberate, and intentional; it was not by chance, or hap-hazard; it was because he had some object that was worthy of his interposition.

(c.) There is no reason why he should *begin* such a work, and then abandon it. It cannot be because he has no power to complete it, or because there are more enemies to be overcome than he had supposed; or because there are difficulties which he did not foresee; or because it is not desirable that the work should be completed. Why, then, should he abandon it?

(d.) God abandons nothing that he undertakes. There are no unfinished worlds or systems; no half-made and forsaken works of his hands. There is no evidence in his works of creation of change of plan, or of having forsaken what he began from disgust, or disappointment, or want of power to complete them. Why should there be in the salvation of the soul?

(e.) He has *promised* to keep the renewed soul to eternal life. See Joh 10:27,28,29 Heb 6:17-20. Comp. Ro 8:29,30.

{c} "of this very thing" Heb 10:35 {d} "which hath begun" Ps 138:8 {2} "perform" "finish" {e} "work" Heb 10:35 {f} "day of Jesus Christ" 2Pe 3:10

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all*. "There is a reason why I should cherish this hope of you, and this confident expectation that you will be saved. That reason is found in the evidence which you have given that you are sincere Christians. Having evidence of that, it is proper that I should believe that you will finally reach heaven."

Because I have you in my heart. Marg., *Ye have me in your*. The Greek will bear either, though the former translation is the most obvious. The meaning is, that he was warmly attached to them, and had experienced many proofs of their kindness; and that there was, therefore, a propriety in his wishing for their salvation. Their conduct towards him, moreover, in his trials, had convinced him that they were actuated by Christian principle; and it was proper that he should believe that they would be kept to eternal life.

Both in my bonds. While I have been a prisoner—referring to the care which they had taken to minister to his wants, Php 4:10,14,18.

And in the defence. Gr., *apology*. Probably he refers to the time when he made his defence before Nero, and vindicated himself from the charges which had been brought against him. **See Barnes "2Ti 4:16"**.

Perhaps he means, here, that on that occasion he was abandoned by those who should have stood by him, but that the Philippians showed him all the attention which they could. It is not impossible that they may have sent some of their number to sympathize with him in his trials, and to assure him of the unabated confidence of the church.

And confirmation of the gospel. In my efforts to defend the gospel, and to make it known. Php 1:17. The allusion is probably to the fact that, in all his efforts to defend the gospel, he had been

sure of their sympathy and co-operation. Perhaps he refers to some assistance which he had derived from them in this cause, which is now to us unknown.

Ye all are partakers of my grace. Marg., "Or, *with me of grace*." The meaning is, that as they had participated with him in the defence of the gospel; as in all his troubles and persecutions they had made common cause with him, so it followed that they would partake of the same tokens of the Divine favour, he expected that the Divine blessing would follow *his* efforts in the cause of the gospel, and he says that they would share in his blessing. They had shown all the sympathy which they could in his trials; they had nobly stood by him when others forsook him; and he anticipated, as a matter of course, that they would all share in the benefits which would flow to him in his efforts in the cause of the Redeemer.

{*} "meet" "right" {1} "I have you in my heart" "ye have me in your" {+} "heart" "I affectionately regard you" {a} "defense and confirmation" Php 1:17 {2} "partakers of my grace" "with me of grace"

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *For God is my record*. My witness; I can solemnly appeal to him.

How greatly I long after you all. To see you; and how much I desire your welfare.

In the bowels of Jesus Christ. The word "bowels," in the Scriptures, denotes the upper viscera—the region of the heart and lungs. **See Barnes "Isa 16:11"**.

That region was regarded as the seat of affection, sympathy, and compassion, as the heart is with us. The allusion here is to the sympathy, tenderness, and love of the Redeemer; and probably the meaning is, that Paul regarded them with something of the affection which the Lord Jesus had for them. This was the tenderest and strongest expression which he could find to denote the ardour of his attachment.

{+} "bowels of Jesus Christ" "With the tender affection of"

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *And this I pray*. We pray for those whom we love, and whose welfare we seek. We desire theft happiness; and there is no way more appropriate of expressing that desire than of going to God, and seeking it at his hand. Paul proceeds to enumerate the blessings which he sought for them; and it is worthy of observation that he did not ask riches, or worldly prosperity, but that his supplications were confined to spiritual blessings, and he sought these as the most desirable of all favours.

That your love may abound, etc. Love to God; love to one another; love to absent Christians; love to the world. This is an appropriate subject of prayer. We cannot wish and pray for a better thing for our Christian friends, than that they may abound in love. Nothing will promote their welfare like this; and we had better pray for this, than that they may obtain abundant riches, and share the honours and pleasures of the world.

In knowledge. The idea is, that he wished them to have *intelligent* affection. It should not be mere blind affection, but that intelligent love which is based on an enlarged view of Divine things—on a just apprehension of the claims of God.

And in all judgment. Marg., *sense*. **See Barnes "Heb 5:14"**.

The word here means, *the power of discerning*; and the meaning is, that he wished that their love should be exercised with proper *discrimination*. It should be in proportion to the relative value of objects; and the meaning of the whole is, that he wished their religion to be intelligent and discriminating; to be based on knowledge, and a proper sense of the relative value of objects, as well as to be the tender affection of the heart.

{b} "yet more" 1Th 3:12 2Pe 3:18

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *That ye may approve things*. Marg., "Or, try." The word used here denotes the kind of trial to which metals are exposed in order to test their nature; and the sense here is, that the apostle wished them so to try the things that were of real value, as to discern that which was true and genuine.

That are excellent. Marg., "or, *differ*." The margin here more correctly expresses the sense of the Greek word. The idea is, that he wished them to be able to distinguish between things that *differed* from each other; to have an intelligent apprehension of what was right and wrong—of what was good and evil. He would not have them love and approve all things indiscriminately. They should be esteemed according to their real value. It is remarkable here how anxious the apostle was, not only that they should be *Christians*, but that they should be *intelligent Christians*, and should understand the real worth and value of objects.

That ye may be sincere. **See Barnes "Eph 6:24"**.

The word here used—*eilikrinhv* nowhere else in the New Testament, except in 2Pe 3:1, where it is rendered *pure*. The noun *eilikrineia*, however, occurs in 1Co 5:8 2Co 1:12, 2:17; in all which places it is rendered *sincerity*. The word properly means, that *which is judged of in sunshine*, *eilh krinw*; and then that which is clear and manifest. It is that over which there are no clouds; which is not doubtful and dark; which is pure and bright. The word *sincere* means literally *without wax* (*sine cera*;) that is, honey which is pure and transparent. Applied to Christian character, it means that which is not deceitful, ambiguous, hypocritical; that which is not mingled with error, worldliness, and sin; that which does not proceed from selfish and interested motives, and where there is nothing disguised. There is no more desirable appellation that can be given to a man than to say that he is sincere—a sincere friend, benefactor, Christian; and there is nothing more lovely in the character of a Christian than *sincerity*. It implies,

(1.) that he is truly converted—that he has not *assumed* Christianity as a mask;

(2.) that his motives axe disinterested and pure;

(3.) that his conduct is free from double-dealing, trick, and cunning;

(4.) that his words express the real sentiments of his heart;

(5.) that he is true to his word, and faithful to his promises;

(6.) that he is always what he professes to be. A sincere Christian would bear to have the light let in upon him always; to have the emotions of his heart seen; to be scanned everywhere, and at all times, by men, by angels, and by God.

And without offence. Inoffensive to others. Not injuring them in property, feelings, or reputation. This is a negative virtue, and is often despised by the world. But it is much to say of a man that he injures no one; that neither by example, nor opinions, nor conversation, he leads them astray; that he never does injustice to their motives, and never impedes their influence; that he never wounds their feelings, or gives occasion for hard thoughts; and that he so lives that all may see that his is a blameless life.

Till the day of Christ. **See Barnes "Php 1:6"**

{a} "ye may" Ro 2:18 {1} "approve" "try" {2} "are excellent" "differ" {b} "sincere" Eph 5:27

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Being filled with the fruit if righteousness*. That which will righteousness in the heart produces. The fruits, or results, will be seen in the life; and those fruits are honesty, truth, kindness, meekness, goodness. The wish of the apostle is, that they might show abundantly by their lives that they were truly righteous. He does not refer to liberality merely, but to everything which true piety in the heart is fitted to produce in the life.

¶ *Which are by Jesus Christ*.

(1.) Which his religion is fitted to produce.

(2.) Which result from endeavouring to follow his example.

(3.) Which are produced by his agency on the heart.

Unto the glory and praise of God. His honour is never more promoted than by the eminent holiness of his friends. **See Barnes "Joh 15:8"**.

If we wish, therefore, to honour God, it should not be merely with the lips, or by acts of prayer and praise; it should be by a life devoted to him. It is easy to render the service of the lips; it is far more difficult to render that service which consists in a life of patient and consistent piety; and in proportion to the *difficulty* of it, is its value in his sight.

{c} "and praise of God" Joh 15:8

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *But I would ye should understand*. Paul here turns to himself, and goes into a somewhat extended account of his own feelings in his trials, and of the effects of his imprisonment at Rome. He wished them to understand what his circumstances were, and what had been the effect of his imprisonment, probably for such reasons as these:

(1.) They were tenderly attached to him, and would feel an interest in all that pertained to him.

(2.) It was possible that they might hear unfounded rumours about the manner of his treatment, and he wished that they should understand the exact truth.

(3.) He had real intelligence to communicate to them that would be joyful to them, about the effect of his imprisonment, and his treatment there; and he wished them to rejoice with him.

That the things which happened unto me. The accusations against him, and his imprisonment at Rome. He had been falsely accused, and had been constrained to appeal to Caesar, and had been taken to Rome as a prisoner, Acts chapters 15 thru 18. This arrest and imprisonment would seem to have been against his success as a preacher; but he now says that the contrary had been the fact.

Have fallen out. Have resulted in. Literally, "have come." *Tindal*. "My business is happened."

The furtherance. The increase, the promotion of the gospel. Instead of being a hinderance, they have been rather an advantage.

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *So that my bonds in Christ*. Marg., *for*. The meaning is, his bonds *in the cause* of Christ. He was imprisoned because he preached Christ, **See Barnes** "Eph 6:20, and was really suffering because of his attachment to the Redeemer. It was not for crime, but for being a Christian—for had he not been a Christian, he would have escaped all this. The *manner* of Paul's imprisonment was, that he was suffered to occupy a house by himself, though chained to a soldier who was his guard, Ac 28:16. He was not in a dungeon indeed, but he was not at liberty, and this was a severe mode of confinement. Who would wish to be *chained* night and day to a living witness of all that he did; to a spy on all his movements? Who would wish to have such a man always with him, to hear all he said, and to see all that he did? Who could well bear the feeling that he could never be alone—and never be at liberty to do anything without the permission of one too who probably had little disposition to be indulgent?

Are manifest. That is, it has become known that I am imprisoned only for the sake of Christ. *Grotius*. The true reason why I am thus accused and imprisoned begins to be understood, and this has awakened sympathy for me as an injured man. They see that it is not for *crime*, but that it is on account of my religious opinions; and the conviction of my innocence has spread abroad, and has produced a favourable impression in regard to Christianity itself. It must have been a matter of much importance for Paul to have this knowledge of the real cause why he was imprisoned go abroad. Such a knowledge would do much to prepare others to listen to what he had to say—for there is no man to whom we listen more readily than to one who is suffering wrongfully.

In all the palace. Marg., "or *Caesar's court*. Gr., *en olw tw praitwriw, in all the praetorium*. This word properly denotes the *general's tent* in a camp; then the house or palace of a governor of a province; then any large hall, house, or palace. It occurs in the New Testament only in the following places: Mt 27:27, where it is rendered *common hall*; Mr 15:16, rendered *pretorium*; Joh 18:28,33, 19:9 Ac 23:35, rendered *judgment hall*; and in Php 1:13. It is employed to denote

(1.) the palace of Herod at Jerusalem, built with great magnificence at the northern part of the upper city, westward of the temple, and overlooking the temple;

(2.) the palace of Herod at Caesarea, which was probably occupied by the Roman procurator; and

(3) in the place before us, to denote either the palace of the emperor at Rome, or the pretorian camp, the head quarters of the pretorian guards or cohorts. These cohorts were a body of select troops instituted by Augustus to guard his person, and have charge of the city. See *Rob. Lex*. Bloomfield, Rosenmuller, and some others, understand this of the pretorian camp, and suppose that Paul meant to say that the cause of his imprisonment had become known to all the band of the pretorians. Grotius says that the usual word to denote the residence of the emperor at Rome was *palatium—-palace*, but that those who resided in the provinces were accustomed to the word *pretorium*, and would use it when speaking of the palace of the emperor. Chrysostom says that the palace of the emperor was called *pretorium*, by a Latin word derived from the Greek. See Erasmus *in loc*. Calvin supposes that the palace of Nero is intended. The question about the meaning of the word is important, as it bears on the inquiry to what extent the gospel was made known at Rome in the time of Paul, and perhaps as to the question why he was released from his imprisonment. If the knowledge of his innocence had reached *the palace*, it was a ground of hope that he might be acquitted; and if that palace is here intended, it is an interesting fact as showing that in some way the gospel had been introduced into the family of the emperor himself. That the palace or residence of the emperor is intended here, may be considered at least probable from the following considerations:

(1.) It is the name which would be likely. to be used by the Jews who came up from Judea and other provinces, to denote the chief place of judgment, or the principal residence of the highest magistrate. So it was used in Jerusalem, in Cesarea, and in the provinces generally, to denote the residence of the general in the camp, or the procurator in the cities—the highest representative of the Roman power.

(2.) If the remark of Chrysostom, above referred to, be well founded, that this was a common name given to the palace in Rome, then this goes far to determine the question.

(3.) In Php 4:22, Paul, in the salutation of the saints at Rome to those of Philippi, mentions particularly those of "Caesar's household." From this it would seem that some of the family of the emperor had been made acquainted with the Christian religion, and had been converted. In what way the knowledge of the true cause of Paul's imprisonment had been circulated in the "palace," is not now known. There was, however, close intimacy between the military officers and the government, and it was probably by means of some of the soldiers or officers who had the special charge of Paul, that this had been communicated. To Paul, in his bonds, it must have been a subject of great rejoicing, that the government became thus apprized of the true character of the opposition which had been excited against him; and it must have done much to reconcile him to the sorrows and privations of imprisonment, that he was thus the means of introducing religion to the very palace of the emperor.

And in all other places. Marg., *to all others*. The Greek will bear either construction. But if, as has been supposed, the reference in the word *pretorium* is to the *palace*, then this should be rendered "all other *places*." It then means, that the knowledge of his innocence, and the consequences of that knowledge in its happy influence in spreading religion, were not confined to the palace, but were extended to other places. The subject was *generally* understood, so that it might be said that correct views of the matter pervaded the city, and the fact of his imprisonment was accomplishing extensively the most happy effects on the public mind.

{3} "bonds in Christ" "for" {4} "all the palace" "Caesar's court" Php 4:22 {5} "in all other places" "to all others"

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *And many of the brethren*. Many Christians. It is evident from this, that there were already "many" in Rome who professed Christianity.

In the Lord. In the Lord Jesus; that is, united to him and to each other by a professed attachment to him. This is a common phrase to designate Christians.

Waxing confident by my bonds. Becoming increasingly bold and zealous in consequence of my being confined. This might have been either

(1.) that from the very fact that so distinguished a champion of the truth had been imprisoned, they were excited to do all they could in the cause of the gospel. Or

(2.) they were aroused by the fact that the cause of his imprisonment had become generally understood, and that there was a strong current of popular favour setting towards Christianity in consequence of it. Or

(3.) they had had intercourse with Paul in his own "hired house," and had been incited and encouraged by him to put forth great efforts in the cause. Or

(4.) it would seem that some had been emboldened to promulgate their views, and set themselves up as preachers, who would have been restrained if Paul had been at liberty. They were disposed to form parties, and to secure followers, and rejoiced in an opportunity to increase their own popularity, and were not unwilling thus to diminish the popularity and lessen the influence of so great a man as Paul. Had *he* been at liberty, they would have had no prospect of success. See Php 1:16. To this may be added a suggestion by Theodoret. "Many of the brethren have increased boldness—*yarsov* —on account of my bonds. For seeing me bear such hard things with pleasure, they announce that the gospel (which sustains me) is divine." The same sentiment occurs in Oecumen and Theophyl. See *Bloomfield*. In Paul himself they had an illustration of the power of religion, and being convinced of its truth, they went and proclaimed it abroad.

To speak the word without fear. That is, they see that I remain safely, (comp. Ac 28:30,) and that there is no danger of persecution, and, stimulated by my sufferings and patience, they go and make the gospel known.

{*} "confident" "growing confident"

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife*. What was the ground of this "envy and strife" the apostle does not mention. It would seem, however, that even in Rome there was a party which was jealous of the influence of Paul, and which supposed that this was a good opportunity to diminish his influence, and to strengthen their own cause. He was not now at large so as to be able to meet and confute them. They had access to the mass of the people. It was easy, under plausible pretences, to insinuate hints about the ambitious aims, or improper influence of Paul, or to take strong ground against him and in favour of their own views, and they availed themselves of this opportunity. It would seem most probable, though this is not mentioned, that these persons were *Judaizing teachers*, professing Christianity, and who supposed that Paul's views were derogatory to the honour of Moses and the law.

And some also of good will. From pure motives, having no party aims to accomplish, and not intending in any way to give me trouble.

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *The one preach Christ of contention*. So as to form parties, and to produce strifes among his professed followers.

Not sincerely. Not purely—*agnwv*—not with pure motives or intentions. Their real aim is not to preach Christ, but to produce difficulty and to stir up strife. They are ambitious men, and they have no real regard for the welfare of the church and the honour of religion.

Supposing to add affliction to my bonds. To make my trial the greater. How they did this is unknown. Perhaps they were those who were strongly imbued with Jewish notions, and who felt that his course tended to diminish respect for the law of Moses, and who now took this opportunity to promote their views, knowing that this would be particularly painful to him when he was not at, liberty to meet them openly, and to defend his own opinions. It is possible also that they may have urged that Paul himself had met with a signal reproof for the course which he had taken, and, as a consequence, was now thrown into chains. Bloomfield suggests that it was the opinion of many of the ancient expositors that they endeavoured to do this by so preaching as to excite the fury of the multitude or the rulers against Paul, and to produce increased severity in his punishment. But the way in which they did this is unknown, and conjecture is altogether useless.

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *But the other of love*. From pure motives, and from sincere affection to me.

Knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. They believe that I am an ambassador from God. They regard me as unjustly imprisoned, and while I am disabled, they are willing to aid me in the great cause to which my life is devoted. To alleviate his sorrows, and to carry forward the great cause to defend which he was particularly appointed, they engaged in the work which he could not now do, and went forth to vindicate the gospel, and to make its claims better known. Coverdale renders this, "for they know that I lie here for the defence of the gospel." So Piscator, Michaelis, and Endius render it, supposing that the meaning is, that he lay in prison for the defence of the gospel, or as a consequence of his efforts to defend it. But this is not in accordance with the usual meaning of the Greek word, *keimai*. It means to lie, and in the perf. pass. to be laid, set, placed. If the apostle had referred to his being in prison, he would have *added* that fact to the statement made. The sense is, that he was appointed to be a defender of the gospel, and that they being well convinced of this, went forth to promulgate and defend the truth. That fact was one of Paul's chief consolations while he was thus in confinement.

{+} "set" "placed"

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *What then*? What follows from this? What effect does it have on my mind? Does the fact that some preach from a spirit of envy and contention give me pain?

Notwithstanding every way. No matter in what way it is done. We are not to suppose, however, that Paul was indifferent as to the way in which the gospel was preached, or the spirit with which it was done; but the meaning is, that it was a matter of rejoicing that *it was done at all*, whatever the motives might be.

Whether in pretence or in truth. Whether as a mere pretext to cover up some other design, or from pure motives. Their pretence was that they preached the gospel because they believed it true and loved it; their real object was to build up a party, and to diminish the influence and authority of Paul.

Christ is preached. They made known the name of the Saviour, and announced that the Messiah had come. They could not go forth under any pretence as preachers, without making known some truth about the Redeemer. So now, it is hardly possible that any persons should attempt to preach, without stating some truth that would not otherwise be known. The name of a Saviour will be announced, and that will be something. Some views of his life and work will be presented, which, though they may be far enough from full views, are yet better than none. Though there may be much *error* in what is said, yet there will be also some truth. It would be better to have preachers that were better instructed, or that were more prudent, or that had purer motives, or that held a more perfect system; yet it is much in our world *to have the name of the Redeemer announced in any way*, and even to be told, in the most stammering manner, and from whatever motives, that *man has a Saviour*. The announcement of that fact, in any way, may save a soul; but ignorance of it could save none.

And I therein do rejoice. This is an instance of great magnanimity on the part of Paul, and nothing, perhaps, could better show his supreme love for the Saviour. Part preached to increase his afflictions, and the tendency of that preaching was, probably, as it was designed to be, to unsettle confidence in him, and to lessen his influence. Yet this did not move him. The more important matter was secured, and Christ was made known; and if this were secured, he was willing that his own name should be east into the shade. This may furnish valuable lessons to preachers of the gospel now. When

(1.) we are laid aside from preaching by sickness, we should rejoice that others are in health, and are able to make the Saviour known, though we are forgotten.

(2.) When we are unpopular and unsuccessful, we should rejoice that others are more popular and successful—for Christ is preached.

(3.) When we have rivals, who have better plans than we for doing good, and whose labours are crowned with success, we should not be envious or jealousy for Christ is preached.

(4.) When ministers of other denominations preach what we regard as error, and their preaching becomes popular, and is attended with success, we can find occasion to rejoice—for they preach Christ. In the error we should not, we cannot rejoice; but in the fact that the great truth is held up that Christ died for men, we can always find abundant occasion for joy. Mingled as it may be with error, it may be nevertheless the means of saving souls; and though we should rejoice *more* if the truth were preached without any admixture of error, yet still the very fact that Christ is made known lays the foundation for gratitude and rejoicing. Had all Christians, and Christian ministers, the

feelings which Paul expresses here, there would be much less envy and uncharitableness than there is now in the churches. May we not hope that the time will yet come when all who preach the gospel will have such supreme regard for the name and work of the Saviour, that they will find sincere joy in the success of a rival denomination, or a rival preacher, or in rival plans for doing good? Then, indeed, contentions would cease, and the hearts of Christians, "like kindred drops," would mingle into one.

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *For I know that this shall turn to my salvation*. Will be a means of my salvation. Whether the effect shall be to turn public favour towards the Christian religion, and secure my release; or whether it shall be to instigate my enemies more, so as to lead to my death; I am satisfied that the result, so far as I am concerned, will be well. The word "salvation," here, does not refer to him release from captivity, as Koppe, Rosenmuller, Clarke, and others, suppose; for he was not absolutely certain of that, and could not expect that to be effected by "the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ." But the meaning is, that all these dealings, including his imprisonment, and especially the conduct of those who thought to add affliction to his bonds, would be among the means of his salvation. Trying and painful as all this was, yet trial and pain Paul reckoned *among the means of grace*; and he had no doubt that this would prove so.

Through your prayer. **See Barnes "2Co 1:11"**.

And the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. To sustain me, and to cause those happy results to come out of these trials. He needed the same Spirit which Jesus Christ had, to enable him to bear his trials with patience, and to impart to him the consolations which he required. He had no idea that these trials would produce these effects of their own accord, nor that it could be by any strength of his own.

{a} "shall turn" Ro 8:28 {b} "your prayer" 2Co 1:11

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *According to my earnest expectation*. The word here used occurs but in one other place in the New Testament. See it explained **See Barnes "Ro 8:19"**.

The earnest desire and hope which Paul had was not, primarily, that he might be released; but it was that, in all circumstances, he might be able to honour the gospel, living or dying. To that he looked as a much more important matter than to save his life. Life with him was the secondary consideration; the main thing was, to stand up everywhere as the advocate of the gospel, to maintain its truth, and to exhibit its spirit.

That in nothing I shall be ashamed. That I shall do nothing of which I shall have occasion to be ashamed. That in these heavy trials, I may not be left to deny the truth of the Christian religion; that, even before the emperor, I may maintain its principles; and that the dread of death may not

lead me to do a dishonourable thing, or in any way so to shrink from an avowal of my belief, as to give me or my friends occasion of regret.

But that with all boldness. By my speaking the truth, and maintaining my principles with all boldness. **See Barnes "2Co 7:4"**; **See Barnes** "Eph 6:19, **See Barnes "Eph 6:20"**.

Christ shall be magnified. Shall be held up to the view of man as the true and only Saviour, whatever becomes of me.

Whether it be by life. If I am permitted to live. He was not yet certain how the case would terminate with him. He had not been put on his trial, and, whether that trial would result in his acquittal or not, he could not certainly know. But he felt assured that, if he were acquitted, the effect would be to honour Christ. He would ascribe his deliverance to his gracious interposition; he would devote himself with new ardour to his service; and he felt assured, from his past efforts, that he would be able to do something that would "*magnify*" Christ in the estimation of mankind.

Or by death. If my trial shall result in my death. Then, he believed, he would be able to show such a spirit as to do honour to Christ and his cause. He was not afraid to die, and he was persuaded that he would be enabled to bear the pains of death in such a manner as to show the sustaining power of religion, and the value of Christianity. Christ is "magnified" in the death of Christians, when his gospel is seen to sustain them; when, supported by its promises, they are enabled to go calmly into the dark valley; and when, in the departing moments, they confidently commit their eternal all into his hands. The effect of this state of feeling on the mind of Paul must have been most happy. In whatever way his trial terminated, he felt assured that the great object for which he lived would be promoted. Christ would be honoured, perhaps, as much by his dying as a martyr, as by his living yet many years to proclaim his gospel, tie was, therefore, reconciled to his lot. He had no anxiety. Come what might, the purpose which he had most at heart would be secured, and the name of the Saviour would be honoured.

{c} "ashamed" Ro 5:5 {d} "as always" Eph 6:19,20 {e} "whether it be life" Ro 14:7,8

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *For to me to live is Christ*. My sole aim in living is to glorify Christ. He is the supreme End of my life, and I value it only as being devoted to his honour. *Doddridge*. His aim was not honour, learning, gold, pleasure; it was to glorify the Lord Jesus. This was the single purpose of his soul—a purpose to which he devoted himself with as much singleness and ardour as ever did a miser to the pursuit of gold, or a devotee of pleasure to amusement, or an aspirant for fame to ambition. This implied the following things:

(1.) A purpose to know as much of Christ as it was possible to know—to become as fully acquainted as he could with his rank, his character, his plans, with the relations which he sustained to the Father, and with the claims and influences of his religion. See Php 3:10 Eph 3:19. Comp. Joh 17:3.

(2.) A purpose to *imitate* Christ—to make him the model of his life. It was a design that his Spirit should reign in his heart, that the same temper should actuate him, and that the same great end should be constantly had in view.

(3.) A purpose to make his religion known, as far as possible, among mankind. To this Paul seriously gave his life, and devoted his great talents. His aim was to see on how many minds he could impress the sentiments of the Christian religion; to see to how many of the human family he could make Christ known, to whom he was unknown before. Never was there a man who gave himself with more ardour to any enterprise, than Paul did to this; and never was one more successful, in any undertaking, than he was in this.

(4.) It was a purpose to *enjoy Christ*. He drew his comforts from him. His happiness he found in communion with him. It was not in the works of art; not in the pursuits of elegant literature; not in the gay and fashionable world; but it was in communion with the Saviour, and in endeavouring to please him. Remark,

(1.) Paul never had occasion to regret this course. It produced no sadness when he looked over his life. He never felt that he had had an unworthy aim of living; he did not wish that his purpose had been different when he came to die.

(2.) If it was Paul's duty thus to live, it is no less that of every Christian. What was there in *his* case that made it his duty to "live unto Christ," which does not exist in the case of every sincere Christian on earth? No believer, when he comes to die, will regret that he has lived unto Christ; but how many, alas! regret that this has not been the aim and purpose of their souls?

And to die is gain. Comp. Re 14:13. A sentiment similar to this occurs frequently in the Greek and Latin classic writers. See Wetstein, *in loc*., who has collected numerous such passages. With them, the sentiment had its origin in the belief that they would be freed from suffering, and admitted to some happy world beyond the grave. To them, however, all this was conjecture and uncertainty. The word *gain*, here, means *profit, advantage*; and the meaning is, there would be an *advantage* in dying above that of living. Important benefits would result to him *personally*, should he die; and the only reason why he should wish at all to live was, that he might be the means of benefiting others, Php 1:24,25. But how would it be gain to die? What advantage would there be in Paul's circumstances? What in ours? It may be answered, that it will be gain for a Christian to die in the following respects:—

(1.) He will be then freed from sin. Here it is the source of perpetual humiliation and sorrow; in heaven he will sin no more.

(2.) He will be freed from doubts about his condition. Here the best are liable to doubts about theft personal piety, and often experience many an anxious hour in reference to this point; in heaven, doubt will be known no more.

(3.) He will be freed from temptation. Here, no one knows when he may be tempted, nor how powerful the temptation may be; in heaven, there will be no allurement to lead him astray; no artful, cunning, and skilful votaries of pleasure to place inducements before him to sin; and no *heart* to yield to them, if there were.

(4.) He will be delivered from all his enemies—from the slanderer, the calumniator, the persecutor. Here the Christian is constantly liable to have his motives called in question, or to be met with detraction and slander; there, there will be none to do him injustice; all will rejoice in the belief that he is pure.

(5.) He will be delivered from suffering. Here he is constantly liable to it. His health fails, his friends die, his mind is sad. There, there shall be no separation of friends, no sickness, and no tears.

(6.) He will be delivered from death. Here, death is ever nigh—dreadful, alarming, terrible to our nature There, death will be known no more. No face will ever turn pale, and no knees tremble,

at his approach; in all heaven there will never be seen a funeral procession, nor will the soil there ever open its bosom to furnish a grave.

(7.) To all this may be added the fact, that the Christian will be surrounded by his best friends; that he will be reunited with those whom he loved on earth; that he will be associated with the angels of light; and that he will be admitted to the immediate presence of his Saviour and his God? Why, then, should a Christian be afraid to die? And why should he not hail that hour, when it comes, as the hour of his deliverance, and rejoice that he is going home? Does the prisoner, long confined in a dungeon, dread the hour which is to open his prison, add permit him to return to his family and friends? Does the man in a foreign land, long an exile, dread the hour when he shall embark on the ocean to be conveyed where he may embrace the friends of his youth? Does the sick man dread the hour which restores him to health? the afflicted, the hour of comfort? the wanderer at night, the cheering light of returning day? And why, then, should the Christian dread the hour which will restore him to immortal vigour; which shall remove all his sorrows; which shall introduce him to everlasting day? \-

"Death is the crown of life:
Were death denied, poor man would live in vain;
Were death denied, to live would not be life;
Were death denied, even fools would wish to die.
Death wounds to cure; we tall; we rise; we reign !
Spring from our fetters; hasten in the skies;
Where blooming Eden withers in our sight.
Death gives us more than was in Eden lost.
The king of terrors is the prince of peace."
Night Thoughts, iii.

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *But if I live in the flesh*. If I continue to live; if I am not condemned, and made a martyr at my approaching trial.

This is the fruit of my labour. The meaning of this passage, which has given much perplexity to commentators, it seems to me is, "If I live in the flesh, it will cost me labour; it will be attended, as it has been, with much effort and anxious care, and I know not which to prefer—whether to remain on the earth with these cares and the hope of doing good, or to go at once to a world of rest."

A more literal version of the Greek will show that this is the meaning— *touto moi karpov ergou* "this to me is [or would be] the fruit of labour." Coverdale, however, renders it, "Inasmuch as to live in the flesh is fruitful to me for the work, I wot not what I shall choose." So Luther, "But since to live in the flesh serves to produce more fruit." And so Bloomfield, "But if my life in the flesh be of use to the gospel, (be it so, I say no more,) verily what I shall choose I see and know not." See also Koppe, Rosenmuller, and Calvin, who give the same sense. According to this, the meaning is, that if his life were of value to the gospel, he was willing to live; or that it was a valuable object—*operae pretium* —worth an effort thus to live. This sense accords well with the connexion,

and the thought is a valuable one, but it is somewhat doubtful whether it can be made out from the Greek. To do it, it is necessary to suppose that *moi—my*—is expletive, (Koppe,) and that *kai and*—is used in an unusual sense. See Erasmus. According to the interpretation first suggested, it means that Paul felt that it would be gain to die, and that he was entirely willing; that he felt that if he continued to live it would involve toil and fatigue; and that therefore, great as was the natural love of life, and desirous as he was to do good, he did not know which to choose-an immediate departure to the world of rest, or a prolonged life of toil and pain, attended even with the hope that he might do good. There was an intense desire to be with Christ, joined with the belief that his life here must be attended with toll and anxiety; and, on the other hand, an earnest wish to live in order to do good, and he knew not which to prefer.

Yet. The sense has been obscured by this translation. The Greek word *kai* means *and*, and should have been so rendered here, in its usual sense. "To die would be gain; my life here would be one of toil, AND I know not which to choose."

What I shall choose I wot not. I do not know which I should prefer, if it were left to me. On each side there were important considerations, and he knew not which overbalanced the other. Are not Christians often in this state, that if it were left to themselves they would not know which to choose, whether to live or to die?

{*} "wot" "know"

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *For I am in a straight betwixt two*. Two things, each of which I desire. I earnestly long to be with Christ; and I desire to remain to be useful to the world. The word rendered "I am in a strait" *sunecomai*—means, to be pressed on or constrained, as in a crowd; to feel one's self pressed, or pent up, so as not to know what to do; and it here means that he was in perplexity and doubt, and did not know what to choose. "The words of the original are very emphatic. They appear to be derived from a ship when lying at anchor, and when violent winds blow upon it that would drive it out to sea. The apostle represents himself as in a similar condition. His strong affection for them bound his heart to them as an anchor holds a ship to its moorings; and yet there was a heavenly influence bearing upon him—like the gale upon the vessel —which would bear him away to heaven." *Burder*, in Ros. Alt. u. neu. Morgenland, in loc.

Having a desire to depart. To die—to leave this world for a better. Men, as they are by nature, usually *dread* to die. Few are even made *willing* to die. Almost none desire to die—and even then they wish it only as the least of two evils. Pressed down by pain and sorrow, or sick and weary of the world, the mind may be wrought up into a desire to be away. But this, with the world, is in all cases the result of misanthropy, or morbid feeling, or disappointed ambition, or an accumulation many sorrows. Wetstein has adduced on this verse several most beautiful passages from the classic writers, in which men expressed a desire to depart—but all of them probably could be traced to disappointed ambition, or to mental or bodily sorrows, or to dissatisfaction with the world. It was from no such wish that Paul desired to die. It was not because he hated man—for he ardently loved him; it was not because he had been disappointed about wealth and honour—for he had sought neither; it was not because he had not been successful—for no man has been more so; it was not

because he had been subjected to pains and imprisonments—for he was willing to bear them; it was not because he was old, and infirm and a burden to the world—for, from anything that appears, he was in the rigour of life, and in the fulness of his strength. It was from a purer, higher motive than any of these—the strength of attachment which bound him to the Saviour, and which made him long to be with him.

And to be with Christ. We may remark on this expression,

(1.) that this was the true reason why he wished to be away. It was his strong love to Christ; his anxious wish to be with him; his firm belief that in his presence was "fulness of joy."

(2.) Paul believed that the soul of the Christian would be immediately with the Saviour at death. It was evidently his expectation that he would at once pass to his presence, and not that he would remain in an intermediate state to some far distant period.

(3.) The soul does not *sleep* at death. Paul expected to be *with* Christ, and to be conscious of the fact—to see him, and to partake of his glory.

(4.) The soul of the believer is made happy at death. To be with Christ is synonymous with being in heaven, for Christ is in heaven, and is its glory. We may add,

(a.) that this wish to be with Christ constitutes a marked difference between a Christian and other men. Other men may be willing to die; perhaps be desirous to die, because their sorrows are so great that they feel that they cannot be borne. But the Christian desires to depart from a different motive altogether. It is *to be with Christ*—and this constitutes a broad line of distinction between him and other men.

(b.) A mere *willingness* to die, or even a desire to die, is no certain evidence of preparation for death. If this willingness or desire is caused by mere intensity of suffering; if it is produced by disgust at the world, or by disappointment; if it arises from some view of fancied Elysian fields beyond the grave, it constitutes no evidence whatever of preparation for death. I have seen not a few persons who were not professed Christians on a bed of death, and not a few *willing* to die, nay, not a few who *wished* to depart. But in the vast majority of instances it was because they were sick of life, or because their pain made them sigh for relief, or *because they were so wretched that they did not care what happened*—and this they and their friends construed into an evidence that they were prepared to die! In most instances this is a miserable delusion; in no case is a mere willingness to die an evidence of preparation for death.

Which is far better. Would be attended with more happiness; and would be a higher, holier state than to remain on earth. This proves, also, that the soul of the Christian at death is made at once happy—for a state of insensibility can in no way be said to be a better condition than to remain in this present world. The Greek phrase here *pollw mallon kreisson*—is very emphatic, and the apostle seems to labour for language which will fully convey his idea. It means, "by much more, or rather better;" and the sense is, "better beyond all expression." *Doddridge*. See numerous examples illustrating the phrase in Wetstein. Paul did not mean to say that he was merely willing to die, or that he *acquiesced* in its necessity, but that the fact of being with Christ was a condition *greatly to be preferred* to remaining on earth. This is the true feeling of Christian piety; and, having this feeling, death to us will have no terrors.

{a} "to depart" 2Co 5:8 {b} "far better" Ps 16:11

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Nevertheless to abide in the flesh*. To live. All this is language derived from the belief that the soul will be separate from the body at death, and will occupy a separate state of existence.

Is more needful for you. Another object that was dear to the heart of Paul. He never supposed that his life was useless; or that it was a matter of no importance to the cause of religion whether he lived or died. He knew that God works by means; and that the life of a minister of the gospel is of real value to the church and the world. His experience, his influence, his paternal counsels, he felt assured, would be of value to the church; and he had, therefore, a desire to live—and it was no part of his religion affectedly to undervalue or despise himself.

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *And having this confidence*. "Being persuaded of this, that my continuance on earth is desirable for your welfare, and that the Lord has a work for me to do, I confidently expect that I shall be permitted to live." The "confidence" here referred to was, that his life was needful for them, and hence that God would spare him. A literal translation would be, "And being persuaded as to this, or of this" *touto pepoiywv* "I know," etc. The foundation of his expectation that he should live does not appear to have been any revelation to that effect, as Doddridge supposes; or any intimation which he had from the palace, of the intentions of the government, as some others suppose; but the fact that he believed his life to be necessary for them, and that therefore God would preserve it.

I know that I shall abide. The word *know*, however, (*oida*) is not to be pressed as denoting absolute necessity—for it appears from Php 1:27 2:17, that there was some ground for doubt whether he would live—but is to be taken in a popular sense, as denoting good courage, and an earnest hope, that he would be permitted to live and visit them. *Heinrichs*.

And continue with you all. That is, that he would be permitted not only to live, but to enjoy their society.

For your furtherance and joy of faith. For the increase of your faith, and the promotion of that joy which is the consequence of faith. Wetstein has quoted a beautiful passage from Seneca (Epis. 104) which strikingly resembles this sentiment of Paul. He says that when a man had meditated death, and when on his own account he would be willing to die, yet that he ought to be willing to live—to come back again to life—for the sake of his friends, he then adds, "It pertains to a great mind to be willing to come back to life for the sake of others; which distinguished men often do."

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Christ Jesus*. Through the mercy and grace of Christ. If he was spared, his deliverance would be traced to Christ, and they would rejoice together in one who had so mercifully delivered him.

For me by my coming to you again. Their joy would not only be that he was delivered, but that he was permitted to see them again.

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *Only let your conversation*. The word conversation we now apply almost exclusively to oral discourse, or to talking. But it was not formerly confined to that, and is never so used in the Scriptures. It means conduct in general—including, of course, our manner of speaking, but not limited to that—and should be so understood in every place where it occurs in the Bible. The original word here used *politeuw-politeuo*, means, properly, *to administer the State; to live as a citizen; to conduct one's self according to the laws and customs of a State*. See Ac 23:1. Comp. examples in Wetstein. It would not be improperly rendered, "let your conduct, as a citizen, be as becomes the gospel;" and might without impropriety, though not exclusively, be referred to our deportment as members of a community, or citizens of a State. It undoubtedly implies that, as citizens, we should act, in all the duties which that relation involves—in maintaining the laws, in submission to authority, in the choice of rulers, etc., as well as in other relations —on the principles of the gospel; for the believer is bound to perform every duty on Christian principles. But the direction here should not be confined to that. It doubtless includes our conduct in all relations in life, and refers to our deportment in general; not merely as citizens of the State, but as members of the church, and in all other relations. In our manner of speech, our plans of living, our dealings with others, our conduct and walk in the church and out of it—all should be done as becomes the *gospel*. The direction, therefore, in this place, is to be understood of everything pertaining to conduct.

As it becometh the Gospel of Christ.

(1.) The rules of the gospel are to be applied to all our conduct—to our conversation, business transactions, modes of dress, style of living, entertainments, etc. There is nothing which we do, or say, or purpose, that is to be excepted from those rules.

(2.) There is a way of living which is *appropriate to the gospel*, or which is such as the gospel requires. There is something which the gospel would secure as *its proper fruits* in all our conduct, and by which our lives should be regulated. It would distinguish us from the gay, and from those who seek honour and wealth as their supreme object. If all Christians were under the influence of the gospel, there would be *something* in their dress, temper, conversation, and aims, which would distinguish them from others. The gospel is not a thing of naught; nor is it intended that it should exert *no* influence on its friends.

(3.) It is very important that Christians should frame their lives by the rules of the gospel, and, to this end, should *study* them, and know what they are. This is important,

(a.) because they are the *best* and *wisest* of all rules;

(b.) because it is only in this way that Christians can do good;

(c.) because they have solemnly covenanted with the Lord to take his laws as their guide;

(d.) because it is only in this way that they can enjoy religion; and

(e.) because it is only by this that they can have peace on a dying bed. If men live as "becometh the gospel," they live well. Their lives are honest and honourable; they are men of truth and uprightness; they will have no sources of regret when they die, and they will not give occasion to

their friends to hang their heads with shame in the remembrance of them. No man on a dying bed ever yet regretted that he had framed his life by the rules of the gospel, or felt that his conduct had been conformed too much to it.

That whether I come and see you. Alluding to the possibility that he might be released, and be permitted to visit them again.

Or else be absent. Either at Rome, still confined, or released, and permitted to go abroad. I may hear of your affairs, etc. I may hear always respecting you that you are united, and that you are vigorously striving to promote the interests of the gospel. {a} "let your conversation" Eph 4:1 Php 3:20 {*} "conversation" "Conduct" {b} "stand fast" Php 4:1 {a} "striving together" Jude 1:3

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *And in nothing terrified by your adversaries*. Adversaries, or opponents, they had, like most of the other early Christians. There were Jews there who would be likely to oppose them, Ac 17:5 and they were exposed to persecution by the heathen. In that city, Paul had himself suffered much Ac 16; and it would not be strange if the same scenes should be repeated. It is evident from this passage, as well as from some other parts of the epistle, that the Philippians were at this time experiencing some form of severe suffering. But in what way, or why, the opposition to them was excited, is nowhere stated. The meaning here is, "Do not be alarmed at anything which they can do. Maintain your Christian integrity, notwithstanding all the opposition which they can make. They will, in the end, certainly be destroyed, and you will be saved."

Which is to them an evident token of perdition, *What*, it may be asked, would be the token of their perdition? What is the evidence to which Paul refers that they will be destroyed? The relative "which" *htiv*— is probably used as referring to the *persecution* which had been commenced, and to the *constancy* which the apostle supposed the Philippians would evince. The sentence is elliptical; but it is manifest that the apostle refers either to the circumstance then occurring, that they were persecuted, and that they evinced constancy, or to the constancy which he *wished* them to evince in their persecutions. He says that *this circumstance of persecution, if they evinced such a spirit as he wished*, would be to them an evidence of two things:

(1.) Of the destruction of those who were engaged in the persecution. This would be, because they knew that such persecutors could not ultimately prevail. Persecution of the church would be a certain indication that they who did it would be finally destroyed.

(2.) It would be a proof of their own salvation, because it would show that they were the friends of the Redeemer; and they had the assurance that all those who were persecuted for his sake would be saved. The gender of the Greek relative here is determined by the following noun *endeixiv* in a manner that is not uncommon in Greek. See Wetstein, *in loc*., and Koppe.

And that of God. That is, their persecution is a proof that God will interpose in due time, and save you. The hostility of the wicked to us is one evidence that we are the friends of God, and shall be saved.

{b} "your adversaries" Isa 51:7,12; Mt 10:28

{c} "which is to them" 2Th 1:5 {d} "but to you" Ro 8:17

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *For unto you*. Unto you as Christians. This favour is granted unto you in your present circumstances.

It is given. God concedes to you this privilege or advantage.

In the behalf of Christ. In the cause of Christ, or with a view to honour Christ. Or, these things are brought on you in consequence of your being Christians.

Not only to believe on him. It is represented here as a *privilege* to be permitted to believe on Christ. It is so.

(1.) It is an honour to a man to believe one who ought to be believed, to trust one who ought to be trusted, to love one who ought to be loved.

(2.) It is a privilege to believe on Christ, because it is by such faith that our sins are forgiven; that we become reconciled to God, and have the hope of heaven.

(3.) It is a privilege, because it saves the mind from the tortures and the deadly influence of unbelief —the agitation, and restlessness, and darkness, and gloom of a sceptic.

(4.) It is a privilege, because we have then a Friend to whom we may go in trial, and on whom me may roll all our burdens. If there is anything for which a Christian ought to give unfeigned thanks, it is that he has been permitted to believe on the Redeemer. Let a sincere Christian compare his peace, and joy, and hope of heaven, and support in trials, with the restlessness, uneasiness, and dread of death, in the mind of an unbeliever, and he will see abundant occasion for gratitude.

But also to suffer for his sake. Here it is represented as a privilege to suffer in the cause of the Redeemer—a declaration which may sound strange to the world. Yet this sentiment frequently occurs in the New Testament. Thus it is said of the apostles, Ac 5:41, that "they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name." Col 1:24: "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you." 1Pe 4:13: "But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings." Comp. Jas 1:2 Mr 10:30. **See Barnes "Ac 5:41"**.

It is a privilege thus to suffer in the cause of Christ, because

(1.) we then resemble the Lord Jesus, and are united with him in trials;

(2.) because we have evidence that we are his, if trials come upon us in his cause;

(3.) because we are engaged in a good cause, and the privilege of maintaining such a cause is worth much of suffering; and

(4.) because it will be connected with a brighter crown and more exalted honour in heaven.

{e} "given in the behalf" Ac 5:41 {*} "of" "in respect to"

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *Having the same conflict*. The same *agony agwna*— the same strife with bitter foes, and the same struggle in the warfare.

Which ye saw in me. When I was in Philippi, opposed by the multitude, and thrown into prison, Ac 16.

And now hear to be in me. In Rome. He was a prisoner there, was surrounded by enemies, and was about to be tried for his life. He says that they ought to rejoice if they were called to pass through the same trials.

In this chapter we have a beautiful illustration of the true spirit of a Christian, in circumstances exceedingly trying. The apostle was in a situation where religion would show itself, if there were any in the heart; and where, if there was none, the bad passions of our nature would be developed. He was a prisoner. He had been unjustly accused. He was about to be put on trial for his life, and it was wholly uncertain what the result would be. He was surrounded with enemies, and there were not a few false friends and rivals who took advantage of his imprisonment to diminish his influence, and to extend their own. He was, perhaps, about to die; and, at any rate, was in such circumstances as to be under a necessity of looking death in the face.

In this situation he exhibited some of the tenderest and purest feelings that ever exist in the heart of man—the genuine fruit of pure religion. He remembered them with affectionate and constant interest in his prayers. He gave thanks for all that God had done for them. Looking upon his own condition, he said that the trials which had happened to him, great as they were, had been overruled to the furtherance of the gospel. The gospel had become known even in the imperial palace. And though it had been preached by some with no good will towards him, and with much error, yet he cherished no hard feeling; he sought for no revenge; he rejoiced that in any way, and from any motives, the great truth had been made known that a Saviour died. Looking forward to the possibility that his trial before the emperor might terminate in his death, he calmly anticipated such a result, and looked at it with composure. He says that, in reference to the great purpose of his life, it would make no difference whether he lived or died, for he was assured that Christ would be honoured whatever was the result. To him personally it would be gain to die; and, as an individual, he longed for the hour when he might be with Christ. This feeling is religion, and this is produced only by the hope of eternal life through the Redeemer. An impenitent sinner never expressed such feelings as these; nor does any other form of religion but Christianity enable a man to look upon death in this manner. It is not often that a man is even *willing* to demand then this state of mind is produced not by the hope of heaven, but by disgust at the world; by disappointed ambition; by painful sickness, when the sufferer feels that *any* change would be for the better. But Paul had none of these feelings. His desire to depart was not produced by a hatred of life; nor by the greatness of his sufferings; nor by disgust at the world. It was the noble, elevated, and pure wish *to be with Christ*—to see him whom he supremely loved, whom he had so long and so faithfully served, and with whom he was to dwell for ever. To that world where Christ dwelt he would gladly rise; and the only reason why he could be content to remain here was, that he might be a little longer useful to his fellow-men. Such is the elevated nature of Christian feeling. But alas! how few attain to it; and even among Christians how few are they that can habitually *feel* and realize that it would be gain for them to die! How few can say with sincerity that they desire to depart, and to be with Christ? How rarely does even the Christian reach that state of mind, and gain that view of heaven, that, standing amidst his comforts here, and looking on his family, and friends, and property, he can say, from the depths of his soul, that he *feels* it would be gain for him to go to heaven? Yet such deadness to the world may be produced—as it was in the case of Paul; such deadness to the world *should* exist in the heart of every sincere Christian. Where it *does* exist, death loses its terror, and the heir of life can look calmly on the bed where he will lie down to die; can think calmly of the moment when he will give the parting hand to wife and child, and press them to his bosom for the last time, and imprint

on them the last kiss; can look peacefully on the spot where he will moulder back to dust, and in view of all can triumphantly say, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

{f} "ye saw in me" Ac 16:19 1Th 2:2

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 2

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 1

PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER II.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

THIS chapter is made up principally of exhortations to the performance of various Christian duties, and the exhibition of Christian virtues. The apostle first exhorts the Philippians, in the most tender manner, so to live as to give him joy, by evincing among themselves unity and concord. He entreats them to do nothing by strife and a desire of distinction, but to evince that humility which is manifested when we regard others as more worthy than we are, Php 2:1-4. This exhortation he enforces in a most impressive manner by a reference to the example of Christian example of condescension and humiliation fitted to repress in us all the aspirings of ambition and to make us ready to submit to the most humble offices to benefit others, Php 2:5-11. He then exhorts them to work out their salvation with diligence, assuring them, for their encouragement, that God worketh in them to will and to do of his good pleasure, Php 2:12,13. To this he adds an exhortation, that they would avoid everything like murmuring and disputing that they would be blameless and harmless in their walk, showing the excellency of the religion which they loved to all around them, and exerting such an influence on others that Paul might feel that he had not laboured in vain, Php 2:14-16. To excite them to this, he assures them that he was ready himself to be sacrificed for their welfare, and should rejoice if, by his laying down his life, their happiness would be promoted. He asked the same thing in return from them, Php 2:17,18. He then tells them, in expressing his interest in them, that he hoped soon to be able to send Timothy to them again a man who felt a deep interest in their welfare, and whose going to them would be one of the highest proofs of the apostle's love, Php 2:19-24. The same love for them, he says, he had now shown to them by sending to them Epaphroditus—a man to whom he was tenderly attached, and who had an earnest desire again to return to the church from which he had been sent. Paul sent him, therefore, again to Philippi, that he might be with them and comfort them, and he asked for him a kind reception and affectionate treatment, in view of the sufferings which he had experienced in the cause of the Redeemer, Php 2:25-30.

Verse 1. *If there be therefore any consolation in Christ*. This, with what is said in the remainder of the verse, is designed as a motive for what he exhorts them to in Php 2:2—that they would be of the same mind, and would thus fulfil his joy. To urge them to this, he appeals to the tender considerations which religion furnished— and begins by a reference to the consolation which there was in Christ. The meaning here may be this: "I am now persecuted and afflicted. In my trials it

will give me the highest joy to learn that you act as become Christians. You also are persecuted and afflicted, Php 1:28-30; and, in these circumstances, I entreat that the highest consolation may be sought; and by all that is tender and sacred in the Christian religion, I conjure you so to live as not to dishonour the gospel. So live as to bring down the highest consolation which *can* be obtained—the consolation which Christ alone can impart." We are not to suppose that Paul *doubted* whether there *was* any consolation in Christ, but the form of expression here is one that is designed to urge upon them the duty of seeking the *highest* possible. The *consolation in Christ* is that which *Christ furnishes* or *imparts*. Paul regarded him as the source of all comfort, and earnestly prays that they might so live that he and they might avail themselves in the fullest sense of that unspeakable enjoyment. The idea is, that Christians ought at all times, and especially in affliction, so to act as to secure the highest possible happiness which their Saviour can impart to them. Such an object is worth their highest effort; and if God sees it needful, in order to that, that they should endure much affliction, still it is gain. *Religious consolation is always worth all which it costs to secure it*.

If any comfort of love. If there be any comfort in the exercise of tender affection. That there *is*, no one can doubt. Our happiness is almost all centred in love. It is when we love a parent, a wife, a child, a sister, a neighbour, that we have the highest earthly enjoyment. It is in the love of God, of Christ, of Christians, of the souls of men, that the redeemed find their highest happiness. Hatred is a passion full of misery; love an emotion full of joy. By this consideration, Paul appeals to them, and the motive here is drawn from all the joy which mutual love and sympathy are fitted to produce in the soul. Paul would have that love exercised in the highest degree, and would have them enjoy all the happiness which its mutual exercise could furnish.

If any fellowship of the Spirit. The word "fellowship" *koinwnia*—means that which is *common* to two or more; that of which they partake together. **See Barnes "Eph 3:9"; See Barnes "Php 1:5"**.

The idea here is, that among Christians there was a *participation* in the influences of the Holy Ghost; that they shared, in some degree, the feelings, views, and joys of the sacred Spirit himself; and that this was a privilege of the highest order. By this fact, Paul now exhorts them to unity, love, and zeal—so to live that they might partake, in the highest degree, of the consolations of the Spirit.

If any bowels and mercies. If there is any affectionate bond by which you are united to me, and any regard for my sorrows, and any desire to fill up my joys, so live as to impart to me, your spiritual father and friend, the consolation which I seek.

{a} "any bowels" Col 3:12 {*} "bowels" "tender regards"

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Fulfil ye my joy*. Fill up my joy so that nothing shall be wanting to complete it. This, he says, would be done by their union, zeal, and humility. Comp. Joh 3:29.

That ye be likeminded. Gr., That ye think the same thing. **See Barnes "2Co 13:11"**.

Perfect unity of sentiment, opinion, and plan would be desirable, if it could be attained. It may be, so far as to prevent discord, schism, contention, and strife in the church, and so that Christians may be harmonious in promoting the same great work—the salvation of souls.

Having the same love. Love to the same objects, and the same love one for another. Though their opinions might differ on some points, yet they might be united in love. **See Barnes "1Co 1:10"**.

Being of one accord, sumqucoi— of one soul; having your souls joined together. The word used here does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It means a union of soul; or an acting together as if but one soul actuated them.

Of one mind. Gr., *Thinking the same thing*. The apostle here uses a great variety of expressions to denote the same thing. The object which he aimed at was union of heart, of feeling, of plan, of purpose. He wished them to avoid all divisions and strifes; and to show the power of religion by being united in the common cause. Probably there is no single thing so much insisted on in the New Testament as the importance of harmony among Christians. Now, there is almost nothing so little known; but *if* it prevailed, the world would soon be converted to God. **See Barnes "Joh 17:21"** or Joh 17:21.

{+} "fulfil" "Fill up" {b} "ye my joy" Joh 3:29 {c} "be like minded" 2Co 13:11 1Pe 3:8

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Let nothing be done through strife*. With a spirit of contention. This command forbids us to do anything, or attempt anything, as *the mere result of strife*. This is not the principle from which we are to act, or by which we are to be governed. We are to form no plan, and aim at no object, which is to be secured in this way. The command prohibits all attempts to secure anything over others by mere physical strength, or by superiority of intellect or numbers, or as the result of dark schemes and plans formed by rivalry, or by the indulgence of angry passions, or with the spirit of ambition. We are not to attempt to do anything *merely* by outstripping others, or by showing that we have more talent, courage, or zeal. What we do is to be by principle, and with a desire to maintain the truth, and to glorify God. And yet how often is this rule violated! How often do Christian denominations attempt to outstrip each other, and to see which shall be the greatest! How often do ministers preach with no better aim! How often do we attempt to outdo others in dress, and in the splendour of furniture and equipage! How often, even in plans of benevolence, and in the cause of virtue and religion, is the secret aim to *outdo others*. This is all wrong. There is no holiness in such efforts. Never once did the Redeemer act from such a motive, and never once should this motive be allowed to influence us. The conduct of others may be allowed to show us what we *can* do, and *ought* to do; but it should not be our sole aim to outstrip them. Comp. 2Co 9:2-4.

Or vainglory. The word here used —*kenodozia kenodoxia*, occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, though the adjective—*kenodoxov kenedoxos*, occurs once in Gal 5:26. **See Barnes "Gal 5:26"**.

It means, properly, empty pride, or glory, and is descriptive of vain and hollow parade and show. Suidas renders it, "any vain opinion about one's self"—*mataia tiv peri eautou oihsiv*. The idea seems to be that of mere self-esteem; a mere desire to honour ourselves, to attract attention, to win praise, to make ourselves uppermost, or foremost, or the main object. The command here solemnly forbids our doing *anything* with such an aim—no matter whether it be in intellectual attainments, in physical strength, in skill in music, in eloquence or song, in dress, furniture, or religion. *Self* is not to be foremost; selfishness is not to be the motive. Probably there is no command of the Bible which would have a wider sweep than this, or would touch on more points of human

conduct, if fairly applied. Who is there who passes a single day without, in some respect, desiring to display himself? What minister of the gospel preaches, who never has any wish to exhibit his talents, eloquence, or learning? How few make a gesture, but with some wish to display the grace or power witch which it is done! Who, in conversation, is always free from a desire to show his wit, or his power in argumentation, or his skill in repartee? Who plays at the piano without the desire of commendation? Who thunders in the senate, or goes to the field of battle; who builds a house, or purchases an article of apparel; who writes a book, or performs a deed of benevolence, altogether uninfluenced by this desire? If all could be taken out of human conduct which is performed merely from "strife," or from "vain-glory," how small a portion would be left!

But in lowliness of mind. Modesty, or humility. The word here used is the same which is rendered *humility* in Ac 20:19 Col 2:18,23; 1Pe 5:5; *humbleness* in Col 3:12; and *lowliness* in Eph 4:2; Php 2:3. It does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It here means *humility*, and it stands opposed to that pride or self-valuation which would lead us to strive for the ascendancy, or which acts from a wish for flattery or praise. The best and the only true correction of these faults is humility. This virtue consists in estimating ourselves *according to truth*. It is a willingness to take the place which we ought to take in the sight of God and man; and, having the low estimate of our own importance and character which the truth about our insignificance as creatures and vileness as sinners would produce, it will lead us to a willingness to perform lowly and humble offices that we may benefit others.

Let each esteem other better than themselves. Comp. 1Pe 5:5. This is one of the effects produced by true humility, and it naturally exists in every truly modest mind. The reasons are these:

(1.) We are sensible of our own defects, but we have not the same clear view of the defects of others. We see our own hearts; we are conscious of the great corruption there; we have painful evidence of the impurity of the motives which often actuate us— the evil thoughts and corrupt desires in our own souls; but we have not the same view of the errors, defects, and follies of others. We can see only their *outward* conduct; but, in our own case, we can look *within*. It is natural for those who have any just sense of the depravity of their own souls, charitably to hope that it is not so with others, and to believe that they have purer hearts. This will lead us to feel that they are worthy of more respect than we are. Hence this is always the characteristic of modesty and humility—graces which the gospel is fitted eminently to produce. A truly pious man will be always, therefore, an humble man, and will wish that others should be preferred in office and honour to himself. Of course, this will not make him blind to the defects of others when they are manifested; but he will be himself retiring, modest, unambitious, unobtrusive. This *rule* of Christianity would strike a blow at all the ambition of the world. It would rebuke the love of office, and would produce universal contentment in any low condition of life where the providence of God may have cast our lot. **See Barnes "1Co 7:21".**

{d} "nothing be done" Gal 5:26 Jas 3:14 {a} "each esteem" 1Pe 5:5

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Look not every man on his own things*. That is, be not selfish. Do not let your care and attention be wholly absorbed by your own concerns, or by the concerns of your own family. Evince

a tender interest for the happiness of the whole, and let the welfare of others lie near your hearts. This, of course, does not mean that there is to be any improper interference in the business of others, or that we are to have the character of "busy-bodies in other men's matters," **See Barnes "2Th 3:11"**; **See Barnes** "1Ti 5:13"; **See Barnes "1Pe 4:15"**; but that we are to regard, with appropriate solicitude, the welfare of others, and to strive to do them good.

But every man also on the things of others. It is the duty of every man to do this. No one is at liberty to live for himself, or to disregard the wants of others. The object of this rule is to break up the narrow spirit of selfishness, and to produce a benevolent regard for the happiness of others. In respect to the rule we may observe: (1.) We are *not* to be "busy-bodies" in the concerns of others. See the references above. We are not to attempt to pry into their secret purposes. Every man has his own plans, and thoughts, and intentions, which no other one has a right to look into. Nothing is more odious than an intermeddler in the concerns of others.

(2.) We are not to obtrude our advice where it is not sought, or at unseasonable times and places, even if the advice is in itself good. No man likes to be interrupted to hear advice; and I have no right to require that he should suspend his business in order that I may give him counsel.

(3.) We are not to find fault with what pertains exclusively to him. We are to remember that there are some things which are *his* business, not *ours*; and we are to learn to "possess our souls in patience," if he does not give just as much as we think he ought to benevolent objects, or if he dresses in a manner not to please our taste, or if he indulges in things which do not accord exactly with our views. He may see reasons for his conduct which we do not; and it is possible that he may be right, and that, if we understood the whole case, we should think and act as he does. We often complain of a man because he does not give as much as we think he ought to objects of charity; and it is *possible* that he may be miserably niggardly and narrow. But it is also *possible* that he may be more embarrassed than we know of; or that he may just then have demands against him of which we are ignorant; or that he may have numerous poor relatives dependant on him; or that he gives much with "the left hand" which is not known by "the right hand." At any rate, it is *his* business, not ours; and we are not qualified to judge until we understand *the whole case*.

(4.) We are not to be *gossips* about the concerns of others. We are not to hunt up small stories and petty scandals respecting their families; we are not to pry into domestic affairs, and divulge them abroad, and find pleasure in circulating such things from house to house. There are domestic secrets which are not to be betrayed; and there is scarcely an offence of a meaner or more injurious character than to divulge to the public what we have seen in a family whose hospitality we have enjoyed.

(5.) Where Christian duty and kindness require us to look into the concerns of others, there should be the utmost delicacy. Even children have their own secrets, and their own plans and amusements, on a small scale, quite as important to them as the greater games which we are playing in life; and they will feel the meddlesomeness of a busy-body to be as odious to them as we should in our plans. A delicate parent, therefore, who has undoubtedly a *right* to know all about his children, will not rudely intrude into their privacies, or meddle with their concerns. So, when we visit the sick, while we show a tender sympathy for them, we should not be too particular in inquiring into their maladies or their feelings. So, when those with whom we sympathize have brought their calamities on themselves by their own fault, we should not ask too many questions about it. We should not too closely examine one who is made poor by intemperance, or who is in prison for crime. And so, when we go to sympathize with those who have been, by a reverse of circumstances,

reduced from affluence to penury, we should not ask too many questions. We should let them tell their own story. If they voluntarily make us their confidants, and tell us all about their circumstances, it is well; but let us not drag out the circumstances, or wound their feelings by our impertinent inquiries, or our indiscreet sympathy in their affairs. *There are always secrets which the sons and daughters of misfortune would wish to keep to themselves*. But, while these things are true, it is also true that the rule before us positively requires us to show an interest in the concerns of others; and it may be regarded as implying the following things:

(1.) We are to feel that the spiritual interests of every one in the church is, in a certain sense, our own interest. The church is one. It is confederated together for a common object. Each one is intrusted with a portion of the honour of the whole, and the conduct of one member affects the character of all. We are therefore to promote, in every way possible, the welfare of every other member of the church. If they go astray, we are to admonish and entreat them; if they are in error, we are to instruct them; if they are in trouble, we are to aid them. Every member of the church has a claim on the sympathy of his brethren, and should be certain of always finding it when his circumstances are such as to demand it.

(2.) There are circumstances where it is proper to look with special interest on the temporal concerns of others. It is when the poor, the fatherless, and the afflicted must be sought out in order to be aided and relieved. They are too retiring and modest to press their situation on the attention of others, and they need that others should manifest a generous care in their welfare in order to relieve them. This is not improper interference in their concerns, nor will it be so regarded.

(3.) For a similar reason, we should seek the welfare of all others in a spiritual sense. We should seek to arouse the sinner, and lead him to the Saviour. He is blind, and will not come himself; unconcerned, and will not seek salvation; filled with the love of this world, and will not seek a better; devoted to pursuits that will lead him to ruin, and he ought to be apprized of it. It is no more an improper interference in his concerns to apprize him of his condition, and to attempt to lead him to the Saviour, than it is to warn a man in a dark night, who walks on the verge of a precipice, of his peril; or to arouse one from sleep whose house is in flames. In like manner, it is no more intermeddling with the concerns of another to tell him that there is a glorious heaven which may be his, than it is to apprize a man that there is a mine of golden ore on his farm. It is for the man's own interest, and it is the office of a friend to remind him of these things. Hie does a man a favour who tells him that he has a Redeemer, and that there is a heaven to which he may rise; he does his neighbour the greatest possible kindness who apprizes him that there is a world of infinite woe, and tells him of an easy way by which he may escape it. The world around is dependant on the church of Christ to be apprized of these truths. The gay will not warn the gay of their danger; the crowd that presses to the theatre or the ball-room will not apprize those who are there that they are in the broad way to hell; and every one who loves his neighbour should feel sufficient interest in him to tell him that he may be eternally happy in heaven.

{b} "his own things" 1Co 13:5

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Let this mind be in you*, which was also in Christ Jesus. The object of this reference to the example of the Saviour is particularly to enforce the duty of humility. This was the highest example which could be furnished, and it would illustrate and confirm all the apostle had said of this virtue. The *principle* in the case is that we are to make the Lord Jesus our model, and are in all respects to frame our lives, as far as possible, in accordance with this great example. The point here is, that he left a state of inexpressible glory, and took upon him the most humble form of humanity, and performed the most lowly offices, that he might benefit us.

{a} "mind" Joh 13:14 1Pe 2:21

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Who being in the form of God*. There is scarcely any passage in the New Testament which has given rise to more discussion than this. The importance of the passage on the question of the Divinity of the Saviour will be perceived at once; and no small part of the point of the appeal by the apostle depends, as will be seen, in the fact that Paul regarded the Redeemer as equal with God. If he was truly Divine, then his consenting to become a man was the most remarkable of all possible acts of humiliation. The word rendered *form morfh morphe*, occurs only in three places in the New Testament, and in each place is rendered *form*, Mr 16:12 Php 2:6,7.

In Mark it is applied to the *form* which Jesus assumed after his resurrection, and in which he appeared to two of his disciples on his way to Emmaus. "After that he appeared in another *form* unto two of them." This "form" was so unlike his usual appearance, that they did not know him. The word properly means, *form, shape, bodily shape*, especially a beautiful form, beautiful bodily appearance. *Passow*. In Php 2:7, it is applied to the appearance of a servant— "and took upon him the *form* of a servant;" that is, he was in the condition of a servant— or of the lowest condition. The word *form* is often applied to the gods by the classic writers, denoting their aspect or appearance when they became visible to men. See Cic. de Nat. Deor. ii. 2; Ovid, Meta. i. 73; Silius xiii. 643; Xeno. Memora. ix; 2Eniad, iv. 556, and other places cited by Wetstein, *in loc*. Hesychius explains it by *idea, eidov*. The word occurs often in the Septuagint,

(1.) as the translation of the word

HEBREW

Ziv splendour, Da 4:33 5:6,9,10 7:28;

(2.) as the translation of the word

HEBREW.

Tabnith—structure, model, pattern—as in building, Isa 44:13;

(3.) as the translation of

HEBREW

temuna—appearance, form, shape, image, likeness, Job 4:16. See also the Book of Wisdom xviii. 1. The word can have here only one of two meanings, either

(1.) splendour, majesty, glory—referring to the honour which the Redeemer had, his power to work miracles, etc.; or

(2.) nature, or essence—meaning the same as *fusiv, nature*, or *ousia, being*. The first is the opinion adopted by Crellus, Grotius, and others, and substantially by Calvin. Calvin says, "The

form of God here denotes majesty. For as a man is known from the appearance of his form, so the majesty which shines in God is his figure. Or, to use a more appropriate similitude, the form of a king consists of the external marks which indicate a king —as his sceptre, diadem, coat of mail, attendants, throne, and other insignia of royalty; the form of a consul is the toga, ivory chair, attending lictors, etc. Therefore Christ, before the foundation of the world, was in the form of God, because he had glory with the Father before the world was, Joh 17:5. For in the wisdom of God, before he put on our nature, there was nothing humble or abject, but there was magnificence worthy of God." —*Comm. in loc*. The second opinion is, that the word is equivalent to *nature, or being*; that is, that he was in the nature of God, or his mode of existence was that of God, or was Divine. This is the opinion adopted by Schleusner (Lex.;) Prof. Stuart (Letters to Dr. Channing, p. 40;) Doddridge, and by orthodox expositors in general, and seems to me to be the correct interpretation. In support of this interpretation, and in opposition to that which refers it to his power of working miracles, or his divine appearance when on earth, we may adduce the following considerations.

(1.) The "form" here referred to must have been something before he became a man, or before he took upon him the form of a servant. It was something *from* which he humble& himself by making "himself of no reputation;" by taking upon himself" the form of a servant;" and *by being made "in the likeness of men.*" Of course, it must have been something which existed when he had *not* the likeness of men; that is, before he became incarnate, he must therefore have had an existence before he appeared on earth as a man, and in that previous state of existence there must have been something which rendered it proper to say that he was "*in the form of God*."

(2.) That it does not refer to any moral qualities, or to his power of working miracles on earth, is apparent from the fact that these were not laid aside. When did he divest himself of these in order that he might humble himself ? There was something which he possessed which made it proper to say of him that he was "in the form of God," which he laid aside when he appeared in the form of a servant, and in the likeness of men. But assuredly that could not have been his moral qualities, nor is there any conceivable sense in which it can be said that he divested himself of the power of working miracles in order that he might take upon himself the "form of a servant." All the miracles which he ever wrought were performed when he sustained the form of a servant, in his lowly and humble condition. These considerations make it certain that the apostle refers to a period before the incarnation. It may be added,

(3.) that the phrase "form of God" is one that naturally conveys the idea that he was God. When it is said that he was "in the form of a servant," the idea is, that he was *actually* in a humble and depressed condition, and not merely that he *appeared* to be. Still it may be asked, what *was* the "form" which he had before his incarnation? What is meant by his having been *then* "in the form of God?" To these questions perhaps no satisfactory answer can be given. He himself speaks (Joh 17:5) of "the glory which he had with the Father before the world was;" and the language naturally conveys the idea that there was then a manifestation of the Divine nature through him, which in some measure ceased when he became incarnate; that there was some visible splendour and majesty which was then laid aside. What manifestation of his glory God may make in the heavenly world of course we cannot now understand. Nothing forbids us, however, to suppose that there is some such visible manifestation; some splendour and magnificence of God in the view of the angelic beings such as *becomes* the Great Sovereign of the universe—for he "dwells in light which no man can approach unto," 1Ti 6:16. *That* glory, visible manifestation, or splendour, indicating the nature of God, it is here said that the Lord Jesus possessed before his incarnation.

Thought it not robbery to be equal with God. This passage, also, has given occasion to much discussion. Prof. Stuart renders it, "did not regard his equality with God as an object of solicitous desire;" that is, that though he was of a Divine nature or condition, he did not eagerly seek to retain his equality with God, but took on him a humble condition —even that of a servant. Letters to Channing, pp. 88—92. That this is the correct rendering of the passage is apparent from the following considerations :—

(1.) It accords with the scope and design of the apostle's reasoning. His object is not to show, as our common translation would seem to imply, that he *aspired* to be equal with God, or that he did not regard it as an improper invasion of the prerogatives of God to be equal with him, but that he did not regard it, in the circumstances of the case, as an object to be greatly desired, or eagerly sought *to retain* his equality with God. Instead of retaining this by an earnest effort, or by a grasp which he was unwilling to relinquish, he chose to forego the dignity, and to assume the humble condition of a man.

(2.) It accords better with the Greek than the common version. The word rendered robbery *arpagmov*— is found nowhere else in the New Testament, though the verb from which it is derived frequently occurs, Mt 11:12 13:19; Joh 6:15 10:12,28,29 Ac 8:39 23:10; 2Co 12:2,4; 1Th 4:17 Jude 1:23; Re 12:5.

The notion of *violence*, or *seizing*, or *carrying away*, enters into the meaning of the word in all these places. The word here used does not properly mean *an act of robbery*, but *the thing robbed—the plunder— das Rauben*, (Passow,) and hence something to be eagerly seized and appropriated. *Schleusner*. Comp. Storr, Opuscul. Acade. i. 322, 323. According to this, the meaning of the word here is, something to be seized and eagerly sought; and the sense is, *that his being equal with God was not a thing to be anxiously retained*. The phrase "thought it not," means "did not consider;" it was not judged to be a matter of such importance that it could not be dispensed with. The sense is, "he did not eagerly seize and tenaciously hold," as one does who seizes prey or spoil. So Rosenmuller, Schleusner, Bloomfield, Stuart, and others understand it.

To be equal with God. *to einai isa yew*. That is, the being equal with God he did not consider a thing to be tenaciously retained. The plural neuter form of the word *equal* in Greek *isa* used in accordance with a known rule of the language, thus stated by Buttman. "When an adjective as *predicate* is separated from its substantive, it often stands in the neuter where the substantive is a masculine or feminine, and in the singular where the substantive is in the plural. That which the predicate expresses is, in this case, considered in general as a *thing*." Gr. Gram., § 129, 6. The phrase "equal with God," or "equal with the gods," is of frequent occurrence in the Greek classics. See Wetstein, *in loc*. The very phrase here used occurs in the Odyssey, O.—-

ton nun isa yew iyakhsioi eisorowsi.

Comp. Joh 5:18. "Made himself equal with God." The phrase means one who sustains the same rank, dignity, nature. Now it could not be said of an angel that he was in any sense equal with God; much less could this be said of a mere man. The natural and obvious meaning of the language is, that there was an equality of nature and of rank with God, from which he humbled himself where he became a man. The meaning of the whole verse according to the interpretation suggested above, is, that Christ, before he became a man, was invested with honour, majesty, and glory, such as was appropriate to God himself; that there was some manifestation, or splendour in his existence and mode of being then, which showed that he was equal with God; that he did not consider that that

honour, indicating equality with God, was to be retained at all events, and so as to do violence, as it were, to other interests, and to rob the universe of the glory of redemption; and that he was willing, therefore, to forget that, or lay it by for a time, in order that he might redeem the world. There were a glory and majesty which were appropriate to God, and which indicated equality with God—such as none but God could assume. For how could an angel have such glory, or such external splendour in heaven, as to make it proper to say that he was "equal with God?" With what glory could he be invested which would be such as became God only? The fair interpretation of this passage therefore is, that Christ, before his incarnation, was equal with God.

{b} "in the form of God" Joh 1:1,2; Col 1:15

{c} "equal with God" Joh 5:18

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *But made himself of no reputation*. This translation by no means conveys the sense of the original. According to this it would seem that he consented to be without distinction or honour among men; or that he was willing to be despised or disregarded. The Greek is, *eauton ekenwse*. The word *kenow* means, literally, *to empty, to make empty, to make vain or void*. It is rendered *made void* in Ro 4:14; *made of none effect*, 1Co 1:17; *make void*, 1Co 9:15; *should be vain*, 2Co 9:3. The word does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament, except in the passage before us. The essential idea is that of bringing to emptiness, vanity, or nothingness; and hence it is applied to a case where one lays aside his rank and dignity, and becomes, in respect to that, as nothing; that is, he assumes a more humble rank and station. In regard to its meaning here we may remark,

(1.) that it cannot mean that he *literally* divested himself of his Divine nature and perfections, for that was impossible. He could not cease to be omnipotent, and omnipresent, and most holy, and true, and good.

(2.) It is conceivable that he might have laid aside, for a time, the symbols or the manifestation of his glory, or that the outward expressions of his majesty in heaven might have been withdrawn. It is conceivable for a Divine Being to intermit the exercise of his almighty power, since it cannot be supposed that God is *always* exerting his power to the utmost. And, in like manner, there might be for a time a laying aside or intermitting of these manifestions or symbols, which were expressive of the Divine glory and perfections. Yet

(3.) this supposes no change in the Divine nature, or in the essential nature of the Divine perfections. When the sun is obscured by a cloud, or in an eclipse, there is no real change of its glory, nor are his beams extinguished, nor is the sun himself in any measure changed. His lustre is only for a time obscured. So it might have been in regard to the manifestation of the glory of the Son of God. Of course, there is much in regard to this which is obscure; but the language of the apostle undoubtedly implies more than that he took an humble place, or that he demeaned himself in an humble manner. In regard to the actual change respecting his manifestations in heaven, or the withdrawing of the symbols of his glory there, the Scriptures are nearly silent, and conjecture is useless—perhaps improper. The language before us fairly implies that he laid aside that which was expressive of his being Divine—that glory which is involved in the phrase "being in the form of God"—and took upon himself another form and manifestation in the condition of a servant.

And took upon him the form of a servant. The phrase "form of a servant," should be allowed to explain the phrase "form of God" in Php 2:6. The form of a servant is that which indicates the condition of a servant, in contradistinction from one of higher rank. It means, to appear as a servant, to perform the offices of a servant, and to be regarded as such. He was made like a servant in the lowly condition which he assumed. The whole connexion and force of the argument here demands this interpretation. Storr and Rosenmuller interpret this as meaning that he became *the servant or minister of God*, and that in doing it, it was necessary that he should become a man. But the objection to this is obvious. It greatly weakens the force of the apostle's argument. His object is to state the depth of humiliation to which he descended; and this was best done by saying that he descended to the lowest condition of humanity, and appeared in the most humble garb. The idea of being a "servant or minister of God" would not express that, for this is a term which might be applied to the highest angel in heaven. Though the Lord Jesus was not *literally* a servant or slave, yet what is here affirmed was true of him in the following respects:

(1.) he occupied a most lowly condition in life; and

(2.) he condescended to perform such acts as are appropriate only to those who are servants. "I am among you as he that serveth," Lu 22:27. Comp Joh 13:4-15.

And was made in the likeness of men. Marg., *habit*. The Greek word means *likeness, resemblance*. The meaning is, he was made like unto men by assuming such a body as theirs. **See Barnes "Ro 8:3"**.

{a} "made himself" Ps 22:6 {*} "reputation" "account" {b} "and was made" Lu 22:27 {+} "made" "Being born" {1} "likeness" "habit"

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *And being found*. That is, being such, or existing as a man, he humbled himself.

In fashion as a man. The word rendered *fashion schma* means figure, mien, deportment. Here it is the same as state, or condition. The sense is, that when he was reduced to this condition he humbled himself, and obeyed even unto death. He took upon himself all the attributes of a mall. He assumed all the innocent infirmities of our nature. He appeared as other men do, was subjected to the necessity of food and raiment, like others, and was made liable to suffering, as other men are. It was still He who had been in the "form of God" who thus appeared; and, though his Divine glory had been for a time laid aside, yet it was not extinguished or lost. It is important to remember, in all our meditations on the Saviour, that it was the same Being who had been invested with so much glory in heaven that appeared on earth in the form of a man.

He humbled himself. Even then, when he appeared as a man. He had not only laid aside the symbols of his glory, Php 2:7, and beck, he a man; but, when *he was a man*, he humbled himself. Humiliation was a constant characteristic of him as a man. He did not aspire to high honours; he did not affect pomp and parade; he did not demand the service of a train of menials; but he condescended to the lowest conditions of life, Lu 22:27. The words here are very carefully chosen. In the former case, Php 2:7, when he became a man, he "emptied himself," or laid aside the symbols of his glory; now, *when* a man, he *humbled* himself. That is, though he was God appearing in the form of man—a Divine Person on earth—yet he did not assume and assert the dignity and prerogatives appropriate to a Divine Being, but put himself in a condition of obedience. For *such*

a Being to obey law implied voluntary humiliation; and the greatness of his humiliation was shown by his becoming entirely obedient, even till he died on the cross.

And became obedient. He subjected himself to the law of God, and wholly obeyed it, Heb 10:7,9. It was a characteristic of the Redeemer that he yielded perfect obedience to the will of God. Should it be said that, if he was God himself, he must have been himself the lawgiver, we may reply, that this rendered his obedience the more wonderful and the more meritorious. If a monarch should, for an important purpose, place himself in a position to obey his own laws, nothing could show in a more striking manner their importance in his view. The highest honour that has been shown to the law of God on earth was, that it was perfectly observed by him who made the law —the great Mediator.

Unto death. He obeyed even when obedience terminated in death. The point of this expression is this:—One may readily and cheerfully obey another where there is no particular peril. But the case is different where obedience is attended with danger. The child shows a spirit of true obedience when he yields to the commands of a father, though it should expose him to hazard; the servant who obeys his master, when obedience is attended with risk of life; the soldier when he is morally certain that to obey will be followed by death. Thus many a company or platoon has been ordered into the "deadly breach," or directed to storm a redoubt, or to scale a wall, or to face a cannon, when it was morally certain that death would be the consequence. No profounder spirit of obedience can be evinced than this. It should be said, however, that the obedience of the soldier is in many cases scarcely voluntary, since, if he did *not* obey, death would be the penalty. But in the case of the Redeemer it was wholly voluntary, he placed himself in the condition of a servant to do the will of God, and then never shrank from what that condition involved.

Even the death of the cross. It was not such a death as a servant might incur by crossing a stream, or by falling among robbers, or by being worn out by toil; it was not such as the soldier meets when he is suddenly cut down covered with glory as he fails; it was the long, lingering, painful, humiliating death of the cross. Many a one might be willing to obey if the death that was suffered was regarded as glorious; but when it is ignominious, and of the most degrading character, and the most torturing that human ingenuity can invent, then the whole character of the obedience is changed. Yet this was the obedience the Lord Jesus evinced; and it was in this way that his remarkable readiness to suffer was shown.

{++} "as a man" "And being in condition truly man" {c} "obedient" Heb 12:12

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Wherefore*. As a reward of this humiliation and these sufferings. The idea is, that there was an appropriate reward for it, and that that was bestowed upon him by his exaltation as Mediator to the right hand of God. **See Barnes "Heb 2:9"**.

God also hath highly exalted him. As Mediator. Though he was thus humbled, and appeared in the form of a servant, he is now raised up to the throne of glory, and to universal dominion. This exaltation is spoken of the Redeemer *as he was*, sustaining a Divine and a human nature. If there was, as has been supposed, some obscuration or withdrawing of the symbols of his glory Php 2:7 when he became a man, then this refers to the restoration of that glory, and would seem to imply,

also, that there was additional honour conferred on him. There was all the augmented glory resulting from the work which he had performed in redeeming man.

And given him a name which is above every name. No other name can be compared with his. It stands alone. He only is Redeemer, Saviour. He only is Christ, the Anointed of God. **See Barnes "Heb 1:4"**.

He only is the Son of God. His rank, his titles, his dignity, are above all others. See this illustrated **See Barnes** "Eph 1:20, **See Barnes "Eph 1:21"**.

{a} "God" Heb 2:9 Re 3:21

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow*. The knee should bow, or bend, in token of honour, or worship; that is, all men should adore him. This cannot mean merely that at the mention of the name of *Jesus* we should bow; nor is there any evidence that God requires this. Why should we bow at the mention of *that* name, rather than at any of the other titles of the Redeemer? Is there any *special* sacredness or honour in it above the other names which he bears? And why should we bow at *his* name rather than at the name of the Father? Besides, if any *special* homage is to be paid to the name of the Saviour under the authority of this passage—and this is the only one on which the authority of this custom is based—it should be by bowing the *knee*, not the "*head*." But the truth is, this authorizes and requires neither; and the custom of bowing at the name of Jesus, in some churches, has arisen entirely from a misinterpretation of this passage. There is no other place in the Bible to which an appeal is made to authorize the custom. Comp. Neal's History of the Puritans, chap. 5. Ninth. 5. The meaning here is, not that a *special* act of respect or adoration should be shown wherever the *name* "Jesus" occurs in reading the Scriptures, or whenever it is mentioned, but that he was so exalted that it would be proper that all in heaven and on earth should worship him, and that the time would come when he would be thus everywhere acknowledged as Lord. The bowing of the knee properly expresses homage, respect, adoration, **See Barnes "Ro 11:4"**; and it cannot be done to the Saviour by those who are in heaven, unless he be Divine.

Of things in heaven. *epouraniwn* —rather, of *beings* in heaven, the word "things" being improperly supplied by our translators. The word *may* be in the neuter plural; but it may be also in the masculine plural, and denote *beings* rather than *things*. *Things* do not bow the knee; and the reference here is undoubtedly to angels, and to the "spirits of the just made perfect" in heaven. If Jesus is worshipped there, he is divine; for there is no idolatry of a creature in heaven. In this whole passage there is probably an allusion to Isa 45:23. See it illustrated **See Barnes "Ro 14:11"**.

In the great divisions here specified—of those in heaven, on the earth, and under the earth—the apostle intends, doubtless, to denote the universe. The same mode of designating the universe occurs in Re 5:13 Ex 20:4; Ps 96:11,12.

This mode of expression is equivalent to saying, "all that is above, around, and beneath us," and arises from what *appears* to us. The division is natural and obvious- that which is above us in the heavens, that which is on the earth where we dwell, and all that is beneath us.

And things in earth. Rather, "beings on earth," to wit, *men*; for they only are capable of rendering homage.

And things under the earth. Beings under the earth. The whole universe shall confess that he is Lord. This embraces, doubtless, those who have departed from this life, and perhaps includes also fallen angels. The meaning is, that they shall all acknowledge him as universal Lord; all bow to his sovereign will; all be subject to his control; all recognise him as divine. The fallen and the lost will do this; for they will be constrained to yield an unwilling homage to him by submitting to the sentence from his lips that shall consign them to woe; and thus the whole universe shall acknowledge the exalted dignity of the Son of God. But this does not mean that they will all be *saved*, for the guilty and the lost may be compelled to acknowledge his power, and submit to his decree as the sovereign of the universe. There is the free and cheerful homage of the heart which they who worship him in heaven will render; and there is the constrained homage which they must yield who are compelled to acknowledge his authority.

{*} "at the name" "In"

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *And that every tongue should confess*. Every one should acknowledge him. On the duty and importance of *confessing Christ*, **See Barnes** "Ro 10:9, **See Barnes "Ro 10:10"**.

That Jesus Christ is Lord. The word *Lord*, here, is used in its primitive and proper sense, as denoting owner, ruler, sovereign. Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 14:9"**.

The meaning is, that all should acknowledge him as the universal sovereign.

To the glory of God the Father. Such a universal confession would honour God. **See Barnes** "Joh 5:23, where this sentiment is explained.

{c} "to the glory" Joh 13:13 Ro 14:9

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed*. The Philippians had from the beginning manifested a remarkable readiness to show respect to the apostle, and to listen to his teaching. This readiness he more than once refers to and commends. He still appeals to them, and urges them to follow his counsels, that they might secure their salvation.

Now much more in my absence. Though they had been obedient when he was with them, yet circumstances had occurred in his absence which made their obedience more remarkable, and more worthy of special commendation.

Work out your own salvation. This important command was first addressed to Christians, but there is no reason why the same command should not be regarded as addressed to all—for it is equally applicable to all. The *duty* of doing this is enjoined here; the reason, for making the effort, or the *encouragement* for the effort, is stated in the next verse. In regard to the command here, it is natural to inquire why it is a duty, and what is necessary to be done in order to comply with it? On the first of these inquiries, it may be observed that it is a duty to make a personal effort to secure salvation, or to work out our salvation:

(1.) Because God *commands* it. There is no command more frequently repeated in the Scriptures, than the command to make to ourselves a new heart; to strive to enter in at the strait gate; to break off from sin, and to repent.

(2.) It is a duty because it is our own personal interest that is at stake. No other one has, or can have, as much interest in our salvation as we have. It is every man's *duty* to be as happy as possible here, and to be prepared for eternal happiness in the future world. No man has a right either to throw away his life or his soul. He has no more right to do the one than the other; and if it is a man's duty to endeavour to save his life when in danger of drowning, it is no less his duty to endeavour to save his soul when in danger of hell.

(3.) Our earthly friends cannot save us. No effort of theirs can deliver us from eternal death without our own exertion. Great as may be their solicitude for us, and much as they may do, there is a point where their efforts must stop—and that point is *always* short of our salvation, unless we are roused to seek salvation. They may pray, and weep, and plead, but they cannot save us. There is a work to be done on our own hearts which *they* cannot do.

(4.) It is a duty, because the salvation of the soul will not take care of itself without an effort on our part. There is no more reason to suppose this than that health and life will take care of themselves without our own exertion. And yet many live as if they supposed that *somehow* all would yet be well; that the matter of salvation need not give them any concern, for that things *will so arrange themselves* that they will be saved. Why should they suppose this any more in regard to religion than in regard to anything else?

(5.) It is a duty, because there is no reason to expect the Divine interposition without our own effort. No such interposition is promised to any man, and why should he expect it? In the case of all who have been saved, they have made an effort—and why should we expect that God will favour us more than he did them? "God helps them who help themselves;" and what reason has any man to suppose that he will interfere in his case and save him, if he will put forth no effort to "work out his own salvation?" In regard to the other inquiry —What does the command imply; or what is necessary to be done in order to comply with it?—we may observe, that it does *not* mean

(1.) that we are to attempt to *deserve* salvation on the ground of merit. That is out of the question; for what can man do that shall be an equivalent for eternal happiness in heaven? Nor

(2.) does it mean that we are to endeavour to make atonement for past sins. That would be equally impossible—and it is, besides, unnecessary. *That* work has been done by the great Redeemer. But it means,

(1.) that we are to make an honest *effort* to be saved in the way which God has appointed;

(2.) that we are to break off from our sins by true repentance;

(3.) that we are to believe in the Saviour and honestly to put our trust in him;

(4.) that we are to give up all that we have to God;

(5.) that we are to break away from all evil companions and evil plans of life; and

(6.) that we are to resist all the allurements of the world, and all the temptations which may assault us that would lead us back from God, and *are to persevere unto the end*. The great difficulty in working out salvation is in forming a purpose *to begin at once*. When that purpose is formed, salvation is easy.

With fear and trembling. That is, with that kind of anxiety which one has who feels that he has an important interest at stake, and that he is in danger of losing it. The reason or the ground for "fear" in this case is in general this: there is danger of losing the soul.

(1.) So many persons make ship wreck of all hope and perish, that there is danger that we may also.

(2.) There are so many temptations and allurements in the world, and so many things that lead us to defer attention to religion, that there is danger that we may be lost.

(3.) There is danger that if the present opportunity passes, another may not occur. Death may soon overtake us. No one has a moment to lose. No one can designate *one single moment* of his life, and say, "I may safely lose that moment. I may *safely* spend it in the neglect of my soul."

(4.) It should be done with the most earnest concern, from the immensity of the interest at stake. If the soul is lost, all is lost. And who is there that can estimate the value of that soul which is thus in danger of being lost for ever?

{a} "work out" Pr 10:16 Joh 6:27-29; Heb 4:11 2Pe 1:5-10

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *For it is God that worketh in you*. This is given as a reason for making an effort to be saved, or for working out our salvation. It is often thought to be the very reverse, and men often feel that if *God* works "in us to will and to do," there can be no need of our making an effort, and that there would be no use in it. If God does all the work, say they, why should we not patiently sit still, and wait until he puts forth his power, and accomplishes in us what he wills? It is of importance, therefore, to understand what this declaration of the apostle *means*, in order to see whether this objection is valid, or whether the fact that God "works in us" is to be regarded as a reason why we should make no effort. The word rendered *worketh—energwn—working*—is from a verb meaning to work, to be active, to produce effect—and is that from which we have derived the word *energetic*. The meaning is, that God *produces a certain effect in us*; he exerts such an influence over us as to lead to a certain result in our minds—to wit, "to will and to do." Nothing is said of the *mode* in which this is done, and probably this cannot be understood by us here. Comp. Joh 3:8. In regard to the Divine agency here referred to, however, certain things, though of a negative character, are clear. It is not God who *acts for us*. He leads *us* to "will and to do". It is not said that *he wills and does for us*, and it cannot be. It is *man* that "wills and does"—though God so influences him that he does it.

(2.) He does not *compel* or *force* us against our will. He leads us to "*will*" as well as to do. The *will* cannot be forced; and the meaning here must be that God exerts such an influence as to make us willing to obey him. Comp. Ps 110:3.

(3.) It is not a physical force, but it must be a *moral influence*. A physical power cannot act on the *will*. You may chain a man, incarcerate him in the deepest dungeon, starve him, scourge him, apply red-hot pincers to his flesh, or place on him the thumb-screw, but the will is still free. You cannot bend that, or control it, or make him believe otherwise than as he *chooses* to believe. The declaration here, therefore, cannot mean that God compels us, or that we are anything else but free agents still, though he "works in us to will and to do." It must mean merely that he exerts such an influence as to secure this result.

To will and to do of his good pleasure. Not to will and to do *everything*, but his "good pleasure." The extent of the Divine agency *here* referred to is limited to that, and no man should adduce this

passage to prove that God "works" in him to lead him to commit sin. This passage teaches no such doctrine. It refers here to Christians, and means that he works in *their* hearts that which is agreeable to him, or leads them to "will and to do" that which is in accordance with his own will. The word rendered "good pleasure"— *eudokia*— means *delight, good-will, favour*; then *good pleasure, purpose, will*. See Eph 1:5 2Th 1:11. Here it means that which would be agreeable to him; and the idea is, that he exerts such an influence as to lead men to *will* and to *do* that which is in accordance with his will. Paul regarded this fact as a *reason* why we should work out our salvation with fear and trembling. It is with that view that he urges it, and not with any idea that it will embarrass our efforts, or be a hinderance to us in seeking salvation. The question then is, how this fact can be a motive to us to make an effort? In regard to this we may observe,

(1.) that the work of our salvation is such that we need *help*, and such help as God only can impart. We need it to enable us to overcome our sins; to give us such a view of them as to produce true penitence; to break away from our evil companions; to give up our plans of evil, and to resolve to lead different lives. We need help that our minds may be enlightened; that we may be led in the way of truth; that we may be saved from the danger of error, and that we may not be suffered to fall back into the ways of transgression. *Such* help we should welcome from any quarter; and any assistance furnished on these points will not interfere with our freedom.

(2.) The influence which God exerts on the mind is in the way of *help* or aid. What *he* does will not embarrass or hinder us. It will prevent no effort which we make to be saved; it will throw no hinderance or obstacle in the way. When we speak of God's working "in us to will and to do," men often seem to suppose that his agency will *hinder* us, or throw some obstacle in our way, or exert some evil influence on our minds, or make it more difficult for us to work out our salvation than it would be without his agency. But this cannot be. We may be sure that *all* the influence which God exerts over our minds will be to aid us in the work of salvation, not to embarrass us; will be to enable us to overcome our spiritual enemies and our sins, and not to put additional weapons into their hands, or to confer on them new power. Why should men ever dread the influence of God on their hearts, as if he would hinder their efforts for their own good?

(3.) The fact that God works is an encouragement for us to work. When a man is about to set out a peach or all apple tree, it is an encouragement for him to reflect that the agency of God is around him, and that he can cause the tree to produce blossoms, and leaves, and fruit. When he is about to plough and sow his farm, it is an encouragement, not a hinderance, to reflect that *God works*, and that he can quicken the grain that is sown, and produce an abundant harvest. What encouragement of a higher order can man ask? And what farmer is *afraid of the agency of God* in the case, or supposes that the fact that God exerts an agency is a reason why he should not plough and plant his field, or set out his orchard? Poor encouragement would a man have in these things if God did not exert any agency in the world, and could not be expected to make the tree grow, or to cause the grain to spring up; and equally poor would be all the encouragement in religion without his aid.

{c} "God which" Heb 13:21

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Do all things without murmurings and disputings*. In a quiet, peaceful, inoffensive manner. Let there be no brawls, strifes, or contentions. The object of the apostle here is, probably, to illustrate the sentiment which he had expressed in Php 2:3-5, where he had inculcated the general duties of humbleness of mind, and of esteeming others better than themselves. In order that that spirit might be fully manifested, he now enjoins the duty of doing every thing in a quiet and gentle manner, and of avoiding any species of strife. **See Barnes** "Eph 4:31, **See Barnes "Eph 4:32"**.

{a} "murmurings" 1Co 10:10 {b} "disputings" Ro 14:1

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *That ye may be blameless*. That you may give no occasion for others to accuse you of having done wrong.

And harmless. Marg., *sincere*. The Greek word (*akeraiov*) means, properly, that which is *unmixed*; and then *pure, sincere*. The idea here is, that they should be artless, simple, without guile. Then they would injure no one. The word occurs only in Mt 10:16; Php 2:15, where it is rendered *harmless*, and Ro 16:19, where it is rendered *simple*. **See Barnes** "Mt 10:16, **See Barnes "Ro 16:19"**.

The sons of God. The children of God—a phrase by which true Christians were denoted. **See Barnes "Mt 5:46"**; **See Barnes "Eph 5:1"**.

Without rebuke. Without blame; without giving occasion for any one to complain of you.

In the midst of a crooked and perverse nation. Among those of perverted sentiments and habits; those who are disposed to complain and find fault; those who will take every occasion to pervert what you do and say, and who seek every opportunity to retard the cause of truth and righteousness. It is not certainly known to whom the apostle refers here, but it seems not improbable that he had particular reference to the Jews who were in Philippi. The language here used was employed by Moses De 32:6 as applicable to the Jewish people, and it is accurately descriptive of the character of the nation in the time of Paul. The Jews were among the most bitter foes of the gospel, and did perhaps more than any other people to embarrass the cause of truth, and prevent the spread of the true religion.

Among whom ye shine. Marg., "*Or, shine ye*." The Greek will admit of either construction, and expositors have differed as to the correct interpretation. Rosenmuller, Doddridge, and others, regard it as *imperative*, and as designed to enforce on them the duty of letting their light shine. Erasmus says it is doubtful whether it is to be understood in the *indicative* or *imperative*. Grotius, Koppe, Bloomfield, and others, regard it as in the *indicative*, and as teaching that they did, *in fact*, shine as lights in the world. The sense can be determined only by the connexion; and, in regard to it, different readers will form different opinions. It seems to me that the connexion seems rather to require the sense of *duty or obligation* to be understood. The apostle is enforcing on them the duty of being blameless and harmless; of holding forth the word of life; and it is in accordance with his design to remind them that they ought to be lights to those around them.

As lights in the world. The comparison of Christians with *light* often occurs in the Scriptures. **See Barnes** "Mt 5:14, **See Barnes "Mt 5:16"**.

The image here is not improbably taken from lighthouses on a sea-coast. The image then is, that as those *lighthouses* are placed on a dangerous coast to apprize vessels of their peril, and to

save them from shipwreck, so the light of Christian piety shines on a dark world, and in the dangers of the voyage which we are making. See the Note of Burder, in Rosenmuller, Alt. u. neu. Morgenland, *in loc*.

{1} "harmless" "sincere" {c} "sons of God" Mt 5:45 Eph 5:1 {*} "rebuke" "reproach" {d} "crooked and perverse" De 32:5 {2} "ye shine" "shine ye" {e} "lights in the world" Mt 5:14,16

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Holding forth the word of life*. That is, you are under obligation to hold forth the word of life. It is a duty incumbent on you as Christians to do it. The "word of life" means the gospel, called the "word of life" because it is the message that promises life; or perhaps this is a Hebraism, denoting the *living*, or *life giving word*. The gospel stands thus in contrast with all human systems of religions for they have no efficacy to save—and to the law which "killeth." **See Barnes "Joh 6:63"**; **See Barnes "2Co 3:6"**.

The *duty* here enjoined is that of making the gospel known to others, and of thus keeping up the knowledge of it in the world. This duty rests on Christians, Mt 5:14,16, and they cannot escape from the obligation. They axe bound to do this, not only because God commands it, but

(1.) because they are called into the church that they may be witnesses for God, Isa 43:10.

(2.) Because they are kept on the earth for that purpose. If it were not for some such design, they would be removed to heaven at once on their conversion.

(3.) Because there are no others to do it. The gay will not warn the gay, nor the proud the proud, nor the scoffer the scoffer. The thoughtless and the vain will not go and tell others that there is a God and a Saviour; nor will the wicked warn the wicked, and tell them that they are in the way to hell. There are none who *will do* this but Christians; and, if they neglect it, sinners will go unwarned and unalarmed down to death. This duty rests on *every Christian*. The exhortation here is not made to the pastor, or to any officer of the church particularly; but *to the mass of communicants*. *They* are to shine as lights in the world; they are to hold forth the word of life. There is not one member of a church who is so obscure as to be exempt from the obligation; and there is not one who may not do something in this work. If we are asked *how* this may be done, we may reply,

(1.) they are to do it by *example*. Every one is to hold forth the living word in that way.

(2.) By efforts to send the gospel to those who have it not. There is almost no one who cannot contribute *something*, though it may be but two mites, to accomplish this.

(3.) By conversation. There is no Christian who has not some influence over the minds and hearts of others; and he is bound to use that influence in holding forth the word of life.

(4.) By defending the Divine origin of religion when attacked.

(5.) By rebuking sin, and thus testifying to the value of holiness. The defence of the truth, under God, and the diffusion of a knowledge of the way of salvation, rests on those who are Christians. Paganism never originates a system which it would not be an advantage to the world to have destroyed as soon as it is conceived. Philosophy has never yet told of a way by which a sinner may be saved. The world at large devises no plan for the salvation of the soul. The most crude, ill-digested, and perverse systems of belief conceivable, prevail in the community called "*the world*." Every form of opinion has an advocate there; every monstrous vagary that the human mind ever conceived

finds friends and defenders there. The human mind has of itself no elastic energy to bring it from the ways of sin; it has no recuperative power to lead it back to God. *The world at large is dependant on the church for any just views of God, and of the way of salvation*; and every Christian is to do his part in making that salvation known.

That I may rejoice. This was one reason which the apostle urged, and which it was proper to urge, why they should let their light shine. He had been the instrument of their conversion, he had founded their church, he was their spiritual father, and had shown the deepest interest in their welfare; and he now entreats them, as a means of promoting his highest joy, to be faithful and holy. The exemplary piety and holy lives of the members of a church will be one of the sources of highest joy to a pastor in the day of judgment. Comp. 3Jo 1:4.

In the day of Christ. The day when Christ shall appear—the day of judgment. It is called the day of Christ because he will be the glorious object which will be prominent on that day; it will be the day in which he will be honoured as the Judge of all the world.

That I have not run in vain. That is, that I have not lived in vain—life being compared with a race. **See Barnes "1Co 9:26"**.

Neither laboured in vain. In preaching the gospel. Their holy lives would be the fullest proof that he was a faithful preacher.

{f} "neither laboured" 1Co 9:26

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Yea, and if I be offered*. Marg., *poured forth*. The mention of his labours in their behalf, in the previous verse, seems to have suggested to him the sufferings which he was likely yet to endure on their account. He had laboured for their salvation. He had exposed himself to peril that they and others might have the gospel. On their account he had suffered much; he had been made a prisoner at Rome; and there was a possibility, if not a probability, that his life might be a forfeit for his labours in their behalf. Yet he says that, even ff this should happen, he would not regret it, but it would be a source of joy. The word which is here used— *spendomai* properly means, to pour out, to make a libation; and is commonly used, in the classic writers, in connexion with sacrifices. It refers to a drink-offering, where one who was about to offer a sacrifice, or to present a drink-offering to the gods, before he tasted of it himself, poured out a part of it on the altar. *Passow*. It is used also to denote the fact, that, when an animal was about to be slain in sacrifice, wine was poured on it as a solemn act of devoting it to God. Comp. Nu 15:6 28:7,14.

In like manner, Paul may have regarded himself as a victim prepared for the sacrifice. In the New Testament it is found only in this place, and in 2Ti 4:6, where it is rendered, "I am ready to be offered." **See Barnes "2Ti 4:6"**.

It does not here mean that Paul really expected to be *a sacrifice*, or to make an expiation for sin by his death; but that he might be called to *pour out* his blood, or to offer up his life as if he were a sacrifice, or an offering to God. We have a similar use of language, when we say that a man *sacrifices himself* for his friends or his country.

Upon the sacrifice. *epi th yusia*. The word here rendered *sacrifice* means,

(1.) the *act* of sacrificing;

(2.) the *victim* that is offered; and

(3.) any oblation or offering. *Robinson, Lex*. Here it must be used in the latter sense, and is connected with "*faith*"—" the sacrifice of your faith." The reference is probably to the faith, that is, the religion of the Philippians, regarded as a sacrifice or an *offering* to God; the worship which they rendered to him. The idea of Paul is, that if, *in order* to render that offering what it should hereto make it as complete and acceptable to God as possible—it were necessary for him to die, pouring out his blood, and strength, and life, as wine was poured out to prepare a sacrifice for the altar and make it complete, he would not refuse to do it, but would rejoice in the opportunity. He seems to have regarded them as engaged in making an offering of faith, and as endeavouring to make the offering complete and acceptable; and says that if his death were necessary to make their piety of the highest and most acceptable kind, he was ready to die.

And service, leitourgia —a word taken from an act of worship, or public service, and especially the ministry of those engaged in offering sacrifices, Lu 1:23 Heb 7:6. Here it means, the *ministering* or service which the Philippians rendered to God; the worship which they offered, the essential element of which was faith. Paul was willing to endure anything, even to suffer death in their cause, if it would tend to make their "service" more pure, spiritual, and acceptable to God. The meaning of the whole is,

(1.) that the sufferings and dangers which he now experienced were in their cause, and on their behalf; and

(2.) that he was willing to lay down his life, if their piety would be promoted, and their worship be rendered more pure and acceptable to God.

I joy. That is, I am not afraid of death; and if my dying can be the means of promoting your piety, it will be a source of rejoicing. Comp. **See Barnes "Php 1:23"**.

And rejoice with you all. My joy will be increased in anything that promotes yours. The fruits of my death will reach and benefit you, and it will be a source of mutual congratulation.

{3} "offered" "poured forth" {g} "upon the sacrifice" 1Co 9:26

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *For the same came*. Because we are united, and what affects one of us should affect both.

Do ye joy and rejoice with me. That is, "Do not grieve at my death. Be not overwhelmed with sorrow, but let your hearts be filled with congratulation. It will be a privilege and a pleasure thus to die." This is a noble sentiment, and one that could have been uttered only by a heroic and generous mind—by a man who did not dread death, and who felt that it was honourable thus to die. Doddridge has illustrated the sentiment by an appropriate reference to a fact stated by Plutarch. A brave Athenian returned from the battle of Marathon, bleeding with wounds and exhausted, and rushed into the presence of the magistrates, and uttered only these two words, *cairete, cairomen* —"*rejoice, we rejoice*"—and immediately expired. So Paul felt that there was occasion for him, and for all whom he loved, to rejoice, if he was permitted to die in the cause of others, and in such a manner that his death would benefit the world.

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *But I trust in the Lord Jesus*. His hope was that the Lord Jesus would so order affairs as to permit this—an expression that no man could use who did not regard the Lord Jesus as on the throne, and as more than human.

To send Timotheus shortly unto you. There was a special reason why Paul desired to send Timothy to them rather than another person, which he himself states, Php 2:22, "Ye know the proof of him, that as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel." From this passage, as well as from Php 1:1, where Timothy is joined with Paul in the salutation, it is evident that he had been with the apostle at Philippi. But this fact is nowhere mentioned in the sixteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles,which contains an account of the visit of Paul to that place. The narrative in the Acts, however, as Dr. Paley has re- marked, *Horae Paulinae, in loc*., is such as to render this altogether probable; and the manner in which the fact is adverted to here is such as would have occurred to no one forging an epistle like this, and shows that the Acts of the Apostles and the epistle are independent books, and are not the work of imposture. In the Acts of the Apostles it is said that when Paul came to Derbe and Lystra he found a certain disciple named Timothy, whom he would have go forth with him, Ac 16:1-3. The narrative then proceeds with an account of the progress of Paul through various provinces of Asia Minor, till it brings him to Troas. There he was warned in a vision to go over into Macedonia. In pursuance of this call, he passed over the AEgean Sea, came to Samothracia, and thence to Neapolis, and thence to Philippi. No mention is made, indeed, of Timothy as being with Paul at Philippi; but after he had left that city, and had gone to Berea, where the "brethren sent away Paul," it is added, "but Silas and *Timotheus* abode there still." From this it is evident that he had accompanied them in their journey, and had no doubt been with them at Philippi. For the argument which Dr. Paley has derived from the manner in which this subject is mentioned in the Acts, and in this epistle, in favour of the genuineness of the Scripture account, see *Horae Paul* on the epistle to the Philippians, No. iv.

When I know your state. It was a considerable time since Epaphroditus had left the Philippians, and since, therefore, Paul had been informed of their condition.

{1} "But I trust" "Moreover" {a} "Timotheus" 1Th 3:2 {*} "state" "affairs"

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *For I have no man like-minded*, Marg., *so dear unto me*. The Greek is, *isoqucon similar in mind*, or like-minded. The meaning is, that there was no one with him who would feel so deep an interest in their welfare.

Who will naturally care. The word rendered *naturally gnhsiwv —means sincerely*; and the idea is, that he would regard their interests with a sincere tenderness and concern. He might be depended on to enter heartily into their concerns. This arose, doubtless, from the fact that he had been with them when the church was founded there, and that he felt a deeper interest in what related to the apostle Paul than any other man. Paul regarded Timothy *as a son*, and his sending him on such an occasion would evince the feelings of a father who should send a beloved son on an important message.

{2} "like minded" "so dear unto me" {*} "state" "affairs"

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *For all seek their own*. That is, all who are with me. Who Paul had with him at this time is not fully known, but he doubtless means that this remark should apply to the mass of Christians and Christian ministers then in Rome. Perhaps he had proposed to some of them to go and visit the church at Philippi, and they had declined it because of the distance and the dangers of the way. When the trial of Paul came on before the emperor, all who were with him in Rome fled from him, 2Ti 4:16; and it is possible that the same disregard of his wishes and his welfare had already begun to manifest itself among the Christians who were at Rome, so that he was constrained to say that, as a general thing, they sought their own ease and comfort, and were unwilling to deny themselves in order to promote the happiness of those who lived in the remote parts of the world. Let us not be harsh in judging them. How many professing Christians in *our* cities and towns are there now who would be willing to leave their business and their comfortable homes, and go on an embassy like this to Philippi? How many are there who would not seek some excuse, and show that it was a characteristic that they "sought their own" rather than the things which pertained to the kingdom of Jesus Christ?

Not the things which are Jesus Christ's. Which pertain to his cause and kingdom. They are not willing to practise self-denial in order to promote that cause. It is implied here,

(1.) that it is the duty of those who profess religion to seek the things which pertain to the kingdom of the Redeemer, or to make that the great and leading object of their lives. They are bound to be willing to sacrifice "their own" things—to deny themselves of ease, and to be always ready to expose themselves to peril and want if they may be the means of advancing his cause.

(2.) That frequently this is not done by those who profess religion. It was the case with the professed Christians at Rome, and it is often the case in the churches now. There are few Christians who deny themselves much to promote the kingdom of the Redeemer; few who are willing to lay aside what they regard as "*their own*" in order to advance *his* cause. Men live for their own ease; for their families; for the prosecution of their own business—as if a Christian could have anything which he has a right to pursue independently of the kingdom of the Redeemer, and without regard to his will and glory.

{b} "not the things" 2Ti 3:2

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *But ye know the proof of him*. You have had evidence among yourselves how faithfully Timothy devoted himself to the promotion of the gospel, and how constantly he served with me. This proves that Timothy was with Paul when he was at Philippi.

As a son with the father. Manifesting the same spirit towards me which a son does towards a father, and evincing the same interest in my work. He did all he could do to aid me, and lighten my labours and sufferings.

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *So soon as I shall see how it will go with me*. Paul was a prisoner at Rome, and there was not a little uncertainty whether he would be condemned or acquitted. He was, it is commonly supposed, in fact released on the first trial, 2Ti 4:16. He now felt that he would soon be able to send Timothy to them at any rate. If he was condemned and put to death, he would, of course, have no further occasion for his services; and if he were released from his present troubles and dangers, he could spare him for a season to go and visit the churches.

{*} "with me" "See through my own affairs"

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *But I trust in the Lord*, etc. **See Barnes "Php 1:25"**.

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus*. Epaphroditus is nowhere else mentioned but in this epistle. See Php 4:18. All that is known of him, therefore, is what is mentioned here. He was from Philippi, and was a member of the church there. He had been employed by the Philippians to carry relief to Paul when he was in Rome, Php 4:18, and while in Rome he was taken dangerously sick. News of this had been conveyed to Philippi, and again intelligence had been brought to him that they had heard of his sickness, and that they were much affected by it. On his recovery, Paul thought it best that he should return at once to Philippi, and doubtless sent this epistle by him. He is much commended by Paul for his faithfulness and zeal.

My brother. In the gospel; or brother Christian. These expressions of affectionate regard must have been highly gratifying to the Philippians.

And companion in labour. It is not impossible that he may have laboured with Paul in the gospel at Philippi; but more probably the sense is, that he regarded him as engaged in the same great work that he was. It is not probable that he assisted Paul much in Rome, as he appears to have been sick during a considerable part of the time he was there.

And fellow-soldier. Christians and Christian ministers are compared with soldiers, Phm 1:2 2Ti 2:3,4, because of the nature of the service in which they are engaged. The Christian life is a warfare; there are many foes to be overcome; the period which they are to serve is fixed by the Great Captain of salvation, and they will soon be permitted to enjoy the triumphs of victory. Paul regarded himself

as enlisted to make war on all the spiritual enemies of the Redeemer, and he esteemed Epaphroditus as one who had shown that he was worthy to be engaged in so good a cause.

But your messenger. Sent to convey supplies to Paul, Php 4:18. The original is, "your apostle"—*umwn de apostolon*—and some have proposed to take this *literally*, meaning that he was the *apostle* of the church at Philippi, or that he was their *bishop*. The advocates for Episcopacy have been the rather inclined to this, because in Php 1:1, there are but two orders of ministers mentioned— "bishops and deacons"—from which they have supposed that "*the* bishop" might have been absent, and that "the bishop" was probably this Epaphroditus. But against this supposition the objections are obvious.

(1.) The word *apostolon* means, properly, *one sent forth*, a messenger, and it is uniformly used in this sense unless there is something in the connexion to limit it to *an apostle*, technically so called.

(2.) The supposition that it here means *a messenger* meets all the circumstances of the case, and describes exactly what Epaphroditus did. He was, in fact, sent as *a messenger* to Paul, Php 4:18.

(3.) He was *not* an apostle, in the proper sense of the term —the apostles having been chosen to be witnesses of the life, the teachings, the death, and the resurrection of the Saviour. See Ac 1:22. **See Barnes "1Co 9:1"**.

(4.) If he *had been* an apostle, it is altogether improbable that he would have been sent on an errand comparatively so humble as that of carrying supplies to Paul. Was there no one else who could do this, without sending their *bishop*? Would a diocese be likely to employ a "bishop" for such a purpose now?

And he that ministered to my wants. Php 4:18.

{b} "my brother" Php 4:18 {c} "your messenger" Phm 1:2

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *For he longed after you all*. He was desirous to see you all, and to relieve your anxiety in regard to his safety.

{+} "heaviness" "was uneasy"

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *For indeed he was sick nigh unto death*. Dr. Paley has remarked (*Hor. Paul*. on Phil. No. ii.) that the account of the sickness and recovery of Epaphroditus is such as to lead us to suppose that he was not restored by miracle; and he infers that the power of healing the sick was conferred on the apostles only occasionally, and did not depend at all on their will, since, if it had, there is every reason to suppose that Paul would at once have restored him to health. This account, he adds, shows also that this epistle is not the work of an impostor. Had it been, a miracle would not have been spared. Paul would not have been introduced as showing such anxiety about a friend lying at

the point of death, and as being unable to restore him. It would have been said that he interposed at once, and raised him up to health.

But God had mercy on him. By restoring him to health, evidently not by miracle, but by the use of ordinary means.

On me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. In addition to all the sorrows of imprisonment, and the prospect of a trial, and the want of friends. The sources of his sorrow, had Epaphroditus died, would have been such as these:

(1.) He would have lost a valued friend, and one whom he esteemed as a brother and worthy fellow-labourer.

(2.) He would have felt that the church at Philippi had lost a valuable member.

(3.) His grief might have been aggravated from the consideration that his life had been lost in endeavouring to do him good. He would have felt that he was the occasion, though innocent, of his exposure to danger.

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *I sent him therefore the more carefully*. With more diligence, or speed; I was the more ready to send him.

That I may be the less sorrowful. That is, on account of my solicitude for you; that I may know that your minds are at ease, and that you rejoice in his being among you.

{++} "carefully" "speedily"

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Receive him therefore in the Lord*. As the servant of the Lord, or as now restored to you by the Lord, and therefore to be regarded as a fresh gift from God. Our friends, restored to us after a long absence, we should receive as the gift of God, and as a proof of his mercy.

And hold such in reputation. Marg., *honour such*. This is a high commendation of Epaphroditus, and, at the same time, it enjoins an important duty in regard to the proper treatment of those who sustain such a character. It is a Christian duty to honour those who ought to be honoured, to respect the virtuous and the pious, and especially to honour those who evince fidelity in the work of the Lord.

{1} "hold such" "honour such"

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *Because for the work of Christ*. That is, either by exposing himself in his journey to see the apostle in Rome, or by his labours there.

Not regarding his life. There is a difference in the Mss. here, so great that it is impossible now to determine which is the true reading, though the sense is not materially affected. The common reading of the Greek text is, *parabouleusamenov*; literally, *misconsulting, not consulting carefully, not taking pains*. The other reading is, *paraboleusamenov*; *exposing one's self to danger*, regardless of life. See the authorities for this reading in Wetstein. Comp. Bloomfield, *in loc*. This reading suits the connexion, and is generally regarded as the correct one.

To supply your lack of service toward me. Not that they had been indifferent to him, or inattentive to his wants, for he does not mean to blame them; but they had not had an opportunity to send to his relief, Php 4:10, and Epaphroditus therefore made a special journey to Rome on his account. He came and rendered to him the service which they could not do in person; and what the church would have done, if Paul had been among them, he performed in their name and on their behalf.

{d} "to supply" 1Co 16:17 {&} "lack" "deficiency"

REMARKS.

1. Let us learn to esteem others as they ought to be, Php 2:3. Every person who is virtuous and pious has some claim to esteem He has a reputation which is valuable to him and to the church, and we should not withhold respect from him. It is one evidence, also, of true humility and of right feeling, when we esteem them as better than ourselves, and when we are willing to see them honoured, and are willing to sacrifice our own ease to promote their welfare. It is one of the instinctive promptings of true humility to feel that other persons are better than we are.

2. We should not be disappointed or mortified if others think little of us—if we are not brought into prominent notice among men, Php 2:3. We *profess* to have a low opinion of ourselves, if we are Christians, and we *ought* to have; and why should we be chagrined and mortified if others have the same opinion of us? Why should we not be willing that they should accord in judgment with us in regard to ourselves?

3. We should be willing to occupy our appropriate place in the church, Php 2:3. That is true humility; and why should any one be unwilling to be esteemed just as he *ought* to be? Pride makes us miserable, and is the grand thing that stands in the way of the influence of the gospel on our hearts. No one can become a Christian who is not willing to occupy just the place which he *ought* to occupy; to take the lowly position as a penitent which he *ought* to take; and to have God regard and treat him just as he *ought* to be treated. The first, second, and third thing in religion is humility; and no one ever becomes a Christian who is not willing to take the lowly condition of a child.

4. We should feel a deep interest in the welfare of others, Php 2:4. Men are by nature selfish, and it is the design of religion to make them benevolent. They seek their own interests by nature, and the gospel would teach them to regard the welfare of others. If we are truly under the influence of religion, there is not a member of the church in whom we should not feel an interest, and whose welfare we should not strive to promote, as far as we have opportunity. And we *may* have opportunity every day. It is an easy matter to do good to others. A kind word, or even a kind *look*, does good; and who is so poor that he cannot render this? Every day that we live, we come in contact with some who may be benefited by our example, our advice, or our alms; and every day, therefore, may be closed with the feeling that we have not lived in vain.

5. Let us in all things look to the example of Christ, Php 2:5. He came that he might be an example; and he was exactly such an example as we need. We may be *always* sure that we are right

when we follow his example, and possess his spirit. We cannot be so sure that we are right in any other way. He came to be our model in all things, and in all the relations of life.

(1.) He showed us what the law of God requires of us.

(2.) He showed us what we should aim to be, and what human nature would be if it were wholly under the influence of religion.

(3.) He showed us what true religion is, for it is just such as was seen in his life.

(4.) He showed us how to act in our treatment of mankind.

(5.) He showed us how to bear the ills of poverty, and want, and pain, and temptation, and reproach from the world. We should learn to manifest the same spirit in suffering which he did, for then we are sure we are right.

(6.) And he has showed us how to die. He has exhibited in death just the spirit which we should when we die; for it is not less desirable *to die well than to live well*.

6. It is right and proper to worship Christ, Php 2:6. He was in the form of God, and equal with God; and, being such, we should adore him. No one need be afraid to render too high honour to the Saviour; and all piety may be measured by the respect which is shown to him. Religion advances in the world just in proportion as men are disposed to render honour to the Redeemer; it becomes dim, and dies away, just in proportion as that honour is withheld.

7. Like the Redeemer, we should be willing to deny ourselves in order that we may promote the welfare of others, Php 2:6-8. We can never, indeed, equal his condescension. We can never stoop from such a state of dignity and honour as he did; but, in our measure, we should aim to imitate him. If we have comforts, we should be willing to deny ourselves of them to promote the happiness of others. If we occupy an elevated rank in life, we should be willing to stoop to one more humble. If we live in a palace, we should be willing to enter the most *lowly* cottage, if we can render its inmates happy.

8. Christ was obedient unto death, Php 2:8. Let *us* be obedient also, doing the will of God in all things. If in his service we are called to pass through trials, even those which will terminate in death, let us obey. He has a right to command us, and we have the example of the Saviour to sustain us. If he requires us, by his providence, and by the leadings of his Spirit, to forsake our country and home, to visit climes of pestilential air, or to traverse wastes of burning sand, to make his name known; if he demands that, in that service, we shall die far away from kindred and home, and that our bones shall be laid on the banks of the Senegal or the Ganges—still, let us remember that these sufferings are not equal to those of the Master. He was an exile from heaven, in a world of suffering. *Our* exile from our own land is not like that from heaven; nor will our sufferings, though in regions of pestilence and death, be like *his* sufferings in the garden and on the Cross.

9. Let us rejoice that we have a Saviour who has ascended to heaven, and who is to be for ever honoured there, Php 2:9-11. He is to suffer no more. He has endured the last pang; has passed through a state of humiliation and woe which he will never repeat; and has submitted to insults and mockeries to which it will not be necessary for him to submit again. When we now think of the Redeemer, we can think of him as always happy and honoured. There is no moment by day or by night in which he is not the object of adoration, love, and praise—nor will there ever be such a moment to all eternity. Our best friend is thus to be eternally reverenced, and in heaven he will receive a full reward for all his unparalleled woes.

10. Let us diligently endeavour to work out our salvation, Php 2:12,13. Nothing else so much demands our unceasing solicitude as this, and in nothing else have we so much encouragement.

We are assured that God aids us in this work. He throws no obstructions in our path, but all that God does in the matter of salvation is in the way of *help*. He does not work in us evil passions, or impure desires, or unbelief; his agency is to enable us to perform "his good pleasure," or that which will please him—that is, that which is holy. The farmer is encouraged to plough and plant his fields when *God works* around him by sending the warm breezes of the spring, and by refreshing the earth with gentle dews and rains. And so we may be encouraged to seek our salvation when God works in our hearts, producing serious thoughts, and a feeling that we need the blessings of salvation.

11. Christians should let their light shine, Php 2:14-16. God has called them into his kingdom that they may show what is the nature and power of true religion. They are to illustrate in their lives the nature of that gospel which he has revealed, and to show its value in purifying the soul and in sustaining it in the time of trial. The world is dependent on Christians for just views of religion, and every day that a Christian lives he is doing *something* to honour or dishonour the gospel. Every word that he speaks, every expression of the eye, every cloud or beam of sunshine on his brow, will have *some* effect in doing this. He cannot live without making some impression upon the world around him, either favourable or unfavourable to the cause of his Redeemer.

12. We should be ready *to die*, if called to such a sacrifice, in behalf of the church of Christ, Php 2:17. We should rejoice in being permitted to suffer, that we may promote the welfare of others, and be the means of saving those for whom Christ died. It has been an honour to be a martyr in the cause of religion, and so it ever will be when God calls to such a sacrifice of life. If he calls *us* to it, therefore, we should not shrink from it, nor should we shrink from any sufferings by which we may honour the Saviour, and rescue souls from death.

13. Let us learn, from the interesting narrative respecting Epaphroditus at the close of this chapter, to live and act as becomes Christians in every situation in life, Php 2:25-30. It was much to have the praise of an apostle, and to be commended for his Christian conduct, as this stranger in Rome was. He went there, not to view the wonders of the imperial city, and not to run the rounds of giddy pleasure there, but to perform an important duty of religion. While there he became sick—not by indulgence in pleasures; not as the result of feasting and revelry, but in the work of Christ. In a strange city, far from home, amidst the rich, the great, the gay; in a place where theatres opened their doors, and where places of amusement abounded, he led a life which an apostle could commend as pure. There is nothing more difficult for a Christian than to maintain an irreproachable walk when away from the usual restraints and influences that serve to keep him in the paths of piety, and when surrounded with the fascinations and allurements of a great and wicked city. There strangers, extending the rites of hospitality, often invite the guest to places of amusement which the Christian would not visit were he at home. There the desire to see all that is to be seen, and to hear all that is to be heard, attracts him to the theatre, the opera, and the gallery of obscene and licentious statuary and painting. There the plea readily presents itself that an opportunity of witnessing these things may never occur again; that he is unknown, and that his example, therefore, can do no harm; that it is desirable, from personal observation, to know what is the condition of the world; or that perhaps his former views in these matters may have been precise and puritanical. To such considerations he yields; but yields only to regret it in future life. Rarely is such a thing done without its being in some way soon known; and rarely, very rarely, does a Christian minister or other member of the church travel much without injury to his piety, and to the cause of religion. A Christian man who is under a *necessity* of visiting Europe from this country, should feel that he has special need of the prayers of his friends, that he may not dishonour his religion abroad; he

who is permitted to remain at home, and to cultivate the graces of piety in his own family, and in the quiet scenes where he has been accustomed to move, should regard it as a cause of special thankfulness to God.

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 3

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 1

PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER 3

ANALYSIS OF CHAPTER 3

THIS chapter consists, in the main, of exhortations to holy living, and to an effort to make great attainments in the divine life. It is full of tenderness and affection, and is one of the most beautiful appeals which can anywhere be found to induce Christians to devote themselves to the service of the Redeemer. The appeal is drawn in a great measure from the apostle's statement of his own feelings, and is one which the Philippians could not but feel, for they knew him well. In the course of the chapter, he adverts to the following points:—

He exhorts them to rejoice in the Lord, Php 3:1.

He warns them against the Jewish teachers who urged the necessity of complying with the Mosaic laws, and who appear to have boasted of their being Jews, and to have regarded themselves as the favourites of God on that account, Php 3:2,3.

To meet what they had said, and to show how little all that on which they relied was to be valued, Paul says that he had had advantages of birth and education which surpassed them all, and that all the claim to the favour of God, and all the hope of salvation which could be derived from birth, education, and a life of zeal and conformity to the law, had been his, Php 3:4-6.

Yet, he says, he had renounced all this, and now regarded it as utterly worthless in the matter of salvation. He had cheerfully suffered the loss of all things, and was willing still to do it, if he might obtain salvation through the Redeemer. Christ was more to him than all the advantages of birth, and rank, and blood; and all other grounds of dependence for salvation, compared with reliance on him, were worthless, Php 2:7-11.

The object which he had sought in doing this, he says, he had not yet fully attained. He had seen enough to know its inestimable value, and he now pressed onward that he might secure all that he desired. The mark was before him, and he pressed on to secure the prize, Php 3:12-14.

He exhorts them to aim at the same thing, and to endeavour to secure the same object, assuring them that God was ready to disclose to them all that they desired to know, and to grant all that they wished to obtain, Php 3:15,16.

This whole exhortation he enforces in the end of the chapter Php 3:17-21 by two considerations. One was, that there were not a few who had been deceived and who had no true religion—whom he had often warned with tears, Php 3:18,19; the other was, that the home, the citizenship of the true Christian, was in heaven, and they who were Christians ought to live as those Who expected

soon to be there. The Saviour would soon return to take them to glory. He would change their vile body, and make them like himself, and they should therefore live as became those who had a hope so blessed and transforming.

Verse 1. *Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord*. That is in the Lord Jesus. Php 3:3, **See Barnes** "Ac 1:24, and **See Barnes "1Th 5:16"**.

The idea here is, that it is the duty of Christians to rejoice in the Lord Jesus Christ. This duty implies the following things.

(1.) They should rejoice that they *have* such a Saviour. Men everywhere have felt the need of a Saviour, and to us it should be a subject of unfeigned joy that one has been provided for us. When we think of our sins, we may now rejoice that there is One who can deliver us from them; when we think of the worth of tile soul, we may rejoice that there is One who can save it from death; when we think of our danger, we can rejoice that there is One who can rescue us from all peril, and bring us to a world where we shall be forever safe.

(2.) We may rejoice that we have such a Saviour. He is just such as we need. He accomplishes just what we want a Saviour to do. We need one to make known to us a way of pardon, and he does it. We need one to make an atonement for sin, and he does it. We need one to give us peace from a troubled conscience, and he does it. We need one to support us in trials and bereavements, and he does it. We need one who can comfort us on the bed of death, and guide us through the dark valley, and the Lord Jesus is just what we want. When we look at his character, it is just such as it should be to win our hearts, and to make us love him; and when we look at what he has done, we see that he has accomplished all that we can desire, and why should we not rejoice?

(3.) We may and should rejoice in him. The principal joy of the true Christian should be in the Lord. He should find his happiness not in riches, or gaiety, or vanity, or ambition, or books, or in the world in any form, but in communion with the Lord Jesus, and in the hope of eternal life through him. In his friendship, and in his service, should be the highest of our joys, and in these we may always be happy. It is the *privilege*, therefore, of a Christian to rejoice. He has more sources of joy than any other man—sources which do not fail when all others fail. Religion is not sadness or melancholy, it is joy; and the Christian should never leave the impression on others that his religion makes him either gloomy or morose. A cheerful countenance, an eye of benignity, a conversation pleasant and kind, should always evince the joy of his heart, and in all his intercourse with the world around him he should show that his heart is full of joy.

To write the same things. That is, to repeat the same truths and admonitions. Perhaps he refers in this to the exhortations which he had given them when he was with them, on the same topics on which he is now writing to them. He says, that for him to *record* these exhortations, and transmit them by a letter might be the means of permanent welfare to them, and would not be burdensome or oppressive to him. It was not absolutely *necessary* for them, but still it would be conducive to their order and comfort as a church. We may suppose that this chapter is a summary of what he had often inculcated when he was with them.

To me indeed is not grievous. It is not burdensome or oppressive to me to repeat these exhortations in this manner. They might suppose that in the multitude of cares which he had, and in his trials in Rome, it might be too great a burden for him to bestow so much attention on their interests.

But for you it is safe. It will contribute to your security as Christians, to have these sentiments and admonitions on record. They were exposed to dangers which made them proper. What those dangers were the apostle specifies in the following verses.

{a} "rejoice in the Lord" 1Th 5:16 {b} "same things to you" 2Pe 1:12-15

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Beware of dogs*. Dogs in the east are mostly without masters; they wander at large in the streets and fields, and feed upon offals, and even upon corpses. Comp. 1Ki 14:11 16:4, 21:19.

They are held as unclean, and to call one *a dog* is a much stronger expression of contempt there than with us, 1Sa 17:43 2Ki 8:13. The Jews called the heathen *dogs*, and the Mohammedans call Jews and Christians by the same name. The term *dog* also is used to denote a person that is shameless, impudent, malignant, snarling, dissatisfied, and contentious, and is evidently so employed here. It is possible that the *language* used here may have been derived from some custom of affixing a caution on a house that was guarded by a dog to persons approaching it. L'Enfant remarks that at Rome it was common for a dog to lie chained before the door of a house, and that a notice was placed in sight, "Beware of the dog." The same notice I have seen in this city affixed to the kennel of dogs in front of a bank, that were appointed to guard it. The reference here is, doubtless, to Judaizing teachers; and the idea is, that they were contentious, troublesome, dissatisfied, and would produce disturbance. The strong language which the apostle uses here shows the sense which he had of the danger arising from their influence. It may be observed, however, that the term *dogs* is used in ancient writings with great frequency, and even by the most grave speakers. It is employed by the most dignified characters in the Iliad, (*Bloomfield*;) and the name was given to a whole class of Greek philosophers—the *Cynics*. It is used in one instance by the Saviour, Mt 7:6. By the use of the term here, there can be no doubt that the apostle meant to express strong disapprobation of the character and course of the persons referred to, and to warn the Philippians in the most solemn mariner against them.

Beware of evil workers. Referring, doubtless, to the same persons that he had characterized as *dogs*. The reference is to Jewish teachers, whose doctrines and influence he regarded only as evil. We do not know what was the nature of their teaching, but we may presume that it consisted much in urging the obligations of the Jewish rites and ceremonies; in speaking of the advantage of having been born Jews; and in urging a compliance with the law in order to justification before God. In this way their teachings tended to set aside the great doctrine of salvation by the merits of the Redeemer.

Beware of the concision. Referring, doubtless, also to the Jewish teachers. The word rendered *concision katatomh*— means, properly, a *cutting off, a mutilation*, it is used here contemptuously for the Jewish circumcision, in contrast with the true circumcision. *Robinson, Lex*. It is not to be understood that Paul meant to throw contempt on circumcision as enjoined by God, and as practised by the pious Jews of other times, Ac 16:3, but only as it was held by the false Judaizing teachers. As they held it, it was not the true circumcision. They made salvation to depend on it, instead of its being only a sign of the covenant with God. Such a doctrine, as they held it, was a mere *cutting off of the flesh*, without understanding anything of the true nature of the rite; and hence the unusual

term by which he designates it. Perhaps, also, there may be included the idea that a doctrine so held would be, in fact, a cutting off of the soul; that is, that it tended to destruction. Their cutting and mangling the flesh might be regarded as an emblem of the manner in which their doctrine would cut and mangle the church. *Doddridge*. The meaning of the whole is, that they did not understand the true nature of the doctrine of circumcision, but that with them it was a mere cutting of the flesh, and tended to destroy the church.

{c} "dogs" Isa 56:10,11; Re 22:15

{d} "beware of" Ps 119:115 {e} "concision" Gal 5:1-3

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *For we are the circumcision*. We who are Christians. We have and hold the true doctrine of circumcision. We have that which was intended to secure this rites for we are led to renounce the flesh, and to worship God in the spirit. The apostle, in this verse, teaches that the ordinance of circumcision was not designed to be a mere outward ceremony, but was intended to be emblematic of the renunciation of the flesh with its corrupt propensities, and to lead to the pure and spiritual worship of God. In this he has undoubtedly stated its true design. They who now urged it as necessary to salvation, and who made salvation depend on its mere outward observance, had lost sight of this object of the rite. But this, the real design of circumcision, was attained by those who had been led to renounce the flesh, and who had devoted themselves to the worship of God. **See Barnes** "Ro 2:28, **See Barnes "Ro 2:29"**.

Which worship God in the spirit. **See Barnes "Joh 4:24"**.

Comp. Ge 17:10-14.

And rejoice in Christ Jesus. See Php 4:1. That is, we have, through him, renounced the flesh; we have become the true worshippers of God, and have thus attained what was originally contemplated by circumcision, and by all the other rites of religion.

And have no confidence in the flesh. In our own corrupt nature; or in any ordinances that relate merely to the flesh. We do not depend on circumcision for salvation, or on any external rites and forms whatever —on any advantage of rank, or blood. The word "*flesh*" here seems to refer to every advantage which any may have of birth; to any external conformity to the law, and to everything which unaided human nature can do to effect salvation. On none of these things can we put reliance for salvation; none of them will constitute a ground of hope.

{a} "are the circumcision" Ro 2:28,29

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Though I might also have confidence in the flesh*. That is, though I had uncommon advantages of this kind; and if any one could have trusted in them I could have done it. The object of the apostle is to show that he did not despise those things because he did not possess them, but because he now saw that they were of no value in the great matter of salvation. Once he had confided

in them; and if any one could find any ground of reliance on them, he could have found more than any of them. But he had seen that all these things were valueless in regard to the salvation of the soul. We may remark here, that Christians do not despise or disregard advantages of birth, or amiableness of manners, or external morality, because they do not possess them—but because they regard them as insufficient to secure their salvation. They who have been most amiable and moral, before their conversion, will speak in the most decided manner of the insufficiency of these things for salvation, and of the danger of relying on them. They have once tried it, and they now see that their feet were standing on a slippery rock. The Greek here is, literally, "although I [was] having confidence in the flesh." The meaning is, that he had every ground of confidence in the flesh which any one could have, and that if there was any advantage for salvation to be derived from such birth, and blood, and external conformity to the law, he possessed it. He had *more* to rely on than most other men had; nay, he could have boasted of advantages of this sort which could not be found united in any other individual. What these advantages were he proceeds to specify.

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Circumcised the eighth day*. That is, he was circumcised in exact compliance with the law. If there was any ground of confidence from such compliance with the law, he had it. The law required that circumcision should be performed on the eighth day, Ge 17:12 Le 12:3; Lu 1:59; but it is probable that, in some cases, this was delayed on account of sickness, or from some other cause; and, in the case of proselytes, it was not performed until adult age. See Ac 16:3. But Paul says that, in his case, the law had been literally complied with; and, consequently, all the advantage which could be derived from such a compliance was his.

Of the stock of Israel. Descended from the patriarch Israel, or Jacob; and, therefore, able to trace his genealogy back as far as any Jew could. He was not a proselyte himself from among the heathen, nor were any of his ancestors proselytes. He had all the advantages which could be derived from a regular descent from the venerable founders of the Jewish nation. He was thus distinguished from the Edomites and others who practised circumcision; from the Samaritans, who were made up of a mixture of people; and from many, even among the Jews, whose ancestors had been once heathen, and who had become proselytes.

Of the tribe of Benjamin. Benjamin was one of the two tribes which remained when the ten tribes revolted under Jeroboam, and, with the tribe of Judah, it ever afterwards maintained its allegiance to God. The idea of Paul is, that he was not one of the revolted tribes, but that he had as high a claim to the honour of being a Jew as any one could boast. The tribe of Benjamin, also, was located near the temple, and indeed it has been said that the temple was on the dividing line between that tribe and the tribe of Judah; and it might have been supposed that there was some advantage in securing salvation from having been born and reared so near where the holy rites of religion were celebrated. If there were any such derived from the proximity of the tribe to the temple, he could claim it; for, though his birth was in another place, yet he was a member of the tribe.

An Hebrew of the Hebrews. This is the Hebrew mode of expressing the superlative degree; and the idea is, that Paul enjoyed every advantage which could possibly be derived from the fact of being a Hebrew. He had a lineal descent from the very ancestor of the nation; he belonged to a tribe

that was as honourable as any other, and that had its location near the very centre of religious influence; and he was an Hebrew by both his parents, with no admixture of Gentile blood. On this fact that no one of his ancestors had been a proselyte, or of Gentile extraction—a Jew would pride himself much; and Paul says that he was entitled to all the advantage which could be derived from it.

As touching the law, a Pharisee. In my views of the law, and in my manner of observing it, I was of the straitest sect—a Pharisee. **See Barnes "Ac 26:5".**

The Pharisees were distinguished among the Jewish sects for their rigid adherence to the letter of the law, and had endeavoured to guard it from the possibility of violation by throwing around it a vast body of traditions, which they considered to be equally binding with the written law. **See Barnes "Mt 3:7".**

The Sadducees were much less strict; and Paul here says, that whatever advantage could be derived from the most rigid adherence to the letter of the law was his.

{*} "stock" "race" {b} "Pharisee" Ac 23:6

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Concerning zeal, persecuting the Church*. Showing the greatness of my zeal for the religion which I believed to be true, by persecuting those whom I considered to be in dangerous error. Zeal was supposed to be, as it is, an important part of religion. See 2Ki 10:16 Ps 69:9, 119:139 Isa 59:17; Ro 10:2.

Paul says that he had shown the highest degree of zeal that was possible. He had gone so far in his attachment for the religion of his fathers as to pursue, with purposes of death, those who had departed from it, and who had embraced a different form of belief. If any, therefore, could hope for salvation on the ground of extraordinary devotedness to religion, he said that he could.

Touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. So far as the righteousness which can be obtained by obeying the law is concerned, it is not needful to suppose here that he refers merely to the ceremonial law; but the meaning is, that he did all that could be done to obtain salvation by the mere observance of law. It was supposed by the Jews, and especially by the Pharisees, to which sect he belonged, that it was possible to be saved in that way; and Paul says that he had done all that was supposed to be necessary for that. We are not to imagine that, when he penned this declaration, he meant to be understood as saying that he had wholly complied with the law of God; but that, before his conversion, he supposed that he had done all that was necessary to be done in order to be saved by the observance of law. He neglected no duty that he understood it to enjoin. He was not guilty of deliberately violating it. He led a moral and strictly upright life, and no one had occasion to "blame" or to accuse him as a violator of the law of God. There is every reason to believe that Paul, before his conversion, was a young man of correct deportment, of upright life, of entire integrity; and that he was free from the indulgences of vice and passion, into which young men often fall. In all that he ever says of himself as being "the chief of sinners," and as being "unworthy to be called an apostle," he never gives the least intimation that his early life was stained by vice, or corrupted by licentious passions. On the contrary, we are left to the fair presumption that, if *any* man could be saved by his own works, he was that man. This fact should be allowed to

make its proper impression on those who are seeking salvation in the same way; and they should be willing to inquire whether they may not be deceived in the matter, as he was, and whether they are not in as much real danger in depending on their own righteousness, as was this most upright and zealous young man.

{c} "zeal, persecuting" Ac 22:3,4; Gal 1:13,14

{+} "in" "by" {d} "blameless" Lu 1:6

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *But what things were gain to me*. The advantages of birth, of education, and of external conformity to the law. "I thought these to be gain—that is, to be of vast advantage in the matter of salvation. I valued myself on these things, and supposed that I was *rich* in all that pertained to moral character and to religion." Perhaps, also, he refers to these things as laying the foundation of a hope of future advancement in honour and in wealth in this world. They commended him to the rulers of the nation; they opened before him a brilliant prospect of distinction; they made it certain that he could rise to posts of honour and of office, and could easily gratify all the aspirings of his ambition.

Those I counted loss. "I now regard them all as so much loss. They were really a disadvantage—a hindrance—an injury. I look upon them not as gain or an advantage, but as an obstacle to my salvation." He had relied on them. He had been led by these things to an improper estimate of his own character, and he had been thus hindered from embracing the true religion, lie says, therefore, that he now renounced all dependence on them; that he esteemed them not as contributing to his salvation, but, so far as *any* reliance should be placed on them, as in fact so much loss.

For Christ. Gr., "On account of Christ." That is, so far as Christ and his religion were concerned, they were to be regarded as worthless. In order to obtain salvation by him, it was necessary to renounce all dependence on these things.

{a} "counted loss" Mt 13:44

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss*. Not only those things which he had just specified, and which he had himself possessed, he says he would be willing to renounce in order to obtain an interest in the Saviour, but *everything* which could be imagined. Were all the wealth and honour which could be conceived of his, we would be willing to renounce them in order that he might obtain the knowledge of the Redeemer. He would be a gainer who should sacrifice everything in order to win Christ. Paul had not only acted on this principle when he became a Christian, but had ever afterwards continued to be ready to give up everything in order that he might obtain an interest in the Saviour. He uses here the same word *zhmian*,—which he does in the Acts of the Apostles, Ac 27:21, when speaking of the loss which had been sustained by loosing from Crete, contrary to his advice, on the voyage to Rome. The idea here seems to be, "What I might

obtain, or did possess, I regard as loss in comparison with the knowledge of Christ, even as seamen do the goods on which they set a high value, in comparison with their lives. Valuable as they may be, they are willing to throw them all overboard in order to save themselves." *Burder*, in Ros. Alt. u. neu. Morgenland, *in loc*.

For the excellency of the knowledge. A Hebrew expression to denote *excellent knowledge*. The idea is, that he held everything else to be worthless in comparison with that knowledge, and he was willing to sacrifice everything else in order to obtain it. On the value of this knowledge of the Saviour, **See Barnes "Eph 3:19"**.

For whom I have suffered the loss of all things. Paul, when he became a Christian, gave up his brilliant prospects in regard to this life, and everything indeed on which his heart had been placed. He abandoned the hope of honour and distinction; he sacrificed every prospect of gain or ease; and he gave up his dearest friends, and separated himself from those whom he tenderly loved. He might have risen to the highest posts of honour in his native land, and the path which an ambitious young man desires was fully open before him. But all this had been cheerfully sacrificed in order that he might obtain an interest in the Saviour, and partake of the blessings of his religion, he has not, indeed, informed us of the exact extent of his loss in becoming a Christian. It is by no means improbable that he had been excommunicated by the Jews; and that he had been disowned by his own family.

And do count them but dung. The word here used—*skubalon*—occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means, properly, *dregs*, *refuse*; what is thrown away as worthless; chaff, offal, or the refuse of a table or of slaughtered animals; and then filth of any kind. No language could express a more deep sense of the utter worthlessness of all that external advantages could confer in the matter of salvation. In the question, of justification before God, all reliance on birth, and blood, and external morality, and forms of religion, and prayers, and alms, is to be renounced, and, in comparison with the merits of the great Redeemer, to be esteemed as vile. Such were Paul's views; and we may remark, that if this was so in his case, it should be in ours. Such things can no more avail for our salvation than they could for his. We can no more be justified by them than he could. Nor will they do anything more in our case to commend us to God than they did in his.

{b} "for the excellency" Isa 53:11 Jer 9:23,24 Joh 17:3; 1Co 2:2

{c} "have suffered" 2Co 11:25-27 {*} "but dung" "refuse"

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *And be found in him*. That is, united to him by a living faith The idea is, that when the investigations of the great day should take place in regard to the ground of salvation, it might be found that he was united to the Redeemer, and depended solely on his merits for salvation. **See Barnes "Joh 6:56"**.

Not having mine own righteousness. That is, not relying on that for salvation. This was now the great aim of Paul, that it might be found at last that he was not trusting to his own merits, but to those of the Lord Jesus.

Which is of the law. **See Barnes "Ro 10:3"**.

The "righteousness which is of the law" is that which could be obtained by conformity to the precepts of the Jewish religion, such as Paul had endeavoured to obtain before he became a Christian. He now saw that no one complied perfectly with the holy law of God, and that all dependence on such a righteousness was vain. All men by nature seek salvation by the law. They set up some standard which they mean to comply with, and expect to be saved by conformity to that. With some it is the law of honour, with others the laws of honesty, with others the laws of kindness and courtesy, and with others the law of God. If they comply with the requirements of these laws, they suppose that they will be safe; and it is only the grace of God showing them how defective their standard is, or how far they come from complying with its demands, that can ever bring them from this dangerous dependence. Paul in early life depended on his compliance with the laws of God as he understood them, and supposed that he was safe. When he was brought to realize his true condition, he saw how far short he had come of what the law of God required, and that all dependence on his own works was vain.

But that which is through the faith of Christ. That justification which is obtained by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. **See Barnes "Ro 1:17"**; **See Barnes** "Ro 3:24"; **See Barnes "Ro 4:5"**.

Righteousness which is of God by faith. Which proceeds from God, or of which he is the great Source and Fountain. This may include the following things:

(1.) God is the author of pardon—and this is a part of the righteousness which the man who is justified has.

(2.) God purposes to treat the justified sinner as if he had not sinned—and thus his righteousness is of God.

(3.) God is the source of all the grace that will be imparted to the soul, making it really holy. In this way, all the righteousness which the Christian has is "of God." The idea of Paul is, that he now saw that it was far more desirable to be saved by righteousness obtained from God than by his own. That obtained from God was perfect, and glorious, and sufficient; that which he had attempted to work out was defective, impure, and wholly insufficient to save the soul. It is far more honourable to be saved by God than to save ourselves; it is more glorious to depend on him than to depend on anything that we can do.

{e} "righteousness which" Ro 1:17 3:21,22

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *That I may know him*. That I may be fully acquainted with his nature, his character, his work, and with the salvation which he has wrought out. It is one of the highest objects of desire in the mind of the Christian to know Christ. **See Barnes "Eph 3:19"**.

And the power of his resurrection. That is, that I may understand and experience the proper influence which the fact of his resurrection should have on the mind. That influence would be felt in imparting the hope of immortality; in sustaining the soul in the prospect of death, by the expectation of being raised from the grave in like manner; and in raising the mind above the world, Ro 6:11. There is no one truth that will have greater *power* over us, when properly believed, than the truth that Christ has risen from the dead. His resurrection confirms the truth of the Christian religion, **See Barnes "1Co 15:11"**; makes it certain that there is a future state, and that the dead will

also rise; dispels the darkness that was around the grave, and shows us that our great interests are in the future world. The fact that Christ has risen from the dead, when fully believed, will produce a sure hope that we also shall be raised, and will animate us to bear trials for his sake, with the assurance that we shall be raised up as he was. One of the things which a Christian ought most earnestly to desire is, to feel the power of this truth on his soul—that his great Redeemer has burst the bands of death; has brought life and immortality to light, and has given us the pledge that our bodies shall rise. What trials may we not bear with this assurance? What is to be dreaded in death, if this is so? What glories rise to the view when we think of the resurrection! And what trifles are all the things which men seek here, when compared with the glory that shall be ours when we shah be raised from the dead!

And the fellowship of his sufferings. That I may participate in the same kind of sufferings that he endured; that is, that I may in all things be identified with him. Paul wished to be just like his Saviour. He felt that it was an honour to live as he did; to evince the spirit that he did, and to suffer in the same manner. All that Christ did and suffered was glorious in his view, and he wished in all things to resemble him. He did not desire merely to share his honours and triumphs in heaven, but, regarding his whole work as glorious, he wished to be wholly conformed to that, and, as far as possible, to be *just like Christ*. Many are willing to reign with Christ, but they would not be willing to suffer with him; many would be willing to wear a crown of glory like him, but not the crown of thorns; many would be willing to put on the robes of splendour which will be worn in heaven, but not the scarlet robe of contempt and mockery. They would desire to share the glories and triumphs of redemption, but not its poverty, contempt, and persecution. This was not the feeling of Paul. He wished in all things to be *just like Christ*, and hence he counted it an honour to be permitted to suffer as he did. So Peter says, "rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings," 1Pe 4:13. So Paul says Col 1:24that he rejoiced in his sufferings in behalf of his brethren, and desired "to fill up that which was behind of the afflictions of Christ," or that in which he had hitherto come short of the afflictions which Christ endured. The idea is, that it is an honour to suffer as Christ suffered; and that the true Christian will esteem it a privilege to be made just like him, not only in glory, but in trial. To do this is one evidence of piety; and we may ask ourselves, therefore, whether these are the feelings of our hearts. Are we seeking merely the honours of heaven, or should we esteem it a privilege to be reproached and reviled, as Christ was—to have our names cast out, as his was—to be made the object of sport and derision, as he was—and to be held up to the contempt of a world, as he was? If so, it is an evidence that we love him; if not so, and we are merely seeking the crown of glory, we should doubt whether we have ever known anything of the nature of true religion.

Being made conformable to his death. In all things, being just like Christ—-to live as he did, and to die as he did. There can be no doubt that Paul means to say that he esteemed it so desirable to be *just like Christ*, that he would regard it as an honour to die in the same manner. He would rejoice to go with him to the cross, and to pass through the circumstances of scorn and pain which attended such a death. Yet how few there are who would be willing to die as Christ died, and how little would the mass of men regard it as a privilege and honour! Indeed, it requires an elevated state of pious feeling to be able to say that it would be regarded as a privilege and honour to die like Christ; to have such a sense of the loveliness of his character in all things, and such ardent attachment to him, as to rejoice in the opportunity of dying as he did! When we think of dying, we wish to have our departure made as comfortable as possible. We would have our sun go down

without a cloud. We would wish to lie on a bed of down; we would have our head sustained by the kind arm of a friend, and not left to fall, in the intensity of sufferring, on the breast; we would wish to have the place where we die surrounded by sympathizing kindred, and not by those who would mock our dying agonies. And, if such is the will of God, it is not improper to desire that our end may be peaceful and happy; but we should also feel, if God should order it otherwise that it would be an honour, in the cause of the Redeemer, to die amidst reproaches—to be led to the stake, as the martyrs have been—or to die, as our Master did, on a cross. They who are most like him in the scenes of humiliation here, will be most like him in the realms of glory.

{a} "the fellowship" 1Pe 4:13

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *If by any means*. Implying, that he meant to make use of the most strenuous exertions to obtain the object.

I might attain unto. I may come to, or may secure this object.

The resurrection of the dead. Paul believed that all the dead would be raised, Ac 24:15 26:6-8; and in this respect he would certainly attain to the resurrection of the dead, in common with all mankind. But the phrase, "the resurrection of the dead," also might be used, in a more limited sense, to denote the resurrection of the righteous as a most desirable object; and this might be secured by effort. It was this which Paul sought—this for which he strove—this that was so bright an object in his eye that it was to be secured at any sacrifice. To rise with the saints; to enter with them into the blessedness of the heavenly inheritance, was an object that the apostle thought was worth every effort which could be made. The doctrine of the resurrection was, in his view, that which distinguished the true religion, and which made it of such inestimable value, Ac 26:6,7, 23:6 1Co 15;) and he sought to participate in the full honour and glory of such a resurrection.

{b} "might attain" Ac 26:7

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Not as though I had already attained*. This verse, and the two following, are full of allusions to the Grecian races, and it will illustrate the whole passage to insert a cut representing a Grecian foot-race. We shall thus have the image before us which probably the apostle had in his eye when he penned the passage. (See opposite page.) "The word rendered 'attained' signifies, to have arrived at the goal and won the prize, but without having as yet received it." *Pict. Bib*. The meaning here is, I do not pretend to have attained to what I wish or hope to be. He had indeed been converted; he had been raised up from the death of sin; he had been imbued with spiritual life and peace; but there was a glorious object before him which he had not yet received. There was to be a kind of resurrection which he had not arrived at. It is possible that Paul here may have had his eye on an error which prevailed to some extent in the early church, that "the resurrection was past already," 2Ti 2:18, by which the faith of some had been perverted. How far this error had spread,

or on what it was founded, is not now known; but it is possible that it might have found advocates extensively in the churches. Paul says, however, that he entertained no such opinion, He looked forward to a resurrection which had not yet occurred. He anticipated it as a glorious event yet to come, and he purposed to secure it by every effort which he could make.

Either were already perfect. This is a distinct assertion of the apostle Paul that he did not regard himself as a perfect man. He had not reached that state where he was free from sin. It is not indeed a declaration that no one was perfect, or that no one could be in this life; but it is a declaration that he did not regard himself as having attained to it. Yet who can urge better claims to having attained perfection than Paul could have done? Who has surpassed him in love, and zeal, and self-denial, and true devotedness to the service of the Redeemer? Who has more elevated views of God, and of the plan of salvation? Who prays more, or lives nearer to God than he did? That must be extraordinary piety which surpasses that of the apostle Paul; and he who lays claim to a degree of holiness which even Paul did not pretend to, gives little evidence that he has any true knowledge of himself, or has ever been imbued with the true humility which the gospel produces. It should be observed, however, that many critics, as Bloomfield, Koppe, Rosenmuller, Robinson, (*Lex*.,) Clarke, the editor of the Pictorial Bible, and others, suppose the word here used—*teleiow*—not to refer to *moral* or *Christian* perfection, but to be an allusion to the *games* that were celebrated in Greece, and to mean that he had not completed his course and arrived at the goal, so as to receive the prize. According to this, the sense would be, that he had not yet received the crown which he aspired after as the result of his efforts in this life. It is of importance to understand precisely what he meant by the declaration here; and, in order to this, it will be proper to look at the meaning of the word elsewhere in the New Testament. The word properly means, *to complete, to make perfect*, so as to be full, or so that nothing shall be wanting. In the New Testament it is used in the following places, and is translated in the following manner: It is rendered *fulfilled* in Lu 2:43 Joh 19:28; *perfect*, and *perfected*, in Lu 13:32 Joh 17:23; 2Co 12:9 Php 3:12; Heb 2:10 5:9, 7:19 9:9 10:1,14 11:40 12:23 Jas 2:22 1Jo 2:5, 4:12,17, 1Jo 4:18; *finish*, and *finished*, Joh 5:36 Ac 20:24; and *consecrated*, Heb 7:28. In one case, Ac 20:24 it is applied to a *race or course* that is run—" That I might finish my course with joy;" but this is the only instance, unless it be in the case before us. The proper sense of the word is that of *bringing to an end*, or rendering complete, so that nothing shall be wanting. The idea of Paul evidently is, that he had not yet attained that which would be the completion of his hopes. There was something which he was striving after, which he had not obtained, and which was needful to render him perfect, or complete. He *lacked* now what he hoped yet to attain to; and that which he lacked may refer to all those things which were wanting in his character and condition then,which he expected to secure in the resurrection. What he would then obtain would be—perfect freedom from sin, deliverance from trials and temptations, victory over the grave, and the possession of immortal life. As those things were needful in order to the completion of his happiness, we may suppose that he referred to them now, when he says that he was not yet "perfect." This word, therefore, while it will embrace an allusion to moral character, need not be understood of that only, but may include all those things which were necessary to be observed in order to his complete felicity. Though there may be, therefore, an allusion in the passage to the Grecian foot-races, (comp. the preceding cut,) yet still it would teach that he did not regard himself as in any sense perfect. In all respects, there were things wanting to render his character and condition complete, or what he desired they might ultimately be. The same is true of all Christians now. We are imperfect in our moral and religious character, in our joys, in our condition. Our state here is far different from that

which will exist in heaven; and no Christian can say, any more that. Paul could, that he has obtained that which is requisite to the *completion or perfection* of his character and condition. He looks for something brighter and purer in the world beyond the grave. Though, therefore, there may be—as I think the connexion and phraseology seem to demand—a reference to the Grecian games, yet the sense of the passage is not materially varied. It was still a struggle for the crown of perfection—a crown which the apostle says he had not yet obtained.

But I follow after. I pursue the object, striving to obtain it. The prize was seen in the distance, and he diligently sought to obtain it. There is a reference here to the Grecian races, and the meaning is, "I steadily pursue my course." Comp. **See Barnes "1Co 9:24"**.

If that I may apprehend. If I may obtain, or reach, the heavenly prize. There was a glorious object in view, and he made most strenuous exertions to obtain it. The idea in the word "apprehend" is that of taking hold of, or of seizing suddenly and with eagerness; and, since there is no doubt of its being used in an allusion to the Grecian foot-races, it is not improbable that there is a reference to the laying hold of the pole or post which marked the goal, by the racer who had outstripped the other competitors, and who, by that act, might claim the victory and the reward. See the engraving.

That for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. My Christ Jesus. The idea is, that he had been called into the service of the Lord Jesus with a view to the obtaining of an important object. He recognised

(1.) *the fact* that the Lord Jesus had, as it were, laid hold on him, or seized him with eagerness or suddenness, for so the word used here—*katelhfyhn*—means, (comp. Mr 9:18 Joh 8:3,4 12:35; 1Th 5:4;) and

(2.) the fact that the Lord Jesus had laid hold on him, *with a view* to his obtaining the prize. He had done it in order that he might obtain the crown of life, that he might serve him faithfully here, and then be rewarded in heaven. We may learn from this,

(1.) that Christians are seized, or laid hold on, when they are converted, by the power of Christ, to be employed in his service.

(2.) That there is an object or purpose which he has in view. He designs that they shall obtain a glorious prize, and he "apprehends" them with reference to its attainment.

(3.) That the fact that Christ has called us into his service with reference to such an object, and designs to bestow the crown upon us, need not and should not dampen our exertions, or diminish our zeal. It should rather, as in the case of Paul, excite our ardour, and urge us forward. We should seek diligently to gain that, for the securing of which Christ has called us into his service. The fact that he has thus arrested us in our mad career of sin; that he has by his grace constrained us to enter into his service, and that he contemplates the bestowment upon us of the immortal crown, should be the highest motive for effort. The true Christian, then, who feels that heaven is to be his home, and who believes that Christ means to bestow it upon him, will make the most strenuous efforts to obtain it. The prize is so beautiful and glorious, that he will exert every power of body and soul that it may be his. The belief, therefore, that God *means* to save us, is one of the highest incentives to effort in the cause of religion.

{a} "but I follow after" Heb 12:23

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended*. That is, to have obtained that for which I have been called into the service of the Redeemer. There is something which I strive after which I have not yet gained. This statement is a confirmation of the opinion that in the previous verse, where he says that he was not "already perfect," he includes a moral perfection, and not merely the obtainment of the prize or reward; for no one could suppose that he meant to be understood as saying that he had obtained the crown of glory.

This one thing I do. Paul had one great aim and purpose of life. He did not attempt to mingle the world and religion, and to gain both. He did not seek to obtain wealth and salvation too; or honour here and the crown of glory hereafter; but he had one object, one aim, one great purpose of soul. To this singleness of purpose he owed his extraordinary attainments in piety, and his uncommon success as a minister. A man will accomplish little who allows his mind to be distracted by a multiplicity of objects. A Christian will accomplish nothing who has not a single great aim and purpose of soul. That purpose should be to secure the prize, and to renounce everything that would be in the way to its attainment. Let us, then, so live that we may be able to say, that there is one great object which we always have in view, and that we mean to avoid everything which would interfere with that.

Forgetting those things which are behind. There is an allusion here undoubtedly to the Grecian races. One running to secure the prize would not stop to look behind him to see how much ground he had run over, or who of his competitors had fallen or lingered in the way. He would keep his eye steadily on the prize, and strain every nerve that he might obtain it. If his attention was diverted for a moment from that, it would hinder his flight, and might be the means of his losing the crown. See cut on page 249. So the apostle says it was with him. He looked *onward* to the prize. He fixed the eye intently on that. It was the single object in his view, and he did not allow his mind to be diverted from that *by anything*—not even by the contemplation of the past. He did not stop to think of the difficulties which he had overcome, or the troubles which he had met, but he thought of what was yet to be accomplished. This does not mean that he would not have regarded a proper contemplation of the past life as useful and profitable for a Christian, (**See Barnes** "Eph 2:11,) but that he would not allow any reference to the past to interfere with the one great effort to win the prize. It may be, and is, profitable for a Christian to look over the past mercies of God to his soul, in order to awaken emotions of gratitude in the heart, and to think of his shortcomings and errors, to produce penitence and humility. But none of these things should be allowed, for one moment, to divert the mind from the purpose to win the incorruptible crown. And it may be remarked in general, that a Christian will make more rapid advances in piety by looking *forward* than by looking *backward*. Forward, we see everything to cheer and animate us—the crown of victory, the joys of heaven, the society of the blessed— the Saviour beckoning to us, and encouraging us. Backward, we see everything to dishearten and to humble. Our own unfaithfulness; our coldness, deadness, and dulness; the little zeal and ardour which we have, all are fitted to humble and discourage. He is the most cheerful Christian who looks *onward*, and who keeps heaven always in view. He who is accustomed much to dwell on fine past, though he may be a true Christian, will be likely to be melancholy and dispirited, to be a recluse rather than a warm-hearted and active friend of the Saviour. Or if he looks backward to contemplate what he has done—the space that he has run over —the difficulties which he has surmounted—and his own rapidity in the race, he will be likely to

become self-complacent and self-satisfied. He will trust in his past endeavours, and feel that the prize is now secure, and will relax his future efforts. Let us, then, look onward. Let us not spend our time either in pondering the gloomy past, and our own unfaithfulness, or in thinking of what we have done, and thus becoming puffed up with self-complacency; but let us keep the eye steadily on the prize, and run the race as though we had just commenced it.

And reaching forth. As one does in a race.

Unto those things which are before. Before the racer there was a crown or garland to be bestowed by the judges of the games. Before the Christian there is the crown of glory, the eternal reward of heaven. There is the favour of God, victory over sin and death, the society of the redeemed and of angelic beings, and the assurance of perfect and eternal freedom from all evil. These are enough to animate the soul, and to urge it on with ever-increasing rigour in the Christian race.

{b} "forgetting those things" Ps 45:10 Heb 6:1

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *I press toward the mark*. As he who was running a race did. The "mark" means, properly, the object set up at a distance at which one looks or aims; and hence the *goal*, or *post* which was set up at the end of a race-course, and which was to be reached in order that the prize might be won. Here it means that which is at the end of the Christian race—in heaven.

For the prize. The prize of the racer was a crown or garland of olive, laurel, pine, or apple. **See Barnes "1Co 9:24"**.

The prize of the Christian is the crown that is incorruptible in heaven.

Of the high calling of God. Which is the end or result of that calling. God has called us to great and noble efforts; to a career of true honour and glory; to the obtainment of a bright and imperishable crown. It is a calling which is "*high*," or *upward anw*—that is, which tends to the skies. The calling of the Christian is *from* heaven, and to heaven. Comp. Pr 15:24, He has been summoned by God, through the gospel of the Lord Jesus, to secure the crown. It is placed before and above him in heaven. It may he his, if he will not faint or tire, or look backward. It demands his highest efforts, and it is *worth* all the exertions which a mortal can make even in the longest life.

{a} "press toward" 1Co 9:24 Heb 12:1 {b} "high calling" Heb 3:1

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Let us therefore*, as many as be perfect. **See Barnes "Php 3:12"**.

Or, rather, those who would be perfect; or who are *aiming at perfection*. It can hardly be supposed that the apostle would address them as already perfect, when he had just said of himself that he had not attained to that state. But those whom he addressed might be supposed to be aiming at perfection, and he exhorts them, therefore, to have the same spirit that he himself had, and to make the same efforts which he himself put forth.

Be thus minded. That is, be united in the effort to obtain the prize, and to become entirely perfect. "Let them put forth the same effort which I do, forgetting what is behind, and pressing forward to the mark."

And if in any thing ye be otherwise minded. That is, if there were any among them who had not these elevated views and aims, and who had not been brought to sec the necessity of such efforts, or who had not learned that such high attainments were possible. There might be those among them who had been very imperfectly instructed in the nature of religion; those who entertained views which impeded their progress, and prevented the simple and earnest striving for salvation which Paul was enabled to put forth. He had laid aside every obstacle; renounced all the Jewish opinions which had impeded his salvation, and had now one single aim— that of securing the prize. But there might be those who had not attained to these views, and who were still impeded and embarrassed by erroneous opinions.

God shall reveal even this unto you. He will correct your erroneous opinions, and disclose to you the importance of making this effort for the prize. This is the expression of an opinion, that to those who were sincere and true Christians, God would yet make a full revelation of the nature of religion, or would lead them on so that they would fully understand it. They who are acquainted with religion at all, or who have been truly converted, God will teach and guide until they shall have a full understanding of divine things.

{c} "be perfect" Heb 3:1 {d} "thus minded" Gal 5:10

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule*. This is a most wise and valuable rule, and a rule that would save much difficulty and contention in the church, if it were honestly applied. The meaning is this—that though there might be different degrees of attainment among Christians, and different views on many subjects, yet there were points in which all could agree; there were attainments which they all had made, and in reference to them they should walk in harmony and love. It might be that some had made much greater advances than others. They had more elevated views of religion; they had higher knowledge; they were nearer perfection. Others had had less advantages of education and instruction, had had fewer opportunities of making progress in the divine life, and would less understand the higher mysteries of the Christian life. They might not see the truth or propriety of many things which those in advance of them would see clearly. But it was not worth while to quarrel about these things. There should be no angry feeling, and no fault-finding on either side. There were many things in which they could see alike, and where there were no jarring sentiments. In those things they could walk harmoniously; and they who were in advance of others should not complain of their less informed brethren as lacking all evidence of piety; nor should those who had not made such advances complain of those before them as fanatical, or as disposed to push things to extremes. They who had the higher views should, as Paul did, believe that God will yet communicate them to the church at large, and in the mean time should not denounce others; and those who had less elevated attainments should not censure their brethren as wild and visionary. There were common grounds on which they might unite, and thus the harmony of the church would be secured. No better rule than this could be applied to the

subjects of inquiry which spring up among Christians respecting temperance, slavery, moral reform, and the various doctrines of religion; and, if this rule had been always observed, the church would have been *always* saved from harsh contention and from schism. If a man does not see things just as I do, let me try with mildness to "teach" him, and let me believe that if he is a Christian, God will make this known to him yet; but let me not quarrel with him, for neither of us would be benefited by that, nor would the object be likely to be attained. In the mean time, there are many things in which we can agree. In them let us work together, and strive, as far as we can, to promote the common object. Thus we shall save our temper, give no occasion to the world to reproach us, *and be much more likely to come together in all our views*. The best way to make true Christians harmonious is, to labour together in the common cause of saving souls. As far as we can agree, let us go and labour together; and where we cannot *yet*, let us "agree to differ." We shall all think alike by-and-by.

{e} "rule, let us" Gal 6:16

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Brethren, be followers together of me*. That is, live as I do. A minister of the gospel, a parent, or a Christian of any age or condition, ought so to live that he can refer to his own example, and exhort others to imitate the course of life which he had led. Paul could do this without ostentation or impropriety. They knew that he lived so as to be a proper example for others; and he knew that they would feel that his life had been such that there would be no impropriety in his referring to it in this manner. But, alas! how few are there who can safely imitate Paul in this!

And mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. There were those in the church who endeavoured to live as he had done, renouncing all confidence ill the flesh, and aiming to win the prize. There were others, it would seem, who were actuated by different views. See Php 3:18. There are usually two kinds of professing Christians in every church—those who imitate the Saviour, and those who are worldly and vain. The exhortation here is, to "mark"—that is, to observe with a view to imitate—hose who lived as the apostles did. We should set before our minds the best examples, and endeavour to imitate the most holy men. A worldly and fashionable professor of religion is a very bad example to follow; and, especially, *young* Christians should set before their minds for imitation, and associate with, the purest and most spiritual members of the church. Our religion takes its form and complexion much from those with whom we associate; and he will usually be the most holy man who associates with the most holy companions.

{f} "followers together" 1Th 1:6 {+} "together" "joint imitators"

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *For many walk*. Many *live*, the Christian life being often in the Scriptures compared with a journey. In order to induce them to imitate those who were the most holy, the apostle says that there were many, even in the church, whom it would not be safe for them to imitate. He evidently

here refers mainly to the church at Philippi, though it may be that he meant to make the declaration general, and to say that the same thing existed in other churches. There has not probably been any time yet in the Christian church when the same thing might not be said.

Of whom I have told you often. When he preached in Philippi. Paul was not afraid to speak of church-members when they did wrong, and to warn others not to imitate their example. He did not attempt to cover up or excuse guilt because it was in the church, or to apologize for the defects and errors of those who professed to be Christians. The true way is, to admit that there are those in the church who do not honour their religion, and to warn others against following their example. But this fact does not make religion any the less true or valuable, any more than the fact that there is counterfeit money makes all money bad, or makes genuine coin of no value.

And now tell you even weeping. This is the true spirit with which to speak of the errors and faults of Christians. It is not to go and blazon their inconsistencies abroad. It is not to find pleasure in the fact that they are inconsistent. It is not to reproach religion on that account, and to say that all religion is false and hollow, and that all professors are hypocrites. We should rather speak of the fact with tears; for, if there is any thing that should make us weep, it is, that there are those in the church who are hypocrites, or who dishonour their profession. We should weep,

(1.) because they are in danger of destroying their own souls;

(2.) because they are destined to certain disappointment when they come to appear before God; and

(3.) because they injure the cause of religion, and give occasion to the "enemies of the Lord to speak reproachfully." He who loves religion will weep over the inconsistencies of its friends; he who does not will exult and triumph.

That they are the enemies of the cross of Christ. The "cross" was the instrument of death on which the Redeemer died to make atonement for sin. As the atonement made by Christ for sin is that which peculiarly distinguishes his religion from all others, the "cross" comes to be used to denote his religion; and the phrase here means, that they were the enemies of his religion, or were strangers to the gospel. It is not to be supposed that they were open and avowed enemies of the cross or that they denied that the Lord Jesus died on the cross to make an atonement. The characteristic of those persons mentioned in tile following verse is, rather, that they were *living* in a manner which showed that they were strangers to his pure gospel. An immoral life is enmity to the cross of Christ; for he died to make us holy. A life where there is no evidence that the heart is renewed is enmity to the cross; for he died that we might be renewed. They are the enemies of the cross, in the church,

(1.) who have never been born again;

(2.) who are living in the indulgence of known sin;

(3.) who manifest none of the peculiarities of those who truly love him;

(4.) who have a deeper interest ill worldly affairs than they have in the cause of the Redeemer;

(5.) whom nothing can induce to give up their worldly concerns when God demands it;

(6.) who are opposed to all the peculiar *doctrines* of Christianity; and

(7.) who are opposed to all the peculiar *duties* of religion, or who live in the habitual neglect of them. It is to be feared that at all times there are such enemies of the cross in the church, and the language or, the apostle implies that it ks a proper subject of grief and tears. He wept over it, and so should we. It is from this cause that so much injury is done to the true religion in the world. One secret enemy in a camp may do more harm than fifty men who are open foes; and a single unholy

or inconstant member in a church may do much more injury than many men who are avowedly opposed to religion. It is not by infidels, and scoffers, and blasphemers, so much, that injury is done to the cause of religion; it is by the unholy lives of its professed friends—the worldliness, inconsistency, and want of the proper spirit of religion, among those who are in the church. Nearly all the objections that are made to religion are from this quarter; and if this objection, were taken away, the religion of Christ would soon spread its triumphs around the globe.

{b} "enemies of the cross" Gal 1:7 6:12

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Whose end is destruction*. That is, as they have no true religion, they must perish in the same manner as all sinners. A mere profession will not save them. Unless they are converted, and become the true friends of the cross, they cannot enter heaven.

Whose God is their belly. Who worship their own appetites; or who live not to adore and honour God, but for self-indulgence and sensual gratifications. See Ro 16:18.

And whose glory is in their shame. That is, they glory in things of which they ought to be ashamed. They indulge in modes of living which ought to cover them with confusion.

Who mind earthly things. That is, whose hearts are set on earthly things, or who live to obtain them. Their attention is directed to honour, gain, or pleasure, and their chief anxiety is that they may secure these objects. This is mentioned as one of the characteristics of enmity to the cross of Christ; and if this be so, how many are there in the church now who are the real enemies of the cross! How many professing Christians are there who regard little else than worldly things! How many who live only to acquire wealth, to gain honour, or to enjoy the pleasures of the world! How many are there who have no interest in a prayer-meeting, in a Sabbath-school, in religious conversation, and in the advancement of true religion on the earth! These are the real enemies of the cross. It is not so much those who deny the doctrines of the cross, as it is those who oppose its influence on their hearts; not so much those who live to scoff and deride religion, as it is those who "mind earthly things," that injure this holy cause in the world.

{c} "end is destruction" 2Co 11:15 2Pe 2:1 {d} "whose God is their belly" 1Ti 6:5 {e} "glory is in their shame" Eph 2:6,19

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *For our conversation is in heaven*. That is, this is true of all who are sincere Christians. It is a characteristic of Christians, in contradistinction from those who are the "enemies of the cross," that their conversation is in heaven. The word "conversation" we now apply almost entirely to oral discourse. It formerly, however, meant *conduct in general*, and it is usually employed in this sense in the Scriptures. **See Barnes** "Php 1:27, where the verb occurs, from which the noun here is derived. The word here used *politeuma* —is found nowhere else in the New Testament. It properly means, *any public measure, administration of the state*, the manner in which the affairs of a state

are administered; and then the state itself, the community, commonwealth, those who are bound under the same laws, and associated in the same society. Here it cannot mean that their "conversation," in the sense of *discourse* or *talking*, was in heaven; nor that their "conduct" was in heaven —for this would convey no idea, and the original word does not demand it; but the idea is, that they were *heavenly citizens*, or citizens of the *heavenly* world, in contradistinction from a worldly community. They were governed by the laws of heaven; they were a community associated as citizens of that world, and expecting there to dwell. The idea is, that there are two great communities in the universe—that of the world, and that of heaven; that governed by worldly laws and institutions, and that by the laws of heaven; that associated for worldly purposes, and that associated for heavenly or religious purposes; and that the Christian belonged to the latter—the enemy of the cross, though in the church, belonged to the former. Between true Christians, therefore, and others, there is all the difference which arises from belonging to different communities; being bound together for different purposes; subject to different laws; and altogether under a different administration. There is *more* difference between them than there is between the subjects of two earthly governments. Comp. **See Barnes** "Eph 2:6,19.

From whence also we look for the Saviour. From heaven. That is, it is one of the characteristics of the Christian that he believes that the Lord Jesus will return from heaven, and that he looks and waits for it. Other men do not believe this, (2Pe 3:4,) but the Christian confidently expects it. His Saviour has been taken away from the earth, and is now in heaven, but it is a great and standing article of his faith that that same Saviour will again come, and take the believer to himself. **See Barnes** "Joh 14:2, **See Barnes "Joh 14:3"**; **See Barnes** "1Th 4:14.

This was the firm belief of the early Christians, and this expectation with them was allowed to exert a constant influence on their hearts and lives. It led them

(1.) to desire to be prepared for his coming;

(2.) to feel that earthly affairs were of little importance, as the scene here was soon to close;

(3.) to live above the world, and in the desire of the appearing of the Lord Jesus. This was one of the elementary doctrines of their faith, and one of the means of producing deadness to the world among them; and among the early Christians there was, perhaps, no doctrine that was more the object of firm belief, and the ground of more delightful contemplation, than that their ascended Master would return. In regard to the certainty of their belief on this point, and the effect which it had on their minds, see the following texts of the New Testament, Mt 24:42,44; Lu 12:37 Joh 14:3; Ac 1:11 1Co 4:5; Col 3:4 1Th 2:19; 2Th 2:1; Heb 10:37 Jas 5:7,8 1Jo 3:2; Re 22:7,12,20.

It may be asked, with great force, whether Christians in general have now any such expectation of the second appearing of the Lord Jesus, or whether they have not fallen into the dangerous error of prevailing unbelief, so that the expectation of his coming is allowed to exert almost no influence on the soul? In the passage before us, Paul says that it was one of the distinct characteristics of Christians that they *looked* for the coming of the Saviour from heaven. They believed that he would return. They anticipated that important effects would follow to them from his second coming. So *we* should look. There may be, indeed, a difference of opinion about the time when he will come, and about the question whether he will come to reign "literally" on the earth—but *the fact that Christ will return to our world* is common ground on which all Christians may meet, and is a fact which should be allowed to exert its full influence on the heart. It is a glorious truth—for what a sad world would this be, and what a sad prospect would be before the Christian, if the Saviour were never to come to raise his people from their graves, and to gather his redeemed to himself! The *fact*

that he will come is identified with all our hopes. It is fitted to cheer us in trial; to guard us in temptation; to make us dead to the world; to lead us to keep the eye turned toward heaven.

{*} "conversation" "citizenship" {f} "is in heaven" Eph 2:6,19 {g} "look for the Saviour" Heb 9:28

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Who shall change our vile body*. **See Barnes** "1Co 5:1, and following. The original words, which are here rendered "vile body," properly mean "*the body of humiliation*;" that is, our *humble* body. It refers to the body as it is in its present state, as subject to its infirmities, disease, and death. It is different far from what it was when man was created, and from what it will be in the future world. Paul says that it is one of the objects of the Christian hope and expectation that this body, so subject to infirmities and sicknesses, will be changed.

That it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body. Gr., "The body of his glory;" that is, the body which he has in his glorified state. What change the body of the Redeemer underwent when he ascended to heaven we are not informed; nor do we know what is the nature, size, appearance, or form of the body which he now has. It is certain that it is adapted to the glorious world where he dwells; that it has none of the infirmities to which it was liable when here; that it is not subject, as here, to pain or death; that it is not sustained in the same manner. The body of Christ in heaven is of the same nature as the bodies of the saints will be in the resurrection, and which the apostle calls "spiritual bodies," **See Barnes "1Co 15:44"**;) and it is doubtless accompanied with all the circumstances of splendour and glory which are appropriate to the Son of God. The idea here is, that it is the object of the desire and anticipation of the Christian, to be made just like Christ in all things. He desires to resemble him in moral character here, and to be like him in heaven. Nothing else will satisfy him but such conformity to the Son of God; and when he shall resemble him in all things, the wishes of his soul will be all met and fulfilled.

According to the working, etc. That is, such a change demands the exertion of vast power. No creature can do it. But there is One who has power entrusted to him over all things, and he can effect this great transformation in the bodies of men. Comp. 1Co 15:26,27. He can mould the mind and the heart to conformity to his own image, and thus also he can transform the body so that it shall resemble his. Everything he can make subject to his will. **See Barnes "Mt 28:18"**; **See Barnes "Joh 17:2"**.

And he that has this power *can* change our humbled and debased bodies, so that they shall put on the glorious appearance and form of that of the Son of God himself. What a contrast between our bodies here—frail, feeble, subject to sickness, decay, and corruption—and the body as it will be in heaven! And what glorious prospect awaits the weak and dying believer, in the future world!

{a} "change our vile" 1Co 15:43 1Jo 3:2 {*} "fashioned" "formed" {b} "working whereby" Eph 1:19 {c} "even to subdue" 1Co 15:26,27

REMARKS.

1. It is a privilege of the Christian to rejoice, Php 3:1. He has more sources of real joy than any other persons. See 1Th 5:16. He has a Saviour in whom he may always find peace; a God whose

character he can always contemplate with pleasure; a heaven to look forward to where there is nothing but happiness; a Bible that is full of precious promises; and at all times the opportunity of prayer, in which he may roll all his sorrows on the arms of an unchanging Friend. If there is any one on earth who *ought* to be happy, it is the Christian.

2. The Christian should so live as to leave on others the impression that religion *produces* happiness. In our intercourse with our friends we should show them that religion does not cause sadness or gloom, sourness or misanthropy, but that it produces cheerfulness, contentment, and peace. This may be shown by the countenance, and by the whole demeanour—by a calm brow, and a benignant eye, and by a cheerful aspect. The internal peace of the soul should be evinced by every proper external expression. A Christian may thus be always doing good—for he is always doing good who leaves the impression on others that religion makes its possessors happy.

3. The nature of religion is almost always mistaken by the world. They suppose that it makes its possessors melancholy and sad. The reason is, not that they are told so by those who are religious, and not that even *they* can see anything in religion to produce misery, but because they have fixed their affections on certain things which they suppose to be *essential* to happiness, and which they suppose religion would require them to give up without substituting anything in their place. But never was there a greater mistake. Let them go and ask Christians, and they will obtain but one answer from them. It is, that they never knew what true happiness was till they found it in the Saviour. This question may be proposed to a Christian of any denomination, or in any land, and the answer will be uniformly the same. Why is it, then, that the mass of persons regard religion as adapted only to make them unhappy? Why will they not take the testimony of their friends in the case, and believe those whom they would believe on any other subject, when they declare that it is only true religion that ever gives them solid peace?

4. We cannot depend on any external advantages of birth or blood for salvation, Php 3:4-6. Few or no persons have as much in this respect to rely on as Paul had. Indeed, if salvation were to be obtained at all by such external advantages, it is impossible to conceive that more could have been united in one case than there was in his. He had not only the advantage of having been born a Hebrew; of having been early trained in the Jewish religion; of being instructed in the ablest manner, but also the advantage of entire blamelessness in his moral deportment. He had showed, in every way possible, that he was heartily attached to the religion of his fathers, and he began life with a zeal in the cause which seemed to justify the warmest expectations of his friends. But all this was renounced, when he came to see the true method of salvation, and saw the better way by which eternal life is to be obtained. And if Paul could not depend on this, we cannot safely do it. It will not save us that we have been born in the church; that we have had pious parents; that we were early baptized and consecrated to God; that we were trained in the Sabbath school. Nor will it save us that we attend regularly on the place of worship, or that we are amiable, correct, honest, and upright in our lives. We can no more depend on these things than Saul of Tarsus could; and if all his eminent advantages failed to give him a solid ground of hope, our advantages will be equally vain in regard to our salvation. It almost seems as if God *designed*, in the case of Saul of Tarsus, that there should be *one* instance where every possible external advantage for salvation should be found, and there should be everything that men ever could rely on in moral character, in order to show that no such things could be sufficient to save the soul. All these may exist, and yet there may not be a particle of love to God, and the heart may be full of selfishness, pride, and ambition, as it was in his case.

5. Religion demands humility, Php 3:7,8. It requires us to renounce all dependence on our own merits, and to rely simply on the merits of another—the Lord Jesus Christ. If we are ever saved, we must be brought to esteem all the advantages which birth and blood and our own righteousness can bestow as worthless, and even vile, in the matter of justification. We shall not despise these things in themselves, nor shall we consider that vice is as desirable as virtue, nor that a bad temper is to be sought rather than an amiable disposition,nor that dishonesty is as commendable as honesty; but we shall feel that in comparison with the merits of the Redeemer all these are worthless. But the mind is not brought to this condition without great humiliation. Nothing but the power of God can bring a proud and haughty and self-righteous sinner to this state, where he is willing to renounce all dependence on his own merits, and to be saved in the same way as the vilest of the species.

6. Let us seek to obtain an interest in the righteousness of the Redeemer, Php 3:9. Our own righteousness cannot save us. But in him there is enough. There is all that we want, and if we have that righteousness which is by faith, we have all that is needful to render us accepted with God, and to prepare us for heaven. When there is such a way of salvation,—so easy, so free, so glorious, so ample for all,—how unwise is any one to rest on his own works, and to expect to be saved by what he has done! The highest honour of man is to be saved by the merits of the Son of God; and he has reached the most elevated rank in the human condition who has the most certain hope of salvation through him.

7. There is enough to be gained to excite us to the utmost diligence and effort in the Christian life, Php 3:10-14. If men can be excited to effort by the prospect of an earthly crown in a race or a game, how much more should we be urged forward by the prospect of the eternal prize? To seek to know the Redeemer; to be raised up from the degradation of sin; to have part in the resurrection of the just; to obtain the prize of the high calling in heaven; to be made everlastingly happy and glorious there—what object was ever placed before the mind like this? What ardour should it excite that we may gain it? Surely, the hope of obtaining such a prize as is before the Christian should call forth all our powers. The struggle will not be long. The race will soon be won. The victory will be glorious; the defeat would be overwhelming and awful. No one need fear that he can put forth too much effort to obtain the prize. It is worth every exertion, and we should never relax our efforts, or give over in despair.

8. Let us, like Paul, ever cherish an humble sense of our attainments in religion, Php 3:12,13. If Paul had not reached the point of perfection, it is not to be presumed that we have; if he could not say that he had "attained," it is presumption in us to suppose that we have; if he had occasion for humiliation, we have more; if he felt that he was far short of the object which he sought, and was pressed down with the consciousness of imperfection, such a feeling becomes us also. Yet let us not sink down in despondency and inaction. Like him, let us strain every nerve that we may overcome our imperfections and win the prize. That prize is before us. It is glorious we may be sensible that we, as yet, have not reached it, but if we will strive to obtain it, it will soon be certainly ours. We may feel that we are far distant from it now in the degree of our attainments, but we are not far from it in fact. It will be but a short period before the Christian will lay hold on that immortal crown, and before his brow will be encircled with the diadem of glory. For the race of life, whether we win or lose, is soon run; and when a Christian begins a day, he knows not but he may end it in heaven; when he lies down on his bed at night, he knows not but he may awake with the "prize" in his hand, and with the diadem of glory sparkling on his brow.

9. Our thoughts should be much in heaven, Php 3:20. Our home is there; our citizenship is there. Here we are strangers and pilgrims. We are away from home, in a cold and unfriendly world. Our great interests are in the skies; our eternal dwelling is to be there; our best friends are already there. There is our glorious Saviour, with a body adapted to those pure abodes, and there are many whom we have loved on earth already with him. They are happy now, and we should not love them less because they are in heaven. Since, therefore, our great interests are there, and our best friends there; and since we ourselves are citizens of that heavenly world, our best affections shoed be there.

10. We look for the Saviour, Php 3:20,21. He will return to our world. He will change our vile bodies, and make them like his own glorious body. And since this is so, let us

(1.) bear with patience the trials and infirmities to which our bodies here are subject. These trials will be short, and we may well bear them for a few days, knowing that soon all pain will cease, and that all that is humiliating in the body will be exchanged for glory.

(2.) Let us not think too highly or too much of our bodies here. They may be now beautiful and comely, but they are "vile" and degraded, compared with what they will soon be. They are subject to infirmity, and to numerous pains and sicknesses. Soon the most beautiful body may become loathsome to our best friends. Soon, too offensive to be looked upon, it will be hidden in the grave. Why, then, should we seek to pamper and adorn these mortal frames? Why live only to decorate them? Why should we idolize a mass of moulded and animated clay? Yet

(3.) let us learn to honour the body in a true sense. It is soon to be changed. It will be made like the glorified body of Christ. Yes, this frail, diseased, corruptible, and humbled body; this body, that is soon to be laid in the grave, and to return to the dust, is soon to put on a new form, and to be clothed with immortality. It will be what the body of Christ now is—glorious and immortal. What a change! Christian, go and look on the creeping caterpillar, and see it changed to the gay and gilded butterfly—yesterday, a crawling and offensive insect; to-day, with gaudy colours, an inhabitant of the air, and a dweller amidst flowers; and see an *image* of what thy body shall be, and of the mighty transformation which thou wilt soon undergo. See the change from the cold death of winter to the fragrance and life of spring, and behold an image of the change which thou thyself wilt ere long experience, and a proof that some such change awaits thee.

"Shall spring the faded world revive ?
Shall waning moons their light renew ?
Again shall setting suns ascend,
And chase the darkness from our view!

Shall life revisit dying worms,
And spread the joyful insect's wing ?
And oh! shall man awake no more,
To see thy face, thy name to sing?

"Faith sees the bright, eternal doors
Unfold to make her children way:
They shall be clothed with endless life,
And shine ill everlasting day."
DWIGHT.

11. Let us look for the coming of the Lord, Php 3:21. All that we hope for depends on his reappearing. Our day of triumph, and of the fulness of our joy, is to be when he shall return. Then we shall be raised from the grave; then our vile bodies shall be changed; then we shall be acknowledged as his friends; then we shall go to be for ever with him. The earth is not our home; nor is the grave to be our everlasting bed of rest. Our home is heaven—and the Saviour will come, that he may raise us up to that blessed abode. And who knows when he may appear? He himself commanded us to be ready, for he said he would come at an hour when we think not. We should so desire his coming, that the hours of his delay would seem to be heavy and long; and should so live that we can breathe forth with sincerity, at all times, the fervent prayer of the beloved disciple, "Come, Lord Jesus, COME QUICKLY !" Re 22:20.

"My faith shall triumph o'er the grave,
And trample on the tombs;
My Jesus, my Redeemer lives,
My God, my Saviour comes.
Ere long I know he shall appear,
In power and glory great;
And death, the last of all his foes,
Lie vanquish'd at his feet.

"Then, though the worms my flesh devour,
And make my form their prey,
I know I shall arise with power,
On the last judgment-day.
When God shall stand upon the earth,
Him then mine eyes shall see;
My flesh shall feel a sacred birth,
And ever with him be.

"Then his own hand shall wipe the tears
From every weeping eye;
And pains, and groans, and griefs, and fears,
Shall cease eternally.
How long, dear Saviour! oh, how long
Shall this bright hour delay ?
Fly swift around, ye wheels of time,
And bring the welcome day."
WATTS.

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 4

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 1

Philippians CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

THIS chapter comprises the following points :—

I. Exhortations.

II. Solemn commands to live as became Christians.

III. The expression of a grateful acknowledgment of the favours which he had received from them; and,

IV. The customary salutations.

I. Exhortations, Php 4:1-3.

(1.) He exhorts them to stand fast in the Lord, Php 4:1

(2.) He entreats Euodias and Syntyche, who appear to have been alienated from each other, to be reconciled, Php 4:2

(3.) He entreats one whom he calls a "true yokefellow" to render assistance to those women who had laboured with him in the gospel, Php 4:3.

II. Commands, Php 4:4-9. He commands them to rejoice in the Lord always, Php 4:4; to let their moderation be known to all, Php 4:5; to have no anxiety about worldly matters, but in all their necessities to go to God. Php 4:6,7; and to do whatever was honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report, Php 4:8,9.

III. A grateful acknowledgment of their kindness, Php 4:10-19. He says that their care of him had been manifested again, in such away as to be highly grateful to his feelings, Php 4:10. He did not indeed say that he had suffered, for he had learned, in whatever state he was, to be content, Php 4:11-13; but they had shown a proper spirit in endeavouring to relieve his necessities, Php 4:14. He remarks that their church was the only one that had aided him when he was in Macedonia, and that they had sent to him more than once when he was in Thessalonica; and says that their favour now was an offering acceptable to God, who would abundantly reward them, Php 4:15-20.

IV. Salutations, Php 4:21-23.

Verse 1. *Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for*. Doddridge unites this verse with the previous chapter, and supposes that it is the proper close of the solemn statement which the apostle makes there. The word *therefore wste* has undoubted reference to the remarks made there; and the meaning is, that in view of the fact that there were many professed Christians who were not sincere— that the "citizenship" of all true Christians was in heaven, and that Christians looked for the coming of the Lord Jesus, who would make them like to himself, the apostle exhorts them to stand fast ill the Lord. The accumulation of epithets of endearment in this verse shows his tender regard for them, and is expressive of his earnest solicitude for their welfare, anti his deep conviction of their danger. The term "*longed for*" is expressive of strong affection. Php 1:8, 2:26.

My joy. The source of my joy. He rejoiced in the fact that they had been converted under him; and in their holy walk and theft friendship. Our chief joy is in our friends; and the chief happiness of a minister of the gospel is in the pure lives of those to whom he ministers. See 3Jo 1:4.

And crown. Comp. 1Th 2:19. The word *crown* means a circlet, chaplet, or diadem,

(1.) as the emblem of royal dignity— the symbol of office;

(2.) as the prize conferred on victors in the public games, 1Co 9:25; and hence as an emblem of the rewards of a future life, 2Ti 4:8 Jas 1:12; 1Pe 5:4;

(3) anything that is an ornament or honour, as one glories in a crown Comp. Pr 12:4, "A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband;" Pr 14:24, "The crown of the wise is their riches;" Pr 16:31, "The hoary head is a crown of glory; Pr 17:6, "Children's children are the crown of old men." The idea here is, that the church at Philippi was that in which the apostle gloried. He regarded it as a high honour to have been the means of founding such a church, and he looked upon it with the same interest with which a monarch looks upon the diadem which he wears.

So stand fast in the Lord. In the service of the Lord, and in the strength which he imparts. **See Barnes** "Eph 6:13, **See Barnes "Eph 6:14"**.

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche*. These are doubtless the names of females. The name Syntyche is sometimes the name of a man; but, if these persons are referred to in Php 4:3, there can be no doubt that they were females. Nothing more is known of them than is here mentioned. It has been commonly supposed that they were deaconesses, who preached the gospel to those of their own sex; but there is no certain evidence of this. All that is known is, that there was some disagreement between them, and the apostle entreats them to be reconciled to each other.

That they be of the same mind. That they be united, or reconciled. Whether the difference related to doctrine, or to something else, we cannot determine from this phrase. The language is such as would properly relate to any difference.

In the Lord. In their Christian walk and plans. They were doubtless professing Christians, and the apostle exhorts them to make the Lord the great object of their affections, and, in their regard for him, to bury all their petty differences and animosities.

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow*. It is not known to whom the apostle refers here. No name is mentioned, and conjecture is useless. All that is known is, that it was some one whom Paul regarded as associated with himself in labour, and one who was so prominent at Philippi that it would be understood who was referred to, without more particularly mentioning him. The presumption therefore is, that it was one of the ministers or "bishops" **See Barnes "Php 1:1"**) of Philippi, who had been particularly associated with Paul when he was there. The epistle was addressed to the "church, with the bishops and deacons," Php 1:1; and the fact that this one had

been particularly associated with Paul would serve to designate him with sufficient particularity. Whether he was related to the women referred to is wholly unknown. Doddridge supposes that he might be the husband of one of these women; but of that there is no evidence. The term "yokefellow" *suzugov*— some have understood as a proper name, (*Syzygus*;) but the proper import of the word is yokefellow, and there is no reason to believe that it is used here to denote a proper name. If it had been, it is probable that some other word than that here used and rendered *true*—*gnhsiov*—would have been employed. The word *true gnhsiov*—means that he was sincere, faithful, worthy of confidence. Paul had had evidence of his sincerity and fidelity; and he was a proper person, therefore, to whom to entrust a delicate and important business.

Help those women. The common opinion is, that the women here referred to were Euodias and Syntyche, and that the office which the friend of Paul was asked to perform was, to secure a reconciliation between them. There is, however, no certain evidence of this. The reference seems rather to be to influential females who had rendered important assistance to Paul when he was there. The kind of "help" which was to be imparted was probably by counsel, and friendly co-operation in the duties which they were called to perform. There is no evidence that it refers to pecuniary aid; and, had it referred to a reconciliation of those who were at variance, it is probable that some other word would have been used than that here rendered *help*—*sullambanou*.

Which laboured with me in the Gospel. As Paul did not permit women to preach, (1Ti 2:12 comp. **See Barnes** "1Co 11:5,) he must have referred here to some other services which they had rendered. There were deaconesses in the primitive churches, (**See Barnes "Ro 16:1"**; **See Barnes** "1Ti 5:9, seq.,) to whom was probably entrusted particularly the care of the female members of a church. In the custom which prevailed in the oriental world of excluding females from the public gaze, and of confining them to their houses, it would not be practicable for the apostles to have access to them. The duties of instructing and exhorting them were then probably entrusted chiefly to pious females; and in this way important aid would be rendered in the gospel. Paul could regard such as "labouring with him," though they were not engaged in preaching.

With Clement also. That is, they were associated with Clement, and with the other fellow-labourers of Paul, in aiding him in the gospel. Clement was doubtless some one who was well known among them; and the apostle felt that, by associating them with him, as having been real helpers in the gospel, their claim to respectful attention would be better appreciated. Who Clement was is unknown. Most of the ancients say it was Clement of Rome, one of the primitive fathers. But there is no evidence of this. The name Clement was common, and there is no improbability in supposing that there might have been a preacher of this name in the church at Philippi.

Whose names are in the book of life. **See Barnes "Isa 4:3"**.

The phrase, "the book of life," which occurs here, and in Re 3:5 13:8, 20:12,15, 21:27 22:19, is a Jewish phrase, and refers originally to a record or catalogue of names, as the roll of an army. It then means to be among the living, as the name of an individual would be erased from a catalogue when he was deceased. The word life here refers to eternal life; and the whole phrase refers to those who were enrolled among the true friends of God, or who would certainly be saved. The use of this phrase here implies the belief of Paul that these persons were true Christians. Names that are written in the book of life will not be blotted out. If the hand of God records them there, who can obliterate them?

{*} "yokefellow" "companion"

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Rejoice in the Lord alway*. **See Barnes "Php 3:1"**.

It is the privilege of Christians to do this, not at certain periods and at distant intervals, but at all times they may rejoice that there is a God and Saviour; they may rejoice ill the character, law, and government of God—in his promises, and in communion with him. The Christian, therefore, may be, and should be, always a happy man. If everything else changes, yet the Lord does not change; if the sources of all other joy are dried up, yet this is not; and there is not a moment of a Christian's life in which he may not find joy in the character, law, and promises of God.

{a} "Rejoice in the Lord alway" Re 22:7,20

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Let your moderation be known unto all men*. That is, let it be such that others may see it. This does not mean that they were to make an ostentatious display of it, but that it should be such a characteristic of their lives that it would be constantly visible to others. The word *moderation epieikev*—refers to restraint on the passions, general soberness of living, being free from all excesses. The word properly means that which is *fit or suitable*, and then propriety, gentleness, mildness.—They were to indulge in no excess of passion, or dress, or eating, or drinking. They were to govern their appetites, restrain their temper, and to be examples of what was proper for men in view of the expectation that the Lord would soon appear.

The Lord is at hand. Is near. **See Barnes "Php 3:20"**; **See Barnes "1Co 16:22"**.

This has the appearance of being a phrase in common use among the early Christians, and as being designed to keep before their minds a lively impression of an event which ought, by its anticipation, to produce an important effect. Whether, by this phrase, they commonly understood the coming of the Lord to destroy Jerusalem, or to remove them by death, or to judge the world, or to reign personally on the earth, it is impossible now to determine, and is not very material to a proper understanding of its use here. The idea is, that the expectation that the Lord Jesus will "come" *ought* to be allowed to produce moderation of our passions, in our manner of living, in our expectations of what this world can furnish, and in our desires of earthly good. On him who feels that he is soon to die, and to stand at the bar of God— on him who expects soon to see the Lord Jesus coming in the clouds of heaven, it cannot fail to have this effect. Men indulge their passions—are extravagant in their plans of life, and in their expectations of earthly good for themselves and for their families, because they have no realizing sense of the truth that there is before them a vast eternity. He that has a lively expectation that heaven will soon be his, will form very moderate expectations of what this world can furnish.

{b} "moderation be known" 1Co 9:25 {c} "Lord is at hand" Re 22:7,20

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Be careful for nothing*. That is, be not anxious or solicitous about the things of the present life. The word here used—*merimnate* —does not mean that we are to exercise no care about worldly matters—no care to preserve our property, or to provide for our families, (1Ti 5:8;) but that there is to be such confidence in God as to free the mind from anxiety, and such a sense of dependence on him as to keep it calm. See the subject explained **See Barnes "Mt 6:25"**.

But in every thing. Everything in reference to the supply of your wants, and the wants of your families; everything in respect to afflictions, embarrassments, and trials: and everything relating to your spiritual condition. There ia nothing which pertains to body, mind, estate, friends, conflicts, losses, trials, hopes, fears, in reference to which we may not go and spread it all out before the Lord.

By prayer and supplication. The word rendered supplication is a stronger term than the former. It is the mode of prayer peculiarly which arises from the sense of *need*, or want—from *deomai*, *to want, to need*.

With thanksgiving. Thanksgiving connected with prayer. We can always find something to be thankful for, no matter what may be the burden of our wants, or the special subject of our petitions. When we pray for the supply of our wants, we may be thankful for that kind Providence which has hitherto befriended us; when we pray for restoration from sickness, we may be thankful for the health we have hitherto enjoyed, and for God's merciful interposition in the former days of trial, and for his goodness in now sparing our lives; when we pray that our children and friends may be preserved from danger and death, we may remember how often God has interposed to save them; when, oppressed with a sense of sin, we pray for pardon, we have abundant cause of thanksgiving that there is a glorious way by which we may be saved. The greatest sufferer that lives in this world of redeeming love, and who has the offer of heaven before him, has cause of gratitude.

Let your request be made known unto God. Not as if you were to give him information, but to express to him your wants. God needs not to be informed of our necessities, but he requires that we come and express them to him. Comp. Eze 36:37: "Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them."

{*} "careful" "anxious" {d} "careful for nothing" Mt 6:25

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *And the peace of God*. The peace which God gives. The peace here particularly referred to is that which is felt when we have no anxious care about the supply of our wants, and when we go confidently and commit everything into the hands of God. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee," Isa 26:3. **See Barnes "Joh 14:27"**.

Which passeth all understanding. That is, which surpasses all that men had conceived or imagined. The expression is one that denotes that the peace imparted is of the highest possible kind. The apostle Paul frequently used terms which had somewhat of a hyperbolical cast, **See Barnes "Eph 3:19"; comp.** Joh 21:25;) and the language here is that which one would use who designed to speak of that which was of the highest order. The Christian, committing his way to God, and feeling that he will order all things aright, has a peace which is nowhere else known. Nothing else will furnish it but religion. No confidence that a man can have in his own powers; no reliance which he can

repose on his own plans or on the promises or fidelity of his fellow-men, and no calculations which he can make on the course of events, can impart such peace to the soul as simple confidence in God.

Shall keep your hearts and minds. That is, shall keep them from anxiety and agitation. The idea is, that by thus making our requests known to God, and going to him in view of all our trials and wants, the mind would be preserved from distressing anxiety. The way to find peace, and to have the heart kept from trouble, is thus to go and spread out all before the Lord. Comp. Isa 26:3,4,20 37:1-7.

The word here rendered *shall keep* is a military term, and means that the mind would be guarded as a camp or castle is. It would be preserved from the intrusion of anxious fears and alarms.

Through Christ Jesus. By his agency, or intervention. It is only in him that the mind can be preserved in peace. It is not by mere confidence in God, or by mere prayer, but it is by confidence in God as he is revealed through the Redeemer, and by faith in him. Paul never lost sight of the truth, that all the security and happiness of a believer were to be traced to the Saviour.

{e} "Peace of God" Isa 26:3 Joh 14:27

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Finally, brethren*. As for what remains *to loipon*—, as a final counsel or exhortation.

Whatsoever things are true. In this exhortation the apostle assumes that there were certain things admitted to be true, and pure, and good, in the world, which had not been directly revealed, or which were commonly regarded as such by the men of the world; and his object is to show them that such things ought to be exhibited by the Christian. Everything that was honest and just towards God and towards men was to be practised by them, and they were in all things to be examples of the highest kind of morality. They were not to exhibit partial virtues; not to perform one set of duties to the neglect or exclusion of others; not to be faithful in their duties to God, and to neglect their duty to men; not to be punctual in their religious rites, and neglectful of the common laws of morality; but they were to do everything that could be regarded as the fair subject of commendation, and that was implied in the highest moral character. The word true refers here to everything that was the reverse of falsehood. They were to be true to their engagements; true to their promises; true in their statements; and true in their friendships. They were to maintain the truth about God; about eternity; about the judgment; and about every man's character. Truth is a representation of things as they are; and they were constantly to live under the correct impression of objects. A man who is false to his engagements, or false in his statements and promises, is one who will always disgrace religion.

Whatsoever things are honest. *semna*. Properly, *venerable*, *reverend*; then *honourable, reputable*. The word was originally used in relation to the gods, and to the things that pertained to them, as being worthy of honour or veneration. *Pussow*. As applied to men, it commonly means grave, dignified, worthy of veneration or regard. In the New Testament it is rendered *grave* in 1Ti 3:8,11, and Tit 2:2, the only places where the word occurs except this; and the *noun* (*semnothv*) is rendered *honesty* in 1Ti 2:2 and *gravity* in 1Ti 3:4 Tit 2:7. It occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. The word, therefore, does not express precisely what the word honest does with us, as confined to

dealings or business transactions, but rather has reference to what was regarded as worthy of reputation or honour; what there was in the customs of society, in the respect due to age and rank, and in the intercourse of the world, that deserved respect or esteem. It *includes* indeed what is right in the transaction of business, but it embraces also much more, and means that the Christian is to show respect to all the venerable and proper customs of society, when they did not violate conscience or interfere with the law of God. Comp. 1Ti 3:7.

Whatsoever things are just. The things which are right between man and man. A Christian should be just in all his dealings. His religion does not exempt him from the strict laws which bind men to the exercise of this virtue, and there is no way by which a professor of religion can do more injury, perhaps, than by injustice and dishonesty in his dealings. It is to be remembered, that the men of the world, in estimating a man's character, affix much more importance to the virtues of justice and honesty than they do to regularity in observing the ordinances of religion; and therefore, if a Christian would make an impression on his fellow-men favourable to religion, it is indispensable that he manifest uncorrupted integrity in his dealings.

Whatsoever things are pure. Chaste—in thought, and feeling, and in the intercourse between the sexes. **See Barnes "1Ti 5:2".**

Whatsoever things are lovely. The word here used means, properly, what is *dear* to any one; then what is pleasing. Here it means what is amiable—such a temper of mind that one can love it; or such as to be agreeable to others. A Christian should not be sour, crabbed, and irritable in his temper for nothing almost tends so much to injure the cause of religion as a temper always chafed; a brow morose and stern; an eye that is severe and unkind, and a disposition to find fault with everything. And yet it is to be regretted that there are many persons, who make no pretensions to piety, who far surpass many professors of religion in the virtue here commended. A sour and crabbed temper in a professor of religion will undo all the good that he attempts to do.

Whatsoever things are of good report. That is, whatsoever is truly reputable in the world at large. There are actions which all men agree in commending, and which in all ages and countries are regarded as virtues. Courtesy, urbanity, kindness, respect for parents, purity between brothers and sisters, are among those virtues—and the Christian should be a pattern and an example in them all. His usefulness depends much more on the cultivation of these virtues than is commonly supposed.

If there be any virtue. If there is anything truly virtuous. Paul did not suppose that he had given a full catalogue of the virtues which he would have cultivated. He therefore adds, that if there was anything else that had the nature of true virtue in it, they should be careful to cultivate that also. The Christian should be a pattern and example of every virtue.

And if there be any praise. Anything worthy of praise, or that ought to be praised.

Think on these things. Let them be the object of your careful attention and study, so as to practise them. Think what they are; think on the obligation to observe them; think on the influence which they would have on the world around you.

{f} "true" Eph 4:25 {1} "honest" "venerable" {g} "honest" 2Co 8:21 {a} "just" De 16:20 Isa 26:7 {b} "pure" Jas 3:17 {c} "lovely" 1Co 13 {d} "if there be any virtue" Col 4:5 Heb 11:2 {e} "virtue" 2Pe 1:3,4 {f} "praise" Ro 13:3

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do*. That is, what you have witnessed in me, and what you have learned of me, and what you have heard about me, practise yourselves. Paul refers them to his uniform conduct—to all that they had seen, and known, and heard of him, as that which it was proper for them to imitate. The same thing, substantially, he urges in Php 3:17. **See Barnes "Php 3:1"**.

It could have been only the consciousness of a pure and upright life which would make such counsel proper. How few are the men at this day who can urge others to imitate all that they have seen in them, and learned from them, and *heard* of them.

And the God of peace shall be with you. The God who gives peace. Comp. Heb 13:20 1Th 5:23. **See Barnes "Php 4:7"**.

The meaning here is, that Paul, by pursuing the course of life which he had led, and which he here counsels them to follow, had found that it had been attended with the blessing of the God of peace, and he felt the fullest assurance that the same blessing would rest on them if they imitated his example. The way to obtain the blessing of the God of peace is to lead a holy life, and to perform with faithfulness all the duties which we owe to God and to our fellow-men.

{g} "God of peace" Heb 13:20

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly*. The favour which Paul had received, and for which he felt so much gratitude, had been received of the Philippians; but he regarded "the Lord" as the source of it, and rejoiced in it as the expression of his kindness. The effect was to lead his heart with cheerfulness and joy up to God.

That now at the last. After so long a time. The reason why he had not before received the favour, was not neglect or inattention on their part, but the difficulty of having communication with him.

Your care of me hath flourished again. In the margin this is rendered, "*is revived*," and this is the proper meaning of the Greek word. It is a word properly applicable to plants or flowers, meaning to grow green again; to flourish again; to spring up again. Here the meaning is, that they had been again *prospered* in their care of him, and to Paul it seemed as if their care had sprung up anew.

Wherein ye were also careful. That is, they were desirous to render him assistance, and to minister to his wants. Paul adds this, lest they should think he was disposed to blame them for inattention.

But ye lacked opportunity. Because there were no persons going to Rome from Philippi by whom they could send to him. The distance was considerable, and it is not probable that the intercourse between the two places was very constant.

{1} "hath flourished" "is revived" {*} "lacked" "wanted" {h} "opportunity" 2Co 11:9

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Not that I speak in respect of want*. Though Paul was, doubtless, often in circumstances of necessity, yet he did not make these remarks on that account. In his journeys, in his imprisonments, he could not but be at times in want; but he had learned to bear all this; and that which most impressed itself on his mind was the interest which the church *ought* to show in the cause of religion, and the evidence which it would thus furnish of attachment to the cause. As to his own personal trials, he had learned to bear them, so that they did not give him great uneasiness.

For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. That is, to have a contented mind. Paul says that he had "learned" this. Probably, by nature, he had a mind as prone to impatience as others, but he had been in circumstances fitted to produce a different state of feeling. He had had ample experience, (2Co 11:26,) and, in his life of trials, he had acquired invaluable lessons on the subject. He had had abundant time for reflection, and he had found that there was grace enough in the gospel to enable him to bear trials with resignation. The *considerations* by which he had been taught this he does not state; but they were probably such as the following: that it is wrong to murmur at the allotments of Providence; that a spirit of impatience does no good, remedies no evil, and supplies no want; that God could provide for him in a way which he could not foresee, and that the Saviour was able abundantly to sustain him. A contented mind is an invaluable blessing, and is one of the fruits of religion in the soul. It arises from the belief that God is right in all his ways. Why should we be impatient, restless, discontented? What evil will be remedied by it? what want supplied? what calamity removed? "He that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast," Pro 15:15; and one of the secrets of happiness is to have a mind satisfied with all the allotments of Providence. The members of the Episcopal church beautifully pray, every day, "Give us minds always contented with our present condition." No prayer can be offered which will enter more deeply into all our happiness on earth.

{i} "content" Heb 13:5

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *I know both how to be abased*. To be in circumstances of want.

And I know how to abound. To have an abundance. He had been in circumstances where he had an ample supply for all his wants, and knew what it was to have enough. It requires as much grace to keep the heart right in prosperity as it does in adversity, and perhaps more. Adversity, *of itself*, does something to keep the mind in a right state; prosperity does nothing.

Every where and in all things. In all my travels and imprisonments, and in reference to everything that occurs, I learn important lessons on these points.

I am instructed. The word here used *memuhmai* — is one that is commonly used in relation to *mysteries*, and denoted being instructed in the secret doctrines that were taught in the ancient "mysteries." *Passow*. In those mysteries, it was only the "initiated" who were made acquainted with the lessons that were taught there. Paul says that he had been initiated into the lessons taught by trials and by prosperity. The secret and important lessons which these schools of adversity are fitted

to teach he had had an ample opportunity of learning; and he had faithfully embraced the doctrines thus taught.

Both to be full. That is, he had learned to have an ample supply of his wants, and yet to observe the laws of temperance and soberness, and to cherish gratitude for the mercies which he had enjoyed.

And to be hungry. That is, to be in circumstances of want, and yet not to murmur or complain. He had learned to bear all this without discontent. This was then, as it is now, no easy lesson to learn; and it is not improper to suppose that, when Paul says that he had "been instructed" in this, even he means to say that it was only *by degrees* that he had acquired it. It is a lesson which we slowly learn, not to murmur at the allotments of Providence; not to be envious at the prosperity of others; not to repine when our comforts are removed. There may be another idea suggested here. The condition of Paul was not always the same. He passed through great reveries. At one time he had abundance; then he was reduced to want; now he was in a state which might be regarded as affluent; then he was brought down to extreme poverty. Yesterday, he was poor and hungry; today, all his necessities are supplied. Now, it is in these sudden reverses that grace is most needed, and in these rapid changes of life that it is most difficult to learn the lessons of calm contentment. Men get accustomed to an even tenor of life, no matter what it is, and learn to shape theft temper and their calculations according to it. But these lessons of philosophy vanish when they pass suddenly from one extreme to another, and find their condition of life suddenly changed. The garment that was adapted to weather of an uniform temperature, whether of heat or cold, fails to be fitted to our wants when these transitions rapidly succeed each other. Such *changes* are constantly occurring in life. God tries his people, not by a steady course of prosperity, or by long-continued and uniform adversity, but by *transition* from the one to the other; and it often happens that the grace which would have been sufficient for either continued prosperity or adversity would fail in the transition from the one to the other. Hence, new grace is imparted for this new form of trial, and new traits of Christian character are developed in these rapid transitions in life, as some of the most beautiful exhibitions of the laws of matter are brought out in the transitions produced in chemistry. The rapid changes from heat to cold, or from a solid to a gaseous state, develop properties before unknown, and acquaint us much more intimately with the wonderful works of God. The gold or the diamond, unsubjected to the action of intense heat, and to the changes produced by the powerful agents brought to bear on them, might have continued to shine with steady beauty and brilliancy; but we should never have witnessed *the peculiar* beauty and brilliancy which may be produced in rapid chemical Changes. And so there is many a beautiful trait of character which would never have been known by either continued prosperity or adversity. There might have been always a beautiful exhibition of virtue and piety, but not that peculiar manifestation which is produced in the transitions from the one to the other.

{*} "need" "want"

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *I can do all things*. From the experience which Paul had in these various circumstances of life, he comes here to the general conclusion that he could "do all things." He could bear any trial, perform any duty, subdue any evil propensity of his nature, and meet all the temptations

incident to any condition of prosperity or adversity. His own experience in the various changes of life had warranted him in arriving at this conclusion; and he now expresses the firm confidence that nothing would be required of him which he would not be able to perform. In Paul, this declaration was not a vain self-reliance, nor was it the mere result of his former experience. He knew well where the strength was to be obtained by which to do all things, and on that arm that was able to uphold him he confidently relied.

Through Christ which strengtheneth me. **See Barnes "Joh 15:5".**

Of the strength which Christ can impart Paul had had abundant experience; and now his whole reliance was there. It was not in any native ability which he had; not in any rigour of body or of mind; not in any power which there was in his own resolutions; it was in the strength that he derived from the Redeemer. By that he was enabled to bear cold, fatigue, and hunger; by that he met temptations and persecutions; and by that he engaged in the performance of his arduous duties. Let us learn hence,

(1.) that we need not sink under any trial, for there is One who can strengthen us.

(2.) That we need not yield to temptation: there is One who is able to make a way for our escape.

(3.) That we need not be harassed, and vexed, and tortured with improper thoughts and unholy desires: there is One who can enable us to banish such thoughts from the mind, and restore the right balance to the affections of the soul.

(4.) That We need not dread what is to come. Trials, temptations, poverty, want, persecution, may await us; but we need not sink into despondency. At every step of life, Christ is able to strengthen us, and can bring us triumphantly through. What a privilege it is, therefore, to be a Christian—to feel, in the trials of life, that we have one Friend, unchanging and most mighty, who can always help us! How cheerfully should we engage in our duties, and meet the trials that are before us, leaning on the arm of our Almighty Redeemer ! Let us not shrink from duty; let us not dread persecution; let us not fear the bed of death. In all circumstances, Christ, our unchanging Friend, can uphold us. Let the eye and the affections of the heart be fixed on him; let the simple, fervent, believing prayer be directed always to him when trials come, when temptations assail, when duty presses hard upon us, and when a crowd of unholy and forbidden thoughts rush into the soul, and we shall be safe.

{a} "through Christ" Joh 15:5 2Co 12:9

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Notwithstanding ye have well done*. Though he had learned the grace of contentment, and though he knew that Christ could enable him to do all things, it was well for them to show sympathy for his sufferings; for it evinced a proper regard for a benefactor and an apostle.

Ye did communicate. You took part with my affliction. That is, you sympathized with me, and assisted me in bearing it. The relief which they had sent not only supplied his wants, but it sustained him by the certainty that he was not forgotten.

{+} "with my affliction" "Have jointly contributed to relieve"

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *In the beginning of the Gospel*. "At the time when I first preached the gospel to you; or when the gospel began its benign influence on your hearts."

When I departed from Macedonia. See Ac 17:14. The last place that Paul visited in Macedonia, at that time, was Berea. There a tumult was excited by the Jews, and it was necessary for him to go away. He left Macedonia to go to Athens; and left it in haste, amidst scenes of persecution, and when he needed sympathizing aid. At that time, as well as when he was in Thessalonica, Ac 17:1-10, he needed the assistance of others to supply his wants; and he says that aid was not withheld. The meaning here is, that this aid was sent to him "as he was departing from Macedonia;" that is, alike in Thessalonica and afterwards. This was about twelve years before this epistle was written. *Doddridge*.

No church communicated with me. No church so participated with me in my sufferings and necessities as to send to my relief. Comp. 2Co 11:8,9. *Why* they did not, Paul does not intimate. It is not necessary to suppose that he meant to blame them. They might not have been acquainted with his necessities. All that is implied here is, that he specially commends the Philippians for their attention to him.

{b} "no church" 2Co 11:8,9 {++} "communicated" "had intercourse"

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *For even in Thessalonica*. **See Barnes "Ac 17:1"**.

Paul remained there long enough to establish a flourishing church. He met, indeed, with much opposition and persecution there; and hence it was necessary that his wants should be supplied by others.

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Not because I desire a gift*. "The reason why I rejoice in the reception of what you have sent to me is not that I am covetous." From the interest with which he had spoken of their attention to him, some might, perhaps, be disposed to say that it arose from this cause, he says, therefore, that, grateful as he was for the favour which he had received, his chief interest in it arose from the fact that it would contribute ultimately to their own good. It showed that they were governed by Christian principle, and this would not fail to be rewarded. What Paul states here is by no means impossible, though it may not be very common. In the reception of favours from others, it is practicable to rejoice in them mainly, because their bestowment will be a means of good to the benefactor himself. All our selfish feelings and gratifications may be absorbed and lost in the superior joy which we have in seeing others actuated by a right spirit, and in the belief that they will be rewarded. This feeling is one of the fruits of Christian kindness. It is that which leads us to look away from self, and to rejoice in every evidence that others will be made happy.

I desire fruit. The word "fruit" is often used in the Scriptures, as elsewhere, to denote *results*, or that which is produced. Thus we speak of punishment as the fruit of sin, poverty as the fruit of idleness, and happiness as the fruit of a virtuous life. The language is taken from the fact, that a man reaps or gathers the fruit or result of that which he plants.

To your account, A phase taken from commercial dealings. The apostle wished that it might be set down *to their credit*, he desired that, when they came to appear before God, they might reap the benefit of all the acts of kindness which they had shown him.

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *But I have all*. Marg., "or, have received." The phrase here is equivalent to, "I have received everything. I have all I want, and desire no more." He was entirely satisfied. What they had sent to him is, of course, now unknown. It is sufficient to know that it was of such a nature as to make his situation comfortable.

I am full. I have enough. This is a strong expression, denoting that by nothing was lacking.

Having received of Epaphroditus. **See Barnes "Php 2:25"**.

An odour of a sweet smell. This does not mean that it was such an odour to Paul, but to God. He regarded it as an offering which they had made to God himself; and he was persuaded that he would regard it as acceptable to him. They had doubtless made the offering, not merely from personal friendship for Paul, but because he was a minister of Christ, and from love to his cause; and Paul felt assured that this offering would be acceptable to him. Comp. Mt 10:41,42. The word "*odour*" refers, properly, to the pleasant fragrance produced in the temple by the burning of incense. **See Barnes "Lu 1:9"**.

On the meaning of the word rendered "a sweet smell" *euwdia*— **See Barnes "2Co 2:15"**.

The whole language here is taken from an act of worship; and the apostle regarded what he had received from the Philippians as, in fact, a thank-offering to God, and as presented with the spirit of true devotion to him. It was not, indeed, a formal act of worship; but it was acceptable to God as an expression of their regard for his cause.

A sacrifice acceptable. Acceptable to God. Heb 13:16. **See Barnes "Ro 12:1"**.

Well-pleasing to God. Because it evinced a regard for true religion. Learn hence,

(1.) that kindness done to the ministers of the gospel is regarded as an acceptable offering to God.

(2.) That kindness to the servants of God *in distress and want* is as well-pleasing to God as direct acts of worship.

(3.) That such acts of benevolence are evidences of attachment to the cause of religion, and are proofs of genuine piety. **See Barnes "Mt 10:42"**.

{1} "have all" "have received" {a} "sacrifice acceptable" Heb 13:16

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *But my God shall supply all your need*. That is, "You have shown your regard for me as a friend of God, by sending to me in my distress, and I have confidence that, in return for all this, God will supply all your wants when you are in circumstances of necessity." Paul's confidence in this seems not to have been founded on any express revelation; but on the general principle that God would regard their offering with favour. Nothing is lost, even in the present life, by doing good. In thousands of instances it is abundantly repaid. The benevolent are not usually poor; and if they are, God often raises up for them benefactions, and sends supplies in a manner as unexpected, and bearing proofs of Divine interposition as decided, as when supplies were sent by the ravens to the prophet.

According to his riches in glory, **See Barnes "Eph 3:16"**.

The word "riches" here means his abundant fulness; his possessing all things; his inexhaustible ability to supply their wants. The phrase, "*in glory*," is probably to be connected with the following phrase, "by Christ Jesus;" and means that the method of imparting supplies to men was through Jesus Christ, and was a glorious method; or, that it was done in a glorious manner. It is such an expression as Paul is accustomed to use when speaking of what God does. He is not satisfied with saying simply that *it is so*; but connects with it the idea that whatever God does is done in a way worthy of himself, and so as to illustrate his own perfections.

By Christ Jesus. By the medium of Christ; or through him. All the favours that Paul expected for himself, or his fellowmen, he believed would be conferred through the Redeemer. Even the supply of our temporal wants comes to us through the Saviour. Were it not for the atonement, there is no more reason, to suppose that blessings would be conferred on men than that they would be on fallen angels. For them no atonement has been made; and at the hand of justice they have received only wretchedness and woe.

{b} "supply all your" Ps 23:1 {*} "need" "wants" {c} "riches in glory"

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Now unto God and our Father*, etc. **See Barnes "Ro 16:27"**.

It was common for Paul to address such an ascription of praise to God, at the close of his epistles.

{d} "unto God" Ro 16:27 {+} "Father" "Our God and Father"

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Salute every saint in Christ Jesus*. It was usual for him also to close his epistles with affectionate salutations to various members of the churches to which he wrote. These salutations are generally specific, and mention the names, particularly if prominent members of the churches. See the close of the epistles to the Romans; 1Corinthians; Colossians; and 2 Timothy. In this epistle, however, as in some others, the salutation is general. Why none are specified in particular is not certainly known.

The brethren which are with me, etc. The word "brethren" here probably refers to ministers that were with Paul, as the "saints" in general are mentioned in the next verse. It is possible that at Rome the ministers were known by the general name of *the brethren. —Pierce*.

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *All the saints salute you*. All in Rome, where this epistle was written. No individuals are specified, perhaps because none of the Christians at Rome were personally known to the church at Philippi. They would, however, feel a deep interest in a church which had thus the confidence and affection of Paul. There is reason to believe that the bonds of affection among the churches then were much stronger than they are now. There was a generous warmth in the newness of the Christian affections the first ardour of love; and the common trials to which they were exposed would serve to bind them closely together.

Chiefly they that are of Caesar's household. That is, of Nero, who was at that time the reigning emperor. The name *Caesar* was given to all the emperors after the time of Julius Caesar, as the name Pharaoh was the common name of the kings of Egypt. The *phrase* here used—"the household of Caesar"—may refer to the relatives of the emperor; and it is certainly possible that some of them may have been converted to Christianity. But it does not of necessity refer to those related to him, but may be applied to his domestics, or to some of the officers of the court that were more particularly employed around his person and as it is more probable that some of them would be converted than his own relatives, it is more safe to suppose that they were intended. **See Barnes "Php 1:13"**.

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*, etc. **See Barnes "Ro 16:20"**.

In regard to the subscription at the end of this epistle it may be remarked, as has been done of the other subscriptions at the end of the epistles, that it is of no authority whatever. There is no reason, however, to doubt that in this case it is correct. The epistle bears internal evidence of having been written from Rome, and was doubtless sent by Epaphroditus. See the Intro., § 3. There is considerable variety in the subscription. The Greek is, "It was written to the Philippians from Rome by Epaphroditus." The Syriac, "The epistle to the Philippians was written from Rome, and sent by Epaphroditus." The AEthiopic, "To the Philippians, by Timothy."

REMARKS.

The principal lessons taught in this dosing chapter are the following:—

(1.) It is our duty to be firm in the Lord, in all the trials, temptations, and persecutions to which we may be exposed, Php 4:1. This duty should be pressed on Christians by their teachers, and by each other, by all that is tender and sacred in the Christian profession, and all that is endearing in Christian friendship. Like Paul, we should appeal to others as "brethren dearly beloved and longed for; "and by all their affection for us we should entreat them to be steadfast in the Christian profession. As their "joy and crown," also, ministers should desire that their people should be holy.

Their own happiness and reward is to be closely connected with the firmness with which their people maintain the principles of the Christian faith. If Christians, therefore, wish to impart the highest joy to their religious teachers, and to exalt them as high as possible m future happiness and glory, they should strive to be faithful to their great Master, and to be steadfast in attachment to his cause.

(2.) It is the duty of those who have from any cause been alienated, to seek to be reconciled, Php 4:2. They should be of the same mind. Almost nothing does more to hinder the cause of religion than alienations and bickerings among its professed friends. It is *possible* for them to live in harmony, and to be of the same mind in the Lord; and such is the importance of this, that it well deserves to be enforced by apostolic authority and persuasion. It may be observed, also, that in the case referred to in this chapter—that of Euodias and Syntyche—the exhortation to reconciliation is addressed to *both*. Which was in the wrong, or whether both were is not intimated, and is not needful for us to know. It is enough to know that there was alienation, and both of them were exhorted to see that the quarrel was made up. So, in all cases where members of the church are at variance it is the business of both parties to seek to be reconciled, and neither party is right if he waits for the other before he moves in the matter. If you feel that you have been injured, go and tell your brother kindly wherein you think he has done you wrong, he may at once explain the matter, and show that you have misunderstood it, or he may make proper confession or restitution. Or, if he will do neither, you will have done your duty, Mt 18:15. If you are conscious that you have injured him, then nothing is more proper than that you should go and make confession. The blame of the quarrel rests wholly on you. And if some meddling third person has got up the quarrel between you, then go and see your brother, and disappoint the devices of the enemy of religion.

(3.) It is our duty and our privilege to rejoice in the Lord always, Php 4:4. As God is unchanging, we may always find joy in him. The character of God which we loved yesterday, and in the contemplation of which we found happiness then, is the same to-day, and its contemplation will furnish the same joy to us now. His promises are the same; his government is the same; his readiness to impart consolation is the same; the support which he can give in trial and temptation is the same. Though in our own hearts we may find much over which to mourn, yet when we look away from ourselves we may find abundant sources of consolation and peace. The Christian, therefore, may be always happy. If he will look to God, and not to himself—-to heaven, and not to earth— he will find permanent and substantial sources of enjoyment. But in nothing else than God can we rejoice always. Our friends, in whom we find comfort, are taken away; the property that we thought would make us happy, fails to do so; and pleasures that we thought would satisfy, pall upon the sense and make us wretched. No man can be permanently happy who does not make THE LORD the source of joy, and who does not expect to find his chief pleasure in him.

(4.) It is a privilege to be permitted to go and commit everything to God, Php 4:6,7. The mind *may* be in such a state that it shall feel no *anxiety* about anything. We may feel so certain that God will supply all our wants; that he will bestow upon us all that is really necessary for us in this life and the next, and that he will withhold from us nothing which it is not for our real good to have withheld, that the mind may be constantly in a state of peace. With a thankful heart for all the mercies which we *have* enjoyed —and in all cases they are many—we may go and commit ourselves to God for all that we need hereafter. Such is the privilege of religion; such an advantage is it to be a Christian. Such a state of mind will be followed by peace. And it is only in such a way that true peace can be found. In every other method there will be agitation of mind and deep anxiety. If we

have not this confidence in God, and this readiness to go and commit all to him, we shall be perplexed with the cares of this life; losses and disappointments will harass us; the changes which occur will weary and wear out our spirits; and through life we shall be tossed as on a restless ocean.

(5.) It is the duty of Christians to be upright in every respect Php 4:8. Every friend of the Redeemer should be a man of incorruptible and unsuspected integrity. He should be one who can always be depended on to do what is right, and pure, and true, and lovely. I know not that there is a more important verse in the New Testament than the *eighth* verse of this chapter. It deserves to be recorded in letters of gold in the dwelling of every Christian, and it would be well if it could be made to shine on his way as if written in characters of living light. There should be no virtue, no truth, no noble plan of benevolence, no pure and holy undertaking in society, of which the Christian should not be, according to his ability, the patron and the friend. The reasons are obvious. It is not only because this is in accordance with the law of God, but it is from its effect on the community. The people of the world judge of religion by the character of its professed friends. It is not from what they hear in the pulpit, or learn from the Bible, or from treatises on divinity; it is from what they see in the lives of those who profess to follow Christ. They mark the expression of the eye; the curl of the lip; the words that we speak; and if they perceive peevishness and irritability, they set it down to the credit of religion. They watch the conduct, the temper and disposition, the manner of doing business, the respect which a man has for truth, the way in which he keeps his promises, and set it all down to the credit of religion. If a professed Christian fails in any one of these things, he dishonours religion, and neutralizes all the good which he might otherwise do. It is not only the man in the church who is untrue, and dishonest, and unjust, and unlovely in him temper, that does evil; it is he who is *either* false, or dishonest, or unjust, or unlovely in his temper. One evil propensity will neutralize all that is good; and one member of the church who fails to lead a moral and upright life will do much to neutralize all the good that can be done by all the rest of the church. Comp. Ec 10:1.

(6.) It is the duty of Christians to show kindness to the ministers of the gospel, especially in times and circumstances of want, Php 4:10,14-17.

Paul commended much what the Philippians had done for him. Yet they had done no more than they ought to do. See 1Co 9:11. He had established the gospel among them, carrying it to them by great personal sacrifice and self-denial. What he had done for *them* had cost him much more than what they had done for *him* and was of much more value. He had been in want. He was a prisoner; among strangers; incapable of exerting himself for his own support; not in a situation to minister to his own wants, as he had often done by tent-making; and in these circumstances he needed the sympathizing aid of friends, he was not a man to be voluntarily dependent on others, or to be at any time a burden to them. But circumstances beyond his control had made it necessary for others to supply his wants. The Philippians nobly responded to his claims on them, and did all that he could ask. Their conduct is a good example for other Christians to imitate in their treatment of the ministers of the gospel. Ministers now are often in want. They become old, and are unable to labour; they are sick, and cannot render the service which they have been accustomed to; their families are afflicted, and they have not the means of providing for them comfortably in sickness. It is to be remembered, also, that such cases often happen where a minister has spent the best part of his life in the service of a people; where he has devoted his most vigorous days to their welfare; where he has been unable to lay up anything for sickness or old age; where he may have abandoned what would have been a lucrative calling in life, for the purpose of preaching the gospel. If there ever is

a claim on the generosity of a people, his case is one; and there is no debt of gratitude which a people ought more cheerfully to pay than that of providing for the wants of an aged or an afflicted and disabled servant of Christ, who has spent his best years in endeavouring to train them and their children up for heaven. Yet, it cannot be denied that great injustice is often done in such cases. The poor beast that has served a man and his family in the days of his rigour is often turned out in old age to die; and something like this sometimes occurs in the treatment of ministers of the gospel. The conduct of a people, generous in many other respects, is often unaccountable in their treatment of their pastors; and one of the lessons which ministers often have to learn, like their Master, by bitter experience, is the ingratitude of those for whose welfare they have toiled, and prayed, and wept.

(7.) Let us learn to be contented with our present condition, Php 4:11,12. Paul learned this lesson. It is not a native state of mind. It is a lesson to be acquired by experience. By nature we are all restless and impatient; we are reaching after things that we have not, and often after things that we cannot and ought not to have. We are envious of the condition of others, and suppose that if we had what they have we should be happy. Yet, if we have right feelings, we shall always find enough in our present condition to make us *contented*. Ye shall have such confidence in the arrangements of Providence as to feel that things are ordered for the best. If we are poor, and persecuted, and in want, or are prostrated by sickness, we shall feel that there is some good reason why this is so arranged—though the reason may not be known to us. If we are benevolent, as we ought to be, we shall be willing that others shall be made happy by what they possess, instead of coveting it for ourselves, and desiring to wrest it from them. If we are disposed to estimate our mercies, and not to give up our minds to a spirit of complaining, we shall see enough around us to make us contented. Paul was a prisoner; he was poor; he was among strangers; he had neither wife nor children; he was about to be tried for his life, and probably put to death—yet he learned to be content. He had a good conscience; the hope of heaven; a sound intellect; a heart disposed to do good, and confidence in God—and why should a man in such circumstances murmur? Says Jeremy Taylor, "Am I fallen into the hands of publicans and sequestrators, who have taken all from me? What now? Let me look about me. They have left me the sun and moon, fire and water, a loving wife, and many friends to pity me, and some to relieve me, and I can still discourse; and unless I list, they have not taken away my merry countenance, and a cheerful spirit, and a good conscience; they still have left me the providence of God, and all the promises of the gospel, and my religion, and my hopes of heaven, and my charity to them too; and still I sleep and digest; I eat and drink; I read and meditate; I can walk in my neighbour's pleasant fields and see the varieties of natural beauties, and delight in all in which God delights-that is, in virtue, and wisdom, in the whole creation, and in God himself. And he who hath so many causes of joy, and so great, is very much in love with sorrow and peevishness who loses all these pleasures, and chooses to sit down upon his little handful of thorns." Holy living, chap. ii. & vi. Let the whole of this section "on Contentedness" be read. It is one of the most beautiful arguments for contentment that ever proceeded from uninspired lips.

(8.) In all these things; in all the duties and the trials of life; in all our efforts to meet temptation, and to cultivate contentment with our present condition, let us put our trust in the Saviour, Php 4:13. Paul said that he could "do all things through Christ who strengthened him." His strength was there; ours is there also. If we attempt these things, relying on our own strength, we shall certainly fail. The bad passions of our nature will get the ascendancy, and we shall be left to discontent and murmuring. The arm that is to uphold us is that of the Redeemer; and, relying on that, we shall find

no duty so arduous that we may not be able to perform it; no temptation so formidable that we may not be able to meet it; no trial so great that we may not be able to bear it; no situation in life through which we may be called to pass, where we may not find contentment and peace. And may God of his rich mercy give to each one who shall read these Notes on this beautiful epistle to the Philippians, abundant grace thus to confide in the Saviour, and to practise all the duties so tenderly enjoined on the Philippian Christians, and on us, by this illustrious prisoner in the cause of Christ.

REMARKS ON GRECIAN GAMES

The apostle Paul has many allusions to these games in his epistles, but especially in the third chapter of this epistle, in which his eye is evidently fixed upon the exercise of running.

dromov—dromos— or the exercise of running, was in great esteem amongst the ancient Grecians, insomuch that such as prepared themselves for it thought it worth their while to use means to burn or parch their spleen, because it was believed to be an hindrance to then, and retard them in their course. Homer tells us that swiftness is one of the most excellent endowments a man can be blessed withal. —Oyyss. v. 147, which is thus in the translation

No greater honour has been e'er attained
Than what strong hands or nimble feet have gained

Indeed, all those exercises that conduced to fit men for war, were more especially valued. Now, swiftness was looked upon as an excellent qualification in a warrior, both because it serves for a sudden assault and onset, and likewise for a nimble retreat; and, therefore, it is not to be wondered that the constat character which *Homer* gives of *Achilles* is, that he was *podav wkuv*, or swift of foot. And in the holy Scripture, *David*, in his poetical lamentation over these two great captains, *Saul* and *Jonathan*, take particular notice of this warlike quality of theirs. "They were," says he, "swifter than eagles, stronger than lions!"

Racing may be traced back to the earliest period of Grecian antiquity, and may be regarded as the first friendly contest in which men engaged. Accordingly, the Olympic and Pythain, probably also the other games, opened with foot-races, Foot-racing, perfected by systematic practice, was divided into different kinds, If you ran merely to the end of the course, (*stadion*) it was called stadium; if you went thither and back, you ran the double course *diaulov*.

The longest course was *dolicov*—dolichos—which required extraordinary speed and power of endurance. Suidas assigns twenty-four stadia to the *dolicov*, and others only twelve; but the measure of it seems not to have been fixed or determinate, but variable at pleasure. Sometimes they ran back again to the place whence they at first set out, and sometimes they ran in armour. The lengths above mentioned have even been increased tot he number of four and twenty times over the stadium. This, it must be understood, was a large semi-circle of about one hundred and twenty-five geometrical paces long, which it derived the name stadium, it being a measure ordinarily used among the Greeks, being the eighth part of a Roman mile. These lengths will give some idea of the severity of the trial, and serve to illustrate the meaning of the apostle, when he speaks of running with patience in the race. Indeed, one Ladas, a victor at the Olympic games in the *dolicov*,] or long race, was so exhausted by his efforts, that immediately on gaining the honour and being crowned, he yielded up his breath: a fact which also serves to throw light on the Scripture language, as showing with what intense eagerness these aspirants strove for the perishing chaplets. In the preparatory discipline, everything

was done that could conduce to swiftness and strength. The training was severe, and the exercises were performed with the body naked and well oiled. The contest was generally most severe: to reach the goal sooner by one foot was enough to decide the *victory*. The competitors employed all their ability, and displayed the greatest eagerness to gain the prize. The nearer, too, they approached to the goal, the more did they increase their efforts. Sometimes the victory depended upon a final spring; and happy he that retained enough power to leap first to the goal.

For these remarks the reader is indebted to *Potter's Archeologia Graeca* and *Kitto's Cyclopaedia of biblical Literature* — Editor.

End of Barnes Notes on Philippians.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 1

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 1

COLOSSIANS

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS

INTRODUCTION.

I.—THE SITUATION OF COLOSSE.

COLOSSE, or, as it is written in many manuscripts, *Colosse*, was a celebrated city of Phrygia, in Asia Minor. See the map prefixed to the Notes on the Acts of the Apostles. It was in the southern part of that province, was nearly directly east of Ephesus, north of Laodicea, and nearly west of Antioch in Pisidia. It is mentioned by Herodotus (Polyhymn. Lib. viii. c. 30) as "a great city of Phrygia, in that part where the river Lycus descends into a chasm of the earth and disappears, but which, after a distance of five stadia, rises again and flows into the Meander" *ev ton maiandron*. Xenophon also mentions the city of Colosse as being *poliv oikoumenh eudaimwn kai megalh* "a city well inhabited, pleasant, and large." Expedi. Cyr. Lib. i. In the time of Strabo, however, it seems to have been much diminished in size, as it is mentioned by him among the "smaller towns," *polismata* Lib. xii p. 864. In the latter part of the reign of Nero, and not long after this epistle was written, Colosse, Laodicea, and Hierapolis, were at the same time overwhelmed by an earthquake. Pliny, Hist. Nat. Lib. v. c. 41. Colosse recovered, however, from this shock, and is mentioned by the Byzantine writers as among the most opulent cities. See Koppe, *Proleg*. The ancient town is now extinct, but its site is occupied by a village called *Chonos*, or *Khonas*. This village is described by Mr. Arundell as being situated most picturesquely under the immense range of Mount Cadmus, which rises to a very lofty and perpendicular height behind the village, in some parts clothed with pines, in others bare of soil, with vast chasms and caverns. The immense perpendiculary chasm, seen in the view, affords an outlet to a wide mountain torrent, the bed of which is dry in summer. The approach to the village is as wild as the village itself is beautiful, abounding in tall trees, from which vines of most luxuriant growth are suspended. In the immediate neighbourhood are several vestiges of an ancient city, consisting of arches, vaults, squared stones, while the ground is strewed with broken pottery, which so generally and so remarkably indicates the site of ancient towns in the East. That these ruins are all that now remain of Colosse there seems no reason to doubt. The following cut will furnish an idea of their appearance.

Colosse, as has been remarked, was situated in Phrygia. On the name Phrygia, and the origin of the Phrygians, very different opinions have been entertained, which it is not necessary to specify in order to an understanding of this epistle. They claimed to be the most ancient people of the world; and it is said that this claim was admitted by the Egyptians, who though boastful of their own

antiquity, were content to regard themselves as second to the Phrygians. Pict. Bib. Like other parts of Asia Minor which were distinguished as provinces under the Roman empire, Phrygia is first historically known as a kingdom, and continued such until it was made a province of the Lydian monarchy. It remained a province of that monarchy until Croesus, king of Lydia, was conquered by Cyrus of Persia, who added the Lydian kingdom to his empire. After that, Phrygia, like the rest of Asia Minor, became successively subject to the Greeks, the Romans, and the Turks. In the time when the gospel was preached there it was subject to the Romans; it is now under the dominion of the Turks. Phrygia was anciently celebrated for its fertility; but, under the Moslem yoke, a great part of the country lies uncultivated.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH IN COLOSSE.

THE gospel was first preached in Phrygia by Paul and Silas, accompanied also by Timothy, Ac 15:40,41, 16:1-3,6.

It is said that they "went throughout Phrygia," which means, doubtless, that they went to the principal cities and towns. In Ac 18:23, it is said that Paul visited Phrygia again, after he had been to Philippi, Athens, Jerusalem, and Antioch. He "went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples." It is not, indeed, expressly said of Paul and Silas that they went to Colosse; but, as this was one of the principal cities of Phrygia, there is every reason to suppose that they preached the gospel there. It has been doubted, however, whether Paul was ever at Colosse. It is expressly affirmed by Hug, (*Intro*.,) and by Koppe, (*Proleg*.,) that Paul had not taught at Colosse himself, and that he had no personal acquaintance with the Christians there. It has been maintained that the gospel was, probably, first preached there by Epaphras, who heard the apostle at Ephesus, and who returned and preached the gospel to his own countrymen. The opinion that Paul had not been there, and was personally unacquainted with the church, is founded on his declaration in Col 2:1, "For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, *and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh*." From this it is inferred that he was neither at Colosse nor at Laodicea. Yet it may be justly doubted whether this passage will authorize this conclusion. Theodoret long since suggested that the meaning of this was, "I have not only a concern for you, but I have also great concern for those who have not seen me." Dr. Lardher, however, maintains that the gospel was preached in Colosse by Paul. The reasons which he gives for the opinion are briefly these :—

(1.) The declarations of Luke, already quoted, that Paul more than once passed through Phrygia. The presumption is, that he would visit the chief cities of that province in passing and repassing through it. It is to be remembered, that, according to Col 2:1, Colosse and *Laodicea* are placed on the same footing; and hence the difficulty of the supposition that he did not visit the former is increased. Can it be supposed that Paul would go again and again through that region, preaching the gospel in the points where it would be likely to exert the widest influence, and yet never visit either of these principal cities of the province, especially when it is remembered that Laodicea was the capital?

(2.) Dr. Lardner appeals to what Paul says in Col 1:6, 2:6,7, in proof that he knew that they had been rightly taught the gospel. From this he infers that Paul had himself communicated it to them. This conclusion is not perfectly clear, since it is certain that Paul might have known their first teachers, and been satisfied that they taught the truth; but it is such language as he would have used on the supposition that he was the spiritual father of the church.

(3.) Epaphras, says Dr. Lardher, was not their first instructor in the gospel. This he infers from what is said of him in Col 1:7, and in Col 4:12,13. He is commended as "one of them," as a "fellow-servant," as "a faithful minister of Christ," as one "beloved." But he is not spoken of as sustaining any nearer relation to them. If he had been the founder of their church, he thinks it is incredible that there is no allusion to this fact in writing to them; that the apostle should have spoken more than once of him, and never referred to his agency in establishing the church there.

(4.) Paul does, in effect, say that he had himself dispensed the gospel to these Colossians, Col 1:21-25. The salutations at the end of the epistle, to various persons at Laodicea and Colosse, show that he was personally acquainted there. See these and other reasons drawn out in Lardner's Works, vol. vi., pp. 151 seq., Ed. Lond. 1829. The considerations suggested by Dr. Lardher seem to me to be sufficient to render it in the highest degree probable that the church at Colosse was founded by Paul.

III.——WHEN AND WHERE THE EPISTLE WAS WRITTEN.

THIS epistle is believed to have been written at Rome, when Paul was a prisoner there, and at about the same time that the epistle to the Ephesians, and the epistle to Philemon, were written; and that they were all sent by the same persons. It is said in the epistle itself, Col 4:7,9 that it was sent by Tychicus and Onesimus, both of whom are commended as "faithful and beloved" brethren. But the epistle to the Ephesians was written at Rome, (see the Intro.,) and was sent by Tychicus, (Eph 6:21;) and the epistle to Philemon was sent by Onesimus. It is probable, therefore, that these persons visited Ephesus, Colosse, and the place where Philemon resided; or, rather, that Tychicus and Onesimus visited Colosse together, and that then Tychicus went to Ephesus, and Onesimus went to his former master, Philemon. That this epistle and the one to Philemon were written at about the same time is further apparent from the fact that Epaphras is mentioned in both as with the apostle, and as joining in the salutation, Col 4:12 Php 1:23. The epistle to the Colossians bears internal marks of having been written at Rome, when the apostle was a prisoner. Thus, in Col 1:24, he says, "who now rejoice in my sufferings for you." Col 4:18, "Remember my bonds." If this be so, then it is not difficult to fix the date of the epistle with some degree of accuracy. This would be about the year 62.

IV.—-THE OCCASION AND DESIGN OF THE EPISTLE.

THE general drift of this epistle has a strong resemblance to that addressed to the Ephesians, and it bears internal marks of being from the same hand. It was evidently written in view of errors which extensively prevailed among the churches of that part of Asia Minor, and was designed to inculcate the same general duties. It is of importance, therefore, to possess a general understanding of the nature of these errors,in order to a correct interpretation of the epistle. The church at Colosse was one of a circle or group of churches, lying near each other, in Asia Minor; and it is probable that the same general views of philosophy, and the same errors, prevailed throughout the entire region where they were situated. That group of churches embraced those at Ephesus, Laodicea, Thyatira, and, in general, those addressed in the Apocalypse as "the seven churches of Asia." From some of the notices of those churches in the New Testament, as well as from the epistle before us, we may learn what errors prevailed there in genera], and against what form of error particularly the epistle to the Colossians was designed to guard.

(1.) Several classes of errorists are mentioned as existing within the limits of the "seven churches of Asia." Thus, in the church at Ephesus, "those which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars," Re 2:2; in Smyrna, those "which say they are Jews, and are not, but are of the

synagogue of Satan," Re 2:9; in Thyatira, "that woman Jezebel, which called herself a prophetess," Re 2:20; in Pergamos, "them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans;" those "who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel," Re 2:14,15. The near proximity of these churches to Colosse would render it probable that the infection of these errors might have reached that church also.

(2.) The apostle Paul, in his parting speech to the elders of the church at Ephesus, alludes to dangerous teachers to which the church there might be exposed, in such a manner as to show that there was some peculiar danger from such teachers in that community. "For I know that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them," Ac 20:29,30. He does not specify, indeed, the kind of danger to which they would be exposed; but it is evident that the danger arose from plausible teachers of error. These were of two classes—those who would come in from abroad, implying probably that there were such teachers in the neighbouring churches; and such as would spring up among themselves.

(3.) In that vicinity there appear to have been numerous disciples of John the Baptist, retaining many Jewish prejudices and prepossessions, who would be tenacious of the observances of the Mosaic law. What were their views is not precisely known. But it is clear that they regarded the Jewish law as still binding; that they would be rigid in its observance, and in insisting on its observance by others; that they had at best, if any, a very imperfect acquaintance with Christianity; and that they were ignorant of the miraculous powers of the Holy Spirit, and of the fact that that had been poured out in a remarkable manner under the preaching of the apostles. Paul found a number of these disciples of John at Ephesus, who professed not to have received the Holy Ghost, and who said that they had been baptized unto John's baptism, Ac 19:1-3. Among the most distinguished and influential of the disciples of John in that region was Apollos, Ac 18:24,25, who is represented as an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures. He taught at Ephesus; but how long before he was made more fully acquainted with the gospel is unknown. He is represented as having been zealously engaged in that work, and as being eminently successful, Ac 18:25. There is no reason to doubt that he contributed not a little in diffusing, in that region, the peculiar views held by those who were known as the disciples of John. What was precisely the doctrine which Apollos taught, before "the way of God was expounded more perfectly to him," Ac 18:26, is not now known. There is every reason, however, to suppose that he would insist on the observance of the Jewish laws, and the customs of their nation. The opinions which would be *likely* to be defended by one in his circumstances, would be those which prevailed when John preached—when the law of Moses was considered to be in full force, and when it was necessary to observe all his institutions. The advocates for the Jewish law among the churches would be likely to appeal with great force to the sentiments of so good and so eloquent a man as Apollos. So extensive was his influence, that Koppe supposes that the principal errors prevailing in the churches in Phrygia, which it was the design of the apostle in this epistle to correct, could be traced to the influence of the disciples of John, and especially to the teachings of this eloquent man. Proleg., p. 160.

(4.) If we look into the epistle itself, we shall be able to determine with some degree of certainty the errors which prevailed, and which it was the design of this epistle to correct, and we shall find that they correspond remarkably with what we might anticipate, from what we have seen to be the errors abounding in that region.

(a.) Their first danger arose from the influence of philosophy, Col 2:4-8. The apostle warns them to beware lest any one should "beguile them with enticing words;" he cautions them against "philosophy and vain deceit "—a philosophy that was based on the "tradition of men," "after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." Such philosophy might be expected to prevail in those cities so near to Greece, and so much imbued with the Grecian spirit; and one of the chief dangers which would beset them would arise from its prevalence.

(b.) A second source of danger referred to, was that arising from the influence of those who insisted on the observance of the rites and customs of the Jewish religion. This the apostle refers to in Col 2:16: "Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days." These are subjects on which the Jews would insist much, and in this respect the disciples of John would be likely to sympathize entirely with them. It is evident that there were those among them who were endeavouring to enforce the observance of these things.

(c.) There is some evidence of the prevalence there of a philosophy more Oriental than Grecian—a philosophy that savoured of Gnosticism. This philosophy was subsequently the foundation of a large part of the errors that crept into the church. Indications of its prevalence in Colosse, occur in places like the following: Col 2:9, "For in him [Christ] dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead *bodily*; "from which it would seem probable that there were those who denied that the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily in the Lord Jesus—a favourite doctrine of the Gnostics, who maintained that the assumption of human nature, by the Son of God, was *in appearance* only, and that he died on the cross only *in appearance*, and not in reality. So, in Col 2:18, there is a reference to "a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which are not seen, and which tend vainly to puff up a fleshly mind"—a description that will apply with remarkable accuracy to the homage paid by the Gnostics to the AEons, and to the general efforts of those who held the doctrines of that philosophy to intrude into those things which are not seen, and to offer an explanation of the mode of the Divine existence, and the nature of the Divine agency. **See Barnes "Col 2:18".**

It will contribute not a little to a proper understanding of this epistle, to keep these things in remembrance respecting the kind of philosophy which prevailed in the region in which Colosse was situated, and the nature of the dangers to which they were exposed.

(5.) It will be seen from these remarks, and from the epistle itself, that the difficulties in the church at Colosse did not relate to the moral and religious character of its members. There is no mention of any improper conduct, either in individuals or in the church at large, as there was in the church at Corinth; there is no intimation that they had been guilty of any sins but such as were common to all heathens before conversion. There are, indeed, intimations that they were exposed to sin, and there are solemn charges against indulgence in it. But the sins to which they were exposed were such as prevailed in all the ancient heathen world, and doubtless such as the Gentile part of the church, particularly, had been guilty of before their conversion. The following sins particularly are mentioned: "Fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, covetousness, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communications, and lying," Col 3:5-9. These were common sins among the heathen, See Barnes Notes on Romans Chapter 1, and to a re]apse into these they were particularly exposed; but it does not appear that any of the members of the church had given occasion for public reproach, or for apostolic reproof, by falling into them. As they were sins, however, in which they had formerly indulged,

Col 3:7

and as they were, therefore, the more liable to fall into them again, there was abundant occasion for all the solicitude which the apostle manifests on the subject.

From the remarks now made, it is easy to see what was the *design* of the epistle to the Colossians. It was primarily to guard the church against the errors to which it was exposed from the prevalence of false philosophy, and from the influence of false teachers in religion; to assert the superior claims of Christianity over all philosophy, and its independence of the *peculiar* rites and customs of the Jewish religion.

It has been asked *why* the apostle wrote an epistle to the church at Colosse, rather than to the church ia Laodicea, especially as Laodicea was the capital of Phrygia? And it has been asked, also, why an epistle was addressed to that church so strikingly resembling the Epistle to the Ephesians, (see § 5,) especially as it has been supposed that the Epistle to the Ephesians was designed to be a *circular* letter, to be read by the churches in the vicinity? The reasons why an epistle was addressed particularly to the church at Colosse seem to have been such as the following:—-

(1.) Onesimus was at that time with Paul at Rome, and was about to return to his master, Philemon, at Colosse. See the Introduction to the Epistle to Philemon. It was perfectly natural that Paul should avail himself of the opportunity thus afforded him, to address a letter to the church at Colosse also.

(2.) Epaphras, a principal teacher of the church at Colosse, was also with Paul at Rome, Col 1:7 4:12. He was at that time a fellow-prisoner with him, Phm 1:23, and it is not improbable that it was at his solicitation particularly that this epistle was written. Paul had learned from him the state of the church at Colosse, Col 1:7,8, and it is not impossible, as Koppe conjectures, that he had been sent to Rome by the church to seek the counsel of the apostle in the state of things which then existed in Colosse. Epaphras was, at any rate, greatly interested in the state of things in the church, as well as in the condition of the churches at Laodicea and Hierapolis, Col 4:13, and nothing was more natural than that he should endeavour to induce the apostle to direct a letter that might be of benefit to them all.

(3.) A particular reason for sending this epistle appears to have been to confirm the authority of Epaphras, and to give the sanction of the apostle to the truths which he had taught. In their difficulties and dangers, Epaphras had taken an important part in giving them counsel. His views might have been opposed; or his authority might have been disputed by the teachers of error there, and it was important that the apostolic sanction should be given to what he had taught. Hence the apostle speaks with so much affection of Epaphras, and so warmly of him as a faithful servant of Christ, Col 1:7 4:12,13.

(4.) It may be added, that although there is a strong resemblance between this epistle and that to the Ephesians, and although it may be regarded as probable that the epistle to the Ephesians was intended in part as a circular, yet this epistle would not have been needless. It contains many things which are not in that epistle; is especially adapted to the state of things in the church at Colosse, and would have the greater weight with Christians there from being specifically addressed to them. See Michaelis' Intro. to the New Testament, vol. iv. 122, and Koppe, Proleg. pp. 163, 164.

V.—-THE RESEMBLANCE BETWEEN THIS EPISTLE AND THAT TO THE EPHESIANS,

EVERY person who has given any considerable degree of attention to this epistle must have been struck with its remarkable similarity to the epistle to the Ephesians. That resemblance is greater by far than exists between any other two of the epistles of Paul—a resemblance not only in the

general style and manner which may be expected to characterize the different productions of the same author, but extending to the course of thought; the structure of the argument; the particular instructions; and to some phrases which do not occur elsewhere. This similarity relates particularly to the following points:—

(1.) In the representation of the reason for which the apostle was imprisoned at Rome. This resemblance, Dr. Paley (*Horae Paul*.) remarks, is "too close to be accounted for from accident, and yet too indirect and latent to be imputed to design, and is one which cannot easily be resolved into any other source than truth." It is not found in any other of his epistles. It consists in this, that Paul in these two epistles attributes his imprisonment not to his preaching Christianity in general, but to his asserting the right of the Gentiles to be admitted into the church on an equal footing with the Jews, and without being obliged to conform themselves to the Jewish law. This was the doctrine to which he considered himself a martyr. Thus, in Col 1:24, he says, "Who now rejoice in my sufferings *for you*;" and in Col 2:1, "For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea." That is, his conflicts and trials, his imprisonment and danger of death, had somehow come upon him in consequence of his endeavouring to spread tile gospel in such places as Colosse and Laodicea. These were Gentile communities; and the meaning is, that his trials were the result of his efforts to preach among the *Gentiles*. The same representation is made in the epistle to the Ephesians—likewise written from Rome during his imprisonment. "For this cause I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ *for you Gentiles*," Eph 3:1. And this coincidence is also apparent by comparing two other places in the epistles. Thus, Col 4:3, "Praying for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance to speak the *mysteries of Christ, for which I am in bonds*. An allusion to the same "*mystery*" occurs also in the epistle to the Ephesians. "Whereby when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the *mystery of Christ—-that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel*," Col 3:4-6. In the Acts of the Apostles the same statement occurs in regard to the cause for which the apostle was persecuted and imprisoned; and it is on this coincidence, which is so evidently undesigned, that Paley has founded the argument for the genuineness of the epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians. *Horae Paulinae*. The statement in the Acts of the Apostles is, that the persecutions of Paul, which led to his appeal to the Roman emperor and to his imprisonment at Rome, were in consequence of his maintaining that the Gentiles were, in the Christian administration, to be admitted to the same privileges as the Jews, or that there was no distinction between them in the matter of salvation; and his sufferings therefore were, as he says, "in behalf of the Gentiles." See particularly Ac 21:28 22:21,22.

From these passages, it appears that the offence which drew down on Paul the vengeance of his countrymen was his mission to the Gentiles, and his maintaining that they were to be admitted to the privileges of salvation on the same terms as the Jews.

(2.) There is a strong resemblance between the course of thought and the general structure of the epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians. To an extent that does not occur in any other of Paul's epistles, the same topics are introduced, and in the same order and connexion. Indeed, in some portions they are almost identical. Particularly the order in which the various topics are introduced is nearly the same. The following portions of the two epistles will be seen to correspond with each other:——

EPHESIANS 1. 15—-19 ..... with COLOSSIANS 1.9—-11.

1. 20—-23 ..... " ..... 1.15—19.

1. 10 ..... " ..... 1.20.
2. 1—10 ..... "..... 1.21—23.
3. 7 ..... " ..... 1.25.
3. 9, 10 ..... " ..... 1.26, 27.
3. 17 ..... " 2.7
2. 11—22 ..... "..... 2.11—-15.
4. 14 ..... "..... 2.8.
4. 15, 16 ..... "..... 2.19.
4. 25 ..... "..... 3.9.
4. 22—-24 ..... "..... 3.9-10.
4. 32 ..... "..... 3.12.
5. 19, 20 ..... "..... 3.16, 17.
5. 21; 6.6—9 ..... "..... 3.18-22; 4.1.
5. 19 ..... "..... 4.3.
5. 16 ..... "..... 4.5.
6. 21 ..... "..... 4.7.

This resemblance, thus carried almost through the epistle, shows that there was a similarity of condition in the two churches in reference to the dangers to which they were exposed, the kind of philosophy which prevailed, the false teachers who might have an influence over them, and the particular duties to which it was desirable their attention should be turned. There is, indeed, some considerable variety of phraseology in the discussion of these topics, but still the resemblance is remarkable, and would indicate that the epistles were written not far from the same time, and clearly by the same person. It is remarkable, among other things, as Michaelis has observed, that it is only in these two epistles that the apostle warns his readers against lying, Eph 4:25 Col 3:9. Hence we may conclude that this vice was one that particularly prevailed in the region where these churches were situated, and that the members of these churches had been particularly addicted to this vice before their conversion.

This note is too long to fit in one passage, see it continued in Notes on Col 1:2

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 2

Continuation of Introductory Notes to Colossians

THE EPISTLE FROM LAODICEA.

IN Col 4:16, of this epistle, the apostle gives this direction: "And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea." The former part of this verse is clear; and the direction was given, doubtless, because the churches of Colosse and Laodicea were in the vicinity of each other, and the instructions were adapted to both churches. Doubtless the same form of philosophy prevailed, and the churches were exposed to the same errors. But it is not so clear what is meant by the "epistle from Laodicea." The most natural and obvious interpretation would be, that Paul had sent a letter also to that church, and that he wished them to procure it and read it. But no such epistle is now extant, and,

consequently, much difficulty has been felt in determining what the apostle referred to. A brief examination of the opinions entertained on the subject seems necessary in this place. They are the following:—-

1. It has been supposed that the reference is to a letter sent *from* the Laodiceans to Paul, proposing to him some questions which they desired him to answer, and that he now wishes the Colossians to procure that letter, in order that they might more fully understand the drift of the epistle which he now sent to them. This opinion was held by Theodoret, and has been defended by Storr, Rosenmuller, and others. But the objections to it are obvious and conclusive.

(1.) It is not the fair meaning of the language used by Paul. If he had referred to a letter *to him*, he would have said so; whereas the obvious meaning of the language used is, that the Colossians were to procure a letter in the possession of the Laodiceans in exchange for the one which they now received from Paul. The churches were to make an exchange of letters, and one church was to read that which had been addressed to the other.

(2.) If the letter had been addressed *to* Paul, it was doubtless in his possession; and if he wished the church at Colosse to read it, nothing would be more natural or obvious than to send it, by Tychicus, along with the letter which he now sent. Why should he give directions to send to Laodicea to procure a copy of it?

(3.) If a letter had been sent *to* him by the Laodiceans, proposing certain questions why did he send the answer to the church at Colosse, and not to the church at Laodicea? The church at Laodicea would certainly have been the one that was entitled to the reply. There would have been a manifest impropriety in sending an epistle to one church, made up of answers to questions proposed by another, and then at the end requesting them to procure those questions, that they might understand the epistle.

(4.) It may be added, that it is not necessary to suppose that there was any such epistle, in order to understand this epistle to the Colossians. This is not more difficult of interpretation than the other epistles of Paul, and does not furnish, in its structure, any particular evidence that it was sent in answer to inquiries which had been proposed to the author.

2. It has been supposed by some that the epistle referred to was one written to Timothy, by the apostle himself, at Laodicea. This opinion was defended by Theophylact. The only show of authority for it is the subscription at the end of the First Epistle to Timothy—"The first to Timothy was written from Laodicea, which is the chiefest city of Phrygia Pacatiana." But that this is erroneous can be easily shown.

(1.) The subscription to the epistle to Timothy is of no authority.

(2.) If this epistle had been referred to, Paul would not have designated it in this manner. It would have been rather by mentioning the person to whom it was addressed, than the place where it was written.

(3.) There is nothing in the epistle to Timothy which would throw any important light on this to the Colossians, or which would be particularly important to them as a church. It was addressed to one individual, and it contains counsels adapted to a minister of the gospel rather than to a church.

3. Many have supposed that the "epistle from Laodicea," referred to, was one which Paul had written to the Laodiceans, partly for their use, but which was of the nature of a circular epistle, and that we still have it under another name. Those who hold this opinion suppose that the epistle to the Ephesians is the one referred to, and that it was, in fact, sent also to the church at Laodicea. See this question treated at length in the Introduction to the epistle to the Ephesians, % 5. The reasons

for supposing that the epistle now known as the "Epistle to the Ephesians" was neither a circular letter, nor addressed to the church at Laodicea, are there given. But if the common reading of the text in Eph 1:1, "the saints which are at Ephesus," be correct, then it is clear that that epistle was really sent to the church in that place. The only question then is, whether it is of so general a character that it might as well be sent to other churches as to that, and whether Paul actually sent it as a circular, with a direction to different churches? Against this supposition there are strong improbabilities.

(1.) It is contrary to the usual practice of Paul. He addressed letters to particular churches and individuals; and, unless this case be one, there is no evidence that he ever adopted the practice of sending the same letter to different individuals or churches.

(2.) There would have been some impropriety in it, if not dishonesty. An avowed circular letter, addressed to churches in general, or to any number whose names are enumerated, would be perfectly honest. But how would this be, if the same letter was addressed to one church, and then, with a new direction, addressed to another, with no intimation of its circular character? Would there not be a species of concealment in this which we should not expect of Paul?

(3.) How happens it, if this had occurred, that all remembrance of it was forgotten?. When those epistles were collected, would not the attention be called to the fact, and some record of it be found in some ancient writer?. Would it fail to be adverted to, that the same epistle had been found to have been addressed to different churches, with a mere change in the name?

4. There is but one other opinion which can exist on this question; and that is, that the apostle refers to some letter which had been sent to the Laodiceans, which we have not now in the New Testament. If this be so, then the reference could only be to some epistle which may be extant elsewhere, or which is now lost. There is an epistle extant which is known by the name of "St. Paul's Epistle to the Laodiceans;" but it has no well-founded claims to being a genuine epistle of Paul, and is universally regarded as a forgery. "It is," says Michaelis, "a mere rhapsody, collected from St. Paul's other epistles, and which no critic can receive as a genuine work of the apostle. It contains nothing which it was necessary for the Colossians to know, nothing which is not ten times better and more fully explained in the epistle which St. Paul sent to the Colossians; in short, nothing which could be suitable to St. Paul's design." Intro. to the New Test. iv. 127. The Greek of this epistle may be found at length in Michaelis; and, as it may be a matter of curiosity, and will show that this cannot be the epistle referred to by Paul in Col 4:16, I will subjoin here a translation. It is as follows: "Paul, an apostle, not of men, neither by men, but by Jesus Christ, to the brethren in Laodicea. Grace be to you, and peace, from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ. I give thanks to my God in Christ always in my prayers, that you are mindful of and are persevering in good works, waiting for the promise in the day of judgment. And let not the vain speeches of some who would conceal the truth disturb you, to turn you away from the truth of the gospel which has been preached unto you. Now God grant that all they who are of me may be borne forward to the perfection of the truth of the gospel, to perform those excellent good works which become the salvation of eternal life. And now are my bonds manifest, in which bonds I am in Christ, and at the present time; but I rejoice, for I know that this shall be for the furtherance of my salvation, which is through your prayer and the supply of the Holy Ghost, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is joy. But our Lord himself shall grant you his mercy with us, that possessing love you may be of the same mind, and think the same thing. On this account, brethren, as ye have heard of the appearing of the Lord, so think and do in the fear of God, and it shall be

eternal life to you for it is God who worketh in you. Do all things without murmurings and disputings. And for the remainder, brethren, rejoice in the Lord Jesus Christ, and see that ye keep yourselves from all base gain of covetousness. Let all your requests be made known with boldness unto God, and be firm in the mind of Christ. And finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are holy, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are lovely, these things do. And what you have heard and received, keep in your hearts, and it shall give you peace. Salute all the brethren with an holy kiss. All the saints salute you. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Cause that this epistle be read in the church of the Colossians, and do you also read the epistle from Colosse." Nothing can be plainer than that this is not such an epistle as the apostle Paul would have written, it is therefore a mere forgery. The conclusion to which we are conducted is, that the reference in Col 4:16 is to some epistle of Paul to the church at Laodicea which is not now extant, and that the probability is, that, having accomplished the object for which it was sent, it has been suffered to be lost. Thus, it is to be numbered with the writings of Gad, and Iddo the Seer, and Nathan, and the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and the book of Jehu, (2Ch 9:29 20:34; 1Ki 16:1;) works which, having accomplished the object for which they were composed, have been suffered to become extinct. Nor is there anything improbable or absurd in the supposition that an inspired book may have been lost. There is no special sacredness in a mere *writing*, or in the fact that inspired truth was *recorded*, that makes it indispensable that it should be preserved. The *oral discourses* of the Saviour were as certainly inspired as the *writings* of Paul; and yet but a small part of what he said has been preserved, Joh 21:25. Why should there be any improbability in supposing that an inspired book may also have been lost? And, if it has, how does that fact weaken the evidence of the importance or the value of what we now possess? How does the fact that a large part of the sermons of the Saviour have perished, by not being recorded, diminish the value, or lessen the evidence of the Divine authority, of the Sermon on the Mount?

THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

ANALYSIS OF CHAPTER 1.

The chapter embraces the following topics :—

(1.) The usual salutation to the church, Col 1:1,2.

(2.) Thanks to God for what he had done for the Colossians and for the fruits of the gospel among them, Col 1:3-8.

(3.) Prayer that they might persevere in the name course, and might walk worthy of their calling, Col 1:9-11.

(4.) An exhortation to render thanks to God for what he had done for them in redemption, Col 1:12-14.

(5.) A statement of the exalted dignity of the Redeemer, Col 1:15-18.

(6.) A statement of what he had done in the work of redemption, in making peace by the blood of his cross, and reconciling the world to God, Col 1:19,20.

(7.) Through this gospel, Paul says, they had been reconciled to God, and were now brought into a state in which they might be presented as holy and unblamable in his sight, Col 1:21-23.

(8.) Of this gospel, Paul says he was a minister; in preaching it he had been called to endure trials, but those trims he endured with joy; and in preaching this gospel he used the utmost diligence,

warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that he might present every one perfect in Christ Jesus, Col 1:24-29.

Verse 1. *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ*. **See Barnes "Rom 1:1"**.

By the will of God. **See Barnes "1Co 1:1"**.

And Timotheus our brother. On the question why Paul associated others with him in his epistles, **See Barnes "1Co 1:1"**.

There was a particular reason why Timothy should be associated with him in writing this epistle. He was a native of the region where the church was situated, Ac 16:1-3, and had been with Paul when he preached there, and was doubtless well known to the church there, Ac 16:6. It is evident, however, from the manner in which Paul mentions him here, that he did not regard him as "an apostle," and did not wish the church at Colosse to consider him as such. It is not "Paul and Timothy, apostles of Jesus Christ," but "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, and Timothy *our brother*." Paul is careful never to apply the term apostle to Timothy. Php 1:1, "Paul and Timotheus, the *servants* of Jesus Christ." Comp. 1Th 1:1 2Th 1:1. If he had regarded Timothy as an apostle, or as having apostolic authority, it is not easy to conceive why he should not have referred to him as such in these letters to the churches. Could he have failed to see that the manner in which he referred to him was adapted to produce a very important difference in the estimate in which he and Timothy would be held by the Colossians?

{a} "an apostle" Eph 1:1.

Verse 2. *Grace be unto you*. **See Barnes "Ro 1:7"**

{b} "saints and faithful" Ps 16:3 {c} "Grace be unto you" Ga 1:3

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *We give thanks to God*. **See Barnes "Eph 1:15"**.

Praying always for you. **See Barnes "Ro 1:9"; See Barnes "Eph 1:16"**.

Comp. 1Th 1:2

{d} "We give thanks" Eph 1:15,16

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus*. To wit, by Epaphras, who had informed Paul of the steadfastness of their faith and love, Col 1:7,8. This does not prove that Paul had never been at Colosse, or that he did not establish the church there, for he uses a similar expression respecting the church at Ephesus, Eph 1:15, of which he was undoubtedly the founder. The meaning is, that he had heard of their faith *at that time*, or of their *perseverance* in faith and love.

Which ye have to all the saints. In what way they had manifested this is not known. It would seem that Paul had been informed that this was a character of their piety, that they had remarkable

love for all who bore the Christian name. Nothing could be more acceptable information respecting them to one who himself so ardently loved the church; and nothing could have furnished better evidence that they were influenced by the true spirit of religion. 1Jo 3:4.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven*. That is, "I give thanks that there is such a hope laid up for you." The *evidence* which he had that this hope was theirs, was founded on the faith and love to the saints which he heard they had evinced. He fully believed that where there was such faith and love, there was a well-founded hope of heaven. The word "hope" here is used, as it often is, for *the thing hoped for*. The object of hope—to wit, eternal happiness—was reserved for them in heaven.

¶ *Whereof ye heard before*. When the gospel was first preached to you. You were told of the blessed rewards of a life of faith in heaven.

In the word of the truth of the gospel. In the true word of the gospel.

{e} "laid up for you" 2Ti 4:8 1Pe 1:4

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Which is come unto you*. It has not been confined to the Jews, or limited to the narrow country where it was first preached, but has been sent abroad to the Gentile world. The object of the apostle here seems to be, to excite in them a sense of gratitude that the gospel had been sent to *them*. It was owing entirely to the goodness of God in sending them the gospel that they had this hope of eternal life.

As it is in all the world. It is confined to no place or people, but is designed to be a universal religion. It offers the same blessedness ill heaven to all. **See Barnes "Col 1:23"**.

And bringing forth fruit. The fruits of righteousness or good living. **See Barnes "2Co 9:10"**.

The meaning is, that the gospel was not without effect wherever it was preached. The same results were observable everywhere else as in Colosse, that it produced most salutary influences on the hearts and lives of those who received it. On the nature of the "fruits" of religion, **See Barnes "Gal 5:22"**.

See Barnes "Gal 5:23.

Since the day ye heard of it. It has constantly been producing these fruits since you first heard it preached.

And knew the grace of God in truth. Since the time ye knew the true grace of God; since you became acquainted with the real benevolence which God has manifested in the gospel. The meaning is, that ever since they had heard the gospel it had been producing among them abundantly its appropriate fruit, and that the same thing had also characterized it wherever it had been dispensed.

{f} "all the world" Col 1:23 {g} "forth fruit" Joh 15:16 {h} "ye heard of it" Rom 10:17 {i} "the grace" Tit 2:11,12 {k} "in truth" Joh 4:23

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *As ye also learned of Epaphras*. Epaphras was then with Paul, Phm 1:23. He had probably been sent to him by the church at Colosse to consult him in reference to some matters pertaining to the church there. It is evident from this, that Epaphras was a minister of the church at Colosse, though there is no evidence, as has been often supposed, that he was the founder of the church. The apostle here says, that they had learned from Epaphras the *true nature of the gospel*; and he designs undoubtedly to confirm what he had taught them, in opposition to the teachings of errorists. See the Introduction, § 4. He had doubtless conferred with Epaphras respecting the doctrines which he had taught there.

Our dear fellow-servant.This shows that Paul had contracted a strong friendship for Epaphras. There is no reason to believe that he had known him before, but his acquaintance with him now had served to attach him strongly to him. It is possible, as has been conjectured, (see the Introduction,) that there was a party in the church at Colosse opposed to Epaphras and to the doctrines which he preached; and if this were so, Paul's strong expression of attachment for him would do much to silence the opposition.

Who is for you a faithful minister of Christ. "For you," when he is with you, and in managing your interests here.

{l} "learned of Epaphras" Phm 1:23

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit*. The love wrought in you by the Holy Spirit. It was not mere natural affection, but love wrought in their hearts by the agency of the Holy Ghost.

{a} "love in the Spirit" Rom 15:30

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Do not cease to pray for you*. Col 1:3. The progress which they had already made, and the love which they had shown, constituted an encouragement for prayer, and a reason why higher blessings still should be sought. We always feel stimulated and encouraged to pray for those who are doing well.

That ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will. They had shown, by their faith and love, that they were disposed to do his will, and the apostle now prays that they might be fully acquainted with what he would have them do. He offered a similar prayer in behalf of the Ephesians. See the parallel place in Eph 1:17-19, and the Notes on those verses.

In all wisdom. That you may be truly wise in all things, Eph 1:17.

And spiritual understanding. In understanding those things that pertain to the "Spirit;" that is, those things taught by the Holy Spirit, and those which he produces in the work of salvation. **See Barnes "**1Co 2:12, **See Barnes "1Co 2:13"**.

Comp. 1Jo 2:20 5:20.

{b} "in all wisdom" Ro 12:2 Eph 5:10,11

{c} "spiritual" Ps 119.99

{d} "understanding" 1Jo 5:20

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *That ye might walk worthy of the Lord*. That you may live as becomes the followers of the Lord. How this was to be done he states in this and the following verses.

Unto all pleasing. So as to please him in all things. Comp. Heb 11:5.

Being fruitful in every good work. This is one way in which we are to walk worthy of the Lord, and so as to please him. **See Barnes "Joh 15:8"**.

And increasing in the knowledge of God. This is another way in which we may walk worthy of the Lord, and so as to please him. It is by endeavouring to become better acquainted with his true character. God is pleased with those who desire to understand what he is; what he does; what he purposes; what he commands. Hence he not only commands us to study his works, (comp. Ps 111:2,) but he has made a world so beautiful as to *invite* us to contemplate his perfections as reflected in that world. All good beings desire that others should understand their character, and God delights in those who are sincerely desirous of knowing what he is, and who inquire with humility and reverence into his counsels and his will. Men are often displeased when others attempt to look into their plans, for they are sensible they will not bear the light of investigation. God has no plans which would not be seen to be, in the highest degree, glorious to him.

{e} "worthy of the Lord" Php 1:27 {f} "pleasing" 1Th 4:1 {g} "fruitful" Joh 15:8,16 {h} "increasing in the knowledge" 2Pe 3:18

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Strengthened with all might*. This was also an object of Paul's earnest prayer. He desired that they might be strengthened for the performance of duty; to meet temptations; and to bear up under the various trials of life.

According to his glorious power. Not by any human means, but by the power of God. There is a manifestation of power in the spirit with which Christians are enabled to bear up under trims, which shows that it is not of human origin. It is the power which God gives them in the day of trial. This power is "glorious," or, as it is in the Greek, it is the "power of his glory." It is manifestly the power of the great and glorious God, and it tends to promote his glory, and to show forth his praise.

Unto all patience. So that you may be enabled to bear all your trials without murmuring. It is only the power of God that can enable us to do that.

And longsuffering. **See Barnes "1Co 13:4"**.

With joyfulness. **See Barnes "Ro 5:3"**; **See Barnes** "2Co 7:4".

The Syriac version, Chrysostom, and a few Mss. attach this to the following verse, and read it, "With joyfulness giving thanks to the Father," etc. The only difference is in the pointing, and either reading makes good sense.

{i} "Strengthened" Isa 14:24 {k} "patience" Jas 1:4 {l} "joyfulness" Ro 5:3

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Giving thanks to the Father*. This is another mode by which we may "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing," Col 1:10; to wit, by rendering appropriate thanks to God for his mercy. The particular point which the apostle here says demanded thanksgiving was, that they had been called from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light. This had been done by the special mercy of the Father, who had provided the plan of salvation, and had sent his Son to redeem them. The connexion shows that the word "Father" refers, in this place, not to God as the Father of his creatures, but to the Father as distinguished from the Son. It is the "Father" who has translated us into the kingdom of the "Son." Our especial thanks are due to the "Father" in this, as he is represented as the great Author of the whole plan of salvation as he who sent his Son to redeem us.

Who hath made us meet. The word here used *ikanow* means, properly, *to make sufficient*, from *ikanov sufficient, abundant, much*. The word conveys the idea of having sufficient or enough to accomplish anything. **See Barnes "2Co 3:6"**.

The verb is not elsewhere used in the New Testament. In its use here, there seems to be implied the idea of conferring the privilege or the ability to be thus made the partakers of the kingdom, and the idea also of rendering us *fit* for it. The sense is, he has conferred on us grace *sufficient* to make it proper that we should partake of the blessings of his kingdom. In regard to this "fitness" or "meetness" for that kingdom, we may remark,

(1.) that it does not mean that we are rendered fit by our own merits, or by anything which we have done; for it is expressly said that it is God who has thus rendered us "meet" for it. No one, by his own merits, ever made himself *fit* for heaven. His good works cannot be an equivalent for the eternal rewards of heaven; nor is the heart, when unrenewed, even in the best state, *fit* for the society and the employments of heaven. There is no *adaptedness* of such a heart, however amiable and however refined, to the pure spiritual joys of the upper world. Those joys are the joys of religion, of the love of God, of pleasure in holiness; and the unrenewed heart can never be *wrought up* to a fitness to enter into those joys. Yet

(2.) there is a fitness or meetness which Christians possess for heaven. It consists in two things.

First, in their having complied with the conditions on which God promises heaven; so that, although they have no merit in themselves, and no fitness by their own works, they have that meetness which results from having complied with the terms of favour. They have truly repented of their sins, and believed in the Redeemer; and they are thus in the proper state of mind to receive the mercy of God; for, according to the terms of mercy, there is a propriety that pardon should be bestowed on the penitent, and peace on the believing. A child that is truly broken-hearted for a fault is in a fit state of mind to be forgiven; a proud, and obstinate, and rebellious child is not.

Secondly, there is, *in fact*, a fitness in the Christian for the participation of the inheritance of the saints in light. He has a state of feeling that is *adapted* to that. There is a congruity between his feelings and heaven—a state of mind that can be satisfied with nothing but heaven. He has in his heart substantially the same principles which reign in heaven; and he is fitted to find happiness only in the same objects in which the inhabitants of heaven do. He loves the same God and Saviour; has pleasure in the same truths; prefers, as they do, holiness to sin; and, like the inhabitants of heaven, he would choose to seek his pleasure in holy living, rather than in the ways of vanity, his preferences are all on the side of holiness and virtue; and, with such preferences, he is fitted for the enjoyments of heaven. In character, views, feelings, and preferences, therefore, the Christian is made "fit" to participate in the employments and joys of the saints in light.

To be partakers of the inheritance. The privileges of religion are often represented as an *heirship*, or an *inheritance*. **See Barnes "Ro 8:17"**.

Of the saints in light. Called, Col 1:13, "the kingdom of his dear Son." This is a kingdom of *light*, as opposed to the kingdom of darkness in which they formerly were. In the East, and particularly in Persia, there prevailed early the belief that there were two great kingdoms in the universe—that of light, and that of darkness. We find traces of this opinion in the Scriptures, where the kingdom of God is called "light," and that of Satan is called "darkness." These are, of course, figurative expressions; but they convey important truth. Light, in the Scriptures, is the emblem of holiness, knowledge, happiness; and all these are found in the kingdom over which God presides, and of which Christians are the heirs. Accordingly, we find the word *light* often used to describe this kingdom. Thus it is said of God, who presides over it, that he "is *light*, and in him is no darkness at all," 1Jo 1:5; of Christ, that he is "the light of man," Joh 1:4; that he is "the true light," Joh 1:9; that he is "the light of the world," Joh 8:12. Comp. Joh 12:35; Lu 2:32. The angels of that kingdom are "angels of light," 2Co 11:14. Those who compose that kingdom on earth are "the children of light," Lu 16:8 1Th 5:5. And all the descriptions of that kingdom in heaven represent it as filled with light and glory, Isa 60:19 Re 21:23, 22:5.

{m} "meet to be partakers" Re 22:14 {n} "inheritance of" Ac 20:32

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness*. The power exerted over us in that dark kingdom to which we formerly belonged—the kingdom of Satan. The characteristic of this empire is *darkness*—the emblem of

(1) sin;

(2) error;

(3) misery and death. Over us, by nature, these things had uncontrollable power; but now we are delivered from them, and brought to the enjoyment of the privileges of those who are connected with the kingdom of light. Darkness is often used to represent the state in which men are by nature. Comp. Lu 1:79 Ac 26:18; Ro 13:12; 1Pe 2:9 1Jo 2:8.

And hath translated us. The word here rendered "translated" is often used in the sense of removing *a people* from one country to another. See Josephus, Ant. ix. 11.1. It means, here, that they who are Christians have been transferred from one kingdom to another, as if a people were

thus removed. They become subjects of a new kingdom, are under different laws, and belong to a different community. This change is made in regeneration, by which we pass from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light; from the empire of sin, ignorance, and misery, to one of holiness, knowledge, and happiness. No change, therefore, in a man's life is so important as this; and no words can suitably express the gratitude which they should feel who are thus transferred from the empire of darkness to that of light.

{a} "darkness" 1Pe 2:9 {1} "his dear Son" "the Son of his love"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *In whom we have redemption*. **See Barnes "Eph 1:7".**

The passage here proves that we obtain forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ; but it does not prove that this is all that we obtain through that blood.

{b} "In whom" Eph 1:7

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Who is the image of the invisible God*. *eikwn tou yeou tou aoratou*. The object here, as it is in the parallel place in Eph 1:20-23, is to give a just view of the exaltation of the Redeemer. It is probable that, in both cases, the design is to meet some erroneous opinion on this subject that prevailed in those churches, or among those that claimed to be teachers there. See the Introduction to this epistle, and **See Barnes "Eph 1:20"**

and Eph 1:20-23. For the meaning of the phrase occurring here, "*the image of the invisible God*," **See Barnes** "Heb 1:3, **See Barnes "2Co 4:4".**

The meaning is, that he represents to mankind the perfections of God, as an image, figure, or drawing does the object which it is made to resemble. See the word *image—eikwn*—explained **See Barnes "Heb 10:1".**

It properly denotes that which is a copy or delineation of a thing; which accurately and fully represents it, in contradistinction from a rough sketch, or outline. Comp. Ro 8:29; 1Co 11:7 15:49. The meaning here is, that the being and perfections of God are accurately and fully represented by Christ. what respects particularly he was thus a representative of God, the apostle proceeds to state in the following verses; to wit, in his creative power, in his eternal existence, in his heirship over the universe, in the fulness that dwelt in him. This cannot refer to him merely as incarnate, for some of the things affirmed of him pertained to him *before* his incarnation; and the idea is, that *in all things* Christ fairly represents to us the Divine nature and perfections. God is manifest to us through him,

@1Ti 3:16.

We see God in him, as we see an object in that which is in all respects an exact copy of it. God is invisible. No eye has seen him, or can see him; but in what Christ is, and has done in the works

of creation and redemption, we have a fair and full representation of what God is. **See Barnes "Joh 1:18"**; **See Barnes** "Joh 14:9".

The firstborn of every creature. Among all the creatures of God, or over all his creation, occupying the rank and pre-eminence of the firstborn. The first-born, or the eldest son, among the Hebrews as elsewhere, had peculiar privileges. He was entitled to a double portion of the inheritance. It has been, also, and especially in Oriental countries, a common thing for the eldest son to succeed to the estate and the title of his father. In early times, the firstborn son was the officiating priest in the family, in the absence or on the death of the father. There can be no doubt that the apostle here has reference to the *usual* distinctions and honours conferred on the firstborn, and means to say, that, among all the creatures of God, Christ occupied a pre-eminence *similar* to that. He does not say, that *in all respects*, he resembled the firstborn in a family; nor does he say that he himself was a creature, for the point of his comparison does not turn on these things, and what he proceeds to affirm respecting him is inconsistent with the idea of his being a created Being himself. He that "created all things that are in heaven and that are in earth" was *not himself created*. That the apostle did not mean to represent him as a creature is also manifest *from the reason which he assigns* why he is called the firstborn. "He is the image of God, and the firstborn of every creature, *for oti* by him were all things created." That is, he sustains the elevated rank of the firstborn, or a high eminence over the creation, *because* by him "all things were created in heaven and in earth." The *language* here used, also, does not fairly imply that he was a creature, or that he was, in nature and rank, one of those in relation to whom it is said he was the firstborn. It is true that the word firstborn—*prwtotokov* —properly means the firstborn child of a father or mother, Mt 1:25 Lu 2:7; or the firstborn of animals. But two things are also to be remarked in regard to the use of the word:

(1.) It does not necessarily imply that any one is born *afterwards* in the family, for it would be used of the firstborn, though an only child; and

(2) it is used to denote one who is chief, or who is highly distinguished and pre-eminent. Thus it is employed in Ro 8:29, "That he might be the firstborn among many brethren." So, in Col 1:18, it is said that he was "the firstborn from the dead;" not that he was literally the first that was raised from the dead, which was not the fact, but that he might be pre-eminent among those that are raised. Comp. Ex 4:22. The meaning then is, that Christ sustains the most exalted rank in the universe; he is pre-eminent above all others; he is at the head of all things. The expression does not mean that he was "begotten before all creatures," as it is often explained, but refers to the simple fact that he sustains the highest rank over the creation. He is the Son of God. He is the heir of all things. All other creatures are also the "offspring of God;" but he is exalted as the Son of God above all.

{c} "image of the" Heb 1:3 {*} "creature" "The chief of all the creation"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *For by him were all things created*. This is one of the reasons why he is called "the image of God," and the "firstborn." He makes God known to us by his creative power, and by the same power in creation shows that he is exalted over all things as the Son of God. The phrase which is here used by the apostle is universal. He does not declare that he created all things in the spiritual kingdom of God, or that he arranged the events of the gospel dispensation, as Socinians suppose,

(see Crellius;) but that *everything* was created by him. A similar form of expression occurs in Joh 1:3. **See Barnes "Joh 1:3".**

There could not possibly be a more explicit declaration, that the universe was created by Christ, than this. As if the simple declaration in the most comprehensive terms were not enough, the apostle goes into a specification of things existing in heaven and earth, and so varies the statement, as if to prevent the possibility of mistake.

That are in heaven. The division of the universe into "heaven and earth" is natural and obvious, for it is the one that is *apparent*. See Ge 1:1. *Heaven*, then, according to this division, will embrace all the universe, except the earth; and will include the heavenly bodies and their inhabitants, the distant worlds, as well as heaven, more strictly so called, where God resides. The declaration then is, that all things that were in the worlds above us were the work of his creative power.

And that are in earth. All the animals, plants, minerals, waters, hidden fires, etc. Everything which the earth contains.

Visible and invisible. We see but a small part of the universe. The angels we cannot see. The inhabitants of distant worlds we cannot see. Nay, there are multitudes of worlds which, even with the best instruments, we cannot see. Yet all these things are said to have been created by Christ.

Whether they be thrones. Whether those invisible things be thrones. The reference is to the ranks of angels, called here *thrones*, *dominions*, etc. **See Barnes "Eph 1:21".**

The word "*thrones*" does not occur in the parallel place in Ephesians; but there can be no doubt that the reference is to an order of angelic beings, as those to whom dominion and power were entrusted. The other orders enumerated here are also mentioned in Eph 1:21.

All things were created by him. The repetition, and the varied statement here, are designed to express the truth with emphasis, and so that there could not be the possibility of mistake or misapprehension. **See Barnes "Joh 1:1"**; **See Barnes** "Joh 1:2"; **See Barnes "Joh 1:3".**

The importance of the doctrine, and the fact that it was probably denied by false teachers, or that they held philosophical opinions that tended to its practical denial, are the reasons why the apostle dwells so particularly on this point.

And for him. For his glory; for such purposes as he designed. There was a reference to himself in the work of creation, just as when a man builds a house it is with reference to some important purposes which he contemplates, pertaining to himself. The universe was built by the Creator to be his own property; to be the theatre on which he would accomplish his purposes, and display his perfections. Particularly the earth was made by the Son of God to be the place where he would become incarnate, and exhibit the wonders of redeeming love. There could not be a more positive declaration than this, that the universe was created by Christ; and, if so, he is Divine. The work of creation is the exertion of the highest power of which we can form a conception, and is often appealed to in the Scriptures by God to prove that he is Divine, in contradistinction from idols. If, therefore, this passage be understood literally, it settles the question about the divinity of Christ. Accordingly, Unitarians have endeavoured to show that the creation here referred to is a *moral* creation; that it refers to the arrangement of affairs in the Christian church, or to the kingdom of God on earth, and not to the creation of the material universe. This interpretation has been adopted even by Grotius, who supposes that it refers to the arrangement by which all things are fitted up in the new creation, and by which angels and men are reconciled. By the "things in heaven and in earth" some Unitarian expositors have understood the Jews and the Gentiles, who are reconciled by the gospel; others, by the "things in heaven" understand the angels, and by the "things on earth"

men, who are brought into harmony by the gospel plan of salvation. But the objections to this interpretation are insuperable.

(1.) The word *created* is not used in this sense properly, and cannot be. That it may mean *to arrange, to order*, is true; but it is not used in the sense of *reconciling*, or of bringing discordant things into harmony. To the great mass of men, who have no theory to support, it would be understood in its natural and obvious sense, as denoting the literal creation.

(2.) The assertion is, that the "creative" power of Christ was exerted on "all *things*." It is not in reference to angels only, or to men, or to Jews, or to Gentiles; it is in relation to "*everything* in heaven and in earth ;" that is, to the whole universe. Why should so universal a declaration be supposed to denote merely the intelligent creation?

(3.) With what propriety, or in what tolerable sense, can the expression, "things in heaven and things in earth," be applied to the Jews and Gentiles? In what sense can it be said that they are "visible and invisible?" And, if the language could be thus used, how can the fact that Christ is the means of reconciling them be a reason why he should be called "the image of the invisible God?"

(4.) If it be understood of a *moral creation*, of a renovation of things, of a change of nature, how can this be applied to *the angels*? Has Christ *created* them anew? Has he changed their nature and character? Good angels cannot need a spiritual renovation; and Christ did not come to convert fallen angels, and to bring them into harmony with the rest of the universe.

(6.) The phrase here employed, of "creating all things in heaven and in earth," is *never* used elsewhere to denote a moral or spiritual creation. It appropriately expresses the creation of the universe. It is language strikingly similar to that used by Moses, Ge 1:1; and it would be so understood by the great mass of mankind. If this be so, then Christ is Divine, and we can see in this great work a good reason why he is called "the image of the invisible God," and why he is at the head of the universe—the firstborn of the creation. It is because, through him, God is made known to us in the work of creation; and because, being the great Agent in that work, there is a propriety that he should occupy this position at the head of all things.

{d} "by him were all" Joh 1:3 {a} "by him and for him" Ro 11:36

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *And he is before all things*. As he must be, if he created all things. Those who regard this as referring to a moral creation, interpret it as meaning that he has the *pre-eminence* over all things; not as referring to his *pre-existence*. But the fair and proper meaning of the word *before pro* is, that he was *before* all things in the order of existence. Comp. Mt 8:29; Joh 11:55 13:1; Ac 5:36 21:38; 2Co 12:2.

It is equivalent to saying that he was eternal—for he that had an existence before *anything* was created must be eternal. Thus it is equivalent to the phrase, "In the beginning," Ge 1:1; comp. **See Barnes "Joh 1:1".**

And by him all things consist. Or are sustained. **See Barnes "Heb 1:3".**

The meaning is, that they are kept in the present state; their existence, order, and arrangement are continued by his power. If unsupported by him, they would fall into disorder, or sink back to nothing. If this be the proper interpretation, then it is the ascription to Christ of infinite *power*—for

nothing less could be sufficient to uphold the universe; and of infinite *wisdom*—for this is needed to preserve the harmonious action of the suns and systems of which it is composed. None could do this but one who is Divine; and hence we see the reason why he is represented as the image of the invisible God. He is the great and glorious and ever-active Agent by whom the perfections of God are made known.

{b} "before all things" Joh 1:1

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *And he is the head of the body, the Church*. **See Barnes "Eph 1:22"**; **See Barnes** "Eph 5:23".

Who is the beginning. In all things—alike in the work of creation and in the church. He is the fountain of authority and power, and commences everything that is designed to uphold the order of the universe, and to save the world.

The firstborn from the dead. At the head of those who rise from their graves. This does not mean, literally, that he was the first who rose from the dead, for he himself raised up Lazarus and others, and the bodies of saints arose at his crucifixion; but it means that he had the pre-eminence among them all; he was the most illustrious of those who will be raised from the dead, and is the head over them all. Especially, he had this pre-eminence in the resurrection in this respect, that he was the first who rose from death to immortality. Others who were raised undoubtedly died again. Christ rose to die no more. **See Barnes "1Co 15:20"**.

That in all things. Marg., *among all*. The Greek will bear either construction, and either will accord with the scope of the apostle's remarks. If the former, it means that he is at the head of all *things*—the universe; if the latter, that he is chief among those who rose from the dead. Each of these is true; but the scope of the passage seems rather to require us to understand this of *everything*, and to mean that all the arrangements respecting him were such as to give him supremacy over the universe.

He might have the pre-eminence. Gr., *might be first prwteuwn*. That is, might be first in rank, dignity, honour, power. He has the pre-eminence

(1.) as over the universe which he has formed—as its Creator and Proprietor;

(2.) as chief among those who shall rise from the dead—since he first rose to die no more, and their resurrection depends on him;

(3.) as head of the church—all synods, councils, and governments being subject to him, and he alone having a right to give law to his people; and

(4.) in the affections of his friends—being in their affections and confidence superior to all others.

{c} "head of the body" Eph 5:23 {*} "beginning" "chief" {d} "the first born from the dead" 1Co 15:20 {1} "in all things" "among all"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *For it pleased the Father*. The words, "the Father," are not in the original, but they are not improperly supplied. Some word must be understood; and as the apostle, in Col 1:12, referred to "the Father" as having a claim to the thanks of his people for what he had done, and as the great favour for which they ought to be thankful is that which he immediately specifies the exaltation of Christ—-it is not improper to suppose that this is the word to be understood here. The meaning is, that he chose to confer on his Son such a rank, that in all things he might have the preeminence, and that there might be in him "all fulness." Hence, by his appointment, he was the agent in creation, and hence he is placed over all things as the head of the church.

That in him should all fulness dwell. That in him there should be such dignity, authority, power, and moral excellence as to be fitted to the work of creating the world, redeeming his people, and supplying everything needful for their salvation. On the word *fulness*, **See Barnes** "Joh 1:14, **See Barnes "Joh 1:16"**.

Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 11:12"**; **See Barnes** "Ro 11:25"; **See Barnes "Gal 4:4"**; **See Barnes** "Eph 1:23"; **See Barnes "Eph 3:19"**; **See Barnes** "Col 2:9".

This is to us a most precious truth. We have a Saviour who is in no respect deficient in wisdom, power, and grace to redeem and save us. There is nothing necessary to be done in our salvation which he is not qualified to do; there is nothing which we need to enable us to perform our duties, to meet temptation, and to bear trial, which he is not able to impart. In no situation of trouble and danger will the church find that there is a deficiency in him; in no enterprise to which she can put her hands will there be a lack of power in her great Head to enable her to accomplish what he calls her to. We may go to him in all our troubles, weaknesses, temptations, and wants, and may be supplied from his fullness—just as, if we were thirsty, we might go to an ocean of pure water and drink.

{e} "in Him should" Joh 1:16

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *And having made peace*. Marg., *making*. The Greek will bear either. The meaning is, that by his atonement he produces reconciliation between those who were alienated from each other. **See Barnes "Eph 2:14"**.

It does not mean here that he had actually effected peace by his death, but that he had laid the foundation for it; he had done that which would secure it.

Through the blood of his cross. By his blood shed on the cross. That blood, making atonement for sin, was the means of making reconciliation between God and man. On the meaning of the word *blood*, as used in this connexion, **See Barnes "Ro 3:25"**.

By him to reconcile all things to himself. On the meaning of the word *reconcile*, **See Barnes "Mt 5:24 Ro 5:10;** 2Co 5:18.

When it is said that "it pleased the Father by Christ to reconcile *all things* to himself," the declaration must be understood with some limitation.

(1.) It relates only to those things which are in *heaven and earth* —for those only are specified. Nothing is said of the inhabitants of hell, whether fallen angels, or the spirits of wicked men who are there.

(2.) It cannot mean that all things are actually reconciled for that never has been true. Multitudes on earth have remained alienated from God, and have lived and died his enemies.

(3.) It can mean then, only, that he had executed a plan that was adapted to this; that if fairly and properly applied, the blood of the cross was fitted to secure entire reconciliation between heaven and earth. There was no enemy which it was not fitted to reconcile to God; there was no guilt, now producing alienation, which it could not wash away.

Whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. That is, to produce harmony between the things in heaven and in earth; so that all things shall be reconciled to him, or so that there shall be harmony between heaven and earth. The meaning is not that "the things *in heaven*" were alienated from God, but that there was alienation in the universe which *affected* heaven, and the object was to produce again universal concord and love. Substantially the same sentiment is found in Eph 1:10. **See Barnes "Eph 1:10"**.

Much has been written on the meaning of this expression, and a great variety of opinions have been entertained of it. It is best, always, unless necessity require a different interpretation, to take words in their usual signification. If that rule be adopted here, "things in heaven" will refer to God and the angels, and perhaps may include the principles of the Divine government. "Things on earth" will embrace men, and the various things on earth which are now at variance with God and with heaven. Between these, it is designed to produce harmony by the blood of the cross, or by the atonement. As in heaven nothing is *wrong*; as it is not desirable that anything should be changed there, all the *change* that is to take place, in order to produce reconciliation, is to be on the part of men and the things of this world. The only effect of the blood of the atonement on the "things" of heaven, in effecting the reconciliation, is to render it consistent for God *to be* at peace with sinners. The effect on earth is to dispose the sinner to a willingness to be reconciled; to lead him to lay aside his enmity; to change his heart; and to effect a change in the views and principles prevailing on earth which are now at variance with God and his government. When this shall be done there will be harmony between heaven and earth, and an alienated world will be brought into conformity with the laws and government of the Creator.

{1} "having made" "making" {a} "peace" Eph 2:14-16

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *And you, that were sometime alienated*. In this work of reconciling heaven and earth, you at Colosse, who were once enemies of God, have been reached. The benefit of that great plan has been extended to you, and it has accomplished in you what it is designed to effect everywhere—to reconcile enemies to God. The word *sometime* here *pote*—means *formerly*. In common with all other men, they were, by nature, in a state of enmity against God. **See Barnes** "Eph 2:1-3.

In your mind. It was not merely by wicked works, or by an evil life; it was alienation seated in the mind, and leading to wicked works. It was deliberate and purposed enmity. It was not the result of passion and excitement; it had a deeper seat, and took hold of the intellectual. powers. The

understanding was perverse and alienated from God, and all the powers of the soul were enlisted against him. It is this fact which renders reconciliation with God so difficult. Sin has corrupted and perverted alike the moral and the intellectual powers, and thus the whole man is arrayed against his Creator. Comp. **See Barnes "Eph 4:18"**.

By wicked works. The alienation of the mind showed itself by wicked works, and those works were the public evidence of the alienation. Comp. Eph 2:1,2.

Yet now hath he reconciled. Harmony has been secured between you and God, and you are brought to friendship and love. Such a change has been produced in you as to bring your minds into friendship with that of God. All the *change* in producing this is on the part of man, for God cannot *change*, and there is no reason why he should, if he could. In the work of reconciliation man lays aside his hostility to his Maker, and thus becomes his friend. **See Barnes "2Co 5:18"**.

{2} "in" "by" {3} "by" "in"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *In the body of his flesh through death*. The death of his body, or his death in making an atonement, has been the means of producing this reconciliation. It

(1.) removed the obstacles to reconciliation on the part of God —vindicating his truth and justice, and maintaining the principles of his government as much as if the sinner had himself suffered the penalty of the law—thus rendering it *consistent* for God to indulge the benevolence of his nature in pardoning sinners; and

(2) it was the means of bringing the sinner himself to a willingness to be reconciled—furnishing the strongest possible appeal to him; leading him to reflect on the love of his Creator, and showing him his own guilt and danger. No means ever used to produce reconciliation between two alienated parties has had so much tenderness and power as those which God has adopted in the plan of salvation; and of the dying love of the Son of God fails to lead the sinner back to God, everything else will fail. The phrase "the body of his flesh" means, *the body of flesh* which he assumed in order to suffer in making an atonement. The reconciliation could not have been effected but by his assuming such a body, for his Divine nature could not so suffer as to make atonement for sins.

To present you. That is, Before God. The object of the atonement was to enable him to present the redeemed to God freed from sin, and made holy in his sight. The whole work had reference to the glories of that day when the Redeemed and the redeemed will stand before God, and he shall present them to his Father as completely recovered from the ruins of the fall.

Holy. Made holy, or made free from sin. Comp. Lu 20:36.

And unblameable. Not that in themselves they will not be deserving of blame, or will not be unworthy, but that they will be purified from their sins. The word here used *amwmov*—means, properly, *spotless, without blemish*. **See Barnes "Eph 1:4"**; **See Barnes** "Eph 5:27"

See Barnes "Heb 9:14".

It is applied to a lamb, 1Pe 1:19; to the Saviour, Heb 9:14; and to the church, Eph 1:4 5:27; Jude 1:24 Re 14:5. It does not elsewhere occur. When the redeemed enter heaven, all their sins will have been taken away; not a *spot* of the deep dye of iniquity will remain on their souls, Re 1:15; Re 7:14.

And unreproveable in his sight. There will be none to *accuse* them before God; or they will be free from all *accusation*. The *law* will not accuse them—for the death of their Redeemer has done as much to honour it as theft own punishment would have done; God will not accuse them—for he has freely forgiven them; their consciences will not accuse them—for theft sins will all have been taken away, and they will enjoy the favour of God *as if* they had not sinned; holy angels will not accuse them—for they will welcome them to their society; and even Satan will not accuse them—for he will have seen that their piety is sincere, and that they are truly what they profess to be. Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 8:33,34"**.

{b} "present you holy" Jude 1:24

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *If ye continue in the faith*. In the belief of the gospel, and in holy living. If this were done, they would be presented unblamable before God; if not, they would not be. The meaning is, that it will be impossible to be saved unless we continue to lead lives becoming the gospel.

Grounded. On a firm foundation. **See Barnes** "Eph 3:17, where the same word occurs.

And settled. Gr., *firm*; as a building is that is founded on a rock. Mt 7:25.

And be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel. By the arts of philosophy, and the allurements of sin.

Which was preached to every creature which is under heaven. It cannot be supposed that it was literally true that every creature under heaven had actually *heard* the gospel. But this may mean,

(1.) that it was *designed* to be preached to every creature, or that the commission to make it known embraced every one, and that, so far as the provisions of the gospel are concerned, it may be said that it was a system proclaimed to all mankind. See Mr 16:15. If a vast army, or the inhabitants of a distant province, were in rebellion against a government, and a proclamation of pardon were issued, it would not be improper to say that *it was made to every one of them*, though, as a matter of fact, it might not be true that every one in the remote parts of the army or province had actually heard of it.

(2.) The gospel, in the time of Paul, seems to have been so extensively preached, that it might be said that it was proclaimed to everybody. All known countries appear to have been visited; and so zealous and laborious had been the heralds of salvation, that it might be said that the message had been proclaimed to all the world. Col 1:6. Comp. **See Barnes "Mt 24:14"**.

Whereof I Paul am made a minister. **See Barnes "Eph 3:1"**

and Eph 3:2-7. Paul here pursues the same train of thought which he does in the epistle to the Ephesians, where, having shown the exalted nature of the Redeemer, and the design of the gospel, he adverts to his own labours and sufferings in making it known. The object seems to be, to show that he regarded it as the highest honour to be thus entrusted with the message of mercy to mankind, and considered it as a privilege to suffer in that cause.

{c} "continue in the faith" Eph 3:9

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you*. For you as a part of the Gentile world. It was not for the Colossians alone, but he regarded himself as suffering on account of his labours in preaching to the heathen at large. His trials at Rome had come upon him because he had maintained that the wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles was broken down, and that the gospel was to be preached indiscriminately to all mankind. See this illustrated in the Introduction, & 5.

And fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ. That which I lack of coming up to the sufferings which Christ endured in the cause of the church. The apostle seems to mean,

(1.) that he suffered in the same cause as that for which Christ suffered;

(2.) that he endured the same kind of sufferings, to some extent, in reproaches, persecutions, and opposition from the world;

(3,) that he had not yet suffered *as much* as Christ did in this cause, and, though he had suffered greatly, yet there was much that was lacking to make him equal in this respect to the Saviour; and,

(4.) that he felt that it was an object to be earnestly desired to be made in all respects *just like Christ*, and that in his present circumstances he was fast filling up that which was lacking, so that he would have a more complete resemblance to him. What he says here is based on the leading desire of his soul—the great principle of his life—TO BE JUST LIKE CHRIST; alike in moral character, in suffering, and in destiny. **See Barnes "Php 3:10"**.

Having this strong wish, he had been led to pursue a course of life which conducted him through trials strongly resembling those which Christ himself endured; and, as fast as possible, he was filling up that in which he now fell short. He does not mean that there was anything lacking or deficient in the sufferings which Christ endured in making an atonement, which was to be supplied by his followers, so that *their* merits might be added to *his* in order to secure the salvation of men, as the Romanists seem to suppose; but that there was still much lacking on his part before he should be entirely conformed to the Saviour in his sufferings, and that his present condition was such as rapidly to fill that up. This seems to me to be the fair meaning of this expression, though not the one commonly given. The usual interpretation is, "that which remains to me of affliction to be endured in the cause of Christ." But this seems to me to be cold and tame, and not to suit the genius of Paul.

In my flesh. In bodily sufferings.

For his body's sake, which is the Church. **See Barnes "Eph 1:23"**.

{b} "afflictions of Christ" Php 3:10

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *According to the dispensation of God*. The arrangement which God has made. That is, he designed that the gospel should be preached to the Gentiles, and, in accordance with that arrangement, he has called me to be a minister. **See Barnes "Eph 3:2"**.

To fulfil the word of God. Marg., "*fully to preach*." The Greek is, "to fill up the word of God;" the meaning is, "fully to teach and promulgate the gospel." **See Barnes "Ro 15:19"**.

{1} "to fulfill" "to fully preach"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Even the mystery*. To make that mystery fully known. **See Barnes "Eph 3:2, and** Eph 3:3-9. The great doctrine, that salvation was to be proclaimed to all mankind, Paul says, had been concealed for many generations. Hence it was called a mystery, or a hidden truth.

But now is made manifest to his saints. It was communicated especially to the apostles who were appointed to proclaim it, and through them to all the saints. Paul says that he regarded himself as specially called to make this truth known, as far as possible, to mankind.

{c} "mystery" Eph 3:9 {d} "now is made" 2Ti 1:10

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *To whom*. To the saints.

God would make known. "*Willed* (Gr.) to make known;" that is, he was pleased to make this known. It was concealed in his bosom until he chose to reveal it to his apostles. It was a doctrine which the Jewish people did not understand, Eph 3:5,6.

What is the riches of the glory of this mystery. The rich glory of this great, long-concealed truth. On the use of the word *riches*, **See Barnes "Ro 2:4"**.

It is a favourite word with the apostle Paul to denote that which is valuable, or that which *abounds*. The meaning here is, that the truth that the gospel was to be preached to all mankind, was a truth *abounding in glory*.

Among the Gentiles. That is, the glory of this truth is manifested by the effects which it has produced among the Gentiles.

Which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Or, Christ *among* you. Margin. The meaning is, that the whole of that truth, so full of glory, and so rich and elevated in its effect, is summed up in this—that Christ is revealed among you as the source of the hope of glory in a better world. This was the great truth which so animated the heart and. fired the zeal of the apostle Paul. The wonderful announcement had burst on his mind like a flood of day, that the offer of salvation was not to be confined, as he had once supposed, to the Jewish people, but that all men were now placed on a level; that they had a common Saviour; that the same heaven was now opened for all, and that there were none so degraded and vile that they might not have the offer of life as well as others. This great truth Paul burned to communicate to the whole world; and for holding it, and in making it known, he had involved himself in all the difficulties which he had with his own countrymen; had suffered from want, and peril, and toil; and had finally been made a captive, and was expecting to be put to death. It was just such a truth as was fitted to fire such a mind as that of Paul, and to make it known was *worth* all the sacrifices and toils which he endured. Life is well sacrificed in making known such a doctrine to the world.

{2} "Christ in you" "among" {e} "the hope" 1Ti 1:10

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *Whom we preach, warning every man*. This does not mean warning of danger, but "*admonishing* all of the claims of the gospel to attention." Our word *warn* is commonly used in the sense of *cautioning against danger*. The Greek word here means *to put in mind; to admonish; to exhort*. The idea of the apostle is, that he made it his great business to bring the offers of the gospel fairly before the mind of every man. As it had the same claims on all, as it might be freely offered to all, and as it furnished the only hope of glory, he made it the object of his life to apprize every man of it, as far as he could.

And teaching every man. Paul made it his business to instruct men, as well as to exhort them. Exhortation and warning are of little use where there is not sound instruction and a careful inculcation of the truth. It is one of the duties of the ministry to instruct men in those truths of which they were before ignorant. See Mt 28:19 2Ti 2:25.

In all wisdom. **See Barnes "Mt 10:16"**

See Barnes "Col 1:9".

The meaning is, that he and his fellow-labourers endeavoured to *manifest* true wisdom in the method in which they instructed others.

That we may present every man. When we come to appear before God. **See Barnes "2Co 11:2".**

Paul was anxious that no one to whom this gospel was preached should be lost. He believed it to be adapted to save every man; and as he expected to meet all his hearers at the bar of God, his aim was to present them made perfect by means of that gospel which he preached.

{f} "warning" Ac 20:28,31 {a} "every man" 2Ti 2:24,25 {b} "we may present" 2Co 11:2

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Whereunto I also labour*. **See Barnes "1Co 15:10".**

Striving. Gr., *agonizing*, he taxed all his energies to accomplish this, as the wrestlers strove for the mastery in the Grecian games.

According to his working. Not by my own strength, but by the power which God alone can give. **See Barnes "1Co 15:10".**

{c} "I also labour" 1Co 15:10

REMARKS.

Among the truths of practical importance taught by this chapter are the following:—

(1.) We should rejoice in the piety of others, Col 1:2-8. It should be to us a subject of unfeigned gratitude to God, when others are faithful to their high calling, and when they so live as to adorn the blessed gospel. In all their faith, and love, and joy, we should find occasion for thankfulness to God. We should not envy it, or be disposed to charge it to wrong motives, or suspect it of insincerity or hypocrisy; but should welcome every account of the zeal and faithfulness of those who bear the Christian name—no matter who the persons are, or with what denomination of Christians they may be connected. Especially is this true in relation to our friends, or to those for whose salvation we have laboured. The source of highest gratitude to a Christian, in relation to his friends, should be,

that they act as becomes the friends of God; the purest joy that can swell the bosom of a minister of Christ, is produced by the evidence that they to whom he has ministered are advancing in knowledge and love.

(2.) We should earnestly pray that they who have been much favoured should be prospered more and more, Col 1:9-11.

(3.) It is a good time to pray for Christians when they are already prosperous, and are distinguished for zeal and love, Col 1:9-11. We have then encouragement to do it. We feel that our prayers will not be in vain. For a man that is doing well, we feel encouraged to pray that he may do still better; for a Christian who has true spiritual joy, we are encouraged to pray that he may have more joy; for one who is aiming to make advances in the knowledge of God, we are encouraged to pray that he may make still higher advances; and if, therefore, we wish others to pray for us, we should show them by our efforts that there is some encouragement for them to do it.

(4.) Let us cherish with suitable gratitude the remembrance of the goodness of God, who has translated us from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear Son, Col 1:12,13. By nature we, like others, were under the power of darkness. In that kingdom of sin, and error, and misery, we were born and reared, until God, in great compassion, brought us out from it, and made us heirs of light. Now, if we are true Christians, we belong to a kingdom of holiness, and knowledge, and happiness. No words can express appropriately the goodness of God in thus making us heirs of light; and not an hour of our lives should pass without a thoughtful remembrance of his mercy.

(5.) In the affections of our hearts let the Saviour in all things have the pre-eminence, Col 1:15-18. He is the image of God; and when we think of him we see what God is—how holy, pure, benevolent. He is the firstborn of all things; the Son of God; exalted to the highest seat in the universe. When we look on the sun, moon, and stars, let us remember that he created them all. When we think of the angels, let us remember that they are the workmanship of his hands. When we look on the earth—the floods, the rivers, the hills, let us remember that all these were made by his power. The vast universe is still sustained by him. Its beautiful order and harmony are preserved by him; and all its movements axe under his control. So the church is under him. It is subject to his command; receives its laws from his lips, and is bound to do his will. Over all councils and synods—over all rule and authority in the church—Christ is the Head; and, whatever may be ordained by man, his will is to be obeyed. So, when we think of the resurrection, Christ is *chief*. He first rose to return to death no more; he rose as the pledge that his people should also rise. As Christ is thus head over all things, so let him be first in the affections of our hearts; as it is designed that in everything he shall have the pre-eminence, so let him have the pre-eminence in the affections of our souls. None should be loved by us as Christ is loved; and no friend, however dear, should be allowed to displace him from the supremacy in our affections.

(6.) In all our wants let us go to Christ, Col 1:19. "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." We have not a want which he cannot supply; there is not a sorrow of our lives in which he cannot comfort us; not a temptation from which he cannot deliver us; not a pain which he cannot relieve, or enable us to bear. Every necessity of body or mind he can supply; and we never can go to him, in any circumstance of life in which we can possibly be placed, where we shall fad of consolation and support because Christ is not able to help us. True piety learns day by day to live more by simple dependence on the Saviour. As we advance in holiness we become more and more sensible of our weakness and insufficiency, and more and more dispose& to live "by the faith of the Son of God."

(7.) By religion we become united with the angels, Col 1:20. Harmony is produced between heaven and earth. Alienated worlds are reconciled again, and from jarring elements there is rearing one great and harmonious empire. The work of the atonement is designed to remove what separated earth from heaven; men from angels; man from God. The redeemed have substantially the same feelings now which they have who are around the throne of God; and though we are far inferior to them in rank, yet we shall be united with them in affection and purpose, for ever and ever. What a glorious work is that of the gospel! It reconciles and harmonizes distant worlds, and produces concord and love in millions of hearts which but for that would have been alienated for ever!

(8.) By religion we become fitted for heaven, Col 1:21,22. We are made "meet" to enter there; we shall be presented there unblameable and unreproveable. No one will accuse us before the throne of God. Nor Satan, nor our own consciences, nor our fellow-men will then urge that we ought not to be admitted to heaven. Redeemed and pardoned, renewed and sanctified, the universe be satisfied that we ought to be saved, and will rejoice. Satan no longer charge the friends of Jesus with insincerity and hypocrisy; our own minds will be no longer troubled with doubts and fears; and holy angels will welcome us to their presence. Not a voice will be lifted up in reproach or condemnation, and the Universal Father will stretch out his arms and press to his bosom the returning prodigals. Clothed in the white robes of salvation, we shall be welcome even in heaven, and the universe will rejoice that we are there.

(9.) It is a privilege to suffer for the welfare of the church, Col 1:24. Paul regarded it as such, and *rejoiced* in the trials which came upon him in the cause of religion. The Saviour so regarded it, and shrank not from the great sorrows involved in the work of saving his people. We may suffer much in promoting the same object. We may be exposed to persecution and death. We may be called to part with all we have—to leave country and friends and home, to go and preach the gospel to benighted men. On a foreign shore, far from all that we hold dear on earth, we may lie down and die, and our grave, unmarked by sculptured marble, may be soon forgotten. But to do good; to defend truth; to promote virtue; to save the souls of the perishing, is *worth all which it costs*, and he who accomplishes these things by exchanging for them earthly comforts, and even life, has made a wise exchange. The universe *gains* by it in happiness; and the benevolent heart should rejoice that there *is such a gain*, though attended with our individual and personal suffering.

(10.) Ministers have a noble office, Col 1:24-29. It is their privilege to make known to men the most glorious truths that can come before the human mind; truths which were hid from ages and generations, but which are now revealed by the gospel. These great truths are entrusted to the ministry to explain and defend, and are by them to be carried around the world. The ministers of religion strive not for gold, and honour, and worldly pleasures; they strive in the noble effort to show to every man that he has a Saviour; that there is a heaven to which he may come; and to present every one perfect before God. With all its sacrifices and self-denials, therefore, it is an inestimable privilege to be a minister of the gospel—for there is no man who diffuses through a community so much solid happiness; there is no one, the result of whose labours reaches so far into future ages. To a benevolent heart there is no higher privilege than to be permitted to go to *every man*—to the poor, the tempted, the oppressed, the slave, the penitent, and the dying sinner—and to say to him that *he has* a Saviour, that Christ died for him, and that, if he will have it so, he *may* have a home in heaven. No matter whom he meets; no matter how debased and degraded he may be to whom he ministers; no matter though it be the poor slave, or the lonely wanderer on pathless sands, or the orphan, or the outcast, the herald of salvation may tell him that there is a heaven for

him—a Saviour who died for *him*—a God who is ready to pardon and save *his* soul. In such a work, it is a privilege to exhaust our strength; in the performance of the duties of such an office, it is an honour to be permitted to wear out life itself. Doing this, a man when he comes to die will fed that he has not lived in vain; and whatever self-denial he may practise in it; however much comfort, or however many friends he may forsake, all these things will give him no pang of regret, when from a bed of death he looks out on the eternal world.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 2

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 1

COLOSSIANS CHAPTER 2.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER

THIS entire chapter may be regarded as designed to guard the Colossians against the seductive influence of the false philosophy which tended to draw them away from the gospel. It is evident from the chapter that there were at Colosse, or in the vicinity, professed instructors in religion, who taught an artful and plausible philosophy, adapting themselves to the prejudices of the people, and inculcating opinions that tended to lead them away from the truths which they had embraced. These teachers were probably of Jewish origin, and had adopted many of the arts of a plausible rhetoric, from the prevailing philosophy in that region. See the Intro. § 4. Against the seductive influences of this philosophy it is the design of this chapter to guard them; and though the apostle does not seem to have intended to pursue an exact logical order, yet the argument in the chapter can be conveniently regarded as consisting of two parts:—a statement of the reasons why they should be on their guard against the arts of that philosophy, and a specification of the particular errors to which they were exposed.

I. A statement of the reasons why they should not allow themselves to be drawn away by the influence of the prevalent philosophy, Col 2:1-15. This also consists of two parts.

(A.) The importance of the subject, Col 2:1-7.

(1.) The apostle felt great solicitude for them, and for all whom he had not seen, that they might hold the truth in reference to the Divine existence and perfections, Col 2:1,2.

(2.) All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge were in Christ, and it was, therefore, of the greatest importance to hold to the truth respecting him, Col 2:3.

(3.) They were in danger of being led astray by enticing words, Col 2:4.

(4.) Paul says that he was with them in spirit, and he exhorted them, therefore, to remain rooted and grounded in the doctrines which they had received respecting the Saviour, Col 2:5-7.

(B.) Reasons why they should be steadfast, and not drawn away by the influence of false philosophy, Col 3:8-15.

(1.) The danger of depending on traditions and worldly principles in religion; of being "spoiled" or robbed by philosophy, Col 2:8.

(2.) All that we need to desire is to be found in Christ, Col 2:9,10.

(3.) We have received through him the true circumcision—the putting away our sins, Col 2:11.

(4.) We have been buried with him in baptism, and have solemnly devoted ourselves to him, Col 2:12.

(5.) We have been quickened by him; our sins have been forgiven; and everything that hindered our salvation has been taken out of the way by him, and he has triumphed over our foes, Col 2:13-15.

II. Specification of particular errors to which they were exposed, or of particular things to be avoided, Col 2:16-23.

The chapter closes Col 2:20-23 with an earnest exhortation wholly to avoid these things; not to touch or taste or handle them. However plausible the pretences might be on which they were urged; whatever appearance of wisdom or humility there might be, the apostle assures them that there was no real honour in them, and that they were wholly to be avoided.

Verse 1. *For I would that ye knew*. I wish you knew or fully understood. He supposes that this would deeply affect them, if they understood the solicitude which he had had on their account.

What great conflict. Marg., *fear, or care*. The Greek word is *agony agwna*. It is not, however, the word rendered *agony* in Lu 22:44 *agwnia*—though that is derived from this. The word is rendered *conflict* in Php 1:30; *contention*, 1Th 2:2; *fight*, 1Ti 6:12 2Ti 4:17 and *race* Heb 12:1. It properly refers to the combats, contests, struggles, efforts at the public games; the toil and conflict to obtain a victory. It refers here to the anxious care, the mental conflict, the earnest solicitude which he had in their behalf, in view of the dangers to which they were exposed from Judaizing Christians and pagan philosophy. This mental struggle resembled that which the combatants had at the public games. **See Barnes "1Co 9:25,27".**

And for them at Laodicea. For Christians there, who were exposed to similar danger. Laodicea was the capital of Phrygia, in Asia Minor, and a little south of Colosse. See Intro. p. 1, 6. **See Barnes** "Col 4:16.

There was a church early planted there—-the "lukewarm" church mentioned in Re 3:14. Being in the vicinity of Colosse, the church there would be exposed to the same perils, and the rebuke, in Re 3:14, showed that the fears of Paul were well founded, and that the arts of the false teachers were too successful.

And for as many as have not seem face in the flesh. That is, evidently, in that region. He had, doubtless, a general solicitude for all Christians, but his remark here has reference to those in the neighbourhood of the church at Colosse, or in that church. On the question which has been raised, whether this proves that the apostle Paul had never been at Colosse or Laodicea, see Intro. p. 2, 4. This passage does not seem to me to prove that he had not been there. It may mean that he had great solicitude for those Christians there whom he knew, and for all others there, or in the vicinity, even though he was not personally acquainted with them. He may refer (1.) to some churches in the neighbourhood formed since he was there; or

(2.) to strangers who had come in there since he was with them; or

(3.) to those who had been converted since he was there, and with whom he had no personal acquaintance. For all these he would feel the same solicitude, for they were all exposed to the same danger. To "see one's face in the flesh" is a Hebraism, meaning to become personally acquainted with him.

{1} "great conflict" "fear" or "care" {a} "Laodicea, and for" Re 3:14

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 2

Verse 2.

Verse 2. *That their hearts might be comforted*. Like all other Christians in the times of the apostles, they were doubtless exposed to trials and persecutions.

Being knit together in love. The same word which is here used, *sumbibazw* occurs in Eph 4:16, and is rendered *compacted*. **See Barnes "Eph 4:16"**.

In Ac 9:22, it is rendered *proving*; Ac 16:10, *assuredly gathering*; 1Co 2:16 *instruct*; and here, and in Col 2:19, *knit together*. It means, properly *to make to come together*, and hence refers to a firm union, as where the hearts of Christians are one. Here it means that the way of comforting each other was by solid Christian friendship, and that the means of cementing that was *love*. It was not by a mere outward profession, or by mere speculative faith; it was by a union of affection.

And unto all riches. On the meaning of the word *riches*, as used by the apostle Paul, **See Barnes "Ro 2:4"**.

There is a great energy of expression here. The meaning is, that the thing referred to—" the full understanding" of the "mystery" of religion—was an invaluable possession, like abundant wealth. This passage also shows the object for which they should be united. It should be in order that they might obtain this inestimable wealth. If they were divided in affections, and split up into factions, they could not hope to secure it.

Of the full assurance of understanding. This word (*plhroforia*) means, *firm persuasion, settled conviction*. It occurs only here and in 1Th 1:6 Heb 6:11, 10:22; and is rendered by *assurance*, or *full assurance*, in every instance. See the *verb*, however, in Lu 1:1 Ro 4:21, 14:5 2Ti 4:5,17.

It was the desire of the apostle that they might have *entire conviction* of the truth of the Christian doctrines.

To the acknowledgment. So as fully and openly to acknowledge or confess this mystery.

The mystery. On the meaning of this word, **See Barnes "Ro 11:25"; See Barnes "Eph 1:9"**.

The meaning is, the doctrine respecting God, which had before been concealed or hidden, but which was now revealed in the gospel. It does not mean that there was anything unintelligible or incomprehensible respecting this doctrine when it was made known. That might be as clear as any other truth.

Of God. Of God as he *actually* subsists. This does not mean that the mere fact of the *existence* of God was a "mystery," or a truth which had been concealed, for that was not true. But the sense plainly is, that there were truths now made known in the gospel to mankind, about the mode of the Divine existence, which had not before been disclosed; and *this* "mystery" he wished them to retain, or fully acknowledge. The "mystery," or the hitherto unrevealed truth, related to the fact that God subsisted in more persons than one, as "Father," and as "Christ."

And of the Father. Or, rather, "*even* of the Father@;" for so the word *kai* (*and*) is often used. The apostle does not mean that he wished them to acknowledge the hitherto unrevealed truth respecting "God" and another being called "the Father;" but respecting "God" as the "Father," or of God "*as* "Father" and *as* "Christ."

And of Christ. As a person of the Godhead. What the apostle wished them to acknowledge was the full revelation now made known respecting the essential nature of God, as the "Father," and as "Christ." In relation to this, they were in special danger of being corrupted by the prevalent philosophy, as it is in relation to this that error of Christian doctrine usually commences. It should

be said, however, that there is great variety of reading in the MSS. on this whole clause, and that many critics (see Rosenmuller) regard it as spurious. I do not see evidence that it is not genuine; and the strain of exhortation of the apostle seems to me to demand it.

{b} "love, and unto" Col 3:14 {c} "full assurance" Isa 32:17 Heb 6:11 {d} "mystery of God" 1Jo 5:7 {*} "and" "even"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *In whom*. Marg., *wherein*. The more correct translation is, "in whom." The reference is doubtless to Christ, as his name is the immediate antecedent, and as what is affirmed here properly appertains to him.

Are hid. Like treasures that are concealed or garnered up. It does not mean that none of those "treasures" had been developed; but that, so to speak, Christ, as Mediator, was the great treasure-house where were to be found all the wisdom and knowledge needful for men.

All the treasures. It is common to compare anything valuable with "treasures" of silver or gold. The idea here is, that in reference to the wisdom and knowledge needful for us, Christ is what abundant treasures are in reference to the supply of our wants.

Wisdom. The wisdom needful for our salvation. **See Barnes "1Co 1:24"**.

And knowledge. The knowledge which is requisite to guide us in the way to life. Christ is able to instruct us in all that it is desirable for us to know, so that it is not necessary for us to apply to philosophy, or to the teachings of men.

{1} "In whom" "wherein"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And this I say*. Respecting the character and sufficiency of the truth revealed in Christ.

Lest any man should beguile you. Deceive you, lead you away from the truth.

With enticing words. Artful words, smooth and plausible arguments, such as were employed by the Greek sophists and rhetoricians.

{a} "with enticing" Mr 13:22

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *For though I be absent in the flesh*, yet am I with you in the spirit. That is, I seem to see you; I feel as if I were there, and were looking upon you; and I have the same solicitude as if I were there, and saw all the danger which exists that your beautiful order and harmony should be disturbed by the influence of false philosophy. **See Barnes "1Co 5:3"**.

The word "spirit" here does not refer to the Holy Spirit, or to any inspiration by which the apostle was enabled to see them; but it is equivalent to what we mean when we say, "My *heart* is with you. He seemed to be beholding them.

Joying and beholding your order. That is, I rejoice *as if I saw* your order. He had such confidence that everything would be done among them as became Christians, that he could rejoice as if he actually saw it.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord*. Have received him by faith as your Saviour, or as you were instructed respecting his rank, character, and work. The *object* here is to induce them not to swerve from the views which they had of Christ when he was made known to them. They had at first probably received their ideas of the Saviour from the apostle himself, (see the Intro.;) and, at any rate, the apostle designs to assure them that the views which they had when they "received him" were founded in truth.

So walk ye in him. Continue in those views of Christ; live in the maintenance of them; let them regulate your whole conduct. The word walk, in the Scriptures, is used to denote the manner of life; and the sense here is, that they should live and act wholly under the influence of the conceptions which they had of the Saviour when they first embraced him. The particle "*so*" is supplied by our translators, and rather weakens the sense. No stress should be laid on it, as is often done. The meaning is, simply, "Since you have received Christ as your Lord as he was preached to you, hold fast the doctrine which you have received, and do not permit yourselves to be turned aside by any Jewish teachers, or teachers of philosophy."

{b} "walk ye in him" 1Jo 2:6

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Rooted—in him*. As a tree strikes its roots deep in the earth, so our faith should strike deep into the doctrine respecting the Saviour. See the phrase here used explained in the parallel place in Eph 3:17.

And stablisheth in the faith, as ye have been taught. To wit, by the founders of the church, and by those faithful ministers who had succeeded them. **See Barnes "Col 1:7"**.

Abounding therein with thanksgiving. Expressing overflowing thanks to God that you have been made acquainted with truths so precious and glorious. If there is anything for which we ought to be thankful, it is for the knowledge of the great truths respecting our Lord and Saviour.

{c} "rooted" Eph 3:17 {d} "and stablished" Joh 15:4,5

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Beware lest any man spoil you*. The word *spoil* now commonly means, *to corrupt, to cause to decay and perish*, as fruit is spoiled by keeping too long, or paper by wetting, or hay by a long rain, or crops by mildew. But the Greek word here used means to spoil in the sense of *plunder, rob*, as when plunder is taken in war. The meaning is, "Take heed lest any one plunder or rob you of your faith and hope by philosophy." These false teachers would strip them of their faith and hope, as an invading army would rob a country of all that was valuable.

Through philosophy. The Greek philosophy prevailed much in the regions around Colosse, and perhaps also the Oriental or Gnostic philosophy. See the Intro. They were exposed to the influences of these plausible systems. They consisted much of speculations respecting the nature of the Divine existence; and the danger of the Colossians was, that they would rely rather on the deductions of that specious *reasoning*, than on what they had been taught by their Christian teachers.

And vain deceit. Mere fallacy. The idea is, that the doctrines which were advanced ill those systems were maintained by plausible, not by solid arguments; by considerations not fitted to lead to the truth, but to lead astray.

After the tradition of men. There appear to have been two sources of danger to which the Christians at Colosse were exposed, and to which the apostle in these cautions alludes, though he is not careful to distinguish them. The one was that arising from the Grecian philosophy; the other from Jewish opinions. The latter is that to which he refers here. The Jews depended much on tradition, **See Barnes "Mt 15:2"**;) and many of those traditions would have tended much to corrupt the gospel of Christ.

After the rudiments of the world. Marg., *elements*. See this explained **See Barnes "Gal 4:3"**.

And not after Christ. Not such as Christ taught.

{e} "lest any man" Ro 16:17 Eph 5:6; Heb 13:9

{2} "rudiments" "elements"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *For in him dwelleth*. That is, this was the great and central doctrine that was to be maintained about Christ, that all the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him. Every system which denied this was a denial of the doctrine which they had been taught; and against everything that would go to undermine this, they were especially to be on their guard. Almost all heresy has been begun by some form of the denial of the great central truth of the incarnation of the Son of God.

All the fulness. **See Barnes "Col 1:19"**.

Of the Godhead. Of the Divinity, the Divine nature *yeothv*. The word is one that properly denotes the Divine nature and perfections. *Robinson, Lex*. It occurs nowhere else in the New Testament.

Bodily. *swmatikwv*. This word also is found nowhere else in the New Testament, though the adjective bodily— *swmatikov* —occurs twice: Lu 3:22, "in a *bodily* shape;" and 1Ti 4:8, "for *bodily* exercise profiteth little." The word means, "having a bodily appearance, instead of existing or appearing in a spiritual form;" and the fair sense of the phrase is, that the fairness of the Divine nature became incarnate, and was indwelling in the body of the Redeemer. It does not meet the case to say, as Crellius does, that the "whole Divine will was in him," for the word *yeothv godhead* does not mean the *will* of God; and it is as certainly true that the inspired prophets were under the

control of the Divine will, as that the Saviour was. Nor can it mean, as Socinus supposes, that the fulness of Divine *knowledge* dwelt in him, for this is not the proper meaning of the word *yeothv* godhead; nor can it mean, for the same reason, that a fairness of Divine gifts was entrusted to him. The language is such as would be obviously employed on the supposition that God became incarnate, and appeared in human form; and there is no other idea which it so naturally expresses, nor is there any other which it can be *made* to express without a forced construction. The meaning is, that it was not any *one* attribute of the Deity that became incarnate in the Saviour; that he was not merely endowed with the knowledge, or the power, the wisdom of God; but that the whole Deity thus became incarnate, and appeared in human form. Comp. Joh 14:9 1:18. No language could, therefore, more clearly demonstrate the divinity of Christ. Of what mere man— of what angel-could it be used?

{f} "dwelleth" Col 1:19

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *And ye are complete in him*. Having no need, for the purposes of salvation, of any aid to be derived from the philosophy of the Greeks, or the traditions of the Jews. All that is necessary to secure your salvation is to be found in the Lord Jesus. There is a *completion*, or a *filling* up, in him, so as to leave nothing wanting. This is true in respect

(1.) to the *wisdom* which is needful to guide us;

(2.) the *atonement* to be made for sin;

(3.) the *merit* by which a sinner can be justified; and

(4.) the *grace* which is needful to sustain us in the trials, and to aid us in the duties of life. **See Barnes "1Co 1:30".**

There is no necessity, therefore, that we should look to the aid of philosophy, as if there was a defect in the teachings of the Saviour; or to human strength, as if he were unable to save us; or to the merits of the saints, as if those of the Redeemer were not sufficient to meet all our wants. The sentiment advanced in this verse would overthrow the whole papal doctrine of the merits of the saints, and, of course, the whole doctrine of papal "indulgences."

Which is the head. **See Barnes "Eph 1:21"; See Barnes "Eph 1:22".**

{a} "complete in him" Heb 5:9 {b} "head of all" 1Pe 3:22 on Eph. i. 21, 22.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *In whom*. In connexion with whom, or in virtue of whose religion.

Ye are circumcised. You have received that which was designed to be represented by circumcision—the putting away of sin. **See Barnes "Php 3:3".**

With the circumcision made without hands. That made in the heart by the renunciation of all sin. The Jewish teachers insisted on the necessity of the literal circumcision in order to salvation, (comp. **See Barnes "Eph 2:11";**) and hence this subject is so often introduced into the writings of

Paul, and he is at so much pains to show that, by believing in Christ, all was obtained which was required in order to salvation. Circumcision was an ordinance by which it was denoted that all sin was to be cut off or renounced, and that he who was circumcised was to be devoted to God and to a holy life. All this, the apostle says, was obtained by the gospel; and, consequently, they had all that was denoted by the ancient rite of circumcision. What Christians had obtained, moreover, related *to the heart*; it was not a mere ordinance pertaining *to the flesh*.

In putting off the body of the sins of the flesh. That is, in renouncing the deeds of the flesh, or becoming holy. The word "*body*," here, seems to be used with reference to circumcision. In that ordinance, the body of the FLESH was subjected to the rite; with Christians, it is the body of sin that is cut off.

By the circumcision of Christ. Not by the fact that Christ was circumcised, but that we have that kind of circumcision which Christ established—to wit, *the renouncing of sin*. The idea of the apostle here seems to be, that since we have thus been enabled by Christ to renounce sin, and to devote ourselves to God, we should not be induced, by any plausible arguments, to return to an ordinance pertaining to the flesh, as if that were needful for salvation.

{d} "Buried with him" Rom 6:4,5 {e} "operation of God" Eph 1:19

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Buried with him in baptism*. **See Barnes "Ro 6:4"**.

Wherein also. In which ordinance, or by virtue of that which is signified by the ordinance.

Ye are risen with him. From the death of sin to the life of religion. **See Barnes** "Ro 6:4, **See Barnes** "Ro 6:5, **See Barnes** "Eph 2:5, **See Barnes "Eph 2:6"**.

Through the faith of the operation of God. By a firm belief on the agency of God in raising him up; that is, a belief of the fact that God has raised him from the dead. The resurrection of Christ is often represented as the foundation of all our hopes; and, as he was raised from the grave to die no more, so, in virtue of that, we are raised from the death of sin to eternal spiritual life. The *belief* of this is shown by our baptism, whatever be *the mode* in which that ordinance is performed, and as *well* shown in one mode as another.

{d} "Buried" Ro 6:4,5 {e} "operation of God" Eph 1:19

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *And you, being dead in your sins*. **See Barnes "Eph 2:1"**.

And the uncircumcision of your flesh. That is, Gentiles, and giving unrestrained indulgence to the desires of the flesh. They lived as those who had not by any religious rite or covenant brought themselves under obligations to lead holy lives.

Hath he quickened. **See Barnes "Eph 2:1"**.

Together with him. In virtue of his being restored to life. That is, the resurrection of the Lord Jesus was the means of imparting to us spiritual life.

{f} "And you" Eph 2:1,5,11

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Blotting out the handwriting*. The word rendered *handwriting* means something written by the hand, a manuscript; and here, probably, the writings of the Mosaic law, or the law appointing many ordinances or observances in religion. The allusion is probably to a written contract, in which we bind ourselves to do any work, or to make a payment, and which remains in force against us until the bond is cancelled. That might be done either by blotting out the names, or by drawing lines through it, or, as appears to have been practised in the east, by driving a nail through it. The Jewish ceremonial law is here represented as such a contract, binding those under it to its observance, until it was nailed to the cross. The meaning here is, that the burdensome requirements of the Mosaic law are abolished, and that its necessity is superseded by the death of Christ. His death had the same effect, in reference to those ordinances, *as if* they had been blotted from the statute-book. This it did by fulfilling them, by introducing a more perfect system and by rendering their observance no longer necessary, since all that they were designed to typify had been now accomplished in a better way. **See Barnes "Eph 2:15".**

Of ordinances. Prescribing the numerous rites and ceremonies of the Jewish religion.

That was against us. That is, against our peace, happiness, comfort; or, in other words, which was oppressive and burdensome. Comp. **See Barnes "Ac 15:10".**

Those ordinances bound and lettered the soul, restrained the expansive spirit of true piety which seeks the salvation of all alike, and thus operated as a *hinderance* to the enlarged spirit of true religion. Thus they really operated *against* the truly pious Jew, whose religion would lead him to seek the salvation of the world; and to the *Gentile*, since he was not in a situation to avail himself of them, and since they would be burdensome if he could. It is in this sense, probably, that the apostle uses the word "*us*," as referring to all, and as cramping and restraining the true nature of religion.

Which was contrary to us. Operated as a hinderance, or obstruction, in the matter of religion. The ordinances of the Mosaic law were *necessary*, in order to introduce the gospel; but they were always burdensome. They were to be confined to one people; and if they were continued, they would operate to prevent the spread of the true religion around the world. **See Barnes "2Co 3:7,9".**

Hence the exulting language of the apostle in view of the fact that they were now taken away, and that the benefits of religion might be diffused all over the world. The gospel contains nothing which is "*against*," or "*contrary to*," the true interest and happiness of any nation or any class of men.

And took it out of the way. Gr., "Out of the midst;" that is, he wholly removed it. He has removed the obstruction, so that it no longer prevents union and harmony between the Jews and the Gentiles.

Nailing it to his cross. As if he had nailed it to his cross, so that it would be entirely removed out of our way. The death of Jesus had the same effect, in regard to the rites and institutions of the Mosaic religion, as if they had been affixed to his cross. It is said that there is an allusion here to the ancient method by which a bond or obligation was cancelled, by driving a nail through it, and affixing it to a post. This was practised, says Grotius, in Asia. In a somewhat similar manner, in

our banks now, a sharp instrument, like the blade of a knife, is driven through a check, making a hole through it, and furnishing to the teller of the bank a sign or evidence that it has been paid. If this be the meaning, then the expression here denotes that the obligation of the Jewish institutions ceased on the death of Jesus, *as if* he had taken them and nailed them to his own cross, in the manner in which a bond was cancelled.

{g} "Blotting out" Eph 2:15,16

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *And having spoiled*. Plundered; as a victorious army does a conquered country. **See Barnes "Col 2:8".**

The terms used in this verse are all military; and the idea is, that Christ has completely subdued our enemies by his death. A complete victory was achieved by his death, so that everything is now in subjection to him, and we have nothing to fear.

Principalities and powers. **See Barnes "Eph 1:21"; See Barnes "Eph 6:12".**

The "principalities and powers" here referred to, are the formidable enemies that had held man in subjection, and prevented his serving God. There can be no doubt, I think, that the apostle refers to the ranks of fallen, evil spirits which had usurped a dominion over the world. **See Barnes "Joh 12:31"; See Barnes "Eph 2:2".**

The Saviour, by his death, wrested the dominion from them, and seized upon what they had captured, as a conqueror seizes upon his prey. Satan and his legions had invaded the earth, and drawn its inhabitants into captivity, and subjected them to their evil reign. Christ, by his death, subdues the invaders, and recaptures those whom they had subdued.

He made a show of them openly. As a conqueror, returning from a victory, displays in a triumphal procession the kings and princes whom he has taken, and the spoils of victory. This was commonly done when a "triumph" was decreed for a conqueror. On such occasions, it sometimes happened that a considerable number of prisoners were led along amidst the scenes of triumph. **See Barnes "2Co 2:14".**

Paul says that this was now done "*openly*"—that is, it was in the face of the whole universe; a grand victory; a glorious triumph over all the powers of hell. It does not refer to any public procession or display on the earth; but to the grand victory as achieved in view of the universe, by which Christ, as a conqueror, dragged Satan and his legions at his triumphal car. Comp. Ro 16:20.

Triumphing over them in it. Marg., "*or, himself*." Either "by the cross," or "by himself." Or, it may mean, as Rosenmuller suggests, that "God Col 2:12 triumphed over these foes in him; i.e., in Christ." The sense is substantially the same, that this triumph was effected by the atonement made for sin by the Redeemer. See the word triumph explained in the **See Barnes "2Co 2:14".**

The meaning of all this is, that since Christ has achieved for us such a victory, and has subdued all the foes of man, we should not be led captive, but should regard ourselves as freemen. We should not be made again the slaves of custom, or habit, or ritual observances, or superstitious rites, or anything whatever that has its origin in the kingdom of darkness. We are bound to assert and to use our freedom, and should not allow any hostile power, in the form of philosophy or false teaching of any kind, to *plunder* or "*spoil*" us, Col 2:8. The Christian is a freeman. His great Captain has

subdued all his enemies, and we should not allow them again to set up their dark empire over our souls. The argument of the apostle in these verses Col 2:13-15 is derived from what Christ has done for us. He mentions *four* things.

(1.) He has given us spiritual life;

(2.) he has forgiven all our trespasses;

(3.) he has blotted out or abolished the "ordinances" that were against us; and

(4.) he has triumphed over all our foes. From all this he infers Col 2:16, seq. that we should not be made captive or subdued by any of the rights of superstition, or any of the influences of the kingdom of darkness.

{a} "having spoiled" Ps 68:18 Isa 53:12; Lu 10:18 11:22; Joh 12:31

Heb 2:14 {1} "in it" "himself"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Let no man therefore judge you*. **See Barnes "Ro 14:10,13"**.

The word judge here is used in the sense of pronouncing a sentence. The meaning is, "since you have thus been delivered by Christ from the evils which surrounded you; since you have been freed from the observances of the law, let no one sit in judgment on you, or claim the right to decide for you in those matters. You are not responsible *to man* for your conduct, but to Christ; and no man has a right to impose that on you as a burden from which he has made you free."

In meat. Marg., *for eating and drinking*. The meaning is, "in respect to the various articles of food and drink." There is reference here, undoubtedly, to the distinctions which the Jews made on this subject, implying that an effort had been made by Jewish teachers to show them that the Mosaic laws were binding on all.

Or in respect of an holyday. Marg., *part*. The meaning is, "in the part, or the *particular* of a holyday; that is, in respect to it." The word rendered "holyday" —*eorth* means, properly, *a feast or festival*; and the allusion here is to the festivals of the Jews. The sense is, that no one had a right to impose their observance on Christians, or to condemn them if they did not keep them. They had been delivered from that obligation by the death of Christ, Col 2:14.

Or of the new moon. On the appearance of the new moon, among the Hebrews, in addition to the daily sacrifices, two bullocks, a ram, and seven sheep, with a meat-offering, were required to be presented to God, Nu 10:10 28:11-14. The new moon in the beginning of the month Tisri (October) was the beginning of their civil year, and was commanded to be observed as a festival, Le 23:24,25.

Or of the sabbath days. Gr, "of the sabbaths." The word *Sabbath* in the Old Testament is applied not only to the seventh day, but to all the days of holy rest that were observed by the Hebrews, and particularly to the beginning and close of their great festivals. There is, doubtless, reference to those days in this place, as the word is used in the plural number, and the apostle does not refer particularly to *the* Sabbath properly so called. There is no evidence, from this passage, that he would teach that there was no obligation to observe *any* holy time, for there is not the slightest reason to believe that he meant to teach that one of the ten commandments had ceased to be binding on mankind. If he

had used the word in the singular number —"THE Sabbath"—it would then, of course, have been clear that he meant to teach that that commandment had ceased to be binding, and that a sabbath was no longer to be observed. But the use of the term in the plural number, and the connexion, show that he had his eye on the great number of days which were observed by the Hebrews as festivals, as a part of their ceremonial and typical law— and not to the *moral* law, or the ten commandments. No part of the moral law— no one of the ten commandments — could be spoken of as "*a shadow* of good things to come." These commandments are, from the nature of moral law, of perpetual and universal obligation.

{b} "judge you" Ro 14:10,13 {2} "in meat" "for eating and drinking" {3} "in respect" "part" {*} "holyday" "feast"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Which are a shadow of things to come*. **See Barnes "Heb 8:5"**.

See Barnes "Heb 10:1"

They were only a dim outline of future things, not the reality.

But the body is of Christ. The reality, the substance. All that they signified is of or in Christ. Between those things themselves which are in Christ, and those which only represented or prefigured them, there is as much difference as there is between a body and a shadow—a solid substance and a mere outline. Having now, therefore, the *thing itself*, the shadow can be to us of no value; and that having come which was prefigured, that which was designed merely to represent it, is no longer binding.

{c} "shadow of things" Heb 8:5

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Let no man beguile you of your reward*. Marg., *judge against you*. The word here used *katabrabeuw* occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It is a word which was employed with reference to the distribution of prizes at the Grecian games, and means, *to give the prize against any one, to deprive of the palm*. Hence it means to *deprive of a due reward*; and the sense here is, that they were to be on their guard lest the "reward"—the crown of victory to which they looked forward—should be wrested from them by the arts of others. That would be done if they should be persuaded to turn back, or to falter in the race. The only way to secure the prize was to hold on in the race which they were then running; but if they yielded to the philosophy of the Greeks, and the teachings of the Jews, they would be defrauded of this reward as certainly as a racer at the games would if the crown of victory should be unjustly awarded to another. In this case, too, as real injustice would be done, though the apostle does not say it would be in the same manlier. Here it would be by art—in the case of the racer it would be by a wrong decision; *but in either case the crown was lost*. This exhortation has the more force from this consideration. Against an unjust

judge we could have no power; but we may take care that the reward be not wrested from us by *fraud*.

In a voluntary humility. Marg. "*being a voluntary in humility*." Tindal renders this, "Let no man make you shoot at a wrong mark, which, after his own imagination, walketh in the humbleness of angels." The word used here (*tapeinofrosunh*) means, *lowliness of mind, modesty, humbleness of deportment*; and the apostle refers, doubtless, to the spirit assumed by those against whom he would guard the Colossians—the spirit of modesty or of humble inquirers. The meaning is, that they would not announce their opinions with dogmatic certainty, but they would put on the appearance of great modesty. In this way, they would become really more dangerous—for no false teachers are so dangerous as those who assume the aspect of great humility, and who manifest great reverence for Divine things. The word rendered "voluntary" here *yelwn* —does not, properly, belong to the word rendered "humility." It rather appertains to the subsequent part of the sentence, and means that the persons referred to were *willing*, or had pleasure in attempting, to search into the hidden and abstruse things of religion. They were desirous of appearing to do this with an humble spirit—even with the modesty of an angel—but still they had pleasure in that profound and dangerous kind of inquiry.

And worshipping of angels. *yrhskeia twn aggelwn*. This does not mean, as it seems to me, that they would *themselves worship angels*, or that they would teach others to do it—for there is no reason to believe this. Certainly the Jewish teachers, whom the apostle seems to have had particularly in his eye, would not do it; nor is there any evidence that *any* class of false teachers would deliberately teach that *angels* were to be worshipped. The reference is rather to the profound reverence—the spirit of lowly piety—which *the angels evinced*, and to the fact that the teachers referred to *would assume* the same spirit, and were, therefore, the more dangerous. They would come professing profound regard for the great mysteries of religion, and for the incomprehensible perfections of the Divinity, and would approach the subject professedly with the awful veneration which the angels have when they "look into these things," 1Pe 1:12. There was no bold, irreverent, or confident declamation, but the danger in the case arose from the fact that they *assumed* so much the aspect of modest piety; so much the appearance of the lowly devotion of angelic beings. The word here rendered *worship yrhskeia*—occurs in the New Testament only here, in Ac 26:6 Jas 1:26,27, in each of which places it is rendered *religion*. It means here the religion, or the spirit of humble reverence and devotion which is evinced by the angels; and this accords well with the meaning in Jas 1:26,27.

Intruding into those things which he hath not seen. Or, *inquiring* into them. The word used here (*embateuwn*) means, to go in, or enter; then to investigate, to inquire. It has not, properly, the meaning of *intruding*, or of impertinent inquiry, (see Passow,) and I do not see that the apostle meant to characterize the inquiry here as such. He says that it was the object of their investigations to look, with great professed modesty and reverence, into those things which are not visible to the eye of mortals. The "things" which seem here to be particularly referred to, are the abstruse questions respecting the mode of the Divine subsistence; the ranks, orders, and employments of angelic beings; and the obscure doctrines relating to the Divine government and plans. These questions comprised most of the subjects of inquiry in the Oriental and Grecian philosophy, and inquiries on these the apostle apprehended would tend to draw away the mind from the "simplicity that is in Christ." Of these subjects, what *can* be known more than is revealed?

Vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind. Notwithstanding the avowed "humility," the modesty, the *angelic reverence*, yet the mind was full of vain conceit, and self-confident, carnal wisdom. The

two things are by no means incompatible —the men apparently most meek and modest being sometimes the most bold in their speculations, and the most reckless in regard to the great landmarks of truth. It is not so with *true* modesty, and *real* "angelic veneration," but all this is sometimes assumed for the purpose of deceiving; and sometimes there is a native appearance of modesty which is by no means an index of the true feelings of the soul. The most meek and modest men in appearance are sometimes the most proud and reckless in their investigations of the doctrines of religion.

{c} "shadow of things" Heb 8:5

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *And not holding the Head*. Not holding the true doctrine respecting the Great Head of the church, the Lord Jesus Christ. **See Barnes "Eph 1:22"**.

This is regarded here as essential to the maintenance of all the other doctrines of religion. He who has just views of the Redeemer will not be in much danger of erring respecting the other points of religious belief.

From which all the body, etc. This passage is almost word for word the same as in Eph 4:15,16. **See Barnes "Eph 4:15"**; **See Barnes "Eph 4:16"**.

{a} "from which" Eph 4:15,16

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Wherefore*. In view of all that has been said. If it be true that you are really dead to the world, why do you act *as if* you still lived under the principles of the world?

If ye be dead with Christ. If you are dead to the world in virtue of his death. The apostle here, as elsewhere, speaks of a very close union with Christ. We died with him; that is, such was the efficacy of his death, and such is our union with him, that we became dead also to the world. **See Barnes "Ro 6:2"**; **See Barnes** "Ro 6:4"; **See Barnes "Ro 6:8"**; **See Barnes** "Ro 6:11".

From the rudiments of the world. Marg., *elements*. The elements or principles which axe of a worldly nature, and which reign among worldly men. **See Barnes "Gal 4:3"**.

Why, as though living in the world? Why do you allow them to influence you, as though you were living and acting under those worldly principles? They ought no more to do it than the things of this world influence those who are in their graves.

Are ye subject to ordinances. The rites and ceremonies of the Jewish religion. **See Barnes "Gal 5:1-4"**.

{1} "rudiments" "elements"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Touch not; taste not; handle not*. These words seem intended as a specimen of the kind of ordinances which the apostle refers to, or an imitation of the language of the Jewish teachers in regard to various kinds of food and drink. "Why are ye subject to ordinances of various kinds, *such* as this—Touch not, taste not, handle not?" That is, such as prohibit you from even touching certain kinds of food, or tasting certain kinds of drink, or handling certain prohibited things. The rapid succession of the words here, without any connecting particle, is supposed to denote the *eagerness* of the persons who imposed this injunction, and their earnestness in warning others from contaminating themselves with the prohibited things. Many injunctions of this kind are found in the writings of the Jewish Rabbins; and the ancient Jewish sect of the Essenes **See Barnes "Mt 3:7"**

abounded in precepts of this kind. See *Schoetgen*, and *Pict. Bib., in loc*. "They allowed themselves no food that was pleasant to the taste, but ate dry, coarse bread, and drank only water. Many of them ate nothing until sunset, and, if any one touched them who did not belong to their sect, they washed themselves as if they had been most deeply defiled. Perhaps there was at Colosse a society of this kind, as there were in many other places out of Judea; and, if there was, it is not improbable that many Christians imitated them in the peculiarity of their rules and observances." Comp. Jenning's Jew. Ant. i. 471, and Ros. Alt. u. neu. Morgenland, *in loc*. If this be the correct interpretation, then these are not the words of the apostle, forbidding Christians to have anything to do with these ordinances, but are introduced as a *specimen* of the manner in which they who enjoined the observance of those ordinances pressed the subject on others. There were certain things which they prohibited, in conformity with what they understood to be the law of Moses; and they were constantly saying, in regard to them, "do not touch them, taste them, handle them." These words are often used as a kind of motto in reference to the use of intoxicating drinks. They express very well what is held by the friends of total abstinence; but it is obvious that they had no such reference as used by the apostle, nor should they be alleged as an *authority*, or as an argument, in the question about the propriety or impropriety of the use of spirituous liquors. They may as well be employed in reference to anything else as that, and would have no authority in either case. Intoxicating drinks should be abstained from; but the obligation to do it should be made to rest on solid arguments, and not on passages of Scripture like this. This passage could with more plausibility be pressed into the service of the enemies of the total abstinence societies, than into their support; but it really has nothing to do with the subject, one way or the other.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Which all are to perish with the using*. This is commonly marked as a part of the parenthesis, or the quotation; and there is considerable difficulty in ascertaining its true meaning. It seems most probable that these are the words of the apostle himself, thrown in the rapidity of composition, and that they are not to be connected with the phrase "touch not," etc. If so, the idea is, that it cannot be of so much consequence as the Jewish teachers supposed, to mark distinctly the difference between meats and drinks. They were all to perish with the use of them. Nothing was permanent about them. It could really then be of no great importance what was eaten, or what was drunk, provided it was not in itself injurious. These ordinances had a value among tile Hebrews when it was designed to keep them as a distinct people; but they had no value in themselves, so as

to make them binding on all mankind. To suppose this was the common error of the Jews; and hence the apostle so frequently laboured to show that the Jewish rites had no permanent value. **See Barnes** "Ro 14:1, also Ro 14:2-6; **See Barnes "1Co 8:1"**

and following. **See Barnes** "Mt 15:17, **See Barnes "Mt 15:18"**.

According to this interpretation, the 21st verse should be regarded as expressing the common maxim of the Jewish teachers, and the clause before us as the words of the apostle, and should be marked as a parenthesis. So it is marked in Hahn's Ed. of the New Testament.

After the commandments and doctrines of men. Many of the ordinances on which the Jews insisted were those which were handed down by tradition. They depended on human authority only, and, of course, should not bind the conscience. Others take the words here to mean, "All which things tend to the corruption of religion, (*Doddridge*,) or are cause of destruction or condemnation, (*Rob. Lex*,) by the use of these things, according to the commandments and doctrines of these men.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Which things*. Which scrupulous observance of the numerous precepts enjoining rites and ceremonies, the observance of days, and the distinctions between meats and drinks.

Have indeed a show of wisdom. Have a great appearance of piety, and of regard for the will of God. They have a show of "wisdom," too, or of a deep acquaintance with divine things. They who insist on them appear to be learned in what constitutes religion, and to have a deep insight into its mysteries. Doubtless they who urged the obligation of these things laid claim to uncommon acquaintance with the nature of religion, and urged the observance of these things on the ground of their tendency to promote piety, just as they always do who insist much on the observance of religious rites and ceremonies.

In will worship. Voluntary worship; that is, worship beyond what God strictly requires—supererogatory service. Probably many of these things they did not urge as being strictly *required*, but as conducing greatly to piety. The plea doubtless was, that piety might be promoted by service rendered *beyond* what was absolutely enjoined, and that thus there would be evinced a spirit of uncommon piety—a readiness not only to obey all that God required, but even to go beyond this, and to render him voluntary service. There is much plausibility in this; and this has been the foundation of the appointment of the fasts and festivals of the church; of penances and self-inflicted tortures; of painful vigils and pilgrimages; of works of supererogation; and of the merits of the "saints." A large part of the corruptions of religion have arisen from this plausible, but deceitful argument. God knew best what things it was most conducive to piety for his people to observe; and we are most safe when we adhere most closely to what he has appointed, and observe no more days and ordinances than he has directed. There is much apparent piety about these things; but there is much wickedness of heart at the bottom, and there is nothing that more tends to corrupt pure religion.

And humility. **See Barnes "Col 2:18"**.

There is a great show of reverence for divine things in the manner in which they pursue their investigations, and in their humble and meek compliance with painful rites and ceremonies; in fastings, abstinence, and penances. Under all this there lurks often the worst kind of pride; for "Pride may be pampered while the flesh grows lean."

And neglecting of the body. Putting on sackcloth and ashes; subjecting it to painful fastings and penances; appearing in a form of squalid poverty, *as if* the body were not worth regarding, and as if the attention were so much engrossed by the nobler care of the soul, as to be entirely regardless of the body. Yet, we may observe,

(1.) God made the body as well as the soul, and has shown *his* care of it by its "being fearfully and wonderfully made," and by all the provision which he has made for its wants.

(2.) Religion pertains to the body as well as the soul, and should teach a man properly to regard it. Man is bound so to take care of the body, as to have the most health and the longest life possible in the service of his Creator, and so as to be able to employ it in the best manner. There is no religion in ragged or squalid clothing, in a dirty face, in offensive personal habits, in filth and defilement, and in setting at defiance the decencies of life.

(3.) Much affected sanctity may exist where there is a most proud and corrupt heart. A long face, a demure countenance, a studied disregard of the decencies of dress and the courtesies of life, as if they were unworthy of notice, may be the exponent of the most hateful pride, and of the basest purposes of the soul. A man should be on his guard always against one who, under, pretence of extraordinary sanctity, professes to despise the ordinary dress and usages of society.

Not in any honour. That is, there is no real honour in these things; there is nothing to ennoble and elevate the soul; nothing that is to be commended.

To the satisfying of the flesh. The only effect is, to satisfy or please the flesh; that is, the carnal and corrupt nature, for so the word *flesh* is often used in the Scriptures. The effect of these observances, on which so much stress is laid as if they would promote piety, is merely to gratify pride, self-righteousness, the love of distinction, and the other carnal propensities of our nature. There seems to be a great deal of humility and piety in them; there is really little else than pride, selfishness, and ambition.

{1} "neglecting" "punishing" or "not sparing"

REMARKS.

(1.) We should feel a deep interest for the welfare of other Christians, even those whom we have never seen, Col 2:1,2. All belong to the same family, have the same enemies to contend with, are engaged in the same warfare, are travelling to the same heaven. By our prayers and sympathy, we may often do much good to those whom we shall never see till we meet them in heaven.

(2.) We should be on our guard against the seductive arts of false teachers. They are often plausible; they can urge arguments which we may not be able to answer; they may have much more learning than we have; and they may put on the appearance of great humility and of real piety, Col 2:3,4.

(3.) It is, in general, a safe rule for a Christian to abide by the views which he had on the great subjects of religion when he became converted, Col 2:6. Then the heart was tender and soft—like wax—and received the impression which the Spirit made on it. There are some things in which the *heart* judges better than the *head*; and in which we are quite as likely to go right if we follow the former as we are the latter. In relation to the performance of many of the duties of life—the duties of kindness and charity—the heart is often a more safe guide than the head; and so in many things pertaining more immediately to religion, a man is more likely to judge right if he follows the promptings of his feelings in the happiest moments of piety, than he is to wait for the more cool and cautious course of argument. The same thing may be true even of many of the *doctrines* of

religion. When a poor sinner trembles on the verge of hell, he feels that none but an *Almighty* Saviour can deliver him, and he goes and commits himself to Jesus *as God*—and he is not in much danger of erring in that. He will be more likely to be drawn aside from the truth by the artful reasonings of the advocates of error, than he will by his *feelings* at that moment.

(4.) Our views of the "mystery of God"—-of the Divine nature, and especially of the rank and character of Christ—will determine *all* our views of theology, Col 2:2. This has been so in all ages; and, however it may be accounted for, the fact is undoubted, that if at any time we can ascertain what are the prevalent views of Christ, we can easily see what is the prevailing character of the theology of that age. The influence of this will be felt on the views which are held of the native character of man; of regeneration, the Divine purposes, the nature of holiness, and the retributions beyond the grave. Hence, the reason why the apostle Paul insisted so much on this, and urged so earnestly the importance of adhering to just views of the Saviour.

(5.) Christ has laid us under the highest obligations to love and serve him, Col 2:11-15. He has enabled us to put off our sins; he has raised us from spiritual death to spiritual life; he has removed the old ordinances that were against us, and has made religion easy and pleasant; he has subdued our enemies, and triumphed over them. He achieved a glorious victory over "principalities and powers," and has led our great enemy captive. He met the enemy of man when on earth, and overcame his power of temptation; expelled him from the bodies of men; laid the foundation for a permanent victory over him on the cross, and triumphed over him when he rose and ascended to heaven. Satan is now an humbled foe. His power is broken and limited, and the Lord Jesus will yet completely triumph over him. He will return from heaven; raise all the dead; and reascend, in the face of the universe, to his native skies, with all his ransomed hosts—the "spoils" of victory. We should not, then, fear what Satan can do to us; nor should we fear that the great enemy of the church will ever be triumphant. \-

Stand up, my soul, shake off thy fears,
And gird the gospel armour on;
March to the gates of endless joy,
Where thy great Captain Saviour's gone.

Hell and thy sills resist thy course;
But hell and sin are vanquish'd foes;
Thy Jesus nailed them to the cross,
And sung the triumph when he rose.

Then let my soul march boldly on;
Press forward to the heavenly gate;
There peace and joy eternal reign,
And glittering robes for conquerors wait.

There shall I wear a starry crown,
And triumph in Almighty grace;
While all the armies of the skies
Join in my glorious Leader's praise.

(6.) No individual has a right to appoint ceremonies and ordinances in the church to be binding on the consciences of others; nor is this authority entrusted to any body of men, Col 2:16. What *God* has enjoined is to be obeyed. What man enjoins beyond that, is of no binding force on the conscience; and it is the solemn and sacred duty of all Christians to resist all such attempts to make ceremonial observances binding on the conscience. Christ has appointed a *few* ordinances of religion, and they are enough. They are simple, easily observed, and all adapted to promote piety. He appointed baptism and the Lord's Supper; but he appointed no stated festivals or fasts; no days in commemoration of the saints, or of his own birth or death; he enjoined no rites of religion but those which are most simple, and which are easily observed. He well knew how those observances would be abused to the purposes of superstition, and *obscure the great doctrine of justification by faith*. He knew how ready men would be to rely on them rather than on the merits of the great Sacrifice, and hence he appointed no ordinance where that danger could exist.

(7.) Pride is often united with apparent humility, Col 2:18. It is easy to assume the appearance of humility in the outer deportment, but no such assumed appearance reaches the heart. That remains the same, whatever external appearance is assumed, until it is renewed by the grace of God.

(8.) A meek, modest, and candid demeanour is consistent with great boldness and daring in speculation, Col 2:18. The most daring speculators in religion—they who make the most reckless attacks on the truth—are often, to appearance, eminently candid, and even put on the aspect of angelic devotion. Yet they are bold "where angels fear to tread;" and they declaim with confidence on subjects which must be for ever beyond the grasp of the human mind.

(9.) We should not infer, because a man is modest and humble, and because he appears to be endued with uncommon meekness and piety, that *therefore* he is a good man, or a safe guide, Col 2:18. The teachers in Colosse, against whom Paul warned the Christians there, appear to have been men just of this stamp; and this is commonly assumed by those who would lead their fellow-men into error. "Satan is often transformed into an angel of light."

(10.) We should not attempt to penetrate into those things which lie beyond the grasp of the human mind, Col 2:18. We should not "intrude into those things which are unseen." There is an outer limit to our investigations on all subjects, and we soon reach it. In life we are to act chiefly on *facts*; not on the *reason* why those facts exist. When we have ascertained or established *a fact*, our feet stand on a solid rock; and there we shall stand securely. We act safely and wisely if we act in view of that fact; we do not act safely or wisely if we disregard that, and act on theory or imagination.

(11.) Many real Christians are in danger of being "beguiled of the reward" which they might obtain, Col 2:18. They are allured by the world; they are drawn into error by the arts of philosophy; they obscure the lustre of their piety by conformity to the world, and thus they lose the high recompense which they might have obtained in heaven. For the rewards of heaven will be strictly in proportion to the measure of our religion here—the zeal, and faith, and love which we evince in the cause of our Master.

(12.) Many persons are in danger of losing the "reward" altogether —for the "reward" of a life of piety is set before all, Col 2:18. Heaven is offered freely to all, and there is no one who might not obtain it. But, alas! how many there are who are drawn aside by the allurements of error and of sin; who are led to defer to a future time the great subject of preparation for death; who spend their lives in disregard of the commands of God and the invitations of mercy, until it is too late to seek salvation, and they sink down to final ruin. Every impenitent sinner is in imminent danger of

losing his soul. The great deceiver is endeavouring to blind him, and decoy him down to death, and a thousand snares on every side are spread for his feet, into which he is in constant danger of falling. In a world of allurements, where the work of death from the beginning has been carried on chiefly by deception, with what solicitude should man guard himself lest he be "beguiled of heaven," and sink to a world where heaven will be offered no more!

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 3

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 1

COLOSSIANS CHAPTER 3

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER

IN the previous chapter, the apostle had showed what a true Christian ought not to follow after. He had warned the Colossians against the dangers of false philosophy, and the doctrines of erroneous teachers. In this chapter, he teaches them what they ought to pursue and to seek. He therefore enjoins various duties in the different relations of life, which they ought to perform in such a way as to show that true religion had a controlling influence over their hearts, he specifies the following:

(1.) The duty of setting the affections on things above, Col 3:1-4. They were risen with Christ, Col 2:12; they were dead to sin, Col 3:3; they were soon to be like Christ, Col 3:4; and they should, therefore, fix their affections on heavenly things.

(2.) The duty of mortifying their corrupt passions and carnal propensities, Col 3:5-8.

(3.) The duty of speaking the truth, since they had put off the old man with his deeds, Col 3:9-11.

(4.) The duty of kindness, gentleness, charity, and the spirit of peace, Col 3:12-15.

(5.) The duty of edifying one another by psalms and songs of praise, Col 3:16,17.

(6.) The duty of wives, Col 3:18;

(7.) of husbands, Col 3:19;

(8.) of children, Col 3:20;

(9.) of fathers, Col 3:21;

(10.) of servants, Col 3:22-25. There is a very striking similarity between this chapter and the fifth and sixth chapters of the epistle to the Ephesians, and a full exposition of the principal subjects adverted to here may be found in the Notes there.

Verse 1. *If ye then be risen with Christ*. The apostle in this place evidently founds the argument on what he had said in Col 2:12. **See Barnes "Col 2:12"**.

The argument is, that there was such an union between Christ and his people, that in virtue of *his* death *they* become dead to sin; that in virtue of *his* resurrection they rise to spiritual life; and that *therefore*, as Christ now lives in heaven, they should live for heaven, and fix their affections there.

Seek those things which are above. That is, seek them as the objects of pursuit and affection; strive to secure them.

Where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. **See Barnes** "Mr 16:19.

The argument here is, that since Christ is there, and since he is the object of our supreme attachment, we should fix our affections on heavenly things, and seek to be prepared to dwell with him.

{a} "risen with Christ" Col 2:12 {b} "Christ sitteth" Ro 8:34

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Set your affection*. Marg., "or, mind." Gr., "think of"— *froneite*. The thoughts should be occupied about the things where Christ now dwells, where our final home is to be, where our great interests are. Since we are raised from the death of sin, and are made to live anew, the great object of our contemplation should be the heavenly world.

Not on things on the earth. Wealth, honour, pleasure. Our affections should not be fixed on houses and lands; on scenes of fashion and gaiety; on low and debasing enjoyments.

{1} "affections" "mind"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *For ye are dead*. Dead to the world; dead to sin; dead to earthly pleasures. On the meaning of the word dead, **See Barnes "Ro 6:2"; See Barnes** "Eph 2:1".

The idea of the apostle is, that as Christ became literally dead in the tomb, so we, in virtue of our connexion with him, have become *dead* to sin, to worldly influences, pleasures, and ambition. Or, in other words, we are to be to them as if we were dead, and they had no more influence over us than the things of earth had over him in the grave. **See Barnes "Ro 6:2"**.

And your life. There is still *life*. Though dead to one class of objects, you are alive to others. See the sentiment here expressed explained at large **See Barnes "Gal 2:20"**.

Is hid with Christ in God. The language here is taken probably from treasure which is "hid" or concealed in a place of security; and the idea is, that eternal life is an invaluable *jewel or treasure*, which is laid up with Christ in heaven where God is. There it is safely deposited. It has this security, that it is with the Redeemer, and that he is in the presence of God; and thus nothing can reach it or take it away. It is not left with us, or entrusted to our keeping—for then it might be lost, as we might lose an invaluable jewel; or it might be wrested from us; or we might be defrauded of it; but it is now laid up far out of our sight, and far from the reach of all our enemies, and with One who can "keep that which we have committed to him against that day," 2Ti 1:12. Our eternal life, therefore, is as secure as it could possibly be made. The true condition of the Christian is, that he is "dead" to this world, but that he has immortal *life* in prospect, and that is secure, being in the holy keeping of his Redeemer, now in the presence of God. From this it follows that he should regard himself as living for heaven.

{d} "ye are dead" Ro 6:2

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *When Christ, who is our life*. **See Barnes "Joh 1:4"**; **See Barnes "Joh 11:25"**.

Shall appear. In the day when he shall come to judge the world.

Then shall ye also appear with him in glory. 1Th 4:16,17. Christians shall then be raised from the dead, and ascend with the Redeemer to heaven.

{b} "who is our life" Joh 11:25 14:6

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Mortify therefore your members*. Since you are dead to sin and the world, and are to appear with Christ in the glories of his kingdom, subdue every carnal and evil propensity of your nature. The word *mortify* means, *to put to death*, **See Barnes "Ro 8:13"**; **See Barnes** "Gal 5:24"; and the meaning here is, that they were entirely to subdue their evil propensities, so that they would have no remains of life; that is, they were not at all to indulge them. The word "*members*" here refers to the different members of the body—as the seat of evil desires and passions. Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 6:13"**.

They were wholly to extirpate those evil passions which he specifies as having their seat in the various members of the earthly body.

Fornication. **See Barnes "Ro 1:29"**.

Uncleanness. **See Barnes "Ro 1:24"**.

Inordinate affection. *payov*. Rendered in Ro 1:26, "vile *affections*." **See Barnes "Ro 1:26"**.

In 1Th 4:5, the word is rendered *lust*—which is its meaning here.

Evil concupiscence. Evil desires; licentious passions, Ro 1:24. Greek.

And covetousness, which is idolatry. It is remarkable that the apostle always ranks covetousness with these base and detestable passions. The meaning here is,

(1.) that it is a low and debasing passion, like those which he had specified; and

(2.) that it secures the affections which properly belong to God, and is therefore idolatry. Of all base passions, this is the one that most dethrones God from the soul. See this whole passage more fully explained **See Barnes** "Eph 5:3, **See Barnes** "Eph 5:4, **See Barnes "Eph 5:5"**; **See Barnes** "Eph 5:6".

{c} "Mortify" Ro 8:13 Gal 5:24; Eph 5:3-6

{*} "inordinate affection" "unnatural passion" {+} "concupiscence" "Desire"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *For which things' sake*, etc. **See Barnes** "Eph 5:6, where the same expression occurs.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *In the which*. In all which evil passions.

Ye also walked some time. You formerly lived. These were the common vices of the heathen. **See Barnes "Eph 5:8"**; **See Barnes** "1Co 6:10"; **See Barnes "1Co 6:11"**.

Comp. **See Barnes** "Ro 1:24, and Ro 1:25-32.

{d} "In the which" Tit 3:3

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *But now ye also put off all these*. All these which follow, as being also inconsistent with the Christian calling.

Anger, wrath. **See Barnes "Eph 4:26"**.

Malice. **See Barnes "Eph 4:31"**.

Blasphemy. **See Barnes "Mt 9:3"**.

The word here seems to mean *all* injurious and calumnious speaking—whether against God or man.

Filthy communication out of your mouth. Lewd, indecent, and immodest discourse. **See Barnes "Eph 4:29"**.

The conversation of the heathen everywhere abounds with this. A pure method of conversation among men is the fruit of Christianity.

{++} "blasphemy" "evil speaking"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Lie not one to another*. **See Barnes "Eph 4:25"**.

Seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds. Your former corrupt and evil nature. **See Barnes "Eph 4:22"**.

The reason for putting away lying, stated in Eph 4:25, is, that we "are members one of another"- or are brethren. The reason assigned here is, that we have put off the old man with his deeds. The sense is, that *lying* is one of the fruits of sin. It is that which the corrupt nature of man naturally produces; and when that is put off, then all that that nature produces should be also put off with it. The vice of lying is a universal fruit of sin, and seems to exist everywhere where the gospel does not prevail. Comp. **See Barnes "Tit 1:12"**.

There is, perhaps, no single form of sin that reigns so universally in the heathen world.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Which is renewed in knowledge*. In Eph 4:24, it is said that the new man is "created after God in righteousness and true holiness." In this place it is added that to the renewed soul *knowledge* is imparted, and it is made in that respect as man was when he was first created. This passage, in connexion with Eph 4:24, proves that before man fell he was endowed with "righteousness, true holiness, and *knowledge*." The *knowledge* here referred to is not the knowledge *of everything*, but the knowledge *of God*. Man was acquainted with his Creator. He resembled him in his capacity for knowledge. He was an intelligent being, and he had an acquaintance with the Divine existence and perfections. Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 5:12"**.

But especially had he that knowledge which is the fear of the Lord; that knowledge of God which is the result of love. Piety, in the Scriptures, is often represented as the "knowledge" of God. **See Barnes "Joh 17:3"**.

Comp. **See Barnes** "Eph 3:19.

After the image of him that created him. So as to resemble God. *In knowledge he was made* in the likeness of his Maker.

{e} "in knowledge" Eph 4:23,24

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Where there is neither Greek nor Jew*. See this fully explained **See Barnes "Gal 3:28"**.

The meaning here is, that all are on a level; that there is no distinction of nation in the church; that all are to be regarded and treated as brethren, and that therefore no one should be false to another, or lie to another.

Circumcision nor uncircumcision. No one is admitted into that blessed society because he is circumcised; no one is excluded because he is uncircumcised. That distinction is unknown, and all are on a level.

Barbarians. No one is excluded because he is a barbarian, or because he lives among those who are uncivilized, and is unpolished in his manners. See the word barbarian explained in **See Barnes "Ro 1:14"**.

Scythian. This word does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. The name *Scythian* is applied in ancient geography to the people who lived on the north and north-east of the Black and Caspian Seas, a region stretching indefinitely into the unknown countries of Asia. They occupied the lands now peopled by the Monguls and Tartars. The name was almost synonymous with barbarian, for they were regarded as a wild and savage race. The meaning here is, that even such a ferocious and uncivilized people were not excluded from the gospel, but they were as welcome as any other, and were entitled to the same privileges as others. No one was excluded because he belonged to the most rude and uncivilized portion of mankind.

Bond nor free. **See Barnes "Gal 3:28"**.

But Christ is all, and in all. The great thing that constitutes the peculiarity of the church is, that Christ is its Saviour, and that all are his friends and followers. Its members lay aside all other distinctions, and are known only as *his* friends. They are not known as Jews and Gentiles; as of this nation or that; as slaves or freemen; but they are known as Christians—distinguished from all the rest of mankind as the united friends of the Redeemer. **See Barnes "Gal 3:28"**.

{f} "Where" Ro 10:12

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Put on therefore, as the elect of God*. The fact that you thus belong to one and the same church; that you have been redeemed by the same blood, and chosen by the same grace, and that you are all brethren, should lead you to manifest a spirit of kindness, gentleness, and love.

Bowels of mercies. **See Barnes "Php 2:1"**.

Kindness, etc. **See Barnes "Eph 4:32"**.

The language here is a little different from what it is there, but the sentiment is the same.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Forbearing one another*. **See Barnes "Eph 4:2"**.

And forgiving one another. **See Barnes** "Mt 6:12, **See Barnes "Mt 6:14"**.

If any man have a quarrel against any. Marg., "or *complaint*." The word here used *momfh* occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means, *fault found, blame, censure*; and here denotes *occasion of complaint*. The idea is, that if another one has given us *just occasion of complaint*, we are to forgive him; that is, we are

(1.) to harbour no malice against him;

(2.) we are to be ready to do him good as if he had not given us occasion of complaint;

(3.) we are to be willing to *declare* that we forgive him when he asks it; and

(4.) we are always afterwards to treat him as kindly as if he had not injured us—- a God treats us when he forgives us. **See Barnes "Mt 18:21"**.

Even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. Learn here that Christ has power to forgive sin. Comp. **See Barnes "Mt 9:6"; See Barnes "Ac 5:31"**.

Christ forgave us

(1.) freely—-he did not hesitate or delay when we asked him;

(2.) entirely—he pardoned all our offences;

(3.)for ever—-he did it so as to remember our sins no more, and to treat us ever onward as if we had not sinned. So we should forgive an offending brother.

{g} "Forbearing" Mr 11:25 Eph 4:2,32

{h} "forgiving" Mt 6:14,15 {1} "quarrel" "complaint"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *And above all these things*. Over, or upon all these things. Comp. **See Barnes "Eph 6:16"**.

Charity. Love. **See Barnes "1Co 13:1"**.

Which is the bond of perfectness. The bond of all perfection; the thing which will unite all other things, and make them complete. Comp. the parallel place in Eph 4:3. The idea seems to be, that love will bind all the other graces fast together, and render the whole system complete. Without love, though there might be other graces and virtues, there would be a want of harmony and compactness in our Christian graces—and this was necessary to unite and complete the whole. There is great beauty in the expression, and it contains most important truth. If it were possible to conceive that the other graces could exist among a Christian people, yet there would be a sad incompleteness, a painful want of harmony and union, if love were not the reigning principle. Nor faith, nor zeal, nor prophecy, nor the power of speaking with the tongue of angels, would answer the purpose. See this sentiment expressed in 1Co 13, and the effect of love more fully explained in the Notes on that chapter.

{a} "put on charity" 1Pe 4:3 {*} "charity" "love" {b} "the bond" 1Co 13:2,8,13

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *And let the peace of God*. The peace which God gives. **See Barnes "Php 4:7"**.

Rule in your hearts. Preside in your hearts; sit as umpire there, (*Doddridge*;) govern and control you. The word here rendered rule *brabeuetw*—is commonly used in reference to the Olympic and other games. It means, to be a director, or arbiter of the public games; to preside over them and preserve order, and to distribute the prizes to the victors. The meaning here is, that the peace which God gives to the soul is to be to us what the *brabeutes*, or governor at the games, was to those who contended there. It is to preside over and govern the mind; to preserve everything in its place; and to save it from tumult, disorder, and irregularity. The thought is a very beautiful one. The soul is liable to the agitations of passion and excitement—like an assembled multitude of men. It needs something to preside over it, and keep its various faculties in place and order; and nothing is so well fitted to do this as the calm peace which religion gives, a deep sense of the presence of God, the desire and the evidence of his friendship, the hope of his layout, and the belief that he has forgiven all our sins. The "peace of God" will thus calm down every agitated element of the soul; subdue the tumult of passion, and preserve the mind in healthful action and order—as a ruler sways and controls the passions of assembled multitudes of men.

To the which also ye are called. To which peace.

In one body. To be one body; or to be united as one. **See Barnes "Eph 4:4-6"**.

And be ye thankful. For all mercies, and especially for your privileges and hopes as Christians. A spirit of thankfulness, also, would tend much to promote harmony and peace. An ungrateful people is commonly a tumultuous, agitated, restless, and dissatisfied people. Nothing better tends to promote peace and order than gratitude to God for his mercies.

{c} "peace of God" Php 4:7

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Let the word of Christ*. The doctrine of Christ.

Dwell in you richly in all wisdom. Abundantly, producing the spirit of true wisdom. That doctrine is adapted to make you wise. The meaning is, that they were to lay up the doctrines of the gospel in their hearts; to meditate upon them; to allow them to be their guide, and to endeavour wisely to improve them to the best purpose.

Teaching and admonishing, etc. See this explained **See Barnes "Eph 5:19,20"**.

The only additional thought here is, that their psalms and hymns were to be regarded as a method of "*teaching*" and "*admonishing*;" that is, they were to be imbued with truth, and to be such as to elevate the mind, and withdraw it from error and sin. Dr. Johnson once said, that if he were allowed to make the ballads of a nation, he cared not who made the laws. It is true, in a more important sense, that he who is permitted to make the *hymns* of a church need care little who preaches, or who makes the creed. He will more effectually mould the sentiments of a church than they who preach or make creeds and confessions. Hence, it is indispensable, in order to the preservation of the truth, that the sacred songs of a church should be imbued with sound evangelical sentiment.

{d} "word of Christ" Ps 119:11 {e} "psalms and hymns" Eph 5:19

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *And whatsoever ye do in word or deed*. Whatever ye say or do—whether relating to temporal affairs or to religion. The command here extends to all that we do.

Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. Do it all because he requires and commands it, and with a desire to honour him. His authority should be the warrant; his glory the aim of all our actions and words. See the general sentiment here expressed fully illustrated in **See Barnes "1Co 10:31"**.

Giving thanks to God and the Father by him. Through him; or in his name. All our actions are to be accompanied with thanksgiving. **See Barnes "Php 4:6"**.

We are to engage in every duty, not only in the name of Christ, but with thankfulness for strength and reason; for the privilege of acting so that we may honour him; and with a grateful remembrance of the mercy of God, that gave us such a Saviour to be an example and guide. He is most likely to do his duty well who goes to it with a heart overflowing with gratitude to God for his mercies; and he who is likely to perform his duties with the most cheerful fidelity, is he who has the deepest sense of the Divine goodness in providing a Saviour for his lost and ruined soul. **See Barnes "2Co 5:14,15"**.

{f} "whatsoever ye do" 1Co 10:31

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Wives, submit yourselves*, etc. Notes on the parallel passage Eph 5:22-24.

{g} "submit" Eph 5:22 Tit 2:4,5 1Pe 3:1

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Husbands, love your wives*, etc. **See Barnes "Eph 4:25, and** Eph 4:26-29.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Children, obey your parents*, etc. **See Barnes "Eph 6:1"; and** Eph 6:2-4.
{h} "obey" Eph 6:1

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Fathers, provoke not*, etc. **See Barnes "Eph 6:4"**.

Lest they be discouraged. Lest, by your continually finding fault with them, they should lose all courage, and despair of ever pleasing you. There is much sound sense and practical wisdom in this observation of the apostle. Children should not be *flattered*, but they should be *encouraged*. They should not be so praised as to make them vain and proud, but they should be commended when they do well. The *desire* of praise should not be the principle from which they should be taught to act, but they should feel that the approbation of parents is a desirable thing, and when they act so as to deserve that approbation, no injury is done them by their understanding it. He who always finds fault with a child; who is never satisfied with what he does; who scolds and frets and complains, let him do as he will, breaks his spirit, and soon destroys in the delicate texture of his soul all *desire* of doing well. The child in despair soon gives over every effort to please, he becomes sullen, morose, stupid, and indifferent to all the motives that can be presented to him, and becomes, to a great extent, indifferent as to *what* he does—since all that he does meets with the same reception from the parent.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Servants, obey in all things*, etc. **See Barnes "Eph 6:5, also** Eph 6:6-8.
{i} "obey" 1Pe 2:18

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 23

Verse 23. **See Barnes on "Col 3:22"**.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 24

Verse 24. **See Barnes on "Col 3:22".**

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 25

Verse 25. **See Barnes on "Col 3:22".**

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 4

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 1

Verse 1. *Masters, give unto your servants*, etc. **See Barnes "Eph 6:9".**

That which is just and equal. What they ought to have; what is fairly their due. The apostle here, probably, refers to bondmen or slaves—and the propriety of this rule is apparent. Such persons were subject to their masters' control; their time and services were at their disposal, and they could not enforce their just and equal claims by an appeal to the laws. They were, therefore, dependent on the equity and kindness of their masters. There can be no doubt that not a few who were converted to the Christian faith were held to involuntary servitude, 1Co 7; and it is as clear that the apostles did not design to make a violent disruption of these bonds, or to lead the slaves to rise and murder their masters. **See Barnes "1Ti 6:1, also** 1Ti 6:2-4. But it is equally clear that they meant to represent slavery as a hard and undesirable condition; that they intended to instruct the slaves to embrace the earliest opportunity to be free which was presented, 1Co 7:21; and that they meant to suggest such considerations, and to lay down such principles, as would lead masters to emancipate their slaves, and thus ultimately to abolish it. Among these principles are such as these.

(1.) That all men were of one and the same blood, Ac 17:26.

(2.) That they were all redeemed by the same Saviour, and were brethren, 1Ti 6:2; Phm 1:16.

If redeemed; if they were "brethren", if they were heirs of glory, they were not "*chattels*," or "*things*": and how could a Christian conscientiously hold or regard them *as property*?

(3.) That they were to "render them that which was *just and equal*." What would follow from this if fairly applied? What *would be just and equal to a man in those circumstances*? Would it not be

(a.) to compensate him *fairly* for his labour—to furnish him an adequate remuneration for what he had earned? But this would strike a blow at the root of slavery—for one of the elementary principles of it is, that there *must* be "unrequited labour;" that is, *the slave must earn as much more than he receives as will do his part in maintaining the master in idleness*, for it is of the very essence of the system that he is to be maintained in indolence by the slaves which he owns —or just so far as he owns a slave. If he were disposed to earn his own living, he would not need the labour of slaves. No man ever yet became the permanent owner of a slave from benevolence to him, or

because he desired to pay him fully for his work, or because he meant himself to work in order to maintain his slave in indolence.

(b.) If a man should in fact render to his slaves "that which is just and equal," would he not restore them to freedom? Have they not been deprived of their liberty by *injustice*, and would not "justice" restore it? What has the *slave* done to forfeit his liberty? If he should make him "equal" in rights to himself, or to what he is by nature, would he not emancipate him? Has he not been reduced to his present condition by withholding that which is "equal?" Has he "equal" rights, and "equal" privileges with other men? Has he not been cut off from them by denying him the equality to which he is entitled in the arrangements of God's government? Can he be held at all without violating all the just notions of *equality*? Though, therefore, it may be true that this passage only enjoins the rendering of that which was "just" and "equal" *in* their condition as slaves, yet it contains a *principle* which would "lay the axe at the root" of slavery, and would lead a conscientious Christian to the feeling that his slaves *ought* to be free. These principles actually effected the freedom of slaves in the Roman empire in a few centuries after Christianity was introduced, and they are destined to effect it yet all over the world.

Knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven. **See Barnes "Eph 6:9"**.

{a} "Masters" Eph 6:9

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Continue in prayer*. That is, do not neglect it; observe it at all stated times; maintain the spirit of prayer, and embrace all proper occasions to engage in it. Comp. **See Barnes "Lu 18:1"**; **See Barnes "Eph 6:18"**; **See Barnes** "1Th 5:17".

And watch in the same with thanksgiving. Watch for favourable opportunities; watch that your mind may be in a right frame when you pray; and watch, that when your mind is in a right frame you may not neglect to pray. **See Barnes "Eph 6:1"**; **See Barnes** "Eph 6:8"; **See Barnes "Php 4:6"**.

{*} "Continue" "Persevere" {b} "in prayer" Lu 18:1 {c} "watch" Mr 13:33

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Withal*. With all the supplications which you offer for other persons and things; or at the same time that you pray for them.

Praying also for us. **See Barnes "Eph 6:19,20"**.

Comp. 2Co 1:11 Php 1:19; Heb 13:18,19.

That God would open unto us a door of utterance. To preach the gospel. He earnestly desired to have liberty to: preach the gospel, and asked them to pray that this might be restored to him. **See Barnes "Eph 6:19"**.

To speak the mystery of Christ. Called, in Eph 6:19, the "mystery of the gospel. **See Barnes "Eph 6:19"**.

For which I am also in bonds. A prisoner at Rome, **See Barnes "Eph 6:20"**.

{+} "praying" "praying at the same time" {d} "open unto us" 2Th 3:1

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *That I may make it manifest*, etc. **See Barnes "Eph 1:20"**.
{++} "manifest" "so that I may show it"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Walk in wisdom*. That is, conduct upright and honest. Deal with them on the strictest principles of integrity, so that they may not have occasion to reproach the religion which you profess.

Toward them that are without. Without the pale of the church, or who, are not professing Christians. **See Barnes "1Co 5:12"**.

They were surrounded by heathens, as Christians now are by men of the world. The injunction is one that requires us to act with prudence and propriety (*en sofia*) towards them; and there is, perhaps, not a more important direction in the New Testament than this. Among the reasons for this are the following:

(1.) Men of the world judge of religion, not from the *profession*, but from the *life* of its friends.

(2.) They judge of religion, not from preaching, or from books, or from the conduct of its Founder and his apostles, but from what they see in the daily walk and conversation of the members of the church.

(3.) They *understand* the nature of religion so well as to know when its friends are or are not consistent with their profession.

(4.) They set a much higher value on honesty and integrity than they do on the doctrines and duties of religion; and if the professed friends of religion are destitute of the principle of truth and honesty, they think they have nothing of any value. They may be very devout on the Sabbath; very regular at prayer-meetings; very strict, in the observance of rites and ceremonies—but all these are of little worth in the estimation of the world, unless attended with an upright life.

(5.) No professing Christian can possibly do good to others who does not live an upright life. If you have cheated a man out of never so small a sum, it is vain that you talk to him about the salvation of his soul; if you have failed to pay him a debt when it was due, or to finish a piece of work when you promised it, or to tell him the exact truth in conversation, it is vain for you to endeavour to induce him to be a Christian. He will *feel*, if he does not *say*— and he *might* very properly say—that he wants no religion which will not make a man honest.

(6.) No man *will attempt* to do much good to others whose own life is not upright. He will be sensible of the inconsistency, and will feel that he *cannot* do it with any sense of propriety; and the honour of religion, therefore, and the salvation of our fellow-men, demand that, in all our intercourse with others, we should lead lives of the strictest integrity.

Redeeming the time. **See Barnes "Eph 5:16"**.

{e} "wisdom" Ps 90:12 Eph 5:15,16

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Let your speech.* Your conversation. In the previous verse the apostle had given a general direction that our conduct towards those who are not professing Christians should be wise and prudent; he here gives a *particular* direction in regard to our conversation.

Be alway with grace. Imbued with the spirit of religion. It should be such as religion is fitted to produce; such as to show that the grace of God is in our hearts. Bloomfield supposes that this means "courteous and agreeable, not morose and melancholy." But though this may be included, and though the rule here laid down would lead to that, it cannot be all that is intended. It rather means that our conversation should be such as to show that we are governed by the principles of religion, and that there is unfeigned piety in the heart. This will indeed *make* us mild, courteous, agreeable, and urbane in our conversation; but it will do more than this. It will imbue our discourse *with the spirit of religion*, so as to show hat the soul is under the influence of love to the Redeemer.

Seasoned with salt. Salt, among the Greeks, was the emblem of wit. Here the meaning seems to be, that our conversation should be seasoned with piety or grace in a way similar to that in which we employ salt in our food. It makes it wholesome and palatable. So with our conversation. If it be not imbued with the spirit of piety, it is flat, insipid, unprofitable, injurious. The spirit of piety will make it what it should be—useful, agreeable, beneficial to mankind. This does not mean that our conversation is to be always, strictly speaking, *religious* —wherever we may be—any more than our food should be mere salt; but it means that, *whatever be the topic*, the spirit of piety should be diffused through it—as the salt in our food should properly season it all, whatever the article of food may be.

That ye may know how ye ought to answer every man. He imbued with the spirit of piety, that you may not utter anything that would be rash and foolish, but be prepared to answer any one who may question you about your religion in a way that will show that you understand its nature, and that will tend to edification. This remark may be extended farther. It may be understood as meaning also, "be imbued with the spirit of religion, and you will be able to answer man appropriately on any subject. If he asks you about the evidence of the nature of religion, you will be able to reply to him; if he converses with you on the common topics of the day, you will be able to answer him in a mild, kind, affable spirit; if he asks you of things of which you are ignorant—if he introduces some topic of science with which you are not acquainted, you will not be ashamed to confess your ignorance, and to seek instruction; if he addresses you in a haughty, insolent, and overbearing manner, you will be able to repress the risings of your temper, and to answer him with gentleness and kindness." Comp. Lu 2:46.

{&} "speech" "words" {f} "seasoned with salt" Mr 9:50

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you*. See these verses explained in the Notes, **See Barnes** "Eph 6:21, **See Barnes "Eph 6:22"**.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 8

Verse 8. **See Barnes on "Col 4:7"**.
{*} "estate" "no definition given"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *With Onesimus*. Who had been formerly a servant of Philemon, an inhabitant of Colosse. **See Barnes "Phm 1:10"**.

Onesimus had probably been recently converted; and Paul felt towards him the warm attachment of a brother, Phm 1:16. In what way he became acquainted with him is unknown. A more full account of him will be found in the Notes on the epistle to Philemon.

Who is one of you. That is, either who is from your city, or one of your own people and nation. It is clear from this, that Onesimus was from Phrygia, and probably from the city of Colosse itself. It would seem, also, that he was of a higher rank than is designated by the word "*slave*" now. He was, indeed, a "servant" *doulov* —of Philemon; but would the apostle have addressed the Colossians, and said that he was "*one of them*," if he had occupied precisely the condition which is now denoted by the word slave? Would a minister of the gospel now in the Northern States, who should send a letter by a runaway slave to a community of masters at the South, say of him that he was "*one of them*?" Would it be kindly received, or produce a good *impression*, if he did? There is reason, therefore, to think that Onesimus was not a slave in the proper sense, but that he might have been a respectable youth, who had bound himself to service for a term of years, Comp. Phm 1:18.

They shall make known unto you all things which are done here. Relating to Paul himself, and the state of the church in Rome. As the epistle which Paul sent was designed not only for them, but to be a part of the volume of revealed truth, he *wrote* only those things which would be of permanent interest. Other matters he left for those who carried the epistle to communicate. It would also serve to give Tychius and Onesimus more respectability in view of the church at Colosse, if he referred the church to them for information on important points.

{b} "a faithful" Phm 1:10

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner*. Aristarchus was of Thessalonica, and is mentioned in Ac 19:29 20:4, as Paul's companion in his travels. In Ac 27:2, it is said that he accompanied him in his voyage to Rome, and from the passage before us it appears that he was there imprisoned with him. As he held the same sentiments as Paul, and was united with him in his travels and labours,

it was natural that he should be treated in the same manner. He, together with Gaius, had been seized in the tumult at Ephesus, and treated with violence; but he adhered to the apostle in all his troubles, and attended him in all his perils. Nothing further is certainly known of him, though the Greeks say that he was bishop of Assamea in Syria, and was beheaded with Paul at Rome, under Nero." *Calmet*.

And Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas. John Mark, in relation to whom Paul and Barnabas had formerly disagreed so much as to cause a separation between Barnabas and Paul. The ground of the disagreement was, that Barnabas wished to take him, probably on account of relationship, with them in their travels; Paul was unwilling to take him, because he had, on one occasion, departed from them. **See Barnes "Ac 15:37"**; **See Barnes** "Ac 15:38"; **See Barnes "Ac 15:39"**.

They afterward became reconciled, and Paul mentions Mark here with affection. He sent for him when he sent Tychicus to Ephesus, and it seems that he had come to him in obedience to his request, 2Ti 4:11. Mark had probably become more decided, and Paul did not harbour unkind and unforgiving feelings towards any one.

Touching whom ye received commandments. What these directions were, and how they were communicated, whether verbally or by writing, is now unknown. It was, not improbably, on some occasion when Paul was with them. He refers to it here in order that they might know distinctly whom he meant.

If he come unto you, receive him. In Phm 1:24, Mark is mentioned as a "fellow-labourer" of Paul. It would seem probable, therefore, that he was not a prisoner. Paul here intimates that he was about to leave Rome, and he enjoins it on the Colossians to receive him kindly. This injunction may have been necessary, as the Colossians may have been aware of the breach between him and Paul, and may have been disposed to regard him with suspicion. Paul retained no malice, and now commended in the warmest manner, one from whom he was formerly constrained to separate.

{c} "Aristarchus" Ac 27:2 {d} "Marcus" Ac 15:37 {++} "touching" "respecting"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *And Jesus which is called Justus*. The name Jesus was probably that which he bore among the Jews. Justus is a Roman name, and was probably that by which he was known among the Romans. It was not uncommon thus to assume another name when one went among a foreign people. Comp. **See Barnes "Ac 13:9"**.

Who are of the circumcision. Jews, or Jewish Christians. Nothing more is knows of Justus.

These only are my fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God. The word "only," here, probably refers to the fact that they only of all the Jews Who were at Rome assisted Paul in his work. Epaphras and Luke were also with him at Rome, and doubtless aided him.

Which have been a comfort unto me. The more so because they were Jews. The other Jews in Rome stood aloof, and doubtless endeavoured to augment the trials of the apostle. Comp. Ac 28:23-29.

{&} "fellow-workers" "Labourers"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Epaphras*. **See Barnes "Col 1:7"**.

Always labouring fervently for you in prayers. Marg., "or, *striving*." Gr., *agonizing*. The word denotes the intense desire which he had for their salvation; his fervent, earnest pleading for their welfare.

That ye may stand perfect and complete. Marg., as in Greek, *filled*. The desire was, that they might maintain their Christian principles unadulterated by the nature of philosophy and error, and completely perform the will of God in every respect. This is the expression of a pious *wish* in regard to them, without any affirmation that any had been absolutely perfect, or that they would be perfect in this world. It is, however, a command of God that we should be perfect, (see Mt 5:48;) and it is the highest wish of benevolence in reference to any one, that he may be complete in moral character, and may do all the will of God. **See Barnes "2Co 13:9"**.

{1} "labouring" "serving" {e} "fervently" Jas 5:16 {f} "stand perfect" Mt 5:48 {2} "complete" "filled affairs"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *For I bear him record*. Paul had had abundant opportunity to know what were his feelings in regard to these churches.

A great zeal for you. A great desire to promote your welfare.

And them that are in Laodicea. Laodicea was the capital of Phrygia, and not far from Colosse. There was a church there. See the Introduction, and **See Barnes "Col 4:16"**.

And them in Hierapolis. This was also a city in Phrygia, and not far from Laodicea and Colosse. It was situated under a hill to the north, and had on the south a large plain about five miles over. On the south of that plain, and opposite to Hierapolis, was Laodicea, with the river Lycus running in between them, nearer to Laodicea than to Hierapolis. This place is now called by the Turks *Pambuck-Kulasi*, or the *Cotton-Tower*, on account of the white cliffs which lie round about it. It is now utterly forsaken and desolate, but the ruins are so magnificent as to show that it was once one of the most splendid cities in the East. It was celebrated for the hot springs in its vicinity; and, on account of the numerous temples erected there, it received the name of *Hierapolis, or the holy city*. The principal deity worshipped there was Apollo. See Travels by T. Smith, B. D. 1678. Comp. **See Barnes "Col 4:16"**.

From the allusion to it here it would seem that there were Christians there in the time of Paul, though there is no mention of a *church* there. It is nowhere else mentioned in the New Testament.

{|} "record" "witness"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Luke, the beloved physician*. This was undoubtedly the author of the gospel which bears his name, and of the Acts of the Apostles. He is mentioned as the travelling companion of Paul in Ac 16:10, and appears to have accompanied him afterwards until his imprisonment at Rome. See 2Ti 4:11. From verse 11 of this chapter, it is evident that he was not by birth a Jew, but was probably a proselyte. He is supposed to have been a native of Cyrene, and to have died in Achaia, soon after the martyrdom of Paul, at the advanced age of eighty-four. See Rob. Cal. Art. *Luke*. He is here mentioned as a *physician*; and in his Gospel, and in the Acts, there are incidental evidences that he was acquainted with the science of medicine, and that he observed the events which he has recorded with the eye of one who practised the healing art. It is easy to imagine that the presence of a physician might have been of important service to the apostle Paul in his travels, and that his acquaintance with the art of healing may have aided not a little in the furtherance of the gospel. The miraculous power of healing, possessed by the Saviour and his apostles, contributed much to the success of their preaching; for the power of alleviating pain of body, of restoring to health by miracles, would not only be an evidence of the Divine origin of their mission—a credential that they were sent from God—but would dispose those who had received such important benefits to listen attentively to the message of salvation. One of the best qualifications in missionaries in modern times, in order to gain access to the heathen, is an acquaintance with the healing art.

And Demas. Demas is mentioned in two other places, Phm 1:24, and 2Ti 4:10. He is here spoken of with commendation as one in whom the apostle had confidence. Afterwards, when troubles thickened, he was not found proof to the trials which threatened him in Rome, and forsook the apostle and went to Thessalonica. He did this under the influence of the "love of this present world," or of life evidently unwilling to lay down his life in the cause for which Paul suffered. **See Barnes "2Ti 4:10"**.

His departure, and that of the others on whom Paul relied in Rome, was one of the severest trials which he was called there to endure. **See Barnes "2Ti 4:16"**.

{a} "Luke" 2Ti 4:10,11

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea*. **See Barnes "Col 2:1"**.

And Nymphas. This person is nowhere else mentioned, and nothing more is known of him.

And the church which is in his house. **See Barnes "Ro 16:5"**.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans*. Laodicea was near to Colosse, and the church there was evidently exposed to the same dangers from philosophy and false teachers as that at Colosse. The counsels in this epistle, therefore, would be equally applicable to both. In 1Th 5:27, the apostle also charges those to whom that epistle was addressed to see that it be "read unto all the holy brethren." It is evident that the

apostles designed that the letters which they addressed to the churches should be read also by others, and should become the permanent source of instruction to the friends of Christ. Laodicea, here referred to, was the seat of one of the "Seven churches" of Asia, (Re 3:14;) was a city of Phrygia, and was its capital. It was situated on the river Lycus, (hence called *laodikeia epi lukw* —Laodicea on the Lycus,) and stood at the south-western angle of Phrygia. Its early name appears to have been Diospolis, changed subsequently to Rhoas. The name Laodicea was given to it by Antiochus Theos, in honour of his wife, Laodice. Under the Romans it became a very flourishing commercial city. It was often damaged by earthquakes, but was restored by the Roman emperors. It is supposed to have been destroyed during the inroad of Timur Leng, A.D. 1402. The ruins are called by the Turks *Eski Hissar*. These ruins, and the ruins of Hierapolis, were visited by Mr. Riggs, an American missionary, in 1842, who thus speaks of them: "These spots, so interesting to the Christian, are now utterly desolate. The threatening expressed in Re 3:16 has been fulfilled, and Laodicea is but a name. In the midst of one of the finest plains of Asia Minor, it is entirely without inhabitant. Sardis, in like manner, whose church had a name to live, but was dead, is now an utter desolation. Its soil is turned up by the plough, or overgrown by rank weeds; while in Philadelphia, since the clay when our Saviour commended those who had there "kept the word of his patience," there has never ceased to be a nominally Christian church. The ruins of Laodicea and Hierapolis are very extensive. The stadium of the former city, and the gymnasia and theatres of both, are the most complete which I have anywhere seen. Hierapolis is remarkable also for the so-called frozen cascades, a natural curiosity, in its kind probably not surpassed for beauty and extent in the world. It consists of a deposit of carbonate of lime, white as the driven snow, assuming, when closely examined, various forms, and covering nearly the whole southern and western declivities of the elevation on which the city was built. It is visible for many miles, and has procured for the place the name, by which alone Hierapolis is known among the Turks, of the Cotton Castle." The engraving on the preceding page will illustrate the ruins of Laodicea.

And that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea. In regard to this epistle, see Introduction, & 6.

{c} "epistle" 1Th 5:27

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *And say to Archippus*. Archippus is mentioned also in Phm 1:2. He is not elsewhere referred to in the New Testament, and nothing further is known of him.

Take heed to the ministry, etc. The Greek here is, *thn diakonian* meaning the office of ministering in Divine things; but it is not certain precisely what office he held there. It seems probable, from the language which the apostle applies to him—"the ministry"—(comp. Ac 1:17,25, 6:4 20:24, 21:19 Ro 11:13; 1Co 12:5 2Co 3:7-9, 4:1 5:18; 2Co 6:3 Eph 4:12) that he was not a *deacon*, properly so called, but that he was a preacher of the word. In Phm 1:2, he is mentioned by Paul as his "fellow-soldier," and it is evident that the apostle meant to speak of him with honour. There is no evidence, as has been supposed by some, that he intended to imply, by what he said, that he had been remiss in the performance of his duties; but the apostle doubtless meant to encourage him, and to excite him to increased ardour and zeal in the work of the Lord. Comp. **See Barnes "Ac 20:28"**.

It is always proper to caution even the most faithful and self-denying servants of the Lord to "take heed," or see to it, that they perform their duties with fidelity. The office of the ministry is such, and the temptations to unfaithfulness are so great, that we need constant watchfulness.

That thou fulfil it. That there be nothing wanting, or lacking, in any of the departments of labour which you are called to perform.

{d} "Archippus" Phm 1:2 {e} "heed" 1Ti 4:14

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *The salutation by the hand of me Paul*. Probably the rest of the epistle was written by an amanuensis. As was his custom, Paul affixed his own hand to it in the form of a salutation. Comp **See Barnes "1Co 16:21"; See Barnes** "2Th 3:17".

Remember my bonds. Also evidently written by his own hand, to make the injunction more impressive. Comp. **See Barnes "Heb 13:3"**.

The meaning is that they should not forget him in his confinement. They should remember that he was suffering on their account, **See Barnes** "Col 1:24, and that he was entitled to every expression of sympathy and love.

Grace be with you. **See Barnes "Ro 16:20"**.

The subscription to this epistle is undoubtedly correct. See the Introduction.

{f} "salutation" 2Th 3:17 {g} "remember my bonds" Heb 13:3,25

End of Barnes Notes on Colossians

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 1

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 1

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

INTRODUCTION.

I.—-THE SITUATION OF THESSALONICA.

THESSALONICA was a city and sea-port of Macedonia. It was at the head of tile bay Thermaicus, or the Gulf of Thessalonica, (see the map prefixed to the Notes on the Acts of the Apostles,) and was, therefore, favourably situated for commerce. It was on the great AEgean Way; was possessed of an excellent harbour, and had great advantages for commerce through the Hellespont, and with Asia Minor and the adjacent countries. It was south-west of Philippi and Amphipolis, and a short distance north-east of Berea. Macedonia was an independent country until it was subdued by the Romans. The occasion of the wars which led to its conquest by the Romans was, an alliance which was formed by Philip II. with Carthage, during the second Punic war. The Romans delayed their revenge for a season; but Philip having laid siege to Athens, the Athenians called the Romans to their aid, and they declared war against the Macedonians. Philip was compelled to sue for peace, to surrender his vessels, to reduce his army to 500 men, and to defray the expenses of the war. Perseus, the successor of Philip, took up arms against the Romans, and was totally defeated at Pydna by Paulus AEmilius, and the Romans took possession of the country. Indignant at their oppression, the Macedonian nobility and the whole nation rebelled under Andriscus; but, after a long struggle, they were overcome by Quintus Caecilius, surnamed, from his conquest, Macedonius, and the country became a Roman province, B.C. 148. It was divided into four districts, and the city of Thessalonica was made the capital of the second division, and was the station of a Roman governor and questor. At the time, therefore, that the gospel was preached there, this whole country was subject to Roman authority.

The city, called, when Paul visited it, Thessalonica, was anciently called *Therme*, and by this name was known in the times of Herodotus, Thucydides, and AEschines. We are informed, by Strabo, that Cassander changed the name of Therme to Thessalonica, in honour of his wife, who was a daughter of Philip. Others have said that the name was given to it by Philip himself, in memory of a victory which he obtained over the armies of Thessaly. In the time of Brutus and Cassius it was a city of so much importance that the promise of being permitted to plunder the city, as the reward of victory, infused new courage into their armies. The city was inhabited by Greeks, Romans, and Jews. It adored many gods, but particularly Jupiter, as the father of Hercules, the alleged founder of its ancient royal family. It had a celebrated amphitheatre, where gladiatorial shows were exhibited for the amusement of the citizens, and a circus for public games. The Roman part of the population

was, of course, introduced after the conquest, and it is impossible now to estimate the relative number of the Greeks and the Romans in the time when the gospel was preached there. In common with most of the other cities of Greece, a considerable number of Jews resided there, who had a synagogue at the time when the city was visited by Paul, Ac 17:1. Little is known of the *morals* of the place, but there is reason to believe that it was somewhat distinguished for dissoluteness of manners. "The females, particularly, could claim little credit on the score of modest, retiring demeanour; for this virtue was in so low estimation in the city, that the place was selected as the scene of the wanton fancies of the satirist." (Lucian.) See *Hug. Intro*.

The name of the place now is Saloniki. It is a Turkish commercial town, and contains about 70,000 inhabitants. Its situation and appearance are thus described by Dr. Clarke. "The walls of Salonica give a very remarkable appearance to the town, and cause it to be seen at a great distance, being white-washed; and what is still more extraordinary, they are painted. They extend in a semi-circular manner from the sea, enclosing the whole of the buildings within a *peribolus*, whose circuit is five or six miles; but a great part of the space within the walls is void. It is one of the few remaining cities which has preserved the ancient form of its fortifications; the mural turrets yet standing, and the walls that support them, being entire. The antiquity is, perhaps, unknown, for, though they have been ascribed to the Greek emperors, it is very evident they were constructed in two distinct periods of time: the old Cyclopean masonry remaining in the lower parts of them, surmounted by an upper structure of brickwork. Like all the ancient and modern cities of Greece, its wretched aspect within is forcibly contrasted with the beauty of its external appearance. The houses are generally built of unburnt bricks, and, for the most part, they are no better than so many hovels." It is, however, a flourishing commercial town, from which is exported the corn, cotton, wool, tobacco, bees'-wax, and silk of Macedonia. It is the seat of a pasha, and has still among its population a considerable proportion of Jews. Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela, who visited it in A.D. 1160, describes it, under the name of *Salunki*, and says that it was built by Seleucus, one of the four Greek nobles who arose after Alexander; and that when he visited it, it was "a large city containing about five hundred Jewish inhabitants." "The Jews," says he, "are much oppressed in this place, and live by the exercise of handicrafts." *Itinerary*, vol. i. 49, 50. Ed. 1840. He describes it as having, at that time, more Jewish inhabitants than any other town in Greece, Thebes alone excepted. It is said at present to contain about 20,000 Jewish inhabitants. Its favourable situation for commerce is probably the cause of the numerous assemblage of the Jews there. See *Asher's Ed. of Benjamin of Tudela*, vol. ii. p. 42.

II. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH IN THESSALONICA.

THE gospel was first preached in Thessalonica by Paul and Silas. After their release from imprisonment at Philippi, they passed through Amphipolis and Appollonia, and came to Thessalonica. For some cause they appear not to have paused to preach in either of the first two places, but went at once to the city of Thessalonica. That was a much more important place, and they may have been attracted there particularly because many Jews resided there. It was customary for the apostle Paul, when he came to a place where there were Jews, to preach the gospel first to them; and as there was a synagogue in Thessalonica, he entered it, and, for three Sabbath days, reasoned with the Jews in regard to the Messiah. The points on which he endeavoured to convince them were, that, according to the Scriptures, it was necessary that the Messiah should be put to death, and that he would rise from the dead, and that all the predictions on these points were completely fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, Ac 17:2,3. A few of the Jews believed, and a much larger number of the `devout Greeks,'

and also a considerable number of females of the more elevated ranks. From these converts the church was organized, and the number at the organization would seem to have been large. It is not quite certain how long Paul and Silas remained at Thessalonica. It is known only that they preached in the synagogue for three Sabbaths, and if that were all the time that they remained there, it could not have been more than about three weeks. But it is not certain that they did not remain in the city a longer time. It is possible that they may have been excluded from the synagogue, but still may have found some other place in which to preach. This would seem probable from one or two circumstances referred to in the history and in the Epistle. In the history, Ac 17:5, it appears that Paul and Silas, for a time at least, made the house of Jason their home, and that so large numbers attended on their ministry as to give occasion to great excitement among the Jews. In the epistle, 1Th 2:9, Paul says that when he was among them, he "laboured night and day, because he would not be chargeable unto any of them, and preached unto them the gospel of God," 2Th 3:8, which looks as if he had been with them a longer time than the three Sabbaths, and as if he had laboured at his usual occupation for support, before he shared the hospitality of Jason. It appears also, from Php 4:16, that he was there long enough to receive repeated supplies from the church at Philippi. "For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity."

Paul and Silas were driven away from Thessalonica by the opposition of the Jews. A mob was created by them; the house of Jason was assailed; he and 'certain brethren,' who were supposed to have harboured and secreted Paul and Silas, were dragged before the magistrates and accused of receiving those who "had turned the world upside down," and who were guilty of treason against the Roman emperor, Ac 17:5-7. So great was the tumult, and such would be the danger of Paul and Silas if they remained there, that the members of the church judged it best that they should go to a place of safety, and they were conveyed by night to the neighbouring city of Berea. There the gospel was received with more favour, and Paul preached without opposition, until the Jews from Thessalonica, hearing where he was, came thither and excited the people against him, Ac 17:13. It became necessary again that he should be removed to a place of safety, and he was conducted to Athens; while Silas and Timothy remained at Berea. Timothy, it appears, had accompanied Paul, and had been with him, as well as Luke, at Philippi and Thessalonica, though he is not mentioned as present' with them until the arrival at Berea. When Paul went to Athens, he gave commandment to those who conducted him, that Silas and Timothy should come to him as soon as possible; and while he waited for them at Athens, he delivered the memorable speech on Mars' hill, recorded in Ac 17. Their actual arrival at Athens is not mentioned by Luke, Ac 17, but that Timothy came to him there appears from 1Th 3:1,2. "Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone, and sent Timotheus our brother, etc., to comfort you concerning your faith." Timothy appears, therefore, to have been with Paul at Athens but a short time, for he sent him back to Thessalonica, and before his return, Paul had gone to Corinth, whither Timothy followed him, Ac 18:5.

III.—THE TIME AND PLACE OF WRITING THE EPISTLE.

The subscription at tile close of this epistle affirms that it was written at Athens. But these subscriptions are of no authority whatever, (see Notes at the close of I Corinthians;) and in this case, as in several others, the subscription is false. Paul remained but a short time at Athens, and there is internal evidence that the epistle was not written there. In 1Th 3:1,2, Paul says, that such was his anxiety for them, that he had concluded to remain at Athens alone, and that he had sent Timothy to them from that place to impart to them consolation. In the same epistle, 1Th 3:6, he

speaks of Timothy's return to him before the epistle was written. But, from Ac 17 and Ac 18:5, it is evident that Timothy did not return to Paul at Athens, but that he and Silas came to him after he had left Athens and had gone to Corinth. To that place Paul had gone after his short visit to Athens, and there he remained a year and a half, Ac 18:1. It is further evident that the epistle was not written to the Thessalonians so soon as it would be necessary to suppose, if it were written-from Athens. In Ac 2:17,18, the author says, "But we, brethren, being taken from you a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire. Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us." From this it is evident that the apostle had repeatedly endeavoured to visit them, but had been hindered. But it is not reasonable to suppose that he had attempted this during the short time that he was in Athens, and so soon after having been driver, away from Berea. It is more probable that this had occurred during his residence at Corinth, and it would seem also from this, that the epistle was written towards the close of his residence there. At the time of writing the epistle, Silas and Timothy were with the apostle, 1Th 1:1, and we know that they were with him when he was at Corinth, Ac 18:5.

If this epistle were written, at the time supposed, at Corinth, it must have been about the 13th year of the reign of Claudius, and about A.D. 52. That this was the time in which it was written, is the opinion of Mill, of Lardner, of Hug, and is, indeed, generally admitted. It was the *first* epistle written by the apostle Paul, and, in some respects, may be allowed to excite a deeper interest on that account than any others of his. The Second Epistle to the Thessalonians is supposed to have been written at the same place, and, probably, in the same year. See *Lardner*, vol. vi. 4—6. Grotius, indeed, supposes that the order of the epistles has been inverted, and that that which is now called the "Second Epistle to the Thessalonians," was, in fact, first sent. But there is no evidence of this.

IV.—-THE CHARACTER OF THE CHURCH AT THESSALONICA,

AND THE DESIGN OF THE EPISTLE.

The church at Thessalonica, at first, was composed of the following classes of persons:—

(1.) Jews, To them Paul preached first; and though the mass of them opposed him, and rejected his message, yet some of them believed, Ac 17:4.

(2.) Greeks who had been proselyted to the Jewish faith, and who seem to have been in attendance on the synagogue, Ac 17:4. They are called 'devout Greeks'— *sebomenoi ellhnev*, that is, religious Greeks, or those who had renounced the worship of idols, and who attended on the worship of the synagogue. They were probably what the Jews called 'Proselytes of the Gate;' persons who were admitted to many privileges, but who were not proselytes in the fullest sense. There were many such persons usually where a synagogue was established among the Gentiles.

(3.) Females of the more elevated rank and standing in the community, Ac 17:4. They were women of influence, and were connected with distinguished families. Possibly they also may have been of the number of the proselytes.

(4.) Not a few members of the church appear to have been converted from idolatry by the preaching of the apostle, or had connected themselves with it after he had left them. Thus, in 1Th 1:9, it is said, "For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and *how ye turned to God from idols*, to serve the living and true God."

Though the apostle had been much opposed when there, and the gospel had been rejected by the great body of the inhabitants of Thessalonica, yet it had been most cordially embraced by these different classes, 1Th 2:13, and they were entirely harmonious in the belief of it. They forgot all their former differences in the cordiality with which they had embraced the gospel. The

characteristics of the church there, and the circumstances existing, which gave occasion for the two epistles to the Thessalonians, appear to have been, so far as can be gathered from the history, Ac 17, and the epistles themselves, the following:—-

(1.) The members of the church had very cordially embraced the gospel; they were the warm friends of the apostle; they greatly desired to receive his instruction; and these things prompted him to the earnest wish which he had cherished to visit them, 1Th 2:17, and now led him to write to them: Comp. 1Th 1:5,6, 2:8,9,13,19,20.

Paul had for them the strong affection which a nurse has for the children committed to her charge, 1Th 2:7, or a father for his children, 1Th 2:11, and hence the interest shown for them by writing these epistles.

(2.) They were disposed not only to embrace the gospel, but to spread it abroad, 1Th 1:8; and Paul was evidently desirous of commending them for this, and of exciting them to greater love and zeal in doing it.

(3.) They had, at first, embraced the gospel amidst scenes of strife, 1Th 2:2; they were now opposed, as they had been there, by the Jews, and by their own countrymen, 1Th 2:14, and they appear to have been called to some peculiar trials, by the loss of some valued members of the church—friends who were peculiarly dear to their hearts, 1Th 2:3,5, 3:13.

To console them in view of these afflictions, was one design of the first epistle, and in doing it, the apostle states one of the most interesting views of the resurrection to be found in the Scriptures, 1Th 4:14-18.

(4.) They had been instructed in reference to the future coming of the Saviour; the day of judgment, and the fact that the appearing of the "day of the Lord" would be like a thief in the night, 1Th 5:2. But they seem to have inferred that that day was near, and they were looking for the immediate advent of the Redeemer, and the close of the world. To this view they seem to have been led by two things. One was, a misinterpretation of what the apostle says, 1Th 4:14-18 5:2,3, about the advent of the Redeemer, which they seem to have understood as if it meant that it would be 'soon;' and the other was, probably, the fact that certain letters had been forged in the name of Paul, which maintained this doctrine, 2Th 2:2 To correct this view was one of the leading objects of the second epistle, and, accordingly, the apostle in that shows them that events must occur preceding the coming of the Lord Jesus, which would occupy a long time, and that the end of the world, therefore, could not be near, 2Th 2:3-12.

(5.) An error seems also to have prevailed among them in regard to the resurrection, which was the cause of great uneasiness to those who had lost Christian friends by death 1Th 4:13. They seem to have supposed, that when the Lord Jesus appeared, they who were alive would have great advantages over those who were deceased: that the living would be allowed to behold his glory, and to participate in the splendours of his personal reign while those who were in their graves would slumber through these magnificent scenes. To correct these views, appears to have been one design of the first epistle. The apostle shows them that at the coming of the Saviour, all the redeemed, whether living or dead, would participate alike in his glory. They who were alive would not anticipate those who were in their graves. In fact, he says, those who were dead would rise *before* the change would take place in the living that was to fit them to dwell with the Lord, and then all would be taken up to be for ever with him 1Th 4:15-18.

(6.) It would appear to be not improbable, that, after the departure of the apostle from Thessalonica, he had been accused by the enemies of the gospel there, of a want of courage, and

that they had urged this as proof, that he was conscious that the gospel was an imposture. Besides, his leaving the church there without any instructors, in a time when they greatly needed them, may have been urged as a proof that he had no real affection for them, or concern for their welfare. To meet this charge, the apostle urges several things, vindicating his conduct, and showing the strength of his attachment for them. He says,

(1.) that, as they knew, so far from being deterred by persecution from preaching, after a violent persecution at Philippi, he and his fellow-labourers had at once preached the same gospel at Thessalonica, and they had done it there amidst the same kind of opposition, 1Th 2:2.

(2.) That they themselves were witnesses that it had been done without any appearance of fraud or of guile. They had given them all possible proofs of sincerity, 1Th 2:3-5.

(3.) That they had given every proof possible that they did not seek glory from men, and that their aims were not selfish. They were willing to have imparted, not the gospel only, but also their own lives; and to show that they had had no selfish aim while with them, they had supported themselves by the labour of their own hands, 1Th 2:6-9.

(4.) That so far from not feeling any interest in them, he had repeatedly sought to visit them, but had in every instance been prevented, 1Th 2:17,18 and,

(5.) that, since he was prevented from going to them, he had submitted to the personal sacrifice of parting with Timothy at Athens, and of being left alone there, in order that he might go to them and comfort their hearts, 1Th 3:1,2.

(7.) In common with other churches, gathered in part or in whole from the heathen, they were in danger of falling into the sins to which they had been addicted before their conversion; and one object of the first epistle is, to put them on their guard against the leading vices to which they were exposed, 1Th 4:1-7.

(8.) It would seem, also, that there were some in the church who had a spirit of insubordination towards their religious teachers, and who, under pretence of edifying others, were guilty of disorder. To correct this was also one object of the epistle, 1Th 5:12-14.

From these views, the design of this epistle, and also of the second epistle to the same church, which seems to have been written soon after this, will be apparent. They were the effusions of warm attachment towards a church which the apostle had founded, but from which he had been soon driven away, and which he had been prevented from revisiting when he had earnestly desired it. They are filled with expressions of tender regard; they remind the members of the church of the ardour with which they had at first embraced the gospel; caution them against the dangers to which they were exposed; commend them for their fidelity hitherto, and encourage them in their trials and persecutions. They present some most interesting views of the nature of the gospel, and especially contain statements about the resurrection of the saints, which are not found elsewhere in the New Testament, and views in relation to the great apostasy, and the "man of sin," which demonstrate that the writer was inspired, and which are of inestimable importance in guarding the true church from the power of Antichrist. No one could have drawn the picture of the Papacy in the second chapter of the second epistle, who was not under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost; and no true Christian can be sufficiently grateful that the apostle was thus inspired to reveal the features of that great apostasy, to put the church on its guard against the wiles and the power of him, who "exalteth himself above all that is called God."

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

ANALYSIS OF CHAPTER I.

THE first chapter of this epistle embraces the following subjects :—

1. The inscription by Paul, Silas, and Timothy, to the Thessalonians, and the usual salutations, 1Th 1:1.

2. An expression of thanks for their fidelity in the gospel, 1Th 1:2-4. The apostle says that he made mention of them continually in his prayers; that he remembered their faith, and love, and patience, for by these things they had shown that they were among the elect of God.

3. He reminds them of the manner in which they received the gospel when it was first preached to them,1Th 1:5,6. The power of God had been manifested among them in a remarkable manner; they had embraced the gospel with strong assurance, and though in the midst of deep afflictions, they had received the word with joy.

4. The effect of the establishment of the church in Thessalonica had been felt far abroad, and had been of the most happy character, 1Th 1:7-10. They had become examples to all that believed in Macedonia and Achaia. From them the gospel had been sounded abroad throughout Greece, and indeed in all places with which they had connexion by their commercial relations. Those who dwelt in distant places bore witness to the influence of the gospel on them, and to the power of that religion which had turned them from idols to serve the living God. These verses contain a beautiful illustration of the effect of the gospel in a place favourably situated for commerce, and having extensive intercourse with other regions.

Verse 1. *Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus*. On the reasons why Paul associated other names with his in his epistles, **See Barnes "1Co 1:1 2Co 1:1"**.

Silvanus, or Silas, and Timothy were properly united with him on this occasion, because they had been with him when the church was founded there, Ac 17, and because Timothy had been sent by the apostle to visit them after he had himself been driven away, 1Th 3:1,2. Silas is first mentioned in the New Testament as one who was sent by the church at Jerusalem with Paul to Antioch, **See Barnes "Ac 15:22"**; and he afterwards became his travelling companion.

Which is in God the Fathers and in the Lord Jesus Christ. Who are united to the true God and to the Redeemer; or who sustain an intimate relation to the Father and the Lord Jesus. This is strong language, denoting that they were a true church. Comp. 1Jo 5:20.

Grace be unto you, etc. **See Barnes "Ro 1:7"**.

{a} "and Timotheus" 1Pe 5:12 {b} "the Thessalonians" Ac 17:1 {c} "Grace" Eph 1:2

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *We give thanks to God always for you all*. **See Barnes "Ro 1:9"**.

Making mention of you in our prayers. **See Barnes "Eph 1:16"**.

It may be observed here,

(1.) that the apostle was in the habit of constant prayer.

(2.) That he was accustomed to extemporary prayer, and not to written prayer. It is not credible that "forms" of prayer had been framed for the churches at Thessalonica and Ephesus, and the other

churches for which Paul says he prayed, nor would it have been possible to have adapted such forms to the varying circumstances attending the organization of new churches.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Remembering without ceasing*. Remembering your faith and love whenever we pray. This is not to be understood literally, but it is language such as we use respecting anything that interests us much. It is constantly in our mind. Such an interest the apostle had in the churches which he had established.

Your work of faith.That is, your work showing or evincing faith. The reference is probably to acts of duty, holiness, and benevolence, which *proved* that they exercised faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Works of faith are those to which faith prompts, and which show that there is faith in the heart. This does not mean, therefore, a work of their own producing faith, but a work which showed that they had faith.

And labour of love. Labour *produced* by love, or showing that you are actuated by love. Such would be all their kindness toward the poor, the oppressed, and the afflicted; and all their acts which showed that they loved the souls of men.

And patience of hope. Patience in your trials, showing that you have such a hope of future blessedness as to sustain you in your afflictions. It was the hope of heaven through the Lord Jesus that gave them patience. **See Barnes "Ro 8:24"**.

"The phrases here are Hebraisms, meaning active faith, and laborious love, and patient hope, and might have been so translated." *Doddridge*.

In our Lord Jesus Christ. That is, your hope is founded only on him. The only hope that we have of heaven is through the Redeemer.

In the sight of God and our Father. Before God, even our Father. It is a hope which we have through the merits of the Redeemer, and which we are permitted to cherish before God; that is, in his very presence. When we think of God; when we reflect that we must soon stand before him, we are permitted to cherish this hope. It is a hope which will be found to be genuine even in the presence of a holy and heart-searching God. This does not mean that it had been merely *professed* before God, but that it was a hope which they might dare to entertain in the presence of God, and which would bear the scrutiny of his eye.

{d} "work of faith" Joh 6:29 2Th 1:11 {e} "labour of love" Heb 6:10 {f} "patience" Ro 12:12

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God*. The margin here reads, "beloved of God, your election." The difference depends merely on the pointing, and that which would require the marginal reading has been adopted by Hahn, Tittman, Bloomfield, and Griesbach. The sense is not materially varied, and the common version may be regarded as giving the true meaning. There is no great difference between "being *beloved* of God," and "being *chosen* of God." The

sense then is, "knowing that you are chosen by God unto salvation." Comp. **See Barnes "Eph 1:4"**; **See Barnes** "Eph 1:5"; **See Barnes "Eph 1:11"**.

The word "*knowing*," here refers to Paul himself, and to Silas and Timothy, who united with him in writing the epistle, and in rendering thanks for the favours shown to the church at Thessalonica. The meaning is, that they had so strong confidence that they had been chosen of God as a church unto salvation, that they might say they *knew* it. The way in which they knew it seems not to have been by direct revelation, or by inspiration, but by the *evidence* which they had furnished, and which constituted such a proof of piety as to leave no doubt of the fact. *Calvin*. What this evidence was, the apostle states in the following verses. It was shown by the man- ner in which they embraced the gospel, and by the spirit which they had evinced under its influence. The meaning here seems to be, not that all the members of the church at Thessalonica were certainly chosen of God to salvation—for, as in other churches, there might have been those there who were false professors; but that the church, as such, had given evidence that it was a true church—that it was founded on Christian principles—and that, as a church, it had furnished evidence of its "election by God." Nor can it mean, as Clarke and Bloomfield suppose, that God "had chosen and called the Gentiles to the same privileges to which he chose and called the Jews; and that as they (the Jews) had rejected the gospel, God had now *elected* the Gentiles in their stead;" for a considerable portion of the church was composed of *Jews*, Ac 17:4,6; and it cannot, therefore, mean that the Gentiles had been selected in the place of the Jews. Besides, the election of the *Gentiles*, or any portion of the human family, to the privileges of salvation, to the neglect or exclusion of any other part, would be attended with all the difficulties which occur in the doctrine of personal and individual election. Nothing is gained on this subject in removing the difficulties, by supposing that God chooses *masses* of men instead of *individuals*. How can the one be more proper than the other? What difficulty in the doctrine of election is removed by the supposition? Why is it not as right to choose an individual as a nation? Why not as proper to reject an individual as a whole people? If this means that the church at Thessalonica had shown that it was a true church of Christ, chosen by God, then we may learn

(1.) that a true church owes what it has to the "election of God." It is because God has chosen it; has called it out from the world; and has endowed it in such a manner as to be a true church.

(2.) A church *may* give evidence that it is chosen of God, and is a true church. There are things which it may do, which will show that it is undoubtedly such a church as God has chosen, and such as he approves. There *are* just principles on which a church should be organized; and there is a spirit which may be manifested by a church which will distinguish it from any other association of men.

(3.) It is not improper to speak with strong confidence of such a church as undoubtedly chosen of God. There are churches which, by their zeal, self-denial, and deadness to the world, show beyond question their "election of God;" and the world may see that they are founded on other principles, and manifest a different spirit, from other organizations of men.

(4.) Every church should evince such a spirit, that there may be no doubt of its "election of God." It should be so dead to the world; so pure in doctrine and in practice, and so much engaged in spreading the knowledge of salvation, that the world will see that it is governed by higher principles than any worldly association, and that nothing could produce this but the influence of the Holy Spirit of God.

{1} "beloved" "beloved of God, your election"

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *For our gospel came not unto you*. When first preached, Ac 17:1-3. Paul speaks of it as "our gospel," because it was the gospel *preached* by him, and Silas, and Timothy. Comp. 2Th 2:14, 2Ti 2:8. He did not mean to say that the gospel had been originated by him, but only that he had delivered the good news of salvation to them. He is here stating the *evidence* which had been given that they were a church "chosen by God." He refers, *first*, to the manner in which the gospel was received by them, 1Th 1:5-7; and, *secondly*, to the spirit which they themselves manifested in sending it abroad, 1Th 1:8-10.

In word only. Was not merely *spoken*; or was not merely *heard*. It produced a powerful effect on the heart and life. It was not a mere empty sound, that produced no other effect than to entertain or amuse. Comp. Eze 33:32.

But also in power. That is, in such power as to convert the soul. The apostle evidently refers not to any miracles that were wrought there, but to the effect of the gospel on those who heard it. It is possible that there were miracles wrought there, as there were in other places; but there is no mention of such a fact, and it is not necessary to suppose it, in order to see the full meaning of this language. There was great *power* manifested in the gospel in its leading them to break off from their sins, to abandon their idols, and to give their hearts to God. See this more fully explained **See Barnes "1Co 2:4"**.

And in the Holy Ghost. Comp. **See Barnes "1Co 2:4"**.

It is there called the "demonstration of the Spirit."

And in much assurance. That is, with firm conviction, or full persuasion of its truth. It was not embraced as a doubtful thing, and it did not produce the effect on the mind which is caused by anything that is uncertain in its character. Many seem to embrace the gospel as if they only *half* believed it, or as if it were a matter of very doubtful truth and importance; but this was not the case with the Thessalonians. There was the firmest conviction of its truth, and they embraced it "heart and soul." Col 2:2 Heb 6:11. From all that is said in this verse, it is evident that the power of God was remarkably manifested in the conversion of the Thessalonians, and that they embraced the gospel with an uncommonly strong conviction of its truth and value. This fact will account for the subsequent zeal which the apostle so much commends in them—for it is usually true that the character of piety in a church, as it is in an individual, is determined by the views with which the gospel is first embraced, and the purposes which are formed at the beginning of the Christian life.

As ye know what manner of men, etc. Paul often appeals to those among whom he had laboured as competent witnesses with respect to his own conduct and character. See 1Th 2:9,10; Ac 20:33-35.

He means here that he and his fellow-labourers had set them an example, or had shown what Christianity was by their manner of living, and that the Thessalonians had become convinced that the religion which they taught was real. The holy life of a preacher goes far to confirm the truth of the religion which he preaches, and is among the most efficacious means of inducing them to embrace the gospel.

{a} "came not unto you" Isa 55:11 Mr 16:20 {b} "power" 1Co 2:4 {c} "in the Holy Ghost" 2Co 6:6 {d} "as ye know" Heb 2:3

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *And ye became followers of us*. "You became imitators— *mimhtai* of us." This does not mean that they became followers of Paul, Silas, and Timothy, in the sense that they had set themselves up as teachers, or as the head of a sect, but that they imitated their manner of living. **See Barnes "1Co 4:16"; See Barnes** "1Co 11:1".

And of the Lord. The Lord Jesus. You also learned to *imitate* him. From this it is evident that the manner in which the Saviour lived was a prominent topic of their preaching, and also that it was one of the means of the conversion of the Thessalonians. It is probable that preaching on the pure and holy life of the Lord Jesus might be made a much more important means of the conversion of sinners than it is. Nothing is better adapted to show them the evil of their own guilty lives than the contrast between their lives and his; and nothing can be conceived better fitted to win them to holy living than the contemplation of his pure and holy deportment.

Having retired the word in much affliction. That is, amidst much opposition from others. See Ac 17:5-8. It was in the midst of these trials that they had become converted—and they seem to have been all the better Christians for them. In *this* they were imitators of the Saviour, or shared the same lot with him, and thus became his followers. Their embracing and holding fast the truths of religion amidst all this opposition, showed that they were controlled by the same principles that he was, and that they were truly his friends.

With joy of the Holy Ghost. With happiness produced by the Holy Ghost. Though they were much afflicted and persecuted, yet there was joy. There was joy in their conversion, in the evidence of pardoned sin, in the hope of heaven. **See Barnes "Ac 8:8"**.

However great may be the trials and persecutions experienced in receiving the gospel, or however numerous and long the sufferings of the subsequent life in consequence of having embraced it, there is a joy in religion that more than overbalances all, and that makes religion the richest of all blessings.

{e} "followers of us" 2Co 8:5 {f} "Holy Ghost" Ac 13:52

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *So that ye were ensamples to all that believe*. Examples in reference to the firmness with which you embraced the gospel, the fidelity with which you adhered to it in trials, and the zeal which you showed in spreading it abroad. These things are specified in the previous and subsequent verses as characterizing their piety. The word here rendered *ensamples—tupouv*—is that from which the word *type* is derived. It properly denotes anything caused or produced by the means of blows, (from *tupouv*,) and hence a mark, print, or impression, made by a stamp, or die; and then a resemblance, figure, pattern, exemplar—a model after which anything is made. This is the meaning here. They became, as it were, a model or pattern after which the piety of others should be moulded, or showed what the piety of others ought to be.

In Macedonia. Thessalonica was an important city of Macedonia, (see the Introduction. Comp. **See Barnes "Ac 16:9"**; and of course their influence would be felt on the whole of the surrounding region. This is a striking instance of the effect which a church in a city may have on the country.

The influence of a city church may be felt, and will usually be felt afar on the other churches, of a community; just as, in all other respects, a city has an important influence on the country at large.

And Achaia. Achaia proper was the part of Greece of which Corinth was the capital. The word, however, was sometimes so used as to comprehend the whole of Greece, and in this sense it seems to be employed here, as there is no reason to suppose that their influence would be felt *particularly* in the province of which Corinth was the centre. Koppe observes that Macedonia and Achaia were the two provinces into which all Greece was divided when it was brought under the Roman yoke, the former of which comprehended Macedonia proper, Illyricum, Epirus, and Thessaly, and the other Greece properly so called. The meaning here is, therefore, that their influence was felt on all the parts of Greece; that their piety was spoken of, and the effect of their conversion had been felt m all those places. Thessalonica was a commercial city, and a sea-port. It had intercourse with all the other parts of Macedonia, with Greece, and with Asia Minor. It was partly owing to the advantages of its situation that its influence was thus felt. Its own merchants and mariners who went abroad would carry with them the spirit of the religion of the church there; and those who visited it from other ports would see the effect of religion there. This is just an instance, therefore, of the influence which a commercial town and a sea-port may have in religion on other parts of the world. A revival of religion in such a place will extend its influence afar to other places; and appropriate zeal among the friends of the Redeemer there, may have an important effect on sea-ports, and towns, and lands far remote. It is impossible to over-estimate the importance of such places in regard to the spread of the gospel; and Christians who reside there—be they merchants, mechanics, lawyers, physicians, mariners, or ministers of the gospel, should feel that on them God has placed the responsibility of using a vast influence in sending the gospel to other lands. He that goes forth from a commercial town should be imbued with the spirit of the gospel; and churches located there should be so under the influence of religion that they who come among them from abroad shall bear to their own lands honourable testimony of the power of religion there.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *For from you sounded out the word of the Lord*. The truths of religion were thus spread abroad. The word rendered, "sounded-out," *exhchtai* refers to the sounding of a trumpet, (Bloomfield,) and the idea is, that the gospel was proclaimed like the sonorous voice of a trumpet echoing from place to place. Comp. Isa 58:1 Re 1:10. Their influence had an effect in diffusing the gospel in other places, as if the sound of a trumpet echoed and re-echoed among the hills and along the vales of the classic land of Greece. This seems to have been done

(1.) *involuntarily*; that is, the necessary result of their conversion, even without any direct purpose of the kind of their own, would be to produce this effect. Their central and advantageous commercial position; the fact that many of them were in the habit of visiting other places; and the fact that they were visited by strangers from abroad, would naturally contribute to this result. But

(2.) this does not appear to be all that is intended. The apostle commends them in such a way as to make it certain that they were voluntary in the spread of the gospel; that they made decided efforts to take advantage of their position to send the knowledge of the truth abroad. If so, this is an interesting instance of one of the first efforts made by a church to diffuse the gospel, and to send

it to those who were destitute of it. There is no improbability in the supposition that they sent out members of their church—messengers of salvation—to other parts of Macedonia and Greece, that they might communicate the same gospel to others. See *Doddridge*.

But also in every place. Thessalonica was connected not only with Macedonia and Greece proper, in its commercial relations, but also with the ports of Asia Minor, and not improbably with still more remote regions. The meaning is, that in all the places with which they trafficked, the effect of their faith was seen and spoken of.

Faith to God-ward. Fidelity toward God. They showed that they had a true belief in God, and in the truth which he had revealed.

So that we need not to speak anything. That is, wherever we go, we need say nothing of the fact that you have been turned to the Lord, or of the character of your piety. These things are sufficiently made known by those who come from you, by those who visit you, and by your zeal in spreading the true religion.

{a} "sounded out" Rom 10:18 {b} "place your faith" 2Th 1:4

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *For they themselves*. They who have visited you, and they whom you have sent out: all persons testify of your piety. The apostle seems to refer to all whom he had met or had heard of "in all places," who said anything about the Thessalonians. They were unanimous in bearing testimony to their fidelity and piety.

Show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you. The testimony which they bear of you is, in fact, testimony of the manner in which we preached the gospel, and demeaned ourselves when we were with you. It shows that we were intent on our Master's work, and that we were not actuated by selfish or sinister motives. The argument is, that such effects could not have been produced among them if Paul, Silas, and their fellow-labourers had been impostors. Their sound conversion to God; their change from idolatry to the true religion, and the zeal which had been the result of their conversion, was an argument to which Paul and his fellow-labourers might appeal in proof of their sincerity and their being sent from God. Paul often makes a similar appeal, Comp. **See Barnes** "2Co 3:2, **See Barnes "2Co 3:3"**.

It is certain that many of the Jews in Thessalonica, when Paul and his fellow-labourers were there, regarded them as impostors, Ac 17:6,8; and there is every reason to suppose that after they left the city, they would endeavour to keep up this impression among the people. To meet this, Paul now says that their own undoubted conversion to life of holiness and zeal under their ministry, was in unanswerable argument that this was not so. How could impostors and deceivers have been the means of producing such effects?

And how ye turned to God from idols. That is, under our preaching. This proves that the church was, to a considerable extent, composed of those who were converted from idolatry under the preaching of Paul. Comp. Intro. paragraph 5. The meaning here is, that they who came from them, or they who had visited them, bore abundant testimony to the fact that they had turned from idols to the worship of the true God. Comp. **See Barnes "1Co 12:2 Gal 4:8"**.

To serve the living and true God. He is called the "living God" in opposition to idols —who are represented as dead, dumb, deaf, and blind. Comp. Ps 135:15-17. **See Barnes "Isa 44:10"** and following; **See Barnes "Mt 16:16"**; **See Barnes** "Joh 5:26"; **See Barnes "Ac 14:15".**

{c} "to God from idols" 1Co 12:2 Gal 4:8

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *And to wait for his Son from heaven*, It is clear from this and from other parts of these two epistles, that the return of the Lord Jesus to this world was a prominent subject of the preaching of Paul at Thessalonica. No small part of these epistles is occupied with stating the true doctrine on this point, (1 Thess 4, 5) and in correcting the errors which prevailed in regard to it after the departure of Paul. Perhaps we are not to infer, however, that this doctrine was made *more* prominent there than others, or that it had been inculcated there more frequently than it had been elsewhere; but the apostle adverts to it here particularly because it was a doctrine so well fitted to impart comfort to them in their trials, 1Th 4:13-18, and because, in that connexion, it was so well calculated to rouse them to vigilance and zeal, 1Th 5:1-11. He makes it prominent in the second epistle, because material errors prevailed there in reference to it, which needed to be corrected. In the passage before us, he says that the return of the Son of God from heaven was an important point which had been insisted on when he was there, and that their conduct, as borne witness to by all, had shown with what power it had seized upon them, and what a practical influence it had exerted in their lives. They lived as if they were "waiting" for his return. They fully believed in it; they expected it. They were looking out for it, not knowing when it might occur, and as if it might occur at any moment. They were, therefore, dead to the world, and were animated with an earnest desire to do good. This is one of the instances which demonstrate that the doctrine that the Lord Jesus will return to our world, is fitted, when understood in the true sense revealed in the Scriptures, to exert a powerful influence on the souls of men. It is eminently adapted to comfort the hearts of true Christians in the sorrows, bereavements, and sicknesses of life, Joh 14:1-3; Ac 1:11 1Th 4:13-18; 2Pe 3:8,9; to lead us to watchfulness, and to an earnest inquiry into the question whether we are prepared to meet him, Mt 24:37-44 25:13; to make us dead to the world, and to lead us to act as becomes the children of light, 1Th 5:5-9; to awaken and arouse impenitent and careless sinners, 1Th 5:2,3; 2Pe 3:3-7; and to excite Christians to self-denying efforts to spread the gospel in distant lands, as was the case at Thessalonica. Every doctrine of the gospel is adapted to produce some happy practical effects on mankind; but there are few that are more full of elevated and holy influences than that which teaches that the Lord Jesus will return to the earth, and which leads the soul to wait for his appearing. Comp. **See Barnes "1Co 1:7"**; **See Barnes** "Php 3:20".

Whom he raised from the dead. **See Barnes** "Ac 2:24, also Ac 2:25-32; **See Barnes "1Co 15:4"; also** 1Co 15:5-9. Paul probably means to intimate here, that this was one of the great truths which they had received, that the Lord Jesus had been raised from the dead. We know it was a prominent doctrine wherever the gospel was preached.

Which delivered us from the wrath to come. Another of the prominent doctrines of Christianity, which was undoubtedly always inculcated by the first preachers of religion. The "wrath to come" is the Divine indignation which will come upon the guilty, Mt 3:7. From that Christ delivers us by

taking our place, and dying in our stead. It was the great purpose of his coming to save us from this approaching wrath. It follows from this

(1.) that there was wrath which man had to dread, since Jesus came to deliver us from something that was real, and not from what was *imaginary*; and

(2.) that the same wrath is to be dreaded now by all who are not united to Christ, since in this respect they are now just as all were before he died; that is, they axe exposed to fearful punishment, from which he alone can deliver. It may be added, that the existence of this wrath is real, whether men believe it or not; for the fact of its existence is not affected by our belief or unbelief.

{d} "wait for his Son" Php 3:20 {e} "wrath to come" Mt 3:7 Ro 5:9

REMARKS

This chapter teaches,

(1.) That it is right to commend those who do well, 1Th 1:3. Paul was never afraid of injuring any one by commending him when he deserved it; nor was he ever afraid to rebuke when censure was due.

(2.) Christians are chosen to salvation, 1Th 1:4. Their hope of heaven depends on the "election of God."

(3.) It is possible for a people to know that they are chosen of God, and to give such evidence of it that others shall know it also, 1Th 1:4. It is possible for a *church* to evince such a spirit of piety, self-denial, love, and holiness, and such a desire to spread the gospel, as to show that they are "chosen of God," or that they are a true church. This question is not to be determined by their adherence to certain rites and forms; by their holding to the sentiments of an orthodox creed; or by their zeal in defence of the "apostolic succession," but by their bringing forth "the fruits of good living." In determining that the church at Thessalonica was "chosen of God," Paul does not refer to its external organization, or to the fact that it was founded by apostolic hands, or that it had a true ministry and valid ordinances, but to the fact that it evinced the true spirit of Christian piety; and, particularly, that they had been zealous in sending the gospel to others. There were three things to which he referred:

1. That the gospel had power over themselves, inducing them to abandon their sins;

2. that it had such influence on their lives that others recognised in them the evidence of true religion; and,

3. that it made them benevolent, and excited them to make efforts to diffuse its blessings abroad.

(4.) If a *church* may know that it is chosen or elected of God, it is true of an individual also that he may know it. It is not by any direct revelation from heaven; not by an infallible communication of the Holy Spirit; not by any voice or vision; but it is in the same way in which this may be evinced by a church. The conversion of an individual, or his "election of God," may be certainly known by himself, if,

1. the gospel is received as "the word of God," and induces him to abandon his sins;

2. if it leads him to pursue such a life that others shall see that he is actuated by Christian principles; and,

3. if he makes it his great aim in life to do good and to diffuse abroad, as far as he can, that religion which he professes to love. He who finds in his own heart and life evidence of these things, need not doubt that he is among the "chosen of God."

(5.) The character of piety in the life of an individual Christian, and in a church, is often determined by the manner in which the gospel is embraced at first, and by the spirit with which the Christian life is entered on. **See Barnes "1Th 1:5"**; **See Barnes** "1Th 1:6".

If so, then this fact is of immense importance in the question about organizing a church, and about making a profession of religion. If a church is so organized as to have it understood that it shall be to a considerable extent the patron of worldly amusements—a" half-way house" between the world and religion—that purpose will determine all its subsequent character, unless it shall be counteracted by the grace of God. If it be organized so as to look with a benignant and tolerant eye on gayety, vanity, self-indulgence, ease, and what are called the amusements and pleasures of life, it is not difficult to see what will be its character and influence. How can such a church diffuse far and near the conviction that it is "chosen of God," as the church at Thessalonica did? And so of an individual. Commonly, the whole character of the religious life will be determined by the views with which the profession of religion is made. If there be a propose to enjoy religion and the world too; to be the patron of fashion as well as a professed follower of Christ; to seek the flattery or the plaudits of man as well as the approbation of God, that purpose will render the whole religious life useless, vacillating, inconsistent, *miserable*. The individual will live without the enjoyment of religion, and will die leaving little evidence to his friends that he has gone to be with God. If, on the other hand, there be singleness of purpose, and entire dedication to God at the commencement of the Christian life, the religious career will be one of usefulness, respectability, and peace. The most important period in a man's life, then, is that when he is pondering the question whether he shall make a profession of religion.

(6.) A church in a city should cause its influence to be felt afar, 1Th 1:7,9. This is true, indeed, of all other churches, but it is especially so of a church in a large town. Cities will be centres of influence in fashion, science, literature, religion, and morals. A thousand ties of interest bind them to other parts of a land; and thought in fact, there may be, as there often is, much more *intelligence* in a country neighbourhood than among the same number of inhabitants taken promiscuously from a city; and though there may be, as there often is, far more good sense and capability to appreciate religious truth in a country congregation than in a congregation in a city, yet it is true that the city will be the radiating point of influence. This, of course, increases the responsibility of Christians in a city, and makes it important that, like those of Thessalonica, they should be models of self-denial, and of efforts to spread the gospel.

(7.) A church in a commercial town should make use of its peculiar influence to spread the gospel abroad, 1Th 1:7-9. Such a place is connected with remote lands, and those who, for commercial purposes, visit distant ports from that place, should bear with them the spirit of the gospel. Such, too, should be the character of piety in the churches in such a city, that all who visit it for any purpose, should see the reality of religion, and be led to bear the honourable report of it again to their own land.

(8.) Such, too, should be the piety of any church. The church at Thessalonica evinced the true spirit of religion, 1Th 1:7-9. Its light shone afar. It sent out those who went to spread the gospel. Its members, when they went abroad, showed that they were influenced by higher and purer principles than those which actuated them before conversion, and than were evinced by the heathen world. Those who visited them, also, saw that there was a reality in religion, and bore an honourable report of it again to their own lands. Let any church evince this spirit, and it will show that it is

"chosen of God," or a true church; and wherever there is a church formed after the primitive model, these traits will always be seen.

(9.) It is *our* duty and privilege to "wait for the Son of God to return from heaven." We know not when his appearing, either to remove us by death, or to judge the world, will be; and we should therefore watch and be ready. The hope of his return to our world to raise the dead, and to convey his ransomed to heaven, is the brightest and most cheering prospect that dawns on man; and we should be ready, whenever it occurs, to hail him as our returning Lord, and to rush to his arms as *our* glorious Redeemer. It should be always the characteristic of our piety, as it was that of John, to say, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus," Re 22:20.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 2

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 1

FIRST THESSALONIANS CHAPTER 2

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER

The principal *subjects* embraced in this chapter are the following:—

I. A statement of the conduct of Paul, and his fellow-labourers, when they first preached tile gospel at Thessalonica, 1Th 2:1-12.

In this statement, the apostle specifies particularly the following things.

(1.) That he and his fellow-labourers had been shamefully treated at Philippi, and had been obliged to encounter much opposition at Thessalonica, 1Th 2:1,2.

(2.) That in their efforts to convert the Thessalonians they had used no deceit, corruption, or guile, 1Th 2:3,4.

(3.) That they had not sought the praise of men, and had not used the weight of *authority* which they might have done as the apostles of Christ, 1Th 2:6.

(4.) That they had been gentle and mild in all their intercourse with them, 1Th 2:7,8.

(5.) That, in order not to be burdensome, or to subject themselves to the charge of selfishness, they had supported themselves by labouring night and day, 1Th 2:9.

(6.) That the Thessalonians themselves were witnesses in what a holy and pure manner they had lived when there, and how they had exhorted them to a holy life, 1Th 2:10-12.

II. The apostle refers to the manner in which the Thessalonians had received the truth at first, as undoubtedly the word of God, and not as the word of men, 1Th 2:13.

III. He reminds them of the fact that they had met with the same opposition from the Jews which the churches in Judea had, for that everywhere the Jews had made the same opposition to the messengers of God, killing the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and forbidding the apostles everywhere to speak to the Gentiles, 1Th 2:14-16.

IV. In the conclusion of the chapter, the apostle expresses the earnest desire which he had to visit them, and the reason why he had not done it. It was because he had been prevented by causes

beyond his control; and now his earnest and sincere wish was, that he might be permitted to see them—for they were his hope, and joy, and crown, 1Th 2:17-20.

It is reasonable to suppose that the statements in this chapter were designed to meet a certain condition of things in the church there, and if so, we may learn something of the difficulties which the Thessalonians had to encounter, and of the objections which were made to Paul and to the gospel. It is often in this way that we can get the best view of the internal condition of a church referred to in the New Testament—not by direct statement respecting difficulties and errors in it, but by the character of the epistle sent to it. Judging by this rule, we should infer that there were those in Thessalonica who utterly denied the Divine origin of the gospel. This general charge, the apostle meets in the first chapter, by showing that the *power* of the gospel evinced in their conversion, and its *effects* in their lives, demonstrated it to be of heavenly origin.

In reference to the state of things as referred to in this chapter, we should also infer the following things:

1. That it was represented by some that the apostle, and his fellow-labourers, sought influence and power; that they were dictatorial and authoritative; that they were indisposed to labour, and were, in fact, impostors. This charge Paul refutes abundantly by his appeal to what *they* knew of him, and what they had seen of him when he was there, 1Th 2:1-12.

2. That the church at Thessalonica met with severe and violent opposition from the Jews who were there, 1Th 2:14-17. This appears to have been a formidable opposition. Comp. Ac 17:5, seq. They would not only be likely to use violence, but it is not improbable that they employed the semblance of *argument* that might perplex the church. They might represent that they were from the same country as Paul and his fellow-labourers; that they, while pretending to great zeal for religion, were, in fact, apostates, and were engaged in overturning the revealed doctrines of God. It would be easy to represent them as men who, from this cause, were worthy of no confidence, and to urge the fact that those who thus acted in opposition to the religion of their own country, and to the sacred rites of the temple at Jerusalem, could be entitled to no regard. These charges, if they were made, the apostle meets, by assuring the Thessalonians that they were suffering precisely the same things which the churches ill Judea did; that the Jews manifested the same spirit there which they did in Thessalonica; that they had killed alike the Lord Jesus and their own undoubted prophets, and that it was a characteristic of them that they were opposed to all other men. Their opposition, therefore, was not to be wondered at; nut was it to be regarded as ally argument that the apostles, though Jews, were unworthy of confidence, 1Th 2:15,16§.

3. It was very probably represented by the enemies of Paul and his fellow-labourers, that they had fled from Thessalonica on the slightest danger, and had no regard for the church there, or they would have remained there in the time of peril, or, at least, that they would have returned to visit them. Their continued absence was probably urged as a proof that they had no concern for them. The apostle meets this by stating that they had been indeed "taken from them" for a little time, but that their hearts were still with them, and by assuring them that he had often endeavoured to visit them again, but that "Satan had hindered" him, 1Th 2:17-20. He had, however, given them the highest proof of interest and affection that he could, for when he was unable to go himself, he had, at great self-denial, sent Timothy to establish them in the faith, and to comfort their hearts, 1Th 2:1-3. His absence, therefore, should not be urged as a proof that he had no regard for them.

1. For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you. **See Barnes** "1Th 1:9, Paul appeals to themselves, for proof that they had not come among them as impostors. They had had a full

opportunity to see them, and to know what influenced them. Paul frequently appeals to his own life, and to what they, among whom he laboured, knew of it, as a full refutation of the slanderous accusations of his enemies. **See Barnes "1Co 4:10-16 9:19-27;** 2Co 6:3-10.

Every minister of the gospel ought so to live as to be able, when slanderously attacked, to make such an appeal to his people.

That it was not in vain. *kenh*. This word means

(1.) *empty, vain, fruitless*, or without success;

(2.) that in which there is no truth or reality—*false, fallacious*, Eph 5:6 Col 2:8. Here it seems, from the connexion, 1Th 2:3-5, to be used in the latter sense, as denoting that they were not deceivers. The object does not appear to be so much to show that their ministry was successful, as to meet a charge of their adversaries that they were impostors. Paul tells them that, from their own observation, they knew that this was not so.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *But even after that we had suffered before*. Before we came among you.

And were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, Ac 16:19, seq. By being beaten and cast into prison. The *shame* of the treatment consisted in the fact that it was wholly undeserved; that it was contrary to the laws; and that it was accompanied with circumstances designed to make their punishment as ignominious as possible. The Thessalonians knew of this, and Paul was not disposed to palliate the conduct of the Philippians. What was "shameful treatment" he speaks of as such without hesitation. It is not wrong to call things by their right names, and when we have been abused, it is not necessary that we should attempt to smoothe the matter over by saying that it was not so.

We were bold in our God. By humble dependence on the support of our God. It was only his powerful aid that could have enabled them to persevere with ardour and zeal in such a work after such treatment. The meaning here is, that they were not deterred from preaching the gospel by the treatment which they had received, but at the very next important town, and on the first opportunity, they proclaimed the same truth, though there was no security that they might not meet with the same persecution there. Paul evidently appeals to this in order to show them that they were not impostors, and that they were not influenced by the hope of ease or of selfish gains. Men who were not sincere and earnest in their purposes would have been deterred by such treatment as they had received at Philippi.

With much contention. Amidst much opposition, and where great effort was necessary. The Greek word here used is *agwn* (*agony*,) a word referring usually to the Grecian games. **See Barnes "Col 2:1"**.

It means the course, or place of contest; and then the contest itself, the strife, the combat, the effort for victory; and the apostle here means, that, owing to the opposition there, there was need of an effort on his part like the desperate struggles of those who contended for the mastery at the Grecian games. Comp. Notes on 1Co 9:24-27. The triumph of the gospel there was secured only by an effort of the highest kind, and by overcoming the most formidable opposition.

{a} "at Philippi we" Ac 16:12 {b} "bold" Ac 17:2,3 {c} "contention" Jude 1:3

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *For our exhortation*. That is, the exhortation to embrace the gospel. The word seems to be used here so as to include *preaching* in general. The sense is, that the means which they used to induce them to become Christians were not such as to delude them.

Was not of deceit. Was not founded on sophistry. The apostle means to say, that the Thessalonians knew that his manner of preaching was not such as was adopted by the advocates of error.

Nor of uncleanness.—Not such as to lead to an impure life. It was such as to lead to holiness and purity. The apostle appeals to what they knew to be the tendency of his doctrine as an evidence that it was true. Most of the teaching of the heathen philosophers led to a life of licentiousness and corruption. The *tendency* of the gospel was just the reverse.

Nor in guile. Not by the arts of deceit. There was no *craftiness* or *trick*, such as could not bear a severe scrutiny. No point was carried by art, cunning, or stratagem. Everything was done on the most honourable and fair principles. It is much when a man can say that he has never endeavoured to accomplish anything by mere *trick*, *craft*, or *cunning*. Sagacity and shrewdness are always allowable in ministers as well as others; trick and cunning never. Yet stratagem often takes the place of sagacity, and trick is often miscalled shrewdness. Guile, craft, cunning, imply deception, and can never be reconciled with that entire honesty which a minister of the gospel, and all other Christians, ought to possess. **See Barnes "2Co 12:16"**.

Comp. Ps 32:2 34:13; Joh 1:47 1Pe 2:1,22 Re 14:5.

{d} "deceit" 2Pe 1:16

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel*. Comp.

@1Ti 1:11,12.

Since there had been committed to us an office so high and holy, and so much demanding sincerity, fidelity, and honesty, we endeavoured to act in all respects in conformity to the trust reposed in us. The gospel is a system of truth and sincerity, and we evinced the same. The gospel is concerned with great realities, and we did not resort to trick and illusion. The office of the ministry is most responsible, and we acted in view of the great account which we must render. The meaning is, that Paul had such a sense of the truth, reality, and importance of the gospel, and of his responsibility, as effectually to keep him from anything like craft or cunning in preaching it. An effectual restrainer from mere management and trick will always be found in a deep conviction of the truth and importance of religion. Artifice and cunning are the usual accompaniments of a bad cause; and, when adopted by a minister of the gospel, will usually, when detected, leave the impression that he feels that he is engaged in such a cause. If an object cannot be secured by sincerity and straight-forward dealing, it is not desirable that it should be secured at all.

Even so we speak. In accordance with the nature of the gospel; with the truth and sincerity which such a cause demands.

Not as pleasing men. Not in the manner of impostors, who make it their object to please men. The meaning of the apostle is, that he did not aim to teach such doctrines as would flatter men; as

would win their applause; or as would gratify their passions or their fancy. We are not to suppose that he desired to offend men; or that he regarded their esteem as of no value; or that he was indifferent whether they were pleased or displeased; but that it was not the direct object of his preaching to please them. It was to declare the truth, and to obtain the approbation of God, whatever men might think of it.

See Barnes "Ga 1:10".

Which trieth our hearts. It is often said to be an attribute of God that he tries or searches the hearts of men, 1Ch 28:9 29:17; Jer 11:20 17:10; Ps 11:4 Ro 8:27.

The meaning here is, that the apostle had a deep conviction of the truth that God knew all his motives, and that all would be revealed in the last day.

{a} "trust with" 1Ti 1:11,12

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *For neither at any time used we flattering words*. **See Barnes "Job 32:21"**; **See Barnes** "Job 32:22"; **See Barnes "2Co 2:17"**.

The word here rendered "flattering"—*kolakeia*—occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. The meaning is, that the apostle did not deal in the language of adulation; he did not praise them for their beauty, wealth, talent, or accomplishments, and conceal from them the painful truths about their guilt and danger, He stated simple truth—not refusing to commend men if truth would admit of it, and never hesitating to declare his honest convictions about their guilt and danger. One of the principal arts of the deceiver on all subjects is flattery; and Paul says, that when preaching to the Thessalonians he had carefully avoided it. He now appeals to that fact as a proof of his own integrity. They knew that he had been faithful to their souls.

Nor a cloke of covetousness. The word rendered "*cloke*" here— *profasiv*—means, properly, "what is shown or appears before any one;" i.e., *show, pretence, pretext*, put forth in order to cover one's real intent, Mt 23:14 Mr 12:40; Lu 20:47.

The meaning here is, that he did not put on a *pretence or appearance* of piety for the sake of promoting the schemes of covetousness. The evidence of that was not only what their observed of the general spirit of the apostle, but also the fact that when with them he had actually laboured with his own hands for a support, 1Th 2:9. It is obvious that there were those there, as sometimes there are now, who, under the pretence of great zeal for religion, were really seeking wealth; and it is possible that it may have been alleged against Paul and his fellow-labourers that they were such persons.

God is witness. This is a solemn appeal to God for the truth of what he had said. He refers not only to their own observation, but he calls God himself to witness his sincerity. God knew the truth in the case. There could have been no imposing on him; and the appeal, therefore, is to one who was intimately acquainted with the truth. Learn hence,

(1.) that it is right, on important occasions, to appeal to God for the truth of what we say.

(2.) We should always so live that we can properly make such an appeal to him.

{b} "neither at any time" 2Co 2:17

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Nor of men sought we glory*. Or praise. The love of applause was not that which influenced them. **See Barnes "Col 1:10"**.

Neither of you, nor yet of others. Nowhere has this been our object. The love of fame is not that which has influenced us. The particular idea in this verse seems to be, that though they had uncommon advantages, as the apostles of Christ, for setting up a dominion or securing an ascendency over others yet they had not availed themselves of it. As an apostle of Christ; as appointed by him to found churches; as endowed with the power of working miracles, Paul had every advantage for securing authority over others and turning it to the purposes of ambition or gain.

When we might have been burdensome. Marg., "or, *used authority*." Some understand this as meaning that they might have demanded a support in virtue of their being apostles; others, as Calvin, and as it is in the margin, that they might have used authority, and have governed them wholly in that manner, exacting unqualified obedience. The Greek properly refers to that which is *weighty—en barei —heavy, burdensome*. Anything that weighs down, or oppresses —as a burden, sorrow, or authority, would meet the sense of the Greek. It seems probable, from the context, that the apostle did not refer either to authority or to support exclusively, but may have included both. In their circumstances it might have been somewhat burdensome for them to have maintained him and his fellow-labourers, though as an apostle he might have required it. Comp. 1Co 9:8-15. Rather than be oppressive in this respect, he had chosen to forego his right, and to maintain himself by his own labour. As an apostle also he might have exerted his authority, and might have made use of his great office for the purpose of placing himself at the head of churches, and giving them laws. But he chose to do nothing that would be a burden; he treated them with the gentleness with which a nurse cherishes her children, 1Th 2:7, or a father his sons, 1Th 2:11, and employed only the arts of persuasion. Comp. **See Barnes "2Co 12:13"**; **See Barnes** "2Co 12:14"; **See Barnes "2Co 12:15"**; **See Barnes** "2Co 12:16".

As the apostles of Christ. Though the writer uses the word *apostles* here in the plural number, it is not certain that he means to apply it to Silas and Timothy. He often uses the plural number where he refers to himself only; and though Silas and Timothy are joined with him in this epistle, 1Th 1:1, yet it is evident that he writes the letter as if he were alone, and that they had no part in the composition or the instructions. Timothy and Silas are associated with him for the mere purpose of salutation or kind remembrance. That this is so, is apparent from chapter 3. In 1Th 3:1, Paul uses the plural term also. "When we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone." 1Th 2:5 "For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith? Neither Silas nor Timothy were apostles in the strict and proper sense, and there is no evidence that they had the "authority" which Paul here says might have been exerted by an apostle of Christ.

{c} "men sought" Joh 5:41,44; Ga 1:10

{1} "been burdensome" "used authority"

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *But we were gentle among you*, etc. Instead of using authority, we used only the most kind and gentle methods to win you and to promote your peace and order. The word here rendered "nurse" may mean any one who nurses a child, whether a mother or another person. It seems here to refer to a mother, 1Th 2:11;

and the idea is, that the apostle felt for them the affectionate solicitude which a mother does for the child at her breast.

{*} "cherisheth" "nursing mother"

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *So, being affectionately desirous of you*. The word here rendered "being affectionately desirous" *imeirw* occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means *to long after, to have a strong affection for*. The sense here is, that Paul was so strongly attached to them that he would have been willing to lay down his life for them.

We were willing to have imparted unto you. To have given or communicated, Ro 1:11.

Not the gospel of God only. To be willing to communicate the knowledge of the gospel was in itself a strong proof of love, even if it were attended with no self-denial or hazard in doing it. We evince a decided love for a man when we tell him of the way of salvation, and urge him to accept of it. We show strong interest for one who is in danger, when we tell him of a way of escape, or for one who is sick, when we tell him of a medicine that will restore him; but we manifest a much higher love when we tell a lost and ruined sinner of the way in which he may be saved. There is no method in which we can show so strong an interest in our fellow-men, and so much true benevolence for them, as to go to them and tell them of the way by which they may be rescued from everlasting ruin.

But also our own souls. Or rather *lives—qucav*. Mt 6:25 20:28; Lu 12:22,23; Mr 3:4.

This does not mean that the apostle was willing to be damned, or to lose his soul in order to save them; but that, if it had been necessary, he would have been ready to lay down his life. See Joh 3:16. "We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." Comp. **See Barnes "Joh 15:13"**.

His object seems to be to assure them that he did not leave them from any want of love to them, or from the fear of being put to death. It was done from the strong conviction of duty. He appears to have left them because he could not longer remain without exposing others to danger, and without the certainty that there would be continued disturbances. See Ac 17:9,10.

{a} "have imparted" Ro 1:1 {+} "souls" "lives"

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Ye remember, brethren, our labour*. Doubtless in the occupation of a tent-maker. **See Barnes "Ac 20:34"**; **See Barnes "1Co 4:12"**.

And travail. **See Barnes "2Co 11:27"**.

The word means wearisome labour.

For labouring night and day. That is, when he was not engaged in preaching the gospel. He appears to have laboured through the week, and to have preached on the Sabbath; or, if engaged in preaching in the day time during the week, he made it up by night labour.

We preached unto you the gospel of God. That is, I supported myself when I preached among you. No one, therefore, could say, that I was disposed to live in idleness; no one that I sought to make myself rich at the expense of others.

{b} "labour and travail" Ac 20:34,35; 1Th 3:7,8

{++} "travail" "toil"

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Ye are witnesses*. They had a full opportunity of knowing his manner of life.

And God also. **See Barnes "1Th 2:5"**.

How holily. Piously—observing all the duties of religion.

And justly. In our intercourse with men. I did them no wrong.

And unblameably. This seems to refer to his duties both to God and man. In reference to all those duties no one could bring a charge against him. Every duty was faithfully performed. This is not a claim to absolute *perfection*, but it is a claim to consistency of character, and to faithfulness in duty, which every Christian should be enabled to make. Every man, professing religion, should so live as to be able to appeal to all who have had an opportunity of knowing him, as witnesses that he was consistent and faithful, and that there was nothing which could be laid to his charge.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *How we exhorted*. That is, to a holy life.

And comforted. In the times of affliction.

And charged. Gr., *testified*. The word *testify* is used here in the sense of *protesting*, or making an earnest and solemn appeal. They came as witnesses from God of the truth of religion, and of the importance of living in a holy manner. They did not originate the gospel themselves, or teach its duties and doctrines as their own, but they came in the capacity of those who bore witness of what God had revealed and required, and they did this in the earnest and solemn manner-which became such an office.

As a father doth his children. With an interest in your welfare, such as a father feels for his children, and with such a method as a father would use. It was not done in a harsh, dictatorial, and arbitrary manner, but in tenderness and love.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *That ye would walk worthy of God*, etc. That you would live in such a manner as would honour God, who has chosen you to be his friends. **See Barnes "Eph 4:1"**.

A child "walks worthy of a parent" when he lives in such way as to reflect honour on that parent for the method in which he has trained him; when he so lives as to bring no disgrace on him, so as not to pain his heart by misconduct, or so as to give no occasion to any to speak reproachfully of him. This he does, when

(1.) he keeps all his commands;

(2.) when he leads a life of purity and virtue;

(3.) when he carries out the principles of the family into his own life;

(4.) when he honours a father by evincing a profound respect for his opinions; and

(5.) when he endeavours to provide for his comfort, and to promote his welfare. In a manner similar to this, a true Christian honours God. He lives so as not to bring a reproach upon him or his cause, and so as to teach the world to honour him who has bestowed such grace upon him.

Who hath called you. **See Barnes "1Co 1:9"**.

{c} "walk worthy" Eph 4:1 {d} "who hath" 1Co 1:9

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *For this cause also thank we God*. In addition to the reasons for thankfulness already suggested, the apostle here refers to the fact, that they received the truth, when it was preached, in such a way as to show that they fully believed it to be the word of God.

Not as the word of men. Not of human origin, but as a Divine revelation. You were not led to embrace it by human reasoning, or the mere arts of persuasion, or from personal respect for others, but by your conviction that it was a revelation from God. It is only when the gospel is embraced in this way, that religion will show itself sufficient to abide the fiery trials to which Christians may be exposed. He who is convinced by mere human reasoning, may have his faith shaken by opposite, artful reasoning; he who is won by the mere arts of popular eloquence, will have no faith which will be proof against similar arts in the cause of error; he who embraces religion from mere respect for a pastor, parent, or friend, or because others do, may abandon it when the popular current shall set in a different direction, or when his friends shall embrace different views; but he who embraces religion as the truth of God, and from the love of the truth, will have a faith, like that Of the Thessalonians, which will abide every trial.

Which effectually worketh also in you that believe. The word rendered "which" here—*ov*—may be referred either to "truth" or to "God." The grammatical construction will admit of either, but it is not material which is adopted. Either of them expresses a sense undeniably true, and of great importance. The meaning is, that the truth was made efficacious in the minds of all who became true Christians. It induced them to abandon their sins, to devote themselves to God, to lead pure and holy lives, and enabled them to abide the trials and temptations of life. Comp.

See Barnes "Php 2:12, **See Barnes "Php 2:13"**; **See Barnes "Heb 13:21"**.

The particular *illustration* here is, that when they embraced the gospel, it had such an efficacy on their hearts as to prepare them to meet all the terrors of bitter persecution without shrinking.

{e} "not as" Mt 10:40 2Pe 3:2 {f} "worketh also" Jas 1:18 1Pe 1:23

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus*. Which are united to the Lord Jesus, or which are founded on his truth: that is, which are true churches. OF those churches they became *imitators mimhtai*— to wit, in their sufferings. This does not mean that they were founded on the same model; or that they professed to be the followers of those churches, but that they had been treated in the same way, and thus were like them. They had been persecuted in the same manner, and by the same people—the Jews; and they had borne their persecutions with the same spirit. The object of this is, to comfort and encourage them, by showing them that others had been treated in the same manner, and that it was to be expected that a true church would be persecuted by the Jews. They ought not, therefore, to consider it as any evidence that they were not a true church that they had been persecuted by those who claimed to be the people of God, and who made extraordinary pretensions to piety.

For ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen; Literally, "of those who are of your fellow, tribe, or fellow-clansmen," *sumfuletwn*. The Greek word means "one of the same tribe," and then a fellow-citizen, or fellow-countryman. It is not elsewhere used in the New Testament. The particular reference here seems not to be to the heathen, who were the *agents* or *actors* in the scenes of tumult and persecutions, but to the Jews by whom they were led on, or who were the prime-movers in the persecutions which they had endured. It is necessary to suppose that they were principally Jews who were the *cause* of the persecution which had been excited against them, in order to make the parallelism between the church there and the churches in Palestine exact. At the same time, there was a propriety in saying that, though this parallelism was exact, it was by the "*hands of their own countrymen*" that it was done; that is, they were the visible agents or actors by whom it was done—the instruments in the hands of others. In Palestine, the Jews persecuted the churches directly, out of Palestine, they did it by means of others. They were the real *authors* of it, as they were in Judea; but they usually accomplished it by producing an excitement among the heathen, and by the plea that the apostles were making war on civil institutions. This was the case in Thessalonica. "The Jews which believed not, moved with envy, set all the city on an uproar." "They drew Jason and certain brethren *unto the rulers of the city*, crying These that have turned the world upside down have come hither also," Ac 17:5,6. The same thing occurred a short time after at Berea. "When the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and *stirred up the people*," Ac 17:13; Comp. Ac 14:2. "The unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil-affected against the brethren." "The epistle, therefore, represents the case accurately as the history states it. It was the Jews always who set on foot the persecutions against the apostles and their followers." Paley, *Hor. Paul. in loc*. It was, therefore, strictly true, as the apostle here states it,

(1.) that they were subjected to the same treatment from the Jews as the churches in Judea were, since they were the authors of the excitement against them; and

(2.) that it was carried on, as the apostle states, "by their own countrymen;" that is, that they were the agents or instruments by which it was done. This kind of *undesigned coincidence* between the epistle and the history in the Acts of the Apostles, is one of the arguments from which Paley (*Hor. Paul*.) infers the genuineness of both.

As they have of the Jews. Directly. In Palestine there were no others but Jews who could be excited against Christians, and they were obliged to appear as the persecutors themselves.

{*} "followers" "imitators"

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Who both killed the Lord Jesus*. **See Barnes "Ac 2:23"**.

The meaning here is, that it was characteristic of the Jews to be engaged in the work of persecution, and that they should not regard it strange, that they who had put their own Messiah to death, and slain the prophets, should now be found persecuting the true children of God.

And their own prophets. **See Barnes** "Mt 21:33, and following; **See Barnes** "Mt 23:20-37, and following; **See Barnes "Ac 7:52"**.

And have persecuted us. As at Iconium, (Ac 14:1,) Derbe, and Lystra, (Ac 14:6) and at Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. The meaning is, that it was characteristic of them to persecute, and they spared no one. If they had persecuted the apostles themselves, who were their own countrymen, it should not be considered strange that they should persecute those who were Gentiles.

And they please not God. Their conduct is not such as to please God, but such as expose them to his wrath, 1Th 2:16. The meaning is, not that they did not aim to please God—whatever may have been the truth about that—but that they had shown, by all their history, that their conduct could not meet with the Divine approbation. They made extraordinary pretensions to being the peculiar people of God, and it was important for the apostle to show that their conduct demonstrated that they had no such claims. Their opposition to the Thessalonians, therefore, was no proof that God was opposed to them, and they should not allow themselves to be troubled by such opposition. It was, rather, proof that they were the friends of God—since those who now persecuted them had been engaged in persecuting the most holy men that had lived.

And are contrary to all men. They do not merely differ from other men in customs and opinions—which might be harmless— but they keep up an active opposition to all other people. It was not opposition to one nation only, but to all; it was not to one form of religion only, but to all, even including God's last revelation to mankind; it was not opposition evinced in their own country, but they carried it with them wherever they went. The truth of this statement is confirmed, not only by authority of the apostle and the uniform record in the New Testament, but by the testimony borne of them in the classic writers. This was universally regarded as their national characteristic, for they had so demeaned themselves as to leave this impression on the minds of those with whom they had intercourse. Thus Tacitus describes them as "cherishing hatred against all others"—adversus omnes alios hostile odium, Hist. v. 5. So Juvenal, (Sat. xiv. 103, 104,) describes them.

Non monstrare vias eadem nisi sacra colenti,
Quasitum ad fontem solos deducere verpos.

"They would not even point out the way to any one except of the same religion; nor, being asked, guide any to a fountain except the circumcised." So they are called by Appollonius, "atheists and misanthropes, and the most uncultivated barbarians"—*ayeoi kai misanyrwpoi kai afuestatoi twn barbarwn* Josephus Con. Ap. ii, 15. So Diodorus Sicuhs, (xxxiv. p. 524,) describes them as "those alone among all the nations who were unwilling to have any intercourse [or intermingling—*epimixiav*] with any other nation, and who regarded all others as enemies"—*kai polemiouv upolambanein pantav-*. Their history had given abundant occasion for these charges.

{a} "their own prophets" Ac 7:52 {1} "persecuted us" "chased us out" {+} "contrary to all men" "Against all men"

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles*. See Ac 17:5,13. No particular instance is mentioned in the life of Paul previous to this, when they had formally commanded him not to preach to the heathen; but no one can doubt that this was one of the leading points of difference between him and them. Paul maintained, that the Jews and Gentiles were now on a level with regard to salvation; that the wall of partition was broken down; that the Jew had no advantages over the rest of mankind in this respect, and that the heathen might be saved without becoming Jews, or being circumcised, Ro 2:25-29; Ro 3:22-31; **See Barnes "Col 1:25"**.

The Jews did not hold it unlawful "to speak to the Gentiles," and even to offer to them eternal life, (Mt 23:15;) but it was only on condition that they should become proselytes to their religion, and should observe the institutions of Moses. If saved, they held that it would be *as Jews*—either originally such, or such by becoming proselytes. Paul maintained just the opposite opinion, that heathens might be saved without becoming proselytes to the Jewish system, and that, in fact, salvation was as freely offered to them as to the children of Abraham. Though there are no express instances in which they prohibited Paul from speaking to the Gentiles recorded *before* the date of this epistle, yet events occurred *afterwards* which showed what were their feelings, and such as to make it in the highest degree probable that they had attempted to restrain him. See Ac 22:21,22. "And he [Christ] said unto me [Paul,] Depart, for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles. And they [the Jews] gave him audience unto this word, and then lift up their voices and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live."

That they might be saved. That is, as freely as others, and on the same terms, not by conversion to Judaism, but by repentance and faith.

To fill up their sins alway. At all times *pantote*—in every generation. That is, to do now as they have always done, by resisting God and exposing themselves to his wrath. The idea is, that it had been a characteristic of the nation, at all times, to oppose God, and that they did it now in this manner in conformity with their fixed character. Comp. Ac 7:51-53, and **See Barnes** "Mt 23:32, on the expression, "Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers."

For the wrath is come upon them.This cannot mean that the wrath of God had been then actually poured out upon them in the extreme degree referred to, or that they had experienced the full expressions of the Divine displeasure, for this epistle was written before the destruction of their city and temple, (see the Introduction;) but that the cup of their iniquity was full; that they were, in fact, abandoned by God; that they were the objects, *even then*, of his displeasure, and that their destruction was so certain, that it might be spoken of as an indubitable fact. The "wrath of God" may be said to have come upon a man when he abandons him, even though there may not be *as yet* any *external* expressions of his indignation. It is not *punishment* that constitutes the wrath of God. That is the mere *outward expression* of the Divine indignation; and the wrath of God may, in fact, have come upon a man when as yet there are no external tokens of it. The overthrow of Jerusalem and the temple, were but the outward expressions of the Divine displeasure at their

conduct. Paul, inspired to speak of the feelings God, describes that wrath as already existing in the Divine mind; Comp. Ro 1:18.

To the uttermost. Gr. *eiv telov, to the end*; that is, until wrath shall be *complete or exhausted*; or wrath in the extremest degree. It does not mean "to the end of their race or history;" nor necessarily to the remotest periods of time, but to that which constitutes completion, so that there should be nothing lacking of that which would make indignation perfect: *eiv telov*—thoroughly, entirely, through and through." *Passow*. Some have understood this as meaning at the last or at length, as Macknight, Rosenmuller, Koppe, and Wetstein; others as referring to *duration*, meaning, that it would follow them everywhere; but the more correct interpretation seems to be to refer it to that *extremity* of calamity and woe which was about to come upon the nation. For an account of this, **See Barnes "Mt 24:21"**.

{b} "forbidding" Ac 17:5,13, 18:12

{c} "fill up" Ge 15:16 Mt 23:32 {d} "uttermost" Re 22:11

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *But we, brethren, being taken from you*. There is more implied in the Greek word here rendered, "being taken from you"— *aporfanisyentev*—than appears from our translation. It properly has relation to the condition of an *orphan*, (comp. **See Barnes** "Joh 14:18,) or one who is bereaved of parents. Then it is used in a more general sense, denoting to be *bereaved of*; and in this place it does not mean merely that he was "taken from them," but there is included the idea that it was like a painful bereavement. It was such a state as that of one who had lost a parent. No word, perhaps, could have expressed stronger attachment for them.

For a short time. Gr., "For the time of an hour ;" that is, for a brief period. The meaning is, that when he left them he supposed it would be only for a short time. The *fact* seems to have been, (Ac 17:10,) that it was supposed, when Paul was sent to Berea, that things would soon be in such a state that he could safely return to Thessalonica. He was "sent" there by those who thought it was necessary for the safety of some of his friends at Thessalonica, and he evidently purposed to return as soon as it could properly be done. It had, in fact, however, turned out to be a long and painful absence.

In presence, not in heart, My heart was still with you. This is an elegant and touching expression, which we still use to denote affection for an absent friend.

Endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face. Made every endeavour possible. It was from no want of affection that I have not done it, but from causes beyond my control.

With great desire. Comp. **See Barnes "Lu 22:15"**.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul*. The phrase "even I Paul," seems to be used by way of/emphasis, lie had a special desire to go himself. He had sent Timothy

to them, (1Th 3:2,6,) and perhaps some might have been disposed to allege that Paul was afraid to go himself, or that he did not feel interest enough in them to go, though he was willing to send one to visit them. Paul, therefore, is at much pains to assure them that his long separation from them was unavoidable.

But Satan hindered us. Comp. **See Barnes "2Co 12:7"**.

In what way this was done is unknown, and conjecture would be useless. The apostle recognised the hand of Satan in frustrating his attempt to do good, and preventing the accomplishment of his strong desire to see his Christian friends. In the obstacles, therefore, to the performance of our duty, and in the hindrances of our enjoyment, it is not improper to trace the hand of the great enemy of good. The agency of Satan may, for aught we can tell, be employed ill the embarrassments that we meet with in life. The hindrances which we meet with in our efforts to do good, when the providence of God seems to favour us, and his word and Spirit seem to call us to a particular duty, often look very much like the work of Satan. They are just such obstructions as a very wicked being would be glad to throw in our way.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *For what is our hope*. That is, "I had a strong desire to see you; to assist you; to enjoy your friendship; for you are my hope and joy, and my absence does not arise from a want of affection." The meaning, when he says that they were his "*hope*," is, that their conversion and salvation was one of the *grounds* of his hope of future blessedness. It was an evidence that he was a faithful servant of God, and that he would be rewarded in heaven.

Or joy. The source of joy here, and in heaven.

Or crown of rejoicing. Marg., as in Gr., *glorying*; that is, boasting, or exulting. The allusion is, probably, to the victors at the Grecian games; and the sense is, that he rejoiced in their conversion, as the victor there did in the garland which he had won. **See Barnes "1Co 9:24-27"**.

Are not even ye. Or, *will* not you be?

In the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming. "When the Lord Jesus appears at the end of the world, then our highest source of happiness and honour will be your conversion and salvation." Then their salvation would be a proof of his fidelity. It would fill his soul with the highest happiness, that he had been the means of saving them from ruin.

{1} "rejoicing" "glorying" {a} "in the presence" 2Co 1:14 Php 4:1 {b} "of our Lord Jesus Christ" Jude 1:24 {c} "at his coming" Re 1:7

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *For ye are our glory and joy*. The meaning is, that the source of happiness to a minister of the gospel in the day of judgment will be the conversion and salvation of souls. The *object* of the apostle in dwelling on this, in a manner so tender and affectionate, is, to show them that his leaving them, and his long absence from them, Were not caused by any want of affection for them.

REMARKS on 1st Thessalonians Chapter 2

(1.) Ministers of the gospel should be entirely sincere, and without guile. They should attempt to carry no measure—not even the conversion of sinners—by *trick* or *management*, 1Th 2:3-5.

(2.) They should not make it a point to please men, 2Th 2:4. If they do please men; or if their ministry is acceptable to men, they should not regard it, indeed, as proof that they are unfaithful, for they "should have a good report of them that are without;" nor should they make it a point to *displease* men, or consider it a proof that because men are offended, *therefore* they are faithful; but it should not be their leading aim or purpose to gratify men. They should preach the truth; and if they do this, God will take care of their reputation, and give them just as much as they ought to have. The same principle should operate with all Christians. They should do *right*, and leave their reputation with God.

(3.) Ministers of the gospel should be gentle, tender, and affectionate. They should be kind in feeling, and courteous in manner —like a father or mother, 2Th 2:7,11. Nothing is ever gained by a sour, harsh, crabbed, dissatisfied manner. Sinners are never *scolded* either into duty or into heaven. "Flies are not caught with vinegar." No man is a better or more faithful preacher because he is rough in manner, coarse or harsh in his expressions, or sour in his intercourse with mankind. Not thus was the Master, or Paul. There is no crime in being polite and courteous; none in observing the rules of good-breeding, and paying respect to the sensibilities of others; and there is no piety in outraging all the laws which society has found necessary to adopt to promote happy intercourse. What is *wrong* we should indeed oppose, but it should be in the kindest manner towards the persons of those who do wrong; what is true and right we should maintain and defend—and we shall always do it more effectually if we do it kindly.

(4.) Ministers should be willing to labour in any proper calling, if it be necessary for their own support, or to do good, 1Th 2:9. It is, indeed, the duty of a people to support the gospel, but there may be situations where they are not able to do it; and a minister should be *able* to earn something in some other way, and should be *willing* to do it. Paul made tents; and if he were willing to do that, a minister should not feel himself degraded if he be obliged to make shoes, or to hoe corn, or to plough, or to keep cattle. He had better not do it, if he can avoid it well, for he needs his time for his more important work; but he should feel it no dishonour if he be obliged to do it, and should feel that it is a privilege to preach the gospel even if he be obliged to support himself by making either tents or shoes. It is no dishonour for a minister to work hard; and it is not well for a man to enter the ministry wholly unacquainted with every other way of procuring an honest living.

(5.) Every minister should be able to appeal to the people among whom he has laboured in proof that he is an honest man, and lives consistently with his profession, 1Th 2:1,9-11.

The same remark applies to all other Christians. They should so live that they may at once refer to their neighbours in proof of the uprightness of their lives, and their consistent walk. But to be enabled to do this, a man should live as he ought; for the world generally forms a very correct estimate of character.

(6.) The joy of a minister in the day of judgment will be measured by the amount of good which he has done, and the number of souls which he has been the means of converting and saving, 1Th 2:19. It will not be the honour which he has received from men; the titles which they have conferred on him; the commendation which he has received for eloquence or talent, or the learning which he has acquired; but it will be found in the number of those who have been converted from the error

of their ways, and in the evidence of the good which he did on the earth. And will not the same thing be substantially true of all others who bear the Christian name? Will it then be a source of joy to them that they were richer than their neighbours; or that they were advanced to higher honours; or that they had a more splendid mansion; or were able to fare more "sumptuously?" The good that we do will be remembered certainly with pleasure in the day of judgment: of how many other things which now interest us so much, can the same thing be said?

(7.) Paul expected evidently to *recognise* the Thessalonian Christians at the day of judgment, for he said that they would be then his "joy and crown of rejoicing," 1Th 2:19. But this could not be, unless he should be able to know those who had been converted by his instrumentality. If he expected then to recognise them, and to rejoice with them, then we also may hope to know our pious friends in that happy world. Nothing in the Bible forbids this hope; and we can hardly believe that God has created the strong ties which bind us to each other, to endure for the present life only. If Paul hoped to meet those who had been converted by his instrumentality, and to rejoice with them there, then the parent may hope to meet the child over whose loss he mourned; the husband and wife will meet again; the pious children of a family will be re-assembled; and the pastor and his flock will be permitted to rejoice together before the Lord. This hope, which nothing in the Bible forbids us to entertain, should do much to alleviate the sorrow of the parting pang, and may be an important and powerful inducement to draw our own thoughts to a brighter and a better world. Of many of the living it is true that the best and dearest friends which they have are already in heaven—and how should their own hearts pant that they may meet them there !

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 3

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 1

CHAPTER III.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

THIS chapter is a continuation of the course of thought pursued in the previous chapter, and seems designed to meet the same state of feeling existing in Thessalonica, and the same objections which some there urged against the apostle. The objection seems to have been, that he had really no attachment for them, and no regard for their welfare; that he had fled from them on the slightest danger, and that when the danger was passed, he had not returned, but had left them to bear their afflictions alone. It appears to have been inferred from his long absence, that he had no solicitude for their welfare, and had brought them into difficulties, to escape from which, or to bear which, he was now indisposed to render any assistance. It was important, therefore, for him to remind them of what he had actually done, and to state his real feelings towards them. He refers them, therefore, to the following things as proof of his interest in them, and his affection for them:—

(1.) He had sent Timothy to them at great personal inconvenience, when he could not go himself, 1Th 3:1-5.

(2.) He had been greatly comforted by the report which Timothy had brought of their steadfastness in the faith, 1Th 3:6-8. Every expression of their attachment to him had gone to his heart, and their faith and charity had been to him in his trials the source of unspeakable consolation. His very *life* depended, as it were, on their fidelity; and he says he should live and be happy if they stood fast in the Lord, 1Th 3:8.

(3.) He expresses again the earnest desire which he had to see them; says that it had been to him the subject of unceasing prayer night and day, and beseeches God again now that he would be pleased to direct his way to them, 1Th 3:9-11.

(4.) As a proof of affection, the chapter is closed with a fervent prayer that God would cause them to abound more and more in love, and would establish their hearts unblameable before him, 1Th 3:12,13. The Thessalonians well knew the apostle Paul. They had had abundant proof of his love when he was with them; and if his enemies there had succeeded in ally degree in causing their affection towards him to become cool, or to excite suspicions that he was not sincere, their love must have been rekindled, and their suspicions must have been entirely allayed by the expressions of attachment in this chapter. Language of warmer love, or of deeper interest in the welfare of others, it would not be possible to find anywhere.

Verse 1. Wherefore. 1Th 2:18. This particle (*dio*) is designed here to refer to another proof of his affection for them. One evidence had been referred to in his strong desire to visit them, which he had been unable to accomplish, (1Th 2:18;) and he here refers to another—to wit, the fact that he had sent Timothy to them.

We could no longer forbear. That is, when I could not, (1Th 3:5,) for there is every evidence that Paul refers to himself only, though he uses the plural form of the word. There was no one with him at Athens after he had sent Timothy away, (Ac 17:15 18:5;) and this shows that when, in 1Th 2:6, he uses the term apostles in the plural number, he refers to himself only, and does not mean to give the name to Timothy and Silas. If this be so, Timothy and Silas are nowhere called "apostles" in the New Testament. The word rendered here *could forbear*, (*stegontev*,) means, properly, to cover, to conceal; and then to hide or conceal anger, impatience, weariness, etc.,; that is, to hold out as to anything, to bear with, to endure. It is rendered *suffer* in 1Co 9:12; *beareth*, 1Th 3:1,5. It is not elsewhere used in the New Testament. It means that he could no longer bear up under, hide, or suppress his impatience in regard to them, his painful emotions, his wish to know of their state; and he therefore sent Timothy to them.

We thought it good. I was willing to suffer the inconvenience of parting with him in order to show my concern for you.

To be left at Athens alone. Paul had been conducted to Athens from Berea, where he remained until Silas and Timothy could come to him, Ac 17:15. It appears from the statement here, that Timothy *had* joined him there, but such was his solicitude for the church at Thessalonica, that he very soon after sent him there, and chose to remain himself alone at Athens. Why he did not *himself* return to Thessalonica, is not stated. It is evidently implied here that it was a great personal inconvenience for him thus to part with Timothy, and to remain alone at Athens, and that he evinced the strong love which he had for the church at Thessalonica by being willing to submit to it. What that inconvenience consisted in, he has not stated, but it is not difficult to understand.

(1.)He was among total strangers, and, when Timothy was gone, without an acquaintance or friend.

(2.) The aid of Timothy was needed in order to prosecute the work which he contemplated. He had requested that Timothy should join him as soon as possible when he left Berea, (Ac 17:15;) and he evidently felt it desirable that in preaching the gospel in that city he should have all the assistance he could obtain. Yet he was willing to forego those comforts and advantages in order to promote the edification of the church at Thessalonica.

{*} "forbear" "bear"

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And sent Timotheus*. That is, evidently, he sent him from Athens—for this is the fair construction of the passage. But in the history Ac 17 there is no mention that Timothy came to Athens at all, and it may be asked how this statement is reconcilable with the record in the Acts? It is mentioned there that "the brethren sent away Paul [from Berea] to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there still. And they that conducted Paul brought him to Athens," Ac 17:14,15. The history further states, that after Paul had remained some time at Athens, he went to Corinth, where he was joined by Timothy and Silas, who came to him "*from Macedonia*," Ac 18:5. But, in order to reconcile the account in the Acts with the statement before us in the epistle, it is necessary to suppose that Timothy had come to Athens. In reconciling these accounts, we may observe, that though the history does not expressly mention the arrival of Timothy at Athens, yet there are circumstances mentioned which render this extremely probable. First, as soon as Paul reached Athens, he sent a message back to Silas, and Timothy to come to him as soon as possible, and there is every probability that this request would be obeyed, Ac 17:15. Secondly, his stay at Athens was on purpose that they might join him there. "Now whilst *Paul waited for them at Athens*, his spirit was stirred within him," Ac 17:16. Thirdly, his departure from Athens does not appear to have been in any sort hastened or abrupt. He had an opportunity of seeing the city, Ac 17:23. He disputed in the synagogue and in the market "daily," Ac 17:17; he held a controversy with the philosophers, Ac 17:18-22; he made converts there, Ac 17:34; and "after these things" he calmly went to Corinth. There was no tumult or excitement, and it is not suggested that he was driven away, as in other places, because his life was in danger. There was, therefore, ample *time* for Timothy to come to him there—for Paul was at liberty to remain as long as he pleased, and as he stayed there for the *express purpose* of having Timothy and Silas meet him, it is to be presumed that his wish was in this respect accomplished. Fourthly, the *sending back of Timothy to Macedonia*, as mentioned in the epistle, is a circumstance which will account for the fact mentioned in Ac 18:5, that Timothy came to him "*at Corinth*," instead of at Athens. He had given directions for him to meet him at Athens, Ac 17:15, but the history mentions only that he met him, after a long delay, *at Corinth*. This delay, and this change of place, when they rejoined each other for the purpose of labouring together, can only be accounted for by the supposition that Timothy had come to him at Athens, and had been immediately sent back to Macedonia, with instructions to join him again at Corinth. This is one of the "undesigned coincidences" between the history in the Acts of the Apostles and the epistles of Paul, of which Paley (*Hor. Paul.*) has made so good use in demonstrating the genuineness of both. "The epistle discloses a fact which is not preserved in the history; but which

makes what is said in the history more significant, probable, and consistent. The history bears marks of an omission; the epistle furnishes a circumstance which: supplies that omission."

Our brother. **See Barnes "Col 1:1"**.

The mention of his being a "*brother*" is designed to show his interest in the church there. He did not send one whose absence would be no inconvenience to him, or for whom he had no regard. He sent one who was as dear to him as a brother.

And minister of God. Another circumstance showing his affection for them. He did not send a layman, or one who could not be useful with him or to them, but he sent one fully qualified to preach to them, and to break to them the Bread of life One of the richest tokens of affection which can be shown to any people, is to send to them a faithful minister of God.

And our fellow-labourer in the gospel of Christ. A third token of affectionate interest in their welfare. The meaning is, "I did not send one whom I did not want, or who could be of no use here, but one who was a *fellow-labourer* with me, and whose aid would have been of essential service to me. In parting with him, therefore, for your welfare, I showed a strong attachment for you. I was willing to endure personal inconvenience, and additional toil, in order to promote your welfare,"

To establish you. To strengthen you; to make you firm *sthrixai*. This was to be done by presenting such considerations as would enable them to maintain their faith steadfastly in their trials.

And to comfort you concerning your faith. It is evident that they were suffering persecution on account of their faith in the Lord Jesus; that is, for their belief in him as a Saviour. The object of sending Timothy was to suggest such topics of consolation as would sustain them in their trials—that is, that he was the Son of God; that the people of God had been persecuted in all ages; that God was able to support them, etc.

{a} "Timotheus" Ac 17:15

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *That no man should be moved*. The word rendered *moved* (*sainw*) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It properly means to wag, to move to and fro, as of dogs which wag their tails in fondness, (Hom. Od.K. 216. AEl. A.N.x. 7. Ovid, xiv. 258;) then to caress, to fawn upon, to flatter; then to move or waver in mind—as from fear; to dread, to tremble. See *Passow and Wetstein*. Here the sense is, to be so moved or agitated by fear, or by the terror of persecution, as to forsake their religion. The object of sending Timothy was, that they might not be thus moved, but that amidst all opposition they might adhere steadfastly to their religion.

These afflictions. **See Barnes "1Th 2:14"**.

For yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto. It is not quite certain whether by the word "we" here the apostle refers to himself; or to himself and the Thessalonians; or to Christians in general. On either supposition what he says is true, and either would meet the case. It would be most to the purpose, however, to suppose that he means to state the general idea that all Christians are exposed to persecution, and could not hope to avoid it. It would then appear that the Thessalonians had partaken only of the common lot. Still there may have been a special reference to the fact that Paul and his fellow-labourers there were subjected to trims; and if this be the reference, then the idea is, that the Thessalonians should not be "moved" by their trials, for even

their teachers were not exempt. Even their enemies could not say that the apostle and his co-workers were impostors, for they had persevered in preaching the gospel when they knew that these trials were coming upon them. The phrase, "we are appointed thereunto," means that such was the Divine arrangement. No one who professed Christianity could hope to be exempted from trial, for it was the common lot of all believers. Comp. **See Barnes "1Co 4:9"**; **See Barnes "2Ti 3:12"**.

{b} "no man" Eph 3:13 {c} "we are appointed" Joh 16:2 2Ti 3:12; 1Pe 2:12

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *For verily*, when we were with you, we told you before, etc. It is not mentioned in the history Ac 17 that Paul thus predicted that peculiar trials would come upon them, but there is no improbability in what is here said. He was with them long enough to discourse to them on a great variety of topics, and nothing can be more probable, than that, in their circumstances, the subjects of persecution and affliction would be prominent topics of discourse. There was every reason to apprehend that they would meet with opposition on account of their religion, and nothing was more natural than that Paul should endeavour to prepare their minds for it beforehand.

That we should suffer tribulation. We who preached to you; perhaps also including those to whom they preached.

Even as it came to pass, and ye know. When Paul, Silas, and Timothy were driven away, and when the church was so much agitated, by the opposition of the Jews, Ac 17:5-8.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *For this cause*. Since I knew that you were so liable to be persecuted, and since I feared that some might be turned from the truth by this opposition.

When I could no longer forbear. **See Barnes "1Th 3:1"**.

I sent to know your faith. That is, your *fidelity*, or your steadfastness in the gospel.

Lest by some means. Either by allurements to apostasy, set before you by your former heathen friends; or by the arts of false teachers; or by the severity of suffering. Satan has *many* methods of seducing men from the truth, and Paul was fearful that by some of his arts he might be successful there.

The tempter. Satan; for though the Jews were the immediate actors in those transactions, yet the apostle regarded them as being under the direction of Satan, and as accomplishing his purposes. He was, therefore, the real author of the persecutions which had been excited. He is here called the "*Tempter*," as he is often, (comp. Mt 4,) and the truths taught are;

(1.) that Satan is the great author of persecution; and

(2.) that in a time of persecution—or of trial of any kind—he endeavours to *tempt* men to swerve from the truth, and to abandon their religion. In persecution, men are tempted to apostatize from God, in order to avoid suffering. In afflictions of other kinds, Satan often tempts the sufferer to murmur and complain; to charge God with harshness, partiality, and severity, and to give vent to

expressions that will show that religion has none of its boasted power support the soul in the day of trial. Comp. Job 1:9-11. In all times of affliction, as well as in prosperity, we may be sure that the Tempter" is not far off, and should be on our guard against his wiles.

And our labour be in vain. By your being turned from the faith. **See Barnes "Ga 4:11"**.

{a} "when I could" 1Th 3:1 {*} "forbear" "bear" {b} "lest by" 2Co 11:2,3 {c} "labour be in vain" Ga 4:11

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *But now when Timotheus came from you unto us*. To Corinth, after he had been sent to Thessalonica, Ac 18:5. Comp. **See Barnes "1Th 3:2"**.

And brought us good tidings. A cheerful or favourable account. Gr., "evangelizing ;" that is, bringing good news.

Of your faith. Of your faithfulness or fidelity. Amidst all their trials they evinced fidelity to the Christian cause.

And charity. Love. **See Barnes "1Co 13:1"**.

And that ye have good remembrance of us always. That is, probably, they showed their remembrance of Paul by obeying his precepts, and by cherishing all affectionate regard for him, notwithstanding all the efforts which had been made to alienate their affections from him.

Greatly desiring to see us, as we also to see you. There was no disposition to blame him for having left them, or because he did not return to them. They would have welcomed him again as their teacher and friend. The meaning of this is, that there was between him and them a strong mutual attachment.

{+} "charity" "love" {d} "desiring greatly" Php 1:8

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *We were comforted over you*. **See Barnes "2Co 1:3"**

\ and following; **See Barnes** "2Co 7:6, **See Barnes "2Co 7:7"**.

The sense here is, that their steadfastness was a great source of comfort to him in his trials. It was an instance where the holy lives and the fidelity of a people did much, as will always be the case, to lighten the burdens and cheer the heart of a minister of the gospel. In the inevitable trials of the ministerial office there is no source of comfort more rich and pure than this.

{e} "comforted" 2Co 7:6,7 {++} "over you" "concerning"

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *For now we live*, if ye stand fast in the Lord. This is equivalent to saying, "My life and comfort depend on your stability in the faith, and your correct Christian walk." Comp. Martial vi.

70. Non est vivere, sed valere, vita—" Life consists not merely in living, but in the enjoyment of health." See, also, Seneca, Epis. 99, and Manilius, iv. 5, as quoted by Wetstein. The meaning here is, that Paul now *enjoyed* life; he had that which constituted real life, in the fact that they acted as became Christians, and so as to show that his labour among them had not been in vain. The same thing here affirmed is true of all faithful ministers of the gospel. They feel that they have something that may be called life, and that is worth living for, when those to whom they preach maintain a close walk with God.

{f} "fast" Eph 6:13,14; Php 4:1

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *For what thanks can we render to God again*. That is, what expression of thanksgiving can we render to God that shall be an *equivalent* for the joy which your holy walk has furnished, or which shall suitably express our gratitude for it.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Night and day*. Constantly.

Praying exceeedingly. Gr., abundantly; that is, there was much more than ordinary prayer. He made this a special subject of prayer; he urged it with earnestness, and without intermission. Comp. 1Th 2:17.

And might perfect that which is lacking in your faith. Might render it complete, or fill up anything which is wanting. The word here used, (*katartisai*,) means, properly, *to make fully ready, to put full in order, to make complete*. **See Barnes "Ro 9:22"**; **See Barnes "2Co 13:9"**; **See Barnes** "Ga 6:1".

It is rendered *mending*, Mt 4:21 Mr 1:19. *Perfect* and *perfected*. Mt 21:16 Lu 6:40; 2Co 13:11 1Th 3:10; Heb 13:21 1Pe 5:10.

Fitted, Ro 9:22. *Perfectly joined together*, 1Co 1:10. *Restore*, Ga 6:1. *Prepared*, Heb 10:5; and *framed*, Heb 11:3. It is not elsewhere used in the New Testament. The meaning here is, that whatever was deficient in their views of religious doctrine the apostle desired to Supply. It is to be remembered that he was with them but a comparatively short time before he was compelled to depart to Berea, and it is reasonable to suppose that there were many subjects on which he would be glad to have an opportunity to instruct them more fully.

{g} "perfect" 2Co 13:9,11; Col 4:12

{&} "lacking in your faith" "wanting in your faith"

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Now God himself*. This is evidently a *prayer*, he earnestly sought of God that he might be permitted to visit them, and that he would so prepare the way that he might do it.

And our Father. *Even* our Father. The reference is particularly to the 'Father,' the First Person of the Trinity. It does not refer to the Divine nature in general, or to God *as such*, but to God as the Father of the Lord Jesus. It is a distinct prayer offered to him that he would direct his way to them. It is right, therefore, to offer prayer to God as the First Person of the Trinity.

And our Lord Jesus Christ. This also is a prayer, as much as the former was, for it can be understood in no other way. What can be its meaning, unless the apostle believed that the Lord Jesus had power to direct his way to them, and that it was proper for him to express this wish to him; that is, to pray to him? If this be so, then it is right to pray to the Lord Jesus, or to worship him. **See Barnes "Joh 20:28"**; **See Barnes** "Ac 1:24".

Would Paul have prayed to an angel to direct his way to the church at Thessalonica?

Direct our way unto you. Marg., *guide*. The Greek word *kateuyunw* means, to guide straight towards or upon anything. It is rendered *guide*, in Lu 1:79, and *direct* here and in 2Th 3:5. It does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. The idea is that of conducting one straight to a place, and not by a round-about course. Here the petition is, that God would remove all obstacles so that he could come directly to them.

{1} "direct" "guide"

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love*. Comp. **See Barnes "2Co 9:8"**.

The word "Lord" here probably refers to the Lord Jesus, as this is the name by which he is commonly designated in the New Testament. **See Barnes "Ac 1:24"**.

If this be so, then this is a petition to the Lord Jesus as the fountain of all grace and goodness.

{h} "love one another" 1Jo 4:7-12

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *To the end he may establish your hearts*. That is, "May the Lord cause you to increase in love, 1Th 3:12, in order that you may be established, and be without blame in the day of judgment." The idea is, that if charity were diffused through their hearts, they would abound in every virtue, and would be at length found blameless.

Unblameable. **See Barnes "1Th 2:10"**; **See Barnes "Php 2:15"**; **See Barnes** "Php 3:6"; **See Barnes "Heb 8:7"**.

Comp. **See Barnes "Lu 1:6"**; **See Barnes "1Th 5:23"**.

The meaning is, so that there could be no charge or accusation against them.

In holiness. Not in outward conduct merely, or the observance of rites and forms of religion, but in purity of heart.

At the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. To judge the world. **See Barnes "1Th 1:10"**.

As we are to appear before him, we should so live that our Judge will find nothing in us to be *blamed*.

With all his saints. With all his holy ones *twn agiwn*. The word includes his *angels* who will come with him, Mt 25:31, and all the redeemed who will then surround him. The idea is, that before that holy assemblage it is desirable that we should be prepared to appear *blameless*. We should be fitted to be welcomed to the goodly "fellowship" of the angels, and to be regarded as worthy to be numbered with the redeemed who "have washed their robes, and have made them pure in the blood of the Lamb." When we come to appear amidst that vast assemblage of holy beings, the honours of the world will appear to be small things; the wealth of the earth will appear worthless, and all the pleasures of this life beneath our notice. Happy will they be who are prepared for the solemnities of that day, and who shall have led such a life of holy love—of pure devotion to the Redeemer—of deadness to the world—and of zeal in the cause of pure religion—of universal justice, fidelity, honesty, and truth, as to be without reproach, and to meet with the approbation of their Lord.

{i} "unblameable" 2Th 2:17 1Jo 3:20,21

{j} "coming" Zec 14:5 Jude 1:14

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 4

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 1

1st Thessalonians Chapter 4

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

THIS chapter, properly, comprises two parts:—first, various practical exhortations, 1Th 4:1-12; and, secondly, suggestions designed to console those who had been bereaved, 1Th 4:13-18.

The first part embraces the following topics:—

(1.) an exhortation to increase and abound in the Christian virtues which they had already manifested, 1Th 4:1,2.

(2.) A particular exhortation on the subject of sanctification, 1Th 4:3-8, in which two points are specified, probably as illustrations of the general subject, and embracing those in regard to which they were exposed to special danger. The first was fornication; the other was fraud.

(3.) An exhortation to brotherly love, 1Th 4:9,10.

(4.) An exhortation to quiet industry, and to honesty in their dealings, particularly with those who were Christians, 1Th 4:11,12. The second part is designed to comfort the Thessalonians who had been bereaved, 1Th 4:13-18. Some of their number had died. They appear to have been beloved members of the church, and dear blends of those to whom the apostle wrote. To console them he brings into view the doctrine of the second coming of the Saviour, and the truth that they would be raised up to live with him for ever. He reminds them that those who had died were "*asleep*" —reposing in a gentle slumber, as if they were to be awakened again, 1Th 4:13; that they should not sorrow as they did who have no hope, 1Th 4:13; that if they believed that Jesus died and rose again, they ought to believe that God would raise up all those who sleep in Jesus, 1Th 4:14; that in the last day they would rise before the]lying should be changed, and that the living would not

be taken up to heaven and leave their departed friends in their graves, 1Th 4:15,16; and that both the living and the dead would be raised up to heaven, and would be for ever with the Lord, 1Th 4:17. With this prospect, they had every ground of comfort which they could desire, and they should sustain each other in their trials by bright hope, 1Th 4:18.

Verse 1. *Furthermore then*. *to loipon*. "As to what remains." That is, all that remains is to offer these exhortations. **See Barnes "2Co 12:11"; See Barnes** "Gal 6:17"; **See Barnes "Eph 6:10"; See Barnes** "Php 4:8".

The phrase is a formula appropriate to the end of an argument or discourse.

We beseech you. Marg., *request*. The Greek is, "we *ask* you"— *erwtwmen*. It is not as strong a word as that which follows.

And exhort you. Marg., *beseech*. This is the word which is commonly used to denote earnest exhortation. The use of these words here implies that Paul regarded the subject as of great importance. He might have *commanded* them—but kind exhortation usually accomplishes more than a command.

By the Lord Jesus. In his name, and by his authority.

That as ye have received of us. You were taught by us. Paul doubtless had given them repeated instructions as to their duty as Christians.

How ye ought to walk. How ye ought to live. Life is often represented as a journey, Ro 6:4 8:1; 2Co 5:7 Gal 6:16; Eph 4:1.

So ye would abound more and more. "That is, follow the directions they had received more and more fully." *Abbott*.

{*} "Furthermore" "Finally" {1} "beseech" "request" {2} "exhort" "beseech" {a} "walk" Col 1:10 {b} "abound" 1Co 6:15,18

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *For ye know what commandments*. It was but a short time Paul was with them, and they could not but recollect the rules of living which he had laid down.

By the Lord Jesus. By the authority of the Lord Jesus. Some of those rules, or commandments, the apostle refers to, probably, in the following verses.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *For this is the will of God, even your sanctification*. It is the will or command of God that you should be holy. This does not refer to the *purpose or decree of God*, and does not mean that he intended to make them holy; but it means that it was his *command* that they should be holy. It was also true that it was agreeable to the Divine will or purpose that they *should be* holy, and that he meant to use such an influence as to secure this; but this is not the truth taught here. This text, therefore, should not be brought as a proof that God intends to make his people holy, or that they are sanctified. It is a proof only that he requires holiness. The word here rendered *sanctification agiasmov* is not used in the Greek classics, but is several times found in the New Testament. It is

rendered *holiness*, Ro 6:19,22; 1Th 4:7 1Ti 2:15; Heb 12:14; and *sanctification*, 1Co 1:30 1Th 4:3,4; 2Th 2:13 1Pe 1:2. **See Barnes "Ro 6:19"**

: **See Barnes "1Co 1:30".**

It means here purity of life, and particularly abstinence from those vices which debase and degrade the soul. Sanctification consists in two things,

(1.) in "ceasing to do evil;" and

(2.) in "learning to do well." Or in other words, the first work of sanctification is in overcoming the propensities to evil in our nature, and checking and subduing the unholy *habits* which we had formed before we became Christians; the second part of the work consists in cultivating the positive principles of holiness in the soul.

That ye should abstain from fornication. A vice which was freely indulged among the heathen, and to which, from that fact, and from their own former habits, they were particularly exposed. On the fact that they were thus exposed, and on the reasons for these solemn commands on the subject, **See Barnes "Ac 15:20"; See Barnes "1Co 6:18".**

{c} "ye should abstain" 1Co 6:15,18

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel*. The word vessel here (*skeuov*) probably refers to the body. When it is so used, it is either because the body is frail and feeble, like an earthen vessel, easily broken 2Co 4:7, or because it is that which contains the soul, or in which the soul is lodged. Lucret. Lib. iii. 441. The word *vessel* also, (Heb.

HEBREW

Gr. *skeuov*,) was used by the later Hebrews to denote a wife, as the vessel of her husband Schcoettg. Hor. Heb. p. 827. Comp. Wetstein *in loc*. Many, as Augustine, Wetstein, Scheettgen, Koppe, Robinson (Lex.), and others, have supposed that this is the reference here. Comp. 1Pe 3:7. The word *body*, however, accords more naturally with the usual signification of the word, and as the apostle was giving directions to the whole church, embracing both sexes, it is hardly probable that he confined his direction to those who had wives. It was the duty of females; and of the unmarried among the males, as well as of married men, to observe this command. The injunction then is, that we should preserve the body pure. **See Barnes "1Co 6:18-20".**

In sanctification and honour. Should not debase or pollute it; that is, that we should honour it as a noble work of God to be employed for pure purposes. **See Barnes "1Co 6:19".**

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Not in the lust of concupiscence*. In gross gratifications.

Even as the Gentiles. This was, and is, a common vice among the heathen. **See Barnes "Ac 15:20"; See Barnes** "Ro 1:29"; **See Barnes** "Eph 4:17, **See Barnes "Eph 4:19"**

and the reports of missionaries everywhere.

Which know not God. **See Barnes** "Ro 1:21, **See Barnes "Ro 1:28"**; **See Barnes** "Eph 2:12".
{*} "concupiscence" "not given up to lustful passions" {a} "Gentiles" Eph 4:17,18

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *That no man go beyond*. *uperbainein*. This word means, *to make to go over*, as, e.g., a wall or mountain; then, *to overpass*, to wit, certain limits, to transgress; and then, to go too far, i.e., to go beyond right—hence to cheat or defraud. It is not used elsewhere in the New Testament. The idea of *overreaching* is that which is implied in its use here.

And defraud pleonektein. Marg., *oppress or overreach*. This word properly means, to have more than another; then to have an advantage; and then to *take* advantage of any one, to circumvent, defraud, cheat. It is rendered *got an advantage*, 2Co 2:11; *defraud*, 2Co 7:2 1Th 4:6; *a gain*, 2Co 12:17,18. Comp. for the use of the *adjective*, 1Co 5:10,11, 6:10 Eph 5:5; and the *noun*, Mr 7:22 Lu 12:15; Ro 1:29 2Co 9:5; Eph 5:3 Col 3:5; 1Th 2:5 2Pe 2:3,14.

It is the word commonly used to denote *covetousness*. *Taking advantage of*, is the idea which it conveys here.

In any matter. Marg., or "*the*." According to the reading in the margin, this would refer to the particular matter under discussion 1Th 4:3-5 to wit, concupiscence, and the meaning then would be, that no one should be guilty of illicit intercourse with the wife of another. —as Hammond, Whitby, Macknight, Rosenmuller, suppose that this is a prohibition of adultery, and there can be no doubt that it does include this. But there is no reason why it should be confined to it. The Greek is so general that it may prohibit all kinds of *fraud*, *overreaching*, or *covetousness*, and may refer to *any* attempts to deprive another of his rights, whether it be the right which he has in his property, or his rights as a husband, or his rights in any other respect. It is a general command not to defraud; in way to take advantage of another; in no way to deprive him of his rights.

Because that the Lord is the avenger of all such. Of all such as are guilty of fraud; that is, he will punish them. Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 12:19"**; **See Barnes** "Eph 6:9".

As we have also forewarned. Doubtless, when he was with them.

{1} "defraud" "oppress" or "overreach" {2} "any matter" "the"

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *For God hath not called us unto uncleanness*. When he called us to be his followers, it was not that we should lead lives of impurity, but of holiness. We should, therefore, fulfil the purposes for which we were called into his kingdom. The word uncleanness, (*akayarsia*) means, properly, impurity, filth; and then, in a moral sense, pollution, lewdness, as opposed to chastity, Ro 1:24 6:19; 2Co 12:21 Ga 5:19; Eph 4:19 5:3; Col 3:5.

{b} "unto holiness" Le 11:44 Heb 12:14; 1Pe 1:14-16

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *He therefore that despiseth*. Marg., *rejected*. That is, he who disregards such commands as these, which call him to a holy life, is really rejecting and disobeying God. Some might be disposed to say that these were merely the precepts of man, and that therefore it was not important whether they were obeyed or not. The apostle assures them, in the most solemn manner, that though communicated to them by man, yet they were really the commands of God.

Who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit. This is a claim to inspiration. Paul did not give these commands as his own, but as taught by the Spirit of God. Comp. **See Barnes "1Co 7:40"**.

{3} "despiseth" "rejecteth"

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *But as touching brotherly love*. The "peculiar charity and affection which one Christian owes to another." *Doddridge*. **See Barnes "Joh 13:34"**.

Ye need not that I write unto you. That is, "as I have done on the other points." They were so taught of God in regard to this duty, that they did not need any special instruction.

For ye yourselves are taught of God. The word here rendered "taught of God" *yeodidaktoi* occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It is correctly translated, and must refer here to some direct teaching of God on their own hearts, for Paul speaks of their being so taught by him as to need no special precepts in the case. He probably refers to that influence exerted on them when they became Christians, by which they were led to love all who bear the Divine image. He calls this being "taught of God," not because it was of the nature of *revelation* or *inspiration*, but because it was, in fact, the *teaching* of God in this case, though it was secret and silent. God has many ways of teaching men. The lessons which we learn from his Providence are a part of his instructions. The same is true of the decisions of our own consciences, and of the secret and silent influence of his Spirit on our hearts, disposing us to love what is lovely, and to do what ought to be done. In this manner all true Christians are taught to love those who bear the image of their Saviour. They feel that they are brethren; and such is their strong attachment to them, from the very nature of religion, that they do not need any express command of God to teach them to love them. It is one of the first—the elementary effects of religion on the soul, to lead us to love "the brethren;" and to do this is one of the evidences of piety about which there need be no danger of deceptions. Comp. 1Jo 3:14.

{c} "taught of God" Joh 15:12,17

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *And indeed ye do it*. **See Barnes "1Th 1:7"**.

But we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more. **See Barnes "1Th 3:12"**.

Here, as elsewhere, the apostle makes the fact that they deserved commendation for what they had done, a stimulant to arouse them to still higher attainments. *Bloomfield*.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *And that ye study to be quiet*. Orderly, peaceful; living in the practice of the calm virtues of life. The duty to which he would exhort them was that of being subordinate to the laws; of avoiding all tumult and disorder; of calmly pursuing their regular avocations, and of keeping themselves from all the assemblages of the idle, the restless, and the dissatisfied. No Christian should be engaged in a *mob*; none should be identified with the popular excitements which lead to disorder and to the disregard of the laws. The word rendered "ye study" (*filotimeomai*,) means, properly, *to love honour, to be ambitious*; and here means the same as when we say, "*to make it a point of honour to do so and so*." *Robinson*, Lex. It is to be regarded as a sacred duty; a thing in which our honour is concerned. Every man should regard himself as disgraced who is concerned in a mob.

And to do your own business. To attend to their own concerns, without interfering with the affairs of others. **See Barnes "Php 2:4"; Comp. 2Th 3:11 1Ti 5:13;** 1Pe 4:15.

The injunction here is one of the beautiful precepts of Christianity so well adapted to promote the good order and the happiness of society. It would prevent the impertinent and unauthorized prying into the affairs of others, to which many are so prone, and produce that careful attention to what properly belongs to our calling in life, which leads to thrift, order, and competence. Religion teaches no man to neglect his business. It requires no one to give up an honest calling, and to be idle. It asks no one to forsake a useful occupation unless he can exchange it for one more useful. It demands, indeed, that we shall be willing so far to suspend our ordinary labours as to observe the sabbath; to maintain habits of devotion; to improve our minds and hearts by the study of truth; to cultivate the social affections, and to do good to others as we have an opportunity; but it makes no one idle, and it countenances idleness in no one. A man who is habitually idle can have very slender pretensions to piety. There is enough in this world for every one to do, and the Saviour set such an example of untiring industry in his vocation, as to give each one occasion to doubt whether he be his true follower if he be not disposed to be employed.

And to work with your own hands, as we commanded you. This command is not referred to in the history, (Ac 17) but it is probable that the apostle saw that many of those residing in Thessalonica were disposed to spend their time in indolence, and hence insisted strongly on the necessity of being engaged in some useful occupation. Comp. Ac 17:21. Idleness is one of the great evils of the heathen world in almost every country, and the parent of no small part of their vices. The effect of religion everywhere is to make men industrious; and every man, who is able, should feel himself under sacred obligation to be employed. God made man to work, (Comp. Ge 2:15 3:19,) and there is no more benevolent arrangement of his government than this. No one who has already enough for himself and family, but who can make money to do good to others, has a right to retire from business and to live in idleness, (Comp. Ac 20:34 Eph 4:28;) no one has a right to live in such a relation as to be wholly dependent on others, if he can support himself; and no one has a right to compel others to labour for him, and to exact their unrequited toil, in order that he may be supported

in indolence and ease. The application of this rule to all mankind would speedily put an end to slavery, and would convert multitudes, even in the church, from useless to useful men. If a man has no *necessity* to labour for himself and family, he should regard it as an inestimable *privilege* to be permitted to aid those who cannot work—the sick, the aged, the infirm. If a man has no need to add to what he has for his own temporal comfort, what a privilege it is for him to toil in promoting public improvements; in founding colleges, libraries, hospitals, and asylums; and in sending the gospel to those who are sunk in wretchedness and want! No man understands fully the blessings which God has bestowed on him, if he has hands to work and will not work.

{d} "to do your own business" 1Pe 4:15

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without*. Out of the church. Comp. **See Barnes "Col 4:5".**

The word rendered *honestly*, means *becomingly, decorously, in a proper manner*. Ro 13:13 1Co 14:40. It does not refer here to mere *honesty* in the transaction of business, but to their *general treatment* of those who were not professing Christians. They were to conduct themselves towards them in all respects in a becoming manner—to be honest with them; to be faithful to their engagements; to be kind and courteous in their intercourse; to show respect where it was due; and to endeavour, in every way, to do them good. There are few precepts of religion more important than those which enjoin upon Christians the duty of a proper treatment of those who are not connected with the church.

And that ye may have lack of nothing. Marg., *no man*. The Greek will bear either construction, but the translation in the text is probably the correct one. The phrase is to be taken in connection not merely with that which immediately precedes it—as if their walking honestly towards those who were without, would preserve them from want— but as meaning that their industrious and quiet habits; their patient attention to their own business, and upright dealing with every man would do it. They would, in this way, have a competence, and would not be beholden to others. Learn hence, that it is the duty of a Christian so to live as not to be dependent on others, unless he is made so by events of divine Providence which he cannot foresee or control. No man should be dependent on others as the result of idle habits; of extravagance and improvidence; of the neglect of his own business, and of intermeddling with that of others. If by age, losses, infirmities, sickness, he be made dependent, he cannot be blamed, and he should not repine at his lot. One of the ways in which a Christian may always do good in society, and honour his religion, is by quiet and patient industry, and by showing that religion prompts to those habits of economy on which the happiness of society so much depends.

{*} "honestly" "in a becoming manner" {a} "honestly" Ro 13:13 {1} "lack of nothing" "no man"

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *But I would not have you to be ignorant*. I would have you fully informed on the important subject which is here referred to. It is quite probable from this, that some erroneous views prevailed among them in reference to the condition of those who were dead, which tended to prevent their enjoying the full consolation which they might otherwise have done. Of the prevalence of these views, it is probable the apostle had been informed by Timothy on his return from Thessalonica, 1Th 3:6. What they were we are not distinctly informed, and can only gather from the allusions which Paul makes to them, or from the opposite doctrines which *he* states, and which are evidently designed to correct those which prevailed among them. From these statements, it would appear that they supposed that those who had died, though they were true Christians, would be deprived of some important advantages which those would possess who should survive to the coming of the Lord. There seems some reason to suppose, as Koppe conjectures, (comp. also Saurin, Serra. vol. vi. 1,) that the cause of their grief was two-fold: one that some among them doubted whether there would be any resurrection, (comp. 1 Cor. xv. 12,) and that they supposed that they who had died were thus cut off from the hope of eternal happiness, so as to leave their surviving friends to sorrow "as those who had no hope;" the other, that some of them believed that, though those who were dead would indeed rise again, yet it would be long after those who were living when the Lord Jesus would return had been taken to glory, and would always be in a condition inferior to them. See Koppe, *in loc*. The effect of such opinions as these can be readily imagined. It would be to deprive them of the consolation which they might have had, and should have had, in the loss of their pious friends. They would either mourn over them as wholly cut off from hope, or would sorrow that they were to be deprived of the highest privileges which could result from redemption. It is not to be regarded as wonderful that such views should have prevailed in Thessalonica. There were those even at Corinth who wholly denied the doctrine of the resurrection, (1Co 15:12;) and we are to remember that those to whom the apostle now wrote, had been recently converted from heathenism; that they had enjoyed his preaching but a short time; that they had few or no books on the subject of religion; and that they were surrounded by those who had no faith in the doctrine of the resurrection at all, and who were doubtless able—as skeptical philosophers often are now—to urge their objections to the doctrines in such a way as greatly to perplex Christians. The apostle, therefore, felt the importance of stating the *exact truth* on the subject, that they might not have unnecessary sorrow, and that their unavoidable grief for their departed friends might not be aggravated by painful apprehensions about their future condition.

Concerning them which are asleep. It is evident from this that they had been recently called to part with some dear and valued members of their church. The word *sleep* is frequently applied in the New Testament to the death of saints. For the reasons why it is, **See Barnes "Joh 11:11"**; **See Barnes** "1Co 11:30"

See Barnes "1Co 15:51".

That ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. That is, evidently, as the heathen who had no hope of future life. Comp. **See Barnes "Eph 2:12"**.

Their sorrow was caused not only by the fact that their friends were removed from them by death, but from the fact that they had no evidence that their souls were immortal; or that, if they still lived, that they were happy; or that their bodies would rise again. Hence, when they buried them, they buried their hopes in the grave; and so far as they had any evidence, they were never to

see them again. Their grief at parting was not mitigated by the belief that the soul was now happy, or by the prospect of again being with them in a better world. It was on this account, in part, that the heathens indulged in expressions of such excessive grief. When their friends died, they hired men to play in a mournful manner on a pipe or trumpet, or women to howl and lament in a dismal manner. They beat their breasts; uttered loud shrieks; rent their garments; tore off their hair; cast dust on their heads, or sat down in ashes. It is not improbable that some among the Thessalonians, on the death of their pious friends, kept up these expressions of excessive sorrow. To prevent this, and to mitigate their sorrow, the apostle refers them to the bright hopes which Christianity had revealed, and points them to the future glorious re-union with the departed pious dead. Learn hence,

(1.) that the world without religion is destitute of hope. It is just as true of the heathen world now as it was of the ancient pagans, that they have no hope of a future state. They have no *evidence* that there is any such future state of blessedness; and *without* such evidence there can be no *hope*. Comp. **See Barnes "Eph 2:12"**.

(2.) That the excessive sorrow of the children of this world, when they lose a friend is not to be wondered at. They bury their bones in the grave. They part, for all that they know or believe, with such a friend for ever. The wife, the son, the daughter, they consign to silence—to decay —to dust, not expecting to meet them again. They look forward to no glorious resurrection, when that body shall rise, and when they shall be re-united to part no more. It is no wonder that they weep—for who would not weep when he believes that he parts with his friends *for ever*?

(3.) It is only the hope of future blessedness that can mitigate this sorrow. Religion reveals a brighter world —a world where all the pious shall be reunited; where the bonds of love shall be made stronger than they were here; where they shall never be severed again. It is only this *hope* that can soothe the pains of grief at parting; only when we can look forward to a better world, and feel that we shall see them again— love them again —love them for ever, that our tears are made dry.

(4.) The Christian, therefore, when he loses a Christian friend, should not sorrow as others do. He will feel, indeed, as keenly as they do, the loss of their society; the absence of their well known faces; the want of the sweet voice of friendship and love; for religion does not blunt the sensibility of the soul, or make the heart unfeeling. Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus; and religion does not prevent the warm gushing expressions of sorrow when God comes into a family and removes a friend. But this sorrow should not be like that of the world. It should not be

(a.) such as arises from the feeling that there is to be no future union;

(b.) it should not be accompanied with repining or complaining;

(c.) it should not be excessive, or beyond that which God designs that we should feel. It should be calm, submissive, patient; it should be that which is connected with steady confidence in God; and it should be mitigated by the hope of a future glorious union in heaven. The eye of the weeper should look up through his tears to God. The heart of the sufferer should acquiesce in him, even in the unsearchable mysteries of his dealings, and feel that all is right.

(5.) It is a sad thing to die without hope—so to die as to have no hope for ourselves, and to leave none to our surviving friends that we are happy. Such is the condition of the whole heathen world; and such the state of those who die in Christian lands, who have no evidence that their peace is made with God. As I love my friends, my father, my mother, my wife, my children, I would not have them go forth and weep over my grave as those who have no hope in my death. I would have their sorrow for my departure alleviated by the belief that my soul is happy with my God, even

when they commit my cold clay to the dust; and were there no other reason for being a Christian, this would be worth all the effort which it requires to become one. It would demonstrate the unspeakable value of religion, that my living friends may go forth to my grave, and be comforted in their sorrows with the assurance that my soul is already in glory, and that my body will rise again! No eulogium for talents, accomplishments, or learning; no paens of praise for eloquence, beauty, or martial deeds; no remembrances of wealth and worldly greatness, would then so meet the desires which my heart cherishes, as to have them enabled, when standing around my open grave, to sing the song which only Christians can sing:—

Unveil thy bosom, faithful tomb,
Take this new treasure to thy trust;
And give these sacred relics room
To seek a slumber in the dust.

Nor pain, nor grief, nor anxious fear
Invade thy bounds. No mortal woes
Can reach the peaceful sleeper here,
While angels watch the soft repose.

So Jesus slept: God's dying Son
Pass'd thro' the grave, and bless'd the bed
Rest here, bless saint, till from his throne;
The morning break, and pierce the shade.

Break from his throne, illustrious morn:
Attend, O Earth, his sovereign word;
Restore thy trust—a glorious form—
Call'd to ascend, and meet the Lord.
//WATTS//.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again*. That is, if we believe this, we ought also to believe that those who have died in the faith of Jesus will be raised from the dead. The meaning is not that the fact of the resurrection depends on our believing that Jesus rose, but that the death and resurrection of the Saviour were connected with the resurrection of the saints: that the one followed from the other, and that the one was as certain as the other. The doctrine of the resurrection of the saints so certainly follows from that of the resurrection of Christ, that, if the one is believed, the other ought to be also. **See Barnes "1Co 15:12-14"**.

Which sleep in Jesus. A most beautiful expression. It is not merely that they have calm repose—like a gentle slumber—in the hope of awaking again, but that this is "*in Jesus*"—or "through" (*dia*) him; that is, his death and resurrection are the cause of their quiet and calm repose. They do not "sleep" in heathenism, or in infidelity, or in the gloom of atheism—but in the blessed

hope which Jesus has imparted. They lie, *as he did*, in the tomb—free from pain and sorrow, and with the certainty of being raised up again.

They sleep in Jesus and are bless'd,
How kind their slumbers are;
From sufferings and from sin released,
And freed from every snare.

When, therefore; we think of the death of saints, let us think of what Jesus was in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. Such is the sleep of our pious friends now in the grave; such will be our own when we die.

Will God bring with him. This does not mean that God will bring them with him *from heaven* when the Saviour comes—though it will be true that their spirits will descend with the Saviour; but it means that he will bring them from their graves, and will conduct them with him to glory, to be with him. Comp. **See Barnes "Joh 14:3"**.

The declaration, as it seems to me, is designed to teach the general truth, that the redeemed are so united with Christ, that they shall share the same destiny as he does. As the head was raised, so will all the members be. As God brought Christ from the grave, so will he bring them; that is, his resurrection made it certain that they would rise. It is a great and universal truth that God will bring all from their graves who "sleep in Jesus;" or that they shall all rise. The apostle does not, therefore, refer so much to the *time* when this would occur—meaning that it would happen when the Lord Jesus should return—as to the *fact* that there was an established connection between him and his people, which made it certain that if they died united with him by faith, they would be as certainly brought from the grave as he was. If, however, it means, as Prof. Bush (Anastasis, pp. 266, 267) supposes, that they will be brought with him from heaven, or will accompany him down, it does not prove that there must have been a previous resurrection, for the full force of the language would be met by the supposition that their spirits had ascended to heaven. and would be brought with him to be united to their bodies when raised. If this be the correct interpretation, then there is probably an allusion to such passages as the following, representing the coming of the Lord accompanied by his saints. "The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee," Zec 14:6. "And Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh, with ten thousand of his saints," Jude 1:14. "Who," says Pres. Dwight, (Serra. 164,) "are those whom God will bring with him at this time? Certainly not the bodies of his saints .... The only answer is, he will bring with him "the spirits of just men made perfect."

{a} "even so" 1Co 15:20

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord*. By the command, or inspired teaching of the Lord. Prof. Bush (Anastasis, p. 265) supposes that the apostle here alludes to what the Saviour says in Mt 24:30,31. "And they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven." etc. It is possible that Paul may have designed a general allusion to *all* that the Lord had said about his coming, but there cannot have been an exclusive reference to that passage, for in

what he says here there are several circumstances mentioned to which the Saviour in Matthew does not allude. The probability, therefore, is, that Paul means that the Lord Jesus had made a special communication to him on the subject.

That we which are alive. See this fully explained **See Barnes "1Co 15:51"**.

From this expression, it would seem, that some of the Thessalonians supposed that Paul meant to teach that he himself, and many of the living, would survive until the coming of the Lord Jesus, and, of course, that that event was near at hand. That this was not his meaning, however, he is at special pains to show in 2Th 2:1-10.

And remain unto the coming of the Lord. Those Christians who shall then be alive.

Shall not prevent them which are asleep. Shall not precede; anticipate; go before. The word *prevent* with us is now commonly used in the sense of *hinder*, but this is never its meaning in the Scriptures. The word, in the time of the translators of the Bible, was used in its primitive and proper sense (*proevenio*,) meaning to precede, or anticipate. Job 3:12, "Why did the knees *prevent* me?" That is, why did they anticipate me, so that I did not perish. Ps 79:8, "Let thy tender mercies speedily *prevent* us;" that is, go before us in danger. Ps 119:147, "I *prevented* the dawning of the morning, and cried ;" that is, I *anticipated* it, or I prayed *before* the morning dawned. Mt 17:26, "Jesus *prevented* him, saying;" that is, Jesus anticipated him; he commenced speaking before Peter had told him what he had said. Comp. Ps 17:13 59:10 Ps 88:13 95:2; 2Sa 22:6,19; Job 30:27 41:11.

The meaning here is, that they who would be alive at the coming of the Lord Jesus, would not be 'changed' and received up into glory before those who were in there graves were raised up. The object seems to be to correct an opinion which prevailed among the Thessalonians that they who should survive to the coming of the Lord Jesus would have great advantages over those who had died. What they supposed those advantages would be—whether the privilege of *seeing* him come, or that they would be raised to higher honours in heaven, or that they who had died would not rise at all, does not appear, nor is the origin of this sentiment known. It is clear, however, that it was producing an increase of their sorrow on the death of their pious friends, and hence it was very important to correct the error. The apostle, therefore, states that no such disadvantage could follow, for the matter of fact was, that the dead would rise first.

{*} "asleep" "go up before them which are asleep"

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven*. **See Barnes "Ac 1:11"**.

With a shout. The word here used (*keleusma*) does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It properly means a *cry* of excitement, or of urging on; an outcry, clamour, or shout, as of sailors at the oar, Luc. Catapl. 19; of soldiers rushing to battle, Thuc. iii. 14; of a multitude of people, Diod. Sic. iii. 15; of a huntsman to his aogs, Xen. Ven. vi. 20. It does not mean here, that the Lord would himself make such a shout, but that he would be attended with it; that is, with a multitude who would lift up the voice, like that of an army rushing to the conflict.

With the voice of the archangel. The word *archangel* occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, except in Jude 1:9, where it is applied to Michael. It properly means a chief angel; one who is first, or who is over others *arcwn*. The word is not found in the Septuagint; and the only archangel,

therefore, which is *named* in the Scriptures, is Michael, Jude 1:9 Comp. Re 12:7. Seven angels, however, are referred to in the Scriptures as having an eminence above others, and these are commonly regarded as archangels, Re 8:2. "And I saw the seven angels which stood before God." One of these is supposed to be referred to in the Book of Tobit, xii. 15, "I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, which present the prayers of the saints, and which go in and out before the glory of the Holy One." The names of three only of the seven are mentioned in the Jewish writings: Michael, the patron of the Jewish nation, Da 10:13,21, 12:1.

Gabriel, Da 8:16 9:21 comp. Lu 1:19,26. Raphael, Tobit iii. 17; v. 4; viii. 2; ix. 1, 5; xii. 15. The Book of Enoch adds that of Uriel, pp. 187, 190, 191, 193. Michael is mentioned as one "of the chief princes," Da 10:13; and as "the great prince," Da 12:1. Comp. **See Barnes** "Eph 1:21, and see an article by Prof. Stuart in the Bibliotheca Sacra, No. x on *Angelology*. It seems evident from the Scriptures, that there is one or more among the angels to whom the name archangel properly belongs. This view is in accordance with the doctrine in the Scriptures that the heavenly beings are divided into ranks and orders, for if so, it is not unreasonable to suppose that there should be one or more to whom the most exalted rank appertains. Comp. Re 12:7. Whether there is more than one to whom this name appropriately belongs, it is impossible now to determine, and is not material. The word here (in Greek) is without the article, and the phrase might be rendered, "with the voice of an archangel." The Syriac renders it, "with the voice of the prince of the angels." On an occasion so august and momentous as that of the coming of the final Judge of all mankind, the resurrection of the dead, and the solemn transactions before the tribunal of the Son of God, deciding the destiny of countless millions for ever, it will not be inappropriate that the highest among the heavenly hosts should be present, and take an important part in the solemnities of the day. It is not quite certain what is meant here by the "the voice of the archangel," or for what purpose that voice will be heard. It cannot be that it will be to raise the dead—for that will be by the "voice of the Son of God," (Joh 5:28,29;) and it seems most probable that the meaning is, that this will be a part of the loud shout or cry which will be made by the descending hosts ore,yen; or perhaps it may be for the purpose of summoning the world to the bar of judgment. Comp. Mt 24:31.

And with the trump of God. The trump which God appoints to be sounded on that solemn occasion. It does not mean that it will be sounded by God himself. **See Barnes "Mt 24:31"**.

And the dead in Christ. Christians.

Shall rise first. That is, before the living shall be changed. A doctrine similar to this was held by the Jews. "Resch Lachisch said, Those who die in the land of Israel, shall rise first in the days of the Messiah." See Wetstein, in loc. It is implied in all this description, that the interval between their resurrection and the change which will occur to the living, will be brief, or that the one will rapidly succeed the other. **See Barnes** "1Co 15:23,51,52.

{a} "the Lord himself" Mt 24:30,31 {b} "first" Re 20:5,6

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Then we which are alive*. Those who shall then be alive. See 1Th 4:16. The word here rendered then, (*epeita*) does not necessarily mean that this would occur immediately. It properly

marks *succession in time*, and means *afterwards, next*, next in the order of events, Lu 16:7 Ga 1:21; Jas 4:14.

There may be a considerable interval between the resurrection of the pious and the time when the living shall be caught up to meet the Lord, for the change is to take place in them which will fit them to ascend with those who have been raised. The meaning is, that *after* the dead are raised, or the next thing *in order*, they and the living will ascend to meet the Lord. The proper meaning of the word, however, denotes a succession so close as to exclude the idea of a long interval in which other important transactions would occur, such an interval, for example, as would be involved in a long personal reign of the Redeemer on earth. The word demands this interpretation—that the next thing in order, after the resurrection of the righteous, will be their being caught up with the living, with an appropriate change, into the air—though, as has been remarked, it will admit of the supposition of such a brief, momentary interval (*en atomw, en riph ofyalmou*, 1Co 15:51,52) as shall be necessary to prepare for it.

Shall be caught up. The word here used implies that there will be the application of external force or power by which this will be done. It will not be by any power of ascending which they will themselves have; or by any tendency of their raised or changed bodies to ascend of their own accord, or even by any effort of their own will, but by *a power* applied to them which will cause them to rise. Compare the use of the word *arpazw* in Mt 11:12, "the violent *take* it by force;" Mt 13:19, "then cometh the wicked one, and *catcheth away*;" Joh 6:15, "that they would come and take him by force;" Joh 10:12, "the wolf *catcheth them*;" Ac 8:39, "the Spirit of the Lord *caught away* Philip;" 2Co 12:2, "such an one *caught up to the third heaven*." Also, Joh 10:28,29; Ac 23:10 Jude 1:23; Re 12:5.

The verb does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. In all these instances there is the idea of either foreign force or violence, effecting that which is done. What force or power is to be applied in causing the living and the dead to ascend, is not expressed. Whether it is to be by the ministry of angels, or by the direct power of the Son of God, is not intimated, though the latter seems to be most probable. The word should not be construed, however, as implying that there will be any reluctance on the part of the saints to appear before the Saviour, but merely with reference to the physical fact that power will be necessary to elevate them to meet him in the air. Will their bodies then be such that they will have the power of locomotion at will from place to place?

In the clouds. Gr., "in clouds" *en nefelaiv*—without the article. This may mean "in clouds ;" that is, in such numbers, and in such *grouping* as to resemble clouds. So it is rendered by Macknight, Koppe, Rosenmuller, Bush (Anastasis, 266,) and others. The absence of the article here would rather seem to demand this interpretation. Still, however, the other interpretation may be true, that it means that they will be caught up into the region of the clouds, or to the clouds which shall accompany the Lord Jesus on his return to our world, Mt 24:30 26:64; Mr 13:26 14:62; Re 1:7.

Comp. Da 7:13. In whichever sense it is understood, the expression is one of great sublimity, and the scene will be immensely grand. Some doctrine of this kind was held by the ancient Jews. Thus Rabbi Nathan (Midras Tillin, xlviii. 13) says, "What has been done before will be done again, As he led the Israelites from Egypt in the clouds of heaven, so will he do to them in the future time."

To meet the Lord in the air. In the regions of the atmosphere -above the earth. It would seem from this, that the Lord Jesus, in his coming, would not descend *to* the earth, but would remain at a distance from it in the air, where the great transactions of the judgment will occur. It is, indeed, nowhere said that the trans- actions of the judgment will occur *upon* the earth. The world would

not be spacious enough to contain all the assembled living and dead, and hence the throne of judgment will be fixed in the ample space above it.

And so shall we ever be with the Lord. This does not mean that they will always remain with him in the air—for their final home will be heaven—and *after* the trial they will accompany him to the realms of glory. Mt 25:34, "*Come*, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom," etc. The time during which they will remain with him "in the air," is nowhere mentioned in the Bible. It will be as long as will be necessary for the purposes of judging a world, and deciding the eternal doom of every individual "according to the deeds done in the body." There is no reason to suppose that this will be accomplished in a single day of twenty-four hours; but it is impossible to form any conjecture of the period which will be occupied.

{c} "in the clouds" Rev 11:12 {d} "ever be" Joh 14:3

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 4 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Wherefore comfort one another*. Marg., *exhort*. The word *comfort* probably best expresses the meaning. They were to bring these glorious truths and these bright prospects before their minds, in order to alleviate the sorrows of bereavement. The topics of consolation are these: first, that those who had died in the faith would not always lie in the grave; second, that when they rose they would not occupy an inferior condition because they were cut off before the coming of the Lord; and third, that all Christians, living and dead, would be received to heaven and dwell for ever with the Lord.

With these words. That is, with these truths.

{1} "comfort" "exhort"

REMARKS.

1. This passage (1Th 4:13-18) contains a truth which is to be found in no heathen classic writer, and nowhere else, except in the teachings of the New Testament. For the elevated and glorious view which it gives of future scenes pertaining to our world, and for all its inestimable consolations, we are wholly indebted to the Christian religion, Reason unassisted by revelation, never dared to *conjecture* that such scenes would occur; if it had, it would have had no arguments on which the conjecture could be supported.

2. The death of the Christian is a calm and gentle slumber, 1Th 4:13. It is not annihilation; it is not the extinction of hope. It is like gentle repose when we lie down at night, and when we hope to awake again in the morning; it is like the quiet, sweet slumber of the infant: Why, then, should the Christian be afraid to die? Is he afraid to close his eyes in slumber? Why dread the night— the stillness of death? Is he afraid of the darkness, the silence, the chilliness of the midnight hour, when his senses are locked int repose? Why should death to him appear so terrible? *Is the slumbering of an infant an object of terror*?

3. There are magnificent scenes before us. There is no description anywhere which is more sublime than that in the close of this chapter. Great events are brought together here, any one of which is more grand than all the pomp of courts, and all the sublimity of battle, and all the grandeur of a triumphal civic procession. The glory of the descending Judge of all mankind; the attending

retinue of angels, and of the spirits of the dead; the loud shout of the descending host; the clangour of the archangel's trumpet; the bursting of graves and the coming forth of the millions there entombed; the rapid, sudden, glorious change on the millions of living men; the consternation of the wicked; the ascent of the innumerable host to the regions of the air; and the solemn process of the judgment there—what has ever occurred like these events in this world? And how strange it is that the thoughts of men are not turned away from the trifles—the show—the shadow—the glitter—the empty pageantry here—to these bright and glorious realities!

4. In those scenes we shall all be personally interested. If we do not survive till they occur, yet we shall have an important part to act in them. We shall hear the archangel's trump; we shall be summoned before the descending Judge. In these scenes we shall mingle not as careless spectators, but as those whose eternal doom, is there to be determined, and with all the intensity of emotion derived from the fact that the Son of God will descend to judge us, and to pronounce *our* final doom! Can we be too much concerned to be prepared for the solemnities of that day?

5. We have, in the passage before us, an interesting view of the *order* in which these great events will occur. There will be

(1.) the descent of the Judge with the attending hosts of heaven;

(2.) the raising up of the righteous dead;

(3.) the change which the living will undergo, 1Co 15:52;

(4.) the ascent to meet the Lord in the air; and

(5.) the return with him to glory. What place in this series of wonders will be assigned for the resurrection of the wicked, is not mentioned here. The object of the apostle did not lead him to advert to that, since his propose was to comfort the afflicted by the assurance that their pious friends would rise again, and would suffer no disadvantage by the fact that they had died before the coming of the Redeemer. From Joh 5:28,29: however, it seems most probable that they will be raised at the same time with the righteous, and will ascend with them to the place of judgment in the air.

{Typist's note: Barnes assumes a GENERAL judgment. Others believe that the Christian, whose eternal destination has already been determined, will be judged at THE BEMA seat with regard to REWARDS. The WICKED will not be raised until the end of the Millenial Reign and will be judged at THE GREAT WHITE THRONE judgment.}

6. There is no intimation here of a "personal reign" of Christ upon the earth. Indeed, there is no evidence that he will return to the earth at all. All that appears is, that he will descend "from heaven" to the regions of "the air," and there will summon the living and the dead to his bar. But there is no intimation that he will set up a visible kingdom then on earth, to continue a thousand: or more years; that the Jews will be re-collected in their own land that a magnificent city or temple will be built there; or that saints will hover in the air, or reign personally with the Lord Jesus over the nations. There are two considerations in view of this passage, which, to my mind, are conclusive proof that all this is romance—splendid and magnificent indeed as an Arabian but wholly unknown to the apostle Paul. The one is, that *if* this were to occur, it is inconceivable that there should have been no allusion to it here. It would have been such a magnificent conception of the design of the Second Advent, that it could not have failed to have been adverted to in a description like this. The other consideration is, that such a view would have been exactly in point to meet the object of the apostle here. What could have been more appropriate in comforting the Thessalonian Christians respecting those who had died in the faith, than to describe the gorgeous scenes of the "personal reign" of Christ, and the important part which the risen saints were to play in that great drama!

How can it be accounted for that the apostle did not advert to it? *Would a believer in the "personal reign" now be likely to omit so material a point, in a description of the scenes which are to occur at the Second Advent?*"

7. The saints will be for ever with the Lord. They will dwell with him in his own eternal home, Joh 14:3. This expression comprises the sum of all their anticipated felicity and glory. To be with Christ will be, in itself, the perfection of bliss; for it will be a security that they will sin no more, that they will suffer no more, and that they will be shielded from danger and death. They will have realized the object of their long, fond desire—-that of seeing their Saviour; they will have suffered the last pang, encountered the last temptation, and escaped for ever from the dominion of death. What a glorious prospect is this! Assuredly we should be willing to endure pain, privation, and contempt here for the brief period of our earthly pilgrimage, if we may come at last to a world of eternal rest. What trifles are all earthly sorrows compared with the glories of an endless life with our God and Saviour!

8. It is possible that even the prospect of the judgment-day should be a source of consolation, 1Th 4:18. To most men it is justly an object of dread—for *all* that they have to fear is concentrated on the issues of that day. But why should a Christian fear it? In the descending Judge he will hail his Redeemer and Friend; and just in proportion as he has true religion here, will be the certainty of his acquittal there. Nay, his feelings in anticipation of the judgment may be more than the *mere* absence of fear and alarm. it may be to him the source of positive joy. It will be the day of his deliverance from death and the grave. It will confirm to him all his long-cherished hopes. It will put the seal of approbation on his life spent in endeavouring to do the will of God. It will reunite him to his dear friends who have died in the Lord. It will admit him to a full and glorious view of that Saviour whom "having not seen he has loved;" and it will make him the companion of angels and of God. If there be anything, therefore, which ought to cheer and sustain our hearts in the sorrows and bereavements of this life, it is the anticipation of the glorious scenes connected with the Second Advent of our Lord, and the prospect of standing before him clothed in the robes of salvation, surrounded by all those whom we have loved who have died in the faith, and with the innumerable company of the redeemed of all ages and lands.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 5

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 1

1st Thessalonians Chapter 5

ANALYSIS OF CHAPTER
THIS chapter consists of two parts.
I. The continuation of the subject of the coming of the Lord, 1Th 5:1-11; and,
II. Various practical exhortations.
In the first part, the apostle states

(1.)that it was well understood by the Thessalonians that the coming of the Lord would be sudden, and at an unexpected moment, 1Th 5:1,2;

(2.) he refers to the effect of his coming on the wicked and the righteous, and says that it would be attended with the sudden and inevitable destruction of the former, 1Th 5:3; but that the result of his coming would be far different on the righteous, 1Th 5:4-11. The prospect of his coming was fitted to make them watchful and sober, 1Th 5:6-8; and his advent would be attended with their certain salvation, 1Th 5:9-11.

In the second part of the chapter, he exhorts them to show proper respect for their spiritual teachers and rulers, 1Th 5:12,13; to endeavour to restrain the unruly, to support the feeble, and to evince towards all the spirit of patience and forbearance, 1Th 5:14; to manifest a meek and benevolent manner of life, 1Th 5:18; to rejoice always, 1Th 5:16; to pray constantly, 1Th 5:17; to render thanks to God in every situation, 1Th 5:18; to cherish the influences of the Holy Ghost on their souls, 1Th 5:19; to show respect for all the divine prophetic communications, 1Th 5:20; to consider and examine carefully everything submitted to them for belief; to adhere steadfastly to all that was good and true, 1Th 5:21; and to avoid the appearance of evil, 1Th 5:22. The epistle closes with a fervent prayer that God would sanctify them entirely; with an earnest entreaty that they would pray for him; with a command that the epistle should be read to all the churches, and with the benediction, 1Th 5:23-28.

Verse 1. But of the times and the seasons. **See Barnes "Ac 1:7"**.

The reference here is to the coming of the Lord Jesus, and to the events connected with his advent. See the close of 1Th 4.

Ye have no need that I write unto you. That is, they had received all the information on the particular point to which he refers, which it was necessary they should have. He seems to refer to the *suddenness* of his coming. It is evident from this, as well as from other parts of this epistle, that this had been, from some cause, a prominent topic which he had dwelt on when he was with them. **See Barnes "1Th 1:10"**.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *For yourselves know perfectly*. That is, they had been taught this. There could be no doubt in their minds respecting it.

The day of the Lord so cometh. Of the Lord Jesus—for so the word "Lord" in the New Testament commonly means. **See Barnes "Ac 1:24"**.

The "day of the Lord" means that day in which he will be manifested, or in which he will be the prominent object in view of the assembled universe.

As a thief in the night. Suddenly and unexpectedly, as a robber breaks into a dwelling. A thief comes without giving any warning, or any indications of his approach. He not only gives none, but he is careful that none shall be given. It is a point with him, that, it possible, the man whose house he is about to rob shall have no means of ascertaining his approach until he comes suddenly upon him. Comp. **See Barnes "Mt 24:37"; and** Mt 24:38-43, **See Barnes** "Lu 12:39, **See Barnes "Lu 12:40"**.

In this way the Lord Jesus will return to judgment; and this *proves* that all the attempts to determine the day, the year, or the *century* when he will come, must be fallacious. He intends that

his coming to this world shall be sudden and unexpected, "like that of a thief in the night;" that there shall be no such indications of his approach that it shall *not* be sudden and unexpected; and that no warning of it shall be not the point of the comparison in expressions like this, what is it? Is there anything else in which his coming will resemble that of a thief? And if this *be* the true point of comparison, how can it be true that men can ascertain when that is to occur? Assuredly, if they can, his coming will *not* be like that of a thief. Comp. **See Barnes "Ac 1:7"**.

{a} "cometh as a thief" Lu 12:39,40; 2Pe 3:10 Re 16:15

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *For when they shall say, Peace and safety*. That is, when the wicked shall say this, for the apostle here refers only to those on whom "sudden destruction" will come. Compare **See Barnes "Mt 24:36"**

and following; **See Barnes** "2Pe 3:3,4.

It is clear from this,

(1.) that when the Lord Jesus shall come, the world will not all be converted. There will be some to be "destroyed." How large this proportion will be, it is impossible now to ascertain. This supposition, however, is not inconsistent with the belief that there will be a general prevalence of the gospel before that period.

(2.) The impenitent and wicked world will be sunk in carnal security when he comes. They will regard themselves as safe. They will see no danger. They will give no heed to warning. They will be unprepared for his advent. So it has always been. It seems to be an universal truth in regard to all the visitations of God to wicked men for punishment, that he comes upon them at a time when they are not expecting him, and that they have no faith in the predictions of his advent. So it was in the time of the flood; in the destruction of Sodom, Gomorrah, and Jerusalem; in the overthrow of Babylon; so it is when the sinner dies, and so it will be when the Lord Jesus shall return to judge the world. One of the most remarkable facts about the history of man is, that he takes no warning from his Maker: he never changes his plans, or feels any emotion, because his Creator "thunders damnation along his path," and threatens to destroy him in hell.

Sudden destruction. Destruction that was unforeseen (*aifnidiov*) or unexpected. The word here rendered sudden, occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, except in Lu 21:34, "Lest that day come upon you unawares." The word rendered destruction *oleyrov* —occurs in the New Testament only here and in 1Co 5:5; 2Th 1:9; 1Ti 6:9, in all of which places it is correctly translated *destruction*. The word destruction is familiar to us. It means, properly, demolition; pulling down; the annihilation of the form of any thing, or that form of parts which constitutes it what it is; as the destruction of grass by eating; of a forest by cutting down the trees; of life by murder; of the soul by consigning it to misery. It does not necessarily mean annihilation—for a house or city is not annihilated which is pulled down or burned; a forest is not annihilated which is cut down; and a man is not annihilated whose character and happiness are destroyed. In regard to the destruction here referred to, we may remark,

(1.) it will be *after* the return of the Lord Jesus to judgment; and hence it is not true that the wicked experience all the punishment which they ever will in the present life;

(2.) that it seems fairly implied that the destruction which they will then suffer will not be annihilation, but will be connected with conscious existence; and

(3.) that they will then be cut off from life, and hope, and salvation. How can the solemn affirmation that they will be "destroyed suddenly," be consistent with the belief that all men will be saved? Is it the same thing to be destroyed and to be saved? Does the Lord Jesus, when he speaks of the salvation of his people, say that he comes to *destroy* them?

As travail upon a woman with child. This expression is sometimes used to denote great consternation, as in Ps 48:6 Jer 6:24 Mic 4:9,10; great pain, as Isa 53:11 Jer 4:31; Joh 16:21; or the suddenness with which anything occurs, Jer 13:21. It seems here to be used to denote two things: first, that the coming of the Lord to a wicked world will be sudden; and, secondly, that it will be an event of the most distressing and overwhelming nature.

And they shall not escape. That is, the destruction, or punishment. They calculated on impunity, but now the time will have come when none of these refuges will avail them, and no rocks will cover them from the "wrath to come."

{b} "travail" Jer 13:21

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief*. The allusion here is to the manner in which a thief or robber accomplishes his purpose, He comes in the night, when men are asleep. So, says the apostle, the Lord will come to the wicked. They are like those who are asleep when the thief comes upon them. But it is not so with Christians. They are, in relation to the coming of the day of the Lord, as men are who are awake when the robber comes. They could see his approach, and could prepare for it, so that it would not take them by surprise.

{c} "brethren" Eph 5:8 1Jo 2:8

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Ye are all the children of light*. All who are Christians. The phrase "*children* of light" is a Hebraism, meaning that they were the enlightened children of God.

And the children of the day. Who live as if light always shone round about them. The meaning is, that in reference to the coming of the Lord, they are as men would be in reference to the coming of a thief, if there were no night, and no necessity of slumber. They would always be wakeful and active, and it would be impossible to come upon them by surprise. Christians are always to be wakeful and vigilant; they are so to expect the coming of the Redeemer, that he will not find them off their guard, and will not come upon them by surprise.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Therefore let us not sleep as do others*. As the wicked world does. Comp. Mt 25:6.

But let us watch. That is, for the coming of the Lord. Let us regard it as an event which is certainly to occur, and which may occur at any moment. **See Barnes "Mt 25:13"**.

And be sober. The word here used (*nhfw*) is rendered *sober* in 1Th 5:6,8; 1Pe 1:13 5:8; and *watch* in 2Ti 4:5 1Pe 4:7. It does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It properly means, to be temperate or abstinent, especially in respect to wine. Joseph. Jewish Wars, 5. 5. 7. Xenophon, Cyr.. 7. 5. 20; and then it is used in a more general sense, as meaning to be sober-minded, watchful, circumspect. In this passage, there is an allusion to the fact that persons not only sleep in the night, but that they are frequently drunken in the night also. The idea is, that the Lord Jesus, when he comes, will find the wicked sunk not only in carnal security, but in sinful indulgences; and that those who are Christians ought not only to be awake and to watch as in the daytime, but to be temperate. They ought to be like persons engaged in the sober, honest, and appropriate employments of the day, and not like those who waste their days in sleep, and their nights in revelry. A man who expects soon to see the Son of God coming to judgment, ought to be a sober man. No one would wish to be summoned from a scene of dissipation to his bar. And who would wish to be called there from the ball-room; from the theatre; from the scene of brilliant worldly amusement? The most gay votary of the world; the most accomplished, and flattered, and joyous patron of the ball-room; the most richly-dressed and admired daughter of vanity, would tremble at the thought of being summoned from those brilliant halls, where pleasure is now found, to the judgment-bar. They would wish to have at least a little time that they might prepare for so solemn a scene. But if so, as this event may at any moment occur, why should they not be habitually sober-minded? Why should they not aim to be always in that state of mind which they know would be appropriate to meet him? Especially should Christians live with such vigilance and soberness as to be always prepared to meet the Son of God. What Christian can think it appropriate for him to go up to meet his Saviour from the theatre, the ballroom, or the brilliant worldly party? A Christian *ought* always so to live, that the coming of the Son of God in the clouds of heaven would not excite the least alarm.

{a} "let us not sleep" Mt 25:5 Ro 13:12,13

{b} "sober" 1Pe 2:8

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *For they that sleep, sleep in the night*. Night is the time for sleep. The day is the time for action, and in the light of day men should be employed. Night and sleep are made for each other, and so are the day and active employment. The meaning here is, that it is in accordance with the character of those who are of the night, that is, sinners, to be sunk in stupidity and carnal security, as if they were asleep; but for the children of the day, that is, for Christians, it is no more appropriate to be inactive than it is for men to sleep in the day-time. "It is not to be wondered at that wicked men are negligent, and are given to vice, for they are ignorant of the will of God. Negligence in doing right, and corrupt morals, usually accompany ignorance." *Rosenmuller*.

And they that be drunken, are drunken in the night. The night is devoted by them to revelry and dissipation. It is in accordance with the usual custom in all lands and times, that the night is the usual season for riot and revelry. The leisure, the darkness, the security from observation, and the freedom from the usual toils and cares of life, have caused those hours usually to be selected for indulgence in intemperate eating and drinking. This was probably more particularly the case among the ancients than with us; and much as drunkenness abounded, it was much more rare to see a man intoxicated in the day-time than it is now. To be drunk then in the day-time was regarded as the greatest disgrace. See Polyb. Exc. Leg. 8, and Apul. viii., as quoted by Wetstein. Comp. **See Barnes "Ac 2:15"**; **See Barnes** "Isa 5:11".

The object of the apostle here is, to exhort Christians to be sober and temperate; and the meaning is, that it is as disgraceful for them to indulge in habits of revelry, as for a man to be drunk in the day-time. The propriety of this exhortation, addressed to Christians, is based on the fact that intoxication was hardly regarded as a crime; and, surrounded as they were with those who freely indulged in drinking to excess, they were then, as they are now, exposed to the danger of disgracing their religion. The actions of Christians ought always to be such that they may be performed in open day, and in the view. of all the world. Other men seek the cover of the night to perform their deeds; the Christian should do nothing which may not be done under the full blaze of day.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *But let us who are of the day, be sober*. Temperate, as men usually are in the day-time.

Putting on the breast-plate of faith and love. This is a favourite comparison of the apostle Paul. See it explained at length **See Barnes "Eph 6:14"**.

And for an helmet, the hope of salvation. **See Barnes "Eph 6:17"**.

{c} "breast-plate of faith" Isa 59:17

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *For God hath not appointed us to wrath*. This is designed as an encouragement to effort to secure our salvation. The wish of God is to save us, and therefore we should watch and be sober; we should take to ourselves the whole of the Christian armour, and strive for victory. If he had appointed us to wrath, effort would have been in vain, for we could do nothing but yield to our inevitable destiny. The hope of a final triumph should animate us in our efforts, and cheer us in our struggles with our foes. How much does the hope of victory animate the soldier in battle! When morally certain of success, how his arm is nerved! When everything conspires to favour him, and when he seems to feel that God fights for him, and intends to give him the victory, how his heart exults, and how strong is he in battle! Hence, it was a great point among the ancients, when about entering into battle, to secure evidence that the gods favoured them, and meant to give them the victory. For this purpose they offered sacrifices, and consulted the flight of birds and the entrails of animals; and for this armies were accompanied by soothsayers and priests, that they might

interpret any signs which might occur that would be favourable, or to propitiate the favour of the gods by sacrifice. See Homer, *passim*; Arrian's Expedition of Alexander, and the classic writers generally. The apostle alludes to something of this kind here. He would excite us to maintain the Christian warfare manfully, by the assurance that God intends that we shall be triumphant. This we are to learn by no conjectures of soothsayers; by no observation of the flight of birds; by no sacrifice which we can make to propitiate his favour; but by the unerring assurance of his holy word. If we are Christians, we know that he intends our salvation, and that victory will be ours; if we are willing to become Christians, we know that the almighty Arm will be stretched out to aid us, and that the "gates of hell" cannot prevent it.

{d} "appointed us to wrath" Ro 9:8,9; 2Co 5:15

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Who died for us*. That is, to redeem us. He designed by his death that we should ultimately live with him; and this effect of his death could be secured only as it was an atoning sacrifice.

Whether we wake or sleep. Whether we are found among the living or the dead when he comes. The object here is to show that the cone class would have no advantage over the other. This was designed to calm their minds in their trials, and to correct an error which seems to have prevailed in the belief that those who were found alive when he should return, would have some priority over those who were dead. **See Barnes "1Th 4:13"**

and following. The word rendered "together", *ama* is not to be regarded as connected with the phrase "with him" — as meaning that he and they would be "together" but it refers to those who "wake and those who sleep"— those who are alive and those who are dead—meaning that they would be *together*, or would be with the Lord *at the same time*; there would be no priority or precedence. *Rosenmuller.*

{d} "whether we wake or sleep" Ro 14:8,9; 2Co 5:15

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Wherefore comfort yourselves*. **See Barnes "1Th 4:18"**.

And edify one another. Strive to build up each other, or to stablish each other in the faith by these truths. **See Barnes "Ro 14:19"**.

Even as also ye do. Continue to do it. Let nothing intervene to disturb the harmony and consolation which you have been accustomed to derive from these high and holy doctrines.

{1} "comfort" "exhort"

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you*. Who they were is not mentioned. It is evident, however: that the church was not left without appointed persons to minister to it when its founders should be away. We know that there were presbyters ordained over the church at Ephesus, and over the churches in Crete, Ac 20:17 Tit 1:5; and that there were bishops and deacons at Philippi, Php 1:1; and there is every reason to believe that similar officers would be appointed in every newly organized church. The word "know" seems to mean that they were not to make themselves strangers to them—to be cold and distant towards them—to be ignorant of their wants, or to be indifferent to them. While a people are not obtrusively to intermeddle with the business of a minister, any more than they are with that of any other man, yet there are things in regard to him with which they should be acquainted. They should seek to be personally acquainted with him, and make him their confidant and counsellor in their spiritual troubles. They should seek his friendship, and endeavour to maintain all proper intercourse with him. They should not regard him as a distant man, or as a stranger among them. They should so far understand his circumstances as to know what is requisite to make him comfortable, and should be on such terms that they may readily and cheerfully furnish what he needs. And they are to "know" or regard him as their spiritual teacher and ruler; not to be strangers to the place where he preaches the word of life, and not to listen to his admonitions and reproofs as those of a stranger, but as those of a pastor and friend.

Which labour among you. There is no reason to suppose, as many have done, that the apostle here refers to different classes of ministers, he rather refers to different parts of the work which the same ministers perform. The first is, that they "labour"—that is, evidently, in preaching the gospel. For the use of the word, see Joh 4:3, where it occurs twice; 1Co 15:10 16:16. The word is one which properly expresses wearisome toil, and implies that the office of preaching is one that demands constant industry.

And are over you in the Lord. That is, by the appointment of the Lord, or under his direction. They are not absolute sovereigns, but are themselves subject to one who is over them—the Lord Jesus. On the word here rendered "are over you," (*proistamenouv*) **See Barnes** "Ro 12:8, where it is translated *ruleth*.

And admonish you. The word here used (*nouyetew*) is rendered *admonish, and admonished*, in Rom 15:14 Col 3:16; 1Th 5:12; 2Th 3:15. And *warn, and warning*, 1Co 4:14 Col 1:28 1Th 5:14. It does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It means, to put in mind; and then to warn, entreat, exhort. It is a part of the duty of a minister to put his people in mind of the truth; to warn them of danger; to exhort them to perform their duty; to admonish them if they go astray.

{a} "know them" Heb 13:7,17

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *And to esteem them very highly in love*. To cherish for them an affectionate regard. The *office* of a minister of religion demands respect. They who are faithful in that office have a claim on the kind regards of their fellow-men. The very nature of the office requires them to do good to others, and there is no benefactor who should be treated with more affectionate regard than he who endeavours to save us from ruin; to impart to us the consolations of the gospel in affliction; and to bring us and our families to heaven.

For their work's sake. Not primarily as a personal matter, or on their own account, but on account of the work in which they are engaged. It is a work whose only tendency, when rightly performed, is to do good. It injures no man, but contributes to the happiness of all. It promotes intelligence industry, order, neatness, economy, temperance, chastity, charity, and kindness in this world, and leads to eternal blessedness in the world to come. A man who sincerely devotes himself to such a work has a claim on the kind regards of his fellow-men.

And be at peace among yourselves. **See Barnes "Mr 9:50"**; **See Barnes "Ro 12:18"**; **See Barnes** "Ro 14:19".

{b} "be at peace" Mr 9:50

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Now we exhort you, brethren*. Marg., *beseech*. This earnest entreaty is evidently addressed to the whole church, and not to the ministers of the gospel only. The duties here enjoined are such as appertain to all Christians in their appropriate spheres, and should not be left to be performed by ministers only.

Warn them. The same word which in 1Th 5:12 is rendered *admonish*. It is the duty of every church member, as well as of the ministers of the gospel, affectionately to admonish those whom they know to be living contrary to the requirements of the gospel. One reason why there is so little piety in the church, and why so many professors of religion go astray, is, that the great mass of church members feel no responsibility on this subject. They suppose that it is the duty *only* of the officers of the church to admonish an erring brother, and hence many become careless and cold and worldly, and no one utters a kind word to them to recall them to a holy walk with God.

That are unruly. Marg., *disorderly*. The word here used (*ataktov*) is one which properly means *not keeping the ranks*, as of soldiers; and then irregular, confused, neglectful of duty, disorderly. The reference here is to the members of the church who were irregular in their Christian walk. It is not difficult, in an army, when soldiers get out of the line, or leave their places in the ranks, or are thrown into confusion, to see that little can be accomplished in such a state of irregularity and confusion. As little difficult is it, when the members of a church are out of their places, to see that little can be accomplished in such a state. Many a church is like an army where half the soldiers are out of the line; where there is entire insubordination in the ranks, and where not half of them could be depended on for efficient service in a campaign. Indeed, an army would accomplish little, if as large a proportion of it were irregular, idle, remiss, or pursuing their own aims to the neglect of the public interest, as there are members of the church who can never be depended on in accomplishing the great purpose for which it was organized.

Comfort the feeble-minded. The dispirited; the disheartened; the downcast. To do this is also the duty of each church member. There are almost always those who are in this condition, and it is not easy to appreciate the value of a kind word to one in that state, Christians are assailed by temptation; in making efforts to do good they are opposed and become disheartened; in their contests with their spiritual foes they are almost overcome; they walk through shades of spiritual night, and find no comfort. In such circumstances, how consoling is the voice of a friend! How comforting is it to feel that they are not alone! How supporting to be addressed by one who has had the same

conflicts, and has triumphed! Every Christian—especially every one who has been long in the service of his Master—has a fund of experience which *is the property of the church*, and which may be of incalculable value to those who are struggling now amidst many embarrassments along the Christian way. He who has that experience should help a weak and sinking brother; he should make his own experience of the efficacy of religion in his trials and conflicts, the means of sustaining others in their struggles. There is no one who would not reach out his hand to save a child borne down a rapid stream; yet how often do experienced and strong men in the Christian faith pass by those who are struggling in the "deep waters, where the proud waves have come over their souls!"

Support the weak. **See Barnes "Ro 15:1"**.

Be patient toward all men. See the Greek word here used, explained **See Barnes "1Co 13:4"**.

Comp. **See Barnes "Eph 4:2"**; Ga 5:22 Col 3:12.

{2} "exhort" "beseech" {3} "unruly" "disorderly" {d} "weak" Ro 15:1 {e} "patient toward all men" Eph 4:2

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *See that none render evil for evil*. **See Barnes "Mt 5:39,44"**.

The meaning here is, that we are not to take vengeance. Comp. **See Barnes** "Ro 12:17, **See Barnes "Ro 12:19"**.

This law is positive, and is universally binding. The moment we feel ourselves acting from a desire to "return evil for evil," that moment we are acting wrong. It may be right to defend our lives, and the lives of our friends; to seek the protection of the law for our persons, reputation, or property, against those who would wrong us; to repel the assaults of calumniators and slanderers; but in no case should the motive be to do them wrong for the evil which they have done us.

But ever follow that which is good. Which is benevolent, kind, just, generous. **See Barnes** "Ro 12:20, **See Barnes "Ro 12:21"**.

Both among yourselves, and to all men. The phrase "to all men," seems to have been added to avoid the possibility of misconstruction. Some might possibly suppose that this was a good rule to be observed towards those of their own number, but that a greater latitude in avenging injuries might be allowable towards their enemies out of the church. The apostle, therefore, says that the rule is universal. It relates to the heathen, to infidels, sceptics, and persecutors, as well as to the members of the church. To every man we are to do good as we are able—no matter what they do to us. This is the rule which God himself observes toward the evil and unthankful, (**See Barnes** "Mt 5:45,) and is one of the original and beautiful laws of our holy religion.

{a} "render evil" Pr 20:22,24,29 Mt 5:39,44; 1Pe 3:9

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Rejoice evermore*. **See Barnes "Php 3:1"; See Barnes "Php 4:4"**.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Pray without ceasing*. **See Barnes "Ro 12:12".**

The direction here may be fairly construed as meaning

(1.) that we are to be regular and constant in the observance of the stated seasons of prayer. We are to observe the duty of prayer in the closet, in the family, and in the assembly convened to call on the name of the Lord. We are not to allow this duty to be interrupted or intermitted by any trifling cause. We are so to act that it may be said we pray *regularly* in the closet, in the family, and at the usual seasons when the church prays to which we belong.

(2.) We are to maintain an uninterrupted and constant *spirit* of prayer. We are to be in such a frame of mind as to be ready to pray publicly if requested; and when alone, to improve any moment of leisure which we may have when we feel ourselves strongly inclined to pray. That Christian is in a bad state of mind who has suffered himself, by attention to worldly cares, or by light conversation, or by gayety and vanity, or by reading an improper book, or by eating or drinking too much, or by late hours at night among the thoughtless and the vain, to be brought into such a condition that he cannot engage in prayer with proper feelings. There has been evil done to the soul if it be not prepared for communion with God at all times, and if it would not find pleasure in approaching his holy throne.

{d} "Pray" Ga 6:10

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *In everything give thanks*. **See Barnes "Eph 5:20"; See Barnes "Php 4:6".**

We can always find *something* to be thankful for, and there may be reasons why we *ought* to be thankful for even those dispensations which appear dark and frowning. Chrysostom, once the archbishop of Constantinople, and then driven into exile, persecuted, and despised, died far away from all the splendours of the capital, and all the comforts and honours which he had enjoyed, uttering his favourite motto *doxa tw yew pantwn eneken glory to God for all things*. Bibliotheca Sacra, i. 700. So we may praise God for everything that happens to us under his government. A man owes a debt of obligation to him for anything which will recall him from his wanderings, and which will prepare him for heaven. Are there any dealings of God towards men which do not contemplate such an end? Is a man ever made to drink the cup of affliction when no drop of mercy is intermingled? Is he ever visited with calamity which does not in some way contemplate his own temporal or eternal good? Could we see all, we should see that we are never placed in circumstances in which there is not much for which we should thank God. And when, in his dealings, a cloud seems to cover his face, let us remember the good things without number which we have received, and especially remember that we are in the world of redeeming love, and we shall find enough for which to be thankful.

For this is the will of God. That is, that you should be grateful. This is what God is pleased to require you to perform in the name of the Lord Jesus. In the gift of that Saviour he has laid the foundation for that claim, and he requires that you should not be unmindful of the obligation. **See Barnes "Heb 13:15".**

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Quench not the Spirit*. This language is taken from the way of putting out a fire; and the sense is, we are not to extinguish the influences of the Holy Spirit in our hearts; Possibly there may be an allusion here to fire on an altar, which was to be kept constantly burning. This fire may have been regarded as emblematic of devotion, and as denoting that that devotion was never to become extinct. The Holy Spirit is the source of true devotion, and hence the enkindlings of piety in the heart, by the Spirit, are never to be quenched. Fire may be put out by pouring on water; or by covering it with any incombustible substance; or by neglecting to supply fuel. If it is to be made to burn, it must be nourished with proper care and attention. The Holy Spirit, in his influences on the soul, is here compared with fire that might be made to burn more intensely, or that might be extinguished. In a similar manner the apostle gives this direction to Timothy, "I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up (*anazwpurein*, *kindle up, cause to burn*) the gift of God,"2Ti 1:6. Anything that will tend to damp the ardour of piety in the soul; to chill our feelings; to render us cold and lifeless in the service of God, may be regarded as "quenching the Spirit." Neglect of cultivating the Christian graces, or of prayer, of the Bible, of the sanctuary, of a careful watchfulness over the heart, will do it. Worldliness, vanity, levity, ambition, pride, the love of dress, or indulgence in an improper train of thought, will do it. It is a great rule in religion that all the piety which there is in the soul is the fair result of culture. A man has no more religion than he intends to have; he has no graces of the Spirit which he does not seek; he has no deadness to the world which is not the object of his sincere desire, and which he does not aim to have. Any one, if he will, may make elevated attainments in the divine life; or he may make his religion merely a religion of form, and know little of its power and its consolations.

{f} "Quench" Eph 4:30

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Despise not prophesyings*. On the subject of prophesyings in the early Christian church, **See Barnes** "1Co 14:1, seq. The reference here seems to be to *preaching*. They were not to undervalue it in comparison with other things. It is possible that in Thessalonica, as appears to have been the case subsequently in Corinth, (comp. 1Co 14:19, there were those who regarded the power of working miracles, or of speaking in unknown tongues, as a much more eminent endowment than that of stating the truths of religion in language easily understood. It would not be unnatural that comparisons should be made between these two classes of endowments, much to the disadvantage of the latter; and hence may have arisen this solemn caution not to disregard or despise the ability to make known divine truth in intelligible language. A similar counsel may not be inapplicable to us now. The office of setting forth the truth of God is to be the permanent office in the church; that of speaking foreign languages by miraculous endowment, was to be temporary. But the office of addressing mankind on the great duties of religion, and of publishing salvation, is to be God's great ordinance for converting the world. It should not be *despised*, and no man commends his own wisdom who contemns it—for

(1.) it is God's appointment—the means which he has designated for saving men.

(2.) It has too much to entitle it to respect to make it proper to despise or contemn it. There is nothing else that has so much power over mankind as the preaching of the gospel: there is no other institution of heaven or earth, among men, that is destined to exert so wide and permanent an influence as the Christian ministry.

(3.) It is an influence which is wholly good. No man is made the poorer, or the less respectable, or more miserable in life or in death, by following the counsels of a minister of Christ when he makes known the gospel.

(4.) He who despises it contemns that which is designed to promote his own welfare, and which is indispensable for his salvation. It remains yet to be shown that any man has promoted his own happiness, or the welfare of his family, by affecting to treat with contempt the instructions of the Christian ministry.

{g} "no prophesying" 1Co 14:1,39

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Prove all things*. Subject everything submitted to you to be believed to the proper test. The word here used (*dokimazete*,) is one that is properly applicable to metals, referring to the art of the assayer by which the true nature and value of the metal is tested. **See Barnes "1Co 3:13"**.

This trial was usually made by fire. The meaning here is, that they were carefully to examine everything proposed for their belief. They were not to receive it on trust; to take it on assertion; to believe it because it was urged with vehemence, zeal, or plausibility. In the various opinions and doctrines which were submitted to them for adoption, they were to apply the appropriate tests from reason and the word of God; and what they found to be true they were to embrace; what was false they were to reject. Christianity does not require men to disregard their reason, or to be credulous. It does not expect them to believe anything because others say it is so. It does not make it a duty to receive as undoubted truth all that synods and councils have decreed; or all that is advanced by the ministers of religion. It is, more than any other form of religion, the friend of free inquiry, and would lead men everywhere to understand the reason of the opinions which they entertain. Comp. Ac 17:11,12; 1Pe 3:15.

Hold fast that which is good. Which is in accordance with reason and the word of God; which is adapted to promote the salvation of the soul and the welfare of society. This is just as much a duty as it is to "prove all things." A man who has applied the proper tests, and has found out what is truth, is bound to embrace it and to hold it fast. He is not at liberty to throw it away, as if it were valueless; or to treat truth and falsehood alike. It is a duty which he owes to himself and to God, to adhere to it firmly, and to suffer the loss of all things rather than to abandon it. There are few more important rules in the New Testament than the one in this passage. It shows what is the true nature of Christianity, and it is a rule whose practical value cannot but be felt constantly in our lives. Other religions require their votaries to receive everything upon trust; Christianity asks us to examine *everything*. Error, superstition, bigotry, and fanaticism attempt to repress free discussion, by saying that there are certain things which are too sacred in their nature, or which have been too long held, or which are sanctioned by too many great and holy names, to permit their being subjected to the scrutiny of common eyes, or to be handled by common hands. In opposition to all this,

Christianity requires us to examine everything—no matter by whom held; by what councils ordained; by what venerableness of antiquity sustained; or by what sacredness it may be invested. We are to receive no opinion: until we are convinced that it is true; we are to be subjected to no pains or penalties for not believing what we do not perceive to be true; we are to be prohibited from examining no opinion which our fellow-men regard as true, and which they seek to make others believe. No popular current in favour of any doctrine; no influence which name and rank and learning can give it, is to commend it to us as certainly worthy of our belief. By whomsoever held, we are to examine it freely before we embrace it; but *when* we are convinced that it is true, it is to be held, no matter what current or popular opinion or prejudice may be against it; no matter what ridicule may be poured upon it; and no matter though the belief of it may require us to die a martyr's death.

{h} "Prove" 1Jo 4:1 {i} "hold fast" Php 4:8

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Abstain from all appearance of evil*. Not only from evil itself, but from that which *seems* to be wrong. There are many things which are *known* to be wrong. They are positively forbidden by the laws of heaven, and the world concurs in the sentiment that they are wicked. But there are also many things about which there may be some reasonable doubt. It is not quite easy to determine in the case what is right or wrong. The subject has not been fully examined, or the question of its morality may be so difficult to settle, that the mind may be nearly or quite balanced in regard to it There are many things which, in themselves, may not appear to us to be positively wrong, but winch are so considered by large and respectable portions of the community; and for us to do them would be regarded as inconsistent and improper. There are many things, also, in respect to which there is great variety of sentiment among mankind—where one portion would regard them as proper, and another as improper. There are things, also, where, whatever may be our motive, we may be certain that our conduct will be regarded as improper. A great variety of subjects, such as those pertaining to dress, amusements, the opera, the ball-room, games of chance and hazard, and various practices in the transaction of business, come under this general class; which, though on the supposition that they cannot be proved to be in themselves positively wrong or forbidden, have much the "*appearance*" of evil, and will be so interpreted by others. The safe and proper rule is to *lean always* to the side of virtue. In these instances, it may be certain that there will be no sin committed by abstaining; there *may be* by indulgence. No command of God, or of propriety, will be violated if we decline complying with these customs; but, on the other hand, we may wound the cause of religion by yielding to what possibly is a mere temptation. No one ever does injury or wrong by abstaining from the pleasures of the ball-room, the theatre, or a glass of wine; who can indulge in them, without, in the view of large and respectable portions of the community, doing that which has the "appearance" at least "of evil ?"

{a} "abstain" Isa 33:15

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *And the very God of peace*. The God who gives peace or happiness. Comp. **See Barnes** "Ro 1:7.

Sanctify you. **See Barnes "Joh 17:17"**.

Wholly. *oloteleiv* In every part; completely. It is always proper to pray that God would make his people entirely holy. A *prayer* for perfect sanctification, however, should not be adduced as a *proof* that it is in fact attained in the present life.

Your whole spirit and soul and body. There is an allusion here, doubtless, to the popular opinion in regard to what constitutes man. We have a body; we have animal life and instincts in common with the inferior creation; and we have also a rational and immortal soul. This distinction is one that appears to the mass of men to be true, and the apostle speaks of it in the language commonly employed by mankind. At the same time, no one can demonstrate that it is not founded in truth. The *body* we see, and there can be no difference of opinion in regard to its existence. The *soul* (*h quch psyche*) the vital principle, the animal life, or the seat of the senses, desires, affections, appetites, we have in common with other animals. It appertains to the nature of the animal creation, though more perfect in some animals than in others, but is in all distinct from the soul as the seat of conscience, and as capable of moral agency. See the use of the word in Mt 22:37 Mr 12:30; Lu 10:27 12:20; Ac 20:10 Heb 4:12; Re 8:9, *et al*. In the Pythagorean and Platonic philosophy this was distinguished from the higher rational nature, (*o nouv, to pneuma*,) as this last belonged to man alone. This *psyche* (*Greek*) "soul," or life, it is commonly supposed, becomes extinct at death. It is so connected with the bodily organization, that when the tissues of the animal frame cease their functions, this ceases also. This was not, however, the opinion of the ancient Greeks. Homer uses the term to denote that which leaves the body with the breath, as escaping from the *erkov odontwn*—*the fence or sept of the teeth*—and as also passing out through a wound. This *quch*—*psyche*—continued to exist in Hades, and was supposed to have a definite form there, but could not be seized by the hands. Ody. ii. 207. See *Passow*, 2. Comp. Prof. Bush, Anastasis, pp. 72, 73. Though this word, however, denotes the vital principle, or the animal life, in man it may be connected with morals—just as the body may be—for it is a part of himself in his present organization, and whatever may be true in regard to the inferior creation, it is his duty to bring *his whole nature* under law, or so to control it that it may not be an occasion of sin. Hence the apostle prays that the "whole body and soul"—or animal nature—may be made holy. This distinction between the animal life and the mind of man (the *anima* and *animus*, the *quch* and the *pneuma*,) was often made by the ancient philosophers. See Plato, Timse. p. 1048, A. Nemesius, de Nat. Hom. i Cit. Glyca, p. 70. Lucretius, iii. 94. 116. 131. Juvenal, xv. 146. Cicer,), de Divinat. 129, as quoted by Wetstein *in loc*. A similar view prevailed also among the Jews. Rabbi Isaac (Zohar in Lev. tbl. 29. 2,) says, "Worthy are the righteous in this world and the world to come, for lo, they are all holy; their body is holy, their soul is holy, their spirit, and their breath is holy." Whether the apostle meant to sanction this view, or merely to speak in common and popular language, may indeed be questioned; but there seems to be a foundation for the language in the nature of man. The word here rendered *spirit* (*pneuma*) refers to the intellectual or higher nature of man; that which is the seat of reason, of conscience, and of responsibility. This is immortal. It has no necessary connection with the body, as animal life or the *psyche* (*quch*) has, and consequently will be unaffected by death. It is this

which distinguishes man from the brute creation; this which allies him with higher intelligences around the throne of God.

Be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle does not intimate here that either the body or the vital principle will be admitted to heaven, or will be found in a future state of being, whatever may be the truth on that subject. The prayer is, that they might be entirely holy, and be kept from transgression, until the Lord Jesus should come; that is, until he should come either to remove them by death, or to wind up the affairs of this lower world. **See Barnes "1Th 1:10".**

By his praying that the "body and the soul"—meaning here the animal nature, the seat of the affections and passions—might be kept holy, there is reference to the fact that, connected as they are with a rational and accountable soul, they may be *the occasion* of sin. The same natural propensities; the same excitability of passion; the same affection, which in a brute would involve no responsibility, and have nothing moral in their character, may be a very different thing in *man*, who is placed under a moral law, and who is bound to restrain and given all his passions by a reference to that law, and to his higher nature. For a cur to snarl and growl; for a lion to roar and rage; for a hyena to be fierce and untameable; for a serpent to hiss and bite; and for the ostrich to leave her eggs without concern, (Job 39:14,) involves no blame, no guilt for them, for they are not accountable; but for *man* to evince the same temper, and the same want of affection, *does* involve guilt, for he has a higher nature, and it these things should be subject to the law which God has imposed on him as a moral and accountable being. As these things may, therefore, in man be the *occasion* of sin, and *ought* to be subdued, there was a fitness in praying that they might be "preserved blameless" to the coming of the Saviour. Comp. **See Barnes "1Co 9:27".**

{b} "blameless" 1Co 1:8,9

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Faithful is he that calleth you*. That is, your sanctification after all depends on him, and as he has begun a work of grace in your hearts, you may depend on his faithfulness to complete it. **See Barnes "1Th 4:3"**; **See Barnes** "Php 1:6"; **See Barnes "1Co 1:9".**

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Brethren pray for us*. A request which the apostle often makes. **See Barnes "Heb 13:18".**

He was a man of like passions as others; liable to the same temptations; engaged in an arduous work; often called to meet with opposition, and exposed to peril and want, and he peculiarly needed the prayers of the people of God. A minister, surrounded as he is by temptations, is in great danger if he has not the prayers of his people. Without those prayers, he will be likely to accomplish little in the cause of his Master. His own devotions in the sanctuary will be formal and frigid, and the word which he preaches will be likely to come from a cold and heavy heart, and to fall also on cold

and heavy hearts. There is no way in which a people can better advance the cause of piety in their own hearts, than by praying much for their minister.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss*.
See Barnes "Ro 16:16".
{*} "Greet" "Salute"

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *I charge you by the Lord*. Marg., *adjure*. Gr., "I put you under oath by the Lord" *orkizw umav ton kurion*. It is equivalent to binding persons by an oath. **See Barnes "Mt 26:63"**.

Comp. Ge 21:23,24; Ge 24:3,37, 1:25.

That this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren. To all the church. Comp. **See Barnes "Col 4:16"**.

The meaning is, that the epistle was to be read to the whole church on some occasion on which it was assembled together. It was not merely designed for the individual or individual into whose hands it might happen to fall; but as it contained of common interest, and was designed for the whole body of believers at Thessalonica, the apostle gives a solemn charge that it should not be suppressed or kept from them. Injunctions of this kind, occurring in the epistles, look as if the apostles regarded themselves as under the influence of inspiration, and as having authority to give infallible instructions to the churches.

{1} "charge" "adjure"

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 5 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*, etc. **See Barnes "Ro 16:20"**.

In regard to the subscription at the close of the epistle, purporting that it was written from Athens, see the Intro. paragraph 3. These subscriptions are of no authority; and the one here, like several others, is probably wrong.

From the solemn charge in 1Th 5:27, of this chapter, that "this epistle should be read to all the holy brethren," that is, to the church at large, we may infer that it is in accordance with the will of God that all Christians should have free access to the Holy Scriptures. What was the particular reason for this injunction in Thessalonica, is not known; but it is possible that an opinion had begun to prevail, even then, that the Scriptures were designed to be kept in the hands of the ministers of religion, and that their common perusal was to be prohibited. At all events, whether this opinion prevailed then or not, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the Holy Spirit, by whom this epistle was dictated, foresaw that the time *would* come when this doctrine would be defended by cardinals,

and popes, and councils; and that it would be one of the means by which the monstrous fabric of the Papacy would be sustained and perpetuated. It is worthy of remark, also, that the apostle Paul, in his epistles to the Thessalonians, has dwelt more fully on the fact that the great apostasy would occur under the Papacy, and on the characteristics of that grand usurpation over the rights of men, than he has anywhere else in his epistles. See 2Th 2:11. It is no improbable supposition that with reference to that, and to counteract one of its leading dogmas, his mind was supernaturally directed to give this solemn injunction, that the contents of the epistle which he had written should be communicated without reserve to all the Christian brethren in Thessalonica. In view of this injunction, therefore, at the close of this epistle, we may remark,

(1.) that it is a subject of express Divine command that the people should have access to the Holy Scriptures. So important was this considered, that it was deemed necessary to enjoin those who should receive the word of God, under the solemnities of an oath, and by all the force of apostolic authority, to communicate what they had received to others.—

(2.) This injunction had reference to all the members of the church, for they were *all* to be made acquainted with the word of God. The command is, indeed, that it be "read" to them, but by parity of reasoning it would follow that it was to be in their hands; that it was to be accessible to them; that it was in no manner to be withheld from them. Probably many of them could not read, but in *some way* the contents of revelation were to be made known to them; and not by *preaching* only, but by *reading* the words of inspiration. No part was to be kept back: nor were they to be denied such access that they could fully understand it; nor was it to be insisted on that there should be an authorized expounder of it. It was presumed that all the members of the church were qualified to understand what had been written to them, and to profit by it. It follows, therefore,

(3.) that there is great iniquity in all those decisions and laws which are designed to keep the Scriptures from the common people. This is true

(a.) in reference to the Papal communion, and to all the ordinances there which prohibit the free circulation of the sacred volume among the people;

(b.) it is true of all those laws in slave-holding communities which prohibit slaves from being taught to read the Scriptures; and

(c.) it is true of all the opinions and dogmas which prevail in any community where the right of "private judgment" is denied, and where free access to the volume of inspiration is forbidden. The richest blessing of heaven to mankind is the Bible; and there is no book ever written so admirably adapted to the common mind, and so fitted to elevate the sunken, the ignorant, and the degraded. There is no more decided enemy of the progress of the human race in intelligence, purity, and freedom, than he who prevents the free circulation of this holy volume; and there is no sincerer friend of the species, than he who "causes it to be read by all," and who contribute to make it accessible to all the families and all the inhabitants of the world.

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 1

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 1

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

INTRODUCTION.

For a general view of Thessalonica; of the establishment of the church there; of the character of the church; and of the design for which the apostle addressed these letters to it, see the Introduction to the First Epistle.

This epistle appears to have been written soon after the first, and from the same place—Corinth. See Intro. to the First Epistle, paragraph 3. The proof of this indeed is not certain, for there are no marks of time or place in the epistle by which these points can be determined. The probability rests upon these grounds:

(1.) That the same persons—Paul, Silas, and Timothy—are associated in both epistles, and are mentioned as being together at the time when they were written, (1Th 1:1 2Th 1:1;) but as there is reason to believe that they did not continue long together, it is to be presumed that one epistle was written soon after the other.

(2.) Paul refers to an error which had grown up, apparently in consequence of a misunderstanding of his first epistle, 1Th 2:1,2 an error which he regarded as of great magnitude, and which was producing very unhappy results, (2Th 3:11,12,)and it was natural that he should hasten to correct that error as soon as possible.

(3.) There is some probability, as Benson has remarked, that the epistle was written *before* the troubles came upon him at Corinth, under the administration of Gallio, (Ac 18:12-16;) and yet that he saw that the storm was approaching, and hints at in 2Th 3:2, "And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men." If so, this epistle was written but a few months at farthest after the first. We may regard the evidence, therefore as sufficiently clear, that this epistle was written at Corinth some time during the latter part of A.D. 53, or the beginning of A. D. 54.

There is little doubt as to the design for which it was written. Either by a false interpretation of his former epistle, or by an epistle forged in his name and sent to them, the opinion had become prevalent in the church at Thessalonica, that the Saviour was about to appear, and that the end of the world was at hand. See 2Th 2:2. Comp. Hug's Intro. % 94; and Stuart's Notes on the same, pp. 741, seq. To correct this impression was the leading design of this epistle. Some had become alarmed, and were suffering from unnecessary apprehension, 2Th 2:2, and some, under the natural belief that labour then was useless, and that property was of no value, had given up all attention to their worldly concerns, 2Th 3:10,11; and it was of the utmost importance that the error should be corrected. This was done in this second epistle; and, in doing it, Paul, as was usual, intermingled several other points of importance, adapted to the condition of those to whom he wrote.

This epistle, though short, has great permanent value, and is indispensable to a proper understanding of the great doctrine of the Second Advent of the Redeemer. It was written, indeed, to correct an error in a single church, and at a particular time; but history has shown that there is a tendency to that same error in all ages, and that there was need of some permanent inspired statement to check it. It was inferred from the First Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians, that he meant to teach that the day of judgment was not far off. Had not this second epistle been written to correct that false interpretation, and to show what was his belief, it would have been charged on him that he was mistaken; and then the inference would have been naturally made that all the prophecies respecting that event were false. The distance between this and absolute infidelity, it is easy to see, is very small. Paul, by his prompt explanation, arrested that danger, and showed that he intended to teach no such doctrine as had been drawn from his first letter to them. This epistle, therefore, is of importance to show

(1.) that the apostle did not believe, or mean to teach, that the end of the world was near. There are many expressions, indeed, which, like those in First Thessalonians, would *seem* to imply that the apostle held that belief *but the explanation of an inspired apostle, of his own sentiments at the time, settled the matter*. No one has now a right to charge that belief on him, or on others who then used the same language. No one can pretend that they held the opinion that the end of the world was near. There is no stronger language on that subject in any of their writings than occurs in the first epistle to the Thessalonians; and Paul, in the second epistle, expressly says that he held no such opinion, and meant to teach no such thing.

(2.) This epistle is a standing rebuke of the kind of interpretation which attempts to determine the time when the Saviour will come, and of all those theories which represent "the day of Christ as at hand." The declarations in the Scriptures are positive and abundant that the time of his appearing is not made known to mortals, **See Barnes "Ac 1:7"**; and it is not possible now to make out a *stronger* argument to prove that that time is near, than could have been made out from the first epistle to the Thessalonians; and yet Paul deemed it necessary to write them a second letter, expressly to show them that the interpretation which they put on his language was unauthorized. The truth is, that it was not the design of God to make known to men the exact time when the Lord Jesus will return to judgment; and all attempts, since the time of Paul, to settle that have failed, and all will doubtless continue to fail, as they always have done.

ANALYSIS OF CHAPTER I.

THIS chapter comprises the following points:—

(1.) The salutation, 2Th 1:1,2.

(2.) An expression of thanks for the progress which the Thessalonians had made in piety, and especially for the manner in which they had been enabled to bear their trials, 2Th 1:3,4.

(3.) An assurance that the manner in which they had been enabled to bear their trials was an evidence that they were true Christians, 2Th 1:5.

(4.) A declaration that those who had persecuted them, and all others who were wicked, would be punished when the Lord Jesus should come; and that when this should occur, the righteous would appear in glory and honour, 2Th 1:6-10.

(5.) The expression of an earnest desire that they might be prepared for the solemn scenes of that day, 2Th 1:11,12.

Verse 1. *Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus*. **See Barnes "1Th 1:1"**.

{a} "the church" 1Th 1:1 i. 1.

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 2

Verse 2. No Barnes text on this verse.
{b} "Grace unto you"
1Co 1:3

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *We are bound to thank God always for you*. **See Barnes "1Th 1:2"**.

As it is meet. As it is fit or proper.

Became that your faith groweth exceedingly. It would seem probable from this, that Paul had heard from them since his first epistle was written. He had doubtless received intelligence of the error which prevailed among them respecting his views of the coming of the Lord Jesus, and of the progress which the truth was making, at the same time.

And the charity of every one of you all toward each other. Your mutual love.

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God*. That is, we mention your example to other churches, and glory in it, as an evidence of what the gospel is fitted to do. **See Barnes** "1Th 2:19, **See Barnes "1Th 2:20"**.

Comp. **See Barnes "2Co 9:2"**.

For your patience. Your patient endurance of trials.

And faith. Fidelity, or constancy. You have shown unwavering confidence in God in your afflictions.

In all your persecutions and tribulation, that ye endure. **See Barnes "1Th 2:14"**; **See Barnes** "1Th 4:13".

It would seem from this that the persecutions and trials to which the apostle referred in his first epistle were still continued.

{a} "glory" 2Co 9:2 1Th 2:19,20
{b} "endure" Jas 5:11

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God*. The word "*which*" is supplied by our translators, and there may be some doubt to what the apostle has reference as being "a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God." The general sense seems to be, that the fact that they were thus persecuted was an evidence that there would be a future judgment, when the righteous who were persecuted would be rewarded, and the wicked who persecuted them would be punished. The manner in which they bore their trials was an indication, also, of what the result would be in regard to them. Their patience and faith under persecutions were constantly showing that they would "be counted worthy of the kingdom of God," for which they were called to suffer. It is evident that a *relative* must be supplied here, as our translators have done; but there has been a difference of view as to what it refers: Some suppose that it is to "*patience*;" others to *persecutions* and *tribulations*; and others to the *whole sentence* preceding. The latter is probably the true construction; and the sense is, that the endurance of affliction, in a proper manner, by the righteous, is a proof that there will be a righteous judgment of God in the last day.

(1.) It is evidence that there *will be* a future judgment—since the righteous here suffer so much, and the wicked triumph.

(2.) These things are now permitted in order that the character may be developed, and that the reason of the sentence in the last day may be seen.

(3.) The manner in which these afflictions are borne is an *evidence*—an *indication* (*endeigma*) of what the results of the judgment will be. The word rendered "manifest token," (*endeigma*,) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means an indication, token, proof, anything that *shows, or points out*, how a thing is, or is to be, (from *endeiknumi*, *to show, to point out*.) The meaning here is, therefore, that the course of events referred to—the persecutions which they endured, and the manner in which they were borne—furnished a proof that there would be a righteous judgment, and also afforded an indication of what the result of that judgment would be. We may, in general, learn what will be the issues of the judgment in the case of an individual from the manner in which he bears trials.

Of the righteous judgment of God. That there will be a just judgment hereafter. The crimes of the wicked who go unpunished on the earth, and the sufferings of the good who are unavenged, are a demonstration that there will be a judgment, when all these inequalities will be adjusted.

That ye may be counted worthy. As the result of your affliction, that you may be *fitted* for the kingdom of God. This does not mean that Christians will merit heaven by their sufferings, but that they may show that they have such a character that there is a *fitness* or *propriety* that they should be admitted there. They may evince, by their patience and resignation, by their deadness to the world, and their holy lives, that they are not disqualified to enter into that kingdom where the redeemed are to dwell. No true Christian will ever feel that he is worthy on his own account, or that he has any claim to eternal life; yet he may have evidence that he has the characteristics to which God has promised salvation, and is fitted to dwell in heaven.

of the kingdom of God. In heaven. **See Barnes "Mt 3:2"**.

For which ye also suffer. The sufferings which you now endure are because you are professed heirs of the kingdom; that is, you are persecuted because you are Christians. See 1Th 2:14.

{c} "manifest token" Php 1:28 {d} "suffer" 1Th 2:14 Heb 10:32,33

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you*. The sense is, "There will be a future judgment, because it is proper that God should punish those who now persecute you. It is not right that they should go unpunished, and triumph for ever. It is not an *arbitrary* thing, a thing which is indifferent; a thing which may or may not be done; it is a *just* and *proper* thing that the wicked should be punished." The doctrine is, that the future punishment of the wicked is *just and proper*; and that, being just and proper, it will be inflicted. Many suppose that there would be no justice in the eternal punishment of the wicked; that the threatening of that punishment is wholly arbitrary; that it might easily be dispensed with; and that, because it is unjust, it will *not* be inflicted, and need not be dreaded. But that it is just and proper, a very slight degree of reflection must show. For

(1.) it is inconceivable that God should threaten such punishment unless it were just How can it be reconciled with his perfections that he can hold up before mankind the assurance that any of them will be punished for ever, unless it be right that it should be so? Can we believe that he deliberately threatens what is wrong, or that in the face of the universe, he publicly declares his intention to do what is wrong?

(2.) Men themselves believe that it is just that the wicked should be punished. They are constantly making laws, and affixing penalties to them, and executing them, under the belief that it is right. Can they regard it as wrong in God to do the same thing? Can that be wrong in him which is right in themselves?

(3.) If it be right to punish wickedness here, it is not wrong to punish it in the future world. There is nothing in the two *places* which can change the nature of what is done. If it be right for God to visit the sinner here with the tokens of his displeasure, there is nothing which can make it wrong to visit him in like manner in the future world. Why should that be wrong in another world which is right and proper in this?

(4.) It will be a righteous thing for God to punish the wicked in a future state, for they are not always punished here as they deserve. No one can seriously maintain that there is an equal distribution of rewards and punishments on the earth. Many a man goes to the grave having received *no* adequate punishment for his crimes. Many a murderer, pirate, robber, traitor, and plunderer of nations under the name of a conqueror thus dies. No one can doubt that it would be a "just" thing to punish them here if they could be arrested. Why should it be any the less "just" to punish them when they enter another world? In like manner, many a man lives a life of profligacy; or is an open scoffer; or aims to cast off the government of God; or is a seducer of innocence; and yet lives ill the midst of wealth, and goes down in calmness and. peace to the grave. Ps 73:3-5; Job 21:23-33. Why is it not "just" that such an one should be punished in the future world? Comp. Ps 73:16-20. But, if it be right that God should punish the wicked in the future world, it will be done. For

(1.) there is nothing to hinder him from doing it. He has all power, and has all necessary means of inflicting punishment, entirely at his disposal.

(2.) It would not be right not to do it. It is not right for a magistrate to treat the righteous and the wicked alike, or to show that he has as much regard to the one as to the other.

(3.) It cannot be believed that God has uttered a threatening which he never *meant* to execute, or to appear before the universe as having held up before men the terror of the most awful punishment

which *could* be inflicted, but which he never intended to carry into effect. Who could have confidence in such a Being? Who could know what to believe when he makes the most solemn declaration?

(4.) The Judge of all the earth will "do right;" and if it be right to declare that "the wicked shall be turned into hell," it will not be wrong to *inflict* the sentence. And if, on the whole, it be right that the sinner should be punished, it will be done.

Them that trouble you. Those who persecute you. See 1Th 2:14.

{e} "Seeing it is" Re 6:10

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *And to you who are troubled*. That is, "It will be a righteous thing for God to give to you who are persecuted rest in the last day." As it will be right and proper to punish the wicked, so it will be right to reward the good. It will not, however, be in precisely the same sense. The wicked will *deserve* all that they will suffer; but it cannot be said that the righteous will *deserve* the reward which they will receive. It will be right and proper, because

(1.) there is a fitness that they who are the friends of God should be treated as such, or it is proper that he should show himself to be their Friend; and

(2.) because in this life this is not always clearly done. They are often less prospered, and less happy in their outward circumstances, than the wicked. There is, therefore, a propriety that in the future state God should manifest himself as their Friend, and show to assembled worlds that he is not indifferent to character, or that wickedness does not deserve his smiles, and piety incur his frown. At the same time, however, it will be owing wholly to his grace that any are ever admitted to heaven.

Rest. The future happiness of believers is often represented under the image of *rest*. It is rest like that of the weary labourer after his day of toil; rest, like that of the soldier after the hardships of a long and perilous march; rest, like the calm repose of one who has been racked with pain. **See Barnes "Heb 4:9".**

The word *rest* here (*anesiv*) means a letting loose, a remission, a relaxation; and hence composure, quiet. 2Co 2:13 7:5.

With us. That is, with Paul, Silas, and Timothy, 2Th 1:1. It would increase the comfort of the Thessalonians, derived from the anticipation of the future world, to reflect that they would meet their religious teachers and friends there. It always augments the anticipated joy of heaven to reflect that we are to share its blessedness with them. There is no envy among those who anticipate heaven; there will be none there. They who desire heaven at all, desire that it may be shared in the highest degree by all who are dear to them.

When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven. Shall appear; shall come from heaven. **See Barnes "1Th 4:16".**

With his mighty angels. Marg., *angels of his power*. So the Greek. The sense is, that angels of exalted rank and glory will accompany him. **See Barnes "1Th 4:16 Mt 24:31, 25:31".**

{f} "rest with us" Re 14:13 {g} "his mighty angels" 1Th 4:16 Jude 1:14

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *In flaming fire*. This is a circumstance which is not noticed in the account of his appearing in the parallel place in 1Th 4:16. The object of the apostle here seems to be to represent him as coming amidst vivid flashes of lightning. He is commonly described as coming in clouds, and to that common description there is here added the image of incessant lightnings, as if the whole heavens were illuminated with a continued blaze.

Taking vengeance, Marg., *yielding*. Gr., *giving*. The word *vengeance* is used in the sense of punishment, for there cannot be in God what literally corresponds with the passion of revenge. Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 12:19"**.

On them that know not God. On all who are strangers to him; that is, who are living in heathenish darkness, or who, having heard of him, have no practical acquaintance with him.

And that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who do not embrace it, and practise its precepts in their lives. Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 2:9"**.

{a} "flaming fire" Heb 10:27 2Pe 3:7 {1} "taking" "yielding" {b} "vengeance" De 32:41,43 {c} "know not" Ps 79:6 {d} "that obey not" Ro 2:8

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction*. **See Barnes "Mt 25:41,46"**.

The word which is here rendered *destruction* (*oleyron*,) is different from that which occurs in Mt 25:46, and which is there rendered *punishment kolasiv*. The word *oleyron* —occurs only here and in 1Co 5:5 1Th 5:8; 1Ti 6:9; in each of which places it is rendered *destruction*. It does not denote annihilation, but is used in the same sense in which we use the word when we say that a thing is *destroyed*. Thus health is destroyed when it fails; property is destroyed when it is burned, or sunk in the ocean; a limb is-destroyed that is lost in battle; life is destroyed when one dies. In the case before us, the destruction, whatever it be, is

(1.) to be continued for ever; and

(2.) is to be of the nature of punishment. The meaning then must be, that the soul is destroyed as to the great purposes of its being with enjoyment, dignity, honour, holiness, happiness. It will not be annihilated, but will live and linger on in destruction. It seems difficult to conceive how any one can profess to hold that this passage is a part of the word of God, and yet deny the doctrine of future eternal punishment. It would not be possible to state that doctrine in clearer language than this. It never is stated in clearer language in any creed or confession of faith; and if it be not true that the wicked will be punished for ever, it must be admitted that it would not have been *possible* to reveal the doctrine in human language.

From the presence of the Lord. That is, a part of their punishment will consist in being banished from the immediate presence of the Lord. There is a sense in which God is everywhere present, and in that sense he will be in the world where the wicked will dwell, to punish them. But the phrase is also used to denote his more immediate presence; the place where are the symbols of his majesty and glory; the home of the holy and the blessed. It is in that sense that the word is used here; and the idea is, that it will be one of the circumstances contributing to the deeper woe of the place of

punishment, that those who dwell there will be banished from that holy abode, and will never be permitted to enter there.

And from the glory of his power. The meaning seems to be, that they will not be able to endure the manifestation of his power and majesty when he shall appear, but will be driven away by it into outer darkness. See 2Th 2:8. The Saviour, in describing his Second Advent, uses this language: "They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory," Mt 24:30. There will be a great exhibition of both. The power will be seen in the convulsions of nature, which will precede or attend him; in the resurrection of the dead; and in the bringing of all to judgment. And the *glory* will be seen in his own person; the dignity and number of his attendants; and the honour that shall then be conferred on him as the final Judge of all mankind. By the manifestation of that power and glory the wicked will be driven away into eternal ruin. They will not be able to stand before it, and though, in common with the righteous, they may see the majesty of the Redeemer in the last day, yet they will be driven away to witness it no more.

{e} "destruction from" Php 3:19 2Pe 3:7 {f} "glory" Isa 2:19

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *When he shall come to be glorified in his saints*. That is, the redeemed in that day will be the means of promoting his glory, or the universe will see his glory manifested in their redemption. His chief glory, as seen in that day, will be connected with the fact that he has redeemed his people; and he will come in order that all the appropriate honour of such a work may then be manifested, he will be "glorified" then by the numbers that shall have been redeemed; by their patience in the trials through which they have passed; by the triumphs which religion shall have made on the earth; by their praises and songs; and by their ascent with him to the realms of blessedness.

And to be admired in all them that believe.This may either mean that he will be admired among or by them that believe; or that the ground of the admiration which he will receive in that day will be what will be seen in them; that is, their graces, their numbers, their joys, their triumphs will be the occasion of producing admiration of *him* for he will be regarded as the source of it all. Tindal renders it, "and to be made marvellous in all them that believe." The latter interpretation seems to me to be the correct one. The general idea is, that Christ in that day will be manifested in a glorious manner, and that the source of his highest triumphs will be what is seen in the saints. His main honour, when he returns to the world, will not be the outward splendours which will attend his coming, nor the angels that will accompany him, nor the manifestation of his power over the elements, but the church which he has redeemed. It will then be seen that he is worthy of universal admiration, for having redeemed that church, lie shall then be admired or glorified in his people,

(1.) for having conceived the plan of redeeming them;

(2.) for being willing to become incarnate, and to die to save them;

(3.) for the defence of his church in all its persecutions and trials;

(4.) for raising his people from the dead;

(5.) for the virtues and graces which they will exhibit in that day. This appropriate honour of Christ in the church has never yet been fully seen. His people on earth have, in general, most

imperfectly reflected his image. They have in general been comparatively few in number, and scattered upon the earth. They have been poor and despised. Often they have been persecuted, and regarded as the "filth of the world and the off-scouring of all things." The honours of this world, have been withheld from them. The great have regarded it as no honour to be identified with the church, and the proud have been ashamed to be enrolled among the followers of the Lamb. In the last day all this will be changed, and the assembled church will show to admiring worlds how great and glorious is its Redeemer, and how glorious was the work of redemption.

Because our testimony among you was believed. The meaning of this seems to be, that they would be among the number of those who would in that day honour the Saviour, because they had embraced what the apostle had preached to them respecting these future scenes. Thus interpreted, this clause should be regarded as connected with 1Th 1:7, "And to you it is a righteous thing that he should give rest with us, because our testimony among you was believed." That is, you have shown that you are true Christians, and it is proper that you should partake of the triumphs and hopes of that day.

{g} "glorified" Mt 25:31 {h} "admired" Ps 68:35

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Wherefore also we pray always for you*. **See Barnes "1Th 1:2"**.

That our God would count you worthy of this calling. Marg., "or, *vouchsafe*." The meaning is, "that he would regard you as worthy of this calling." **See Barnes "2Th 1:5"**.

Of this calling. **See Barnes "Eph 4:1"**.

The "calling" here, is that which had brought them into the kingdom, and led them to become Christians.

And fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness. That is, make the work of salvation complete and effectual. Oldshausen has well expressed the sense: "May God fill you with all that good which is pleasing to him." The thoughts in the passage are,

(1.) that the purpose towards them on the part of God was one of "goodness" or benevolence;

(2.) that there was a state of mind which would be regarded by him as pleasing, or as his "good pleasure ;" and

(3.) that Paul wished that this might be accomplished in them. desired that there might be in them everything which would be pleasing to God, and which his benevolence was fitted to secure.

And the work of faith. The work which faith is adapted to produce on the soul. See 1Jo 5:4,5.

With power. Effectually, completely. The apostle prays that so much power may be exerted as will be sufficient to secure the object. The work of religion on the soul is always represented in the Bible as one of *power*.

{1} "count" "vouchsafe" {a} "worthy" Col 1:12 Re 3:4

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 1 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*. That is, that the Lord Jesus himself may be honoured among you: the *name* often denoting the person. The idea is, that the apostle wished that the Lord Jesus might be honoured among them by the fair application and development of the principles of his religion.

And ye in him. That you may be regarded and treated as his friends when he shall come to judge the world.

According to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. That is, that you may experience all the honour which his grace is fitted to impart. In view of the exposition given of this chapter, we may remark:

(1.) That the wicked will certainly be punished when the Lord Jesus shall come to judgment. Words cannot reveal this truth more plainly than is done in this chapter, and if it is not to be so, then language has no meaning.

(2.) The punishment of the wicked will be eternal. It is impossible for language to teach that doctrine more clearly than in done in this chapter. If it were admitted to have been the intention of God to teach the doctrine of eternal punishment, it is impossible to conceive that he could have chosen more plain and positive language to express the doctrine than has been done here. Can it be, then, that he means to trifle with men on so solemn a subject, by using words which have no meaning?

(3.) It will greatly aggravate the punishment of the wicked that it will be "a *righteous* thing" for God thus to punish them. If they were to suffer as martyrs; if, in their sufferings, they could feel that they were oppressed and crushed beneath mere power; if they could feel that they were right, and that God was wrong; if they could get up a *party* in the universe against God, sympathizing with them as if they were wronged, the case would be changed. A man can endure suffering much more easily when he has a good conscience, and feels that he is right, than he can when he feels that what he endures is deserved. But the sinner in hell can never have this consolation. He will for ever feel that God is *right*, and that he is wrong, and that every pang which he endures is deserved.

(4.) If it be a "righteous thing" that the wicked shall be punished, then they never can be saved by mere justice. No one will go to heaven because he *deserves* or *merits* it. All dependence on human merit, therefore, is taken away in the matter of salvation; and if the sinner is ever saved, it will be by *grace*, and not by *justice*.

(5.) If it be a "righteous thing" that the sinner should perish, he will perish. God will do *right* to all.

(6.) It is amazing that the mass of men have so little concern about their future condition. God has plainly revealed that he will destroy the wicked for ever, and that it will be a righteous thing for him to do it; and yet the mass of mankind are wholly unconcerned, and disregard all the solemn declarations of the Bible on this subject, as if they were idle tales. One would suppose that the very possibility of eternal suffering would rouse all the sensibilities of the soul, and lead to the earnest inquiry whether it is not *possible* to avoid it. Yet the mass of men feel no concern in this inquiry. It is impossible to get them ever to *think* of it. We cannot get them even to ask the question seriously, whether they themselves are to be happy or miserable to all eternity? This stupidity and indifference is the most unaccountable fact on earth, and probably distinguishes this world from all others.

(7.) It is *rational* to think of religion; to reflect on eternity; to be serious; to be *anxious* about the future state. If there be even a *possibility* that we may be miserable for ever, it is proper to be *serious* about it. And if there be a solemn declaration of God that it will be a "righteous thing" for

him to punish the wicked, and that he *will* "punish them with everlasting destruction," assuredly the mind *should* be concerned. Is there anything more worthy the calm and sober attention of the human soul than such solemn declarations of the infinite God?

{b} "the name" 1Pe 1:7

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 2

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 1

2nd Thessalonians CHAPTER II.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER,

THE main object of this chapter is to correct an erroneous impression which had been made on the minds of the Thessalonians respecting the second coming of the Saviour, either by his own former letter, or by one forged in his name. They had received the impression that that event was about to take place. This belief had produced an unhappy effect on their minds, 2Th 2:2. It became, therefore, necessary to state the truth on the subject, in order to free their minds from alarm; and this purpose of the apostle leads to one of the most important prophecies in the New Testament:

The chapter comprises the following points:—

I. An exhortation that they would not be alarmed or distressed by the expectation of the speedy coming of the Saviour, 2Th 2:1,2.

II. A statement of the truth that he would not soon appear, and of the characteristics of a great apostasy which must intervene before his advent, 2Th 2:3-12.

In this part of the chapter, the apostle shows that he did not mean to teach that that event would soon happen, by stating that before that, there would occur a most melancholy apostasy, which would require a considerable time before it was matured.

(a.) That day would not come until there should be a great apostasy, and a revelation of the man of sin, 2Th 2:3.

(b.) The character of this man of sin was to be such that it could not be mistaken: he would be opposed to God; would exalt himself above all that is called God; and would sit in the temple showing himself as God, 2Th 2:4.

(c.) There was a restraint then exercised which prevented the development of the great apostasy. There were indeed causes then at work which would lead to it, but they were then held in check, and God would restrain them until some future time, when he would suffer the man of sin to be revealed, 2Th 2:5-7.

(d.) When that time should come, then that "wicked" one would be revealed, with such marks that he could not be mistaken. His coming would be after the working of Satan, with power and signs and lying wonders, and under him there would be strong delusion, and the belief of a lie, 2Th 2:8-12. This great foe of God was to be destroyed by the coming of the Saviour, and one object of his appearing would be to put an end to his dominion, 2Th 2:8.

III. The apostle then says, that there was occasion for thankfulness to God that he had chosen them to salvation, and not left them to be destroyed, 2Th 2:13,14.

IV. An exhortation to stand fast, and to maintain what they had been taught, (2Th 2:15;) and a prayer that God, who had given them a good hope, would comfort their hearts, closes the chapter, 2Th 2:16,17.

Verse 1. *Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*. The phrase "by the coming," is not here, as our translators seem to have supposed, a form of solemn adjuration. It is not common, if it ever occurs, in the Scriptures, to make a solemn adjuration in view of an event, and the connection here demands that we give to the phrase a different sense. It means, *respecting his coming*; and the idea of Paul is, "In regard to that great event of which I spoke to you in my former epistle—the coming of the Saviour—I beseech you not to be troubled, as if it were soon to happen." As his views had been misunderstood or misrepresented, he now proposes to show them that there was nothing in the true doctrine which should create alarm, as if he were about to appear.

And by our gathering together unto him. There is manifest allusion here to what is said in the first epistle, 1Th 4:17, "then we shall be caught up together with them in the clouds;" and the meaning is, "In reference to our being gathered unto him, I beseech you not to be shaken in mind, as if that event were near."

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *That ye be not soon shaken in mind*. The word here used signifies, properly, to be moved as a wave of the sea, or to be tossed upon the waves, as a vessel is. Then it means to be shaken in any way. See Mt 11:7 24:29; Lu 6:38 Ac 4:31; Heb 12:26.

The reference here is to the agitation or alarm felt from the belief that the day of judgment would soon occur. It is uniformly said in the Scriptures, that the approach of the Lord Jesus to judge the world, will produce a great consternation and alarm. Mt 24:30, "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn." Re 1:7, "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." Lu 23:30, "Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us." Comp. Isa 2:21,22. Of the truth of this, there can be no doubt. We may *imagine* something of the effects which will be produced by the alarm caused in a community when a belief prevails that the day of judgment is near. In a single year (1843) seventeen persons were admitted to the Lunatic Asylum in Worcester, Mass., who had become deranged in consequence of the expectation that the Lord Jesus was about to appear. It is easy to account for such facts; and no doubt, when the Lord Jesus shall actually come, the effect on the guilty world will be overwhelming. The apostle here says, also, that those who were Christians were "shaken in mind and troubled" by this anticipation. There are, doubtless, many true Christians who would be alarmed at such an event, as there are many who, like Hezekiah, Isa 38:1,2, are alarmed at the prospect of death. Many real Christians might, on the sudden occurrence of such an event, feel that they were not prepared, and be alarmed at the prospect of passing through the great trial which is to determine their everlasting destiny. It is no certain evidence of a want of piety to be alarmed at

the approach of death. Our nature dreads death, and though there may be a well-founded hope of heaven, it will not always preserve a delicate physical frame from trembling when it comes.

Or be troubled. That is, disturbed, or terrified. It would seem that this belief had produced much consternation among them.

Neither by spirit. By any pretended spirit of prophecy. But whether this refers to the predictions of those who were false prophets in Thessalonica, or to something which it was alleged the apostle Paul had himself said there, and which was construed as meaning that the time was near, is not certain. This depends much on the question whether the phrase "as from us," refers only to the *letters* which had been sent to them, or also to the "word" and to the "spirit" here spoken of. See Oldshansen on the place. It would seem, from the connection, that all their consternation had been caused by some misconstruction which had been put on the sentiments of Paul himself, for if there had been any other source of alarm, he would naturally have referred to it. It is probable, therefore, that allusion is made to some representation which had been given of what he had said under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and that the expectation that the end of the world was near, was supposed to be a doctrine of inspiration. Whether, however, the Thessalonians themselves put this construction on what he said, or whether those who had caused the alarm represented him as teaching this, cannot be determined.

Nor by word. That is, by public instruction, or in preaching. It is evident that when the apostle was among them, this subject, from some cause, was prominent in his discourses. 2Th 2:5. It had been inferred, it seems, from what he said, that he meant to teach that the end of the world was near.

Nor by letter. Either the one which he had before written to them—the First Epistle to the Thessalonians—or one which had been forged in his name.

As from us. That is, Paul, Silas, and Timothy, who are united in writing the two epistles, 1Th 1:1 2Th 1:1, and in whose names a letter would be forged, if one of this description were sent to them. It has been made a question, whether the apostle refers here to the former epistle which he had sent to them, or to a forged letter; and on this question critics have been about equally divided. The reasons for the former opinion may be seen in Paley's Horae Paulinae, *in loc*. The question is not very important, and perhaps cannot be easily settled. There are two or three circumstances, however, which seem to make it probable that he refers to an epistle which had been forged, and which had been pretended to be received from him.

(1.) One is found in the expression "as from us." If he had referred to his own former letter, it seems to me that the allusion would have been more distinct, and that the particle "as" (*wv*) would not have been used. This is such an expression as would have been employed if the reference were to such a forged letter.

(2.) A second circumstance is found in the expression in the next verse, "Let no man deceive you by any means," which looks as if they were not led into this belief by their own interpretation of his former epistle, but by a deliberate attempt of some one to delude them on the subject.

(3.) Perhaps a third circumstance would be found in the fact that it was not uncommon in the early times of Christianity to attempt to impose forged writings on the churches. Nothing would be more natural for an impostor who wished to acquire influence, than to do this; and that it was often done is well known. That epistles were forged under the names of the apostles, appears very probable, as Benson has remarked, from ch. iii. 17; Gal. vi. 11; and Philemon 19. There are, indeed, none of those forged epistles extant which were composed in the time of the apostles, but there is

extant an epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, besides the two which we have; another to the Laodiceans; and six of Paul's epistles to Seneca—all of which are undoubted forgeries. See Benson *in loc*. If Paul, however, here refers to his former epistle, the reference is doubtless to 1Th 4:15 5:2-4, which might easily be understood as teaching that the end of the world was near, and to which those who maintained that opinion might appeal with great plausibility. We have, however, the authority of the apostle himself that he meant to teach no such thing.

As that the day of Christ is at hand. The time when he would appear—called "the day of Christ," because it would be appointed especially for the manifestation of his glory. The phrase "at hand" means *near*. Grotius supposes that it denotes that same year, and refers for proof to Ro 8:38 1Co 3:22; Ga 1:4 Heb 9:9.

If so, the attempt to fix the day was an early indication of the desire to determine *the very time* of his appearing—a disposition which has been so common since, and which has led into so many sad mistakes.

{a} "that" Mt 24:4-6

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Let no man deceive you by any means*. That is, respecting the coming of the Lord Jesus. This implies that there were then attempts to deceive, and that it was of great importance for Christians to be on their guard. The result has shown that there is almost no subject on which caution is more proper, and on which men are more liable to delusion. The means then resorted to for deception appear, from the previous verse, to have been either an appeal to a pretended verbal message from the apostle, or a pretended letter from him. The means now, consist of a claim to uncommon wisdom in the interpretation of obscure prophecies of the Scriptures. The necessity for the caution here given has not ceased.

For that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first. Until all *apostasy apostasia* shall have occurred—the great apostasy. There is scarcely any passage of the New Testament which has given occasion to greater diversity of opinion than this. Though the reference seems to be plain, and there is scarcely *any* prophecy of the Bible apparently more obvious and easy in its general interpretation; yet it is proper to mention some of the opinions which have been entertained of it. Some have referred it to a great apostasy from the Christian church, particularly on account of persecution, which would occur before the destruction of Jerusalem. The "coming of the Lord" they suppose refers to the destruction of the holy city; and, according to this, the meaning is, that there would be a great apostasy before that event would take place. Of this opinion was Vitringa, who refers the" apostasy to a great defection from the faith which took place between the time of Nero and Trajan. Whitby also refers it to an event which was to take place before the destruction of Jerusalem, and supposes that the apostasy would consist in a return from the Christian to the Jewish faith by multitudes of professed converts. The "man of sin," according to him, means the Jewish nation, so characterized on account of its eminent wickedness. Hammond explains the apostasy by the defection to the Gnostics, by the arts of Simon Magus, whom he supposes to be the man of sin; and by the "day of the Lord" he also understands the destruction of Jerusalem. Grotius takes Gaius Caesar, or Caligula, to be the man of sin, and by the apostasy he understands

his abominable wickedness. In the beginning of his government, he says, his plans of iniquity were concealed, and the hopes of all were excited in regard to his reign; but his secret iniquity was subsequently "revealed," and his true character understood. Wetstein understands by the "man of sin, Titus and the Flavian house." He says that he does not understand it of the Roman Pontiff, who "is not one such as the demonstrative pronoun thrice repeated designates, and who neither sits in the temple of God, nor calls himself God; nor Caius, or Simon Gioriac, nor any Jewish impostor, nor Simon Magus." Koppe refers it to the king mentioned in Da 11:36. According to him, the reference is to a great apostasy of the Jews from the worship of God, and the "man of sin" is the Jewish people. Others have supposed that the reference is to Mohammed, and that the main characteristics of the prophecy may be found in him. Of the Papists, a part affirm that the apostasy is the falling away from Rome in the time of the Reformation; but the greater portion suppose that the allusion is to Antichrist, who, they say, will appear in the world before the great day of judgment, to combat religion and the saints. See these opinions stated at length, and examined, in Bishop Newton on the Prophecies, Diss. xxii. Some more recent expositors have referred it to Napoleon Bonaparte; and some (as Oldshausen) suppose that it refers to some one who has not yet appeared, in whom all the characteristics here specified will be found united. Most Protestant commentators have referred it to the great apostasy under the Papacy; and by the "man of sin," they suppose there is allusion to the Roman Pontiff the Pope. It is evident that we are in better circumstances to understand the passage than those were who immediately succeeded the apostles. Eighteen hundred years have passed away since the epistle was written, and the "day of the Lord" has not yet come, and we have an opportunity of inquiring, whether in all that long tract of time any one man can be found, or any series of men have arisen, to whom the description here given is applicable. If so, it is in accordance with all the proper rules of interpreting prophecy, to make such an application. If it be fairly applicable to the Papacy, and cannot be applied in its great features to anything else, it is proper to regard it as having such an original reference. Happily, the expressions which are used by the apostle are, in themselves, not difficult of interpretation, and all that the expositor has to do is, to ascertain whether in any one great apostasy all the things here mentioned have occurred. If so, it is fair to apply the prophecy to such an event; if not so, we must wait still for its fulfilment. The word rendered "falling away," (*apostasia*, *apostasy*) of so *general* a character, that it may be applied to any departure from the faith as it was received in the time of the apostles It occurs in the New Testament only here and in Ac 21:21, where it is rendered "to forsake"—" thou teachest all the Jews which are among us to forsake Moses"— *apostasy* from Moses— *apostasian apo mwsewv*. The word means a *departing from*, or a *defection*. See the verb used in 1Ti 4:1, "Some shall depart from the faith"—*aposthsovtai*. **See Barnes on "1Ti 4:1"**.

See also Heb 3:12 Lu 8:13; Ac 5:37.

The reference here is evidently to some general falling away, or to some great religious apostasy that was to occur, and which would be under one head, leader, or dynasty, and which would involve many in the same departure from the faith, and in the same destruction. The use of the article here, "*the* apostasy," (Gr.,) Erasmus remarks, "signifies that great and before-predicted apostasy." It is evidently emphatic, showing that there had been a reference to this before, or that they understood well that there was to be such an apostasy. Paul says 2Th 2:5, that when he was with them, he had told them of these things. The writers in the New Testament often speak of such a defection under the name of Antichrist. Re 13:14 1Jo 2:18,22 4:3; 2Jo 1:7.

And that man of sin. This is a Hebraism, meaning a man of eminent wickedness; one distinguished for depravity. Comp. Joh 17:12; Pr 6:12, in Heb. The use of the article here— *o anyrwpov* —"the man of sin," is also emphatic, as in the reference to "*the* falling away," and shows that there is allusion to one of whom they had before heard, and whose character was well known; who would be the wicked one by way of eminence. See also 2Th 2:8, "*that* wicked" *o anomov*. There are two general questions in regard to the proper interpretation of this appellative: the one is whether it refers to an individual, or to a series of individuals of the same general character, aiming at the accomplishment of the same plans; and the other is, whether there has been any individual, or any series of individuals, since the time of the apostle, who, by eminence, deserved to be called "*the* man of sin." That the phrase, "the man of sin," may refer to a succession of men of the same general character, and that it does so refer here, is evident from the following considerations:

(1.) The word "king" is used in Da 7:25 11:36, to which places Paul seems to allude, to denote a succession of kings.

(2.) The same is true of the *beast* mentioned in Daniel Chapters 7, 8. Rev 13., representing a kingdom or empire through its successive changes and revolutions.

(3.) The same is true of the "woman arrayed in purple and scarlet," (Re 17:4,) which cannot refer to a single woman, but is the emblem of a continued corrupt administration.

(4.) It is clear that a succession is intended here, because the work assigned to "the man of sin," cannot be supposed to be that which could be accomplished by a single individual. The statement of the apostle is, that there were then tendencies to such an apostasy, and that "the man of sin" would be revealed at no distant period, and yet that he would continue his work of "lying wonders" until the coming of the Saviour.

In regard to this "man of sin," it may be further observed,

(1.) that his appearing was to be *preceded* by "the great apostasy;? and

(2.) that he was to continue and perpetuate it. His rise was to be owing to a great departure from the faith, and then he was to be the principal agent in continuing it by "signs and lying wonders." He was not himself to originate the defection, but was to be the creation, or result of it. He was to rise upon it, or grow out of it, and, by artful arrangements adapted to that purpose, was to perpetuate it. The question then is, to whom this phrase, descriptive of a succession of individuals so eminent for wickedness that: the name "*the* man of sin" could be applied, was designed by the Spirit of inspiration to refer. Bishop Newton has shown that it cannot refer to Caligula, to Simon Magus, to the revolt of the Jews from the Romans, or to the revolt of the Jews from the faith, or to the Flavian family, or to Luther, as some of the Papists suppose, or to one man who will appear just before the end of the world, as others of the Romanists suppose. See his Dissertations on the Prophecies, xxii. pp. 393—402. Comp. Oldshansen, in loc. The argument is too long to be inserted here. But can it be referred to the Papacy? Can it denote the pope of Rome, meaning not a single pope, but the succession? If all the circumstances of the entire passage can be shown to be fairly applicable to him, or if it can be shown that all that is fairly implied in the language used here has received a fulfilment in him, then it is proper to regard it as having been designed to be so applied, and then this may be numbered among the prophecies that are in part fulfilled. The question now is on the applicability of the phrase "the man of sin" to the pope. That his rise *was preceded* by a great apostasy, or departure from the purity of the simple gospel, as revealed in the New Testament, cannot reasonably be doubted by any one acquainted with the history of the church. That he is the

creation or result of that apostasy, is equally clear. That he is the grand agent in *continuing* it, is equally manifest. Is the phrase itself one that is properly applicable to him? Is it proper to speak of the pope of Rome, as he has actually appeared, as "*the* man of sin?" In reply to this, it might be sufficient to refer to the general character of the Papacy, and to its influence in upholding and perpetuating various forms of iniquity in the world. It would be easy to show that there has been no dynasty or system that has contributed so much to uphold and perpetuate sins of various kinds on the earth, as the Papacy. No other one has been so extensively and so long the patron of superstition; and there are vices of the grossest character which have all along been fostered, by its system of celibacy, indulgences, monasteries, and absolutions. But it would be a better illustration of the meaning of the phrase "man of sin," as applicable to the pope of Rome, to look at the general character of the popes themselves. Though there may have been some exceptions, yet there never has been a *succession* of men of so decidedly wicked character as have occupied the Papal throne since the great apostasy commenced. A very few references to the characters of the popes will furnish an illustration of this point. Pope Vagilius waded to the pontifical throne through the blood of his predecessor. Pope Joan—the Roman Catholic writers tell us—a female in disguise, was elected and confirmed pope, as John VIII. Platina says, that "she became with child by some of those that were round about her; that she miscarried, and died on her way from the Lateran to the temple." Pope Marcellinus sacrificed to idols. Concerning pope Honorius, the council of Constantinople decreed, "We have caused Honorius, the late pope of Old Rome, to be *accursed*; for that in all things he followed the mind of Sergius the *heretic*, and confirmed his wicked doctrines." The council of Basil thus condemned pope Eugenius: "We condemn and depose pope Eugenius, a despiser of the holy canons; a disturber of the peace and unity of the church of God; a notorious offender of the whole universal church; a Simonist; a perjurer; a man incorrigible; a schismatic; a man, fallen from the faith, and a wilful heretic." Pope John II was publicly charged at Rome with incest. Pope John XIII usurped the pontificate, spent his time in hunting, in lasciviousness, and monstrous forms of vice; he fled from the trial to which he was summoned, and was stabbed, being taken in the act of adultery. Pope Sixtus IV licensed brothels at Rome. Pope Alexander VI was, as a Roman Catholic historian says, "one of the greatest and most horrible monsters in nature that could scandalize the holy chair. His beastly morals, his immense ambition, his insatiable avarice, his detestable cruelty, his furious lusts, and monstrous incest with his daughter Lucretia, are, at large, described by Guicciardini Ciaconius, and other authentic papal historians." Of the popes, Platina, a Roman Catholic, says: "The chair of Saint Peter was usurped, rather than possessed, by monsters of wickedness, ambition, and bribery. They left no wickedness unpractised." See the New Englander, April, 1844, pp. 285, 286. To no succession of men who have ever lived could the appellative, "the man of sin," be applied with so much propriety as to this succession. Yet they claim to have been the true "successors" of the apostles; and there are *Protestants* that deem it of essential importance to be able to show that they have derived the true "succession" through such men.

Be revealed. Be made manifest. There were at the time when the apostle wrote, two remarkable things,

(1.) that there was already a *tendency* to such an apostasy as he spoke of; and

(2.) there was something which as yet prevented the appearance or the rise of the man of sin, 2Th 2:7. When the hinderance which then existed should be taken out of the way, he would be manifested. **See Barnes "2Th 2:7".**

{*} "falling away" "the apostasy" {b} "except" 1Ti 4:1 {c} "man of sin" Da 7:25 {d} "son of perdition" Joh 17:12 ¶ The son of perdition. This is the same appellation which the Saviour bestowed on Judas. See it explained in the Notes on John xvii. 12. It may mean either that he would be the cause of ruin to others, or that he would himself be devoted to destruction. It would seem here rather to be used in the latter sense, though this is not absolutely certain. Tile phrase, whichever interpretation be adopted, is used to denote one of eminent wickedness.

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Who opposeth*. That is, he is distinguished as an *opposer* of the great system which God has revealed for human salvation, and of those who would serve God in purity in the gospel of his Son. No Protestant will doubt that this has been the character of the Papacy. The opposition of the general system to the gospel; the persecution of Wickliffe, of John Huss, of Jerome of Prague, of the Waldenses and the Reformers; the Inquisition, the cruelties in the reign of Mary, and the massacre of St. Bartholomew in France, are obvious illustrations of this.

And exalteth himself above all that is called God. That is, whether among the heathen or the Sews: above a false god, or the true God. This could be true only of one who set aside the Divine laws; who undertook to legislate where God only has a right to legislate, and whose legislation was contrary to that of God. Any claim of a dominion over conscience; or any arrangement to set aside the Divine laws, and to render them nugatory, would correspond with what is implied. in this description. It cannot be supposed that any one would openly *claim* to be superior to God; but the sense must be, that the enactments and ordinances of the "man of sin" would pertain to the province in which God only can legislate, and that the ordinances made by him would be such as to render nugatory the Divine laws, by appointing others in their place. No one can reasonably doubt that all that is here affirmed may be found in the claims of the pope of Rome. The assumptions of the Papacy have related to the following things:

(1.) To authority above all the inferior orders of the priesthood— above all pastors, bishops, and primates.

(2.) Authority above all kings and emperors, "deposing some, and advancing others, obliging them to prostrate themselves before him, to kiss his toe, to hold his stirrup, to wait barefooted at his gate, treading even upon the neck, and kicking off the imperial crown with his foot." *Newton*. Thus Gregory VII made Henry IV wait barefooted at his gate. Thus Alexander III trod upon the neck of Alexander I. Thus Celestin kicked off the imperial crown of Henry VI. Thus the right was claimed, and asserted, of laying nations under interdict, of deposing kings, and of absolving their subjects from their oaths of allegiance. And thus the pope claimed the right over all unknown lands that might be discovered by Columbus, and apportioned the New World as he pleased—in all these things claiming prerogatives which can appertain only to God.

(3.) To authority over the conscience, in matters which can pertain only to God himself, and where he only can legislate. Thus it has been, and is, one of the claims set up for the pope that he is infallible. Thus he "forbids what God has commanded," as the marriage of the clergy, communion in both kinds, the use of the Scriptures for the common people. Thus he has set aside the second commandment by the appointment of image-worship; and thus he claims the power of the remission

of sins. Multitudes of things which Christ allows his people are forbidden by the Papacy, and many things are enjoined, or allowed, directly contrary to the Divine legislation.

Or that is worshipped. *sebasma*. This word means *an object of worship*. See Ac 18:23, where it is rendered *devotions*. It may be applied to the worship of a heathen divinity, or of the true God.

"It may refer to a person, an idol, or a place. Probably Paul refers here to the heroes and other subordinate divinities of the heathen mythology." Oldshausen. No one can doubt that the pope has claimed higher honours, as the vicegerent of Christ, than was ever rendered in the ancient "hero worship."

So that he, as God. That is, claiming the honours due to God. This expression would not imply that he actually claimed *to be* the true God, but only that he sits in the temple, and manifests himself *as if* he were God. He claims such honours and such reverence as the true God *would* if he should appear in human form. It should be observed here, however, that there is much reason to doubt the genuineness of this phrase—"*as God*" *wv yeon*. Mill supposes that it was inserted from the context. It is marked with an asterisk in the Vulgate, the Coptic, and the Syriac, and is omitted by many of the fathers. See Mill and Wetstein. It is rejected by Griesbach and Lachmann, and marked as doubtful by Hahn. It is defended, however, by Matthaei, Koppe, Knapp, and Schott. The sense is not materially affected whether it be regarded as genuine or not.

Sitteth in the temple of God. That is, in the Christian church. It is by no means necessary to understand this of the temple at Jerusalem, which was standing at the time this epistle was written, for

(1.) the phrase "the temple of God" is several times used with reference to the Christian church, 2Co 6:16 Eph 2:21; 1Co 3:16,17; Re 3:12; and

(2.) the temple was the proper symbol of the church, and an apostle trained amidst the Hebrew institutions would naturally speak of the church as the temple of God. The temple at Jerusalem was regarded as the peculiar dwelling-place of God on earth. When the Christian church was founded, it was spoken of as the peculiar dwelling-place of God. See the passages referred to above. He dwelt among his people. He was with them, and walked with them, and manifested himself among them— as he had done in the ancient temple. The usage in the New Testament would not lead us to restrict this language to an *edifice*, or a "church," as the word is now commonly used, but rather to suppose that it denotes the church as a society; and the idea is, that the Antichrist here referred to would present himself in the midst of that church as claiming the honours due to God alone. In the temple at Jerusalem, God himself presided. There he gave laws to his people; there he manifested himself as God; and there he was worshipped. The reign of the "man of sin" would be *as if* he should sit there. In the Christian church he would usurp the place which God had occupied in the temple. He would claim Divine attributes and homage. He would give laws and responses as God did there. He would be regarded as the head of all ecclesiastical power; the source from which all authority emanated; the same in the Christian church which God himself was in the temple. This does not then refer primarily to the pope as sitting in any particular church on any particular occasion, but to his claiming in the church of Christ the authority and homage which God had in the temple at Jerusalem. In whatever place, whether in a cathedral or elsewhere, this authority should be exercised, all that the language here conveys

would be fulfilled. No one can fail to see that the authority claimed by the pope of Rome, meets the full force of the language used here by the apostle.

Showing himself that he is God. This does not necessarily mean that he actually, in so many words, claimed *to be God*; but that he usurped the place of God, and claimed the prerogatives of God. If the names of God are given to him, or are claimed by him; if he receives the honours due to God; if he asserts a dominion like that of God, then all that the language fairly implies will be fulfilled. The following expressions, applied to the pope of Rome by Catholic writers without any rebuke from the Papacy, will show how entirely applicable this is to the pretended head of the church. He has been styled "Our Lord God the Pope; another God upon earth: King of kings and Lord of lords. The same is the dominion of God and the Pope. To believe that our Lord God the Pope might not decree as he decreed, is heresy. The power of the Pope is greater than all created power, and extends itself to things celestial, terrestrial, and infernal. The Pope doeth whatsoever he listeth, even things unlawful, and is more than God." See the authority for these extraordinary declarations in Bishop Newton on the Prophecies, xxii. How can it be doubted that the reference here is to the Papacy? Language could not be plainer, and it is not possible to conceive that anything can ever occur which would furnish a more manifest fulfilment of this prophecy. Indeed, interpreted by the claims of the Papacy, it stands among the very clearest of all the predictions in the sacred Scriptures.

{a} "exalteth himself" Isa 14:13 Re 13:6

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told ye these things*? The whole subject of the second advent of the Saviour seems to have constituted an important part of the instructions of Paul when at Thessalonica. He now refers them to what he had told them respecting the great apostasy, to show that his views had not changed, and that he did not mean to have them understand that the world would soon come to an end. He had stated these things to them, implying that a considerable interval must elapse before the Saviour would appear. Much of the obscurity of this prophecy arises from the fact, that the apostle alludes to things which he had told them when with them, of which we have now no knowledge. Hence, what would be perfectly clear to them on reading this letter, is now difficult to be understood.

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *And now ye know what withholdeth*. Marg., *holdeth*. The reference is, to something that then operated to *constrain or hold back* the obvious tendency of things, so that "the man of sin" should not at once appear, or so that things should not soon so develope themselves as to give rise to this antichristian power. There were causes at work, even then, which would ultimately lead to this; but there was also something which checked the tendency of things, so that the revelation or development of the "man of sin" was put off to a future period. The obvious meaning of this would be, that, when the apostle wrote, there was a tendency to what would occur under the great apostasy, and that this would soon develope itself if it were not restrained. If the reference is to the

Papacy, this would consist in corruptions already existing in the church, having a resemblance to those which afterwards existed under that system, or which were the germ of that system. If there were a tendency towards the concentration of all power in an individual in the church,—if there were an assumption of authority by one class of ministers above another,—if there were a denial of the "parity of the clergy," the tendency would have been to that ultimate assumption of authority which is found in the Romish hierarchy. But conjecture is useless as to what was the precise form in which this tendency then began to develope itself. That the corruptions early began in the church which terminated in the Papacy, and which led on directly to it, we know; and that the apostle was able to foresee and predict such a final development, shows that he was under the influence of inspiration. It is not known precisely what is referred to by the phrase "what with- holdeth," *to katecon*. The phrase means, properly, something that *holds back, or restrains*. The word here is in the *neuter* gender, "What withholdeth." In the following verse it is in the masculine gender, *o katecwn,— "he that letteth"*, or withholdeth; and the reference would seem to be to some agency or state of things under the control of an *individual*, or of *some civil power*, that then operated as a restraint on the natural tendency of things. Of this, the apostle says, *they* had had full information; but *we* can only conjecture what it was. The restraining power of any thing controlled by an individual, or of any government, or the restraining power of God, would meet all that the phrase implies. The most natural interpretation is that which refers it to civil power, meaning that there was something in the form of the existing administration which would prevent this development until that restraint should be removed. The supposition that there was even then a tendency to concentrate all ecclesiastical power at Rome, and that while the civil authority remained there it would not suffer ecclesiastical power to grow to the exorbitant height which it ultimately reached, will meet all that is implied in the language.

That he might be revealed in his time. The man of sin. The meaning is, that there was then a restraint operating which would prevent the development of this antichristian power until the proper time; that is, till the state of the world should be such that in the Divine arrangements it would be proper to permit it. It was not to be permitted until the gospel should be extensively preached, and had had an opportunity of showing its fair effects on the nations; until it had become so planted and established that even the rise of this antichristian power could not effectually uproot it. Had the "man of sin" been permitted to rise at once, the consequence might have been that the new religion would have been crushed so that it could never have revived again. There was then a providential arrangement by which this growth of wickedness should be checked and restrained, until the new religion should take deep root in the earth, and its perpetuity should be secured. Then the great trial was to be permitted under the "man of sin."

{1} "withholdeth" "holdeth"

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *For the mystery of iniquity*. On the meaning of the word *mystery*, **See Barnes "Ro 11:25"**. Comp. 1Co 2:7 Eph 1:9; Eph 3:3 Col 1:26. It means properly that which is *hidden* or *concealed*; not necessarily that which is *unintelligible*. The "mystery of iniquity," seems here to refer to some hidden or concealed depravity-some form of sin which was working secretly and silently: and which

had not yet developed itself. Any secret sources of iniquity in the church—anything that tended to corrupt its doctrines, and to destroy the simplicity of the faith of the gospel, would correspond with the meaning of the word. Doddridge correctly supposes that this may refer to the pride and ambition of some ministers, the factious temper of some Christians, the imposing of unauthorized severities, the worship of angels, etc.

Doth already work. There are elements of these corruptions already existing in the church. Bishop Newton maintains that the foundations of Popery were laid in the apostles' days, and that the superstructure was raised by degrees; and this is entirely in accordance with the statements of the apostle Paul. In his own time, he says, there were things, which, if not restrained, would expand and ripen into that apostasy. He has not told us particularly to what he refers, but there are several intimations in his writings, as well as in other parts of the New Testament, that even in the apostolic age there existed the elements of those corruptions which were afterwards developed and imbodied in the Papacy. Even "then," says bishop Newton, "*idolatry* was stealing into the church, 1Co 10:14, and a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels." Col 2:18; **See Barnes "Col 2:18"**.

"There existed strife and divisions, 1Co 3:3; an adulterating and handling the word of God deceitfully, 2Co 2:17 4:2; a gain of godliness, teaching of things for filthy lucre's sake, 1Ti 6:5 Tit 1:11; a vain observation of festivals, Ga 4:10; a vain distinction of meats, 1Co 8:8; a neglecting of the body, Col 2:23; traditions, and commandments, and doctrines of men, (Col 2:8,22)." Compare 3Jo 1:9, "Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence." These things constituted the elements of the corruptions which were afterwards developed in the Papacy, and which are imbodied in that system. An eye that could see all, would even then have perceived that, if there were no restraint, these incipient corruptions would grow up into that system, and would be expanded into all the corruptions and arrogant claims which have ever characterized it. Comp. 1Jo 4:3.

Only he who now letteth. Who now *hinders or restrains— o katecwn*. This is the same word which is used in 2Th 2:6, and rendered "withholdeth," except that it is there in the neuter gender. There can be no doubt that there is reference to the same restraining power, or the same power under the control of an individual: but what that was, is not quite certain. It was some power which operated as a check on the growing corruptions then existing, and which prevented their full development, but which was to be removed at no distant period, and whose removal would give an opportunity for those corruptions to develope themselves, and for the full revelation of the man of sin. Such a supposition as that the civil power of Rome was such a restraint, operating to prevent the assumption of the ecclesiastical claims of supremacy which afterwards characterized the Papacy, will correspond with all that is necessarily implied in the language.

Will let, until he be taken out of the way. This will be an effectual check on these corruptions, preventing their full development, until it is removed, and then the man of sin will appear. The supposition which will best suit this language is, that there was then some civil restraint, preventing the development of existing corruptions, but that there would be a removal, or withdrawing of that restraint; and that then the tendency of the existing corruptions would be seen. It is evident, as Oldshansen remarks, that this resisting or restraining power must be something *out* of the church, and distinguished from the antichristian tendency itself: von der Kirche und vom Antichristenthum. It is necessary, therefore, to understand this of the restraints of civil power. Was there, then, any fact in history which will accord with this interpretation? The belief among the primitive Christians was, that what hindered the rise of the man of sin was the Roman empire, and therefore "they prayed for its peace and welfare, as knowing that when the Roman empire should be dissolved and broken

in pieces, the empire of the man of sin would be raised on its ruins." *Bp. Newton*. How this revolution was effected, may be seen by the statement of Machiavel. "The emperor of Rome, quitting Rome to dwell at Constantinople," (in the fourth century under Constantine,) "the Roman empire began to decline, but the church of Rome augmented as fast. Nevertheless, until the coming in of the Lombards, all Italy being under the dominion of either emperors or kings, the bishops assumed no more power than what was due to their doctrine and manners; in civil affairs they were subject to the civil power. But Theodoric, king of the Goths, fixing his seat at Ravenna, was that which advanced their interest, and made them more considerable in Italy, for there being no other prince left in Rome, the Romans were forced for protection to pay greater allegiance to the pope. The Lombards having invaded and reduced Italy into several can- tons, the pope took the opportunity, and began to hold up his head. For being, as it were, governor and principal of Rome, the emperor of Constantinople and the Lombards bare him a respect, so that the Romans (by mediation of their pope) began to treat and confederate with Longinuis, [the emperor's lieutenant,] and the Lombards, not as subjects, but as equals and companions; which said custom continuing, and the pope's entering into alliance sometimes with the Lombards, and sometimes with the Greeks, contracted great reputation to their dignity." (Hist. of Florence, B.i. p 6, of the English translation.) A more extended quotation on this subject, may be seen in Newton on the Prophecies, pp. 407,408. To any one acquainted with the decline and fall of the Roman empire, nothing can be more manifest than the correspondence of the facts in history respecting the rise of the Papacy, and the statement of the apostle Paul here. The simple facts are these.

(1.) There were early corruptions in the church at Rome, as there were elsewhere, but peculiarly there, as Rome was the seat of philosophy and of power.

(2.) There were great efforts made by the bishop of Rome to increase his authority, and there was a steady approximation to what he subsequently claimed—that of being universal bishop.

(3.) There was a constant tendency to yield to him deference and respect in all matters.

(4.) This was kept in check as long as Rome was the seat of the imperial power. Had that power remained there, it would have been impossible for the Roman bishop ever to have obtained the civil and ecclesiastical eminence which he ultimately did. Rome could not have had two heads, both claiming and exercising supreme power; and there never could have been a "revelation of the man of sin."

(5.) Constantine removed the seat of empire to Constantinople; and this removal or "taking away" of the only restraint on the ambitious projects of the Roman bishops, gave all the opportunity which could be desired for the growth of the papal power. In all history there cannot, probably, be found a series of events corresponding more accurately with a prophetic statement than this; and there is every evidence, therefore, that these are the events to which the Spirit of inspiration referred.

{a} "work" 1Jo 4:3

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *And then shall that Wicked be revealed*. *o anomov*, "*the* wicked one," referring to the "man of sin," and called "*the* wicked one" because of the eminent depravity of the system of which he was to be the head. **See Barnes "2Th 2:3"**.

Whom the Lord shall consume. The Lord Jesus. **See Barnes "Ac 1:24"**.

The word *consume* here *analwsei* means to destroy. See Gal 5:15 Lu 9:54. The word would be applicable to any kind of destruction. The methods by which this will be done are immediately specified—and it is of much importance to understand them, if this refers to the Papacy.

With the spirit of his mouth. What goes out of his mouth, or what he speaks; that is *word, truth, command, or gospel*—all of which he may be regarded as speaking. In Re 1:16 19:16,21, it is said of the Redeemer that "a sharp two-edged sword goeth out of his mouth" that is, his word, doctrine, or command—*what he speaks* —is like a sharp sword. It will cut deep; will lay open the heart; will destroy his enemies. Comp. Isa 11:4, "With the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked." The reference in the passage before us is one of the methods which would be employed to "destroy" the man of sin; and the sense is, that it would be by what is *spoken* by the Redeemer. This may refer either to what he will say at his coming, or to his *truth*—already spoken; to what has gone from his lips, by whomsoever uttered; and the meaning then is, that one of the grand agencies for destroying this antichristian power is the *truth* spoken or revealed by the Saviour—that is, his pure gospel. If this latter be the true interpretation, it may mean that the process for his destruction may have commenced long anterior to the personal appearing of the Redeemer, but that the *complete* destruction of this power will be accomplished by the splendour of his Second Advent. It cannot be denied, however, that the most obvious interpretation is that which refers both clauses in the sentence to the same period—that of his second coming. Still, it is not improper to suppose that it may be implied that his power will be weakened and diminished by the influence of the gospel, though it may not be *wholly* destroyed until the second coming of the Saviour.

And shall destroy. *katarghsei*. Shall bring to naught; cause to cease; put an end to. This is, in some respects, a stronger word than that which in the former part of the verse is rendered *consume*. It denotes a more entire destruction than that, though it does not refer so much to any positive *agency* by which it will be done. In the former word, the attention is directed more to the *agency* by which the destruction will be effected —to the exertion of some kind of *power* to do it; in this word the attention is directed rather to the entireness or totality of the destruction. The antichristian domination will *wholly cease*, or be *entirely* destroyed. The *words* would naturally harmonize with the idea that there would be a somewhat gradual process under the operation of truth toward the destruction of the man of sin, but that the complete annihilation of his power would be by some more manifest exhibition of the personal glory of the Saviour.

With the brightness of his coming. This is evidently a Hebraism, meaning his splendid or glorious appearing. The Greek word, however, rendered "brightness"—(*epifaneia*, *epiphany*)—means merely *an appearing*, or *appearance*. So it is used in 1Ti 6:14; 2Ti 1:10 4:1,8 Tit 2:13, in all which places it is rendered appearing, and refers to the manifestation of the Saviour when he shall come to judge the world. It is used nowhere else in the New Testament. There is no necessary idea of *splendour* in the word; and the idea is not, as our translation would seem to convey, that there would be *such a dazzling light*, or *such unsufferable brightness*, that all would be consumed before it, but that he would *appear*, and that this antichristian power would be destroyed *by* his appearing: that is, by himself when he would return. The agency in doing it would not be his *brightness*, but *himself*. It would seem to follow from this, that however this enormous power of wickedness might be weakened by truth, the final triumph over it would be reserved for the Son of God himself on his second return to our world. Yet, if this be so, it need not lessen our zeal in endeavouring to diminish the power

of these corruptions; to establish and spread the truth; or to convert the defenders of these errors to a better faith.

{a} "consume" Da 7:10,11 {b} "spirit" Isa 11:4 Re 19:15,21

{c} "destroy" Heb 10:27

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan*. Greek, *kat energeian tou satana*, According to the energy of Satan; that is, the energetic or efficient operation of Satan. The word rendered *after*, it need not be said to one who looks at the Greek, does not refer to time, but is a preposition, meaning *according to, in conformity with*; meaning that the manner of his appealing would be accompanied by such works as would show that the agency of Satan was employed, and such as he only could produce. It does not mean that *the coming of the Lord Jesus would be after Satan had worked in this manner*, but that the manifestation of that wicked one would be with such demonstrations of power and wonder as Satan only could effect. The system over which he presides is originated by Satan, and sustained by those things which he alone can perform. On the word *Satan*, **See Barnes "Job 1:6".**

The idea is, that it would be under the direction and control of the great enemy of God, and that the things on which it would rely for support could be traced to his agency. In all the pretended miracles to which it would appeal, there would be nothing which Satan could not accomplish.

With all power. With all the power which Satan can exhibit; meaning, also, that there would be a great exertion of power in the case. It would not be a feeble and imbecile dominion. The dominion of the Papacy has been one of the *most powerful* on earth. There has been none which has been more dreaded by the nations of the earth—and there have been times when nations trembled, and kings turned pale on their thrones, at the frown of the pope.

And signs. This word frequently denotes real miracles, but not necessarily so. It may be applied to pretended miracles as well as real, and is undoubtedly so used here, as it is connected with "*lying* wonders," and as it is said that the thing wrought would be "after the working of Satan." There is doubtless reference to such "signs and wonders" as the Saviour mentions in Mt 24:24. **See Barnes "Mt 24:24".**

It is hardly necessary to remark that the Papacy has always relied for support on its pretended miracles. Even in our own age the wonders performed by the Prince Hohenloe, and by the pretended seamless garment of the Saviour, have been proclaimed as true miracles, and as furnishing indubitable evidence of the truth of the Roman Catholic system. The dissolving of the blood of St. Januarius, the removal of Pilate's stairs to Rome, and the transportation to Italy of the "house of our Lady," are among the miracles to which there is a constant reference in the Papal communion. In addition to these and to all similar pretensions, there is the power claimed of performing a miracle at the pleasure of the priest by the change of bread and wine into the "body and blood, the soul and divinity" of the Lord Jesus. In 1756, there was published in London a book entitled, "The miraculous power of the church of Christ, asserted through each successive century, from the apostles down to the present time." The power of working miracles has been one of the standing claims of the Papacy.

And lying wonders. False or pretended miracles. They would be such as would be claimed to be miracles; such as would excite wonder; and yet such as were false and delusive. No Protestant assuredly needs to be convinced that this is just the character of the pretended miracles of the Papacy. It would be impossible for language to describe them more clearly, in the apprehension of all Protestants, than is done in the language of the apostle Paul.

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness*. There are two ideas here. The first is, that there would be *deceit*; and the other is, that it would be for the purpose of promoting unrighteousness or iniquity. The iniquitous system would be maintained by fraudulent methods. No one who has read Pascal's Provincial Letters can ever doubt that this description is applicable to the system of the Jesuits; and no one familiar with the acts of the Papacy, as they have always been practised, can doubt that the whole system is accurately described by this language. The plausible reasoning by which the advocates of that system have palliated and apologised for sins of various kinds, has been among its most remarkable features.

In them that perish. Among those who will perish; that is, among the abandoned and wicked. The reference is to men of corrupt minds and lives, over whom this system would have power; countenancing them in their depravity, and fitting them still farther for destruction. The idea is, that these acts would have especial reference to men who would be lost at any rate, and who would be sustained in their wickedness by this false and delusive system.

Because they received not the love of the truth. They prefer this system of error and delusion to the simple and pure gospel, by which they might have been saved.

{a} "of unrighteousness" Heb 3:13 {*} "perish" "are lost" {b} "love of the truth" 1Co 16:22

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *And for this cause*. Because they chose error, or their hearts love that more than they do truth. The original reason then of their embracing and adhering to the system was not an arbitrary decree on the part of God, but that they did not love the truth. Hence he gave them up to this system of error. If a man strongly prefers error to truth, and sin to holiness, it is not wrong to allow him freely to evince his own preference.

God shall send them strong delusion. Gr., "energy of deceit;" a Hebraism, meaning strong deceit. The agency of God is here distinctly recognised, in accordance with the uniform statements of the Scriptures, respecting evil. Comp. Ex 7:13 9:12, 10:1,20,27 11:10 14:8 De 2:30

Isa 45:7. On the nature of this agency, **See Barnes "Joh 12:40"**.

It is not necessary here to suppose that there was any positive influence on the part of God in causing this delusion to come upon them, but all the force of the language will be met, as well as the reasoning of the apostle, by supposing that God withdrew all restraint, and suffered men simply to show that they did not love the truth. God often places men in circumstances to develope their

own nature, and it cannot be shown to be wrong that he should do so. If men have no love of the truth, and no desire to be saved, it is not improper that they should be allowed to manifest this. How it happened that they had no "love of the truth," is a different question, to which the remarks of the apostle do not appertain. Comp. **See Barnes** "Ro 9:17, **See Barnes "Ro 9:18"**; **See Barnes** "Ro 1:24".

That they should believe a lie. This does not affirm that God wished them to believe a lie nor that he would not have preferred that they should believe the truth; nor that he exerted any direct agency to cause them to believe a lie. It means merely that he left them, because they did not love the truth, to believe what was false, and what would end in their destruction. Can any one doubt that this constantly occurs in the world? Men are left to believe impostors; to trust to false guides; to rely on unfounded information; to credit those who live to delude and betray the innocent; and to follow those who lead them to ruin. God does not impose by direct power to preserve them. Can any one doubt this? Yet this is not peculiarly the doctrine of revelation. The fact pertains just as much to the infidel as it does to the believer in Christianity, and he is just as much bound to explain it as the Christian is. It belongs to our world—to us all—and it should not be charged on Christianity as a doctrine pertaining peculiarly to that system.

{c} "that they should" Eze 14:9 Ro 1:24

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *That they all might be damned*. The word *damned* we commonly apply now exclusively to future punishment, and it has a harsher signification than the original word. **See Barnes "1Co 11:29"**.

The Greek word *krinw* — means to judge, determine, decide; and then to condemn, Ro 2:27 14:22; Jas 4:11; Joh 7:51 Lu 19:22; Ac 13:27.

It may be applied to the judgment of the last day, Joh 5:22 8:50; Ac 17:31 Ro 3:6; 2Ti 4:1, but not necessarily. The word *judged*, or *condemned*, would, in this place, express all that the Greek word necessarily conveys. Yet there can be no doubt that the *judgment* or condemnation which is referred to, is that which will occur when the Saviour will appear. It does not seem to me to be a necessary interpretation of this to suppose that it teaches that God would send a strong delusion that they should believe a lie, *in order* that all might be damned who did not believe the truth; or that he *desired* that they should be damned, and sent this as the means of securing it; but the sense is, that this course of events would be allowed to occur, *so that ina* not *eiv to* all who do not love the truth would be condemned. The particle here used, and rendered "that" (*ina*) in connection with the phrase "all might be damned" is employed in two general senses, either as marking the end, purpose, or cause *for, or on account of*, which anything is done; *to the end that*, or *in order that it may be so and so*; or as marking simply the result, event, or upshot of an action, *so that, so as that*. *Robinson, Lex*. In the latter case it denotes merely that something will really take place, without indicating that such was the design of the agent, or that what brought it about was in order that it might take place. It is also used, in the later Greek, so as neither to mark the purpose, or to indicate that the event would occur, but merely to point out that to which the preceding words refer. It is not proper, therefore, to infer that this passage teaches that all these things would be brought about in the arrangements of Providence, in order that they might be damned who came under their

influence. The passage teaches that such would be the result; that the connection between these delusions and the condemnation of those who were deluded, would be certain. It cannot be proved from the Scriptures that God sends on men strong delusions, in order that they may be damned. No such construction should be put on a passage of Scripture if it can be avoided, and it cannot be shown that it is necessary here.

Who believed not the truth. The grounds or reasons why they would be damned are now stated. One would be that they did not believe the truth —not that God sent upon them delusion in order that they might be damned. That men will be condemned for not believing the truth, and that it will be right thus to condemn them, is everywhere the doctrine of the Scriptures, and is equally the doctrine of common sense. **See Barnes "Mr 16:16".**

But had pleasure in unrighteousness. This is the second ground or reason of their condemnation. If men have pleasure in sin, it is proper that they should be punished. There can be no more just ground of condemnation than that a man *loves to do wrong*.

{d} "that they all" De 32:35 {+} "damned" "condemned"

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you*. **See Barnes "2Th 1:3".**

Because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation. The following important things are affirmed or implied here:

(1.) That God had chosen or elected them (*eileto*) to salvation. The doctrine of election, therefore, is true.

(2.) That this was from the beginning, (*ap archv*) that is, from eternity. Joh 1:1 Eph 1:4, 3:9-11

The doctrine of eternal election is, therefore, true.

(3.) That this was the choice of the persons to whom Paul referred. The doctrine of *personal* election is, therefore, true.

(4.) That this is a reason for thanksgiving. Why should it not be? Can there be any higher ground of praise or gratitude than that God has chosen us to be eternally holy and happy, and that he has from eternity designed that we should be so? Whatever, therefore, may be the feelings with which those who are not chosen to salvation, regard this doctrine, it is clear that those who have evidence that they are chosen should make it a subject of grateful praise. They can have no more exalted source of gratitude than that they are chosen to eternal life.

Through sanctification of the Spirit. Being made holy by the Divine Spirit. It is not without respect to character, but it is a choice to holiness and then to salvation. No one can have evidence that he is chosen to salvation except as he has evidence that he is sanctified by the Spirit. **See Barnes "Eph 1:4".**

And belief of the truth. In connexion with believing the truth. No one who is not a believer in the truth can have evidence that God has chosen him.

{a} "are bound" 2Th 1:3 {b} "chosen you" Eph 1:4 1Th 1:4; 1Pe 1:2

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Wereunto he called you by our gospel*. He made the gospel, as preached by us, the means of calling you to salvation. That is, God has chosen you to salvation from eternity, and has made the gospel as preached by us the means of carrying that eternal purpose into effect.

To the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. That you may partake of the same glory as the Saviour in heaven. **See Barnes "Joh 17:22,24"**.

{c} "he called" 1Pe 5:10 {d} "glory of our Lord" Joh 17:22

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Therefore*. In view of the fact that you are thus chosen from eternity, and that you are to be raised up to such honour and glory.

Stand fast. Amidst all the temptations which surround you. Comp. **See Barnes "Eph 6:10"** and following.

And hold the traditions which ye have been taught. On the word *traditions*, **See Barnes "Mt 15:2"**.

It means properly things delivered over from one to another; then anything orally delivered—any precept, doctrine, or law. It is frequently employed to denote that which is not written, as contradistinguished from that which is written, (comp. Mt 15:2,) but not necessarily or always; for here the Apostle speaks of the "traditions which they had been taught by his epistle." Comp. **See Barnes "1Co 11:2"**.

Here it means the doctrines or precepts which they had received from the apostle, whether when he was with them, or after he left them; whether communicated by preaching or by letter. This passage can furnish no authority for holding the "traditions" which have come down from ancient times, and which profess to have been derived from the apostles; for

(1.) there is no evidence that any of those traditions were given by the apostles;

(2.) many of them are manifestly so trifling, false, and contrary to the writings of the apostles, that they could not have been delivered by them;

(3.) if any of them are genuine, it is impossible to separate them from those which are false,

(4.) we have all that is necessary for salvation in the written word; and

(5.) there is not the least evidence that the apostle here meant to refer to any such thing. He speaks only of what had been delivered to them by himself, whether orally or by letter; not of what was delivered from one to another as from him. There is no intimation here that they were to hold anything as from him which they had not received directly from him, either by his own instructions personally or by letter. With what propriety, then, can this passage be adduced to prove that we are to hold the traditions which professedly come to us through a great number of intermediate persons? Nowhere is the evidence here that the church was to hold those unwritten traditions, and transmit them to future times?

Whether by word. By preaching, when we were with you. It does not mean that he had sent any oral message to them by a third person.

Or our epistle. The former letter which he had written to them.

{*} "Traditions" "doctrines"

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself*. This expression is equivalent to this: "l pray our Lord Jesus, and our Father, to comfort you." It is really a prayer offered to the Saviour—a recognition of Christ as the source of consolation as well as the Father, and a union of his name with that of the Father in invoking important blessings. It is such language as could be used only by one who regarded the Lord Jesus as Divine.

And God even our Father. Gr., "And God, and (*kai*) our Father;" though not incorrectly rendered "*even* our Father." If it should be contended that the use of the word "and"—" our Lord Jesus Christ, and God," proves that the Lord Jesus is a different being from God—the use of the same word "and" would prove that the "Father" is a different *being* from God. But the truth is, the apostle meant to speak of the Father and the Son as the *common* source of the blessing for which he prayed.

Which hath loved us. Referring particularly to the Father. The love which is referred to is that manifested in redemption, or which is shown us through Christ. See Joh 3:16 1Jo 4:9.

And hath given us everlasting consolation. Not temporary comfort, but that which will endure for ever. The joys of religion are not like other joys. They soon fade away;—they always terminate at death ;—they cease when trouble comes, when sickness invades the frame, when wealth or friends depart, when disappointment lowers, when the senses by age refuse to minister as they once did to our pleasures. The comforts of religion depend on no such contingencies. They live through all these changes—attend us in sickness, poverty, bereavement, losses, and age; they are with us in death, and they are perpetual and unchanging beyond the grave.

And good hope through grace. **See Barnes "Ro 5:2"**

See Barnes "Ro 5:5".

See Barnes "Heb 6:19".

{f} "good hope through grace" 1Pe 1:3

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 2 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Comfort your hearts*. **See Barnes "1Th 3:2"**; **See Barnes "1Th 5:11"**; **See Barnes** "1Th 5:14".

The Thessalonians were in the midst of trials, and Paul prayed that they might have the full consolations of their religion.

And stablish you. Make you firm and steadfast, 1Th 3:2,13.

In every good word and work. In every true doctrine, and in the practice of every virtue.

This chapter is very important in reference to the rise of that great antichristian power which has exerted, and which still exerts so baleful an influence over the Christian world. Assuming now that it refers to the Papacy, in accordance with the exposition which has been given, there are a few important reflections to which it gives rise.

(1.) The Second Advent of the Redeemer is an event which is distinctly predicted in the Scriptures. This is assumed in this chapter; and though Paul corrects some errors into which the Thessalonians had fallen, he does not suggest this as one of them. Their error was in regard to the time of his appearing; not the *fact*.

(2.) The *time* when he will appear is not made known to men. The apostles did not pretend to designate it, nor did the Saviour himself, Mt 24:36 Mr 13:32; Ac 1:7.

(3.) The course of reasoning in this chapter would lead to the expectation that a considerable time would elapse before the Saviour would appear. The apostles, therefore, did not believe that the end of the world was near, and they did not teach false doctrine on the subject, as infidels have often alleged. No one, who attentively and candidly studies this chapter, it seems to me, can suppose that Paul believed that the Second Advent of the Saviour would occur within a short time, or during the generation when he lived. He has described a long series of events which were to intervene before the Saviour would appear—events which, if the interpretation which has been given is correct, have been in fact in a process of developement from that time to the present, and which, it must have been foreseen, even then, would require a long period before they would be completed. There was to be a great apostasy. There were, at that time, subtle causes at work which would lead to it. They were, however, then held in check and restrained by some foreign influence. But the time would come, when that foreign power would be withdrawn. Then these now hidden and restrained corruptions would develope themselves into this great antichristian power. That power would sustain itself by a series of pretended miracles and lying wonders; and, *after* all this, would be the second coming of the Son of man. But this would require time. Such a series of events would not be completed in a day, or in a single generation. They would require a succession—perhaps a *long* succession—of years, before these developements would be complete. It is clear, therefore, that the apostle did not hold that the Lord Jesus would return in that age, and that he did not mean to be understood as teaching it; and consequently it should not be said that he or his fellow-apostles were mistaken in the statements which they have recorded respecting the second coming of the Lord Jesus and the end of the world.

(4.) The apostle Paul was inspired. He has recorded in this chapter a distinct prediction of an important series of events which were to occur at a future, and most of them at quite a remote period. They were such that they could have been foreseen by no natural sagacity, and no human skill. There were, indeed, corruptions existing then in the church, but no mere natural sagacity could have foreseen that they would grow up into that enormous system which would overshadow the Christian world, and live for so many ages.

(5.) If these predictions referred to the Papacy, we may see how we are to regard that system of religion. The simple inquiry, if this interpretation is correct, is, *How did the apostle Paul regard that system to which he referred*? Did he consider it to be the true church? Did he regard it as a church at all? The language which he uses will enable us easily to answer these questions. He speaks of it as "the apostasy;" he speaks of the head of that system as "the man of sin," "the son of perdition," "the wicked one," and as "opposing and exalting himself above all that is called God;" he says that his "coming is after the working of Satan, with lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness." Can it be believed, then, that he regarded this as a true church of Jesus Christ? Are these the characteristics of the church as laid down elsewhere in the Scriptures ? Wherever it may lead, it seems clear me that the apostle did not regard that system of which he spoke as having any of the marks of a true church; and the only question which can be raised on this point is, whether the fair interpretation of the passage demands that it shall be considered as referring to the Papacy. Protestants believe that it must be so understood; and Papists have not yet disproved the reasons which they allege for their belief.

(6.) If this be the fair interpretation, then we may see what is the value of the pretended "succession" of the ministry through that system. If such a regular "succession" of ministers from the apostles could be made out, what would it be worth? What is the value of a spiritual descent from pope Alexander VI.? How would it increase the proper respect for the ministerial office, if it could be proved to be derived in a right line from those monsters of incest, ambition, covetousness, and blood, who have occupied the Papal throne? A Protestant minister should blush and hang his head if it were *charged* on him that he held his office by no better title than such a derivation. Much less should he make it a matter of glorying, and an argument to prove that he only is an authorized minister, that he has received his office through such men.

(7.) From this chapter we may see the tendency of human nature to degeneracy. The elements of that great and corrupt apostasy existed even in apostolic times. Those elements grew regularly up into the system of the Papacy, and spread blighting and death over the whole Christian world. It is the tendency of human nature to corrupt the best things The Christian church was put in possession of a pure, and lovely and glorious system of religion. It was a religion adapted to elevate and save the race. There was not an interest of humanity which it would not have fostered and promoted; there was not a source of human sorrow which it would not have mitigated or relieved; there were none of the race whom it would not have elevated and purified. Its influence, as far as it was seen, was uniformly of the happiest kind. It did no injury anywhere, but produced only good. But how soon was it voluntarily exchanged for the worst florin of superstition and error that has ever brooded in darkness over mankind! How soon did the light fade, and how rapidly did it become more obscure, until it well-nigh went out altogether! And with what tenacity did the world adhere to the system that grew up under the great apostasy, maintaining it by learning, and power, and laws, and dungeons, and racks, and fagots! What a comment is this on human nature, thus "loving darkness more than light," and error rather than truth!

(8.) The chapter teaches the importance of resisting error at the beginning. These errors had their foundation in the time of the apostles. They were then comparatively small, and perhaps to many they appeared unimportant; and yet the whole Papal system was just the developement of errors, the germs of which existed in their days. Had these been crushed, as Paul wished to crush them, the church might have been saved from the corruption, and woes, and persecutions produced by the Papacy. So error now should always be opposed—no matter how small or unimportant it may appear. We have no right to connive at it; to patronise it; to smile upon it. The *beginnings* of evil are always to be resisted with firmness; and if that is done, the triumph of truth will be certain.

(9.) The church is safe. It has now passed through every conceivable form of trial, and still survives, and is now more vigorous and flourishing than it ever was before. It has passed through fiery times of persecution; survived the attempts of emperors and kings to destroy it; and lived while the system of error described here by the apostle Paul has thrown its baleful shade over almost the whole Christian world. It cannot reasonably be supposed that it will be called to pass through such trials again as it has already endured; but whether it does or not, the past history of the church is a guarantee that it will survive all that it is destined to encounter. None but a religion of Divine origin could have continued to live amidst so many corruptions, and so many attempts to destroy it; and in the view of the past history of that church, it is impossible not to come to the conclusion that it has been founded by God himself.

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 3

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 1

2nd Thessalonians Chapter 3

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

THIS chapter is made up of exhortations and directions in regard to the performance of various Christian duties.

(1.) The apostle asks their prayers, 2Th 3:1,2. He desires them to pray particularly that the true religion might be prospered, and that in preaching the gospel, he might be delivered from the opposition of unreasonable and wicked men.

(2.) He expresses confidence that God would incline them to do what was right, and prays that he would keep their hearts in his love, and in patient waiting for the Saviour, 2Th 3:3-5.

(3.) He commands them to remove from their number those who were disorderly, and especially those who were idle; and addresses an earnest exhortation to this class, that they would be diligently engaged in the prosecution of the business of their appropriate callings, 2Th 3:6-12.

(4.) He exhorts them not to be weary in doing well, 2Th 3:13.

(5.) He directs that if any one should not obey the commands given in this epistle, he should be noted, and they were to separate themselves from him. Yet they were not to regard him as an enemy, but to admonish him as a brother, 2Th 3:14,15.

(6.) The epistle closes with the usual salutations, 2Th 3:16-18.

Verse 1. *Finally, brethren, pray for us*. That is, for Paul, Silas, and Timothy, then engaged in arduous labours at Corinth. This request for the prayers of Christians is one which Paul often makes. **See Barnes "1Th 5:25".**

That the word of the Lord may have free course. That is, the gospel. The margin is "*run*". So also the Greek. The idea is, that it might meet with no obstruction, but that it might be carried abroad with the rapidity of a racer out of whose way every hinderance was removed. The gospel would spread rapidly in the earth if all the obstructions which men have put in its way were removed; and that they may be removed should be one of the constant subjects of prayer.

And be glorified. Be honoured; or appear to be glorious.

As it is with you. It is evident from this Paul met with some obstructions in preaching the gospel where he was then labouring. What they were, he mentions in the next verse. He was then at Corinth, (see the Introduction,) and the history in the Acts of the Apostles informs us of the difficulties which he had to encounter there. See Ac 18.

{1} "free course" "run"

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men*. That is from opposition in their endeavours to spread the gospel. Paul encountered such men everywhere, as all do who labour to diffuse the knowledge of the truth, but it is probable that there is particular reference here to the opposition which he encountered when in Corinth. This opposition arose mainly from the Jews. See Ac 18:5,6,12,13.

The word *unreasonable* is rendered in the margin absurd. The Greek word (*atopov*) means properly, *out of place*; then absurd, unusual, strange; then improper, unreasonable, wicked. It is rendered in Lu 23:41, *amiss*; in Ac 28:6, *harm*. It does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It refers here to men who acted amiss or improperly; men who were not found in the right place, or who had not the right views of things; and probably does not refer so much to their being positively wicked or malicious, as *to their putting things out of their proper place*. They gave an undue prominence to certain things, and less importance to others than they deserved. They had a distorted vision of the value of objects, and in tenacious adherence to their own views, and prosecuting their own objects to the exclusion of all others, they presented a constant obstruction to the true gospel. This word would apply, and probably was designed to be applied to Jewish teachers, (see Ac 18:5,6,)who gave an undue prominence to the laws of Moses; but it will apply well to all who entertain distorted views of the relative importance of objects, and who put things out of their place. Men often have a *hobby*. They give more importance to some object than it deserves. They, therefore, undervalue other objects; press their own with improper zeal; denounce others who do not feel the same interest in them which they do; withdraw from those who will not go with them in their views; form separate parties, and thus throw themselves in the way of all who are endeavouring to do good in some other method. It was from men who thus put themselves *out of place*, that the apostle prayed to be delivered.

And wicked men. Men with bad aims and purposes. It is not always true that those who would come under the appellation of what the apostle here calls "*unreasonable*," are *wicked*. They are sometimes well-meaning, but misguided men. But in this case, it seems, they were men of bad character, who were at heart opposed to what was good, as well as inclined to put things out of their place.

For all men have not faith. Of the truth of this, no one can doubt. The only question is, as to its bearing on the case before us. Some suppose it means, "there are few men whom we can safely trust;" others, , that it means that they have not that "upright and candid disposition which would engage men to receive the testimony of the apostle," (*Doddridge*;) others, that "all men do not embrace the Christian faith, but many oppose it," (*Benson*,) and others, that "all men do not believe, but the worthy only." *Bloomfield*. The connection seems to require us to understand it as meaning that all men are not prepared to embrace the gospel. Hence they set themselves against it, and from such men Paul prayed that he might be delivered. Comp. 2Ti 3:8. The state of mind in which the apostle was when he wrote this, seems to have been this: He recollected the readiness with which the Thessalonians had embraced the gospel, and the firmness with which they held it, and seems to suppose that they would imagine the same thing must be found true everywhere. But he says all men have not the same faith; all were not prepared cordially and fully to embrace the gospel. There were unreasonable and wicked men whom he had encountered, from whom he prayed that he might be delivered.

{2} "unreasonable" "absurd"

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *But the Lord is faithful*. Though men cannot be trusted, God is faithful to his promises and his purposes. He may always be confided in; and when men are unbelieving, perverse, unkind, and disposed to do us wrong, we may go to him, and we shall always find in him one in whom we may confide. This is an exceedingly interesting declaration, and is a beautiful illustration of the resource which a truly pious mind will feel that it has. We often have occasion to know, to our sorrow, that "all men have not faith." We witness their infidelity. We see how they turn away from the truth. We see many who once gave some evidence that they had faith, abandon it all; and we see many in the church who seem to have no true faith, and who refuse to lend their aid in promoting the cause of religion. In such circumstances, the heart is disposed to despond, and to ask whether religion can be advanced in the midst of so much indifference and opposition? At such times, how consoling is it to be able to turn, as Paul did, to one who is faithful; who never fails us; and who will certainly accomplish his benevolent purposes. Men may be faithless and false, but God never is. They may refuse to embrace the gospel, and set themselves against it, but God will not abandon his great purposes. Many who are in the church may forget their solemn and sacred vows, and may show no fidelity to the cause of their Saviour, but God himself will never abandon that cause. *To a pious mind it affords unspeakably more consolation to reflect that a faithful God is the Friend of the cause which we love, than it would were all men, in and out of the church, its friends*.

Who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil. **See Barnes "Joh 17:16"**.

Comp. **See Barnes "Eph 6:16"**.

The allusion is to the *Evil One*, or Satan, and the meaning is, that God would keep them from his wiles.

{a} "is faithful" 1Co 1:9 {b} "keep you from evil" Joh 17:15

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And we have confidence in the Lord*. Not primarily in you, for you have hearts like others, but in the Lord. It is remarkable that when Paul expresses the utmost confidence m Christians that they will live and act as becomes their profession, his reliance is not on anything in themselves, but wholly on the faithfulness of God. He must be a stranger to the human heart who puts much confidence in it even in its best state. Php 1:6 4:7; 2Ti 1:12.

Comp. Jude 1:24 Re 3:10; Pr 28:26.

{c} "confidence in" 2Co 7:16 {*} "touching you" "concerning you"

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God*. So direct your hearts that you may love God.

And into the patient waiting for Christ. Marg., *patience of Christ*. The marginal reading is in accordance with the Greek, and seems best to express the apostle's meaning. The prayer of the apostle was, that they might have the love of God in their hearts, and "the patience of Christ;" that is, the same patience which Christ evinced in his trials. They were then suffering affliction and persecution. They needed patience, that they might endure their trials in a proper manner. It was natural for the apostle to refer them to the Saviour, the great example of patience, and to pray that they might have the same which he had. That it does not mean that they were to wait patiently for the *appearing* of Christ, as our translation seems to imply, is quite clear, because the apostle had just been showing them that he would not appear until after a long series of events had occurred.

{d} "direct your hearts" 1Ch 29:18 {3} "patient waiting" "patience of Christ"

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Now we command you, brethren*. The apostle now 2Th 3:6-12 turns to an important subject—the proper method of treating those who were idle and disorderly in the church. In the previous epistle he had adverted to this subject, but in the mild language of exhortation. When he wrote that epistle he was aware that there were some among them who were disposed to be idle, and he had tenderly exhorted them "to be quiet, and to mind their own business, and to work with their own hands," 1Th 4:11. But it seems the exhortation, and the example of Paul himself when there, 1Th 2:9, had not been effectual in inducing them to be industrious. It became, therefore, necessary to use the strong language of *command*, as he does here, and to require that if they would not work, the church should withdraw from them. What was the original *cause* of their idleness, is not known. There seems no reason, however, to doubt that it was much increased by their expectation that the Saviour would soon appear, and that the world would soon come to an end. If this was to be so, of what use would it be to labour? Why strive to accumulate property with reference to the wants of a family, or to a day of sickness, or old age? Why should a man build a house that was soon to be burnt up, or why buy a farm which he was so soon to leave? The effect of the expectation of the speedy appearing of the Lord Jesus has always been to induce men to neglect their worldly affairs, and to lead idle lives. Man, naturally disposed to be idle, wants the stimulus of hope that he is labouring for the future welfare of himself, for his family, or for society, nor will he labour if he believes that the Saviour is about to appear.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.—**See Barnes "1Co 5:4"**.

That ye withdraw yourselves. **See Barnes "1Ti 6:6"**.

This is the true notion of Christian discipline. It is not primarily that of cutting a man off, or denouncing him, or excommunicating him; it is that of withdrawing from him. We cease to have fellowship with him. We do not regard him any longer as a Christian brother. We separate from him. We do not seek to affect him in any other respect; we do not injure his name or standing as a man, or hold him up to reprobation; we do not follow him with denunciation or a spirit of revenge; we simply cease to recognize him as a Christian brother, when he shows that he is no longer worthy to be regarded as such. We do not deliver him over to the civil arm; we do not inflict any positive punishment on him; we leave him unmolested in all his rights as a citizen, a man, a neighbour, a husband, a father, and simply say that he is no longer one of us as a Christian. How different is this

from *excommunication*, as it has been commonly understood! How different from the anathemas fulminated by the Papacy, and the delivering of the heretic over to the civil power!

From every brother that walketh disorderly. **See Barnes "1Co 5:11, also** 1Co 5:12-13. A "disorderly walk" denotes conduct that is in any way contrary to the rules of Christ. The proper idea of the word used here (*ataktwv*,) is that of soldiers who do not keep the ranks; who are regardless of order; and then who are irregular in any way. The word would include any violation of the rules of Christ on any subject.

And not after the tradition which ye received of us. According to the doctrine which we delivered to you. **See Barnes "2Th 2:15"**.

This shows that by the word "tradition" the apostle did not mean *unwritten* doctrines handed down from one to another, for he evidently alludes to what he had himself taught them, and his direction is not that that should be *handed down* by them, but that they should obey it.

{a} "withdraw yourselves" 1Ti 6:5 {b} "every brother that walketh disorderly" 1Co 5:11,13 {*} "received of us" "doctrine which you received of us"

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us*. You know what you should do in order to imitate us.

For we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you. **See Barnes "1Th 2:10"**.

{+} "follow us" "imitate"

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought*. We were not supported in idleness at the expense of others. We gave a fair equivalent for all that we received, and, in fact, laboured for our own support. **See Barnes "1Th 2:9"**.

{++} "wrought" "worked" {c} "with labour" Ac 18:3 20:34

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Not because we have not power*, **See Barnes "1Co 9:6"**; **See Barnes "1Co 9:12"**; **See Barnes** "1Co 9:14".

{&} "power" "right" {d} "power" 1Co 9:6 {|} "follow us" "imitate us"

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *For even when we were with you, this we commanded you*. It would seem from this that the evil of which the apostle here complains had begun to operate even when he was with them. There were those who were disposed to be idle, and who needed the solemn command of an apostle to induce them to labour.

That if any would not work, neither should he eat. That is, at the public expense. They should not be supported by the church. This was a maxim among the Jews, (see Wetstein, *in loc*.;) and the same sentiment may be found in Homer, Demosthenes, and Pythagoras. See Grotius, *in loc*. The maxim is founded in obvious justice, and is in accordance with the great law under which our Creator has placed us, Ge 3:19. That law, in the circumstances, was benevolent, and it should be our aim to carry it out in reference to ourselves and to others. The law here laid down by the apostle extends to all who are able to work for a living, and who will not do it, and binds us *not* to contribute to their support if they will not labour for it. It should be regarded as extending

(1.) to the members of a church—who, though poor, should not be supported by their brethren, unless they are willing to work in any way they can for their own maintenance.

(2.) To those who beg from door to door, who should *never* be assisted unless they are willing to do all they can do for their own support. No one can be justified in assisting a lazy man. In no possible circumstances are we to contribute to foster indolence. A man might as properly help to maintain open vice.

{e} "that if any" Ge 3:19

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *For we hear*. It is not known in what way this was made known to Paul, whether by Timothy, or by some other one. He had no doubt of its truth, and he seems to have been prepared to believe it the more readily from what he saw when he was among them.

Which walk disorderly. **See Barnes "2Th 3:6".**

But are busybodies. Comp. **See Barnes "1Ti 5:13"; See Barnes "1Pe 4:15".**

That is, they meddled with the affairs of others—a thing which they who have nothing of their own to busy themselves about will be very likely to do. The apostle had seen that there was a tendency to this when he was in Thessalonica, and hence he had commanded them to "do their own business," 1Th 4:11. The injunction, it seems, had availed little, for there is no class of persons who will so little heed good counsel as those who have a propensity to meddle with the affairs of others. One of the indispensable things to check this is, that each one should have enough to do himself; and one of the most pestiferous of all persons is he who has to do but to look after the affairs of his neighbours. In times of affliction and want, we should be ready to lend our aid. At other times, we should feel that he can manage his own affairs as well as we can do it for him; or if he cannot, it is his business, not ours. The Greek word used occurs only here, and in 1Ti 5:13. Comp. **See Barnes "Php 2:4".**

{f} "busy-bodies" 1Ti 5:13 1Pe 4:15

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus*, etc. A more solemn command and appeal to do what he had before enjoined on all of them, 1Th 4:11. **See Barnes "1Th 4:11".**

{a} "they work, and eat" Eph 4:28

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *But ye, brethren, be not weary in well-doing*. Marg., *faint not*. The Greek means, properly, to turn out a coward; then to be faint-hearted, to despond. The idea is, that they were not to be discouraged from doing good to the truly worthy and deserving, by the idleness and improper conduct of some who asked their assistance. They were, indeed, shiftless and worthless. They would not labour; they spent their time in intermeddling with the concerns of their neighbours, and they depended for their support on the charity of others. The tendency of this, as all persons who have ever been applied to by such persons for aid, is, to indispose us to do good *to any*. We almost insensibly feel that all who ask for aid are of the same character; or, not being able to discriminate, we close our hands alike against all. Against this the apostle would guard us, and he says that though there may be many such persons, and though we may find it difficult to distinguish the worthy from the unworthy, we should not become so disheartened as not to give at all. Nor should we be weary though the applications for assistance are frequent. They *are* indeed frequent. God designs that they should be. But the effect should not be to dishearten us, or to make us weary in well-doing, but to fill us with gratitude—for it is a privilege to be permitted to do good. It is the great distinguishing characteristic of God that he always does good. It was that which marked the character of the Redeemer, that he "went about doing good;" and whenever God gives us the opportunity and the means of doing good, it should be to us an occasion of special thanksgiving. A man ought to become "weary" of everything else sooner than of evincing benevolence. Comp. **See Barnes "Ga 6:10".**

{1} "be not" "faint not" {b} "weary" 1Co 15:58

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *And if any man obey not our word by this epistle*, Marg., or *signify that man by an epistle*. According to the marginal reading this would mean, "signify, mark out, or designate that man to me by an epistle." The difference is merely whether we unite the words "by the epistle" with what goes before, or what follows. The Greek would admit of either construction, (Winer, p. 93,) but it seems to me that the construction in the text is the correct one, for

(1.) the requirement was to proceed to discipline such a man by withdrawing from him;

(2.) in order to do this it was not necessary that the case should be made known to Paul, for there was no supposable difficulty in it, and the effect would be only needless delay;

(3.) Paul regarded the right of discipline as residing in the church itself, and did not require that cases should be referred to him to determine. **See Barnes "1Co 5:2"**; **See Barnes** "1Co 5:3, **See Barnes "1Co 5:4"**.

(4.) Though the Greek will *admit* of either construction, yet it rather favours this. See Oldshansen, *in loc*.

Note that man. The word here used, means to mark; to sign; to note with marks; and the idea is, set such a mark upon him that he shall be shunned; that is, withdraw all Christian fellowship from him.

And have no company with him. The Greek word here means, to mix up together; then to mingle together with; to have intercourse with. The idea is, that they were not to mingle with him as a Christian brother, or as one of their own number. They were not to show that they regarded him as a worthy member of the church, or as having a claim to its privileges. The extent of their discipline was, that they were to withdraw from him. **See Barnes "2Th 3:6"**; **See Barnes** "Mt 18:17".

Comp. 2Jo 1:10,11.

{2} "by this epistle" "signify that man by an epistle" {*} "man" "mark that man"

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother*. This shows the true spirit in which discipline is to be administered in the Christian church. We are not to deal with a man as an adversary over whom we are to seek to gain a victory, but as an erring brother—*a brother still, though he errs*. There was necessity for this caution. There is great danger that when we undertake the work of discipline we shall forget that he who is the subject of it is a brother, and that we shall regard and treat him as an enemy. Such is human nature. We set ourselves in array against him. We cut him off as one who is unworthy to walk with us. We triumph over him, and consider him at once as an enemy of the church, and as having lost all claim to its sympathies. We abandon him to the tender mercies of a cold and unfeeling world, and let him take his course. Perhaps we follow him with anathemas, and hold him up as unworthy the confidence of mankind. Now all this is entirely unlike the method and aim of discipline as the New Testament requires. There all is kind and gentle, though firm; the offender is a man and a brother still; he is to be followed with tender sympathy and prayer, and the hearts and the arms of the Christian brotherhood are to be open to receive him again when he gives any evidence of repenting.

{d} "brother" Le 19:17

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Now the Lord of peace*. The Lord who alone can impart peace. **See Barnes "Ro 15:33"**; **See Barnes** "1Co 14:33"; **See Barnes "Joh 14:27"**.

{e} "Lord of Peace" Ro 16:20

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *The salutation of Paul with mine own hand*. **See Barnes "1Co 16:21"**.

Which is the token in every epistle. Gr., *sign*. This signature is a *sign or proof* of the genuineness of the Comp. **See Barnes "Ga 6:11"**.

So I write. Referring to some mark or method which Paul had of signing his name which was well known, and which would easily be recognised by them.

{f} "salutation" 1Co 16:21

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS - Chapter 3 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all*. **See Barnes "Ro 16:20"**.

From the subscription to this epistle, it purports to have been "written from Athens." This is probably incorrect, as there is reason to think that it was written from Corinth. See the Introduction. At all events, this subscription is of no authority. See Notes at the end of the Epistles to the Romans and 1 Corinthians.

{g} "grace" Rom 16:20

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 1

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 1 - Verse 1

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY.

INTRODUCTION.

I. NOTICES OF THE LIFE OF TIMOTHY.

NEARLY all that can now be known of Timothy is to be learned from the New Testament. He was a native of either Derbe or Lystra, but it is not certainly known which, Ac 16:1. Paul found him there on his visit to those places, and does not appear to have been acquainted with him before. His mother, whose name was Eunice, was a Jewess, and was pious, as was also his grandmother, Lois, 2Ti 1:5. His father was a Greek, but was evidently not unfriendly to the Jewish religion, for Timothy had been carefully trained in the Scriptures, 2Ti 3:15. Paul came to Derbe and Lystra, and became acquainted with him about A.D. 51 or 52; but there is no method now of ascertaining the exact age of Timothy at that time, though there is reason to think that he was then a youth, 1Ti 4:12. It would seem, also, that he was a youth of uncommon hope and promise, and that there had been some special indications that he would rise to distinction as a religious man, and would exert an extended influence in favour of religion, 1Ti 1:18. At the time when Paul first met with him, he was a "disciple," or a Christian convert; but the means which had been used for his conversion are unknown. His mother had been before converted to the Christian faith, (Ac 16:1) and Timothy was well known to the Christians in the neighbouring towns of Lystra and Iconium. The gospel had been preached by Paul and Barnabas, in Iconium, Derbe, and Lystra, some six or seven years before it is said that Paul met with Timothy, (Ac 16:1,) and it is not improbable that this youth had been converted in the interval.

Several things appear to have combined to induce the apostle to introduce him into the ministry, and to make him a travelling companion. His youth; his acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures; the "prophecies which went before on him;" his talents; his general reputation in the church; and, it would seem also, his amiableness of manners, fitting him to be an agreeable companion, attracted the attention of the apostle, and led him to desire that he might be a fellow-labourer with him. To satisfy the prejudices of the Jews, and to prevent any possible objection which might be made against his qualifications for the ministerial office, Paul circumcised him, (Ac 16:3) and he was ordained to the office of the ministry by "the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery," 1Ti 4:14. *When* this ordination occurred is not known; but it is most probable that it was before he went on his travels with Paul, as it is known that Paul was present on the occasion, and took a leading part in the transaction, 2Ti 1:6.

Timothy having joined Paul and Silas, accompanied them on a visit to the churches of Phrygia and Galatia, in which they delivered them the decrees to keep which had been ordained at Jerusalem,

Ac 16:4, seq. Having done this, they endeavoured to go together into Bithynia, a province of Asia Minor, on the north-west, but were prevented; and they then went into Mysia, and to the town of Troas, Ac 16:8. Here Luke appears to have joined them; and from this place, in obedience to a vision which appeared to Paul, they went into Macedonia, and preached the gospel first at Philippi, where they established a church. In this city Paul and Silas were imprisoned; but it is remarkable that nothing is said of Timothy and Luke, and it is not known whether they shared in the sufferings of the persecution there or not. Everything, however, renders it probable that Timothy was with them at Philippi; as he is mentioned as having started with them to go on the journey, (Ac 16:3, seq.;) and as we find him at Berea, after the apostle had been released from prison, and had preached at Thessalonica and Berea, Ac 17:14. From this place Paul was conducted to Athens, but left an injunction for Silas and Timothy to join him there as soon as possible. This was done; but when Timothy had come to Athens, Paul felt it to be important that the church at Thessalonica should be visited and comforted in its afflictions, and being prevented from doing it himself, he sent Timothy, at great personal inconvenience, back to that church. Having discharged the duty there, he rejoined the apostle at Corinth, (Ac 18:5,) from which place the First Epistle to the Thessalonians was written. See Intro. to 1 Thess., and **See Barnes "1Th 1:1"**; **See Barnes** "1Th 3:2".

These transactions occurred about A.D. 52.

Paul remained at Corinth a year and a half, (Ac 18:11,) and it is probable that Timothy and Silas continued with him. See 2Th 1:1. From Corinth he sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila, whom he appears to have left on his way at Ephesus, Ac 18:18,19,26.

Whether Timothy and Silas accompanied him is not mentioned, but we find Timothy again with him at Ephesus, after he had been to Caesarea and Antioch, and had returned to Ephesus, Ac 18:22 19:1,22.

From Ephesus, he sent Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia, Ac 19:22; but for what purpose, or how long they remained, is unknown. From 1Co 4:17, it appears that Paul expected that on this journey Timothy would stop at Corinth, and would give the church there instructions adapted to its situation. Paul continued in Ephesus until he was compelled to depart by the tumult caused by Demetrius, when he left and went to Macedonia, Ac 20. Whether Timothy, during the interval, had returned to Ephesus from Macedonia, is not expressly mentioned in the history; but such a supposition is not improbable. Paul, during the early part of his residence in Ephesus, appears to have laboured quietly, (Ac 19:9,10;) and Timothy was sent away *before* the disturbances caused by Demetrius, Ac 19:22. Paul designed to follow him soon, and then to go to Jerusalem, and then to Rome, Ac 19:21. Paul (Ac 20:31) was in Ephesus in all about three years; and it is not unreasonable to suppose that he remained there after Timothy was sent to Macedonia long enough for him to go and to return to him again. If so, it is *possible* that when he himself went away, he left Timothy there in his place. Comp. 1Ti 1:3. It has been the general opinion that the First Epistle to Timothy was written at this time: either when the apostle was on his way to Macedonia, or while in Macedonia. But this opinion has not been unquestioned. The departure of Paul for Macedonia occurred about A.D. 58, or 59. In Ac 20:4, Timothy is again mentioned as accompanying Paul after he had remained in Greece three months, on the route to Syria through Macedonia. He went with him, in company with many others, into "Asia." Going before Paul, they waited for him at Troas, Ac 20:5, and thence doubtless accompanied him on his way to Jerusalem. It was on this occasion that Paul delivered his farewell charge to the elders of the church of Ephesus, at Miletus, Ac 20:17, seq. When in Macedonia, Paul wrote the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, and Timothy was then

with him, for he unites in the salutations, 2Co 1:1. Timothy was also with the apostle on this journey at Corinth, when from that city he wrote his epistle to the Romans, Ro 16:21.

The subsequent events of the life of Timothy are less known. It does not appear from the Acts of the Apostles, that he was with Paul during his two years' imprisonment at Caesarea, nor during his voyage to Rome. It is certain, however, that he was at Rome with the apostle when he wrote the epistles to the Philippians, to the Colossians, and to Philemon, Php 1:1 Col 1:1; Phm 1:1.

From Heb 13:23, it appears, also, that Timothy had been with the apostle there, but that when the epistle was written, he was absent on some important embassy, and that Paul was expecting his speedy return. **See Barnes** "Heb 13:23.

Between the first and second imprisonment of Paul at Rome, no mention is made of Timothy, nor is it known where he was, or whether he accompanied him in his travels or not. When he was imprisoned there the second time, he wrote the Second Epistle to Timothy, in which he desires him to come to Rome, and bring with him several things which he had left at Troas, 2Ti 4:9-13,21. If Timothy went to Rome, agreeably to the request of the apostle, it is probable that he was a witness there of his martyrdom.

In regard to the latter part of the life of Timothy, there is nothing which can be depended on. It has been the current opinion, derived from tradition, that he was "bishop" of Ephesus; that he died and was buried there; and that his bones were subsequently removed to Constantinople. The belief that he was "bishop" of Ephesus rests mainly on the "subscription" to the Second Epistle to Timothy, which is no authority whatever. See Notes on that subscription. On the question whether he was an episcopal prelate at Ephesus, the reader may consult my "Inquiry into the Organization and Government of the Apostolic Church," [pp. 91—114, London edition.] The supposition that he died at Ephesus, and was subsequently removed to Constantinople, rests on no certain historical basis.

Timothy was long the companion and the friend of the apostle Paul, and is often mentioned by him with affectionate interest. Indeed, there seems to have been no one of his fellow-labourers, to whom he was so warmly attached. See 1Ti 1:2,18; 2Ti 1:2 2:1; 1Co 4:17, where he calls him "his own son," and "his beloved son;" 2Ti 1:4, where he expresses his earnest desire to see him, and makes a reference to the tears which Timothy shed at parting from him; 1Co 16:10,11, where he bespeaks for him a kind reception among the Corinthians; Ro 16:21 1Th 3:2; and especially Php 2:19,20, where he speaks of his fidelity, of his usefulness to him in his labours, and of the interest which he took in the churches which the apostle had established.

II. WHEN AND WHERE THE EPISTLE WAS WRITTEN.

THE subscription at the close of the epistle states that it was written from Laodicea. But these subscriptions are of no authority, and many of them are false. See Notes at the end of 1 Corinthians. There has been much diversity of opinion in regard to the time when this epistle was written, and of course in regard to the place where it was composed. All that is certain from the epistle itself is, that it was addressed to Timothy at Ephesus, and that it was soon after Paul had left that city to go into Macedonia, 1Ti 1:3. Paul is mentioned in the Acts as having been at Ephesus twice, Ac 18:19-23 19:1-41. After his first visit there, he went directly to Jerusalem, and of course it could not have been written at that time. The only question then is, whether it was written when Paul left the city, having been driven away by the excitement caused by Demetrius, (Ac 20:1;) or whether he visited Ephesus again on some occasion after his first imprisonment at Rome, and of course after the narrative of Luke in the Acts of the Apostles closes. If on the former occasion, it was written about

the year 58 or 59; if the latter, about the year 64 or 65. Critics have been divided in reference to this point, and the question is still unsettled, and it may be impossible to determine it with entire certainty.

Those who have maintained the former opinion, among others, are Theodoret, Benson, Zaehariae, Michaelis, Schmidt, Koppe, Planck, Grotius, Lightfoot, Witsius, Lardner, Hug, and Prof. Stuart. The latter opinion, that it was written subsequently to the period of Paul's first imprisonment at Rome, is maintained by Paley, Pearson, L'Enfant, Le Clere, Cave, Mill, Whitby, Macknight, and others.

An examination of the reasons in favour of each of these opinions as to the date of the epistle, may be found in Paley's Hor. Paul.; Macknight; Hug's Intro., and Koppe, *Proleg*.

The theory of Eienhorn, which is peculiar, and which is supported by some ingenious and plausible, but not conclusive reasoning, may be seen in his Einleitung in das neue Test. 3 B. 314—352.

In the diversity of opinion which prevails about the time when the epistle was written, it is impossible to determine the question in such a manner as to leave no room for doubt. After the most careful examination which I have been able to give to the subject, however, it seems to me that the former opinion is correct, that it was written soon after Paul was driven from Ephesus by the tumult caused by Demetrius, as recorded in Ac 19:1-20:1. The reasons for this opinion are briefly these:—

1. This is the only record that occurs in the New Testament of the apostle's having gone from Ephesus to Macedonia. See above. It is natural, therefore, to suppose that this is referred to in 1Ti 1:3, unless there is some insuperable difficulty in the way.

2. There is no certain evidence that Paul visited the church at Ephesus after his first imprisonment at Rome. It is certainly possible that he did, but there is no record of any such visit in the New Testament, nor any historical record of it elsewhere. If there had been such a visit after his release, and if this epistle were written then, it is remarkable that the apostle does not make any allusion to his imprisonment in this epistle, and that he does not refer at all to his own escape from this danger of death at Rome. Comp. 2Ti 4:16,17.

3. The supposition that the epistle was written at the time supposed, agrees better with the character of the epistle, and with the design for which Timothy was left at Ephesus, than the others. It is manifest from the epistle that the church was, in some respects, in an unsettled condition; and it would seem, also, that one part of the duty of Timothy there was to see that it was placed under a proper organization. This Paul had evidently proposed to accomplish himself; but it is clear, from 1Ti 1:3, that he left his work unfinished, and that he gave what he had proposed to do into the hands of Timothy to be perfected. After the first imprisonment of Paul at Rome, however, there is every reason to suppose that the church was completely organized. Even when Paul went from Macedonia to Jerusalem, Ac 20, there were "elders" placed over the church at Ephesus, whom Paul assembled at Miletus, and to whom he gave his parting charge, and his final instructions in regard to the church.

4. At the time when Paul wrote this epistle, Timothy was a young man—a youth, 1Ti 4:12. It is true, that if he were somewhere about twenty years of age when he was introduced into the ministry, as has been commonly supposed, this language would not be entirely inappropriate, even after the imprisonment of Paul; but still the language would more properly denote one somewhat younger than Timothy would be at that time.

5. To this may be added the declaration of Paul in 1Ti 3:14, that he "hoped to come to him shortly." This is an expression which agrees well with the supposition that he had himself been driven away before he had intended to leave; that he had left something unfinished there which he desired to complete, and that he hoped that affairs would soon be in such a state that he would be permitted to return. It may be also suggested, as a circumstance of some importance, though not conclusive, that when Paul met the elders of the church of Ephesus at Miletus, he said that he had no expectation of ever seeing them again: "And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more," Ac 20:25. I do not think that this is to be understood as an inspired prediction, aiming with absolute certainty that he never would see them again, but that he rather expressed his apprehensions that it would be so from the circumstances which then existed, Ac 20:22,23. Still, this passage shows that when he uttered it he did not *expect* to visit Ephesus again, as he manifestly did when he wrote the epistle to Timothy.

These considerations seem so clear that they would leave no doubt on the mind, were it not for certain things which it seems to many impossible to reconcile with this supposition. The difficulties are the following:—

1. That before Paul went to Macedonia, he had sent Timothy with Erastus before him, (Ac 19:22,) purposing to follow them at no distant period, and to pass through Macedonia and Achaia, and then to go to Jerusalem, and afterwards to visit Rome, Ac 19:21. As he had sent Timothy before him but so short a time before he left Ephesus, it is asked how Timothy could be *left at Ephesus* when Paul went himself to Macedonia? To this objection we may reply, that it is not improbable by any means that Timothy may have accomplished the object of his journey to Macedonia, and may have returned to the apostle at Ephesus before he was driven away. It does not appear, from the narrative, that Timothy was intrusted with any commission which would require a long time to fulfil it, nor that Paul expected that he would remain in Macedonia until he himself came. The purpose for which he sent Timothy and Erastus is not indeed mentioned, but it seems probable that it was with reference to the collection which he proposed to take up for the poor saints at Jerusalem. **See Barnes** "Ac 19:21, **See Barnes "Ac 19:22"**.

Comp. 1Co 16:1-6. If it were the purpose to prepare the churches for such a collection, it could not have required any considerable time, nor was it necessary that Timothy should remain long in a place; and it was natural, also, that he should return to the apostle at Ephesus, and apprize him of what he had done, and what was the prospect in regard to the collection. It has been clearly shown by Hug, (Intro. to the New Test., % 104. 109,) that such a journey could easily have been made during the time which the apostle remained at Ephesus after he had sent Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia.

2. The next objection—and one which is regarded by Paley as decisive against the supposition that the epistle was written on this occasion—is, that from the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, 2Co 1:1, it is evident that at the time in which this epistle is supposed to have been written, Timothy was with the apostle in Macedonia. The Second Epistle to the Corinthians was undoubtedly written during this visit of Paul to Macedonia, and at that time Timothy was with him. See the Introduction to 2Co 3. How then can it be supposed that he was at Ephesus? Or how can this fact be reconciled with the supposition that Timothy was left there, and especially with the declaration of Paul to him, 1Ti 3:14, that he "hoped to come to him shortly?" That Paul *expected* that Timothy would remain at Ephesus, at least for some time, is evident from 1Ti 3:15, "But *if I tarry long*, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God;" and from 1Ti 4:13, "*Till I come*,

give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine." The only solution of this difficulty is, that Timothy had left Ephesus, and had followed the apostle into Macedonia; and the only question here is, whether, since the apostle designed that he should remain at Ephesus, and expected himself to return and meet him there, Timothy would be likely to leave that place and go to Macedonia. It is certain that the history in the Acts does not make this record, but that is no material objection—-since it cannot be supposed that every occurrence in the travels of the apostles was recorded. But there are two or three circumstances which may render the supposition that Timothy, either by the concurrence, or by the direction of Paul, privately communicated to him, may have left Ephesus sooner than was at first contemplated, and may have rejoined him in Macedonia.

(1.) One is, that the main business which Timothy was appointed to perform at Ephesus—to give a solemn charge to certain persons there to teach no other doctrine but that which Paul taught, 1Ti 1:3 —might have been speedily accomplished. Paul was driven away in haste, and, as he had not the opportunity of doing this himself as he wished, he left Timothy in charge of it. But this did not require, of necessity, any considerable time.

(2.) Another is, that the business of appointing suitable officers over the church there, might also have been soon accomplished. In fact, the church there is known to have been supplied with proper officers not long after this, for Paul sent from Miletus for the elders to meet him there on his way to Jerusalem. This remark is made in accordance with the opinion that a part of the work which Timothy was expected to perform there, was to constitute proper officers over the church But there is no proof that that was a part of his business. It is not specified in what Paul mentions, in 1Ti 1:3, as the design for which he was left there, and it is hardly probable that the apostle would have spent so long a time as he did in Ephesus—nearly three years, Ac 20:31—without having organized the church with proper officers. Besides, the address of Paul to the elders at Miletus, implies that they had received their appointment before he left them. See Ac 20:18-35, particularly Ac 20:35. The instructions to Timothy in this epistle about the proper qualifications of the officers of the church, do not prove that he was then to appoint officers at Ephesus, for they are general instructions, having no particular reference to the church there, and designed to guide him in his work through life. There is, therefore, nothing in the duties which Timothy was to perform at Ephesus which would forbid the supposition that he may have soon followed the apostle into Macedonia.

(3.) It appears, that though Paul may have intended, if possible, to visit Ephesus on his way to Jerusalem, in accordance with 1Ti 3:14,15, 4:13, yet, if that had been his intention, he subsequently changed his mind, and found it necessary to make other arrangements. Thus it is said, Ac 20:16, that "Paul had determined to sail *by* Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia;" that is, he had resolved to sail *past* Ephesus without visiting it. It would seem probable, also, that this resolution had been formed before he left Macedonia, for it is said that he `*had determined*' it, (*ekrine*;) and if so, there is no improbability in supposing that he had, in some way, caused it to be intimated to Timothy that he wished him to leave Ephesus, and join him before he left Macedonia.

(4.) In fact, and in accordance with this supposition, we find Timothy with Paul when he went on that occasion into "Asia," Ac 20:4,5. These considerations render it probable that the epistle was written to Timothy soon after Paul left Ephesus to go into Macedonia after the tumult excited by Demetrius. As Paul was driven away unexpectedly, and when he had not completed what he designed to do there, nothing is more natural than the supposition that he would embrace the earliest opportunity to give suitable instructions to Timothy, that he might know how to complete the work.

III. THE OCCASION AND DESIGN OF THE EPISTLE

This is specified in 1Ti 1:3. Paul had gone in Macedonia, having been suddenly driven away from Ephesus, before he had entirely done what he had designed to do there. He left Timothy there to "charge some that they teach no other doctrine:" that is, no other doctrine than that which he had himself taught there. It is clear, from this, that there were certain errors prevailing there which Paul thought it of the highest importance to have corrected. In regard to those errors, see the Introduction to the Epistle to the Ephesians, and the Epistle to the Colossians. some of the circumstances which gave occasion to this epistle, can be gathered from the history in the Acts of the Apostles; others can be derived from the epistle itself. From these sources of information we learn the following things in reference to the state of the church in Ephesus, which made it proper that Timothy should be left there, and that these instructions should be given him to regulate his conduct.

(1.) There was much opposition to the apostle Paul from the Jews who resided there, Ac 14:8,19.

(2.) There were in the church teachers who endeavoured to enforce the maxims of the Jewish law, and to represent that law as binding on Christians, 1Ti 1:6,7.

(3.) Some of the Hews residing there were addicted to exorcism, and endeavoured to make use of Christianity and the name of Jesus to promote their selfish ends, Ac 19:14. Comp. 1Ti 1:4.

(4.) The Jewish teachers laid great stress on geneologies and traditions, and were much given to debates about various questions connected with the law, 1Ti 1:4-6.

(5.) There were erroneous views prevailing respecting the rights of women, and the place they ought to occupy in the church, 1Ti 2:8-15.

(6.) The organization of the officers of the church had not been effected as Paul wished it to be. It is probable that some of the officers had been appointed, and that some instructions had been given to them in regard to their duties, but the whole arrangement had not been completed, 1Ti 3,5.

(7.) There were certain questions in regard to the proper treatment of widows, which had not yet been determined, 1Ti 5.

(8.) The apostle, in his preaching, had inculcated benevolent principles, and had asserted the natural equality of all men; and it would seem that certain persons had taken occasion form this to excite a spirit of discontent and insubordination among those who were servants. The doctrine seems to have been advanced, that, as all men were equal, and all had been redeemed by the same blood, therefore those who had been held in bondage were free from all obligation to serve their masters. There were those evidently who sought to excite them to insurrection; to break down the distinctions in society, and to produce a state of insubordination and disorder,

1Ti 6; comp. Eph 6:5-10 Col 3:22, 4:2.

The remainder of this note is continued in note on 1Ti 1:2

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 1 - Verse 2

Continuation of Note from 1Ti 1:1. Material for Verse 2 is at end of this material.

Such appears to have been the state of things when the apostle was compelled suddenly to leave Ephesus. He had hitherto directed the affairs of the church there mainly himself, and had endeavoured to correct the errors then prevailing, and to establish the church on a right foundation. Matters appear to have been tending tot he desired result; religion was acquiring a strong hold on the

members of the church Ac 19:18-20; error was giving way; the community was becoming more and more impressed with the value of Christianity; the influence idolatry was becoming less and less, Ac 19:23, seq. and the arrangements for the complete organization of the church were in progress. Such was the promising state of things in these respects, that the apostle hoped to be able to leave Ephesus at no very distant period, and had actually made arrangements to do it, Ac 19:21. But his arrangements were not quite finished, and before they were completed, he was compelled to leave by the tumult excited by Demetrius. He left Timothy, therefore, to complete the arrangements, and, in this first epistle, gave him all the instructions necessary to guide him in that work.

This view of the state of things in Ephesus at the time when the apostle was constrained to leave it, will enable us to understand the drift of the epistle, and the reasons why the various topics found in it were introduced. At the same time, the instructions are of so general a character, that they would be an invaluable guide to Timothy not only at Ephesus, but through his life; and not only to him, but to all the ministers of the gospel in every age and land. A more detailed view of these topics will be furnished in the analysis prefixed to the several chapters of the epistle.

The epistles to Timothy and Titus occupy a very important place in the New Testament, and without them there would be a manifest and most material defect in the volume of inspiration. Their canonical authority has never been questioned by the great body of the church, and there is no doubt that they are the productions of the apostle Paul. If the various epistles which he wrote, and the various other books of the New Testament be attentively examined, it will be found that each one is designed to accomplish an important object, and that if any one were removed, a material chasm would be made. Though the removal of any one of them would not so impair the volume of the New Testament as to obscure any essential doctrine, or prevent our obtaining the knowledge of the way of salvation from the remainder, yet it would mar the beauty and symmetry of the truth, and would render the system of instruction defective and incomplete.

This is true in regard to the epistles to Timothy and Titus, as it is of the other epistles. They fill a department which nothing else in the New Testament would enable us to supply, and without which instructions to man respecting redemption would be incomplete. They relate mainly to the office of the ministry; and though there are important instructions of the Saviour himself respecting the office, Mt 10 Mr 16, and elsewhere; and though, in the address of Paul to the elders of Ephesus, Ac 20, and in the epistles to the Corinthians, there are invaluable suggestions respecting it: yet, such is its importance in the organization of the church, that more full and complete instructions seem to be imperiously demanded. Those instructions are furnished in these epistles. They are as full and complete as we could desire in regard to the nature of the office, the qualifications for it, and the duties which grow out of it. They are fitted not only to direct Timothy and Titus in the work to which they were specifically appointed, but to counsel the ministry in every age and in every land. It is obvious that the character and welfare of the church depend greatly, if not entirely, on the character of the ministry. The office of the ministry is God's great appointment for the preservation of pure religion, and for spreading it abroad through the world. The church adheres to the truth; is built up in faith; is distinguished for love, and purity, and zeal, in proportion as the ministry is honoured, and shows itself qualified for its work. In every age corruption in the church has commenced in the ministry; and where the gospel has been spread abroad with zeal, and the church has arisen in her strength and beauty, it has been pre-eminently where God has sent down his Spirit in copious measures on those who have filled the sacred office. So important, then, is this

office to the welfare of the church and the world, that it was desirable that full instructions should be furnished in the volume of revelation in regard to its nature and design. Such instructions we have in these epistles, and there is scarcely any portion of the New Testament which the church could not better afford to part with than the Epistles to Timothy and Titus. Had the ministry always been such as these epistles contemplate, had they who have filled the sacred office always had the character and qualifications here described, we may believe that the church would have been saved from the strifes that have rent it, and that the pure gospel would long ere this have been spread through the world.

But it is not to the ministry only that these epistles are of so much value. They are of scarcely less importance to the church at large. Its vitality; its purity; its freedom from strife; its zeal and love, and triumph in spreading the gospel, depend on the character of the ministry. If the church will prosper from age to age, the pulpit must be filled with a pious, learned, laborious, and devoted ministry, and one of the first cares of the church should be, that such a ministry should be secured. This great object cannot better be attained than by keeping the instructions in these epistles steadily before the minds of the members of the church; and though a large part of them is particularly adapted to the ministers of the gospel, yet the church itself can in no better way promote its own purity and prosperity than by a prayerful and attentive study of the epistles to Timothy and Titus.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY.

CHAPTER 1.

ANALYSIS OF CHAPTER 1.

This chapter comprises the following subjects :—

(1.) The salutation to Timothy, in the usual manner in which Paul introduces his epistles, 1Ti 1:1,2.

(2.) The purpose for which he had left him at Ephesus, 1Ti 1:3,4. It was that he might correct the false instructions of some of the teachers there, and especially, as it would seem, in regard to the true use of the law. They gave undue importance to some things in the laws of Moses; they did not understand the true nature and design of his laws; and they mingled in their instructions much that was mere fable.

(3.) The true use and design of the law, 1Ti 1:5-11. It was to produce *love*, not vain jangling. It was not made to fetter the conscience by vain and troublesome austerities and ceremonies; it was to restrain and bind the wicked. The use of the law according to these teachers, and according to the prevailing Jewish notions, was to prescribe a great number of formalities, and to secure outward conformity in a great variety of cumbrous rights and ceremonies. Paul instructs Timothy to teach them that *love*, out of a pure heart and a good conscience, was the elementary principle of religion, and that the "law" was primarily designed to restrain and control the wicked, and that the gospel brought to light and enforced this important truth.

(4.) The mention of the gospel in this connection, leads Paul to express his thanks to God that he had been intrusted with this message of salvation, 1Ti 1:12-17. Once he had the same views as others. But he had obtained mercy, and he was permitted to publish that glorious gospel which had shed such light on the law of God, and which had revealed a plan of salvation that was worthy of universal acceptation.

(5.) This solemn duty of preaching the gospel he commits now to Timothy, 1Ti 1:18-20. He says that he had been called to the work in accordance with the prophecies which had been uttered of him in anticipation of his future usefulness in the church, and in the expectation that he would not, like some others, make shipwreck of his faith.

Verse 1. *Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ*. **See Barnes "Ro 1:1"**

By the commandment of God. **See Barnes "1Co 1:1"**.

Our Saviour. The name Saviour is as applicable to God the rather as to the Lord Jesus Christ, since God is the great Author of salvation. **See Barnes "Lu 1:47"**.

Comp. 1Ti 4:10 Tit 2:10; Jude 1:25".

And Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul had received his commission directly from him. **See Barnes** "Ga 1:11, **See Barnes "Ga 1:12"**.

Which is our hope. **See Barnes "Col 1:27"**.

{a} "by the commandment" Ac 9:15

Verse 2. *Unto Timothy*. For an account of Timothy see Intro, § 1.

My own son in the faith. Converted to the Christian faith by my instrumentality, and regarded by me with the affection of a father. **See Barnes "1Co 4:15"**.

Paul had no children of his own, and he adopted Timothy as a son, and uniformly regarded and treated him as such. He had the same feeling also towards Titus. Tit 1:4. Comp. **See Barnes "Ga 4:19"**; **See Barnes** "1Th 2:7, **See Barnes "1Th 2:11"**; **See Barnes** "Phm 1:10".

Grace, mercy, and peace, etc. **See Barnes "Ro 1:7"**.

{c} "my own son" Ac 16:1 {d} "in the faith" Tit 1:4 {e} "Grace" Ga 1:3 1Pe 1:2

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 1 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *As I besought thee still to abide at Ephesus*. It is clear from this, that Paul and Timothy had been labouring together at Ephesus, and the language accords with the supposition that Paul had been compelled to leave before he had completed what he had designed to do there. See the Intro. 2.

When I went into Macedonia. Having been driven away by the excitement caused by Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen, Ac 20:1. See the Intro. & 2, 3.

That thou mightest charge some. The word charge here—*paraggeilhv*— seems to mean more than is commonly implied by the word as used by us. If it had been a single direction or command, it might have been given by Paul himself before he left, but it seems rather to refer to that *continuous instruction* which would convince these various errorists, and lead them to inculcate only the true doctrine. As they may have been numerous,—as they may have embraced various forms of error, and as they might have had plausible grounds for their belief, this was evidently a work requiring time, and hence Timothy was left to effect this at leisure. It would seem that the wrath which had been excited against Paul had not affected Timothy, but that he was permitted to remain and labour without molestation. It is not certainly known who these teachers were, but they appear to have

been of Jewish origin, and to have inculcated the peculiar sentiments of the Jews respecting the law.

That they teach no other doctrine. That is, no other doctrine than that taught by the apostles. The Greek word here used is not found in the classic writers, and does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament except in 1Ti 6:3 of this epistle, where it is rendered `teach otherwise.' We may learn here what was the design for which Timothy was left at Ephesus.

(1.) It was for a temporary purpose, and not as a permanent arrangement. It was to correct certain errors prevailing there which Paul would have been able himself soon to correct if he had been suffered to remain. Paul expected soon to return to him again, and then they would proceed unitedly with their work. 1Ti 4:13 3:15.

(2.) It was not that he might be the "*bishop*" of Ephesus. There is no evidence that he was "ordained" there at all, as the subscription to the second epistle declares, (see Notes on that subscription,) nor were the functions which he was to perform, those of a prelatical bishop. He was not to take the charge of a "diocese," or to ordain ministers of the "second rank," or to administer the rite of confirmation, or to perform acts of discipline, he was left there for a purpose which is specified, and that is as far as possible from what are now regarded as the appropriate functions of a prelatical bishop. Perhaps no claim which has ever been set up has had less semblance of argument than that which asserts that Timothy was the "bishop of Ephesus." See this clause examined in my "Inquiry into the Organization and Government of the Apostolic Church," [pp. 91—-114, London edition.]

{f} "went into Macedonia" Ac 20:1,3

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 1 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Neither give heed to fables*. That is, that they should not bestow their attention on fables, or regard such trifles as of importance. The "fables" here referred to were probably the idle and puerile superstitions and conceits of the Jewish Rabbies. The word rendered *fable* (*muyov*) means properly *speech or discourse*, to and then fable or fiction, or a mystic discourse. Such things abounded among the Greeks as well as the Jews, but it is probable that the latter here are particularly intended. These were composed of frivolous and unfounded stories, which they regarded as of great importance, and which they seem have desired to incorporate with the teachings of Christianity. Paul, who had been brought up amidst these superstitions, saw at once how they would tend, to draw off the mind from the truth, and would corrupt the true religion. One of the most successful arts of the adversary of souls has been to mingle fable with truth; and when he cannot overthrow the truth by direct opposition, to neutralize it by mingling with it much that is false and frivolous.

And endless genealogies. This also refers to Jewish teaching. The Hebrews kept careful genealogical records, for this was necessary in order that the distinction of their tribes might be kept up. Of course, in the lapse of centuries, these tables would become very numerous, complicated, and extended—so that they might, without much exaggeration, be called "*endless*." The Jews attached great importance to them, and insisted on their being carefully preserved. As the Messiah, however, had now come—as the Jewish polity was to cease—as the separation between them and the heathen was no longer necessary, and the distinction of tribes was now useless, there was no

propriety that these distinctions should be regarded by Christians. The whole system was, moreover, contrary to the genius of Christianity, for it served to keep up the pride of blood and of birth.

Which minister questions. Which afford matter for troublesome and angry debates. It was often difficult to settle or understand them. They became complicated and perplexing. Nothing is more difficult than to unravel an extensive genealogical table. To do this, therefore, would often give rise to contentions; and, *when* settled, would give rise still further to questions about rank and precedence.

Rather than godly edifying which is in faith. These inquiries do nothing to promote true religion in the soul. They settle no permanent principle of truth; they determine nothing that is really concerned in the salvation of men. They might be pursued through life, and not one soul be converted by them; they might be settled with the greatest accuracy, and yet not one heart be made better. Is not this still true of many controversies and logomachies in the church? No point of controversy is worth much trouble, which, if it were settled one way or the other, would not tend to convert the soul from sin, or to establish some important principle in promoting true religion.

So do. These words are supplied by our translators, but they are necessary to the sense. The meaning is, that Timothy was to remain at Ephesus, and faithfully perform the duty which he had been left there to discharge.

{g} "heed to fables" 1Ti 6:3,4,20

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 1 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Now the end of the commandment*. **See Barnes "Ro 10:4"**.

In order that Timothy might fulfil the design of his appointment, it was necessary that he should have a correct view of the design of the law. The teachers, to whom he refers, insisted much on its obligation and importance; and Paul designs to say that he did not intend to teach that the law was of no consequence, and was not, when properly understood, obligatory. Its nature and use, however, was not correctly understood by them, and hence it was of great importance for Timothy to inculcate correct views of the purpose for which it was given. The word "commandment" here, some have understood of the gospel, (Doddridge ;) others of the particular command which the apostle here gives to Timothy, (Benson, Clarke, and Macknight ;) but it seems more naturally to refer to *all* that God had commanded—his whole law. As the error of these teachers arose from improper views of the nature and design of *law*, Paul says that that design should be understood. It was not to produce distinctions and angry contentions, and was not to fetter the minds of Christians with minute and burdensome observances, but it was *to produce love*.

Is charity. On the meaning of this word, **See Barnes "1Co 13:1"**.

Out of a pure heart. The love which is genuine must proceed from a holy heart. The commandment was not designed to secure merely the outward expressions of love, but that which had its seat in the heart.

And of a good conscience. A conscience free from guilt. Of course there can be no genuine love to God where the dictates of conscience are constantly violated, or where a man knows that he is continually doing wrong. If a man wishes to have the evidence of love to God, he must keep a good conscience. All pretended love, where a man knows that he is living in sin, is mere hypocrisy.

And of faith unfeigned. Undissembled confidence in God. This does seem to be intended specifically of faith in the Lord Jesus, but it means that all true love to God, such as this law would produce, must be based on confidence in him. How can any one have love to him who has no confidence in him? Can we exercise love to a professed friend in whom we have no confidence? Faith, then, is as necessary under the law as it is under the gospel.

{a} "of the commandment" Ro 13:8,10; Ga 5:14

{*} "charity" "Love" {b} "pure heart" 2Ti 2:22

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 1 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *From which some having swerved*. Marg., *not aiming at*. The word here used *astocew*—means properly, to miss the mark; to err; and then, to swerve from. Comp. 1Ti 6:21 2Ti 2:18. It does not mean that they had ever had that from which they are said to have swerved—for it does not follow that a man who misses a mark had ever hit it—but merely that they failed of the things referred to, and had turned to vain talk. The word "which" (*wn*,) in the plural, refers not to the law, but to the things enumerated —a pure heart, a good conscience, and unfeigned faith.

Have turned aside unto vain jangling. Vain talk, empty declamation, discourses without sense. The word here used does not mean contention or strife, but that kind of discourse which is not founded in good sense. They were discourses on their pretended distinctions in the law; on their traditions and ceremonies; on their useless genealogies, and on the fabulous statements which they had appended to the law of Moses.

{1} "having swerved" "not aiming at"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 1 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Desiring to be teachers of the law*. That is, to have the credit and reputation of being well versed in the law of Moses, and qualified to explain it to others. This was a high honour among the Jews, and these teachers laid claim to the same distinction.

Understanding neither what they say. That is, they do not understand the true nature and design of that law which they attempt to explain to others. This was true of the Jewish teachers, and equally so of those in the church at Ephesus, who attempted to explain it. They appear to hare explained the law on the principles which commonly prevailed among the Jews, and hence their instructions tended greatly to corrupt the faith of the gospel. They made affirmations of what they knew nothing of, and though they made confident asseverations, yet they often pertained to things about which they had no knowledge. One needs only a slight acquaintance with the manner of teaching among Jewish Rabbies, or with the things found in their traditions, to see the accuracy of this statement of the apostle. A sufficient illustration of this may be found in Allen's "Modern Judaism."

{d} "understanding neither" Ro 1:22

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 1 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *But we know that the law is good*. We admit this; it is that which we all concede. This declaration is evidently made by the apostle to guard against the supposition that he was an enemy of the law. Doubtless this charge would be brought against him, or against any one who maintained the sentiments which he had just expressed. By speaking thus of what those teachers regarded as so important in the law, it would be natural for them to declare that he was an enemy of the law itself, and would be glad to see all its claims abrogated. Paul says that he designs no such thing. He admitted that the law was good. He was never disposed for one moment to call it in question. He only asked that it should be rightly understood and properly explained. Paul was never disposed to call in question the excellency and the utility of the law, however it might bear on him or on others. Comp. **See Barnes** "Ro 7:12, and **See Barnes "Ac 21:21-26"**.

"*If a man use it lawfully*". In a proper manner; for the purposes for which it was designed. It is intended to occupy a most important place, but it should not be perverted. Paul asked only that it should be used aright, and, in order to this, he proceeds to state what is its true design.

{e} "law is good" Ro 7:12

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 1 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Knowing this*. That is, "If any one knows, or admits this, he has the proper view of the design of the law." The apostle does not refer particularly to himself as knowing or conceding this, for then he would have used the plural form of the participle, (see the Greek;) but he means that any one, who had just views of the law, would see that that which he proceeds to specify was its real purpose.

The law is not made for a righteous man.—There has been great variety in the interpretation of this passage. Some suppose that the law here refers to the ceremonial laws of Moses, (Clarke, Rosenmuller, Abbot;) others to the denunciatory part of the law, (Doddridge and Bloomfield;) and others that it means that the chief purpose of the law was to restrain the wicked. It seems clear, however, that the apostle does not refer merely to the ceremonial law, for he specifies that which condemns the unholy and profane; the murderers of fathers and mothers; liars and perjured persons. It was not the *ceremonial* law which condemned these things, but the moral law. It cannot be supposed, moreover, that the apostle meant, to say that the law was not binding on a *righteous man*, or that he was under no obligation to obey it—for he everywhere teaches that the moral law is obligatory on all mankind. To suppose also that a *righteous man* is released from the obligation to obey the law, that is, to do *right*, is an absurdity. Nor does he seem to mean, as Macknight supposes, that the law was not given for the purpose of justifying a righteous man—for this was originally one of its designs. Had man always obeyed it, he would have been justified by it. The meaning seems to be, that the purpose of the law was not to fetter and perplex those who were righteous, and who aimed to do their duty and to please God, It was not intended to produce a spirit of servitude and bondage. As the Jews interpreted it, it did this, and this interpretation appears to have been adopted by the teachers at Ephesus, to whom Paul refers. The whole tendency of their teaching was to bring the soul into a state of bondage, and to make religion a condition of servitude. Paul teaches,

on the other hand, that religion was a condition of freedom, and that the main purpose of the law was not to fetter the minds of the righteous by numberless observances and minute regulations, but that it was to restrain the wicked from sin. This is the case with all law. No *good* man feels himself fettered and manacled by wholesome laws, nor does he feel that the purpose of law is to reduce him to a state of servitude. It is only the wicked who have this feeling—and in this sense the law is made for a man who intends to do wrong.

For the lawless. To bind and restrain them. The word here used means, properly, those who have no law, and then those who are transgressors—the wicked. It is rendered *transgressors* in Mr 15:28 Lu 22:37; and *wicked*, Ac 2:23 2Th 2:8.

And disobedient. Those who are insubordinate, lawless, refractory. The word properly means those who are under no subjection or authority. It occurs in the New Testament only here, and Tit 1:6,10, where it is rendered unruly, and Heb 2:8, where it is translated not put under; that is, under Christ.

For the ungodly. Those who have no religion; who do not worship or honour God. The Greek word occurs in the following places, in all of which it is rendered *ungodly*, Ro 4:5 5:6; 1Ti 1:9 1Pe 4:18; 2Pe 2:5 3:7; Jude 1:4,15.

The meaning is, that the law is against all who do not worship or honour God.

And for sinners. The word used here is the common word to denote *sinners*. It is general, and includes sins of all kinds.

For unholy. "Those who are regardless of duty to God or man." *Robinson, Lex*. The word occurs in the New Testament only here, and in 2Ti 3:2. It has particular reference to those who fail of their duty towards God, and means those who have no piety; who are irreligious.

And profane. This does not necessarily mean that they were profane in the sense that they blasphemed the name of God, or were profane swearers—though the word would include that—but it means properly those who are impious, or who are scoffers. **See Barnes "Heb 12:16"**.

The word occurs only in the following places, in all of which it is rendered *profane*, 1Ti 1:9 4:7, 6:20 2Ti 2:16; Heb 12:16.

A man who treats religion with contempt, mockery, or scorn, would correspond with the meaning of the word.

For murderers of fathers. The Greek properly means *a smiter of a father*, (Robinson,) though here it undoubtedly means a parricide. This was expressly forbidden by the law of Moses, and was a crime punishable by death, Ex 21:15. It is said to have been a crime which the Roman law did not contemplate as possible, and hence that there was no enactment against it. It is, indeed, a crime of the highest order; but facts have shown that if the Romans supposed it would never be committed, they did not judge aright of human nature. There is no sin which man will not commit if unrestrained, and there is in fact no conceivable form of crime of which he has not been guilty.

Murderers of mothers. A still more atrocious and monstrous crime, if possible, than the former. We can conceive nothing superior to this in atrocity, and yet it has been committed. Nero caused his mother to be murdered, and the annals of crime disclose the names of not a few who have imbrued their own hands in the blood of those who bare them. This was also expressly forbidden by the law of Moses, Ex 21:15.

For manslayers. This word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means a homicide—a murderer. The crime is expressly forbidden by the law, Ex 20:13 Ge 9:6.

{f} "the law" Ga 5:23

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 1 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *For whoremongers*. Le 19:29 20:5.

For them that defile themselves with mankind. Sodomites. See the evidence that this crime abounded in ancient times, **See Barnes "Ro 1:27"**.

It was forbidden by the law of Moses, and was punishable with death. Le 20:13.

For menstealers. The word here used *andrapodisthv* occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It properly means one who steals another for the purpose of making him a slave—a kidnapper. This is the common way in which men are made slaves. Some, indeed, are taken in war and sold as slaves, but the mass of those who have been reduced to servitude have become slaves by being kidnapped. Children are *stolen* from their parents, or wives from their husbands, or husbands from their wives, or parents from their children, or whole families are stolen together. None become slaves voluntarily, and consequently the whole process of making slaves partakes of the nature of *theft* of the worst kind. What theft is like that of stealing a man's children, or his wife, or his father or mother! The *guilt* of manstealing is incurred essentially by those who purchase those who are thus stolen—as the purchaser of a stolen horse, knowing it to be so, participates in the crime. A measure of that criminality also adheres to all who own slaves, and who thus maintain the system-for it is a system known to have been originated by theft. This crime was expressly forbidden by the law of God, and was made punishable with death, Ex 21:16 De 24:7.

For liars. Le 6:2-4 19:11.

For perjured persons. Those who swear falsely. Le 19:12 6:3; Ex 20:7.

And if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine. To sound or correct *teaching*—for so the word doctrine means. The meaning is, if there is anything else that is opposed to the instruction which the law of God gives.

{a} "doctrine" 2Ti 4:3 Tit 1:9

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 1 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *According to the glorious gospel*. The gospel is a system of Divine revelation. It makes known the will of God. It states what is duty, and accords in its great principles with the law, or is in harmony with it. The law, in principle, forbids all which the gospel forbids, and in publishing the requirements of the gospel, therefore, Paul says that the law really forbade all which was prohibited in the gospel, and was designed to restrain all who would act contrary to that gospel. There is no contradiction between the law and the gospel. They forbid the same things, and in regard to morals and true piety, the clearer revelations of the gospel are but carrying out the principles stated in the law. They who preach the gospel, then, should not be regarded as arrayed against the law, and Paul says that they who preached the gospel aright really stated the true principles of the law. This he evidently intends should bear against the false teachers who professed to explain the law of Moses. lie means here that if a man wished to explain the law, the best explanation would be found in that gospel which it was his office to publish. Comp. Ro 3:31.

Of the blessed God. Revealed by the blessed God—the same God who was the Author of the law. Which was committed to my trust. Not to him alone, but to him in common with others, he had received it directly from the Lord, 1Co 9:17. **See Barnes "Ga 1:1"**.

{b} "blessed God" 1Ti 6:15 {c} "was committed" 1Co 9:17

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 1 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord*. The mention of the gospel 1Ti 1:11, and of the fact that it was committed to him leads the apostle to express his gratitude to him who had called him to the work of preaching it. The Lord Jesus had called him when he was a blasphemer and a persecutor. He had constrained him to leave his career of persecution and blasphemy, and to consecrate himself to the defence and the propagation of the gospel. For all this, though it had required him to give up his favourite projects in life, and all the flattering schemes of ambition, he now felt that praise was due to the Redeemer. If there is anything for which a good man will be thankful, and should be thankful, it is that he has been so directed by the Spirit and providence of God as to be put into the ministry. It is indeed a work of toil and of self-denial, and demanding many sacrifices of personal ease and comfort. It requires a man to give up his splendid prospects of worldly distinction, and of wealth and ease. It is often identified with want, and poverty, and neglect, and persecution. But it is an office so honourable, so excellent, so noble, and ennobling; it is attended with so many precious comforts here, and is so useful to the world, and it has such promises of blessedness and happiness in the world to come, that *no matter what a man is required to give up in order to become a minister of the gospel*, he should be thankful to Christ for putting him into the office. A minister when he comes to die, feels that the highest favour which heaven has conferred on him has been in turning his feet away from the paths of ambition, and the pursuits of ease or gain, and leading him to that holy work to which he has been enabled to consecrate his life.

Who hath enabled me. Who has given me ability or strength for this service. The apostle traced to the Lord Jesus *the fact* that he was in the ministry at all, and all the ability which he had to perform the duties of thai holy office. It is not necessary here to suppose, as many have done, that he refers to miraculous power conferred on him, but he makes the acknowledgment which any faithful minister would do, that all the strength which he has to perform the duties of his office is derived from Christ. Comp. **See Barnes "Joh 15:5"**; **See Barnes "1Co 15:10"**.

For that he counted me faithful. This is equivalent to saying that he reposed confidence in me. It means that there was something in the character of Paul, and in his attachment to the Saviour, on which reliance could be placed, or that there was that which gave the assurance that he would be faithful. A sovereign when he sends an ambassador to a foreign court, reposes confidence in him, and would not commission him unless he had reason to believe that he would be faithful. So it is in reference to all who are called by the Redeemer into the ministry. They are his ambassadors to a lost world. His putting them into the ministry is an act expressive of great confidence in them—for he commits to them great and important interests. Learn hence,

(1.) that no one ought to regard himself as called to the ministry who will not be "faithful" to his Master: and

(2.) that the office of the ministry is most honourable and responsible. Nowhere else are there so great interests intrusted to man.

{d} "enabled me" 1Co 15:10 {e} "faithful" 1Co 7:25 {f} "putting me" Col 1:25

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 1 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Who was before a blasphemer*. This does not mean that Paul before his conversion was what would now be regarded as an open blasphemer—that he was one who abused and reviled sacred things, or one who was in the habit of profane swearing. His character appears to have been just the reverse of this, for he was remarkable for treating what he regarded as sacred with the utmost respect. **See Barnes "Php 3:4-6"**.

The meaning is, that he had reviled the name of Christ, and opposed him and his cause—not believing that he was the Messiah; and in thus opposing he had really been guilty of blasphemy. The true Messiah he had in fact treated with contempt and reproaches; and he now looked back upon that fact with the deepest mortification, and with wonder that one who had been so treated by him should have been willing to put him into the ministry. On the meaning of the word *blaspheme*, **See Barnes "Mt 9:3"**.

Compare **See Barnes "Ac 26:11"**.

In his conduct here referred to, Paul elsewhere says, that he thought at the time that he was doing what he ought to do, Ac 26:9; here he says that he now regarded it as blasphemy. Learn hence that men may have very different views of their conduct when they come to look at it in subsequent life. What they now regard as harmless, or even as right and proper, may hereafter overwhelm them with shame and remorse. The sinner will yet feel the deepest self-reproaches for that which now gives us no uneasiness.

And a persecutor. Ac 9:1 Ac 22:4, 26:11 1Co 15:9; Ga 1:13,23.

And injurious. The word here used, (*ubristhv*,) occurs only in one other place in the New Testament, Ro 1:30, where it is tendered *despiteful*. The word *injurious* does not quite express its force. It does not mean merely doing injury, but refers rather to the manner or spirit in which it is done. It is a word of intenser signification than either the word "blasphemer," or "persecutor," and means that what he did was done with a proud, haughty, insolent spirit. There was wicked and malicious violence, an arrogance and spirit of tyranny in what he did, which greatly aggravated the wrong that was done. Comp. the Greek in Mt 22:6 Lu 11:45, 18:32 Ac 14:5; 1Th 2:2; 2Co 12:10, for illustrations of the meaning of the word. Tindal and Coverdale render it here "tyrant."

But I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. Comp. **See Barnes "Lu 23:34"**.

The ignorance and unbelief of Paul were not such excuses for what he did that they would wholly free him from blame, nor did he regard them as such—for what he did was with a violent and wicked spirit—but they were mitigating circumstances. They served to modify his guilt, and were among the reasons why God had mercy on him. What is said here, therefore, accords with what the Saviour said in his prayer for his murderers: "Father, forgive them, *for* they know not what they do." It is undoubtedly true that persons who sin ignorantly, and who regard themselves as right in what they do, are much more likely to obtain mercy than those who do wrong designedly.

{a} "a blasphemer" Ac 8:3 1Co 15:9 {b} "ignorantly" Lu 23:34

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 1 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant*. That is, in his conversion under these circumstances, and in the aid which was afterwards imparted to him in his work.

With faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. Accompanied with the exercise of faith and love; or producing faith and love. The grace which was imparted to him was seen in the faith and love which it produced. **See Barnes "1Co 15:10"**.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 1 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *This is a faithful saying*. Gr., "Faithful is the word," or doctrine— *o logov*. This verse has somewhat the character of a parenthesis, and seems to have been thrown into the midst of the narrative because the mind of the apostle was full of the subject. He had said that he, a great sinner, had obtained mercy. This naturally led him to think of the purpose for which Christ came into the world—*to save sinners*—and to think how strikingly that truth had been illustrated in his own case, and how that case had shown that it was worthy the attention of all. The word rendered "saying," means, in this place, *doctrine, position, or declaration*. The word "faithful," means *assuredly true*; it was that which might be depended on, or on which reliance might be placed. The meaning is, that the doctrine that Christ came to save sinners might be depended on as certainly true. Comp. 2Ti 2:11 Tit 3:8.

And worthy of all acceptation. Worthy to be embraced or believed by all. This is so because

(1.) all are sinners and need a Saviour. All, therefore, ought to welcome a doctrine which shows them how they may be saved.

(2.) Because Christ died for all.

If he had died for only a part of the race, and could save only a part, it could not be said, with any propriety, that the doctrine was worthy of the acceptance of "all". If that were so, what had it to do with *all*? How could all be interested in it, or benefited by it? If medicine had been provided for only a part of the patients in a hospital, it could not be said that the announcement of such a fact was worthy the attention of all. It would be highly worthy the attention of those for whom it was designed, but there would be a part who would have nothing to do with it; and why should they concern themselves about it? But if it were provided for each one, then each one would have the highest interest in it. So, if salvation has been provided for me, it is a matter claiming my profoundest attention; and the same is true of every human being. If not provided for me, I have nothing to do with it. It does not concern me at all.

(3.) The manner in which the provision of salvation has been made in the gospel is such as to make it worthy of universal acceptation. It provides for the complete pardon of sin, and the restoration of the soul to God. This is done in a way that is honourable to God—maintaining his law and his justice; and, at the same time, it is in a way that is honourable to man. He is treated afterwards as a friend of God and an heir of life. He is raised up from his degradation, and restored to the favour of his Maker. If man were himself to suggest a way of salvation, he could think of none that would be more honourable to God and to himself; none that would do so much to maintain the law, and to elevate him from all that now degrades him. What higher honour can be conferred on man than

to have his salvation *sought as an object of intense and earnest desire* by one so great and glorious as the Son of God?

(4.) It is worthy of all acceptance, from the nature of the salvation itself. Heaven is offered, with all its everlasting glories, through the blood of Christ—and is not this worthy of universal acceptation? Men would accept of a coronet or crown; a splendid mansion, or a rich estate; a present of jewels and gold, if freely tendered to them; but what trifles are these compared with heaven! If there is anything that is worthy of universal acceptation, it is heaven, for all will be miserable unless they enter there.

That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. The great and peculiar doctrine of the gospel. He "*came* into the world." He, therefore, had a previous existence. He *came*. He had, therefore, an object in coming. It makes his gospel more worthy of acceptation, that he had an intention, a plan, a wish, in thus coming into the world. He "came" when he was under no necessity of coming; he came to save, not to destroy; to reveal mercy, not to denounce judgment; to save sinners—the poor, the lost, the wandering, not to condemn them; he came to restore them to the favour of God, to raise them up from their degradation, and to bring them to heaven.

Of whom I am chief. Gr., *first*. The word is used to denote eminence, and it means that he occupied the *first rank* among sinners. There were none who surpassed him. This does not mean that he had been the greatest of sinners *in all respects*, but that in some respects he had been so great a sinner, that, on the whole, there were none who had surpassed him. That to which he particularly refers was doubtless the part which he had taken in putting the saints to death; but in connexion with this, he felt, undoubtedly, that he had by nature a heart eminently prone to sin. See Ro 7. Except in the matter of persecuting the saints, the youthful Saul of Tarsus appears to have been eminently moral, and his outward conduct was framed in accordance with the strictest rules of the law, Php 3:6 Ac 26:4,6.

After his conversion, he never attempted to extenuate his conduct, or excuse himself. He was always ready, in all circles, and in all places, to admit, to its fullest extent, the fact that he was a sinner. So deeply convinced was he of the truth of this, that he bore about with him the constant impression that he was eminently unworthy; and hence he does not say merely that he *had been* a sinner of most aggravated character, but he speaks of it as something that always pertained to him—" of whom I am chief." We may remark

(1.) that a true Christian will always be ready to admit that his past life has been evil;

(2.) that this will become the abiding and steady conviction of the soul; and

(3.) that an acknowledgment that we are sinners is not inconsistent with evidence of piety, and with high attainments in it. The most eminent Christian has the deepest sense of the depravity of his own heart, and of the evil of his past life.

{c} "faithful saying" 2Ti 2:11 Tit 3:8 {d} "came into the world" Mt 9:13 Lu 19:10

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 1 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Howbeit for this came*. That is, this was on, of the causes, or this was a leading reason. We are not to suppose that this was the only one. God had other ends to answer by his conversion than this; but this was one of the designs why he was pardoned— that there might be for all ages

a permanent proof that sins of the deepest dye might be forgiven. It was well to have one such example at the outset, that a doubt might never arise about the possibility of forgiving great transgressors. The question thus would be settled for ever.

That in me first. Not *first* in the order of time, as our translation would seem to imply, but that in me the first or chief of sinners *en emoi prwtw* he might show an example. The idea is, that he sustained the first rank as a sinner, and that Jesus Christ designed to show mercy to him as such, in order that the possibility of pardoning the greatest sinners might be evinced, and that no one might afterwards despair of salvation on account of the greatness of his crimes.

Might show forth all long-suffering. The highest possible degree of forbearance, in order that a case might never occur about which there could be any doubt. It was shown by his example that the Lord Jesus could evince any possible degree of patience, and could have mercy on the greatest imaginable offenders.

For a pattern. *upotupwsin*. This word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, except in 2Ti 1:13, where it is rendered *form*. It properly means a form, sketch, or imperfect delineation. Then it denotes a pattern or example, and here it means that the case of Paul was an example for the encouragement of sinners in all subsequent times. It was that to which they might look when they desired forgiveness and salvation. It furnished all the illustration and argument which they would need to show that they might be forgiven. It settled the question for ever that the greatest sinners might be pardoned; for as he was "the chief of sinners," it proved that a case could not occur which was beyond the possibility of mercy.

Which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. All might learn from the mercy shown to him that salvation could be obtained. From this verse we may learn

(1.) that no sinner should despair of mercy. No one should say that he is so great a sinner that he cannot be forgiven. One who regarded himself as the "chief" of sinners was pardoned, and pardoned for the very purpose of illustrating this truth, that any sinner might be saved. His example stands as the illustration of this to all ages; and were there no other, any sinner might now come and hope for mercy. But there are other examples. Sinners of all ranks and descriptions have been pardoned. Indeed, there is no form of depravity of which men can be guilty, in respect to which there are not instances where just such offenders have been forgiven. The persecutor may reflect that great enemies of the cross like him have been pardoned; the profane man and the blasphemer, that many such have been forgiven; the murderer, the thief, the sensualist, that many of the same character have found mercy, and have been admitted to heaven.

(2.) The fact that great sinners have been pardoned, is a proof that others of the same description may be also. The same mercy that saved them can save us—for mercy is not exhausted by being frequently exercised. The blood of atonement which has cleansed so many can cleanse us—for its efficacy is not destroyed by being once applied to the guilty soul. Let no one then despair of obtaining mercy because he feels that his sins are too great to be forgiven. Let him look to the past, and remember what God has done. Let him remember the case of Saul of Tarsus; let him think of David and Peter; let him recall the names of Augustine, and Col. Gardiner, and the Bari of Rochester, and John Newton, and John Bunyan—and thousands like them, who have found mercy; and in *their* examples let him see a full proof that God is willing to save any sinner, no matter how vile, provided he is penitent and believing.

{a} "pattern" Ro 15:4

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 1 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Now unto the King eternal*. This ascription of praise is offered to God in view of the mercy which he had shown to so great a sinner. It is the outbreak of that grateful emotion which swelled his bosom, and which would not be denied expression, when Paul recalled his former life and the mercy of God to his soul. It somewhat interrupts indeed the train of his remarks, but the heart was so full that it demanded utterance. It is just an instance of the joy and gratitude which fill the soul of a Christian when he is led along in a train of reflections which conduct him to the recollection of his former sin and danger, and to the fact that he has obtained mercy and has now the hope of heaven. The apostle Paul not unfrequently, in accordance with a mode of writing that was common among the Hebrews, interposes an expression of praise in the midst of his reasonings. Comp. Ro 1:25 2Co 11:31. God is called King here, as he is often in the Scriptures, to denote that he rules over the universe. A literal translation of the passage would be, "To the King of ages, who is immortal," etc. The meaning of this expression—"the King of ages" *basilei twn aiwnwn* — is, that he is a King who rules throughout all ages. This does not mean that he himself lives for ever, but that his dominion extends over all ages or generations. The rule of earthly monarchs does not extend into successive ages; his does. Their reign is temporary; his is enduring, and continues as one generation after another passes on, and thus embraces them all.

Immortal. This refers to God himself, not to his reign. It means that he does not die, and it is given to him to distinguish him from other sovereigns. All other monarchs but God expire—and are just as liable to die at any moment as any other men.

Invisible. 1Ti 6:16. **See Barnes "Joh 1:18"**.

The only wise God. **See Barnes "Ro 16:27"**.

The word "*wise*" is wanting in many .Mss., and in some editions of the New Testament. It is omitted by Griesbach; marked as doubtful by Tittman; and rejected in the valuable edition of Hahn. Erasmus conjectures that it was added against the Arians, who maintained that the Father only was God, and that as he is here mentioned as such, the word *wise* was interpolated to denote merely that the attribute of perfect wisdom belonged only to him. Wetstein regards the reading as genuine, and suspects that in some of the early manuscripts where it is wanting it was omitted by the transcriber, because it was regarded as inelegant for two adjectives to be united in this manner. It is not easy to determine as to the genuineness of the reading. The sense is not materially affected, whichever view be adopted. It is true that Jehovah is the only God; it is also true that he is the only *wise* God. The gods of the heathen are "vanity and a lie," and they are wholly destitute of wisdom. See Ps 115:3-8 135:16-18; Isa 40:18-20 44:10-17.

Be honour. Let there be all the respect and veneration shown to him which is his due.

And glory. Praise. Let him be praised by all for ever.

Amen. So be it; an expression of strong affirmation. Joh 3:3. Here it is used to denote the solemn assent of the heart to the sentiment conveyed by the words used. **See Barnes "Mt 6:13 1Co 14:16"**.

{b} "eternal" Ps 10:16 {c} "invisible" 1Ti 6:15,16 {d} "wise God" Joh 1:16 {e} "God" Ro 16:27 {f} "honour and glory" 1Ch 29:11

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 1 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *This charge*. This command or injunction. It does not refer to any "charge," or "cure," which he had as bishop or minister, as the word is sometimes used now, but to the commands or injunctions which he was delivering to him. The command particularly referred to is that in 1Ti 1:3.

According to the prophecies which went before on thee. The general meaning of this is plain. It is, that Paul was committing to him an important trust, and one that required great wisdom and fidelity; and that in doing it he was acting in conformity with the hopes which had been cherished respecting Timothy, and with certain expressed anticipations about his influence in the church. From early life the hope had been entertained that he would be a man to whom important trusts might be committed; and it had been predicted that he would be distinguished as a friend of religion. These hopes seem to have been cherished in consequence of the careful training in religion which he had had, 2Ti 2:2 3:15, and probably from the early indications of seriousness, prudence, and piety, which he manifested. It was natural to entertain such hopes; and it seems, from this place, that such hopes had even assumed the form of predictions. It is not absolutely necessary to suppose that these predictions referred to by the word prophecies were inspired, for the word may be used in a popular sense, as it is often now, We speak now familiarly of *predicting or foretelling* the future usefulness of a serious, prudent, studious, and pious youth. We argue from what he is, to what he will be, and we do not deem it unsafe or improper to hazard the prediction that, if he lives, he will be a man to whom important interests may be intrusted. As there were, however, prophets in the Christian church, **See Barnes "Ac 11:27"**; **See Barnes** "1Co 14:32, and as it is possible that in some cases they were inspired to foretell future events, it cannot be regarded as improper to suppose that some of them had foretold the future usefulness of this religiously educated youth. Whatever may be meant by the expression, this general observation may be made, that when a young man enters on the active duties of life, and when great interests are intrusted to him, it is not improper to remind him of the hopes which had been cherished of him; of the anticipations which had been formed of his future usefulness; and of the expressions which have been used by the pious and the discerning respecting his future character. This is a kind of reminiscence which will rather increase his sense of responsibility than flatter his vanity; and it may be made a means of exciting him to diligence and fidelity. A virtuous young man will not willingly disappoint the long-cherished hopes of his friends. He will be likely to be made more diligent by the remembrance of all their fond anticipations of his future success.

That thou by them. By those prophecies. That is, that being stimulated and excited by those predictions and hopes, you might be led to fidelity and usefulness.

Mightest war a good warfare. The Christian life is often compared to a warfare or struggle for victory, comp. Eph 6:10-17 1Co 9:7 2Co 10:4, and the services of the Christian ministry especially are likened to those of a soldier, 2Ti 2:3,4, 4:7.

The meaning here is, that he should contend with earnestness as a Christian and a minister in that holy service in which he was engaged, and endeavour to secure the victory. He "wars a good warfare" who is engaged in a righteous cause; who is faithful to his commander and to his post; who is unslumbering in observing the motions of the enemy, and fearless in courage in meeting them; who never forsakes his standard, and who continues thus faithful till the period of his enlistment has expired, or till death. *Such* a soldier the Christian minister should be.

{a} "according to the prophecies" 1Th 4:14 {*} "on thee" "concerning thee"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 1 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Holding faith*. Fidelity to the cause in which you are enlisted as a good soldier should do. This does not mean, as it seems to me, that Timothy should hold to the system of doctrines revealed in the gospel, but that he should have that fidelity which a good soldier ought to have. He should not betray his trust. He should adhere to the cause of his Master with unwavering steadfastness. This would include, of course, a belief of the truth, but this is not the leading idea in the phrase.

And a good conscience. **See Barnes "Ac 23:1".**

A good conscience, as well as fidelity, is necessary in the service of the Redeemer. A good conscience is that which is well informed in regard to what is right, and where its dictates are honestly followed.

Which some having put away. That is, which good conscience some have put from them, or in other words, have not followed its dictates The truth thus taught is, that men make shipwreck of their faith by not keeping a good conscience. They love sin. They follow the leadings of passion. They choose to indulge in carnal propensities. As a matter of course, they must, if they will do this, reject and renounce the gospel. Men become infidels because they wish to indulge in sin. No man can be a sensualist, and yet love that gospel which enjoins purity of life. If men would keep a good conscience, the way to a steady belief in the gospel would be easy. If men will not, they must expect sooner or later to be landed in infidelity.

Concerning faith. In respect to the whole subject of faith. They are unfaithful to God, and they reject the whole system of the gospel. "Faith" is sometimes used to denote the gospel—as faith is the principal thing in the gospel.

Have made shipwreck. There is an entire destruction of faith—as a ship is wholly ruined that strikes on a rock and sinks.

{b} "Holding faith". "1Ti 3:9

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 1 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander*. Hymeneus is nowhere else mentioned in the New Testament, except in 2Ti 2:17, where he is mentioned in connection with Philetus as a very dangerous man. An Alexander is mentioned in Ac 19:33, which some have supposed to be the same as the one referred to here. It is not certain, however, that the same person is intended. **See Barnes "Ac 19:33".**

In 2Ti 4:14, Alexander the coppersmith is mentioned as one who had done the apostle "much evil," and there can be little doubt that he is the same person who is referred to here. One of the doctrines which Hymeneus held was that the "resurrection was past already," 2Ti 2:18; but what doctrine Alexander held is unknown. It is not improbable, as he is mentioned here in connection

with Hymeneus, that he maintained the same opinion; and, in addition to that, he appears to have been guilty of some personal injury to the apostle. Both also were guilty of blasphemy.

Whom I have delivered unto Satan. On the meaning of this expression, **See Barnes "1Co 5:5"**.

That they may learn not to blaspheme. It cannot be supposed that Satan would undertake to teach them not to blaspheme, or that Paul put them under him as an instructor on that subject. The instructions of Satan tend rather to teach his followers to blaspheme, and none in his school fail to be apt scholars. The meaning here is, that Paul excommunicated them, and not improbably brought upon them, by giving them over to Satan, some physical maladies, that they might be reformed. Comp. **See Barnes "1Co 5:5"**.

It is not entirely clear what is meant by *blaspheme* in this place. Comp. **See Barnes "1Ti 1:13"**

It cannot be supposed that they were open and bold blasphemers, for such could not have maintained a place in the church, but rather that they held doctrines which the apostle regarded as amounting to blasphemy; that is, doctrines which were *in fact* a reproach on the Divine character. There are many doctrines held by men which are in fact a reflection on the Divine character, and which amount to the same thing as blasphemy. A blasphemer openly expresses views of the Divine character which are a reproach to God; an errorist expresses the same thing in another way—by teaching as true about God that which represents him in a false light, and to suppose which, in fact, is a reproach. The spirit with which this is done in the two cases may be different; the thing itself may be the same. Let us be careful that we hold no views about God which are reproachful to him, and which, though we do not express it in words, may lead us to blaspheme him in our hearts.

{c} "delivered unto Satan" 1Co 5:5

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 1

I Timothy Chapter 2

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER,

THIS chapter is occupied mainly in directions about the mode of conducting public worship. Timothy had been left at Ephesus to complete the plans which the apostle had commenced in reference to the church there, but from completing which he had been un- expectedly prevented, (see the Intro. ;) and it was important to state the views which he entertained on this subject to Timothy. It was important also that general directions on these subjects should be given, which would be useful to the church at large. The directions in this chapter relate to the following subjects:—

I. Public prayer, 1Ti 2:1-8.

(1.) It was to be offered for all classes of men, without distinction of rank, sect, party, country, or name; especially for all that were in authority, 1Ti 2:1,2. The reasons for this were,

(a) That God desired all men to be saved, and it was acceptable to him that prayer should be offered for all, 1Ti 2:3,4.

(b) There is but one God over all the human race, and all are alike his children, 1Ti 2:5.

(c) There is one and the same Mediator between God and all men, 1Ti 2:5.

(d) The same atonement has been made for all, 1Ti 2:6,7.

(2.) The way in which prayer should be offered. It should be with holy hands, and without the intermingling of any bad passion, 1Ti 2:8.

II. The duties of women, 1Ti 2:9-15.

(1.) Modesty in their demeanour and apparel, 1Ti 2:9.

(2.) Good works—the chief ornament of women professing piety, 1Ti 2:10.

(3.) The duty of learning from others with a gentle and quiet spirit, 1Ti 2:11.

(4.) The duty of a proper subordination and submission to man, 1Ti 2:12.

(5.) The reasons for this subordination and submission are then stated. They are,

(a) That Adam was first formed, 1Ti 2:13.

(b) That the woman had been deceived, and should be willing to occupy a subordinate place, as she was first in the transgression and was the means of leading him into sin, 1Ti 2:14.

(6.) Yet, as if to make a kind remark in favour of woman—to show that he did not intend to teach that she was degraded and abandoned of God—the apostle says that she would be under the Divine protection, and that in the special sorrow and peril which had been brought upon her for her transgression, God would sustain her if she continued in faith, and evinced the spirit of a Christian in her life, 1Ti 2:15.

Verse 1. *I exhort, therefore*. Marg., *desire*. The word *exhort*, however, better expresses the sense of the original. The exhortation here is not addressed particularly to Timothy, but relates to all who were called to lead in public prayer, 1Ti 2:8. This exhortation, it may be observed, is inconsistent with the supposition that a *liturgy* was then in use, or with the supposition that there ever would be a liturgy—since, in that case, the objects to be prayed for would be prescribed. How singular would it be now for an episcopal bishop to "exhort" his presbyters to pray "for the President of the United States and for all who are in authority." When the prayer is prescribed, do they not do this as a matter of course?

First of all. That is, as the first duty to be enjoined; the thing that is to be regarded with primary concern. Comp. Lu 12:1; 2Pe 1:20. It does not mean that this was to be the first thing in public worship in the order of time, but that it was to be regarded as a duty of primary importance. The duty of praying for the salvation of the whole world was not to be regarded as a subordinate and secondary thing.

Supplications. It is not entirely easy to mark the difference in the meaning of the words used here, and it is not essential. They all relate to *prayer*, and refer only to the different parts of prayer, or to distinct classes of thought and desire which come before the mind in pleading for others. On the difference between the words *supplications* and *prayers*, **See Barnes "Heb 5:7"**.

Intercessions. The noun used occurs only in this place and in 1Ti 4:5, of this epistle. The verb, however (*entugcanw*) occurs in Ac 25:24 Ro 8:27,34 11:2; Heb 7:25.

See the meaning explained in the **See Barnes "Ro 8:26"**; **See Barnes** "Heb 7:25".

There is one great Intercessor between God and man, who pleads for our salvation on the ground of what he himself has done, but we are permitted to intercede for others, not on the ground of any

merit which they or we possess, but on the ground of the merit of the great Advocate and Intercessor. It is an inestimable privilege to be permitted to plead for the salvation of our fellow-men.

Giving of thanks. That is, in behalf of others. We ought to give thanks for the mercy of God to ourselves; it is right and proper also that we should give thanks for the goodness of God to others. We should render praise that there is a way of salvation provided; that no one is excluded from the offer of mercy; and that God is using so many means to call lost sinners to himself.

For all men. Prayers should be made for all men—for all need the grace and mercy of God; thanks should be rendered for all, for all may be saved. Does not this direction imply that Christ died for all mankind? How could we give thanks in their behalf if there were no mercy for them, and no way had been provided by which they could be saved? It may be observed here, that the direction to pray and to give thanks for all men, showed the large and catholic nature of Christianity. It was opposed entirely to the narrow and bigoted feelings of the Jews, who regarded the whole Gentile world as excluded from covenant mercies, and as having no offer of life. Christianity threw down all these barriers, and all men are on a level; and since Christ has died for all, there is ample ground for thanksgiving and praise in behalf of the whole human race.

{1} "exhort" "desire"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *For kings*. On the respect due to rulers, **See Barnes "Ro 13:1-7"**.

The meaning here is, that while all men should be the subjects of prayer, those should be particularly remembered before the throne of grace who are in authority. The reason is, that so much depends on their character and plans; that the security of life, liberty, and property, depends so much on them. God has power to influence their hearts, and to incline them to what is just and equal; and hence we should pray that a Divine influence may descend upon them. The salvation of a king is of itself of no more importance than that of a peasant or a slave; but the welfare of thousands may depend on him, and hence he should be made the special subject of prayer.

All that are in authority. Marg., "or, *eminent place*." This does not necessarily mean those who hold office, but refers to any of elevated rank. The happiness of all who are under their control depends greatly on them, and hence we should pray for them that they may be converted men, and inclined to do that which is right.

That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life. That their hearts may be so inclined to what is right that they may protect us in the enjoyment of religion, and that we may not be opposed or harassed by persecution. This does not mean that their protection would dispose us to lead quiet and peaceful lives, but that under their protection we may be saved from oppression on account of our religion. Christians are disposed of themselves to be peaceful and orderly; they ask of their rulers only that they may not be harassed in the enjoyment of their rights.

In all godliness and honesty. In the practice of all our duties towards God, and of all the duties which we owe to men. The word godliness here denotes piety—or the duty which we owe to God; the word honesty refers to our duties to our fellow-men. The Christian asks from civil rulers such protection that he may be enabled quietly to perform both these classes of duties.

{a} "kings" Ro 13:1 {2} "that are in authority" "eminent places"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *For this is good and acceptable*. That is, it is good and acceptable to God that we should pray for all men. The reason is, that he desires their salvation, and hence it is agreeable to him that we should pray for it. If there were no provision made for their salvation, or if he were unwilling that they should be saved, it could not be agreeable to him that we should offer prayer for them.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Who will have all men to be saved*. That is, it is in accordance with his nature, his feelings, his desires. The word *will* cannot be taken here in the absolute sense, denoting a decree like that by which he willed the creation of the world, for then it would certainly be done. But the word is often used to denote a desire, wish, or what is in accordance with the nature of any one. Thus it may be said of God that he "wills" that his creatures may be happy—because it is in accordance with his nature, and because he has made abundant provision for their happiness—though it is not true that he wills it in the sense that he exerts his absolute power to make them happy. God wills that sickness should be relieved, and sorrow mitigated, and that the oppressed should go free, because it is agreeable to his nature; though it is not true that he wills it in the sense that he exerts his absolute power to produce it. A parent wills the welfare of his child. It is in accordance with his nature, his feelings, his desires; and he makes every needful arrangement for it. If the child is not virtuous and happy, it is his own fault. So God wills that all men should be saved. It would be in accordance with his benevolent nature. He has made ample provision for it. He uses all proper means to secure their salvation. He uses no positive means to prevent it, and if they are not saved it will be their own fault. For places in the New Testament where the word here translated "will" (*yelw*) means *to desire or wish*, Lu 8:20 23:8; Joh 16:19; Ga 4:20 Mr 7:24; 1Co 7:7 11:3, 14:5 Mt 15:28.

This passage cannot mean, as many have supposed, that God wills that all kinds of men should be saved, or that some sinners of every rank and class may be saved, because

(1.) the natural and obvious interpretation of the language is opposed to such a sense. The language expresses the desire that "all men" should be saved, and we should not depart from the obvious sense of a passage unless necessity requires it.

(2.) Prayer and thanksgiving 1Ti 2:1 are directed to be offered, not for some of all ranks and conditions, but for all mankind. No exception is made, and no direction is given that we should exclude any of the race from the expressions of our sympathy, and from an interest in our supplications. The reason given here for that prayer is, that God desires that all men should be saved. But how could this be a reason for praying for *all*, if it means that God desired only the salvation of some of all ranks?

(3.) In 1Ti 2:5,6, the apostle gives reasons showing that God wished the salvation of all men, and those reasons are such as to prove that the language here is to be taken in the most unlimited sense. Those reasons are,

(a) that there is one God over all, and one Mediator between God and men—showing that God is the Father of all, and has the same interest in all; and

(b) that Christ gave himself a ransom for all—showing that God desired their salvation. This verse proves

(1.) that salvation is provided for all —for if God wished all men to be saved, he would undoubtedly make provision for their salvation; and if he had not made such provision, it could not be said that he desired their salvation, since no one can doubt that he has *power* to provide for the salvation of all;

(2.) that salvation should be offered to all men—for if God desires it, it is right for his ministers to announce that desire, and if he desires it, it is not proper for them to announce anything contrary to this;

(3.) that men are to blame if they are not saved. If God did not wish their salvation, and if he had made no provision for it, they could not be to blame if they rejected the gospel. If God wishes it, and has made provision for it, and they are not saved, the sin must be their own—and it is a *great* sin, for there is no greater crime which a man can commit than to destroy his own soul, and to make himself the eternal enemy of his Maker.

And to come unto the knowledge of the truth. The truth which God has revealed: the "truth as it is in Jesus." **See Barnes "Eph 4:21"**.

{b} "Who will have" Joh 3:15,16; 2Pe 3:9

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *For there is one God*. This is a reason for offering prayer for all men, and for the declaration 1Ti 2:4 that God desires that all men should be saved. The reason is founded in the fact that he is the common Father of all the race, and that he must have the same desire for the welfare of all his children. He has made them of one blood, Ac 17:26, and he must have the same interest in the happiness of all. Comp. **See Barnes "**Eph 4:6; **See Barnes "Ro 3:30"**.

And one Mediator between God and men. **See Barnes "**Ga 3:19, **See Barnes "Ga 3:20"**; **See Barnes "Heb 9:15"**.

This also is given as a reason why prayer should be offered for all, and a proof that God desires their salvation. The argument is, that there is the same Mediator between God and all men. He is not the Mediator between God and a part of the human race, but between "God and men," implying that he desired the salvation of the race. Whatever love there was in giving the Mediator at all, was love for all the race: whatever can be argued from that about the interest which God has in man, is proof of his interest in the race at large. It is proper, therefore, to pray for all. It may be remarked here that there is but one Mediator. There is not one for kings and another for their subjects; one for the rich and another for the poor; one for the master and another for the slave. All are on the same level, and the servant may feel that, in the gift of a Mediator, God regarded him with the same interest that he did his master. It may be added, also, that the doctrine of the Papists, that the saints or the Virgin Mary may act as mediators to procure blessings for us, is false. There is but "one Mediator;" and but one is necessary. Prayer offered to the "saints," or to the "Virgin," is idolatry;

and, at the same time, removes the one great Mediator from the office which he alone holds, of making intercession with God.

The man Christ Jesus. Jesus was truly and properly a man, having a perfect human body and soul, and is often called a man in the New Testament. But this does not prove that he was not also divine—any more than his being called *God*, Joh 1:1 20:28; Ro 9:5 1Jo 5:20

Heb 1:8, proves that he was not also a man. The use of the word *man* here was probably designed to intimate that, though he was divine, it was in his human nature that we are to consider him as discharging the office. *Doddridge*.

{a} "one God" Ro 3:30 {b} "one mediator" Heb 9:15

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Who gave himself a ransom for all*. This also is stated as a reason why prayer should be offered for all, and a proof that God desires the salvation of all. The argument is, that as Christ died for all, it is proper to pray for all; and that the fact that he died for all, is proof that God desired the salvation of all. Whatever proof of his desire for their salvation can be derived from this, in relation to *any* of the race, is proof in relation to all. On the meaning of the phrase "he gave himself a ransom," **See Barnes "Mt 20:28"**; **See Barnes "Ro 3:26"**.

On the fact that it was for "all," **See Barnes "2Co 5:14"**.

To be testified in due time. Marg., a testimony. The Greek is, "the testimony in its own times," or in proper times— *to marturion kairoiv idioiv*. There have been very different explanations of this phrase. The common interpretation, and that which seems to me to be correct, is, that "the testimony of this will be furnished in the proper time; that is, in the proper time it shall be made known through all the world." See Rosenmuller. Paul affirms it as a great and important truth that Christ gave himself a ransom for all mankind—for Jews and gentiles; for all classes and conditions of men alike. This truth had not always been understood. The Jews had supposed that salvation was designed exclusively for their nation, and denied that it could be extended to others, unless they became Jews. According to them, salvation was not provided for, or offered to heathens as such, but only on condition that they became Jews. In opposition to this, Paul says that it was a doctrine of revelation that redemption was to be provided for all men, and that it was intended that the testimony to this should be afforded at the proper time. It was not fully made known under the ancient dispensation, but now the period had come when it should be communicated to all. **See Barnes** "Ro 5:6, **See Barnes "Ga 4:4"**.

{c} "ransom for all" Mt 20:28 {1} "be testified" "a testimony"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Whereunto*. Gr., "Unto which;" that is, to the bearing of which testimony I am appointed.

I am ordained. Gr., "I am placed or constituted" *eteyhn*. The word "ordain" has now acquired a technical signification, meaning to set apart solemnly to a sacred office by the imposition of

hands; but it has not that meaning here. It does not refer to the manner in which he was set apart, or to any act of others in consecrating him to this work, but merely to the fact that he had been placed in this office, or appointed to it. He refers, doubtless, to the fact that the Lord Jesus had designated him to this work.

A preacher and an apostle. **See Barnes** "1Co 9:1, and following. **See Barnes** "Ga 1:11, also **See Barnes "Ga 1:12"**.

I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not. That is, by Christ; or I solemnly appeal to Christ—a form of an oath. **See Barnes "Ro 9:1"**.

Paul makes a solemn declaration similar to this in regard to his call to the apostleship, in Ga 1:20. For the reasons why he did it, **See Barnes "Ga 1:20"**.

It is probable that there were those in Ephesus who denied that he could be an apostle, and hence his solemn declaration affirming it.

A teacher of the Gentiles. Specially appointed to carry the gospel to the gentiles or the heathen. **See Barnes "Ro 11:13"**; **See Barnes "Ga 2:7"**.

In faith and verity. These words mean that he was appointed to instruct the Gentiles in faith and the knowledge of the truth.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *I will therefore*. The Greek word here *boulomai* is different from the word rendered *will yelw* 1Ti 2:4. The distinction is, that the word there used—*yelw*—denotes an active volition or purpose; the word here used—*boulomai*—a mere passive desire, propensity, willingness. Rob. Lex. The meaning here is, "It is my will"—expressing his wishes in the case, or giving direction—though using a milder word than that which is commonly employed to denote an act of will.

That men pray everywhere. Not merely in the temple, or in other sacred places, but in all places. The Jews supposed that there was special efficacy in prayers offered at the temple in Jerusalem; the heathen also had the same view in regard to their temples—for both seemed to suppose that they came nearer to God by approaching his sacred abode. Christianity teaches that God may be worshipped in any place, and that we are at all times equally near him.

See Barnes "Joh 4.20"

and following. **See Barnes "Ac 17:25"**.

The direction here given that men should pray in contradistinction from the, duties of women, specified in the next verse, may be intended to imply that men should conduct the exercises of public worship. The duties of women pertain to a different sphere. Comp. 1Ti 2:11,12.

Lifting up holy hands. To lift up the hands denotes supplication, as it was a common attitude of prayer to spread abroad the hands towards heaven. Comp. Ps 68:31 Ex 9:29,33 1Ki 8:22; 2Ch 6:12,13; Isa 1:16.

See also Horace Odes, III. xxii. 1; Ovid, M. ix. 701; Livy, v. 21; Seneca, Ep. 21. "Holy hands" here mean hands that are not defiled by sin, and thai have not been employed for any purpose of iniquity. The idea is, that when men approach God they should do it in a pure and holy manner.

Without wrath. That is, without the intermingling of any evil passion; with a calm, peaceful, benevolent mind. There should be nothing of the spirit of contention; there should be no anger

towards others; the suppliant should be at peace with all men. It is impossible for a man to pray with comfort, or to suppose that his prayers will be heard, if he cherishes anger. The following exquisite and oft-quoted passage from Jeremy Taylor, is a more beautiful and striking illustration of the effect of anger in causing our prayers to return unanswered than was probably ever penned by any one else. Nothing could be more true, beautiful, and graphic. "Anger sets the house on fire, and all the spirits are busy upon trouble, and intend propulsion, defence, displeasure, or revenge. It is a short madness, and an eternal enemy to discourse and a fair conversation; it intends its own object with all the earnestness of perception or activity of design, and a quicker motion of a too warm and distempered blood; it is a fever in the heart, and a calenture in the head, and a fire in the face, and a sword in the hand, and a fury all over; and therefore can never suffer a man to be in a disposition to pray. For prayer is the peace of our spirit, the stillness of our thoughts, the evenness of recollection, the seat of meditation, the rest of our cares, and the calm of our tempest; prayer is the issue of a quiet mind, of untroubled thoughts; it is the daughter of charity and the sister of meekness; and he that prays to God with an angry, that is, with a troubled and discomposed spirit, is like him that retires into a battle to meditate, and sets up his closet in the out-quarters of an army, and chooses a frontier garrison to be wise in. Anger is a perfect alienation of the mind from prayer, and therefore is contrary to that attention which presents our prayers in a right line to God. For so have I seen a lark rising from his bed of grass, and soaring upwards, and singing as he rises, and hopes to get to heaven and rise above the clouds; but the poor bird was beaten back with the loud sighings of an eastern wind, and his motion made irregular and inconsistent. Descending more at every breath of the tempest than it could recover by the libation and frequent weighing of its wings, till the little creature was forced to sit down and pant, and stay till the storm was over; and then it made a prosperous flight, and did rise and sing, as if it had learned music and motion from an angel." *The Return of Prayers*, Works vol. i. 638. Ed. Lond. 1835.

And doubting. This. word, as used here, does not mean, as our translation would seem to imply, that we are to come before God without any doubts of our own piety, or in the exercise of perfect faith. The word used (*dialogismov*) means, properly, computation, adjustment of accounts; then reflection, thought; then reasoning, opinion; then debate, contention, strife. Lu 9:46 Mr 9:33,34; Php 2:14. This is the sense evidently in this place. They were not to approach God in prayer in the midst of clamorous disputings and angry contentions. They were not to come When the mind was heated with debate, and irritated by strife for victory. Prayer was to be offered in a calm, serious, sober state of mind, and they who engage in polemical strife, or in warm contention of any kind, are little fitted to unite in the solemn act of addressing God. How often are theologians, when assembled together, so heated by debate, and so anxious for party victory, that they are in no suitable state of mind to pray! How often do even good men, holding different views on the disputed points of religious doctrine, suffer their minds to become so excited, and their temper so ruffled, that they are conscious they are in an unfit state of mind to approach the throne of grace together! That theological debate has gone too far; that strife for victory has become too warm, when the disputants are in such a state of mind that they cannot unite in prayer; when they could not cease their contentions, and with a calm and proper spirit, bow together before the throne of grace.

{a} "pray everywhere" Joh 4:21 {b} "holy hands" Heb 10:22

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *In like manner also*. That is, with the same propriety; with the same regard to what religion demands. The apostle had stated particularly the duty of men in public worship, 1Ti 2:8, and he now proceeds to state the duty of women. All the directions here evidently refer to the proper manner of conducting public worship, and not to private duties; and the object here is to state the way in which he would have the different sexes appear. He had said that he would have prayers offered for all men, 1Th 2:1, seq., and that in offering such petitions he would have the men on whom devolved the duty of conducting public devotion, do it with holy hands, and without any intermingling of passion, and with entire freedom from the spirit of contention. In reference to the duty of females in attendance on public worship, he says that he would have them appear in apparel suitable to the place and the occasion; adorned not after the manner of the world, but with the zeal and love in the cause of the Redeemer which became Christians. He would not have a woman become a public teacher, 1Ti 2:12, but would wish her ever to occupy the place in society for which she was designed, 1Ti 2:11, and to which she had shown that she was adapted, 1Ti 2:13,14. The direction in 1Ti 2:9-12, therefore, is to be understood particularly of the proper deportment of females in the duties of public worship. At the same time, the principles laid down are doubtless such as were intended to apply to them in the other situations in life, for if modest apparel is appropriate in the sanctuary, it is appropriate everywhere. If what is here prohibited in dress is *wrong* there, it would be difficult to show that it is *right* elsewhere.

That women adorn themselves. The words "I will," are to be understood here as repeated from 1Ti 2:8. The apostle, by the use of the word *adorn*, *kosmein* shows that he is not opposed to *ornament or adorning*, provided it be of the right kind. The world, as God has made it, is full of beauty, and he has shown in each flower that he is not opposed to true ornament. There are multitudes of things which so far as we can see, appear to be designed for *mere* ornament, or are made merely because they are beautiful. Religion does not forbid true adorning. It differs from the world only on the question what is true ornament, or what it becomes us, all things considered, to do in the situation in which we are placed, the character which we sustain, the duties which we have to perform, and the profession which we make. It may be that there are ornaments in heaven which would be anything but appropriate for the condition of a poor, lost, dying sinner on earth.

In modest apparel. The word here rendered modest, *kosmiov*, properly relates to ornament or decoration, and means that which is *well-ordered, decorous, becoming*. It does not, properly, mean *modest*, in the sense of being opposed to that which is *immodest*, or which tends to excite improper passions and desires, but that which is becoming or appropriate. The apostle does not positively specify what this would be, but he mentions some things which are to be excluded from it, and which, in his view, are inconsistent with the true adorning of Christian females —" broidered hair, gold, pearls, costly array." The sense here is, that the apparel of females should be such as becomes them, or is appropriate to them. The word here used, *kosmiov* shows that there should be due attention that it may be *truly neat*, fit, decorous. There is no religion in a negligent mode of apparel, or in inattention to personal appearance- any more than there is in wearing gold and pearls; and a female may as truly violate the precepts of her religion by neglecting her personal appearance, as by excessive attention to it. The true idea here is, that her attention to her appearance should be such that she will be offensive to no class of persons; such as to show that her mind is supremely fixed on higher and more important things, and such as to interfere with no duty which she owes,

and no good which she can do, either by spending her time needlessly in personal adorning, or by lavishing that money for dress which might do good to others, or by neglecting the proprieties of her station, and making herself offensive to others.

With shame-facedness. With modesty of appearance and manner—an eminent female virtue, whether in the sanctuary or at home.

And sobriety. The word here used means properly, *sanity*; then sober-mindedness, moderation of the desires and passions. It is opposed to all that is frivolous, and to all undue excitement of the passions. The idea is, that in their apparel and deportment they should not entrench on the strictest decorum. *Doddridge*.

Not with broidered hair. Marg., *plaited*. Females in the east pay much more attention to the hair than is commonly done with us. It is plaited with great care, and arranged in various forms, according to the prevailing fashion, and often ornamented with spangles, or with silver wire, or tissue interwoven. **See Barnes "Isa 3:24"**.

The sense here is, that Christian females are not to imitate those of the world in their careful attention to the ornaments of the head. It cannot be supposed that the mere *braiding* of the hair is forbidden, but only that careful attention to the manner of doing it, and to the ornaments usually worn in it, which characterized worldly females.

Or gold, or pearls. It is not to be supposed that all use of gold or pearls, as articles of dress, is here forbidden; but the idea is, that the Christian female is not to seek these as the adorning which she desires, or is not to imitate the world in these personal decorations. It may be a difficult question to settle how much ornament is allowable, and when the true line is passed. But though this cannot be settled by any exact rules, since much must depend on age, and on the relative rank in life, and the means which one may possess, yet there is one general rule which is applicable to all, and which might regulate all. It is, that the true line is passed when more is thought of this external adorning, than of the ornament of the heart. Any external decoration which occupies the mind more than the virtues of the heart, and which engrosses the time and attention more, we may be certain is wrong. The apparel should be such as not to attract attention; such as becomes our situation; such as will not be particularly singular; such as shall leave the impression that the heart is not fixed on it. It is a poor ambition to decorate a dying body with gold and pearls. It should not be forgotten that the body thus adorned will soon need other habiliments, and will occupy a position where gold and pearls would be a mockery. When the *heart* is right; when there is true and supreme love for religion, it is usually not difficult to regulate the subject of dress. *Costly array*. Expensive dress. This is forbidden, for it is foolish; and the money thus employed may be much more profitably used in doing good. "Costly array" includes that which can be ill afforded, and that which is inconsistent with the feeling that the principal ornament is that of the heart.

{1} "broidered" "plaited" 1Pe 3:3

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works*. That is, it is not appropriate for women who profess to be the followers of the Saviour, to seek to be distinguished for personal, external decorations. If they are Christians, they have seen the vanity of these things,

and have fixed the heart on more substantial realities. They are professed followers of Him "who went about doing good," and the performance of good works especially becomes them. They profess to have fixed the affections on God their Saviour, and to be living for heaven; and it is not becoming in them to seek such ornaments as would indicate that the heart is supremely attached to worldly things. There is great beauty in this direction. Good works, or deeds of benevolence, eminently become a Christian female. The nature of woman seems to be adapted to the performance of all deeds demanding kindness, tenderness, and gentleness of feeling; of all that proceeds from pity, sympathy, and affection; and we feel, instinctively, that while acts of hardy enterprise and daring in a good cause peculiarly become a Christian man, there is something exquisitely appropriate to the female character in deeds of humble and unobtrusive sympathy and benevolence. God seems to have formed her mind for just such things, and in such things it occupies its appropriate sphere, rather than in seeking external adorning.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Let the woman learn in silence*. Listen attentively to instruction, without attempting to teach in public. **See Barnes "1Co 14:35"**.

With all subjection. With due subjection to those who are in authority, and who are appointed to minister in holy things **See Barnes "1Co 14:34"**.

{a} "woman learn" 1Co 14:34

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *But I suffer not a woman to teach*. **See Barnes "1Co 14:34"**.

Nor to usurp authority over the man. **See Barnes "1Co 11:3"**.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *For Adam was first formed, then Eve*. The apostle in this verse, and, the following, gives reasons why a woman should occupy a subordinate situation, and not usurp authority. The first is, that she was second in the act of creation, or was made subsequent to man. The reason here assigned cannot be understood to be merely that of priority of existence—for then it would give every old person authority over a younger one; but it must refer to the circumstances of the case as detailed in the history of the creation, Genesis chapters 1 and 2. Man was made as the Lord, of this lower creation, and placed in the garden, and then the woman was made of a rib taken from his side, and given to him, not as a lord, but as a companion. All the circumstances combine to show the subordinate nature of her rank, and to prove that she was not designed to exert authority over the man. **See Barnes "1Co 11:8,9"**.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *And Adam was not deceived*. This is the second reason why the woman should occupy a subordinate rank in all things. It is that in the most important situation in which she was ever placed, she had shown that she was not qualified to take the lead. She had evinced a readiness to yield to temptation; a feebleness of resistance; a pliancy of character, which showed that she was not adapted to the situation of headship, and which made it proper that she *should* ever afterwards occupy a subordinate situation. It is not meant here that Adam did not sin, nor even that he was not deceived by the Tempter, but that the woman opposed a feebler resistance to the temptation than he would have done, and that the temptation as actually applied to *her* would have been ineffectual on him. To tempt and seduce *him* to fall, there were needed all the soft persuasions, the entreaties, and the example of his wife. Satan understood this, and approached man not with the specious argument of the serpent, but through the allurements of his wife. It is undoubtedly implied here that man, in general, has a power of resisting certain kinds of temptation, superior to that possessed by woman, and hence that the *headship* properly belongs to him. This is, undoubtedly, the general truth, though there may be many exceptions, and many noble cases to the honour of the female sex, in which they evince a power of resistance to temptation superior to man. In many traits of character, and among them those which are most lovely, woman is superior to man; yet it is undoubtedly true that, as a general thing, temptation will make a stronger impression on her than on him. When it is said that "Adam was not deceived," it is not meant that when he partook actually of the fruit he was under no deception, but that he was not deceived by the serpent; he was not first deceived, or first in the transgression. The woman should remember that sin began with her, and she should therefore be willing to occupy an humble and subordinate situation.

But the woman being deceived. She was made to suppose that the fruit would not injure her, but would make her wise, and that God would not fulfil his threatening of death. Sin, from the beginning, has been a process of delusion. Every man or woman who violates the law of God is deceived as to the happiness which is expected from the violation, and as to the consequences which will follow it.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 15

pgreek Verse 15. *Notwithstanding she shall be saved*. The promise in this verse is designed to alleviate the apparent severity of the remarks just made about the condition of woman, and of the allusion to the painful facts of her early history. What the apostle had just said would carry the mind back to the period in which woman introduced sin into the world, and by an obvious and easy association, to the sentence which had been passed on her in consequence of her transgression, and to the burden of sorrows which she was doomed to bear. By the remark in this verse, however, Paul shows that it was not his intention to overwhelm her with anguish. He did not design to harrow up her feelings by an unkind allusion to a melancholy fact in her history. It was necessary for him to state, and for her to know, that her place was secondary and subordinate, and he wished this truth ever to be kept in memory among Christians. It was not unkind or improper, also, to state the reasons for this opinion, and to show that her own history had demonstrated that she was not designed for

headship. But she was not to be regarded as degraded and abandoned. She was not to be overwhelmed by the recollection of what "the mother of all living" had done. There were consolations in her case. There was a special Divine interposition which she might look for, evincing tender care on the part of God in those deep sorrows which had come upon her in consequence of her transgression; and instead of being crushed and broken-hearted on account of her condition, she should remember that the everlasting arms of God would sustain her in her condition of sorrow and pain. Paul, then, would speak to her the language of consolation, and while he would have her occupy her proper place, he would have her feel that *God was her Friend*. In regard to the nature of the consolation referred to here, there has been a considerable variety of opinion. Some have held, that by the expression "she shall be saved in child-bearing," the apostle designs to include all the duties of the maternal relation, meaning that she should be saved through the faithful performance of her duties as a mother. *Robinson, Lex*. Rosenmuller regards the word rendered "child-bearing" (*teknogonia*,) as synonymous with *education*, and supposes that the meaning is, that a woman, by the proper training of her children, can obtain salvation as well as her husband, and that her appropriate duty is not public teaching, but the training of her family. Wetstein supposes that it means, "she shall be saved from the arts of impostors, and from the luxury and vice of the age, if, instead of wandering about, she remains at home, cultivates modesty, is subject to her husband, and engages carefully in the training of her children." This sense agrees well with the connexion. Calvin supposes that the apostle designs to console the woman by the assurance that, if she bears the trials of her condition of sorrow with a proper spirit, abiding in faith and holiness, she will be saved. She is not to regard herself as cut off from the hope of heaven. Doddridge, Macknight, Clarke, and others, suppose that it refers to the promise in Ge 3:15, and means that the woman shall be saved through, or by means of bearing a child, to wit, the Messiah; and that the apostle means to sustain the woman in her sorrows, and in her state of subordination and inferiority, by referring to the honour which has been put upon her by the fact that a woman gave birth to the Messiah. It is supposed also that he means to say that special honour is thus conferred on her over the man, inasmuch as the Messiah had no human father. Doddridge. The objections to this interpretation, however, though it is sustained by most respectable names, seem to me to be insuperable. They are such as these:

(1.) The interpretation is too refined and abstruse. It is not that which is obvious. It depends for its point on the fact that the Messiah had no human father, and if the apostle had intended to refer to that, and to build an argument on it, it may be doubted whether he would have done it in so obscure a manner. But it may reasonably be questioned whether he would have made that fact a point on which his argument would turn. There would be a species of refinement about such an argument, such as we should not look for in the writings of Paul.

(2.) It is not the obvious meaning of the word "child-bearing." There is nothing in the word which requires that it should have any reference to the birth of the Messiah. The word is of a general character, and properly refers to child-bearing in general.

(3.) It is not true that woman would be "saved" merely by having given birth to the Messiah. She will be saved, as man will be, as a consequence of his having been born; but there is no evidence that the mere fact that woman gave birth to him, and that he had no human father, did anything to save Mary herself, or any one else of her sex. If, therefore, the word refers to the "bearing" of the Messiah, or to the fact that he was born, it would be no more proper to say that this was connected

with the salvation of woman than that of man. The true meaning, it seems to me, has been suggested By Calvin, and may be seen by the following remarks.

(1.) The apostle designed to comfort woman, or to alleviate the sadness of the picture which he had drawn respecting her condition.

(2.) He had referred, incidentally, as a proof of the subordinate character of her station, to the first apostasy. This naturally suggested the sentence which was passed on her, and the condition of sorrow to which she was doomed, particularly in child-birth. *That* was the standing demonstration of her guilt; that the condition in which she suffered most; that the situation in which she was in greatest peril.

(3.) Paul assures her, therefore, that though she must thus suffer, yet that she ought not to regard herself in her deep sorrows and dangers, though on account of sin, as necessarily under the Divine displeasure, or as excluded from the hope of heaven. The way of salvation was open to her as well as to men, and was to be entered in the same manner. If she had faith and holiness, even in her condition of sorrow brought on by guilt, she might as well hope for eternal life as man. The object of the apostle seems to be to guard against a possible construction which might be put on his words, that he did not regard the woman as in circumstances as favourable for salvation as those of man, or as if he taught that salvation for her was more difficult, or perhaps that she could not be saved at all. The general sentiments of the Jews in regard to the salvation.of the female sex, and their exclusion from the religious privileges which men enjoy; the views of the Mohammedans in reference to the inferiority of the sex; and the prevalent feelings in the heathen world, degrading the sex, and making their condition, in regard to salvation, far inferior to that of man, show the propriety of what the apostle here says, and the fitness that he should so guard himself that his language could not possibly be construed so as to give countenance to such a sentiment. According to the interpretation of the passage here proposed, tho apostle does not mean to teach that a Christian female would be certainly saved from death in child-birth—for this would not be true, and the proper construction of the passage does not require us to understand him as affirming this. Religion is not designed to make any immediate and direct change in the laws of our physical being. It does not of itself guard us from the pestilence; it does not arrest the progress of disease; it does not save us from death; and, as a matter of fact, woman, by the highest degree of piety, is not necessarily saved from the perils of that condition to which she has been subjected in consequence of the apostasy. The apostle means to show this—that in all her pain and sorrow; amidst all the evidence of apostasy, and all that reminds her that she was "*first*" in the transgression, she may look up to God as her Friend and Strength, and may hope for acceptance and salvation.

If they continue. If woman continues—it being not uncommon to change the singular form to the plural, especially if the subject spoken of have the character of a noun of multitude. Many have understood this of children, as teaching that if the mother were faithful, so that her children continued in faith, she would be saved. But this is not a necessary or probable interpretation. The apostle says nothing of children, and it is not reasonable to suppose that he would make the prospect of *her* salvation depend on their being pious. This would be to add a hard condition of salvation, and one nowhere else suggested in the New Testament. The object of the apostle evidently is, to show that woman must continue in the faithful service of God if she would be saved—a doctrine everywhere insisted on in the New Testament in reference to all persons. She must not imitate the example of the mother of mankind, but she must faithfully yield obedience to the laws of God till death.

Faith. Faith in the Redeemer and in Divine truth, or a life of fidelity in the service of God.

Charity. Love to all.
See Barnes "1Co 13".
Holiness. She must be truly religious.
With sobriety. All these things must be united with a becoming soberness or seriousness of deportment. **See Barnes "1Ti 2:9".**
In such a life, woman may look to a world where she will be for ever free from all the sadnesses and sorrows of her condition here; where, by unequalled pain, she will be no more reminded of the time when
——————"her rash hand in evil hour
Forth reaching to tile fruit, she pluck'd, she ate;"
and when before the throne she shall be admitted to full equality with all the redeemed of the Lord. Religion meets all the sadnesses of her condition here; pours consolation into the cup of her many woes; speaks kindly to her in her distresses; utters the language of forgiveness to her heart when crushed with the remembrance of sin—for "she loves much," Lu 7:37-48; and conducts her to immortal glory in that world where all sorrow shall be unknown.
{*} "in childbearing" "through" {+} "sobriety" "sober mindedness"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 3

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 3 - Verse 1

1st Timothy Chapter 3

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER
THE object of this chapter is to give directions respecting the qualifications and duties of the officers of the Christian church. As it is evident that Timothy was to be partly employed in the appointment of suitable officers for the church at Ephesus, and as the kinds of officers here referred to were to be permanent in the church, it was important that a full statement should be put on record, under the influence of inspiration, respecting their qualifications and duties. The chapter embraces the following subjects:—
I. The qualifications of a bishop, 1Ti 3:1-7. The enumeration of his qualifications is preceded by a general statement that the office was an honourable one, and that he who aspired to it, sought an employment that was, in itself, to be regarded as desirable, 1Ti 3:1. The qualifications specified for this office, are the following:—
(1.) He must be a man of good private character; possessing and illustrating the Christian virtues, or, as we would say now, an upright man, and a Christian gentleman, 1Ti 3:2,3.
(2.) He must be a man who ruled his own house well, and who thus showed that he was qualified to preside as the first officer in the church of God, 1Ti 3:4,5.
(3.) He must be a man of suitable age and experience—one who would not be likely to fall into the temptations that are laid for the young, 1Ti 3:6.

(4.) He must have a fair reputation among those who were not Christians —as it is intended that the influence of his ministry shall reach them, and as it is impossible to do them good unless he is believed to be a man of integrity, 1Ti 3:7.

II. The qualifications of deacons, 1Ti 3:8-10,12,13.

They must be,

(1.) Men of fair character—serious, temperate, candid, 1Ti 3:8.

(2.) Men who hold to the doctrines of the gospel with a pure conscience, 1Ti 3:9.

(3.) Men who have been proved, and who have shown that they are qualified to serve the church, 1Ti 3:10.

(4.) Men whose wives are of such a character that their example will contribute to the promotion of the common cause, 1Ti 3:11.

(5.) Men not living in polygamy, and who exercise exemplary family government, 1Ti 3:12,13.

III. The reason why Paul gave these instructions to Timothy, 1Ti 3:14,15. It was, that he might know how he ought to demean himself in the important station which he was called to occupy. Paul hoped to be able to come to him before long, and to complete the work which he had commenced at Ephesus; but, in the mean time, he gave him these written counsels, that he might understand particularly the duty which was required of him.

IV. The chapter closes with a statement which seems to have been intended to impress the mind of Timothy with the importance of the duties in which he was engaged, 1Ti 3:15,16. The statement is, that the church is the great defender of the truth in the world, 1Ti 3:15, and that the truth which the church is to maintain is of the greatest importance. It relates to the incarnation of the Son of God, and to the work which he accomplished on earth—a work which excited the deepest interest in heaven, and the true doctrine respecting which it was of the utmost importance to keep up among men, 1Ti 3:16. This reason is further urged in the following chapter, by showing that the time would come when, under the influence of Satan, these great doctrines would be denied, and the truth be corrupted and perverted.

Verse 1. This is a true saying. Gr., "*Faithful is the word*"—the very phrase which is used in 1Ti 1:15. **See Barnes "1Ti 1:15"**.

The idea here is, that it was worthy of credence; it was not to be doubted.

If a man desire. Implying that there would be those who would wish to be put into the ministry. The Lord, undoubtedly, by his Spirit, often excites an earnest and irrepressible desire to preach the gospel—a desire so strong, that he in whom it exists can be satisfied in no other calling. In such a case, it should be regarded as one evidence of a call to this work. The apostle, however, by the statements which follow, intimates that wherever this desire exists, it is of the utmost importance to have just views of the nature of the office, and that there should be other qualifications for the ministry than a mere desire to preach the gospel. He proceeds, therefore, to state those qualifications; and no one who "desires" the office of the ministry should conclude that he is *called* to it, unless these qualifications substantially are found in him. The word rendered *desire* here, (*oregw*,) denotes, properly, *to reach* or *stretch out*—and hence to reach after anything, to long after, to try to obtain. Heb 11:16.

The office of a bishop. The Greek here is a single word— *episkophv*. The word *episkoph—episcoe*—whence the word *Episcopal* is derived—occurs but four times in the New Testament. It is translated visitation in Lu 19:44, and 1Pe 2:12; *bishoprick*, Ac 1:20; and, in this place, *office of a bishop*. The verb from which it is derived, (*episkopew*) occurs but twice. In Heb

12:15, it is rendered *looking diligently*; and in 1Pe 5:2, *taking the oversight*. The noun rendered *bishop*, occurs in Ac 20:28; Php 1:1 1Ti 3:2; Tit 1:7 1Pe 2:25.

The verb means, properly, to look upon, behold; to inspect, to look after, see to, take care of; and the noun denotes the office of overseeing, inspecting, or looking to. It is used to denote the care of the sick, Xeno. Oec. 15, 9; comp. *Passow*; and is of so general a character, that it may denote any office of overseeing, or attending to. There is nothing in the word itself which would limit it to any class or grade of the ministry; and it is, *in fact*, applied to nearly all the officers of the church in the New Testament, and, indeed, to Christians who did not sustain any office. Thus it is applied

(a) to believers in general, directing them to "*look diligently*, lest any one should fail of the grace of God," Heb 12:15;

(b) to the elders of the church at Ephesus, "over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers," Ac 20:28;

(c) to the elders or presbyters of the church in 1Pe 5:2, "Feed the flock of God, *taking the oversight thereof*;"

(d.) to the officers of the church in Philippi, mentioned, in connection with deacons, as the only officers of the church there, "to the saints at Philippi, with the *bishops* and deacons," Php 1:1;

(e.) to Judas, the apostate, Ac 1:20; and

(f.) to the great Head of the church, the Lord Jesus Christ, 1Pe 2:25, "the Shepherd and *Bishop* of your souls." From this use of the term it follows,

(1.) That the word is never used to designate the peculiarity of the apostolic office, or so as to have any special applicability to the apostles. Indeed, the term bishop is never applied to any of them in the New Testament; nor is the word in any of its forms ever used with reference to them, except in the single case of *Judas*, Ac 1:20.

(2.) It is never employed in the New Testament to designate an order of men superior to presbyters, regarded as having any other functions than presbyters, or being in any sense "successors" to the apostles. It is so used now by the advocates of prelacy; but this is a use wholly unknown to the New Testament. It is so undeniable that the name is never given in the New Testament to those who are now called "bishops" that even Episcopalians concede it. Thus, Dr. Onderdonk (Tract on Episcopacy, p. 12) says, "ALL that we read in the New Testament concerning 'bishops' is to be regarded as pertaining to the 'middle grade;' that is, to those who are now regarded as 'priests.'" This is not strictly correct, as is clear from the remarks above respecting what is called the 'middle grade;' but it *is* strictly correct so far as it affirms that it is *never* applied to *prelates*.

(3.) It is used in the New Testament to denote ministers of the gospel who had the care or oversight of the churches, without any regard to grade or rank.

(4.) It has now, as used by Episcopalians, a sense which is wholly unauthorized by the New Testament, and which, indeed, is entirely at variance with the usage there. To apply the term to a pretended superior Order of clergy, as designating their peculiar office, is wholly to depart from the use of the word as it occurs in the Bible.

(5.) As it is never used in the Scriptures with reference to *prelates*, it *should* be used with reference to the pastors, or other officers of the church; and to be a pastor or overseer of the flock of Christ, should be regarded as being a scriptural *bishop*.

He desireth a good work. An honourable office; an office which it is right for a man to desire. There are some stations in life which ought never to be desired; it is proper for any one to desire the office of a bishop who has the proper qualifications. Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 11:13".**

{a} "bishop" Php 1:1

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 3 - Verse 2

Verse 2. A *bishop*. A minister of religion, according to the foregoing remarks, who has the charge or oversight of any Christian church. The reference here is doubtless to one who had the government of the church intrusted to him, 1Ti 3:4,5, and who was also a preacher of the gospel.

Must be blameless. This is a different word (*anepilhptov*) from that rendered *blameless* in Lu 1:6 Php 2:15, 3:6, (*amemptov*) Compare **See Barnes "Lu 1:6"**; **See Barnes** "Php 3:6".

The word here used does not mean that, as a necessary qualification for office, a bishop should be *perfect*; but that he should be a man against whom no charge of immorality, or of holding false doctrine, is alleged. His conduct should be irreprehensible or irreproachable. Undoubtedly it means that if any charge could be brought against him implying moral obliquity, he is not fit for the office, he should be a man of irreproachable character for truth, honesty, chastity, and general uprightness.

The husband of one wife. This need not be understood as requiring that a bishop should be a married man, as Vigilantias, a presbyter in the church at Barcelona in the fourth century, supposed, however desirable, in general, it may be that a minister of the gospel should be married. But, while this interpretation is manifestly to be excluded as false, there has been much difference of opinion on the question whether the passage means that a minister should not have more than one wife at the same time, or whether it prohibits the marriage of a second wife after the death of the first. On this question the Notes of Bloomfield, Doddridge, and Macknight, may be consulted. That the former is the correct opinion, seems to me to be evident from the following considerations:

(1.) It is the most obvious meaning of the language, and it would doubtless be thus understood by those to whom it was addressed. At a time when polygamy was not uncommon, to say that a man should "have but *one wife*" would be naturally understood as prohibiting polygamy.

(2.) The marriage of a second wife, after the death of the first, is nowhere spoken of in the Scriptures as wrong. The marriage of a widow to a second husband is expressly declared to be proper, 1Co 7:39; and it is not unfair to infer from that permission that it is equally lawful and proper for a man to marry the second time. But if it is lawful for any man, it is right for a minister of the gospel. No reason can be assigned against such marriages in his case, which would not be equally valid in any other. Marriage is as honourable for a minister of the gospel as for any other man, (comp. **See Barnes** "Heb 13:4; and, as Doddridge has well remarked, "circumstances may be so adjusted that there may be as much reason for a second marriage as for the first, and as little inconvenience of any kind may attend it."

(3.) There was a special propriety in the prohibition, if understood as prohibiting polygamy. It is known that it was extensively practised, and was not regarded as unlawful. Yet one design of the gospel was to restore the marriage relation to its primitive condition; and though it might not have seemed absolutely necessary to require of every man who came into the church to divorce his wives, if he had more than one, yet, in order to fix a brand on this irregular practice, it might have been deemed desirable to require of the ministers of the gospel that they should have but one wife. Thus the practice of polygamy would gradually come to be regarded as dishonourable and improper, and the example and influence of the ministry would tend to introduce correct views in regard to

the nature of this relation. One thing is clear from this passage, that the views of the Papists in regard to the celibacy of the clergy are directly at variance with the Bible. The declaration of Paul in Heb 13:4, is, that "marriage is honourable in all;" and here it is implied that it was proper that a minister should be married. If it were not, why did not Paul prohibit it altogether! Instead of saying that it was improper that a bishop should have more than one wife, why did he not say that it was improper that he should be married at all! Would not a Romanist say so now?

Vigilant. This word *nhfaleov* occurs only here and in 1Ti 3:11; Tit 2:2. It means, properly, *sober, temperate, abstinent*, especially in respect to wine; then *sober-minded, watchful, circumspect*. *Robinson*. A minister should have a watchful care over his own conduct. He should be on his guard against sin in any form.

Sober. *swfrona*. Properly, a man of a sound mind; one who follows sound reason, and who is not under the control of passion. The idea is, that he should have his desires and passions well regulated. Perhaps the word prudent would come nearer to the meaning of the apostle than any single word which we have.

Of good behaviour. Marg., *modest*. Coverdale renders it, mannerly. The most correct rendering, according to the modern use of language, would be, that he should be a gentleman. He should not be slovenly in his appearance, or rough and boorish in his manners. He should not do violence to the usages of refined intercourse, nor be unfit to appear respectably in the most refined circles of society. Inattention to personal neatness, and to the rules which regulate refined intercourse, is indicative neither of talent, learning, nor religion; and though they are occasionally—not often—connected with talent, learning, and religion, yet they are never the fruit of either, and are always a disgrace to those who exhibit such incivility and boorishness, for such men *ought* to know better. A minister of the gospel should be a finished gentleman in his manners, and there is no excuse for him if he is not. His religion, if he has any, is adapted to make him such. He has usually received such an education as ought to make him such, and in all cases ought to have had such a training. He is admitted into the best society, and has an opportunity of becoming familiar with the laws of refined intercourse. He should be an example and a pattern in all that goes to promote the welfare of mankind, and there are few things so easily acquired that are fitted to do this, as refinement and gentility of manners. No man can do good, on the whole, or in the "long run," by disregarding the rules of refined intercourse; and, other things being equal, the refined, courteous, polite gentleman in the ministry, will always do more good than he who neglects the rules of good-breeding.

Given to hospitality. This is often enjoined on all Christians as a duty of religion. For the reasons of this, and the nature of the duty, **See Barnes "Ro 12:3 Heb 13:2"**.

It was a special duty of the ministers of religion, as they were to be examples of every Christian virtue.

Apt to teach. Gr., *Didactic*; that is, capable of instructing, or qualified for the office of a teacher of religion. As the principal business of a preacher of the gospel is to teach, or to communicate to his fellowmen the knowledge of the truth, the necessity of this qualification is obvious. No one should be allowed to enter the ministry who is not qualified to impart instruction to others on the doctrines and duties of religion; and no one should feel that he ought to continue in the ministry, who has not industry, and self-denial, and the love of study enough to lead him constantly to endeavour to increase in knowledge, that he may be qualified to teach others. A man who would teach a people, must himself keep in advance of them on the subjects on which he would instruct them.

{b} "bishop" Tit 1:6 {1} "good behaviour" "modest"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 3 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Not given to wine*. Marg., "*Not ready to quarrel and offer wrong, as one in wine*." The Greek work (*paroinov*) occurs in the New Testament only here and in Tit 1:7. It means, properly, *by wine*; i.e., spoken of what takes place *by or over wine*, as revelry, drinking songs, etc. Then it denotes, as it does here, one who sits by wine; that is, who is in the habit of drinking it. It cannot be inferred, from the use of the word here, that wine was absolutely and entirely prohibited; for the word does not properly express that idea. It means that one who is in the habit of drinking wine, or who is accustomed to sit with those who indulge in it, should not be admitted to the ministry. The way in which the apostle mentions the subject here would lead us fairly to suppose that he did not mean to commend its use in any sense; that he regarded its use as dangerous, and that he would wish the ministers of religion to avoid it altogether. In regard to its use at all, except at the communion or as a medicine, it may be remarked, that a minister will do no injury to himself or others by letting it entirely alone; he may do injury by indulging in it. No man is under any obligation of courtesy or Christian duty to use it; thousands of ministers of the gospel have brought ruin on themselves, and disgrace on the ministry, by its use. **See Barnes** "Mt 11:19, **See Barnes "1Ti 5:23".**

No striker, he must be a peaceable, not a quarrelsome man. This is connected with the caution about the use of wine, probably, because that is commonly found to produce a spirit of contention and strife.

Not greedy of filthy lucre. Not contentious or avaricious. Gr., Not desirous of base gain. The desire of this is condemned everywhere in the New Testament; but it is especially the duty of a minister of the gospel to be free from it. He has a right to a support, **See Barnes "1Co 9:1"**; and following, but there is nothing that more certainly paralyzes the usefulness of a minister of the gospel than the love of money. There is an instinctive feeling in the human bosom that such a man ought to be actuated by a nobler and a purer principle. As avarice, moreover, is the great sin of the world—the sin that sways more hearts, and does more to hinder the progress of the gospel, than all others combined—it is important in the highest degree that the minister of religion should be an example of what men should be, and that he, by his whole life, should set his face against that which is the main obstruction to the progress of that gospel which he is appointed to preach.

But patient. Modest, mild, gentle. See the word (Gr.) in Php 4:5 Tit 3:2; Jas 3:17 1Pe 2:18, where it is rendered *gentle*. The word means that the minister of the gospel should be a man of mild and kind demeanour, such as his Master was.

Not a brawler. Comp. 2Ti 2:24. That is, he should not be a man given to contention, or apt to take up a quarrel. The Greek is, literally, *Not disposed to fight*.

Not covetous, Gr., *Not a lover of silver*; that is, of money. A man should not be put into the ministry who is characteristically a lover of money. Such a one, no matter what his talents may be, has no proper qualification for the office, and will do more harm than good.

{1} "Not given to wine" "not ready to quarrel and offer wrong, as one on wine"

{a} "not a brawler" 2Ti 2:24

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 3 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *One that ruleth well his own house*. This implies that a minister of the gospel would be, and ought to be, a married man. It is everywhere in the New Testament supposed that he would be a man who could be an example in all the relations of life. The position which he occupies in the church has a strong resemblance to the relation which a father sustains to his household; and a qualification to govern a family well, would be an evidence of a qualification to preside properly in the church. It is probable that, in the early Christian church, ministers were not unfrequently taken from those of mature life, and who were, at the time, at the head of families; and, of course, such would be men who had had an opportunity of showing that they had this qualification for the office. Though, however, this cannot be insisted on now as a previous qualification for the office, yet it is still true that, if he has a family, it is a necessary qualification, and that a man in the ministry should be one who governs his own house well. A want of this will always be a hinderance to extensive usefulness.

Having his children in subjection with all gravity. This does not mean that his children should evince gravity, whatever may be true on that point; but it refers *to the father*, he should be a grave or serious man in his family; a man free from levity of character, and from frivolity and fickleness, in his intercourse with his children. It does not mean that he should be severe, stern, morose—which are traits that are often mistaken for gravity, and which are as inconsistent with the proper spirit of a father as frivolity of manner —but that he should be a serious and sober-minded man. He should maintain proper *dignity*, (*semnothv*;) he should maintain self-respect, and his deportment should be such as to inspire others with respect for him.

{a} "ruleth well" Ps 101:2

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 3 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *For if a man know not how to rule*. This is a beautiful and striking argument. A church resembles a family. It is, indeed, larger, and there is a greater variety of dispositions in it than there is in a family. The authority of a minister of the gospel in a church is also less absolute than that of a father. But still there is a striking resemblance. The church is made up of an assemblage of brothers and sisters. They are banded together for the same purposes, and have a common object to aim at. They have common feelings and common wants. They have sympathy, like a family, with each other in their distresses and afflictions. The government of the church also is designed to be *paternal*. It should be felt that he who presides over it, has the feelings of a father; that he loves all the members of the great family; that he has no prejudices, no partialities, no selfish aims to gratify. Now, if a man cannot govern his own family well; if he is severe, partial, neglectful, or tyrannical at home, how can he be expected to take charge of the more numerous "household of faith" with proper views and feelings? If, with all the natural and strong ties of affection, which bind a father to his own children; if, when they are few comparatively in number, and where his eye is constantly upon them, he is unable to govern them aright, how can he be expected to preside in a proper manner over the larger household, where he will be bound with comparatively feebler ties, and where he will be exposed more to the influence of passion, and where he will have a much

less constant opportunity of supervision? Confucius, as quoted by Doddridge, has a sentiment strikingly resembling that before us: "It is impossible, that he who knows not how to govern and reform his own family, should rightly govern and reform a people." We may remark, also, in this verse, a delicate and beautiful use of words by the apostle, to prevent the possibility of misapprehension. While he institutes a comparison between the government of a family and that of the church, he guards against the possibility of its being supposed that he would countenance *arbitrary* authority in the church, even such authority as a father must of necessity employ in his own family. Hence he uses different words, he speaks of the father as '*ruling*' over his own family, or *presiding over it —prosthnai*; he describes the minister of religion as *having a tender care for the church —epimelhsetai*.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 3 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Not a novice*. Marg., *one newly come to the faith*. The Greek word, which occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, means, properly, that which is *newly planted*. Thus it would mean a plant that was not strong, or not fitted to bear the severity of storms; that had not as yet struck its roots deep, and could not resist the fierceness of a cold blast. Then the word comes to mean a new convert; one who has had little opportunity to test his own faith, or to give evidence to others that he would be faithful to the trust committed to him. The word does not refer so much to one who is young in years, as one who is young in faith. Still, all the reasons which apply against introducing a very recent convert into the ministry, will apply commonly with equal force against introducing one young in years.

Lest being lifted up with pride. We are not to suppose that this is the only reason against introducing a recent convert into the ministry, but it is a sufficient reason. He would be likely to be elated by being intrusted at once with the highest office in the church, and by the commendations and flattery which he might there receive. No condition is wholly proof against this; but he is much less likely to be injured who has had much experience of the depravity of his own heart, and whose mind has been deeply imbued with the spirit of the gospel.

He fall into the condemnation of the devil. That is, the same kind of condemnation which the devil fell into; to wit, condemnation on account of pride. It is here intimated, that the cause of the apostasy of Satan was Pride—a cause which is as likely to have been the true one as any other. Who can tell but it may have been produced by some new honour which was conferred on him in heaven, and that his virtue was not found sufficient for the untried circumstances in which he was placed? Much of the apostasy from eminent virtue in this world, arises from this cause; and possibly the case of Satan may have been the most signal instance of this kind which has occurred in the universe. The idea of Paul is, that a young convert should not suddenly be raised to an exalted station in the church. Who can doubt the wisdom of this direction? The word rendered lifted up, (*tufwyeiv*,) is from a verb which means, to smoke, to fume, to surround with smoke; then *to inflate*—as a bladder is with air; and then to be conceited or proud; that is, to be like a bladder filled, not with a solid substance, but with air.

{1} "novice" "one newly come to the faith" {b} "pride" Pr 16:18 {c} "devil" Jude 1:6

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 3 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without*. Who are without the church; that is, of those who are not Christians. This includes, of course, all classes of those who are not Christians—heathens, infidels, Jews, moral men, and scoffers. The idea is, that he must have a fair reputation with them for integrity of character. His life must be in their view upright must not be addicted to anything which they regard as inconsistent with good morals. His deportment must be such that they shall regard it as not inconsistent with his profession. He must be true, and just, and honest in his dealings with his fellow-men, and so live that they cannot say that he has wronged them. lie must not give occasion for scandal or reproach in his intercourse with the other sex, but must be regarded as a man of a pure life and of a holy walk. The reason for this injunction is too obvious. It is his business to endeavour to do such men good, and to persuade them to become Christians. *But no minister of the gospel can possibly do such men good, unless they regard him as an upright and honest man*. No matter how he preaches or prays; no matter how orthodox, learned, or apparently devout he may be, all his efforts will be in vain unless *they* regard him as a man of incorruptible integrity. If they hate religion themselves, they insist justly that since he has professed it, he shall be governed by its principles; or if they feel its importance, they will not be influenced to embrace it by a man that they regard as hypocritical and impure. Go to a man whom you have defrauded, or who regards you as having done or attempted wrong to any other one, and talk to him about the necessity of religion, and he will instinctively say, that he does not want a religion which will not make its professor true, honest, and pure. It is impossible, therefore, for a minister to over-estimate the importance of having a fair character in the view of the world, and no man should be introduced into the ministry, or sustained in it, who has not a fair reputation. **See Barnes "Col 4:5"**; **See Barnes** "1Th 4:12".

Lest he fall into reproach. That is, in such a way as to bring dishonour on the ministerial character. His life will be such as to give men occasion to reproach the cause of religion.

And the snare of the devil. The snare which the devil lays to entrap and ruin the ministers of the gospel and all good men. The snare to which reference is here made, is that of *blasting the character and influence of the minister of the gospel*. The idea is, that Satan lays this snare so to entangle him as to secure this object, and the means which he uses is the vigilance and suspicion of those who are out of the church. If there is anything of this kind in the life of a minister which they can make use of, they will be ready to do it. Hence the necessity, on his part, of an upright and blameless life. Satan is constantly aiming at this thing; the world is watching for it; and if the minister has any propensity which is not in entire accordance with honesty, Satan will take advantage of it, and lead him into the snare.

{d} "them which are without" Ac 22:12 1Th 4:12 {e} "snare or the devil" 1Ti 6:9 2Ti 2:26

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 3 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Likewise must the deacons*. On the meaning of the word *deacons*, **See Barnes "Php 1:1"**. On their appointment, **See Barnes "Ac 6:1"**.

The word here evidently denotes those who had charge of the temporal affairs of the church, the poor, etc. No qualifications are mentioned, implying that they were to be preachers of the gospel. In most respects, except in regard to preaching, their qualifications were to be the same as those of the bishops.

Be grave. Serious, sober-minded men. In Ac 6:3, it is said that they should be men of *honest report*. On the meaning of the word grave, **See Barnes "1Th 3:4"**.

They should be men, who, by their serious deportment, will inspire respect.

Not double-tongued. The word here used —*dilogov* does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It means, properly, uttering the same thing twice, (from *div* and *legw*,) and then deceitful, or speaking one thing and meaning another. They should be men who can be relied on for tile exact truth of what they say, and for the exact fulfilment of their promises.

Not given to much wine. **See Barnes "1Th 3:3"**.

The word *much* is added here to what is said (1Ti 3:8) of the qualification of a bishop. It is not affirmed that it would be proper for the deacon, any more than the bishop, to indulge in the use of wine in small quantities, but it is affirmed that a man who is much given to the use of wine, ought not, on any consideration, to be a deacon. It may be remarked here, that this qualification was everywhere regarded as necessary for a minister of religion. Even the heathen priests, on entering a temple, did not drink wine.—Bloomfield. The use of wine, and of strong drinks of all kinds, was absolutely prohibited to the Jewish ministers of every rank, when they were about to engage in the service of God, Le 10:9. Why should it, then, be any more proper for a Christian minister to drink wine, than for a Jewish or a heathen priest! Shall a minister of the gospel be less holy than they? Shall he have a feebler sense of the purity of his vocation? Shall he be less careful lest he expose himself to the possibility of conducting the services of religion in an irreverent and silly manner? Shall he venture to approach the altar of God under the influence of intoxicating drinks, when a sense of propriety restrained the heathen priest, and a solemn statute of Jehovah restrained the Jewish priest from doing it?

Not greedy of filthy lucre. **See Barnes** "1Ti 3:3.

The special reason why this qualification was important in the deacon was, that he would be intrusted with the funds of the church, and might be tempted to appropriate them to his own use, instead of the charitable purposes for which they were designed. See this illustrated in the case of Judas, Joh 12:6.

{a} "be grave" Ac 6:3 {b} "not given" 1Ti 3:3 Le 10:9

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 3 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Holding the mystery of the faith*. On the word *mystery*, **See Barnes "1Co 2:7"**.

It means that which had been concealed, or hidden, but which was now revealed. The word *faith*, here, is synonymous with the gospel; and the sense is, that he should hold firmly the great doctrines of the Christian religion, which had been so long. concealed from men, but which were now revealed. The reason is obvious. Though not a preacher, yet his influence and example would be great, and a man who held material error, ought not to be in the office.

In a pure conscience. A mere orthodox faith was not all that was necessary, for it was possible that a man might be professedly firm in the belief of the truths of revelation, and yet be corrupt at heart.

{c} "the mystery" Eph 1:9 {d} "of the faith" 1Ti 3:16

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 3 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *And let these also be first proved*. That is, tried or tested in regard to the things which were the proper qualifications for the office. This does not mean that they were to be employed as *preachers*, but that they were to undergo a proper trial in regard to their fitness for the office which they were to fill. They were not to be put into it without any opportunity of knowing what they were. It should be ascertained that they were grave, serious, temperate, trustworthy men; men who were sound in the faith, and who would not dishonour the office. It is not said here, that there should be a formal trial, as if they were candidates for this office; but the meaning is, that they should have had an opportunity of making their character known, and should have gained such respect for their piety, and their other qualifications, that there would be reason to believe that they would perform the functions of the office well. Thus, in Ac 6:3, when deacons were first appointed, the church was directed to "look out seven men *of honest report*," who might be appointed to the office.

Then let them use the office of a deacon. Let them be appointed to this office, and fulfil its duties.

Being found blameless. If nothing can be alleged against their character. **See Barnes "1Ti 3:2"**.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 3 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Even so must their wives be grave*. Chrysostom, Theophylact, Grotius, Bloomfield, and many others, suppose that by the word *wives*, here, *gunaikav*, the apostle means *deaconesses*. Clarke supposes that it refers to women in general. The reason assigned for supposing that it does not refer to the wives of deacons, as such, is, that nothing is said of the qualifications of the wives of bishops —a matter of as much importance as that of the character of the wife of a deacon; and that it cannot be supposed that the apostle would specify the one, without some allusion to the other. But that the common interpretation, which makes it refer to the wives of deacons, as such, is to be adhered to, seems to me to be clear. For,

(1,) it is the obvious and natural interpretation.

(2.) The word here used—wives—is never used of itself to denote deaconesses.

(3.) If the apostle had meant deaconesses, it would have been easy to express it without ambiguity. Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 16:1"**.

(4.) What is here mentioned is important, whether the same thing is mentioned of bishops or not.

(5.) In the qualifications of bishops, the apostle had made a statement respecting his family, which made any specification about the particular members of the family unnecessary. He was to

be one who presided in a proper manner over his own house, or who had a well-regulated family, 1Ti 3:4,5. By a comparison of this passage, also, with Tit 2:3,4, which bears a strong resemblance to this, it would seem that it was supposed that the deacons would be taken from those who were advanced in life, and that their wives would have some superintendence over the younger females of the church. It was, therefore, especially important that they should be persons whose influence would be known to be decidedly favourable to piety. No one can doubt that the character of a woman may be such, that it is not desirable that her husband should be an officer in the church. A bad woman ought not to be intrusted with any additional power or influence.

Grave. **See Barnes "1Ti 3:4"**.

Not slanderers. Comp. Tit 2:3, "Not false accusers." The Greek word is *diabolouv—devils*. It is used here in its original and proper sense, to denote a *calumniator, slanderer, or accuser*. It occurs in the same sense in 2Ti 3:3 Tit 2:3. Elsewhere in the New Testament, it is uniformly rendered devil, **See Barnes "Mt 4:1"**; and is given to Satan, the prince of the fallen angels, (Mt 9:34,) by way of eminence, as *the accuser*. Comp. **See Barnes** "Job 1:6, and following; **See Barnes "Re 12:10"**.

Here it means that they should not be women who were in the habit of calumniating others, or aspersing their character. Mingling as they would with the church, and having an opportunity to claim acquaintance with many, it would be in their power, if they chose, to do great injury to the character Of others.

Sober. **See Barnes "1Ti 3:2"**.

Faithful in all things. To their husbands, to their families, to the church, to the Saviour.

{e} "wives be grave" Tit 2:3

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 3 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife*. **See Barnes "1Ti 3:2"**.

Ruling their children and their own houses well. **See Barnes "1Ti 3:4"**; **See Barnes** "1Ti 3:5".

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 3 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *For they that have used the office of a deacon well*. Marg., *ministered*. The Greek word is the same as deacon, meaning ministering, or serving in this office. The sense would be well expressed by the phrase, deaconizing well. The *word* implies nothing as to the exact nature of the office.

Purchase to themselves. Procure for themselves. See this word explained **See Barnes "Ac 20:28"**.

A good degree. The word here used *baymov* occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means, properly, a step, as of a stair; and the fair meaning is that of going up higher, or taking an additional step of dignity, honour, or standing. So far as the word is concerned, it may mean either an advance in officer in dignity, in respectability, or in influence. It cannot certainly be inferred that the apostle referred to a higher grade of *office*; for all that the word essentially conveys is, that, by exercising this office well, a deacon would secure additional respectability and influence in the

church. Still, it is possible that those who had performed the duties of this office well were appointed to be preachers. They may have shown so much piety, prudence, good sense, and ability to preside over the church, that it was judged proper that they should be advanced to the office of bishops or pastors of the churches. Such a course would not be unnatural. This is, however, far from teaching that the office of a deacon is a subordinate office, with a view to an ascent to a higher grade.

And great boldness in the faith. The word here rendered boldness properly refers to boldness *in speaking*. See it explained in the **See Barnes "Ac 4:13"**; **See Barnes** "2Co 3:12; **See Barnes "Php 1:20"**.

But the word is commonly used to denote boldness of any kind—openness, frankness, confidence, assurance. Joh 7:13,26; Mr 8:32 2Co 7:4.

As it is here connected with *faith*—"boldness in the faith"—it means, evidently, not so much public speaking, as a manly and independent exercise of faith in Christ. The sense is, that by the faithful performance of the duties of the office of a deacon, and by the kind of experience which a man would have in that office, he would establish a character of firmness in the faith, which would show that he was a decided Christian. This passage, therefore, cannot be fairly used to prove that the deacon was a *preacher*, or that he belonged to a grade of ministerial office from which he was regularly to rise to that of a presbyter.

{1} "used" "ministered" {b} "well" Mt 25:21 {+} "purchase" "acquire" {++} "degree" "an honourable rank" {c} "faith" 2Ti 2:1

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 3 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly*. That is, he hoped to come there to give instructions personally, or to finish, himself, the work which he had commenced in Ephesus, and which had been interrupted by his being driven so unexpectedly away. This verse PROVES that the apostle Paul did not regard Timothy as the permanent diocesan bishop of Ephesus. Would any Episcopal bishop write this to another bishop? If Timothy were the permanent prelate of Ephesus, would Paul have intimated that he expected soon to come and take the work of completing the arrangements there into his own hands? In regard to his expectation of going soon to Ephesus, **See Barnes "1Ti 1:3"**.

Comp. the Introduction to the Epistle.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 3 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *But if I tarry long*. Paul appears to have been uncertain how long circumstances would require him to be absent. He expected to return, but it was possible that his hope of returning soon would be disappointed.

That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself. That is, that he might have just views about settling the affairs of the church.

In the house of God. This does not mean in a place of public worship, nor does it refer to propriety of deportment there. It refers rather to the church as a body of believers, and to intercourse

with them. The church is called the "house of God," because it is that in which he dwells. Formerly, his peculiar residence was in the temple at Jerusalem; now that the temple is destroyed, it is in the church of Christ, among his people.

Which is the church of the living God. This seems to have been added to impress the mind of Timothy with the solemn nature of the duty which he was to perform. What he did pertained to the honour and welfare of the church of the living God, and hence he should feel the importance of a correct deportment, and of a right administration of its affairs.

The pillar and ground of the truth. There has been no little diversity of opinion among critics whether this phrase is to be taken in connection with the preceding, meaning that the church is the pillar and ground of the truth; or whether it is to be taken in connection with what follows, meaning that the principal support of the truth was the doctrine there referred to—that God was manifest in the flesh. Bloomfield remarks on this: "It is surprising that any who have any knowledge or experience in Greek literature could tolerate so harsh a construction as that which arises from the latter method." The more natural interpretation certainly is, to refer it to the former; and this is supported by the consideration that it would then fall in with the object of the apostle. His design here seems to be, to impress Timothy with a deep sense of the importance of correct conduct in relation to the church; of the responsibility of those who presided over it; and of the necessity of care and caution in the selection of proper officers. To do this, he reminded him that the truth of God that revealed truth which he had given to save the world—was intrusted to the church; that it was designed to preserve it pure, to defend it, and to transmit it to future times; and that, therefore, every one to whom the administration of the affairs of the church was intrusted, should engage in this duty with a deep conviction of his responsibility. On the construction of the passage, Bloomfield, Rosenmuller, and Clarke, may be consulted. The word "pillar" means a column, such as that by which a building is supported, and then any firm prop or support. Ga 2:9 Re 3:12. If it refers to the church here, it means that that is the support of the truth, as a pillar is of a building. It sustains it amidst the war of elements, the natural tendency to fall, and the assaults which may be made on it, and preserves it when it would otherwise tumble into ruin. Thus it is with the church. It is intrusted with the business of maintaining the truth, of defending it from the assaults of error, and of transmitting it to future times. The truth is, in fact, upheld in the world by the church. The people of the world feel no interest in defending it, and it is to the church of Christ that it is owing that it is preserved and transmitted from age to age. The word rendered "ground"—*edraiwma*—means properly, a basis, or foundation. The figure here is evidently taken from architecture, as the use of the word pillar is. The proper meaning of the one expression would be, that truth is supported by the church, as an edifice is by a pillar; of the other, that the truth rests on the church, as a house does on its foundation. It is that which makes it fixed, stable, permanent; that on which it securely stands amidst storms and tempests; that which renders it firm when systems of error are swept away as a house that is built on the sand. Comp. **See Barnes "Mt 7:24";** Mt 7:25-27. The meaning then is, that the stability of the truth on earth is dependent on the church. It is owing to the fact that the church is itself founded on a rock, that the gates of hell cannot prevail against it, that no storms of persecution can overthrow it, that the truth is preserved from age to age. Other systems of religion are swept away; other opinions change; other forms of doctrine vanish; but the knowledge of the great system of redemption is preserved on earth unshaken, because the church is preserved, and because its foundations cannot be moved. This does not refer, I suppose, to creeds and confessions, or to the decisions of synods and councils; but to the living spirit of truth and piety in the church

itself. As certainly as the church continues to live, so certain it will be that the truth of God will be perpetuated among men.

{&} "tarry long" "delay" {d} "house of God" 2Ti 2:20 {2} "pillar and ground" "stay"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 3 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *And, without controversy*. Undeniably, certainly. The object of the apostle is to say that the truth which he was about to state admitted of no dispute.

Great is the mystery. On the meaning of the word *mystery*, **See Barnes "1Co 2:7"**.

The word means that which had been hidden or concealed. The meaning here is not that the proposition which he affirms was mysterious, in the sense that it was unintelligible, or impossible to be understood; but that the doctrine respecting the incarnation and the work of the Messiah, which had been so long *kept hidden* from the world, was a subject of the deepest importance. This passage, therefore, should not be used to prove that there is anything unintelligible, or anything that surpasses human comprehension, in that doctrine, whatever may be the truth on that point; but that the doctrine which he now proceeds to state, and which had been so long concealed from mankind, was of the utmost consequence.

Of godliness. The word *godliness* means, properly, piety, reverence or religiousness. It is used here, however, for the gospel scheme, to wit, that which the apostle proceeds to state. This "mystery" which had "been hidden from ages and from generations, and which was now manifest," Col 1:26, was the great doctrine on which depended religion everywhere, or was that which constituted the Christian scheme.

God. Probably there is no passage in the New Testament which has excited so much discussion among critics as this, and none in reference to which it is so difficult to determine the true reading. It is the only one, it is believed, in which the microscope has been employed to determine the lines of the letters used in a manuscript; and, after all that has been done to ascertain the exact truth in regard to it, still the question remains undecided. It is not the object of these Notes to enter into the examination of questions of this nature. A full investigation may be found in Wetstein. The question which has excited so much controversy is, whether the original Greek was *yeov*, *God*, or whether it was *ov*, *who*, or *o*, *which*. The controversy has turned, to a considerable degree, on the reading in the *Codex Alexandrinus*; and a remark or two on the method in which the manuscripts of the New Testament were written, will show the true nature of the controversy. Greek manuscripts were formerly written entirely in capital letters, and without breaks or intervals between the words, and without accents. See a full description of the methods of writing the New Testament, in an article by Prof. Stuart in Dr. Robinson's Bibliotheca Sacra, No. 2, pp. 254, seq. The small, cursive Greek letters which are now used, were not commonly employed in transcribing the New Testament, if at all, until the ninth or tenth centuries. It was a common thing to abridge or contract words in the manuscript. Thus, *pr* would be used for, *pathr*, *father*; *kv* for *kuriov*, *Lord*; *yv* for *yeov*, *God*, etc. The words thus contracted were designated by a faint line or dash over them. In this place, therefore, if the original were *yC*, standing for *yeov*, *God*, and the line in the *y* and the faint line over it, were obliterated from any cause, it would be easily mistaken for *ov*, *who*. To ascertain which of these is the true reading, has been the great question; and it is with reference to this that the microscope

has been resorted to in the examination of the Alexandrian manuscript. It is now generally admitted that the faint line over the word has been added by some later hand, though not improbably by one who found that the line was nearly obliterated, and who meant merely to restore it. Whether the letter O was originally written with a line within it, making the reading, *God*, it is now said to be impossible to determine, in consequence of the manuscript at this place having become so much worn by frequent examination. The Vulgate and the Syriac read it, who, or which. The Vulgate is, "Great is the sacrament of piety which was manifested in the flesh." The Syriac, "Great is the mystery of godliness, that he was manifested in the flesh." The *probability* in regard to the correct reading here, as it seems to me, is, that the word, as originally written, was *yeov* —God. At the same time, however, the evidence is not so clear that it can be properly used in an argument. But the passage is not necessary to prove the doctrine which is affirmed, on the supposition that that is the correct reading. The same truth is abundantly taught elsewhere. Comp. Mt 1:23 Joh 1:14.

Was manifest. Marg., *Manifested*. The meaning is, *appeared* in the flesh.

In the flesh. In human nature. See this explained **See Barnes "Ro 1:3"**.

The expression here looks as though the true reading of the much disputed word was *God*. It could not have been, it would seem evident, *o*, *which*, referring to "mystery," for how could a 'mystery'" be manifested in the flesh? Nor could it be *ov*, *who*, unless that should refer to one who was more than a man; for how absurd would it be to say that a "a man was manifested, or appeared in the flesh!" How else could a man appear? The phrase here means that God appeared in human form, or with human nature; and this is declared to be the "great" truth so long concealed from human view, but now revealed as constituting the fundamental doctrine of the gospel. The expressions which follow in this verse refer to God as thus manifested in the flesh; to the Saviour as he appeared on earth, regarded as a divine and human Being. It was the fact that he thus appeared and sustained this character, which made the things which are immediately specified so remarkable, and so worthy of attention.

Justified in the Spirit. That is, the incarnate Person above referred to; the Redeemer, regarded as God and man. The word *Spirit* here, it is evident, refers to the Holy Spirit; for

(1.) it is not possible to attach any intelligible idea to the phrase, "he was justified by his own spirit, or soul,"

(2.) as the Holy Spirit performed so important a part in the work of Christ, it is natural to suppose there would be some allusion here to him; and

(3.) as the "angels" are mentioned here as having been with him, and as the Holy Spirit is often mentioned in connection with him, it is natural to suppose that there would be some allusion to Him here. The word *justified*, here, is not used in the sense in which it is when applied to Christians, but in its more common signification. It means to indicate, and the sense is, that he was shown to be the Son of God by the agency of the Holy Ghost; he was thus vindicated from the charges alleged against him. The Holy Spirit furnished the evidence that he was the Son of God, or *justified* his claims. Thus he descended on him at his baptism, Mt 3:16; he was sent To convince the world of sin, because it did not believe on him, Joh 16:8,9; the Saviour cast out devils by him, Mt 12:28; the Spirit was given to him without measure, Joh 3:34; and the Spirit was sent down, in accordance with his promise, to convert the hearts of men, Ac 2:33. All the manifestations of God to him; all the power of working miracles by his agency; all the influences imparted to the man Christ Jesus, endowing him with such a wisdom as man never had before, may be regarded as an attestation of the Holy Ghost to the divine mission of the Lord Jesus, and of course as a vindication from all the

charges against him. In like manner, the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, and his agency in the conversion of every sinner, prove the same thing, and furnish the grand argument in vindication of the Redeemer that he was sent from God. To this the apostle refers as a part of the glorious truth of the Christian scheme now revealed—the "mystery of religion;" as a portion of the amazing records, the memory of which the church was to preserve as connected with the redemption of the world.

Seen of angels. They were attendants on his ministry, and came to him in times of distress, peril, and want. Comp. Lu 2:9-13 22:43; Lu 24:4 Heb 1:6; Mt 4:11.

They felt an interest in him and his work, and they gladly came to him in his sorrows and troubles. The design of the apostle is to give an impressive view of the grandeur and glory of that work which attracted the attention of the heavenly hosts, and which drew them from the skies that they might proclaim his advent, sustain him in his temptations, witness his crucifixion, and watch over him in the tomb. The work of Christ, though despised by men, excited the deepest interest in heaven. Comp. **See Barnes** "1Pe 1:12.

Preached unto the Gentiles. This is placed by the apostle among the "great" things which constituted the "mystery" of religion. The meaning is, that it was a glorious truth that salvation might be, and should be, proclaimed to all mankind, and that this was a part of the important truths made known in the gospel. Elsewhere this is called, by way of eminence, "*the* mystery of the gospel;" that is, the grand truth, which had not been known until the coming of the Saviour. **See Barnes "Eph 6:19"**; **See Barnes** "Col 1:26, **See Barnes "Col 1:27"**; **See Barnes** "Col 4:3".

Before his coming, a wall of partition had divided the Jewish and Gentile world. The Jews regarded the rest of mankind as excluded from the covenant mercies of God, and it was one of the principal stumbling-blocks in their way, in regard to the gospel, that it proclaimed that all the race was on a level, that that middle wall of partition was broken down, and that salvation might now be published to all men. Comp. Ac 22:21 Eph 2:14,15 Ro 3:22, 10:11-20.

The Jew had no peculiar advantage for salvation by being a Jew; the Gentile was not excluded from the hope of salvation. The plan of redemption was adapted to man as such—without regard to his complexion, country, customs, or laws. The blood of Christ was shed for all, and wherever a human being could be found salvation might be freely offered him. This is a glorious truth; and, taken in all its bearings, and in reference to the views which then prevailed, and which have always more or less prevailed, about the distinctions made among men by caste and rank, there is scarcely any more glorious truth connected with the Christian revelation, or one which will exert a wider influence in promoting the welfare of man. It is a great privilege to be permitted to proclaim that all men in one respect—and that the most important—are on a level; that they are all equally the objects of the Divine compassion; that Christ died for one as really as for another; that birth, wealth, elevated rank, or beauty of complexion, contribute nothing to the salvation of one man; and that poverty, a darker skin, slavery, or a meaner rank, do nothing to exclude another from the favour of his Maker:

Believed on in the world. This also is mentioned among the "great" things which constitute the mystery of revealed religion. But why is this regarded as so remarkable as to be mentioned thus? In point of importance, how can it be mentioned in connection with the fact that God was manifest in the flesh; that he was vindicated by the Holy Ghost; that he was an object of intense interest to angelic hosts; and that his coming had broken down the walls which had separated the world, and

placed them now on a level? I answer, perhaps the following circumstances may have induced the apostle to place this among the remarkable things evincing the greatness of this truth:

(1.) The strong *improbability* arising from the greatness of the "mystery," that the doctrines respecting the incarnate Deity *would* be believed. Such is the incomprehensible nature of many of the truths connected with the incarnation; so strange does it seem that God would become incarnate; so amazing that he should appear in human flesh and blood, and that the incarnate Son of God should die, that it might be regarded as a wonderful thing that such a doctrine had in fact obtained credence in the world. But it was a glorious truth that all the natural improbabilities in the case had been overcome, and that men had accredited the announcement.

(2.) The strong improbability that his message would be believed, arising from *the wickedness of the human heart*. Man, in all his history, had shown a strong reluctance to believe any message from God, or any truth whatever revealed by him. The Jews had rejected his prophets, and put them to death, Mt 23 Ac 7, and had at last put his own Son—their Messiah—to death. Man everywhere had shown his strong inclination to unbelief. There is in the human soul no elementary principle or germ of faith in God. Every man is an unbeliever by nature—an infidel first, a Christian afterwards; an infidel as he comes into the world; a believer only as he is made so by grace. The apostle, therefore, regarded it as a glorious fact that the message respecting the Saviour had been believed in the world. It overcame such a strong and universal reluctance to confide in God, that it showed that there was more than human power in operation to overcome this reluctance.

(3.) The extent to which this had been done may have been a reason why he thought it worthy of the place which he gives it here. It had been embraced, not by a few, but by thousands in all lands where the gospel had been published; and it was proof of the truth of the doctrine, and of the great power of God, that such high mysteries as those relating to redemption, and so much opposed to the natural feelings of the human heart, should have been embraced by so many. The same thing occurs now. The gospel makes its way against the native incredulity of the world, and every new convert is an additional demonstration that it is from God, and a new illustration of the greatness of this mystery.

Received up into glory. To heaven. Comp. Joh 17:5. **See Barnes "Ac 1:9"**.

This is mentioned as among the "great," or remarkable things pertaining to "godliness," or the Christian revelation, because it was an event which had not elsewhere occurred, and was the crowning grandeur of the work of Christ. It was an event that was fitted to excite the deepest interest in heaven itself. No event of more importance has ever occurred in the universe, of which we have any knowledge, than the re-ascension of the triumphant Son of God to glory, after having accomplished the redemption of a world.

In view of the instructions of this chapter, we may make the following remarks:—

1. The word *bishop* in the New Testament never means what is now commonly understood by it—a *Prelate*. It does not denote here, or anywhere else in the New Testament, one who has charge over a *diocese* composed of a certain district of country, embracing a number of churches with their clergy.

2. There are not "three orders" of clergy in the New Testament. The apostle Paul, in this chapter, expressly designates the characteristics of those who should have charge of the church, but mentions only two—"bishops" and "deacons." The former are ministers of the word, having charge of the spiritual interests of the church; the other are deacons, of whom there is no evidence that they were appointed to preach.—There is no "third" order. There is no allusion to any one who was to be

"superior" to the "bishops" and "deacons." As the apostle Paul was expressly giving instructions in regard to the organization of the church, such an omission is unaccountable if he supposed there was to be an order of "prelates" in the church. Why is there no allusion to them? Why is there no mention of their qualifications? If Timothy was himself a prelate, was he to have nothing to do in transmitting the office to others? Were there no peculiar qualifications required in such an order of men which it would be proper to mention? Would it not be *respectful*, at least, in Paul to have made some allusion to such an office, if Timothy himself held it?

3. There is only one order of preachers in the church. The qualifications of that order are specified with great minuteness and particularity, as well as beauty, 1Ti 3:2-7. No man really needs to know more of the qualifications for this office than could be learned from a prayerful study of this passage.

4. A man who enters the ministry ought to have high qualifications, 1Ti 3:2-7. No man *ought*, under any pretence, to be put into the ministry who has not the qualifications here specified. Nothing is gained in any department of human labour, by appointing incompetent persons to fill it. A farmer gains nothing by employing a man on his farm who has no proper qualifications for his business; a carpenter, a shoemaker, or a blacksmith, gains nothing by employing a man who knows nothing about his trade; and a neighbourhood gains nothing by employing a man as a teacher of a school who has no qualifications to teach, or who has a bad character. Such a man would do more mischief on a farm, or in a workshop, or in a school, than all the good which he could do would compensate. And so it is in the ministry. The true object is not to increase the number of ministers, it is to increase the number of those who are qualified for their work, and if a man has not the qualifications laid down by the inspired apostle, he had better seek some other calling.

5. The church is the guardian of the truth, 1Ti 3:15. It is appointed to preserve it pure, and to transmit it to future ages. The world is dependent on it for any just views of truth. The church has the power, and is intrusted with the duty, of preserving on earth a just knowledge of God and of eternal things; of the way of salvation; of the requirements of pure morality:—to keep up the knowledge of that truth which tends to elevate society and to save man. It is intrusted with the Bible, to preserve uncorrupted, and to transmit to distant ages and lands. It is bound to maintain and assert the truth in its creeds and confessions of faith. And it is to preserve the truth by the holy lives of its members, and to show in their walk what is the appropriate influence of truth on the soul. Whatever religious truth there is now on the earth, has been thus preserved and transmitted, and it still devolves on the church to bear the truth of God on to future times and to diffuse it abroad to distant lands.

6. The closing verse of this chapter 1Ti 3:16 gives us a most elevated view of the plan of salvation, and of its grandeur and glory. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to condense more interesting and sublime thought into so narrow a compass as this. The great mystery of the incarnation; the interest of angelic beings in the events of redemption; the effect of the gospel on the heathen world; the tendency of the Christian religion to break down every barrier among men, and to place all the race on a level; its power in overcoming the unbelief of mankind; and the re-ascension of the Son of God to heaven, present a series of most wonderful facts to our contemplation. These things are found in no other system of religion, and these are worthy of the profound attention of every human being. The manifestation of God in the flesh! What a thought! It was worthy of the deepest interest among the angels, and it *claims* the attention of men, for it was for men and not for angels that he thus appeared in human form. Comp. **See Barnes "1Pe 1:12".**

7. How strange it is that man feels no more interest in these things! God was manifest in the flesh for his salvation, but he does not regard it. Angels looked upon it with wonder; but man, for whom he came, feels little interest in his advent or his work? The Christian religion has broken down the barrier among nations, and has proclaimed that all men may be saved; yet the mass of men look on this with entire unconcern. The Redeemer ascended to heaven, having finished his great work; but how little interest do the mass of mankind feel in this! He will come again to judge the world; but the race moves on, regardless of this truth; unalarmed at the prospect of meeting him; feeling no interest in the assurance that he *has* come and died for sinners, and no apprehension in view of the fact that he will come again, and that they must stand at his bar. All heaven was moved with his first advent, and will be with his second; but the earth regards it with unconcern. Angelic beings look upon this with the deepest anxiety, though they have no personal interest in it: man, though all his great interests are concentrated on it, regards it as a fable, disbelieves it all, and treats it with contempt and scorn. Such is the difference between heaven and earth—angels and men!

{a} "mystery of godliness" 1Co 2:7 {1} "manifest" "manifested" {b} "flesh" Joh 1:14 1Jo 1:2 {c} "Spirit" Mt 3:16 Joh 16:8,9 Ro 1:4; 1Pe 3:18 1Jo 5:6

{d} "seen of angels" Mt 4:11 Lu 2:13; Eph 3:10 1Pe 1:12

{e} "believed" Ac 13:46,48; Ro 10:12,18

{f} "world" Col 1:6 {g} "into glory" Lu 24:51 Ac 1:9

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 4

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 4 - Verse 1

1st Timothy Chapter 4.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

THERE is, in many respects, a strong resemblance between the first part of this chapter and 2Th 2. Comp. Notes on that chapter. The leading object of this chapter is to state to Timothy certain things of which he was constantly to remind the church; and, having done this, the apostle gives him some directions about his personal deportment. The chapter may be conveniently divided into three parts:—

I. Timothy was to put the church constantly in remembrance of the great apostasy which was to occur, and to guard them against the doctrines which would be inculcated under that apostasy, 1Ti 4:1-6.

(a) There was to be, in the latter days, a great departing from the faith, 1Ti 4:1.

(b) Some of the characteristics of that apostasy were these: there would be a giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils, 1Ti 4:1. Those who taught would hypocritically speak what they knew to be falsehood, having their own consciences seared,

@1Ti 4:2.

They would forbid to marry, and forbid the use of certain articles of food which God had appointed for man, 1Ti 4:3-5.

II. Timothy was to warn the churches against trifling and superstitious views, such as the apostle calls "old wives' fables," 1Ti 4:7-11.

(a) He was not to allow himself to be influenced by such fables, but at once to reject them, 1Ti 4:7.

(b) The bodily exercise which the friends of such "fables" recommended was of no advantage to the soul, and no stress ought to be laid on it, as if it were important, 1Ti 4:8.

(c) That which was truly profitable, and which ought to be regarded as important, was godliness; for that had promise of the present life, and of the life to come, 1Ti 4:8.

(d) Timothy must expect, in giving these instructions, to endure labour and to suffer reproach; nevertheless, he was faithfully to inculcate these important truths, 1Ti 4:10,11.

III. Various admonitions respecting his personal deportment, 1Ti 4:12-16.

(a) He was so to live that no one would despise him or his ministry because he was young, 1Ti 4:12.

(b) He was to give a constant attention to his duties until the apostle should himself return to him, 1Ti 4:13.

(c) He was carefully to cultivate the gift which had been conferred by his education, and by his ordination to the work of the ministry, 1Ti 4:14.

(d) He was to meditate on these things, and to give himself wholly to the work, so that his profiting might appear to all, 1Ti 4:15.

(e) He was to take good heed to himself, and to the manner and matter of his teaching, that he might save himself and those who heard him, 1Ti 4:16.

Verse 1. *Now the Spirit*. Evidently the Holy Spirit; the Spirit of inspiration. It is not quite certain, from this passage, whether the apostle means to say that this was a revelation *then* made to him, or whether it was a well-understood thing as taught by the Holy Spirit. He himself elsewhere refers to this same prophecy, and John also more than once mentions it. Comp. 2Th 2; 1Jo 2:18; Re 20. From 2Th 2:6, it would seem that this was a truth which had before been communicated to the apostle Paul, and that he had dwelt on it when he preached the gospel in Thessalonica. There is no probability, however, in the supposition that so important a subject was communicated directly by the Holy Ghost to other of the apostles.

Speaketh expressly. In express words, *rhtwv*. It was not by mere hints, and symbols, and shadowy images of the future. it was in an open and plain manner—in so many words. The object of this statement seems to be to call the attention to Timothy to it in an emphatic manner, and to show the importance of attending to it.

That in the latter times. Under the last dispensation, during which the affairs of the world would close.

See Barnes "Heb 1.2"

It does not mean that this would occur *just before* the end of the world, but that it would take place during *that last dispensation*, and that the end of the world would not happen *until* this should take place. **See Barnes "2Th 2:3"**

Some shall depart from the faith. The Greek word here— *aposthsontai*, *apostesnotai*— is that from which we have derived the word *apostate*, and would be properly so rendered here. The

meaning is, that they would *apostatize* from the belief of the truths of the gospel. It does not mean that, as individual, they would have been true Christians; but that there would be a departure from the great doctrines which constitute the Christian faith. The *ways* in which they would do this are immediately specified, showing what the apostle meant here by departing from the faith. They would give heed to seducing spirits, to the doctrines of devils, etc. The use of the word "*some*", here *tinev*, does not imply that the number would be small. The meaning is, that *certain persons* would thus depart, or that *there would be* an apostasy of the kind here mentioned, in the last days.

From the parallel passage in 2Th 2:3, it would seem that this was to be an extensive apostasy.

Giving heed to seducing spirits. Rather than to the Spirit of God. It would be a part of their system to yield to those spirits that led astray. The spirits here referred to are any that cause to err, and the most obvious and natural construction is to refer it to the agency of fallen spirits. Though it may apply to false teachers, yet, if so, it is rather to them as under the influence of evil spirits. This may be applied, so far as the phraseology is concerned, to any false teaching; but it is evident that the apostle had a specific apostasy in view—some great system that would greatly corrupt the Christian faith; and the words here should be interpreted with reference to that. It is true that men in all ages are prone to give heed to seducing spirits; but the thing referred to here is some grand apostasy, in which the characteristics would be manifested, and the doctrines held, which the apostle proceeds immediately to specify. Comp. 1Jo 4:1.

And doctrines of devils. Gr., "*Teachings of demons*"—*didaskaliaiv daimoniwn*. This may either mean teachings respecting demons, or teachings by demons. This particular sense must be determined by the connection. Ambiguity of this kind in the construction of words, where one is in the genitive case, is not uncommon. Comp. Joh 15:9,10, 21:16.

Instances of the construction where the genitive denotes the *object*, and should, be translated *concerning*, occur in Mt 9:35, "The gospel of the kingdom," i.e., concerning the kingdom; Mt 10:1, "Power *of* unclean spirits," i.e., over or concerning unclean spirits. So, also, Ac 4:9 Ro 16:25; 2Co 1:5 Eph 3:1; Re 2:13.

Instances of construction where the genitive denotes the agent, occur in the following places: Lu 1:69, "A horn of salvation," i.e., a horn which produces or causes salvation. Joh 6:28 Ro 3:22; 2Co 4:10 Eph 4:18; Col 2:11.

Whether the phrase here means that, in the apostasy, they would give heed to doctrines *respecting demons*, or to doctrines which demons *taught*, cannot, it seems to me, be determined with certainty. If the previous phrase, however, means that they would embrace doctrines taught by evil spirits, it can hardly be supposed that the apostle would immediately repeat the same idea in another form; and then the sense would be, that one characteristic of the time referred to would be the prevalent teaching *respecting* demons. They would "give heed to," or embrace, some peculiar views respecting demons. The word here rendered *devils* is *daimonia*— *demons*. This word, among the Greeks, denoted the following things:

(1.) A god or goddess, spoken of the heathen gods. Comp. in New Testament, Ac 17:18

(2.) A divine being, where no particular one was specified, the agent or author of good or evil fortune; of death, fate, etc. In this sense it is often used in Homer.

(3.) The souls of men of the golden age, which dwelt unobserved upon the earth to regard the actions of men, and to defend them—tutelary divinities, or geniuses—like that which Socrates regarded as his constant attendant. Xen. Mem. 4. 8. 1.6; Apol. Soc. 4. See *Passow*\.

(4.) To this may be added the common use in the New Testament, where the word denotes a demon in the Jewish sense—a bad spirit, subject to Satan, and under his control; one of the host of fallen angels— commonly, but not very properly, rendered *devil*, or *devils*. These spirits were supposed to wander in desolate places, Mt 12:43. Comp. Isa 13:21 34:14; or they dwell in the air, Eph 2:2. They were regarded as hostile to mankind, Joh 8:44; as able to utter heathen oracles, Ac 16:17; as lurking in the idols of the heathen, 1Co 10:20 Re 9:20. They are spoken of as the authors of evil, Jas 2:19. Comp. Eph 6:12; and as having the power of taking possession of a person, of producing diseases, or of causing mania, as in the case of the demoniacs, Luke 4:33 8:27; Mt 17:18 Mr 7:29,30; and often elsewhere. The doctrine, therefore, which the apostle predicted would prevail, might, *so far as the word used is concerned*, be either of the following:

(1.) Accordance with the prevalent notions of the heathen respecting false gods; or a falling into idolatry similar to that taught in the Grecian mythology. It can hardly be supposed, however, that he designed to say that the common notions of the heathen would prevail in the Christian church, or that the worship of the heathen gods as such would be set up there.

(2.) An accordance with the Jewish views respecting demoniacal possessions, and the power of exorcising them, If this view should extensively prevail in the Christian church, it would be in accordance with the language of the prediction.

(3.) Accordance with the prevalent heathen notions respecting the departed spirits of the good and the great, who were exalted to the rank of demi-gods; and who, though invisible, were supposed still to exert all important influence in favour of mankind. To these beings, the heathen rendered extraordinary homage. They regarded them as demi-gods. They supposed that they took a deep interest in human affairs. They invoked their aid. They set apart days in honour of them. They offered sacrifices, and performed rites and ceremonies, to propitiate their favour. They were regarded as a sort of mediators or intercessors between man and the superior divinities. If these things are found anywhere in the Christian church, they may be regarded as a fulfilment of this prediction, for they were not of a nature to be foreseen by any human sagacity. Now it so happens, that they are in fact found in the Papal communion, and in a way that corresponds fairly to the meaning of the phrase, as it would have been understood in the time of the apostle. There is, *first*, the worship of the Virgin and of the saints, or the extraordinary honours rendered to them—corresponding almost entirely with the reverence paid by the heathen to the spirits of heroes, or to demi-gods. The saints are supposed to have extraordinary power with God, and their aid is implored as intercessors. The Virgin Mary is invoked as "the mother of God," and as having power still to command her Son. The Papists do not, indeed, offer the same homage to the saints which they do to God, but they ask their aid; they offer prayer to them. The following extracts from the catechism of Dr. James Butler, approved and recommended by Dr. Kenrick, "bishop of Philadelphia," expresses the general views of Roman Catholics on this subject. "Q. How do Catholics distinguish between the honour they give to God, and the honour they give to the saints, when they pray to God and the saints? A. Of God alone they beg grace and mercy; and of the saints they only ask the assistance of their prayers. Q. Is it lawful to recommend ourselves to the saints, and ask their prayers? A. Yes; as it is lawful and a very pious practice to ask the prayers of our fellow creatures on earth, and to pray for them." In the "Prayer to be said before mass," the following language occurs, "In union with the holy church and its minister, and invoking the blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and all the angels and saints; we now offer the adorable sacrifice of the mass," etc. In the "General Confession" it is said, "I confess to Almighty God, to the blessed Mary, ever Virgin, to blessed Michael the

archangel, to blessed John the Baptist, to the holy apostles Peter and Paul, and to all the saints, that I have sinned exceedingly." So, also, the Council of Trent declared, Sess. 25, *Concerning the Invocation of the Saints*, "that it is good and useful to supplicate them, and to fly to their prayers, power, and aid; but that they who deny that the saints are to be invoked, or who assert that they do not pray for men, or that their invocation of them is idolatry, hold an impious opinion." See also Peter Dens' Moral Theology, translated by the Rev. J. F. Berg, pp. 342—356. *Secondly*, in the Papal communion the doctrine of exorcism is still held—implying a belief that evil spirits or demons have power over the human frame; a doctrine which comes fairly under the meaning of the phrase here—"*the doctrine respecting demons*." Thus, in Dr. Butler's Catechism: "Q. What do you mean by exorcism? A. The rites and prayers instituted by the church for the casting out devils, or restraining them from hurting persons, disquieting places, or abusing any of God's creatures to our harm. Q. Has Christ given his church any such power over devils? A. Yes, he has. See Mt 10:1 Mr 3:15; Lu 9:1.

And that this power was not to die with the apostles, nor to cease after the apostolic age, we learn from the perpetual practice of the church, and the experience of all ages." The characteristic here referred to by the apostle, therefore, is one that applies precisely to the Roman Catholic communion, and cannot be applied with the same fitness to any other association calling itself Christian on earth. There can be no doubt, therefore, that the Holy Spirit designed to designate that apostate church.

{a} "in the latter times" Da 11:35 Mt 24:5-12; 2Pe 2:1

{b} "seducing spirits" Re 16:14

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 4 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Speaking lies in hypocrisy*. *en upokrisei qeudologwn*. Or rather, "by, or through the hypocrisy of those speaking lies." So it is rendered by Whitby, Benson, Macknight, and others. Our translators have rendered it as if the word translated "speaking lies"— *qeudologwn* referred to *demons, or devils daimoniwn* —in the previous verse. But there are two objections to this. One is, that then, as Koppe observes, the words would have been inverted—*qeudologwn en upokrisei*. The other is, that if that construction is adopted, it must be carried through the sentence, and then all the phrases "speaking lies," "having their conscience seared," "forbidding to marry," etc., must be referred to demons. The preposition *en*, *in*, may denote by or through, and is often so used. If this be the true construction, then it will mean that those who departed from the faith did it by or through the hypocritical teachings of those who spoke lies, or who knew that they were inculcating falsehoods; of those whose conscience was seared; of those who forbade to marry, etc. The meaning then will be, "In the last days certain persons will depart from the faith of the gospel. This apostasy will essentially consist in their giving heed to spirits that lead to error, and in embracing corrupt and erroneous views on demonology, or in reference to invisible beings between us and God. This they will do through the hypocritical teaching of those who inculcate falsehood; whose consciences are seared," etc. The series of characteristics, therefore, which follow, are those of the teachers, not of the taught; of the ministers of the church, not of the great body of the people. The apostle meant to say that this grand apostasy would occur under the influence of a hypocritical, hardened, and

arbitrary ministry, teaching their own doctrines instead of the Divine commands, and forbidding that which God had declared to be lawful. In the clause before us—"speaking lies in hypocrisy"—two things are implied, first, that the characteristic of those referred to would be that they would "speak lies;" second, that this would be done *hypocritically*. In regard to the first, there can be no doubt among Protestants of its applicability to the Papal communion. The entire series of doctrines respecting the authority of the Pope, purgatory, the Mass, the invocation of the saints, the veneration of relics, the Seven Sacraments, the authority of tradition, the doctrine of merit, etc., is regarded as false. Indeed, the system could not be better characterized than by saying that it is a system "speaking lies." The entire scheme attempts to palm falsehood upon the world, in the place of the simple teaching of the New Testament. The only question is, whether this is done "in hypocrisy," or hypocritically. In regard to this, it is not necessary to maintain that there is no sincerity among the ministers of that communion, or that all are hypocritical in their belief and their teaching. The sense is, that this is the general characteristic, or that this is understood by the leaders or prime movers in that apostasy. In regard to the applicability of this to the ministers of the Papal communion, and the question whether they teach what they know to be false, we may observe

(1.) that many of them are men of eminent learning, and there can be no reason to doubt that they know that many of the Catholic legends are false, and many of the doctrines of their faith contrary to the Bible.

(2.) Not a few of the things in that communion must be known by them to be false, though not known to be so by the people. Such are all the pretended miracles wrought by the relics of the saints; the liquefying of the blood of St. Januarius, etc. **See Barnes "2Th 2:9"**.

As the working of these tricks depends wholly on the priesthood, they must know that they are "speaking lies in hypocrisy."

(3.) The matter of fact seems to be, that when young men who have been trained in the Catholic church, first turn their attention to the ministry, they are sincere. They have not yet been made acquainted with the "mysteries of iniquity" in the communion in which they have been trained, and they do not suspect the deceptions that are practised there. When they pass through their course of study, however, and become acquainted with the arts and devices on which the fabric rests, and with the scandalous lives of many of the clergy, they are shocked to find how corrupt and false the whole system is. But they are now committed. They have devoted their lives to this profession. They are trained now to this system of imposture, and they must continue to practise and perpetuate the fraud, or abandon the church, and subject themselves to all the civil and ecclesiastical disabilities which would now follow if they were to leave and reveal all its frauds and impostures. A gentleman of high authority, and who has had as good an opportunity as any man living to make accurate and extensive observations, stated to me, that this was a common thing in regard to the Catholic clergy in France and Italy. No one can reasonably doubt that the great body of that clergy must be apprized that much that is relied on for the support of the system is mere legend, and that the miracles which are pretended to be wrought are mere trick and imposture.

Having their conscience seared with a hot iron. The allusion here is doubtless to the effect of applying a hot iron to the skin. The cauterized part becomes rigid and hard, and is dead to sensibility. So with the conscience of those referred to. It has the same relation to a conscience that is sensitive and quick in its decisions, that a cauterized part of the body has to a thin, delicate, and sensitive skin. Such a conscience exists in a mind that will practise delusion without concern; that will carry on a vast system of fraud without wincing; that will incarcerate, scourge, or burn the innocent

without compassion; and that win practise gross enormities, and indulge in sensual gratifications under the mask of piety. While there are many eminent exceptions to an application of this to the Papal communion, yet this description will apply better to the Roman priesthood in the time of Luther found in many other periods of the world—than to any other *body of men* that ever lived.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 4 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Forbidding to marry*. That is, "They will depart from the faith through the hypocritical teaching—of those who forbid to marry." **See Barnes "1Th 4:2".**

This does not necessarily mean that they would prohibit marriage altogether, but that it would be a characteristic of their teaching that marriage *would be forbidden*, whether of one class of persons or many. They would commend and *enjoin* celibacy and virginity. They would regard such a state, for certain persons, as more holy than the married condition, and would consider it as so holy that they would absolutely prohibit those who wished to be most holy from entering into the relation. It is needless to say how accurately this applies to the views of the Papacy in regard to the comparative purity and advantages of a state of celibacy, and to their absolute prohibition of the marriage of the clergy. The tenth article of the decree of the Council of Trent, in relation to marriage, will show the general view of the Papacy on that subject.—" Whosoever shall say that the married state is to be preferred to a state of virginity, or celibacy, and that it is not better and more blessed to remain in virginity, or celibacy, than to be joined in marriage; let him be accursed!" Comp. Peter Dens' Moral Theology, pp. 497—500.

And commanding to abstain from meats, etc; The word meat in the Scriptures, commonly denotes food of all kinds, Mt 3:4 6:26, 10:10; Mt 15:37. This was the meaning of the word when the translation of the Bible was made. It is now used by us, almost exclusively, to denote animal food. The word here used *brwma* means, properly, whatever is eaten, and may refer to animal flesh, fish, fruit, or vegetables. It is often, however, in the New Testament, employed particularly to denote the flesh of animals, Heb 9:10 13:9; Ro 14:15,20; 1Co 8:8,13.

As it was animal food particularly which was forbidden under the Jewish code, and as the questions on this subject among Christians would relate to the same kinds of prohibition, it is probable that the word has the same limited signification here, and should be taken as meaning the same thing that the word *meat* does with us. To forbid the use of certain meats, is here described as one of the characteristics of those who would instruct the church in the time of the great apostasy. It is not necessary to suppose that there would be an *entire* prohibition, but only a prohibition of certain kinds, and at certain seasons. That *this* characteristic is found in the Papacy more than anywhere else in the Christian world, it is needless to prove. The following questions and answers from Dr. Butler's Catechism, will show what is the sentiment of Roman Catholics on this subject. "Q. Are there any other commandments besides the Ten Commandments of God? A. There are the commandments or precepts of the church, which are chiefly six. Q. What are we obliged to do by the second commandment of the church? A. To give part of the year to fast and abstinence Q. What do you mean by fast-days? A. Certain days on which we are allowed but one meal, *and forbidden flesh meat*. Q. What do you mean by days of abstinence? A. Certain days on which *we are forbidden to eat flesh meat*; but are allowed the usual number of meals. Q. Is it strictly forbidden by the church

to eat flesh meat on days of abstinence? A. Yes; and to eat flesh meat on any day on which it is forbidden, without necessity and leave of the church, is very sinful." Could there be a more impressive and striking commentary on what the apostle says here, that "in the latter days some would depart from the faith, under the hypocritical teaching of those who *commanded to abstain from meats*?" The authority claimed by the Papacy to issue commands on this subject, may be seen still further by the following extract from the same catechism, showing the gracious permission of the church to the "faithful." "The abstinence on Saturday is dispensed with, for the faithful throughout the United States, for the space of ten years (from 1833,) except when a fast falls on a Saturday. The use of flesh meat is allowed at present by dispensation, in the diocese of Philadelphia, on all the Sundays of Lent, except Palm Sunday, and once a day on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday in each week, except the Thursday after Ash Wednesday, and also excepting Holy-week." Such is the Roman Catholic religion! See also Peter Dens' Moral Theology, pp. 321—339. It is true that what is said here might apply to the Essenes, as Koppe supposes, or to the Judaizing teachers, but it applies more appropriately and fully to the Papal communion than to any other body of men professing Christianity, and taken in connection with the other characteristics of the apostasy, there can be no doubt that the reference is to that.

Which God hath created. The articles of food which he has made, and which he has designed for the nourishment of man. The fact that God had created them was proof that they were not to be regarded as evil, and that it was not to be considered as a religious duty to abstain from them. All that God has made is good in its place, and what is adapted to be food for man is not to be refused or forbidden. Comp. Ec 5:18. There can be no doubt that in the apostasy here referred to, those things would be forbidden, not because they were injurious or hurtful in their nature, but because it might be made a part of a system of religion of self-righteousness, and because there might be connected with such a prohibition the belief of special merit.

{a} "received with thanksgiving" Ec 5:18

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 4 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *For every creature of God is good*. Gr., all the creatures, or all that God has created—*pan ktisma*: that is, as he made it. Comp. Ge 1:10,12,18,31.

It does not mean that every moral agent *remains* good as long as he is a *creature of God*, but moral agents, men and angels, were good as they were made at first. Ge 1:31. Nor does it mean that all that God has made is good for *every object to which it can be applied*. It is good in its place: good for the purpose for which he made it. But it should not be inferred that a thing which is poisonous in its nature is good for food, because it is a creation of God. It is good only in its place, and for the ends for which he intended it. Nor should it be inferred that what God has made is necessarily good after it has been perverted by man. As God made it originally, it might have been used without injury. Apples and peaches were made good, and are still useful and proper as articles of food; rye and indian corn are good, and are admirably adapted to the support of man and beast; but it does not follow that all that man can make of them is necessarily good. He extracts from them a poisonous liquid, and then says that "every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused." But is this a fair use of this passage of Scripture? True, they *are* good —they are to be received

with gratitude as he made them, and as applied to the uses for which he designed them: but why apply this passage to prove that a deleterious beverage which man has extracted from what God has made, is good also, and good for all the purposes to which it can be applied? As God made these things, they are good. As man perverts them, it is no longer proper to call them the "creation of God," and they may be injurious in the highest degree. This passage, therefore, should not be adduced to vindicate the use of intoxicating drinks. As employed by the apostle, it had no such reference, nor does it contain any *principle* which can properly receive any such appellation.

And nothing to be refused. Nothing that God has made, for the purposes for which he designed it. The necessity of the case—the "exigency of the passage"—requires this interpretation. It cannot mean that we are not to refuse poison if offered in our food, or that we are never to refuse food that is to us injurious or offensive; nor can it any more mean that we are to receive all that may be offered to us as a beverage. The sense is, that as God made it, and for the purposes for which he designed it, it is not to be held to be evil; or, which is the same thing, it is not to be prohibited as if there were merit in abstaining from it. It is not to be regarded as a religious duty to abstain from food which God has appointed for the support of man.

If it be received with thanksgiving. **See Barnes "1Co 10:31"; See Barnes "Eph 5:20"; See Barnes "**Php 4:6".

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 4 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *For it is sanctified by the word of God*. By the authority or permission of God. It would be profane or unholy if he had forbidden it; it is made holy or proper for our use by his permission, and no command of man can make it unholy or improper. Comp. Ge 1:29 9:3.

And prayer. If it is partaken of with prayer. By prayer we are enabled to receive it with gratitude, and everything that we eat or drink may thus be made a means of grace.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 4 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things*. Of the truths just stated. They are, therefore, proper subjects to preach upon. It is the duty of the ministry to show to the people of their charge what is error and where it may be apprehended, and to caution them to avoid it.

Nourished up in the word of faith. That is, you will be then "a good minister of Jesus Christ, as becomes one who has been nourished up in the words of faith, or trained up in the doctrines of religion." The apostle evidently designs to remind Timothy of the manner in which he had been trained, and to show him how he might act in accordance with that. From one who had been thus educated, it was reasonable to expect that he would be a faithful and exemplary minister of the gospel.

Whereunto thou hast attained. The word used here means, properly, to accompany side by side; to follow closely; to follow out, trace, or examine. It is rendered *shall follow*, in Mr 16:17; *having had understanding*, in Lu 1:3; and *hast fully known*, in 2Ti 3:10. It does not elsewhere occur in the

New Testament. The meaning here seems to be, that Timothy had followed out the doctrines in which he had been trained to their legitimate results; he had accurately seen and understood their bearing, as leading him to embrace the Christian religion. His early training in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, (2Ti 1:5 3:15,) he had now fully carried out, by embracing the Lord Jesus as the Messiah, and by evincing the proper results of the early teaching which he had received in connection with that religion. If he now followed the directions of the apostle, he would be a minister of the Lord Jesus, worthy of the attainments in religious knowledge which he had made, and of the expectations which had been formed of him. No young man should, by neglect, indolence, or folly, disappoint the reasonable expectations of his friends. Their cherished hopes are a proper ground of appeal to him, and it may be properly demanded of every one that he shall carry out to their legitimate results all the principles of his early training, and that he shall be in his profession all that his early advantages make it reasonable to expect that he will be.

{a} "nourished up in the words" Jer 15:16 1Pe 2:2

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 4 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *But refuse*. That is, refuse to pay attention to them, or reject them. Do not consider them of sufficient importance to occupy your time.

Profane. The word here used does not mean that the fables here referred to were blasphemous or impious in their character, but that they had not the character of true religion, 2Ti 2:16.

And old wive's. Old women's stories; or such as old women held to be important. The word is used here, as it is often with us, in the sense of silly.

Fables. Fictions, or stories that were not founded on fact. The heathen religion abounded with fictions of this kind, and the Jewish teachers were also remarkable for the number of such fables which they had introduced into their system. It is probable that the apostle referred here particularly to the Jewish fables, and the counsel which he gives to Timothy is to have nothing to do with them.

And exercise thyself rather unto godliness. Rather than attempt to understand those fables.

Do not occupy your time and attention with them, but rather cultivate piety, and seek to become more holy.

{b} {wive's} Tit 1:14 {*} {fables} "senseless fables"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 4 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *For bodily exercise profiteth little*. Marg., *for a little time*. The Greek will admit of either interpretation, and what is here affirmed is true in either sense. The bodily exercise to which the apostle refers is of little advantage, compared with that piety which he recommended Timothy to cultivate, and whatever advantage could be derived from it, would be but of short duration. "Bodily exercise" here refers, doubtless, to the mortifications of the body by abstinence and penance, which the ancient devotees, and particularly the Essenes, made so important as a part of their religion. The apostle does not mean to say that bodily exercise is in itself unproper, or that no

advantage can be derived from it in the preservation of health; but he refers to it solely as a means of religion; as supposed to promote holiness of heart and of life. By these bodily austerities it was supposed that the corrupt passions would be subdued, the wanderings of an unholy fancy fettered down, and the soul brought into conformity to God. In opposition to this supposition, the apostle has here stated a great principle which experience has shown to be universally correct, that such austerities do little to promote holiness, but much to promote superstition. There must be a deeper work on the soul than any which can be accomplished by the mere mortification of the body. **See Barnes "Col 2:23"; and comp.** 1Co 9:25-27.

But godliness. Piety or religion.

Is profitable unto all things. In every respect. There is not an interest of man, in reference to this life, or to the life to come, which it would not promote. It is favourable to health of body, by promoting temperance, industry, and frugality; to clearness and rigour of intellect, by giving just views of truth, and of the relative value of objects; to peace of conscience, by leading to the faithful performance of duty; to prosperity in business, by making a man sober, honest, prudent, and industrious; to a good name, by leading a man to pursue such a course of life as shall deserve it; and to comfort in trial, calmness in death, and immortal peace beyond the grave. Religion injures no one. It does not destroy health; it does not enfeeble the intellect; it does not disturb the conscience; it does not pander to raging and consuming passions; it does not diminish the honour of a good name; it furnishes no subject of bitter reflection on a bed of death. It makes no one the poorer; it prompts to no crime; it engenders no disease. If a man should do that which would most certainly make him happy, he would be decidedly and conscientiously religious; and though piety promises no earthly possessions directly as its reward, and secures no immunity from sickness, bereavement, and death, yet there is nothing which so certainly secures a steady growth of prosperity in a community as the virtues which it engenders and sustains; and there is nothing else that will certainly meet the ills to which man is subject. I have no doubt that it is the real conviction of every man, that if he ever becomes certainly *happy*, he will be a Christian; and I presume that it is the honest belief of every one that the true and consistent Christian is the most happy of men. And yet, with this conviction, men seek everything else rather than religion; and in the pursuit of baubles, which they know cannot confer happiness, they defer religion —the only certain source of happiness at any time—to the last period of life, or reject it altogether.

Having promise of the life that now is. That is, it furnishes the promise of whatever is really necessary for us in this life. The promises of the Scriptures on this subject are abundant; and there is probably not a want of our nature for which there might not be found a specific promise in the Bible. Comp. Ps 23:1, 84:11; Php 4:19.

Religion promises us needful food and raiment, Mt 6:25-33 Isa 33:16; comfort in affliction, De 33:27 Job 5:19 Ps 46 Heb 13:5

support in old age and death, Isa 46:4 Ps 23:4; comp. Isa 43:2; and a good reputation, an honoured name when we are dead, Ps 37:1-6. There is nothing which man really needs in this life, which is not promised by religion; and if the inquiry were made, it would be surprising to many, even with our imperfect religion, how literal these promises are fulfilled. David, near the close of a long life, was able to bear this remarkable testimony on this subject: "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread," Ps 37:25. And now, of the beggars that come to our doors, to how few of them can we give a cup of cold water, feeling that we are giving it to a disciple! How rare is it that a true Christian becomes a beggar! Of the inmates

of our alms-houses, how very few give any evidence that they have religion! They have been brought there by vice, not by religion. True piety sends none to the alms-house; it would have saved the great mass of those who are there from ever needing the charity of their fellow-men.

And of that which is to come. Eternal life. And it is the only thing that promises such a life. Infidelity makes no promise of future happiness. Its business is to take away all the comforts which religion gives, and to leave men to go to a dark eternity with no promise or hope of eternal joy. Vice *promises* pleasures in the present life, but only to disappoint its votaries here; it makes no promise of happiness in the future world. There is nothing that furnishes any certain promise of happiness hereafter, in this world or the next, but religion. God makes no promise of such happiness to beauty, birth, or blood; to the possession of honours or wealth; to great attainments in science and learning; or to the graces of external accomplishment. All these, whatever flattering hopes of happiness they may hold out here, have no assurance of future eternal bliss. It is not by such things that God graduates the rewards of heaven, and it is only piety or true religion that furnishes any assurance of happiness in the world to come.

{1} "little" "for a little time" {c} "godliness" 1Ti 6:6 {d} "promise of the life" Ps 84:11

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 4 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *This is a faithful saying*. **See Barnes "1Ti 1:1"**.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 4 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach*. In making this truth known, that all might be saved, or that salvation was offered to all. The *labour* was chiefly experienced in carrying this intelligence abroad among the Gentiles; the *reproach* arose chiefly from the Jews for doing it.

Because we trust in the living God. This does not mean, as our translation would seem to imply, that he laboured and suffered because he confided in God, or that this was the reason of his sufferings, but rather that this trust in the living God was his support in these labours and trials, "We labour and suffer reproach, for we have hope in God. Through him we look for salvation. We believe that he has made this known to men, and believing this, we labour earnestly to make it known, even though it be attended with reproaches." The sentiment is, that the belief that God has revealed a plan of salvation for all men, and invites all men to be saved, will make his friends willing to labour to make this known, though it be attended with reproaches.

Who is the Saviour of all men. This must be understood as denoting that he is the Saviour of all men in some sense which differs from what is immediately affirmed: "specially of those that believe." There is something pertaining to them in regard to salvation which does not pertain to "all men." It cannot mean that he brings all men to heaven, *especially* those who believe—for this would be nonsense. And if he brings all men actually to heaven, how can it be especially true that he does this in regard to those who believe? Does it mean that he saves others *without* believing.

But this would be contrary to the uniform doctrine of the Scriptures. See Mr 16:16. When, therefore, it is said that he "is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe, "it must mean that there is a sense in which it is true that he may be called the Saviour of all men, while, at the same time, it is *actually* true that those only are saved who believe. This may be true in two respects.

(1.) As he is the *Preserver* of men, (Job 7:20,) for in this sense he may be said to save them from famine, and war, and peril—keeping them from day to day; comp. Ps 107:28;

(2.) as he has *provided* salvation for all men. He is thus their Saviour, and may be called the common Saviour of all; that is, he has confined the offer of salvation to no one class of men; he has not limited the atonement to one division of the human race; and he actually saves all who are willing to be saved by him.

Specially of those that believe. This is evidently designed to limit the previous remark. If it had been left there, it might have been inferred that he would actually save all men. But the apostle held no such doctrine, and he here teaches that salvation is actually limited to those who believe. This is the speciality or the peculiarity in the salvation of those who actually reach heaven, that they are *believers*. **See Barnes "Mr 16:16".**

All men, therefore, do not enter heaven, unless all men have faith. But is this so? What evidence is there that the great mass of mankind die believing on the Son of God?

{*} "therefore" "On this account"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 4 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *These things command and teach*. As important doctrines, and as embracing the sum of the Christian system. It follows from this, that a minister of the gospel is solemnly bound to teach that there is a sense in which God is the Saviour of all men. He is just as much bound to teach this, as he is that only those will be saved who believe. It is a glorious truth—and it is a thing for which a man should unceasingly give thanks to God that he may go and proclaim that he has provided salvation for all, and is willing that all should come and live.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 4 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Let no man despise thy youth*. That is, do not act in such a manner that any shall despise you on account of your youth. Act as becomes a minister of the gospel in all things, and in such a way that men will respect you as such, though you are young. It is clear from this that Timothy was then a young man, but his exact age there is no means of determining. It is implied here,

(1.) that there was danger that, by the levity and indiscretion to which youth are so much exposed, the ministry might be regarded with contempt; and

(2.) that it was possible that his deportment should be so grave, serious, and every way appropriate that the ministry would not be blamed, but honoured. The way in which Timothy was

to live so that the ministry would not be despised on account of his youth, the apostle proceeds immediately to specify.

But be thou an example of the believers. One of the constant duties of a minister of the gospel, no matter what his age. A minister should so live, that if all his people should closely follow his example, their salvation would be secure, and they would make the highest possible attainments in piety. On the meaning of the word rendered *example*, **See Barnes "Php 1:27"**; **See Barnes** "1Th 1:7".

In word. In *speech*—that is, your manner of conversation. This does not refer to his *public teaching*—in which he could not probably be an *example* to them—but to his usual and familiar conversation.

In conversation. In general deportment. See this word explained in **See Barnes "Php 1:27"**.

In charity. Love to the brethren, and to all. **See Barnes "1Co 13:1"**

and following.

In spirit. In the government of your passions, and in a mild, meek, forgiving disposition.

In faith. At all times, and in all trials, show to believers by your example, how they ought to maintain unshaken confidence in God.

In purity. In chasteness of life. See 1Ti 5:2. There should be nothing in your intercourse with the other sex that would give rise to scandal. The Papists, with great impropriety, understand this as enjoining celibacy—as if there could be no purity in that holy relation which God appointed in Eden, and which he has declared to "be honourable in all," (Heb 13:4,) and which he has made so essential to the well-being of mankind. If the apostle had wished to produce the highest possible degree of corruption in the church, he would have enjoined the celibacy of the clergy and the celibacy of an indefinite number of nuns and monks. There are no other institutions on the earth which have done so much to corrupt the chastity of the race, as those which have grown out of the doctrine that celibacy is more honourable than marriage.

{a} "Let no man" Tit 2:7,15 {+} "charity" "Love"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 4 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Till I come*. **See Barnes "1Ti 3:14"**; **See Barnes "1Ti 3:15"**.

Give attendance to reading. The word here used may refer either to public or to private reading. See

@Ac 13:15 2Co 3:14.

Comp. I Esdr. ix. 48.

The more obvious interpretation here is to refer it to private reading, or to a careful perusal of those books which would qualify him for his public work. The then written portions of the sacred volume —the Old Testament—are doubtless specially intended here, but there is no reason to doubt that there were included also such other books as would be useful, to which Timothy might have access. Even those were then few in number, but Paul evidently meant that Timothy should, as far as practicable, become acquainted with them. The apostle himself, on more than one occasion, showed that he had some acquaintance with the classic writings of Greece, Ac 17:28 Tit 1:12.

To exhortation. **See Barnes "Ro 12:8"**.

To doctrine. To teaching—for so the word means. Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 12:7"**.

{++} "attendance" "attention"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 4 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Neglect not the gift that is in thee*. An important question arises here, to what the word gift refers :—whether to natural endowment; to office; or to some supposed virtue which had been conferred by ordination—some transmitted influence which made him holy as a minister of religion, and which was to continue to be transmitted by the imposition of apostolic hands.—The word which is here used, is rendered *gift* in every place in which it occurs in the New Testament. It is found in the following places, and with the following significations:— *deliverance from peril*, 2Co 1:11; a gift or quality of the mind, ; gifts of Christian knowledge or consolation, Ro 1:11; 1Co 1:7; redemption or salvation through Christ, Ro 5:15,16; Ro 6:23 11:29; the miraculous endowments conferred by the Holy Spirit, Ro 12:6 1Co 12:4,9,28,30,31; and the special gift or endowment for the work of the ministry, 1Ti 4:14 2Ti 1:6; 1Pe 4:10.

The gift then referred to here was that by which Timothy was qualified for the work of the ministry. It relates to his office and qualifications -to every thing that entered into his fitness for the work. It does not refer exclusively to any influence that came upon him in virtue of his ordination, or to any new grace that was infused into him by that act, making him either officially or personally more holy than other men, or than he was before—or to any efficacy in the mere act of ordination—but it comprised *the whole train of circumstances* by which he had been qualified for the sacred office, and recognised as a minister of religion. All this was regarded as *a gift, a benefit, or favour*, *carisma*,—and he was not to neglect or disregard the responsibilities and advantages growing out of it. In regard to the manner in which this gift or favour was bestowed, the following things are specified.

(1.) It was the gift of God, 2Ti 1:6. He was to be recognised as its source; and it was not therefore conferred merely by human hands. The call to the ministry, the qualifications for the office, and the whole arrangement by which one is endowed for the work, are primarily to be traced to him as the source.

(2.) It was given to Timothy in accordance with certain predictions which had existed in regard to him—the expectations of those who had observed his qualifications for such an office, and who had expressed the hope that he would one day be permitted to serve the Lord in it.

(3.) It was sanctioned by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery. The call of God to the work thus recognised by the church, and the approbation of the Presbytery expressed by setting him apart to the office, should be regarded by Timothy as a part of the "gift" or *benefit* (*charisma*) which had been conferred on him, and which he was not to neglect.

(4.) An additional circumstance which might serve to impress the mind of Timothy with the value of this endowment, and the responsibility of this office, was, that Paul himself had been concerned in his ordination, 2Ti 1:6. He who was so much more aged, (2Ti 4:6,7); he who had been a father to him, and who had adopted him and treated him as a son, had been concerned in his ordination; and this fact imposed a higher obligation to perform aright the functions of an office which had been conferred on him in this manner. We are not to suppose, therefore, that there was any mysterious influence—any *virus*—conveyed by the act of ordination, or that that act imparted

any additional degree of holiness. The endowment for the ministry; the previous anticipations and hopes of friends; and the manner in which he had been inducted into the sacred office, should all be regarded as a *benefit or favour* of a high order, and as a reason why the gift thus bestowed should not be neglected—and the same things now should make a man who is in the ministry deeply feel the solemn obligations resting on him to cultivate his powers in the highest degree, and to make the most of his talents.

Which was given thee by prophecy. That is, the prophetic declarations and the hopes of pious friends in regard to your future usefulness, have been among the means by which you have been introduced to the ministry, and should be a reason why you should cultivate your powers, and perform faithfully the duties of your office. **See Barnes "1Ti 1:18".**

With the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. It was common to lay on the hands in imparting a blessing, or in setting apart to any office. See Mt 19:15 Mr 6:5; Lu 4:40 13:13; Le 8:14 Nu 27:23

Ac 28:8 6:6, 8:17 13:3.

The reference here is undoubtedly to the act by which Timothy was set apart to the office of the ministry. The word rendered *presbytery—presbuterion*, occurs only in two other places in the New Testament—Lu 22:66, where it is rendered *elders* and Ac 22:5, where it is rendered "*estate of the elders*." It properly means *an assembly of aged men; council of elders*. In Lu 22:66 Ac 22:5, it refers to the Jewish sanhedrim. **See Barnes "Mt 5:22".**

In the passage before us, it cannot refer to *that* body—for they did not ordain men to the Christian ministry—but to some association, or council, or body of elders of the Christian church. It is clear from the passage

(1.) that there was more than *one person* engaged in this service, and taking part in it when Timothy was ordained, and therefore it could not have been by a *prelate or bishop* alone.

(2.) That the power conferred, whatever it was, was conferred by the whole body constituting the Presbytery—since the apostle says that the "gift" was imparted, not in virtue of any particular power or eminence in any one individual, but by the "laying on of the hands *of the Presbytery*."

(3.) The statement here is just such a one as would be made now respecting a Presbyterian ordination; it is not one which would be made of an Episcopal ordination. A Presbyterian would choose these very words in giving an account of an ordination to the work of the ministry; an Episcopalian *would not*. The former speaks of an ordination by a *Presbytery*; the latter of ordination by a *Bishop*. The former can use the account of the apostle Paul here as applicable to an ordination without explanations, comments, new versions, or criticisms; the latter cannot. The passage, therefore, is full proof that, in one of the most important ordinations mentioned in the New Testament, it was performed by an association of men, and not by a Prelate; and, *therefore*, that this was the primitive mode of ordination. Indeed, there is not a single instance of ordination to an office mentioned in the New Testament which was performed by one man alone. See this passage examined at greater length in my "Inquiry into the Organization and Government of the Apostolic Church" [pp. 221—238. London edition.]

{a} "Neglect not" 2Ti 1:6 {b} "given thee by prophecy" 1Ti 1:18 {c} "laying on of the hands" Ac 13:3

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 4 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Meditate upon these things*. Upon the train of events by which you have been led into the ministry, and upon the responsibilities and duties of the office. Let your mind be deeply impressed with these things; make them the subject of profound and serious thought.

Give thyself wholly to them. Gr., "Be in them"—a phrase similar to that of Horace—*totus in illis*. The meaning is plain. He was to devote his life wholly to this work. He was to have no other grand aim of living. His time, attention, talents, were to be absorbed in the proper duties of the work. He was not to make that subordinate and tributary to any other purpose, nor was he to allow any other object to interfere with the appropriate duties of that office. He was not to live for money, fame, or pleasure; not to devote his time to the pursuits of literature or science for their own sakes; not to seek the reputation of an elegant or profound scholar; not to aim to be distinguished merely as an accomplished gentleman, or as a skilful farmer, teacher, or author. Whatever was done in any of these departments, was to be wholly consistent with the direction, *en toutoiv isyi*—"*be in these things*"— be absorbed in the appropriate duties of the ministerial office. It may be remarked here that no man will ever make much of himself, or accomplish much in any profession, who does not make this the rule of his life. He who has one great purpose of life to which he patiently and steadily devotes himself, and to which he makes everything else bend, will uniformly rise to high respectability, if not to eminence. He who does not do this, can expect to accomplish nothing.

That thy profiting. Gr. Thy going forward; that is, thy advancement or progress. A minister of the gospel ought to make steady improvement in all that pertains to his office. No man ought to be satisfied with present attainments.

To all. Marg., *in all things*. The margin is the more correct rendering, but either of them makes good sense. It *should* be apparent to all persons who attend on a stated preaching of a minister of the gospel, that he is making steady advances in knowledge, and wisdom, and piety, and in *all* things that pertain to the proper performance of the duties of his office. If a man really makes progress, it will be seen and appreciated by others; if he does not, that will be as well understood by his hearers.

{1} "appear to all" "in all things"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 4 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Take heed unto thyself*. This may be understood as relating to everything of a personal nature that would qualify him for his work. It may be applied to personal piety; to health; to manners; to habits of living; to temper; to the ruling purposes; to the intercourse with others. In relation to personal religion, a minister should take heed

(1.) that he has true piety; and

(2.) that he is advancing in the knowledge and love of God. In relation to morals, he should be upright; to his intercourse with others, and his personal habits, he should be correct, consistent, and gentlemanly, so as to give needless offence to none. The person of a minister should be neat and cleanly; his manners such as will show the fair influence of religion on his temper and deportment; his style of intercourse such as will be an example to the old and the young, and such as will not

offend against the proper laws of courtesy and urbanity. There is no religion in a filthy person; in uncouth manners; in an inconvenient and strange form of apparel; in bad grammar, and in slovenly habits—and to be a real gentleman should be as much a matter of conscience with a minister of the gospel as to be a real Christian. Indeed under the full and fair influence of the gospel, the one always implies the other. Religion refines the manners—it does not corrupt them; it makes one courteous, polite, and kind—it never produces boorish manners, or habits that give offence to the well-bred and the refined.

And unto the doctrine. The kind of *teaching* which you give, or to your public instructions. The meaning is, that he should hold and teach only the truth, he was to "take heed" to the whole business of public instruction that is, both to the matter and the manner. The great object was to get as much truth as possible before the minds of his hearers and in such a way as to produce the deepest impression on them.

Continue in them. That is, in these things which have been specified. He was ever to be found perseveringly engaged in the performance of these duties.

For in doing thou shalt both save thyself. By holding of the truth, and by the faithful performance of your duties, you will secure the salvation of the soul. We are not to suppose that the apostle meant to teach that this would be the meritorious cause of his salvation, but that these faithful labours would be regarded as an evidence of piety, and would be accepted as such. It is equivalent to saying, that an unfaithful minister of the gospel cannot be saved; one who faithfully performs all the duties of that office with a right spirit, *will be*.

And them that hear thee. That is, you will be the means of their salvation. It is not necessary to suppose that the apostle meant to teach that he would save all that heard him. The declaration is to be understood in a popular sense, and it is undoubtedly true, that a faithful minister will be the means of saving many sinners. The assurance furnishes a ground of encouragement for a minister of the gospel. He may hope for success, and should look for success. He has the promise of God that if he is faithful he shall see the fruit of his labours; and this result of his work is a sufficient reward for all the toils, and sacrifices, and self-denials of the ministry. If a minister should be the means of saving but one soul from the horrors of eternal suffering and eternal sinning, it would be worth the most self-denying labours of the longest life. Yet what minister of the gospel is there, who is at all faithful to his trust, who is not made the honoured instrument of the salvation of many more than one? Few are the devoted ministers of Christ who are not permitted to see evidence even here, that their labour has not been in vain. Let not, then, the faithful preacher be discouraged. A single soul rescued from death will be a gem in his eternal crown brighter by far than ever sparkled on the brow of royalty.

{a} "heed" Eze 44:24 {b} "save themselves" Jas 5:20

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 5

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 5 - Verse 1

1st Timothy CHAPTER V.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER,

This chapter embraces the following subjects:—

(1.) The proper method of admonition when others err—to wit, an aged man should be entreated as a father, younger men as brethren, the aged women as mothers, and the younger with the pure feelings which one has for a sister, 1Ti 5:1,2.

(2.) Instructions respecting the proper treatment of widows, 1Ti 5:3-16.

(a.) Those who were true widows were to be regarded with honour and respect.

(b.) Who sustained this character, 1Ti 5:4-7. Those who had evinced piety at home in taking charge of those who were dependent on them, and who were steady in their devotions. No one was to be received into this number who was not of the age of sixty, who had been married to more than one man, and who had not given evidence in all the duties of domestic fidelity and charity, that she was imbued with the spirit of religion, 1Ti 5:9,10.

(c.) Those who were young were not to be admitted into this class, 1Ti 5:11-15. The reasons given are, that they would marry again, or that they would be idle, and would be intermeddlers in the affairs of others. It was better, therefore, that they should marry, and have charge of a family of their own, 1Ti 5:14,15.

(d.) The duty of the individual members of the church to sustain helpless and dependent widows, if they had such among their relations, 1Ti 5:16. In these verses 1Ti 5:3-16 it is evident that the apostle had his eye on a class of widows that sustained some such relation to other females as the elders did to the whole church. They were aged women to whom was intrusted the superintendence of the females of the church—probably because from the customs then prevalent, men had much less liberty of access to the other sex, and much less freedom of intercourse was allowable than now.

(3.) The duty of supporting and honouring those who ruled in the church, 1Ti 5:17,18.

(4.) The suitable guarding of the rights of the elders in the church. No accusation was to be received, unless it was sustained by two or three witnesses, 1Ti 5:19.

(5.) No one who was guilty was to be spared. All who sinned were to be publicly rebuked, 1Ti 5:20.

(6.) A solemn charge is given to Timothy to keep these commandments, 1Ti 5:21.

(7.) The statement of his duty not to ordain any person rashly or hastily to the sacred office, 1Ti 5:22.

(8.) To guard his health, 1Ti 5:23.

(9.) A declaration respecting sin—-that sometimes it is open beforehand, and sometimes it is concealed till it is revealed at the judgment, closes the chapter, 1Ti 5:24,25.

The design of this closing statement seems to be, to show Timothy that he should not judge men by appearances, but that he should evince great caution in forming his estimate of their character.

Verse 1. *Rebuke not an elder*. The word *elder* here is not used in the sense in which it often is, to denote an officer of the church, *a presbyter*, but in its proper and usual sense, to denote an aged man. This is evident, because the apostle immediately mentions in contradistinction from the elder, "the younger men," where it cannot be supposed that he refers to them as officers. The command to treat the "elder" as a "father," also shows the same thing. By the direction not to rebuke, it is not to he supposed that the minister of the gospel is not to admonish the aged, or that he is not to show

them their sins when they go astray, but that he is to do this as he would to a father. He is not to assume a harsh, dictatorial, and denunciatory manner. The precepts of religion always respect the proprieties of life, and never allow us to transgress them, even when the object is to reclaim a soul from error, and to save one who is wandering. Besides, when this is the aim, it will always be most certainly accomplished by observing the respect due to others on account of office, relation, rank, or age.

But entreat him *as a father*. As you would a father. That is, do not harshly denounce him. Endeavour to persuade him to lead a more holy life. One of the things for which the ancients were remarkable above most of the moderns, and for which the Orientals are still distinguished, was respect for age. Few things are enjoined with more explicitness and emphasis in the Bible than this, Le 19:32 Job 29 Pr 20:20 30:17

Comp. Da 7:9,10; Re 1:14,15.

The apostle would have Timothy, and, for the same reason, every other minister of the gospel, a model of this virtue.

And the younger men as brethren. That is, treat them as you would your own brothers. Do not consider them as aliens; strangers, or enemies, but entertain towards them, even when they go astray, the kindly feelings of a brother. This refers more particularly to his private intercourse with them, and to his personal efforts to reclaim them when they had fallen into sin. When these efforts were ineffectual, and they sinned openly, he was to "rebuke them before all," 1Ti 5:20, that others might be deterred from following their example.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 5 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *The elder women as mothers*. Showing still the same respect for age, and for the proprieties of life. No son who had proper feelings would rebuke his own mother with severity. Let the minister of religion evince the same feelings if he is called to address a "mother in Israel" who has erred.

The younger as sisters. With the feelings which you have toward a sister. The tender love which one has for a beloved sister would always keep him from using harsh and severe language. The same mildness, gentleness, and affection should be used towards a sister in the church.

With all purity. Nothing could be more characteristic of Paul's manner than this injunction; nothing could show a deeper acquaintance with human nature. He knew the danger which would beset a youthful minister of the gospel when it was his duty to admonish and entreat a youthful female; he knew, too, the scandal to which he might be exposed if, in the performance of the necessary duties of his office, there should be the slightest departure from purity and propriety. He was therefore to guard his heart with more than common vigilance in such circumstances, and was to indulge in no word, or look, or action, which could by any possibility be construed as manifesting an improper state of feeling. On nothing else do the fair character and usefulness of a youthful minister more depend, than on the observance of this precept. Nowhere else does he more need the grace of the Lord Jesus, and the exercise of prudence, and the manifestation of incorruptible integrity, than in the performance of this duty. A youthful minister who fails here, can never recover the

perfect purity of an unsullied reputation, and never in subsequent life be wholly free from suspicion. Comp. **See Barnes "Mt 5:28".**

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 5 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Honour widows*. The particular attention and respect which are enjoined here, seem to refer to the class of widows who were supported by the church, and who were intrusted with the performance of certain duties towards the other female members, 1Ti 5:9. It is to be remembered that the intercourse of the sexes was much more circumscribed in oriental countries than it is among us; that access to the female members of the church would be much less free than it is now, and that consequently there might have been a special propriety in intrusting the duty of watching over the younger among them to the more aged. This duty would be naturally intrusted to those who had not the care of families. It would also be natural to commit it, if they were qualified, to those who had not the means of support, and who, while they were maintained by the church, might be rendering a valuable service to it. It would seem, therefore, that there was a class of this description, who were intrusted with these duties, and in regard to whose qualifications it was proper that Timothy should be instructed. The change of customs in society has made this class less necessary, and probably the arrangement was never designed to be permanent, but still it may be a question whether such an arrangement would not now be wise and useful in the church. On this subject, **See Barnes "Ro 16:1".**

That are widows indeed. Who are truly widows. We associate with the word widow, commonly, not only the idea of the loss of a husband, but many other things that are the usual accompaniments of widowhood—a poor and dependent condition; care and solicitude; sadness and sorrow. This idea is implied in the use of the word employed here—*chra*—which means properly one who is bereaved, (from the adjective *chrov*, bereaved,) and which, as Calvin says, conveys the idea of one in distressed circumstances. What Paul regarded as constituting true widowhood, he specifies in verses 1Ti 5:4,5,9,10.

He connects with it the idea that she had no persons dependent on her; that she was desolate, and evinced true trust in God; that she was so aged that she would not marry again; and that by her life she had given evidence of possessing a heart of true benevolence, 1Ti 5:10.

{a} "widows indeed" 1Ti 5:5,16

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 5 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *But if any widow have children*. Who would be dependent on her care, and who might themselves contribute to her support.

Or nephews. The word nephew now commonly means the son of a brother or sister. Formerly the English word also meant grandchildren, or descendants of any description. *Webster*. The Greek word here *ekgona*—has the latter meaning. It denotes those sprung from or born of; and then

descendants of any kind—sons, daughters, grandchildren. The Greek word would not, in fact, properly include nephews and nieces. It embraces only those in a direct line.

Let them learn first to show piety at home. Marg., "or kindness." That is, let the *children and grandchildren* learn to do this. Let them have an opportunity of performing their duty towards their aged parent or grandparent. Do not receive such a widow among the poor and dependent females of the church, to be maintained at public expense, but let her children support her. Thus they will have an opportunity of evincing Christian kindness, and of requiting her for her care? This the apostle calls "*showing piety*"—*eusebein* that is, *filial piety*; piety towards a parent by providing for the wants of that parent in advanced age. The word is commonly used to denote piety towards God, but it is also used to denote proper reverence and respect for a parent. *Robinson*.

And to requite their parents. To repay them, as far as possible, for all their kindness. This debt can never be wholly repaid, but still a child should feel it a matter of sacred obligation to do as much towards it as possible.

For that is good and acceptable before God. It is a duty everywhere enjoined. Comp. **See Barnes "Mt 15:5-7; Eph 6:1,2"**.

{1} "show piety" "kindness"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 5 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *A widow indeed, and desolate*. The word rendered desolate means solitary, alone. It does not necessarily imply the idea of discomfort, which we attach to the word desolate. The sense is, that she had no children or other descendants; none on whom she could depend for support.

Trusteth in God. She has no one else to look to but God. She has no earthly reliance; and, destitute of husband, children, and property, she feels her dependence, and steadily looks to God for consolation and support.

And continueth in supplications and prayers night and day. Continually. **See Barnes "1Ti 2:1"**.

See also the description of Anna in Lu 2:36,37. The apostle regards this as one of the characteristics of those who were "widows indeed," whom he would have received into the class to be maintained by the church, and to whom the charge of younger members of the church might be intrusted.

{*} "desolate" "left alone"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 5 - Verse 6

Verse 6. But she that liveth in pleasure. Marg., delicately. The Greek word *spatalaw* occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, except in Jas 5:5: "Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth." It properly means to live in luxury, voluptuously; to indulge freely in eating and drinking; to yield to the indulgence of the appetites. It does not indicate grossly criminal pleasures; but the kind of pleasure connected with luxurious living, and with pampering the appetites. It is probable that in

the time of the apostle, there were professedly Christian widows who lived in this manner—as there are such professing Christians of all kinds in every age of the world.

Is dead while she liveth". To all the proper purposes of life she is as if she were dead. There is great emphasis in this expression, and nothing could convey more forcibly the idea that true happiness is not to be found in the pleasures of sense. There is nothing in them that answers the purposes of life. They are not the objects for which life was given, and as to the great and proper designs of existence, such persons might as well be dead.

{+} "liveth" "rioteth" {b} "dead" Re 3:1

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 5 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *And these things give in charge*. Announce, or declare these things, to wit, particularly respecting the duty of children to their widowed mothers, and the proper duty of those who are widows.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 5 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *But if any provide not for his own*. The apostle was speaking 1Ti 5:4 particularly of the duty of children towards a widowed mother. In enforcing that duty, he gives the subject, as he often does in similar cases, a general direction, and says that all ought to provide for those who are dependent on them, and that if they did not do this, they had a less impressive sense of the obligations of duty than even the heathen had. On the duty here referred to, comp. **See Barnes "Ro 12:17 2Co 8:21"**.

The meaning is, that the person referred to is to think *beforehand pronoei* of the probable wants of his own family, and make arrangements to meet them. God thus provides for our wants; that is, he sees *beforehand* what we shall need, and makes arrangements for those wants by long preparation. The food that we eat, and the raiment that we wear, he foresaw that we should need, and the arrangement for the sup- ply was made years since, and to meet these wants he has been carrying forward the plans of his providence in the seasons; in the growth of animals; in the formation of fruit; in the bountiful harvest. So, according to our measure, we are to anticipate what will be the probable wants of our families, and to make arrangements to meet them. The words '*his own*,' refer to those who are naturally dependent on him, whether living in his own immediate family or not. There may be many distant relatives naturally dependent on our aid, besides those who live in our own house.

And especially for those of his own house. Marg., *kindred*. The word *house, or household*, better expresses the sense than the word *kindred*. The meaning is, those who live in his own family. They would naturally have higher claims on him than those who did not. They would commonly be his nearer relatives, and the fact, from whatever cause, that they constituted his own family, would lay the foundation for a strong claim upon him. He who neglected his own immediate family would be more guilty than he who neglected a more remote relative.

He hath denied the faith. By his conduct, perhaps, not openly. He may still be a *professor* of religion and do this; but he will show that he is imbued with none of the spirit of religion, and is a stranger to its real nature. The meaning is, that he would, by such an act, have practically renounced Christianity, since it enjoins this duty on all. We may hence learn that it is possible to deny the faith by conduct as well as by words; and that a neglect of doing our duty is as real a denial of Christianity as it would be openly to renounce it. Peter denied his Lord in one way, and thousands do the same thing in another. He did it in *words*; they by neglecting their duty to their families, or their duty in their closets, or their duty in attempting to send salvation to their fellow-men, or by an openly irreligious life. *A neglect of any duty is so far a denial of the faith*. ¶ And is worse than an infidel. The word here does not mean an infidel, technically so called, or one who openly professes to disbelieve Christianity, but any one who does not believe; that is, any one who is not a sincere Christian. The word, therefore, would include the heathen, and it is to them, doubtless, that the apostle particularly refers. *They* acknowledged the obligation to provide for their relatives. This was one of the great laws of nature written on their hearts, and a law which they felt bound to obey. Few things were inculcated more constantly by heathen moralists than this duty. Galgacus, in Tacitas, says, "Nature dictates that to every one, his own children and relatives should be most dear." Cicero says, "Every man should take care of his own family"—suos quisque debet tueri. See Rosenmuller, *in loc*., and also numerous examples of the same kind quoted from Apuleius, Cicero, Plutarch, Homer, Terence, Virgil, and Servius, in *Priceaus, in loc*. The doctrine here is,

(1.) that a Christian ought not to be inferior to an unbeliever in respect to any virtue;

(2.) that in all that constitutes true virtue he ought to surpass him;

(3.) that the duties which are taught by nature ought to be regarded as the more sacred and obligatory from the fact that God has given us a better religion; and

(4.) that a Christian ought never to give occasion to an enemy of the gospel to point to a man of the world and say, "There is one who surpasses you in any virtue."

{a} "especially" Isa 58:7 {1} "own house" "kindred"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 5 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Let not a widow be taken into the number*. Marg., *chosen*. The margin expresses the sense of the Greek more accurately, but the meaning is not materially different. Paul does not here specify into what "number" the widow is to be "taken," or for what purpose she is to be "chosen," but he speaks of this as a thing that was well understood. There can be no doubt, however, what he means. In the Acts of the apostles Ac 6:1 we have this account: "And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, *because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration*." "It appears that from the first formation of the Christian church, provision was made out of the public funds of the society for the indigent widows who belonged to it." See Paley's Horae Paulinae, on 1 Tim. No. 11. To this, as to a well-known practice, Paul here evidently refers. The manner in which he refers to it is such as to show that the custom had an existence. All that was necessary in the, case, was, not to speak of it as if it were a new arrangement, but to mention those who ought to be regarded as proper subjects of the charity. It would seem, also, that it was understood that such widows, according to

their ability, should exercise a proper watch over the younger females of the church. In this way, while they were supported by the church, they might render themselves useful.

Under threescore years old. For such reasons as those mentioned in 1Ti 5:11-14.

Having been the wife of one man. There has been much diversity of opinion whether this means that she had never had but one husband, or whether she had been the wife of but one man at a time; that is, whether she had cast off one and married another. See *Whitby, in loc*. The same difficulty has been felt in regard to this as on the passage in 1Ti 3:2. **See Barnes "1Ti 3:2"**.

Doddridge, Clarke, and others, suppose that it means, "who had lived in conjugal fidelity to her husband." The reason assigned for this opinion by Doddridge, is, that the apostle did not mean to condemn second marriages, since he expressly 1Ti 5:14 commends it in the younger widows. The correct interpretation probably is, to refer it to one who had been married but once, and who, after her husband had died, had remained a widow. The reasons for this opinion briefly are—

(1.) That this is the interpretation most naturally suggested by the phrase;

(2.) that it agrees better with the description of the one that was to be enrolled among the "number"—those who were "*widows indeed*" —as we should more naturally apply this term to one who had remained unmarried after the death of her husband, than to one who had been married again;

(3.) that, while it was not unlawful or improper in itself for a widow to marry a second time, there was a degree of respect and honour attached to one who did not do it, which would not be felt for one who did. Comp. Lu 2:36,37. "She was a widow of great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; *and she was a widow of about fourscore and four years*." The same is true now. There is a higher degree of respect felt for such a widow than there is for one who has been married again, though she may be again a widow.

(4.) Among the heathen, it was regarded as especially honourable to have been married to but one man, and such widows wore the *Pudicitia Coronam*, or crown of chastity. Val. Max. L. i. e. ii. Comp. Livy, L. x. e. 23. See Whitby.

(5.) As these persons were not only to be maintained by the church, but appear also to have been intrusted with an office of guardianship over the younger females, it was of importance that they should have such a character that no occasion of offence should be given, even among the heathen; and, in order to that, Paul gave direction that only those should be thus enrolled who were in all respects widows, and who would be regarded, on account of their age and their whole deportment, as "widows indeed." I cannot doubt, therefore, that he meant to exclude those from the number here referred to who had been married the second time.

{2} "be taken into the number" "chosen"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 5 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Well reported of for good works*. Of good character or reputation. **See Barnes "1Ti 3:7"**.

If she have brought up children. Either her own or others. The idea is, if she has done this in a proper manner.

If she have lodged strangers. If she has been characterized by hospitality—a virtue greatly commended in the Scriptures. Comp. **See Barnes "1Ti 3:2"**

If she have washed the saints' feet. It is not certain whether this is to be understood literally, or whether it merely denotes that she had performed offices of a humble and self-denying kind—such as would be shown by washing the feet of others. It was one of the rites of hospitality in the East to wash the feet of the guest, Ge 18:4, and Paul might have spoken of this as having been literally performed. There is not the slightest evidence that he refers to it as a *religious rite*, or *ordinance*, any more than he does to the act of bringing up children as a religious rite. **See Barnes "Joh 13:1"** and following.

If she have relieved the afflicted. If it has been her character that she was ready to furnish relief to those who were in distress.

If she have diligently followed every good work. This is one of the characteristics of true piety. A sincere Christian will, like God, be the friend of all that is good, and will be ready to promote every good object according to his ability. He will not merely be the friend of one good cause, to the neglect of others, but he will endeavour to promote every good object, and though from peculiar circumstances, and peculiar dealings of Providence, he may have been *particularly* interested in some one object of charity, yet every good object will find a response in his heart, and he will be ready to promote it by his influence, his property, and his prayers.

{b} "lodged" Ac 16:15

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 5 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *But the younger widows refuse*. That is, in respect to the matter under discussion. Do not admit them into the class of widows referred to. It cannot mean that he was to reject them as members of the church, or not to treat them with respect and kindness.

For when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ. There is probably a thought conveyed by these words to most minds which is by no means in the original, and which does injustice both to the apostle and to the "younger widows" referred to. In the Greek there is no idea of wantonness in the sense of lasciviousness or lewdness; nor was this, though now a common idea attached to the word, by any means essential to it when our translation was made. The word *wanton* then meant *wandering or roving in gayety or sport; moving or flying loosely*; *playing in the wind*; then, *wandering from moral rectitude, licentious, dissolute, libidinous*.—Webster. The Greek word here used, *katastrhniazw*, occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. The word *strhniaw* —however, is used twice, and is in both cases translated *lived deliciously*, Re 18:7,9. The word is derived from *strhnov* —*strenos*— (whence strenuous,) properly meaning *rudeness, insolence, pride*, and hence, *revel, riot, luxury*; or from *strhnhv, strenes* the adjective,—*strong, stiff, hard, rough*. The verb then means "to live strenuously, rudely," as in English, "*to live hard*;" also to live wild, or without restraint; to run riot, to live luxuriously. The idea of strength is the essential one, and then of strength that is not subordinate to law; that is wild and riotous. See Passow and Robinson, Lex. The sense here is, that they would not be subordinate to the restraints implied in that situation; they would become impatient, and would marry again. The idea is not that of wantonness or lewdness, but it is that of a mind not subdued by age and by trials, and that would be impatient under the necessary

restraints of the condition which was contemplated. They could not be depended on with certainty, but they might be expected again to enter into the married relation.

They will marry. It is clear from this that the apostle did not contemplate any vows which would prevent their marrying again; nor does he say that it would be absolutely wrong for them to marry, even if they were admitted into that rank, as if there were any vows to restrain them from doing it. This passage, therefore, can never be adduced in favour of that practice of taking the veil in nunneries, and of a vow of perpetual seclusion from the world.

{*} "refuse" "reject" {+} "wanton against Christ" "To grow weary of the restraint of Christ"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 5 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Having damnation*. Or rather, having condemnation; or incurring guilt. This does not mean of necessity that they would lose their souls. See the phrase explained **See Barnes "1Co 11:29"**.

The meaning is, that they would contract guilt, if they had been admitted among this class of persons, and then married again. The apostle does not say that that would be wrong in itself, **See Barnes** "1Ti 5:14, or that they would be absolutely prohibited from it, but that injury would be done if they were admitted among those who were "widows indeed"—who were supported by the church, and who were intrusted with a certain degree of care over the more youthful females—and then should leave that situation. It might give occasion for scandal; it might break in upon the arrangements; it would show that there was a relaxing of the faith, and of the deadness to the world, which they were supposed to have; and it was better that they should be married 1Ti 5:14, without having been thus admitted.

Because they have cast of their first faith. This does not mean that they would lose all their religion, or wholly fall away, but that this would show that they had not the strong faith, the deadness to the world, the simple dependence on God, 1Ti 5:5,) and the desire which they had to be weaned from worldly cares and influences, which they once had. When they became widows, all their earthly hopes seemed to be blasted. They were then dead to the world, and felt their sole dependence on God. But if, under the influence of these strong emotions, they were admitted to the "class of widows" in the church, there was no certainty that they would continue in this state of mind. Time would do much to modify their grief. There would be a reviving love of the world, and under the influence of this they would be disposed to enter into the married relation, and thus show that they had not the strong and simple *faith* which they had when the blow which made them widows fell heavily upon them.

{++} "damnation" "condemnation"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 5 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *And withal*. In addition to the prospect that they may marry again, there are other disadvantages which might follow from such an arrangement, and other evils to be feared, which it is desirable to avoid.

They learn to be idle. That is, if supported by the church, and if without the settled principles which might be expected in those more aged and experienced, it may be feared that they will give themselves up to an indolent life. There would be a security in the age and established habits of those more advanced in life, which there could not be in their case. The apostle does not mean that widows are naturally disposed to be idle, but that in the situation referred to, there would be danger of it.

Wandering about from house to house. A natural consequence of supposing that they had nothing to do, and a practice not only profitless, but always attended with mischief.

Tattlers also. Literally, *overflowing*; then overflowing with talk—praters, triflers. They would learn all the news; become acquainted with the secrets of families; and of course indulge in much idle and improper conversation. Our word *gossippers* would accurately express the meaning here. The *noun* does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. The verb occurs in 3Jo 10; rendered, *prating against*.

And busybodies. **See Barnes "2Th 3:11"**.

The word means, probably, *working all round, over-doing, and then an intermeddler*. Persons who have nothing to do of their own, commonly find employment by interesting themselves in the affairs of their neighbours. No one likes to be wholly idle; and if any one is not found doing what he *ought to do*, he will commonly be found engaged in doing what he ought not.

Speaking things which they ought not. Revealing the concerns of their neighbours; disclosing secrets; magnifying trifles, so as to exalt themselves into importance, as if they were intrusted with the secrets of others; inventing stories and tales of gossip, that they may magnify and maintain their own consequence in the community. No persons are commonly more dangerous to the peace of a neighbourhood, than those who have nothing to do.

{a} "not only idle" 2Th 3:11

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 5 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *I will therefore*. I give it as my opinion; or this is my counsel. **See Barnes** "1Co 7:6,10,40".

That the younger women marry. The word *women* is not expressed or necessarily implied in the original—*newterav*—and it is evident that the apostle here had particular reference to widows, and that the injunction should be understood as relating to them. We are not to suppose that he gives this as an absolute and universal command, for it might not always be at the option of a widow to marry again, and it cannot be doubted that there may be cases where it would be unadvisable. But he speaks of this as a general rule. It is better for such persons to have domestic concerns that require their attention, than it is to be exposed to the evils of an idle life. We may learn from this

(1.) that second marriages are not improper or unlawful, but that in some circumstances they may be preferable to widowhood;

(2.) that marriage itself is in a high degree honourable. How different are the views of the inspired apostle Paul about marriage from those of the Papists!

Bear children, guide the house. These words signify, says Bloomfield, to "exercise and occupy themselves in the duties of a wife." It is better to be employed in the duties growing out of the cares of a family, than to lead a life of celibacy.

Give none occasion to the adversary. The enemy of religion—the heathen or the infidel.

To speak reproachfully. Marg., *for their railing*. That is, on account of a life which would do no honour to religion. In the performance of domestic duties, when fully employed, they would avoid the evils specified in 1Ti 5:13. Every one who professes religion should so live as to give no occasion to an infidel, or a man of the world, to speak reproachfully of the cause of the Redeemer.

{1} "to speak reproachfully" "for their railing"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 5 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *For some are already turned aside after Satan*. That is, some young widows. The meaning is, that in the respects above mentioned, 1Ti 5:13, they had followed the great Tempter, rather than the Lord Jesus. This is stated as a reason why they should not be admitted into the number of the widows who were to be maintained at the expense of the church, and to whom the care of the younger female members was to be committed.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 5 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *If any man or woman that believeth*. Christians are often simply called *believers*, because faith is the leading and most important act of their religion.

Have widows. Widowed mothers, or grandmothers, or any other widows whose support would naturally devolve on them.

Let them relieve them. That is, let them support them. This was an obvious rule of duty. **See Barnes "1Ti 5:8"**.

Nothing can be more unreasonable than to leave those who are properly dependent on us to be supported by others, when we are able to maintain them ourselves.

That it may relieve, etc. That it may have the means of supporting those who are truly dependent. To require or expect the church, therefore, to support those whom we ought ourselves to support, is, in fact, to rob the poor and friendless. In regard to these directions respecting widows, 1Ti 5:3-16, we may remark in general, as the result of the exposition which has been given,

(1.) they were to be *poor* widows, who had not the means of support themselves.

(2.) They were, probably, to be not merely supported, but to be usefully employed in the service of the church, particularly in overseeing the conduct, and imparting instruction to the female members.

(3.) They were to be of such age and character that there would be security of stability and correctness of deportment; such that they would not be tempted to leave the situation, or to act so as to give occasion of reproach.

(4.) It is by no means certain that this was intended to be a permanent arrangement. It grew probably out of the peculiar customs respecting intercourse between the sexes in the oriental world, and would undoubtedly be proper now in similar circumstances. But it by no means follows that this arrangement is binding on the churches where the customs of society are different. Yet

(5.) the passage inculcates the general principle that the poor widows of the church are to be assisted, when they have no relatives on whom they can naturally depend. No class of people are more helpless than aged widows, and for that class God has always shown a special concern, and his people should do so likewise.

{*} "charged" "burdened"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 5 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Let the elders that rule well*. Gr. *presbuteroi*, *Presbyters*. The apostle had given full instructions respecting bishops, 1Ti 3:1-7; deacons, 1Ti 3:8-13; widows, 1Ti 5:3-16; and he here proceeds to describe the duty of the church towards those who sustain the office of elder. The word used—*elder* or *presbyter*—properly refers to age, and is then used to denote the officers of the church, probably because the aged were at first intrusted with the administration of the affairs of the church. The word was in familiar use among the Jews to denote the body of men that presided in the synagogue. **See Barnes "Mt 15:2"**; **See Barnes** "Ac 11:30"; **See Barnes "Ac 15:2"**.

That rule well. Presiding well, or well managing the spiritual interests of the church. The word rendered *rule -proestwtev* — is from a verb meaning to be over; to preside over; to have the care of. The word is used with reference to bishops, Tit 1:5,7; to an apostle, 1Pe 5:1; and is such a word as would apply to any officers to whom the management and government of the church was intrusted. On the general subject of the rulers in the church, **See Barnes "1Co 12:28"**.

It is probable that not precisely the same organization was pursued in every place where a church was established; and where there was a Jewish synagogue, the Christian church would be formed substantially after that model, and in such a church there would be a bench of presiding elders. See, on this subject, Whately's "Kingdom of Christ delineated," pp.84-86. The language here seems to have been taken from such an Organization. On the Jewish synagogue, **See Barnes "Mt 4:23"**.

Be counted worthy of double honour. Of double respect; that is, of a high degree of respect; of a degree of respect becoming their age and office. Comp. 1Th 5:12,13. From the quotation which is made in 1Ti 5:18, in relation to this subject, it would seem probable that the apostle had some reference also to their support, or to what was necessary for their maintenance. There is no improbability in supposing that all the officers of the church, of whatever grade or rank, may have had some compensation, corresponding to the amount of time which their office required them to devote to the service of the church. Nothing would be more reasonable than that, if their duties in the church interfered with their regular employments in their secular calling, their brethren should contribute to their support. **See Barnes** "1Co 9:1, and following.

Especially they who labour in word and doctrine. In preaching and instructing the people. From this it is clear that, while there were "elders" who laboured "in the word and doctrine," that is, in preaching, there were also those who did not labour "in the word and doctrine," but who were

nevertheless appointed to rule in the church. Whether, however, they were regarded as a separate and distinct class of officers, does not appear from this passage. It may have been that there was a bench of elders to whom the general management of the church was confided, and that a part of them were engaged in preaching; a part may have performed the office of "teachers" **See Barnes "Ro 12:7"; See Barnes "1Co 12:28"**

and a part may have been employed in managing other concerns of the church, and yet all were regarded as the *proestwtev presbuteroi*—or "elders presiding over the church." It cannot, I think, be certainly concluded from this passage, that the ruling elders who did not teach or preach were regarded as a separate class or order of permanent officers in the church. There seems to have been a bench of elders selected on account of age, piety, prudence, and wisdom, to whom was intrusted the whole business of the instruction and government of the church, and they performed the various parts of the duty as they had ability. Those among them who "laboured in the word and doctrine," and who gave up all their time to the business of their office, would be worthy of special respect, and of a higher compensation.

{a} "elders" 1Th 5:12,13

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 5 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *For the Scripture saith*. This is adduced as a reason why a church should show all due respect and care for its ministers. The reason is, that as God took care to make provision for the labouring ox, much more should due attention be paid to those who labour for the welfare of the church.

Thou shalt not muzzle the ox. See this passage explained, and its bearing on such an argument shown, **See Barnes "1Co 9:8"**.

See Barnes "1Co 9:9"; See Barnes "1Co 9:10".

And, The labourer is worthy of his reward. This expression is found substantially in Mt 10:10 Lu 10:7. It does not occur in so many words in the Old Testament, and yet the apostle adduces it evidently as a quotation from the Scriptures, and as authority in the case. It would seem probable, therefore, that he had seen the gospel by Matthew or by Luke, and that he quoted this as a part of Scripture, and regarded the. Book from which he made the quotation as of the same authority as the Old Testament. If so, then this may be regarded as an attestation of the apostle to the inspiration of the "Gospel" in which it was found.

{c} "The Labourer" Lu 10:7.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 5 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Against an elder*. The word *elder* here seems to be used in the sense in which it is in the previous verse as relating to *office*, and not in the sense of an aged man, as in 1Ti 5:1. The connection demands this interpretation.

Receive not an accusation. He was not to regard such a charge as well founded unless sustained by two or three witnesses. It is clear from this, that Paul supposed that Timothy would be called on to hear charges against others who were in the ministerial office, and to express his judgment on such cases. There is no reason, however, to suppose that he meant that he should hear them *alone*, or as a "bishop," for this direction does not make the supposition improper that others would be associated with him. It is just such counsel as would now be given to a Presbyterian or Congregational minister, or such as would be given to an associate justice in a court, on the supposition that a brother judge was at any time to be tried by him and his colleagues.

But before two or three witnesses. Marg., *under*. The meaning is, unless supported by the testimony of two or three persons, he was not to regard an accusation against a presbyter as proved, if there was but one witness in the case, however positive he might be in his testimony. The *reasons* for this direction were probably such as these:

(1.) This was the requirement of the Jewish law in all cases, which had thus settled a principle which the apostle seems to have regarded as important, if not obligatory, under the Christian dispensation. See De 17:6 19:15. **See Barnes "Joh 8:17"; See Barnes "2Co 13:1".**

(2.) There would be much greater reason to apprehend that one person might be deceived in the matter on which he bore witness, or might do it from malignant motives, or might be bribed to give false testimony, than that two or three would give such testimony; and the arrangement, therefore, furnished important security for the innocent.

(3.) There might be reason to apprehend that evil-minded persons might be disposed to bring charges against the ministers of the gospel or other officers of the church, and it was important therefore that their rights should be guarded with anxious care. The ministers of religion often give offence to wicked men by their rebukes of sin, (comp. Mr 6:17-20;) wicked men would rejoice to see an accusation against them sustained; the cause of religion would be liable to suffer much when its ministers were condemned as guilty of gross offences, and it is right, therefore, that the evidence in the case should be as free as possible from all suspicion that it is caused by malignity, by hatred of religion, or by conspiracy, or by a desire to see religion disgraced.

(4.) The character of a minister of the gospel is of value, not only to himself and family, as is the case with that of other men, but is of special value to the church, and to the cause of religion. It is the property of the church. The interests of religion depend much on it, and it should not be wantonly assailed; and every precaution should be adopted that Christianity should not be deprived of the advantage which may be derived in its favour from the piety, experience, and talents of its public defenders. At the same time, however, the wicked, though in the ministry, should not be screened from the punishment which they deserve. The apostle gave no injunction to attempt to cover up their faults, or to save them from a fair trial, he only demanded such security as the nature of the case required, that the trial *should be fair*. If a minister of the gospel has been proved to be guilty of crime, the honour of religion, as well as simple justice, requires that he shall be punished as he deserves. He sins against great light; he prostitutes a holy office, and makes use of the very reputation which his office gives him, that he may betray the confidence of others; and such a man should not escape. There should be no "benefit of clergy," and neither a black coat, nor bands, nor the lawn should save a villain.

{1} "but before" "under" {d} "two or three witnesses" De 19:15

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 5 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Them that sin*. That have been proved to have committed sin—referring probably to the elders mentioned in the previous verse, but giving the direction so general a form that it might be applicable to others.

Rebuke before all. Before all the church or congregation. The word *rebuke* properly denotes to reprove or reprehend. It means here that there should be a public statement of the nature of the offence, and such a censure as the case demanded. It extends only to *spiritual* censures. There is no power given of inflicting any punishment by fine or imprisonment. The power of the church, in such cases, is only to express its strong and decided disapprobation of the wrong done, and if the case demands it, of disowning the offending member or minister. This direction to "rebuke an offender before all," may be easily reconciled with the direction in 1Ti 5:1, "Rebuke not an elder." The latter refers to the private and pastoral intercourse with an elder, and to the method in which he should be treated in such intercourse—to wit, with the feelings due to a father; the direction here refers to the manner in which an offender should be treated, who has been proved to be guilty, and where the case has become public. Then there is to be a public expression of disapprobation.

That others also may fear. That they be kept from committing the same offence. Comp. 1Pe 2:14. The end of punishment is not the gratification of the private feelings of him who administers it, but the prevention of crime.

{a} "rebuke" Le 19:17 {b} "others also" De 13:11

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 5 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *I charge thee before God*. Comp. Lu 16:28 Ac 20:21. The word rendered charge means, properly, to call to witness; then to affirm with solemn attestations; and then to admonish solemnly, to urge upon earnestly. It is a word which implies that the subject is of great importance. Paul gives this charge as in the presence of God, of the Redeemer, and of the elect angels, and wishes to secure that sense of its solemnity which must arise from the presence of such holy witnesses.

And the Lord Jesus Christ. As in the presence of the Lord Jesus; with his eye resting upon you.

And the elect angels. It is not uncommon in the Scriptures to speak as if we were in the presence of holy angels, and of the disembodied spirits of the good. Comp. **See Barnes "Heb 12:1"**.

No one can prove that the angels, and that the departed spirits of holy men are not witnesses of what we do. At all events, it is right to urge on others the performance of duty as if the eye of the departed father, mother, sister were fixed upon us, and as if we were encompasses by all the holy beings of heaven. Sin, too, should be avoided as if every eye in the universe were upon us. How many things do we do which we would not; how many feelings do we cherish which we would at once banish from our minds, if we felt that the heavens above us were as transparent as glass, and that all the holy beings around the throne were fixing an intense gaze upon us!

The word "elect" here seems to imply that there had been some influence used to keep them, and some purpose respecting them, which had not existed in regard to those who had fallen. Saints are called elect because they are chosen of God unto salvation, (Eph 1:4,5;) and it would appear

that it is a great law extending through the universe, that both those who remain in a state of holiness, and those who are made holy, are the subjects of purpose and choice on the part of God. The *fact* only is stated; the *reasons* which led to the choice, alike in regard to angels and men, are unknown to us. Comp. Mt 11:25.

That thou observe these things. Probably referring to all the things which he had enjoined in the previous parts of the epistle.

Without preferring one before another. Marg., *prejudice*. The meaning is without previous judgment— *cwriv prokrimatov*—without any prejudice on account of rank, wealth, personal friendship, or predilection of any sort. Let there be entire impartiality in all cases. Justice was beautifully represented by the ancients as holding a pair of scales equally balanced. It is as important that there should be entire impartiality in the church as in civil transactions, and though it is not wrong for a minister of the gospel to have his personal friends, yet in the administration of the affairs of the church, he should remember that all are brethren, and all, of whatever rank, colour, sex, or age, have equal rights.

Partiality. Gr., *inclination or proclivity*—that is, without being inclined to favour one party or person more than another. There should be no purpose to find one guilty, and another innocent; no inclination of heart towards one which would lead us to resolve to find him innocent; and no aversion for another which would make us resolve to find him guilty.

{c} "charge thee" 2Ti 4:1 {d} "elect angels" Re 12:7-9 {1} "preferring" "prejudice" {e} "before another" De 1:17

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 5 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Lay hands suddenly on no man*. Some have understood this of laying on hands to heal the sick (Koppe ;) others of the laying on of hands to absolve penitents; but the obvious meaning is to refer it to ordination. It was usual to lay the hands on the heads of those who were ordained to a sacred office, or appointed to perform an important duty. **See Barnes "1Ti 4:14"**.

Comp. Ac 6:6 8:17. The idea here is, that TimotHy should not be hasty in an act so important as that of introducing men to the ministry, he should take time to give them a fair trial of their piety; he should have satisfactory evidence of their qualifications, he should not at once introduce a man to the ministry because he gave evidence of piety, or because he burned with an ardent zeal, or because he thought himself qualified for the work. It is clear from this that the apostle regarded Timothy as having the right to *ordain* to the ministry; but not that he was to ordain alone, or *as a prelate*. The injunction would be entirely proper on the supposition that others were to be associated with him in the act of ordaining. It is just such as a Presbyterian father in the ministry would give in a charge to his son now; it is in fact just the charge which is now given by Presbyterians and Congregationalists to those who are set apart to the sacred office, in reference to ordaining others.

Neither be partakers of other men's sins. This is evidently to be interpreted in connection with the injunction "to lay hands suddenly on no man." The meaning in this connection, is, that Timothy was not to become a participant in the sins of another by introducing him to the sacred office. He was not to invest one with a holy office who was a wicked man or a heretic, for this would be to sanction his wickedness and error. If we ordain a man to the office of the ministry who is known

to be living in sin, or to cherish dangerous error, we become the patrons of the sin and of the heresy. We lend to it the sanction of our approbation; and give to it whatever currency it may acquire from the reputation which we may have, or which it may acquire from the influence of the sacred office of the ministry. Hence the importance of caution in investing any one with the ministerial office. But while Paul meant, doubtless, that this should be applied particularly to ordination to the ministry, he has given it a general character. *In no way* are we to participate in the sins of other men. We are not to be engaged with them in doing wrong; we are not to patronize them in a wicked business; we are not to be known as their companions or friends; and we are not to partake of their unlawful gains. We are not to loan money, or a boat, or a horse, or a pistol, or a bowie-knife for an unlawful business; we are not to furnish capital for the slave trade, or for manufacturing intoxicating drinks, or for an enterprise that contemplates the violation of the Sabbath.

Keep thyself pure. Particularly in regard to participation in the sins of others; generally, in all things—in heart, in word, in conduct.

{f} "Lay hands suddenly" Ac 13:3 {g} "partaker of other" 2Jo 1:11

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 5 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Drink no longer water*.—There has been much difficulty felt in regard to the connection which this advice has with what precedes and what follows. Many have considered the difficulty to be so great that they have supposed that this verse has been displaced, and that it should be introduced in some other connection. The true connection, and the reason for the introduction of the counsel here, seems to me to be this; Paul appears to have been suddenly impressed with the thought—a thought which is very likely to come over a man who is writing on the duties of the ministry—of the arduous nature of the ministerial office. He was giving counsels in regard to an office which required a great amount of labour, care, and anxiety. The labours enjoined were such as to demand all the time; the care and anxiety incident to such a charge would be very likely to prostrate the frame, and to injure the health. Then he remembered that Timothy was yet but a youth: he recalled his feebleness of constitution and his frequent attacks of illness; he recollected the very abstemious habits which he had prescribed for himself, and, in this connection, he urges him to a careful regard for his health, and prescribes the use of a small quantity of wine, mingled with water, as a suitable medicine in his case. Thus considered, this direction is as worthy to be given by an inspired teacher as it is to counsel a man to pay a proper regard to his health, and not needlessly to throw away his life. Comp. Mt 10:23. The phrase, "drink no longer water," is equivalent to "drink not water *only*." See numerous instances in Wetstein. The Greek word here used does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament.

But use a little wine. Mingled with the water—the common method of drinking wine in the East. See Robinson's Bibliotheca Sacra. i. 512, 513.

For thy stomach's sake. It was not for the pleasure to be derived from the use of wine, or because it would produce hilarity or excitement, but solely because it was regarded as necessary for the promotion of health; that is, as a medicine.

And thine often infirmities. *asyeneiav*. Weaknesses or sicknesses. The word would include all infirmities of body, but seems to refer here to some attacks of sickness to which Timothy was liable,

or to some feebleness of constitution; but beyond this we have no information in regard to the nature of his maladies. In view of this passage, and as a further explanation of it, we may make the following remarks:

(1.) The use of wine, and of all intoxicating drinks, was solemnly forbidden to the priests under the Mosaic law, when engaged in the performance of their sacred duties, Le 10:9,10. The same was the case among the Egyptian priests, *Clarke*. **See Barnes "1Ti 3:3"**.

It is not improbable that the same thing would be regarded as proper among those who ministered in holy things under the Christian dispensation. The natural feeling would be, and not improperly, that a Christian minister should not be less holy than a Jewish priest, and especially when it is remembered that the *reason* of the Jewish law remained the same—"that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and clean and unclean."

(2.) It is evident from this passage that *Timothy* usually drank water only, or that, in modern language, he was a "*tee-totaller*." He was, evidently, not in the habit of drinking wine, or he could not have been exhorted to do it.

(3.) He must have been a remarkably temperate youth to have required the authority of an apostle to induce him to drink even a *little* wine. See *Doddridge*. There are few young men so temperate as to require such an authority to induce them to do it.

(4.) The exhortation extended only to a very *moderate* use of wine. It was not to drink it *freely*; it was not to drink it at the tables of the rich and the great, or in the social circle; it was not even to drink it by itself; it was to use "a *little*," mingled with water—for this was the usual method. See Athaeneus Deipno. lib. ix. x. c. 7.

(5.) It was not as a common drink, but the exhortation or command extends *only* to its use as a medicine. All the use which can be legitimately made of this injunction—whatever conclusion may be drawn from other precepts—is, that it is proper to use a small quantity of wine for medicinal purposes.

(6.) There are many ministers of the gospel, now, alas! to whom under no circumstances could an apostle apply this exhortation—"Drink no longer water only." They would ask, with surprise, what he meant? whether he intended it in irony, and for banter—for they need no apostolic command to drink wine. Or if he should address to them the exhortation, "Use a *little* wine," they could regard it only as a reproof for their usual habit of drinking much. To many, the exhortation would be appropriate, if they ought to use wine at all, only because they are in the habit of using so much, that it would be proper to restrain them to a much smaller quantity.

(7.) This whole passage is one of great value to the cause of temperance. Timothy was undoubtedly in the habit of abstaining wholly from the use of wine. Paul knew this, and he did not reprove him for it. He manifestly favoured the general habit, and only asked him to depart in some small degree from it, in order that he might restore and preserve his health. So far, and no farther, is it right to apply this language in regard to the use of wine; and the minister who should follow this injunction would be in no danger of disgracing his sacred profession by the debasing and demoralizing sin of intemperance.

{a} "little wine" Pr 31:6 {*} "infirmities" "Thy frequent infirmities"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 5 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Some men's sins are open beforehand*. This declaration, though it assumes a general form, is to be taken evidently in connection with the general subject of introducing men to the ministry 1Ti 5:22 5:23

is to be regarded as a parenthesis. The apostle had given Timothy a charge 1Ti 5:22 respecting the character of those whom he should ordain. He here says, in reference to that, that the character of some men was manifest. There was no disguise. It was evident to all what it was, and there could be no danger of mistake respecting it. Their conduct was apparent to all. About such men he ought not to hesitate a moment, and, no matter what their talents, or learning, or rank in the community, he ought to have no participation in introducing them to the ministry.

Going before to judgment. Their character is well understood. There is no need of waiting for the day of judgment to know what they are. Their deeds so precede their own appearance at the judgment-bar, that the record and the verdict can be made up before they arrive there, and there will be scarcely need even of the formality of a trial. The meaning here is, that there could be no doubt about the character of such men, and Timothy should not be accessory to their being introduced into the office of the ministry.

And some men they follow after. That is, their character is not fully understood here. They conceal their plans. They practise deception. They appear different from what they really are. But the character of such men will be developed, and they will be judged according to their works. They cannot hope to escape with impunity. Though they have endeavoured to hide their evil deeds, yet they will follow after them to the judgment-bar, and will meet them there. The meaning, in this connection, seems to be, that there ought to be circumspection in judging of the qualifications of men for the office of the ministry. It ought not to be inferred from favourable appearances at once, or on slight acquaintance, that they are qualified for the office—for they may be of the number of those whose characters, now concealed or misunderstood, will be developed only on the final trial.

{b} "open beforehand" Ga 5:19

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 5 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand*. The character of some men is clear, and accurately understood. There can be no doubt, from their works, that they are good men. We need not wait for the day of judgment to determine that, but may treat them here as good men, and introduce them to offices which only good men can fill. The idea here is, that their character may be so certain and undoubted that there need be no hesitation in setting them apart to the office of the ministry.

And they that are otherwise cannot be hid. That is, they cannot be ultimately concealed or misunderstood. There are arrangements in the Divine government for bringing out the character of every man so that it may be clearly understood. The expression here refers to good men. The idea is, that there are *some* good men whose character is known to all. Their deeds spread a glory around them, so that no one can mistake what they are. *They* correspond, in respect to the publicity of their character, with those mentioned in 1Ti 5:24, whose "*sins* are open beforehand" for the good deeds

of the one are as manifest as the sins of the other. But there are those who are "*otherwise*." They are modest, retiring, unobtrusive, unknown. They may live in obscurity; may have slender means for doing good; may be constitutionally so diffident they never appear on the stage of public action. What they do is concealed from the world. These correspond in respect to publicity with those mentioned in 1Ti 5:24, "whose deeds follow after them." Yet, says the apostle, *these* cannot always be hid. There are arrangements for developing every man's character, and it will be ultimately known what he is. The connection here, seems to be this. As Timothy 1Ti 5:24 was to be on his guard in introducing men into the ministry, against those whose character for evil was not developed, but who might be concealing their plans and practicing secret sins, so he was to endeavour to search out the modest, the unobtrusive, and those who, though now unknown, were among the excellent of the earth, and bring them forward to a station of usefulness where their virtues might shine on the world.

Apart from the reference of this beautiful passage 1Ti 5:24,25 to the ministry it contains truth important to all.

(1.) The character of many wicked men is now clearly known. No one has any doubt of it. Their deeds have gone before them and are recorded in the Books that will be open at the judgment. They might even now be judged without the formality of appearing there, and the universe would acquiesce in the sentence of condemnation.

(2.) The character of many wicked men is concealed. They hide their plans. They are practicing secret iniquity. They do not mean that the world shall know what they are. More than half the real depravity of the world is thus concealed from human view; and in regard to more than half the race who are going up to the judgment there is an entire mistake as to their real character. If all the secret wickedness of the earth were disclosed, no one would have any doubt about the doctrine of human depravity.

(3.) There is a process steadily going forward for bringing out the real character of men, and showing what they are. This process consists, *first*, in the arrangements of Providence for developing their character *here*. Many a man who was supposed to be virtuous, is shown, by some sudden trial, to have been all along a villain at heart. Many a minister of the gospel, a lawyer, a physician, an officer in a bank, a merchant, whose character was supposed to stand fair, has been suffered to fall into open sin, that he might develope the long-cherished secret depravity of his soul. *Secondly*, the process will be completed on the final trial. Then *nothing* will be concealed. Every man will be seen as he is. All they whose characters were understood to be wicked here, will be seen then also to be wicked, and many who were supposed on earth to have a good character, will be seen there to have been hollow- hearted and base hypocrites.

(4.) Every man in the last day will be judged according to his real character. No one, however successful he may have been here, can hope to practise a deception on his final Judge.

(5.) There is a fitness and propriety in the fact that there will be a final judgment. Indeed, there must be such a judgment, in order that God may be just. The characters of men are not fully developed here. The process is not completed. Many are taken away before their schemes of iniquity are accomplished, and before their real characters are understood. If they were to live long enough on the earth, their characters would be ultimately developed here; but the Divine arrangement is, that man shall not live long here, and the development, therefore, must be in the future world.

(6.) The modest, the retiring, the humble, and those here unknown, will not be overlooked in the last great day. There is much good, as there is much evil in the world, that is now concealed.

There are many plans of benevolence formed which they who formed them are not permitted to complete; many desires of benefiting others are cherished, which there are no means of gratifying; many a deed of kindness is performed which is not blazoned abroad to the world; and many a wish is entertained for the progress of virtue, the freedom of the enslaved, the relief of the oppressed, and the salvation of the world, which can find expression only in prayer. We are not to suppose, then, that all that is concealed and unknown in the world is *evil*.

(7.) There will be amazing developments in the last great day; and as it will then be seen in the revelations of the secret deeds of evil that human nature is corrupt, so it will be seen that there was much more good in the world than was commonly supposed. As a large portion of the wickedness of the earth is concealed, so, from the necessity of the case, it is true that no small portion of the goodness on earth is hidden. *Wickedness* conceals itself from shame, from a desire better to effect its purposes, from the dread of punishment; goodness, from its modesty, its retiring nature, and from the want of an opportunity of acting out its desires; but whatever may have been the cause of the concealment, in all cases all will be made known on the final trial—to the shame and confusion of the one class; to the joy and triumph of the other.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 6

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 6 - Verse 1

1st Timothy Chapter 6

Analysis of the Chapter

This chapter embraces the following subjects of counsel and exhortation:—

(1.) The kind of instruction which was to be given to servants, 1Ti 6:1-5. They were to treat their masters with all proper respect, 1Ti 6:1; if their masters were Christians, they were, on that account, to serve them with the more fidelity, 1Ti 6:2; and any opposite kind of teaching would tend only to stir up strife and produce dissatisfaction and contention, and could proceed only from a proud and self-confident heart.

(2.) The advantage of piety and of a contented mind, 1Ti 6:6-8. The argument for this is, that we brought nothing into the world, and can carry nothing out; that our essential wants here are food and raiment; and that, having enough to make us comfortable, we should be content.

(3.) The evils of a desire to be rich, 1Ti 6:9,10; evils seen in the temptations to which it leads; the passions which it fosters; and the danger to religion itself.

(4.) An exhortation to Timothy, as a minister of religion, to pursue higher and nobler objects, 1Ti 6:11-16. He was

(a) to avoid these worldly things; he was

(b) to pursue nobler objects.

He was to follow after righteousness, and to fight the good fight of faith. To do this, he was to be encouraged by the assurance that the great and only Potentate would, in due time, place the crown on his head.

(5.) The duty of those who were rich—for it is supposed that some Christians will be rich, either by inheritance, or by prosperous business, 1Ti 6:17-19. They are

(a) not to be proud;

(b) nor to trust in their riches so as to forget their dependence on God;

(c) to do good with their property; and

(d) to make their wealth the means of securing eternal life.

(6.) A solemn charge to Timothy to observe these things, and not to be turned from them by any of the arguments and objections of pretended science, 1Ti 6:20,21.

Verse 1. *Let as many servants*. On the word here rendered servants— *douloi*—**See Barnes "Eph 6:5"**.

The word is that which was commonly applied to a slave, but it is so extensive in its signification as to be applicable to any species of servitude, whether voluntary or involuntary. If slavery existed in Ephesus at the time when this epistle was written, it would be applicable to slaves; if, any other kind of servitude existed, the word would be equally applicable to that. There is nothing *in the word itself* which essentially limits it to *slavery*. Examine Mt 13:27 20:27; Mr 10:44 Lu 2:29; Joh 15:15 Ac 2:18, 4:29 16:17; Ro 1:1

2Co 4:5 Jude 1:1; Re 1:1 2:20, 7:3.

The addition of the phrase "under the yoke," however, shows undoubtedly that it is to be understood here of slavery.

As are under the yoke. On the word yoke, **See Barnes "Mt 11:29"**.

The phrase here properly denotes slavery, as it would not be applied to any other species of servitude. See Le 26:13. Dem. 322. 12. *zugov doulosunhv Rob. Lex*. It sometimes denotes the bondage of the Mosaic law as being a severe and oppressive burden. Ac 15:10 Ga 5:1. It may be remarked here that the apostle did not regard slavery as a *light or desirable thing. He would not have applied this term to the condition of a wife or a child*.

Count their own masters worthy of all honour. Treat them with all proper respect. They were to manifest the *right spirit themselves*, whatever their masters did; they were not to do anything that would dishonour religion. The injunction here would seem to have particular reference to those whose masters were not Christians. In the following verse, the apostle gives particular instructions to those who had pious masters. The meaning here is, that the slave ought to show the Christian spirit towards his master who was not a Christian; he ought to conduct himself so that religion would not be dishonoured; he ought not to give his master occasion to say that the only effect of the Christian religion on the mind of a servant was to make him restless, discontented, dissatisfied, and disobedient. In the humble and trying situation in which he confessedly was—under the yoke of bondage—he ought to evince patience, kindness, and respect for his master, and as long as the relation continued he was to be obedient. This command, however, was by no means inconsistent with his desiring his freedom, and securing it, if the opportunity presented itself. See Notes on 1Co 7:21. Comp., on the passage before us, **See Barnes "Eph 6:5"; Eph 6:6-8** 1Pe 2:18.

That the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. That religion be not dishonoured and reproached, and that there may be no occasion to say that Christianity tends to produce discontent and to lead to insurrection. If the effect of religion had been to teach all who were servants that

they should no longer obey their masters, or that they should rise upon them and assert their freedom by violence, or that their masters were to be treated with indignity on account of their usurped rights over others, the effect would have been obvious. There would have been a loud and united outcry against the new religion, and it could have made no progress in the world. Instead of this, Christianity taught the necessity of patience and meekness, and forbearance in the endurance of all wrong—whether from private individuals, Mt 5:39-41 1Co 6:7; or under the oppressions and exactions of Nero, Ro 13:1-7; or amidst the hardships and cruelties of slavery. These peaceful injunctions, however, did not demonstrate that Christ approved the act of him "that smote on the one cheek," or that Paul regarded the government of Nero as a good government, —and as little do they prove that Paul or the Saviour approved of slavery.

{a} "servants" Eph 6:5 {*} "blasphemed" "evil spoken of"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 6 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And they that have believing masters*. Masters who are Christians. It is clear from this, that Paul supposed that, at that time, and under those circumstances, a man might become a Christian who had slaves under him. How long he might continue to hold his fellow-men in bondage, .and yet be a Christian, is, however, quite a different question. It is quite clear, from the New Testament, as well as from facts now, that God may convert men when pursuing any kind of wickedness. The effect of religion, however, in all cases, will be to lead them to cease to do wrong. It is by no means improbable that many of those who had owned slaves, in accordance with the prevailing custom in the Roman empire, may have been converted—for the fact that a man has been living a life of sin does not prevent the possibility of his conversion. There is no evidence that Paul refers here to any who had *bought* slaves *after* they were converted; nor is there any intimation of any such transaction among Christians in the New Testament. Nor is there any intimation that he regarded it as right and best that they should continue to hold slaves; nor that he would approve their making arrangements to persevere in this as a permanent institution. Nor is it to be fairly inferred from this passage that he meant to teach that they might continue this, and yet be entitled to all the respect and confidence due to the Christian name, or be regarded as maintaining a good standing in the church. Whatever may be true on these points, the passage before us only proves that Paul considered that a man who was a slave-holder might be converted, and be spoken of as a "believer," or a Christian. Many have been converted in similar circumstances, as many have in the practice of all other kinds of iniquity. What was their duty after their conversion, was another question; and what was the duty of their "servants," or slaves, was another question still. It is only this latter question which the apostle is here considering.

Not despise them, because they are brethren. Not treat them with any want of the respect which is due to their station. The word here used sometimes denotes *to neglect, or, not to care for*, Mt 6:24; Lu 16:13. Here it is not necessary to suppose that it denotes actual *contempt*, but only that want of respect which might possibly spring up in the mind if not well instructed, or not on its guard, among those who were servants or slaves. It was to be apprehended that the effect of the master and the slave having both embraced religion would be to produce in the mind of the servant

a want of respect and deference for his master. This danger was to be apprehended from the following causes:—

(1.) Christianity taught that all men were made of "*one blood*," and were by nature equal, Ac 17:26. It was natural, therefore, for the slave to infer that by nature he was equal to his master, and it would be easy to pervert this truth to make him disrespectful and insubordinate.

(2.) They were equal to them as Christians. Christianity taught them that they were all "brethren" in the Lord, and that there was no distinction before God. It might be natural to infer from this, that all distinctions in society were to be abolished, and that, *in all respects*, the slave was to regard himself as on a level with his master.

(3.) Some, who did not well understand the nature of Christianity, or who might have been disposed to cause trouble, may have taken advantage of the undeniable truths about the equality of men by nature and by redemption, to produce discontent on the part of the slave. They may have endeavoured to embitter the feelings of the slaves towards their masters who held them in bondage. The effect, it is easy to see, may have been to lead those who were in a state of servitude to manifest open and marked disrespect. In opposition to this, the apostle would have Timothy teach that Christianity did not rudely assail the existing institutions of society, and especially did not teach those who were in subordinate ranks to be disrespectful to those above them.

But rather do them service. That is, serve them with more cheerfulness and alacrity than they did before the master was converted; or serve them with the more cheerfulness because they were Christians. The reasons for this were, because the master was now more worthy of affectionate regard, and because the servant might look for better treatment at his hands. Comp. Notes on Eph 6:6.

Because they are faithful. That is, *because* they are believers, or are Christians -*pistoi*; the same word which in the beginning of the verse is rendered *believing*. It does not here mean that they were "faithful" to their servants or their God, but merely that they were *Christians*.

And beloved. Probably, "beloved of *God*;" for so the word is often used. As they are the friends of God, they who are servants should show them the more respect. The idea is, simply, that one whom God loves should be treated with more respect than if he were not thus beloved; or, a good man deserves more respect than a wicked man. In all the relations of life, we should respect those above us the more in proportion to the excellency of their character.

Partakers of the benefit. That is, the benefit which the gospel imparts—for so the connection requires us to understand it. It cannot mean, as many have supposed, that they were "partakers of the benefit of the labours of the servant," or enjoyed the fruits of their labours,—for how could this be a reason for their treating them with the more respect? It would be rather a reason for treating them with less respect, because they were living on the avails of unrequited toil. But the true reason assigned is, that the master had been, by the grace of God, permitted to participate in the same benefits of salvation as the servant; he had received, like him, the pardon of sin, and he was to be regarded as a fellow-heir of the grace of life. The expression here might be rendered, "they are *partakers of, or are devoted to, the good cause*." *Rob. Lex*. The argument is, that they were not infidels, or strangers to religion, or those who would try to hinder the progress of that which was dear to the heart of the servant, but were united with them in that same good work; they participated in the blessings of the same salvation, and they were really endeavouring to further the interests of religion. There ought, therefore, to be the more respect shown to them, and the more cheerful service rendered them.

{1} "faithful" "believing"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 6 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *If any man teach otherwise*. Any otherwise than that respect should be shown to masters; and that a more cheerful and ready service should be rendered because they were Christians. It is evidently implied here that some might be disposed to inculcate such views of religion as would produce discontent and a spirit of insubordination among those who were held to servitude. *Who* they were is not known, nor is it known what arguments they would employ to do it, It would seem probable that the arguments which would be employed would be such as these:—that God made all men equal; that all had been redeemed by the same blood; that all true Christians were fellow-heirs of heaven; and that it was wrong to hold a Christian brother in bondage, etc. From Undeniable principles it would seem that they drew the inference that slaves ought at once to assert their freedom; that they should refuse obedience to their masters; and that the tendency of their teaching was, instead of removing the evil by the gradual and silent influence of Christian principles, to produce discontent and insurrection. From some of the expressions here used by the apostle, as characteristic of these teachers, it would seem to be probable that these persons were Jews. They were men given to subtle disputations, and those who doted about questions and verbal disputes, and who were intent on gain, supposing that that which conduced to mere worldly prosperity was of course religion. These characteristics apply well to Jewish teachers.

And consent not to wholesome words. Words conducing to a healthful state of the church; that is, doctrines tending to produce order and a due observance of the proprieties of life; doctrines leading to contentment, and sober industry, and the patient endurance of evils. *Even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ*. The doctrines of the Saviour—all of which tended to a quiet life, and to a patient endurance of wrongs. *And to the doctrine which is according to godliness*. Which tends to produce piety or religion; that is, the doctrine which would be most favourable to an easy and rapid propagation of the gospel. The idea seems to be, that such a state of insubordination and discontent as they would produce, would be unfavourable to the promotion of religion. Who can doubt it?

{a} "words" 2Ti 1:13 {b} "according to godliness" Tit 1:1

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 6 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *He is proud*. That is, he is lifted up with his fancied superior acquaintance with the nature of religion. The Greek verb means properly *to smoke, to fume*; and then *to be inflated, to be conceited*, etc. The idea is, that he has no proper knowledge of the nature of the gospel, and yet he values himself on a fancied superior acquaintance with its principles.

Knowing nothing. Marg., *a fool*. That is, that he does not understand the nature of religion as he supposes he does. His views in regard to the relation of masters and servants, and to the bearing of religion on that relation, show that he does not understand the genius of Christianity. The apostle expresses this in strong language, by saying that he knows *nothing*. **See Barnes "1Co 8:2"**.

But doting. Marg., *sick*. The Greek word— *nosew* —means properly to be sick; then to languish, to pine after. The meaning here is, that such persons had a *sickly* or *morbid* desire for debates of this kind. They had not a sound and healthy state of mind on the subject of religion. They were like a sickly man, who has no desire for solid and healthful food, but for that which will gratify a diseased appetite. They desired no sound doctrine, but controversies about unimportant and unsubstantial matters—things that bore the same relation to important doctrines which the things that a sick man pines after do to substantial food.

Questions and strifes of words. The Jews abounded much in disputes of this sort, and it would seem probable that the persons here referred to were Jewish teachers. **See Barnes "1Ti 1:6"**; **See Barnes** "1Ti 1:7"; **See Barnes "Ac 18:15"**.

Whereof cometh envy. The only fruit of which is to produce envy. That is the appearance of superior knowledge; the boast of being profoundly acquainted with religion, and the show of an ability for subtle argumentation, would produce in a certain class envy. Envy is uneasiness, pain, mortification, or discontent, excited by another's prosperity, or by his superior knowledge or possessions. **See Barnes "Ro 1:29"**.

Strife. Or contentions with those who will not readily yield to their opinions.

Railings. Harsh and abusive language towards those who will not concede a point—a common effect of disputes, and more commonly of disputes about small and unimportant matters, than of those which are of magnitude. Such railings often attend disputes that arise out of nice and subtle distinctions.

Evil surmisings. Suspicions that they are led to hold their views, not by the love of the truth, but from sordid or worldly motives. Such suspicions are very apt to attend an angry debate of any kind. It might be expected peculiarly to exist on such a question as the apostle refers to here—the relation of a master and slave. It is always very hard to do justice to the motives of one who seems to us to be living in sin, or to believe it to be possible that he acts from right motives.

{1} "knowing nothing" "a fool" {a} "nothing" 2Ti 1:13 {2} "doting" "sick"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 6 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Perverse disputings*. Marg., *gallings one of another*. In regard to the correct reading of this passage, see Bib. Repository, vol. iii pp. 61, 62. The word which is here used in the Received Text—*paradiatribh*—occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It properly means *mis-employment*; then, *idle occupation*. (*Rob. Lex*.) The verb from which this is derived means *to rub in pieces*, to wear away; and hence the word here used refers to what was a mere *wearing away* of time. The idea is that of employments that merely consumed time without any advantage. The notion of *contention or dispute* is not necessarily implied in the passage, but the allusion is to inquiries or discussions that were of no practical value, but were a mere consumption of time. Comp. Koppe on the passage. The reading in the margin is derived from the common usage of the verb *to rub*, and hence our translators attached the idea of rubbing against each other, or of *galling* each other, as by rubbing. This is not, however, the idea in the Greek word. The phrase "*idle employments*" would better suit the meaning of the Greek than either of the phrases which our translators have employed.

Of men of corrupt minds. That is, of wicked hearts.

And destitute of the truth. Not knowing the truth; or not having just views of truth. They show that they have no correct acquaintance with the Christian system.

Supposing that gain is godliness. That that which contributes to an increase of property is of course true religion; or that it is proper to infer that any course which contributes to worldly prosperity must be sanctioned by religion. They judge of the consistency of any course with religion by its tendency to promote outward prosperity. This they have exalted into a maxim, and this they make the essential thing in religion. But how could any men do this? And what connection would this have with the subject under consideration—the kind of instruction that was to be given to servants? The *meaning* of the maxim seems to be, that religion must necessarily promote prosperity by its promoting temperance, and industry, and length of days; and that since this was the case, it was fair to infer that anything which would not do this could not be consistent with religion. They adopted it, therefore, as a general rule of judging, and one in entire accordance with the wishes of their own hearts, that any course of life that would not do this must be contrary to the true spirit of religion. This maxim, it would seem, they applied to the relation of the slave and his master; and as the tendency of the system was always to keep the servant poor and in an humble condition, they seem to have inferred that the relation was contrary to Christianity, and hence to have excited the servant to disaffection. In their reasoning they were not far out of the way, for it is fair to infer that a system that tends to produce uniform poverty, and to perpetuate a degraded condition in society, is contrary to the genius of Christianity. They were *wrong*

(1.) in making this a *general* maxim by which to judge of everything in religion; and

(2.) in so applying it as to produce insubordination and discontent in the minds of servants towards their masters; and

(3.) in supposing that *everything* which produced gain was consistent with religion, or that they could infallibly judge of the moral quality of any course of life by its contributing to outward prosperity. Religion will uniformly lead to that which conduces to prosperity; but it does not follow that every way of making money is therefore a part of piety. It is possible, also, that in some way they hoped for "gain" to themselves by inculcating those principles. It may be remarked here, that this is not an uncommon maxim practically among men—that "gain is godliness." The whole object of life with them is to make money; the rule by which they judge of everything is by its tendency to produce gain; and their whole religion may be summed up in this, that *they live for gain*. Wealth is the real object of pursuit; but it is often with them cloaked under the pretence of piety. They have no more religion than they suppose will contribute to this object; they judge of the nature and value of every maxim by its tendency to make men prosperous in their worldly business; they have as much as they suppose will promote their pecuniary interest, and they sacrifice every principle of religion which they suppose would conflict with their earthly advancement.

From such withdraw thyself. That is, have no communion or fellowship with them. Do not recognize them as religious teachers; do not countenance their views. Timothy was, in no way, to show that he regarded them as inculcating truth, or to patronize their doctrines. From such men, as having any claim to the character of Christians, every man *should* withdraw with feelings of unutterable pity and loathing. This passage 1Ti 6:1-5 is often appealed to by the advocates and apologists for slavery, to prove that Christianity countenances that institution, and that no direct attempt should be made by the ministers of the gospel, or other Christians, to show the evil of the institution, and to promote its abolition, and to prove that we have no right to interfere in any way

with what pertains to these "domestic relations." It is of importance, therefore, in view of the exposition which has been given of the words and phrases in the passage, to sum up the truths which it inculcates. From it, therefore, the following lessons may be derived:

(1.) That those who are slaves, and who have been converted to Christianity, should not be indolent or disorderly. If their masters are Christians, they should treat them with respect, and all the more because they are fellow-heirs of the grace of life. If they are *not* Christians, they should yet show the nature of religion on *themselves*, and bear the evils of their condition with patience—showing how religion teaches them to endure wrong. In either case, they are to be quiet, industrious, kind, meek, respectful. This Christianity everywhere enjoins while the relation continues. At the same time, however, it does not forbid the slave earnestly to desire his freedom, or to use all proper measures to obtain it. See 1Co 7:21.

(2.) That the ministers of religion should not labour to produce a spirit of discontent among slaves, or excite them to rise upon their masters. This passage would undoubtedly forbid all such interference, and all agencies or embassies sent *among slaves themselves* to inflame their minds against their masters, in view of their wrongs; to put arms into their hands; or to induce them to form combinations for purposes of insurrection. It is not so much in the true spirit of Christianity to go to those who *are wronged*, as to those who *do the wrong*. The primary message in such cases is to the latter; and when it does go to the former, it is to teach them to be patient under their wrongs, to evince the Christian spirit there, and to make use only of those means which are consistent with the gospel to free themselves from the evils under which they suffer. At the same time, nothing in this passage, or in any other part of the New Testament, forbids us to go to the *master himself*, and to show him the evil of the system, and to enjoin upon him to let the oppressed go free. Nothing in this passage can be reasonably construed as teaching that an appeal of the most earnest and urgent kind may not be made to him; or that the wrongs of the system may not be fully set before him; or that any man or set of men may not lawfully lift up in his hearing a loud and earnest voice in favour of the freedom of all. And in like manner there is nothing which makes it improper that the slave himself should be put fully in possession of that gospel which will apprize him of his rights as a man, and as redeemed by the blood of Jesus. Every human being, whether held in bondage or not, has a *right* to be made acquainted with all the provisions and truths of that gospel, nor has any man or class of men a right to withhold such knowledge from him. No *system* of things can be right which contemplates that that gospel shall be withheld, or under which it is necessary to withhold it in order to the perpetuity of the system.

(3.) The passage teaches that it is possible that a man who is a slaveholder may become a Christian. But it does not teach that, though he may become a Christian while he is a slaveholder, that it is proper for him to continue this relation after he becomes such. It does *not* teach that a man can be a Christian and yet go into the business of buying and selling slaves. It does not teach that a man can be a Christian and continue to hold others in bondage, whatever may be true on that point. It does not teach that he ought to be considered as maintaining a "good standing" in the church, if he continues to be a slaveholder; and whatever may be the truth on these points, *this* passage should not be adduced as demonstrating them. It settles one point only in regard to these questions—that a case was supposable in which a slave had a Christian master. It settles the duty *of the slave* in such a case; it says nothing about the duty *of the master*.

(4.) This passage does not teach that slavery is either a *good* thing, or a *just* thing, a *desirable* relation in life, or an institution that God wishes to be *perpetuated* on the earth. The injunctions to

slaves to be patient, meek, industrious, and respectful, no more demonstrate this, than the command to subjects to be obedient to the laws proves that God regarded the government of Nero as such an administration as he wished to be perpetuated on the earth. To exhort a slave to manifest a Christian spirit under his oppressions and wrongs, is not to justify the system that does him wrong, nor does it prohibit us from showing to masters that the system is contrary to the gospel, and that it ought to be abandoned.

(5.) This passage, therefore, furnishes no real support for slavery. It can no more be adduced in favour of it than any exhortation to those who are oppressed, or in any degrading situation in life, to be patient, proves that the system which oppresses and degrades them, is a good one. Nor does the fact that a man might be converted who was a slaveholder, and might be spoken of as a *pistov*, or *believer*, prove that it would be right and desirable that he should continue that relation, any more than the fact that Saul of Tarsus became a Christian when engaged in persecution, proves that it would have been right for him to continue in that business; or than the conversion of the Ephesians who "used curious arts," Ac 19:19,) proved that it would have been proper for them to continue in that employment. Men who are doing wrong are converted in order to turn them *from* that course of life, not to justify them in it.

{3} "perverse disputings" "gallings one of another" {b} "from such withdraw" Tit 1:1

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 6 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *But godliness*. Piety; religion. The meaning is, that real religion should be regarded as the greatest and most valuable acquisition.

With contentment. This word, as now used, refers to a state of mind; a calm and satisfied feeling; a freedom from murmuring and complaining. The idea is, that "piety, connected with a contented mind—or a mind acquiescing in the allotments of life—is to be regarded as the *real* gain." Tindal gives substantially the same interpretation: "Godliness is great riches, if a man be content with that he hath." Coverdale,—" Howbeit, it is of great advantage, who is so godly, and holdeth him content with that he hath." The word which is used here—*autarkeia* —means, properly, *self-sufficiency*, and is used here, in a good sense, to denote a mind satisfied with its lot. If there be true religion, united with its proper accompaniment, peace of mind, it is to be regarded as the true riches. The object of the apostle seems to be, to rebuke those who supposed that property constituted everything that was worth living for. He tells them, therefore, that the true gain, the real riches which we ought to seek, is religion, with a contented mind. This does more to promote happiness than wealth can ever do, and this is what should be regarded as the great object of life.

{a} "godliness with contentment" Pr 15:16

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 6 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *For we brought nothing into this world*, etc. A sentiment very similar to this occurs in Job 1:21; and it would seem probable that the apostle had that passage in his eye. **See Barnes "Job 1:21".**

Numerous expressions of this kind occur in the classic writers. See Wetstein, *in loc*., and Pricaeus, *in loc*., in the Critici Sacri. Of the *truth* of what is here said, there can be nothing more obvious. It is apparent to all. We bring no property with us into the world; no clothing, no jewels, no gold; and it is equally clear that we can take nothing with us when we leave the earth. Our coming into the world introduces no additional property to that which the race before possessed, and our going from the world removes none that we may have helped the race to accumulate. This is said by the apostle as an obvious reason why we should be contented if our actual wants are supplied; for this is really all that we need, and all that the world is toiling for.

We can carry nothing out. Comp. Ps 49:17. "For when he [the rich man] dieth, he shall carry nothing away; his glory shall not descend after him."

{b} "it is certain" Ps 49:17

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 6 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *And having food and raiment*. "Food and raiment," here, seem to be used to denote supplies for our wants in general. It is not uncommon to denote the whole by a part, and as these are the principal things which we really need, and without which life could not be sustained, the apostle uses the phrase to denote all that is really necessary for us. We cannot suppose that he would forbid a desire of a comfortable habitation, or of the means of knowledge, or of conveniences for worshipping God, etc. The idea is, that having those things which meet the actual necessities of our nature, and save us from distress, we should not strive after "uncertain riches," or make wealth the object of our anxious pursuit. **See Barnes** "Php 4:11, **See Barnes "Php 4:12".**

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 6 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *But they that will be rich*. Further to enforce the duty of contentment, the apostle refers to some of the evils which necessarily attend a desire to be rich. Those evils have been so great and uniform in all ages, and are so necessary accompaniments of that desire, that, even amidst many inconveniences which may attend the opposite condition, we should be contented with our lot. Indeed, if we could see all, it would only be necessary to see the evils which the desire of wealth produces in the world, to make us contented with a most lowly condition of life. Perhaps nothing more would be necessary to make a poor man satisfied with his lot, and grateful for it, than to be acquainted with the perplexities and cares of a rich man. There is more emphasis to be placed on the word *will*, here, in the phrase "will be rich," than might be supposed from our translation. It is not the sign of the future tense, but implies an actual *purpose or design* to become rich— *oi boulomenoi*. The reference is to those in whom this becomes the object of earnest desire, and who lay their plans for it.

Fall into temptation. That is, they are tempted to do wicked things in order to accomplish their purposes. It is extremely difficult to cherish the desire to be rich, as the leading purpose of the soul, and to be all honest man.

And a snare. Birds are taken in a snare, and wild beasts were formerly. **See Barnes** "Job 18:8, **See Barnes "Job 18:9"**.

The net was sprung suddenly upon them, and they could not escape. The idea here is, that they who have this desire, become so *entangled*, that they cannot easily escape. They become involved in the meshes of worldliness and sin; their movements are so lettered by cares, and inordinate desires, and by artificial wants, that they are no longer freemen. They become so involved in these things, that they cannot well break away from them if they would. Comp. Pr 28:20.

And into many foolish and hurtful lusts. Desires, such as the love of wealth creates. They are *foolish*—as being not such as an intelligent and immortal being should pursue; and they are *hurtful*—as being injurious to morals, to health, and to the soul. Among those desires, are the fondness for display; for a magnificent dwelling, a train of menials, and a splendid equipage; for sumptuous living, feasting, the social glass, company, and riotous dissipation.

Which drown men in destruction and perdition. The word which is here rendered, *drown buyizw* means, to *sink in the deep*, or, *to cause to sink*; and the meaning here is, that they become submerged as a ship that sinks. The idea of *drowning* is not properly that of the apostle, but the image is that of a wreck, where a ship and all that is in it, go down together. The destruction is complete. There is a total ruin of happiness, of virtue, of reputation, and of the soul. The ruling desire to be rich leads on a train of follies which ruins everything here, and hereafter. How many of the human family have thus been destroyed!

{a} "will be rich" Pr 28:20 {*} "lusts" "been seduced"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 6 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *For the love of money is the root of all evil*. That is, of all *kinds* of evil. This is evidently not to be understood as *literally* true, for there are evils which cannot be traced to the love of money —the evils growing out of ambition, and intemperance, and debasing lusts, and of the hatred of God and of goodness. The expression here is evidently a popular saying—" all sorts of evils grow out of the love of money." Similar expressions often occur in the classic writers. See *Wetstein, in loc*., and numerous examples quoted by Pricaeus. Of the truth of this, no one can doubt. No small part of the crimes of the world can be traced to the love of gold. But it deserves to be remarked here, that the apostle does not say that "*money* is the root of all evil," or that it is an evil at all. It is the 'love' of it which is the source of evil.

Which while some coveted after. That is, some who were professing Christians. The apostle is, doubtless, referring to persons whose history was known to Timothy, and warning him, and teaching him to warn others, by their example.

They have erred from the faith. Marg., *been seduced*. The Greek is, they have been led astray from; that is, they have been so deceived, as to depart from the faith. The notion of *deception or delusion* is in the word, and the sense is, that, deceived by the promises held out by the prospect of wealth, they have apostatized from the faith. It is not implied of necessity that they were ever

real Christians. They have been led off from truth and duty, and from all the hopes and joys which religion would have imparted.

And have pierced themselves through with many sorrows. With such sorrows as remorse, and painful reflections on their folly, and the apprehension of future wrath. Too late they see that they have thrown away the hopes of religion for that which is at best unworthy the pursuit of an immortal mind; which leads them on to a life of wickedness; which fails of imparting what it promised when its pursuit is successful; and which, in the great majority of instances, disappoints its votaries in respect to its attainment. The word rendered "pierced themselves through"—*periepeiran*—occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, and is a word whose force and emphasis cannot be well expressed in a translation. It is from *peirw*, and is made more emphatic by the addition of the preposition *peri*. The word *peirw*, *peiro*, means, properly, to pierce through from one end to another, and is applied to meat that is *pierced through* by the spit when it is to be roasted (*Passow*;) then it means, to pierce through and through. The addition of the preposition (*peri*) to the word, conveys the idea of doing this *all round*; of piercing everywhere. It was not a single thrust which was made, but they are gashed all round with penetrating wounds. Such is the effect on those who cast off religion for the sake of gold. None can avoid these consequences who do this. Every man is in the hands of a holy and just God, and sooner or later he must feel the effects of his sin and folly.

{b} "love of money" Ex 23:8 {1} "erred" "been seduced"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 6 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *But thou, man of God*, flee these things. These allurements of wealth, and these sad consequences which the love of gold produces.

But follow after righteousness, etc. Make these the grand object of your pursuit. On the virtues here enumerated, **See Barnes "Ga 5:22"**; **See Barnes "Ga 5:23"**.

{c} "O man of God" De 33:1

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 6 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Fight the good fight of faith*. The noble conflict in the cause of religion, **See Barnes** "Eph 6:10-17.

See Barnes "1Co 9:26"; **See Barnes** "1Co 9:27".

The allusion is to the contests at the Grecian games.

Lay hold on eternal life. As the crown of victory that is held out to you. Seize this as eagerly as the competitors at the Grecian games laid hold on the prize. **See Barnes "1Co 9:25"**.

Whereunto thou art also called. That is, by the Spirit of God, and by the very nature of your profession. God does not 'call' his people that they may become rich; he does not convert them in order that they may devote themselves to the business of gain. They are 'called' to a higher and nobler work. Yet how many professing Christians there are who seem to live *as if* God had 'called' them to the special business of making money, and who devote themselves to it with a zeal and

assiduity that would do honour to such a calling, if this had been the grand object which God had in view in converting them!

And hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. That is, either when he embraced the Christian religion, and made a public profession of it in the presence of the church and of the world; or when he was solemnly set apart to the ministry; or as he, in his Christian life, had been enabled publicly to evince his attachment to the Saviour. I see no reason to doubt that the apostle may have referred to the former, and that in early times a profession of religion may have been openly made before the church and the world. Such a method of admitting members to the church would have been natural, and would have been fitted to make a deep impression on others. It is a good thing often to remind professors of religion, of the feelings which they had when they made a profession of religion; of the fact that the transaction was witnessed by the world; and of the promises which they then made to lead holy lives. One of the best ways of stimulating ourselves or others to the faithful performance of duty, is the remembrance of the vows then made; and one of the most effectual methods of reclaiming a backslider, is to bring to his remembrance that solemn hour when he publicly gave himself to God.

{d} "Fight the good fight" 2Ti 4:7. {e} "good profession" Heb 13:23 {+} "profession" "confessed a good profession"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 6 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *I give thee charge in the sight of God*. **See Barnes "1Ti 5:21"**.

Who quickeneth all things. Who gives *life* to all. **See Barnes "Eph 2:1"**.

It is not quite clear why the apostle refers to this attribute of God as enforcing the charge which he here makes. Perhaps he means to say, that God is the source of life, and that as he had given life to Timothy—natural and spiritual—he had a right to require that it should be employed in his service; and that, if, in obedience to this charge and in the performance of his duties, he should be required to lay down his life, he should bear in remembrance, that God had power to raise him up again. This is more distinctly urged in 2Ti 2:8-10.

And before Christ Jesus. As in the presence of Christ, and stimulated by his example.

Who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession. Marg., *profession*. The same Greek word is used which in 1Ti 6:12 is translated *profession*. The reference is to the fact that the Lord Jesus, when standing at the bar of Pilate, who claimed to have power over his life, did not shrink from an open avowal of the truth. Joh 18:36,37. Nothing can be better fitted to preserve our minds steadfast in the faith, and to enable us to maintain our sacred vows in this world when allured by temptation, or when ridiculed for our religion, than to remember the example of the Lord Jesus. Let us place him before us as he stood at the bar of Pilate—threatened with death in its most appalling form, and ridiculed for the principles which he maintained; let us look on him, friendless and alone, and see with what seriousness, and sincerity, and boldness, he stated *the simple truth* about himself, and we shall have one of the best securities that we can have, that we shall not dishonour our profession. A clear view of the example of Christ our Saviour, in those circumstances, and a deep conviction that his eye is upon us to discern whether we are steadfast as he was, will do more than all abstract precepts to make us faithful to our Christian calling.

{a} "charge" 1Ti 5:21 {*} "quickeneth all things" "Giveth life to all"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 6 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *That thou keep this commandment*. Referring particularly to the solemn injunction which he had just given him, to "fight the good fight of faith," but perhaps also including *all* that he had enjoined on him.

Without spot. It seems harsh, and is unusual, to apply the epithet— "*without spot*"—*aspilov*—to a command or doctrine, and the passage may be so construed that this may be understood as referring to Timothy himself—" That thou keep the commandment so that thou mayest be without spot and unrebukeable." See Bloomfield, Crit. Dig., *in loc*. The word here rendered "*without spot*," occurs in the New Testament only here, and in Jas 1:27 1Pe 1:19; 2Pe 3:14.

It means without any *stain* or *blemish; pure*. If applied here to *Timothy*, it means that he should so keep the command that there would be no stain on his moral character; if to the doctrine, that that should be kept pure.

Unrebukeable. So that there be no occasion for reproof or reproach. **See Barnes "Php 2:15"**.

Until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. **See Barnes "1Th 2:19"**; **See Barnes** "1Th 4:16"; **See Barnes "1Th 5:23"**.

{c} "unrebukeable" Php 2:15 {d} "appearing" 1Th 5:23

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 6 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Which in his times he shall show*. Which God will reveal at such times as he shall deem best. It is implied here that the time is unknown to men. **See Barnes "Ac 1:7"**.

Who is the blessed and only Potentate. God who is the Ruler over all. The word used here—*dunasthv*—means one who is *mighty*, Lu 1:52, then a prince or ruler. Comp. Ac 8:27. It is applied here to God as the mighty ruler over the universe.

The King of kings. Who claims dominion over all the kings of the earth. In Re 17:14, the same appellation is applied to the Lord Jesus, ascribing to him universal dominion.

Lord of lords. The idea here is, that all the sovereigns of the earth are under his sway; that none of them can prevent the accomplishment of his purposes; and that he can direct the winding up of human affairs when he pleases.

{e} "blessed" 1Ti 1:17 {f} "King of Kings" Re 17:14

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 6 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Who only hath immortality*. The word here—*ayanasia* —properly means *exemption from death*, and seems to mean that God, in his own nature, enjoys a perfect and certain exemption from death. Creatures have immortality only as they derive it from him, and of course are dependent

on him for it. He has it by his very nature, and it is in his case underived, and he cannot be deprived of it. It is one of the essential attributes of his being, that he will always exist, and that *death* cannot reach him. Comp. the expression in Joh 5:26. "The Father hath life in himself," **See Barnes "Joh 5:26"**.

Dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto. Gr., "Inhabiting inapproachable light." The light where he dwells is so brilliant and dazzling, that mortal eyes could not endure it. This is a very common representation of the dwelling-place of God. See examples quoted in Pricaeus, *in loc*. Heaven is constantly represented as a place of the most pure and brilliant light, needing not the light of the sun, or the moon, or the stars, Re 21:23,24; Re 22:5, and God is represented as dwelling in that light, surrounded by amazing and inapproachable glory. Comp. Re 4:6; Eze 1:4 Heb 1:3.

Whom no man hath seen nor can see. **See Barnes "Joh 1:18"**.

To whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen. **See Barnes "Ro 11:36"**.

{h} "whom no man hath" Ex 33:20 {i} "be honour" Jude 1:25 Re 1:6

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 6 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded*. One of the evils to which they are particularly exposed. The idea is, that they should not value themselves on account of their wealth, or look down with pride and arrogance on their inferiors. They should not suppose that they are any better men, or any nearer heaven, because they are wealthy. Property really makes no distinction in the great things that pertain to character and salvation. It does not necessarily make one wise, or learned, or great, or good. In all these things the man who has not wealth may be vastly the superior of him who has; and for so slight and unimportant a distinction as gold can confer, no man should be proud. Besides, let such a man reflect that his property is the gift of God; that he is made rich because God has chosen to arrange things so that he should be; that it is not primarily owing to any skill or wisdom which he has; that his property only increases his responsibility, and that it must all soon be left, and he be as poor as the "beggar that lies at his gate;" and he will see ample reason why he should not be proud.

Nor trust in uncertain riches. Marg., *The uncertainty of*. The margin expresses the meaning of the Greek more accurately than the text, but the sense is not materially varied. Riches are uncertain because they may soon be taken away. No dependence can be placed on them in the emergencies of life. He who is rich to-day, has no security that he will be tomorrow; and if he shall be rich tomorrow, he has no certainty that his riches will meet his necessities then. A man whose house is in flames, or who is shipwrecked, or whose child lies dying, or who is himself in the agonies of death, can derive no advantage from the fact that he is richer than other men. **See Barnes "Lu 12:16"**

and Lu 12:17-21. That against which Paul here directs Timothy to caution the rich, is that to which they are most exposed. A man who is rich, is very liable to "trust" in his riches, and to suppose that he needs nothing more. Comp. Lu 12:19. He feels that he is not dependent on fellow-men, and he is very likely to feel that he is not dependent on God. It is for this cause that God has recorded so many solemn declarations in his word respecting the instability of riches, (comp. Pr 23:5,) and

that he is furnishing so many instructive lessons in his providence, showing how easily riches may suddenly vanish away.

But in the living God.

(1.) He is able to supply all our wants, and to do for us what riches cannot do; and

(2) he never changes, or leaves those who put their trust in him. He is able to meet our wants if in the flames, or in a storm at sea, or when a friend dies, or when we lie down on a bed of death, or wherever we may be in the eternal world.

Who giveth us richly all things to enjoy. The meaning of this seems to be, that God permits us to enjoy everything. Everything in the works of creation and redemption he has given to man for his happiness, and he should therefore trust in him. He has not merely given wealth for the comfort of men, but he has given *everything*; and he on whom so many and so great blessings have been bestowed for his comfort, should trust in the great Benefactor himself, and not rely merely on one of his gifts. Comp. **See Barnes "1Co 3:21"**; **See Barnes "1Co 1:22"**; **See Barnes** "1Co 1:23".

{j} "trust" Ps 62:10 {k} "enjoy" Ec 5:18,19

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 6 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *That they do good*. On the duty enjoined in this verse, **See Barnes "Ga 6:10 Heb 13:16"**.

That they be rich in good works. "That their good works may be as abundant as their riches."

Ready to distribute. To divide with others. Comp. Ac 4:34. The meaning is that they should be liberal, or bountiful.

Willing to communicate. Marg., or *sociable*. The translation in the text is a more correct rendering of the Greek. The idea is, that they should be willing to share their blessings with others, so as to make others comfortable. **See Barnes "Heb 13:16"**.

Comp. the argument of Paul in 2Co 8:13-15, **See Barnes "2Co 8:13"**; **See Barnes** "2Co 8:14, **See Barnes "2Co 8:15"**.

{1} "willing to communicate" "sociable" {*} "communicate" "bestow"

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 6 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Laying up in store for themselves*, etc. The meaning of this verse is, that they were to make such a use of their property that it would contribute to their eternal welfare. It *might* be the means of exalted happiness and honour in heaven, if they would so use it as not to interfere with religion in the soul, and so as to do the most good possible. See the sentiment in this verse explained at length **See Barnes "Lu 16:9"**.

{a} "lay hold" Php 3:14

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 6 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Keep that which is committed to thy trust*. All that is entrusted to you, and to which reference has been particularly made in this epistle. The honour of the gospel, and the interests of religion, had been specially committed to him; and he was sacredly to guard this holy trust, and not suffer it to be wrested from him.

Avoiding profane and vain babblings. Gr., "Profane, empty words." The reference is to such controversies and doctrines as tended only to produce strife, and were not adapted to promote the edification of the church. **See Barnes "1Ti 1:4"**; **See Barnes** "1Ti 4:7".

And oppositions of science falsely so called. Religion has nothing to fear from true science, and the minister of the gospel is not exhorted to dread that. Real science, in all its advances, contributes to the support of religion; and just in proportion as that is promoted will it be found to sustain the Bible, and to confirm the claims of religion to the faith of mankind. See this illustrated at length in Wiseman's Lectures on the connection between science and religion. It is only false or pretended science that religion has to dread, and which the friend of Christianity is to avoid. The meaning here is, that Timothy was to avoid everything which falsely laid claim to being "knowledge" or "science." There was much of this in the world at the time the apostle wrote; and this, more perhaps than anything else, has tended to corrupt true religion since.

{b} "profane" Tit 1:14

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 6 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Which some professing*. Evidently some who professed to be true Christians. They were attracted by false philosophy, and soon, as a consequence, were led to deny the doctrines of Christianity. This result has not been uncommon in the world.

Have erred concerning the faith. **See Barnes "1Ti 1:6"**; **See Barnes "1Ti 1:7"**; **See Barnes** "1Ti 6:10".

Grace be with thee. **See Barnes "Ro 1:7"**.

On the subscription at the close of this epistle, see Intro. para. 2. It is, like the other subscriptions at the close of the epistles, of no authority.

{c} "erred" 2Ti 2:18.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 1

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 1 - Verse 1

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY

INTRODUCTION

I. TIME AND PLACE OF WRITING THE EPISTLE.

There has been much diversity of sentiment on the question when this epistle was written. That it was written at Rome, and when the apostle was imprisoned there, is the unanimous opinion of all who have written on the epistle, and indeed is apparent on the face of it. See 2Ti 1:8,16, 4:6.

But whether it was written during his first imprisonment there, or during a second imprisonment, is a question on which critics even now are by no means agreed. The most respectable names may be found on each side of this question, though the common opinion has been that it was during a second imprisonment. Of this opinion are Mosheim, Michaelis, Benson, Mill, Macknight, Le Clerc, Paley, Stuart, Clarke, and Doddridge. The reasons for this may be seen at length in Hug's Introduction, pp. 761-763, Macknight, and in Paley's Horae Paulinae. Dr. Lardner, Baronius, Witsius, Lightfoot, Hammond, Hug, Hemsen, and others, maintain that it was written during the first imprisonment, and that it was sent about the same time as the epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon. The reasons for this opinion may be found in Hug's Introduction, pp. 556-559, and in Lardner, vol. vi. pp. 38—72. It is not consistent with the design of these Notes to go at length into an examination of this question, and it is not material in order to an exposition of the epistle.

After considering the reasons of Lardner and Hug to prove that this epistle was written during Paul's first imprisonment at Rome—that is, as they suppose, during his only imprisonment there, and not long after the first epistle was written—it seems to me still that there are insuperable difficulties in such a view, and that the evidence is clear that it was during a second imprisonment. The reasons for this are briefly the following:—

(1.) In the epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon, written during his first imprisonment, Paul confidently looked forward to a release, and to a speedy departure from Rome. In this, he had no such expectation. Thus he tells the Philippians, (Php 2:24,) "I trust in the Lord, that I myself shall come shortly." See also Php 1:24. In the epistle to Philemon, Phm 1:22, he says, "But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you." In this epistle, however, the author had no such expectation. 2Ti 4:6, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness."

(2.) In 2Ti 4:16, the apostle uses the following language: "At my first answer, no man stood with me, but all forsook me." It is true that this may refer to a hearing which he had had before

Nero during the same imprisonment at Rome in which this second epistle was written; but the most natural interpretation is to suppose that he had had one hearing, and had been discharged, and that the imprisonment of which he speaks in this epistle was a second one. This seems to me to be confirmed by what he says in the next verse: "Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion." Here it appears

(a) that he had been delivered, on that occasion, from death— "I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion," which is equivalent to saying that he was discharged;

(b) that after that discharge he was permitted to preach the gospel— "that by me the preaching might be fully known;"

(c) that he had been permitted after that to travel and preach—" and that all the Gentiles might hear," which is just such an expression as he would use on the supposition that he had been discharged, and been permitted to go abroad and preach the gospel extensively, and is not such an expression as he could have used if he had been imprisoned but once.

(3.) The expression occurring in 2Ti 4:20, "Erastus at Corinth," implies that he had made a second journey to Rome. The word rendered 'abode' *emeinen* is such as would be used where two were travelling together, and where one of them chose to remain at a certain place. It implies that, at the time referred to, the two were together, and that one chose to go on, and the other to remain. But it is capable of very clear proof that, when Paul was sent to Rome by Festus, Acts chapters 16, 17. He did not stop at Corinth; and if Erastus had been with him then, he would have passed by that place with him on his way to Rome. Further, when Paul left Corinth, as related in Acts chapter 20, on his way to Jerusalem, Timothy was with him. This is the last time that Paul is mentioned as having been at Corinth before coming to Rome, and there could have been no need of informing Timothy of the fact that Erastus remained there, if this were so, because that fact would be known to Timothy as well as Paul. Besides, that departure from Corinth took place some five years before Paul wrote this second epistle to Timothy; and what would be the use of his reminding Timothy of this after so long an interval? It is clear, moreover, that Paul refers to some recent transaction. He is urging Timothy to use all diligence to come to him before winter; that is, as soon as possible. 2Ti 4:21. But how could it be a reason for this urgency to say that, some five years before, he had been forsaken by one fellow-labourer, and had been obliged to leave another one sick on the way?

(4.) Similar remarks may be made respecting what Paul says in the close of the same verse, 2Ti 4:20, "Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick." Paul, when sent by Festus to Rome, did not stop at Miletus; for the course which the ship took on that occasion is minutely described, (Ac 27,) and there is every certainty that there can be that it did not put in at that place. The time, then, to which Paul must refer here, unless he made a second journey to Rome after he had been once discharged, must have been several years before; certainly as far back as when he took leave of the elders of the church of Ephesus, as recorded in Ac 20. But this was about five years before; and what would have been the pertinency of informing Timothy that, some five years before, he had left a fellow-labourer sick there, as a reason why he should then hasten to Rome as soon as possible? It was evidently a recent occurrence to which the apostle refers here; and the only natural supposition is, that, not long before his arrival at Rome, he had parted with both these friends, and now needed, in consequence, especially the presence of Timothy. Of course, if this be so, Paul must have made another circuit through these countries, of which the Acts of the Apostles gives us no account, and which must have been after his first imprisonment. It is true that Hug suggests that the word rendered

'I have left' *apelipon* -may be in the third person plural, and may be rendered '*they have left*.' But who left him there?. We are not told; and as "nothing is suggested in the context which would supply us with a subject of the verb in the *third person plural*, we are led naturally to construe it of the first person singular, and, consequently, to apply it to Paul." *Prof. Stuart*, in *Hug's Intro*.

(5.) With this supposition of a second and recent journey, agrees the passage in 2Ti 4:13, "The cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments." This evidently refers to some recent affair. Can it be believed that these had been there for some five years, and that Paul had not needed them before? He was two years at Caesarea. He had abundant opportunity of sending for them. An article of wearing apparel, or books to study, or his own writings, he would be likely to need long before, and it is highly improbable that he suffered them to remain during this long period without sending for them.

(6.) In the epistles which were written during Paul's first imprisonment, certain persons are referred to as being then with him, who are in this epistle mentioned as absent. It is almost beyond a doubt that the epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and to Philemon, were written during Paul's first imprisonment at Rome. See the Introduction to those epistles. In the epistle to the Colossians, Col 1:1, Timothy is mentioned as being then with the apostle. When this was written, of course he was absent in the same epistle, Mark is mentioned as with Paul, and unites with him in the salutation to the Colossians, Col 4:10; when this epistle was written, he was absent, for Timothy is ordered to bring him with him, (2Ti 4:11.) Demas was then with him, (Col 4:4;) now he was absent for Paul says, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica." 2Ti 4:10. These circumstances make it quite clear that the second epistle to Timothy was not written during the imprisonment at Rome in which the epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, etc., were written, unless a change had taken place in the circumstances of the apostle, which we have no reason to suppose occurred. The probability, then, seems to be strong, that the apostle was imprisoned there a second time, and that the things referred to in this epistle occurred then.

(7.) To these circumstances should be added the fact, that many of the Fathers say that Paul was liberated from his *first* imprisonment, and afterwards travelled extensively in preaching the gospel. This testimony is borne by Eusebius, Chrysostom, Theodoret, and others. See Calmet's Dictionary, and Lives of the Apostles, by D. F. Bacon, New Haven, pp. 619-621. If the supposition of a second imprisonment at Rome, during which this epistle was written, is correct, then it was written probably not far from the year 65. Lardner, however, who supposes it was written during the first imprisonment, places its date in May, A.D. 61; Hug, also, in the same year.

II. THE PLACE WHERE TIMOTHY WAS WHEN THE EPISTLE WAS ADDRESSED TO HIM.

THERE can be little doubt that Timothy was at Ephesus at the time when this epistle was addressed to him. The evidence for this opinion is thus stated by Lightfoot and others.—

(1.) Paul directs Timothy to salute the household of Onesiphorus, 2Ti 4:19. But it is evident, from 2Ti 1:18, that Onesiphorus was an Ephesian, and, as the direction is to salute his 'household,' it may be argued with the more certainty that Timothy was then at Ephesus, the ordinary residence of the family of Onesiphorus.

(2.) He directs Timothy to take Troas in the way as he came to him at Rome, 2Ti 4:13, which was the way that Paul had gone to Ephesus, 2Co 2:12 Ac 20:5, thus showing that this was the usual route of travel, and was a way which Timothy would naturally take in passing from Ephesus to

Rome. It is true that this does not absolutely prove that he was at Ephesus, since, if he bad been in any other part of the western portion of Asia Minor, the direction would have been the same—but it is a slight circumstance corroborating others.

(3.) He warns him to beware of Alexander, 2Ti 4:14, who we know was an Ephesian, 1Ti 1:20 Ac 19:33.

(4.) In 2Ti 4:9, he gives direction to Timothy to come to him as soon as possible, and then adds, 2Ti 4:12, "Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus." From this it would seem that one reason why he wished him then to come was, that he had appointed one to occupy his place there, so that he could leave without injury to the cause. But it would seem also probable that Paul was not in the habit of calling away a labourer from an important station without supplying his place. Thus, in Tit 3:12, he says, "When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me." It may thence be inferred that Timothy was at Ephesus at the time when Paul wrote to him, and that he had taken care that his place should not be left vacant, by the appointment of Tychicus to fill it when he should leave.

(5.) It may be added, that the errors and vices Timothy is directed to oppose, are the same as referred to in the first epistle, and it may be hence inferred that he was at the same place.

How long Timothy had been in Ephesus is not certainly known, and is not material to be known in order to a proper understanding of the epistle. It does not appear, from the Acts, that he was with Paul during the two years in which he was in Caesarea, nor during his voyage to Rome; yet it is certain that he was in Rome when Paul wrote to the Philippians, to the Colossians, and to Philemon, because he is named in the titles to those epistles. In Heb 13:23, Paul says that Timothy was "set at liberty," or, more probably, "sent away," **See Barnes** "Heb 13:23, but to what place he had gone is not mentioned. Nothing would be more natural, however, than that he should visit Ephesus again, and it is not improbable that Paul would leave him there when he again visited Rome.

III. THE OCCASION ON WHICH THE EPISTLE WAS WRITTEN'

THE epistle was evidently written when the apostle was expecting soon to be put to death. 2Ti 4:6-8. The main object of writing it seems to have been to request Timothy to come to him as speedily as possible, 2Ti 4:9. But, in doing this, it was natural that Paul should accompany the request with such counsel as Timothy needed, and such as it was proper for Paul to give in probably the last letter that he would write to him. The particular reason why the apostle desired the presence of Timothy seems to have been, that nearly all the others on whom he might have supposed he could rely in a time of trial, had left him. Thus he says that Demas had forsaken him; Crescens had gone to Galatia; Titus to Dalmatia, and Tychicus he had himself sent to Ephesus. 2Ti 4:10-12. No one remained with him but Luke, 2Ti 4:11, and he was, therefore, desirous that Timothy and Mark should be with him. 2Ti 4:11. He did not ask their presence merely that they might sustain him in his trials, but that they might aid him in the work of the ministry, 2Ti 4:11, for it would seem that all hope of doing good in Rome was not closed.

If the view of the time when this epistle was written which has been taken in this Introduction, is correct, and if this is the last epistle which was written by the apostle Paul before his martyrdom, then it occupies a very important place in sacred canon, and is invested with great interest. It may be regarded as the dying counsels of the most eminent of the apostles to one who had just entered on the ministerial life. We should read it with the interest with which we do the last words of the great and the good Then we feel that every word which they utter has a weight which demands attention. We feel that, whatever a man might do at other times, he will not trifle then. We feel that,

having little time to express his wishes, he will select topics that lie nearest his heart, and that he deems most important. There is no more interesting position in which we can be placed, than when we sit down at such a man's feet, and listen to his parting counsels. To a young minister of the gospel, therefore, this epistle is invaluable; to any and every Christian, it cannot fail to be a matter of interest to listen to the last words of the great apostle of the Gentiles, and to ponder his last written testimony in favour of that religion to the promulgation of which he had devoted his talents and his life.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY.

CHAPTER 1

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER

THE principal design of this chapter is to exhort Timothy to steadfastness and fidelity as a Christian and a minister; and to entreat him to adhere to the truth, and live as became a Christian, in the midst of all the temptations by which he was surrounded, and while so many were turning away from the Christian faith. Timothy was young; he was exposed, like others, to trials; he could not be unaware that not a few had apostatized; he knew that his father in Christ was in bonds, and he was liable to become disheartened, or to be led astray. In these circumstances, the apostle seems to have resolved to place before him strong reasons to induce him to devote himself steadfastly to the cause of religion, and not to allow those things which might tend to alienate him from Christianity to have any effect on his mind. After the usual salutations, therefore, 1Ti 1:1,2, he proceeds to present these considerations to the mind of Timothy:

(1.) He commences the chapter with *delicate praise* of his young friend—one of the most happy methods of inducing him to persevere in the course of life on which he had entered, 2Ti 1:3-5. We naturally desire to perfect that in which we already excel; we feel encouraged for future efforts in a cause in which we have already been successful. The apostle, therefore, reminds Timothy of the manner in which he had been trained; of the piety of his mother and grandmother, and assures him of his belief that their efforts to train him up in the ways of religion had not been in vain.

(2.) He urges various considerations to induce him not to turn away from that holy purpose to which he had devoted himself. The considerations which he urges are these:

(a) he had been solemnly consecrated to the work of preaching the gospel, 2Ti 1:6;

(b) God had imparted to him, as to others, a spirit of love and power, and a sound mind, 1Ti 1:7;

(c) the grace of God had called him to his great work, and he possessed that gospel by which life and immortality are brought to light, 1Ti 1:8-11;

(d) Paul urges his own example, and says that, amidst all his own trials, he had never seen occasion to be ashamed of the gospel, 2Ti 1:12-14; and

(e) he reminds Timothy that all his other friends in Asia had turned away from him, specifying two of them, and urges him, therefore, to maintain a steadfast attachment to the principles which he had professed, 2Ti 1:15.

(3.) The chapter closes with the expression of an earnest prayer that the Lord would bless the family of Onesiphorus, and with a grateful mention of his kindness to him, 2Ti 1:16-18.

Verse 1. *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ*. **See Barnes "Ro 1:1"**.

By the will of God. Called to be an apostle in accordance with the Divine will and purpose. **See Barnes "Ga 1:1".**

According to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus. In accordance with the great promise of eternal life through the Saviour; that is, he was called to be an apostle to carry out the great purpose of human salvation. Comp. Eph 3:6. God has made a promise of life to mankind through faith in the Lord Jesus, and it was with reference to this that he was called to the apostleship.

{a} "promise" Eph 3:6

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 1 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *To Timothy, my dearly beloved son*. **See Barnes "1Ti 1:2".**

Grace, mercy, and peace, etc. **See Barnes "Ro 1:7".**

{b} "beloved son" 1Ti 1:2

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 1 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *I thank God*, whom I serve from my forefathers. Paul reckoned among his forefathers the patriarchs and the holy men of former times, as being of the same nation with himself; though it may be that he also included his more immediate ancestors, who, for anything known to the contrary, may have been distinguished examples of piety. His own parents, it is certain, took care that he should be trained up in the ways of religion. Comp. **See Barnes** "Php 3:4, **See Barnes** "Php 3:5; **See Barnes "Ac 26:4"; See Barnes "Ac 26:5".**

The phrase "from my forefathers," probably means, after the *example* of my ancestors. He worshipped the same God; he held substantially the same truths; he had the same hope of the resurrection and of immortality; he trusted to the same Saviour *having come*, on whom they relied *as about to come*. His was not, therefore, a different religion from theirs; it was the same religion carried out and perfected. The religion of the Old Testament and the New is essentially the same. **See Barnes "Ac 23:6".**

With pure conscience. **See Barnes "Ac 23:1".**

That without ceasing. Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 12:12** 1Th 5:17.

I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day. **See Barnes** "Php 1:3,
See Barnes "1:4".

{c} "serve" Ac 23:1 {*} "from my forefathers" "After" {d} "pure conscience" Heb 13:18

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 1 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Greatly desiring to see thee*. See 2Ti 4:9,21. It was probably on account of this earnest desire that this epistle was written. He wished to see him, not only on account of the warm friendship

which he had for him, but because he would be useful to him in present circumstances. See Intro., paragraph 3.

Being mindful of thy tears. Alluding probably to the tears which he shed at parting from him. The occasion to which he refers is not mentioned; but nothing is more probable than that Timothy would weep when separated from such a father and friend. It is not wrong thus to weep, for religion is not intended to make us stoics or savages.

That I may be filled with joy. By seeing you again. It is easy to imagine what joy it would give Paul, then a prisoner, and forsaken by nearly all his friends, and about to die, to see a friend whom he loved as he did this young man. Learn, hence, that there may be very pure and warm friendship between an old and young man, and that the warmth of true friendship is not diminished by the near prospect of death.

{e} "desiring" 2Ti 4:6

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 1 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee*. **See Barnes "1Ti 1:5"**.

On the faith of Timothy, **See Barnes "1Ti 4:6"**.

Which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois. That is, the same faith dwelt in her; or, she was a sincere believer in Christ. It would seem probable from this, that she was the first of the family who had been converted. In the Acts of the Apostles Ac 16:1,we have an account of the family of Timothy:—"Then came he to Derbe and Lystra; and behold a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek." In this account no mention is made of the grandmother Lois, but there is no improbability in supposing that Paul was better acquainted with the family than Luke. There is, at any rate, no contradiction between the two accounts; but the one confirms the other, and the "undesigned coincidence" furnishes an argument for the authenticity of both. See Paley's *Horae Paulinae, in loc*. As the mother of Timothy was a Hebrew, it is clear that his grandmother was also. Nothing more is known of her than is here mentioned.

And in thy mother Eunice. In Ac 16:1, it is said that the mother of Timothy was "a Jewess, and believed;" but her name is not mentioned. This shows that Paul was acquainted with the family, and that the statement in the epistle to Timothy was not forged from the account in the Acts. Here is another "undesigned coincidence." In the history in the Acts, nothing is said of the father, except that he was "a Greek," but it is implied that he was not a believer. In the epistle before us, nothing *whatever* is said of him. But the piety of his mother alone is commended, and it is fairly implied that his father was *not* a believer. This is one of those coincidences on which Paley has constructed his beautiful argument in the Horae Paulinae in favour of the genuineness of the New Testament.

{f} "unfeigned faith" 1Ti 4:6 {g} "mother" Ac 16:1

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 1 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *That thou stir up the gift of God*. Gr., That thou kindle up as a fire. The original word used here denotes the kindling of a fire, as by bellows, etc. It is not uncommon to compare piety to a flame or a fire, and the image is one that is obvious when we speak of causing that to burn more brightly. The idea is, that Timothy was to use all proper means to keep the flame of pure religion in the soul burning, and more particularly his zeal in the great cause to which he had been set apart. The agency of man himself is needful to keep the religion of the heart warm and glowing. However rich the gifts which God has bestowed upon us, they do not grow of their own accord, but need to be cultivated by our own personal care.

Which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. In connection with the presbytery. **See Barnes "1Ti 4:14"**.

This proves that Paul took part in the ordination of Timothy; but it does not prove either that he performed the duty alone, or that the "ordaining virtue," whatever that was, was imparted by him only; for

(1.) it is expressly said 1Ti 4:14, that he was ordained by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, of which Paul was doubtless one; and

(2.) the language here used, "by the putting on of *my* hands," is just such as Paul, or any other one of the presbytery, would use in referring to the ordination of Timothy, though they were all regarded as on a level. It is such an expression as an aged Presbyterian, or Congregational, or Baptist minister would address to a son whom he had assisted to ordain. Nothing would be more natural than to remind him that *his own* hands had been laid on him when he was set apart to the work of the ministry. It would be in the nature of a tender, pathetic, and solemn appeal, bringing all that there was in his own character, age, and relation to the other, to bear on him, in order to induce him to be faithful to his trust. On other occasions, he would naturally remind him that *others* had united with him in the act, and that he had derived his authority through the presbytery, just as Paul appeals to Timothy, 1Ti 4:14. But no one would now think of inferring from this, that he meant to be understood as saying that he alone had ordained him, or that all the authority for preaching the gospel had been imparted through *his* hands, and that those who were associated with him only expressed "*concurrence*;" that is, that their presence there was only an unmeaning ceremony. What *was* the "gift of God" which had been conferred in this way, Paul specifies in the next verse. It is "the spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." The meaning is, that these had been conferred by God, and that the gift had been recognised by his ordination. It does not imply that any mysterious influence had gone from the hands of the ordainers, parting any holiness to Timothy which he had not before.

{a} "Gift of God" 1Ti 4:14

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 1 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *For God hath not given us the spirit of fear*. A timorous and servile spirit. This is said in order to encourage Timothy, who was not improbably modest and diffident.

But of power. Power to encounter foes and dangers; power to bear up under trials; power to triumph in persecutions. That is, it is the nature of the gospel to inspire the mind with holy courage. Comp., however, Lu 24:49.

And of Love to God and to the souls of men. The tendency of this also, is to "cast out fear," 1Jo 4:18, and to make the mind bold and constant. Nothing will do more to inspire courage, to make a man fearless of danger, or ready to endure privation and persecution, than love. The love of country, and wife, and children, and home, makes the most timid bold when they are assailed; and the love of Christ and of a dying world nerves the soul to great enterprises, and sustains it in the deepest sorrows.

And of a sound mind. The Greek word denotes one of sober mind; a man of prudence and discretion. The state referred to here is that in which the mind is well balanced, and under right influences; in which it sees things in their just proportions and relations; in which it is not feverish and excited, but when everything is in its proper place. It was this state of mind which Timothy was exhorted to cultivate; this which Paul regarded as so necessary to the performance of the duties of his office. It is as needful now for the minister of religion as it was then.

{b} "fear" Ro 8:15 1Jo 4:18 {c} "power" Lu 24:49

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 1 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord*. Do not be ashamed to bear your testimony to the doctrines taught by the Lord Jesus. Joh 3:11,32,33 7:7.

Comp. Ac 10:42 20:24; 1Co 1:6 Re 22:16. Paul seems to have apprehended that Timothy was in some danger of being ashamed of this gospel, or of shrinking back from its open avowal in the trials and persecutions to which he now saw it exposed him.

Nor of me his prisoner. Of the testimony which I have borne to the truth of the gospel. This passage proves that, when Paul wrote this epistle, he was in confinement. Comp. Eph 3:1 6:20; Php 1:13,14,16; Col 4:3,18; Phm 1:9.

Timothy knew that he had been thrown into prison on account of his love for the gospel. To avoid that himself, there might be some danger that a timid young man might shrink from an open avowal of his belief in the same system of truth.

But be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel. The sufferings to which the profession of the gospel may expose you. Comp. **See Barnes "Col 1:24"**.

According to the power of God. That is, according to the power which God gives to those who are afflicted on account of the gospel. The apostle evidently supposes that they who were subjected to trials on account of the gospel, might look for Divine strength to uphold them, and asks him to endure those trials, relying on that strength, and not on his own.

{d} "partaker" Col 1:24

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 1 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Who hath saved us*. **See Barnes "Mt 1:21"**.

He has brought us into a state in which salvation is so certain, that Paul could speak of it as if it were already done.

And called us. **See Barnes "Ro 8:28"; See Barnes** "Ro 8:30".

With an holy calling. A calling which is in its own mature holy, and which leads to holiness. Comp. **See Barnes "Eph 4:1"; See Barnes "Php 3:14"; See Barnes** "Heb 3:1".

Not according to our works. Tit 3:6; **See Barnes** "Eph 2:8, **See Barnes "Eph 2:9"**.

The idea is, that our own works have nothing to do in inducing God to call us. As, when we *become* Christians, he does not choose us *because* of our works, so the eternal purpose in regard to our salvation could not have been formed because he foresaw that we would perform such works as would be a reason why he should choose us. The whole arrangement was irrespective of our deserts.

But according to his own purpose and grace. **See Barnes "Ro 9:11"; also** Ro 9:12-13,16; **See Barnes "Eph 1:4,6"**.

Which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. That is, which he intended to give us, for it was not then actually given. The thing was so certain in the Divine purposes, that it might be said to be already done. Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 4:17"**.

{e} "saved us" Mt 1:21 {f} "called" Ro 8:28,30 {g} "not according" Tit 3:5 {h} "purpose" De 7:7,8 {i} "before" Eph 1:4

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 1 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *But is now made manifest*. The purpose to save us was long concealed in the Divine Mind, but the Saviour came that he might make it known.

Who hath abolished death. That is, he has made it so certain that death will be abolished, that it may be spoken of as already done. It is remarkable how often, in this chapter, Paul speaks of what God *intends* to do as so certain, that it may be spoken of as a thing that is already done. On the meaning of the expression here, **See Barnes "1Co 15:54"**.

Comp. **See Barnes "Heb 2:14"**.

The meaning is, that, through the gospel, death will cease to reign, and over those who are saved there will be no such thing as we now understand by dying.

And hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. This is one of the great and glorious achievements of the gospel, and one of the things by which it is distinguished from every other system. The word rendered "hath brought to light" *fwtizw*— means to give light, to shine; then to give light to, to shine upon; and then to bring to light, to make known. *Rob. Lex*. The sense is, that these things were before obscure or unknown, and that they have been disclosed to us by the gospel. It is, of course, not meant that there were *no* intimations of these truths before, or that *nothing* was known of them—for the Old Testament shed some light on them; but that they are fully disclosed to man in the gospel. It is there that all ambiguity and doubt are removed, and that the evidence is so clearly stated as to leave no doubt on the subject. The intimations of a future state, among the wisest of the heathen, were certainly very obscure, and their hopes very faint. The hope of a future state is styled by Cicero, Futurorum quoddam augurinto sieculorum— *a conjecture or surmise of future ages*. Tusc. Q. 1. Seneca says it is "that which our wise men do promise, but they do not prove." Epis. 102. Socrates, even at his death, said, "I hope to go hence to good men, but of that I am not very confident; nor doth it become any wise man to be positive that so it will

be. I must now die, and you shall live; but which of us is in the better state, the living or the dead, God only knows." Pliny says, "Neither soul nor body has any more sense after death, than before it was born." Cicero begins his discourse on the subject with a profession that he intended to deliver nothing as fixed and certain, but only as probable, and as having some likelihood of truth. And, having mentioned the different sentiments of philosophers, he concludes,—"Which of these opinions is true, some god must tell us; which is most like to truth, is a great question." See Whitby, *in loc*. Such doubts existed in regard to the immortality of the *soul*; but of the resurrection and future life of the *body*, they had no conception whatever. Comp. Ac 17:32. With what propriety, then, may it be said that these doctrines were brought to light through the gospel! Man would never have known them if it had not been for revelation. The word "*life*," here, refers undoubtedly to life in the future world. The question was, whether man would live at all; and that question has been determined by the gospel. The word "immortality" means, properly, *incorruption, incapacity of decay*; and may be applied either to the body or the soul. See it explained **See Barnes "1Co 15:42"**.

It is used in reference to the *body*, in 1Co 15:42,53,54.

In Ro 2:7, it is applied to the future state of rewards, without special reference to the body or soul. Here it seems to refer to the future state as that in which there will be no corruption or decay. Many suppose that the phrase "life and immortality," here, is used by hendiadys (two things for one,) as meaning immortal or incorruptible life. The gospel thus has truths not found in any other system, and contains what man never would have discovered of himself. As fair a trial had been made among the philosophers of Greece and Rome as could be made, to determine whether the unaided powers of the human mind could arrive at these great truths; and their most distinguished philosophers confessed that they could arrive at no certainty on the subject. In this state of things, the gospel comes and reveals truths worthy of all acceptation; sheds light where man had desired it; solves the great problems which had for ages perplexed the human mind, and discloses to man all that he could wish—that not only the soul will live for ever, but that the body will be raised from the grave, and that the entire man will become immortal. How strange it is that men will not embrace the gospel! Socrates and Cicero would have hailed its light, and welcomed its truths, as those which their whole nature panted to know.

{j} "manifest" 1Pe 1:20 {k} "death" 1Co 15:54 {l} "life" Joh 5:24-29

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 1 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Whereunto I am appointed a preacher*. That is, I am appointed to make these truths known. **See Barnes** "Eph 3:7, **See Barnes "Eph 3:8"**.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 1 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *For the which cause I also suffer these things*. That is, I suffer on account of my purpose to carry the gospel to the Gentiles. **See Barnes "Col 1:24"**.

Nevertheless I am not ashamed. Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 1:16"**.

For I know whom I have believed. Marg., *trusted*. The idea is, that he understood the character of that Redeemer to whom he had committed his eternal interests, and knew that he had no reason to be ashamed of confiding in him. He was able to keep all that he had intrusted to his care, and would not suffer him to be lost. **See Barnes "Isa 28:16".**

And am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him. That is, the soul with all its immortal interests. A man has nothing of higher value to intrust to another than the intereats of his soul, and there is no other act of confidence like that in which he intrusts the keeping of that soul to the Son of God. Learn hence,

(1.) that religion consists in committing the soul to the care of the Lord Jesus; because

(a) we feel that we cannot secure its salvation ourselves;

(b) it is by nature in danger;

(c) if not saved by him, it will not be saved at all.

(2.) That is a great and invaluable treasure which is committed to him.

(a) No higher treasure can be committed to another;

(b) in connection with that the whole question of our happiness on earth and in heaven is intrusted to him, and all depends on his fidelity.

(3.) It is done by the true Christian with file most entire confidence, so that the mind is at rest. The grounds of this confidence are

(a) what is said of the *mighty power* of the Saviour;

(b) his promises that he will keep all who confide in him, (comp. Joh 10:27-29;)

(c) experience—the fact that those who have trusted in him have found that he is able to keep them.

(4.) This act of committing the soul, with all its interests, to the Saviour, is the true source of peace in the trials of life. This is so because

(a) having done this, we feel that our *great* interests are secure. If the *soul* is safe, why need we be disturbed by the loss of health, or property, or other temporal comforts. Those are secondary things. A man who is shipwrecked, and who sees his son or daughter safe with him on the shore, will be little concerned that a casket of jewels fell overboard—however valuable it might be.

(b) All those trials will soon pass away, and he will be safe in heaven.

(c) These very things *may* further the great object—the salvation of the soul. A man's great interests may be more safe when in a prison than when in a palace; on a pallet of straw than on a bed of down; when *constrained* to say, "Give us this day our daily bread," than when encompassed with the wealth of Croesus.

Against that day. The day of judgment—called "*that* day," without anything further to designate it, because it is the great day; "the day for which all other days were made." It seems to have been so much the object of thought and conversation among the early Christians that the apostle supposed that he would be understood by merely referring to it as "*that* day ;" that is, the day which they were always preaching about, and talking about, and thinking about.

{a} "nevertheless" Ro 1:18 {1} "whom I have believed" "trusted" {b} "have committed"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 1 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Hold fast the form of sound words*. **See Barnes "1Ti 1:3"**.

On the Greek word here rendered "*form*," **See Barnes** "1Ti 1:16, where it is rendered *pattern*. The word means a form, sketch, or imperfect delineation—an outline. Grotius says that it here means "an exemplar, but an exemplar fixed in the mind—an idea." Calvin says that the command is that he should adhere to the doctrine which he had learned, not only in its substance, but in its form. Archbishop Tilotson explains this as meaning the profession of faith which was made by Christians at baptism. There seems to be an allusion to some summary or outline of truth which Paul had given to Timothy, though there is no evidence that it was written. Indeed, there is every presumption that, if it refers to such a summary, it was not committed to writing. If it had been, it would have been regarded as inspired, and would have taken its place in the canon of Scripture. It may be presumed that almost none of the sacred writings would have been more sacredly preserved than such a condensed summary of Christian truth. But there is no improbability in supposing that Paul, either at his ordination, or on some other occasion, may have stated the outlines of the Christian religion to Timothy, that he might have a clear and connected view of the subject. The passage, therefore, may be used as an argument for the propriety of some brief summary of doctrine as a matter of convenience, though not as having binding authority on the consciences of others.

Of sound words. Comp. **See Barnes "1Ti 6:3"**.

The Greek is the same in both places.

Which thou hast heard of me. This proves that he does not refer to a written creed, since what he refers to was something which he had heard.

In faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. Hold these truths with sincere faith in the Lord Jesus, and with that love which is the best evidence of attachment to him.

{c} "fast" Re 2:25 {d} "form" Ro 6:17 {e} "sound words" 1Ti 6:3

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 1 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *That good thing which was committed unto thee*. **See Barnes "1Ti 6:20"**.

The reference here in the phrase, "that good thing committed to thee," is to the sound Christian doctrine with which he had been intrusted, and which he was required to transmit to others.

Keep by the Holy Ghost. By the aid of the Holy Ghost. One of the best methods of preserving the knowledge and the love of truth is to cherish the influences of the Holy Spirit.

{a} "good thing" 1Ti 6:20 {*} "Holy Ghost" "Spirit"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 1 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *This thou knowest*, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me. That is, in that part of Asia Minor of which Ephesus was the capital. The name Asia was often given particularly to that of Asia Minor. **See Barnes "Ac 2:9"**; **See Barnes** "Ac 16:6".

This passage proves that Timothy was somewhere in that region when this epistle was written to him, for otherwise he could not be supposed to "know" what is here said. When Paul says that

"*all*" were turned away from him, he must use the word in a general sense, for he immediately specifies one who had been faithful and kind to him.

Of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes. We know nothing of these individuals but what is here mentioned. It would seem that they were prominent persons, and those from whom the apostle had a right to expect other treatment. "The ecclesiastical traditions allege that they were of the seventy disciples, and, in the end, became followers of Simon Magus. We imagine that this is little more than conjecture." *Pict. Bib*.

It is a end thing when the only record made of a man—the only evidence which we have that he ever lived at all—is, that he turned away from a friend, or forsook the paths of true religion. And yet there are many men of whom the only thing to be remembered of them is, that they lived to do wrong.

{b} "all" Ac 19:10 {c} "turned away" 2Ti 4:10,16

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 1 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus*. The *family* of Onesiphorus—for so the word house is often used. He was himself still living, 2Ti 1:18, but not improbably then absent from his home. Comp. 2Ti 4:19. H e was evidently of Asia, and is the only one who is mentioned from that region who had showed the apostle kindness in his trials. He is mentioned only in this epistle, and nothing more is known of him. The record is entirely honourable to him, and for his family the apostle felt a warm interest on account of the kindness which he had shown to him in prison. The ecclesiastical traditions also state that he was one of the seventy disciples, and was ultimately bishop of Corone. But there is no evidence of this. There is much force in the remark of the editor of the Pictorial Bible, that "the pretended lists of the seventy disciples seem to have been made out on the principle of including all the names incidentally mentioned in the sacred books, and not otherwise appropriated."

For he oft refreshed me. That is, showed me kindness, and ministered to my wants.

And was not ashamed of my chain. Was not ashamed to be known as a friend of one who was a prisoner on account of religion. Paul was bound with a chain when a prisoner at Rome, Php 1:13,14,16 Col 4:3,18; Phm 1:10; **See Barnes "Ac 28:20"**.

{d} "Onesiphorus" 2Ti 4:19 {e} "chain" Ac 28:20

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 1 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *But when he was in Rome*. What was the employment of Onesiphorus is not known. It may have been that he was a merchant, and had occasion to visit Rome on business. At all events, he was at pains to search out the apostle, and his attention was the more valuable because it cost him trouble to find him. It is not every one, even among professors of religion, who, in a great and splendid city, would be at the trouble to search out a Christian brother, or even a minister, who was a prisoner, and endeavour to relieve his sorrows. This man, so kind to the great apostle, will be

among those to whom the Saviour will say, at the final judgment, "I was in prison, and ye came unto me," Mt 25:36.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 1 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day*. The day of judgment. **See Barnes "2Ti 1:12"**.

This proves that Onesiphorus was then alive, as Paul would not offer prayer for him if he were dead. The Papists, indeed, argue from this in favour of praying for the dead—*assuming* from 2Ti 4:19, that Onesiphorus was then dead. But there is no evidence of that. The passage in 2Ti 4:19 would prove only that he was then absent from his family.

And in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus. This was the home of Onesiphorus, and his family was still there, 2Ti 4:19. When Paul was at Ephesus, it would seem that Onesiphorus had showed him great kindness. His affection for him did not change when he became a prisoner. True friendship, and especially that which is based on religion, will live in all the vicissitudes of fortune, whether we are in prosperity or adversity; whether in a home of plenty, or in a prison.

This chapter is full of interest, and may suggest many interesting reflections. We see

(1.) A holy man in prison and about to die. He had nearly finished his course, and had the prospect of soon departing.

(2.) He was forsaken by his friends, and left to bear his sorrows alone. They on whom he might have relied, had left him; and to all his outward sufferings, there was added this, one of the keenest which his Master endured before him, that his friends forsook him, and left him to bear his sorrows alone.

(3.) Yet his mind is calm, and his faith in the gospel is unshaken. tie expresses no regret that he had embraced the gospel; no sorrow that he had been so zealous in it as to bring these calamities upon himself. That gospel he still loves, and his great solicitude is, that his young friend may never shrink from avowing it, though it may call him also to pass through scenes of persecution and sorrow.

(4.) In the general apostasy, the turning away of those on whom he might have relied, it is refreshing and interesting, to find mention made of one unshaken friend, 2Ti 4:16. He never swerved in his affections. He had been kind to him in former years of comparative honour, and he did not leave him now in the dark day of adversity. It is always interesting to find true friendship in this world—friendship that survives all reverses, and that is willing to manifest itself when the great mass turn coldly away. There is such a thing as friendship, and there is such a thing as religion; and when they meet and mingle in the same heart, the one strengthens the other; and then neither persecution, nor poverty, nor chains, will prevent our doing good to him who is in prison is about to die. **See Barnes "2Ti 4:16"**.

{f} "that day" Mt 25:34-40

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 1

CHAPTER II.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

THIS chapter is made up of various exhortations and encouragements to duty. The apostle exhorts Timothy to be strong in the Christian graces, 2Ti 2:1; to commit the great trust which he had received to faithful men, 2Ti 2:2; to endure hardships like a good soldier, 2Ti 2:3-7, and refers him

(a.) to the case of one who goes to war, whose great business it is to please him in whose service he is 2Ti 2:4;

(b.) to the case of one who strives for a crown at the games, 2Ti 2:5; and

(c.) to the husbandman who looks onward for the reward of his labour, 2Ti 2:6. He then, in order to encourage to be patient in enduring the trials to which he would be exposed, refers him

(a.) to the certainty of the truth of that religion in whose cause he would suffer, 2Ti 2:8;

(b.) to his own case, reminding him how much *he* had endured in that cause, 2Ti 2:9,10;

(c.) to the fact that our sufferings here will be crowned with certain glory hereafter, 2Ti 2:11,12; and

(d.) to the assurance that the Lord Jesus will be faithful to all his promises to his people, 2Ti 2:13. These things the apostle then exhorts him to press upon the hearts of others, that they might not waste their time in unprofitable pursuits, but might engage in the same great and arduous struggle for securing the reward, 2Ti 2:14. He then exhorts Timothy to study to perform his duties in such a way that he Would not be ashamed, and to avoid the unimportant strifes which were then raging; and to enforce this, he refers to a real case with which Timothy was acquainted—that of Hymeneus and Philetus, who, by unprofitable speculations, had been led to deny a fundamental doctrine of religion, 2Ti 2:15-18. Yet, Paul says, he should not be discouraged because some had been led into dangerous errors. The foundation of God remained firm. Those that were truly his were known, and would not apostatize, 2Ti 2:19. In illustration of this, and to show that it was to be expected that all would not honour religion, the apostle refers to a house in which there were all sorts of vessels, some to honour and some to dishonour, and says that, if any one would endeavour to free himself from all that was base and impure, he would be a vessel meet for the use of the Master, 2Ti 2:20,21. To accomplish this, he gives Timothy various directions respecting his conduct. He was to flee from youthful lusts; he was to follow righteousness, faith, charity, and peace; he was to avoid foolish questions; he was to be example of gentleness and meekness, and he was patiently to instruct those that were of a different character, 2Ti 2:22-26.

Verse 1. *Thou therefore*. In view of the fact stated in the previous chapter, that many had turned away from the apostle, and had forsaken the paths of truth.

Be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus. Comp. **See Barnes "Eph 6:10"**.

The meaning is, Be strong, relying on the grace which the Lord Jesus only can impart.

{a} "be strong" Jos 1:7 Eph 6:10

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And the things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses*, Marg. *by*. Before, or in the presence of, many witnesses. Perhaps he refers to a solemn charge which he gave him, in the presence of the church, when he was ordained. It is by no means improbable that such a charge was given then to a newly-ordained minister, as it is now. On such an occasion, the apostle would be likely to state a summary of Christian doctrine,— **See Barnes** "2Ti 1:13, —and to exhort Timothy to a faithful adherence to it.

The same commit thou to faithful men. In the same way as those things have been committed to you. The reference is undoubtedly to ordination to the ministerial office. Timothy was to see that those only were admitted to the ministry who were qualified to understand the truths of religion, and to communicate them to others. This is a clear warrant for ministers to set apart others to the same sacred office. It does not prove that the people are not at liberty to choose their own pastor, but only that those in the ministry are to set apart others to the same office with themselves. There is, doubtless, to be a succession of ministers in the church; but the true line of the succession is to be found in good men who are qualified to teach, and who have the Spirit of Christ, and not merely in those who have been ordained.

Who shall be able to teach others also. On the qualifications of ministers, **See Barnes "1Ti 3:2, also** 1Ti 3:3-7.

{1} "among many witnesses" "by" {b} "thou to faithful" 1Ti 1:18 {c} "able to teach" Tit 1:9

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ*. Such hardships as a soldier is called to endure. The apostle supposes that a minister of the gospel might be called to endure hardships, and that it is reasonable that he should be as ready to do it as a soldier is. On the hardships which *he* endured himself, **See Barnes "2Co 11:23-29"**.

Soldiers often endure great privations. Taken from their homes and friends; exposed to cold, or heat, or storms, or fatiguing marches; sustained on coarse fare, or almost destitute of food, they are often compelled to endure as much as the human frame can bear, and often, indeed, sink under their burdens and die. If, for reward or their country's sake, they are willing to do this, the soldier of the cross should be willing to do it for his Saviour's sake, and for the good of the human race. Hence, let no man seek the office of the ministry as a place of ease. Let no one' come into it merely to enjoy himself. Let no one enter it who is not prepared to lead a soldier's life, and to welcome hard, ship and trial as his portion. He would make a bad soldier, who, at his enlistment, should make it a condition that he should be permitted to sleep on a bed of down, and always be well clothed and fed, and never exposed to peril, or compelled to pursue a wearisome march. Yet do not some men enter the ministry, making these the conditions? And would they enter the ministry on any other terms?

{d} "hardness" 1Ti 1:18

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life*. Having alluded to the soldier, and stated one thing in which the Christian minister is to resemble him, another point of resemblance is suggested to the mind of the apostle. Neither the minister nor the soldier is to be encumbered with the affairs of this life, and the one should not be more than the other. This is always a condition in becoming a soldier. He gives up his own business during the time for which he is enlisted, and devotes himself to the service of his country. The farmer leaves his plough, and the mechanic his shop, and the merchant his store, and the student his books, and the lawyer his brief; and neither of them expect to pursue these things while engaged in the service of their country. It would be wholly impracticable to carry on the plans of a campaign, if each one of these classes should undertake to prosecute his private business. See this fully illustrated from the Rules of War among the Romans, by Grotius, in loc. Roman soldiers were not allowed to marry, or to engage in any husbandry or trade; and they were forbidden to act as tutors to any person, or curators to any man's estate, or proctors in the cause of other men. The general principle was, that they were excluded from those relations, agencies, and engagements, which it was thought would divert their minds from that which was to be the sole object of pursuit. So with the ministers of the gospel. It is *equally* improper for them to 'entangle' themselves with the business of a farm or plantation; with plans of speculation and gain, and with any purpose of worldly aggrandizement. The minister of the gospel accomplishes the design of his appointment only when he can say in sincerity, that he "is not entangled with the affairs of this life." Comp. **See Barnes "1Co 9:25-27"**.

That he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. That is, him who has enlisted him, or in whose employ he is. His great object is, to approve himself to him. It is not to pursue his own plans, or to have his own will, or to accumulate property or fame for himself. His will is absorbed in the will of his commander, and his purpose is accomplished if he meet with his approbation. Nowhere else is it so true that the will of one becomes lost in that of another, as in the case of the soldier. In an army it is contemplated that there shall be but one mind, one heart, one purpose, that of the commander; and that the whole army shall be as obedient to that as the members of the human body are to the one will that controls all. The application of this is obvious. The grand purpose of the minister of the gospel is to please Christ. He is to pursue no separate plans, and to have no separate will, of his own; and it is contemplated that the whole corps of Christian ministers and members of the churches shall be as entirely subordinate to the will of Christ, as an army is to the orders of its chief.

{e} "warreth" 1Co 9:25,26

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And if a man also strive for masteries*. As in the Grecian games. See this favourite illustration of Paul explained **See Barnes** "1Co 9:24, seq.

Yet is he not crowned except he strives lawfully. In conformity with the rules of the games. See Grotius, *in loc*. NO one could obtain the prize unless he had complied with all the laws of the games, and had thus given to those with whom he contended, a fair opportunity to succeed. "In those

contests, he who transgressed the rules in the least matter, not only failed of the prize, even though the apparent victor, but was sometimes disgraced and punished," *Pict. Bib*. So the apostle here represents the Christian minister as engaged in a struggle or conflict for the crown. He says, that he could not hope to win it unless he should comply with all the laws by which it is conferred; unless he should subdue every improper propensity; and make an effort like that evinced by the combatants at the Olympic games. Comp. **See Barnes** "1Co 9:26, **See Barnes "1Co 9:27"**.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *The husbandman that laboureth*. The margin is, "*labouring first, must be partaker*." The idea, according to the translation in the text, is, that there is a fitness or propriety (*dei*) that the man who cultivates the earth, should enjoy the fruits of his labour. See the same image explained **See Barnes "1Co 9:10"**.

But if this be the meaning here, it is not easy to see why the apostle introduces it. According to the marginal reading, the word '*first*' is introduced in connexion with the word *labour*—" labouring first, must be partaker." That is, it is a great law that the husbandman must work before he receives a harvest. This sense will accord with the purpose of the apostle. It was to remind Timothy that *labour* must precede reward; that if a man would reap, he must sow; that he could hope for no fruits, unless he toiled for them. The point was not that the husbandman would be the *first one* who would partake of the fruits; but that he must first labour before he obtained the reward. Thus understood, this would be an encouragement to Timothy to persevere in his toils, looking onward to the reward. The Greek will bear this construction, though it is not the most obvious one.

{2} "that laboureth" "labouring first must be partaker"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Consider what I say*. **See Barnes "1Ti 4:15"**.

The sense is, "Think of the condition of the soldier, and the principles on which he is enlisted; think of the aspirant for the crown in the Grecian games; think of the farmer, patiently toiling in the prospect of the distant harvest; and then go to *your* work with a similar spirit." These things are worth attention. When the minister of the gospel thinks of his hardships, of his struggles against an evil world, and of his arduous and constant discouraging toil, let him think of the soldier, of the man who struggles for this world's honours, and of the patient farmer —*and be content*. How patiently do they bear all, and yet for what inferior rewards! *And the Lord give thee understanding in all things*. Enable you to see the force of these considerations, and to apply them to your own case. Such are often the discouragements of the ministry; so prone is the mind to despondency, that we need the help of the Lord to enable us to apply the most obvious considerations, and to derive support from the most plain and simple truths and promises.

{b} "the Lord" Pr 2:6

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead*. Or rather, perhaps, "Remember Jesus Christ; who was raised from the dead." The idea seems not to be, as our translators supposed, that he was to reflect on the fact that he was raised from the dead; but rather that he was to think of the Saviour himself. "Think of the Saviour, now raised up from the dead after all the sorrows of this life, and let this encourage you to bear your trials." There is nothing better fitted to enable Us to endure the labours and trials of this life, than to think of the Saviour. On the phrase, 'seed of David,' **See Barnes "Ro 1:3"**.

According to my gospel. The gospel which I preach. **See Barnes "2Th 2:14"**.

{c} "Jesus Christ" Ro 1:3,4

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Wherein I suffer trouble as an evil-doer*. As if I were a violator of the laws. That is, I am treated as if I were a criminal.

Even unto bonds. As if I were one of the worst kind of malefactors, **See Barnes "Eph 6:20"**.

During the apostle's first imprisonment at Rome, he was permitted to "dwell in his own hired house," though guarded by a soldier, and probably chained to him. **See Barnes "Ac 28:16,30"**.

What was his condition in his second imprisonment, during which this epistle was written, we have no means of knowing with certainty. It is probable, however, that he was subjected to much more rigid treatment than he had been in the first instance. The *tradition* is, that he and Peter were together in the Mamertine prison at Rome; and the place is still shown in which it is said that they were confined. The Mamertine prisons are of great antiquity. According to Livy, they were constructed by Ancus Marrtius, and enlarged by Servius Tullius. The lower prison is supposed to have been once a quarry, and to have been at one time occupied as a granary. These prisons are on the descent of the Capitoline Mount, towards the Forum. They consist of two apartments, one over the other, built with large, uncemented stones. There is no entrance to either, except by a small aperture in the roof, and by a small hole in the upper floor, leading to the cell below, without any staircase to either. The upper prison is twenty-seven feet long, by twenty wide; the lower one is elliptical, and measures twenty feet by ten. In the lower one is a small spring, which is said at Rome to have arisen at the command of Peter, to enable him to baptize his keepers, Processus and Martianus, with forty-seven companions, whom he converted. No certain reliance can be placed on any part of this tradition, though in itself there is no improbability in supposing that these prisons may have been used for confining Christians, and the apostle Paul among others. Dr. Burton says, that a more horrible place for the confinement of a human being can scarcely be conceived.

But the word of God is not bound. This is one of Paul's happy turns of thought. Comp. Ac 26:29. The meaning is plain. The gospel was prospered. That could not be lettered hand imprisoned. It circulated with freedom, even when he who was appointed to preach it was in chains. See Php 1:13,14. As this was the great matter, his own imprisonment was of comparatively little consequence. What may *befall* us is of secondary importance. The grand thing is, the triumph of truth on the earth; and well may we bear privations and sorrows, if the gospel moves on in triumph.

{d} "unto bonds" Eph 6:20

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes*. **See Barnes "2Co 1:6"**.

The sense is, What I suffer is in the cause of the church, spoken of here, as it is often, as chosen, or elected. **See Barnes "Eph 1:4"**.

That they may also obtain the salvation, etc. Their salvation, though they were elected, could not be secured without proper efforts. The meaning of the apostle here is, that he was willing to suffer if he might save others; and any one *ought* to be willing to suffer in order to secure the salvation of the elect—for it was an object for which the Redeemer was willing to lay down his life.

{e} "elect's sake" 2Co 1:6

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *It is a faithful saying*. Or, rather, that which he was about to say was worthy of entire credence and profound attention. **See Barnes "1Ti 1:15"**.

The object is, to encourage Timothy to bear trials by the hope of salvation.

For if we be dead with him. **See Barnes "Ro 6:8"**.

We shall also live with him. This was a sort of maxim, or a settled point, which is often referred to in the Bible. **See Barnes "Ro 6:3"**.

See Barnes "Ro 6:4, **See Barnes "Ro 6:5"**; **See Barnes "Joh 11:25"**; **See Barnes** "1Th 4:14".

{f} "if we be dead" Ro 6:5,8

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *If we suffer, we shall also reign with him*. The meaning is, that the members will be treated as the Head is. We become united with him by faith; and, if we share his treatment on earth we shall share his triumphs in heaven. **See Barnes "Ro 8:17"**.

If we deny him, he also will deny us. **See Barnes** "Mt 10:32, **See Barnes "Mt 10:33"**.

{g} "deny him" Mt 10:33

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful*. This cannot mean that, if we live in sin, he will certainly save us, as if he had made any promise to the elect, or formed any purpose that he would save them, whatever might be their conduct; for

(1.) he had just said, that if we deny him he will deny us; and

(2.) there is no such promise in the Bible, and no such purpose has been formed. The promise is, that he that is a believer shall be saved, and there is no purpose to save any but such as lead holy lives. The meaning must be, that if we are unbelieving and unfaithful, Christ will remain true to his word, and we cannot hope to be saved. The object of the apostle evidently is, to excite Timothy to fidelity in the performance of duty, and to encourage him to bear trials, by the assurance that we cannot hope to escape if we are not faithful to the cause of the Saviour. This interpretation accords with the design which he had in view.

He cannot deny himself. Implying that it would be a denial of his very nature to save those who are unfaithful. He is holy; and how can he save one who is unholy? His very nature is purity; and how can he save one who has no purity? Let no one, then, suppose that, because he is elected, he is safe, if he lives in sin. The electing purpose of God, indeed, makes salvation sure; but it is only for those who lead righteous lives. Nothing would be more dishonourable for God than to resolve to save a man that lived habitually in sin; and if that were the doctrine of election, it would deserve all the opprobrium that has ever been heaped upon it.

{h} "If we believe not" Ro 3:3 {i} "he cannot" Nu 23:19

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Of these things put them in remembrance*. These great principles in regard to the kingdom of Christ. They would be as useful to others as they were for Timothy, to whom they were specially addressed.

Charging them before the Lord. In the presence of the Lord, implying that it was a very important matter. **See Barnes "1Ti 1:18"**.

That they strive not about words to no profit. **See Barnes "1Ti 1:6"**; **See Barnes** "1Ti 6:4".

But to the subverting of the hearers. Turning them away from the simplicity of faith. It is rare, indeed, that a religious controversy does not produce this effect, and this is commonly the case, where, as often happens, the matter in dispute is of little importance.

{k} "put them" 2Pe 1:13 {l} "strive not" Tit 3:9,10

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Study to show thyself approved unto God*. Give diligence, 2Pe 1:10, or make an effort so to discharge-the duties of the ministerial office as to meet the Divine approbation. The object of the ministry is not to please men. Such doctrines should be preached, and such plans formed, and such a manner of life pursued, as God will approve. To do this demands *study or care*—for there are many temptations to the opposite course; there are many things the tendency of which is

to lead a minister to seek popular favour rather than the Divine approval. If any man please God, it will be as the result of deliberate intention and a careful life.

A workman that needeth not to be ashamed. A man faithfully performing his duty, so that when he looks over what he has done, he may not blush.

Rightly dividing the word of truth. The word here rendered "rightly dividing," occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means, properly, *to cut straight, to divide right*; and the allusion here may be to a steward who makes a proper distribution to each one under his care of such things as his office and their necessities require. Comp. **See Barnes "Mt 13:52"**.

Some have supposed that there is an allusion here to the Jewish priest cutting or dividing the sacrifice into proper parts; others, that the allusion is to the Scribes dividing the law into sections; others, to a carver distributing food to the guests at a feast. Robinson (*Lex*.) renders it, "rightly proceeding as to the word of truth;" that is, rightfully and skilfully teaching the word of truth. The idea seems to be, that the minister of the gospel is to make a proper distribution of that word, adapting his instructions to the circumstances and wants of his hearers, and giving to each that which will be fitted to nourish the soul for heaven.

{a} "Study" 2Pe 1:10 {b} "rightly dividing" Mt 13:52

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *But shun profane and vain babblings*. **See Barnes "1Ti 6:20"**.

For they will increase unto more ungodliness. Their tendency is to alienate the soul from God, and to lead to impiety. Such kinds of disputation are not merely a waste of time, they are productive of positive mischief. A man fond of contention in religious things is seldom one who has much love for the practical duties of piety, or any very deep sense of the distinction between right and wrong. You will not usually look for him in the place of prayer, nor can you expect his aid in the conversion of sinners, nor will you find that he has any very strict views of religious obligation.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *And their word*. The word, or the discourses of those who love vain and idle disputations.

Will eat as doth a canker. Marg. *gangrene*. This word— *gaggraina* occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It is derived from *graiw, grainw, graio* or *graino*—to devour, corrode, and means *gangrene or mortifications* the death of a part, spreading, unless arrested, by degrees over the whole body. The words rendered "will eat," mean will have nutriment; that is, will spread over and consumes the healthful parts. It will not merely destroy the parts immediately affected, bat will extend into the surrounding healthy parts and destroy them also. So it is with erroneous doctrines. They will not merely eat out the truth in the particular matter to which they refer, but they will also spread over and corrupt other truths. The doctrines of religion are closely connected, and are dependent on each other—like the different parts of the human body. One cannot be corrupted

without affecting those adjacent to it, and unless checked, the corruption will soon spread over the whole.

Of whom is Hymeneus and Philetus. In regard to Hymeneus, **See Barnes "1Ti 1:20"**.

Of Philetus nothing more is known. They have gained an undesirable immortality, destined to be known to the end of time only as the advocates of error.

{1} "canker" "gangrene"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Who concerning the truth have erred*. To what extent they had erred is unknown. Paul mentions only one point—that pertaining to the resurrection; but says that this was like a gangrene. It would certainly, unless checked, destroy all the other doctrines of religion. No man can safely hold a single error, any more than he can safely have one part of his body in a state of mortification.

Saying, that the resurrection is past already. It is not known in what form they held this opinion. It may have been, as Augustine supposes, that they taught that there was no resurrection but that which occurs in the soul when it is recovered from the death of sin, and made to live anew. Or it may be that they held that those who had died had experienced all the resurrection which they ever would, by passing into another state, and receiving at death a spiritual body fitted to their mode of being in the heavenly world. Whatever was the form of the opinion, the apostle regarded it: as a most dangerous error, for just views of the resurrection undoubtedly lie at the foundation of correct apprehensions of the Christian system. Comp. **See Barnes** "1Co 15:12, seq.

And overthrow the faith of some. That is, on this point, and as would appear on all the correlative subjects of Christian belief. Comp. 1Ti 1:19,20.

{c} "have erred" 1Ti 6:21 {d} "saying" 1Co 15:12

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Nevertheless the foundation of God is sure*. Marg. *steady*. The meaning is, that though some had been turned away by the arts of these errorists, yet the foundation of the church which God had laid remained firm. Comp. Eph 2:20, "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone." As long as this foundation remained farm, there was no reason to be troubled from the few-instances of apostasy which had occurred. Comp. Ps 11:3. It is not uncommon to compare the church to a building erected on a solid foundation. Eph 2:20,21 1Co 3:9,10; Mt 16:18.

Having this seal. Or rather a seal with this inscription. The word *seal* is sometimes used to denote the instrument by which an impression is made, and sometimes the impression or inscription itself. A seal is used for security Mt 27:66, or as a mark of genuineness, Re 9:4. The seal here is one that was affixed to the *foundation*, and seems to refer to some inscription on the foundation-stone which always remained there, and which denoted the character and design of the edifice. The

allusion is to the custom, in rearing an edifice, of inscribing the name of the builder and the design of the edifice on the corner-stone. See Rosenmuller, Alte u. neue Morgenland, No. 405. So the church of Christ is a budding reared by the hands of God. Its foundation has been firmly and securely laid, and on that foundation there is an inscription always remaining, which determines the character of the edifice.

The Lord knoweth them that are his. This is one of the inscriptions on the foundation-stone of the church, which seems to mark the character of the building. It always stands there, no matter who apostatizes. It is, at the same time, a fearful inscription —showing that no one can deceive God; that he is intimately acquainted with all who enter that building; and that in the multitudes which enter there, the friends and the foes of God are intimately known. He can separate his own friends from all others, and his constant care will be extended to all who are truly his own, to keep them from failing. This has the *appearance* of being a quotation, but no such passage is found in the Old Testament in so many words. In Na 1:7, the following words are found: "And he knoweth them that trust in him;" and it is possible that Paul may have had that in his eye; but it is not necessary to suppose that he designed it as a quotation. A phrase somewhat similar to this is found in Nu 16:5, "The Lord will show who are his," rendered in the Septuagint, "God knoweth who are his;" and Whitby supposes that this is the passage referred to. But whether Paul had these passages in view or not, it is clear that he meant to say that it was one of the fundamental things in religion, that God knew who were his own people, and that he would preserve them from the danger of making shipwreck of their faith.

And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. This is the other seal or inscription which is made on the foundation which God has laid. The foundation has two inscriptions-the first implying that God knows all who are his own people; the other, that all who are his professed people should depart from evil. This is not found in so many words in the Old Testament, and, like the former, it is not to be regarded as a quotation. The meaning is, that it is an elementary principle in the true church, that all who become members of it should lead holy lives. It was also true that they *would* lead holy lives, and amidst all the defections of errorists, and all their attempts to draw away others from the true faith, those might be known to be the true people of God who *did* avoid evil.

{e} "foundation" Pr 10:25 {f} "Lord" Na 1:7 Joh 10:14,27

{g} "Let every one" Ps 97:10

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *But in a great house*. Still keeping up the comparison of the church with a building. The idea is, that the church is a large edifice, and that in such a building we are not to expect entire uniformity in all the articles which it contains.

There are not only vessels of gold and of silver, etc. You are not to expect to find all the articles of furniture alike, or all made of the same material. Variety in the form, and use, and material, is necessary in furnishing such a house.

And some to honour, and some to dishonour. Some to most honourable uses—as drinking-vessels, and vessels to contain costly viands, and some for the less honourable purposes connected with

cooking, etc. The same thing is to be expected in the church. See this idea illustrated at greater length under another figure: **See Barnes** "1Co 12:14, also 1Co 12:15-26. Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 9:21"**.

The *application* here seems to be, that in the church it is to be presumed that there will be a great variety of gifts and attainments, and that we are no more to expect that all will be alike than we are that all the vessels in a large house will be made of gold.

{a} "vessels" Ro 9:21

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel of honour*. If a man cleanse or purify himself. Comp. **See Barnes "Joh 15:2"**.

The word "these" refers, here, to the persons represented by the vessels of wood and of earth—the vessels made to dishonour, as mentioned in the previous verse. The idea is, that if one would preserve himself from the corrupting influence of such men, he would be fitted to be a vessel of honour, or to be employed in the most useful and honourable service in the cause of his Master. On the word *vessel*, **See Barnes "Ac 9:16"**.

And meet for the Master's use. Fit to be employed by the Lord Jesus in promoting his work on earth.

{b} "If a man" Jer 15:19 {c} "prepared" 2Ti 3:17

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Flee also youthful lusts*. Such passions as youth are o. On subject to. the word *flee*, and the pertinency of its use in such a connection, **See Barnes "1Co 6:18"**.

Paul felt that Timothy, then a young man, was subject to the same passions as other young men; and hence his repeated cautions to him to avoid all those things arising from his youth, which might be the occasion of scandal. Comp. **See Barnes "1Ti 4:12"**

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See Barnes "1Ti 5.2".

It is to be remembered that this epistle is applicable to other ministers, as well as to Timothy; and, to a young man in the ministry no counsel could be more appropriate than to "Flee from youthful lusts;" not to indulge for a moment in those corrupt passions to which youth are subject, but to cultivate the pure and sober virtues which become the ministerial office.

But follow righteousness, etc. Comp. **See Barnes "Heb 12:14"**.

The general meaning here is, that he was to practise all that is good and virtuous. He was to practise righteousness, or justice and equity, in all his dealings with men; faith, or fidelity in his duties; charity, or love to all men, **See Barnes** "1Co 13:1, seq. *peace*, or harmony and concord with all others. What virtues could be more appropriate for a minister of the gospel?

With them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. That is, with all Christians, who are often characterized as those who call on the Lord, 1Co 1:2. Comp. Ac 9:11. In all his intercourse with

them, Timothy was to manifest the virtues above recommended. But not with them alone. It would be incumbent on him to exhibit the same virtues in his intercourse with all.

{d} "Flee" Ec 11:9,10 {e} "follow" Heb 12:14 {f} "call on the Lord" 1Co 1:2

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *But foolish and unlearned questions avoid*. **See Barnes "1Ti 1:4"**; **See Barnes** "1Ti 1:6"; **See Barnes "1Ti 4:7"**.

The word unlearned, here, means *trifling; that which does not tend to edification; stupid*. The Greeks and the Hebrews were greatly given to controversies of various kinds; and many of the questions discussed pertained to points which could not be settled, or which, *if* settled, were of no importance. Such has been the character of no small part of the disputes which have agitated the world. Paul correctly says that the only effect of such disputes is to engender harsh contention. Points of *real* importance can be discussed with no injury to the temper; but men cannot safely dispute about trifles.

{g} "questions" 2Ti 2:16

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *And the servant of the Lord*. Referring here primarily to the Christian minister, but applicable to all Christians; for all profess to be the servants of the Lord.

Must not strive. He may calmly inquire after truth; he may discuss points of morals, or theology, if he will do it with a proper spirit; he may "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints," (Jude 1:3;) but he may not do that which is here mentioned as strife. The Greek word—*macesyai* —commonly denotes, *to fight to make war, to contend*. In Joh 6:52 Ac 7:26; 2Ti 2:24, it is rendered *strove*, and *strive*; in Jas 4:2, *fight*. It is not elsewhere used in the New Testament. The meaning is, that the servant of Christ should be a man of peace. He should not indulge in the feelings which commonly give rise to contention, and which commonly characterize it. He should not struggle for mere victory, even when endeavouring to maintain truth; but should do this, in all cases, with a kind spirit, and a mild temper; with entire candour; with nothing designed to provoke and irritate an adversary; and so that, whatever may be the result of the discussion, "the bond of peace" may, if possible, be preserved. Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 12:18"**.

But be gentle unto all men. **See Barnes "1Th 2:7"**.

The word rendered *gentle*, does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It means that the Christian minister is to be meek and mild towards all, not disputatious and quarrelsome.

Apt to teach. Notes, 1Ti 3:2.

Patient. Marg., *forbearing*. The Greek word here used does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It means, patient under evils and injuries. *Robinson, Lex*. Comp. **See Barnes "Eph 4:2"**; **See Barnes "Col 3:13"**

{1} "patient" "forbearing" iv. 2; Col. iii. 13.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves*. That is, those who embrace error, and array themselves against the truth. We are not to become angry with such persons, and denounce them at once as heretics. We are not to hold them up to public reproach and scorn; but we are to set about the business of patiently *instructing* them. Their grand difficulty, it is supposed in this direction, is, that they are ignorant of the truth. Our business with them is, *calmly to show them what the truth is*. If *they* are angry, *we* are not to be. If they oppose the truth, we are still calmly to state it to them. If they are slow to see it, we are not to become weary or impatient, Nor, if they do not embrace it at all, are we to become angry with them, and denounce them. We may pity them, but we need not use hard words. This is the apostolic precept about the way of treating those who are in error; and can any one fail to see its beauty and propriety? Let it be remembered, also, that this is not only beautiful and proper in itself; it is the wisest course, if we would bring others over to our opinions. You are not likely to convince a man that you are right, and that he is wrong, if you first make him angry; nor are you very likely to do it, if you enter into harsh contention. You then put him on his guard; you make him a party; and, from self-respect, or pride, or anger, he will endeavour to defend his own opinions, and will not yield to yours. Meekness and gentleness are the very best things, if you wish to convince another that he is wrong. Win his *heart* first, and then modestly and kindly show him *what the truth is*, in as few words, and with as unassuming a spirit, as possible, *and you have him*.

If God peradventure will give them repentance, etc. Give them such a view of the error which they have embraced, and such regret for having embraced it, that they shall be willing to admit the truth. After all our care in teaching others the truth, our only dependence is on God for its success. We cannot be absolutely certain that they will see their error; we cannot rely certainly on any power which argument will have; we can only hope that *God* may show them their error, and enable them to see and embrace the truth. Compare Ac 11:18. The word rendered *peradventure*, here *mhpote*—means, usually, not even, never; and then, *that never, lest ever*—the same as lest perhaps. It is translated *lest at any time*, Mt 4:6 5:26, 13:15 Mr 4:12; Lu 21:34

lest, Mt 7:6 13:29, 15:32, et al.; *lest haply*, Lu 14:12; Ac 5:39. It does not imply that there was *any chance* about what is said, but rather that there was uncertainty in the mind of the speaker, and that there was need of caution *lest* something should occur; or, that anything was done, or should be done, to prevent something from happening. It is not used elsewhere in the New Testament in the sense which our translators, and all the critics, so far as I have examined, give to it here—as implying a hope that God would give them repentance, etc. But I may be permitted to suggest another interpretation, which will accord with the uniform meaning of the word in the New Testament, and which will refer the matter to those who had embraced the error, and not to God. It is this: "In meekness instructing *those that oppose themselves*—(*antidiatiyemenouv*) *lest*—*mhpote*—God should give them repentance, and they should recover themselves out of the snare of the devil," etc. That is, they put themselves in this posture of opposition so that they shall not be brought to repentance, and recover themselves. They do it with a precautionary view that they *may not* be

thus brought to repentance, and be recovered to God. They take this position of opposition to the truth, intending not to be converted; and this is the reason why they are not converted.

{h} "meekness" Ga 6:1 {i} "peradventure" Ac 8:22 {k} "acknowledge" Tit 1:1

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 2 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *And that they may recover themselves*. Marg., *awake*. The word which is rendered *recover* in the text and *awake* in the margin *ananhqwsin* occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It properly means, to become sober again, as from inebriation; to awake from a deep sleep; and then, to come to a right mind, as one does who is aroused from a state of inebriety, or from sleep. The representation in this part of the verse implies that while under the influence of error, they were like a man intoxicated, or like one in deep slumber. From this state they were to be roused, as one is from sleep, or as a man is recovered from the stupor and dullness of intoxication.

Out of the snare of the devil. The snare which the devil has spread for them, and in which they have become entangled. There is a little confusion of metaphor here, since in the first part of the verse, they are represented as asleep, or intoxicated; and, here, as taken in a snare. Yet the general idea is clear. In one part of the verse, the influence of *error* is represented as producing sleep, or stupor; in the other, as being taken in a snare or net; and, in both, the idea is, that an effort was to be made that they might be rescued from this perilous condition.

Who are taken captive by him at his will. Marg., *alive*. The Greek word means, properly, to take alive; and then to take captive, to win over, Lu 5:10; and then to ensnare, or seduce. Here it means that they had been ensnared by the arts oh Satan *unto* (*eiv*) *his will*; that is, they were so influenced by him, that they complied with his will. Another interpretation of this passage should be mentioned here, by which it is proposed to avoid the incongruousness of the metaphor of awaking one from a snare. It is adopted by Doddridge, and is suggested also by Burder, as quoted by Rosenmuller, *A.u.n. Morgenland*. According to this, the reference is to an artifice of fowlers, to scatter seeds impregnated with some intoxicating drugs, intended to lay birds asleep, that they may draw the snare over them more securely. There can be no doubt that such arts were practised, and it is possible that Paul may have alluded to it. Whatever is the allusion, the general idea is clear. It is an affecting representation of those who have fallen into error. They are in a deep slumber. They are as if under the fatal influence of some stupefying potion. They are like birds taken alive in this state, and at the mercy of the fowler. They will remain in this condition, unless they shall be roused by the mercy of God; and it is the business of the ministers of religion to carry to them that gospel call, which God is accustomed to bless in showing them their danger. That message should be continually sounded in the ears of the sinner, with the prayer and the hope that God will make it the means of arousing him to seek his salvation.

{1} "recover" "awake" {a} "snare" 1Ti 3:7 {2} "captive" "alive"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 3

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 3 - Verse 1

2nd Timothy Chapter 3

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

IN the first part of this chapter, 2Ti 3:1-8, Paul reminds Timothy of the great apostasy which was to be expected in the church, and states some of the characteristics of it. In 2Ti 3:9, he says that that apostasy would not always continue; but would be at some time arrested, and so arrested as to show to all men the folly of those who were concerned in it. In 2Ti 3:10,11, he refers Timothy to his own manner of life in the midst of persecutions, as an encouragement to him to bear the trials which might be expected to occur to him in a similar manner. "Perilous times" were to come, and Timothy might be expected to be called to pass through trials similar to those which Paul himself had experienced. In those times the remembrance of his example would be invaluable. In 2Ti 3:12,13, he assures Timothy that persecutions and trials were to be expected by all who aimed to lead holy lives, and that it was as certainly to be expected that evil men would become worse and worse. And in 2Ti 3:14-17, he exhorts him to be steadfast in maintaining the truth; and to encourage him to do this, reminds him of his early training in the Holy Scriptures, and of the value of those Scriptures. To the Scriptures he might repair in all times of trial, and find support in the Divine promises. What he had learned there was the inspired truth of God, and was able to make him wise, and to furnish him abundantly for all that he was to do or to suffer.

Verse 1. *This know also*. The *object* of this reference to the perilous times which were to occur, was evidently to show the necessity of using every precaution to preserve the purity of the church, from the fact that such sad scenes were to open upon it. The apostle had dwelt upon this subject in his first epistle to Timothy, 1Ti 4, but its importance leads him to advert to it again.

In the last days. Under the gospel dispensation; some time in that period during which the affairs of the world will be closed up. **See Barnes "1Ti 4:1, Heb 1:2"**.

Perilous times shall come. Times of danger, of persecution, and of trial. On the general meaning of this passage, and the general characteristics of those times, the reader may consult **See Barnes "2Th 2:1"**; seq. **See Barnes "**1Ti 4:1, seq. There can be no doubt that in all these passages the apostle refers to the same events.

{b} "that" 1Ti 4:1 2Pe 3:3; 1Jo 2:18 Jude 1:17,18

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 3 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *For men shall be lovers of their own selves*. It shall be one of the characteristics of those times, that men shall be eminently selfish, evidently under the garb of religion. 2Ti 3:5. The word here used *filautov*—does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It means a lover of one's self, *selfish*. Such a love of self as to lead us to secure our salvation is proper. But this interferes with the rights and happiness of no other persons. the selfishness which is condemned, is that regard to our own interests which interferes with the rights and comforts of others; which makes self the central and leading object of living; and which tramples on all that would interfere with that. As

such it is a base and hateful and narrow passion; but it has been so common in the world that no one can doubt the correctness of the prophecy of the apostle that it would exist "*in the last times*."

Covetous. Gr., *Lovers of silver*; i.e., of money, see Lu 16:14. **See Barnes "1Ti 6:10"**.

Boasters. **See Barnes "Ro 1:30"**.

Proud. **See Barnes "Ro 1:30"**.

Blasphemers. **See Barnes "Mt 9:3"**.

Disobedient to parents. **See Barnes "Ro 1:30"**.

Unthankful. See Lu 6:35. The word here used occurs in the New Testament only in these two places. Ingratitude has always been regarded as one of the worst of crimes. It is said here that it would characterize that wicked age of which the apostle speaks, and its prevalence would, as it always does, indicate a decline of religion. Religion makes us grateful to every benefactor—to God, and to man.

Unholy. **See Barnes "1Ti 1:9"**.

{c} "men" Ro 1:29-31

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 3 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Without natural affection*. **See Barnes "Ro 1:31"**.

Trucebreakers. The same word in Ro 1:31, is rendered *implacable*. **See Barnes "Ro 1:31"**.

It properly means, *without treaty*; that is, those who are averse to any treaty or compact. It may thus refer to those who are unwilling to enter into any agreement; that is, either those who are unwilling to be reconciled to others when there is a variance— *implacable*; or those who disregard treaties or agreements. In either case, this marks a very corrupt condition of society. Nothing would be more indicative of the lowest state of degradation, than that in which all compacts and agreements were utterly disregarded.

False accusers. Marg., *makebates*. The word *makebate* means one who excites contentions and quarrels. Webster. The Greek here is *diaboloi—devils* —the primitive meaning of which is, *calumniator, slanderer, accuser*. Comp. **See Barnes** "1Ti 3:11, where the word is rendered *slanderers*.

Incontinent. 1Co 7:5. Literally, *without strength*; that is, without strength to resist the solicitations of passion, or who readily yield to it.

Fierce. The Greek word used here— *anhmerov* does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It means *ungentle, harsh, severe*, and is the opposite of gentleness and mildness. Religion produces gentleness; the want of it makes men rough, harsh, cruel. **See Barnes "2Ti 2:24"**.

Despisers of those that are good. In Tit 1:8, it is said of a bishop that he must be "a lover of good men." This, in every condition of life, is a virtue; and hence the opposite of it is here set down as one of the characteristics of that evil age of which the apostle speaks.

{1} "false accusers" "makebates"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 3 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Traitors*. This word is used in the New Testament only here and in Lu 6:16 Ac 7:52. It means any one who betrays— whether it be a friend or his country. *Treason* has been in all ages regarded as one of the worst crimes that man can commit.

Heady. The same word in Ac 19:36, is rendered *rashly*. It occurs only there and in this place in the New Testament. It properly means *falling forwards; prone, inclined, ready to do anything*; then *precipitate, headlong, rash*. It is opposed to that which is deliberate and calm; and here means, that men would be ready to do anything without deliberation, or concern for the consequences. They would engage in enterprises which would only disturb society, or prove their own ruin.

High-minded. Literally, *puffed up*. **See Barnes** "1Ti 3:6, where the same word is rendered *lifted up with pride*. The meaning is, that they would be inflated with pride or self-conceit.

Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. That is, of sensual pleasures, or vain amusements. This has been, and is, the characteristic of a great part of the world, and has often distinguished even many who profess religion. Of a large portion of mankind it may be said that this is their characteristic, that they live for pleasure; they have no serious pursuits; they brook no restraints which interfere with their amusements, and they greatly prefer the pleasures to be found in the gay assembly, in the ball-room, or in the place of low dissipation, to the friendship of their Creator.

{a} "heady" 2Pe 2:10 {+} "high-minded" "headstrong" {b} "lovers" Php 3:19

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 3 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Having a form of godliness*. That is, they profess religion, or are in connexion with the church. This shows that the apostle referred to some great corruption in the church; and there can be little doubt that he had his eye on the same great apostasy to which he refers in 2Th 2, 1Ti 4.

All these things to which he refers here have been practised and tolerated in that apostate church, while no body of men, at any time, have been more zealous in maintaining a *form of godliness*; that is, in keeping up the *forms* of religion.

But denying the power thereof. Opposing the real power of religion; not allowing it to exert any influence in their lives. It imposes no restraint on their passions and carnal propensities; but in all respects, except in the *form* of religion, they live as if they had none. This has been common in the world. The most regular and bigoted adherence to the forms of religion, furnishes no evidence in itself that there is any true piety at heart, or that true religion has any actual control over the soul. It is much easier for men to observe the forms of religion than it is to bring the heart under its controlling influence.

From such turn away. Have no intercourse with them as if they were Christians; show no countenance to their religion; do not associate with them. Comp. 2Jo 1:10,11; **See Barnes "2Co 6:17"**.

{c} "form" Tit 1:16

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 3 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *For of this sort are they which creep into houses*. Who go slyly and insidiously into families. They are not open and manly in endeavouring to propagate their views, but they endeavour by their address to ingratiate themselves first with weak women, and through them to influence men. Comp. Tit 1:11. The word translated "creep into," is rendered by Doddridge, *insinuate themselves*; by Bloomfield, *wind their way into*, in the manner of serpents; by Bretschneider, *deceitfully enter*; by Robinson and Passow, *go in, enter in*. It is not certain that the idea of *deceit or cunning* is contained in this word, yet the whole complexion of the passage implies that they made their way by art and deceitful tricks.

And lead captive silly women. One of the tricks always played by the advocates of error, and one of the ways by which they seek to promote their purposes. Satan began his work of temptation with Eve rather than with Adam, and the advocates of error usually follow his example. There are always weak-minded women enough in any community to give an opportunity of practicing these arts, and often the aims of the imposter and deceiver can be best secured by appealing to them. Such women are easily flattered; they are charmed by the graceful manners of religious instructors; they lend a willing ear to anything that has the appearance of religion, and their hearts are open to anything that promises to advance the welfare of the world. At the same time, they are just such persons as the propagators of error can rely on. They have leisure; they have wealth; they are busy; they move about in society, and by their activity they obtain an influence, to which they are by no means entitled by their piety or talents. There *are*, indeed, very many women in the world who cannot be so easily led away as men; but it cannot be denied also that there are those who are just adapted to the purposes of such as seek to spread plausible error. The word rendered *silly women*, means properly *little women*, and then *weak women*.

Laden with sins. With so many sins that they seem to be burdened with them. The idea is, that they are under the influence of sinful desires and propensities, and hence are better adapted to the purposes of deceivers.

Led away with divers lusts. With various kinds of passions or desires— *epiyumiaiv* —such as pride, vanity, the love of novelty, or a susceptibility to flattery, so as to make them an easy prey to deceivers.

{d} "creep" Tit 1:16

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 3 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Ever learning*. That is, these "silly women;" for so the Greek demands. The idea is, that they *seem* to be disciples. They put themselves wholly under the care of these professedly religious teachers, but they never acquire the true knowledge of the way of salvation.

And never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. They may learn many things, but the true nature of religion they do not learn. There are many such persons in the world, who, whatever attention they may pay to religion, never understand its nature. Many obtain much speculative acquaintance with the *doctrines* of Christianity, but never become savingly acquainted with the system; many study the constitution and government of the church, but remain strangers to practical piety; many become familiar with the various philosophical theories of religion, but never become truly acquainted with what religion is; and many embrace visionary theories, who never show that

they are influenced by the Spirit of the gospel. Nothing is more common than for persons to be very busy and active in religion, and even to *learn* many things about it, who still remain strangers to the saving power of the gospel.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 3 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Now as Jannes and Jambres* withstood Moses. The names of these two men are not elsewhere mentioned in the Bible. They are supposed to have been two of the magicians who resisted Moses, Ex 7:11, *et al*., and who opposed their miracles to those of Moses and Aaron. It is not certain where the apostle obtained their names; but they are frequently mentioned by the Hebrew writers, and also by other writers; so that there can be no reasonable doubt that their names were correctly handed down by tradition. Nothing is more probable than that the names of the more distinguished magicians who attempted to imitate the miracles of Moses, would be preserved by tradition; and though they are not mentioned by Moses himself, and the Jews have told many ridiculous stories respecting them, yet this should not lead us to doubt the truth of the tradition respecting their names. A full collection of the Jewish statements in regard to them may be found in Wetstein, *in loc*. They are also mentioned by Pliny, Nat. Hist. xxx. 7; and by Numenius, the philosopher, as quoted by Eusebius, ix. 8; and Origen, against Celsus, p. 199. See Wetstein. By the rabbinical writers, they are sometimes mentioned as Egyptian magicians who opposed Moses in Egypt, and sometimes as the sons of Balaam. The more common account is, that they were the princes of the Egyptian magicians. One of the Jewish rabins represents them as having been convinced by the miracles of Moses, and as having become converts to the Hebrew religion. There is no reason to doubt that these were, in fact, the leading men who opposed Moses in Egypt, by attempting to work counter miracles. The *point* of the remark of the apostle here, is, that they resisted Moses by attempting to *imitate* his miracles; thus *neutralizing* the evidence that he was sent from God. In like manner, the persons here referred to, opposed the progress of the gospel by setting up a similar claim to that of the apostles; by pretending to have as much authority as they had; and by thus neutralizing the claims of the true religion, and leading off weak-minded persons from the truth. This is often the most dangerous kind of opposition that is made to religion.

Men of corrupt minds. Comp. **See Barnes "1Ti 6:5"**.

Reprobate concerning the faith. So far as the Christian faith is concerned. On the word rendered *reprobate*, **See Barnes "Ro 1:28"**.

See Barnes "1Co 9:27, rendered *cast-away*. **See Barnes "2Co 13:5"**.

The margin here is, "of no judgment." The meaning is, that in respect to the Christian faith, or the doctrines of religion, their views could not be approved, and they were not to be regarded as true teachers of religion.

{e} "Jannes and Jambres" Ex 7:11 {f} "of corrupt minds" 1Ti 6:5 {2} "reprobate" "of no judgment" {&} "concerning" "disproved"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 3 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *But they shall proceed no further*. There is a certain point beyond which they will not be allowed to go. Their folly will become manifest, and the world will understand it. The apostle does not say *how far* these false teachers would be allowed to go, but that they would not be suffered always to prosper and prevail. They might be plausible at first, and lead many astray; they might, by art and cunning, cover up the real character of their system, but there would be a fair development of it, and it would be seen to be folly. The apostle here may be understood as declaring a general truth in regard to error. It often is so plausible at first, that it seems to be true. It wins the hearts of many persons, and leads them astray. It flatters them personally, or it flatters them with the hope of a better state of things in the church and the world. But the time will *always* come when men will see the folly of it. Error will advance only to a certain point, when it will be seen to be falsehood and folly, and when the world will arise and cast it off. In some cases, this point may be slower in being reached than in others; but there is a point, beyond which error will not go. At the reformation under Luther, that point had been reached when the teachings of the great apostasy were seen to be "folly," and when the awakened intellect of the world would allow it to "proceed no farther," and aroused itself and threw it off. In the workings of society, as well as by the direct appointment of God, there is a point beyond which error cannot prevail; and hence there is a certainty that truth will finally triumph.

For their folly shall be manifest unto all men. The world will see and understand what they are, and what they teach. By smooth sophistry, and cunning arts, they will not be able always to deceive mankind.

As their's also was. That of Jannes and Jambres. That is, it became manifest to all that they could not compete with Moses and Aaron; that their claims to the power of working miracles were the mere arts of magicians, and that they had set up pretensions which they could not sustain. Comp. Ex 8:18,19. In regard to the time to which the apostle referred in this description, it has already been observed **See Barnes** "2Ti 3:1, that it was probably to that great apostasy of the "latter days," which he has described in 2Th 2 1Ti 4.

But there seems to be no reason to doubt that he had his eye immediately on some persons who had appeared then, and who had evinced some of the traits which would characterize the great apostasy, and whose conduct showed that the great "falling away" had already commenced. In 2Th 2:7, he says that the "mystery of iniquity" was already at work, or was even then manifesting itself; and there can be no doubt that the apostle saw that there had then commenced what he knew would yet grow up into the great defection from the truth. In some persons, at that time, who had the form of godliness, but who denied its power; who made use of insinuating arts to proselyte the weak and the credulous; who endeavoured to imitate the true apostles, perhaps by attempting to work miracles, as Jannes and Jambres did, he saw the *germ* of what was yet to grow up into so gigantic a system of iniquity as to overshadow the world. Yet he consoled Timothy with the assurance that there was a point beyond which the system of error would not be allowed to go, but where its folly must be seen, and where it would be arrested.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 3 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *But thou hast fully known my doctrine*, etc. Marg., *been a diligent follower of*. The margin is more in accordance with the usual meaning of the Greek word, which means, properly, to accompany side by side; to follow closely; to trace out; to examine, (Lu 1:3 ;) and to conform to. The meaning here, however, seems to be, that Timothy had an opportunity to follow out; i.e., to examine closely the manner of life of the apostle Paul. He had been so long his companion, that he had had the fullest opportunity of knowing how he had lived and taught, and how he had borne persecutions. The *object* of this reference to his own life and sufferings is evidently to encourage Timothy to bear persecutions and trials in the same manner. Comp. 2Ti 3:14. He saw, in the events began already to develop themselves, that trials must be; he knew that all who would live holy lives must suffer persecution; and hence he sought to prepare the mind of Timothy for the proper endurance of trials, by a reference to his own case. The word *doctrine*, here, refers to his *teaching*, or manner of giving instruction. It does not refer, as the word now does, to the *opinions* which he held. **See Barnes "1Ti 4:16"**.

In regard to the opportunities which Timothy had for knowing the manner of Paul's life, see the introduction to the epistle, and Paley, Hor. Paul., *in loc*. Timothy had been the companion of Paul during a considerable portion of the time after his conversion. The persecutions referred to here 2Ti 3:11 are those which occurred in the vicinity of Timothy's native place, and which he would have had a particular opportunity of being acquainted with. This circumstance, and the fact that Paul did not refer to *other* persecutions in more remote places, is one of the "undesigned coincidences," of which Paley has made so much in his incomparable little work, the *Horae Paulinae*.

Manner of life. Literally, leading, guidance; then, the method in which one is led—his manner of life. Comp. 1Th 2:1.

Purpose. Plans, or designs.

Faith. Perhaps fidelity, or faithfulness.

Long-suffering. With the evil passions of others, and their efforts to injure him. See the word explained **See Barnes "1Co 13:4"**.

Charity. **See Barnes** "1Co 13:1, seq.

Patience, "A calm temper, which suffers evils without murmuring or discontent." *Webster*.

{1} "fully known" "been a diligent follower of"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 3 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Persecutions*. On the meaning of this word, **See Barnes "Mt 5:10"**.

Afflictions. Trials of other kinds than those which arose from persecutions. The apostle met them everywhere.

See Barnes "Ac 20:23".

Which came unto me at Antioch. The Antioch here referred to is not the place of that name in Syria, **See Barnes "Ac 11:19"**; but a city of the same name in Pisidia, in Asia Minor. **See Barnes "Ac 13:14"**.

Paul there suffered persecution from the Jews. Ac 13:46.

At Iconium. **See Barnes "Ac 13:51"**.

On the persecution there, **See Barnes** "Ac 14:3, seq.

At Lystra. Ac 14:6. At this place, Paul was stoned. **See Barnes "Ac 14:19"**.

Timothy was a native of either Derbe or Lystra, cities near to each other, and was doubtless there at the time of this occurrence. Ac 16:1.

But out of them all the Lord delivered me. See the history in the places referred to in the Acts of the Apostles.

{a} "Antioch" Ac 13:45,50 {b} "Iconium" Ac 14:5,6,19

{c} "all" Ps 34:19

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 3 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution*. Paul takes occasion from the reference to his own persecutions, to say that his case was not peculiar. It was the common lot of all who endeavoured to serve their Redeemer faithfully; and Timothy himself, therefore, must not hope to escape from it. The apostle had a particular reference, doubtless, to his own times; but he has put his remark into the most general form, as applicable to all periods. It is undoubtedly true at all times, and will ever be, that they who are devoted Christians—who live as the Saviour did—and who carry out his principles always, will experience some form of persecution. The *essence* of persecution consists in *subjecting a person to injury or disadvantage on account of his opinions*. It is something more than meeting his opinions by argument, which is always right and proper; it is inflicting some injury on him: depriving him of some privilege, or right; subjecting him to some disadvantage, or placing him in less favourable circumstances, on account of his sentiments. This may be either an injury done to his feelings, his family, his reputation, his property, his liberty, his influence; it may be by depriving him of an office which he held, or preventing him from obtaining one to which he is eligible; it may be by subjecting him to fine or imprisonment, to banishment, torture, or death. If, in any manner, or in any way, he is subjected to disadvantage on account of his religious opinions, and deprived of any immunities and rights to which he would be otherwise entitled, this is persecution. Now, it is doubtless as true as it ever was, that a man who will live as the Saviour did, will, like him, be subjected to some such injury or disadvantage. On account of his opinions, he may be held up to ridicule, or treated with neglect, or excluded from society to which his attainments and manners would otherwise introduce him, or shunned by those who might otherwise value his friendship. These things may be expected in the best times, and under the most favourable circumstances; and it is known that a large part of the history of the world, in its relation to the church, is nothing more than a history of persecution. It follows, from this,

(1.) that they who make a profession of religion, should come prepared to be persecuted. It should be considered as one of the proper qualifications for membership in the church, to be willing to bear persecution, and to *resolve* not to shrink from any duty in order to avoid it.

(2.) They who *are* persecuted for their opinions, should consider that this *may* be one evidence that they have the Spirit of Christ, and are his true friends. They should remember that, in this

respect, they are treated as the Master was, and are in the goodly company of the prophets, apostles, and martyrs; for they were *all* persecuted. Yet,

(3.) if we are persecuted, we should carefully inquire, before we avail ourselves of this consolation, whether we are persecuted *because* we "live godly in Christ Jesus," or for some other reason. A man may embrace some absurd opinion, and call it religion; he may adopt some mode of dress irresistibly ludicrous, from the mere love of singularity, and may call it *conscience*; or he may be boorish in his manners, and uncivil in his deportment, outraging all the laws of social life, and may call this "deadness to the world;" and for these, and similar things, he may be contemned, ridiculed, and despised. But let him not infer, *therefore*, that he is to be enrolled among the martyrs, and that he is certainly a real Christian. That persecution which will properly furnish any evidence that we are the friends of Christ, must be *only* that which is "for righteousness' sake," Mt 5:10, and must be brought upon us in an honest effort to obey the commands of God.

(4.) Let those who have never been persecuted in any way, inquire whether it is not an evidence that they have no religion. If they had been more faithful, and more like their Master, would they have always escaped? And may not their freedom from it prove that they have surrendered the principles of their religion, where they should have stood firm, though the world were arrayed against them? It is easy for a professed Christian to avoid persecution, if he yields every point in which religion is opposed to the world. But let not a man who will do this, suppose that he has any claim to be numbered among the martyrs, or even entitled to the Christian name.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 3 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse*. That is, it is the character of such men to do this; they may be expected to do it. This is the general law of depravity—that if men are not converted, they are always growing worse, and sinking deeper into iniquity. Their progress will be certain, though it may be gradual, since *nemo repente turpissimus*. The *connexion* here is this: that Timothy was not to expect that he would be exempt from persecution, 2Ti 3:12, by any change for the better in the wicked men referred to. He was to anticipate in them the operation of the general law in regard to bad men and seducers—that they would grow worse and worse, from this fact, he was to regard it as certain that he, as well as others, would be liable to be persecuted. The word rendered *seducers gohv*—occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means, properly, *a juggler*, or *diviner*; and then, a *deceiver*, or *impostor*. Here it refers to those who, by seductive arts, lead persons into error.

Deceiving. Making others believe that to be true and right, which is false and wrong. This was, of course, done by seductive arts.

And being deceived. Under delusion themselves. The advocates of error are often themselves as really under deception, as those whom they impose upon. They are often sincere in the belief of error, and then they are under a delusion; or, if they are insincere, they are equally deluded in supposing that they can make error pass for truth before God, or can deceive the Searcher of hearts. The worst victims of delusion are those who attempt to delude others.

{*} "wax" "grow" {a} "being deceived" 2Th 2:1

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 3 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of*. To wit, the truths of religion. Timothy had been taught those truths when a child, and he had been confirmed in them by the instructions of Paul. Amidst the errors and seductions of false teachers, Paul now exhorts him to hold fast those doctrines, whoever might oppose them, or whatever might be the consequence. Comp. **See Barnes "2Ti 1:13"**.

Knowing of whom thou hast learned them. To wit, of his mother 2Ti 1:5) and of Paul, 2Ti 1:13. The reference seems to be particularly to the fact that he had learned these truths first from the lips of a mother, 2Ti 3:15; and the *doctrine* taught here is, *that the fact that we have received the views of truth from a parent's lips, is a strong motive for adhering to them*. It is not to be supposed, indeed, that this is the *highest* motive, or that we are always to adhere to the doctrines which have been taught us, if, on maturer examination, we are convinced they are erroneous; but that this is a strong reason for adhering to what we have been taught in early life. It is so, because,

(1.) a parent has no motive for deceiving a child, and it cannot be supposed that he would teach him what he knew to be false;

(2.) a parent usually has had much more experience, and much better opportunities of examining what is true, than his child has;

(3.) there is a degree of respect which nature teaches us to be due to the sentiments of a parent. A child should depart very slowly from the opinions held by a father or mother; and, when it is done, it should be only as the result of prolonged examination and prayer. These considerations should have the greater weight, if a parent has been eminent for piety, and especially if that parent has been removed to heaven. A child, standing by the grave of a pious father or mother, should reflect and pray much, before he deliberately adopts opinions which he knows that father or mother would regard as wrong.

{b} "continue" 2Ti 1:13

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 3 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures*. That is, the Old Testament; for the New Testament was not then written. **See Barnes "Joh 5:39"**.

The mother of Timothy was a pious Hebrewess, and regarded it as one of the duties of her religion to train her son in the careful knowledge of the word of God. This was regarded by the Hebrews as an important duty of religion, and there is reason to believe that it was commonly faithfully performed. The Jewish writings abound with lessons on this subject. Rabbi Judah says, "The boy of five years of age ought to apply to the study of the sacred Scriptures." Rabbi Solomon, on De 11:19, says, "When the boy begins to talk, his father ought to converse with him in the sacred language, and to teach him the law; if he does not do that he seems to bury him." See numerous instances referred to in Wetstein, *in loc*. The expression used by Paul—*from a child*, (*apo brefouv*) does not make it certain at precisely what age Timothy was first instructed in the Scriptures, though it would denote an early age. The word used *brefov* denotes,

(1.) a babe unborn, Lu 1:41,44;

(2.) an infant, babe, suckling. In the New Testament, it is rendered *babe* and *babes*, Lu 1:41,44, 2:12,16; 1Pe 2:2; *infants*, Lu 18:15; and *young children*, Ac 7:19. It does not elsewhere occur, and its current use would make it probable that Timothy had been taught the Scriptures as soon as he was capable of learning anything. Dr. Doddridge correctly renders it here "*from infancy*." It may be remarked then,

(1.) that it is proper to teach the Bible to children at as early a period of life as possible.

(2.) That there is reason to hope that such instruction will not be forgotten, but will have a salutary influence on their future lives. The piety of Timothy is traced by the apostle to the fact that he had been early taught to read the Scriptures, and a great proportion of those who are in the church have been early made acquainted with the Bible.

(3.) It is proper to teach the *Old* Testament to children— since this was all that Timothy had, and this was made the means of his salvation.

(4.) We may see the utility of Sabbath schools. The great and almost the sole object of such schools is to teach the Bible; and from the view which Paul had of the advantage to Timothy of having been early made acquainted with the Bible, there can be no doubt that if Sunday schools had then been in existence, he would have been their hearty patron and friend.

Which are able to make thee wise unto salvation. So to instruct you in the way of salvation, that you may find the path to life. Learn hence,

(1.) that the plan of salvation may be learned from the Old Testament. It is not as clearly revealed there as it is in the New, but it is there; and if a man had only the Old Testament, he might find the way to be saved. The Jew, then, has no excuse if he is not saved.

(2.) The Scriptures have *power*. They are "able to make one wise to salvation." They are not a cold, tame, dead thing. There is no book that has so much *power* as the Bible; none that is so efficient in moving the hearts, and consciences, and intellects of man-kind. There is no book that *has* moved so many minds; none that has produced so deep and permanent effects on the world.

(3.) To find the way of salvation, is the best kind of wisdom; and none are wise who do not make that the great object of life.

Through faith which is in Christ Jesus. **See Barnes "Mr 16:16".**

See Barnes "Ro 1:17".

Paul knew of no salvation, except through the Lord Jesus. He says, therefore, that the study of the Scriptures, valuable as they were, would not save the soul unless there was faith in the Redeemer; and it is implied, also, that the proper effect of a careful study of the Old Testament, would be to lead one to put his trust in the Messiah.

{c} "which are able" Joh 5:39

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 3 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *All Scripture*. This properly refers to the Old Testament, and should not be applied to any part of the New Testament, unless it can be shown that that part was then written, and was included under the general name of the Scriptures. Comp. 2Pe 3:15,16. But it includes the *whole* of the Old Testament, and is the solemn testimony of Paul that it was *all* inspired. If now it can be

proved that Paul himself was an inspired man, this settles the question as to the inspiration of the Old Testament.

Is given by inspiration of God. All this is expressed in the original by one word *yeopneustov theopneustos*. This word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It properly means, *God-inspired*—from *yeov*, *God*, and *pnew*, to breathe, to breathe out. The idea of *breathing upon*, or *breathing into the soul*, is that which the word naturally conveys. Thus God breathed into the nostrils of Adam the breath of life, Ge 2:7; and thus the Saviour breathed on his disciples, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," Joh 20:22. The idea seems to have been, that the life was in the breath, and that an intelligent spirit was communicated with the breath. The expression was used among the Greeks, and a similar one was employed by the Romans. Plutarch ed. B. ix, p. 683, 9. *touv oneirouv touv yeopneustouv*; Phocylid. 121. *thv de yeopneustou sofihv logov estin aristov*. Perhaps, however, this is not an expression of Phocylides, but of the pseudo Phocylides. So it is understood by Bloomfield. Cicero, pro Arch., 8. *poetam—quasi divino quodam spiritu infiari*. The word does not occur in the Septuagint, but is found in Josephus, C. Ap. i. 7. "The Scriptures of the prophets who were taught according to the inspiration of God, *kata t hn epipnoian thn apo tou yeou*" In regard to the manner of inspiration, and to the various questions which have been started as to its nature, nothing can he learned from the use of this word. It asserts a *fact*—that the Old Testament was composed under a Divine influence, which might be represented by *breathing on one*, and so imparting life. But the language *must* be figurative, for God does not breathe; though the fair inference is that those Scriptures are as much the production of God, or as much to be traced to him as life is. Comp. Mt 22:43 2Pe 1:21. The question as to the *degree* of inspiration, and whether it extends to the *words* of Scripture, and how far the sacred writers were left to the exercise of their own faculties, is foreign to the design of these Notes. All that is necessary to be held is, that the sacred writers were kept from error on those subjects which were matters of their own observation, or which pertained to memory; and that there were truths imparted to them directly by the Spirit of God, which they never could have arrived at by the unaided exercise of their own minds. Comp. Intro. to Isaiah and Job.

And is profitable. It is useful, it is adapted to give instruction, to administer reproof, etc. If "*all*" Scripture is thus valuable, then we are to esteem no part of the Old Testament as worthless. There is no portion of it, even now, which may not be fitted, in certain circumstances, to furnish us valuable lessons, and, consequently, no part of it which could be spared from the sacred canon. There is no part of the human body which is not useful in its place, and no part of it which can be spared without sensible loss.

For doctrine. For teaching or communicating instruction. Comp. **See Barnes "1Ti 4:16"**.

For reproof. On the meaning of the word here rendered *reproof elegcov*—**See Barnes "Heb 11:1"**.

It here means, probably, for *convincing*; that is, convincing a man of his sins, of the truth and claims of religion, etc., **See Barnes "Joh 16:8"**.

For correction. The word here used—*epanorywsiv*—occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means properly, *a setting to rights, reparation, restoration*, (from *epanoryow*, to right up again, to restore;) and here means, the leading to a correction or amendment of life—*a reformation*. The meaning is, that the Scriptures are a powerful means of reformation, or of putting men into the proper condition in regard to morals. After all the means which have been employed to reform mankind; all the appeals which are made to them on the score of health, happiness, respectability, property, and long life, the word of God is still the most powerful and the most effectual means of

recovering those who have fallen into vice. No reformation can be permanent which is not based on the principles of the word of God.

For instruction in righteousness. Instruction in regard to the principles of justice, or what is right. Man needs not only to be made acquainted with truth, to be convinced of his error, and to be reformed; but he needs to be taught what is right, or what is required of him, in order that he may lead a holy life. Every reformed and regenerated man needs instruction, and should not be left merely with the evidence that he is *reformed*, or *converted*, he should be followed with the principles of the word of God, to show him how he may lead an upright life. The Scriptures furnish the rules of holy living in abundance, and thus they are adapted to the whole work of recovering man, and of guiding him to heaven.

{a} "All scripture" 2Pe 1:21 {b} "is profitable" Ro 15:4

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 3 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *That the man of God may be perfect*. The object is not merely to convince and to convert him; it is to furnish all the instruction needful for his entire perfection. The idea here is, not that any one is absolutely perfect, but that the Scriptures have laid down the way which leads to perfection, and that if any one were perfect, he would find in the Scriptures all the instruction which he needed in those circumstances. There is no deficiency in the Bible for man, in any of the situations in which he may be placed in life; and the whole tendency of the book is to make him who will put himself fairly under its instructions, absolutely perfect.

Thoroughly furnished unto all good works. Marg., or "*perfected*" The Greek means, to bring to an end; to make complete. The idea is, that whatever good work the man of God desires to perform, or however perfect he aims to be, he will find no deficiency in the Scriptures, but will find there the most ample instructions that he needs. He can never advance so far, as to become forsaken of his guide. He can never make such progress, as to have gone in advance of the volume of revealed truth, and to be thrown upon his own resources in a region which was not thought of by the Author of the Bible. No new phase of human affairs can appear, in which it will not direct him; no new plan of benevolence can be started, for which he will not find principles there to guide him; and he can make no progress in knowledge or holiness, where he will not feel that his holy counsellor is in advance of him still, and that it is capable of conducting him even yet into higher and purer regions. Let us, then, study and prize the Bible. It is a holy and a safe guide. It has conducted millions along the dark and dangerous way of life, and has never led one astray. The human mind, in its investigations of truth, has never gone beyond its teachings; nor has man ever advanced into a region so bright that its light has become dim, or where it has not thrown its beams of glory on still far distant objects. We are often in circumstances in which we feel that we have reached the outer limit of what man can teach us; but we never get into such circumstance in regard to the word of God.

How precious is the book Divine,
By respiration given!
Bright as a lamp its doctrines shine,
To guide our souls to heaven.

It sweetly cheers our drooping hearts
In this dark vale of tears;
Life, light, and joy, it still imparts,
And quells our rising fears.

This lamp, through all the tedious night
Of life, shall guide our way;
Till we behold the clearer light
Of an eternal day.

{c} "perfect" Ps 119:98-100 {1} "thoroughly finished" "perfected"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 4

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 4 - Verse 1

2nd Timothy Chapter 4

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

THIS chapter comprises the following subjects:

1. A solemn charge to Timothy, to be faithful in preaching the gospel, and in the whole.work of the ministry, 2Ti 4:1-5. The particular *reason* given for this charge was, that the time was approaching when men would not endure sound doctrine, but would turn away from the truth. Hence, Timothy is exhorted to be faithful in his work, and to be prepared to endure the trials which, in such circumstances, a faithful minister must be expected to meet.

2. A statement of Paul that his own work was nearly done, and that the hour of his departure drew near, 2Ti 4:6-8. This statement, also, seems to be made in order to excite Timothy to increased fidelity in the ministry. His teacher, guide, father, and friend, was about to be withdrawn, and the great work of preaching was to be committed to other hands. Hence, in view of his own departure, Paul exhorts Timothy to fidelity when he himself should be removed.

3. An exhortation to Timothy to come to him as soon as practicable, 2Ti 4:9-15. Paul was then in bonds, and was expecting soon to die. He was alone. For various reasons, those who had been with him had left him, and he needed some companion and friend. He therefore exhorts Timothy to come to him as soon as possible.

4. Paul refers now to his first trial before the emperor, and to the fact that then no one stood by him, 2Ti 4:16-19. The reason of his referring to this seems to be, to induce Timothy to come to him in view of his anticipated second trial. The Lord, he says, then stood by him, and he had confidence that he would continue to do it; yet who is there that does not feel it desirable to have some dear earthly friend to be with him when he dies?

5. The epistle is closed, in the usual manner, with various salutations, and with the benediction, 2Ti 4:19-22.

Verse 1. *I charge thee therefore before God*. **See Barnes "1Ti 5:21"**.

Who shall judge the quick and the dead. That is, the Lord Jesus; for he is to be the Judge of men, Mt 25:31-46 2Co 5:10. The word *quick* means *living*, **See Barnes "Ac 10:42"; See Barnes "Eph 2:1"**; and the idea is, that he would be alike the Judge of all who were alive when he should come, and of all who had died. **See Barnes** "1Th 4:16, **See Barnes "1Th 4:17"**.

In view of the fact that *all*, whether preachers or hearers, must give up their account to the final Judge, Paul charges Timothy to be faithful; and what is there which will more conduce to fidelity in the discharge of duty, than the thought that we must soon give up a solemn account of the manner in which we have performed it?

At his appearing. That is, the judgment shall then take place. This must refer to a judgment yet to take place, for the Lord Jesus has not yet "appeared" the second time to men; and, if this be so, then there is to be a resurrection of the dead. On the meaning of the word rendered *appearing*, **See Barnes "2Th 2:8"**.

It is there rendered *brightness*. Comp. 1Ti 6:14 2Ti 1:10; Tit 2:13.

And his kingdom. Or, at the setting up of his kingdom. The idea of his *reigning*, or setting up his kingdom, is not unfrequently associated with the idea of his coming. See Mt 16:28. The meaning is, that, at his second advent, the extent and majesty of his kingdom will be fully displayed. It will be seen that he has control over the elements, over the graves of the dead, and over all the living. It will be seen that the earth and the heavens are under his sway, and that all things there acknowledge him as their sovereign Lord. In order to meet the full force of the language used by Paul here, it is not necessary to suppose that he will set up a visible kingdom on the earth, but only that there will be an illustrious display of himself as a king, and of the extent and majesty of the empire over which he presides. Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 14:11"; See Barnes** "Php 2:10".

{a} "charge" 1Ti 5:21 6:13 {b} "judge" Re 20:12,13

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 4 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Preach the word*. The word of God; the gospel. This was to be the main business of the life of Timothy, and Paul solemnly charges him, in view of the certain coming of the Redeemer to judgment, to be faithful in the performance of it.

Be instant. **See Barnes** "Ro 12:12, The meaning here is, that he should be constant in this duty. Literally, *to stand by*, or *to stand fast by*; that is, he was to be pressing or urgent in the performance of this work. He was always to be at his post, and was to embrace every opportunity of making known the gospel. What Paul seems to have contemplated was not merely that he should perform the duty at stated and regular times; but that he should press the matter as one who had the subject much at heart, and never lose an opportunity of making the gospel known.

In season. *eukairwv*. In good time; opportunely. Comp. Mt 16:16 Lu 22:6; Mr 14:11.

The sense is, when it could be conveniently done; when all things were favourable, and when there were no obstructions or hinderances. It may include the *stated* and *regular seasons* for public worship, but is not confined to them.

Out of season. *akairwv*. This word does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It is the opposite of the former, and means that a minister is to seek opportunities to preach the gospel even at such periods as might be inconvenient to himself, or when there might be hinderances and embarrassments, or when there was no stated appointment for preaching. He is not to confine himself to the appointed times of worship, or to preach only when it will be perfectly convenient for himself; but he is to have such an interest and earnestness in the work, that it will lead him to do it in the face of embarrassments and discouragements, and whenever he can find an opportunity. A man who is greatly intent on an object will seek every opportunity to promote it. He will not confine himself to stated times and places, but will present it everywhere, and at all times. A man, therefore, who merely confines himself to the stated seasons of preaching the gospel, or who merely reaches when it is convenient to himself, should not consider that he has come up to the requirement of the rule laid down by the apostle. He should preach in his private conversation, and in the intervals of his public labours, at the side of the sick bed, and wherever there is a prospect of doing good to any one. If his heart is full of love to the Saviour and to souls, he cannot help doing this.

Reprove. Or *convince*. **See Barnes "2Ti 3:16"**.

The meaning is, that he was to use such arguments as would *convince* men of the truth of religion, and of their own need of it.

Rebuke. Rebuke offenders. Tit 2:15. See the use of the word in Mt 8:26 12:16, (rendered *charged*;) Mt 16:22 17:18; Mt 19:13 20:31; Lu 4:35,39, 17:3 18:15; Jude 1:9.

In the New Testament the word is used to express a judgment of what is wrong, or contrary to one's will, and hence to admonish or reprove. It implies our conviction that there is something evil, or some fault in him who is rebuked. The word in this verse rendered *reprove*, does not imply this, but merely that one may be in error, and needs to have *arguments* presented to convince him of the truth. That word also implies no superior *authority* in him who does it. He presents *reasons*, or *argues* the case, for the purpose of *convincing*. The word here rendered *rebuke*, implies authority or superiority, and means merely that we may say that a thing is wrong, and administer a rebuke for it, as if there were no doubt that it was wrong. The propriety of the rebuke rests on our *authority* for doing it, not on the arguments which we present. This is based on the presumption that men often know that they are doing wrong, and need no arguments to convince them of it. The idea is, that the minister is not merely to reason about sin, and *convince* men that it is wrong; but he may solemnly admonish them not to do it, and warn them of the consequences.

Exhort. **See Barnes "Ro 12:8"**.

With all long-suffering. That is, with a patient and persevering spirit if you are opposed. **See Barnes "2Ti 2:25"**.

Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 2:4"**.

Comp. Ro 9:22 2Co 6:6; Ga 5:22; Eph 4:2 Col 1:11, 3:12 1Ti 1:16.

And doctrine. Teaching, or patient instruction.

{c} "reprove" Tit 2:15

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 4 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *For the time will come*, etc. Probably referring to the time mentioned in 2Ti 3:1, seq.

When they will not endure sound doctrine. Greek, *healthful doctrine*; i.e., doctrine contributing to the health of the soul, or to salvation. At that time they would seek a kind of instruction more conformable to their wishes and feelings.

But after their own lusts. They will seek such kind of preaching as will accord with their carnal desires; or such as will palliate their evil propensities, and deal gently with their vices. Comp. Isa 30:10, "Speak unto us smooth things; prophesy deceits."

Shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears. The word rendered *heap episwreuw*—does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It means to *heap up upon, to accumulate*; and here *to multiply*. The word rendered *itching—knhyw*—also occurs only in this place in the New Testament. It means *to rub, to scratch*; and then *to tickle*, and here to feel an itching for something pleasing or gratifying. The image is derived from the desire which we have when there is an itching sensation, to have it rubbed or scratched. Such an uneasiness would these persons have to have, some kind of instruction that would allay their restless and uneasy desires, or would gratify them. In explanation of this passage we may observe,

(1.) that there will be always religious teachers of some kind, and that, in proportion as error and sin abound, they will be multiplied. The apostle here says, that by turning away from Timothy, and from sound instruction, they would not abandon all religious teachers, but would rather increase and multiply them. Men often declaim much against a regular ministry, and call it *priestcraft*; and yet, if they were to get rid of such a ministry, they would by no means escape from all kinds of religious teachers. The deeper the darkness, and the more gross the errors, and the more prevalent the wickedness of men, the more will a certain kind of religious teachers abound, and the more it will cost to support them. Italy and Spain swarm with priests, and in every heathen nation they constitute a very numerous class of the population. The *cheapest* ministry on the earth is a well-educated Protestant clergy, and if society wishes to free itself from swarms of preachers, and prophets, and exhorters, it should secure the regular services of an educated and pious ministry.

(2.) In such classes of persons as the apostle here refers to, there is a restless, uneasy desire to have some kind of preachers. They have "itching ears." They will be ready to run after all kinds of public instructors. They will be little pleased with any, and this will be one reason why they will have so many. They are fickle, and unsettled, and never satisfied. desire to hear the truth, and to learn the way of salvation, is a good desire. But this can be better gratified by far under the patient and intelligent labour of a single religious teacher, than by running after many teachers, or than by frequent changes. How much would a child learn if he were constantly running from one school to another?

(3.) Such persons would have teachers according to "their own lusts;" that is, their own tastes, or wishes. They would have those who would coincides with their whims; who would foster every vagary which might enter their imagination; who would countenance every wild project for doing good; who would be the advocates of the errors which they held; and who would be afraid to rebuke their faults. These are the principles on which many persons choose their religious teachers. The *true* principle should be, to select those who will faithfully declare the truth, and who will not shrink from exposing and denouncing sin, wherever it may be found.

{*} "lusts" "desires"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 4 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And they shall turn away their ears from the truth*. That is, the people themselves will turn away from the truth. It does not mean that the teachers would turn them away by the influence of their instructions.

And shall be turned unto fables. **See Barnes "1Ti 1:4"**.

{a} "fables" 1Ti 1:4

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 4 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *But watch thou in all things*. Be vigilant against error and against sin, and faithful in the performance of duty. **See Barnes "Mt 25:13"**; **See Barnes** "1Co 16:13".

Endure afflictions. **See Barnes "2Ti 2:3"**.

The Greek word here is the same which is there rendered "endure hardness."

Do the work of an evangelist. On the word evangelist, **See Barnes "Ac 21:8"**.

The phrase here means, *do the work of preaching the gospel*, or of one appointed to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation. This is the proper business of all ministers, whatever other rank they may maintain. Whether it was ever regarded as the proper duty of a separate class of men to do this, **See Barnes "Eph 5:11"**.

Make full proof of thy ministry. Marg., *fulfil*. Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 14:5"**.

The word here used denotes, properly, to bear or bring fully; then to persuade fully; and then to make fully assured of, to give full proof of. The meaning here seems to be, *to furnish full evidence of what is the design of the Christian ministry, and of what it is adapted to accomplish*, by the faithful performance of all its duties. Timothy was so to discharge the duties of his office as to furnish a fair illustration of what the ministry could do, and thus to show the wisdom of the Saviour in its institution. This should be the aim of all the ministers of the gospel. Each one should resolve, by the blessing of God, that the ministry, in his hands, shall be allowed, *by a fair trial*, to show to the utmost what it is adapted to do for the welfare of mankind.

{b} "things" 2Ti 2:3 {1} "full proof" "fulfil" {c} "of thy ministry" 1Ti 4:12,15

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 4 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *For I am now ready to be offered*. This conviction of the apostle that he was about to die, is urged as a reason why Timothy should be laborious and faithful in the performance of the duties of his office. His own work was nearly done. He was soon to be withdrawn from the earth, and whatever benefit the world might have derived from his experience or active exertions, it was now to be deprived of it. He was about to leave a work which he much loved, and to which he had devoted the rigour of his life, and he was anxious that they who were to succeed him should carry on the work with all the energy and zeal in their power. This expresses the common feeling of aged ministers as death draws near. The word "*ready*," in the phrase "ready to be offered," conveys an

idea which is not in the original. It implies a *willingness* to depart, which, whether true or not, is not the idea conveyed by the apostle. His statement is merely of *the fact* that he was *about* to die, or that his work was drawing to a close. No doubt he was "ready," in the sense of being willing and prepared, but this is not the idea in the Greek. The single Greek word rendered "I am ready to be offered"—*spendomai*—occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, except in Php 2:17, where it is translated, "if I *be offered*." See it explained **See Barnes "Php 2:17"**.

The allusion here, says Burder (in Rosenmuller's A. u. n. Morgenland,) is to the custom which prevailed among the heathen generally, of pouring wine and oil on the head of a victim when it was about to be offered in sacrifice. The idea of the apostle then is, that he was in the condition of the victim on whose head the wine and oil had been already poured, and which was just about to be put to death; that is, he was about to die. Every preparation had been made, and he only awaited the blow which was to strike him down. The meaning is not that he was to be a *sacrifice*; it is that his death was about to occur. Nothing more remained to be done but to die. The victim was all ready, and he was sure that the blow would soon fall. What was the *ground* of his expectation, he has not told us. Probably there were events occurring in Rome which made it morally certain that though he had once been acquitted, he could not now escape. At all events, it is interesting to contemplate an aged and experienced Christian on the borders of the grave, and to learn what were his feelings in the prospect of his departure to the eternal world. Happily, Paul has in more places than one (comp. Php 1:23) stated his views in such circumstances, and we know that his religion then did not fail him. He found it to be in the prospect of death what he had found it to be through all his life—the source of unspeakable consolation; and he was enabled to look calmly onward to the hour which should summon him into the presence of his Judge.

And the time of my departure is at hand. Gr., *dissolving*, or *dissolution*. So we speak of the dissolution of the soul and body. The verb from which the noun (*analusiv*,) is derived (*analuw*,) means to loosen again; to undo. It is applied to the act of unloosing or casting off the fastenings of a ship, preparatory to a departure. The proper idea in the use of the word would be, that he had been bound to the present world, like a ship to its moorings, and that death would be a release. He would now spread his sails on the broad ocean of eternity. The true idea of death is that of loosening the bands that confine us to the present world; of setting us free, and permitting the soul to go forth, as with expanded sails, on its eternal voyage. With such a view of death, why should a Christian fear to die?

{+} "offered" "sacrificed" {d} "departure" Php 1:23 2Pe 1:14

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 4 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *I have fought a good fight*. The Christian life is often represented as a conflict, or warfare. **See Barnes "1Ti 6:12"**.

That noble conflict with sin, the world, the flesh, and the devil, Paul now says he had been able to maintain.

I have finished my course. The Christian life, too, is often represented as a race to be run. Comp. **See Barnes** "1Co 9:24, **See Barnes** "1Co 9:25, **See Barnes "1Co 9:26"**.

I have kept the faith. I have steadfastly maintained the faith of the gospel; or, have lived a life of fidelity to my Master. Probably the expression means that he had kept his plighted faith to the Redeemer, or had spent a life in faithfully endeavouring to serve his Lord:

{a} "fought" 1Ti 6:12 {b} "finished" Ac 20:24 {c} "kept the faith" Pr 23:23 Re 3:10

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 4 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Henceforth there is laid up for me*. At the end of my race, as there was a crown in reserve for those who had successfully striven in the Grecian games. Compare **See Barnes "1Co 9:25"**.

The word *henceforth—loipon*—means *what remains*, or, as to the rest; and the idea is, that that was what remained of the whole career. The race had been run; the conflict had been waged; and all that was now necessary to complete the whole transaction, was merely that the crown be bestowed.

A crown of righteousness. That is, a crown won in the cause of righteousness, and conferred as the reward of his conflicts and efforts in the cause of holiness. It was not the crown of ambition; it was not a garland won in struggles for earthly distinction; it was that which was the appropriate reward of his efforts to be personally holy, and to spread the principles of holiness as far as possible through the world.

Which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me. The Lord Jesus, appointed to judge the world, and to dispense the rewards of eternity. It will be seen, in the last day, that the rewards of heaven are not conferred in an arbitrary manner, but that they are bestowed because they *ought* to be, or that God is righteous and just in doing it. No man will be admitted to heaven *who ought not*, under all the circumstances of the case, to be admitted there; no one will be excluded who *ought* to have been saved.

At that day. That is, the time when he will come to judge the world, Mt 25.

And not to me only. "Though my life has been spent in laboriously endeavouring to spread his religion; though I have suffered much, and laboured long; though I have struggled hard to win the prize, and now have it full in view, yet I do not suppose that it is to be conferred on me alone. It is not like the wreath of olive, laurel, pine, or parsley, **See Barnes** "1Co 9:25, which could be conferred only on one victor, **See Barnes** "1Co 9:24; but here every one may obtain the crown who strives for it. The struggle is not between me and a competitor in such a sense that, if *I* obtain the crown, *he* must be excluded; but it is a crown which *he* can obtain as well as *I*. As many as run—as many as fight the good fight—as many as keep the faith—as many as love his appearing, may win the crown as well as *I*." Such is religion, and such is the manner in which its rewards differ from all others. At the Grecian games, but one could obtain the prize, 1Co 9:24. All the rest who contended in those games, no matter how numerous they were, or how skilfully they contended, or how much effort they made, were of course subjected to the mortification of a failure, and to all the ill-feeling and envy to which such a failure might give rise. So it is in respect to all the prizes which this world can bestow. In a lottery, but one can obtain the highest prize; in a class in college, but one can secure the highest honour in the scramble for office, no matter how numerous the competitors may be, or what may be their merits, but one can obtain it. All the rest are liable to the disappointments and mortifications of defeat. Not so in religion. No matter how numerous the competitors', or how worthy any one of them may be, or how pre-eminent above his brethren, yet all may obtain the

prize; all may be crowned with a diadem of life of equal brilliancy. No one is excluded because another is successful; no one fails of the reward because another obtains it. Who, then, would not make an effort to win the immortal crown?

Unto all them also that love his appearing. That is, unto all who desire his second coming. To believe in the second advent of the Lord Jesus to judge the world, and to desire his return, became a kind of a criterion by which Christians Were known. No others but true Christians were supposed to believe in that, and no others truly desired it. Comp. Re 1:7 22:20. It is so now. It is one of the characteristics of a true Christian, that he sincerely *desires* the return of his Saviour, and would welcome his appearing in the clouds of heaven.

{d} "crown of righteousness" 1Co 9:25 1Pe 5:4; Re 2:10

{e} "all them also" 1Co 2:9

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 4 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me*. As soon as possible. Timothy had been Paul's travelling companion, and was his intimate friend. The apostle was now nearly forsaken, and was about to pass through severe trials. It is not certainly known for what purpose he wished him to come to him, but perhaps he desired to give him some parting counsels; perhaps he wished him to be near him when he died. It is evident from this that he did not regard him as the prelatical "bishop of the church of the Ephesians," or consider that he was so confined to that place in his labours, that he was not also to go to other places if he was called in the providence of God. It is probable that Timothy would obey such a summons, and there is no reason to believe that he ever returned to Ephesus.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 4 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *For Demas hath forsaken me*. Demas is honourably mentioned in Col 4:14; but nothing more is known of him than what can be gathered from that place and this—that he was at first a friend and fellow-labourer of Paul, but that, under the influence of a desire to live, he afterwards forsook him, even in circumstances where he greatly needed the presence of a friend.

Having loved this present world. This does not mean necessarily, that he was an avaricious man, or that, in itself, he loved the honours or wealth of this world; but it means that he desired to live. He was not willing to stay with Paul, and subject himself to the probabilities of martyrdom; and, in order to secure his life, he departed to a place of safety. The Greek is, *agaphsav ton nun aiwna*—having loved the world that now is; that is, this world as it is, with all its cares, and troubles, and comforts; having desired to remain in this world, rather than go to the other. There is, perhaps, a slight censure here in the language of Paul —*the censure of grief*; but there is no reason why Demas should be held up as an example of a worldly man. That he desired to live longer; that he was unwilling to remain, and risk the loss of life, is indeed clear. That Paul was pained by his departure, and that he felt lonely and sad, is quite apparent; but I see no evidence that Demas was

influenced by what are commonly called *worldly* feelings, or that he was led to this course by the desire of wealth, fame, or pleasure.

And is departed unto Thessalonica. Perhaps his native place. *Calmet*.

Crescens. Nothing more is known of Crescens than is here mentioned. "He is thought by Eusebius and others to have preached in Gaul, and to have founded the church in Vienne, in Dauphiny." *Calmet*.

To Galatia. See Intro. to the epistle to the Galatians, paragraph 1. It is not known to what part of Galatia he had gone, or why he went there.

Titus unto Dalmatia. Dalmatia was a part of Illyricum, on the gulf of Venice, or the Adriatic sea. On the situation of Illyricum, **See Barnes "Ro 15:19"**.

Paul does not mention the reason why Titus had gone there: but it is not improbable that he had gone to preach the gospel, or to visit the churches which Paul had planted in that region. The apostle does not suggest that he was deserving of blame for having gone, and it can hardly be supposed that Titus would have left him at this time without his concurrence. Perhaps when he permitted him to go, he did not know how soon events would come to a crisis with him; and as a letter would more readily reach Timothy at Ephesus than Titus in Dalmatia, he requested him to come to him, instead of directing Titus to return.

{f} "loved" 1Jo 2:15

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 4 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Only Luke is with me*. Luke, the author of the gospel which bears his name, and of the Acts of the Apostles. For a considerable part of the ministry of Paul, he was his travelling companion, comp. **See Barnes "Ac 16:10"**; and we know that he went with him to Rome, Ac 27:1.

Take Mark. John Mark, **See Barnes "Ac 15:37"**.

He was the son of a sister of Barnabas, and had been the travelling companion of Barnabas and Paul. There had been a temporary alienation between Paul and him, Ac 15:38, but this passage proves that that had been removed, and that Paul was reconciled to him.

For he is profitable to me for the ministry. In what way he would be profitable he does not say; nor is it known why Mark was at that time with Timothy. It may be observed however, that this is such language as Paul might be expected to use of Mark, after what had occurred, as recorded in Ac 15:38. He felt that he was now about to die. If he suspected that there was on the part of Mark any lingering apprehension that the great apostle was not entirely reconciled to him, or retained a recollection of what had formerly occurred, nothing would be more natural than that at this trying time of his life, Paul should summon him to his side, and express towards him the kindest emotions. It would soothe any lingering irritation in the mind of Mark to receive such a message.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 4 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *And Tychicus*. See Ac 20:4. In Eph 6:21, Paul calls him "a beloved brother, and faithful minister in the Lord." But it may be asked, why he did not retain him with him, or why should he have sent him away, and then call Timothy to him? The probability is, that he had sent him before he had seen reason to apprehend that he would be put to death; and now, feeling the need of a friend to be with him, he sent to Timothy, rather than to him, because Tychicus had been employed to perform some service which he could not well leave, and because Paul wished to give some special instructions to Timothy before he died.

Have I sent to Ephesus. Why, is not certainly known. Comp. Intro paragraph 2.

{a} "Tychius" Tit 3:12

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 4 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *The cloak that I left at Troas*. On the situation of Troas, **See Barnes "Ac 16:8"**.

It was not on the most direct route from Ephesus to Rome, but was a route frequently taken. See Intro. to the Acts, paragraph 2. In regard to what the "cloak" here mentioned was, there has been considerable difference of opinion. The Greek word used, (*felonhv* variously written, *failonhv*, *felonhv*, and *felwnhv*,) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It is supposed to be used for a similar Greek word, (*fainolhv*,) to denote a cloak, or great-coat, with a hood, used chiefly on journeys, or in the army: Latin, *penula*. It is described by Eschenberg, (Man. Class. Lit. p. 209,) as a "cloak without sleeves, for cold or rainy weather." See the uses of it in the quotations made by Wetstein, *in loc*. Others, however, have supposed that the word means a travelling-case for books, etc. So Hesychus understands it. Bloomfield endeavours to unite the two opinions by suggesting that it may mean a *cloak-bag*, and that he had left his books and parchments in it. It is impossible to settle the precise meaning of the word here, and it is not material. The common opinion, that it was a wrapper or travelling-cloak, is the most probable; and such a garment would not be undesirable for a prisoner. It should be remembered, also, that winter was approaching, 2Ti 4:21, and such a cloak would be particularly needed. He had, probably, passed through Troas in summer, and, not needing the cloak, and not choosing to encumber himself with it, had left it at the house of a friend. On the meaning of the word, see Wetstein, Robinson, *Lex*., and Schleusner, Lex. Comp. also, Suic. Thess. ii. 1422. The doubt in regard to what is here meant, is as old as Chrysostom. He says, (Horn. x. on this epistle,) "that the word (*felonhn*) denotes a garment—*to imation*. But some understood by it a *capsula*, or bag— *glwssokomon*," compare **See Barnes "Joh 12:6"**

"in which books, etc., were carried."

With Carpus. Carpus is not elsewhere mentioned, he was evidently a friend of the apostle, and it would seem probable that Paul had made his house his home when he was in Troas.

And the books. It is impossible to determine what books are meant here. They may have been portions of the Old Testament, or classic writings, or books written by other Christians, or by himself. It is worthy of remark, that even *Paul* did not travel without *books*, and that he found them in some way necessary for the work of the ministry.

Especially the parchments. The word here used, (*membranov*, whence our word *membrane*,) occurs only in this place in the New Testament, and means skin, membrane, or parchment. Dressed skins were among the earliest materials for writing, and were in common use before the art of

making paper from rags was discovered. These "parchments" seem to have been something different from "books," and, probably, refer to some of his own writings. They may have contained notes, memorandums, journals, or unfinished letters. It is, of course, impossible now to determine what they were. Benson supposes they were letters which he had received from the churches; Macknight, that they were the originals of the letters which he had written; Bishop Bull, that they were a kind of common-place book, in which he inserted hints and extracts of the most remarkable passages in the authors which he read. All this, however, is mere conjecture.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 4 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Alexander the coppersmith*. Or, rather, *the brazier o calkeuv*. The word is used, however, to denote a worker in any kind of metals. This is, probably, the same person who is mentioned in 1Ti 1:20, and, perhaps, the same as the one mentioned in Ac 19:33. **See Barnes "1Ti 1:20".**

Did me much evil. In what way this was done, is not mentioned. If this is the same person who is referred to in 1Ti 1:20, it is probable that it was not evil to Paul personally, so much as embarrassment to the cause of religion which he advocated. Comp. 2Ti 2:17,18.

The Lord reward him according to his works. Comp. **See Barnes "1Ti 1:20".**

This need not be regarded as an expression of private feeling; still less should it be understood as expressing a desire of revenge. It is the language of one who wished that God would treat him exactly as he ought to be treated, and might be in accordance with the highest benevolence of any heart. It is the aim of every just government that every one should be treated exactly as he deserves; and every good citizen should desire and pray that exact justice may be done to all. It is the business of a police officer to ferret out the guilty, to bring them to trial, to secure a just sentence; and any police officer might *pray*, with the utmost propriety, that God would assist him in his endeavours, and enable him to perform his duty. This might be done with no malevolent feeling toward any human being, but with the purest love of country, and the most earnest desire for the welfare of all. *If* such a police officer, or *if* a judge, or a juryman, were heard thus to pray, who would dare to accuse him of having a vindictive spirit, or a malevolent heart? And why should Paul be so charged, when his prayer amounts to no more than this? For it remains yet to be proved, that he refers to any *private* wrong which Alexander had done him, or that he was actuated by any other desire than that the sacred interests of truth should be guarded, and equal justice done to all. Why is it wrong to desire or to pray that universal justice may be done, and that every man may be treated as, under all the circumstances of the case, he *ought* to be treated? On the subject of the "Imprecations in the Scriptures," the reader may consult an article in the Bibliotheca Sacra, vol. 1, pp. 97— 110. It should be added, here, that some manuscripts, instead of *apodwh*, "*may* the Lord reward," read it in the future— *apodwsei*, "*will reward*." See Wetstein. The future is also found in the Vulgate, Coptic, and in Augustine, Theodoret, and Chrysostom. Augustine says, (on the Sermon on the Mount,) "He does not say, may he reward, (*reddat*;) but, he will reward, (*redder*,) which is a verb of prophecy, not of imprecation." The authority, however, is not sufficient to justify a change in the present reading. These variations have, do doubtless, arisen from a belief, that the common

reading expresses a sentiment inconsistent with the true spirit of a Christian, and a desire to find a better. But there is no reason for desiring a change in the text.

{b} "Lord reward him" Ps 28:4

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 4 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Of whom be thou ware also*. It would seem from this, that Alexander was still a public teacher, and that his discourses were plausible and artful. The best and the wisest of men need to be on their guard against the efforts of the advocates of error.

For he hath greatly withstood our words. Marg., *preachings*. The Greek is, *words*; but the reference is, doubtless, to the public teachings of Paul. This verse makes it clear that it was no private wrong that Paul referred to, but the injury which he was doing to the cause of truth as a professed public teacher.

{1} "words" "preachings"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 4 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *At my first answer*. Or, *apology, apologia, plea, or defence*. This evidently refers to some trial which he had had before the Roman emperor. He speaks of a *first* trial of this kind; but whether it was on some former occasion, and he had been released and permitted again to go abroad, or whether it was a trial which he had already had during his second imprisonment, it is not easy to determine. The former is the most natural supposition; for, if he had had a trial during his present imprisonment, it is difficult to see why he was still held as a prisoner. See this point examined in the Intro., & 1.

No man stood with me. Paul had many friends in Rome, 2Ti 4:21; comp. Ro 16; but it seems that they did not wish to appear as such when he was put on trial for his life. They were, doubtless, afraid that they would be identified with him, and would endanger their own lives. It should be said that some of the friends of the apostle, mentioned in Ro 16, and who were there when that epistle was written, may have died before the apostle arrived there, or, in the trials and persecutions to which they were exposed, may have left the city. Still, it is remarkable that those who *were* there should have all left him on so trying an occasion. But to forsake a friend in the day of calamity is not uncommon, and Paul experienced what thousands before him and since have done. Thus Job was forsaken by friends and kindred in the day of his trials. See his pathetic description in Job 19:13-17:

> He hath put my brethren far from me,
> And mine acquaintance verily are estranged from me.
> My kinsfolk have failed.
> And my familiar friends have forgotten me.
> They that dwelt in my house, and my maids, count me for a stranger,
> I am an alien in their sight.

I called my servant, and he gave me no answer; I entreated him with my mouth.
My breath is strange to my wife,
Though I entreated for the children's sake of mine own body.

Thus the Psalmist was forsaken by his friends in the time of calamity, Ps 35:12-16 38:11, 41:9 55:12.

And thus the Saviour was forsaken in his trials, Mt 26:66. Comp., for illustration, Zec 13:6. The world is full of instances in which those who have been overtaken by overwhelming calamities, have been forsaken by professed friends, and have been left to suffer alone. This has arisen, partly, from the circumstance that many sincere friends are timid, and their courage fails them when their attachment for another would expose them to peril; but more commonly from the circumstance that there is much professed friendship in the world which is false, and that calamity becomes a test of it which it cannot abide. There is professed friendship which is caused by wealth, (Pr 14:20 19:4;) there is that which is cherished for those in elevated and fashionable circles; there is that which is formed for beauty of person, or graceful manners, rather than for the solid virtues of the heart; there is that which is created in the sunshine of life—the affection of those "swallow friends, who retire in the winter, and return in the spring." Comp. the concluding remarks on the book of Job. Such friendship is always tested by calamity; and when affliction comes, they, who in the days of prosperity were surrounded by many flatterers and admirers, are surprised to find how few there were among them who truly loved them.

"In the wind and tempest of his frown,
Distinction, with a broad and powerful fan,
Puffing at all, winnows the light away;
And, what hath mass or matter by itself,
Lies, rich in virtue and unmingled."
Troilus and Cressida

So common has this been—so little confidence can be placed in professed friends in time of adversity, that we are sometimes disposed to believe that there is more truth than fancy in the representation of the poet—

"And what is friendship but a name,
A charm that lulls to sleep;
A shade that follows wealth or fame,
But leaves the wretch to weep ?"

Yet there *is* true friendship in the world. It existed between Damon and Pythias, and its power and beauty were still more strikingly illustrated in the warm affection of David and Jonathan. In the trials of David—though raised from the condition of a shepherd boy—and though having no powerful friends at court, the son of Saul never forsook him, and never gave him occasion to suspect the sincerity or the depth of his affection. With what exquisite beauty he sang of that attachment when Jonathan was dead!

"I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan !
Very pleasant hast thou been unto me !
Thy love to me was wonderful,
Passing the love of women !"

2Sa 1:26.

True friendship, founded on sincere love, so rare, so difficult to be found, so little known among the gay and the great, is one of the richest of Heaven's blessings to man; and, when enjoyed, should be regarded as more than a compensation for all of show, and splendour, and flattery, that wealth can obtain.

"Though choice of follies fasten on the great,
None clings more obstinate, than fancy fond,
That sacred friendship is their easy prey;
Caught by the wafture of a golden lure,
Or fascination of a high-born smile.
Their smiles, the great, and the coquette, throw out
For other's hearts, tenacious of their own,
And we no less of ours, when such the bait.
Ye fortune's cofferers! ye powers of wealth!
Can gold gain friendship? Impudence of hope!
As well mere man an angel might beget.
Love, and love only, is the loan for love.
Lorenzo! pride repress; nor hope to find
A friend, but what has found a friend in thee.
All like the purchase; few the price will pay,
And this makes friends such miracles below.
A friend is worth all hazards we can run.
Poor is the friendless master of a world;
A world in purchase of a friend is gain."

Night Thoughts, Night 2.

I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. That it may not be *reckoned*, or imputed to them—*logisyeih*. On the meaning of this word, **See Barnes** "Ro 4:3, **See Barnes "Phm 1:18"**.

The prayer of the apostle here breathes the very spirit of Christ. **See Barnes "Lu 23:34"**.

Comp. Ac 7:60.

{a} "all men forsook" 2Ti 1:15 {b} "laid" Ac 7:60

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 4 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me*. Though all *men* forsook me, yet God did not. This expresses an universal truth in regard to the faithfulness of God. See Ps 27:10. Comp. Job 5:17-19 Isa 43:1,2.

That by me the preaching might be fully known. The word *preaching* here probably means *the gospel as preached by him*. The word rendered "might be fully known" *plhroforhyh* means, "might obtain full credence;" that is, might be fully confirmed, so that others might be assured of its truth. The apostle, doubtless, means that on his trial, though forsaken by all men, he was enabled to be so steadfast in his profession of the truth, and so calm in the prospect of death, that all who witnessed his trial, saw that there was a reality in religion, and that the gospel was founded in truth. He had

maintained as a preacher that the gospel was able to support the soul in trial, and he was now able to illustrate its power in his own case. He had proclaimed the gospel as the true system of religion, and he was now able to bear testimony to it with the prospect of approaching martyrdom. The sentiment of this passage then is, that the truth of the gospel is made known, or that men may become fully assured of it, by the testimony which is borne to it by its friends in the near prospect of death. One of the most important means of establishing the truth of the gospel in the world, has been the testimony borne to it by martyrs, and the spirit of unwavering confidence in God which they have evinced. And now, one of the most important methods of keeping up the knowledge of the value of religion in the world, and of convincing men of the truth of Christianity, is the spirit evinced by its friends when they are about to die. Men judge much, and justly, of the value of a system of religion by its power to comfort in the day of calamity, and to sustain the soul when about to enter on an untried state of being. That system is of little value to mankind which leaves us in the day of trial; that is of inestimable worth which will enable us to die with the firm hope of a brighter and better world. Christian, having served his God faithfully in life, may, therefore, be eminently useful when he comes to die.

And that all the Gentiles might hear. Paul was at this time in Rome. His trial was before a heathen tribunal, and he was surrounded by Pagans. Rome, too, was then the centre of the world, and at all times there was a great conflux of strangers thee. His trial, therefore, gave him an opportunity of testifying to the truth of Christianity before Gentile rulers; and in such circumstances, that the knowledge of his sufferings, and of the religion for which he suffered, might be conveyed by the strangers who witnessed it to the ends of the world. His main object in life was, to make the gospel known to the Gentiles, and he had thus an opportunity of furthering that great cause, even on what he supposed might be the trial which would determine with him the question of life or death. Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 1:10"**.

And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. This may either mean that he was delivered from Nero, compared with a lion, or, literally, that he was saved from being thrown to lions in the amphitheatre, as was common in Rome. **See Barnes** "1Co 15:32.

(3.) It is not uncommon in the Scriptures to compare tyrants and persecutors with ravenous wild beasts. Comp. Ps 22:13,21; Jer 2:30.

Nero is called a *lion* by Seneca, and it was usual among heathen writers to apply the term in various senses to princes and warriors. See Grotius, *in loc*. The common interpretation here has been, that this refers to Nero, and there is no improbability in the interpretation. Still, it is quite as natural to suppose, that the punishment which had been appointed for him, or to which he would have been subjected, was, to be thrown to lions, and that in some way, now unknown to us, he had been delivered from it. Paul attributes his deliverance entirely to the Lord; but what instrumental agency there may have been, he does not specify. It seems probable that it was his own defence; that he was enabled to plead his own cause with so much ability, that he found favour even with the Roman emperor, and was discharged. If it had been through the help of a friend at court, it is hardly to be supposed that he would not have mentioned the name of him to whom he owed his deliverance.

{c} "Lord stood" Mt 10:19 Ac 23:11 {d} "mouth of the lion" Ps 22:21

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 4 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work*. He does not say from *death*, for he expected now to die. See 2Ti 4:6. But he was assured that God would keep him from shrinking from death when the hour approached; from apostasy, and from the manifestation of an improper spirit when he came to die.

And will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom. So keep me from evil that I shall reach his heavenly kingdom. See 2Ti 4:8.

To whom be glory for ever and ever. Paul was accustomed to introduce a doxology in his writings when his heart was full, (comp. Ro 9:5,) and in no place could it be more appropriate than here, when he had the fullest confidence that he was soon to be brought to heaven. If man is ever disposed to ascribe glory to God, it is on such an occasion.

{a} "shall deliver" Ps 121:7

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 4 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Salute Priscilla and Aquila*. Prisca, or Priscilla, was the wife of Aquila, though her name is sometimes mentioned first. In regard to their history, **See Barnes "Ro 16:3"**.

They were at Rome when Paul wrote his epistle to the Romans, but afterwards went into Asia Minor, which was the native place of Aquila, Ac 18:2, and where they probably died.

And the household of Onesiphorus. **See Barnes "2Ti 1:16"**.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 4 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Erastus*. **See Barnes "Ro 16:23"**.

Abode at Corinth. This was his home, where he filled an important office. **See Barnes "Ro 16:23"**.

It would seem, that when Paul went to Rome, there was some expectation that he would accompany him, but that reasons had occurred for his remaining in Corinth. His doing so is referred to without blame.

But Trophimus. See Ac 20:4. He was a native of Asia Minor.

Have I left at Miletum sick. Probably he designed to accompany him to Rome, as he had been often with him in his journeys. On the situation of Miletus, or Miletum, **See Barnes "Ac 20:15"**.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 4 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Do thy diligence*, 2Ti 4:9.

To come before winter. Probably because of the dangers of the navigation then, and because the circumstances of the apostle were such as to demand the presence of a friend.

Eubulus, etc. These names are of common occurrence in the classic writers, but of the persons here referred to we know nothing.

{*} "diligence" "thy best"

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY - Chapter 4 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit*. See Ga 6:18 Ro 16:20. The subscription to this epistle was not added by Paul himself, nor is there any evidence that it was by an inspired man, and it is of no authority. There is not the slightest evidence that Timothy was "ordained the first bishop of the church of the Ephesians," or that he was a "bishop" there at all. There is no reason to believe that he was even a pastor there, in the technical sense. **See Barnes "1Ti 1:3"**.

Compare the remarks on the subscriptions to the Epistle to the Romans, I Corinthians, and especially Titus.

{1} "Nero" "Caesar Nero, or the Emperor Nero"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 1

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 1 - Verse 1

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS.

INTRODUCTION

I. THE HISTORY OF TITUS.

OF Titus nothing more is certainly known than what we find in the epistles of Paul. It is somewhat remarkable that there is no mention of him in the Acts of the Apostles; nor does his name occur in the New Testament anywhere except in the writings of the apostle Paul. From his incidental allusions to him, we learn the following particulars respecting him.

(1.) He was by birth a Gentile. In Ga 2:3, he is called a Greek, and it is certain from that passage that he had not been circumcised; and the probability is, that up to the time of his conversion, he had lived as other Gentiles, and had not been converted to the Jewish faith. His father and mother were, doubtless, both Greeks, and thus he was distinguished from Timothy, whose mother was a, Jewess, but whose father was a Greek, Ac 16:3. Comp. **See Barnes "Ga 2:3".**

If Titus had been proselyted to the Jewish faith, it is to be presumed that he would have been circumcised.

(2.) He had been converted to Christianity by the instrumentality of Paul himself. This is clear from the Tit 1:4, "To Titus, *mine own son* after the common faith." **See Barnes "1Ti 1:2".**

This is language which the apostle would not have used of one who had been converted by the instrumentality of another. But where he lived, and when or how he was converted, is wholly unknown. As to *the time* when he was converted, it is known only that this occurred before the fourteenth year after the conversion of Paul; for at that time Titus, a Christian, was with Paul at Jerusalem, Ga 2:1. As to *the place* where he lived, there seems some reason to suppose that it was in some part of Asia Minor—for the Greeks abounded there; Paul laboured much there; and there were numerous converts made there to the Christian faith, Still this is not by any means certain.

(3.) Titus went with Paul to Jerusalem when he was deputed by the church at Antioch with Barnabas, to lay certain questions before the apostles and elders there in reference to the converts from the Gentiles, Ac 15. Comp. Ga 2:1. It is not known why he took Titus with him on that occasion, and the reasons can be only conjectural. **See Barnes "Ga 2:1".**

It is possible that he was taken with him to Jerusalem because his was *a case in point* in regard to the question which was to come before the apostles and elders there. It is not improbable, from an expression which Paul uses in describing his visit there— "neither was Titus *compelled to be circumcised*"—that the case came up for discussion, and that strenuous efforts were made by the Judaizing portion there, (comp. Ga 2:4,) to have him circumcised. Paul and Barnabas, however, so

managed the cause, that the principle was settled that it was not necessary that converts from the heathen should be circumcised, Ac 15:19,20.

(4.) After the council at Jerusalem, it seems probable that Titus returned with Paul and Barnabas, accompanied by Silas and Judas, Ac 15:22, and that afterwards he attended the apostle for a considerable time in his travels and labours. This appears from a remark in 2Co 8:23: "Whether any do inquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellow-helper concerning you." From this it would seem, that he had been with Paul; that he was as yet not well known; and that the fact that he had been seen with him had led to inquiry who he was, and what was the office which he sustained, That he was also a companion of Paul, and quite essential to his comfort in his work, is apparent from the following allusions to him in the same epistle—2Co 7:6— "God, that comforteth those who are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus;" 2Co 2:13, "I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother;"2Co 7:13, "Yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus." Comp. 2Ti 4:10 2Co 12:18.

(5.) There is reason to believe that Titus spent some time with the apostle in Ephesus; for the First Epistle to the Corinthians was written at Ephesus, and was sent by the hand of Titus. Intro. to 1 Cor. % 3, 6. It is to be presumed, also, that he would, on such an occasion, send some one with the epistle in whom he had entire confidence, and who had been so long with him as to become familiar with his views. For Titus, on this occasion, was sent not only to bear the epistle, but to endeavour to heal the divisions and disorders there, and to complete a collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem, which the apostle had himself commenced. Comp. **See Barnes "2Co 2:13"**; **See Barnes "2Co 7:6"**; **See Barnes** "2Co 8:6".

After this he met Paul in Macedonia, (2Co 7:5,6;) but whether he was with him when he went with the collection to Jerusalem, and during his imprisonment in Caesarea, or on his voyage to Rome, we have no information.

(6.) We next hear of him as being left by the apostle in the island of Crete, that he might "set in order the things that were wanting, and ordain elders in every city," Tit 1:5. This is supposed to have occurred about the year 62, and after the first imprisonment of the apostle at Rome. It is evidently implied, that the apostle had been himself there with him, and that he had undertaken to accomplish some important object there, but that something had prevented his completing it, and that he had left Titus to finish it. This was clearly a temporary arrangement, for there is no evidence that it was designed that Titus should be a permanent "bishop" of Crete, or that he remained there long. That he did not design that he should be a permanent bishop of that island, is clear from Tit 3:12, where the apostle directs him, when he should send Artemas to take his place, to come to him to Nicopolis. If Titus were a prelatical bishop, the apostle would not in this summary manner have superseded him, or removed him from his diocese.

(7.) He was with Paul in Rome during his second imprisonment there. He did not, however, remain with him until his trial, but left him and went into Dalmatia, 2Ti 4:10. For the probable reason why he had gone there, **See Barnes "2Ti 4:10"**.

What became of him afterward, we are not informed. The tradition is, that he returned to Crete, and preached the gospel there and in the neighbouring islands, and died at the age of 94. But this tradition depends on no certain evidence.

II.—THE ISLAND OF CRETE.

As Paul Tit 1:5 says that he had left Titus in Crete to perform an important service there, and as the instructions in this epistle doubtless had some peculiar applicability to the state of things

existing there, it is of importance, in order to a correct understanding of the epistle, to have some knowledge of that island, and of the circumstances in which the gospel was introduced there.

The island of Crete, now Candia, is one of the largest islands in the Mediterranean, at the south of all the Cyclades. Its name is said by some to have been derived from the Curetes, who are supposed to have been its first inhabitants; by others, from, the nymph Crete, daughter of Hesperus; and by others, from Cres, a son of Jupiter and the nymph Idaea. The ancient authors in general say that Crete was originally peopled from Palestine. According to Bochart, (Lib. 5. c. 15,) that part of Palestine which lies by the Mediterranean was called by the Arabs *Keritha*, and by Syrians *Creth*; and the Hebrews called the inhabitants *Crethi*, or *Crethim*, which the seventy have rendered *krhtav—Cretans*, Eze 25:16 Zep 2:5. It would be easy to pass from Palestine to the island of Crete. Sir Isaac Newton, also, is of opinion that Crete was peopled from Palestine. He says, "Many of the Phoenicians and Syrians, in the year before Christ 1045, fled from Zidon, and from king David, into Asia Minor, Crete, Greece, and Libya, and introduced letters, music, poetry, the Octaeteris, metals and their fabrication, and other arts, sciences, and customs of the Phoenicians. Along with these Phoenicians came a sort of men skilled in religious mysteries, arts, and sciences of Phoenicia, and settled in several places, under the name of Curetes, Idaei, Dactyli," etc. According to Pliny, the extent of Crete from east to west is about two hundred and seventy miles, but its breadth nowhere exceeds fifty miles. The early inhabitants are generally supposed to be the Eteocretes of Homer; but their origin is unknown. Minos, who had expelled his brother Sarpedon from the throne, first gave laws to the Cretans, and, having conquered the pirates who infested the AEgean Sea, established a powerful navy. In the Trojan war, Idomeneus, sovereign of Crete, led its forces to war in eighty vessels—a number A little inferior to those commanded by Agamemnon himself. At this period, the island appears to have been inhabited by a mixed population of Greeks and barbarians. After the Trojan war, the principal cities formed themselves into several republics, for the most part independent, while some of them were connected with federal ties. The Cretan code of laws was supposed by many to have furnished Lycurgus with the model of his most salutary regulations. It was founded on the just basis of liberty and an equality of rights, and its great aim was to promote social harmony and peace, by enforcing temperance and frugality. In regard to this code, see Anthon's Class. Dic., Art. Greta. In the time of Polybius, (B. C. 203,) the Cretans had much degenerated from their ancient character; for he charges them repeatedly with the grossest immorality, and the basest vices, Polyb. 4, 47, 53; Id. 6, 46. We know, also, with what severity they are reproved by Paul, in the words of Epimenides. **See Barnes "Tit 1:12".**

Crete was subdued by the Romans, and became a part of a Roman province. The interior of the island is very hilly and woody, and intersected with fertile valleys. Mount Ida, in the centre of the island, is the principal mountain, and surpasses all the others in elevation. The island contains no lakes, and its rivers are mostly mountain torrents, which are dry during the summer season. The valleys, or sloping plains, in the island are represented as very fertile. The greater portion of the land is not cultivated; but it might produce sugar-cane, excellent wine, and the best kind of fruit. It has a delightful climate, and is remarkably healthful. The ancients asserted, that this delightful island, the birth-place of Jupiter, was freed, by the indulgence of the gods, from every noxious animal. No quadrupeds of a ferocious character belong to it. The wild goat is the only inhabitant of the forest and the lofty mountains, and sheep overspread the plains, and graze undisturbed by ravenous enemies. The island now is under Turkish rule, and is divided into three pachaliks; but the inhabitants are mostly Greeks, who are kept in a state of great depression. The native Candians

are of the Greek church, and are allowed the free exercise of their religion. The island is divided into twelve bishoprics, the bishop of one of which assumes the title of archbishop, and is appointed by the patriarch of Constantinople. The situation of this island for commerce can scarcely be surpassed. It is at an almost equal distance from Asia, Europe, and Africa, and might be made the emporium for the manufactures and agricultural productions of each; but, from the oppressive nature of the government, the indolence of the Turks, and the degraded state of the Greeks, those advantages are not improved, and its condition partakes of that of the general condition of the Turkish empire.

This island was formerly famous for its hundred cities. It is distinguished in the ancient fabulous legends for the arrival there of Europa, on a bull, from Phoenicia; for the laws of Minos; for the labyrinth, the work of Daedalus; and, above all, as the place where Jupiter was born and was buried. According to the fables of mythology, he was born in a cavern near Lyctus, or Cnosus; was rocked in a golden cradle; was fed with honey, and with the milk of the goat Amalthea, while the Curetes danced around him, clashing their arms, to prevent his cries from being heard by Saturn. He became, according to the legend, the king of Crete, and was buried on the island. See *Anthon, Class. Dic., Art. Jupiter*.

III.—-THE INTRODUCTION OF THE GOSPEL INTO CRETE.

WE have no certain information in regard to the time when the gospel was first preached in Crete, nor by whom it was done. There are some circumstances mentioned, however, which furnish all the light which we need on this point, in order to an understanding of the epistle before us. Among the persons who were in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, and who were converted there, *Cretans* are mentioned, Ac 2:11; and it is highly probable that, when they returned to their homes, they made the gospel known to their countrymen. Yet history is wholly silent as to the method by which it was done, and as to the result on the minds of the inhabitants. As no visit of any of the apostles to that island is mentioned by Luke in the Acts of the Apostles, it may be presumed that the gospel there had not produced any very marked success; and the early history of Christianity there is to us unknown. It is clear from the epistle before us, Tit 1:5, that the apostle Paul was there on some occasion; and that the gospel, either when he was there, or before, was attended with success. "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city." Here it is manifest that Paul had been there with Titus; that he had commenced some arrangements which he had not been able himself to complete; and that the gospel had had an effect extensively on the island, since he was to ordain elders "in every city."

It is not certainly known, however, when Paul was there. There is no mention in the Acts of the Apostles of his having been there, except when he was on his way to Rome, (Ac 27:7,8;) and this was in such circumstances as to preclude the supposition that that was the time referred to in this epistle; for

(1.) Titus was not then with him;

(2.) there is no reason to suppose that he remained there long enough to preach the gospel to any extent, or to establish churches. He was sailing to Rome as a prisoner, and there is no probability that he would be permitted to go at large and preach for any considerable time. There is, therefore, a moral certainty that it must have been on some other occasion. "It is striking," says Neander, (History of the Planting of the Christian Church, vol. 1, pp. 400, 401,) "that while Luke in the Acts reports so fully and circumstantially the occurrences of the apostle's last voyage to Rome, and

mentions his stay in Crete, he says not a word (contrary to his usual practice in such cases) of the friendly reception given to him by the Christians there, or even of his meeting them at all. Hence we may conclude that no Christian churches existed in that island, though that transient visit would naturally give rise to the intention of planting the gospel there, which he probably fulfilled soon after he was set at liberty, when he came into these parts." There is reason to believe that Paul, after his first imprisonment at Rome, was released, and again visited Asia Minor and Macedonia. See Intro. to 2 Timothy. On this journey, it is not improbable that he may have visited Crete, having, as Neander supposes, had his attention called to this island as a desirable place for preaching the gospel, when on his way to Rome. "If we may be allowed to suppose;" says Dr. Paley (*Hor. Paul*.,) "that St. Paul, after his liberation at Rome, sailed into Asia, taking Crete in his way; that from Asia, and from Ephesus, the capital of that country, he proceeded into Macedonia, and, crossing the peninsula in his progress, came into the neighbourhood of Nicopolis, we have a route which falls in with everything. It executes the intention expressed by the apostle of visiting Colosse and Philippi, as soon as he should be set at liberty at Rome. It allows him to leave "Titus at Crete," and "Timothy at Ephesus, as he went into Macedonia," and to write to both, not long after, from the peninsula of Greece, and probably from the neighbourhood of Nicopolis, thus bringing together the dates of these two letters," (1 Tim. and Titus,) "and thereby accounting for that affinity between them, both in subject and language, which our remarks have pointed out. I confess that the journey which we have thus traced out for St. Paul is, in a great measure, hypothetic; but it should be observed that it is a species of consistency which seldom belongs to falsehood, to admit of an hypothesis which includes a great number of remote and independent circumstances without contradiction." See Neander, History of the Planting of the Churches, i. 401. Comp., however, Intro. to 1 Tim., % 2.

Why Paul left Crete without completing the work which was to be done, and especially without ordaining the elders himself, is not certainly known. There is evidently a striking resemblance between the circumstances which induced him to leave Titus there, and those which existed at Ephesus when he left Timothy there to complete an important work, 1Ti 1:3,4. We know that Paul was driven away from Ephesus before he had finished the work there which he had purposed to accomplish, (Ac 19 20:1;) and it is not at all improbable that some such disturbance took place in Crete. Comp. Koppe, Proleg. p. 194. When he thus left, he committed to Titus the work which he had designed to accomplish, with instructions to finish it as soon as possible, and then to come to him at Nicopolis, Tit 3:12.

IV.—-THE PLACE, TIME, AND OCCASION OF WRITING THE EPISTLE.

THERE has been much diversity of opinion as to the time and place of writing this epistle.

In regard to the *place*, there can be little doubt that it was at *a* Nicopolis; for the apostle, in Tit 3:12, directs Titus to come to him at that place. But it is not easy to determine *what* Nicopolis is meant, for there were many cities of that name. The person who affixed the subscription at the end of the epistle, affirms that it was "Nicopolis of Macedonia;" but, as has been frequently remarked in these Notes, these subscriptions are of no authority. The name *Nicopolis* (meaning, properly, *a city of victory nikh* and *poliv*) was given to several places. There was a city of this name in Thrace, on the river Nessus, now called Nikopi. There was also a city of the same name in Epirus, two in Moesia, another in Armenia, another in Cilicia, and another in Egypt, in the vicinity of Alexandria. It is by no means easy to ascertain which of these cities is meant, though, as Paul was accustomed to travel in Greece and Asia Minor, there seems to be a probability that one of those cities is intended. The only way of determining this with any degree of probability, is, to ascertain what city was *best*

known by that name at the time when the epistle was written, or what city one would be likely to go to, if he were directed to go to Nicopolis, without any further specification-as if one were directed to go to Philadelphia, London, or Rome. In such a case, he would go to the principal city of that name, though there might be many other smaller places of that name also. But even this would not be absolutely certain, for Paul may have specified to Titus the place where he *expected* to go before he left him, so that he would be in no danger of doubt where the place was. But if we were to allow this consideration to influence us in regard to the place, there can be little doubt that the city which he meant was Nicopolis in Epirus; and the common opinion has been, that the apostle alludes to this city. This Nicopolis was situated in Epirus, in Greece, north-west of Corinth and Athens, on the Ambracian gulf, and near its mouth. On the same gulf, and directly opposite to Nicopolis, is Actium, the place where Augustus achieved a signal victory over Mark Antony; and the city of Nicopolis he built in honour of that victory. Augustus was anxious to raise this city to the highest rank among the cities of Greece, and caused games to be celebrated there, with great pomp, every few years. Having afterwards fallen into decay, the city was restored by the emperor Julian. Modern travellers describe the remains of Nicopolis as very extensive: the site which they now occupy is called *Prevesa Vecchia*. See *Anthon's Class Dic*. It should be said, however, that there is no absolute certainty about the place where the epistle was written. Macknight and Benson suppose it was at Colosse; Lardner supposes it was in or near Macedonia; Hug, at Ephesus.

If the epistle were written from the Nicopolis referred to, then it was probably after Paul's first imprisonment at Rome. If so, it was written about the year 63 or 64. But there is great diversity of opinion as to the time. Lardner and Hug place it in the year 56. It is of no material importance to be able to determine the exact time. The occasion on which it was written is specified by the apostle himself, with such clearness, that there can be no doubt on that point. Paul had left Titus in Crete, to "set in order the things which were wanting, and to ordain elders in every city," (Tit 1:5;) and as he had himself, perhaps, been called to leave suddenly, it was important that Titus should have more full instructions than he had been able to give him on various points of duty; or, at any rate, that he should have permanent instructions to which he could refer. The epistle is occupied, therefore, mainly with such counsels as were appropriate to a minister of the gospel engaged in the duties which Titus was left to discharge. The principal difficulties which it was apprehended Titus would meet with in the performance of his duties there, and which in fact made his labours there desirable, arose from two sources

(1) the character of the Cretans themselves; and

(2) the influence of Judaizing teachers.

(1.) The character of the Cretans themselves was such as to demand the vigilance and care of Titus. They were a people characterized for insincerity, falsehood, and gross living, Tit 1:12. There was great danger, therefore, that their religion would be hollow and insincere, and great need of caution lest they should be corrupted from the simplicity and purity required in the gospel, Tit 1:13.

(2.) The influence of Judaizing teachers was to be guarded against. It is evident from Ac 2:11 that there were Jews residing there; and it is probable that it was by those who had gone from that island to Jerusalem to attend the feast of the Pentecost, and who had been converted on that occasion, that the gospel was first introduced there. From this epistle, also, it is clear that one of the great dangers to piety in the churches of Crete, arose from the efforts of such teachers, and from the plausible arguments which they would use in favour of the Mosaic law. See Tit 1:10,14-16 3:9.

To counteract the effect of their teaching, it was necessary to have ministers of the gospel appointed in every important place, who should be qualified for their work. To make these arrangements, was the great design for which Titus was left there; and to give him full information as to the kind of ministers which was needed, this epistle was written.

There is a very striking resemblance between this epistle and the first epistle to Timothy. See Paley's *Horae Paulinae*. "Both letters were addressed to persons left by the writer to preside in their respective churches during his absence. Both letters are principally occupied in describing the qualifications to be sought for in those whom they should appoint to offices in the church; and the ingredients of this description are, in both letters, nearly the same. Timothy and Titus, likewise, are cautioned against the same prevailing corruptions, and, in particular, against the same misdirection of their cares and studies." *Paley*. This similarity is found, not only in the general structure of the epistles, but also in particular phrases and expressions. Comp. 1Ti 1:2,3, with Tit 1:4,5; 1Ti 1:4 with Tit 1:14 3:9; 1Ti 4:12, with Tit 2:7,15; and 1Ti 3:2-4, with Tit 1:6-8.

It is evident, from this, that the epistles were written by the same person, and to those who were in substantially the same circumstances. They are incidental proofs that they are genuine, and were written by the person, and to the persons, whose names appear, and on the occasions which are said in the epistle to have existed. On the subjects in this introduction, the reader may consult Macknight's Introduction to the Epistle; Michaelis's Introduction; Benson, Koppe, and especially Paley's Horae Paulinae —a work which will never be consulted without profit.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS.

CHAPTER I.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

THIS chapter embraces the following points:—

1. The usual inscription and salutation, Tit 1:1-4. In this Paul declares himself to be the author of the epistle, and asserts in the strongest manner his claims to the apostleship. He alludes to the great cause in which, as an apostle, he was engaged—as acting under the eternal plan of God for the salvation of the elect, and appointed to communicate the glorious truths of that system which had been now revealed to mankind. The object of this seems to be to impress the mind of Titus with his right to give him instruction.

2. A statement of the object for which Titus had been left in Crete, and the general character of the work which he was to perform there, Tit 1:5.

3. The qualifications of those who were to be ordained to the ministry, Tit 1:6-9. The characteristics laid down are substantially the same as in 1Ti 3.

4. Reasons for great caution and prudence in thus appointing elders over the churches, Tit 1:10-13. Those reasons arose from the character of the Cretans. There were many deceivers there; and the character of the Cretans was such that there was great danger that they who professed to be Christians would be hypocritical, and if put into the eldership that they would do great injury to the cause.

5. A solemn charge to Titus to rebuke them faithfully for their prevailing and characteristic vices, and to avoid giving any countenance to that for which they were so much distinguished, Tit 1:13-16.

Verse 1. *Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ*. **See Barnes "Ro 1:1"**.

Comp. **See Barnes** "1Co 9:1, seq.

According to the faith of God's elect. Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 8:33"**; **See Barnes** "Eph 1:4"; **See Barnes "2Ti 2:10"**.

The meaning of the word rendered here, "according to" *kata*—is, probably, *with reference to*; that is, he was appointed to be an apostle *with respect to the faith* of those whom God had chosen, or, *in order* that they might be led to believe the gospel. God had chosen them to salvation but he intended that it should be in connection with their believing; and, *in order to that*, he had appointed Paul to be an apostle that he might go and make known to them the gospel. It is the purpose of God to save his people, but he does not mean to save them as infidels, or unbelievers. He intends that they shall be believers first—and hence he sends his ministers that they may become such.

And the acknowledging of the truth. In order to secure the acknowledgment or recognition of the truth. The object of the apostleship, as it is of the ministry in general, is to secure the proper acknowledgment of the truth among men.

Which is after godliness. Which tends to promote piety towards God. On the word rendered *godliness*, **See Barnes "1Ti 2:2"**; **See Barnes "1Ti 3:16"**.

—The truth, the acknowledgment of which Paul was appointed to secure, was not scientific, historical, or political truth: it was that of religion—that which was adapted to lead men to a holy life, and to prepare them for a holy heaven.

{a} "acknowledging" 2Ti 2:25 {b} "which is" 1Ti 6:3

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 1 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *In hope of eternal life*. Marg., *for*. Gr., *ep elpidi*. This does not mean that Paul cherished the hope of eternal life, but that the" faith of the elect," which he aimed to secure, was in order that men might have the hope of eternal life. The whole system which he was appointed to preach was designed to secure to man a Well-founded hope of salvation. Comp. **See Barnes "2Ti 1:10"**.

Which God, that cannot lie. On the phrase, "cannot lie," see **See Barnes "Heb 6:18"**.

The fact that God cannot lie; that it is his nature always to speak the truth; and that no circumstances can ever occur in which he will depart from it, is the foundation of all our hopes of salvation.

Promised. The only hope of salvation is in the promise of God. It is only as we can have evidence that he has assured us that we may be saved, that we are authorized to cherish any hope of salvation. That promise is not made to us as individuals, or by name, but it becomes ours,

(1.) because he has made a general promise that they who repent and believe shall be saved; and

(2.) because we may have evidence that we have repented, and do believe the gospel. If this be so, we fairly come under the promise of salvation, and may apply it to ourselves.

Before the world began. That is, the purpose was then formed, and the promise may be considered as in fact then made;— for a purpose in the mind of God, though it is not as yet made known, is equivalent to a promise. Comp. **See Barnes "Mt 25:34"**; **See Barnes "2Ti 1:9"**.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 1 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *But hath in due times*. At the proper time; the time which he had intended; the best time. **See Barnes "1Ti 2:6"**.

Comp. **See Barnes "Mt 2:2"**.

Manifested his word through preaching. **See Barnes "2Ti 1:10"**.

The meaning here is, that he has made known his eternal purpose through the preaching of the gospel. Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 10:14,15"**.

Which is committed unto me. Not exclusively, but in common with others. **See Barnes "2Ti 1:11"**.

According to the commandment of God our Saviour. Paul always claimed to be divinely commissioned, and affirmed that he was engaged in the work of preaching by the authority of God. See Ga 1:1-11,12; 1Co 1:1

Ro 1:1-4.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 1 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *To Titus*. See the Intro. & 1.

Mine own son. **See Barnes "1Ti 1:2"**.

After the common faith. The faith of all Christians; —equivalent to saying "my son in the gospel." That is, Paul had been the means of converting him by preaching that gospel which was received by all who were Christians.

Grace, mercy, and peace, etc. **See Barnes "Ro 1:7"**.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 1 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *For this cause left I thee in Crete*. Comp. **See Barnes "1Ti 1:3"**.

On the situation of Crete, see the Intro. § 2.

That thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting. Marg., *left undone*. The Greek is, "the things that are left;" that is, those which were left unfinished; referring, doubtless, to arrangements which had been commenced, but which for some cause had been left incomplete. Whether this had occurred because he had been driven away by persecution, or called away by important duties demanding his attention elsewhere, cannot now be determined. The word rendered, "set in order"— *epidiorywsh*— occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means, properly, to make straight upon, and then to put further to rights, to arrange further. Robinson, *Lex*.—- There were things left unfinished which he was to complete. One of these things, and perhaps the principle, was, to appoint elders in the various cities where the gospel had been preached.

And ordain. The word ordain has now acquired a technical signification which it cannot be shown that it has in the New Testament. It means, in common usage, to "invest with a ministerial function or sacerdotal power; to introduce, and establish, and settle in the pastoral office with the customary forms and solemnities," (*Webster*;) and it may be added, with the idea always connected

with it, of the imposition of hands, But the word used here does not necessarily convey this meaning, or imply that Titus was to go through what would now be called *an ordination service*. It means to set, place, or constitute; then, to set over any thing, as a steward or other officer (see Mt 24:45 Lu 12:42; Ac 6:3,) though without reference to any particular mode of investment with an office. See the word, *ordain*, explained in the **See Barnes "Ac 1:22 14:23"**.

Titus was to appoint or set them over the churches, though with what ceremony is now unknown. There is no reason to suppose that he did this except as the result of the choice of the people. Comp. **See Barnes "Ac 6:3"**.

Elders. Gr., *Presbyters*. See the word explained **See Barnes "Ac 14:23"**.

These *elders*, or *presbyters*, were also called *bishops* (comp. **See Barnes "1Ti 3:1"**) , for Paul immediately, in describing their qualifications, calls them bishops— "ordain elders in every city—if any be blameless —FOR a *bishop* must be blameless," etc. If the elders and bishops in the times of the apostles were of different ranks, this direction would be wholly unmeaning. It would be the same as if the following directions were given to one who was authorized to appoint officers over an army: "Appoint *captains* over each company, who shall be of good character, and acquainted with military tactics, *for a brigadier-General* must be of good character, and acquainted with the rules of war." —That the same rank is denoted also by the terms *presbyter* and *bishop* here, is further apparent because the qualifications which Paul states as requisite for the "bishop" are not those which pertain to a prelate or a diocesan bishop, but to one who was a pastor of a church, or an evangelist. It is clear, from Tit 1:7, that those whom Titus was to appoint were "bishops;" and yet it is absurd to suppose that the apostle meant *prelatical* bishops, for no one can believe that such bishops were to be appointed in "every city" of the island. According to all modern notions of Episcopacy, one such bishop would have been enough for such an island as Crete, and indeed it has been not unfrequently maintained that Titus himself was in fact the bishop of that diocese. But if these were not prelates who were to be ordained by Titus, then it is clear that the term "bishop" in the New Testament is given to the Presbyters or elders; that is, to all ministers of the gospel. That usage should never have been departed from.

In every city. Crete was anciently celebrated for the number of its cities. In one passage, Homer ascribes to the island an hundred cities, (*Il* ii. 649 ;) in another, ninety (*Od*. xix. 174.) It may be presumed that many of these cities were towns of no very considerable size, and yet it would seem probable that each one was large enough to have a church, and to maintain the gospel. Paul, doubtless, expected that Titus would travel over the whole island, and endeavour to introduce the gospel in every important place.

As I had appointed thee. As *I commanded* thee or gave thee direction *dietaxamhn*. This is a different word from the one used in the former part of the verse, and rendered *ordain kayisthmi*. It does not mean that Titus was to ordain elders in the same manner as Paul had ordained him, but that he was to set them over the cities as he had *directed* him to do. He had, doubtless, given him oral instructions, when he left him, as to the way in which it was to be done.

{a} "set in order" 1Co 11:34 {1} "wanting" "left undone" {b} "ordain elders" Ac 14:23 2Ti 2:2

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 1 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *If any be blameless, the husband of one wife*. **See Barnes "1Ti 3:2"**.

Having faithful children. **See Barnes "1Ti 3:4,6"**.

That is, having a family well-governed, and well-trained in religion. The word here *-pista*—applied to the children, and rendered faithful, does not necessarily mean that they should be truly pious, but it is descriptive of those who had been well-trained, and were in due subordination. If a man's family were not of his character—if his children were insubordinate, and opposed to religion—if they were decided infidels or scoffers, it would show that there was such a deficiency in the head of the family that he could not be safely entrusted with the government of the church. **See Barnes "1Ti 3:5"**.

It is probably true also, that the preachers at that time would be selected, as far as practicable, from those whose families were all Christians. There might be great impropriety in placing a man over a church, a part of whose family were Jews or Heathens.

Not accused of riot. That is, whose *children* were not accused of riot. This explains what is meant by *faithful*. The word rendered *riot aswtia* is translated *excess* in Eph 5:18, and *riot* in Tit 1:6 1Pe 4:4. It does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament, though the word *riotous* is found in Lu 15:13. See it explained **See Barnes "Eph 5:18"**.

The meaning here is, that they should not be justly accused of this; this should not be their character. It would, doubtless, be a good reason now why a man should not be ordained to the ministry that he had a dissipated and disorderly family.

Or unruly. Insubordinate; ungoverned. **See Barnes "1Ti 1:9"**; and **See Barnes "1Ti 3:4"**.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 1 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *For a bishop must be blameless*. 1Ti 3:2.

As the steward of God. **See Barnes "1Co 4:1"**; **See Barnes "1Co 4:2"**.

A man, in order to perform the duties of such an office, should be one against whom no accusation could lie.

Not self-willed. Comp. 2Pe 2:10. The word— *auyadhv* not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It means, properly, *self-complacent*; and then, *assuming, arrogant, imperious*, Rob. Lex. The gist of the offence—the very "head and front"—is that of being self-complacent; a trait of character which of necessity, makes a man imperious, dogmatical, impatient of contradiction, and unyielding. Such a man, evidently, is not fit for the office of a minister of the gospel.

Not soon angry. **See Barnes** "1Ti 3:2, and the margin there.

Not given to wine. **See Barnes "1Ti 3:3"**.

No striker. **See Barnes "1Ti 3:3"**.

Not given to filthy lucre. In 1Ti 3:3, "Not *greedy* of filthy lucre." The same Greek word is used.

{c} "bishop" 1Ti 3:2

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 1 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *But a lover of hospitality*. **See Barnes "1Ti 3:2"**.

A lover of good men. Marg., "or *things*." The Greek (*filagayov*) means, *a lover of good*, and may apply to anything that is good. It may refer to good men, as included under the general term good; and there is no more essential qualification of a bishop than this. A man who sustains the office of a minister of the gospel, should love every good object, and be ever ready to promote it; and he should love every good man, no matter in what denomination or country he may be found—no matter what his complexion, and no matter what his rank in life. Comp. **See Barnes "Php 4:8"**.

Sober. **See Barnes "1Ti 3:2"**.

Just. Upright in his dealings with all. A minister can do little good who is not. Comp.
See Barnes "Php 4.8".

Holy. Pious, or devout. Faithful in all his duties to God. **See Barnes "1Ti 2:8"**.

Temperate. *egkrath*. Having power or control over all his passions. We apply the term, now, with reference to abstinence from intoxicating liquors. In the Scriptures, it incudes not only that, but also much more. It implies control over all our passions and appetites. See it explained **See Barnes "Ac 24:25"**.

Comp. **See Barnes "1Co 7:9"**
See Barnes "1Co 9:25"; **See Barnes** "Ga 5:23".

{2} "good men" "good things"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 1 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Holding fast the faithful word*. That is, the true doctrines of the gospel. This means, that he is to hold this fast, in opposition to one who would wrest it away, and in opposition to all false teachers, and to all systems of false philosophy. He must be a man who is firm in his belief of the doctrines of the Christian faith, and a man who can be relied on to maintain and defend those doctrines in all circumstances. Comp. **See Barnes "2Th 2:15"**.

As he hath been taught. Marg., *in teaching*. Gr., "according to the teaching." The sense is, according to that doctrine as taught by the inspired teachers of religion. It does not mean as *he* had individually been taught; but he was to hold the faith as it was delivered by those whom the Saviour had appointed to make it known to mankind. The phrase, "*the* doctrine," or "*the* teaching," had a sort of technical meaning, denoting the gospel as that which had been communicated to mankind, not by human reason, but *by teaching*.

That he may be able by sound doctrine. By sound *teaching*, or *instruction*. **See Barnes "1Ti 1:10"**; **See Barnes** "1Ti 4:16".

He was not to *dictate*, or to *denounce*; but to seek to convince by the statement of the truth. **See Barnes "2Ti 2:25"**.

Both to exhort and to convince. To persuade them, or to bring them over to your views by kind exhortation, and by the instruction which shall convince. The former method is to be used where men know the truth, but need encouragement to follow it; the latter, where they are ignorant, or are opposed to it. Both exhortation and argument are to be used by the ministers of religion.

The gainsayers. Opposers. Literally, *those who speak against*; that is, against the truth. **See Barnes "Ro 10:21"**.

{f} "Holding fast" 2Th 2:15 {3} "as he hath been taught" "in teaching"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 1 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers*. There are many persons who are indisposed to submit to authority, (see the word *unruly* in Tit 1:6;) many who are *vain talkers* —who are more given to talk, than to the duties of practical religion, (see the character of "Talkative," in the Pilgrim's Progress;) and many who live to deceive others under the mask of religion. They make great pretensions to piety; they are fluent in argument, and they urge their views in a plausible manner.

Specially they of the circumcision. Jews, spoken of here as "of the circumcision" particularly, because they urged the necessity of circumcision in order that men might be saved. **See Barnes "Ac 15:1".**

This proves that there were not a few Jews in the island of Crete.

{a} "talkers" Jas 1:26

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 1 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Whose mouths must be stopped*. The word here rendered *stopped epistomizein*—occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means, properly, to check, or curb, as with a bridle; to restrain, or bridle in; and then, to put to silence. It is, of course, implied here, that this was to be done in a proper way, and in accordance with the spirit of the gospel. The apostle gives Timothy no civil power to do it, nor does he direct him to call in the aid of the civil arm. All the agency which he specifies as proper for this, is that of argument and exhortation. These are the proper means of silencing the advocates of error; and the history of the church shows that the ministers of religion can be safely intrusted with no other. Comp. Ps 32:8,9.

Who subvert whole houses. Whole families. Comp. Mt 23:14 2Ti 3:6. That is, they turn them aside from the faith.

Teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. For gain. That is, they inculcate such doctrines as will make themselves popular, and as will give them access to the confidence of the people. They make it their first object to acquire influence as ministers of religion, and then abuse that in order to obtain money from the people. This they would doubtless do under many pretences; such as, that it was needful for the support of the gospel, or for the relief of the poor, or, perhaps, for the assistance of distant Christians in persecution. Religion is the most powerful principle that ever governs the mind; and if a man has the control of that, it is no difficult thing to induce men to give up their worldly possessions. In all ages, there have been impostors who have taken advantage of the powerful principle of religion, to obtain money from their deluded followers. No people can be too vigilant in regard to pretended religious teachers; and while it is undoubtedly their duty to contribute liberally for the support of the gospel, and the promotion of every good cause, it is no less their duty to examine with care every proposed object of benevolence, and to

watch with an eagle eye those who have the disbursement of the charities of the church. It is very rare that ministers ought to have much to do with disposing of the funds given for benevolent purposes; and when they do, they should in all cases be associated with their lay brethren. See Paley's *Horae Paulinae*, ch. iv., No. 1, 3, note. Comp. 1Co 16:3. On the phrase "filthy lucre," **See Barnes "1Ti 3:3".**

{b} "subvert" Mt 23:14

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 1 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *One of themselves*. That is, one of the Cretans. The quotation here shows, that Paul had his eye not only on the Jewish teachers there, but on the native Cretans. The meaning is, that, alike in reference to Jewish teachers and native-born Cretans, there was need of the utmost vigilance in the selection of persons for the ministry. They all had well-known traits of character, which made it proper that no one should be introduced into the ministry without extreme caution. It would seem, also, from the reasoning of Paul here, that the trait of character here referred to pertained not only to the native Cretans, but also to the character of the Jews residing there; for he evidently means that the caution should extend to all who dwelt on the island.

Even a prophet of their own. Or, *a poet*; for the word *prophet profhthv*— like the Latin word *vates*, was often applied to poets, because they were supposed to be *inspired* of the muses, or to write under the influence of inspiration. So Virgil, Ecl. 9, 32: Et me fecere poetam Pierides ..... me quoque dicunt vatera pastores. Varro, Ling. Lat. 6, 3: Vates poetse dicti sunt. The term *prophet* was also given by the Greeks to one who was regarded as the *interpreter* of the gods, or who explained the obscure responses of the oracles. As such an interpreter—as one who thus saw future events, he was called a *prophet*; and as the poets claimed much of this kind of knowledge, the name was given to them. It was also given to one who was regarded as eminently endowed with *wisdom*, or who had that kind of sagacity by which the results of present conduct might be foreseen, as if he was under the influence of a kind of inspiration. The word might have been applied to the person here referred to —Epimenides—in this latter sense, because he was eminently endowed with wisdom. He was one of the seven wise men of Greece. He was a contemporary of Solon, and was born at Phaestus, in the island of Crete, B. C. 659, and is said to have reached the age of 157 years. Many marvellous tales are told of him, (see Anthon, *Class. Dic*.,) which are commonly supposed to be fabulous, and which are to be traced to the invention of the Cretans. The event in his life which is best known is, that he visited Athens, at the request of the inhabitants, to prepare the way by sacrifices for the introduction of the laws of Solon. He was supposed to have intercourse with the gods, and it was presumed that a peculiar sacredness would attend the religious services in which he officiated. On this account, also, as well as because he was a poet, the name prophet may have been given him. Feuds and animosities prevailed at Athens, which it was supposed such a man might allay, and thus prepare them for the reception of the laws of Solon. The Athenians wished to reward him with wealth and public honours; but he refused to accept of any remuneration, and only demanded a branch of the sacred olive tree, and a decree of perpetual friendship between Athens and his native city. After his death, divine honours were paid to him by the Cretans. He

wrote a poem on the Argonantic expedition, and other poems, which are now entirely lost. The quotation here is supposed to be made from a treatise on oracles and responses, which is also lost.

The Cretans are always liars. This character of the Cretans is abundantly sustained by the examples adduced by Wetstein. To be a Cretan, became synonymous with being a liar, in the same way as to be a Corinthian, became synonymous with living a licentious life. Compare Introduction to 1Co 1:1. Thus the scholiast says, *paroimia esti to krhtizein epi tou qeudesyai to act the Cretan, is a proverb for to lie*. The particular reason why they had this character abroad, rather than other people, is unknown. Bishop Warburton supposes that they acquired it by claiming to have among them the tomb of Jupiter, and by maintaining that *all* the gods, like Jupiter, were only mortals who had been raised to divine honours.

Thus the Greeks maintained that they *always* proclaimed a false-hood by asserting this opinion. But their reputation for falsehood seems to have arisen from some deeper cause than this, and to have pertained to their general moral character. They were only more eminent in what was common among the ancient heathen, and what is almost universal among the heathen now. Comp. **See Barnes "Eph 4:25".**

Evil beasts. In their character, beasts or brutes of a ferocious or malignant kind. This would imply, that there was a great want of civilization, and that their want of refinement was accompanied with what commonly exists in that condition—the unrestrained indulgence of wild and ferocious passions. See examples of the same manner of speaking of barbarous and malicious men in Wetstein.

Slow bellies. Mere gormandizers. Two vices seem here to be attributed to them, which indeed commonly go together—*gluttony and sloth*. An industrious man will not be likely to be a gormandizer, and a gormandizer will not often be an industrious man. The mind of the poet, in this, seems to have conceived of them first as an indolent, worthless people; and then immediately to have recurred to the cause—that they were a race of gluttons: a people whose only concern was the stomach. Comp. Php 3:19. On the connexion between gluttony and sloth, see the examples in Wetstein. Seldom have more undesirable, and, in some respects, incongruous qualities, been grouped together in describing any people. They were false to a proverb, which was, indeed, consistent enough with their being ferocious—though ferocious and wild nations are sometimes faithful to their word; but they were, at the same time, ferocious and lazy, fierce and gluttonous—qualities which are not often found together. In some respects, therefore, they surpassed the common depravity of human nature, and blended in themselves ignoble properties which, among the worst people, are usually found existing alone. To mingle apparently contradictory qualities of wickedness in the same individual or people, is the height of depravity; as to blend in the same mind apparently inconsistent traits of virtuous character, or those which exist commonly, in their highest perfection, only alone, is the highest virtue.

{c} "One" Ac 17:28

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 1 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *This witness is true*. That is, this testimony, long before borne by one of their own number, was true when the apostle wrote to Titus. The fact that this was the general character of

the people, was a reason why he should be on his guard in introducing men into the ministry, and in the arrangement of affairs pertaining to the church. That it *was* true, see proofs in Wetstein.

Wherefore rebuke them. **See Barnes "2Ti 4:2"**.

Sharply. *apotomwv—cuttingly, severely*—from *apotemnw, to cut off*. The word is used here in the sense of severity, meaning that the reproof should be such as would be understood, and would show them plainly the wickedness of such traits of character, he was not to be mealy-mouthed, but he was to call things by their right names, and not to spare their faults. When men *know* that they are doing wrong, we should tell them so in few words; if they do not know it, it is necessary to *teach* them, in order to convince them of their error.

That they may be sound in the faith. That they may not allow the prevailing vices to corrupt their views of religion.

{*} "witness" "testimony" {a} "rebuke them sharply" 2Ti 4:2

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 1 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Not giving heed to Jewish fables*, etc. **See Barnes "1Ti 1:4"**.

And commandments of men that turn from the truth. **See Barnes "Mt 15:3,** Mt 15:4-6.

{b} "fables" 1Ti 1:4

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 1 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Unto the pure all things are pure*. **See Barnes "Ro 14:14"**; **See Barnes** "Ro 14:20".

There is probably an allusion here to the distinctions made in respect to meats and drinks among the Jews. Some articles of food were regarded as "clean," or allowed to be eaten; and some as "unclean," or forbidden. Paul says, that those distinctions ceased under the Christian dispensation, and that to those who had a conscience not easily troubled by nice and delicate questions about ceremonial observances, all kinds of food might be regarded as lawful and proper. Comp. **See Barnes** "1Ti 4:4, **See Barnes "1Ti 4:5"**.

If a man habitually maintains a good conscience in the sight of God, it will be accepted of him whether he do or do not abstain from certain kinds of food. Comp. **See Barnes "Col 2:16"**.

This passage, therefore, should not be interpreted as proving that all things are right and lawful for a Christian, or that whatever he may choose to do will be regarded as pure, but as primarily referring to distinctions in food, and meaning that there was no sanctity in eating one kind of food, and no sin in another, but that the mind was equally pure whatever was eaten. The phrase has a proverbial cast, though I know not that it was so used. The *principle* of the declaration is, that a pure mind—a truly pious mind will not regard the distinctions of food and drink; of festivals, rites, ceremonies, and days, as necessary to be observed in order to promote its purity. The conscience is not to be burdened and enslaved by these things, but is to be controlled only by the moral laws which God has ordained. But there may be a somewhat higher application of the words— that every ordinance of religion; every command of God; every event that occurs in Divine Providence, tends

to promote the holiness of one who is of pure heart. He can see a sanctifying tendency in everything, and can derive from all that is commanded, and all that occurs, the means of making the heart more holy. While a depraved mind will turn every such thing to a pernicious use, and make it the means of augmenting its malignity and corruption, to the pure mind it will be the means of increasing its confidence in God, and of making itself more holy. To such a mind everything may become a means of grace.

But unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure. Everything is made the means of increasing their depravity. No matter what ordinances of religion they observe; what distinctions of meats, or drinks, or days they regard, and what events of Providence occur, all are the occasion of augmented depravity. Such distinctions in food they make the means of fostering their pride and producing self-righteousness; the mercies of God they abuse to pamper their own lusts, and the afflictive events of Divine Providence they make the occasion of murmuring and rebellion. Naturally corrupt at heart, no ordinances of religion, and no events of Providence, make them any better, but all tend to deepen their depravity. A sentiment similar to this is found in the classic writers. Thus Seneca, Epis. 98. Malus animus omnia in malum vertit, etiam quse specie optimi venerunt. So again (de Beneficiis v. 12,) Quemadmodum stomachus morbo vitiatus, et colliques bilem, quoscunque acceperit cibos mutat—ita animus ceecus quicquid illi commiseris, id onus suum, et perniciem facit.

But even their mind and conscience is defiled. It is not a mere external defilement—a thing which they so much dread—but a much worse kind of pollution, that which extends to the soul and the conscience. Everything which they do tends to corrupt the inner man more and more, and to make them really more polluted and abominable in the sight of God. The wicked, while they remain impenitent, are constantly becoming worse and worse. They make everything the means of increasing their depravity, and even those things which seem to pertain only to outward observances, are made the occasion of the deeper corruption of the heart.

{c} "Unto the pure" Ro 14:14,20

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 1 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *They profess that they know God*. That is, the Jewish teachers particularly, who are referred to in Tit 1:14. All those persons were professors of religion, and claimed that they had a peculiar knowledge of God.

But in works they deny him. Their conduct is such as to show that they have no real acquaintance with him.

Being abominable. In their conduct. The word here used— *bdeluktoi*—occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means that which is detestable, or to be held in abhorrence.

And disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate. Marg., *void of judgment*. On the word here used— *adokimov*, **See Barnes "Ro 1:28"**; **See Barnes** "2Co 13:5".

It means here, that in reference to everything that was good, their conduct was such that it could not be approved, or deserved disapprobation. It was for this reason; from the character of the people of the island of Crete, and of those who claimed to be teachers there enforcing the obligation of the Mosaic law, that it was so important for Titus to exercise special care in introducing men into

the ministry, and in completing the arrangements contemplated in the organization of the churches there. Yet, is this character confined to them? Are there none now who profess that they know God, but in works deny him; whose conduct is such that it ought to be abhorred; who are disobedient to the plain commands of God, and whose character in respect to all that pertains to true piety, is to be disapproved by the truly pious, and will be by God at the last day? Alas! taking the church at large, there are many such; and the fact that there are such persons, is the grand hinderance to the triumphs of religion on the earth. "*The way to heaven is blocked up by dead professors of religion*."

{d} "profess" 2Ti 3:5,7 {1} "reprobate" "void of judgment"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 2

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 2 - Verse 1

Titus CHAPTER 2

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

IN the previous chapter, the apostle had directed Titus what to do in the organization of churches in the various cities of Crete, and had put him on his guard in doing it, by showing the character of the people he had to deal with. In this chapter, he gives him various instructions as to his *own* method of teaching, showing what kind of doctrines he should inculcate, and what kind of instructions he should give to the various classes of his hearers. He was, in general, to speak only such things as became sound doctrine, Tit 2:1. In particular, he was to instruct aged men to be sober, grave, and temperate—acting in a manner that became their time of life, Tit 2:2; the aged women to be a proper example to the younger females, and to exercise a proper care over them, Tit 2:3-5; the young men to be sober-minded, Tit 2:6; Titus himself, who evidently came under the class of young men, was to be an example to them in all things, Tit 2:7,8; and servants were to be instructed to perform their duty to their masters with fidelity, Tit 2:9,10. The duty of giving these instructions is then enforced by a reference to the nature and design of the gospel, Tit 2:11-15. That grace which brings salvation has appeared to all mankind, and its design is to make all holy who embrace it, and to teach all to live for a higher and a better world.

Verse 1. *But speak thou*. In thine own ministry. In the previous chapter he had given him instructions as to the kind of persons who were to be put into the sacred office. Here he gives him special instructions in regard to his own breaching.

The things which become sound doctrine. To wit, those which he proceeds immediately to specify. On the phrase sound doctrine, **See Barnes** "1Ti 1:10, comp. **See Barnes "2Ti 4:3"**.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 2 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *That the aged men*. All aged men—for there is no reason to suppose that the apostle refers particularly to those who were in office, or who were technically *elders*, or *presbyters*. If he had, he would have used the common word— *presbuterov presbyter* (see Mt 15:2 16:21, 21:23 26:3,47,57,59 1Ti 5:1,17,19 Tit 1:5

Jas 5:14 1Pe 5:1,) instead of the unusual word— *presbuthv* an old or aged man—a word which occurs nowhere else in the New Testament except in Lu 1:18, "For I am *an old man*," and Phm 1:9, "being such an one as Paul *the aged*." It is in no instance applied to *an office*. Besides, the instructions which Titus was to give to such men was not that which peculiarly pertained to *elders* as officers in the church, but to *all* old men. The idea is, that he was to adapt his instructions to the peculiar character of different classes of his hearers. The *aged* needed special instructions, and so did the young.

Be sober. Marg., *vigilant*. See the word explained **See Barnes** "1Ti 3:2, where it is rendered *vigilant*. In 1Ti 3:11, the same word is rendered *sober*.

Grave. Serious. **See Barnes "1Ti 3:8"**.

Compare **See Barnes** "Php 4:8, where the same word is rendered honest.

Temperate. *swfronav*. Rather, *prudent, or sober-minded*. See it explained **See Barnes** "1Ti 3:2, where it is rendered sober. Also, Tit 1:8.

Sound in faith. **See Barnes "1Ti 1:10"**; **See Barnes** "Tit 1:13".

In charity. In love. **See Barnes** "1Co 13:1, seq. The meaning is, that an old man should evince love for all, especially for those who are good. He should have overcome, at his time of life, all the fiery, impetuous, envious, wrathful passions of his early years, and his mind should be subdued into sweet benevolence to all mankind.

In patience. In the infirmities of old age—in the trials resulting from the loss of the friends of their early years —in their loneliness in the world, they should show that the effect of all God's dealings with them has been to produce patience. The aged should submit to the trials of their advanced years, also, with resignation—for they will soon be over. A few more sighs, and they will sigh no more; a little longer bearing up under their infirmities, and they will renew their youth before the throne of God.

{a} "aged men" Pr 16:31 {1} "sober" "vigilant"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 2 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *The aged women likewise*. Not only those who may have the office of deaconnesses, but all aged females.

That they be in behaviour as becometh holiness. Marg., *holy women*. The Greek word is not found elsewhere in the New Testament. It means appropriate to a sacred place or person, or becoming to religion. Their conduct should be such as the gospel requires.

Not false accusers. Marg., *make-bates*. Gr., *diabolouv*, the word commonly applied to the devil—*as the accuser*. See it explained **See Barnes** "1Ti 3:11, where it is rendered *slanderers*.

Not given to much wine. **See Barnes "1Ti 3:3"**.

Teachers of good things. That is, instructing the younger—whether their own children, or whether they sustain the office of deaconess, and are appointed to give instruction to younger females. Comp. **See Barnes "1Ti 5:2-6"**.

{2} "holiness" "holy women" {3} "false accusers" "makebates"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 2 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *That they may teach the young women to be sober*. Marg., *wise* —a word similar to that which in Tit 2:2 is rendered *temperate*, and in 1Ti 3:2, *sober*. The meaning is, that they should instruct them to have their desires and passions well regulated, or under proper control.

To love their husbands, *filandrouv*. This word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. In Eph 5:25, Paul directs husbands to love their wives, and in Eph 5:33, the wife to reverence her husband, and here he says that it should be one of the first duties enjoined on the wife that she should love her husband. All happiness in the marriage relation is based on mutual love. When that departs, happiness departs. No wealth or splendour in a dwelling—no gorgeousness of equipage or apparel— no magnificence of entertainment or sweetness of music—and no forms of courtesy and politeness, can be a compensation for the want of affection. Mutual love between a husband and wife will diffuse comfort through the obscurest cottage of poverty; the want of it cannot be supplied by all that can be furnished in the palaces of the great.

To love their children. Nature prompts to this, and yet there are those so depraved that they have no maternal affection. **See Barnes "Ro 1:31"**.

Religion reproduces natural affection when sin has weakened or destroyed it, and it is the design of Christianity to recover and invigorate all the lost or weakened sensibilities of our nature.

{b} "the young women" 1Ti 5:14 {4} "sober" "wise"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 2 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *To be discreet*. The same word rendered in Tit 2:2, *temperate*, and explained in Tit 2:4.

Chaste. Pure—in heart, and in life.

Keepers at home. That is, characteristically attentive to their domestic concerns, or to their duties in their families. A similar injunction is found in the precepts of the Pythagoreans— *tan gar gunaika dei oikouren kai endon menen*. See Creuzer's Symbolik, iii. 120. This does not mean, of course, that they are *never* to go abroad, but they are not to neglect their domestic affairs; they are not to be better known abroad than at home; they are not to omit their own duties, and become "busy-bodies" in the concerns of others. Religion is the patron of the domestic virtues, and regards the appropriate duties in a family as those most intimately connected with its own progress in the world. It looks benignly on all which makes home a place of contentment, intelligence, and peace. It does not flourish when domestic duties are neglected; and whatever may be done abroad, or whatever self-denial and zeal in the cause of religion may be evinced there, or whatever call there

may be for the labours of Christians there, or however much good may be actually done abroad, religion has *gained nothing*, on the whole, if, in order to secure these things, the duties of a wife and mother at home have been disregarded. Our first duty is at home, and all other duties will be well performed just in proportion as that is.

Good. In all respects, and in all relations. To a wife, a mother, a sister, there can be no higher characteristic ascribed, than to say that she is *good*. What other trait of mind will enable her better to perform her appropriate duties of life? What other will make her more like her Saviour?

Obedient to their own husbands. **See Barnes** "Eph 5:22, seq. **See Barnes "Col 3:18"**.

That the word of God be not blasphemed. That the gospel may not be *injuriously spoken of* (**See Barnes** "Mt 9:3,) on account of the inconsistent lives of those who profess to be influenced by it. The idea is, that religion ought to produce the virtues here spoken of, and that when it does not, it will be reproached as being of no value.

{*} "blasphemed" "evil spoken of"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 2 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Young men likewise exhort to be sober-minded*. Marg., *discreet*. On the meaning of the Greek word used here (*swfronein*,) **See Barnes "Tit 2:2"**; **See Barnes** "Tit 2:4".

The idea is, that they should be entreated to be prudent, discreet, serious in their deportment; to get the mastery over their passions and appetites; to control the propensities to which youth are subject; and that there should be such self-government, under the influence of religion, as to avoid excess in everything. A well-governed mind, superior to the indulgence of those passions to which the young are prone, will express the meaning of the word here. They should be "steady in their behaviour, superior to sensual temptations, and constant in the exercise of every part of self-government." *Doddridge*. The reasons for this are obvious.

(1.) The hopes of the church depend much on them.

(2.) A young man who cannot govern himself, gives little promise of being useful or happy.

(3.) Indulgence in the propensities to which young men are prone, will, sooner or later, bring ruin to the body and the soul.

(4.) They are just at the period of life when they are exposed to peculiar temptations, and when they need to exercise a peculiar guardianship over their own conduct.

(5.) Like others, they may soon die; and they should be habitually in such a frame of mind, as to be prepared to stand before God. A young man who feels that he may be soon in the eternal world, cannot but be sensible of the propriety of having a serious mind, and of living and acting as in the immediate presence of his Maker and Judge.

{1} "sober" "discreet"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 2 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works*. Not merely teaching others, but showing them by *example* how they ought to live. On the word rendered *pattern* (*tupon*, *type*,) see **See Barnes "Heb 8:6"**; **See Barnes** "1Co 10:6"; Php 3:17.

In doctrine. In your manner of teaching. **See Barnes "1Ti 4:16"**.

Showing uncorruptness. The word here used does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It means, here, the same as *purity*—that which is not erroneous, and which does not tend to corrupt or vitiate the morals of others, or to endanger their salvation. Everything in his teaching was to be such as to make men purer and better.

Gravity. See this word explained **See Barnes** "1Ti 2:2, where it is rendered *honesty*. Comp. **See Barnes** "1Ti 3:4, where it is rendered *gravity*. It does not elsewhere occur. See the use of the adjective, however, in Php 4:8 1Ti 3:8,11 Tit 2:2.

The word properly means *venerableness*; then, whatever will insure respect, in character, opinions, deportment. The sense here is, that the manner in which a preacher delivers his message, should be such as to *command respect*, he should evince good sense, undoubted piety, an acquaintance with his subject, simplicity, seriousness, and earnestness, in his manner.

Sincerity. See this word (*afyarsia*) explained **See Barnes "Eph 6:24"**.

It is rendered *immortality* in Ro 2:7 2Ti 1:10; *incorruption*, in 1Co 15:42,50,53,54; and *sincerity*, Eph 6:24, and in the place before us. It does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It means *incorruption, incapacity of decay*; and, therefore, would be here synonymous with *purity*. It should be said, however, that it is wanting in many Mss., and is rejected in the later editions of the New Testament by Wetstein, Tittman, and Hahn.

{a} "pattern" 1Ti 4:12

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 2 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Sound speech*. **See Barnes "1Ti 1:10"**.

He was to use language that would be spiritually healthful (*ugih*;) that is, true, pure, uncorrupted.—This word, and its correlatives, is used in this sense, in the New Testament, only by the apostle Paul. It is commonly applied to the body, meaning that which is *healthful, or whole*. See Lu 5:31 6:10, 7:10 15:27; Mt 12:13 15:31; Mr 3:5 5:34

Joh 5:4,6,9,11,14,15 7:23 Ac 4:10 3Jo 1:2.

For Paul's use of the word, see 1Ti 1:10 6:3; 2Ti 1:13 4:3; Tit 1:9,13, 2:1,2,8.

It does not elsewhere occur.

That cannot be condemned. Such as cannot be shown to be weak, or unsound; such that no one could find fault with it, or such as an adversary could not take hold of and blame. This direction would imply purity and seriousness of language, solidity of argument, and truth in the doctrines which he maintained.

That he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, etc, Ashamed that he has opposed such views.

{b} "Sound speech" 1Ti 6:3

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 2 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Exhort servants to be obedient to their own masters*. See this explained **See Barnes "**Eph 6:5, seq., **See Barnes "1Ti 6:1-4"**.

And to please them well in all things. That is, so far as they lawfully may, or in those things which are not contrary to the will of God. Comp. Eph 6:6. It should be an object with one who is a servant, to meet the approbation of his master, as long as this relation continues. This rule would not, however, go to the extent to require him to please his master in doing anything that is contrary to the law of God, or that is morally wrong.

Not answering again. Marg., *gainsaying*. Not contradicting, or not disobeying. They were to do what the master required, if it did not interfere with the rights of conscience, without attempting to argue the matter—without disputing with the master—and without advancing their own opinions. Where this relation exists, no one can doubt that this is a proper frame of mind for a servant. It may be observed, however, that all that is here said would be equally appropriate, whether the servitude was voluntary or involuntary. A man who becomes voluntarily a servant, binds himself to obey his master cheerfully and quietly, without gainsaying, and without attempting to reason the matter with him, or propounding his own opinions, even though they may be much wiser than those of his employer, he makes a contract to obey his master, not to reason with him, or to *instruct* him.

{c} "servants" Eph 6:5 {2} "answering again" "gainsaying"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 2 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Not purloining*. Not to appropriate to themselves what belongs to their masters. The word *purloin* means, literally, to take or carry away for one's self; and would be applied to an appropriation to one's self of what pertained to a common stock, or what belonged to one in whose employ we are—as the embezzlement of public funds. Here it means that the servant was not to apply to his own use what belonged to his master; that is, was not to *pilfer* —a vice to which, as all know, servants, and especially slaves, are particularly exposed. See the word explained **See Barnes "Ac 5:2"**.

But showing all good fidelity. In labouring, and in taking care of the property intrusted to them.

That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. That they may show the fair influence of religion on them, in all respects, making them industrious, honest, kind, and obedient. They were to show that the effect of the religion which they professed was to make them better fitted to discharge tile duties of their station in life, however humble; or that its influence on them was desirable in every respect. In this way, they might hope also that the minds of their masters might be reached, and that they might be brought to respect and love the gospel. Learn, hence,

(1.) that one in the most humble walk of life *may* so live as to be an *ornament* to religion, as well as one favoured with more advantages.

(2.) That servants may do much good, by so living as to show to all around them that there is a reality in the gospel, and to lead others to love it.

(3.) If, in this situation of life, it is a duty so to live as to adorn religion, it cannot be less so in more elevated situations. A master should feel the obligation not to be surpassed in religious character by his servant.

{d} "that they may" Mt 5:16

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 2 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *For the grace of God*. The favour of God, shown to the undeserving. **See Barnes "Ro 1:7"**.

That bringeth salvation. Marg., *to all men, hath appeared*. That is, in the margin, "the grace which brings salvation to all men has been revealed." The marginal reading is most in accordance with the Greek, though it will bear either construction. If that which is in the text be adopted, it means that the plan of salvation has been revealed to all classes of men; that is, that it is *announced or revealed* to all the race that they may be saved. Comp. **See Barnes "Col 1:23"**.

If the other rendering be adopted, it means that that plan was fitted to secure the salvation of all men; that none were excluded from the offer; that provision had been made for all, and all might come and be saved. Whichever interpretation be adopted, the sense here will not be essentially varied. It is, that the gospel was adapted to man as man, and therefore might include servants as well as masters; subjects, as well as kings; the poor, as well as the rich; the ignorant, as well as the learned. See **See Barnes "1Ti 2:1,2"**; **See Barnes** "Ac 17:26".

{e} "grace of God" Ro 5:15 {3} "hath appeared" "hath appeared to all men"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 2 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Teaching us*. That is the "grace of God" so teaches us; or that system of religion which is a manifestation of the grace of God, inculcates the great and important duties which Paul proceeds to state.

That denying ungodliness and worldly lusts. "That by denying ourselves of these, or refusing to practise them, we should lead a holy life." The word *ungodliness*, here means all that would be included under the word impiety; that is, all failure in the performance of our proper duties towards God. **See Barnes "Ro 1:18"**.

The phrase "worldly lusts," refers to all improper desires pertaining to this life—the desire of wealth, pleasure, honour, sensual indulgence. It refers to such passions as the men of this world are prone to, and would include all those things which cannot be indulged in with a proper reference to the world to come. The gross passions would be of course included, and all those more re- fined pleasures also which constitute the characteristic and peculiar enjoyments of those who do not live unto God.

We should live soberly. See the word soberly (*swfronwv*) explained **See Barnes** "Tit 2:2, **See Barnes "Tit 2:4"**.

It means that we should exercise a due restraint on our passions and propensities.

Righteously. Justly. This refers to the proper performance of our duties to our fellowmen; and it means that religion teaches us to perform those duties with fidelity, according to all our relations in life; to all our promises and contracts; to our fellow-citizens and neighbours; to the poor, and needy, and ignorant, and oppressed; and to all those who are providentially placed in our way who need our kind offices.

Justice to them would lead us to act as we would wish that they would towards us.

And godly. Piously; that is, in the faithful performance of our duties to God. We have here, then, an epitome of all that religion requires:

(1.) Our duty to ourselves—included in the word "soberly," and requiring a suitable control over our evil propensities and passions;

(2.) our duty to our fellow-men in all the relations we sustain in life; and

(3.) our duty to God—evinced in what will be properly regarded as a *pious life*. He that does these things, meets all the responsibilities of his condition and relations; and the Christian system, requiring the faithful performance of these duties, shows how admirably it is adapted to man.

In this present world. That is, as long as we shall continue in it. These are the duties which we owe in the present life.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 2 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Looking for*. Expecting; waiting for. That is, in the faithful performance of our duties to ourselves, to our fellow-creatures, and to God, we are patiently to wait for the coming of our Lord.

(1.) We are to believe that he will return;

(2.) we are to be in a posture of expectation, not knowing when he will come; and

(3.) we are to be ready for him whenever he shall come. **See Barnes** "Mt 24:42, seq. **See Barnes "1Th 5:4"**; **See Barnes "Php 3:20"**.

That blessed hope. The fulfillment of that hope so full of blessedness to us.

The glorious appearing. **See Barnes "2Th 2:8"**.

Compare 1Ti 6:14 2Ti 1:10, 4:1,8.

Of the great God. There can be little doubt, if any, that by "the great God" here, the apostle referred to the Lord Jesus, for it is not a doctrine of the New Testament that God himself as such, or in contradistinction from his incarnate Son, will appear at the last day. It is said, indeed, that the Saviour will come "in the glory of his Father with his angels," (Mt 16:27,) but that God as such will appear, is not taught in the Bible. The doctrine there is, that God will be manifest in his Son; that the Divine approach to our world will be through him to judge the race; and that though he will be accompanied with the appropriate symbols of the Divinity, yet it will be the Son of God who will be visible. No one, accustomed to Paul's views, can well doubt that when ne used this language he had his eye throughout on the Son of God, and that he expected no other manifestation than what would be made through him. In no place in the New Testament is the phrase *epifaneian tou yeou* " the manifestation or appearing of God"—applied to any other one than Christ. It is true that this is spoken of here as the "appearing of the glory *thv doxhv* —of the great God;" but the idea is that of such a manifestation as became God, or would appropriately display his glory. It is known

to most persons who have attended to religious controversies, that this passage has given rise to much discussion. The ancients, in general, interpreted it as meaning, "The glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ." This sense has been vindicated by the labours of Beza, Whitby, Bull, Matthaei, and Middleton, (on the Greek article,) and is the common interpretation of those who claim to be orthodox. See Bloomfield, Rec. Syn., and Notes, *in loc*. He contends that the meaning is, "the glorious appearance of that GREAT BEING who is our GOD AND SAVIOUR." The arguments for this opinion are well summed up by Bloomfield. Without going into a critical examination of this passage, which would not be in accordance with the design of these Notes, it may be remarked in general,

(1.) that no plain reader of the New Testament, accustomed to the common language there, would have any doubt that the apostle referred here to the coming of the Lord Jesus.

(2.) That the "coming" of God, as such, is not spoken of in this manner in the New Testament.

(3.) That the expectation of Christians was directed to the advent of the ascended Saviour, not to the appearing of God as such.

(4.) That this is just such language as one would use who believed that the Lord Jesus is Divine, or that the name God might properly be applied to him.

(5.) That it would naturally and obviously convey the idea that he was Divine, to one who had no theory to defend.

(6.) That if the apostle did not mean this, he used such language as was fitted to lead men into error. And

(7.) that the fair construction of the Greek here, according to the application of the most rigid rules, abundantly sustains the interpretation which the plain reader of the New Testament would affix to it. The names above referred to are abundant proof that no violation is done to the rules of the Greek language by this interpretation, but rather that the fair construction of the original demands it. If this be so, then this furnishes an important proof of the divinity of Christ.

{d} "Looking" 2Pe 3:12 {e} "appearing" Re 1:7

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 2 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Who gave himself for us*. **See Barnes "Eph 5:2"**.

That he might redeem us from all iniquity. The word here rendered *redeem lutrow*, occurs only here and in Lu 24:21 1Pe 1:18. The noun, however— *lutron*, *lutron*, occurs in Mt 20:28, and Mr 10:45, where it is rendered *ransom*. See it explained **See Barnes "Mt 20:28"**.

It is here said that the *object* of his giving himself was to save his people from all iniquity. See this explained **See Barnes "Mt 1:21"**.

And purify unto himself.

(1.) *Purify them*, or make them holy. This is the first and leading object. **See Barnes "Heb 9:14"**.

(2.) Unto himself: that is, they are no longer to be regarded as their own, but as redeemed for his own service, and for the promotion of his glory. **See Barnes** "1Co 6:19, **See Barnes "1Co 6:20"**.

A peculiar people, 1Pe 2:9. The word here used (*periousiov*) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means, properly, *having abundance*; and then *one's own, what is special, or peculiar*, (Rob. Lex.;) and here means that they were to be regarded as *belonging* to the Lord Jesus. It does

not mean, as the word would seem to imply—and as is undoubtedly true—that they are to be a peculiar people in the sense that they are to be *unlike others*, or to have views and principles peculiar to themselves; but that they belong to the "Saviour" in contradistinction from belonging to themselves—"peculiar," or his own in the sense that a man's property is his own, and does not belong to others. This passage, therefore, should not be used to prove that Christians should be *unlike others* in their manner of living, but that they belong to Christ as his redeemed people. From that it may indeed be inferred that they should be unlike others, but that is not the direct teaching of the passage.

Zealous of good works. As the result of their redemption; that is, this is one object of their having been redeemed. **See Barnes "Eph 2:10"**.

{f} "gave himself" Eph 5:2 {g} "all iniquity" Ps 130:8 {h} "purity" Heb 9:14 {i} "peculiar" De 7:6 1Pe 2:9 {k} "zealous" Eph 2:10

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 2 - Verse 15

Verse 15. These things speak and exhort. **See Barnes "1Ti 6:2"**.

And rebuke with all authority. **See Barnes** "1Ti 5:1, **See Barnes "1Ti 5:20"**; **See Barnes** "2Ti 4:2".

The word *authority* here means *command epitagh*. 1Co 7:6 25; 2Co 8:8 1Ti 1:1; Tit 1:3.

The sense here is, he was to do it decidedly, without ambiguity, without compromise, and without keeping any thing back. He was to state these things not as being advice or counsel, but as the requirement of God.

Let no man despise thee. That is, conduct yourself, as you may easily do, so as to command universal respect as a minister of God. **See Barnes "1Ti 4:12"**.

{l} "Let no man" 1Ti 4:12.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 3

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 3 - Verse 1

Titus CHAPTER 3

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

THIS chapter comprises the following subjects :—

(1.) Titus was to instruct his hearers to be subject to lawful authority, and in general to manifest meekness and gentleness towards all classes of men, Tit 3:1 2.

(2.) A *reason* is assigned why they should do this, Tit 3:3-8. They who were Christians were once, indeed, like others, disobedient and unholy; they were regardless of law, and gave free

indulgence to their evil propensities, but they had been redeemed for a better purpose, and it was the design of God in redeeming them, that they should manifest every kind of virtue.

(3.) Titus was to avoid foolish questions, and contentions, and strifes about the law, Tit 3:9.

(4.) He who was a heretic was to be rejected after suitable admonitions, Tit 3:10,11.

(5.) Paul directs Titus to come to him at Nicopolis, and to bring Zenas and Apollos with him, Tit 3:12-14.

(6.) He closes with the customary salutations, Tit 3:15.

Verse 1. Put them in mind to be subject, etc. See the duty here enjoined, explained **See Barnes** "Ro 13:1, seq.

Principalities and powers. See these words explained **See Barnes "Ro 8:38"**.

The word here rendered *powers*, (*exousiaiv*,) is not, indeed, the same as that which is found there, (*dunameiv*,) but the same idea is conveyed. Comp. **See Barnes "Eph 1:21"**.

To obey magistrates. That is, to obey them in all that was not contrary to the word of God. **See Barnes** "Ro 13:1, seq.; **See Barnes** "Ac 4:19, **See Barnes "Ac 4:20"**.

To be ready to every good work. To be prepared for (*etoimouv*); prompt to perform all that is good. **See Barnes "Php 4:8"**.

A Christian should be always ready to do good as far as he is able. He should not need to be urged, or coaxed, or persuaded, but should be so ready always to do good that he will count it a privilege to have the opportunity to do it.

{a} "subject" Ro 13:1

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 3 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *To speak evil of no man*. Gr., "to blaspheme (*blasfhmein*, compare **See Barnes "Mt 9:3"**) no one." Doddridge renders it, "Calumniate no one." The idea is, that we are not to slander, revile, or defame any one. We are not to say anything to any one, or *of* any one, which will do him injury. We are never to utter anything which we know to be false about him, or to give such a colouring to his words or conduct as to do him wrong in any way. We should always so speak to him and of him in such a way that he will have no reason to complain that he is an injured man. It may be necessary, when we are called to state what we know of his character, to say things which are not at all in his favour, or things which he has said or done that were wrong; but

(1.) we should never do this *for the purpose* of doing him injury, or so as to find a pleasure in it; and

(2.) where it is necessary to make the statement, it should be so as to do him no injustice. We should give no improper colouring. We should exaggerate no circumstance. We should never attempt to express ourselves about his motives, or charge on him bad motives—for we know not what his motives were. We should state every palliating circumstance of which we have knowledge, and *do entire justice to it*. We should not make the bad traits of his character prominent, and pass over all that is good. In a word, we should show that we would rather find him to be a good man than a bad man—*even if the result should be that we had been mistaken in our opinions*. It is better that we should have been mistaken, than that he should be a bad man.

To be no brawlers. **See Barnes "1Ti 3:3"**.

The same Greek word occurs in both places. It is not elsewhere found in the New Testament.

But gentle. The word here used is rendered *moderation* in Php 4:5; *patient* in 1Ti 3:3, and elsewhere *gentle*. **See Barnes "1Ti 3:3"**.

Showing all meekness unto all men. In the reception of injuries. **See Barnes "Mt 5:6 Eph 4:2"**.

{b} "all meekness" Eph 4:2

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 3 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *For we ourselves*. We who are Christians. There is no reason for supposing, as Benson does, that this is to be understood as confined to Paul himself. There are some things mentioned here which were not probably true of him before his conversion, and the connexion does not require us to suppose that he referred particularly to himself. He is stating a reason why those to whom Titus was appointed to preach should be urged to lead holy lives, and especially to manifest a spirit of order, peace, kindness, and due subordination to law. In enforcing this, he says, that those who were now Christians had formerly been wicked, disorderly, and sensual, but that under the influence of the gospel, they had been induced to lead better lives. The same gospel which had been effectual in their case, might be in others. To others it would be an encouragement to show that there were cases in which the gospel had been thus efficacious, and those who were appointed to preach it might refer to their own example as a reason why others should be persuaded to lead holy lives. In preaching to others, also, they were not to be proud or arrogant. They were to remember that they were formerly in the same condition with those whom they addressed, and whom they exhorted to reformation. They were not to forget that what they had that was superior to others they owed to the grace of God, and not to any native goodness. He will exhort the wicked to repentance most effectually who remembers that his own former life was wicked; he will evince most of the proper spirit in doing it who has the deepest sense of the errors and folly of his own past ways.

Foolish. See this word explained in **See Barnes** "Lu 24:26, where it is rendered *fools*. Comp. Ro 1:14, where it is rendered *unwise*; and Ga 3:1,3; 1Ti 6:9, where it is rendered *foolish*.

Disobedient. To law, to parents, to civil authority, to God. This is the natural character of the human heart. See Lu 1:17 Ro 1:30 2Ti 3:2 Tit 1:16, where the same word occurs.

Deceived. By the great enemy, by false teachers, by our own hearts, and by the flattery of others. It is a characteristic of man by nature that he sees nothing in its true light, but walks along amidst constant, though changing and very beautiful illusions. Comp. Mt 24:4,6,11; 2Ti 3:13 1Pe 2:25; Re 12:9 18:23, where the same word occurs. See also Re 20:3,8,10, where the same word is applied to that great deceiver who has led the world astray. Every one who is converted feels, and is ready to confess, that before conversion he was deceived as to the comparative value of things, as to the enjoyment which he expected to find in scenes of pleasure and riot, and often in what seemed to him well-formed plans.

Serving divers lusts and pleasures. Indulging in the various corrupt passions and propensities of the soul. We were so under their influence that it might be said we were their servants, or were slaves to them (*douleuontev*;) that is, we implicitly obeyed them. **See Barnes "Ro 6:16,17"**.

Living in malice. Gr., *in evil en kakia*; that is, in all kinds of evil. **See Barnes** "Ro 1:29, where the word is rendered maliciousness.

And envy. Displeasure at the happiness and prosperity of others. **See Barnes "Ro 1:29"**.

Hateful. *stughtoi*. This word does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It means, that our conduct was such as to be worthy of the hatred of others. Of whom, before his conversion, is not this true?

And hating one another. There was no brotherly love; no true affection for others. There was ill-will felt in the heart, and it was evinced in the life. This is an apt description of the state of the heathen world before the gospel shines on it, and it may be regarded as the characteristic of all men before conversion. They have no true love for one another, such as they ought to cherish, and they are liable constantly to give indulgence to feelings which evince hatred. In contentions, and strifes, and litigations, and wars, this feeling is constantly breaking out. All this is suggested here as a *reason* why Christians should now be gentle and mild toward those who are evil. Let us remember what we were, and we shall not be disposed to treat others harshly. When a Christian is tempted to unkind thoughts or words towards others, nothing is more appropriate for him than to reflect on his own past life.

{c} "we ourselves" 1Co 6:11 1Pe 4:3

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 3 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *But after that*. Gr., when— *ote*. The meaning is, that "when the love of God was manifested in the plan of salvation, he saved us from this state by our being washed and purified." The idea is not, that "the love of God appeared" *after* we had sinned in this way; but that when his mercy was thus displayed we were converted from our sins, and made pure in his sight.

The kindness. *h crhstothv*, *—the goodness, or the benignity*. The word is rendered *goodness* and *good* in Ro 2:4; Ro 3:12; Ro 11:22, thrice; *kindness*, 2Co 6:6 Eph 2:7; Col 3:12; Tit 3:4; and *gentleness*, Ga 5:22. The act of redeeming us was one of great kindness, or goodness.

And love of God. Marg., *pity*. The Greek word is *filanyrwpia— philanthropy*—the love of man. The plan of salvation was founded on love to man, and was the highest expression of that love. **See Barnes "Joh 3:16"**.

The Greek of this verse is, "When the kindness and love of God our Saviour to man was manifested, he saved us," (Tit 3:5,) to wit, from those sins of which we had before been guilty.

{1} "kindness and love" "pity"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 3 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Not by works of righteousness which we have done*. The plan was not based on our own good works, nor are our own good works now the cause of our salvation. If men could have been saved by their own good works, there would have been no need of salvation by the Redeemer; if our own deeds were now the basis of our title to eternal life, the work of Christ would be equally unnecessary. It is a great and fundamental principle of the gospel that the good works of men come in for no share in the justification of the soul. They are in no sense a *consideration* on account of

which God pardons a man, and receives him to favour. The only basis of justification is the merit of the Lord Jesus Christ; and in the matter of justification before God, all the race is on a level. **See Barnes "Eph 2:8,9".**

But according to his mercy.

(1.) It had its origin in mercy;

(2.) it is by mere mercy or compassion, and not by justice;

(3.) it is an expression of *great mercy*; and

(4.) it is now *in fact* conferred only by mercy. Whatever we have done or can do, when we come to receive salvation from the hand of God, there is no other element which enters into it but mercy. It is not because our deeds deserve it; it is not because we have by repentance and faith wrought ourselves into such a state of mind that we can *claim* it; but, after all our tears, and sighs, and prayers, and good deeds, it is a mere favour. Even then God might justly withhold it if he chose, and no blame would be attached to him if he should suffer us to sink down to ruin.

He saved us. That is, he began that salvation in us which is to be completed in heaven. A, man who is already renewed and pardoned may be spoken of as *saved*—for

(1.) the work of salvation is begun, and

(2.) when begun it will certainly be completed. **See Barnes "Php 1:6".**

By the washing of regeneration. In order to a correct understanding of this important passage, it is necessary to ascertain whether the phrase here used refers to *baptism*, and whether anything different is intended by it from what is meant by the succeeding phrase—" renewing of the Holy Ghost."—The word rendered washing (*loutron*) occurs in the New Testament only in this place and in Eph 5:26, where also it is rendered *washing*—" That he might sanctify and cleanse it [the church] with the washing of water by the word." The word properly means *a bath*; then water.for bathing; then the act of bathing, washing, ablution. *Passow and Robinson*. It is used by Homer to denote a warm or cold bath; then a washing away, and is thus applied to the drink-offerings in sacrifice, which were supposed to purify or wash away sin. *Passow*. The word here does not mean *laver*, or the vessel for washing in, which would be expressed by *louthr*, *louter*; and this word cannot be properly applied to the baptismal font. The word in itself would naturally be understood as referring to baptism, (comp. **See Barnes** "Ac 22:16,) which was regarded as the emblem of washing away sins, or of cleansing from them. I say it was the *emblem*, not the *means* of purifying the soul from sin. If this be the allusion, and it seems probable, then the phrase "washing of regeneration" would mean "that outward washing or baptism which is the *emblem* of regeneration," and which is appointed as one of the ordinances connected with salvation. **See Barnes "Mr 16:16".**

"He that believeth and *is baptized* shall be saved." It is not affirmed in his phrase that baptism is the means of regeneration; or that grace is *necessarily* conveyed by it; and still less that baptism is regeneration, for no one of these is a necessary interpretation of the passage, and should not be assumed to be the true one. The full force of the language will be met by the supposition that it means that baptism is the *emblem or symbol* of regeneration, and, if this is the case, no one has a right to assume that the other is certainly the meaning. And that this is the meaning is further clear, because it is nowhere taught in the New Testament that baptism is regeneration, or that it is the means of regeneration. The word rendered regeneration (*paliggenesia*, *palingenesia*) occurs in the New Testament only here and in Mt 19:28,—"in the regeneration when the Son of man," etc. It means, properly, a new-birth, reproduction, or renewal. It would properly be applied to one who should be begotten again in this sense, that a new life was commenced in him in some way

corresponding to his being made to live at first. To the proper idea of the word, it is essential that there should be connected the notion of the commencement of life in the man, so that he may be said to live anew; and as religion is in the Scriptures represented as *life*, it is properly applied to the *beginning* of that kind of life by which man may be said to live anew. This word, occurring only here and in Mt 19:28, and there indubitably *not* referring to baptism, should not be here understood as referring to that, or be applied to that, for

(1.) that is not the proper meaning of the word;

(2.) there is no Scripture usage to sanction it;

(3.) the connexion here does not demand it;

(4.) the correlatives of the word (Joh 3:3,5,6,8 1Pe 1:3) are applied only to that great moral change which is produced by the Holy Ghost; and

(5.) it is a dangerous use of the word. Its use in this sense leaves the impression that the only change needful for man is that which is produced by being regularly baptized. On almost no point has so much injury been done in the church as by the application of the word *regeneration* to baptism. It affects the beginning of religion in the soul; and if a mistake is made there, it is one which must pervade all the views of piety.

And renewing of the Holy Ghost. This is an important clause, added by Paul apparently to save from the possibility of falling into error. If the former expression, "the washing of regeneration," had been left to stand by itself, it might have been supposed possibly that all the regeneration which would be needed would be that which would accompany baptism. But he avoids the possibility of this error, by saying that the "renewing of the Holy Ghost" is an indispensable part of that by which we are saved. It is necessary that this should exist *in addition* to that which is the mere emblem of it—the washing of regeneration —for without this the former would be unmeaning and unavailing. It is important to observe that the apostle by no means says that this *always* follows from the former, nor does he affirm that it ever follows from it—whatever may be tile truth on that point—but he asserts that this is that on which our salvation depends. The word rendered *renewing* (*anakainwsiv—anakainosis*) occurs only here and in Ro 12:2, where it is also rendered renewing. Compare **See Barnes "Ro 12:2"**.

The verb (*anakainow—anakainoo*) occurs in 2Co 4:16, Col 3:19, in both which places it is rendered *renewed*, and the corresponding word, *anakainizw —anakainidzo*, in Heb 6:6. The noun properly means *making new again*; *a renewing; a renovation*. Comp. H. Planck in Bib. Repos., i. 677. It is a word which is found only in the writings of Paul and in ecclesiastical Greek writers. It would be properly applied to such a change as the Holy Spirit produces in the soul, making one a *new* man; that is, a man new, so far as religion is concerned—new in his views, feelings, desires, hopes, plans, and purposes. He is so far different from what he was before, that it may be said he enters on a new life. **See Barnes "Eph 4:23,24"**.

The "renewing *of the Holy Ghost*" of course means that which the Holy Ghost produces, recognising the fact, everywhere taught in the Scriptures, that the Holy Spirit is the Author of the new creation. It cannot mean, as Koppe supposes, the renewing of the mind itself, or producing a holy spirit in the soul.

{a} "works of righteousness" Eph 2:4,8,9

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 3 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Which he shed on us*. Gr., "Which he poured out on us"— *execeen*. **See Barnes "Ac 2:17"**.

The same Greek word is used there as here. It occurs also in the same sense in Ac 2:18,33.

Abundantly. Marg., as in Gr., *richly*. The meaning is, that the Holy Spirit had been imparted in copious measure in order to convert them from their former wickedness. There is no particular allusion here to the day of Pentecost; but the sense is, that the Holy Spirit had been imparted richly to all who were converted, at any time or place, from the error of their ways. What the apostle says here is true of all who become Christians, and can be applied to all who become believers in any age or land.

Through Jesus Christ our Saviour. **See Barnes "Ac 2:33"**.

{1} "abundantly" "richly"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 3 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *That being justified by his grace*. Not by our own works, but by his favour or mercy. **See Barnes "Ro 3:24"**.

We should be made heirs. Ro 8:15,17.

According to the hope of eternal life. In reference to the hope of eternal life; that is, we have that hope in virtue of our being adopted with the family of God, and being made heirs. He has received us as his children, and permits us to hope that we shall live with him for ever.

{a} "justified" Ro 3:24

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 3 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *This is a faithful saying*. **See Barnes "1Ti 1:15"**.

The reference here is to what he had been just saying, meaning that the doctrine which he had stated about the method of salvation was in the highest degree important, and entirely worthy of belief.

And these things I will that thou affirm constantly. Make them the constant subject of your preaching.

That they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. This shows that Paul supposed that the doctrines of the gospel were fitted to lead men to holy living. Comp. Tit 3:1, and **See Barnes "Php 4:8"**.

The "good works," here refer not merely to acts of benevolence and charity, but to all that is upright and good—to an honest and holy life.

These things are good and profitable unto men. That is, these doctrines which he had stated were not mere matters of speculation, but they were fitted to promote human happiness, and they should be constantly taught.

{b} "careful" Tit 3:1,14

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 3 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *But avoid foolish questions and genealogies*. **See Barnes "1Ti 1:4"**; **See Barnes** "2Ti 2:16, **See Barnes "2Ti 2:23"**.

And contentions, and strivings about the law. Such as the Jews started about various matters connected with the law—about meats and drinks, etc. **See Barnes "1Ti 1:4"**.

Comp. **See Barnes "Ac 18:15"**.

For they are unprofitable and vain. They disturb and embitter the feelings; they lead to the indulgence of a bad spirit; they are often difficult to be settled, and are of no practical importance if they could be determined. The same thing might be said of multitudes of things about which men dispute so earnestly now.

{c} "avoid foolish" 2Ti 2:23

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 3 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *A man that is an heretic*. The word heretic is now commonly applied to one who holds some fundamental error of doctrine, "a person who holds and teaches opinions repugnant to the established faith, or that which is made the standard of orthodoxy." *Webster*. The Greek word here used (*airetikov— haireticos*) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. The corresponding noun (*airesiv— hairesis*) occurs in the following places: Ac 5:17 15:5, 24:5

Ac 26:5 28:22, where it is rendered sect; and Ac 24:14 1Co 11:19 Gal 5:20; 2Pe 2:1, where it is rendered *heresy*, and *heresies*. **See Barnes "Ac 24:14"**.

The true notion of the word is that of one who is a promoter of a sect or party. The man who makes divisions in a church, instead of aiming to promote unity, is the one who is intended. Such a man may form sects and parties on some points of doctrine on which he differs from others, or on some custom, religious rite, or peculiar practice; he may make some unimportant matter a ground of distinction from his brethren, and may refuse to have fellowship with them, and endeavour to get up a new organization. Such a man, according to the Scripture usage, is a *heretic*, and not merely one who holds a different doctrine from that which is regarded as orthodoxy. The spirit of the doctrine here is the same as in Ro 16:17, and the same class of persons is referred to. "Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have received; and avoid them." **See Barnes "Ro 16:17"**.

The word here used is defined by Robinson, (Lex.,) "one who creates dissensions, introduces errors—a factious person." It is not found in classic Greek, but often in ecclesiastical writers. See Suicer's Thesau.

After the first and second admonition. Comp. Mt 18:15-17. That is, do not do it hastily and rashly. Give him an opportunity to explain himself, and to repent and abandon his course. No man is to be cut off without giving him a proper opportunity to vindicate his conduct, and to repent if

he has done wrong. If, after the first and second admonition, a man, who is undoubtedly doing wrong, will not repent, then he is to be cut off. The apostle does not say in what way this admonition is to be given, or whether it should be public or private. The language which he uses would justify either, and the method which is to be adopted is doubtless to be determined by circumstances. The *thing* which is to be reached is, *that his fault is to be fairly set before his mind*.

Reject. *paraitou*. This word is rendered *excuse* in Lu 14:18,19; *refuse*, Ac 25:11 1Ti 4:7, 5:11 Heb 12:25

avoid, 2Ti 2:23; and *entreated*, Heb 12:19. Its prevailing meaning, as used in connections like the one before us, is, to reject *in relation to an office*; that is, to decline appointing one to an office. It probably had a primary reference to that here, and meant that a man who was given to making dissensions, or who was a factious person, should not be admitted to an office in the church. The general direction would also include this—that he should not be admitted to the church. He is neither to be owned as a member, nor admitted to office. Comp. Mt 18:17: "Let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." In regard to this passage, then, we may observe,

(1.) that the utmost limit which this allows is mere exclusion. It does not allow us to follow the offender with injury.

(2.) It does not authorize us to oppose one on account of his mere private opinions. The essential idea is that of a *factious*, *division-making man*; a man who aims to form sects and parties, whether on account of opinions, or from any other cause.

(3.) It does not make it right to deliver such a man over to the "secular arm," or to harm him in body, soul, property, or reputation. It gives no power to torture him on the rack, or with thumb-screws, or to bind him to the stake. It authorizes us *not* to recognise him as a Christian brother, or to admit him to an office in the church —but beyond this it gives us no right to go. He has a right to his own opinion still, so far as we are concerned, and we are not to molest him in the enjoyment of that right.

(4.) It demands that, when a man is undoubtedly a heretic in the sense here explained, there should be the utmost kindness towards him, in order if possible to reclaim him. We should not *begin* by attacking and denouncing his opinions; or by formally arraigning him; or by blazoning his name abroad as a heretic; but he is to be dealt with in all Christian kindness and brotherly fidelity. He is to be admonished *more than once* by those who have the right to admonish him; and then, and then only, if he does not repent, he is *to be simply avoided*. That is to be an end of the matter so far as we are concerned. The power of the church there ceases. It has no power to deliver him over to any one else for persecution or punishment, or *in any way to meddle with him*. He may live where he pleases; pursue his own plans; entertain his own opinions or company, provided he does not interfere with us; and though we have a right to examine the opinions which he may entertain, yet our work with *him* is done. If these principles had been observed, what scenes of bloody and cruel persecution in the church would have been avoided!

{*} "heretic" "a factious man" {d} "reject" Mt 18:17

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 3 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Knowing that he that is such is subverted*. Literally, *is turned out*; or, *is changed*, i.e., for the worse. He has gone from the right way, and therefore he should be rejected.

And sinneth, being condemned of himself. His own conscience condemns him. He will approve the sentence, for he knows that he is wrong; and his self-condemnation will be punishment sufficient. His own course, in attempting a division or schism in the church, shows him that it is right that *he* should be separated from the communion of Christians. He that attempts to rend the church, without a good reason, should himself be separated from it.

{+} "condemned of himself" "self-condemned"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 3 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *When I shall send Artemas unto thee*. This person is not elsewhere mentioned in the New Testament, and nothing more is known of him.

Or Tychicus. **See Barnes "Ac 20:4"**.

Be diligent. **See Barnes "2Ti 4:9"**.

To come unto me to Nicopolis. It was at this place, probably, that this epistle was written. In regard to its situation, see Intro., § 4.

For I have determined there to winter. Why Paul designed to spend the winter there, or what he purposed to do there, are questions on which no light can now be thrown. There is no evidence that he *organized* a church there, though it may be *presumed* that he preached the gospel, and that he did not do it without success. His requesting Titus to leave his important post, and to come to him, looks as if his aid were needed in the work of the ministry there, and as if Paul supposed there was a promising field of labour there.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 3 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Bring Zenas the lawyer*. This person is not elsewhere mentioned in the New Testament, and nothing more is known of him. He belonged, doubtless, to that class of persons so often mentioned in the New Testament as *lawyers*; that is, who were regarded as qualified to expound the Jewish laws. **See Barnes "Mt 22:35"**.

It does not mean that he practised law, in the modern sense of that phrase, he had doubtless been converted to the Christian faith; and it is not improbable that there were Jews at Nicopolis, and that Paul supposed he might be particularly useful among them.

And Apollos. **See Barnes "Ac 18:24"**.

He was also well-skilled in the laws of Moses, being "mighty in the Scriptures," (Ac 18:24,) and he and Zenas appear to have been travelling together. It would seem that they had been already on a journey, probably in preaching the gospel, and Paul supposed that they would be in Crete, and that Titus could aid them.

Diligently. 2Ti 4:9. Gr., Speedily; i.e., facilitate their journey as much as possible.

That nothing be wanting unto them. Nothing necessary for their journey. Paul desired that they might meet with hospitable treatment from Christians in Crete, and might not be embarrassed for the want of that which was needful for their journey. It would seem most probable that they had been sent by Paul on a visit to the churches.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 3 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *And let ours*. Our friends; that is, those who were Christians. Paul had just directed Titus to aid Zenas and Apollos himself; and he here adds that he wished that others who were Christians would be characterized by good works of all kinds.

To maintain good works. Marg., *profess honest trades*. The Greek will admit of the interpretation in the margin, or will *include* that; but there is no reason why the direction should be supposed to have any peculiar reference to an honest mode of livelihood, or why it should be confined to that. It rather means, that they should be distinguished for good works, including benevolent deeds, acts of charity, honest toil, and whatever would enter into the conception of an upright life. **See Barnes "Tit 3:8"**.

For necessary uses. Such as are required by their duty to their families, and by the demands of charity. Tit 3:8.

That they be not unfruitful. That it may be seen that their religion is not barren and worthless, but that it produces a happy effect on themselves and on society. **See Barnes "Joh 15:16"**; **See Barnes "Eph 4:28"**.

{1} "maintain" "profess honest trades" {a} "good works" Tit 3:8

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS - Chapter 3 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *All that are with me salute thee*. **See Barnes "Ro 16:3"**.

Paul, at the close of his epistles, usually mentions the names of those who sent affectionate salutations. Here it could seem to be implied that Titus knew who were with Paul, and also that he himself had been travelling with him. He evidently refers not to those who were residing in the place where he Was, but to those who had gone with him from Crete as his companions.

Greet them that love us in the faith. In the faith of the gospel, or as Christians. No names are here mentioned. 1Th 5:26 Col 4:15.

Grace be with you all. **See Barnes "Ro 1:7 16:20"**.

The subscription, "It was written to Titus," etc., is, like the other subscriptions at the close of the epistles, of no authority whatever. See the close of the Notes on 1 Cor. In this subscription there are probably two errors:

(1.) In the statement that Titus was "ordained the first bishop of the church of the Cretians;" for

(a.) there is no evidence that there was a church there called, "*the* church of the Cretians," as there were doubtless many churches on the island;

(b.) there is no evidence that Titus was the *first* bishop of the church there, or that he was the first one there to whom might be properly applied the term *bishop* in the scriptural sense. Indeed, there is positive evidence that he was not the first, for Paul was there with him, and Titus was "*left*" there to complete what he had begun.

(c.) There is no evidence that Titus was "bishop" there at all in the prelatical sense of the term, or even that he was a settled pastor. **See Barnes "Tit 1:5"**.

(2.) That the epistle was written "from Nicopolis of Macedonia;" for

(a.) there is no certain evidence that it was written at Nicopolis at all, though this is probable;

(b.) there is no reason to believe that the Nicopolis referred to was in Macedonia. See Intro., & 4. These subscriptions are so utterly destitute of authority, and are so full of mistakes, that it is high time they were omitted in the editions of the Bible. They are no part of the inspired writings, but are of the nature of " notes and comments," and are constantly doing something, perhaps much, to perpetuate error. *The opinion that Timothy and Titus were prelatical bishops, the one of Ephesus and the other of Crete, depends far more on these worthless subscriptions than on any thing in the epistles themselves*. Indeed, there is no evidence of it in the epistles; and, if these subscriptions were removed, no man from the New Testament would ever suppose that they sustained this office at all.

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON - Chapter 1

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON - Chapter 1 - Verse 1

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON.

INTRODUCTION.

I.—THE HISTORY OF PHILEMON.

OF PHILEMON, to whom this epistle was addressed, almost nothing more is known than can be ascertained from the epistle itself. It is short, and of a private character; but it is a bright and beautiful gem in the volume of inspiration. From Col 4:9, it may be inferred that the person to whom it was addressed, was an inhabitant of Colosse, since Onesimus, concerning whom this epistle was written, is there mentioned as "one of them." **See Barnes "Col 4:9"**.

Comp. the ingenious remarks of Paley, *Hor. Paul*., on Colossians, No. Iv. He is said by Calmet and Michaelis to have been wealthy; but this cannot be determined with certainty, though it is not improbable. The only circumstances which seem to indicate this, are, that Onesimus had been his "servant," from which it has been inferred, that he was an owner of slaves; and that he appears to have been accustomed to show hospitality to strangers, or, as Michaelis expresses it, "travelling Christians." See Phm 1:22. But these circumstances are not sufficient to determine that he was a man of property. There is no evidence, as we shall see, that he was a slave-holder; and Christians in moderate circumstances were accustomed to show hospitality to their brethren. Besides, it is not said in Phm 1:22 that he was accustomed to show general hospitality; but Paul merely asks him to provide for him a lodging. It is probable that he had been accustomed to remain with him when he was in Colosse. It is quite clear that he had been converted under the ministry of the apostle himself. This appears from what is said in Phm 1:19, "I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self." This cannot be understood otherwise than as implying that he had been converted under his preaching, unless the apostle, on some former occasion, had been the means of saving his life, of which there is no evidence. Indeed, it is manifest, from the general tone of the epistle, that Philemon had been: converted by the labours of the author. It is just such a letter as it would be natural and proper to write on such a supposition; it is not one which the apostle would have been likely to write to any one who did not sustain such a relation to him. But where and when he was converted is unknown. It is possible that Paul may have met with him at Ephesus; but it is much more probable that he had himself been at Colosse, and that Philemon was one, of his converts there. See Intro. to the epistle to the Colossians.

It is evident from the epistle, that Paul regarded him as a sincere Christian; as a man of strict integrity; as one who could be depended on to do right. Thus (Phm 1:5-7) he says, that he had heard of his "love and faith toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints;" thus he confidently asks him to provide for him a lodging when he should come, (Phm 1:22;) and thus he expresses the assured

belief, that he would do what was right towards one who had been his servant, who, having been formerly unfaithful, was now converted, and, in the estimation of the apostle, was worthy of the confidence and affection of his former master. In regard to his rank in the Christian church, nothing whatever is known. Paul calls him (Phm 1:1) his "fellow-labourer;" but this appellation is so general, that it determines nothing in regard to the manner in which he cooperated with him in promoting religion. It is a term which might be applied to any active Christian, whether a preacher, an elder, a deacon, or a private member of the church. It would seem clear, however, that he was not a travelling preacher, for he had a home in Colosse, (Phm 1:2,22;) and the presumption is, that he was an active and benevolent member of the church, who did not sustain any office. There are many private members of the churches, to whom all that is said of Philemon in the epistle would apply. Yet there have been various conjectures in regard to the office which he held. Hoffmann (Intro. ad Lection. Ep. ad Colossenses, % 18) supposes that he was bishop of Colosse; Michaelis supposes that he was a deacon in the church; but of either of these, there is no evidence whatever.

Nothing is known of his age, his profession, or of the time and circumstances of his death. Neither is it certainly known what effect this epistle had on him, or whether he again received Onesimus under his roof. It may be presumed, however, that such a letter, addressed to such a man, would not fail of its object.

II.—THE OCCASION ON WHICH THE EPISTLE WAS WRITTEN.

This can be learned only from the epistle itself, and there the circumstances are so marked as to make a mistake impossible.

(1.) Philemon had had a servant of the name of Onesimus. Of the character of this servant, before Paul became acquainted with him, nothing more is known than that he had been "unprofitable" to Philemon, (Phm 1:11,) and that he had probably done him some wrong, either by taking his property, or by the fact that he had escaped from him, Phm 1:18. It is not necessary to suppose that he was a slave; for all that is implied of necessity in the word which is employed to designate his condition in Phm 1:16, (*doulov*,) and all that is stated of him in the epistle, would be met by the supposition that he was bound to Philemon, either by his parents or guardians, or that he had bound himself to render voluntary service. Phm 1:16.

(2.) For some cause, this servant had fled from his master, and had gone to Rome. The *cause* of his escaping is unknown. It may be, that he had purloined the property of his master, and dreaded detection; or that he had, by his base conduct in some other way, exposed himself to punishment; or that he merely desired freedom from oppression; or that he disregarded the bonds into which he himself, or his parents or guardians, had entered, and had therefore escaped. Nothing can be inferred about his condition, or his relation to Philemon, from the fact that he ran away. It is, perhaps, quite as common for *apprentices* to run away, as it is for slaves; and they who enter into voluntary bonds to render service to another, do not always regard them.

(3.) In some way, when at Rome, this servant had found out the apostle Paul, and had been converted by his instrumentality. Paul says, (Phm 1:10,) that he had "begotten him *in his bonds*"—*en toiv desmoiv mou*; which seems to imply that Onesimus had come *to him*, and not that Paul had searched him out. It does not appear that Paul, when a prisoner at Rome, was allowed to go at large, (compare Ac 28:30,) though he was permitted to receive all who came to him. *Why* Onesimus came to the apostle is not known. It may have been because he was in want, and Paul was the only one in Rome whom he had ever seen; or it may have been because his mind had become distressed on

account of sin, and he sought him out to obtain spiritual counsel. Conjecture on these points is useless, where there is not even a *hint* that can serve as a clue to find out the truth.

(4.) From some cause, equally unknown, Onesimus, when converted, was desirous of returning to his former master. It is commonly *assumed*, that his returning again was at the *instigation* of the apostle, and that this furnishes an instance of his belief, that runaway slaves should be sent back to their masters. But, besides that there is no certain evidence that he ever was a slave, there is as little proof that he returned at the instigation of Paul, or that his return was not wholly voluntary on his part. For the only expression which the apostle uses on this subject, (Phm 1:12,) "whom I have sent again"— *anepemqa* —does not necessarily imply that he even *proposed* it to him, still less that he *commanded* it. It is a word of such general import, that it would be employed on the supposition that Onesimus *desired* to return, and that Paul, who had a strong wish to retain him, to aid him in the same way that Philemon himself would do if he were with him, Phm 1:13, had, on the whole, concluded to part with him, and to send him again, with a letter, to his friend Philemon. It is just such language as he would have used of Timothy, Titus, or Epaphroditus, if employed on an important embassy at the request of the apostle. Comp. Lu 7:6,10,19 20:13 Ac 10:5 15:22; 1Co 4:17 2Co 9:3; Eph 6:22 Php 2:19

Php 2:23 25 28 1Th 3:2,5; Tit 3:12, for a similar use of the word *send* (*pempw*.) There is nothing in the statement which forbids us to suppose that Onesimus was himself *disposed* to return to Philemon, and that Paul "sent" him at his own request. To this, Onesimus might have been inclined from many causes. He may have repented that he left his master, and had forsaken the comforts which he had enjoyed under his roof. It is no uncommon thing for a runaway apprentice, or servant, when he has seen and felt the misery of being among strangers and in want, to wish himself well back again in the house of his master. Or he may have felt that he had wronged his master in some way, (**See Barnes** "Phm 1:18,) and, being now converted, was desirous of repairing the wrong. Or he may have had friends and kindred in Colosse whom he was desirous of seeing again. Since any one of these, or of many other supposable causes, may have induced him to *desire* to return to his master, it should not be *assumed* that Paul sent him *against his will, and thence be inferred that he was in favour of sending back runaway slaves to their masters AGAINST their will*. There are many points to be proved, which cannot be proved, to make that a legitimate inference. **See Barnes "Phm 1:12".**

(5.) Whatever were the reasons why Onesimus desired to return to Philemon, it is clear that he was apprehensive of some trouble if he went back. What those reasons were, it is impossible now to determine with absolute certainty; but it is not difficult to conjecture what they may have been, and any of the following will account for his apprehensions —either

(a.) that he had done his master wrong by the mere act of leaving him, depriving him of valuable services which he was bound to render; or

(b.) that he may have felt that the *mere act* of running away had injured the *character* of his master, for such an act always implies that there is something in the dealings of a master which makes it desirable to leave him; or

(c.) that he had in some way injured him in respect to property, by taking that which did not belong to him, Phm 1:18; or

(d.) that he owed his master, and he may have inferred from his leaving him that he meant to defraud him, Phm 1:18; or

(e.) that the laws of Phrygia were such, that Onesimus apprehended that if he returned, even penitent, it would be judged by his master necessary to punish him, in order to deter others from committing a similar defence. The laws of Phrygia, it is said, allowed the master to punish a slave without applying to a magistrate. See Macknight. It should be said also that the Phrygians were a severe people, (Curtius, Lib. v. c. 1 ;) and it is not improbable that, from the customs there, Onesimus may have apprehended harsh treatment if he returned. It is not proper to assume that any *one* of these was certainly the reason why he feared to return, for this cannot be absolutely determined. We should not take it for granted that he had defrauded his master—for that is not necessarily implied in what is said in Phm 1:18, and we should not impute crimes to men without proof; nor should we take it for granted, that he feared to be punished as a runaway *slave*—for *that* cannot be proved; but some one or more of these reasons, doubtless, operated to make him apprehensive, that if he returned he would meet with, at least, a cold reception.

(6.) To induce his master to receive him kindly again, was the main object of this courteous and kind epistle. For a view of the *arguments* on which he urges this, see the Analysis of the epistle. The arguments are such, that we should suppose they could not be resisted; and we may presume, without impropriety, that they had the desired effect on the mind of Philemon—but of that we have no certain evidence.

III.—THE TIME AND PLACE OF WAITING THE EPISTLE.

THERE can be no doubt that this letter was written from Rome about the time when the epistle to the Colossians was written. Comp. Intro. to the epistle. The circumstances which conduct to this conclusion are such as the following:

(1.) Paul at the time when it was written was a prisoner. "Paul a prisoner of Jesus Christ," Phm 1:1. "Whom I have begotten in my bonds," Phm 1:10. Comp. Phm 1:23, "Epaphras my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus."

(2.) It was written when he had hopes of obtaining his liberty, or when he had such a prospect of it that he could ask Philemon, with confidence, to "prepare him a lodging," Phm 1:22.

(3) Timothy was with him at the time when it was written, Phm 1:1, and we know that Paul desired him to come to him to Rome, when he was a prisoner there, as soon as possible, 2Ti 4:9: "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me."

(4.) We know that Onesimus was actually sent by Paul to Colosse while he was a prisoner at Rome, and it would be morally certain that, under the circumstances of the case, he would send the letter to his master at that time. No other instance is mentioned in which he sent him to Colosse, and the evidence is as certain as the nature of the case admits, that that was the time when the epistle was written. See Col 4:9.

(5.) The same persons are mentioned in the salutations in the two epistles; at least, they are so far the same as to make it probable that the epistles were written at the same time; for it is not very probable that the same persons would, in another place, and on another occasion, have been with the apostle. Thus Aristarchus, Mark, Epaphras, Luke, and Demas, join in the salutations both to the church at Colosse and to Philemon. Probably at no other time in the life of Paul were all these persons with him, than when he was a prisoner at Rome. These considerations make it clear that the epistle was written while Paul was a prisoner at Rome, and at about the same time with the epistle to the Colossians. If so, it was about A.D. 62.

IV.—-THE CHARACTER OF THIS EPISTLE.

THIS letter is almost wholly of a private character; and yet there is scarcely any portion of the New Testament of equal length which is of more value. It is exquisitely beautiful and delicate. It is a model of courtesy and politeness. It presents the character of the author in a most amiable light, and shows what true religion will produce in causing genuine refinement of thought and language. It is gentle and persuasive, and yet the argument is one that we should suppose would have been, and probably was, irresistible. It is very easy to conceive, that the task which the apostle undertook to perform, was one which it would be difficult to accomplish—that of reconciling an offended master to a runaway servant. And yet it is done with so much kindness, persuasiveness, gentleness, and true affection, that, as the letter was read, it is easy to imagine that all the hostility of the master was disarmed, and we can almost see him desiring to embrace him who bore it, not now as a servant, but as a Christian brother, Phm 1:16. "It is impossible," says Doddridge, "to read over this admirable epistle without being touched with the delicacy of sentiment, and the masterly address, that appear in every part of it. We see here, in a most striking light, how perfectly consistent true politeness is—not only with all the warmth arid sincerity of a friend, but even with the dignity of the Christian and the Apostle. And if this letter were to be considered in no other view than as a mere human composition, it must be allowed to be a master-piece in its kind. As an illustration of this remark, it may not be improper to compare it with an epistle of Pliny, that seems to have been written on a similar occasion, (Lib. ix. Let. 21 ;) which, though penned by one that was reckoned to excel in the epistolary style, though it has undoubtedly many beauties, yet must be acknowledged by every impartial reader vastly inferior to this animated composition of the apostle." As a specimen of the courtesy and politeness which the Christian ought to practise at all times, as well as furnishing many valuable lessons on Christian duty, (see the remarks at the close,) it deserves a place in the volume of inspiration; and a material chasm would be produced in the instructions which are needful for us, if it were withdrawn from the sacred canon.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON.

ANALYSIS OF THE EPISTLE.

THE epistle embraces the following subjects:—

I. The salutation, Phm 1:1-3.

II. A mention of the excellent account which the apostle had heard of Philemon, and the occasion which he had for thankfulness on his behalf, Phm 1:4-7.

(a.) He always remembered him in his prayers, Phm 1:4.

(b.) He-had heard of his faith and love, and of his kindness towards those who bore the Christian name, Phm 1:5.

(c.) He desired that his goodness in making others, in common with him, partakers of the expression of his faith, might be even more effectual in securing the proper acknowledgment of it wherever it might be known, Phm 1:6.

(d.) He says that he had great joy and consolation from the happiness which he had conferred on Christians who needed his aid, Phm 1:7.

III. The main subject of the epistle—the desire that he would receive his servant Onesimus again, and the arguments to persuade him to do it, Phm 1:8-21.

(1.) He places it on the ground of *entreaty*, not of *command*. He might, in virtue of his apostolic office, enjoin many things on him, and possibly this, yet he chooses to place it wholly on other grounds, and to make it a matter of personal friendship, Phm 1:8.

(2.) Particular reasons why he should do it:—

(a.) for love's sake—love to Paul—now an old man, and in prison on account of their common religion, Phm 1:9.

(b.) Paul regarded Onesimus as his own son, and asked that he might be received and treated as such, Phm 1:10.

(c.) He assures Philemon that, whatever he might have been formerly, he would now find him to be profitable to himself, Phm 1:11.

(d.) He assures him that Onesimus was especially dear to him, and that he would have been very useful to him in his circumstances, but that he did not think it proper to retain him with him without the consent of Philemon. Onesimus, therefore, was not sent back as a worthless vagabond, and Philemon, in receiving him, might be sure that he was receiving one whom *Paul* believed was fitted to be eminently useful, Phm 1:12-14.

(e.) He suggests to Philemon that probably it was so arranged by divine Providence, that Onesimus should depart in order that he might receive him again in a far more tender and endearing relation, not as a servant, but as a Christian brother, Phm 1:15,16.

(f.) He appeals to the personal friendship of Philemon, and asks that if he regarded him as a participator with him in the hopes of the gospel, or as a fellow-labourer in a common cause, he would receive him as he would himself, Phm 1:17.

(g.) He says that he would himself become security for Onesimus if he owed Philemon anything, or had in any way wronged him, Phm 1:18,19.

(h.) He concludes the argument by referring to the happiness which it would give him if Philemon would receive his former servant again; and with the expression of his conviction that he would do more than he asked in the matter, and then asks that, while he showed favour to Onesimus, he would also prepare a lodging for him, for he hoped soon to be with him, Phm 1:20-22. *Perhaps* by this last suggestion he hoped also to do much to favour the cause of Onesimus—for Philemon could hardly turn him away when he expected that Paul himself would soon be with him. Such an argument would be likely to be effectual in the case. We do not like to deny the request which a friend makes in a letter, if we expect soon to see the writer himself. It would be much more easy to do it if we had no expectations of seeing him very soon.

IV. The epistle closes with affectionate salutations from certain persons who were with Paul, and who were probably well known to Philemon, and with the customary benediction, Phm 1:23-25.

1. *Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ*. A prisoner at Rome in the cause of Jesus Christ. **See Barnes "Eph 3:1"**

See Barnes "2Ti 1:8".

And Timothy our brother. Timothy, it seems, had come to him agreeably to his request. 2Ti 4:9. Paul not unfrequently joins his name with his own in his epistles. 2Co 1:1 Php 1:1; Col 1:1 1Th 1:1; 2Th 1:1.

As Timothy was of that region of country, and as he had accompanied Paul in his travels, he was doubtless acquainted with Philemon.

Unto Philemon our dearly beloved and fellow-labourer. See Intro. & 1. The word rendered *fellow-labourer* (*sunergov*,) does not determine what office he held, if he held any, or in what respects he was a fellow-labourer with Paul. It means a co-worker, or helper, and doubtless here means that he was a helper or fellow-worker in the great cause to which Paul had devoted his life, but whether as a preacher, or deacon, or a private Christian, cannot be ascertained. It is *commonly*,

in the New Testament, applied to ministers of the gospel, though by no means exclusively, and in several instances it cannot be determined whether it denotes ministers of the gospel, or those who furthered the cause of religion, and co-operated with the apostle in some other way than preaching. See the following places, which are the only ones where it occurs in the New Testament, Ro 16:3,9,21; 1Co 3:9 2Co 1:24, 8:23 Php 2:25, 4:3 Col 4:11; 1Th 3:2 Phm 1:24; 3Jo 1:8.

{a} "prisoner" Eph 3:1 {b} "fellow-labourer" Php 2:25

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON - Chapter 1 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And to our beloved Apphia*. This was a female, (Gr. *agaphth*,) and was probably the wife of Philemon.

And Archippus our fellow-soldier. **See Barnes "Col 4:17"**.

It has been supposed that he was a son of Philemon, and this would appear not to be improbable, as he was one of his family. On the term "fellow-soldier," **See Barnes "Php 2:25"**.

It is applied here to one who was a minister of the gospel, and who is spoken of in connection with Paul as enlisted under the banners of the Captain of salvation, and waging a warfare with the wickedness of the world. Comp. **See Barnes "**2Ti 2:3, **See Barnes "2Ti 2:4"**.

That Archippus was a minister of the gospel, is clear from Col 4:17.

And to the church in thy house. Either the church that commonly met in his house, or more probably that was composed of his own family. Comp. Ro 16:5.

{c} "Archippus" Col 4:17 {d} "church" Ro 16:5

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON - Chapter 1 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Grace to you, and peace, etc*. **See Barnes "Ro 1:7"**.

{e} "Grace" Eph 1:2

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON - Chapter 1 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *I thank my God*. That is, for what I hear of you.

Making mention of thee always in my prayers. See a similar declaration respecting the church at Ephesus. Eph 1:16. It would appear from this that Paul, in his private devotions, was in the habit of mentioning churches and individuals by name. It would seem, also, that though he was a prisoner, yet he somehow found opportunity for secret devotion. And it would appear further, that though encompassed with many cares and sorrows, and about to be put on trial for his life, he did not forget to remember a Christian brother though far distant from him, and to bear him on his heart before the throne of grace. To remember with affectionate concern these churches and individuals, as he did, Paul must have been a man of much prayer.

{f} "thank" Eph 1:16

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON - Chapter 1 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Hearing of thy love and faith*. Either by Onesimus, who, after his conversion, would be disposed to state all that he knew that was favourable of Philemon, or hearing it by some other persons who had come from Colosse to Rome. The *faith* which is mentioned here refers to the Lord Jesus; the *love*, to the saints. The order in the Greek is indeed the same as in our version, but it is not unusual by synthesis, or uniting two or more things together, to arrange words in that manner. Thus Mt 12:22; "The blind and dumb both spake and saw;" that is, the blind saw, and the dumb spake. The meaning is, that he had strong faith in the Lord Jesus, and ardent love towards all who were Christians. See a similar declaration in Col 1:4.

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON - Chapter 1 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *That the communication of thy faith*. That is, this was a subject of prayer on the part of the apostle, that the "communication of his faith" might receive from all the proper acknowledgment of the good which he did in the Christian cause. The phrase translated "communication of thy faith," means the making of thy faith *common* to others; that is, enabling others to partake of the fruits of it, to wit, by good deeds. On the meaning of the word here rendered "communication," (*koinwnia*, koinonia,) **See Barnes "Eph 3:9".**

Comp. Php 2:1;

See Barnes "3:10".

Calvin has well expressed the sense of this passage. "It is to be observed that the apostle here does not proceed in the commendation of Philemon, but rather expresses what he desires for him from the Lord. These words are connected with those in which he says that he remembered him in his prayers. What, therefore, did he desire for Philemon? That his faith expressing itself by good fruits, might be shown to be true and not vain. For he calls that the communication of his faith when it does not remain inoperative within, but bears itself forth to benefit men by its proper effects. For although faith has its proper seat in the heart, yet it communicates itself to men by good works." The meaning is, that he desired that Philemon would so *make common* the proper fruits of faith by his good deeds towards others, that all might acknowledge it to be genuine and efficacious.

May become effectual. Gr., "May be energetic" (*energhv*;) may become operative, active, effective.

By the acknowledging. That is, so as to secure from others the proper recognition of the existence of faith in your heart. In other words, so that others may see that you are truly pious, and understand to what extent you have faith.

Of every good thing which is in you. Of every good principle, and of every benevolent trait, which is in your character. That is, the proper outward expression of his faith in Christ, by doing good to others, would be a development of the benevolence which existed in his heart.

In Christ Jesus. Or "*towards* (*eiv*) Christ Jesus." The goodness in his heart had respect to the Lord Jesus as its proper object, but would be made manifest by his kindness to men. The *truth* which is taught in this passage, therefore, is, that when faith exists in the heart, it is very desirable that it should impart its proper fruits towards others in such a way that all may see that it is operative,

and may recognize its power; or in other words, it is desirable that when true religion exists it should be fairly developed, that its possessor may be acknowledged to be under its influence. We should wish that he may have all the credit and honour which the goodness of his heart is entitled to. Paul supposed that a case had now occurred in which an opportunity was furnished to Philemon to show the world how much he was governed by the faith of the gospel.

{a} "the communication" Php 1:9-11 {b} "effectual" Jas 2:14,17 {c} "every good" Php 4:8

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON - Chapter 1 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *For we have great joy and consolation in thy love*. In thy love towards Christians. The word here rendered *joy* (*carin*,) properly means grace, A large number of manuscripts, however, instead of this word, have *caran*, *charan—joy*. See Wetstein. This reading has been adopted by Griesbach, Tittman, and Hahn.

Because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother. For your kindness to them. The word *bowels* here probably means *minds, hearts*, for it is used in the Scriptures to denote the affections. The sense is, that the kindness which he had shown to Christians had done much to make them happy. On the word *refreshed*, see 2Co 7:13 2Ti 1:16.

{d} "refreshed by thee" 2Co 7:13 2Ti 1:16

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON - Chapter 1 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ*. Though I might have much boldness as an apostle of Christ. He means that he was invested with authority by the Lord Jesus, and would have a right, as an apostle, to enjoin what ought to be done in the case which he is about to lay before him. Comp. 1Th 2:6,7.

To enjoin thee that which is convenient. To command what is proper to be done. The word *convenient* here, (*to anhkon*,) means that which would be fit or proper in the case. Comp. **See Barnes "Eph 5:4"**.

The apostle implies here that what he was about to ask, was *proper to be done* in the circumstances, but he does not put it on that ground, but rather asks it as a personal favour. It is usually not best to *command* a thing to be done, if we can as well secure it by asking it as a favour. Comp. Da 1:8,11,12.

{e} "though" 1Th 2:6

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON - Chapter 1 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Yet for love's sake*. For the love which you bear me, and for the common cause.

I rather beseech thee. Rather than *command thee*.

Being such an one as Paul the aged. *presbuthv*—an old man. We have no means of ascertaining the exact age of Paul at this time, and I do not recollect that he ever alludes to his age, though he often does to his infirmities, in any place except here. Doddridge supposes that at the time when Stephen was stoned, when he is called "a young man," (*neaniav*, Ac 7:58,) he was twenty-four years of age, in which case he would now have been about fifty-three. Chrysostom supposes that he may have been about thirty-five years old at the time of his conversion, which would have made him about sixty-three at this time. The difficulty of determining, with any degree of accuracy, the age of the apostle at this time, arises from the indefinite nature of the word used by Luke, Ac 7:58, and rendered a young man. That word, like the corresponding word, *neaniskov*, *neaniskos*, was applied to when in the rigour of manhood up to the age of forty years, Robinson Lex. Phavorinus says a man is called *neaniskov*, *neaniskos*, a young man, till he is twenty-eight; and *presbuthv*, *presbytes*, from forty-nine till he is fifty-six. Varro says that a man is young (*juvenis*) till he is forty-five, and aged at sixty. Whitby. These periods of time, however, are very indefinite; but it will accord well with the usual meaning of the words to suppose that Paul was in the neighbourhood of thirty when he was converted, and that he was now not far from sixty. We are to remember, also, that the constitution of Paul may have been much broken by his labours, his perils, and his trials. Not advanced probably to the usual limit of human life, he may have had all the characteristics of a very aged man. Comp. the Note of *Benson*. The argument here is that we feel that it is proper, as far as we can, to grant the request of an old man. Paul thus felt that it was reasonable to suppose that Philemon would not refuse to gratify the wishes of an aged servant of Christ, who had spent the rigour of his life in the service of their common Master. It should be a very strong case when we refuse to gratify the wishes of an aged Christian in anything, especially if he has rendered important services to the church and the world.

And now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ. In the cause of Jesus Christ; or a prisoner for endeavouring to make him known to the world. Comp. **See Barnes "Eph 3:1"**

See Barnes "Eph 4:1"; **See Barnes "Eph 6:20"**.

See Barnes "Col 4:10".

The argument here is, that it might be presumed that Philemon would not refuse the request of one who was suffering in prison on account of their common religion. For such a prisoner we should be ready to do all that we can to mitigate the sorrows of his confinement, and to make his condition comfortable.

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON - Chapter 1 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *I beseech thee for my son Onesimus*. That is, my son in the gospel; one to whom I sustain the relation of a spiritual father. Comp. **See Barnes "1Ti 1:2"**.

The address and *tact* of Paul here are worthy of particular observation. Any other mode of bringing the case before the mind of Philemon might have repelled him; If he had simply said, "I beseech thee *for Onesimus*;" or, "I beseech thee for *thy servant* Onesimus," he would at once have reverted to his former conduct, and remembered all his ingratitude and disobedience. But the phrase "*my son*," makes the way easy for the mention of his name, for he had already found the way to his heart before his eye lighted on his name, by the mention of the relation which he sustained to

himself. Who could refuse to such a man as Paul— a laborious, servant of Christ—an aged man, exhausted with his many sufferings and toils—and a prisoner—a request which he made for one whom he regarded *as his son*? It may be added, that the delicate address of the apostle in introducing the subject, is better seen in the original than in our translation. In the original, the name Onesimus is reserved to come in last in the sentence. The order of the Greek is this: "I entreat thee concerning a son of mine, whom I have begotten in my bonds—Onesimus." Here the name is not suggested, until he had mentioned that he sustained to him the relation of a son, and also till he had added that his conversion was the fruit of his labours *while he was a prisoner*. Then, when the name of Onesimus is mentioned, it would occur to Philemon not primarily as the name of an ungrateful and disobedient servant, but as the interesting case of one converted by the labours of his own friend in prison. Was there ever more delicacy evinced in preparing the way for disarming one of prejudice, and carrying an appeal to his heart?

Whom I have begotten in my bonds. Who has been converted by my efforts while I have been a prisoner. On the phrase "whom I have begotten," see 1Co 4:15. Nothing is said of the way in which he had become acquainted with Onesimus, or why he had put himself under the teaching of Paul. See the Intro., § 2. (3.)

{f} "Onesimus" Col 4:9 {g} "begotten" 1Co 4:15

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON - Chapter 1 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Which in time past was to thee unprofitable*. Either because he was indolent; because he had wronged him, (comp. **See Barnes "Phm 1:18"**;) or because he had run away from him. It is *possible* that there may be an allusion here to the meaning of the name *Onesimus*, which denotes *profitable*, (from *oninhmi*, fut. *onhsw*, *to be useful, to be profitable, to help*;) and that Paul means to say that he had hitherto not well answered to the meaning of his own name, but that now he would be found to do so.

But now profitable to thee. The Greek here is *eucrhston*, *euchreston*, but the meaning is about the same as that of the word Onesimus. It denotes *very useful*. In 2Ti 2:21, it is rendered, *meet for use*; in 2Ti 4:11, and here, *profitable*. It does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament.

And to me. Paul had doubtless found him useful to him as a Christian brother in his bonds, and it is easy to conceive that, in his circumstances, he would greatly desire to retain him with him.

{a} "in time past" 1Pe 2:10

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON - Chapter 1 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Whom I have sent again*. That is, to Philemon. This was, doubtless, at his own request, for

(1.) there is not the slightest evidence that he *compelled* him, or even *urged* him to go. The language is just such as would have been used on the supposition either that he requested him to go and bear a letter to Colosse, or that Onesimus desired to go, and that Paul sent him agreeably

to his request. Comp. Php 2:25, "Yet I suppose it necessary to *send* to you Epaphroditus my brother, and companion in labour," etc. Col 4:7,8, "All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord: whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate," etc. But Epaphroditus and Tychicus were not sent against their own wills—nor is there any more reason to think that Onesimus was. See Intro., & 2. (4.)

(2.) Paul had no power to send Onesimus back to his master unless he chose to go. He had no civil authority; he had no guard to accompany him; he could entrust him to no sheriff to convey him from place to place, and he had no means of controlling him, if he chose to go to any other place than Colosse. He could indeed have sent him away from himself; he could have *told* him to go to Colosse, but there his power ended. Onesimus then could have gone where he pleased. But there is no evidence that Paul even told him to go to Colosse against his own inclination, or that he would have sent him away at all unless he had himself requested it.

(3.) There may have been many reasons why Onesimus desired to return to Colosse, and no one can prove that he did not express that desire to Paul, and that his "sending" him was not in consequence of such a request. He may have had friends and relatives there; or, being now converted, he may have been sensible that he had wronged his former master, and that he ought to return and repair the wrong; or he may have been poor, and a stranger in Rome, and may have been greatly disappointed in what he had expected to find there when he left Philemon, and may have desired to return to the comparative comforts of his former condition.

(4.) It may be added, therefore,

(a.) that this passage should not be adduced to prove that we *ought* to send back runaway slaves to their former masters against their own consent; or to justify the laws which require magistrates to do it; or to show that they who have escaped should be arrested and forcibly detained; or *to justify any sort of influence over a runaway slave to induce him to return to his former master*. There is not the least evidence that any of these things occurred in the case before us; and if this instance is ever appealed to, it should be to justify *what Paul did* —AND NOTHING ELSE.

(b.) The passage shows that it is right to aid a servant of any kind to return to his master if he desires it. It is right to give him a "letter,"and to plead earnestly for his favourable reception if he has in any way wronged his master—for Paul did this. On the same principle, it would be right to give him pecuniary assistance to enable him to return—for there *may* be cases where one who has fled from servitude might wish to return. There may be instances where one has had a kind master, with whom he would feel that on the whole he could be more happy than in his present circumstances. Such cases, however, are exceedingly rare. Or there may be instances where one may have relatives that are in the neighbourhood or in the family of his former master, and the desire to be with them may be so strong that on the whole he would choose to be a servant as he was before, rather than to remain as he is now. In all such cases it is right to render aid—for the example of the apostle Paul goes to sustain this. But it goes no further. So far as appears, he neither *advised* Onesimus to return, nor did he *compel* him; nor did he say one word to influence him to do it; nor did he mean or expect that he would be a slave when he should have been received again by his master. **See Barnes "Phm 1:16"**.

Thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels. There is great delicacy also in this expression. If he had merely said, "receive *him*," Philemon might have thought only of him as he

formerly was. Paul, therefore, adds, that is, *mine own bowels*"—-"one whom I so tenderly love that he seems to carry my heart with him wherever he goes." *Doddridge*.

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON - Chapter 1 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead*. "That he might render me the service which I know you would if you were here." The Greek is, "for thee;" (*uper sou*;) that is, what he should do for Paul might be regarded as done by Philemon himself.

He might have ministered unto me. He might have rendered me assistance, (*diakonh*;) to wit, in such a way as one who was in bonds would need.

{b} "that in thy stead" 1Co 16:17 Php 2:30

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON - Chapter 1 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *But without thy mind would I do nothing*. Nothing in the matter referred to. He would not retain Onesimus in his service, much as he needed his assistance, without the cordial consent of Philemon. He would not give him occasion for hard feeling or complaint, *as if* Paul had induced him to leave his master, or *as if* he persuaded him to remain with him when he wished to return—or as if he kept him away from him when he owed him or had wronged him. All that is said here is entirely consistent with the supposition that Onesimus was *disposed* to return to his master, and with the supposition that Paul did not compel or urge him to do it. For it is probable that *if* Onesimus had proposed to return, it would have been easy for Paul to have retained him with him. He might have represented his own want of a friend. He might have appealed to his gratitude on account of his efforts for his conversion. He might have shown him that he was under no moral obligation to go back. He might have refused to give him this letter, and might have so represented to him the dangers of the way, and the probability of a harsh reception, as effectually to have dissuaded him from such a purpose. But, in that case, it is clear that this might have caused hard feeling in the bosom of Philemon, and rather than do that he preferred to let him return to his master, and to plead for him that he might have a kind reception. It is, therefore, by no means necessary to suppose that Paul felt that Onesimus was under *obligation* to return, or that he was disposed to *compel* him, or that Onesimus was not inclined to return voluntarily; but all the circumstances of the case are met by the supposition that, if Paul retained him, Philemon might conceive that he had injured *him*. Suppose, as seems to have been the case, that Onesimus "owed" Philemon, (Phm 1:18,) and then suppose that Paul had chosen to retain him with himself, and had dissuaded him from returning to him, would not Philemon have had reason to complain of it? There was, therefore, on every account, great propriety in his saying that he did not wish to use any influence over him to retain him with him when he purposed to return to Colosse, and that he felt that it would be wrong for him to keep him, much as he needed him, without the consent of Philemon. Nor is it necessary, by what is said here, to suppose that Onesimus was a slave, and that Paul believed that Philemon had a right to him and to his services as such. All that he says here would be met by the supposition that he was

a hired servant, and would be in fact equally proper even on the supposition that he was an apprentice. In either case, he would feel that he gave just ground of complaint on the part of Philemon if, when Onesimus desired to return, he used any influence to dissuade him from it, and to retain him with himself. It would have been a violation of the rule requiring us to do to others as we would wish them to do unto us, and Paul therefore felt unwilling, much as he needed the services of Onesimus, to make use of any influence to retain him with him without the consent of his master.

That thy benefit. The favour which I might receive from thee by having the services of Onesimus. If Onesimus should remain with him and assist him, he would feel that the benefit which would be conferred by his services would be in fact bestowed by Philemon, for he had a right to the service of Onesimus, and while Paul enjoyed it, he would be deprived of it. The word rendered *benefit* here *agayon* —means *good*, and the sense is, "the *good* which you would do me;" to wit, by the service of Onesimus.

Should not be as it were of necessity. As it would be if Paul should detain Onesimus with him without affording Philemon an opportunity of expressing his assent. Paul would even then have felt that he was in fact receiving a "good" at the expense of Philemon, but it would not be a voluntary favour on his part.

But willingly. As it would be if he had given his consent that Onesimus should remain with him.

{c} "willingly" 2Co 9:7

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON - Chapter 1 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *For perhaps he therefore departed for a season*. Perhaps *on this account*, or *for this reason dia touto* he left you for a little time. Greek, "for an hour"—*prov wran*. The meaning is, that it was possible that this was permitted, in the providence of God, *in order* that Onesimus might be brought under the influence of the gospel, and be far more serviceable to Philemon as a Christian, than he could have been in his former relation to him. What appeared to Philemon, therefore, to be a calamity, and what seemed to him to be wrong on the part of Onesimus, might have been permitted to occur in order that he might receive a higher benefit. Such things are not uncommon in human affairs.

That thou shouldest receive him for ever. That is, in the higher relation of a Christian friend and brother; that he might be united to thee in eternal affection; that he might not only be with thee in a far more endearing relation during the present life than he was before, but in the bonds of love in a world that shall never end.

{a} "perhaps" Ge 14:5-8

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON - Chapter 1 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Not now as a servant*. The adverb rendered "*not now*," (*ouketi*,) means no more, no further, no longer. It implies that he had been before in this condition, but was not to be now. Comp.

Mt 19:6, "They are *no more* twain." They were once so, but they are not to be regarded as such now. Mt 22:46, "Neither durst any man from that day forth, ask him any more questions." They once did it, but now they did not dare to do it. Lu 15:19, "And am *no more* worthy to be called thy son," though I once was. Joh 6:66, "And walked *no more* with him," though they once did. See also Joh 11:54 14:19, 17:11 Ac 8:39; Gal 4:7; Eph 2:19. This passage, then, proves that he had been before a servant—*doulov—doulos*. But still it is not certain what kind of a servant he was. The word does not necessarily mean *slave*, nor can it be proved from this passage, or from any other part of the epistle, that he was at any time a slave. **See Barnes "Eph 6:5"**.

See Barnes "1Ti 6:1".

The word denotes *servant* of any kind, and it should never be assumed that those to whom it was applied were slaves. It is true that slavery existed in the heathen nations when the gospel was first preached, and it is doubtless true that many slaves were converted, **See Barnes "1Co 7:21"**; but the mere use of *the word* does not necessarily prove that he to whom it is applied was a slave. If Onesimus were a slave, there is reason to think that he was of a most respectable character, comp. **See Barnes "Col 4:9"**; and indeed *all* that is implied in the use of the term here, and *all* that is said of him, would be met by the supposition that he was a *voluntary servant*, and that he had been in fact intrusted with important business by Philemon. It would seem from Phm 1:18, ("*or oweth thee aught*,") that he was in a condition which made it possible for him to hold property, or at least to be intrusted.

But above a servant, a brother beloved. Christian brother. Comp. Notes, 1Ti 6:2. He was especially dear to Paul himself as a Christian, and he trusted that he would be so to Philemon.

Specially to me. That is, I feel a special or particular interest in him, and affection for him. This he felt not only on account of the traits of character which he had evinced since his conversion, but because he had been converted under his instrumentality when he was a prisoner. A convert made in such circumstances would be particularly dear to one.

But how much more unto thee. Why, it may be asked, would he then be particularly dear to Philemon? I answer, because

(1.) of the former relation which he sustained to him—a member of his own family, and bound to him by strong ties;

(2.) because he would receive him as a penitent, and would have joy in his returning from the error of his ways;

(3.) because he might expect him to remain long with him, and be of advantage to him as a Christian brother; and

(4.) because he had voluntarily returned, and thus shown that he felt a strong attachment to his former master.

In the flesh. This phrase is properly used in reference to any relation which may exist pertaining to the present world, as contradistinguished from that which is formed primarily by religion, and which would be expressed by the subjoined phrase, "in the Lord." It might, in itself, refer to any natural relation of blood, or to any formed in business, or to any constituted by mere friendship, or to family alliance, or to any relation having its origin in voluntary or involuntary servitude. It is not necessary to suppose, in order to meet the full force of the expression, either that Onesimus had been a slave, or that he would continue to be regarded as such. *Whatever* relation of the kind, referred to above, may have existed between him and Philemon, would be appropriately denoted by this phrase. The new and more interesting relation which they were now to sustain to each other,

which was formed by religion, is expressed by the phrase "in the Lord." In *both* these, Paul hoped that Onesimus would manifest the appropriate spirit of a Christian, and be worthy of his entire confidence.

In the Lord. As a Christian. He will be greatly endeared to your heart as a consistent and worthy follower of the Lord Jesus.

On this important verse, then, in relation to the use which is so often made of this epistle by the advocates of slavery, to show that Paul sanctioned it, and that it is a duty to send back those who have escaped from their masters that they may again be held in bondage, we may remark,

(1.) there is no certain evidence that Onesimus was ever a slave at all. All the proof that he was, is to be found in the word *doulov* —*doulos*—in this verse. But, as we have seen, the mere use of this word by no means proves that. All that is necessarily implied by it is that he was in some way the *servant* of Philemon— whether hired or bought cannot be shown.

(2.) At all events, even supposing that he had been a slave, Paul did not mean that he should return as such, or to be regarded as such. He meant, whatever may have been his former relation, and whatever subsequent relation he might sustain, that he should be regarded *as a beloved Christian brother*; that the leading conception in regard to him should be that he was a fellow-heir of salvation, a member of the same redeemed church, a candidate for the same heaven.

(3.) Paul did not send him back in order that he might be a slave, or with a view that the shackles of servitude should be riveted on him. There is not the slightest evidence that he *forced* him to return, or that he *advised* him to do it, or even that he expressed a *wish* that he would; and when he did send him, it was not *as a slave*, but as a beloved brother in the Lord. It cannot be shown that the motive for sending him back was, in the slightest degree, that he should be a slave. No such thing is intimated, nor is any such thing necessary to be supposed in order to a fair interpretation of the passage.

(4.) It is clear that, even *if* Onesimus had been a slave before, it would have been contrary to the wishes of Paul that Philemon should now hold him as such. Paul wished him to regard him "*not* as a servant," but as a "beloved brother." If Philemon complied with his wishes, Onesimus was never afterwards regarded or treated as a slave. If he *did* so regard or treat him, it was contrary to the expressed intention of the apostle, and it is certain that he could never have shown this letter in justification of it. It cannot fail to strike any one that if Philemon followed the spirit of this epistle, he would not consider Onesimus to be a slave; but if he sustained the relation of a servant at all, it would be as a voluntary member of his household, where, in all respects, he would be regarded and treated, not as a "chattel, or a "thing," but as a Christian brother.

(5.) This passage, therefore, may be regarded as full proof that it is *not* right to send a slave back, against his will, to his former master, *to be a slave*. It is right to help one if he wishes to go back; to give him a letter to his master, as Paul did to Onesimus; to furnish him money to help him on his journey if he desires to return; and to commend him as a Christian brother, if he is such; but beyond that, the example of the apostle Paul does not go. It is perfectly clear that he would *not* have sent him back to be regarded and treated as a slave; but being able to commend him as a Christian, he was willing to do it, and he expected that he *would* be treated, not as a slave, but as a Christian. The case before us does not go at all to prove that Paul would have ever sent him back to be a chattel or a thing. If, with his own consent, and by his own wish, we can send a slave back ta his master to be treated *as a Christian* and as a man, the example of Paul may show that it would be right to do it, but it does not go beyond that.

(6.) In confirmation of this, and as a guide in duty now, it may be observed, that Paul had been educated as a Hebrew; that he was thoroughly imbued with the doctrines of the Old Testament; and that one of the elementary principles of that system of religion was, that a runaway slave was in *no circumstances* to be returned by force to his former master. "*Thou shalt NOT deliver unto his master the servant that is escaped from his master unto thee*," De 23:15. It cannot be supposed that, trained as he was in the principles of the Hebrew religion—of which this was a positive and unrepealed law, and imbued with the benevolent spirit of the gospel—a system so hostile to oppression, the apostle Paul would have constrained a slave who had escaped from bondage to return to servitude against his will.

(7.) It may be added, that if the principles here acted on by Paul were carried out, slavery would speedily cease in the world. Very soon would it come to an end if masters were to regard those whom they hold, "not as slaves," but as *beloved Christian brothers*; not as *chattels* and *things*, but as the redeemed children of God. Thus regarding them, they would no longer feel that they might chain them, and task them, and sell them as property. They would feel that, as Christians and as men, they were on a level with themselves; and that they who were made in the image of God, and who had been redeemed with the blood of his Son, *ought to be FREE*.

{b} "brother beloved" Mt 18:8 1Ti 6:2 {c} "and in the Lord" Col 3:22

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON - Chapter 1 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *If thou count me therefore a partner*. The word rendered *partner*, (*koinwnov*,) means a partaker, a companion. The idea in the word is that of having something *in common* (*koinov*) with any one —as common principles; common attachments; a common interest in an enterprise; common hopes. It may be applied to those who hold the same principles of religion, and who have the same hope of heaven, the same views of things, etc. Here the meaning is, that if Philemon regarded Paul as sharing with him in the principles and hopes of religion, or as a brother in the gospel, so that he would receive *him*, he ought to receive Onesimus in the same way. He was actuated by the same principles, and had the same hopes, and had a claim to be received as a Christian brother. His receiving Onesimus would be interpreted by Paul as proof that he regarded him as a partaker of the hopes of the gospel, and as a companion and friend. For a plea in behalf of another, strongly resembling this, see Horace, Epis. Lib. 1, Ep. 9.

{a} "partner" 2Co 8:23

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON - Chapter 1 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *If he hath wronged thee*. Either by escaping from you, or by failing to perform what he had agreed to, or by unfaithfulness when he was with you as a servant, or by taking your property when he went away. Any of these methods would meet all that is said here, and it is impossible to determine in which of them he had done Philemon wrong. It may be observed, however, that the apostle evinces much delicacy in this matter. He does not say that he *had* wronged him, but he

makes a *supposition* that he might have done it. Doubtless, Philemon would suppose that he *had* done it, even if he had done no more than to escape from him, and, whatever Paul's views of that might be, he says that, even if it were so, he would wish him to set that over to his account. He took the blame on himself, and asked Philemon not to remember it against Onesimus.

Or oweth thee ought. It appears from this, that Onesimus, whatever may have been his former condition, was capable of holding property, and of contracting debts. It is possible that he might have borrowed money of Philemon, or he may have been regarded as a tenant, and may not have paid the rent of his farm, or the apostle may mean that he had owed him service which he had not performed. Conjecture is useless as to the way in which the debt had been contracted.

Put that on mine account. Reckon, or impute that to me—*emoi ellogei*. This word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, except in Ro 5:13, where it is rendered *imputed*. **See Barnes "Ro 5:13".**

It means to reckon; to put to one's account, to wit, what properly belongs to him, or what he assumes. It never implies that that is to be charged on one which does not properly belong to him, either as his own act, or as that which he has assumed. In this case, it would have been manifestly unjust for Philemon to charge the wrong which Onesimus had done, or what he owed him, to the apostle Paul without his consent; and it cannot be inferred from what Paul says here that it would have been right to do so. The *steps* in the case were these:

(1.) Onesimus, not Paul, had done the wrong.

(2.) Paul was not guilty of it, or blameworthy for it, and never in any way, or by any process, could be made to be, or conceived to be. It would be true for ever that Onesimus and not he had done the wrong.

(3.) Paul *assumed* the debt and the wrong to himself. He was willing, by putting himself in the place of Onesimus, to bear the consequences, and to have Onesimus treated *as if* he had not done it. When he had voluntarily assumed it, it was right to treat him as if he had done so; that is, to hold him responsible. A man may *assume* a debt if he pleases, and then he may be held answerable for it.

(4.) If he had *not* assumed this himself, it never could have been right for Philemon to charge it on him. No possible supposition could make it right. No agency which he had in the conversion of Onesimus; no friendship which he had for him; no favour which he had shown him, could make it right. The *consent*, the *concurrence*, on the part of Paul, was absolutely necessary in order that he should be in any way responsible for what Onesimus had done.

(5.) The same principle prevails in imputation everywhere.

(a.) What we have done is chargeable upon us.

(b.) If we have not done a thing, or have not assumed it by a voluntary act, it is not right to charge it upon us.

(c.) God reckons things as they are. The Saviour voluntarily *assumed* the place of man, and God *reckoned*, or considered it so. He did not hold him guilty or blameworthy in the case; but as he had voluntarily taken the place of the sinner, he was treated as if he had been a sinner. God, in like manner, does not charge on man crimes of which he is not guilty. He does not hold him to be blameworthy, or ill-deserving for the sin of Adam, or any other sin but his own. He reckons things as they are. Adam sinned, and *he* alone was held to be blameworthy or ill-deserving for the act. By a divine constitution comp. **See Barnes** "Ro 5:12, seq., he had appointed that *if* he sinned, the consequences or results should pass over and terminate on his posterity—as the consequences of

the sin of the drunkard pass over and terminate on his sons, and God *reckons* this to be so—and treats the race accordingly. He never reckons those to be guilty who are not guilty; or those to be ill-deserving who are not ill-deserving; nor does he punish one for what another has done. When Paul, therefore, voluntarily *assumed* a debt or an obligation, what he did should not be urged as an argument to prove that it would be right for God to charge on all the posterity of Adam the sin of their first father, or to hold them guilty for an offence committed ages before they had an existence. The case should be adduced to demonstrate *one point* only—that when a man *assumes* a debt, or voluntarily takes a wrong done upon himself, it is right to hold him responsible for it.

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON - Chapter 1 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *I Paul have written it with mine own hand*. It has been inferred from this, that Paul wrote this entire epistle with his own hand, though this was contrary to his usual practice. Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 16:22"**; **See Barnes** "1Co 16:21"; **See Barnes "Gal 6:11"**.

He undoubtedly meant to refer to this as a mark of special favour towards Philemon, and as furnishing security that he would certainly be bound for what he had promised.

I will repay it. I will be security for it. It is not probable that Paul supposed that Philemon would rigidly exact it from him, but if he did, he would feel himself bound to pay it.

Albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me thine own self besides. Paul had doubtless been the means of the conversion of Philemon, and whatever hope he cherished of eternal life, was to be traced to his instrumentality. Paul says that this was equivalent to his owing *himself* to him. It is very life—his eternal welfare—-was to be traced to his labours. What he asked now of him was a small matter compared with this, and he seems to have supposed—what was probably true—that for this consideration, Philemon would not think of exacting of him what he had voluntarily obligated himself to obey.

{*} "do not say" "not to say"

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON - Chapter 1 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord*. "By showing me this favour in receiving, my friend and brother as I request." The phrase, "in the Lord," here seems to mean that, if this request was granted, he would recognise the hand of the Lord in it, and would receive it as a favour from him.

Refresh my bowels in the Lord. The bowels, in the Scriptures, are uniformly spoken of as the seat of the affections—meaning commonly the upper viscera, embracing the heart and the lungs. **See Barnes "Isa 16:11"**.

The reason is, that in any deep emotion this part of our frame is peculiarly affected, or we *feel* it there. Comp. Robinson's Lex. on the word *splagcnon*. See this illustrated at length in Sir Charles Bell's "Anatomy of Expression," p. 85, seq. Ed. London, 1844. The idea here is, that Paul had such a tender affection for Onesimus as to give him great concern and uneasiness. The word rendered

"refresh"—*anapauson*—means to give rest to, to give repose, to free from sorrow or care; and the sense is, that by receiving Onesimus, Philemon would cause the deep and anxious feelings of Paul to cease, and he would be calm and happy. Comp. **See Barnes "Phm 1:7"**.

{a} "refresh" Phm 1:7

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON - Chapter 1 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Having confidence in thy obedience*. That you would comply with all my expressed desires.

I wrote unto thee. "I have written to you;" to wit, in this epistle.

Knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say. In all the respects which he had mentioned—in receiving Onesimus, and in his kind treatment of him. He had asked a great favour of him, but he knew that he would go even beyond what he had asked.

{b} "confidence" 2Co 7:16 {+} "obedience" "compliance"

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON - Chapter 1 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *But withal*. Or, *at the same time— ama*. While you are granting this favour, do me also another by preparing a lodging for me.

Prepare me also a lodging. Philemon had been accustomed to show kindness to the saints (Phm 1:6,) and not improbably Paul had before shared his hospitality. The word rendered *lodging* (*xenia*) means, properly, *guest-right, hospitality, entertainment*; and then, *a place for a guest*. Compare Ac 28:23.

For I trust. Paul had some hope of being released—an event which probably occurred. **See Barnes "Php 1:25"**; **See Barnes** "Php 2:23, **See Barnes "Php 2:24"**.

Compare Introduction to 2Ti 1:1

Through your prayers. **See Barnes "2Co 1:11"**.

He expected release in answer to the petitions of those who loved him, and the cause in which he was engaged. Compare **See Barnes "Ac 12:5"**.

I shall be given unto you. I shall be permitted to return to you, as a favour *carisyhsomai*. Paul had no doubt that Philemon would so regard it, and he had no apprehension that his abiding with him would be considered as a burden.

{++} "withal" "At the same time" {c} "I trust" Php 2:24 {d} "through your prayers" 2Co 1:11

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON - Chapter 1 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *There salute thee Epaphras*. The same persons who are here mentioned as greeting Philemon, are mentioned in the close of the epistle to the Colossians—furnishing a high degree of

evidence that Philemon resided at Colosse. Epaphras was a member of the church there. **See Barnes "Col 4:12".**

My fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus. In the cause of Christ. **See Barnes "Phm 1:1".**

The circumstance of his being a prisoner is not mentioned in the parallel place in the epistle to the Colossians, but nothing is more probable.

{e} "Epaphras" Col 1:7

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON - Chapter 1 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, and Lucas*. **See Barnes** "Col 4:10, **See Barnes "Col 4:14"**

{f} "Marcus" Ac 12:25 {g} "Aristarchus" Ac 19:29 {h} "Demas" 2Ti 4:11 {&} "Lucas" "Luke"

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON - Chapter 1 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*, etc. **See Barnes "2Ti 4:22".**

The subscription to the epistle is of no authority, but in this case is undoubtedly correct. Compare the Remarks at the close of 1 Corinthians, and Titus.

REMARKS.

Having now passed through with the exposition of this epistle, it may be proper to copy, for comparison with it, one of the most beautiful specimens of epistolary composition to be found in profane literature—an epistle of Pliny, written on a similar occasion, and having a strong resemblance to this; As a matter of taste, it is of importance to show that the sacred writers do not fall behind the most favourable specimens of literary composition to be found in uninspired writings. The epistle of Pliny was directed to his friend Sabinianus, in behalf of his manumitted slave who had offended him, and who was consequently cast out of his favour. It is in the following words :—

C. Plinius Sabiniano, S.

Libertus tuus, cui succensere te dixeras, yenit ad me advolutusque pedibus meis, tanquam tuis, haesit. Flevit multum, multum rogavit, multum etiam tacuit: in summa, fecit mihi fidem penitentice. Vere credo emendatum, quia deliquisse sentit. Irasceris scio; et irasceris merito, id quoque scio: sed tunc praecipua mansuetudinis laus, cum irae causa justissima est. Amasti hominem; et spero amabis: interim sufficit ut exorari te sinas. Licebit rursus irasci, si meruerit: quod exoratus excusatius facies.

Remitte aliquid adolescentice ipsius; remitte lachrymis; remitte indulgentiae tuae; ne torseris ilium, ne torseris etiam te. Torqueris enim cum tam lenis irasceris. Vereor, ne ridear non rogare, sed cogere, si precibus eju. s meas junxero. Sungain tureen tanto plenius et etfusius, quantc ipsum acrius severiusque corripui, destricte minatus, nunquam me postea rogaturum. Hoc illo, quem terreri oportebat; tibi non idem. Nam fortasse iterum rogabo, impetrabo iterum: sit mode tale, ut togare me, ut priestare te deceat. Vale. *Epistolar*. Lib. ix. Ep. 21. \-

"Caius Pliny to Sabinianus, health:

"Thy freed man, with whom thou didst say thou wert incensed, came to me, and having thrown himself at my feet, grasped them as if they had been thine. He wept much; plead much; and yet pleaded more by his silence. In short, he fully convinced me that he was a penitent. I do sincerely believe that he is reformed, because he perceives that he has done wrong. I know that thou art incensed against him; and I know also that thou art justly so; but then clemency has its chief praise when there is the greatest cause for anger. Thou hast loved the man; and I hope that thou wilt love him again. In the meantime, it may suffice that thou dost suffer thyself to be entreated for him. It will be right for thee again to be offended if he deserves it; because, having allowed thyself to be entreated, you will do it with greater propriety.

"Forgive something for his youth; forgive on account of his tears; forgive on account of thine own kindness: do not torment him; do not torment thyself—for thou wilt be tormented when thou, who art of so gentle a disposition, dost suffer thyself to be angry. I fear, if I should unite my prayers to his, that I should seem not to ask, but to compel. Yet I will write them, and the more largely and earnestly, too, as I have sharply and severely reproved him; solemnly threatening him, should he offend again, never more to intercede for him. This I said to him, because it was necessary to alarm him; but I will not say the same to thee. For perhaps I may again entreat thee, and again obtain, if now that shall be done which it is fit that I should ask and you concede. Farewell."

Those who compare these two epistles, much as they may admire that of Pliny as a literary composition, and as adapted to secure the end which he had in view, will coincide with the remark of Doddridge, that it is much inferior to the letter of Paul. There is less courtesy—though there is much; there is less that is touching and tender—though there is much force in the pleading; and there is much less that is affecting in the manner of the appeal than in the epistle of the apostle.

The epistle to Philemon, though the shortest that Paul wrote, and though pertaining to a private matter in which the church at large could not be expected to have any direct interest, is nevertheless a most interesting portion of the New Testament, and furnishes some invaluable lessons for the church.

I. It is a model of courtesy. It shows that the apostle was a man of refined sensibility, and had a delicate perception of what was due in friendship, and what was required by true politeness. There are turns of thought in this epistle which no one would employ who was not thoroughly under the

influence of true courtesy of feeling, and who had not an exquisite sense of what was proper in intercourse with a Christian gentleman.

II. The epistle shows that he had great tact in argument, and great skill in selecting just such things as would be adapted to secure the end in view. It would be hardly possible to accumulate, even in a letter of fiction, more circumstances which would be fitted to accomplish the object which he contemplated, than he has introduced into this short letter, or to arrange them in a way better fitted to secure the desired result. If we remember the state of mind in which it is reasonable to suppose Philemon was in regard to this runaway servant, and the little probability that a man in his circumstances would receive him with kindness again, it is impossible not to admire the address with which Paul approaches him. It is not difficult to imagine in what state of mind Philemon may have been, or the obstacles which it was necessary to surmount in order to induce him to receive Onesimus again—*and especially to receive him as a Christian brother*. If, as has been commonly supposed, Onesimus had been a slave; if he had run away from him; if he had been formerly intractable and disobedient; if he had wronged him by taking property with him that did not belong to him, or if he had owed him, and had run off without paying him, it is not difficult for any one to imagine how great was the difficulty to be overcome in his mind before the object of Paul could be accomplished. This will be felt to be especially so, if we bear in remembrance the repugnance necessarily felt by a slaveholder to receive one who has been a slave as an equal in any respect, or to regard and treat such an one as a Christian brother on the same level with himself. Or if we suppose that Onesimus had been a voluntary servant in the employ of Philemon, and had failed to render the service which he had contracted to perform, or had embezzled property, or had gone off in debt, greatly irritating the mind of his master, the difficulty to be overcome before he received him again would be little less. In either case, it would be necessary to soothe his irritated feelings, and to inspire confidence in one who hitherto had evinced little claim to it, and to persuade him now to receive one who had shown that he was not to be trusted as a Christian brother. If the epistle be examined with reference to either of these suppositions, it will be found to be composed with the most finished tact and art.

III. This epistle has been frequently appealed to by the friends and advocates of slavery as furnishing a support or apology for that institution. Indeed, it would seem to be regarded by the advocates of that system as so clear on the point, that all that they need to do is to *name* it as settling the whole matter in debate. The points which it is supposed by the advocates of that system to prove are two: *first*, that slavery is right—since it is assumed that Onesimus was a slave, and that Paul does not intimate to Philemon that the relation was contrary to the spirit of Christianity; and *second*, that it is our duty to send back a runaway slave to his master—since it is assumed that Paul did this in the case of Onesimus. It cannot be denied that this view of the matter would be sustained by most of the *commentaries* on the epistle; but it is time to inquire whether such an exposition is the true one, and whether this epistle really gives countenance to slavery in respect to these points. In order to this, it is important to know exactly what was the state of the case in reference to these points—for in interpreting the New Testament it should not be *assumed* that anything is in favour of slavery, nor should anything be *admitted* to be in favour of it, without applying the most rigid principles of interpretation—any more than in the case of profaneness, adultery, or any other sin. As the result of the examination of the epistle, we are now prepared to inquire what countenance the epistle gives to slavery in these respects, and whether it can be fairly appealed to either in justification of the system, or in showing that it is a duty to return a runaway slave against his

consent to his former master. To make out these points from the epistle, it would be necessary to demonstrate that Onesimus was certainly a slave; that Paul so treats the subject as to show that he approved of the institution; that he sent back Onesimus against his own will; that he returned him because he supposed he had done wrong by escaping from servitude; and that he meant that he should continue to be regarded as a slave, and held as a slave, after his return to Philemon. Now, in regard to these points, I would make the following remarks in view of the exposition which has been given of the epistle:—

(1.) There is no positive evidence that Onesimus was a *slave* at all. **See Barnes "Phm 1:16"**.

Even if it should be admitted to be probable that he was, it would be necessary, in order that this epistle should be adduced in favour of slavery, that that fact should be made out without any ground of doubt, or the argument is worthless. It is clear that the epistle, under any circumstances, can be adduced in favour of slavery only *so far* as it is certain that Onesimus was a slave. But that is *not certain*. It cannot be made to be certain. It should not be taken for granted. Either of the suppositions that he was bound to service till he was of age, by a parent or guardian, or that he had voluntarily bound himself to service for wages, will meet all that is *necessarily* implied in the epistle.

(2.) There is not the least evidence that Paul used any force, or even persuasion to induce him to return to his master. It cannot be proved from the epistle that he even *advised* him to return. It is certain that he did not compel him to do it—for Paul had no power to do this, and no guard or civil officer accompanied Onesimus to secure him if he had chosen to escape. Every one of the circumstances mentioned in the epistle will be met by the supposition that Onesimus *desired* to return, but that there were circumstances which made him apprehensive that if he did, he would not be kindly received, and that, at his request, Paul wrote the epistle to induce Philemon to receive him kindly. Nothing more can be proved; nothing more is necessary to be believed, in order to a fair interpretation of the epistle. Nothing is more natural than the supposition that when Onesimus was truly converted, he would *desire* to return to Philemon if he had in any way done him wrong. But to make it proper to adduce this epistle to show that it is a *duty* to return a runaway slave to his master, even on the supposition that Onesimus was a slave, it is necessary to *prove* either that Paul *advised* him to return, or that he *compelled* him to do it against his will. No one doubts that it would be right to help one who had escaped from slavery, if, on any proper account, he should *wish* to go back to his former master: if he felt that he had wronged him, or if he had a wife and children in the neighbourhood, or if he was satisfied that he could be more happy in his service than he could be elsewhere. To this point, and this only, this epistle goes.

(3.) There is no evidence that Paul meant that Onesimus should return *as* a slave, or with a view to be retained and treated as a slave. Even supposing he had been so formerly, there is not the slightest intimation in the epistle that when he sent him back to his master, he meant that he should throw himself into the chains of bondage again. Nor is there the slightest evidence that *if* he had supposed that this would be the result, he would have even *consented* that he should return to his master. No man can take this epistle, and prove from it that Paul *would* have sent him at all, if he had supposed that the effect would be that he would be reduced to slavery, and held in bondage. If *such* had been his expectation, he would never have written such a letter as this. The expression of such a desire would have found a place in the epistle; or, at least, the epistle would not have been so framed as almost of necessity to lead to a different result.

(4.) There is very satisfactory evidence, besides this, that he did not mean that Onesimus should be regarded and treated by Philemon as a slave. It would be impossible for Philemon to comply with the wishes breathed forth in this letter, and meet exactly the desires of Paul in the case, and yet retain him as a slave, or regard him as property—as a "chattel"—as a "thing." For

(a.) *if* he had been formerly a slave; if this is the fair meaning of the word *doulov* or—*doulos*—then this is expressly declared. Thus, in Phm 1:16, he is commanded to receive him "*NOT now as a servant*" *ouketi wv doulon*. If he had been a slave before, he did not *wish* that he should be received as such now, or regarded as such any longer. How *could* Philemon comply with the wish of the apostle, and yet regard Onesimus as a slave? The very attempt to do it would be directly in the face of the expressed desire of Paul, and every moment he held him as such he would be disregarding his wishes.

(b.) He desired him to receive and treat him, in all respects, as a Christian brother—as one redeemed—as a man:—"*Above a servant, a brother beloved*." How could he do this, and yet regard and treat him as a slave? *Is it* treating one as a Christian brother to hold him as property; to deprive him of freedom; to consider him an article of merchandise; to exact his labour without compensation? Would the man himself who makes another a slave suppose that *he* was treated as a Christian brother, if *he* were reduced to that condition? Would he feel that his son was so regarded if he was made a slave? There are no ways of reconciling these things. It is *impossible* for a master to regard his slave as, in the proper and full sense of the phrase, "*a Christian brother*." He may, indeed, esteem him highly as a Christian; he may treat him with kindness; he may show him many favours; *but—he regards him also As HIS SLAVE*; and this fact makes a difference wide "as from the centre thrice to the utmost pole" in his feelings towards him and other Christians. He is *not* on a level with them as a Christian. The notion of his being *his slave* mingles with all his feelings towards him, and gives a colouring to all his views of him. He cannot but feel, if he himself is under the influence of religion, that that slave, if he were treated in all respects as a Christian, would be as free as himself; would have a right to his time, and skill, and liberty; would be permitted to form his own plans, and to enjoy the avails of his own labour; and would be secure from the possibility of being *sold*.

(c.) Suppose now that Paul, after a short interval, had actually come to the residence of Philemon, as he expected to, (Phm 1:22,) and had found him regarding and treating Onesimus as a slave; would he have felt that Philemon had complied with his wishes? Did he ask this of him? Did he not request just the contrary? Phm 1:16. Would it not be natural for him to say to him that he had not received him as he wished him to? And how would Philemon reply to this?

(5.) The principles laid down in this epistle would lead to the universal abolition of slavery. If all those who are now slaves were to become Christians, and their masters were to treat them "not as slaves, but as brethren beloved," the period would not be far distant when slavery would cease. This probably will be admitted by all. But a state of things which would be destroyed by the widest prevalence of Christianity, is not right at any time. Christianity, in its highest influences, interferes with nothing that is good, and would annihilate nothing which is not wrong. That which is true, and best for the welfare of man, will survive when the true religion spreads all over the world; and to say, as is commonly admitted even by the advocates of slavery, that Christianity will ultimately destroy the system, is to say that *it is now wrong*— for Christianity destroys nothing which is in itself right, and which is desirable for the highest good of man. It will destroy intemperance, and idolatry, and superstition, and war—because they are evil and wrong—and *only* because they are

so; and for the same reason, and that only, will it abolish slavery. When a man, therefore, admits that the gospel will ultimately destroy slavery, he at the same time admits that it is now an evil and a sin. The gospel is adapted and designed to put an end to the system. It *did* annihilate it in the Roman empire, and its tendency everywhere is to secure its final abolition. The system, *therefore*, is evil. It is opposed to the spirit of religion. It is destructive of the welfare of society. It is a violation of human rights. It is contrary to the will of God. The gospel everywhere teaches us to regard the slave "no longer as a slave, but as a brother;" and when this is secured, the system must speedily come to an end. For this, and for all its other anticipated influences, we should labour and pray that the gospel may be diffused as speedily as possible all over the world; that it may raise man everywhere from his degradation, and invest every human being with the dignity of a freeman; that it "may undo the heavy burdens, break every yoke, and bid the oppressed go free," Isa 58:6.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 1

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 1 - Verse 1

Note: Due to extended length the Introductory Materials to this book can be found in Barnes Notes on
Mal 1:1-5.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

CHAPTER I.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

THE main object of the epistle is to commend the Christian religion to those who were addressed in it, in such a way as to prevent defection from it. This is done, principally, by showing its superiority to the Mosaic system. The great danger of Christians in Palestine was of relapsing into the Jewish system. The imposing nature of its rites; the public sentiment in its favour; the fact of its antiquity, and its undisputed Divine origin, would all tend to that. To counteract this, the writer of this epistle shows that the gospel had higher claims on their attention, and that, if that were rejected, ruin was inevitable. In doing this, he begins, in this chapter, by showing the superiority of the Author of Christianity to prophets, and to the angels; that is, that he had a rank that entitled him to the profoundest regard. The drift of this chapter, therefore, is to show the dignity and exalted nature of the Author of the Christian system— the Son of God. The chapter comprises the following points :—

I. The announcement of the fact that God, who had formerly spoken by the prophets, had, in this last dispensation, spoken by his Son, Heb 1:1,2.

II. The statement respecting his rank and dignity. He was

(1.) the Heir of all things;

(2.) the Creator of the worlds;

(3.) the brightness of the Divine glory, and the proper expression of his nature;

(4.) he upheld all things, Heb 1:2,3.

III. The work and exaltation of the Author of the Christian system.

(1.) He, by his own unassisted agency, purified us from our sins.

(2.) He is seated at the right hand of God.

(3.) He has a more exalted and valuable inheritance than the angels, in proportion as his name is more exalted than theirs, Heb 1:3,4.

IV. Proofs that what is here ascribed to him belongs to him, particularly that he is declared to be superior to the angels, Heb 1:5-14.

(1.) The angels have never been addressed with the title of Son, Heb 1:5.

(2.) He is declared to be the object of worship by the angels, while they are employed merely as the messengers of God, Heb 1:6,7.

(3.) He is addressed as God, and his throne is said to be for ever and ever, Heb 1:8,9.

(4.) He is addressed as immutable. He is declared to have laid the foundations of heaven and earth; and though they would perish, yet he would remain the same, Heb 1:10-12.

(5.) None of the angels had been addressed in this manner, but they were employed in the subordinate work of ministering to the heirs of salvation, Heb 1:13,14.

From this train of reasoning, the inference is drawn in Heb 2:1-4, that we ought to give diligent heed to what had been spoken. The Great Author of the Christian scheme had peculiar claims to be heard, and there was peculiar danger in disregarding his message. The object of this chapter is, to impress those to whom the epistle was addressed with the high claims of the Founder of Christianity, and to show that it was superior in this respect to any other system.

Verse 1. *God, who at sundry times*. The commencement of this epistle varies from all the others which Paul wrote. In every other instance, he at first announces his name, and the name of the church or of the individual to whom he wrote. In regard to the reason why he here varies from that custom, see the Introduction, & 3. This commences with the full acknowledgment of his belief, that God had made important revelations in past times, but that now he had communicated his will in a manner that more especially claimed their attention. This announcement was of particular importance here. He was writing to those who had been trained up in the full belief of the truths taught by the prophets. As the object of the apostle was to show the superior claims of the gospel, and to lead them from putting confidence in the rites instituted in accordance with the directions of the Old Testament, it was of essential importance that he should admit that their belief of the inspiration of the prophets was well founded, he was not an infidel, he was not disposed to call in question the Divine origin of the books which were regarded as given by inspiration, he fully admitted all that had been held by the Hebrews on that head, and yet showed that the new revelation had more important claims to their attention. The word rendered "at sundry times" —*polumerwv*— means, *in many parts*. It refers here to the fact, that the former revelation had been given in various parts. It had not all been given at once. It had been communicated from time to time, as the exigencies of the people required, and as God chose to communicate it. At one time it was by history, then by prophecy, by poetry, by proverbs, by some solemn and special message, etc. The ancient revelation was a *collection* of various writings, on different subjects, and given at different times; but now God had addressed us by *his Son*—the one great Messenger, who had come to finish the Divine communications, and to give a uniform and connected revelation to mankind. The contrast here is between the numerous separate *parts* of the revelation given by the prophets, and the oneness of that given by his Son. The word does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament.

And in divers manners polutropwv. In many ways. It was not all in one mode. He had employed various methods in communicating his will. At one time it was by direct communication, at another by dreams, at another by visions, etc. In regard to the various methods which God employed to communicate his will, see Introduction to Isaiah, & 7. In contradistinction from these, God had now spoken by his Son. He had addressed us in one uniform manner. It was not by dreams, or visions; it was a direct communication from him. The word used here, also, occurs nowhere else in the New Testament.

In times past. Formerly; in ancient times. The series of revelations began, as recorded by Moses, with Adam, (Ge 3.) and terminated with Malachi—a period of more than three thousand five hundred years. From Malachi to the time of the Saviour, there were no recorded Divine communications; and the whole period of *written* revelation, or when the Divine communications were recorded from Moses to Malachi, was about a thousand years.

Unto the fathers. To our ancestors; to the people of ancient times.

By the prophets. The word *prophet*, in the Scriptures, is used in a wide signification. It means not only those who predict future events, but those who communicate the Divine will on any subject. **See Barnes "Ro 12:6"; See Barnes** "1Co 14:1".

It is used here in that large sense—as denoting all those by whom God had made communications to the Jews in former times.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 1 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Hath in these last days*. In this the final dispensation; or in this dispensation under which the affairs of the world will be wound up. Phrases similar to this occur frequently in the Scriptures. They do not imply that the world was soon coming to an end, but that that was the *last* dispensation, the *last* period of the world. There had been the patriarchal period, the period under the law, the prophets, etc., and this was the period during which God's *last* method of communication would be enjoyed, and under which the world would close. It might be a *very long* period, but it would be the last one; and, so far as the meaning of the phrase is concerned, it might be the longest period, or longer than all the others put together, but still it would be the *last* one. **See Barnes "Ac 2:17"; See Barnes** "Isa 2:2".

Spoken unto us. The word "*us*" here does not of necessity imply that the writer of the epistle had actually heard him, or that they had heard him to whom the epistle was written. It means that God had now communicated his win to man by his Son. It may be said, with entire propriety, that God has spoken to *us* by his Son, though we have not personally heard or seen him. We have what he spoke, and caused to be recorded, for our direction.

By his Son. The title commonly given to the Lord Jesus, as denoting his peculiar relation to God. It was understood, by the Jews, to denote equality with God, (**See Barnes "Joh 5:18"**; comp. **See Barnes** "Joh 10:33,36,) and is used with such a reference here. **See Barnes** "Ro 1:4, where the meaning of the phrase "Son of God" is fully considered. It is implied here, that the fact, that the Son of God has spoken to us, imposes the highest obligations to attend to what he has said; that he has authority superior to all those who have spoken in past times; and that there will be peculiar guilt in refusing to attend to what he has spoken. See Heb 2:1-4; comp. Heb 12:25. The *reasons* for the superior respect which should be shown to the revelations of the Son of God may be such as these:—-

(1.) His rank and dignity. He is: the equal with God, (Joh 1:1,) and is himself called God in this chapter, Heb 1:8. He has a right, therefore, to command, and when he speaks men should obey.

(2.) The clearness of the truths which he communicated to man, on a great variety of subjects, that are of the highest moment to the world. Revelation has been gradual—like the breaking of the day in the east. At first there is a little light; it increases and expands till objects become more and more visible, and then the sun rises in full-orbed glory. At first we discern only the *existence* of

some object—- obscure and undefined; then we can trace-its outline; then its colour, its size, its proportions, its drapery—till it stands before us fully revealed. So it has been with revelation. There is a great variety of subjects which we now see clearly, which were very imperfectly understood by the teaching of the prophets, and would be now if we had only the Old Testament. Among them are the following:—

(a.) The character of God. Christ came to make him known as a *merciful* Being, and to show *how* he could be merciful as well as just. The views given of God by the Lord Jesus are far more clear than any given by the ancient prophets; compared with those entertained by the ancient philosophers, they are like the sun compared with the darkest midnight.

(b.) The way in which man may be reconciled to God, The New Testament— which may be considered as that which God "has spoken to us by his Son" —has told us how the great work of being reconciled to God can be effected. The Lord Jesus told us that he came to "give his life a ransom for many;" that he laid down his life for his friends; that he was about to die for man; that he would draw all men to him. The prophets indeed— particularly Isaiah —threw much light on these points. But the mass of the people did not understand their revelations. They pertained to future events—always difficult to be understood. But Christ has told us the way of salvation; and he has made it so plain, that he who runs may read.

(c.) The *moral* precepts of the Redeemer are superior to those of any and all that had gone before him. They are elevated, pure, expansive, benevolent—such as became the Son of God to proclaim. Indeed, this is admitted on all hands. Infidels are constrained to acknowledge, that all the moral precepts of the Saviour are eminently pure and benignant. If they were obeyed, the world would be filled with justice, truth, purity, and benevolence. Error, fraud, hypocrisy, ambition, wars, licentiousness, and intemperance, would cease; and the opposite virtues would diffuse happiness over the face of the world. Prophets had indeed delivered many moral precepts of great importance, but the purest and most extensive body of just principles and of good morals on earth are to be found in the teachings of the Saviour.

(d.) He has given to us the clearest view which man has had of the future state; and he has disclosed, in regard to that future state, a class of truths of the deepest interest to mankind, which were before wholly unknown or only partially revealed.

1. He has revealed the certainty of a state of future existence—in opposition to the Sadducees of all ages. This was denied, before he came, by multitudes; and where it was not, the arguments by which it was supported were often of the feeblest kind. The *truth* was held by some—like Plato and his followers—but the *arguments* on which they relied were feeble, and such as were unfitted to give rest to the soul. The *truth* they had obtained by TRADITION; the *arguments* were THEIR OWN.

2. He revealed the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. This before was doubted or denied by nearly all the world. It was held to be absurd and impossible. The Saviour taught its certainty; he raised up more than one to show that it was possible; he was himself raised, to put the whole matter beyond debate.

3. He revealed the certainty of future judgment—the judgment of all mankind.

4. He disclosed great and momentous truths respecting the future state. Before he came, all was dark. The Greeks spoke of Elysian fields, but they were dreams of the imagination; the Hebrews had some faint notion of a future state, where all was dark and gloomy, with perhaps an occasional glimpse of the truth that there is a holy and blessed heaven; but to the mass of mind, all was obscure.

Christ revealed a heaven, and told us of a hell. He showed us that the one might be gained, and the other avoided. He presented important motives for doing it; and, had he done nothing more, his communications were worthy the profound attention of mankind. I may add,

(3.) That the Son of God has claims on our attention from the MANNER in which he spoke, He spoke as one having "authority," Mt 7:29. He spoke as a witness of what he saw and knew, Joh 3:11. He spoke without doubt or ambiguity of God, and heaven, and hell. His is the language of one who is familiar with all that he describes; who saw all, who knew all. There is no hesitancy or doubt in his mind of the truth of what he speaks; and he speaks as if his whole soul were impressed with its unspeakable importance. Never were so momentous communications made to men of hell as fell from the lips of the Lord Jesus, (**See Barnes "Mt 23:33"**

;) never were announcements made so fitted to awe and appall a sinful world.

Whom he hath appointed heir of all things. See Ps 2:8; comp. **See Barnes "Ro 8:17"**.

This is language taken from the fact that he is "*the* SON of God." If a Son, then he is an heir —for so it is usually among men. This is not to be taken *literally*, as if he inherits anything as a man does. An heir is one who inherits anything after the death of its possessor—usually his father. But this cannot be applied in this sense to the Lord Jesus. The language is used to denote his rank and dignity as the Son of God. As such, all things are his, as the property of the father descends to his son at his death. The word rendered *heir*— *klhronomov*—means, properly,

(1.) one who acquires anything by lot; and

(2.) an *heir* in the sense in which we usually understand the word. It may also denote a *possessor* of anything received as s portion, or of property of any kind. See Ro 4:13,14. It is, in every instance, rendered heir in the New Testament. Applied to Christ, it means that, as the Son of God, he is possessor or lord of all things, or that all things are his. Comp. Ac 2:36 10:36; Joh 17:10 16:15. "All things that the Father hath are mine." The sense is, that all things belong to the Son of God. Who is so *rich*, then, as Christ? Who so able to endow his friends with enduring and abundant wealth?

By whom. By whose agency; or who was the actual agent in the creation. Grotius supposes that this means, "on account of whom;" and that the meaning is, that the universe was formed with reference to the Messiah, in accordance with an ancient Jewish maxim, But the more common and classical usage of the word rendered *by*, (*dia*,) when it governs a genitive, as here, is to denote the instrumental cause; the agent by which anything is done. See Mt 1:22 2:5,15,23 Lu 18:31 Joh 1:17

Ac 2:22,43, 4:16 12:9; Ro 2:16 5:5.

It may be true that the universe was formed with reference to the glory of the Son Of God, and that this world was brought into being in order to show his glory; but it would not do to establish that doctrine on a passage like this. Its obvious and proper meaning is, that he was the agent of the creation—a truth that is elsewhere abundantly taught. See Joh 1:3,10; Col 1:16 Eph 3:9; 1Co 8:6.

This sense, also, better agrees with the design of the apostle in this place. His object is to set forth the dignity of the Son of God. This is better shown by the consideration that he was the *Creator* of all things, than that all things were made for him.

The worlds. The universe, or creation. So the word here— *aiwn*—is undoubtedly used in Heb 11:3. The word properly means age—an indefinitely long period of time; then perpetuity, ever, eternity—*always being*. For an extended investigation of the meaning of the word, the reader may consult an essay by Prof. Stuart, in the Spirit of the Pilgrims, for 1829, pp. 406—452. From the sense of age, or duration, the word comes to denote the present and future age; the present world,

and the world to come; the present world, with all its cares, anxieties, and evils; the men of this world—a wicked generation, etc. Then it means the world —the material universe—creation as it is. The only perfectly clear use of the word in this sense in the New Testament is in Heb 11:3, and there there can be no doubt. "Through faith we understand that *the worlds* were made by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." The passage before us will bear the same interpretation, and this is the most obvious and intelligible. What would be the meaning of saying that the *ages* or *dispensations* were made by the Son of God? The Hebrews used the word—

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—*olam*—in the same sense. It properly means age, duration; and thence it came to be used by them to denote the world—made up of *ages* or generations; and then the world itself. This is the fair, and, as it seems to me, the only intelligible interpretation of this passage—an interpretation amply sustained by texts referred to above, as demonstrating that the universe was made by the agency of the Son of God Comp. **See Barnes** "Heb 1:10, and **See Barnes "Joh 1:3"**.

{a} "spoken" De 18:15 {b} "heir" Ps 2:8 {c} "by whom also" Joh 1:3

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 1 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Who being the brightness of his glory*. This verse is designed to state the dignity and exalted rank of the Son of God, and is exceedingly important with reference to a correct view of the Redeemer. Every word which is employed is of great importance, and should be clearly understood in order to a correct apprehension of the passage. First, In what manner does it refer to the Redeemer? To his Divine nature? To the mode of his existence before he was incarnate? Or to him as he appeared on earth? Most of the ancient commentators supposed that it referred to his Divine dignity before he became incarnate; and proceed to argue, on that supposition, on the mode of the Divine existence. The true solution seems to me to be, that it refers to him as incarnate, but still has reference to him *as* the incarnate *Son of God*. It refers to him as Mediator, but not simply or mainly as a man. It is rather to him as Divine—thus, in his incarnation, being the brightness of the Divine glory, and the express image of God. That this is the correct view is apparent, I think, from the whole scope of the passage. The drift of the argument is, to show his dignity *as he has spoken to us*, (Heb 1:1,) and not in the period antecedent to his incarnation. It is to show his claims to our reverence as sent from Gods the last and greatest of the messengers which God has sent to man. But, then, it is a description of him *as he actually is* —-the incarnate Son of God; the equal of the Father in human flesh: and this leads the writer to dwell on his Divine character, and to argue from that, Heb 1:8,10-12.

I have no doubt, therefore, that this description refers to his Divine nature, but it is the Divine nature as it appears in human flesh. An examination of the words used will prepare us for a more clear comprehension of the sense. The word *glory—doxa*— properly, *a seeming, an appearance*; and then

(1.) praise, applause, honour;

(2.) dignity, splendour, glory;

(3.) brightness, dazzling light; and

(4.) excellence, perfection, such as belongs to God, and such as there is in heaven. It is probably used here, as the word—

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is often among the Hebrews, to denote splendour, brightness, and refers to the Divine perfections as resembling a bright light, or the sun. The word is applied to the sun and stars, 1Co 15:40,41; to the light which Paul saw on the way to Damascus, Ac 22:11; to the shining of Moses' face, 2Co 3:7; to the celestial light, which surrounds the angels, Re 18:1; and glorified saints, Lu 9:31,32; and to the dazzling splendour or majesty in which God is enthroned. 2Th 1:9 2Pe 1:17; Re 15:8 21:11,23.

Here there is a comparison of God with the sun; he is encompassed with splendour and majesty; he is a being of light and of infinite perfection. It refers to *all in God* that is bright, splendid, glorious; and the idea is, that the Son of God is the *brightness* of it all. The word rendered *brightness apaugasma* —occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means, properly, *reflected splendour*, or the light which emanates from a luminous body. The rays or beams of the sun are its "brightness," or that by which the sun is seen and known. The sun itself we do not see; the beams which flow from it we do see. The meaning here is, that if God be represented under the image of a luminous body, as he is in the Scriptures, (see Ps 84:11 Mal 4:2,) then Christ is the radiance of that light, the brightness of that luminary. *Stuart*. He is that by which we perceive God, or by which God is made known to us in his real perfections. Comp. Joh 1:18; Joh 14:9. It is by him only that the true character and glory of God is known to men. This is true in regard to the great system of revelation; but it is especially true in regard to the views which men have of God. Mt 11:27: "No man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." The human soul is dark respecting the Divine character, until it is enlightened by Christ. It sees no beauty, no glory in his nature—nothing that excites wonder, or that wins the affections, until it is disclosed by the Redeemer. *Somehow* it happens—account for it as men may—that there are no elevating, practical views of God in the world; no views that engage and hold the affections of the soul; no views that are transforming and purifying, but those which are derived from the Lord Jesus. A man becomes a Christian, and at once he has elevated practical views of God. He is, to him, the most glorious of all beings. He finds supreme delight in contemplating his perfections. But he may be a philosopher or an infidel, and though he may profess to believe in the existence of God, yet the belief excites no practical influence on him; he sees nothing to admire—nothing which leads him to worship him. Comp. Ro 1:21.

And the express image. The word here used *carakthr* likewise occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It is that from which our word character is derived. It properly means, a graying, tool; and then something engraved or stamped—a character —as, a letter, mark, sign. The image stamped on coins, seals, wax, expresses the idea; and the sense here is, that if God be represented under the idea of a substance, or being, then Christ is the exact resemblance of that, as an image is of the stamp or die. The resemblance between a stamp and the figure which is impressed is exact; and so is the resemblance between the Redeemer and God. See Col 1:15: "Who is the image of the invisible God."

Of his person. The word *person*, with us, denotes an individual being, and is applied to human beings, consisting of body and soul. We do not apply it to anything dead—not using it with reference to the body when the spirit is gone. It is applied to man— with individual and separate consciousness and will; with body and soul; with an existence separate from others. It is evident that it cannot be

used in this sense when applied to God, and that this word does not express the true idea of the passage here. Tindal renders it, more accurately, *substance*. The word in the original *upostasiv* —whence our word hypostasis means, literally, a foundation, or substructure. Then it means, a well-founded trust, firm expectation, oonttdence, firmness, boldness; and then *reality, substance, essential nature*. In the New Testament, it is rendered *confident*, or *confidence*, (2Co 9:4 11:17; Heb 3:14;) *substance*, (Heb 11:1;) and *person* in the passage before us. It is not elsewhere used. Here it properly refers to the essential nature of God—that which distinguishes him from all other beings and which, if I may so say, *constitutes him God*; and the idea is, that, the Redeemer is the exact resemblance of *that*. This resemblance consists, probably, in the following things—though perhaps the enumeration does not include all— but in these he certainly resembles God, or is his exact image.

(1.) In his original mode of being, or before the incarnation. Of this we know little. But he had a "glory with the Father before the world was," Joh 17:5. He was "in the beginning with God, and was God," Joh 1:1. He was in intimate union with the Father, and was one with him, in certain respects; though in certain other respects, there was a distinction. I do not see any evidence in the Scriptures of the doctrine of "eternal generation," and it is certain that that doctrine militates against the *proper eternity* of the Son of God. The natural and fair meaning of that doctrine would be, that there was a time when he had not an existence, and when he began to be, or was begotten. But the Scripture doctrine is, that he had a strict and proper eternity. I see no evidence that he was, in any sense, *a derived being*—deriving his existence and his divinity from the rather. The Fathers of the Christian church, it is believed, held that the Son of God, as to his Divine, as well as his human nature, was *derived* from the Father. Hence the Nicene creed speaks of him as begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light very God of very God, begotten, not made" —language implying derivation in his Divine nature. They held, with one voice, that he was God; but it was in this manner. See Stuart, Excursus III on the Epistle to the Hebrews. But this is incredible, and impossible. A *derived* being cannot, in any proper sense, be God; and if there is any attribute which the Scriptures have ascribed to the Saviour with peculiar clearness, it is that of proper eternity, Re 1:11,18; Joh 1:1.

It *may* have been, that it was by him that the perfections of God were made known, before the incarnation, to the angelic world, but on that point the Scriptures are silent.

(2.) On earth he was the brightness of the Divine glory, and the express image of his person.

(a.) It was by him, eminently, that God was made known to men—as it is by the beams of the sun that that is made known.

(b.) He bore an exact resemblance to God. He was just such a being as we should suppose God to be, were he to become incarnate, and to act as a man. He was the embodied representation of the Deity. He was pure—like God. He was benevolent—like God. He spake to the winds and storms—like God. He healed diseases—like God. He raised the dead—like God. He wielded the power which God only can wield, and he manifested a character in all respects like that which we should suppose God would evince, if he appeared in human flesh, and dwelt among men. And this is saying much. It is, in fact, saying that the account in the Gospels is real, and that the Christian religion is true. Uninspired men could never have drawn such a character as that of Jesus Christ, unless that character had actually existed. The attempt has often been made to describe God, or to show how he would speak and act if he came down to earth. Thus the Hindoos speak of the incarnations of Vishnu; and thus Homer, and Virgil, and most of the ancient poets, speak of the

appearance of the gods, and describe them as they were supposed to appear. But how different from the character of the Lord Jesus! *They* are full of passion, and lust, and anger, and contention, and strife; they come to mingle in battles, and to take part with contending armies, and they evince the same spirit as men, and are merely *men of great power, and more gigantic passions*; but Christ is God IN HUMAN NATURE. The form is that of man; the Spirit is that of God. He walks, and eats, and sleeps as a man; he thinks, and speaks, and acts like God. He was born as a man—but the angels adored him as God. As a man he ate; yet, by a word, he created food for thousands, as if he were God. Like a man he slept on a pillow, while the vessel was tossed by the waves; like God he rose, and rebuked the winds, and they were still. As a man he went, with affectionate interest, to the house of Martha and Mary. As a man he sympathized with them in their affliction, and wept at the grave of their brother; like God he spoke, and the dead came forth to the land of the living. As a man he travelled through the land of Judea. lie was without a home; yet everywhere the sick were laid at his feet, and health came from his touch, and strength from the words of his lips—as if he were God. As a man he prayed in the garden of Gethsemane; he bore his cross to Calvary; he was nailed to the tree; yet then the heavens grew dark, and the earth shook, and the dead arose—as if he were God. As a man he slept in the cold tomb; like God he rose, and brought life and immortality to light. He lived on earth as a man—he ascended to heaven like God. And in all the life of the Redeemer, in all the variety of trying situations in which he was placed, there was not a word or action which was inconsistent with the supposition that he was the incarnate God. There was no failure of any effort to heal the sick or to raise the dead; no look, no word, no deed, that is not perfectly consistent with this supposition; but, on the contrary, his life is full of events which can be explained on no other supposition than that he was the appropriate shining forth of the Divine glory, and the exact resemblance of the essence of God. There are not two Gods, as there are not two suns when the sun shines. It is the one God, in a mysterious and incomprehensible manner, shining into the world in the face of Jesus Christ. **See Barnes "2Co 4:6"**.

As the wax bears the perfect image of the seal—perfect not only in the outline, but in the filling up—in all the lines, and features, and letters, so is it with the Redeemer. There is not one of the Divine perfections which has not the counterpart in him; and if the glory of the Divine character is seen at all by men, it will be Been in and through him.

And upholding all things by the word of his power. That is, by his powerful word, or command. The phrase "word of his power' is a Hebraism, and means his efficient command. There could not be a more distinct ascription of divinity to the Son of God than this. He upholds or sustains all things—i. e. the universe. It is not merely the earth; not only its rocks, mountains, seas, animals, and men, but it is the universe—all distant worlds. How can he do this who is not God? He does it by his word— his command. What a conception! That a simple *command* should do all this: So the world was made when God "spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast," Ps 33:9. So the Lord Jesus commanded the waves and the winds, and they were still, (Mt 8:26,27;) so he spoke to diseases, and they departed—and to the dead, and they arose. Comp. Ge 1:3. I know not how men can *explain away* this ascription of infinite power to the Redeemer. There can be no higher idea of omnipotence than to say, that he upholds all things by his word; and assuredly he who can hold up this wast universe, so that it does not sink into anarchy or into nothing, must be God. The same power Jesus claimed for himself. See Mt 28:18.

When he had by himself purged our sins. "*By himself*"—not by the blood of bulls and lambs, but by his own blood. This is designed to bring in the grand feature of the Christian scheme, that

the purification made for sin was by his blood, instead of the blood which was shed in the temple-service. The word here rendered "*purged*" means *purified*, or "expiated". **See Barnes "Joh 15:2".**

The literal rendering is, "having made purification for our sins." The purification or cleansing, which he effected, was by his blood. See 1Jo 1:7: "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." This the apostle here states to have been the great object for which he came, and having done this, he sat down on the right hand of God. See Heb 7:27 9:12-14. It was not merely to teach that he came; it was to purify the hearts of men, to remove their sins, and to put an end of sacrifice by the sacrifice of himself.

Sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. Of God. **See Barnes "Mr 16:19"**

See Barnes "Eph 1:20, seq.

{a} "being the brightness" Joh 1:14 {b} "when he" Heb 7:27 9:12-14 {a} "sat down" Ps 110:1

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 1 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Being made so much better*. Being exalted so much above the angels. The word "better" here does not refer to moral character, but to exaltation of rank. As Mediator; as the Son of God in our nature, he is exalted far above the angels.

Than the angels. Than all angels of every rank. **See Barnes "Eph 1:21"; comp.** 1Pe 3:22: "Angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him." He is exalted to his mediatorial throne, and all things are placed beneath his feet.

As he hath by inheritance. Or in virtue of his name—the Son of God; an exaltation such as is implied in that name. As a son has a rank in a family above servants; as he has a control over the property above that which servants have, so it is with the Mediator. He is the Son of God: angels are the servants of God, and the servants of the church. They occupy a place in the universe, compared with that which he occupies, similar to the place which servants in a family occupy compared with that which a son has. To illustrate and prove this is the design of the remainder of this chapter. The argument which the apostle insists on is, that the title "THE Son of God" is to be given to him alone. It has been conferred on no others. Though the angels, and though saints are called in general "*sons* of God," yet the title "THE Son of God" has been given to him only. As the apostle was writing to Hebrews, he makes his appeal to the Hebrew Scriptures alone for the confirmation of this opinion,

A more excellent name. To wit, the name *Son*. It is a more honourable and exalted name than has ever been bestowed on them. It involves more exalted privileges, and entitles him on whom it is bestowed to higher respect and honour than any name ever bestowed on them.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 1 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *For unto which oft he angels*, etc. The object of this is to prove that the Son of God, who has spoken to men in these last days, is superior to the angels. As the apostle was writing to

those who had been trained in the Jewish religion, and who admitted the authority of the Old Testament, of course he made his appeal to that, and undoubtedly referred for proof to those places which were generally admitted to relate to the Messiah. Abarbanel says, that it was the common opinion of the Jewish doctors, that the Messiah would be exalted above Abraham, Moses, and the angels. *Stuart*. There is a difficulty, as we shall see, in applying the passages which follow to the Messiah—a difficulty which we may find it not easy to explain. Some remarks will be made on the particular passages as we go along. In general, it may be observed here,

(1.) That it is to be presumed that those passages were, in the time of Paul, applied to the Messiah. He seems to argue from them as though this was commonly understood,and is at no pains to prove it.

(2.) It is to be presumed, that those to whom he wrote would at once admit this to be so. If this were not so, we cannot suppose that he would regard this mode of reasoning as at all efficacious, or adapted to convince those to whom he wrote.

(3.) He did not apprehend that the application which he made of these texts would be called in question by the countrymen of those to whom he wrote. It is to be presumed, therefore, that the application was made in accordance with the received opinions, and the common interpretation.

(4.) Paul had been instructed, in early life, in the doctrines of the Jewish religion, and made fully acquainted with all their principles of interpretation. It is to be presumed, therefore, that he made these quotations in accordance with the prevalent belief, and with principles which were well understood and admitted,

(5.) Every age and people have their own modes of reasoning. They may differ from others, and others may regard them as unsound, and yet, to that age and people, they are satisfactory and conclusive. The ancient philosophers employed modes of reasoning which would not strike us as the most forcible, and which, perhaps, we should not regard as tenable. So it is with the Chinese, the Hindoos, the Mohammedans now. So it was with the writers of the dark ages, who lived under the influence of the scholastic philosophy. They argue from admitted principles in their country and time—just as *we* do in ours. Their reasoning was as satisfactory to them, as ours is to us.

(6.) In a writer of any particular age we are to expect to find the prevailing mode of reasoning, and appeals to the usual arguments on any subject. We are not to look for methods of argument founded on the inductive philosophy in the writings of the schoolmen, or in the writings of the Chinese or the Hindoos. It would be unreasonable to expect it. We are to expect that they will be found to reason in accordance with the customs of their time; to appeal to such arguments as were commonly alleged; and, if they are reasoning with an adversary, *to make use of the points which he concedes*, and to urge them as fitted to convince *him*. And this is not wrong. It may strike him with more force than it does us; it may be that we can see that is not the most solid mode of reasoning, but still it may not be in itself an improper method. That the writers of the New Testament should have used that mode of reasoning sometimes, is no more surprising than that we find writers in China reasoning from acknowledged principles, and in the usual manner there; or than that men in our own land, reason on the principles of the inductive philosophy. These remarks may not explain *all* the difficulties in regard to the proof-texts adduced by Paul in this chapter, but they may remove *some* of them, and may so prepare the way that we may be able to dispose of them all as we advance. In the passage which is quoted in this verse, there is not much difficulty in regard to the propriety of its being thus used. The difficulty lies in the subsequent quotations in the chapter.

Said he at any time. He never used language respecting the angels, like that which he employs respecting his Son. He never applied to any one of them the name Son.

Thou art my Son. The name "*sons* of God," is applied in the Scriptures to saints, and may have been given to the angels. But the argument here is, that the name "my son" has never been given to any one of them particularly, and by eminence. In a large, general sense, they are the sons of God, or the children of God; but the name is given to the Lord Jesus, the Messiah, in a peculiar sense, implying a peculiar relation to him, and a peculiar dominion over all things. This passage is quoted from Ps 2.—a Psalm that is usually believed to pertain particularly to the Messiah, and one of the few Psalms that have undisputed reference to him. **See Barnes "Ac 4:25"; See Barnes "Ac 13:33".**

This day. **See Barnes** "Ac 13:33, where this passage is applied to the resurrection of Christ from the dead;—proving that the phrase "this day" does not refer to the doctrine of eternal generation, but to the resurrection of the Redeemer—"the FIRST-BEGOTTEN of the dead," Re 1:6. Thus Theodoret says of the phrase "this day"—" It does not express his eternal generation, but that which is connected with time." The argument of the apostle here does not turn on the time when this was said, but on the fact that this was said to him, and not to any one of the angels; and this argument will have equal force, whether the phrase be understood as referring to the fact of his resurrection, or to his previous existence. The structure and scope of the second Psalm refers to his exaltation *after* the kings of the earth set themselves against him, and endeavoured to cast off his government from them. In spite of that, and subsequent to that, he would set his King, which they had rejected, on his holy hill of Zion. See Ps 2:2-6.

Have I begotten thee. See this place explained **See Barnes "Ac 13:33".**

It must, from the necessity of the case, be understood figuratively; and must mean substantially, "I have *constituted*, or *appointed* thee." If it refers to his resurrection, it means that that resurrection was a kind of *begetting* to life, or a beginning of life, see Re 1:5. And yet, though Paul (Ac 13:33) has applied it to the resurrection of the Redeemer, and though the name "Son of God" is applied to him on account of his resurrection, (**See Barnes** "Ro 1:4,) yet I confess this does not seem to me to come up to all that the writer here intended. The phrase, "THE Son of God," I suppose, properly denotes that the Lord Jesus sustained a relation to God, designated by that name, corresponding to the relations which he sustained to man, designated by the name "*the Son of man*." The one implied that he had a peculiar relation to God, as the other implied that he had a peculiar relation to man. This is indisputable. But on what particular account the name was given him, or how he was manifested to be the Son of God, has been the great question. Whether the name refers to the mode of his existence before the incarnation, and to his being begotten from eternity, or to the incarnation and the resurrection, has long been a point on which men have been divided in opinion. The *natural* idea conveyed by the title, `THE Son of God,' is, that he sustained a relation to God which implied more than was human or angelic; and this is certainly the drift of the argument of the apostle here. I do not see, however, that he refers to the doctrine of `eternal generation,' or that he means to teach that. His point is, that God had declared and treated him as *a Son*—as superior to the angels and to men, and that this was shown in what had been said of him in the Old Testament. This would be equally clear, whether there is reference to the doctrine of eternal generation or not. The sense is, "he is more than human." He is more than angelic, He has been addressed and treated as a Son—which none of the angels have. They are regarded simply as ministering spirits. They sustain subordinate stations, and are treated accordingly. He, on the contrary, is the brightness of the Divine glory, he is treated and addressed as a Son. In his original existence this was so. In his incarnation

this was so. When on earth this was so; and in his resurrection, ascension, and session at the right hand of God, he was treated in all respects *as a Son*—as superior to all servants, and to all "ministering spirits." The exact reference, then, of the phrase "this day have I begotten thee," in the Psalm, is to the act of *constituting* him, in a public manner, the Son of God; and refers to God's setting him as King on the "holy hill of Zion"—or making him King over the church and the world, as Messiah; and this was done eminently, as Paul shows (Ac 13) by the resurrection. It was *based*, however, on what was fit and proper. It was not arbitrary. There was a reason why *he* should thus be exalted, rather than a man or an angel; and this was, that he was the God incarnate, and had a nature that qualified him for universal empire, and he was thus *appropriately* called "THE Son of God."

And again, I will be to him a Father. This passage is evidently quoted from 2Sa 7:14. A *sentiment* similar to this is found in Ps 89:20-27. As these words were originally spoken, they referred to Solomon. They occur in a promise to DAVID, that he should not fail to have an heir to sit on his throne, or that his throne should be perpetual. The promise was particularly designed to comfort him in view of the fact, that God would not suffer *him* to build the temple, because his hands had been defiled with blood. To console him, in reference to that, God promises him far greater honour than that would be. He promises that the house should be built by one of his own family, and that his family and kingdom should be established for ever. That, in this series of promises, the *Messiah* was included, as a descendant of David, was the common opinion of the Jews, of the early Christians, and has been of the great body of interpreters. It was certainly from such passages as this, that the Jews derived the notion, which prevailed so universally in the time of the Saviour, that the Messiah was to be the Son or the descendant of David. See Mt 22:42-45 9:27, 15:22 20:30,31 Mr 10:47,48 Lu 18:38,39 Mt 12:23; Mt 21:9 Joh 7:42; Ro 1:3 Re 5:5, 22:16.

That opinion was universal. No one doubted it; and it must have been common for the Jews to apply such texts as this to the Messiah. Paul would not have done it, in this instance, unless it had been usual. Nor was it improper. If the Messiah was to be a descendant of David, then it was natural to apply these promises, in regard to his posterity, in an eminent and peculiar sense to the Messiah. They were a part of the promises which included him, and which terminated in him. The promise, therefore, which is here made is, that God would be to him, in a peculiar sense, a Father, and he should be a Son. It does not, as I suppose, pertain, originally, exclusively to the Messiah, but *included* him as a descendant of David. To him it would be applicable in an eminent sense; and if applicable to him *at all*, it proved all that the passage here is adduced to prove—that the name Son is given to the Messiah, a name not given to angels. That is just the point on which the argument turns. What is *implied* in the bestowment of that name, is another point on which the apostle discourses in the other parts of the argument. I have no doubt, therefore, that while these words originally might have been applicable to Solomon, or to any of the other descendants of David who succeeded him on the throne, yet they at last terminated, and were designed to, in the Messiah, to whom pre-eminently God would be a Father. Comp. Introduction to Isaiah, & 7, iii. (3,) and **See Barnes "Isa 7:16".**

{a} "at any time, Thou" Ps 2:7 {b} "and again" 2Sa 7:14

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 1 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *And again*. Marg., *When he bringeth in again*. The proper construction of this sentence probably is, "But when, he the moreover, brings in," etc. The word "*again*" refers not to the fact that Son of God is brought again into the world, implying that he had been introduced before; but it refers to the course of the apostle's argument, or to the declaration which is made about the Messiah in another place. "The name *Son* is not only given to him as above, but *also* in another place, or on another occasion, when he brings in the first-begotten into the world."

When he bringeth in. When he introduces. So far as the language here is concerned, this might refer to the *birth* of the Messiah; but it is evident, from the whole connexion, that the writer meant to refer to something that is *said* in the Old Testament. This is plain, because the passage occurs among quotations designed to prove specific point—that the Son of God, the Author of the Christian system, was superior to the angels. A *declaration of the writer* here, however true and solemn, would not have answered the purpose. A *proof-text* was wanting; a text which would be admitted, by those to whom he wrote, to bear on the point under consideration. The meaning then is, "that on another occasion, different from those to which he had referred, God, when speaking of the Messiah, or when introducing him to mankind, had used language showing that he was superior to the angels." The meaning of the phrase, "when he bringeth in," therefore, I take to be, when he *introduces* him to men; when he makes him known to the world—to wit, by the declaration which he proceeds immediately to quote.

The first-begotten. Christ is called the "*first-begotten*," with reference to his resurrection from the dead, in Re 1:5 Col 1:18. It is probable here, however, that the word is used, like the word *first-born*, or *first-begotten*, among the Hebrews, by way of eminence. As the first-born was the principal heir, and had peculiar privileges, so the Lord Jesus Christ sustains a similar rank in the universe of which God is the Head and Father. **See Barnes** "Joh 1:14,

where the word, "only-begotten," is used to denote the dignity and honour of the Lord Jesus.

Into the world. When he introduces him to mankind, or declares what he is to be.

He saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. Much difficulty has been experienced in regard to this quotation, for it cannot be denied that it is intended to be a quotation. In the Septuagint these very words occur in De 32:43, where they are inserted in the Song of Moses. But they are not in the Hebrew; nor are they in all the copies of the Septuagint. The Hebrew is, "Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people; for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries.", The Septuagint is, "Rejoice ye heavens with him and let all the angels of God worship him. Let the nations rejoice with his people, and let all the sons of God be strong in him, for he has avenged the blood of his sons." But there are objections to our supposing that the apostle had this place in his view, which seem to me to settle the matter.

(1.) One is, that the passage is not in the Hebrew; and it seems hardly credible that, in writing to Hebrews, and to those residing in the very country where the Hebrew Scriptures were constantly used, he should adduce, as a proof-text on an important doctrine, what was not in their Scriptures.

(2.) A second is, that it is omitted in all the ancient versions, except the Septuagint.

(3.) A third is, that it is impossible to believe that the passage in question, in Deuteronomy, had any reference to the Messiah. It does not relate to his "introduction" to the world. It would not occur to any reader that it had any such reference. The context celebrates the victory over the enemies of Israel which God will achieve. After saying that "his arrows would be drunk with blood, and that

his sword would devour flesh with the blood of the slain and of captives, from the time when he begins to take vengeance on an enemy," the Septuagint (not the Hebrew) immediately asserts, "let the heavens rejoice at the same time with him, and let all the angels of God worship him." That is: "Let the inhabitants of the heavenly world rejoice in the victory of God over the enemies of his people, and let them pay their adoration to him." But the Messiah does not appear to be alluded to anywhere in the context; much less described as "*introduced into the world*." There is, moreover, not the slightest evidence that it was ever supposed by the Jews to have any such reference; and though it *might* be said that the apostle merely quoted *language* that expressed his meaning—as we often do when we are familiar with any well-known phrase that will exactly suit our purpose and convey an idea—yet, it should be remarked, that this is not the way in which this passage is quoted. It is a *proof-text*, and Paul evidently meant to be understood as saying, that that passage had a *fair* reference to the Messiah. It is evident, moreover, that it would be admitted to have such a reference by those to whom he wrote. It is morally certain, therefore, that this was not the passage which the writer intended to quote. The probability is, that the writer here referred to Ps 97:7, (in the Sept. Ps 96:7.) In that place, the Hebrew is, "worship him all *ye* gods "

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—*all ye elohim*. In the Septuagint it is, "Let all his angels worship him ;" where the translation is literal, except that the word *God*—"angels *of God*" —is used by the apostle instead of *his*— "*all his angels*"—as it is in the Septuagint. The word "gods" *elohim* is rendered by the word *angels*, but the word may have that sense. Thus it is rendered by the Seventy, in Job 20:15; and in Ps 8:6 138:1. It is well known, that the word *elohim* may denote kings and magistrates, because of their rank and dignity; and is there anything improbable in the supposition that, for a similar reason, the word may be given also to angels? The fair interpretation of the passage, then, would be, to refer it to *angelic beings*; and the command, in Ps 97, is for them to do homage to the being there referred to. The only question then is, whether the Psalm can be regarded properly as having any reference to the Messiah? Did the apostle fairly and properly use this language as referring to him? On this we may remark,

(1.) That the *fact* that he uses it thus may be regarded as proof that it would be admitted to be proper by the Jews in his time, and renders it probable that it was in fact so used.

(2.) Two Jewish rabbins of distinction—Raschi and Kimchi—affirm, that all the Psalms, from 93, to 101 are to be regarded as referring to the Messiah. Such was, and is, the opinion of the Jews.

(3.) There is nothing *in* the Psalm which forbids such a reference, or which can be shown to be inconsistent with it. Indeed, the whole Psalm *might* be taken as beautifully descriptive of the "introduction" of the Son of God into the world, or as a sublime and glorious description of his advent. Thus, in Ps 97:1, the earth is called on to rejoice that the Lord reigns. In Ps 97:2-5, he is introduced or described as coming in the most magnificent manner—clouds and darkness attend him; a fire goes before him; the lightnings play; and the hills melt like wax —a sublime description of his coming, with appropriate symbols, to reign, or to judge the world. In Ps 97:6, it is said that all people shall see his glory; in Ps 97:7, that all who worship graven images shall be confounded, and *all the angels are required to do him homage*, and in vers. Ps 97:8-12, the effect of his advent is described as filling Zion with rejoicing, and the hearts of the people of God with gladness. It cannot be *proved*, therefore, that this Psalm had no reference to the Messiah; but the presumption is that it had, and that the apostle has quoted it not only as it was *usually* regarded in his time, but as it was designed by the Holy Ghost. If so, then it *proves*, what the writer intended, that the Son

of God should be adored by the angels; and, of course, that he was superior to them. It proves also more. Whom would God require the angels to adore? A creature? A man? A fellow-angel? To ask these questions is to answer them. He could require them to worship none but God, and the passage proves that the Son of God is divine.

{1} "And again" or "when he bringeth again" {a} "let all the angels" Ps 97:7

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 1 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *And of the angels he saith*, Who maketh his angels spirits. He gives to them an inferior name, and assigns to them a more humble office. They are mere ministers, and have not ascribed to them the name of *Son*. They have a name which implies a more humble rank and office—the name "spirit," and the appellation of a "flame of fire." They obey his will as the winds and the lightnings do. The *object* of the apostle in this passage is to show that the angels serve God in a ministerial capacity—as the winds do; while the Son is Lord of all. The one serves him passively, as being wholly under his control; the other acts as a Sovereign, as Lord over all, and is addressed and regarded as the equal with God. This quotation is made from Ps 104:4. The passage might, be translated, "Who, maketh his angels *winds*, and his ministers a flame of fire; that is, "who makes his angels *like* the winds, or as swift as the winds, and his ministers as rapid, as terrible, and as resistless as the lightning." So Doddridge renders it; and so did the late Rev. Dr. J.P. Wilson. *MS. Notes*. The passage in the Psalm is susceptible, I think, of another interpretation, and *might* be regarded as meaning, "who makes the winds his messengers, and the flaming fire his ministers;" and perhaps this is the sense which would most naturally occur to a reader of the Hebrew. The Hebrew, however, will admit of the construction here put upon it, and it cannot be proved that it was the original intention of the passage to show that the angels were the mere servants of God, rapid, quick, and prompt to do his will—like the winds. The Chaldee Paraphrase renders the passage in the Psalm, "Who makes his messengers swift as the wind; his ministers strong, like a flame of fire." Professor Stuart maintains that the passage in the Psalm cannot mean "who makes the winds his messengers," but that the intention of the Psalmist is to describe the *invisible* as well as the visible majesty of God, and that he refers to the angels as a part of the retinue which goes to make up his glory. This does not seem to me to be perfectly certain; but still, it cannot be demonstrated that Paul has made an improper use of the passage. It is to be presumed that *he*, who had been trained in the knowledge of the Hebrew language, would have had a better opportunity of knowing its fair construction than we can; and it is morally certain, that he would employ the passage *in an argument* as it was commonly understood by those to whom he wrote—that is, to those who were familiar with the Hebrew language and literature. If he has so used the passage; if he has —as no one can disprove— put the fair construction on it, then it is just in point. It proves that the angels are the *attendant servants* of God; employed to grace his train, to do his will, to accompany him as the clouds and winds and lightnings do, and to occupy a subordinate rank in his creation.

Flame of fire. This probably refers to lightning— which is often the meaning of the phrase. The word "*ministers*" here, means the same as angels; and the sense of the whole is, that the attending retinue of God, when he manifests himself with great power and glory, is like the winds and the lightning. His angels are like them. They are prompt to do his will—rapid, quick, obedient in his

service; they are, in all respects, subordinate to him, and occupy, as the winds and the lightnings do, the place of servants. They are not addressed in language like that which is applied to the Son of God, and they must all be far inferior to him.

{1} "And of the angels" "unto" {a} "maketh" Ps 104.4

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 1 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *But unto the Son he saith*. In Ps 45:6,7. The fact that the writer of this epistle makes this application of the Psalm to the Messiah, proves that it was so applied in his time, or that it would be readily admitted to be applicable to him. It has been generally admitted, by both Jewish and Christian interpreters, to have such a reference. Even those who have doubted its primary applicability to the Messiah, have regarded it as referring to him in a secondary sense. Many have supposed that it referred to Solomon in the primary sense, and that it has a secondary reference to the Messiah. To me it seems most probable that it had an original and exclusive reference to the Messiah. It is to be remembered, that the hope of the Messiah was the peculiar hope of the Jewish people. The coming of the future King, so early promised, was the great event to which they all looked forward with the deepest interest. That hope inspired their prophets and their bards, and cheered the hearts of the nation in the time of despondency. The Messiah, if I may so express it, was the *hero* of the Old Testament—more so than Achilles is of the Iliad, and AEneas of the AEniad. The sacred poets were accustomed to employ all their most magnificent imagery in describing him, and to present him in every form that was beautiful in their conception, and that would be gratifying to the pride and hopes of the nation. Every thing that is gorgeous and splendid in description is lavished on him; and they were never under any apprehension of attributing to him too great magnificence in his personal reign; too great beauty of moral character; or too great an extent of dominion. That which would be regarded by them as a magnificent description of a monarch, they freely applied to him; and this is evidently the case in this Psalm. That the description may have been, in part, derived from the view of Solomon in the magnificence of his court, is possible, but no more probable than that it was derived from the general view of the splendour of any oriental monarch, or than that it might have been the description of a monarch which was the pure creation of inspired poetry. Indeed, I see not why this Psalm should ever have been supposed to be applicable to Solomon. His *name* is not mentioned. It has no peculiar applicability to him. There is nothing that would apply to him which would not also apply to many an oriental prince. There are some things in it which are much less applicable to him than to many others. The king here described is a *conqueror*. He girds his sword on his thigh, and his arrows are sharp in the hearts of his foes, and the people are subdued under him. This was not true of Solomon. His was a reign of peace and tranquillity, nor was he ever distinguished for war. On the whole, it seems clear to me, that this Psalm is designed to be a beautiful poetic description of the Messiah *as king*. The images are drawn from the usual characteristics of an oriental prince; and there are many things in the poem—as there, are in parables—for the sake of keeping, or *veri-similitude*, and which are not, in the interpretation, to be cut to the quick. The writer imagined to himself a magnificent and beautiful prince: a prince riding prosperously in his conquests; swaying a permanent and wide dominion; clothed in rich and splendid vestments; eminently upright and pure; and scattering blessings

everywhere—and that prince was the Messiah. The Psalm, therefore, I regard as relating originally and exclusively to Christ; and though, in the interpretation, the *circumstances* should not be unduly pressed, nor an attempt be made to spiritualize them, yet the whole is a glowing and most beautiful description of Christ as a King. The same principles of interpretation should be applied to it which are applied to parables, and the same allowance be made for the introduction of circumstances for the sake of keeping, or for finishing the story. If this be the correct view, then Paul has quoted the Psalm in conformity exactly with its original intention, as he undoubtedly quoted it as it was understood in his time.

Thy throne. A throne is the seat on which a monarch sits, and is here the symbol of dominion, because kings, when acting as rulers, sit on thrones. Thus a throne becomes the emblem of authority or empire. Here it means, that his *rule or dominion* would be perpetual- "*for ever and ever*" —which assuredly could not be applied to Solomon.

O God. This certainly could not be applied to Solomon; but applied to the Messiah, it proves what the apostle is aiming to prove—that he is above the angels. The *argument* is that a name is given to him which is never given to *them*. They are not called *God* in any strict and proper sense. The *argument* here requires us to understand this word as used in a sense more exalted than any name which is ever given to angels, and though it may be maintained that the name

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Elohim is given to magistrates or to angels, yet *here* the argument requires us to understand it as used in a sense *superior* to what it ever is when applied to an angel—or of course to any creature, since it was the express design of the argument to prove that the Messiah was superior to the angels. The word *God* should be taken in its natural and obvious sense, unless there is some necessary reason for limiting it. If applied to magistrates (Ps 82:6) it *must* be so limited. If applied to the Messiah there is no such necessity, (Joh 1:1 Isa 10:6; 1Jo 5:20 Php 2:6,) and it should be taken in its natural and proper sense. The form here—*o yeov* in the vocative case and not the nominative. It is the usual form of the vocative in the Septuagint, and nearly the only form of it. *Stuart*. This, then, is a direct address to the Messiah, calling him God; and I see not why it is not to be used in the usual and proper sense of the word. Unitarians proposed to translate this, "God is thy throne;" but how can God be *a throne* of a creature? What is the meaning of such an expression? Where is there one parallel? And what must be the nature of that cause which renders such an argument necessary?—This refers, as it seems to me, to the Messiah as *king*. It does not relate to his mode of existence *before* the incarnation, but to him as the magnificent monarch of his people. Still the ground or reason why this name is given to him is that he is divine. It is language which properly expresses his nature. He must have a divine nature, or such language would be improper. I regard this passage, therefore, as full proof that the Lord Jesus is *divine*; nor is it possible to evade this conclusion by any fair interpretation of it. It cannot be wrong to address him as God; nor addressing him as such, not to regard him as divine.

Is for ever and ever. This could not, in any proper sense, apply to Solomon. As applied to the Messiah, it means that his essential kingdom will be perpetual, Lu 1:33. As Mediator his kingdom will be given up to the Father, or to God, without reference to a mediatorial work, (1Co 15:24,28—**See Barnes "1Co 15:24"**; **See Barnes** "1Co 15:28,) but his reign over his people will be perpetual. There never will come a time when they shall not obey and serve him, though the peculiar form of his kingdom, as connected with the work of *mediation*, will be changed. The form of the organized church, for example, will be changed—for there shall be no necessity for it in heaven—but the

essential dominion and power of the Son of God will not cease. He shall have the same dominion which he had before he entered on the work of mediation; and that will be eternal. It is also true, that, compared with earthly monarchs, his kingdom shall be perpetual. They soon die. Dynasties pass away. But *his* empire extends from age to age, and is properly a *perpetual* dominion. The fair and obvious interpretation of this passage would satisfy me, were there nothing else, that this Psalm had no reference to Solomon, but was designed originally as a description of the Messiah, as the expected King and Prince of his people.

A sceptre of righteousness. That is, a right or just sceptre. The phrase is a Hebraism. The former expression described the perpetuity of his kingdom; this describes its equable nature. It would be just and equal. **See Barnes "Isa 11:5"**.

A *sceptre* is a staff or wand usually made of wood, five or six feet long, and commonly overlaid with gold, or ornamented with golden rings. Sometimes, however, the sceptre was made of ivory, or wholly of gold. It was borne in the hands of kings as an emblem of authority and power. Probably it had its origin in the staff or crook of the shepherd— as kings were at first regarded as the *shepherds* of their people. Thus Agamemnon is commonly called, by Homer, the shepherd of the people. The *sceptre* thus becomes the emblem of kingly office and power—as when we speak of *swaying a sceptre*;— and the idea here is, that the Messiah would be a *King*, and that the authority which he would wield would be equitable and just. He would not be governed, as monarchs often are, by mere caprice, or by the wishes of courtiers and flatterers; he would not be controlled by mere will, and the love of arbitrary power; but the execution of his laws would be in accordance with the principles of equity and justice. How well this accords with the character of the Lord Jesus we need not pause to show. Comp. **See Barnes** "Isa 11:2, seq.

{b} "he saith" Ps 14:6,7 {2} "righteousness" "rightness or straightness"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 1 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Thou hast loved righteousness*. Thou hast been obedient to the law of God, or holy and upright. Nothing can be more truly adapted to express the character of any one, than this is to describe the Lord Jesus, who was "holy, harmless, undefiled," who "did no sin, and in whose mouth no guile was found;" but it is with difficulty that this can be applied to Solomon. Assuredly, for a considerable part of his life, this declaration could not well be appropriate to him; and it seems to me, that it is not to be regarded as descriptive of him at all. It is language prompted by the warm and pious imagination of the Psalmist, describing the future Messiah and, as applied to him, is true to the letter.

Therefore God, even thy God. The word *even* inserted here by the translators, weakens the force of the expression. This *might* be translated, "O God, thy God hath anointed thee." So it is rendered by Doddridge, Clarke, Stuart, and others. The Greek will bear this construction, as well the Hebrew in Ps 45:7. In the margin in the Psalm it is rendered, "O God." This is the most natural construction, as it accords with what is just said before. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever. Thou art just and holy, therefore, O God, thy God hath anointed thee." It is not material, however, which construction is adopted.

Hath anointed thee. Anciently kings and priests were consecrated to their office by pouring oil on their heads. See Le 8:12 Nu 3:3; 1Sa 10:1 2Sa 2:7; Ps 2:6 Isa 61:1; Ac 4:27 10:38; **See Barnes "Mt 1:1".**

The expression "*to anoint*," therefore, comes to mean, to consecrate to office, or to set apart to some public work. This is evidently the meaning in the Psalm, where the whole language refers to the appointment of the personage there referred to to the kingly office.

The oil of gladness. This probably means the perfumed oil that was poured on the head, attended with many expressions of joy and rejoicing. The inauguration of the Messiah, as king would be an occasion of rejoicing and triumph. Thousands would exult at it—as in the coronation of a king; and thousands would be made glad by such a consecration to the office of Messiah.

Above thy fellows. Above thine associates; that is, above all, who sustain the kingly office. He would be more exalted than all other kings. Doddridge supposes that it refers to angels, who might have been associated with the Messiah in the government of the world. But the more natural construction is, to suppose that it refers to kings, and to mean that he was the most exalted of all.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 1 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *And*. That is, "To add another instance;" or, "to the Son he saith in another place, or in the following language." This is connected with Heb 1:8. "Unto the Son he saith, (Heb 1:8,) Thy throne, etc.—and (Heb 1:10) he *also* saith, Thou Lord," etc. That this is the meaning is apparent, because

(1.) the *object* of the whole quotation is to show the exalted character of the Son of God, and

(2.) an address here to JEHOVAH would be wholly irrelevant. Why, in an argument designed to prove that the Son of God was superior to the angels, should the writer break out in an address to JEHOVAH, in view of the fact that he had laid the foundations of the world, and that he himself would continue to live when the heavens should be rolled up and pass away? Such is not the manner of Paul, or of any other good writer; and it is clear that the writer here designed to adduce this as applicable to the Messiah. Whatever difficulties there may be about the principles on which it is done, and the reason why *this* passage was selected for the purpose, there can be no doubt about the *design* of the writer. He meant to be understood as applying it to the Messiah, beyond all question, or the quotation is wholly irrelevant, and it is inconceivable why it should have been made.

Thou, Lord. This is taken from Ps 102:25-27. The quotation is made from the Septuagint, with only a slight variation, and is an accurate translation of the Hebrew. In the Psalm, there can be no doubt that JEHOVAH is intended. This is apparent on the face of the Psalm, and particularly because the name JEHOVAH is introduced Ps 102:1,12, and because he is addressed as the Creator of all things, and as immutable. No one, on reading the Psalm, ever would doubt that it referred to God; and, if the apostle meant to apply it to the Lord Jesus, it proves most conclusively that he is divine. In regard to the difficult inquiry, why he applied this to the Messiah, or on what principle such an application can be vindicated, we may perhaps throw some light by the following remarks. It must be admitted, that probably few persons, if any, on reading the *Psalm*, would suppose that it referred to the Messiah; but

(1.) the fact that the apostle thus employs it, proves that it was understood, in his time, to have such a reference, or, at least, that those to whom he wrote would admit that it had such a reference. On no other principle would he have used it in an argument. This is at least of some consequence, in showing what the prevailing interpretation was.

(2.) It cannot be demonstrated that it had no such reference—for such was the habit of the sacred writers in making the future Messiah the theme of their poetry, that no one can *prove* that the writer this Psalm did not design that the Messiah should be the subject of his praise here.

(3.) There is nothing in the Psalm which *may* not be applied to the Messiah; but there is much in it that is peculiarly applicable to him. Suppose, for example, that the Psalmist, Ps 102:1-11, in his complaints, represents the people of God, before the Redeemer appeared, as lowly, sad, dejected, and afflicted, speaking of himself as one of them, and as a *fair representative* of that people, the remainder of the Psalm will well agree with the promised redemption. Thus, having described the sadness and sorrow of the people of God, he speaks of the fact that God would arise and have mercy upon Zion, (Ps 102:13,14,) that the heathen would fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth would see his glory, (Ps 102:15,) and that when the Lord should build up Zion he would appear in his glory, Ps 102:16. To whom else could this be so well applied as to the Messiah? To what time so well as to his time? Thus, too, in Ps 102:20, it is said that the Lord would look down from heaven "to hear the groaning of the prisoner, and to loose them that are appointed to death"—language remarkably resembling that used by Isaiah, Isa 61:1 which the Saviour applies to himself, in Lu 4:17-21. The passage then quoted by the apostle (Ps 102:25-27) is designed to denote the *immutability* of the Messiah, and the fact that in him all the interests of the church were safe. He would not change. He had formed all things, and he would remain the same. His kingdom would be permanent, amidst all the changes occurring on earth, and his people had no cause of apprehension or alarm, Ps 102:28.

(4.) Paul applies this language to the Messiah, in accordance with the doctrine which he had stated, (Heb 1:2,) that it was by him that God "made the worlds." Having stated that, he seems to have felt that it was not improper to apply to him the passages occurings in the Old Testament that speak of the work of creation. The argument is this. "He was, in fact, the Creator of all things. But, to the Creator, there is applied language in the Scriptures which shows that he was far exalted above the angels. He would remain the same, while the heavens and the earth should fade away. His years are enduring and eternal. Such a Being MUST be superior to the angels; such a Being must be divine." The words "Thou, Lord" *su kurie* are not in the Hebrew of the Psalm, though they are in the Septuagint. In the Hebrew, in the Psalm, (Ps 102:24,) it is an address to God—"I said, O my God"—

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—but there can be no doubt that the Psalmist meant to address JEHOVAH, and that the word *God* is used in its proper sense, denoting divinity. See Ps 102:1,12, of the Psalm.

In the beginning. See Ge 1:1. When the world was made. Comp. **See Barnes** "Joh 1:1, where the same phrase is applied to the Messiah —"In the beginning was the Word."

Hast laid the foundation of the earth. Hast made the earth. This language is such as is common in the Scriptures, where the earth is represented as laid on a foundation, or as supported. It is figurative language, derived from the act of rearing an edifice. The meaning here is, that the Son of God was the *original* Creator or Founder of the universe. He did not merely arrange it out of pre-existing materials, but he was properly its Creator or Founder.

And the heavens art the works of thine hands. This *must* demonstrate the Lord Jesus to be divine. He that made the vast heavens must be God. No creature could perform a work like that; nor can we conceive that power to create the vast array of distant worlds could possibly be delegated. If that power could be delegated, there is not an attribute of Deity which may not be, and thus all our notions of what constitutes divinity would be utterly confounded. The word "heavens" here must mean all parts of the universe except the earth, see Ge 1:1. The word *hands* is used, because it is by the hands that we usually perform any work.

{a} "Thou Lord" Ps 102:25

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 1 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *They shall perish*. That is, the heavens and the earth. They shall pass away; or they shall be destroyed. Probably no more is meant by the phrase here, than that important changes will take place in them, or than that they will change their form, Still, it is not possible to foresee what changes may yet take place in the heavenly bodies, or to say that the present universe may not at some period be destroyed, and be succeeded by another creation still more magnificent. He that created the universe by a word, can destroy it by a word; and he that formed the present frame of nature can cause it to be succeeded by another, not less wonderful and glorious. The Scriptures seem to hold out the idea, that the present frame of the universe shall be destroyed. See 2Pe 3:10-13; Mt 24:35.

But thou remainest. Thou shalt not die, or be destroyed, What a sublime thought! The idea is, that though the heavens and earth should suddenly disappear, or though they should gradually wear out and become extinct, yet there is one infinite Being who remains unaffected, and unchanged. Nothing can reach or disturb him. All these changes shall take place under his direction, and by his command. See Le 20:11. Let us not be alarmed, then, at any revolution. Let us not fear, though we should see the heavens rolled up as a scroll, and the stars falling from their places. God, the Creator and Redeemer, presides over all. He is unchanged, He ever lives; and though the universe should pass away, it will be only at his bidding, and under his direction.

And they all shall wax old. Shall *grow* or become old. The word *wax* is an old Saxon word, meaning to grow, or increase, or become. The heavens here are compared with a garment-meaning, that as that grows old and decays, so it will be with the heavens, and the earth. The language is evidently figurative; and yet who can tell how much literal truth there may be couched under it? Is it absurd to suppose that that sun which daily sends forth so many countless millions of beams of light over the universe, may, in a course of ages, become diminished in its splendour, and shine with feeble lustre? Can there be constant exhaustion, a constant burning like that, and yet no tendency to decay at some far distant period? Not unless the material for its splendour shall be supplied from the boundless resources of the Great Source of Light—God; and when he shall choose to with. hold it, even that glorious sun must be dimmed of its splendour, and shine with enfeebled beams.

{*} "wax old" "shall become old"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 1 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *And as vesture*, A garment;—literally something thrown around—*peribolaion*,—and denoting properly the outer garment, the cloak or mantle. **See Barnes "Mt 5:40"**.

Shalt thou fold them up. That is, the heavens. They are represented in the Scriptures as *an expanse*, or something spread out, (Heb. in Ge 1:7;) and a *curtain*, or *tent*, (Isa 40:22,) and as a *scroll* that might be spread out or rolled up like a book or volume, Isa 34:4 Re 6:14. Here they are represented as a garment or mantle that might be folded up—language borrowed from folding up and laying aside garments that are no longer fit for use.

And they shall be changed. That is, they shall be exchanged for others, or they shall give place to the new heavens and the new earth. 2Pe 3:13. The meaning is, that the present form of the heavens and the earth is not to be permanent, but is to be succeeded by others, or to pass away, but that the Creator is to remain the same.

Thou art the same. Thou wilt not change.

And thy years shall not fail. Thou wilt exist for ever unchanged. What could more clearly prove that he of whom this is spoken is immutable? Yet it is indubitably spoken of the Messiah, and must demonstrate that he is divine. These attributes cannot be conferred on a creature; and nothing can be clearer, than that he who penned the epistle believed that the Son of God was divine.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 1 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *But to which of the angels*. The apostle adduces one other proof of the exaltation of the Son of God above the angels. He asks where there is an instance in which God had addressed any one of the angels, and asked him to sit at his right hand until he should subdue his enemies under him? Yet that high honour had been conferred on the Son of God; and he was therefore far exalted above them.

Sit on my right hand. **See Barnes "Heb 1:3"**.

This passage is taken from Ps 90:1—a Psalm that is repeatedly quoted in this epistle as referring to the Messiah, and the very passage before us is applied by the Saviour to himself, in Mt 22:43,44, and by Peter it is applied to him in Ac 2:34,35. There can be no doubt, therefore, of its applicability to the Messiah.

Until I make thine enemies thy footstool. Until I reduce them to entire subjection. A footstool is what is placed under the feet when we sit on a chair; and the phrase here means that an enemy is entirely subdued. Comp. **See Barnes "1Co 15:25"**.

The phrase, *to make an enemy a footstool*, is borrowed from the custom of ancient warriors, who stood on the necks of vanquished kings, on the occasion of celebrating a triumph over them, as a token of their complete prostration and subjection. **See Barnes "Isa 10:6"**.

—The enemies here referred to are the foes of God and of his religion; and the meaning is, that the Messiah is to be exalted *until* all those foes are subdued. Then he will give up the kingdom to the Father. **See Barnes "**1Co 15:24, seq. The exaltation of the Redeemer, to which the apostle refers here, is to the mediatorial throne. In this he is exalted far above the angels. His foes are to be subdued to him, but angels are to be employed as mere instruments in that great work.

{a} "Sit on my right hand" Ps 90:1

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 1 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Are they not all*. There is not one of them that is elevated to the high rank of the Redeemer. Even the most exalted angel is employed in the comparatively humble office of a ministering spirit, appointed to aid the heirs of salvation.

Ministering spirits. A *ministering spirit* is one that is employed to execute the will of God. The proper meaning of the word here— *leitourgika* (whence our word liturgy) is, *pertaining to public service, or the service of the people* (*laov*;) and is applied particularly to those who were engaged in the public service of the temple. They were those who rendered aid to others; who were helpers or servants. Such is the meaning as used here. They are employed to render aid or assistance to others—to wit, to Christians.

Sent forth. Appointed by God for this. They are *sent*; are under his control; are in a subordinate capacity. Thus Gabriel was sent forth to convey an important message to Daniel. Da 9:21-23.

To minister. For the aid or succour of such. They come to render them assistance and, if employed in this humble office, how much inferior to the dignity of the Son of God—the Creator and Ruler of the worlds!

Who shall be heirs of salvation. To the saints; to Christians. They are called "heirs of salvation," because they are adopted into the family of God, and are treated as his sons. **See Barnes** "Ro 8:14, seq. The main point here is, that the angels are employed in a much more humble capacity than the Son of God; and, therefore, that he sustains a far more elevated rank. But while the apostle has proved, that he has incidentally stated an exceedingly interesting and important doctrine, that the angels are employed to further the salvation of the people of God, and to aid them in their journey to heaven. In this doctrine there is nothing absurd. It is no more improbable that angels should be employed to aid man, than that one man should aid another; certainly not as improbable as that the Son of God should come down, "not to be ministered unto, but to minister," (Mt 20:28,) and that he performed on earth the office of a servant, Joh 13:1-15. Indeed, it is a great principle of the Divine administration, that one class of God's creatures are to minister to others; that one is to aid another—to assist him in trouble, to provide for him when poor, and to counsel him in perplexity. We are constantly deriving benefit from others, and are dependent on their counsel and help. Thus, God has appointed parents to aid their children; neighbours to aid their neighbours; the rich to aid the poor; and all over the world the principle is seen, that one is to derive benefit from the aid of others. Why may not the angels be employed in this service? They are pure, benevolent, powerful; and as man was ruined in the fall by the temptation offered by one of an angelic, though fallen nature, why should not others of angelic, unfallen holiness, come to assist in repairing the evils which their fallen, guilty brethren have inflicted on the race? To me there seems to be a beautiful propriety in bringing *aid* from another race, as ruin came from another race; and that as those endowed with angelic might, though with fiendish malignity, ruined man, those with angelic might, but heavenly benevolence, should aid in his recovery and salvation. Farther, it is, from the necessity of the case, a great principle, that the weak shall be aided by the strong; the ignorant by the enlightened; the impure by the pure; the tempted by those who have not fallen by temptation. All

over the world we see this in operation; and it constitutes the beauty of the moral arrangements on the earth; and why shall not this be extended to the inhabitants of other abodes? Why shall not angels, with their superior intelligence, benevolence, and power, come in to perfect this system, and show how much adapted it is to glorify God? In regard to the *ways* in which angels become ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation, the Scriptures have not fully informed us; but facts are mentioned, which will furnish some light on this inquiry. What they do *now* may be learned from the Scripture account of what they *have* done—as it seems to be a fair principle of interpretation, that they are engaged in substantially the same employment in which they have ever been. The following methods of angelic interposition in behalf of man are noted in the Scripture.

(1.) They feel a deep interest in man. Thus the Saviour says, "There is joy in heaven among the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth," Lu 15:10.

(2.) Thus also he says, when speaking of the "little ones" that compose his church, "In heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven," Mt 18:10.

(3.) They feel a special interest in all that relates to the redemption of man. Thus Peter says of the things pertaining to redemption, "which things the angels desire to look into," 1Pe 1:12. In accordance with this they are represented as praising God over the fields of Bethlehem, where the shepherds were to whom it was announced that a Saviour was born, (Lu 2:13;) an angel announced to Mary that she would be the mother of the Messiah, (Lu 1:26;) an angel declared to the shepherds that he was born, (Lu 2:10;) the angels came and ministered to him in his temptation, (Mt 6:11;) an angel strengthened him in the garden of Gethsemane, (Lu 22:43;) angels were present in the sepulchre where the Lord Jesus had been laid, to announce his resurrection to his disciples, (Joh 20:12;) and they re-appeared to his disciples on Mount Olivet, to assure them that he would return, and receive his people to himself, Ac 1:10.

(4.) They appear for the defence and protection of the people of God. Thus it is said, (Ps 34:7,) "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." Thus two angels came to hasten Lot from the cities of the Plain, and to rescue him from the impending destruction, Ge 19:1,15. Thus an angel opened the prison doors of the apostles, and delivered them when they had been confined by the Jews, Ac 5:19. Thus the angel of the Lord delivered Peter from prison, when he had been confined by Herod, Ac 12:7,8.

(5.) Angels are sent to give us strength to resist temptation. Aid was thus furnished to the Redeemer in the garden of Gethsemane, when there "appeared an angel from heaven strengthening him," Lu 22:43. The great trial there seems to have been somehow connected with temptation; some influence of the power of darkness, or of the prince of evil, Lu 22:53; comp. Joh 14:30. In this aid which they rendered to the tempted Redeemer, and in the assistance which they render to us when tempted, there is a special fitness and propriety. Man was at first tempted by a fallen angel. No small part—if not all the temptations in the world—are under the direction now of fallen angels. They roam at large, "seeking whom they may devour," 1Pe 5:8. The temptations which occur in life, the numerous allurements which beset our path, all have the marks of being under the control of dark and malignant spirits. What, therefore, can be more appropriate, than for the pure angels of God to interpose and aid man against the skill and wiles of their fallen and malignant fellow-spirits ? Fallen angelic power and skill—power and skill far above the capability and the strength of man—are employed to ruin us; and how desirable is it for like power and skill, under the guidance of benevolence, to come in to aid us!

(6.) They support us in affliction. Thus an angel brought a cheering message to Daniel; the angels were present to give comfort to the disciples of the Saviour, when he had been taken from them by death, and when he ascended to heaven. Why may it not be so now, that important consolations, in some way, are imparted to us by angelic influence? And

(7.) they attend dying saints, and conduct them to glory. Thus the Saviour says of Lazarus, that-when he died he "was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom," Lu 16:22. Is there any impropriety in supposing that the same thing may be done still? Assuredly, if anywhere heavenly aid is needed, it is when the spirit leaves the body. If anywhere a guide is needed, it is when the ransomed soul goes up the unknown path to God. And if angels are employed on any messages of mercy to mankind, it is proper that it should be when life is closing, and the spirit is about to ascend to heaven. Should it be said that they are *invisible*, and that it is difficult to conceive how we can be aided by beings whom we never see, I answer—I know that they are unseen. They no longer appear, as they once did, to be the *visible* protectors and defenders of the people of God. But no small part of the aid which we receive from others comes from sources unseen by us. We owe more to *unseen* benefactors than to those whom we see; and the most grateful of all aid, perhaps, is that which is furnished by a hand which we do not see, and from quarters which we cannot trace. How many an orphan is benefited by some unseen and unknown benefactor! So it may be a part of the great arrangements of Divine Providence, that many of the most needed and acceptable interpositions for our welfare should come to us from invisible sources, and be conveyed to us from God by unseen hands.

REMARKS.

1. The Christian religion has a claim on the attention of man. God has spoken to us in the gospel by his Son, Heb 1:1,2. This fact constitutes a claim on us to attend to what is spoken in the New Testament. When God sent prophets to address men, endowing them with more than human wisdom and eloquence, and commanding them to deliver solemn messages to mankind, *that* was a reason why men should hear. But how much more important is the message which is brought by his own Son! How much more exalted the Messenger! How much higher his claim to our attention and regard! Comp. Mt 21:37. Yet it is lamentable to reflect, how few attended to him when he lived on the earth, and how few comparatively regard him now. The great mass of men feel no interest in the fact, that the Son of God has come and spoken to the human race. Few take the pains to *read* what he said, though all the records of the discourses of the Saviour could be read in a few hours. A newspaper is read; a poem; a novel; a play; a history of battles and sieges; but the New Testament is neglected, and there are thousands, even in Christian lands, who have not even read through the sermon on the Mount! Few, also, listen to the truths which the Redeemer taught when they are proclaimed in the sanctuary. Multitudes never go to the place where the gospel is preached; multitudes, when there, are engaged in thinking of other things, or are wholly inattentive to the truths which are proclaimed. Such a reception has the Son of God met with in our world! The most wonderful of all events is, that he should have come from heaven to be the Teacher of mankind; next to that, the most wonderful event is, that when he has come men feel no interest in the fact, and refuse to listen to what he says of the unseen and eternal world. What a man will say about the *possibility* of making a fortune, by some wild speculation, will be listened to with the deepest interest; but what the Redeemer says about the *certainty* of heaven, and eternal riches there, excites no emotion. What one from the dead might say about the unseen world would excite the profoundest

attention, what He has said, who has always dwelt in the unseen world, and who knows all that has occurred there, and all that is yet to occur, awakens no interest, and excites no inquiry. Such is man. The visit, too, of an illustrious stranger—like Lafayette to America—will rouse a nation, and spread enthusiasm everywhere; the visit of the Son of God to the earth, on a great errand of mercy, is regarded as an event of no importance, and excites no interest in the great mass of human hearts.

2. Christ is divine. In the view of the writer of this epistle, he was undoubtedly regarded as equal with God. This is so clear, that it seems wonderful that it should ever have been called in question. He who made the worlds; who is to be worshipped by the angels; who is addressed as God; who is said to have laid the foundation of the earth, and to have made the heavens, and to be unchanged when all these things shall pass away, must be divine. These are the attributes of God, and belong to him alone. These things *could not* be spoken of a man, an angel, an archangel. It is impossible to conceive, that attributes like these could belong to a creature. If they could, then all our notions of what constitutes the distinction between God and his creatures are confounded, and we can have no intelligible idea of God.

3. It is not improbable, that Christ is the medium of communicating the knowledge of the Divine essence and perfections to all worlds. He is the brightness of the Divine glory—the showing forth—the manifestation of God, Heb 1:3. The body of the sun is not seen—certainly not by the naked eye. We cannot look upon it. But there is a shining, a brightness, a glory, a manifestation, which *is* seen. It is in the sunbeams, the manifestation of the glory and the existence of the sun. By his shining the sun is known. So the Son of God—incarnate or not—may be the manifestation of the Divine Essence. And, from this illustration, may we not, without irreverence, derive an illustration of the doctrine of the glorious Trinity? There is the body of the sun—to us invisible —yet great and glorious, and the source of all light, and heat, and life. The vast body of the sun is the source of all this radiance, the fountain of all that warms and enlivens. All light, and heat, and life, depend on him, and should he be extinct all would die. Thus may it not be with God the Father—God the eternal and unchanging essence—the Fountain of all light and life in the universe? In the sun there is also the *manifestation*—the shining —the glorious light. The brightness which we see emanates from that—emanates at once, continually, always. While the sun exists, that exists, and cannot be separated from it. By that brightness the sun is seen; by that the world is enlightened. Without these beams there would be no light, but all would be involved in darkness. What a beautiful representation of the Son of God—the brightness of the Divine glory; the medium by which God is made known; the source of light to man, and, for aught we know, to the universe! When he shines on men, there is light; when He does not shine, there is as certain moral darkness as there is night when the sun sinks in the west. And, for aught we can see, the manifestation which the Son of God makes may be as necessary in all worlds, to a proper contemplation of the Divine Essence, as the beams of the sun are to understand its nature. Then there are the warmth, and heat, and vivifying influences of the sun—an influence which is the source of life and beauty to the material world. It is not the mere shining —it is the attendant warmth and vivifying power. All nature is dependent on it. Each seed, and bud, and leaf, and flower; each spire of grass, and each animal on earth, and each bird on the wing, is dependent on it. Without that, vegetation would decay at once, and animal life would be extinct, and universal death would reign. What a beautiful illustration of the Holy Spirit, and of his influences on the moral world! "The Lord God is *a Sun*," (Ps 84:11;) and I do not see that it is improper thus to derive from the sun an illustration of the doctrine of the Trinity. I am certain we should know nothing of the sun but for the beams that reveal him, and that enlighten the world;

and I am certain that all animal and vegetable life would die, if it were not for his vivifying and quickening rays. I do not see that it may not be equally probable that the nature, the essence of God would be unknown, were it not manifested by the Son of God; and I am certain that all moral and spiritual life would die, were it not for the quickening and vivifying influences of the Holy Spirit on the human soul.

4. Christ has made an atonement for sin, Heb 1:3. He has done it by "*himself*." It was not by the blood of bulls and of goats; it was by his own blood. Let us rejoice that we have not now to come before God with a bloody offering; that we need not come leading up a lamb to be slain, but that we may come confiding in that blood which has been shed for the sins of mankind. The great Sacrifice has been made. The Victim is slain. The blood has been offered which expiates the sin of the world. We may now come at once to the throne of grace, and plead the merits of that blood. How different is our condition from that of the ancient Jewish worshippers! They were required to come leading the victim that was to be slain for sin, and to do this every year, and every day. We may come with the feeling, that the one great Sacrifice has been made for us; that it is never to be repeated; and that in that Sacrifice there is merit sufficient to cancel all our sins. How different our condition from that of the heathen. They, too, lead up sacrifices to be slain on bloody altars. They offer lambs, and goats, and bullocks, and captives taken in war, and slaves, and even their own children! But, amidst these horrid offerings, while they show their deep conviction that *some* sacrifice is necessary, they have no promise—no evidence whatever—that the sacrifice will be accepted. They go away unpardoned. They repeat the offering with no evidence that their sins are forgiven, and at last they die in despair! We come assured that the "blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin,"—and the soul rejoices in the evidence that all past sins are forgiven, and is at peace with God.

5. Let us rejoice that the Lord Jesus is thus exalted to the right hand of God, Heb 1:3,4. He has gone into heaven. He is seated on the throne of glory. He has suffered the last pang, and shed the last drop of blood that will ever be necessary to be shed for the sins of the world. No cold tomb is again to hold him; and and glorious in heaven. The angels there render him homage, (Heb 1:6,) and the universe is placed under his control.

6. It is right to *worship* the Lord Jesus. When he came into the world the *angels* were required to do it, (Heb 1:6,) and it cannot be wrong for *us* to do it now. If the angels in heaven might properly worship him, we may. If they worshipped him, he is divine. Assuredly God would not require them to worship a fellow-angel or a man! I feel safe in adoring where angels adore; I do not feel that I have a right to withhold my homage where they have been required to render theirs.

7. It is right to address the Lord Jesus as God, Heb 1:8. If he is so addressed in the language of inspiration, it is not improper for us so to address him. We do not err when we adhere closely to the language of the Bible; nor can we have a stronger evidence that we are right, than that we express our sentiments and our devotions in the very language of the sacred Scriptures.

8. The kingdom of the Redeemer is a righteous kingdom. It is founded in equity, Heb 1:8,9. Other kingdoms have been kingdoms of cruelty, oppression, and blood. Tyrants have swayed an iron sceptre over men. But not thus with the Redeemer in his kingdom. There is not a law there which is not equal and mild not a statute Which it would not promote the temporal and eternal welfare of man to obey. Happy is the man that is wholly under his sceptre; happy the kingdom that yields entire obedience to his laws!

9. The heavens shall perish; the earth shall decay, Heb 1:10,11. Great changes have already taken place in the earth—as the researches of geologists show; and we have no reason to doubt that similar changes may have occurred in distant worlds. Still greater changes may be expected to occur in future times, and some of them we may be called to witness. Our souls are to exist for ever; and far on in future ages—far beyond the utmost period which we can now compute—we may witness most important changes in these heavens and this earth. God may display his power in a manner which has never been seen yet; and, safe near his throne, his people may be permitted to behold the exhibition of power of which the mind has never yet had the remotest conception.

10. Yet, amidst these changes, the Saviour will be the same, Heb 1:12. He changes not. In all past revolutions, he has been the same. In all the changes which have occurred in the physical world, he has been unchanged; in all the revolutions which have occurred among kingdoms, he has been unmoved. One change succeeds another: kingdoms rise and fall, and empires waste away one generation goes off, to be succeeded by another; but he remains the same. No matter what tempests howl, or how wars rage, or how the pestilence spreads abroad, or how the earth is shaken by earthquakes—still the Redeemer is the same. And no matter what are our external changes, he is the same. We pass from childhood to youth, to manhood, to old age, but he changes not. We are in prosperity or adversity; we may pass from affluence to poverty, from honour to dishonour, from health to sickness; hut he is the same. We may go and lie down in the cold tomb, and our mortal frames may decay; but he is the same during our long sleep, and he will remain the same, till he shall return and summon us to renovated life. I rejoice that in all the circumstances of life I have the same Saviour. I know what he is. I know, if the expression may be allowed, "where he may be found." Man may change by caprice, or whim, or by some new suggestion of interest, of passion, or ambition. I go to my friend to-day, and find him kind and true —but I have no absolute certainty that I shall find him such to-morrow. His feelings, from some unknown cause, may have become cold towards me. Some enemy may have breathed suspicion into his ear about me, or he may have formed some stronger attachment, or he may be sick, or dead. But nothing like this can happen in regard to the Redeemer. He changes not. I am sure that he is always the same. No one can influence him by slander; no new friendship can weaken the old; no sickness or death can occur to him, to change him; and though the heavens be on fire, and the earth be convulsed, he is THE SAME. In such a Saviour I may confide; in such a friend why should not all confide? Of earthly attachments it has been too truly said,

"And what is friendship but a name;
A charm that lulls to sleep;
A shade that follows wealth or tame,
But leaves the wretch to weep ?"

But this can never be said of the attachment formed between the Christian and the Redeemer. That is unaffected by all external changes; that shall live in all the revolutions of material things, and when all earthly ties shall be severed; that shall survive the dissolution of all things.

11. We see the dignity of man, Heb 1:13,14. Angels are sent to be his attendants. They come to minister to him here, and to conduct him home "to glory." Kings and princes are surrounded by armed men, or by sages called to be their counsellors; but the most humble saint may be encompassed by a retinue of beings of far greater power, and more elevated rank. The angels of light and glory feel a deep interest in the salvation of men, They come to attend the redeemed; they wait on their steps; they sustain them in trial; they accompany them when departing to heaven. It is a higher

honour to be attended by one of those pure intelligences, than by the most elevated monarch that ever swayed a sceptre, or wore a crown; and the obscurest Christian shall soon be himself conducted to a throne in heaven, compared with which the most splendid seat of royalty on earth loses its lustre and fades away.

"And is there care in heaven? and is there love
In heavenly spirits to these creatures base,
That may compassion of their evils move?
There is; else; much more wretched were the case
Of men than beasts. But oh! the exceeding grace
Of Highest God, that loves his creatures so,
And all his works of mercy doth embrace,
That blessed angels he sends to and fro
To serve to wicked man, to serve his wicked foe!

"How oft do they their silver bowers leave,
To come to succour us that succour want!
How do they, with golden pinions, cleave
Against foul fiends, to aid us militant!
They for us fight; they watch and duly ward,
And their bright squadrons round about us plant;
And all for love, and nothing for reward:
Oh, why should heavenly God to men have such regard!"
Spencer's Faery Queen, B. II. Canto viii. 1, 2

12. What has God done for the salvation of man! He formed an eternal plan. He sent his prophets to communicate his will. He sent his Son to bear a message of mercy, and to die the just for the unjust. He exalted him to heaven, and placed the universe under his control, that man may be saved, he sent his Holy Spirit, his ministers, and messengers for this. And last, to complete the work, he sends his angels to be ministering spirits; to sustain his people; to comfort them in dying; to attend them to the realms of glory. What an interest is felt in the salvation of a single Christian! What a value he has in the universe! And how important it is that he should be holy! A man who has been redeemed by the blood of the Son of God should be pure. He who is an heir of life should be holy. He who is attended by celestial beings, and who is soon—he knows not *how* soon—to be translated to heaven, should be holy. Are angels my attendants? Then I should walk worthy of my companionship. Am I soon to go and dwell with angels? Then I should be pure. Are these feet soon to tread the courts of heaven? Is this tongue soon to unite with heavenly beings in praising God? Are these eyes soon to look on the throne of eternal glory, and on the ascended Redeemer? Then these feet, and eyes, and lips, should be pure and holy, and I should be dead to the world, and should live only for heaven.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 2

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 2 - Verse 1

HEBREWS

CHAPTER II.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

THE main object of this chapter is to show that we should attend diligently to the things which were spoken by the Lord Jesus, and not suffer them to glide away from us. The apostle seems to have supposed, that some might be inclined to disregard what was spoken by one of so humble appearance as the Lord Jesus; and that they would urge that the Old Testament had been given by the interposition of angels, and was therefore more worthy of attention. To meet this, he shows that important objects were accomplished by his becoming a man; and that, even as a man, power and dignity shall been conferred on him, superior to that of the angels. In illustration of these points, the chapter contains the following subjects:—

(1.) An exhortation not to suffer the things which had been spoken to slip from the mind—or, in other words, to attend to them diligently and carefully. The *argument* is, that if what was spoken by the angels under the old dispensation claimed attention, much more should that be regarded which was spoken by the Son of God, Heb 2:1-4.

(2.) Jesus had been honoured, as incarnate, in such a way as to show that he had a right to be heard, and that what he said should receive the profound attention of men, Heb 2:5-9. The World to come had not been put under the angels, as it had been under him, (Heb 2:5;) the general principle had been stated in the Scriptures, that all things were put under man (Heb 2:6,7,) but this was fulfilled only in the Lord Jesus, who had been made a little lower than the angels, and, when so made, crowned with glory and honour, Heb 2:9. His appearance as a man, therefore, was in no way inconsistent with what had been said of his dignity, or his claim to be heard.

(3.) The apostle then proceeds to show why he became a man, and why, though he was so exalted, he was subjected to so severe sufferings; and with this the chapter closes, Heb 2:10-18. It was because this was *proper*, from the relation which he sustained to man., The argument is, that the Redeemer and his people were identified; that he did not come to save *angels*, and that, therefore, there was a propriety in his assuming the nature of man, and being subjected to trials like those whom he came to save. In all things it behoved him to be made like his brethren, in order to redeem them, and in order to set them an example, and show them how to suffer. The humiliation, therefore, of the Redeemer—the fact that he appeared as a man, and that he was a sufferer—so far from being a reason why he should not be *heard*, was rather an additional reason why we should attend to what he said. He had a claim to the right of being heard, not only from his original dignity, but from the friendship which he has evinced for us in taking upon himself our nature, and suffering in our behalf.

Verse 1. Therefore. Gr. "On account of this" *dia touto* that is, on account of the exalted dignity and rank of the Messiah, as stated in the previous chapter. The sense is, "Since Christ, the Author of the new dispensation, is so far exalted above the prophets, and even the angels, we ought to give the more earnest attention to all that has been Spoken."

We ought. It is *fit or proper* that we should attend to those things. When the Son of God speaks to men, every consideration makes it appropriate that we should attend to what is spoken.

To give the more earnest heed. To give the more strict attention.

To the things which we have heard. Whether directly from the Lord Jesus, or from his apostles. It is possible, that some of those to whom the apostle was writing had heard the Lord Jesus himself preach the gospel; others had heard the same truths declared by the apostles.

Lest at any time. We ought to attend to those things at all times. We ought never to forget them; never to be indifferent to them. We are sometimes interested in them, and then we feel indifferent to them; sometimes at leisure to attend to them, and then the cares of the worlds, or a heaviness and dulness of mind, or a cold and languid state of the affections, renders us indifferent to them and they are suffered to pass out of the mind without concern. Paul says, that this ought *never* to be done! At no time should we be indifferent to those things. They are always important to us, and we should never be in a state of mind when they would be uninteresting. At all times; in all places; and in every situation of life, we should feel that the truths of religion are of more importance to us than all other truths, and nothing should be suffered to efface their image from the heart.

We should let them slip. Marg, *Run out as leaking vessels*. Tindal renders this, "lest we be split." The expression here has given rise to much discussion as to its meaning; and has been very differently translated. Doddridge renders it, "lest we let them flow out of our minds." Prof. Stuart, "lest at any time we should slight them." Whitby, "that they may not entirely slip out of our memories." The word here used *pararrew* —occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. The Septuagint translators have used the word but once. Pr 3:21, "Son, do not pass by, *mh pararruhv* but keep my counsel;" that is, do not pass by my advice by neglect, or suffer it to be disregarded. The word means, according to Passow, to flow by, to flow over; and then, to go by, to fall, to flow away. It is used to mean, to flow near, to flow by—as of a river; to glide away, to escape—as from the mind, i.e. to forget; and to glide along—as a thief does by stealth. See *Robinson's Lex*. The Syriac and Arabic translators have rendered it, that we may not fall. After all that has been said on the meaning of the word here, (compare *Stuart, in loc*.,) it seems to me, that the true sense of the expression is that of flowing or gliding by—as a river; and that the meaning here is, that we should be very cautious that the important truths spoken by the Redeemer and his apostles should not be suffered to *glide* by us without attention, or without profit. We should not allow them to be like a stream that glides on by us without benefiting us; that is, we should endeavour to secure and retain them as our own. The truth taught is, that there is great danger, now that the true system of religion has been revealed, that it will not profit us, but that we shall lose all the benefit of it. This danger may arise from many sources—some of which are the following:—

(1.) We may not feel that the truths revealed are important; and before their importance is felt, they may be beyond our reach. So we are often deceived in regard to the importance of objects; and before we perceive their value, they are irrecoverably gone. So it is often with time, and with the opportunities of obtaining an education, or of accomplishing any object which is of value. The opportunity is gone before we perceive its importance. So the young suffer the most important

period of life to glide away before they perceive its value; and the opportunity of making much of their talents is lost, because they did not embrace the suitable opportunities.

(2.) By being engrossed in business. We feel that *that* is now the most important thing. That claims all our attention. We have no time to pray, to read the Bible, to think of religion, for the cares of the world engross all the time—and the opportunities of salvation glide insensibly away, until it is too late.

(3.) By being attracted by the pleasures of life. We attend to them now, and are drawn along from one to another, until religion is suffered to glide away with all its hopes and consolations; and we perceive, too late, that we have let the opportunity of salvation slip for ever. Allured by those pleasures, the young neglect it; and new pleasures, starting up in future life, carry on the delusion, until every favourable opportunity for salvation has passed away;

(4.) We suffer favourable *opportunities* to pass by without improving them. Youth is by far the best time, as it is the most appropriate time, to become a Christian—and yet how easy is it to allow that period to slip away, without becoming interested in the Saviour! One day glides on after another, and one week, one month, one year passes away after another—like a gently-flowing stream—until all the precious time of youth has gone, and we are not Christians. So a revival of religion is a favourable time—and yet many suffer this to pass by without becoming interested in it. Others are converted, and the heavenly influences descend all around us, but we are unaffected; and the season, so full of happy and heavenly influences, is gone, to return no more.

(5.) We let the favourable season slip, because we design to attend to it at some future period of life. So youth defers it to manhood—manhood to old age—old age to a death-bed, and then neglects it—until the whole of life has glided away, and the soul is not saved. Paul knew man. He knew how prone he was to let the things of religion slip out of the mind; and hence the earnestness of his caution that we should give heed to the subject now, lest the opportunity of salvation should soon glide away. When once passed, it can never be recalled. Learn hence,

(1.) The truths of religion will not benefit us, unless we give heed to them. It will not save us that the Lord Jesus has come and spoken to men, unless we are disposed to listen. It will not benefit us that the sun shines, unless we open our eyes. Books will not benefit us, unless we read them; medicine, unless we take it; nor will the fruits of the earth sustain our lives, however rich and abundant, they may be, if we disregard and neglect them. So with the truths of religion. There is truth enough to save the world—but the world disregards and despises it.

(2.) It needs not great sins to destroy the soul. Simple *neglect* will do it as certainly as atrocious crimes. Every man has a sinful heart that will destroy him, unless he makes an effort to be saved. And it is not merely the great sinner, therefore, who is in danger. It is the man who *neglects* his soul—whether a moral or an immoral man, a daughter of amiableness, or a daughter of vanity and vice.

{1} "let them slip" "run out, as leaking vessels"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 2 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *For if the word spoken by angels*. The revelation in the Old Testament. It was indeed given by *Jehovah*; but it was the common opinion of the Hebrews, that it was by the ministry of

angels. **See Barnes "Ac 7:38"**; **See Barnes** "Ac 7:53, and **See Barnes** "Ga 3:19, where this point is fully considered. As Paul was discoursing here of the superiority of the Redeemer to the angels, it was to the point to refer to the fact that the law had been given by the ministry of angels.

Was steadfast. Was *firm— bebaiov*—settled, established. It was not vacillating and fluctuating. It determined what crime was, and it was firm in its punishment. It did not yield to circumstances; but, if not obeyed in all respects, it denounced punishment. The idea here is not that everything was *fulfilled*, but it is, that the law so given could not be violated with impunity. It was not *safe to* violate it, but it took notice of the slightest failure to yield perfect obedience to its demands.

And every transgression. Literally, *going beyond, passing by*. It means every instance of *disregarding* the law.

And disobedience. Every instance of *not hearing* the law *parakoh* and hence every instance of disobeying it. The word here stands opposite to *hearing* it, or attending to it—and the sense of the whole is, that the slightest infraction of the law was sure to be punished. It made no provision for indulgence in sin; it demanded prompt, implicit, and entire Obedience.

Received a Just recompense of reward. Was strictly punished. Subjected to equal retribution. This was the character of the law. It threatened punishment for each and every offence, and made no allowance for transgression in any form. Comp. Nu 15:30,31.

{*} "reward" "A just retribution"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 2 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *How shall we escape*. How shall we escape the just recompense due to transgressors? What way is there of being saved from punishment, if we suffer the great salvation to be neglected, and do not embrace its offers ? The sense is, that there is no other way of salvation, and the neglect of this will be followed by certain destruction. *Why* it will, the apostle proceeds to show, by stating that this plan of salvation was proclaimed first by the Lord himself, and had been confirmed by the most decided and amazing miracles.

If we neglect. It is not merely if we commit great sins; not if we are murderers, adulterers, thieves, infidels, atheists, scoffers. It is, if we merely neglect this salvation—if we do not embrace it—if we suffer it to pass unimproved. *Neglect* is enough to ruin a man. A man who is in business need not commit forgery or robbery to ruin himself; he has only to neglect his business, and his ruin is certain. A man who is lying on a bed of sickness need not cut his throat to destroy himself; he has only to neglect the means of restoration, and he will be ruined. A man floating in a skiff above Niagara, need not move an oar or make an effort to destroy himself; he has only to *neglect* using the oar at the proper time, and he will certainly be carried over the cataract. Most of the calamities of life are caused by simple *neglect*. By neglect of education, children grow up in ignorance; by neglect, a farm grows up to weeds and briars ; by neglect, a house goes to decay; by neglect of sowing, a man will have ho harvest; by neglect of reaping, the harvest would rot in the fields. No worldly interest can prosper where there is neglect; and why may it not be so in religion? There is nothing in earthly affairs, that is valuable, that will not be ruined if it is not attended to; and why may it not be so with the concerns of the soul? Let no one infer, therefore, that because he is not a drunkard, or an adulterer, or a murderer, that *therefore* he will be saved. Such an inference

would be as irrational as it would be for a man to infer, that because he is not a murderer his farm will produce a harvest, or that because he is not an adulterer, therefore his merchandise will take care of itself. Salvation would be worth nothing if it cost no effort; and there will be no salvation where no effort is put forth.

So great salvation. Salvation from sin and from hell. It is called *great*, because (1) its Author is great. This is perhaps the main idea in this passage. It "began to be spoken by the Lord;" it had for its author the Son of God, who is so much superior to the angels; whom the angels were required to worship, (Heb 1:6;) who is expressly called God, (Heb 1:8;) who made all things, and who is eternal, (Heb 1:10-12.) A system of salvation promulgated by him must be of infinite importance, and have a claim to the attention of man.

(2.) It is *great*, because it saves from great sins. It is adapted to deliver from all sins, no matter how aggravated. No one is saved who one feels that his sins are small, or that they are of no consequence. Each sees his sins to be black and aggravated; and each one who enters heaven, will go there feeling and confessing that it is a great salvation which has brought such a sinner there. Besides, this salvation delivers from all sin—no matter how gross and aggravated. The adulterer, the murderer, the blasphemer, may come and be saved; and the salvation which redeems such sinners from eternal ruin is *great*.

(3.) It is great, because it saves from great dangers. The danger of an eternal hell besets the path of each one. All do not see it; and all will not believe it when told of it. But this danger hovers over the path of every mortal. The danger of an eternal hell! Salvation from everlasting burnings! Deliverance from unending ruin! Surely that salvation must be great which shall save from such a doom! If that salvation is neglected, that danger still hangs over each and every man. The gospel did not *create* that danger it came to deliver from it. Whether the gospel be true or false, each man is by nature exposed to eternal death—just as each one is exposed to temporal death, whether the doctrine of the immortality of the soul and the resurrection be true or false. The gospel comes to provide a remedy for dangers and woes—it does not create them; it comes to deliver men from great dangers—not to plunge them into them. *Lacking the gospel*, and before it was preached at all, men were in danger of everlasting punishment; and that system which came to proclaim deliverance from such a danger is great.

(4.) The salvation itself is great in heaven. It exalts men to infinite honours, and places on their heads an eternal crown. Heaven, with all its glories, is offered to us; and such a deliverance, and *such* an elevation to eternal honours, deserves to be called GREAT. If that is neglected, there is no other salvation; and man must be inevitably destroyed.

(5.) It is great, because it was effected by infinite displays of power, and wisdom, and love. It was procured by the incarnation and humiliation of the Son of God. It was accomplished amidst great sufferings and self-denials. It was attended with great miracles. The tempest was stilled, and the deaf were made to hear and the blind to see, and the dead were raised, and the sun was darkened, and the rocks were rent. The whole series of wonders connected with the incarnation and death of the Lord Jesus, was such as the world had not elsewhere seen, and such as was fitted to hold the race in mute admiration and astonishment. If this be so, then religion is no trifle. It is not a matter of little importance, whether we embrace it or not. It is the most momentous of all the concerns that pertain to man; and has a claim on his attention which nothing else can have. Yet the mass of men live in the neglect of it. It is not that they are professedly Atheists, or Deists, or that they are immoral or profane; it is not that they oppose it, and ridicule it, and despise it; it is that they simply

neglect it. They pass it by, They attend to other things. They are busy with their pleasures, or in their counting-houses-in their workshops, or on their farms; they are engaged in politics or in book-making; and they *neglect* religion NOW as a thing of small importance—proposing to attend to it hereafter, as if they acted on the principle, that everything else was to be attended to *before* religion.

Which at the first. Gr. *Which received the beginning of being spoken*. The meaning is correctly expressed in our translation. Christ *began* to preach the gospel; the apostles followed him. John prepared the way, but the Saviour was properly the first preacher of the gospel.

By the Lord. By the Lord Jesus. **See Barnes "Act 1:24"**.

And was confirmed unto us, etc. They who heard him preach—that is, the apostles—were witnesses of what he said, and certified us of its truth. When the apostle here says "*us*," he means the church at large. Christians were assured of the truth of what the Lord Jesus spake, by the testimony of the apostles; or the apostles communicated it to those who had not heard him in such a manner, as left no room for doubt.

{a} "How shall" Heb 4:1,11 {b} "which at the first" Mr 1:14

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 2 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *God also bearing them witness*. By miracles. Giving them the sanction of his authority, or showing that they were sent by him. No man can work a miracle by his own power. When the dead are raised, the deaf made to hear, and the blind to see, by a word, it is the power of God alone that does it. He thus becomes a *witness* to the Divine appointment of him by whose instrumentality the miracle is wrought; or furnishes an attestation that what he says is true. **See Barnes "Ac 14:3"**.

With signs and wonders. These words are usually connected in the New Testament. The word rendered *signs shmeion*— means any miraculous event that is fitted to show that what had been predicted by a prophet would certainly take place. See Mt 12:38. Compare **See Barnes "Isa 7:1"**.

A *wonder -terav*— denotes a portent, or prodigy—something that is fitted to excite wonder or amazement-and hence a miracle. The words together refer to the various miracles which were performed by the Lord Jesus and his apostles, designed to confirm the truth of the Christian religion.

And with divers miracles. Various miracles—such as healing the sick, raising the dead, etc. The miracles were not of one class merely, but were various, so that all pretence of deception should be taken away.

And gifts of the Holy Ghost. Marg. *Distributions*, The various influences of the Holy Spirit enabling them to speak different languages, and to perform works beyond the power of man. **See Barnes "1Co 12:4-11"**.

According to his own will. As he chose. He acted as a sovereign in this. He gave them where he pleased, and imparted them in such measure as he chose. The sense of this whole passage is—"The gospel has been promulgated to man in a solemn manner. It was first published by the Lord of glory himself. It was confirmed by the most impressive and solemn miracles. It is undoubtedly a revelation from heaven; was given in more solemn circumstances than the law of Moses, and its threatenings are more to be dreaded than those of the law. Beware, therefore, how

you trifle with it, or disregard it. It cannot be neglected with safety; its neglect or rejection must be attended with condemnation."

{c} "God also" Ac 14:2 {1} "gifts" "distributions"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 2 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection*. In this verse the apostle returns to the subject which he had been discussing in Chapter 1—the superiority of the Messiah to the angels. From that subject he had been diverted, (Heb 2:1-4,) by showing them what must be the consequences of defection from Christianity, and the danger of neglecting it. Having shown that, he now proceeds with the discussion, and shows that an honour had been conferred on the Lord Jesus which had never been bestowed on the angels—to wit, *the supremacy over this world*. This he does by proving, from the Old Testament, that such a dominion was given to *man*, (Heb 2:6-8,) and that this dominion was *in fact* exercised by the Lord Jesus, Heb 2:9. At the same time, he meets an objection which a Jew would be likely to make. It is, that Jesus appeared to be far inferior to the angels. He was a man of a humble condition. He was poor, and despised. He had none of the external honour which was shown to Moses—the founder of the Jewish economy; none of the apparent honour which belonged to angelic beings. This implied objection he removes, by showing the reason why he became so. It was proper, since he came to redeem man, that he should be a man, and not take on himself the nature of angels; and, for the same reason, it was proper that he should be subjected to sufferings, and be made a man of sorrows, Heb 2:10-17. The remark of the apostle in the verse before us is, that God had never put the world in subjection to the angels, as he had to the Lord Jesus. They had no jurisdiction over it; they were mere ministering spirits; but the world had been put under the dominion of the Lord Jesus. *The world to come*. The word here rendered *world oikoumenh* means, properly, *the inhabited or inhabitable* world. See Mt 24:14; Lu 2:1 4:5, 21:27, (Gr. ;) Ac 11:28 17:6 31 19:27 24:5 Ro 10:18; Heb 1:6 Re 3:10, 12:9 16:14

-in all which places, but one, it is rendered *world*. It occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. The proper meaning is, the world or earth considered as inhabitable—and here the jurisdiction refers to the control over man, or the dwellers on the earth. The phrase, "the world *to come*," occurs not unfrequently in the New Testament. Comp. Eph 2:7 1Co 10:11; Heb 6:5.

The same phrase, "the world to come,

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—occurs often in the Jewish writings. According to Buxtorf (Lex. Ch. Talm. Rub.) it means, as some suppose, "the world which is to exist after this world is destroyed, and after the resurrection of the dead, when souls shall be again united to their bodies." By others it is supposed to mean "the days of the Messiah, when he shall reign on the earth." To me it seems to be clear that the phrase here means, *the world under the Messiah*— the world, age, or dispensation which was to succeed the Jewish, and which was familiarly known to them as "the world to come;" and the idea is, that that world, or age, was placed under the jurisdiction of the Christ, and not of the angels. This point the apostle proceeds to make out. **See Barnes "Isa 2:2"**.

Whereof we speak. "Of which I am writing;" that is, of the Christian religion, or the reign of the Messiah.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 2 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *But one in a certain place testified*. The apostle was writing to those who were supposed to be familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures, and where it would be necessary only to makes reference in general, without mentioning the name. The place which is quoted here is Ps 8:4-6. The *argument* of the apostle is this—that there stood in the sacred Scriptures a declaration, that "all things were placed under the control and jurisdiction of MAN," but that that had not yet been accomplished. It was not true (Heb 2:8) that all things were subject to him; and the complete truth of that declaration would be found only in the jurisdiction conferred on the Messiah—THE MAN, by way of eminence—the incarnate Son of God. It would not occur to any one probably in reading the Psalm, that the verse here quoted had any reference to the Messiah. It seems to relate to the dominion which God had given man over his works in this lower world, or to the fact that he was made lord over all things. That dominion is apparent, to a considerable extent, everywhere, and is a standing proof of the truth of what is recorded in Ge 1:26, that God originally gave dominion to man over the creatures on earth—since it is only by this supposition that it can be accounted for, that the horse, and the elephant, and the ox, and even the panther and the lion, are subject to the control of man. The argument of Paul seems to be this:— "Originally this control was given to man. It was absolute and entire. All things were subject to him, and all obeyed. Man was made a little lower than the angels, and was the undisputed lord of this lower world. He was in a state of innocence. But he rebelled, and this dominion has been in some measure lost. It is found complete only in the *second man, the Lord from heaven*, (1Co 15:47,) the Lord Jesus, to whom this control is absolutely given. He comes up to the complete idea of man—man as he was in innocence, and man as he was described by the Psalmist, as having been made a little lower than the angels, and having entire dominion over the world." Much difficulty has been felt by commentators in regard to this passage, and to the principle on which it is quoted. The above seems to me to be that which is most probably true. There are two other methods by which an attempt has been made to explain it. One is, that Paul uses the words here by way of *allusion*, or *accommodation*, (Doddridge;) as words that will express his meaning, without designing to say that the Psalm originally had any reference to the Messiah. Most of the later commentators accord with this opinion. The other opinion is, that David originally referred to the Messiah—that he was deeply and gratefully affected in view of the honour that God had conferred on him; and that in looking down by faith on the posterity that God had promised him, (see 2Sa 7:14,) he saw one among his own descendants to whom God would give this wide dominion, and expresses himself in the elevated language of praise. This opinion is defended by Prof. Stuart. See his Com. On the Hebrews, Excursus IX.

What is man, etc. What is there in man that entitles him to so much notice? Why has God conferred on him so signal honours? Why has he placed him over the works of his hands? He seems so insignificant; his life is so much like a vapour; he so soon disappears, that the question may well be asked why this extraordinary dominion is given him? He is so sinful, also, and so unworthy; so much unlike God, and so passionate and revengeful; is so prone to *abuse* his dominion, that it may be well asked why God has given it to him? Who would suppose that God would give such a dominion over his creatures to one who was so prone to abuse it, as man has shown himself to be? He is so *feeble*, also, compared with other creatures—even of those which are made subject to him-that the question may well be asked why God has conceded it to him? Such questions may be asked when we contemplate man *as he is*. But similar questions may be asked, if, as was probably

the case, the Psalm here be supposed to have had reference to man *as he was created*. Why was one so feeble, and so comparatively without strength, placed over this lower world, and the earth made subject to his control? Why is it that, when the heavens are so vast and glorious, (Ps 8:3,) God has taken such notice of man? Of what consequence can he be amidst works so wonderful? "When I look on the heavens, and survey their greatness and their glory," is the sentiment of David, "why is it that man has attracted so much notice, and that he has not been wholly overlooked in the vastness of the works of the Almighty? Why is it, that instead of this he has been exalted to so much dignity and honour?" This question, thus considered, strikes us with more force now, than it could have struck David. Let any one sit down, and contemplate the heavens as they are disclosed by the discoveries of modern astronomy, and he may well ask the question, "What is man that he should have attracted the attention of God, and been the object of so much care?" The same question would not have been inappropriate to David, if the Psalm be supposed to have had reference originally to the Messiah, and if he was speaking of himself particularly as the ancestor of the Messiah. "What is man; what am I; what can any of my descendants be, who must be of mortal frame, that this dominion should be given him? Why should any of a race so feeble, so ignorant, so imperfect, be exalted to such honour?" *We* may ask the question here, and it may be asked in heaven with pertinency and with power, "Why was *man* so honoured, as to be united to the Godhead? Why did the Deity appear in the human form? What was there in man that should entitle him to this honour of being united to the Divinity, and of being thus exalted above the angels?" The wonder is not yet solved; and we may well suppose that the angelic ranks look with amazement —but without envy—on the fact, that *man*, by his union with the Deity in the person of the Lord Jesus, has been raised above them in rank and in glory.

Or the son of man. This phrase means the same as man, and is used merely to give variety to the mode of expression. Such a change or variety in words and phrases, when the same thing is intended, occurs constantly in Hebrew poetry. The name "son of man" is often given to Christ, to denote his intimate connexion with our race, and the interest which he felt in us, and is the *common* term which the Saviour uses when speaking of himself. Here it means man, and may be applied to human nature everywhere—and therefore to human nature in the person of the Messiah.

That thou visitest him. That thou shouldst regard him, or treat him with so much honour. Why is he the object of so much interest to the Divine Mind?

{a} "What is man" Ps 8:4

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 2 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Thou madest him a little lower than the angels*. Marg. *A little while inferior to*. The Greek may here mean, a little inferior in rank, or inferior for a little time. But the probable meaning is, that it refers to inferiority of rank. Such is its obvious sense in Ps 8, from which this is quoted. The meaning is, that God had made man but little inferior to the angels in rank. He *was* inferior, but still God had exalted him almost to their rank. Feeble, and weak, and dying as he was, God had exalted him, and had given him a dominion and a rank almost like that of the angels. The wonder of the Psalmist is, that God had given to human nature so much honour—a wonder that is not at all diminished, when we think of the honour done to man by his connexion with the Divine nature

in the person of the Lord Jesus. If, in contemplating the face as it appears; if, when we look at the dominion of man over the lower world, we are amazed that God has bestowed so much honour on our nature, how much more should we wonder that he has honoured man by his connexion with the Divinity. Paul applies this to the Lord Jesus. His object is to show that he is superior to the angels. In doing this, he shows that he had a nature given him in itself but little inferior to the angels, and then that that had been exalted to a rank and dominion far above theirs. That such honour should be put on *man* is what is fitted to excite amazement, and well may one continue to ask why it has been done? When we survey the heavens, and contemplate their glories, and think of the exalted rank of other beings, we may well inquire why has such honour been conferred on man? *Thou crownedst him with glory and honour*. That is, with exalted honour. Glory and honour here are nearly synonymous. The meaning is, that elevated honour had been conferred on human nature. A most exalted and extended dominion had been given to man, which showed that God had greatly honoured him. This appeared eminently in the person of the Lord Jesus, "the exalted Man," to whom this dominion was given in the widest extent.

And didst set him over, etc. Man has been placed over the other works of God

(1.) by the original appointment, (Ge 1:26;)

(2.) man at large—though fallen, sinful, feeble, dying;

(3.) man, eminently in the person of the Lord Jesus, in whom human nature has received its chief exaltation. This is what is particularly in the eye of the apostle—and the language of the Psalm will accurately express this exaltation.

{1} "a little" "a little while inferior to"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 2 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Thou hast put all things in subjection*, etc. Ps 8:6. That is, all things are put under the control of man, or, thou hast given him dominion over all things.

For in that he put all in subjection. The meaning of this is, that "*the fair interpretation* of the passage in the Psalm is, that the dominion of man, or of human nature over the earth, was to be absolute and total. Nothing was to be excepted. But this is not now the fact in regard to man in general, and can be true only of human nature in the person of the Lord Jesus. There the dominion is absolute and universal." The point of the argument of the apostle may be this:—"It was the original appointment (Ge 1:26) that man should have dominion over this lower world, and be its absolute lord and sovereign. Had he continued in innocence, this dominion would have been entire and perpetual. But he fell, and we do not now see him exerting this dominion. What is said of the dominion of man can be true only of human nature in the person of the Lord Jesus, and there it *is* completely fulfilled."

But now we see not yet all things put under him. That is, "It is not now true that all things are subject to the control of man. There is indeed a general dominion over the works of God, and over the inferior creation. But the control is not universal. A large part of the animal creation rebels, and is brought into subjection only with difficulty. The elements are not entirely under his control; the tempest and the ocean rage; the pestilence conveys death through city and hamlet; the dominion of man is a broken dominion. His government is an imperfect government. The world is not *yet*

put wholly under his dominion, but enough has been done to constitute a pledge that it will yet be done. It will be fully accomplished only in him who sustains our nature, and to whom dominion is given over the worlds."

{a} "now we see" 1Co 15:24

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 2 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *But we see Jesus*. "We do not see that man elsewhere has the extended dominion of which the Psalmist speaks. But we see the fulfillment of it in Jesus, who was crowned with glory and honour, and who has received a dominion that is superior to that of the angels." The *point* of this is, not that he suffered, and not that he tasted death for every man; but that on account of this, or as a reward for thus suffering, he was crowned with glory and honour, and that he thus fulfilled all that David (Ps 8) had said of the dignity and honour of man. The object of the apostle is to show that he was exalted, and in order to this he shows *why* it was—. to wit, because he had suffered death to redeem man. Comp. Php 2:8,9.

Who was made a little lower than the angels. That is, as a man, or when on earth. His assumed rank was inferior to that of the angels. He took upon himself, not the nature of angels, Heb 2:16, but the nature of man. The apostle is probably here answering some implied objections to the rank which it was claimed that the Lord Jesus had, or which might be urged to the views which he was defending. Those objections were mainly two: first, that Jesus was a man; and, secondly, that he suffered and died. If that was the fact, it was natural to ask how he could be superior to the angels? How could he have had the rank which was claimed for him? This he answers by showing, first, that his condition as a man was *voluntarily* assumed—" he was made lower than the angels;" and, secondly, by showing that, as a consequence of his sufferings and death, he was immediately crowned with glory and honour. This state of humiliation became him in the great work which he had undertaken, and he was immediately exalted to universal dominion—and, as Mediator, was raised to a rank far above the angels.

For the suffering of death. Marg. *By*. The meaning of the preposition here rendered "for," (*dia*, here governing the accusative,) is, "on account of; "that is, Jesus, on account of the sufferings of death, or in virtue of that, was crowned with glory and honour. His crowning was the result of his condescension and sufferings. **See Barnes "Php 2:8,9"**.

It does not here mean as our translation would seem to imply, that he was made a little lower than the angels *in order* to suffer death, but that as a reward for having suffered death be was raised up to the right hand of God.

Crowned with glory and honour. That is, at the right hand of God. He was raised up to heaven, Ac 2:33 Mr 16:19. The meaning is, that he was crowned with the highest honour on account of his sufferings. Comp. Php 2:8,9; Heb 12:2 5:7-9; Eph 1:20-23.

That he. Or rather, "*since* he by the grace of God tasted death for every man." The sense is, that *after* he had thus tasted death, and as a consequence of it, he was thus exalted. The word here rendered "*that*" *opwv* —means usually and properly, *that, so that, in order that, to the end that, etc*. But it *may* also mean, *when, after that, after*. **See Barnes "Ac 3:19"**.

This is the interpretation which is given by Prof. Stuart, (*in loc*,) and this interpretation seems to be demanded by the connexion. The general interpretation of the passage has been different. According to that, the sense is, "We see Jesus, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, so as that, by the grace of God, he might taste of death for every man." See Robinson's Lex. on the word *opwv*, and Doddridge on the place. But it is natural to ask *when* Jesus was thus crowned with glory and honour? It was not *before* the crucifixion —for he was then poor and despised. The connexion seems to require us to understand this of the glory to which he was exalted in heaven, and this was *after* his death, and could not be in order that he might taste of death. I am disposed, therefore, to regard this as teaching that the Lord Jesus was exalted to heaven in virtue of the atonement which he had made—and this accords with Php 2:8,9; Heb 12:2.

It accords both with *the fact* in the case, and with the design of the apostle in the argument before us.

By the grace of God. By the favour of God, or by his benevolent purpose towards men. It was not by any claim which man had, but was by his special favour.

Should taste death. Should die; or, should experience death. See Mt 16:28. Death seems to be represented as something bitter and unpalatable—something unpleasant—as an object may be to the taste. Or the language may be taken from a *cup*—since to experience calamity and sorrow is often represented as drinking a cup of woes, Ps 11:6 73:10, 75:8 Isa 51:17; Mt 20:22 26:39.

For every man. For all *uper pantov*— for each and all —whether Jew or Gentile, bond or free, high or low, elect or non-elect. How could words affirm more clearly, that the atonement made by the Lord Jesus was unlimited in its nature and design? How can we express that idea in more clear or intelligible language? That this refers to the atonement is evident—for it says that he "tasted death" for them. The friends of the doctrine of general atonement do not desire any other than Scripture language in which to express their belief. It expresses it exactly— without any need of modification or explanation. The advocates of the doctrine of limited atonement cannot thus use Scripture language to express their belief. They cannot incorporate it with their creeds, that the Lord Jesus "tasted death for EVERY MAN." They are compelled to modify it, to limit it, to explain it, in order to prevent error and misconception. But that system *cannot* be true which requires men to shape and modify the plain language of the Bible, in order to keep men from error. **See Barnes** "2Co 5:14, where this point is considered at length. Learn hence, (Heb 2:6-9,) from the incarnation of the Son of God, and his exaltation to heaven, what an honour has been conferred on human nature. When we look on the weakness and sinfulness of our race, we may well ask, What is man, that God should honour him or regard him? He is the creature of a day. He is feeble and dying. He is lost and degraded. Compared with the universe at large, he is a speck, an atom. He has done nothing to deserve the Divine favour or notice; and when we look at the race at large, we can do it only with sentiments of the deepest humiliation and mortification. But when we look at human nature in the person of the Lord Jesus, we see it honoured there to a degree that is commensurate with all our desires, and that fills us with wonder. We feel that it is an honour to human nature; that it has done much to elevate man—when we look on such a man as Howard or Washington. But how much more has that nature been honoured in the person of the Lord Jesus!

(1.) What an honour to us it was, that he should take our nature into intimate union with himself—passing by the angelic hosts, and becoming a man!

(2.) What an honour it was, that human nature there was so pure and holy; that *man*—everywhere else so degraded and vile—*could* be seen to be noble, and pure, and god-like!

(3.) What an honour it was, that the Divinity should speak to men in connexion with human nature, and perform such wonderful works; that the pure precepts of religion should come forth from human lips—the great doctrines of eternal life be uttered by a man; and that from human hands should go forth power to heal the sick, and to raise the dead!

(4.) What an honour to man it was, that the atonement for sin should be made in his own nature, and that the universe should be attracted to that scene where one in our form, and with flesh and blood like our own, should perform that great work.

(5) What an honour it is to man, that his own nature is exalted far above all heavens! That one in our form sits on the throne of the universe! That adoring angels fall prostrate before him! That to him is entrusted all power in heaven and on earth!

(6.) What an honour to man, that one in his nature should be appointed to judge the worlds! That one in our own form, and with a nature like ours, shall sit on the throne of judgment, and pronounce the final doom on angels and men! That assembled millions shall be constrained to bow before him, and receive their eternal doom from his hands! That prince and potentate, the illustrious dead of all past times, and the mighty men who are yet to live, shall all appear before him, and all receive from him there the sentence of their final destiny! I see, therefore, the most honour done to my nature as a man— not in the deeds of proud conquerors; not in the lives of sages and philanthropists; not in those who have carried their investigations farthest into the obscurities of matter and of mind; not in the splendid orators, poets, and historians of other times, or that; now live—much as I may admire them, or feel it an honour to belong to a race which has produced such illustrious men—but in the fact, that the Son of God has chosen a Body like my own in which to dwell; in the expressible loveliness evinced in his pure morals, his benevolence, his blameless life; in the great deeds that he performed on earth; in the fact, that it was this form that was chosen in which to make atonement for sin; in the honours that now cluster around him in heaven, and the glories that shall attend him when he shall come to judge the world.

"Princes to his imperial name
Bend their bright sceptres down;
Dominions, thrones, and powers rejoice
To see him wear the crown.

"Archangels sound his lofty praise
Through every heavenly street;
And lay their highest honours down,
Submissive at his feet.

"Those Soft, those blessed feet of his,
That once rude iron tore,
High on a throne of light they stand,
And all the saints adore.

"His head, the dear, majestic head,
That cruel thorns did wound;
See—what immortal glories shine,
And circle it around !

"This is the Man, the exalted Man,
Whom we, unseen, adore;
But when our eyes behold his face,
Our hearts shall love him more."

{b} "who was made" Php 2:8,9 {2} "for" or "by" {c} "crowned" Ac 2:33

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 2 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *For it became him*. There was a fitness or propriety in it. It was such an arrangement as became God to make, in redeeming many, that the great agent by whom it was accomplished, should be made complete in all respects by sufferings. The apostle evidently means by this to meet an objection that might be offered by a Jew to the doctrine which he had been stating—an objection drawn from the fact, that Jesus was a man of sorrows, and that his life was a life of affliction. This he meets by stating that there was a *fitness* and *propriety* in that fact. There was a reason for it —a reason drawn from the plan and character of God. It was fit, in the nature of the case, that he should be qualified to be a *complete or perfect Saviour*—a Saviour just adapted to the purpose undertaken, by sufferings. The reasons of this fitness the apostle does not state. The amount of it probably was, that it became him, as a Being of infinite benevolence—as one who wished to provide a perfect system of redemption—to subject his Son to such sufferings as should completely qualify him to be a Saviour for all men. This subjection to his humble condition, and to his many woes, made him such a Saviour as man needed, and qualified him fully for his work. There was a propriety that he who should redeem the suffering and the lost should partake of their nature; identify himself with them; and share their woes, and the consequences of their sins.

For whom are all things. With respect to whose glory the whole universe was made; and with respect to whom the whole arrangement for salvation has been formed. The phrase is synonymous with "the Supreme Ruler;" and the idea is, that it became the Sovereign of the universe to provide a *perfect* scheme of salvation—even though it involved the humiliation and death of his own Son.

And by whom are all things. By whose agency everything is made. As it was by his agency, therefore, that the plan of salvation was entered into, there was a fitness that it should be perfect. It was not the work of fate or chance, and there was a propriety that the whole plan should bear the mark of the infinite wisdom of its Author.

In bringing many sons unto glory. To heaven. This was the plan—it was to bring many to heaven who should be regarded and treated as his *sons*. It was not a plan to save a *few*—but to save *many*. Learn hence,

(1.) that the plan was full of benevolence.

(2.) No representation of the gospel should ever be made which will leave the impression that a few only, or a small part of the whole race, will be saved. There is no such representation in the Bible, and it should not be made. God intends, taking the whole race together, to save a large part of the human family. Few in ages that are past, it is true, may have been saved, few now are his friends and are travelling to heaven; but there are to be brighter days on earth. The period is to

arrive when the gospel shall spread over all lands; and during that long period of the millennium, innumerable millions will be brought under its saving power, and be admitted to heaven. All exhibitions of the gospel are wrong which represent it as narrow in its design, narrow in its offer, and narrow in its result.

To make the captain of their salvation. The Lord Jesus, who is represented as the leader or commander of the army of the redeemed— "the sacramental host of God's elect." The word "captain" we apply now to an inferior officer—the commander of a "company" of soldiers. The Greek word —*archgov*—is a more general term, and denotes, properly, the author or source of any thing; then a leader, chief, prince. In Ac 3:15, it is rendered *prince*—" and killed *the prince of life*." So in Ac 5:31—"Him hath God exalted to be a prince and a Saviour." In Heb 12:2, it is rendered *author*: "Jesus the author and finisher of our faith." Comp. **See Barnes "Heb 12:2"**.

Perfect through sufferings. Complete by means of sufferings; that is, to render him wholly qualified for his work, so that he should be a Saviour just adapted to redeem man. This does not mean that he was *sinful* before, and was made *holy* by his sufferings; nor that he was not in all respects a perfect man before;—but it means, that by his sufferings he was made *wholly fitted* to be a Saviour of men; and that therefore the fact of his being a suffering man was no evidence, as a Jew might have urged, that he was not the Son of God. There was a *completeness*, a filling up, of all which was necessary to his character as a Saviour, by the sufferings which he endured. We are made *morally* better by afflictions, if we receive them in a right manner—for we are sinful, and need to be purified in the furnace of affliction; Christ was not made *better*, for he was before perfectly holy, but he was completely endowed for the work which he came to do, by his sorrows. Nor does this mean here precisely that he was exalted to heaven *as a reward* for his sufferings, or that he was raised up to glory as a consequence of them—which was true in itself—but that he was rendered complete, or fully qualified to be a Saviour by his sorrows, he was rendered thus complete,

(1.) because his suffering in all the forms that flesh is liable to, made him an example to all his people who shall pass through trials. They have before them a perfect model to show them how to bear afflictions. Had this not occurred, he could not have been regarded as a complete or perfect Saviour—that is, such a Saviour as we need.

(2.) He is able to sympathize with them, and to succour them in their temptations, Heb 2:18.

(3.) By his sufferings an atonement was made for sin. He would have been an *imperfect* Saviour—if the name *Saviour* could have been given to him at all—if he had not died to make an atonement for transgression. To render him complete as a Saviour, it was necessary that he should suffer and die; and when he hung on the cross in the agonies of death, he could appropriately say, "It is finished." The work is complete, All has been done that could be required to be done; and man may now have the assurance that he has a perfect Saviour—perfect not only in moral character, but perfect in his work, and in his adaptedness to the condition of men." Comp. Heb 5:8,9; **See Barnes** "Lu 13:32.

{b} "became him" Lu 24:26,46 {c} "for whom" Ro 11:36 {a} "captain" Isa 45:4 {b} "Perfect" Lu 13:22

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 2 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *For both he that sanctifieth*. This refers evidently to the Lord Jesus. The *object* is to show that there was such a union between him and those for whom he died, as to make it necessary that he should partake of the same nature, or that he should be a suffering man, Heb 2:14. He undertook to redeem and sanctify them. He called them brethren, he identified them with himself. There was, in the great work of redemption, a *oneness* between him and them, and hence it was necessary that he should *assume* their nature—and the fact, therefore, that he appeared as a suffering man, does not at all militate with the doctrine that he had a more exalted nature, and was even above the angels. Prof. Stuart endeavours to prove that the word *sanctify* here is used in the sense of, *to make expiation or atonement*, and that the meaning is, "he who maketh expiation, and they for whom expiation is made." Bloomfield gives the same sense to the word, as also does Rosenmuller. That the word *may* have such a signification it would be presumptuous in any one to doubt, after the view which such men have taken of it; but it may be doubted whether this idea is necessary here. The word sanctify is a general term, meaning, to make holy or pure; to consecrate, set apart, devote to God; to regard as holy, or to hallow. Applied to the Saviour here, it may be used in this general sense—that he consecrated, or devoted himself to God—as eminently *the consecrated or holy one* —the Messiah, (**See Barnes "Joh 17:19"**

:) applied to his people, it may mean that they, in like manner, were *the* consecrated, the holy, the pure on earth. There is a richness and fairness in the word when so understood, which there is not when it is limited to the idea of expiation; and it seems to me that it is to be taken in its richest and fullest sense, and that the meaning is, "the great consecrated Messiah—the Holy One of God—and his consecrated and holy followers, are all of one."

All of one. Of one family; spirit; Father; nature. Father of these significations will suit the connexion, and some such idea must be understood; The meaning is, that they were united, or partook of *something* in common, so as to constitute a *oneness*, or a brotherhood; and that since this was the case, there was a propriety in his taking their nature. It does not mean that they were originally of one nature or family; but that it was understood in the writings of the prophets that the Messiah should partake of the nature of his people, and that *therefore*, though he was more exalted than the angels, there was a propriety that he should appear in the human form. Comp. Joh 17:21.

For which cause. That is, because he is thus united with them, or has undertaken their redemption.

He is not ashamed. As it might be supposed that one so exalted and pure would be. It might have been anticipated that the Son of God would refuse to give the name brethren to those who were so humble, and sunken, and degraded, as those whom he came to redeem. But he is willing to be ranked with them, and to be regarded as one of their family.

To call them brethren. To acknowledge himself as of the same family, and to speak of them as his brothers. That is, *he is so represented as speaking of them in the prophecies respecting the Messiah*—for this interpretation the argument of the apostle demands. It was material for him to show that he was so represented in the Old Testament. This he does in the following verses.

{c} "all of one" Joh 17:21

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 2 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Saying*. This passage is found in Ps 22:22. The whole of that Psalm has been commonly referred to the Messiah; and in regard to such a reference there is less difficulty than attends most of the other portions of the Old Testament that are usually supposed to relate to him. The following verses of the Psalm are applied to him, or to transactions connected with him, in the New Testament, Ps 22:1,8,18; and the whole Psalm is so strikingly descriptive of his condition and sufferings, that there can be no reasonable doubt that it had an original reference to him. There is much in the Psalm that cannot be well applied to David; there is nothing which cannot be applied to the Messiah; and the proof seems to be clear, that Paul quoted this passage in accordance with the original sense of the Psalm. The *point* of the quotation here is not that he would "declare the name" of God, but that he gave the name *brethren* to those whom he addressed.

I will declare thy name. I will make thee known. The word "name" is used, as it often is, to denote God himself. The meaning is, that it would be a part of the Messiah's work to make known to his disciples the character and perfections of God—or to make them acquainted with God. He performed this. In his parting prayer (Joh 17:6) he says, "I have manifested thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me out of the world." And again, John 17:26, "And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it."

Unto my brethren. The point of the quotation is in this. He spoke of them as *brethren*. Paul is showing that he was not ashamed to call them such. As he was reasoning with those who had been Jews, and as it was necessary, as a part of his argument, to show that what he maintained respecting the Messiah was found in the Old Testament, he makes his appeal to that, and shows that the Redeemer is represented as addressing his people as *brethren*. It would have been easy to appeal to *facts*, and to have shown that the Redeemer used that term familiarly in addressing his disciples, (comp. Mt 12:48,49, 25:40 28:10; Lu 8:21; Joh 20:17,) but that would not have been pertinent to his object. It is full proof to us, however, that the prediction in the Psalm was literally fulfilled.

In the midst of the church. That is, in the assembly of my brethren. The point of the proof urged by the apostle lies in the first part of the quotation. This latter part seems to have been adduced, because it might assist their memory to have the whole verse quoted; or because it contained an interesting truth respecting the Redeemer—though not precisely a *proof* of what he was urging; or because it *implied* substantially the same truth as the former member. It shows that he was *united* with his church; that he was one of them; and that he mingled with them as among brethren.

Will I sing praise. That the Redeemer united with his disciples in singing praise, we may suppose to have been in the highest degree probable—though, I believe, but a single case is mentioned—that at the close of the Supper which he instituted to commemorate his death, Mt 26:30. This, therefore, proves what the apostle intended—that the Messiah was among them as his brethren, that he spoke to them as such, and mingled in their devotions as one of their number.

{d} "Saying" Ps 22:22

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 2 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *And again*. That is, it is said in another place, or language is used of the Messiah in another place, indicating the confidence which he put in God, and showing that he partook of the feelings of the children of God, and regarded himself as one of them.

I will put my trust in him. I will confide in God; implying

(1.) a sense of dependence on God, and

(2.) confidence in him. It is with reference to the former idea that the apostle seems to use it here—as denoting a condition where there was felt to be need of Divine aid. His object is to show that he took part with his people, and regarded them as brethren; and the purpose of this quotation seems to be, to show that he was in such a situation as to make an expression of dependence proper. He was one with his people, and shared their dependence and their piety—using language which showed that he was identified with them, and could mingle with the tenderest sympathy in all their feelings. It is not certain from what place this passage is quoted. In Ps 18:3, and the corresponding passage in 2Sa 22:3, the Hebrew is

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—"I will trust in him;" but this Psalm has never been regarded as having any reference to the Messiah, even by the Jews— and it is difficult to see how it could be considered as having any relation to him. Most critics therefore, as Rosenmuller, Calvin, Koppe, Bloomfield, Stuart, etc., regard the passage as taken from Isa 8:17. The reasons for this are,

(1.) that the words are the same in the Septuagint as in the epistle to the Hebrews;

(2.) the apostle quotes the next verse immediately as applicable to the Messiah;

(3.) no other place occurs where the same expression is found. Isa 8:17, is

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"I will wait for him," or I will trust in him — rendered by the Septuagint *pepoiywv esomai ep autw*— the same phrase precisely as is used by Paul—and here can be no doubt that he meant to quote it here. The *sense* in Isaiah is, that he had closed his message to the people; he had been directed to seal up the testimony; he had exhorted the nation to repent, but he had done it in vain; and he had now nothing to do but to put his trust in the Lord, and commit the whole cause to him. His only hope was in God; and he calmly and confidently committed his cause to him. Paul evidently designs to refer this to the Messiah; and the sense as applied to him is—"The Messiah in using this language expresses himself *as a man*. It is *men* who exercise dependence on God; and by the use of this language he speaks as one who had the nature of man, and who expressed the feelings of the pious, and showed that he was one of them, and that he regarded them as brethren." There is not much difficulty in the *argument* of the passage; nor it is seen that in such language he must speak as a man, or as one having human nature; but the main difficulty is on the question how this and the verse following can be applied to the Messiah? In the prophecy they seem to refer solely to Isaiah, and to be expressive of his feelings alone— the feelings of a man who saw little encouragement in his work, and who having done all that he could do, at last put his sole trust in God. In regard to this difficult and yet unsettled question, the reader may consult my introduction to Isaiah, & 7. The following remarks may serve in part to remove the difficulty.

(1.) The passage in Isaiah (Isa 8:17,18) occurs in the midst of a number of predictions relating to the Messiah—preceded and followed by passages that had an ultimate reference undoubtedly to him. See Isa 7:14 9:1-7 and Notes on those passages.

(2.) The language, if used of Isaiah, would as accurately and fitly express the feelings and the condition of the Redeemer. There was such a remarkable similarity in the circumstances, that the

same language would express the condition of both. Both had delivered a solemn message to men; both had come to exhort them to turn to God, and to put their trust in him, and both with the same result. The nation had disregarded them alike; and now their only hope was to confide in God; and the language here used would express the feelings of both—" I will *trust in God*. I will put confidence in him, and look to him."

(3.) There can be little doubt that, in the time of Paul, this passage was regarded by the Jews as applicable to the Messiah. This is evident, because

(a.) Paul would not have so quoted it as a *proof-text*, unless it would be admitted to have such a reference by those to whom he wrote; and

(b.) because, in Ro 9:32,33, it is evident that the passage in Isa 8:14, is regarded as having reference to the Messiah, and as being so admitted by the Jews. It is true that this may be considered merely as an argument ad hominem—or an argument from what was admitted by those with whom he was reasoning, without vouching for the precise accuracy of the manner in which the passage was applied—but that method of argument is admitted elsewhere, and why should we not expect to find the sacred writers reasoning as other men do, and especially as was common in their own times? The apostle is showing them, that *according to their own Scripture*, and in accordance with principles which they themselves admitted, it was necessary that the Messiah should be a man and a sufferer; that he should be identified with his people, and be able to use language which would express that condition. In doing this, it is not remarkable that he should apply to him language which they admitted to belong to him, and which would accurately describe his condition.

(4.) It is not necessary to suppose that the passage in Isaiah had an *original* and *primary* reference to the Messiah. It is evident from the whole passage that it had not. There was a *primary* reference to Isaiah himself, and to his children as being emblems of certain truths. But still there was a strong resemblance, in certain respects, between his feelings and condition and those of the Messiah. There was such a resemblance, that the one would not unaptly symbolize the other. There was such a resemblance that the mind—probably of the prophet himself, and of the people—would look forward to the more remote, but similar event—the coming and the circumstances of the Messiah. So strong was this resemblance, and so much did the expressions of the prophet here accord with his declarations elsewhere pertaining to the Messiah, that in the course of time they came to be regarded as relating to him in a very important sense, and as destined to have their complete fulfillment when he should come. As such they seem to have been used in the time of Paul; and no one can PROVE that the application was improper. Who can demonstrate that God did not *intend* that those transactions referred to by Isaiah should be designed as symbols of what would occur in the time of the Redeemer? They were certainly symbolical actions—for they are expressly so said to have been by Isaiah himself, (Isa 8:18;) and none can demonstrate that they might not have had an ultimate reference to the Redeemer.

And again. In another verse, or in another declaration; to wit, Isa 7:18.

Behold I and the children which God hath given me. This is only a part of the passage in Isaiah, and seems to have been partially quoted, because the point of the quotation consisted in the fact, that he sustained to them somewhat of the relation of a parent towards his children—as having the same *nature*, and being identified with them in interest and feeling. As it is used by Isaiah, it means that he and his children were "for signs and emblems" to the people of his time—to communicate and confirm the will of God, and to be *pledges* of the Divine favour and protection. **See Barnes "Isa 7:18".**

As applied to the Messiah, it means that he sustained to his people a relation so intimate, that they could be addressed and regarded as his children. They were of one family; one nature. He became one of them, and had in them all the interest which a father has in his sons, He had, therefore, a nature like ours; and though he was exalted above the angels, yet his relation to man was like the most tender and intimate earthly connexions, showing that he took part in the same nature with them. The *point* is that he was a man; that since those who were to be redeemed partook of flesh and blood, *he* also took part of the same, (Heb 2:14,) and thus identified himself with them.

{a} "I will put my trust" Ps 18:2 {b} "again" Isa 8:18 {c} "God hath given me" Joh 17:6-12

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 2 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Forasmuch then*. Since; or because.

As the children. Those who were to become the adopted children of God; or who were to sustain that relation to him.

Are partakers of flesh and blood. Have a human and not an angelic nature. Since they are men, he became a man. There was a fitness or propriety that he should partake of their nature. **See Barnes** "1Co 15:50; **See Barnes "Mt 16:17"**.

He also himself, etc. He also became a man, or partook of the same nature with them. **See Barnes "Joh 1:14"**.

That through death. By dying. It is implied here,

(1.) that the work which he undertook of destroying him that had the power of death was to be accomplished *by his own dying*; and

(2.) that, in order to this, it was necessary that he should be a man. An angel does not die, and therefore he did not take on him the nature of angels; and the Son of God, in his Divine nature, could not die, and therefore he assumed a form in which he *could* die—that of a man. In that nature the Son of God could taste of death; and thus he could destroy him that had the power of death.

He might destroy. That he might *subdue*, or that he might overcome him, and destroy his dominion. The word *destroy* here is not used in the sense of *closing life*, or of *killing*, but in the sense of bringing into subjection, or crushing his power. This is the work which the Lord Jesus came to perform—to destroy the kingdom of Satan in the world, and to set up another kingdom in its place. This was understood by Satan to be his object. **See Barnes "Mt 8:29"**; **See Barnes "Mr 1:24"**.

That had the power of death. I understand this as meaning that the devil was the cause of death in this world, he was the means of its introduction, and of its long and melancholy reign. This does not *affirm* anything of his power of inflicting death in particular instances—whatever may be true on that point—but that *death* was a part of his dominion; that he introduced it; that he seduced man from God, and led on the train of woes which result in death. He also made it terrible. Instead of being regarded as falling asleep, or being looked on without alarm, it becomes, under him, the means of terror and distress. What *power* Satan may have in inflicting death in particular: instances no one can tell. The Jewish Rabbins speak much of Samuel, "the angel of death"—

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—who they supposed had the control of life, and was the great messenger employed in closing it. The Scriptures, it is believed, are silent on that point. But that Satan was the means of introducing

"death into the world, and all our woe," no one can doubt; and over the whole subject, therefore, he may be said to have had *power*. To *destroy* that dominion; to rescue man; to restore him to life; to place him in a world where death is unknown; to introduce a state of things where *not another one would ever die*, was the great purpose for which the Redeemer came. What a noble object! What enterprise in the universe has been so grand and noble as this! Surely an undertaking that contemplates the annihilation of DEATH; that designs to bring this dark dominion to an end, is full of benevolence, and commends itself to every man as worthy of his profound attention and gratitude. What woes are caused by death in this world! They are seen everywhere. The earth is "arched with graves." In almost every dwelling death has been doing his work of misery. The palace cannot exclude him; and he comes unbidden into the cottage. He finds his way to the dwelling of ice in which the Esquimaux and the Greenlander live; to the tent of the Bedouin Arab, and the wandering Tartar; to the wigwam of the Indian, and to the harem of the Turk; to the splendid mansion of the rich, as well as to the abode of the poor. That reign of death has now extended near six thousand years, and will travel on to future times—meeting each generation, and consigning the young, the vigorous, the lovely, and the pure, to dust. Shall that gloomy reign continue forever? Is there no way to arrest it? Is there no place where death can be excluded? Yes: *heaven* —and the object of the Redeemer is to bring us there.

{a} "he himself also" Joh 1:14 {b} "through death" 1co 15:54

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 2 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *And deliver them*. Not all of them *in fact*, though the way is open for all. This deliverance relates

(1.) to the *dread* of death. He came to free them from that.

(2.) From death itself—that is, ultimately to bring them to a world where death shall be unknown. The *dread* of death may be removed by the work of Christ, and they who had been subject to constant alarms on account of it may be brought to look on it with calmness and peace; and ultimately they will be brought to a world where it will be wholly unknown. The dread of death is taken away, or they are delivered from that, because

(a.) the cause of that *dread*—to wit, sin—is removed. **See Barnes** "1Co 15:54, **See Barnes "1Co 15:55"**.

(b.) Because they are enabled to look to the world beyond with triumphant joy. Death conducts them to heaven. A Christian has nothing to fear in death; nothing beyond the grave. In no part of the universe has he any thing to dread, for God is his friend, and he will be his protector everywhere. On the dying bed; in the grave; on the way up to the judgment; at the solemn tribunal; and in the eternal world, he is under the eye and the protection of his Saviour—and of what should he be afraid?

Who through fear of death. From the dread of dying —that is, whenever they think of it, and they think of it *so often* as to make them slaves of that fear. This obviously means the natural dread of dying, and not particularly the fear of punishment beyond. It is *that* indeed which often gives its principal terror to the dread of death; but still the apostle refers here evidently to natural death—as an object which men fear. All men have, by nature, this dread of dying— and perhaps some of the

inferior creation have it also. It is certain that it exists in the heart of every man, and that God has implanted it there for some wise purpose. There is the dread

(1.) of the dying pang, or pain.

(2.) Of the darkness and gloom of mind that attends it.

(3.) Of the unknown world beyond—the "evil that we know not of."

(4.) Of the chilliness, and loneliness, and darkness of the grave.

(5.) Of the solemn trial at the bar of God.

(6.) Of the condemnation which awaits the guilty—the apprehension of future woe. There is no other evil that we fear so much as we do DEATH, and there is nothing more clear than that God *intended* that we should have a dread of dying. The REASONS why he designed this are equally clear.

(1.) One may have been to lead men to prepare for it— which otherwise they would neglect.

(2.) Another, to deter them from committing self-murder where nothing else would deter them. Facts have shown that it was necessary that there should be some strong principle in the human bosom to prevent this crime, and even the dread of death does not *always* do it. So sick do men become of the life that God gave them; so weary of the world; so overwhelmed with calamity; so oppressed with disappointment and cares, that they lay violent hands on themselves, and rush unbidden into the awful presence of their Creator. This would occur more frequently by far than it now does, if it were not for the salutary fear of death which God has implanted in every bosom. The feelings of the human heart on this subject were never more accurately or graphically drawn than in the celebrated Soliloquy of Hamlet—

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

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

God *designed* that man should be deterred from rushing uncalled into his awful presence, by this salutary dread of death, and his implanting this feeling in the human heart is one of the most striking and conclusive proofs of a moral government over the world. This instinctive dread of death can be overcome *only* by religion —and *then* man does not NEED it to reconcile him to life. He becomes submissive to trials, he is willing to bear all that is laid on him. He resigns himself to the dispensations of Providence, and feels that life, even in affliction, is the gift of God, and is a valuable endowment. He now dreads *self-murder* as a crime of deep dye, and religion restrains him and keeps him by a more mild and salutary restraint than the dread of death. The man who has true religion is willing to live or to die; he feels that life is the gift of God, and that he will take it away in the best time and manner; and feeling this, he is willing to leave all in his hands, We may remark,

(1.) how much do we owe to religion! It is the only thing that will effectually take away the dread of death, and yet secure this point—to make man willing to live in all the circumstances where God may place him. It is *possible* that philosophy or stoicism may remove, to a great extent, the dread of death—but then it will be likely to make a man willing to take his life if he is placed in trying circumstances. Such an effect it had on Cato in Utica; and such an effect it had on Hume, who maintained that suicide was lawful, and that to turn a current of blood from its accustomed channel was of no more consequence than to change the course of any other fluid!

(2.) In what a sad condition is the sinner! Thousands there are who never think of death with composure, and who, all their life long, are subject to bondage through the fear of it. They never think of it if they can avoid it; and when it is forced upon them, it fills them with alarm. They attempt to drive the thought away. They travel; they plunge into business; they occupy the mind with trifles; they drown their fears in the intoxicating bowl: but all this tends only to make death more terrific and awful when the reality comes. If man were wise, he would seek an interest in that religion which, if it did nothing else, would deliver him from the dread of death; and the influence of the gospel in this respect, if it exerted no other, is worth to a man all the sacrifices and self-denials which it would ever require.

All their life-time subject to bondage. Slaves of fear; in a depressed and miserable condition, like slaves under a master. They have no freedom; no comfort; no peace. From this miserable state Christ comes to deliver man. Religion enables him to look calmly on death and the judgment, and to feel that all will be well.

{c} "through fear" Lu 1:74

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 2 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *For verily*. Truly. *He took not* on him the nature of angels. Marg., *He taketh not hold of angels, but of the seed of Abraham he taketh hold*. The word here used—*epilambanetai*; means, to take hold upon; to seize; to surprise; to take hold with a view to detain for one's self. *Robinson*. Then it means to take hold of one as by the hand—with a view to aid, conduct, or succour, Mr 8:23 Ac 23:19. It is rendered *took*, Mr 8:23 Lu 9:47; Lu 14:4 Ac 9:27, 17:19 18:17, 21:30,33 23:19 Heb 8:9; *caught*, Mt 14:31 Ac 16:19; *take hold*, Lu 20:20,26; *lay hold*, and *laid hold*, Lu 23:26 1Ti 6:12. The general idea is that of seizing upon, or laying hold of any one—no matter what the object is—whether to aid, or to drag to punishment, or simply to conduct. Here it means to lay hold with reference to *aid*, or *help*; and the meaning is, that he did not seize the nature of angels, or take it to himself, with reference to rendering *them* aid, but he assumed the nature of man in order to aid him. He undertook the work of human redemption, and consequently it was necessary for him to be a man.

But he took on him the seed of Abraham. He came to help the descendants of Abraham, and consequently, as they were men, he became a man. Writing to Jews, it was not unnatural for the apostle to refer particularly to them as the descendants of Abraham, though this does not exclude the idea that he died for the whole human race. It was true that he came to render aid to the descendants of Abraham, but it was also true that he died for all. The fact that I love one of my children, and that I make provision for his education, and tell him so, does not exclude the idea that I love the others also, and that I may make to them a similar appeal when it shall be proper.

{1} "verily" "he taketh not hold of angels, but of the seed of Abraham he taketh hold.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 2 - Verse 17

17. *Wherefore in all things*. In respect to his body; his soul; his rank and character. There was a propriety that he should be like them, and should partake of their nature. The meaning is, that there was a fitness that nothing should be wanting in him in reference to the innocent propensities and sympathies of human nature.

It behoved him. It became him; or there was a fitness and propriety in it. The reason why it was proper, the apostle proceeds to state.

Like unto his brethren. Like unto those who sustained to him the relation of brethren; particularly as he undertook to redeem the descendants of Abraham, and as he was a descendant of Abraham himself, there was a propriety that he should be like them. He calls them brethren; and it was proper that, he should show that he regarded them as such by assuming their nature.

That he might be a merciful and faithful high priest.

(1.) That he might be merciful; that is, compassionate. That he might know how to pity us in our infirmities and trials, by having a nature like our own.

(2.) That he might be *faithful*; that is, perform with fidelity all the functions pertaining to the office of high priest. The idea is, that it was needful that he should become a man; that he should experience, as we do, the infirmities and trials of life; and that, by being a man, and partaking of all that pertained to man except his sins, he might feel how necessary it was that there should be *fidelity* in the office of high priest. Here were a race of sinners and sufferers. They were exposed to the wrath of God. They were liable to everlasting punishment. The judgment impended over the

race, and the day of vengeance hastened on. *All now depended on the Great High Priest*. All their hope was in his fidelity to the great office which he had undertaken. If he were faithful, all would be safe; if he were unfaithful, all would be lost. Hence the necessity that he should enter fully into the feelings, fears, and dangers of man; that he should become one of the race, and be identified with them, so that he might be qualified to perform with faithfulness the great trust committed to him.

High priest. The Jewish high priest was the successor of Aaron, and was at the head of the ministers of religion among the Jews. He was set apart with solemn ceremonies—clad in his sacred vestments—and anointed with oil, Ex 29:6-9 Le 8:2. He was by his office the general judge of all that pertained to religion, and even of the judicial affairs of the Jewish nation, De 17:8-12 19:17, 21:5 33:9,10.

He only had the privilege of entering the most holy place once a year, on the great day of expiation, to make atonement for the sins of the whole people, Le 16:2, etc. He was the oracle of truth—so that, when clothed in his proper vestments, and having on the Urim and Thummim, he made known the will of God in regard to future events. The Lord Jesus became, in the Christian dispensation, what the Jewish high priest was in the old; and an important object of this epistle is to show that he far surpassed the Jewish high priest, and in what respects the Jewish high priest was designed to typify the Redeemer. Paul, therefore, early introduces the subject, and shows that the Lord Jesus came to perform the functions of that sacred office, and that he was eminently endowed for it.

In things pertaining to God. In offering sacrifice; or in services of a religious nature. The great purpose was to offer sacrifice, and make intercession; and the idea is, that Jesus took on himself our nature that he might sympathize with us; that thus he might be faithful to the great trust committed to him—the redemption of the world. Had he been unfaithful, all would have been lost, and the world would have sunk down to woe.

To make reconciliation. By his death as a sacrifice. The word here used— *ilaskomai*—occurs but in one other place in the New Testament, (Lu 18:13,) where it is rendered, "God *be merciful* to me a sinner;" that is, reconciled to me. The *noun ilasmov— propitiation*) is used in 1Jo 2:2 4:10. The word here means, properly, to appease, to reconcile, to conciliate; and hence to *propitiate AS TO SINS*; that is, to propitiate God in reference to sins, or to render him propitious. The Son of God became a man, that he might so fully enter into the feelings of the people as to be faithful, and that he might be qualified, as a high priest, to perform the great work of rendering God propitious in regard to sins. How he did this is fully shown in the subsequent parts of the epistle.

{a} "merciful" Ge 19:15,16

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 2 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *For in that he himself*, etc. *Because* he has suffered, he is able to sympathize with sufferers.

Being tempted. Or, being *tried*. The Greek word here used is more general in its meaning than the English word *tempted*. It means to put to the proof; to try the nature or character of; and this may be done either

(1.) by subjecting a person to *afflictions or sufferings*, that his true character may be tried—that it may be seen whether he has sincere piety and love to God; or

(2.) by allowing one to fall into temptation—properly so called—where some strong inducement to evil is presented to the mind, and where it becomes thus a *trial* of virtue. The Saviour was subjected to both these in as severe a form as was ever presented to men. His sufferings surpassed all others; and the temptations of Satan (Mt 4) were presented in the most alluring form in which he could exhibit them. Being *proved or tried* in both these respects, he showed that he had a strength of virtue which could bear all that could ever occur to seduce him from attachment to God; and at the same time to make him a perfect model for those who should be tried in the same manner.

He is able to succour, etc. This does not mean that he would not have had *power* to assist others if he had not gone through these sufferings, but that he is now qualified to sympathize with them from the fact that he has endured like trials.

"He knows what sore temptations mean,
For he has felt the same."

The idea is that one who has himself been called to suffer, is able to sympathize with those who suffer; one who has been tempted, is able to sympathize with those who are tempted in like manner; one who has been sick is qualified to sympathize with the sick; one who has lost a child, can sympathize with him who follows his beloved son or daughter to the grave; one who has had some strong temptation to sin urged upon himself, can sympathize with those who are now tempted; one who has never been sick, or who has never buried a friend, or been tempted, is poorly qualified to impart consolations in such scenes. Hence it is, that ministers of the gospel are often—like their Master—much persecuted and afflicted, that they may be able to assist others, Hence they are called to part with the children of their love; or to endure long and painful sicknesses; or to pass through scenes of poverty and want, that they may sympathize with the most humble and afflicted of their flock. And they should be willing to endure all this; for

(1.) thus they are like their Master, (comp. Col 1:24 Php 3:10;) and

(2.) they are thus enabled to be far more extensively useful. Many a minister owes a large part of his usefulness to the fact that he has been much afflicted; and for those afflictions, therefore, he should unfeignedly thank God. The idea which is here expressed by the apostle; that one is enabled to sympathize with others from having himself suffered, was long since beautifully expressed by Virgil:—

"Me quoque per multos similis fortuna labores.
Jactatam, hac demum voluit consistere terra.
Non ignara mali, miseris succurrere disco."
AEn. I. 628.

"For I myself, like you, have been distressed,
Till heaven afforded me this place of rest:
Like you, an alien in a land unknown,
I learn to pity Woes so like my own."
Dryden.

Jesus is thus able to alleviate the sufferer. In all our temptations and trials let us remember

(1.) that he suffered more—infinitely more—than we can do, and that in all our sorrows we shall never reach what he endured. We enter no region of trial where he has not gone beyond us; we tread no dark and gloomy way where he has not gone before us.

(2.) Let us remember that he is to us *a brother*, for he "is not ashamed to call us brethren." He had a nature like ours; he condescended to appear as one of our race, with all the innocent propensities and passions of a man. What matchless condescension! And what an honour for us to be permitted to address him as an "elder brother," and to know that he feels a deep sympathy in our woes!

(3.) Let us then, in all times of affliction, look to him. Go not, suffering Christian, to philosophy; attempt not to deaden your feelings by the art of the Stoic; but go at once to the Saviour—the great, sympathizing High Priest, who is able to succour you—and rest your burdens on him. \-

"His heart is made of tenderness,
His soul is fill'd with love.
"Touched with a sympathy within,
He knows our feeble frame;
He knows what sore temptations mean,
For he has felt the same.

"Then let our humble faith address
His mercy and his power;
We shall obtain delivering grace,
In every trying hour."

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 3

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 3 - Verse 1

CHAPTER III.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

THE Jews valued their religion on many accounts. One was that it had been given by the instrumentality of distinguished prophets sent from God, and by the medium of angels. The apostle, in the previous chapters, had shown that, in these respects, the Christian religion had the advantage over theirs, for it had been communicated by one who was superior to any of the prophets, and who had a rank above the angels. Next to this, they valued their religion because it had been imparted by a law-giver so eminent as Moses—a man more distinguished than any other one on earth as a legislator. To him they looked with pride as the founder of their economy, and the medium through whom God had given them their peculiar laws. Next to him, their high priest was the most important functionary in the nation. He was at the head of their religion, and served to distinguish it from all

others; for they high priest was recognised. The apostle, therefore, proceeds to show, that in these respects the Christian religion had lost nothing, but had the advantage altogether—that it was founded by one superior to Moses, and that Christ, as high priest, was superior by far, to the high priest of the Jews.

This chapter, and to verse 13 of chapter 4, relates to the first of these points, and is occupied with showing the superiority of the Redeemer to Moses, and the consequences which result from the admission of that fact. It consists, therefore, of two parts.

I. The first is employed in showing, that if the Author of the Christian religion is compared with Moses, he has the preference, Heb 3:1-6. Moses was indeed faithful, but it was as a servant. Christ was faithful *as a Son*. He had a rank as much above that of Moses as one who builds a house has over the house itself.

II. The consequences that resulted from that, Heb 3:7-19, and Heb 4:1-13. The general doctrine here is, that there would be special danger in apostatizing from the Christian religion —danger far superior to that which was threatened to the Israelites if they were disobedient to Moses. In illustrating this, the apostle is naturally led to a statement of the warnings against defection under Moses, and of the consequences of unbelief and rebellion there, he entreats them, therefore,

(1,) not to harden their hearts against God, as the Israelites did, who were excluded from Canaan, Heb 3:7-11.

(2.) To be on their guard against unbelief, Heb 3:12.

(3.) To exhort one another constantly, and to stimulate one another, that they might not fall away, Heb 3:13.

(4.) To hold the beginning of their confidence steadfast unto the end, and not to provoke God, as they did who came out of Egypt, Heb 3:14-19. In the following chapter (Heb 4:1-13) he completes the exhortation, by showing them that many, who came out of Egypt, were excluded from the promised land, and that there was equal danger now; and then proceeds with the comparison of Christ with the Jewish high priest, and extends that comparison through the remainder of the doctrinal part of the epistle.

Verse 1. *Wherefore*. That is, since Christ sustains such a character as has been stated in the previous chapter; since he is so able to succour those who need assistance; since he assumed our nature that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest, his character ought to be attentively considered, and we ought to endeavour fully to understand it.

Holy brethren. The name *brethren* is often given to Christians to denote that they are of one family. It is *possible*, also, that the apostle may have used the word here in a double sense—denoting that they were his brethren as *Christians*, and as *Jews*. The word *holy* is applied to them to denote that they were set apart to God, or that they were sanctified. The Jews were often called a "holy people," as being consecrated to God; and Christians are holy, not only as consecrated to God, but as sanctified.

Partakers of the heavenly calling. On the meaning of the word *calling*, **See Barnes "Eph 4:1"**.

The "heavenly calling" denotes the calling which was given to them from heaven, or which was of a heavenly nature. It pertained to heaven, not to earth; it came from heaven, not from earth; it was a calling *to* the reward and happiness of heaven, and not to the pleasures and honours of the world.

Consider. Attentively ponder all that is said of the Messiah. Think of his rank; his dignity; his holiness; his sufferings; his death; his resurrection, ascension, intercession. Think of him, that you

may see the claims to a holy life; that you may learn to bear trials; that you may be kept from apostasy. The character and work of the Son of God are worthy of the profound and prayerful consideration of every man; and especially every Christian should reflect much on him. Of the friend that we love we think much; but what friend have we like the Lord Jesus?

The Apostle. The word *apostle* is nowhere else applied to the Lord Jesus. The word means one who *is sent*—and in this sense it might be applied to the Redeemer as one *sent* by God, or as by way of eminence THE one sent by him. But the connexion seems to demand that there should be some allusion here to one who sustained a similar rank among the Jews; and it is probable that the allusion is to *Moses*, as having been the great apostle of God to the Jewish people, and that Paul here means to say, that the Lord Jesus, under the new dispensation, filled the place of Moses *and* of the high priest under the old, and that the office of "apostle" and "high priest," instead of being now separated, as it was between Moses and Aaron under the old dispensation, was now blended in the Messiah. The name *apostle* is not indeed given to Moses directly in the Old Testament, but the verb from which the Hebrew word for apostle is derived is frequently given him. Thus, in Ex 3:10, it is said, "Come now, therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh." And in Heb 3:13, "The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you." So also in Heb 3:14,15, of the same chapter. From the word there used—

HEBREW

to send, the word denoting *apostle*

HEBREW

—is derived; and it is not improbable that Moses would be regarded as being, by way of eminence, *THE one sent* by God. Further, the Jews applied the word

HEBREW

—*apostle*, to the minister of the synagogue; to him who presided over its affairs, and who had the general charge of the services there; and in this sense it might be applied by way of eminence to Moses, as being the general director and controller of the religious affairs of the nation, and as sent for that purpose. The object of Paul is to show that the Lord Jesus, in the Christian system—as the great apostle sent from God—sustained a rank and office similar to this, but superior in dignity and authority.

And High Priest. One great object of this epistle is, to compare the Lord Jesus with the high priest of the Jews, and to show that he was in all respects superior. This was important, because the office of high priest was that which eminently distinguished the Jewish religion, and because the Christian religion proposed to abolish that. It became necessary, therefore, to show that all that was dignified and valuable in that office was to be found in the Christian system. This was done by showing that in the Lord Jesus was found all the characteristics of a high priest, and that all the functions which had been performed in the Jewish ritual were performed by him, and that all which had been prefigured by the Jewish high priest was fulfilled in him. The apostle here merely alludes to him, or names him as the high priest, and then postpones the consideration of his character, in that respect, till after he had compared him with Moses.

Of our profession. Of our religion; of that religion which we profess. The apostle and high priest whom we confessed as ours when we embraced the Christian religion.

{a} "High Priest" Heb 4:14

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 3 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Who was faithful*. **See Barnes "Heb 2:17"**.

He performed with fidelity all the functions entrusted to him.

To him that appointed him. Marg. *Made*. The word *made*, however, is used in the sense of constituted or appointed. The meaning is, that he was faithful to God. Perhaps Paul urges on them the necessity of considering *his fidelity* in order to keep *them* from the danger of apostasy. A leading object of this epistle was to preserve those whom he addressed from apostatizing from God, amidst the temptations and trials to which they were exposed. In doing this, what could be a more powerful argument than to direct their attention to the unwavering constancy and fidelity of the Lord Jesus? The *importance* of such a virtue in the Saviour is manifest. It is seen everywhere; and all the great interests of the world depend on it. A husband should maintain inviolate fidelity towards a wife, and a wife towards her husband; a child should be faithful to a parent, a clerk and apprentice to his employer, a lawyer to his client, a physician to his patient, an ambassador to the government that commissions him. No matter what may be the temptations in the way; in all these, and in all other relations, there should be inviolate fidelity. The welfare of the world depended on the faithfulness of the Lord Jesus. Had *he* failed in that, all would have been lost. His fidelity was worthy of the more attentive consideration, from the numerous temptations which beset his path, and the attempts which were made to turn him aside from his devotedness to God. Amidst all the temptations of the adversary, and all the trials through which he passed, he never for a moment swerved from fidelity to the great trust which had been committed to his hands. What better example to preserve them, from the temptations to apostasy, could the apostle propose to the Christians whom he addressed? What, in these temptations and trials, could be more appropriate than for them to "*consider*" the example of the great Apostle and High Priest of their profession? What more proper for us now, in the trials and temptations of *our* lives, than to keep that great and glorious example continually before our eyes?

As also Moses was faithful, Fidelity to God was remarkable in Moses. In all the provocations and rebellions of the Jews, he was firm and unwavering. This is affirmed of him in Nu 12:7, to which place the apostle here alludes:—"My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all his house." The word *house*, as applied to Moses, is used probably in the sense of family, as it often is, and refers to the family over which he presided—that is, the Jewish nation. The whole Jewish people were a *household*, or the family of God, and Moses was appointed to preside over it, and was faithful in the functions of his office there.

{b} "Moses" Nu 12:7

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 3 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *For this man*. The Lord Jesus. The word "*man*" is understood, but there can be no doubt that he is referred to.

Was counted worthy. Was more worthy; or is more worthy. The word here used does not refer to anything that had been *said* of him, or to any estimate which had been made of him. It means simply that he was worthy of more honour than Moses. *How* he was so Paul proceeds to show.

Of more glory doxhv. Honour, dignity, regard. He really had a higher rank, and was worthy of more respect. This was saying much for the Messiah; and that it was proper to say this Paul proceeds to show. He did not attempt in any way to undervalue Moses and his institutions. He gave him all the honour which the Jews were themselves disposed to render him. He admitted that he had been eminently faithful in the station where God had placed him; and he then proceeds to show that the Lord Jesus was entitled to honour superior to that, and that hence the Christian religion had more to attach its friends to it than the Jewish had.

Inasmuch as he who hath builded the house. The idea here is, either that he who is the maker of a house—the architect— is worthy of more respect than the house itself; or that he who is the founder of a family is worthy of more honour than the family of which he is the founder. It seems to me that the former is the meaning—for the latter is not always true. The founder of a family may be really deserving of much less respect than some of his descendants. But it is *always* true that the architect is worthy of more respect than the house which he makes. He exhibits intellect and skill. The house, however splendid, has neither. The plan of the house was drawn by him; its beauty, its proportions, its ornaments, are what he made them, and but for him they would not have existed, Michael Angelo was worthy of more honour than "St. Peter's" at Rome; and Sir Christopher Wren worthy of more than St. Paul's at London. Galileo is more worthy of praise than the telescope, and Fulton more than a steam-engine. All the evidence of skill and adaptedness that there is in the invention had its origin in the inventor; all the beauty of the statue or the temple had its origin in the mind of him that designed it, an author is worthy of more honour than a book; and he that forms a work of art is worthy of more respect than the work itself. This is the idea here. Paul assumes that *all* things owed their origin to the Son of God, Heb 1:2,8,10.

He was the Author of the universe; the Source of all wise and well-founded systems; the Originator of the Jewish dispensation, over which Moses presided. Whatever beauty or excellence there might have been, therefore, in that system, was to be traced to him; and whatever ability even Moses displayed was imparted by him. Christ is really the head of the family over which Moses presided, and has claims, therefore, to higher honour as such.

{c} "builded" Zec 6:12,13

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 3 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *For every house is builded by some man*. The words in this verse are plain, and the sentiment in it clear. The only difficulty is in seeing the connexion, and in understanding how it is intended to bear on what precedes, or on what follows. It is clear that every house must have a builder, and equally clear that God is the Creator of all things. But what is the meaning of this passage in this connexion? What is its bearing on the argument? If the verse was entirely omitted, and the fifth verse read in connexion with the third, there would be apparently nothing wanting to complete the sense of the writer, or to finish the comparison which he had commenced. Various ways have been adopted to explain the difficulty. Perhaps the following observations may remove it, and express the true sense.

(1.) Every family must have a founder; every dispensation an author; every house a builder. There must be some one, therefore, over *all* dispensations —the old and the new—the Jewish and the Christian.

(2.) Paul assumes that the Lord Jesus was Divine. He had demonstrated this in Heb 1; and he argues as if this were so, without now stopping to prove it, or even to affirm it expressly.

(3.) God must be over *all things*. He is Creator of all; and he must therefore be over all. As the Lord Jesus, therefore, is Divine, he must be over the Jewish dispensation as well as the Christian—or he must, as God, have been at the head of that—or over his own family or household.

(4.) As such, he must have a glory and honour which could not belong to Moses. He, in his Divine character, was the Author of both the Jewish and the Christian dispensations; and he must, therefore, have a rank far superior to that of Moses—which was the point which the apostle designed to illustrate. The meaning of the whole may be thus expressed:— "The Lord Jesus is worthy of more honour than Moses, He is so, as the maker of a house deserves more honour than the house. He is Divine. In the beginning he laid the foundation of the earth, and was the agent in the creation of all things, Heb 1:2,10. He presides, therefore, over everything; and was over the Jewish and Christian dispensations—for there must have been some one over them, or the author of them, as really as it must be true that every house is built by some person. Being, therefore, over all things, and at the head of all dispensations, he MUST be more exalted than Moses." This seems to me to be the argument—- an argument which is based on the supposition that he is at the head of all things, and that he was the agent in the creation of all worlds. This view will make all consistent. The Lord Jesus will be seen to have a claim to a far higher honour than Moses, and Moses will be seen to have derived his honour, as a servant of the Mediator, in the economy which he had appointed.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 3 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Moses was faithful—as a servant*. Not as the head of the dispensation; not as having originated it; but as in the employ and under the direction of its great Founder and Author—the Messiah. As such a servant he deserves all the honour for fidelity which has ever been claimed for him, but it cannot be the honour which is due to him who is at the head of the family or house. Paul assumed that Moses was a servant, and argued on that supposition, without attempting to prove it, because it was so often affirmed in the Old Testament, and must have been conceded by all the Jews. In numerous instances he is spoken of as "THE servant of the Lord." See Jos 1:1,2, 9:24

1Ch 6:49; 2Ch 24:9; Ne 10:29 Da 9:11; Ex 14:31 1Ki 8:56; Ps 105:26.

As this point was undisputed, it was only necessary to show that the Messiah was superior to a *servant*, in order to make the argument clear.

For a testimony. To bear witness to those truths which were to be revealed; that is, he was the instrument of the Divine communications to the people, or the medium by which God made his will known. He did not *originate* the truths himself; but he was the mere medium by which God made known his truth to his people—a servant whom he employed to make his will known. The word "*after*" here is not necessary in order to a just translation of this passage, and obscures the sense. It does not mean that he was a witness of those truths which were to be spoken *subsequently*

to his time, under another dispensation; nor those truths which the apostle proposed to consider in another part of the epistle, as Doddridge supposes; but it means merely that Moses stood forth as a public witness of the truths which God designed to reveal, or which were to be spoken. God did not speak to his people directly, and face to face, but he spoke through Moses, as an organ or medium. The sense is, Moses was a mere servant of God to communicate his will to man.

{a} "Moses, verily" Nu 12:7 {b} "servant" Jos 1:2 {c} "of those things" De 18:15-19

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 3 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *But Christ as a son over his own house*. He is not a servant. To the whole household or family of God he sustains the same relation which a son and heir in a family does to the household. That relation is far different from that of a servant. Moses was the latter; Christ was the former. To God he sustained the relation of a Son, and recognised him as his Father, and sought in all things to do his will; but over the whole family of God—the entire Church of all dispensations—he was like a son over the affairs of a family. Compared with the condition of a servant, Christ is as much superior to Moses as a son and heir is to the condition of a servant. A servant owns nothing; is heir to nothing; has no authority, and no right to control anything, and is himself wholly at the will of another. A son is the heir of all; has a prospective right to all; and is looked up to by all with respect. But the idea here is not merely that Christ is *a son*; it is that *as* a son he is placed over the whole arrangements of the household, and is one to whom all is entrusted as if it were his own.

Whose house we are. Of whose family we are a part, or to which we belong. That is, we belong to the family over which Christ is placed, and not to that which was subject to Moses.

If we hold fast. A leading object of this epistle is to guard those to whom it was addressed against the danger of apostasy. Hence this is introduced on all suitable occasions; and the apostle here says, that the only evidence which they could have that they belonged to the family of Christ, would be that they held fast the confidence which they had unto the end. If they did not do that, it would demonstrate that they never belonged to his family, for evidence of having belonged to his household was to be furnished only by perseverance to the end.

The confidence. The word here used originally means, *the liberty of speaking boldly and without restraint*; then it means boldness, or confidence in general.

And the rejoicing. The word here used means, properly, glorying, boasting, and then rejoicing. These words are used here in an adverbial signification, and the meaning is, that the Christian has a confident and a rejoicing hope. It is

(1.) confident—bold—firm. It is not like the timid hope of the pagan, and the dreams and conjectures of the philosopher; it is not that which gives way at every breath of opposition; it is bold, firm, and manly. It is

(2.) rejoicing—triumphant, exulting. Why should not the hope of heaven fill with joy? Why should not he exult who has the prospect of everlasting happiness?

Unto the end. To the end of life. Our religion, our hope, our confidence in God, must be persevered in to the end of life, if we would have evidence that we are his children. If hope is cherished for a while, and then abandoned; if men profess religion, and then fall away—no matter what were their raptures and triumphs—it proves that they never had any real piety. No evidence

can be strong enough to prove that a man is a Christian, unless it leads him to persevere to the end of life.

{d} "son" Ps 2:7,12 {e} "house" 1Pe 2:15 {f} "if we hold fast" Mt 10:22 Heb 10:38,39

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 3 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Wherefore*. In view of the fact that the Author of the Christian dispensation has a rank far superior to that of Moses. Because Christ has claims on us far greater than those which Moses had, let us hearken to his voice, and dread his displeasure.

As the Holy Ghost saith. In Ps 95:7-11. This is full proof that, in the estimation of the author of this epistle, the writer of this Psalm was inspired. The Holy Ghost speaks through the word which he has revealed. The apostle quotes this passage, and applies it to those whom he addressed, because the admonition was as pertinent and important under the Christian dispensation as it was under the Jewish. The danger of hardening the heart by neglecting to hear his voice was as great, and the consequences would be as fearful and alarming.—We should regard the solemn warnings in the Old Testament against sin, and against the danger of apostasy, as addressed by the Holy Ghost to *us*. They are as applicable to us as they were to those to whom they were at first addressed; and we need all the influence of such appeals, to keep us from apostasy, as much as they did.

Today. Now; at present. At the very time when the command is addressed to you. It is not to be put off till tomorrow. All God's commands relate to *the present*—to this day—to the passing moment. He gives us no commands *about the future*, he does not require us to repent; and to turn to him *to-morrow*, or ten years hence. The reasons are obvious.

(1.) Duty pertains to the present. It is our duty to turn from sin, and to love him now.

(2.) We know not that we shall live to another day. A command, therefore, could not extend to that time, unless it were accompanied with a *revelation* that we should live till then—and such a revelation God does not choose to give. Every one, therefore, should feel that whatever commands God addresses to him are addressed to him now. Whatever guilt he incurs by neglecting those commands is incurred now. For the *present* neglect and disobedience each one is to answer—and each one must give account to God for what he does TODAY.

If ye will hear. In case you are willing to hearken to God, listen now, and do not defer it to a future period.—There is much in a willingness to hear the voice of God. A *willingness* to learn is usually the precursor of great attainments in knowledge. A willingness to reform is usually the precursor of reformation. Get a man *willing* to break off his habits of profaneness or intemperance, and usually all the rest is easy. The great difficulty in the mind of a sinner is in his *will*. He is unwilling to hear the voice of God; unwilling that he should reign over him; unwilling now to attend to religion. While this unwillingness lasts he will make no efforts, and he sees, or creates, a thousand difficulties in the way of his becoming a Christian. But when that unwillingness is overcome, and he is disposed to engage in the work of religion, difficulties vanish, and the work of salvation becomes easy.

His voice. The voice of God speaking to us

(1.) in his written word;

(2.) in the preached gospel;

(3.) in our own consciences;

(4.) in the events of his Providence;

(5.) in the admonitions of our relatives and friends. Whatever conveys to us the truth of God, or is adapted to impress that on us, may be regarded as his voice speaking to us. He thus speaks to us every day in some of these ways; and *every day*, therefore, he may entreat us not to harden our hearts.

{g} "Today" Ps 95:7

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 3 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Harden not your hearts*. Do not render the heart insensible to the Divine voice and admonition. A hard heart is that where the conscience is seared and insensible; where truth makes no impression; where no religious effect is produced by afflictions; where preaching is listened to without interest; and where the mind is unaffected by the appeals of friends. The idea here is, that a refusal to listen to the voice of God is connected with a hardening of the heart. It is in two ways.

(1.) The very refusal to do this tends to harden it. And

(2.) in order to resist the appeals of God, men must resort to the means of voluntarily hardening the heart. This they do by setting themselves against the truth; by the excuses which they offer for not becoming Christians; by plunging into sin in order to avoid serious impressions; and by direct resistance of the Holy Ghost. No inconsiderable part of the efforts of sinners consists in endeavouring to produce insensibility in their minds to the truth and the appeals of God.

As in the provocation. Literally, *in the embittering*— Then it means that which embitters or provokes the mind—as disobedience. Here it refers to what they did to embitter the mind of God against them; that is, to the course of conduct which was adopted to provoke him to wrath.

In the day of temptation. In the *time* of temptation—the word day being used here, as it is often, to denote an indefinite period, or time in general. The word *temptation* here refers to the various provocations by which they tried the patience of God. They rebelled against him; they did that which put the Divine patience and forbearance to a trial. It does not mean that they tempted God to do evil, but that his long-suffering was tried by their sins.

In the wilderness. The desert through which they passed. The word *wilderness*, in the Scriptures, commonly means a *desert*. **See Barnes "Mt 3:1"**.

"One provocation was in demanding bread at Sin; a second for want of water at Massah or Meribah; a third time at Sinai with the golden calf; a fourth time at Taberah for want of flesh; a fifth time at Kadesh, when they refused to go up into Canaan, and the oath came that they should die in the wilderness. A like refusal may prevent us from entering into rest."—*Dr. J. P. Wilson*, MS. Notes.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 3 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Proved me*. "As if they would have made an experiment how much it was possible for me to bear." *Doddridge*. The meaning is, they put my patience to a thorough trial.

And saw my works. That is, my miracles, or my interpositions in their behalf. They saw the wonders at the Red Sea, the descent on Mount Sinai, the supply of manna, etc.; and yet, while seeing those works, they rebelled. Even while sinners look on the doings of God, and are surrounded by the proofs of his power and goodness, they rebel, and provoke him to anger. Men sin when God is filling their houses with plenty; when he opens his hand daily to supply their wants; when they behold the manifestations of his goodness on the sea and on the land; and even in the midst of all the blessings of redemption they provoke him to wrath.

Forty years. The whole time during which they were passing from Egypt to the promised land. This may mean, either that they saw his works forty years, or that they tempted him forty years. The sense is not materially affected, whichever interpretation is preferred.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 3 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Wherefore I was grieved*. On the word *grieved*, **See Barnes "Eph 4:30"**.

The word here means that he was offended with, or that he was indignant at them.

They do alway err in their heart. Their long trial of forty years had been sufficient to show that it was a characteristic of the people that they were disposed to wander from God. Forty years are enough to show what the character is. They had seen his works; they had been called to obey him; they had received his law; and yet their conduct, during that time, had shown that they were not disposed to obey him. So of an individual. A man who has lived in sin forty years; who during all that time has rebelled against God, and disregarded all his appeals; who has lived for himself, and not for his Maker, has shown what his character is. Longer time is unnecessary; and if God should then cut him down, and consign him to hell, he could not be blamed for doing it. A man who during forty years will live in sin, and resist all the appeals of God, shows what is in his heart; and no injustice is done if then he is summoned before God, and he swears that he shall not enter into his rest.

And they have not known my ways. They have been rebellious. They have not been acquainted with the true God; or they have not *approved* my doings. The word *know* is often used, in the Scriptures, in the sense of *approving, or loving*. **See Barnes "Mt 7:23"**.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 3 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *So I sware in my wrath*. God is often represented in the Scriptures as *swearing*—and usually as swearing by himself, or by his own existence. Of course this is figurative, and denotes a strong affirmation, or a settled and determined purpose. An oath with us implies the strongest affirmation, or the expression of the most settled and determined purpose of mind. The meaning here is, that so refractory and perverse had they showed themselves, that he solemnly resolved that they should never enter into the land of Canaan.

They shall not enter into my rest. Marg. As in the original, *if they shall enter*. That is, they shall not enter. The word

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if has this negative meaning in Hebrew, and this meaning is transferred to the Greek word *if*. Comp. 1Sa 3:17 2Sa 3:35; 2Ki 6:31.

It is called "my rest" here; meaning that it was such rest as God had provided, or such as he enjoyed. The particular rest referred to here was that of the land of Canaan, but which was undoubtedly regarded as emblematic of the "*rest*" in heaven. Into that rest God solemnly said they should never enter. They had been rebellious. All the means of reclaiming them had failed. God had warned and entreated them; he had caused his mercies to pass before them, and had visited them with judgments in vain; and he now declares, that for all their rebellion they should be excluded from the promised land. God speaks here in the manner of men. Men are affected with feelings of indignation in such circumstances, and God makes use of such language as expresses such feelings. But we are to understand it in a manner consistent with his character, and we are not to suppose that he is affected with the same emotions which agitate the bosoms of men. The meaning is, that he formed and expressed a deliberate and solemn purpose, that they should never enter into the promised land. Whether this *rest* refers here to heaven, and whether the meaning is that God would exclude them from that blessed world, will be more appropriately considered in the next chapter. The particular idea is, that they were to be excluded from the promised land, and that they should fall in the wilderness. No one can doubt, also, that their conduct had been such as to show that the great body of them were unfit to enter into heaven.

{1} "They shall not enter" "if they shall enter"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 3 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Take heed, brethren*. In view of the conduct of the rebellious Jews, and of their fearful doom, be on your guard lest you also be found to have had the same feelings of rebellion and unbelief. See to it, that under the new dispensation, and in the enjoyment of the privileges of the gospel, you be not found to manifest such feelings as shall exclude you from the heavenly world. The *principle* has been settled by their unbelief, that they who oppose God will be excluded from his rest. That may be shown under all dispensations, and in all circumstances; and there is not less danger of it under the gospel, than there was when the fathers were conducted to the promised land. You are travelling through a wilderness—the barren wilderness of this world. You are exposed to trials and temptations. You meet with many a deadly and mighty foe. You have hearts prone to apostasy and sin. You are seeking a land of promise—a land of rest. You are surrounded by the wonders of almighty power, and by the proofs of infinite beneficence. Disobedience and rebellion in you will as certainly exclude you from heaven, as their rebellion did them from the promised land; and as their great sin was unbelief, be on your guard lest you manifest the same.

An evil heart of unbelief. An evil, unbelieving heart. The word *unbelief* is used to qualify the word heart by a Hebraism—a mode of speech that is common in the New Testament. An unbelieving heart was the cause of their apostasy, and what worked their ruin will produce ours. The root of their evil was a want of confidence in God—and this is what is meant here by a heart of unbelief.

The great difficulty on earth everywhere is *a want of confidence in God* and this has produced all the ills that man has ever suffered. It led to the first apostasy; and it has led to every other apostasy, and will continue to produce the same effects to the end of the world. The apostle says that this heart of unbelief is "*evil*." Men often feel that it is a matter of little consequence whether they have faith or not, provided their *conduct* is right; and hence they do not see or admit the propriety of what is said about the consequences of unbelief in the Scriptures. But what do they say about a want of confidence between a husband and wife? Are there no evils in that? What husband can sleep with quietness on his pillow, if he has no confidence in the virtue of his wife? What child can have peace who has no confidence in a parent? How can there be prosperity in a community, where there is no confidence in a bank or an insurance office, or where one merchant has no confidence in another; where a neighbour has no confidence in his neighbour; where the sick have no confidence in a physician; and where, in general, all confidence is broken up between man and man? If I wished to produce the deepest distress in any community, and had the power, I would produce the same want of confidence between man and man which there is now between man and his Maker. I would thus take away sleep from the pillow of every husband and wife, every parent and child; and make every man wretched, with the feeling that all the property which he had was insecure. Among men, nothing is seen to be productive of greater evil than a want of confidence or faith; and why should not the same evil exist in the Divine administration? And if want of confidence produces such results between man and man, why should it not produce similar, or greater miseries, where it occurs in relation to God? There is not an evil that man endures which might not be alleviated or removed by *confidence* in God; and hence one great object of the Christian religion is, to restore to man his lost confidence in the God that made him.

In departing from the living God. Manifested in departing from him; or leading to a departure from him. The idea is, that such a heart of unbelief would be connected with apostasy from God. All apostasy first exists in the heart, and then is manifested in the life. They who indulge in unbelief in any form, or in regard to any subject, should remember that this is the great source of all alienation from God, and that if indulged it will lead to complete apostasy. They who wish to live a life of piety should keep the heart right, he that lives "by the faith of the Son of God" is safe; and none is safe but he.

{a} "evil heart" Mr 7:21,23 {b} "departing" Jer 2:13

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 3 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *But exhort one another daily*. This is addressed to the members of the churches; and it follows, therefore,

(1.) that it is their duty to exhort their brethren; and

(2.) that it is their duty to do it *daily*; that is, constantly. See Heb 10:24 1Th 4:18, 5:11; **See Barnes "Ro 12:8".**

While this is the special duty of the ministers of the gospel, 1Ti 6:2 2Ti 4:2; Tit 2:6,15, it is also the duty of all the members of the churches —and a most important, but much neglected duty. This does not refer to *public* exhortation, which more appropriately pertains to the ministers of the gospel, but to that private watch and care which the individual members of the church should have

over one another. But in what cases is such exhortation proper? What rules should regulate it ? I answer, It may be regarded as a duty, or is to be performed in such cases as the following:—

(1.) Intimate friends in the church should exhort and counsel one another; should admonish each other of their faults; and should aid one another in the divine life.

(2.) Parents should do the same thing to their children. They are placed particularly under their watch and care. A pastor cannot often see the members of his flock in private; and a parent may greatly aid him in his work by watching over the members of their families who are connected with the church.

(3.) Sabbath school teachers may aid much in this duty. They are to be assistants to parents and to pastors. They often have under their care youthful members of the churches. They have an opportunity of knowing their state of mind, their temptations, and their dangers, better than the pastor can have. It should be theirs, therefore, to exhort them to a holy life.

(4.) The aged should exhort the young. Every aged Christian may thus do much for the promotion of religion. His experience is the property of the church; and he is bound so to employ it, as to be useful in aiding the feeble, reclaiming the wandering, recovering the backslider, and directing the inquiring. There is a vast amount of *spiritual capital* of this kind in the church that is unemployed, and that might be made eminently useful in helping others to heaven.

(5.) Church members should exhort one another. There may not be the intimacy of personal friendship among all the members of a large church, but still the connexion between them should be regarded as sufficiently tender and confidential to make it proper for any one to admonish a brother who goes astray. They belong to the same communion. They sit down at the same Supper of the Lord. They express their assent to the same articles of faith. They are regarded by the community as united. Each member sustains a portion of the honour and the responsibility of the whole; and each member should feel that he has a right, and that it is his duty, to admonish a brother if he goes astray. Yet this duty is greatly neglected. In what church is it performed! How often do church-members see a fellow-member go astray, without any exhortation or admonition! How often do they hear reports of the inconsistent lives of other members, and perhaps contribute to the circulation of these reports themselves, without any pains taken to inquire whether they are true! How often do the poor fear the rich members of the church, or the rich despise the poor, and see each other live in sin, without any attempt to entreat or save them! I would not have the courtesies of life violated. I would not have any assume a dogmatical or dictatorial air. I would have no one step out of his proper sphere of life. But the principle which I would lay down is, that the fact of church-membership should inspire such confidence, as to make it proper for one member to exhort another whom he sees going astray. Belonging to the same family; having the same interest in religion; and all suffering when one suffers, why should they not be allowed tenderly and kindly to exhort one another to a holy life?

While it is called To-day. While life lasts; or while you may be permitted to use the language, "To-day hear the voice of God." The idea is, that the exhortation is not to be intermitted. It is to be our daily business to admonish and exhort one another. Christians are liable every day to go astray; every day they need aid in the divine life; and they who are fellow;heirs with them of salvation should be ever ready to counsel and advise them.

Lest any of you be hardened. **See Barnes "Heb 3:8".**

It is *possible* for Christians to become, in a sense, hardened. Their minds become less sensitive than they were to the claims of duty, and their consciences become less tender. Hence the propriety

of mutual exhortation, that they may always have the right feeling, and may always listen to the commands of God.

The deceitfulness of sin. **See Barnes "Eph 4:22"**.

Sin is always deceitful. It promises more than it performs. It assures us of pleasure which it never imparts. It leads us on beyond what was supposed when we began to indulge in it. The man who commits sin is always under a delusion; and sin, if he indulges it, will lead him on from one step to another, until the heart becomes entirely hardened. Sin puts on plausible appearances and pretences; it assumes the name of virtue; it offers excuses and palliations, until the victim is snared; and then, spell-bound, he is hurried on to every excess. If sin was always seen in its true aspect when man is tempted to commit it, it would be so hateful that he would flee from it with the utmost abhorrence. What young man would become a drunkard, if he saw, when he began, exactly the career which he would run? What young man, now vigorous and healthful, and with fair prospects of usefulness and happiness, would ever touch the intoxicating bowl, if he saw what he *would* be when he became a sot? What man would ever enter the room of the gambler, if he saw just where indulgence would soon lead him, and if, at the commencement he saw exactly the woe and despair which would inevitably ensue? Who would become a voluptuary and a sensualist, if he saw exactly the close of such a career? Sin deceives, deludes, blinds. Men do not, or will not, see the fearful results of indulgence. They are deluded by the hope of happiness or of gain; they are drawn along by the fascinations and allurements of pleasure, until the heart becomes hard and the conscience seared—and then they give way without remorse. From such a course the apostle would have Christians guarded by kind and affectionate exhortation. Each one should feel that he has an interest in keeping his brother from such a doom; and each Christian, thus in danger should be willing to listen to the kind exhortation of a Christian brother.

{c} "exhort" Heb 10:24

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 3 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *For we are made partakers of Christ*. We are spiritually united to the Saviour. We become one with him. We partake of his Spirit and allotments. The sacred writers are accustomed to describe the Christian as being closely united to the Saviour, and as being one with him. **See Barnes** "Joh 15:1, seq., **See Barnes "Joh 17:21"**; **See Barnes** "Joh 17:23"; **See Barnes "Eph 5:30"**; **See Barnes** "1Co 12:27".

The idea is, that we participate in all that pertains to him. It is a union of feeling and affection; a union of principle and of congeniality; a union of dependence as well as love; a union where nothing is to be imparted by us, but everything gained; and a union, therefore, on the part of the Redeemer of great condescension. It is the union of the branch to the vine, where the branch is supported and nourished by the vine, and not the union of the ivy and the oak, where the ivy has its own roots, and merely clings around the oak and climbs up upon it. What else can be said so honourable of man as that he is "a partaker of Christ;" that he shares his feelings here, and that he is to share his honours in a brighter world? Compared with this, what is it to participate with the rich and the gay in their pleasures; what would it be to share in the honours of conquerors and kings?

If we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast. **See Barnes "Heb 3:6"**.

If we continue to maintain the same confidence which we had in the beginning, or which we showed at the commencement of our Christian life. At first, they had been firm in the Christian hope. They evinced true and strong attachment to the Redeemer. They were ardent and devoted to his cause. If they continued to maintain that to the end, that is, the end of life; if, in the midst of all temptations and trials they adhered inflexibly to the cause of the Savior, they would show that they were true Christians, and would partake of the blessedness of the heavenly world with the Redeemer. The idea is, that it is only perseverance in the ways of religion that constitutes certain evidence of piety. Where piety is manifested through life, or where there is an untiring devotion to the cause of God, there the evidence is clear and undoubted. But where there is at first great ardour, zeal, and confidence, which soon dies away, then it is clear that they never had any real attachment to him and his cause. It may be remarked here, that the "beginning of the confidence" of those who are deceived, and who know nothing about religion at heart, is often as bold as where there is true piety. The hypocrite makes up in ardour what he lacks in sincerity; and he who is really deceived, is usually deceived under the influence of some strong and vivid emotion, which he mistakes for true religion. Often the sincere convert is calm, though decided, and sometimes is even timorous and doubting; while the self-deceiver is noisy in profession, and clamorous in his zeal, and much disposed to blame the lukewarmness of others. Evidence of piety, therefore, should not be built on that early zeal; nor should it be concluded, that because there is ardour, there is of necessity genuine religion. Ardour is valuable, and true religion is ardent; but there *is* other ardour than that which the gospel inspires. The evidence of genuine piety is to be found in that which will bear us up under trials, and endure amidst persecution and opposition. The doctrine here is, that it is necessary to persevere if we would have the evidence of true piety. This doctrine is taught everywhere in the Scriptures. Persevere in what? I answer, not

(1.) merely in a profession of religion. A man may do that, and have no piety.

(2.) Not in zeal for party or sect. The Pharisees had that to the end of their lives.

(3.) Not in mere honesty, and correctness of external deportment. A man may do that in the church, as well as out of it, and yet have no religion. But we should persevere

(1) in the love of God and of Christ—in conscious, ardent, steady attachment to Him to whom our lives are professedly devoted.

(2) In the secret duties of religion: in that watchfulness over the heart; that communion with God; that careful study of the Bible; that guardianship over the temper; and in that habitual intercourse with God in secret prayer which is appropriate to a Christian, and which marks the Christian character.

(3) In the performance of the public duties of religion: in leading a *Christian* life, as distinguished from a life of worldliness and vanity—a life of mere morality and honesty—a life such as thousands lead who are out of the church. There is *something* which distinguishes a Christian from one who is not a Christian; a religious from an irreligious man. There is *something* in religion; something which serves to characterize a Christian; and unless that something is manifested, there can be no evidence of true piety. The Christian is to be distinguished in temper, feeling, deportment, aims, plans, from the men of this World; and unless those characteristics are shown in the life and deportment, there can be no well-founded evidence of religion. Learn,

(1.) that it is not mere *feeling* that furnishes evidence of religion.

(2.) That it is not mere *excitement* that constitutes religion.

(3.) That it is not mere ardour.

(4.) That it is not mere zeal. All these may be temporary. Religion is something that lasts through life. It goes with a man everywhere. It is with him in trial. It forms his plans; regulates his temper; suggests his words; prompts to his actions. It lives with him in all his external changes, and goes with him through the dark valley of death, and accompanies him up to the bar of God, and is with him for ever.

{a} "if we hold" Heb 3:6

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 3 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *While it is said, To-day*, etc. That is, persevere as long as life lasts, or as long as it can be said "To-day;" and by persevering in this manner you will have evidence that you are the friends of the Redeemer. This is a quotation from Ps 95:7. Paul means, undoubtedly, to make use of this language himself as a direct exhortation to the Christians to whom he was writing. He entreats them, therefore, as long as it could be said "To-day," or as long as life lasted, to take care lest they should harden their hearts, as had been done in the temptation in the wilderness.

{b} "Today" Heb 3:7

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 3 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *For some*. Some of the Hebrews who came out of Egypt. The truth was, that a large proportion of them rebelled against God, and provoked him to indignation. It is somewhat remarkable, that though *all* the Hebrews seem to have joined in the provocation— except a very small number—Paul should have used language which would seem to imply that the number which rebelled was comparatively small. Another version, therefore, has been given to this passage by some of the most eminent critics, consisting merely in a change in the punctuation, by which a different view is given of the whole sentence. According to this it would be a question, and would mean, "But who were they who when they had heard did provoke? Were they not all, indeed, who came out of Egypt under Moses? And with whom was he angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?" This version was adopted by Chrysostom, Theodoret, and others of the Fathers; and is adopted by Rosenmuller, Clarke, Stuart, Pyle, and some others. In favour of it, it may be alleged

(1.) that the Greek win bear it—all the change required being in the punctuation;

(2.) that it avoids the difficulty which exists in one other interpretation, of supposing the apostle to imply that but few of them rebelled, when the truth was that it was nearly all;

(3.) it thus accords with the remainder of the exhortation which consists in a series of questions; and

(4.) it agrees with the scope and design of the whole. The object was not to state that it was not all who came out of Egypt that rebelled, or that the number was small; but that the great body of them rebelled, and fell in the wilderness, and that Christians should be admonished by their example.

These reasons seem to be so strong as to make it probable that this is the true construction; and the sense then will be, "For who were they that having heard did provoke? Were they not all who came out of Egypt under Moses?"

When they had heard. Had heard God speaking to them, and giving them his commands.

Did provoke.Provoked him to anger; or their conduct was such as was fitted to produce indignation. **See Barnes "Heb 3:8"**.

Howbeit. *alla*. *But*. This particle "in a series of questions, and standing at the head of a question, means, *but, further*. It serves to connect, and give intensity to the interrogation." *Stuart*. Paul means to ask, with emphasis, whether the great mass of those who came out of Egypt did not apostatize at the same time he means to intimate that there is no security that they who have witnessed remarkable manifestations of the greatness of God, and who have partaken of extraordinary mercies, will not apostatize and perish. As the Hebrews, who heard God speak from Mount Sinai, revolted and perished, so it is possible that they who witness the mercies of God in redemption may be in danger of abusing all those mercies, and of perishing. By the example, therefore, of the disobedient Israelites, he would admonish professed Christians of their danger.

Not all, etc. According to the interpretation proposed above, "Were they not all who came out of Egypt?" Or, "Did not all who came out of Egypt?" The word *all* here is not to be taken in the strict sense. It is often used to denote the great body; a large proportion; or vast multitudes. Thus it is used in Mt 3:5: "Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan." So in Joh 3:26: "The same baptizeth, and *all* men come to him," So Php 2:21: "For *all* seek their own." 2Co 3:2: "Ye are our epistle, known and read of all men." *In fact*, there were two exceptions—and but two—of the adults who came out of Egypt— Caleb and Joshua, Nu 14:30. All the others murmured against the Lord, and were prohibited from entering the promised land. Of the great multitudes who came out of Egypt, and who murmured, the exception was so small that the apostle had no scruple in saying in general that they were *all* rebellious.

{a} "For some" Nu 14:2, etc.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 3 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *But with whom was he grieved forty years*? With whom was he angry? **See Barnes "Heb 3:10"**.

Was it not with them that had sinned? That had sinned in various ways —by rebellion, murmuring, in belief. As God was angry with them for their sins, we have the same reason to apprehend that he will be angry with us if we sin; and we should, therefore, be on our guard against that unbelief which would lead us to depart from him, Heb 3:12.

Whose carcases fell, Nu 14:29. That is, they all died, and were left on the sands of the desert. The whole generation was strewed along in the way to Canaan. All of those who had seen the wonders that God had done in the land of Ham—-who had been rescued in so remarkable a manner from oppression—were thus cut down, and died in the deserts through which they were passing, Nu 26:64,65. Such an example of the effects of revolt against God, and of unbelief, was well fitted to admonish Christians in the time of the apostle, and is fitted to admonish us now, of the danger of the sin of unbelief. We are not to suppose that all of those who thus died were excluded from

heaven. Moses and Aaron were among the number of those who were not permitted to enter the promised land, but of their piety there can be no doubt. Beyond all question, also, there were many others of that generation who were truly pious. But, at different times, they seem all to have partaken of the prevalent feelings of discontent, and were all involved in the sweeping condemnation that they should die in the wilderness.

{b} "carcases" Nu 26:64,65; Jude 1:5

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 3 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *And to whom sware he*. **See Barnes "Heb 3:11"**.

But to them that believed not. That did not confide in God. De 1:32: "Yet in this thing ye did not believe the Lord your God." In consequence of this want of faith, God solemnly sware unto them that they should not enter into the promised land. De 1:34,35: "And the Lord heard the voice of your words, and was wroth, and sware saying, Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land, which I sware to give unto your fathers, save Caleb," etc. The distinct reason, therefore, assigned by —Moses, why they did not enter the promised land, was a want of faith; and this accords directly with the design of the apostle here. He is exhorting those whom he addresses to beware of an evil heart of unbelief, Heb 3:12. He says that it was such a heart that excluded the Hebrews from the promised land. The same thing, says he, must exclude you from heaven—the promised home of the believer; and if that firm confidence in God and his promises which he requires is wanting, you will be excluded from the world of eternal rest.

{c} "sware" De 1:34,35

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 3 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *So we see*, etc. We see, from the direct testimony of the Old Testament, that unbelief was the reason why they were excluded from the promised land. Let us learn, in view of the reasoning and exhortations here—

(1.) The evil of unbelief. It excluded that whole generation, consisting of many hundred thousand souls, from the land of promise—the land to which they had looked with ardent hopes, and with warm desires. It will exclude countless millions from heaven. A *want of confidence* in God is the great source of evil in this world, and will be the cause of wretchedness to all eternity of unnumbered hosts. But surely that was not a small or unimportant thing which strewed the desert with the bones of that whole generation whom God had, in so remarkable a manner, rescued from Egyptian servitude. And that cannot be a small matter which wile cause multitudes to sink down to infinite wretchedness and despair.

(2.) Let us, who are professed Christians, be cautious against indulging unbelief in our hearts. Our difficulties all begin there. We lose confidence in God. We doubt his promises, his oaths, his threatenings. In dark and trying times we begin to have doubts about the wisdom of his dealings, and about his goodness. Unbelief once admitted into the heart is the beginning of many woes. When

a man loses confidence in God, he is on a shoreless ocean that is full of whirlpools, and rocks, and quicksands, and where it is *impossible* to find a secure anchorage. There is nothing to which he may moor his driven bark; and he will never find safety or peace till he comes back to God.

(3.) Let us live a life of faith. Let us so live that we may say with Paul, "The life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." So living, we shall have peace. The mind will be at rest. Storms and tempests may blow, but we shall be secure. Others may be troubled in the vicissitudes of life, but our minds will be at peace.

(4.) Let us live expecting the future "*rest*" that remains for us. Let us keep our eye fixed upon it. To us there is a rest promised, as there was to the Hebrews whom God had delivered from the land of oppression; and we may by faith attain to that, "rest," as they might have reached the land of Canaan.

(5.) Let us persevere to the end. He that draws back must be lost. He that does not endure to the end of life, in the ways of religion, can never have been a Christian. There is nothing which will furnish certain evidence of religion, unless our piety is such as to lead us to persevere till death. The man who enters on the professed Christian life expecting to fall away, or who can look upon the possibility of falling away without concern, has never known anything of the nature of true religion, he cannot be a Christian. He may have had raptures and visions; he may be a loud professor, and a noisy and zealous partisan, but he has no evidence that he has ever known anything about religion. That religion which is not connected with a firm and determined purpose, by the grace of God, to persevere to the end of life, is no true religion; and a man who *expects* to fall away and go back again to the world, or who can look at such an idea without alarm, should regard it as a settled matter that he has no true knowledge of God.

(6.) No man should delay the work of salvation to a future time. *To-day* is the accepted time; to-day the only time of which we have any security. God speaks *to-day*, and to-day his voice should be heard. No man on any subject should defer till to-morrow what ought to be done to-clay. He who defers religion till a future time neglects his own best interest; violates most solemn obligations; and endangers his immortal soul. What security can any one have that he will live to see another day? What evidence has he that he will be any more disposed to attend to his salvation then than he is now? What evidence can he have that he will not provoke God by this course, and bring condemnation on his soul? Of all delusions, that is the most wonderful by which dying men are led to defer attention to the concerns of the soul to a future period of life. Nowhere has Satan such advantage as in keeping this delusion before the mind; and if in respect to anything the voice of warning and alarm should be lifted loud and long, it is in reference to this. Oh, why will not men be wise *to-day*? Why will they not embrace the offer of salvation now? Why will they not *at once* make sure of eternal happiness? And why, amidst the changes and trials of this life, will they not so secure the everlasting inheritance as to feel that that is safe—that there is one thing at least that cannot be shaken and disturbed by commercial embarrassment and distress; one thing secure, though friends and kindred are torn away from them; one thing safe when their own health fads, and they lie down on the bed where they will bid adieu to all earthly comforts, and from which they will never rise.

{d} "so we see" Heb 4:6

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 4

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 4 - Verse 1

CHAPTER IV.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

THIS chapter comprises two parts. In the first, Heb 4:1-13, the apostle pursues and completes the exhortation which he had commenced in the previous chapter, drawn from the comparison of the Saviour with Moses, (see the analysis of chapter 3;) and in the second part, (Heb 4:14-16,) he enters on the consideration of the character of Christ as a high priest, which is pursued to the end of the doctrinal part of the epistle.

In the first part, (Heb 4:1-13,) he describes more at length the character of the "rest" to which he had referred in the previous chapter. He shows (Heb 4:1) that the promise of a "rest" yet remains, and that there is still danger, as there was formerly, of coming short of it, or of losing it. He affirms that such was the nature of that promise, that it is applicable to us as well as to those to whom it was first made, and that the promise of rest as really pertains to Christians now as it did to the Hebrews of old, Heb 4:2. The reason, he adds, (Heb 4:2) why *they* did not enter into that rest was, that they had not faith. This he had established in the previous chapter, Heb 3:18. In Heb 4:3-6, he proceeds to demonstrate more at length that there is a "rest" remaining for those who believe. The great object, in this part of the chapter, is to prove that a "rest" remains for believers now; a rest of a spiritual character, and much more desirable than that of the land of Canaan; a rest to which Christians may look forward, and which there may be danger of losing. Addressing Hebrew Christians, he, of course, appeals to the Old Testament, and refers to several places where the word "rest" occurs, and argues that those expressions are of such a character as to allow that there remains a "rest" for Christians yet. It would have been easy to have affirmed this as a part of the Christian revelation; but, throughout the epistle, he is bringing his illustrations from the Old Testament, and showing to the Hebrew Christians to whom he wrote that there were abundant considerations *in the Old Testament itself*, to constitute an argument why they should adhere inviolably to the Christian religion. He says, therefore, (Heb 4:4,) that God himself had spoken of *his own rest* from his works; that when he had finished the work of creation he had instituted a *rest* which was characterized by the peace, and beauty, and order of the first Sabbath after the work of creation, when all was new, and lovely, and pure. That might be called the *rest of God*—a beautiful emblem of that which dwells around his throne in heaven. The meaning of this verse (Heb 4:4) is, that the Bible spoke early of a rest which appertained to God himself. In Heb 4:5, he goes on to say, that the prospect of entering into His rest was spoken of as a possible thing; that some were excluded, but that there was a place deserved to be called "the rest of God"—" My rest"—to which,all may come. Of course, that rest must be of a spiritual nature, and must be different from that of the promised land. That "*rest*," the apostle implies, it was possible to attain. He does not argue this point at length, but he assumes that God would not create a place of rest in vain; that it was made to be enjoyed; and that since those

to whom it was at first offered were excluded, it must follow that it remained still; and as they were excluded by the want of *faith*, it would follow also that it was reserved for those who *had faith*. Of course, therefore, it is offered to Christians now, Heb 4:6.

This view he proceeds to confirm by another consideration, Heb 4:7,8. It is that David, who lived nearly five hundred years after the land of promise had been occupied by the Israelites, spoke *then* of the possibility of entering into such a "rest." He says (Ps 95:7,) that, in his time, the people were called to hear the voice of God; that he warned them against the guilt and danger of hardening their hearts; that he reminded them that it was by that that the Israelites were excluded from the promised land; and that he said that the same thing would occur if those in his own time should harden their hearts. It followed, therefore, that even in the time of David there was a hope and promise of "rest ;" and that there was something more intended for the true people of God than merely entering into the promised land. There must be something in advance of that; something that existed to the time of David—and it must be, therefore, a spiritual rest. This, the apostle adds, (Heb 4:8,) is conclusive; for if Joshua had given them all the "rest" that was contemplated, then David would not have spoken as he did of the danger of being excluded from it in his time. He, therefore, (Heb 4:9,) comes to the conclusion, that there must still remain a "rest" for the people of God—a "rest" to which they were invited, and which they were in danger of losing by unbelief. He adds, (Heb 4:10,) that he who enters into that "rest" ceases from toil, as God did from his when he had finished the work of creation. Since, therefore, there is such a "rest," and since there is danger of coming short of it, the apostle urges them (Heb 4:11) to make every effort to enter into it. He adds, Heb 4:12,13,) as a consideration to quicken them to earnest effort and to anxious care, lest they should be deceived, and should fail of it the fact that God cannot be deceived; that his word penetrated the heart, and that everything is naked and open before him. There should, therefore, be the most faithful investigation of the heart, lest they should fail of the grace of God, and lose the hoped-for rest.

In the second portion of the chapter, (Heb 4:14-16,) he enters on the consideration of the character of Christ as High Priest; and says, that since we have such an High Priest as he is, we should be encouraged to come boldly to the throne of grace. We have encouragement to persevere from the fact that we have such a High Priest, and in all our conscious weakness and helplessness we may look to him for aid.

1. Let us therefore fear. Let us be apprehensive that we may possibly fail of that rest. The kind of *fear* which is recommended here is that which leads to caution and care. A man who is in danger of losing his life or health should be watchful; a seaman that is in danger of running on a lee-shore should be on his guard. So we who have the offer of heaven, and who yet are in danger of losing it, should take all possible precautions lest we fail of it,

Lest a promise being left us. Paul assumes here that there *is* such a promise. In the subsequent part of the chapter, he goes more into the subject, and proves from the Old Testament that there is such a promise made to us. It is to be remembered, that Paul had not the New Testament then to appeal to, as we have, which is perfectly clear on the subject, but that he was obliged to appeal to the Old Testament. This he did, not only because the New Testament was not then written, but because he was reasoning with those who had been Hebrews, and who regarded the authority of the Old Testament as decisive. If his reasoning to us appears somewhat obscure, we should put ourselves in his place, and should remember that the converts then had not the full light which we have now in the New Testament.

Of entering into his rest. The rest of God—the rest of the world where he dwells. It is called *his* rest, because it is that which he enjoys, and which he alone can confer. There can be no doubt that Paul refers here to heaven, and means to say that there is a promise left to Christians of being admitted to the enjoyment of that blessed world where God dwells.

Any of you should seem to come short of it. The word "*seem*" here is used as a form of gentle and mild address, implying the possibility of thus coming short. The word here— *dokew* -is often used so as to appear to give no essential addition to the sense of a passage, though it is probable that it always gave a shading to the meaning. Thus the phrase *esa videatur* is often used by Cicero at the end of a period, to denote merely that a thing *was*—though he expressed it as though it merely seemed to be. Such language is often used in argument or in conversation as a modest expression, as when we say a thing seems to be so and so, instead of saying "it is." In some such sense Paul probably used the phrase here—perhaps as expressing what we would by this language—" lest it should appear at last that any of you had come short of it." The phrase "come short of it" is probably used with reference to the journey to the promised land, where they who came out of Egypt came short of that land, and fell in the wilderness. They did not reach it. —This verse teaches the important truth, that though heaven is offered to us, and that a "rest" is promised to us if we seek it, yet that there is reason to think that many may fail of reaching it who had expected to obtain it. Among those will be the following classes:—

(1.) Those who are professors of religion, but who have never known anything of true piety.

(2.) Those who are expecting to be saved by their own works, and are looking forward to a world of rest on the ground of what their own hands can do.

(3.) Those who defer attention to the subject, from time to time, until it becomes too late. They expect to reach heaven, but they are not ready to give their hearts to God now, and the subject is deferred from one period to another, until death arrests them unprepared.

(4.) Those who have been awakened to see their guilt and danger, and who have been almost, but not quite, ready to give up their hearts to God. Such were Agrippa, Felix, the young ruler, (Mr 10:21;) and such are all those who are *almost* but not *quite* prepared to give up the world, and to devote themselves to the Redeemer. To all these the promise of "rest" is made, if they will accept of salvation as it is offered in the gospel; all of them cherish a hope that they will be saved; and all of them are destined alike to be disappointed. With what earnestness, therefore, should we strive that we may not fail of the grace of God!

{a} "Let us therefore fear" Heb 12:15

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 4 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *For unto us was the gospel preached as well as unto them*. This translation by no means conveys the sense of the original. According to this, it would seem that the *Gospel*, as we understand it, or the whole plan of salvation, was communicated to *them*, as well as to us. But this is by no means the idea. The discussion has reference only to *the promise of rest*; and the assertion of the apostle is, that this *good news* of a promise of rest is made to us, as really as it was made *to them*. "Rest" was promised to them in the land of Canaan—an emblem of the eternal rest of the people of God. That was unquestioned, and Paul took it for granted. His object now is, to show

that a promise of "rest" is as really made to us as it was to them, and that there is the same danger of failing to secure it as there was then. It was important for him to show that there was such a promise made to the people of God in his time; and as he was discoursing of those who were Hebrews, he of course made his appeal to the Old Testament. The literal translation would be, "For we are *evangelized—esmen euhggelismenoi*— as well as they." The word *evangelize* means, to communicate good news, or glad tidings; and the idea here is, that the good news or glad tidings of "rest" is announced to us as really as it was to them. This the apostle proves in the following verses.

But the word preached. Marg. *Of hearing*. The word *preach* we also use now, in a technical sense, as denoting a formal proclamation of the gospel by the ministers of religion. But this is not the idea here. It means, simply, the word *which they heard*; and refers particularly to the promise of "rest" which was made to them. That message was communicated to them by Moses.

Did not profit them. They derived no advantage from it. They rejected and despised it, and were, therefore, excluded from the promised land. It exerted no influence over their hearts and lives, and they lived and died as though no such promise had been made. Thus many persons live and die now. The offer of salvation is made to them. They are invited to come, and be saved. They are assured that God is willing to save them, and that the Redeemer stands with open arms to welcome them to heaven. They are trained up under the gospel; are led early in life to the sanctuary; are in the habit of attending on the preaching of the gospel all their days; but still what they hear exerts no saving influence on their hearts. At the close of life, all that could be truly said of them is, that they have not been *profited*; it has been no real advantage to them, in regard to their final destiny, that they have enjoyed so many privileges.

Not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. Marg. "Or, *because they were not united by faith to*" There are some various readings on this text, and one of these has given occasion to the version in the margin. Many Mss., instead of the common reading—*sugkekramenov* which the word *mixed* would be united to *o logov* "*the word*," have another reading— *sugkekramenouv* according to which the word *mixed* would refer to "*them*," and would mean that they who heard the word and rejected it were not *mixed*, or united, with those who believed it. The former reading makes the best sense, and is the best sustained; and the idea is, that the message which was preached was not received into the heart by faith. They were destitute of faith, and the message did not profit them. The word *mixed* is supposed by many of the best critics to refer to the process of which *food* is made nutritive, by being properly mixed with the saliva and the gastric juice, and thus converted into chyme and chyle, and then changed into blood. If suitably mired in this manner, it contributes to the life and health of the bodily frame; if not, it is the means of disease and death. So it is supposed the apostle meant to say of the message which God sends to man. If properly received—if mixed or united with faith—it becomes the means of spiritual support and life; if not, it furnishes no alhnent to the soul, and will be of no advantage. As food, when properly digested, incorporates itself with the body, and gives it support, so those critics suppose it to be of the word of God, that it incorporates itself with the internal and spiritual man, and gives it support and life: It may be doubted, however, whether the apostle had any such allusion as this, and whether it is not rather a refinement of the critics than of Paul. The *word* used here properly denotes a mixing or mingling together, like water and wine, 2 Mac. xv. 39; a uniting together in proper proportions and order, as of the body, 1Co 12:24; and it may refer here merely to a proper *union* of faith with the word, in order that it might be profitable. The idea is, that merely to *hear* the message of life with the outward

ear will be of no advantage. It must be *believed*, or it will be of no benefit. The message is sent to mankind at large. God declares his readiness to save all. But this message is of no advantage to multitudes—for such reasons as these:—

(1.) Many do not attend to it at all. They do not even *listen* respectfully to it. Multitudes go not near the place where the gospel is proclaimed; and many, when there, and when they seem to attend, have their minds and hearts on other things.

(2.) Many do not believe it. They have doubts about the whole subject of religion, or about the particular doctrines of the gospel; and while they do not believe it, how can they be benefited by it? How can a man be profited by the records of history if he does not believe them? How can one be benefited by the truths of science if he does not believe them? And if a man was assured that by going to a certain place he might close a bargain that would be a great advantage to him, of what use would this information be to him if he did not believe a word of it? So of the knowledge of salvation; the facts of the history recorded in the Bible; the offset of eternal life.

(3.) Men do not allow the message of life to influence their conduct, and of course it is of no advantage to them. Of what use can it be, if they steadily resist all the influence which it would have, and ought to have, on their lives? They live as though it were ascertained that there is no truth in the Bible; no reason for being influenced by the offered hope of eternal life, or alarmed by the threatened danger of eternal death. Resolved to pursue a course of life that is at variance with the commands of God, they cannot be profited by the message of salvation. Having no faith which influences and controls the heart, they are not in the least benefited by the offer of heaven. When they die, their condition is in no wise made better by the fact, that they were trained up in a pious family; that they were instructed in the Sabbath-school; that they had the Bible in their dwellings, and that they sat regularly under a preached gospel. For any *advantage* to be derived from all this in the future world, they might as well have never heard the message of life. Nay it would have been better for them. The only effect of these privileges is to harden them in guilt, and to sink them deeper in hell. **See Barnes "2Co 2:16"**.

{1} "did" "of hearing" {2} "not being mixed" "or, because they were not united by faith to"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 4 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *For we which have believed do enter into rest*. That is, it is a certain fact that believers will enter into rest. That promise is made to "believers;" and as we have evidence that we come under the denomination of believers, it will follow that we have the offer of rest as well as they. That this is so the apostle proceeds to prove; that is, he proceeds to show, from the Old Testament, that there was a promise to "believers" that they would enter into rest. Since there was such a promise, and since there was danger that by unbelief that "rest" might be lost, he proceeds to show them the danger, and to warn them of it.

As he said, etc. See Heb 3:11. The meaning of this passage is this:— "God made a promise of rest to those who believe. They to whom the offer was first made failed, and did not enter in. It must follow, therefore, that the offer extended to others, since God designed that *some* should enter in, or that it should not be provided in vain. To them it was a solemn declaration, that *unbelievers* should not enter in—and this implied that *believers* would. As we now, "says he, "sustain the

character of *believers*, it follows that to us the promise of rest is now made, and we may partake of it."

If they shall enter, etc. That is, they shall *not* enter in. See Heb 3:11. The "rest" here spoken of, as reserved for Christians, must be different from that of the promised land. It is something that pertains to Christians now, and it must, therefore, refer to the "rest" that remains in heaven.

Although the works were finished, etc. This is a difficult expression. What works are referred to? it may be asked. How does this bear on the subject under discussion? How can it be a proof that there remains a "rest" to those who believe now? This was the point to be demonstrated; and this passage was designed clearly to bear on that point. As it is in our translation, the passage seems to make no sense whatever. Tindal renders it, "And that spake he verily long after that the works were made from the foundation of the world laid," which makes much better sense than our translation. Doddridge explains it as meaning, "And this may lead us further to reflect on what is elsewhere said concerning his works as they were finished from the foundation of the world." But it is difficult to see why they should reflect on his works just then, and how this would bear on the case in hand. Prof. Stuart supposes that the word "rest" must be understood here before "works," and translates it, "Shall not enter into my rest—to wit, rest from the works which were performed when the world was founded." Prof. Robinson (Lex.) explains it as meaning, "The rest here spoken of, 'MY rest,' could not have been God's resting from his works, (Ge 2:2,) for this rest, the Sabbath, had already existed from the creation of the world." Dr. J.P. Wilson (MSS. Notes) renders it, "For we who have believed do enter into rest (or a cessation) indeed (*kaitoi*) of the works done (among men) from the beginning of the world." Amidst this variety of interpretation it is difficult to determine the true sense. But perhaps the main thought may be collected from the following remarks.

(1.) The Jews, as the people of God, had a rest promised them in the land of Canaan. Of that they failed by their unbelief.

(2.) The purpose of the apostle was to prove that there was a similar promise made to the people of God long subsequent to that, and to which all his people were invited.

(3.) *That* rest was not that of the promised land, it was such as *God had himself* when he had finished the work of creation. That was peculiarly *his rest*—the rest of God, without toil or weariness, and after his whole *work* was finished.

(4.) His people were invited to the same *rest*—the rest of God—to partake of his felicity; to enter into that bliss which *he* enjoyed when he had finished the work of creation. The happiness of the saints was to be *like* that. It was to be, *in their case*, also a rest from toil—to be enjoyed at the end of all that they had to do. To prove that Christians were to attain to *such* a rest was the purpose which the apostle had in view—showing that it was a general doctrine pertaining to believers in every age, that there was a promise of rest for them. I would, then, regard the middle clause of this verse as a parenthesis, and render the whole," For we who are believers shall enter into rest—[the rest] indeed which occurred when the works were finished at the foundation of the world—as he said [in one place] as I have sworn in my wrath they shall not enter into *my* rest." That was the true rest—such rest or repose as *God* had when he finished the work of creation—such as he has now in heaven. This gives the highest possible idea of the dignity and desirableness of that "rest" to which we look forward—for it is to be such as God enjoys, and is to elevate us more and more to him. What more exalted idea can there be of happiness than to participate in the calmness, the peace, the repose, the freedom from raging passions, from wearisome toil, and from agitating cares, which God enjoys? Who, torn with conflicting passions here, wearied with toil, and distracted with

care, ought not to feel it a privilege to look forward to that rest? Of this rest the Sabbath and the promised land were emblems. They to whom the promise was made did not enter in; but some shall enter in, and the promise therefore pertains to us.

{a} "he said" Ps 95:11

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 4 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *For he spake*. Ge 2:2.

And God did rest. "At the close of the work of creation he rested. The work was done. *That* was the rest of God. He was happy in the contemplation of his own works; and he instituted that day to be observed as a memorial of *his* resting from his works, and as a *type* of the eternal rest which remained for man." The idea is this— that the notion of *rest* of some kind runs through all dispensations. It was seen in the finishing of the work of creation; seen in the appointment of the Sabbath; seen in the offer of the promised land, and is seen now in the promise of heaven. All dispensations contemplate *rest*, and there must be such a prospect before men now. When it is said that "God did *rest*," of course it does not mean that he was wearied with his toil, but merely that he *ceased* from the stupendous work of creation. He no more put forth creative energy, but calmly contemplated his own works in their beauty and grandeur, Ge 1:31. In carrying forward the great affairs of the universe, he always has been actively employed, Joh 5:17, but he is not employed in the work of *creation*, properly so called. That is done; and the sublime cessation from that constitutes the "rest of God."

{b} "wise" Ge 2:2.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 4 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And in this place again*. Ps 95:11.

If they shall enter. That is, they shall *not* enter. See **See Barnes "Heb 3:11"**.

The object of quoting this here seems to be two-fold.

(1.) To show that even in this Psalm God spoke of *his rest*, and said that they should not enter into it; and

(2) it is connected with Heb 4:6, and is designed to show that it was implied, that a rest yet remained. "That which deserves to be called *the divine rest* is spoken of in the Scriptures; and as *they* did not enter into it, it follows that it must be in reserve for some others, and that the promise must still remain."

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 4 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein*. That is, "Since there is a rest spoken of in the Scriptures, implying that it is to be enjoyed by some, and since they to whom

it was first promised did not inherit it, it follows that it must still be in reserve." This is the conclusion which the apostle draws from the argument in the previous verses, and is connected with Heb 4:9, where he says that "there remaineth a rest to the people of God"—the point to which the whole argument tended. The statement in Heb 4:7,8, is to be regarded as an interruption in stating the conclusion, or as the suggestion of a new thought or a new argument bearing on the subject, which he sets down even while stating the conclusion from his argument. It has the appearance of being *suggested* to him as a new thought of importance, and which he preferred to place even in the midst of the summing up of the argument rather than omit it altogether. It denotes a state of mind full of the subject, and where one idea came hastening after another, and which it was deemed important to notice, even though it should seem to be out of place. The *position* in this verse (Heb 4:6) is, that it was a settled or indisputable matter that some would enter into rest. The implied *argument* to prove this is,

(1.) that there was a "rest" spoken of which deserved to be called a *divine rest*, or the "rest of God;"

(2) it could not be supposed that God would prepare such a rest in vain; for it would follow, that if he had fitted up a world of rest he designed that it should be occupied. As he knew, therefore, that they to whom it was first offered would not enter in, it must be that he designed it for some others, and that it *remained* to be occupied by us now.

And they to whom it was first preached, Marg. *The Gospel*. Gr. *Evangelized*; that is, to whom the good news of the rest was first announced—the Israelites.

Entered not in because of unbelief. **See Barnes "Heb 3:19"**.

{a} "they" Heb 3:19 {*} "preached" "To whom glad tidings were first preached"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 4 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Again, he limiteth*. He designates, or definitely mentions. The word rendered *limiteth orizei* means to *bound*, to set a boundary—as of a field, or farm; and then, to determine or fix definitely, to designate, appoint. Here it means, that he specifies particularly, or mentions expressly.

A certain day. A particular time; he mentions TO-DAY particularly. That is, in the time of David, he uses the word "*to-day*," as if there was *then* an offer of rest, and as if it were then possible to enter into it. The object of the additional thought was to show that the offer of rest was not confined to the Israelites, to whom it was first made; that David regarded it as existing in his day; and that man might even then be invited to come and partake of the rest that was promised. "Nearly five hundred years after the time when the Israelites were going to the promised land, and when the offer of rest was made to them, we hear David speaking of *rest* still; rest which was offered in his time, and which might then be lost by hardening the heart. It could not be, therefore, that the offer of rest pertained *merely* to the promised land. It must be something in advance of that. It must be something existing in the time of David. It must be an offer of heaven." "A Jew might feel the force of this argument more than we do; still it is conclusive to prove the point under consideration, that there was a rest spoken of long after the offer of the promised land, and that all the promises could not have pertained to that".

Saying in David. In a Psalm composed by David, or rather, perhaps, saying by David; that is, God spake by him.

To-day. Now; that is, even in the time of David.

After so long a time. That is, so long after the first promise was made; to wit, about five hundred years. These are the words of Paul, calling attention to the fact, that so long a time after the entrance into the promised land there was still a speaking of "*to-day*," as if even then they were called to partake of the rest.

As it is said. To quote it exactly; or to bring the express authority of the Scriptures. It is expressly said even after that long time, "To-day—or Now—if you will hear his voice." All this is to prove that even in that time, there was an offer of rest.

{b} "to-day" Ps 95:7

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 4 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *For if Jesus* Marg. "That is, *Joshua*." The Syriac renders it, "Joshua the Son of Nun." *Jesus* is the Greek mode of writing Joshua, and there can be no doubt that Joshua is here intended. The object is to prove that Joshua did *not* give the people of God such a rest as to make it improper to speak of a "rest" after that time. "If Joshua had given them a complete and final rest; if, by his conducting them to the promised land, all had been done which had been contemplated by the promise, then it would not have been alluded to again, as it was in the time of David." Joshua *did* give them a *rest* in the promised land; but it was not all which was intended, and it did not exclude the promise of another and more important rest.

Then would he not. Then *God* would not have spoken of another time when that rest could be obtained. The "*other day*" here referred to is that which is mentioned before by the phrase "to-day," and refers to the time in which it is spoken of long after Joshua, to wit, in the time of David.

{2} "Jesus" "that is, Joshua"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 4 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *There remaineth, therefore, a rest*. This is the conclusion to which the apostle comes. The meaning is this, that according to the Scriptures there is *now* a promise of rest made to the people of God. It did not pertain merely to those who were called to go to the promised land, nor to those who lived in the time of David, but it is *still* true that the promise of rest pertains to *all* the people of God of every generation. The *reasoning* by which the apostle comes to this conclusion is briefly this.

(1.) That there was a *rest* called "the rest of God"—spoken of in the earliest period of the world—implying that God meant that it should be enjoyed.

(2.) That the Israelites, to whom the promise was made, failed of obtaining that which was promised by their unbelief.

(3.) That God intended that some should enter into his rest—since it would not be provided in vain.

(4.) That long after the Israelites had fallen in the wilderness, we find the same reference to a rest which David in his time exhorts those whom he addressed to endeavour to obtain.

(5.) That if all that had been meant by the word rest, and by the promise, had been accomplished when Joshua conducted the Israelites to the land of Canaan, we should not have heard another day spoken of when it was possible to forfeit that rest by unbelief. It followed, therefore, that there was something besides that; something that pertained to all the people of God, to which the name *rest* might still be given, and which they were exhorted still to obtain. The word *rest* in this verse *sabbatismov Sabbatism*, in the margin is rendered *keeping of a Sabbath*. It is a different word from *sabbaton —the Sabbath*; and it occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, and is not found in the Septuagint. It properly means, *a keeping Sabbath*— from *sabbatizw to keep Sabbath*. This word, not used in the New Testament, occurs frequently in the Septuagint, Ex 16:30 Le 23:32, 26:35

2Ch 36:21 and in 3 Esd. i. 58; 2 Mac. vi. 6. It differs from the word *Sabbath*. That denotes *the time—the day*, this, *the keeping, or observance of it*; the festival. It means here, *a resting*, or an observance of sacred repose—and refers undoubtedly to *heaven*, as a place of eternal rest with God. It cannot mean the rest in the land of Canaan—for the drift of the writer is to prove that that is not intended. It cannot mean the Sabbath, properly so called—for then the writer would have employed the usual word *sabbaton—Sabbath*. It cannot mean the Christian Sabbath—for the object is not to prove that there is such a day to be observed; and his reasoning about being excluded from it by unbelief and by hardening the heart would be irrelevant. It must mean, therefore, *heaven*—the world of spiritual and eternal rest; and the assertion is, that there is such a resting, or keeping of a Sabbath in heaven for the people of God. Learn hence,

(1.) that heaven is a place of cessation from wearisome toil. It is to be like the "rest" which God had after the work of creation, (Heb 4:4) **See Barnes** "Heb 4:4, and of which that was the type and emblem. There will be employment there, but it will be without fatigue; there will be the occupation of the mind, and of whatever powers we may possess, but without weariness. Here we are often worn down and exhausted. The body sinks under continued toil, and falls into the grave. There the slave will rest from his toil; the man here oppressed and broken down by anxious care will cease from his labours. We know but little of heaven; but we know that a large part of what now oppresses and crushes the frame will not exist there. Slavery will be unknown; the anxious care for support will be unknown, and all the exhaustion which proceeds from the love of gain, and from ambition, will be unknown. In the wearisome toils of life, then, let us look forward to the rest that remains in heaven; and as the labourer looks to the shades of the evening, or to the Sabbath, as a period of rest, so let us look to heaven as the place of eternal repose.

(2.) Heaven will be like a Sabbath. The best description of it is to say it is *an eternal Sabbath*. Take the Sabbath on earth, when best observed, and extend the idea to eternity, and let there be separated all idea of imperfection from its observance, and that would be heaven. The Sabbath is holy; so is heaven. It is a period of worship; so is heaven. It is for praise, and for the contemplation of heavenly truth; so is heaven. The Sabbath is appointed that we may lay aside worldly cares and anxieties for a little season here; heaven, that we may lay, them aside for ever.

(3.) The Sabbath here should be like heaven. It is designed to be its type and emblem. So far as the circumstances of the case will allow, it should be just like heaven. There should be the same employments; the same joys; the same communion with God. One of the best rules for employing

the Sabbath aright is, to think what heaven will be, and then to endeavour to spend it in the same way. One day in seven at least should remind us of what heaven is to be; and that day may be, and should be, the most happy of the seven.

(4.) They who do not love the Sabbath on earth are not prepared for heaven. If it is to them a day of tediousness; if its hours move heavily; if they have no delight in its sacred employments, what would an eternity of such days be? How would *they* be passed? Nothing can be clearer than that if we have no such happiness in a season of holy rest, and in holy employments here, we are wholly unprepared for heaven. To the Christian it is the subject of the highest joy in anticipation, that heaven is to be *one long, unbroken SABBATH*—an eternity of successive Sabbath hours. But what, to a sinner, could be a more repulsive and gloomy prospect than such an eternal Sabbath?

(5.) If this be so, then what a melancholy view is furnished as to the actual preparation of the great mass of men for heaven! How is the Sabbath now spent? In idleness; in business; in travelling; in hunting and fishing; in light reading and conversation; in sleep; in visiting; in riding, walking, lounging, *ennui*; in revelry and dissipation; in any and every way *except the right way*; in every way except in holy communion with God. What would the race be if once translated to heaven as they are! What a prospect would it be to this multitude to have to spend *an eternity*, which would be but a prolongation of the Sabbath of holiness!

(6.) Let those who love the Sabbath rejoice in the prospect of eternal rest in heaven. In our labour let us look to that world where wearisome toil is unknown; in our afflictions, let us look to that world where tears never fall; and when our hearts are pained by the violation of the Sabbath all around us, let us look to that blessed world where such violation will cease for ever. It is not far distant. A few steps will bring us there. Of any Christian it may be said that perhaps his next Sabbath will be spent in heaven—near the throne of God.

{3} "a rest" or "keeping of a Sabbath"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 4 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *For he that is entered into rest*. That is, the man who is so happy as to reach heaven, will enjoy a rest similar to that which God had when he finished the work of creation. It will be

(1) a cessation from toil; and

(2) it will be a rest similar to that of God—the same kind of enjoyment, the same freedom from care, anxiety, and labour, How happy, then, are they who have entered into heaven! Their toils are over. Their labours are done. Never again will they know fatigue. Never more will they feel anxious care. Let us learn then,

(1.) not to mourn improperly for those who have left us, and gone to heaven. Happy in the rest of God, why should not we rejoice? Why wish them back again in a world of toil?

(2.) Let us in our toils look forward to the world of rest. Our labours will all be over. The weary man will lay down his burden; the exhausted frame will know fatigue no more. Rest is sweet at night after the toils of day; how much more sweet will it be in heaven after the toils of life! Let us

(3) labour while it is called to-day. Soon we shall cease from our work. All that we have to do is to be done soon. We shall soon cease from our work, as God did from his. What we have to do for the salvation of children, brothers, sisters, friends, and for the world, is to be done soon. From

the abodes of bliss we shall not be sent forth to speak to our kindred of the blessedness of that world, or to admonish our friends to escape from the place of despair. The pastor will not come again to warn and invite his people; the parent will not come again to tell his children of the Saviour and of heaven; the neighbour will not come to admonish his neighbour. Comp. Lu 16:24-29. We shall ALL have ceased from *our* work, as God did from *his*; and never again shall we speak to a living friend to invite him to heaven.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 4 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Let us labour therefore*. Let us earnestly strive. Since there is a rest whose attainment is worth all our efforts; since so many have failed of reaching it by their unbelief; and since there is so much danger that we may fail of it also, let us give all diligence that we may enter into it. Heaven is never obtained but by diligence, and no one enters there who does not earnestly desire it, and who does not make a sincere effort to reach it.

Of unbelief. Marg. *disobedience*. The word *unbelief* best expresses the sense, as the apostle was showing that this was the principal thing that prevented men from entering into heaven. **See Barnes "Heb 3:12"**.

{a} "Let us" 2Pe 1:10 {1} "unbelief" "disobedience"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 4 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *For the word of God*. The design of this and the following verse is obvious. It is to show that we cannot escape the notice of God; that all insincerity, unbelief, hypocrisy, will be detected by him; and that since our hearts are perfectly open before him, we should be sincere, and should not attempt to deceive him. The sense is, that the truth of God is all-penetrating and searching, and that the real thoughts and intents of the heart will be brought to light; and that if there is insincerity and self-deception, there can be no hope of escape. There has been a great variety of opinion here about the meaning of the phrase "the word of God." Some have supposed that it means the Lord Jesus; others the whole of the divine revelation; others the gospel; others the particular threatening referred to here. The "word of God" is *that which God speaks*—whether it be a promise or a threatening; whether it be law or gospel; whether it be a simple declaration or a statement of a doctrine. The idea here is, that what *God had said* is fitted to detect hypocrisy, and to lay open the true nature of the feelings of the soul, so that there can be no escape for the guilty. His truth is adapted to bring out the real feelings, and to show man exactly what he is. Truth always has this power —whether preached, or read, or communicated by conversation, or impressed upon the memory and conscience by the Holy Spirit. There can be no escape from the penetrating, searching application of the word of God. That truth has power to show what man is, and is like a penetrating sword that lays open the whole man. Comp. Isa 49:2. The phrase "the word of God" here may be applied, therefore, to the *truth* of God, however made known to the mind. In some way it will bring out the real feelings, and show what man is.

Is quick. Gr. *zwn—living*. It is not dead, inert, and powerless. It has a living power, and is energetic and active. It is *adapted* to produce this effect.

And powerful. Mighty. Its power is seen in awakening the conscience; alarming the fears; laying bare the secret feelings of the heart; and causing the sinner to tremble with the apprehension of the coming judgment. All the great changes in the moral world for the better, have been caused by the power of truth. They are such as the truth in its own nature is fitted to effect; and, if we may judge of its power by the greatness of the revolutions produced, no words can over-estimate the might of the truth which God has revealed.

Sharper than any two-edged sword. Literally, *two-mouthed sword distomon*. The word *mouth* was given to the sword because it seemed to *devour* all before it. It consumed or destroyed, as a wild beast does. The comparison of the word of God to a sword, or to an arrow, is designed to show its power of penetrating the heart, Ec 12:11. "The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies." Comp. Isa 49:2; "And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword." Re 1:16: "And out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword;" Re 2:12,16, 19:15.

The comparison is common in the classics, and in Arabic poetry. See Gesenius, on Isa 49:2. The idea is that of piercing, or penetrating; and the meaning here is, that the word of God reaches the *heart*—the very centre of action and lays open the motives and feelings of the man. It was common among the ancients to have a sword with two-edges. The Roman sword was commonly made in this manner. The fact that it had two edges made it more easy to penetrate, as well as to cut with every way.

Piercing even to the dividing asunder. Penetrating so as to divide.

Soul and spirit. The animal life from the immortal soul. The former word here—*quch*— *soul*—is evidently used to denote the animal life, as distinguished from the mind or soul. The latter word—*pneuma*—*spirit*—means the soul; the immaterial and immortal part; that which lives when the animal life is extinct, This distinction occurs in 1Th 5:23" your whole spirit. and soul, and body ;" and it is a distinction which we are constantly in the habit of making. There is the body in man—the animal life—and the immortal part that leaves the body when life is extinct. Mysteriously united, they constitute one man. When the animal life is separated from the soul, or when the soul leaves the animated body, the body dies, and life is extinct. To separate the one from the other is, therefore, the same as to take life—and this is the idea here, that the word of God is like a sharp sword that inflicts deadly wounds. The sinner "*dies*;" that is, he becomes dead to his former hopes, or is "slain" by the law. Ro 7:9, "I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." This is the power referred to here—the power of destroying the hopes of the sinner; cutting him down under conviction; and prostrating him, as if a sword had pierced his heart.

And of the joints and marrow. The figure is still continued of the sword that takes life. Such a sword would seem to penetrate even the joints and marrow of the body. It would separate the joints, and pierce through the very bones to the marrow. A similar effect, Paul says, is produced by truth. It seems to penetrate the very essence of the soul, and lay it all open to the view.

And is a discerner of the thoughts. It shows what the thoughts and intentions are. Prof. Stuart, Bloomfield, and some others, suppose that the reference here is to *God* speaking by his word. But the more natural construction certainly is, to refer it to the word or truth of God. It is true that God searches the heart, and knows the thoughts; but that is not the truth which is prominent here. It is, that the thoughts and intents of the heart are brought out to view by the word of God. And can any one doubt this? See Ro 7:7. Is it not true that men are made to see their real character under the

exhibition of the truth of God? That in the light of the law they see their past lives to be sinful? That the exhibition of truth calls to their recollection many long forgotten sins? And that their feelings are brought out when the truth of God is proclaimed? Men then are made to look upon their motives as they had never done before, and to see in their hearts feelings whose existence they would not have suspected, if it had not been for the exhibition of the truth. The exhibition of the truth is like pouring down the beams of the sun at midnight on a dark world; and the truth lays open the real feelings of the sinner, as that sun would disclose the clouds of wickedness that are now performed under cover of the night. Many a man has a deep and fixed hostility to God, and to his gospel, who might never be sensible of it, if the truth was not faithfully proclaimed. The particular idea here is, that the truth of God will detect the feelings of the hypocrite and self-deceiver. They cannot always conceal their emotions, and the time will come when truth, like light poured into the soul, will reveal their unbelief and their secret sins. They who are cherishing a hope of salvation, therefore, should be on their guard lest they mistake the name for the reality. Let us learn from this verse,

(1,) the power of truth. It is *fitted* to lay open the secret feelings of the soul. There is not an effect produced in awakening a sinner, or in his conviction, conversion, and Sanctification, which the truth is not *adapted* to produce. The truth of God is not dead; nor fitted to make man *worse*; nor designed merely to show its own *weakness*, and to be a mere occasion on which the Holy Spirit acts on the mind; —it is, in its own nature, FITTED to produce just the effects which are produced when it awakens, convicts, converts, and sanctifies the soul.

(2.) The truth should be preached with the feeling that it is adapted to this end. Men who preach should endeavour to understand the nature of the mind and of the moral feelings, as really as he who would inflict a deadly wound should endeavour to understand enough about anatomy to know where the heart is, or he who administers medicine should endeavour to know what is adapted to remove certain diseases. And he who has no belief in the efficacy of truth to produce any effect, resembles one who should suppose that all knowledge of the human system was needless to him who wished and who should cut at random— to perform a surgical operations piously leaving it with God to direct the knife; or he who should go into a hospital of patients, and administer medicines indiscriminately-devoutly saying, that all healing must come from God, and that the use of medicine was only to show its own weakness! Thus many men seem to preach. Yet, for aught that appears, truth is just as wisely adapted to save the soul, as medicine is to heal the sick; and why, then, should not a preacher be as careful to study the nature of truths and its adaptedness to a particular end, as a student of the healing art is to understand the adaptedness of medicine to cure disease? The true way of preaching is, to feel that truth is adapted to the end in view; to select that which is best fitted for that end; to preach as if the whole result depended on getting that truth before the mind and into the heart, and *then* to leave the whole result with God—as a physicians with right feelings, will exert all his skill to save his patient, and then commit the whole question of life and health to God. He will be more likely to praise God intelligently who believes that he has wisely adapted a plan to the end in view, than he who believes that God works only at random.

{b} "word" Isa 49:2 {c} "piercing" Re 1:16 {a} "discerner" Ps 139:2 Jer 17:10; Re 2:23

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 4 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight*. There is no being who is not wholly known to God. All his thoughts, feelings, plans, are distinctly understood. Of the truth of this there can be no doubt. The *design* of the remark here is, to guard those to whom the apostle was writing from self-deception —since they could conceal nothing from God.

All things are naked. Exposed; uncovered. There is nothing that can be concealed from God, Ps 139:11,12.

"The veil of night is no disguise,
No screen from thy all-searching eyes;
Thy hands can seize thy foes as soon
Through midnight shades as blazing noon."

And opened tetrachlismena. The word here used — *trachlizw* — properly means,

(1.) to lay bare the neck, or to bend it back so as to expose the throat to being cut.

(2.) To expose; to lay open in any way. Why the word is used here has been a matter of inquiry. Some have supposed that the phrase is derived from offering sacrifice, and from the fact that the priest carefully examined the victim, to see whether it was sound, before it was offered. But this is manifestly a forced exposition. Others have supposed that it is derived from the custom of bending back the head of a criminal, so as to look full in his face, and recognise him, so as not to be mistaken; but this is equally forced and unnatural. This opinion was first proposed by Erasmus, and has been adopted by Clarke and others, Bloomfield, following, as he says, the interpretation of Chrysostom, Grotius, (though this is not the sentiment of Grotius,) Beza, Alting, Hammond, and others, supposes the allusion to be to the custom of cutting the animal down the back-bone through the spinal marrow, and thus of laying it open entirely. This sense would well suit the connexion. Grotius supposes that it means to strip off the skin by dividing it at the neck, and then removing it. This view is also adopted substantially by Doddridge. These explanations are forced, and imply a departure, more or less, from the proper meaning of the Greek word. The most simple and obvious meaning is usually the best in explaining the Bible. The word which the apostle employs relates to *the neck*; *trachlov* —-and not to the spinal marrow, or the skin. The proper meaning of the verb is, *to bend the neck back*, so as to expose it in front when an animal is slain. *Passow*. Then it means, to make bare; to remove everything like covering; to expose a thing entirely—as the naked neck is for the knife. The allusion here is undoubtedly to the sword which Paul had referred to in the previous verse, as dividing the soul and spirit, and the joints and marrow; and the meaning is, that in the hand of God, who held that sword, everything was exposed. We are, in relation to that, like an animal whose neck is bent back, and laid bare, and ready for the slaughter. Nothing *hinders* God from striking; there is nothing that can prevent that sword from penetrating the heart any more than, when the neck of the animal is bent back and laid bare, there is anything that can hinder the sacrificing priest from thrusting the knife into the throat of the victim. If this be the true interpretation, then what an affecting view does it give of the power of God, and of the exposedness of man to destruction! All is bare, naked, open. There is no concealment; no hinderance; no power of resistance. In a moment God can strike, and his dreadful sentence shall fall on the sinner like the knife on the exposed throat of the victim. What emotions should the sinner have who feels that he is exposed each moment to the sentence of eternal justice —to the sword of God—as the animal with bent-back

neck is exposed to the knife! And what solemn feeling should all have who remember that all is naked and open before God! Were we *transparent*, so that the World could see all we are, who would dare go abroad? Who would wish the world to read all his thoughts and feelings for a single day? Who would wish his best friends to look in upon his naked soul, as we can look into a room through a window? Oh, what blushes and confusion; what a hanging down of the head, and what an effort to escape from the gaze of men would there be, if every one knew that all his secret feelings were seen by every person whom he met! Social enjoyment would end; and the now gay and blithe multitudes in the streets would become processions of downcast and blushing convicts. And yet all these are known to God. He reads every thought; sees every feeling; looks through the whole soul. How careful should we be to keep our heart pure; how anxious that there should be nothing in the soul that we are not *willing* to have known!

With whom we have to do. Literally, *with whom is our account*. Our account; our reckoning is to be with him before whom all is naked and open. We cannot, therefore, impose on him. We cannot pass off hypocrisy for sincerity. He will judge us according to truth, not according to appearances; and his sentence, therefore, will be just. A man who is to be tried by one who *knows all about him*, should be a pure and holy man.

{b} "naked" Pr 15:11

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 4 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Seeing then that we have a great High Priest*. The apostle here resumes the subject which had been slightly hinted at in Heb 2:17, 3:1, and pursues it to the end of chapter 10. The object is to show that Christians have a great High Priest as really as the Jews had; to show wherein he surpassed the Levitical priesthood; to show how all that was said of the Aaronic priesthood, and all the types pertaining to that priesthood, were fulfilled in the Lord Jesus; and to state and illustrate the nature of the consolations which Christians might derive from the fact that they had such an High Priest. One of the things on which the Jews most valued their religion, was the fact that it had such a minister of religion as their high priest—the most elevated functionary of that dispensation. It came, therefore, to be of the utmost importance to show that Christianity was not inferior to the Jewish religion in this respect, and that the High Priest of the Christian profession would not suffer in point of dignity, and in the value of the blood with which he would approach God, and in the efficacy of his intercession, when compared with the Jewish high priest. Moreover, it was a doctrine of Christianity that the Jewish ritual was to pass away; and its temple services cease to be observed. It was, therefore, of vast importance to show why hey passed away, and how they were superseded. To do this, the apostle is led into this long discussion respecting their nature. He shows that they were designed to be typical. He proves that they could not purify the heart, and give peace to the conscience. He proves that they were all intended to point to something future, and to introduce the Messiah to the world; and that when this object was accomplished, their great end was secured, and they were thus all fulfilled. In no part of the Bible can there be found so full an account of the design of the Mosaic institutions as in chapter 5 through 10 of this epistle; and were it not for this, the volume of inspiration would be incomplete. We should be left in the dark on some of the most important subjects in revelation; we should ask questions for which we could find no certain answer.

The phrase "great High Priest" here is used with reference to a known usage among the Jews. In the time of the apostle the name high priest pertained not only to him who actually held the office, and who had the right to enter into the holy of holies, but to his deputy, and to those who had held the office, but who had retired from it; and perhaps also the name was given to the head of each one of the twenty-four courses or classes into which the priests were divided. Comp. **See Barnes "Lu 1:5"**; **See Barnes "Mt 26:3"**.

The name "great high priest" would designate him who actually held the office, and was at the head of all the other priests; and the idea here is, not merely that the Lord Jesus was a Priest, but that he was at the head of all; in the Christian economy he sustained a rank that corresponded with that of the great high priest in the Jewish.

That is passed into the heavens. Heb 9:12,24. The Jewish high priest went once a year into the most holy place in the temple, to offer the blood of the atonement. **See Barnes "Heb 9:7"**.

Paul says that the Christian High Priest has gone into heaven. He has gone there also to make intercession, and to sprinkle the blood of the atonement on the mercy-seat. **See Barnes "Heb 9:24"**; **See Barnes** "Heb 9:25".

Jesus the Son of God. Not a descendant of Aaron, but one greater— the Son of God. **See Barnes "Heb 1:2"**.

Let us hold fast our profession. **See Barnes "Heb 9:23"**; **See Barnes "Heb 3:14"**.

This is the drift and scope of the epistle— to show that Christians should hold fast their profession, and not apostatize. The object of the apostle now is to show why the fact, that we have such a High Priest, is a reason why we should hold fast our professed attachment to him. These reasons—which are drawn out in the succeeding chapters—are such as the following.

(1.) We may look to him for assistance—since he can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, Heb 4:15,16.

(2.) The impossibility of being renewed again if we should fall away from him, since there is but one such High Priest, and since the sacrifice for sin can never be repeated, Heb 6.

(3.) The fact that all the ancient types were fulfilled in him, and that everything which there was in the Jewish dispensation, to keep men from apostasy, exists much more powerfully in the Christian scheme.

(4.) The fact that they who rejected the laws of Moses died without mercy, and much more any one who should reject the Son of God must expect more certain and fearful severity, Heb 10:27-30. By considerations such as these, the apostle aims to show them the danger of apostasy, and to urge them to a faithful adherence to their Christian profession.

{a} "passed" Heb 9:12,24 {b} "hold fast" Heb 10:23

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 4 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched*. Our High Priest is not cold and unfeeling. That is, we have one who is abundantly qualified to sympathize with us in our afflictions, and to whom, therefore, we may look for aid and support in trials. Had we a high priest who was cold and heartless; who simply performed the external duties of his office, without entering into the sympathies of those who came to seek for pardon; who had never experienced any trials,

and who felt himself above those who sought his aid, we should necessarily feel disheartened in attempting to overcome our sins, and to live to God. His coldness would repel us; his stateliness would awe us; his distance and reserve would keep us away, and perhaps render us indifferent to all desire to be saved. But tenderness and sympathy attract those who are feeble, and kindness does more than anything else to encourage those who have to encounter difficulties and dangers. **See Barnes "Heb 2:16, also** Heb 2:17-18. Such tenderness and sympathy has our great High Priest.

But was in all points tempted like as we are. Tried as we are. **See Barnes "Heb 2:18"**.

He was subjected to all the kinds of trial to which we can be, and he is, therefore, able to sympathize with us, and to aid us. He was tempted—in the literal sense; he was persecuted; he was poor; he was despised; he suffered bodily pain; he endured the sorrows of a lingering and most cruel death.

Yet without sin. 1Pe 2:22: "Who did no sin." Isa 53:9: "He had done no violence, neither was there any deceit in his mouth." Heb 7:26: "Who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." The importance of this fact, that the great High Priest of the Christian profession was "without sin," the apostle illustrates at length in chapters 7 through 9. He here merely alludes to it, and says that one who was "without sin" was able to assist those who were sinners, and who put their trust in him.

{c} "touched" Hos 11:8 {d} "without sin" 1Pe 2:22

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 4 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace*. "The throne of grace!" What a beautiful expression! A throne is the seat of a sovereign; a throne of grace is designed to represent a sovereign seated to dispense mercy and pardon. The illustration or comparison here may have been derived from the temple service. In that service God is represented as seated in the most holy place on the mercy-seat. The high priest approaches that seat or throne of the Divine Majesty with the blood of the atonement, to make intercession for the people, and to plead for pardon. **See Barnes** "Heb 9:7,

See Barnes "9:8".

That scene was emblematic of heaven. God is seated on a throne of mercy. The great High Priest of the Christian calling, having shed his own blood to make expiation, is represented as approaching God, and pleading for the pardon of men. To a God willing to show mercy he comes with the merits of a sacrifice sufficient for all, and pleads for their salvation. We may, therefore, come with boldness, and look for pardon. We come not depending on our own merits, but we come where a sufficient sacrifice has been offered for human guilt, and where we are assured that God is merciful. We may, therefore, come without hesitancy, or trembling, and ask for all the mercy that we need.

That we may obtain mercy. This is what we want *first*. We need pardon—as the first thing when we come to God. We are guilty and self-condemned—and our first cry should be for mercy—mercy. A man who comes to God, not feeling his need of mercy, must fail of obtaining the Divine favour; and he will be best prepared to obtain that favour who has the deepest sense of his need of forgiveness.

And find grace. Favour—strength, help, counsel, direction, support, for the various duties and trials of life. This is what we next need—we all need—we always need. Even when pardoned, we need grace to keep us from sin, to aid us in duty, to preserve us in the day of temptation. And feeling our need of this, we may come and ask of God all that we want for this purpose. Such is the assurance given us; and to this bold approach to the throne of grace all are freely invited. In view of it, let us:

(1) rejoice that there is a throne of grace. What a World would this be if God sat on a throne of *justice* only, and if no mercy were ever to be shown to men! Who is there who would not be overwhelmed with despair? But it is not so. He is on A THRONE OF GRACE. By day and by night; from year to year; from generation to generation, he is on such a throne. In every land he may be approached, and in as many different languages as men speak may they plead for mercy. In all times of our trial and temptation we may be assured that he is seated on that throne, and, wherever we are, we may approach him with acceptance.

(2) We *need* the privilege of coming before such a throne. We are sinful, and need mercy; we are feeble, and need grace to help us. There is not a day of Our lives in which we do not need pardon; not an hour in which we do not need grace.

(3) How obvious are the propriety and necessity of prayer! Every man is a sinner, and should pray for pardon; every man is weak, feeble, dependent, and should pray for grace. Not till a man can prove that he has never done any sin should he maintain that he has no need of pardon; not till he can show that he is able alone to meet the storms and temptations of life should he feel that he has no need to ask for grace. Yet who can feel this? And how strange it is that all men do not pray!

(4) It is easy to be forgiven. All that needs to be done is to plead the merits of our great High Priest, and God is ready to pardon. Who would not be glad to be able to pay a debt in a manner so easy? Yet how few there are who are willing to pay the debt to justice thus!

(5.) It is easy to obtain all the grace that we need. We have only to *ask for it*—and it is done. How easy then to meet temptation, if we would! How strange that any should rely on their own strength, when they may lean on the arm of God!

(6.) If men are not pardoned, and if they fall into sin and ruin, they alone are to blame. There Is A THRONE OF GRACE. It is always accessible. There is A GOD. He is always ready to pardon. There Is A REDEEMER. He is the great High Priest of men. He is always interceding, His merits may always be pleaded as the ground of our salvation. Why then, oh why, should any remain unforgiven, and perish? On them alone the blame must lie. In their own bosoms is the reason why they are not saved.

{e} "boldly" Eph 3:12 Heb 10:19-22

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 5

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 5 - Verse 1

HEBREWS CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER

IN this chapter the subject of the priestly office of Christ is continued, and further illustrated. It had been introduced, Heb 2:17,18, 3:1 4:14-16.

The Jews regarded the office of high priest as an essential feature in the true religion; and it became, therefore, of the highest importance to show that in the Christian system there was a High Priest every way equal to that of the Jews. In his rank; in his character; and in the sacrifice which he offered, he was more than equal to the Jewish high priest; and they who had forsaken Judaism, and embraced Christianity, had lost nothing in this respect by the change, and had gained much. It became necessary, therefore, in making out this point, to institute a comparison between the Jewish high priest, and the great Author of the Christian religion: and this comparison is pursued in this and the following chapters. The comparison in this chapter turns mainly on the qualifications for the office, and the question whether the Lord Jesus had those qualifications. The chapter embraces the following points.

I. The qualifications of a Jewish high priest, Heb 5:1-4. They are these.

(1.) He must have been ordained or appointed by God, for the purpose of offering gifts and sacrifices for sins, Heb 5:1.

(2.) He must be tender and compassionate in his feelings, so that he can sympathize with those for whom he ministers, Heb 5:2.

(3.) He must have an offering to bring to God, and be able to present a sacrifice alike for himself and for the people, Heb 5:3.

(4.) He could not take this honour on himself, but must have evidence that he was called of God, as was Aaron, Heb 5:4.

II. An inquiry whether these qualifications were found in the Lord Jesus, the great High Priest of the Christian dispensation, Heb 5:5-10. In considering this, the apostle specifies the following qualifications in him, corresponding to those which he had said were required by the Jewish high priest.

(1.) He did not take this honour on himself, but was called directly by God, and after an order superior to the Aaronic priesthood —the order of Melchisedek, Heb 5:5,6,9,10.

(2.) He was kind, tender, and compassionate, and showed that he was able to sympathize with those for whom he had undertaken the office. When on the earth, he had evinced all the tenderness which could be desired in one who had come to pity and save mankind, he had a tender, sensitive, human nature. He felt deeply as a man, under the pressure of the great sufferings which he endured, and thus showed that he was abundantly qualified to sympathize with his people, Heb 5:7,8.

III. In verse 10 the apostle had introduced, incidentally, a topic of great difficulty; and he adds, Heb 5:11-14, that he had much to say on that subject, but that those whom he addressed were not qualified then to understand it. They ought to have been so far advanced in knowledge as to have been able to embrace the more abstruse and difficult points connected with the doctrines of Christianity. But they needed, he says, instruction even yet in the more simple elements of religion, and he feared that what he had to say of Melchisedek would be far above their comprehension. This point, therefore, he drops for the present, and in Heb 6 states again, and at greater length, the danger of apostasy, and the importance of perseverance in endeavouring to comprehend the sublime mysteries of the Christian religion; and then Heb 7 he resumes the subject of the comparison between Christ and Melchisedek.

Verse 1. *For every high priest*. That is, among the Jews, for the remarks relate to the Jewish system. The Jews had one high priest who was regarded as the successor of Aaron. The word "*high* priest" means *chief* priest; that is, a priest of higher rank and office than others. By the original regulation the Jewish high priest was to be of the family of Aaron, (Ex 29:9,) though in later times the office was frequently conferred on others. In the time of the Romans it had become venal, and the Mosaic regulation was disregarded, 2 Mac. iv. 7; Jos. Ant. xv. 3, 1. It was no longer held for life, so that there were several persons at one time to whom was given the title of high priest. The high priest was at the head of religious affairs, and was the ordinary judge of all that pertained to religion, and even of the general justice of the Hebrew commonwealth, De 17:8-12 19:17; De 21:5 23:9,10.

He only had the privilege of entering the most holy place once a year, on the great day of atonement, to make expiation for the sins of the people, Le 16. He was to be the son of one who had married a virgin, and was to be free from any corporeal defect, Le 21:13. The dress of the high priest was much more costly and magnificent than that of the inferior order of priests, Ex 39:1-9. He wore a mantle or robe—*meil*—

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of blue, with the borders embroidered with pomegranates in purple and scarlet; an *ephod*—

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—made of cotton, with crimson, purple, and blue, and ornamented with gold, worn over the robe or mantle, without sleeves, and divided below the arm-pits into two parts or halves, of which one was in front, covering the breast, and the other behind, covering the back. In the ephod was a breastplate of curious workmanship, and on the head a mitre. The breastplate was a piece of broidered work about ten inches square, and was made double, so as to answer the purpose of a pouch or bag. It was adorned with twelve precious stones, each one having the name of one of the tribes of Israel. The two upper corners of the breastplate were fastened to the ephod, and the two lower to the girdle. The cut is supposed to give an illustration of this part of the dress of the high priest. It is copied from Taylor's Fragments, appended to Calmet. As there is frequent reference to the high priest of the Jews in this epistle, and as he performed so important an office among the Hebrews, it may be useful to have a view of the appearance of this officer in fall dress. The following cuts will illustrate this.

The first represents him with the robe and the ephod. On each shoulder is seen an onyx stone, Upon each of which were engraved the names of six of the tribes of the children of Israel. The breastplate is also seen with a wrought chain of gold fastened to each corner, and passing under the arms and over each shoulder. The dress is described at length in Ex 28. The second cut, exhibits the dress of the high priest on the day of expiation, and is very plain and simple, consisting only of plain linen, with a sash and girdle, Le 16:4,23.

Taken from among men. There may be an allusion here to the fact, that the great High Priest of the Christian dispensation had a higher than human origin, and was selected from a rank far above men. Or it may be that the meaning is, that every high priest on earth—including, all under the old dispensation and the great High Priest of the new—is ordained with reference to the welfare of men, and to bring some valuable offering for man to God.

Is ordained for men. Is set apart or consecrated for the welfare of men. The Jewish high priest was set apart to his office with great solemnity. See Ex 29.

In things pertaining to God. In religious matters, or with reference to the worship and service of God. He was not to be a civil ruler, nor a teacher of science, nor a military leader, but his business was to superintend the affairs of religion.

That he may offer both gifts. That is, thank-offerings, or oblations, which would be the expressions of gratitude. Many such offerings were made by the Jews under the laws of Moses, and the high priest was the medium by whom they were to be presented to God.

And sacrifices for sins. Bloody offerings; offerings made of slain beasts. The blood of expiation was sprinkled by him on the mercy-seat, and he was the appointed medium by which such sacrifices were to be presented to God. **See Barnes** "Heb 4:6, seq. We may remark here,

(1.) that the proper office of a *priest* is to present a *sacrifice* for sin.

(2.) It is *improper* to give the name priest to a minister of the gospel. The reason is, that he offers no sacrifice; he sprinkles no blood. He is appointed to "preach the word," and to lead the devotions of the church, but not to offer sacrifice. Accordingly, the New Testament preserves entire consistency on this point, for the name *priest* is never once given to the apostles, or to any other minister of the gospel. Among the Papists there is *consistency*—though gross and dangerous error—in the use of the word priest. They believe that the minister of religion offers up "the real body and blood of our Lord;" that the bread and wine are changed by the words of consecration into the "body and blood, the soul and divinity, of the Lord Jesus," (Decrees of the Council of Trent;) and that this is really offered by him as a sacrifice. Accordingly, they "elevate the host;" that is, lift up or offer the sacrifice, and require all to bow before it and worship; and with this view they are *consistent* in retaining the word priest. But why should this name be applied to a *Protestant* minister, who believes that all this is blasphemy, and who claims to have no *sacrifice* to offer when he comes to minister before God? The great sacrifice —the one sufficient atonement—has been offered; and the ministers of the gospel are appointed to proclaim that truth to men, not to offer sacrifices for sin.

{a} "among men" Heb 8:3 {*} "ordained" "appointed" {+} "pertaining" "related"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 5 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Who can have compassion*. Marg. *Reasonably bear with*. The idea is that of *sympathizing with*. The high priest is taken from among men, in order that he may have a fellow-feeling for those on whose behalf he officiates. Sensible of his own ignorance, he is able to sympathize with those who are ignorant; and compassed about with infirmity, he is able to succour those who have like infirmities.

And on them that are out of the way. The erring and the guilty. If he were taken from an order of beings superior to men, he would be less qualified to sympathize with those who felt that they were sinners, and who needed pardon.

For that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. Heb 7:28. He is liable to err; he is subject to temptation; he must die, and appear before God: and encompassed with these infirmities, he is better qualified to minister in behalf of guilty and dying men. For the same reason it is that the ministers of the gospel are chosen from among men. They are of like passions with others. They are sinners; they are dying men. They can enter into the feelings of those who are conscious of

guilt; they can sympathize with those who tremble in dread of death; they can partake of the emotions of those who expect soon to appear before God.

{1} "have compassion" "reasonably bear with" {a} "he himself" Heb 7:28

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 5 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And by reason hereof*. Because he is a sinner—an imperfect man.

As for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. To make an expiation for sins. He needs the same atonement; he offers the sacrifice for himself which he does for others, Le 9:7 The same thing is true of the ministers of religion now. They come before God feeling that they have need of the benefit of the came atonement which they preach to others; they plead the merits of the same blood for their own salvation which they show to be indispensable for the salvation of others.

{*} "hereof" "On this account" {a} "so also" Le 9:7

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 5 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And no man taketh this honour to himself*. No one has a right to enter on this office unless he has the qualifications which God has prescribed. There were fixed and definite laws in regard to the succession in the office of the high priest, and to the qualifications of him who should hold the office.

But he that is called of God, as was Aaron. Aaron was designated by name. It was necessary that his successors should have as clear evidence that they were called of God to the office, as though they had been mentioned by name. The manner in which the high priest was to succeed to the office was designated in the law of Moses, but in the time of Paul these rules were little regarded. The office had become venal, and was conferred at pleasure by the Roman rulers. Still it was true that, according to the law, to which alone Paul here refers, no one might hold this office but he who had the qualifications which Moses prescribed, and which showed that he was called of God. We may remark here,

(1.) that this does not refer so much to an internal as to an *external* call. He was to have the qualifications prescribed in the law; but it is not specified that he should be conscious of an internal call to the office, or be influenced by the Holy Spirit to it. Such a call was, doubtless, in the highest degree desirable, but it was not prescribed as an essential qualification.

(2.) This has no reference to the call to the work of the Christian ministry, and should not be applied to it. It should not be urged as a proof-text to show that a minister of the gospel should have a "call" directly from God, or that he should be called according to a certain order of succession. The object of Paul is not to state this, whatever may be the truth on this point. His object is to show that the Jewish high priest was called of God to his office in a certain way, showing that he held the appointment from God, and that *therefore* it was necessary that the great High Priest of the Christian profession should be called in a similar manner. To this alone the comparison should be understood as applicable.

{b} "no man" 2Ch 26:18 {c} "Aaron" Ex 28:1 Nu 16:40

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 5 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *So also Christ glorified not himself*. **See Barnes "Joh 8:54"**.

The meaning is, that Jesus was not ambitious; that he did not intrude himself into the great office of high priest; he did not enter upon its duties without being regularly called to it. Paul claimed that Christ held that office; but, as he was not descended from Aaron, and as no one might perform its duties without being regularly called to it, it was incumbent on him to show that Jesus was not an intruder, but had a regular vocation to that work. This he shows by a reference to two passages of the Old Testament.

But he that said unto him. That is, he who said to him, "Thou art my son," exalted him to that office He received his appointment from him. This was decisive in the case; and this was sufficient, if it could be made out; for the only claim which Aaron and his successors could have to the office, was the fact that they had received their appointment from God.

Thou art my Son. Ps 2:7. See this passage explained **See Barnes "Ac 13:33"**.

It is here used with reference to the designation to the priestly office, though in the Psalm more particularly to the anointing to the office of king. The propriety of this application is founded on the fact, that the language in the Psalm is of so general a character, that it may be applied to any exaltation of the Redeemer, or to any honour conferred on him. It is here used with strict propriety, for Paul is saying that Jesus did not exalt *himself*, and in proof of that he refers to the fact that God had exalted him by calling him his "*Son*."

{d} "Christ glorified" Joh 8:54 {e} "Thou art my Son" Ps 2:7

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 5 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *As he said also in another place*. Ps 110:4.

Thou art a Priest for ever. It is evident here that the apostle means to be understood as saying that the Psalm referred to Christ-and this is one of the instances of quotation from the Old. Testament respecting which there can be no doubt. Paul makes winch of this argument in a subsequent part of this epistle, Heb 7, and reasons as if no one would deny that the Psalm had a reference to the Messiah. It is clear, from this, that the Psalm was understood by the Jews at that time to have such a reference, and that it was so universally admitted that no one would call it in question. That the Psalm refers to the Messiah has been the opinion of nearly all Christian commentators, and has been admitted by the Jewish Rabbins in general also. The *evidence* that it refers to the Messiah is such as the following.

(1.) It is a Psalm of David, and yet is spoken of One who was superior to him, and whom he called his "Lord," Ps 110:1.

(2.) It cannot be referred to JEHOVAH himself, for he is expressly Ps 110:1 distinguished from him who is here addressed.

(3.) It cannot be referred to any one in the time of David, for there was no one to whom he would attribute this character of superiority but God.

(4.) For the same reason there was no one among his posterity, except the Messiah, to whom he would apply this language.

(5.) It is expressly ascribed by the Lord Jesus to himself, Mt 22:43,44.

(6.) The scope of the Psalm is such as to be applicable to the Messiah, and there is no part of it which would be inconsistent with such a reference. Indeed, there is no passage of the Old Testament of which it would be more universally conceded that there was a reference to the Messiah than this Psalm.

Thou art a Priest. He is not here called a high priest, for Melchisedek did not bear that title, nor was the Lord Jesus to be a high priest exactly in the sense in which the name was given to Aaron and his successors. A word is used, therefore, in a general sense, to denote that he would be a print simply, or would sustain the priestly office. This was all that was needful to the present argument, which was, that he was *designated by God* to the priestly office, and that he had not intruded himself into it. ¶

For ever. This was an important circumstance, of which the apostle makes much use in another part of the epistle. **See Barnes** "Heb 7:8, **See Barnes "Heb 7:23"**

See Barnes "Heb 7:24".

The priesthood of the Messiah was not to change from hand to hand; it was not to be laid down at death; it was to remain unchangeably the same.

After the order. The word rendered *order*— *taxiv* ~means, "a setting in order—hence arrangement or disposition. It may be applied to ranks of soldiers; to the gradations of office; or to any rank which men sustain in society. To say that he was of the same order with Melchisedek, was to say that he was of the same *rank or station*. He was like him in his designation to the office. In what respects he was like him the apostle shows more fully in Heb 7. *One* particular in which there was a striking resemblance, which did not exist between Christ and any other high-priest, was that Melchisedek was both *a priest and a king*. None of the kings of the Jews were priests; nor were any of the priests ever elevated to the office of king. But in Melchisedek these offices were united; and this fact constituted a striking resemblance between him and the Lord Jesus. It was on this principle that there was such pertinency in quoting here the passage from Ps 2. See Heb 5:5. The meaning is, that Melchisedek was of a peculiar rank or order; that he was not numbered with the Levitical priests, and that there were important features in his office which differed from theirs. In those features it was distinctly predicted that the Messiah would resemble him.

Melchisedek. **See Barnes** "Heb 7:1, seq.

{f} "Thou art" Ps 110:4

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 5 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Who*. That is, the Lord Jesus—for so the connexion demands. The *object* of this verse and the two following is, to show that the Lord Jesus had that qualification for the office of priest to which he had referred Heb 5:2. It was one important qualification for that office, that he who sustained it should be able to show compassion, to aid those that were out of the way, and to

sympathize with sufferers; in other words, they were themselves encompassed with infirmity, and thus were able to succour those who were subjected to trials. The apostle shows now that the Lord Jesus had those qualifications, as far as it was possible for one to have them who had no sin. In the days of his flesh he suffered intensely; he prayed with fervour; he placed himself in a situation where he learned subjection and obedience by his trials; and in all things he went far beyond what had been evinced by the priests under the ancient dispensation.

In the days of his flesh. When he appeared on earth as a man. Flesh is used to denote human nature, and especially human nature as susceptible of suffering. The Son of God still is united to human nature, but it is human nature glorified; for in his case, as in all others, "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," 1Co 15:50. He has now a glorified body, Php 3:21, such as the redeemed will have in the future world. Comp, Re 1:13-17. The phrase "*days* of his flesh," means the time when he was incarnate, or when he lived on earth in human form. The particular time here referred to, evidently, was the agony in the garden of Gethsemane.

Prayers and supplications. These words are often used to denote the same thing. If there is a difference, the former—*dehseiv*—means, petitions which arise from a sense of need,—from *deomai*— *want, to need*; the latter refers usually to supplication for protection, and is applicable to one who, under a sense of guilt, flees to an altar with the symbols of supplication in his hand. Suppliants in such cases often carried an olive-branch as an emblem of the peace which they sought.

A fact is mentioned by Livy respecting the Locrians that may illustrate this passage. "Ten delegates from the Locrians, squalid and covered with rags, came into the hall where the consuls were sitting, extending the badges of suppliants—olive branches—according to the custom of the Greeks; and prostrated themselves on the ground before the tribunal, with a lamentable cry," Lib xxix. c. 16. The particular idea in the word here used *ikethria* is, petition for protection,help, or shelter, (*Passow*;) and this idea accords well with the design of the passage. The Lord Jesus prayed as one who had need, and as one who desired protection, shelter, or help. The words here, therefore, do not mean the same thing, and are not merely intensive, but they refer to distinct purposes which the Redeemer had in his prayers. He was about to die, and, as a man, he needed the Divine help; he was, probably, tempted in that dark hour, **See Barnes** "Joh 12:30, and he fled to God for protection.

With strong crying. This word does not mean weeping, as the word "crying" does familiarly with us. It rather means an outcry, the voice of wailing and lamentation. It is the cry for help of one who is deeply distressed, or in danger; and refers here to the earnest petition of the Saviour when in the agony of Gethsemane, or when on the cross. It is the intensity of the voice which is referred to, when it is raised by an agony of suffering. Comp. Lu 22:44: "He prayed more earnestly." Mt 27:46: "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice—My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" See also Mt 26:38,39, 27:60.

And tears. Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus, Joh 11:35, and over Jerusalem, Lu 19:41. It is not expressly stated by the Evangelists that he wept in the garden of Gethsemane, but there is no reason to doubt that he did. In such an intense agony as to cause a bloody sweat, there is every probability that it would be accompanied with tears. We may remark then,

(1.) that there is nothing *dishonourable* in tears, and that man should not be ashamed, on proper occasions, to weep. The fact that the Son of God wept is a full demonstration that it is not disgraceful to weep. God has so made us as to express sympathy for others by tears. Religion does not make the heart insensible and hard, as stoical philosophy does; it makes it tender and susceptible to impression.

(2.) It is not improper to weep. The Son of God wept—and if he poured forth tears it cannot be wrong for us. Besides, it is a great law of our nature, that in suffering we should find relief by tears. God would not have so made us if it had been wrong.

(3.) The fact that the Son of God thus wept should be allowed deeply to affect our hearts.

"He wept that we might weep;"

Each sin demands a tear."

He wept that he might redeem us; we should weep that our sins were so great as to demand such bitter woes for our salvation. That we had sinned; that our sins caused him such anguish; that he endured for us this bitter conflict, should make us weep. Tear should answer to tear, and sigh respond to sigh, and groan to groan, when we contemplate the sorrows of the Son of God in accomplishing our redemption. That man must have a hard heart who has never had an emotion when he has reflected that the Son of God wept, and bled, and died for him.

Unto him that was able. To God. He alone was able then to save. In such a conflict man could not aid; and the help of angels, ready as they were to assist him, could not sustain him. We may derive aid from man in trial; we may be comforted by sympathy and counsel; but there are sorrows where God only can uphold the sufferer. That God was able to uphold him, in his severe conflict, the Redeemer could not doubt; nor need we doubt it, in reference to ourselves, when deep sorrows come over our souls.

To save him from death. It would seem from this, that what constituted the agony of the Redeemer was the dread of death, and that he prayed that he might be saved from that. This might be, so far as the language is concerned, either the dread of death on the spot by the intensity of his sufferings and by the power of the tempter, or it might be the dread of the approaching death on the cross. As the Redeemer, however, knew that he was to die on the cross, it can hardly be supposed that he apprehended death in the garden of Gethsemane. What he prayed for was, that, if it were possible, he might be spared from a death so painful as he apprehended, Mt 26:39. Feeling that God had *power* to save him from that mode of dying, the burden of his petition was, that, if human redemption could be accomplished without such sufferings, it might please his Father to remove that cup from him.

And was heard. In Joh 11:42, the Saviour says, "I know that thou hearest me always." In the garden of Gethsemane he was heard. His prayer was not disregarded, though it was not *literally* answered. The cup of death was not taken away; but his prayer was not disregarded. What answer was given—what assurance or support was imparted to his soul—we are not informed. The case, however, shows us,

(1.) that prayer may be heard even when the sufferings which are dreaded, and from which we prayed to be delivered, may come upon us. They may come with such assurances of Divine favour, and such supports, as will be full proof that the prayer was not disregarded.

(2.) That prayer offered in faith may not be always *literally* answered. No one can doubt that Jesus offered the prayer of faith; and it is as little to be doubted, if he referred in the prayer to the death on the cross, that it was not literally answered. Comp, Mt 26:39. In like manner it may occur now, that prayer shall be offered with every right feeling, and with an earnest desire for the object, which may not be literally answered. Christians, even in the highest exercise of faith, are not inspired to know what is best for them; and, as long as this is the case, it is possible that they may ask for things which it would not be best to have granted. They who maintain that the prayer of faith is

always literally answered, must hold that the Christian is under such a guidance of the Spirit of God that he cannot ask anything amiss. **See Barnes "2Co 12:9"**.

In that he feared. Marg. *For his piety*. Coverdale, "Because he had God in honour." Tindal, "Because he had God in reverence." Prof. Stuart renders it, "And was delivered from that which he feared." So also Doddridge. Whitby, "Was delivered from his fear." Luther renders it, "And was heard for that he had God in reverence"—*dass er Gott in Ehren hatte*. Beza renders it, "His prayers being heard, he was delivered from fear." From this variety in translating the passage, it will be seen at once that it is attended with difficulty. The Greek is, literally, "from fear or reverence" —*apo thv eulabeiav*. The word occurs in the New Testament only in one other place, Heb 12:28, where it is rendered "*fear*." "Let us serve him with reverence and godly *fear*." The word properly means, *caution*, *circumspection*; then timidity, fear; then the fear of God, reverence, piety. Where the most distinguished scholars have differed as to the meaning of a Greek phrase, it would be presumption in me to attempt to determine its sense. The most natural and obvious interpretation, however, as it seems to me, is, that it means that he was heard on account of his reverence for God; his profound veneration; his submission. Such was his piety that the prayer was *heard*, though it was not literally answered. A prayer may be *heard*, and yet not literally answered; it may be acceptable to God, though it may not consist with his arrangements to bestow the very blessing that is sought. The posture of the mind of the Redeemer, perhaps, was something like this. He knew that he was about to be put to death in a most cruel manner. His tender and sensitive nature, as a man, shrank from such a death. As a man he went, under the pressure of his great sorrows, and pleaded that the cup might be removed, and that man might be redeemed by a less fearful scene of suffering. That arrangement, however, could not be made. Yet the spirit which he evinced; the desire to do the will of God; the resignation, and the confidence in his Father which he evinced, were such as were acceptable in his sight. They showed that he had unconquerable virtue; that no power of temptation, and no prospect of the intensest woes which human nature could endure, could alienate him from piety, To show this was an object of inestimable value, and, much as it cost the Saviour, was worth it all. So now it is worth much to see what Christian piety can endure; What strong temptations it can resist; and what strength it has to bear up under accumulated woes: and even though the prayer of the pious sufferer is not directly answered, yet that prayer is acceptable to God, and the result of such a trial is worth all that it costs.

{a} "prayers" Mt 26:39-44 {b} "able" Mt 26:53 {1} "in that he feared" "for his piety"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 5 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Though he were a Son*. Though the Son of God. Though he sustained this exalted rank, and was conscious of it, yet he was willing to learn experimentally what is meant by obedience in the midst of sufferings.

Yet learned he obedience. That is, he learned experimentally and practically. It cannot be supposed that he did not know what obedience was; or that he was *indisposed* to obey God before he suffered; or that he had, as we have, perversities of nature, leading to rebellion, which required to be subdued by suffering;—but that he was willing *to test* the power of obedience in sufferings;

to become personally and practically acquainted with the nature of such obedience in the midst of protracted woes. Comp. **See Barnes "Php 2:8".**

The *object* here is, to show how well fitted the Lord Jesus was to be a Saviour for man-kind; and the argument is, that he has set us an example, and has shown that the most perfect obedience may be manifested in the deepest sorrows of the body and the soul. Learn hence, that one of the objects of affliction is to lead us *to obey God*. In prosperity we forget it. We become self-confident and rebellious. *Then* God lays his hand upon us; breaks up our plans; crushes our hopes; takes away our health; and teaches us that we must be submissive to his will. Some of the most valuable lessons of obedience are learned in the furnace of affliction; and many of the most submissive children of the Almighty have been made so, as the result of protracted woes.

{a} "obedience" Php 2:3

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 5 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *And being made perfect*. That is, being made a *complete* Saviour—a Saviour fitted in all respects to redeem men. Sufferings were necessary to the completeness or the finish of his character as a Saviour—not to his moral perfection, for he was always without sin. See this explained **See Barnes "Heb 2:10".**

He became the Author, That is, he was the procuring cause (*aitiov*) of salvation. It is to be traced wholly to his sufferings and death. **See Barnes "Heb 2:10".**

Unto all them that obey him. It is not to save those who live in sin. Only those who obey him have any evidence that they will be saved. **See Barnes "Joh 14:15".**

{b} "being made perfect" Heb 2:10

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 5 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Called of God*. Addressed by him, or greeted by him. The Word. here used does not mean that he was *appointed* by God, or "*called*" to the office, in the sense in which we often use the word but simply that he was addressed as such, to wit, in Ps 110.

An High Priest. In the Septuagint, (Ps 110.4,) and in Heb 4:6 above, it is rendered *priest* — *iereuv* —-but the Hebrew word

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cohen—is used to denote the high priest, and may mean either. See Sept. in Le 4:3. Whether the word *priest*, or high priest, be used here, does not affect the argument of the apostle.

After the order of Melchisedek. **See Barnes "Heb 5:6".**

{c} "High Priest" Heb 5:6

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 5 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Of whom we have many things to say*. There are many things which seem strange in regard to him; many things which are hard to be understood. Paul knew that what he had to say of this man, as a type of the Redeemer, would excite wonder, and that many might be disposed to call it in question. He knew that, in order to be understood, what he was about to say required a familiar acquaintance with the Scriptures, and a strong and elevated faith. A young convert—one who had just commenced the Christian life—could hardly expect to be able to understand it. The same thing is true now. One of the first questions which a young con- vert often asks is, Who was Melchisedek? And one of the things which most uniformly perplex those who begin to study the Bible, is the statement which is made about this remarkable man.

Hard to be uttered. Rather, hard to be *interpreted, or explained*. So the Greek word means.

Seeing ye are dull of hearing. That is, when they ought to have been acquainted with the higher truths of religion, they had shown that they received them slowly, and were dull of apprehension. On what particular fact Paul grounded this charge respecting them is unknown; nor could we know, unless we were better acquainted with the persons to whom he wrote, and their circumstances, than we now are. But he had doubtless in his eye some fact which showed that they were slow to understand the great principles of the gospel.

{*} "uttered" "explained" {+} "hearing" "apprehension"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 5 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *For when for the time*. Considering the time which has elapsed since you were converted. You have been Christians long enough to be expected to understand such doctrines. This verse proves that those to whom he wrote were not recent converts.

Ye ought to be teachers. You ought to be able to instruct others. He does not mean to say, evidently, that they ought all to become public teachers, or preachers of the gospel, but that they ought to be able to explain to others the truths of the Christian religion. As parents, they ought to be able to explain them to their children; as neighbours, to their neighbours; or as friends, to those who were inquiring the way to life.

Ye have need. That is, probably the mass of them had need. As a people, or a church, they had shown that they were ignorant of some of the very elements of the gospel.

Again. This shows that they had been taught, on some former occasions, what were the first principles of religion, but they had not followed up the teaching as they ought to have done.

The first principles. The very elements; the rudiments; the first lessons—such as children learn before they advance to higher studies. See the word here used explained **See Barnes** "Ro 4:3, under the word "*elements*." The Greek word is the same.

Of the oracles of God. Of the Scriptures, or what God has spoken. **See Barnes "Ro 3:2"**.

The phrase here may refer to the writings of the Old Testament, and particularly to those parts which relate to the Messiah; or it may include all that God had at that time revealed, in whatever way it was preserved. In 1Pe 4:11, it is used with reference to the Christian religion, and to the doctrines which God had revealed in the gospel. In the passage before us it may mean, *the Divine oracles or communications*, in whatever way they had been made known. They had shown that they were ignorant of the very rudiments of the Divine teaching.

And are become such. There is more meant in this phrase than that they simply were such persons. The word rendered "are become" *ginomai*—sometimes implies a change of state, or a passing from one state to another—well expressed by the phrase "are become." See Mt 5:45 4:3, 13:32 6:16 10:25 Mr 1:17 Ro 7:3,4.

The idea here is, that they had passed from the hopeful condition in which they were when they showed that they had an acquaintance with the great principles of the gospel, and that they had become such as to need again the most simple form of instruction. This agrees well with the general strain of the epistle, which is to preserve them from the danger of apostasy. They were verging towards it, and had come to that state where, if they were recovered, it must be by being again taught the elements of religion.

Have need of milk. Like little children. You can bear only the most simple nourishment. The meaning is, that they were incapable of receiving the higher doctrines of the gospel, as much as little children are incapable of digesting solid food. They were, in fact, in a state of spiritual infancy.

And not of strong meat. Greek. "Strong food." The word *meat*, with us, is used now to denote only animal food. Formerly, it meant food in general. The Greek word here means *nourishment*.

{++} "time" "For whereas by this time" {d} "milk" 1Co 3:1-3

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 5 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *For every one that useth milk*. Referring to the food of children. The apostle has in view here those Christians who resemble children in this respect, that they are not capable of receiving the stronger food adapted to those of mature age.

Is unskilful. Inexperienced; who has not skill to perform anything. The word Is properly applied to one who has not experience or skill, or who is ignorant. Here it does not mean that they were not true Christians, but that they had not the experience or skill requisite to enable them to understand the higher mysteries of the Christian religion.

In the word of righteousness. The doctrine respecting the way in which men become righteous, or the way of salvation by the Redeemer. **See Barnes "Ro 1:17"**.

For he is a babe. That is, in religious matters. He understands the great system only as a child may. It is common to speak of "babes in knowledge," as denoting a state of ignorance.

{1} "is unskilful" "hath no experience"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 5 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Strong meat*. Solid food pertains to those of maturer years. So it is with the higher doctrines of Christianity. They can be understood and appreciated only by those who are advanced in Christian experience.

Of full age. Marg *Perfect*. The expression refers to those who are grown up.

Who by reason of use. Marg. *Or, an habit*; or *perfection*. Coverdale and Tindal render it, "through custom." The Greek word means, habit, practice. The meaning is, that by long use and habit they

had arrived to that state in which they could appreciate the more elevated doctrines of Christianity. The reference, in the use of this word is not to those who *eat food*—meaning that by long use they are able to distinguish good from bad; but it is to experienced Christians, who, by long experience, are able to distinguish that which is useful, in pretended religious instruction, from that which is injurious. It refers to the delicate taste which an experienced Christian has in regard to those doctrines which impart most light and consolation. Experience will thus enable one to discern what is fitted to the soul of man, what elevates and purifies the affections, and what tends to draw the heart near to God.

Have their senses. The word here used means, properly, the senses— as we use the term; the seat of sensation, the smell, taste, &c. Then it means, *the internal sense*, the faculty of perceiving truth: and this is the idea here. The meaning is, that by long experience Christians come to be able to understand the more elevated doctrines or Christianity; they see their beauty and value, and they are able carefully and accurately to distinguish them from error. **See Barnes "Joh 7:17".**

To discern both good and evil. That is, in doctrine. They will appreciate and understand that which is true; they will reject that which is false.

{2} "full of age" "perfect" {3} "of use" "or an habit; or perfection"

REMARKS

1. Let us rejoice that we have a High Priest who is duly called to take upon himself the functions of that great office, and who lives for ever, Heb 5:1-6. True, he was not of the tribe of Levi; he was not a descendant of Aaron; but he had a more noble elevation, and a more exalted rank. He was the Son of God, and was called to his office by special Divine designation, He did not obtrude himself into the work; he did not unduly exalt himself, but he was directly called to it by the appointment of God, When, moreover, the Jewish high priests could look back on the long line of their ancestors, and trace the succession up to Aaron, it was in the power of the great High Priest of the Christian faith to look farther back still, and to be associated in the office with one of higher antiquity than Aaron, and of higher rank—one of the most remarkable men of all ancient times—he whom Abraham acknowledged as his superior, and from whom Abraham received the benediction.

2. It is not unmanly to weep, Heb 5:7. The Son of God poured out prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, He wept at the grave of Lazarus, and he wept over Jerusalem. If the Redeemer wept, it is not unmanly to weep; and we should not be ashamed to have tears seen streaming down our cheeks. Tears are appointed by God to be the natural expression of sorrow, and, often to furnish a relief to a burdened soul. We instinctively honour the man whom we see weeping when there is occasion for grief. We sympathize with him ia his sorrow, and we love him the more. When we see a father who could face the cannon's mouth without shrinking, yet weeping over the open grave of a daughter, we honour him more than we could otherwise do. He shows that he has a heart that can love and feel, as well as courage that can meet danger without alarm. Washington wept when he signed the death-warrant of Major Andre; and who ever read the affecting account without feeling that his character was the more worthy of our love? There is enough in the world to make us weep. Sickness, calamity, death, are around us. They come into our dwellings, and our dearest objects of affection are taken away, and *God intends that we shall deeply feel*. Tears here will make heaven more sweet; and our sorrows on earth are intended to prepare us for the joy of that day when it shall be announced to us, that "all tears shall be wiped away from every face."

3. We see the propriety of prayer in view of approaching death, Heb 5:7. The Redeemer prayed when he felt that he must die. We know, also, that we must die. True, we shall not suffer as he did. He had pangs on the cross which no other dying man ever bore. But death to us is am object of dread. The hour of death is a fearful hour. The scene when a man dies is a gloomy scene. The sunken eye, the pallid cheek, the clammy sweat, the stiffened corpse, the coffin, the shroud, the grave, are all sad and gloomy things. We know not, too, what severe pangs we may have when we die. Death may come to us in some peculiarly fearful form; and in view of his approach, in any way, we should pray. Pray, dying man, that you may be prepared for that sad hour; pray, that you may not be left to complain, and rebel, and murmur then; pray, that you may lie down in calmness and peace; pray, that you may be enabled *to honour God even in death*.

4. It is not sinful to dread death, Heb 5:7. The Redeemer dreaded it. His human nature, though perfectly holy, shrank back from the fearful agonies of dying. The fear of death, therefore, in itself, is not sinful. Christians are often troubled because they have not that calmness in the prospect of death which they suppose they ought to have, and because their nature shrinks back from the dying pang. They suppose that such feelings are inconsistent with religion, and that they who have them cannot be true Christians. But they forget their Redeemer, and his sorrows; they forget the earnestness with which he pleaded that the cup might be removed. Death is in itself fearful, and it is a part of our nature to dread it; and even in the best of minds sometimes the fear of it is not wholly taken away until the hour comes, and God gives them "*dying grace*." There are probably two reasons why God made death so fearful to man.

(1.) One is, to impress him with the importance of being prepared for it. Death is, to him, the entrance on an endless being, and it is an object of God to keep the attention fixed on that as a most momentous and solemn event. The ox, the lamb, the robin, the dove, have no immortal nature, no conscience, no responsibility, and no need of making preparation for death; and hence—except in a very slight degree—they seem to have no dread of dying. But not so with man. He has an undying soul. His main business here is to prepare for death, and for the world beyond; and hence, by all the fear of the dying pang, and by all the horror of the grave, God would fix the attention of man on his own death as a most momentous event, and lead him to seek that hope of immortality which alone can lay the foundation for any proper removal of the fear of dying.

(2.) The other reason is, to deter man from taking his own life. To keep him from this, he is made so as to start back from death. He fears it; it is to him an object of deepest dread; and even when pressed down by calamity and sadness, as a general law, he "had rather bear the ills he has, than fly to others that he knows not of." Man is the only creature in reference to whom this danger exists. There is no one of the brute creation, unless it be the scorpion, that will take its own life; and hence they have not such a dread of dying. But we know how it is with man. Weary of life; goaded by a guilty conscience; disappointed and heart-broken, he is under strong temptation to commit the enormous crime of self-murder, and to rush uncalled to the bar of God. As one of the means of deterring from this, God has so made us that we fear to die; and thousands are kept from this enormous crime by this fear, when nothing else would save them. It is benevolence, therefore, to the world, that man is afraid to die; and in every pang of the dying struggle, and everything about death that makes us turn pale, and tremble at its approach, there is in some way the manifestation of goodness to mankind.

5. We may be comforted in the prospect of death by looking to the example of the Redeemer, Heb 5:7. Much as we may fear to die, and much as we may be left to suffer then, of one thing we

may be sure. It is, that he has gone beyond us in suffering. The sorrows of our dying will never equal his. We shall never go through such scenes as occurred in the garden of Gethsemane and on the cross. It may be some consolation that human nature has endured greater pangs than we shall, and that there is one who has surpassed us even in our keenest sufferings. It should be to us a source of consolation, also, of the highest kind, that he did it that he might alleviate our sorrows, and that he might drive away the horrors of death from us by "bringing life and immortality to light," and that, as the result of *his* sufferings, our dying moments may be calm and peaceful.

6. It often occurs that men are true Christians, and yet are ignorant of the elementary principles of religion, Heb 5:12. This is owing to such things as the following:—A want of early religious instruction; the faults of preachers who fail to teach their people; a want of inquiry on the part of Christians, and the interest which they feel in other things above that which they feel in religion. It is often surprising what vague and unsettled opinions many professed Christians have on some of the most important points of Christianity, and how little qualified they are to defend their opinions when they are attacked. Of multitudes in the Church even now it might be said, that they "need some one to teach them what are the very first principles of true religion." To some of the *elementary* doctrines of Christianity, about deadness to the world, about self-denial, about prayer, about doing good, and about spirituality, they are utter strangers. So of forgiveness of injuries, and charity, and love for a dying world. These are the elements of Christianity—rudiments which children in righteousness should learn; and yet they are not learned by multitudes who bear the Christian name.

7. All Christians ought to be teachers, Heb 5:12. I do not mean that they should all be *preachers*; but they should all so live as to teach others the true nature of religion. This they should do by their example, and by their daily conversation. Any Christian is qualified to impart useful instruction to others. The servant of lowest rank may teach his master how a Christian should live. A child may thus teach a parent how he should live, and his daily walk may furnish to the parent lessons of inestimable value. Neighbours may thus teach neighbours; and strangers may learn of strangers. Every Christian has a knowledge of the way to be saved, which it would be of the highest value to others to know, and is qualified to tell the rich, and proud, and learned sinner, that about himself, and of the final destiny of man, of which he is now wholly ignorant. Let it be remembered, also, that the world derives its views of the nature of religion from the lives and conduct of its professed friends. It is not from the Bible, or from the pulpit, or from books, that men learn what Christianity is; it is from the daily walk of those who profess to be its friends; and every day we live, a wife, a child, a neighbour, or a stranger, is forming some view of the nature of religion from what they see in us. How important, therefore, it is that we so live as to communicate to them just views of what constitutes religion!

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 6

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 6 - Verse 1

CHAPTER SIX

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

In Heb 5:10,11, the apostle had said that the Lord Jesus was called to the office of high priest after the order of Melchisedek, and that there were many things to be said of him which were not easy to be understood. They had not, he says, advanced as far in the knowledge of the true religion as might have been reasonably expected, but had rather gone back, Heb 5:12-14. The design of this chapter seems to be, to warn them against the danger of going back entirely, and to encourage them to make the highest attainments possible in the knowledge of Christianity, and in the divine life. The apostle would keep them from entire apostasy, and would excite them to make all the advances which they possibly could make; and particularly he designs to prepare them to receive what he had yet to say about the higher doctrines of the Christian religion. In doing this he presents the following considerations.

(1.) An exhortation to leave the elements or rudiments of the Christian religion, and to go on to the contemplation of the higher doctrines. The elements were the doctrines of repentance, faith, laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. These entered into the very nature of Christianity. They were its first principles, and were indispensable. The higher doctrines related to other matters, which the apostle called them now to contemplate, Heb 6:1-2.

(2.) He warns them, in the most solemn manner, against apostasy. He assures them that, if they should apostatize, it would be impossible to renew them again. They could not fall away from grace, and again be renewed; they could not, after having been Christians and then apostatizing, be recovered. Their fall, in that case, would be final and irrecoverable, for there was no other way by which they could be saved; and by rejecting the Christian scheme, they would reject the only plan by which they could ever be brought to heaven. By this solemn consideration, therefore, he warns them of the danger of going back from their exalted hopes, or of neglecting the opportunities which they had to advance to the knowledge of the higher truths of religion, vers. Heb 6:4-6.

(3.) This sentiment is illustrated Heb 6:7,8 by a striking and beautiful figure drawn from agriculture. The sentiment was, that they who did not improve their advantage, and grow in the knowledge of the gospel, but who should go back and apostatize, would inevitably be destroyed. They could not be renewed and saved. It will be, says the apostle, as it is with the earth. That which receives the rain that falls, and that bears its proper increase for the use of man, partakes of the Divine blessing. That which does not—which bears only thorns and briers—is rejected, and is nigh to cursing, and will be burned with fire.

(4.) Yet the apostle says, he hoped better things of them. They had indeed receded from what they had been. They had not made the advances which he says they might have done. But still, there was reason to hope that they would not wholly apostatize, and be cast off by God. They had shown that they had true religion, and he believed that God would not forget the evidence which they had furnished that they loved him, Heb 6:9,10.

(5.) He expresses his earnest wish that they all would show the same diligence until they attained the full assurance of hope, Heb 6:11,12.

(6.) To encourage them in this, he refers them to the solemn oath which God had taken, and his sacred covenant with them confirmed by an oath, in order that they might have true consolation, and be sustained in the temptations and trials of life. That hope was theirs. It was sure and steadfast. It entered into that within the veil; it had been confirmed by him who had entered heaven as the

great High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, Heb 6:13-20. By such considerations he would guard them from the danger of apostasy; he would encourage them to diligence in the divine life; and he would seek to prepare them to welcome the more high and difficult doctrines of the Christian religion.

Verse 1. *Therefore*. "Since, as was stated in the previous chapter, you *ought* to be capable of comprehending the higher doctrines of religion; since those doctrines are adapted to those who have been for a considerable time professors of Christianity, and have had opportunities of growing in knowledge and grace—as much as strong meat is for those of mature years—leave now the elements of Christian doctrine, and go on to understand its higher mysteries." The idea is, that to those who had so long been acquainted with the way of salvation, the elements of Christianity were no more adapted than milk was for grown persons.

Leaving. Dismissing; intermitting; passing by the consideration of, with a view to advance to something higher. The apostle refers to his discussion of the subject, and also to their condition. He wished to go on to the contemplation of higher doctrines, and he desired that they should no longer linger around the mere elements. "Let us advance to a higher state of knowledge than the mere elements of the subject." On the sense of the word "leaving," or quitting with a view to engage in something else, see Mt 4:20,22, 5:24.

The principles. Marg. *The word of the beginning of Christ*. Tindal renders it, "let us leave the doctrine pertaining to the beginning of a Christian man." Coverdale, "let us leave the doctrine pertaining to the beginning of a Christian life." On the word "principles" see **See Barnes "Heb 5:12"**.

The Greek there, indeed, is not the same as in this place, but the idea is evidently the same. The reference is to what he regarded as the very elements of the Christian doctrine; and the meaning is, "Let us no longer linger here.' We should go on to higher attainments. We should wholly understand the system. We should discuss and receive its great principles. You have been long enough converted to have understood these; but you linger among the very elementary truths of religion. But you cannot remain here. You must either advance or recede; and if you do not go forward, you will go back into entire apostasy, when it will be *impossible* to be renewed." The apostle here, therefore, does not refer to his *discussion* of the points under consideration as the main thing, but to their state as one of danger; and in writing to them he was not content to discuss the elements of religion as being alone fitted to their condition, but would have them make higher attainments, and advance to the more elevated principles of the gospel.

Of the doctrine. Literally, "the word" *logon*—reason, or doctrine of the beginning of Christ." That is, the word or reason that pertains to the elements of his system; the first principles of Christian doctrine.

Of Christ. Which pertain to the Messiah. Either that which he taught, or that which is taught of him and his religion, Most probably it is the latter—that which pertains to the Messiah, or to the Christian revelation. The idea is, that there is a set of truths which maybe regarded as lying at the foundation of Christian doctrine, and those truths they had embraced, but had not advanced beyond them.

Let us go on. Let us advance to a higher state of knowledge and holiness. The reference is alike to his discussion of the subject, and to their advancement in piety and in knowledge. He would not linger around these elements in the discussion, nor would he have them linger at the threshold of the Christian doctrines.

Unto perfection. Comp. **See Barnes "Heb 2:10"**.

The word here is used, evidently, to denote an advanced state of Christian knowledge and piety; or the more elevated Christian doctrines, and the holier living to which it was their duty to attain. It does not refer solely to the intention of the apostle to discuss the more elevated doctrines of Christianity, *but to such an advance as would secure them from the danger of apostasy*. If it should be said, however, that the word "*perfection*" is to be understood in the most absolute and unqualified sense, as denoting entire freedom from sin, it may be remarked,

(1.) that this does not prove that they ever attained to it, nor should this be adduced as a text to show that such an attainment is ever made. To exhort a man to do a thing—however reasonable—is no proof in itself that it is ever done.

(2.) It is proper to exhort Christians to aim at entire perfection. Even if none have ever reached that point on earth, that fact does not make it any the less desirable or proper to aim at it.

(3.) There is much in making an honest attempt to be perfectly holy, even though we should not attain to it in this life. No man accomplishes much who does not aim high.

Not laying again the foundation. Not laying down—as one does a foundation for an edifice. The idea is, that they were not to begin and build all this over again. They were not to make it necessary to lay down again the very corner-stones, and the foundations of the edifice, but since these were laid already, they were to go on and build the superstructure and complete the edifice.

Of repentance from dead works. From works that cause death or condemnation; or that have no vitality or life. The reference may be either to those actions which were sinful in their nature, or to those which related to the *forms* of religion, where there was no spiritual life. This was the character of much of the religion of the Jews; and conversion to the true religion consisted greatly in repentance for having relied on those heartless and hollow forms. It is possible that the apostle referred mainly to these, as he was writing to those who had been Hebrews. When formalists are converted, one of the first and the main exercises of their minds in conversion, consists in deep and genuine sorrow for their dependence on those forms. Religion is life; and irreligion is a state of spiritual death, (comp. **See Barnes** "Eph 2:1, whether it be in open transgression, or in false and hollow forms of religion. The apostle has here stated what is the first element of the Christian religion. It consists in genuine sorrow for sin, and a purpose to turn from it. **See Barnes "Mt 3:2"**.

And of faith toward God. **See Barnes "Mr 16:16"**.

This is the second element in the Christian system. Faith is everywhere required in order to salvation, but it is usually faith in the Lord Jesus that is spoken of. See Ac 20:21. Here, however faith in God is particularly referred to. But there is no essential difference. It is faith in God in regard to his existence and perfections, and to his plan of saving men. It includes, therefore, faith in his message and messenger, and thus embraces the plan of salvation by the Redeemer. There is but one God— "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ;" and he who believes in the true God, believes in him as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the Author of the plan of redemption, and the Saviour of *lost* men. No one can believe *in the true God* who does not believe in the *Saviour*. Comp. Joh 5:23 17:3. He who supposes that he confides in any other God than the Author of the Christian religion, worships a being of the imagination as really as though he bowed down to a block of wood or stone. If Christianity is true, there is no such God as the infidel professes to believe in, any more than the god of the Brahmin has an existence. To believe *in God*, therefore, is to believe in him as he *actually exists*—as the true God—the Author of the great plan of salvation by the Redeemer. It is needless to attempt to show that faith in the true God is essential to salvation. How can he be saved who has no *confidence* in the God that made him?

{a} "dead works" Heb 9:14 {b} "toward God" Heb 11:6

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 6 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Of the doctrine of baptisms*. This is mentioned as the third element or principle of the Christian religion. The Jews made much of various kinds of washings, which were called baptisms. **See Barnes "Mr 7:4".**

It is supposed, also, that they were in the practice of baptizing proselytes to their religion. **See Barnes "Mt 3:6".**

Since they made so much of various kinds of ablution, it was important that the true doctrine on the subject should be stated as one of the elements of the Christian religion, that they might be recalled from superstition, and that they might enjoy the benefits of what was designed to be an important aid to piety—the true doctrine of baptisms. It will be observed that the plural form is used here—*baptisms*. There are two baptisms whose necessity is taught by the Christian religion—baptism by water, and by the Holy Ghost: the first of which is an emblem of the second. These are stated to be among the *elements* of Christianity, or the things which Christian converts would first learn. The necessity of both is taught. "He that believeth, and is *baptized* shall be saved," Mr 16:16. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," Joh 3:5. On the baptism of the Holy Ghost, **See Barnes "Mt 3:11"**; **See Barnes** "Ac 1:6"; comp. Ac 19:1-6. To understand the true doctrine respecting baptism was one of the first principles to be learned then, as it is now, as baptism is the rite by which we are *initiated* into the Church. This was supposed to be so simple, that young converts could understand it as one of the elements of the true religion; and the teaching on that subject now should be made so plain that the humblest disciple may comprehend it. If it was an element or first principle of religion; if it was presumed that any one who entered the Church could understand it, can it be believed that it was then so perplexing and embarrassing as it is often made now? Can it be believed that a vast array of learning, and a knowledge of languages, and a careful inquiry into the customs of ancient times, was needful in order that a candidate for baptism should understand it? The truth is, that it was probably regarded as among the most simple and plain matters of religion; and every convert was supposed to understand that the application of water to the body in this ordinance, in any mode, was designed to be merely emblematic of the influences of the Holy Ghost.

And of laying on of hands. This is the *fourth* element or principle of religion. The Jews practised the laying on of hands on a great variety of occasions. It was done when a blessing was imparted to any one; when prayer was made for one; and when they offered sacrifice they laid their hands on the head of the victim, confessing their sins, Le 16:21 24:14; Nu 8:12.

It was done on occasions of solemn consecration to office, and when friend supplicated the Divine favour on friend. In like manner, it was often done by the Saviour and the apostles. The Redeemer laid his hands on children to bless them, and on the sick when he healed them, Mt 19:13 Mr 5:23; Mt 9:18.

In like manner, the apostles laid hands on others in the following circumstances: —

(1.) In healing the sick, Ac 28:8.

(2.) In ordination to office, 1Ti 5:22 Ac 6:6.

(3.) In imparting the miraculous influences of the Holy Spirit, Ac 8:17,19, 19:6.

The true doctrine respecting the design of laying on the hands, is said here to be one of the elements of the Christian religion. That the custom of laying on the hands, as symbolical of imparting spiritual gifts, prevailed in the Church in the time of the apostles, no one can doubt. But on the question whether it is to be regarded as of perpetual obligation in the Church, we are to remember,

(1.) that the apostles were endowed with the power of imparting the influences of the Holy Ghost in a miraculous or extraordinary manner. It was with reference to such an imparting of the Holy Spirit that the expression is used in each of the eases where it occurs in the New Testament.

(2.) The Saviour did not appoint the imposition of the hands of a "bishop" to be one of the rites or ceremonies to be observed perpetually in the Church. The injunction to be baptized and to observe his Supper is positive, and is universal in its obligation. But there is no such command respecting the imposition of hands.

(3.) No one now is entrusted with the power of imparting the Holy Spirit in that manner. There is no class of officers in the Church that can make good their claim to any such power. What evidence is there that the Holy Spirit is imparted at the rite of "confirmation?"

(4.) It is liable to be abused, or to lead persons to substitute the form for the thing; or to think that because they have been "confirmed," that therefore they are sure of the mercy and favour of God. Still, if it be regarded as a *simple form of admission to a church*, without claiming that it is enjoined by God, or that it is connected with any authority to impart the Holy Spirit, no objection can be made to it, any more than there need be to any other form of recognising church-membership. Every pastor has a right, if he chooses, to lay his hands on the members of his flocks and to implore a blessing on them; and such an act, on making a profession of religion, would have much in it that would be appropriate and solemn.

And of resurrection of the dead. This is mentioned as the fifth element or principle of the Christian religion. This doctrine was denied by the Sadducees, Mr 12:18 Ac 23:8 and was ridiculed by philosophers, Ac 17:32. It was, however, clearly taught by the Saviour, Joh 5:28,29, and became one of the cardinal doctrines of his religion. By the resurrection of the dead, however, in the New Testament, there is more intended than the resurrection of the *body*. The question about the resurrection included the whole inquiry about the future state, or whether man would live at all in the future world. Comp. **See Barnes "Mt 22:23"**; **See Barnes "Ac 23:6"**.

This is one of the most important subjects that can come before the human mind, and one on which man has felt more perplexity than any other. The belief of the resurrection of the dead is an elementary article in the system of Christianity. It lies at the foundation of all our hopes. Christianity is designed to prepare us for a future state; and one of the first things, therefore, in the preparation, is to *assure* us that there/s a future state, and to tell us what it is. It is, moreover, a *peculiar* doctrine of Christianity. The belief of the resurrection is found in no other system of religion, nor is there a ray of light shed upon the future condition of man by any other scheme of philosophy or religion.

And of eternal judgment. This is the sixth element or principle of religion. It is, that there will be a judgment whose consequences will be eternal. It does not mean, of course, that the *process* of the judgment will be eternal, or that the judgment-day will continue for ever; but that the *results or consequents* of the decision of that day will continue for ever. There will be no appeal from the sentence, nor will there be any reversal of the judgment then pronounced. What is decided then will be determined for ever. The approval of the righteous will fix their state eternally in heaven, and, in like manner, the condemnation of the wicked will fix their doom for ever in hell. This

doctrine was one of the earliest that was taught by the Saviour and his apostles, and is inculcated in the New Testament perhaps with more frequency than any other. See Mt 25 Ac 17:31.

That the consequences or results of the judgment will be *eternal*, is abundantly affirmed. See Mt 25:46 Joh 5:29; 2Th 1:9 Mr 9:45,48.

{c} "doctrine" Ac 19:4,5 {d} "laying on of hands" Ac 8:17 {e} "resurrection" Ac 17:31 26:8

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 6 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And this will we do*. We will make these advances towards a higher state of knowledge and piety. Paul had confidence that they would do it Heb 6:9,10; and though they had lingered long around the elements of Christian knowledge, he believed that they would yet go on to make higher attainments.

If God permit. This is not to be interpreted as if God was *unwilling* that they should make such advances, or if it were *doubtful* whether he would allow it if they made an honest effort, and their lives were spared; but it is a phrase used to denote their *dependence* on him. It is equivalent to saying, "if he would spare their lives, their health, and their reason; if he would continue the means of grace, and would impart his Holy Spirit; if he would favour their efforts, and crown them with success, they would make these advances." In reference to *anything* that we undertake, however pleasing to God in itself, it is proper to recognise our entire dependence on God. See Jas 4:13-16. Comp. **See Barnes "Joh 15:5".**

{a} "if God permit" Jas 4.15

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 6 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *For it is impossible*. It is needless to say that the passage here Heb 6:4-6 has given occasion to much controversy, and that the opinions of commentators and of the Christian world are yet greatly divided in regard to its meaning. On the one hand, it is held that the passage is not intended to describe those who are true Christians, but only those who have been awakened and enlightened, and who then fall back; and on the other, it is maintained that it refers to those who are true Christians, and who then apostatize. The contending parties have been Calvinists and Armenians; each party, in general, interpreting it according to the views which are held on the question about falling from grace. I shall endeavour, as well as I may be able, to state the true meaning of the passage, by an examination of the words and phrases in detail: observing here, in general, that it seems to me that it refers to true Christians; that the object is to keep them from apostasy; and that it teaches that, if they should apostatize, it would be impossible to renew them again, or to save them. That it refers to true Christians will be apparent from these considerations:—

(1.) Such is the sense which would strike the great mass of readers. Unless there were some theory to defend, the great body of readers of the New Testament would consider the expression here used as describing true Christians.

(2.) The connexion demands such an interpretation. The apostle was addressing Christians. He was endeavouring to keep them from apostasy. The object was not to keep those who were awakened and enlightened from apostasy, but it was to preserve those who were already in the Church of Christ from going back to perdition. The kind of exhortation appropriate to those who were awakened and convicted, but who were not truly converted, would be *to become converted*; not to warn them of the danger of *falling away*. Besides, the apostle would not have said of such persons that they could not be converted and saved. [But of sincere Christians it might be said, with the utmost propriety, that they *could not* be renewed again, and be saved, if they should fall away—because they rejected the only plan of salvation after they had tried it, and renounced the only scheme of redemption after they had tasted its benefits. If that plea could not save them, what could? If they neglected that, by what Other means could they be brought to God?

(3.) This interpretation accords, as I suppose, with the exact meaning of the phrases which the apostle uses. An examination of those phrases will show that he refers to those who are sincere believers. The phrase "it is impossible," obviously and properly denotes absolute impossibility. It has been contended, by Storr and others, that it denotes only great difficulty. But the meaning which would at first strike all readers would be, that the thing could not be done; that it was not merely very difficult, but absolutely impracticable. The word—*adunaton*—occurs only in the New Testament in the following places, in all which it denotes that the thing could not be done. Mt 19:26 Mr 10:27: "With men this is impossible;" that is, men could not save one who was rich; implying that the thing was wholly beyond human power. Lu 18:27: "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God"—-referring to the same case. Ac 14:8 "A man of Lystra, impotent in his feet;" that is, who was wholly unable to walk. Ro 8:3: "For what the law could not do;" what was absolutely impossible for the law to accomplish; that is, to save men. Heb 6:18: "In which it was impossible for God to lie." Heb 10:4: "It is not *possible* for the blood of bulls and of goats to take away sin." And Heb 11:6: "Without faith it is *impossible* to please God."—In all of these instances denoting absolute impossibility. These passages show that it is not merely a great difficulty to which the apostle refers, but that he meant to say that the thing was wholly impracticable; that it could not be done. And if this be the meaning, then it proves that if those referred to should fall away, they could never be renewed; their case was hopeless, and they must perish:—that is, if a true Christian should apostatize, or fall from grace, he never could be renewed again, and could not be saved. Paul did not teach that he might fall away and be renewed again as often as he pleased. He had other views of the grace of God than this; and he meant to teach, that if a man should once cast off true religion, his case was hopeless, and he must perish: and by this solemn consideration—the only one that would be effectual in such a case—he meant to guard them against the danger of apostasy.

For those who were once enlightened. The phrase "to be enlightened" is one that is often used in the Scriptures, and may be applied either to one whose understanding has been enlightened to discern his duty, though he is not converted, (comp. **See Barnes "Joh 1:9"**;) or, more commonly, to one who is truly converted. **See Barnes "Eph 1:18"**.

It does not of necessity refer to true Christians, though it cannot be denied that it more obviously suggests the idea that the heart is truly changed, and that it is more commonly used in that sense. Comp. Ps 19:8. Light, in the Scriptures, is the emblem of knowledge, holiness, and happiness; and there is no impropriety here in understanding it in accordance with the more decisive phrases which follow, as referring to true Christians.

And have tasted. To taste of a thing means, according to the usage in the Scriptures, to experience, or to understand it. The expression is derived from the fact, that the taste is one of the means by which we ascertain the nature or quality of an object. Comp. Mt 16:28 Joh 8:51; Heb 2:9. The proper idea here is, that they had *experienced* the heavenly gift, or had learned its nature.

The heavenly gift. The gift from heaven, or which pertains to heaven. **See Barnes "Joh 4:10"**.

The express!on properly means, some favour or gift which has descended from heaven; and may refer to any of the benefits which God has conferred on man in the work of redemption. It might include the plan of salvation; the forgiveness of sins; the enlightening, renewing, and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, or any one of the graces which that spirit imparts. The use of the article, however,—" the heavenly gift,"—limits it to something special, as being conferred directly from heaven; and the connexion would seem to demand that we understand it of some peculiar favour which could be conferred only on the children of God. It is an expression which may be applied to sincere Christians; it is at least doubtful whether it can with propriety be applied to any other.

And were made partakers of the Holy Ghost. Partakers of the influences of the Holy Ghost—for it is only in this sense that we can partake of the Holy Spirit. We *partake* of food when we share it with others; we partake of pleasure when we enjoy it with others; we *partake* of spoils in war when they are divided between us and others. So we *partake* of the influences of the Holy Spirit when we share these influences conferred on his people. This is not language which can properly be applied to any one but a true Christian; and though it is true that an unpardoned sinner may be enlightened and awakened by the Holy Spirit, yet the language here used is not such as would be likely to be employed to describe his state. It is too clearly expressive of those influences which renew and sanctify the soul. It is as elevated language as can be used to describe the joy of the Christian, and is undoubtedly used in that sense here. If it is not, it would be difficult to find any language which would properly express the condition of a renewed heart. Grotius, Bloomfield, and some others, understood this or the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit. But this is not necessary, and does not accord well with the general description here, which evidently pertains to the mass of those whom the apostle addressed.

{b} "impossible" Mt 5:13 12:31,32 Joh 15:6; Heb 10:26 2Pe 2:20,21

1Jo 5:16

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 6 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And have tasted the good word of God*. That is, either the doctrines which he teaches, and which are good or pleasant to the soul; or the word of God which is connected with good, that is, which promises good. The former seems to be the correct meaning—that the word of God, or the truth which he taught, was itself a good. It was that which the soul desired, and in which it found comfort and peace. Comp. Ps 119:103 141:6. The meaning here is, that they had experienced the excellency of the truth of God; they had seen and enjoyed its beauty. This is language which cannot be applied to an impenitent sinner. He has no *relish* for the truth of God; sees no beauty in it; derives no comfort from it. It is only the true Christian who has pleasure in its contemplation,

and who can be said to "taste" and enjoy it. This language describes a state or mind of which every sincere Christian is conscious, It is that of pleasure in the word of God. He loves the Bible; he loves the truth of God that is preached. He sees an exquisite beauty in that truth. It is not merely in its poetry; in its sublimity; in its argument; but he has now a taste or relish for the truth itself, which he had not before his conversion. Then he might have admired the Bible for its beauty of language, or for its poetry; he might have been interested in preaching for its eloquence or power of argument; but now his love is for the truth. Comp. Ps 19:10. There is no book that he so much delights in as the Bible; and no pleasure is so pure as that which he has in contemplating the truth. Comp. Jos 21:45 23:16.

And the powers of the world to come. Or of the "coming age." "The age to come" was a phrase in common use among the Hebrews, to denote the future dispensation, the times of the Messiah. The same idea was expressed by the phrases, "the last times," "the end of the world," etc., which are of so frequent occurrence in the Scriptures. They all denoted an age which was to succeed the old dispensation; the time of the Messiah; or the period in which the affairs of the world would be wound up. **See Barnes "Isa 2:2".**

Here it evidently refers to that period; and the meaning is, that they had participated in the peculiar blessings to be expected in that dispensation—to wit, in the clear views of the way of salvation, and the influences of the Holy Spirit on the soul. The word "powers" here implies that in that time there would be some extraordinary manifestation of the *power* of God. An unusual energy would be put forth to save men, particularly as evinced by the agency of the Holy Spirit on the heart. Of this "power" the apostle here says they of whom he spake had partaken. They had been brought under the awakening and renewing energy which God put forth under the Messiah, in saving the soul. They had experienced the promised blessings of the new and last dispensation; and the language here is such as appropriately describes Christians, and as indeed can be applicable to no other. It may be remarked respecting the various expressions used here, Heb 6:4,5,

(1.) that they are such as properly denote a renewed state. They obviously describe the condition of a Christian; and though it may be not certain that any *one* of them, if taken by itself, would *prove* that the person to whom it was applied was truly converted, yet, taken together, it is clear that they are designed to describe such a state. If they are not, it would be difficult to find any language which would be properly descriptive of the character of a sincere Christian. I regard the description here, therefore, as that which is clearly designed to denote the state of those who were born again, and were the true children of God; and it seems plain to me, that no other interpretation would have ever been thought of, if this view had not seemed to conflict with the doctrine of the "perseverance of the saints."

(2.) There is a regular gradation here from the first elements of piety in the soul to its highest developments; and, whether the apostle so designed it or not, the language describes the successive steps by which a true Christian advances to the highest stage of Christian experience. The mind is

(a.) enlightened; then

(b.) tastes the gift of heaven, or has some experience of it; then

(c.) it is made to partake of the influences of the Holy Ghost; then

(d.) there is experience of the excellence and loveliness of the word of God; and

(e.) finally, there is a participation of the full "powers" of the new dispensation—of the extraordinary energy which God puts forth in the gospel to sanctify and save the soul.

{+} "to come" "The mighty works of that age that is to come"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 6 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *If they shall fall away*. Literally, "and having fallen away." "There is no *if* in the Greek in this place—' having fallen away.'" *Dr. J. P. Wilson*. It is not an affirmation that any *had* actually fallen away, or that, in fact, they would do it; but the statement is, that on the supposition that they had fallen away, it would be impossible to renew them again. It is the same as supposing a case which, in fact, might never occur:—as if we should say, "had a man fallen down a precipice, it would be impossible to save him;" or, "had the child fallen into the stream, he would certainly have been drowned." But though this literally means "having fallen away," yet the sense, in the connexion in which it stands, is not improperly expressed by our common translation. The Syriac has given a version Which is remarkable, not as a correct translation, but as showing what was the prevailing belief in the time in which it was made, (probably the first or second century,) in regard to the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. "For it is impossible that they who have been baptized, and who have tasted the gift which is from heaven, and have received the spirit of holiness, and have tasted the good word of God, and the power of the coming age, should again sin, so that they should be renewed again to repentance, and again crucify the Son of God, and put him to ignominy." The word rendered "*fall away*" means, properly, "to fall near by any one;" "to fall in with, or meet;" and thus to fall aside from, to swerve or deviate from; and here means undoubtedly to apostatize from, and implies an entire renunciation of Christianity, or a going back to a state of Judaism, heathenism, or sin. The Greek word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It is material to remark here, that the apostle does not say that any true Christian ever had fallen away. He makes a statement of what would occur on the supposition that such a thing should happen -but a statement may be made of what would occur on the supposition that a certain thing should take place, and yet it be morally certain that the event never would happen. It would be easy to suppose what would happen if the ocean should overflow a continent, or if the sun should cease to rise, and still there be entire certainty that such an event never would occur.

To renew them again. Implying that they had been before renewed, or had been true Christians. The word *again*"—*palin* —supposes this; and this passage, therefore, confirms the considerations suggested above, showing that they were true Christians who were referred to. They had once repented, but it would be impossible to bring them to this state again. The declaration, of course, is to be read in connexion with the first clause of Heb 6:4, "It is impossible to renew again to repentance those who once were true Christians, should they fall away." I know of no declaration more unambiguous than this. It is a positive declaration. It is not that it would be very difficult to do it; or that it would be impossible for man to do it, though it might be done by God; it is an unequivocal and absolute declaration that it would be utterly impracticable that it should be done by any one, or by any means; and this, I have no doubt, is the meaning of the apostle. Should a Christian fall from grace, he *must perish*. HE NEVER COULD BE SAVED The *reason* of this the apostle immediately, adds.

Seeing. This word is not in the Greek, though the sense is expressed. The Greek literally is, "having again crucified to themselves the Son of God." The reason here given is, that the crime would be so great, and they would so effectually exclude themselves from the only plan of salvation, that they could not be saved. There is but one way of salvation. Having tried that, and then renounced it, how could they then be saved? The case is like that of a drowning man. If there was but one plank by which he could be saved, and he should get on that, and then push it away and plunge into

the deep, he must die. Or if there was but one rope by which the shore could be reached from a wreck, and he should cut that and cast it off, he must die. Or if a man were sick, and there was but one kind of medicine that could possibly restore him, and he should deliberately dash that away, he must die. So in religion. There is but *one way* of salvation. If a man deliberately rejects that, he must perish.

They crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh. Our translators have rendered this as if the Greek were— *anastaurountav palin*— *crucify again*, and so it is rendered by Chrysostom, by Tindal, Coverdale, Beza, Luther, and others. But this is not properly the meaning of the Greek. The word *anastaurow* is an *intensive* word, and is employed instead of the usual word "to crucify," only to denote emphasis. It means that such an act of apostasy would be equivalent to crucifying him in an aggravated manner. Of course this is to be taken *figuratively*. It could not be literally true that they would thus crucify the Redeemer. The meaning is, that their conduct would be as if they had crucified him; it would bear a strong resemblance to the act by which the Lord Jesus was publicly rejected and condemned to die. The act of crucifying the Son of God was the great crime which outpeers any other deed of human guilt. Yet the apostle says, that should they who had been true Christians fall away, and reject him, they would be guilty of a similar crime. It would be a public and solemn act of rejecting him. It would show that if they had been there they would have joined in the cry, "Crucify him, crucify him!" The *intensity and aggravation* of such a crime perhaps the apostle meant to indicate by the intensive or emphatic *ana* in the *anastaurountav*. Such an act would render their salvation impossible, because

(1.) the crime would be aggravated beyond that of those who rejected him and put him to death—for they knew not what they did; and

(2.) because it would be a rejection of the only possible plan of salvation, after they had had experience of its power and known its efficacy. The phrase "to themselves," Tindal renders, "as concerning themselves." Others, "as far as in them lies," or as far as they have ability to do. Others, "to their own heart." Probably Grotius has suggested the true sense. "They do it *for themselves*. They make the act their own. It is as if they did it themselves; and they are to be regarded as having done the deed." So we make the act of another our own when we authorize it beforehand, or approve of it after it is done.

And put him to an open shame. Make him a public example; or hold him up as worthy of death on the cross. See the same word explained in **See Barnes** "Mt 1:19, in the phrase, "make her a public example." The word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. Their apostasy and rejection of the Saviour would be like holding him up publicly as deserving the infamy and ignominy of the cross. A great part of the crime attending the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus, consisted in exhibiting him to the passing multitude as deserving the death of a malefactor. Of that sin they would partake who should reject him, for they would thus show that they regarded his religion as an imposture, and would, in a public manner, hold him up as worthy only of rejection and contempt. Such, it seems to me, is the fair meaning of this much-disputed passage—a passage which Would never have given so much perplexity if it had not been supposed that the obvious interpretation would interfere with some prevalent articles of theology. The passage proves that if true Christians should apostatize, it would be impossible to renew and save them. If then it should be asked whether I believe that any true Christian ever did, or ever will fall from grace, and wholly lose his religion, I would answer unhesitatingly, *No*. Comp. **See Barnes "Joh 10:27,28; Ro 8:38,39;** Ga 5:4.

If then it be asked what was the *use* of a warning like this, I answer,

(1.) It would show the great sin of apostasy from God if it were to occur. It is proper to state the greatness of an act of sin, though it might never occur, in order to show how it would be regarded by God.

(2.) Such a statement might be one of the most effectual means of preserving from apostasy. To state that a fall from a precipice would cause certain death, would be one of the most certain means of preserving one from falling; to affirm that arsenic would be certainly fatal, is one of the most effectual means of preventing its being taken; to know that fire certainly destroys, is one of the most sure checks from the danger. Thousands have been preserved from going over the Falls of Niagara by knowing that there would be no possibility of escape; and so effectual has been this knowledge, that it has preserved all from such a catastrophe, except the very few who have gone over by accident. So in religion. The knowledge that apostasy would be fatal, and there could be no hope of being saved should it once occur, would be a more effectual preventive of the danger than all the other means that could be used. If a man believed that it would be an easy matter to be restored again, should he apostatize, he would feel little solicitude in regard to it; and it has occurred, in fact, that they who suppose that this may occur, have manifested little of the care to walk in the paths of strict religion, which should have been evinced.

(3.) It may be added, that the means used by God to preserve his people from apostasy have been entirely effectual. There is no evidence that one has ever fallen away who was a true Christian, Comp. Joh 10:27,28, and 1Jo 2:19; and to the end of the world it will be true, that the means which he uses to keep his people from apostasy will not in a single instance fail.

{*} "seeing" "Since" {+} "afresh" "again"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 6 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *For the earth*. The design of the apostle by this comparison is apparent. It is to show the consequences of not making a proper use of all the privileges which Christians have, and the effect which would follow should those privileges fail to be improved. He says, it is like the earth. If that absorbs the rain, and produces an abundant harvest, it receives the Divine blessing. If not, it is cursed, or is worthless. The design is to show that if Christians should become like the barren earth, they would be cast away and lost.

Which drinketh in the rain. A comparison of the earth as if it were "thirsty"—a comparison that is common in all languages.

That cometh oft upon it. The frequent showers that fall. The object is, to describe fertile land which is often watered with the rains of heaven. The comparison of "drinking in" the rain is designed to distinguish a mellow soil which receives the rain, from hard or rocky rand where it runs off.

And bringeth forth herbs. The word herbs we now limit, in common discourse, to the small vegetables which die every year, and which are used as articles of food, or to such in general as have not ligneous or hard woody stems. The word here means anything which is cultivated in the earth as an article of food, and includes all kinds of grains.

Meet for them. Useful or appropriate to them.

By whom it is dressed. Marg. "*for* whom." The meaning is, on account of whom it is cultivated. The word "dressed" here means *cultivated*. Comp. Ge 2:15.

Receiveth blessing from God. Receives the Divine approbation. It is in accordance with his wishes and plans, and he stories upon it and blesses it. He does not curse it, as he does the desolate and barren soil. The language is figurative, and must be used to denote that which is an object of the Divine favour. God delights in the harvests which the earth brings forth; in the effects of dews and rains and suns, in causing beauty and abundance; and on much fields of beauty and plenty he looks down with pleasure. This does not mean, as I suppose, that he renders it more fertile and abundant, for

(1.) it cannot be shown that it is true that God thus rewards the earth for its fertility; and

(2.) such an interpretation would not accord well with the scope of the passage. The design is to show that a Christian who makes proper use of the means of growing in grace which God bestows upon him, and who does not apostatize, meets with the Divine favour and approbation. His course accords with the Divine intention and wishes, and he is a man on whom God will smile—as he seems to on the fertile earth.

{++} "earth" "land" {*} "meet" "useful" {1} "by" "for" {+} "dressed" "belong to" {a} "blessing" Ps 65:10

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 6 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected*. That is, by the farmer or owner. It is abandoned as worthless. The force of the comparison here is, that God would thus deal with those who professed to be renewed if they should be like such a worthless field.

And is nigh unto cursing. Is given over to execration, or is abandoned as useless. The word cursing means, devoting to destruction. The sense is not that the owner would curse it in words, or imprecate a curse on it, as a man does who uses profane language, but the language is taken here from the more common use of the word curse—as meaning to devote to destruction. So the land would be regarded by the farmer. It would be valueless, and would be given up to be overrun with fire.

Whose end is to be burned. Referring to the land. The allusion here is to the common practice, among the Oriental and Roman agriculturists, of burning bad and barren lands. An illustration of this is afforded by Pliny. "There are some who burn the stubble on the field, chiefly upon the authority of Virgil: the principal reason for which is, that they may burn the seeds of weeds," Nat. Hist. xviii. 30. The authority of Virgil, to which Pliny refers, may be found in Georg. i. 84.

"Saepe etiam steriles incendere profuit agros,

Atque levem stipulam crepitantibus urere flammis."

"It is often useful to set fire to barren lands, and burn the light stubble in crackling flames." The *object* of burning land in this way was to render it available for useful purposes; or to destroy noxious weeds, and thorns, and underbrush. But the object of the apostle requires him to refer merely to the *fact* of the burning, and to make use of it as an illustration of an act of punishment. So, Paul says, it would be in the dealings of God with his people. If, after all attempts to secure holy living, and to keep them in the paths of salvation, they should evince none of the spirit of piety, all that could be done would be to abandon them to destruction, as such a field is overrun with fire. It is not supposed that a true Christian will fall away and be lost; but we may remark,

(1.) that there are many professed Christians who seem to be in danger of such ruin. They resist all attempts to produce in them the fruits of good living as really as some pieces of ground do to secure a harvest. Corrupt desires, pride, envy, uncharitableness, covetousness, and vanity, are as certainly seen in their lives as thorns and briers are on a bad soil. Such briers and thorns you may cut down again and again; you may strike the plough deep, and seem to tear away all their roots; you may sow the ground with the choicest grain, but soon the briers and the thorns will again appear and be as troublesome as ever. No pains will subdue them or secure a harvest. So with many a professed Christian. He may be taught, admonished, rebuked, and afflicted, but all will not do. There is essential and unsubdued perverseness in his soul, and, despite all the attempts to make him a holy man, the same bad passions are continually breaking out anew.

(2.) Such professing Christians are "nigh unto cursings." They are about to be abandoned for ever. Unsanctified and wicked in their hearts, there is nothing else which can be done for them, and they must be lost! What a thought! A professing Christian "*nigh unto cursing*!" A man, the efforts for whose salvation are about to cease for ever, and who is to be given over as incorrigible and hopeless! For such a man—in the church or out of it—we should have compassion. We have some compassion for an ox which is so stubborn that he will not work, and which is to be put to death; for a horse which is so fractious that he cannot be broken, and which is to be killed; for cattle which are so unruly that they cannot be restrained, and which are only to be fattened for the slaughter; and even for a field which is desolate and barren, and which is given up to be overrun with briers and thorns; but how much more should we pity a man, all the efforts for whose salvation fail, and who is soon to be abandoned to everlasting destruction!

{++} "accompany" "Belong to"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 6 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *But, beloved, we are persuaded better things*. We confidently hope for better things respecting you. We trust that you are true Christians; that you will produce the proper fruits of holiness; that you will be saved.

Things that accompany salvation. Things that pertain to salvation. The Greek phrase here means, "near to salvation," or things that are conjoined with salvation. So Coverdale renders it, "and that salvation is nigher." The form of expression seems to refer to what was said in Heb 6:8. The land overrun with briers was nigh to cursing; the things which Paul saw in them were nigh to salvation. From this verse it is evident

(1.) that the apostle regarded them as sincere Christians, and

(2.) that he believed they would not fall away. Though he had stated what must be the inevitable consequence if Christians should apostatize, yet he says that, in their case, he had a firm conviction that it would not occur. There is no inconsistency in this. We may be certain that if a man should take arsenic it would kill him; and yet we may have the fullest conviction that he will not do it. Is not this verse a clear proof that Paul felt that it was certain that true Christians would never fall away and be lost? If he supposed that they might, how could he be persuaded that it would not happen to them? Why not to them as well as to others? Learn hence, that while we assure men that

if they should fall away they would certainly perish, we may nevertheless address them with the full persuasion that they will be saved.

{++} "accompany" "belong to"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 6 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *For God is not unrighteous*. God will do no wrong. He will not forget or fail to reward the endeavours of his people to promote his glory, and to do good. The meaning here is, that by their kindness in ministering to the wants of the saints, they had given full evidence of true piety. If God should forget that, it would be "unrighteous,"

(1.) because there was a propriety that it should be remembered; and

(2.) because it is expressly promised that it shall not fail of reward, Mt 10:42.

Your work. Particularly in ministering to the wants of the saints.

Labour of love. Deeds of benevolence when there was no hope of recompense, or when love was the motive in doing it.

Which ye have shewed toward his name. Toward him—for the word name is often used to denote the person himself. They had showed that they loved God by their kindness to his people. Mt 25:40: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

In that ye have ministered to the saints. You have supplied their wants. This may refer either to the fact that they contributed to supply the wants of the poor members of the church, (comp. **See Barnes** "Ga 2:10, or it may refer to some special acts of kindness which they had shown to suffering and persecuted Christians. It is not possible now to know to what particular acts the apostle refers. We may learn,

(1.) that to show kindness to Christians, because they are Christians, is an important evidence of piety.

(2.) It will in no case be unrewarded. God is not "unjust ;" and he will remember an act of kindness shown to his people—even though it be nothing but giving a cup of cold water.

{c} "For God" Mt 25:40

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 6 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *And we desire that every one of you*. We wish that every member of the church should exhibit the same endeavour to do good, until they attain to the full assurance of hope. It is implied here, that the full assurance of hope is to be obtained by a persevering effort to lead a holy life.

The same diligence. The same strenuous endeavour, the same ardour and zeal.

To the full assurance of hope. In order to obtain the full assurance of hope. The word rendered "full assurance," means firm persuasion, and refers to a state of mind where there is the fullest conviction, or where there is no doubt. See Col 2:2 1Th 1:6 Heb 10:22 comp. Lu 1:1 Ro 4:21,

14:5 2Ti 4:6,17, where the same word, in different forms, occurs. Hope is a compound emotion, **See Barnes "Eph 2:12"**

made up of an earnest *desire* for an object, and a corresponding expectation of obtaining it. The hope of heaven is made up of an earnest wish to reach heaven, and a corresponding expectation of it, or reason to believe that it will be ours. The full assurance of that hope exists where there is the highest desire of heaven, and such corresponding evidence of personal piety, as to leave no doubt that it will be ours.

To the end. To the end of life. The apostle wished that they would persevere in such acts of piety to the end of their course, as to have their hope of heaven fully established, and to leave no doubt on the mind that they were sincere Christians. Learn hence,

(1.) that full assurance of hope is to be obtained only by holy living.

(2.) It is only when that is persevered in that it can be obtained.

(3.) It is not by visions and raptures, by dreams and revelations, that it can now be acquired, for God imparts no such direct revelation now.

(4.) It is usually only as the result of a life of consistent piety that such an assurance is to be obtained. No man can have it who does not persevere in holy living; and they who do obtain it usually secure it only near the end of a life of eminent devotedness to God. God could impart it at once when the soul is converted; but such is the tendency of man to indolence and sloth, that even good men would then relax their efforts, and sit down contented, feeling that they had now the undoubted prospect of heaven. As it is, it is held out as a prize to be won—as that whose acquisition is to cheer us in our old age, when the warfare is over, and when, amidst the infirmities of years, and in the near prospect of death, we need special consolation. Comp. 2Ti 4:6,7.

{a} "full assurance" Heb 3:6,14

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 6 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *That ye be not slothful*. Indolent; inactive. This was what he was especially desirous of guarding them against. By diligent and strenuous effort only could they secure themselves from the danger of apostasy.

But followers. Imitators—that you may live as they lived.

Of them who through faith and patience. By faith, or confidence in God, and by patience in suffering—referring to those who in times of trial had remained faithful to God, and had been admitted to heaven. In Heb 11 the apostle has given a long list of such persevering and faithful friends of God. See Notes on that chapter.

The promise. The promise of heaven.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 6 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *For when God made promise to Abraham*. That he would bless him, and multiply his seed as the stars of heaven, Ge 22:16,17. The object of introducing this example here is to

encourage those to whom the apostle was writing to persevere in the Christian life. This he does by showing that God had given the highest possible assurance of his purpose to bless his people by an oath. Reference is made to Abraham in this argument probably, for two reasons.

(1.) To show the nature of the evidence which Christians have that they will be saved, or the ground of encouragement—being the same as that made to Abraham, and depending, as in his case, on the promise of God; and

(2.) because the example of Abraham was just in point. He had persevered. He had relied firmly and solely on the promise of God. He did this when appearances were much against the fulfilment of the promise, and he thus showed the advantage of perseverance and fidelity in the cause of God.

Because he could swear by no greater. There is no being greater than God. In taking an oath among men it is always implied that the appeal is to one of superior power, who is able to punish for its infraction. But this could not occur in the case of God himself. There was no greater being than himself, and the oath, therefore, was by his own existence.

He sware by himself. Ge 22:16: "By myself have I sworn." Comp. Isa 45:23. In an oath of this kind God pledges his veracity; declares that the event shall be as certain as his existence; and secures it by all the perfections of his nature. The usual form of the oath is, "As I live, saith the Lord." See Nu 14:21,28; Eze 33:11.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 6 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Saying*, Surely blessing I will bless thee. That is, I will certainly bless thee. The phrase is a Hebrew mode of expression, to denote emphasis or certainty—indicated by the repetition of a word. Comp. Ge 16:10 Ex 8:10; Joe 3:14 Jud 5:30, 15:16.

Multiplying I will multiply thee. I will greatly increase thee—I will grant thee an exceedingly numerous posterity.

{c} "Surely" Ge 22:16,17

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 6 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *And so, after he had patiently endured*. After he had waited for a long time. He did not faint or grow weary, but he persevered in a confident expectation of the fulfilment of what God had so solemnly promised.

He obtained the promise. Evidently the promise referred to in the oath—that he would have a numerous posterity. The apostle intimates that he had waited for that a long time; that his faith did not waver, and that in due season the object of his wishes was granted. To see the force of this, we are to remember,

(1.) that when he was called by God from Haran, and when the promise of a numerous posterity was made to him, he was seventy-five years old, Ge 12:1-6.

(2.) Twenty-four years elapsed after this, during which he was a sojourner in a strange land, before the manner in which this promise would be fulfilled was made known to him, Ge 17:1-16.

(3.) It was only when he was a hundred years old, and when he had persevered in the belief of the truth of the promise against all the natural improbabilities of its accomplishment, that he received the pledge of its fulfilment in the birth of his son Isaac, Ge 21:1-5.

(4.) The birth of that son was a pledge that the other blessings implied in the promise would be granted, and in that pledge Abraham may be said to have "received the promise." He did not actually see the numerous posterity of which he was to be the honoured ancestor, nor the Messiah who was to descend from him, nor the happy influences which would result to mankind from the fulfilment of the promise. But he saw the certainty that all this would occur; he saw by faith the Messiah in the distance, (Joh 8:56,) and the numerous blessings which would result from his coming. It was a remarkable instance of faith, and one well fitted to the purpose of the apostle. It would furnish ample encouragement to the Christians to whom he wrote to persevere their course, and to avoid the dangers of apostasy. If Abraham persevered when *appearances* were so much against the fulfilment of what had been promised, then Christians should persevere under the clearer light, and with the more distinct promises of the gospel.

{+} "endured" "waited"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 6 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *For men verily swear by the greater*. That is, they appeal to God. They never swear by one who is inferior to themselves. The object of the apostle in this declaration is to show that, as far as this could be done, it had been by God. He could not indeed swear by one greater than himself, but he could make his promise as certain as an oath taken by men was when they solemnly appealed to Him. He could appeal to his own existence and veracity, which was at any time the most solemn form of an oath, and thus put the mind to rest in regard to the hope of heaven.

And an oath for confirmation. An oath taken to confirm or establish anything.

Is to them an end of all strife. That is, when two parties are at variance, or have a cause at issue, an oath binds them to adhere to the terms of agreement concluded on, or contracting parties bind themselves by a solemn oath to adhere to the conditions of an agreement, and this puts an end to all strife. They rest satisfied when a solemn oath has been taken, and they feel assured that the agreement will be complied with. Or it may refer to cases where a man was accused of wrong before a court, and where he took a solemn oath that the thing had not beer, done, and his oath was admitted to be sufficient to put an end to the controversy. The general meaning is clear, that, in disputes between man and man, an appeal was made to an oath, and that was allowed to settle it. The connexion here is, that, as far as the case would admit of, the same thing was done by God. His oath by himself made his promise firm.

{a} "oath" Ex 22:11

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 6 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Wherein God*. On account of which, or since an oath had this effect, God was willing to appeal to it, in order to assure his people of salvation.

Willing more abundantly. In the most abundant manner, or to make the case as sure as possible. It does not mean more abundantly than in the case of Abraham, but that he was willing to give the most ample assurance possible. Coverdale renders it, correctly, "very abundantly."

The heirs of promise. The heirs to whom the promise of life pertained; that is, all who were interested in the promises made to Abraham—thus embracing the heirs of salvation now.

The immutability of his counsel. His fixed purpose, he meant to show, in the most solemn manner, that his purpose would not change. The plans of God never change; and all the hope which we can have of heaven is founded on the fact that his purpose is immutable. If he changed his plans; if he was controlled by caprice; if he willed one thing to-day and another thing tomorrow, who could confide in him or who would have any hope of heaven? No one would know what to expect; and no one could put confidence in him. The farmer ploughs and sows because he believes that the laws of nature are settled and fixed; the mariner ventures into unknown seas because the needle points in one direction; we plant an apple-tree because we believe it will produce apples, a peach because it will produce peaches, a pear because it will produce a pear. But suppose there were no settled laws—that all was governed by caprice—who would know what to plant? Who then would plant anything? So in religion. If there were nothing fixed and settled, who would know what to do? If God should change his plans by caprice, and save one man by faith today and condemn another for the same faith tomorrow; or if he should pardon a man today and withdraw the pardon tomorrow, what security could we have of salvation? How grateful, therefore, should we be, that God has an *immutable counsel*, and that this is confirmed by a solemn oath! No one could honour a God that had not such an immutability of purpose; and all the hope which man can have of heaven is in the fact that He is unchanging.

Confirmed it by an oath. Marg. Interposed himself. Tindal and Coverdale, "added an oath." The Greek is, "interpose with an oath"— *emesiteusen orkw*. The word here used— *mesiteuw* —means, to mediate or intercede for one; and then to intervene or interpose. The meaning here is, that he *interposed an oath* between himself and the other party by way of a confirmation or pledge.

{b} "heirs" Ro 8:17 He 11:9 {c} "immutability" Ro 11:29 {1} "confirmed it" "interposed himself"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 6 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *That by two immutable things*. What the "two immutable things" here referred to are, has been made a matter of question among commentators. Most expositors, as Doddridge, Whitby, Rosenmuller, Koppe, and Calvin, suppose that the reference is to the *promise* and the *oath* of God, each of which would be a firm ground of the assurance of salvation, and in each of which it would be impossible for God to lie. Prof. Stuart supposes that the reference is to *two oaths*—the oath made to Abraham, and that by which the Messiah was made High Priest according to the order of Melchisedek, Ps 110:4 Heb 5:6,10.

He supposes that thus the salvation of believers would be amply secured, by the promise that Abraham should have a Son, the Messiah, in whom all the families of the earth would be blessed,

and in the oath that his Son should be High Priest for ever. But to this interpretation it may be objected that the apostle seems to refer to two things distinct from each other in their nature, and not to two acts of the same kind. There are two kinds of security referred to, whereas the security furnished according to this interpretation would be the same—that arising from an oath. However numerous the oaths might be, still it would be security of the same kind; and if one of them were broken, no certainty could be derived from the other. On the supposition, however, that he refers to the *promise* and the *oath*, there would be two kinds of assurance, of different kinds. On the supposition that the promise was disregarded—if such a supposition may be made—still there would be the security of the oath and thus the assurance of salvation was two-fold. It seems to me, therefore, that the apostle refers to the promise and to the oath of God, as constituting the two grounds of security for the salvation of his people. Those things were both unchangeable; and when his word and oath are once passed, what he promises is secure.

In which it was impossible for God to Lie. That is, it would be contrary to his nature; it is not for a moment to be supposed. Comp. Tit 1:2: "God—that cannot lie." The impossibility is a moral impossibility, and the use of the word here explains the Sense in which the words *impossible, cannot*, etc., are often used in the Scriptures. The meaning here is, that such was the love of God for truth, such his holiness of character, that he could not speak falsely.

We might have a strong consolation. The strongest of which the mind can conceive. The consolation of a Christian is not in his own strength; his hope of heaven is not in any reliance on his own powers. His comfort is, that God has promised eternal life to his people, and that He cannot prove false to his word, Tit 1:2.

Who have fled for refuge. Referring to the fact that one charged with murder fled to the city of refuge, or laid hold on an altar for security. So we, guilty and deserving of death, have fled to the hopes of the gospel in the Redeemer.

To lay hold upon. To seize and hold fast—as one does an altar when he is pursued by the avenger of blood.

The hope set before us. The hope of eternal life offered in the gospel. This is set before us as our refuge, and to this we flee when we feel that we are in danger of death. On the nature of hope, **See Barnes "Eph 2:12"**.

{d} "lie" Tit 1:2 {e} "lay hold" 1Ti 6:12

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 6 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul*. Hope accomplishes for the soul the same thing which an anchor does for a ship. It makes it fast and secure. An anchor preserves a ship when the waves beat and the wind blows; and as long as the anchor holds, so long a ship is safe, and the mariner apprehends no danger. So with the soul of the Christian. In the tempests and trials of life, his mind is calm as long as his hope of heaven is firm. If that gives way, he feels that all is lost. Among the heathen writers, *hope* is often compared with an anchor. So Socrates said, "To ground hope on a false supposition, is like trusting to a weak anchor." Again—"A ship ought not to trust to one anchor, nor life to one hope."

Both sure and stedfast. Firm and secure. This refers to the *anchor*. That is fixed in the sand, and the vessel is secure.

And which entereth into that within the veil. The allusion to the anchor here is dropped, and the apostle speaks simply of *hope*. The "*veil*" here refers to that which, in the temple, divided the holy from the most holy place. **See Barnes "Mt 21:12"**.

The place "within the veil"—the most holy place—was regarded as God's peculiar abode, where he dwelt by the visible symbol of his presence. That holy place was emblematic of heaven; and the idea here is, that the hope of the Christian enters into heaven itself; it takes hold on the throne of God; it is made firm by being fastened there. It is not the hope of future riches, honours, or pleasures in this life—for such a hope would not keep the soul steady; it is the hope of immortal blessedness and purity in the world beyond.

{f} "within the veil" Le 16:15

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 6 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Whither*. To which most holy place—heaven.

The forerunner. The word here used occurs nowhere else in the New Testament.

A forerunner prodromov—is one who goes before others to prepare the way. The word is applied to light troops sent forward as scouts. Diod. Sic. 17.17. Comp. "Wisdom of Solomon," (Apoc.,) xii. 8: "Thou didst send wasps, forerunners of thy host, to destroy them by little and little." The meaning here is, that Jesus went first into the heavenly sanctuary. He led the way. He has gone there on our account, to prepare a place for us, Joh 14:3. Having such a friend and advocate there, we should be firm in the hope of eternal life; and, amidst the storms and tempests around us, we should be calm.

Made an High Priest for ever. **See Barnes "Heb 5:6"**; **See Barnes "Heb 5:10"**

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To illustrate this fact was the object for which this discussion was introduced, and which had been interrupted by the remarks occurring in this chapter on the danger of apostasy. Having warned them of this danger, and exhorted them to go on to make the highest attainments possible in the divine life, the apostle resumes the discussion respecting Melchizedek, and makes the remarks which he intended to make respecting this remarkable man. See Heb 5:11.

{g} "the forerunner" Heb 4:14 {h} "Melchisedec" Heb 7:17

REMARKS

1. We should *aim* at perfection, in order that we may have evidence of piety, Heb 6:1. No man can be a Christian who does not do this, or who does not desire to be perfect, as God is perfect. No one can be a Christian who is satisfied or contented to remain in sin; or who would not prefer to be made at once as holy as an angel—as the Lord Jesus— as God.

2. We should aim at perfection, in order to make great attainments, Heb 6:1. No man makes any great advance in anything who does not set his standard high. Men usually accomplish about what they expect to accomplish. If a man expects to be a quack physician, he becomes such; if he is satisfied to become a fourth rate lawyer, he becomes such; if he is willing to be an indifferent

mechanic, he advances no higher; if he has no intention or expectation of being a first-rate farmer, he will never become one. If he sincerely aims, however, to excel, he usually accomplishes his object. And it is so in religion. If a man does not intend to be an eminent Christian, he may be certain he never will be. Religion is not produced by chance, any more than fine fruit is, or than a good harvest is. One of the principal reasons why President Edwards became so eminent a Christian was, that in early life he adopted the following resolution, to which he appears always to have adhered, that "on the supposition that there never was to be but one individual in the world, at any one time, who was properly a complete Christian, in all respects of a right stamp, having Christianity always shining in its true lustre, and appearing excellent and lovely, from whatever part, and under whatever character viewed: *Resolved*, To act just as I would do, if I strove with all my might to be that one, who should live in my time." *Life, by S. E. Dwight*, D.D., p. 72.

3. We should aim to acquire as much *knowledge* of religious truth as we possibly can, Heb 6:1,2. True piety is *principle*. It is not fancy, or dreaming, or visions, or enthusiasm. It is based on knowledge, and does not go beyond that. No man has any more religion than he has knowledge of the way of salvation. He cannot force his religion to overstep the bounds of his knowledge; for ignorance contributes nothing to devotion. There may be knowledge where there is no piety; but there can be no true religion where there is no knowledge. If, therefore, a Christian wishes to make advances, he must gain a knowledge of the truth. He must understand the great doctrines of his religion. And in like manner, if we wish the next generation to be intelligent and solid Christians, we must train them up to understand the Bible.

4. The consequences of the judgment will be eternal, Heb 6:3. No truth is more solemn than this. It is this which makes the prospect of the judgment so awful. If the consequences of the sentence were to continue for a few years, or ages, or centuries only, it would be of much less importance. But who can abide the thought of "*eternal judgment*" of an *eternal sentence*? Here the most fearful and solemn sentence is for a short period. The sentence will soon expire; or it is mitigated by the hope of a change. Pain here is brief. Disgrace, and sorrow, and heaviness of heart, and all the woes that man can inflict, soon come to an end. There is an outer limit of suffering, and no severity of a sentence, no ingenuity of man, can prolong it far. The man disgraced, and whose life is a burden, will soon die. On the cheeks of the solitary prisoner, doomed to the dungeon for life, a "mortal paleness" will soon settle down, and the comforts of an approaching release by death may soothe the anguish of his sad heart. The rack of torture cheats itself of its own purpose, and the exhausted sufferer is released. "The excess [of grief] makes it soon mortal." But in the world of future woe the sentence will never expire; and death will never come to relieve the sufferer. I may ask, then, of my reader, Are you prepared for the "eternal" sentence? Are you ready to hear a doom pronounced which can never be changed? Would you be willing to have God judge you just as you are, and pronounce such a sentence as ought to be pronounced now, and have the assurance that it would be eternal? You seek worldly honour—Would you be willing to be doomed *always* to seek that? You aspire after wealth—Would you be willing to be doomed to aspire after that *always*? You seek pleasure, in the gay and giddy world—Would you be willing to be doomed *always* to seek after that? You have no religion —perhaps desire to have none—Yet would you be willing to be doomed to be *always* without religion You are a stranger to the God that made you—Would you be willing to be sentenced to be *always* a stranger to God? You indulge in passion, pride, envy, sensuality—Would you be willing to be sentenced always to the raging of these passions and lusts? How few are they who would be willing to have an eternal sentence passed on them, or to be doomed

to pursue their present employments, or to cherish their present opinions for ever! How few who would *dare* to meet a sentence which should be in strict accordance with what was *just*, and which was never to change!

5. With the righteous it should be matter of rejoicing that the judgment is to be eternal, Heb 6:3. They can desire no change of the sentence which will assign them to heaven; and it will be no small part of the joy of the heavenly world, that the results of the judgment will be everlasting. There will be no further trial; no reversing of the sentence; no withdrawing of the crown of glory. The righteous are the only ones who have not reason to dread a "just eternal sentence;" and *they* will rejoice when the time shall come which will fix their doom for ever.

6. We should dread apostasy from the true religion, Heb 6:4. We should habitually feel that if we should deny our Lord, and reject his religion, there would be no hope. The die would be cast; and we must then perish for ever. By this solemn consideration God intends to preserve his people; and it is a consideration which has been so effectual, that there is not the least reason to suppose that any one who has ever had any true religion has fallen away and perished. Many have been *almost* Christians, and have then turned back to perdition, (Mt 7:22,23; Ac 26:28;) but there is no reason to suppose that any who have been true Christians have thus apostatized and been lost. Yet Christians are not kept without watchfulness; they cannot be kept without the most sincere and constant endeavours to preserve themselves from falling.

7. If the sin of apostasy is so great, then every approach to it is dangerous, and then every sin should be avoided. He that habitually indulges in sin cannot be a Christian; and every sin which a sincere Christian commits should be measured by the guilt which would exist should it become final, and should he wholly fall away. No man can indulge in sin and be safe; and no professed Christian, who finds himself *disposed* to indulge in sin, should cherish the expectation of reaching heaven, Heb 6:4-6.

8. It is a matter of devout gratitude that God *has* kept all his true people from apostasy, Heb 6:4-6. If it is true that no one who has been regenerated has ever fallen away; if the means which God has used have been effectual in a world so full of temptations, and when we have hearts so prone to evil; and if it is the intention of God to keep all to eternal salvation who are truly converted, then it should be to us a subject of devout thankfulness and of encouragement. In view of this, we should admire the wisdom of the plan which thus secures salvation; we should look to him with the firm assurance that he *will keep* what we have committed to him to the final day.

9. We should improve the privileges which we enjoy, so as to receive a blessing from God, Heb 6:7,8. It is desirable that a farm should be well cultivated, so as not to be overrun with briers and thorns; desirable that it should produce an abundant harvest, and not exhibit mere barrenness and desolation. Yet, alas, there are many professing Christians who resemble such a field of thorns, and such a scene of desolation. They produce no fruits of righteousness; they do nothing to extend the kingdom of the Redeemer! What can such expect but the "curses, of God ? What can the end of such be but to be "burned?"

10. God will not fail to reward his faithful people, Heb 6:10. What we have done in his service, and with a sincere desire to promote his glory, unworthy of his notice as it may seem to us to be, he will not fail to reward. It may be unobserved or forgotten by the world—nay, it may pass out of our own recollection—but it will never fail from the mind of God. Whether it be "two mites" contributed to his cause, or a "cup of cold water given to a disciple," or a life consecrated to his

service, it will be alike remembered. What encouragement there is, therefore, to labour it. the promotion of his glory, and to do all we can for the advancement of his kingdom!

11. Let us follow those who have inherited the promises; Heb 6:12. They are worthy examples. When from their lofty seats in heaven they look back on the journey of life, though to them attended with many trials, they never regret the "faith and patience" by which they were enabled to persevere. We have most illustrious examples to imitate. They are numerous as the drops of dew, and bright as the star of the morning. It is an honour to tread in the footsteps of the holy men who have inherited the promises; an honour to feel that we are walking in the same path, and are reaching out the hand to the same crown.

It is the privilege of those who are truly the children of God to enjoy strong consolation, Heb 6:13-18. Their hope is based on that which cannot fail. God cannot lie. And when we have evidence that he has promised us eternal life, we may open our hearts to the full influence of Christian consolation. It may be asked, perhaps, how we may have that evidence? Will God speak to us from heaven, and assure us that we are his children? Will he reveal our names as written in his book? Will he come to us in the night-watches, and address us by name as his? I answer, No. None of these things are we to expect. But if we have evidence that we have true repentance, and sincere faith in the Redeemer; if we love holiness, and desire to lead a pure life; if we delight in the Bible an& in the people of God, then we may regard him as addressing us in the promises and oaths of his word, and assuring us of salvation. These promises belong to us, and we may apply them to ourselves. And if we have evidence that God *promises* us eternal life, why should we doubt? We may feel that we are unworthy; our consciences may reproach us for the errors and follies of our past lives; but on the unchanging word and oath of God we may rely, and there we may feel secure.

13. How invaluable is the Christian hope! Heb 6:19. To us it is like the anchor to a vessel in a storm. We are sailing along the voyage of life. We are exposed to breakers and tempests. Our bark is liable to be tossed about, or to be shipwrecked. In the agitations and troubles of life, how much we need some anchor of the soul; something that shall make us calm and serene! Such an anchor is found in the hope of the gospel. While that hope is firm we need fear nothing. All is then safe, and we may look calmly on, assured that we shall ride out the storm, and come at last safely into the haven of peace. Happy they who have fled for refuge to the faith of the gospel; whose hope, like a steady anchor, has entered into heaven, and binds the soul to the throne of God; whose confidence in the Redeemer is unshaken in all the storms of life, and who have the assurance that, when the tempest shall have beaten upon them a little longer, they will be admitted to a haven of rest, where storms and tempests are for ever unknown. With such a hope we may well bear the trials of this life for the few days appointed to us on earth—for what are the longest trials here compared with that eternal rest which remains for all who love God in a brighter world?

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 7

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 7 - Verse 1

CHAPTER VII.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

IN Heb 5:10,11, the apostle had introduced the name of Melchisedek, and said that Christ was made an high priest after the same order as he. He added, that he had much to say of him, but that they were not in a state of mind then to receive or understand it. He then Heb 5:12-14 rebukes them for the little progress which they had made in Christian knowledge; exhorts them to go on and make higher attainments, Heb 6:1-3; warns them against the danger of apostasy, Heb 6:4-8; and encourages them to hold fast their faith and hope to the end, in view of the covenant faithfulness of God, Heb 6:9-20; and now returns to the subject under discussion—*the high priesthood of Christ*. His object is to show that he was superior to the Jewish high priest, and for this purpose he institutes the comparison between him and Melchisedek. The *argument* is the following :—

I. That which is drawn from the exalted rank of Melchisedek, and the fact that the ancestor of the whole Jewish priesthood and community —Abraham—acknowledged him as his superior, and rendered tribute to him. But Christ was of the order of Melchisedek, and the apostle, therefore, infers his superiority to the Jewish priesthood, Heb 7:1-10. In the prosecution of this argument, the apostle dwells on the import of the name *Melchizedek*, Heb 7:1,2; states the fact that he was without any known ancestry or descent, and that he stood alone on the pages of the sacred record, and was therefore worthy to be compared with the Son of God, who had a similar pre-eminence, Heb 7:3; urges the consideration that even Abraham, the ancestor of the whole Jewish community and priesthood, paid tithes to him, and thus confessed his inferiority, Heb 7:4; shows that he of whom a blessing was received must be superior to the one who receives it, Heb 7:6,7; and that even Levi, the ancestor of the whole Levitical priesthood, might be said to have paid tithes in Abraham, and thus to have acknowledged his inferiority to Melchisedek, and, consequently, to the Son of God, who was of his "order," Heb 7:9,10.

II. The apostle shows that-"*perfection*" could not arise out of the Levitical priesthood, and that a priesthood that introduced a perfect state must be superior, Heb 7:11-19. In the prosecution of this argument, he states that perfection could not be arrived at under the Hebrew economy, and that there was need that a priesthood of another order should be formed, Heb 7:11) that a change of the priesthood involved of necessity a change in the law of administration, Heb 7:12; that the necessity of change of the law also followed from the fact that the great high priest was now of another tribe than that of Levi, Heb 7:13,14;) that the Christian High Priest was constituted not after a commandment pertaining to the flesh, and liable to change, but "after the power of an endless life"—adapted to a life that was never to change or to end, Heb 7:15-17; that, consequently, there was a disannulling of the commandment going before, because it was weak and unprofitable, Heb 7:18; and that the old law made *nothing* perfect, but that by the new arrangement a system of entire and eternal perfection was introduced, Heb 7:19.

III. The apostle shows the superiority of the priesthood of Christ to that of the Jewish system, from the fact that the great High Priest of the Christian system was constituted with the solemnity of an oath; the Jewish priesthood was not, Heb 7:20-22. His priesthood, therefore, was as much more important and solemn as an oath is superior to a command; and his suretyship became as much more certain as an oath is superior to a simple promise, Heb 7:22.

IV. The superiority of the priesthood of Christ is further shown, from the fact that under the former dispensation there were *many* priests; but here there was but *one*. There they lived but a brief period, and then gave way to their successors; but here there was no removal by death, there was no succession, there was an unchangeable priesthood, Heb 7:23,24. He infers, therefore, Heb 7:25,26, that the Christian High Priest was able to save to the uttermost all that came to the Father by him, since he ever lived to make intercession.

V. The last argument is, that under the Levitical priesthood it was necessary for the priest to offer sacrifice for his own sins, as well as for those of the people. No such necessity, however, existed in regard to the High Priest of the Christian system. He was holy, harmless, and undefiled; he had no need to offer sacrifices for his own sins; and in this respect there was a vast superiority of the Christian priesthood over the Jewish, Heb 7:26-28. The force of these several arguments we shall be able to estimate as we advance in the exposition.

Verse 1. *For this Melchisedec*. **See Barnes "Heb 5:6".**

The name, Melehisedek, from which the apostle derives a portion of his argument here, is Hebrew

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and is correctly explained as meaning *king of righteousness*—being compounded of two words —*king* and *righteousness*. Why this name was given to this man is unknown. Names, however, were frequently given on account of some quality or characteristic of the man. **See Barnes "Isa 8:18".**

This name may have been given on account of his eminent integrity. The apostle calls attention to it Heb 7:2 as a circumstance worthy of notice, that his name, and the name of the city where he reigned, were so appropriate to one who, as a priest, was the predecessor of the Messiah. The account of Melchisedek, which is very brief, occurs in Ge 14:18-20. The name occurs in the Bible only in Ge 14, Ps 110:4, and in this epistle. Nothing else is certainly known of him. Grotius supposes that he is the same man who, in the history of Sanchoniathon, is called *suduk—Sydyc*. It has indeed been made a question by some whether such a person ever actually existed, and consequently whether this be a proper name. But the account in Genesis is as simple an historical record as any other in the Bible. In that account there is no difficulty whatever. It is said simply, that when Abraham was returning from a successful military expedition, this man, who, it seems, was well known, and who was respected as a priest of God, came out to express his approbation of what he had done, and to refresh him with bread and wine. As a tribute of gratitude to him, and as a thank-offering to God, Abraham gave him a tenth part of the spoils which he had taken. Such an occurrence was by no means improbable, nor would it have been attended with any special difficulty if it had not been for the use which the apostle makes of it in this epistle. Yet on no subject has there been a greater variety of opinion than in regard to this man. The bare recital of the opinions which have been entertained of him would fill a volume. But in a case which *seems* to be plain, from the Scripture narrative, it is not necessary even to enumerate these opinions. They only serve to show how easy it is for men to mystify a clear statement of history, and how fond they are of finding what is mysterious and marvellous in the plainest narrative of facts. That he was Shem; as the Jews suppose, or that he was the Son of God himself, as many Christian expositors have maintained, there is not the slightest evidence. That the latter opinion is false is perfectly clear; for if he were the Son of God, with what propriety could the apostle say that he "was made *like* the Son of God," Heb 7:3; that is, like himself; or that Christ was constituted a priest "*after the order of Melchisedec*;" that is, that he was a type of himself? The most simple and probable opinion is

that given by Josephus, that he was a pious Canaanitish prince; a personage eminently endowed by God, and who acted as the priest of his people. That he combined in himself the offices of priest and king furnished to the apostle a beautiful illustration of the offices sustained by the Redeemer, and was, in this respect, perhaps the only one whose history is recorded in the Old Testament who would furnish such an illustration. That his genealogy was not recorded, while that of every other priest mentioned was so careful traced and preserved, furnished another striking illustration. In this respect, like the Son of God, he stood alone. He was not in a *line* of priests; he was preceded by no one in the sacerdotal office, nor was he followed by any. That he was superior to Abraham, and consequently to all who descended from Abraham; that a tribute was rendered to him by the great ancestor of all the fraternity of Jewish priests, was just an illustration which suited the purpose of Paul. His name, therefore, the place where he reigned, his solitariness, his lone conspicuity in all the past, his dignity, and perhaps the air of mystery thrown over him in the brief history in Genesis, furnished a beautiful and striking illustration of the solitary grandeur, and the inapproachable eminence of the priesthood of the Son of God. There is no evidence that Melchisedek was *designed* to be a type of the Messiah, or that Abraham so understood it. Nothing of this kind is affirmed; and how shall we affirm it when the sacred oracles are silent?

King of Salem. Such is the record in Ge 14:18. The word *Salem*—

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—means, *peace*; and from this fact the apostle derives his illustration in Heb 7:2. He regards it as a fact worth remarking on, that the *name* of the place ever which he ruled expressed so strikingly the nature of the kingdom over which the Messiah was placed. In regard to the *place* here denoted by the name *Salem*, the almost uniform opinion has been that it was that afterwards known as Jerusalem. The reasons for this opinion are,

(1.) that it is a part of the name Jerusalem itself—the name *Jerus*, altered from *Jebus*, having been afterwards added, because it was the residence of the *Jebusites*.

(2.) The name *Salem* is itself given to Jerusalem. Ps 86:2: "In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling-place in Zion."

(3.) Jerusalem would be in the direction through which Abraham would naturally pass on his return from the slaughter of the kings. He had pursued them unto Dan, Ge 14:14, and he was returning to Mamre, that is, Hebron, Ge 14:13. On his return, therefore, he would pass in the vicinity of Jerusalem. Rosenmuller, however, supposes that by the name here Jerusalem is not intended, but the whole region occupied by the Jebusites and Hittites, or the royal seat of this region, situated not far from the cities of the plain—the vale of Siddim, where Sodom and Gomorrah were situated. But I see no reason for doubting that the common opinion, that Jerusalem is intended, is correct. That place was favourably situated for a capital of a nation or tribe; was easily fortified; and would be likely to be early selected as a royal residence,

Priest of the most high God. This is the account which is given of him in Ge 14:18. The leading office of priest was to offer sacrifice. This duty was probably first performed by the father of the family, (comp. **See Barnes "Job 1:5"; see also** Ge 8:20 22:2; and when he was dead it devolved on the eldest son. It would seem, also, that in the early ages, among all nations whose records have reached us, the office of priest and king were united in the same person. It was long before it was found that the interests of religion would be promoted by having the office of priest pertain to an order of men set apart for this special work, That Melchisedek, who was a king, should also be a priest, was not, therefore, remarkable. The only thing remarkable is, that he should have been a priest *of*

the true God. In what way he became acquainted with Him, is wholly unknown. It may have been by tradition preserved from the times of Noah, as it is possible that the arrival of Abraham in that land may have been in some way the means of acquainting him with the existence and character of JEHOVAH. The *fact* shows, at least, that the knowledge of the true God was not extinct in the world.

Who met Abraham. He came out to meet him, and brought with him bread and wine. *Why* he did this, is not mentioned. It was probably as an expression of gratitude to Abraham for having freed the country from oppressive and troublesome invaders, and in order to furnish refreshments to the party which Abraham headed, who had become weary and exhausted with the pursuit. There is not the slightest evidence that the bread and wine which he brought forth was designed to typify the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as has been sometimes supposed. Comp. Bush on Ge 14:18. What did he know of this ordinance? And why should we resort to such a supposition, when the whole case may be met by a simple reference to the ancient rites of hospitality, and by the fact that the deliverance of the country by Abraham from a grievous invasion made some expression of gratitude on the part of this pious king in the highest degree proper?

Returning from the slaughter of the kings. Amraphel, king of Shiner, Arioch, king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, and "Tidal, king of nations," who had invaded the valley where Sodom and Gomorrah were, and had departed with a great amount of booty. Those kings Abraham had pursued beyond Dan, and to the neighbourhood of Damascus, and had smitten them, and recovered the spoil.

And blessed him. For the important service which he had rendered in taking vengeance on these invaders; in freeing the land from the apprehension of being invaded again; and in recovering the valuable booty which they had taken away. From Heb 7:6,7, it appears that this act of *blessing* was regarded as that of one who was superior to Abraham: that is, he blessed him as a priest and a king. As such he was superior in rank to Abraham, who never claimed the title of *king*, and who is not spoken of as a *priest*.

{a} "king of Salem" Ge 14:18

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Verse 2. *To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all*. That is, a tenth part of all the spoils which he had taken, Ge 14:20; thus acknowledging that, in dignity of office, Melchisedek was greatly his superior, Heb 7:4,6,8.

This does not appear to have been, on the part of Abraham, so much designed as a present to Melchisedek personally, as an act of pious thankfulness to God. He doubtless recognised in Melchisedek one who was a minister of God, and to him, as such, he devoted the tenth of all which he had taken, as a proper acknowledgment of the goodness of God and of his claims. From this it is evident that the propriety of devoting a tenth part of what was possessed to God, was regarded as a duty before the appointment of the Levitical law. *Some* expression of this kind is obviously demanded, and piety seems early to have fixed on the tenth part as being no more than a proper proportion to consecrate to the service of religion, for the propriety of the use which the apostle makes of this fact, **See Barnes** "Heb 7:4, **See Barnes "Heb 7:6"**; **See Barnes** "Heb 7:8".

First being. The *first* idea in the interpretation of his name and office, etc. First being mentioned as king of righteousness, and then as king of peace.

King of righteousness. The literal translation of the name Melchisedek. **See Barnes "Heb 7:1"**.

The argument implied in this by the remarks of the apostle is, that he bore a name which made him a proper emblem of the Messiah. There was a propriety that one in whose "order" the Messiah was to be found should have such a name. It would be exactly descriptive of him; and it was *worthy of observation*, that he of whose "order" it was said the Messiah would be should have had such a name. Paul does not say that this name was given to him with any such reference, or that it was *designed* to be symbolical of what the Messiah would be; but that there was a *remarkable coincidence*; that it was a fact which was worth at least a *passing thought*. This is a kind of remark that might occur to any one to make, and where the slight use which Paul makes of it would not be improper anywhere; but it cannot be denied, that to one accustomed to the Jewish mode of reasoning—accustomed to dwell much on hidden meanings, and to trace out concealed analogies—it would be much more obvious and striking than it is with us. We are to place ourselves in the situation of those to whom Paul wrote—trained up with Jewish feelings, and Jewish modes of thought—and to ask how this would strike their minds. And this is no more unreasonable than it would be in interpreting a Greek classic, or a work of a Hindoo philosopher, that we should endeavour to place ourselves in the situation of the writer, and of those for whom he wrote, and ascertain what ideas would be conveyed to them by certain expressions. It is not meant by these observations that there was really no intrinsic force in what Paul here said respecting the import of the name. There was force; and all the use which he makes of it is proper. His meaning appears to be merely that it was a fact worthy of remark, that the name had a meaning which corresponded so entirely with the character of Him who was to be a high priest of the same "order."

And after that. He is mentioned after that with another appellation equally significant.

King of peace. A literal translation of the appellation "king of Salem," Heb 7:1. The idea of Paul is, that it was worthy of remark that the appellation which he bore was appropriate to one whose ministry, it was said, the priesthood of the Messiah would resemble.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 7 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Without father*. The phrase *without father apatwr* —means, literally, one who has no father; one who has lost his father; one who is an orphan. Then it denotes one who is born after the death of his father; then one whose father is unknown—spurious. *Passow*. The word occurs often in these senses in the classic writers, for numerous examples of which the reader may consult Wetstein, *in loc*. It is morally certain, however, that the apostle did not use the word here in either of these senses, for there is no evidence that Melchizedek was *fatherless* in any of these respects. It was very important, in the estimation of the Jews, that the line of their priesthood should be carefully kept; that their genealogies should be accurately marked and preserved; and that their direct descent from Aaron should be susceptible of easy and certain proof. But the apostle says that there was no such genealogical table in regard to Melchizedek. There was no *record* made of the name either of his father, his mother, or any of his posterity. *He stood alone*. It is simply said that such a man came out to meet Abraham—and that is the first and the last which we hear of him and

of his family. Now, says the apostle, it is distinctly said Ps 110:4 that the Messiah was to be a priest *according to his order*: and in this respect there is a remarkable resemblance, *so far as the point of his being a priest*—which was the point under discussion—*was concerned*. The Messiah thus, *as a priest*, STOOD ALONE. His name does not appear in the line of priests. He pertained to another tribe, Heb 7:14. No one of his ancestors is mentioned as a priest; and: as a priest he has no descendants and no followers. He has a lonely conspicuity similar to that of Melchisedek; a standing unlike that of any other priest. This should not, therefore, be construed as meaning that the genealogy of Christ could not be traced out—which is not true, for Mt 1 and Lu 3 have carefully preserved it; but that he had no genealogical record *as a priest*. As the reasoning of the apostle pertains to this point only, it would be unfair to construe it as implying that the Messiah was to stand unconnected with any ancestor, or that his genealogy would be unknown. The meaning of the word rendered "without father" here is, therefore, *one the name of whose father is not recorded in the Hebrew genealogies*.

Without mother. The name of whose mother is unknown, or is not recorded in the Hebrew genealogical tables. Philo calls Sarah— *amhtora—without mother*, probably because her mother is not mentioned in the sacred records. The Syriac has given the correct view of the meaning of the apostle. In that version it is, "Of whom neither the father nor mother are recorded in the genealogies." The meaning here is not that Melchisedek was of low and obscure origin, as the terms "without father and without mother" often signify in the classic writers, and in Arabic, (comp. Wetstein ;) for there is no reason to doubt that Melchisedek had an ancestry as honourable as other kings and priests of his time. The simple thought is, that the name of his ancestry does not appear in any record of those in the priestly office.

Without descent, Marg, *pedigree*. The Greek word *agenealoghtov* — means, *without genealogy; whose descent is unknown*. He is merely mentioned himself, and nothing is said of his family or of his posterity.

Having neither beginning of days, nor end of life. This is a much more difficult expression than any of the others respecting Melchizedek. The obvious meaning of the phrase is, that, *in the records of Moses*, neither the beginning nor the close of his life is mentioned. It is not said when he was born, or when he died; nor is it said that he was born, or that he died. The apostle adverts to this particularly, because it was so unusual in the records of Moses, who is in general so careful to mention the birth and death of the individuals whose lives he mentions. Under the Mosaic dispensation everything respecting the duration of the sacerdotal office was determined accurately by the law. In the time of Moses, and by his arrangement, the Levites were required to serve from the age of thirty to fifty, Nu 4:3,23,36,43,47; Nu 8:24,26. After the age of fifty, they were released from the more arduous and severe duties of their office. In later periods of the Jewish history they commenced their duties at the age of twenty, 1Ch 23:24,27. The priests also, and the high priest, entered on their office at thirty years of age, though it is not supposed that they retired from it at any particular period of life. The idea of the apostle here is, that nothing of this kind occurs in regard to Melchizedek. No period is mentioned when he entered on his office; none when he retired from it. From anything that appears in the sacred record it might be perpetual—though Paul evidently did not mean to be understood as saying that it *was* so. It *cannot* be that he meant to say that Melehizedek had *no beginning of days* literally, that is, that he was from eternity; or that he had *no end of life* literally, that is, that he would exist for ever—for this would be to make him equal with God. The expression used must be interpreted *according to the matter under discussion*, and that

was the office of Melchizedek *as a priest*. Of that no beginning is mentioned, and no end. That this is the meaning of Paul there can be no doubt; but there is a much more difficult question about the force and pertinency of this reasoning—about the use which he means to make of this fact, and the strength of the argument which he here designs to employ. This inquiry cannot easily be settled. It may be admitted, undoubtedly, that it would strike a Jew with much more force than it would any other person; and to see its pertinency we ought to be able to place ourselves in their condition, and to transfer to ourselves, as far as possible, their state of feeling. It was mentioned in Ps 110:4, that the Messiah was to be a "priest after the order of Melchizedek." It was natural, then, to turn to the only record which existed of him—the very brief narrative in Ge 14. There the account is simple and plain—that he was a pious Canaanitish king, who officiated as a priest. In what point then, it would be asked, was the Messiah to resemble him? In his personal character; his office; his rank; or in what he did? It would be natural, then, to run out the parallel, and seize upon the points in which Melchizedek *differed from the Jewish* priests which would be suggested on reading that account for it was undoubtedly in those points that the resemblance between Christ and Melchizedek was to consist. Here the *record* was to be the only guide, and the points in which he differed from the Jewish priesthood, *according to the record*, were such as these.

(1.) That there is no account of his ancestry as a priest—neither father nor mother being mentioned—as was indispensable in the records of the Levitical priesthood.

(2.) There was no account of any descendants in his office, and no reason to believe that he had any, and he thus stood alone.

(3.) There was no account of the commencement or close of his office as a priest, but, *so far as the record goes*, it is just as it would have been if his priesthood had neither beginning nor end. It was inevitable, therefore, that those who read the Psalm, and compared it with the account in Ge 14, should come to the conclusion that the Messiah was to resemble Melchizedek *in some such points as these*—for these are the points in which he differed from the Levitical priesthood; and to run out these points of comparison is all that the apostle has done here. It is just what would be done by any Jew, or indeed by any other man; and the reasoning grew directly out of the two accounts in the Old Testament. It is not, then, quibble or quirk —it is sound reasoning, based on these two points:

(1) that it was said in the Old Testament that the Messiah would be a priest after the order of Melchizedek; and

(2) that the only points, *according to the record*, in which there was anything *peculiar* about the priesthood of Melchizedek, or in which he differed from the Levitical priesthood, were such as those which Paul specifies, he reasons *from the record*; and though there is, as was natural, something of a Jewish cast about it, yet it was *the only kind of reasoning that was possible in the case*.

But made like. The word here used means, to be made like, to be made to resemble; and then to be like, to be compared with. Our translation seems to imply that there was a Divine agency or intention by which Melchizedek was *made to resemble* the Son of God; but this does not seem to be the idea of the apostle. In the Psalm it is said that the Messiah would resemble Melchizedek in his priestly office, and this is doubtless the idea here. Paul is seeking to illustrate the nature and perpetuity of the office of the Messiah by comparing it with that of Melchizedek. Hence he pursues the idea of this resemblance; and the true sense of the word used here is, "he was like, or he resembled the Son of God." So Tindal and Coverdale render it, "is likened unto the Son of God." The points of resemblance are those which have been already suggested:

(1) in the *name—king of righteousness*, and *king of peace*;

(2) in the fact that he had no ancestors or successors in the priestly office;

(3) that he was, according to the record, a perpetual priest—there being no account of his death; and perhaps

(4) that he united in himself the office of king and priest. It may be added, that the expression here, "was made *like unto* the Son of God," proves that he was not *himself* the Son of God, as many have supposed. How could he be "made like" himself? How could a comparison be formally made *between Christ and himself*?

Abideth a priest continually. That is, *as far as the record in Genesis goes*—for it was according to this record that Paul was reasoning. This clause is connected with Heb 7:1; and, the intermediate statements are of the nature of a parenthesis, containing important suggestions respecting the character of Melchizedek, which would be useful in preparing the readers for the argument which the apostle proposed to draw from his rank and character. The meaning is, that there is no account of his death, or of his ceasing to exercise the priestly office; and in this respect he may be compared with the Lord Jesus. All other priests cease to exercise their office by death, Heb 7:23; but of the death of Melchizedek there is no mention. It must have been true that the priesthood of Melchizedek terminated at his death; and it will be also true that that of Christ will cease when his Church shall have been redeemed, and when he shall have given up the mediatorial kingdom to the rather, 1Co 15:25-28. The expression, "abideth a priest *continually*," therefore, is equivalent to saying that he had a perpetual priesthood, in contradistinction from those whose office terminated at a definite period, or whose office passed over into the hands of others. **See Barnes "Heb 7:24".**

{1} "descent" "pedigree"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 7 - Verse 4

Verse 4 *Now consider how great this man was*. The object of the apostle was to exalt the rank and dignity of Melchizedek. The Jews had a profound veneration for Abraham; and if it could be shown that Melchizedek was superior to Abraham, then it would be easy to demonstrate the superiority of Christ, as a priest, to all who descended from Abraham. Accordingly he argues, that he to whom even the patriarch Abraham showed so much respect, must have had an exalted rank. Abraham, according to the views of the East, the illustrious ancestor of the Jewish nation, was regarded as superior to any of his posterity, and of course was to be considered as of higher rank and dignity than the Levitical priests, who were descended from him.

Even the patriarch Abraham. One so great as he is acknowledged to have been. On the word *patriarch*, **See Barnes "Ac 2:29".**

It occurs only in Ac 2:29 7:8,9, and in this place.

Gave the tenth of the spoils. **See Barnes "Heb 7:2".**

The *argument* here is, that Abraham acknowledged the superiority of Melchizedek by thus devoting the usual part of the spoils of war, or of what was possessed, to God by his hands, as the priest of the Most High. Instead of making a direct consecration by himself, he brought them to him as a minister of religion, and recognised in him one who had a higher official standing in the matter of religion than himself. The Greek word rendered spoils—*akroyinion*—means, literally,

the *top of the heap*, from *akron*, *top*, and *yin*, *heap*. The Greeks were accustomed, after a battle, to collect the spoils together, and throw them into a pile, and then, before they were distributed, to take off a portion from the top, and devote it to the gods, Xen. Cyro. vii. 6, 36; Herod. i. 86, 90; viii. 121, 122; Dion. Hal. ii. In like manner it was customary to place the harvest in a heap; and, as the first thing, to take off a portion from the top to consecrate as a thank-offering to God. The word then came to denote the *first-fruits* which were offered to God, and then the best of the spoils of battle. It has that sense here, and denotes the spoils or plunder which Abraham had taken of the discomfited kings.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 7 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And verily they that are of the sons of Levi*. The meaning of this verse is, that the Levitical priests had a right to receive tithes of their brethren, but still that they were inferior to Melchizedek. The apostle admits that their superiority to the rest of the people was shown by the fact that they had a right to require of them the tenth part of the productions of the land for their maintenance, and for the support of religion. But still he says that their inferiority to Melchizedek, and consequently to Christ as a priest, was shown by the fact that the illustrious ancestor of all the Jewish people, including the priests as well as others, had confessed his inferiority to Melchizedek by paying him tithes.

Who receive the office of the priesthood. Not all the descendants of Levi were priests. The apostle, therefore, specifies particularly those who "received this office," as being those whom he specially designed, and as those whose inferiority to Christ as a priest it was his object to show.

Have a commandment to take tithes. Have by the law a commission, or a right to exact tithes of the people, De 14:22,27-29.

{a} "who receive" Nu 18:21-26.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 7 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *But he whose descent is not counted from them*. Melchizedek. The word *descent* is, in the margin, *pedigree*. The meaning is, that he was not *in the same genealogy—mh genealogoumenov*—he was not of the order of Levitical priests. That Melchizedek is meant there can be no doubt; at the same time, also, the thought is presented with prominence, on which Paul so much insists, that he was of a different order from the Levitical priesthood.

And blessed him. Blessed him as a priest of God; blessed him in such a manner as to imply acknowledged superiority. See Heb 7:1.

That had the promises. The promise that he should have a numerous posterity; that in him all the nations of the earth should be blessed. See Heb 6:12-16.

{1} "descent" "pedigree" {b} "tithes" Ge 14:20 {c} "the promises" Ro 9:4

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 7 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *And without all contradiction*. It is an admitted principle; a point about which there can be no dispute.

The less is blessed of the better. The act of pronouncing a blessing is understood to imply superiority of rank, age, or station. So when a father lays his hand on his children and blesses them, it is understood to be the act of one superior in age, venerableness, and authority; when a prophet pronounced a blessing on the people, the same thing was understood; and the same is true, also, when a minister of religion pronounces a blessing on a congregation. It is the act of one who is understood to sustain an office above the people on whom the blessing is pronounced. This was understood of the Saviour when parents brought their children to him to lay his hands on them and bless them, Mt 19:13; and the same was true of Jacob, when flying he blessed the sons of Joseph, Heb 11:21 Ge 48:5-20. The word *less* here means the one of inferior rank; who is less in office, honour, or age. It does not imply inferiority of moral or religious character, for this is not the point under consideration. The word *better* means one who is of superior office or rank, not one who has necessarily a purer or holier character. That Melchizedek was thus superior to Abraham, Paul says, is implied by the very declaration that he "blessed him." It is also seen to be true by the whole comparison. Abraham was a petty prince; an *Emir*—the head of a company of Nomades, or migratory shepherds, having, it is true, a large number of dependents, but still not having the rank here given to Melchizedek. Though called a *prophet*, Ge 20:7, yet he is nowhere called either a *priest* or a *king*. In these respects, it was undoubted that he was inferior to Melchizedek.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 7 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *And here men that die receive tithes*. Another point showing the inferiority of the Levitical priesthood. They who thus received tithes, though by the right to do this they asserted a superiority over their brethren, were mortal. Like others, they would soon die; and in regard to the most essential things they were on a level with their brethren. They had no exemption from sickness, affliction, or bereavement, and death came to them with just as much certainty as he approached other men. The meaning of this is, that they are mortal like their brethren, and the design is to show the inferiority of their office by this fact. Its obvious and natural signification, in the apprehension of the great mass of readers, would not be, as the meaning has been supposed to be, that it refers "to the *brief* and *mutable* condition of the Levitical priesthood." See Stuart, *in loco*. Such an interpretation would not occur to any one if it were not to avoid the difficulty existing in the correlative member of the verse, where it is said of Melchizedek that "he liveth." But is the difficulty avoided then? Is it not as difficult to understand what is meant by his having an immutable and perpetual priesthood, as it is to know what is meant by his not dying literally ? Is the one any more true than the other whatever difficulties, therefore, there may be, we are bound to adhere to the obvious sense of the expression here; a sense which furnishes also a just and forcible ground of comparison. It seems to me, therefore, that the simple meaning of this passage is, that under the Levitical economy those who received tithes were mortal, and were thus placed in strong contrast with him of whom it was said, "he liveth." Thus they were inferior to him—as a *mortal* is inferior

to one who does not die; and thus also they must he inferior to him who was made a priest after the "order" of him who thus "lived."

But there. In contrast with "here" in the same verse. The reference here is to the account of Melchizedek: "Here" in the Levitical economy, men received tithes who are mortal; "there," in the account of Melchizedek, the case is different.

He receiveth them. Melchizedek — for so the connexion evidently demands.

Of whom it is witnessed. Of whom the record is. There is not, in Genesis, indeed any direct record that he *lives*, but there is the absence of a record that he *died*; and this seems to have been regarded as, in fact, a record of permanency in the office, or as having an office which did not pass over to successors by the death of the then incumbent.

That he liveth. This is an exceedingly difficult expression, and one which has always greatly perplexed commentators. The fair and obvious meaning is, that all the record we have of Melchizedek is, that *he was* "*alive*;" or, as Grotius says, the record is *merely* that he lived. We have no mention of his death, from anything that the *record* shows, it might appear that he continued to live on, and did not die. Arguing from the record, therefore, there is a strong contrast between him and the Levitical priests, all of whom we know are mortal, Heb 7:23. The apostle is desirous of making out a contrast between them and the priesthood of Christ, *on this point*, among others; and in doing this he appeals to the record in the Old Testament, and says that there was a case which furnished an intimation that the priestly office of the Messiah was not to pass over from him to others by death. That case was, that he was expressly compared Ps 110:4 with Melchizedek, and that in the account of Melchizedek there was no record of his death. As to the *force* of this argument, it must be admitted that it would strike a Jew more impressively than it does most readers now; and it may not be improbable that the apostle was reasoning from some interpretation of the passages in Ge 14 and Ps 110, which was then prevalent, and which would then be conceded on all hands to be correct. If this was the admitted interpretation, and if there is no equivocation, or mere *trick* in the reasoning—as there cannot be shown to be—why should we not allow to the Jew a peculiarity of reasoning as we do to all other people? There are modes of reasoning and illustration in all nations, in all societies, and in all professions, which do not strike others as very forcible. The ancient philosophers had methods of reasoning which now seem weak to us; the lawyer often argues in a way which appears to be a mere quirk or quibble, and so the lecturer in science sometimes reasons. The cause of all this may not be always that there is real quibble or quirk, in the mode of argumentation, but that he who reasons in this manner has in his view certain points which he regards as undisputed which do not appear so to us; or that he argues from what is admitted in the profession, or in the school where he is taught, which are not understood by those whom he addresses. To this should be added also the consideration, that Paul had a constant reference to the Messiah, and that it is possible that in his mind there was here a transition from the type to the antitype, and that the language which he uses may be stronger than if he had been speaking of the *mere* record of Melchizedek if he had found it standing by itself. Still his reasoning turns mainly on the fact, that in the case of Melchizedek there was no one who had preceded him in that office, and that he had no successor, and, *in regard to the matter in hand*, it was all one as if he had been a perpetual priest, or *had continued still alive*.

{a} "of whom" Heb 5:6

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 7 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *And as I may so say*. So to speak—*wv epov eipein*. For numerous examples in the classic writers of this expression, see Wetstein, *in loc*. It is used precisely as it is with us when we say, "so to speak," or, "if I may be allowed the expression." It is employed when what is said is not strictly and literally true, but when it amounts to the same thing, or when about the same idea is conveyed. "It is a *softening down* of an expression which a writer supposes his readers may deem too strong, or which may have the appearance of excess or severity. It amounts to an indirect apology for employing an unusual or unexpected assertion or phrase." *Prof. Stuart*. Here Paul could not mean that Levi had actually paid tithes in Abraham—for he had not then an existence; or that Abraham was his representative—for there had been no appointment of Abraham to act in that capacity by Levi; or that the act of Abraham was imputed or reckoned to Abraham—for that was not true, and would not have been pertinent to the case if it were so. But it means, that in the circumstances of the case, the same thing occurred in regard to the superiority of Melchizedek, and the inferiority of the Levitical priesthood, *as if* Levi had been present with Abraham, and had himself actually paid tithes on that occasion. This was so because Abraham was the distinguished ancestor of Levi; and when an ancestor has done an act implying inferiority of rank to another, we feel as if the whole family, or all the descendants, by that act recognised the inferiority, unless something occurs to change the relative rank of the persons. Here nothing indicating any such change had occurred. Melchizedek had no descendants of which mention is made, and the act of Abraham, as the head of the Hebrew race, stood therefore as if it were the act of all who descended from him.

Levi. The ancestor of the whole Levitical priesthood, and from whom they received their name. He was the third son of Jacob and Leah, and was born in Mesopotamia. On account of the conduct of Simeon and Levi towards Shechem, for the manner in which he had treated their sister Dinah, Ge 34:25, and which Jacob characterized as "cruelty," Ge 49:5,6, Jacob said that they should be "scattered in Israel," Ge 49:7. Afterwards the whole tribe of Levi was chosen by God to execute the various functions of the priesthood, and were "scattered" over the land, having no inheritance of their own, but deriving their subsistence from the offerings of the people. Nu 3:6, seq. Levi is here spoken of as the ancestor of the tribe, or collectively to denote the entire Jewish priesthood.

Who receiveth tithes. That is, his descendants, the priests and Levites, receive tithes.

Payed tithes in Abraham. It is the same as if he had payed tithes in or by Abraham.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 7 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *For he was yet in the loins of his father*. Abraham is here called the *father* of Levi, by a common use of the word, referring to a more remote ancestor than the literal father. The meaning of the apostle is that he was even then, in a certain sense, in the loins of Abraham, when Melchizedek met him; or it was all the same as if he were there, and had then an existence. The relation which subsisted between him and Abraham, in the circumstances of the case, implied the same thing *as if* he had then been born, and had acted for himself by paying tithes. Instances of this occur constantly. A father sells a farm, to which his son would be heir, and it is the same as if the son had sold it. He has no more control over it than if he had been present and disposed of it himself.

A father acknowledges fealty to a government for a certain title or property which is to descend to his heirs, and it is all one as if the heir had himself done it; and it is not improper to say that it is the same as if he had been there and acted for himself. For some valuable remarks on the nature of the reasoning here employed, see Stuart on the Hebrews, Eursus xiv. The reasoning here is, indeed, especially such as would be fitted to impress a Jewish mind, and perhaps more forcibly than it does ours. The Jews valued themselves on the dignity and honour of the Levitical priesthood, and it was important to show them on their own principles, and according to their own sacred writings, that the great ancestor of all the Levitical community had himself acknowledged his inferiority to one who was declared also in their own writings Ps 110 to be like the Messiah, or who was of the same "order." At the same time, the reasoning concedes nothing false, and conveys no wrong impression. It is not mere fancy or accommodation, nor is it framed on allegory or cabalistic principles. It is founded in truth, and such as might be used anywhere, where regard was shown to pedigree, or respect was claimed on account of the illustrious deeds of an ancestor. It would be regarded as sound reasoning in a country like England, where titles and ranks are recognised, and where various orders of nobility exist. The fact that a remote ancestor had done homage or fealty to the ancestor of another class of titled birth would be regarded as proof of acknowledged inferiority in the family, and might be used with force and propriety in an argument. Paul has done no more than this.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 7 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood*. As the Jews supposed. They were accustomed to regard the system as perfect, It was an appointment of God, and they were tenacious of the opinion that it was to be permanent, and that it needed no change. But Paul says that this could not be. Even from their own Scriptures it was apparent that a priest was to arise of another order, and of a more permanent character; and this, he says, was full proof that there was *defect* of some kind in the previous order. What this defect was he does not here specify, but the subsequent reasoning shows that it was in such points as these—that it was not permanent; that it could not make the worshippers perfect; that the blood which they offered in sacrifice could not take away sin, and could not render those who offered it holy. Comp. Heb 7:19,23,24, Heb 10:1-4.

For under it the people received the law. This assertion seems necessary in order to establish the point maintained in Heb 7:12, that if the priesthood is changed there must be also a change of the law. In order to this it was necessary to admit that the law was *received* under that economy, and that *it was a part of it*, so that the change of one involved also the change of the other. It was not strictly true that the whole law was given *after* the various orders of Levitical priests were established—for the law on Sinai, and several other laws were given before that distinct arrangement was made; but it was true

(1) that a considerable part of the laws of Moses were given under that arrangement; and

(2) *that the whole* of the ceremonial observances was connected with that. They were parts of one system, and mutually dependent on each other. This is all that the argument demands.

What further need was there, etc. "If that system would lead to perfection; if it was sufficient to make the conscience pure, and to remove sin, then there was no necessity of any other. Yet the Scriptures have declared that there *would be* another Of a different order, implying that there was

some defect in the former." This reasoning is founded on the fact that there was an express prediction of the coming of a priest of a different "order," Ps 110:4, and that this fact implied that there was some deficiency in the former arrangement. To this reasoning it is impossible to conceive that there can be any objection.

{a} "If, therefore" Ga 2:21 5:18,19 Heb 8:7

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 7 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *For the priesthood being changed*. According to the prediction in Ps 110 that it would be. When that occurs, the consequence specified will also follow.

There is made of necessity a change also of the law. The law so far as it grew out of that, or was dependent on it. The connexion requires us to understand it *only* of the law *so far as it was connected with the Levitical priesthood*. This could not apply to the ten commandments—for they were given *before* the institution of the priesthood; nor could it apply to any other part of the moral law, for that was not dependent on the appointment of the Levitical priests. But the meaning is, that since a large number of laws—constituting a code of considerable extent and importance—was given for the regulation of the priesthood, and in reference to the rites of religion, which they were to observe or superintend, it followed that when their office was superseded *by one of a wholly different order*, the law which had regulated *them* vanished also, or ceased to be binding. This was a very important point in the introduction of Christianity, and hence it is that it is so often insisted on in the writings of Paul. The *argument* to show that there had been a change or transfer of the priestly office, he proceeds to establish in the sequel.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 7 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *For he of whom these things are spoken*. The Lord Jesus, the Messiah, to whom they had reference. The *things* here spoken of pertain to his office as priest; his being of the order of Melchizedek. The apostle here *assumes* it as a point concerning which there could be no dispute, that these things referred to the Lord Jesus. Those whom he addressed would not be disposed to call this in question, and his argument had conducted him to this conclusion.

Pertaineth to another tribe. To the tribe of Judah, Heb 7:14.

Of which no man gave attendance at the altar. The priestly office pertained only to the tribe of Levi. No one of the tribe of Judah had any part in the performance of the duties of that office. This was settled by the Jewish law.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 7 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah*. It is well known; it cannot be a matter of dispute. About the fact that the Lord Jesus was of the tribe of Judah there could be no

doubt. Comp. Mt 1:3. But probably the apostle means here to refer to more than that simple fact. It was a doctrine of the Old Testament, and was admitted by the Jews, that the Messiah was to be of that tribe. See Ge 49:10; Isa 11:1 Mic 5:2; Mt 11:6, This was an additional consideration to show that there was to be a change of some kind in the office of the priesthood, since it was declared Ps 110 that the Messiah was to be a priest. The fact that the Messiah is to be of the tribe of Judah is still admitted by the Jews. As their distinction of tribes now, however, is broken up, and as it is impossible for them to tell who belongs to the tribe of Judah, it is held by them that when he comes this-will be made known by miracle.

Of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. That is, in the Mosaic laws respecting the office of priest this tribe is not mentioned. All the arrangements pertain to the tribe of Judah.

{b} "evident" Isa 11:1 Mt 1:3; Re 5:5

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 7 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *And it is yet far more evident*. Not that our Lord would spring out of Judah, but the point which he was endeavouring to establish; that there must be a change of the priesthood, was rendered still more evident from another consideration. A strong proof of the necessity of such a change of the priesthood was furnished from the fact that the Messiah was to be of the tribe of Judah; but a much stronger because, as a priest, he was to be of the order of Melchizedek—that is, he was of the same rank with one who did not even belong to that tribe.

After the similitude, Resembling; that is, he was to be of the order of Melchizedek.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 7 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Who is made*. That is, the other priest is made—to wit, the Messiah. He was made a priest by a peculiar law.

Not after the law of a carnal commandment. Not according to the law of a commandment pertaining to the flesh. The word *carnal* means *fleshly*; and the idea is, that the law under which the priests of the old dispensation were made was external, rather than spiritual; it related more to outward observances than to the keeping of the heart. That this was the nature of the Mosaic ritual in the main, it was impossible to doubt, and the apostle proceeds to argue from this undeniable truth.

But after the power of an endless life. By an authority of endless duration, That is, it was not concerned mainly with outward observances, and did not pass over from one to another by death, but was unchanging in its character, and spiritual in its nature. It was enduring and perpetual as a priesthood, and was thus far exalted above the service performed by the priests under the former dispensation.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 7 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *For he testifieth*. "That this is the true account of it is proved by the testimony of God himself, that he was to be a Priest for ever. **See Barnes "Heb 5:6"**.

{a} "Thou art a Priest" Ps 110:4

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 7 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *For there is verily a disannulling*. A setting aside. The law which existed before in regard to the priesthood becomes now abrogated, in consequence of the change which has been made in the priesthood. **See Barnes "Heb 7:12"**.

Of the commandment. Relating to the office of priest, or to the ceremonial rites in general. This does not refer to the moral law, as if that was abrogated, for

(1) the reasoning of the apostle does not pertain to that, and

(2) that law cannot be abrogated. It grows out of the nature of things, and must be perpetual and universal.

Going before. Going before the Christian dispensation, and introducing it.

For the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. That is, it was not adapted to save man; it had not power to accomplish what was necessary to be done in human salvation. It answered the end for which it was designed—that of introducing a more perfect plan, and then vanished as a matter of course. It did not expiate guilt; it did not give peace to the conscience; it did not produce perfection, (Heb 7:11,) and therefore it gave place to a better system.

{b} "weakness" Ac 13:39

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 7 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *For the law made nothing perfect.* The Levitical, ceremonial law. It did not produce a perfect state; it did not do what was desirable to be done for a sinner. **See Barnes "Heb 8:11"**.

That law, as such, did not reconcile man to God; it did not make an atonement; it did not put away guilt; in one word, *it did not restore things to the condition in which they were before the law was broken and man became a sinner*. If man were saved under that system—as many undoubtedly were—it was not in virtue of any intrinsic efficacy which it possessed, but in virtue of that great Sacrifice which it typified.

But the bringing in of a better hope did. Marg. "But *it was*." The correct rendering is, probably, "but there is the bringing in of a better hope by which we have access to God." The law could not effect this. It left the conscience guilty, and sin unexpiated. But there is now the introduction of a better system by which we can approach a reconciled God. The "better hope" here refers to the more sure and certain expectation of heaven introduced by the gospel. There is a better foundation for hope; a more certain way of obtaining the Divine favour than the law could furnish.

By the which. By which better hope; that is, by means of the ground of hope furnished by the gospel—to wit, that God is now reconciled, and that we can approach him with the assurance that he is ready to save us.

We draw nigh unto God. We have access to him. **See Barnes "Ro 5:1"**; **See Barnes** "Ro 5:2".

{1} "the bringing" "but it was" {d} "which we draw" Ro 3:20

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 7 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *And inasmuch as not without an oath*. In addition to every other consideration showing the superiority of Christ as a priest, there was the solemnity of the oath by which he was set apart to the office. The appointment of one to the office of priest by an oath, such as occurred in the case of Jesus, was much more solemn and important than where the office was received merely by descent.

Ac 13:39

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 7 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *For those priests were made without an oath*. The Levitical priests were set apart and consecrated without their office being confirmed to them by an oath on the part of God. They received it by regular descent, and when they arrived at a suitable age they entered on it of course. Jesus received *his* office by special appointment, and it was secured to him by an oath. The word rendered "oath" is, in the margin, "swearing of an oath". This is the proper meaning of the Greek word, but the sense is not materially varied.

But this with an oath. This priest, the Lord Jesus, became a priest in virtue of an oath.

The Lord sware. **See Barnes "Heb 6:3"**.

The reference here is to Ps 110:4 "The Lord hath sworn." and will not repent. That is, will not regret, or will not alter his mind through regret—for this is the meaning of the Greek word.

{2} "an oath" "swearing of an oath" {e} "The Lord sware" Ro 5:2

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 7 - Verse 22

Verse 22.

By so much.

Inasmuch as an oath is more solemn than a mere appointment. The meaning is, that there is all the additional security in the suretyship of Jesus which arises from the solemnity of an oath. It is not implied that God would not be true to his mere promise, but the argument here is derived from the custom of speaking among men. An oath is regarded as much more sacred and binding than a mere promise; and the fact that God has sworn in a given case furnishes the highest security that what he has promised will be performed.

Was Jesus made a surety. The word *surety egguov*— occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, nor is it found in the Septuagint. It properly means, a bondsman; one who pledges his name, property, or influence, that a certain thing shall be done. When a contract is made, a debt contracted, or a note given, a friend often becomes the *security* in the case, and is himself responsible if the terms of the contract are not complied with. In the case of the new covenant between God and man, Jesus is the "security," or the bondsman. But of what, and to whom, is he the surety? It cannot be that he is a bondsman *for God* that he will maintain the covenant, and be true to the promise which he makes, as Crellius supposes, for we need no suck "security" of the Divine faithfulness and veracity. It cannot be that he becomes responsible for the Divine conduct in any way—- for no such responsibility is needed or possible. But it must mean, that he is the security or bondsman on the part of man; He is the pledge that we shall be saved. He becomes responsible, so to speak, to law and justice, that no injury shall be done by our salvation, though we are sinners. He is not a security that we shall be saved, *at any rate*, without holiness, repentance, faith, or true religions for he never could enter into a suretyship of that kind; but his suretyship extends to this point, that the law shall be honoured; that all its demands shall be met; that we may be saved though we have violated it, and that its terrific penalty shall not fall upon us. The case is this:— A sinner becomes a true penitent, and enters heaven. It might be said that he does this over a broken law; that God treats the good and bad alike, and that no respect has been paid to the law or the penalty in his salvation. Here the great Surety comes in, and says that it is not so. *He* has become responsible for this; he the surety, the pledge, that all proper honour shall be paid to justice, and that the same good effects shall ensue as if the penalty of the law had been fully borne. He himself has died to honour the law, and to open a way by which its penalty may be fully remitted consistently with justice, and he becomes *the everlasting pledge or security* to law, to justice, to the universe, that no injury shall result from the pardon and salvation of the sinner. According to this view, no man can rely on the suretyship of Jesus but he who expects salvation on the terms of the gospel. The suretyship is not at all that he shall be saved in his sins, or that he shall enter heaven no matter what life he leads; it is only that if he believes, repents, and is saved, no injury shall be clone to the universe, no dishonour to the law. For this the Lord Jesus is responsible.

Of a better testament. Rather, "of a better covenant." The former covenant, was that which God made with his people under the Mosaic dispensation: the new covenant is that made by means of Christ. This is *better*, because

(1) the terms are more simple and easy;

(2) the observances and rites are much less onerous and hard;

(3) it relates to all men, not being confined to the Jewish people;

(4) it is now sure. The former was administered through the instrumentality of the Levitical priesthood, this by the Son of God; that was transitory and changing, this is permanent and eternal.

{f} "better testament" Heb 8:6

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 7 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *And they truly*. Under the Jewish dispensation. The object of this verse, and the following, is to state one more reason of the excellence of the priesthood of Christ. It is that, owing

to the frailty of human nature and the shortness of life, the office of priest there was continually changing. But here there was no such change. Christ, being exalted to the heavens to live for ever there, has now an unchangeable priesthood, and everything in regard to his office is permanent.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 7 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *But this man*. Gr., "But he"—referring to Christ.

Because he continueth ever. Gr., "Because he remains for ever." The idea is, because he does not die, but ever lives, he has an unchanging priesthood. There is no necessity that he should yield it to others, as was the ease with the Jewish priests, because they were mortal. The reason, in their ease, why it passed to others, was not that they did not perform the office well, but that they were mortal, and could not continue to hold it. But this reason could not operate in the ease of the Lord Jesus, and therefore his priesthood would be permanent.

Hath an unchangeable priesthood. Marg., "or, *which passeth not from one to another*." The margin expresses the sense of the passage. The idea is not strictly that it was *unchangeable*, but that it did not pass over into other hands. The Levitical priesthood passed from one to another as successive generations came on the stage of action. This reasoning is not designed to prove that the priesthood of Christ will be literally *eternal*—for its necessity may cease when all the redeemed are in heaven—but that it is permanent, and does not pass from hand to hand.

{b} "unchangeable" "which passeth not from on to another" {1} "priesthood" 1Sa 2:35

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 7 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Wherefore he is able also*. As he ever lives, and ever intercedes, he has power to save. He does not begin the work of salvation, and then relinquish it by reason of death, but he lives on as long as it is necessary that anything should be done for the salvation of his people. We need a Saviour who has *power* and Christ has shown that he has all the power which is needful to rescue man from eternal death.

To the uttermost. This does not mean simply *for ever*—but that he has power to save them so that their salvation shall be *complete eiv to pantelev*. He does not abandon the work midway; he does not begin a work which he is unable to finish. He can aid us *as long* as we need anything done for our salvation; he can save all who will entrust their salvation to his hands.

That come unto God by him. In his name; or depending on him. To come to God, is to approach him for pardon and salvation.

Seeing he ever liveth. He does not die as the Jewish priests did.

To make intercession for them. **See Barnes "Ro 8:34"**.

He constantly presents the merits of his death as a reason why we should be saved. The precise mode, however, in which he makes intercession in heaven for his people is not revealed. The *general* meaning is, that he undertakes their cause, and assists them in overcoming their foes and in their endeavours to live a holy life. Comp. 1Jo 2:1. He does in heaven whatever is necessary to obtain

for us grace and strength; secures the aid which we need against our foes; and is the *pledge* or *security* for us that the law shall be honoured, and the justice and truth of God maintained, though we are saved. It is reasonable to presume that this is somehow by the presentation of the merits of his great sacrifice, and that *that* is the ground on which all this grace is obtained. As that is infinite, we need not fear that it will ever be exhausted.

{b} "able" Jude 1:24 {2} "to the uttermost" "evermore"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 7 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *For such an High Priest became us*. Was fitted to our condition. That is, there was that in our character and circumstances which demanded that a high priest for us should be personally holy. It was not requisite merely that he should have great power; or that he should be of a rank superior to that of the Jewish priesthood; but there was a special propriety that he should surpass all others in *moral* purity. Other priests were mere mortal men, and it was necessary that their office should pass to other hands: they were *sinful* men also, and it was necessary that sacrifices should be made for themselves as well as others. We need, however, a different priest. We need not only one who ever lives, but one who is perfectly holy, and who has no need to bring an offering for himself, and all the merit of whose sacrifice, therefore, may be ours. Such an high priest we have in the person of the Lord Jesus; and there is no truth more interesting, and no proposition more susceptible of proof, than that. HE IS EXACTLY FITTED TO MAN. In his moral character, and in the great work which he has accomplished, he is just such a Saviour as is adapted to the wants of ignorant, fallen, wretched, sinful man. He is benevolent, and pities our woes; wise, and is able to enlighten our ignorance; compassionate, and ready to forgive our faults. He has made such an sacrifice. It was necessary to put away our guilt, and offers such intercession as we need to have offered for us in order that we may be preserved from falling.

Who is holy. Not merely outwardly righteous, but pure in heart.

Harmless. Not injuring any one. To no one did he do wrong. Neither to their name, person, or property, did he ever do injury; nor will he ever. He is the only one who has lived on earth of whom it could be said that he never, in any way, did wrong to another.

Undefiled. By sin; by any improper desire or passion. He was unstained by crime; "unspotted from the world." Sin always defiles the soul; but from every such pollution the Lord Jesus was free.

Separate from sinners. That is, he did not associate with them as such. He did not partake of their feelings, plans, pleasures. Though he mingled with them, yet it was merely to do them good; and in all his life there was an entire separation from the feelings, principles, and views of a sinful world.

And made higher than the heavens. Exalted above the visible heavens; that is, at the right hand of God. **See Barnes** "Eph 1:21, **See Barnes "Php 2:9"**.

We needed a high priest who is thus exalted, that he may manage our cause before the throne of God.

{d} "harmless" Heb 4:15 1Pe 2:22

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 7 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *Who needeth not daily, as those High priests*. As the Jewish priests. This is an additional circumstance introduced to show the superior excellency of the High Priest of the Christian profession, and to show also how he was fitted to our wants. The Jewish high priest was a sinful man. He had the same fallen and corrupt nature as others. He needed an expiatory sacrifice for his own sins as really as they did for theirs. When he approached God to offer sacrifice, it was needful to make an atonement for himself; and when all was done, it was still a sacrifice offered by a sinful man. But it was not so in the case of Jesus. He was so holy that he needed no sacrifice for himself, and all that he did was in behalf of others. Besides, it was necessary that the sacrifices in the Jewish service should be constantly repeated. They were imperfect. They were mere types and shadows. They who offered them were frail, sinful men. It became necessary, therefore, to repeat them every day to keep up the proper sense of their transgressions, and to furnish a suitable acknowledgment of the tendency to sin alike among the people and the priests. Neither in the nature of the offering, nor in the character of those who made it, was there any sufficient reason why it should *cease* to be offered, and it was therefore repeated day by day. But it was not so with the Lord Jesus. The offering which he made, though presented but *once*, was so ample and perfect, that it had sufficient merit for all the sins of the world, and needed never to be repeated. It is not probable that the Jewish high priest himself *personally* officiated at the offering of sacrifice every day; but the meaning here is, that it was *done* daily, and that there was *need* of a daily sacrifice in his behalf. As one of the Jewish people, the sacrifice was offered on his account, as well as on the account of others— for he partook of the common infirmities and sinfulness of the nation.

For this he did once. That is, once for all *efapax*. He made such an atonement that it was not needful that it should be repeated. Thus he put an end to sacrifice; for when he made the great atonement it was complete, and there was no need that any more blood should be shed for human guilt.

{a} "his own sins" Le 9:7

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 7 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *For the law*. The ceremonial law.

Which have infirmity. Who are weak, frail, sinful, dying, Such were all who were appointed to the office of priest under the Jewish law.

But the word of the oath. By which one was appointed after the order of Melchizedek. **See Barnes "Heb 7:21"**.

Maketh the Son. The Son of God. That appointment has resulted in his being set apart to this work.

Who is consecrated for evermore. Marg., *Perfected*. **See Barnes "Heb 2:10"**.

The idea is, that the appointment is *complete* and *permanent*. It does not pass from one to the other. It is perfect in all the arrangements, and will remain so for ever.

REMARKS.

The subject of this chapter is the exalted high-priesthood of the Redeemer. This is a subject which pertains to all Christians, and to all men. All religions imply the priestly office; all suppose sacrifice of some kind. In regard to the priestly office of Christ: as illustrated in this chapter, we may observe,

(1.) He stands alone. In that office he had no predecessor, and has no one to succeed him. In this respect he was without father, mother, or descent—and he stands in lonely majesty, as the only one who sustains the office, Heb 7:3.

(2.) He is superior to Abraham. Abraham never laid claim to the office of priest, but he recognised his inferiority to one whom the Messiah was to resemble, Heb 7:2,4.

(3.) He is superior to all the Jewish priesthood—sustaining a rank, and performing an office, above them all. The great ancestor of all the Levitical priests recognised his inferiority to one of the rank or "order" of which the Messiah was to be, and received from him a blessing. In our contemplation of Christ, therefore, as priest, we have the privilege of regarding him as superior to the Jewish high priest—exalted as was his office, and important as were the functions of his office; as more grand, more pure, more worthy of confidence and love.

(4.) The great High Priest of the Christian profession is the only perfect priest, Heb 7:11,19. The Jewish priests were all imperfect and sinful men. The sacrifices which they offered were imperfect, and could not give peace to the conscience. There was need of some better system, and they all looked forward to it. But in the Lord Jesus, and in his work, there is absolute perfection. What he did was complete, and his office needs no change.

(5.) The office now is permanent. It does not change from hand to hand, Heb 7:23,24. He who sustains this office does not die, and we may ever apply to him, and cast our cares on him. Men die; one generation succeeds another; but our High Priest is the same. We may trust in him in whom our fathers found peace and salvation, and then we may teach our children to confide in the same High-Priest —and so send the invaluable lesson down to latest generations.

(6.) His work is firm and sure, Heb 7:20-22. His office is founded on an oath, and he has become the security for, all who will commit their cause to him. Can great interests, like those of the soul, be entrusted to better hands? Are they not safer in his keeping than in our own

(7.) He is able to save to the uttermost, Heb 7:25. That power he showed when he was on earth; that power he is constantly evincing. No one has asked aid of him, and found him unable to render it; no one has been suffered to sink down to hell because his arm was weak. What he has done for a few, he can do for "all;" and they who will entrust themselves to him will find him a sure Saviour. Why will not men then be persuaded to commit themselves to him? Can they save themselves? Where is there one who has shown that he was able to do it? Do they not need a Saviour? Let the history of the world answer. Can man conduct his own cause before God? How weak, ignorant, and blind is he! how little qualified for such an office! Has any one suffered wrong by committing himself to the Redeemer? If there is such an one, where is he? Who has ever made this complaint that has tried it? Who ever will make it? In countless millions of instances the trial has been made, whether Christ was "able to save." Men have gone with a troubled spirit, with a guilty conscience, and with awful apprehensions of the wrath to come, and have asked him to save them. Not one of, those who have done this has found reason to doubt his ability; not one has regretted that he has committed the deathless interest of the soul into his hands.

(8.) Christ saves to the *uttermost*, Heb 7:25. He makes the salvation *complete*. So the Bible assures us; and so we see it, in fact, as far as we can trace the soul. When a Christian friend dies,

we stand at his bed-side, and accompany him as far as we can into the valley of the shadow of death. We ask him whether he feels that Christ is able to save? He replies," Yes." When he has lost the power of speaking above a whisper, we ask him the same question, and receive the same reply. When he gives us the parting hand, and we, still anxious to know whether all is well, ask the same question, a sign, a smile, a lighting up of the dying eye, declares that all is well. As far as we can trace the departing soul, when it goes into the dark valley, we receive the same assurance; and why should we doubt that the same grace is bestowed further onward and that he saves "to the uttermost? " But what else thus saves? Friends give the parting hand at the gloomy entrance to that valley, and the gay and the worldly coolly turn away. The delusions of infidelity there forsake the soul, and minister no comfort then. Flatterers turn away from the dying scene—for who flatters the dying with the praise of beauty or accomplishments? Taste, skill, learning, talent, do not help then—for how can *they* save a dying soul? None but Jesus saves to the "uttermost;" no other friend but he goes with us *entirely through* the valley of death. Is it not better to have such a friend than to go alone through that dark, gloomy path? Any other gloomy and dangerous way may be more safely trod without a friend than the vale of death.

(9.) The Christian religion is fitted to our condition, Heb 7:26,27. It has just such a High Priest as we need—holy, harmless, undefiled. Just such an atonement has been made as is necessary —ample, rich, full, and not needing to be made again. It reveals just such truth as we want— that respecting the immortality of the soul, and the glorious state of the redeemed beyond the grave. It imparts just such consolation as is fitted to our condition— pure, rich, unfailing, elevating. It reconciles us to God just as it should be done—in such a way that God can be honoured, and the purity and dignity of his law maintained. It is the religion adapted to dying, ignorant, sinful, wretched man. No other system so much consults the true dignity of our nature, and the honour of God; no one diffuses such consolations through the life that is, or fills with such hopes in regard to the life to come.

(10.) Since, then, we have now such a great High Priest; since the promises of the gospel are settled on so firm a foundation; and since the gospel in its provisions of mercy is all that we can desire it to be, let us yield our hearts entirely to the Saviour, and make this salvation wholly ours. We have the privilege, if we will, of drawing near to God with boldness. We may come near his throne. Though we are poor and sinful, and deserve neither notice nor mercy, yet we may come and ask for all that we need. We may go to God, and supplicate his favour with the assurance that he is ready to hear. We may go feeling that the great atonement has been made for our sins, and that no other offering is now needed; that the last bloody offering which God required has been presented, and that all that he now asks is the sacrifice of a contrite and a grateful heart. All that was needful to be done on the part of God to provide a way of salvation, has been done; all that remains is for man to forsake his sins, and to come back to a God who waits to be gracious.

{1} "consecrated" "perfected"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 8

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 8 - Verse 1

CHAPTER VIII.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

THIS chapter is a continuation of the argument which has been prosecuted in the previous chapters respecting the priesthood of Christ. The apostle had demonstrated that he was to be a priest, and that he was to be not of the Levitical order, but of the order of Melchizedek. As a consequence, he had proved that this involved a change of the law appointing a priesthood, and that, in respect to permanency, and happy moral influence, the priesthood of Christ far surpassed the Jewish. This thought he pursues in this chapter, and shows particularly that it involved a change in the nature of the covenant between God and his people. In the prosecution of this, he

(1.) states the sum or principal point of the whole matter under discussion—that the priesthood of Christ was real and permanent, while that of the Hebrew economy was typical, and was destined in its own nature to be temporary, Heb 8:1-3.

(2.) There was a fitness and propriety in his being removed to heaven to perform the functions of his office there—since if he had remained on earth he could not have officiated as priest, that duty being by the law of Moses entrusted to others pertaining to another tribe, Heb 8:4,5.

(3.) Christ had obtained a more exalted ministry than the Jewish priests held, because he was the Mediator in a better covenant—a covenant that related rather to the heart than to external observances, Heb 8:6-13. That new covenant excelled the old in the following respects:

(a) it was established on better promises, Heb 8:6.

(b) It was not a covenant requiring mainly external observances, but pertained to the soul, and the law of that covenant was written there, Heb 8:7-10.

(c) It was connected with the diffusion of the knowledge of the Lord among all classes, from the highest to the lowest, Heb 8:11.

(d) The evidence of forgiveness might be made more clear than it was under the old dispensation, and the way in which sins are pardoned be much better understood, Heb 8:12. These considerations involved the consequence also which is stated in Heb 8:13, that the old covenant was of necessity about to vanish away.

Verse 1. *Now of the things which we have spoken*. Or, "of the things of which we are speaking," (*Stuart*;) or, as we should say, *of what is said*. The Greek does not necessarily mean things that *had been* spoken, but may refer to all that he was saying, taking the whole subject into consideration.

This is the sum. Or, this is the principal thing; referring to what he was *about* to say, not what he *had said*. Our translators seem to have understood this as referring to *a summing up*, or recapitulation of what he had said—and there can be no doubt that the Greek would bear this interpretation. But another exposition has been proposed, adopted by Bloomfield, Stuart, Michaelis, and Storr, among the moderns, and found also in Sindas, Theodoret, Theophylact, and others, among the ancients. It is that which regards the word rendered *sum kefalaion* as meaning the *principal thing*; the chief matter; the most important point. The reason for this interpretation is, that the apostle in fact goes into no *recapitulation* of what he had said, but enters on a new topic relating to the priesthood of Christ. Instead of *going over* what he *had* demonstrated, he enters on a more important point, that the priesthood of Christ is performed in heaven, and that he has entered into

the true tabernacle there. All which preceded was type and shadow, this was that which the former economy had adumbrated. In the previous chapters the apostle had shown that he who sustained this office was superior in rank to the Jewish priests; that they were frail and dying, and that the office in their hands was changing from one to another, but that that of Christ was permanent and abiding. He now comes to consider the *real nature* of the office itself; the sacrifice which was offered; the substance of which all in the former dispensation was the type. This was the *principle thing kefalaion the head*, the most important matter; and the consideration of this is pursued through chapters 8-10.

We have such an High Priest. That is settled; proved; indisputable. The Christian system is not destitute of that which was regarded as so essential to the old dispensation—the office of a high priest.

Who is set on the right hand of a throne, etc. He is exalted to honour and glory before God. The right hand was regarded as the place of principle honour; and when it is said that Christ is at the right hand of God, the meaning is, that he is exalted to the highest honour in the universe. **See Barnes "Mr 16:19"**.

Of course the language is figurative—as God has no hands literally—but the language conveys an important meaning, that he is near to God, is high in his affection and love, and is raised to the most elevated situation in heaven. See Php 2:9; **See Barnes** "Eph 1:21, **See Barnes "Eph 1:22"**.

{a} "who is set" Eph 1:20

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 8 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *A minister of the sanctuary*. Marg. "or holy things." Gr. *twn agiwn*. The Greek may either mean *the sanctuary*—denoting the Holy of Holies—or *holy things*. The word *sanctuary*

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kodesh—was given to the tabernacle or temple as a *holy place*, and the plural form which is here used— *ta agia*—was given to the most holy place by way of eminence —the full form of the name being—

HEBREW

—*kodesh kodushim*, or, *agia agiwn* h*agia hagion*, (Jahn's Arche. & 328,) or, as it is here used, simply as *ta agia*. The connexion seems to require us to understand it of the most holy place, and not of holy things. The idea is, that the Lord Jesus, the great High Priest, has entered into the Holy of Holies in heaven, of which that in the tabernacle was an emblem. For a description of the most holy place in the temple, **See Barnes "Mt 21:12"**.

And of the true tabernacle. The real tabernacle in heaven, of which that among the Hebrews was but this type. The word *tabernacle skhnh* means, properly, *a booth, hut, or tent*, and was applied to the tent which Moses was directed to build as the place for the worship of God. That tabernacle, as the temple was afterwards, was regarded as the peculiar abode of God on earth. Here the reference is to heaven, as the dwelling place of God, of which that tabernacle was the emblem or symbol. It is called the "*true* tabernacle," as it is the *real* dwelling of God, of which the one made by Moses

was but the emblem. It is not moveable and perishable like that made by man, but is unchanging and eternal.

Which the Lord pitched, and not man. The word *pitched* is adapted to express the setting up of a *tent*. When it is said that "the Lord pitched the true tabernacle"—that is, the permanent dwelling in heaven—the meaning is, that heaven has been fitted up by God himself, and that whatever is necessary to constitute that an appropriate abode for the Divine majesty has been done by him. To that glorious dwelling the Redeemer has been received, and there he performs the office of High Priest in behalf of man. In what way he does this the apostle specifies in the remainder of this chapter, and in chapters 9 and 10.

{1} "of the sanctuary" "holy things" {b} "sanctuary" Heb 9:8,12,24

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 8 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *For every High Priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices*. This is a general statement about the functions of the high priest. It was the peculiarity of the office; it constituted its essence, that some gift or sacrifice was to be presented. This was indisputable in regard to the Jewish high priest, and this is involved in the nature of the priestly office everywhere. A *priest* is one who offers sacrifice, mainly in behalf of others. The *principles* involved in the office are,

(1.) that there is need that some offering or atonement should be made for sin; and,

(2.) that there is a fitness or propriety that some one should be designated to do it. If this idea that a priest must offer sacrifice be correct, then it follows that the name *priest* should not be given to any one who is not appointed to offer sacrifice. It should not therefore be given to the ministers of the gospel, for it is no part of their work to offer sacrifice—the great sacrifice for sin having been once offered by the Lord Jesus, and not being again to be repeated. Accordingly, the writers in the New Testament are perfectly uniform and consistent on this point. The name priest is never once given to the ministers of the gospel there. They are called ministers, ambassadors, pastors, bishops, overseers, etc., but never *priests*. Nor should they be so called in the Christian church. The name priest, as applied to Christian ministers, has been derived from the papists. They hold that the priest *does* offer as a sacrifice the real body and blood of Christ in the mass, and holding this, the name *priest* is given to the minister who does it *consistently*. It is not indeed *right or Scriptural*—for the whole doctrine on which it is based is absurd and false—but while that doctrine is held the *name* is consistent. But with what show of consistency or propriety can the name be given to a Protestant minister of the gospel?

Wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. That the Lord Jesus should make an offering. That is, since he is declared to be a priest, and since it is; essential to the office that a priest should make an offering, it is indispensable that he should bring a sacrifice to God. He could not be a priest, on the acknowledged principles on which that office is held, unless he did it. What the offering was which the Lord Jesus made the apostle specifies more fully in Heb 9:11-14; Heb 9:25,26

{a} "offer" Eph 5:2 Heb 9:12

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 8 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *For if he were on earth*, he should not be a Priest. He could not perform that office. The design of this is to show a reason why he was removed to heaven. The reason was, that on earth there were those who were set apart to that office, and that he, not being of the same tribe with them, could not officiate as priest, There was an order of men here on earth consecrated already to that office, and hence it was necessary that the Lord Jesus, in performing the functions of the office, should be removed to another sphere.

{1} "that there" "they"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 8 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Who serve unto the example*. Who perform their service by the mere example and shadow of the heavenly things; or in a tabernacle, and in a mode, that is the mere emblem of the reality which exists in heaven. The reference is to the tabernacle, which was a mere *example or copy* of heaven. The word here rendered *example upodeigma* means a *copy*, *likeness*, or *imitation*. The tabernacle was made after a *pattern* which was shown to Moses; it was made so as to have some faint resemblance to the reality in heaven, and in that "copy," or "example," they were appointed to officiate. Their service, therefore, had some *resemblance* to that in heaven.

And shadow. That is, in the tabernacle where they served there was a mere shadow of that which was real and substantial. Compared with what is in heaven, it was what the shadow is compared with the substance. A shadow—as of a man, a house, a tree—will indicate the form, the outline, the size of the object; but it has no substance or reality. So it was with the rites of the Jewish religion. They were designed merely as a shadow of the substantial realities of the true religion, or to present the dim outlines of what is true and real in heaven. Compare **See Barnes "Col 2:17"**.

See Barnes "Heb 10:1".

The word *shadow* here *skia* is used in distinction from the body or reality *swma*—(Compare Col 2:17) **See Barnes "Heb 10:1"**.

and also from *eikwn*— a perfect image or resemblance. See Heb 10:1.

Of heavenly things. Of the heavenly sanctuary; of what is real and substantial in heaven. That is, there exists in heaven a reality of which the service in the Jewish sanctuary was but the outline. The reference is, undoubtedly, to the service which the Lord Jesus performs there as the great High Priest of his people.

As Moses was admonished of God. As he was divinely instructed. The word here used—*crhmatizw*—means, properly, to give oracular responses; to make communications to men in a supernatural way—by dreams, by direct revelations, etc. See Mt 2:12,22; Lu 2:26

Ac 10:22 Heb 11:7.

For, See, saith he. Ex 25:9,40, 26:30.

In Ex 40, it is also repeatedly said that Moses executed all the work of the tabernacle as he had been commanded. Great care was taken that an exact copy should be exhibited to him of all which

he was to make, and that the work should be exactly like the pattern. The reason doubtless was, that as the Jewish service was to be typical, none but God could judge of the form in which the tabernacle should be made. It was not to be an edifice of architectural beauty, skill, or taste, but was designed to adumbrate important realities which were known only to God. Hence it was needful that the exact model of them should be given to Moses, and that it should be scrupulously followed.

That thou make all things. Not only the tabernacle itself, but the altars, the ark, the candlestick, etc. The form and materials for each were specified, and the exact pattern shown to Moses in the Mount.

According to the pattern. Gr. *tupon—type*; that is, figure, form. The word *tupov type*—means, properly, anything produced by the agency of blows, (from *tuptw—to strike*;) hence a mark, stamp, print, impression— as that made by driving nails in the hands, (Joh 20:25;) then a figure or form, as of an image or statue, (Ac 7:43;) the form of a doctrine or opinion, (Ro 6:17;) then an example to be imitated or followed, (1Co 10:6,17; Php 3:17 1Th 1:7; 2Th 3:9;) and hence a *pattern*, or model, after which anything is to be made, Ac 7:44. This is the meaning here. The allusion is to a pattern such as an architect or sculptor uses; a drawing or figure made in wood or clay, after which the work is to be modelled. The idea is, that some such drawing or model was exhibited to Moses by God on Mount Sinai, so that he might have an exact idea of the tabernacle which was to be made. A similar drawing or model of the temple was given by David to Solomon, 1Ch 28:11,12. We are not, indeed, to suppose that there was, in the case of the pattern shown to Moses, any miniature model of wood or stone actually created and exhibited; but that the form of the tabernacle was exhibited to Moses in vision, **See Barnes** "Isa 1:1, or was so vividly impressed on his mind that he would have a distinct view of the edifice which was to be reared.

In the Mount. In Mount Sinai; for it was while Moses was there, in the presence of God, that these communications were made.

{b} "of heavenly" Col 2:17 Heb 10:1 {c} "that thou" Ex 25:40 26:30

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 8 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *But now hath he obtained*. That is, Christ.

A more excellent ministry. A service of a higher order, or of a more exalted nature. It was the real and substantial service of which the other was but the emblem; it pertained to things in heaven, while that was concerned with the earthly tabernacle; it was enduring, while that was to vanish away. **See Barnes** "2Co 3:6, seq.

By how much. By as much as the new covenant is more important than the old, by so much does his ministry exceed in dignity that under the ancient dispensation,

He is the Mediator. **See Barnes** "Ga 3:19, **See Barnes** "Ga 3:19, where the word Mediator is explained. It means here that Christ officiates between God and man according to the arrangements of the new covenant.

Of a better covenant. Marg. "Or *testament*." This word properly denotes a disposition, arrangement, or ordering of things; and, in the Scriptures, is employed to describe the arrangement which God has made to secure the maintenance of his worship on earth, and the salvation of men. It is *uniformly* used in the Septuagint and in the New Testament to denote the *covenant* which God

makes with men. The word which properly denotes a *covenant* or *compact sunyhkh—suntheke*, is never used. The writers of the New Testament evidently derived its use from the Septuagint; but why the authors of that version employed it as denoting a *will*, rather than the proper one denoting a *compact*, is unknown. It has been supposed by some, and the conjecture is not wholly improbable, that it was because they were unwilling to represent God as making a compact or agreement with men, but chose rather to represent him as making a mere *arrangement or ordering* of things. Compare **See Barnes "Heb 8:8, and** Heb 9:16,17. This is a *better* covenant than the old, inasmuch as it relates mainly to the heart; to the pardon of sin; to a spiritual and holy religion. See Heb 8:10. The former related more to external rites and observances, and was destined to vanish away. See Heb 8:13.

Which was established upon better promises. The promises in the first covenant pertained mainly to the present life. They were promises of length of days; of increase of numbers; of seed-time and harvest; of national privileges; and of extraordinary peace, abundance, and prosperity. That there was also the promise of eternal life it would be wrong to doubt; but this was not the main thing. In the new covenant, however, the promise of spiritual blessings becomes the principal thing. The mind is directed to heaven; the heart is cheered with the hopes of immortal life; the favour of God and the anticipation of heaven are secured in the most ample and solemn manner.

{d} "excellent ministry" 2Co 3:6-9 Heb 7:22 {2} "better covenant" "testament"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 8 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *For if that first covenant had been faultless*. **See Barnes "Heb 7:11"**.

It is here implied that God had *said* that that covenant was not perfect or faultless. The meaning is not that that first covenant made under Hoses had any real *faults*, or inculcated that which was wrong, but that it did not contain the ample provision for the pardon of sin and the salvation of the soul which was desirable. It was merely *preparatory* to the gospel.

Then should no place have been sought for the second. There could not have been, inasmuch as in that case it would have been impossible to have bettered it, and any change would have been only for the worse.

{e} "if that first covenant" Heb 7:11

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 8 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *For finding fault with them*. Or rather, "finding fault, he says is, with the Jewish people-for they had had nothing to do in giving the covenant, but *with the covenant itself*. "Stating its defects, he had said to them that he would give them one more perfect, and of which that was only preparatory. So Grottos, Stuart, Rosenmuller, and Erasmus understand it. Doddridge, Koppe, and many others understand it as it is in our translation, as implying that the fault was found with

the people, and they refer to the passage quoted from Jeremiah for proof, where the complaint is of the people. The Greek may bear either construction; but may we not adopt a somewhat different interpretation still? May not this be the meaning? "For, using the language of complaint, or language that implied that there was defect or error, he speaks of another covenant." According to this, the idea would be, not that he found fault specifically either with the covenant or the people, but generally that he used language which implied that there was defect somewhere when he promised another and a better covenant. The word rendered "finding fault" properly means, to censure, or to blame. It is rendered in Mr 7:2 "they found fault," to wit, with those who ate with unwashed hands; in Ro 9:19, "why doth he yet find fault?" It occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It is language used where wrong has been done; where there is ground of complaint; where it is desirable that there should be a change. In the passage here quoted from Jeremiah, it is not expressly stated that God found fault either with the covenant or with the people, but that he promised that he would give another covenant, and that it should be different from that which he gave them when they came out of Egypt—implying that there was defect in that, or that it was not faultless. The whole meaning is, that there was a deficiency which the giving of a new covenant would remove.

He saith. In Jer 31:31-34. The apostle has not quoted the passage literally as it is in the Hebrew, but he has retained the substance, and the sense is not essentially varied. The quotation appears to have been made partly from the Septuagint, and partly from the memory. This often occurs in the New Testament.

Behold. This particle is designed to call attention to what was about to be said as important, or as having some special claim to notice. It is of very frequent occurrence in the Scriptures, being much more freely used by the sacred writers than it is in the classic authors.

The days come. The time is coming. This refers doubtless to the times of the Messiah. Phrases such as these, "in the last days," "in after times," and "the time is coming," are often used in the Old Testament to denote the last dispensation of the world —the dispensation when the affairs of the world would be wound up. See the phrase explained in the Notes, **See Barnes** "Heb 1:2, and **See Barnes "Isa 2:2"**.

There can be no doubt that, as it is used by Jeremiah, it refers to the times of the gospel.

When I will make a new covenant. A covenant that shall contemplate somewhat different ends; that shall have different conditions, and that shall be more effective in restraining from sin. The word *covenant* here refers to the arrangement, plan, or dispensation into which he would enter in his dealings with men. On the meaning of the word, **See Barnes** "Ac 7:8, and **See Barnes "Heb 9:16,17"**.

The word *covenant* with us commonly denotes a compact or agreement between two parties that are equal, and who are free to enter into the agreement or not. In this sense, of course, it cannot be used in relation to the arrangement which God makes with man. There is

(1) no equality between them, and

(2) man is not at liberty to reject any proposal which God shall make. The word, therefore, is used in a more general sense, and more in accordance with the original meaning of the Greek word. It has been above remarked, **See Barnes** "Heb 8:6, that the *proper* word to denote *covenant*, or *compact*— *sunyhkh syntheke* —is never used either in the Septuagint or in the New Testament; another word *diayhkh* — *diathake*—being carefully employed. Whether the reason there suggested for the adoption of this word in the Septuagint be the real one or not, the fact is indisputable. I may be allowed to suggest, *as possible*, here an additional reason why this so uniformly occurs in the New Testament. It is, that the writers of the New Testament *never meant* to represent the transactions

between God and man as a *compact or covenant*, properly so called. They have studiously avoided it; and their uniform practice, in making this nice distinction between the two words, may show the real sense in which the Hebrew word rendered *covenant*

HEBREW, *berith* -is used in the Old Testament. The word which they employ— *diayhkh* -never means a compact or agreement as between equals. It remotely and secondarily means a *will*, or *testament*— and hence our word "New *Testament*." But *this* is not the sense in which it is used in the Bible—for God has never made a will in the sense of a testamentary disposition of what belongs to him. We are referred, therefore, in order to arrive at the true Scripture view of this whole matter, to the original meaning of the word— *diatheke diyhkh* —as denoting a *disposition, arrangement, plan*; then that which is *ordered*, a law, precept, promise, etc. Unhappily, we have no single word which expresses the idea, and hence a constant error has existed in the church—either keeping up the notion of a *compact*—as if God could make one with men; or the idea of a will—equally repugnant to truth. The word *diayhkh* is derived from a verb—*diatiyhmi*—meaning, to place apart, to set in order; and then to appoint, to make over, to make an arrangement with. Hence the word *diayhkh diatheke*—means, properly, the *arrangement or disposition* which God made with men in regard to salvation; the system of statutes, directions, laws, and promises, by which men are to become subject to him, and to be saved. The meaning here is, that he would make a new arrangement, contemplating, as a primary thing, that the law should be written in the heart; an arrangement which would be peculiarly spiritual in its character, and which would be attended with the diffusion of just views of the Lord.

With the house of Israel. The *family*, or *race* of Israel—for so the word *house* is often used in the Scriptures and elsewhere. The word "*Israel*" is used in the Scriptures in the following senses.

(1.) As a name given to Jacob, because he wrestled with the angel of God and prevailed as a prince, Ge 32:28.

(2.) As denoting all who were descended from him— called "the children of Israel"—or the Jewish nation.

(3.) As denoting the kingdom of the ten tribes—or the kingdom of Samaria, or Ephraim—that kingdom having taken the name *Israel* in contradistinction from the other kingdom, which was called *Judah*.

(4.) As denoting the people of God in general—his true and sincere friends—his church. **See Barnes** "Ro 2:28, **See Barnes "Ro 2:29"**; **See Barnes "Ro 9:6"**.

In this place, quoted from Jeremiah, it seems to be used to denote the kingdom of Israel in contradistinction from that of Judah, and *together they denote the whole people of God, or the whole Hebrew nation*, This arrangement was ratified and confirmed by the gift of the Messiah, and by implanting his laws in the heart. It is not necessary to understand this as refering to the whole of the Jews, or to the restoration of the ten tribes; but the words Israel and Judah are used to denote the people of God in general; and the idea is, that with the *true* Israel under the Messiah the laws of God would be written in the heart, rather than be mere external observances.

And with the house of Judah. The kingdom of Judah. This kingdom consisted of two tribes—Judah and Benjamin. The tribe of Benjamin was, however, small, and the name was lost in that of Judah.

{a} "Behold" Jer 31:31-34

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 8 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Not according to the covenant*, etc. An arrangement or dispensation relating mainly to outward observances, and to temporal blessings. The meaning is, that the new dispensation would be different from that which was made with them when they came out of Egypt. In what respects it would differ is specified in Heb 8:10-12.

Because they continued not in my covenant. In Jeremiah, in the Hebrew, this is, "while my covenant they brake." That is, they failed to comply with the conditions on which I promised to bestow blessings upon them. In Jeremiah this is stated as a simple fact; in the manner in which the apostle quotes it, it is given as a *reason* why he would give a new arrangement. The apostle has quoted it literally from the Septuagint, and the sense is not materially varied. The word rendered "because" *oti* may mean "since"—"since they did not obey that covenant, and it was ineffectual in keeping them from sin, showing that it was not *perfect or complete* in regard to what was needful to be done for man, a new arrangement shall be made that will be without defect." This accords with the reasoning of the apostle; and the idea is, simply, that an arrangement may be made for man, adapted to produce important ends in one state of society or one age of the world, which would not be well adapted to him in another, and which would not accomplish *all* which it would be desirable to accomplish for the race. So an arrangement may be made for teaching children which would not answer the purpose of instructing those of mature years, and which at that time of life may be-superseded by another. A system of measures may be adapted to the infancy of society, or to a comparatively rude period of the world, which would be ill adapted to a more advanced state of society. Such was the Hebrew system. It was well adapted to the Jewish community in their circumstances, and answered the end then in view. It served to keep them separate from other people; to preserve the knowledge and the worship of the true God, and to introduce the gospel dispensation.

And I regarded them not. In Jeremiah this is, "Although I was an husband unto them." The Septuagint is as it is quoted here by Paul. The Hebrew is,

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—which may be rendered, "although I was their Lord;" or, as it is translated by Gesenius, "and I rejected them." The word

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—means,

(1.) to be lord or master over anything, (Isa 26:13;)

(2.) to become the husband of any one, (De 21:13 24:1;)

(3.) with

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—to disdain, to reject. So Jer 3:14. It is very probable that this is the meaning here, for it is not only adopted by the Septuagint, but by the Syriac. So Abulwalid, Kimchi, and Rabbi Tanchum understood it. The Arabic word means, *to reject, to loathe, to disdain*. All that is necessary to observe here is, that it cannot be demonstrated that the apostle has not given the true sense of the prophet. The probability is, that the Septuagint translators would give the meaning which was commonly understood to be correct, and there is still more probability that the Syriac translator would adopt the true sense; for

(1) the Syriac and Hebrew languages strongly resemble each other; and

(2) the old Syriac version—the Peshito—is incomparably a better translation than the Septuagint. If this, therefore, be the correct translation, the meaning is, that since they did not regard and obey the laws which he gave them, God would reject them as his people, and give new laws better adapted to save men. Instead of regarding and treating them as his friends, he would punish them for their offences, and visit them with calamities.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 8 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *For this is the covenant*. This is the arrangement, or the dispensation, which shall succeed the old one.

With the house of Israel. With the true Israel; that is, with all those whom he will regard and treat as his friends.

After those days. This may either mean, "after those days I will put my laws in their hearts," or, "I will make this covenant with them after those days." This difference is merely in the punctuation, and the sense is not materially affected. It seems to me, however, that the meaning of the Hebrew in Jeremiah is, "in those *after days*" **See Barnes** "Isa 2:1, "I will put my laws into their mind;" that is, in that subsequent period, called in Scripture "the after times," "the last days;" "the ages to come," meaning the last dispensation of the world. Thus interpreted, the sense is, that this would be done in the times of the Messiah.

I will put my laws into their mind. Marg. *Give*. The word *give* in Hebrew is often used in the sense of *put*. The meaning here is, that they would not be mere external observances, but would affect the conscience and the heart. The laws of the Hebrews pertained mainly to external rites and ceremonies; the laws of the new dispensation would relate particularly to the inner man, and be designed to control the heart. The grand peculiarity of the Christian system is, that it regulates the conscience and the principles of the soul rather than external matters. It prescribes few external rites, and those are exceedingly simple, and are merely the proper *expressions* of the pious feelings supposed to be in the heart; and all attempts either to increase the *number* of these rites, or to make them imposing by their gorgeousness, have done just so much to mar the simplicity of the gospel, and to corrupt religion.

And write them in their hearts. Marg. *Upon*. Not on tables of stone or brass, but on the soul itself. That is, the obedience rendered will not be external. The law of the new system will have living power, and bind the faculties of the soul to obedience. The commandment there will be written in more lasting characters than if engraved on tables of stone.

And I will be to them a God. This is quoted literally from the Hebrew. The meaning is, that he would sustain to them the appropriate relation of a God; or, if the expression may be allowed, he would be to them what a God should be, or what it is desirable that men should find in a God. We speak of a father's acting in a manner appropriate to the character of a father; and the meaning here is, that *he* would be to his people all that is properly implied in the name of *God*. He would be their Lawgiver, their Counsellor, their Protector, their Redeemer, their Guide. He would provide for their wants, defend them in danger, pardon their sins, comfort them in trials, and save their souls,

he would be a faithful friend, and would never leave them nor forsake them. It is one of the inestimable privileges of his people that JEHOVAH is their God. The living and ever-blessed Being who made the heavens sustains to them the relation of a Protector and a Friend, and they may look up to heaven feeling that he is all which they could desire in the character of a God.

And they shall be to me a people. This is not merely stated as *a fact*, but as *a privilege*. It is an inestimable blessing to be regarded as one of the people of God, and to feel that we belong to him—that we are associated with those whom he loves, and whom he treats as his friends.

{1} "put" "give" {2} "in" "upon" {a} "and I" Hos 2:23 Zec 8:8 {*} "God" "Be their God"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 8 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *And they shall not teach every man his neighbour*, etc. That is, no one shall be under a necessity of imparting instruction to another, or of exhorting him to become acquainted with the Lord. This is designed to set forth another of the advantages which would attend the new dispensation. In the previous verse it had been said that one advantage of that economy would be, that the law would be written on the heart, and that they who were thus blessed would be regarded as the people of God. Another advantage over the *old* arrangement or covenant is here stated. It is that the knowledge of the Lord and of the true religion, would be deeply engraved on the minds of all, and that there would be no necessity for mutual exhortation and counsel. "They shall have a much more certain and effectual teaching than they can derive from another." *Doddridge*. This passage does not refer to the fact that the true religion will be universally diffused, but that among those who are interested in the blessings of the new covenant there would be an accurate and just knowledge of the Lord. In some way they would be so taught respecting his character that they would not need the aid to be derived from others. All under that dispensation, or sustaining to him the relation of "*a people*," would, *in fact*, have a correct knowledge of the Lord. This could not be said of the old dispensation, for

(1.) their religion consisted much in outward observances.

(2.) It was not to such an extent as the new system a dispensation of the Holy Spirit.

(3.) There were not as many means as now for learning the true character of God.

(4.) The fullest revelations had not been made to them of that character. That was reserved for the coming of the Saviour, and under him it was intended that there should be communicated the full knowledge of the character of God. Many Mss, and those among the best, here have *polithn citizen—fellow-citizen*, instead of *plhsion*, *neighbour*; and this is adopted by Griesbach, Tittman, Rosenmuller, Knapp, Stuart, and by many of the fathers. It is also in the version of the LXX. in the place quoted from Jeremiah. It is not easy to determine the true reading, but; the word *neighbour* better accords with the meaning of the Hebrew

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-and there is strong authority from the MSS. and the versions for this reading.

And every man his brother. Another form of expression, meaning that there would be no necessity that one should teach another.

Saying, Know the Lord. That is, become acquainted with God; learn his character and his will. The idea is, that the true knowledge of Jehovah would prevail as a characteristic of those times.

For all shall know me. That is, all those referred to; all who are interested in the new covenant, and who are partakers of its blessings. It does not mean that all *persons, in all lands*, would then know the Lord—though the time will come when that will be true; but the expression is to be limited by the point under discussion. That point is not that the knowledge of the Lord will fill the whole world, but that all who are interested in the new dispensation will have a much more full and clear knowledge of God than was possessed under the old. Of the truth of this no one can doubt. Christians have a much more perfect knowledge of God and of his government than could have been learned merely from the revelations of the Old-Testament.

{b} "all shall know me" Isa 44:13

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 8 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness*, etc. That is the blessing of *pardon* will be much more richly enjoyed under the new dispensation than it was under the old. This is the *fourth* circumstance adduced in which the new covenant will surpass the old. That was comparatively severe in its inflictions, (see Heb 10:28;) marked every offence with strictness, and employed the language of mercy much less frequently than that of justice. It was a system where *law* and *justice* reigned; not where *mercy* was the crowning and prevalent attribute, it was true that it contemplated pardon, and made arrangements for it; but it is still true that this is much more prominent in the new dispensation than in the old. It is there the leading idea. It is that which separates it from all other systems. The entire arrangement is one for the pardon of sin in a manner consistent with the claims of law and justice, and it bestows the benefit of forgiveness in the most ample and perfect manner on all who are interested in the plan. In fact, the peculiarity by which the gospel is distinguished from *all other* systems, ancient and modern, philosophic and moral, pagan and deistical, is, that it is a system making provision for the forgiveness of sin, and actually bestowing pardon on the guilty. This is the centre, the crown, the glory of the new dispensation. God is merciful to the unrighteousness of men; and their sins are remembered no more.

Will I remember no more. This is evidently spoken after the manner of men, and in accordance with human apprehension. It cannot mean literally that God *forgets* that men are sinners, but it means that he treats them as if this were forgotten. Their sins are not charged upon them, and they are no more punished than *if* they had passed entirely out of the recollection. God treats them with just as much kindness, and regards them with as sincere affection, *as if* their sins ceased wholly to be remembered, or, which is the same thing, *as if* they had never sinned.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 8 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old*. That is, the use of the word "*new*" implies that the one which it was to supersede was "*old*." New and old stand in contradistinction from each other. Thus we speak of a new and old house, a new and old garment, etc. The object of the apostle is to show that, by the very fact of the arrangement for a *new* dispensation differing so much from the old, it was implied of necessity *that* that was to be superseded, and would vanish away. This was one of the leading points at which he arrived.

Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away. This is a *general* truth which would be undisputed, and which Paul applies to the ease under consideration. An old house, or garment; an ancient tree; an aged man—-all have indications that they are soon to disappear. They cannot be expected to remain long. The very fact of their growing old Is an indication that they will soon be gone. So Paul says it was with the dispensation that was represented as old. It had symptoms of decay. It had lost the rigour which it had when it was fresh and new; it had every mark of an antiquated and a declining system; and it had been expressly declared that a new and more perfect dispensation was to be given to the world. Paul concluded, therefore, that the Jewish system must soon disappear.

REMARKS.

1. The fact that we have a High Priest is fitted to impart consolation to the pious mind, Heb 8:1-6. He ever lives, and is ever the same. He is a minister of the true sanctuary, and is ever before the mercy-seat. He enters there not once a year only, but has entered there to abide there for ever. We can *never* approach the throne of mercy without having a High Priest there—for he at all times, day and night, appears before God. The merits of his sacrifice are never exhausted, and God is never wearied with hearing his pleadings in behalf of his people. He is the same that he was when he gave himself on the cross. He has the same love and the same compassion which he had then; and that love which led him to make the atonement, will lead him always to regard with tenderness those for whom he died.

2. It is a privilege to live under the blessings of the Christian system, Heb 8:6. We have a better covenant than the old one was —one less expensive and less burdensome, and one that is established upon better premises. Now the sacrifice is made, and we do not have to renew it every day. It was made once for all, and need never be repeated. Having now a High Priest in heaven who has made the sacrifice, we may approach him in any part of the earth, and at all times, and feel that our offering will be acceptable to him. If there is any blessing for which we ought to be thankful, it is for the Christian religion; for we have only to look at any portion of the heathen world, or even to the condition of the people of God under the comparatively dark and obscure Jewish dispensation, to see abundant reasons for thanksgiving for what we enjoy.

3. Let us often contemplate the mercies of the new dispensation with which we are favoured—the favours of that religion whose smiles and sunshine we are permitted to enjoy, Heb 8:10-12. It contains all that we want, and is exactly adapted to our condition. It has that for which every man should be thankful; and has not one thing which should lead a man to reject it. It furnishes all the security which we could desire for our salvation; lays upon us no oppressive burdens or charges; and accomplishes all which we ought to desire in our souls. Let us contemplate a moment the arrangements of that "covenant," and see how fitted it is to make man blessed and happy.

First. It writes the laws of God on the mind and the heart, Heb 8:10. It not only *reveals* them, but it secures their observance, it has made arrangements for disposing men to keep the laws—a

thing which has not been introduced into any other system. Legislators may enact good laws, but they cannot induce others to obey them; parents may utter good precepts, but they cannot engrave them on the hearts of their children; and sages may express sound maxims and just precepts in morals, but there is no security that they will be regarded. So in all the heathen world—there is no power to inscribe good maxims and rules of living on the *heart*. They may be written; recorded on tablets; hung up in temples; but stir men will not regard them. They will still give indulgence to evil passions, and lead wicked lives. But it is not so with the arrangement which God has made in the plan of salvation. One of the very first provisions of that plan is, that the laws shall be inscribed *on the heart*, and that there shall be a DISPOSITION to obey. Such a system is what man wants, and such a system he can nowhere else find.

Secondly. This new arrangement reveals to us a God such as we need, Heb 8:10. It contains the promise that he will be "*our* God." He will be to his people all that can be *desired in God*; all that man could wish. He is just such a God as the human mind, when it is pure, most loves; has all the attributes which it could be desired there should be in his character; has done all that we could desire a God to do; and is ready to do all that we could wish a God to perform. *Man wants a God*; a God in whom he can put confidence, and on whom he can rely. The ancient Greek philosopher *wanted a God*—and he would then have made a beautiful and efficient system of morals; the heathen *want a God*—to dwell in their empty temples, and in their corrupt hearts; the atheist *wants a God* to make him calm, contented, and happy in this life—for he has no God now; and man everywhere—wretched, sinful, suffering, dying—WANTS A God. Such a God is revealed in the Bible—one whose character we may contemplate with ever increasing admiration; one who has all the attributes which we can desire; one who will minister to us all the consolation which we need in this world; and one who will be to us *the same God for ever and ever*.

Thirdly. The new covenant contemplates the diffusion of *knowledge*, Heb 8:11. This, too, was what man needed—for everywhere else he has been ignorant of God and of the way of salvation. The whole heathen world is sunk in ignorance; and indeed all men, except as they are enlightened by the gospel, are in profound darkness on the great questions which most nearly pertain to their welfare. But it is not so with the new arrangement which God has made with his people. It is a fact that they know the Lord; and a dispensation which would produce that is just what man needed. There are two things hinted at in Heb 8:11 of this chapter which are worthy of more than a passing notice, illustrating the excellency of the Christian religion. The *first* is, that in the new dispensation *all would know the Lord*. The matter of fact is, that the obscurest and most unlettered Christian often has a knowledge of God which sages never had, and which is never obtained except by the teachings of the Spirit of God. However this may be accounted for; the fact cannot be denied. There is a clear and elevating view of God; a knowledge of him which exerts a practical influence on the heart, and which transforms the soul; and a correctness of apprehension in regard to what truth is, possessed by the humble Christian, though a peasant, which philosophy never imparted to its votaries. Many a sage would be instructed in the truths of religion if he would sit down and converse with the comparatively unlearned Christian, who has no book but his Bible. The other thing hinted at here is, that all would know the Lord *from the least to the greatest*. Children and youth, as well as age and experience, would have an acquaintance with God. This promise is remarkably verified under the new dispensation. One of the most striking things of the system is, the attention which it pays to the young; one of its most wonderful effects is the knowledge which it is the means of imparting to those in early life. Many a child in the Sabbath school has a knowledge of God which

Grecian sages never had; many a youth in the Church has a more consistent acquaintance with God's real plan of governing and saving men, than all the teachings which philosophy could ever furnish.

Fourthly. The new dispensation contemplates the pardon of sin, and is, therefore, fitted to the condition of man, Heb 8:12. It is what man needs. The knowledge of some way of pardon is that which human nature has been sighing for ages; which has been sought in every system of religion, and by every bloody offering; but which has never elsewhere been found. The philosopher had no assurance that God would pardon; and indeed one of the chief aims of the philosopher has been to convince himself that he had no *need* of pardon. The heathen have had no assurance that their offerings have availed to put away the Divine anger, and to obtain forgiveness. *The only assurance anywhere furnished that sin may be forgiven, is in the Bible*. This is the great peculiarity of the system recorded there, and this it is which renders it so valuable above all the other systems. It furnishes the *assurance* that sins may be pardoned, and shows *how* it may be done. This is what we must have, or perish. And why, since Christianity reveals a way of forgiveness—a way honourable to God and not degrading to man—why should any man reject it? Why should not the guilty embrace a system which proclaims pardon to the guilty—and which assures all, that if they will embrace him who is the "Mediator of the new covenant," "God will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and will remember their iniquities no more?"

{a} "new covenant" 2Co 5:17 {*} "vanish away" "nigh to dissolution"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 9

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 9 - Verse 1

CHAPTER Nine.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

THE general design of this chapter is the same as the-two preceding, to show that Christ as High Priest is superior to the Jewish high priest. This the apostle had already shown to be true in regard to his rank, and to the dispensation of which he was the "Mediator." He proceeds now to show that this was also true in reference to the efficacy of the sacrifice which he made; and in order to this, he gives an account of the ancient Jewish sacrifices, and compares them with that made by the Redeemer. The essential point is, that the former dispensation was mere shadow, type, or figure, and that the latter was real and efficacious. The chapter comprises, in illustration of this general idea, the following points:

(1.) A description of the ancient tabernacle, and of the utensils that were in it, Heb 9:1-5.

(2.) A description of the services in it, particularly of that performed by the high priest once a year, Heb 9:6,7.

(3.) All this was typical and symbolical, and was a standing demonstration that the way into the most holy place in heaven was not yet fully revealed, Heb 9:8-10.

(4.) Christ was now come—the substance of which that was the shadow; the real sacrifice of which that was the emblem, Heb 9:11-14. He pertained, as a Priest, to a more perfect tabernacle, Heb 9:11 he offered not the blood of bulls and goats, but his own blood, Heb 9:12; with that blood he entered into the most holy place in heaven, Heb 9:12 and if the blood of bulls and goats was admitted to be efficacious in putting away external uncleanness, it must be admitted that the blood of Christ had an efficacy in cleansing the conscience, Heb 9:13,14.

(5.) His blood is efficacious not only in remitting present sins, but it extends in its efficacy even to past ages, and removes the sins of those who had worshipped God under the former covenant, Heb 9:15.

(6.) The apostle then proceeds to show that it was necessary that the Mediator of the new covenant should shed his own blood, and that the blood thus shed should be applied to purify those for whom the sacrifice was made, Heb 9:16-23. This he shows by the following considerations, viz. :

(a.) Hie argues it from the nature of a covenant or compact, showing that it was ratified only over dead sacrifices, and that of necessity the victim that was set apart to confirm or ratify it must be slain. **See Barnes "Heb 9:16"**; **See Barnes** "Heb 9:17".

(b.) The first covenant was confirmed or ratified by blood; and hence it was necessary that, since the "patterns" of the heavenly things were sprinkled with blood, the heavenly things themselves should be purified with better sacrifices, Heb 9:18-23.

(7.) The offering made by the Redeemer was to be made but once. This arose from the necessity of the case, since it could not be supposed that the Mediator would suffer *often*, as the high priest went once every year into the most holy place. He had come and died once in the last dispensation of things on earth, and then had entered into heaven, and could suffer no more, Heb 9:24-26.

(8.) In the close of the chapter the apostle adverts to the fact that there was a remarkable resemblance, in one respect, between the death of Christ and the death of all men. It was appointed to them to die once, and but once; and so Christ died but once. As a man, it was in accordance with the universal condition of things that he should die once; and in accordance with the same condition of things it was proper that he should die *but* once. In like manner there was a resemblance or fitness in regard to what would occur after death. Man was to appear at the judgment, he was not to cease to be, but would stand hereafter at the bar of God. In like manner, Christ would again appear. He did not cease to exist when he expired, but would appear again that he might save his people, Heb 9:27,28.

Verse 1. *Then verily*. Or, moreover. The object is to describe the tabernacle in which the service of God was celebrated under the former dispensation, and to show that it had a reference to what was future, and was only an imperfect representation of the reality. It was important to show this, as the Jews regarded the ordinances of the tabernacle and of the whole Levitical service as of Divine appointment, and of perpetual obligation. The object of Paul is to prove that they were to give place to a more perfect system, and hence it was necessary to discuss their real nature.

The first covenant. The word "covenant" is not in the Greek, but is not improperly supplied. The meaning is, that the former arrangement or dispensation had religious rites and services connected with it.

Had also ordinances. Marg. *Ceremonies*. The Greek word means, *laws, precepts, ordinances*; and the idea is, that there were laws regulating the worship of God. The Jewish institutions abounded with such laws.

And a worldly sanctuary. The word *sanctuary* means a holy place, and is applied to a house of worship, or a temple. Here it may refer either to the temple or to the tabernacle. As the temple was constructed after the same form as the tabernacle, and had the same furniture, the description of the apostle may be regarded as applicable to either of them, and it is difficult to determine which he had in his eye. The term "worldly," applied to "sanctuary," here means that it pertained to this world; it was contradistinguished from the heavenly sanctuary not made with hands, where Christ was now gone. Comp. Heb 9:11,24. It does not mean that it was *worldly* in the sense in which that word is now used, as denoting the opposite of spiritual, serious, religious; but worldly in the sense that it belonged to the earth rather than to heaven; it was made by human hands, not directly by the hands of God.

{1} "ordinances" "ceremonies" {a} "sanctuary" Ex 25:8

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 9 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *For there was a tabernacle made*. The word "tabernacle" properly means, a tent, a booth, or a hut, and was then given by way of eminence to the tent for public worship made by Moses m the wilderness. For a description of this, see Ex 25. In this place the word means the *outer sanctuary* or room in the tabernacle; that is, the *first* room which was entered—called here "the first." The same word—*skhnh*—is used in Heb 9:3 to denote the *inner* sanctuary, or holy of holies. The tabernacle, like the temple afterwards, was divided into two parts by the veil, Ex 26:31,32, one of which was called "the holy place," and the other the holy of holies." The exact size of the two rooms in the tabernacle is not specified in the Scriptures, but it is commonly supposed that the tabernacle was divided in the same manner as the temple was afterwards; that is, two-thirds of the interior constituted the holy place, and one-third the holy of holies. According to this, the holy place, or "*first* tabernacle" was twenty cubits long by ten broad, and the most holy place was ten cubits square. The whole length of the tabernacle was about fifty-five feet, the breadth eighteen, and the height eighteen. In the temple, the two rooms, though of the same relative proportions, were of course much larger. See a description of the temple **See Barnes "Mt 21:12"**.

In both cases, the holy place was at the east, and the holy of holies at the west end of the sacred edifice. The following cut will furnish a good illustration of the tabernacle when set up, with the principal coverings removed.

The first. The first room on entering the sacred edifice, here called the "first tabernacle." The apostle proceeds now to enumerate the various articles of furniture which were in the two rooms of the tabernacle and temple. His object seems to be, not for information, for it could not be supposed that they to whom he was writing were ignorant on this point, but partly to show that it could not be said that he spoke of that of which he had no information, or that he undervalued it; and partly to show the real nature of the institution, and to prove that it was of an imperfect and typical character, and had a designed reference to something that was to come. It is remarkable that, though he maintains that the whole institution was a "figure" of what was to come, and though he specifies

by name all the furniture of the tabernacle, he does not attempt to explain their particular typical character nor does he affirm that they *had* such a character. He does not say that the candlestick, and the table of shewbread, and the ark, and the cherubim, were designed to adumbrate some particular truth or fact of the future dispensation, or had a designed spiritual meaning. It would have been happy if all expositors had followed the example of Paul, and had been content, as he was, to state *the facts* about the tabernacle, and the general truth that the dispensation was intended to introduce a more perfect economy, without endeavouring to explain the typical import of every pin and pillar of the ancient place of worship. If those things had such a designed typical reference, it is remarkable that Paul did not go into an explanation of that fact in the epistle before us. Never could a better opportunity for doing it occur than was furnished here. Yet it was not done. Paul is silent where many expositors have found occasion for admiration. Where they have seen the profoundest wisdom, he saw none; where they have found spiritual instruction in the various implements of divine service in the sanctuary, he found none. Why should we be more wise than he was? Why attempt to hunt for types and shadows where he found none? And why should we not be limited to the views which he *actually expressed* in regard to the design and import of the ancient dispensation? Following an inspired example, we are on solid ground, and are not in danger. But the moment we leave that, and attempt to spiritualize everything in the ancient economy, we are in an open sea without compass or chart, and no one knows to what fairy lands he may be drifted. As there are frequent allusions in the New Testament to the different parts of the tabernacle furniture here specified, it may be a matter of interest and profit to furnish an illustration of the most material of them.

The candlestick. For an account of the candlestick, see Ex 25:31-37. It was made of pure gold, and had seven branches, that is, three on each side and one in the centre. These branches had on the extremities seven golden lamps, which were fed with pure olive oil, and which were lighted "to give light over against it"; that is, they shed light on the altar of incense, the table of shew, bread, and generally on the furniture of the holy place. These branches were made with three "bowls," "knops,"and "flowers, occurring alternately on each one of the six branches; while on the centre or upright shaft, there were four "*bowls*," "knops," and "flowers" of this kind. These ornaments were probably taken from the almond, and represented the flower of that tree in various stages. The "bowls" on the branches of the candlestick probably meant the *calyx or cup* of that plant from which the flower springs. The "knops" probably referred to some ornament on the candlestick mingled with the "bowls" and the "flowers" perhaps designed as an imitation of the nut or fruit of the almond. The "flowers" were evidently ornaments resembling the flowers on the almond tree, wrought, as all the rest were, in pure gold. See Bush's Notes on Exod. xxv. The following beautiful cut, drawn on this supposition, will probably give a tolerably correct view of the ancient candelabrum or candlestick. I introduce this cut as being a fine illustration furnished by Professor Bush of the candlestick itself; with the views which he has expressed of its *spiritual* reference, however, I have no sympathy, The candlestick was undoubtedly designed to furnish *light* in the dark room of the tabernacle and temple; and, in accordance with the general plan of those edifices, was ornamented after the most chaste and pure views of ornamental architecture of those times—but there is no evidence that its branches, and bowls, and knops, and flowers, had each a peculiar typical significance. The sacred writers are wholly silent as to any such reference, and it is not well to attempt to be "wise above that which is written." An expositor of the Scripture cannot have a safer guide than the sacred writers themselves. How should any uninspired man know that these things

had such a peculiar typical signification? The candlestick was placed on the south, or left hand side of the holy place as one entered, the row of lamps being probably parallel with the wall. It was at first placed in the tabernacle, and afterwards removed into the temple built by Solomon. Its subsequent history is unknown. Probably it was destroyed when the temple was taken by the Chaldeans. The form of the candlestick in the second temple, whose figure is preserved on the "Arch of Titus" in Rome, was of somewhat different construction. But it is to be remembered, that the articles taken away from the temple by Vespasian were not the same as those made by Moses; and Josephus says expressly that the candlestick was altered from its original form.

And the table. That is, the table on which the shewbread was placed. This table was made of shittim-wood, overlaid with gold. It was two cubits long, and one cubit broad, and a cubit and a half high; that is, about three feet and a half in length, one foot and nine inches wide, and two feet and a half in height. It was furnished with rings or staples, through which were passed staves, by which it was carried. These staves, we are informed by Josephus, were removed when the table was at rest, so that they might not be in the way of the priests at they officiated in the tabernacle. It stood lengthwise east and west, on the north side of the holy place.

And the shewbread. On the table just described. This bread consisted of twelve loaves, placed on the table every Sabbath. The Hebrews affirm that they were square loaves, having the four sides covered with leaves of gold. They were arranged in two piles, of course with six in a pile, Le 24:5-9. The number twelve was selected with reference to the twelve tribes of Israel. They were made without leaven; were renewed each Sabbath, when the old loaves were then taken away to be eaten by the priests only. The Hebrew phrase rendered "shewbread" means, properly, "bread of faces," or "bread of presence." The Seventy render it *artouv enwpiouv foreplaced* loaves. In the New Testament it is, *h proyesiv twn artwn* —the placing of bread; and, in Symmachus, "bread of proposition," or placing. Why it was called "bread of presence" has been a subject on which expositors have been much divided. Some have held that it was because it was *before*, or in the presence of the symbol of the Divine Presence in the tabernacle, though in another department; some, that it was because it was set there to be seen by men, rather than to be seen by God. Others that it had an emblematic design, looking forward to the Messiah as the food or nourishment of the soul, and was substantially the same as the table spread with the symbols of the Saviour's body and blood. See Bush, *in loc*. But of this last mentioned opinion, it may be asked, where is the proof? It is not found in the account of it in the Old Testament, and there is not the slightest intimation in the New Testament that it had any such design. The *object* for which it was placed there can be only a matter of conjecture, as it is not explained in the Bible; and it is more difficult to ascertain the use and design of the shewbread than of almost any other emblem of the Jewish economy. *Calmet*. *Perhaps* the true idea, after all that has been written and conjectured, is, that the *table* and the *bread* were for the sake of carrying out the idea that the tabernacle was the *dwelling-place* of God, and that there was a propriety that it should be fitted up with the usual appurtenances of a dwelling. Hence there was a candlestick and a table, because these were the common and ordinary furniture of a room; and the idea was to be kept up constantly that that was the dwelling-place of the Most High by lighting and trimming the lamps every day, and by renewing the bread on the table periodically. The most simple explanation of the phrase "bread of faces," or "bread of presence," is, that it was so called because it was set before the *face*, or in the *presence* of God in the tabernacle. The various forms which it has been supposed would represent the table of shewbread may be seen in Calmet's Large Dictionary. The preceding cut is the usual illustration of it. If the loaves were

piled above one another, as they are represented in the cut, they were probably separated by thin plates of gold, or some other substance, to keep them from moulding. The Jews say that they were separated by plates of gold.

Which is called the sanctuary. Marg., "Or, *holy*." That is, the *holy place*. The name *sanctuary* was commonly given to the whole edifice, but with strict propriety appertained only to this first room.

{a} "tabernacle" Ex 26:1,35 {b} "table" Ex 11:4 {c} "shewbread" Ex 25:30 {1} "sanctuary" "holy"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 9 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And after the second veil*. There were two veils to the tabernacle. The one which is described in Ex 26:36,37, was called "the hanging for the door of the tent," and was made of "blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine-twined linen," and was suspended on five pillars of shittim-wood, overlaid with gold. This answered for a *door* to the whole tabernacle. The second or inner veil, here referred to, divided the holy from the most holy place. This is described in Ex 26:31-33. It was made of the same materials as the other, though it would seem in a more costly manner, and with more embroidered work. On this veil the figures of the cherubim were curiously wrought. The design of this veil was to separate the holy from the most holy place; and in regard to its symbolical meaning we can be at no loss, for the apostle Paul has himself explained it in this chapter. **See Barnes** "Heb 9:8, seq.

The tabernacle. That is, the *inner* tabernacle; or that which was more properly called the tabernacle. The name was given to either of the two rooms into which it was divided, or to the whole structure.

Which is called the Holiest of all. It was called "the Most Holy Place;" "the Holy of Holies;" or "the Holiest of all." It was so called because the symbol of the Divine Presence—the *Shekinah*—dwelt there between the cherubim.

{a} "veil" Ex 26:31,31

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 9 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Which had the golden censer*. The censer was a *fire-pan*, made for the purpose of carrying fire, in order to burn incense on it in the place of worship. The forms of the censer were various; but the following cuts will represent those which are most common. Some difficulty has been felt respecting the statement of Paul here, that the "golden censer" was in the most holy place, from the fact that no such utensil is mentioned by Moses as pertaining to the tabernacle; nor in the description of Solomon's temple, which was modelled after the tabernacle, is there any account of it given. But the following considerations will probably remove the difficulty.

(1.) Paul was a Jew, and was familiar with what pertained to the temple, and gave such a description of it as would be in accordance with what actually existed in his time. The fact that

Moses does not expressly mention it does not prove that, *in fact*, no such censer was laid up in the most holy place.

(2.) Aaron and his successors were expressly commanded to burn incense in a "censer" in the most holy place before the mercy-seat. This was to be done on the great day of atonement, and but once in a year, Le 16:12,13.

(3.) There is every probability that the censer that was used on such an occasion was made of gold. All the implements that were employed in the most holy place were made of gold, or overlaid with gold, and it is in the highest degree improbable that the high priest would use any other on so solemn an occasion. Comp. 1Ki 7:50.

(4.) As the golden censer was to be used only once in a year, it would naturally be laid away in some secure situation—and none would so obviously occur as the most holy place. There it would be perfectly safe. No one was permitted to enter there but the high priest; and being preserved there it would be always ready for his use. The statement of Paul, therefore, has the highest probability, and undoubtedly accords with what actually occurred in the tabernacle and the temple. The object of the incense burned in worship was to produce an agreeable fragrance or smell. **See Barnes "Lu 1:9"**.

And the ark of the covenant. This ark or *chest* was made of shittim-wood, was two cubits and a half long, a cubit and a half broad, and the same in height, Ex 25:10. It was completely covered with gold, and had a *lid*, which was called the "mercy-seat," on which rested the Shekinah, the symbol of the Divine Presence between the out. stretched wings of the cherubim. It was called "the ark of the covenant," because within it were the two tables of the covenant, or the law of God written on tables of stone. It was a simple *chest, coffer, or box*, with little ornament, though rich in its materials. A golden crown or moulding ran around the top, and it had rings and staves in its sides by which it might be borne, Ex 25:12-16. This ark was regarded as the most sacred of all the appendages of the tabernacle. Containing the law, and being the place where the symbol of the Divine Presence was manifested, it was regarded as peculiarly holy; and in the various wars and revolutions in the Hebrew commonwealth, it was guarded with peculiar care. After the passage over the Jordan it remained for some time at Gilgal, (Jos 4:19,) whence it was removed to Shiloh, 1Sa 1:3. From hence the Israelites took it to their camp, apparently to animate them in battle, but it was taken by the Philistines, 1Sa 4. The Philistines, however, oppressed by the hand of God, resolved to return it, and sent it to Kirjath-Jearim, 1Sa 7:1. In the reign of Saul it was at Nob. David conveyed it to the house of Obed-Edom, and thence to his palace on Mount Zion. 2Sa 6. At the dedication of the temple it was placed in the Holy of Holies by Solomon, where it remained for many years. Subsequently, it is said, the wicked kings of Judah, abandoning themselves to idolatry, established idols in the most holy place itself; and the priests removed the ark, and bore it from place to place to secure it from profanation. *Calmet*. When Josiah ascended the throne he commanded the priests to restore the ark to its place in the sanctuary, and forbade them to carry it about from one place to another as they had before done, 2Ch 35:3. The subsequent history of the ark is unknown. It is probable that it was either destroyed when the city of Jerusalem was taken by Nebuchadnezzar, or that it was carried with other spoils to Babylon. There is no good reason to suppose that it was ever in the second temple; and it is generally admitted by the Jews that the ark of the covenant was one of the things that were wanting there. Abarbanel says, that the Jews flatter themselves that it will be restored by the Messiah.

Wherein, That is, *in the ark* for so the construction naturally requires. In 1Ki 8:9, however, it is said that there was nothing in the ark, "save the two tables of stone which Moses put there at Horeb:" and it has been supposed by some that the pot of manna and the rod of Aaron were not in the ark, but that they were in capsules, or ledges made on its sides for their safe keeping, and that this should be rendered "*by* the ark." But the apostle uses the same language respecting the pot of manna and the rod of Aaron which he does about the two tables of stone; and as they were certainly in the ark, the fair construction here is that the pot of manna and the rod of Aaron were in it also. The account in Ex 16:32-34, Nu 17:10, is, that they were laid up in the most holy place, "before the testimony," and there is no improbability whatever in the supposition that they were in the ark, Indeed that would be the most safe place to keep them, as the tabernacle was often taken down, and removed from place to place. It is clear, from the passage in 1Ki 8:9, that they were not in the ark in the temple, but there is no improbability in the supposition that before the temple was built they might have been removed from the ark and lost. When the ark was carried from place to place, or during its captivity by the Philistines, it is probable they were lost, as we never hear of them afterwards.

The golden pot. In Ex 16:33, it is simply a "pot," without specifying the material. In the Septuagint it is rendered "golden pot;" and as the other utensils of the sanctuary were of gold, it may be fairly presumed that this was also.

That had manna. A small quantity of manna which was to be preserved as a perpetual remembrance of the food which they had eaten in their long journey in the wilderness, and of the goodness of God in miraculously supplying their wants. As the manna, also, would not of itself keep, Ex 16:20, the fact that this was to be laid up to be preserved from age to age was a perpetual miracle in proof of the presence and faithfulness of God. On the subject of the manna, see Bush's Notes on Ex 16:15.

And Aaron's rod that budded. That budded and blossomed as a proof that God had chosen him to minister to him. The princes of the tribes were disposed to rebel, and to call in question the authority of Aaron. To settle the matter each one was required to take a rod or staff of office, and to bring it to Moses with the name of the tribe to which it appertained written on it. These were laid up by Moses in the tabernacle; and it was found, on the next day, that the rod marked with the name of Levi had budded and blossomed, and produced almonds. In perpetual remembrance of this miracle, the rod was preserved in the ark, Nu 17. Its subsequent history is unknown. It was not in the ark when the temple was built; nor is there any reason to suppose that it was preserved to that time.

And the tables of the covenant. The two tables of stone on which the ten commandments were written. They were expressly called "the words of the covenant" in Ex 34:28. On the word *covenant*, **See Barnes "Ex 34:28".**

See Barnes "Heb 9:6"

and **See Barnes "Heb 9:17"**

of this chapter. These two tables were in the ark at the time the temple was dedicated, 1Ki 8:9. Their subsequent history is unknown. It is probable that they shared the fate of the ark, and were either carried to Babylon, or were destroyed when the city was taken by Nebuchadnezzar.

{b} "golden censer" Le 16:12 {c} "ark" Ex 25:10 {d} "golden pot" Ex 25:10 {e} "rod" Nu 17:10 {f} "tables" Ex 34:19 40:20; De 10:2,5

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 9 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And over it*. That is, over the ark.

The cherubim of glory. A Hebrew mode of expression, meaning the glorious cherubim. The word *cherubim* is the Hebrew form of the plural, of which *cherub* is the singular. The word *glory*, used here in connexion with "*cherubim*," refers to the splendour, or magnificence of the image, as being carved with great skill, and covered with gold. There were two cherubim on the ark, placed on the lid in such a manner that their faces looked inward towards each other, and downward toward the mercy-seat. They stretched out their wings "on high," and covered the mercy-seat, or the lid of the ark, Ex 25:18-20. Comp. 1Ki 8:6,7; 1Ch 28:18. In the temple, the cherubim were made of the olive-tree, and were ten cubits high. They were overlaid with gold, and were so placed that the wing of one touched the wall on one side of the holy of holies, and that of the other the other side, and their wings met together over the ark, 1Ki 6:23-28. It is not probable. However, that this was the form used in the tabernacle, as wings thus expanded would have rendered it inconvenient to carry them from place to place. Of the form and design of the cherubim much has been written, and much that is the mere creation of fancy and the fruit of wild conjecture. Their design is not explained in the Bible, and silence in regard to it would have been wisdom. If they were intended to be symbolical as is certainly possible comp. Eze 10:20-22, it is impossible now to determine the object of the symbol. Who is authorized to explain it? Who can give to his speculations anything more than the authority of *pious conjecture*? And of what advantage, therefore, can speculation be, where the volume of inspiration says nothing? They who wish to examine this subject more fully, with the various opinions that have been formed on it, may consult the following works, viz.: Calmet's Dictionary, Fragment No, 152, with the numerous illustrations; Bush's Notes on Ex 25:18; and the Quarterly Christian Spectator, vol. viii. pp. 368—388. Drawings resembling the cherubim were not uncommon on ancient sculptures. The preceding winged figure, taken from the sculpture at Persepolis, may perhaps have been a rude image of the ancient cherub. The common representation of the ark and cherubim is something like the following, which may perhaps be as correct as it is possible now to furnish.

Shadowing. Stretching out its wings so as to cover the mercy-seat.

The mercy-seat. The cover of the ark, on which rested the cloud or visible symbol of the Divine Presence. It was called "mercy-seat," or *propitiatory— ilasthrion*—because it was this which was sprinkled over with the blood of atonements or propitiation, and because it was from this place, on which the symbol of the Deity rested, that God manifested himself as propitious to sinners. The blood of the atonement was that through or by means of which he declared his mercy to the guilty. Here God was supposed to be seated; and from this place he was supposed to dispense mercy to man when the blood of the atonement was sprinkled there. This was undoubtedly designed to be a symbol of his dispensing mercy to men, in virtue of the blood which the Saviour shed as the great sacrifice for guilt. See Heb 9:13,14.

Of which we cannot now speak particularly. That is, it is not my present design to speak particularly of these things. These matters were well understood by those to whom he wrote, and his object did not require him to go into a fuller explanation.

{a} "cherubim" Ex 25:18,22

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 9 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *When thee things were thus ordained*. Thus arranged or appointed. Having shown what the tabernacle *was*, the apostle proceeds to show what was done in it.

The Priests went always into the first tabernacle. The outer tabernacle, called the holy place. They were not permitted to enter the holy of holies, that being entered only once in a year by the high priest. The holy place was entered every day to make the morning and evening oblation.

Accomplishing the service of God. Performing the acts of worship which God had appointed—burning incense, etc. Lu 1:9.

{b} "Priests" Nu 27:3

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 9 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *But into the second*. The second apartment or room, called the most holy place, Heb 9:3.

Went the High priest alone once every year. On the great day of atonement, Ex 30:10. On that day he probably entered the holy of holies three or four times, first to burn incense, Le 16:12; then to sprinkle the blood of the bullock on the mercy-seat, Le 16:14; then he was to kill the goat of the sin-offering, and bring that blood within the veil, and sprinkle it also on the mercy-seat; and then, perhaps, he entered again to bring out the golden censer. The Jewish tradition is, that he entered the holy of holies four times on that day. After all, however, the number of times is not certain, nor is it material; the only important point being that he entered it only on one day of the year, while the holy place was entered every day.

Not without blood. That is, he bare with him blood to sprinkle on the mercy-seat. This was the blood of the bullock and of the goat—borne in at two different times.

Which he offered for himself. The blood of the bullock was offered for himself and for his house or family—thus keeping impressively before his own mind and the mind of the people the fact that the priests, even of the highest order, were sinners, and needed expiation like others, Le 16:11.

And for the errors of the people. The blood of the goat was offered for them, Le 16:15. The word rendered *errors—agnohma* —denotes, properly, *ignorance, involuntary error*; and then error or fault in general—the same as the Hebrew

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— *to err*. The object was to make expiation for all the error and sins of the people, and this occurred once in the year. The repetition of these sacrifices was a constant remembrance of sin; and the design was, that neither the priests nor the people should lose sight of the fact that they were violators of the law of God.

{c} "once" Ex 30:10 Le 16:2

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 9 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *The Holy Ghost*. Who appointed all this. The whole arrangement in the service of the tabernacle is represented as having been under the direction of the Holy Ghost, or this was one of his methods of teaching the great truths of religion, and of keeping them before the minds of men. Sometimes that Spirit taught by direct revelation; sometimes by the written word; and sometimes by symbols. The tabernacle, with its different apartments, utensils, and services, was a *permanent* means of keeping important truths before the minds of the ancient people of God.

This signifying. That is, showing this truth, or making use of this arrangement to impress this truth on the minds of men, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest.

That the way into the holiest of all. Into heaven—of which the most holy place in the tabernacle was undoubtedly designed to be an emblem. It was the place where the visible symbol of God—the Shekinah—dwelt; where the blood of propitiation was sprinkled, and was, therefore, an appropriate emblem of that holy heaven where God dwells, and whence pardon is obtained by the blood of the atonement.

Was not yet made manifest. The way to heaven was not opened, or fully understood. It was not known how men could appear before God, or how they could come with the hope of pardon. That way has now been opened by the ascension of the Redeemer to heaven, and by the assurance that all who will may come in his name.

While as the first tabernacle was yet standing. As long as it stood, and the appointed services were held in it. The idea is, that until it was superseded by a more perfect system it was *a proof* that the way to heaven was not yet fully and freely opened, and that the Holy Ghost *designed* that it should be such a proof. The apostle does not specify in what the proof consisted, but it may have been in something like the following.

(1.) It was a mere *symbol*, and not the reality—showing that the true way was not yet fully understood.

(2.) It was entered but once a year—showing that there was not access at all times.

(3.) It was entered only by the high priest—showing that there was not free and full access to all the people.

(4.) It was accessible only by Jews—showing that the way in which all men might be saved was not then fully revealed. The sense is, that it was a system of types and shadows, in which there were many burdensome rites, and many things to prevent men from coming before the symbol of the Divinity, and was therefore an *imperfect* system. All these obstructions are now removed; the Saviour—the great High Priest of his people—has entered heaven, and "opened it to all true believers," and all of every nation may now have free access to God. See Heb 9:12; comp. Heb 10:19-22.

{b} "way" Joh 14:6

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 9 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Which was a figure for the time then present*. That is, as long as the tabernacle stood. The word rendered *figure—parabolh*— is not the same as *type —tupov*, (Ro 5:14; Act 7:43,44;

John 20:25 1Co 10:6,11 Php 3:17, —but is the word commonly rendered *parable*, Mt 13:3,10,13,18,24,31,33-36,53 15:15

et saepe, and means, properly, *a placing side by side*; then, a comparison, or similitude, Here it is used in the sense of image, or symbol—something to represent other things. The idea is, that the arrangements and services of the tabernacle were a representation of important realities, and of things which were more fully to be revealed at a future period. There can be no doubt that Paul meant to say that this service in general was symbolical or typical, though this will not authorize us to attempt to spiritualize every minute arrangement of it. Some of the things in which it was typical are specified by the apostle himself; and wisdom and safety in explaining the arrangements of the tabernacle and its services consist in adhering *very closely* to the explanations furnished by the inspired writers. An interpreter is on an open Sea, to be driven he knows not whither, when he takes leave of these safe pilots.

Both gifts. Thank-offerings.

And sacrifices. Bloody offerings. The idea as, that all kinds of offerings to God were made there.

That could not make him that did the service perfect. That could not take away sin, and remove the stains of guilt on the soul. **See Barnes "Heb 7:11"; comp.** Heb 8:7 7:27, 10:1,11.

As pertaining to the conscience. They related mainly to outward and ceremonial rites; and even when offerings were made for sin, the conscience was not relieved. They could not expiate guilt; they could not make the soul pure; they could not of themselves impart peace to the soul by reconciling it to God. They could not fully accomplish what the conscience needed to have done in order to give it peace. Nothing will do this but the blood of the Redeemer.

{c} "could not" Ps 40:6,7; Ga 3:21 Heb 10:1,11

{d} "conscience" Ps 51:16-19

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 9 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Which stood only in meats and drinks*. The idea is, that the ordinances of the Jews, in connexion with the services of religion, consisted much of laws pertaining to what was lawful to eat and drink, etc. A considerable part of those laws related to the distinction between clean and unclean beasts, and to such arrangements as were designed to keep them externally distinct from other nations. It is possible, also, that there may be a reference here to meat and drink offerings. On the grammatical difficulties of this verse, see Stuart on the Hebrews, *in loc*.

And divers washings. The various ablutions which were required in the service of the tabernacle and the temple—washing of the hands, of the victim that was to be offered, etc, It was for this purpose that the laver was erected in front of the tabernacle, Ex 30:18 31:9 Ex 35:16, and that the brazen sea and the lavers were constructed in connexion with the temple of Solomon, 2Ch 4:3-5; 1Ki 7:26. The Greek word here is *baptisms*. On its meaning, **See Barnes "Mt 3:6"; See Barnes "Mr 7:4"**.

And carnal ordinances. Marg. "Or, *rites or ceremonies*." Or, "Ordinances of the flesh;" that is, which pertained to the flesh, or to external ceremonies. The object was rather to keep them *externally* pure than to cleanse the conscience and make them holy in heart.

Imposed on them. Laid on them—*epikeimena*. It does not mean that there was any *oppression or injustice* in regard to these ordinances, but that they were appointed for a temporary purpose.

Until the time of reformation. The word here rendered *reformation —diorywsiv* means, properly, *emendation, improvement, reform*. It refers to putting a thing in a right condition; making it better; or raising up and restoring that which is fallen down. *Passow*. Here the reference is undoubtedly to the gospel, as being a better system—*a putting things where they ought to be*. Comp. **See Barnes "Ac 3:21".**

The idea here is, that those ordinances were only temporary in their nature, and were designed to endure till a more perfect system should be introduced. They were of value *to introduce* that better system; they were not adapted to purify the conscience and remove the stains of guilt from the soul.

{e} "meats and drinks" Le 11:2 {f} "washings" Nu 19:7 {1} "ordinances" "rites or ceremonies" {g} "imposed" Eph 2:15

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 9 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *But Christ being come*. Now that the Messiah has come, a more perfect system is introduced, by which the conscience may be made free from guilt.

An High Priest of good things to come. See Heb 10:1. The apostle having described the tabernacle, and shown wherein it was defective in regard to the real wants of sinners, proceeds now to describe the Christian system, and to show how that met the real condition of man, and especially how it was adapted to remove sin from the soul. The phrase, "high priest of good things to come," seems to refer to those "good things" which belonged to the dispensation that *was to come*; that is, the dispensation under the Messiah. The Jews anticipated great blessings in that time. They looked forward to better things than they enjoyed under the old dispensation. They expected more signal proofs of the Divine favour; a clearer knowledge of the way of pardon; and more eminent spiritual enjoyments. Of these, the apostle says that Christ, who had come, was now the high priest. It was he by whom they were procured; and the time had actually arrived when they might enjoy the long-anticipated good things under the Messiah.

By a greater and more perfect tabernacle. The meaning is, that Christ officiated as High Priest in a much more magnificent and perfect temple than either the tabernacle or the temple under the old dispensation. He performed the great functions of his priestly office—the sprinkling of the blood of the atonement—in heaven itself, of which the most holy place in the tabernacle was but the emblem. The Jewish high priest entered the sanctuary made with hands to minister before God; Christ entered into heaven itself. The word "*by*" here *dia* means, probably, *through*; and the idea is, that Christ passed through a more perfect tabernacle on his way to the mercy-seat in heaven than the Jewish high priest did when: he passed *through* the outer tabernacle, Heb 9:2, and through the veil into the most holy place. Probably the idea in the mind of the writer was that of the Saviour passing through the *visible heavens* above us, to which the veil, dividing the holy from the most holy place in the temple, bore some resemblance. Many, however, have understood the word "tabernacle" here as denoting the *body of Christ*, (see Grotius and Bloomfield, *in loc*.;) and according to this the idea is, that Christ, by means of his own body and blood offered as a sacrifice, entered

into the Most Holy Place in heaven. But it seems to me that the whole scope of the passage requires us to understand it of the more perfect temple in heaven where Christ performs his ministry, and of which the tabernacle of the Hebrews was but the emblem. Christ did not belong to the tribe of Levi; he was not an high priest of the order of Aaron; he did not enter the holy place on earth, but he entered the heavens, and perfects the work of his ministry there.

Not made with hands. A phrase that properly, describes heaven as being fitted up by God himself. **See Barnes "2Co 5:1"**.

Not Of this building. Gr. "of this *creation ktisewv*. The meaning is, that the place where he officiates is not fitted up by human power and art, but is the work of God. The object is to show that his ministry is altogether more perfect than that which could be rendered by a Jewish priest, and performed in a temple which could not have been reared by human skill and power.

{h} "High Priest" Heb 3:1 {a} "good things" Heb 10:1

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 9 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Neither by the blood of goats and calves*. The Jewish sacrifice consisted of the shedding of the blood of animals. On the great day of attonement the high priest took with him into the most holy place

(1.) the blood of a young bullock, Le 16:3,11, which is here called the blood of a "calf," which he offered for his own sin; and

(2.) the blood of a goat, as a sin-offering for others, Le 16:9,15. It was *by*, or by *means of dia* blood thus sprinkled on the mercy-seat, that the high priest sought the forgiveness of his own sins and the sins of the people.

But by his own blood. That is, by his own blood shed for the remission of sins. The meaning is, that it was in virtue of his own blood, or *by means* of that, that, he sought the pardon of his people. That blood was not shed for himself—for he had no sin—and consequently there was a material difference between his offering and that of the Jewish high priest. The difference related to such points as these,

(1.) The offering which Christ made was wholly for others; that of the Jewish priest for himself as well as for them.

(2.) The blood offered by the Jewish priest was that of animals; that offered by the Saviour was his own.

(3.) That offered by the Jewish priest was only an emblem or type—for it could not take away sin; that offered by Christ had a real efficacy, and removes transgression from the soul.

He entered into the holy place. Heaven. The meaning is, that as the Jewish high priest bore the blood of the animal into the holy of holies, and sprinkled it there as the means of expiation, so the offering which Christ has to make in heaven, or the *consideration* on which he pleads for the pardon of his people, is the blood which he shed on Calvary. Having made the atonement, he now pleads the merit of it as a *reason* why sinners should be saved. It is not, of course, meant that he literally *bore* his own blood into heaven—as the high priest did the blood of the bullock and the goat into the sanctuary; or that he literally *sprinkled* it on the mercy-seat there; but that that blood, having been shed for sin, is now the ground of his pleading and intercession for the pardon of sin—as the

sprinkled blood of the Jewish sacrifice was the ground of the pleading of the Jewish high priest for the pardon of himself and the people.

Having obtained eternal redemption for us. That is, by the shedding of his blood. On the meaning of the word *redemption*, **See Barnes "Ga 3:13"**.

The redemption which the Lord Jesus effected for his people is *eternal*. It will continue for ever. It is not a temporary deliverance leaving the redeemed in danger of falling into sin and ruin, but it makes salvation secure, and in its effects extends through eternity. Who can estimate the extent of that love which purchased for us *such* a redemption? Who can be sufficiently grateful that he is thus redeemed? The *doctrine* in this verse is, that the blood of Christ is the means of redemption, or atones for sin. In the following verses the apostle shows that it not only makes atonement for sin, but that it is the means of sanctifying or purifying the soul.

{c} "goats" Heb 10:4 {d} "own blood" Ac 8:2 {e} "holy place" Heb 10:19

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 9 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *For if the blood of bulls and of goats*. Referring still to the great day of atonement, when the offering made was the sacrifice of a bullock and a goat.

And the ashes of an heifer. For an account of this, see Nu 19:2-10. In Heb 9:9 it is said that the ashes of the heifer, after it was burnt, should be kept "for a water of separation; it is a purification for sin." That is, the ashes were to be carefully preserved; and, being mixed with water, were sprinkled on those who were from any cause ceremonially impure. The *reason* for this appears to have been that the heifer was considered as a sacrifice whose blood has been offered, and the application of the ashes to which she had been burnt was regarded as an evidence of participation in that sacrifice. It was needful, where the laws were so numerous respecting eternal pollutions, or where the members of the Jewish community were regarded as so frequently "*unclean*" by contact with dead bodies, and in various other ways, that there should be some method in which they could be declared to be cleansed from their "uncleanness." The nature of these institutions also required that this should be in connexion with *sacrifice*; and in order to this it was arranged that there should be this *permanent sacrifice*—the ashes of the heifer that had been sacrificed —of which they could avail themselves at any time, without the expense and delay of making a bloody offering specifically for the occasion. It was, therefore, a provision of convenience; and at the same time was designed to keep up the idea that all purification was somehow connected with the shedding of blood.

Sprinkling the unclean. Mingled with water, and sprinkled on the unclean. The word *unclean* here refers to such as had been defiled by contact with dead bodies, or when one had died in the family, etc. See Nu 19:11-22.

Sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh. Makes holy so far as the flesh or body is concerned. The uncleanness here referred to related to the body only, and of course the means of cleansing extended only to that. It was not designed to give peace to the conscience, or to expiate moral offences. The offering thus made removed the obstructions to the worship of God, so far as to allow him who had been defiled to approach him in a regular manner. Thus much the apostle allows was accomplished by the Jewish rites. They had an *efficacy* in removing ceremonial uncleanness; and in rendering it proper that he who had been polluted should be permitted again to approach and

worship God. The apostle goes on to argue that, if *they* had such an efficacy, it was fair to presume that the blood of Christ would have far greater efficacy, and would reach to the conscience itself and make that pure.

{f} "ashes" Nu 19:2-17

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 9 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *How much more shall the blood of Christ*. As being infinitely more precious than the blood of an animal could possibly be. If the blood of an animal had any efficacy at all, even in removing ceremonial pollutions, how much more is it reasonable to suppose may be effected by the blood of the Son of God!

Who through the eternal Spirit. This expression is very difficult, and has given rise to a great variety of interpretation.—Some Mss., instead of *eternal* here, read *holy*, making it refer directly to the Holy Spirit. See *Wetstein*. These various readings, however, are not regarded as of sufficient authority to lead to a change in the text, and are of importance only as showing that it was an early opinion that the Holy Spirit is here referred to. The principal opinions which have been entertained respecting this phrase are the following.

(1.) That which regards it as referring to the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity. This was the opinion of Owen, Doddridge, and Archbishop Tillotson.

(2.) That which refers it to the divine:nature of Christ. Among those who have maintained this opinion are Beza, Ernesti, Wolf, Vitriuga, Storr, and the late Dr. J.P. Wilson, MSS. Notes.

(3.) Others, as Grotius, Rosenmuller, Koppe, understand it as meaning *endless or immortal life*, in contradistinction from the Jewish sacrifices which were of a perishable nature, and which needed so often to be repeated.

(4.) Others regard it as referring to the glorified person of the Saviour, meaning that, in his exited or spiritual station in heaven, he presents the efficacy of blood,

(5.) Others suppose that it means *Divine influence*; and that the idea is, that Christ was actuated and filled with a Divine influence when he offered up himself as a sacrifice—an influence which was not of a temporal and fleeting nature, but which was eternal in its efficacy. This is the interpretation preferred by Prof. Stuart. For an examination of these various opinions, see his "Excursus xviii." on this epistle. It is difficult, if not impossible, to decide what is the true meaning of the passage amidst this diversity of opinion; but there are some reasons which seem to me to make it probable that the Holy Spirit is intended, and that the idea is, that Christ made his great sacrifice under the *extraordinary influences of that Eternal Spirit*. The reasons which lead me to this opinion are the following.

(1.) It is that which would occur to the great mass of the readers of the New Testament. It is presumed that the great body of sober, plain, and intelligent readers of the Bible, on perusing the passage, suppose that it refers to the Holy Ghost, the third person of the Trinity. There are few better and safer rules for the interpretation of a volume designed like the Bible for the mass of mankind, than to abide by the sense in which they understand it.

(2.) This interpretation is one which is most naturally conveyed by the language of the original. The phrase, *the spirit to pneuma* has so far a technical and established meaning in the New Testament

as to denote the Holy Ghost, unless there is something in the connexion which renders such an application improper. In this case there is nothing certainly which necessarily forbids such an application. The high names and classical authority of those who have held this opinion are a sufficient guarantee of this.

(3.) This interpretation accords with the fact, that the Lord Jesus is represented as having been eminently endowed with the influences of the Holy Spirit. Comp. **See Barnes "Joh 3:34"**.

Though he was Divine, yet he was also a man, and as such was under influences similar to those, of other pious men. The Holy Spirit is the source and sustainer of all piety in the soul; and it is not improper to suppose that the man Christ Jesus was, in a remarkable manner, influenced by the Holy Ghost in his readiness to obey God, and to suffer according to his will.

(4.) If there was *ever* an occasion on which we may suppose he was influenced by the Holy Ghost, that of his sufferings and death here referred to may be supposed eminently to have been such an one. It was expressive of the highest state of piety—of the purest love to God and man—which has ever existed in the human bosom; it was the most trying time of his own life; it was the period when there would be the most strong temptation to abandon his work; and, as the redemption of the whole world was dependent on that act, it is reasonable to suppose that the richest heavenly grace would be there imparted to him, and that he would then be eminently under the influence of that Spirit which was granted not "*by measure* unto him." **See Barnes "Joh 3:34"**.

(5.) This representation is not inconsistent with the belief that the sufferings and death of the Redeemer were *voluntary*, and had all the merit which belongs to a voluntary transaction. Piety in the heart of a Christian now is not less voluntary because it is produced and cherished by the Holy Ghost, nor is there less excellence in it because the Holy Ghost imparts strong faith in the time of temptation and trial. It seems to me, therefore, that the meaning of this expression is, that the Lord Jesus was led by the strong influences of the Spirit of God to devote himself as a sacrifice for sin. It was not by any temporary influence—not by mere excitement; it was by the influence of the *Eternal* Spirit of God; and the sacrifice thus offered could, therefore, accomplish effects which would be eternal in their character. It was not like the offering made by the Jewish high priest, which was necessarily renewed every year, but it was under the influence of one who was *eternal*, and the effects of whose influence might be everlasting. It may be added, that if this is a correct exposition it follows that the Holy Ghost is eternal, and must therefore be Divine.

Offered himself. That is, as a sacrifice. He did not offer a bullock or a goat, but he offered himself. The sacrifice of one's self is the highest offering which he can make: in this case it was the highest which the universe had to make.

Without spot. Marg. "Or, *fault*." The animal that was offered in the Jewish sacrifices was to be without blemish. See Le 1:10 22:19-22. It was not to be lame, or blind, or diseased. The word which is here used and rendered "without spot" *amwmov*—refers to this fact, that there was no defect or blemish. The idea is, that the Lord Jesus, the great Sacrifice, was perfect. See Heb 7:26.

Purge your conscience. That is, cleanse, purify, or sanctify your conscience. The idea is, that this offering would take away whatever rendered the conscience defiled or sinful. The offerings of the Jews related in the main to external purification, and were not adapted to give peace to a troubled conscience. They could render the worshipper externally pure, so that he might draw near to God, and not be excluded by any ceremonial pollution or defile. merit; but the mind, the heart, the conscience, they could not make pure. They could not remove that which troubles a man when he recollects that he has violated a holy law and has offended God, and when he looks forward to an

awful judgment-bar. The word *conscience* here is not to be understood as a distinct and independent faculty of the soul, but *as the soul or mind* itself reflecting and pronouncing on its own acts. The whole expression refers to a mind alarmed by the recollection of guilt—for it is guilt only that disturbs a man s conscience. Guilt originates in the soul remorse and despair; guilt makes a man troubled when he thinks of death and the judgment; it is guilt only which alarms a man when he thinks of a holy God; and it is nothing but guilt that makes the entrance into another world terrible and awful. If man had no guilt he would never dread his Maker, nor would the presence of his God be ever painful to him, Ge 3:6-10; if a man had no guilt he would not fear to die—for what have the innocent to fear anywhere? The universe is under the government of a God of goodness and truth, and, under such a government, how *can* those who have done no wrong have anything to dread? The fear of death, the apprehension of the judgment to come, and *the dread of God*, are strong and irrefragable proofs that every man is a sinner. The only thing, therefore, which ever disturbs the conscience, and makes death dreadful, and God an object of aversion, and eternity awful, is GUILT. If that is removed, man is calm and peaceful; if not, he is the victim of wretchedness and despair.

From dead works. From works that are deadly in their nature, or that lead to death. Or it may mean from works that have no spirituality, and no life. By "*works*" here the apostle does not refer to their outward religious acts particularly, but to the conduct of the life—-to what men *do*; and the idea is, that their acts are not spiritual and saving, but such as lead to death. See **See Barnes "Heb 6:1"**.

To serve the living God. Not in outward form, but in sincerity and in truth; to be his true friends and worshippers. The phrase, "the *living* God," is commonly used in tile Scriptures to describe the true God as distinguished from idols, which are represented as *dead*, or without life, Ps 115:4-7. The idea in this verse is, that it is only the sacrifice made by Christ which can remove the stain of guilt from the soul. It could not be done by the blood of bulls and of goats—for that did not furnish relief to a guilty conscience—but it could be done by the blood of Christ. The sacrifice which he made for sin was so pure and of such values that God can consistently pardon the offender, and restore him to his favour. That blood, too, can give peace—for Christ poured it out in behalf of the guilty. It is not that he took part with the sinner against God; it is not that he endeavours to convince him who has a troubled conscience that he is needlessly alarmed, or that sin is not as bad as it is represented to be, or that it does not expose the soul to danger. Christ never took the part of the sinner against God; he never taught that sin was a small matter, or that it did not expose to danger. He admitted all that is said of its evil. But he provides for giving peace to the guilty conscience by shedding his blood that it may be forgiven, and by revealing a God of mercy who is willing to receive the offender into favour, and to treat him as though he had never sinned. Thus the troubled conscience may find peace; and thus, though guilty, man may be delivered from the dread of the wrath to come.

{a} "who through" 1Pe 3:18 {1} "spot" "fault" {b} "purge" Heb 10:22 {c} "serve" 1Pe 4:2

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 9 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *And for this cause*. With this view; that is, to make an effectual atonement for sin, and to provide a way by which the troubled conscience may have peace.

He is the Mediator. **See Barnes "Ga 3:19,20"**.

He is the Mediator between God and man in respect to that new covenant which he has made, or the new dispensation by which men are to be saved. He stands *between* God and man—the parties at variance—and undertakes the work of mediation and reconciliation.

Of the new testament. Not *testament*—for a *testament*, or will, needs no mediator; but of the *new covenant*, or the new arrangement or disposition of things under which he proposes to pardon and save the guilty. **See Barnes "Heb 9:16,17"**.

That by means of death. His own death as a sacrifice for sin. The old covenant or arrangement also contemplated death but it was the death of an animal. The purposes of this were to be effected by the death of the Mediator himself; or this covenant was to be ratified in his blood.

For the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament. The covenant or arrangement under Moses. The general idea here is, that these were offences for which no expiation could be made by the sacrifices under that dispensation, or from which the blood then shed could not redeem. This general idea may include two particulars.

(1.) That they who had committed transgressions under that covenant, and who could not be fully pardoned by the imperfect sacrifices then made, would receive a full forgiveness of all their sins in the great day of account through the blood of Christ. Though the blood of bulls and goats could not expiate, yet they offered that blood in faith; they relied on the promised mercy of God; they looked forward to a perfect sacrifice; and now the blood of the great atonement, offered as a *full* expiation for all their sins, would be the ground of their acquittal in the last day.

(2.) That the blood of Christ would *now* avail for the remission of all those sins which could not be expiated by the sacrifices offered under the law. It not only contemplated the remission of all the offences committed by the truly pious under that law, but would *now* avail to put away sin entirely. No sacrifice which men could offer would avail, but the blood of Christ would remove all that guilt.

That they which are called. Alike under the old covenant and the new.

Might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. That is, the fulfilment of the promise; or that they might be made partakers of eternal blessings. That blood is effectual alike to save those under the ancient covenant and the new—so that they will be saved in the same manner, and unite in the same song of redeeming love.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 9 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *For where a testament is*. This is the same word *diayhkh* which, in Heb 8:6, is rendered covenant. For the general signification of the word, **See Barnes "Heb 8:6"**.

There is so much depending, however, on the meaning of the word, not only in the interpretation of this passage, but also of other parts of the Bible, that it may be proper to explain it here more at length. The word *diayhkh* —occurs in the New Testament thirty-three times. It is translated *covenant* in the common version, in Lu 1:72; Ac 3:26 7:8; Ro 9:4 11:27; Ga 3:15,17, 4:24 Eph 2:12; Heb 8:6,8,9,10; Heb 9:4 10:16, 12:24 13:20.

In the remaining places it is rendered *testament*: Mt 26:28 Mr 14:24; Lu 22:20 1Co 11:25; 2Co 3:6,14; Heb 7:22 9:15-17,20 Re 11:19.

In four of those instances, Mt 26:28 Mr 14:24; Lu 22:20

and 1Co 11:25, it is used with reference to the institution or celebration of the Lord's Supper. In the Septuagint it occurs not far from three hundred times; in considerably more than two hundred of which, it is the translation of the Hebrew word

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Berith. In one instance, Zec 11:14, it is the translation of the word *brotherhood*; once, De 9:5, of

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—*word*; once, Jer 34:18, of "words of the covenant;" once, Le 26:11, of tabernacle; once, Ex 31:7, of testimony; it occurs once, Eze 16:8, where the reading of the Greek and Hebrew text is doubtful; and it occurs three times, 1Sa 11:2 20:8; 1Ki 8:9, where there is no corresponding word in the Hebrew text. From this use of the word by the authors of the Septuagint, it is evident that they regarded it as the proper translation of the Hebrew

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Berith, and as conveying the same sense which that word does. It cannot be reasonably doubted that the writers of the New Testament were led to the use of the word, in part at least, by. the fact that they found it occurring so frequently in the version m common use; but it cannot be doubted, also, that they regarded it as *fairly* conveying the sense of the word

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Berith. On no principle can it be supposed that inspired and honest men would use a word, in referring to transactions in the Old Testament, which did not *fairly* convey the idea which the writers of the Old Testament meant to express. The use being thus regarded as settled, there are some *facts* in reference to it which are of great importance in interpreting the New Testament, and in understanding the nature of the "covenant" Which God makes with man. These facts are the following.

(1.) The word *diayhkh diatheke*—is not that which properly denotes compact, agreement, or covenant. That word is *sunyhkh —syntheke*— or, in other forms, *sunyesiv* and *sunyesia*; or if the word *diatheke* is used in that signification it is only remotely, and as a secondary meaning. See *Passow*; comp. the Septuagint in Isa 28:15 30:1; Da 11:6, and Wisdom i. 16; I Mac. x. 26; 2 Mac. xiii. 25; xiv. 26. It is not the word which a *Greek* would have employed to denote a *compact or covenant*, He would have employed it to denote a *disposition, ordering, or arrangement* of things, whether of religious rites, civil customs, or property; or if used with reference to a compact, it would have been with the idea of an *arrangement or ordering* of matters, not with the primary notion of an agreement with another.

(2.) The word properly expressive of a covenant or compact *sunyhkh* is *never* used in the New Testament. In all the allusions to the transactions between God and man, this word never occurs. From some cause, the writers and speakers in the New Testament seem to here supposed that the word would leave an impression which.they did not wish to leave. Though it might have been supposed that, in speaking of the various transactions between God and man, they would have selected this word, yet with entire uniformity they have avoided it. No one of them—though the word *diayhkh diatheke*—has been used by no less than six of them—has been betrayed in a single instance into the use of the word *sunyhkh syntheke*, or has differed from the other writers in the

language employed. This cannot be supposed to be the result of concert or collusion, but it must have been founded on some reason which operated equally on all their minds.

(2.) In like manner, and with like remarkable uniformity, the word *sunyhkh syntheke*—is never used in the Septuagint with reference to any arrangement or "covenant" between God and man. Once indeed in the Apocrypha, and but once, it is used in that sense. In the three only other instances in Which it occurs in the Septuagint, it is with reference to compacts between man and man, Isa 28:16 30:1; Da 11:6.

This remarkable fact, that the authors of that version never use the word to denote any transaction between God and man, shows that there must have been some reason for it which acted on their minds with entire uniformity.

(3.) It is no less remarkable that neither in the Septuagint nor the New Testament is the word *diayhkh—diatheke*—ever used in the sense of will or testament, unless it be in the case before us. This is conceded on all hands, and is expressly admitted by Prof. Stuart, (Com Heb p. 439,) though he defends this use of the word in this passage.

A very important inquiry presents itself here which has never received a solution generally regarded as satisfactory. It is why the word *diayhkh —diatheke*—was selected by the writers of the New Testament to express the nature of the transaction between God and man in the plan of salvation. It might be said, indeed, that they found this word uniformly used in the Septuagint, and that they employed it as expressing the idea which they wished to convey, with sufficient accuracy. But this is only removing the difficulty one step farther back. Why did the Seventy adopt this word? Why did they not rather use the common and appropriate Greek word to express the notion of a covenant? A suggestion on this subject has already been made in the **See Barnes "Heb 8:6"**.

Comp. Bib. Repository, vol. xx. p. 55. Another reason may, however, be suggested for this remarkable fact which is liable to no objection. It is, that in the apprehension of the authors of the Septuagint, and of the writers of the New Testament, the word *diayhkh diatheke*—in its original and proper signification, *fairly* conveyed the sense of the Hebrew word

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Berith, and that the word *sunyhkh syntheke*—or *compact, agreement*, would *not* express that; and *that they never meant to be understood as conveying the idea, either that God entered into a COMPACT or COVENANT with man, or that he made a WILL*. They meant to represent him as making *an arrangement, a disposition*, an ordering of things, by which his service might be kept up among his people, and by which men might be saved; but they were equally remote from representing him as making a *compact*, or a *will*. In support of this there may be alleged

(1.) the remarkable uniformity in which the word *diayhkh diatheke*— is used, showing that there was some *settled principle* from which they never departed; and

(2.) used mainly the meaning of the word itself. Prof. Stuart has, undoubtedly, given the accurate original sense of the word. "The real, genuine, and original meaning of *diayhkh diatheke*—is, *arrangement, disposition, or disposal* of a thing," p. 440. The word from which it is derived—*diatiyhmi* means, to place apart or asunder; and then to set, arrange, dispose in a certain order. *Passow*. From this original signification is derived the use which the word has, with singular uniformity, in the Scriptures. It denotes the *arrangement, disposition, or ordering* of things which God made in relation to mankind, by which he designed to keep up his worship on earth, and to save the soul. It means neither covenant nor will; neither compact nor legacy; neither agreement nor testament. It is an *arrangement* of an entirely different order from either of them, and the sacred

writers, with an uniformity which could have been secured only by the presiding influence of the One Eternal Spirit, have avoided the suggestion that God made with man either a *compact or a will*. We have no word which precisely expresses this idea; and hence our conceptions are constantly floating between a compact and a will, and the views which we have are as unsettled as they are unscriptural. The simple idea is, that God has made an *arrangement* by which his worship may be celebrated and souls saved. Under the Jewish economy this arrangement assumed one form; under the Christian another. In neither was it a compact or covenant between two parties in such a sense that one party would be at liberty to reject the terms proposed; in neither was it a testament or will, as if God had left a legacy to man; but in both there were some things in regard to the arrangement such as are found in a covenant or compact. One of those things—equally appropriate to a compact between man and man, and to this arrangement the apostle refers to here, that it implied in all cases the death of the victim. If these remarks are well founded, they should be allowed materially to shape our views in the interpretation of the Bible. Whole treatises of divinity have been written on a mistaken view of the meaning of this word—understood as meaning *covenant*. Volumes of angry controversy have been published on the nature of the "covenant" with Adam, and on its influence on his posterity. The only *literal*, "covenant" which can be supposed in the plan of redemption is that between the Father and the Son—though even the existence of such a covenant is rather the result of devout and learned imagining than of any distinct statement in the volume of inspiration. The simple statement there is, that God has made an arrangement for salvation, the execution of which he has entrusted to his Son, and has proposed it to man to be accepted as the only arrangement by which man can be saved, and which he is not at liberty to disregard.

There has been much difference of opinion in reference to the meaning of the passage here, and to the design of the illustration introduced. If the word used—*diayhkh*—means *testament*, in the sense of a will, then the sense of that passage is, that "a will is of force only when he who made it dies, for it relates to a disposition of his property after his death." The force of the remark of the apostle then would be, that the fact that the Lord Jesus made or expressed his *will* to mankind, implied that he would die to confirm it; or that since in the ordinary mode of making a will it was of force only when he who made it was dead, therefore it was necessary that the Redeemer should die, in order to confirm and ratify that which he made. But the objections to this, which appears to have been the view of our translators, seem to me to be insuperable. They are these.

(1.) The word *diayhkh —diatheke*—is not used in this sense in the New Testament elsewhere. See the remarks above.

(2.) The Lord Jesus made no such *will*. He *had* no property, and the commandments and instructions which he gave to is disciples were not of the nature of a will or testament.

(3.) Such an illustration would not be pertinent to the design of the apostle, or in keeping with his argument. He is comparing the Jewish and Christian dispensations, and the point of comparison in this chapter relates to the question about the efficacy of sacrifice in the two arrangements, he showed that the arrangement for blood-shedding by sacrifice entered into both; that the high priest of both offered blood as an expiation; that the holy place was entered with blood, and that consequently there was *death* in both the arrangements or dispensations. The former arrangement or dispensation was ratified with blood, and it was equally proper that the new arrangement should be also. The point of comparison is not that Moses made a will or testament which could be of force only when he died, and that the same thing was required in the *new* dispensation, but it is that the former covenant was *ratified by blood, or by the death of a victim*, and that it might be expected

that the new dispensation would be confirmed, and that it was, in fact, confirmed in the same manner. In this view of the argument what pertinency would there be in introducing an illustration respecting a *will* and the manner in which it became efficient. **See Barnes "Heb 9:18"**.

It seems clear, therefore, to me, that the word rendered testament here is to be taken in the sense in which it is ordinarily used in the New Testament. The opinion that the word here means such a Divine arrangement as is commonly denoted a "*covenant*," and not testament, is sanctioned by not a few names of eminence in criticism, such as Pierce, Doddridge, Michaelis, Steadel, and the late Dr. J.P. Wilson. Bloomfield says that the connexion here demands this. The principal objections to this view are,

(1.) that it is not proved that no covenants or compacts were valid, except such as were made by the intervention of sacrifices.

(2.) That the word rendered *testator diayemenov* —cannot refer to the death of an animal slain for the purpose of ratifying a covenant, but must mean either a *testator* or a *contractor*, i.e. one of two contracting parties.

(3.) That the word rendered *dead* Heb 9:17— *nekroiv*—means only *dead* men, and never is applied to the dead bodies of animals. See Stuart on the Heb. p. 442. These objections to the supposition that the passage refers to a covenant or compact, Prof. Stuart says are, in his view, insuperable, and they are certainly entitled to grave consideration. Whether the view above presented is one which can be sustained, we may be better able to determine after an examination of the words and phrases which the apostle uses. Those objections which depend wholly on the *philological* argument derived from the words used will be considered, of course, in such an examination. It is to be remembered at the outset,

(1.) that the word *diayhkh -diatheke*—is *never* used in the New Testament in the sense of *testament or will*, unless in this place;

(2.) that it is *never* used in this sense in the Septuagint; and

(3.) that the Hebrew word

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—*Berith*—*never* has this signification. This is admitted. See Stuart on the Heb. pp. 439, 440. It must require very strong reasons to prove that it has this meaning here, and that Paul has employed the word in a sense differing from its uniform signification elsewhere in the Bible. Compare, however, the remarks of Prof, Stuart ia Biblical Repository, vol. xx. p. 364.

There must also of necessity be. *anagkh*—That is, it is necessary in order to confirm the covenant, or it would not be binding in cases where this did not occur. The necessity in the case is simply to make it valid or obligatory. So we say now, there must "necessarily" be a *seal*, or a deed would not be valid. The fair interpretation of this is, that this was the common and established custom in making a "covenant" with God, or confirming the arrangement with him in regard to salvation. To this it is objected, (see the first objection above,) that "it is yet to be made out that no covenants were valid except those by the intervention of sacrifices." In reply to this, we may observe,

(1.) that the point to be made out is *not* that this was a custom in compacts between *man and man*, but between *man and his Maker*. There is no evidence, as it seems to me, that the apostle alludes to a compact between man and man. The mistake on this subject has arisen partly from the use of the word "*testament*" by our translators, in the sense of will—supposing that it must refer to some transaction relating to man only; and partly from the insertion of the word "*men*" in Heb 9:17, in the translation of the phrase—*epi nekroiv* upon the dead," or "over the dead."- But it is not

necessary to suppose that there is a reference here to any transaction between man and man at all, as the whole force of the illustration introduced by the apostle will be retained if we suppose him speaking *only* of a covenant between man and God. Then his assertion will be simply that, in the arrangement between God and man, there was a *necessity* of the death of something, or of the shedding of blood in order to ratify it. This view will save the necessity of proof that the custom of ratifying compacts between man and man by sacrifice prevailed. Whether that can be made out or not, the assertion of the apostle may be true, that in the arrangement which God makes with man, sacrifice was necessary in order to confirm or ratify it.

(2.) The point to be made out is, not that such a custom is or was universal among all nations, but that it was the known and regular opinion among the Hebrews that a sacrifice was necessary in a "covenant "with God, in the same way as if we should say that a deed was not valid without a seal, it would not be necessary to show this in regard to all nations, but only that it is the law or the custom in the nation where the writer lived, and at the time when he lived. Other nations may have very different modes or confirming or ratifying a deed and the same nation may have different methods at various times. The *fact or custom* to which I suppose there is allusion here, is that of sacrificing an animal to ratify the arrangement between man and his Maker, commonly called a "covenant;" In regard to the existence of such a custom, particularly among the Hebrews? we may make the following observations. It was the common mode of ratifying the "covenant" between God and man. That was done over a sacrifice, or by the shedding of blood. So the covenant with Abraham was ratified by slaying an heifer, a she-goat, a ram, a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon. The animals were divided and a burning lamp passed between them, Ge 15:9,18. So the covenant made with the Hebrews in the wilderness was ratified in the same manner, Ex 24:6, seq. Thus, in Jer 34:18, God speaks of the "men that had transgressed his covenant which they had made before him when *they cut the calf in twain and passed between the parts thereof*." See also Zec 9:11. Indeed, all the Jewish sacrifices were regarded as a ratification of the covenant. It was never supposed that it was ratified or confirmed in a proper manner without such a sacrifice. Instances occur, indeed, in which there was *no* sacrifice offered when a covenant was made between man and man, see Ge 23:16 24:9; De 25:7,9; Ru 4:7; but these cases do not establish the point that the custom did not prevail of ratifying a covenant with God by the blood of sacrifice. Further; the *terms* used in the Hebrew in regard to making a covenant with God, prove that it was understood to be ratified by sacrifice, or that the death of a victim was necessary.

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Berith "to cut a covenant"—the word

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karath meaning to cut; to cut off; to cut down; and the allusion being to the victims offered in sacrifice, and cut in pieces on occasion of entering into a covenant. See Ge 15:10 Jer 34:18,19.

The same idea is expressed in the Greek phrases *orkia temnein, temnein spondav*, and in the Latin *icere faedus*. Comp. Virgil, AEn, viii. 641.

Et caesa jungebant faedera porca

These considerations show that it was the common sentiment, alike among the Hebrews and the heathen, that a covenant with God was to be ratified or sanctioned by sacrifice; and the statement of Paul here is, that the death of a sacrificial victim was needful to confirm or ratify such a covenant with God. It was not secure, or confirmed, until blood was thus shed. This was well understood among the Hebrews, that all their covenant transactions with God were to be ratified by a sacrifice;

and Paul says that the same principle must apply to any arrangement between God and men. Hence he goes on to show that it was necessary that a sacrificial victim should die in the new Covenant which God established by man through the Mediator. See Heb 9:23. This I understand to be the sum of the argument here. It is not that every contract made between man and man was to be ratified or confirmed by a sacrifice—for the apostle is not discussing that point; but it is that every similar transaction with God must be based on such a sacrifice, and that no covenant with him could be complete without such a sacrifice. This was provided for in the ancient dispensation by the sacrifices which were constantly offered in their worship; in the new, by the one great Sacrifice offered on the cross. Hence all our approaches to God are based on the supposition of such a sacrifice, and are, as it were, ratified over it. We ratify or confirm such a covenant arrangement, not by offering the sacrifice anew, but by recalling it in a proper manner when we celebrate the death of Christ, and when, in view of his cross, we solemnly pledge ourselves to be the Lord's.

The death of the testator. According to our common version, *the death of him who makes a will*. But if the views above expressed are correct, this should be rendered the covenanter, or "the victim set apart to be slain." The Greek will admit of the translation of the word *diayemenov —diathemenos* —by the word *covenanter*, if the word *diayhkh diatheke*—is rendered *covenant*. To such a translation here as would make the word refer *to a victim slain in order to ratify a covenant*, it is objected that "the word has no such meaning anywhere else. It must either mean a *testator*, or a *contractor*, i. e. one of two covenanting parties. But where is the death of a person covenanting made necessary in order to confirm the covenant? *Prof. Stuart, in loc*. To this objection I remark respectfully,

(1.) that the word is *never* used in the sense of *testator*, either in the New Testament or the Old, unless it be here. It is admitted of the word *diayhkh, diatheke*—by Prof. Smart himself, that it never means *will, or testament*, unless it be here, and it is equally true of the word used here that it never means one *who makes a will*. If, therefore, it should be that a meaning quite uncommon, or wholly unknown in the usage of the Scriptures, is to be assigned to the use of the word here, why should it be assumed that that unusual meaning should be that of *making a will*, and not that of confirming a covenant?

(2.) If the apostle used the word *diayhkh— diatheke* —in the sense of a *covenant* in this passage, nothing is more natural than that he should use the corresponding word *diayemenov—diathemenos*—in the sense of that by which a covenant was ratified. He wished to express the idea that the covenant was alway ratified by the death of a victim—a sacrifice of an animal under the law, and the sacrifice of the Redeemer under the gospel— and no word would so naturally convey that idea as the one from which the word *covenant* was derived. It is to be remembered, also, that there was no word to express that thought. Neither the Hebrew nor the Greek furnished such a word; nor have we now any word to express that thought, but are obliged to use circumlocution to convey the idea. The word *covenanter* would not do it; nor the words victim or sacrifice. *We* can express the idea only by some phrase like this—" the victim set apart to be slain to ratify the covenant." But it was not an unusual thing for the apostle Paul to make use of a word in a sense quite peculiar to himself. Comp. 2Co 4:17.

(3.) The word *diatiyhmi diatithemi*—properly means, *to place apart, to set in order, to arrange*. It is rendered *appoint* in Lu 22:29; *made and make*, with reference to a covenant, Act 3:25 Heb 8:10, 10:16.

It occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, except in the passage before us. The idea of *placing, laying, disposing, arranging*, etc, enters into the word—as to place wares or merchandize for sale, to arrange a contract, etc. See *Passow*. The fair meaning of the word here may be, whatever goes to arrange, dispose, or settle the covenant, or to make the covenant secure and firm. If the reference be to a compact, it cannot relate to one of the contracting parties, because the death of neither is necessary to confirm it. But it may refer to that which was well known as an established opinion, that a covenant with God was ratified only by a sacrifice. Still, it must be admitted that this use of the word is not elsewhere found, and the only material question is, whether it is to be presumed that the apostle would employ a word in a single instance, in a peculiar signification, where the connexion would not render it difficult to be understood. This *must* be admitted, that he might, whichever view is taken of the meaning of this passage; for, on the supposition that he refers here to a *will*, it is conceded that he uses the word in a sense which does not once occur elsewhere either in the Old Testament or the New. It seems to me, therefore, that the word here may, without impropriety, be regarded as referring to *the victim that was slain in order to ratify a covenant with God*; and that the meaning is, that such a covenant was not regarded as confirmed until the victim was slain. It may be added that the authority of Michaelis, Macknight, Doddridge, Bloomfield, and Dr. J.P. Wilson, is a proof that such an interpretation cannot be a very serious departure from the proper use of a Greek word.

{1} "be" "be brought in"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 9 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *For a testament*. Such an arrangement as God enters into with man. See the remarks on Heb 9:16.

Is of force. Is ratified, or confirmed—in the same way as a deed or compact is confirmed by affixing a seal.

After men are dead. *epi nekroiv*. "Over the dead." That is, in accordance with the view given above, after the animal is dead; or over the body of the animal slain for sacrifice, and to confirm the covenant. "For a covenant is completed or confirmed over dead sacrifices, seeing it is never of force as long as the victim set apart for its ratification is still living." MSS. Notes of Dr. J. P. Wilson. To this interpretation it is objected, that "*nekroiv—nekrois*—means only *dead men*; but men surely were not sacrificed by the Jews, as a mediating sacrifice in order to confirm a covenant." Prof. Stuart, *in loc*. In regard to this objection, and to the proper meaning of the passage, we may remark,

(1,) that the word "men" is not in the Greek, nor is it necessarily implied, unless it be in the use of the Greek word rendered *dead*. The proper translation is, "*upon, or over the dead*." The use of the word "men" here by our translators would seem to limit it to the making of a will.

(2.) It is to be presumed, unless there is positive proof to the contrary, that the Greeks and Hebrews used the word dead as it is used by other people, and that it *might* refer to deceased animals, or vegetables, as well as to men. A sacrifice that had been offered was dead; a tree that had fallen was dead; an animal that had been torn by other wild animals was dead. It is *possible* that a people might have one word to refer to dead men, and another to dead animals, and another to dead vegetables; but what is the evidence that the Hebrews or the Greeks had such words?

(3.) What is the meaning of this very word—*nekrov nekros*-,in Heb 6:1 9:14, of this very epistle, when it is applied to *works*—"dead works"—if it never refer to anything but men? Comp. Jas 2:17,20,26 Eph 2:1,5; Re 3:1.

In Ec 9:4, it is applied to a dead lion. I suppose, therefore, that the Greek phrase here will admit of the interpretation which the "exigency of the place" seems to demand, and that the idea is, that a covenant with God was ratified over the animals slain ill sacrifice, and was not considered as confirmed until the sacrifice was killed.

Otherwise. Since—*epei*. That is, unless this takes place it will be of no force.

It is of no strength. It is not *strong—iscuei*—it is not confirmed or ratified.

While the testator liveth. Or while the animal selected to confirm the covenant is alive. It can be confirmed only by its being slain. A full examination of the meaning of this passage (Heb 9:16,17) may be found in an article in the Biblical Repository, vol. xx. pp. 51—71, and in Prof. Stuart's reply to that article. Bib. Repos. xx. pp. 356—381.

{*} "testament" "covenant" {+} "testator" "He that made it"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 9 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Whereupon*. *oyen—Whence*. Or since this is a settled principle, or an indisputable fact, it occurred in accordance with this, that the first covenant was confirmed by the shedding of blood. The admitted principle which the apostle had stated, that the death of the victim was necessary to confirm the covenant, was the reason why the first covenant was ratified with blood. If there were any doubt about the correctness of the interpretation given above, that Heb 9:16,17 refer to a *covenant*, and not a *will*, this verse would seem to be enough to remove it. For how could the fact, that a *will* is not binding until he who makes it is dead, be a reason why a *covenant* should be confirmed by blood? What bearing would such a fact have on the question, whether it ought or ought, not to be confirmed in this manner. Or how could that fact, though it is universal, be given as a reason to account for the fact that the covenant made by the instrumentality of Moses was ratified by blood? No possible connexion can be seen in such reasoning. But admit that Paul had stated, Heb 9:16, Heb 9:17, a general principle that in all covenant transactions with God the death of a victim was necessary, and everything is plain. We then see why he offered the sacrifice and sprinkled the blood. It was not on the basis of such reasoning as this: "The death of a man who makes a will is indispensable before the will is of binding force, THEREFORE it was that Moses confirmed the covenant made with our fathers by the blood of a sacrifice; "but by such reasoning as this: "It is a great principle that in order to ratify a covenant between God and his people a victim should be slain, *therefore* it was that Moses ratified the old covenant in this manner, and *therefore* it was also that the death of a victim was necessary under the new dispensation." Here the reasoning of Paul is clear and explicit; but who could see the force of the former? Prof. Stuart indeed connects this verse with Heb 9:15, and says that the course of thought is, "The new covenant of redemption from sin was sanctioned by the death of Jesus; consequently, or wherefore, *oyen*, the old covenant, which is a type of the new, was sanctioned by the blood of victims." But is this the reasoning of Paul? Does he say that *because* the blood of a Mediator was to be shed under the new dispensation, and because the old was a type of this, that THEREFORE the old was confirmed by blood? Is he

not rather accounting for the shedding of blood at all, and showing that it was *necessary* that the blood of the Mediator should be shed, rather than *assuming* that, and from that arguing that a typical shedding of blood was needful? Besides, on this supposition, why is the statement in Heb 9:16,17 introduced? What bearing have these verses in the train of thought? What are they but an inexplicable obstruction?

The first testament. Or rather covenant— the word testament being supplied by the translators.

Was dedicated. Marg. *Purified*. The word used *to ratify*, to *confirm, to consecrate, to sanction*. Literally, *to renew*.

Without blood. It was ratified by the blood of the animals that were slain in sacrifice. The blood was then sprinkled on the principal objects that were regarded as holy under that dispensation.

{1} "dedicated" "He that made it"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 9 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people*. When he had recited all the law, and had given all the commandments entrusted Him to deliver, Ex 24:8

He took the blood of calves and of goats. This passage has given great perplexity to commentators from the fact that Moses, in his account of the transactions connected with the ratification of the covenant with the people, Ex 24:3 mentions only a part of the circumstances here referred to. He says nothing of the blood of calves and of goats; nothing of water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop; nothing of sprinkling the book, the tabernacle, or the vessels of the ministry. It has been made a question, therefore, whence Paul obtained a knowledge of these circumstances? Since the account is not contained in the Old Testament, it must have been either by tradition or by direct inspiration. The latter supposition is hardly probable, for

(1.)the information here can hardly be regarded as of sufficient importance to have required an original revelation; for the illustration would have had sufficient force to sustain his conclusion if the literal account in Exodus only had been given, that Moses sprinkled the people; but

(2.) such an original act of inspiration here would not have been consistent with the object of the apostle. In that argument it was essential that he should state only the facts about the ancient dispensation which were admitted by the Hebrews themselves. Any statement of his own about things which they did not concede to be true, or which was not well understood as a custom, might have been called in question, and would have done much to invalidate the entire force of the argument. It is to be presumed, therefore, that the facts here referred to had been preserved by tradition; and in regard to this, and the authority due to such a tradition, we may remark,

(1.) that it was well known that the Jews had a great number of traditions which they carefully preserved;

(2.) that there is no improbability in the supposition that many events in their history would be preserved in this manner, since in the small compass of a volume like the Old Testament it cannot be presumed that *all* the events of their nation had been recorded;

(3.) though they had many traditions of a trifling nature, and many which were false, (comp. **See Barnes** "Mt 15:2,) yet they doubtless had many that were true;

(4.) in referring to those traditions, there is no impropriety in supposing that Paul may have been guided by the Spirit of inspiration in selecting only those which were true; and

(5.) nothing is more probable than what is here stated. If Moses sprinkled "the people;" if he read "the book of the law" then, (Ex 24:7;) and if this was regarded as a solemn act of ratifying a covenant with God, nothing would be more natural than that he should sprinkle the book of the covenant, and even the tabernacle and its various sacred utensils. We are to remember, also, that it was common among the Hebrews to sprinkle blood for the purpose of consecrating, or as an emblem of purifying. Thus Aaron and his sons and their garments were sprinkled with blood when they were consecrated to the office of priests, Ex 29:19-21; the blood of sacrifices was sprinkled on the altar, Le 1:5,11, 3:2,13; and blood was sprinkled before the veil of the sanctuary, Le 4:16,17; comp. Le 6:27 7:14. So Josephus speaks of the garments of Aaron and of his sons being sprinkled with "the blood of the slain beasts, and with spring water." "Having consecrated them and their garments," he says, "for seven days together, he did the same to the tabernacle, and the vessels thereto belonging, both with oil and with the blood of bulls and of rams," Ant. B. iii. chap. viii. & 6. These circumstances show the strong probability of the truth of what is here affirmed by Paul, while it is impossible to prove that Moses did not sprinkle the book and the tabernacle in the manner stated. The mere omission by Moses cannot demonstrate that it was not done. On the phrase "the blood of calves and of goats," **See Barnes "Heb 9:12"**.

With water. Agreeably to the declaration of Josephus that "spring water was used." In Le 14:49-51, it is expressly mentioned that the blood of the bird that was killed to cleanse a house from the plague of leprosy should be shed over running water, and that the blood and the water should be sprinkled on the walls. It has been suggested also, (see Bloomfield,) that the use of water was necessary in order to prevent the blood from coagulating, or so as to: make it *possible* to sprinkle it.

And scarlet wool. Marg, *Purple*. The word here used denotes crimson, or deep scarlet. The colour was obtained from a small insect which was found adhering to the shoots of a species of oak in Spain and in Western Asia, of about the size of a pea. It was regarded as the most valuable of the colours for dyeing, and was very expensive. Why the wool used by Moses was of this colour is not known unless it be because it was the most expensive of colours, and thus accorded with everything employed in the construction of the tabernacle and its utensils. *Wool* appears to have been used in order to absorb and retain the blood.

And hyssop. That is, a bunch of hyssop intermingled with the wool, or so connected with it as to constitute a convenient instrument for sprinkling. Comp. Le 14:51. Hyssop is a low shrub, regarded as one of the smallest of the plants, and her me put in contrast with the cedar of Lebanon. It sprung out of the rocks or walls, 1Ki 4:33, and was used for purposes of purification. The term seems to have comprised not only the common hyssop, but also lavender and other aromatic plants. Its *fragrance*, as well as its size, may have suggested the idea of using it in the sacred services of the tabernacle. The appearance of the hyssop is represented by the foregoing engraving.

And sprinkled both the book, This circumstance is not mentioned by Moses, but it has been shown above not to be improbable. Some expositors, however, in order to avoid the difficulty in the passage, have taken this in connexion with the word *labwn* -rendered, "*he took*" "—meaning, "taking the blood, and the book itself;" but the more natural and proper construction is, that the book was sprinkled with the blood.

And all the people. Moses says, "and sprinkled it on the people," Ex 24:8. We are not to suppose that either Moses or Paul designs to say that the blood was actually sprinkled on each one of the three millions of people in the wilderness; but the meaning doubtless is, that the blood was sprinkled over the people, though in fact it might have fallen on a few. So a man now standing on an elevated place, and surrounded by a large assembly, if he should sprinkle water over them from the place where he stood, might be said to sprinkle it *on the people*, though in fact but few might have been touched by it. The act would be equally significant whether the emblem fell on few or many.

{a} "blood" Mt 26:28

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 9 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Saying, This is the blood of the testament*. Of the covenant. **See Barnes "Heb 9:16,17"**.

That is, this is the blood by which the covenant is ratified. It was the means used to confirm it; the sacred and solemn form by which it was made sure. When this was done, the covenant between God and the people was confirmed —as a covenant between man and man is when it is sealed.

Which God hath enjoined unto you. In Ex 24:8, "which God hath made with you. The language used by Paul, "which God hath *enjoined*" — *eneteilato*— commanded—shows that he did not regard this as strictly of the nature of a covenant, or compact. When a compact is made between parties, one does not enjoin or command the other, but it is a mutual agreement. In the transactions between God and man, though called

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Berith—or *diayhkh—diatheke*—the idea of a covenant or compact is so far excluded that God never loses his right to *command* or *enjoin*. It is not a transaction between equals, or an agreement; it is a solemn *arrangement* on the part of God which he proposes to men, and which he enjoins them to embrace; which they are not indeed at liberty to disregard, but which, when embraced, is appropriately ratified by some solemn act on their part. Compare **See Barnes "Heb 8:6"**.

{a} "blood" Mt 26:28

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 9 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *He sprinkled—both the tabernacle*. This circumstance is not stated by Moses. On the probability that this was done, **See Barnes "Heb 9:19"**.

The account of setting up the tabernacle occurs in Ex 40. In that account it is said that Moses *anointed* the tabernacle with the holy anointing oil, Heb 9:9-11. Josephus (Ant. B. III. ch. viii. & 6) says that he consecrated it, and the vessels thereto belonging, with the blood of bulls and of rams. This was undoubtedly the tradition in the time of Paul, and no one can prove that it is not correct.

And all the vessels of the ministry. Employed in the service of God. The altar, the laver, (Ex 40:10,11,) the censers, dishes, bowls, etc., which were used in the tabernacle.

{b} "Moreover" Ex 29:12,36

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 9 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *And almost all things*. It is a general custom to purify everything by blood. This rule was not universal, for some things were purified by fire and water, (Nu 31:22,23,) and some by water only, Nu 31:24 Le 16:26,28.

But the exceptions to the general rule were few. Almost everything in the tabernacle and temple service was consecrated or purified by blood.

And without shedding of blood is no remission. Remission or forgiveness of sins. That is, though some things were purified by fire and water, yet when the matter pertained to the forgiveness of sins, it was *universally* true that no sins were pardoned except by the shedding of blood. *Some* impurities might be removed by water and fire, but the stain of sin could be removed only by blood. This declaration referred, in its primary meaning, to the Jewish rites; and the sense is, that under that dispensation it was universally true that in order to the forgiveness of sin blood must be shed. But it contains a truth of higher order and importance still. *It is universally true that sin never has been, and never will be forgiven, except in connexion with and in virtue of the shedding of blood*. It is on this principle that the plan of salvation by the atonement is based, and on this that God in fact bestows pardon on men. There is not the slightest evidence that any man has ever been pardoned except through the blood shed for the remission of sins. The infidel who rejects the atonement has no evidence that his sins are pardoned; the man who lives in the neglect of the gospel, though he has abundant evidence that he is a sinner, furnishes none that his sins are forgiven; and the Mohamadin and the heathen can point to no proof that their sins are blotted out. It remains to be demonstrated that one single member of the human family has ever had the slightest evidence of pardoned sin, except through the blood of expiation. In the Divine arrangement there is no principle better established than this, that all sin which is forgiven is remitted through the blood of the atonement; a principle which has never been departed from hitherto, and which never will be. It follows, therefore,

(1.) that no sinner can hope for forgiveness except through the blood of Christ;

(2.) that if men are ever saved they must be willing to rely on the merits of that blood;

(3.) that all men are on a level in regard to salvation, since all are to be saved in the same way; and

(4.) that there will be one and the same song in heaven—the song of redeeming love.

{c} "blood" Le 17:11

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 9 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *The patterns of things in the heavens*. The tabernacle and its various utensils. **See Barnes "Heb 8:5".**

Be purified with these.

With water and blood, and by these ceremonies.

But the heavenly things themselves.

The heavenly tabernacle or sanctuary into which Christ has entered, and where he performs the functions of his ministry. The use of the word *purified* here applied to heaven, does not imply that heaven was before *unholy*, but it denotes that it is now made accessible to sinners; or that they may come and worship there in an acceptable manner. The ancient tabernacle was purified or consecrated by the blood of the victims slain, so that men might approach with acceptance and worship; the heavens by purer blood are rendered accessible to the guilty. The necessity for "better sacrifices" in regard to the latter was, that it was designed to make the conscience pure, and because the service in heaven is more holy than any rendered on earth.

With better sacrifices than these.

To wit, the sacrifice made by the offering of the Lord Jesus on the cross. This infinitely surpassed in value all that had been offered under the Jewish dispensation.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 9 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands*. Into the temple or tabernacle. The Jewish high priest alone entered into the most holy place; and the other priests into the holy place. Jesus, being of the tribe of Judah, and not of Levi, never entered the temple proper. He had access only to the courts of the temple, in the same way as any other Jew had. **See Barnes "Mt 21:12".**

He has entered into the true temple—heaven of which the earthly tabernacle was the type.

Which are the figures of the true. Literally, *the antitypes antitupa*. The word properly means that which is formed after a model, pattern, or type; and then that which corresponds to something, or answers to, it. The idea here is, that the type or fashion—the true figure or form—was shown to Moses in the Mount, and then the tabernacle was made after that model, or corresponded to it. The true original figure is heaven itself; the tabernacle was an antitype of that—or was so formed as in some sense to correspond to it. That is, it corresponded in regard to the matters under consideration—the most holy place denoted heaven; the mercy-seat and the shekinah were symbols of the presence of God, and of the fact that he shows mercy in heaven; the entrance of the high priest was emblematical of the entrance of the Redeemer into heaven; the sprinkling of the blood there was a type of what the Redeemer would do in heaven.

Now to appear in the presence of God for us. As the Jewish high priest appeared before the shekinah, the symbol of the Divine Presence in the tabernacle, so Christ appears before God himself in our behalf in heaven. He has gone to plead for our salvation; to present the merits of his blood as a permanent reason why we should be saved, **See Barnes "Ro 8:34"**; **See Barnes** "Heb 7:25".

{a} "appear" Ro 8:34

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 9 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Nor yet that he should offer himself often*. The Jewish high priest entered the most holy place with blood once every year. In this respect the offering made by Christ, and the work which he performed, differed from that of the Jewish high priest. It was not needful that he should enter the holy place but once. Having entered there, he permanently remains there.

With the blood of others. That is, with the blood of calves and goats. This is a second point in which the work of Christ differs from that of the Jewish high priest. Christ entered there with his own blood. **See Barnes "Heb 9:12"**.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 9 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *For then must he often have suffered*. That is, if his blood had no more efficacy than that which the Jewish high priest offered, and which was so often repeated, it would have been necessary that Christ should have often died.

But now once. Once for all; once in the sense that it is not to be repeated again—*apax*.

In the end of the world. In the last dispensation or economy; that under which the affairs of the world will be wound up. See the phrase fully explained

See Heb 1:2; See Barnes "Ac 2:17"; See Barnes "1Co 10:11, See Barnes "Isa 2:2".

Hath he appeared. He has been manifested in human form.

To put away sin.

(1.) To remove the punishment due to sin, or to provide a way of pardon; and

(2.) to remove the stain of sin from the soul. **See Barnes "Heb 9:2"**.

By the sacrifice of himself. **See Barnes "Heb 1:3"**; **See Barnes "Heb 2:14"**; **See Barnes** "Heb 7:27".

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 9 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *And as it is appointed unto men once to die*. Or, "since it is appointed unto men to die once only." The object of this is to illustrate the fact that Christ died but once for sin, and that is done by showing that the most important events pertaining to man occur but once. Thus it is with *death*. That does not, and cannot occur many times. It is the great law of our being, that men die but once, and hence the same thing was to be expected to occur in regard to him who made the atonement. It could not be supposed that this great law pertaining to man would be departed from in the case of him who died to make the atonement, and that he would repeatedly undergo the pains of death. The same thing was true in regard to the *judgment*. Man is to be judged once, and but once. The decision is to be final, and is not to be repeated. In like manner, there was a fitness that the great redeemer should die but once, and that his death should, without being repeated, determine the destiny of man. There was a remarkable oneness in the great events which most affected men; and neither death, the judgment, nor the atonement could be repeated. In regard to the declaration here, that "it is appointed unto men once to die," we may observe,

(1,) that death is the result of *appointment*, Ge 3:19, It is not the effect of chance, or hap-hazard. It is not a "debt of nature." It is not the condition to which man was subject by the laws of his

creation. It is not to be accounted for by the mere principles of physiology. God could as well have made the heart to play for ever as for fifty years. Death is no more the regular result of physical laws than the guillotine and the gallows are. It is, in all cases, the result of *intelligent appointment*, and for *an adequate cause*.

(2.) That cause, or the reason of that appointment, is sin. **See Barnes "Ro 6:23"**.

This is the adequate cause; this explains the whole of it. Holy beings do not die. There is not the slightest proof that an angel in heaven has died, or that any perfectly holy being has ever died, except the Lord Jesus. In every death, then, we have a demonstration that the race is guilty; in each case of mortality we have an affecting memento that we are individually transgressors.

(3.) Death occurs but *once* in this world. It cannot be repeated, if we should *desire* to have it repeated. Whatever truths or facts, then, pertain to death; whatever lessons it is calculated to convey, pertain to it as an event which is not to occur again. That which is to occur but *once* in an eternity of existence acquires, from that very fact, if there were no other circumstances, an immense importance. What is to be done but once, we should wish to be done well. We should make all proper preparation for it; we should regard it with singular interest. If preparation is to be made for it, we should make *all* which we expect ever to make. A man who is to cross the ocean *but once*—to go away from his home never to return—should make the right kind of preparation. He cannot come back to take that which he has forgotten; to arrange that which he has neglected; to give counsel which he has failed to do; to ask forgiveness for offences for which he has neglected to seek pardon. And so of death. A man who dies, dies but once. He cannot come back again to make preparation, if he has neglected it; to repair the evils which he has caused by a wicked life; or to implore pardon for sins for which he had failed to ask forgiveness. Whatever *is to be done* with reference to death, is to be done *once for all* before he dies.

(4.) Death occurs to all. "It is appointed unto men"—to the race. It is not an appointment for one, but for all. No one is appointed by name to die; and not an individual is designated as one who shall escape. No exception is made in favour of youth, beauty, or blood; no rank or station is exempt; no merit, no virtue, no patriotism, no talent, can purchase freedom from it. In every other sentence which goes out against men, there may be some hope of reprieve. Here there is none. We cannot meet an individual who is not under sentence of death. It is not only the poor wretch in the dungeon, doomed to the gallows, who is to die —it is the rich man in his palace; the gay trifler in the assembly room; the friend that we embrace and love; and she whom we meet in the crowded saloon of fashion, with all the graces of accomplishment and adorning. Each one of these is just as much under sentence of death as the poor wretch in the cell, and the execution on any one of them may occur before his. It is, too, for substantially the same cause, and is as really deserved. It is for *sin* that all are doomed to death; and the *fact* that we must die should be a constant remembrance of our guilt.

(5.) As death is to occur to us but once, there is a cheering interest in the reflection that when it is passed it is passed *for ever*. The dying pang, the chill, the cold sweat, are not to be repeated. Death is not to approach us often—he is to be allowed to come to us but once. When we have once passed through the dark valley, we shall have the assurance that we shall never tread its gloomy way again. Once, then, let us be willing to die—since we can die *but* once; and let us rejoice in the assurance which the gospel furnishes, that they who die in the Lord leave the world to go where death in any form is unknown.

But after this the judgment. The apostle does not say *how long* after death this will be, nor is it possible for us to know, Ac 1:7; Mt 24:36. We may suppose, however, that there will be two periods in which there will be an act of judgment passed on those who die.

(1.) Immediately after death, when they pass into the eternal world, when their destiny will be made known to them. This seems to be necessarily implied in the supposition that they will continue to live, and to be happy or miserable after death. This act of judgment may not be formal and public, but will be such as to show them what must be the issues of the final day; and as the result of that interview with God, they will be made happy or miserable until the final doom shall be pronounced.

(2.) The more public and formal act of judgment, when the whole world will be assembled at the bar of Christ, Mt 25. The decision of that day will not change or reverse the former; but the trial will be of such a nature as to bring out all the deeds done on earth, and the sentence which will be pronounced will be in view of the universe, and will fix the everlasting doom. Then the body will have been raised; the affairs of the world will be wound up; the elect will all be gathered in, and the state of retribution will commence, to continue for ever. The main thought of the apostle here may be, that after death will commence a state of *retribution* which can never change. Hence there was a propriety that Christ should die but once. In that future world he would not die to make atonement, for there all will be fixed and final. If men, therefore, neglect to avail themselves of the benefits of the atonement here, the opportunity will be lost for ever. In that changeless state, which constitutes the eternal judgment, no sacrifice will be again offered for sin; there will be no opportunity to embrace that Saviour who was rejected here on earth.

{b} "appointed" Ge 3:19 {c} "after this" Ex 12:14

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 9 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *So Christ was once offered*. As men are to die but once, and as all beyond the grave is fixed by the judgment, so that his death there would make no change in the destiny, there was a propriety that he should die but once for sin. The argument is, there is one probation only, and therefore there was need of but one sacrifice, or of his dying but once. If death were to occur frequently in the existence of each individual, and if each intermediate period were a state of probation, then there might be a propriety that an atonement should be made with reference to each state. Or if beyond the grave there were a state of probation still, then also there might be a propriety that an atoning sacrifice should be offered there. But since neither of these things is true, there was a fitness that the great Victim should die but once.

To bear the sins of many. To suffer and die on account of their sins. **See Barnes "**Isa 53:6, **See Barnes "Isa 53:11"; See Barnes "**Ga 3:13.

The phrase does not mean

(1.) that Christ was *a sinner*—for that was in no sense true. See Heb 7:26. Nor

(2.) that he literally bore the penalty due to transgression—for that is equally untrue. The penalty of the law for sin is *all* which the law when executed inflicts on the offender for his transgress loud and includes, *in fact*, remorse of conscience, overwhelming despair, and eternal punishment. But Christ did not suffer for ever, nor did he experience remorse of conscience, nor did he endure utter despair. Nor

(3.) does it mean that he was literally *punished* for our sins. Punishment pertains only to the guilty. An innocent being may *suffer* for what another does, but there is no propriety in saying that he is *punished* for it. A father suffers much from the misconduct of a son, but we do not say that he is *punished* for it; a child suffers much from the intemperance of a parent, but no one would say that it was a *punishment* on the child. Men always connect the idea of criminality with punishment; and when we say that a man is *punished*, we suppose at once that there is *guilt*. The phrase here means simply, that Christ endured sufferings in his own person which, if they had been inflicted on us, would have been the proper punishment of sin. He who was innocent interposed, and received on himself what was descending to meet us, and consented to be treated *as he would have deserved if he had been a sinner*. Thus he bore what was due to us; and this in Scripture phrase is what is meant by bearing our iniquities. **See Barnes "Isa 53:4"**.

And unto them that look for him. To his people. It is one of the characteristics of Christians that they *look* for the return of their Lord, 1Ti 2:13 2Pe 3:12; comp. **See Barnes "1Th 1:10"**.

They fully believe that he will come. They earnestly *desire* that he will come, 2Ti 4:8 Re 22:20. They are *waiting* for his appearing, 1Th 1:10. He left the world and ascended to heaven, but he will again return to the earth, and his people are looking for that time as the period when they shall be raised up from their graves; when they shall be publicly acknowledged to be his, and when they shall be admitted to heaven. **See Barnes "Joh 14:3"**.

Shall he appear the second time. He first appeared as the Man of sorrows to make atonement for sin. His second appearance will be as the Lord of his people, and the Judge of the quick and the dead, Mt 25:31; see **See Barnes "Ac 1:11"**.

The apostle does not say when this would be, nor is any intimation given in the Scriptures when it will occur. It is, on the contrary, everywhere declared that this is concealed from men, (Ac 1:7 Mt 24:36;) and all that is known respecting the time is, that it will be suddenly, and at an unexpected moment, Mt 24:42,44,50.

Without sin. That is, when he comes again he will not make himself a sin-offering; or will not come in order to make atonement for sin. It is not implied that when he came the first time he was in any sense *a sinner*, but that he came then with reference to sin, or that the main object of his incarnation was to "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" When he comes the second time, it will be with reference to another object.

Unto salvation. That is, to receive his friends and followers to eternal salvation. He will come to save them from all their sins and temptation; to raise them from their graves; to place them at his right hand in glory, and to confirm them in the everlasting inheritance which he has promised to all who truly love him, and who wait for his appearing.

In view of this anticipated return of the Redeemer, we may remark—-

(1.) There is a propriety that the Lord Jesus should thus return. He came once to be humbled, despised, and put to death; and there is a fitness that he should come to be honoured in his own world.

(2.) Every person on earth is interested in the fact that he will return, for "every eye shall see him," Re 1:7. All who are now in their graves, and all who now live, and all who will hereafter live, will behold the Redeemer in his glory.

(3.) It will not be merely to gaze upon him, and to admire his magnificence that they will see him. It will be for greater and more momentous purposes—with reference to an eternal doom.

(4.) The great mass of men are not prepared to meet him. They do not believe that he will return; they do not desire that he should appear; they are not ready for the solemn interview which they will have with him. His appearing now would overwhelm them with surprise and horror. There is nothing in the future which they less expect and desire than the second coming of the Son of God; and in the present state of the world his appearance would produce almost universal consternation and despair. It would be like the coming of the flood of waters on the old world; like the sheets of fire on the cities of the plain, or as *death* now comes to the great mass of those who die.

(5.) Christians are prepared for his coming. They believe in it; they desire it; they are expecting it. In this they are distinguished from all the world besides; and they would be ready to hail his coming as that of a friend, and to rejoice in his appearance as that of *their* Saviour.

(6.) Let us, then, live in habitual preparation for his advent. To each one of us he will come soon; to all he will come suddenly. Whether he come to remove us by death, or whether in the clouds of heaven to judge the world, the period is not far distant when we shall see him. Yes, our eyes shall behold the Son of God in his glory! That which we have long desired—a sight of our Saviour, who died for us—shall soon, very soon, be granted unto us. No Christian begins a week or a day in which there is not a possibility that before its close he may have seen the Son of God in his glory; none lies down upon his bed at night who may not, when the morning dawns upon this world, be gazing with infinite delight on the glories of the great Redeemer in the heavens.

{a} "Christ" 1Pe 2:24 3:18; 1Jo 3:5

{b} "many" Isa 53:12 Mt 26:28 {c} "look" Tit 2:13 2Pe 3:12 {d} "appear" Ac 1:11 {e} "unto salvation" Isa 25:9

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 10

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 10 - Verse 1

CHAPTER X.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER,

THE general subject of this chapter is the sacrifice which Christ has made for sin, and the consequences which flow from the fact that he has made a sufficient atonement. In chapter 9 the apostle had shown that the Jewish rites were designed to be temporary and typical, and that the offerings which were made under that dispensation could never remove sin. In this chapter he shows that the true sacrifice had been made by which sin could be pardoned, and that certain very important consequences followed from that fact. The subject of *sacrifice* was the most important part of the Jewish economy, and was also the essential thing in the Christian dispensation; and hence it is that the apostle dwells upon it at so great length. The chapter embraces the following topics.

I. The apostle repeats what he had said before about the inefficacy of the sacrifices made under the law, Heb 10:1-4. The law was a mere shadow of good things to come, and the sacrifices which

were made under it could never render those who offered them perfect. This was conclusively proved by the fact that they continued constantly to be offered.

II. Since this was the fact in regard to those sacrifices, a better offering had been provided in the gospel by the Redeemer, Heb 10:5-10. A body had been prepared him for this work; and when God had said that he had no pleasure in the offerings under the law, Christ had come and offered *his* body once for all in order that an effectual atonement might be made for sin.

III. This sentiment the apostle further illustrates by showing how this one great Offering was connected with the forgiveness of sins, Heb 10:11-18. Under the Jewish dispensation sacrifices were repeated every day; but under the Christian economy, when the sacrifice was once made, he who had offered it sat down for ever on the right hand of God—for his great work was done. Having done this, he looked forward to the time when his work would have full effect, and when his enemies would be made his footstool. That this was to be the effect of the offering made by the Messiah the apostle then shows from the Scriptures themselves, where it is said, (Jer 31:33,34,) that under the gospel the laws of God would be written on the heart, and sin would be remembered no more. There must then be, the apostle inferred, some way by which this was to be secured, and this was by the great Sacrifice on the cross, which had the effect of perfecting for ever those who were sanctified.

IV. Since it was a fact that such an atonement had been made —that one great offering for sin had been presented to God, which was never to be repeated—there were certain consequences which followed from that, which the apostle proceeds to state, Heb 10:19-25. They were these:

(a.) the privilege of drawing near to God with full assurance of faith, Heb 10:22;

(b.) the duty of holding fast the profession of faith without wavering, Heb 10:23;

(c.) the duty of exhorting one another to fidelity and to good works, Heb 10:24;

(d.) the duty of assembling for public worship, since they had a High Priest in heaven, and might now draw near to God, Heb 10:25.

V. As a *reason* for fidelity in the divine life, and for embracing the offer of mercy now made through the one Sacrifice on the cross, the apostle urges the consequence which must follow from the rejection of that atonement, and especially after having been made acquainted with the truth, Heb 10:26-31. The result, he says, must be certain destruction. If that was rejected, there could remain nothing but a fearful looking for of judgment, for there was no other way of salvation. In support of this, the apostle refers to what was the effect, under the law of Moses, of disobedience, and says that under the greater light of the gospel much more fearful results must follow.

VI. The chapter closes (Heb 10:32-39) with an exhortation to fidelity and perseverance. The apostle reminds those to whom he wrote of what they had already endured; encourages them by the commendation of what they had already done, and especially by the kindness which they had shown to him; says that they had need only of patience, and that the time of their deliverance from all trial was not far off, for that he who was to come would come; says that it was their duty to live by faith, but that if any one drew back, God could have no pleasure in him. Having thus, in the close of the chapter alluded to the subject of faith, he proceeds in the following chapter to illustrate its value at length. The object of the whole is to encourage Christians to make strenuous efforts for salvation; to guard them against the danger of apostasy; and to exhort them to bear their trials with patience and with submission to the will of God.

Verse 1. *For the law, having a shadow*. That is, the whole of the Mosaic economy was a shadow; for so the word *law* is often used. The word *shadow* here refers to a rough outline of anything, a mere sketch, such as a carpenter draws with a piece of chalk, or such as an artist delineates when

he is about to make a picture. He sketches an outline of the object which he designs to draw, which has *some* resemblance to it, but is not "the very image;" for it is not yet complete. The words rendered "the very image" refer to a painting or statue which is finished, where every part is an exact copy of the original. The "good things to come" here refer to the future blessings which would be conferred on man by the gospel. The idea is, that under the ancient sacrifices there was an imperfect representation; a dim outline of the blessings which the gospel would impart to men. They were a typical representation; they were not such that it could be pretended that they would answer the purpose of the things themselves Which they were to represent, and would make those who offered them perfect. Such a rude outline —such a mere sketch, or imperfect delineation—could no more answer the purpose of saving the soul than the rough sketch which an architect makes would answer the purpose of a house, or than the first outline which a painter draws would answer the purpose of a perfect and finished portrait. All that could be done by either would be to convey some distant and obscure idea of what the house or the picture might be, and this was all that was done by the law of Moses.

Can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually. The sacrifices here particularly referred to were those which were offered on the great day of atonement. These were regarded as the most sacred and efficacious of all; and yet the apostle says that the very fact that they were offered every year showed that there must be some deficiency about them, or they would have ceased to be offered.

Make the comers there unto perfect. They could not free them from the stains of guilt; they could not give ease to a troubled conscience; there was in them no efficacy by which sin could be put away. Comp. **See Barnes** "Heb 7:11,

See Barnes "9:9".

{a} "shadow" Col 2:17 {*} "image" "reality" chap. vii. 11; ix. 9.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 10 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *For then would they not have ceased to be offered*? Marg. "Or they would have." The sense is the same. The idea is, that the very fact that they were repeated showed that there was some deficiency in them as to the matter of cleansing the soul from sin. If they had answered all the purposes of a sacrifice in putting away guilt, there would have been no need of repeating them in this manner. They were, in this respect, like medicine. If that which is given to a patient heals him, there is no need of repeating it; but if it is repeated often it shows that there was some deficiency in it, and if taken periodically through a man's life, and the disease should still remain, it would show that it was not sufficient to effect his cure. So it was with the offerings made by the Jews. They were offered every year, and indeed every day, and still the disease of sin remained. The conscience was not satisfied; and the guilty felt that it was necessary that the sacrifice should be repeated again and again.

Because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. That is, if their sacrifices had so availed as to remove their past sins, and to procure forgiveness, they would have had no more trouble of conscience on account of them. They would not have felt that it was necessary to make these sacrifices over and over again in order to find peace. When a man

has full evidence that an atonement has been-made which will meet all the demands of the law, and which secures the remission of sin, he feels that it is enough. It is all that the case demands, and his conscience may have peace. But when he does not feel this, or has not evidence that his sins are all forgiven, those sins will rise to remembrance, and he will be alarmed. He may be punished for them after all. Thence it follows, that if a man wants peace he should have good evidence that his sins are forgiven through the blood of the atonement. No temporary expedient; no attempt to cover them up; no effort to forget them will answer the purpose. They *must be blotted out* if he will have peace—and that can be only through a perfect sacrifice. By the use of the word rendered "*conscience*" here, it is not meant that he who was pardoned would have no consciousness that he was a sinner, or that he would forget it, but that he would have no trouble of conscience; he would have no apprehension of future wrath. The pardon of sin does not cause it to cease to be remembered. He who is forgiven may have a deeper conviction of its evil than he had ever had before. But he will not be troubled or distressed by it as if it were to expose him to the wrath of God. The remembrance of it will humble him; it will serve to exalt his conceptions of the mercy of God and the glory of the atonement, but it will no longer overwhelm the mind with the dread of hell. This effect, the apostle says, was not produced on the minds of those who offered sacrifices every year. The very fact that they did it showed that the conscience was not at peace.

{1} "then" "they would have"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 10 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year*. The reference here is to the sacrifices made on the great day of atonement. This occurred once in a year. Of course, as often as a sacrifice was offered, it was an acknowledgment of guilt on the part of those for whom it was made. As these sacrifices continued to be offered every year, they who made the offering were reminded of their guilt and their desert of punishment. All the efficacy which could be pretended to belong to those sacrifices, was that they made expiation for the past year. Their efficacy did not extend into the future, nor did it embrace any but those who were engaged in offering them. These sacrifices, therefore, could not make the atonement which man needed. They could not make the conscience easy; they could not be regarded as a sufficient expiation for the time to come, so that the sinner at any time could plead an offering which was already made as a ground of pardon, and they could not meet the wants of all men in all lands and at all times. These things are to be found only in that great sacrifice made by the Redeemer on the cross.

{a} "year" Le 16:34

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 10 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins*. The reference here is to the sacrifices which were made on the great day of the atonement, for on that day the blood of bulls and of goats alone was offered. **See Barnes "Heb 9:7"**.

Paul here means to say, doubtless, that it was not possible that the blood of those animals should make a complete expiation so as to purify the conscience, and so as to save the sinner from deserved wrath. According to the Divine arrangement, expiation was made by those sacrifices for offences of various kinds against the ritual law of Moses, and pardon for such offences was thus obtained. But the meaning here is, that there was no efficacy in the blood of a mere animal to wash away a moral offence. It could not repair the law; it could not do anything to maintain the justice of God; it had no efficacy to make the heart pure. The mere shedding of the blood of an animal never *could* make the soul pure. This the apostle states as a truth which must be admitted at once as indisputable; and yet it is probable that many of the Jews had imbibed the opinion that there was such efficacy in blood shed according to the Divine direction, as to remove all stains of guilt from the soul. **See Barnes "Heb 9:9,10".**

{b} "sins" Mt 12:31,32

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 10 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Wherefore*. This word shows that the apostle means to sustain what he had said by a reference to the Old Testament itself. Nothing could be more opposite to the prevailing Jewish opinions about the efficacy of sacrifice than what he had just said. It was, therefore, of the highest importance to defend the position which he had laid down by authority which they would not presume to call in question, and he therefore makes his appeal to their own Scriptures.

When he cometh into the world. When the Messiah came, for the passage evidently referred to him. The Greek is, "Wherefore coming into the world, he saith." It has been made a question when this is to be understood as spoken—whether when he was born, or when he entered on the work of his ministry. Grotius understands it of the latter. But it is not material to a proper understanding of the passage to determine this. The simple idea is, that since it was impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin, Christ coming into the world made arrangements for a better sacrifice.

He saith. That is, this is the language denoted by his great undertaking; this is what his coming to make an atonement implies. We are not to suppose that Christ formally used these words on any occasion—for we have no record that he did—but this language is that which appropriately expresses the nature of his work. Perhaps also the apostle means to say, that it was originally employed in the Psalm from which it is quoted in reference to him, or was indited by him with reference to his future advent.

Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not. This is quoted from Ps 40:6,8. There has been much perplexity felt by expositors in reference to this quotation; and, after all which has been written, it is not entirely removed. The difficulty relates to these points.

(1.) To the question whether the Psalm originally had any reference to the Messiah. The Psalm appears to have pertained merely to David, and it would probably occur to no one on reading it to suppose that it referred to the Messiah, unless it had been so applied by the apostle in this place.

(2.) There are many parts of the Psalm, it has been said, which cannot, without a very forced interpretation, be applied to Christ. See Heb 10:2,12,14-16.

(3.) The argument of the apostle in the expression, "a body hast thou prepared me," seems to be based on a false translation of the principles he has done it.—It is not the design of these Notes to go rate an extended examination of questions of this nature. Such examination must be sought in more extended commentaries, and in treatises expressly relating to points of this kind. On the design of Ps 40, and its applicability to the Messiah, the reader may consult Prof. Stuart on the Hebrews, Excursus xx., and Kuinoel, *in loc*. After the most attentive examination which I can give of the Psalm, it seems to me probable that it is one of the Psalms which had an original and exclusive reference to the Messiah, and that the apostle has quoted it just as it was meant to be understood by the Holy Spirit, as applicable to him. The reasons for this opinion are briefly these.

(1.) There *are* such Psalms, as is admitted by all. The Messiah was the hope of the Jewish people; he was made the subject of their most sublime prophecies; and nothing was more natural than that he should be the subject of the songs of their sacred bards. By the spirit of inspiration they saw him in the distant future in the various circumstances in which he would be placed, and they dwelt with delight upon the vision. Comp. Intro. to Isaiah, & 7. iii.

(2.) The fact that it is here applied to the Messiah is a strong circumstance to demonstrate that it had an original applicability to him. This proof is of two kinds. *First*, that it is so applied by an inspired apostle, which with all who admit his inspiration seems decisive of the question. *Second*, the fact that he so applied it shows that this was an ancient and admitted interpretation. The apostle was writing to those who had been Jews, and whom he was desirous to convince of the truth of what he was alleging in regard to the nature of the Hebrew sacrifices. For this purpose it was necessary to appeal to the Scriptures of the Old Testament; but it cannot be supposed that he would adduce a passage for proof whose relevancy would not be admitted. The presumption is that the passage was in fact commonly applied as here.

(3.) The whole of the Psalm may be referred to the Messiah without anything forced or unnatural. The Psalm throughout seems to be made up of expressions used by a suffering person, who had indeed been delivered from some evils, but who was expecting many more. The principal difficulties in the way of such an interpretation, relate to the following points.

(a.) In Heb 10:2, the speaker in the Psalm says, "He brought me up out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock," and on the ground of this he gives thanks to God. But there is no real difficulty in supposing that this may refer to the Messiah. His enemies often potted against his life; laid snares for him, and endeavoured to destroy him; and it may be that he refers to some deliverance from such machinations. If it is objected to this that it is spoken of as having been uttered "when he came into the world," it may be replied, that that phrase does not necessarily refer to the time of his birth, but that he uttered this sentiment some time during the period of his incarnation. "He, coming into the world for the purpose of redemption, made use of this language." In a similar manner we would say of Lafayette, that "he, coming to the United States to aid in the cause of liberty, suffered a wound in battle." That is, during the period in which he was engaged in. this cause, he suffered in this manner.

(b.) The next objection or difficulty relates to the application of Heb 10:12 to the Messiah, "Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head; therefore my heart faileth me." To meet this, some have suggested that he refers to the sins of men which he took upon himself, and which he here speaks of *as his own*. But it is not true that the Lord Jesus so took upon himself the sins of others that they could be called *his*.

They were *not* his, for he was in every sense" holy, harmless, and undefiled." The true solution of this difficulty probably is, that the word rendered *iniquity*

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means, *calamity, misfortune, trouble*. See Ps 31:10 1Sa 28:10; 2Ki 7:9 Ps 38:6; comp. Ps 49:6. The proper idea in the word is that of *turning away, curving, making crooked*; and it is thus applied to anything which is *perverted* or turned from the right way; as when one is turned from the path of rectitude: or commits sin; when one is turned from the way of prosperity or happiness, or is exposed to calamity. This seems to be the idea demanded by the scope of the Psalm, for it is not a penitential Psalm, in which the speaker is recounting his sins, but one in which he is enumerating his *sorrows*; praising God in the first part of the Psalm for some deliverance already experienced, and supplicating his interposition in view of calamities that he saw to be corning upon him. This interpretation also seems to be demanded in Ps 49:12 of the Psalm by the *parallelism*. In the former part of the verse, the word to which "iniquity" corresponds is not *sin*, but *evil*, i.e. calamity.

"For innumerable evils have compassed me about;
Mine *iniquities* [calamities] hard taken hold upon me."

If the word, therefore, be used here as it often is, and as the scope of the Psalm and the connexion seem to demand, there is no solid objection against applying this verse to the Messiah.

(c.) A third objection to this application of the Psalm to the Messiah is, that it cannot be supposed that he would utter such imprecations on his enemies as are found in Heb 10:14,15: "Let them be ashamed and confounded; let them be driven backward; let them be desolate." To this it may be replied, that such imprecations are as proper in the mouth of the Messiah as of David; but particularly, it may be said also, that they are improper in the mouth of neither.

Both David and the Messiah *did*, in fact, utter denunciations against the enemies of piety and of God. God does the same thing in his word and by his Providence. There is no evidence of any malignant feeling in this; nor is it inconsistent with the highest benevolence. The lawgiver who says that the murderer shall die, may have a heart full of benevolence; the judge who sentences him to death, may do it with eyes filled with tears. The objections, then, are not of such a nature that it is improper to regard this Psalm: as wholly applicable to the Messiah.

(4.) The Psalm cannot be applied with propriety to David, nor do we know of any one to whom it can be but to the Messiah. When was it true of David that he said that he "had come to do the will of God in view of the fact that God did not require sacrifice and offerings? In what "volume of a book" was it written of him before his birth, that he "delighted to do the will of God?" When was it true, that he had "preached righteousness in the great congregation?" These expressions are such as can be applied properly only to the Messiah, as Paul does here; and taking all these circumstances together, it will probably be regarded as the most proper interpretation to refer the whole Psalm at once to the Redeemer, and to suppose that Paul has used it in strict accordance with its original design. The other difficulties referred to will be considered in the exposition of the passage. The difference between *sacrifice* and *offering* is, that the former refers to *bloody* sacrifices; the latter, to *any* oblation made to God—as a thank-offering; an offering of flour, oil, etc. **See Barnes "Isa 1:11".**

When it is said, "Sacrifice and, offering *thou wouldest not*," the meaning is not that such oblations were *in no sense* acceptable to God—for as his appointment, and when offered with a sincere heart, they doubtless were; but that they were not as acceptable to him as obedience, and especially as

the expression is used here, that they could not avail to secure the forgiveness of sins. They were not in their own nature such as was demanded to make an expiation for sin, and hence a body was prepared for the Messiah by which a more perfect sacrifice could be made. The sentiment here expressed occurs more than once in the Old Testament. Thus, 1Sa 15:22, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." Hos 6:6, "For I desired mercy and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings." Comp. Ps 51:16,17, "For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt-offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit." This was an indisputable principle of the Old Testament, though it was much obscured and forgotten in the common estimation among the Jews. In accordance with this principle, the Messiah came to render obedience of the highest order, even to such all extent that he was willing to lay down his own life.

But a body hast thou prepared me. This is one of the passages which has caused a difficulty in understanding this quotation from the Psalm. The difficulty is, that it differs from the Hebrew, and *that the apostle builds an argument upon it*. It is not unusual indeed in the New Testament, to make use of the language of the Septuagint, even where it varies somewhat from the Hebrew; and where no *argument* is based on such a passage, there can be no difficulty in such a usage, since it is not uncommon to make use of the language of others to express our own thoughts. But the apostle does not appear to have made such a use of the passage here, but to have applied it in the way of *argument*. The argument, indeed, does not rest *wholly*, perhaps not *principally*, on the fact that a "body had been prepared" for the Messiah; but still this was evidently, in the view of the apostle, an important consideration, and this is the passage on which the proof of this is based. The Hebrew (Ps 40:6) is, "Mine ears hast thou opened;" or, as it is in the margin, "digged." The idea there is, that the ear had been, as it were, excavated, or dug out, so as to be made to hear distinctly; that is, certain truths had been clearly revealed to the speaker; or perhaps it may mean that he had been made "readily and attentively obedient" *Stuart.* Comp. Is 1:5, "The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious." In the Psalm, the proper connexion would seem to be, that the speaker had been made obedient, or had been so led that he was disposed to do the will of God. This may be expressed by the fact that the ear had been opened so as to be quick to hear, since an indisposition to obey is often expressed by the fact that the ears are *stopped*. There is manifestly no allusion here, as has been sometimes supposed, to the custom of boring through the ear of a servant with an awl, as a sign that he was willing to remain and serve his master, Ex 21:6; De 15:17. In that ease, the outer circle, or rim of the ear, was bored through with an awl; here the idea is that of hollowing out, digging, or excavating —a process to make the passage clear, not to pierce the outward ear. The Hebrew in the Psalm the Septuagint translates, "a body hast thou prepared me," and this rendering has been adopted by the apostle, various ways have been resorted to of explaining the fact that the translators of the Septuagint rendered it in this manner, none of which are entirely free from difficulty. Some critics, as Cappell, Ernesti, and others, have endeavoured to show that it is probable that the Septuagint reading in Ps 40:6, was— *wtion kathrtisw moi* "my ear thou hast prepared;" that is, for obedience. But of this there is no proof, and indeed it is evident that the apostle quoted it as if it were *swma*, *body*. See Heb 5:10. It is probably altogether impossible now to explain the reason why the translators of the Septuagint rendered the phrase as they did; and this remark may be extended to many other places of their version. It is to be admitted here, beyond all doubt, whatever consequences may follow,

(1.) that their version does not accord with the Hebrew;

(2.) that the apostle has quoted their version as it stood, without attempting to correct it;

(3.) that his use of the passage is designed, to some extent at least, as *proof* of what he was demonstrating. The leading idea, the important and essential point in the argument, is, indeed, not that *a body was prepared*, but that *He came to do the will of God*; but still it is clear that the apostle meant to lay some stress on the fact that a body had been prepared for the Redeemer. Sacrifice and offering, by the bodies of lambs and goats, were not what was required; but, instead of that, the Messiah came to do the will of God by offering a more perfect sacrifice, and in accomplishing that it was necessary that he should be endowed with a body. But on what principle the apostle has quoted a passage to prove this which differs from the Hebrew, I confess I cannot see, nor do any of the explanations offered commend themselves as satisfactory. The only circumstances which seem to furnish any relief to the difficulty are these two—

(1.) that the *main point* in the argument of the apostle was not that "a body had been prepared," but that the Messiah came to do the "will of God," and that the preparation of a body for that was rather an incidental circumstance; and

(2) that the translation by the Septuagint was not a material departure from the scope of the whole Hebrew passage. The *main* thought—that of doing the will of God in the place of offering sacrifice—was still retained; the opening of the ears, i.e., rendering the person attentive and disposed to obey, and the preparing of a body in order to obedience, were not circumstances so unlike as to make it necessary for the apostle to re-translate the whole passage in order to the main end which he had in view. Still, I admit that these considerations do not seem to me to be wholly satisfactory. Those who are disposed to examine the various opinions which have been entertained of this passage may find them in Kuinoel, *in loc*., Rosenmuller, Stuart on the Hebrews, Excursus xx., and Kennicott on Ps 40:7. Kennicott supposes that there has been a change in the Hebrew text, and that instead of the present reading

HEBREW

oznaim, ears, the reading was

HEBREW

oz, guph—then a body; and that these words became united by the error of transcribers, and by a slight change then became as the present copies of the Hebrew text stands. This conjecture is ingenious; and if it were ever allowable to follow a mere conjecture, I should be disposed to do it here. But there is no authority from mss. for any change, nor do any of the old versions justify it, or agree with this, except the Arabic.

{c} "Sacrifice" Ps 40:6-8 {2} "prepared" "thou hast fitted"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 10 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure*. This is not quoted literally from the Psalm, but the sense is retained. The reading there is, "burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required." The quotation by the apostle is taken from the Septuagint, with the change of a single word, which does not materially affect the sense—the word *ouk eudokhsav ouk eudokesas*-" thou hast no pleasure," instead of *ouk hyelhsav ouk ethelesas* "thou dost not will." The idea is, that God had no pleasure in them as compared with obedience. He preferred the latter,

and they could not be made to come in the place of it, or to answer the same purpose. When they were performed with a pure heart, he was doubtless pleased with the offering. As used here in reference to the Messiah, the meaning is, that they would not be what was required of *him*. Such offerings would not answer the end for which he was sent into the world, for that end was to be accomplished only by his being "obedient unto death."

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 10 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Then said I*. I the Messiah. Paul applies this directly to Christ, showing that he regarded the passage in the Psalm as referring to him as the speaker. *Lo, I come*. Come into the world, Heb 10:6. It is not easy to see how this could be applied to David in any circumstance of his life. There was no situation in which he could say that, since sacrifices and offerings were not what was demanded, he *came* to do the will of God in the place or stead of them. The *time* here referred to by the word "*then*" is, when it was manifest that sacrifices and offerings for sin would not answer all the purposes desirable, or when in view of that fact the purpose of the Redeemer is conceived as formed to enter upon a work which would effect what they could not.

In the volume of the book it is written of me. The word here rendered "volume"—*kefaliv*—means, properly, *a little head*; and then *a knob*, and here refers, doubtless, to the *head or knob* of the rod on which the Hebrew manuscripts were rolled. Books were usually so written as to be rolled up; and when they were read they were unrolled at one end of the manuscript, and rolled up at the other as fast as they were read. **See Barnes "Lu 4:17"**.

The rods on which they were rolled had small heads, either for the purpose of holding them or for ornament; and hence the name *head* came metaphorically to be given to the roll or volume. But what volume is here intended? And where is that written which is here referred to if David was the author of the Psalm from which this is quoted, (Ps 40) then the book or volume which was then in existence must have been principally, if not entirely, the five books of Moses, and perhaps the books of Job, Joshua, and Judges, with probably a few of the Psalms. It is most natural to understand this of the Pentateuch, or the five books of Moses, as the word "volume," at that time, would undoubtedly have most naturally suggested that. But plainly, this could not refer to *David himself*, for in what part of the law of Moses, or in any of the volumes then extant, can a reference of this kind be found to David? There is no promise, no intimation that *he* would come "to do the will of God" with a view to effect that which could not be done by the sacrifices prescribed by the Jewish law. The reference of the language, therefore, must be to the Messiah—to some place where it is represented that he would come to effect by his obedience what could not be done by the sacrifices and offerings under the law. But still, in the books of Moses, this language is not *literally* found, and the meaning must be, that this was the language which was there *implied* respecting the Messiah; or this was the substance of the description given of him, that he would come to take the place of those sacrifices, and by his obedience unto death would accomplish what they could not do. They had a reference to him; and it was contemplated, in their appointment, that their inefficiency would be such that there should be felt a necessity for a higher sacrifice, and when he should come they would all be done away. The whole language of the institution of sacrifices, and of the Mosaic economy, was, that a Saviour would hereafter come to do the will of God in making an atonement

for the sin of the world. That there are places in the books of Moses which refer to the Saviour is expressly affirmed by Christ himself, (Joh 5:46) 46,) and by the apostles, (comp. Ac 26:23,) and that the general spirit of the institutions of Moses had reference to him is abundantly demonstrated in this epistle. The meaning here is, "I come to do thy will in making an atonement, for no other offering would expiate sin. That I would do this is the language of the Scriptures which predict my coming, and of the whole spirit and design of the ancient dispensation"

To do thy will, God. This expresses the amount of all that the Redeemer came to do. He came to do the will of God

(1) by perfect obedience to his law, and

(2) by making an atonement for sin—becoming "obedient unto death," Php 2:8. The latter is the principal thought here, for the apostle is showing that sacrifice and offering such as were made under the law would not put away sin, and that Christ came, in contradistinction from them, to make a sacrifice that would be efficacious. Everywhere in the Scriptures it is held out as being the "will of God" that such an atonement should be made. There was salvation in no other way, nor was it possible that the race should be saved unless the Redeemer drank that cup of bitter sorrows. See Mt 26:39. We are not to suppose, however, that it was by mere arbitrary *will* that those sufferings were demanded. There were good *reasons* for all that the Saviour was to endure, though those reasons are not all made known to us.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 10 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Above, when he said*. That is, the Messiah. The word "above" refers here to the former part of he quotation. That is, "having in the former part of what was quoted said that God did not require sacrifices, in the latter part he says that he came to do the will of God in the place of them."

Sacrifice and offering and burnt, offerings, etc. These words are not all used in the Psalm from which the apostle quotes, but the idea is, that the specification there included all kinds of offerings. The apostle dwells upon it because it was important to show that the same remark applied to all the sacrifices which could be offered by man. When the Redeemer made the observation about the inefficacy of sacrifices, he meant that there was none of them which would be sufficient to take away sin.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 10 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Then said he*. In another part of the passage quoted. When he had said that no offering which man could make would avail, then he said that he would come himself.

He taketh away the first. The word "*first*" here refers to sacrifices and offerings, he takes them away; that is, he shows that they are of no value in removing sin. He states their inefficacy, and declares his purpose to abolish them.

That he may establish the second. To wit, the doing of the will of God. The two stand in contrast with each other; and he shows the inefficacy of the former, in order that the necessity for his coming

to do the will of God may be fully seen. If *they* had been efficacious, there would have been no need of his coming to make an atonement.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 10 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *By the which will*. That is, by his obeying God in the manner specified. It is in virtue of his obedience that we are sanctified. The apostle immediately specifies what he means, and furnishes the key to his whole argument, when he says that it was *through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ*. It was not merely his doing the will of God *in general*, but it was the specific thing of offering his body in the place of the Jewish sacrifices. Comp. Php 2:8. Whatever part his personal *obedience* had in our salvation, yet the particular thing here specified is, that it was his doing the will of God by offering himself as a sacrifice for sin that was the means of our sanctification.

We are sanctified. We are made holy. The word here is not confined to the specific work which is commonly called sanctification—or the process of making the soul holy after it is renewed, but it includes *everything* by which we are made holy in the sight of God. It embraces, therefore, justification and regeneration as well as what is commonly known as sanctification. The idea is, that whatever there is in our hearts which is holy, or whatever influences are brought to bear upon us to make us holy, is all to be traced to the fact that the Redeemer became obedient unto death, and was willing to offer his body as a sacrifice for sin.

Through the offering of the body. As a sacrifice. A body just adapted to such a purpose had been prepared for him, Heb 10:5. It was perfectly holy; it was so organized as to be keenly sensitive to suffering; it was the dwelling-place of the incarnate Deity.

Once for all. In the sense that it is not to be offered again. **See Barnes "Heb 9:28"**.

This idea is repeated here because it was very important to be clearly understood, in order to show the contrast between the offering made by Christ, and those made under the law. The object of the apostle is to exalt the sacrifice made by him above those made by the Jewish high priests. This he does by showing that such was the efficacy of the atonement made by him that it did not need to be repeated; the sacrifices made by them, however, were to be renewed every year.

{b} "offering" Heb 9:12

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 10 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *And every Priest standeth daily ministering*. That is, this is done every day. It does not mean literally that *every* priest was daily concerned in offering sacrifices, for they took turns according to their courses, (**See Barnes** "Lu 1:5,) but that this was done each day, and that every priest was to take his regular place in doing it, Nu 28:3. The object of the apostle is to prove, that under the Jewish economy sacrifices were *repeated* constantly, showing their imperfection, but that under the Christian economy the great Sacrifice had been offered once, which was sufficient for all.

And offering oftentimes the same sacrifices. The same sacrifices were offered morning and evening every day.

Which can never take away sins. **See Barnes "Heb 9:9"**; **See Barnes "Heb 10:1"**.

{c} "daily" Nu 28:3 {d} "never take away" Ps 50:8-13 Is 1:11

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 10 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *But this Man*. The Lord Jesus. The word *man* is not in the original here. The Greek is literally "but this;" to wit, this priest. The apostle does not state here whether he was a man, or a being of a higher order, he merely mentions him as *a priest*, in contradistinction from the Jewish priests.

After he had offered one sacrifice for sins. By dying on the cross. This he did but once; this *could* not be repeated; and need not be repeated, for it was sufficient for the sins of the world.

For ever sat down. That is, he sat down then to return no more for the purpose of offering sacrifice for sin. He will no more submit himself to scenes of suffering and death to expiate human guilt.

On the right hand of God. **See Barnes "Mr 16:19"**.

Comp. **See Barnes** "Eph 1:20, and following.

{e} "sat down" Col 3:1

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 10 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *From henceforth expecting*. Or, *waiting*. He *waits* there until this shall be accomplished according to the promise made to him that all things shall be subdued under him. **See Barnes "1Co 15:25"**

and following.

Till his enemies. There is an allusion here to Ps 110:1, where it is said, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." The enemies of the Redeemer are Satan, the wicked of the earth, and all the evil passions of the heart. The idea is, that all things are yet to be made subject to his will —either by a cheerful and cordial submission to his authority, or by being crushed beneath his power. The Redeemer, having performed his great work of redemption by giving himself as a sacrifice on the cross, is represented now as calmly waiting until this glorious triumph is achieved, and this promise is fulfilled. We are not to suppose that he is inactive, or that he takes no share in the agency by which this is to be done, but the meaning is, that he looks to the certain fulfilment of the promise.

His footstool. That is, they shall be thoroughly and completely subdued. The same idea is expressed in 1Co 15:25, by saying that all his enemies shall be put under his feet. The language arose from the custom of conquerors in putting their feet on the necks of their enemies, as a symbol of subjection. See Jos 10:24; **See Barnes** "Isa 26:5, **See Barnes "Isa 26:6"**.

{e} "enemies" Col 3:1

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 10 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *For by one offering*. By offering himself once on the cross. The Jewish priest offered his sacrifices often, and still they did not avail to put away sin; the Saviour made one sacrifice, and it was sufficient for the sins of the world.

He hath perfected for ever, He hath laid the foundation of the eternal perfection. The offering is of such a character that it secures their final freedom from sin, and wilt make them for ever holy. It cannot mean that those for whom he died are made at once perfectly holy, for that is not true; but the idea is, that the offering was complete, and did not need to be repeated; and that it was of such a nature as entirely to remove the penalty due to sin, and to lay the foundation for their final eternal holiness. The offerings made under the Jewish law were so defective that there was a necessity for repeating them every day; the offering made by the Saviour was so perfect that it needed not to be repeated, and that it secured the complete and final salvation of those who avail themselves of it.

Them that are sanctified. Those who are made holy by that offering. It does not mean that they are as yet *wholly* sanctified, but that they have been brought under the influence of that gospel which sanctifies and saves. Heb 2:11 9:13. The doctrine taught in this verse is, that all those who are, in any measure; sanctified, will be perfected for ever. It is not a temporary work which has been begun in their souls, but one which is designed to be carried forward to perfection. In the atonement made by the Redeemer there is the foundation laid for their eternal perfection, and it was with reference to that, that it was offered. Respecting this work and the consequences of it, we may remark, that there is

(1.) perfection in its nature, it being of such a character that it needs not to be repeated;

(2.) there is perfection in regard to the pardon of sin—*all* past sins being forgiven to those who embrace it, and being *for ever* forgiven; and

(3.) there is *to be* absolute perfection, for them for ever. They *will* be made perfect at some future period, and when that shall take place it will be to continue for ever and ever.

{g} "perfected "Heb 10:9"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 10 - Verse 15

Verses 15-17. *Whereof the Holy Ghost is a witness to us*. That is, the Holy Ghost is a proof of the truth of the position here laid down —that the one atonement made by the Redeemer lays the foundation for the eternal perfection of all who are sanctified. The witness of the Holy Ghost here referred to is that which is furnished in the Scriptures, and not any witness in ourselves. Paul immediately makes his appeal to a passage of the Old Testament, and he thus shows his firm conviction that the Scriptures were inspired by the Holy Ghost.

For after that he had said before. The apostle here appeals to a passage which he had before quoted, Jer 31:33,34. See it explained in **See Barnes "Heb 8:8";** Heb 8:9-12.

The object of the quotation in both cases is, to show that the new covenant contemplated the formation of a *holy* character or a holy people. It was not to set apart a people who should be externally holy only, or be distinguished for conformity to external rites and ceremonies, but who

should be holy in heart and in life. There has been some difficulty felt by expositors in ascertaining what corresponds to the expression "after that he had said before," and some have supposed that the phrase "then he saith" should be understood before Heb 10:17. But probably the apostle means to refer to two distinct parts of the quotation from Jeremiah, the former Of which expresses the fact that God meant to make a new covenant with his people, and the latter expresses the nature of that covenant, and it is particularly to the latter that he refers. This is seen more distinctly in the passage in Jeremiah than it is in our translation of the quotation in this epistle. The meaning is this, "The Holy Ghost first said, this is the covenant that I will make with them:" and having said this, he then added, "After those days, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." The first part of it expresses the purpose to form such a covenant; the latter states what that covenant would be. The quotation is not, indeed, literally made, but the sense is retained. Comp. **See Barnes "Heb 8:8-12"**.

Still, it may be asked how this quotation *proves* the point for which it is adduced—that the design of the atonement of Christ was "to perfect for ever them that are sanctified?" In regard to this, we may observe,

(1.) that it was declared that those who were interested in it would be *holy*, for the law would be in their *hearts* and written on their minds; and,

(2.) that this would be *entire* and *perpetual*. Their sins would be *wholly* forgiven; they would *never* be remembered again—and thus they would be "perfected for ever."

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 10 - Verse 16

No Barnes text on this verse.

{a} "this is the covenant" Jer 31:33,34

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 10 - Verse 17

Verse 17. **See Barnes on "Heb 10:15"**.

{1} "Their sins" "Some copies have *Then he said, And Their*

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 10 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Now where remission of these is*. Remission or forgiveness of sins; that is, of the sins mentioned in the previous verse.

There is no more offering for sin. If those sins are wholly blotted out, there is no more need of sacrifice to atone for them, any more than there is need to pay a debt again which has been once paid. The idea of Paul is, that in the Jewish dispensation there was a constant repeating of the remembrance of sins by the sacrifices which were offered, but that in reference to the dispensation under the Messiah sin would be entirely cancelled. There would be one great and all-sufficient

sacrifice; and when there was faith in that offering, sin would be absolutely forgiven. If that was the case, there would be no occasion for any further sacrifice for it, and the offering need not be repeated. This circumstance, on which the apostle insists so much, made a very important difference between the new covenant and the old. In the one, sacrifices were offered every day; in the other, the sacrifice once made was final and complete: in the one case, there was no such forgiveness, but that the offender was constantly reminded of his sins by the necessity of the repetition of sacrifice; in the other, the pardon was so complete that all dread of wrath was taken away, and the sinner might look up to God as calmly and joyfully as if he had never been guilty of transgression.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 10 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Having therefore, brethren*. The apostle, in this verse, enters on the hortatory part of his epistle, which continues to the end of it. He had gone into an extensive examination of the Jewish and Christian systems; he had compared the Founders of the two—Moses and the Son of God—and shown how far superior the latter was to the former; he had compared the Christian great High Priest with the Jewish high priest, and shown his superiority; he had compared the sacrifices under the two dispensations, and showed that in all respects the Christian sacrifice was superior to the Jewish —that it was an offering that cleansed from sin; that it was sufficient when once offered, without being repeated, while the Jewish offerings were only typical, and were unable to put away sin; and he had shown that the great High Priest of the Christian profession had opened a way to the mercy-seat in heaven, and was himself now seated there; and having shown this, he now exhorts Christians to avail themselves fully of all their advantages, and to enjoy, to the widest extent, all the privileges now conferred on them. One of the first of these benefits was, that they had now free access to the mercy-seat.

Boldness to enter into the holiest. Marg. *liberty*. The word rendered *boldness*— *parrhsian*— properly means, *boldness of speech*, or freedom, where one speaks all that he thinks, **See Barnes "Ac 4:13"**; and then it means boldness in general, license, authority, pardon. Here the idea is, that before Christ died and entered into heaven, there was no such access to the throne of grace as man needed. Man had no offering which he could bring that would make him acceptable to God. But now the way was open. Access was free for all, and all might come with the utmost freedom. The word *holiest* here is taken from the holy of holies in the temple, **See Barnes** "Heb 9:3, and is there applied to heaven, of which that was the emblem. The entrance into the most holy place was forbidden to all but the high priest; but now access to the real "holy of holies" was granted to all, in the name of the great High Priest of the Christian profession.

By the blood of Jesus. The blood of Jesus is the *means* by which this access to heaven is procured. The Jewish high priest entered the holy of holies with the blood of bullocks and of rams, **See Barnes "Heb 9:7"**; but the Saviour offered his own blood, and that became the means by which we may have access to God.

{2} "boldness" "liberty" {b} "holiest" Heb 9:8,12

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 10 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *By a new and living way*. By a new *method or manner*. It was a mode of access that was till then unknown. No doubt many were saved before the Redeemer came, but the method by which they approached God was imperfect and difficult. The word which is here rendered *new —prosfaton—* occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It properly means *slain, or killed thereto*; i.e. *newly killed, just dead*; and then *fresh, recent. Passow*. It does not so much convey the idea that it is new in the sense that it had never existed before, as new in the sense that it is recent, or fresh. It was a way which was *recently* disclosed, and which had an the freshness of novelty. It is called a "*living* way," because it is a method that imparts life, or because it leads to life and happiness. Doddridge renders it "*ever living way*," and supposes, in accordance with the opinion of Dr. Owen, that the allusion is to the fact that under the old dispensation the blood was to be offered as soon,as it was shed, and that it could not be offered when it was cold and coagulated. The way by Christ was, however, always open. His blood was, as it were, always *warm*, and as if it had been recently shed. This interpretation seems to derive some support from the word which is rendered "new." See above. The word living, also, has often the sense of perennial, or perpetual, as when applied to a fountain always running, in opposition to a pool that dries up, **See Barnes** "Joh 4:10, and the new way to heaven may be called living in all these respects. It is a way that conducts *to* life. It is *ever-living*—as if the blood which was shed always retained the freshness of that which is flowing from tho vein. And it is perpetual and constant—-like a fountain that always flows—for it is by a sacrifice whose power is perpetual and unchanging.

Which he hath consecrated for us. Marg. "or, *new made*." The word here used means, properly, *to renew*, and then to initiate, to consecrate, to sanction. The idea is, that he has dedicated this way for our use; as if a temple or house were set apart for our service. It is a path consecrated by him for the service and salvation of man; a way of access to the eternal sanctuary for the sinner which has been set apart by the Redeemer for this service alone.

Through the veil, that is to say, his flesh. The Jewish high priest entered into the most holy place through the veil that divided the holy from the most holy place. That entrance was made by his drawing the veil aside, and thus the interior sanctuary was laid open. But there has been much difficulty felt in regard to the sense of the expression here used. The plain meaning of the expression is, that the way to heaven was opened by means or through the veil that is, of his body or through the medium of the flesh of Jesus; sacrificed for sin, as the most holy place in the temple was entered by means or through the medium of the veil. We are not to suppose, however, that the apostle meant to say there was, *in all respects*, a resemblance between the veil and the flesh of Jesus, nor that the veil was in any manner typical of his body, but there was a resemblance *in the respect under considerations*—-to wit, in the fact that the holy place was rendered accessible by withdrawing the veil, and that heaven was rendered accessible through the slain body of Jesus. The idea is, that there is by means both of the veil of the temple, and of the body of Jesus, *a medium of access to God*. God dwelt in the most holy place in the temple behind the veil by visible symbols, and was to be approached by removing the veil; and God dwells in heaven, in the most holy place there, and is to be approached only through the offering of the body of Christ. Prof. Stuart supposes that the point of the comparison may be, that the veil of the temple operated as a screen to hide the visible symbol of the presence of God from human view, and that in like manner the body of Jesus might be regarded as a "kind of temporary, tabernacle, or *veil* of the Divine nature which dwelt within

him," and that "as the veil of the tabernacle concealed the glory of Jehovah in the holy of belies, from the view of men, so Christ's flesh or body screened or concealed the higher nature from our view, which dwelt within this veil, as God did within the veil of the temple." See this and other views explained at length in the larger commentaries. It does not seem to me to be necessary to attempt to carry out the point of the comparison in all respects. The simple idea which seems to have been in the mind of the apostle was, that the veil of the temple and the body of Jesus were alike *in this respect*, that they were *the medium of access to God*. It is by the offering of the body of Jesus; by the fact that he was clothed with flesh, and that in his body he made all atonement for sin, and that with his body raised up from the dead he has ascended to heaven, that we have access now to the throne of mercy.

{e} "living way" Joh 14:6 {3} "consecrated" "new made"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 10 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *And having an High Priest over the house of God*. Over the spiritual house of God; that is, the church. Comp. **See Barnes "Heb 3:1-6"**.

Under the Jewish dispensation there was a great high priest, and the same is true under the Christian dispensation, This the apostle had shown at length in the previous part of the epistle. The idea here is, that as under the former dispensation it was regarded as a privilege that the people of God might have access to the mercy-seat by means of the high priest, so it is true, in a much higher sense, that we may now have access to God through our greater and more glorious High Priest.

{a} "High Priest" Heb 4:14-16

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 10 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Let us draw near with a true heart*. In prayer and praise; in every act of confidence and of worship. A sincere heart was required under the ancient dispensation; it is always demanded of men when they draw near to God to worship him. See Joh 4:23,24. Every form of religion which God has revealed requires the worshippers to come with pure and holy hearts.

In full assurance of faith. See the word here used explained in the **See Barnes "Heb 6:11"**.

The "full assurance of faith" means *unwavering confidence*; a fullness of faith in God which leaves no room for doubt. Christians are permitted to come thus because God has revealed himself through the Redeemer as in every way deserving their fullest confidence. No one approaches God in an acceptable manner who does not come to him in this manner. What parent would feel that a child came with any right feelings to ask a favour of him who had not the *fullest confidence* in him?

Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience. By the blood of Jesus. This was fitted to make the conscience pure. The Jewish cleansing or sprinkling with blood related only to that which was external, and could not make the conscience perfect, Heb 9:9; but the Sacrifice offered by the Saviour was designed to give peace to the troubled mind, and to make it pure and holy. An "evil conscience" is a consciousness of evil, or a conscience oppressed with sin; that is, a conscience

that accuses of guilt. We are made free from such a conscience through the atonement of Jesus, not because we become convinced that we have not committed sin, and not because we are led to suppose that our sins are less than we had otherwise supposed—for the reverse of both these is true—but because our sins are forgiven, and since they are freely pardoned they no longer produce remorse and the fear of future wrath. A child that has been forgiven may feel that he has done very wrong, but still he will not be then overpowered with distress in view of his guilt, or with the apprehension of punishment.

And our bodies washed with pure water. It was common for the Jews to wash themselves, or to perform various ablutions in their services. See Ex 29:4 30:19-21, 40:12 Le 6:27, 13:54,58, 14:8,9, 15:16 16:4,24; Le 22:6. Comp. **See Barnes "Mr 7:3"**.

The same thing was also true among the heathen. There was usually, at the entrance of their temples, a vessel placed with consecrated water, in which, as Pliny says, (Hist. Nat. Lib. xv. c. 30,) there was a branch of laurel placed with which the priests sprinkled all who approached for worship. It was necessary that this water should be pure, and it was drawn fresh from wells or fountains for the purpose. Water from pools and ponds was regarded as unsuitable, as was also even the purest water of the fountain, if it had stood long. AEneas sprinkled himself in this manner, as he was about to enter the invisible world, (2En. vi. 635,) with fresh water. Porphyry says that the Essenes were accustomed to clean so themselves with the purest water. Thus Ezekiel also says, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean." Sea-water was usually regarded as best adapted to this purpose, as the salt was supposed to have a cleansing property. The Jews who dwelt near the sea were thence accustomed, as Aristides says, to wash their hands every morning, on this account, in the sea-water. Potter's Gr. Archae. i. 222. Rosenmuller, Alte and Neue Morgenland, *in loc*. It was from the heathen custom of placing a vessel with consecrated water at the entrance of their temples, that the Roman Catholic custom is derived in their churches of placing "holy water" near the door, that those who worship there may "cross themselves." In accordance with the Jewish custom, the apostle says, that it was proper that under the Christian dispensation we should approach God having performed an act emblematic of purity by the application of water to the body. That there is an allusion to baptism is clear. The apostle is comparing the two dispensations, and his aim is to show that in the Christian dispensation there was everything which was regarded as valuable and important in the old. So he had shown it to have been in regard to the fact that there was a Lawgiver; that there was a great High Priest; and that there were sacrifices and ordinances of religion in the Christian dispensation as well as the Jewish. In regard to each of these, he had shown that they existed in the Christian religion in a much more valuable and important sense than under the ancient dispensation. In like manner was true, that *as they* were required to come to the service of God, having performed various ablutions to keep the body pure, so it was with Christians. Water was applied to the Jews as emblematic of purity, and Christians came, having had it applied to them also in baptism, as a symbol of holiness. It is not necessary, in order to see the force of this, to suppose that water had been applied to the *whole* of the body, or that they had been completely *immersed*, for all the force of the reasoning is retained by the supposition that it was a mere *symbol or emblem* of purification. The whole stress of the argument here turns, not on the fact that *the body had been washed all over*, but that the worshipper had been qualified for the spiritual service of the Most High in connexion with an appropriate emblematic ceremony. The *quantity* of water used for this is not a material point, any more than the *quantity* of oil was in the ceremony of inaugurating kings and priests. This was not done in the Christian dispensation by washing the body *frequently*,

as in the ancient, system, nor even necessarily by washing the *whole* body—which would no more contribute to the purity of *the heart* than by application of water to any part of the body; but by the fact that water had been used as emblematic of the purifying of the soul. The passage before us proves, undoubtedly,

(1.) that water should be applied under the new dispensation as an ordinance of religion; and

(2) that *pure* water should be used— for that only is a proper emblem of the purity of the heart.

{b} "full assurance" Eph 3:12 {c} "sprinkled" Eze 36:25

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 10 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering*. To secure this was one of the leading designs of this epistle, and hence the apostle adverts to it so frequently. It is evident that those to whom he wrote were suffering persecution, Heb 12 and that there was great danger that they would apostatize. As these persecutions came probably from the Jews, and as the aim was to induce them to return to their former opinions, the object of the apostle is to show that there was in the Christian scheme every advantage of which the Jews could boast; everything pertaining to the dignity of the great Founder of the system, the character of the High Priest, and the nature and value of the sacrifices offered; and that all this was possessed far more abundantly in the permanent Christian system than in that which was typical in its character, and which were designed soon to vanish away. In view of all this, therefore, the apostle adds that they should hold fast the profession of their faith, without being shaken by their trials, or by the arguments of their enemies. We have the same inducement to hold fast the profession of our faith—for it is the same religion still; we have the same Saviour, and there is held out to us still the same prospect of heaven.

For he is faithful that promised. To induce them to hold fast their profession, the apostle adds this additional consideration. God, who had promised eternal life to them, was faithful to all that he had said. he arrangement here is,

(1.) That since *God* is so faithful to us, we ought to be faithful to him.

(2.) The fact that *he* is faithful is an encouragement to us. We are dependent on him for grace to hold fast our profession. If he were to prove unfaithful, we should have no strength to do it. But this he never does; and we may be assured that *all* that he has promised he will perform. To the service of *such* a God, therefore, we should adhere without wavering. Comp. **See Barnes "1Co 10:13"**.

{a} "he is faithful" 1Th 5:24

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 10 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *And let us consider one another*. Let us so regard the welfare of others as to endeavour to excite them to persevere in the Christian life. The idea is, that much might be done in securing perseverance and fidelity by mutual, kind exhortation. They were not to be selfish; they were not to regard their own interests only, (**See Barnes "Php 2:4"**;) they were to have a kind sympathy in the concerns of each other. They had, as Christians have now, the Same duties to perform, and the

same trials to meet, and they should strengthen each other in their trials, and encourage them in their work.

To provoke unto love. We use the word *provoke* now in a somewhat different sense, as meaning to offend, to irritate, to incense; but its original meaning is, *to arouse, to excite, to call into action*, and it is used in this sense here. The Greek is, literally, "unto a paroxysm of love" *eiv paroxusmon*; the word *paroxysm* meaning *excitement or impulse*; and the idea is, that they were to endeavour to *arouse or excite* each other to the manifestation of love. The word is that which properly expresses *excitement*, and means that Christians should endeavour to excite each other. Men are sometimes afraid of excitement in religion. But there is no danger that Christians will ever be *excited* to love each other too much, or to perform too many *good works*.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 10 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together*. That is, for purposes of public worship. Some expositors have understood the word here rendered *assembling—episunagwghn*—as meaning *the society of Christians*, or the church; and they have supposed that the object of the apostle here is, to exhort them not to apostatize from the church. The arguments for this opinion may be seen at length in Kuinoel, *in loc*. But the more obvious interpretation is that which is commonly adopted, that it refers to public worship. The Greek word (the noun) is used nowhere else in the New Testament, except in 2Th 2:1, where it is rendered *gathering together*. The verb is used in Mt 23:3 Mt 24:31 Mr 1:33, 13:27 Lu 12:1, 13:34, in all which places it is rendered *gathered together*. It properly means *an act of assembling*, or *a gathering together*, and is nowhere used in the New Testament in the sense of an assembly, or the church. The command, then, here is, *to meet together* for the worship of God, and it is enjoined on Christians as an important duty to do it. It is *implied*, also, that there is blame or fault where this is "neglected."

As the manner of some is. *Why* those here referred to neglected public worship is not specified. It may have been from such causes as the following:

(1.) Some may have been deterred by the fear of persecution, as those who were thus assembled would be more exposed to danger than others.

(2.) Some may have neglected the duty because they felt no interest in it—as professing Christians now sometimes do.

(3.) It is possible that some may have had doubts about the necessity and propriety of this duty, and on that account may have neglected it.

(4.) Or it may perhaps have been, though we can hardly suppose that this reason existed, that some may have neglected it from a cause which now sometimes operates—from dissatisfaction with a preacher, or with some member or members of the church, or with some measure in the church. Whatever were the reasons, the apostle says that they should not be allowed to operate, but that Christians should regard it as a sacred duty to meet together for the worship of God. None of the causes above suggested should deter men from this duty. With all who bear the Christian name—with all who expect to make advances in piety and religious knowledge, it should be regarded as a sacred duty to assemble together for public worship. Religion is social; and our graces are to be strengthened and invigorated by waiting together on the Lord. There is an obvious propriety

that men should assemble together for the worship of the Most High, and no Christian can hope that his graces will grow, or that he can perform his duty to his Maker, without uniting thus with those who love the service of God.

But exhorting one another. That is, in our assembling together—a direction which proves that it is proper for Christians to exhort one another when they are gathered together for public worship. Indeed, there is reason to believe that the preaching in the early Christian assemblies partook much of the character of mutual exhortation.

And so much the more as ye see the day approaching. The term "day" here refers to some event which was certainly anticipated, and which was so well understood by them that no particular explanation was necessary. It was also some event that was expected soon to occur, and in relation to which there were indications then of its speedily arriving. If it had not been something which was expected soon to happen, the apostle would have gone into a more full explanation of it, and would have stated at length what these indications were. There has been some diversity of opinion about what is here referred to, many commentators supposing that the reference is to the anticipated second coming of the Lord Jesus to set up a visible kingdom on the earth; and others to the fact-that the period was approaching when Jerusalem was to be destroyed, and when the services of the temple were to cease. So far as the *language* is concerned, the reference might be to either event, for the word a "day" is applied to both in the New Testament. The word would properly be understood as referring to an expected period, when something *remarkable* was to happen, which ought to have an important influence on their character and conduct. In support of the opinion that it refers to the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, and not to the coming of the Lord Jesus to set up a visible kingdom, we may adduce the following considerations:

(1.) The term used-"day"—will as properly refer to that event as to any other. It is a word which would be likely to suggest the idea of distress, calamity, or judgment of some kind, for so it is often used in the Scriptures. Comp. Ps 37:13 1Sa 26:10; Jer 30:7 Eze 21:15; **See Barnes "Isa 2:12"**.

(2.) Such a period was distinctly predicted by the Saviour, and the indications which would precede it were clearly pointed out, see Mt 24. That event was then so near, that the Saviour said that "that generation would not pass" until the prediction had been fulfilled, Mt 24:34.

(3.) The destruction of Jerusalem was an event of great importance to the Hebrews, and to the Hebrew Christians to whom this epistle was directed; and it might be reasonable to suppose that the apostle Paul would refer to it.

(4.) It is not improbable that, at the time of writing this epistle, there *were* indications that that day was approaching. Those indications were of so marked a character, that when the time approached they could not well be mistaken, (see Mt 24:6-12,24,26) , and it is probable that they had already begun to appear.

(5.) There *were* no such indications that the Lord Jesus was about to appear to set up a visible kingdom. It was not *a fact* that that was about to occur, as the result has shown; nor is there any positive proof that the mass of Christians were expecting it, and no reason to believe that the apostle Paul had any such expectation. See 2Th 2:1-5.

(6.) The expectation that the destruction of Jerusalem was referred to, and was about to occur, was just that which might be expected to produce the effect on the minds of the Hebrew Christians which the apostle here refers to. It was to be a solemn and fearful event. It would be a remarkable manifestation of God. It would break up the civil and ecclesiastical polity of the nation, and would scatter them abroad. It would require all the exercise of their patience and faith in passing through

these scenes. It might be expected to be a time when many would be tempted to apostatize; and it was proper, therefore, to exhort them to meet together, and to strengthen and encourage each other as they saw that that event was drawing near. The argument, then, would be this: The danger against which the apostle desired to guard those to whom he was writing was that of apostasy from Christianity to Judaism. To preserve them from this, he urges the fact that the downfall of Judaism was near, and that every indication which they saw of its approach ought to be allowed to influence them, and to guard them from that danger. It is for reasons such as these that I suppose the reference here is not to the "second advent" of the Redeemer, but to the approaching destruction of Jerusalem. At the same time, it is not improper to use this passage as an exhortation to Christians to fidelity when they shall see that the end of the world draws nigh, and when they shall perceive indications that the Lord Jesus is about to come. And so of death. We should be the more diligent when we see the indications that the great Messenger is about to come to summon us into the presence of our final Judge. And who does not know that he is approaching him with silent and steady footsteps, and that even now he may Be very near? Who can fail to see himself indications that the time approaches when he must lie down and die? Every pang that we suffer should remind us of this, and when the hair changes its hue, and time makes furrows in the cheek, and the limbs become feeble, we should regard them as premonitions that he is coming, and should be more diligent as we see that he is drawing near.

{b} "ye see the day" Ro 13:11

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 10 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth*. If, after we are converted and become true Christians, we should apostatize, it would be impossible to be recovered again, for there would be no other sacrifice for sin; no way by which we could be saved. This passage, however, like Heb 6:4-6, has given rise to much difference of opinion. But that the above is the correct interpretation seems evident to me from the following considerations:

(1.) It is the natural and obvious interpretation, such as would occur probably to ninety nine readers in a hundred, if there were no theory to support, and no fear that it would conflict with some other doctrine.

(2.) It accords with the scope of the epistle, which is to keep those whom the apostle addressed from returning again to the Jewish religion, under the trials to which they were subjected.

(3.) It is in accordance with the fair meaning of the language—the words, "after that we have received the knowledge of the truth," referring more naturally to true conversion than to any other state of mind.

(4.) The sentiment would not be correct if it referred to any but real Christians. It would not be true that one who had been somewhat enlightened, and who then sinned "wilfully," must look on fearfully to the judgment, without a possibility of being saved. There are multitudes of cases where such persons are saved. They *willfully* resist the Holy Spirit; they strive against him; they for a long time refuse to yield, but they are brought again to reflection, and are led to give their hearts to God.

(5.) It is true, and always will be true, that *if a* sincere Christian should apostatize, he could never be converted again. **See Barnes "Heb 6:4-6"**.

The reasons are obvious. He would have tried the *only* plan of salvation, and it would have failed. He would have embraced the Saviour, and there would not have been efficacy enough in his blood to keep him, and there would be no more powerful Saviour, and no more efficacious blood of atonement. He would have renounced the Holy Spirit, and would have shown that *his* influences were not effectual to keep him, and there would be no other agent of greater power to renew and save him after he had apostatized. For these reasons it seems clear to me that this passage refers to true Christians, and that the doctrine here taught is, that if such an one should apostatize, he must look forward only to the terrors of the judgment, and to final condemnation. Whether this, *in fact*, ever occurs, is quite another question. In regard to that inquiry, see **See Barnes** "Heb 6:4, and following. If this view be correct, we may add, that the passage should not be regarded as applying to what is commonly known as the "sin against the Holy Ghost," or "the unpardonable sin." The word rendered "wilfully"—*ekousiwv* — occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, except in 1Pe 5:2, where it is rendered *willingly*—" taking the oversight thereof [of the church] not by constraint, but *willingly*". It properly means, *willingly*, *voluntarily, of our own accord*, and applies to cases where no constraint is used. It is not to be construed here *strictly*, or *metaphysically*, for all sin is voluntary, or is committed willingly, but must refer to a *deliberate act*, where a man MEANS to abandon his religion, and to turn away from God. If it were to be taken with metaphysical exactness, it would demonstrate that every Christian who ever does *anything* wrong, no matter how small, would be lost. But this cannot, from the nature of the case, be the meaning. The apostle well knew that Christians *do* commit such sins, (see **See Barnes "Ro 7:1"**) and following and his object here is not to set forth the danger of such sins, but to guard Christians against apostasy from their religion. In the Jewish law, as is indeed the case everywhere, a distinction is made between sins of *oversight, inadvertence, or ignorance*, (Le 4:2,13,22,27 5:15; Nu 15:24,27-29.

Comp. Ac 3:17 17:30,) and sins of *presumption*; sins that are *deliberately and intentionally* committed. See Ex 21:14 Nu 15:30; De 17:12 Ps 19:13.

The apostle here has reference, evidently, to such a distinction, and means to speak of a decided and deliberate purpose to break away from the restraints and obligations of the Christian religion.

There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins. Should a man do this, there is no sacrifice for sins which could save him. He would have rejected deliberately the only atonement made for sin, and there will be no other made. It is as if a man should reject the only medicine that could heal him, or push away the only boat that could save him when shipwrecked. See **See Barnes "Heb 6:6"**.

The sacrifice made for sin by the Redeemer is never to be repeated, and if that is deliberately rejected, the soul must be lost.

{a} "if we sin willfully" Nu 15:30 Heb 6:4

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 10 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *But a certain fearful looking for of judgment*. The word "*certain*" here does not mean *fixed, sure, inevitable*, as our translation would seem to imply. The Greek is the same as "a *tiv* fearful expectation," etc. So it is rendered by Tindall. The idea is, that if there was voluntary apostasy after having embraced the Christian religion, there *could* be nothing but an expectation of the judgment to come. There could be no other hope but that through the gospel, and as this would

have been renounced, it would follow that the soul must perish. The "fearful apprehension" or expectation here does not refer so much to what would be *in the mind itself*, or what would be experienced, as to what *must follow*. It might be that the person referred to would have no realizing sense of all this, and still his situation be that of one who had nothing to expect but the terrors of the judgment to come.

And fiery indignation. Fire is often used in the Scriptures as an emblem of fierce punishment. The idea is, that the person referred to could expect nothing but the wrath of God.

Which shall devour the adversaries. All who become the adversaries or enemies of the Lord. Fire is often said to *devour, or consume*, and the meaning here is, that those who should thus become the enemies of the Lord must perish.

{b} "fiery indignation" Zep 1:18 3:18

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 10 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *He that despised Moses' law*. That is, the apostate from the religion of Moses. It does not mean that in *all cases* the offender against the law of Moses died without mercy, but only where offences were punishable with death, and probably the apostle had in his eye particularly the case of apostasy from the Jewish religion. The subject of apostasy from the Christian religion is particularly under discussion here and it was natural to illustrate this by a reference to a similar case under the law of Moses. The law in regard to apostates from the Jewish religion was positive. There was no reprieve, De 13:6-10.

Died without mercy. That is, there was no provision for pardon.

Under two or three witnesses. It was the settled law among the Hebrews, that in all cases involving capital punishment, two or three witnesses should be necessary. That is, no one was to be executed unless two persons certainly bore testimony, and it was regarded as important, if possible, that *three* witnesses should concur in the statement. The object was the security of the accused person if innocent. The *principle* in the law was, that it was to be presumed that two or three persons would be much less likely to conspire to render a false testimony than one would be, and that two or three would not be likely to be deceived in regard to a fact which they had observed.

{c} "that despised" De 17:2-13

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 10 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy*. That is, he who renounces Christianity *ought* to be regarded as deserving a much severer punishment than the man who apostatized from the Jewish religion, and if he *ought* to be so regarded he will be—for God will treat every man as he ought to be treated. This must refer to future punishment, for the severest punishment was inflicted on the apostate from the Jewish religion which *can be* in this world—*death*; and yet the apostle here says that a severer punishment than that would be deserved by him who should apostatize from the Christian faith. The *reasons* why so much severer punishment

would be deserved are such as these: The Author of the Christian system was far more exalted than Moses, the founder of the Jewish system; he had revealed more important truths; he had increased and confirmed the motives to holiness; he had furnished more means for leading a holy life; he had given himself as a sacrifice to redeem the soul from death; and he had revealed with far greater clearness the truth that there is a heaven of glory and of holiness. He who should apostatize from the Christian faith, the apostle goes on to say, would also be guilty of the most aggravated crime of which man could be guilty —the crime of trampling under foot the Son of God, of showing contempt for his holy blood, and despising the Spirit of grace.

Who hath trodden under foot the Son of God. This language is taken either from the custom of ancient conquerors who were accustomed to tread on the necks of their enemies in token of their being subdued, or from the fact that men tread on that which they despise and contemn. The idea is, that he who should apostatize from the Christian faith would act *as if* he should indignantly and contemptuously trample on God's only Son. What crime could be more aggravated than this?

And hath counted the blood of the covenant. The blood of Jesus by which the new covenant between God and man was ratified. **See Barnes "Mt 9:16-20"**.

Comp. **See Barnes "Mt 26:28"**.

Wherewith he was sanctified. Made holy, or set apart to the service of God. The word *sanctify* is used in both these senses. Prof. Stuart renders it, "by which expiation is made;" and many others, in accordance with this view, have supposed that it refers to the Lord Jesus. But it seems to me that it refers to the person who is here supposed to renounce the Christian religion, or to apostatize from it. The reasons for this are such as these.

(1.) It is the natural and proper meaning of the word here rendered *sanctified*. This word is commonly applied to Christians in the sense that they are made holy. See Ac 20:32 26:18; 1Co 1:2 Jude 1:1.

Comp. Joh 10:36 17:17.

(2.) It is unusual to apply this word to the Saviour. It is true, indeed, that he says, (Joh 17:19,) "for their sakes I sanctify myself," but there is no instance in which he says that he was *sanctified by his own blood*. And where is there an instance in which the word is used as meaning "to make expiation?"

(3.) The supposition that it refers to one who is here spoken of as in danger of apostasy, and not of the Lord Jesus, agrees with the scope of the argument. The apostle is showing the great guilt, and the certain destruction, of one who should apostatize from the Christian religion. In doing this, it was natural to speak of the dishonour which would thus be done to the means which had been used for his sanctification—the blood of the Redeemer. It would be treating it as if it were a common thing, or as if it might be disregarded, like anything else which was of no value.

An unholy thing. Gr. *common*; often used in the sense of unholy. The word is so used because that which was holy was separated from a common to a sacred use. What was *not* thus consecrated was free to all, or was for common use, and hence also the word is used to denote that which is unholy.

And hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace. The Holy Spirit, called the "Spirit of grace," because he confers favour or grace on men. The meaning of the phrase "done despite unto"—*enubrisav* —is, "having reproached, or treated with malignity or contempt?" The idea is, that if they were thus to apostatize, they would by such an act treat the Spirit of God with disdain and contempt. It was by him that they had been renewed; by him that they had been brought to embrace

the Saviour, and to love God; by him that they had any holy feelings or pure desires; and if they now apostatized from religion, such an act would be, in fact, treating the Holy Spirit with the highest indignity. It would be saying that all his influences were valueless, and that they needed no help from him. From such considerations, the apostle shows that *if* a true Christian were to apostatize nothing would remain for him but the terrific prospect of eternal condemnation. He would have rejected the only Saviour; he would have, in fact, treated him with the highest indignity; he would have considered his sacred blood, shed to sanctify men, as a common thing, and would have shown the highest disregard for the only agent who can save the soul—the Spirit of God. How could such an one afterwards be saved? The apostle does not indeed say that any one ever *would* thus apostatize from the true religion, nor is there any reason to believe that such a case ever *has* occurred; but if it *should* occur the doom would be inevitable. How dangerous, then, is every step which would lead to such a precipice! And how strange and unscriptural the opinion held by so many that sincere Christians may "fall away," and be renewed again and again!

{a} "Of how much" Heb 2:3 {b} "Spirit of Grace" Mt 12:31,32

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 10 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *For we know him that hath said*. We know who has said this—God. They knew this because it was recorded in their own sacred books.

Vengeance belongeth unto me, etc. This is found in De 32:35. See it explained in **See Barnes "Ro 12:19"**.

It is there quoted to show that we should not avenge ourselves; it is here quoted to show that God will *certainly* inflict punishment on those who deserve it. If any should apostatize in the manner here referred to by the apostle, they would, says he, be guilty of great and unparalleled wickedness, and would have the certainty that they must meet the wrath of God.

And again, The Lord shall judge his people. This is quoted from De 32:35. That is, he will judge them when they deserve it, and punish them if they ought to be punished. The mere fact that they are his people will not save them from punishment if they deserve it, any more than the fact that one is a beloved child will save him from correction when he does wrong. This truth was abundantly illustrated in the history of the Israelites; and the same great principle would be applied should any sincere Christian apostatize from his religion. He would have before him the certainty of the most fearful and severe of all punishments.

{c} "Vengeance belongeth" De 32:35,36 {d} "again" Ps 135:14

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 10 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*. There may be an allusion here to the request of David to "fall into the hands of the Lord, and not into the hands of men," when it was submitted to him for the sin of numbering the people, whether he would choose seven years of famine, or flee three months before his enemies, or have three days of pestilence, 2Sa 24.

He preferred "to fall into the hands of the Lord," and God smote seventy thousand men by the pestilence. The idea here is, that to fall into the hands of the Lord, after having despised his mercy and rejected his salvation, would be terrific; and the fear of this should deter from the commission of the dreadful crime. The phrase "living God" is used in the Scripture in opposition to *idols*. God always lives; his power is Capable of being always exerted. He is not like the idols of wood or stone which have no life, and which are not to be dreaded, but he always lives. It is the more fearful to fall into his hands because he will live for ever. A man who inflicts punishment will die, and the punishment will come to an end; but God will never cease to exist, and the punishment which he is capable of inflicting to-day he will be capable of inflicting for ever and ever. To fall into his hands, therefore, *for the purpose of punishment*—which is the idea here—is fearful,

(1.) because he has all power, and can inflict just what punishment he pleases;

(2) because he is strictly just, and will inflict the punishment which ought to be inflicted;

(3) because he lives for ever, and can carry on his purpose of punishment to eternal ages; and

(4) because the actual inflictions of punishment which have occurred show what is to be dreaded. So it was on the old world; on the cities of the plain; on Babylon, Idumea, Capernaum, and Jerusalem; and so it is in the world of woe—the eternal abodes of despair, where the worm never dies. All men must, in one sense, fall into his hands. They *must* appear before him. They *must* be brought to his bar when they die. How unspeakably important it is, then, now to to embrace his offers of salvation, that we may not fall into his hands as a righteous avenging Judge, and sink beneath his uplifted arm for ever!

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 10 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *But call to remembrance the former days*. It would seem from this, that at the time when the apostle wrote this epistle they were suffering some severe trials, in which they were in great danger of apostatizing from their religion. It is also manifest that they had on some former occasion endured a similar trial, and had been enabled to bear it with a Christian spirit, and with resignation. The object of the apostle now is to remind them that they were sustained under those trials, and he would encourage them now to similar patience by the recollection of the grace then conferred on them. What was the nature of their former trials, or of that which they were then experiencing, is not certainly known. It would seem probable, however, that the reference in both instances is to some form of persecution by their own countrymen. The meaning is, *that when we have been enabled to pass through trials once, we are to make the remembrance of the grace then bestowed on us a means of supporting and encouraging us in future trials*.

After ye were illuminated. After you became Christians, or were enlightened to see the truth. This phrase, referring here undoubtedly to the fact that they were Christians, may serve to explain the disputed phrase in Heb 6:4. **See Barnes "Heb 6:4"**.

A great fight of afflictions. The language here seems to be taken from the Grecian Games. The word "fight" means, properly, *contention*, *combat*, such as occurred in the public games. Here the idea is, that in the trials referred to they had a great *struggle*; that is, a struggle to maintain their faith without wavering, or against those who would have led them to apostatize from their religion. Some of the circumstances attending this conflict are alluded to in the following verses.

{*} "illuminated" "enlightened"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 10 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *Partly*. That is, your affliction consisted partly in this. The Greek is, "this"—specifying one kind of affliction that they were called to endure.

Whilst ye were made a gazing-stock. *yeatrizomenoi*, —you were made a public spectacle, as if in a theatre; you were held up to public view, or exposed to public scorn when this was done, or in precisely what manner, we are not told. It was not an uncommon thing, however, for the early Christians to be held up to reproach and scorn, and probably this refers to some time when it was done by rulers or magistrates. It was a common custom among the Greeks and Romans to lead criminals, before they were put to death, through the theatre, and thus to expose them to the insults and reproaches of the multitude. See the proofs of this adduced by Kuinoel on this passage. The *language* here seems to have been taken from this custom, though there is no evidence that the Christians to whom Paul refers had been treated in this manner.

By reproaches. Reproached as being the followers of Jesus of Nazareth; probably as weak and fanatical.

And afflictions. Various *sufferings* inflicted on them. They were not merely reviled *in words*, but they were made to endure positive sufferings of various kinds.

And partly, while ye became companions of them that were so used. That is, even when they had not themselves been subjected to these trials, they had sympathized with those who were. They doubtless imparted to them of their property, sent to them relief, and identified themselves with them. It is not known to what particular occasion the apostle here refers. In the next verse he mentions one instance in which they had done this, in aiding *him* when he was a prisoner.

{+} "gazing-stock" "spectacle" {a} "companions" 1Th 2:14 {++} "used" "treated"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 10 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *For ye had compassion of me in my bonds*. You sympathized with me when a prisoner, and sent to my relief. It is not known to what particular instance of imprisonment the apostle here refers. It is probable, however, that it was on some occasion when he was a prisoner in Judea, for the persons to whom this epistle was sent most,probably resided there. Paul was at one time a prisoner more than two years at Cesarea, (Ac 24:27,) and during this time he was kept-in the charge of a centurion, and his friends had free access to him, Ac 24:23. It would seem not improbable that this was the occasion to which he here refers.

And took joyfully the spoiling of your goods. The *plunder* of your property. It was not an uncommon thing for the early Christians to be plundered. This was doubtless a part of the "afflictions" to which the apostle refers in this case. The meaning is, that they yielded their property not only without resistance, but with joy. They, in common with all the early Christians, counted

it a privilege and honour to suffer in the cause of their Master. **See Barnes** "Php 3:10, **See Barnes "Php 4:13"**.

Men may be brought to such a state of mind as to part with their property with joy. It is not usually the case; but religion will enable a man to do it.

Knowing in yourselves. Marg., "or, *that ye have in yourselves*; or, *for yourselves*." The true rendering is, "knowing that ye have for yourselves." It does not refer to any internal knowledge which they had of this, but to the fact that they were assured that they had laid up for themselves a better inheritance in heaven.

That ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Better than any earthly possession, and more permanent. It is

(1.) *better*—it is worth more —it gives more comfort—it makes a man really *richer*. The treasure laid up in heaven is worth more to a man than all the wealth of Croesus. It will give him more solid peace and comfort; will better serve his turn in the various situations in which he may be placed in life, and will do more on the whole to make him happy, is not said here that property is worth *nothing* to a man—which is not true, if he uses it well—but that the treasures of heaven are worth more.

(2.) It is more *enduring*. Property here soon vanishes. Riches take to themselves wings and fly away, or at any rate all that we possess must soon be left. But in heaven all is permanent and secure. No calamity of war, pestilence or famine; no change of times; no commercial embarrassment; no failure of a crop, or a bank; no fraud of sharpers and swindlers, and no act of a pick-pocket or highwayman can take it away; nor does death ever come there to remove the inhabitants of heaven from their "mansions." With this hope, therefore, Christians may cheerfully see their earthly wealth vanish, for they can look forward to their enduring and their better inheritance.

{1} "knowing" "that ye have in yourselves; or, for yourselves" {b} "heaven" Lu 12:33

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 10 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *Cast not away therefore your confidence*. Gr. "your boldness;" referring to their confident hope in God. They were not to cast this away, and to become timid, disheartened, and discouraged. They were to bear up manfully under all their trials, and to maintain a steadfast adherence to God and to his cause. The command is not to "cast this away." Nothing could take it from them if they trusted in God, and it could be lost only by their own neglect or imprudence. Rosenmuller supposes (Alte und Neue Morgenland, *in loc*.) that there may be an allusion here to the disgrace which was attached to the act of a warrior if he cast away his shield, Among the Greeks this was a crime which was punishable with death. Alexander ab Alexand. Gen. Dier. L. ii. c. 13. Among the ancient Germans, Tacitus says, that to lose the shield in battle was regarded as the deepest dishonour, and that those who were guilty of it were not allowed to be present at the sacrifices or in the assembly of the people. Many, says he, who had suffered this calamity, closed their own lives with the halter under the loss of honour. Tac. Germ. c. 6. A similar disgrace would attend the Christian soldier if he should cast away his shield of faith. Comp. **See Barnes "Eph 6:16"**.

Which hath great recompence of reward. It will furnish a reward by the peace of mind which it gives here, and will be connected with the rewards of heaven.

{c} "great recompense" Mt 5:12

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 10 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *For ye have need of patience*. They were then suffering, and in all trials we have need of patience. We have need of it because there is in us so much disposition to murmur and repine; because our nature is liable to sink under sufferings; and because our trials are often protracted. All that Christians can do in such cases is to be *patient*—to lie calmly in the hands of God, and submit to his will day by day, and year by year. See Jas 1:3,4; **See Barnes "Ro 5:4"**.

That after ye have done the will of God. That is, in bearing trials, for the reference here is particularly to afflictions.

Ye might receive the promise. The promised inheritance or reward—in heaven. It is implied here that this promise will not be received unless we are patient in our trials, and the prospect of this reward should encourage us to endure them.

{a} "patience" Lu 21:19

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 10 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *For yet a little while*. There seems to be an allusion here to what the Saviour himself said, "A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me," Joh 16:16. Or more probably, it may be to Hab 2:3: "For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." The idea which the apostle means to convey evidently is, that the time of their deliverance from their trials was not far remote.

And he that shall come will come. The reference here is, doubtless, to the Messiah. But what "coming" of his is referred to is more uncertain. Most probably the idea is, that the Messiah, who was coming to destroy Jerusalem, and to overthrow the Jewish power, (Mt 25,) would soon do this. In this way he would put a period to their persecutions and trials, as the power of the Jewish people to afflict them would be at an end. A similar idea occurs in Lu 21:28, "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; *for your redemption draweth nigh*." **See Barnes "Lu 21:8"**.

The Christians in Palestine were oppressed, reviled, and persecuted by the Jews. The destruction of the city and the temple would put an end to that power, and would be, in fact, the time of deliverance for those who had been persecuted. In the passage before us, Paul intimates that that period was not far distant. Perhaps there were already "signs" of his coming, or indications that he was about to appear; and he therefore urges them patiently to persevere in their fidelity to him during the little time of trial that remained. The same encouragement and consolation may be employed still. To all the afflicted it may be said, that "he that shall come will come" soon. The time of affliction is not long. Soon the Redeemer will appear to deliver his afflicted people from all their sorrows; to remove them from a world of pain and tears; and to raise their bodies from the

dust, and to receive them to mansions where trials are for ever unknown. **See Barnes "Joh 14:3** 1Th 4:13-18.

{b} "yet a little while" Hab 2:3,4 {*} "come" "is to come" {+} "tarry" "delay" iv. 13—18.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 10 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *Now the just shall live by faith*. This is a part of the quotation from Habakkuk, Hab 2:3,4, which was probably commenced in the previous verse. See the passage fully explained **See Barnes "Rom 1:7".**

The meaning in the connexion in which it stands here, in accordance with the sense in which it was used by Habakkuk, is, that the righteous should live by continued confidence in God. They should pass their lives, not in doubt, and fear, and trembling apprehension, but in the exercise of a calm trust in God. In this sense it accords with the scope of what the apostle is here saying, he is exhorting the Christians whom he addressed to perseverance in their religion, even in the midst of many persecutions. To encourage this he says, that it was a great principle that the just—that is, all the pious—ought to live in the constant exercise of faith in God. They should not confide in their own merits, works, or strength. They should exercise constant reliance on their Maker, and he would keep them even unto eternal life. The sense is, that a persevering confidence or belief in the Lord will preserve us amidst all the trials and calamities to which we are exposed.

But if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. This also is a quotation from Hab 2:4, but from the Septuagint, not from the Hebrew. *Why* the authors of the Septuagint thus translated the passage it is impossible now to say. The Hebrew is rendered, in the common version, "Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him;" or more literally, "Behold the scornful; his mind shall not be happy," (Stuart;) or, as Gesenius renders it, "See, he whose soul is unbelieving shall, on this account, be unhappy." The sentiment there is, that the scorner or unbeliever in that day would be unhappy, or would not prosper—,

HEBREW.

The apostle has retained the general sense of the passage; and the idea which he expresses is, that the unbeliever, or he who renounces his religion, will incur the Divine displeasure. He will be a man exposed to the Divine wrath; a man on whom God cannot look but with disapprobation. By this solemn consideration, therefore, the apostle urges on them the importance of perseverance, and the guilt and danger of apostasy from the Christian faith. *If* such a case should occur, no matter what might have been the former condition, and no matter what love or zeal might have been evinced, yet such an apostasy would expose the individual to the certain wrath of God. His former love could not save him, any more than the former obedience of the angels saved them from the horrors of eternal chains and darkness, or than the holiness in which Adam was created saved him and his posterity from the calamities which his apostasy incurred.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 10 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *But we are not of them*, etc. We who are true Christians do not belong to such a class. In this the apostle expresses the fullest conviction that none of those to whom he wrote would apostatize. The case which he had been describing was only a supposable case, not one which he believed would occur. He had only been stating what must happen if a sincere Christian should apostatize. But he did not mean to say that this would occur in regard to them, or in any case. He made a statement of a general principle under the Divine administration, and he designed that this should be a means of keeping them in the path to life. What could be a more effectual means than the assurance that if a Christian should apostatize he must inevitably perish for ever? See the sentiment in this verse illustrated at length in the **See Barnes "Heb 6:4"**

and following.

{c} "draw back" Heb 10:26 {++} "perdition" "Destruction" {&} "believe" "have faith"

REMARKS.

(1.) It is a subject of rejoicing that we are brought under a more perfect system than the ancient people of God were. We have not merely a rude outline—a dim and shadowy sketch of religion, as they had. We are not now required to go before a bloody altar every day, and lead up a victim to be slain. We may come to the altar of God feeling that the great sacrifice has been made, and that the last drop of blood to make atonement has been shed. A pure, glorious, holy body was prepared for the Great Victim, and in that body he did the will of God, and died for our sins, Heb 10:1-10.

(2.) Like that Great Redeemer, let us do the will of God. It may lead us through sufferings, and we may be called to meet trials strongly resembling his. But the will of God is to be done alike in bearing trials, and in prayer and praise. *Obedience* is the great thing which he demands—which he has always sought. When his ancient people led up, in faith, a lamb to the altar, still he preferred obedience to sacrifice; and when his Son came into the world to teach us how to live, and how to die, still the great thing was obedience. He came to illustrate the nature of perfect conformity to the will of God, and he did that by a most holy life, and by the most patient submission to all the trials appointed him in his purpose to make atonement far the sins of the world. Our model, alike in holy living and holy dying, is to be the Saviour; and like him we are required to exercise simple submission to the will of God, Heb 10:1-10.

(3.) The Redeemer looks calmly forward to the time when all his foes will be brought ill submission to his feet, Heb 10:11,12. He is at the right hand of God. His great work on earth is done. He is to suffer no more. He is exalted beyond the possibility of pain and, sorrow; and he is seated now on high, looking to the period when all his foes shall be subdued, and he will be acknowledged as universal Lord.

(4.) The Christian has exalted advantages. He has access to the mercy-seat of God. He may enter by faith into the "holiest" —the very heavens where God dwells. Christ, his great High Priest, has entered there; has sprinkled over the mercy-seat with his blood, and ever lives there to plead his cause. There is no privilege granted to men like that of a near and constant access to the mercy-seat. This is the privilege not of a few; and not to be enjoyed but once in a year, or at distant intervals, but which the most humble Christian possesses, and which may be enjoyed at all times, and in all places. There is not a Christian so obscure, so poor, so ignorant, that he may not come and speak to God; and there is not a situation of poverty, want, or woe, where he may not make his

wants known, with the assurance that his prayers will be heard through faith in the great Redeemer, Heb 10:19,20.

(5.) When we come before God, let our hearts be pure, Heb 10:22. The body has been washed with pure water in baptism, emblematic of the purifying influences of the Holy Spirit. Let the conscience be also pure. Let us lay aside every unholy thought. Our worship will not be acceptable; our prayers will not be heard, if it is not so. "If we regard iniquity in our hearts the Lord will not hear us." No matter though there be a great High Priest; no matter though he have offered a perfect sacrifice for sin; and no matter though the throne of God be accessible to men; yet, if there is in the heart the love of sin—if the conscience is not pure, our prayers will not be heard. Is this not one great reason why our worship is so barren and unprofitable?

(6.) It is the duty of Christians to exhort one another to mutual fidelity, Heb 10:24. We should so far regard the interests of each other as to strive to promote our mutual advance in piety. The church is one. All true Christians are brethren. Each one has an interest in the spiritual welfare of every one who loves the Lord Jesus, and should strive to increase his spiritual joy and usefulness. A Christian brother often goes astray, and needs kind admonition to reclaim him; or he becomes disheartened, and needs encouragement to cheer him on his Christian way.

(7.) Christians should not neglect to assemble together for the worship of God, Heb 10:25. It is a duty which they owe to God to acknowledge him publicly, and their own growth in piety is essentially connected with public worship. It is impossible for a man to secure the advancement of religion in his soul who habitually neglects public worship; and religion will not flourish in any community where this duty is not performed. There are great benefits growing out of the worship of God, which can be secured in no other way, God has made us social beings and he intends that the social principle shall be called into exercise in religion, as well as in other things. We have common wants, and it is proper to present them together before the mercy-seat. We have received common blessings in our creation, in the Providence of God, and in redemption; and it is proper that we should assemble together, and render united praise to our Maker for his goodness. Besides, in any community, the public worship of God does more to promote intelligence, order, peace, harmony, friendship, neatness of apparel, and purity and propriety of intercourse between neighbours, than anything else can, and for which nothing else can be a compensation. Every Christian, and every other man, therefore, is bound to lend his influence in thus keeping up the worship of God, and should always be in his place in the sanctuary. The particular thing in the exhortation of the apostle is, that this should be done *even in the face of persecution*. The early Christians felt so much the importance of this, that we are told they were accustomed to assemble at night, forbidden to meet in public houses of worship, they met in caves, and even when threatened with death they continued to maintain the worship of God. It may be added, that so important is this, that it should be preserved even when the preaching of the gospel is not enjoyed. Let Christians assemble together. Let them pray, and offer praise. Let them read the word of God, and an appropriate sermon. Even *this* will exert an influence of them and on the community of incalculable importance, and will serve to keep the flame of piety burning on the altar of their own hearts, and in the community around them.

(8.) We may see the danger of indulging in any sin, Heb 10:26,27. None can tell to what it may lead. No matter how small and unimportant it may appear at the time, yet if indulged in it will prove that there is no true religion, and will lead on to those greater offences which make shipwreck of the Christian name, and ruin the soul. He that "wilfully" and deliberately sins "after he professes

to have received the knowledge of the truth," shows that his religion is but a name, and that he has never known anything of its power.

(9.) We should guard with sacred vigilance against everything which might lead to apostasy, Heb 10:26-29. If a sincere Christian *should* apostatize from God, he could never be renewed and saved. There would remain no more sacrifice for sins; there is no other Saviour to be provided; there is no other Holy Spirit to be sent down to recover the apostate. Since, therefore, so fearful a punishment *would* follow apostasy from the true religion, we may see the guilt of everything which has a tendency to it. That guilt is to be measured by the fearful consequences which would ensue if it were followed out; and the Christian should, therefore, tremble when he is on the verge of committing any sin whose legitimate tendency would be such a result.

(10.) We may learn, from the views presented in this chapter, (Heb 10:26-29,) the error of those who suppose that a true Christian may fall away and be renewed again and saved. If there is any principle clearly settled in the New Testament, it is, that *if* a sincere Christian should apostatize, *he must perish*. There would be no possibility of renewing him, He would have tried the only religion which saves men, and it would in his case have failed; he would have applied to the only blood which purifies the soul, and it would have been found inefficacious; he would have been brought under the only influence which renews the soul, and that would not have been sufficient to save him. What hope could there be? What would then save him if these would not To what would he apply—to what Saviour, to what blood of atonement, to what renewing and sanctifying agent, if the gospel, and the Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit had all been tried in vain? There are few errors in the community more directly at variance with the express teachings of the Bible than the belief that a Christian may fall away and be again renewed.

(11.) Christians, in their conflicts, their trials, and their temptations, should be strengthened by what is past, Heb 10:32-35. They should remember the days when they were afflicted, and God sustained them; when they were persecuted, and he brought them relief. It is proper also to remember, for their own encouragement now, the spirit of patience and submission which they were enabled to manifest in those times of trial, and the sacrifices which they were enabled to make. They may find in such things evidence that they are the children of God; and they should find, in their past experience, proof that he who has borne them through past trials is able to keep them unto his everlasting kingdom.

(12.) We need patience—but it is only for a little time, Heb 10:36-39. Soon all our conflicts will be over. "He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." He will come to deliver his suffering people from all their trials. He will come to rescue the persecuted from the persecutor; the oppressed from the oppressor; the down-trodden from the tyrant; and the sorrowful and sad from their woes. The coming of the Saviour to each one of the afflicted is the signal of release from sorrow; and his advent at the end of the world will be proof that all the trials of the bleeding and persecuted church are at an end. The time, too, is short before he will appear. In each individual case it is to be but a brief period before he will come to relieve the sufferer from his woes; and, in the case of the church at large, the time is not far remote when the Great Deliverer shall appear to receive "the bride," the church redeemed, to the "mansions" which he has gone to prepare.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11 - Verse 1

CHAPTER XI.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

In the close of the previous chapter the apostle had incidentally made mention of faith, Heb 10:38,39, and said that the just should live by faith. The object of the whole argument in this epistle was to keep those to whom it was addressed from apostatizing, from the Christian religion, and especially from relapsing again into Judaism. They were in the midst of trials, and were evidently suffering some form of persecution, the tendency of which was to expose them to the danger of relapsing. The indispensable means of securing them from apostasy was *faith*; and with a view to show its efficacy in this respect, the apostle goes into an extended account of its nature and effects, occupying this entire chapter. As the persons whom he addressed had been Hebrews, and as the Old Testament contained an account of numerous instances of persons in substantially the same circumstances in which they were, the reference is made, to the illustrious examples of the efficacy of faith in the Jewish history. The object is to show that *faith*, or confidence in the Divine promises, has been in all ages the means of perseverance in the true religion, and consequently of salvation. In this chapter, therefore, the apostle first describes or defines the nature of faith, (Heb 11:1,) and then illustrates its efficacy and power by reference to numerous instances, Heb 11:2-40. In these illustrations he refers to the steady belief which we have that God made the worlds, and then to the examples of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and Rahab in particular, and then to numerous other examples without mentioning their names. The object is to show that there is power in faith to keep tile mind and heart in the midst of trials, and that, having these examples before them, those whom he addressed should continue to adhere steadfastly to the profession of the true religion.

Verse 1. *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for*. On the general nature of faith, **See Barnes "Mr 16:10"**.

The margin here is, "*ground, or confidence*." There is scarcely any verse of the New Testament more important than this, for it states what is the nature of all true faith, and is the only definition of it which is attempted in the Scriptures. Eternal life depends on the existence and exercise of faith, (Mr 16:16,) and hence the importance of an accurate understanding of its nature. The word rendered *substance —upostasiv*—occurs in the New Testament only in the following places. In 2Co 9:4 11:17; Heb 3:14, where it is rendered *confident* and *confidence*; and in Heb 1:3, where it is rendered *person*, and in the passage before us. Comp. **See Barnes** "Heb 1:3.

Prof. Stuart renders it here *confidence*; Chrysostom, "Faith gives reality or substance to things hoped for." The word properly means *that which is placed under*, (Germ. *Unterstellen*;) then *ground, basis, foundation, support*. Then it means, also. *reality, substance, existence*, in contradistinction from that which is unreal, imaginary, or deceptive, (*tauschung.) Passow*. It seems to me, therefore,

that the word here has reference to something which imparts reality in the view of the mind to those things which are not seen, and which serves to distinguish them from those things which are unreal and illusive. It is that which enables us to feel and act *as if* they were real, or which causes them to exert an influence over us *as if* we saw them. Faith does this on all other subjects as well as religion. A belief that there is such a place as London or Calcutta, leads us to act *as if* this were so, if we have occasion to go to either; a belief that money may be made in a certain undertaking, leads men to act *as if* this were so: a belief in the veracity of another leads us to act *as if* this were so. As long as the faith continues, whether it be well-founded or not, it gives all the force of reality to that which is believed. We feel and act *just as if* it were so, or *as if* we saw the object before our eyes. This, I think, is the clear meaning here. We do not see the things of eternity. We do not see God, or heaven, or the angels, or the redeemed in glory, or the crowns of victory, or the harps of praise; but we have faith in them, and this leads us to act *as if* we saw them. And this is, undoubtedly, the fact in regard to all who live by faith, and who are fairly under its influence.

Of things hoped for. In heaven. Faith gives them reality in the view of the mind. The Christian hopes to be admitted into heaven; to be raised up in the last day from the slumbers of the tomb; to be made perfectly free from sin; to be everlastingly happy. Under the influence of faith he allows these things to control his mind *as if* they were a most affecting reality.

The evidence of things not seen. Of the existence of God; of heaven; of angels; of the glories of the world prepared for the redeemed. The word rendered *evidence elegcov* occurs in the New Testament only in this place and in 2Ti 3:16, where it is rendered *reproof*. It means, properly, proof, or means of proving, to wit, evidence; then proof which convinces another of error or guilt; then vindication or defence; then summary or contents. See Pussow. The idea of *evidence* which goes to demonstrate the thing under consideration, or which is adapted to produce *conviction* in the mind, seems to be the elementary idea in the word. So when a proposition is demonstrated; when a man is arraigned, and evidence is furnished of his guilt, or when he establishes his innocence; or when one by argument refutes his adversaries, the idea of *convincing argument* enters into the use of the word in each case. This, I think, is clearly the meaning of the word here. "Faith in the Divine declarations answers all the purposes of a convincing argument, or is itself a convincing argument to the mind, of the real existence of those things which are not seen." But is it a good argument? Is it rational to rely on such a means of being convinced? Is mere *faith* a consideration which should ever convince a rational mind? The infidel says no; and we know there may be a faith which is no argument of the truth of what is believed. But when a man who has never seen it believes that there is such a place as London, his belief in the numerous testimonies respecting it which he has heard and read is, to his mind, a good and rational proof of its existence, and he would act on that belief without hesitation. When a son credits the declaration or the promise of a father who has never deceived him, and acts *as though* that declaration and promise were true, his faith is to him a ground of conviction and of action, and he will act as if these things were so. In like manner the Christian believes what God says. He has never seen heaven; he has never seen an angel; he has never seen the Redeemer; he has never seen a body raised from the grave; *but he has evidence which is satisfactory to his mind that God has spoken on these subjects*, and his very nature prompts him to confide in the declarations of his Creator. Those declarations are, to his mind, more convincing proof than anything else would be. They are more conclusive evidence than would be the deductions on his own reason; far better and more rational than all the reasonings and declarations of the infidel to the contrary. He feels and acts, therefore, as if these things were so—for his faith in the

declarations of God has convinced him that they are so. The object of the apostle, in this chapter, is not to illustrate the nature of what is called *saving faith*, but to show the power of *unwavering confidence in God* in sustaining the soul, especially in times of trial; and particularly in leading us to act, in view of promises and of things not seen, *as if* they were so. "Saving faith" is the same kind of confidence directed to the Messiah—the Lord Jesus—as the Saviour of the soul.

{1} "substance" "ground" {a} "things" Rom 8:24,25

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *For by it*. That is, by that faith which gives reality to things hoped for, and a certain persuasion to the mind of the existence of those things which are not seen.

The elders. The ancients; the Hebrew patriarchs and fathers.

Obtained a good report. Literally, "were witnessed of;" that is, an honourable testimony was borne to them in consequence of their faith. The idea is, that their acting under the influence of faith, in the circumstances in which they were, was the ground of the honourable testimony which was borne to them in the Old Testament. See this use of the word in Heb 7:8, and Heb 11:4 of this chapter. Also Lu 4:22 Ac 15:8. In the cases which the apostle proceeds to enumerate in the subsequent part of the chapter, he mentions those whose piety is particularly commended in the Old Testament, and who showed, in trying circumstances, that they had unwavering confidence in God.

{b} "understand" Ge 1:1 Ps 33:6

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed*. The first instance of the strength of faith, which the apostle refers to, is that by which we give credence to the declarations of the Scriptures about the work of creation, Ge 1:3, This is selected first, evidently, because it is the first thing that occurs in the Bible, or is the first thing there narrated in relation to which there is the exercise of faith. He points to no particular instance in which this faith was exercise—for none is especially mentioned—but refers to it as an illustration of the nature of faith which every one might observe in himself. The *faith* here exercised is confidence in the truth of the Divine declarations in regard to the creation. The meaning is, that our knowledge on this subject is a mere matter of faith in the Divine testimony. It is not that we could reason this out, and demonstrate that the worlds were thus made; it is not that profane history goes back to that period and informs us of it; it is simply that God has told us so in his word. The *strength* of the faith, in this case, is measured

(1.) by the fact that it is *mere faith*—that there is nothing else on which to rely in the case, and

(2.) by the greatness of the truth believed. After all the acts of faith which have ever been exercised in this world, perhaps there is none which is really more strong, or which requires higher confidence in God, than the declaration that this vast universe has been brought into existence by a word!

We understand. We attain to the apprehension of; we receive and comprehend the idea. Our knowledge of this fact is derived only from faith, and not from our own reasoning.

That the worlds. In Ge 1:1, it is "the heaven and the earth." The phrase which the apostle uses denotes a plurality of worlds, and is proof that he supposed there were other worlds besides our earth. How far his knowledge extended on this point we have no means of ascertaining; but there is no reason to doubt that he regarded the stars as "worlds," in some respects, like our own. On the meaning of the Greek word used here, **See Barnes "Heb 1:2"**.

The plural form is used there also, and in both cases, it seems to me, not without design.

Were framed. It is observable that the apostle does not here use the word *make or create*. That which he does use —*katartizw*—means, to put in order, to arrange, to complete, and may be applied to that which before had an existence, and which is to be put in order or re-fitted, Mt 4:24 Mr 1:19; Mt 21:16 Heb 10:5.

The meaning here is, that they *were set in order* by the word of God. This implies the act of creation, but the specific idea is that of *arranging* them in the beautiful order in which they are now. Doddridge renders it "adjusted." Kuinoel, however, supposes that the word is used here in the sense of form or make. It has probably about the meaning which we attach to the phrase "*fitting up anything*"—as, for example, a dwelling—and includes all the previous arrangements, though the thing which is particularly denoted is not the *making*, but the *arrangement*. So in the work here referred to. "We arrive at the conviction that the universe was fitted up or arranged, in the present manner, by the word of God."

By the word of God. This does not mean here, by the *Logos*, or the second Person of the Trinity, for Paul does not use that term here or elsewhere. The word which he employs is *rhma*—*rema*—meaning, properly, a word spoken, and in this place *command*. Comp. Ge 1:3,6,9,11,14,20 Ps 33:6; -"By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth." In regard to the agency of the Son of God in the work of the creation, see **See Barnes** "Heb 1:2; comp. **See Barnes "Joh 1:3"**.

So that things which are seen. The point of the remark here is, that the visible creation was not moulded out of pre-existing materials, but was made out of nothing. In reference to the grammatical construction of the passage, see Stuart, Comm. *in loc*. The doctrine taught is, that matter was not eternal; that the materials of the universe, as well as the arrangements, were formed by God, and that all this was done by a simple command. The *argument* here, so far as it is adapted to the purpose of the apostle, seems to be, that there was nothing which *appeared*, or which was to be *seen*, that could lay the foundation of a belief that God made the worlds; and, in like manner, our faith now is not to be based on what "*appears*," by which we could infer or *reason out* what would be, but that we must exercise strong confidence in Him who had power to create the universe out of nothing. If this vast universe has been called into existence by the mere *word* of God, there is nothing which we may not believe he has ample power to perform.

{b} "understand" Ge 1:1 Ps 33:6

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *By faith Abel offered*. See Ge 4:4,5. In the account in Genesis of the offering made by Abel, there is no mention of faith —as is true also indeed of most of the instances referred to by the apostle. The account in Genesis is, simply, that Abel "brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering." Men have speculated much as to the reason why the offering of Abel was accepted, and that of Cain rejected; but such speculation rests on no certain basis, and the solution of the apostle should be regarded as decisive and satisfactory, that in the one case there was faith, in the other not. It could not have been because an offering of the fruits of the ground was not pleasing to God, for such an offering was commanded under the Jewish law, and was not in itself improper. Both the brothers selected that which was to them most obvious; which they had reared with their own hands; which they regarded as most valuable. Cain had cultivated the earth, and he naturally brought what had grown under his care; Abel kept a flock, and *he* as naturally brought what he had raised: and had the temper of mind in both been the same, there is no reason to doubt that the offering of each would have been accepted. To this conclusion we are led by the nature of the case, and the apostle advances substantially the same sentiment—for he says that the particular state of mind on which the whole turned was, that the one had faith and the other not. *How* the apostle himself was informed of the fact, that it was faith which made the difference, he has not informed us. The belief that he was inspired will, however, relieve the subject of this difficulty—for, according to such a belief, all his statements here, whether recorded in the Old Testament or not, are founded in truth. It is equally impossible to tell with certainty what was the nature of the faith of Abel. It has been commonly asserted that it was faith in Christ—-looking forward to his coming, and depending on his sacrifice when offering that which was to be a type of him. But of this there is no positive evidence, though, from Heb 12:24, it seems to be not improbable. Sacrifice, as a type of the Redeemer's great offering, was instituted early in the history of the world. There can be no reason assigned for the offering of *blood* as an atonement for sin, except that it had originally a reference to the great atonement which was to be made by blood; and as the salvation of man depended on this entirely, it is probable that that would be one of the truths which would be first communicated to man after the fall. The bloody offering of Abel is the first of the kind which is definitely mentioned in the Scriptures, (though it is not improbable that such sacrifices were offered by Adam, comp. Ge 3:21,) and consequently Abel may be regarded *as the recorded head of the whole typical system, of which Christ was the antitype and the fulfilment*. **See Barnes "Heb 12:24"**.

A more excellent sacrifice. *pleiona yusian* -as rendered by Tindal, "more plenteous sacrifice;" or as Wickliffe renders it, more literally, "a much more sacrifice;" that is, a more full or complete sacrifice; a better sacrifice. The meaning is, that it had in it much more to render it acceptable to God. In the estimate of its value, the views of him who offered it would be more to be regarded than the nature of the offering itself

By which. By which sacrifice so offered. The way in which he obtained the testimony of Divine approbation was by the sacrifice offered in this manner. It was not merely by faith; it was by the offering of a sacrifice in connexion with, and under the influence of faith.

He obtained witness that he was righteous. That is, from God. His offering, made in faith, was the means of his obtaining the Divine testimonial that he was a righteous man. **See Barnes "Heb 11:2"**.

This is implied in what is said in Ge 4:4: "And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering;" that is, he regarded it as the offering of a righteous man.

God testifying of his gifts. In what way this was done is not mentioned either here or in Genesis. Commentators have usually supposed that it was by fire descending from heaven to consume the sacrifice. But there is no evidence of this, for there is no intimation of it in the Bible. It is true that this frequently occurred when an offering was made to God, (see Ge 15:17 Le 9:24; Jud 6:21 1Ki 18:38;) but the sacred writers give us no hint that this happened in the case of the sacrifice made by Abel; and since it is expressly mentioned in other cases and not here, the presumption rather is that no such miracle occurred on the occasion. So remarkable a fact—the first one in all history if it were so—could hardly have failed to be noticed by the sacred writer. It seems to me, therefore, that there was some method by which God "testified" his approbation of the offering of Abel which is unknown to us, but in regard to what it was conjecture is vain.

And by it he, being dead, yet speaketh. Marg. *Is yet spoken of*. This difference of translation arises from a difference of reading in the MSS. That from which the translation in the text is derived, is *lalei—he speaketh*. That from which the rendering in the margin is derived, is *laleitai is spoken of*; that is, is praised or commended. The latter is the common reading in the Greek text, and is found in Walton, Wetstein, Matthaei, Tittman, and Mill; the former is adopted by Griesbach, Koppe, Knapp, Grotius, Hammond, Storr, Rosenmuller, Prof. Stuart, Bloomfield, and Hahn, and is found in the Syriac and Coptic, and is that which is favoured by most of the Fathers. See Wetstein. The authority of Mss. is in favour of the reading *laleitai—is spoken of*. It is impossible, in this variety of opinion, to determine which is the true reading, and this is one of the cases where the original text must probably be for ever undecided. Happily, no important doctrine or duty is depending on it. Either of the modes of reading will give a good sense. The apostle is saying that it is by faith that the "elders have obtained a good report," (Heb 11:2;) he had said, (Heb 11:4,) that it was by faith that Abel obtained the testimony of God in his favour; and if the reading "is spoken of" be adopted, the apostle means that, in consequence of that offering thus made, Abel continued even to his time to receive an honourable mention. This act was commended still; and the "good report," of which it had been the occasion, had been transmitted from age to age. A sentiment thus of great beauty and value may be derived from the passage —that true piety is the occasion of transmitting a good report, or an honourable reputation, even down to the latest generation. It is that which will embalm the memory in the grateful recollection of mankind; that on which they will reflect with pleasure, and which they will love to transmit to future ages. But, after all, it seems to me to be probable that the true sentiment in this passage is that which is expressed in the common version, "he yet speaketh." The reasons are briefly these:

(1.) The authority of Mss., versions, editions, and critics, is so nearly equal, that it is impossible from this source to determine the true reading; and we must, therefore, form our judgment from the connexion.

(2.) The apostle had twice in this verse expressed substantially the idea that he was honourably testified of by his faith, and it is hardly probable that he would again repeat it so soon.

(3.) There seems to be an allusion here to the *language* used respecting Abel, (Ge 4:10,) "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground;"—or utters a distinct voice—and the apostle seems to design to represent Abel as still speaking.

(4.) In Heb 12:24, he represents both Abel and Christ as still speaking—as if Abel continued to utter a voice of admonition. The reference there is to the fact that he continued to proclaim from age to age, even to the time of the apostle, the great truth that salvation was only by *blood*. He had proclaimed it at first by his faith when he offered the sacrifice of the lamb; he continued to speak

from generation to generation, and to show that it was one of the earliest principles of religion that there could be redemption from sin in no other way.

(5.) The expression "*yet speaketh*" accords better with the connexion. The other interpretation is cold compared with this, and less fits the case before us. Of the faith of Noah, Abraham, and Moses, it might be said with equal propriety that it is still commended or celebrated as well as that of Abel, but the apostle evidently means to say that there was a voice in that of Abel which was peculiar; there was something in *his* life and character which continued to speak from age to age. His sacrifice, his faith, his death, his blood, *all* continued to lift up the voice, and to proclaim the excellence and value of confidence in God, and to admonish the world how to live.

(6.) This accords with usage in classic writers, where it is common to say of the dead that they continue to speak. Comp. Virg. AEn. vi. 618

Et magna testafur voce per umbras:
Discite justitiam moniti, et non tetonere Divos.

If this be the true meaning, then the sense is, that there is an influence from the piety of Abel which continues to admonish all coming ages of the value of religion, and especially of the great doctrine of the necessity of an atonement by blood. His faith and his sacrifice proclaimed from age to age that this was one of the first great truths made known to fallen man; and on this he continues to address the world as if he were still living. Thus all who are pious continue to exert an influence in favour of religion long after the soul is removed to heaven, and the body consigned to the grave. This is true in the following respects,

(1.) They speak by their example. The example of a pious father, mother, neighbour, will be remembered. It will often have an effect after their death in influencing those over whom it had little control while living.

(2.) They continue to speak by their precepts. The precepts of a father may be remembered, with profit, when he is in his grave, though they were heard with indifference when he lived; the counsels of a minister may be recollected with benefit, though they were heard with scorn.

(3.) They continued to speak from the fact that the good are remembered with increasing respect and honour as long as they are remembered at all. The character of Abel, Noah, and Abraham, is brighter now than it was when they lived, and will continue to grow brighter to the end of time. "The name of the wicked will rot," and the influence which they had when living will grow feebler and feebler, till it wholly dies away. Howard will be remembered, and will proclaim from age to age the excellence of a life of benevolence; the character of Nero, Caligula,and Richard III., has long since ceased to exert *any* influence whatever in favour of evil, but rather shows the world, by contrast, the excellence of virtue; and the same will yet be true of Paine, and Voltaire, and Byron, and Gibbon, and Hume. The time will come when they shall cease to exert any influence in favour of infidelity and sin; and when the world shall be so satisfied of the error of their sentiments, and the abuse of their talents, and the corruption of their hearts, that their names, by contrast, will be made to promote the cause of piety and virtue. If a man wishes to exert any permanent influence after he is dead, he should be a good man. The *strength* of the faith of Abel, here commended, will be seen by a reference to a few circumstances.

(1.) It was manifested shortly after the apostasy, and not long after the fearful sentence had been pronounced in view of the sin of man. The serpent had been cursed; the earth had been cursed; woe had been denounced on the mother of mankind; and the father of the apostate race, and all his posterity, doomed to toil and death. The thunder of this curse had scarcely died away; man had

been ejected from Paradise, and sent out to enter on his career of woes, and the earth was trembling under the malediction, and yet Abel maintained his confidence in God.

(2.) There was then little truth revealed, and only the slightest intimation of mercy. The promise in Ge 3:5, that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent, is so enigmatical and obscure, that it is not easy even now to see its exact meaning —-and it cannot be supposed that Abel could have had a full understanding of what was denoted by it. Yet this appears to have been *all* the truth respecting the salvation of man then revealed, and on this Abel maintained his faith steadfast in God.

(3.) Abel had an elder brother, undoubtedly an infidel, a scoffer, a mocker of religion. He was evidently endowed with a talent for sarcasm, (Ge 4:9;) and there is no reason to doubt, that, like other infidels and scoffers, he would be disposed to use that talent when occasion offered, to hold up religion to contempt. The power with which he used this, and the talent with which he did this, may be seen illustrated, probably with melancholy fidelity, in Lord Byron's, "Cain." No man ever lived who could more forcibly express the feelings that passed through the mind of Cain—for there is too much reason to think that his extraordinary talents were employed, on this occasion, to give vent to the feelings of his own heart, in the sentiments put into the mouth of Cain. Yet, notwithstanding the infidelity of his elder brother, Abel adhered to God and his cause. Whatever influence that infidel brother might have sought to use over him—and there can be no reason to doubt that such an influence *would* be attempted—yet he never swelled, but maintained with steadfastness his belief in religion, and his faith in God.

{a} "Abel offered" Ge 4:4,5 {1} "yet speaketh" "is yet spoken of"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *By faith Enoch was translated*. The account of Enoch is found in Ge 5:21-24. It is very brief, and is this, that "Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him." There is no particular mention of his *faith*; and the apostle attributes this to him, as in the case of Abel, either because it was involved in the very nature of piety, or because the fact was communicated to him by direct revelation. In the account in Genesis, there is nothing inconsistent with the belief that Enoch was characterized by eminent faith, but it is rather implied in the expression, "he walked with God." Comp. 2Co 5:7. It may also be implied in what is said by the apostle Jude, (Jude 1:14,15,) that "he prophesied, saying, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints," etc. From this it would appear that he was a preacher; that he predicted the coming of the Lord to judgment, and that he lived in the firm belief of what was to occur in future times. Moses does not say expressly that Enoch was translated. He says "he was not, for God took him." The expression "he was not," means he was no more among men; or he was removed from the earth. *This* language would be applicable to any method by which he was removed, whether by dying, or by being translated. A similar expression respecting Romulus occurs in Livy, (i. 16,) Nec deinde in tetris Romulus fuit. The translation of the Septuagint on this part of the verse in Genesis is, *ouc eurisketo*—"was not found;" that is, he disappeared. The authority for what the apostle says here that he "was translated," is found in the other phrase in Genesis, "God took him." The reasons which led to the statement

that he was translated without seeing death, or that show that this is a fair conclusion from the words in Genesis, are such as these.

(1.) There is no mention made of his death, and in this respect the account of Enoch stands by itself. It is, except in this case, the uniform custom of Moses to mention the age and the death of the individuals whose biography he records, and in many cases this is about all that is said of them. But in regard to Enoch there is this remarkable exception, that no record is made of his death-showing that there was something unusual in the manner of his removal from the world.

(2.) The Hebrew word used by Moses, found in such a connexion, is one which would rather suggest the idea that he had been taken, in some extraordinary manner from the world. That word—

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—means, *to take*—with the idea of taking *to one's self*. Thus, Ge 8:20, "Noah *took* of all beasts, and offered a burnt-offering." Thus it is often used in the sense of *taking a wife* —that is, to one's self, (Ge 4:19 6:2, 12:19 19:14;) and then it is used in the sense of *taking away*, Ge 14:12 27:35; Job 1:21

Ge 12:20 Ps 31:13; Jer 15:15.

The word, therefore, would naturally suggest the idea that he had been taken by God to himself, or had been removed in an extraordinary manner from the earth. This is confirmed by the fact that the word is not used anywhere in the Scriptures to denote a removal *by death*, and that in the only other instance in which it (

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is used in relation to a removal from this world, it occurs in the statement respecting the translation of Elijah. "And the sons of the prophets that were at Bethel, came forth to Elisha, and said to him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away (

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(3.) It was so understood by the translators of the Septuagint. The apostle has used the same word in this place which is employed by the Seventy in Ge 5:24—*metatiyhmi*. This word means to transpose, to put in another place; and then to transport, transfer, translate, Ac 7:16 Heb 7:12. It properly expresses the removal to another place, and is the very word which would be used on the supposition that one was taken to heaven without dying.

(4.) This interpretation of the passage in Genesis by Paul is in accordance with the uniform interpretation of the Jews. In the Targum of Onkelos it is evidently supposed that Enoch was translated without dying. In that Targum the passage in Gen. v. 24 is rendered, "And Enoch walked in the fear of the Lord, and was not, for the Lord did not put him to death"— "

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So also in Ecclesiasticus or the Son of Sirach, v: (xlix. 14,) "But upon the earth was no man created like Enoch; for he was taken from the earth." These opinions of the Jews and of the early translators, are of value only as showing that the interpretation which Paul has put upon Ge 5:24 is the natural interpretation. It is such as occurs to separate writers, without collusion, and this shows that this is the meaning most naturally suggested by the passage.

That he should not see death. That is, that he should not experience death, or be made personally acquainted with it. The word *taste* often occurs in the same sense. Heb 2:9, "That he should taste death for every man," Comp Mt 16:28 Mr 9:1; Lu 9:27.

And was not found. Ge 5:24: "And he was not." That is, he was not in the land of the living. Paul retains the word used in the Septuagint.

He had this testimony, that he pleased God. Implied in the declaration in Ge 5:22, that he "walked with God." This denotes a state of friendship between God and him, and of course implies that his conduct was pleasing to God. The apostle appeals here to the sense of the account in Genesis, but does not retain the very *words*. The meaning here is not that the testimony respecting Enoch was actually *given* before his translation, but that the testimony relates to his having *pleased God* before he was removed. *Stuart*. In regard to this instructive fragment of history, and to the reasons why Enoch was thus removed, we may make the following remarks.

(1.) The age in which he lived was undoubtedly one of great wickedness. Enoch is selected as the only one of that generation signalized by eminent piety, and he appears to have spent his life in publicly reproving a sinful generation, and in warning them of the approaching judgment, Jude 1:14,16. The wickedness which ultimately led to the universal deluge seems already to have commenced in the earth, and Enoch, like Noah, his great-grandson, was raised up as a preacher of righteousness to reprove a sinful generation.

(2.) It is not improbable that the great truths of religion in that age were extensively denied; and probably, among other things, the future state, the resurrection, the belief that man would exist in another world, and that it was maintained that death was the end of being—was an eternal sleep. If so, nothing could be better adapted to correct the prevailing evils than the removal of an eminent man, without dying, from the world. His departure would thus confirm the instructions of his life; and his removal, like the death of saints often now, would serve to make an impression which his living instructions would not.

(3.) His removal is, in itself, a very important and instructive fact in history. It has occurred in no other instance except that of Elijah; nor has any other living man been translated to heaven except the Lord Jesus. That fact was instructive in a great many respects.

(a.) It showed that there was a future state —another world.

(b.) It showed that the body might exist in that future state—though doubtless so changed as to adapt it to the condition of things there.

(c.) It prepared the world to credit the account of the ascension of the Redeemer. If Enoch and Elijah were removed thus without dying, there was no intrinsic improbability that the Lord Jesus would be removed after having died and risen again.

(d.) It furnishes a demonstration of the doctrine that the saints will exist hereafter, which meets all the arguments of the sceptic and the infidel. One single *fact* overturns all the mere speculations of philosophy, and renders nugatory all the objections of the sceptic. The infidel argues against the truth of the resurrection, and of the future state, from the *difficulties* attending the doctrine. A single case of one who has been raised up from the dead, or who has been removed to heaven, annihilates all such arguments—for how can supposed difficulties destroy a well authenticated *fact*?

(e,) It is an encouragement to piety. It shows that God regards his friends; that their fidelity and holy living please him; and that *in the midst of eminent wickedness and a scoffing world, it is possible so to live as to please God*. The conduct of this holy man, therefore, is an encouragement to us to do our duty, though we stand alone; and to defend the truth, though all who live with us upon the earth deny and deride it.

(4.) The removal of Enoch shows that the same thing would be *possible* in the case of every saint. God could do it in other cases, as well as in his, with equal ease. That his friends, therefore,

are suffered to remain on the earth—that they linger on in enfeebled health, or are crushed by calamity, or are stricken: down by the pestilence as others are, is not because God *could* not remove them, as Enoch was, without dying, but because there is some important reason why they should remain, and linger, and suffer, and die. Among those reasons may be such as the following:

(a.) The regular operation of the laws of nature, as now constituted, require it. Vegetables die; the inhabitants of the deep die; the fowls that fly in the air, and the beasts that roam over hills and plains die; and man, by his sins, is brought under the operation of this great universal law. It would be *possible*, indeed, for God to save his people from this law, but it would require the interposition of continued *miracles*; and it is better to have the laws of nature regularly operating, than to have them constantly set aside by Divine interposition.

(b.) The power of religion is now better illustrated in the way in which the saints are actually removed from the earth, than it would be if they were all translated. Its power is now seen in its enabling us to overcome the dread of death, and in its supporting us in the pains and sorrows of the departing hour. It is a good thing to discipline the soul so that it will not fear to die; it shows how superior religion is to all the forms of philosophy, that it enables the believer to look calmly forward to his own certain approaching death. It is an important matter to keep this up from age to age, and to show to each generation that religion can overcome the natural apprehension of the most fearful calamity which befalls a creature—death; and can make man calm in the prospect of lying beneath the clods of the valley, cold, dark, alone, to moulder back to his native dust.

(c.) The death of the Christian does good. It preaches to the living. The calm resignation, the peace, the triumph of the dying believer, is a constant admonition to a thoughtless and wicked world. The deathbed of the Christian proclaims the mercy of God from generation to generation, and there is not a dying saint who may not, and who probably *does* not do great good in the closing hours of his earthly being.

(d.) It may be added, that the present arrangement falls in with the general laws of religion, that we are to be influenced by faith, not by sight. If all Christians were removed like Enoch, it would be an argument for the truth of religion addressed constantly to the senses. But this is not the way in which the evidence of the truth of religion is proposed to man. It is submitted to his understanding, his conscience, his heart; and in this there is of design a broad distinction between religion and other things. Men act, in other matters, under the influence of the senses; it is designed that in religion they shall act under the influence of higher and nobler considerations, and that they shall be influenced not solely by a reference to what is passing before their eyes, but to the things which are not seen.

{a} "Enoch was translated" Ge 5:22,24

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *But without faith it is impossible to please him*. Without *confidence* in God—in his fidelity, his truth, his wisdom, his promises. And this is as true in other things as ill religion. It is impossible for a child to please his father unless he has confidence in him. It is impossible for a wife to please her husband, or a husband a wife, unless they have confidence in each other. If there is distrust and jealousy on either part, there is discord and misery. We cannot be pleased with a

professed friend unless he has such confidence in us as to believe our declarations and promises, The same thing is true of God. He cannot be pleased with the man who has no confidence in him; who doubts the truth of his declarations and promises; who does not believe that his ways are right, or that he is qualified for universal empire. The requirement of faith or confidence in God is not arbitrary; it is just what we require of our children, and partners in life, and friends, as the indispensable condition of our being pleased with them.

For he that cometh to God. In any way—as a worshipper. This is alike required in public worship, in the family, and in secret devotion.

Must believe that he is. That God exists. This is the first thing required in worship. Evidently we cannot come to him in an acceptable manner if we doubt his existence. We do not see him, but we must believe that he is; we cannot form in our mind a correct image of God, but this should not prevent a conviction that there *is* such a Being. But the declaration here implies more than that there should be a general persuasion of the truth that there is a God. It is necessary that we have this belief in lively exercise in the act of drawing near to him, and that we should realize that we are actually in the presence of the all-seeing JEHOVAH.

And that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. This is equally necessary as the belief that he exists. If we could not believe that God would hear and answer our prayers, there could be no encouragement to call upon him. It is not meant here that the desire of the reward is to be the motive for seeking God—for the apostle makes no affirmation on that point; but that it is impossible to make an acceptable approach to him unless we have this belief.

{a} "*him*" Ps 105:21,22

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *By faith Noah*. It is less difficult to see that Noah must have been influenced by *faith* than that Abel and Enoch were. Everything which Noah did, in reference to the threatened deluge, was done in virtue of simple faith or belief of what God said. It was not because he could show from the course of events that things were tending to such a catastrophe; or because such an event had occurred before, rendering it probable that it would be likely to occur again; or because this was the common belief of men, and it was easy to fall into this himself. It was simply because God had informed him of it, and he put unwavering reliance on the truth of the Divine declaration.

Being warned of God. Ge 6:13. The Greek word here used means *divinely admonished*. Comp. Ge 8:5.

Of things not seen as yet. Of the flood which was yet future. The meaning is, that there were no visible signs of it; there was nothing which could be a basis of calculation that it would occur. This admonition was given an hundred and twenty years before the deluge, and of course long before there could have been any natural indications that it would occur.

Moved with fear. Marg. *Being wary*. The Greek word *eulabhyeiv* —-occurs only here and in Ac 23:10: "The chief captain *fearing* lest Paul," etc. The noun occurs in Heb 5:7: "And was heard in that he feared," **See Barnes** "Heb 5:7) and **See Barnes "Heb 12:28"**

: "With reverence and godly fear." The verb properly means, to act with caution, to be circumspect, and then to fear, to be afraid. So far as the word is concerned, it might mean here that

Noah was influenced by the dread of what was coming, or it may mean that he was influenced by proper caution and reverence for God. The latter meaning agrees better with the scope of the remarks of Paul, and is probably the true sense. His reverence and respect for God induced him to act under the belief that what he had said was true, and that the calamity which he had predicted would certainly come upon the world.

Prepared an ark to the saving of his house. In order that his family might be saved, Ge 6:14-22. The salvation here referred to was preservation from the flood.

By the which. By which faith.

He condemned the world. That is, the wicked world around him. The meaning is, that by his confidence in God, and his preparation for the flood, he showed the wisdom of his own course and the folly of theirs. We have the same phrase now in common use, where one who sets a good example is said to "condemn others." He shows the guilt and folly of their lives by the contrast between his conduct and theirs. The wickedness of the sinner is condemned not only by preaching, and by the admonitions and threatenings of the law of God, but by the conduct of every good man. The language of such a life is as plain a rebuke of the sinner as the most fearful denunciations of Divine wrath.

And became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. The phrase, "heir of righteousness," here means, properly, that he acquired, gained, or became possessed of that righteousness. It does not refer so much to the *mode* by which it was done, as if it were by inheritance, as to the *fact* that he obtained it. The word *heir* is used in this general sense in Ro 4:13,14; Tit 3:7 Heb 1:2, 6:17.

Noah was not the *heir* to that righteousness by *inheriting* it from his ancestors, but in virtue of it he was regarded as among the heirs or sons of God, and as being a possessor of that righteousness which is connected with faith. The phrase "righteousness which is by faith" refers to the fact that he was regarded and treated as a righteous man. **See Barnes "Ro 1:17"**.

It is observable here, that it is not said that Noah had specific faith in Christ, or that his being made heir of the righteousness of faith depended on that, but it was in connexion with his believing what God said respecting the deluge. It was *faith* or *confidence* in God which was the ground of his justification, in accordance with the general doctrine of the Scriptures that it is only by faith that man can be saved, though the specific mode of faith was not that which is required now under the gospel. In the early ages of the world, when few truths were revealed, a cordial belief of any of those truths showed that there was real confidence in God, or that the *principle* of faith was in the heart; in the fuller revelation which we enjoy, we are not only to believe those truths, but specifically to believe in Him who has made the great atonement for sin, and by whose merits all have been saved who have entered heaven. The same faith or confidence in God which led Noah to believe what God said about the deluge would have led him to believe what he has said about the Redeemer; and the same confidence in God which led him to commit himself to his safe keeping in an ark on the world of waters, would have led him to commit his soul to the safe keeping of the Redeemer, the true Ark of safety. As the *principle* of faith, therefore, existed in the heart of Noah, it was proper that he should become, with others, an "heir of the righteousness by faith."

In regard to the circumstances which show the strength of his faith, we may make the following remarks.

(1.) It pertained to a very distant future event. It looked forward to that which was to happen after a lapse of an hundred and twenty years. This was known to Noah, (Ge 6:3;) and, at this long period before it occurred, he was to begin to build an ark to save himself and family—to act as

though this would be undoubtedly true. This is a much longer period than man *now* is required to exercise faith before that is realized which is the object of belief. Rare is it that three-score years intervene between the time when a man first believes in God and when he enters into heaven; much more frequently it is but a few months or days; not an instance now occurs in which the period is lengthened out to an hundred and twenty years.

(2.) There was no outward *evidence* that what Noah believed would occur. There were no appearances in nature which indicated that there would be such a flood of waters after more than a century had passed away. There were no breakings up of the fountains of the deep; no marks of the far-distant storm gathering on the sky, which could be the basis of the calculation. The *word of God* was the only ground of evidence; the only thing to which he could refer gainsayers and revilers. It is so now. There are no visible signs of the coming of the Saviour to judge the world. Yet the true believer feels and acts *as if* it were so—resting on the sure word of God.

(3.) The course of things was much against the truth of what Noah believed. No such event had ever occurred. There is no evidence that there had ever been a storm of rain half sufficient to drown the world; or that there had ever been the breaking up of the deep, or that there had ever been a partial deluge. For sixteen hundred years the course of nature had been uniform, and all the force of this uniformity would be felt and urged when it should be alleged that this was to be disturbed, and to give place to an entire new order of events. Comp. 2Pe 3:4. The same thing is now felt in regard to the objects of the Christian faith. The course of events is uniform. The laws of nature are regular and steady. The dead do not leave their graves. Seasons succeed each other in regular succession; men are born, live, and die, as in former times; fire does not wrap the earth in flames; the elements do not melt with fervent heat; seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter follow each other, and "all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." How many probabilities are there now, therefore, as there were in the time of Noah, against that which is the object of faith!

(4.) It is not improbable that when Noah proclaimed the approaching destruction of the world by a deluge, the *possibility* of such an event was strongly denied by the philosophers of that age. The fact that such an event could have occurred has been denied by infidel philosophers in our own times, and attempts have been gravely made to show that the earth did not contain water enough to cover its surface to the height mentioned in the Scriptures, and that no condensation of the vapour in the atmosphere could produce such an effect. It is not improbable that some such arguments may have been used in the time of Noah, and *it is morally certain that he could not meet those arguments by any philosophy of his own*. There is no reason to think that he was endowed with such a knowledge of chemistry as to be able to show that such a thing was possible, or that he had such an acquaintance with the structure of the earth as to demonstrate that it contained within itself the elements of its own destruction. All that he could oppose to such speculations was the simple declaration of God; and the same thing is also true now in regard to the cavils and philosophical arguments of infidelity. Objections drawn from philosophy are often made against the doctrine of the resurrection of the body; the destruction of the earth by the agency of fire; and even the existence of the soul after death. These difficulties may be obviated partly by science; but the proof that these events will occur does not depend on science. It is a matter of simple faith; and all that we can in fact oppose to these objections is the declaration of God. The result showed that Noah was not a fool or a fanatic in trusting to the word of God against the philosophy of his age; and the result will show the same

of the Christian in his confiding in the truth of the Divine declarations against the philosophy of *his age*.

(6.) It is beyond all question that Noah would be subjected to much ridicule and scorn, he would be regarded as a dreamer; a fanatic; an alarmist; a wild projector. The purpose of making preparation for such an event as the flood to occur after the lapse of an hundred and twenty years, and when there were no indications of it, and all appearances were against it, would be regarded as in the highest degree wild and visionary. The design of building a vessel which would outride the storm, and which would live in such an open sea, and which would contain all sorts of animals with the food for them for an indefinite period, could not but have been regarded as eminently ridiculous. When the ark was preparing, nothing could have been a more happy subject for scoffing and jibes. In such an age, therefore, and in such circumstances, we may suppose that all the means possible would have been resorted to, to pour contempt on such an undertaking. They who had wit, would find here an ample subject for its exercise; if ballads were made then, no more fertile theme for a profane song could be desired than this; and in the haunts of revelry, intemperance, and pollution, nothing would furnish a finer topic to give point to a jest, than the credulity and folly of the old man who was building the ark. It would require strong faith to contend thus with the wit, the sarcasm, the contempt, the raillery, and the low jesting, as well as with the wisdom and philosophy of a whole world. Yet it is a fair illustration of what occurs often now, and of the strength of that faith in the Christian heart which meets meekly and calmly the scoffs and jeers of a wicked generation.

(6.) All this would be heightened by delay. The time was distant. What now completes four generations would have passed away before the event predicted would occur, Youth grew up to manhood, and manhood passed on to old age, and still there were no signs of the coming storm. That was no feeble faith which could hold on in this manner for an hundred and twenty years, believing unwaveringly that all which God had said would be accomplished. But it is an illustration of faith in the Christian church now. The church maintains the same confidence in God from age to age—and, regardless of all the reproaches of scoffers, and all the arguments of philosophy, still adheres to the truths which God has revealed. So with individual Christians. They look for the promise. They are expecting heaven. They doubt not that the time will come when they will be received to glory; when their bodies will be raised up glorified and immortal, and when sin and sorrow will be no more. In the conflicts and trials of life, the time of their deliverance may seem to be long delayed. The world may reproach them, and Satan may tempt them to doubt whether all their hope of heaven is not delusion. But their faith fails not; and though hope seems delayed, and the heart is sick, yet they keep the eye on heaven. So it is in regard to the final triumphs of the gospel. The Christian looks forward to the time when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of God, as the waters cover the sea. Yet that time may seem to be long delayed. Wickedness triumphs. A large part of the earth is still filled with the habitations of cruelty. The progress of the gospel is slow. The church comes up reluctantly to the work. The enemies of the cause exult and rejoice, and ask, with scoffing triumph, Where is the evidence that the nations will be converted to God? They suggest difficulties; they refer to the numbers, and to the opposition of the enemies of the true religion; to the might of kingdoms, and to the power of fixed opinion, and to the hold which idolatry has on mankind; and they sneeringly inquire. At what period will the world be converted to Christ? Yet, in the face of all difficulties, and arguments, and sneers, faith confides in the promise of the Father to the Son, that the "heathen shall be given to him for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession," Ps 2:8. The faith of the true Christian is as strong in the fulfilment

of this promise, as that of Noah was in the assurance that the guilty world would be destroyed by a flood of waters.

{b} "Noah" Ge 6:14-22 {1} "moved with fear" "being wary" {+} "house" "household"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *By faith Abraham*. There is no difficulty in determining that Abraham was influenced by faith in God. The case is even stronger than that of Noah, for it is expressly declared, Ge 15:6, "And he believed, in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness." Comp. **See Barnes** "Ro 4:1, and following. In the illustrations of the power of faith in this chapter, the apostle appeals to two instances m which it was exhibited by Abraham, "the father of the faithful." Each of these required confidence in God of extraordinary strength, and each of them demanded a special and honourable mention. The first was that when he left his own country to go to a distant land of strangers, (Heb 11:8-10;) the other when he showed his readiness to sacrifice his own son in obedience to the will of God, Heb 11:17-19.

When he was called. Ge 12:1: "Now the Lord had said unto Abraham, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee."

Into a Place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed. To Palestine, or the land of Canaan, though that was not indicated at the time.

And he went out not knowing whither he went. Ge 12:4. Abraham at that time took with him Sarai, and Lot the son of his brother, and "the souls that they had gotten in Haran." Terah, the father of Abraham, started on the journey with them, but died in Haran, Ge 11:31,32. The original call was made to Abraham, Ge 12:1 Ac 7:2,3; but he appears to have induced his father and his nephew to accompany him. At this time he had no children, (Ge 11:30,) though it seems probable that Lot had, Ge 12:6. Some, however, understand the expression in Ge 12:6, "and the souls they had gotten in Haran," as referring to the servants or domestics that they had in various ways procured, and to the fact that Abraham and Lot gradually drew around them a train of dependents and followers who were disposed to unite with them, and accompany them wherever they went. The Chaldee Paraphrast understands it of the *proselytes* which Abraham had made there—"All the souls which he had subdued under the law." When it is said that Abraham "went out not knowing whither he went," it must be understood as meaning that he was ignorant to what country he would in fact be led. If it be supposed that he had some general intimatian of the nature of that country, and of the direction in which it was situate, yet it must be remembered that the knowledge of geography was then exceedingly imperfect; that this was a distant country; that it lay beyond a pathless desert, and that probably no traveller had ever come from that land to apprize him what it was. All this serves to show what was the strength of the faith of Abraham.

{a} "when he was called" Ge 12:1,4

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *By faith he sojourned in the land of promise*, as in a strange country. The land of Canaan that had been promised to him and his posterity. He resided there *as if* he were a stranger and sojourner. He had no possessions there which he did not procure by honest purchase; he owned no land in fee-simple, except the small piece which he bought for a burial-place. See Ge 23:7-20. In all respects he lived there as if he had no peculiar right in the soil; as if he never expected to own it; as if he were in a country wholly owned by others. He exercised no privileges which might not have been exercised by any foreigner, and which was not regarded as a right of common—that of feeding his cattle in any unoccupied part of the land; and he would have had no power of ejecting any other persons, excepting that which any one might have enjoyed by the pre-occupancy of the pasture grounds. To all intents and purposes he was a stranger. Yet he seems to have lived in the confident and quiet expectation that that land would, at some period, come into the possession of his posterity. It was a strong instance of *faith* that he should cherish this belief for so long a time, when he was a stranger there—when he gained no right in the soil, except in the small piece that was purchased as a burial-place for his wife—and when he saw old age coming on, and still the whole land in the possession of others.

Dwelling in tabernacles. In tents, the common mode of living in countries where the principal occupation is that of keeping flocks and herds. His dwelling thus in moveable tents looked little like its being his permanent possession.

With Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. That is, the same thing occurred in regard to them which had to Abraham. *They also* lived in tents. They acquired no fixed property, and no title to the land, except to the small portion purchased as a burial-place. Yet they were heirs of the same promise as Abraham, that the land would be theirs. Though it was still owned by others, and filled with its native inhabitants, yet they adhered to the belief that it would come into the possession of their families. In their movable habitations— in their migrations from place to place—they seem never to have doubted that the fixed habitation of their posterity was to be there, and: that all that had been promised would be certainly fulfilled.

{a} "dwelling" Ge 13:3,18, 18:1,9

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *For he looked for a city which hath foundations*. It has been doubted to what the apostle here refers. Grotius and some others suppose that he refers to Jerusalem, as a permanent dwelling for his posterity in contradistinction from the unsettled mode of life which Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob led. But there is no evidence that Abraham looked forward to the building of such a city, for no promise was made to him of this kind; and this interpretation falls evidently below the whole drift of the passage. Comp. Heb 11:12, 11:14-16, 12:22, 13:14.

Phrases like that of "the city of God," "a city with foundations," "the new Jerusalem," and "the heavenly Jerusalem" in the time of the apostle, appear to have acquired a kind of technical signification. They referred to the area—of which Jerusalem, the seat of the worship of God, seems to have been regarded as the emblem. Thus in Heb 12:22, the apostle speaks of the "heavenly Jerusalem," and in Heb 13:14, he says, "here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come."

In Re 21:2, John says that he "saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven," and proceeds in that chapter and the following to give a most beautiful description of it. Even so early as the time of Abraham, it would seem that the future blessedness of the righteous was foretold under the image of a splendid City reared on permanent foundations. It is remarkable that Moses does not mention this as an object of the faith of Abraham, and it is impossible to ascertain the degree of distinctness which this had in is view. It is probable that the apostle, in speaking of his faith in this particular, did not rely on any distinct record, or even any tradition, but spoke of his piety in the language which, he would use to characterize religion of any age, or in any individual, he was accustomed, in common with others of his time, to contemplate the future blessedness of the righteous under the image of a beautiful city; a place where the worship of God would be celebrated for ever—a city of which Jerusalem was the most striking representation to the mind of a Jew. It was natural for him to speak of strong piety in this manner wherever it existed, and especially in such a case as that of Abraham, who left his own habitation to wander in a distant land. This fact showed that he regarded himself as a stranger and sojourner; and yet he had a strong expectation of a fixed habitation, and a permanent inheritance. He must, therefore, have looked on to the permanent abodes of the righteous; the heavenly city ;—and though he had an undoubted confidence that the promised land would be given to his posterity, yet, as he did not possess it himself, he must have looked for his own permanent abode to the fixed residence of the just in heaven. This passage seems to me to prove that Abraham had an expectation of future happiness after death. There is not the slightest evidence that he supposed there would be a magnificent and glorious capital where the Messiah would personally reign, and where the righteous dead, raised from their graves, would dwell in the second advent of the Redeemer. All that the passage fairly implies is, that while Abraham expected the possession of the promised land for his posterity, yet his faith looked beyond this for a permanent home in a future world.

Whose builder and maker is God. Which would not be reared by the agency of man, but of which God was the immediate and direct architect. This shows conclusively, I think, that the reference in this allusion to the "city" is not to Jerusalem, as Grotius supposes; but the language is just such as will appropriately describe heaven, represented as a city reared without human hands or art, and founded and fashioned by the skill and power of the Deity; Comp. **See Barnes "2Co 5:1"**.

The language here applied to God as the "architect" or framer of the universe is often used in the classic writers. See Kuinoel and Wetstein. The apostle here commends the faith of Abraham as eminently strong. The following *hints* will furnish topics of reflection to those who are disposed to inquire more fully into its strength.

(1.) The journey which he undertook was then a long and dangerous one. The distance from Haran to Palestine, by a direct route, was not less than four hundred miles, and this journey lay across a vast desert —a part of Arabia Deserta. That journey has always been tedious and perilous; but to see its real difficulty, we must put ourselves into the position in which the world was four thousand years ago. There was no knowledge of the way; no frequented path; no facility for travelling; no turnpike or railway; and such a journey then must have appeared incomparably more perilous than almost any which could now be undertaken.

(2.) He was going among strangers. Who they were he knew not; but the impression could not but have been made on his mind that they were strangers to religion, and that a residence among them would be anything but desirable.

(3.) He was leaving country, and home, and friends; the place of his birth and the graves of his fathers, with the moral certainty that he would see them no more.

(4.) He had no right to the country which he went to receive. He could urge no claim on the ground of discovery, or inheritance, or conquest, at any former period; but though he went in a peaceful manner, and with no power to take it, and could urge no claim to it whatever, yet he went with the utmost confidence that it would be his. He did not even expect to buy it—for he had no means to do this, and it seems never to have entered his mind to bargain for it in any way, except for the small portion that he needed for a burying ground.

(5.) He had no means of obtaining possession. He had no wealth to purchase it; no armies to conquer it; no title to it which could be enforced before the tribunals of the land. The prospect of obtaining it must have been distant, and probably he saw no means by which it was to be done. In such a case, his only hope could be in God.

(6.) It is not impossible that the enterprise in that age might have been treated by the friends of the patriarch as perfectly wild and visionary. The prevailing religion evidently was idolatry, and the claim which Abraham set up to a special call from the Most High, might have been deemed entirely fanatical. To start off on a journey through a pathless desert; to leave his country and home, and all that he held dear, when he himself knew not whither he went; to go with no means of conquest, but with the expectation that the distant and unknown land would be given him, could not but have been regarded as a singular instance of visionary hope. The whole transaction, therefore was in the highest degree an act of simple confidence in God, where there was no human basis or calculation, and where all the principles on which men commonly act would have led him to pursue just the contrary course. It is, therefore, not without reason, that the faith of Abraham is so commended.

{b} "city" Heb 12:22 13:14 {c} "builder and maker" Re 21:2,10

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed*. The word "herself" here—*auth*—implies that there was something remarkable in the fact that *she* should manifest this faith. Perhaps there may be reference here to the incredulity with which she at first received the announcement that she should have a child, Ge 18:11,13. Even her strong incredulity was overcome; and though everything seemed to render what was announced impossible, and though she was so much disposed to laugh at the very suggestion at first, yet her unbelief was overcome, and she ultimately credited the Divine promise. The apostle does not state the authority for his assertion that the strength of Sarah was derived from her faith, nor when particularly it was exercised. The argument seems to be, that here was a case where all human probabilities were against what was predicted, and where, therefore, there must have been simple trust in God. Nothing else but *faith* could have led her to believe that in her old age she would have borne a son.

When she was past age. She was at this time more than ninety years of age, Ge 17:17. Comp. Ge 18:11.

Because she judged him faithful who had promised. She had no other ground of confidence or expectation. All human probability was against the supposition that, at her time of life, she would be a mother.

{a} "Sarah" Ge 21:1,2 {b} "faithful" Heb 10:23

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Therefore sprang there even of one*. From a single individual. What is observed here by the apostle as worthy of remark is, that the whole Jewish people sprang from one man, and that, as the reward of his strong faith, he was made the father and founder of a nation.

And him as good as dead. So far as the subject under discussion is concerned. To human appearance there was no more probability that he would have a son at that period of life than that the dead would have.

So many as the stars in the sky, etc. An innumerable multitude. This was agreeable to the promise, Ge 15:5 22:17. The phrases here used are often employed to denote a vast multitude, as nothing appears more numerous than the stars of heaven, or than the sands that lie on the shores of the ocean. The strength of faith in this case was, that there was simple confidence in God in the fulfilment of a promise where all human probabilities were against it. This is, therefore, an illustration of the nature of faith. It does not depend on human reasoning, on analogy, on philosophical probabilities, on the foreseen operation of natural laws; but on the mere assurance of God—no matter what may be the difficulties to human view, or the improbabilities against it.

{c} "so many" Ge 17:17 Ro 4:17

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *These all died in faith*. That is those who had been just mentioned—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Sarah. It was true of Abel and Noah also, that they died in faith, but they are not included in *this* declaration, for the "promises" were not particularly entrusted to them; and if the word "these" be made to include them, it must include Enoch also, who did not die at all. The phrase here used, "these all *died in faith*," does not mean that they died in the exercise or possession of religion, but more strictly that they died not having possessed what was the object of their faith. They had been looking for something future, which they did not obtain during their lifetime, and died believing that it would yet be theirs.

Not having received the promises. That is, not having received the fulfilment of the promises; or the promised blessings. The promises themselves they had received. Comp. Lu 24:49 Ac 1:4,11,16 Ga 3:14

Heb 11:33,39. In all these places the word promise is used by metonymy *for the thing promised*.

But having seen them afar off. Having seen that they would be fulfilled in future times. Comp. Joh 8:56. It is probable that the apostle here means that they saw the entire fulfilment of all that the promises embraced in the future that is, the bestowment of the land of Canaan, the certainty of a numerous posterity, and of the entrance into the heavenly Canaan —the world of fixed and permanent rest. According to the reasoning of the apostle here, the "promises" to which they trusted included all these things.

And were persuaded of them. Had no doubt of their reality.

And embraced them. This word implies more than our word embrace frequently does; that is, *to receive as true*. It means, properly, *to draw to one's self*; and then to embrace, as one does a friend from whom he has been separated. It then means to greet, salute, welcome, and here means a joyful greeting of those promises; or a pressing them to the heart, as we do a friend. It was not a cold and formal reception of them, but a warm and hearty welcome. Such is the nature of true faith when it embraces the promises of salvation. No act of pressing a friend to the bosom is ever more warm and cordial.

And confessed that they were strangers. Thus Abraham said, Ge 23:4, "I am a stranger and a sojourner with you." That is, he regarded himself as a foreigner; as having no home and no possessions there. It was on this ground that he proposed to buy a burial place of the sons of Heth.

And pilgrims. This is the word— *parepidhmov*—which is used by Abraham, as rendered by the Seventy in Ge 23:4, and which is there translated "sojourner" in the common English version. The word *pilgrim* means, properly, a *wanderer, a traveller*, and particularly one who leaves his own country to visit a holy place. This sense does not *quite* suit the meaning here, or in Ge 23:4. The Hebrew word—

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means, properly, one who *dwells in a place*, and particularly one who is a mere resident without the rights of; a citizen. The Greek word means a *by-resident*; one who lives *by* another or among a people not his own. This is the idea here. It is not that they confessed themselves to be wanderers, or that they had left their home to visit a holy place, but that they *resided* as mere sojourners in a country that was not theirs. What might be their ultimate destination, or their purpose, is not implied in the meaning of the word. They were such as reside awhile among another people, but have no permanent home there.

On the earth. The phrase here used—*epi thv ghv*—might mean merely on the land of Canaan, but the apostle evidently uses it in a larger sense as denoting the earth in general. There can be no doubt that this accords with the views which the patriarchs had—regarding themselves not only as strangers in the land of Canaan, but feeling that the same thing was true in reference to their whole residence upon the earth—that it was not their permanent home.

{1} "in faith" "according to" {*} "promises" "the promised blessings" {d} "confessed" 1Ch 29:15 1Pe 2:11

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *For they that say such things*, etc. That speak of themselves as having come into' a land of strangers; and that negotiate for a small piece of land, not to cultivate, but to bury their dead. So we should think of any strange people coming among us now—who lived in tents; who frequently changed their residence; who became the purchasers of no land except to bury their dead, and who never spake of becoming permanent residents. We should think that they were in search of some place as their home, and that they had not yet found it. Such people were the Hebrew patriarchs. They lived and acted just as if they had not yet found a permanent habitation, but were travelling in search of one.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *And truly if they had been mindful of that country*, etc, If they had remembered it with sufficient interest and affection to have made them desirous to return.

They might have had opportunity to have returned. The journey was not so long or perilous that they could not have retraced their steps, it would have been no more difficult or dangerous for them to do that than it was to make the journey at first. This shows that their remaining as strangers and sojourners in the land of Canaan was voluntary. They preferred it, with all its inconveniences and hardships, to return to their native land. The same thing is true of all the people of God now. If they choose to return to the world, and to engage again in all its vain pursuits, there is nothing to hinder them. There are "opportunities" enough. There are abundant inducements held out. There are numerous gay and worldly friends who would regard it as a matter of joy and triumph to have them return to vanity and folly again. They would welcome them to their society; rejoice to have them participate in their pleasures; and be willing that they should share in the honours and the wealth of the world. And they might do it. There are multitudes of Christians who could grace, as they once did, the ball-room; who could charm the social party by song and wit; who could rise to the highest posts of office, or compete successfully with others in the race for the acquisition of fame. They have seen and tasted enough of the vain pursuits of the world, to satisfy them with their vanity; they are convinced of the sinfulness of making these things the great objects of living; their affections are now fixed on higher and nobler objects, and they choose not to return to those pursuits again, but to live as strangers and sojourners on the earth—for there is nothing more voluntary than religion.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly*. That is, at the time referred to when they confessed that they were strangers and sojourners, they showed that they sought a better country than the one which they had left. They lived as if they had no expectation of a permanent residence on earth, and were looking to another world. The argument of the apostle here

appears to be based on what is apparent from the whole history, that they had a confident belief that the land of Canaan would be given to "*their posterity*; but as for *themselves* they had no expectation of permanently dwelling there, but looked to a home in the heavenly country. Hence they formed no plans for conquest; they laid claim to no title in the soil; they made no purchases of farms for cultivation; they lived and died without owning any land, except enough to bury their dead. All this appears as if *they* looked for a final home in a "better country, even an heavenly."

Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God. Since they had such an elevated aim, he was willing to speak of himself as their God and Friend. They acted as became his friends, and he was not ashamed of the relation which he sustained to them. The language to which the apostle evidently refers here is that which is found in Ex 3:6, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." We are not to suppose that God is ever *ashamed* of anything that he does. The meaning here is, that they had acted in such a manner that it was fit that he should show towards them the character of a Benefactor, Protector, and Friend.

For he hath prepared for them a city. Such as they had expected—a heavenly residence, Heb 11:10. There is evidently here a reference to heaven, represented as a city—the New Jerusalem—prepared for his people by God himself. Comp. **See Barnes "Mt 25:34"**.

Thus they obtained what they had looked for by faith. The wandering and unsettled patriarchs to whom the promise was made, and who showed all their lives that they regarded themselves as strangers and pilgrims, were admitted to the home of permanent rest; and their posterity was ultimately admitted to the possession of the promised land. Nothing could more certainly demonstrate that the patriarchs believed in a future state than this passage. They did not expect a permanent home on earth. They made no efforts to enter into the possession of the promised land themselves. They quietly and calmly waited for the time when God would give it to their posterity; and, in the meantime, for themselves they looked forward to their permanent home in the heavens. Even in this early period of the world, therefore, there was the confident expectation of the future state. Comp. **See Barnes "Mt 22:31"**.

We may remark, that the life of the patriarchs was, in all essential respects, such as we should lead. They looked forward to heaven; they sought no permanent possessions here; they regarded themselves as strangers and pilgrims on the earth. So should we be. In our more fixed and settled habits of life; in our quiet homes; in our residence in the land in which we were born, and in the society of old and tried friends, we should yet regard ourselves as "strangers and sojourners." We have here no fixed abode. The houses in which we dwell will soon be occupied by others; the paths in which we go will soon be trod by the feet of others; the fields which we cultivate will soon be ploughed and sown and reaped by others. Others will read the books which we read; sit down at the tables where we sit; lie on the beds where we repose; occupy the chambers where we shall die, and from whence we shall be removed to our graves. If we *have* any permanent home, it is in heaven; and that we have the faithful lives of the patriarchs teach us, and the unerring word of God everywhere assures us.

{a} "their God" Ex 3:6,15 {b} "city" Heb 11:10

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *By faith Abraham*. The apostle had stated one strong instance of the faith of Abraham, and he now refers to one still more remarkable—the strongest illustration of faith, undoubtedly, which has ever been evinced in our world.

When he was tried. The word here used is rendered *tempted* in Mt 4:1,3, 16:1 19:3, 22:18,35, and in twenty-two other places in the New Testament; *prove*, in Joh 6:6; *hath gone about*, in Ac 24:6; *examine*, 2Co 13:6; and *tried*, in Re 2:2,10, 3:10.

It does not mean here, as it often does, to place inducements before one to lead him to do wrong, but to subject his faith to a trial in order to test its genuineness and strength. The meaning here is, that Abraham was placed in circumstances which showed what was the real strength of his confidence in God.

Offered up Isaac. That is, he showed that he was ready and willing to make the sacrifice, and would have done it if he had not been restrained by the voice of the angel, Ge 22:11,12. So far as the intention of Abraham was concerned, the deed was done, for he had made every preparation for the offering, and was actually about to take the life of his son.

And he that had received the promises offered up his only-begotten son. The promises particularly of a numerous posterity. The fulfilment of those promises depended on him whom he was now about to offer as a sacrifice. If Abraham had been surrounded with children, or if no special promise of a numerous posterity had been made to him, this act would not have been so remarkable. It would, in any case, have been a strong act of faith; it was peculiarly strong in his case, from the circumstances that he had an only son, and that the fulfilment of the promise depended on his life.

{c} "tried" Ge 22:1 Jas 2:21

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called*. Ge 21:12. A numerous posterity had been promised to him. It was there said expressly that this promise was not to be fulfilled through the son of Abraham by the bond-woman Hagar, but through Isaac. Of course, it was implied that Isaac was to reach manhood; and yet, notwithstanding this, and notwithstanding Abraham fully believed it, he prepared deliberately, in obedience to the Divine command, to put him to death. The phrase, "thy seed be called," means, that his posterity was to be named after Isaac, or was to descend only from him. The word "*called*," in the Scriptures, is often equivalent to the verb *to be*. See Isa 56:7. To *name or call* a thing, was the same as to say that it was, or that it existed. It does not mean here that his spiritual children were to be called or selected from among the posterity of Isaac, but that the posterity promised to Abraham would descend neither from Ishmael nor the sons of Keturah, but in the line of Isaac. This is a strong circumstance insisted on by the apostle, to show the strength of Abraham's faith. It was shown not only by his willingness to offer up the child of his old age—his only son by his beloved wife, but by his readiness, at the command of God, to sacrifice even him on whom the fulfilment of the promises depended.

{1} "Of whom" "To" {d} "That in Isaac" Ge 21:12

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead*. And that he *would do it*; for so Abraham evidently believed, and this idea is plainly implied in the whole narrative. There was no other way in which the promise could be fulfilled; and Abraham reasoned justly in the case. He had received the promise of a numerous posterity, he had been told expressly that it was to be through this favourite child, he was now commanded to put him to death as a sacrifice, and he prepared to do it. To fulfil these promises, therefore, there was no other way possible but for him to be raised up from the dead, and Abraham fully believed that it would be done. The child had been given to him at first in a supernatural manner, and he was prepared, therefore, to believe that he would be restored to him again by miracle. He did not doubt that he who had given him to him at first, in a manner so contrary to all human probability, could restore him again in a method as extraordinary, He *therefore*, anticipated that he would raise him up immediately from the dead. That this was the expectation of Abraham is apparent from the narrative in Ge 22:6: "And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder, and worship, and come again to you;" in the plural-

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-"and we will return;" that is, I and Isaac will return, for no other persons went with them, Ge 22:6. As Abraham went with the full expectation of sacrificing Isaac, and as he expected Isaac to return with him, it follows that he believed that God would raise him up immediately from the dead.

From whence also he received him in a figure. There has been great difference of opinion as to the sense of this passage, but it seems to me to be plain. The obvious interpretation is, that he then received him by his being raised up from the altar *as if* from the dead. He was to Abraham dead. He had given him up. He had prepared to offer him as a sacrifice. He lay there before him as one who was dead. From that altar he was raised up by direct Divine interposition, as if he was raised from the grave, and this was to Abraham a *figure* or a representation of the resurrection. Other interpretations may be seen in Stuart, *in loc*. The following circumstances will illustrate the strength of Abraham's faith in this remarkable transaction.

(1.) The strong persuasion on his mind that God had commanded this. In a case of this nature—where such a sacrifice was required—how natural would it have been for a more feeble faith to have doubted whether the command came from God! It might have been suggested to such a mind that this must be a delusion, or a temptation of Satan; that God could not require such a thing; and that whatever might be the appearance of a Divine command in the cases there must be some deception about it. Yet Abraham does not appear to have reasoned about it at all, or to have allowed the strong feelings of a father to come in to modify his conviction that God had commanded him to give up his son. What an example is this to us! And how ready should we be to yield up a son—an only son—when God comes himself and removes him from us.

(2.) The strength of his faith was seen in the fact that, in obedience to the simple command of God, all the strong feelings of a father were overcome. On the one hand, there were his warm affections for an only son; and on the other, there was the simple command of God. They came in collisions but Abraham did not hesitate a moment. The strong paternal feeling was sacrificed at once. What an example this, too, for us! When the command of God and our own attachments come

into collision, we should not hesitate a moment. God is to be obeyed. His command and arrangements are to be yielded to, though most tender ties are rent asunder, and though the heart bleeds.

(3.) The strength of his faith was seen in the fact that, in obedience to the command of God, he resolved to do what in the eyes of the world would be regarded as a most awful crime. There is no crime of a higher grade than the murder of a son by the hand of a father. So it is now estimated by the world, and so it would have been in the time of Abraham. All the laws of God and of society appeared to be against the act which Abraham was about to commit, and he went forth not ignorant of the estimate which the world would put on this deed if it were known. How natural, in such circumstances, would it have been to argue, that God *could not* possibly give such a command; that it was against all the laws of heaven and earth; that there was required in this what God and man alike must and would pronounce to be wrong and abominable! Yet Abraham did not hesitate. The command of God in the case was, to his mind, a sufficient proof that this was right; and it should teach us that whatever our Maker commands us should be done—no matter what may be the estimate affixed to it by human laws, and no matter how it may be regarded by the world.

(4.) The strength of his faith was seen in the fact, that there was a positive promise of God to himself which would *seem* to be frustrated by what he was about to do. God had expressly promised to him a numerous posterity, and had said that it was to be through this son. How could this be if he was put to death as a sacrifice? And how *could* God command such a thing when his promise was thus positive? Yet Abraham did not hesitate. It was not for him to *reconcile* these things; it was his to *obey*. He did not doubt that *somehow* all that God had said would prove to be true; and as he saw but one way in which it could be done—by his being immediately restored to life—he concluded that that was to be the way. So when God utters his will to us, it is ours simply to obey. It is not to inquire in what way his commands or revealed truth can be reconciled with other things. He will himself take care of that. It is ours at once to yield to what he commands, and to believe that somehow all that he has required and said will be consistent with everything else which he has uttered.

(5.) The strength of the faith of Abraham was seen in his belief that God would raise his son from the dead. Of that he had no doubt. But what evidence had he of that? It had not been promised. No case of the kind had ever occurred; and the subject was attended with all the difficulties which attend it now. But Abraham believed it; for, first, there was no other way in which the promise of God could be fulfilled; and, second, such a thing would be no more remarkable than what had already occurred. It was as easy for God to raise him from the dead as it was to give him at first, contrary to all the probabilities of the case—-and he did not, therefore, doubt that it would be so. Is it less easy for us to believe the doctrine of the resurrection than it was for Abraham? Is the subject attended with more difficulties now than it was then? The faith of Abraham, in this remarkable instance, shows us that the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, notwithstanding the limited revelations then enjoyed, and all the obvious difficulties of the case, was early believed in the world; and as those difficulties are no greater now, and as new light has been shed upon it by subsequent revelations, and especially as, in more than one instance, the dead have been actually raised, those difficulties should not be allowed to make us doubt it, now.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come*. See Ge 27:26-40. The meaning is, that he pronounced a blessing on them in respect to their future condition. This was by faith in God, who had communicated it to him, and in full confidence that he would accomplish all that was here predicted. The act of faith here was simply that which believes that all that God says is true. There were no human probabilities at the time when these prophetic announcements were made, which could have been the basis of his calculation; but all that he said must have rested merely on the belief that God had revealed it to him. A blessing was pronounced on each, of a very different nature, but Isaac had no doubt that both would be fulfilled.

{a} "Isaac blessed" Ge 27:27-40

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *By faith Jacob, when he was a dying*. Ge 47:31 Ge 48:1-20. *That is, when he was about to die*. He saw his death near when he pronounced this blessing on Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph.

And worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff. This is an exact quotation from the Septuagint in Ge 47:31. The English version of that place is, "and Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head," which is a proper translation, in the main, of the word

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—*mittch*. That word, however, with different points—

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—*mattch*, means, a branch, a bough, a rod, a staff, and the translators of the Septuagint have so rendered it. The Masoretic points are of no authority, and either translation, therefore, would be proper. The word rendered "head" in Ge 47:31— "bed's *head*"—

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—*rosh*, means, properly, head, but may there mean the top of anything, and there is no impropriety in applying it to the head or top of a staff. The word rendered in Ge 47:31, *bowed*—

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—implies, properly, the idea of worshipping. It is bowing, or prostration for the purpose of worship or homage. Though the Septuagint and the apostle here have, therefore, given a somewhat different version from that commonly given of the Hebrew, and sustained by the Masoretic pointing, yet it cannot be demonstrated that the version is unauthorized, or that it is not a fair translation of the Hebrew. It has also the probabilities of the case in its favour. Jacob was tenderly affected in view of the goodness of God, and of the assurance that he would be conveyed from Egypt when he died, and buried in the land of his fathers. Deeply impressed with this, nothing was more natural than that the old man should lean reverently forward, and incline his head upon the top of his staff, and adore the covenant faithfulness of his God. Such an image is much more natural and probable than that he should "bow upon his bed's head"—a phrase which at best is not very intelligible. If this be the true account, then the apostle does not refer here to what was done when he "blessed

the sons of Joseph," but to an act expressive of strong faith in God which had occurred just before. The meaning then is, "By faith when about to die he blessed the sons of Joseph; and by faith also, he reverently bowed before God in the belief that when he died his remains would be conveyed to the promised land, and expressed his gratitude in an act of worship, leaning reverently on the top of his staff." The order in which these things are mentioned is of no consequence, and thus the whole difficulty in the case vanishes. *Both* the acts here referred to were expressive of strong confidence in God.

{b} "both" Ge 48:5-20 {c} "leaning" Ge 47:31

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *By faith Joseph, when he died*. When about to die. See Ge 50:24,25.

Made mention of the departing of the children of Israel. Marg. "remembered." The meaning is, that he called this to their mind; he spake of it.

And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die; and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." This prediction of Joseph *could* have rested only on faith in the promise of God. There were no events then occurring which would be likely to lead to this, and nothing which could be a basis of calculation that it would be so, except what God had spoken. The faith of Joseph, then, was simple confidence in God; and its strength was seen in his firm conviction that what had been promised would be fulfilled, even when there were no appearances that, to human view, justified it.

And gave commandment concerning his bones. Ge 50:25,26. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel; saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence." He had such a firm belief that they would possess the land of promise, that he exacted an oath of them that they would remove his remains with them, that he might be buried in the land of his fathers. He could not have exacted this oath, nor could they have taken it, unless both he and they had a sure confidence that what God had spoken would be performed.

{a} "Joseph" Ge 50:24,25 {d} "made mention" "remembered"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *By faith Moses, when he was born*. That is, by the faith of his parents. The faith of Moses himself is commended in the following verses. The statement of the apostle here is that his parents were led to preserve his life by *their* confidence in God. They believed that he was destined to some great purpose, and that he would be spared, notwithstanding all the probabilities against it, and all the difficulties in the case.

Was hid three months of his parents. By his parents. In Ex 2:2, it is said that it was done by his mother. The truth doubtless was, that the mother was the agent in doing it—since the concealment, probably, could be better effected by one than where two were employed—but that the father also concurred in it is morally certain. The concealment was at first, probably in their own house. The

command seems to have been (Ex 1:22,) that the child should be cast into the river as soon as born. This child was concealed in the hope that some way might be found out by which his life might be spared.

Because they saw he was a proper child. A fair, or beautiful child— *asteion*. The word properly means, *pertaining* to a city, (from *astu, a city*;) then *urbane, polished, elegant; then fair, beautiful*. In Ac 7:20, it is said that he was "*fair to God*," (Marg. ;) that is, exceedingly fair, or very handsome. His extraordinary beauty seems to have been the reason which particularly influenced his parents to attempt to preserve him. It is not impossible that they supposed that his uncommon beauty indicated that he was destined to some important service in life, and that they were on that account the more anxious to save him.

And they were not afraid of the king's commandment. Requiring that all male children should be given up to be thrown into the Nile. That is, they were not so alarmed, or did not so dread the king, as to be induced to comply with the command. The strength of the faith of the parents of Moses appears,

(1.) because the command of Pharaoh to destroy all the male children was positive, but they had so much confidence in God as to disregard it.

(2.) Because there was a strong improbability that their child could be saved. They themselves found it impossible to conceal him longer than three months; and when it was discovered, there was every probability that the law would be enforced, and that the child would be put to death. Perhaps there was reason also to apprehend that the parents would be punished for disregarding the authority of the king.

(3.) Because they probably believed that their child was destined to some important work. They thus committed him to God instead of complying with the command of an earthly monarch; and, against strong probabilities in the case, they believed that it was possible that in some way he might be preserved alive. The remarkable result showed that their faith was not unfounded.

{b} "hid three months" Ex 2:2 {*) "of" "by" {c} "king's commandment" Ex 1:16,22.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *By faith Moses*. He had confidence in God when he called him to be the leader of his people. He believed that he was able to deliver them; and he so trusted in him that he was willing, at his command, to forego the splendid prospects which opened before him in Egypt.

When he was come to years. Gr. "*being great*;" that is, when he was grown up to manhood. He was at that time forty years of age. **See Barnes "Ac 7:23"**.

He took this step, therefore, in the full maturity of his judgment, and when there was no danger of being influenced by the ardent passions of youth.

Refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. When saved from the ark in which he was placed on the Nile, he was brought up for the daughter of Pharaoh, Ex 2:9. He seems to have been adopted by her, and trained up as her own son. What prospects this opened before him is not certainly known. There is no probability that he would be the heir to the crown of Egypt, as is often affirmed, for there is no proof that the crown descended in the line of daughters; nor, if it did, is there any

probability that it would descend on an adopted son of a daughter. But his situation could not but be regarded as highly honourable, and as attended with great advantages. It gave him the opportunity of receiving the best education which the times and country afforded—an opportunity of which he seems to have availed himself to the utmost. **See Barnes "Ac 7:22"**.

It would doubtless be connected with important offices in the state. It furnished the opportunity of a life of ease and pleasure—such as they commonly delight in who reside at courts. And it doubtless opened before him the prospect of wealth, for there is no improbability in supposing that he would be the heir of the daughter of a rich monarch. Yet all this, it is said, he "*refused*." There is indeed no express mention made of his *formally* and *openly* refusing it, but his leaving the court, and identifying himself with his oppressed countrymen was, in fact, a refusal of these high honours, and of these brilliant prospects. It is not impossible that, when he became acquainted with his real history, there was some open and decided refusal, on his part, to be regarded as the son of the daughter of this heathen monarch.

{d} "Moses" Ex 2:10,11

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God*. With those whom God had chosen to be his people—the Israelites, They were then oppressed and downtrodden; but they were the descendants of Abraham, and were those whom God had designed to be his peculiar people. Moses saw that if he cast in his lot with them, he must expect trials. They were poor, and crushed, and despised—a nation of slaves. If he identified himself with them, his condition would be like theirs—one of great trial; if he sought to elevate and deliver them, such an undertaking could not but be one of great peril and hardship. Trial and danger, want and care, would follow from any course which he could adopt, and he knew that an effort to rescue them from bondage must be attended with the sacrifice of all the comforts and honour which he enjoyed at court. Yet he "*chose*" this. He on the whole preferred it. He left the court, not because he was driven away; not because there was nothing there to gratify ambition; or to be a stimulus to avarice; and not on account of harsh treatment—for there is no intimation that he was not treated with all the respect and honour due to his station, his talents, and his learning, but because he deliberately *preferred* to share the trials and sorrows of the friends of God. So every one who becomes a friend of God, and casts in his lot with his people, though he may anticipate that it will be attended with persecution, with poverty, and with scorn, prefers this to all the pleasures of a life of gaiety and sin, and to the most brilliant prospects of wealth and fame which this world can offer.

Than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. We are not to suppose that Moses, even at the court of Pharaoh, was leading a life of vicious indulgence. The idea is, that sins were practised there such as those in which pleasure is sought; and that if he had remained there it must have been because he loved the pleasures of a sinful court and a sinful life, rather than the favour of God. We may learn from this,

(1.) that there is a degree of pleasure in sin. It does not deserve to be called happiness and the apostle does not call it so. It is "*pleasure*," excitement, hilarity, merriment, amusement. *Happiness*

is more solid and enduring than "pleasure;" and solid happiness is not found in the ways of sin. But it cannot be denied that there is a degree of *pleasure* which maybe found in amusement; in the excitement of the ballroom; in feasting and revelry; in sensual enjoyments. All which wealth and splendour, music and dancing, sensual gratifications, and the more refined pursuits in the circles of fashion can furnish, may be found in a life of irreligion; and if disappointment, and envy, and sickness, and mortified pride, and bereavements do not occur, the children of vanity and sin can find no inconsiderable enjoyment in these things. They say they do; and there is no reason to doubt the truth of their own testimony in the case. They call *it* a "life of pleasure;" and it is not proper to withhold from it the appellation which they choose to give it. It is not the most pure or elevated kind of enjoyment, but it would be unjust to deny that there is any enjoyment in such a course.

(2.) It is only "for a season." It will all soon pass away. Had Moses lived at the court of Pharaoh all his days, it would have been only for a little "season." These pleasures soon vanish, for

(a.) life itself is short at best; and if a career of "pleasure" is pursued through the whole of the ordinary period allotted to man, it is very brief

(b.) Those who live for pleasure often abridge their own lives. Indulgence brings disease in its train, and the votaries of sensuality usually die young. The art has never been yet discovered of combining intemperance and sensuality with length of days. If a man wishes a reasonable prospect of long life, he must be temperate and virtuous. Indulgence in vice wears out the nervous and muscular system, and destroys the powers of life—just as a machine without balance-wheel or governor would soon tear itself to pieces.

(c.) Calamity, disappointment, envy, and rivalship, mar such a life of pleasure—and he who enters on it, from causes which he cannot control, finds it very short. And,

(d.) compared with eternity, oh how brief is the longest life spent in the ways of sin. Soon it must be over—and then the unpardoned sinner enters on an immortal career where pleasure is for ever unknown!

(3.) In view of all the "pleasures" which sin can furnish, and in view of the most brilliant prospects which this world can hold out, religion enables man to pursue a different path. They who become the friends of God are willing to give up all those fair and glittering anticipations, and to submit to whatever trials may be incident to a life of self-denying piety. Religion, with all its privations and sacrifices, is preferred, nor there ever is occasion to regret the choice. Moses deliberately made that choice: nor in all the trials which succeeded it—in all the cares incident to his great office in conducting the children of Israel to the promised land—in all their ingratitude and rebellion—is there the least evidence that he ever once wished himself back again that he might enjoy "the pleasures of sin" in Egypt.

{e} "choosing" Ps 84:10

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Esteeming the reproach of Christ*. Marg. "For;" that is, on account of Christ. This means either that he was willing to bear the reproaches incident to his belief that the Messiah would come, and that he gave up his fair prospects in Egypt with that expectation; or that he endured such

reproaches as Christ suffered; or the apostle uses the expression as a sort of technical phrase, well understood in his time, to denote sufferings endured in the cause of religion. Christians at that time would naturally describe all sufferings on account of religion as endured *in the cause of Christ*; and Paul, therefore, may have used this phrase to denote sufferings in the cause of religion—meaning that Moses suffered what, when the apostle wrote, would be called "the reproaches of Christ." It is not easy, or perhaps possible, to determine which of these interpretations is the correct one. The most respectable names may be adduced in favour of each, and every reader must be left to adopt his own view of that which is correct. The original will admit of either of them. The general idea is, that he would be reproached for the course which he pursued. He could not expect to leave the splendours of a court, and undertake what he did, without subjecting himself to trials. He would be *blamed* by the Egyptians for his interference in freeing their "slaves," and in bringing so many calamities upon their country, and he would be exposed to ridicule for his folly in leaving his brilliant prospects at court to become identified with an oppressed and despised people. It is rare that men are zealous in doing good without exposing themselves both to blame and to ridicule.

Greater riches. Worth more; of greater value. Reproach *itself* is not desirable; but reproach, when a man receives it in an effort to do good to others, is worth more to him than gold, 1Pe 4:13,14. The scars which an old soldier has received in the defence of his country are more valued by him than his pension; and the reproach which a good man receives in endeavouring to save others is a subject of greater joy to him than would be all the wealth which could be gained in a life of sin.

Than the treasures in Egypt. It is implied here, that Moses had a prospect of inheriting large treasures in Egypt, and that he voluntarily gave them up to be the means of delivering his nation from bondage. Egypt abounded in wealth; and the adopted son of the daughter of the king would naturally be heir to a great estate.

For he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. The "recompence of the reward" here referred to must mean the blessedness of heaven—for he had no earthly reward to look to. He had no prospect of pleasure, or wealth, or honour, in his undertaking. If he had sought these, so far as human sagacity could foresee, he would have remained at the court of Pharaoh. The declaration here proves that it is right to have respect to the rewards of heaven in serving God. It does not prove that this was the only or the *main* motive which induced Moses to abandon his prospects at court; nor does it prove that this should be our main or only motive in leading a life of piety. If it were, our religion would be mere selfishness. But it is right that we should desire the rewards and joys of heaven, and that we should allow the prospect of those rewards and joys to influence us as a motive to do our duty to God, and to sustain us in our trials. Comp. Php 3:8-11,13,14.

{1} "of" "For" {a} "Christ" Heb 13:13 {b} "recompense" Heb 10:35

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *By faith he forsook Egypt*. Some have understood this of the first time in which Moses forsook Egypt, when he fled into Midian, as recorded in Ex 2; the majority of expositors have supposed that it refers to the time when he left Egypt to conduct the Israelites to the promised land. That the latter is the time referred to is evident from the fact that it is said that he did "not fear the

wrath of the king." When Moses first fled to the land of Midian it is expressly said that he went because he did fear the anger of Pharaoh for his having killed an Egyptian, Ex 2:14,15. He was at that time in fear of his life; but when he left Egypt at the head of the Hebrew people, he had no such apprehensions. God conducted him out with "an high hand;" and throughout all the events connected with that remarkable deliverance, he manifested no dread of Pharaoh, and had no apprehension from what he could do. He went forth, indeed, at the head of his people when all the power of the king was excited to destroy them, but he went confiding in God; and this is the faith referred to here.

For he endured. He persevered, amidst all the trials and difficulties connected with his leading forth the people from bondage.

As seeing him who is invisible. As if he saw God. He had no more doubt that God had called him to this work, and that he would sustain him, than if he saw him with his bodily eyes. This is a most accurate account of the nature of faith. Comp. **See Barnes "Heb 11:1"**.

{c} "wrath of king" Ex 10:28,29 {d} "him" 1Ti 1:17

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *Through faith he kept the passover*. Gr., "he *made pepoihke* —the passover," which means more, it seems to me, than that he merely kept or celebrated it. It implies that he instituted this rite, and made the arrangements for its observance. There is reference to the special agency, and the special faith which he had in its institution. The faith in the case was confidence that this would be the means of preserving the firstborn of the Israelites, when the angel should destroy the firstborn of the Egyptians, and also that it would be celebrated as a perpetual memorial of this great deliverance. On the Passover, **See Barnes "Mt 26:2"**.

And the sprinkling of blood. The blood of the paschal lamb on the lintels and door-posts of the houses, Ex 12:22.

Lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them. "The firstborn of the Egyptians, Ex 12:23. The apostle has thus enumerated some of the things which illustrated the faith of Moses. The *strength* of his faith may be seen by a reference to some of the circumstances which characterized it.

(1.) It was such confidence in God as to lead him to forsake the most flattering prospects of worldly enjoyment. I see no evidence, indeed, that he was the heir to the throne; but he was evidently heir to great wealth; he was encompassed with all the means of worldly pleasure; he had every opportunity for a life of literary and scientific pursuits; he was eligible to high and important trusts; he had a rank and station which would be regarded as one of the most honoured and enviable on earth. None of those who are mentioned before in this chapter were required to make just such sacrifices as this. Neither Abel, nor Noah, nor Enoch, was called to forsake such brilliant worldly prospects; and though Abraham was called to a higher act of faith when commanded to give up his beloved son, yet there were some circumstances of trial in the case of Moses, illustrating the nature of faith, which did not exist in the case of Abraham. Moses, in the maturity of life, and with everything around him that is usually regarded by men as objects of ambition, was ready to forego

it all. So, *wherever* true faith exists, there is a readiness to abandon the hope of gain, and brilliant prospects of distinction, and fascinating pleasures, in obedience to the command of God.

(2.) Moses entered on an undertaking wholly beyond the power of man to accomplish, and against every human probability of success. It was no less than that of restoring to freedom two millions of downtrodden, oppressed, and dispirited slaves, and conducting aged and feeble men, tender females, helpless children, with numerous flocks and herds, across barren wastes to a distant land. He undertook this against the power of probably the most mighty monarch of his time; from the midst of a warlike nation; and when the whole nation would be kindled into rage at the loss of so many slaves, and when he might expect that all the power of their wrath would descend on him and his undisciplined and feeble hosts. He did this when he had no wealth that he could employ to furnish provisions or the means of defence; no armies at his command to encircle his people on their march; and even no influence among the people himself, and with every probability that they would disregard him. Comp. Ex 3:11 4:1. He did this when the whole Hebrew people were to be aroused to willingness to enter on the great undertaking; when there was every probability that they would meet with formidable enemies in the way, and when there was nothing human whatever on which the mind could fix as a basis of calculation of success. If there ever was any undertaking commenced opposed to every human probability of success, it was that of delivering the Hebrew people, and conducting them to the promised land. To human view it was quite as hopeless and impracticable as it would be now for a stranger from Africa, claiming to be a native prince there, and to have a commission from God, to liberate the two and a half millions of slaves in this country, and conduct them to the land of their fathers. In all the difficulties and discouragements of the undertaking of Moses, therefore, his only hope of success must have arisen from his confidence in God.

(3.) It was an undertaking where there were many certain trials before him. The people whom he sought to deliver were poor and oppressed. An attempt to rescue them would bring down the wrath of the mighty monarch under whom they were. They were a people unaccustomed to self-government, and, as the result proved, prone to ingratitude and rebellion. The journey before him lay through a dreary waste, where there was every prospect that there would be a want of food and water, and where he might expect to meet with formidable enemies. In all these things his only hope must have been in God. It was he only who could deliver them from the grasp of the tyrant; who could conduct them through the wilderness; who could provide for their wants in the desert; and who could defend a vast multitude of women and children from the enemies which they would be likely to encounter.

(4.) There was nothing in this to gratify ambition, or to promise an earthly reward. All these prospects he gave up when he left the court of Pharaoh. To be the leader of a company of emancipated slaves through a pathless desert to a distant land, had nothing in itself that could gratify the ambition of one who had been bred at the most magnificent court on earth, and who had enjoyed every advantage which the age afforded to qualify him to fill any exalted office. The result showed that Moses never designed to be himself the king of the people whom he led forth, and that he had no intention of aggrandizing his own family in the case.

{e} "passover" Ex 12:21

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land*. Ex 14:22,29. That is, it was only by confidence in God that they were able to do this. It was not by power which they had to remove the waters, and to make a passage for themselves; and it was not by the operation of any natural causes. It is not to be supposed that all who passed through the Red Sea had saving faith. The assertion of the apostle is, that the passage was made in virtue of strong confidence in God, that if it had not been for this confidence the passage could not have been made at all. Of this no one can entertain a doubt who reads the history of that remarkable transaction.

Which the Egyptians assaying to do, were drowned. Ex 14:27,28. Evidently referred to here as showing the effects of not having faith in God, and of what must inevitably have befallen the Israelites if they had had no faith. The destruction of the Egyptians by the return of the waters, in accordance with natural laws, showed that the Israelites would have been destroyed in the passage, if a Divine energy had not been employed to prevent it. On the passage through the Red Sea, see Robinson's Biblical Researches, vol..i., pp. 81—86.

{a} "passed through" Ex 14:22,29 {*} "assaying" "attempting"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11 - Verse 30

Verse 30. *By faith the walls of Jericho fell down*, etc. Jos 6:12-20. That is, it was not by any natural causes, or by any means that were in themselves adapted to secure such a result. It was not because they fell of themselves; nor because they were assailed by the hosts of the Israelites; nor was it because there was any natural tendency in the blowing of horns to cause them to fall. None of these things were true; and it was only by confidence in God that means so little adapted to such a purpose could have been employed at all; and it was only by continued faith in him that they could have been persevered in day by day, when no impression whatever was made. The *strength* of the faith evinced on this occasion appears from such circumstances as these: that there was no natural tendency in the means used to produce the effect; that there was great apparent improbability that the effect would follow that they might be exposed to much ridicule from those within the city for attempting to demolish their strong walls in this manner, and from the fact that the city was encircled day after day without producing any result. This may teach us the propriety and necessity of faith in similar circumstances. Ministers of the gospel often preach where there seems to be as little prospect of beating down the opposition in the human heart by the message which they deliver, as there was of demolishing the walls of Jericho by the blowing of rams' horns, They blow the gospel trumpet from week to week and month to month, and there seems to be no tendency in the strong citadel of the heart to yield. Perhaps the only apparent result is to excite ridicule and scorn. Yet let them not despair. Let them blow on. Let them still lift up their voice with faith in God, and in due time the walls of the citadel will totter and fall. God has power over the human heart, as he had over Jericho; and in our darkest day of discouragement, let us remember that we are never in circumstances indicating *less* probability of success, from any apparent tendency in the means used

to accomplish the result, than those were who encompassed this heathen city. With similar confidence in God we may hope for similar success.

{b} "Jericho" Jos 6:12-20

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11 - Verse 31

Verse 31. *By faith the harlot Rahab*. She resided in Jericho, Jos 2:1. When Joshua crossed the Jordan, he sent two men as spies to her house, and she saved them by concealment from the enemies that would have destroyed their lives. For this act of hospitality and kindness, they assured her of safety when the city should be destroyed, and directed her to give an indication of her place of abode to the invading Israelites, that her house might be spared, Jos 2:18,19. In the destruction of the city, she was accordingly preserved, Jos 6. The apostle seems to have selected this case as illustrating the nature of faith, partly because it occurred at Jericho, of which he had just made mention, and partly to show that strong faith had been exercised not only by the patriarchs, and by those who were confessed to be great and good, but by those in humble life, and whose earlier conduct had been far from the ways of virtue. *Calvin*. Much perplexity has been felt in reference to this case, and many attempts have been made to remove the difficulty. The main difficulty has been that a woman of this character should be enumerated among those who were eminent for piety; and many expositors have endeavoured to show that the word rendered *harlot* does not necessarily denote a woman of abandoned character, but may be used to denote a *hostess*. This definition is given by Schleusner, who says that the word may mean one who prepares and sells food, and who receives strangers to entertain them. Others have supposed that the word means an *idolatress*, because those devoted to idolatry were frequently of abandoned character. But there are no clear instances in which the Greek word and the corresponding Hebrew word—

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—is used in this sense. The usual and the fair meaning of the word is that which is given in our translation, and there is no good reason why that signification should not be retained here. It is not implied by the use of the word here, however, that Rahab was an harlot at the time to which the apostle refers; but the meaning is, that this *had been* her character, so that it was proper to designate her by this appellation.

In regard to this case, therefore, and in explanation of the difficulties which have been felt in reference to it, we may remark,

(1.) that the obvious meaning of this word here and of the corresponding place in Jos 2:4 is, that she had been a woman of abandoned character, and that she was known as such. That she might have been also a hostess, or one who kept a house of entertainment for strangers, is at the same time by no means improbable, since it not unfrequently happened, in ancient as well as modern times, that females of this character kept such houses. It might have been the fact that her house was known merely as a house of entertainment that led the spies who went to Jericho to seek a lodging there. It would be natural that strangers coming into a place should act in this respect as all other travellers did, and should apply for entertainment at what was known as a public house.

(2.) There is no improbability in supposing that her course of life had been changed either before their arrival, or in consequence of it. They were doubtless wise and holy men. Men would not be selected for an enterprise like this in whom the leader of the Hebrew army could not put entire confidence. It is not unfair, then, to suppose that they were men of eminent piety as well as sagacity. Nor is there any improbability in supposing that they would acquaint this female with the history of their people, with their remarkable deliverance from Egypt, and with the design for which they were about to invade the land of Canaan. There is evidence that some such representations made a deep impression on her mind, and led to a change in her views and feelings, for she not only received them with the usual proofs of hospitality, but jeoparded her own life in their defence, when she might easily have betrayed them. This fact showed that she had a firm belief that they were what they professed to be—-the people of God—and that she was willing to identify her interests with theirs.

(3.) This case—supposing that she had been a woman of bad character, but now was truly converted—does not stand alone. Other females of a similar character have been converted, and have subsequently led lives of piety; and though the number is not comparatively great, yet the truth of God has shown its power in renewing and sanctifying some at least of this, the most abandoned and degraded class of human beings. "Publicans and *harlots*," said the Saviour, "go into the kingdom of God," Mt 21:31. Rahab seems to have been one of them; and her case shows that such instances of depravity are not hopeless. This record, therefore, is one of encouragement for the most abandoned sinners; and one too which shows that strangers, even in a public house, may do good to those who have wandered far from God and virtue, and that we should never despair of saving the most abandoned of our race.

(4.) There is no need of supposing that the apostle in commending this woman approved of all that she did. That she was not perfect is true. That she did some things which cannot be vindicated is true also—and who does not? But admitting all that may be said about any imperfection in her character, (comp. Jos 2:4,) it was still true that she had *strong faith*—and that is all that the apostle commends. We are under no more necessity of vindicating all that she did, than we are all that David or Peter did—or all that is now done by those who have the highest claims to virtue.

(5.) She had strong faith. It was only a strong belief that Jehovah was the true God, and that the children of Israel were his people, which would have led her to screen these strangers at the peril of her own life; and when the city was encompassed, and the wails fell and the tumult of battle raged, she showed her steady confidence in their fidelity, and in God, by using the simple means on which she was told the safety of herself and her family depended, Jos 6:22,23.

With them that believed not. The inhabitants of the idolatrous city of Jericho. The margin is, "*were disobedient*." The more correct rendering, however, is, as in the text, *believed not*. They evinced no such faith as Rahab had, and they were therefore destroyed.

Received the spies with peace. With friendliness and kindness, Jos 2:1, seq.

{c} "Rahab" Jos 6:23

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11 - Verse 32

Verse 32. *And what shall I more say*? "There are numerous other instances, showing the strength of faith, which there is not time to mention."

For the time would fail me to tell. To recount all that they did; all the illustrations of the strength and power of faith evinced in their lives.

Of Gedeon. The history of Gideon is detailed at length in Jud 6,7, and there can be no doubt that in his wars he was sustained and animated by strong confidence in God.

And of Barak. Jud 4. Barak, at the command of Deborah the prophetess, who summoned him to war in the name of the Lord, encountered and overthrew the hosts of Sisera. His yielding to her summons, and his valour in battle against the enemies of the Lord, showed that he was animated by faith.

And of Samson. See the history of Samson in Jud 14-16.

It is not by any means necessary to suppose that, in making mention of Samson, the apostle approved of all that he did. All that he commends is his faith, and though he was a very imperfect man, and there were many things in his life which neither sound morality nor religion can approve, yet it was still true that he evinced, on some occasions, remarkable confidence in God, by relying on the strength which he gave him. This was particularly true in the instance where he made a great slaughter of the enemies of the Lord and of his country. See Jud 15:14 16:28.

And of Jephthae. The story of Jephtha is recorded in Jud 11. The mention of his name among those who were distinguished for faith, has given occasion to much perplexity among expositors. That a man of so harsh and severe a character, a man who sacrificed his own daughter in consequence of a rash vow, should be numbered among those who were eminent for piety as if he were one distinguished for piety also, has seemed to be wholly inconsistent and improper. The same remark, however, may be made respecting Jephtha which has been made of Samson and others. The apostle does not commend all which they did. He does not deny that they were very imperfect men, nor that they did many things which can not be approved or vindicated. He commends only *one thing—their faith*; and in these instances he particularly alludes doubtless to their remarkable valour and success in delivering their country from their foes, and from the foes of God. In this, it is implied, that they regarded themselves as called to this work by the Lord, and as engaged in his service; and that they went forth to battle depending on his protection, and nerved by confidence in him as the God of their country. Their views of God himself might be very erroneous; their notions of religion—as was the case with Jephtha—very imperfect and obscure; many things in their lives might be wholly inconsistent with what we should now regard as demanded by religion, and still it might be true that, in their efforts to deliver their country, they relied on the aid of God, and were animated to put forth extraordinary efforts, and were favoured with extraordinary success from their confidence in him. In thee case of Jephtha, all that is necessary to suppose in order to see the force of the illustration of the apostle is, that he had strong confidence in God—the God of his nation—and that, under the influence of this, he made extraordinary efforts in repelling his foes. And this is not unnatural, or improbable, even on the supposition that he was not a pious man. How many a Greek, and Roman, and Goth, and Mohammedan, has been animated to extraordinary courage in battle by confidence in the gods which they worshipped! That Jephtha had this no one can doubt. See Jud 11:29-32. Even in the great and improper sacrifice of his only daughter; which the obvious interpretation of the record respecting him, in Jud 11:39, leads us to suppose he made, he did it as an offering to the Lord; and under these mistaken views of duty he showed, by the

greatest sacrifice which a man could make—that of an only child —that he was disposed to do what he believed was required by religion.

A full examination of the case of Jephtha, and of the question whether he really sacrificed his daughter, may be found in Warburton's Divine Legation of Moses, Book ix. Notes; in Bush's Notes on Judges xi.; and in the Biblical Repository for January, 1843. It is not necessary to go into the much-litigated inquiry here whether he really put his daughter to death—for, whether he did or not, it is equally true that he evinced strong confidence in God. If he did do it in obedience, as he supposed, to duty and to the Divine command, no higher instance of faith in God, as having a right to dispose of all that he had, could be furnished; if he did not, his eminent valour and success in battle show that he relied for strength and victory on the arm of Jehovah. The single reason why the piety of Jephtha has ever been called in question, has been the fact that he sacrificed his own daughter. If he did not do that, no one will doubt his claims to an honoured rank among those who have evinced faith in God.

Of David also. Commended justly as an eminent example of a man who had faith in God, though it cannot be supposed that all that he did was approved.

And Samuel. In early youth distinguished for his piety, and manifesting it through his life. See 1 Sam.

And of the prophets. They were men who had strong confidence in the truth of what God directed them to foretell, and who were ever ready, depending on him, to make known the most unwelcome truths to their fellow-men, even at the peril of their lives.

{*} "Gedeon" "Gideon" {b} "Gideon" Jud 6,7

{c} "Barak" Jud 4:6 {d} "Samson" Jud 15,16

{e} "Jepthae" Jud 11:32 {+} "Jepthae" "Jepthah" {f} "David" 1Sa 17:45 {g} "Samuel" 1Sa 7:9

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11 - Verse 33

Verse 33. *Who through faith subdued kingdoms*. That is, those specified in the previous verses, and others like them. The meaning is, that some of them subdued kingdoms, others obtained promises, etc. Thus, Joshua subdued the nations of Canaan; Gideon this Midianites; Jephtha the Ammonites; David the Philistines, Amalekites, Jebusites, Edomites, etc.

Wrought righteousness. Carried the laws of justice into execution, particularly on guilty nations. They executed the great purposes of God in punishing the wicked, and in cutting off his foes.

Obtained promises. Or obtained promised blessings, (*Bloomfield*, *Stuart*;) that is, they obtained, as a result of their faith, promises of blessings on their posterity in future times.

Stopped the mouths of lions. As Samson, Jud 14:6; David, 1Sa 17:34, seq.; and particularly Daniel, Da 6:7, seq. To be able to subdue and render harmless the king of the forest—the animal most dreaded in early times—was regarded as an eminent achievement.

{a} "promises" Ga 3:16 {b} "lions" Da 6:22

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11 - Verse 34

Verse 34. *Quenched the violence of fire*. As Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did, Da 3:15-26.

Escaped the edge of the sword. As Elijah did when he fled from Ahab, 1Ki 19:3; as Elisha did when he was delivered from the king of Syria, 2Ki 6:16; and as David did when he fled from Saul.

Out of weakness were made strong. Enabled to perform exploits beyond their natural strength, or raised up from a state of bodily infirmity, and invigorated for conflict. Such a case as that of Samson may be referred to, Jud 15:16 16:26-30; or as that of Hezekiah, 2Ki 20, who was restored from dangerous sickness by the immediate interposition of God.

See Barnes "Isa 38".

Waxed valiant in fight. Became valiant. Like Joshua, Barak, David, etc. The books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, supply instances of this in abundance.

Turned to flight the armies of the aliens. The foreigners—as the invading Philistines, Ammonites, Moabites, Assyrians, etc.

{c} "fire" Da 3:25 {d} "edge of the sword" 1Ki 19:3 2Ki 6:16 {*} "aliens" "of other nations"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11 - Verse 35

Verse 35. *Women received their dead raised to life again*. As in the case of the woman of Zarephath, whose child was restored to life by Elijah, 1Ki 17:19-22; and of the son of the Shunammite woman, whose child was restored to life by Elisha, 2Ki 4:18-37.

And others were tortured. The word which is here used *tumpanizw to tympanize*, refers to a form of severe torture which was sometimes practised. It is derived from *tumpanon—tympanum* —a drum, tabret, timbrel; and the instrument was probably so called from resembling the drum or the timbrel. This instrument consisted in the East of a thin wooden rim covered over with skin, as a tambourine is with us. See it described in the **See Barnes "Isa 5:12"**.

The engine of torture here referred to probably resembled the drum in form, on which the body of a criminal was bent so as to give greater severity to the wounds which were inflicted by scourging. The lash would cut deeper when the body was so extended, and the open gashes exposed to the air would increase the torture. See 2 Mac. vi. 19—29. The punishment here referred to seems to have consisted of two things—the stretching upon the instrument, and the scourging. See Robinson's Lex., and Stuart, *in loc*. Bloomfield, however, supposes that the mode of the torture can be best learned from the original meaning of the word *tumpanon —tympanum*—as meaning

(1.) a beating-stick, and

(2.) a beating-post, which was in the form of a T, thus suggesting the posture of the sufferer. This beating, says he, was sometimes administered with sticks or rods; and sometimes with leather thongs inclosing pieces of lead. The former account, however, better agrees with the usual meaning of the word.

Not accepting deliverance. When it was offered them; that is, on condition that they would renounce their opinions, or do what was required of them. This is the very nature of the spirit of martyrdom.

That they might obtain a better resurrection. That is, when they were subjected to this kind of torture they were looked upon as certainly dead. To have accepted deliverance than, would have been a kind of restoration to life or a species of *resurrection*. But they refused this, and looked forward to a more honourable and glorious restoration to life; a resurrection, therefore, which would be better than this. It would be in itself more noble and honourable, and would be permanent, and therefore better. No particular instance of this kind is mentioned in the Old Testament; but, amidst the multitude of cases of persecution to which good men were subjected, there is no improbability in supposing that this may have occurred. The case of Eleazer, recorded in 2 Mac. Vi., so strongly resembles what the apostle says here, that it is very possible he may have had it in his eye. The passage before us proves that the doctrine of the resurrection was understood and believed before the coming of the Saviour, and that it was one of the doctrines which sustained and animated those who were called to suffer on account of their religion. In the prospect of death under the infliction of torture on account of religion, or under the pain produced by disease, nothing will better enable us to bear up under the suffering than the expectation that the body will be restored to immortal rigour, and raised to a mode of life where it will be no longer susceptible of pain. To be raised up to that life is a "better resurrection" than to be saved from death when persecuted, or to be raised up from a bed of pain.

{e} "received" 1Ki 17:22 {f} "deliverance" Ac 4:19

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11 - Verse 36

Verse 36. *And others had trial of cruel mockings*. Referring to the scorn and derision which the ancient victims of persecution experienced. This has been often experienced by martyrs, and doubtless it was the case with those who suffered on account of their religion before the advent of the Saviour as well as afterwards. Some instances of this kind are mentioned in the Old Testament, (2Ki 2:23 1Ki 22:24;) and it was frequent in the time of the Maccabees.

And scourging. Whipping. This was a common mode of punishment, and was usually inflicted before a martyr was put to death. **See Barnes** "Mt 10:17, **See Barnes "Mt 27:26"**.

For instances of this, see Jer 20:2; 2 Mac. vii. 1; v. 17.

Of bonds. Chains, Ge 39:20.

And imprisonment. See 1Ki 22:27 Jer 20:2.

{g} "bonds" Ge 39:20 {h} "imprisonment" Jer 20:2

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11 - Verse 37

Verse 37. *They were stoned*. A common method of punishment among the Jews. **See Barnes** "Mt 21:35,44.

Thus Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada the priest, was stoned. See 2Ch 24:21; comp. 1Ki 21:1-14. It is not improbable that this was often resorted to in times of popular tumult, as in the case of Stephen, Ac 7:59; comp. Joh 10:31 Ac 14:5. In the time of the terrible persecutions under Antiochus Epiphanes, and under Manasseh, such instances also probably occurred.

They were sawn asunder. It is commonly supposed that Isaiah was put to death in this manner. For the evidence of this, see Introduction to Isaiah, & 2. It is known that this mode of punishment, though not common, did exist in ancient times. Among the Romans, the laws of the twelve tables affixed this as the punishment of certain crimes; but this mode of execution was very rare, since Aulius Gellius says, that in his time no one remembered to have seen it practised. It appears, however, from Suetonius, that the emperor Caligula often condemned persons of rank to be sawn through the middle. Calmet, writing above a hundred years ago, says, "I am assured that the punishment of the saw is still in use among the Switzers, and that they put it in practice not many years ago upon one of their countrymen, guilty of a great crime, in the plain of Grenelles, near Paris. They put him into a kind of coffin, and sawed him lengthwise, beginning at the head, as a piece of wood is sawn." Pict. Bib. It was not an unusual mode of punishment to cut a person asunder, and to suspend the different parts of the body to walls and towers as a warning to the living. See 1Sa 31:10, and Morier's Second Journey to Persia, p. 96.

Were tempted. On this expression, which has given much perplexity to critics, see the Notes of Prof. Stuart, Bloomfield, and Kuinoel. There is a great variety of reading in the Mss. and editions of the New Testament, and many have regarded it as an interpolation. The difficulty which has been felt in reference to it has been, that it is a much *milder* word than those just used, and that it is hardly probable that the apostle would enumerate this among those which he had just specified, *as if to be tempted* deserved to be mentioned among sufferings of so severe a nature. But it seems to me, there need be no real difficulty in the case. The apostle here, among other sufferings which they were called to endure, may have referred to the temptations which were presented to the martyrs, when about to die, to abandon their religion and live. It is very possible to conceive that this might have been among the highest aggravations of their sufferings. We know that in latter times it was a common practice to offer life to those who were doomed to a horrid death, on condition that they would throw incense on the altars of a heathen god, and we may easily suppose that a temptation of that kind, artfully presented in the midst of keen tortures, would greatly aggravate their sufferings. Or suppose when a father was about to be put to death for his religion, his wife and children were placed before him, and should plead with him to save his life by abandoning his religion, we can easily imagine that no pain of the rack would cause so keen torture to the soul as their cries and tears would. Amidst the sorrows of martyrs, therefore, it was not improper to say that they were *tempted*, and to place this among their most aggravated woes. For instances of this nature, see 2 Mac. vi. 21, 22; vii. 17, 24.

Were slain with the sword. As in the case of the eighty-five priests slain by Doeg, (1Sa 22:18;) and the prophets, of whose slaughter by the sword Elijah complains, 1Ki 19:10.

They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins. Driven away from their homes, and compelled to clothe themselves in this rude and uncomfortable manner. A dress of this kind, or a dress made of hair, was not uncommon with the prophets, and seems indeed to have been regarded as an appropriate badge of their office. See 2Ki 1:8; Zec 13:4.

Being destitute, afflicted, tormented. The word *tormented* here means *tortured*. The apostle expresses here in general what in the previous verses he had specified in detail.

{i} "stoned" Ac 7:59

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11 - Verse 38

Verse 38. *Of whom the world was not worthy*. The world was so wicked that it had no claim that such holy men should live in it. These poor, despised, and persecuted men, living as outcasts and wanderers, were of a character far elevated above the world. This is a most beautiful expression. It is at once a statement of their eminent holiness, and of the wickedness of the rest of mankind.

They wandered in deserts, etc. On the Scripture meaning of the word *desert or wilderness*, **See Barnes "Mt 3:1".**

This is a description of persons driven away from their homes, and wandering about from place to place to procure a scanty subsistence. Comp. 1 Mac, i. 53; 2 Mac. v. 27; vi. 7. The instances mentioned in the Books of Maccabees are so much in point, that there is no impropriety in supposing that Paul referred to some such cases, if not these very cases. As there is no doubt about their historic truth, there was no impropriety in referring to them, though they are not mentioned in the canonical books of Scripture. One of those cases may be referred to as strikingly illustrating what is here said. "But Judas Maccabeus, with nine others, or thereabout, withdrew himself into the wilderness, and lived in the mountains after the manner of beasts, with his company, who fed on herbs continually, lest they should be partakers of the pollution," 2 Mac. v. 27.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11 - Verse 39

Verse 39. *And these all, having obtained a good report through faith*. They were all commended and approved on account of their confidence in God. **See Barnes "Heb 11:2".**

Received not the promise. That is, did not receive the fulfilment of the promise; or did not receive all that was promised. They all still looked forward to some future blessings. **See Barnes "Heb 11:13".**

{*} "report" "an honourable testimony"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 11 - Verse 40

Verse 40. *God having provided some better thing for us*. Marg., *foreseen*. That is, "God having provided, or determined on giving some better thing than any of them realized, and, which we are now permitted to enjoy." That is, God gave them promises; but they were not allowed to see their fulfilment. We are permitted now to see what they referred to, and in part, at least, to witness their

completion; and though the promise was made to them, the fulfilment more particularly pertains to us.

That they without us should not be made perfect. That is, *complete*. The whole system of revelation was not complete at once, or in one generation. It required successive ages to make the system complete, so that it might be said that it was *finished, or perfect*. Our existence, therefore, and the developments in our times, were as necessary to the perfection of the system as the promise made to the patriarchs. And as the system would not have been complete if the blessings had been simply conferred on us without the previous arrangements, and the long scheme of introductory measures, so it would not have been complete if the promises had been merely given to them without the corresponding fulfilment in our times. They are like the two parts of a tally. The fathers had one part in the promises, and we the other in the fulfilment, and neither would have been complete without the other. The "better things," then, referred to here as possessed by Christians, are the privilege of seeing those promises fulfilled in the Messiah; the blessings resulting from his atonement; the more expanded views which they have under the gospel; the brighter hopes of heaven itself, and the clearer apprehension of what heaven will be, which they are permitted to enjoy. This, therefore, accords entirely with the argument which the apostle is pursuing—which is, to show that the Christians whom he addressed should not apostatize from their religion. The argument is, that in numerous instances, as specified, the saints of ancient times, even under fiery trials, were sustained by faith in God, and that, too, when they had not seen the fulfilment of the promises, and when they had much more obscure views than we are permitted to enjoy. If they, under the influence of the mere promise of future blessings, were enabled thus to persevere, how much more reason is there for us to persevere, who have been permitted, by the coming of the Messiah, to witness the perfection of the system!

There is no part of the New Testament of more value than this chapter; none which deserves to be more patiently studied, or which may be more frequently applied to the circumstances of Christians. These invaluable records are adapted to sustain us in times of trial, temptation, and persecution; to show us what faith has done in days that are past, and what it may do still in similar circumstances. Nothing can better show the value and the power of faith, or of true religion, than the records in this chapter. It has done what nothing else could do. It has enabled men to endure what nothing else would enable them to bear; and it has shown its power in inducing them to give up, at the command of God, what the human heart holds most dear. And among the lessons which we may derive from the study of this portion of divine truth, let us learn from the example of Abel to continue to offer to God the sacrifice of true piety which he requires, though we may be taunted or opposed by our nearest kindred; from that of Enoch to walk with God, though surrounded by a wicked world, and to look to the blessed translation to heaven which awaits all the righteous; from that of Noah to comply with all the directions of God, and to make all needful preparations for the future events which he has predicted, in which we are to be interested—as death, judgment, and eternity—though the events may seem to be remote, and though there may be no visible indications of their coming, and though the world may deride our faith and our fears; from that of Abraham to leave country, and home, and kindred, if God calls us to, and to go just where he commands, through deserts and wilds, and among strange men; and like him, also, to be ready to give up the dearest objects of our earthly affection, even when attended with all that can try or torture our feelings of affection— feeling that God, who gave, has a right to require their removal in his own way; and that, however much we may fix our hopes on a dear child, he can fulfil all his purposes and promises

to us though such a child should be removed by death; from that of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to regard ourselves as strangers and pilgrims on earth, having here no permanent home, and seeking a better country; from that of Moses to be willing to leave all the pomp and splendour of the world, all our brilliant prospects and hopes, and to welcome poverty, reproach, and suffering, that we may identify ourselves with the people of God; by the remembrance of the host of worthies who met danger, and encountered mighty foes, and vanquished them, let us learn to go forth in our spiritual conflicts against the enemies of our souls and of the church, assured of victory; and from the example of those who were driven from the abodes of men, and exposed to the storms of persecution, let us learn to bear every trial, and to be ready, at any moment, to lay down our lives in the cause of truth and of God. Of all those holy men who made these sacrifices, which of them ever regretted it, when he came calmly to look over his life, and to review it on the borders of the eternal world? None. Not one of them ever expressed regret that he had given up the world; or that he had obeyed the Lord too early, too faithfully, or too long. Not Abraham, who left his country and kindred; not Moses, who abandoned his brilliant prospects in Egypt; not Noah, who subjected himself to ridicule and scorn for an hundred and twenty years; and not one of those who were exposed to lions, to fire, to the edge of the sword, or who were driven away from society as outcasts, to wander in pathless deserts, or to take up their abodes in caverns, ever regretted the course which they had chosen. And who of them all now regrets it? Who, of these worthies, now looks from heaven and feels that he suffered one privation too much, or that he has not had an ample recompense for all the ills he experienced in the cause of religion? So we shall feel when from the bed of death we look over the present life, and look out on eternity. Whatever our religion may have cost us, we shall not feel that we began to serve God too early, or served him too faithfully. Whatever pleasure, gain, or splendid prospects we gave up in order to become Christians, we shall feel that it was the way of wisdom, and shall rejoice that we were able to do it. Whatever sacrifices, trials, persecution, and pain, we may meet with, we shall feel that there has been more than a compensation in the consolations of religion, and in the hope of heaven, and that by every sacrifice we have been the gainers. When we reach heaven, we shall see that we have not endured one pain too much, and that through whatever trials we may have passed, the result is worth all which it has cost. Strengthened, then, in our trials by the remembrance of what faith has done in times that are past; recalling the example of those who through faith and patience have inherited the promises, let us go cheerfully on our way. Soon the journey of trials will be ended, and soon what are now objects of faith will become objects of fruition; and in their enjoyment, how trifling and brief will seem all the sorrows of our pilgrimage below!

{1} "having provided" "foreseen" {a} "without us should not be made perfect" Re 6:11

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 12

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 12 - Verse 1

CHAPTER Twelve

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

THE apostle, having illustrated the nature and power of faith in the previous chapter, proceeds in this to exhort those to whom he wrote to apply tile same principles to their own case, and to urge them to manifest the same steady confidence in God and perseverance in their holy walk. For this purpose he adverts to the following arguments or considerations:—

I. He represents the ancient worthies who had so faithfully persevered, and so gloriously triumphed, as witnesses of their strife in the Christian race, and as cheering them on to victory, Heb 12:1.

II. He appeals to the example of the Saviour, Heb 12:2-4. This was a more illustrious instance than any of those which had been adverted to, and is not referred to with theirs, but is adduced as deserving a separate and a special specification. The circumstances in his case which are all encouragement to perseverance in the Christian conflict are these.

(1.) He endured the cross, and is now exalted to the right hand of God.

(2.) He bore the contradiction of sinners against himself, as those were called to do to whom Paul wrote.

(3.) He went beyond them in his trials and temptations, beyond anything which they could have reason to apprehend —for he had "resisted unto blood, striving against sin."

III. He encourages them by showing that their trials would result in their own good, and particularly that the hand of a Father was in them, Heb 12:6-13. Particularly he urges

(1.) that God addressed those who suffered as his sons, and called on them not to receive with improper feeling the chastening of the Lord, Heb 12:5;

(2.) that it was a general principle that the Lord chastened those whom he loved—and the fact that we received chastening was to be regarded as evidence that we are under his paternal care, and that he has not forsaken us, Heb 12:6-8;

(3.) that they had been subject to the correction of earthly fathers, and had learned to be submissive, and that there was much higher reason for submitting to God, Heb 12:9,10;

(4.) and that however painful chastisement might be at present, yet it would ultimately produce important benefits, Heb 12:11. By these considerations he encourages them to bear their trials with patience, and to assume new courage in their efforts to live a Christian life, Heb 12:12,13.

IV. He exhorts them to perseverance and fidelity, by the fact that if they should become remiss, and renounce their confidence in God, it would be impossible to retrieve what was lost, Heb 12:14-17. In illustrating this, he appeals to the case of Esau. For a trifling consideration, when in distress, he parted with an invaluable blessing. When it was gone it was impossible to recover it. No consideration could induce a change, though he sought it earnestly with tears. So it would be with Christians, if, under the power of temptation, they should renounce their religion, and go back to their former state.

V. He urges them to perseverance by the nature of the dispensation under which they were, as compared with the one under which they had formerly been—the Jewish, Heb 12:18-29. Under the former everything was fitted to alarm and terrify the soul, Heb 12:18-29. The new dispensation was of a different character. It was adapted to encourage and to win the heart. The real Mount Zion —the city of the living God—the New Jerusalem—the company of the angels—the church of the firstborn—the Judge of all—the great Mediator—to which they had come under the new dispensation,

all these were fitted to encourage the fainting heart, and to win the affections Of the soul, Heb 12:22-24. Yet, in proportion to the sacredness and tenderness of these considerations, and to the light and privileges which they now enjoyed, would be their guilt if they should renounce their religion—for under this dispensation, as under the old, God was a consuming fire, Heb 12:25-29.

Verse 1. *Wherefore*. In view of what has been said in the previous chapter.

Seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses. The apostle represents those to whom he had referred in the previous chapter as looking on to witness the efforts which Christians make, and the manner in which they live. There is allusion here, doubtless, to the ancient games. A great multitude of spectators usually occupied the circular seats in the amphitheatre, from which they could easily behold the combatants. **See Barnes** "1Co 9:24, seq. In like manner the apostle represents Christians as encompassed with the multitude of worthies to whom he had referred in the previous chapter. It cannot be fairly inferred from this that he means to say that all those ancient worthies were *actually* looking at the conduct of Christians, and saw their conflicts. It is a figurative representation, such as is common, and means that we ought to act as if they were in sight, and cheered us on. How far the spirits of the just who are departed from this world are permitted to behold what is done on earth—if at all—is not revealed in the Scriptures. The phrase "a *cloud* of witnesses," means *many* witnesses, or a number so great that they seem to be a cloud. The comparison of a multitude of persons to a cloud is common in the classic writers. See Homer's Il. iv. 274, xxiii. 133; Statius, i. 340, and other instances adduced in Wetstein, *in loc*. Comp. **See Barnes "1Th 4:17"**.

Let us lay aside every weight. The word rendered *weight —ogkon—* means that which is *crooked or hooked*, and thence anything that is attached or suspended by a hook—that is, by its whole weight, and hence means *weight*. *See Passow*. It does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. The word is often used in the classic writers in the sense of swelling, tumour, pride. Its usual meaning is that of *weight or burden*; and there is allusion here, doubtless, to the runners in the games, who were careful not to encumber themselves with anything that was heavy. Hence their clothes were so made as not to impede their running, and hence they were careful in their training not to overburden themselves with food, and in every way to remove what would be an impediment or hindrance. As applied to the racers, it does not mean that they began to run with anything like a burden, and then threw it away—as persons sometimes aid their jumping by taking a stone in their hands to acquire increased momentum—but that they were careful *not to allow* anything that would be a weight or an encumbrance. As applied to Christians, it means that they should remove all which would obstruct their progress in the Christian course. Thus it is fair to apply it to whatever would be an impediment in our efforts to win the crown of life. It is not the same thing in all persons. In one it may be pride; in another, vanity; in another, worldliness; in another, a violent and almost ungovernable temper; in another, a corrupt imagination; in another, a heavy, leaden, insensible heart; in another, some improper and unholy attachment. Whatever it may be, we are exhorted to lay it aside; and this general direction may be applied to anything which prevents our making the highest possible attainment in the divine life. Some persons would make much more progress if they would throw away many of their personal ornaments; some if they would disencumber themselves of the heavy weight of gold which they are endeavouring to carry with them. So some very light objects, in themselves considered, become material encumbrances. Even a feather or a ring—such may be the fondness for these toys—may become such a weight that they will never make much progress towards the prize.

And the sin which doth so easily beset us. The word which is here rendered "*easily beset*" —*euperistaton*—*euperistaton*—does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It properly means, "standing well around;" and hence denotes that which is near, or at hand, or readily occurring. So Chrysostom explains it. Passow defines it as meaning, "easy to encircle." Tindal renders it, "the sin that hangeth on us." Theodoret and others explain the word as if derived from *peristasiv* —*peristasis*—a word which sometimes means affliction, peril—and hence regard it as denoting that *which is full of peril*, or the sin which so easily subjects one to calamity. Bloom, field supposes, in accordance with the opinion of Grotius, Crellius, Kypke, Kuinoel, and others, that it means "the sin which especially winds around us and hinders our course," with allusion to the long Oriental garments. According to this, the meaning would be, that as a runner would be careful not to encumber himself with a garment which would be apt to wind around his legs in running, and hinder him, so it should be with the Christian, who especially ought to lay aside everything which resembles this that is, all sin which must impede his course. The former of these interpretations however, is most commonly adopted, and best agrees with the established sense of the word. It will then mean that we are to lay aside every encumbrance, particularly or especially—for so the word *Kai*," and," should be rendered here—the sins to which we are most exposed. Such sins are appropriately called "easily-besetting sins." They are those to which *we* are particularly liable. They are such sins as the following:

(1.) Those to which we are particularly exposed by our natural temperament or disposition. In some this is pride, in others indolence, or gaiety, or levity, or avarice, or ambition, or sensuality.

(2.) Those in which we freely indulged before we became Christians. They will be likely to return with power, and we are far more likely, from the laws of association, to fall into them than into any other. Thus a man who has been intemperate is in special danger from that quarter; a man who has been an infidel is in special danger of scepticism; one who has been avaricious, proud, gay, or ambitious, is in special danger, even after conversion, of again committing these sins.

(3.) Sins to which we are exposed by our profession, by our relations to others, or by our situation in life. They whose condition will entitle them to associate with what are regarded as the more elevated classes of society, are in special danger of indulging in the methods of living and of amusement that are common among them; they who are prospered in the world are in danger of losing the simplicity and spirituality of their religion; they who hold a civil office are in danger of becoming mere politicians, and of losing the very form and substance of piety.

(4.) Sins to which we are exposed from some peculiar weakness in our character. On some points we may be in no danger. We may be constitutionally so firm as not to be especially liable to certain forms of sin. But; every man has one or more *weak points*, in his character; and it is there that he is particularly exposed. A bow may be in the main very strong. All along its length there may be no danger of its giving way—save at one place where it has been made too thin, or where the material was defective—and if it ever breaks, it will of course be at that point. *That* is the point, therefore, which needs to be guarded and strengthened. So in reference to character. There is always some weak point which needs especially to be guarded, and our principal danger is there. Self-knowledge, so necessary in leading a holy life, consists much in searching out those weak points of character where we are most exposed; and our progress in the Christian course will be determined much by the fidelity with which we guard and strengthen them.

And let us run with patience the race that is set before us. The word rendered "*patience*" rather means in this place *perseverance*. We are to run the race without allowing ourselves to be hindered

by any obstructions, and without giving out or fainting in the way. Encouraged by the example of the multitudes who have run the same race before us, and who are now looking out upon us from heaven where they dwell, we are to persevere as they did to the end.

{1} "lay aside" 2Co 7:1

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 12 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Looking unto Jesus*, As a farther inducement to do this the apostle exhorts us to look to the Saviour. We are to look to his holy life; to his patience and perseverance in trials; to what he endured in order to obtain the crown, and to his final success and triumph.

The author and finisher of our faith. The word "*our*" is not in the original here, and obscures the sense. The meaning is, he is the *first* and the *last* as an example of faith, or of confidence in God—occupying in this, as in all other things, the preeminence, and being the most complete model that can be placed before us. The apostle had not enumerated him among those who had been distinguished for their faith, but he now refers to him as above them all; as a case that deserved to stand by itself. It is probable that there is a continuance here of the allusion to the Grecian games which the apostle had commenced in the previous verse. The word "*author*" *archgon*— (marg, *beginner*)— means, properly, *the source, or cause of anything*; or one who makes a beginning. It is rendered in Ac 3:16, Ac 5:31, *prince*; in Heb 2:10, *captain*; and in the place before us, *author*. It does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. The phrase, "the beginner of faith," or the leader on of faith, would express the idea. He is at the head of all those who have furnished an example of confidence in God, for he was himself the most illustrious instance of it. The expression, then, does not mean properly that he produces faith in us, or that we believe because he causes us to believe —whatever may be the truth about that—but that he stands at the head as the most eminent example that can be referred to on the subject of faith. We are exhorted to look to him, as if at the Grecian games there was one who stood before the racer who had previously carried away every palm of victory; who had always been triumphant, and with whom there was no one who could be compared. The word *finisher*— *teleiwthn*—corresponds in meaning with the word *author*. It means that he is the *completer* as well as the *beginner*; the *last* as well as the *first*. As there has been no one hitherto who could be compared with him, so there will be no one hereafter. Comp. Re 1:8,11 "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last." The word does not mean that he was the "finisher" of faith, in the sense that he makes our faith complete, or perfects it—whatever may be true about that—but that he occupies this elevated position of being beyond comparison above all others. Alike in the commencement and the close, in the beginning of faith and in its ending, he stands pre-eminent. To this illustrious model we should look—as a racer would on one who had been always so successful that he surpassed all competitors and rivals. If this be the meaning, then it is not properly explained, as it is commonly, (see Bloomfield and Stuart, *in loc*.,) by saying that the word here is synonymous with *rewarder*, and refers to the *brabeuthv*—*brabeutes*-or *the distributor of the prize*. Comp. **See Barnes "Col 3:15"**.

There is no instance where the word is used in this sense in the New Testament, (comp. *Passow*,) nor would such an interpretation present so beautiful and appropriate a thought as the one suggested above.

Who for the joy that was set before him. That is, who in view of all the honour which he would have at the right hand of God, and the happiness which he would experience from the consciousness that he had redeemed a world, was willing to bear the sorrows connected with the atonement.

Endured the cross. Endured patiently the ignominy and pain connected with the suffering of death on the cross.

Despising the shame. Disregarding the ignominy of such a mode of death. It is difficult for us now to realize the force of the expression, "enduring the shame of the cross," as it was understood in the time of the Saviour and the apostles. The views of the world have changed, and it is now difficult to divest the "cross" of the associations of honour and glory which the word suggests, so as to appreciate the ideas which encompassed it then. There is a degree of dishonour which we attach to the guillotine, but the ignominy of a death on the cross was greater than that; there is disgrace attached to the block, but the ignominy of the cross was greater than that; there is a much deeper infamy attached to the gallows, but the ignominy of the cross was greater than that. And that word—*the cross*—which when now proclaimed in the ears of the refined, the intelligent, and even the gay, excites an idea of honour in the ears of the people of Athens, of Corinth, and of Rome, excited deeper disgust than the word *gallows* does with us, for it was regarded as the appropriate punishment of the most infamous of mankind. We can now scarcely appreciate these feelings, and of course the declaration that Jesus "endured the cross, despising the shame," does not make the impression on our minds in regard to the nature of his sufferings, and the value of his example, which it should do. When we now think of the "cross," it is not of the multitude of slaves, and robbers, and thieves, and rebels, who have died on it, but of the one great victim whose death has ennobled even this instrument of torture, and encircled it with a halo of glory. We have been accustomed to read of it as an imperial standard in war in the days of Constantine, and as the banner under which armies have marched to conquest; it is intermingled with the sweetest poetry; it is a sacred thing in the most magnificent cathedrals; it adorns the altar, and is even an object of adoration; it is in the most elegant engravings; it is worn by beauty and piety as an ornament near the heart; it is associated with all that is pure in love, great in self-sacrifice, and holy in religion. To see the true force of the expression here, therefore, it is necessary to divest ourselves of these ideas of glory which encircle the "cross," and to place ourselves in the times and lands in which, when the most infamous of mankind were stretched upon it, it was regarded for such men as an appropriate mode of punishment. That infamy Jesus was willing to bear; and the strength of his confidence in God, his love for man, and the depth of his humiliation, was shown in the readiness and firmness with which he went forward to such a death.

And is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. Exalted to the highest place of dignity and honour in the universe. **See Barnes "Mr 6:19"**; **See Barnes** "Eph 1:20, seq. The sentiment here is, "Imitate the example of the great Author of our religion. He, in view of the honour and joy before him, endured the most severe sufferings to which the human frame can be subjected, and the form of death which is regarded as the most shameful. So, amidst all the severe trials to which you are exposed on account of religion, patiently endure all—for the glorious rewards, the happiness and the triumph of heaven, are before you."

{1} "author" "beginner" {a} "joy" Lu 24:26

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 12 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *For consider him*. Attentively reflect on his example, that you may be able to bear your trials in a proper manner.

That endured such contradiction of sinners. Such opposition. The reference is to the Jews of the time of the Saviour, who opposed his plans, perverted his sayings, and ridiculed his claims. Yet, regardless of their opposition, he persevered in the course which he had marked out, and went patiently forward in the execution of his plans. The idea is, that we are to pursue the path of duty, and follow the dictates of conscience, let the world say what they will about it. In doing this, we cannot find a better example than the Saviour. No opposition of sinners ever turned him from the way which he regarded as right; no ridicule ever caused him to abandon any of his plans; no argument, or expression of scorn, ever caused him for a moment to deviate from his course.

Lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. The meaning is, that there is great danger of being disheartened and wearied out by the opposition which you meet with. But with the bright example of one who was never disheartened, and who never became weary in doing the will of God, you may persevere. The best means of leading a faithful Christian life, amidst the opposition which we may encounter, is to keep the eye steadily fixed on the Saviour.

{*} "of sinners" "From sinners"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 12 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin*. The general sense of this passage is, "You have not yet been called, in your Christian struggles, to the highest kind of sufferings and sacrifices. Great as your trials may seem to have been, yet your faith has not yet been put to the severest test. And since this is so, you ought not to yield in the conflict with evil, but manfully resist it." In the *language* here used, there is undoubtedly a continuance of the allusion to the *agonistic* games—the strugglings and wrestlings for mastery there. In those games, the boxers were accustomed to arm themselves for the fight with the caestus. This, at first, consisted of strong leathern thongs wound around the hands, and extending only to the wrist, to give greater solidity to the *fist*. Afterwards these were made to extend to the elbow, and then to the shoulder; and, finally, they sowed pieces of lead or iron in them, that they might strike a heavier and more destructive blow. The consequence was, that those who were engaged in the fight were often covered with blood, and that resistance "unto blood" showed a determined courage, and a purpose not to yield. But though the *language* here may be taken from this custom, the *fact* to which the apostle alludes, it seems to me, is the struggling of the Saviour in the garden of Gethsemane, when his conflict was so severe, that great drops of blood fell down to the ground. **See Barnes** "Mt 26:42, seq. It is, indeed, commonly understood to mean that they had not yet been called to shed their blood as martyrs in the cause of religion. See Stuart, Bloomfield, Doddridge, Clarke, Whitby, Kuinoel, etc. Indeed, I find in none of the commentators what seems to me to be the true sense of this passage, and what gives an exquisite beauty to it, the allusion to the sufferings of the Saviour in the garden. The reasons which lead me to believe that there is such an allusion are briefly these.

(1.) The connexion. The apostle is appealing to the example of the Saviour, and urging Christians to persevere amidst their trials by looking to him. Nothing would be more natural, in this connexion, than to refer to that dark night when, in the severest conflict with temptation which he ever encountered, he so signally showed his own firmness of purpose, and the effects of resistance on his own bleeding body, and his signal victory, in the garden of Gethsemane.

(2.) The expression, "striving against sin," seems to demand the same interpretation. On the common interpretation, the allusion would be merely to their resisting *persecution*; but here the allusion is to some struggle in their minds against *committing sin*. The apostle exhorts them to strive manfully and perseveringly against sin in every form, and especially against the sin of apostasy. To encourage them, he refers them to the highest instance on record where there was a "striving against sin"—the struggle of the Redeemer in the garden with the great enemy, who there made his most violent assault, and where the resistance of the Redeemer was so great as to force the blood through his pores. What was the exact *form* of the temptation there, we are not informed. It *may* have been to induce him to abandon his work even then, and to yield, in view of the severe sufferings of his approaching death on the cross. If there ever was a point where temptation would be powerful, it would be there. When a man is about to be put to death, how strong is the inducement to abandon his purpose, his plans, or his principles, if he may save his life! How many, of feeble virtue, have yielded just there! If to this consideration we add the thought that the Redeemer was engaged in a work never before undertaken; that he designed to make an atonement never before made; that he was about to endure sorrows never before endured; and that on the decision of that moment depended the ascendency of sin or holiness on the earth, the triumph or the fall of Satan's kingdom, the success or the defeat of all the plans of the great adversary of God and man; and that, on such an occasion as this, the tempter would use all his power to crush the lonely and unprotected Man of sorrows in the garden of Gethsemane, it is easy to imagine what may have been the terror of that fearful conflict, and what virtue it would require in him to resist the concentrated energy of Satan's might, to induce him even then to abandon his work. The apostle says of those to whom he wrote, that they had not *yet* reached that point. Comp. **See Barnes "Heb 5:7".**

(3.) This view furnishes a proper climax to the argument of the apostle for perseverance. It presents the Redeemer before the mind as the great Example; directs the mind to him in various scenes of his life—as looking to the joy before him—disregarding the ignominy of his sufferings—enduring the opposition of sinners—and then in the garden as engaged in a conflict with his great foe, and so resisting sin that, rather than yield, he endured that fearful mental struggle which was attended with such remarkable consequences. This is the highest consideration which could be presented to the mind of a believer to keep him from yielding in the conflict with evil; and if we could keep him in the eye, resisting even unto blood, rather than yield in the least degree, it would do more than all other things to restrain us from sin. How different his case from ours? How readily we yield to sin! We offer a faint and feeble resistance, and then surrender. We think it will be unknown; or that others do it; or that we may repent of it; or that we have no power to resist it; or that it is of little consequence, and our resolution gives way. Not so the Redeemer. Rather than yield in any form to sin, he measured strength with the great adversary when alone with him in the darkness of the night, and gloriously triumphed! And so would we always triumph if we had the same settled purpose to resist sin in every form, *even unto blood*.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 12 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And ye have forgotten the exhortation*. This exhortation is found in Pr 3:11,12. The object of the apostle in introducing it here is, to show that afflictions were designed, on the part of God, to produce some happy effects in the lives of his people, and that they ought, therefore, to bear them patiently. In the previous verses, he directs them to the example of the Saviour. In this verse and the following, for the same object, he directs their attention to the design of trials, showing that they are necessary to our welfare, and that they are, in fact, proof of the paternal care of God. This verse might be rendered as a question, "And have ye forgotten?" etc. This mode of rendering it will agree somewhat better with the design of the apostle.

Which speaketh unto you. Which may be regarded as addressed to you; or which invokes a principle as applicable to you as to others. He does not mean that when Solomon used the words he had reference to them particularly, but that he Used them with reference to the children of God, and they might therefore be applied to them. In this way we may regard the language of the Scriptures as addressed *to us*.

As unto children. As if he were addressing children. The language is such as a father uses.

My son. It is *possible* that in these words Solomon may have intended to address a son literally, giving him paternal counsel; or he may have spoken as the head of the Jewish people, designing to address all the pious, to whom he sustained, as it were, the relation of a father. Or it is possible, also, that it may be regarded as the language of God himself addressing his children. Whichever supposition is adopted, the sense is substantially the same.

Despise not thou the chastening of the Lord. Literally, "Do not regard it as a small matter, or as a trivial thing"—*oligwrei*. The Greek word here used does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. The word here rendered *chastening paideia*—and also in Heb 12:6-8, and Heb 12:9, "corrected"— *paideutav*—does not refer to affliction in general, but that kind of affliction which is designed to correct us for our faults, or which is of the nature of *discipline*. The verb properly relates to the training up of a child—including instruction, counsel, discipline, and correction, (see this use of the verb in Ac 7:22 2Ti 2:25; Tit 2:12,) and then especially discipline, or correction for faults —*to correct, chastise, chasten*, 1Co 11:32 2Co 6:9; Re 3:19.

This is the meaning here; and the idea is, not that God will *afflict* his people in general, but that if they wander away he will *correct* them for their faults. He will bring calamity upon them as a *punishment* for their offences, and in order to bring them back to himself, he will not suffer them to wander away unrebuked and unchecked, but will mercifully reclaim them, though by great sufferings. Afflictions have many objects, or produce many happy effects. That referred to here is, that they are means of reclaiming the wandering and erring children of God, and are proofs of his paternal care and love. Comp. 2Sa 7:14 12:13,14 Ps 89:31-34; Pr 3:11,12. Afflictions, which are always sent by God, should not be regarded as small matters, for these reasons:

(1.) The fact that they are sent by God. Whatever he does is of importance, and is worthy the profound attention of men.

(2.) They are sent for some important purpose, and they should be regarded, therefore, with attentive concern. Men *despise* them when

(1.) they treat them with affected or real unconcern;

(2.) when they fail to receive them as Divine admonitions, and regard them as without any intelligent design; and

(3.) when they receive them with *expressions* of contempt, and speak of them and of the government of God with scorn. It should be a matter of deep concern, when we are afflicted in any manner, not to treat the matter lightly, but to derive from our trials all the lessons which they are adapted to produce on the mind.

Nor faint, etc. Bear up patiently under them. This is the second duty. We are first to study their character and design; and, secondly, to bear up under them, however severe they may be, and however long they may be continued. "Avoid the extremes of proud insensibility and entire dejection." *Doddridge*.

{a} "exhortation" Pr 3:11,12 {*} "of him" "by him"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 12 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth*. This is also a quotation from Prov. 3. It means that it is a universal rule that God sends trials on those whom he truly loves. It does not, of course, mean that he sends chastisement which is not deserved; or that he sends it *for the mere purpose of inflicting pain*. That cannot be. But it means that, by his chastisements, he shows that he has a paternal care for us. He does not treat us with neglect and unconcern, as a father often does his illegitimate child. The very fact that he corrects us shows that he has towards us a father's feelings, and exercises towards us a paternal care. If he did not, he would let us go on without any attention, and leave us to pursue a course of sin that would involve us in ruin. To restrain and govern a child; to correct him when he errs, shows that there is a parental solicitude for him, and that he is not an outcast. And as there is in the life of every child of God something that deserves correction, it happens that it is universally true that "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth."

And scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. Whom he receives or acknowledges as his child. This is not quoted literally from the Hebrew, but from the Septuagint. The Hebrew is, "even as a father the son in whom he delighteth." The general sense of the passage is retained, as is often the case in the quotations from the Old Testament. The meaning is the same as in the former part of the verse, that every one who becomes a child of God is treated by him with that watchful care which shows that he sustains towards him the paternal relation.

{b} "whom" Rev 3:19

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 12 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *If ye endure chastening*. That is, if you undergo, or are called to experience correction. It does not mean here, "if you endure it patiently, or if you bear up under it," but if you are chastised or corrected by God." The affirmation does not relate to the manner of bearing it, but to the fact that we are disciplined.

God dealeth with you as with sons. He does not cast you off, and regard you as if you were in no way related to him.

For what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? That is, he evinces towards his son the care which shows that he sustains the relation of a father. If he deserves correction, he corrects him; and he aims, by all proper means, to exhibit the appropriate care and character of a father. And as we receive such attention from an earthly parent, we ought to expect to receive similar notice from our Father in heaven.

{c} "son" Pr 13:24

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 12 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *But if ye be without chastisement*. If you never meet with anything that is adapted to correct your faults, to subdue your temper, to chide your wanderings, it would prove that you were in the condition of illegitimate children—cast off and disregarded by their father.

Whereof all are partakers. All who are the true children of God.

Then are ye bastards, and not sons. The reference here is to the neglect with which such children are treated, and to the general want of care and discipline over them:—

"Lost in the world's wide range; enjoined no aim, Prescribed no duty. and assigned no name." *Savage*.

In the English law, a bastard is termed *nullius filiua*,. Illegitimate children are usually abandoned by their father. The care of them is left to the mother, and the father endeavours to avoid all responsibility, and usually to be concealed and unknown. His own child he does not wish to recognize; he neither provides for him, nor instructs him, nor governs him, nor disciplines him. A *father* who is worthy of the name, will do all these things. So Paul says it is with Christians. God has not cast them off. In every way he evinces towards them the character of a father. And if it should be that they passed along through life without any occurrence that would indicate the paternal care and attention designed to correct their faults, it would show that they never had been his children, but were cast off and wholly disregarded. This is a beautiful argument; and we should receive every affliction as full proof that we are not forgotten by the High and Holy One who condescends to sustain the character, and to evince towards us, in our wanderings, the watchful care of a Father.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 12 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Furthermore*. As an additional consideration to induce us to receive chastisement with submission. The argument in this verse is derived from the difference in the spirit and design with

which we are corrected by God and by an earthly parent. In God everything is without any intermingling of passion or any improper feeling. In an earthly parent there is often much that is the result of hasty emotion, of an irascible temper, perhaps of the mere love of power. There is much that is inflicted without due reflection, and that produces only pain in the bosom of the parent himself in the recollection. Yet, with all this imperfection of parental government, we were patient and unmurmuring. How much more should we submit to one whose paternal discipline is caused by no excited feeling; by no love of power; by no want of reflection, and which never furnishes occasion for regret!

Fathers of our flesh. Earthly fathers; those from whom we have derived our being here. They are contrasted here with God who is called "the Father of spirits," not because the father does not sustain the paternal relation to the soul as well as the body, but to designate the nature of the dominion over us. The dominion of God is that which pertains to a spiritual kingdom, having more direct reference to the discipline of the soul, and being designed to prepare us for the spiritual world; that of the earthly father pertains primarily to our condition here, and the discipline is designed to subdue our unruly passions, to teach us to restrain our appetites, to inculcate maxims of health and prosperity, and to prevent those things which would impede our happiness in the present world. See, however, many curious instances of the manner in which these phrases were used by the Jewish writers, collected by Wetstein.

We gave them reverence. We submitted to them; honoured them; loved them. Painful at the time as correction may have been, yet when we have fully understood the design of it, we have loved them the more. The effect of such discipline, properly administered, is to produce real veneration for a parent—for he who, in a timely and appropriate manner restrains his child is the only one who will secure ultimate reverence and respect.

Shall we not much rather be in subjection. Since God's government is so much more perfect; since he has so much better right to control us; and since his administration is free from all the defects which attend parental discipline on earth, there is a much higher reason for bowing with submission and reverence to him. The Father of spirits. Thus in Nu 16:22, God is called the God of the spirits of all flesh." So also Nu 27:16; comp. Job 33:4. The idea seems to be, that as the soul is the most important part of man, this name is given to God by way of eminence, or he is eminently and supremely our Father. It was his to create the immortal part, and to that spirit which is never to die he sustains the relation of Father. The earthly father is parent to the man as mortal; God is the Father of man as immortal. God is himself a Spirit. Angels and human souls, therefore, may be represented as peculiarly his offspring. It is the highest designation which could be given to God to say that he is at the head of the universe of mind; not implying that he is not also at the head of the material universe, but designing to bring into view this high characteristic of the Almighty, that all created minds throughout the universe sustain to him the relation of children. To this Great Being we should, therefore, more cheerfully subject ourselves than to an earthly parent.

And live. Meaning that his fatherly chastisements are adapted to secure our spiritual life. He corrects us that he may promote our final happiness, and his inflictions are the means of saving us from eternal death.

{a} "Father of Spirits" Nu 16:22 27:16

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 12 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *For they verily for a few days*. That is, with reference to a few days, (*prov*;) or it was a chastisement that had reference mainly to this short life. The apostle seems to bring in this circumstance to contrast the dealings of earthly parents with those of God. One of the circumstances is, that the corrections of earthly parents had a muck less important object than those of God. They related to this life—a life so brief that it may be said to continue but a "few days." Yet, in order to secure the benefit to be derived for so short a period from fatherly correction, we submitted without murmuring. Much more cheerfully ought we to submit to that discipline from the hand of our heavenly Father which is designed to extend its benefits through eternity. This seems to me to afford a better sense than that adopted by Professor Stuart and others, that it means, "during our childhood or minority;" or than that proposed by Doddridge, that it refers both to our earthly parents and to our heavenly Father.

After their own pleasure. Marg. "*as seemed good, or meet*, to them." Meaning that it was sometimes done arbitrarily, or from caprice, or under the influence of passion. This is an additional reason why we should submit to God, We submitted to our earthly parents, though their correction was sometimes passionate, and was designed to gratify their own pleasure, rather than to promote our good. There is much of this kind of punishment in families; but there is none of it under the administration of God.

But he for our profit. Never from passion, from caprice, from the love of power or superiority, but always for our good. The exact benefit which he designs to produce we may not be able always to understand; but we may be assured that no other cause influences him than a desire to promote our real welfare; and as he can never be mistaken in regard to the proper means to secure that, we may be assured that our trials are always adapted to that end.

That we might be partakers of his holiness. Become so holy that it may be said that we are partakers of the very holiness of God. Comp. 2Pe 1:4. This is the elevated object at which God aims by our trials. It is not that he delights to produce pain; not that he envies us, and would rob us of our little comforts; not that he needs what We prize to increase his own enjoyment, and therefore rudely takes it away; and not that he acts from caprice—now conferring a blessing, and then withdrawing it without any reason: it is, that he may make us more pure and holy, and thus promote our own best interest. To be holy as God is holy; to be so holy that it may be said that we "are partakers of his holiness," is a richer blessing than health, and property, and friends, without it; and when by the exchange of the one we acquire the other, we have secured infinitely more than we have lost. To obtain the greater good, we should be willing to part with the less; to secure the everlasting friendship and favour of God, we should be willing, if necessary, to surrender the last farthing of our property; the last friend that is left us; the last feeble and fluttering pulsation of life in our veins.

{1} "after their own pleasure" "as seemed good or meet to them"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 12 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous*. It does not impart pleasure, nor is this its design. All chastisement is intended to produce pain, and the Christian is as sensitive to pain as others. His religion does not blunt his sensibilities, and make him a stoic, but it rather increases his susceptibility to suffering. The Lord Jesus, probably, felt pain, reproach, and contempt, more keenly than any other human being ever did; and the Christian feels the loss of a child, or bodily suffering, as keenly as any one. But while religion does not render him insensible to suffering, it does two things—

(1.) it enables him to bear the pain without murmuring, and

(2.) it turns the affliction into a blessing on his soul.

Nevertheless afterward. In future life. The effect is seen in a pure life, and in a more entire devotedness to God. We are not to look for the proper fruits of affliction while we are suffering, but afterwards.

It yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness. It is a tree that bears good fruit and we do not expect the fruit to form and ripen at once. It may be long maturing, but it will be rich and mellow when it is ripe. It frequently requires a long time before all the results of affliction appear—as it requires months to form and ripen fruit. Like fruit it may appear at first sour, crabbed, and unpalatable; but it will be at last like the ruddy peach or the golden orange. When those fruits *are* ripened they are

(1.) fruits "*of righteousness*." They make us more holy, more dead to sin and the world, and more alive to God. And they are

(2.) "peaceable." They produce peace, calmness, submission in the soul. They make the heart more tranquil in its confidence in God, and more disposed to promote the religion of peace. The apostle speaks of this as if it were a *universal* truth in regard to Christians who are afflicted. And it is so, There is no Christian who is not ultimately benefited by trials, and who is not able at some period subsequently to say, "It was good for me that I was afflicted. Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept thy word." When a Christian comes to die, he does not feel that he has had one trial too many, or one which he did not deserve. He can then look back and see the effect of some early trial, so severe that he once thought he could hardly endure it, spreading a hallowed influence over his future years, and scattering its golden fruit all along the pathway of life. I have never known a Christian who was not benefited by afflictions; I have seen none who was not able to say that his trials produced some happy effect on his religious character, and on his real happiness in life. If this be so, then no matter how severe our trials, we should submit to them without a murmur. The more severe they are, the more we shall yet be blessed—on earth or in heaven.

{b} "fruit" Isa 32:17 Jas 3:18

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 12 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Wherefore*. In view of the facts which have been now stated —that afflictions are sent from God, and are evidences of his paternal watchfulness.

Lift up the hands which hang down. As if from weariness and exhaustion. Renew your courage; make a new effort to bear them. The hands fall by the side when we are exhausted with toil, or worn down by disease. **See Barnes** "Isa 35:3, from which place this exhortation is taken.

And the feeble knees. The knees also become enfeebled by long effort, and tremble as if their strength were gone. Courage and resolution may do much, however, to make them firm, and it is to this that the apostle exhorts those to whom he wrote. They were to make every effort to bear up under their trials. The hope of victory will do much to strengthen one almost exhausted in battle; the desire to reach home invigorates the frame of the weary traveller. So it is with the Christian. In persecution and sickness and bereavement, he may be ready to sink under his burdens. The hands fall, and the knees tremble, and the heart sinks within us. But confidence in God, and the hope of heaven, and the assurance that all this is for our good, will reinvigorate the enfeebled frame, and enable us to bear what we once supposed would crush us to the dust. A courageous mind braces a feeble body, and hope makes it fresh for new conflicts.

{a} "hands" Isa 35:3

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 12 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *And make straight paths for your feet*. Marg., *even*. The word here used means, properly, *straight*, in the sense of *upright*, erect, Ac 14:10; but it is here used in the sense of straight *horizontally*, that is, level, plain, smooth. The meaning is, that they were to remove all obstacles out of the way, so that they need not stumble and fall. There is probably an allusion here to Pr 4:25-27, "Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left; remove thy foot from evil." The idea is, that by every proper means they were to make the way to heaven as plain and easy as possible. They were to allow no obstructions in the path over which the lame and feeble might fall.

Lest that which is lame be turned out of the way. A lame man needs a smooth path to walk in. The idea is here, that everything which would prevent those in the church who were in any danger of falling—the feeble, the unestablished, the weak—from walking in the path to heaven, or which might be an occasion to, them of falling, should be removed. Or it may mean, that in a road that was not level, those who were lame would be in danger of spraining, distorting, or wrenching a lame limb; and the counsel is, that whatever would have a tendency to this should be removed. Divested of the figure, the passage means, that everything should be removed which would hinder any one from walking in the path to life.

But let it rather be healed. As in the case of lameness, pains should be taken to heal it rather than to suffer it to be increased by careless exposure to a new sprain or fracture, so it should be in our religious and moral character. Whatever is defective we should endeavour to restore to Soundness, rather than to suffer the defect to be increased. Whatever is feeble in our faith or hope; whatever evil tendency there is in our hearts, we should endeavour to strengthen and amend, lest it should become worse, and we should entirely fall.

{1} "straight" "even" {b} "paths" Pr 4:26,27 {c} "Let it" Ga 6:1

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 12 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Follow peace with all men*. Do not give indulgence to those passions which lead to litigations, strifes, wars. **See Barnes "Ro 14:19"**.

The connexion here requires us to understand this mainly of persecutors. The apostle is referring to the trials which those whom he addressed were experiencing. Those trials seem to have arisen mainly from persecution, and he exhorts them to manifest a spirit of kindness towards *all*, even though they were engaged in persecuting them. This is the temper of the gospel. We are to make war with sin, but not with men; with bad passions and corrupt desires, but not with our fellow-worms.

And holiness. Instead of yielding to contending passions and to a spirit of war; instead of seeking revenge on your persecutors and foes, make it rather your aim to be holy, Let that be the object of your pursuit; the great purpose of your life. Men might in such cases counsel them to seek revenge; the spirit of religion would counsel them to strive to be holy. In such times they were in great danger of giving indulgence to evil passions, and hence the special propriety of the exhortation to endeavour to be holy.

Without which no man shall see the Lord. That is, shall see him in peace; or shall so see him as to dwell with him. All will see him in the day of judgment; but to "see" one is often used in the sense of being with one, dwelling with one, enjoying one. **See Barnes "Mt 5:8"**.

The principle here stated is one which is never departed from, Re 21:27; Isa 35:8 52:1, 60:21 Joe 3:17; Mt 13:41 1Co 6:9,10.

No one *has* ever been admitted to heaven in his sins; nor is it desirable that any one ever should be. Desirable as it is that lost men should be happy, yet it is *benevolence* which excludes the profane, the impious, and the unbelieving from heaven—just as it is benevolence to a family to exclude profligates and seducers, and as it is benevolence to a community to confine thieves and robbers in prison. This great principle in the Divine administration will always be adhered to; and hence they who are expecting to be saved without holiness or religion are destined to certain disappointment. Heaven and earth will pass away, but God will not admit one unrepenting and unpardoned sinner to heaven. It was the importance and the certainty of this principle which made the apostle insist on it here with so much earnestness. Amidst all their trials, when exposed to persecution, and when everything might tempt them to the indulgence of feelings which were the opposite of holiness, they were to make it their great object to be like God. For this they were to seek, to strive, to labour, to pray. This with *us*, in all our trials, should also be the great aim of life. How deeply affecting, then, is the inquiry, whether we have that holiness which is indispensable to salvation! Let us not deceive ourselves. We may have many things else—many things which are in themselves desirable, but without this one thing we shall never see the Lord in peace. We may have wealth, genius, learning, beauty, accomplishments, houses, lands, books, friends—but without religion they will be all in vain. Never can we see God in peace without a holy heart; never call we be admitted into heaven without that religion which will identify us with the angels around the throne!

{d} "peace" Ps 34:14 {e} "without which" Mt 5:8 Eph 5:5

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 12 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Looking diligently*. This phrase implies close attention. It is implied that there are reasons why we should take special care. Those reasons are found in the propensities of our hearts to evil; in the temptations of the world; in the allurements to apostasy presented by the great adversary of our souls.

Lest any man fail. As every man is in danger, it is his personal duty to see to it that his salvation be secure.

Fail of the grace of God. Marg. *fall from*. The Greek is, "lest any one be wanting or lacking"—*usterwn*. There is no intimation in the words used here that they already *had* grace, and might fall *way*—whatever might be true about that—but that there was danger that they might be found at last to be deficient in that religion which was necessary to save them. Whether this was to be by losing the religion which they now had, or by the fact that they never had any—however near they may have come to it—the apostle does not here intimate, and this passage should not be used in the discussion of the question about falling from grace. It is a proper exhortation to be addressed to any man in the church, or out of it, to inquire diligently whether there is not reason to apprehend that when he comes to appear before God he will be found to be wholly destitute of religion.

Lest any root of bitterness springing up. Any bitter root. There is, doubtless, an allusion here to De 29:18: "Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the Lord our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood." The allusion there is to those who were idolaters, and who instead of bearing the fruits of righteousness, and promoting the piety and happiness of the nation, would bear the fruits of idolatry, and spread abroad irreligion and sin. The allusion, in both cases, is to a bitter plant springing up among those that were cultivated for ornament or use, or to a tree bearing bitter and poisonous fruit, among those that produced good fruit. The reference of the apostle is to some person who should produce a similar effect in the church—to one who should inculcate false doctrines; or who should apostatize; or who should lead an unholy life, and thus be the means of corrupting and destroying others. They were to be at especial pains that no such person should start up from among themselves, or be tolerated by them.

Trouble you. By his doctrines and example.

And thereby many be defiled. Led away from the faith, and corrupted. One wicked man, and especially one hypocrite in the church, may be the means of destroying many others.

{f} "diligently" 2Pe 1:10 {2} "fail" "fall from" {g} "root" De 29:18

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 12 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Lest there be any fornicator*. The sin here referred to is one of those which would spread corruption in the church, and against which they ought to be especially on their guard. Allusion is made to Esau as an example, who, himself a corrupt and profane man, for a trifle threw away the highest honour which as a son he could have. Many have regarded the word here used as referring to idolatry, or defection from the true religion to a false one—as the word is often used

in the Old Testament—but it is more natural to understand it literally. The crime here mentioned was one which abounded everywhere in ancient times, as it does now, and it was important to guard the church against it. **See Barnes "Ac 15:20"**; **See Barnes** "1Co 6:18".

Or profane person. The word *profane* here refers to one who, by word or conduct, treats religion with contempt, or has no reverence for that which is sacred. This may be shown by words; by the manner; by a sneer; by neglect of religion; or by openly renouncing the privileges which might be connected with our salvation. The allusion here is to one who should openly cast off all the hopes of religion for indulgence in temporary pleasure, as Esau gave up his birthright for a trifling gratification. In a similar manner the young, for temporary gratification, neglect or despise all the privileges and hopes resulting from their being born in the bosom of the church; from being baptized and consecrated to God; and from being trained up in the lap of piety.

As Esau. It is clearly implied here that Esau sustained the character of a fornicator and a profane person, The former appellation is probably given to him to denote his licentiousness, shown by his marrying many wives, and particularly foreigners, or the daughters of Canaan. See Ge 36:2; comp. Ge 26:34,35. The Jewish writers abundantly declare that that was his character. See Wetstein, *in loc*. In proof that the latter appellation—that of a profane person—belonged to him, see Ge 25:29-34. It is true that it is rather by inference, than by direct assertion, that it is known that he sustained this character. The birthright, in his circumstances, was a high honour. The promise respecting the inheritance of the land of Canaan, the coming of the Messiah, and the preservation of the true religion, had been given to Abraham and Isaac, and was to be transmitted by them. As the eldest son, all the honour connected with this, and which is now associated with the name *Jacob*, would have properly appertained to Esau. But he undervalued it. He lived a licentious life. He followed his corrupt propensities, and gave the reins to indulgence. In a time of temporary distress, also, he showed how little he really valued all this by bartering it away for a single meal of victuals. Rather than bear the evils of hunger for a short period, and evidently in a manner implying a great undervaluing of the honour which he held as the firstborn son in a pious line, he agreed to surrender all the privileges connected with his birth. It was this which made the appellation appropriate to him; and this will make the appellation appropriate in any similar instance.

Who for one morsel of meat. The word *meat* here is used, as it is commonly in the Scriptures, in its primitive sense in English to denote, *food*, Ge 25:34. The phrase here, "morsel of meat," would be better rendered by "a single meal."

Sold his birthright. The birthright seems to have implied the first place or rank in the family; the privilege of offering sacrifice and conducting worship in the absence or death of the father; a double share of the inheritance; and in this instance the honour of being in the line of the patriarchs, and transmitting the promises made to Abraham and Isaac. What Esau parted with we can easily understand by reflecting on the honours which have clustered around the name of Jacob.

{a} "fornicator" 1Co 6:13,18 {b} "for one morsel" Ge 25:33

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 12 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *For ye know how that afterward*, etc. When he came to his father, and earnestly besought him to reverse the sentence which he had pronounced. See Ge 27:34-40. The "blessing"

here referred to was not that of the birthright, which he knew he could not regain, but that pronounced by the father Isaac on him whom he regarded as his first born son. This Jacob obtained by fraud, when Isaac really meant to bestow it on Esau. Isaac appears to have been ignorant wholly of the bargain which Jacob and Esau had made in regard to the birthright, and Jacob and his mother contrived in this way to have that confirmed which Jacob had obtained of Esau by contract. The sanction of the father, it seems, was necessary, before it could be made sure; and Rebecca and Jacob understood that the dying blessing of the aged patriarch would establish it all. It was obtained by dishonesty on the part of Jacob, but so far as Esau was concerned it was an act of righteous retribution for the little regard he had shown for the honour of his birth.

For he found no place of repentance. Marg. "Way to change his mind." That is, no place for repentance *in the mind of Isaac*, or no way to change his mind. It does not mean that Esau earnestly sought to repent and could not, but that when once the blessing had passed the lips of his father he found it impossible to change it. Isaac firmly declared that he *had pronounced* the blessing, and though it had been obtained by fraud, yet, as it was of the nature of a Divine prediction it *could* not now be changed. He had not indeed intended that it should be thus. He had pronounced a blessing on another which had been designed for him. But still the benediction had been given. The prophetic words had been pronounced. By Divine direction the *truth* had been spoken, and how *could* it be changed? It was impossible now to reverse the Divine purposes in the case, and hence the "blessing" must stand as it had been spoken. Isaac did, however, all that *could* be done. He *gave* a benediction to his son Esau, though of far inferior value to that which he had pronounced on the fraudulent Jacob, Ge 27:39,40.

Though he sought it carefully with tears. Ge 27:34. He sought to change the purpose of his father, but could not do it. The meaning and bearing of this passage, as used by the apostle, may be easily understood.

(1.) The decision of God, on the human character and destiny, will soon be pronounced. That decision will be according to truth, and cannot be changed.

(2.) If we should despise our privileges, as Esau did his birthright, and renounce our religion, it would be impossible to recover what we had lost. There would be no possibility of changing the Divine decision in the case, for it would be determined for ever. This passage, therefore, should not be alleged to show that a sinner *cannot* repent, or that he cannot find "place for repentance," or assistance to enable him to repent, or that tears and sorrow for sin would be of no avail, for it teaches none of these things; but it *should* be used to keep us from disregarding our privileges, from turning away from the true religion, from slighting the favours of the gospel, and from neglecting religion till death comes; because when God has once pronounced a sentence excluding us from his favour, no tears, or pleading, or effort of our own can change him. The sentence which he pronounces on the scoffer, the impenitent, the hypocrite, and the apostate, is one that will abide for ever without change. This passage, therefore, is in accordance with the doctrine more than once stated before in this epistle, that if a Christian should really apostatize, it would be impossible that he should be saved. **See Barnes** "Heb 6:1, seq.

{c} "he would have" Ge 27:34-38 {1} "place" "way to change his mind" {*} "carefully" "earnestly"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 12 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *For ye are not come*. To enforce the considerations already urged, the apostle introduces this sublime comparison between the old and new dispensations, Heb 12:18-24. The object, in accordance with the principal scope of the epistle, is to guard them against apostasy. To do this, he shows that under the new dispensation there was much more to bind them to fidelity, and to make apostasy dangerous, than there was under the old. The main point of the comparison is, that under the Jewish dispensation everything was adapted to awe the mind, and to restrain by the exhibition of grandeur and of power; but that under the Christian dispensation, while there was as much that was sublime, there was much more that was adapted to win and hold the affections. There were revelations of higher truths. There were more affecting motives to lead to obedience. There was that of which the former was but the type and emblem. There was the clear revelation of the glories of heaven, and of the blessed society there, all adapted to prompt to the earnest desire that they might be our own. The considerations presented in this passage, constitute the climax of the argument so beautifully pursued through this epistle, showing that the Christian system was far superior, in every respect, to the Jewish. In presenting this closing argument, the apostle first refers to some of the circumstances attending the former dispensation, which were designed to keep the people of God from apostasy, and then the considerations of superior weight existing under the Christian economy.

The mount that might be touched. Mount Sinai. The meaning here is, that *that* mountain was *palpable*, material, touchable—in contradistinction from the Mount Zion to which the church had now come, which is above the reach of the external senses, Heb 12:22. The apostle does not mean that it was permitted to the Israelites to *touch* Mount Sinai—for this was strictly forbidden, Ex 19:12; but he evidently alludes to that prohibition, and means to say that a command forbidding them to "touch" the mountain, implied that it was a material or palpable object. The sense of the passage is, that every circumstance that occurred there was fitted to fill the soul with terror. Everything accompanying the giving of the law, the setting of bounds around the mountain which they might not pass, and the darkness and tempest on the mountain itself, was adapted to overawe the soul. The phrase, "the *touchable* mountain"—if such a phrase is proper —would express the meaning of the apostle here. The "Mount Zion" to which the church now has come, is of a different character. It is not thus visible and palpable. It is not enveloped in smoke and flame, and the thunders of the Almighty do not roll and re-echo among its lofty peaks as at Horeb; yet it presents *stronger* motives to perseverance in the service of God.

And that burned with fire. Ex 19:18. Comp. De 4:11 33:2.

Nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest. See Ex 19:16.

{*} "voice" "sound" {a} "which voice" Ex 20:18,19

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 12 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *And the voice of a trumpet*. Ex 19:19. The sound of the trumpet amidst the tempest was fitted to increase the terror of the scene.

And the voice of words. Spoken by God, Ex 19:19. It is easy to conceive what must have been the awe produced by a voice uttered from the midst of the tempest so distinct as to be heard by the hundreds of thousands of Israel, when the speaker was invisible.

Which voice they that heard, etc. Ex 20:18,19. It was so fearful and overpowering, that the people earnestly prayed that if they must be addressed it might be by the familiar voice of Moses, and not by the awful voice of the Deity.

{*} "voice" "sound" {a} "voice" Ex 20:18,19

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 12 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *For they could not endure that which was commanded*. They could not sustain the awe produced by the fact that God uttered his commands himself. The meaning is not that the commands themselves were intolerable, but that the manner in which they were communicated inspired a terror which they could not bear. They feared that they should die. Ex 20:19

And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned. Ex 19:13. The prohibition was, that neither beast nor man should touch it on pain of death. The punishment was to be either by stoning, or being "shot through."

Or thrust through with a dart. Ex 19:13. "Or shot through." This phrase, however, though it is found in the common editions of the New Testament, is wanting in all the more valuable manuscripts; in all the ancient versions; and it occurs in none of the Greek ecclesiastical writers, with one exception. It is omitted now by almost all editors of the New Testament. It is beyond all doubt an addition of later times, taken from the Septuagint of Ex 19:13. Its omission does not injure the sense.

{b} "And if" Ex 19:13,16

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 12 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said*, etc. This is not recorded in the account of the giving of the law in Exodus, and it has been made a question on what authority the apostle made this declaration respecting Moses. In De 9:19, Moses indeed says of himself, after he had come down from the mountain, and had broken the two tables of stone that were in his hand, that he was greatly afraid of the anger of the Lord on account of the sin of the people. "I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure wherewith the Lord was wroth against you to destroy you;" and it has been supposed by many that this is the passage to which the apostle here alludes. But it is very evident that was spoken in a different occasion from the one which is referred to in the passage before us. That was after the law was promulgated, and Moses had descended from the mount; and it was not said in view of the terrors of the scene when the law was given, but of the apprehension of the wrath of God against the people for their sin in making the golden calf. I know not how to explain this, except by the supposition that the apostle here refers to some tradition that the scene

produced this effect on his mind. In itself, it is not improbable that Moses thus trembled with alarm, (comp. Ex 19:16,) nor that the remembrance of it should have been handed down among the numerous traditions which the Jews transmitted from age to age. There must have been many things that occurred in their journey through the wilderness which are not recorded in the Books of Moses. Many of them would be preserved naturally in the memory of the people, and transmitted to their posterity; and though those truths might become intermingled with much that was fabulous, yet it is not irrational to suppose that an inspired writer may have adduced pertinent and true examples from these traditions of what actually occurred. It was one method of preserving the truth, thus to select such instances of what actually took place from the mass of traditions, which were destined to perish, as would be useful in future times. The circumstance here mentioned was greatly fitted to increase the impression of the sublimity and fearfulness of the scene. Moses was accustomed to commune with God. He had met him at the "bush," and had been addressed by him face to face; and yet so awful were the scenes at Horeb, that even he could not bear it with composure. What may we, then, suppose to have been the alarm of the body of the people, when the mind of the great leader himself was thus overpowered!

{+} "quake" "tremble"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 12 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *But ye are come unto mount Sion*. You who are Christians; all who are under the new dispensation. The design is to contrast the Christian dispensation with the Jewish, and to show that its excellences and soul; advantages were far superior to the religion of their fathers. It had more to win the affections; more to elevate the more to inspire with hope. It had less that was terrific and alarming; it appealed less to the fears and more to the hopes of mankind; but still apostasy from this religion could not be less terrible in its consequences than apostasy from the religion of Moses. In the passage before us, the apostle evidently contrasts Sinai with Mount Zion;and means to say that there was more about the latter that was adapted to win the heart, and to preserve allegiance, than there was about the former. Mount Zion literally denoted the southern hill in Jerusalem, on which a part of the city was built. That part of the city was made by David and his successors the residence of the court, and soon the name Zion was given familiarly to the whole city. Jerusalem was the centre of religion in the land; the place where the temple stood, and where the worship of God was celebrated, and where God dwelt by a visible symbol, and it became the type and emblem of the holy abode where He dwells in heaven. It cannot be literally meant here that they had come to the Mount Sion in Jerusalem, for that was as true of the whole Jewish people as of those whom the apostle addressed; but it must mean that they had come to the Mount Zion of which the holy city was an emblem; to the glorious mount which is revealed as the dwelling-place of God, of angels, of saints. That is, they had "come" to this by the revelations and hopes of the gospel. They were not, indeed, literally in heaven, nor was that glorious city literally on earth; but the dispensation to which they had been brought was that which conducted them directly up to the city of the living God, and to the holy mount where he dwelt above. The view was not confined to an earthly mountain enveloped in smoke and flame, but opened at once on the holy place where God abides. By the phrase, "ye are come," the apostle means that this was the characteristic of the new dispensation,

that it conducted them there, and that they were already, in fact, inhabitants of that glorious city. They were citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, (comp. **See Barnes "**Php 3:20,) and were entitled to its privileges.

And unto the city of the living God. The city where the living God dwells—the heavenly Jerusalem. Comp. **See Barnes "Heb 11:10"**.

God dwelt by a visible symbol in the temple at Jerusalem—and to that his people came under the old dispensation. In a more literal and glorious sense his abode is in heaven, and to that his people have now come.

The heavenly Jerusalem. Heaven is not unfrequently represented as a magnificent city, where God and angels dwell; and the Christian revelation discloses this to Christians as certainly their final home. They should regard themselves already as dwellers in that city, and live and act as if they saw its splendour, and partook of its joy. In regard to this representation of heaven as a city where God dwells, the following places may be consulted: Heb 11:10,14-16 12:28 13:14

Ga 4:26 Re 3:12 Re 21:2,10-27.

It is true that Christians have not yet *seen* that city by the bodily eye, but they look to it with the eye of faith. It is revealed to them; they are permitted by anticipation to contemplate its glories, and to feel that it is to be their eternal home. They are permitted to live and act *as if* they saw the glorious God whose dwelling is there, and were already surrounded by the angels and the redeemed. The apostle does not represent them *as if* they were expecting that it would be visibly set up on the earth, but as being now actually dwellers in that city, and bound to live and act as if they were amidst its splendours.

And to an innumerable company of angels. The Greek here is, "to myriads [or ten thousands] of angels in an assembly or joyful convocation." The phrase, "tens of thousands," is often used to denote a great and indefinite number. The word rendered "general assembly," (Heb 12:23)—*panhguriv*—refers, properly, to "an assembly or convocation of the whole people in order to celebrate any public festival or solemnity, as the public games or sacrifices." *Rob. Lex*. It occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, and refers here to the angels viewed as assembled around the throne of God, and celebrating his praises. It should be regarded as connected with the word *angels*, referring to *their* convocation in heaven, and not to the church of the first-born. This construction is demanded by the Greek. Our common translation renders it as if it were to be united with the church— "to the general assembly and church of the firstborn;" but the Greek will not admit of this construction. The interpretation which unites it with the angels is adopted now by almost all critics, and in almost all the editions of the New Testament. On the convocation of angels, **See Barnes "Job 1:6"**.

The writer intends, doubtless, to contrast that joyful assemblage of the angels in heaven with those who appeared in the giving of the law on Mount Sinai. God is always represented as surrounded by hosts of angels in heaven. See De 33:2 1Ki 22:19; Da 7:10 Ps 68:17; comp. **See Barnes "Heb 12:1"; see also Re 5:2 Mt 26:53;** Lu 2:13.

The meaning is, that under the Christian dispensation Christians, in their feelings and worship, become united to this vast host of holy angelic beings. It is, of course, not meant that they are visible, but they are seen by the eye of faith. The argument here is, that as, in virtue of the Christian revelation, we become associated with those pure and happy spirits, we should not apostatize from such a religion, for we should regard it as honourable and glorious to be identified with them.

{a} "city" Re 3:2 {b} "angels" Ps 68:17

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 12 - Verse 23

Verse 23. To the general assembly. **See Barnes** "Heb 12:22.

And church of the firstborn. That is, you are united with the church of the firstborn. They who were firstborn among, the Hebrews enjoyed peculiar privileges, and especially pre-eminence of rank. **See Barnes "Col 1:15"**.

The reference here is, evidently, to those saints who had been distinguished for their piety, and who may be supposed to be exalted to peculiar honours in heaven—such as the patriarchs, prophets, martyrs. The meaning is, that by becoming Christians we have become, in fact, identified with that happy and honoured church, and that this is a powerful motive to induce us to persevere. It is a consideration which should make us adhere to our religion amidst all temptations and persecutions, that we are identified with the most eminently holy men who have lived, and that we are to share their honours and their joys. The Christian is united in feeling, in honour, and in destiny, with the excel. lent of all the earth and of all times, lie should feel it, therefore, an honour to be a Christian; he should yield to no temptation which would induce him to part from so goodly a fellowship.

Which are written in heaven. Marg. *enrolled*. The word here was employed by the Greeks to denote that one was enrolled as a citizen, or entitled to the privileges of citizenship. Here it means. that the names of the persons referred to were registered or enrolled among the inhabitants of the heavenly world. **See Barnes "Lu 10:20"**.

And to God the Judge of all. God, who will pronounce the final sentence on all mankind. The object of the reference here to God as Judge does not appear to be to contrast the condition of Christians with that of the Jews, as is the case in some of the circumstances alluded to, but to bring impressively before their minds the fact that they sustained a peculiarly near relation to him from whom all were to receive their final allotment. As the destiny of all depended on him, they should be careful not to provoke his wrath. The design of the apostle seems to be to give a rapid glance of what there was in heaven, as disclosed by the eye of faith to the Christian, which should operate as a motive to induce him to persevere in his Christian course. The thought that seems to have struck his mind in regard to God was, that he would do right to all. They had, therefore, everything to fear if they revolted from him; they had everything to hope if they bore their trials with patience, and persevered to the end. ¶ And to the spirits of just men made perfect. Not only to the more eminent saints—the "church of the firstborn"—but to all who were made perfect in heaven. They were not only united with the imperfect Christians on earth, but with those who have become completely delivered from sin, and admitted to the world of glory. This is a consideration which ought to influence the minds of all believers. They are even now united with all the redeemed in heaven. They should so live as not to be separated from them in the final day. Most Christians have among the redeemed already not a few of their most tenderly beloved friends. A father may be there; a mother, a sister, a smiling babe. It should be a powerful motive with us so to live as to be prepared to be reunited with them in heaven.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 12 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant*. This was the crowning excellence of the new dispensation, in contradistinction from the old. They had been made acquainted with the true Messiah; they were united to him by faith; they had been sprinkled with his blood. **See Barnes** "Heb 7:22, and **See Barnes "Heb 8:6"**.

The highest consideration which can be urged to induce any one to persevere in a life of piety is the fact that the, Son of God has come into the world and died to save sinners. Comp. **See Barnes** "Heb 12:2, seq. of this chapter.

And to the blood of sprinkling. The blood which Jesus shed, and which is sprinkled upon us to ratify the covenant. **See Barnes** "Heb 9:18, seq.

That speaketh better things than that of Abel. Or, "than Abel; "the words "that of" being supplied by the translators. In the original there is no reference to the blood of Abel shed by Cain, as our translators seem to have supposed; but the allusion is to the faith of Abel, or to the testimony which he bore to a great and vital truth of religion. The meaning here is, that the blood of Jesus speaks better things than Abel did; that is, that the blood of Jesus is the *reality* of which the offering of Abel was a type. Abel proclaimed by the sacrifice which he made the great truth, that salvation could be only by a bloody offering—but he did this only in a typical and obscure manner; Jesus proclaimed it in a more distinct and better manner by the reality. The object here is to compare the Redeemer with Abel, not in the sense that the blood shed in either case calls for vengeance, but that salvation by blood is more clearly revealed in the Christian plan than in the ancient history; and hence illustrating, in accordance with the design of this epistle, the superior excellency of the Christian scheme over all which had preceded it. There were *other* points of resemblance between Abel and the Redeemer, but on them the apostle does not insist. Abel was a martyr, and so was Christ; Abel was cruelly murdered, and so was Christ; there was aggravated guilt in the murder of Abel by his brother, and so there was in that of Jesus by his brethren—his own countrymen; the blood of Abel called for vengeance, and was followed by a fearful penalty on Cain, and so was the death of the Redeemer on his murderers—for they said, "his blood be on us and on our children," and are yet suffering under the fearful malediction then invoked;—but the point of contrast here is, that the blood of Jesus makes a more full, distinct, and clear proclamation of the truth, that salvation is by blood, than the offering made by Abel did. The apostle alludes here to what he had said in Heb 11:4. **See Barnes "Heb 11:4"**.

Such is the contrast between the former and the latter dispensations; and such the motives to perseverance presented by both. In the former, the Jewish, all was imperfect, terrific, and alarming. In the latter, everything was comparatively mild, winning, alluring, animating. Terror was not the principal element; but heaven was opened to the eye of faith, and the Christian was permitted to survey the Mount Zion—the New Jerusalem—the angels—the redeemed—the blessed God— the glorious Mediator—and to feel that that blessed abode was to be his home. To that happy world he was tending; and with all these pure and glorious beings he was identified. Having stated and urged this argument, the apostle, in the remainder of the chapter, warns those whom he addressed in a most solemn manner against a renunciation of their Christian faith.

{g} "mediator" Heb 8:6 {2} "covenant" "testament" {h} "blood" Ex 24:8 {i} "of Abel" Ge 4:10

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 12 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *See that ye refuse not*. That you do not reject or disregard.

Him that speaketh. That is, in the gospel. Do not turn away from him who has addressed you in the new dispensation, and called you to obey and serve him. The meaning is, that God had addressed them in the gospel as really as he had done the Hebrews on Mount Sinai, and that there was as much to be dreaded in disregarding his voice now as there was then. He does not speak, indeed, amidst lightnings, and thunders, and clouds, but he speaks by every message of mercy; by every invitation; by every tender appeal He spake by his Son, (He 1:2;) he speaks by the Holy Spirit, and by all his calls and warnings in the gospel.

For if they escaped not. If they who heard God under the old dispensation, who refused to obey him, were cut off. **See Barnes "Heb 10:28"**.

Who refused him that spake on earth. That is, Moses. The contrast here is between Moses and the Son of God, the head of the Jewish and the head of the Christian dispensation. Moses was a mere man, and spake as such, though in the name of God. The Son of God was from above, and spake as an inhabitant from heaven.

Much more, etc. **See Barnes** "Heb 2:2, **See Barnes "Heb 2:3"**; **See Barnes "Heb 9:28"**.

{*} "spake" "uttered the divine oracles"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 12 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *Whose voice then shook the earth*. When he spake at Mount Sinai. The meaning is, that the mountain and the region around quaked, Ex 19:18. The "voice" here referred to is that of God speaking from the holy mount.

But now hath he promised, saying. The words here quoted are taken from Hag 2:6, where they refer to the changes which would take place under the Messiah. The meaning is, that there would be great revolutions in his coming, *as if* the universe were shaken to its centre. The apostle evidently applies this passage, as it is done in Haggai, to the first advent of the Redeemer.

I shake not the earth only. This is not quoted literally from the Hebrew, but the sense is retained. In Haggai it is, "Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come." The apostle lays emphasis on the fact that not only the *earth* was to be shaken, but also *heaven*. The shaking of the earth here evidently refers to the commotions among the nations that would prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah.

But also heaven. This may refer either (1) to the extraordinary phenomena in the heavens at the birth, the death, and the ascension of Christ; or

(2) to the revolutions in morals and religion which would be caused by the introduction of the gospel, as if everything were to be changed—expressed by "a shaking of the heavens and the earth;" or

(3) it may be more literally taken as denoting that there was a remarkable agitation in the heavens—in the bosoms of its inhabitants—arising from a fact so wonderful as that the Son of God should descend to earth, suffer, and die. I see no reason to doubt that the latter idea may have been

included here; and the meaning of the whole then is, that while the giving of the law at Mount Sinai, fearful and solemn as it was, was an event that merely shook the earth in the vicinity of the holy Mount, the introduction of the gospel agitated the universe. Great changes upon the earth were to precede it; one revolution was to succeed another preparatory to it, and the whole universe would be moved at an event so extraordinary. The meaning is, that the introduction of the gospel was a much more solemn and momentous thing than the giving of the law—and that therefore it was much more fearful and dangerous to apostatize from it.

{a} "saying" Hag 2:6

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 12 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *And this word, Yet once more*. That is, this reference to a great agitation or commotion in some future time. This is designed as an explanation of the prophecy in Haggai; and the idea is, that there would be such agitations that everything which was not fixed on a permanent and immovable basis would be thrown down as in an earthquake. Everything which was temporary in human institutions; everything which was wrong in customs and morals; and everything in the ancient system of religion which was merely of a preparatory and typical character, would be removed. What was of permanent value would be retained, and a kingdom would be established which nothing could move. The effect of the gospel would be to overturn everything which was of a temporary character in the previous system, and everything in morals which was not founded on a solid basis, and to set up, in the place of it, principles which no revolution and no time could change. The coming of the Saviour, and the influence of his religion on mankind, had this effect in such respects as the following.

(1.) All that was of a sound and permanent nature in the Jewish economy was retained; all that was typical and temporary was removed. The whole mass of sacrifices and ceremonies, that were designed to prefigure the Messiah, of course then ceased; all that was of permanent value in the law of God, and in the principles of religion, was incorporated in the new system and perpetuated.

(2.) The same is true in regard to morals. There was much truth on the earth before the time of the Saviour; but it was intermingled with much that was false. The effect of his coming has been to distinguish what is true and what is false; to give permanency to the one, and to cause the other to vanish.

(3.) The same is true of religion. There are some views of religion which men have by nature which are correct; there are many which are false. The Christian religion gives permanence and stability to the one, and causes the other to disappear. And in general it may be remarked, that the effect of Christianity is to give stability to all that is founded on truth, and to drive error from the world. Christ came that he might destroy all the systems of error—that is, all that could be shaken on earth, and to confirm all that is true. The result of all will be, that he will preside over a *permanent* kingdom, and that his people will inherit "a kingdom which cannot be moved," Heb 12:28.

The removing of those things that are shaken. Marg., more correctly, *"may be."*. The meaning is, that those principles of religion and morals which were not founded on truth, would be removed by his coming.

As of things that are made. Much perplexity has been felt by expositors in regard to this phrase, but the meaning seems to be plain. The apostle is contrasting the things which are fixed and stable with those which are temporary in their nature, or which are settled on no firm foundation. The former he speaks of as if they were uncreated and eternal principles of truth and righteousness. The latter he speaks of as if they were *created* and therefore liable, like all things which are "made," to decay, to change, to dissolution,

That those things which cannot be shaken may remain. The eternal principles of truth, and law, and righteousness. These would enter into the new kingdom which was to be set up, and of course *that* kingdom would be permanent. These are not changed or modified by time, circumstances, human opinions, or laws. They remain the same from age to age, in every land, and in all worlds. They have been permanent in all the fluctuations of opinion; in all the varied forms of government on earth; in all the revolutions of states and empires. To bring out these is the result of the events of Divine Providence, and the object of the coming of the Redeemer; and on these principles that great kingdom is to be reared which is to endure for ever and ever.

{1} "are shaken" "may be"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 12 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved*. We who are Christians. We pertain to a kingdom that is permanent and unchanging. The meaning is, that the kingdom of the Redeemer is never to pass away. It is not, like the Jewish dispensation, to give place to another, nor is there any power that can destroy it. **See Barnes "Mt 16:18"**.

It has *now* endured for eighteen hundred years, amidst all the revolutions on earth, and in spite of all the attempts which have been made to destroy it; and it is now as vigorous and stable as it ever was. The past has shown that there is no power of earth or hell that can destroy it, and that in the midst of all revolutions this kingdom still survives. Its great principles and laws will endure on earth till the end of time, and will be made permanent in heaven. This is the only kingdom in which we can be certain that there will be no revolution; the only empire which is destined never to fall.

Let us have grace whereby we may serve God. Marg. "let us hold fast." The Greek is, literally, *let us have grace*; the meaning is, "let us hold fast the grace or favour which we have received in being admitted to the privileges of that kingdom." The object of the apostle is to keep them in the reverent fear and service of God. The argument which he presents is, that this kingdom is permanent. There is no danger of its being overthrown. It is to continue on earth to the end of time; it is to be established in heaven for ever. If it were temporary, changeable, liable to be overthrown at any moment, there would be much less encouragement to perseverance. But in a kingdom like this there is every encouragement, for there is the assurance

(1.) that all our interests there are safe;

(2.) that all our exertions will be crowned with ultimate success;

(3.) that the efforts which we make to do good will have a permanent influence on mankind, and will bless future ages; and

(4.) that the reward is certain. A man subject to a government about whose continuance there would be the utmost uncertainty, would have little encouragement to labour with a view to any

permanent interest. In a government where nothing is settled, where all policy is changing, and where there are constantly vacillating plans, there is no inducement to enter on any enterprize demanding time and risk. But where the policy is settled; where the principles and the laws are firm; where there is evidence of permanency, there is the highest encouragement. The highest possible encouragement of this kind is in the permanent and established kingdom of God. All other governments may be revolutionized—this never will be; all others may have a changeful policy—this has none; all others will be overthrown —this never will.

With reverence and godly fear. With true veneration for God, and with pious devotedness.

{1} "have grace" "hold fast"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 12 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *For our God is a consuming fire*. This is a further reason why we should serve God with profound reverence and unwavering fidelity. The quotation is made from De 4:24: "For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God." The object of the apostle here seems to be, to show that there was the same reason for fearing the displeasure of God under the new dispensation which there was under the old. It was the same God who was served. There had been no change in his attributes, or in the principles of his government. He was.no more the friend of sin now than he was then; and the same perfections of his nature which would then lead him to punish transgression would also lead him to do it now. His anger was really as terrible, and as much to be dreaded, as it was at Mount Sinai; and the destruction which he would inflict on his foes would be as terrible now as it was then. The fearfulness with which he would come forth to destroy the wicked might be compared to *a fire* that consumed all before it. **See Barnes "Mr 9:44-46"**.

The image here is a most fearful one, and is in accordance with all the representations of God in the Bible, and with all that we see in the Divine dealings with wicked men, that punishment, as inflicted by him, is awful and overwhelming. So it was on the old world; on the cities of the plain; on the hosts of Sennacherib; and on Jerusalem;—and so it has been in the calamities of pestilence, war, flood, and famine, with which God has visited guilty men. By all these tender and solemn considerations, therefore, the apostle urges the friends of God to perseverance and fidelity in his service. His goodness and mercy; the gift of a Saviour to redeem us; the revelation of a glorious world; the assurance that all may soon be united in fellowship with the angels and the redeemed; the certainty that the kingdom of the Saviour is established on a permanent basis, and the apprehension of the dreadful wrath of God against the guilty, all should lead us to persevere in the duties of our Christian calling, and to avoid those things which would jeopard the eternal interests of our souls.

{a} "our God" De 4:24

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 13

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 13 - Verse 1

ANALYSIS OF CHAPTER 13

THE closing chapter of this epistle is made up almost entirely of exhortations to the performance of various practical duties. The exhortations relate to the following points:—brotherly love, Heb 13:1; hospitality, Heb 13:2; sympathy with those in bonds, Heb 13:3; fidelity in the marriage relation, Heb 13:4; contentment, Heb 13:5,6; submission to those in authority, Heb 13:7,8; stability in the doctrines of religion, Heb 13:9-15; benevolence, Heb 13:16; obedience to those entrusted with office, Heb 13:17; and special prayer for him who wrote this epistle, Heb 13:18,19. The epistle then closes with a beautiful and impressive benediction, Heb 13:20,21; with an entreaty that they would receive with favour what had been written, Heb 13:22; with the grateful announcement that Timothy, in whom they doubtless felt a great interest, was set at liberty, Heb 13:23; and with a salutation to all the saints, Heb 13:24,25.

Verse 1. *Let brotherly love continue*.Implying that it now existed among them. The apostle had no occasion to reprove them for the want of it, as he had in regard to some to whom he wrote, but he aims merely to impress on them the importance of this virtue, and to caution them against the danger of allowing it ever to be interrupted. **See Barnes "Joh 13:34"**.

{b} "continue" 1Pe 1:22

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 13 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Be not forgetful to entertain strangers*. On the duty of hospitality, see a full explanation in **See Barnes "Ro 12:13"**.

For thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Without knowing that they were angels. As Abraham (Ge 18:2, seq.) and Lot did, Ge 19. The motive here urged for doing it is, that by entertaining the stranger we may perhaps be honoured with the presence of those whose society will be to us an honour and a blessing. It is not well for us to miss the opportunity of the presence, the conversation, and the prayers of the good. The influence of such guests in a family is worth more than it costs to entertain them. If there is danger that we may sometimes receive those of an opposite character, yet it is not wise, on account of such possible danger, to lose the opportunity of entertaining those whose presence would be a blessing. Many a parent owes the conversion of a child to the influence of a pious stranger in his family; and the hope that this may occur, or that our own souls may be blessed, should make us ready, at all proper times, to welcome the feet of the stranger to our doors. Many a man, if he had been accosted as Abraham was at the door of his tent by strangers, would have turned them rudely away; many a one in the situation of Lot would have sent the unknown guests rudely from his door; but who can estimate what would have been the results of such a course on the destiny of those good men and their families? For a great number

of instances in which the heathen were supposed to have entertained the *gods*, though unknown to them, see Wetstein, *in loc*.

{c} "some" Ge 18:3 14:2; 1Jo 4:7,20

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 13 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Remember them that are in bonds*. All who are *bound*; whether prisoners of war; captives in dungeons; those detained in custody for trial; those who are imprisoned for righteousness' sake; or those held in slavery. The word used here will include all instances where *bonds, shackles, chains* were ever used. Perhaps there is an immediate allusion to their fellow-Christians who were suffering imprisonment on account of their religion, of whom there were doubtless many at that time; but the *principle* will apply to every case of those who are imprisoned or oppressed. The word *remember* implies more than that we are merely to think of them. Comp. Ex 20:8 Ec 12:1. It means that we are to remember them with *appropriate sympathy*; or as we should wish others to remember us if we were in their circumstances. That is, we are

(1.) to feel deep compassion for them;

(2.) we are to remember them in our prayers;

(3.) we are to remember them, as far as practicable, with aid for their relief. Christianity teaches us to sympathize with all the oppressed, the suffering, and the sad; and there are more of this class than we commonly suppose, and they have stronger claims on our sympathy than we commonly realize. In this land there are not far from *ten thousand* confined in prison: the father separated from his children; the husband from his wife; the brother from his sister; and all cut off from the living world. Their fare is coarse, and their couches hard, and the ties which bound them to the living world are rudely snapped asunder. Many of them are in solitary dungeons; all of them are sad and melancholy men. True, they are there for crime; but they are men—they are our brothers. They have still the feelings of our common humanity, and many of them *feel* their separation from wife and children and home as keenly as we would. That God who has mercifully made our lot different from theirs has commanded us to sympathize with them—and we should sympathize all the more when we remember that but for *his* restraining grace we should have been in the same condition. There are in this land of "liberty," also, nearly three millions who are held in the hard bondage of slavery. There is the father, the mother, the child, the brother, the sister. They are held as property; liable to be sold; having no right to the avails of their own labour; exposed to the danger of having the tenderest ties sundered at the will of their master; shut out from the privilege of reading the word of God; fed on coarse fare; living in wretched hovels; and often subjected to the painful inflictions of the lash at the caprice of a passionate driver. Wives and daughters are made the victims of degrading sensuality, without the power of resistance or redress; the security of home is unknown; and they are dependent on the will of another man whether they shall or shall not worship their Creator. We should remember them, and sympathize with them as if they were *our* fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, or sons and daughters. Though of different colour, yet the same blood flows in their veins as in ours, (Ac 17:26;) they are bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. By nature they have the same right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," which we and our children have; and to deprive them of that right is as unjust as it would be to deprive us and ours of it. They have

a claim on our sympathy, for they are our brethren. They need it, for they are poor and helpless. They should have it, for the same God who has kept us from that hard lot has commanded us to remember them. That kind remembrance of them should be shown in every practicable way. By prayer; by plans contemplating their freedom; by efforts to send them the gospel; by diffusing abroad the principles of liberty and of the rights of man; by using our influence to arouse the public mind in their behalf, we should endeavour to relieve those who are in bonds, and to hasten the time when "the oppressed shall go free." On this subject **See Barnes** "Is 48:6.

As bound with them. There is great force and beauty in this expression. Religion teaches us to identify ourselves with all who are oppressed, and to feel what they suffer as if we endured it ourselves. Infidelity and atheism are cold and distant. They stand aloof from the oppressed and the sad. But Christianity unites all hearts in one; binds us to all the race, and reveals to us, in the case of each one oppressed and injured, a brother.

And them which suffer adversity. The word here used refers, properly, to those who are maltreated, or who are injured by others. It does not properly refer to those who merely experience calamity.

As being yourselves also in the body. As being yourselves exposed to persecution and suffering, and liable to be injured. That is, do to them as you would wish them to do to you if you were the sufferer. When we see an oppressed and injured man, we should remember that it is possible that we may be in the same circumstances, and that then we shall need and desire the sympathy of others.

{a} "in bonds" Mt 25:36

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 13 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Marriage is honourable in all*. The object here is to state that honour is to be shown to the marriage relation. It is not to be undervalued by the pretence of the superior purity of a state of celibacy, as if marriage were improper for any class of men, or any condition of life; and it should not be dishonoured by any violation of the marriage contract. The course of things has shown that there was abundant reason for the apostle to assert, with emphasis, that "marriage was an honourable condition of life." There has been a constant effort made to show that celibacy was a more holy state; that there was something in marriage that rendered it dishourable for those who were in the ministry, and for those of either sex who would be eminently pure. This sentiment has been the cause of more abomination in the world than any other single opinion claiming to have a religious sanction. It is one of the supports on which the Papal system rests, and has been one of the principal upholders of all the corruptions in monasteries and nunneries. The apostle asserts, without any restriction or qualification, that marriage is honourable in all; and this proves that it is lawful for the ministers of religion to marry, and that the whole doctrine of the superior purity of a state of celibacy is false. See this subject examined

See Barnes "1Co 7".

And the bed undefiled. Fidelity to the marriage vow.

But whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. All licentiousness of life, and all violations of the marriage covenant, will be severely punished by God. **See Barnes "1Co 6:9"**.

The sins here referred to prevailed everywhere, and hence there was the more propriety for the frequent and solemn injunctions to avoid them which we find in the Scriptures.

{b} "marriage is honourable" Pr 5:15-23 {c} "whoremongers" 1Co 6:9 Re 22:15

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 13 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Let your conversation*. Your *conduct*—for so the word conversation is used in the Scriptures. **See Barnes "Php 1:27"**.

Be without covetousness. **See Barnes "Eph 5:3"**; **See Barnes "Col 3:5"**.

And be to content with such things as ye have. **See Barnes "Php 4:11,12"**; **See Barnes** "Mt 6:25, seq. The particular reason here given for contentment is, that God has promised never to leave his people. Compare with this the beautiful argument of the Saviour in Mt 6:25, seq.

For he hath said. That is, God has said.

I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. See De 31:6 Jos 1:5; 1Ch 28:20. Substantially the same expression is found in each of those places, and all of them contain the *principle* on which the apostle here relies, that God will not forsake his people.

{*} "conversation" "conduct" {d} "content" Mt 6:25,34 {e} "hath said" Ge 28:15

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 13 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *So that we may boldly say*. Without any hesitation or doubt. In all times of perplexity and threatening want; in all times when we scarcely know whence the supplies for our necessities are to come, we may put our trust in God, and be assured that he will not leave us to suffer. In the facts which occur under the providential dealings, there is a ground for confidence on this subject which is not always exercised even by good men. It remains yet to be shown that they who exercise simple trust in God for the supply of their wants are ever forsaken. Comp. Ps 37:25.

The Lord is my helper. Substantially this sentiment is found in Ps 27:1 Ps 118:6. The apostle does not adduce it as a quotation, but as language which a true Christian may employ. The sentiment is beautiful, and full of consolation. What can we fear if we have the assurance that the Lord is on our side, and that he will help us? Man can do no more to us than he permits, and of course no more than will be for our own good; and, under whatever trials we may be placed, we need be under no painful apprehensions, for God will be our Protector and our Friend.

{f} "boldly say" Ps 27:1

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 13 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Remember them which have the rule over you*. Marg., "are the guides." The word here used means, properly, *leaders, guides, directors*. It is often applied to military commanders. Here it means teachers—appointed to lead or guide them to eternal life. It does not refer to them so much

as *rulers or governors*, as *teachers* or *guides*. In Heb 13:17, however, it is used in the former sense. The duty here enjoined is that of *remembering* them; that is, remembering their counsel, their instructions, their example.

Who have spoken to you the word of God. Preachers; either apostles or others. Respect is to be shown to the ministerial office by whomsoever it is borne.

Whose faith follow. That is, imitate. **See Barnes "Heb 6:12"**.

Considering the end of their conversation. Of their conduct; of their manner of life. The word here rendered *the end—ekbasiv* —occurs only here and in 1Co 10:13, where it is rendered "*a way* of escape." It properly means, *a going out, an egress*, and is hence spoken of as a going out from life, or as an exit from the world— *death*. This is probably the meaning here. It does not mean, as our translation would seem to imply, that Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and for ever, was the *aim or end* for which they lived—for the Greek will not bear that construction; but it means that they were attentively to contemplate the *end or the issue* of the conduct of those holy teachers—the close or *going out* of all that they did; to wit, in a peaceful death. Their faith sustained them. They were enabled to persevere in a Christian course, and did not faint or fail. There is allusion, doubtless, to those who had been their religious instructors, and who had died in the faith of the gospel, either by persecution, or by an ordinary death; and the apostle points to them as examples of that to which he would exhort those whom he addressed—of perseverance in the faith until death. Thus explained, this verse does not refer to the duty of Christians towards living teachers, but toward those who are *dead*. Their duty towards living teachers is enforced in Heb 13:17. The sentiment here is, that the proper remembrance of those now deceased, who were once our spiritual instructors and guides, should be allowed to have an important influence in inducing us to lead a holy life. We should remember them with affection and gratitude; we should recall the truths which they taught, and the exhortations which they addressed to us; we should cherish, with kind affection, the memory of all that they did for our welfare, and we should not forget the effect of the truths which they taught in sustaining their own souls when they died.

{1} "them which" "are the guides" {a} "faith follow" Heb 6:12 {*} "follow" "whose faith imitate"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 13 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Jesus Christ, the same yesterday*, etc. As this stands in our common translation it conveys an idea which is not in the original. It would seem to mean that Jesus Christ, the unchangeable Saviour, was the end or aim of the conduct of those referred to, or that they lived to imitate and glorify him. But this is by no means the meaning in the original. There it stands as an absolute proposition, that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever;" that is, that he is unchangeable. The evident design of this independent proposition here is, to encourage them to persevere by showing that their Saviour was always the same; that he who had sustained his people in former times was the same still, and would be the same for ever. The *argument* here, therefore, for perseverance is founded on the *immutability* of the Redeemer. If he were fickle, vacillating, changing in his character and plans; if to-day he aids his people, and to-morrow will forsake them; if at one time he loves the virtuous, and at another equally loves the vicious; if he formed a plan

yesterday which he has abandoned today; or if he is ever to be a different being from what he is now, there would be no encouragement to effort. Who would know what to depend on? Who would know what to expect tomorrow? For who could have any certainty that he could ever please a capricious or a vacillating being? Who could know how to shape his conduct if the principles of the Divine administration were not always the same? At the same time, also, that this passage furnishes the strongest argument for fidelity and perseverance, it is an irrefragable proof of the divinity of the Saviour. It asserts immutability—sameness in the past, the present, and to all eternity—but of whom can this be affirmed but God? It would not be possible to conceive of a declaration which would more strongly assert immutability than this.

{b} "same" Re 1:4

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 13 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines*. That is, they should have settled and fixed points of belief, and not yield to every new opinion which was started. The apostle does not exhort them to adhere to an opinion merely because they had before held it, or because it was an old opinion, nor does he forbid their following the leadings of truth, though they might be required to abandon what they had before held; but he cautions them against that vacillating spirit, and that easy credulity, which would lead them to yield to any novelty, and to embrace an opinion because it was new or strange. Probably the principal reference here is to the Judaizing teachers, and to their various doctrines about their ceremonial observances and traditions. But the exhortation is applicable to Christians at all times. A religious opinion, once embraced on what was regarded a good evidence, or in which we have been trained, should not be abandoned for slight causes. Truth, indeed, should always be followed, but it should be only after careful inquiry.

For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace. This is the proper foundation of adherence to the truth. The *heart* should be established with the love of God, with pure religion, and then we shall love the truth, and leave it in the right manner. If it is the head merely which is convinced, the consequence is bigotry, pride, narrow-mindedness. If the belief of the truth has its seat in the heart; it will be accompanied with charity, kindness, good-will to all men. In *such* a belief of the truth it is a good thing to have the heart established. It will produce

(1.) firmness and stability of character;

(2.) charity and kindness to others;

(3.) consolation and support in trials and temptations. When a man is thrown into trials and temptations, he ought to have some settled principles on which he can rely; some fixed points of belief that will sustain his soul.

Not with meters. The meaning is, that it is better to have the heart established with grace, or with the principles of pure religion, than with the most accurate knowledge of the rules of distinguishing the clean from the unclean among the various articles of food. Many such rules were found in the law of Moses, and many more had been added by the refinements of Jewish rulers and by tradition. To distinguish and remember all these required no small amount of knowledge, and the Jewish teachers, doubtless, prided themselves much on it. Paul says that it would be much better to have the principles of grace in the heart than all this knowledge; to have the mind settled on the

great truths of religion than to be able to make the most accurate and learned distinctions in this matter. The same remark may be made about a great many other points besides the Jewish distinctions respecting meats. The principle is, that it is better to have the heart established in the grace of God, than to have the most accurate knowledge of the distinctions which are made on useless or unimportant subjects of religion. This observation would extend to many of the shibboleths of party; to many of the metaphysical distinctions in a hair-splitting theology; to many of the points of controversy which divide the Christian world.

Which have not profited, etc, Which have been of no real benefit to their souls. **See Barnes "1Co 8:8"**.

{c} "be not carried" Re 1:4

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 13 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *We have an altar*. We who are Christians. The Jews had an altar on which their sacrifices were offered which was regarded as sacred, and of the benefit of which no others might partake. The design of the apostle is to show that the same thing substantially, so far as privilege and sanctifying influence were concerned, was enjoyed by Christians. The "altar" to which he here refers is evidently the cross on which the great sacrifice was made.

Whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. A part of the meat offered in sacrifice among the Jews became the property of the priests and Levites, and they had, by the law, a right to this, as a part of their support. See Le 6:25,26; Nu 18:9,10.

But the apostle says that there is a higher and more valuable sacrifice of which they have no right to partake while they remain in the service of the "tabernacle" or temple; that is, while they remain Jews. The participation in the great Christian sacrifice appertained only to those who were the friends of the Redeemer; sad however much they might value themselves on the privilege of partaking of the sacrifices offered under the Jewish law, that of partaking of the great sacrifice made by the Son of God was much greater.

Which serve the tabernacle. **See Barnes "Heb 9:2,3"**.

The Jewish priests and Levites.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 13 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *For the bodies of those beasts*, etc. The word here rendered "*for*"—*gar*—would be here more properly rendered "*moreover*." *Stuart*. The apostle is not urging a reason for what he had said in the previous verse, but is suggesting anew consideration to excite those whom he addressed to fidelity and perseverance. In the previous verse the consideration was, that Christians are permitted to partake of the benefits of a higher and more perfect sacrifice than the Jews were, and therefore should not relapse into that religion. In this verse the consideration is, that the bodies of the beasts that were burned were taken without the camp, and that in like manner the Lord Jesus

suffered without the gate of Jerusalem, and that we should be willing to go out with him to that sacrifice, whatever reproach or shame it might be attended with.

Whose blood is brought into the sanctuary, etc. **See Barnes "Heb 9:7,12"**.

Are burned without the camp. Le 4:12,21, 16:27.

The "camp" here refers to the time when the Israelites were in the wilderness, and lived in encampments. The same custom was observed after the temple was built, by conveying the body of the animal slain for a sin-offering, on the great day of atonement, beyond the walls of Jerusalem to be consumed there. "Whatever," says Grotius, "was not lawful to be done in the camp, afterwards was not lawful to be done in the city."

{a} "without the camp" Le 16:27

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 13 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood*. That there might be a conformity between his death for sin and the sacrifices which typified it. It is implied here that it was voluntary on the part of Jesus that he suffered out of the city; that is, it was so ordered by Providence that it should be so. This was secured by his being put to death as the result of a judicial trial, and not by popular tumult. See Notes on Isa 53:8. If he had been killed in a tumult, it is possible that it might have been done as in other cases, (comp. the case of Zacharias, son of Barachias, Mt 23:35,) even at the altar is he was subjected, however, to a judicial process, his death was effected with more deliberation, and in the usual form. Hence he was conducted out of the city, because no criminal was executed within the walls of Jerusalem.

Without the gate. Without the gate of Jerusalem, Joh 19:17,18. The place where he was put to death was called Golgotha, the place of a skull, and hence the Latin word which we commonly use in speaking of it, *Calvary*, Lu 23:33; comp. **See Barnes "Mt 27:33"**.

Calvary, as it is now shown, is within the walls of Jerusalem; but there is no reason to believe that is the place where the Lord Jesus was crucified, for that was outside of the walls of the city. The precise direction from the city is not designated by the sacred writers, nor are there any historical records, or traditional marks, by which it can now be known where the exact place was. All that we know on the subject from the New Testament is, that the *name* was Golgotha; that the place of the crucifixion and sepulchre were near each other; that they were without the gate, and nigh to the city, and that they were in a frequented spot, Joh 19:20. "This would favour the conclusion that the place was probably upon a great road leading from one of the gates; and such a spot would only be found upon the western or northern sides of the city, on the roads leading towards Joppa or Damascus." See the question about the place of the crucifixion examined at length in Robinson's Bibli. Research., vol. ii., pp. 69—80, and Bibliotheca Sacra, No. 1.

{*} "sanctify" "make expiation for" {b} "without the gate" Joh 19:17,18

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 13 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp*. As if we were going forth with him when he was led away to be crucified. He was put to death as a malefactor. He was the object of contempt and scorn. He was held up to derision, and was taunted and reviled on his way to the place of death, and even on the cross. To be identified with him there, to follow him, to sympathize with him, to be regarded as his friend, would have subjected one to similar shame and reproach. The meaning here is, that we should be willing to regard ourselves as identified with the Lord Jesus, and to bear the same shame and reproaches which he did. When he was led away, amidst scoffing and reviling, to be put to death, would we, if we had been there, been willing to be regarded as his followers, and to have gone out with him as Iris avowed disciples and friends? Alas, how many are there who profess to love him when religion subjects them to no reproach, who would have shrunk from following him to Calvary!

Bearing his reproach. Sympathizing with him; or bearing such *reproach* as he did. See 1Pe 4:13. Comp. **See Barnes** "Heb 12:2; **See Barnes "Php 3:10"**; **See Barnes** "Col 1:24".

{c} "bearing his reproach" Ac 5:41

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 13 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *For here we have no continuing city*, etc. We do not regard this as our final home, or our fixed abode, and we should be willing to bear reproaches during the little time that we are to remain here. Comp. **See Barnes** "Heb 11:10, seq. If, therefore, in consequence of our professed attachment to the Saviour, we should be driven away from our habitations, and compelled to wander, we should be willing to submit to it, for our permanent home is not here, but in heaven. The *object* of the writer seems to be to comfort the Hebrew Christians on the supposition that they would be driven by persecution from the city of Jerusalem, and doomed to wander as exiles. He tells them that their Lord was led from that city to be put to death, and they should be willing to go forth also; that their permanent home was not Jerusalem, but heaven; and they should be willing, in view of that blessed abode, to be exiled from the city where they dwelt, and made wanderers in the earth.

{d} "here" Mic 2:10

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 13 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *By him therefore*. The Jews approached God by the blood of the sacrifice, and by the ministry of their high priest. The exhortation of the apostle here is founded on the general course of argument in the epistle. "In view of all the considerations presented respecting the Christian High Priest—his dignity, purity, and love, his sacrifice and his intercession—let us persevere in offering through him praise to God." That is, let us persevere in adherence to our religion.

The sacrifice of praise. For all the mercies of redemption. The Jews, says Rosenmuller, (Alte u. neue Morgenland, in loc.,) had a species of offerings which they called *peace—offerings, or friendship-offerings*. They were designed not to *produce* peace or friendship with God, but to preserve it. Burnt-offerings, sin-offerings, and trespass-offerings, were all on account of

transgression, and were designed to remove transgression. But in their peace-offerings, the offerer was regarded as one who stood in the relation of a friend with God, and the oblation was a sign of thankful acknowledgment for favours received; or they were connected with vows in order that further blessings might be obtained; or they were brought voluntarily as a means to continue themselves in the friendship and favour of God, Le 7:11,12. Comp. Jenning's Jew. Ant. i. 335.

That is, the fruit of our lips. The phrase, "fruit of the lips," is a Hebraism, meaning what the lips produce; that is, words. Comp. Pr 18:20 Hos 14:2.

Giving thanks to his name. To God; the name of one being often put for the person himself. *Praise* now is one of the great duties of the redeemed. It Will be their employment for ever.

{e} "him" Eph 5:29 {f} Hos 14:2 {1} "giving thanks to his name" "make expiation for"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 13 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *But to do good, and to communicate, forget not*. To communicate or impart to others; that is, to share with them what we have. The Greek word means, *having in common* with others. The meaning is, that they were to show *liberality* to those who were in want, and were to take special pains not to *forget* this duty. We are prone to think constantly of our own interests, and there is great danger of forgetting the duty which we owe to the poor and the needy. On the duty here enjoined, **See Barnes "Ga 6:10"**.

For with such sacrifices God is well pleased. He is pleased with the sacrifices of prayer and of praise; with the offerings of a broken and a contrite heart; but he is especially pleased with the religion which leads us to do good to others. This was eminently the religion of his Son, the Lord Jesus; and to this all true religion prompts. The word "sacrifices" here is not taken in a strict sense, as denoting that which is offered as an expiation for sin, or in the sense that we are, by doing good, to attempt to make atonement for our transgressions, but in the general sense of an offering made to God. God is pleased with this, (1.) because it shows in us a right state of heart;

(2.) because it accords with his own nature. He does good continually, and he is pleased with all who evince the same spirit.

{g} "communicate" Ro 12:13

{h} "such sacrifices" Php 4:18

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 13 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Obey them that have the rule over you*. Marg., *guide*. See Notes on ver. 7. The reference here is to their religious teachers, and not to civil rulers. They were to show them proper respect, and to submit to their authority in the church, so far as it was administered in accordance with the precepts of the Saviour. The obligation to obedience does not, of course, extend to anything which is wrong in itself, or which would be a violation of conscience. The doctrine is, that subordination is necessary to the welfare of the church, and that there ought to be a disposition to yield all proper

obedience to those who are set over us in the Lord. Comp. **See Barnes** "1Th 5:12, **See Barnes "1Th 5:13"**.

And submit yourselves. That is, to all which they enjoin that is lawful and right. There are, in relation to a society,

(1,) those things which God has positively commanded—which are always to be obeyed.

(2.) Many things which have been *agreed* on by the society as needful for its welfare—and these are to be submitted to unless they violate the rights of conscience; and

(3.) many things which are, in themselves, a matter of no express Divine command, and of no formal enactment by the community. They are matters of convenience; things that tend to the order and harmony of the community, and of the propriety of these, "rulers" in the church and elsewhere should be allowed to judge, and we should submit to them patiently. Hence, in the church, we are to submit to all the proper regulations for conducting public worship; for the promotion of religion; and for the administration of discipline.

For they watch for your souls. They have no selfish aim in this. They do not seek "to lord it over God's heritage." It is for your own good that they do this, and you should, therefore, submit to these arrangements. And this shows, also, the true principle on which authority should be exercised in a church. It should be in such a way as to promote the salvation of the people; and all the arrangements should be with that end. The measures adopted, therefore, and the obedience enjoined, should not be arbitrary, oppressive, or severe, but should be such as will really promote salvation.

As they that must give account. To God. The ministers of religion must give account to God for their fidelity, for all that they teach, and for every measure which they adopt, they must soon be called into judgment. There is, therefore, the best security that, under the influence of this solemn truth, they will pursue only that course which will be for your good.

That they may do it with joy, and not with grief. mh stenazontev -not *sighing, or groaning*; as they would who had been unsuccessful. The meaning is, that they should so obey, that when their teachers came to give up their account, they need not do it with sorrow over their perverseness and disobedience.

For this is unprofitable for you. That is, their giving up their account in that manner—as unsuccessful in their efforts to save you—would not be of advantage to you, but would be highly injurious. This is a strong mode of expressing the idea that it must be attended with imminent peril to their souls to have their religious teachers go and give an account against them. As they would wish, therefore, to avoid that, they should render to them all proper honour and obedience.

{c} "good conscience" Ac 24:16 {*} "honestly" "desirous of behaving ourselves well"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 13 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Pray for us*. This is a request which the apostle often makes in his own behalf and in behalf of his fellow-labourers in the gospel. See 1Th 5:25. **See Barnes "Eph 6:18,19"**.

For we trust we have a good conscience, etc. **See Barnes "Ac 24:16"**.

The apostle here appeals to the uprightness of his Christian life as a reason why he might claim their sympathy, he was conscious of an aim to do good; he sought the welfare of the church; and having this aim he felt that he might appeal to the sympathy of all Christians in his behalf. It is only

when we aim to do right, and to maintain a good conscience, that we can with propriety ask the prayers of others, or claim their sympathy. And if we are "willing in all things to live honestly," we may expect the sympathy, the prayers, and the affections of all good men.

{c} "good conscience" Ac 24:16 {*} "honestly" "desirous of behaving ourselves well"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 13 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *That I may be restored to you the sooner*. It is here clearly implied that the writer was deterred from visiting them by some adverse circumstances over which he had no control. This might be either by imprisonment, or sickness, or the want of a convenient opportunity of reaching them. The probability is, judging particularly from the statement in Heb 13:23, that he was then a prisoner, and that his detention was on that account. See Intro. & 4, (6.) The language here is such as Paul would use on the supposition that he was then a prisoner at Rome—and this is a slight circumstance going to show the probability that the epistle was composed by him.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 13 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Now the God of peace*. God who is the Author, or the Source of peace. **See Barnes "1Th 5:23".**

The word *peace* in the New Testament is used to denote every kind of blessing or happiness. It is opposed to all that would disturb or trouble the mind, and may refer, therefore, to reconciliation with God; to a quiet conscience; to the evidence of pardoned sin; to health and prosperity; and to the hope of heaven. **See Barnes "Joh 14:27".**

That brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus. **See Barnes "Ac 2:32"**

See Barnes "1Co 15:15".

It is only by the fact of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus that we have peace, for it is only by him that we have the prospect of an admission into heaven.

That great shepherd of the sheep. **See Barnes "Joh 10:1,14".**

The idea here is, that it is through the tender care of that great Shepherd that true happiness is bestowed on the people of God.

Through the blood of the everlasting covenant. The blood shed to ratify the everlasting covenant that God makes with his people. **See Barnes "Heb 9:14,** Heb 9:15-23. This phrase, in the original, is not connected, as it is in our translation, with his being raised from the dead; nor should it be so rendered, for what can be the sense of "raising Christ from the dead *by the blood of the covenant*?" In the Greek it is, "The God of peace, who brought again from the dead the shepherd of the sheep, great by the blood of the everlasting covenant, our Lord Jesus," etc. The meaning is, that he was made or constituted the great Shepherd of the sheep—the great Lord and Ruler of his people, by that blood. That which makes him so eminently distinguished; that by which he was made superior to all others who ever ruled over the people of God, was the fact that he offered the blood by which the eternal covenant was ratified. It is called everlasting or eternal, because

(1.) it was formed in the councils of eternity, or has been an eternal plan in the Divine Mind; and

(2.) because it is to continue for ever. Through such a covenant God can bestow permanent and solid "peace" on his people, for it lays the foundation of the assurance of eternal happiness.

{d} "God of peace" 1Th 5:23 {e} "that brought" 1Pe 1:21 {+} "again" "brought back" {f} "shepherd" Eze 34:23 {g} "sheep" Zec 9:11 {2} "everlasting covenant" "testament"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 13 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Make you perfect*. The apostle here does not affirm that they were then perfect, or that they would be in this life. The word here used—*katartizw*-means, to make fully ready, to put in full order; to make complete. The meaning here is, that Paul prayed that God would fully endow them with whatever grace was necessary to do his will and to keep his commandments. See the word explained **See Barnes "Heb 11:3"**.

It is an appropriate prayer to be offered at all times, and by all who love the church, that God would make all his people perfectly qualified to do all his will.

Working in you. Marg. *Doing*. The idea here is, that the only hope that they would do the will of God was, that he would, by his own agency, cause them to do what was well-pleasing in his sight: Comp. **See Barnes "Php 2:12"**.

It is not from any expectation that man would do it himself

Through Jesus Christ. The idea is, that God does not directly and by his own immediate agency convert and sanctify the heart, but it is through the gospel of Christ, and all good influences on the soul must be expected through the Saviour.

To whom be glory for ever and ever. That is, to Christ; for so the connexion evidently demands. It is not uncommon for the apostle Paul to introduce doxologies in this way in the midst of a letter. **See Barnes "Ro 9:4"**.

It was common among the Jews, as it is now in the writings and conversation of the Mohammedans, when the name of God was mentioned, to accompany it with an expression of praise.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 13 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Suffer the word of exhortation*. Referring to the arguments and counsels in this whole epistle—which is, in fact, a practical exhortation to perseverance in adhering to the Christian religion amidst all the temptations which existed to apostasy.

For I have written a letter unto you in few words. This does not mean that this epistle is short compared with the others that the author had written, for most of the epistles of Paul are shorter than this. But it means, that it was brief compared with the importance and difficulty of the subjects of which he had treated. The topics introduced would have allowed a much more extended discussion, but in handing them he had made use of as few words as possible. No one can deny this who

considers the sententious manner of this epistle. As an illustration of this, perhaps we may remark, that it is easy to expand the thoughts of this epistle into ample volumes of exposition, and that in fact it is difficult to give an explanation of it without a commentary that shall greatly surpass in extent the text. None can doubt, also, that the author of this epistle could have himself greatly expanded the thoughts and the illustrations if he had chosen. It is with reference to such considerations, probably, that he says that the epistle was *brief*.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 13 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Know ye not that our brother Timothy is set at liberty*. Or, is sent away. So it is rendered by Prof. Stuart, and others. On the meaning of this, and its importance in determining who was the author of the epistle, see the Intro. & 2, (5,) 4, and Prof. Stuart's Intro. & 19. This is a strong circumstance showing that Paul was the author of the epistle, for from the first acquaintance of Timothy with Paul he is represented as his constant companion, and spoken of as a brother. **See Barnes "2Co 1:1"**

See Barnes "Php 1:1"; See Barnes "Col 1:1"; See Barnes "Phm 1:1".

There is no other one of the apostles who would so naturally have used this term respecting Timothy; and this kind mention is made of him here because he was so dear to the heart of the writer, and because he felt that they to whom he wrote would also feel an interest in his circumstances. As to the meaning of the word rendered "set at liberty"—*apolelumenon*—there has been much difference of opinion, whether it means "set at liberty from confinement," or "sent away on some message to some other place." That the latter is the meaning of the expression appears probable from these considerations.

(1.) The connexion seems to demand it. The writer speaks of him as if he were now away, and as if he hoped that he might soon return. "With whom, if he come shortly, I will see you." This is language which would be used rather of one who had been sent on some embassy, than of one who was just released from prison. At all events, he was at this time away, and there was some expectation that he might soon return. But on the supposition that the expression relates to release from imprisonment, there would be an entire incongruity in the language. It is not, as we should then suppose, "our brother Timothy is now released from prison, and *therefore* I will come soon with him and see you;" but, "our brother Timothy is now sent away, and if he return soon, I will come with him to you."

(2.) In Php 2:19,23, Paul, then a prisoner at Rome, speaks of the hope which he entertained that he would be able to send Timothy to them, as soon as he should know how it would go with him. He designed to retain him until that point was settled, as his presence with him would be important until then, and then to send him to give consolation to the Philippians, and to look into the condition of the church. Now the passage before us agrees well with the supposition that that event had occurred: that Paul had ascertained with sufficient clearness that he would be released, so that he might be permitted yet to visit the Hebrew Christians; that he had sent Timothy to Philippi, and was waiting for his return; that as soon as he should return he would be prepared to visit them; and that in the mean time, while Timothy was absent, he wrote to them this epistle.

(3.) The supposition agrees well with the meaning of the word here used—*apoluw*. It denotes, properly, to let loose from; to loosen; to unbind; to release, to let go free; to put away, or divorce; to dismiss simply, or let go, or send away. See Mt 14:15 22 23; Mt 15:32, 39 Lu 9:12, et al. Comp. Rob. Lex. and Stuart's Intro. % 19. The meaning, then, I take to be this, that Timothy was then sent away on some important embassage; that the apostle expected his speedy return; and that then he trusted that he would be able, with him, to visit those to whom this epistle was written.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 13 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Salute all them*. See Notes on Ro 16:3, seq. It was customary for the apostle Paul to close his epistles with an affectionate salutation.

That have the rule over you. **See Barnes "Heb 13:7,17".**

None are mentioned by name, as is usual in the epistles of Paul. The cause of this omission is unknown.

And all the saints. The common name given to Christians in the Scriptures. **See Barnes "Ro 1:7".**

They of Italy salute you. The saints or Christians in Italy. Showing that the writer of the epistle was then in Italy. He was probably in Rome. See Intro. %. 2.

{*} "rule over you" "salute all your guides"

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS - Chapter 13 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Grace be with you all*.

See Barnes "Ro 16:20".

The subscription at the close of the epistle, "written to the Hebrews from Italy by Timothy," like the other subscriptions, is of no authority. See Notes at the end of I Cor. It is demonstrably erroneous here, for it is expressly said by the author of the epistle that, at the time he wrote it, Timothy was absent, Heb 13:23. In regard to the time and place of writing it, see the Intro. $. 4.

At the close of this exposition, it is not improper to refer the reader to the remarks on its design at the end of the Introduction, 6. Having passed through the exposition, we may see more clearly the importance of the views there presented. There is no book of the New Testament more important than this, and of course none whose want would be more perceptible in the canon of the Scriptures. Every reader of the Old Testament needs such a guide as this epistle, written by some one who had an intimate acquaintance from childhood with the Jewish system; who had all the advantages of the most able and faithful instruction, and who was under the influence of inspiration, to make us acquainted with the true nature of those institutions. Nothing was more important than to settle the principles in regard to the nature of the Jewish economy; to show what was typical, and how those institutions were the means of introducing a far more perfect system—the system of the Christian religion. If we have right feelings, we shall have sincere gratitude to God that he caused the Christian religion to be prefigured by a system in itself so magnificent and grand as that of the Jewish, and higher gratitude for that sublime system of religion of which the Jewish, with all its splendour, was

only the shadow. There was much that was beautiful, cheering, and sublime in the Jewish system. There was much that was grand and awful in the giving of the law, and much that was imposing in its ceremonies. In its palmy and pure days, it was incomparably the purest and noblest system of religion then on earth. It taught the nature of the one true God; inculcated a pure system of morals; preserved the record of the truth on the earth, and held up constantly before man the hope of a better system still in days to come. But it was expensive, burdensome, precise in its prescriptions, and wearisome in its ceremonies, Ac 15:10. It was adapted to one people—a people who occupied a small territory, and who could conveniently assemble at the central place of their worship three times in a year. It was not a system adapted to the whole world; nor was it designed for the whole world. When the Saviour came, therefore, to introduce whom was the design of the Jewish economy, it ceased as a matter of course. The Jewish altars were soon thrown down; the temple was rased to the ground, and the city of their solemnities was destroyed. The religion of the Hebrews passed away to be revived no more in its splendour and power, and it has never lived since, except as an empty form. This epistle teaches us why it passed away, and why it can never be restored. It is the true key with which to unlock the Old Testament; and with these views we may remark, in conclusion, that he who would understand the Bible thoroughly should make himself familiar with this epistle; that the canon of Scripture would be incomplete without it; and that to one who wishes to understand the Revelation which God has given, there is no portion of the volume whose loss would be a more irreparable calamity than that of the epistle to the Hebrews.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 1

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 1 - Verse 1

Note: Due to limited space see the Introduction to the General Epistles at
See Barnes "Mal 3:1"

See the Introduction to James at
See Barnes "Mal 3:2"

See 2nd Part of Introduction to James at
See Barnes "Mal 3:3"

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES
CHAPTER ONE
ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

This chapter seems to comprise two general classes of subjects; the statement in regard to the first of which is complete, but the second is only commenced in this chapter, and is continued in the second. The first is the general subject of temptation and trial, (Jas 1:1-15;) the second is the nature of true religion:—the statement that all true religion has its origin in God, the source of purity and truth, and that it requires us to be docile and meek; to be doers of the word; to bridle the tongue, and to be the friends of the fatherless and the widow, Jas 1:16-27.

I. The general subject of temptation or trial, Jas 1:1-15. It is evident that those to whom the epistle was directed were, at that time, suffering in some form, or that they were called to pass through temptations, and that they needed counsel and support. They were in danger of sinking in despondency; of murmuring and complaining, and of charging God as the author of temptation and of sin. This part of the chapter comprises the following topics:

(1.) The salutation, Jas 1:1.

(2.) The subject of temptations or trials. They were to regard it, not as a subject of sorrow, but of gladness and joy, that they were called to pass through trials; for, if borne in a proper manner, they would produce the grace of patience—and this was to be regarded as an object worth being secured, even by much suffering, Jas 1:2-4.

(3.) If in their trials they felt that they had lacked the wisdom which they needed to enable them to bear them in a proper manner, they had the privilege of looking to God, and seeking it at his hand. This was a privilege conceded to all; and if it were asked in faith, without any wavering, it would certainly be granted, Jas 1:5-7.

(4.) The importance and value of stability, especially in trials; of being firm in principle, and of having one single great aim in life. A man who wavered in his faith would waver in everything, Jas 1:8.

(5.) An encouragement to those who, in the trials which they experienced, passed through rapid changes of circumstances. Whatever those changes were, they were to rejoice in them as ordered by the Lord. They were to remember the essential instability of all earthly things. The rich especially, who were most disposed to murmur and complain when their circumstances were changed, were to remember how the burning heat blasts the beauty of the flower, and that in like manner all worldly splendour must fade away, Jas 1:9-11.

(6.) Every man is blessed who endures trials in a proper manner, for such an endurance of trial will be connected with a rich reward —the crown of life, Jas 1:12.

(7.) In their trials, however; in the allurements to sin which might be set before them; in the temptations to apostatize, or to do anything wrong, which might be connected with their suffering condition, they were to be careful never to charge *temptation, as such, on God*. They were never to allow their minds to feel for a moment that *he* allured them to sin, or placed an inducement of any kind before them to do wrong. Everything of that kind, every disposition to commit sin, originated in their own hearts, and they should never allow themselves to charge it on God, Jas 1:13-15.

II. The nature of true religion, Jas 1:16-27.

(1.) It has its origin in God, the source of every good gift, the Father of lights, who has of his own will begotten us again, that he might raise us to an exalted rank among his creatures. God, there- fore, should be regarded not as the author of sin, but as the source of all the good that is in us, Jas 1:16-18.

(2.) Religion requires us to be meek and docile; to lay aside all disposition to dictate or prescribe, all irritability against the truth, and all corruption of heart, and to receive meekly the ingrafted word, Jas 1:19-21.

(3.) Religion requires us to be doers of the word, and not hearers only, Jas 1:23-25.

(4.) Religion requires us to bridle the tongue, to set a special guard on our words, Jas 1:26.

(5.) Religion requires us to be the friends of the fatherless and the widow, and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world, Jas 1:27.

Verse 1. *James, a servant of God*. On the meaning of the word *servant* in this connexion, **see Barnes on "Ro 1:1"**.

See Barnes on "Phm 1:16".

It is remarkable that James does not call himself *an apostle*; but this does not prove that the writer of the epistle was not an apostle, for the same omission occurs in the epistle of John, and in the epistle of Paul to the Philippians, to the Thessalonians, and to Philemon. It is remarkable, also, considering the relation which James is supposed to have borne to the Lord Jesus as his "brother," (Ga 1:19; Intro. & 1,) that he did not refer to that as constituting a ground of claim to his right to address others; but this is only one instance out of many, in the New Testament, in which it is regarded as a higher honour to be the "servant of God," and to belong to his family, than to sustain any relations of blood or kindred. Compare Mt 12:50. It may be observed also, (compare the Intro. 1,) that this term is one which was peculiarly appropriate to James, as a man eminent for his integrity. His claim to respect and deference was not primarily founded on any relationship which he sustained many honour of birth or blood, or even any external office—but on the fact that he was a "*servant of God*."

And of the Lord Jesus Christ. The "servant of the Lord Jesus" is an appellation which is often given to Christians, and particularly to the ministers of religion. They are his servants, not in the

sense that they are *slaves*, but in the sense that they voluntarily obey his will, and labour for him, and not for themselves.

To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad. Gr., "The twelve tribes which are *in the dispersion*," or of the dispersion, (*en th diaspora*) This word occurs only here and in 1Pe 1:1, and Joh 7:35. It refers properly to those who lived out of Palestine, or who were scattered among the Gentiles. There were *two* great "dispersions" —the eastern and the western. The first had its origin about the time when the ten tribes were carried away to Assyria, and in the time of the Babylonian captivity. In consequence of these events, and of the fact that large numbers of the Jews went to Babylon, and other eastern countries, for purposes of travel, commerce, etc., there were many Jews in the east in the times of the apostles. The other was the western "dispersion," which commenced about the time of Alexander the Great, and which was promoted by various causes, until there were large numbers of Jews in Egypt and along Northern Africa, in Asia Minor, in Greece Proper, and even in Rome. To which of these classes this epistle was directed is not known; but most probably the writer had particular reference to those in the east. See the Intro., % 2. The phrase "the twelve tribes," was the common term by which the Jewish people were designated, and was in use long after the ten tribes were carried away—leaving, in fact, but two of the twelve in Palestine. **See Barnes on "Ac 26:7".**

Many have supposed that James here addressed them as Jews, and that the epistle was sent to them as such. But this opinion has no probability; for

(1) had this been the case, he would not have been likely to begin his epistle by saying that he was "a servant of Jesus Christ," a name so odious to the Jews; and

(2) if he *had* spoken of himself as a Christian, and had addressed his countrymen as himself a believer in Jesus as the Messiah, though regarding them *as Jews*, it is incredible that he did not make a more reference to the principles of the Christian religion; that he no arguments to convince them that Jesus was the Messiah; he did not attempt to convert them to the Christian faith. It should be added, that at first most converts were made from those who had been trained in the Jewish faith, and it is not improbable that one in Jerusalem, addressing those who were Christians out of Palestine would naturally think of them as of Jewish origin, and would be likely to address them as appertaining to the "twelve tribes." The phrase "the twelve tribes" became also a sort of technical expression to denote the people of God—the church.

Greeting. A customary form of salutation, meaning, in Greek, *to joy, to rejoice*; and implying that he wished their welfare. Compare Ac 15:23.

{a} "a servant of God" Jude 1 {b} "twelve tribes" Ac 26:7 {c} "scattered abroad" Ac 8:1

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 1 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *My brethren*. Not brethren *as Jews*, but *as Christians*. Compare Jas 2:1. Count it all joy. Regard it as a thing to rejoice in; a matter which should afford you happiness. You are not to consider it as a punishment, a curse, or a calamity, but as a fit subject of felicitation. **See Barnes on "Mt 5:12".**

When ye fall into divers temptations. On the meaning of the word temptations, **see Barnes on "Mt 4:1".**

It is now commonly used in the sense of placing allurements before others to induce them to sin, and in this sense the word seems to be used in Jas 1:13-14. Here, however, the word is used in the sense of trials, to wit, by persecution, poverty, calamity of any kind. These cannot be said to be direct inducements or allurements to sin, but they try the faith, and they show whether he who is tried is disposed to adhere to his faith in God, or whether he will apostatize. They so far coincide with temptations, properly so called, as to test the religion of men. They differ from temptations, properly so called, in that they are not brought before the mind for the express purpose of inducing men to sin. In this sense, it is true that God never tempts men, Jas 1:13-14. On the sentiment in the passage before us, **see Barnes on "1Pe 1:6-7".**

The word divers here refers to the various kinds of trials which they might experience—sickness, poverty, bereavement, persecution, etc. They were to count it a matter of joy that their religion was subjected to anything that tried it. It is well for us to have the reality of our religion tested, in whatever way it may be done.

{a} "count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations"

Mt 5:12; 1Pe 4:13-16 {*} "temptations", or "various trials"

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 1 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience*. Patience is one of the fruits of such a trial, and the grace of patience is *worth* the trial which it may cost to procure it. This is one of the passages which show that James was acquainted with the writings of Paul. See the Introduction to James chapter 5, Jas 5:1. The sentiment expressed here is found in Ro 5:3. **See Barnes on "Ro 5:3".**

Paul has carried the sentiment out farther, and shows that tribulation produces other effects than patience. James only asks that patience may have its perfect work, supposing that every Christian grace is implied in this.

{a} "worketh patience" Ro 5:3

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 1 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *But let patience have her perfect work*. Let it be fairly developed. Let it produce its appropriate effects without being hindered. Let it not be obstructed in its fair influence on the soul, by murmurings, complaining, or rebellion. Patience under trials is fitted to produce important effects on the soul, and we are not to hinder them in any manner by a perverse spirit, or by opposition to the will of God. Every one who is afflicted should desire that the *fair* effects of affliction should be produced on his mind, or that there should be produced in his soul precisely the results which his trials are adapted to accomplish.

That ye may be perfect and entire. The meaning of this is explained in the following phrase—"wanting nothing;" that is, that there may be nothing lacking to complete your character. There may be the elements of a good character; there may be sound principles, but those principles

may not be fully carried out so as to show what they are. Afflictions, perhaps, more than anything else, will do this; and we should therefore allow them to do all that they are adapted to do in developing what is good in us. The idea here is, that it is desirable not only to have the *elements* or *principles* of piety in the soul, but to have them fairly carried out, so as to show what is their real tendency and value. **See Barnes on "1Pe 1:7".**

On the word *perfect*, as used in the Scriptures, **see Barnes on "Job 1:1".**

The word rendered *entire*, (*oloklhroi*,) means, *whole in every part*. **See Barnes on "1Th 5:23".**

The word occurs only in these two places. The corresponding noun (*oloklhrian*) occurs in Ac 3:16, rendered *perfect soundness*.

Wanting nothing. "Being left in nothing;" that is, everything being complete, or fully carried out.

{a} "let patience have her perfect work" Lu 8:15; Lu 21:19

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 1 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *If any of you lack wisdom*. Probably this refers particularly to the kind of wisdom which they would need in their trials, to enable them to bear them in a proper manner; for there is nothing in which Christians more feel the need of heavenly wisdom than in regard to the manner in which they should bear trials, and what they should *do* in the perplexities, and disappointments, and bereavements that come upon them: but the language employed is so general, that what is here said may be applied to the need of wisdom in all respects. The particular kind of wisdom which we need in trials is to enable us to understand their design and tendency; to perform our duty under them, or the new duties which may grow out of them; to learn the lessons which God designs to teach, for he always designs to teach us *some* valuable lessons by affliction; and to cultivate such views and feelings as are appropriate under the peculiar forms of trial which are brought upon us, to find out the sins for which we have been afflicted, and to learn how we may avoid them in time to come. We are in great danger of going wrong when we are afflicted; of complaining and murmuring; of evincing a spirit of insubmission, and of losing the benefits which we *might* have obtained if we had submitted to the trial in a proper manner. So in all things we "lack wisdom." We are shortsighted; we have hearts prone to sin; and there are great and important matters pertaining to duty and salvation on which we cannot but feel that we need heavenly guidance.

Let him ask of God. That is, for the specific wisdom which he needs; the very wisdom which is necessary for him in the particular case. It is proper to bear the very case before God; to make mention of the specific want; to ask of God to guide us in the very matter where we feel so much embarrassment. It is one of the privileges of Christians, that they may not only go to God and ask him for that *general* wisdom which is needful for them in life, but that whenever a particular emergency arises, a case of perplexity and difficulty in regard to duty, they may bring that particular thing before his throne, with the assurance that he will guide them. Compare Ps 25:9; Isa 37:14; Joe 2:17.

That giveth to all men liberally. The word *men* here is supplied by the translators, but not improperly, though the promise should be regarded as restricted to those who *ask*. The object of the writer was to encourage those who felt their need of wisdom, to go and ask it of God; and it

would not contribute anything to furnish such a specific encouragement to say of God that he gives to all men liberally *whether they ask or not*. In the Scriptures, the promise of Divine aid is always limited to the desire. No blessing is promised to man that is not sought; no man can feel that he has a right to hope for the favour of God, who does not value it enough to pray for it; no one *ought* to obtain it, who does not prize it enough to ask for it. Compare Mt 7:7-8. The word rendered *liberally*, (*aplwv*,) means, properly, *simply*; that is, in simplicity, sincerity, reality. It occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, though the corresponding *noun* occurs in Ro 12:8; 2Co 1:12; 2Co 11:3, rendered *simplicity*; in 2Co 8:2; 2Co 9:13, rendered *liberality* and *liberal*; 2Co 9:11, rendered *bountifulness*; and Eph 6:5; Col 3:22, rendered *singleness*, scil., of the heart. The idea seems to be that of openness, frankness, generosity; the absence of all that is sordid and contracted; where there is the manifestation of generous feeling, and liberal conduct, In a higher sense than in the case of any man, all that is excellent in these things is to be found in God; and we may therefore come to him feeling that in his heart there is more that is noble and generous in bestowing favours than in any other being. There is nothing that is stinted and close; there is no partiality; there is no withholding of his favour because we are poor, and unlettered, and unknown.

And upbraideth not. Does not reproach, rebuke, or treat harshly. He does not coldly repel us, if we come and ask what we need, though we do it often and with importunity. Compare Lu 18:1-7. The proper meaning of the Greek word is to rail at, reproach, revile, chide; and the object here is probably to place the manner in which God bestows his favours in contrast with what sometimes occurs among men. He does not reproach or chide us for our past conduct; for our foolishness; for our importunity in asking. He permits us to come in the most free manner, and meets us with a spirit of entire kindness, and with promptness in granting our requests. We are not always sure, when we ask a favour of a man, that we shall not encounter something that will be repulsive, or that will mortify us; we are certain, however, when we ask a favour of God, that we shall never be reproached in an unfeeling manner, or meet with a harsh response.

And it shall be given him. Compare Jer 29:12-13, "Then shall ye call upon me, and go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with your whole heart." See also Mt 7:7-8; Mt 21:22; Mr 11:24; 1Jo 3:22; 1Jo 5:14.

This promise, in regard to the *wisdom* that may be necessary for us, is absolute; and we may be sure that if it be asked in a proper manner it will be granted us. There can be no doubt that it is one of the things which God is able to impart; which will be for our own good; and which, therefore, he is ever ready to bestow. About many things there might be doubt whether, if they were granted, they would be for our real welfare, and therefore there may be a doubt whether it would be consistent for God to bestow them; but there can be no such doubt about *wisdom*. That is always for our good; and we may be sure, therefore, that we shall obtain that, if the request be made with a right spirit. If it be asked in what may expect he will bestow it on us, it may be replied,

(1,) That it is through his word—by enabling us to see clearly the meaning of the sacred volume, and to understand the directions which he has there given to guide us;

(2,) by the secret influences of his Spirit

(a) *suggesting* to us the way in which we should go, and

(b) *inclining* us to do that which is prudent and wise; and,

(3,) by the events of his Providence making plain to us the path of duty, and removing the obstructions which may be in our path. It is easy for God to guide his people; and they who "watch

daily at the gates, and wait at the posts of the doors" of wisdom, (Pr 8:34,) will not be in danger of going astray, Ps 25:9.

{+} "lack", or "want" {a} "that giveth to all men liberally" Pr 2:3-6 {b} "and it shall be given him" Jer 29:12

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 1 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *But let him ask in faith*. See the passages referred to in Jas 1:5. **See Barnes on** "Mt 7:7, and **see Barnes on "Heb 11:6"**

to obtain any favour from God if there is not faith; and where, as in regard to the *wisdom* necessary to guide us, we are sure that it is in accordance with his will to grant it to us, we may come to him with the utmost confidence, the most entire assurance, that it will be granted. In this case, we should come to God without a doubt that, if we ask with a proper spirit, the very thing that we ask will be bestowed on us. We cannot in all other cases be so sure that what we ask will be for our good, or that it will be in accordance with his will to bestow it; and hence we cannot in such cases come with the same kind of faith. We can then only come with unwavering confidence in God, that he will do what is right and best; and that if he sees that what we ask will be for our good, he will bestow it upon us. Here, however, nothing prevents our coming with the assurance that *the very thing* which we ask will be conferred on us. *Nothing wavering*. *mhden diakrinomenov*. "Doubting or hesitating as to nothing, or in no respect." See Ac 20:20; Ac 11:12.

In regard to the matter under consideration, there is to be no hesitancy, no doubting, no vacillation of the mind. We are to come to God with the utmost confidence and assurance.

For he that wavereth, is like a wave of the sea, etc. The propriety and beauty of this comparison will be seen at once. The wave of the sea has no stability. It is at the mercy of every wind, and seems to be driven and tossed every way. So he that comes to God with unsettled convictions and hopes, is liable to be driven about by every new feeling that may spring up in the mind. At one moment, hope and faith impel him to come to God; then the mind is at once filled with uncertainty and doubt, and the soul is agitated and restless as the ocean. Compare Isa 57:20. Hope on the one hand, and the fear of not obtaining the favour which is desired on the other, keep the mind restless and discomposed.

{a} "But let him ask in faith" Mr 11:24 {*} "wavering", or "doubting" {+} "wavereth", or "doubteth"

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 1 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord*. Compare Heb 11:6. A man can hope for favour from God only as he puts confidence in him. He sees the heart; and if he sees that there is no belief in his existence or his perfections—no real trust in him—no reliance on his promises, his wisdom, his grace—it cannot be proper that he should grant an answer to our petitions. That will account sufficiently for the fact that there are so many prayers unanswered;

that we so frequently go to the throne of grace, and are seat empty away. A man that goes to God in such a state of mind, should not *expect* to receive any favour.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 1 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *A double-minded man*. The word here used (*diqucov*) occurs only here and in Jas 4:8. It means, properly, one who has two souls; then one who is wavering or inconstant. It is applicable to a man who has no settled principles; who is controlled by passion; who is influenced by popular feeling; who is now inclined to one opinion or course of conduct, and now to another.

Is unstable in all his ways. That is, not merely in regard to prayer, the point particularly under discussion, but in respect to everything. From the instability which the wavering must evince in regard to *prayer*, the apostle takes occasion to make the general remark concerning such a man, that stability and firmness could be expected on no subject. The hesitancy which he manifested on that one subject would extend to all; and we might expect to find such a man irresolute and undetermined in all things. This is always true. If we find a man who takes hold of the promises of God with firmness; who feels the deepest assurance when he prays that God will hear prayer; who always goes to him without hesitation in his perplexities and trials, never wavering, we shall find one who is firm in his principles, steady in his integrity, settled in his determinations, and steadfast in his plans of life—a man whose character we shall feel that we understand, and in whom we can confide. Such a man eminently was Luther; and the spirit which is thus evinced by taking firmly hold of the promises of God is the best kind of religion.

{+} "unstable" or, "unsteady"

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 1 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Let the brother of low degree*. This verse seems to introduce a new topic, which has no other connexion with what precedes than that the apostle is discussing the general subject of trials. Compare Jas 1:2. Turning from the consideration of trials in general, he passes to the consideration of a particular kind of trials, that which results from a change of circumstances in life, from poverty to affluence, and from affluence to poverty. The idea which seems to have been in the mind of the apostle is, that there is a great and important *trial of faith* in *any* reverse of circumstances; a trial in being elevated from poverty to riches, or in being depressed from a state of affluence to want. Wherever *change* occurs in the external circumstances of life, there a man's religion is put to the test, and there he should feel that God is trying the reality, of his faith. The phrase "of low degree" (*tapeinov*) means one in humble circumstances; one of lowly rank or employment; one in a condition of dependence or poverty. It stands here particularly opposed to one who is *rich*; and the apostle doubtless had his eye, in the use of this word, on those who had been poor.

Rejoice. Margin, *glory*. Not because, being made rich, he has the means of sensual gratification and indulgence; not because he will now be regarded as a rich man, and will feel that he is above

want; not even because he will have the means of doing good to others. Neither of these was the idea in the mind of the apostle; but it was, that the poor man that is made rich should rejoice *because his faith and the reality of his religion are now tried*; because a *test* is furnished which will show, in the new circumstances in which he is placed, whether his piety is genuine. In fact, there is almost no trial of religion which is more certain and decisive than that furnished by a sudden transition from poverty to affluence, from adversity to prosperity, from sickness to health. There is much religion in the world that will bear the ills of poverty, sickness, and persecution, or that will bear the temptations arising from prosperity, and even affluence, which will not bear the transition from one to the other; as there is many a human frame that could become accustomed to bear either the steady heat of the equator, or the intense cold of the north, that could not bear a rapid transition from the one to the other. **See Barnes on "Php 4:12"**.

In that he is exalted. A good man *might* rejoice in such a transition, because it would furnish him the means of being more extensively useful; most persons *would* rejoice because such a condition is that for which men commonly aim, and because it would furnish them the means of display, of sensual gratification, or of ease; but neither of these is the idea of the apostle. The thing in which we are to rejoice in the transitions of life is, that a test is furnished of our piety; that a trial is applied to it which enables us to determine whether it is genuine. The most important thing conceivable for us is to know whether we are true Christians, and we should rejoice in everything that will enable us to settle this point.

{1} "rejoice" or, "glory"

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 1 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *But the rich, in that he is made low*. That is, because his property is taken away, and he is made poor. Such a transition is often the source of the deepest sorrow; but the apostle says that even in that a Christian may find occasion for thanksgiving. The *reasons* for rejoicing in this manner, which the apostle seems to have had in view, were these:

(1.) Because it furnished a *test* of the reality of religion, by showing that it is adapted to sustain the soul in this great trial; that it cannot only bear prosperity, but that it can bear the rapid transition from that state to one of poverty; and,

(2,) because it would furnish to the mind an impressive and salutary illustration of the fact that all earthly glory is soon to fade away. I may remark here, that the transition from affluence to poverty is often borne by Christians with the manifestation of a most lovely spirit, and with an entire freedom from murmuring and complaining. Indeed, there are more Christians who could safely bear a transition from affluence to poverty, from prosperity to adversity, than there are who could bear a sudden transition from poverty to affluence. Some of the loveliest exhibitions of piety which I have ever witnessed have been in such transitions; nor have I seen occasion anywhere to love religion more than in the ease, and grace, and cheerfulness, with which it has enabled those accustomed long to more elevated walks, to descend to the comparatively humble lot where God places them. New grace is imparted for this new form of trial, and new traits of Christian character are developed in these rapid transitions, as some of the most beautiful exhibitions of the laws of matter are brought out in the rapid transitions in the laboratory of the chemist.

Because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. That is, since it is a *fact* that he will thus pass away, he should rejoice that he is reminded of it. He should, therefore, esteem it a favour that this lesson is brought impressively before his mind. To learn this effectually, though by the loss of property, is of more value to him than all his wealth would be if he were forgetful of it. The comparison of worldly splendour with the fading flower of the field, is one that is common in Scripture. It is probable that James had his eye on the passage in Isa 40:6-8. **See Barnes on "Isa 40:6-8"**.

See Barnes on "1Pe 1:24-25".

See also Ps 103:15; Mt 6:28-30.

{a} "as the flower of the grass" Isa 40:6 {*} "grass" or, "herb"

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 1 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat*. Isaiah (Isa 40:7) employs the word wind, referring to a burning wind that dries up the flowers. It is probable that the apostle also refers not so much to the sun itself, as to the hot and fiery wind called the *simoom*, which often rises *with* the sun, and which consumes the green herbage of the fields. So Rosenmuller and Bloomfield interpret it.

It withereth the grass. Isa 40:7. It withereth the *stalk*, or that which, when dried, produces hay or fodder—the word here used being commonly employed in the latter sense. The meaning is, that the effect of the hot wind is to wither the stalk or spire which supports the flower, and when that is dried up, the flower itself falls. This idea will give increased beauty and appropriateness to the figure —that *man himself* is blasted and withered, and then that all the external splendour which encircled him falls to the ground, like a flower whose support is gone.

And the grace of the fashion of it perisheth. Its beauty disappears.

So shall the rich man fade away an his ways. That is, his splendour, and all on which he prided himself, shall vanish. The phrase "in his ways," according to Rosenmuller, refers to his counsels, his plans, his purposes; and the meaning is, that the rich man, with all by which he is known, shall vanish. A man's "ways," that is, his mode of life, or those things by which he appears before the world, may have somewhat the same relation to him which the flower has to the stalk on which it grows, and by which it is sustained. The idea of James seems to be, that as it was indisputable that the rich man *must* soon disappear, with all that he had of pomp and splendour in the view of the world, it was well for him to be reminded of it by every change of condition; and that he should therefore rejoice in the providential dispensation by which his property would be taken away, and by which the reality of his religion would be tested. We should rejoice in *anything* by which it can be shown whether we are prepared for heaven or not.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 1 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation*. The apostle seems here to use the word *temptation* in the most general sense, as denoting *anything* that will try the reality of religion,

whether affliction, or persecution, or a direct inducement to sin placed before the mind. The word *temptation* appears in this chapter to be used in two senses; and the question may arise, why the apostle so employs it. Compare Jas 1:2,13. But, in fact, the word *temptation* is in itself of so general a character as to cover the whole usage, and to justify the manner in which it is employed. It denotes *anything* that will try or test the reality of our religion; and it may be applied, therefore, either to afflictions or to direct solicitations to sin—the latter being the sense in which it is now commonly employed. In another respect, also, essentially the same idea enters into both the ways in which the word is employed. Affliction, persecution, sickness, etc., may be regarded as, in a certain sense, temptations to sin; that is, the question comes before us whether we will adhere to the religion on account of which we are persecuted, or apostatize from it, and escape these sufferings; whether in sickness and losses we will be patient and submissive to that God who lays his hand upon us, or revolt and murmur. In each and every case, whether by affliction, or by direct allurements to do wrong, the question comes before the mind whether we have religion enough to keep us, or whether we will yield to murmuring, to rebellion, and to sin. In these respects, in a general sense, all forms of trial may be regarded as *temptation*. Yet in the following verse (Jas 1:13) the apostle would guard this from abuse. So far as the form of trial involved an allurement or inducement *to sin*, he says that no man should regard it as from God. *That* cannot be his design. The *trial* is what he aims at, not the *sin*. In the verse before us he says, that whatever may be the form of the trial, a Christian should rejoice in it, for it will furnish an evidence that he is a child of God.

For when he is tried. In any way—if he bears the trial.

He shall receive the crown of life. **See Barnes on "2Ti 4:8".**

It is *possible* that James had that passage in his eye. Compare the Introduction to James 5 (**See Barnes on "Jas 5:1"**) .

Which the Lord hath promised. The sacred writers often speak of such a crown as promised, or as in reserve for the children of God, 2Ti 4:8; 1Pe 5:4; Re 2:10; Re 3:11; 4:4.

Them that love him. A common expression to denote those who are truly pious, or who are his friends. It is sufficiently distinctive to characterize them, for the great mass of men do not love God. Compare Ro 1:30.

{+} "temptation" or, "trial" {++} "tried" or, "proved" {a} "crown of life" 2Ti 4:8; Re 2:10 {b} "which the Lord hath promised" Isa 64:4

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 1 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God*. **See Barnes on "Jas 1:12".**

The apostle here seems to have had his eye on whatever there was in trial of any kind to induce us to commit *sin*—whether by complaining, by murmuring, by apostasy, or by yielding to sin. So far as *that* was concerned, he said that no one should charge it on God. He did nothing in any way with a view to *induce* men to do evil. That was only an incidental thing in the trial, and was no part of the Divine purpose or design. The apostle felt evidently that there was great danger, from the general manner in which the word *temptation* was used, and from the perverse tendency of the heart, that it would be charged on God that he so arranged these trials, and so influenced the mind, as to present *inducements* to sin. Against this, it was proper that an inspired apostle should bear his

solemn testimony; so to guard the whole subject as to show that whatever there was in *any* form of trial that could be regarded as an inducement or allurement to sin, is not the thing which he contemplated in the arrangement, and does not proceed from him. It has its origin in other causes; and if there was nothing *in the corrupt human mind itself* leading to sin, there would be nothing in the Divine arrangement that would produce it.

For God cannot be tempted with evil. Marg., *evils*. The sense is the same. The object seems to be to show that, in regard to the whole matter of temptation, it does not pertain to God. Nothing can be presented to *his* mind as an inducement to do wrong, and as little can he present anything to the mind of man to induce *him* to sin. Temptation is a subject which does not pertain to him. He stands aloof from it altogether. In regard to the *particular* statement here, that "God cannot be tempted with evil," or to do evil, there can be no doubt of its truth, and it furnishes the highest security for the welfare of the universe. There is nothing *in* him that has a tendency to wrong; there can be nothing presented from without to induce him to do wrong.

(1.) There is no evil *passion* to be gratified, as there is in men.

(2.) There is no want of *power*, so that an allurement could be presented to seek what he has not.

(3.) There is no want of *wealth*, for he has infinite resources, and all that there is or can be is his, Ps 50:10-11.

(4.) There is no want of *happiness*, that he should seek happiness in sources which are not now in his possession. Nothing, therefore, could be presented to the Divine Mind as an *inducement* to do evil.

Neither tempteth he any man. That is, he places nothing before any human being with a view to induce him to do wrong. This is one of the most positive and unambiguous of all the declarations in the Bible, and one of the most important. It may be added, that it is one which stands in opposition to as many feelings of the human heart as perhaps any other one. We are perpetually thinking—the *heart* suggests it constantly —that God *does* place before us inducements to evil, with a view to lead us to sin. This is done in many ways.

(a) Men take such views of his decrees as if the doctrine implied that he *meant* that we should sin, and that it could not be otherwise than that we should sin.

(b) It is felt that all things are under his control, and that he has made his arrangements with a *design* that men should do as they actually do.

(c) It is said that he has created us with just such dispositions as we actually have, and knowing that we would sin.

(d) It is said that, by the arrangements of his Providence, he actually places inducements before us to sin, knowing that the effect will be that we will fall into sin, when he might easily have prevented it.

(e) It is said that he suffers some to tempt others, when he might easily prevent it if he chose, and that this is the same as tempting them himself. Now, in regard to these things, there may be much which we cannot explain, and much which often troubles the heart even of the good; yet the passage before us is explicit on one point, and all these things *must* be held in consistency with that —that God does not place inducements before us *with a view* that we should sin, or *in order* to lead us into sin. None of his decrees, or his arrangements, or his desires, are based on that, but all have some other purpose and end. The real force of temptation is to be traced to some other source—to ourselves, and not to God. See Jas 1:14.

{1} "evil" or, "evils"

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 1 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own* It *lust*. That is, the fountain or source of *all* temptation is in man himself. is true that external inducements to sin may be placed before him, but they would have no force if there was not something in himself to which they corresponded, and over which they might have power. There must be some "lust;" some desire; some inclination; something which is unsatisfied now, which is made the foundation of the temptation, and which gives it all its power. If there were no capacity for receiving food, or desire for it, objects placed before us appealing to the appetite could never be made a source of temptation; if there were nothing in the soul which could be regarded as the love of acquisition or possession, gold would furnish no temptation; if there were no sensual propensities, we should be in that quarter above the power of temptation. In each case, and in every form, the power of the temptation is laid in some propensity of our nature, some desire of that which we do not now possess. The word rendered "*lust*" in this place, (*epiyuhiav*,) is not employed here in the narrow sense in which it is now commonly used, as denoting libidinousness. It means *desire* in general; an earnest wish for anything, **see Barnes on "Eph 4:22"**.

It seems here to be used with reference to the original propensities of our nature—the desires implanted in us, which are a stimulus to employment—as the desire of knowledge, of food, of power, of sensual gratifications; and the idea is, that a man may be *drawn along* by these *beyond* the prescribed limits of indulgence, and in the pursuit of objects that are forbidden. He does not stop at the point at which the law requires him to stop, and is therefore guilty of *transgression*. This is the source of all sin. The original propensity *may* not be wrong, but may be perfectly harmless—as in the case of the desire of food, etc. Nay, it may furnish a most desirable stimulus to action; for how could the human powers be called forth, if it were not for this? The error, the fault, the sin, is not restraining the indulgence where we are *commanded* to do it, either in regard to the *objects* sought, or in regard to the *degree* of indulgence. *And enticed*. Entrapped, caught; that is, he is seized by this power, and held fast; or he is led along and beguiled, until he falls into sin, as in a snare that springs suddenly upon him.

{a} "of his own lust" Ho 13:9 {*} "lust" or, "evil desire"

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 1 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Then when lust hath conceived*. Compare Job 15:35. The allusion here is obvious. The meaning is, when the desire which we have naturally is quickened, or made to act, the result is that sin is produced. As our desires of good lie in the mind by nature, as our propensities exist as they were created, they cannot be regarded as sin, or treated as such; but when they are indulged, when plans of gratification are formed, when they are developed in actual life, the effect is sin. In the mere desire of good, of happiness, of food, of raiment, there is no sin; it becomes sin when

indulged in an improper manner, and when it leads us to seek that which is forbidden— to invade the rights of others, or in any way to violate the laws of God. The Rabbins have a metaphor which strongly expresses the general sense of this passage: "Evil concupiscence is at the beginning like the thread of a spider's web; afterwards it is like a cart rope."—*Sanhedrin*, fol. 99,

It bringeth forth sin. The result is sin—open, actual sin. When that which is conceived in the heart is matured, it is seen to be sin. The *design* of all this is to show that sin is not to be traced to God, but to man himself; and in order to this, the apostle says that there is enough in the heart of man to account for all actual sin, without supposing that it is caused by God. The solution which he gives is, that there are certain propensities in man which, when they are suffered to get themselves out, will account for all the sin in the world. In regard to those native propensities themselves, he does not *say* whether he regards them as sinful and blameworthy or not; and the probability is, that he did not design to enter into a formal examination, or to make a formal statement, of the nature of these propensities themselves. He looked at man as he is—as a creature of God—as endowed with certain animal propensities—as seen, in fact, to have strong passions by nature; and he showed that there was enough in him to account for the existence of sin, without bringing in the agency of God, or charging it on him. In reference to those propensities, it may be observed that there are two kinds, either of which may account for the existence of sin, but which are frequently both combined. There are, first, our natural propensities; those which we have as men, as endowed with an animal nature, as having constitutional desires to be gratified, and wants to be supplied. Such Adam had in innocence; such the Saviour had; and such are to be regarded as in no respect in themselves sinful and wrong. Yet they may, in our case, as they did in Adam, lead us to sin, because, under their strong influence, we may be led to desire that which is forbidden, or which belongs to another. But there are, secondly, the propensities and inclinations which we have as the result of the fall, and which are evil in their nature and tendency; which as a matter of course, and especially when combined with the former, lead to open transgression. It is not always easy to separate these, and in fact they are often combined in producing the actual guilt of the world. It often requires a close analysis of a man's own mind to detect these different ingredients in his conduct, and the one often gets the credit of the other. The apostle James seems to have looked at it as a simple matter of fact, with a common sense view, by saying that there were *desires* (*epiyumiav*) in a man's own mind which would *account* for all the actual sin in the world, without charging it on God. Of the truth of this, no one can entertain a doubt.

And sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. The result of sin, when it is fully carried out, is death—death in all forms. The idea is, that death, in whatever form it exists, is to be traced to sin, and that sin will naturally and regularly produce it. There is a strong similarity between this declaration and that of the apostle Paul, (Ro 6:21-23;) and it is probable that James had this passage in his eye. **See Barnes on "Ro 6:21-23"**

and **see Barnes on "Ro 5:12"**.

Any one who indulges in a sinful thought or corrupt desire, should reflect that it *may* end in death—death temporal and eternal. Its natural tendency will be to produce such a death. This reflection should induce us to check an evil thought or desire at the beginning. Not for one moment should we indulge in it, for soon it may secure the mastery, and be beyond our control; and the end may be seen in the grave, and the awful world of woe.

{+} "lust" or, "desire" {a} "hath conceived" Job 15:35 {b} "bringeth forth death" Ro 6:21-23

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 1 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Do not err, my beloved brethren*. This is said as if there were great danger of error in the point under consideration. The *point* on which he would guard them, seems to have been in respect to the opinion that God was the author of sin, and that the evils in the world are to be traced to him. There was great danger that they would embrace that opinion, for experience has shown that it is a danger into which men are always prone to fall. Some of the sources of this danger have been already alluded to. **See Barnes on "Jas 1:13"**.

To meet the danger, he says that, so far is it from being true that God is the source of evil, he is in fact the author of all that is good: every *good* gift, and every *perfect* gift, (Jas 1:17,) is from him, Jas 1:18.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 1 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Every good gift and every perfect gift*. The difference between *good* and *perfect* here, it is not easy to mark accurately. It may be that the former means that which is *benevolent* in its character and tendency; the latter that which is *entire*, where there is nothing even apparently wanting to complete it; where it can be regarded as good as a whole and in all its parts. The general sense is, that God is the author of all good. Everything that is good on the earth we are to trace to him; evil has another origin. Compare Mt 13:28. *Is from above*. From God, who is often represented as dwelling above—in heaven.

And cometh down from the Father of lights. From God, the source and fountain of all light. Light, in the Scriptures, is the emblem of knowledge, purity, happiness; and God is often represented as *light*. Compare 1Jo 1:5; **See Barnes on "1Ti 6:16"**.

There is, doubtless, an allusion here to the heavenly bodies, among which the sun is the most brilliant. It appears to us to be the great original fountain of light, diffusing its radiance over all worlds. No cloud, no darkness seems to come from the sun, but it pours its rich effulgence on the farthest part of the universe. So it is with God. There is no darkness in him, (1Jo 1:5;) and all the moral light and purity which there is in the universe is to be traced to him. The word *Father* here is used in a sense which is common in Hebrew, (**see Barnes on** "Mt 1:1,) as denoting that which is the source of anything, or that from which anything proceeds. **See Barnes on "Isa 9:6"**.

With whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. The design here is clearly to contrast God with the sun in a certain respect. As the source of light, there is a strong resemblance. But in the sun there are certain changes. It does not shine on all parts of the earth at the same time, nor in the same manner all the year. It rises and sets; it crosses the line, and seems to go far to the south, and sends its rays obliquely on the earth; then it ascends to the north, recrosses the line, and sends its rays obliquely on southern regions. By its revolutions it produces the changes of the seasons, and makes a constant variety on the earth in the productions of different climes. In this respect God is *not* indeed like the sun. With him there is no variableness, not even the appearance of turning. He is always the same, at all seasons of the year, and in all ages; there is no change in his character, his mode of being, his purposes and plans. What he was millions of ages before the worlds were made, he is now; what he is now, he will be countless millions of ages hence. We may be sure that

whatever changes there may be in human affairs; whatever reverses we may undergo; whatever oceans we may cross, or whatever mountains we may climb, or in whatever worlds we may hereafter take up our abode, *God* is the same. The word which is here rendered *variableness* (*parallagh*) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means change, alteration, vicissitude, and would properly be applied to the changes observed in astronomy. See the examples quoted in Wetstein. The phrase rendered *shadow of turning* would properly refer to the different *shade* or *shadow* cast by the sun from an object, in its various revolutions, in rising and setting, and in its changes at the different seasons of the year. God, on the other hand, is as if the sun stood in the meridian at noon-day, and never cast *any* shadow.

{a} "every good gift" Joh 3:27 {b} "with whom is no variableness" 1Sa 15:29; Mal 3:6 {+} "gift" or, "benefit"

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 1 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Of his own will*. Gr., *willing, boulhyeiv*. The idea is, that the fact that we are "begotten" to be his children is to be traced solely to his *will*. He purposed it, and it was done. The *antecedent* in the case on which all depended was the sovereign will of God. **See Barnes on "Joh 1:13"**.

See Barnes on "Eph 1:5".

When it is said, however, that he has done this by his mere *will*, it is not to be inferred that there was no *reason* why it should be done, or that the exercise of his will was arbitrary, but only that his will determined the matter, and that is the cause of our conversion. It is not to be inferred that there are not in all cases good reasons why God wills as he does, though those reasons are not often stated to us, and perhaps we could not comprehend them if they were. The *object* of the statement here seems to be to direct the mind up to God as the source of *good* and not *evil*; and among the most eminent illustrations of his goodness is this, that by his mere *will*, without any external power to control him, and where there *could* be nothing but benevolence, he has adopted us into his family, and given us a most exalted condition, as renovated beings, among his creatures. *Begat he us*. The Greek word here is the same which in Jas 1:15 is rendered "bringeth forth"—" sin *bringeth forth* death." The word is perhaps designedly used here in contrast with that, and the object is to refer to a different kind of production, or bringing forth, under the agency of *sin*, and the agency of *God*. The meaning here is, that we owe the beginning of our spiritual life to God.

With the word of truth. By the instrumentality of *truth*. It was not a mere creative act, but it was by truth as the seed or germ. There is no effect produced in our minds in regeneration which the *truth* is not fitted to produce, and the agency of God in the case is to secure its fair and full influence on the soul.

That we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures. Compare Eph 1:12. For the meaning of the word rendered *first-fruits*, **see Barnes on "Ro 8:23"**.

Compare Ro 11:6; Ro 16:5; 1Co 15:20,23; 1Co 16:15; Re 14:4.

It does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It denotes, properly, that which is first taken from anything; the portion which was usually offered to God. The phrase here does not primarily denote eminence in honour or degree, but refers rather to *time*—the first in time; and in a secondary sense it is then used to denote the honour attached to that circumstance. The meaning here is, either

(1) that, under the gospel, those who were addressed by the apostles had the honour of being first called into his kingdom as a part of that glorious harvest which it was designed to gather in this world, and that the *goodness* of God was manifested in thus furnishing the first-fruits of a most glorious harvest; or

(2) the reference may be to the rank and dignity which all who are born again would have among the creatures of God in virtue of the new birth.

{a} "Of his own will" Joh 1:13 {b} "firstfruits of his creatures" Jer 2:3; Eph 1:12; Re 14:4

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 1 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Wherefore, my beloved brethren*. The connexion is this: "Since God is the only source of good; since he tempts no man; and since by his mere sovereign goodness, without any claim on our part, we have had the high honour conferred on us of being made the first-fruits of his creatures, we ought to be ready to hear his voice, to subdue all our evil passions, and to bring our souls to entire practical obedience." The necessity of *obedience*, or the doctrine that the gospel is not only to be *learned* but *practised*, is pursued at length in this and the following chapter. The particular statement here (Jas 1:19-21) is, that religion requires us to be meek and docile; to lay aside all irritability against the truth, and all pride of opinion, and all corruption of heart, and to receive meekly the engrafted word. See the analysis of the chapter.

Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak. That is, primarily, to hear God; to listen to the instructions of that *truth* by which we have been begotten, and brought into so near relation to him. At the same time, though this is the primary sense of the phrase here, it may be regarded as inculcating the *general* doctrine that we are to be more ready to hear than to speak; or that we are to be disposed to *learn* always, and from any source. Our appropriate condition is rather that of *learners* than *instructors*; and the attitude of mind which we should cultivate is that of a readiness to receive information from any quarter. The ancients have some sayings on this subject which are well worthy of our attention. "Men have two ears, and but one tongue, that they should hear more than they speak." "The ears are always open, ever ready to receive instruction; but the tongue is surrounded with a double row of teeth, to hedge it in, and to keep it within proper bounds." See *Benson*. So Valerius Maximus, vii. 2: "How noble was the response of Xenocrates! When he met the reproaches of others with a profound silence, some one asked him why he alone was silent? Because, says he, I have sometimes had occasion to regret that I have spoken, *never that I was silent*." See Wetstein. So the son of Sirach, "Be swift to hear, and with deep consideration (*en makroyumia*) give answer," chap. v. 11. So the Rabbins have some similar sentiments. "Talk little, and work much," Pirkey Aboth. c. i. 15. "The righteous speak little, and do much; the wicked speak much, and do nothing," Bava Metsia, fol. 87. A sentiment similar to that before us is found in Ec 5:2, "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God." So Pr 10:19, "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin;" Pr 13:3, "He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life;" Pr 15:2, "The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright, but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness."

Slow to wrath. That is, we are to govern and restrain our temper; we are not to give indulgence to excited and angry passions. Compare Pr 16:32, "He that is slow to anger is greater than the

mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." See also on this subject, Job 5:2; Pr 11:17; Pr 13:10; 14:16; 15:18; 19:19; 22:24; 25:28; Ec 7:9; Ro 12:17;

1Th 5:14; 1Pe 3:8. The particular point here is, however, not that we should be slow to wrath as a general habit of mind, which is indeed most true, but in reference particularly *to the reception of the truth*. We should lay aside all anger and wrath, and should come to the a calm in a investigation of truth with mind, and an imperturbed spirit. A state of wrath or anger is always unfavourable to the investigation of truth. Such an investigation demands a calm spirit, and he whose mind is excited and enraged is not condition to see the value of truth, or to weigh the evidence for it.

{a} "slow to speak" Ec 5:2 {b} "slow to wrath" Pr 16:32

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 1 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God*. Does not produce in the life that righteousness which God requires. Its tendency is not to incline us to keep the law, but to break it; not to induce us to embrace the truth, but the opposite. The meaning of this passage is not that our wrath will make God either more or less righteous; but that its tendency is not to produce that upright course of life, and love of truth, which God requires. A man is never sure of doing right under the influence of excited feelings; he *may* do that which is in the highest sense wrong, and which he will regret all his life. The particular meaning of this passage is, that wrath in the mind of man will not have any tendency to make him righteous. It is only that candid state of mind which will lead him to embrace the truth which can be hoped to have such an effect.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 1 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Wherefore*. In view of the fact that God has begotten us for his own service; in view of the fact that excited feeling tends only to wrong, let us lay aside *all* that is evil, and submit ourselves wholly to the influence of truth.

Lay apart all filthiness. The word here rendered *filthiness*, occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means properly *filth*; and then is applied to evil conduct considered as *disgusting* or *offensive*. Sin may be contemplated as a *wrong* thing; as a violation of law; as evil in its nature and tendency, and *therefore* to be avoided; or it may be contemplated as *disgusting, offensive, loathsome*. To a pure mind, this is one of its most odious characteristics; for, to such a mind, sin in any form is more loathsome than the most offensive object can be to any of the senses.

And superfluity of naughtiness. Literally, "abounding of evil." It is rendered by Doddridge, "overflowing of malignity;" by Tindal, "superfluity of maliciousness;" by Benson, "superfluity of malice;" by Bloomfield, "petulance." The phrase "*superfluity* of naughtiness": or of evil, does not exactly express the sense, as if we were only to lay aside that which *abounded*, or which is *superfluous*, though we might retain that which does not come under this description; but the object of the apostle is to express his deep abhorrence of the thing referred to by strong and emphatic language. He had just spoken of sin in one aspect, as *filthy, loathsome, detestable*; here he designs

to express his abhorrence of it by a still more emphatic description, and he speaks of it not merely as an *evil*, but as an evil *abounding, overflowing*; an evil in the highest degree. The thing referred to had the essence of *evil* in it, (*kakia*;) but it was not merely *evil*, it was evil that was aggravated, that was overflowing, that was eminent in degree, (*perisseia*.) The particular reference in these passages is to the reception of the truth; and the doctrine taught is, that a *corrupt* mind, a mind full of sensuality and wickedness, is not favourable to the reception of the truth. It is not fitted to see its beauty, to appreciate its value, to understand its just claims, or to welcome it to the soul. Purity of heart is the best preparation always for seeing the force of truth. *And receive with meekness*. That is, open the mind and heart to instruction, and to the fair influence of truth. Meekness, gentleness, docility, are everywhere required in receiving the instructions of religion, as they are in obtaining knowledge of any kind. **See Barnes on "Mt 18:2-3"**.

The engrafted word. The gospel is here represented under the image of that which is implanted or engrafted from another source; by a figure that would be readily understood, for the art of engrafting is everywhere known. Sometimes the gospel is represented under the image of seed sown, (compare Mr 6:14, seq.;) but here it is under the figure of a shoot implanted or engrafted, that produces fruit of its own, whatever may be the original character of the tree into which it is engrafted. **See Barnes on "Ro 11:17"**.

The meaning here is, that we should allow the principles of the gospel to be thus *engrafted* on our nature; that however crabbed or perverse our nature may be, or however bitter and vile the fruits which it might bring forth of its own accord, it might, through the engrafted word, produce the fruits of righteousness.

Which is able to save your souls. It is not, therefore, a weak and powerless thing, merely designed to show its own feebleness, and to give occasion for God to work a *miracle*; but it has *power*, and is *adapted* to save.

See Barnes on "Ro 1:16"; **See Barnes on** "1Co 1:18; **See Barnes on** "2Ti 3:15.

{a} "lay apart all filthiness" Col 3:5-8; Heb 12:1; 1Pe 2:1-2

{*} "filthiness" or, "defilement" {+} "naughtiness" or, "abounding wickedness"

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 1 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only*. Obey the gospel, and do not merely listen to it. Compare Mt 7:21.

Deceiving your own selves. It is implied here, that by merely *hearing* the word but not *doing* it, they would deceive their own souls. The nature of this deception was this, that they would imagine that that was all which was required, whereas the main thing was that they should be obedient. If a man supposes that by a mere punctual attendance on preaching, or a respectful attention to it, he has done all that is required of him, he is labouring under a most gross self- deception. And yet there are multitudes who seem to imagine that they have done all that is demanded of them when they have heard attentively the word preached. Of its influence on their lives, and its claims to obedience, they are utterly regardless.

{a} "doers of the word" Mt 7:21

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 1 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *For if any be*, etc. The ground of the comparison in these verses is obvious. The apostle refers to what all persons experience, the fact that we do not retain a distinct impression of ourselves after we have looked in a mirror. While actually looking in the mirror, we see all our features, and can trace them distinctly; when we turn away, the image and the impression both vanish. When looking in the mirror, we can see all the defects and blemishes of our person; if there is a scar, a deformity, a feature of ugliness, it is distinctly before the mind; but when we turn away, that is "out of sight, and out of mind." When unseen it gives no uneasiness, and, even if capable of correction, we take no pains to remove it. So when we hear the word of God. It is like a mirror held up before us. In the perfect precepts of the law, and the perfect requirements of the gospel, we see our own short-comings and defects, and perhaps think that we will correct them. But we turn away immediately, and forget it all. If, however, we were "*doers* of the word," we should endeavour to remove all those defects and blemishes in our moral character, and to bring our whole souls into conformity with what the law and the gospel require. The phrase "natural face," (Gr., face of birth,) means, the face or appearance which we have in virtue of our natural birth. The word *glass* here means *mirror*. Glass was not commonly used for mirrors among the ancients, but they were made of polished plates of metal. **See Barnes on** "Isa 3:24, and **See Barnes on "Job 37:18"**.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 1 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *For he beholdeth himself*. While he looks in the mirror he sees his true appearance.

And goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth. As soon as he goes away, he forgets it. The apostle does not refer to any *intention* on his part, but to what is known to occur as a matter of fact.

What manner of man he was. How he looked; and especially if there was anything in his appearance that required correction.

{+} "straightway" or, "immediately"

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 1 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *But whoso looketh*. *parakuqav*. This word means, to stoop down near by anything; to bend forward near, so as to look at anything more closely. **See Barnes on "1Pe 1:12"**.

The idea here is that of a close and attentive observation. The object is not to contrast the *manner* of looking in the glass, and in the law of liberty, implying that the former was a "*careless* beholding," and the latter an attentive and careful looking, as Doddridge, Rosenmuller, Bloomfield, and others suppose; for the word used in the former case (*katenohse*) implies intense or accurate observation, as really as the word used here; but the object is to show that if a man would attentively look into, and *continue* in the law of liberty, and not do as one who went away and forgot how he looked, he would be blessed. The emphasis is not in the manner of *looking*, it is on the duty of *continuing* or persevering in the observance of the law.

The perfect law of liberty. Referring to the law of God, or his will, however made known, as the correct standard of conduct. It is called the *perfect* law, as being wholly free from all defects; being just such as a law *ought* to be. Compare Ps 19:7. It is called the *law of liberty*, or freedom, because it is a law producing freedom from the servitude of sinful passions and lusts. Compare Ps 119:45; **see Barnes on** "Ro 6:16, seq.

And continueth therein. He must not merely *look* at the law, or see what he is by comparing himself with its requirements, but he must yield steady obedience to it. **See Barnes on "Joh 14:21"**.

This man shall be blessed in his deed. Marg., *doing*. The meaning is, that he shall be blessed in the very act of keeping the law. It will produce peace of conscience; it will impart happiness of a high order to his mind; it will exert a good influence over his whole soul. Ps 19:11, "In keeping of them there is great reward."

{a} "looketh into the perfect law of liberty" 2Co 3:18 {b} "of liberty" Ps 119:45 {c} "this man shall be blessed in his deed" Lu 6:47

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 1 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *If any man among you seem to be religious*. Pious, or devout. That is, if he does not restrain his tongue, his other evidences of religion are worthless. A man may undoubtedly have many things in his character which seem to be evidences of the existence of religion in his heart, and yet there may be some one thing that shall show that all those evidences are false. Religion is designed to produce an effect on our whole conduct; and if there is any one thing in reference to which it does not bring us under its control, that one thing may show that all other appearances of piety are worthless.

And bridleth not his tongue. Restrains or curbs it not, as a horse is restrained with a bridle. There may have been some reason why the apostle referred to this particular sin which is now unknown to us; or he may perhaps have intended to select this as a *specimen* to illustrate this idea, that if there is any one evil propensity which religion does not control, or if there is any one thing in respect to which its influence is not felt, whatever other evidences of piety there may be, this will demonstrate that all those appearances of religion are vain. For religion is designed to bring the whole man under control, and to subdue every faculty of the body and mind to its demands. If the tongue is not restrained, or if there is any unsubdued propensity to sin whatever, it proves that there is no true religion.

But deceiveth his own heart. Implying that he *does* deceive his heart by supposing that any evidence can prove that he is under the influence of religion if his tongue is unrestrained. Whatever love, or zeal, or orthodoxy, or gift in preaching or in prayer he may have, this one evil propensity will neutralize it all, and show that there is no true religion at heart.

This man's religion is vain. As all religion must be which does not control all the faculties of the body and the mind. The truths, then, which are taught in this verse are,

(1,) that there may be evidences of piety which seem to be very plausible or clear, but which in themselves do not prove that there is any true religion. There may be much zeal, as in the case of the Pharisees; there may be much apparent love of Christians, or much outward benevolence; there may be an uncommon gift in prayer; there may be much self-denial, as among those who

withdraw from the world in monasteries or nunneries; or there may have been deep conviction for sin, and much joy at the time of the supposed conversion, and still there be no true religion. Each and all of these things may exist in the heart where there is no true religion.

(2.) A single unsubdued sinful propensity neutralizes all these things, and shows that there is no true religion. If the tongue is not subdued; if any sin is indulged, it will show that the *seat* of the evil has not been reached, and that the soul, *as such*, has never been brought into subjection to the law of God. For the very *essence* of all the sin that there was in the soul may have been concentrated on that one propensity. Everything else which may be manifested may be accounted for on the supposition that there is no religion; this cannot be accounted for on the supposition that there is any.

{a} "bridleth not his tongue" Ps 34:13

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 1 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *Pure religion*. On the word here rendered *religion*, (*yrhskeia*,) **see Barnes on "Col 2:18"**.

It is used here evidently in the sense of *piety*, or as we commonly employ the word *religion*. The object of the apostle is to describe what enters essentially into religion; what it will do when it is properly and fairly developed. The phrase "*pure* religion," means that which is genuine and sincere, or which is free from any improper mixture.

And undefiled before God and the Father. That which God sees to be pure and undefiled, Rosenmuller supposes that there is a metaphor here taken from pearls or gems, which should be pure, or without stain.

Is this. That is, this enters into it; or this *is* religion such as God approves. The apostle does not say that this is *the whole* of religion, or that there is nothing else essential to it; but his general design clearly is, to show that religion will lead to a holy life, and he mentions this as a specimen, or an instance of what it will lead us to do. The *things* which he specifies here are in fact two:

(1.) That pure religion will lead to a life of practical benevolence; and

(2) that it will keep us unspotted from the world. If these things are found, they show that there is true piety. If they are not, there is none.

To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction. To go to see, to look after, to be ready to aid them. This is an instance or specimen of what true religion will do, showing that it will lead to a life of practical benevolence. It may be remarked in respect to this,

(1,) that this has always been regarded as an essential thing in true religion; for

(a) it is thus an imitation of God, who is "a father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows in his holy habitation," Ps 68:6; and who has always revealed himself as their friend, De 10:18; De 14:29; Ps 10:14; Ps 82:3; Isa 1:17; Jer 7:7; Jer 49:11; Ho 14:3;

(b) religion is represented as leading its friends to do this, or this is required everywhere of those who claim to be religious, Isa 1:17; De 24:17; De 14:29; Ex 22:22; Job 29:11-13.

(2.) Where this disposition to be the real friend of the widow and the orphan exists, there will also exist other corresponding things which go to make up the religious character. This will not stand alone. It will show what the heart is, and prove that it will ever be ready to do good. If a man,

from proper motives, is the real friend of the widow and the fatherless, he will be the friend of every good word and work, and we may rely on him in any and every way in doing good.

And to keep himself unspotted from the world. **See Barnes on "Ro 12:2"**; **see Barnes on** "Jas 4:4; **see Barnes on "1Jo 2:15-17".**

That is, religion will keep us from the maxims, vices, and corruptions which prevail in the world, and make us holy. These two things may, in fact, be said to constitute religion. If a man is truly benevolent, he bears the image of that God who is the fountain of benevolence; if he is pure and uncontaminated in his walk and deportment, he also resembles his Maker, for he is holy. If he has not these things, he cannot have any well-founded evidence that he is a Christian; for it is always the nature and tendency of religion to produce these things. It is, therefore, an easy matter for a man to determine whether he has any religion; and equally easy to see that religion is eminently desirable. Who can doubt that that is good which leads to compassion for the poor and the helpless, and which makes the heart and the life pure?

{a} "visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction"
Isa 1:16-17; Isa 58:6-7

{b} "unspotted from the world" Ro 12:2

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 2

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 2 - Verse 1

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

This chapter is evidently made up of three parts, or three subjects are discussed:—

I. The duty of impartiality in the treatment of others, verses 1-9. There was to be no favouritism on account of rank, birth, wealth, or apparel. The *case* to which the apostle refers for an illustration of this, is that where two persons should come into an assembly of Christian worshippers, one elegantly dressed, and the other meanly clad, and they should show special favour to the former, and should assign to the latter a more humble place. The *reasons* which the apostle assigns why they should not do this are,

(a) that God has chosen the poor for his own people, having selected *his* friends mainly from them;

(b) because rich men in fact oppressed them, and showed that they were worthy of no special regard;

(c) because they were often found among revilers, and in fact despised their religion; and

(d) because the law required that they should love their neighbours as themselves, and if they did this, it was all that was demanded; that is, that the love of the *man* was not to be set aside by the love of splendid apparel.

II. The duty of yielding obedience to the *whole* law in order to have evidence of true religion, verses 10-13. This subject seems to have been introduced in accordance with the general principles and aims of James, (**see Barnes on** "Jas 1:1, the Introduction) that religion consists in obeying the law of God, and that there can be none when this is not done. It is not improbable that, among those

to whom he wrote, there were some who denied this, or who had embraced some views of religion which led them to doubt it. He therefore enforces the duty by the following considerations:

(1.) That if a man should obey every part of the law, and yet be guilty of offending in one point, he was in fact guilty of all; for he showed that he had no genuine principle of obedience, and was guilty of violating the law as a whole, Jas 2:10.

(2.) Every part of the law rests on the same authority, and one part, therefore, is as binding as another. The same God that has forbidden murder, has also forbidden adultery; and he who does the one as really violates the law as he who does the other, Jas 2:11.

(3.) The judgment is before us, and we shall be tried on impartial principles, not with reference to obeying one part of the law, but with reference to its whole claim; and we should so act as becomes those who expect to be judged by the whole law, or on the question whether we have conformed to every part of it, Jas 2:12-13.

III. The subject of justification, showing that *works* are necessary in order that a man may be justified, or esteemed righteous before God, Jas 2:14-26. For a general view of the design of this part of the epistle, **see Barnes on** "Jas 5:1, Introduction to Chapter 5. The object here is to show that *in fact* no one can be regarded as truly righteous before God who does not lead an upright life; and that if a man professes to have faith, and has not works, he cannot be justified; or that if he have *real* faith, it will be shown by his works. If it is *not* shown by works corresponding to its nature, it will be certain that there is no true religion, or that his professed faith is worth nothing. The "stand point" from which James views the subject, is not that faith is unnecessary or worthless, or that a man is not justified by faith rather than by his own works, in the sense of its being the ground of acceptance with God; or, in other words, the place where the apostle takes his position, and which is the point from which he views the subject, is not *before* a man is justified, to inquire in what way he *may* be accepted of God, but it is *after* the act of justification by faith, to show that if faith does not lead to good works it is "dead," or is of no value; and that in fact, therefore, the evidence of justification is to be found in good living, and that when this is not manifest, all a man's professed religion is worth nothing. In doing this, he

(a) makes the general statement, by a pointed interrogatory, that faith cannot profit, that is, cannot *save* a man, unless there be also works, Jas 2:14. He then

(b) appeals, for an illustration, to the case of one who is hungry or naked, and asks what mere *faith* could do in his case, if it were not accompanied with proper acts of benevolence, Jas 2:15-17. He then,

(c) by a strong supposable case, says that real faith will be evinced *by* works, or that works are the proper evidence of its existence, Jas 2:18. He then

(d) shows that there is a kind of faith which even the devils have on one of the most important doctrines of religion, and which can be of no value; showing that it cannot be by *mere* faith, irrespective of the question of what sort the faith is, that a man is to be saved, Jas 2:19. He then

(e) appeals to the case of Abraham, showing that *in fact* works performed an important part in his acceptance with God; or that if it had not been for his works—that is, if there no evidence that he was justified, or that his works were the proper *carrying out* or *fulfilment* of his faith, Jas 2:20-24. He then

(f) shows that the same thing was true of another case recorded in the Old Testament—that of Rahab, (Jas 2:25;) and then observes, (Jas 2:26,) that faith without works would have no more claim to being true religion than a dead body, without a soul, would be regarded as a living man.

Verse 1. *My brethren*. Perhaps meaning brethren in two respects—as Jews, and as Christians. In both respects the form of address would be proper.

Have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ. *Faith* is the distinguishing thing in the Christian religion, for it is this by which man is justified, and hence it comes to be put for religion itself. **See Barnes on "1Ti 3:9"**.

The meaning here is, "Do not hold such views of the religion of Christ, as to lead you to manifest partiality to others on account of their difference of rank or outward circumstances."

The Lord of glory. The glorious Lord; he who is glorious himself, and who is encompassed with glory. **See Barnes on "1Co 2:8"**.

The *design* here seems to be to show that the religion of such a Lord should be in no way dishonoured.

With respect of persons. That is, you are not to show respect of persons, or to evince partiality to others on account of their rank, wealth, apparel, etc. Compare Pr 24:23; Pr 28:21; Le 19:15; De 1:17; De 10:17; 2Ch 19:7; Ps 40:4.

See Barnes on "Ac 10:34; and **see Barnes on** "Ro 2:11

to see the subject explained.

{a} "respect of persons" Pr 28:21; Jude 16

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 2 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *For if there come unto your assembly*. Marg., as in Gr., *synagogue*. It is remarkable that this is the only place in the New Testament where the word *synagogue* is applied to the Christian church. It is probably employed here because the apostle was writing to those who had been Jews; and it is to be presumed that the word *synagogue* would be naturally used by the early converts from Judaism to designate a Christian place of worship, or a Christian congregation, and it was probably so employed until it was superseded by a word which the Gentile converts would be more likely to employ and which would, in fact, be better and more expressive—the word *church*. The word *synagogue* (*sunagwghn*) would properly refer to the whole congregation, considered *as assembled together*, without respect to the question whether all were truly pious or not; the word *church* (*ekklhsia*) would refer to the assembly convened for worship as *called out*, referring to the fact that they were called out from the world, and convened as worshippers of God, and would, therefore, be more applicable to a body of spiritual worshippers. It is probable that the Christian church was modelled, in its general arrangements, after the Jewish synagogue; but there would be obviously some disadvantages in retaining the name, as applicable to Christian worship. It would be difficult to avoid the associations connected with the *name*, and hence it was better to adopt some other name which would be free from this disadvantage, and on which might be engrafted all the ideas which it was necessary to connect with the notion of the Christian organization. Hence the word *church*, liable to no such objection as that of synagogue, was soon adopted, and ultimately prevailed, though the passage before us shows that the word *synagogue* would be in some places, and for a time, employed to designate a Christian congregation. We should express the idea here by saying, "If a man of this description should come *into the church*."

A man with, a gold ring. Indicative of rank or property. Rings were common ornaments of the rich; and probably then, as now, of those who desired to be *esteemed* to be rich. For proof that they were commonly worn, see the quotations in Wetstein, *in loc*.

In goodly apparel. Rich and splendid dress. Compare Lu 16:19.

A poor man in vile raiment. The Greek here is, *filthy, foul*; the meaning of the passage is, in sordid, shabby clothes. The reference here seems to be, not to those who commonly attended on public worship, or who were members of the church, but to those who might accidentally drop in to witness the services of Christians. See 1Co 14:24.

{+} "assembly" or, "synagogue" {*} "goodly" or, "gorgeous"

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 2 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing*. If you show him superior attention on account of his rich and gay apparel, giving him a seat by himself, and treating others with neglect or contempt. Religion does not forbid proper respect to rank, to office, to age, or to distinguished talents and services, though even in such cages it does not require that we should feel that such persons have any peculiar claims to salvation, or that they are not on a level with all others, as sinners before God; it does not forbid that a man who has the means of procuring for himself an eligible pew in a church should be permitted to do so; but it requires that men shall be regarded and treated according to their moral worth, and not according to their external adorning; that all shall be considered as in fact on a level before God, and entitled to the privileges which grow out of the worship of the Creator. A stranger coming into any place of worship, no matter what his rank, dress, or complexion, should be treated with respect, and everything should be done that can be to win his heart to the service of God.

And say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place. Marg., as in Gr., *well, or seemly*; that is, in an honourable place near the pulpit; or in some elevated place where he would be conspicuous. The meaning is, you treat him with distinguished marks of respect on the first appearance, merely from the indications that he is a rich man, without knowing anything about his character.

And say to the poor, Stand thou there. Without even the civility of offering him a seat at all. This may be presumed not *often* to occur in a Christian church; yet it practically does sometimes, when no disposition is evinced to furnish a stranger with a seat.

Or sit here under my footstool. Perhaps some seats in the places of worship were raised, so that even the footstool would be elevated above a lower seat. The meaning is, that he would be treated as if he were not worth the least attention.

{+} "in a good place" or, "well" or, "seemly"

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 2 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Are ye not then partial in yourselves?* Among yourselves. Do you not show that you are partial?

And are become judges of evil thoughts. There has been considerable difference of opinion respecting this passage, yet the sense seems not to be difficult. There are two ideas in it: one is, that they showed by this conduct that they took it upon themselves to be *judges*, to pronounce on the character of men who were strangers, and on their claims to respect, (compare Mt 7:1;) the other is, that in doing this, they were not guided by just rules, but that they did it under the influence of improper "thoughts." They did it not from benevolence; not from a desire to do justice to all according to their moral character; but from that improper feeling which leads us to show honour to men on account of their external appearance, rather than their real worth. The *wrong* in the case was in their presuming to "judge" these strangers at all, as they practically did by making this distinction, and then by doing it under the influence of such an unjust rule of judgment. The sense is, that we have no right to form a decisive judgment of men on their first appearance, as we do when we treat one with respect and the other not; and that when we make up our opinion in regard to them, it should be by some other means of judging than the question whether they can wear gold rings, and dress well, or not. Beza and Doddridge render this, "ye become judges who reason ill."

{+} "judges of evil thoughts" or, "judges who reason ill"

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 2 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Hearken, my beloved brethren*. The apostle now proceeds to show that the rich, as such, had no special claim on their favor, and that the poor in fact might be made more entitled to esteem than they were. For a view of the arguments by which he does this, compare the analysis of the chapter. (**See Barnes on "Jas 2:1"**)

Hath not God chosen the poor of this world? Those who are poor so far as this world is concerned, or those who have not wealth. This is the first argument the apostle suggests why the poor should not be treated with neglect. It is, that God has had special reference to them in choosing those who should be his children. The meaning is not that he is not as *willing* to save the rich as the poor, for he has no partiality; but that there are circumstances in the condition of the poor which make it more likely that they will embrace the offers of the gospel than the rich; and that in fact the great mass of believers is taken from those who are in comparatively humble life. **See Barnes on "1Co 1:26-28".**

The fact that God has chosen one to be an "heir of the kingdom" is as good a reason now why he should not be treated with neglect, as it was in the times of the apostles.

Rich in faith. Though poor in this world's goods, they are rich in a higher and more important sense. They have faith in God their Saviour; and in this world of trial and of sin, that is a more valuable possession than piles of hoarded silver or gold. A man who has that is sure that he will have all that is truly needful for him in this world and the next; a man who has it not, though he may have the wealth of Croesus, will be utterly without resources in respect to the great wants of his existence.

"Give what thou wilt, without thee we are poor;
And with thee rich, take what thou wilt away."

Faith in God the Saviour will answer more purposes, and accomplish more valuable ends for man, than the wealth of the Indies could: and this the poor may have as well as the rich. Compare Re 2:9.

And heirs of the kingdom, etc. Marg., *that*. **See Barnes on "Mt 5:3"**.

{a} "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world" 1Co 1:26-28 {b} "rich in faith" Re 2:9 {+} "the kingdom" or, "that kingdom" {c} "the kingdom which he hath promised" Mt 5:3; Lu 12:32; Lu 22:29

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 2 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *But ye have despised the poor*. Koppe reads this as an interrogation: "Do ye despise the poor?" Perhaps it might be understood somewhat ironically: "You despise the poor, do you, and are disposed to honour the rich! Look then, and see how the rich treat you, and see whether you have so much occasion to regard them with any peculiar respect." The *object* of the apostle is to fix the attention on the impropriety of that partiality which many were disposed to show to the rich, by reminding them that the rich had never evinced towards them any such treatment as to lay the foundation of a claim to the honour which they were disposed to render them.

Do not rich men oppress you? Referring probably to something in their conduct which existed particularly then. The meaning is not that they oppressed the poor as such, but that they oppressed those whom James addressed. It is probable that then, as since, a considerable portion of those who were Christians were in fact poor, and that this would have all the force of a personal appeal; but still the particular thought is, that it was a characteristic of the rich and the great, whom they were disposed peculiarly to honour, to oppress and crush the poor. The Greek here is very expressive: "Do they not imperiously lord it over you?" The statement here will apply with too much force to the rich in every age.

And draw you before the judgment-seats. That is, they are your persecutors rather than your friends. It was undoubtedly the case that many of the rich were engaged in persecuting Christians, and that on various pretenses they dragged them before the judicial tribunals.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 2 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Do they not blaspheme that worthy name*. This is another argument to show that the rich had no special claim to the honour which they were disposed to show them. The "worthy name" here referred to is, doubtless, the name of the Saviour. The thing here affirmed would, of course, accompany persecution. They who persecuted Christians, would revile the name which they bore. This has always occurred. But besides this, it is no improbable supposition that many of those who were *not* disposed to engage in open persecution, would revile the name of Christ, by speaking contemptuously of him and his religion. This has been sufficiently common in every age of the world, to make the description here not improper. And yet nothing has been more remarkable than the very thing adverted to here by James, that notwithstanding this, many who profess to be Christians

have been more disposed to treat even such persons with respect and attention than they have their own brethren, if they were poor; that they have cultivated the favour, sought the friendship, desired the smiles, aped the manners, and coveted the society of such persons, rather than the friendship and the favour of their poorer Christian brethren. Even though they are known to despise religion in their hearts, and not to be sparing of their words of reproach and scorn towards Christianity; though they are known to be blasphemers, and to have the most thorough contempt for serious, spiritual religion, yet there is many a professing Christian who would prefer to be at a party given by such persons than at a prayer-meeting where their poorer brethren are assembled; who would rather be known by the world to be the associates and friends of such persons, than of those humble believers who can make no boast of rank or wealth, and who are looked down upon with contempt by the great and the gay.

{a} "that worthy name" Ps 111:9

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 2 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *If ye fulfil the royal law*. That is, the law which he immediately mentions requiring us to love our neighbour as ourselves. It is called a "*royal* law," or *kingly* law, on account of its excellence or nobleness; not because it is ordained by God *as a king*, but because it has some such prominence and importance among other laws as a king has among other men; that is, it is majestic, noble, worthy of veneration. It is a law which ought to govern and direct us in all our intercourse with men—as a king rules his subjects.

According to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Le 19:18. Compare Mt 19:19. See it explained by the Saviour, in the parable of the good Samaritan, Lu 10:25-37. In regard to its meaning, **see Barnes on "Mt 19:19"**.

Ye do well. That is, "if you fairly comply with the spirit of this law, you do all that is required of you in regulating your intercourse with others. You are to regard all persons as your neighbours, and are to treat them according to their real worth; you are not to be influenced in judging of them, or in your treatment of them, by their apparel, or their complexion, or the circumstances of their birth, but by the fact that they are fellow-beings." This is another reason why they should not show partiality in their treatment of others, for if, in the true sense, they regarded all others as "neighbours," they would treat no one with neglect or contempt.

{a} "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" Le 19:18

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 2 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin*. You transgress the plain law of God, and do wrong. See the references on Jas 2:1.

And are convinced of the law as transgressors. Gr., "*By* the law." The word *convinced* is now used in a somewhat different sense from what it was formerly. It now commonly refers to the impression made on a man's mind by showing him the truth of a thing which before was doubted,

or in respect to which the evidence was not clear. A man who doubted the truth of a report or a proposition may be *convinced* or *satisfied* of its truth; a man who has done wrong, though he supposed he was doing what was proper, may be *convinced* of his error. So a man may be *convinced* that he is a sinner, though before he had no belief of it, and no concern about it; and this may produce in his mind the feeling which is technically known as *conviction*, producing deep distress and anguish. **See Barnes on "Joh 16:8"**.

Here, however, the word does not refer so much to the effect produced on the mind itself, as to the fact that the law would hold such an one to be guilty; that is, the law pronounces what is done to be wrong. Whether they would be personally *convinced* of it, and troubled about it as convicted sinners, would be a different question, and one to which the apostle does not refer; for his object is not to show that they would be *troubled* about it, but to show that the law of God condemned this course, and would hold them to be guilty. The *argument* here is not from the *personal distress* which this course would produce in their own minds, but from the fact that the law of God *condemned* it.

{a} "respect to persons" Jas 2:1

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 2 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *For whosoever shall keep the whole law*. All except the single point referred to. The apostle does not say that this in fact ever *did* occur, but he says that if it *should*, and yet a man should have failed in only one particular, he must be judged to be guilty. The case supposed seems to be that of one who *claimed* that he had kept the whole law. The apostle says that even if this should be admitted for the time to be true in all other respects, yet, if he had failed in any *one* particular—in showing respect to persons, or in anything else—he could not but be held to be a transgressor. The design of this is to show the importance of yielding *universal* obedience, and to impress upon the mind a sense of the enormity of sin from the fact that the violation of any one precept is in fact an offence against the whole law of God. The *whole law* here means *all* the law of God; all that he has required; all that he has given to regulate us in our lives.

And yet offend in one point. In one respect; or shall violate any one of the commands included in the general word *law*. The word *offend* here means, properly, to stumble, to fall; then to err or fail in duty. **See Barnes on "Mt 5:29"; see Barnes on "Mt 26:31"**.

He is guilty of all. He is guilty of violating the law as a whole, or of violating the law of God as such; he has rendered it impossible that he should be justified and saved *by* the law. This does not affirm that he is *as* guilty as if he had violated *every* law of God; or that all sinners are of equal grade because all have violated some one or more of the laws of God; but the meaning is, that he is guilty of violating the law of God *as such*; he shows that he has not the true spirit of obedience; he has exposed himself to the penalty of the law, and made it impossible now to be saved *by* it. His acts of obedience in other respects, no matter how many, will not screen him from the charge of being a violator of the law, or from its penalty. He must be held and treated as a transgressor for *that* offence, however upright he may be in other respects, and must meet the penalty of the law as certainly as though he had violated every commandment. One portion of the law is as much binding as another, and if a man violates any one plain commandment, he sets at nought the authority of

God. This is a simple principle which is everywhere recognised, and the apostle means no more by it than occurs every day. A man who has stolen a horse is held to be a violator of the law, no matter in how many other respects he has kept it, and the law condemns him for it. He cannot plead his obedience to the law in other things as a reason why he should not be punished for this sin; but however upright he may have been in general, even though it may have been through a long life, the law holds him to be a transgressor, and condemns him. He is as *really* condemned, and as much thrown from the protection of law, as though he had violated every command. So of murder, arson, treason, or ally other crime. The law judges a man for what he has done *in this specific case*, and he cannot plead in justification of it that he has been obedient in other things. It follows, therefore, that if a man has been guilty of violating the law of God in any one instance, or is not perfectly holy, he cannot be justified and saved by it, though he should have obeyed it in every other respect, any more than a man who has been guilty of murder can be saved from the gallows *because* he has, in other respects, been a good citizen, a kind father, an honest neighbour, or has been compassionate to the poor and the needy. He cannot plead his act of truth in one case as an offset to the sin of falsehood in another; he cannot defend himself from the charge of dishonesty in one instance by the plea that he has been honest in another; he cannot urge the fact that he has done a good thing as a reason why he should not be punished for a bad one. He must answer for the specific charge against him, and none of these other things can be an *offset* against this one act of wrong. Let it be remarked, also, in respect to our being justified by obedience to the law, that no man can plead before God that he has kept all his law *except* in one point. Who is there that has not, in spirit at least, broken each one of the ten commandments? The sentiment here expressed by James was not new with him. It was often expressed by the Jewish writers, and seems to have been an admitted principle among the Jews. See Wetstein, *in loc*, for examples.

{a} "he is guilty of all" De 27:26

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 2 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill.* That is, these are parts of the same law of God, and one is as obligatory as the other. If, therefore, you violate either of these precepts, you transgress the law of God as such, and must be held to be guilty of violating it as a whole. The penalty of the law will be incurred, whatever precept you violate.

{+} "For he that said" or, "that law which said" {a} "Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill" Ex 20:13-14

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 2 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty*. On the phrase, "the law of liberty," **see Barnes on "Jas 1:26"**; and **See Barnes on** "Jas 4:11".

The meaning is, that in all our conduct we are to act under the constant impression of the truth that we are soon to be brought into judgment, and that the law by which we are to be judged is that

by which it is contemplated that we shall be set free from the dominion of sin. In the rule which God has laid down in his word, called "the law of liberty," or the rule by which true *freedom* is to be secured, a system of religion is revealed by which it is designed that man shall be emancipated not only from one sin, but from *all*. Now, it is with reference to such a law that we are to be judged; that is, we shall not be able to plead on our trial that we were under a necessity of sinning, but we shall be judged under that law by which the arrangement was made that we might be free from sin. If we might be free from sin; if an arrangement was made by which we could have led holy lives, then it will be proper that we shall be judged and condemned if we are not righteous. The sense is, "In all your conduct, whatever you do or say, remember that you *are to be judged*, or that you are to give an impartial account; and remember also that the *rule* by which you are to be judged is that by which provision is made for being delivered from the dominion of sin, and brought into the freedom of the gospel." The argument here seems to be, that he who habitually feels that he is soon to be judged by a law under which it was contemplated that he might be, and *should* be, free from the bondage of sin, has one of the strongest of all inducements to lead a holy life.

{a} "law of liberty" Jas 1:25

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 2 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy*. This is obviously an equitable principle, and is one which is everywhere found in the Bible. Pr 21:13, "Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but will not be heard." 2Sa 22:26-27, "With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful, and with the froward thou wilt show thyself unsavoury". Compare Ps 18:25-26; Mt 6:15; Mt 7:1-2.

The idea which the apostle seems to design to convey here is, that there will certainly be a judgment, and that we must expect that it will be conducted on equitable principles; that no mercy is to be shown when the character is not such that it will be proper that it should be; and that we should habitually feel in our conduct that God will be impartial, and should frame our lives accordingly.

And mercy rejoiceth against judgment. Marg., *glorieth*. Gr., Boasts, glories, or exults. The idea is that of glorying over, as where one is superior to another, or has gained a victory over another. The reference all along here is to the judgment, the trial of the great day; and the apostle is stating the principles on which the trial at that day will be conducted—on which one class shall be condemned and the other acquitted and saved. In reference to one class, the wicked, he says that where there has been no mercy shown to others—referring to this as *one* evidence of piety—that is, where there is no true piety, there will be judgment without mercy; in the other case there will be, as it were, a *triumph* of mercy, or mercy will appear to have gained a victory over judgment. Strict justice would indeed plead for their condemnation, but the attribute of mercy will triumph, and they will be acquitted. The attributes of mercy and justice would seem to come in conflict, but mercy would prevail. This is a true statement of the plan of salvation, and of what actually occurs in the redemption of a sinner. Justice *demands*, as what is her due, that the sinner should be condemned; mercy *pleads* that he may be saved— and mercy prevails. It is not uncommon that there *seems* to be a conflict between the two. In the dispensations of justice before human tribunals,

this often occurs. Strict justice *demands* the punishment of the offender; and yet there are cases when mercy pleads, and when every man feels that it would be desirable that pardon should be extended to the guilty, and when we always rejoice if mercy triumphs. In such a case, for example, as that of Major Andre, this is strikingly seen. On the one hand, there was the undoubted proof that he was guilty; that he had been taken as a spy; that by the laws of war he ought to be put to death; that as what he had done had tended to the ruin of the American cause, and as such an act, if unpunished, would always expose an army to surprise and destruction, he ought, in accordance with the law of nations, to die. On the other hand, there were his youth, his high attainments, his honourable connexions, his brilliant hopes, all pleading that he might live, and that he might be pardoned. In the bosom of Washington, the promptings of justice and mercy thus came into collision. Both could not be gratified, and there seemed to be but one course to be pursued. His sense of justice was shown in the act by which he signed the death-warrant; his feelings of compassion in the fact that when he did it his eyes poured forth a flood of tears. How every generous feeling of our nature would have been gratified if mercy could have triumphed, and the youthful and accomplished officer could have been spared! In the plan of salvation, this does occur. Respect is done to justice, but mercy triumphs. Justice indeed pleaded for the condemnation of the sinner, but mercy interposed, and he is saved. Justice is not disregarded, for the great Redeemer of mankind has done all that is needful to uphold it; but there is the most free and full exercise of mercy, and, while the justice of God is maintained, every benevolent feeling in the breast of all holy beings can be gratified in the salvation of countless thousands.

{a} "he shall have judgement without mercy" Pr 21:13; Mt 6:15; Mt 7:1-2

{b} "Rejoiceth against judgement" Ps 85:10 {+} "rejoiceth" or, "glorieth" {++} "rejoiceth against" or, "exults over"

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 2 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith*? The apostle here returns to the subject adverted to in Jas 1:22-27, the importance of a practical attention to the duties of religion, and the assurance that men cannot be saved by a mere opinion, speculative or merely by holding correct sentiments. He doubtless had in his eye those who abused the doctrine of justification by faith, by holding that good works are unnecessary to salvation, provided they maintain an orthodox belief. As this abuse probably existed in the time of the apostles, and as the Holy Ghost saw that there would be danger that in later times the great and glorious doctrine of justification by faith would be thus abused, it was important that the error should be rebuked, and that the doctrine should be distinctly laid down that good works are necessary to salvation. The apostle, therefore, in the question before us, implicitly asserts that faith would not "profit" at all unless accompanied with a holy life, and this doctrine he proceeds to illustrate in the following verses. **See Barnes on** "Jas 2:1, the analysis of this chapter; and **See Barnes on** "Jas 5:1, the Introduction to chapter 5, (2.). In order to a proper interpretation of this passage, it should be observed that the *stand-point* from which the apostle views this subject is not *before* a man is converted, inquiring in what way he *may* be justified before God, or on what ground his sins may be forgiven; but it is *after* a man is converted, showing that that faith can have no value which is not followed by good

works; that is, that it is not *real* faith, and that good works are necessary if a man would have evidence that he is justified. Thus understood, all that James says is in entire accordance with what is taught elsewhere in the New Testament. *Can faith save him*? It is implied in this question that faith cannot save him, for very often the most emphatic way of making an affirmation is by asking a question. The meaning here is, that that faith which does not produce good works, or which would not produce holy living if fairly acted out, will save no man, for it is not genuine faith.

{a} "What doth it profit" Mt 7:26 {*} "faith" or, "this faith"

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 2 - Verse 15

Verses 15-17. *If a brother or sister be naked*, etc. The comparison in these verses is very obvious and striking. The sense is, that faith in itself, without the acts that correspond to it, and to which it would prompt, is as cold, and heartless, and unmeaning, and useless, as it would be to say to one who was destitute of the necessaries of life, "depart in peace." In itself considered, it might seem to have something that was good; but it would answer none of the purposes of faith unless it should prompt to action. In the case of one who was hungry or naked, what he wanted was not good wishes or kind words merely, but the *acts* to which good wishes and kind words prompt. And so in religion, what is wanted is not merely the abstract state of mind which would be indicated by faith, but the life of goodness to which it ought to lead. Good wishes and kind words, in order to make them what they should be for the welfare of the world, should be accompanied with corresponding action. So it is with faith. It is not enough for salvation without the benevolent and holy acts to which it would prompt, any more than the good wishes and kind words of the benevolent are enough to satisfy the wants of the hungry, and to clothe the naked, without correspondent action. Faith is not and cannot be shown to be genuine, unless it is accompanied with corresponding acts; as our good wishes for the poor and needy can be shown to be genuine, when we have the means of aiding them, only by actually ministering to their necessities. In the one case, our wishes would be shown to he unmeaning and heartless; in the other, our faith would be equally so. In regard to this passage, therefore, it may be observed,

(1,) that in fact faith is of no more value, and has no more evidence of genuineness when it is unaccompanied with good works, than such empty wishes for the welfare of the poor would be when unaccompanied with the means of relieving their wants. Faith is designed to lead to good works. It is intended to produce a holy life; a life of activity in the service of the Saviour. This is its very essence; it is what it always produces when it is genuine. Religion is not designed to be a cold abstraction; it is to be a living and vivifying principle.

(2.) There is a great deal of that kindness and charity in the world which is expressed by mere good wishes. If we really have not the means of relieving the poor and the needy, then the expression of a kind wish may be in itself an alleviation to their Sorrows, for even sympathy in such a case is of value, and it is much to us to know that others *feel* for us; but if we *have* the means, and the object is a worthy one, then such expressions are mere mockery, and aggravate rather than soothe the feelings of the sufferer. Such wishes will neither clothe nor feed them; and they will only make deeper the sorrows which we ought to heal. But how much of this is there in the world, when the

sufferer cannot but feel that all these wishes, however kindly expressed, are hollow and false, and when he cannot but feel that relief would be easy!

(3.) In like manner there is much of this same kind of worthless *faith* in the world—faith that is dead; faith that produces no good works; faith that exerts no practical influence whatever on the life. The individual professes indeed to believe the truths of the gospel; he may be in the church of Christ; he would esteem it a gross calumny to be spoken of as an infidel; but as to any influence which his faith exerts over him, his life would be the same if he had never heard of the gospel. There is not one of the truths of religion which is bodied forth in his life; not a deed to which he is prompted by religion; not an act which could not be accounted for on the supposition that he has no true piety. In such a case, faith may with propriety be said to be dead.

Being alone. Marg., *by itself*. The sense is, "being by itself;" that is, destitute of any accompanying fruits or results, it shows that it is dead. That which is alive bodies itself forth, produces effects, makes itself visible; that which is dead produces no effect, and is as if it were not.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 2 - Verse 16

See Barnes on "Jas 2:15".

{a} "what doth it profit" 1Jo 3:18

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 2 - Verse 17

See Barnes on "Jas 2:15".

{+} "alone" or, "by itself"

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 2 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Yea, a man may say*, etc. The word which is rendered "*yea*," (*alla*) would be better rendered by but. The apostle designs to introduce an objection, not to make an affirmation. The sense is, "someone might say," or, "to this it might be urged in reply." That is, it might perhaps be said that religion is not always manifested in the same way, or we should not suppose that, because it is not always exhibited in the same form, it does not exist. One man may manifest it in one way, and another in another, and still both have true piety. One may be distinguished for his faith, and another for his works, and both may have real religion. This objection would certainly have some plausibility, and it was important to meet it. It would seem that all religion was not to be manifested in the same way, as all virtue is not; and that it *might* occur that one man might be particularly eminent for one form of religion, and another for another; as one man may be distinguished for zeal, and another for meekness, and another for integrity, and another for truth, and another for his gifts in prayer, and another for his large-hearted benevolence. To this the apostle replies, that the two things referred to, faith and works, were not independent things, which could exist separately,

without the one materially influencing another—as, for example, charity and chastity, zeal and meekness; but that the one was the *germ* or *source* of the other, and that the existence of the one was to be known only by its developing itself in the form of the other. A man could not show that he possessed the one unless it developed itself in the form of the other. In proof of this, he could boldly appeal to any one to show a case where faith existed without works. He was himself willing to submit to this just trial in regard to this point, and to demonstrate the existence of his own faith *by* his works.

Thou hast faith, and I have works. You have one form or manifestation of religion in an eminent or prominent degree, and I have another. You are characterized particularly for one of the virtues of religion, and I am for another; as one man may be particularly eminent for meekness, and another for zeal, and another for benevolence, and each be a virtuous man. The expression here is equivalent to saying, "One may have faith, and another works."

Shew me thy faith without thy works. That is, you who maintain that faith is enough to prove the existence of religion; that a man may be justified and saved by that alone, or where it does not develope itself in holy living; or that all that is necessary in order to be saved is merely *to believe*. Let the reality of any *such* faith as that be shown, if it can be; let *any* real faith be shown to exist *without* a life of good works, and the point will be settled. *I*, says the apostle, will undertake to exhibit the evidence of *my* faith in a different way— in a way about which there can be no doubt, and which is the *appropriate* method. It is clear, if the common reading here is correct, that the apostle meant to *deny* that true faith could be evinced without appropriate works. It should be said, however, that there is a difference of reading here of considerable importance. Many manuscripts and printed editions of the New Testament, instead of *without* [works—*cwriv*], read *from* or *by*, (*ek*,) as in the other part of the verse, "show me thy faith by thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works." This reading is found in Walton, Wetstein, Mill, and in the received text generally; the other [without] is found in many Mss., and in the Vulgate, Syriac, Coptic, English, and Armenian versions; and is adopted by Beza, Castalio, Grotius, Bengel, Hammond, Whitby, Drusius, Griesbach, Tittman, and Hahn, and is now commonly received as the correct reading. It may be added that this reading seems to be demanded by the similar teaching in Jas 2:20, "But wilt thou know that faith *without works* (*cwriv twn ergwn*) is dead," evidently implying that something had been said before about "faith *without* works." This reading also is so natural, and makes so good sense in the connexion, that it would seem to be demanded. Doddridge felt the difficulty in the other reading, and has given a version of the passage which showed his great perplexity, and which is one of the most unhappy that he ever made.

And I will show thee my faith by my works. I will furnish in this way the best and most certain proof of the existence of faith. It is implied here that true faith is adapted to lead to a holy life, and that such a life would be the appropriate evidence of the existence of faith. By their fruits the principles held by men are known. **See Barnes on "Mt 7:16".**

{+} "without" or, "by" {a} "I will shew thee my faith" Jas 3:13

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 2 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Thou believest that there is one God*. One of the great and cardinal doctrines of religion is here selected as an illustration of all. The design of the apostle seems to have been to select one of the doctrines of religion, the belief of which would—if mere belief in any doctrine could—save the soul; and to show that even *this* might be held as an article of faith by those who could be supposed by no s one to have any claim to the name of Christian. He selects therefore, the great fundamental doctrine of all religion—the doctrine of the existence of one Supreme Being—and shows that if even this were held in such a way as it might be, and as it was held by devils, it could not save men. The apostle here is not to be supposed to be addressing such an one as *Paul*, who held to the doctrine that we are justified by faith; nor is he to be supposed to be *combating* the doctrine of Paul, as some have maintained, (**See Barnes on** "Jas 2:1, the Introduction;) but he is to be regarded as addressing one who held, in the broadest and most unqualified sense, that provided there was *faith*, a man would be saved. To this he replies, that even the devils might have faith of a certain sort, and faith that would produce sensible effects on them of a certain kind, and still it could not be supposed that they had true religion, or that they would be saved. Why might not the same thing occur in regard to man?

Thou doest well. So far as this is concerned, or so far as it goes. It is a doctrine which *ought* to be held, for it is one of the great fundamental truths of religion.

The devils. The *demons*, (*ta daimonia*.) There is, properly, but one being spoken of in the New Testament as the devil—*o diabolov*, and *o satan*—though *demons* are frequently spoken of in the plural number. They are represented as evil spirits, subject to Satan, or under his control, and engaged with him in carrying out his plans of wickedness. These spirits or demons were supposed to wander in desert and desolate places, (Mt 12:43,) or to dwell in the atmosphere, (**see Barnes on "Eph 2:2"**;) they were thought to have the power of working miracles, but not for good, (Re 16:14; compare Joh 10:21;) to be hostile to mankind, (Joh 8:44;) to utter the heathen oracles, (Ac 16:17;) to lurk in the idols of the heathen, (1Co 10:20;) and to take up their abodes in the bodies of men, afflicting them with various kinds of diseases, Mt 7:22; Mt 9:34; Mt 10:8; Mt 17:18; Mr 7:29-30; Lu 4:33; Lu 8:27,30, *et sape*. It is of *these* evil spirits that the apostle speaks when he says this they believe.

Also, believe. That is, particularly, they believe in the existence of the one God. How far their knowledge may extend respecting God, we cannot know; but they are never represented in the Scriptures as denying his existence, or as doubting the great truths of religion. They are never described as *atheists*. That is a sin of this world only. They are not represented as *skeptics*. That, too, is a peculiar sin of the earth; and probably, in all the universe besides, there are no beings but those who dwell on this globe, who doubt or deny the existence of God, or the other great truths of religion.

And tremble. The word here used (*frissw*) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means, properly, to be rough, uneven, jaggy, sc., with bristling hair; to bristle, to stand on end, as the hair does in a fright; and then to shudder or quake with fear, etc. Here the meaning is, that there was much more in the case referred to than mere speculative faith. There was a faith that produced *some* effect, and an effect of a very decided character. It did not, indeed, produce good works, or a holy life, but it made it manifest that there *was faith*; and, consequently, it followed that the existence of mere faith was not all that was necessary to save men, or to make it certain that they would be secure, unless it were held that the devils would be justified and saved by it. If they might hold such faith, and still remain in perdition, men might hold it, and *go* to perdition. A man should not

infer, therefore, because he has faith, even that faith in God which will fill him with alarm, that therefore he is safe. He must have a faith which will produce another effect altogether—that which will lead to a holy life.

{a} "the devils also believe" Mr 1:24; Mr 5:7

{+} "devils" or, "demons"

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 2 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *But wilt thou know*. Will you have a full demonstration of it; will you have the clearest proof in the case. The apostle evidently felt that the instances to which he was about to refer, those of Abraham and Rahab, were decisive.

O vain man. The reference by this language is to a man who held an opinion that could not be defended. The word *vain* here used, (*kenov*,) means properly *empty*, as opposed to *full*—as empty hands, having nothing in them; then fruitless, or without utility or success; then false, fallacious. The meaning here, properly, would be "empty," in the sense of being void of understanding; and this would be a mild and gentle way of saying of one that he was *foolish*, or that he to maintained an argument that was *without sense*. James means, doubtless, represent it as a perfectly plain matter, a matter about which no man of sense could have any reasonable doubt. If we *must* call a man *foolish*, as is sometimes necessary, let us use as mild and inoffensive a term as possible—a term which, while it will convey our meaning, will not unnecessarily wound and irritate. *That faith without works is dead*. That the faith which does not produce good works is useless in the matter of salvation, he does not mean to say that it would produce *no* effect, for in the case of the demons it *did* produce trembling and alarm; but that it would be valueless in the matter of salvation. The faith of Abraham and of Rahab was entirely different from this.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 2 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Was not Abraham our father*. Our progenitor, our ancestor; using the word *father*, as frequently occurs in the Bible, to denote a remote ancestor. **See Barnes on "Mt 1:1"**.

A reference to his and probably most of those to whom this epistle was addressed were of this character. **See Barnes on** "Jas 2:1, the Introduction.

Justified by works. That is, in the sense in which James is maintaining that a man professing religion is to be justified by his works. He does not affirm that the ground of acceptance with God is that we keep the law, or are perfect; or that our good works make an atonement for our sins, and that it is on their account that we are pardoned; nor does he deny that it is necessary that a man should *believe* in order to be saved. In this sense he does not deny that men are justified by faith; and thus he does not contradict the doctrine of the apostle Paul. But he *does* teach that where there are no good works, or where there is not a holy life, there is no true religion; that that faith which is not productive of good works is of no value; that if a man has that faith only, it would be impossible that he could be regarded as justified, or could be saved; and that consequently, in that

large sense, a man is justified by his works; that is, they are the evidence that he is a justified man, or is regarded and treated as righteous by his Maker. The point on which the apostle has his eye is the nature of saving faith; and his design is to show that a mere faith which would produce no more effect than that of the demons did, could not save. In this he states no doctrine which contradicts that of Paul. The *evidence* to which he appeals in regard to faith, is good works and a holy life; and where that exists it shows that the faith is genuine. The case of Abraham is one directly in point. He showed that he had that kind of faith which was *not* dead. he gave the most affecting evidence that his faith was of such a kind as to lead him to implicit obedience, and to painful sacrifices. Such an act as that referred to—the act of offering up his son—demonstrated, if anything could, that his faith was genuine, and that his religion was deep and pure. In the sight of heaven and earth it would *justify* him as a righteous man, or would *prove* that he was a righteous man. In regard to the strength of his faith, and the nature of his obedience in this sacrifice, **see Barnes on "Heb 11:19"**.

That the apostle here cannot refer to the act of justification as the term is commonly understood, referring by that to the moment when he was accepted of God as a righteous man, is clear from the fact that in a passage of the Scriptures which he himself quotes, that is declared to be consequent on his *believing*: "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness." The act here referred to occurred long *subsequent* to that, and was thus a fulfilment or Confirmation of the declaration of Scripture, which says that "he *believed* God." It showed that his faith was not merely speculative, but was an active principle, leading to holy living. **See Barnes on "Jas 2:23"**.

This demonstrates that what the apostle refers to here is the evidence by which it is shown that a man's faith is genuine, and that he does not refer to the question whether the act of justification, where a sinner is converted, is solely in consequence of believing. Thus the case proves what James purposes to prove, that the faith which justifies is only that which leads to good works.

When he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar. This was long after he believed, and was an act which, if any could, would show that his faith was genuine and sincere. On the meaning of this passage, **see Barnes on "Heb 11:17"**.

{a} "when he had offered Isaac his son" Ge 22:9,12

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 2 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Seest thou*. Marg., *Thou seest*. Either rendering is correct, and the sense is the same. The apostle means to say that this was so plain that they could not but see it.

How faith wrought with his works. *sunhrgei*. Co-operated with. The meaning of the word is, *to work together with any one; to co-operate*, (1Co 16:16; 2Co 6:1;) then to aid, or help, (Mr 16:20;) to contribute to the production of any result, where two or more persons or agents are united. Compare Ro 8:28. The idea here is, that the result in the case of Abraham, that is, his salvation, or his religion, was secured, not by *one* of these things alone, but that *both* with contributed to it. The result which was reached, to wit, his acceptance God, could *not* have been obtained by either one of them separately, but both, in some sense, entered into it. The apostle does not say that, in regard to the *merit* which justifies, they came in for an equal share, for he makes no affirmation on that point; he does not deny that in the sight of God, who foresees and knows all things, he was regarded as a justified man the moment he believed, but he looks at the result *as it was*, at Abraham as he

appeared under the trial of his faith, and says that in that result there was to be seen the co-operation of faith *and* good works. Both contributed to the end, as they do now in all cases where there is true religion.

And by works was faith made perfect. Made *complete, finished*, or *entire*. It was so *carried out* as to show its legitimate and fair results. This does not mean that the faith in itself was defective before this, and that the defect was *remedied* by good works; or that there is any deficiency in what the right kind of faith can do in the matter of justification, which is to be *helped out* by good works; but that there was that kind of completion which a thing has when it is fully developed, or is fairly carried out.

{+} "Seest thou" or, "Thou seest" {a} "faith wrought with his works" Heb 11:17

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 2 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith*. That is, the fair and full meaning of the language of Scripture was expressed by this act, showing in the highest sense that his faith was genuine; or the declaration that he truly believed, was *confirmed* or *established* by this act. His faith was shown to be genuine; and the fair meaning of the declaration that he *believed* God was carried out in the subsequent act. The passage here referred to occurs in Ge 15:6. That which it is said Abraham believed, or in which he believed God, was this: "This shall not be thine heir, (viz., Eliezer of Damascus,) but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels, shall be thine heir." And again, "Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them. And he said unto him, So shall thy seed be," Ge 15:3-5. The act of confiding in these promises, was that act of which it is said that "he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness." The act of offering his son on the altar, by which James says the Scripture was fulfilled, occurred some twenty years afterwards. That act confirmed or fulfilled the declaration. It showed that his faith was genuine, and that the declaration that he believed in God was true; for what could do more to confirm that, than a readiness to offer his own son at the command of God? It cannot be supposed that James meant to say that Abraham was justified by *works* without respect to faith, or to deny that the primary ground of his justification in the sight of God was *faith*, for the very passage which he quotes shows that faith was the primary consideration: "Abraham *believed* God, and it was imputed," etc. The meaning, therefore, can only be, that this declaration received its fair and full expression when Abraham, by an act of obedience of the most striking character, long after he first exercised that faith by which he was accepted of God, showed that his faith was genuine. If he had not thus obeyed, his faith would have been inoperative and of no value. As it was, his act showed that the declaration of the Scripture that, he "*believed*," was well founded.

Abraham believed God, and it was imputed, etc. **See Barnes on "Ro 4:3"**

for a full explanation of this passage.

And he was called the Friend of God. In virtue of his strong faith and obedience. See 2Ch 20:7: "Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham *thy friend* for ever?" Isa 41:8, "But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham *my friend*." This was a most honourable appellation; but it is one which, in all eases, will result from true faith and obedience.

{a} "Abraham believed God" Ge 15:6
{+} "imputed" or, "counted" {b} "called the Friend of God" 2Ch 15:7; Isa 41:8

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 2 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Ye see then*. From the course of reasoning pursued, and the example referred to.

How that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Not by a cold, abstract, inoperative faith. It must be by a faith that shall *produce* good works, and whose existence will be shown to men by good works. As justification takes place in the sight of God, it is by faith, for he sees that the faith is genuine, and that it will produce good works if the individual who exercises faith shall live; and he justifies men in view of that faith, and of no other. If he sees that the faith is merely speculative; that it is cold and dead, and would *not* produce good works, the man is *not* justified in his sight. As a matter of fact, therefore, it is only the faith that produces good works that justifies; and good works, therefore, as the proper expression of the nature of faith, *foreseen* by God as the certain result of faith, and actually as seen by *performed* men, are necessary in order to justification. In other words, no man will be justified who has not a faith which will produce good works, and which is of an operative and practical character. The *ground* of justification in the case is faith, and that only; the *evidence* of it, the carrying it out, the proof of the existence of the faith, is good works; and thus men are justified and saved not by mere abstract and cold faith, but by a faith necessarily connected with good works, and where good works perform an important part. James, therefore, does not contradict Paul, but he contradicts a false explanation of Paul's doctrine, he does not deny that a man is justified in the sight of God by faith, for the very passage which he quotes shows that he believes that; but he *does* deny that a man is justified by a faith which would not produce good works, and which is not expressed by good works; and thus he maintains, as Paul always did, that nothing else than a holy life can show that a man is a true Christian, and is accepted of God.

{a} "by works a man is justified" Re 20:12 {+} "faith only" or, "Faith which is alone."

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 2 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works*? In the same sense in which Abraham was, as explained above—showing by her act that her faith was genuine, and that it was not a mere cold and speculative assent to the truths of religion. Her act showed that she truly believed God. If that act had not been performed, the fact would have shown that her faith was not genuine, and she could not have been justified. God saw her faith as it was; he saw that it *would* produce acts of obedience, and he accepted her as righteous. The act which she performed was the public manifestation of her faith, the evidence that she was justified. **See Barnes on "Heb 11:31"**

for a full explanation of the case of Rahab. It may be observed here, that we are not to suppose that *everything* in the life and character of this woman is commended. She is commended for her *faith*, and for the fair expression of it; a faith which, as it induced her to receive the messengers of the true God, and to send them forth in peace, and as it led her to identify herself with the people

of God, was also influential, we have every reason to suppose, in inducing her to abandon her former course of life. When we commend the faith of a man who has been a profane swearer, or an adulterer, or a robber, or a drunkard, we do not commend his former life, or give a sanction to it. We commend that which has induced him to abandon his evil course, and to turn to the ways of righteousness. The more evil his former course has been, the more wonderful, and the more worthy of commendation, is that faith by which he is reformed and saved.

{a} "Rahab the harlot justified by works" Jos 2:1

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 2 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *For as the body without the spirit is dead*. Marg., *breath*. The Greek word *pneuma* is commonly used to denote *spirit* or *soul*, as referring to the intelligent nature. The meaning here is the obvious one, that the body is animated or kept alive by the presence of the soul, and that when that is withdrawn, hope departs. The body has no life independent of the presence of the soul.

So faith without works is dead also. There is as much necessity that faith and works should be united to constitute true religion, as there is that the body and soul should be united to constitute a living man. If good works do not follow, it is clear that there is no true and proper faith; none that justifies and saves. If faith produces no fruit of good living, that fact proves that it is dead, that it has no power, and that it is of no value. This shows that James was not arguing against real and genuine faith, nor against its importance in justification, but against the supposition that mere faith was all that was necessary to save a man, whether it was accompanied by good works or not. *He* maintains that if there is genuine faith it will always be accompanied by good works, and that it is only *that* faith which can justify and save. If it leads to no practical holiness of life, it is like the body without the soul, and is of no value whatever. James and Paul both agree in the necessity of true faith in order to salvation; they both agree that the tendency of true faith is to produce a holy life; they both agree that where there is not a holy life there is no true religion, and that a man cannot be saved. We may learn, then, from the whole doctrine of the New Testament on the subject, that unless we believe in the Lord Jesus we cannot be justified before God; and that unless our faith is of that kind which will produce holy living, it has no more of the characteristics of true religion than a dead body has of a living man.

{+} "the spirit" or, "breath"

RECONCILIATION OF PAUL AND JAMES.

At the close of the exposition of this chapter, it may be proper to make a few additional remarks on the question in what way the statements of James can be reconciled with those of Paul, on the subject of justification. A difficulty has always been felt to exist on the subject; and there are, perhaps, no readers of the New Testament who are not perplexed with it. Infidels, and particularly Voltaire, have seized the occasion which they supposed they found here to sneer against the Scriptures, and to pronounce them to be contradictory. Luther felt the difficulty to be so great that, in the early part of his career, he regarded it as insuperable, and denied the inspiration of James, though he afterwards changed his opinion, and believed that his epistle was a part of the inspired canon; and one of Luther's followers was so displeased with the statements of James, as to charge

him with wilful falsehood.—Dr. Dwight's Theology, Serra. lxviii. The question is, whether their statements can be so reconciled, or can be shown to be so consistent with each other, that it is proper to regard them both as inspired men? Or, are their statements so opposite and contradictory, that it cannot be believed that both were under the influences of an infallible Spirit? In order to answer these questions, there are two points to be considered: first, what the real difficulty is; and, secondly, how the statements of the two writers can be reconciled, or whether there is any way of explanation which will remove the difficulty.

I. What the difficulty is. This relates to two points—that James Seems to contradict Paul in express terms, and that both writers make use of the same case to illustrate their opposite sentiments.

(1.) That James seems to contradict Paul in express terms. The doctrine of Paul on the subject of justification is stated in such language as the following: "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight," Ro 3:20. "We conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law," Ro 3:28. "Being justified by faith," Ro 5:1. "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ," Ga 2:16. Compare Ro 3:24-26; Ga 3:11; Tit 3:5,6.

On the other hand, the statement of James seems to be equally explicit that a man is *not* justified by faith only, but that good works come in for an important share in the matter. "Was not Abraham our father justified by works?" Jas 2:21. "Seest thou how faith wrought with his works?" Jas 2:22. "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only," Jas 2:24.

(2.) Both writers refer to the same case to illustrate their views— the case of Abraham. Thus Paul (Ro 4:1-3) refers to it to prove that justification is wholly by faith. "For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness." And thus James (Jas 2:21-22) refers to it to prove that justification is by works: "Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?"

The difficulty of reconciling these statements would be more clearly seen if they occurred in the writings of the same author; by supposing, for example, that the statements of James were appended to the fourth chapter of the epistle to the Romans, and were to be read in connexion with that chapter. Who, the infidel would ask, would not be struck with the contradiction? Who would undertake to harmonize statements so contradictory? Yet the statements are equally contradictory, though they occur in different writers, and especially when it is claimed for both that they wrote under the influence of inspiration.

II. The inquiry then is, how these apparently contradictory statements may be reconciled, or whether there is any way of explanation that will remove the difficulty. This inquiry resolves itself into two —whether there is any theory that can be proposed that would relieve the difficulty, and whether that theory can be shown to be well founded.

(1.) Is there any theory which would remove the difficulty—any explanation which can be given on this point which, if true, would show that the two statements may be in accordance with each other and with truth?

Before suggesting such an explanation, it may be further observed, that, as all history has shown, the statements of Paul on the subject of justification are liable to great abuse. All the forms of Antinomianism have grown out of such abuse, and are only perverted statements of his doctrine. It has been said, that if Christ has freed us from the necessity of obeying the law in order to justification; if he has fulfilled it in our stead, and borne its penalty, then the law is no longer binding

on those who are justified, and they are at liberty to live as they please. It has been further said, that if we are saved by faith alone, a man is safe the moment he believes, and good works are therefore not necessary. It is possible that such views as these began to prevail as early as the time of James, and, if so, it was proper that there should be an authoritative apostolic statement to correct them, and to cheek these growing abuses. If, therefore, James had, as it has been supposed he had, any reference to the sentiments of Paul, it was not to correct his sentiments, or to controvert them, but it was to correct the *abuses* which began already to flow from his doctrines, and to show that the alleged inferences did not properly follow from the opinions which he held; or, in other words, to show that the Christian religion required men to lead holy lives, and that the faith by which it was acknowledged that the sinner must be justified, was a faith which was productive of good works.

Now, all that is necessary to reconcile the statements of Paul sad James, is to suppose that they contemplate the subject of justification from different points of view, and with reference to different inquiries. Paul looks at it *before* a man is converted, with reference to the question how a sinner may be justified before God; James *after* a man is converted, with reference to the question how he may show that he has the genuine faith which justifies. Paul affirms that the sinner is justified before God only by faith in the Lord Jesus, and not by his own works; James affirms that it is not a mere speculative or dead faith which justifies, but only a faith that is productive of good works, and that its genuineness is seen only *by* good works. Paul affirms that whatever else a man has, if he have not faith in the Lord Jesus, he cannot be justified; James affirms that no matter what pretended faith a man has, if it is not a faith which is adapted to produce good works, it is of no value in the matter of justification. Supposing this to be the true explanation, and that these are the "stand-points" from which they view the subject, the reconciliation of these two writers is easy: for it was and is still true, that if the question is asked how a sinner is to be justified before God, the answer is to be that of Paul, that it is by faith alone, "without the works of the law;" if the question be asked, how it can be shown what is the kind of faith that justifies, the answer is that of James, that it is only that which is productive of holy living and practical obedience.

(2.) Is this a true theory? Can it be shown to be in accordance with the statements of the two writers? Would it be a proper explanation if the same statements had been made by the same writer? That it is a correct theory, or that it is an explanation founded in truth, will be apparent, if

(a) the language used by the two writers will warrant it;

(b) if it accords with a fair interpretation of the declarations of both writers; and

(c) if, in fact, each of the two writers held respectively the same doctrine on the subject.

(a) Will the language bear this explanation? That is, will the word *justify*, as used by the two writers, admit of this explanation? That it will, there need be no reasonable doubt; for both are speaking of the way in which man, who is a sinner, may be regarded and treated by God *as if* he were righteous—the true notion of justification. It is not of justification in the sight *of men* that they speak, but of justification in the sight of God. Both use the word justify in this sense—-Paul as affirming that it is only by faith that it can be done; James as affirming, in *addition*, not in *contradiction*, that it is by a faith that produces holiness, and no other.

(b) Does this view accord with the fair interpretation of the declarations of both writers?

In regard to Paul, there can be no doubt that this is the point from which he contemplates the subject, to wit, with reference to the question *how a sinner may be justified*. Thus, in the epistle to the Romans, where his principal statements on the subject occur, he shows, first, that the Gentiles

cannot be justified by the works of the Law, (Ro 1) and then that the same thing is true in regard to the Jews, (Ro 2; 3) by demonstrating that both had violated the law given them, and were transgressors, and then (Ro 3:20) draws his conclusion "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight"—the whole argument showing conclusively that he is contemplating the subject *before* a man is justified, and with reference to the question how he *may be*.

In regard to James, there can be as little doubt that the point of view from which he contemplates the subject, is *after* a man professes to have been justified by faith, with reference to the question *what kind of faith justifies, or how it may be shown that faith is genuine*. This is clear,

(a) because the whole question is introduced by him with almost express reference to that inquiry: "What doth it *profit*, my brethren, though a man *say* he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him? " Ro 2:14. That is, can *such* faith— can *this* faith (*h pistiv*) save him? In other words, he must have a different kind of faith in order to save him. The point of James' denial is not that faith, if genuine, would save; but it is, that *such* a faith, or a faith without works, would save.

(b) That this is the very point which he discusses, is further shown by his illustrations, Jas 2:15-16,19. He shows (Jas 2:15-16) that mere faith in religion would be of no more value in regard to salvation, than if one were naked and destitute of food, it would meet his wants to say, "Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled;" and then, (Jas 2:19,) that even the demons had a certain kind of faith in one of the cardinal doctrines of religion, but that it was a faith which was valueless—thus showing that his mind was on the question what is true and genuine faith.

(c) Then he shows by the case to which he refers, (Jas 2:21-23,) the case of Abraham, that this was the question before his mind. He refers not to the act *when* Abraham first believed —the act by which as a sinner he was justified before God; but to an act that occurred twenty years after—the offering up of his son Isaac. **See Barnes on "Jas 2:21"**

and through verse 23. He affirms that the faith of Abraham was of such a kind that it led him to obey the will of God; that is, to good works. Though, as is implied in the objection referred to above, he does not refer to the same *case* to which Paul referred— the case of Abraham—yet it is not to the same *act* in Abraham. Paul (Ro 4:1-3) refers to him when he first believed, affirming that he was then justified by faith; James refers indeed to an act of the same man, but occurring twenty years after, showing that the faith by which he had been justified was genuine. Abraham was, in fact, according to Paul, justified when he believed, and, had he died then, he would have been saved; but according to James, the faith which justified him was not a dead faith, but was living and operative, as was shown by his readiness to offer his son on the altar.

(d) Did each of these two writers in reality hold the same doctrine on the subject? This will be seen, if it can be shown that James held to the doctrine of justification by faith, as really as Paul did; and that Paul held that good works were necessary to show the genuineness of faith, as really as James did.

(1.) They both agreed in holding the doctrine of justification by faith. Of Paul's belief there can be no doubt. That *James* held the doctrine is apparent from the fact that he quotes the very passage in Genesis, (Ge 15:6,) and the one on which Paul relies, (Ro 4:1-3,) as expressing his own views—"Abraham believed God, and it was imputed auto him for righteousness." The truth of this James does not deny, but affirms that the Scripture which made this declaration was fulfilled or confirmed by the act to which he refers.

(2.) They both agreed in holding that good works are necessary to show the genuineness of faith. Of *James*' views on that point there can be no doubt. That *Paul* held the same opinion is clear

(a) from his own life, no man ever having been more solicitous to keep the whole law of God than he was.

(b) From his constant exhortations and declarations, such as these: "Created in Christ Jesus unto good works," Eph 2:10; "Charge them that are rich that they be rich in good works," 1Ti 6:17-18; "In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works," Tit 2:7; "Who gave himself for us, that he might purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works," Tit 2:14; "These things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works," Tit 3:8.

(c) It appears from the fact that Paul believed that the rewards of heaven are to be apportioned according to our good works, or according to our character and our attainments in the divine life. The *title* indeed to eternal life is, according to him, in consequence of faith; the measure of the reward is to be our holiness, or what we do. Thus he says, (2Co 5:10,) "For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body." Thus also he says, (2Co 9:6,) "He which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully." And thus also he says, (Ro 2:6,) that God "will render to every man according to his deeds." See also the influence which faith had on Paul personally, as described in the third chapter of his epistle to the Philippians. If these things are so, then these two writers have not contradicted each other, but, viewing the subject from different points, they have together stated important truths which might have been made by any one writer without contradiction; first, that it is only by faith that a sinner can be justified—and second, that the faith which justifies is that only which leads to a holy life, and that no other is of value in saving the soul. Thus, on the one hand, men would be guarded from depending on their own righteousness for eternal life; and, on the other, from all the evils of Antinomianism. The great object of religion would be secured—the sinner would be justified, and would become personally holy.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 3

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 3 - Verse 1

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

The *evil* which the apostle seems to have referred to in this chapter, was a desire, which appears to have prevailed among those to whom he wrote, *to be public teachers*, (*didaskaloi*, Jas 3:1,) and to be such even where there was no proper qualification. It is not easy to see any *connexion* between what is said in this chapter, and what is found in other parts of the epistle; and indeed the plan of the epistle seems to have been to notice such things as the apostle supposed claimed their attention, without particular regard to a logical connexion. Some of the errors and improprieties which existed among them had been noticed in the previous chapters, and others are referred to in chapters 4 and 5. Those which are noticed in this chapter grew out of the desire of being public teachers of religion. It seems probable that he had this subject in his eye in the whole of this chapter, and this will give

a clue to the course of thought which he pursues. Let it be supposed that there was *a prevailing desire among those to whom he wrote to become public teachers, without much regard for the proper qualifications for that office*, and the interpretation of the chapter will become easy. Its design and drift then may be thus expressed:

I. The general subject of the chapter, a caution against the desire prevailing among many to be ranked among public teachers, Jas 3:1, first clause.

II. Considerations to check and modify that desire, Jas 3:1, (last clause,) Jas 3:18. These considerations are the following:

(1.) The fact that public teachers must give a more solemn account than other men, and that they expose themselves to the danger of a deeper condemnation, Jas 3:1, last clause.

(2.) The evils which grow out of an improper use of the *tongue*; evils to which those are particularly liable whose business is *speaking*, Jas 3:2-12. This leads the apostle into a general statement of the importance of the tongue as a member of the human body; of the fact that we are peculiarly liable to offend in that, (Jas 3:2;) of the fact that if that is regulated aright, the whole mall is—as a horse is managed by the bit, and a ship is steered by the rudder, (Jas 3:2-4;) of the fact that the tongue, though a little member, is capable of accomplishing great things, and is peculiarly liable, when not under proper regulations, to do mischief, (Jas 3:5-6;) of the fact that, while everything else has been tamed, it has been found impossible to bring the tongue under proper restraints, and that it performs the most discordant and opposite functions, (Jas 3:7-9;) and of the impropriety and absurdity of this, as if the same fountain should bring forth sweet water and bitter, Jas 3:10-12. By these considerations, the apostle seems to have designed to repress the prevailing desire of leaving other employments, and of becoming public instructors without suitable qualifications.

(3.) The apostle adverts to the importance of *wisdom*, with reference to the same end; that is, of suitable qualifications to give public instruction, Jas 3:13-18. He shows (Jas 3:13) that if there was a truly wise man among them, he should show this by his works, with "meekness," and not by obtruding himself upon the attention of others; that if there was a want of it evinced in a spirit of rivalry and contention, there would be confusion and every evil work, (Jas 3:14-16;) and that where there was true wisdom, it was unambitious and unostentatious; it was modest, retiring, and pure. It would lead to a peaceful life of virtue, and its existence would be seen in the "fruits of righteousness sown in peace," Jas 3:17-18. It might be inferred that they who had *this* spirit would not be ambitious of becoming public teachers; they would not place themselves at the head of parties; they would show the true spirit of religion in an unobtrusive and humble life. We are not to suppose, in the interpretation of this chapter, that the apostle argued against a desire to enter the ministry, in itself considered, and where there are proper qualifications; but he endeavoured to suppress a spirit which has not been uncommon in the world, to become public teachers as a means of more influence and power, and without any suitable regard to the proper endowments for such an office.

Verse 1. *My brethren, be not many masters*. "Be not many of you teachers." The evil referred to is that where *many* desired to be teachers, though but *few* could be qualified for the office, and though, in fact, comparatively few were required. A small number, well qualified, would better discharge the duties of the office, and do more good, than many would; and there would be great evil in having many crowding themselves unqualified into the office. The word here rendered *masters* (*didaskaloi*) should have been rendered *teachers*. It is so rendered in Joh 3:2; Ac 13:1; Ro

2:20; 1Co 12:28-29; Eph 4:11; 1Ti 2:11; 1Ti 4:3; Heb 5:12; though it is elsewhere frequently rendered *master*. It has, however, in it primarily the notion of *teaching*, (*didaskw*,) even when rendered *master*; and the word *master* is often used in the New Testament, as it is with us, to denote an *instructor*—as the "schoolmaster". Compare Mt 10:24-25; Mt 22:16; Mr 10:17; Mr 12:19, *et al*. The word is not properly used in the sense of *master*, as distinguished from a *servant*, but as distinguished from a *disciple* or *learner*. Such a position, indeed, implies *authority*, but it is authority based not on power, but on superior qualifications. The connexion implies that the word is used in that sense in this place; and the evil reprehended is that of seeking the office of public instructor, especially the sacred office. It would seem that this was a prevailing fault among those to whom the apostle wrote. This desire was common among the Jewish people, who coveted the name and the office of *Rabbi*, equivalent to that here used, (compare Mt 23:7,) and who were ambitious to be doctors and teachers. See Ro 2:19; 1Ti 1:7. This fondness for the office of teachers they naturally carried with them into the Christian church when they were converted, and it is this which the apostle here rebukes. (A proof of some importance that this prevailed in the early Christian church, among those who had been Jews, is furnished by a passage in the Apocryphal work called "The Ascension of Isaiah the Prophet;" a work which Dr. Lawrence. the editor, supposes was written not far from the apostolic age. "in those days (the days of the Messiah) shall many be attached to office, destitute of wisdom; multitudes of iniquitous elders and pastors, injurious to their flocks, and addicted to rapine, nor shall the holy pastors themselves diligently discharge their duty" chap. iii. 23-24). The same spirit the passage before us would rebuke now, and for the same reasons; for although a man should be willing to become a public instructor in religion when called to it by the Spirit and Providence of God, and should esteem it a privilege when so called, yet there would be scarcely anything more injurious to the cause of true religion, or that would tend more to produce disorder and confusion, than a prevailing desire of the prominence and importance which a man has in virtue of being a public instructor. If there is anything which ought to be managed with extreme prudence and caution, it is that of introducing men into the Christian ministry. Compare 1Ti 5:22; Ac 1:15-26; Ac 13:2-3.

Knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation, (*meizon krima*) Or rather, *a severer judgment*; that is, we shall have a severer trial, and give a stricter account. The word here used does not necessarily mean *condemnation*, but *judgment, trial, account*; and the consideration which the apostle suggests is not that those who were public teachers would be *condemned*, but that there would be a much more solemn account to be rendered by them than by other men, and that they ought duly to reflect on this in seeking the office of the ministry. He would carry them in anticipation before the judgment-seat, and have them determine the question of entering the ministry there. No better "stand-point" can be taken in making up the mind in regard to this work; and if that had been the position assumed in order to estimate the work, and to make up the mind in regard to the choice of this profession, many a one who has sought the office would have been deterred from it; and it may be added, also, that many a pious and educated youth *would* have sought the office, who has devoted his life to other pursuits. A young man, when about to make choice of a calling in life, should place himself by anticipation at the judgment-bar of Christ, and ask himself how human pursuits and plans will appear there. If *that* were the point of view taken, how many would have been deterred from the ministry who have sought it with a view to honour or emolument! How many, too, who have devoted themselves to the profession of the law, to the army or navy, or to the pursuits of elegant literature, would have felt that it was their duty to serve God in the ministry

of reconciliation? How many at the close of life, in the ministry and out of it, feel, when too late to make a change, that they have wholly mistaken the purpose for which they should have lived!

{a} "be not many masters" Mt 18:8,14; 1Pe 5:3

{+} "condemnation" or, "judgement"

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 3 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *For in many things we offend all*. We all offend. The word here rendered *offend*, means to stumble, to fall; then to err, to fail in duty; and the meaning here is, that all were liable to commit error, and that this consideration should induce men to be cautious in seeking an office where an error would be likely to do so much injury. The particular thing, doubtless, which the apostle had in his eye, was the peculiar liability to commit error, or to do wrong with the tongue. Of course, this liability is very great in an office where the *very business* is public speaking. If anywhere the improper use of the tongue will do mischief, it is in the office of a religious teacher; and to show the danger of this, and the importance of caution in seeking that office, the apostle proceeds to show what mischief the *tongue* is capable of effecting.

If any man offend not in word. In his speech; in the use of his tongue.

The same is a perfect man. Perfect in the sense in which the apostle immediately explains himself; that he is able to keep every other member of his body in subjection. His object is not to represent the man as absolutely spotless in every sense, and as wholly free from sin, for he had himself just said that "all offend in many things;" but the design is to show that if a man can control his tongue, he has complete dominion over himself, as much as a man has over a horse by the bit, or as a steersman has over a ship if he has hold of the rudder. He is perfect in that sense, that he has complete control over himself, and will not be liable to error in anything. The design is to show the important position which the tongue occupies, as governing the whole man. On the meaning of the word *perfect*, **see Barnes on "Job 1:1"**.

And able also to bridle the whole body. To control his whole body, that is, every other part of himself, as a man does a horse by the bridle. The word rendered "to bridle," means to lead or guide with a bit; then to rein in, to check, to moderate, to restrain. A man always has complete government over himself if he has the entire control of his tongue. It is that by which he gives expression to his thoughts and passions; and if that is kept under proper restraint, all the rest of his members are as easily controlled as the horse is by having the control of the bit.

{a} "For in many things we offend all" 1Ki 8:46; Pr 20:9; 1Jo 1:8

{b} "offend not in word" Pr 8:3

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 3 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths*, etc. The meaning of this simple illustration is, that as we control a horse by the bit— though the bit is a small thing—so the body is controlled

by the tongue. He who has a proper control over his tongue can govern his whole body, as he who holds a bridle governs and turns about the horse.

{a} "we put bits in the horses' mouths" Ps 32:9

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 3 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Behold also the ships*. This illustration is equally striking and obvious. A ship is a large object. It seems to be unmanageable by its vastness, and it is also impelled by driving storms. Yet it is easily managed by a small rudder; and he that has control of that, has control of the ship itself. So with the tongue. It is a small member as compared with the body; in its size not unlike the rudder as compared with the ship. Yet the proper control of the tongue in respect to its influence on the whole man, is not unlike the control of the rudder in its power over the ship.

Which though they be so great. So great in themselves, and in comparison with the rudder. Even such. bulky and unwieldy objects are controlled by a very small thing.

And are driven of fierce winds. By winds that would seem to leave the ship beyond control. It is probable that by the "fierce winds" here as impelling the ship, the apostle meant to illustrate the power of the passions in impelling man. Even a man under impetuous passion would be restrained, if the tongue is properly controlled, as the ship driven by the winds is by the helm.

Yet are they turned about with a very small helm. The ancient rudder or helm was made in the shape of an oar. This was very small when compared with the size of the vessels about as small as the tongue is as compared with the body.

Whithersoever the governor listeth. As the helmsman pleases. It is entirely under his control.

{+} "governor listeth" or, "Pilot chooseth"

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 3 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Even so, the tongue is a little member*. Little compared with the body—as the bit or the rudder is, compared with the horse or the ship;

And boasteth great things. The design of the apostle is to illustrate the *power* and *influence* of the tongue. This may be done in a great many respects: and the apostle does it by referring to its boasting; to the effects which it produces, resembling that of fire, (Jas 3:6;) to its untameableness, (Jas 3:8-9;) and to its giving utterance to the most inconsistent and incongruous thoughts, Jas 3:9-10. The particular idea here is, that the tongue seems to be conscious of its influence and power, and *boasts* largely of what it can do. The apostle means doubtless to convey the idea that it boasts not *unjustly* of its importance. It *has* all the influence in the world, for good or for evil, which it claims.

Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! Marg., *wood*. The Greek word (*ulh*) means a wood, forest, grove; and then fire-wood, fuel. This is the meaning here. The sense is, that a very little fire is sufficient to ignite a large quantity of combustible materials, and that the tongue produces effects similar to that. A spark will kindle a lofty pile; and a word spoken by the tongue may set a neighbourhood or a village "in a flame."

{a} "the tongue is a little member" Pr 12:18 {b} "boasteth great things" Ps 12:3 {+} "a matter" or, "wood" {++} "a matter" or, "How much combustible matter"

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 3 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *And the tongue is a fire*. In this sense, that it produces a "blaze," or a great conflagration. It produces a disturbance and an agitation that may be compared with the conflagration often produced by a spark.

A world of iniquity. A little world of evil in itself. This is a very expressive phrase, and is similar to one which we often employ, as when we speak of a town as being a *world* in miniature. We mean by it that it is an epitome of the world; that all that there is in the work is represented there on a small scale. So when the tongue is spoken of as being "a world of iniquity," it is meant that all kinds of evil that are in the world are exhibited there in miniature; it seems to concentrate all sorts of iniquity that exist on the earth. And what evil is there which may not be originated or fomented by the tongue? What else is there that might with so much propriety be represented as a little world of iniquity? With all the good which it does, who can estimate the amount of evil which it causes. Who can measure the evils which arise from scandal, and slander, and profaneness, and perjury, and falsehood, and blasphemy, and obscenity, and the inculcation of error, by the tongue? Who can gauge the amount of broils, and contentions, and strifes, and wars, and suspicions, and enmities, and alienations among friends and neighbours, which it produces? Who can number the evils produced by the "honeyed" words of the seducer; or by the tongue of the eloquent in the maintenance of error, and the defence of wrong? If all men were dumb, what a portion of the crimes of the world would soon cease! If all men would speak only that which ought to be spoken, what a change would come over the face of human affairs!

So is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body. It stains or pollutes the whole body. It occupies a position and relation so no portion which is not affected by it. Of the truth of this, no one can have any doubt. There is nothing else pertaining to us as moral and intellectual beings, which exerts such an influence over ourselves as the tongue. A man of pure conversation is understood and felt to be pure in every respect; but who has any confidence in the virtue of the blasphemer, or the man of obscene lips, or the calumniator and slanderer? We always regard such a man as corrupt to the core.

And setteth on fire the course of nature. The margin is, "the *wheel* of nature." The Greek word also (*trocov*) means *a wheel*, or anything made far revolving and running. Then it means the course run by a wheel; a circular course or circuit. The word rendered *nature*, (*genesiv*,) means, *procreation, birth, nativity*; and therefore the phrase means, literally, *the wheel of birth*—that is, the wheel which is set in motion at birth, and which runs on through life.—*Rob. Lex*. sub voce *genesiv*. It may be a matter of doubt whether this refers to successive generations, or to the course of individual life. The more literal sense would be that which refers to an individual; but perhaps the apostle meant to speak in a popular sense, and thought of the affairs of the world as they roll on from age to age, as all enkindled by the tongue, keeping the world in a constant blaze of excitement. Whether applied to an individual life, or to the world at large, every one can see the justice of the comparison. One

naturally thinks, when this expression is used, of a chariot driven on with so much speed that its wheels by their rapid motion become self-ignited, and the chariot moves on amidst flames.

And it is set on fire of hell. Hell, or Gehenna, is represented as a place where the fires continually burn: **See Barnes on "Mt 5:22"**.

The idea here is, that that which causes the tongue to do so much evil derives its origin from hell. Nothing could better characterize much of that which the tongue does, than to say that it has its origin in hell, and has the spirit which reigns there. The very spirit of that world of fire and wickedness—a spirit of falsehood, and slander, and blasphemy, and pollution—seems to inspire the tongue. The *image* which seems to have been before the mind of the apostle was that of a torch which enkindles and burns everything as it goes along—a torch itself lighted at the fires of hell. One of the most striking descriptions of the woes and curses which there may be in hell, would be to portray the sorrows caused on the earth by the tongue.

{a} "a fire" Pr 16:27 {b} "it defileth the whole body" Mt 15:11-20 {+} "course" or, "wheel"

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 3 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *For every kind of beasts*. The apostle proceeds to state another thing showing the power of the tongue, the fact that it is ungovernable, and that there is no power of man to keep it under control. Everything else but this has been tamed. It is unnecessary to refine on the expressions used here, by attempting to prove that it is *literally* true that every species of beasts, and birds, and fishes has been tamed. The apostle is to be understood as speaking in a general and popular sense, showing the remarkable power of man over those things which are by nature savage and wild. The power of man in taming wild beasts is wonderful. Indeed, it is to be remembered that nearly all those beasts which we now speak of as "domestic" animals, and which we are accustomed to see only when they are tame, were once fierce and savage races. This is the ease with the horse, the ox, the ass, (**see Barnes on "Job 11:12"**; and **see Barnes on** "Job 39:5,) the swine, the dog, the cat, etc. The editor of the Pictorial Bible well remarks, "There is perhaps no kind of creature, to which man has access, which might not be tamed by him with proper perseverance. The ancients seem to have made more exertions to this end, and with much better success, than ourselves. The examples given by Pliny, of creatures tamed by men, relate to elephants, lions, and tigers, among beasts; to the eagle, among birds; to asps, and others serpents; and to crocodiles, and various fishes, among the inhabitants of the water. Nat. Hist. viii. 9, 16, 17; x. 5, 44. The lion was very commonly tamed by the ancient Egyptians, and trained to assist both in hunting and in war." Notes *in loc*. The only animal which it has been supposed has defied the power of man to tame it, is the hyena, and even this, it is said, has been subdued, in modern times. There is a passage in Euripides which has a strong resemblance to this of James:—

bracu toi syenov anerov,
alla poikiliav prapidwn

dama fula pontou,
cyoniwn t aeriwn te paideumata

"Small is the power which nature has given to man; but, by various acts of his superior understanding, he has subdued the tribes of the sea, the earth, and the air." Compare on this subject, the passages quoted by Pricaeus in the Critici Sacri, *in loc*.

And of birds. It is a common thing to tame birds, and even the most wild are susceptible of being tamed. A portion of the feathered race, as the hen, the goose, the duck, is thoroughly domesticated. The pigeon, the martin, the hawk, the eagle, maybe; and perhaps there are none of that race which might not be made subject to the will of man.

And of serpents. The ancients showed great skill in this art, in reference to asps and other venomous serpents, and it is common now in India. In many instances, indeed, it is known that the fangs of the serpents are extracted; but even when this is not done, they who practise the art learn to handle them with impunity.

And of things, in the sea. As the crocodile, mentioned by Pliny. It may be affirmed with confidence that there is no animal which might not, by proper skill and perseverance, be rendered tame, or made obedient to the will of man. It is not necessary, however, to understand the apostle as affirming that literally every animal has been tamed, or ever can be. He evidently speaks in a popular sense of the great power which man undeniably has over all kinds of wild animals—over the creation beneath him.

{+} "kind" or, "nature" {++} "sea" or, "Sea monsters" {+++} "tamed" or, "subdued" {++++} "mankind" or, "nature or man"

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 3 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *But the tongue can no man tame*. This does not mean that it is never brought under control, but that it is impossible effectually and certainly to subdue it. It would be possible to subdue and domesticate any kind of beasts, but this could not be done with the tongue,

It is an unruly evil. An evil without restraint, to which no certain effectual check can be applied. Of the truth of this no one can have any doubt, who looks at the condition of the world.

Full of deadly poison. That is, it acts on the happiness of man, and on the peace of society, as poison does on the human frame. The allusion here seems to be to the bite of a venomous reptile. Compare Ps 140:3, "They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adders' poison is under their lips." Ro 3:13, "With their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips." Nothing would better describe the mischief that may be done by the tongue. There is no sting of a serpent that does so much evil in the world; there is no poison more deadly to the frame than the poison of the tongue is to the happiness of man. Who, for example, can stand before the power of the slanderer? What mischief can be done in society that can be compared with that which he, may do?

'Tis slander;'
Whose edge is sharper than the sword; whose tongue
Outvenoms all the worms of Nile; whose breath
Rides on the posting winds, and doth belie

All corners of the world: kings, queens, and states,
Maids, matrons, nay, the secrets of the grave
This viperous slander enters.
Shakspere, in Cymbeline

{+} "tame" or, "subdue" {a} "full of deadly poison" Ps 140:3; Ro 3:13

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 3 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Therewith bless we God*. We men do this; that is, all this is done by the tongue. The apostle goes not mean that the *same man* does this, but that all this is done by the same organ—the tongue.

Even the Father. Who sustains to us the relation of a Father. The point in the remark of the apostle is, the absurdity of employing the tongue in such contradictory uses as to bless one who has to us the relation of a *Father* and to *curse* any being, especially those who are made in his image. The word *bless* here is used in the sense of *praise, thank, worship*.

And therewith curse we men. That is, it is one by the same organ by which God is praised and honoured.

Which are made after the similitude of God. After his image, Ge 1:26-27. As we bless God, we ought with the same organ to bless those who are like him. There is an absurdity in cursing men who are thus made, like what there would be in both blessing and cursing the Creator himself.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 3 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing*. The meaning here may be, either that out of the mouth of man two such opposite things proceed, not referring to the same individual, but to different persons; or, out of the mouth of the same individual. Both of these are true; and both are equally incongruous and wrong. No organ should be devoted to uses so unlike, and the mouth should be employed in giving utterance only to that which is just, benevolent, and good. It is true, however, that the mouth *is* devoted to these opposite employments; and that while one part of the race employ it purposes of praise, the other employ it in uttering maledictions. It is also true of many individuals that at one time they praise their Maker, and then, with the sane organ, calumniate, and slander, and revile their fellow-men. After an act of solemn devotion in the house of God, the professed worshipper goes forth with the feelings of malice in his heart, and the language of slander, detraction, or even blasphemy on his lips.

My brethren, these things ought not so to be. They are as incongruous as it would be for the same fountain to send forth both salt water and fresh; or for the same tree to bear different kinds of fruit.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 3 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Doth a fountain send forth at the same place*. Marg., *hole*. The greek word means *opening, fissure*, such as there is in the earth, or in rocks from which a fountain gushes.

Sweet water and bitter. Fresh water and salt, Jas 3:12. Such things do not occur in the works of nature, and they should not be found in man.

{+} "place" or, "hole"

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 3 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Can the fig-tree, my brethren, bear olive berries*? Such a thing is *impossible* in nature, and equally *absurd* in morals. A fig-tree bears only figs; and so the tongue ought to give utterance only to one class of sentiments and emotions. These illustrations are very striking, and show the absurdity of that which the apostle reproves. At the same time, they accomplish the main purpose which he had in view, to repress the desire of becoming public teachers without suitable qualifications. They show the power of the tongue; they show what a dangerous power it is for a man to wield who has not the proper qualifications; they show that no one should put himself in the position where he may wield this power without such a degree of tried prudence, wisdom, discretion, and piety, that there shall be a moral certainty that he will use it aright.

{a} "Can the fig-tree...bear olive berries" Mt 7:16

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 3 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Who is a wise man, and endued with knowledge among you*? This is spoken with reference to the work of public teaching; and the meaning of the apostle is, that if there were such persons among them, *they* should be selected for that office. The characteristics here stated as necessary qualifications, are *wisdom* and *knowledge*. Those, it would seem, on which reliance had been placed, were chiefly those which were connected with a ready elocution, or the mere faculty of speaking. The apostle had stated the dangers which would follow if reliance were placed on that alone, and he now says that something more is necessary, that the main qualifications for the office are wisdom and knowledge. No mere power of speaking, however eloquent it might be, was a sufficient qualification. The primary things to be sought in reference to that office were wisdom and knowledge, and they who were endowed with these things should be selected for public instructors.

Let him shew out of a good conversation. From a correct and consistent life and deportment. On the meaning of the word *conversation*, **see Barnes on "Php 1:27"**.

The meaning here is, that there should be an upright *life*, and that this should be the basis in forming the judgment in appointing persons to fill stations of importance, and especially in the office of teaching in the church.

His works. His acts of uprightness and piety. He should be a man of a holy life.

With meekness of wisdom. With a wise and prudent gentleness of life; not in a noisy, arrogant, and boastful manner. True wisdom is always meek, mild, gentle; and that is the wisdom which is needful, if men would become public teachers. It is remarkable that the truly wise man is always characterized by a calm spirit, a mild and placid demeanour, and by a gentle, though firm, enunciation of his sentiments. A noisy, boisterous, and stormy declaimer we never select as a safe counsellor. He may accomplish much in his way by his bold eloquence of manner, but we do not put him in places where we need far-reaching thought, or where we expect the exercise of profound philosophical views. In an eminent degree, the ministry of the gospel should be characterized by a calm, gentle, and thoughtful wisdom—a wisdom which shines in all the actions of the life.

{a} "who is a wise man" Ps 107:43 {b} "good conversation" Php 1:27 {+} "conversation" or, "By a good behaviour"

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 3 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts*. If that is your characteristic. There is reference here to a fierce and unholy zeal against each other; a spirit of ambition and contention.

Glory not. Do not boast, in such a case, of your qualifications to be public teachers. Nothing would render you more unfit for such an office than such a spirit.

And lie not against the truth. You would lie against what is true by setting up a claim to the requisite qualifications for such an office, if this is your spirit. Men should seek no office or station which they could not properly seek if the whole truth about them were known.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 3 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *This wisdom descendeth not from above*. **See Barnes on "1Co 3:3"**.

The *wisdom* here referred to is that carnal or worldly wisdom which produces strife and contention; that kind of knowledge which leads to self-conceit, and which prompts a man to defend his opinions with overheated zeal. In the contentions which are in the world, in church and state, in neighbourhoods and families, at the bar, in political life, and in theological disputes, even where there is the manifestation of enraged and irascible feeling, there is often much of a certain kind of *wisdom*. There is learning, shrewdness, tact, logical skill, subtle and skilful argumentation—"making the worse appear the better reason;" but all this is often connected with a spirit so narrow, bigoted, and contentious, as to show clearly that it has not its origin in heaven. The spirit which is originated there is always connected with gentleness, calmness, and a love of truth.

But is earthly. Has its origin in this world, and partakes of its spirit. It is such as men exhibit who are governed only by worldly maxims and principles.

Sensual. Marg., *natural*. The meaning is, that it has its origin in our sensual rather than in our intellectual and moral nature. It is that which takes counsel of our natural appetites and propensities, and not of high and spiritual influences.

Devilish. Demoniacal, (*daimoniwdhv*) Such as the *demons* exhibit. **See Barnes on "Jas 2:19".**

There may be indeed *talent* in it, but there is the intermingling of malignant passions, and "it leads to contentions, strifes, divisions, and "every evil work."

{a} "This wisdom descendeth not from above" 1Co 3:3 {+} "sensual" or, "natural"

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 3 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *For where envying and strife is, there is confusion*. Marg.:, *tumult*, or *unquietness*. Everything is unsettled and agitated. There is no mutual confidence; there is no union of plan and effort; there is no co-operation in promoting a common object; there is no stability in any plan; for a purpose, though for good, formed by one portion, is defeated by another.

And every evil work. The truth of this no one can have any doubt who has observed the effects in a family or neighbourhood where a spirit of strife prevails. Love and harmony of course are banished; all happiness disappears; all prosperity is at an end. In place of the peaceful virtues which ought to prevail, there springs up every evil passion that tends to mar the peace of a community. Where this spirit prevails in a church, it is of course impossible to expect any progress in Divine things; and in such a church any effort to do good is vain.

"The Spirit, like a peaceful dove,
Flies from the realms of noise and strife."

{+} "confusion" or, "tumult, or unquietness"

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 3 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *But the wisdom that is from above*. **See Barnes on "1Co 2:6".**

The wisdom which has a heavenly origin, or which is from God. The man who is characterized by that wisdom will be pure, peaceable, etc. This does not refer to the *doctrines* of religion, but to its *spirit*.

Is first pure. That is, the first effect of it on the mind is to make it *pure*. The influence on the man is to make him upright, sincere, candid, holy. The word here used (*agnov*) is that which would be applied to one who is innocent, or free from crime or blame. Compare Php 4:8; 1Ti 5:22; 1Jo 3:3, where the word is rendered, as here, *pure*; 2Co 7:11, where it is rendered *clear*, [in this matter;] 2Co 11:2; Tit 2:5; 1Pe 3:2, where it is rendered *chaste*. The meaning here is, that the first and immediate effect of religion is not on the intellect, to make it more enlightened; or on the imagination, to make it more discursive and brilliant; or on the memory and judgment, to make them clearer and stronger; but it is to *purify* the heart, to make the man upright, inoffensive, and good. This passage should not be applied, as it often is, to the *doctrines* of religion, as if it were the first duty of a church to keep itself free from errors in doctrine, and that this ought to be sought even in preference to the maintenance of peace—as if it meant that in doctrine a church should be "*first* pure, *then* peaceable;" but it should be applied *to the individual consciences of men*, as showing the effect of

religion on the heart and life. The *first* thing which it produces is to make the man himself pure and good; then follows the train of blessings which the apostle enumerates as flowing from that. It is true that a church should be *pure* in doctrinal belief, but that is not the truth taught here. It is *not* true that the Scripture teaches, here or elsewhere, that purity of doctrine is to be preferred to a peaceful spirit; or that it always leads to peaceful spirit; or that it is proper for professed Christians and Christian ministers to sacrifice, as is often done, a peaceful spirit, in an attempt to preserve purity of doctrine. Most of the persecutions in the church have grown out of this maxim. This led to the establishment of the Inquisition; this kindled the fires of Smithfield; this inspirited Laud and his friends; this has been the origin of no small part of the schisms in the church. A *pure* spirit is the best promoter of peace, and will do more than anything else to secure the prevalence of truth.

Then peaceable. The effect of true religion —the wisdom which is from above—will be to dispose a man to live in peace with all others. **See Barnes on "Ro 14:19;** Heb 12:14.

Gentle. Mild, inoffensive, clement. The word here used (*epieikhv*) is rendered *moderation* in Php 4:6; *patient* in 1Ti 3:3; and *gentle* in Tit 3:2; Jas 3:17; 1Pe 2:18.

It does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. Every one has a clear idea of the virtue of *gentleness*—gentleness of spirit, of deportment, and of manners; and every one can see that that is the appropriate spirit of religion. **See Barnes on "2Co 10:1".**

It is from this word that we have derived the word *gentleman*; and the effect of true religion is to make every one, in the proper and best sense of the term, a *gentleman*. How can a man have evidence that he is a true Christian, who is not such? The highest title which can be given to a man is that he is a *Christian gentleman*.

And easy to be entreated. The word here used does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It means *easily persuaded, compliant*. Of course, this refers only to cases where it is right and proper to be easily persuaded and complying. It cannot refer to things which are in themselves wrong. The sense is, that he who is under the influence of the wisdom which is from above, is not a stiff, stern, obstinate, unyielding man. He does not take a position, and then hold it whether right or wrong; he is not a man on whom no arguments or persuasions can have any influence. He is not one who cannot be affected by any appeals which may be made to him on the grounds of patriotism, justice, or benevolence; but is one who is ready to yield when truth requires him to do it, and who is willing to sacrifice his own convenience for the good of others. See this illustrated in the ease of the apostle Paul, in 1Co 9:20-22. **See Barnes on "1Co 9:20-22".**

Full of mercy. Merciful; disposed to show compassion to others. This is one of the results of the wisdom that is from above, for it makes us like God, the "Father of mercies." **See Barnes on "Mt 5:7".**

And good fruits. The fruits of good living; just, benevolent, and kind actions. **See Barnes on "Php 1:11"; see Barnes on "2Co 9:10".**

Compare Jas 2:14-26.

Without partiality. Marg., "or *wrangling*." The word here used (*adiakritov*) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means, properly, *not to be distinguished*. Here it may mean either of the following things:

(a) not open to distinction or doubt; that is, unambiguous, so that there shall be no doubt about its origin or nature;

(b) making no distinction, that is, in the treatment of others, or *impartial* towards them; or

(c) without strife, from *diakrinw*, to contend. The second meaning here suggested seems best to accord with the sense of the passage; and according to this the idea is, that the wisdom which is from above, or true religion, makes us impartial in our treatment of others: that is, we are not influenced by a regard to dress, rank, or station, but we are disposed to do equal justice to all, according to their moral worth, and to show kindness to all, according to their wants. See Jas 2:1-4.

And without hypocrisy. What it professes to be; sincere. There is no disguise or mask assumed. What the man pretends to be, he is. This is everywhere the nature of true religion. It has nothing of its own of which to be ashamed, and which needs to be concealed; its office is not to hide or conceal anything that is wrong. It neither is a mask, nor does it *need* a mask. If such is the nature of the "wisdom which is from above," who is there that should be ashamed of it? Who is there that should not desire that its blessed influence should spread around the world?

{a} "the wisdom that is from above" 1Co 2:6-7 {b} "pure" Php 4:8 {c} "peaceable" Heb 12:14 {d} "gentle" Ga 5:22 {+} "partiality" or, "wrangling"

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 3 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *And the fruit of righteousness*. That which the righteousness here referred to produces, or that which is the effect of true religion. The meaning is, that righteousness or true religion produces certain results on the life, like the effects of seed sown in good ground. Righteousness or true religion as certainly produces such effects, as seed that is sown produces a harvest.

Is sown in peace. Is scattered over the world in a peaceful manner. That is, it is not done amidst contentions, and brawls, and strifes. The farmer sows his seed in peace. The fields are not sown amidst the tumults of a mob, or the excitements of a battle or a camp. Nothing is more calm, peaceful, quiet, and composed, than the farmer, as he walks with measured tread over his fields, scattering his seed. So it is in sowing the "seed of the kingdom," in preparing for the great harvest of righteousness in the world. It is done by men of peace; it is done in peaceful scenes, and with a peaceful spirit; it is not in the tumult of war, or amidst the hoarse brawling of a mob. In a pure and holy life; in the peaceful scenes of the sanctuary and the Sabbath; by noiseless and unobtrusive labourers, the seed is scattered over the world, and the result is seen in an abundant harvest in producing peace and order.

Of them that make peace. By those who desire to produce peace, or who are of a peaceful temper and disposition. They are engaged everywhere in scattering these blessed seeds of peace, contentment, and order; and the result shall be a glorious harvest for themselves and for mankind—a harvest rich and abundant on earth and in heaven. The whole effect, therefore, of religion, is to produce peace. It is all peace—peace in its origin and in its results; in the heart of the individual, and in society; on earth, and in heaven. The idea with which the apostle commenced this chapter seems to have been that such persons only should be admitted to the office of public teachers. From that, the mind naturally turned to the effect of religion in general; and he states that in the ministry and out of it; in the heart of the individual and on society at large; here and hereafter, the effect of religion is to produce peace. Its nature is peaceful as it exists in the heart, and as it is developed in the world; and wherever and however it is manifested, it is like seed sown, not amid the storms of war and the contentions of battle, but in the fields of quiet husbandry, producing in rich abundance

a harvest of peace. In its origin, and in all its results, it is productive only of contentment, sincerity, goodness, and peace. Happy he who has this religion in his heart; happy he who with liberal hand scatters its blessings broadcast over the world!

{a} "the fruit of righteousness" Heb 12:11

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 4

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 4 - Verse 1

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

In the previous chapter (Jas 3:13-18) the apostle had contrasted the wisdom which is from above with that which is from beneath. The former is peaceable, pure, and gentle, leading to universal kindness and order; the latter earthly, sensual, and devilish. The points suggested in this chapter grow directly out of the remarks made there, and are designed to show the effect of the "wisdom which descendeth not from above," as evinced in the spirit of this world, and thus by contrast to show the value of true wisdom, or of the spirit of religion. Accordingly, the apostle illustrates the effects of the wisdom of this world, or the spirit of this world, by showing what it produces, or what they do who are under its influence. We are not to suppose that the persons to whom the apostle addressed this epistle were actually *guilty* of the things here referred to themselves, but such things had an existence in the world, and it gave more life and spirit to the discussion to represent them as existing "among them." In illustrating the subject, he refers to the following things as resulting from the spirit that is opposite to the wisdom which is from above, viz.:

(1.) Wars and fightings, which are to be traced solely to the lusts of men, Jas 4:1-2;

(2.) the neglect of prayer, showing the reason why they did not have the things which were necessary, Jas 4:2;

(3,) the fact that *when* they prayed they did not obtain what they needed, because they prayed with improper motives, in order to have the means of gratifying their sensual desires, Jas 4:3;

(4,) the desire of the friendship of the world, as one of the fruits of being under the influence of the wisdom which is not from above, Jas 4:4;

(5,) *envy*, as another of these fruits, Jas 4:5. In view of these things, and of the danger to which they were exposed of acting under their influence, the apostle proceeds to give them some solemn cautions and admonitions. He tells them that God resists all who are proud, but gives grace to all who are humble, (Jas 4:6;) he counsels them to submit to God, (Jas 4:7,) to resist the devil, (Jas 4:7,) to draw nigh to God, (Jas 4:8,) to cleanse their hands and their hearts, (Jas 4:8,) to be afflicted and mourn over their sins, and to become serious and devout, (Jas 4:9,) and to humble themselves before God that he might lift them up, (Jas 4:10;) he commands them not to speak evil one of another, since by so doing they in fact set themselves up to be judges, and in the circumstances became judges of the law as well as of their brethren, Jas 4:11-12. He then rebukes the confident spirit which lays its plans for the future with no just view of the frailty and uncertainty of human life, and shows them that all their plans for the future should be formed with a distinct recognition of their dependence on God for success, and even for the continuance of life, Jas 4:13-16. The

chapter closes with an affirmation that to him that knows how to do good and does it not, to him it is sin, (Jas 4:17,) implying that all he had said in the chapter might indeed be obvious, and that they would be ready to admit that these things were true, and that if they knew this, and did not do right, they must be regarded as guilty.

Verse 1. *From whence come wars and fightings among you*? Marg., *brawlings*. The reference is to strifes and contentions of all kinds; and the question then, as it is now, was an important one, what was their source or origin? The answer is given in the succeeding part of the verse. Some have supposed that the apostle refers here to the contests and seditions existing among the Jews, which afterwards broke out in rebellion against the Roman authority, and which led to the overthrow of the Jewish nation. But the more probable reference is to domestic broils, and to the strifes of sects and parties; to the disputes which were carried on among the Jewish people, and which perhaps led to scenes of violence, and to popular outbreaks among themselves. When the apostle says "among *you*," it is not necessary to suppose that he refers to those who were members of the Christian church as actually engaged in these strifes, though he was writing to such; but he speaks of them as a part of the Jewish people, and refers to the contentions which prevailed among them *as a people*—contentions in which those who were Christian converts were in great danger of participating, by being drawn into their controversies, and partaking of the spirit of strife which existed among their countrymen. It is known that such a spirit of contention prevailed among the Jews at that time in an eminent degree, and it was well to put those among them who professed to be Christians on their guard against such a spirit, by stating the causes of all wars and contentious. The solution which the apostle has given of the causes of the strifes prevailing then, will apply substantially to all the wars which have ever existed on the earth.

Come they not hence, even of your lusts? Is not this the true source of all war and contention? The word rendered *lusts* is in the margin rendered *pleasures*. This is the usual meaning of the word, (*hdonh*;) but it is commonly applied to the pleasures of sense, and thence denotes *desire, appetite, lust*. It may be applied to any desire of sensual gratification, and then to the indulgence of any corrupt propensity of the mind. The lust or desire of rapine, of plunder, of ambition, of fame, of a more extended dominion, would be properly embraced in the meaning of the word. The word would equally comprehend the spirit-which leads to a brawl in the street, and that which prompted to the conquests of Alexander, Caesar, or Napoleon. All this is the same spirit evinced on a larger or smaller scale.

That war in your members. The word *member* (*melov*) denotes, properly, a limb or member of the body; but it is used in the New Testament to denote the members of the body collectively; that is, the body itself as the seat of the desires and passions, Ro 6:13,19; Ro 7:5,23; Col 3:5. The word *war* here refers to the conflict between those passions which have their seat in the flesh, and the better principles of the mind and conscience, producing a state of agitation and conflict. **See Barnes on "Ro 7:23"**.

Compare Ga 5:17. Those corrupt passions which have their seat in the flesh, the apostle says are the causes of war. Most of the wars which have occurred in the world can be traced to what the apostle here calls *lusts*. The desire of booty, the love of conquest, the ambition for extended rule, the gratification of revenge, these and similar causes have led to all the wars that have desolated the earth. Justice, equity, the fear of God, the spirit of true religion, never originated any war, but the corrupt passions of men have made the earth one great battle-field. If true religion existed among all men, there would be no more war. War always supposes that wrong has been done on one side

or the other, and that one party or the other, or both, is indisposed to do right. The spirit of justice, equity, and truth, which the religion of Christ would implant in the human heart, would put an end. to war *for ever*.

{+} "fightings" or, "brawlings" {++} "lusts" or, "pleasures" "evil desires" {a} "the fruit of righteousness" Heb 12:11

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 4 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Ye lust, and have not*. That is, you wish to have something which you do not now possess, and to which you have no just claim, and this prompts to the effort to obtain it by force. You desire extension of territory, fame, booty, the means of luxurious indulgence, or of magnificence and grandeur, and this leads to contest and bloodshed. These are the causes of wars on the large scale among nations, and of the contentions and strifes of individuals. The general reason is, that others have that which we have not, and which we desire to have; and not content with endeavouring to obtain it, if we can, in a peaceful and honest manner, and not willing to content ourselves without its possession, we resolve to secure it by force. Socrates is reported by Plato to have said on the day of his death, "nothing else but the body and its desires cause wars, Seditions, and contests of every kind; for all wars arise through the possession of wealth."—Phaedo of Plato, by Taylor, London, 1793, p. 158. The system of wars in general, therefore, has been a system of *great robberies*, no more honest or honourable than the purposes of the foot-pad, and more dignified only because it involves greater skill and talent. It has been said that "to kill one man makes a murderer, to kill many makes a hero." So it may be said, that to steal a horse, or to rob a house, makes a man a thief or burglar; to fire a dwelling subjects him to the punishment of arson; but to plunder kingdoms and provinces, and to cause cities, towns, and hamlets to be wrapped in flames, makes an illustrious conqueror, and gives a title to what is deemed a bright page in history. The one enrols the name among felons, and consigns the perpetrator to the dungeon or the gibbet; the other, accompanied with no more justice, and with the same spirit, sends the name down to future times as immortal. Yet in the two the all-discerning eye of God may see no difference except in the magnitude of the crime, and in the extent of the injury which has been inflicted. In his way, and according to the measure of his ability, the felon who ends his life in a dungeon, or on the gibbet, is as worthy of grateful and honoured remembrance as the conqueror: triumphing in the spoils of desolated empires.

Ye kill. Marg., "or *envy*." The marginal reading "*envy*" has been introduced from some doubt as to the correct reading of the text, whether it should be *foneute*, ye kill, or *fyoneite*, *ye envy*. The latter reading has been adopted by Erasmus, Schmidius, Luther, Beza, and some others, though merely from conjecture. There is no authority from the manuscripts for the change. The correct reading undoubtedly is, *ye kill*. This expression is probably to be taken in the sense of *having a murderous disposition, or fostering a brutal and murderous spirit*. It is not exactly that they killed or committed murder previous to "desiring to have," but that they had such a covetous desire of the possessions of others as to produce a murderous and bloody temper. The spirit of *murder* was at the bottom of the whole; or there was such a desire of the possessions of others as to lead to the commission of this crime. Of what aggressive wars which have ever existed is not this true?

Desire to have. That is, what is in the possession of others.

And cannot obtain. By any fair and honest means; by purchase or negotiation: and this leads to bloody conquests. All wars might have been avoided if men had been content with what they had, or could rightfully obtain, and had not desired to have what was in the possession of others, which they could not obtain by honest and honourable means. Every war might have been avoided by fair and honourable negotiation.

Ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Notwithstanding you engage in contentions and strifes, you do not obtain what you seek after. If you sought that from God which you truly need, you would obtain it, for he would bestow upon you all that is really necessary. But you seek it by contention and strife, and you have no security of obtaining it. He who seeks to gain anything by war seeks it in an unjust manner, and cannot depend on the Divine help and blessing. The true way of obtaining anything: which we really need is to seek it from God by prayer, and then to make use of just and fair means of obtaining it, by industry and honesty, and by a due regard for the rights of others. Thus sought, we shall obtain it if it would be for our good; if it is withheld, it will be because it is best for us that it should not be ours. In all the wars which have been waged on the earth, whether for the settlement of disputed questions, for the adjustment of boundaries, for the vindication of violated rights, or for the permanent extension of empire, how rare has it been that the object which prompted to the war has been secured! The course of events has shown that, indisposed as men are to do justice, there is much more probability of obtaining the object by patient negotiation than there is by going to war.

{+} "lusts" or, "desire" {++} "kill" or, "envy"

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 4 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Ye ask, and receive not*. That is, some of you ask, or you ask on some occasions. Though seeking in general what you desire by strife, and without regard to the rights of others, yet you sometimes pray. It is not uncommon for men who go to war to pray, or to procure the services of a chaplain to pray for them. It sometimes happens that the covetous and the quarrelsome; that those who live to wrong others, and who are fond of litigation, pray. Such men may be professors of religion. They keep up a form of worship in their families. They pray for success m their worldly engagements, though those engagements are all based on covetousness. Instead of seeking property that they may glorify God, and do good; that they may relieve the poor and distressed; that they may be the patrons of learning, philanthropy, and religion, they do it that they may live in splendour, and be able to pamper their lusts. It is not indeed very common that persons with such ends and aims of life pray, but they sometimes do it; for, alas! there are many professors of religion who have no higher aims than these, and not a few such professors feel that consistency demands that they should observe some form of prayer. If such persons do not receive what they ask for, if they are not prospered in their plans, they should not set it down as evidence that God does not hear prayer, but as evidence that their prayers are offered for improper objects, or with improper motives.

Because ye ask amiss. Ye do it with a view to self-indulgence and carnal gratification.

That you may consume it upon your lusts. Marg., *pleasures*. This is the same word which is used in Jas 4:1, and rendered *lusts*. The reference is to sensual gratifications; and the word would include all that comes under the name of sensual *pleasure*, or carnal appetite. It was not that they

might have a decent and comfortable living, which would not be improper to desire, but that they might have the means of luxurious dress and living; perhaps the means of gross sensual gratifications. Prayers offered that we may have the means of sensuality and voluptuousness, we have no reason to suppose God will answer, for he has not promised to hear such prayers; and it becomes every one who prays for worldly prosperity, and for success in business, to examine his motives with the closest scrutiny. Nowhere is deception more likely to creep in than into such prayers; nowhere are we more likely to be mistaken in regard to our real motives, than when we go before God and ask for success in our worldly employments.

{+} "lusts" or, "pleasures"

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 4 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Ye adulterers and adultresses*. These words are frequently used to denote those who are faithless towards God, and are frequently applied to those who forsake God for idols, Ho 3:1; Isa 57:3,7;

Ezekiel chapters 16 and 23. It is, not necessary to suppose that the apostle meant that those to whom he wrote were literally guilty of the sins here referred to; but he rather refers to those who were unfaithful to their covenant with God by neglecting their duty to him, and yielding themselves to the indulgence of their own lusts and passions. The idea is, "You have in effect broken your marriage covenant with God by loving the world more than him; and, by the indulgence of your carnal inclinations, you have violated those obligations to self-mortification and self-denial to which you were bound by your religious engagements." To convince them of the evil of this, the apostle shows them what was the true nature of that friendship of the world which they sought. It may be remarked here, that no terms could have been found which would have shown more decidedly the nature of the sin of forgetting the covenant vows of religion for the pleasures of the world, than those which the apostle uses here. It is a deeper crime to be unfaithful to God than to any created being; and it will yet be seen that even the violation of the marriage contract, great as is the sin, is a slight offence compared with unfaithfulness towards God,'

Know ye not that the friendship of the world. Compare 1Jo 2:15. The term *world* here is to be understood not of the physical world as God made it, for we could not well speak of the "*friendship*" of that, but of the *community*, or *people*, called "*the world*," in contradistinction from the people of God. Compare Joh 12:31; 1Co 1:20; 1Co 3:19; Ga 4:3; Col 2:8.

The "friendship of the world," (*filia tou kosmou*,) is the *love* of that world; of the maxims which govern it, the principles which reign there, the ends that are sought, the amusements and gratifications which characterize it as distinguished from the church of God. It consists in setting our hearts on t hose things; in conforming to them; in making them the object of our pursuit with the same spirit with which they are sought by those who make no pretensions to religion. **See Barnes on "Ro 12:2".**

Is enmity with God. Is in fact hostility against God, since that world is arrayed against him. It neither obeys his laws, submits to his claims, nor seeks to honour him. To love that world is, therefore, to be arrayed against God; and the spirit which would lead us to this is, in fact, a spirit of hostility to God.

Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world. "*Whoever*" he may be, whether in the church or out of it. The fact of being a member of the church makes no difference in this respect, for it is as easy to be a friend of the world in the church as out of it. The phrase "whosoever *will*" (*boulhyh*) implies *purpose, intention, design*. It supposes that the *heart* is set on it; or that there is a deliberate purpose to seek the friendship of the world. It refers to that strong desire which often exists, even among professing Christians, to secure the friendship of the world; to copy its fashions and vanities; to enjoy its pleasures; and to share its pastimes and its friendships. Wherever there is a manifested purpose to find our chosen friends and associates there rather than among Christians; wherever there is a greater desire to enjoy the smiles and approbation of the world than there is to enjoy the approbation of God and the blessings of a good conscience; and wherever there is more conscious pain because we have failed to win the applause of the world, or have offended its rotaries, and have sunk ourselves in its estimation, than there is because we have neglected our duty to our Saviour, and have lost the enjoyment of religion, there is the clearest proof that the heart *wills* or *desires* to be the "friend of the world."

Is the enemy of God. This is a most solemn declaration, and one of fearful import in its bearing on many who are members of the church. It settles the point that any one, no matter what his professions, who is characteristically a friend of the world, cannot be a true Christian. In regard to the meaning of this important verse, then, it may be remarked,

(1,) that there *is* a sense in which the love of this world, or of the physical universe, is not wrong. That kind of love for it as the work of God, which perceives the evidence of his wisdom and goodness and power in the various objects of beauty, usefulness, and grandeur, spread around us, is not evil. The world as such— the physical structure of the earth, of the mountains, forests, flowers, seas, lakes, and vales—is full of illustrations of the Divine character and it cannot be wrong to contemplate those things with interest, or with warm affection toward their Creator.

(2.) When that world, however, becomes our portion; when we study it only as a matter of science, without "looking through nature up to nature's God.;" when we seek the wealth which it has to confer, or endeavour to appropriate as our supreme portion its lands, its minerals, its fruits; when we are satisfied with what it yields, and when in the possession or pursuit of these things, our thoughts never rise to God; and when we partake of the spirit which rules in the hearts of those who avowedly seek this world as their portion, though we profess religion, then the love of the world becomes evil, and comes in direct conflict with the spirit of true religion.

(3.) The statement in this verse is, therefore, one of most fearful import for many professors of religion. There are many in the church who, so far as human judgment can go, are characteristically lovers of the world. This is shown

(a) by their conformity to it in all in which the world is distinguished from the church as such;

(b) in their seeking the friendship of the world, or their finding their friends there rather than among Christians;

(c) in preferring the amusements of the world to the scenes where spiritually-minded Christians find their chief happiness;

(d) in pursuing the same pleasures that the people of the world do, with the same expense, the same extravagance, the same luxury;

(e) in making their worldly interests the great object of living, and everything else subordinate to that. This spirit exists in all cases where no worldly interest is sacrificed for religion; where

everything that religion peculiarly requires is sacrificed for the world. If this be so, then there are many professing Christians who are the "enemies of God." **See Barnes on "Php 3:18"**.

They have never known what is true friendship for him, and by their lives they show that they can be ranked only among his foes. It becomes every professing Christian, therefore, to examine himself with the deepest earnestness to determine whether he is characteristically a friend of the world or of God; whether he is living for this life only, or is animated by the high and pure principles of those who are the friends of God. The great Searcher of hearts cannot be deceived, and soon our appropriate place will be assigned us, and our final Judge will determine to which class of the two great divisions of the human family we belong—to those who are the friends of the world, or to those who are the friends of God.

{a} "friendship of the world" 1Jo 2:15

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 4 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Do ye think that the Scripture saith in vain*. Few passages of the New Testament have given expositors more perplexity than this. The difficulty has arisen from the fact that no such passage as that which seems here to be quoted is found in the Old Testament; and to meet this difficulty, expositors have resorted to various conjectures and solutions. Some have supposed that the passage is spurious and that it was at first a gloss in the margin, placed there, by some transcriber, and was then introduced into the text; some that the apostle quotes from an apocryphal book; some, that he quotes the general spirit of the Old Testament rather than any particular place; some regard it not as a quotation, but read the two members separately, supplying what is necessary to complete the sense, thus: "Do you think that the Scripture speaks in vain, or without a good reason, *when it condemns such a worldly temper*? No; that you can not suppose. Do you imagine that the Spirit of God, which dwelleth in us Christians, leads to covetousness, pride, envy? No. On the contrary, to such as follow his guidance and direction, he gives more abundant grace and favour." This is the solution proposed by Benson, arid adopted by Bloomfield. But this solution is by no means satisfactory. Two things are clear in regard to the passage:

(1,) that James meant to adduce something that was *said* somewhere, or which could be regarded as *a quotation*, or as *authority* in the case, for he uses the formula by which such quotations are made; and,:

(2,) that he meant to refer, not to an apocryphal book, but to the inspired and canonical Scriptures, for he uses a term (*h grafh—the Scripture*) which is everywhere employed to denote the Old Testament, and which is nowhere applied to an apocryphal book, Mt 21:42; Mt 22:29; Mt 26:54,56; Joh 2:22; Joh 5:39; 7:38,42; 10:35, et al. The word is used more than fifty times in the New Testament, and is never applied to any books but those which were regarded by the Jews as inspired, and which constitute now the Old Testament, except in 2Pe 3:16, where it refers to the writings of Paul. The difficulty in the case arises from the fact that no such passage as the one here quoted is found in so many words in the Old Testament, nor any of which it can fairly be regarded as a quotation. The only solution of the difficulty which seems, to me to be at all satisfactory, is to suppose that the apostle, in the remark made here in the form of a quotation, refers to the Old Testament, but that he had not his eye on any particular passage, and did not mean to quote the

words literally, but meant to refer to what was the current teaching or general spirit of the Old Testament; or that he meant to say that this *sentiment* was found there, and designed himself to embody the sentiment in words, and to put it into a condensed form. His eye was on envy as at the bottom of many of the contentions and strifes existing on earth, (Jas 3:16,) and of the spirit of the world which prevailed everywhere, (Jas 4:4;) and he refers to the *general teaching* of the Old Testament that the soul is by nature inclined to envy; or that this has a deep lodgement in the heart of man. That truth which was uttered everywhere in the Scriptures, was not taught "in vain." The abundant facts which existed showing its developement and operation in contentions, and wars, and a worldly spirit, proved that it was deeply imbedded in the human soul. This general truth, that man is prone to envy, or that there is much in our nature which inclines us to it, is abundantly taught in the Old Testament. Ec 4:4, "I considered all travail, and every right work, that for this a man is envied of his neighbour." Job 5:2, "Wrath killeth, and envy slayeth the silly one." Pr 14:30, "Envy is the rottenness of the bones." Pr 27:4, "Who is able to stand before envy?" For particular instances of this, and the effects, see Ge 26:14; Ge 30:1; 37:11; Ps 106:16; Ps 73:3.

These passages prove that there is strong propensity in human nature to envy, and it was in accordance with the design of the apostle to show this. The effects of envy to which he himself referred evinced the same thing, and demonstrated that the utterance given to this sentiment in the Old Testament was not "in vain," or was not false, for the records in the Old Testament on the subject found a strong confirmation in the wars and strifes and worldliness of which he was speaking.

Saith in vain. "Says falsely;" that is, the testimony thus borne is true. The apostle means that what was said in the Old Testament on the subject found abundant confirmation in the facts which were continually occurring, and especially in those to which he was adverting.

The spirit that dwelleth in us. Many have supposed that the word spirit here refers to the Holy Spirit, or the Christian spirit; but in adopting this interpretation they are obliged to render the passage, "the spirit that dwells in us lusteth *against* envy," or tends to check and suppress it. But this interpretation is forced and unnatural, and one which the Greek will not well bear. The more obvious interpretation is to refer it to our spirit or disposition as we are by nature, and it is equivalent to saying that we are naturally prone to envy.

Lusteth to envy. Strongly tends to envy. The margin is "*enviously*," but the sense is the same. The idea is, that there is in man a strong inclination to look with dissatisfaction on the superior happiness and prosperity of others; to desire to make what they possess our own; or at any rate to deprive them of it by detraction, by fraud, or by robbery. It is this feeling which leads to calumny, to contentions, to wars, and to that strong worldly ambition which makes us anxious to surpass all others, and which is so hostile to the humble and contented spirit of religion. He who could trace all wars and contentions and worldly plans to their source—all the schemes and purposes of even professed Christians, that do so much to mar their religion and to make them worldly-minded, to their real origins would be surprised to find how much is to be attributed to envy. We are pained that others are more prosperous than we are; we desire to possess what others have, though we have no right to it; and this leads to the various guilty methods which are pursued to lessen their enjoyment of it, or to obtain it ourselves, or to show that they do not possess as much as they are commonly supposed to. This purpose will be accomplished if we can obtain more than they have; or if we can diminish what they actually possess; or if by any statements to which we can give currency in society, the general impression shall be that they do *not* possess as much wealth, domestic peace,

happiness, or honour, as is commonly supposed— for thus the spirit of envy in our bosoms will be gratified.

{+} "to envy" or, "enviously" {a} "to envy" Ec 4:4

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 4 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *But he giveth more grace*. The reference here is undoubtedly to God. Some have regarded this clause as a continuation of the quotation in the previous verse, but it is rather to be considered as a declaration of the apostle himself. The writer had just spoken of envy, and of the crimes which grew out of it. He thought of the wars and commotions of the earth, and of the various lusts which reigned among men. In the contemplation of these things, it seems suddenly to have occurred to him that all were not under the influence of these things; that there were cases where men were restrained, and where a spirit opposite to these things prevailed. Another passage of Scripture struck his mind, containing the truth that there was a class of men to whom God gave grace to restrain these passions, and to subdue these carnal propensities. They were the humble, in contradistinction to the proud; and he states the fact that "God giveth more grace;" that is, that in some instances he confers more grace than in the cases referred to; to some he gives more grace to overcome their evil passions, and to subdue their corrupt inclinations, than he does to others. The meaning may be thus expressed: "It is true that the natural spirit in man is one that tends to envy, and thus leads to all the sad consequences of envy. But there are instances in which higher grace or favour is conferred; in which these feelings are subdued, and these consequences are prevented. They are not indeed to be found among the proud, whom God always resists; but they are to be found among the meek and the humble. Wherefore submit yourselves to his arrangements; resist the devil; draw nigh to God; purify yourselves, and weep over your past offences, and you shall find that the Lord will lift you up, and bestow his favour upon you," Jas 4:10,

Wherefore he saith. The reference here is to Pr 3:34, "Surely he scorneth the scorners; but he giveth grace unto the lowly." The quotation is made exactly from the Septuagint, which, though not entirely literal, expresses the sense of the Hebrew without essential inaccuracy. This passage is also quoted in 1Pe 5:5.

God resisteth the proud. The *proud* are those who have an inordinate self-esteem; who have a high and unreasonable conceit of their own excellence or importance. This may extend to anything; to beauty, or strength, or attainments, or family, or country, or equipage, or rank, or even religion. A man may be proud of anything that belongs to him, or which can in any way be construed as a part of himself, or as pertaining to him. This does not, of course, apply to a *correct* estimate of ourselves, or to the mere knowledge that we may excel others. One may *know* that he has more strength, or higher attainments in learning or in the mechanic arts, or greater wealth than others, and yet have properly no *pride* in the case. He has only a *correct* estimate of himself, and he attaches no undue importance to himself on account of it. His heart is not lifted up; he claims no undue deference to himself; he concedes to all others what is their due; and he is humble before God, feeling that all that he has, and is, is nothing in his sight, he is willing to occupy his appropriate place in the sight of God and men, and to be esteemed just as he is. Pride goes beyond this, and gives to a man a degree of self-estimation which is not warranted by anything that he possesses.

God looks at things as they are; and hence he abhors and humbles this arrogant claim, Le 26:19; Job 33:17; Ps 59:12; Pr 8:13

; Pr 16:18; Pr 29:13; Isa 23:9; Isa 28:1; Da 4:37; Zec 10:11.

This resistance of pride he shows not only in the explicit declarations of his word, but in the arrangements of his providence and grace.

(1.) In his providence, in the reverses and disappointments which occur; in the necessity of abandoning the splendid mansion which we had built, or in disappointing us in some favourite plan by which our pride was to be nurtured and gratified.

(2.) In sickness, taking away the beauty, and strength on which we had so much valued ourselves, and bringing us to the sad condition of a sick bed.

(3.) In the grave, bringing us down to corruption and worms. Why should one be proud who will soon become so offensive to his best friends that they will gladly hide him in the grave?

(4.) In the plan of salvation he opposes our pride. Not a feature of that plan is fitted to foster pride, but all is adapted to make us humble.

(a) The *necessity* for the plan—that we are guilty and helpless sinners;

(b)the selection of a Saviour—one who was so poor, and who was so much despised by the world, and who was put to death, on a cross;

(c) our entire dependence on him for salvation, with the assurance that we have no merit of our own, and that salvation is all of grace;

(d) the fact that we are brought to embrace it only by the agency of the Holy Spirit, and that if we were left to ourselves we should never have one right thought or holy desire—all this is fitted to humble us, and to bring us low before God. God has done nothing to foster the self-estimation of the human heart; but how much has he done to "stain the pride of all glory!" **See Barnes on "Isa 23:9"**.

But giveth grace unto the humble. The meaning is, that he shows them *favour*; he bestows upon them the grace needful to secure their salvation. This he does

(1,) because they feel their need of his favour;

(2,) because they will welcome his teaching and value his friendship;

(3,) because all the arrangements of his grace are adapted only to such a state of mind. You cannot *teach* one who is so wise that he already supposes he knows enough; you cannot bestow grace on one who has no sense of the need of it. The arrangements of salvation are adapted only to an humble heart.

{a} "God resisteth the proud" Pr 29:23

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 4 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Submit yourselves therefore to God*. That is, in his arrangements for obtaining his favour. *Yield* to what he has judged necessary for your welfare in the life that is, and your salvation in the life to come. The duty here enjoined is that of entire acquiescence in the arrangements of God, whether in his providence or grace. All these are for our good, and submission to them is required by the spirit of true humility. The object of the command here, and in the succeeding injunctions to particular duties, is to show them how they might obtain the grace which God is

willing to bestow, and how they might overcome the evils against which the apostle had been endeavouring to guard them. The true method of doing this is by submitting ourselves *in all things* to God.

Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. While you yield to God in all things, you are to yield to the devil in none. You are to resist and oppose him in whatever way he may approach you, whether by allurements, by flattering promises, by the fascinations of the world, by temptation, or by threats. See 1Pe 5:9. Satan makes his way, and secures his triumphs, rather by art, cunning, deception, and threatenings, than by true courage; and when opposed manfully, he flies. The true way of meeting him is by direct resistance, rather than by argument; by steadfastly *refusing* to yield in the slightest degree, rather than by a belief that we can either convince him that he is wrong, or can return to virtue when we have gone a certain length in complying with his demands. No one is safe who yields in the least to the suggestions of the tempter; there is no one who is not safe if he does not yield. A man, for example, is always safe from intemperance if he *resists* all allurements to indulgence in strong drink, told never yields in the slightest degree; no one is certainly safe if he drinks even moderately.

{a} "resist the devil" 1Pe 5:9

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 4 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you*. Compare 2Ch 15:2. This declaration contains a great and important principle in religion. If we wish the favour of God, we must come to him; nor can we hope for his mercy, unless we approach him and ask him for it. We cannot come *literally* any nearer to God than we always are, for he is always round about us; but we may come nearer in a spiritual sense. We may address him directly in prayer; we may approach him by meditation on his character; we may draw near to him in the ordinances of religion. We can never hope for his favour while we prefer to remain at a distance from him; none who in fact draw near to him will find him unwilling to bestow on them the blessings which they need.

Cleanse your hands, ye sinners. There may possibly be an allusion here to Isa 1:15-16: "Your hands are full of blood; wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil." The *heart* is the seat of motives and intentions—that by which we devise anything; the *hands*, the instruments by which we execute our purposes. The hands here are represented as defiled by blood, or by acts of iniquity. To *wash* or cleanse the hands was, therefore, emblematic of putting away transgression, Mt 27:24. Compare De 21:6; Ps 26:6. The heathen and the Jews were accustomed to wash their hands before they engaged in public worship. The particular idea here is, that in order to obtain the favour of God, it is necessary to put away our sins; to approach him with a desire to be pure and holy. The mere washing of the hands, in itself, could not recommend us to his favour; but that of which the washing of the hands would be all emblem, would be acceptable in his sight. It may be inferred from what is said here that no one can hope for the favour of God who does not abandon his transgressions. The *design* of the apostle is, evidently, to state one of the conditions on which we can make an acceptable approach to God. It is indispensable that we come with a purpose and desire to wash ourselves from all iniquity, to put away from us

all our transgressions. So David said, "I will wash my hands in innocency; so will I compass thine altar, O Lord," Ps 26:6.

And purify your hearts. That is, do not rest satisfied with a mere external reformation; with putting away your outward transgressions. There must be a deeper work than that; a work which shall reach to the heart, and which shall purify the affections. This agrees with all the requisitions of the Bible, and is in accordance with what must be the nature of religion. If the heart is wrong, nothing can be right. If, while we seek an external reformation, we still give indulgence to the secret corruptions of the heart, it is clear that we can have no true religion.

Ye double minded. **See Barnes on "Jas 1:8".**

The apostle here seems to have had his eye on those who were vacillating in their purposes; whose hearts were not decidedly fixed, but who were halting between good and evil, The *heart* was not right in such persons. It was not settled and determined in favour of religion, but vibrated between that and the world. The proper business of such persons, therefore, was to cleanse the heart from disturbing influences, that it might settle down in unwavering attachment to that which is good.

{a} "draw nigh to God" 2Ch 15:2 {b} "Cleanse your hands" Isa 1:16

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 4 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep*. That is, evidently, on account of your sins. The sins to which the apostle refers are those which he had specified in the previous part of the chapter, and which he had spoken of as so evil in their nature, and so dangerous in their tendency. The word rendered "be afflicted" means, properly, to endure toil or hardship; then to endure affliction or distress; and here means, that they were *to afflict themselves*—that is, they were to feel distressed and sad on account of their transgressions. Compare Ezr 8:21. The other words in this clause are those which are expressive of deep grief or sorrow. The language here used shows that the apostle supposed that it was possible that those who had done wrong should voluntarily feel sorrow for it, and that, therefore, it was proper to call upon them to do it.

Let your laughter be turned to mourning. It would seem that the persons referred to, instead of suitable sorrow and humiliation on account of sin, gave themselves to joyousness, mirth, and revelry. See a similar instance in Isa 22:12-13. It is often the case, that those for whom the deep sorrows of repentance would be peculiarly appropriate, give themselves to mirth and vanity. The apostle here says that such mirth did not become them. Sorrow, deep and unfeigned, was appropriate on account of their sins, and the sound of laughter and of revelry should be changed to notes of lamentation. To how many of the assemblies of the vain, the gay, and the dissipated, might the exhortation in this passage with propriety be now addressed!

Your joy to heaviness. The word here rendered *heaviness* occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means *dejection, sorrow*. It is not gloom, melancholy, or moroseness, but it is sorrow on account of sin, God has so made us that we should feel sorrow when we are conscious that we have done wrong, and it is appropriate that we should do so.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 4 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord*. Compare Mt 23:12. **See Barnes on "Jas 4:6"**.

That is, be willing to take your appropriate place in the dust on account of your transgressions. This is to be "in the sight of the Lord," or before him. Our sins have been committed against him; and their principal aggravation, whoever may have been wronged by them, and great as is their criminality in other respects, arises from that consideration. Ps 51:4, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." Lu 15:18, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, Father, I have sinned *against heaven*, and before thee." As the Being against whom we have sinned is the only one who can pardon, it is proper that we should humble ourselves before him with penitent confession.

And he shall lift you up. He will exalt you from the condition of a broken-hearted penitent to that of a forgiven child; will wipe away your tears, remove the sadness of your heart, fill you with joy, and clothe you with the garments of salvation. This declaration is in accordance with all the promises in the Bible, and with all the facts which occur on the earth, that God is willing to show mercy to the humble and contrite, and to receive those who are truly penitent into his favour. Compare Lu 15:22.

{a} "humble yourselves" Mt 23:2 {+} "lift" or, "raise"

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 4 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Speak not evil one of another, brethren*. It is not known to whom the apostle here particularly refers, nor is it necessary to know. It is probable that among those whom he addressed there were some who were less circumspect in regard to speaking of others than they should be, and perhaps this evil prevailed. There are few communities where such an injunction would not be proper at any time, and few churches where some might not be found to whom the exhortation would be appropriate. **See Barnes on "Eph 4:31"**; also **see Barnes on "1Pe 2:1"**.

The evil here referred to is that of *talking against* others—-against their actions, their motives, their manner of living, their families, etc. Few things are more common in the world; nothing is more decidedly against the true spirit of religion.

He that speaketh evil of his brother. Referring here probably to a Christian brother, or to a fellow Christian. The word *may* however be used in a larger sense to denote any one—a brother of the human race. Religion forbids both, and would restrain us from *all* evil speaking against any human being.

And judgeth his brother. His motives, or his conduct. **See Barnes on "Mt 7:1"**.

Speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law. Instead of manifesting the feelings of a brother, he sets himself up as judge, and not only a judge of his brother, but a judge of *the law*. The *law* here referred to is probably the law of Christ, or the rule which all Christians profess to obey. It is that which James elsewhere calls the "law of liberty," (**see Barnes on "Jas 1:25"**;) the law which released men from the servitude of the Jewish rites, and gave them liberty to worship God without the restraint and bondage (Ac 15:10; Ga 4:21-31) implied in that ancient system of worship; and

the law by which it was contemplated that they should be free from sin. It is not absolutely certain to what the apostle refers here, but it would seem probable that it is to some course of conduct which one portion of the church felt they were at liberty to follow, but which another portion regarded as wrong, and for which they censured them. The explanation which will best suit the expressions here used, is that which supposes that it refers to some difference of opinion which existed among Christians, especially among those of Jewish origin, about the binding nature of the Jewish laws, in regard to circumcision, to holy days, to ceremonial observances, to the distinctions of meats, etc. A part regarded the law on these subjects as still binding, another portion supposed that the obligation in regard to these matters had ceased by the introduction of the gospel. Those who regarded the obligation of the Mosaic law as still binding, would of course *judge* their brethren, and regard them as guilty of a disregard of the law of God by their conduct. We know that differences of opinion on these points gave rise to contentions, and to the formation of parties in the church, and that it required all the wisdom of Paul and of the other apostles to hush the contending elements to peace. **See Barnes on "Col 2:16-18"**.

To some such source of contention the apostle doubtless refers here; and the meaning probably is, that they who held the opinion that all the Jewish ceremonial laws were still binding on Christians, and who judged and condemned their brethren who did not [observe them], by such a course judged and condemned "the law of liberty" under which they acted—the law of Christianity that had abolished the ceremonial observances, and released men from their obligation. The *judgment* which they passed, therefore, was not only on their brethren, but was on that law of Christianity which had given greater liberty of conscience, and which was intended to abolish the obligation of the Jewish ritual. The same thing now occurs when we judge others for a course which their consciences approve, because they do not deem it necessary to comply with all the rules which *we* think to be binding. Not a few of the harsh judgments which one class of religionists pronounce on others, are in fact judgments on *the laws of Christ*. We set up our own standards, or our own interpretations, and then we judge others for not complying with them, when in fact they may be acting only as the law of Christianity, properly understood, would allow them to do. They who set up the claim to a right to judge the conduct of others, should be certain that they understand the nature of religion themselves. It may be *presumed*, unless there is evidence to the contrary, that others are as conscientious as we are; and it may commonly be supposed that they who differ from us have some *reason* for what they do, and *may be* desirous of glorifying their Lord and Master, and *that they may possibly be right*. It is commonly not safe to judge hastily of a man who has turned his attention to a particular subject, or to suppose that he has no reasons to allege for his opinions or conduct.

But if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. It is implied here that it is the simple duty of every Christian to *obey* the law. He is not to assume the office of a judge about its propriety or fitness; but he is to do what he supposes the law to require of him, and is to allow others to do the same. Our business in religion is not to make laws, or to declare what they should have been, or to amend those that are made; it is simply to *obey* those which are appointed, and to allow others to do the same, as they understand them. It would be well for all individual Christians. and Christian denominations, to learn this, and to imbibe the spirit of charity to which it would prompt.

{a} "speak not evil one of another" Eph 4:31; 1Pe 2:1

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 4 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *There is one lawgiver*. There is but one who has a right to give law. The reference here is undoubtedly to the Lord Jesus Christ, the great Legislator of the church. *This*, too, is a most important and vital principle, though one that has been most imperfectly understood and acted on. The tendency everywhere has been to enact *other* laws than those appointed by Christ—the laws of synods and councils—and to claim that Christians are bound to observe them, and should be punished if they do not. But it is a fundamental principle in Christianity that no laws are binding on the conscience, but those which Christ has ordained; and that all attempts to make other laws pertaining to religion binding on the conscience is a usurpation of his prerogatives. The church is safe while it adheres to this as a settled principle; it is not safe when it submits to any legislation in religious matters as binding the conscience.

Who is able to save and to destroy. Compare Mt 10:28. The idea here would seem to be, that he is able to save those whom you condemn, and to destroy you who pronounce a judgment on them. Or, in general, it may mean that he is intrusted with all power, and is abundantly able to administer his government; to restrain where it is necessary to restrain; to save where it is proper to save; to punish where it is just to punish. The whole matter pertaining to *judgment*, therefore, may be safely left in his hands; and, as he is abundantly qualified for it, we should not usurp his prerogatives.

Who art thou that judgest another? "Who art thou, a weak and frail and erring mortal, thyself accountable to that Judge, that thou shouldest interfere, and pronounce judgment on another, especially when he is doing only what that Judge permits him to do?" **See Barnes on "Ro 14:4"**

for this sentiment explained at length. Also **see Barnes on** "Ro 2:1, and **see Barnes on "Mt 7:1"**.

There is nothing more decidedly condemned in the Scriptures than the habit of pronouncing a judgment on the motives and conduct of others. There is nothing in which we are more liable to err, or to indulge in wrong feelings; and there is nothing which God claims more for himself as his peculiar prerogative.

{a} "who is able to save and to destroy" Mt 10:28

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 4 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Go to now*. The apostle here introduces a new subject, and refers to another fault which was doubtless prevalent among them, as it is everywhere, that of a presumptuous confidence respecting the future, or of forming plans stretching into the future, without any proper sense of the uncertainty of life, and of our absolute dependence on God. The phrase "go to now," (*age nun*,) is a phrase designed to arrest attention, as if there were something that demanded their notice, and especially, as in this case, with the implied thought that that to which the attention is called is wrong. See Jas 5:1. Compare Ge 11:7; Isa 1:18.

Ye that say. You that form your plans in this manner, or that speak thus confidently of what you will do in the future. The word say here probably refers to what was in their thoughts, rather than to what was openly expressed.

To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city. That is, they say this without any proper sense of the uncertainty of life, and of their absolute dependence on God.

And continue there a year. Fixing a definite time; designating the exact period during which they would remain, and when they would leave, without any reference to the will of God. The apostle undoubtedly means to refer here to this as a mere *specimen* of what he would reprove. It cannot be supposed that he refers to this single case alone as wrong. All plans are wrong that are formed in the same spirit. "The practice to which the apostle here alludes," says the editor of the Pictorial Bible, "is very common in the East to this day, among a very respectable and intelligent class of merchants. They convey the products of one place to some distant city, where they remain until they have disposed of their own goods and have purchased others suitable for another distant market; and thus the operation is repeated, until, after a number of years, the trader is enabled to return prosperously to his home. Or again, a shopkeeper or a merchant takes only the first step in this process—conveying to a distant town, where the best purchases of his own line are to be made, such goods as are likely to realize a profit, and returning, without any farther stop, with a stock for his own concern. These operations are seldom very rapid, as the adventurer likes to wait opportunities for making advantageous bargains; and sometimes opens a shop in the place to which he comes, to sell by retail the goods which he has bought." The practice is common in India. See Roberts' Oriental Illustrations.

And buy and sell, and get gain. It is not improbable that there is an allusion here to the commercial habits of the Jews at the time when the apostle wrote. Many of them were engaged in foreign traffic, and for this purpose made long journeys to distant trading cities, as Alexandria, Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, etc.—BloomSeld.

{6} "go to" or, "come"

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 4 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Whereas, ye know not what shall be on the morrow*. They formed their plans as if they knew; the apostle says it could not be known. They had no means of ascertaining what would occur; whether they would live or die; whether they would be prospered, or would be overwhelmed with adversity. Of the *truth* of the remark made by the apostle here, no one can doubt; but it is amazing how men act as if it were false. We have no power of penetrating the future so as to be able to determine what will occur in a single day or a single hour, and yet we are almost habitually forming our plans as if we saw with certainty all that is to happen. The classic writings abound with beautiful expressions respecting the uncertainty of the future, and the folly of forming our plans as if it were known to us. Many of those passages, some of them almost precisely in the words of James, may be seen in Grotius and Pricseus, *in loc*. Such passages occur in Anacreon, Euripides, Menander, Seneca, Horace, and others, suggesting an obvious but much-neglected thought, that the future is to us all unknown. Man cannot penetrate it; and his plans of life should be formed in view of the possibility that his life may be cut off and all his plans fail, and consequently in constant preparation for a higher world.

For what is your life? All your plans must depend of course on the continuance of your life; but what a frail and uncertain thing is that! How transitory and evanescent as a basis on which to

build *any* plans for the future! Who can calculate on the permanence of a vapour? Who can build any solid hopes on a mist?

It is even a vapour. Marg., *For it is*. The margin is the more correct rendering. The previous question had turned the attention to *life* as something peculiarly frail, and as of such a nature that no calculation could be based on its permanence. This expression gives a *reason* for that, to wit, that it is a mere vapour. The word *vapour*, (*atmiv*,) means a mist, an exhalation, a smoke; such a vapour as we see ascending from a stream, or as lies on the mountain side in the morning, or as floats for a little time in the air, but which is dissipated by the rising sun, leaving not a trace behind. The comparison of life with a vapour is common, and is as beautiful as it is just. Job says,

remember that my life is wind;
Mine eye shall no more see good.
Job 7:7.

So the Psalmist,

For he remembered that they were but flesh.
A wind that passeth away and that cometh not again.
Ps 78:39.

Compare 1Ch 29:15; Job 14:10-11.

And then vanisheth away. Wholly disappears. Like the dissipated vapour, it is entirely gone. There is no remnant, no outline, *nothing* that reminds us that it ever was. So of life. Soon it disappears altogether. The works of art that man has made, the house that he has built, or the book that he has written, remain for a little time, but *the life* has gone. There is nothing of it remaining—any more than there is of the vapour which in the morning climbed silently up the mountain side. The animating principle has vanished for ever. On such a frail and evanescent thing, who can build any substantial hopes?

{+} "It is even" or, "For it is" {a} "a vapour, that appeareth for a little time" Job 7:7

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 4 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *For that ye ought to say*. Instead of what you *do* say, "we will go into such a city," you *ought* rather to recognise your absolute dependence on God, and feel that life and success are subject to his will. The meaning is not that we ought always to be *saying* that in so many words, for this might become a mere ostentatious *form*, offensive by constant unmeaning repetition; but we are, in the proper way, to recognise our dependence on him, and to form all our plans with reference to his will.

If the Lord will, etc. This is proper, because we are wholly dependent on him for life, and as dependent on him for success, he alone can keep us, and he only can make our plans prosperous. In a thousand ways he can thwart our best-laid schemes, for all things are under his control. We need not travel far in life to see how completely all that we have is in the hands of God, or to learn how easily he can frustrate us if he pleases. There is nothing on which the success of our plans

depends over which we have absolute control; there is nothing, therefore, on which we can base the assurance of success but his favour.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 4 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *But now ye rejoice in your boastings*. That is, probably, in your boastings of what you can do; your reliance on your own skill and sagacity. You form your plans for the future as if with consummate wisdom, and are confident of success. You do not anticipate a failure; you do not see how plans so skilfully formed *can* fail. You form them as if you were certain that you would live; as if secure from the numberless casualties which may defeat your schemes.

All such rejoicing is evil. It is founded on a wrong view of yourselves and of what may occur. It shows a spirit forgetful of our dependence on God; forgetful of the uncertainty of life; forgetful of the many ways by which the best-laid plans may be defeated. We should never boast of any wisdom or skill in regard to the future. A day, an hour may defeat our best-concerted plans, and show us that we have not the slightest power to control coming events.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 4 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin*. That is, he is guilty of sin if he does not do it. Cottoa Mather adopted it as a principle of action, "that the ability to do good in any case imposes an obligation to do it." The proposition in the verse before us is of a general character, but probably the apostle meant that it should refer to the point specified in the previous verses—the forming of plans respecting the future. The particular meaning then would be, "that he who knows what sort of views he should take in regard to the future, and how he should form his plans in view of the uncertainty of life, and still does not do it, but goes on recklessly, forming his plans boastingly and confident of success, is guilty of sin against God." Still, the proposition will admit of a more general application. It is universally true that if a man knows what is right, and does not do it, he is guilty of sin. If he understands what his duty is; if he has the means of doing good to others; if by his name, his influence, his wealth, he can promote a good cause; if he can, consistently with other duties, relieve the distressed, the poor, the prisoner, the oppressed; if he can send the gospel to other lands, or can wipe away the tear of the mourner; if he has talents by which he can lift a voice that shah be heard in favour of temperance, chastity, liberty, and religion, he is under obligations to do it: and if, by indolence, or avarice, or selfishness, or the dread of the loss of popularity, he does not do it, he is guilty of sin before God. No man can be released from the obligation to do good in this world to the extent of his ability; no one should desire to be. The highest privilege conferred on a mortal, besides that of securing the salvation of his own soul, is that of doing good to others—of alleviating sorrow, instructing ignorance, raising up the bowed down, comforting those that mourn, delivering the wronged and the oppressed, supplying the wants of the needy, guiding inquirers into the way of truth, and sending liberty, knowledge, and salvation around the world. If a man does *not* do this when he has the means, he

sins against his own soul, against humanity, and against his Maker; if he does it cheerfully and to the extent of his means, it likens him more than anything else to God.

{a} "to him that knoweth to do good" Lu 12:47

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 5

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 5 - Verse 1

CHAPTER V.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

The subjects which are introduced in this chapter are the following:—

I. An address to rich men, and a severe condemnation of the manner in which they lived, Jas 5:1-6. There have been various opinions in regard to the persons here referred to.

(1.) Some have supposed that the address is to unbelieving Jews, and that the punishment which the apostle threatens was that which was about to be brought on the nation by the Roman armies. But, as Benson well observes, it can hardly be presumed that the apostle supposed that his letter would be read by the Jews, and it is not probable therefore, that he would in this manner directly address them.

(2.) Another opinion has been, that this, like the rest of the epistle, is addressed to professed Christians who had been Jews, and that the design is to reprove faults which prevailed among them. It is not supposed indeed, by those who hold this opinion, that all of those who were rich among them were guilty of the sins here adverted to, nor even that they were very prevalent among them. The rebuke would be proper if the sins here referred to existed at all, and were practised by any who bore the Christian name. As to any improbability that professed Christians would be guilty of these faults, it might be remarked that the period has been rare in the church, if it has occurred at all, in which all that is here said of "rich men" would not be applicable to *some* members of the church. Certainly it is applicable in all those countries where slavery prevails; in countries where religion is allied to the state; in all places where the mass are poor, and the few are rich. It would be difficult now to find any extended church on earth in relation to which the denunciation here would not be applicable to some of its members. But still it can hardly be supposed that men were tolerated in the church, in the times of the apostles, who were guilty of the oppressions and wrongs here referred to, or who lived in the manner here specified. It is true, indeed, that such men have been, and are still found, in the Christian church; but we should not, without the clearest proof, suppose that such cases existed in the times of the apostles.

(3.) The correct opinion therefore seems to be, that the design of the apostle in this chapter was to encourage and strengthen poor and oppressed Christians; to impart consolation to those who, under the exactions of rich men, were suffering wrong. In doing this, nothing would be more natural than for him first to declare his views in regard to those who were guilty of these wrongs, and who made use of the power which wealth gave to injure those in the humble walks of life. This he does in the form of an address to rich men—not perhaps expecting that *they* would see what he had written but with a design to set before those to whom he wrote, and for whose benefit the statement

is made, in a vivid manner, the nature of the wrongs under which they were suffering, and the nature of the punishment which must come upon those who oppressed them. Nothing would tend more effectually to reconcile those to whom he wrote to their own lot, or do more to encourage them to bear theft trials with patience. At the same time, nothing would do more to keep them from envying the lot of the rich, or desiring the wealth which was connected with such a mode of life.

II. The apostle exhorts those who were suffering under these wrongs to exercise patience, Jas 5:7-11. He encourages them with the hope that the Lord would come; he refers them to the example of the farmer, who waits long for the fruit of the earth; he cautions them against indulging in hard feelings and thoughts against others more prospered than they were; he refers them, as examples of patience, to the prophets, to the case of Job, and to the Lord Jesus himself.

III. He adverts to a fault among them on the subject of *swearing*, Jas 5:12. This subject is introduced here apparently because they were in danger, through impatience, of expressing themselves in a severe manner, and even of uttering imprecations on those who oppressed them. To guard against this, he exhorts them to control their temper, and to confine themselves in their conversation to a simple affirmative or denial.

IV. He refers to the case of those who were sick and afflicted among them, and directs them what to do, Jas 5:14-18. The duty of those who were sick was to employ prayer—as the duty of those who were in health and prosperity was praise. The afflicted were to pray; the sick were to call for the elders of the church, who were to pray over them, and to anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord, not as "extreme unction," or *with a view to their dying*, but *with a view to their living*. To encourage them thus to call in the aid of praying men, he refers them to an illustrious instance of the power of prayer in the case of Elijah.

V. In the close of the chapter and of the epistle, the apostle adverts to the possibility that some among them might err from the truth, and urges the duty of endeavouring to convert such, Jas 5:19-20. To encourage them to do this, he states the important consequences which would follow where such an effort would be successful. He who should do this, would have the satisfaction of saving a soul from death, and would hide from the universe a multitude of sins, which otherwise, in the case of the erring brother, could not but have been exposed in the great day of judgment.

Verse 1. *Go to now*. **See Barnes on "Jas 4:13"**.

Ye rich men. Not *all* rich men, but only that class of them who are specified as unjust and oppressive. There is no sin in merely being rich; where sin exists peculiarly among the rich, it arises from the manner in which wealth is acquired, the spirit which it tends to engender in the heart, and the way in which it is used. **See Barnes on "Lu 6:24"**

and also **see Barnes on "1Ti 6:9"**.

Weep and howl. Gr., "Weep howling." This would be expressive of very deep distress. The language is intensive in a high degree, showing that the calamities which were coming upon them were not only such as would produce tears, but tears accompanied with loud lamentations. In the East, it is customary to give expression to deep sorrow by loud out cries. Compare Isa 13:6; Isa 14:31; 15:2; 16:7; Jer 4:8; Jer 47:2; Joe 1:5.

For your miseries that shall come upon you. Many expositors, as Benson, Witby, Macknight, and others, suppose that this refers to the approaching destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, and to the miseries which would be brought in the siege upon the Jewish people, in which the *rich* would be the peculiar objects of cupidity and vengeance. They refer to passages in Josephus, which describe particularly the sufferings to which the rich were exposed; the searching of their houses

by the zealots, and the heavy calamities which came upon them and their families. But there is no reason to suppose that the apostle referred particularly to those events. The poor as well as the rich suffered in that siege, and there were no such special judgements then brought upon the rich as to show that they were the marked objects of the Divine displeasure. It is much more natural to suppose that the apostle means to say that such men as he here refers to exposed themselves always to the wrath of God, and that they had great reason to weep in the anticipation of his vengeance. The sentiments here expressed by the apostle are not applicable merely to the Jews of his time. If there is any class of men which has special reason to dread the wrath of God at all times, it is just the class of men here referred to.

{+} "go to" or, "come" {a} "ye rich men" Pr 11:28; Lu 6:24

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 5 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Your riches are corrupted*. The word here rendered *corrupted* (*shpw*) does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It means, to cause to rot, to corrupt, to destroy. The reference here is to their hoarded treasures; and the idea is, that they had accumulated more than they needed for their own use; and that, instead of distributing them to do good to others, or employing them in any useful way, they kept them until they rotted or spoiled. It is to be remembered, that a considerable part of the treasures which a man in the East would lay up, consisted of perishable materials, as garments, grain, oil, etc. Such articles of property were often stored up, expecting that they would furnish a supply for many years, in case of the prevalence of famine or wars. Compare Lu 12:18-19. A suitable provision for the time to come cannot be forbidden; but the reference here is to cases in which great quantities had been laid up, perhaps while the poor were suffering, and which were kept until they became worthless.

Your garments are moth-eaten. The same idea substantially is expressed here in another form. As the fashions in the East did not change as they do with us, wealth consisted much in the garments that were laid up for show or for future use. **See Barnes on** "Mt 6:19.

Q. Curtius says that when Alexander the Great was going to take Persepolis, the riches of all Asia were gathered there together, which consisted not only of a great abundance of gold and silver, but also of garments, Lib. vi. c. 5. Horace tells us that when Lucullus the Roman was asked if he could lend a hundred garments for the theatre, he replied that he had five thousand in his house, of which they were welcome to take part or all. Of course, such property would be liable to be moth-eaten; and the idea here is, that they had amassed a great amount of this kind of property which was useless to them, and which they kept until it became destroyed.

{a} "Your riches are corrupted" Jer 17:11 {b} "your garments are moth-eaten" Job 13:28

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 5 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Your gold and silver is cankered*. That is, that you have heaped together, by injustice and fraud, a large amount, and have kept it from those to whom it is due, (Jas 5:4,) until it has

become corroded. The word rendered is *cankered*, (*katiwtai*) does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It properly means, *to cause to rust; to rust out*, (Passow;) *to be corroded with rust*, (Robinson;) to be spotted with rust. It is true that gold and silver do not properly *rust*, or become *oxidized*, and that they will not be corroded like iron and steel; but by being kept long in a damp place they will contract a dark colour, resembling rust in appearance. This seems to be the idea in the mind of the apostle. He speaks of gold and silver as they *appear* after having been long laid up without use; and undoubtedly the *word* which he uses here is one which would to an ancient have expressed that idea, as well as the mere literal idea of the *rusting* or *oxidizing* of metals. There is no reason to suppose that the word was then used in the strict chemical sense of *rusting*, for there is no reason to suppose that the nature of oxidization was then fully understood.

And the rust of them. Another word is used here—*iov*. This properly denotes something sent out or emitted, (from *ihmi*,) and is applied to a missile weapon, as an arrow; to poison, as emitted from the tooth of a serpent; and to *rust*, as it seems to be emitted from metals. The word refers to the dark discoloration which appears on gold and silver, when they have remained long without use.

Shall be a witness against you. That is, the rust or discoloration shall bear testimony against you that the money is not used as it should be, either in paying those to whom it is due, or in doing good to others. Among the ancients, the gold and silver which any one possessed was laid up in some secret and safe place. **See Barnes on "Isa 45:3"**.

There were no banks then in which money might be deposited; there were few ways of investing money so as to produce regular interests; there were no corporations to employ money in joint operations; and it was not very common to invest money in the purchase of real estate, and stocks and mortgages were little known.

And shall eat your flesh as it were fire. This cannot be taken literally. It must mean that the effect would be *as if* it should corrode or consume their very flesh; that is, the fact of their laying up treasures would be followed by painful consequences. The thought is very striking, and the language in which it is conveyed is singularly bold and energetic. The effect of thus heaping up treasure will be as corroding as fire in the flesh. The reference is to the punishment which God would bring on them for their avarice and injustice—effects that will come on all now for the same offences.

Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. The day of judgment; the dosing scenes of this world. You have been heaping up treasure; but it will be treasure of a different kind from what you have supposed. It is treasure not laid up for ostentation, or luxury, or use in future life, but treasure the true worth of which will be seen at the judgment-day. So Paul speaks of "treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God," Ro 2:5. There are many who suppose they are accumulating property that may be of use to them, or that may secure them the reputation of possessing great wealth, who are in fact accumulating a most fearful treasure against the day of final retribution. Every man who is rich should examine himself closely to see whether there is anything in the manner in which he has gained his property, or in which he now holds it, that will expose him to the wrath of God in the last day. That on which he so much prides himself may yet bring down on him the vengeance of heaven; and in the day of judgment he may curse his own madness and folly in wasting his probation in efforts to amass property.

{a} "heaped treasure together" Ro 2:5

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 5 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your* In *fields*. the previous verses the form of the sin which the apostle specified was that they had *hoarded* their property, he now states another form of their guilt, that, while doing this, they had withheld what was due from the very labourers who had cultivated their fields, and to whose labour they were indebted for what they had. The phrase, "who have reaped down your fields," is used to denote labour in general. This particular thing is specified, perhaps, because the reaping of the harvest seems to be more immediately connected with the accumulation of property. What is said here, however, will apply to all kinds of labour. It may be remarked, also, that the sin condemned here is one that may exist not only in reference to those who are hired to cultivate a farm, but to all in our employ, to day-labourers, to mechanics, to seamen, etc. It will apply, in an eminent degree, to those who hold others in slavery, and who live by their unrequited toils. The very essence of slavery is, that the slave shall produce by his labour so much *more* than he receives for his own maintenance as to support the master and his family in indolence. The slave is to do the work which the master would otherwise be obliged to do; the advantage of the system is supposed to be that the master is not under a necessity of labouring at all. The amount which the slave receives is not *presumed* to be what is a fair equivalent for what he does, or what a freeman could be hired for; but so much *less* than his labour is fairly worth, as to be a source of so much *gain* to the master. If slaves were fairly compensated for their labour; if they received what was understood to be a just *price* for what they do, or what they would be willing to bargain for if they were free, the system would at once come to an end. No owner of a slave would keep him if he did not suppose that out of his unrequited toil he might make money, or might be relieved himself from the necessity of labour, he who hires a freeman to reap down his fields pays what the freeman regards as a fair equivalent for what he does; he who employs a slave does *not* give what the slave would regard as an equivalent, and expects that what he gives will be so much *less* than an equivalent, that he may be free alike from the necessity of labour and of paying him what he has fairly earned. The very *essence* of slavery, therefore, is fraud; and there is nothing to which the remarks of the apostle here are more applicable than to that unjust and oppressive system. *Which is of you kept back by fraud*. The Greek word here used (*aposterew*) is rendered *defraud*, in Mr 10:10; 1Co 6:7-8; 1Co 7:5; and *destitute*, in 1Ti 6:5. It occurs nowhere else, except in the passage before us. It means to deprive of, with the notion that that to which it is applied was *due* to one, or that he had a *claim* on it. The *fraud* referred to in keeping it back, may be anything by which the payment is withheld, or the claim evaded—whether it be mere neglect to pay it; or some advantage taken in making the bargain; or some evasion of the law; or mere vexatious delay; or such superior power that he to whom it is due cannot enforce the payment; or such a system that he to whom it is fairly due is supposed in the laws to have no rights, and to be incapable of suing or being sued. Any one of these things would come under the denomination of *fraud*.

Crieth. That is, cries out to God for punishment. The voice of this wrong goes up to heaven.

And the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. That is, he hears them, and he will attend to their cry. Compare Ex 22:27. They are oppressed and wronged; they have none to regard their cry on earth, and to redress their wrongs, and they go and appeal to that God who *will* regard their cry, and avenge them. On the phrase "Lord of sabaoth," or *Lord of hosts*, for so the word *sabaoth* means, **see Barnes on** "Isa 1:9, and **see Barnes on "Ro 9:29"**.

Perhaps by the use of the word here it is implied that the God to whom they cry—the mighty Ruler of all worlds— is *able* to vindicate them. It may be added, that the cry of the oppressed and the wronged is going up constantly from all parts of the earth, and is always heard by God. In his own time he will come forth to vindicate the oppressed, and to punish the oppressor. It may be added, also, that if what is here said were regarded as it should be by all men, slavery, as well as other systems of wrong, would soon come to an end. If everywhere the workman was fairly paid for his earnings; if the poor slave who cultivates the fields of the rich were properly compensated for his toil; if he received what a freeman would contract to do the work for; if there was no *fraud* in withholding what he earns, the system would soon cease in the earth. Slavery could not live a day if this were done. Now there is no such compensation; but the cry of oppressed millions will continue to go up to heaven, and the period must come when the system shall cease. Either the master must be brought to such a sense of right that he will be disposed to do justice, and let the oppressed go free; or God will so impoverish the lands where the system prevails as to make all men see that the system is unprofitable and ruinous as compared with free labour; or the oppressed will somehow become so acquainted with their own strength and their rights that they shall arise and assert their freedom; or under the prevalence of true religion better views will prevail, and oppressors, turned to God, shall relax the yoke of bondage; or God will so bring heavy judgments in his holy providence on the oppressors, that the system of slavery will everywhere come to an end on the earth. Nothing is more certain than that the whole system is condemned by the passage of Scripture before us; that it is contrary to the genuine spirit of Christianity, and that the prevalence of true religion would bring it to an end. Probably *all* slave holders feel that to place the Bible in the hands of slaves, and to instruct them to read it, would be inconsistent with the perpetuity of the system. Yet a system which cannot survive the most full and free circulation of the sacred Scriptures, *must* be founded in wrong.

{a} "the hire of the laborers" Jer 22:13; Mal 3:5 {b} "are entered into the ears of the Lord" Ex 22:27 {+} "Sabaoth" or, "Hosts"

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 5 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth*. One of the things to which the rich are peculiarly addicted. Their wealth is supposed to be of value, because it furnishes them the means of doing it. Compare Lu 12:19; Lu 16:19.

The word translated "lived in pleasure," (*trufaw*,) occurs only here in the New Testament. It means, to live delicately, luxuriously, at ease. There is not in the word essentially the idea of *vicious* indulgence, but that which characterizes those who live for enjoyment. They lived in ease and affluence on the avails of the labours of others; they indulged in what gratified the taste, and pleased the ear and the eye, while those who contributed the means of this were groaning under oppression. A life of mere indolence and ease, of delicacy and luxury, is nowhere countenanced in the Bible; and even where unconnected with oppression and wrong to others, such a mode of living is regarded as inconsistent with the purpose for which God made man, and placed him on the earth. See Lu 12:19-20. Every man has high and solemn duties to perform, and there is enough to be done on

earth to give employment to every human being, and to fill up every hour in a profitable and useful way.

And been wanton. This word now probably conveys to most minds a sense which is not in the original. Our English word is now commonly used in the sense of *lewd, lustful, lascivious*. It was, however, formerly used in the sense of *sportive, joyous, gay*, and was applied to anything that was variable or fickle. The Greek word used here (*spatalaw*) means, to live luxuriously or voluptuously. **See Barnes on** "1Ti 5:6, where the word is explained. It does not refer necessarily to gross criminal pleasures, though the kind of living here referred to often leads to such indulgences. There is a close connexion between what the apostle says here, and what he refers to in the previous verses—the oppression of others, and the withholding of what is due to those who labour. Such acts of oppression and wrong are commonly resorted to in order to obtain the means of luxurious living, and the gratification of sensual pleasures. In all countries where slavery exists, the things here referred to are found in close connexion. The fraud and wrong by which the reward of hard toil is withheld from the slave is connected with indolence and sensual indulgence on the part of the master.

Ye have nourished your hearts. Or, yourselves—the word *hearts* here being equivalent to *themselves*. The meaning is, that they appeared to have been *fattening* themselves, like stall-fed beasts, for the day of slaughter. As cattle are carefully fed, and are fattened *with a view* to their being slaughtered, so they seemed to have been fattened for the slaughter that was to come on them—the day of vengeance. Thus many now live. They do no work; they contribute nothing to the good of society; they are mere consumers—*fruges consumere nati*; and, like stall-fed cattle, they seem to live only with reference to the day of slaughter, and to the recompense which awaits them after death.

As in a day of slaughter. There has been much variety in the interpretation of this expression. Robinson (*Lex*.) renders it, "like beasts in the day of slaughter, without care or forethought." Rosenmuller (*Morgenland*) supposes that it means, *as in a festival*; referring, as he thinks, to the custom among the ancients of having a feast when a part of the animal was consumed in sacrifice, and the rest was eaten by the worshippers. So Benson. On such occasions, indulgence was given to appetite almost without limit; and the idea then would be, that they had given themselves up to a life of pampered luxury. But probably the more correct idea is, that they had fattened themselves as for the day of destruction; that is, as animals are fattened for slaughter. They lived only to eat and drink, and to enjoy life. But, by such a course, they were as certainly preparing for perdition, as cattle were prepared to be killed by being stall-fed.

{a} "lived in pleasure on the earth" Lu 16:19,25 {+} "wanton" or, "luxurious" {++} "nourished" or, "pampered"

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 5 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Ye have condemned and killed the just*. *ton dikaion— the just one*, or *the just man*—for the word used is in the singular number. This may either refer to the condemnation and crucifixion of Christ—- meaning that their conduct towards his people had been similar to the treatment of the Saviour, and was in fact a condemnation and crucifixion of him afresh; or, that by their rejection of him in order to live in sin, they in fact condemned him and his religion; or, that they had

condemned and killed *the just man*—meaning that they had persecuted those who were Christians; or, that by their harsh treatment of others in withholding what was due to them, they had deprived them of the means of subsistence, and had, as it were, killed the righteous. Probably the true meaning is, that it was one of their characteristics that they had been guilty of wrong towards good men. Whether it refers, however, to any particular act of violence, or to such a course as would wear out their lives by a system of oppression, injustice, and fraud, cannot now be determined.

And he doth not resist you. Some have supposed that this refers to God, meaning that *he* did not oppose them; that is, that he bore with them patiently while they did it. Others suppose that it should be read as a question—"and doth he not resist you?" meaning that God would oppose them, and punish them for their acts of oppression and wrong. But probably the true reference is to the "just man" whom they condemned and killed; meaning that they were so powerful that all attempts to resist them would be vain, and that the injured and oppressed could do nothing but submit patiently to their acts of injustice and violence. The sense may be either that they could not oppose them—the rich men being so powerful, and they who were oppressed so feeble; or that they bore their wrongs with meekness, and did not attempt it. The sins, therefore, condemned in these verses, (Jas 5:1-6,) and for which it is said the Divine vengeance would come upon those referred to, are these four:

(1,) that of hoarding up money when it was unnecessary for their real support and comfort, and when they might do so much good with it, (compare Mt 6:19;)

(2,) that of keeping back the wages which was due to those who cultivated their fields; that is, keeping back what would be a fair compensation for their toil—applicable alike to hired men and to slaves;

(3,) that of giving themselves up to a life of ease, luxury, and sensual indulgence; and,

(4,) that of wronging and oppressing good and just men— men, perhaps in humble life, who were unable to vindicate their rights, and who had none to undertake their cause; men who were too feeble to offer successful resistance, or who were restrained by their principles from attempting it. It is needless to say that there are multitudes of such persons now on the earth, and that they have the same reason to dread the Divine vengeance which the same class had in the time of the apostle James.

{a} "resist you" Mt 5:39

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 5 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Be patient therefore, brethren*. That is, under such wrongs as the apostle had described in the previous verses. Those whom he addressed were doubtless suffering under those oppressions, and his object was to induce them to bear their wrongs without murmuring and without resistance. One of the methods of doing this was by showing *them*, in an address to their rich oppressors, that those who injured and wronged them would be suitably punished at the day of judgment, or that their cause was in the hands of God; and another method of doing it was by the direct inculcation of the duty of patience. **See Barnes on "Mt 5:38"**

and also through verse 45. The margin here is, *be long patient*, or *suffer with long patience*. The sense of the Greek is, "be long-suffering, or let not your patience be exhausted. Your courage,

rigour, and forbearance is not to be *short-lived*, but is to be *enduring*. Let it continue as long as there is need of it, even to the coming of the Lord. Then you will be released from sufferings."

Unto the coming of the Lord. The coming of the Lord Jesus—either to remove you by death, or to destroy the city of Jerusalem and bring to an end the Jewish institutions, or to judge the world and receive his people to himself. The "coming of the Lord" in any way was an event which Christians were taught to expect, and which would be connected with their deliverance from troubles. As the *time* of his appearing was not revealed, it was not improper to refer to that as an event that might *possibly* be near; and as the removal of Christians by death is denoted by the phrase "the coming of the Lord"—that is, his coming to each one of us—it was not improper to speak of death in that view. On the general subject of the expectations entertained among the early Christians of the second advent of the Saviour, **see Barnes on "1Co 15:51"**

and also **see Barnes on "2Th 2:2-3"**.

Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth. The farmer waits patiently for the grain to grow. It requires time to mature the crop, and he does not become impatient. The idea seems to be, that we should wait for things to develop themselves in their proper season, and should not be impatient before that season arrives. In due time we may expect the harvest to be ripened. We cannot hasten it. We cannot control the rain, the sun, the seasons; and the farmer therefore patiently waits until in the regular course of events he has a harvest. So we cannot control and hasten the events which are in God's own keeping; and we should patiently wait for the developments of his will, and the arrangements of his providence, by which we may obtain what we desire.

And hath long patience for it. That is, his patience is not exhausted. It extends through the whole time in which, by the Divine arrangements, he may expect a harvest.

Until he receive the early and latter rain. In the climate of Palestine there are two rainy seasons, on which the harvest essentially depends—the autumnal and the spring rains—called here and elsewhere in the Scriptures *the early and the latter rains*. See De 11:14; Job 29:23; Jer 5:24.

The autumnal or early rains of Scripture, usually commence in the latter half of October or the beginning of November; not suddenly, but by degrees, which gives opportunity for the husbandman to sow his fields of wheat and barley. The rains come mostly from the west or south-west, continuing for two or three days at a time, and failing especially during the nights. The wind then chops round to the north or east, and several days of fine weather succeed. During the months of November and December the rains continue to fall heavily; afterwards they return only at longer intervals, and are less heavy; but at no period during the winter do they entirely cease to occur. Snow often falls in Jerusalem, in January and February, to the depth of a foot or more, but it does not last long. Rain continues to fall more or less through the month of March, but it is rare after that period. At the present time there are not any particular periods of rain, or successions of showers, which might be regarded as distinct rainy seasons. The whole period from October to March now constitutes only one continued rainy season, without any regularly intervening time of prolonged fair weather. Unless, therefore, there has been some change in the climate since the times of the New Testament, the early and the latter rains for which the husbandman waited with longing, seem rather to have implied the first showers of autumn, which revived the parched and thirsty earth, and prepared it for the seed; and the latter showers of spring, which continued to refresh and forward the ripening crops and the vernal products of the fields. In ordinary seasons, from the cessation of the showers

in spring until their commencement in October or November, rain never falls, and the sky is usually serene.—*Robinson's Biblical Researches*, vol. ii., pp. 96-100.

{+} "Be patient" or, "Be long patient; or Suffer with long patience" {a} "early and latter rain" De 11:14

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 5 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Be ye also patient*. As the farmer is. In due time, as he expects the return of the rain, so you may anticipate deliverance from your trials. Stablish your hearts. Let your purposes and your faith be firm and unwavering. Do not become weary and fretful; but bear with constancy all that is laid upon you, until the time of your deliverance shall come.

For the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Compare Re 22:10,12,20; **See Barnes on "1Co 15:51"**.

It is clear, I think, from this place, that the apostle expected that that which he understood by "the coming of the Lord" was soon to occur; for it was to be that by which *they* would obtain deliverance from the trials which they then endured. See Jas 5:7. Whether it means that he was soon to come to judgment, or to bring to an end the Jewish policy and to set up his kingdom on the earth, or that they would soon be removed by death, cannot be determined from the mere use of the language. The most natural interpretation of the passage, and one which will accord well with the time when the epistle was written, is, that the predicted time of the destruction of Jerusalem (Matthew 24) was at hand; that there were already indications that that would soon occur; and that there was a prevalent expectation among Christians that that event would be a release from many trials of persecution, and would be followed by the setting up of the Redeemer's kingdom. Perhaps many expected that the judgment would occur at that time, and that the Saviour would set up a personal reign on the earth. But the expectation of others might have been merely—what is indeed all that is necessarily implied in the predictions on the subject—that there would be after that a rapid and extensive spread of the principles of the Christian religion in the world. The destruction of Jerusalem and of the temple would contribute to that by bringing to an end the whole system of Jewish types and sacrifices; by convincing Christians that there was not to be one central rallying-point, thus destroying their lingering prejudices in favour of the Jewish mode of worship; and by scattering them abroad through the world to propagate the new religion. The epistle was written, it is supposed, some ten or twelve years before the destruction of Jerusalem, (Intro., & 3,) and it is not improbable that there were already some indications of that approaching event.

{+} "stablish" or, "Establish" {a} "the coming of the Lord" Re 22:20

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 5 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Grudge not one against another*. Marg., "*groan, grieve*." The Greek word (*stenazw*) means, *to sigh, to groan*, as of persons in distress, (Ro 8:23;) and then to sigh or groan through impatience, fretfulness, ill-humour; and hence *to murmur, to find fault, to complain*. The exact idea here is, not that of *grudging* in the sense of dissatisfaction with what others possess, or of being

envious; it is that of being fretful and impatient—or, to use a common word which more exactly expresses the sense, that of *grumbling*. This may arise from many causes; either because others have advantages which we have not, and we are discontented and unhappy, as if it were *wrong* in them to have such enjoyments; or because we, without reason, suppose they intend to slight and neglect us; or because we are ready to take offence at any little thing, and to "pick a quarrel" with them. There are some persons who are always *grumbling*. They have a sour, dissatisfied, discontented temper; they see no excellence in other persons; they are displeased that others are more prospered, honoured, and beloved than they are themselves; they are always complaining of what others do, not because they are injured, but because others seem to them to be weak and foolish; they seem to feel that it becomes them to complain if everything is not done precisely as in their estimation it should be. It is needless to say that this spirit—the offspring of pride—will make any man lead a wretched life; and equally needless to say that it is wholly contrary to the spirit of the gospel. Compare Lu 3:14; Php 4:11;

1Ti 6:8; Heb 13:5.

Lest ye be condemned. That is, for *judging* others with this spirit— for this spirit is in fact judging them. **See Barnes on "Mt 7:1".**

Behold, the judge standeth before the door. The Lord Jesus, who is soon to come to judge the world. See Jas 5:8. He is, as it were, even now approaching the door—so near that he can hear all that you say.

{+} "grudge" or, "groan; or grieve" {a} "standeth before the door" Re 3:20

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 5 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Take, my brethren, the prophets*. That is, in your trials and persecutions. To encourage them to the exercise of patience, he points them to the example of those who had trod the same thorny path before them. The prophets were in general a much persecuted race of men; and the argument on which the apostle relies from their example is this:

(1,) that if the prophets were persecuted and tried, it may be expected that other good men will be;

(2,) that they showed such patience in their trials as to be a model for us.

An example of suffering affliction. That is, they showed us how evils are to be borne.

{a} "example of suffering affliction and of patience" Heb 11:35-38

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 5 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Behold, we count them happy which endure*. The word rendered "we count them happy," (*makarizomen*,) occurs only here and in Lu 1:48, where it is rendered "*shall call* me *blessed*." The word *makariov*, (*blessed*, or *happy*,) however, occurs often. See Mt 5:3-11; Mt 11:6;

Mt 13:6, *et saepe*. The sense here is, we speak of their patience with commendation. They have done what they ought to do, and their name is honoured and blessed.

Ye have heard of the patience of Job. As one of the most illustrious instances of patient sufferers. See Job 1:21. The book of Job was written, among other reasons, to show that true religion would *bear* any form of trial to which it could be subjected. See Job 1:9-11; Job 2:5-6.

And have seen the end of the Lord. That is, the end or design which the Lord had in the trials of Job, or the result to which he brought the case at last—to wit, that he showed himself to be very merciful to the poor sufferer; that he met him with the expressions of his approbation for the manner in which he bore his trials; and that he doubled his former possessions, and restored him to more than his former happiness and honour. See Job 42. Augustine, Luther, Wetstein, and others, understand this as referring to the death of the Lord Jesus, and as meaning that they had seen the manner in which he suffered death, as an example for us. But, though this might strike many as the true interpretation, yet the objections to it are insuperable.

(1.) It does not accord with the proper meaning of the word *end*, (*telov*.) That word is in no instance applied to death, nor does it properly express *death*. It properly denotes an end, term, termination, completion: and is used in the following senses:

(a) to denote the end, the termination, or the *last* of anything, Mr 3:26; 1Co 15:24; Lu 21:9; Heb 7:3;

(b) an event, issue, or result, Mt 26:58; Ro 6:21; 2Co 11:18;

(c) the final purpose,, that to which all the parts tend, and in which they terminate, 1Ti 1:5;

(d) tax, custom, or tribute—what is paid for public *ends* or purposes, Mt 17:25; Ro 13:7.

(2.) This interpretation, referring it to the death of the Saviour, would not accord with the remark of the apostle in the close of the verse, "that the Lord is very merciful." That is, what he says was "*seen*," or this was what was *particularly* illustrated in the case referred to. Yet this was not particularly seen in the death of the Lord Jesus. He was indeed most patient and submissive in his death, and it is true that he showed mercy to the penitent malefactor; but this was not the particular and most prominent trait which he evinced in his death. Besides, if it had been, that would not have been the thing to which the apostle would have referred here. His object was to recommend *patience under trials*, not *mercy shown to others*; and this he does by showing

(a) that Job was an eminent instance of it, and

(b) that the result was such as to encourage us to be patient. The *end* or the *result* of the Divine dealings in his case was, that the Lord was "very pitiful and of tender mercy;" and we may hope that it will be so in our case, and should therefore be encouraged to be patient under our trials.

That the Lord is very pitiful. As he showed deep compassion in the case of Job, we have equal reason to suppose that he will in our own.

{a} "count them happy which endure" Ps 94:12; Mt 5:10 {b} "patience of Job" Job 1:21 {c} "the end of the Lord" Job 42:10

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 5 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *But above all things*. That is, be especially careful on this point; whatever else is done, let not this be. The manner in which James speaks of the practice referred to here, shows that he regarded it as a sin of a very heinous nature; one that was by all means to be avoided by those whom he addressed. The habit of swearing by various things was a very common one among the

Jews, and it was important to guard those who from among them had been converted to Christianity on that subject.

Swear not. **See Barnes on "Mt 5:33-34"**

for this command illustrated. Nearly the same things are mentioned here as objects by which they were accustomed to swear which are referred to by the Saviour.

But let your yea be yea. Let there be a simple affirmation, unaccompanied by any oath or appeal to God or to any of his works. A man who makes that his common method of speech is the man who will be believed. **See Barnes on "Mt 5:37"**.

Lest ye fall into condemnation. That is, for profaning the name of God. "The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain," Ex 20:7.

{a} "swear not" Mt 5:34

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 5 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Is any among you afflicted*? By sickness, bereavement, disappointment, persecutions, loss of health or property. The word used here refers to suffering evil of any kind, (*kakopayei*.)

Let him pray. That is, prayer is appropriate to trial. The mind naturally resorts to it, and in every way it is proper. God only can remove the source of sorrow; he can grant unto us "a happy issue out of all our afflictions;" he can make them the means of sanctifying the soul. Compare 2Ch 33:12; Ps 34:4; Ps 107:6,13,28.

It matters not what is the form of the trial, it is a privilege which all have to go to God in prayer. And it is an inestimable privilege. Health fails, friends die, property is lost, disappointments come upon us, danger threatens, death approaches—and to whom shall we go but to God? He ever lives. He never fails us or disappoints us if we trust in him, and his ear is ever open to our cries. This would be a sad world indeed, if it were not for the privilege of prayer. The last resource of millions who suffer—for millions suffer every day—would be taken away, if men were denied the access to the throne of grace. As it is, there is no one so poor that he may not pray; no one so disconsolate and forsaken that he may not find in God a friend; no one so broken-hearted that he is not able to bind up his spirit. One of the *designs* of affliction is to lead us to the throne of grace; and it is a happy result of trials if we are led by our trials to seek God in prayer.

Is any merry? The word *merry* now conveys an idea which is not properly found in the original word here. It refers now, in common usage, to light and noisy pleasure; to that which is jovial; to that which is attended with laughter, or which causes laughter, as a *merry* jest. In the Scriptures, however, the word properly denotes *cheerful, pleasant, agreeable*, and is applied to a state of mind free from trouble—the opposite of affliction-happy, Pr 15:13,16; Pr 17:22; Isa 24:7; Lu 15:23-24,29,32.

The Greek word used here (*euyumei*) means, literally, *to have the mind well*, (*eu* and *yumov*;) that is, to have it happy, or free from trouble; to be cheerful.

Let him sing psalms. That is, if any one is happy; if he is in health, and is prospered; if he has his friends around him, and there is nothing to produce anxiety; if he has the free exercise of conscience and enjoys religion, it is proper to express that in notes of praise. Compare Eph 5:19-20. On the meaning of the word here rendered "sing psalms," **see Barnes on** "Eph 5:9, where it is rendered

making melody. It does not mean to sing *psalms* in contradistinction from singing *hymns*, but the reference is to any songs of praise. Praise is appropriate to such a state of mind. The heart naturally gives utterance to its emotions in songs of thanksgiving. The sentiment in this verse is well expressed in the beautiful stanza,

In every joy that crowns my days,
In every pain I bear,
My heart shall find delight in praise,
Or seek relief in prayer.
Mrs. Williams.

{a} "pray" 2Ch 33:12; Jon 2:2 {+} "merry" or, "cheerful" {b} "sing psalms" Eph 5:19

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 5 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Is any sick among you*? In the previous verse the reference was to affliction in general, and the duty there urged was one that was applicable to all forms of trial. The subject of sickness, however, is so important, since it so often occurs, that a specific direction was desirable. That direction is to call in the aid of others to lead our thoughts, and to aid us in our devotions, because one who is sick is less able to direct his own reflections and to pray for himself than he is in other forms of trial. Nothing is said here respecting the *degree* of sickness, whether it is that which would be fatal if these means were used or not; but the direction pertains to any kind of illness.

Let him call for the elders of the church. Gr., *presbyters*. **See Barnes on "Ac 15:2"**; and also **see Barnes on** "Ac 11:30".

It cannot be supposed that this refers to the *apostles*, for it could not be that they would be always accessible; besides, instructions like this were designed to have a permanent character, and to be applicable to the church at all times and in all places. The reference, therefore, is doubtless to the ordinary religious teachers of the congregation; the officers of the church intrusted with its spiritual interests. The spirit of the command would embrace those who are pastors, and any others to whom the spiritual interests of the congregation are confided—ruling elders, deacons, etc. If the allusion is to the ordinary officers of the church, it is evident that the cure to be hoped for (Jas 5:15) was not *miraculous*, but was that to be expected in the use of appropriate means accompanied by prayer. It may be added, as worthy of note, that the apostle says they should "*call*" for the elders of the church; that is, they should *send* for them. They should not *wait* for them to hear of their sickness, as they might happen to, but they should cause them to be informed of it, and give them an opportunity of visiting them and praying with them. Nothing is more common than for persons—even members of the church—to be sick a long time, and to *presume* that their pastor must know all about it; and then they wonder that he does not come to see them, and think hard of him because he does not. A pastor cannot be supposed to know everything; nor can it be presumed that he knows when persons are sick, any more than he can know anything else, unless he is apprized of it; and many hard thoughts, and many suspicions of neglect would be avoided, if, when persons are sick, they would in some way inform their pastor of it. It should always be presumed of a

minister of the gospel that he is ready to visit the sick. But how can he go unless he is in some way apprized of the illness of those who need his counsel and his prayers? The sick *send* for their family physician; why should they *presume* that their pastor will know of their illness any more than that their physician will?

And let them pray over him. With him, and for him. A man who is sick is often little capable of praying himself; and it is a privilege to have some one to lead his thoughts in devotion. Besides, the prayer of a good man may be of avail in restoring him to health, Jas 5:15. Prayer is always one important means of obtaining the Divine favour, and there is no place where it is more appropriate than by the bedside of sickness. That relief from pain may be granted; that the mind may be calm and submissive; that the medicines employed may be blessed to a restoration to health; that past sins may be forgiven; that he who is sick may be sanctified by his trials; that he may be restored to health, or prepared for his "last change"—all these are subjects of prayer which we feel to be appropriate in such a case, and every sick man should avail himself of the aid of those who "have an interest at the throne of grace," that they may be obtained.

Anointing him with oil. Oil, or unguents of various kinds, were much used among the ancients, both in health and in sickness. The oil which was commonly employed was olive oil. **See Barnes on "Isa 1:6"**; and also **see Barnes on** "Lu 10:34".

The custom of anointing the sick with oil still prevails in the East, for it is believed to have medicinal or healing properties. Niebuhr (Beschrieb. von Arabien, s. 131) says, "The southern Arabians believe that to anoint with oil strengthens the body, and secures it against the oppressive heat of the sun, as they go nearly naked. They believe that the oil closes the pores of the skin, and thus prevents the effect of the excessive heat by which the body is so much weakened; perhaps also they regard it as contributing to beauty, by giving the skin a glossy appearance. I myself frequently have observed that the sailors in the ships from Dsjidda and Loheia, as well as the common Arabs in Tehama, anointed their bodies with oil, in order to guard themselves against the heat. The Jews in Mocha assured Mr. Forskal, that the Mohammoedans as well as the Jews, in Sana, when they were sick, were accustomed to anoint the body with oil." *Rosenmuller, Morgenland*, in loc.

In the name of the Lord. By the authority or direction of the Lord; or as an act in accordance with his will, and that will meet with his approbation. When we do anything that tends to promote virtue, to alleviate misery, to instruct ignorance, to save life, or to prepare others for heaven, it is right to feel that we are doing it in the name of the Lord. Compare for such uses of the phrase "in the name of the Lord," and "in my name," Mt 10:22; Mt 18:6,20 Mt 19:29; Mt 24:9; Mr 9:41; Mr 13:13; Lu 21:12,17; Re 2:3; Col 3:17. There is no reason to think that the phrase is used here to denote any *peculiar* religious rite or "sacrament." It was to be done in the name of the Lord, as any other good deed is.

{a} "any sick among you" Mr 16:18

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 5 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *And the prayer of faith*. The prayer offered in faith, or in the exercise of confidence in God. It is not said that the particular form of the faith exercised shall be that the sick man will certainly recover; but there is to be unwavering confidence in God, a belief that he will do what is

best, and a cheerful committing of the cause into his hands. We express our earnest wish, and leave the case with him. The prayer of faith is to accompany the use of means, or all means would be ineffectual without the blessing of God.

Shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up. This must be understood, as such promises are everywhere, with this restriction, that they will be restored to health if it shall be the will of God; if he shall deem it for the best. It cannot be taken in the absolute and unconditional sense, for then, if these means were used, the sick person would always recover, no matter how often he might be sick, and he need never die. The design is to encourage them to the use of these means with a strong hope that it would be effectual. It may fairly be inferred from this statement,

(1,) that there would be cases in large numbers where these means would be attended with this happy result; and,

(2,) that there was so much encouragement to do it that it would be proper in any case of sickness to make use of these means. It may be added, that no one can demonstrate that this promise has not been in numerous instances fulfilled. There *are* instances, not a few, where recovery from sickness *seems* to be in direct answer to prayer, and no one can *prove* that it is not so. Compare the case of Hezekiah, in Isa 38:1-5.

And if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Perhaps there maybe a particular allusion here to sins which may have brought on the sickness as a punishment. In that case the removal of the disease. in answer to prayer would be an evidence that the sin was pardoned. Compare Mt 9:2. But the promise may be understood in a more general sense as denoting that such sickness would be the means of bringing the sins of the past life to remembrance, especially if the one who was sick had been unfaithful to his Christian vows; and that the sickness in connexion with the prayers offered would bring him to true repentance, and would recover him from his wanderings. On backsliding and erring Christians sickness often has this effect; and the subsequent life is so devoted and consistent as to show that the past unfaithfulness of him who has been afflicted is forgiven.

This passage (Jas 5:14-15) is important, not only for the counsel which it gives to the sick, but because it has been employed by the Roman Catholic communion as almost the only portion of the Bible referred to sustain one of the peculiar rites of their religion— that of "extreme unction"—a "sacrament," as they suppose, to be administered to those who are dying. It is of importance, therefore, to inquire more particularly into its meaning. There can be but three views taken of the passage:

I. That it refers to a *miraculous* healing by the apostles, or by other early ministers of religion who were endowed with the power of healing diseases in this manner. This is the interpretation of Doddridge, Macknight, Benson, and others. But to this view the objections seem to me to be insuperable.

(a) Nothing of this kind is said by the apostle, and this is not necessary to be supposed in order to a fair interpretation of the passage.

(b) The reference, as already observed, is clearly not to the *apostles*, but to the ordinary officers of the church—for such a reference would be naturally understood by the word *presbyters*; and to suppose that this refers to miracles, would be to suppose that this was a common endowment of the ordinary ministers of religion. But there was no promise of this, and there is no evidence that they possessed it. In regard to the *extent* of the promise, "they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover," **see Barnes on "Mr 16:17".**

(c) If this referred to the power of working miracles, and if the promise was absolute, then death would not have occurred at all among the early disciples. It would have been easy to secure a restoration to health in any instance where a minister of religion was at hand.

II. It is supposed by the Roman Catholics to give sanction to the practice of "extreme unction," and to prove that this was practised in the primitive church. But the objections to this are still more obvious.

(a) It was not to be performed at death, or in the immediate prospect of death, but in sickness at any time. There is no hint that it was to be only when the patient was past all hope of recovery, or in view of the fact that he was to die. But "extreme unction," from its very nature, is to be practised only where the patient is past all hope of recovery.

(b) It was not with a view to his *death*, but to his *living*, that it was to be practised at all. It was not that he might be prepared *to die*, but that he might he restored *to health*—"and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, *and the Lord shall raise him up*." But "*extreme* unction" can be with no such reference, and no such hope. It is *only* with the expectation that the patient is about to die; and if there were any expectation that he would be raised up even by *this* ordinance, it could not be administered as "*extreme* unction."

(c) The ordinance practised as "extreme unction" is a rite wholly unauthorized in the Scriptures, unless it be by this passage. There are instances indeed of persons being embalmed *after* death. It was a fact also that the Saviour said of Mary, when she poured ointment on his body, that she "did it *for his burial*," or with reference to his burial, (**see Barnes on "Mt 26:12"**;)but the Saviour did not say that it was with reference *to his death*, or was designed in any way to prepare him to die, nor is there any instance in the Bible in which such a rite is mentioned. The ceremony of extreme unction has its foundation in two things: first, in superstition, in the desire of something that shall operate as a charm, or that shall possess physical efficiency in calming the apprehensions of a troubled conscience, and in preparing the guilty to die; and, second, in the fact that it gives immense power to the priesthood. Nothing is better adapted to impart such power than a prevalent belief that a minister of religion holds in his hands the ability to alleviate the pangs of the dying, and to furnish a sure passport to a world of bliss. There is deep philosophy in that which has led to the belief of this doctrine—for the dying look around for consolation and support, and they grasp at anything which will promise ease to a troubled conscience, and the hope of heaven. The *gospel* has made arrangements to meet this state of mind in a better way—in the evidence which the guilty may have that by repentance and faith their sins are blotted out through the blood of the cross.

III. The remaining supposition, therefore, and, as it seems to me, the true one, is, that the anointing with oil was, in accordance with a common custom, regarded as medicinal, and that a blessing was to be invoked on this as a means of restoration to health. Besides what has been already said, the suggestions may be made in addition:

(a) This was, as we have seen, a common usage in the East, and is to this day.

(b) This interpretation meets all that is demanded to a fair understanding of what is said by the apostle.

(c) Everything thus directed is rational and proper. It is proper to call in the ministers of religion in time of sickness, and to ask their counsels and their prayers. It is proper to make use of the ordinary means of restorate to health. It was proper then, as it is now, to do this "in the name of the Lord;" that is, believing that it is in accordance with his benevolent arrangements, and making use of means which he has appointed. And it was proper then, as it is now, having made of those means,

to implore the Divine blessing on them, and to feel that their efficacy depends wholly on him. Thus used, there was ground of *hope* and of *faith* in regard to the recovery of the sufferer; and no one can show that in thousands of instances in the apostles' day, and since, the prayer of faith, accompanying the proper use of means, may not have raised up those who were on the borders of the grave, and who *but* for these means would have died.

{a} "if he have committed sins" Isa 33:24

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 5 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Confess your faults one to another*. This seems primarily to refer to those who were sick, since it is added, "*that ye may be healed*." The fair interpretation is, that it might be supposed that such *confession* would contribute to a restoration to health. The case supposed all along here (see Jas 5:15) is, that the sickness referred to had been brought upon the patient for his sins, apparently as a punishment for some particular transgressions. **See Barnes on "1Co 11:30".**

In such a case, it is said that if those who were sick would make confession of their sins, it would, in connexion with prayer, be an important means of restoration to health. The duty inculcated, and which is equally binding on all now, is, that if we are sick, and are conscious that we have injured any persons, to make confession to them. This indeed is a duty at all times, but in health it is often neglected, and there is a special propriety that such confession should be made when we are sick. The particular *reason* for doing it which is here specified is, that it would contribute to a restoration to health—"that ye may be healed." In the case specified, this might be supposed to contribute to a restoration to health from one of two causes:

(1.) If the sickness had been brought upon them as a *special* act of Divine visitation for sin, it might be hoped that when the confession was made the hand of God would be withdrawn; or

(2) in any case, if the mind was troubled by the recollection of guilt, it might be hoped that the calmness and peace resulting from confession would be favourable to a restoration to health. The former case would of course be more applicable to the times of the apostles; the latter would pertain to all times. Disease is often greatly aggravated by the trouble of mind which arises from conscious guilt; and, in such a case, nothing will contribute more directly to recovery than the restoration of peace to the soul agitated by guilt and by the dread of a judgment to come. This may be secured by *confession*—confession made first to God, and then to those who are wronged. It may be added, that this is a duty to which we are prompted by the very nature of our feelings when we are sick, and by the fact that no one is willing to die with guilt on his conscience; without having done everything that he can to be at peace with all the world. This passage is one on which Roman Catholics rely to demonstrate the propriety of "*auricular confession*," or confession made to a priest with a view to an absolution of sin. The doctrine which is held on that point is, that it is a duty to confess to a priest, at certain seasons, *all* our sins, secret and open, of which we have been guilty; all our improper thoughts, desires, words, and actions; and that the priest has power to declare on such confession that the sins are forgiven. But never was any text less pertinent to prove a doctrine than this passage to demonstrate that. For,

(1,) the confession here enjoined is not to be made by a person in health, that he may obtain salvation, but by a sick person, that he may be healed.

(2.) As *mutual* confession is here enjoined, a priest would be as much bound to confess to the people as the people to a priest.

(3.) No mention is made of a *priest* at all, or even of a minister of religion, as the one to whom the confession is to be made.

(4.) The confession referred to is for "faults" with reference to "one another," that is, where one has injured another; and nothing is said of confessing faults to those whom we have not injured at all.

(5.) There is no mention here of *absolution*, either by a priest or any other person.

(6.) If anything is meant by absolution that is scriptural, it may as well be pronounced by one person as another; by a layman as a clergyman. All that it *can* mean is, that God *promises* pardon to those who are truly penitent, and this fact may as well be stated by one person as another. No priest, no man whatever, is empowered to say to another either that he is truly penitent, or to *forgive* sin. "Who can forgive sins but God only?" None but he whose law has been violated, or who has been wronged, can pardon an offence. No third person can forgive a sin which a man has committed against a neighbour; no one but a parent can pardon the offences of which his own children have been guilty towards him; and who call put himself in the place of God, and presume to pardon the sins which his creatures have committed against him?

(7.) The practice of "auricular confession" is "evil, and only evil, and that continually." Nothing gives so much power to a priesthood as the supposition that they have the power of absolution. Nothing serves so much to pollute the soul as to keep impure thoughts before the mind long enough to make the confession, and to *state* them in words. Nothing gives a man so much power over a female as to have it supposed that it is required by religion, and appertains to the sacred office, that all that passes in the mind should be disclosed to him. The thought which but for the necessity of confession would have vanished at once; the image which would have departed as soon as it came before the mind but for the necessity of retaining it to make confession—these are the things over which a man would seek to have control, and to which he would desire to have access, if he wished to accomplish purposes of villany. *The very thing which a seducer would desire would be the power of knowing all the thoughts of his intended victim; and if the thoughts which pass through the soul could be known, virtue would be safe nowhere*. Nothing probably under the name of religion has ever done more to corrupt the morals of a community than the practice of auricular confession.

And pray one for another. One for the other; mutually. Those who have done injury, and those who are injured, should pray for each other. The apostle does not seem here, as in Jas 5:14-15, to refer particularly to the prayers of the ministers of religion, or the elders of the church, but refers to it as a duty appertaining to all Christians.

That ye may be healed. Not with reference to death, and therefore not relating to "extreme unction," but in order that the sick may be restored again to health. This is said in connexion with the duty of *confession*, as well as *prayer*; and it seems to be implied that both might contribute to a restoration to health. Of the way in which *prayer* would do this, there can be no doubt; for all healing comes from God, and it is reasonable to suppose that this might be bestowed in answer to prayer. Of the way in which *confession* might do this, see the remarks already made. We should be deciding without evidence if we should say that sickness never comes now as a particular judgment for some forms of sin, and that it might not be removed if the suffering offender would make full confession to God, or to him whom he has wronged, and should resolve to offend no more. Perhaps this is, oftener than we suppose, one of the methods which God takes to bring his

offending and backsliding children back to himself, or to warn and reclaim the guilty. When, after being laid on a bed of pain, his children are led to reflect on their violated vows and their unfaithfulness, and resolve to sin no more, they are raised up again to health, and made eminently useful to the church. So calamity, by disease or in other forms, often comes upon the vicious and the abandoned. They are led to reflection and to repentance. They resolve to reform, and the natural effects of their sinful course are arrested, and they become examples of virtue and usefulness in the world.

The effectual fervent prayer. The word effectual is not the most happy translation here, since it seems to do little more than to state a truism—that a prayer which is *effectual* is *availing*—that is, that it *is* effectual. The Greek word (*energoumenh*) would be better rendered by the word *energetic*, which indeed is derived from it. The word properly refers to that which has power; which in its own nature is fitted to produce an effect. It is not so much that it actually *does* produce an effect, as that it is *fitted* to do it. This is the kind of prayer referred to here. It is not listless, indifferent, cold, lifeless, as if there were no vitality in it, or power, but that which is adapted to be efficient—earnest, sincere, hearty, persevering. There is but a single word in the original to answer to the translation *effectual fervent*. Macknight and Doddridge suppose that the reference is to a kind of prayer "*inwrought* by the Spirit," or the "*inwrought* prayer;" but the whole force of the original is expressed by the word *energetic*, or *earnest*.

Of a righteous man. The quality on which the success of the prayer depends is not the talent, learning, rank, wealth, or *office* of the man who prays, but the fact that he is a "righteous man," that is, a good man; and this may be found in the ranks of the poor, as certainly as the rich; among laymen, as well as among the ministers of religion; among slaves, as well as among their masters.

Availeth much. *iscuei*. Is strong; has efficacy; prevails. The idea of *strength* or *power* is that which enters into the word; strength that overcomes resistance and secures the object. Compare.Mt 7:28; Ac 19:16; Re 12:8. It has been said that "prayer moves the arm that moves the world;" and if there is anything that can prevail with God, it is prayer— humble, fervent, earnest *petitioning*. We have no power to control him; we cannot dictate or prescribe to him; we cannot resist him in the execution of his purposes; but we may ASK him for what we desire, and he has graciously said that such asking may effect much for our own good and the good of our fellow-men. Nothing has been more clearly demonstrated in the history of the world than that *prayer* is effectual in obtaining blessings from God, and in accomplishing great and valuable purposes. It has indeed no intrinsic power; but God has graciously purposed that his favour shall be granted to those who call upon him, and that what no mere human power can effect should be produced by *his* power in answer to prayer.

{a} "confess your faults" Ac 19:18 {+} "faults" or, "offences" {b} "availeth much" Ps 145:19

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 5 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Elias*. The common way of writing the word *Elijah* in the New Testament, Mt 11:14; Mt 16:14; 17:3, etc.

Was a man subject to like passions as we are. This does not mean that Elijah was *passionate* in the sense in which that word is now commonly used; that is, that he was excitable or irritable,

or that he was the victim of the same corrupt passions and propensities to which other men are subject; but that he was *like afflicted*; that he was capable of suffering the same things, or being affected in the same manner. In other words, he was a mere man, subject to the same weaknesses and infirmities as other men. **See Barnes on "Ac 14:15"**.

The apostle is illustrating the efficacy of prayer. In doing this, he refers to an undoubted case where prayer *had* such efficacy. But to this it might be objected that Elijah was a distinguished prophet, and that it was reasonable to suppose that *his* prayer would be heard. It might be said that his example could not be adduced to prove that the prayers of those who were not favoured with such advantages would be heard; and especially that it could not be argued from his case that the prayers of the ignorant, and of the weak, and of children and of servants, would be answered. To meet this, the apostle says that he was a mere man, with the same natural propensities and infirmities as other men, and that therefore his case is one which should encourage all to pray. It was an instance of the *efficacy* of prayer, and not an illustration of the power of a *prophet*.

And he prayed earnestly. Greek, "He *prayed with prayer*"—a Hebraism, to denote that he prayed earnestly. Compare Lu 22:15. This manner of speaking is common in Hebrew. Compare 1Sa 26:25; Ps 118:18; La 1:2.

The reference here is undoubtedly to 1Ki 17:1. In that place, however, it is not said that Elijah *prayed*, but that he said, "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these three years, but according to my word." Either James interprets this as a prayer, because it could be accomplished only *by* prayer, or he states what had been handed down by tradition as the way in which the miracle was effected. There can be no reasonable doubt that prayer was employed in the case, for even the miracles of the Saviour were accomplished in connexion with prayer, Joh 11:41-42.

That it might not rain. Not to gratify any private resentment of his, but as a punishment on the land for the idolatry which prevailed in the time of Ahab. Famine was one of the principal methods by which God punished his people for their sins.

And it rained not on the earth. On the land of Palestine, for so the word *earth* is frequently understood in the Bible. **See Barnes on "Lu 2:1"**.

There is no reason to suppose that the famine extended beyond the country that was subject to Ahab.

By the space. For the time.

Of three years and six months. **See Barnes on "Lu 4:25"**

to see this explained. Compare Lightfoot, Horae Hebraicae, on Lu 4:25.

{+} "Elias" or, "Elijah" {a} "he prayed earnestly" 1Ki 17:1 {++} "earnestly" or, "in prayer"

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 5 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *And he prayed again*. The allusion here seems to be to 1Ki 18:42,45, though it is not expressly said there that he *prayed*. Perhaps it might be fairly gathered from the narrative that he *did* pray, or at least that would be the presumption, for he put himself into a natural attitude of prayer. "he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees," 1Ki 18:42. In such circumstances, it is to be fairly presumed that such a man *would* pray; but it is remarkable that

it is not expressly mentioned, and quite as remarkable that James should have made his argument turn on a thing which is *not* expressly mentioned, but which seems to have been a matter of *inference*. It seems probable to me, therefore, that there was some tradition on which he relied, or that it was a common interpretation of the passage in 1Ki 18 that Elijah prayed earnestly, and that this was generally believed by those to whom the apostle wrote. Of the *fact* that Elijah was a man of prayer, no one could doubt; and in these circumstances the tradition and common belief were sufficient to justify the argument which is employed here.

And the heaven gave rain. The clouds gave rain. "The heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain," 1Ki 18:45.

And the earth brought forth her fruit. The famine ceased, and the land again became productive. The case referred to here was indeed a miracle, but it was a case of *the power of prayer*, and therefore to the point. If God would work a miracle in answer to prayer, it is reasonable to presume that he will bestow upon us the blessings which we need in the same way.

{a} "he prayed again" 1Ki 18:42,45 {+} "fruit" or, "produce"

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 5 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth*. Either doctrinally and speculatively, by embracing error; or practically, by falling into sinful practices. Either of these may be called "erring from the truth," because they are contrary to what the truth teaches and requires. What is here said does not appear to have any connexion with what precedes, but the apostle seems to have supposed that such a case *might* occur; and, in the conclusion of the epistle, he called their attention to the importance of endeavouring to save an erring brother, if such an instance should happen. The exhortation would be proper in addressing a letter to any church, or in publicly addressing any congregation.

And one convert him. This does not mean *convert him as a sinner*, or *regenerate him*, but turn him from the error of his way; bring him back from his wanderings; re-establish him in the truth, and in the practice of virtue and religion. So far as the word used here is concerned, (*epistreqh*,) he who had erred from the truth, and who was to be converted, may have been a true Christian before. The word means simply *to turn*, sc., from his way of error. **See Barnes on "Lu 22:32"**.

{a} "one convert him" Mt 18:15

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES - Chapter 5 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Let him know*. Let him who converts the other know for his encouragement.

That he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way. *Any* sinner; any one who has done wrong. This is a general principle, applicable to this case and to all others of the same kind. It is a universal truth that he who turns a sinner from a wicked path does a work which is acceptable to God, and which will in some way receive tokens of his approbation. Compare De 12:3. No work which man can perform is more acceptable to God; none will be followed with higher rewards. In

the language which is used here by the apostle, it is evidently intended not to deny that success in converting a sinner, or in reclaiming one from the error of his ways, is to be traced to the grace of God; but the apostle here refers only to the Divine feeling towards the individual who shalt attempt it, and the rewards which he may hope to receive. The reward bestowed, the good intended and done, would be the same as if the individual were able to do the work himself God approves and loves his aims and efforts, though the success is ultimately to be traced to himself.

Shall save a soul from death. It has been doubted whether this refers to his own soul, or to the soul of him who is converted. Several manuscripts, and the Vulgate, Syriac, Arabic, and Coptic versions, here read, "*his soul*." The most natural interpretation of the passage is to refer it to the soul of the one converted, rather than of him who converts him. This accords better with the uniform teaching of the New Testament, since it is nowhere else taught that the method of saving *our* souls is by converting others; and this interpretation will meet all that the scope of the passage demands. The object of the apostle is to present a *motive* for endeavouring to convert one who has wandered away; and assuredly a sufficient motive for that is furnished in the fact, that by this means an immortal soul would be saved from eternal ruin. The word *death* here must refer to eternal death, or to future punishment. There is no other *death* which the soul is in danger of dying. The body dies and moulders away, but the soul is immortal. The apostle cannot mean that he would save the soul from *annihilation*, for it is in no danger of that. This passage proves, then, that there is a death which the soul may die; that there is a condition which may properly be called death as a consequence of sin; and that the soul will suffer that unless it is converted.

And shall hide a multitude of sins. Shall cover them over so that they shall not be seen; that is, they shall not be punished. This must mean either the sins which he has committed who is thus converted and saved, or the sins of him who converts him. Whichever is the meaning, a strong *motive* is presented for endeavouring to save a sinner from the error of his ways. It is not easy to determine which is the true sense. Expositors have been about equally divided respecting the meaning. Doddridge adopts substantially *both* interpretations, paraphrasing it, "not only procuring the pardon of those committed by the convert, but also engaging God to look with greater indulgence on his own character, and to be less ready to mark severely what he has done amiss." The Jews regarded it as a meritorious act to turn a sinner from the error of his ways, and it is *possible* that James may have had some of their maxims in his eye. Compare Clarke, *in loc*. Though it may not be possible to determine with certainty whether the apostle here refers to the sins of him who converts another, or of him who is converted, yet it seems to me that the reference is probably to the latter, for the following reasons:

(1.) Such an interpretation will meet all that is fairly implied in the language.

(2.) This interpretation will furnish a strong motive for what the apostle expects us to do. The motive presented is, according to this, that *sin* will not be punished. But this is always a good motive for putting forth efforts in the cause of religion, and quite as powerful when drawn from our doing good to others as when applied to ourselves.

(3.) This is a *safe* interpretation; the other is attended with danger. According to this, the effort would be one of pure benevolence, and there would be no danger of depending on what we do as a ground of acceptance with God. The other interpretation would seem to teach that *our* sins might be forgiven on some other ground than that of the atonement by virtue of some act of our own. And

(4.) there might be danger, if it be supposed that this refers to the fact that our sins are to be covered up by this act, of supposing that by endeavouring to convert others we may live in sin with

impunity; that however we live, we shall be safe if we lead others to repentance and salvation. If the motive be the simple desire to hide the sins of others—to procure their pardon—to save a soul from death, without any supposition that *by* that we are making an atonement for our own sins—it is a good one, a safe one. But if the idea is that by this act we are making some atonement for our own offences, and that we may thus work out a righteousness of our own, the idea is one that is every way dangerous to the great doctrine of justification by faith, and is contrary to the whole teaching of the Bible. For these reasons it seems to me that the true interpretation is, that the passage refers to the sins of others, not our own; and that the simple motive here presented is, that in this way we may save a fellow-sinner from being punished for his sins. It may be added, in the conclusion of the Notes on this epistle, that this motive is one which is sufficient to stimulate us to great and constant efforts to save others. Sin is the source of all the evil in the universe: and the great object which a benevolent heart ought to have, should be that its desolating effects may be stayed; that the sinner may be pardoned; and that the guilty soul may be saved from its consequences in the future world. This is the design of God in the plan of redemption; this was the object of the Saviour in giving himself to die; this is the purpose of the Holy Spirit in renewing and sanctifying the soul; and this is the great end of all those acts of Divine Providence by which the sinner is warned and turned to God. When we come to die, as we shall soon, it will give us more pleasure to be able to recollect that we have been the means of saving one soul from death, than to have enjoyed all the pleasures which sense can furnish, or to have gained all the honour and wealth which the world can give.

{+} "converteth" or, "turneth" {a} "hide a multitude of sins" Pr 10:12; 1Pe 4:8

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 1

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER.

INTRODUCTION.

THE first epistle of Peter has never been doubted to be the production of the apostle of that name. While there were doubts respecting the genuineness of the second epistle, (see Intro. to that epistle, 1,) the unvarying testimony of history, and the uniform belief of the church, ascribe this epistle to him. Indeed, there is no ancient writing whatever of which there is more certainty in regard to the authorship.

The history of Peter is so fully detailed in the New Testament, that it is not necessary to go into any extended statement of his biography in order to an exposition of his epistles. No particular light would be reflected on them from the details of his life; and in order, therefore, to their exposition, it is not necessary to have any farther information of him than what is contained in the New Testament itself. Those who may wish to obtain all the knowledge of his life which can now be had, may find ample details in Lardner, vol. vi. pp. 203—254, ed. London, 1829; Koppe, Proleg.; and Bacon's Lives of the Apostles, pp. 43—286. There are some questions, however, which it is important to consider in order to an intelligent understanding of his epistles.

I.—-THE PERSONS TO WHOM THE FIRST EPISTLE WAS ADDRESSED.

This epistle purports to have been addressed "to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." All these were provinces of Asia Minor; and there is no difficulty, therefore, in regard to the *places* where those to whom the epistle was written resided. The only question is, who they were who are thus designated as "strangers scattered abroad," or *strangers of the dispersion*, (*parepidhmoiv diasporav*.) Comp. Notes on 1Pe 1:1. In regard to this, various opinions have been held.

(1.) That they were native-born Jews, who had been converted to the Christian faith. Of this opinion were Eusebius, Jerome, Grotius, Beza, Mill, Cave, and others. The principal argument for this opinion is the appellation given to them, (1Pe 1:1,) "strangers scattered abroad," and what is said in 1Pe 2:9 3:6, which it is supposed is language which would be applied only to those of Hebrew extraction.

(2.) A second opinion has been that the persons to whom it was sent were all of Gentile origin. Of this opinion were Procopius, Cassiodorus, and more recently Wetstein. This belief is founded chiefly on such passages as the following: 1Pe 1:18 2:10, 4:3

—-which are supposed to show that they who were thus addressed were formerly idolaters.

(3.) A third opinion has been that they were Gentiles by birth, but had been Jewish proselytes, or" proselytes of the gate," and had then been converted to Christianity. This sentiment was defended

by Michaelis, chiefly on the ground that the phrase in 1Pe 1:1, "strangers of the dispersion," when followed by the name of a heathen country or people, in the genitive ease, denotes the Jews who were dispersed there, and yet that there is evidence in the epistle that they were not native-born Jews.

(4.) A fourth opinion has been that the persons referred to were not Jews in general, but those of the ten tribes who had wandered from Babylon and the adjacent regions into Asia Minor. This opinion is mentioned by Michaelis as having been entertained by some persons, but no reasons are assigned for it.

(5.) A fifth opinion has been that the persons referred to were Christians, converted from both Jews and Gentiles, with no particular reference to their extraction; that there were those among them who had been converted from the Jews, and those who had been Gentiles, and that the apostle addresses them as Christians, though employing language such as the Jews had been accustomed to, when speaking of those of their own nation who were scattered abroad. This is the opinion of Lardner, Estius, Whitby, Wolffus, and Doddridge.

That this last opinion is the correct one, seems to me to be clear from the epistle itself. Nothing can be plainer than that the apostle, while in the main he addresses Christians as such, whether they had been Jews or heathen, yet occasionally makes such allusions, and uses such language, as to show that he had his eye, at one time, on some who had been Jews, and again on some who had been pagans. This is clear, I think, from the following considerations:

(1.) The address of the epistle is general, not directed particularly either to the Jews or to the Gentiles. Thus in 1Pe 5:14, he says, "Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus." From this it would seem that the epistle was addressed to *all* true Christians in the region designated in 1Pe 1:1. But no one can doubt that there were Christians there who had been Jews, and also those who had been Gentiles. The same thing is apparent from the second epistle; for it is certain, from 2Pe 3:2, that the second epistle was addressed to the same persons as the first. But the address in the second epistle is to Christians residing in Asia Minor, without particular reference to their origin. Thus in 1Pe 1:1, "To them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." The same thing is apparent also from the address of the first epistle: "To the elect strangers scattered throughout Pontus," etc.; that is, "to the strangers of the dispersion who are chosen, or who are true Christians, scattered abroad." The term "elect" is one which would apply to all who were Christians; and the phrase, "the strangers of the dispersion," is that which one who had been educated as a Hebrew would be likely to apply to those whom he regarded as the people of God dwelling out of Palestine. The Jews were accustomed to use this expression to denote their own people who were dispersed among the Gentiles; and nothing would be more natural than that one who had been educated as a Hebrew, and then converted to Christianity, as Peter had been, should apply this phrase indiscriminately to Christians living out of Palestine. See the Notes on the passage. These considerations make it clear that in writing this epistle he had reference to Christians *as such*, and meant that *all* who were Christians in the parts of Asia Minor which he mentions, (1Pe 1:1,) should regard the epistle as addressed to them.

(2.) Yet there are some allusions in the epistle which look as if a part of them at least had been Jews before their conversion, or such as a Jew would better understand than a Gentile would. Indeed, nothing is more probable than that there were Jewish converts in that region. We know that there were many Jews in Asia Minor; and, from the Acts of the Apostles, it is morally certain that not a few of them had been converted to the Christian faith under the labours of Paul. Of the allusions

of the kind referred to in the epistle, the following may be taken as specimens: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people," 1Pe 2:9. This is such language as was commonly used by the Jews when addressing their own countrymen as the people of God; and would seem to imply that to some of those at least to whom the epistle was addressed, it was language which would be familiar. See also 1Pe 3:6. It should be said, however, that these passages are not *positive* proof that any among them were Hebrews. While it is true that it is such language as would be naturally employed in addressing those who were, and while it supposes an acquaintance among them with the Old Testament, it is also true that it is such language as one who had himself been educated as an Hebrew would not unnaturally employ when addressing any whom he regarded as the people of God.

(3.) The passages in the epistle which imply that many of those to whom it was addressed had been Gentiles or idolaters, are still more clear. Such passages are the following: "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts in your ignorance," 1Pe 1:14. "This," says Dr. Lardner," might be very pertinently said to men converted from Gentilism to Christianity; but no such thing is ever said by the apostles concerning the Jewish people who had been favoured with the Divine revelation, and had the knowledge of the true God." So in 1Pe 2:9, Peter speaks of them as "having been called out of darkness into marvellous light." The word "darkness" is one which would be naturally applied to those who had been heathens, but would not be likely to be applied to those who had had the knowledge of God as revealed in the Jewish Scriptures. So in 1Pe 2:10, it is expressly said of them, "which in time past was not a people, but are now the people of God"—language which would not be applied to those who had been Jews. So also 1Pe 4:3, "For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries." Though the apostle here uses the word "us," grouping himself with them, yet it cannot be supposed that he means to charge himself with these things. It is a mild and gentle way of speech, adopted not to give offence, and is such language as a minister of the gospel would now use, who felt that he was himself a sinner, in addressing a church made up of many individuals. Though it might be true that he had not been guilty of the particular offences which he specifies, yet in speaking in the name of the church, he would use the term we, and use it honestly and correctly. It would be true that the church had been formerly guilty of these things; and this would be a much more mild, proper, and effective method of address, than to say you. But the passages adduced here prove conclusively that some of those whom Peter addresses in the epistle had been formerly idolaters, and had been addicted to the sins which idolaters are accustomed to commit.

These considerations make it clear that the epistle was addressed to those Christians in general who were scattered throughout the various provinces of Asia Minor Which are specified in 1Pe 1:1, whether they had been Jews or Gentiles. It is probable that the great body of them had been converted from the heathen, though there were doubtless Jewish converts intermingled with them; and Peter uses such language as would be natural for one who had been a Jew himself' in addressing those whom he now regarded as the chosen of God.

II.—-THE TIME AND PLACE OF WRITING THE EPISTLE.

On this point also there has been no little diversity of opinion. The only designation of the place where it was written which occurs in the epistle is in 1Pe 5:13: "The church that is at *Babylon*, elected together with you, saluteth you." From this it is clear that it was written at Babylon, but still there has been no little difference of opinion as to what place is meant here by Babylon. Some

have supposed that it refers to the well-known place of that name on the Euphrates; others to a Babylon situated in Lower Egypt; others to Jerusalem or Rome, represented as Babylon. The claims of each of these places it is proper to examine. The order in which this is done is not material.

(1.) The opinion that the" Babylon" mentioned in the epistle refers to a place of that name in Egypt, not far from Cairo. This opinion was held by Pearson and Le Clerc, and by most of the *Coptic* interpreters, who have endeavoured to vindicate the honour of their own country, Egypt, as a place where one of the books of Scripture was composed. See Koppe, Proleg. 12. That there *was* such a place in Egypt, there can be no doubt. It was a small town to the north-east of Cairo, where there was a strong castle in the time of Strabo, (i. 17, p. 807,) in which, under Tiberius, there were quartered three Roman legions, designed to keep the Egyptians in order. But there is little reason to suppose that there were many Jews there, or that a church was early collected there. The Jews would have been little likely to resort to a place which was merely a Roman garrison, nor would the apostles have been likely to go early to such a place to preach the gospel. Comp. Basnage, Ant. 36, num. xxvii. As Lardner well remarks, if Peter had written an epistle from Egypt, it would have been likely to have been from Alexandria. Besides, there is not, for the first four centuries, any notice of a church at Babylon in Egypt; a fact which can hardly be accounted for, if it had been supposed that one of the sacred books had been composed there.—Lardner, vol. vi. 265. It may be added, also, that as there was another place of that name on the Euphrates, a place much better known, and which would be naturally supposed to be the one referred to, it is probable that if the epistle had been composed at the Babylon in Egypt, there would have been something said clearly to distinguish it. If the epistle was written at the Babylon on the Euphrates, so well known was that place that no one would be likely to understand that the Babylon in Egypt was the place referred to; on the other supposition, however, nothing would be more likely than that a mistake should occur.

(2.) Others have supposed that Jerusalem is intended, and that the name was given to it on account of its wickedness, and because it resembled Babylon. This was the opinion of Capellus, Spanheim, Hardouin, and some others. But the objections to this are obvious:

(a.) There is no evidence that the name *Babylon* was ever given to Jerusalem, or *so* given to it as to make it commonly understood that that was the place intended when the term was employed. If not so, its use would be likely to lead those to whom the epistle was addressed into a mistake.

(b.) There is every reason to suppose that an apostle in writing a letter, if he mentioned the place at all where it was written, would mention the real name. So Paul uniformly does.

(c.) The name Babylon is not one which an apostle would be likely to give to Jerusalem; certainly not as the name by which it was to be familiarly known.

(d.) If the epistle had been written there, there is no conceivable reason why the name of the place should not have been mentioned.

(3.) Others have supposed that *Rome* is intended by the name Babylon. This was the opinion of many of the Fathers, and also of Bede, Valesills, Grotius, Cave, Whitby, and Lardner. The principal reasons for this are, that such is the testimony of Papias, Eusebius, and Jerome; and that at that time Babylon on the Euphrates was destroyed. See Lardner. But the objections to this opinion seem to me to be insuperable.

(a.) There is no evidence that at that early period the name Babylon was given to Rome, nor were there any existing reasons why it should be. The name is generally supposed to have been applied to it by John, in the book of Revelation, (Re 16:19 17:5, 18:10,21;) but this was probably

long after this epistle was written, and for reasons which did not exist in the time of Peter. There is no evidence that it was given familiarly to it in the time of Peter, or even at all until after his death. Certain it is, that it was not given so familiarly to it that when the name Babylon was mentioned it would be generally understood that Rome was intended. But the only reason which Peter could have had for mentioning the name Babylon at all, was to convey some definite and certain information to those to whom he wrote.

(b.) As has been already observed, the apostles, when they sent an epistle to the churches, and mentioned a place as the one where the epistle was written, were accustomed to mention the real place.

(c.) It would be hardly consistent with the dignity of an apostle, or any grave writer, to make use of what would be regarded as a nickname, when suggesting the name of a place where he then was.

(d.) If Rome had been meant, it would have been hardly respectful *to the church* there which sent the salutation—"The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you"—to have given it this name. Peter mentions the church with respect and kindness; and yet it would have been scarcely regarded as kind to mention it as a, "church *in Babylon*," if he used the term Babylon, as he must have done on such a supposition, to denote a place of eminent depravity.

(e.) The testimony of the Fathers on this subject does not demonstrate that Rome was the place intended. So far as appears from the extracts relied on by Lardner, they do not give this as *historical testimony*, but as their own interpretation; and, from anything that appears, we are as well qualified to interpret the word as they were.

(f.) In regard to the objection that Babylon was at that time destroyed, it may be remarked that this is true so far as the original splendour of the city was concerned, but still there may have been a sufficient population there to have constituted a church. The destruction of Babylon was gradual. It had not become an utter desert in the time of the apostles. In the first century of the Christian era a part of it was inhabited, though the greater portion of its former site was a waste. **See Barnes "Isa 13:19".**

Comp. Diod. Sic., ii. 27. All that time, there is no improbability in supposing that a Christian church may have existed there. It should be added here, however, that on the supposition that the word Babylon refers to Rome, rests nearly all the evidence which the Roman Catholics can adduce that the apostle Peter was ever at Rome at all. There is nothing else in the New Testament that furnishes the slightest proof that he ever was there. The only passage on which Bellarmine relies to show that Peter was at Rome, is the very passage now under consideration. "That Peter was one time at Rome," he says, "we show first from the testimony of Peter himself, who thus speaks at the end of his first epistle: 'The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you.'" He does not pretend to cite any other evidence from Scripture than this; nor does any other writer.

(4.) There remains the fourth opinion, that the well-known Babylon on the Euphrates was the place where the epistle was written. This was the opinion of Erasmus, Drusius, Lightfoot, Bengel, Wetstein, Bashage, Beausobre, and others. That this is the correct opinion seems to me to be clear from the following considerations:

(a.) It is the most natural and obvious interpretation. It is that which would occur to the great mass of the readers of the New Testament now, and is that which would have been naturally adopted by those to whom the epistle was sent. The word *Babylon*, without something to give it a different application, would have been understood anywhere to denote the well-known place on the Euphrates.

(b.) There is, as has been observed already, no improbability that there was a Christian church there, but there are several circumstances which render it probable that this would be the case:

1st. Babylon had been an important place; and its history was such, and its relation to the Jews such, as to make it probable that the attention of the apostles would be turned to it.

2nd. The apostles, according to all the traditions which we have respecting them, travelled extensively in the East, and nothing would be more natural than that they should visit Babylon.

3rd. There were many Jews of the captivity remaining in that region, and it would be in the highest degree probable that they would seek to carry the gospel to their own countrymen there. See Koppe, Proleg., pp. 16—18. Jos. Ant., b. xv., chap. ii., 2; chap. iii., 1. Philo. De Virtut., p. 587.

These considerations make it clear that the place where the epistle was written was Babylon on the Euphrates, the place so celebrated in ancient sacred and profane history. If this be the correct view, then this is a fact of much interest, as showing that even in apostolic times there was a true church in a place once so distinguished for splendour and wickedness, and so memorable for its acts in oppressing the ancient people of God. Our information respecting this church, however, ceases here. We know not by whom it was founded; we know not who were its pastors; nor do we know how long it survived. As Babylon, however, continued rapidly to decline, so that in the second century nothing remained but the walls, (comp. **See Barnes** "Isa 13:19,) there is no reason to suppose that the church long existed there. Soon the ancient city became a heap of ruins; and excepting that now and then a Christian traveller or missionary has visited it, it is not known that a prayer has been offered there from generation to generation, or that amidst the desolations there has been a single worshipper of the true God. See this subject examined at length in Bacon's Lives of the Apostles, pp. 58-263.

In regard to the *time* when this first epistle was written, nothing certainly can be determined. There are no marks of time in the epistle itself, and there are no certain data from which we can determine when it was composed. Lardner supposes that it was in the year 63, or 64, or at the latest 65; Michaelis, that it was about the year 60. If it was written at Babylon, it was probably some time between the year 58 and 61. The time is not material, and it is impossible now to determine it.

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Christian will find more that is adapted to his matured feelings, or to which he will more naturally turn.

(2.) There is great compactness and terseness of thought in his epistles. They seem to be composed of a succession of *texts*, each one fitted to constitute the subject of a discourse. There is more that a pastor would like to preach on in a course of expository lectures, and less that he would be disposed to pass over as not so well adapted to the purposes of public instruction, than in almost any other part of the New Testament. There is almost nothing that is local or of temporary interest; there are no discussions about points pertaining to Jewish customs such as we meet with in Paul; there is little that pertains particularly to one age of the world or country. Almost all that he has written is of universal applicability to Christians, and may be read with as much interest and profit now by us as by the people to whom his epistles were addressed.

(3.) There is evidence in the epistles of Peter that the author was well acquainted with the writings of the apostle Paul. See this point illustrated at length in Eichhorn, Einleitung in das Neue Tes. viii. 606—618, 284, and Michaelis, Intro., vol. iv. p. 323, seq. Peter himself speaks of his acquaintance with the epistles of Paul, and ranks them with the inspired Writings. 2Pe 3:15,16, "Even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction." Indeed, to any one who will attentively compare the epistles of Peter with those of Paul, it will be apparent that he was acquainted with the writings of the Apostle of the Gentiles, and had become so familiar with the modes of expression which he employed, that he naturally fell into it. There is that kind of coincidence which would be expected when one was accustomed to read what another had written, and when he had great respect for him, but not that when there was a purpose to *borrow or copy* from him. This will be apparent by a reference to a few parallel passages:—

PAUL PETER

Eph 1:3. Blessed be the God 1Pe 1:3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. See also 2Co 1:3. Christ.

Col 3:8. But now ye also put 1Pe 2:1. Wherefore laying off all these; anger, wrath, aside all malice, and all guile malice, blasphemy, filthy and all hypocrisies, and envies, blasphemies out of your mouth. and all evil speakings.

Eph 5:22. Wives, submit your- 1Pe 3:1. Likewise ye wives selves to your own husbands as be in subjection to your own hus- unto the Lord. bands.

Eph 5:21. Submitting your- 1Pe 5:6. Yea, all of you be selves one to another in the fear subject one to another. of God.

1Th 5:6. Let us watch and 1Pe 5:8. Be sober: be vigi- be sober. lant. [in the Greek the same words, though the order is re-
versed.]

1Co 16:20. Greet ye one 1Pe 5:14. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss. 2Co 13:12. another with a kiss of love, Ro 16:16 1Th 5:26 (*en filhmati agaphv*).

Ro 8:18. The glory that 1Pe 5:1. The glory that shall shall be revealed unto us. be revealed.

Ro 4:24. If we believe on 1Pe 1:21. Who by him do him that raised up Jesus our Lord believe in God, that raised him from the dead. up from the dead.

Ro 13:1,3,4.

Let every 1Pe 2:13,14. Submit your- soul be subject unto the higher selves to every ordinance of man powers. For there is no power for the Lord's sake; whether it but of God; the powers that be be to the king, as supreme; or are ordained of God ....Do that unto governors, as unto them that which is good, and thou shalt are sent by him for the punish- have praise of the same....For ment of evil doers, and for the he is a minister of God, a praise of them that do well. revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

See also the following passages:

Ro 12:6,7. 1Pe 4:10.
1Ti 2:9. 1Pe 3:3.
1Ti 5:5. 1Pe 3:5.

These coincidences are not such as would occur between two authors when one had no acquaintance with the writings of the other; and they thus demonstrate, what may be implied in 2Pe 3:15, that Peter was familiar with the epistles of Paul. This also would seem to imply that the epistles of Paul were in general circulation.

(4.) "In the structure of his periods," says Michaelis, "St. Peter has this peculiarity, that he is fond of beginning a sentence in such a manner that it shall refer to a principal word in the preceding. The consequence of this structure is, that the sentences, instead of being rounded, according to the manner of the Greeks, are drawn out to a great length; and in many places where we should expect that a sentence would be closed, a new clause is attached, and another again to this, so that before the whole period comes to an end, it contains parts which, at the commencement of the period, do not appear to have been designed for it." This manner of writing is also found often in the epistles of Paul.

The canonical authority of this epistle has never been disputed. For a view of the contents of it, see the analyses prefixed to the several chapters.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER.

CHAPTER I.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

This epistle was evidently addressed to those who were passing through severe trials, and probably to those who were, at that time, enduring persecution, 1Pe 1:6,7, 3:14 4:1,12-19.

The main object of this chapter is to comfort them in their trials; to suggest such considerations as would enable them to bear them with the right spirit, and to show the sustaining, elevating, and purifying power of the gospel. In doing this, the apostle adverts to the following considerations:—

(1.) He reminds them that they were the elect of God; that they had been chosen according to his foreknowledge, by the sanctifying agency of the Holy Ghost, and in order that they might be obedient, 1Pe 1:1,2.

(2.) He reminds them of the lively hope to which they had been begotten, and of the inheritance that was reserved for them in heaven. That inheritance was incorruptible, and undefiled, and glorious; it would be certainly theirs, for they would be kept by the power of God unto it, though now they were subjected to severe trials, 1Pe 1:3-6.

(3.) Even now they could rejoice in hope of that inheritance, (1Pe 1:6;) their trial was of great importance to themselves in order to test the genuineness of their piety, (1Pe 1:7;) and in the midst of all their sufferings they could rejoice in the love of their unseen Saviour, (1Pe 1:8;) and they

would certainly obtain the great object for which they had believed—the salvation of their souls, 1Pe 1:9. By these considerations the apostle would reconcile them to their sufferings; for they would thus show the genuineness and value of Christian piety, and would be admitted at last to higher honour.

(4.) The apostle proceeds, in order further to reconcile them to their sufferings, to say that the nature of the salvation which they would receive had been an object of earnest inquiry by the prophets. They had searched diligently to know precisely what the Spirit by which they were inspired meant by the revelations given to them, and they had understood that they ministered to the welfare of those who should come after them, 1Pe 1:10-12. Those who thus suffered ought, therefore, to rejoice in a salvation which had been revealed to them in this manner; and in the fact that they had knowledge which had not been vouchsafed even to the prophets; and under these circumstances they ought to be willing to bear the trials which had been brought upon them by a religion so communicated to them.

(5.) In view of these things, the apostle (1Pe 1:13-17) exhorts them to be faithful and persevering to the end. In anticipation of what was to be revealed to them at the final day, they should be sober and obedient; and as he who had called them into his kingdom was holy, so it became them to be holy also.

(6.) This consideration is enforced (1Pe 1:18-21) by a reference to the price that was paid for their redemption. They should remember that they had been redeemed, not with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ. He had been appointed from eternity to be their Redeemer; he had been manifested in those times for them; he had been raised from the dead for them, and their faith and hope were through him. For these reasons they ought to be steadfast in their attachment to him.

(7.) The apostle enjoins on them the especial duty of brotherly love, 1Pe 1:22,23. They had purified their hearts by obeying the truth, and as they were all one family, they should love one another fervently. Thus they would show to their enemies and persecutors the transforming nature of their religions and furnish an impressive proof of its reality.

(8.) To confirm all these views, the apostle reminds them that all flesh must soon die. The glory of man would fade away. Nothing would abide but the word of the Lord. They themselves would soon die, and be released from their troubles, and they should be willing, therefore, to bear trials for a little time. The great and the rich, and those apparently more favoured in this life, would soon disappear, and all the splendour of their condition would vanish; and they should not envy them, or repine at their own more humble and painful lot, 1Pe 1:24,25. The keenest sufferings here are brief and the highest honours and splendours of life here soon vanish away; and our main solicitude should be for the eternal inheritance. Having the prospect of that, and building on the sure word of God, which abides forever, we need not shrink from the trials appointed to us here below.

Verse 1. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ. On the word apostle, **See Barnes "Ro 1:1"**; **See Barnes** "1Co 9:1, seq.

To the strangers. In the Greek, the word "elect" (1Pe 1:2) occurs here: *eklektoiv parepidhmoiv*, "to the elect strangers." He here addresses them as elect; in the following verse he shows them in what way they were elected. See the Notes there. The word rendered *strangers* occurs only in three places in the New Testament; Heb 11:13 1Pe 2:11, where it is rendered *pilgrims*, and in the place before us. **See Barnes "Heb 11:13"**.

The word means, literally, a *by-resident*, a sojourner among a people not one's own.—*Robinson*. There has been much diversity of opinion as to the persons here referred to: some supposing that the epistle was written to those who had been Jews, who were now converted, and who were known by the common appellation among their countrymen as "the scattered abroad," or the "dispersion ;" that is, those who were strangers or sojourners away from their native land; others, that the reference is to those who were called, among the Jews, "proselytes of the gate," or those who were admitted to certain external privileges among the Jews, (**See Barnes "Mt 23:15"**;) and others, that the allusion is to Christians as such, without reference to their origin, and who are spoken of as strangers and pilgrims. That the apostle did not write merely to those who had been Jews, is clear from 1Pe 4:3,4, (comp. Intro. & 1;) and it seems probable that he means here *Christians as such*, without reference to their origin, who were scattered through the various provinces of Asia Minor. Yet it seems also probable that he did not use the term as denoting that they were "strangers and pilgrims on the earth," or with reference to the fact that the earth was not their home, as the word is used in Heb 11:13; but that he used the term as a Jew would naturally use it, accustomed, as he was, to employ it as denoting his own countrymen dwelling in distant lands, he would regard them still as the people of God, though dispersed abroad; as those who were away from what was properly the home of their fathers. So Peter addresses these Christians as the people of God, now scattered abroad; as similar in their condition to the Jews who had been dispersed among the Gentiles. Comp. the Intro., & 1. It is not necessarily implied that these persons were strangers to Peter, or that he had never seen them; though this was not improbably the fact in regard to most of them.

Scattered. Greek, *of the dispersion*, (*diasporav*;) a term which a Jew would be likely to use who spoke of his countrymen dwelling among the heathen. **See Barnes "Joh 7:35** Jas 1:1, where the same Greek word is found. It does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. Here, however, it is applied to Christians as dispersed or scattered abroad,

Throughout Pontus, etc. These were provinces of Asia Minor. Their position may be seen in the map prefixed to the Acts of the Apostles. On the situation of Pontus, **See Barnes "Ac 2:9"**.

Galatia. On the situation of this province, and its history, see Intro. to the Notes on Galatians, & 1.

Cappadocia. **See Barnes "Ac 2:9"**.

Asia. Meaning a province of Asia Minor, of which Ephesus was the capital. **See Barnes "Ac 2:9"**.

And Bithynia. **See Barnes "Ac 16:7"**.

{*} "strangers" "sojourners" {a} "Bithynia" Ac 8:4

Verse 2. *Elect*. That is, chosen. The meaning here is, that they were *in fact* chosen. The word does not refer to the *purpose to choose*, but to the fact that they were chosen or selected by God as his people. It is a word commonly applied to the people of God as being chosen out of the world, and called to be his. The use of the word does not determine whether God had a previous eternal purpose to choose them or not. That must be determined by something else than the mere use of the term. This word has reference to the act of selecting them, without throwing any light on the question why it was done. See Mt 24:22,24,31 Mr 13:20 Lu 18:7; Ro 8:33; Col 3:12. Comp. **See Barnes "Joh 15:16"**.

The meaning is, that God had, on *some* account, a preference for them above others as his people, and had chosen them from the midst of others to be heirs of salvation. The word should be properly understood as applied to the *act* of choosing them, not to the *purpose* to choose them; the

fact of his selecting them to be his, not the *doctrine* that he would choose them; and is a word, therefore, which should be freely and gratefully used by all Christians, for it is a word in frequent use in the Bible, and there is nothing for which men should be more grateful than the fact that God has chosen them to salvation. *Elsewhere* we learn that the purpose to choose them was eternal, and that the reason of it was his own good pleasure. **See Barnes "Eph 1:4,5".**

We are here also informed that it was in accordance with "the foreknowledge of God the Father."

According to the foreknowledge of God the Father. The Father is regarded, in the Scriptures, as the Author of the plan of salvation, and as having chosen his people to life, and given them to his Son to redeem and save, Joh 6:37,65, 17:2,6,11.

It is affirmed here that the fact that they were elect was in some sense in accordance with the "foreknowledge of God." On the meaning of the phrase, **See Barnes "Ro 8:29".**

The passage does not affirm that *the thing* which God "foreknew," and which was the reason of their being chosen, was, that they would of themselves be disposed to embrace the offer of salvation. The foreknowledge referred to might have been of many other things as constituting the reason which operated in the case; and it is not proper to *assume* that it could have been of this alone. It *may* mean that God foreknew all the events which would ever occur, and that he saw reasons why they should be selected rather than others; or that he foreknew all that could be made to bear on their salvation; or that he foreknew all that he would himself do to secure their salvation; or that he foreknew them as having been designated by his own eternal counsels; or that he foreknew all that could be accomplished by their instrumentality; or that he saw that they would believe; but it should not be assumed that the word means necessarily any one of these things. The simple fact here affirmed, which no one can deny, is, that there was *foreknowledge* in the case on the part of God. It was not the result of ignorance or of blind chance that they were selected. But if *foreknown*, must it not be *certain*? How could a thing which is foreknown be contingent or doubtful? The essential idea here is, that the original *choice* was on the part of God, and not on *their* part, and that this choice was founded on what he before knew to be best. He undoubtedly saw good and sufficient *reasons* why the choice should fall on them. I do not know that the reasons why he did it are revealed, or that they could be fully comprehended by us if they were. I am quite certain that it is *not* stated that it is because they would be more disposed of themselves to embrace the Saviour than others; for the Scriptures abundantly teach, what every regenerated person feels to be true, that the fact that we are disposed to embrace the Saviour is to be traced to a Divine influence on our hearts, and not to ourselves. See Joh 6:65 Ro 9:16; Tit 3:5 Ps 110:2,3.

Through sanctification of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity. The Greek is, "*by* (*en*) sanctification of the Spirit;" that is, it was by this influence or agency. The election that was purposed by the Father was carried into effect by the agency of the Spirit in making them holy. The word rendered *sanctification* (*agiasmov*) is not used here in its usual and technical sense to denote *the progressive holiness of believers*, but in its more primitive and usual sense of *holiness*. **See Barnes "1Co 1:30".**

It means here *the being made holy*; and the idea is, that we become in fact the chosen or elect of God by a work of the Spirit on our hearts making us holy; that is, renewing us in the Divine image. We are chosen by the Father, but it is necessary that the heart should be renewed and made holy by a work of grace, in order that we may actually *become* his chosen people. Though we are sinners, he proposes to save us; but we are not saved in our sins, nor can we regard ourselves as the children of God until we have evidence that we are born again. The purpose of God to save us

found us unholy, and we become in fact his friends by being renewed in the temper of our mind. A man has reason to think that he is one of the elect of God, just so far as he has evidence that he has been renewed by the Holy Spirit, and so far as he has holiness of heart and life, AND NO FARTHER.

Unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. This expresses the design for which they had been chosen by the Father, and renewed by the Spirit. It was that they might obey God, and lead holy lives. On the phrase "unto obedience," **See Barnes "Ro 1:5"**.

The phrase "unto sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ," means to cleansing from sin, or to holiness, since it was by the sprinkling of that blood that they were to be made holy. See it explained **See Barnes** "Heb 9:18, seq. **See Barnes "Heb 12:24"**.

Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. **See Barnes "Ro 1:7"**.

The phrase "be multiplied" means, "may it abound," or "may it be conferred abundantly on you." From this verse we may learn that they who are chosen should be holy. Just in proportion as they have evidence that God has chosen them at all, they have evidence that he has chosen them to be holy; and, in fact, all the evidence which any man *can* have that he is among the elect, is that he *is* practically a holy man, and desires to become more and more so. No man can penetrate the secret counsels of the Almighty. No one can go up to heaven, and inspect the book of life to see if his name be there. No one should presume that his name is there without evidence. No one should depend on dreams, or raptures, or visions, as proof that his name is there. No one should expect a new revelation declaring to him that he is among the elect. All the proof which any man can have that he is among the chosen of God, is to be found in the evidences of personal piety; and any man who is willing to be a true Christian may have all that evidence in his own case. If any one, then, wishes to settle the question whether he is among the elect or not, the way is plain. Let him become a true Christian, and the whole matter is determined, for that is all the proof which any one has that he is chosen to salvation. Till a man is *willing* to do that, he should not complain of the doctrine of election. If he is not *willing* to become a Christian and to be saved, assuredly he should not complain that those who are think that they have evidence that they are the chosen of God.

{a} "elect" Eph 1:4 {b} "foreknowledge" Ro 8:29 {*} "foreknowledge" "preordination" {c} "sanctification" 2Th 2:13 {d} "unto obedience" Ro 16:26 {e} "sprinkling" Heb 12:24 {f} "multiplied" Jude 1:2

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*. **See Barnes "2Co 1:3"**.

Which according to his abundant mercy. Marg., as in the Greek, *much*. The idea is, that there was great mercy shown them in the fact that they were renewed. They had no claim to the favour, and the favour was great. Men are not begotten to the hope of heaven because they have any claim on God, or because it would not be right for him to withhold the favour. **See Barnes "Eph 2:4"**.

Hath begotten us again. The meaning is, that as God is the Author of our life in a natural sense, so he is the Author of our second life by regeneration. The Saviour said, (Joh 3:3,) that "except a man be born again" or begotten again, *hennhyh anwyen*, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Peter here affirms that that change had occurred in regard to himself and those whom he was addressing.

The word used here as a compound (*anagennaw*) does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament, though it corresponds entirely with the words used by the Saviour in Joh 3:3,5,7.

Perhaps the phrase "*begotten again*" would be better in each instance where the word occurs, the sense being rather that of being begotten again, than of being born again.

Unto a lively hope. The word lively we now use commonly in the sense of *active, animated, quick*; the word here used, however, means *living*, in contradistinction from that which is *dead*. The hope which they had, had living power. It was not cold, inoperative, dead. It was not a mere form—or a mere speculation—or a mere sentiment; it was that which was vital to their welfare, and which was active and powerful. On the nature of hope, **See Barnes "Ro 8:24"**.

Comp. Eph 2:12.

By the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus is the foundation of our hope. It was a confirmation of what he declared as truth when he lived; it was a proof of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul; it was a pledge that all who are united to him will be raised up. **See Barnes** "1Co 15:1, seq. **See Barnes "2Ti 1:10"**; **See Barnes** "1Th 4:14".

On this verse we may remark, that the fact that Christians are *chosen* to salvation should be a subject of gratitude and praise. Every man should rejoice that any of the race may be saved, and the world should be thankful for every new instance of Divine favour in granting to any one a hope of eternal life. Especially should this be a source of joy to true Christians. Well do they know that if God had not chosen them to salvation, they would have remained as thoughtless as others; if he had had no purpose of mercy towards them, they would never have been saved. Assuredly, if there is *anything* for which a man should be grateful, it is that God has so loved him as to give him the hope of eternal life; and if he has had *an eternal purpose* to do this, our gratitude should be proportionably increased.

{g} "Blessed" 2Co 1:3 {1} "abundant" "much" {h} "abundant mercy" Eph 2:4 {i} "again" Joh 3:3,5 {k} "resurrection" 1Co 15:20

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *To an inheritance*. Through the resurrection of the Lord Jesus we now cherish the hope of that future inheritance in heaven. On the word *inheritance*, **See Barnes "Ac 20:32"**; **See Barnes** "Eph 1:11, **See Barnes** "Eph 1:14, **See Barnes "Eph 1:18"**; **See Barnes** "Col 1:12".

Christians are regarded as the adopted children of God, and heaven is spoken of as their *inheritance*—as what their Father will bestow on them as the proof of his love.

Incorruptible. It will not fade away and vanish, as that which we inherit in this world does. See the word explained **See Barnes "1Co 9:25"**.

The meaning here is, that the inheritance will be imperishable, or will endure for ever. Here, to whatever we may be heirs, we must soon part with the inheritance; there it will be eternal.

And undefiled. **See Barnes "Heb 7:26"**; **See Barnes "Heb 13:4"**; **See Barnes** "Jas 1:27".

The word does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. As applied to an inheritance, it means that it will be *pure*. It will not have been obtained by dishonesty, nor will it be held by fraud; it will not be such as will corrupt the soul, or tempt to extravagance, sensuality, and lust, as a rich inheritance often does here; it will be such that its eternal enjoyment will never tend in any manner

to defile the heart. "How many estates," says Benson, "have been got by fraudulent and unjust methods; by poisoning, or in some other way murdering the right heir; by cheating of helpless orphans; by ruining the fatherless and widows; by oppressing their neighbours, or grinding the faces of the poor, and taking their garments or vineyards from them! But this future inheritance of the saints is stained by none of these vices; it is neither got nor detained by any of these methods; nor shall persons polluted with vice have any share in it." Here no one can be heir to an inheritance of gold or houses without danger of soon sinking into indolence, effeminacy, or vice; there the inheritance may be enjoyed for ever, and the soul continually advance in, knowledge, holiness, and the active service of God.

And that fadeth not away. Gr. *amaranton*. This word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, though the word *amarantinov* (*amarantine*) occurs in

@1Pe 5:4, applied to a crown or garland. The word is properly applied to that which does not fade or wither, in contradistinction from a flower that fades. It may then denote anything that is enduring, and is applied to the future inheritance of the saints to describe its perpetuity *in all its brilliance and splendour*, in contrast with the fading nature of all that is earthly. The idea here, therefore, is not precisely the same as is expressed by the word "incorruptible." Both words indeed denote *perpetuity*, but that refers to perpetuity in contrast with *decay*; this denotes perpetuity in the sense that everything there *will be kept in its original brightness and beauty*. The crown of glory, though worn for millions of ages, will not be dimmed; the golden streets will lose none of their lustre; the flowers that bloom on the banks of the river of life will always be as rich in colour, and as fragrant, as when we first beheld them.

Reserved in heaven for you. Marg., *us*. The difference in the text margin arises from the various readings in MSS. The common reading is "for *you*." The sense is not materially affected. The idea is, that it is an inheritance appointed for us, and kept by one who can make it sure to us, and who will certainly bestow it upon us. **See Barnes "Mt 25:34"**; **See Barnes** "Joh 14:2"; **See Barnes "Col 1:5"**.

{a} "inheritance" Heb 9:15 {b} "fadeth" 1Pe 5:4 {c} "reserved" Col 1:5

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Who are kept by the power of God*. That is, "kept" or preserved in the faith and hope of the gospel; who are preserved from apostasy, or so kept that you will finally obtain salvation. The word which is here used and rendered *kept*, (*frourew—phroureo*,) is rendered in 2Co 11:32, *kept with a garrison*; in Ga 3:23, and here, *kept*; in Php 4:7, *shall keep*. It does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It means to keep, as in a garrison or fortress; or as with a military watch. The idea is, that there was a faithful guardianship exercised over them to save them from danger, as a castle or garrison is watched to guard it against the approach of an enemy. The meaning is, that they were weak in themselves, and were surrounded by temptations; and that the only reason why they were preserved was, that God exerted his power to keep them. The only reason which any Christians have to suppose they will ever reach heaven, is the fact that God keeps them by his own power. Comp. **See Barnes "Php 1:6"**; **See Barnes** "2Ti 1:12"; **See Barnes "2Ti 4:18"**.

If it were left to the will of man; to the strength of his own resolutions; to his power to meet temptations, and to any probability that he would of himself continue to walk in the path of life, there would be no certainty that any one would be saved.

Through faith. That is, he does not keep us by the mere exertion of power, but he excites *faith* in our hearts, and makes that the means of keeping us. As long as we have faith in God, and in his promises, we are safe. When that fails, we are weak; and if it should fail altogether, we could not be saved. **See Barnes "Eph 2:8"**.

Unto salvation. Not preserved for a little period, and then suffered to fall away, but so kept as to be saved. We may remark here that Peter, as well as Paul, believed in the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. If he did not, how could he have addressed these Christians in this manner, and said that they were "*kept by the power of God unto salvation*". What evidence could he have had that they would obtain salvation, unless he believed in the general truth that it was the purpose of God to keep all who were truly converted?

Ready to be revealed in the last time. That is, when the world shall close. Then it shall be made manifest to assembled worlds that such an inheritance was "reserved" for you, and that you were "kept" in order to inherit it. **See Barnes "Mt 25:34"**.

This verse, then, teaches that the doctrine that the saints will persevere and be saved, is true. They are "*kept* by the power of God to salvation;" and as God has all power, and guards them with reference to this end, it cannot be but that they will be saved. It may be added,

(a.) that it is very *desirable* that the doctrine should be true. Man is so weak and feeble, so liable to fall, and so exposed to temptation, that it is in itself every way a thing to be wished that his salvation should be in some safer hands than his own.

(b.) If it is *desirable* that it should be true, it is fair to infer that it *is* true, for God has made all the arrangements for the salvation of his people which are really desirable and proper.

(c.) The only *security* for the salvation of any one is founded on that doctrine. If it were left entirely to the hands of men, even the best of men, what assurance could there be that any one could be saved Did not Adam fall? Did not holy angels fall? Have not some of the best of men fallen into sin? And who has such a strength of holiness that he could certainly confide in it to make his own salvation sure? Any man must know little of himself, and of the human heart, who supposes that he has such a strength of virtue that he would never fall away if left to himself. But if this be so, then his only hope of salvation is in the fact that God intends to "keep his people by his own power through faith unto salvation"

{d} "kept" Jude 1:24 {e} "faith" Eph 2:8

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Wherein ye greatly rejoice*. In which hope of salvation. The idea is, that the prospect which they had of the future inheritance was to them a source of the highest joy, even in the midst of their many sufferings and trials. On the *general* grounds for rejoicing, **See Barnes** "Ro 5:1, **See Barnes "Ro 5:2"**; **See Barnes "Php 3:1"**; **See Barnes** "Php 4:4"; **See Barnes "1Th 5:16"**.

See Barnes "1Pe 1:8".

The *particular* meaning here is, that the hope which they had of their future inheritance enabled them to rejoice *even in the midst of persecutions and trials*. It not only sustained them, but it made them happy. That must be a valuable religion which will make men happy in the midst of persecutions and heavy calamities.

Though now for a season. A short period—*oligon*. It would be in fact only for a brief period, even if it should continue through the whole of life. **See Barnes "2Co 4:17"**

: "Our light affliction which is *but for a moment*." It is possible, however, that Peter supposed that the trials which they then experienced would soon pass over. They may have been suffering persecutions which he hoped would not long continue.

If need be. This phrase seems to have been thrown in here to intimate that there was a necessity for their afflictions, or that there was "need" that they should pass through these trials. There was some good to be accomplished by them, which made it desirable and proper that they should be thus afflicted. The sense is, "since there is need;" though the apostle expresses it more delicately by suggesting the possibility that there might be need of it, instead of saying absolutely that there was need. It is the kind of language which we would use in respect to one who was greatly afflicted, by suggesting to him, in the most tender manner, that there might be things in his character which God designed to correct by trials, instead of saying roughly and bluntly that such was undoubtedly the fact. We would not say to such a person, "you certainly *needed* this affliction to lead you to amend your life:" but, *it may be* that there is something in your character which makes it desirable, or that God intends that some good results shall come from it which will show that it is wisely ordered."

Ye are in heaviness. Gr., "Ye are sorrowing," *luphyentev*; you are sad, or grieved, Mt 14:9 17:23.

Through manifold temptations. Through many kinds of *trials*, for so the word rendered *temptation* (*peirasmov*) means, Jas 1:2,12. \\See Barnes "Mt 4:1 6:13\"\\. The meaning here is, that they now endured many things which were fitted to *try or test* their faith. These might have consisted of poverty, persecution, sickness, or the efforts of others to lead them to renounce their religion, and to go back to their former state of unbelief. Any one or all of these would *try* them, and would show whether their religion was genuine. On the various ways which God has of trying his people, **See Barnes** "Isa 28:23, seq.

{f} "if need be" Heb 12:7-11 {*} "heaviness" "Ye are grieved" {+} "temptations" "various trials"

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *That the trial of your faith*. The putting of your religion to the test, and showing what is its real nature. **See Barnes "Jas 1:3,12"**.

Being much more precious than of gold. This does not mean that their faith was much more precious than gold, but that *the testing of it*, (*dokimion*,) the process of showing whether it was or was not genuine, was a much more important and valuable process than that of testing gold in the fire. More important results were to be arrived at by it, and it was more desirable that it should be done.

That perisheth. Not that gold perishes by the process of being tried in the fire, for this is not the fact, and the connexion does not demand this interpretation. The idea is, that gold, however valuable it is, is *a perishable thing*. It is not an enduring, imperishable, indestructible thing, like religion. It may not perish in the fire, but it will in some way, for it will not endure for ever.

Though it be tried with fire. This refers to the *gold*. See the Greek. The meaning is, that gold, though it will bear the action of fire, is yet a destructible thing, and will not endure for ever. It is more desirable to test religion than it is gold, because it is more valuable. It pertains to that which is eternal and indestructible, and it is therefore of more importance to show its true quality, and to free it from every improper mixture.

Might be found unto praise. That is, might be found to be genuine, and such as to meet the praise or commendation of the final Judge.

And honour. That honour might be done to it before assembled worlds.

And glory. That it might be rewarded with that glory which will be then conferred on all who have shown, in the various trials of life, that they had true religion.

At the appearing of Jesus Christ. To judge the world. Comp. Mt 25:31 Ac 1:11; 1Th 4:16 2Th 2:8; 1Ti 6:14 2Ti 4:1,8 Tit 2:13.

From these two verses (1Pe 1:6,7) we may learn:

I. That it is desirable that the faith of Christians should be *tried*.

(a.) It is desirable to know whether that which appears to be religion is genuine, as it is desirable to know whether that which appears to be gold is genuine. To gold we apply the action of intense heat, that we may know whether it is what it appears to be; and as religion is of more value than gold, so it is more desirable that it should be subjected to the proper tests, that its nature may be ascertained. There is much which *appears* to be gold, which is of no value, as there is much which *appears* to be religion, which is no value. The one is worth no more than the other, unless it is genuine.

(b.) It is desirable in order to show its true *value*. It is of great importance to know what that which is claimed to be gold is *worth* for the purposes to which gold is usually applied; and so it is in regard to religion. Religion claims to be of more value to man than anything else. It asserts its power to do that for the intellect and the heart which nothing else can do; to impart consolation in the various trials of life which nothing else can impart; and to give a support which nothing else can on the bed of death. It is very desirable, therefore, that in these various situations it should show its power; that is, that its friends should be in these various conditions, in order that they may illustrate the true value of religion.

(c.) It is desirable that true religion should be separated from all alloy. There is often much alloy in gold, and it is desirable that it should be separated from it, in order that it may be pure. So it is in religion. It is often combined with much that is unholy and impure; much that dims its lustre and mars its beauty; much that prevents its producing the effect which it would otherwise produce. Gold is, indeed, often better, for some purposes, for having some alloy mixed with it; but not so with religion. It is never better for having a little pride, or vanity, or selfishness, or meanness, or worldliness, or sensuality mingled with it; and that which will remove these things from our religion will be a favour to us.

II. God takes various methods of trying his people, with a design to test the value of their piety, and to separate it from all impure mixtures.

(1.) He tries his people by *prosperity*—often as decisive a test of piety as can be applied to it. There is much pretended piety, which will bear adversity, but which will not bear prosperity. The piety of a man is decisively tested by popularity; by the flatteries of the world; by a sudden increase of property; and in such circumstances it is often conclusively shown that there is no true religion in the soul.

(2.) He tries his people in adversity. He lays his hand on them heavily, to show

(a.) whether they will bear up under their trials, and persevere in his service;

(b.) to show whether their religion will keep them from murmuring or complaining;

(c.) to show whether it is adapted to comfort and sustain the soul.

(3.) He tries his people by *sudden transition* from one to the other. We get accustomed to a uniform course of life, whether it be joy or sorrow; and the religion which is adapted to a uniform course may be little fitted to transitions from one condition of life to another. In prosperity we may have shown that we were grateful, and benevolent, and disposed to serve God; but our religion will be subjected to a new test, if we are suddenly reduced to poverty. In sickness and poverty, we learn to be patient and resigned, and perhaps even happy. But the religion which we then cultivated may be little adapted to a sudden transition to prosperity; and in such a transition, there would be a new trial of our faith. That piety which shone so much on a bed of sickness, might be little fitted to shine in circumstances of sudden prosperity. The human frame may become accustomed either to the intense cold of the polar regions, or to the burning heats of the equator; but in neither case might it bear a transition from one to the other. It is such a *transition* that is a more decisive test of its powers of endurance than either intense heat or cold, if steadily prolonged.

III. Religion will *bear* any trial which may be applied to it, as gold will bear the action of fare.

IV. Religion is *imperishable* in its nature. Even the most fine gold will perish. Time will corrode it, or it will be worn away by use, or it will be destroyed at the universal conflagration; but time and use will not wear out religion, and it will live on through the fires that will consume everything else.

V. Christians should be *willing* to pass through trials.

(a.) They will purify their religion, as the fire will remove dross from gold.

(b.) They will make it shine more brightly, as gold does when it comes out of the furnace.

(c.) They disclose more fully its value.

(d.) They will furnish an evidence that we shall be saved; for that religion which will bear the tests that God applies to it in the present life, will bear the test of the final trial.

{a} "trial" Jas 1:3,12 {*} "trial" "proof" {+} "tried" "proved" {b} "with fire" 1Co 3:13 {c} "praise and honour" Ro 2:7,10 {d} "appearing" Re 1:7

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Whom having not seen, ye love*. This epistle was addressed to those who were "strangers scattered abroad," **See Barnes** "1Pe 1:1, and it is evident that they had not personally seen the Lord Jesus. Yet they had heard of his character, his preaching, his sacrifice for sin, and his resurrection and ascension, and they had learned to love him.

(1.) It is possible to love one whom we have not seen. Thus we may love God, whom no "eye hath seen," **See Barnes "1Jo 4:20"**; and thus we may love a benefactor, from whom we have received important benefits, whom we have never beheld.

(2.) We may love the *character* of one whom we have never seen, and from whom we may never have received any particular favours. We may love his uprightness, his patriotism, his benignity, as represented to us. We might love him the more if we should become personally acquainted with him, and if we should receive important favours from him; but it is possible to feel a sense of strong admiration for such a character in itself.

(3.) That may be a very *pure* love which we have for one whom we have never seen. It may be based on simple excellence of character; and in such a case there is the least chance for any intermingling of selfishness, or any improper emotion of any kind.

(4.) We may love a friend as *really* and as *strongly* when he is absent, as when he is with us. The wide ocean that rolls between us and a child, does not diminish the ardour of our affection for him; and the Christian friend that has gone to heaven, we may love no less than when he sat with us at the fireside.

(5.) Millions, and hundreds of millions, have been led to love the Saviour, who have never seen him. They have seen—not with the bodily eye, but with the eye of faith—the inimitable beauty of his character, and have been brought to love him with an ardour of affection which they never had for any other one.

(6.) There is every reason why we *should* love him.

(a.) His character is infinitely lovely.

(b.) He has done more for us than any other one who ever lived among men. He died for us, to redeem our souls, he rose, and brought life and immortality to light. He ever lives to intercede for us in heaven. He is employed in preparing mansions of rest for us in the skies, and he will come and take us to himself, that we may be with him for ever. Such a Saviour *ought* to be loved, *is* loved, and *will* be loved. The strongest attachments which have ever existed on earth have been for this unseen Saviour. There has been a love for him stronger than that for father, or mother, or wife, or sister, or home, or country. It has been so strong, that thousands have been willing, on account of it, to bear the torture of the rack or the stake. It has been so strong, that thousands of youth of the finest minds, and the most flattering prospects of distinction, have been willing to leave the comforts of a civilized land, and to go among the benighted heathen, to tell them the story of a Saviour's life and death. It has been so strong, that unnumbered multitudes have longed, more than they have for all other things, that they might see him, and be with him, and abide with him for ever and ever. **See Barnes "Php 1:23"**.

In whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing. He is now in heaven, and to mortal eyes now invisible, like his Father. *Faith* in him is the source and fountain of our joy. It makes invisible things real, and enables us to feel and act, in view of them, with the same degree of certainty if we saw them. Indeed, the conviction to the mind of a true believer that there is a Saviour, is as certain and as strong as if he saw him; and the same may be said of his conviction of the existence of heaven, and of eternal realities. If it should be said that filth may deceive us, we may reply,

(1.) May not our bodily senses also deceive us? Does the *eye* never deceive? Are there no optical illusions? Does the *ear* never deceive? Are there no sounds which are mistaken? Do the *taste* and the *smell* never deceive? Are we never mistaken in the report which they bring to us? And does the

sense of *feeling* never deceive? Are we never mistaken in the size, the hardness, the figure of objects which we handle? But,

(2.) for all the practical purposes of life, the senses are correct guides, and do not in general lead us astray. So,

(3.) there are objects of faith about which we are never deceived, and where we do act and must act with the same confidence as if we had personally seen them. Are we deceived about the existence of London, or Paris, or Canton, though we may never have seen either? May not a merchant embark with perfect propriety in a commercial enterprise, on the supposition that there is such a place as London or Canton, though he has never seen them? Would he not be reputed mad, if he should refuse to do it on this ground? And so, may not a man, in believing that there is a heaven, and in forming his plans for it, though he has not yet seen it, act as rationally and as wisely as he who forms his plans on the supposition that there is such a place as Canton?

Ye rejoice. Ye *do* rejoice; not merely *ye ought to rejoice*. It may be said of Christians that they do in fact rejoice; they are happy. The people of the world often suppose that religion makes its professors sad and melancholy. That there are those who have not great comfort in their religion, no one indeed can doubt; but this arises from several causes entirely independent of their religion. Some have melancholy temperaments, and are not happy in anything. Some have little evidence that they are Christians, and their sadness arises not from religion, but from the want of it. But that true religion does make its possessors happy, any one may easily satisfy himself by asking any number of sincere Christians, of any denomination, whom he may meet. With one accord they will say to him that they have a happiness which they never found before; that however much they may have possessed of the wealth, the honours, and the pleasures of the world—and they who are now Christians have not all of them been strangers to these things—they never knew solid and substantial peace till they found it in religion. And why should they not be believed? The world would believe them in other things; why will they not when they declare that religion does not make them gloomy, but happy.

With joy unspeakable. A very strong expression, and yet verified in thousands of cases among young converts, and among those in the maturer days of piety. There are thousands who can say that their happiness when they first had evidence that their sins were forgiven, that the burden of guilt was rolled away, and that they were the children of God, was unspeakable. They had no words to express it, it was so full and so new.

> "Tongue can never express The sweet comfort and peace of a soul in its earliest love."

And so there have been thousands of mature Christians who can adopt the same language, and who could find no words to express the peace and joy which they have found in the love of Christ, and the hope of heaven. And why are not all Christians enabled to say constantly that they "rejoice with joy unspeakable?" Is it not a privilege which they might possess? Is there anything in the nature of religion which forbids it? Why should not one be filled with constant joy who has the hope of dwelling in a world of glory for ever? Comp. Joh 14:27 16:22.

And full of glory.

(1.) Of anticipated glory—of the prospect of enjoying the glory of heaven.

(2.) Of present glory—with a joy *even now* which is of the same nature as that in heaven; a happiness the same in kind, though not in degree, as that which will be ours in a brighter world.

The saints on earth partake of the same kind of joy which they will have in heaven; for the happiness of heaven will be but an expansion, a prolongation, and a purifying of that which they have here. **See Barnes "Eph 1:14".**

{e} "not seen" 1Jo 4:20 {a} "joy" Joh 16:22

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls*. The result or object of your faith; that is, what your faith is designed and adapted to secure. **See Barnes "Ro 10:4".**

The word rendered *receiving* is used here as indicating that they would surely obtain that. They even now had such peace and joy in believing, that it furnished undoubted evidence that they would be saved; and such that it might be said that even now they were saved. The condition of one who is a true Christian here is so secure that it may even now be called salvation.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Of which salvation*. Of the certainty that this system of religion, securing the salvation of the soul, would be revealed. The *object* of this reference to the prophets seems to be to lead them to value the religion which they professed more highly, and to encourage them to bear their trials with patience. They were in a condition, in many respects, far superior to that of the prophets. They had the full light of the gospel. The prophets saw it only at a distance and but dimly, and were obliged to search anxiously that they might understand the nature of that system of which they were appointed to furnish the comparatively obscure prophetic intimations.

The prophets. This language would imply that this had been a common and prevalent wish of the prophets. Have enquired. This word is intensive. It means that they sought out, or scrutinized with care the revelations made to them, that they might understand exactly what was implied in that which they were appointed to record in respect to the salvation which was to be made known through the Messiah. See the following places where the same word is used which occurs here: Lu 11:50,51; Ac 15:17 Ro 3:11; Heb 11:6 12:17.

And searched diligently. *exereunaw* Comp. Da 9:2,3. The word here used means *to search out, to trace out, to explore*. It is not elsewhere used in the New Testament, though one of the words from which this is compounded (*ereunaw*) occurs. **See Barnes** "Joh 5:39, Joh 8:52 Ro 8:27; 1Co 2:10 Re 2:23.

The idea is, that they perceived that in their communications there were some great and glorious truths which they did not fully comprehend, and that they diligently employed their natural faculties to understand that which they were appointed to impart to succeeding generations. They thus became students and interpreters for themselves of their own predictions. They were not only *prophets*, but men. They had souls to be saved in the same way as others. They had hearts to be sanctified by the truth; and it was needful, in order to this, that truth should be applied to their own hearts in the same way as to others. The mere fact that they were the channels or organs for imparting truth to

others would not save them, any more than the fact that a man now preaches truth to others will save himself, or than the fact that a sutler delivers bread to an army will nourish and support his own body.

Who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you. Of the favour that should be shown to you in the gospel. Though the predictions which they uttered appeared to the men of their own times, and perhaps to themselves, obscures yet they were in fact prophecies of what was to come, and of the favours which, under another dispensation, would be bestowed upon the people of God. The apostle does not mean to say that they prophesied particularly of those persons to whom he was then writing, but that their prophecies were *in fact* for their benefit, for the things which they predicted had actually terminated on them, The benefit was as real as though the predictions had been solely on their account.

{b} "enquired" Da 9:3

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Searching what*. That is, examining their own predictions with care, to ascertain what they meant. They studied them as we do the predictions which others have made; and though the prophets were the medium through which the truth was made known, yet their own predictions became a subject of careful investigation to themselves. The expression here used in the original, rendered "what," (*eiv tina*,) literally, "*unto what*," may mean, so far as the Greek is concerned, either "*what time*," or "*what people*," or "*what person*;" that is, with reference to what person the prophecies were really uttered. The latter, it seems to me, is the correct interpretation, meaning that they inquired in regard to him, who he would be, what would be his character, and what would be the nature of the work which he would perform. There can be no doubt that they understood that their predictions related to the Messiah; but till it is not improper to suppose that it was with them an interesting inquiry what sort of a person he would be, and what would be the nature of the work which he would perform. This interpretation of the phrase *eiv tina*, (*unto what or whom*,) it should be observed, however, is not that which is commonly given of the passage. Bloomfield, Rosenmuller, Doddridge, Whitby, Benson, and Grotius suppose it to refer to time, meaning that they inquired at what time, or when these things would occur. Macknight thinks it refers to people, (*laon*,) meaning that they diligently inquired what people would put him to death. But the most obvious interpretation in that which I have suggested above, meaning that they made particular inquiry to whom their prophecies related—what was his rank and character, and what was to be the nature of his work. What would be a more natural inquiry for them than this? What would be more important? And how interesting is the thought that when Isaiah, for example, had given utterance to the sublime predictions which we now have of the Messiah, in his prophecies, he sat himself down with the spirit of a little child, to learn by prayer and study, what was fully implied in the amazing words which the Spirit had taught him to record! How much of mystery might seem still to hang around the subject! And how intent would such a mind be to know what was the full import of those words!

Or what manner of time. This phrase, in Greek, (*poion kairon*,) would properly relate, not to the exact time when these things would occur, but to the *character or condition* of the age when they would take place; perhaps referring to the state of the world at that period, the preparation to

receive the gospel, and the probable manner in which the great message-would be received. Perhaps, however, the inquiry in their minds pertained to the time when the predictions would be fulfilled, as well as to the condition of the world when the event takes place. The meaning of the Greek phrase would not exclude this latter sense. There are not unfrequent indications of time in the prophets, (comp. Da 9:24, seq.;) and these indications were of so clear a character, that when the Saviour actually appeared there was a general expectation that the event would then occur. **See Barnes "Mt 2:2".**

The Spirit of Christ which was in them. This does not prove that they knew that this was the Spirit of Christ, but is only a declaration of Peter that it was actually so. It is not probable that the prophets distinctly understood that the Spirit of inspiration, by which they were led to foretell future events, was peculiarly the Spirit of Christ. They understood that they were inspired; but there is no intimation, with which I am acquainted, in their writings, that they regarded themselves as inspired by the Messiah. It was not improper, however, for Peter to say that the Spirit by which they were influenced was in fact the Spirit of Christ, so called because that Spirit which suggested these future events to them was given as the great Medium of all revealed truth to the world. Comp. Heb 1:3 Joh 1:9, 14:16,26, 16:7 Isa 49:6.

It is clear from this passage,

(1.) that Christ must have had an existence before his incarnation; and,

(2.) that he must have understood then what would occur to him when he should become incarnate; that is, it must have been arranged or determined beforehand.

Did signify. Meant to intimate or manifest to them, (*edhlou*;) or what was implied in the communications made to them.

When it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ. As Isaiah, Isa 53; Da 9:25-27. They saw clearly that the Messiah was to *suffer*; and doubtless this was the common doctrine of the prophets, and the common expectation of the pious part of the Jewish nation. Yet it is not necessary to suppose that they had clear apprehensions of his sufferings, or were able to reconcile all that was said on that subject with what was said of his glory and his triumphs. There was much about those sufferings which they wished to learn, as there is much still which we desire to know. We have no reason to suppose that there were any views of the sufferings of the Messiah communicated to the prophets except what we now have in the Old Testament; and to see the force of what Peter says, we ought to imagine what would be our views of him if all that we have known of Christ as *history* were obliterated, and we had only the knowledge which we could derive from the Old Testament. As has been already intimated, it is probable that they studied their own predictions, just as we would study them if we had not the advantage of applying to them the *facts* which have actually occurred.

And the glory that should follow. That is, they saw that there would be glory which would be the result of his sufferings, but they did not clearly see what it would be. They had some knowledge that he would be raised from the dead, Ps 16:8-11; comp. Ac 2:25-28; they knew that he would "see of the travail of his soul, and would be satisfied," (Isa 53:11;) they had some large views of the effects of the gospel on the nations of the earth, Isa 11; Isa 25:7,8; Isa 60; Isa 66. But there were many things respecting his glorification which it cannot be supposed they clearly understood; and it is reasonable to presume that they made the comparatively few and obscure intimations in their own writings in relation to this, the subject of profound and prayerful inquiry.

{a} "Spirit of Christ" 2Pe 1:21

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Unto whom it was revealed*. They were not permitted to know fully the import of the predictions which they were made the instruments of communicating to mankind, but they understood that they were intended for the benefit of future ages. That not unto themselves. We are not to suppose that they derived no benefit from their own predictions; for, as far as they understood the truth, it was as much adapted to sanctify and comfort them as it is us now: but the meaning is, that their messages had reference mainly to future times, and that the full benefit of them would be experienced only in distant ages. **See Barnes "Heb 11:39,40"**.

Unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you. Not unto us by name, but their ministrations had reference to the times of the Messiah; and those to whom Peter wrote, in common with all Christians, were those who were to enjoy the fruits of the communications which they made. The word *reported* means *announced*, or *made known*. By them that have preached the gospel unto you. The apostles, who have made known unto you, in their true sense, the things which the prophets predicted, the import of which they themselves were so desirous of understanding.

With the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Accompanied by the influences of the Holy Ghost bearing those truths to tile heart, and confirming them to the soul. It was the same Spirit which inspired the prophets which conveyed those truths to the souls of the early Christians, and which discloses them to true believers in every age. Comp. Joh 16:13,14; Ac 2:4 10:44,45.

The object of Peter by thus referring to the prophets, and to the interest which they took in the things which those to whom he wrote now enjoyed, seems to have been, to impress on them a deep sense of the value of the gospel, and of the great privileges which they enjoyed. They were reaping the benefit of all the labours of the prophets. They were permitted to see truth clearly, which the prophets themselves saw only obscurely. They were, in many respects, more favoured than even those holy men had been. It was for them that the prophets had spoken the word of the Lord; for them and their salvation that a long line of the most holy men that the world ever saw, had lived, and toiled, and suffered; and while they themselves had not been allowed to understand the full import of their own predictions, the most humble believer was permitted to see what the most distinguished prophet never saw. See Mt 13:17.

Which things the angels desire to look into. The object of this reference to the angels is the same as that to the prophets. It is to impress on Christians a sense of the value of that gospel which they had received, and to show them the greatness of their privileges in being, made partakers of it. It had excited the deepest interest among the most holy men on earth, and even among the inhabitants of the skies. They were enjoying the full revelation of what even the angels had desired more fully to understand, and to comprehend which they had employed their great powers of investigation. The *things* which are here referred to, *eiv a -unto which*, are those which the prophets were so desirous to understand—the great truths respecting the sufferings of Christ, the glory which would follow, and the nature and effects of the gospel. In all the events pertaining to the redemption of a world they felt a deep interest. The word which is rendered "to look," (*parakuqai*,) is rendered *stooping down*, and *stooped down*, in Lu 24:12 Joh 20:5,11; *looketh*, in Jas 1:25; and *look*, in the place before us. It does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It properly means, to stoop down near by anything; to bend forward near, in order to look at anything more closely.—*Robinson, Lex*. It would denote that state where one, who was before at so great a distance that he could not dearly see an object, should draw nearer, stooping down in order that he might observe it more

distinctly. It is possible, as Grotius supposes, that there may be an allusion here to the posture of the cherubim over the mercy-seat, represented as looking down with an intense gaze, as if to behold what was in the ark. But it is not necessary to suppose that this is the allusion, nor is it absolutely certain that that was the posture of the cherubim. **See Barnes "Heb 9:5"**.

All that is necessarily implied in the language is, that the angels had an intense desire to look into these things; that they contemplated them with interest and fixed attention, like one who comes near to an object, and looks narrowly upon it. In illustration of this sentiment, we may make the following suggestions:

I. The angels, doubtless, desire to look into all the manifestations of the character of God, wherever those manifestations are made.

(1.) It is not unreasonable to suppose that, to a great degree, they acquire the knowledge of God as all other creatures do. They are not omniscient, and cannot be supposed to comprehend at glance all his doings.

(2.) They doubtless employ their faculties, substantially as we do, in the investigation of truth; that is, from things known they seek to learn those that are even unknown.

(3.) It is not unreasonable to suppose that there are many things in relation to the Divine character and plans, which they do not yet understand. They know, undoubtedly, much more than we do; but there are plans and purposes of God which are yet made known to none of his creatures. No one can doubt that these plans and purposes must be the object of the attentive study of all holy created minds.

(4.) They doubtless feel a great interest in the welfare of other beings—of their fellow-creatures, wherever they are. There is in the universe one great brotherhood, embracing all the creatures of God.

(5.) They cannot but feel a deep interest in man—a fallen creature, tempted, suffering, dying, and exposed to eternal death. This they have shown in every period of the world's history. **See Barnes "Heb 1:14"**.

II. It is probable, that in each one of the worlds which God has made, there is some peculiar manifestation of his glory and character; something which is not to be found at all in any other world, or, if found, not in so great perfection; and that the angels would feel a deep interest in all these manifestations, and would desire to look into them.

(1.) This is probable from the nature of the case, and from the variety which we see in the form, size, movements, and glory of the heavenly orbs. There is no reason to suppose, that on *any one* of those worlds *all* the glory of the Divine character would be manifest, which he intends to make known to the universe.

(2.) This is probable from what we can now see of the worlds which he has made. We know as yet comparatively little of the heavenly bodies, and of the manifestations of the Deity; and yet, as far as we *can* see, there must be far more striking exhibitions of the power, and wisdom, and glory of God, in many or of those worlds that roll above us, than there are on our earth. On the body of the sun—on the planets Jupiter and Saturn, so vast in comparison with the earth—there must be far more impressive exhibitions of the glory of the Creator, than there is on our little planet. Saturn, for example, is 82,000 miles in diameter, 1100 times as large as our earth; it moves at the rate of 22,000 miles an hour; it is encircled by two magnificent rings, 5000 miles apart, the innermost of which is 21,000 miles from the body of the planet, and 22,000 miles in breadth, forming a vast illuminated *arch* over the above the brightness of our moon, and giving a most beautiful to the

heavens there. It is also, doubtless, true of all which God has made, that in each one of them there may some peculiar manifestation of the glory of the Deity.

(3.) The universe therefore, seems fitted up to give eternal employment to *mind* in contemplating it; and, in the worlds which God has made, is enough to employ the study of his creatures *for ever*. On our own world, the most diligent and pious student of the works of God might spend many thousand years, and then leave much, very much, which he did not comprehend; and it may yet be the eternal employment of holy minds to range from world to world, and in each new world to find much to study and to admire; much that shall proclaim the wisdom, power, love, and goodness of God, which had not elsewhere been seen.

(4.) Our world, therefore, though small, a mere speck in creation, may have something to manifest the glory of the Creator which may not exist in any other. It cannot be its magnitude; for, in that respect, it is among the smallest which God has made. It may not be the height and the majesty of our mountains, or the length and beauty of our rivers, or the fragrance of our flowers, or the clearness of our sky; for, in these respects, there may be much more to admire in other worlds: it is the exhibition of the character of God in the work of redemption; the illustration of the way in which a sinner may be forgiven; the manifestation of the Deity as incarnate, assuming permanently a union with one of his own creatures. This, so far as we know, is seen in no other part of the universe; *and this is honour enough for one world*. To see this, the angels may be attracted down to earth. When they come, they come not to contemplate our works of art, our painting and our sculpture, or to read our books of science or poetry: they come to gather around the cross, to minister to the Saviour, to attend on his steps while living, and to watch over his body when dead; to witness his resurrection and ascension, and to bless, with their offices of kindness, those whom he died to redeem, Heb 1:4.

III. What, then, is there in our world which we may suppose would attract their attention? What is there which they would not see in other worlds? I answer, that the manifestation of the Divine character in the plan of redemption, is that which would peculiarly attract their attention here, and lead them from heaven down to earth.

(1.) The mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God would be to them an object of the deepest interest. This, so far as we know, or have reason to suppose, has occurred nowhere else. There is no evidence that in any other world God has taken upon himself the form of one of his own creatures dwelling there, and stooped to live and act like one of them; to mingle with them; to share their feelings; and to submit to toil, and want, and sacrifice, for their welfare.

(2.) The *fact* that the guilty *could* be pardoned would attract their attention, for

(a.) it is elsewhere unknown, no inhabitant of heaven having the need of pardon, and no offer of pardon having been made to a rebel angel.

(b.) There are great and difficult questions about the whole subject of forgiveness, which an angel could easily see, but which he could not so easily solve. How could it be done consistently with the justice and truth of God? How could he forgive, and yet maintain the honour of his own law, and the stability of his own throne. There is no more difficult subject in a human administration than that of *pardon*; and there is none which so much perplexes those who are intrusted with executive power.

(3.) The *way* in which pardon has been shown to the guilty here would excite their deep attention. It has been in a manner entirely consistent with justice and truth; showing, through the great sacrifice made on the cross, that the attributes of justice and mercy may both be exercised: that, while God

may pardon to any extent, he does it in no instance the expense of justice and truth. This blending of the attributes of the Almighty in beautiful harmony; this manifesting of mercy to the guilty and the lost; this raising up a fallen and rebellious race to the favour and friendship of God; and this opening before a dying creature the hope of immortality, was what could be seen by the angels nowhere else: and hence it is no wonder that they hasten with such interest to our world, to learn the mysteries of redeeming love. Every step in the process of recovering a sinner must be new to them, for it is unseen elsewhere; and the whole work, the atonement, the pardon and renovation of the sinner, the conflict of the child of God with his spiritual foes, the supports of religion in the time of sickness and temptation, the bed of death, the sleep in the tomb, the separate flight of the soul to its final abode, the resurrection of the body, and the solemn scenes of the judgment, all must open new fields of thought to an angelic mind, and attract the heavenly inhabitants to our world, to learn here what they cannot learn in their own abodes, however otherwise bright, where sin, and suffering, and death, and redemption are unknown. In view of these truths we may add:

(1.) The work of redemption is worthy of the study of the profoundest minds. Higher talent than *any* earthly talent has been employed in studying it; for, to the most exalted intellects of heaven, it has been a theme of the deepest interest. No mind on earth is too exalted to be engaged in this study; no intellect here is so profound that it would not find in this study a range of inquiry worthy of itself.

(2.) This is a study that peculiarly appropriate to man. The angels have no other interest in it than that which arises from a desire to know God, and from a benevolent regard for the welfare of others; *we* have a personal interest in it of the highest kind. It pertains primarily to us. The plan was formed for us. Our eternal all depends upon it. The angels would be safe and happy if they did *not* fully understand it; if *we* do not understand it, we are lost for ever. It has claims to their attention as a wonderful exhibition of the character and purposes of God, and as they are interested in the welfare of *others*; it claims our attention because our eternal welfare depends on our accepting the offer of mercy made through a Saviour's blood.

(3.) How amazing, then, how wonderful, is the indifference of man to this and glorious work! How wonderful, that neither as a matter of speculation, nor of personal concern, he can be induced to look into these things! "How wonderful that all other subjects engross his attention, and excite inquiry; but that for *this* he feels no concern, and that here he finds nothing to interest him! It is not unreasonable to suppose, that amidst all the other topics of wonder in this plan as seen by angels, this is not the least—that man by nature takes no interest in it; that in so stupendous a work, performed in his own world, he feels no concern; that he is unmoved when he is told that even God became incarnate, and appeared on the earth where he himself dwells; and that, busy and interested as he is in other things, often of a most trifling nature, he has *no* concern for that on which is suspended his own eternal happiness. If heaven was held in mute astonishment when the Son of God left the courts of glory to be poor, to be persecuted, to bleed, to die, not less must be the astonishment than when, from those lofty heights, the angelic hosts look down upon a race unconcerned amidst wonders such as those of the incarnation and the atonement!

{b} "not unto themselves" Heb 11:39,40 {c} "Holy Ghost" Ac 2:4 2Co 1:22 {*} "Ghost" "Spirit" {d} "angels" Eph 3:10

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind*. The allusion here is to the manner in which the Orientals were accustomed to dress. They wear loose, flowing robes, so that, when they wished to run, or to fight, or to apply themselves to any business, they are obliged to bind their garments close around them. **See Barnes** "Mt 5:38, seq. The meaning here is, that they were to have their minds in constant preparation to discharge the duties, or to endure the trials of life—like those who were prepared for labour, for a race, or for a conflict.

Be sober. **See Barnes "1Ti 3:2"; See Barnes** "Tit 1:8".

And hope to the end. Marg., *perfectly*. The translation in the text is the most correct. It means, that they were not to become faint or weary in their trials. They were not to abandon the hopes of the gospel, but were to cherish those hopes to the end of life, whatever opposition they might meet with, and however much might be done by others to induce them to apostatize. Comp. **See Barnes "Heb 10:35".**

See Barnes "Heb 10:36".

For the grace that is to be brought unto you. For the favour that shall then be bestowed upon you; to wit, salvation. The word *brought* here means, that this great favour which they hoped for would be borne to them by the Saviour on his return from heaven.

At the revelation of Jesus Christ. When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in his glory; that is, when he comes to judge the world. **See Barnes "2Th 1:7".**

{a} "gird up" Lu 12:35 {b} "sober" Lu 21:34 {1} "hope" "perfectly" {*} "revelation" "manifestation"

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *As obedient children*. That is, conduct yourselves as becomes the children of God, by obeying his commands; by submitting to his will; and by manifesting unwavering confidence in him as your Father, at all times.

Not fashioning yourselves. Not forming or modelling your life. Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 12:2".**

The idea is, that they were to have *some* model or example, in accordance with which they were to frame their lives, but that they were not to make their own former principles and conduct the model. The Christian is to be as different from what he was himself before conversion as he is from his fellow-men. He is to be governed by new laws, to aim at new objects, and to mould his life in accordance with new principles. Before conversion, he was

(a.) supremely selfish;

(b.) he lived for personal gratification;

(c.) he gave free indulgence to his appetites and passions, restrained only by a respect for the decencies of life, and by a reference to his own health, property, or reputation, without regard to the will of God;

(d.) he conformed himself to the customs and opinions around him, rather than to the requirements of his Maker;

(e.) he lived for worldly aggrandizements, his supreme object being wealth or fame; or

(f.) in many cases, those who are now Christians, gave indulgence to every passion which they wished to gratify, regardless of reputation, health, property, or salvation. Now they are to be governed by a different rule, and their own former standard of morals and of opinions is no longer their guide, but the will of God.

According to the former lusts in your ignorance. When you were ignorant of the requirements of the gospel, and gave yourselves up to the unrestrained indulgence of your passions.

{d} "fashioning" Ro 12:2 {+} "lusts" "desires"

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *But as he which hath called you is holy*. On the word *called*, **See Barnes "Eph 4:1"**.

The meaning here is, that the model or example in accordance with which they were to frame their lives, should be the character of that God who had called them into his kingdom. They were to be like him. Comp. **See Barnes "Mt 5:48"**.

So be ye holy in all manner of conversation. In all your conduct. On the word *conversation*, **See Barnes "Php 1:27"**.

The meaning is, that since God is holy, and we profess to be his followers, we ought also to be holy.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy*. Le 11:44. This command was addressed at first to the Israelites, but it is with equal propriety addressed to Christians, as the professed people of compared. The foundation of the command is, that they professed to be his people, and that as his people they ought to be like their God. **See Barnes "Mic 4:5"**.

It is a great truth, that men everywhere will imitate the God whom they worship. They will form their character in accordance with his. They will regard what he does as right. They will attempt to rise no higher in virtue than the God whom they adore, and they will practise freely what he is supposed to do or approve. Hence, by knowing what are the characteristics of the gods which are worshipped by any people, we may form a correct estimate of the character of the people themselves; and hence, as the God who is the object of the Christian's worship is perfectly holy, the character of his worshippers *should* also be holy. And hence, also, we may see that the tendency of true religion is to *make* men pure. As the worship of the impure gods of the heathen moulds the character of the worshippers into their image, so the worship of Jehovah moulds the character of his professed friends into his image, and they become like him.

{e} "written" Le 11:44

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *And if ye call on the Father*. That is, if you are true Christians, or truly pious—piety being represented in the Scriptures as calling on God, or as the worship of God. **See Barnes "Ac 9:11"**; Ge 4:26 1Ki 18:24; Ps 116:17 2Ki 5:11; 1Ch 16:8 Joe 2:32; Ro 10:13; Zep 3:9 1Co 1:2; Ac 2:21.

The word "Father" here is used evidently not to denote the Father in contradistinction to the Son, but as referring to God as the rather of the universe. 1Pe 1:14 "As *obedient children*." God is often spoken of as the Father of the intelligent beings whom he has made. Christians worship him *as* a Father—as one having all the feelings of a kind and tender parent towards them. **See Barnes** "Ps 103:13, seq.

Who without respect of persons. Impartiality. Who is not influenced in his treatment of men by a regard to rank, wealth, beauty, or any external distinction. **See Barnes** "Ac 10:34, **See Barnes "Ro 2:11"**.

Judgeth according to every man's work. He judges each one according to his character; or to what he has done, Re 22:12. **See Barnes "2Co 5:10"**.

The meaning is, "You worship a God who will judge every man according to his real character, and you should therefore lead such lives as he can approve."

Pass the time of your sojourning. "Of your temporary residence on earth. This is not your permanent home, but you are strangers and sojourners." **See Barnes "Heb 11:13"**.

In fear. **See Barnes "Php 2:12"**

See Barnes "Heb 12:28".

With true reverence or veneration for God and his law. Religion is often represented as the reverent fear of God, De 6:2,13,24 Pr 1:7 3:13, 14:26,27, *et saepe al*.

{f} "fear" Php 2:12

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Forasmuch as ye know*. This is an argument for a holy life, derived from the fact that they were redeemed, and from the manner in which their redemption had been effected. There is no more effectual way to induce true Christians to consecrate themselves entirely to God, than to refer them to the fact that they are not their own, but have been purchased by the blood of Christ. That ye were not redeemed. On the word rendered *redeemed*, (*lutrow lutroo*,) **See Barnes "Tit 2:14"**.

The word occurs in the New Testament only in Lu 24:21, **See Barnes** "Tit 2:14, and in this place. The noun (*lutron—lutron*) is found in Mt 20:28 Mr 10:45, rendered *ransom*. For the meaning of the similar word, *apolutrwsiv* — (*apolutrosis*,) **See Barnes "Ro 3:24"**.

This word occurs in Lu 21:28 Ro 3:24, 8:23 1Co 1:30; Eph 1:7,14, 4:30 Col 1:14; Heb 9:15, in all which places it is rendered *redemption*; and in Heb 11:35, where it is rendered *deliverance*. The word here means that they were rescued from sin and death by the blood of Christ, as the *valuable consideration* on account of which it was done; that is, the blood, or the life of Christ offered as a sacrifice, effected the same purpose in regard to justice and to the maintenance of the principles of moral government, which the punishment of the sinner himself would have done. It was that which God was pleased to accept in the place of the punishment of the sinner, as answering the same great ends in his administration. The principles of his truth and justice could as certainly be maintained in this way as by the punishment of the guilty themselves. If so, then there was no

obstacle to their salvation; and they might, on repentance, be consistently pardoned and taken to heaven.

With corruptible things, as silver and gold. On the word *corruptible*, as applicable to gold, **See Barnes "1Pe 1:7".**

Silver and gold usually constitute the price or the valuable consideration paid for the redemption of captives. It is clear that the obligation of one who is redeemed, to love his benefactor, is in proportion to the price which is paid for his ransom. The idea here is, that a price far more valuable than any amount of silver or gold had been paid for the redemption of the people of God, and that they were under proportionate obligation to devote themselves to his service. They were redeemed by the life of the Son of God offered in their behalf; and between the value of that life and silver and gold there could be no comparison.

From your vain conversation. Your vain *conduct*, or manner of life. **See Barnes "1Pe 1:15".**

The word *vain*, applied to conduct, (*mataiav*,) means properly *empty, fruitless*. It is a word often applied to the worship of idols, as being nothing, worthless, unable to help, (Ac 14:15 1Ki 16:13; 2Ki 17:15 Jer 2:5,8,19) ; and is probably used in a similar sense in this place. The apostle refers to their former worship of idols, and to all the abominations connected with that service, as being vain and unprofitable; as the worship of nothing real, (comp. 1Co 8:4") , "We know that an idol is *nothing* in the world;" and as resulting in a course of life that answered none of the proper ends of living. From that they had been redeemed by the blood of Christ.

Received by tradition from your fathers. The mode of worship which had been handed down from father to son. The worship of idols depends on no better reason than that it is that which has been practised in ancient times; and it is kept up now in all lands, in a great degree, only by the fact that it has had the sanction of the venerated men of other generations.

{*} "from your fathers" "delivered down from"

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *But with the precious blood of Christ*. On the use of the word *blood*, and the reason why the efficacy of the atonement is said to be in the blood, **See Barnes "Ro 3:25".**

The word *precious* (*timiov*,) is a word which would be applied to that which is worth much; which is costly. Comp. for the use of the noun (*timh*) in this sense, Mt 27:6, "The price of blood;" Ac 4:34 5:2,3 7:16.

See also for the use of the adjective, (*timiov*,) Re 17:4, "gold and *precious* stones." Re 18:12, "vessels of most *precious* wood." Re 21:11, "a stone most *precious*." The meaning here is, that the blood of Christ had a *value* above silver and gold; it was *worth* more, to wit,

(1.) in itself—being a more valuable thing and

(2.) in effecting our redemption.

It accomplished what silver and gold could not do. The universe had nothing more valuable to offer, of which we can conceive, than the blood of the Son of God.

As of a lamb. That is, of Christ regarded *as* a lamb offered for sacrifice. **See Barnes "Joh 1:29".**

Without blemish and without spot. Such a lamb only was allowed to be offered in sacrifice, Le 22:20-24 Mal 1:8. This was required,

(1.) because it was *proper* that man should offer that which was regarded as perfect in its kind; and,

(2.) because only that would be a proper symbol of the great sacrifice which was to be made by the Son of God. The idea was thus kept up from age to age that he, of whom all these victims were the emblems, would be perfectly pure.

{a} "lamb" Joh 1:29,36; Re 13:8

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world*. That is, it was foreordained, or predetermined, that he should be the great atoning Sacrifice for sin. On the meaning of the word *foreordained*, (*proginwskw*,) see Ro 8:29. The word is rendered *which knew*, Ac 26:5; *foreknew and foreknow*, Ro 8:29, 11:2; *foreordained*in 1Pe 1:20; and *know before*, 2Pe 2:17. It does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. The sense is, that the plan was formed, and the arrangements made for the atonement, before the world was created. *Before the foundation of the world*. That is, from eternity. It was before man was formed; before the earth was made; before any of the material universe was brought into being; before the angels were created. **See Barnes "Mt 15:34 Joh 17:24;** Eph 1:4.

But was manifest. Was revealed. **See Barnes "1Ti 3:16"**.

In these last times. In this, the last dispensation of things on the earth. **See Barnes "Heb 1:2"**.

For you. For your benefit or advantage. **See Barnes "1Pe 1:12"**.

It follows from what is said in this verse,

(1.) that the atonement was not an *after-thought* on the part of God. It entered into his plan when he made the world, and was revolved in his purposes from eternity.

(2.) It was not a device to supply a *defect* in the system; that is, it was not adopted because the system did not work well, or because God had been disappointed. It was arranged *before* man was created, and when none but God could know whether he would stand or fall.

(3.) The creation of the earth must have had some reference to this plan of redemption, and that plan must have been regarded as in itself so glorious, and so desirable, that it was deemed best to bring the world into existence that the plan might be developed, though it would involve the certainty that the race would fall, and that many would perish. It was, on the whole, more wise and benevolent that the race should be created with a certainty that they would apostatize, than it would be that the race should not be created, and the plan of salvation be unknown to distant worlds. **See Barnes "1Pe 1:12".**

{+} "verily" "indeed" {b} "before" Re 13:8

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Who by him do believe in God*. Faith is sometimes represented particularly as exercised in God, and sometimes in Christ. It is always a characteristic of true religion that a man has faith in God. **See Barnes "Mr 11:22".**

That raised him up from the dead. **See Barnes "Ac 2:24"**; **See Barnes** "Ac 3:15, **See Barnes "Ac 3:26"**; **See Barnes "Ac 4:10"**; **See Barnes** "Ac 5:30"; **See Barnes "Ac 13:30"**; **See Barnes** "Ro 4:24"; **See Barnes "1Co 15:15".**

And gave him glory. By exalting him at his own right hand in heaven, Php 2:9 1Ti 3:16; Eph 1:20,21.

That your faith and hope might be in God. That is, by raising up the Lord Jesus, and exalting him to heaven, he has laid the foundation of confidence in his promises, and of the hope of eternal life. **See Barnes "1Pe 1:3".**

Comp. 1Co 15; Col 1:27 1Th 1:3; 1Ti 1:1.

{c} "and gave" Mt 28:18 Php 2:9

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Seeing ye have purified your souls*. Greek, "Having purified your souls." The apostles were never afraid of referring to human agency as having an important part in saving the soul. Comp. 1Co 4:15. No one is made pure without personal intention or effort—any more than one becomes accomplished or learned without personal exertion. One of the leading effects of the agency of the Holy Spirit is to excite us to *make* efforts for our own salvation; and there is no true piety which is not the fair result of culture, as really as the learning of a Porson or a Parr, or the harvest of the farmer. The amount of effort which we make "in purifying our souls" is usually also the *measure* of our attainments in religion. No one can expect to have any true piety *beyond* the amount of effort which he makes to be conformed to God, any more than one can expect wealth, or fame, or learning, without exertion.

In obeying the truth. That is, your yielding to the requirements of truth, and to its fair influence on your minds, has been the means of your becoming pure. The *truth* here referred to is, undoubtedly, that which is revealed in the gospel—the great system of truth respecting the redemption of the world.

Through the Spirit. By the agency of the Holy Spirit. It is his office to apply truth to the mind; and however precious the truth may be, and however adapted to secure certain results on the soul, it will never produce those effects without the influences of the Holy Spirit. compare Tit 3:5,6. **See Barnes "Joh 3:5".**

Unto unfeigned love of the brethren. The effect of the influence of the Holy Spirit in applying the truth has been to produce sincere love to all who are true Christians. Comp. **See Barnes "Joh 13:34"**; **See Barnes "1Th 4:9".**

See also 1Jo 3:14-18.

See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently. Comp. **See Barnes "Heb 13:1"**; **See Barnes** "John 13:34"; **See Barnes "Joh 13:35"**; **See Barnes** "Eph 5:2".

The phrase "with a pure heart fervently," means

(1.) that it should be *genuine* love, proceeding from a heart in which there is no guile or hypocrisy; and (2.) that it should be *intense* affection, (*ektenwv*;) not cold and formal, but ardent and strong. If there is any reason why we should love true Christians at all, there is the same reason why our attachment to them should be intense. This verse establishes the following points:

(1.) That *truth* was at the foundation of their piety. They had none of which this was not the proper basis; and in which the foundation was not as broad as the superstructure. There is no religion in the world which is not the fair developement of truth; which the truth is not fitted to produce.

(2.) They became Christians as the result of *obeying* the truth; or by yielding to its fair influence on the soul. Their own minds complied with its claims; their own hearts yielded; there was the exercise of their own volitions. This expresses a doctrine of great importance.

(a.) There is always the exercise of the powers of the mind in true religion; always a yielding to truth; always a voluntary reception of it into the soul.

(b.) Religion is always of the nature of *obedience*. It consists in yielding to what is true and right; in laying aside the feelings of opposition, and in allowing the mind to follow where truth and duty lead.

(c.) This would always take place when the truth is presented to the mind, if there were no voluntary resistance. If all men were ready to *yield* to the truth, they would become Christians. The only reason why all men do not love and serve God, is that they refuse to yield to what they know to be true and right.

(3.) The agency by which this was accomplished was that of the Holy Ghost. Truth is adapted in itself to a certain end or result, as seed is adapted to produce a harvest. But it will no more of itself produce its appropriate effects on the soul, than seed will produce a harvest without rains, and dews, and suns. In all cases, therefore, the proper effect of truth on the soul is to be traced to the influence of the Holy Spirit, as the germination of the seed in the earth is to the foreign cause that acts on it. No man was ever converted by the mere effect of truth without the agency of the Holy Ghost, any more than seed germinates when laid on a hard rock.

(4.) The *effect* of this influence of the Holy Spirit in applying the truth is to produce love to all who are Christians. Love to Christian brethren springs up in the soul of every one who is truly converted: and this love is just as certain evidence that the seed of truth has germinated in the soul, as the green and delicate blade that peeps up through the earth is evidence that the seed sown has been quickened into life. Comp. **See Barnes "1Th 4:9"**; **See Barnes "1Jo 3:14"**.

We may learn hence,

(a.) that *truth* is of inestimable value. It is as valuable as religion itself, for all the religion in the world is the result of it.

(b.) Error and falsehood are mischievous and evil in the same degree. There is no true religion which is the fair result of error; and all the pretended religion that is sustained by error is worthless.

(c.) If a system of religion, or a religious measure or doctrine, cannot be defended by *truth*, it should be at once abandoned. Comp. **See Barnes "Job 13:7"**.

(d.) We should avoid the places where error is taught. Pr 19:27, "Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge."

(e.) We should place ourselves under the teachings of truth, for there is truth enough in the world to occupy all our time and attention; and it is only by truth that our minds can be benefited.

{d} "truth" Joh 17:17,19 {e} "unfeigned love" 1Jo 3:14,18

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Being born again*. **See Barnes "Joh 3:3"**.

Not of corruptible seed. "Not by virtue of any descent from human parents." *Doddridge*. The result of such a birth, or of being *begotten* in this way—for so the word rendered *born again* more properly signifies is only corruption and decay. We are begotten only to die. There is no permanent, enduring life produced by that. It is in this sense that this is spoken of as "corruptible seed," because it results in decay and death. The word here rendered seed—*spora*—occurs nowhere else in the New Testament.

But of incorruptible. By truth, communicating a living principle to the soul which can never decay. Comp. 1Jo 3:9: "His seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

By the word of God. **See Barnes "Jas 1:18"**

: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures." Comp. **See Barnes "Joh 1:13"**.

It is the uniform doctrine of the Scriptures that Divine *truth* is made the instrument of quickening the soul into spiritual life.

Which liveth and abideth for ever. This expression may either refer to God, as living for ever, or to the word of God, as being for ever true. Critics are about equally divided in the interpretation. The Greek will bear either construction. Most of the recent critics incline to the latter opinion—that it refers to the word of God, or to his doctrine. So Rosenmuller, Doddridge, Bloomfield, Wolf, Macknight, Clarke. It seems to me, however, that the more natural construction of the Greek is to refer it to God, as ever-living or enduring; and this interpretation agrees well with the connexion. The idea then is, that as God is everliving, that which is produced directly by him in the human soul, by the instrumentality of truth, may be expected also to endure for ever. It will not be like the offspring of human parents, themselves mortal, liable to early and certain decay, but may be expected to be as enduring as its ever-living Creator.

{a} "born again" Joh 1:13 {b} "word" Jas 1:18

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *For all flesh is as grass*. That is, all human beings, all men. The connexion here is this: The apostle, in the previous verse, had been contrasting that which is begotten by man with that which is begotten by God, in reference to its *permanency*. The former was corruptible and decaying; the latter abiding. The latter was produced by God, who lives for ever; the former by the agency of man, who is himself corruptible and dying. It was not unnatural, then, to dwell upon the feeble, frail, decaying nature of *man*, in contrast with God; and the apostle, therefore, says that "*all* flesh, every human being, is like grass. There is no stability in anything that man does or produces, lie himself resembles grass that soon fades and withers; but God and his word endure for ever the same." The comparison of a human being with grass, or with flowers, is very beautiful, and is quite common in the Scriptures. The comparison turns on the fact, that the grass or the flower, however green or beautiful it may be, soon loses its freshness; is withered; is cut down, and dies. Thus in Ps 103:15,16:

"As for man, his days are as grass;
As a flower of the field, so he flourisheth,
For the wind passeth over it and it is gone,
And the place thereof shall know it no more."
So in Isa 40:6-8; a passage which is evidently referred to by Peter in this place:—

"The voice said, Cry.
And he said, What shall I cry?
All flesh is grass,
And all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field.
The grass withereth,
The flower fadeth.
When the wind of Jehovah bloweth upon it:
Surely the people is grass,
The grass withereth,
The flower fadeth,
But the word of our God shall stand for ever."
See Barnes "Jas 1:10,11.
This sentiment is beautifully imitated by the great dramatist in the speech of Wolsey:—
"This is the state of man: to-day he puts forth
The tender leaves of hope, to-morrow blossoms,
And bears his blushing honours thick upon him.
The third day comes a frost, a killing frost.
And—when he thinks, good easy man, full surely
His greatness is a ripening—nips his root,
And then he falls."

Comp. **See Barnes "Isa 40:6-8"**.

And all the glory of man. All that man prides himself on—his wealth, rank, talents, beauty, learning, splendour of equipage or apparel.

As the flower of grass. The word rendered "*grass*," (*cortov*,) properly denotes herbage; that which furnishes food for animals—pasture, hay. Probably the prophet Isaiah, from whom this passage is taken, referred rather to the appearance of a meadow or a field, with mingled grass and flowers, constituting a beautiful landscape, than to mere grass. In such a field, the grass soon withers with heat, and with the approach of winter; and the flowers soon fade and fall.

The grass withereth, and the flower thereof fadeth away. This is repeated, as is common in the Hebrew writings, for the sake of emphasis, or strong confirmation.

{1} "For" "For that" {c} "For all flesh" Isa 40:6-8

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *But the word of the Lord*. In Isa 40:8, "the word of our God." The sense is not materially varied.

Endureth for ever. Is unmoved, fixed, permanent. Amidst all the revolutions on earth, the fading glories of natural objects, and the wasting strength of man, his truth remains unaffected. Its beauty never fades; its power is never enfeebled. The gospel system is as lovely now as it was when it was first revealed to man, and it has as much power to save as it had when first applied to a human heart. We see the grass wither at the coming on of autumn; we see the flower of the field decay; we see man, though confident in his strength, and rejoicing in the rigour of his frame, cut down in an instant; we see cities decline, and kingdoms lose their power: but the word of God is the same now that it was at first, and, amidst all the changes which may ever occur on the earth, that will remain the same.

And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. That a is, this gospel is the "word" which was referred to by Isaiah in the passage which has been quoted, In view, then, of the affecting truth stated in the close of this chapter, 1Pe 1:24,25, let us learn habitually to reflect on our feebleness and frailty. "We all do fade as a leaf," Isa 64:6. Our glory is like the flower of the field. Our beauty fades, and our strength disappears, as easily as the beauty and rigour of the flower that grows up in the morning, and that in the evening is cut down, Ps 90:6. The rose that blossoms on the cheek of youth may wither as soon as any other rose; the brightness of the eye may become dim, as readily as the beauty of field covered with flowers; the darkness of death may come over the brow of manliness and intelligence, as readily as night settles down on the landscape; and our robes of adorning may be laid aside, as soon as beauty fades in a meadow full of flowers before the scythe of the mower. There is not an object of natural beauty on which we pride ourselves that will not decay; and soon all our pride and pomp will be laid low in the tomb. It is sad to look on a beautiful lily, a rose, a magnolia, and to think how soon all that beauty will disappear. It is more sad to look on a rosy cheek, a bright eye, a lovely form, an expressive brow, an open, serene, intelligent countenance, and to think how soon all that beauty and brilliancy will fade away. But amidst these changes which beauty undergoes, and the desolations which disease and death spread over the world, it is cheering to think that all is not so, There is that which does not change, which, never loses its beauty. "The word of the Lord" abides. His cheering promises, his assurances that there is brighter and better world, remain amidst all these changes the same. The traits which are drawn on the character by the religion of Christ, more lovely by far than the most delicate colouring of the lily, remain for ever. There they abide, augmenting in loveliness, when the rose fades from the cheek; when the brilliancy departs from the eye; when the body moulders away in the sepulchre. The beauty of religion is the only permanent beauty in the earth; and he that has that need not regret that that which in this mortal frame charms the eye shall fade away like the flower of the field.

{d} "this is the word" Joh 1:1,14; 2Pe 1:19

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 1

CHAPTER II. ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

This chapter may be divided into three parts:—

I. An exhortation to those whom the apostle addressed, to lay aside all malice, and all guile, and to receive the simple and plain instructions of the word of God with the earnestness with which babes desire their appropriate food, 1Pe 2:1-3. Religion *reproduces* the traits of character of children in those whom it influences and they ought to regard themselves as new-born babes, and seek that kind of spiritual nutriment which is adapted to their condition as such.

II. The privileges which they had obtained by becoming Christians, while so many others had stumbled at the very truths by which they had been saved, 1Pe 2:4-10.

(a.) They had come to the Saviour, as the living stone on which the whole spiritual temple was founded, though others had rejected him; they had become a holy priesthood; they had been admitted to the privilege of offering true sacrifices, acceptable to God, 1Pe 2:4,5.

(b.) To them Christ was precious as the chief corner-stone, on which all their hopes rested, and on which the edifice that was to be reared was safe, though that foundation of the Christian hope had been rejected and disallowed by others, 1Pe 2:6-8.

(c.) They were now a chosen people, an holy nation, appointed to show forth on earth the praises of God, though formerly they were not regarded as the people of God, and were not within the range of the methods by which he was accustomed to show mercy, 1Pe 2:9,10.

III. Various duties growing out of these privileges, and out of the various relations which they sustained in life, 1Pe 2:11-25.

(a.) The duty of living as strangers and pilgrims; of abstaining from all those fleshly lusts which war against the soul; and of leading lives of entire honesty in relation to the Gentiles, by whom they were surrounded, 1Pe 2:11,12.

(b.) The duty of submitting to civil rulers, 1Pe 2:13-17.

(c.) The duty of servants to submit to their masters, though their condition was a hard one in life, and they were called to suffer wrongfully, 1Pe 2:18-20.

(d.) This duty was enforced on servants, and on all, from the example of Christ, who in more wronged than any others can be, and who yet bore all his sufferings with entire patience, leaving us an example that we should follow in his steps, 1Pe 2:21-25.

Verse 1. *Wherefore laying aside*. On the word rendered *laying aside*, see Ro 13:12 Eph 4:22,25 Col 3:8.

The allusion is to putting off clothes; and the meaning is, that we are to cast off these things entirely; that is, we are no longer to practise them. The word *wherefore* (*oun*) refers to the reasonings in the first chapter. In view of the considerations stated there, we should renounce all evil.

All malice. All evil, (*kakian*.) The word *malice* we commonly apply now to a particular kind of evil, denoting extreme enmity of heart, ill-will, a disposition to injure others without cause, from mere personal gratification, or from a spirit of revenge.—-*Webster*. The Greek word, however, includes evil of all kinds. **See Barnes "Ro 1:29"**.

Comp. **See Barnes** "Ac 8:22, where it is rendered wickedness, and 1Co 5:8 14:20; Eph 4:31 Col 3:8; Tit 3:3.

And all guile. Deceit of all kinds. **See Barnes "Ro 1:29"**; **See Barnes "2Co 12:16"**; **See Barnes** "1Th 2:3".

And hypocrisies. **See Barnes "1Ti 4:2"**; **See Barnes** "Mt 23:28"; **See Barnes** "Ga 2:13, on the word rendered *dissimulation*. The word means, feigning to be what we are not; assuming a false appearance of religion; cloking a wicked purpose under the appearance of piety:

And envies. Hatred of others on account of some excellency which they have, or something which they possess which we do not. **See Barnes "Ro 1:29"**.

And all evil speaking. Greek, Speaking against others. This word (*katalalia*) occurs only here and in 2Co 12:20, where it is rendered *backbitings*. It would include all unkind or slanderous speaking against others. This is by no means an uncommon fault in the world, and it is one of the designs of religion to guard against it. Religion teaches us to lay aside whatever guile, insincerity, and false appearances we may have acquired, and to put on the simple honesty and openness of children. We all acquire more or less of guile and insincerity ill the course of life, We learn to conceal our sentiments and feelings, and almost unconsciously come to appear different from what we really are. It is not so with children. In the child, every emotion of the bosom: appears as it is. *Nature there work, well and beautifully*. Every emotion is expressed; every feeling of the heart is developed; and in the cheeks, the open eye, the joyous or sad countenance, we know all that there is in the bosom, as certainly as we know all that there is in the rose by its colour and its fragrance. Now, it is one of the purposes of religion to bring us back to this state, and to *strip off* all the subterfuges which we may have acquired in life; and he in whom this effect is not accomplished has never been converted. A man that is characteristically deceitful, cunning, and crafty, cannot be a Christian. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven," Mt 18:3.

{a} "laying aside all malice" Eph 4:22,31

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *As new-born babes*. The phrase here used would properly denote those which were just born, and hence Christians who had just begun the spiritual life. See the word explained **See Barnes "2Ti 3:15"**.

It is not uncommon, in the Scriptures, to compare Christians with little children. **See Barnes "Mt 18:3"**

for the reasons of this comparison. Comp. **See Barnes "1Co 3:2"**

See Barnes "Heb 5:12,14".

Desire the sincere milk of the word. The *pure* milk of the word, On the meaning of the word *sincere*, **See Barnes "Eph 6:24"**.

The Greek word here (*adolon*) means, properly, that which is without guile or falsehood; then unadulterated, pure, genuine. The Greek adjective rendered "of the word," (*logikon*,) means properly *rational*, pertaining to reason, or mind; and, in the connexion here with milk, means that which is adapted to sustain the soul. **See Barnes "Ro 12:1"**.

There is no doubt that there is allusion to the gospel in its purest and most simple form, as adapted to be the nutriment of the new-born soul. Probably there are two ideas here; one, that the proper aliment of piety is simple truth; the other, that the truths which they were to desire were the

more elementary truths of the gospel, such as would be adapted to those who were babes in knowledge.

That ye may grow thereby. As babes grow on their proper nutriment. Piety in the heart is susceptible of growth, and is made to grow by its proper element, as a plant or a child is, and will grow in proportion as it has the proper kind of nutriment, from this verse we may see,

(1.) the reason of the injunction of the Saviour to Peter, to "feed his lambs," Joh 21:15 1Pe 2:1,2.

Young Christians strongly resemble children, babes; and they need watchful care, and kind attention, and appropriate aliment, as much as new-born infants do. Piety receives its form much from its commencement; and the character of the whole Christian life will be determined in a great degree by the views entertained at first, and the kind of instruction which is given to those who are just entering on their Christian course. We may also see,

(2.) that it furnishes evidence of conversion, if we have a love for the simple and pure truths of the gospel, It is evidence that we have spiritual life, as really as the desire of appropriate nourishment is evidence that an infant has natural life. The new-born soul loves the truth. It is nourished by it. It perishes without it. The gospel is just what it wants; and without that it could not live. We may also learn from this verse,

(3.) that the truths of the gospel which are best adapted to that state, are those which are simple and plain. **See Barnes** "Heb 5:12, seq. It is not philosophy that is needed then; it is not the profound and difficult doctrines of the gospel; it is those elementary truths which he at the foundation of all religion, and which can be comprehended by children: Religion makes every one docile and humble as a child; and whatever may be the age at which one is converted, or whatever attainments he may have made in science, he relishes the same truths which are loved by the youngest and most unlettered child that is brought into the kingdom of God.

{b} "babes" Mt 18:3 {*} "sincere" "pure" {c} "milk" 1Co 3:2

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious*. Or rather, as Doddridge renders it, "Since you have tasted that the Lord is gracious." The apostle did not mean to express any doubt on the subject, but to state that, since they had had an experimental acquaintance with the grace of God, they should desire to increase more and more in the knowledge and love of him, On the use of the word *taste*, **See Barnes "Heb 6:4"**.

{a} "tasted" Ps 34:8

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *To whom coming*. To the Lord Jesus, for so the word "Lord" is to be understood in 1Pe 2:3. **See Barnes "Ac 1:24"**.

The idea here is, that *they* had come to him for salvation, while the great mass of men rejected him. Others "disallowed" him, and turned away from him, but they had seen that he was the one chosen or appointed of God, and had come to him in order to be saved. Salvation is often represented as coming to Christ. See Mt 11:28.

As unto a living stone. The allusion in this passage is to Isa 28:16, "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste." **See Barnes "Isa 28:16"**.

There may be also possibly an allusion to Ps 118:22, "The stone which the builders disallowed, is become the head-stone of the corner." The reference is to Christ as the foundation on which the church is reared. He occupied the same place in regard to the church which a foundation-stone does to the edifice that is reared upon it. Comp. Mt 7:24,25. **See Barnes** "Ro 9:33, **See Barnes** "Eph 2:20, seq. The phrase "*living stone*" is however unusual, and is not found, I think, except in this place. There seems to be an incongruity in it, in attributing *life* to a stone, yet the meaning is not difficult to be understood. The purpose was not to speak of a temple, like that at Jerusalem, made up of gold and costly stones; but of a temple made up of *living* materials—of redeemed men—in which God now resides. In speaking of that, it was natural to refer to the foundation on which the whole rested, and to speak of that as corresponding to the whole edifice. It was all a *living temple*—a temple composed of living materials—from the foundation to the top. Compare the expression in Joh 4:10, "He would have given thee living water;" that is, water which would have imparted life to the soul. So Christ imparts life to the whole spiritual temple that is reared on him as a foundation.

Disallowed indeed of men. Rejected by them, first by the Jews, in causing him to be put to death; and then by all men when he is offered to them as their Saviour. **See Barnes "Isa 53:3"**.

See Barnes "Ps 118:22"

: "Which the builders refused." Comp. **See Barnes "Mt 21:42"**; **See Barnes** "Ac 4:11".

But chosen of God. Selected by him as the suitable foundation on which to rear his church.

And precious. Valuable. The universe had nothing more valuable on which to rear the spiritual temple.

{b} "disallowed" Ps 118:22 {*} "disallowed" "rejected"

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Ye also, as lively stones*. Gr., "living stones." The word should have been so rendered. The word *lively* with us now has a different meaning from living, and denotes *active, quick, sprightly*. The Greek word is the same as that used in the previous verse, and rendered living. The meaning is, that the materials of which the temple here referred to was composed, were living materials throughout. The foundation is a living foundation, and all the superstructure is composed of living materials. The purpose of the apostle here is to compare the church to a beautiful temple—such as the temple in Jerusalem, and to show that it is complete in all its parts, as that was. It has within itself what corresponds with everything that was valuable in that. It is a beautiful structure like that; and as in that there was a priesthood, and there were real and acceptable sacrifices offered, so it is in the Christian church. The Jews prided themselves much on their temple. It was a most costly and splendid edifice. It was the place where God was worshipped, and where he was supposed to

dwell. It had an imposing service, and there was acceptable worship rendered there. As a new dispensation was introduced; as the tendency of the Christian system was to draw off the worshippers from that temple, and to teach them that God could be worshipped as acceptably elsewhere as at Jerusalem, (Joh 4:21-23;) as Christianity did not inculcate the necessity of rearing splendid temples for the worship of God; and as in fact the temple at Jerusalem was about to be destroyed for ever, it was important to show that in the Christian church there might be found all that was truly beautiful and valuable in the temple at Jerusalem; that it had what corresponded to what was in fact most precious there, and that there was still a most magnificent and beautiful temple on the earth. Hence the sacred writers labour to show that all was found in the church that had made the temple at Jerusalem so glorious, and that the great design contemplated by the erection of that splendid edifices, —the maintenance of the worship of God was now accomplished in a more glorious manner than even in the services of that house. For there was a temple, made up of living materials, which was still the peculiar dwelling-place of God on the earth. In that temple there was a holy priesthood—for every Christian was a priest. In that temple there were sacrifices offered, as acceptable to God as in the former—for they were spiritual sacrifices, offered continually. These thoughts were often dwelt upon by the apostle Paul, and are here illustrated by Peter, evidently with the same design, to impart consolation to those who had never been permitted to worship at the temple in Jerusalem, and to comfort those Jews, now converted to Christianity, who saw that that splendid and glorious edifice was about to be destroyed. The peculiar abode of God on the earth was now removed from that temple to the Christian church, The *first* aspect in which this is illustrated here is, that the temple of God was made up of living stones;" that is, that the materials were not inanimate stones, but endued with life, and so much more valuable than those employed in the temple at Jerusalem, as the soul is more precious than any materials of stone. There were living beings which composed that temple, constituting a more beautiful structure, and a more appropriate dwelling-place for God, than any edifice could be made of stone, however costly or valuable. A spiritual house.

A spiritual temple, not made of perishable materials, like that at Jerusalem; not composed of *matter*, as that was, but made up of redeemed souls—a temple more appropriate to be the residence of one who is a pure spirit. **See Barnes "Eph 2:19, seq. and** 1Co 6:19,20. An holy priesthood. In the temple at Jerusalem, the priesthood appointed to minister there, and to offer sacrifices, an essential part of the arrangement. It was important, to show that this was not overlooked in the spiritual that God was raising. Accordingly, the apostle says that amply provided for, by constituting *the whole body of Christians* to be in fact a priesthood. Every one is engaged in offering sacrifice to God. The business is not intrusted to a particular class to be known as priests; there is not a particular portion to whom the name is to be peculiarly given; but *every* Christian is in fact a priest, and is engaged in offering an acceptable sacrifice to God. See Ro 1:6 "And hath made us kings and priests unto God." The Great High Priest in this service is the Lord Jesus Christ, (see the Epistle to the Hebrews, *passim*;) but besides him there is no one who sustains this office, except as it is borne by all the Christian members. There are *ministers, elders, pastors, evangelists* in the church; but there is no one who is *a priest*, except in the general sense that all are priests—-for the great sacrifice has been offered, and there is no expiation now to be made. The name *priest*, therefore, should never be conferred on a minister of the gospel. It is never so given in the New Testament, and there was a *reason* why it should not be. The proper idea of a *priest* is one who offers sacrifice; but the ministers of the New Testament have no sacrifices to offer—the one great and perfect oblation for

the sins of the world having been made by the Redeemer on the cross. To him, and him alone, under the New Testament dispensation, should the name priest be given, as it is uniformly in the New Testament, except in the general sense in which it is given to all Christians. In the Roman Catholic communion it is *consistent* to give the name priest to a minister of the gospel, but it is wrong to do it. It is *consistent*, because they claim that a true *sacrifice* of the body and blood of Christ is offered in the mass. It is *wrong*, because that doctrine is wholly contrary to the New Testament, and is derogatory to the one perfect oblation which has been once made for the sins of the world, and in conferring on a class of men a degree of importance and of power to which they have no claim, and which is so liable to abuse. But in a *Protestant* church it is *neither* consistent nor right to give the name to a minister of religion. The only sense in which the term can now be used in the Christian church is a sense in which it is applicable to *all* Christians alike—that they" offer the sacrifice of prayer mid praise,"

To offer up spiritual sacrifices. Not bloody offerings, the blood of lambs and bullocks, but those which are the offerings of the heart—the sacrifices of prayer and praise. As there is a *priest*, there is also involved the notion of a *sacrifice*; but that which is offered is such as all Christians offer to God, proceeding from the heart, and breathed forth from the lips, and in a holy life. It is called *sacrifice*, not because at makes an expiation for sin, but because it is of the nature of worship. **See Barnes "Heb 13:15"**; **See Barnes** "Heb 10:14".

Acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. **See Barnes "Ro 12:1"**.

Through the merits of the great sacrifice made by the Redeemer on the cross. Our prayers and praises are in themselves so imperfect, and proceed from such polluted lips and hearts, that they can be acceptable only through him as our intercessor before the throne of God. **See Barnes** "Heb 9:24, **See Barnes "Heb 9:25"**; **See Barnes** "Heb 10:19, seq.

{a} "scripture" Isa 28:16

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture*. Isa 28:16. The quotation is substantially as it is found in the Septuagint.

Behold, I lay in Sion. **See Barnes** "Isa 28:16, and **See Barnes "Ro 9:33"**.

A chief corner-stone. The principal stone on which the corner of the edifice rests. A stone is selected for this which is large and solid, and, usually, one which is squared, and wrought with care; and as such a stone is commonly laid with solemn ceremonies, so, perhaps, in allusion to this, it is here said by God that *he would lay* his stone at the foundation. The solemnities attending this were those which accompanied the great work of the Redeemer. See the word explained in the **See Barnes "Eph 2:20"**.

Elect. Chosen of God, or selected for this purpose, 1Pe 2:4.

And he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Shall not be ashamed. The Hebrew is, "shall not make haste." See it explained **See Barnes "Ro 9:33"**.

{a} "Behold" Isa 28:16

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Unto you therefore which believe*. Christians are often called simply believers, because faith in the Savour is one of the prominent characteristics by which they are distinguished from their fellowmen. It sufficiently describes any man, to say that he is a believer in the Lord Jesus.

He is precious. Marg., *an honour*. That is, according to the margin, it is an honour to believe on him, and should be so regarded. This is true, but it is very doubtful whether this is the idea of Peter. The Greek is *h timh*; literally, "esteem, honour, respect, reverence;" then "value or price." The noun is probably used in the place of the adjective, in the sense of honourable, valued, precious; and it is not incorrectly rendered in the text, "he is precious." The *connexion* demands this interpretation. The apostle was not showing that it was an *honour* to believe on Christ, but was stating the estimate which was put on him by those who believe, as contrasted with the view taken of him by the world. The truth which is taught is, that while the Lord Jesus is rejected by the great mass of men, he is regarded by all Christians as of inestimable value.

I. Of the *fact* there can be no doubt. *Somehow*, Christians perceive a value in him which is seen in nothing else. This is evidenced

(a.) in their *avowed* estimate of him as their best friend;

(b.) in their being willing so far to honour him as to commit to him the keeping of their souls, resting the whole question of their salvation on him alone;

(c.) in their readiness to keep his commands, and to serve him, while the mass of men disobey him; and

(d.) in their being willing to die for him.

II. The *reasons* why he is so precious to them are such as these:

(1.) They are brought into a condition where they can appreciate his worth. To see the value of food, we must be hungry; of clothing, we must be exposed to the winter's blast; of home, we must be wanderers without a dwelling-place; of medicine, we must be sick; of competence, we must be poor. So, to see the value of the Saviour, we must see that we are poor, helpless, dying sinners; that the soul is of inestimable worth; that we have no merit of our own; and that unless some one interpose, we must perish. Every one who becomes a true Christian is brought to this condition; and in this state he can appreciate the worth of the Saviour. In this respect the condition of Christians is unlike that of the rest of mankind—for they are in no better state to appreciate the worth of the Saviour, than the man in health is to appreciate the value of the healing art, or than he who has never had a want unsupplied, the kindness of one who comes to us with an abundant supply of food.

(2.) The Lord Jesus is in fact of more value to them than any other benefactor. We have had benefactors who have done us good, but none who have done us such good as he has. We have had parents, teachers, kind friends, who have provided for us, taught us, relieved us; but all that they have done for us is slight, compared with what he has done. The fruit of their kindness, for the most part, pertains to the present world; and they have not laid down their lives for us. What *he* has done pertains to our welfare to all eternity; it is the fruit of the sacrifice of his own life. How precious should the name and memory of one be who has laid down his own life to save us!

(3.) We owe all our hopes of heaven to him; and in proportion to the value of such a hope, he is precious to us. We have no hope of salvation but in him. Take that away—blot out the name and the work of the Redeemer—and we see no way in which we could be saved; we have no prospect

of being saved. As our hope of heaven, therefore, is valuable to us; as it supports us in trial; as it comforts us in the hour of death, so is the Saviour precious: and the estimate which we form of him is in proportion to the value of such a hope.

(4.) There is an intrinsic value and excellency in the character of Christ, apart from his relation to us, which makes him precious to those who can appreciate his worth. In his character, abstractedly considered, there was more to attract, to interest, to love, than in that of any other one who ever lived in our world. There was more purity, more benevolence, more that was great in trying circumstances, more that was generous and self-denying, more that resembled God, than in any other one who ever appeared on earth. In the moral firmament, the character of Christ sustains a pre-eminence above all others who have lived, as great as the glory of the sun is superior to the feeble lights, though so numerous, which glimmer at midnight. With such views of him, it is not to be wondered at, that, however he may be estimated by the world, "to them who believe he is PRECIOUS."

But unto them which be disobedient. Literally, *unwilling to be persuaded*, (*apeiyhv*;) that is, those who refused to believe; who were obstinate or contumacious, Lu 1:17 Ro 1:30. The meaning is, that to them he is made a stone against which they impinge, and ruin themselves. **See Barnes "1Pe 2:8"**.

The stone which the builders disallowed. Which they rejected, or refused to make a corner-stone. The allusion here, by the word "builders," is primarily to the Jews, represented as raising a temple of salvation, or building with reference to eternal life. They refused to lay this stone, which God had appointed, as the foundation of their hopes, but preferred some other foundation. See this passage explained **See Barnes "Mt 21:42"**; **See Barnes "Ac 4:11"**; and **See Barnes** "Ro 9:33".

The same is made the head of the corner. That is, though it is rejected by the mass of men, yet God has in fact made it the corner-stone on which the whole spiritual temple rests, Ac 4:11,12. However men may regard it, there is, in fact, no other hope of heaven than that which is founded on the Lord Jesus. If men are not saved by him, he becomes to them a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence.

{1} "precious" "an honour" {*} "disobedient" "believe not" {b} "stone" Mt 21:42 {+} "disallowed" "rejected"

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *And a stone of stumbling*. A stone over which they stumble, or against Which they impinge. The idea seems to be that of a cornerstone which projects from the building, against which they dash themselves, and by which they are made to fall. **See Barnes "Mt 21:44"**.

The rejection of the Saviour becomes the means of their ruin. They refuse to build on him, and it is *as if* one should run against a solid projecting corner-stone of a house, that would certainly be the means of their destruction. Comp. **See Barnes "Lu 1:34"**.

An idea similar to this occurs in Mt 21:44: "Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken." The meaning is, that if this foundation-stone is not the means of their salvation, it will be of their ruin. It is not a matter of indifference whether they believe on him or not—whether they accept or reject him. They cannot reject him without the most fearful consequences to their souls.

And a rock of offence. This expresses substantially the same idea as the phrase "stone of stumbling." The word rendered "offence," *skandalon*, means properly "a trap-stick—a crooked stick on which the bait is fastened, which the animal strikes against, and so springs the trap," (*Robinson, Lex*.;) then a trap, gin, snare; and then anything which one strikes or stumbles against; a stumbling block. It then denotes that which is the cause or occasion of ruin. This language would be strictly applicable to the Jews, who rejected the Saviour on account of his humble birth, and whose rejection of him was made the occasion of the destruction of their temple, city, and nation. But it is also applicable to all who reject him, from whatever cause; for their rejection of him will be followed with ruin to their souls. It is a crime for which God will judge them as certainly as he did the Jews who disowned him and crucified him, for the offence is substantially the same. What might have been, therefore, the means of their salvation, is made the cause of their deeper condemnation.

Even to them which stumble at the word. To all who do this. That is, they take the same kind of offence at the gospel which the Jews did at the Saviour himself. It is substantially the same thing, and the consequences must be the same. How does the conduct of the man who rejects the Saviour now, differ from that of him who rejected him when he was on the earth?

Being disobedient. 1Pe 2:7. The *reason* why they reject him is, that they are not disposed to obey. They are solemnly commanded to believe the gospel; and a refusal to do it, therefore, is as really an act of disobedience as to break any other command of God. Whereunto they were appointed. (*eiv o kai eteyhsan*.) The word "*whereunto*" means unto which. But unto what? It cannot be supposed that it means that they were "appointed" to believe on him and be saved by him; for

(1.) this would involve all the difficulty which is ever felt in the doctrine of decrees or election; for it would then mean that he had eternally designated them to be saved, which is the doctrine of predestination; and

(2.) *if* this were the true interpretation, the consequence would follow that God had been foiled. In his plan—for the reference here is to those who would *not* be saved, that is, to those who "stumble at that stumbling-stone," and are destroyed. Calvin supposes that it means, "unto which rejection and destruction they were designated in the purpose of God." So Bloomfield renders it, "Unto which (disbelief) they were destined," (*Crit. Digest*;) meaning, as he supposes, that "into this stumbling and disobedience they were *permitted* by God to fall." Doddridge interprets it, "To which also they were appointed by the righteous sentence of God, long before, even as early as in his first purpose and decree he ordained his Son to be the great foundation of his church." Rosenmuller gives substantially the same interpretation. Clemens Romanus says it means that "they were appointed, not that they should sin, but that, sinning, they should be punished." See Wetstein. So Macknight, "To which *punishment* they were appointed." Whitby gives the same interpretation of it, that because they were disobedient, (referring, as he supposes, to the Jews who rejected the Messiah,) "they were appointed, for the punishment of that disobedience, to fall and perish." Dr. Clarke supposes that it means that *they were prophesied* of that they should, thus fall; or that, long before, it was predicted that they should thus stumble and fall. In reference to the meaning of this difficult passage, it is proper to observe that there is in the Greek verb necessarily the idea of *designation, appointment, purpose*. There was some agency or intention by which they were put in that condition; some act of *placing or appointing*, (the word *tiyhmi* meaning *to set, put, lay, lay down, appoint, constitute*,) by which this result was brought about. The fair sense, therefore, and one from which we cannot escape, is, that this did not happen by chance or accident, but that there was a Divine arrangement,

appointment, or plan on the part of God in reference to this result, and that the result was in conformity with that. So it is said in Jude 1:4, of a similar class of men, "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation." The facts were these:

(1.) That God appointed his Son to be the corner-stone of his church.

(2.) That there was a portion of the world which, from some cause, would embrace him and be saved.

(3.) That there was another portion who, it was certain, would not embrace him.

(4.) That it was known that the appointment of the Lord Jesus as a Saviour would be the occasion of their rejecting him, and of their deeper and more aggravated condemnation.

(5.) That the arrangement was nevertheless made, with the understanding that all this *would* be so, and because it was best on the whole that it should be so, even though this consequence would follow. That is, it was better that the arrangement should be made for the salvation of men even with this result, that a part would sink into deeper condemnation, than that no arrangement should be made to save any. The primary and originating arrangement, therefore, did not contemplate them or their destruction, but was made with reference to others, and notwithstanding they would reject him, and would fall. The expression *whereunto* (*eiv o*) refers to this plan, as involving, under the circumstances, the result which actually followed. Their stumbling and falling was not a matter of chance, or a result which was not contemplated, but entered into the original arrangement; and the whole, therefore, might be said to be in accordance with a wise plan and purpose. And,

(6.) it might be said in this sense, and in this connexion, that those who would reject him were appointed to this stumbling and falling. It was what was foreseen; what entered into the general arrangement; what was involved in the purpose to save any. It was not a matter that was unforeseen, that the consequence of giving a Saviour would result in the condemnation of those who should crucify and reject him; but the whole thing, as it actually occurred, entered into the Divine arrangement. It may be added, that as, in the facts in the case, nothing wrong has been done by God, and no one has been deprived of any rights, or punished more than he deserves, it was not wrong in him to make the arrangement. It was better that the arrangement should be made as it is, even with this consequence, than that none at all should be made for human salvation. **See Barnes** "Ro 9:5, seq. **See Barnes** "Joh 12:39, **See Barnes "Joh 12:40"**.

This is just a statement, in accordance with what everywhere occurs in the Bible, that all things enter into the eternal plans of God; that nothing happens by chance; that there is nothing that was not foreseen; and that the plan is such as, on the whole, God saw to be best and wise, and therefore adopted it. If there is nothing unjust and wrong in the actual developement of the plan, there was nothing in forming it. At the same time, no man who disbelieves and rejects the gospel should take refuge in this as an excuse. He was "appointed" to it no otherwise than as it actually occurs; and as they know that they are voluntary in rejecting him, they cannot lay the blame of this on the purposes of God. They are not *forced or compelled* to do it; but it was seen that this consequence would follow, and the plan was laid to send the Saviour notwithstanding.

{a} "whereunto" Jude 1:4

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *But ye are a chosen generation*. In contradistinction from those who, by their disobedience, had rejected the Saviour as the foundation of hope. The people of God are often represented as his chosen or elected people. **See Barnes "1Pe 1:2"**.

A royal priesthood. **See Barnes "1Pe 2:2"**

%. The meaning of this is, probably, that they "at once bore the dignity of kings, and the sanctity of priests."—*Doddridge*. Comp. Re 1:6: "And hath made us kings and priests unto God." See also Isa 61:6: "But ye shall be named priests of the Lord; men shall call you ministers of our God." It may be, however, that the word *royal* is used only to denote the dignity of the priestly office which they sustained, or that they constituted, as it were, an entire nation or kingdom of priests. They were a kingdom over which he presided, and they were all priests; so that it might be said they were a kingdom of priests—a kingdom in which all the subjects were engaged in offering sacrifice to God. The expression appears to be taken from Ex 19:6—"And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests"—and is such language as one who had been educated as a Jew would be likely to employ to set forth the dignity of those whom he regarded as the people of God.

An holy nation. This is also taken from Ex 19:6. The Hebrews were regarded as a nation consecrated to God; and now that they were east off or rejected for their disobedience, the same language was properly applied to the people whom God had chosen in their place —the Christian church.

A peculiar people. Comp. **See Barnes** "Tit 2:14, The margin here is *purchased*. The word *peculiar*, in its common acceptation now, would mean that they were distinguished from others, or were singular. The reading in the margin would mean that they had been bought or redeemed. Both these things are so, but neither of them expresses the exact sense of the original. The Greek (*laov eiv peripoihsin*) means, "a people for a possession;" that is, as pertaining to God. They are a people which he has secured as a possession, or as his own; a people, therefore, which belong to him, and to no other. In this sense they are *peculiar* as being his; and, being such, it may be inferred that they *should be* peculiar in the sense of being unlike others in their manner of life. But that idea is not necessarily in the text. There seems to be here also an allusion to Ex 19:5: "Ye shall be a peculiar treasure with me (Sept. *laov periousiov*) above all people."

That ye should shew forth the praises of him. Marg., *virtues*. The Greek word (*areth*) means properly *good quality, excellence* of any kind. It means here the excellences of God—his goodness, his wondrous deeds, or those things which make it proper to praise him. This shows one great object for which they were redeemed. It was that they might proclaim the glory of God, and keep up the remembrance of his wondrous deeds in the earth. This is to be done

(a.) by proper ascriptions of praise to him in public, family, and social worship;

(b.) by being always the avowed friends of God, ready ever to vindicate his government and ways;

(c.) by endeavouring to make known his excellences to all those who are ignorant of him; and

(d.) by such a life as shall constantly proclaim his praise—as the sun, the moon, the stars, the hills, the streams, the flowers do, showing what God *does*. The consistent life of a devoted Christian is a constant setting forth of the praise of God, showing to all that the God who has made him such is worthy to be loved.

Who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. On the word *called*, **See Barnes "Eph 4:1"**.

Darkness is the emblem of ignorance, sin, and misery, and refers here to their condition before their conversion; *light* is the emblem of the opposite, and is a beautiful representation of the state of those who are brought to the knowledge of the gospel. **See Barnes "Ac 26:18"**.

The word *marvellous* means *wonderful*; and the idea is, that the light of the gospel was such as was unusual, or not to be found elsewhere, as that excites wonder or surprise which we are not accustomed to see. The primary reference here is, undoubtedly, to those who had been heathens, and to the great change which had been produced by their having been brought to the knowledge of the truth as revealed in the gospel; and, in regard to this, no one can doubt that the one state deserved to be characterized as darkness, and the other as light. The contrast was as great as that between midnight and noonday. But what is here said is substantially correct of all who are converted, and is often as strikingly true of those who have been brought up in Christian lands, as of those who have lived among the heathen. The change in conversion is often so great and so rapid, the views and feelings are so different before and after conversion, that it seems like a sudden transition from midnight to noon. In all *cases* also, of true conversion, though the change may not be so striking, or apparently so sudden, there is a change of which this may be regarded as substantially an accurate description. In many cases the convert can adopt this language in all its fulness, as descriptive of his own conversion; in all cases of genuine conversion it is true that each one can say that he has been called from a state in which his mind was dark to one in which it is comparatively clear.

{1} "peculiar" "purchased" {b} "people" De 4:20 {2} "the praises" "virtues" {c} "darkness" Ac 26:18

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Which in time past were not a people*. That is, who formerly were not regarded as the people of God. There is an *allusion* here to the passage in Hos 2:23, "And I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God." It is, however, a *mere* allusion, such as one makes who uses the language of another to express his ideas, without meaning to say that both refer to the same subject. In Hosea, the passage refers evidently to the reception of one portion of the Israelites into favour after their rejection; in Peter, it refers mainly to those who had been Gentiles, and who had never been recognised as the people of God. The language of the prophet would exactly express his idea, and he therefore uses it without intending to say that this was its original application. See it explained **See Barnes "Ro 9:25"**.

Comp. **See Barnes** "Eph 2:11, seq.

Which had not obtained mercy. That is, who had been living unpardoned, having no knowledge of the way by which sinners might be forgiven, and no evidence that your sins were forgiven. They were then in the condition of the whole heathen world, and they had not then been acquainted with the glorious method by which God forgives iniquity.

{a} "which in past" Ro 9:25

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims*. On the word rendered *strangers*, (*paroikouv*,) **See Barnes** "Eph 2:19, where it is rendered *foreigners*. It means, properly, one dwelling near, neighbouring; then a by-dweller, a sojourner, one without the rights of citizenship, as distinguished from a citizen; and it means here that Christians are not properly citizens of this world, but that their citizenship is in heaven, and that they are here mere sojourners. **See Barnes "Php 3:20"**.

For our conversation [*citizenship*] is in heaven." On the word rendered *pilgrims*, (*parepidhmouv*,) **See Barnes "1Pe 1:1"**; **See Barnes** "Heb 11:13".

A *pilgrim*, properly, is one who travels to a distance from his own country to visit a holy place, or to pay his devotion to some holy object; then a traveller, a wanderer. The meaning here is, that Christians have no permanent home on earth; their citizenship is not here; they are mere sojourners, and they are passing on to their eternal home in the heavens. They should, therefore, act as become such persons; as sojourners and travellers do. They should not

(a.) *regard* the earth as their home.

(b.) They should not seek to acquire permanent possessions *here*, as if they were to remain here, but should act as travellers do, who merely seek a temporary lodging, without expecting permanently to reside in a place.

(c.) They should not allow any such attachments to be formed, or arrangements to be made, as to *impede* their journey to their final home, as pilgrims seek only a temporary lodging, and steadily pursue their journey.

(d.) Even while engaged here in the necessary callings of life—their studies, their farming, their merchandize—their thoughts and affections should be on other things. One in a strange land thinks much of his country and home; a pilgrim, much of the land to which he goes; and even while his time and attention may be necessarily occupied by the arrangements needful for the journey, his thoughts and affections will be far away.

(e.) We should not *encumber* ourselves with much of this world's goods. Many professed Christians get so many worldly things around them, that it is impossible for them to make a journey to heaven. They burden themselves as no traveller would, and they make no progress. A traveller takes along as few things as possible; and a staff is often all that a pilgrim has. We make the most rapid progress in our journey to our final home when we are least encumbered with the things of this world.

Abstain from freshly lusts. Such desires and passions as the carnal appetites prompt to. **See Barnes** "Ga 5:19, seq., a sojourner in a land, or a pilgrim, does not give himself up to the indulgence of sensual appetites, or to the soft pleasures of the soul. All these would hinder his progress, and turn him off from his great design. Comp. Ro 13:4, Ga 5:24 2Ti 2:22; Tit 2:12 1Pe 1:14.

Which war against the soul. **See Barnes** "Ro 8:12, **See Barnes "Ro 8:13"**.

The meaning is, that indulgence in these things makes war against the nobler faculties of the soul; against the conscience, the understanding, the memory, the judgment, the exercise of a pure imagination. Comp. Ga 5:17. There is not a faculty of the mind, however brilliant in itself, which will not be ultimately ruined by indulgence in the carnal propensities of our nature. The effect of intemperance on the noble faculties of the soul is well known; and alas, there are too many instances in which the light of genius, in those endowed with splendid gifts, at the bar, in the pulpit, and in

the senate, is extinguished by it, to need a particular description. But there is one vice pre-eminently, which prevails all over the heathen world, (Comp. **See Barnes** "Ro 1:27, seq.) and extensively in Christian lands, which more than all others, blunts the moral sense, pollutes the memory, defiles the imagination, hardens the heart, and sends a withering influence through all the faculties of the soul.

"The soul grows clotted by contagion,
Embodies, and embrutes, till she quite lose
The divine property of her first being,"
Of this passion, Burns beautifully and truly said-
"But oh ! it hardens a' within,
And petrifies the feeling."

From all these passions the Christian pilgrim is to abstain.
{b} "strangers" Ps 119:19 {c} "lusts" Ga 5:16-21 {d} "war" Ro 8:13 Jas 4:1

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Having your conversation honest*. Your *conduct*. **See Barnes "Php 1:27"**.

That is, lead upright and consistent lives. Comp. **See Barnes "Php 4:8"**.

Among the Gentiles. The heathen by whom you are surrounded, and who will certainly observe your conduct. **See Barnes** "1Th 4:12, "That ye may walk honestly towards them that are without." Comp. Ro 13:13.

That, whereas they speak against you as evil doers,. Marg., *wherein*. Gr., *en w—in what*; either referring to time, and meaning that *at the very time* when they speak against you in this manner they may be silenced by seeing your upright lives; or meaning *in respect to which*—that is, that in respect to the very matters for which they reproach you they may see by your meek and upright conduct that there is really no ground for reproach. Wetstein adopts the former, but the question which is meant is not very important. Bloomfield supposes it to mean *inasmuch, whereas*. The sentiment is a correct one, whichever interpretation is adopted It should be true that at the very time when the enemies of religion reproach us, they should see that we are actuated by Christian principles, and that in the very matter for which we are reproached we are conscientious and honest.

They may, by your good works, which they shall behold. Gr., "which they shall closely or narrowly inspect." The meaning is, that upon a close and narrow examination, they may see that you are actuated by upright principles, and ultimately be disposed to do you justice. It is to be remembered that the heathen were very little acquainted with the nature of Christianity; and it is known that in the early ages they charged on Christians the most abominable vices, and even accused them of practices at which human nature revolts. The meaning of Peter is, that while they charged these things on Christians, whether from ignorance or malice, they ought so to live as that a more full acquaintance with them, and a closer inspection of their conduct, would disarm their prejudices, and show that their charges were entirely unfounded. The truth taught here is, *that our conduct as Christians should be such as to bear the strictest scrutiny; such that the closest examination will*

lead our enemies to the conviction; that we are upright and honest. This *may* be done by every Christian; this his religion solemnly requires him to do.

Glorify God. Honour God; that is, that they may be convinced by your conduct of the pure and holy nature of that religion which he has revealed, and be led also to love and worship him. **See Barnes "Mt 5:16".**

In the day of visitation. Many different opinions have been entertained of the meaning of this phrase, some referring it to the day of judgment; some to times of persecution; some to the destruction of Jerusalem; and some to the time when the gospel was preached among the Gentiles, as a period when God visited them with mercy. The word visitation (*episkoph*,) means the act of visiting or being visited for any purpose, usually with the notion of inspecting conduct, of inflicting punishment, or of conferring favours. Comp. Mt 25:36,43; Lu 1:68,78, 7:16 19:44.

In the sense of visiting for the purpose of punishing, the word is often used in the Septuagint for the Heb.

HEBREW, (*pakad*,) though there is no instance in which the word is so used in the New Testament, unless it be in the verse before us. The "visitation" here referred to is undoubtedly that of God; and the reference is to some time when he would make a "visitation" to men for some purpose, and when the fact that the Gentiles had narrowly inspected the conduct of Christians would lead them to honour him. The only question is, to what visitation of that kind the apostle referred. The prevailing use of the word in the New Testament would seem to lead us to suppose that the "visitation" referred to was designed to confer favours rather than to inflict punishment, and indeed the word seems to have somewhat of a technical character, and to have been familiarly used by Christians to denote God's coming to men to bless them; to pour out his Spirit upon them; to revive religion. This seems to me to be its meaning here; and, if so, the sense is, that when God appeared among men to accompany the preaching of the gospel with saving power, the result of the observed conduct of Christians would be to lead those around them to honour him by giving up their hearts to him; that is, their consistent lives would be the means of the revival and extension of true religion.

And is it not always so? Is not the pure and holy walk of Christians an occasion of his bending his footsteps down to earth to bless dying sinners, and to scatter spiritual blessings with a liberal hand? Comp. **See Barnes** "1Co 14:24, **See Barnes "1Co 14:25".**

{1} "whereas" "wherein" {e} "good works" Mt 5:16

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man*. Gr., "to every *creation* of man," (*anyrwpinh ktisei*.) The meaning is, to every institution or appointment of man; to wit, of those who are in authority, or who are appointed to administer government. The laws, institutes, and appointments of such a government may be spoken of as the creation of man; that is, as what man makes. Of course, what is here said must be understood with the limitation everywhere implied, that what is ordained by those in authority is not contrary to the law of God. **See Barnes "Ac 4:19".**

On the general duty here enjoined of subjection to civil authority, **See Barnes "Ro 13:1-7".**

For the Lord's sake. Because he has required it, and has intrusted this power to civil rulers. **See Barnes "Ro 13:6".**

Comp. **See Barnes "Eph 6:7".**

Whether it be to the king. It has been commonly supposed that there is reference here to the Roman emperor, who might be called king, because in him the supreme power resided. The common title of the Roman sovereign was, as used by the Greek writers, *autokratwr*, and among the Romans themselves, *imperator*, (emperor;) but the title *king* was also given to the sovereign. Joh 19:15, "We have no king *but* Cesar." Ac 17:7, "And these all do contrary to the decrees of Cesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus." Peter undoubtedly had particular reference to the Roman emperors, but he uses a general term, which would be applicable to all in whom the supreme power resided, and the injunction here would require submission to such authority, by whatever name it might be called. The meaning is, that we are to be subject to that authority whether exercised by the sovereign in person, or by those who are appointed by him.

As supreme. Not supreme in the sense of being superior to God, or not being subject to him, but in the sense of being over all subordinate officers.

{a} "yourselves" Mt 22:21 Ro 13:1-7

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Or unto governors*. Subordinate officers, appointed by the chief magistrate, over provinces. Perhaps Roman proconsuls are here particularly intended.

As unto them that are sent by him. By the king, or the Roman emperor. They represent the supreme power.

For the punishment of evil doers. One of the leading ends of government. "The Roman governors had the power of life and death in such conquered provinces as those mentioned in 1Pe 1:1. —*Doddridge*. Ulpian, the celebrated Roman lawyer, who flourished two hundred years after Christ, thus describes the power of the governors of the Roman provinces: "It is the duty of a good and vigilant president to see to it that his province be peaceable and quiet. And that he ought to make diligent search after sacrilegious persons, robbers, man-stealers, and thieves, and to punish every one according to their guilt." Again, "They who govern whole provinces, have the power of sending to the mines." And again, "The presidents of provinces have the highest authority, next to the emperor." Peter has described the office of the Roman governors in language nearly resembling that of Ulpian. See Lardner's Credibility, (Works, i. 77, edit. 8vo., Lond. 1829.)

And for the praise of them that do well. *Praise* here stands opposed to *punishment*, and means commendation, applause, reward. That is, it is a part of their business to reward in a suitable manner those who are upright and virtuous as citizens. This would be by protecting their persons and property; by defending their rights, and, perhaps, by admitting those to share the honours and emoluments of office who showed that they were worthy to be trusted. It is as important a part of the functions of magistracy to protect the innocent, as it is to punish the wicked.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 15

Verse 15. For so is the will of God. That is, it is in accordance with the Divine will that in this way you should put them to silence.

That with well doing. By a life of uprightness and benevolence. Ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. **See Barnes "Tit 2:8"**.

The reference here is to men who brought charges against Christians, by accusing them of being inimical to the government, or insubordinate, or guilty of crimes. Such charges, it is well known, were often brought against them by their enemies in the early ages of Christianity. Peter says they were brought by *foolish* men, perhaps using the word *foolish* in the sense of evil-disposed, or wicked, as it is often used in the Bible. Yet, though there might be malice at the bottom, the charges were really based on ignorance. They were not thoroughly acquainted with the principles of the Christian religion; and the way to meet those charges was to act in every way as became good citizens, and so as "to live them down." One of the best ways o meeting the accusations of our enemies is to lead a life of strict integrity. It is not easy for the wicked to reply to this argument.

{b} "that with" Tit 2:8

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *As free*. That is, they were to consider themselves as freemen, as having a right to liberty. The Jews boasted much of their freedom and regarded it as a birthright privilege that they were free, Joh 8:33. They never willingly acknowledged their subjection to any other power, but claimed it as an elementary idea of their civil constitution that God only was their Sovereign. They were indeed conquered by the Romans, and paid tribute, but they did it because they were compelled to do it, and it was even a question much debated among them whether they should do it or not, Mt 22:17. Josephus has often referred to the fact that the Jews rebelled against the Romans under the plea that they were a *free people*, and that they were subject only to God. This idea of essential freedom the Jews had when they became Christians, and every thing in Christianity tended to inspire them with the love of liberty, They who were converted to the Christian faith, whether from among the Jews or the Gentiles, were made to feel that they were the children of God; that his law was the supreme rule of their lives; that in the ultimate resort they were subject to him alone; that they were redeemed, and that, therefore, the yoke of bondage could not be properly imposed on them; that God "had made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth," (Ac 17:26;) and that, therefore, they were on a level before him. The meaning here is, that they were not to consider themselves as slaves, or to act as slaves. In their subjection to civil authority they were not to forget that they were freemen in the highest sense, and that liberty was an invaluable blessing. They had been made free by the Son of God, Joh 8:32,36. They were free from sin and condemnation. They acknowledged Christ as their supreme Head, and the whole spirit and tendency of his religion prompted to the exercise of freedom. They were not to submit to the chains of slavery; not to allow their consciences to be bound, or their essential liberty to be interfered with; nor in their subjection to the civil magistrate were they ever to regard themselves otherwise than as freemen. As a matter of fact, Christianity has always been the friend and promoter of liberty. Its influence emancipated

the slaves throughout the Roman empire; and all the civil freedom which we enjoy, and which there is in the world, can be traced to the influence of the Christian religion. To spread the gospel in its purity everywhere would be to break every yoke of oppression and bondage, and to make men everywhere free. It is the essential right of every man who is a Christian to be a *freeman*—to be free to worship God; to read the Bible; to enjoy the avails of his own labour; to train up his children in the way in which he shall deem best; to form his own plans of life, and to pursue his own ends, provided only that he does not interfere with the equal right of others—and every system which prevents this, whether it be that of civil government, of ecclesiastical law, or of domestic slavery, is contrary to the religion of the Saviour.

And not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness. Marg., as in Greek, *having*. Not making your freedom a mere pretext under which to practise all kinds of evil. The word rendered *maliciousness kakia*—means more than our word *maliciousness* does; for it denotes *evil* of any kind, or all kinds. The word maliciousness refers rather to enmity of heart ill-will, an intention to injure. The apostle has reference to an abuse of freedom, which has often occurred. The pretence of those who have acted in this manner has been, that the freedom of the gospel implied deliverance from all kinds of restraint; that they were under no yoke, and bound by no laws; that, being the children of God, they had a right to all kinds of enjoyment and indulgence; that even the moral law ceased to bind them, and that they had a right to make the most of liberty in all respects. Hence they have given themselves up to all sorts of sensual indulgence, claiming exemption from the restraints of morality as well as of civil law, and sinking into the deepest abyss of vice. Not a few have done this who have professed to be Christians; and, occasionally, a fanatical sect now appears who make the freedom which they say Christianity confers a pretext for indulgence in the most base and degrading vices. The apostles saw this tendency in human nature, and in nothing are they more careful than to guard against this abuse.

But as the servants of God. Not free from all restraint; not at liberty to indulge in all things, but bound to serve God in the faithful obedience of his laws. Thus bound to obey and serve him, they could not be at liberty to indulge in those things which would be in violation of his laws, and which would dishonour him. See this sentiment explained **See Barnes "1Co 7:22"**; **See Barnes** "1Co 9:21".

{c} "As free" Ga 5:1,13 {1} "not using" "having"

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Honour all men*. That is, show them the respect which is due to them according to their personal worth, and to the rank and office which they sustain. **See Barnes "Ro 13:7"**.

Love the brotherhood. The whole fraternity of Christians, regarded as a band of brothers. The word here used occurs only in this place and in 1Pe 5:9, where it is rendered *brethren*. The idea expressed here occurs often in the New Testament. **See Barnes** "Joh 13:34, **See Barnes "Joh 13:35"**.

Fear God, A duty everywhere enjoined in the Bible, as one of the first duties of religion. Comp. Le 25:17 24:7, 25:14; Pr 1:7 3:13, 9:10 23:17; **See Barnes "Ro 3:18"**; **See Barnes "2Co 7:1"**.

The word *fear*, when used to express our duty to God, means that we are to reverence and honour him. Religion, in one aspect, is described as the fear of God; in another, as the love of God; in another, as submission to his will, etc. A holy veneration or fear is always an elementary principle

of religion. It is the fear, not so much of punishment as of his disapprobation; not so much the dread of suffering at the dread of doing wrong.

Honour the king. Referring here primarily to the Roman sovereign, but implying that we are always to respect those who have the rule over us. **See Barnes "Ro 13:1-7"**.

The doctrine taught in these verses 1Pe 2:13-17 is, that we are faithfully to perform all the relative duties of life. There are duties which we owe to ourselves, which are of importance in their place, and which we are by no means at liberty to neglect. But we also owe duties to our fellow-men, to our Christian brethren, and to those who have the rule over us; and religion, while it is honoured by our faithful performance of our duty to ourselves, is more *openly* honoured by our performance of our duties to those to whom we sustain important relations in life. Many of the duties which we owe to ourselves are, from the nature of the case, hidden from public observation. All that pertains to the examination of the heart; to our private devotions; to the subjugation of our evil passions; to our individual communion with God, must be concealed from public view. Not so, however, with those duties which pertain to others. In respect to them, we are open to public view. The eye of the world is upon us. The judgment of the world in regard to us is made up from their observation of the manner in which we perform them. If religion fails there, they judge that it fails altogether; and however devout we may be in private, if it is not seen by the world that our religion leads to the faithful performance of the duties which we owe in the various relations of life, it will be regarded as of little value.

{1} "Honour all men" "Esteem" {a} "men" Ro 12:10 {b} "Love" Joh 13:35 {c} "Fear" Ps 111:10 {d} "king" Pr 24:21

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Servants, be subject to your masters*. On the duty here enjoined, **See Barnes** "Eph 6:5, seq. The Greek word here used (*oiketai*) is not the same which is employed in Ephesians, (*douloi*). The word here means properly *domestics*—those employed about a house, or living in the same house—from *oikov*, *house*. These persons might have been slaves, or might not. The word would apply to them, whether they were hired, or whether they were owned as slaves. The word should not and cannot be employed to *prove* that slavery existed in the churches to which Peter wrote, and still less to prove that he approved of slavery, or regarded it as a good institution. The exhortation here would be, and still is, strictly applicable to any persons employed as domestics, though they had voluntarily hired themselves out to be such. It would be incumbent on them, while they remained in that condition, to perform with fidelity their duties as Christians, and to bear with Christian meekness all the wrongs which they might suffer from those in whose service they were. Those who are hired, and who are under a necessity of "going out to service" for a living, are not always free from hard usage, for there are trials incident to that condition of life which cannot be always avoided. It might be better, in many cases, to bear much than to attempt a change of situation, even though they were entirely at liberty to do so. It must be admitted, however, that the exhortation here will have more force if it is supposed that the reference is to slaves, and there can be no doubt that many of this class were early converted to the Christian faith. The word here rendered *masters* (*despotaiv*) is not the same which is used in Eph 6:5, (*kurioiv*.) Neither of these words necessarily

implies that those who were under them were slaves. The word here used is applicable to the head of a family, *whatever* may be the condition of those under him. It is frequently applied to God, and to Christ; and it cannot be maintained that those to whom God sustains the relation of *despothv*, or *master*, are *slaves*. **See Barnes "Lu 2:29"; Ac 4:24 2Ti 2:21; 2Pe 2:1 Jude 1:4;** Re 6:10.

The word, indeed, is one that "*might* be applied to those who were owners of slaves. If that be the meaning here, it is not said, however, that those to whom it is applied were Christians. It is rather implied that they were pursuing such a course as was inconsistent with real piety. Those who were under them are represented as suffering grievous wrongs.

With all fear. That is, with all proper reverence and respect. **See Barnes "Eph 6:6"**.

Not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. The word rendered *froward* (*skolioiv*) means properly *crooked, bent; then perverse, wicked, unjust, peevish*. Any one who is a servant or domestic is liable to be employed in the service of such a master; but while the relation continues, the servant should perform *his* duty with fidelity, whatever may be the character of the master. *Slaves* are certainly liable to this; and even those who voluntarily engage as servants to others, cannot always be sure that they will have kind employers. Though the *terms* used here do not necessarily imply that those to whom the apostle gave this direction were *slaves*, yet it may be presumed that they probably were, since slavery abounded throughout the Roman empire; but the directions will apply to *all* who are engaged in the service of others, and are therefore of permanent value. Slavery will, sooner or later, under the influence of the gospel, wholly cease in the world, and instructions addressed to masters and slaves will have no permanent value; but it will always be true that there will be those employed as domestics, and it is the duty of all who are thus engaged to evince true fidelity and a Christian spirit themselves, whatever may be the character of their employers.

{e} "Servants" Eph 6:5

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *For this is thank-worthy*. Marg., *thank*. Gr., "This is grace," (*cariv*.) Doddridge renders the expression, "This is graceful indeed." Various interpretations of this expression have been proposed; but the meaning evidently is, that it is acceptable to God, (1Pe 2:20, "this is acceptable to God "*cariv para yew*-) that is, this will be regarded by him with *favour*. It does not mean that it was worthy of thanks, or that God would thank them for doing it, (comp. Lu 17:9,10;) but that such conduct would meet with his approbation.

If a man for conscience toward God. If, in the conscientious discharge of his duty, or if, in the endurance of this wrong, he regards himself as serving God. That is, if he feels that God, by his providence, has placed him in the circumstances in which he is, and that it is a duty which he owes to him to bear every trial incident to that condition with a submissive spirit. If he does this, he will evince the true nature of religion, and will be graciously accepted of God.

Endure grief. That is, endure that which is fitted to produce grief, or that which is wrong.

Suffering wrongfully. Suffering injury, or where there is injustice, (*pascwn adikwv*.) This, though a general remark, has particular reference to servants, and to their duty in the relation which they sustain to their masters. In view of what is here said, we may remark,

(1.) that if this has reference *to slaves*, as has been usually supposed, it proves that they are very *liable* to be abused; that they have little or no security against being wronged; and that it was a special and very desirable characteristic of those who were in that condition, to be able to bear wrong with a proper spirit. It is impossible so to modify slavery that this shall not be the case; for the whole system is one of oppression, and there can be nothing that shall effectually secure the slave from being ill-treated.

(2.) It would follow from this passage, if this refers to slavery, that that is a very hard and undesirable condition of life; for that is a very undesirable condition where the principal virtue, which they who are in it are required to exercise, is *patience under wrongs*. Such a condition cannot be in accordance with the gospel, and cannot be designed by God to be *permanent*. The relation of parent and child is never thus represented. It is never said or implied in the Scriptures that the principal virtue to which children are exhorted is patience under wrongs; nor, in addressing them, is it ever supposed that the most prominent thing in their condition is, that they would need the exercise of such patience.

(3.) It is acceptable to God, if we bear wrong with a proper spirit, from whatever quarter it may come. Our proper business in life is, to do the will of God; to evince the right spirit however others may treat us; and to show, even under excessive wrong, the sustaining power and the excellence of true religion. Each one who is oppressed and wronged, therefore, has an eminent opportunity to show a spirit which will honour the gospel; and the slave and the martyr may do more to honour the gospel than if they were both permitted to enjoy liberty and life undisturbed.

{1} "this is thank-worthy" "thank" Lu 6:32 {*} "thank-worthy" "well-pleasing"

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *For what glory is it*. What honour or credit would it be.

If, when ye be buffeted for your faults. That is, if you are punished when you deserve it, The word buffet (*kolafizw*) means, to strike with the fist; and then to strike in any way; to maltreat, Mt 26:67 Mr 14:65; 1Co 4:11 2Co 12:7, Perhaps there may be a reference here to the manner in which servants were commonly treated, or the kind of punishment to which they were exposed. They would be likely to be *struck* in sudden anger, either by the hand, or by anything that was accessible, The word rendered "for your faults," is sinning, (*amartanontev*,) That is, "if being guilty of an offence, or having done wrong." The idea is, that if they were justly punished, and should take it patiently, there would be no credit or honour in it,

Ye shall take it patiently. "If, even then, you evince an uncomplaining spirit, and bear it with the utmost calmness and patience, it would be regarded as comparatively no virtue, and as entitling you to no honour. The feeling of all who saw it would be that you deserved it, and there would be nothing to excite their sympathy or compassion. The patience evinced might indeed be as great as in the other ease, but there would be the feeling that you deleted all that you received, and the spirit evinced in that ease could not be regarded as entitled to any particular praise. If your masters are inflicting on you only what you deserve, it would be in the highest degree shameful for you to rise up against them, and resist them, for it would be only adding to the wrong which you had already done:" The expression here is, doubtless, to be understood *comparatively*. The meaning is not that

absolutely there would be no more credit due to one who should bear his punishment patiently when he had done wrong, than if he had met it with resistance and murmuring; but that there is *very little* credit in that compared with the patience which an innocent person evinces, who, from regard to the will of God, and by control over all the natural feelings of resentment, meekly endures wrong. This expresses the common feeling of our nature. We attribute no particular credit to one who submits to a just punishment even with a calm temper. We feel that it would be wrong in the highest degree for him to do otherwise. So it is when calamities are brought on a man on account of his sins. If it is *seen* to be the fruit of intemperance or crime, we do not feel that there is any great virtue exhibited if he bears it with a calm temper. But if he is overwhelmed with calamity when it seems to have no particular connexion with his sins, or to be a punishment for any particular fault; if he suffers at the hand of man, where there is manifest injustice done him, and yet evinces a calm, submissive, and meek temper, we feel that in such cases there is eminent virtue.

This is acceptable with God. Marg., as in 1Pe 2:19, *thank*. It is that which is agreeable to him, or with which he is pleased.

{a} "this" Mt 5:10-12 {2} "is acceptable" or "thank" Lu 6:32

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *For even hereunto were ye called*. Such a spirit is required by the very nature of your Christian vocation; you were called into the church in order that you might evince it. **See Barnes "1Th 3:3".**

Because Christ also suffered for us. Marg., "Some read, *for you*." The latest editions of the Greek Testament adopt the reading "for *you*." The sense, however, is not essentially varied. The object is, to hold up the example of Christ to those who were called to suffer, and to say to them that they should bear their trials in the same spirit that he evinced in his. **See Barnes "Php 3:10".**

Leaving us an example. The apostle does not say that this was the only object for which Christ suffered, but that it was an object, and an important one. The word rendered *example* (*upogrammon*) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means properly a *writing copy*, such as is set for children; or an outline or sketch for a painter to fill up; and then, in general, an example, a pattern for imitation.

That ye should follow his steps. That we should *follow him*, as if we trod exactly along behind him, and should place our feet precisely where his were. The meaning is, that there should be the closest imitation or resemblance. The *things* in which we are to imitate him are specified in the following verses.

{b} "hereunto" Mt 16:24 {3} "suffered for us" "Some copies read *for you*" {c} "follow his steps" 1Jo 3:16 Re 12:11

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Who did no sin*. Who was in all respects perfectly holy. There is an allusion here to Isa 53:9; and the sense is, that he was entirely innocent, and that he suffered without having committed any crime. In this connexion the meaning is, that we are to be careful that, if we suffer, it should be without committing any crime, We should so live, as the Saviour did, as not to *deserve* to be punished, and thus only shall we entirely follow his example. It is as much our duty to live so as not to *deserve* the reproaches of others, as it is to bear them with patience when we are called to suffer them. The first thing in regard to hard treatment from others, is to live that there shall be no just occasion for it; the next is, if reproaches come upon us when we have not deserved them, to bear them as the Saviour did. If he suffered unjustly, we should esteem it to be no strange thing that we should; if he bore the injuries done him with meekness, we should learn that it is *possible* for us to do it also; and should learn also that we have not the spirit of his religion unless we actually do it. On the expression here used, **See Barnes "Isa 53:9"**; **See Barnes** "Heb 7:26".

Neither was guile found in his mouth. There was no deceit, hypocrisy, or insincerity, he was in all respects what he professed to be, and he imposed on no one by any false and unfounded claim. All this has reference to the time when the Saviour was put to death; and the sense is, that though he was condemned as an impostor, yet that the charge was wholly unfounded. As in his whole life before he was perfectly sincere, so he was eminently on that solemn occasion.

{1} "committed himself" "his cause" {a} "judgeth" Lu 23:46

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again*. He did not use harsh and opprobrious words in return for those which he received.

(1.) He *was* reviled, he was accused of being a seditious man; spoken of as a deceiver; charged with being in league with Beelzebub, the "prince of the devils ;" and condemned as a blasphemer against God. This was done

(a.) by the great and the influential of the land;

(b.) in the most public manner;

(c.) with a design to alienate his friends from him;

(d.) with most cutting and severe sarcasm and irony; and

(e.) in reference to everything that would most affect a man of delicate and tender sensibility.

(2.) He did not revile those who had reproached him. He asked that justice might be done. He demanded that if he had spoken evil, they should bear witness of the evil; but beyond that he did not go. He used no harsh language, He showed no anger. He called for no revenge. He prayed that they might be forgiven, He calmly stood and bore it all, for he came to endure all kinds of suffering in order that he might set us an example, and make an atonement for our sins.

When he suffered, he threatened not. That is, when he suffered injustice from others, in his trial and in his death, he did not threaten punishment. He did not call down the wrath of heaven. He did not even predict that they would be punished; he expressed no wish that they should be.

But committed himself to him that judgeth righteously. Marg., his cause. The sense is much the same. The meaning is, that he committed his cause, his name, his interests, the whole case, to God. The meaning of the phrase "that judgeth righteously" here is, that God would do him exact justice.

Though wronged by men, he felt assured that *he* would do right. He would rescue his name from these reproaches; he would give him the honour in the world which he deserved; and he would bring upon those who had wronged him all that was necessary in order to show his disapprobation of what they had done, and all that would be necessary to give the highest support to the cause of virtue. Comp Lu 23:46. This is the example which is set before us when we are wronged. The whole example embraces these points:

(1.) We should see to it that we ourselves are *guiltless* in the matter: for which we are reproached or accused. Before we fancy that we are suffering as Christ did, we should be sure that our lives are such. as not to deserve reproach. We cannot indeed hope to be as pure in all things as he was; but we may so live that if we are reproached and reviled we may be certain that it is not for any wrong that we have done to others, or that we do not deserve it from our fellowmen. (2.) When we are reproached and reviled, we should feel that we were called to this by our profession; that it was one of the things which we were taught to expect when we became Christians; that it is what the prophets and apostles endured, and what the Master himself suffered in an eminent degree; and that if we meet with the scorn of the great, the gay, the rich, the powerful, it is no more than the Saviour did, and no more than we have been taught to expect will be our portion. It may be well, too, to remember our unworthiness; and to reflect, that though we have done no wrong to the individual who reviles us, yet that we are sinners, and that such reproaches may not be a useless admonisher of our being guilty before God. So David felt when reproached by Shimei: "So let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so?" 2Sa 16:10.

(3.) When this occurs, we should calmly and confidently commit our cause to God. Our name, our character, our influence, our reputation, while living and after we are dead, we should leave entirely with him. We should not seek nor desire revenge. We should not call down the wrath of God on our persecutors and slanderers. We should calmly fed that God win give us the measure of reputation which we ought to have in the world, and that he will suffer no ultimate injustice to be done us. "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass; and he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon-day," Ps 37:5,6. The Latin Vulgate has here, "But he committed himself to him who judged him unjustly," judieanti se injuste; that is, to Pontius pilate, meaning that he left himself in his hands, though he knew that the sentence was unjust. But there is no authority for this in the Greek, and this is one of the instances in which that version departs from the original.

{1} "committed himself" "his cause"

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Who his own self*. **See Barnes** "Heb 1:3, on the phrase "when he had *by himself* purged our sins." The meaning is, that he did it in his own proper person; he did not make expiation by offering a bloody victim, but was himself the sacrifice.

Bare our sins. There is an allusion here undoubtedly to Isa 53:4,12. See the meaning of the phrase "to bear sins" fully considered in the Notes on those places. As this cannot mean that Christ so took upon himself the sins of men as to become himself a sinner, it must mean that he put himself

in the place of sinners, and bore that which those sins deserved; that is, that he endured in his own person that which, if it had been inflicted on the sinner himself, would have been a proper expression of the Divine displeasure against sin, or would have been a proper punishment for sin. **See Barnes "2Co 5:21".**

He was treated *as if* he had been a sinner, in order that we might be treated as if we had not sinned; that is, as if we were righteous. There is no other way in which we can conceive that one bears the sins of another. They cannot be *literally* transferred to another; and all that can be meant is, that he should take the consequences on himself, and suffer *as if* he had committed the transgressions himself.

In his own body. This alludes undoubtedly to his sufferings. The sufferings which he endured on the cross were such *as if* he had been guilty; that is, he was treated *as he would have been* if he had been a sinner. He was treated as a malefactor; crucified as those most guilty were; endured the same kind of bodily pain that the guilty do who are punished for their own sins; and passed through mental sorrows strongly resembling —as much so as the case admitted of—what the guilty themselves experience when they are left to distressing anguish of mind, and are abandoned by God. The sufferings of the Saviour were in all respects made as nearly like the sufferings of the most guilty, as the sufferings of a perfectly, innocent being could be.

On the tree. Marg., "*to* the tree. Gr., *epi to xulon*. The meaning is rather, as in the text, that while himself on the cross, he bore the sorrows which our sins deserved. It does not mean that he conveyed our sorrows there, but that while there he suffered under the intolerable burden, and was by that burden crushed in death. The phrase "on the tree," literally "on the *wood*," means the cross. The same Greek word is used in Ac 5:30 10:39, 13:29 Ga 3:13, as applicable to the cross, in all of which places it is rendered *tree*.

That we, being dead to sins. In virtue of his having thus been suspended on a cross; that is, his being put to death as an atoning sacrifice was the means by which we become dead to sin, and live to God. The phrase "being dead to sins" is, in the original, *taiv amartiaiv apogenomenoi*, literally, "*to be absent from sins*." The Greek word was probably used (by an euphemism) to denote *to die*, that is, *to be absent from the world*, This is a milder and less repulsive word than to say *to die*. It is not elsewhere used in the New Testament. The meaning is, that we being *effectually separated* from sin—that is, being so that it no longer influences us—should live unto God. We are to be, in regard to sin, *as if* we were dead; and it is to have no more influence over us than if we were in our graves. **See Barnes "Ro 6:2-7".**

The *means* by which this is brought about is the death of Christ, **See Barnes "Ro 6:8"**; for as he died literally on the cross on account of our sins, the effect has been to lead us to see the evil of transgression, and to lead new and holy lives.

Should live unto righteousness. Though dead in respect to sin, yet we have real life in another, respect. We are made alive unto God, to righteousness, to true holiness. **See Barnes "Ro 6:11"**; **See Barnes "Ga 2:20".**

By whose stripes. This is taken from Isa 53:5. See it explained in the Notes on that verse. The word rendered stripes (*mwlwpi*) means, properly, the livid and swollen mark of a blow; the mark designated by us when we use the expression "black and blue." It is not properly a bloody wound, but that made by pinching, beating, scourging. The idea seems to be that the Saviour was scourged or whipped; and that the effect on us is the same in producing spiritual healing, or in recovering us from our faults, *as if* we had been scourged ourselves. By faith we see the bruises inflicted on him,

the black and blue spots made by beating; we remember that they were on account of *our* sins, and not for his; and the effect in reclaiming us is the same as if they had been inflicted on us.

Ye were healed. Sin is often spoken of as a disease, and redemption from it as a restoration from a deadly malady. See this explained in the **See Barnes "Isa 53:5"**.

{b} "bare" Isa 53:4 {2} "on" "to" {c} "unto righteousness" Ro 6:11 {d} "stripes" Isa 53:5,6

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *For ye were as sheep going astray*. Here also is an allusion to Isa 53:6, "All we like sheep have gone astray." See Notes on that verse. The figure is plain. We were like a flock without a shepherd. We had wandered far away from the true fold, and were following our own paths. We were without a protector, and were exposed to every kind of danger. This aptly and forcibly expresses the condition of the whole race before God recovers men by the plan of salvation. A flock thus wandering without a shepherd, conductor, or guide, is in a most pitiable condition; and so was man in his wanderings before he was sought out and brought back to the true fold by the great Shepherd.

But are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls. To Christ, who thus came to seek and save those who were lost. He is often called a *Shepherd*. **See Barnes** "Joh 10:1, seq. The word rendered *bishop*, (*episkopov*) means *overseer*. It may be applied to one who *inspects or oversees* anything, as public works, or the execution of treaties; to anyone who is an inspector of wares offered for sale; or, in general, to any one who is a superintendent. It is applied in the New Testament to those who are appointed to watch over the interests of the church, and especially to the officers of the church. Here it is applied to the Lord Jesus as the great Guardian and Superintendent of his church; and the title of Universal Bishop belongs to him alone.

{a} "astray" Ps 119:176 {b} "Shepherd" Eze 34:22 Joh 10:11-16 {*} "Bishop" "Overseer"

REMARKS

In the conclusion of this chapter we may remark:—

(1.) That there is something very beautiful in the expression, "*Bishop of souls*." It implies that the soul is the peculiar care of the Saviour; that it is the object of his special interest; and that it is of great value—so great that it is that which mainly deserves regard. He is the Bishop *of the soul* in a sense quite distinct from any care which he manifests for the *body*. *That* too, in the proper way, is the object of his care; but that has no importance compared with the soul. *Our* care is principally employed in respect to the body; the care of the Redeemer has especial reference to the soul.

(2.) It follows that the welfare of the soul may be committed to him with confidence. It is the object of his special guardianship, and he will not be unfaithful to the trust reposed in him. There is nothing more *safe* than the human soul is when it is committed in faith to the keeping of the Son of God. Comp. 2Ti 1:12.

(3.) As, therefore, he has shown his regard for us in seeking us when we were wandering and lost; as he came on the kind and benevolent errand to find us and bring us back to himself, let us show our gratitude to him by resolving to wander no more. As we regard our own safety and happiness, let us commit ourselves to him as our great Shepherd, to follow where he leads us, and

to be ever under his pastoral inspection. We had all wandered away. We had gone where there was no happiness and no protector. We had no one to provide for us, to care for us, to pity us. We were exposed to certain ruin. In that state he pitied us, sought us out, brought us back. If we had remained where we were, or had gone farther in our wanderings, we should have gone certainly to destruction. He has sought us out; he has led us back; he has taken us under his own protection and guidance; and we shall be safe as long as we follow where he leads, and no longer. To him then, a Shepherd who never forsakes his flock, let us at all times commit ourselves, following where he leads, feeling that under him our great interests are secure.

(4.) We may learn from this chapter, indeed, as we may from every other part of the New Testament, that in doing this we may be called to suffer. We may be reproached and reviled as the great Shepherd himself was. We may become the objects of public scorn on account of our devoted attachment to him. We may suffer in name, in feeling, in property, in our business, by our honest attachment to the principles of his gospel. Many who are his followers may be in circumstances of poverty or oppression. They may be held in bondage; they may be deprived of their rights; they may feel that their lot in life is a hard one, and that the world seems to have conspired against them to do them wrong; but let us in all these circumstances look to Him "who made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," (Php 2:7,8;) and let us remember that it is "enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord," Mt 10:25. In view of the example of our Master, and of all the promises of support in the Bible, let us bear with patience all the trims of life, whether arising: from poverty, an humble condition, or the reproaches of a wicked world. Our trials will soon be ended; and soon, under the direction of the "Shepherd and Bishop of souls," we shall be brought to a world where trials and sorrows are unknown.

(5.) In our trials here, let it be our main object so to live that our sufferings shall not be on account of our own faults. 2Pe 2:19-22. Our Saviour so lived. He was persecuted, reviled, mocked, condemned to die. But it was for no fault of his. In all his varied and prolonged sufferings, he had the ever abiding consciousness that he was innocent; he had the firm conviction that it would yet be seen and confessed by all the world that he was "holy, harmless, undefiled," 1Pe 2:23. His were not the sufferings produced by a guilty conscience, or by the recollection that he had wronged any one. So, if we must suffer, let our trials come upon us. Be it our first aim to have a conscience void of offence, to wrong no one, to give no occasion for reproaches and revilings, to do our duty faithfully to God and to men. Then, if trials come, we shall feel that, we suffer as our Master did; and then we may, as he did, commit our cause "to him that judgeth righteously," assured that in due time "he will bring forth our righteousness as the light, and our judgment as the noon-day," Ps 37:6.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3 - Verse 1

1 PETER CHAPTER III.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER

THIS chapter embraces the following subjects:—

I. The duty of wives, 1Pe 3:1-6. Particularly

(a.) that their conduct should be such as would be adapted to lead their unbelieving husbands to embrace a religion whose happy influence was seen in the pure conduct of their wives, 1Pe 3:1,2.

(b.) In reference to dress and ornaments, that they should not seek that which was external, but rather that which was of the heart, 1Pe 3:3,4.

(c.) For an illustration of the manner in which these duties should be performed, the apostle refers them to the holy example of the wife of Abraham, as one which Christian females should imitate, 1Pe 3:5,6.

II. The duty of husbands, 1Pe 3:7. It was their duty to render all proper honour to their wives, and to live with them as fellow-heirs of salvation, that their prayers might not be hindered; implying,

(1.) that in the most important respects they were on an equality;

(2.) that they *would* pray together, or that there *would be* family prayer; and,

(3.) that it was the duty of husband and wife so to live together that their prayers might ascend from united hearts and that it would be consistent for God to answer them.

III. The general duty of unity and of kindness, 1Pe 3:8-14. They were

(a.) to be of one mind; to have compassion; to love as brethren, 1Pe 3:8.

(b.) They were never to render evil for evil, or railing for railing, 1Pe 3:9.

(c.) They were to remember the promises of length of days, and of honour, made to those who were pure in their conversation, and who were the friends of peace, 1Pe 3:9,10.

(d.) They were to remember that the eyes of the Lord were always on the righteous; that they who were good were under his protection, 1Pe 3:12; and that if, while they maintained this character, they were called to suffer, they should count it rather an honour than a hardship, 1Pe 3:13,14.

IV. The duty of being ready always to give to every man a reason for the hope they entertained; and, if they were called to suffer persecution and trial in the service of God, of being able still to show good reasons why they professed to be Christians, and of so living that those who wronged them should see that their religion was more than a name, and was founded in such truth as to command the assent even of their persecutors, 1Pe 3:15-17.

V. In their persecutions and trials they were to remember the example of Christ, *his* trials, *his* patience, and *his* triumphs, 1Pe 3:18-22. Particularly

(a.) the apostle refers them to the fact that he had suffered, though he was innocent, and that he was put to death though he had done no wrong, 1Pe 3:18.

(b.) He refers them to the *patience* and *forbearance* of Christ in a former age, an age of great and abounding wickedness, when in the person of his representative and ambassador Noah, he suffered much and long from the opposition of the guilty and perverse men who were finally destroyed, and who are now held in prison, showing us how patient we ought to be when offended by others in our attempts to do them good, 1Pe 3:19,20.

(c.) He refers to the fact that notwithstanding all the opposition which Noah met with in bearing a message, as an ambassador of the Lord, to a wicked generation, he and his family were saved, 1Pe 3:21. The *design* of this allusion evidently is to show us, that if we are patient and forbearing in the trials which we meet with in the world, we shall be saved also. Noah, says the apostle, was

saved by water. We, too, says he, are saved in a similar manner by water. In his salvation, and in ours, *water* is employed as the means of salvation: in *his* case by bearing up the ark, in *ours* by becoming the emblem of the washing away of sins.

(d.) The apostle refers to the fact that Christ has ascended to heaven, and has been exalted over angels, and principalities, and powers; thus showing that having borne all his trials with patience he ultimately triumphed, and that in like manner we, if we are patient, shall triumph also, 1Pe 3:22. He came off a conqueror, and was exalted to the highest honours of heaven; and so, if faithful, we may hope to come off conquerors also, and be exalted to the honours of heaven as he was. The whole argument here is drawn from the example of Christ, first, in his patience and forbearance with the whole world, and then when he was personally on the earth; from the fact, that in the case of that messenger whom he sent to the ungodly race before the flood, and in his own case when personally on earth, there was ultimate triumph after all that they met with from ungodly men; and thus, if we endure opposition and trials in the same way, we may hope also to triumph in heaven with our exalted Saviour.

Verse 1. *Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands*. On the duty here enjoined, **See Barnes** "1Co 11:3, seq.; **See Barnes "Eph 5:22"**.

That, if any obey not the word. The word of God; the gospel. That is, if any wives have husbands who are not true Christians. This would be likely to occur when the gospel was first preached, as it does now, by the fact that wives might be converted, though their husbands were not. It cannot be inferred from this, that after they themselves had become Christians they had married unbelieving husbands. The term "*word*" here refers particularly to the gospel *as preached*; and the idea is, that if they were regardless of that gospel when preached—if they would not attend on preaching, or if they were unaffected by it, or if they openly rejected it, there might be hope still that they would be converted by the Christian influence of a wife at home. In such cases, a duty of special importance devolves on the wife.

They also may without the word be won. In some other way than by preaching. This does not mean that they would be converted independently of the influence of truth—for truth is always the instrument of conversion, (Jas 1:18 Joh 17:17;) but that it was to be by another influence than *preaching*.

By the conversation of the wives. By the *conduct or deportment* of their wives. **See Barnes "Php 1:27"**.

The word *conversation*, in the Scriptures, is never confined, as it is now with us, to *oral discourse*, but denotes conduct in general. It *includes* indeed "conversation" as the word is now used, but it embraces also much more—including everything that we *do*. The meaning here is, that the habitual deportment of the wife was to be such as to show the reality and power of religion; to show that it had such influence on her temper, her words, her whole deportment, as to demonstrate that it was from God.

{a} "be in subjection" Eph 5:22 {*} "subjection" "Be subject" {+} "conversation" "Behaviour"

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *While they behold your chaste conversation*. Your pure conduct. The word *chaste* here (*agnhn*) refers to purity of conduct in all respects, and not merely to chastity properly so called. It includes that, but it also embraces much more. The conduct of the wife is to be in all respects pure; and this is to be the grand instrumentality in the conversion of her husband. A wife may be strictly *chaste*, and yet there may be many other things in her conduct and temper which would mar the beauty of her piety, and prevent any happy influence on the mind of her husband.

Coupled with fear. The word *fear*, in this place, may refer either to the fear of God, or to a proper respect and reverence for their husbands, Eph 5:33. The trait of character which is referred to is that of proper respect and reverence in all the relations which she sustained, as opposed to a trifling and frivolous mind. Leighton suggests that the word fear here relates particularly to the other duty enjoined—that of chaste conversation—"fearing the least stain of chastity, or the very appearance of anything not suiting with it. It is a delicate, timorous grace, afraid of the least air, or shadow of anything that hath but a resemblance of wronging it, in carriage, or speech, or apparel."

{+} "conversation" "behaviour" {++} "fear" "reverence"

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Whose adorning*. Whose ornament. The apostle refers here to a propensity which exists in the heart of woman to seek that which would be esteemed ornamental, or that which will *appear well* in the sight of others, and commend us to them. The desire of this is laid deep in human nature, and therefore, when properly regulated, is not wrong. The only question is, what is the true and appropriate Ornament? What should be primarily sought as the right kind of adorning? The apostle does not condemn true ornament, nor does he condemn the desire to appear in such a way as to secure the esteem of others. God does not condemn real ornament The universe is full of it. The colours of the clouds and of the rainbow; the varied hues of flowers; the plumage of birds, and the covering of many of the animals of the forest; the green grass; the variety of hill and dale; the beauty of the human complexion, the ruddy cheek, and the sparkling eye, are all of the nature of *ornament*. They are something *superadded* to what would be merely useful, *to make them appear well*. Few or none of these things are absolutely necessary to the things to which they are attached; for the eye could see without the various tints of beauty that are drawn upon it, and the lips and the cheeks could perform their functions without their beautiful tints, and the vegetable world could exist without the variegated colours that are painted on it; but God *meant* that this should be a beautiful world; that it should *appear well*; that there should be something more than mere utility. The true notion of ornament or adorning, is that which will make any person or thing *appear well, or beautiful*, to others; and the apostle does not prohibit that which would have this effect in the wife. The grand thing which she was to seek, was not that which is merely external, but that which is internal, and which God regards as of so great value.

Let it not be that outward adorning. Let not this be the main or principal thing; let not her heart be set on this. The apostle does not say that she should wholly neglect her personal appearance, for she has no more right to be offensive to her husband by neglecting her personal appearance, than by a finical attention to it. Religion promotes neatness, and cleanliness, and a proper attention to

our external appearance according to our circumstances in life, as certainly as it does to the internal virtue of the soul. On this whole passage, **See Barnes "**1Ti 2:9, **See Barnes "1Ti 2:10"**.

Of plaiting the hair. **See Barnes "1Ti 2:9"**; Comp. **See Barnes "Isa 3:24"**.

Great attention is paid to this in the East, and it is to this that the apostle here refers. "The women in the eastern countries," says Dr. Shaw, (Travels, p. 294,) "affect to have their hair hang down to the ground, which they collect into one lock, upon the hinder part of the head, binding and plaiting it about with ribbons. Above this, or on the top of their heads, persons of better fashion wear flexible plates of gold or silver, variously cut through, and engraved in imitation of lace." We are not to suppose that a mere braiding or plaiting of the hair is improper, for there may be no more simple or convenient way of disposing of it. But the allusion here is to the excessive care which then prevailed, and especially to their setting the heart on such ornaments rather than on the adorning which is internal. It may not be easy to fix the exact limit of propriety about the method of arranging the hair, or about any other ornament; but those whose *hearts* are right, generally have little difficulty on the subject. Every ornament of the body, however beautiful, is soon to be laid aside; the adorning of the soul will endure for ever.

And of wearing of gold. The gold here particularly referred to is probably that which was interwoven in the hair, and which was a common female ornament in ancient times. Thus Virgil says, *erines nodantur in aurum*. And again, *erinera implieat auro*. See Homer, II., B. 872; Herod. i. 82; and Thucyd. i. 6. The wearing of gold in the hair, however, was more common among women of loose morals than among virtuous females.—Pollux iv. 153. It cannot be supposed that *all* wearing of gold about the person is wrong, for there is nothing evil in gold itself, and there may be some articles connected with apparel made of gold that may in no manner draw off the affections from higher things, and may do nothing to endanger piety. The meaning is, that such ornaments should not be sought; that Christians should be in no way distinguished for them; that they should not engross the time and attention; that Christians should so dress as to show that their minds are occupied with nobler objects, and that in their apparel they should be models of neatness, economy, and plainness. If it should be said that this expression teaches that it is wrong to wear gold *at all*, it may be replied that on the same principle it would follow that the next clause teaches that it is wrong *to put on apparel at all*. There is really no difficulty in such expressions. We are to dress decently, and in the manner that will attract least attention, and we are to show that *our hearts* are interested supremely in more important things than in outward adorning.

Or of putting on of apparel. That is, this is not to be the ornament which we principally seek, or for which we are distinguished. We are to desire a richer and more permanent adorning—that of the heart.

{b} "let it not" 1Ti 2:9,10

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *But let it be the hidden man of the heart*. This expression is substantially the same as that of Paul in Ro 7:22, "the inward man." **See Barnes "Ro 7:22"**.

The word "*hidden*" here means that which is concealed; that which is not made apparent by the dress, or by ornament. It lies within, pertaining to the affections of the soul.

In that which is not corruptible. Properly, "in the incorruptible ornament of a meek and quiet spirit." This is said to be incorruptible in contradistinction to gold and apparel. They will decay; but the internal ornament is ever enduring. The sense is, that whatever pertains to outward decoration, however beautiful and costly, is fading; but that which pertains to the soul is enduring. As the soul is immortal, so all that tends to adorn that will be immortal too; as the body is mortal, so all with which it can be invested is decaying, and will soon be destroyed.

The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit. Of a calm temper; a contented mind; a heart free from passion, pride, envy, and irritability; a soul not subject to the agitations and vexations of those who live for fashion, and who seek to be distinguished for external adorning. The connexion here shows that the apostle refers to this, not only as that which would be of great price in the sight of God, but as that which would tend to secure the affection of their husbands, and win them to embrace the true religion, (1Pe 3:1,2;) and, in order to this, he recommends them, instead of seeking external ornaments, to seek those of the mind and of the heart, as more agreeable to their husbands; as better adapted to win their hearts to religion; as that which would be most permanently proved. In regard to this point we may observe,

(1.) that there are, undoubtedly, some husbands who are pleased with excessive ornaments in their wives, and who take a pleasure in seeing them decorated with gold, and pearls, and costly array.

(2.) That *all* are pleased and gratified with a suitable attention to personal appearance on the part of their wives. It is as much the duty of a wife to be cleanly in her person, and neat in her habits, in the presence of her husband, as in the presence of strangers; and no wife can hope to secure the permanent affection of her husband who is not attentive to her personal appearance in her own family; especially if, while careless of her personal appearance in the presence of her husband, she makes it a point to appear gaily dressed before others, Yet

(3.) the decoration of the body is not all, nor is it the principal thing which a husband desires. He desires primarily in his wife the more permanent adorning which pertains to the heart. Let it be remembered,

(a.) that a large part of the ornaments on which females value themselves are *lost* to a great extent on the other sex. Many a man cannot tell the difference between diamonds: and cut-glass, or paste in the form of diamonds; and few are such connoisseurs in the matter of female ornaments as to appreciate at all the difference in the quality or colour of silks, and shawls, and laces, which might appear so important to a female eye. The fact is, that those personal ornaments which to females appear of so much value, are much less regarded and prized by men than they often suppose. It is a rare thing that a man is so thoroughly skilled in the knowledge of the distinctions that pertain to fashions, as to appreciate that on which the heart of a female often so much prides itself; and it is no great credit to him if he can do this. His time usually, unless he is a draper or a jeweller, might have been much better employed than in making those acquisitions which are needful to qualify him to appreciate and admire the peculiarities of gay female apparel.

(b.) But a man has a real interest in what constitutes the ornaments of the heart. His happiness, in his intercourse with his wife, depends on these. He knows what is denoted by a kind temper; by gentle words; by a placid brow; by a modest and patient spirit; by a heart that is calm in trouble, and that is affectionate and pure; by freedom from irritability, fretfulness, and impatience; *and he can fully appreciate the value of these things*. No professional skill is necessary to qualify him to see their worth; and no acquired tact in discrimination is requisite to enable him to estimate them

according to their full value. A wife, therefore, if she would permanently please her husband, should seek the adorning of the soul rather than the body; the ornament of the heart, rather than gold and jewels. The one can never be a substitute for the other; and whatever outward decorations she may have, unless she have a gentleness of spirit, a calmness of temper, a benevolence and purity of soul, and a cultivation of mind that her husband can love, she cannot calculate on his permanent affection.

Which is in the sight of God of great price. Of great value; that being of great value for which a large price is paid. He has shown his sense of its value

(a.) by commending it so often in his word;

(b.) by making religion to consist so much in it rather than in high intellectual endowments, learning, skill in the arts, and valour; and

(c.) by the character of his Son, the Lord Jesus, in whom this was so prominent a characteristic. Sentiments not unlike what is here stated by the apostle, occur not unfrequently in heathen classic writers. There are some remarkable passages in Plutarch, strongly resembling it:—"An ornament, as Crates said, is that which adorns. The proper ornament of a woman is that which becomes her best. This is neither gold, nor pearls, nor scarlet, but those things which are an evident proof of gravity, regularity, and modesty."—*Conjugalia Praecept*., c. xxvi. The wife of Phocion, a celebrated Athenian general, receiving a visit from a lady who was elegantly adorned with gold and jewels, and her hair with pearls, took occasion to call the attention of her guest to the elegance and costliness of her dress. "My ornament," said the wife of Phocion, "is my husband, now for the twentieth year general of the Athenians."—*Plutarch's Life of Phocion*. 'The Sicilian tyrant sent to the daughters of Lysander garments and tissues of great value, but Lysander refused them, saying, "These ornaments will rather put my daughters out of countenance than adorn them.'"—*Plutarch*. So in the fragments of Naumachius, as quoted by Benson, there is a precept much like this "Be not too fond of gold, neither wear purple hyacinth about your neck, or the green jasper, of which foolish persons are proud. Do not covet such vain ornaments, neither view yourself too often in the glass, nor twist your hair into a multitude of curls," etc.

{a} "heart" Ps 45:13 Ro 2:29 {b} "meek and quiet" Ps 25:9 149:4; Mt 5:5

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *For after this manner, in the old time*. The allusion here is particularly to the times of the patriarchs, and the object of the apostle is to state another reason why they should seek that kind of ornament which he had been commending. The reason is, that this characterised the pious and honoured females of ancient times—those females who had been most commended of God, and who were most worthy to be remembered on earth.

Who trusted in God. Greek, "Who *hoped* in God;" that is, who were truly pious. They were characterised by simple trust or hope in God, rather than by a fondness for external adorning.

Adorned themselves. To wit, with a meek and quiet spirit, manifested particularly by the respect evinced for their husbands.

Being in subjection unto their own husbands. This was evidently a characteristic of the early periods of the world; and piety was understood to consist much in proper respect for others, according to the relations sustained towards them.

{*} "unto" "subject to"

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Even as Sara obeyed Abraham*. Sarah was one of the most distinguished of the wives of the patriarchs, and her case is referred to as furnishing one of the best illustrations of the duty to which the apostle refers. Nothing is said, in the brief records of her life, of any passion for outward adorning; much is said of her kindness to her husband, and her respect for him. Comp. Ge 12:5 18:6.

Calling him lord. See Ge 18:12. It was probably inferred from this instance, by the apostle, and not without reason, that Sarah habitually used this respectful appellation, acknowledging by it that he was her superior, and that he had a right to rule in his own house. The word *lord* has the elementary idea of *ruling*, and this is the sense here—that she acknowledged that he had a right to direct the affairs of his household, and that it was her duty to be in subjection to him as the head of the family. In what respects this is a duty, may be seen by consulting **See Barnes "Eph 5:22"**.

Among the Romans, it was quite common for wives to use the appellation *lord*, (dominus,) when speaking of their husbands. The same custom also prevailed among the Greeks, See Grotius, *in loc*. This passage does not prove that the term *lord* should be the particular appellation by which Christian wives should address their husbands now, but it proves that there should be the same respect and deference which was implied by its use in patriarchal times The welfare of society, and the happiness of individuals, are not diminished by showing proper respect for all classes of persons in the various relations of life.

Whose daughters ye are. That is, you will be worthy to be regarded as her daughters, if you manifest the same spirit that she did. The margin here, as the Greek, is *children*. The sense is, that if they demeaned themselves correctly in the relation of wives, it would be proper to look upon her as their mother, and to feel that they were not unworthy to be regarded as her daughters.

As long as ye do well. In respect to the particular matter under consideration.

And are not afraid with any amazement. This passage has been supposed variously understood. Some have that this is suggested as an argument to persuade them to *do well*, from the consideration that by so doing they would be preserved from those alarms and terrors which a contest with superior power might bring with it, and which would prove as injurious to their peace as to their character. Rosenmuller explains it, "If ye do well, terrified by no threats of unbelieving husbands, if they should undertake to compel you to deny the Christian faith." Doddridge supposes that it means that they were to preserve their peace and fortitude in any time of danger, so as not to act out of character, through amazement or danger. Calvin, Benson, and Bloomfield understand it of that firmness and intrepidity of character which would be necessary to support their religious independence, when united with heathen husbands; meaning that they were not to be deterred from doing their duty by any threats or terrors, either of their unbelieving husbands, or of their enemies and persecutors. Dr. Clarke supposes that it means that if they did well, they would live under no dread of being detected in improprieties of life, or being found out in their *infidelities* to their husbands, as those must always be who are unfaithful to their marriage vows. The word rendered amazement (*ptohsiv*) does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It means *terror, trepidation*, fear; and the literal

translation of the Greek is, "not fearing any fear." It seems to me that the following: may express the sense of the passage:

(1.) There is undoubtedly an allusion to the character of Sarah, and the object of the apostle is to induce them to follow her example.

(2.) The thing in Sarah which he would exhort them to imitate, was her pure and upright life, her faithful discharge of her duties as a woman fearing God. This she did constantly wherever she was, regardless of consequences. Among friends and strangers, at home and abroad, she was distinguished for *doing well*. Such was her character, such her fidelity to her husband and her God, such her firm integrity and benevolence, that she at all times lived to do good, and would have done it, unawed by terror, undeterred by threats. To whatever trial her piety was exposed, it bore the trial; and such was her strength of virtue, that it was certain her integrity would be firm by whatever consequences she might have been threatened for her adherence to her principles.

(3.) They were to imitate her in this, and were thus to show that they were worthy to be regarded as her daughters. They were to do well; to be faithful to their husbands; to be firm in their principles; to adhere steadfastly to what was true and good, whatever trials they might pass through, however much they might be threatened with persecution, or however any might attempt to deter them from the performance of their duty. Thus, by a life of Christian fidelity, unawed by fear from any quarter, they would show that they were imbued with the same principles of unbending virtue which characterised the wife of the father of the faithful, and that they were not unworthy to be regarded as her daughters.

{c} "whose" Ge 18:12 {1} "daughters" "children" {*} "amazement" "terror"

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Likewise, ye husbands*. On the general duty of husbands, **See Barnes** "Eph 5:25, seq.

Dwell with them. That is, "Let your manner of living with them be that which is immediately specified.

According to knowledge. In accordance with an intelligent view of the nature of the relation; or, as becomes those who have been instructed in the duties of this relation according to the gospel. The meaning evidently is, that they should seek to obtain just views of what Christianity enjoins in regard to this relation, and that they should allow those intelligent views to control them in all their intercourse with their wives.

Giving honour unto the wife. It was an important advance made in society when the Christian religion gave such a direction as this, for everywhere among the heathen, and under all false systems of religion, woman has been regarded as worthy of little honour or respect. She has been considered as a slave, or as a mere instrument to gratify the passions of man. It is one of the elementary doctrines of Christianity, however, that woman is to be treated with respect; and one of the first and most marked effects of religion on society is to elevate the wife to a condition in which she will be worthy of esteem. The particular reasons for the honour which husbands are directed to show to their wives, here specified, are two: she is to be treated with special kindness as being more feeble than man, and as having a claim therefore to delicate attention; and she is to be honoured as the equal heir of the grace of life. Doddridge, Clarke, and some others, suppose that the word *honour* here refers to

maintenance or support; and that the command is, that the husband is to provide for his wife so that she may not want. But it seems to me that the word is to be understood here in its more usual signification, and that it inculcates a higher duty than that of merely providing for the temporal wants of the wife, and strikes at a deeper evil than a mere neglect of meeting her temporal necessities. The *reasons* assigned for doing this seem to imply it,

As unto the weaker vessel. It is not uncommon in the Scriptures to compare the body to a vessel, (Comp. **See Barnes** "1Th 4:4,) and thence the comparison is extended to the whole person. This is done either because the body is frail and feeble, like an earthen vessel easily broken; or because it is that in which the soul is lodged; or because, in accordance with a frequent use of the word, (see below,) the body is the *instrument* by which the soul accomplishes its purposes, or is the *helper* of the soul. Comp. Ac 9:15 Ro 9:22,23 2Co 4:7.

In the later Hebrew usage it was common to apply the term *vessel* (Heb.

HEBREW, Gr. *skeuov*) to a wife, as is done here. See Schoettgen, Hor. Heb. p. 827. Expressions similar to this, in regard to the comparative *feebleness* of woman, occur frequently in the classic writers. See Wetstein *in loc*. The *reasons* why the term *vessel* was given to a wife, are not very apparent. A not unfrequent sense of the word used here (*skeuov*) in the Greek Classics was that of an instrument; a helper; one who was employed by another to accomplish anything, or to aid him, (*Passow*) and it seems probable that this was the reason why the term was given to the wife. Comp. Ge 2:18. The reason here assigned for the honour that was to be shown to the wife is, that she is "the weaker vessel." By this it is not necessarily meant that she is of feebler capacity, or inferior mental endowments, but that she is more tender and delicate; more subject to infirmities and weaknesses; less capable of enduring fatigue and toil; less adapted to the rough and stormy scenes of life. As such, she should be regarded and treated with special kindness and attention. This is a reason, the force of which all can see and appreciate. So we feel toward a sister; so we feel toward a beloved child, if he is of feeble frame and delicate constitution; and so every man should feel in relation to his wife. She may have mental endowments equal to his own; she may have moral qualities in every way superior to his; but the God of nature has made her with a more delicate frame, a more fragile structure, and with a body subject to many infirmities to which the more hardy frame of man is a stranger.

And as being heirs together of the grace of life. The grace that is connected with eternal life; that is, as fellow-Christians. They were equal heirs of the everlasting inheritance, called in the Scripture "life;" and the same "grace" connected with that inheritance had been conferred on both. This passage contains a very important truth in regard to the female sex. Under every other system of religion but the Christian system, woman has been regarded as in every way inferior to man. Christianity teaches that, in respect to her highest interests, the interests of religion, *she is every way his equal*. She is entitled to all the hopes and promises which religion imparts. She is redeemed as he is, she is addressed in the same language of tender invitation. She has the same privileges and comforts which religion imparts here, and she will be elevated to the same rank and privileges in heaven. This single truth would raise the female sex everywhere from degradation, and check at once half the social evils of the race. Make her the equal of man in the hope of heaven, and at once she rises to her appropriate place. Home is made what it should be, a place of intelligence and pure friendship; and a world of suffering and sadness smiles under the benefactions of Christian woman.

That your prayers be not hindered. It is fairly implied here,

(1.) that it was supposed there would be united or family prayer. The apostle is speaking of "dwelling with the wife," and of the right manner of treating her; and it is plainly supposed that united prayer would be one thing that would characterise their living together. He does not direct that there *should* be prayer. He seems to take it for granted that there *would be*; and it may be remarked, that where there is true religion in right exercise, there is prayer as a matter of course. The head of a family does not ask whether he must establish family worship; he does it as one of the spontaneous fruits of religion-as a thing concerning which no formal command is necessary. Prayer in the family, as everywhere else, is a privilege; and the true question to be asked on the subject is not whether a man *must*, but whether he *may* pray.

(2.) It is implied that there might be such a way of living as effectually to hinder prayer; that is, to prevent its being offered aright, and to prevent any answer. This might occur in many ways. If the husband treated the wife unkindly; if he did not show her proper respect and affection; if there were bickerings, and jealousies, and contentions between them, there could be no hope that acceptable prayer would be offered. A spirit of strife; irritability and unevenness of temper; harsh looks and unkind words; a disposition easily to take offence, and an unwillingness to forgive, all these prevent a "return of prayers." Acceptable prayer never can be offered in the tempest of passion, and there can be no doubt that such prayer is often "hindered" by the inequalities of temper, and the bickerings and strifes that exist in families. Yet how desirable is it that husband and wife should so live together that their prayers may not be hindered! How desirable for their own peace and happiness in that relation; how desirable for the welfare of children! In view of the exposition in this verse we may remark,

(a.) that Christianity has done much to elevate the female sex. It has taught that woman is an heir of the grace of life as well as man; that, while she is inferior in bodily rigour, she is his equal in the most important respect; that she is a fellow-traveller with him to a higher world; and that in every way she is entitled to all the blessings which redemption confers, as much as he is. This single truth has clone more than all other things combined to elevate the female sex, and is all that is needful to raise her from her degradation all over the world.

(b.) They, therefore, who desire the elevation of the female sex, who see woman ignorant and degraded in the dark parts of the earth, should be the friends of all well-directed efforts to send the gospel to heathen lands. Every husband who has a pure and intelligent wife, and every father who has an accomplished daughter, and every brother who has a virtuous sister, should seek to spread the gospel abroad. To that gospel only he owes it that he *has* such a wife, daughter, sister; and that gospel, which has given to him such an intelligent female friend, would elevate woman everywhere to the same condition. The obligation which he owes to religion in this respect can be discharged in no better way than by aiding in diffusing that gospel which would make the wife, the daughter, the sister, everywhere what she is in his own dwelling.

(c.) Especially is this the duty of the Christian female. She owes her elevation in society to Christianity, and what Christianity has made her, it would make the sunken and debased of her own sex all over the earth; and how can she better show her gratitude than by aiding in any and every way in making that same gospel known in the dark parts of the world?

(d.) Christianity makes a happy home. Let the principles reign in any family which are here enjoined by the apostle, and that family will be one of intelligence, contentment, and peace. There is a simple and easy way of being happy in the family relation. *It is to allow the spirit of Christ and his gospel to reign there*. That done, though there be poverty, and disappointment, and sickness,

and cares, and losses, yet there will be peace within, for there will be mutual love, and the cheerful hope of a brighter world. Where that is wanting, no outward splendour, no costly furniture or viands, no gilded equipage, no long train of servants, no wine, or music, or dances, can secure happiness in a dwelling. With all these things there may be the most corroding passions; in the mansion where these things are, pale disease, disappointment, and death may come, and there shall be nothing to console and support.

{a} "husbands" Col 3:19 {+} "together" "joint heirs"

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Finally*. As the last direction, or as general counsel in reference to your conduct in all the relations of life. The apostle had specified most of the important relations which Christians sustain, (1Pe 2:13-25 3:1-7;) and he now gives a general direction in regard to their conduct in all those relations.

Be ye all of one mind. **See Barnes "Ro 12:16".**

The word here used (*omofrwn*) does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It means, *of the same mind; like-minded*; and the object is to secure harmony in their views and feelings. Having compassion one of another. *Sympathizing*, (*sumpayeiv*;) entering into one another's feelings, and evincing a regard for each other's welfare. **See Barnes "Ro 12:15".**

Comp. 1Co 12:26 Joh 11:35. The Greek word here used does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It describes that state of mind which exists when we enter into the feelings of others as if they were our own, as the different parts of the body are affected by that which affects one. **See Barnes "1Co 12:26".**

Love as brethren. Marg., *loving to the*; i.e., the brethren. The Greek word (*filadelfov*) does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It means *loving one's brethren*; that is, loving each other as Christian brethren.—*Rob. Lex*. Thus it enforces the duty so often enjoined in the New Testament, that of love to Christians as brethren of the same family. **See Barnes "Ro 12:10".**

Comp. Heb 13:1 Joh 13:34.

Be pitiful. The word here used (*eusplagcnov*) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, except in Eph 4:32, where it is rendered *tender-hearted*. See Notes on that verse.

Be courteous. This word also (*filofrwn*) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means *friendly-minded, kind, courteous*. Later editions of the New Testament, instead of this, read (*tapeinofronev*) of a lowly or humble mind. See Hahn. The sense is not materially varied. In the one word, the idea of *friendliness* is the one that prevails; in the other, that of *humility*. Christianity requires both of these virtues, and either word enforces an important injunction. The *authority* is in favour of the latter reading; and though Christianity requires that we should be courteous and gentlemanly in our treatment of others, *this* text can hardly be relied on as a proof-text of that point.

{a} "one mind" Ro 12:16 {1} "of another" "loving to the" {b} "love" 1Jo 3:18

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Not rendering evil for evil*. **See Barnes "Mt 5:39"**
See Barnes "Mt 5:44"; **See Barnes** "Ro 12:17".
Or railing for railing. **See Barnes "1Ti 6:4"**.
Comp. Mr 15:29 Lu 23:39.
But contrariwise blessing. In a spirit contrary to this. **See Barnes "Mt 5:44"**.

Knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. "Knowing that you were called to be Christians in order that you should obtain a blessing infinite and eternal in the heavens. Expecting such a blessing yourselves, you should be ready to scatter blessings on all others. You should be ready to bear all their reproaches, and even to wish them well. The hope of eternal life should make your minds calm; and the prospect that *you* are to be so exalted in heaven should fill your hearts with benignity and love." There is nothing which is better fitted to cause our hearts to overflow with benignity, to make us ready to forgave all others when they forgive us, than the hope of salvation. Cherishing such a hope ourselves, we cannot but wish that all others may share it, and this will lead us to wish for them every blessing. A man who has a hope of heaven should abound in every virtue, and show that he is a sincere well-wisher of the race. Why should one who expects soon to be in heaven harbour malice in his bosom? Why should he wish to injure a fellow-worm? How can he?

{c} "rendering evil for evil" Mt 5:44 Eph 4:32.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *For he that will love life*. Or., "He willing, (*yelwn*,) or that *wills* to love life." It implies that there is some positive desire to live; some active wish that life should be prolonged. This whole passage 1Pe 3:10-12 is taken, with some slight variations, from Ps 34:12-16. In the Psalm this expression is, "What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good?" The sense is substantially the same. It is implied here that it is right to love life, and to desire many days. The desire of this is referred to by the psalmist and by the apostle, without any expression of disapprobation, and the way is shown by which length of days may be secured. Life is a blessing; a precious gift of God. We are taught so to regard it by the instinctive feelings of our nature; for we are so made as to love it, and to dread its extinction. Though we should be prepared to resign it when God commands, yet there are important reasons why we should desire to live. Among them are the following:

(1.) Because, as already intimated, life, as such, is to be regarded as a blessing. We instinctively shrink back from death, as one of the greatest evils; we shudder at the thought of annihilation. It is not wrong to love that, in proper degree, which, by our very nature, we are prompted to love; and we are but acting out one of the universal laws which our Creator has impressed on us, when, with proper submission to his will, we seek to lengthen out our days as far as possible.

(2.) That we may see the works of God, and survey the wonders of his hand on earth. The world is full of wonders, evincing the wisdom and goodness of the Deity; and the longest life, nay, many such lives as are allotted to us here, could be well employed in studying his works and ways.

(3.) That we may make preparation for eternity. Man may, indeed, make preparation in a very brief period; but the longest life is not too much to examine and settle the question whether we have a well-founded hope of heaven. If man had nothing else to do, the longest life could be well employed in inquiries that grow out of the question whether we are fitted for the world to come. In the possibility, too, of being deceived, and in view of the awful consequences that will result from deception, it is desirable that length of days should be given us that we may bring the subject to the severest test, and so determine it, that we may go sure to the changeless world.

(4.) That we may do good to others. We *may*, indeed, do good in another world; but there are ways of doing good which are probably confined to this. What good we may do hereafter to the inhabitants of distant worlds, or what ministrations, in company with angels, or without them, we may exercise towards the friends of God on earth after we leave it, we do not know; but there are certain things which we are morally certain we shall not be permitted to do in the future world. We shall not

(a.) personally labour for the salvation of sinners, by conversation and other direct efforts;

(b.) we shall not illustrate the influence of religion by example in sustaining us in trials, subduing and controlling our passions, and making us dead to the world;

(c.) we shall not be permitted to pray for our impenitent friends and kindred, as we may now;

(d.) we shall not have the opportunity of contributing of our substance for the spread of the gospel, or of going personally to preach the gospel to the perishing;

(e.) we shall not be employed in instructing the ignorant, in advocating the cause of the oppressed and the wronged, in seeking to remove the fetters from the slave, in dispensing mercy to the insane, or in visiting the prisoner in his lonely cell;

(f.) we shall not have it in our power to address a kind word to an impenitent child, or seek to guide him in paths of truth, purity, and salvation. What we can do personally and directly for the salvation of others is to be done in this world; and, considering how much there is to be done, and how useful life may be on the earth, it is an object which we should desire, that our days may be lengthened out, and should use all proper means that it may be done. While we should ever be ready and willing to depart when God calls us to go; while we should not wish to linger on these mortal shores beyond the time when we may be useful to others, yet, as long as he permits us to live, we should regard life as a blessing, and should pray that, if it be his will, we may not be cut down in the midst of our way.

"Love not thy life, nor hate; but what thou livest
Live well; here long, or short, permit to heaven."
Paradise Lost.

And see good days. In the Psalm (Ps 34:12) this is, "and loveth many days, that he may see good." The quotation by Peter throughout the passage is taken from the Septuagint, excepting that there is a change of the person from the second to the third: in the psalm, e.g., "refrain thy tongue from evil," etc.; in the quotation, "let him refrain his tongue from evil," etc. "Good days" are prosperous days; happy days; days of usefulness; days in which we may be respected and loved. *Let him refrain his tongue from evil*. The general meaning of all that is said here is, "let him lead an upright and pious life; doing evil to no one, but seeking the good of all men." To refrain the tongue from evil, is to avoid all slander, falsehood, obscenity, and profaneness, and to abstain from uttering erroneous and false opinions. Comp. Jas 1:26 3:2.

And his lips that they speak no guile. No deceit; nothing that will lead others astray. The words should be an exact representation of the truth, Rosenmuller quotes a passage from the Hebrew book *Musar*, which may be not an inappropriate illustration of this: "A certain Assyrian wandering through the city, cried and said, 'Who will receive the elixir of life?' The daughter of Rabbi Jodus heard him, and went and told her father. 'Call him in,' said he. When he came in, Rabbi Jannei said to him, 'What is that elixir of life which thou art selling?' He said to him, 'Is it not written, What man is he that desireth life, and loveth days that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips that they speak no guile. Lo, this is the elixir of life which is in the mouth of a man!'"

{d} "he that will love" Ps 34:12

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Let him eschew evil*. Let him avoid all evil. Comp. Job 1:1.

And do good. In any and every way; by endeavouring to promote the happiness of all. Comp. **See Barnes "Ga 6:10"**.

Let him seek peace, and ensue it. Follow it; that is, practise it. **See Barnes "Mt 5:9"**; **See Barnes** "Ro 12:18".

The meaning is, that a peaceful spirit will contribute to length of days.

(1.) A peaceful spirit—a calm, serene, and equal temper of mind—is favourable to health, avoiding those corroding and distracting passions which do so much to wear out the physical energies of the frame; and

(2.) such a spirit will preserve us from those contentions and strifes to which so many owe their death. Let any one reflect on the numbers that are killed in duels, in battles, and in brawls, and he will have no difficulty in seeing how a peaceful spirit will contribute to length of days.

{*} "eschew" "avoid"

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous*. That is, he is their Protector. His eyes are indeed on all men, but the language here is that which describes continual guardianship and care.

And his ears are open unto their prayers. He hears their prayers. As he is a hearer of prayer, they are at liberty to go to him at all times, and to pour out their desires before him. This passage is taken from Ps 34:15, and it is designed to show the reason why a life of piety will contribute to length of days.

But the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. Marg., *upon*. The sense of the passage, however, is *against*. The Lord sets his face against them: an expression denoting disapprobation, and a determination to punish them. His face is not mild and benignant towards them, as-it is towards the righteous. The general sentiment in these verses (1Pe 3:10-12) is, that while length of days is desirable, it is to be secured by virtue and religion, or that virtue and religion will contribute to it.

This is not to be understood as affirming that all who are righteous will enjoy long life, for we know that the righteous are often cut down in the midst of their way; and that in, fire, and flood, and war, and the pestilence, the righteous and the wicked often perish together. But still there is a sense in which it is true that a life of virtue and religion will contribute to length of days, and that the law is so general as *to be a basis of @calculation* in reference to the future.

I. Religion and virtue contribute to those things which are favourable to length of days, which are conducive to health and to a vigorous constitution. Among those things are the following,

(a.) a calm, peaceful, and contented mind—avoiding the wear and tear of the raging passions of lusts, avarice, and ambition;

(b.) temperance in eating and drinking—always favourable to length of days;

(c.) industry— ne of the essential means, as a general rule, of promoting long life;

(d.) prudence and economy—avoiding the extravagances by which many shorten their days; and

(e.) a conscientious and careful regard of life itself. Religion makes men feel that life is a blessing, and that it should not be thrown away. Just in proportion as a man is under the influence of religion, does he regard life as of importance, and does he become careful in preserving it. Strange and paradoxical as it may seem, the want of religion often makes men reckless of life, and ready to throw it away for any trifling cause. Religion shows a man what great issues depend on life, and makes him, therefore, desirous of living to secure his own salvation and the salvation of all others.

II. Multitudes lose their lives who would have preserved them ff they had been under the influence of religion. To see this, we have only to reflect

(a.) on the millions who are cut off in war as the result of ambition, and the want of religion;

(b.) on the countless hosts cut down in middle life, or in youth, by intemperance, who would have been saved by religion;

(c.) on the numbers who are the victims of raging passions, and who are cut off by the diseases which gluttony and licentiousness engender;

(d.) on the multitude who fall in duels, all of whom would have been saved by religion;

(e.) on the numbers who, as the result of disappointment in business or in love, close their own lives, who would have been enabled to bear up under their troubles if they had had religion; and

(f.) on the numbers who are cut off from the earth as the punishment of their crimes, all of whom would have continued to live if they had had true religion.

III. God protects the righteous. He does it by saving them from those vices by which the lives of so many are shortened; and often, we have no reason to doubt, in answer to their prayers, when, but for those prayers, they would have fallen into crimes that would have consigned them to an early grave, or encountered dangers from which they would have had no means of escape. No one can doubt that in fact those who are truly religious are saved from the sins which consign millions to the tomb; nor is there any less reason to doubt that a protecting shield is often thrown before the children of God when in danger. Comp. Ps 91.

{1} "against" "upon"

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good*? This question is meant to imply, that as a general thing they need apprehend no evil if they lead an upright and benevolent life. The idea is, that God would in general protect them, though the next verse shows that the apostle did not mean to teach that there would be absolute security, for it is implied there that they *might* be called to suffer for righteousness' sake. While it is true that the Saviour was persecuted by wicked men, though his life was wholly spent in doing good; while it is true that the apostles were put to death, though following his example; and while it is true that good men have often suffered persecution, though labouring only to do good, still it is true as a general thing that a life of integrity and benevolence conduces to safety, even in a wicked world. Men who are upright and pure; who live to do good to others; who are characteristically benevolent; and who are imitators of God—are those who usually pass life in most tranquillity and security, and are often safe when nothing else would give security but confidence in their integrity. A man of a holy and pure life may, under the protection of God, rely on that character to carry him safely through the world, and to bring him at last to an honoured grave. Or should he be calumniated when living, and his sun set under a cloud, still his name will be vindicated, and justice will ultimately be done to him when he is dead. The world ultimately judges right respecting character, and renders "honour to whom honour is due." Comp. Ps 37:3-6.

{a} "who is he" Pr 16:7 Ro 8:28

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake*. Implying that though, in general, a holy character would constitute safety, yet that there was a possibility that they might suffer persecution. Comp. **See Barnes "Mt 5:10"**

See Barnes "2Ti 3:12".

Happy are ye. Perhaps alluding to what the Saviour says in Mt 5:10: "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake." On the meaning of the word *happy or blessed*, **See Barnes "Mt 5:3"**.

The meaning here is, not that they would find positive enjoyment *in* persecution on account of righteousness, but that they were to regard it as a *blessed condition*; that is, as a condition that might be favourable to salvation; and they were not therefore, on the whole, to regard it as an evil.

And be not afraid of their terror. Of anything which they can do to cause terror. There is evidently an allusion here to Isa 8:12,13: "Neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread." **See Barnes "Isa 8:12, seq. Comp. Isa 51:12** Mt 10:28.

Neither be troubled. With apprehension of danger. Compare **See Barnes "Joh 14:1"**.

If we are true Christians, we have really no reason to be alarmed in view of anything that can happen to us. God is our protector, and he is abundantly able to vanquish all our foes; to uphold us in all our trials; to conduct us through the valley of death, and to bring us to heaven. "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, *or life, or death*, or things present or things to come," 1Co 3:21,22.

{a} "be not afraid" Isa 8:12,13, 51:12

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts*. In Isa 8:13 this is, "sanctify the Lord of hosts himself;" that is, in that connexion, regard him as your Protector, and be afraid of him, and not of what man can do. The sense in the passage before us is, "In your hearts, or in the affections of the soul, regard the Lord God as holy, and act towards him with that confidence which a proper respect for one so great and so holy demands. In the midst of dangers, be not intimidated; dread not what man can do, but evince proper reliance on a holy God, and flee to him with the confidence which is due to one so glorious." This contains, however, a more general direction, applicable to Christians at all times. It is, that in our hearts we are to esteem God as a holy being, and in all our deportment to act towards him as such. The *object* of Peter in quoting the passage from Isaiah, was to lull the fears of those whom he addressed, and preserve them from any alarms in view of the persecutions to which they might be-exposed; the trials which would be brought upon them by men. Thus, in entire accordance with the sentiment as employed by Isaiah, he says, "Be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts." That is, "in order to keep the mind calm in trials, sanctify the Lord in your hearts; regard him as your holy God and Saviour; make him your refuge. This will allay all your fears, and secure you from all that you dread." The sentiment of the passage then is, *that the sanctifying of the Lord God in our hearts, or proper confidence in him as a holy and righteous God, will deliver us from fear*. As this is a very important sentiment for Christians, it may be proper, in order to a just exposition of the passage, to dwell a moment on it.

I. What is meant by our-sanctifying the Lord God? It cannot mean to *make* him holy, for he is perfectly holy, whatever may be our estimate of him; and our views of him evidently can make no change in his character. The meaning therefore must be, that we should regard him as holy in our estimate of him, or in the feelings which we have towards him. This may include the following things:

(1.) *To esteem or regard* him as a holy being, in contradistinction from all those feelings which rise up in the heart against him—the feelings of complaining and murmuring under his dispensations, as if he were severe and harsh; the feelings of dissatisfaction with his government, as if it were partial and unequal; the feelings of rebellion, as if his claims were unfounded or unjust.

(2.) To desire that he may be regarded by others as holy, in accordance with the petition in the Lord's prayer, (Mt 6:9,) "hallowed be thy name;" that is, "let thy name be *esteemed to be holy* everywhere;" a feeling in opposition to that which is regardless of the honour which he may receive in the world. When we esteem a friend, we desire that all due respect should be shown him by others; we wish that all who know him should have the same views that we have; we are sensitive to his honour, just in proportion as we love him.

(3.) To *act towards him as holy*, that is, to obey his laws, and acquiesce in all his requirements, as if they were just and good. This implies,

(a.) that we are to speak of him as holy, in opposition to the language of disrespect and irreverence so common among mankind;

(b.) that we are to flee to him in trouble, in contradistinction from withholding our hearts from him, and flying to other sources of consolation and support.

II. What is it to do this in the heart? Sanctify the Lord God *in your hearts*;" that is, in contradistinction from a mere external service. This may imply the following things:

(1.) In contradistinction from a mere intellectual assent to the proposition that he is holy. Many admit the doctrine that God is holy into their creeds, who never suffer the sentiment to find its way to the heart. All is right on this subject in the articles of their faith; all in their hearts may be murmuring and complaining. In their creeds he is spoken of as just and good; in their hearts they regard him as partial and unjust, as severe and stern, as unamiable and cruel.

(2.) In contradistinction from a mere outward form of devotion, in our prayers, and in our hymns, we, of course, "ascribe holiness to our Maker." But how much of this is the mere language of form! How little does the heart accompany it! And even in the most solemn and sublime ascriptions of praise, how often are the feelings of the heart entirely at variance with what is expressed by the lips? What would more justly offend us, than for a professed friend to approach us with the language of friendship, when every feeling of his heart belied his expressions, and we knew that his honeyed words were false and hollow!

III. Such a sanctifying of the Lord in our hearts will save us from fear. We dread danger, we dread sickness, we dread death, we dread the eternal world. We are alarmed when our affairs are tending to bankruptcy; we are alarmed when a friend is sick and ready to die; we are alarmed if our country is invaded by a foe, and the enemy already approaches our dwelling. The sentiment in the passage before us is, that if we sanctify the Lord God with proper affections, we shall be delivered from these alarms, and the mind will be calm.

(1.) The fear of the Lord, as Leighton (*in loc*.) expresses it, "as greatest, overtops and nullifies all lesser fears: the heart possessed with this fear hath no room for the other." It is an absorbing emotion; making everything else comparatively of no importance. If we fear God, we have nothing else to fear. The highest emotion which there can be in the soul is the fear of God; and when that exists, the soul will be calm amidst all that might tend otherwise to disturb it. "What time I am afraid," says David, "I will trust in thee," Ps 56:3. "We are not careful," said Daniel and his friends, "to answer thee, O king. Our God can deliver us; but if not, we will not worship the image," Da 3:16.

(2.) If we sanctify the Lord God in our hearts, there will be a belief that he will do all things well, and the mind will be calm. However dark his dispensations may be, we shall be assured that everything is ordered aright. In a storm at sea, a child may be calm when he feels that his father is at the helm, and assures him that there is no danger. In a battle, the mind of a soldier may be calm, if he has confidence in his commander, and he assures him that all is safe. So in anything, if we have the assurance that the best thing is done that can be, that the issues will all be right, the mind will be calm. But in this respect the highest confidence that can exist, is that which is reposed in God.

(3.) There will be the assurance that all is *safe*. "Though I walk," says David, "through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me," Ps 23:4. "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" Ps 27:1. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble: therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof," Ps 46:1-3. Let us ever then regard the Lord as holy, just, and good. Let us flee to him in all the trials of the present life, and in the hour of death repose on his arm. Every other source of trust will fail; and whatever else may be our reliance, when the hour of anguish approaches, that reliance will fail, and that which we dreaded will overwhelm us. Nor riches, nor honours, nor earthly friends,

can save us from those alarms, or be a security for our souls when "the rains descend, and the floods come, and the winds blow" upon us.

And be ready always. That is,

(a.) be always *able* to do it; have such reasons for the hope that is in you that they can be stated; or, have good and substantial reasons; and

(b.) be *willing* to state those reasons on all proper occasions. No man ought to entertain opinions for which a good reason cannot be given; and every man ought to be willing to state the grounds of his hope on all proper occasions. A Christian should have such intelligent views of the truth of his religion, and such constant evidence in his own heart and life that he is a child of God,as to be able at any time to satisfy a candid inquirer that the Bible is a revelation from heaven, and that it is proper for him to cherish the hope of salvation.

To give an answer. Greek, *An apology*, (*apologian*.) This word formerly did not mean, as the word *apology* does now, an *excuse* for anything that is done as if it were wrong, but a defence of anything. We apply the word now to denote something written or said in extenuation of what appears to others to be wrong, or what might be construed as wrong—as when we make an apology to others for not fulfilling an engagement, or for some conduct which might be construed as designed neglect. The word originally, however, referred rather to that which was thought not to be true, than that which might be construed as *wrong*; and the defence or "apology" which Christians were to make of their religion, was not on the supposition that others would regard it as wrong, but in order to show them that it was true. The word here used is rendered *defence*, Ac 22:1 Php 1:7,17; *answer*, Ac 25:16 1Co 9:3; 2Ti 4:16 1Pe 3:15; and *clearing of yourselves* in 2Co 7:11. We are not to hold ourselves ready to make an apology for our religion as if it were a wrong thing to be a Christian; but we are always to be ready to give reasons for regarding it as true.

To every man that asketh you. Any one has a right respectfully to ask another on what grounds he regards his religion as true; for every man has a common interest in religion, and in knowing what is the truth on the subject. If *any* man, therefore, asks us candidly and respectfully by what reasons we have been led to embrace the gospel, and on what grounds we regard it as true, we are under obligation to state those grounds in the best manner that we are able. We should regard it not as an impertinent intrusion into our private affairs, but as an opportunity of doing good to others, and to honour the Master whom we serve. Nay, we should hold ourselves in readiness to state the grounds of our faith and hope, whatever may be the motive of the inquirer, and in whatever manner the request may be made. Those who were persecuted for their religion, were under obligation to make as good a defence of it as they could, and to state to their persecutors the "reason" of the hope which they entertained. And so now, if a man attacks our religion; if he ridicules us for being Christians; if he tauntingly asks us what reason we have for believing the truth of the Bible, it is better to tell him in a kind manner, and to meet his taunt with a kind and strong argument, than to become angry, or to turn away with contempt. The best way to disarm him, is to show him that by embracing religion we are not fools in understanding; and, by a kind temper, to convince him that the influence of religion over us when we are *abused and insulted*, is a "reason" why we should love our religion, and why he should too.

A reason of the hope that is in you. Gr, "an account," (*logon*.) That is, you are to state on what ground you cherish that hope. This refers to the *whole ground* of our hope, and includes evidently two things:

(1.) The reason why we regard Christianity as true, or as furnishing a ground of hope for men; and,

(2.) the reason which we have ourselves for cherishing a hope of heaven, or the experimental and practical views which we have of religion, which constitute a just ground of hope. It is not improbable that the former of these was more directly in the eye of the apostle than the latter, though both seem to be implied in the direction to state the reasons which ought to satisfy others that it is proper for us to cherish the hope of heaven. The *first* part of this duty—that we are to state the reasons why we regard the system of religion which we have embraced as true—implies, that we should be acquainted with the evidences of the truth of Christianity, and be able to state them to others. Christianity is founded on *evidence*; and though it cannot be supposed that every Christian will be able to understand all that is involved in what are called the *evidences* of Christianity, or to meet all the objections of the enemies of the gospel; yet every man who becomes a Christian should have such intelligent views of religion, and of the evidences of the truth of the Bible, that he can show to others that the religion which he has embraced has claims to their attention, or that it is not a mere matter of education, of tradition, or of feeling. It should also be an object with every Christian to increase his acquaintance with the evidences of the truth of religion, not only for his own stability and comfort in the faith, but that he may be able to defend religion if attacked, or to guide others if they are desirous of knowing what is truth. The *second* part of this duty, that we state the reasons which we have for cherishing the hope of heaven as a personal matter, implies

(a.) that there should be, in fact, a well-founded hope of heaven; that is, that we have evidence that we are true Christians, since it is impossible to give a "*reason*" of the hope that is in us unless there are reasons for it;

(b.) that we be able to state in a clear and intelligent manner what constitutes evidence of piety, or what should be reasonably regarded as such; and

(c.) that we be ever *ready* to state these reasons. A Christian should always be willing to converse about his religion. He should have such a deep conviction of its truth, of its importance, and of his personal interest in it; he should have a hope so firm, so cheering, so sustaining, that he will be always prepared to converse on the prospect of heaven, and to endeavour to lead others to walk in the path to life.

With meekness. With modesty; without any spirit of ostentation; with gentleness of manner. This seems to be added on the supposition that they sometimes might be rudely assailed; that the questions might be proposed in a spirit of cavil; that it might be done in a taunting or insulting manner. Even though this should be done, they were not to fall into a passion, to manifest resentment, or to retort in an angry and revengeful manner; but, in a calm and gentle spirit, they were to state *the reasons* of their faith and hope, and leave the matter there.

And fear. Marg., *reverence*. The sense seems to be, "in the fear of God; with a serious and reverent spirit; as in the presence of Him who sees and hears all things." It evidently does not mean with the fear or dread of those who propose the question, but with that serious and reverent frame of mind which is produced by a deep impression of the importance of the subject, and a conscious sense of the presence of God. It follows, from the injunction of the apostle here,

(1.) that every professing Christian should have clear and intelligent views of his own personal interest in religion, or such evidences of piety that they *can* be stated to others, and that they *can* be made satisfactory to other minds;

(2.) that every Christian, however humble his rank, or however unlettered he may be, may become a valuable defender of the truth of Christianity;

(3.) that we should esteem it a privilege to bear our testimony to the truth and value of religion, and to stand up as the advocates of truth in the world. Though we may be rudely assailed, it is an honour to speak in defence of religion; though we are persecuted and reviled, it is a privilege to be permitted in anyway to show our fellow-men that there is such a thing as true religion, and that man *may* cherish the hope of heaven.

{b} "ready always" Ps 119:46 {c} "fear" "reverence"

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Having a good conscience*. That is, a conscience that does not accuse you of having done wrong. Whatever may be the accusations of your enemies, so live that you may be at all times conscious of uprightness. Whatever you suffer, see that you do not suffer the pangs inflicted by a guilty conscience, the anguish of remorse. On the meaning of the word *conscience*, **See Barnes "Ro 2:15".**

The word properly means the judgment of the mind respecting right and wrong; or the judgment which the mind passes on the immorality of its own actions, when it instantly approves or condemns them. There is always a feeling of *obligation* connected with operations of conscience, which precedes, attends, and follows our actions. "Conscience is first occupied in ascertaining our duty, before we proceed to action; then in judging of our actions when performed." A "good conscience" implies two things:

(1.) That it be properly enlightened to know what is right and wrong, or that it be not under the dominion of ignorance, superstition, or fanaticism, prompting us to do what would be a violation of the Divine law; and

(2) that its dictates be always obeyed. Without the first of these—clear views of that which is right and wrong—conscience becomes an unsafe guide; for it merely prompts us to do what we esteem to be right, and if our views of what is right and wrong are erroneous, we may be prompted to do what may be a direct violation of the law of God. Paul thought he "*ought*" to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth, (Ac 26:9;) the Saviour said, respecting his disciples, that the time would come when whosoever should kill them would think that they were doing God service, (Joh 16:2;) and Solomon says, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death," (Pr 14:12 16:25.) Under an unenlightened and misguided conscience, with the plea and pretext of religion, the most atrocious crimes have been committed; and no man should infer that he is certainly doing *right*, because he follows the promptings of conscience. No man, indeed, should act *against* the dictates of his conscience; but there may have been a previous wrong in not using proper means to ascertain what is right. Conscience is not revelation, nor does it answer the purpose of a revelation. It communicates no new truth to the soul, and is a safe guide only so far as the mind has been properly enlightened to see what is truth and duty. Its office is *to prompt us to the performance of duty, not to determine what is right*. The other thing requisite that we may have a good conscience is, that its decisions *should be obeyed*. Conscience is appointed to be the "vicegerent" of God in inflicting punishment, if his commands

are not obeyed. It pronounces a sentence on our own conduct. Its penalty is remorse; and that penalty will be demanded if its promptings be not regarded. It is an admirable device, as a part of the moral government of God, urging man to the performance of duty, and, in case of disobedience, making the mind its own executioner. There is no penalty that will more certainly be inflicted, sooner or later, than that incurred by a guilty conscience. It needs no witnesses; no process for arresting the offender; no array of judges and executioners; no stripes, imprisonment, or bonds. Its inflictions will follow the offender into the most secluded retreat; overtake him in his most rapid flight; find him out in northern snows, or on the sands of the equator; go into the most splendid palaces, and seek out the victim when he is safe from all the vengeance that man can inflict; pursue him into the dark valley of the shadow of death, or arrest him as a fugitive in distant worlds. No one, therefore, can over-estimate the importance of having a good conscience. A true Christian should aim, by incessant study and prayer, to know what is right, *and then always do it*, no matter what may be the consequences.

That, whereas they speak evil of you. They who are your enemies and persecutors. Christians are not to hope that men will always speak well of them, Mt 5:11 Lu 6:26.

As of evil doers. **See Barnes "1Pe 2:12"**.

{*} "conversation" "Behaviour" They may be ashamed. They may see that they have misunderstood your conduct, and regret that they have treated you as they have. We should expect, if we are faithful and true, that even our enemies will yet appreciate our motives, and do us justice. Comp. Psa. xxxvii. 5, 6. That falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. Your good conduct as Christians. They may accuse you of insincerity, hypocrisy, dishonesty; of being enemies of the state, or of monstrous crimes; but the time will come when they will see their error, and do you justice. See Notes one,hap, ii. 12.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *For it is better, if the will of God be so*. That is, if God sees it to be necessary for your good that you should suffer, it is better that you should suffer for doing well than for crime. God often sees it to be necessary that his people should suffer. There are effects to be accomplished by affliction which can be secured in no other way; and some of the happiest results on the soul of a Christian, some of the brightest traits of character, are the effect of trials. But it should be our care that our sufferings should not be brought upon us for our own crimes or follies. No man can promote his own highest good by doing wrong, and then enduring the penalty which his sin incurs; and no one should *do* wrong with any expectation that it may be overruled for his own good. If we are to suffer, let it be by the direct hand of God, and not by any fault of our own. If we suffer then, we shall have the testimony of our own conscience in our favour, and the feeling that we may go to God for support. If we suffer for our faults, in addition to the outwar& pain of body, we shall endure the severest pangs which man can suffer—those which the guilty mind inflicts on itself.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *For Christ also hath once suffered for sins*. Comp. **See Barnes "1Pe 2:21"**.

The *design* of the apostle in this reference to the sufferings of Christ, is evidently to remind them that he suffered as an innocent being, and not for any wrong-doing, and to encourage and comfort them in their sufferings by his example. The reference to his sufferings leads him (1Pe 2:18-22) into a statement of the various ways in which Christ suffered, and of his ultimate triumph. By his example in his sufferings, and by his final triumph, the apostle would encourage those whom he addressed to bear with patience the sorrows to which their religion exposed them. He assumes that all suffering for adhering to the gospel is the result of well-doing; and for an encouragement in their trials, he refers them to the example of Christ, the highest instance that ever was, or ever will be, both of well-doing, and of suffering on account of it. The expression, "hath *once* suffered," in the New Testament, means *once for all*; once, in the sense that it is not to occur again. Comp. Heb 7:27. The particular point here, however, is not that he once suffered; it is that he *had* in fact suffered, and that in doing it he had left an example for them to follow.

The just for the unjust. The one who was just, (*dikaiov*) on account of, or in the place of, those who were unjust, (*uper adikwn*;) or one who was righteous, on account of those who were wicked. Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 5:6"**; **See Barnes** "2Co 5:21"; **See Barnes "Heb 9:28"**.

The idea on which the apostle would particularly fix their attention was, that he was *just or innocent*. Thus he was an example to those who suffered for well-doing.

That he might bring us to God. That his death might be the means of reconciling sinners to God. Comp. **See Barnes "Joh 3:14"**; **See Barnes "Joh 12:32"**.

It is through that death that mercy is proclaimed to the guilty; it is by that alone that God can be reconciled to men; and the fact that the Son of God loved men, and gave himself a sacrifice for them, enduring such bitter sorrows, is the most powerful appeal which can be made to mankind to induce them to return to God. There is no appeal which can be made to us more powerful than one drawn from the fact that another *suffers* on our account. We could resist the *argument* which a father, a mother, or a sister would use to reclaim us from a course of sin; but if we perceive that our conduct involves them in suffering, that fact has a power over us which no mere argument could have.

Being put to death in the flesh. As a man; in his human nature. Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 1:3,4"**.

There is evidently a contrast here between "the flesh" in which it is said he was "put to death," and "the spirit" by which it is said he was "quickened." The words "*in the flesh*" are clearly designed to denote something that was *peculiar* in his death; for it is a departure from the usual method of speaking of *death*. How singular would it be to say of Isaiah, Paul, or Peter, that they were put to death *in the flesh*! How obvious would it be to ask, In what other way are men usually put to death? What was there peculiar in their case, which would distinguish their death from the death of others? The use of this phrase would suggest the thought at once, that though, in regard to that which was properly expressed by the phrase, "*the flesh*," they died, yet that there was something else in respect to which they did not die. Thus, if it were said of a man that he was deprived of his rights *as a father*, it would be implied that in other respects he was not deprived of his rights; and this would be especially true if it were added that he continued to enjoy his rights as a neighbour, or as holding an office under the government. The only proper inquiry, then, in this place is, What is fairly implied in the phrase, *the flesh*? Does it mean simply his body, as distinguished from his human soul? or

does it refer to him *as a man*, as distinguished from some higher nature, over which death had no power? Now, that the latter is the meaning seems to me to be apparent, for these reasons:

(1.) It is the usual way of denoting the human nature of the Lord Jesus, or of saying that he became incarnate, or was a man, to speak of his being in the flesh. See Ro 1:2: "Made of the seed of David according to the flesh." Joh 1:14: "And the Word was made flesh." 1Ti 3:16: "God was manifest in the flesh." 1Jo 4:2: "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God." 2Jo 1:7: "Who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh."

(2.) So far as appears, the effect of death on the human soul of the Redeemer was the same as in the case of the soul of any other person; in other words, the effect of *death* in his case was not confined to the mere body or the flesh. Death, with him, was what death is in any other case—the separation of the soul and body, with all the attendant pain of such dissolution. It is not true that his "*flesh*," as such, died without the ordinary accompaniments of death on the soul, so that it could be said that the one died, and the other was kept alive. The purposes of the atonement required that he should meet death in the usual form; that the great laws which operate everywhere else in regard to dissolution, should exist in his case; nor is there in the Scriptures any intimation that there was, in this respect, anything peculiar in his case. If his soul had been exempt from whatever there is involved in death in relation to the spirit, it is unaccountable that there is no hint on this point in the sacred narrative. But if this be so, then the expression "*in the flesh*" refers to him as a man, and means, that so far as his human nature was concerned, he died. In another important respect, he did *not* die. On the meaning of the word *flesh* in the New Testament, see **See Barnes "Ro 1:3"**.

But quickened. Made alive— *zwopoihyeiv*. This does not mean *kept alive*, but *made alive*; recalled to life; reanimated. The word is never used in the sense of *maintained alive*, or *preserved alive*. Compare the following places, which are the only ones in which it occurs in the New Testament: Joh 5:21, twice; Joh 6:63; Ro 4:17 8:11; 1Co 15:36,45; 1Ti 6:13 1Pe 3:18; in all which it is rendered *quickened, quicken, quickeneth*, 1Co 15:22, *be made alive*; 2Co 3:6, *giveth life*; and Ga 2:21, *have given life*. "Once the word refers to God, as he who giveth life to all creatures, 1Ti 6:13; three times it refers to the life-giving power of the Holy Ghost, or of the doctrines of the gospel, Joh 6:63 2Co 3:6; Ga 3:21; seven times it is used with direct reference to the raising of the dead, Joh 5:21 Ro 4:17, 8:11; 1Co 15:22,36,45 1Pe 3:18

". See Biblical Repos., April, 1845, p. 269. See also *Passow, and Robinson; Lex*. The sense, then, cannot be that, in reference to his soul or spirit, he was *preserved* alive when his body died, but that there was some agency or power restoring him to life, or reanimating him after he was dead.

By the Spirit. According to the common reading in the Greek, this is *tw pneumati* — with the article *the*—"*the* Spirit." Hahn, Tittman, and Griesbach omit the article, and then the reading is, "quickened in spirit;" and thus the reading corresponds with the former expression, "in flesh" (*sarki*,) where the article also is wanting. The word *spirit*, so far as the mere use of the word is concerned, might refer to his own soul, to his Divine nature, or to the Holy Spirit. It is evident

(1.) that it does not refer to his own soul, for,

(a.) as we have seen, the reference in the former clause is to his human nature, including all that pertained to him as a man, body and soul;

(b.) there was no power in his own spirit, regarded as that appertaining to his human nature, to raise him up from the dead, any more than there is such a power in any other human soul. That power does not belong to a human soul in any of its relations or conditions.

(2.) It seems equally clear that this does not refer to the Holy Spirit, or the Third Person of the Trinity, for it may be doubted whether the work of raising the dead is anywhere ascribed to that Spirit. His peculiar province is to enlighten, awaken, convict, convert, and sanctify the soul; to apply the work of redemption to the hearts of men, and to lead them to God. This influence is *moral*, not *physical*; an influence accompanying *the truth*, not the exertion of mere physical power.

(3.) It remains, then, that the reference is to his own Divine nature—a nature by which he was restored to life after he was crucified; to the Son of God, regarded as the Second Person of the Trinity. This appears, not only from the facts above stated, but also

(a.) from the connexion. It is stated that it was in or by this spirit that he went and preached in the days of Noah. But it was not his spirit as a man that did this, for his human soul had then no existence. Yet it seems that he did this personally or directly, and not by the influences of the Holy Spirit, for it is said that "*he* went and preached." The reference, therefore, cannot be to the Holy Ghost, and the fair conclusion is that it refers to his Divine nature.

(b.) This accords with what the apostle Paul says, (Ro 1:3,4,) "which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh,"—that is, in respect to his human nature,—"and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness,"—that is, in respect to his Divine nature,—" by the resurrection from the dead." See Notes on that passage.

(c.) It accords with what the Saviour himself says, Joh 10:17,18: "I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." This must refer to his Divine nature, for it is impossible to conceive that a human soul should have the power of restoring its former tenement, the body, to life. See Notes on the passage. The conclusion, then, to which we have come is, that the passage means, that as a man, a human being, he was put to death; in respect to a higher nature, or by a higher nature, here denominated *Spirit*, (*pneuma*,) he was restored to life. As a man, he died; as the incarnate Son of God, the Messiah, he was made alive again by the power of his own Divine Spirit, and exalted to heaven. Comp. Robinson's Lex. on the word *pneuma*.

{a} "Christ also" 1Pe 2:21 {b} "just for unjust" 2Co 5:21 {a} "death" Ro 4:25

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *By which*. Evidently by the Spirit referred to in the previous verse—*en w*—the Divine nature of the Son of God; that by which he was "quickened" again, after he had been put to death; the Son of God regarded as a Divine Being, or in that same nature which afterwards became incarnate, and whose agency was employed in quickening the man Christ Jesus, who had been put to death. The meaning is, that the same "Spirit" which was efficacious in restoring him to life, after he was put to death, was that by which he preached to the spirits in prison.

He went. To wit, in the days of Noah. No particular stress should be laid here on the phrase he went." The literal sense is, "he, *having gone*, preached," etc. —*poreuyeiv*. It is well known that such expressions are often redundant in Greek writers, as in others. So Herodotus, "to these things they *spake, saying*"—for they said. "And he, *speaking, said*;" that is, he said. So Eph 2:17, "And *came* and preached peace," etc. Mt 9:13, "But *go* and learn what that meaneth," etc. So God is often represented as *coming*, as *descending*, etc,, when he brings a message to mankind. Thus Ge 11:5,

"The Lord *came down* to see the city and the tower." Ex 19:20, "The Lord *came down* upon Mount Sinai." Nu 11:25, "The Lord *came down* in a cloud." 2Sa 22:10, "He bowed the heavens and *came down*." The idea, however, would be conveyed by this language that he did this *personally*, or by *himself*, and not merely by employing the agency of another. It would then be implied here, that though the instrumentality of Noah was employed, yet that it was done not by the Holy Spirit, but by him who afterwards became incarnate. On the supposition, therefore, that this whole massage refers to his preaching to the antediluvians in the time of Noah, and not to the "spirits" *after* they were confined in prison, this is language which the apostle would have properly and probably used. If that supposition meets the full force of the language, then no argument can be based on it in proof that he went to preach to them after their death, and while his body was lying in the grave.

And preached. The word used here (*ekhruxen*) is of a *general* character, meaning to make a proclamation of any kind, as a crier does, or to deliver a message, and does not necessarily imply that it was the gospel which was preached, nor does it determine anything in regard to the nature of the message. It is not affirmed that he preached *the gospel*, for if that specific idea had been expressed it would have been rather by another word—*euaggelizw*. The word here used would be appropriate to such a message as Noah brought to his contemporaries, or to any communication which God made to men. See Mt 3:1 4:17; Mr 1:35; Mr 5:20 7:36. It is implied in the expression, as already remarked, that he did this himself; that it was the Son of God who subsequently became incarnate, and not the Holy Spirit, that did this; though the language is consistent With the supposition that he did it by the instrumentality of another, to wit, Noah. *Qui facit per alium, facit per se*. God really proclaims a message to mankind when he does it by the instrumentality of the prophets, or apostles, or other ministers of religion; and all that is necessarily implied in this language would be met by the supposition that Christ delivered a message to the antediluvian race by the agency of Noah. No *argument*, therefore, can be derived from this language to prove that Christ went and *personally* preached to those who were confined in hades or in prison.

Unto the spirits in prison. That is, clearly, to the spirits now in prison, for this is the fair meaning of the passage. The obvious sense is, that Peter supposed there were "spirits in prison" at the time when he wrote, and that to those same spirits the Son of God had at some time "preached," or had made some proclamation respecting the will of God. As this is the only passage in the New Testament on which the Romish doctrine of purgatory is supposed to rest, it is important to ascertain the fair meaning of the language here employed. There are three obvious inquiries in ascertaining its signification. Who are referred to by *spirits*? What is meant by *in prison*? Was the message brought to them while in the prison, or at some previous period?

I. Who are referred to by *spirits*? The specification in the next verse determines this. They were those "who were sometime disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah." No others are specified; and if it should be maintained that this means that he went down to hell, or to sheol, and preached to those who are confined there, it could be inferred from this passage only that he preached to that portion of the lost spirits confined there which belonged to the particular generation in which Noah lived. *Why* he should do this; or *how* there should be such a separation made in hades that it could be done; or what was the nature of the message which he delivered to that portion, are questions which it is impossible for any man who holds to the opinion that Christ went down to hell after his death *to preach*, to answer. But if it means that he preached to those who lived in the days of Noah, while they were yet alive, the question will be asked why are they called "spirits?" Were they *spirits* then, or were they men like others? To this the answer

is easy. Peter speaks of them as they were when he wrote; not as they *had been*, or were at the time when the message was preached to them. The idea is, that to those spirits who were then in prison who had formerly lived in the days of Noah, the message had been in fact delivered. It was not necessary to speak of them precisely as they were at the time when it was delivered, but only in such a way as to *identify* them. We should use similar language now. If we saw a company of men in prison who had seen better days—a multitude now drunken, and debased, and poor, and riotous—it would not be improper to say that "the prospect of wealth and honour was once held out *to this ragged and wretched multitude*. All that is needful is to *identify* them as the same persons who once had this prospect. In regard to the inquiry, then, who these "spirits" were, there can be no difference of opinion.

They were that wicked race which lived in the days of Noah. There is no allusion in this passage to any other; there is no intimation that to any others of those "in prison" the message here referred to had been delivered.

II. What is meant by *prison here*? Purgatory, or the *limbus patrum*, say the Romanists—a place in which departed souls are supposed to be confined, and in which their final destiny may still be effected by the purifying fires which they endure, by the prayers of the living, or by a message in some way conveyed to their gloomy abodes —in which such sins may be expiated as do not deserve eternal damnation. The Syriac here is "*in sheol*," referring to the abodes of the dead, or the place in which departed spirits are supposed to dwell. The word rendered *prison*, (*fulakh*) means properly *watch*, *guard*—the act of keeping watch, or the guard itself; then watchpost, or station; then a place where any one is watched or guarded, as a prison; then a watch in the sense of a division of the night, as the morning watch. It is used in the New Testament, with reference to the future world, only in the following places: 1Pe 3:19, "Preached unto the spirits *in prison*;" and Re 20:7, "Satan shall be loosed out of his *prison*". An *idea* similar to the one here expressed may be found in 2Pe 2:4, though the word *prison* does not there occur: "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;" and in Jude 1:6, "and the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day." The allusion, in the passage before us, is undoubtedly to confinement or imprisonment in the invisible world; and perhaps to those who are reserved there with reference to some future arrangement—for this idea enters commonly into the use of the word prison. There is, however, no specification of the place where this is; no intimation that it is *purgatory*—a place where the departed are supposed to undergo purification; no intimation that their condition can be affected by anything that we can do; no intimation that those particularly referred to differ in any sense from the others who are confined in that world; no hint that they can be released by any prayers or sacrifices of ours. This passage, therefore, cannot be adduced to support the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory, for

(1.) the essential ideas which enter into the doctrine of purgatory are not to be found in the word here used;

(2.) there is no evidence in the fair interpretation of the passage that any message is borne to them while in prison;

(3.) there is not the slightest hint that they can be released by any prayers or offerings of those who dwell on the earth. The simple idea is that of persons confined as in a prison; and the passage will prove only that in the time when the apostle wrote there *were* those who were thus confined.

III. Was the message brought to them while in prison, or at some previous period? The Romanists say that it was while in prison; that Christ, after he was put to death in the body, was still kept alive in his spirit, and went and proclaimed his gospel to those who were in prison. So Bloomfield maintains, (*in loc*.,) and so OEcumenius and Cyril, as quoted by Bloomfield. But against this view there are plain objections drawn from the language of Peter himself.

(1.) As we have seen, the fair interpretation of the passage "quickened by the Spirit," is not that he was *kept alive as to his human soul*, but that he, after being dead, was *made alive* by his own Divine energy.

(2.) If the meaning be that he went and preached *after* his death, it seems difficult to know why the reference is to those only who "had been disobedient in the days of Noah." Why were *they* alone selected for this message? Are they separate from others? Were they the only ones in purgatory who could be beneficially affected by his preaching? On the other method of interpretation, we can suggest a reason why they were particularly specified. But how can we on this?

(3.) The language employed does not demand this interpretation. Its full meaning is met by the interpretation that Christ once preached to the spirits then in prison, to wit, in the days of Noah; that is, that he caused a Divine message to be borne to them. Thus it would be proper to say that "Whitfield came to America, and preached to the souls in perdition;" or to go among the graves of the first settlers of New Haven, and say, "Davenport came from England to preach to the dead men around us."

(4.) This interpretation accords with the design of the apostle in inculcating the duty of patience and forbearance in trials; in encouraging those whom he addressed to be patient in their persecutions. See the analysis of the chapter. With this object in view, there was entire propriety in directing them to the long-suffering and forbearance evinced by the Saviour, through Noah. *He* was opposed, reviled, disbelieved, and, we may suppose, persecuted. It was to the purpose to direct them to the fact that he was saved as the result of his steadfastness to Him who had commanded him to preach to that ungodly generation. But what pertinency would there have been in saying that Christ went down to hell, and delivered some sort of a message there, we know not what, to those who are confined there?

{b} "prison" Isa 42:7

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Which sometime were disobedient*. Which were *once*, or *formerly*, (*pote*,) disobedient or rebellious. The language here does not imply that they had *ceased* to be disobedient, or that they had become obedient at the time when the apostle wrote; but the object is to direct the attention to a former race of men characterized by disobedience, and to show the patience evinced under their provocations, in endeavouring to do them good. To say that men were formerly rebellious, or rebellious in a specified age, is no evidence that they are otherwise now. The meaning here is, that they did not obey the command of God when he called them to repentance by the preaching of Noah. Comp. 2Pe 2:5, where Noah is called "a preacher of righteousness."

When once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah. God waited on that guilty race a hundred and twenty years, (Ge 6:3,) a period sufficiently protracted to evince his long-suffering

toward one generation. It is not improbable that during that whole period Noah was, in various ways, preaching to that wicked generation. Comp. **See Barnes "Heb 11:7"**.

While the ark was a preparing. It is probable that preparations were made for building the ark during a considerable portion of that time. St. Peter's, at Rome, was a much longer time in building; and it is to be remembered that in the age of the world when Noah lived, and with the imperfect knowledge of the arts of naval architecture which must have prevailed, it was a much more serious undertaking to construct an ark that would hold such a variety and such a number of animals as that was designed to, and that would float safely for more than a year in an universal flood, than it was to construct such a fabric as St. Peter's, in the days when that edifice was reared.

Wherein few, that is, eight souls. Eight *persons*—Noah and his wife, his three sons and their wives, Ge 7:7. The allusion to their being saved here seems to be to encourage those whom Peter addressed to perseverance and fidelity, in the midst of all the opposition which they might experience. Noah was not disheartened. Sustained by the Spirit of Christ—the presence of the Son of God—he continued to preach. He did not abandon his purpose, and the result was that he was saved. True, they were few in number who were saved; the great mass continued to be wicked; but this very fact should be an encouragement to us—that though the great mass of any one generation may be wicked, God can protect and save the few who are faithful.

By water. They were borne up by the waters, and were thus preserved. The thought on which the apostle makes his remarks turn, and which leads him in the next verse to the suggestions about baptism, is, that *water* was employed in their preservation, or that they owed their safety, in an important sense, to that element. In like manner we owe *our* salvation, in an important sense, to water; or, there is an important agency which it is made to perform in our salvation. The apostle does not say that it was in the same way, or that the one was a type *designed* to represent the other, or even that the efficacy of water was in both cases the same; but he says, that as Noah owed *his* salvation to water, so there is an important sense in which water is employed in *ours*. There is in *certain respects*—he does not say in all respects—a resemblance between the agency of water in the salvation of Noah, and the agency of water in our salvation. In both cases water is employed, though it may not be that it is in the same manner, or with precisely the same efficacy.

{*} "sometime" "formerly" {a} "once" Ge 6

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth also now save us*. There are some various readings here in the Greek text, but the sense is not essentially varied. Some have proposed to read (*w*) *to which* instead of (*o*) *which*, so as to make the sense "the antitype to which baptism now also saves us." The antecedent to the relative, whichever word is used, is clearly not *the ark*, but *water*; and the idea is, that as Noah was saved by water, so there is a sense in which water is made instrumental in our salvation. The mention of water in the case of Noah, in connexion with *his* being saved, by an obvious association suggested to the mind of the apostle the use of water in our salvation, and hence led him to make the remark about the connexion of baptism with our salvation. The Greek word here rendered *figure—antitupon—antitype* means properly, *resisting a blow or impression*, (from *anti* and *tupov*;) that is, *hard, solid*. In the New Testament, however, it

is used in a different sense; and (*anti*) *anti*, in composition, implies resemblance, correspondence; and hence the word means, *formed after a type or model; like; corresponding; that which corresponds to a type*. *Rob. Lex*. The word occurs only in this place and Heb 9:24, rendered *figures*. The meaning here is, that *baptism corresponded to, or had a resemblance to,* the water by which Noah was saved; or that there was a use of water in the one case which corresponded in some respects to the water that was used in the other; to wit, *in effecting salvation*. The apostle does not say that it corresponded *in all respects*; in respect, e.g., to quantity, or to the manner of the application, or to the efficacy; but there is a sense in which water performs an important part in our salvation, as it did in his.

Baptism. Not the *mere* application of water, for that idea the apostle expressly disclaims, when he says that it involves not "putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God." The sense is, that baptism, including all that is properly meant by baptism as a religious rite—that is, baptism administered in connexion with true repentance, and true faith in the Lord Jesus, and when it is properly a symbol of the putting away of sin, and of the renewing influences of the Holy Spirit, and an act of unreserved dedication to God—now saves us. On the meaning of the word *baptism*, **See Barnes "Mt 3:6"**.

Doth also now save us. The water saved Noah and his family from perishing in the flood; to wit, by bearing up the ark. Baptism, in the proper sense of the term, as above explained, where the water used is a symbol, in like manner now saves us; that is, the water is an emblem of that purifying by which we are saved. It may be said to save us, not as the meritorious cause, but as the indispensable condition of salvation. No man can be saved without that regenerated and purified heart of which baptism is the appropriate symbol, and when it would be *proper* to administer that ordinance. The apostle cannot have meant that water saves us *in the same way* in which it saved Noah, for that cannot be true. It is neither the same in quantity, nor is it applied *in the same way*, nor is it efficacious in the same manner. It is indeed connected with our salvation in its own proper way, as an emblem of that purifying of the heart by which we are saved. Thus it corresponds with the salvation of Noah by water, and is the (*antitupon*) *antitype* of that. Nor does it mean that the salvation of Noah by water was *designed* to be a type of Christian baptism. There is not the least evidence of that; and it should not be affirmed without proof. The apostle saw a resemblance in some respects between the one and the other; such a resemblance that the one naturally suggested the other to his mind, and the resemblance was so important as to make it the proper ground of remark. The points of resemblance in the two cases seem to have been these:

(1.) There was *salvation* in both; Noah was saved from death, and we from hell.

(2.) *Water* is employed in both cases—in the case of Noah to uphold the ark; in ours to be a symbol of our purification.

(3.) The water in both cases is *connected with* salvation; in the case of Noah by sustaining the ark; in ours by being a symbol of salvation, of purity, of cleansing, of that by which we may be brought to God. The meaning of this part of the verse, therefore, may be thus expressed: "Noah and his family were saved by water, the antitype to which (to wit, that which in important respects corresponds to that) baptism (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, or the mere application of material water, but that purifying of the heart of which it is the appropriate emblem) now saves us."

Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh. Not a mere external washing, however solemnly done. No outward ablution or purifying saves us, but that which pertains to the conscience. This

important clause is thrown in to guard the statement from the abuse to which it would otherwise be liable, the supposition that baptism has of itself a purifying and saving power. To guard against this, the apostle expressly declares that he means much more than a mere outward application of water.

But the answer of a good conscience toward God. The word here rendered *answer* (*eperwthma*) means properly a question, an inquiry. It is spoken of a *question* put to a convert at baptism, or rather of the whole process of question and answer; that is, by implication, *examination, profession*."—Robinson, Lex. It is designed to mark the character of the baptismal rite in contrast with a mere external purification, and evidently refers to something that occurred baptism; some question, inquiry, or examination, that took place then; and it would seem to imply,

(1.) that when baptism was performed, there was some question or inquiry in regard to the belief of the candidate;

(2.) that an answer was expected, implying that there was a good conscience; that is, that the candidate had an enlightened conscience, and was sincere in his profession; and,

(3.) that the real efficacy of baptism, or its power in saving, was not in the mere external rite, but in the state of the heart, indicated by the question and answer, of which that was the emblem. On the meaning of the phrase "a good conscience," **See Barnes "1Pe 3:16"**

of this chapter. Compare on this verse Neander, Geschich der Pfianz. u. Leit. der chr. Kirche, i.p. 203. seq., in Bibl. Reposi. iv. 272, seq. It is in the highest degree probable that questions would be proposed to candidates for baptism respecting their belief, and we have an instance of this fact undoubtedly in the case before us. How extensive such examinations would be, what points would be embraced, how much reference there was to personal experience, we have, of course, no certain means of ascertaining. We may suppose, however, that the examination pertained to what constituted the essential features of the Christian religion, as distinguished from other systems, and to the cordial belief of that system by the candidate.

By the resurrection of Jesus Christ. That is, we are saved in this manner through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The whole efficiency in the case is derived from that. If he had not been raised from the dead, baptism would have been vain, and there would have been no power to save us. See this illustrated at length in the **See Barnes "Ro 6:4,5"**.

The points, therefore, which are established in regard to baptism by this important passage are these:

(1.) That baptism is not a mere *external* rite; a mere outward ablution; a mere application of water to the body. It is not contemplated that it shall be an empty form, and its essence does not consist in a mere "putting away of the filth of the flesh." There is a work to be doric in respect to the *conscience* which cannot be reached by the application of water.

(2.) That there was an examination among the early Christians when a candidate was about to be baptized, and of course such an examination is proper now. Whatever was the ground of the examination, it related to that which existed *before* the baptism was administered. It was not expected that it should be accomplished *by* the baptism. There is, therefore, implied evidence here that there was no reliance placed on that ordinance to *produce* that which constituted the "answer of a good conscience;" in other words, that it was not supposed to have an efficacy to produce that of itself, and was not a converting or regenerating ordinance.

(3.) The "answer" which was returned in the inquiry, was to be such as indicated a good conscience; that is, as Bloomfield expresses it, (New Test. *in loc*.,) "that which enables us to return

such an answer as springs from a good conscience towards God, which can be no other than the inward change and renovation wrought by the Spirit." It was supposed, therefore, that there would be an internal work of grace; that there would be much more than an outward rite in the whole transaction. The application of water is, in fact, but an emblem or symbol of that grace in the heart, and is to be administered as denoting that. It does not *convey* grace to the soul by any physical efficacy of the water. It is a symbol of the purifying influences of religion, and is made a means of grace in the same way as obedience to any other of the commands of God.

(4.) There is no efficacy in the mere application of water in any form, or with any ceremonies of religion, to put away sin. It is the "good conscience," the renovated heart, the purified soul, of which baptism is the emblem, that furnishes evidence of the Divine acceptance and favour. Comp. Heb 9:9,10. There must be a deep internal work on the soul of man, in order that he may be acceptable to God; and when that is wanting, no external rite is of any avail. Yet,

(5.) it does not follow from this that baptism is of no importance. The argument of the apostle here is, that it *is* of great importance. Noah was saved by water; and so baptism has an important connexion with our salvation. As water bore up the ark, and was the means of saving Noah, so baptism by water is the emblem of our salvation; and when administered in connexion with a "good conscience," that is, with a renovated heart, it is as certainly connected with our salvation as the sustaining waters of the flood were with the salvation of Noah. No man can prove from the Bible that baptism has no important connexion with salvation; and no man can prove that by neglecting it he will be as likely to obtain the Divine favour as he would by observing it. It is a means of exhibiting great and important truths in an impressive manner to the soul; it is a means of leading the soul to an entire dedication to a God of purity; it is a means through which God manifests himself to the soul, and through which he imparts grace, as he does in all other acts of obedience to his commandments.

{b} "baptism" Eph 5:26 {a} "conscience" Ac 8:37 Ro 10:10

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Who is gone into heaven*. **See Barnes "Ac 1:9"**.

And is on the right hand of God. **See Barnes "Mr 16:19"**.

Angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him **See Barnes "Eph 1:20,21"**.

The reason why the apostle here adverts to the fact that the Lord Jesus is raised up to the right hand of God, and is so honoured in heaven, seems to have been to encourage those to whom he wrote to persevere in the service of God, though they were persecuted. The Lord Jesus was in like manner persecuted. He was reviled, and rejected, and put to death. Yet he ultimately triumphed, he was raised from the dead, and was exalted to the highest place of honour in the universe. Even so they, if they did not faint, might hope to come off in the end triumphant. As Noah, who had been faithful and steadfast when surrounded by a scoffing world, was at last preserved by his faith from ruin, and as the Redeemer, though persecuted and put to death, was at last exalted to the right hand of God, so would it be with them if they bore their trials patiently, and did not faint or fail in the persecutions which they endured.

In view of the exposition in 1Pe 3:1,2, we may remark,

(1.) that it is our duty to seek the conversion and salvation of our impenitent relatives and friends. All Christians have relatives and friends who are impenitent; it is a rare thing that some of the members of their own families are not so. In most families, even Christian families, there is a husband or a wife, a father or a mother, a or daughter, a brother or sister, who is not converted. To all they who are Christians owe important duties, and there is none more important than that of seeking their conversion. That this is a duty is clearly implied in this passage in reference to a wife, and for the same reason it is a duty in reference to all other persons. It may be further apparent from these considerations:

(a.) It is an important part of the business of all Christians to seek the salvation of others. This is clearly the duty of ministers of the gospel; but it is no less the duty of all who profess to be followers of the Saviour, and to take him as their example and guide. Comp. Jas 5:19,20.

(b.) It is a duty peculiarly devolving on those who have relatives who are unconverted, on account of the advantages which they have for doing it. They are with them constantly; they have their confidence and affection; they can feel more for them than any one else can; and if *they* are not concerned for their salvation, they cannot hope that any others will be.

(c.) It is not wholly an improper motive to seek their salvation from the happiness which it would confer on those who are already Christians. It is not improper that a wife should be stimulated to desire the conversion of her husband from the increased enjoyment which she would have if her partner in life were united with her in the same hope of heaven, and from the pleasure which it would give to enjoy the privilege of religious worship in the family, and the aid which would be furnished in training up her children in the Lord. A Christian wife and mother has important duties to perform towards her children; it is not improper that in performing those duties she should earnestly desire the co-operation of her partner in life.

(2.) Those who have impenitent husbands and friends should be *encouraged* in seeking their conversion. It is plainly implied 1Pe 3:1,2 that it was not to be regarded as a *hopeless* thing, but that in all cases they were to regard it as possible that unbelieving husbands *might* be brought to the knowledge of the truth. If this is true of husbands, it is no less true of other friends. We should never despair of the conversion of a friend as long as life lasts, however far he may be from the path of virtue and piety. The grounds of encouragement are such as these:

(a.) You have an influence over them which no other one has; and that influence may be regarded as capital, which will give you great advantages in seeking their conversion.

(b.) You have access to them at times when their minds are most open to serious impressions. Every man has times when he may be approached on the subject of religion; when he is pensive and serious; when he is disappointed and sad; when the affairs of this world do not go well with him, and his thoughts are drawn along to a better. There are times in the life of every man when he is ready to open his mind to a friend on the subject of religion, and when he would be glad of a word of friendly counsel and encouragement. It is much to have access to a man at such times.

(c.) If all the *facts* were known which have occurred, there would be no lack of encouragement to labour for the conversion of impenitent relatives and friends. Many a husband owes his salvation to the persevering solicitude and prayers of a wife; many a son will enter heaven because a mother never ceased to pray for his salvation, even when to human view there seemed no hope of it.

(3.) We may learn 2Pe 3:1,2 what are the principal means by which we are to hope to secure the conversion and salvation of impenitent friends. It is to be mainly by a pure life; by a holy walk;

by a consistent example. *Conversation*, properly so called, is not to be regarded as excluded from those means, but the main dependence is to be on a holy life. This is to be so, because

(a.) most persons form their notions of religion from what they see in the lives of its professed friends. It is not so much what they hear in the pulpit, for they regard preaching as a mere professional business, by which a man gets a living; not so much by books in defence and explanation of religion, for they seldom or never read them; not by what religion enabled the martyrs to do, for they may have scarcely heard the names of even the most illustrious of the martyrs; but by what they see in the walk and conversation of those who profess to be Christians, especially of those who are their near relations. The husband is forming his views of religion constantly from what he sees on the brow and in the eye of his professedly Christian wife; the brother from what he sees in his sister; the child from what he sees in the parent.

(b.) Those who profess to be Christians have an opportunity of showing the power of religion in a way which is superior to any abstract argument. It controls their temper; it makes them kind and gentle; it sustains them in trial; it prompts them to deeds of benevolence; it disposes them to be contented, to be forgiving, to be patient in the reverses of life. Every one may thus be always doing something to make an impression favourable to religion on the minds of others. Yet it is *also* true that much may be done, and should be done for the conversion of others, by *conversation* properly so called, or by direct address and appeal. There is nothing, however, which requires to be managed with more prudence than conversation with those who are not Christians, or direct efforts to lead them to attend to the subject of religion. In regard to this it may be observed,

(a.) that it does no good to be *always* talking with them. Such a course only produces disgust.

(b.) It does no good to talk to them at unseasonable and improper times. If they are specially engaged in their business, and would not like to be interrupted—if they are in company with others, or even with their family—it does little good to attempt a conversation with them. It is "the word that is *fitly* spoken that is like apples of gold in pictures of silver," Pr 25:11.

(c.) It does no good to scold them on the subject Of religion, with a view to make them Christians. In such a case you show a spirit the very reverse of that religion which you are professedly endeavouring to persuade them to embrace.

(d.) All conversation with impenitent sinners should be kind, and tender, and respectful. It should be addressed to them when they will be disposed to listen; usually when they are alone; and especially when from trials or other causes they may be in such a state of mind that they will be willing to listen. It may be added, that impenitent sinners are much more frequently in such a state of mind than most Christians suppose, and that they often wonder that their Christian friends do not speak to them about the salvation of the soul.

From the exposition given of the important 1Pe 3:18-21, we may derive the following inferences:—

(1.) The pre-existence of Christ. If he preached to the antediluvians in the time of Noah, he must have had an existence at that time.

(2.) His divinity. If he was "quickened" or restored to life by his own exalted nature, he must be Divine; for there is no more inalienable attribute of the Deity than the power of raising the dead.

(3.) If Christ preached to the heathen world in the time of Noah, for the same reason it may be regarded as true that *all* the messages which are brought to men, calling them to repentance, in any age or country, are through him. Thus it was Christ who spake by the prophets and by the apostles; and thus he speaks now by his ministers.

(4.) If this interpretation is well-founded, it takes away one of the strongest supports of the doctrine of purgatory. There is no *stronger* passage of the Bible in support of this doctrine than the one before us; and if *this* does not countenance it, it may be safely affirmed that it has not a shadow of proof in the sacred Scriptures.

(5.) It follows that there is no hope or prospect that the gospel will be preached to those who are lost. This is the *only* passage in the Bible that could be supposed to teach any such doctrine; and if the interpretation above proposed be correct, this furnishes no ground of belief that if a man dies impenitent he will ever be favoured with another offer of mercy. This interpretation also accords with all the other representations in the Bible. "As the tree falleth, so it lies." "He that is holy, let him be holy still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still." All the representations in the Bible lead us to suppose that the eternal destiny of the soul after death is fixed, and that the only change which can ever occur in the future state is that which will be produced by DEVELOPEMENT: the developement of the principles of piety in heaven; the developement of the principles of evil in hell.

(6.) It follows, that if there is not a place of *purgatory* in the future world, there is a place of punishment. If the word *prison*, in the passage before us, does not mean purgatory, and does not refer to a detention with a prospect or possibility of release, it must refer to detention of another kind, and for another purpose, and that can be only with reference "to the judgment of the great day," 2Pe 2:14 Jude 1:6. From that gloomy prison there is no evidence that any have been, or will be, released.

(7.) Men should embrace the gospel at once. Now it is offered to them; in the future world it will not be. But even if it could be proved that the gospel would be offered to them in the future world, it would be better to embrace it now. Why should men go down to that world to suffer long before they become reconciled to God? Why choose to taste the sorrows of hell before they embrace the offers of mercy? Why go to that world of woe at all? Are men so in love with suffering and danger that they esteem it wise to go down to that dark prison-house, with the intention or the hope that the gospel may be offered to them there, and that when there they may be disposed to embrace it? Even if it could be shown, therefore, that they might again hear the voice of mercy and salvation, how much wiser would it be to hearken to the voice now, and become reconciled to God here, and never experience in any way the pangs of the second death! But of any such offer of mercy in the world of despair, the Bible contains no intimation; and he who goes to the eternal world unreconciled to God, perishes for ever. The moment when he crosses the line between time and eternity, he goes for ever beyond the boundaries of hope.

{a} "angels" Eph 1:21

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 4

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 4 - Verse 1

I PETER CHAPTER IV.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

THIS chapter relates principally to the manner in which those to whom the apostle wrote ought to bear their trials, and to the encouragements to a holy life, notwithstanding their persecutions. He had commenced the subject in the preceding chapter, and had referred them particularly to the example of the Saviour. His great solicitude was, that if they suffered, it should not be for crime, and that their enemies should not be able to bring any well-founded accusation against them. He would have them pure and harmless, patient and submissive; faithful in the performance of their duties, and confidently looking forward to the time when they should be delivered. He exhorts them, therefore, to the following things:

(a.) To arm themselves with the same mind that was in Christ; to consider that the past time of their lives was enough for them to have wrought the will of the flesh, and that now it was their duty to be separate from the wicked world, in whatever light the world might regard their conduct —remembering that they who calumniated them must soon give account to God, 1Pe 4:1-6.

(b.) He reminds them that the end of all things was at hand, and that it became them to be sober, and watch unto prayer, 1Pe 4:7.

(c.) He exhorts them to the exercise of mutual love and hospitality—virtues eminently useful in a time of persecution and affliction, 1Pe 4:8,9.

(d.) He exhorts them to a performance of every duty with seriousness of manner, and fidelity—whether it were in preaching, or in dispensing alms to the poor and needy, 1Pe 4:10,11.

(e.) He tells them not to think it strange that they were called to pass through fiery trials, nor to suppose that any unusual thing had happened to them; reminds them that they only partook of Christ's sufferings, and that it was to be regarded as a favour if any one suffered as a Christian; and presses upon them the thought that they ought to be careful that none of them suffered for crime, 1Pe 4:12-16.

(f.) He reminds them that the righteous would be saved with difficulty, and that the wicked would certainly be destroyed; and exhorts them, therefore, to commit the keeping of their souls to a faithful Creator, 1Pe 4:18,19.

Verse 1. *Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh*. Since he as a man has died for us. **See Barnes "1Pe 3:18"**.

The design was to set the suffering Redeemer before them as an example in their trials.

Arm yourselves likewise with the same mind. That is, evidently, the same mind that he evinced—a readiness to suffer in the cause of religion, a readiness to die as he had done. This readiness to suffer and die, the apostle speaks of as *armour*, and having this is represented as being *armed*. Armour is put on for offensive or defensive purposes in war; and the idea of the apostle here is, that that state of mind when we are ready to meet with persecution and trial, and when we are *ready* to die, will answer the purpose of armour in engaging in the conflicts and strifes which pertain to us as Christians, and especially in meeting with persecutions and trials. We are to put on the same fortitude which the Lord Jesus had, and this will be the best defence against our foes, and the best security of victory.

For he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin. Comp. Ro 6:7. To "suffer in the flesh" is *to die*. The expression here has a proverbial aspect, and seems to have meant something like this: "when a man is dead, he will sin no more;" referring of course to the present life. So if a Christian becomes *dead* in a moral sense—dead to this world, dead by being crucified with Christ

(**See Barnes "Ga 2:20"**) —he may be expected to cease from sin. The reasoning is based on the idea that there is such a union between Christ and the believer that his death on the cross *secured* the death of the believer to the world. Comp. 2Ti 2:11 Col 2:20, 3:3.

{*} "then" "Since then" {a} "same mind" Php 2:5 {b} "he that" Ro 6:2,7

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 4 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *That he no longer should live*. That is, he has become, through the death of Christ, dead to the world and to the former things which influenced him, *in order* that he should hereafter live not to the lusts of the flesh. **See Barnes "2Co 5:15"**.

The rest of his time in the flesh. The remainder of the time that he is to continue in the flesh; that is, that he is to live on the earth.

To the lusts of men. Such lusts as men commonly live for and indulge in. Some of these are enumerated in the following verse.

But to the will of God. In such a manner as God commands. The object of redemption is to rescue us from being swayed by wicked lusts, and to bring us to be conformed wholly to the will of God.

{c} "he no longer" 2Co 5:15

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 4 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *For the time past of our life may suffice us*. "We have spent sufficient time in indulging ourselves, and following our wicked propensities, and we should hereafter live in a different manner." This does not mean that it was ever *proper* thus to live, but that, as we would say, "we have had enough of these things; we have tried them; there is no reason why we should indulge in them any more." An expression quite similar to this occurs in Horace—Lusisti satis, edisti satis, atque bibisti. Ternpus abire tibi est, etc.—Epis, ii. 213.

To have wrought the will of the Gentiles. This does not mean to be subservient to their will, but to have done what they willed to do; that is, to live as they did. That the Gentiles or heathen lived in the manner immediately specified, **See Barnes** "Ro 1:21, seq.

When we walked in lasciviousness. When we *lived* in the indulgence of corrupt passions—the word *walk* being often used in the Scriptures to denote the manner of life. On the word *lasciviousness*, **See Barnes "Ro 13:13"**.

The apostle says *we*, not as meaning that he himself had been addicted to these vices, but as speaking of those who were Christians in general. It is common to say that *we* lived so and so, when speaking of a collection of persons, without meaning that each one was guilty of *all* the practices enumerated. **See Barnes** "1Th 4:17, for a similar use of the word *we*. The use of the word *we* in this place would show that the apostle did not mean to set himself up as better than they were, but was willing to be identified with them.

Lusts. The indulgence of unlawful desires. **See Barnes "Ro 1:24"**.

Excess of wine. The word here used (*oinoflugia*) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It properly means *overflowing of wine*, (*oinov*), wine, and *fluw*, to overflow; then wine-drinking; drunkenness. That this was a common vice need not be proved. Multitudes of those who became Christians had been drunkards, for intemperance abounded in all the heathen world. Comp. 1Co 6:9-11. It should not be inferred here from the English translation, "*excess* of wine," that wine is improper only when used to excess, or that the moderate use of wine is proper. Whatever may be true on that point, nothing, can be determined in regard to it from the use of this word. The apostle had his eye on one thing—on such a use of wine as led to intoxication; such as they had indulged in before their conversion. About the impropriety of that, there could be no doubt. Whether *any* use of wine, by Christians or other persons, was lawful, was another question. It should be added, moreover, that the phrase "*excess* of wine" does not precisely convey the meaning of the original. The word *excess* would naturally imply something more than was needful; or something beyond the proper limit or measure; but no such idea is in the original word. That refers merely to the *abundance* of wine, without any reference to the inquiry whether there was more than was proper or not. Tindal renders it, somewhat better, *drunkenness*. So Luther, *Trunkenheit*.

Revellings, Rendered *rioting* in Ro 13:13. **See Barnes "Ro 13:13"**.

The Greek word (*kwmov*) occurs only here, and in Ro 13:13, and Ga 5:21. It means *feasting, revel*; "a carousing or merry-making after supper, the guests often sallying into the streets, and going through the city with torches, music, and songs in honour of Bacchus," etc.—*Robinson, Lex*. The word would apply to all such noisy and boisterous processions now—scenes wholly inappropriate to the Christian.

Banquetings. The word here used (*potov*) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means properly *drinking; an act of drinking*; then *a drinking bout; drinking together*. The thing forbidden by it is *an assembling together for the purpose of drinking*. There is nothing in this word referring to eating, or to banqueting, as the term is now commonly employed. The idea in the passage is, that it is improper for Christians to meet together for the purpose of drinking—as wine, toasts, etc. The prohibition would apply to all those assemblages where this is understood to be the main object. It would forbid, therefore, an attendance on all those celebrations in which drinking toasts is understood to be an essential part of the festivities, and all those where hilarity and joyfulness are sought to be produced by the intoxicating bowl. Such are not proper places for Christians.

And abominable idolatries. Literally, *unlawful idolatries*; that is, unlawful to the Jews, or forbidden by their laws. Then the expression is used in the sense of *wicked, impious*, since what is unlawful is impious and wrong. That the vices here referred to were practised by the heathen world is well known. **See Barnes** "Ro 1:26

", seq. That many who became Christians were guilty of them before their conversion, is clear from this passage. The fact that they were thus converted shows the power of the gospel, and also that we should not despair in regard to those who are indulging in these vices now. They seem indeed almost to be hopeless, but we should remember that many who became Christians when the gospel was first preached, as well as since, were of this character. If *they* were reclaimed; if those who had been addicted to the gross and debasing vices referred to here, were brought into the kingdom of God, we should believe that those who are living in the same manner now may also be recovered. From the statement made in this verse, that "the time past of our lives may *suffice* to have wrought the will of the Gentiles," we may remark that the same may be said by all Christians of themselves; the same thing is true of all who are living in sin.

(1.) It is true of all who are Christians, and they feel it, that they lived long enough in sin.

(a) They made a fair trial—many of them with ample opportunities; with abundant wealth; with all that the fashionable world can furnish; with all that can be derived from low and gross indulgences. Many who are now Christians had opportunities of living in splendour and ease; many moved in gay and brilliant circles; many occupied stations of influence, or had brilliant prospects of distinction; many gave indulgence to gross propensities; many were the companions of the vile and the abandoned. Those who are *now* Christians, take the church at large, have had ample opportunity of making the fullest trial of what sin and the world can furnish.

(b.) They *all* feel that the past is enough for this manner of living. It is "sufficient" to satisfy them that the world cannot furnish what the soul demands. They need a better portion; and they can now see that there is no reason why they should desire to continue the experiment in regard to what the world can furnish. On that unwise and wicked experiment they have expended time enough; and satisfied with that, they desire to return to it no more.

(2.) The same thing is true of the wicked—of all who are living for the world. The time past *should* be regarded as sufficient to make an experiment in sinful indulgences; for

(a.) the experiment has been made by millions before them, and has always failed; and they can hope to find in sin only what has always been found—disappointment, mortification, and despair.

(b.) *They* have made a sufficient experiment. They have never found in those indulgences what they flattered themselves they would find, and they have seen enough to satisfy them that what the immortal soul needs can never be obtained there.

(c.) They have spent sufficient *time* in this hopeless experiment. Life is short. Man has no time to waste. He may soon die— and at whatever period of life any one may be who is living in sin, we may say to him the he has already thrown away *enough* of probation in a fruitless attempt to find happiness where it can never be found. For any purpose whatever for which any one could ever suppose it to be desirable to live in sin, the past should suffice. But why should it ever be deemed desirable at all? The fruits of sin are always disappointment, tears, death, despair.

{d} "time past" 1Co 6:11 Tit 3:3

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 4 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Wherein they think it strange*. In respect to which vices, they who were once your partners and accomplices now think it strange that you no longer unite with them. They do not understand the reasons why you have left them. They regard you as abandoning a course of life which has much to attract and to make life merry, for a severe and gloomy superstition. This is a true account of the feelings which the people of the world have when their companions and friends leave them and become Christians. It is to them a strange and unaccountable thing, that they give up the pleasures of the world for a course of life which to them seems to promise anything but happiness. Even the kindred of the Saviour regarded him as "beside himself," (Mr 3:21,) and Festus supposed that Paul was mad, Ac 26:24. There is almost nothing which the people of the world so little comprehend as the reasons which influence those with ample means of worldly enjoyment to leave the circles of gaiety and vanity, and to give themselves to the serious employments of religion.

The epithets of fool, enthusiast, fanatic, are terms which frequently occur to the heart to denote this, if they are not always allowed to escape from the lips. The *reasons* why they esteem this so strange, are something like the following:

(1.) They do not appreciate the motives which influence those who leave them. They feel that it is proper to enjoy the world, and to make life cheerful, and they do not understand what it is to act under a deep sense of responsibility to God, and with reference to eternity. They live for themselves. They seek happiness as the end and aim of life. They have never been accustomed to direct the mind onward to another world, and to the account which they must soon render at the bar of God. Unaccustomed to act from any higher motives than those which pertain to the present world, they cannot appreciate the conduct of those who begin to live and act for eternity.

(2.) They do not, yet see the guilt and folly of sinful pleasures. They are not convinced of the deep sinfulness of the human soul, and they to think it strange that others should abandon a course of life which seems them so innocent. They do not see why those who have been so long accustomed to these indulgences should have changed their opinions, and why they now regard those things as sinful which they once considered to be harmless.

(3.) They do not see the force of the argument for religion. Not having the views of the unspeakable importance of religious truth and duty which Christians now have, they wonder that they should break off from the course of life which they formerly pursued, and separate from the mass of their fellow-men. Hence they sometimes regard the conduct of Christians as amiable weakness; sometimes as superstition; sometimes as sheer folly; sometimes as madness; and sometimes as sourness and misanthropy. In all respects they esteem it *strange*.

"Lions and beasts of savage name
Put on the nature of the lamb,
While the wide world esteems it strange,
Gaze, and admire, and hate the change."

That ye run not with them. There may be an allusion here to the well-known orgies of Bacchus, in which his votaries *ran* as if excited by the furies, and were urged on as if transported with madness. See Ovid, Metam. iii. 529, thus translated by Addison:

"For now, through prostrate Greece, young Bacchus rode,
Whilst howling matrons celebrate the god;
All ranks and sexes to his or orgies ran,
To mingle in the pomp and fill the train."

The language, however, will well describe revels of any sort, and at any period of the world.

To the same excess of riot. The word rendered excess (*anacusiv*) means, properly, a *pouring out, an affusion*; and the idea here is, that all the sources and forms of riot and disorder were poured out together. There was no withholding, no restraint. The most unlimited indulgence was given to the passions. This was the case in the disorder referred to among the ancients, as it is the case now in scenes of midnight revelry. On the meaning of the word *riot*, **See Barnes "Eph 5:18 Tit 1:6"**.

Speaking evil of you. Gr., *blasphemy*. **See Barnes "Mt 9:3"**.

The meaning here is, that they used harsh and reproachful epithets of those who would not unite with them in their revelry. They called them fools, fanatics, hypocrites, etc. The idea is not that they blasphemed God, or that they charged Christians with crime, but that they used language fitted

to injure the feelings, the character, the reputation of those who would no longer unite with them in the ways of vice and folly.

{a} "evil" Ac 13:45

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 4 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Who shall give account*. That is, they shall not do this with impunity. They are guilty in this of a great wrong, and they must answer for it to God.

That is ready to judge. That is, "who is *prepared* to judge"— *tw etoimwv econti*. See the phrase used in Ac 21:13: "I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem." 2Co 12:14 "The third time I am *ready* to come to you." Compare the word *ready—etoimov* in Mt 22:4,8, 24:44 25:10; Lu 12:40 22:33; 1Pe 1:5.

The meaning is, not that he was about to do it, or that the day of judgment was near at hand—whatever the apostle may have supposed to be true on that point—but that he was *prepared* for it; all the arrangements were made with reference to it; there was nothing to hinder it.

To judge the quick and the dead. The *living* and the dead; that is, those who shall be alive when he comes, and those in their graves. This is a common phrase to denote all who shall be brought before the bar of God for judgment. **See Barnes "Ac 10:42".**

See Barnes "1Th 4:16"; **See Barnes** "1Th 4:17; **See Barnes "2Ti 4:1".**

The meaning in this connexion seems to be, that they should bear their trials and the opposition which they would meet with patiently, not feeling that they were forgotten, nor attempting to avenge themselves; for the Lord would vindicate then when he should come to judgment, and call those who had injured them to an account for all the wrongs which they had done to the children of God.

{*} "quick" "Living"

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 4 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *For, for this cause*. The expression, "For, for this cause," refers to an *end* to be reached, or an *object* to be gained, or a *reason* why anything referred to is done. The end or reason why the thing referred to here, to wit, that "the gospel was preached to the dead," was done, is stated in the subsequent part of the verse to have been "*that they might be judged*," etc. It was with reference to this, or in order that this might be, that the gospel was preached to them.

Was the gospel preached also to them that are dead. Many, as Doddridge, Whitby, and others, understand this of those who are *spiritually dead*, that is, the Gentile, and suppose that the object for which this was done was that "they might be brought to such a state of life as their carnal neighbours will look upon as a kind of condemnation and death." —*Doddridge*. Others have suppose that it refers to those who had suffered martyrdom in the cause of Christianity; others, that it refers to the sinners of the old world, (*Saurin.*) expressing a hope that some of them might be saved; and others, that it means that the Saviour went down and preached to those who are dead, in accordance with one of the interpretations given of 1Pe 3:19. It seems to me that the most natural and obvious

interpretation is to refer it to those who were *then* dead, to whom the gospel had been preached when living, and who had become true Christians. This is the interpretation proposed by Wetstein, Rosenmuller, Bloomfield, and others. In support of this, it may be said,

(1.) that this is the natural and obvious meaning of the word *dead*, which should be understood literally, unless there is some good reason in the connexion for departing from the common meaning of the word.

(2.) The apostle had just used the word in that sense in the previous verse.

(3.) This will suit the connexion, and accord with the design of the apostle. He was addressing those who were suffering persecution. It was natural, in such a connexion, to refer to those who had died in the faith, and to show, for their encouragement, that though they had been put to death, yet they still lived to God. He therefore says, that the design in publishing the gospel to them was, that though they might be judged by men in the usual manner, and put to death, yet that in respect to their higher and nobler nature, *the spirit*, they might live unto God. It was not uncommon nor unnatural for the apostles, in writing to those who were suffering persecution, to refer and example an argument for fidelity and perseverance. Compare 1Th 4:13 Re 14:13.

That they might be judged according to men in the flesh. That is, *so far as men are concerned*, (*kata anyrwpouv*), or in respect to the treatment which they received from men in the flesh, they were judged and condemned; in respect to God, and the treatment which they received from him, *kata yeon*, they would live in spirit. Men judged them severely, and put them to death for their religion; God gave them life, and saved them. By the one they were condemned in the flesh—so far as pain, and sorrow, and death could be inflicted on the body; by the other they were made to live in the spirit—to be his, to live with him. The word *judged* her, I supposed, therefore, to refer to a sentence passed on them for their religion, consigning them to death for it. There is a *particle* in the original—*men indeed*—which has not been retained in the common translation, but which is quite important to the sense: "that they might *indeed* be judged in the flesh, but live," etc. The direct object or design of preaching the gospel to them was not that they might be condemned and put to death by man, but this was *indeed or in fact* one of the results in the way to a higher object.

But live according to God. In respect to God, or so far as he was concerned. By him they would not be condemned. By *him* they would be made to live—to have the true life. The gospel was preached to them *in order* that so far as God was concerned, so far as their relation to him was concerned, so far as he would deal with them, they might *live*. The word *live* here seems to refer to the *whole life* that was the consequence of their being brought under the power of the gospel;

(a.) that they might have *spiritual* life imparted to them;

(b.) that they might live a life of holiness in this world;

(c.) that they might live hereafter in the world to come. In one respect, and so far as men were concerned, their embracing the gospel was followed by *death*; in another respect, and so far as God was concerned, it was followed by *life*. The value and permanence of the latter, as contrasted with the former, seems to have been the thought in the mind of the apostle in encouraging those to whom he wrote to exercise patience in their trials, and to show fidelity in the service of their Master.

In the spirit. In their souls, as contrasted with their body. In respect to that—to the flesh—they were put to death; in respect to their souls—their higher natures—they were made truly to live. The argument, then, in this verse is, that in the trials which we endure on account of religion, we should remember the example of those who have suffered for it, and should remember why the gospel was preached to them. It was in a subordinate sense, indeed, that they might glorify God by

a martyr's death; but in a higher sense, that in this world and the next they might truly live. The flesh might suffer in consequence of their embracing the gospel that was preached to them, but the soul would live. Animated by their example, we should be willing to suffer in the flesh, if we may for ever live with God.

{+} "cause" "end" {a} "judged" Mt 24:9 {b} "live according" Re 14:13

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 4 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *But the end of an things is at hand*. This declaration is also evidently designed to support and encourage them in their trials, and to excite them to lead a holy life, by the assurance that the end of all things was drawing nigh. The phrase, "the end of all things," would naturally refer to the end of the world; the winding up of human affairs. It is not absolutely certain, however, that the apostle used it here in this sense. It might mean that *so far as they were concerned*, or *in respect to them*, the end of all things drew near. Death is to each one the end of all things here below: the end of his plans and of his interest in all that pertains to sublunary affairs. Even if the phrase did originally and properly refer to the end of the world, it is probable that it would soon come to denote the end of life in relation to the affairs of each individual; since, if it was believed that the end of the world was near, it must consequently be believed that the termination of the earthly career of each one also drew near to a close. It is possible that the latter signification may have come ultimately to predominate, and that Peter may have used it in this sense without referring to the other. Comp. **See Barnes** "2Pe 3:8, seq., for his views on this subject. **See Barnes** "Ro 13:11, **See Barnes "Ro 13:12"**.

The word rendered "is at hand," (*hggike*,) may refer either to proximity of *place or time*, and it always denotes that the *place* or the time referred to was not far off. In the former sense, as referring to nearness of place, see Mt 21:1 Mr 11:1; Lu 7:12 15:25, 18:35,40, 19:29,37,41 24:46 Ac 9:3 10:9, 21:33; in the latter sense, as referring to *time* as being near, see Mt 3:2; Mt 4:17 10:7, 21:34 26:45; Mr 1:16 Lu 21:20,28 Ac 7:17; Ro 13:12; Heb 10:25 1Pe 4:7. The idea as applied to *time*, or to *an approaching event*, is undoubtedly that it is *close by*; it is not *far off*; it will *soon occur*. If this refers to the end of the world, it would mean that it was soon to occur; if to death, that this was an event which could not be far distant—perhaps an event that was to be hastened by their trials. The fact that it is such language as we now naturally address to men, saying that in respect to them "the end of all things is at hand," shows that it cannot be demonstrated that Peter did not use it in the same sense, and consequently that it cannot be proved that he meant to teach that the end of the world was then soon to occur.

Be ye therefore sober. Serious; thoughtful; considerate. Let a fact of so much importance make a solemn impression on your mind, and preserve you from frivolity, levity, and vanity. See the word explained **See Barnes "1Ti 3:2"**.

And watch unto prayer. Be looking out for the end of all things in such a manner as to lead you to embrace all proper opportunities for prayer. Comp. **See Barnes "Mt 26:39,41"**.

The word rendered *watch*, means to be sober, temperate, abstinent, especially in respect to wine; then watchful, circumspect. The important truth, then, taught by this passage is, that *the near approach of the end of all things should make us serious and prayerful*.

I. The *end* may be regarded as approaching. This is true

(1.) of all things; of the winding up of the affairs of this world. It is constantly drawing nearer and nearer, and no one can tell how soon it will occur. The period is wisely hidden from the knowledge of all men, **See Barnes** "Mt 24:36, **See Barnes** "Ac 1:7, among other reasons, in order that we may be always ready, No man can tell certainly at what time it will come; no man can demonstrate that it *may not* come at any moment. Everywhere in the Scriptures it is represented that it will come at an unexpected hour, as a thief in the night, and when the mass of men shall be slumbering in false security, Mt 24:37-39,42,43 1Th 5:2; Lu 21:34.

(2.) It is near in relation to each one of us. The day of our death *cannot* be far distant; it may be very near. The very next thing that we may have to do, may be to lie down and die.

II. It is proper that such a nearness of the end of all things should lead us to be serious, and to pray.

(1.) *To be serious*; for

(a.) the end of all things, regard to us, is a most important event. It closes our probation. It fixes our character. It seals up our destiny. It makes all ever onward in character and doom unchangeable.

(b.) We are so made as to be serious in view of such events. God has so constituted the mind, that when we lose property, health, or friends; when we look into a grave, or are beset with dangers; when we are in the room of the dying or the dead, we are serious and thoughtful. It is unnatural not to be so. Levity and frivolity on such occasions are as contrary to all the finer and better feelings of our nature as they are to the precepts of the Bible.

(c) There are *advantages* in seriousness of mind. It enables us to take better views of things, Ec 7:2,3. A calm, sober, sedate mind is the best for a contemplation of truth, and for looking at things as they are.

(2.) To be watchful unto prayer.

(a.) Men naturally pray when they suppose that the end of all things is coming. An earthquake induces them to pray. An eclipse, or any other supposed prodigy, leads men to pray if they suppose the end of the world is drawing near. A ship-wreck, or any other sudden danger, leads them to pray, Ps 107:28. So men often pray in sickness who have never prayed in days of health.

(b.) It is *proper* to do it. Death is an important event, and in anticipation of such an event we should pray. Who can help us then but God? Who can conduct us through the dark valley but he? Who can save us amidst the wrecks and ruins of the universe but he? Who can dissipate our fears, and make us calm amidst the convulsions of dissolving nature, but God? As that event, therefore, may come upon us at any hour, it should lead us to constant prayer; and the more so because, *when* it comes, we may be in no state of mind to pray. The posture in which we should feel that it would be most appropriate that the messenger of death should find us, would be that of prayer.

{c} "end" Jas 5:8,9 {d} "watch" Lu 21:36

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 4 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *And above all things*. More than all things else.

Have fervent charity among yourselves. Warm, ardent *love* towards each other. On the nature of *charity*, **See Barnes "1Co 13:1"**.

The word rendered *fervent*, means properly *extended*; then intent, earnest, fervent.

For charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Love to another shall so cover or hide a great many imperfections in him, that you will not notice them. This passage is quoted from Pr 10:12: "Love covereth all sins." For the truth of it we have only to appeal to the experience of every one.

(a.) True love to another makes us kind to his imperfections, charitable towards his faults, and often blind even to the existence of faults. We *would not* see the imperfections of those whom we love; and our attachment for what we esteem their real excellencies, makes us insensible to their errors.

(b.) If we love them we are ready to cover over their faults, even those which we may see in them. Of love the Christian poet says—-

"Tis gentle, delicate, and kind.

To faults compassionate or blind."

The passage before us is not the same in signification as that in Jas 5:20, "He which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." **See Barnes "Jas 5:20".**

That passage means, that by the *conversion* of another the sins of him who is converted shall be covered over, or not brought to judgment for condemnation; that is, they shall be covered over so far as *God* is concerned—-this passage means that, under the influence of love, the sins of another shall be covered over so far as we are concerned; that is, they shall be unobserved or forgiven. The language here used does not mean, as the Romanists maintain, that "charity shall procure us pardon for a multitude of sins;" for, besides that such a doctrine is contrary to the uniform teachings of the Scriptures elsewhere, it is a departure from the obvious meaning of the passage. The *subject* on which the apostle is treating is the advantage of *love* in our conduct towards others, and this he enforces by saying that it will make us kind to their imperfections, and lead us to overlook their faults. It is nowhere taught in the Scriptures that our "charity" to others will be an *atonement* or *expiation* for our own offences. If it could be so, the atonement made by Christ would have been unnecessary. Love, however, is of inestimable value in the treatment of others; and imperfect as we are, and liable to go astray, we all have occasion to cast ourselves on the charity of our brethren, and to avail ourselves much and often of that "love which covers over a multitude of sins."

{*} "charity" "love" {a} "charity" 1Co 13:7 {1} "shall" "will"

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 4 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Use hospitality one to another*. On the duty of hospitality, **See Barnes "Ro 12:13"**; **See Barnes** "Heb 13:2".

Without grudging. Greek, "without *murmurs*;" that is, without complaining of the hardship of doing it; of the time, and expense, and trouble required in doing it. The idea of *grudging*, in the common sense of that word—that is, of doing it *unwillingly*, or regretting the expense, and considering it as ill-bestowed, or as not producing an equivalent of any kind—is not exactly the idea here. It is that we are to do it without murmuring or complaining. It greatly enhances the value of hospitality, that it be done On our part with entire cheerfulness. One of the duties involved in it

is to make a guest happy; and this can be done in no other way than by showing him that he is welcome.

{b} "hospitality" Heb 13:2,16 {+} "grudging" "murmuring"

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 4 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *As every man hath received the gift*. The word rendered *the gift*, (*carisma*,) in the Greek, without the article, means endowment of any kind, but especially that conferred by the Holy Spirit. Here it seems to refer to every kind of endowment by which we can do good to others; especially every kind of qualification furnished by religion by which we can help others. It does not refer here particularly to the ministry of the word—though it is applicable to that, and includes that—but to all the gifts and graces by which we can contribute to the welfare of others. All this is regarded as a gift, or *charisma*, of God. It is not owing to ourselves, but is to be traced to him. See the word explained **See Barnes "1Ti 4:14"**.

Even so minister the same one to another, in anything by which you can benefit another. Regard what you have and they have not as a gift bestowed upon you by God for the common good, and be ready to impart it as the wants of others require. The word *minister* here (*diakonountev*) would refer to any kind of ministering, whether by counsel, by advice, by the supply of the wants of the poor, or by preaching. It has here no reference to any one of these exclusively; but means, that in whatever God has favoured us more than others, we should be ready to minister to their wants. See 2Ti 1:18; 2Co 3:3, 8:19,20.

As good stewards. Regarding yourselves as the mere *stewards* of God; that is, as appointed by him to do this work for him, and intrusted by him with what is needful to benefit others. *He* intends to do them good, but he means to do it through your instrumentality, and has intrusted to you as a steward what he designed to confer on them. This is the true idea, in respect to any special endowments of talent, property, or grace, which we may have received from God. Comp. **See Barnes "1Co 4:1,2;** Lu 16:1,2,8.

Of the manifold grace of God. The grace or favour of God evinced in many ways, or by a variety of gifts. His favours are not confined to one single thing; as, for example, to talent for doing good by preaching; but are extended to a great many things by which we may do good to influence, property, reputation, wisdom, experience. All these are to be regarded as his gifts; all to be employed in doing good to others as we have opportunity.

{c} "received the gift" Ro 12:6-8 {d} "stewards" Lu 12:42

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 4 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *If any man speak*. As a preacher, referring here particularly to the office of the ministry.

Let him speak as the oracles of God. As the oracles of God speak; to wit, in accordance with the truth which God has revealed, and with an impressive sense of the responsibility of delivering a message from him. The word rendered *oracles*, (*logia*) means, properly, something *spoken* or

uttered; then anything uttered by God—a Divine communication—a revelation, **See Barnes "Ro 3:2"**; **See Barnes "Heb 5:12"**.

See the general duty here inculcated illustrated at length in **See Barnes "Ro 12:6-8"**.

The passage here has a strong resemblance to the one in Romans.

If any man minister. *diakonei*. This may refer either, so far as the word is concerned, to the office of a deacon, or to any service which one renders to another. See 1Pe 4:10. The word commonly refers to service in general; to attendance on another, or to aid rendered to another; to the distribution of alms, etc. It seems probable that the word here does not refer to the office of a *deacon* as such, because the peculiarity of that office was to take charge of the poor of the church, and of the funds provided for them, (Ac 6:2,3;) but the apostle here says that they to whom he referred should "minister as of *the ability which God giveth*," which seems to imply that it was rather to distribute what was their *own*, than what was committed to them by the church. The word may refer to any aid which we reader to others in the church, as distributing alms, attending on the sick, etc. **See Barnes "Ro 12:7,8"**.

As of the ability which God giveth. In regard to property, talent, strength, influence, etc. This is the limit of all obligation, No one is bound to go *beyond* his ability; every one is required to come up to it. Comp. Mr 14:8 Lu 17:10.

That God in all things may be glorified. That he may be honoured; to wit, by our doing all the good we can to others, and thus showing the power of his religion. **See Barnes "1Co 10:31"**.

Through Jesus Christ. That is, as the medium through whom all those holy influences come by which God is honoured.

To whom. That is, to God; for he is the main subject of the sentence. The apostle says that in all things lie is to be glorified by us, and then adds in this doxology that he is *worthy* to be thus honoured. Comp. Re 1:6; **See Barnes "2Ti 4:18"**.

Many, however, suppose that the reference here is to the Son of God. That it would be true of him, and appropriate, **See Barnes "Ro 9:5"**.

{a} "all things" 1Co 10:31 {b} "to whom" Re 1:6

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 4 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Beloved, think it not strange*. Do not consider it as anything which you had no reason to expect; as anything which may not happen to others also.

Concerning the fiery trial which is to try you. Referring, doubtless, to some severe persecution which was then impending. We have not the means of determining precisely what this was. The word rendered *fiery trial* (*purwsei*) occurs only here and in Re 18:9,18; in both of which latter places it is rendered *burning*. It means, properly, *a being on fire, burning, conflagration*; and then any severe trial. It cannot be demonstrated from this word that they were literally to suffer *by fire*, but it is clear that some heavy calamity was before them.

As though some strange thing happened unto you. Something unusual; something which did not occur to others.

{c} "fiery trial" 1Co 3:13

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 4 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings*. That is, sufferings of the same kind that he endured, and inflicted for the same reasons. Comp. Col 1:24 Jas 1:2; **See Barnes "Mt 5:12"**.

The meaning here is, that they were to regard it as a matter of rejoicing that they were identified with Christ, even in suffering. See this sentiment illustrated at length **See Barnes "Php 3:10"**.

That, when his glory shall be revealed. At the day of judgment. **See Barnes "Mt 26:30"**.

Ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. Being admitted to the rewards which he will then confer on his people. Comp. 1Th 2:19. Every good man will have joy when, immediately at death, he is received into the presence of his Saviour; but his joy will be complete only when, in the presence of assembled worlds, he shall hear the sentence which shah confirm him in happiness for ever.

{d} "rejoice" Jas 1:2 {e} "when his glory" 2Ti 2:12

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 4 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye*. That is, in his cause, or on his account. **See Barnes "Mt 5:11"**.

The sense of the word *happy* here is the same as *blessed* in Mt 5:3,4, etc. It means that they were to regard their condition or lot as a blessed one; not that they would find personal and positive enjoyment on being reproached and vilified. It would be a blessed condition, because it would be like that of their Saviour; would show that they were his friends; would be accompanied with rich spiritual influences in the present world; and would be followed by the rewards of heaven.

For the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you. The glorious and Divine Spirit. There is no doubt that there is reference here to the Holy Spirit; and the meaning is, that they might expect that that Spirit would rest upon them, or abide with them, if they were persecuted for the cause of Christ. There may be some allusion here, in the language, to the fact that the Spirit of God descended and abode on the Saviour at his baptism, (Joh 1:33;) and, in like manner, they might hope to have the same Spirit resting on them. The essential idea is, that, if they were called to suffer in the cause of the Redeemer, they would not be left or forsaken. They might hope that God would impart his Spirit to them in proportion to their sufferings in behalf of religion, and that they would have augmented joy and peace. This is doubtless the case with those who suffer persecution, and this is the secret reason why they are so sustained in their trials. Their persecutions are made the reason of a much more copious effusion of the Spirit on their souls. The same principle applies, doubtless, to all the forms of trial which the children of God pass through; and in sickness, bereavement, loss of property, disappointment in their worldly plans, and death itself, they may hope that larger measures of the Spirit's influences will rest upon them. Hence it is often gain to the believer to suffer.

On their part. So far as they are concerned; or by them.

He is evil spoken of. That is, the Holy Spirit. They only *blaspheme* him, (*Greek*;) they reproach his sacred influences by their treatment of you and your religion.

But on your part he is glorified. By your manner of speaking of him, and by the honour done to him in the patience evinced in your trials, and in your purity of life.

{f} "If ye be" Mt 5:11

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 4 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *But let none of you suffer as a murderer*. If you must be called to suffer, see that it be not for crime. Comp. **See Barnes "**2Pe 3:14, **See Barnes "2Pe 3:17"**.

They were to be careful that their sufferings were brought upon them only in consequence of their religion, and not because any crime could be laid to their charge. If even such charges were brought against them, there should be no pretext furnished for them by their lives.

As an evil doer. As a wicked man; or as guilty of injustice and wrong towards others.

Or as a busy-body in other men's matters. The Greek word here used (*allotrioepiskopov*) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means, properly, an inspector of strange things, or of the things of others. Professor Robinson (Lex.) supposes that the word may refer to one who is "a director of heathenism;" but the more obvious signification, and the one commonly adopted, is that which occurs in our translation —*one who busies himself with what does not concern him*; that is, one who pries into the affairs of another; who attempts to control or direct them as if they were his own. In respect to the vice here condemned, **See Barnes "Php 2:4"**.

Comp. **See Barnes "**2Th 3:11, and **See Barnes "1Ti 5:13"**.

{*} "busy-body" "busy-meddler"

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 4 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Yet if any man suffer as a Christian*. Because he is a Christian; if he is persecuted on account of his religion. This was often done, and they had reason to expect that it might occur in their own case. **See Barnes "2Pe 3:17"**.

On the import of the word *Christian*, and the reasons why the name was given to the disciples of the Lord Jesus, **See Barnes "Ac 11:26"**.

Let him not be ashamed.

(1.) Ashamed of religion so as to refuse to suffer on account of it.

(2.) Ashamed that he is despised and maltreated. He is to regard his religion as every way honourable, and all that fairly results from it in time and eternity as in every respect desire able. He is not to be ashamed to be called a Christian; he is not to be ashamed of the doctrines taught by his religion; he is not to be ashamed of the Saviour whom he professes to love; he is not to be ashamed of the society and fellowship of those who are true Christians, poor and despised though they may be; he is not to be ashamed to perform any of the duties demanded by his religion; he is not to be ashamed to have his name cast out, and himself subjected to reproach and scorn. A man should be ashamed only of that which is wrong. He should glory in that which is right, whatever may be the consequences to himself. Christians now, though not subjected to open persecution, are

frequently reproached by the world on account of their religion; and though the rack may not be employed, and the fires of martyrdom are not enkindled, yet it is often true that one who is a believer is called to "suffer as a Christian." He may be reviled and despised. His views may be regarded as bigoted, narrow, severe. Opprobrious epithets, on account of his opinions, may be applied to him. His former friends and companions may leave him because he has become a Christian. A wicked father, or a gay and worldly mother, may oppose a child, or a husband may revile a wife, on account of their religion. In all these cases, the same spirit essentially is required which was enjoined on the early Christian martyrs. We are never to be ashamed of our religion, whatever results may follow from our attachment to it. **See Barnes "Ro 1:16".**

But let him glorify God on this behalf. Let him praise God that he is deemed not unworthy to suffer in such a cause. It is a matter of thankfulness

(1.) that they may have *this* evidence that they are true Christians;

(2.) that they may desire the advantages which may result from suffering as Christ did, and in his cause. **See Barnes** "Ac 5:41, where the sentiment here expressed is fully illustrated. Comp. **See Barnes "Php 3:10"**; **See Barnes** "Col 1:24".

{+} "behalf" "On this account"

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 4 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *For the time is come*. That is, this is now to be expected. There is reason to think that this trial will now occur, and there is a propriety that it should be made. Probably the apostle referred to some indications then apparent that this was about to take place.

That judgment must begin. The word *judgment* here (*krima*) seems to mean *the severe trial which would determine character*. It refers such calamities as would settle the question whether there was any religion, or would test the value of that which was professed. It was to "*begin*" at the house of God, or be applied to the church first, in order that the nature and worth of religion might be see. The reference is, doubtless, to some fearful calamity which would primarily fall on the "house of God;" that is, to some form of persecution which was to be let loose upon the church.

At the house of God. Benson, Bloomfield, and many others, suppose that this , refers to the Jews, and to the calamities that were to come around the temple and the holy city about to be destroyed. But the more obvious reference is to Christians, spoken of as the house or family Of God. There is probably in the language here an allusion to Eze 9:6 "Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women; *and begin at my sanctuary*." **See Barnes "Jer 25:29".**

But the language used here by the apostle does not denote literally the temple, or the Jews, but those who were in his time regarded as the people of God—Christians—the church. So the phrase (

HEBREW) *house of Jehovah* is used to denote the family or people of God, Nu 12:7, Hos 8:1. Comp. also 1Ti 3:15, See Barnes "1Ti 3:15.

The sense here is, therefore, that the series of calamities referred to were to commence with the church, or were to come first upon the people of God. Schoettgen here aptly quotes a passage from the writings of the Rabbins: "Punishments never come into the world unless the wicked are in it; but they do not begin, unless they commence first with the righteous."

And if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel God? If God brings such trials upon us who have obeyed his gospel, what have we not reason to suppose he will bring upon those who are yet in their sins? And if we are selected first as the objects of this visitation, if there is that in us which requires such method of dealing, what are we to suppose will occur in the end with those who make no pretensions to religion, but are yet living in open transgression? The sentiment is, that if God deals thus strictly with his people; if there is that in them which makes the, visitations of his judgment proper on them, there is a certainty that they who are not his people, but who live in iniquity, will in the end be overwhelmed with the tokens of severer wrath. Their punishment hereafter will be certain; and who can tell what will be the measure of its severity? Every wicked man, when he sees the trials which God brings upon his own people, should tremble under the apprehension of the deeper calamity which will hereafter come upon himself. We may remark,

(1.) that the judgments which God brings upon his own people make it certain that the wicked will punished. If he does not spare his own people, why should he spare others?

(2.) The punishment of the wicked is merely delayed. It *begins* at the house, of God, Christians are tried, and are recalled from their wanderings, and are prepared by discipline for: the heavenly world. The punishment of the wicked is often delayed to a future world, and in this life they have almost uninterrupted prosperity, but in the end it will be certain. **See Barnes** "Ps 73:1, seq. The punishment will come in the *end*. It cannot be evaded. Sooner or later justice requires that the wicked should be visited with the expressions of Divine displeasure on account of sin, and in the future world there will be ample time for the infliction of all the punishment which they deserve.

{a} "begin" Isa 10:12 Jer 49:12; Eze 9:6

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 4 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *And if the righteous scarcely be saved*. If they are saved with difficulty. The word here used (*moliv*) occurs in the following places: Ac 14:18, "scarce restrained they the people;" Ac 27:7, "and *scarce* were come over against Cnidus;" Ac 27:8, "and *hardly* passing it;" Ac 27:16, "we had much work to come by the boat"- literally, we were able *with difficulty* to get the boat; Ro 5:7, "scarcely for a righteous man will one die;" and in the passage before us. The word implies that there is some difficulty, or obstruction, so that the thing came very near not to happen, or so that there was much risk about it. Compare Lu 13:31. The apostle in this passage seems to have had his eye on a verse in Proverbs, (Pr 11:31,) and he has merely expanded and illustrated it: "Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner." By the question which he employs, he *admits* that the righteous are saved with difficulty, or that there are perils which jeopard their salvation, and which are of such a kind as to make it very near not to happen. They *would* indeed be saved, but it would be in such a manner as to show that the circumstances were such as to render it, to human appearances, doubtful and problematical. This peril may have arisen from many circumstances:

(a.) The difficulty of forming a plan of salvation, involving a degree of wisdom wholly beyond that of man, and of such a character that beforehand it would have been problematical and doubtful whether it could be. There was but one way in which it could be done. But what human wisdom

could have devised that, or thought of it? There was but one being who could save. But who would have supposed that the Son of God would have been willing to become a man, and to die on a cross to do it? If he had been unwilling to come and die, the righteous could not have been saved.

(b.) The difficulty of bringing those who are saved to a willingness to accept of salvation. All were disposed alike to reject it; and there were many obstacles in the human heart, arising from pride, and selfishness, and unbelief, and the love of sin, which must be overcome before any would accept of the offer of mercy. There was but one agent who could overcome these things, and induce any of the race to embrace the gospel—the Holy Spirit. But who could have anticipated that the Spirit of God would have undertaken to renew and sanctify the polluted human heart? Yet, if *he* had failed, there could have been no salvation for any.

(c.) The difficulty of keeping them from falling away amidst the temptations and allurements of the world. Often it seems to be wholly doubtful whether those who have been converted *will be* kept to eternal life. They have so little religion; they yield so readily to temptation; they conform so much to the world; they have so little strength to bear up under trials, that it seems as if there was no power to preserve them and bring them to heaven. They are saved when they seemed almost ready to yield everything.

(d.) The difficulty of rescuing them from the power of the great enemy of souls. The adversary has vast power, and he means, if he can, to destroy those who are the children of God. Often they are in most imminent danger, and it seems to be a question of doubtful issue whether they will not be entirely overcome, and perish. It is no small matter to rescue a soul from the dominion of Satan, and to bring it to heaven, so that it shall be eternally safe. Through the internal struggles and the outward conflicts of life, it seems often a matter of doubt whether with all their effort they will be saved; and when they are saved, they will feel that they have been rescued from thousands of dangers, and that there has been many a time when they have stood on the very verge of ruin, and when, to human appearances, it was scarcely possible that they could be saved.

Where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear! What hope is there of their salvation? The meaning is, that they would certainly perish; and the doctrine in the passage is, that the fact that the righteous are saved with so much difficulty is proof that the wicked will not be saved at all. This follows, because

(a.) there is the same difficulty in their salvation which there was in the salvation of those who became righteous; the same difficulty arising from the love of sin, the hardness of the heart, and the arts and power of the adversary.

(b.) No one can be saved without effort, and in fact the righteous are saved only by constant and strenuous effort on their part. But the wicked make no effort for their own salvation. They make use of no means for it; they put forth no exertions to obtain it; they do not make it a part of their plan of life. How, then, can they be saved? But *where* will they appear? I answer,

(a.) they will appear *somewhere*. They will not cease to exist when they pass away from this world. Not one of them will be annihilated; and though they vanish from the earth, and will be seen here no more, yet they will make their appearance in some other part of the universe.

(b.) They will appear at the judgment-seat, as all others will, to receive their sentence according to the deeds done in the body. It follows from this,

(1.) that the wicked will certainly be destroyed. If the righteous are *scarcely* saved, how can *they* be?

(2.) That there will be a state of future punishment, for this refers to what is to occur in the future world.

(3.) That the punishment of the wicked will be eternal, for it is the opposite of what is meant by *saved*. The time will never come when it will be said that they are *saved*! But if so, their punishment must be eternal!

{b} "if the righteous" Jer 25:29 Lu 23:31

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 4 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Wherefore, let them that suffer according to the will of God*. That is, who endure the kind of sufferings that he, by his Providence, shall appoint. Comp. 1Pe 3:17 4:15,16.

Commit the keeping of their souls to him. Since there is so much danger; since there is no one else that can keep them; and since he is a Being so faithful, let them commit all their interests to him. Comp. Ps 37:5. The word *souls* here (*qucav*) is equivalent to *themselves*. They were to leave everything in his hand, faithfully performing every duty, and not being anxious for the result.

In well doing. Constantly doing good, or seeking to perform every duty in a proper manner. Their business was always to do right; the result was to be left with God. A man who is engaged always in well-doing, may safely commit all his interest to God.

As unto a faithful Creator. God may be trusted, or confided in, in all his attributes, and in all the relations which he sustains as Creator, Redeemer, Moral Governor, and Judge. In these, and in all other respects, we may come before him with confidence, and put unwavering trust in him. As *Creator* particularly; as one who has brought us, and all creatures and things into being, we may be sure that he will be "faithful" to the design which he had in view. From that design he will never depart until it is fully accomplished. He abandons no purpose which he has formed, and we may be assured that he will faithfully pursue it to the end. As our Creator we may come to him, and look to him for his protection and care. He made us. He had a design in our creation. He so endowed us that we might live for ever, and so that we might honour and enjoy him. He did not create us that we might be miserable; nor does he wish that we *should be*. He formed us in such a way that, if we choose, we may be eternally happy. In that path in which he has appointed us to go, if we pursue it, we may be sure of his aid and protection. If we really aim to accomplish the purposes for which we were made, we may be certain that he will show himself to be a "*faithful* Creator;" one in whom we may always confide. And even though we have wandered from him, and have long forgotten why we were made, and have loved and served the creature more than the Creator, we may be sure, if we will return to him, that he will not forget the design for which he originally made us. *As* our Creator we may still confide in him. Redeemed by the blood of his Son, and renewed by his Spirit after the image of Him who created us, we may still go to him as our Creator, and may pray that even yet the high and noble ends for which we were made may be accomplished in us. Doing this, we shah find him as true to that purpose as though we had never sinned.

{a} "commit" Ps 37:5

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 5

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 5 - Verse 1

1 PETER CHAPTER V.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

THIS chapter embraces the following subjects:

I. An exhortation to the elders of the churches to be faithful to the flocks committed to their charge, 1Pe 5:1-4.

II. An exhortation to the younger members of the church to evince all proper submission to those who were older; to occupy the station in which they were placed with a becoming spirit, casting all their care on God, 1Pe 5:5-7.

III. An exhortation to be sober and vigilant, in view of the dangers which beset them, and the arts and power of their great adversary, the . devil, and especially to bear with patience the trials to which they were subjected, in common with their Christian brethren elsewhere, 1Pe 5:8-11.

IV. Salutations, 1Pe 5:12-14.

Verse 1. *The elders which are among you I exhort*. The word *elder* means, properly, one who is old; but it is frequently used in the New Testament as applicable to the officers of the church; probably because aged persons were at first commonly appointed to these offices. **See Barnes "Ac 11:30"**; **See Barnes** "Ac 14:23"; **See Barnes "Ac 15:2"**.

There is evidently an allusion here to the fact that such persons were selected on account of their *age*, because in the following verses (1Pe 5:4, seq.) the apostle addresses particularly *the younger*. It is worthy of remark, that he here refers only to one class of ministers. He does not speak of three "orders," of "bishops, priests, and deacons;" and the evidence from the passage here is quite strong that there were no such orders in the churches of Asia Minor, to which this epistle was directed. It is also worthy of remark, that the word "*exhort*" is here used. The language which Peter uses is not that of stern and arbitrary command; it is that of kind and mild Christian exhortation. **See Barnes** "Phm 1:8, **See Barnes "Phm 1:9"**.

Who am also an elder. Gr., "a fellow-presbyter," (*sumpresbuterov*.) This word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means that he was a co-presbyter with them; and he makes this one of the grounds of his exhortation to them. He does not put it on the ground of his apostolical authority; or urge it because he was the "vicegerent of Christ;" or because he was the head of the church; or because,he had any pre-eminence over others in any way. Would he have used this language if he had been the "head of the church" on earth? Would he if he supposed that the distinction between apostles and other ministers was to be perpetuated? Would he if he believed that there were to be distinct orders of clergy? The whole drift of this passage is adverse to such a supposition.

And a witness of the sufferings of Christ. Peter was indeed a witness of the sufferings of Christ when on his trial, and doubtless also when he was scourged and mocked, and when he was crucified. After his denial of his Lord, he wept bitterly, and evidently then followed him to the place where he was crucified, and, in company with others, observed with painful solicitude the last agonies of

his Saviour. It is not, so far as I know, expressly said in the Gospels that Peter was present at the crucifixion of the Saviour; but it is said (Lu 23:49) that "all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things," and nothing is more probable than that Peter was among them. His warm attachment to his Master: and his recent bitter repentance for having denied him, would lead him to follow him to the place of his death; for after the painful act of denying him he would not be likely to expose himself to the charge of neglect, or of any want of love again. His own solemn declaration here makes it certain that he was present. He alludes to it now, evidently because it qualified him to exhort those whom he addressed. It would be natural to regard with peculiar respect one who had actually seen the Saviour in his last agony, and nothing would be more impressive than an exhortation falling from the lips of such a man. A son would be likely to listen with great respect to any suggestions which should be made by one who had seen his father or mother die. The impression which Peter had of that scene he would desire to have transferred to those whom he addressed, that by a lively view of the sufferings of their Saviour they might be excited to fidelity in his cause.

And a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. Another reason to make his exhortation impressive and solemn. He felt that he was an heir of life. He was about to partake of the glories of heaven. Looking forward, as they did also, to the blessed world before him and them, he had a right to exhort them to the faithful performance of duty. Any one, who is himself an heir of salvation, may appropriately exhort his fellow-Christians to fidelity in the service of their common Lord.

{b} "glory" Ro 8:17,18 {*} "revealed" "manifested"

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 5 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Feed the flock of God*. Discharge the duties of a shepherd towards the flock. On the word *feed*, **See Barnes "Joh 21:15"**.

It is a word which Peter would be likely to remember, from the solemn manner in which the injunction to perform the duty was laid on him by the Saviour. The direction means to take such an oversight of the church as a shepherd is accustomed to take of his flock. **See Barnes** "Joh 10:1, seq.

Which is among you. Marg., *as much as in you is*. The translation in the text is the more correct. It means the churches which were among them, or over which they were called to preside.

Taking the oversight thereof—*episkopountev*. The fair translation of this word is, *discharging the episcopal office*; and the word implies all that is ever implied by the word *bishop* in the New Testament. This idea should have been expressed in the translation. The meaning is not merely *to take the oversight*—for that might be done in a subordinate sense by any one in office; but it is to take such an oversight as is implied in the episcopate, or by the word *bishop*. The words *episcopate, episcopal, and episcopacy*, are merely the Greek word used here and its correlatives transferred to our language. The sense is that of overseeing; taking the oversight of; looking after, as of a flock; and the word has originally no reference to what is now spoken of as peculiarly the *episcopal* office. It is a word strictly applicable to *any* minister of religion, or officer of a church. In the passage before us this duty was to be performed by those who, in 1Pe 5:1, are called *presbyters or elders*; and this is one of the numerous passages in the New Testament which prove that all that is properly

implied in the performance of the episcopal functions pertained to those who were called *presbyters, or elders*. If so, there was no higher grade of ministers to which the peculiar duties of the episcopate were to be intrusted; that is, there was no class of officers corresponding to those who are now called *bishops*. Comp. **See Barnes "Ac 20:28"**.

Not by constraint, but willingly. Not as if you felt that a heavy yoke was imposed on you, or a burden from which you would gladly be discharged. Go cheerfully to your duty as a work which you love, and act like a freeman in it, and not as a slave. Arduous as are the labours of the ministry, yet there is no work on earth in which a man can and should labour more cheerfully.

Not for filthy lucre. Shameful or dishonourable gain. **See Barnes "1Ti 3:3"**.

But of a ready mind. Cheerfully, promptly. We are to labour in this work, not under the influence of the desire of gain, but from the promptings of love. There is all the difference conceivable between one who does a thing because he is paid for it and one who does it from *love*—between, for example, the manner in which one attends on us when we are sick who *loves* us, and one who is merely *hired* to do it. Such a difference is there in the spirit with which one who is actuated by mercenary motives, and one whose heart is in the work, will engage in the ministry.

{a} "Feed the flock" Joh 21:15-17 Ac 20:28 {b} "willingly" 1Co 9:17\ {c} "filthy lucre" 1Ti 3:3,8 {*} "lucre" "base gain" {1} "which is among you" "as much as in you is"

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 5 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Neither as being lords*. Marg., *overruling*. The word here used (*katakurieuw*) is rendered *exercise dominion over*, in Mt 20:25; *exercise lordship over*, in Mr 10:42; and *overcame*, in Ac 19:16. It does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It refers properly to that kind of jurisdiction which civil rulers or magistrates exercise. This is an exercise of *authority*, as contradistinguished from the influence of reason, persuasion, and example. The latter pertains to the ministers of religion; the former is forbidden to them. Their dominion is not to be that of temporal lordship; it is to be that of love and truth. This command would prohibit all assumption of temporal power by the ministers of religion, and all conferring of titles of nobility on those who are preachers of the gospel. It needs scarcely to be said that it has been very little regarded in the church.

Over God's heritage—twn klhrwn. Vulgate, *in cleris*—over the clergy. The Greek word here (*klhrov—kleros*) is that from which the word *clergy* has been derived; and some have interpreted it here as referring to the *clergy*, that is, to priests and deacons who are under the authority of a bishop. Such an interpretation, however, would hardly be adopted now. The word means properly,

(a.) a lot, die, anything used in determining chances;

(b.) a part or portion, such as is assigned by lot; hence

(c.) an office to which one is designated or appointed, by lot or otherwise; and

(d.) in general any possession or heritage, Ac 26:18 Col 1:12. The meaning here is, "not lording it over the possessions or the heritage of God." The reference is, undoubtedly, to the church, as that which is peculiarly his property; his own in the world. Whitby and others suppose that it refers to the possessions or property of the church; Doddridge explains it—"not assuming dominion over those who fall to your lot," supposing it to mean that they were not to domineer over the particular

congregations committed by Providence to their care. But the other interpretation is most in accordance with the usual meaning of the word.

But being ensamples to the flock. *Examples*. **See Barnes "1Ti 4:12"**.

Peter has drawn here with great beauty, the appropriate character of the ministers of the gospel, and described the spirit with which they should he actuated in the discharge of the duties of their office. But how different it is from the character of many who have claimed to be ministers of religion; and especially how different from that corrupt communion which professes in a special manner to recognise Peter as the head, and the vicegerent of Christ. It is well remarked by Benson on this passage, that "the church of Rome could not well have acted more directly contrary to this injunction of St. Peter's if she had studied to disobey it, and to form herself upon a rule that should be the reverse of this."

{2} "being Lords" "overruling" {d} "being" 1Ti 4:12 {+} "ensamples" "examples"

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 5 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And when the chief Shepherd shall appear*. The prince of the pastors—the Lord Jesus Christ. "Peter, in the passage above, ranks himself with the elders; here he ranks Christ himself with the pastors."—Benson. **See Barnes "1Pe 2:25"**.

Comp. Heb 13:20.

Ye shall receive a crown of glory. A glorious crown or diadem. Comp. **See Barnes "2Ti 4:8"**.

That fadeth not away. This is essentially the same word, though somewhat different in form, which occurs in 1Pe 1:4. **See Barnes "1Pe 1:4"**.

The word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. Comp. **See Barnes "1Co 9:25"**.

{e} "chief Shepherd" Heb 13:20 {f} "crown of glory" 2Ti 4:8

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 5 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Likewise, ye younger*. All younger persons of either sex.

Submit yourselves unto the elder. That is, with the respect due to their age, and to the offices which they sustain. There is here, probably, a particular reference to those who sustained the *office* of elders or teachers, as the same word is used here which occurs in 1Pe 5:1. As there was an allusion in that verse, by the use of the word, to *age*, so there is in this verse to the fact that they sustained an *office* in the church. The general duty, however, is here implied, as it is everywhere in the Bible, that all suitable respect is to be shown to the aged. Comp. Le 19:32 1Ti 5:1; Ac 23:4 2Pe 2:9.

Yea, all of you be subject one to another. In your proper ranks and relations. You are not to attempt to lord it over one another, but are to treat each other with deference and respect. **See Barnes "Eph 5:21"; See Barnes "Php 2:3"**.

And be clothed with humility. The word here rendered *be clothed* (*egkomboomai*) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It is derived from *kombov*—a strip, string, or loop to fasten a garment;

and then the word refers to a garment that was fastened with strings. The word *egkombwma* (*egkomboma*) refers particularly to a long white apron, or outer garment, that was commonly worn by slaves. See *Rob. Lex. Passow Lex*. There is, therefore, peculiar force in the use of this word here, as denoting an humble mind. They were to be willing to take any place, and to perform any office, however humble, in order to serve and benefit others. They were not to assume a style and dignity of state and authority, as if they would lord it over others, or as if they were better than others; but they were to be willing to occupy any station, however humble, by which they might honour God. It is known that not a few of the early Christians actually sold themselves as slaves, in order that they might preach the gospel to those who were in bondage. The sense here is, they were to put on humility as a garment bound fast to them, as a servant bound fast to him the apron that was significant of his station. Comp. Col 3:13. It is not unusual in the Scriptures, as well as in other writings, to compare the virtues with articles of apparel; as that with which we are clothed, or in which we are seen by others. Comp. Isa 11:5 59:17.

For God resisteth the proud, etc. This passage is quoted from the Greek translation in Pr 3:34. See it explained in the **See Barnes** "Jas 4:6, where it is also quoted.

{g} "all of you" Eph 5:21 {h} "God" Jas 4:6

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 5 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Humble yourselves therefore*. Be willing to take a low place—a place such as becomes you. Do not arrogate to yourselves what does not belong to you; do not evince pride and haughtiness in your manner; do not exalt yourselves above others. **See Barnes "Lu 14:7, seq. Comp. Pr 15:33 18:12, 22:4** Mic 6:8; Php 2:8.

Under the mighty hand of God. This refers probably to the calamities which he had brought upon them, or was about to bring upon them; represented here, as often elsewhere, as the infliction of his hand—the hand being that by which we accomplish anything. When that hand was upon them they were not to be lifted up with pride and with a spirit of rebellion, but were to take a lowly place before him, and submit to him with a calm mind, believing that he would exalt them in due time. There is no situation in which one will be more likely to feel humility than in scenes of affliction.

That he may exalt you in due time. When *he* shall see it to be a proper time.

(1.) They might be assured that this would be done at some time. He would not always leave them in this low and depressed condition. He would take off his heavy hand, and raise them up from their state of sadness and suffering.

(2.) This would be in due time; that is, in the proper time, in the best time.

(a.) It might be in the present life.

(b.) It would certainly be in the world to come. There they would be exalted to honours which will be more than an equivalent for all the persecution, poverty, and contempt which are suffered in this world. He may well afford to be humble here who is to be exalted to a throne in heaven.

{i} "humble" Isa 57:15

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 5 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Casting all your care upon him*. Comp. Ps 55:22, from whence this passage was probably taken. "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee; he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved," Compare, for a similar sentiment, Mt 6:25-30. The meaning is, that we are to commit our whole cause to him. If we suffer heavy trials; if we lose our friends, health, or property; if we have arduous and responsible duties to perform; if we feel that we have no strength, and are in danger of being *crushed* by what is laid upon us, we may go and cast all upon the Lord; that is, we may look to him for grace and strength, and feel assured that he will enable us to sustain all that is laid upon us. The *relief* in the case will be as real, and as full of consolation, as if he took the burden and bore it himself. He will enable us to bear with ease what we supposed we could never have done; and the burden which he lays upon us will be light, Mt 11:30. **See Barnes "Php 4:6,7".**

For he careth for you. **See Barnes** "Mt 10:29, seq. He is not like the gods worshipped by many of the heathen, who were supposed to be so exalted, and so distant, that they did not interest themselves in human affairs; but He condescends to regard the wants of the meanest of his creatures. It is one of the glorious attributes of the true God, that he can and will thus notice the wants of the mean as well as the mighty; and one of the richest of all consolations when we are afflicted, and are despised by the world, is the thought that we are not forgotten by our heavenly Father. He who remembers the failing sparrow, and who hears the young ravens when they cry, will not be unmindful of us. "Yet *the Lord thinketh on me*," was the consolation of David, when he felt that he was "poor and needy," Ps 40:17. "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up," Ps 27:10. Comp. Isa 49:15. What more can one wish than to be permitted to feel that the great and merciful Jehovah *thinks* on him? What are we—what have we done, that should be worthy of such condescension? Remember, poor, despised, afflicted child of God, that you will never *be* forgotten. Friends on earth, the. great, the gay, the noble, the rich, may forget you; God never will. Remember that you will never be entirely neglected. Father, mother, neighbour, friend, those whom you have loved, and those to whom you have done good, may neglect you, but God never will. You may become poor, and they may pass by you; you may lose your office, and flatterers may no longer throng your path; your beauty may fade, and your admirers may leave you; you may grow old, and be infirm, and appear to be useless in the world, and no one may seem to care for you; but it is not thus with the God whom you serve. When he loves, he always loves; if he regarded you with favour when you were rich, he will not forget you when you are poor; he who watched over you with a parent's care in the bloom of youth, will not cast you off when you are "old and grey-headed," Ps 71:18. If we are what we should be, we shall never be without a friend as long as there is a God.

{a} "Casting" Ps 55:22

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 5 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Be sober*. While you cast your cares upon God, and have no anxiety on that score, let your solicitude be directed to another point. Do not doubt that he is able and willing to support and

befriend you, but be watchful against your foes. See the word used here fully explained in **See Barnes "1Th 5:6"**.

Be vigilant. This word (*grhgorew*) is everywhere else in the New Testament rendered *watch*. See Mt 24:42,43, 25:13 26:38,40,41.

It means that we should exercise careful circumspection, as one does when he is in danger, tn reference to the matter here referred to, it means that we are to be on our guard against the wiles and the power of the evil one.

Your adversary the devil. Your enemy; he who is opposed to you. Satan opposes man in his best interests. He resists his efforts to do good; his purposes to return to God; his attempts to secure his own salvation. There is no more appropriate appellation that can be given to him than to say that he resists all our efforts to obey God and to secure the salvation of our own souls.

As a roaring lion. Comp. Re 12:12. Sometimes Satan is represented as transforming himself into an angel of light, (**See Barnes "2Co 11:14"**;) and sometimes, as here, as a roaring lion: denoting the efforts which he makes to alarm and overpower us. The lion here is not the *crouching* lion-the lion stealthfully creeping towards his foe—but it is the raging monarch of the woods, who by his terrible roar would intimidate all so that they might become an easy prey. The *particular* thing referred to here, doubtless, is *persecution*, resembling in its terrors a roaring lion. When error comes in; when seductive arts abound; when the world allures and charms, the representation of the character of the foe is not of the roaring lion, but of the silent influence of an enemy that has clothed himself in the garb of an angel of light, 2Co 11:14.

Walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. "Naturalists have observed that a lion roars when he is roused with hunger, for then he is most fierce, and most eagerly seeks his prey. See Jud 14:5 Ps 22:13; Jer 2:15 Eze 22:25; Hos 11:10 Zep 3:3; Zec 11:3.

"—*Benson*.

{*} "vigilant" "watchful" {b} "as a roaring lion" Re 12:12

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 5 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Whom resist*. **See Barnes "Jas 4:7"**.

You are in no instance to yield to him, but are in all forms to stand up and oppose him. Feeble in yourselves, you are to confide in the arm of God. No matter in what form of terror he approaches, you are to fight manfully the fight of faith. Comp. **See Barnes** "Eph 6:10, seq.

Stedfast in the faith. Confiding in God. You are to rely on him alone, and the means of successful resistance are to be found in the resources of faith. **See Barnes "Eph 6:16"**.

Knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. Comp. for a similar sentiment, 1Co 10:13. The meaning is, that you should be encouraged to endure your trials by the fact that your fellow-Christians suffer the same things. This consideration might furnish consolation to them in their trials in the following ways:

(1.) They would feel that they were suffering only the common lot of Christians. There was no evidence that God was peculiarly angry with them, or that he had in a peculiar manner forsaken them.

(2.) The fact that others were enabled to bear their trials should be an argument to prove to them that they would also be able. If they looked abroad, and saw that others were sustained, and were brought off triumphant, they might be assured that this would be the case with them.

(3.) There would be the support derived from the fact that they were not *alone* in suffering. We can bear pain more easily if we feel that we are not alone—that it is the common lot—that we are in circumstances where we may have sympathy from others. This remark may be of great practical value to us in view of persecutions, trials, and death. The consideration suggested here by Peter to sustain those whom he addressed, in the trials of persecution, may be applied now to sustain and comfort us in every form of apprehended or real calamity. We are all liable to suffering. We are exposed to sickness, bereavement, death. We often feel as if we could not bear up under the sufferings that may be before us, and especially do we dread *the great trial—DEATH*. It may furnish us some support and consolation to remember,

(1.) that this is the common lot of men. There is nothing peculiar in our case. It proves nothing as to the question whether we are accepted of God, and are beloved by him, that we suffer; for those whom he has loved most have been often among the greatest sufferers. We often think that our sufferings are peculiar; that there have been none like them. Yet, if we knew all, we should find that thousands—and among them the most wise, and pure, and good—have endured sufferings of the same kind as ours, and perhaps far more intense in *degree*.

(2.) Others have been conveyed triumphantly through their trials. We have reason to hope and to believe that we shall also, for

(a.) our trials have been no greater than theirs have been; and

(b.) their natural strength was no greater than ours. Many of them were timid, and shrinking, and trembling, and felt that they had no strength, and that they should fail under the trial.

(3.) The grace which sustained them can sustain us. The hand of God is not shortened that it cannot save; his ear is not heavy that it cannot hear. His power is as great, and his grace is as fresh, as it was when the first sufferer was supported by him; and that Divine strength which supported David and Job in their afflictions, and the apostles and martyrs in theirs, is just as powerful as it was when they applied to God to be upheld in their sorrows.

(4.) We are especially fearful of death—fearful that our faith will fail, and that we shall be left to die without support or consolation. Yet let us remember that death is the common lot of man. Let us remember *who* have died—tender females; children; the timid and the fearful; those, in immense multitudes, who had no more strength by nature than we have. Let us think of our own kindred who have died. A wife has died, and shall a husband be afraid to die? A child, and shall a father? A sister, and shall a brother? It does much to take away the dread of death, to remember that a mother has gone through the dark valley; that that gloomy vale has been trod by delicate, and timid, and beloved sisters. Shall I be afraid to go where they have gone? Shall I apprehend that I shall find no grace that is able to sustain me where they have found it? Must the valley of the shadow of death be dark and gloomy to me, when they found it to be illuminated with the opening light of heaven? Above all, it takes away the fear of death when I remember that my Saviour has experienced all the horrors which can ever be in death; that he has slept in the tomb, and made it a hallowed resting-place.

{c} "resist, stedfast" Jas 4:7

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 5 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *But the God of all grace*. The God who imparts all needful grace. It was proper in their anticipated trials to direct them to God, and to breathe forth in their behalf an earnest and affectionate prayer that they might be supported. A prayer of this kind by an apostle would also be to them a sort of pledge or assurance that the needed grace would be granted them.

Who hath called us unto his eternal glory. And who means, therefore, that we shall be saved. As he has called us to his glory, we need not apprehend that he will leave or forsake us. On the meaning of the word *called*, **See Barnes "Eph 4:1"**.

After that ye have suffered a while. After you have suffered as long as he shall appoint. The Greek is, "having suffered a *little*," and may refer either to *time or degree*. In both respects the declaration concerning afflictions is true. They are *short*, compared with eternity; they are light, compared with the exceeding and eternal weight of glory. **See Barnes** "2Co 4:16, seq.

Make you perfect. By means of your trials. The tendency of affliction is to make us perfect.

Stablish. The Greek word means to *set fast*; *to fix firmly*; *to render immovable*, Lu 16:26 9:61, 22:32 Ro 1:11, 16:25

1Th 3:2,13, *et al*.

Strengthen Give you strength to bear all this.

Settle you. Literally, *found you*, or establish you on a firm foundation—*yemeliwsei*. The allusion is to a house which is so firmly fixed on a foundation that it will not be moved by winds or floods. Comp, **See Barnes** "Mt 7:24, seq.

{a} "a while" 2Co 4:16 {b} "perfect" Heb 13:21 {c} "stablish" 2Th 3:3 {d} "strengthen" Zec 10:6,10 {e} "settle" Ps 138:7,8

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 5 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *To him be glory*, etc. **See Barnes "1Pe 4:11"**.

{f} "glory" 1Pe 4:11

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 5 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *By Silvanus*. Or *Silas*. **See Barnes "2Co 1:19"**; **See Barnes "1Th 1:1"**.

He was the intimate friend and companion of Paul, and had laboured much with him in the regions where the churches were situated to which this epistle was addressed. In what manner he became acquainted with Peter, or why he was now with him in Babylon, is unknown.

A faithful brother unto you, as I suppose. The expression "as I suppose"—*wv logizomai*,—does not imply that there was any doubt on the mind of the apostle, but indicates rather a firm persuasion that what he said was true. Thus, Ro 8:18, "For I *reckon* (*logizomai*) that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared," etc. That is, I am fully persuaded of it; I have no doubt of it. Peter evidently had *no doubt* on this point, but he probably could not speak from any

personal knowledge. He had not been with them when Silas was, and perhaps not at all; for they may have been "strangers" to him personally- for the word "strangers," in 1Pe 1:1, *may* imply that he had no personal acquaintance with them. Silas, however, had been much with them, (comp. Ac 15:17-31,) and Peter had no doubt that he had shown himself to be "a faithful brother" to them. An epistle conveyed by his hands could not but be welcome. It should be observed, however, that the expression "I suppose" has been differently interpreted by some. Wetstein understands it as meaning, "Not that he supposed Silvanus to be a faithful brother, for who, says he, could doubt that? but that he had written as he understood matters, having carefully considered the subject, and as he regarded things to be true;" and refers for illustration to Ro 8:18 Php 4:8; Heb 11:9.

Grotius understands it as meaning, "If I remember right;" and supposes that the idea is, that he shows his affection for them by saying that this was not the first time that he had written to them, but that he had written before briefly, and sent the letter, as well as he could remember, by Silvanus. But there is no evidence that he had written to them before, and the common interpretation is undoubtedly to be preferred.

Exhorting. No small part of the epistle is taken up with exhortations.

And testifying. Bearing witness. The main design of the office of the apostles was to bear witness to the truth, (**See Barnes "1Co 9:1";**) and Peter in this epistle discharged that part of the functions of his office towards the scattered Christians of Asia Minor.

That this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand. That the religion in which you stand, or which you now hold, is that which is identified with the grace or favour of God. Christianity, not Judaism, or Paganism, was the true religion. To show this, and bear continual witness to it, was the leading design of the apostolic office.

{g} "Silvanus" 2Co 1:19 {*} "suppose" "judge" {h} "ye stand" 1Co 15:1

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 5 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you*. It will be seen at once that much of this is supplied by our translators; the words "church that is" not being in the original. The Greek is, *h en babulwni suneklekth*; and might refer to a church, or to a female. Wall, Mill, and some others, suppose that the reference is to a Christian woman, perhaps the wife of Peter himself. Comp, 2Jo 1:1. But the Arabic, Syriac, and Vulgate, as well as the English versions, supply the word *church*. This interpretation seems to be confirmed by the word rendered *elected together with—suneklekth*. This word would be properly used in reference to *one individual* if writing to another *individual*, but would hardly be appropriate as applied to an individual addressing a *church*. It could not readily be supposed, moreover, that any one female in Babylon could have such a prominence, or be so well known, that nothing more would be necessary to designate her than merely to say, "the elect female." On the word Babylon here, and the place denoted by it, see the Intro., & 2.

And so doth Marcus my son. Probably John Mark. **See Barnes "Ac 12:12"; See Barnes** "Ac 15:37".

Why he was now with Peter is unknown. If this was the Mark referred to, then the word *son* is a title of affection, and is used by Peter with reference to his own superior age. It is possible, however, that some other Mark may be referred to, in whose conversion Peter had been instrumental.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 5 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity*. A kiss of *love*; a common method of affectionate salutation in the times of the apostles. **See Barnes "Ro 16:16".**

Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. That are true Christians. **See Barnes "Eph 6:23 Php 4:7".**

{i} "Greet" Ro 16:16 {+} "charity" "love" {k} "Peace" Eph 6:23

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 1

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER.

INTRODUCTION.

I—GENUINENESS AND AUTHENTICITY OF THE EPISTLE.

IT is well known that at an early period of the Christian history there were doubts respecting the canonical authority of the Second Epistle of Peter. The sole ground of the doubt was, whether Peter was the author of it. Eusebius, in the chapter of his ecclesiastical history where he speaks of the New Testament in general, reckons it among the *autilegomena*, (*antilegomena*,) or those books which were not universally admitted to be genuine; literally, "*those which were spoken against*," b. iii. chap. 25. This does not imply that even he, however, disbelieved its genuineness, but merely that it was numbered among those about which there had not been always entire certainty. Jerome says, "Peter wrote two epistles, called Catholic; the second of which is denied by many to be his, because of the difference of style from the former." Origen, before him. had also said, "Peter, on whom the church is built, has left one epistle [universally] acknowledged. Let it be granted that he also wrote a second. For it is doubted of." See Lardner, vol. vi., p. 255, Ed. Lond. 1829. Both the epistles of Peter, however, were received as genuine in the fourth and following centuries by all Christians, except the Syrians. The first epistle was never doubted to have been the production of Peter. In regard to the second, as remarked above, it was doubted by some. The principal ground of the doubt, if not the entire ground, was the difference of style between the two, especially in the second chapter, and the fact that the old Syriac translator, though he admitted the Epistle of James, which was also reckoned among the "doubtful" epistles, did not translate the Second Epistle of Peter. That version was made, probably, at the close of the first century, or in the second; and it is said that it is to be presumed that if this epistle had been then in existence, and had been regarded as genuine, it would also have been translated by him.

It is of importance, therefore, to state briefly the evidence of the genuineness and authenticity of this epistle. In doing this, it is proper to regard the *first* epistle as undoubtedly genuine and canonical, for that was never called in question. That being admitted, the genuineness of this epistle may be argued on the following grounds'

(1.) It does not appear to have been *rejected* by any one. It was merely *doubted* whether it was genuine. How far even this *doubt* extended is not mentioned. It is referred to only by Jerome, Origen, and Eusebius, though there is not the least evidence that even *they* had any doubts of its genuineness. They merely state that there were some persons who had doubts on the subject, from the difference of style between this and the former epistle. This fact, indeed, as Wall has remarked, (Critical Notes on the New Testament, pp. 358, 359,) will serve at least to show the care which was

evinced in admitting books to be canonical, proving that they were not received without the utmost it was caution, and that if the slightest doubt existed in the case of any one, honestly expressed.

(2.) Even all doubt on the subject disappeared as early as the third and fourth centuries, and the epistle was received as being unquestionably the production of Peter. The effect of the examination in the case was to remove all suspicion, and it has never since been doubted that the epistle was written by Peter; at least, no doubt has arisen, except from the fact stated by Jerome and Origen, that it was not universally admitted to be genuine.

(3.) This epistle purports to have been written by the author of the former, and has all the internal marks of genuineness which could exist.

(a.) It bears the inscription of the name of the same apostle: "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ," 2Pe 1:1.

(b.) There is an allusion in 2Pe 1:14, which Peter only could appropriately make, and which an impostor, or forger of an epistle, would hardly have thought of introducing: "Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me." Here, there is an evident reference to the Saviour's prediction of the death of Peter, recorded in Joh 21:18,19. It is conceivable, indeed, that an adroit forger of an epistle *might* have introduced such a circumstance; but the supposition that it is genuine is much more natural. It is such an allusion as Peter would naturally make; it would have required much skill and tact in another to have introduced it so as not to be easily detected, even if it had occurred to him to personate Peter at all. Would not a forger of an epistle have been likely to mention particularly what *kind* of death was predicted by the Saviour, and not to have made a mere allusion?

(c.) In 2Pe 1:16-18, there is another allusion of a similar kind. The writer claims to have been one of the "eye-witnesses of the majesty" of the Lord Jesus when he was transfigured in the holy mount. It was natural for Peter to refer to this, for he was with him; and he has mentioned it just as one would be likely to do who had actually been with him, and who was writing from personal recollection. A forger of the epistle would have been likely to be more particular, and would have described the scene more minutely, and the place where it occurred, and would have dwelt more on the nature of the evidence furnished there of the Divine mission of the Saviour.

(d.) In 2Pe 3:1, it is stated that this is a second epistle written to the same persons, as a former one had been; and that the writer aimed at substantially the same object in both. Here the plain reference is to the first epistle of Peter, which has always been acknowledged to be genuine. It may be said that one who forged the epistle might have made this allusion. This is true, but it may be doubtful whether he would do it. It would have increased the liability to detection, for it would not be easy to imitate the manner, and to carry out the views of the apostle.

(4.) To these considerations it may be added, that there is clear internal evidence of another kind to show that it was written by Peter. This evidence, too long to be introduced here, may be seen in Michaelis' Introduction, iv. 349—356. The sum of this internal evidence is, that it would not have been practicable for a writer of the first or second century to have imitated Peter so as to have escaped detection; and that, in general, it is not difficult to detect the books that were forged in imitation of, and in the name of, the apostles.

As to the alleged objection in regard to the difference of the style in the second chapter, see Michaelis, iv. 352—-356. Why it was not inserted in the old Syriac version is not known. It is probable that the author of that version was exceedingly cautious, and did not admit any books-about which *he* had any doubt. The fact that this was doubted by some, and that these doubts were not

removed from his mind, as in the case of the epistle of James, was a good reason for his not inserting it, though it by no means proves that it is not genuine. It came, however, to be acknowledged afterwards by the Syrians as genuine and canonical. Ephrem the Syrian, a writer of the fourth century, not only quotes several passages of it, but expressly ascribes it to Peter. Thus, in the second volume of his Greek works, p. 387, he says, "The blessed Peter, also, the Coryphaeus of the apostles, cries, concerning that day, saying, The day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night, in which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat." This is literally quoted (in the Greek) from 2Pe 3:12. See Michaelis, as above, p. 348. And Asseman, in his catalogue of the Vatican Manuscripts, gives an account of a Syriac book of Lessons to be read, in which is one taken from this epistle. See Michaelis.

These considerations remove all reasonable doubt as to the propriety of admitting this epistle into the canon, as the production of Peter.

II.—THE TIME WHEN THE EPISTLE WAS WRITTEN.

IN regard to the time when this epistle was written, nothing can be determined with absolute certainty. All that appears on that subject from the epistle itself is, that at the time of writing it the author was expecting soon to die. 2Pe 1:14, "Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me." What evidence he had that he was soon to die he has not informed us; nor is it known even what he meant precisely by the word *shortly*. The Greek word (*tacinh*) is indeed one that would imply that the event was expected not to be far off; but a man would not unnaturally use it who felt that he was growing old, even though he should in fact live several years afterwards. The Saviour (Joh 21:18) did not state to Peter *when* his death would occur, except that it would be when he should be "*old*;" and the probability is, that the fact that he was growing *old* was the only intimation that he had that he was soon to die. Ecclesiastical history informs us that he died at Rome, A.D. 66, in the 12th year of the reign of Nero. See Calmet, Art. Peter Comp. Joh 21:18,19. Lardner supposes, from 2Pe 1:13-15 of this epistle, that this was written not long after the first, as he then says that he "would not be *negligent* to put them in remembrance of these things." The two epistles he supposes were written in the year 63 or 64, or at the latest 65. Michaelis supposes it was in the year 64; Calmet that it was in the year of Christ 68, or according to the Vulgar Era, A.D. 65. Probably the year 64 or 65 would not be far from the real date of this epistle. If so, it was, according to Calmet, one year only before the martyrdom of Peter, (A.D. 66,) and six years before the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, A.D. 71.

III.—THE PERSONS TO WHOM THIS EPISTLE WAS WRITTEN, AND THE PLACE WHERE.

ON this subject there is no room for doubt. In 1Pe 3:1, the writer says, "this second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance." This epistle was written, therefore, to the same persons as the former. On the question to whom that was addressed, see the Introduction to that epistle, & 1. The epistles were addressed to persons who resided in Asia Minor, and in both they are regarded as in the midst of trials. No certain intimation of the place where this epistle was written is given in the epistle itself. It is probable that it was at the same place as the former, as, if it had not been, we may presume that there would have been some reference to the fact that he had changed his residence, or some local allusion which would have enabled us to determine the fact. If he wrote this epistle from Babylon, as he did the former one, (see Intro. to that epistle, & 2,) it is not known why he was so soon removed to Rome, and became a martyr there. Indeed, everything respecting the last days of this apostle is involved

in great uncertainty. See the article *Peter* in Calmet's Dictionary. See these questions examined also in Bacon's Lives of the Apostles, pp. 258—279.

IV.—THE OCCASION ON WHICH THE EPISTLE WAS WRITTEN.

THE first epistle was written in view of the trials which those to whom it was addressed were then enduring, and the persecutions which they had reason to anticipate, 1Pe 1:6,7, 4:12-19 5:8-11.

The main object of that epistle was to comfort them in their trials, and to encourage them to bear them with a Christian spirit, imitating the example of the Lord Jesus. This epistle appears to have been written, not so much in view of persecutions and bodily sufferings, —real or prospective, as in view of the fact that there were teachers of error among them, the tendency of whose doctrine was to turn them away from the gospel. To those teachers of error, and to the dangers to which they were exposed on that account, there is no allusion in the first epistle, and it would seem not to be improbable that Peter had been informed that there were such teachers among them after he had written and despatched that. Or, if he was not thus *informed* of it, it seems to have occurred to him that this was a point of great importance which had not been noticed in the former epistle, and that an effort should be made by apostolic influence and authority to arrest the progress of error, to counteract the influence of the false teachers, and to confirm the Christians of Asia Minor in the belief of the truth. A large part of the epistle, therefore, is occupied in characterising the teachers of error, in showing that they would certainly be destroyed, and in stating the true doctrine in opposition to what they held. It is evident that Peter supposed that the danger to which Christians in Asia Minor were exposed from these errors, was not less than that to which they were exposed from persecution, and that it was of as much importance to guard them from those errors as it was to sustain them in their trials.

The characteristics of the teachers referred to in this epistle, and the doctrines which they taught, were the following:—

(1.) One of the prominent errors was a denial of the Lord that bought them, 2Pe 2:1. On the nature of this error, **See Barnes "2Pe 2:1"**.

(2.) They gave indulgence to carnal appetites, and were sensual, corrupt, beastly, lewd, 2Pe 2:10,12,13,14,19.

Comp. Jude 1:4,8,16.

It is remarkable that so many professed *reformers* have been men who have been sensual and lewd—men who have taken advantage of their character as professed religious teachers, and as *reformers*, to corrupt and betray others. Such reformers often begin with pure intentions, but a constant familiarity with a certain class of vices tends to corrupt the mind, and to awaken in the soul passions which would otherwise have slept; and they fall into the same vices which they attempt to reform. It should be said, however, that many professed reformers are corrupt at heart, and only make use of their pretended zeal in the cause of reformation to give them the opportunity to indulge their base propensities.

(3.) They were disorderly in their views, and "*radical*" in their movements. The tendency of their doctrines was to unsettle the foundations of order and government; to take away all restraint from the indulgence of carnal propensities, and to break up the very foundations of good order in society, 2Pe 2:10-12. They "walked after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness;" they "despised government" or authority; they were "presumptuous and self-willed;" they "were not afraid to speak evil of dignities;" they were like "natural brute beasts;" they" spoke evil of the subjects which they did not understand." It is by no means an uncommon thing for professed reformers to become

antigovernment men, or to suppose that all the restraints of law stand in their way, and that they must be removed in order to success. They fix the mind on one thing to be accomplished. That thing magnifies itself until it fills all the field of vision. Everything which seems to oppose their efforts, or to uphold the evil which they seek to remove, they regard as an evil itself; and as the laws and the government of a country often seem to sustain the evil, they become opposed to the government itself, and denounce it as an evil. Instead of endeavouring to enlighten the public mind, and to modify the laws by a course of patient effort, they array themselves against them, and seek to overturn them. For the same reason, also, they suppose that *the church* upholds the evil, and become the deadly foe of all church organizations.

(4.) They were seductive and artful, and adopted a course of teaching that was fitted to beguile the weak, and especially to produce licentiousness of living, 2Pe 2:14. They were characterised by "adulterous" desires; and they practised their arts particularly on the "unstable," those who were easily led away by any new and plausible doctrine that went to unsettle the foundations of rigid morality.

(5.) They adopted a pompous mode of teaching, distinguished for sound rather than for sense, and proclaimed themselves to be the special friends of liberal views, and of a liberal Christianity, 2Pe 2:17-19. They were like "wells without water;" "clouds that were carried about with a tempest;" they spake "great swelling words of vanity," and they promised "liberty" to those who would embrace their views, or freedom from the restraints of bigotry and of a narrow and gloomy religion. This appeal is usually made by the advocates of error.

(6) They had been professed Christians, and had formerly embraced the more strict views on morals and religion which were held by Christians in general, 2Pe 2:20-22. From this, however, they had departed, and had fallen into practices quite as abominable as those of which they had been guilty before their pretended conversion.

(7.) They denied the doctrines which the apostles had stated respecting the end of the world. The *argument* on which they based this denial was the fact that all things continued unchanged as they had been from the beginning, and that it might be inferred from that that the world would be stable, 2Pe 3:3,4. They saw no change in the laws of nature; they saw no indications that the world was drawing to a close, and they *inferred* that laws so stable and settled as those were which existed in nature would continue to operate, and that the changes predicted by the apostles were impossible.

A large part of the epistle is occupied in meeting these errors, and in so portraying the characters of their advocates as to show what degree of reliance was to be placed on their preaching. For a particular view of the manner in which these errors are met, see the analyses to chapters 2 and 3.

This epistle is characterised by the same earnest and tender manner as the first, and by a peculiarly "solemn grandeur of imagery and diction." The apostle in the last two chapters had to meet great and dangerous errors, and the style of rebuke was appropriate to the occasion. He felt that he himself was soon to die, and, in the prospect of death, his own mind was peculiarly impressed with the solemnity and importance of coming events. He believed that the errors which were broached tended to sap the very foundations of the Christian faith and of good morals, and his whole soul is roused to meet and counteract them. The occasion required that he should state in a solemn manner what *was* the truth in regard to the second advent of the Lord Jesus; what great changes were to occur; what the Christian *might* look for hereafter; and his soul kindles with the sublime theme, and he describes in glowing imagery, and in impassioned language, the end of all things, and exhorts them to live as became those who were looking forward to so important events.

The practical effect of the whole epistle is to make the mind intensely solemn, and to put it into a position of waiting for the coming of the Lord. On the similarity between this epistle (2Pe 2) and the epistle of Jude, see Introduction to Jude.

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER,

THIS chapter comprises the following subjects:—

I. The usual salutations, 2Pe 1:1,2.

II. A statement that all the mercies which they enjoyed pertaining to life and godliness, had been conferred by the power of God, and that he had given them exceeding great and precious promises, 2Pe 1:3,4. It was mainly with reference to these "promises" that the epistle was written, for they had been assailed by the advocates of error, (2Pe 2 3,) and it was important that Christians should see that they *had* the promise of a future life. Comp. 2Pe 3:5-14.

III. An exhortation to abound in Christian virtues; to go on making constant attainments in knowledge, and temperance, and patience, and godliness, and brotherly kindness, and charity, 2Pe 1:5-9.

IV. An exhortation to endeavour to make their calling and election sure, that so an entrance might be ministered unto them abundantly into the kingdom of the Redeemer, 2Pe 1:10,11.

V. The apostle says that he will endeavour to keep these things before their minds, 2Pe 1:12-15. He knew well that they were then established in the truth, (2Pe 1:12,) but he evidently felt that they were in danger of being shaken in the faith by the seductive influence of error, and he says therefore, (2Pe 1:13,) that it was proper, as long as he remained on earth, to endeavour to excite in their minds a lively remembrance of the truths which they had believed; that the opportunity for his doing this must soon cease, as the period was approaching when he must be removed to eternity, in accordance with the prediction of the Saviour, (2Pe 1:14,) but that he would endeavour to make so permanent a record of his views on these important subjects that they might always have them in remembrance, 2Pe 1:15.

VI. A solemn statement that the doctrines which had been taught them, and which they had embraced, were not cunningly-devised fables, but were true, 2Pe 1:16-21. In support of this the apostle appeals to the following things:—

(a.) The testimony to the fact that Jesus was the Son of God, which Peter had himself heard given on the mount of transfiguration, 2Pe 1:17,18.

(b.) Prophecy. These truths, on which he expected them to rely, had been the subject of distinct prediction, and they should be held, whatever were the plausible arguments of the false teachers, 2Pe 1:19,20.

The general object, therefore, of this chapter is to affirm the truth of the great facts of religion, on which their hopes were based, and thus to prepare the way to combat the errors by which these truths were assailed. He first assures them that the doctrines which they held were true, and then, in chapters 2 and 3, meets the errors by which they were assailed.

Verse 1. *Simon Peter*. Marg., *Symeon*. The name is written either *Simon* or *Simeon*—*simwn* or *sumewn*. Either word properly means *hearing*; and perhaps, like other names, was at first significant. The first epistle (1Pe 1:1) begins simply, "Peter, an apostle," etc. The name Simon, however, was

his proper name—*Peter*, or *Cephas*, having been added to it by the Saviour, Joh 1:42. Comp. Mt 16:18.

A servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ. In the first epistle the word apostle only is used. Paul, however, uses the word *servant* as applicable to himself in Ro 1:1, and to himself and Timothy in the commencement of the epistle to the Philippians, Php 1:1. **See Barnes "Ro 1:1"**.

To them that have obtained like precious faith with us. With us who are of Jewish origin. This epistle was evidently written to the same persons as the former, (Intro., & 3,) and that was intended to embrace many who were of Gentile origin. **See Barnes "1Pe 1:1"**.

The apostle addresses them all now, whatever was their origin, as heirs of the common faith, and as in all respects brethren.

Through the righteousness of God. Through the method of justification which God has adopted. See this fully explained in **See Barnes "Ro 1:17"**.

God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. Marg., *our God and Saviour*. The Greek will undoubtedly *bear* the construction given in the margin; and if this be the true rendering, it furnishes an argument for the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Bishop Middleton, Slade, Valpy, Bloomfield, and others, contend that this is the true and proper rendering. It is doubted, however, by Wetstein, Grotius, and others. Erasmus supposes that it may be taken in either sense. The construction, though certainly not a violation of the laws of the Greek language, is not so free from all doubt as to make it proper to use the passage as a proof-text in an argument for the divinity of the Saviour. It is easier to prove the doctrine from other texts that are plain, than to show that this *must* be the meaning here.

{1} "Simon Peter" "Symeon" {a} "like precious faith" Eph 4:5 {2} "of God" "our God and Saviour"

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord*. That is, grace and peace abound to us, or may be expected to be conferred on us abundantly, if we have a true knowledge of' God and of the Saviour. Such a knowledge constitutes true religion: for in that we find grace—the grace that pardons and sanctifies; and peace—peace of conscience, reconciliation with God, and calmness in the trials of life. **See Barnes "Joh 7:3"**.

{b} "peace" Da 4:1 6:25

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *According as his divine power hath given unto us*. All the effects of the gospel on the human heart are, in the Scriptures, traced to the *power* of God. **See Barnes "Ro 1:16"**.

There are no moral means which have ever been used that have such power as the gospel; none through which God has done so much in changing the character and affecting the destiny of man.

All things that pertain unto life and godliness. The reference here in the word *life* is undoubtedly to the life of religion; the life of the soul imparted by the gospel. The word godliness is synonymous

with piety. The phrase "according as" (*wv*) seems to be connected with the sentence in 2Pe 1:5, "Forasmuch as he has conferred on us these privileges and promises connected with life and godliness, we are bound, in order to obtain all that is implied in these things, to give all diligence to add to our faith, knowledge," etc.

Through the knowledge of him. By a proper acquaintance with him, or by the right kind of knowledge of him. **See Barnes "Joh 17:3"**.

That hath called to glory and virtue. Margin, *by*. Greek, "through glory," etc. Doddridge supposes that it means that he has done this "by the strengthening virtue and energy of his spirit." Rosenmuller renders it, "*by* glorious benignity." Dr. Robinson (Lex.) renders it, "through a glorious display of his efficiency." The *objection* which any one feels to this rendering arises solely from the word *virtue*, from the fact that we are not accustomed to apply that word to God. But the original word (*areth*) is not as limited in its signification as the English word is, but is rather a word which denotes a good quality or excellence of any kind. In the ancient classics it is used to denote manliness, vigour, courage, valour, fortitude; and the word would rather denote *energy* or *power* of some kind, than what we commonly understand by virtue, and would be, therefore, properly applied to the *energy* or *efficiency* which God has displayed in the work of our salvation. Indeed, when applied to moral excellence at all, as it is in 1Pe 1:5 of this chapter, and often elsewhere, it is perhaps with a reference to the *energy, boldness, rigour*, or *courage* which is evinced in overcoming our evil propensities, and resisting allurements and temptations. According to this interpretation, the passage teaches that it is *by a glorious Divine efficiency* that we are called into the kingdom of God.

{c} "all things" Ps 84:11 1Ti 4:8 {*} "unto" "belong to" {3} "to glory" "by" {d} "virtue" 2Ti 1:9

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Whereby*. *di wn*. "Through which"—in the plural number, referring either to the *glory and virtue* in the previous verse, and meaning that it was by that glorious Divine efficiency that these promises were given; or, to all the things mentioned in the previous verse, meaning that it was through those arrangements, and in order to their completion, that these great and glorious promises were made. The promises given are in connexion with the plan of securing "life and godliness," and are a part of the gracious arrangements for that object.

Exceeding great and precious promises. A promise is an assurance on the part of another of some good for which we are dependent on him. It implies,

(1.) that the thing is in his power;

(2.) that he may bestow it or not, as he pleases;

(3.) that we cannot infer from any process of reasoning that it is his purpose to bestow it on us;

(4.) that it is a favour which we can obtain only from him, and not by any independent effort of our own. The promises here referred to are those which pertain to salvation. Peter had in his eye probably all that then had been revealed which contemplated the salvation of the people of God. They are called "exceeding great and precious," because of their value in supporting and comforting the soul, and of the honour and felicity which they unfold to us. The promises referred to are doubtless those which are made in connexion with the plan of salvation revealed in the gospel, for

there are no *other* promises made to man. They refer to the pardon of sin; strength, comfort, and support in trial; a glorious resurrection; and a happy immortality. If we look at the greatness and glory of the objects, we shall see that the promises are in fact exceedingly precious; or if we look at their influence in supporting and elevating the soul, we shall have as distinct a view of their value. The promise goes beyond our reasoning powers; enters a field which we could not otherwise penetrate—the distant future; and relates to what we could not otherwise obtain. All that we need in trial, is the simple promise of God that he will sustain us; all that we need in the hour of death, is the assurance of our God that we shall be happy for ever. What would this world be without a *promise*? How impossible to penetrate the future! How dark that which is to come would be! How bereft we should be of consolation! The past has gone, and its departed joys and hopes can never be recalled to cheer us again; the present may be an hour of pain, and sadness, and disappointment, and gloom, with perhaps not a ray of comfort; the future only opens fields of happiness to our vision, and everything there depends on the will of God, and all that we can know of it is from his promises. Cut off from these, we have no way either of obtaining the blessings which we desire, or of ascertaining that they can be ours. For the promises of God, therefore, we should be in the highest degree grateful, and in the trials of life we should cling to them with unwavering confidence as the only things which can be an anchor to the soul.

That by these. Greek, "*through these*." That is, these constitute the basis of your hopes of becoming partakers of the divine nature. Comp. **See Barnes "2Co 7:1"**.

Partakers of the divine nature. This is a very important and a difficult phrase. An expression somewhat similar occurs in Heb 2:10, "That we might be partakers of his holiness." **See Barnes "Heb 2:10"**.

In regard to the language here used, it may be observed,

(1.) that it is directly contrary to all the notions of *Pantheism* —or the belief that all things are *now* God, or a part of God—for it is said that the object of the promise is, that we "*may become* partakers of the divine nature," not that we are now.

(2.) It can not be taken in so literal a sense as to mean that we can ever partake of the divine *essence*, or that we shall be *absorbed* into the divine nature so as to lose our individuality. This idea is held by the Budhists; and the perfection of being is supposed by them to consist in such absorption, or in losing their own individuality, and their ideas of happiness are graduated by the approximation which may be made to that state. But this cannot be the meaning here, because

(a.) it is in the nature of the case impossible. There must be for ever an essential difference between a created and an uncreated mind.

(b.) This would argue that the Divine Mind is not perfect. If this absorption was necessary to the completeness of the character and happiness of the Divine Being, then he was imperfect before; if before perfect, he would not be after the absorption of an infinite number of finite and imperfect minds.

(c.) In all the representations of heaven in the Bible, the idea of *individuality* is one that is prominent. *Individuals* are represented everywhere as worshippers there, and there is no intimation that the separate existence of the redeemed is to be absorbed and lost in the essence of the Deity. Whatever is to be the condition of man hereafter, he is to have a separate and individual existence, and the *number* of intelligent beings is never to be diminished either by annihilation, or by their being united to ally other spirit so that they shall become *one*. The reference then, in this place, must be to the *moral* nature of God; and the meaning is, that they who are renewed become

participants of the same moral nature; that is, of the same views, feelings, thoughts, purposes, principles of action. Their nature as they are born, is sinful, and prone to evil, (Eph 2:3;) their nature as they are born again, becomes like that of God. They are made like God; and this resemblance will increase more and more for ever, until in a much higher sense than can be true in this world, they may be said to have become "partakers of the divine nature." Let us remark, then,

(a.) that *man* only, of all the dwellers on the earth, is capable of rising to this condition. The nature of all the other orders of creatures here below is incapable of any such transformation that it can be said that they become "partakers of the divine nature."

(b.) It is impossible now to estimate the degree of approximation to which man may yet rise towards God, or the exalted sense in which the term may yet be applicable to him; but the prospect before the believer in this respect is most glorious. Two or three circumstances may be referred to here as mere *hints* of what we may yet be:

(1.) Let any one reflect on the amazing advances made by himself since the period of infancy. But a few, very few years ago, he knew *nothing*. He was in his cradle, a poor, helpless infant. He knew not the use of eyes, or ears, or hands, or feet. He knew not the name or use of anything, not even the name of father or mother, he could neither walk, nor talk, nor creep. He knew not even that a candle would burn him if he put his finger there. He knew not how to grasp or hold a rattle, or what was its sound, or whence that sound or any other sound came. Let him think what he is at twenty, or forty, in comparison with this; and then, if his improvement in every similar number of years hereafter *should* be equal to this, who can tell the height to which he will rise?

(2.) We are here limited in our powers of learning about God or his works. We become acquainted with him *through* his works—by means of *the senses*. But by the appointment of this method of becoming acquainted with the external world, the design seems to have been to accomplish a double work quite contradictory —one to help us, and the other to hinder us. One is to give us the means of communicating with the external world—by the sight, the hearing, the smell, the touch, the taste; the other is to shut us *out* from the external world, except by these. The body is a *casement*, an enclosure, a prison in which the soul is incarcerated, from which we can *look out* on the universe only through these organs. But suppose, as may be the case in a future state, there shall be no such enclosure, and that the whole soul may look directly on the works of God—on spiritual existences, on God himself—who can then calculate the height to which man may attain in becoming a "partaker of the divine nature?"

(3.) We shall have an *eternity* before us to grow in knowledge, and in holiness, and in conformity to God. Here, we attempt to climb the hill of knowledge, and having gone a few steps—while the top is still lost in the clouds—we lie down and die. We look at a few things; become acquainted with a few elementary principles; make a little progress in virtue, and then all our studies and efforts are suspended, and "we fly away." In the future world we shall have an *eternity* before us to make progress in knowledge, and virtue, and holiness, uninterrupted; and who can tell in what exalted sense it may yet be true that we shall be "partakers of the divine nature," or what attainments we may yet make?

Having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. The world is full of corruption. It is the design of the Christian plan of redemption to deliver us from that, and to make us holy; and the means by which we are to be made like God, is by rescuing us from its dominion.

{*} "Whereby" "By which" {a} "precious promises" 2Co 7:1 {b} "partakers" Heb 12:10 {c} "escaped" 2Pe 2:18,20 {+} "lust" "evil desire"

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And beside this*. *kai auto touto*. Something here is necessary to be understood in order to complete the sense. The reference is to 2Pe 1:3; and the connexion is, "since (2Pe 1:3) God has given us these exalted privileges and hopes, *in respect to this*, (*kata* or *dia* being understood,) or as a consequence fairly flowing from this, we ought to give all diligence that we may make good use of these advantages, and secure as high attainments as we possibly can. We should add one virtue to another, that we may reach the highest possible elevation in holiness."

Giving all diligence. Greek, "Bringing in all zeal or effort." The meaning is, that we ought to make this a distinct and definite object, and to apply ourselves to it as a thing to be accomplished.

Add to your faith virtue. It is not meant in this verse and the following that we are to endeavour particularly to add these things one to another *in the order* in which they are specified, or that we are to seek first to have faith, and then to add to that virtue, and then to add knowledge to virtue rather than to faith, etc. The *order* in which this is to be done, the relation which one of these things may have to another, is not the point aimed at; nor are we to suppose that any other order of the words would not have answered the purpose of the apostle as well, or that any one of the virtues specified would not sustain as direct a relation to any other, as the one which he has specified. The design of the apostle is to say, in an emphatic manner, that we are to strive to possess and exhibit all these virtues; in other words, we are not to content ourselves with a single grace, but are to cultivate all the virtues, and to endeavour to make our piety complete in all the relations which we sustain. The essential idea in the passage before us seems to be, that in our religion we are not to be satisfied with one virtue, or one class of virtues, but that there is to be

(1.) a diligent CULTIVATION of our virtues, since the graces of religion are as susceptible of cultivation as any other virtues;

(2.) that there is to be PROGRESS made from one virtue to another, seeking to reach the highest possible point in our religion; and,

(3.) that there is to be an ACCUMULATION of virtues and graces-or we are not to be satisfied with one class, or with the attainments which we can make in one class. We are to endeavour to *add on* one after another until we have become possessed of all. Faith, perhaps, is mentioned first, because that is the foundation of all Christian virtues; and the other virtues are required to be added to that, because, from the place which faith occupies in the plan of justification, many might be in danger of supposing that if they had that they had all that was necessary. Comp. Jas 2:14, seq. In the Greek word rendered "*add*," (*epicorhghsate*,) there is an allusion to a *chorus-leader* among the Greeks, and the sense is well expressed by Doddridge: "Be careful to accompany that belief with all the lovely train of attendant graces." Or, in other words, "let faith lead on as at the head of the choir or the graces, and let all the others follow in their order." The word here rendered *virtue* is the same which is used in 2Pe 1:3; and there is included in it, probably, the same general idea which was noticed there. All the things which the apostle specifies, unless *knowledge* be an exception, are *virtues* in the sense in which that word is commonly used; and it can hardly be supposed that the apostle here meant to use a *general* term which would include all of the others. The probability is, therefore, that by the word here he has reference to the common meaning of the Greek word, as referring to manliness, courage, rigour, energy; and the sense is, that he wished them to evince whatever firmness or courage might be necessary in maintaining the principles of their religion, and in enduring the trials to which their faith might be subjected. True *virtue* is not a tame and

passive thing. It requires great energy and boldness, for its very essence is firmness, manliness, and independence.

And to virtue knowledge. The knowledge of God and of the way of salvation through the Redeemer, 2Pe 2:3. Comp. 2Pe 3:8. It is the duty of every Christian to make the highest possible attainments in *knowledge*.

{*} "this" "And to this end" {a} "virtue" Php 4:8 {b} "knowledge" Php 1:9

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *And to knowledge temperance*. On the meaning of the word *temperance*, **See Barnes** "Ac 24:25, and **See Barnes "1Co 9:25"**.

The word here refers to the mastery over all our evil inclinations and appetites. We are to allow none of them to obtain control over us. **See Barnes "1Co 6:12"**.

This would include, of course, abstinence from intoxicating drinks; but it would also embrace all evil passions and propensities. Everything is to be confined within proper limits, and to no propensity of our nature are we to give indulgence beyond the limits which the law of God allows.

And to temperance patience. **See Barnes "Jas 1:4"**.

And to patience godliness. True piety.

See Barnes "1Pe 1:3".

See Barnes "1Ti 2:2"; **See Barnes "1Ti 3:16"**; **See Barnes** "1Ti 4:7, **See Barnes "1Ti 4:8"**; **See Barnes** "1Ti 6:3, **See Barnes** "1Ti 6:5, **See Barnes "1Ti 6:6"**

See Barnes "1Ti 6:11".

{c} "temperance" 1Co 9:25 {d} "patience" Jas 1:4 {e} "godliness" 1Ti 4:7

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *And to godliness brotherly kindness*. Love to Christians as such. **See Barnes "Joh 13:34"**; **See Barnes** "Heb 13:1".

And to brotherly kindness charity. Love to all mankind. There is to be a peculiar affection for Christians as of the same family; there is to be a true and warm love, however, for all the race. **See Barnes** "1Co 13:1, seq.

{f} "kindness" Joh 13:34,35 {g} "brotherly kindness" 1Co 13:1-5 {+} "charity" "Love"

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *For if these things be in you, and abound*. If they are in you in rich abundance; if you are eminent for these things.

They make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful. They will show that you are not barren or unfruitful. The word rendered *barren*, is, in the margin, *idle*. The word *idle* more accurately expresses the sense of the original. The meaning is, that if they evinced these things, it would show

(1.) that they were diligent in cultivating the Christian graces, and

(2.) that it was not a vain thing to attempt to grow in knowledge and virtue. Their efforts would be followed by such happy results as to be an encouragement to exertion. In nothing is there, in fact, more encouragement than in the attempt to become eminent in piety. On no other efforts does God smile more propitiously that on the attempt to secure the salvation of the soul and to do good. A small part of the exertions which men put forth to become rich, or learned, or celebrated for oratory or heroism, would secure the salvation of the soul. In the former, also, men often fail; in the latter, never.

{1} "barren" "idle" {h} "unfruitful" Joh 15:2-6

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *But he that lacketh these things is blind*. He has no clear views of the nature and the requirements of religion.

And cannot see afar off. The word used here, which does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament, (*muwpazw*,) means to shut the eyes; i.e., to contract the eyelids, to blink, to twinkle, as one who cannot see clearly, and hence to be *near-sighted*. The meaning here is, that he is like one who has an indistinct vision; one who can see only the objects that are near him, but who has no correct apprehension of objects that are more remote. He sees but a little way into the true nature and design of the gospel, he does not take those large and clear views which would enable him to comprehend the whole system at a glance.

And hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. He does not remember the obligation which grows out of the fact that a system has been devised to purify the heart, and that he has been so far brought under the power of that system as to have his sins forgiven. If he had any just view of that, he would see that he was under obligation to make as high attainments as possible, and to cultivate to the utmost extent the Christian graces.

{++} "lacketh" "hath not" {&} "can not see afar off" "And short-sighted" {|} "purged" "cleansed"

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence*. 2Pe 1:5. "In view of these things, give the greater diligence to secure your salvation." The considerations on which Peter based this appeal seem to have been the fact that such promises are made to us, and such hopes held out before us; the degree of uncertainty thrown over the whole matter of our personal salvation by low attainments in the divine life, and the dreadful condemnation which will ensue if in the end it shall be found that we are destitute of all real piety. The general thought is, that religion is of sufficient importance

to claim our highest diligence, and to arouse us to the most earnest efforts to obtain the assurance of salvation.

To make your calling and election sure. On the meaning of the word *calling*, **See Barnes "Eph 4:1"**.

On the meaning of the word *election*, **See Barnes "Ro 9:11"**; **See Barnes** "1Th 1:4"; Comp. **See Barnes "Eph 1:5"**.

The word rendered *election* here, (*eklogh*) occurs only in this place and in Ac 9:15 Ro 9:11; Ro 11:5 "

Ro 11:7,28; 1Th 1:4; though corresponding words from the same root denoting *the elect, to elect, to choose*, frequently occur. The word here used means *election*, referring to the act of God, by which those who are saved are chosen to eternal life. As the word *calling* must refer to the act of God, so the word *election* must; for it is God who both calls and chooses those who shall be saved. The word in the Scriptures usually refers to the actual *choosing* of those who shall be saved; that is, referring to the time when they, in fact, *become* the children of God, rather than to the purpose of God that it shall be done; but still there must have been an eternal purpose, for God makes no choice which he did not always intend to make. The word *sure*, means firm, steadfast, secure, (*bebaian*). Here the reference must be to *themselves*; that is, they were so to act as to make it certain to themselves that they had been chosen, and were truly called into the kingdom of God. It cannot refer to God, for no act of theirs could make it more certain on his part, if they had been actually chosen to eternal life. Still, God everywhere treats men as moral agents; and what may be absolutely certain in his mind from the mere purpose that it shall be so, is to be made certain to us only by evidence, and in the free exercise of our own powers. The meaning here is, that they were to obtain such evidences of personal piety as to put the question whether they were *called and chosen*, so far as their own minds were concerned, to rest; or so as to have undoubted evidence on this point. The Syriac, the Vulgate, and some Greek manuscripts, insert here the expression "*by* your good works;" that is, they were to make their calling sure by their good works, or by holy living. This clause, as Calvin remarks, is not authorized by the best authority, but it does not materially affect the sense. It was undoubtedly by their "good works" in the sense of holy living, or of lives consecrated to the service of God, that they were to obtain the evidence that they were true Christians; that is, that they had been really called into the kingdom of God, for there is nothing else on which we can depend for such evidence. God has given no assurance to us by name that he intends to save us. We can rely on no voice, or vision, or new revelation, to prove that it is so. No internal feeling of itself, no raptures, no animal excitement, no confident persuasion in our own minds that we are elected, can be proof in the case; and the only certain *evidence* on which we can rely is that which is found in a life of sincere piety. In view of the important statement of Peter in this verse, then, we may remark,

(1.) that he believed in the doctrine of election, for he uses language which obviously implies this, or such as they are accustomed to use who believe the doctrine.

(2.) The fact that God has chosen those who shall be saved, does not make our own efforts unnecessary to make that salvation sure to us. It can be made sure to our own minds only by our own exertions; by obtaining evidence that we are in fact the children of God. There can be no evidence that salvation will be ours, unless there is a holy life; that is, unless there is true religion. Whatever may be the secret purpose of God in regard to us, the only evidence that we have that

we shall be saved is to be found in the fact that we are sincere Christians, and are honestly endeavouring to do his will.

(3.) It is possible to make our calling and election sure; that is, to have such evidence on the subject that the mind shall be calm, and that there will be no danger of deception. If we can determine the point that we are in fact true Christians, that settles the matter—for then the unfailing promise of God meets us that we shall be saved. In making our salvation sure to our own minds, if we are *in fact* true Christians, we have not to go into an argument to prove that we have sufficient strength to resist temptation, or that we shall be able in any way to keep ourselves. All that matter is settled by the promise of God, that if we are Christians we shall be kept by him to salvation. The only question that is to be settled is, whether we are in fact true Christians, and all beyond that may be regarded as determined immutably. But assuredly it is possible for a man to determine the question whether he is or is not a true Christian.

(4.) If it *can* be done, it *should* be. Nothing is more important for us to do than this; and to this great inquiry we should apply our minds with unfaltering diligence, until by the grace of God we can say that there are no lingering doubts in regard to our final salvation.

For if ye do these things. The things referred to in the previous verses. If you use all diligence to make as high attainments as possible in piety, and if you practise the virtues demanded by religion, 2Pe 1:5-7.

Ye shall never fall. You shall never fall into perdition. That is, you shall certainly be saved.

{k} "diligence" 2Pe 3:17 {l} "for if" 1Jo 3:19 Re 22:14 {&} "diligence" "endeavour"

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *For so an entrance*. In this manner you shall be admitted into the kingdom of God.

Shall be ministered unto you. The same Greek word is here used which occurs in 2Pe 1:5, and which is there rendered *add*. **See Barnes "2Pe 1:5"**.

There was not improbably in the mind of the apostle a recollection of that word; and the sense may be, that "if they would lead on the virtues and graces referred to in their beautiful order, those graces would attend them in a radiant train to the mansions of immortal glory and blessedness." See Doddridge *in loc*.

Abundantly. Gr., *richly*. That is, the most ample entrance would be furnished; there would be no doubt about their admission there. The gates of glory would be thrown wide open, and they, adorned with all the bright train of graces, would be admitted there.

Into the everlasting kingdom, etc. Heaven. It is here called everlasting, not because the Lord Jesus shall preside over it as the Mediator, (comp. **See Barnes** "1Co 14:24,) but because, in the form which shall be established when "he shall have given it up to the Father," it will endure for ever. The empire of God which the Redeemer shall set up over the souls of his people shall endure to all eternity. The object of the plan of redemption was to secure their allegiance to God, and that will never terminate.

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Wherefore I will not be negligent*. That is, in view of the importance of these things.

To put you always in remembrance. To give you the means of having them always in remembrance; to wit, by his writings.

¶ *Though ye know them*. It was of importance for Peter, as it is for ministers of the gospel now, to bring known truths to remembrance. Men are liable to forget them, and they do not exert the influence over them which they ought. It is the office of the ministry not only to impart to a people truths which they did not know before, but a large part of their work is to bring to recollection well-known truths, and to seek that they may exert a proper influence on the life. Amidst the cares, the business, the amusements, and the temptations of the world, even true Christians are prone to forget them; and the ministers of the gospel render them an essential service, even if they should do nothing more than remind them of truths which are well understood, and which they have known before. A pastor, in order to be useful, need not always aim at originality, or deem it necessary always to present truths which have never been heard of before. He renders an essential service to mankind who *reminds* them of what they know but are prone to forget, and who endeavours to impress plain and familiar truths on the heart and conscience, for these truths are most important for man.

And be established in the present truth. That is, the truth which is with you, or which you Have received.—*Rob. Lex*. on the word *pareimi*. The apostle did not doubt that they were now confirmed in the truth as far as it had been made known to them, but he felt that amidst their trials, and especially as they were liable to be drawn away by false teachers, there was need of reminding them of the grounds on which the truths which they had embraced rested, and of adding his own testimony to confirm their Divine origin. Though we may be very firm in our belief of the truth, yet there is a propriety that the grounds of our faith should be stated to us frequently, that they may be always in our remembrance. The mere fact that at present we are firm in the belief of the truth, is no certain evidence that we shall always continue to be; nor because we are thus firm should we deem it improper for our religious teachers to state the grounds on which our faith rests, or to guard us against the arts of those who would attempt to subvert our faith.

{*} "remembrance" "To remind you"

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Yea, I think it meet*. I think it becomes me as an apostle. It is my appropriate duty; a duty which is felt the more as the close of life draws near.

As long as I am in this tabernacle. As long as I live; as long as I am in the body. The body is called a tabernacle, or tent, as that in which the soul resides for a little time. **See Barnes "2Co 5:1"**.

To stir you up, by putting you in remembrance. To excite or arouse you to a diligent performance of your duties; to keep up in your minds a lively sense of Divine things. Religion becomes more important to a man's mind always as he draws near the close of life, and feels that he is soon to enter the eternal world.

{+} "meet" "right" {a} "stir you up" 2Pe 3:1 {++} "remembrance" "reminding you"

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle*. That I must die. This he knew, probably, because he was growing old, and was reaching the outer period of human life. It does not appear that he had any express revelation on the point.

Even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. **See Barnes "Joh 21:18,19".**

This does not mean that he had any new revelation on the subject, showing him that he was soon to die, as many of the ancients supposed; but the idea is, that the time drew near when he was to die in the manner in which the Saviour had told him that he would. He had said (Joh 21:18) that this would occur when he should be "old," and as he was now becoming old, he felt that the predicted event was drawing near. Many years had now elapsed since this remarkable prophecy was uttered. It would seem that Peter had never doubted the truth of it, and during all that time he had had before him the distinct assurance that he must die by violence; by having "his hands stretched forth;" and by being conveyed by force to some place of death to which he would not of himself go, (Joh 21:18;) but, though the prospect of such a death must have been painful, he never turned away from it; never sought to abandon his Master's cause; and never doubted that it would be so. This is one of the few instances that have occurred in the world, where a man knew distinctly, long beforehand, what would be the manner of his own death, and where he could have it constantly in his eye. *We* cannot foresee this in regard to ourselves, but we may learn to feel that death is not far distant, and may accustom ourselves to think upon it in whatever manner it may come upon us, as Peter did, and endeavour to prepare for it. Peter would naturally seek to prepare himself, for death in the particular form in which he knew it would occur to him; we should prepare for it in whatever way it may occur to us. The subject of crucifixion would be one of peculiar interest to him; to us death itself should be the subject of peculiar interest—the manner is to be left to God. Whatever may be the signs of its approach, whether sickness or grey hairs, we should meditate much upon an event so solemn to us; and as these indications thicken we should be more diligent, as Peter was, in doing the work that God has given us to do. Our days, like the fabled Sybil's leaven, become more valuable as they are diminished in number; and as the "inevitable hour" draws nearer to us, we should labour more diligently in our Master's cause, gird our loins more closely, and trim our lamps. Peter thought of the cross, for it was such a death that he was led to anticipate. Let us think of the bed of languishing on which we may die, or of the blow that may strike us suddenly down in the midst of our way, calling us without a moment's warning into the presence of our Judge.

{b} "shewed me" Joh 21:18,19

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Moreover, I will endeavour*. I will leave such a permanent record of my views on these subjects that you may not forget them. He meant not only to declare his sentiments orally, but to record them that they might be perused when he was dead. He had such a firm conviction of the truth and value of the sentiments which he held, that he would use all the means in his power that the church and the world should not forget them.

After my decease. My *exode*, *exodon*, my journey out; my departure; my exit from life. This is not the usual word to denote *death*, but is rather a word denoting that he was going on a journey *out* of this world, he did not expect to cease to be, but he expected to go on his travels to a distant abode. This idea runs through all this beautiful description of the feelings of Peter as he contemplated death. Hence he speaks of taking down the "tabernacle" or *tent*, the temporary abode of the soul, that his spirit might be removed to another place, (1Pe 1:13;) and hence he speaks of an *exode* from the present life—a journey to another world. This is the true notion of death; and if so, two things follow from it:

(1.) we should make preparation for it, as we do for a journey, and the more in proportion to the distance that we are to travel, and the time that we are to be absent; and

(2.) when the preparation is made, we should not be unwilling to enter on the journey, as we are not now when we are prepared to leave our homes to visit some remote part of our own country, or a distant land.

To have these things always in remembrance. By his writings. We may learn from this,

(1.) that when a Christian grows old, and draws near to death, his sense of the value of Divine truth by no means diminishes. As he approaches the eternal world; as from its borders he surveys the past, and looks on to what is to come; as he remembers what benefit the truths of religion have conferred on him in life, and sees what a miserable being he would now be if he had no such hope as the gospel inspires; as he looks on the whole influence of those truths on his family and friends, on his country and the world, their value rises before him with a magnitude which he never saw before, and he desires most earnestly that they should be seen and embraced by all. A man on the borders of eternity is likely to have a very deep sense of the value of the Christian religion and is he not then in favourable circumstances to estimate this matter aright? Let any one place himself in imagination in the situation of one who is on the borders of the eternal world, as all in fact soon will be, and can he have any doubt about the value of religious truth?

(2.) We may learn from what Peter says here, that it is the *duty* of those who are drawing near to the eternal world, and who are the friends of religion, to do all they can that the truths of Christianity "may be always had in remembrance." Every man's experience of the value of religion, and the results of his examination and observation, should be regarded as the property of the world, and should not be lost. As he is about to die, he should seek, by all the means in his power, that those truths should be perpetuated and propagated. This duty may be discharged by some in counsels offered to the young, as they are about to enter on life giving them the results of their own experience, observation, and reflections on the subject of religion; by some, by an example consistent that it cannot be soon forgotten—a legacy to friends and to the world of much more value than accumulated silver and gold; by some, by solemn warnings or exhortations on the bed of death; in other cases, by a recorded experience of the conviction and value of religion, and a written defence of its truth, and illustration of its nature—for every man who can write a good book owes it to the church and the world to do it; by others, in leaving the means of publishing and spreading good books in the world. He does a good service to his own age, and to future ages, who records the results of his observations and his reflections in favour of the truth in a book that shall be readable; and though the book itself may be ultimately forgotten, it may have saved some persons from ruin, and may have accomplished its part in keeping up the knowledge of the truth in his own generation. Peter, as a minister of the gospel, felt himself bound to do this, and no men have so good an opportunity of doing this now as ministers of the gospel; no men have more ready access to the press; no men

have so much certainty that they will have the public attention, if they will write anything worth reading; no men, commonly, in a community are better educated, or are more accustomed to write; no men, by their profession, seem to be so much called to address their fellow-men in any way in favour of the truth; and it is matter of great marvel that men who have such opportunities, and who seem especially called to the work, do not do more of this kind of service in the cause of religion. Themselves soon to die, how can they help desiring that they may leave something that shall bear an honourable, though humble, testimony to truths which they so much prize, and which they are appointed to defend? A tract may live long after the author is in the grave; and who can calculate the results which have followed the efforts of Baxter and Edwards to keep up in the world the remembrance of the truths which they deemed of so much value? This little epistle of Peter has shed light on the path of men now for eighteen hundred years, and will continue to do it until the second coming of the Saviour.

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *For we have not followed cunningly devised fables*. That is, fictions or stories invented by artful men, and resting on no solid foundation. The doctrines which they held about the coming of the Saviour were not, like many of the opinions of the Greeks, defended by weak and sophistical reasoning, but were based on solid evidence —evidence furnished by the personal observation of competent witnesses. It is true of the gospel, in general, that it is not founded on cunningly devised fables; but the particular point referred to here is the promised coming of the Saviour. The evidence of that fact Peter proposes now to adduce.

When we made known unto you. Probably Peter here refers particularly to statements respecting the coming of the Saviour in his first epistle, (1Pe 1:5,13, 4:13;) but this was a common topic in the preaching, and in the epistles, of the apostles. It may, therefore, have referred to statements made to them at some time in his preaching, as well as to what he said in his former epistle. The apostles laid great stress on the second coming of the Saviour, and often dwelt upon it. Comp. **See Barnes "1Th 4:16"**; **See Barnes** "Ac 1:11".

The power and coming. These two words refer to the same thing; and the meaning is, his *powerful coming*, or his *coming in power*. The advent of the Saviour is commonly represented as connected with the exhibition of power. Mt 24:30. "Coming in the clouds of heaven, with power." **See Barnes "Mt 24:30"**.

Comp. Lu 22:69 Mr 3:9. The *power* evinced will be by raising the dead; summoning the world to judgment; determining the destiny of men, etc. When the coming of the Saviour, therefore, was referred to by the apostles in their preaching, it was probably always in connexion with the declaration that it would be accompanied by exhibitions of great power and glory—as it undoubtedly will be. The fact that the Lord Jesus would thus return, it is clear, had been denied by some among those to whom this epistle was addressed, and it was important to state the evidence on which it was to be believed. The *grounds* on which they denied it (2Pe 3:4) were, that there were no appearances of his approach; that the promise had not been fulfilled; that all things continued as they had been; and that the affairs of the world moved on as they always had done. To meet and counteract this error—an error which so prevailed that many were in danger of "falling from their

own steadfastness," (2Pe 3:17,)—Peter states the proof on which he believed in the coming of the Saviour.

But were eye-witnesses Of his majesty. On the mount of transfiguration, Mt 17:1-5, **See Barnes** "Mt 17:1, seq. That transfiguration was witnessed only by Peter, James, and John. But it may be asked how the facts there witnessed demonstrate the point under consideration—that the Lord Jesus will come with power? To this it may be replied,

(1.) that these apostles had there such a view of the Saviour in his glory as to convince them beyond doubt that he was the Messiah.

(2.) That there was a direct attestation given to that fact by a voice from heaven, declaring that he was the beloved Son of God.

(3.) That that transfiguration was understood to have an important reference to the coming of the Saviour in his kingdom and his glory, and was designed to be a representation of the manner in which he would then appear. This is referred to distinctly by each one of the three evangelists who have mentioned the transfiguration. Mt 16:28, "There be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom;" Mr 9:1,2; Lu 9:27,28.

The transfiguration which occurred soon after these words were spoken was designed to show them what he would be in his glory, and to furnish to them a demonstration which they could never forget, that he would yet set up his kingdom in the world.

(4.) They had in fact such a view of him as he would be in his kingdom, that they could entertain no doubt on the point; and the fact, as it impressed their own minds, they made known to others. The evidence as it lay in Peter's mind was, that that transfiguration was designed to furnish proof to them that the Messiah would certainly appear in glory, and to give them a view of him as coming to reign which would never fade from their memory. As that had not yet been accomplished, he maintained that the evidence was clear that it must occur at some future time. As the transfiguration was *with reference* to his coming in his kingdom, it was proper for Peter to use it with that reference, or as bearing on that point.

{a} "fables" 2Co 4:2 {b} "eye-witnesses" Mt 17:1-5 Joh 1:14

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *For he received from God the Father honour and glory*, He was honoured by God in being thus addressed.

When there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory. The magnificent splendour; the bright cloud which overshadowed them, Mt 17:5.

This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. **See Barnes "Mt 17:5"**; **See Barnes** "Mt 3:17, This demonstrated that he was the Messiah. Those who heard that voice could not doubt this; they never did afterwards doubt.

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *And this voice which came from heaven we heard*. To wit, Peter, and James, and John.

When we were with him in the holy mount. Called *holy* on account of the extraordinary manifestation of the Redeemer's glory there. It is not certainly known what mountain this was, but it has commonly been supposed to be Mount Tabor. **See Barnes "Mt 17:1"**.

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *We have also a more sure word of prophecy*. That is a prophecy pertaining to the coming of the Lord Jesus; for that is the point under discussion. There has been considerable diversity of opinion in regard to the meaning of this passage. Some have supposed that the apostle, when he says "a *more sure word*," did not intend to make any comparison between the miracle of the transfiguration and prophecy, but that he meant to say merely that the word of prophecy was very sure, and could certainly be relied on. Others have supposed that the meaning is, that the prophecies which foretold his coming into the world having been confirmed by the fact of his advent, are rendered more sure and undoubted than when they were uttered, and may now be confidently appealed to. So Rosenmuller, Benson, Macknight, Clarke, Wetstein, and Grotius. Luther renders it, "we have a firm prophetic word;" omitting the comparison. A literal translation of the passage would be, "and we have the prophetic word more firm." If a *comparison* is intended, it may be either that the prophecy was more sure than the *fables* referred to in 2Pe 1:16; or than the miracle of the transfiguration; or than the word which was heard in the holy mount; or than the prophecies even in the time when they were first spoken. If such a comparison was designed, the most obvious of these interpretations would be, that the prophecy was more certain proof than was furnished in the mount of transfiguration. But it seems probable that no *comparison* was intended, and that the thing on which Peter intended to fix the eye was not that the prophecy was a better evidence respecting the advent of the Messiah than other evidences, but that it was a strong proof which demanded their particular attention, as being of a firm and decided character. There can be no doubt that the apostle refers hereto what is contained in the Old Testament; for, in 2Pe 1:21, he speaks of the prophecy as that which was spoken "in old time, by men that were moved by the Holy Ghost." The *point* to which the prophecies related, and to which Peter referred, was the great doctrine respecting the coming of the Messiah, embracing perhaps all that pertained to his work, or all that he designed to do by his advent. They had had one illustrious proof respecting his advent as a glorious Saviour by his transfiguration on the mount; and the apostle here says that the prophecies abounded with truths on these points, and that they ought to give earnest heed to the disclosures which they made, and to compare them diligently with facts as they occurred, that they might be confirmed more and more in the truth. If, however, as the more obvious sense of this passage *seems* to be, and as many suppose to be the correct interpretation, (see Doddridge, *in loc*., and Professor Stuart, on the canon of the Old Test., p. 329,) it means that the prophecy was more sure, more steadfast, more to be depended on than even what the three disciples had seen and heard in the mount of transfiguration, this may be regarded as true in the following respects:

(1.) The prophecies are *numerous*, and by their number they furnish a stronger proof than could be afforded by a single manifestation, however clear and glorious.

(2.) They were *recorded*, and might be the subject of careful comparison with the events as they occurred.

(3.) They were written long beforehand, and it could not be urged that the testimony which the prophets bore was owing to any illusion on their minds, or to any agreement among the different writers to impose on the world. Though Peter regarded the testimony which he and James and John bore to the glory of the Saviour, from what they saw on the holy mount, as strong and clear confirmation that he was the Son of God, yet he could not but be aware that it might be suggested by a caviller that they might have *agreed* to impose on others, or that they might have been dazzled and deceived by some natural phenomenon occurring there. Comp. Kuinoel on Mt 17:1, seq.

(4.) Even supposing that there was a miracle in the case, the evidence of the prophecies, embracing many points in the same general subject, and extending through a long series of years, would be more satisfactory than any single miracle whatever. See Doddridge, *in loc*. The general meaning is, that the fact that he had come as the Messiah was disclosed in the mount by such a manifestation of his glory, and of what he would be, that they who saw it could not doubt it; the same thing the apostle says was more fully shown also in the prophecies, and these prophecies demanded their close and prolonged attention.

Whereunto ye do well that ye take heed. They are worthy of your study, of your close and careful investigation. There is perhaps no study more worthy of the attention of Christians than that of the prophecies.

As unto a light that shineth in a dark place. That is, the prophecies resemble a candle, lamp, or torch, in a dark room, or in an obscure road at night. They make objects distinct which were before unseen; they enable us to behold many things which would be otherwise invisible. The object of the apostle in this representation seems to have been, to state that the prophecies do not give a *perfect* light, or that they do not remove *all* obscurity, but that they shed some light on objects which would otherwise be *entirely* dark, and that the light which they furnished was so valuable that we ought by all means to endeavour to avail ourselves of it. Until the day shall dawn, and we shall see objects by the clear light of the sun, they are to be our guide. A lamp is of great value in a dark night; though it may not disclose objects so clearly as the light of the sun. But it may be a safe and sure guide; and a man who has to travel in dark and dangerous places, does "well" to "take heed" to his lamp.

Until the day dawn. Until you have the clearer light which shall result from the dawning of the day. The reference here is to the morning light as compared with a lamp; and the meaning is, that we should attend to the light furnished by the prophecies until the truth shall be rendered more distinct by the events as they shall actually be disclosed—until the brighter light which shall be shed on all things by the glory of the second advent of the Saviour, and the clearing up of what is now obscure in the splendours of the heavenly world. The point of comparison is between the necessary obscurity of prophecy, and the clearness of events when they actually occur—a difference like that which is observable in the objects around us when seen by the shining of the lamp and by the light of the sun. The apostle directs the mind onward to a period when all shall be clear—to that glorious time when the Saviour shall return to receive his people to himself in that heaven where all shall be light. Comp. Re 21:23-26 22:5. Meantime, we should avail ourselves of all the light which we have, and should apply ourselves diligently to the study of the prophecies of the Old Testament which are still unfulfilled, and of those in the New Testament which direct the mind onward to brighter and more glorious scenes than this world has yet witnessed. In our darkness

they are a cheering lamp to guide our feet, till that illustrious day shall dawn. Comp. **See Barnes "1Co 13:9,10".**

And the day-star. The morning star—the bright star that at certain periods of the year leads on the day, and which is a pledge that the morning is about to dawn. Comp. Re 2:28 22:16.

Arise in your hearts. *On* your hearts; that is, sheds its beams on your hearts. Till you see the indications of that approaching day which all is light. The period referred to here by the approaching day that is to diffuse this light, is when the Saviour shall return in the full revelation of his glory—the splendour of his kingdom. Then all will be clear. Till that time, we should search the prophetic records, and strengthen our faith, and comfort our hearts, the predictions of the future glory of his reign. Whether this refers, as some suppose, to his reign on earth, either personally or by the principles of his religion universally prevailing, or, as others suppose, to the brighter revelations of heaven when he shall come to receive his people to himself, it is equally clear that a brighter time than any that has yet occurred is to dawn on our race, and equally true that we should regard the prophecies, as we do the morning star, as the cheering harbinger of day.

{*} "word" "And we have yet more sure the word" {+} "heed" "To attend" {++} "light" "Lamp" {a} "shineth" Ps 119:105 Pr 6:23

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Knowing this first*. Bearing this steadily in mind as a primary and most important truth.

That no prophecy of the scripture. No prophecy contained in the inspired records. The word scripture here shows that the apostle referred particularly to the prophecies recorded in the Old Testament. The remark which he makes about prophecy is general, though it is designed to bear on a particular class of the prophecies.

Is of any private interpretation. The expression here used (*idiav epilusewv*) has given rise to as great a diversity of interpretation, and to as much discussion, as perhaps any phrase in the New Testament; and to the present time there is no general agreement among expositors as to its meaning. It would be foreign to the design of these Notes, and would be of little utility, to enumerate the different interpretations which have been given of the passage, or to examine them in detail. It will be sufficient to remark, preparatory to endeavouring to ascertain the true sense of the passage, that some have held that it teaches that no prophecy can be interpreted of itself, but can be understood only by comparing it with the event; others, that it teaches that the prophets did not themselves understand what they wrote, but were mere passive Organs under the dictation of the Holy Spirit to communicate to future times what they could not themselves explain; others, that it teaches that "no prophecy is of self-interpretation," (*Horsley*;) others, that it teaches that the prophecies, besides having a literal signification, have also a hidden and mystical sense which cannot be learned from the prophecies themselves, but is to be perceived by a peculiar power of insight imparted by the Holy Ghost, enabling men to understand their recondite mysteries. It would be easy to show that some of these opinions are absurd, and that none of them are sustained by the fair interpretation of the language used, and by the drift of the passage. The more correct interpretation, as it seems to me, is that which supposes that the apostle teaches that the truths which the prophets communicated

were not originated by themselves; were not of their own suggestion or invention; were not their own opinions, but were of higher origin, and were imparted by God; and according to this the passage may be explained, "knowing this as a point of first importance when you approach the prophecies, or always bearing this in mind, that it is a great principle in regard to the prophets, that what they communicated *was not of their own disclosure*; that is, was not revealed or originated by them." That this is the correct interpretation will be apparent from the following considerations:

(1.) It accords with the *design* of the apostle, which is to produce an impressive sense of the importance and value of the prophecies, and to lead those to whom he wrote to study them with diligence. This could be secured in no way so well as by assuring them that the writings which he wished them to study did not contain truths originated by the human mind, but that they were of higher origin.

(2.) This interpretation accords with what is said in the following verse, and is the only one of all those proposed that is consistent with that, or in connexion with which that verse will have any force. In that verse (2Pe 1:21) a reason is given for what is said here: "For (*gar*) the prophecy came not in old time *by the will of man*, etc. But this can be a good reason for what is said here only on the supposition that the apostle meant to say that what they communicated was not originated by themselves; that it was of a higher than human origin; that the prophets spake "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." This fact was a good reason why they should show profound respect for the prophecies, and study them with attention. But how could the fact that *they were moved by the Holy Ghost* be a reason for studying them, if the meaning here is that the prophets could not understand their own language, or that the prophecy could be understood only by the event, or that the prophecy had a double meaning, etc.? If the prophecies were of Divine origin, then *that* was a good reason why they should be approached with reverence, and should be profoundly studied.

(3.) This interpretation accords as well, to say the least, with the fair meaning of the language employed, as either of the other opinions proposed. The word rendered *interpretation* (*epilusiv*) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It properly means *solution*, (Rob. Lex.,) *disclosure*, (Prof. Stuart on the Old Testament, p. 328,) *making free*, (Passow,) with the notion that what is thus released or loosed was before bound, entangled, obscure. The verb from which this word is derived (*epiluw*) means, *to let loose upon*, as dogs upon a hare, (Xen. Mem. 7, 8; lb. 9, 10 ;) to loose or open letters; to loosen a band; to loose or disclose a riddle or a dark saying, and then to enlighten, illustrate, etc.—*Passow*. It is twice used in the New Testament. Mr 4:34, "He *expounded* all things to his disciples"; Ac 19:39, "It shall be *determined* in a lawful assembly." The verb would be applicable to loosing anything which is bound or confined, and thence to the explanation of a mysterious doctrine or a parable, or to a disclosure of what was before unknown. The word, according to this, in the place before us, would mean the disclosure of what was before bound, or retained, or unknown; either what had never been communicated at all, or what had been communicated obscurely; and the idea is, "no prophecy recorded in the Scripture is of, or comes from, any exposition or disclosure of the will and purposes of God by the prophets themselves." It is not a thing of their own, or a private matter originating with themselves, but it is to be traced to a higher source. If this be the true interpretation, then it follows that the prophecies are to be regarded as of higher than any human origin; and then, also, it follows that this passage should not be used to prove that the prophets did not understand the nature of their own communications, or that they were mere unconscious and passive instruments in the hand of God to make known his will. Whatever may be the truth on those points, this passage proves nothing in regard to them, any more than the fact

that a minister of religion now declares truth which he did not originate, but which is to be traced to God as its author, proves that he does not understand what he himself says. It follows, also, that this passage cannot be adduced by the Papists to prove that the people at large should not have free access to the word of God, and should not be allowed to interpret it for themselves. It makes no affirmation on that point, and does not even contain any *principle* of which such a use can be made; for,

(1.) whatever it means, it is confined to *prophecy*; it does not embrace the whole Bible.

(2.) Whatever it means, it merely states a *fact*; it does not enjoin a *duty*. It states, as a fact, that there was something about the prophecies which was not of private solution, but it does not state that it is the duty of the church to prevent any private explanation or opinion even of the prophecies.

(3.) It says nothing about the church as empowered to give a public or authorized interpretation of the prophecies. There is not a hint, or an intimation of any kind, that the church is intrusted with any such power whatever. There never was any greater perversion of a passage of Scripture than to suppose that this teaches that any class of men is not to have free access to the Bible. The effect of the passage, properly interpreted, should be to lead us to study the Bible with profound reverence, as having a higher than any human origin, not to turn away from it as if it were unintelligible, nor to lead us to suppose that it can be interpreted only by one class of men. The fact that it discloses truths which the human mind could not of itself have originated, is a good reason for studying it with diligence and with prayer—not for supposing that it is unlawful for us to attempt to understand it; a good reason for reverence and veneration for it—not for sanctified neglect.

{*} "interpretation" "Is from a man's own invention"

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 1 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *For the prophecy came not in old time*. Marg., "or, *at any*." The Greek word (*pote*) will bear either construction. It would be true in either sense, but the reference is particularly to the recorded prophecies in the Old Testament. What was true of them, however, is true of all prophecy, that it is not by the will of man. The word *prophecy* here is without the article, meaning prophecy in general—all that is prophetic in the Old Testament; or, in a more general sense still, all that the prophets taught, whether relating to future events or not.

By the will of man. It was not of human origin; not discovered by the human mind. The word *will*, here seems to be used in the sense of *prompting or suggestion*; men did not speak by their own suggestion, but as truth was brought to them by God.

But holy men of God. Pious men commissioned by God, or employed by him as his messengers to mankind.

Spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Comp. 2Ti 3:16. The Greek phrase here (*upo pneumatov agiou feromenoi*) means *borne along, moved, influenced* by the Holy Ghost. The idea is, that in what they spake they were *carried along* by an influence from above. They moved in the case only as they were moved; they spake only as the influence of the Holy Ghost was upon them. They were no more self-moved than a vessel at sea is that is impelled by the wind; and as the progress made by the vessel is to be measured by the impulse bearing upon it, so the statements made by the prophets are to be traced to the impulse which bore upon their minds. They were not,

indeed, in all respects like such a vessel, but only in regard to the fact that all they said as prophets was to be traced to the foreign influence that bore upon their minds. There could not be, therefore, a more decided declaration than this in proof that the prophets were inspired. If the authority of Peter is admitted, his positive and explicit assertion settles the question. If this be so, also, then the point with reference to which he makes this observation is abundantly confirmed, that the prophecies demand our earnest attention, and that we should give all the heed to them which we would to a light or lamp when travelling in a dangerous way, and in a dark night. In a still more general sense, the remark here made may also be applied to the whole of the Scriptures. We are in a dark world. We see few things clearly; and all around us, on a thousand questions, there is the obscurity of midnight. By nature there is nothing to cast light on those questions, and we are perplexed, bewildered, embarrassed. The Bible is given to us to shed light on our way. It is the *only* light which we have respecting the future, and though it does not give *all* the information which we might desire in regard to what is to come, yet it gives us sufficient light to guide us to heaven. It teaches us what it is necessary to know about God, about our duty, and about the way of salvation, in order to conduct us safely; and no one who has committed himself to its direction, has been suffered to wander finally away from the paths of salvation. It is, therefore, a duty to attend to the instructions which the Bible imparts, and to commit ourselves to its holy guidance in our journey to a better world: for soon, if we are faithful to its teachings, the light of eternity will dawn upon us, and there, amidst its cloudless splendour, we shall see as we are seen, and know as we are known; then we shall "need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God shall give us light, and we shall reign for ever and ever." Comp. Re 21:22-24 22:5.

{1} "not" "at any" {a} "in old time" Lu 1:70 {b} "moved" 2Ti 3:16 {*} "Ghost" "Spirit"

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 1

CHAPTER II.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

THE general subject of this chapter is stated in the first verse, and it embraces these points:

(1.) that it might be expected that there would be false teachers among Christians, as there were false prophets in ancient times;

(2.) that they would introduce destructive errors, leading many astray; and,

(3.) that they would be certainly punished. The design of the chapter is to illustrate and defence these points.

I. That there would be such false teachers the apostle expressly states in 2Pe 2:1; and incidentally in that verse, and elsewhere in the chapter, he notices some of their characteristics, or some of the doctrines which they would hold.

(a.) They would deny the Lord that bought them, 2Pe 2:1. **See Barnes "2Pe 2:1".**

(b.) They would be influenced by covetousness, and their object in their attempting to seduce others from the faith, and to induce them to become followers of themselves, would be to make money, 2Pe 2:3.

(c.) They would be corrupt, beastly, and licentious in their conduct; and it would be one design of their teaching to show that the indulgence of gross passions was not inconsistent with religion; 2Pe 2:10, "that walk after the flesh, in the lust of uncleanness;" 2Pe 2:12, "as natural brute beasts;" "shall perish in their own corruption;" 2Pe 2:14, "having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin;" 2Pe 2:22, "the dog has returned to his own vomit again."

(d.) They would be proud, arrogant, and self-willed; men who would despise all proper government, and who would be thoroughly "*radical*" in their views; 2Pe 2:10, and despise government; presumptuous are they and self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities;" 2Pe 2:18, "they speak great swelling words of vanity."

(e.) They were persons who had been formerly of corrupt lives, but who had become professing Christians. This is implied in 2Pe 2:20-22. They are spoken of as having "escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;" as "having known the ways of righteousness," but as having turned again to their former corrupt practices and lusts; "it has happened to them according to the true proverb," etc. There were various classes of persons in primitive times, coming under the general appellation of the term *Gnostic*, to whom this description would apply, and it is probable that they had begun to broach their doctrines in the times of the apostles. Among those persons were the Ebionites, Corinthians, Nicolaitanes, etc.

II. These false teachers would obtain followers, and their teachings would be likely to allure many. This is intimated more than once in the chapter: 2Pe 2:2, "and many shall follow their pernicious ways;" 2Pe 2:3, "and through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you;" 2Pe 2:14, "beguiling unstable souls." Comp. 2Pe 2:18.

III. They would certainly be punished. A large part of the chapter is taken up in proving this point, and especially in showing from the examples of others who had erred in a similar manner, that they could not escape destruction. In doing this, the apostle refers to the following facts and illustrations:

(1.) The case of the angels that sinned, and that were cast down to hell, 2Pe 2:4. If God brought such dreadful punishment on those who were once before his throne, wicked men could have no hope of escape.

(2.) The case of the wicked in the time of Noah, who were cut off by the flood, 2Pe 2:5.

(3.) The case of Sodom and Gomorrah, 2Pe 2:6.

(4.) The *character* of the persons referred to was such that they could have no hope of escape.

(a.) They were corrupt, sensual, presumptuous, and selfwilled, and were even worse than the rebel angels had been—men that seemed to be made to be taken and destroyed, 2Pe 2:10-12.

(b.) They were spots and blemishes, sensual and adulterers, emulating the example of Balaam, who was rebuked by even a dumb ass for his iniquity, 2Pe 2:13-16.

(c.) They allured others to sin under the specious promise of liberty, while they were themselves the slaves of debased appetites, and gross and sensual passions, 2Pe 2:17-19. From the entire description in this chapter, it is clear that the persons referred to, though once professors of religion, had become eminently abandoned and corrupt. It may not, indeed, be easy to identify them with any particular sect or class then existing and now known in history, though not a few of the sects in the early Christian church bore a strong resemblance to this description; but there have been

those in every age who have strongly resembled these persons; and this chapter, therefore, possesses great value as containing important warnings against the arts of false teachers, and the danger of being seduced by them from the truth. Compare Introduction to the Epistle of Jude, & 3, 4.

Verse 1. *But there were false prophets also among the people*. In the previous chapter, (2Pe 1:19-21,) Peter had appealed to the prophecies as containing unanswerable proofs of the truth of the Christian religion. He says, however, that he did not mean to say that all who claimed to be prophets were true messengers of God. There were many who pretended to be such, who only led the people astray. It is unnecessary to say, that such men have abounded in all ages where there have been true prophets.

Even as there shall be false teachers among you. The fact that false teachers would arise in the church is often adverted to in the New Testament. Compare Mt 24:5,24; Ac 20:29,30.

Who privily. That is, in a secret manner, or under plausible arts and pretences. They would not at first make an open avowal of their doctrines, but would in fact, while their teachings seemed to be in accordance with truth, covertly maintain opinions which would sap the very foundations of religion. The Greek word here used, and which is rendered "who privily shall bring in," (*pareisagw*,) means properly to *lead in by the side of others*; to lead in along with others. Nothing could better express the usual way in which error is introduced. It is *by the side*, or *along with*, other doctrines which are true; that is, while the mind is turned mainly to other subjects, and is off its guard, gently and silently to lay down some principle, which, being admitted, would lead to the error, or from which the error would follow as a natural consequence. Those who inculcate error rarely do it openly. If they would at once boldly" deny the Lord that bought them," it would be easy to meet them, and the mass of professed Christians would be in no danger of embracing the error. But when principles are laid down which may lead to that; when doubts on remote points are suggested which may involve it; or when a long train of reasoning is pursued which may secretly tend to it; there is much more probability that the mind will be corrupted from the truth.

Damnable heresies. *aireseiv apwleiav*. "Heresies of destruction;" that is, heresies that will be followed by destruction. The Greek word which is rendered *damnable*, is the same which in the close of the verse is rendered *destruction*. It is so rendered also in Mt 7:13 Ro 9:22; Php 3:19 2Pe 3:16— in all of which places it refers to the future loss of the soul. The same word also is rendered *perdition* in Joh 17:12 Php 1:28; 1Ti 6:9 Heb 10:39; 2Pe 3:7 Re 17:8,11

—in all which places it has the same reference. On the meaning of the word rendered "*heresies*,"
See Barnes "Ac 24:14"; See Barnes "1Co 11:19".

The idea of *sect or party* is that which is conveyed by this word, rather than doctrinal errors; but it is evident that in this case the formation of the sect or party, as is the fact in most cases, would be founded on error of doctrine. The thing which these false teachers would attempt would be divisions, alienations, or parties, in the church, but these would be based on the erroneous doctrines which they would promulgate. What would be the particular doctrine in this case is immediately specified, to wit, that they "would deny the Lord that bought them." The idea then is, that these false teachers would form sects or parties in the church, of a destructive or ruinous nature, founded on a denial of the Lord that bought them. Such a formation of sects would be ruinous to piety, to good morals, and to the soul. The authors of these sects, holding the views which they did, and influenced by the motives which they would be, and practising the morals which they would practise, as growing out of their principles, would bring upon themselves swift and certain destruction. It is not possible now to determine to what particular class of errorists the apostle had reference here,

but it is generally supposed that it was to some form of the Gnostic belief. There were many early sects of so-called *heretics* to whom what he here says would be applicable.

Even denying the Lord that bought them. This must mean that they held doctrines which were in fact a denial of the Lord, or the tendency of which would be a denial of the Lord, for it cannot be supposed that, while they professed to be Christians, they would openly and avowedly deny him. To "deny the Lord" may be either to deny his existence, his claims, or his attributes; it is to withhold from him, in our belief and profession, anything which is essential to a proper conception of him. The particular thing, however, which is mentioned here as entering into that self-denial, is something connected with the fact that he had "*bought*" them. It was such a denial of the Lord *as having bought them*, as to be in fact a renunciation of the peculiarity of the Christian religion. There has been much difference of opinion as to the meaning of the word Lord in this place—whether it refers to God the Father, or to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Greek word is *despothv—despotes*. Many expositors have maintained that it refers to the Father, and that when it is said that he had *bought* them, it means in a general sense that he was the Author of the plan of redemption, and had *caused* them to be purchased or redeemed. Michaelis supposes that the Gnostics are referred to as denying the Father by asserting that he was not the Creator of the universe, maintaining that it was created by an inferior being.—Intro, to New Testament, iv. 360. Whitby, Benson, Slade, and many others, maintain that this refers to the Father as having originated the plan by which men are redeemed; and the same opinion is held, of necessity, by those who deny the doctrine of general atonement. The only *arguments* to show that it refers to God the Father would be,

(1.) that the word used here (*despothv*) is not the usual term (*kuriov*) by which the Lord Jesus is designated in the New Testament; and,

(2.) that the admission that it refers to the Lord Jesus would lead inevitably to the conclusion that some will perish for whom Christ died. That it *does*, however, refer to the Lord Jesus, seems to me to be plain from the following considerations:

(1.) It is the obvious interpretation; that which would be given by the great mass of Christians, and about which there could never have been any hesitancy if it had not been supposed that it would lead to the doctrine of general atonement. As to the alleged fact that the word used (*Despotes*) is not that which is commonly applied to the Lord Jesus, that may be admitted to be true, but still the word here may be understood as applied to him. It properly means a master as opposed to a servant; then it is used as denoting supreme authority, and is thus applied to God, and may be in that sense to the Lord Jesus Christ, as head over all things, or as having supreme authority over the church. It occurs in the New Testament only in the following places: 1Ti 6:1,2; Tit 2:9 1Pe 2:18, where it is rendered *masters*; Lu 2:29; Ac 4:24 Re 6:10, where it is rendered *Lord*, and is applied to God; and in Jude 1:4, and in the passage before us, in both which places it is rendered *Lord*, and is probably to be regarded as applied to the Lord Jesus. There is nothing in the proper signification of the word which would forbid this.

(2.) The phrase is one that is properly applicable to the Lord Jesus as having *bought* us with his blood. The Greek word is *apwleian*—a word which means properly *to market, to buy, to purchase*, and then to redeem, or acquire for one's self a by price paid, or by a ransom. It is rendered *buy or bought* in the following places in the New Testament: Mt 13:44,46, 14:15 21:12, 25:9,10 27:7 Mr 6:36,37, 11:15 15:46, 16:1; Lu 9:13 14:18,19 17:28, 19:45 22:36 Joh 4:8 6:5, 13:29 1Co 7:30; Re 3:18 13:17, 18:11, —in all which places it is applicable to ordinary transactions of *buying*. In the following places it is also rendered *bought*, as applicable to the redeemed, as being bought or

purchased by the Lord Jesus: 1Co 6:20 7:23, "Ye are *bought* with a price;" and in the following places it is rendered redeemed, Re 5:9 14:3,4.

It does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It is true that in a large sense this word might be applied to the Father as having caused his people to be redeemed, or as being the Author of the plan of redemption; but it is also true that the word is more properly applicable to the Lord Jesus, and that, when used with reference to redemption, it is uniformly given to him in the New Testament. Compare the passages referred to above. It is strictly and properly true only of the Son of God that he has "*bought*" us. The Father indeed is represented as making the arrangement, as giving his Son to die, and as the great Source of all the blessings secured by redemption; but the purchase was actually made by the Son of God by his sacrifice on the cross. Whatever there was of the nature of a price was paid by him; and whatever obligations may grow out of the fact that we are purchased or ransomed are due particularly to him, 2Co 5:15. These considerations seem to me to make it clear that Peter referred here to the Lord Jesus Christ, and that he meant to say that the false teachers mentioned held doctrines which were in fact a denial of that Saviour. He does not specify particularly what constituted such a denial; but it is plain that any doctrine which represented him, his person, or his work, as essentially different from what was the truth, would amount to such a denial. If he was Divine, and that fact was denied, making him wholly a different being; if he actually made an expiatory sacrifice by his death, and that fact was denied, and he was held to be a mere religious teacher, changing essentially the character of the work which he came to perform; if he, in some proper sense, "bought" them with his blood, and that fact was denied in such a way that according to their views it was not strictly proper to speak of him as having bought them at all, which would be the case if he were a mere prophet or religious teacher, then it is clear that such a representation would be in fact a denial of his true nature and work. That some of these views entered into their *denial* of him is clear, for it was with reference to the fact that he had "bought" them, or redeemed them, that they denied him.

And bring upon themselves swift destruction. The *destruction* here referred to can be only that which will occur in the future world, for there can be no evidence that Peter meant to say that this would destroy their health, their property, or their lives. The Greek word (*apwleian*) is the same which is used in the former part of the verse, in the phrase "*damnable heresies*." See Notes. In regard, then, to this important passage, we may remark,

(1.) that the apostle evidently believed that some would perish for whom Christ died.

(2.) If this be so, then the same truth may be expressed by saying that he died for others besides those who will be saved; that is, that the atonement was not confined merely to the elect. This one passage, therefore, demonstrates the doctrine of general atonement. This conclusion would be drawn from it by the great mass of readers, and it may be presumed, therefore, that this is the fair interpretation of the passage.

(3.) It follows that men may destroy themselves by a denial of the great and vital *doctrines* of religion. It cannot be a harmless thing, then, to hold erroneous opinions; nor can men be safe who deny the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. It is truth, not error, that saves the soul; and an erroneous opinion on any subject may be as dangerous to a man's ultimate peace, happiness, and prosperity, as a wrong course of life. How many men have been ruined in their worldly prospects, their health, and their lives, by holding false sentiments on the subject of morals, or in regard to medical treatment! Who would regard it as a harmless thing if a son should deny in respect to his father that he was a man of truth, probity, and honesty, or should attribute to him a character which

does not belong to him—a character just the reverse of truth? Can the same thing be innocent in regard to God our Saviour?

(4.) Men bring destruction "*on themselves*." No one *compels* them to deny the Lord that bought them; no one *forces* them to embrace any dangerous error. If men perish, they perish by their own fault, for

(a.) ample provision was made for their salvation as well as for others; (b.) they were freely invited to be saved;

(c.) it was, in itself, just as easy for them to embrace the truth as it was for others; and

(d.) it was as easy to embrace the truth as to embrace error.

{c} "There were" De 13:1 {a} "among you" Mt 24:5 Ac 20:29,30 1Ti 4:1

{*} "privily" "craftily" {+} "heresies" "heresies of destruction" {++} "Lord" "Sovereign Lord"

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And many shall follow their pernicious ways*. Marg., *lascivious*. A large number of manuscripts and versions read *lascivious* here *aselgeiaiv*—instead of *pernicious*— *apwleiaiv*, (see Wetstein) and this reading is adopted in the editions of the Greek Testament by Tittman, Griesbach, and Hahn, and it seems probable that this is the correct reading. This will agree well with the account elsewhere given of these teachers, that their doctrines tended to licentiousness, 2Pe 2:10,14,18,19.

It is a very remarkable circumstance, that those who have denied the essential doctrines of the gospel have been so frequently licentious in their own conduct, and have inculcated opinions which tended to licentiousness. Many of the forms of religious error have somehow had a connexion with this vice. Men who are corrupt at heart often seek to obtain for their corruptions the sanction of religion.

By reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

(1.) Because they were professors of religion, and religion would seem to be held responsible for their conduct; and,

(2,) because they were professed teachers of religion, and, by many, would be understood as expounding the true doctrines of the gospel.

{1} "pernicious" "lascivious" {*} "reason of" "Because of"

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And through covetousness*. This shows what one of the things was by which they were influenced—a thing which, like licentiousness, usually exerts a powerful influence over the teachers of error. The religious principle is the strongest that is implanted in the human bosom; and men who can obtain a livelihood in no other way, or who are too unprincipled or too indolent to labour for an honest living, often turn public teachers of religion, and adopt the kind of doctrines that will be likely to give them the greatest power over the purses of others. True religion, indeed, requires of its friends to devote all that they have to the service of God and to the promotion of his cause;

but it is very easy to pervert this requirement, so that the teacher of error shall take advantage of it for his own aggrandizement.

Shall they with reigned words. Gr., formed, fashioned; then those which are *formed* for the occasion—feigned, false, deceitful. The idea is, that the doctrines which they would defend were not maintained by solid and substantial arguments, but that they would make use of plausible reasoning made up for the occasion.

Make merchandise of you. Treat you not as rational beings, but as a bale of goods, or any other article of traffic. That is, they would endeavour to make money out of them, and regard them only as fitted to promote that object.

Whose judgment. Whose condemnation.

Now of a long time lingereth not. Greek, "of old; long since." The idea seems to be, that justice had been long attentive to their movements, and was on its way to their destruction. It was not a new thing—that is, there was no new principle involved in their destruction; but it was a principle which had always been in operation, and which would certainly be applicable to them, and of a long time justice had been impatient to do the work which it was accustomed to do. What had occurred to the angels that sinned, (2Pe 2:4,) to the old world, (2Pe 2:5,) and to Sodom and Gomorrah, (2Pe 2:6,) would occur to them; and the same justice which had overthrown them might be regarded as on its way to effect their destruction. Comp. **See Barnes "Isa 18:4"**.

And their damnation slumbereth not. Their condemnation, (**See Barnes** "1Co 11:29,) yet here referring to future punishment. "Mr. Blackwell observes, that this is a most beautiful figure, representing the vengeance that shall destroy such incorrigible sinners as an angel of judgment pursuing them on the wing, continually approaching nearer and nearer, and in the mean time keeping a watchful eye upon them that he may at length discharge an unerring low." —*Doddridge*. It is not uncommon to speak of "sleepless justice;" and the idea here is, that however justice may have seemed to slumber or to linger, it was not really so, but that it had on them an ever-watchful eye, and was on its way to do that which was right in regard to them. A sinner should never forget that there is an eye of unslumbering vigilance always upon him, and that everything that he does is witnessed by one who will yet render exact justice to all men. No man, however careful to conceal his sins, or however bold in transgression, or however unconcerned he may seem to be, can hope that justice will always linger, or destruction always slumber.

{+} "feigned" "Smooth" {a} "judgment" Jude 1:1-4 {++} "damnation" "destruction"

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *For if God spared not the angels that sinned*. The apostle now proceeds to the proof of the proposition that these persons would be punished. It is to be remembered that they had been, or were even then, professing Christians, though they had really, if not in form, apostatized from the faith, (2Pe 2:20-22;) and a part of the proofs, therefore, are derived from the cases of those who had apostatized from the service of God. He appeals, therefore, to the case of the angels that had revolted. Neither their former rank, their dignity, nor their holiness, saved them from being thrust down to hell; and if God punished them so severely, then false teachers could not hope to escape. The apostle, by the *angels* here, refers undoubtedly to a revolt in heaven—-an event referred to in

Jude 1:6, and everywhere implied in the Scriptures. *When* that occurred, however—why they revolted, or what was the number of the apostates—we have not the slightest information, and on these points conjecture would be useless. In the supposition that it occurred, there is no improbability; for there is nothing more absurd in the belief that angels have revolted than that men have; and if there are evil angels, as there is no more reason to doubt than that there are evil men, it is morally certain that they must have fallen at some period from a state of holiness, for it can not be believed that God made them wicked.

But cast them down to hell. Gr., *tartarwsav*—"thrusting them down to Tartarus." The word here used occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, though it is common in the classical writers. It is a verb formed from *tartarov* (*Tartarus*,) which in Greek mythology was the lower part, or abyss of hades, where the shades of the wicked were supposed to be imprisoned and tormented, and answered to the Jewish word *geenna* —*Gehenna*. It was regarded, commonly, as beneath the earth; as entered through the grave; as dark, dismal, gloomy; and as a place of punishment. Comp. **See Barnes** "Job 10:21,22, and **See Barnes "Mt 5:22"**.

The word here is one that properly refers to a place or punishment, since the whole argument relates to that, and since it cannot be pretended that the "angels that sinned" were removed to a place of happiness on account of their transgression. It must also refer to punishment in some other world than this, for there is no evidence that *this* world is made a place of punishment for fallen angels.

And delivered them into chains of darkness. "Where darkness lies like chains upon them."—*Rob. Lex*. The meaning seems to be, that they are confined in that dark prison-house *as if* by chains. We are not to suppose that spirits are literally bound; but it was common to bind or fetter prisoners who were in dungeons, and the representation here is taken from that fact. This representation that the mass of fallen angels are confined in *Tartarus*, or in hell, is not inconsistent with the representations which elsewhere occur that their leader is permitted to roam the earth, and that even many of those spirits are allowed to tempt men. It may be still true that the mass are confined within the limits of their dark abode; and it may even be true also that Satan and those who are permitted to roam the earth are under bondage, and are permitted to range only within certain bounds, and that they are so secured that they will be brought to trial at the last day.

To be reserved unto judgment. Jude 1:6, "to the judgment of the great day." They will then, with the revolted inhabitants of this world, be brought to trial for their crimes. That the fallen angels will be punished *after* the judgment is apparent from Re 20:10. The argument in this verse is, that if God punished the angels who revolted from him, it is a fair inference that he will punish wicked men, though they were once professors of religion.

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And spared not the old world*. The world before the flood. The argument here is, that he cut off that wicked race, and thus showed that he would punish the guilty. By that awful act of sweeping away the inhabitants of a world, he showed that men could not sin with impunity, and that the incorrigibly wicked must perish.

But saved Noah the eighth person. This reference to Noah, like the reference to Lot in 2Pe 2:7, seems to have been thrown in in the progress of the argument as an incidental remark, to show that the righteous, however few in number, would be saved when the wicked were cut off. The phrase "Noah the eighth," means Noah, one of eight; that is, Noah and seven others. This idiom is found, says Dr. Bloomfield, in the best writers—from Herodotus and Thucydides downwards. See examples in Wetstein. The meaning in this place then is, that eight persons, and eight only of that race, were saved; thus showing, that while the wicked would be punished, however numerous they might be, the righteous, however few, would be saved.

A preacher of righteousness. In Ge 6:9, it is said of Noah that he was "a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God;" and it may be presumed that during his long life he was faithful in reproving the wickedness of his age, and warned the world of the judgment that was preparing for it, Compare Notes, Heb 11:7.

Bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly. Upon all the world besides that pious family. The argument here is, that if God would cut off a wicked race in this manner, the principle is settled that the wicked will not escape.

{a} "Noah the eighth" Ge 7:1

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes*. Ge 19:24,25. This is a third example to demonstrate that God will punish the wicked. Compare **See Barnes "Jude 1:7"**.

The word here rendered "turning into ashes," (*tefrwsav*,) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It is from *tefra*, (*ashes*,) and means to reduce to ashes, and then to consume or destroy.

Condemned them with an overthrow. By the fact of their being overthrown, he showed that they were to be condemned, or that he disapproved their conduct. Their calamity came expressly on account of their enormous sins; as it is frequently the case now that the awful judgments that come upon the licentious and the intemperate, are as plain a proof of the Divine disapprobation as were the calamities that came upon Sodom and Gomorrah.

Making them an ensample, etc. That is, they were a demonstration that God disapproved of the crimes for which they were punished, and would disapprove of the same crimes in every age and in every land. The punishment of one wicked man or people always becomes a warning to all others.

{b} "cities of Sodom and Gomorrha" Ge 19:24,25. {c} "making them" De 29:23 {*} "ensample" "Example"

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *And delivered just Lot*. Ge 19:16. This case is incidentally referred to, to show that God makes a distinction between the righteous and the wicked; and that while the latter will be destroyed, the former will be saved. See 2Pe 2:9. Lot is called just, because he preserved himself

uncontaminated amidst the surrounding wickedness. As long as he lived in Sodom he maintained the character of an upright and holy man.

Vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked. By the corrupt and licentious conduct of the wicked around him. On the word *conversation*, **See Barnes "Php 1:27"**.

The original phrase, which is rendered *filthy*, has reference to licentiousness, The corruption of Sodom was open and shameless; and as Lot was compelled to see much of it, his heart was pained. The word here rendered vexed, means that he was wearied or burdened. The crimes of those around him he found it hard to bear with.

{d} "just Lot" Ge 19:16

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *For that righteous man dwelling among them*. The Latin Vulgate renders this, "For in seeing and hearing he was just;" meaning that he maintained his uprightness, or that he did not become contaminated by the vices of Sodom. Many expositors have supposed that this is the correct rendering; but the most natural and the most common explanation is that which is found in our version. According to that, the meaning is, that compelled as he was, while living among them, to see and to hear what was going on, his soul was constantly troubled.

In seeing and hearing. Seeing their open acts of depravity, and hearing their vile conversation. The effect which this had on the mind of Lot is not mentioned in Genesis, but nothing is more probable than the statement here made by Peter. Whether this statement was founded on tradition, or whether it is a suggestion of inspiration to the mind of Peter, cannot be determined. The words rendered *seeing and hearing* may refer to the *act* of seeing, or to the *object* seen. Wetstein and Robinson suppose that they refer here to the latter, and that the sense is, that he was troubled by what he saw and heard. The meaning is not materially different. Those who live among the wicked are compelled to see and hear much that pains their hearts, and it is well if they do not become indifferent to it, or contaminated by it.

Vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds. Tortured or tormented his soul—*ebasanizen*. Compare Mt 8:6,29; Lu 8:28 Re 9:5, 11:10 14:10, 20:10, where the same word is rendered *tormented*. The use of this word would seem to imply that there was something *active* on the part of Lot which produced this distress on account of their conduct, lie was not merely troubled as if his soul were passively acted on, but there were strong mental exercises of a positive kind, arising perhaps from anxious solicitude how he might prevent their evil conduct, or from painful reflections on the consequences of their deeds to themselves, or from earnest pleadings in their behalf before God, or from reproofs and warnings of the wicked. At all events, the language is such as would seem to indicate that he was not a mere passive observer of their conduct. This, it would seem, was "from day to day;" that is, it was constant. There were doubtless reasons why Lot should remain among such a people, and why, when he might so easily have done it, he did not remove to another place. Perhaps it was one purpose of his remaining to endeavour to do them good, as it is often the duty of good men now to reside among the wicked for the same purpose. Lot is supposed to have resided in Sodom—then probably the most corrupt place on the earth—for sixteen years; and we have in that fact an instructive demonstration that a good man may maintain

the life of religion in his soul when surrounded by the wicked, and an illustration of the effects which the conduct of the wicked will have on a man of true piety when he is compelled to witness it constantly. We may learn from the record made of Lot what those effects will be, and what is evidence that one is truly pious who lives among the wicked.

(1.) He will not be *contaminated* with their wickedness, or will not conform to their evil customs.

(2.) He will not become *indifferent* to it, but his heart will be more and more affected by their depravity. Comp. Ps 119:136 Lu 19:41; Ac 17:16.

(3.) He will have not only constant, but growing solicitude in regard to it—solicitude that will be felt every day: "He vexed his soul *from day to day*." It will not only be at intervals that his mind will be affected by their conduct, but it will be an habitual and constant thing. True piety is not fitful, periodical, and spasmodic; it is constant and steady. It is not a *jet* that occasionally bursts out; it is a fountain always flowing.

(4.) He will seek to do them good. We may suppose that this was the case with Lot; we are certain that it is a characteristic of true religion to seek to do good to all, however wicked they may be.

(5.) He will secure their confidence. He will practise no improper arts to do this, but it will be one of the usual results of a life of integrity, that a good man will secure the confidence of even the wicked. It does not appear that Lot lost that confidence, and the whole narrative in Genesis leads us to suppose that even the inhabitants of Sodom regarded him as a good man. The wicked may *hate* a good man because he is good; but if a man lives as he should, they will regard him as upright, and they will give him the credit of it when he dies, if they should withhold it while he lives.

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *The Lord knoweth*, etc. That is, the cases referred to show that God is able to deliver his people when tempted, and understands the best way in which it should be done. He sees a way to do it when we cannot, though it is often a way which we should not have thought of. He can send all angel to take his tempted people by the hand; he can interpose and destroy the power of the tempter; he can raise up earthly friends; he can deliver his people completely and for ever from temptation, by their removal to heaven.

And to reserve the unjust. As he does the rebel angels, 2Pe 2:4. The case of the angels shows that God can keep wicked men, as if under bonds, reserved for their final trial at his bar. Though they seem to go at large, yet they are under his control, and are kept by him with reference to their ultimate arraignment.

{e} "how to deliver" Ps 34:15-18

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *But chiefly*. That is, it may be presumed that the principles just laid down would be applicable in an eminent degree to such persons as he proceeds to designate.

That walk after the flesh. That live for the indulgence of their carnal appetites. **See Barnes "Ro 8:1"**.

In the lust of uncleanness. In polluted pleasures. Comp. **See Barnes "2Pe 2:2"**.

And despise government. Marg., *dominion*. That is, they regard all government in the state, the church, and the family, as an evil. Advocates for unbridled freedom of all sorts; declaimers on liberty and on the evils of oppression; defenders of what they regard as the rights of injured man, and yet secretly themselves lusting for the exercise of the very power which they would deny to others—they make no just distinctions about what constitutes true freedom, and in their zeal array themselves against government in all forms. No topic of declamation would be more popular than this, and from none would they hope to secure more followers; for if they could succeed in removing all respect for the just restraints of law, the way would be open for the accomplishment of their own purposes, in setting up a dominion over the minds of others. It is a common result of such views, that men of this description become impatient of the government of God himself, and seek to throw off all authority, and to live in the unrestrained indulgence of their vicious propensities.

Presumptuous are they. *tolmhtai*—daring, bold, audacious, presumptuous men.

Self-willed—auyadeiv. **See Barnes "Tit 1:7"**.

They are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. The word rendered dignities here, (*doxav*,) means properly honour, glory, splendour; then that which is fitted to inspire respect; that which is dignified or exalted. It is applied here to men of exalted rank; and the meaning is, that they did not regard rank, or station, or office—thus violating the plainest rules of propriety and of religion. **See Barnes** "Ac 23:4, **See Barnes "Ac 23:5"**.

Jude, between whose language and that of Peter in this chapter there is a remarkable resemblance, has expressed this more fully. He says, (Jude 1:8,) "These filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities." It is one of the effects of religion to produce respect for superiors; but when men are self-willed, and when they purpose to give indulgence to corrupt propensities, it is natural for them to dislike all government. Accordingly, it is by no means an unfrequent effect of certain forms of error to lead men to speak disrespectfully of those in authority, and to attempt to throw off all the restraints of law. It is a very certain indication that men hold wrong opinions when they show disrespect to those in authority, and despise the restraints of law.

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Whereas angels*. The object, by the reference to angels here, is to show that they, even when manifesting the greatest zeal in a righteous cause, and even when opposing others, did not make use of reproachful terms, or of harsh and violent language. It is not known precisely to what Peter alludes here, nor on what the statement here is based. There can be little doubt, however, as Benson has remarked, that, from the strong resemblance between what Peter says and what Jude says, (Jude 1:9,10,) there is allusion to the same thing, and probably both referred to some common tradition among the Jews respecting the contention of the archangel Michael with the devil about the body of Moses. **See Barnes "Jude 1:9"**.

As the statement in Jude is the most full, it is proper to explain the passage before us by a reference to that; and we may suppose that, though Peter uses the plural term, and speaks of angels, yet that he really had the case of Michael in his eye, and meant to refer to that as an example of what the angels do. Whatever may have been the origin of this tradition, no one can doubt that what is here said of the angels accords with probability, and no one can prove that it is not true.

Which are greater in power and might. And who might, therefore, if it were in any case proper, speak freely of things of an exalted rank and dignity. It would be more becoming for them than for men. On this difficult passage, **See Barnes "Jude 1:9"**.

Bring not railing accusation. They simply say, "The Lord rebuke thee," Jude 1:9. Comp. Zec 3:2. The Greek here is, "bring not blasphemous or reproachful judgment, or condemnation"—*blasfhmon krisin*. They abhor all scurrility and violence of language; they simply state matters as they are. No one can doubt that this accords with what we should expect of the angels; and that if they had occasion to speak of those who were opposers, it would be in a calm and serious manner, not seeking to overwhelm them by reproaches.

Against them. Margin, *against themselves*. So the Vulgate. The more correct reading is *against them*; that is, against those who might be regarded as their adversaries, (Jude 1:9,) or those of their own rank who had done wrong—the fallen angels.

Before the Lord. When standing before the Lord; or when represented as reporting the conduct of evil spirits. Comp. Zec 3:1,2. This phrase, however, is wanting in many manuscripts. See Wetstein.

{2} "against them" "against themselves"

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *But these, as natural brute beasts*. These persons, who resemble so much irrational animals which are made to be taken and destroyed. The *point* of the comparison is, that they are like fierce and savage beasts that exercise no control over their appetites, and that seem to be made only to be destroyed. These persons, by their fierce and ungovernable passions, appear to be made only for destruction, and rush blindly on to it. The word rendered *natural*, (which, however, is wanting in several manuscripts,) means *as they are by nature*, following the bent of their natural appetites and passions. The idea is, that they exercised no more restraint over their passions than beasts do over their propensities. They were entirely under the dominion of their natural appetites, and did not allow their reason or conscience to exert any constraint. The word rendered brute, means without reason; irrational. Man *has* reason, and should allow it to control his passions; the brutes have no rational nature, and it is to be expected that they will act out their propensities without restraint. Man, as an animal, has many passions and appetites resembling those of the brute creation, but he is also endowed with a higher nature, which is designed to regulate and control his inferior propensities, and to keep them in subordination to the requirements of law. If a man sinks himself to the level of brutes, he must expect to be treated like brutes; and as wild and savage animals—lions, and panthers, and wolves, and bears—are regarded as dangerous, and as "made to be taken and destroyed," so the same destiny must come upon men who make themselves like them.

Made to be taken and destroyed. They are not only useless to society, but destructive; and men feel that it is right to destroy them. We are not to suppose that this teaches that the only object

which God had in view in making wild animals was that they *might be destroyed*; but that men so regard them.

Speak evil of the things that they understated not. Of objects whose worth and value they cannot appreciate. This is no uncommon thing among men, especially in regard to the works and ways of God.

And shall utterly perish in their own corruption. Their views will be the means of their ruin; and they render them fit for it, just as much as the fierce passions of the wild animals do.

{d} "brute beasts" Jer 12:3 {+} "perish" "be destroyed"

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness*. The appropriate recompense of their wickedness in the future world. Such men do not always receive the due recompense of their deeds in the present life; and as it is a great and immutable principle that all will be treated, under the government of God, as they deserve, or that justice will be rendered to every rational being, it follows that there must be punishment in the future state.

As they that count it pleasure to riot in the day-time. As men peculiarly wicked, shameless, and abandoned; for only such revel in open day. Comp. **See Barnes "Ac 2:15"**; **See Barnes** "1Th 5:7".

Spots they are and blemishes. That is, they are like a dark spot on a pure garment, or like a deformity on an otherwise beautiful person. They are a scandal and disgrace to the Christian profession.

Sporting themselves. The Greek word here means to live delicately or luxuriously; to revel. The idea is not exactly that of sporting, or playing, or amusing themselves; but it is that they take advantage of their views to live in riot and luxury. Under the garb of the Christian profession, they give indulgence to the most corrupt passions.

With their own deceivings. Jude, in the parallel place, (Jude 1:12,) has, "These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you." Several versions, and a few manuscripts also, here read feasts instead of deceivings, (*agapaiv* for *apataiv*.) The common reading, however, is undoubtedly the correct one, (see Wetstein, *in loc*;) and the meaning is, that they took advantage of their false views to turn even the sacred feasts of charity, or perhaps the Lord's Supper itself, into an occasion of sensual indulgence. Comp. **See Barnes** "1Co 11:20, seq. The difference between these persons, and those in the church at Corinth, seems to have been that these did it of design, and for the purpose of leading others into sin; those who were in the church at Corinth erred through ignorance.

While they feast with you. *suneuwcoumenoi*. This word means to feast several together; to feast with any one; and the reference seems to be to some festival which was celebrated by Christians, where men and women were assembled together, (2Pe 2:14,) and where they could convert the festival into a scene of riot and disorder. If the Lord's Supper was celebrated by them as it was at Corinth, that would furnish such an occasion; or if it was preceded by a "feast of charity," **See Barnes "Jude 1:12"**

that would furnish such an occasion. It would seem to be probable that a festival of some kind was connected with the observance of the Lord's Supper, **See Barnes** "1Co 11:21, and that this was converted by these persons into a scene of riot and disorder.

{e} "they that count it pleasure" Php 3:19 Jude 1:12 {*} "deceivings" "deceits"

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Having eyes full of adultery*. Marg., as in the Greek, *an adulteress*; that is, gazing with desire after such persons. The word *full* is designed to denote that the corrupt passion referred to had wholly seized and occupied their minds. The eye was, as it were, full of this passion; it saw nothing else but some occasion for its indulgence; it expressed nothing else but the desire. The reference here is to the sacred festival mentioned in the previous verse; and the meaning is, that they celebrated that festival with licentious feelings, giving free indulgence to their corrupt desires by gazing on the females who were assembled with them. In the passion here referred to, the eye is usually the first offender, the inlet to corrupt desires, and the medium by which they are expressed. Comp. **See Barnes "Mt 5:28"**.

The wanton glance is a principal occasion of exciting the sin; and there is much often in dress, and mien, and gesture, to charm the eye and to deepen the debasing passion.

And that cannot cease from sin. They cannot look on the females who may be present without sinning. Comp. Mt 5:28. There are many men in whom the presence of the most virtuous woman only excites impure and corrupt desires. The expression here does not mean that they have no natural ability to cease from sin, or that they are impelled to it by any physical necessity, but only that they are so corrupt and unprincipled that they certainly will sin always.

Beguiling unstable souls. Those who are not strong in Christian principle, or who are naturally fluctuating and irresolute. The word rendered *beguiling* means to bait, to entrap, and would be applicable to the methods practised in hunting. Here it means that it was one of their arts to place specious allurements before those who were known not to have settled principles or firmness, in order to allure them to sin. Comp. 2Ti 3:6.

An heart they have exercised with covetous practices. Skilled in the arts which covetous men adopt in order to cheat others out of their property. A leading purpose which influenced these men was to obtain money. One of the most certain ways for dishonest men to do this is to make use of the religious principle; to corrupt and control the conscience; to make others believe that they are eminently holy, or that they are the special favourites of heaven; and when they can do this, they have the purses of others at command. For the religious principle is the most powerful of all principles; and he who can control that, can control all that a man possesses. The idea here is, that these persons had made this their study, and had learned the ways in which men could be induced to part with their money under religious pretences. We should always be on our guard when professedly religious teachers propose to have much to do with money matters. While we should always be ready to aid every good cause, yet we should remember that unprincipled and indolent men often assume the mask of religion that they may practise their arts on the credulity of others, and that their real aim is to obtain their property, not to save their souls.

Cursed children. This is a Hebraism, meaning literally, "children of the curse;" that is, persons devoted to the curse, or who will certainly be destroyed.

{1} "adultery" "an adulteress" {+} "unstable souls" "minds"

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Which have forsaken the right way*. The straight path of honesty and integrity. Religion is often represented as a straight path, and to do wrong is to go out of that path in a crooked way.

Following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor. See Nu 22:5, seq. In the Book of Numbers, Balaam is called the son of *Beor*. Perhaps the name Beor was corrupted into Bosor; or, as Rosenmuller suggests, the father of Balaam may have had two names. Schleusner (Lex.) supposes that it was changed by the Greeks because it was more easily pronounced. The Seventy, however, read it *bewr—Beor*. The meaning here is, that they imitated Balaam. The particular point to which Peter refers in which they imitated him, seems to have been the love of gain, or covetousness. Possibly, however, he might have designed to refer to a more general resemblance, for in fact they imitated him in the following things:

(1.) in being professed religious teachers, or the servants of God;

(2.) in their covetousness;

(3.) in inducing others to sin, referring to the same kind of sins in both cases. Balaam counselled the Moabites to entice the children of Israel to illicit connexion with their women, thus introducing licentiousness into the camp of the Hebrews, Nu 31:16; comp. Nu 25:1-9 and in like manner these teachers led others into licentiousnes, thus corrupting the church.

Who loved the wages of unrighteousness. Who was supremely influenced by the love of gain, and was capable of being employed, for a price, in a wicked design; thus prostituting his high office, as a professed prophet of the Most High, to base and ignoble ends. That Balaam, though he professed to be influenced by a supreme regard to the will of God, (Nu 22:18,38,) was really influenced by the desire of reward, and was willing to prostitute his great office to secure such a reward, there can be no doubt.

(1.) The elders of Moab and of Midian came to Balaam with "the rewards of divination in their hand," (Nu 22:7,) and with promises from Balak of promoting him to great honour, if he would curse the children of Israel, Nu 22:17.

(2.) Balaam was disposed to go with them, and was restrained from going at once only by a direct and solemn prohibition from the Lord, Nu 22:11.

(3.) Notwithstanding this solemn prohibition, and notwithstanding he said to the ambassadors from Balak that he would do only as God directed, though Balak should give him his house full of silver and gold, (Nu 22:18,) yet he did not regard the matter as settled, but proposed to them that they should wait another night, with the hope that the Lord would give a more favourable direction in reference to their request, thus showing that his heart was in the service which they required, and that his inclination was to avail himself of their offer, Nu 22:19.

(4.) When he *did* obtain permission to go, it was only to say that which the Lord should direct him to say, (Nu 22:20;) but he went with a "perverse" heart, with a secret wish to comply with the desire of Balak, and with a knowledge that he was doing wrong, (Nu 22:34,) and was restrained

from uttering the curse which Balak desired only by an influence from above which he could not control. Balaam was undoubtedly a wicked man, and was constrained by a power from on high to utter sentiments which God *meant* should be uttered, but which Balaam would never have expressed of his own accord.

{a} "way of Balaam"

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *But was rebuked for his iniquity*. The object of Peter in this seems to be to show that God employed the very extraordinary means of causing the ass on which he rode to speak, because his iniquity was so monstrous. The guilt of thus debasing his high office, and going forth to curse the people of God—a people who had done him no wrong, and given no occasion for his malediction—was so extraordinary, that means as extraordinary were proper to express it. If God employed means so extraordinary to rebuke his depravity, it was to be expected that in some appropriate way he would express his sense of the wickedness of those who resembled him.

The dumb ass, speaking with man's voice. Nu 22:28. God seems to have designed that both Balaam and Balak should be convinced that the children of Israel were his people; and so important was it that this conviction should rest fully on the minds of the nations through whom they passed, that he would not suffer even a pretended prophet to make use of his influence to curse them. He designed that all that influence should be in favour of the cause of truth, thus furnishing a striking instance of the use which he often makes of wicked men. To convince Balaam of the error of his course, and to make him sensible that God was an observer of his conduct, and to induce him to utter only what he should direct, nothing would be better fitted than this miracle. The very animal on which he rode, dumb and naturally stupid, was made to utter a reproof; a reproof as directly from heaven as though the stones had cried out beneath his feet, or the trees of the wood had uttered the language of remonstrance. As to the nature of the miracle here referred to, it may be remarked,

(1.) that it was as easy for God to perform this miracle as any other; and

(2.) that it was a miracle that would be as likely to be effectual, and to answer the purpose, as any other. No man can show that it could not have occurred; and the occasion was one in which some decided rebuke, in language beyond that of conscience, was necessary.

Forbad the madness of the prophet. That is, the mad or perverse design of the prophet. The word here rendered *madness* means, properly, being aside from a right mind. It is not found elsewhere in the New Testament. It is used here to denote that Balaam was engaged in an enterprise which indicated a headstrong disposition; an acting contrary to reason and sober sense. He was so under the influence of avarice and ambition that his sober sense was blinded, and he acted like a madman. He knew indeed what was right, and had professed a purpose to do what was right, but he did not allow that to control him; but, for the sake of gain, went against his own sober conviction, and against what he knew to be the will of God. He was so mad or infatuated that he allowed neither reason, nor conscience, nor the will of God, to control him.

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *These are wells without water*. Jude 1:12,13 employs several other epithets to describe the same class of persons. The language employed both by Peter and Jude is singularly terse, pointed, and emphatic. Nothing to an oriental mind would be more expressive than to say of professed religious teachers, that they were "wells without water." It was always a sad disappointment to a traveller in the hot sands of the desert to come to a well where it was expected that water might be found, and to find it dry. It only aggravated the trials of the thirsty and weary traveller. Such were these religious teachers. In a world, not unaptly compared, in regard to its real comforts, to the wastes and sands of the desert, they would only grievously disappoint the expectations of all those who were seeking for the refreshing influences of the truths of the gospel. There are many such teachers in the world.

Clouds that are carried with a tempest. Clouds that are driven about by the wind, and that send down no rain upon the earth. They promise rain, only to be followed by disappointment. Substantially the same idea is conveyed by this as by the previous phrase. "The Arabs compare persons who put on the appearance of virtue, when yet they are destitute of all goodness, to a light cloud which makes a show of rain, and afterwards vanishes."—*Benson*. The sense is this: The cloud, as it rises, promises rain. The expectation of the farmer is excited that the thirsty earth is to be refreshed with needful showers. Instead of this, however, the wind "gets into" the cloud; it is driven about, and no rain falls, or it ends in a destructive tornado which sweeps everything before it. So of these religious teachers. Instruction in regard to the way of salvation was expected from them; but, instead of that, they disappointed the expectations of those who were desirous of knowing the way of life, and their doctrines only tended to destroy.

To whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever. The word rendered *mist* here, (*zofov*,) means properly muskiness, thick gloom, darkness, (see 2Pe 2:4;) and the phrase "mist of darkness" is designed to denote intense darkness, or the thickest darkness. It refers undoubtedly to the place of future punishment, which is often represented as a place of intense darkness. **See Barnes "Mt 8:12"**.

When it is said that this is reserved for them, it means that it is prepared for them, or is kept in a state of readiness to receive them. It is like a jail or penitentiary which is built in anticipation that there will be criminals, and with the expectation that there will be use for it. So God has constructed the great prison-house of the universe, the world where the wicked are to dwell, with the knowledge that there would be occasion for it; and so he keeps it from age to age that it may be ready to receive the wicked when the sentence of condemnation shall be passed upon them. Comp. Mt 25:41. The word *forever* is a word which denotes properly eternity, (*eiv aiwna*,) and is such a word as could not have been used if it had been meant that they would not suffer for ever, Comp. **See Barnes "Mt 25:46"**.

{a} "clouds" Eph 4:14 {*} "carried" "driven along"

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *For when they speak great swelling words of vanity*. When they make pretensions to wisdom and learning, or seem to attach great importance to what they say, and urge it in a pompous

and positive manner. Truth is simple, and delights in simple statements. It expects to make its way by its own intrinsic force, and is willing to pass for what it is worth. Error is noisy and declamatory, and hopes to succeed by substituting sound for sense, and by such tones and arts as shall induce men to believe that what is said is true, when it is known by the speaker to be false.

They allure through the lusts of the flesh. The same word is used here which in 2Pe 2:14 is rendered *beguiling*, and in Jas 1:14 *enticed*. It does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It means that they make use of deceitful arts to allure, ensnare, or beguile others. The means which it is here said they employed, were *the lusts of the flesh*; that is, they promised unlimited indulgence to the carnal appetites, or taught such doctrines that their followers would feel themselves free to give unrestrained liberty to such propensities. This has been quite a common method in the world, of inducing men to embrace false doctrines.

Through much wantonness. **See Barnes "2Ti 3:6".**

The meaning here is, that they made use of every variety of lascivious arts to beguile others under religious pretences. This has been often done in the world; for religion has been abused to give seducers access to the confidence of the innocent, only that they might betray and ruin them. It is *right* that for all such the "mist of darkness should be reserved for ever;" and if there were not a place of punishment prepared for such men, there would be defect in the moral administration of the universe.

Those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. Marg.,for a little child. The difference between the margin and the text here arises from a difference of reading in the Greek. Most of the later editions of the Greek Testament coincide with the reading in the margin, (*oligwv*,) meaning *little, but a little, scarcely*. This accords better with the scope of the passage; and, according to this, it means that they had *almost escaped* from the snares and influences of those who live in error and sin. They had begun to think of their ways; they had broken off many of their evil habits; and there was hope that they would be entirely reformed, and would become decided Christians, but they were allured again to the sins in which they had so long indulged. This seems to me to accord with the design of the passage, and it certainly accords with what frequently occurs, that those who are addicted to habits of vice become apparently interested in religion, and abandon many of their evil practices, but are again allured by the seductive influences of sin, and relapse into their former habits. In the case referred to here it was by professedly religious teachers—and is this never done now? Are there none, for example, who have been addicted to habits of intemperance, who had been almost reformed, but who are led back again by the influence of religious teachers? Not directly and openly, indeed, would they lead them into habits of intemperance. But, when their reformation is begun, its success and its completion depend on total abstinence from all that intoxicates. In this condition, nothing more is necessary to secure their entire reformation and safety than mere abstinence; and nothing more may be necessary to lead them into their former practices than the example of others who indulge in moderate drinking, or than the doctrine inculcated by a religious teacher that such moderate drinking is not contrary to the spirit of the Bible.

{b} "speak" Ps 73:8 {1} "were clean" "for a little while" {+} "clean" "had nearly"

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *While they promise them liberty*. True religion always promises and produces liberty, **See Barnes "Joh 8:36"**; but the particular liberty which these persons seem to have promised, was freedom from what they regarded as needless restraint, or from strict and narrow views of religion.

They themselves are the servants of corruption. They are the slaves of gross and corrupt passions, themselves utter strangers to freedom, and bound in the chains of servitude. These passions and appetites have obtained the entire mastery over them, and brought them into the severest bondage. This is often the case with those who deride the restraints of serious piety. They are themselves the slaves of appetite, or of the rules of fashionable life, or of the laws of honour, or of vicious indulgences. "he is a freeman whom the truth makes free, and all are slaves besides." Comp. **See Barnes "2Co 3:17"**.

For of whom a man is overcome, etc. Or rather "by *what* (*w*) any one is overcome;" that is, *whatever* gets the mastery of him, whether it be avarice, or sensuality, or pride, or any form of error. **See Barnes** "Ro 6:16, where this sentiment is explained.

{++} "liberty" "freedom"

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world*. This does not necessarily mean that they had been true Christians, and had fallen from grace. Men may outwardly reform, and escape from the open corruptions which prevail around them, or which they had themselves practised, and still have no true grace at heart.

Through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Neither does this imply that they were true Christians, or that they had ever had any saving knowledge of the Redeemer. There is a knowledge of the doctrines and duties of religion which may lead sinners to abandon their outward vices, which has no connexion with saving grace. They may profess religion, and may know enough of religion to understand that it requires them to abandon their vicious habits, and still never be true Christians.

They are again entangled therein and overcome. The word rendered *entangled*, (*emplekw*,) from which is derived our word *implicate*, means to braid in, to interweave; then to involve in, to entangle. It means here that they become implicated in those vices like an animal that is entangled in a net.

The latter end is worse with them than the beginning. This is usually the case. Apostates become worse than they were before their professed conversion. Reformed drunkards, if they go back to their "cups" again, become more abandoned than ever. Thus it is with those who have been addicted to any habits of vice, and who profess to become religious, and then fall away. The *reasons* of this may be,

(1.) that they are willing now to show to others that they are no longer under the restraints by which they had professedly bound themselves;

(2.) that God gives them up to indulgence with fewer restraints than formerly; and

(3.) their old companions in sin may be at special pains to court their society, and to lead them into temptation, in order to obtain a triumph over virtue and religion.

{b} "again entangled" Lu 11:26 Heb 6:4, 10:26

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *For it had been better for them*, etc. Compare **See Barnes "Mt 26:24"**.

It would have been better for them, for

(1.) then they would not have dishonoured the cause of: religion as they have now done;

(2.) they would not have sunk so deep in profligacy as they now have; and

(3.) they would not have incurred so aggravated a condemnation in the world of woe. If men are resolved on being wicked, they had better never pretend to be good. If they are to be cast off at last, it had better not be as apostates from the cause of virtue and religion.

{c} "better" Mt 11:23,24; Lu 12:47,48

{d} "way of righteousness" Pr 12:28

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 2 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb*. The meaning of the proverbs here quoted is, that they have returned to their former vile manner of life. Under all the appearances of reformation, still their evil nature remained, as really as that of the dog or the swine, and that nature finally prevailed. There was no thorough internal change, any more than there is in the swine when it is washed, or in the dog, This passage, therefore, would seem to demonstrate that there never had been any real change of heart, and of course there had been no falling away from true religion. It should not, therefore, be quoted to prove that true Christians may fall from grace and perish. The dog and the swine had never been anything else than the dog and the swine, and these persons had never been anything else than sinners.

The dog is turned to his own vomit again. That is, to eat it up. The passage would seem to imply, that whatever pains should be taken to change the habits of the dog, he would return to them again. The quotation here is from Pr 26:11: "As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly." A similar proverb is found in the Rabbinical writers. Of the truth of the disgusting *fact* here affirmed of the dog, there can be no doubt. Phaedrus (Fab. 27) states a fact still more offensive respecting its habits. In the view of the Orientals, the dog was reckoned among the most vile and disgusting of all animals. Comp. De 23:18 1Sa 17:43; 2Sa 3:8 9:8, 16:9 Mt 7:6; Php 3:2.

See also Horace, II. Epis. l, 26:—-

vixisset canis irnmundus, vel arnica luto sus.

On the use of this proverb, see Wetstein, *in loc*.

And the sow that was washed, etc. This proverb is not found in the Old Testament, but it was common in the Rabbinical writings, and is found in the Greek classics. See Wetstein, *in loc*. Its meaning is plain, and of the truth of what ;s affirmed no one can have any doubt. No matter how clean the swine is made by washing, thin would not prevent it, in the slightest degree, from rolling in filth again. It will act out its real nature. So it is with the sinner. No external reformation will certainly prevent his returning to his former habits; and when he *does* return, we can only say that he is acting according to his real nature—a nature which has never been changed, any more than the nature of the dog or the swine. On the *characteristics* of the persons referred to in this chapter, (2Pe 2:9-19,) see the Introduction, & 3.

This passage is often quoted to prove "the possibility of falling from grace, and from a very high degree of it too." But it is one of the last passages in the Bible that should be adduced to prove that doctrine. The true point of this passage is to show that the persons referred to never were changed; that whatever external reformation might have occurred, their nature remained the same; and that when they apostatized from their outward profession, they merely acted out their nature, and showed that in fact there had been no real change. This passage will prove—what there are abundant facts to confirm—that persons may reform externally, and then return again to their former corrupt habits; it can never be made to prove that one true Christian will fall away and perish. It will also prove that we should rely on no mere external reformation, no outward cleansing, as certain evidence of piety. Thousands who have been externally reformed have ultimately shown that they had no religion, and there is nothing in mere outward reformation that can fit us for heaven. God looks upon the heart; and it is only the religion that has its seat there, that can secure our final salvation.

{e} "proverb" Pr 26:11

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3 - Verse 1

2ND PETER 3—ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

THE principal design of this chapter is to demonstrate, in opposition to the objections of scoffers, that the Lord Jesus will return again to this world; that the world will be destroyed by fire, and that there will be a new heaven and a new earth; and to show what effect this should have on the minds of Christians. The chapter, without any very exact arrangement by the author, essentially consists of two parts.

I. The argument of the objectors to the doctrine that the Lord Jesus will return to the world, and that it will be destroyed, 2Pe 3:1-4. In doing this, the apostle (2Pe 3:1,2) calls their attention to the importance of attending diligently to the things which had been spoken by the prophets, and to the commands of the apostles, reminding them that it was to be expected that in the last days there would be scoffers who would deride the doctrines of religion, and who would maintain that there was no evidence that what had been predicted would be fulfilled, 2Pe 3:3. He then 2Pe 3:4 adverts to the argument on which they professed to rely, that there were no signs or indications that those events were to take place; that there were no natural causes in operation which could lead to such results; and that the fact of the stability of the earth since the time of the creation, demonstrated that the predicted destruction of the world could not occur.

II. The argument of Peter, in reply to this objection; a strong affirmation of the truth of the doctrine that the Lord Jesus will return; that the earth and all which it contains will be burned up; that there will be a new heaven and a new earth; and the effect Which the prospect of the coming of the Lord Jesus, and of the destruction of the world by fire, should have on the minds of Christians, 2Pe 3:5-18.

(1.) The arguments of Peter, in reply to the objection from the long-continued stability of the earth, are the following:

(a.) He refers to the destruction of the old world by the flood—a fact against which the same objections could have been urged, beforehand, which are urged against the predicted destruction of the world by fire, 2Pe 3:6-7. With just as much plausibility it might have been urged then that-the earth had stood for thousands of years, and that there were no natural causes at work to produce that change. It might, have been asked where the immense amount of water necessary to drown a world could come from; and perhaps it might have been argued that God was too *good* to destroy a world by a flood. Every objection which could be urged to the destruction of the world by fire, could have been urged to its destruction by water; and as, in fact, those objections, as the event showed, would have had no real force, so they should be regarded as having no real force now.

(b.) No argument against this predicted event can be derived from the fact that hundreds and thousands of years are suffered to elapse before the fulfillment of the predictions, 2Pe 3:8,9. What seems long to men is not long to God. A thousand years with him, in reference to this point, are as one day. He does not measure time as men do. They soon die; and if they cannot execute their purpose in a brief period, they cannot at all. But this cannot apply to God. He has infinite ages in which to execute his purposes, and therefore no argument can be derived from the fact that his purposes are long delayed, to prove that he will not execute them at all.

(c.) Peter says (2Pe 3:15, seq.) that the delay which was observed in executing the plans of God should not be interpreted as a proof that they would never be accomplished, but as an evidence of his long-suffering and patience; and, in illustration of this, he refers to the writings of Paul, in which he says that the same sentiments were advanced. There were indeed, he says, in those writings, some things which were hard to be understood; but on this point they were plain.

(2.) A strong affirmation of the truth of the doctrine, 2Pe 3:9,10, 2Pe 3:13. He declares that these events will certainly occur, and that they should be expected to take place suddenly, and without any preintimations of their approach—as the thief comes at night without announcing his coming.

(3.) The practical suggestions which Peter intersperses in the argument illustrative of the effect which these considerations should have on the mind, are among the most important parts of the Chapter:

(1.) We should be holy, devout, and serious, 2Pe 3:11.

(2.) We should look forward with deep interest to the new heavens and earth which are to succeed the present, 2Pe 3:12.

(3.) We should be diligent and watchful, that we may be found on the return of the Saviour "without spot and blameless," 2Pe 3:14.

(4.) We should be cautious that we be not seduced and led away by the errors which deny these great doctrines, 2Pe 3:17 and

(5.) we should grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, 2Pe 3:18.

Verse 1. *This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you*. This expression proves that he had written a former epistle, and that it was addressed to the same persons as this. Comp. Intro. & 3.

In both which I stir up your pure minds, etc. That is, the main object of both epistles is the same—to call to your remembrance important truths which you have before heard, but which you are in danger of forgetting, or from which you are in danger of being turned away by prevailing errors. Comp. **See Barnes** "2Pe 3:12, seq. The word rendered *pure*, *eilikrinhv* occurs only here and

in Php 1:10, where it is rendered *sincere*. The word properly refers to *that which may be judged of in sunshine*; then it means *clear, manifest*; and then *sincere, pure*—as that in which there is no obscurity. The idea here perhaps is, that their minds were open, frank, candid, sincere, rather than that they were *pure*. The apostle regarded them as disposed to see the truth, and yet as liable to be led astray by the plausible errors of others. Such minds need to have truths often brought fresh to their remembrance, though they are truths with which they had before been familiar.

{*} "remembrance" "reminding"

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *That ye may be mindful of the words*. Of the doctrines; the truths; the prophetic statements. Jude 1:18 says that it had been foretold by the apostles, that in the last days there would be scoffers, Peter refers to the instructions of the apostles and prophets in general, though evidently designing that his remarks should bear particularly on the fact that there would be scoffers.

Which were spoken before by the holy prophets. The predictions of the prophet before the advent of the Saviour, respecting his character and work, Peter had before appealed to them, (2Pe 1:19-21,) as furnishing important evidence in regard to the truth of the Christian religion, and valuable instruction in reference to its nature. See Notes on that passage. Many of the most important doctrines respecting the kingdom of the Messiah are stated as clearly in the Old Testament as in the New, (comp. Isa 53,) and the prophecies therefore deserve to be studied as an important part of Divine revelation. It should be added here, however, that when Peter wrote there was this special reason why he referred to the prophets, that the canon of the New Testament was not then completed, and he could not make his appeal to that. To some parts of the writings of Paul he could and did appeal, (2Pe 3:15,16,) but probably a very small part of what is now the New Testament was known to those to whom this epistle was addressed.

And of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour. As being equally entitled with the prophets tb state and enforce the doctrines and duties of religion. It may be observed, that no man would have used this language who did not regard himself and his fellow-apostles as inspired, and as on a level with the prophets.

{a} "That ye" Jude 1:17,18 {b} "before" 1Ti 4:1 2Ti 3:1

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Knowing this first*. As among the first and most important things to be attended to—as one of the predictions which demand your special regard. Jude Jude 1:18 says that the fact that there would be "mockers in the last time," had been particularly foretold by them. It is probably that Peter refers to the same thin, and we may suppose that this was so well understood by all the apostles that they made it a common subject of preaching.

That there shall come in the last days. In the last dispensation; in the period during which the affairs of the world shall be wound up. The apostle does not say that that was the last time in the

sense that the world was about to come to and end; nor is it implied that the period called "the last day" might not be a very long period, longer in fact than either of the previous periods of the world. He says that during that period it had been predicted there would arise those whom he calls *scoffers*. On the meaning of the phrase "in the last days," as used in the Scriptures, **See Barnes** "Ac 2:17, **See Barnes** "Heb 1:2, **See Barnes "Isa 2:2"**.

Scoffers. In Jude 1:18 the same Greek word is rendered *mockers*. The word means those who deride, reproach, ridicule. There is usually in the word the idea of contempt or malignity towards an object. Here the sense seems to be that they would treat with derision or contempt the predictions respecting the advent of the Saviour, and the end of the world. It would appear probable that there was a particular or definite class of men referred to; a class who would hold peculiar opinions, and who would urge plausible objections against the fulfilment of the predictions respecting the end of the world, and the second coming of the Saviour— for those are the points to which Peter particularly refers. It scarcely required inspiration to foresee that there would be *scoffers* in the general sense of the term—for they have so abounded in every age, that no would hazard much in saying that they would be found at any particular time; but the eye of the apostle is evidently on a particular class of men, the special form of whose reproaches would be the ridicule of the doctrines that the Lord Jesus would return; that there would be a day of judgment; that the world would be consumed by fire, etc. Archbishop Tillotson explains this of the Carpocratins, a large sect of the Gentiles, who denied the resurrection of the dead, and the future judgment.

Walking after their own lusts. Living in the free indulgence of their sensual appetites. **See Barnes** "2Pe 2:10, **See Barnes "2Pe 2:12"**; **See Barnes** "2Pe 2:14"; **See Barnes "2Pe 2:18"**; **See Barnes** "2Pe 2:19".

{c} "scoffers" Isa 5:19

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And saying, Where is the promise of his coming*? That is, either Where is the *fulfilment* of that promise; or, Where are the *indications or signs* that he will come? They evidently meant to imply that the promise had utterly failed; that there was not the slightest evidence that it would be accomplished; that they who had believed this were entirely deluded. It is possible that some of the early Christians, even in the time of the apostles, had undertaken to fix the time when these events would occur, as many have done since; and that as *that* time had passed by, they inferred that the prediction had utterly failed. But whether this were so or not, it was easy to allege that the predictions respecting the second coming of the Saviour *seemed* to imply that the end of the world was near, and that there were no indications that they would be fulfilled. The laws of nature were uniform, as they had always been, and the alleged promises had failed.

For since the fathers fell asleep. Since they *died*—-death being often, in the Scriptures, as elsewhere, represented as sleep. Notes, John xi. 11; I Cor. xi. 30. This reference to the "fathers," by such scoffers, was probably designed to be ironical and contemptuous. Perhaps the meaning may be thus expressed: "These old men, the prophets, indeed foretold this event. They were much concerned and troubled about it; and their predictions alarmed others, and filled their bosoms with dread. They looked out for the signs of the end of the world, and expected that that day was drawing near. But those good men have died. They lived to old age, and then died as others; and since they

have departed, the affairs of the world have gone on very much as they did before. The earth is suffered to have rest, and the laws of nature operate in the same way that they always did." It seems not improbable that the immediate reference in the word *fathers* is not to the prophets of former times, but to aged and pious men of the times of the apostles, who had dwelt much on this subject, and who had made it a subject of conversation and of preaching. Those old men, said the scoffing objector, have died like others; and, notwithstanding their confident predictions, things now move on as they did from the beginning.

All things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. That is, the laws of nature are fixed and settled. The *argument* here—for it was doubtless designed to be an argument—is based on the stability of the laws of nature, and the uniformity of the course of events. Thus far all these predictions had failed. Things continued to go on as they had always done. The sun rose and set; the tides ebbed and flowed; the seasons followed each other in the usual order; one generation succeeded another, as had always been the case; and there was every indication that those laws would continue to operate as they had always done. This argument for the stability of the earth, and against the prospect of the fulfilment of the predictions of the Bible, would have more force with many minds now than it had then, for eighteen hundred years more have rolled away, and the laws of nature remain the same. Meantime, the expectations of those who have believed that the world was coming to an end have been disappointed; the time set for this by many interpreters of Scripture has passed by; men have looked out in vain for the coming of the Saviour, and sublunary affairs move on as they always have done. Still there are no indications of the coming of the Saviour; and perhaps it would be said that the farther men search, by the aid of science, into the laws of nature, the more they become impressed with their stability, and the more firmly they are convinced of the improbability that the world will be destroyed in the manner in which it is predicted in the Scriptures that it will be. The specious and plausible objection arising from this source, the apostle proposes to meet in the following verses.

{d} "Where is the promise" Jer 17:15 Eze 12:22-27; Mt 24:48

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *For this they willingly are ignorant of. lanyanei gar autouv touto yelontav*. There is some considerable variety in the translation of this passage. In our common version the Greek word (*yelontav*) is rendered as if it were an adverb, or as if it referred to their ignorance in regard to the event; meaning, that while they might have known this fact, they took no pains to do it, or that they preferred to have its recollection far from their minds. So Beza and Luther render it. Others, however, take it as referring to what follows, meaning, "being so minded; being of that opinion; or affirming." So Bloomfield, Robinson, (Lex.,) Mede, Rosenmuller, etc. According to this interpretation the sense is, "They who thus *will* or think; that is, they who hold the opinion that all things will continue to remain as they were, are ignorant of this fact that things have not always thus remained; that there has been a destruction of the world once by water." The Greek seems rather to demand this interpretation; and then the sense of the passage will be, "It is concealed or hidden from those who hold this opinion, that the earth has been once destroyed." It is implied, whichever interpretation is adopted, that the will was concerned in it; that they were influenced by that rather than by sober

judgment and by reason; and whether the word refers to their ignorance, or to their holding that opinion, there was obstinacy and perverseness about it. The *will* has usually more to do in the denial and rejection of the doctrines of the Bible than the understanding has. The argument which the apostle appeals to in reply to this objection is a simple one. The adversaries of the doctrine affirmed that the laws of nature had always remained the same, and they affirmed that they always would. The apostle denies the fact which they assumed, in the sense in which they affirmed it, and maintains that those laws have *not* been so stable and uniform that the world has never been destroyed by an overwhelming visitation from God. It has been destroyed by a flood; it may be again by fire. There was the same improbability that the event would occur, so far as the argument from the stability of the laws of nature is concerned, in the one case that there is in the other, and consequently the objection is of no force.

That by the word of God. By the *command* of God. "He *spake*, and it was done." Comp. Ge 1:6,9; Ps 33:9.

The idea here is, that everything depends on his word or will. As the heavens and the earth were originally made by his command, so by the same command they call be destroyed.

The heavens were of old. The heavens were formerly made, Ge 1:1. The word *heaven* in the Scriptures sometimes refers to the atmosphere, sometimes to the starry worlds as they appear above us, and sometimes to the exalted place where God dwells. Here it is used, doubtless, in the popular signification, as denoting the heavens as they appear, embracing the sun, moon, and stars.

And the earth standing out of the water and in the water. Marg., *consisting*. Gr., *sunestwsa*. The Greek word, when used in an intransitive sense, means to *stand with, or together*; then tropically, *to place together*, to constitute, place, bring into existence. —*Robinson*. The idea which our translators seem to have had is, that, in the formation of the earth, a part was out of the water, and a part under the water; and that the former, or the inhabited portion, became entirely submerged, and that thus the inhabitants perished. This was not, however, probably the idea of Peter. He doubtless has reference to the account given in Ge 1 of the creation of the earth, in which *water* performed so important a part. The thought in his mind seems to have been, that *water* entered materially into the formation of the earth, and that in its very origin there existed the means by which it was afterwards destroyed. The word which is rendered "*standing*" should rather be rendered *consisting of*, or constituted of; and the meaning is, that the creation of the earth was the result of the Divine agency acting on the mass of elements which in Genesis is called *waters*, Ge 1:2,6,7,9.

There was at first a vast fluid, an immense unformed collection of materials, called waters, and from that the earth arose. The point of time, therefore, in which Peter looks at the earth here, is not when the mountains, and continents, and islands, seem to be standing partly out of the water and partly in the water, but when there was a vast mass of materials called *waters* from which the earth was formed. The phrase "*out of the water*" (*ex udatov*) refers to the origin of the earth. It was formed from, or out of, that mass. The phrase "*in the water*" (*di udatov*) more properly means *through or by*. It does not mean that the earth stood *in* the water in the sense that it was partly submerged; but it means not only that the earth arose *from* that mass that is called *water* in Ge 1, but that that mass called water was in fact the grand material out of which the earth was formed. It was *through* or *by means of* that vast mass of mingled elements that the earth was made as it was. Everything arose out of that chaotic mass; through that, or by *means of* that, all things were formed, and from the fact that the earth was thus formed out of the water, or that water entered so essentially into its formation, there existed causes which ultimately resulted in the deluge.

{a} "by the word" Ge 1:6,9 {1} "earth standing" "consisting" {b} "water" Ps 24:2

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Whereby*. *di wn*. Through which, or by means of which. The pronoun here is in the plural number, and there has been much difference of opinion as to what it refers. Some suppose that it refers to the heavens mentioned in the preceding verse, and to the fact that the windows of heaven were opened in the deluge, (*Doddridge*;) others that the Greek phrase is taken in the sense of (*dio*) *whence*. Wetstein supposes that it refers to the "heavens and the earth." But the most obvious reference, though the plural number is used, and the word *water* in the antecedent is in the singular, is to *water*. The fact seems to be that the apostle had the waters mentioned in Genesis prominently in his eye, and meant to describe the effect produced *by* those waters. He has also twice, in the same sentence, referred to *water*" out of the *water* and in the *water*." It is evidently to these *waters* mentioned in Genesis, out of which the world was originally made, that he refers here. The world was formed from that fluid mass; by these waters which existed when the earth was made, and out of which it arose, it was destroyed. The antecedent to the word in the plural number is rather that which was in the mind of the writer, or that of which he was thinking, than the word which he had used.

The world that then was, etc. Including all its inhabitants. Rosenmuller supposes that the reference here is to some universal catastrophe which occurred before the deluge in the time of Noah, and indeed before the earth was fitted up in its present form, as described by Moses in Ge 1. It is rendered more than probable, by the researches of geologists in modern times, that such changes have occurred; but there is no evidence that Peter was acquainted with them, and his purpose did not require that he should refer to them. All that his argument demanded was the fact that the world had been once destroyed, and that therefore there was no improbability in believing that it would be again. They who maintained that the prediction that the earth would be destroyed was improbable, affirmed that there were no signs of such an event; that the laws of nature were stable and uniform; and that as those laws had been so long and so uniformly unbroken, it was absurd to believe that such an event could occur. To meet this, all that was necessary was to show that, in a case where the same objections substantially might be urged, it had actually occurred, that the world had been destroyed. There was, in itself considered, as much improbability in believing that the world could be destroyed by water as that it would be destroyed by fire, and consequently the objection had no real force. Notwithstanding the apparent stability of the laws of nature, the world had been once destroyed; and there is, therefore, no improbability that it may be again. On the objections which *might* have been plausibly urged against the flood, **See Barnes "Heb 11:7"**.

{c} "water" Ge 7:11

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *But the heavens and the earth which are now*. As they now exist. There is no difficulty here respecting what is meant by the word *earth*, but it is not so easy to determine precisely how much is included in the word *heavens*. It cannot be supposed to mean *heaven* as the place where God dwells; nor is it necessary to suppose that Peter understood by the word all that would now be implied in it, as used by a modern astronomer. The word is doubtless employed in a popular signification, referring to the *heavens as they appear to the eye*; and the idea is, that the conflagration would not only destroy the earth, but would change the heavens as they now appear to us. If, in fact, the earth with its atmosphere should be subjected to an universal conflagration, all that is properly implied in what is here said by Peter would occur.

By the same word. Dependent solely on the will of God. He has only to give command, and all will be destroyed. The laws of nature have no stability independent of his will, and at his pleasure all things could be reduced to nothing, as easily as they were made. A single word, a breath of command, from one Being, a Being over whom we have no control, would spread universal desolation through the heavens and the earth. Notwithstanding the laws of nature, as they are called, and the precision, uniformity, and power with which they operate, the dependence of the universe on the Creator is as entire as though there were no such laws, and as though all were conducted by the mere will of the Most High, irrespective of such laws. In fact, those laws have no efficiency of their own, but are a mere statement of the way in which God produces the changes which occur, the methods by which He operates who "works all in all." At any moment he could suspend them; that is, he could cease to act, or withdraw his efficiency, and the universe would cease to be.

Are kept in store. Gr., "*Are treasured up*." The allusion in the Greek word is to anything that is treasured up, or reserved for future use. The apostle does not say that this is the *only* purpose for which the heavens and the earth are preserved, but that this is *one* object, or this is one aspect in which the subject may be viewed. They are like treasure reserved for future use.

Reserved unto fire. Reserved or kept to be burned up, **See Barnes "2Pe 3:10"**.

The first mode of destroying the world was by water, the next will be by fire. That the world would at some period be destroyed by fire was a common opinion among the ancient philosophers, especially the Greek Stoics. What was the foundation of that opinion, or whence it was derived, it is impossible now to determine; but it is remarkable that it should have accorded so entirely with the statements of the New Testament. The authorities in proof that this opinion was entertained may be seen in Wetstein, *in loc*. See Seneca, N. Q. iii. 28; Cic. N. D. ii. 46; Simplicius in Arist. de Ccelo i. 9; Eusebius, P. xv. 18. It is quite remarkable that there have been among the heathen in ancient and modern times so many opinions that accord with the statements of revelation—opinions, many of them, which could not have been founded on any investigations of science among them, and which must, therefore, have been either the result of conjecture, or handed down by tradition. Whatever may have been their origin, the fact that such opinions prevailed and were believed, may be allowed to have some weight in showing that the statements in the Bible are not improbable.

Against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. The world was destroyed by a flood on account of the wickedness of its inhabitants. It would seem from this passage that it will be destroyed by fire with reference to the same cause; at least, that its destruction by fire will involve the perdition of wicked men. It cannot be inferred from this passage that the world will be all wicked at the general conflagration as it was in the time of Noah; but the idea in the mind of Peter seems to have been, that in the destruction of the world by fire the perdition of the wicked will be involved, or will at that time occur. It also seems to be implied that the fire will accomplish an important

agency in that destruction, as the water did on the old world. It is not said, in the passage before us, whether those to be destroyed will be living at that time, or will be raised up from the dead, nor have we any means of determining what was the idea of Peter on that point. All that the passage essentially teaches is, that the world is reserved now with reference to such a consummation by fire; that is, that there are elements kept in store that may be enkindled into an universal conflagration, and that such a conflagration will be attended with the destruction of the wicked.

{a} "unto fire" Ps 1:3 Zep 3:8; 2Th 1:8

{*} "perdition" "destruction"

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years*. This (2Pe 3:8,9) is the second consideration by which the apostle meets the objection of scoffers against the doctrine of the second coming of the Saviour. The objection was, that much time, and perhaps the time which had been supposed to be set for his coming, had passed away, and still all things remained as they were. The reply of the apostle is, that no argument could be drawn from this, for that which may seem to be a long time to us is a brief period with God. In the infinity of his own duration there is abundant time to accomplish his designs, and it can make no difference with him whether they are accomplished in one day or extended to a thousand years. Man has but a short time to live, and if he does not accomplish his purposes in a very brief period, he never will. But it is not so with God. He always lives; and we cannot therefore infer, because the execution of his purposes seems to be delayed, that they are abandoned. With Him who always lives it will be as easy to accomplish them at a far distant period as now. If it is his pleasure to accomplish them in a single day, he can do it; if he chooses that the execution shall be deferred to a thousand years, or that a thousand years shall be consumed in executing them, he has power to carry them onward through what seems to us to be so vast a duration. The wicked, therefore, cannot infer that they will escape because their punishment is delayed; nor should the righteous fear that the Divine promises will fail because ages pass away before they are accomplished. The expression here used, that "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years," etc., is common in the Rabbinical writings. See Wetstein *in loc*. A similar thought occurs in Ps 90:4: "For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night."

{b} "a thousand years" Ps 90:4

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise*. That is, it should not be inferred because his promise seems to be long delayed that therefore it will fail. When men, after a considerable lapse of time, fail to fulfil their engagements, we infer that it is because they have changed their plans, or because they have forgotten their promises, or because they have no ability to perform them, or because there is a want of principle which makes them regardless of their obligations. But

no such inference can be drawn from the apparent delay of the fulfilment of the Divine purposes. Whatever may be the reasons why they seem to be deferred, we may be sure that it is from no such causes as these.

As some men count slackness. It is probable that the apostle here had his eye on some professing Christians who had become disheartened and impatient, and who, from the delay in regard to the coming of the Lord Jesus, and from the representations of those who denied the truth of the Christian religion, arguing from that delay that it was false, began to fear that his promised coming would indeed never occur. To such he says that it should not be inferred from his delay that he would not return, but that the delay should be regarded as an evidence of his desire that men should have space for repentance, and an opportunity to secure their salvation. **See Barnes "2Pe 3:15"**.

But is longsuffering to us-ward. Toward us. The delay should be regarded as a proof of his forbearance, and of his desire that men should be saved. Every sinner should consider the fact that he is not cut down in his sins, not as a proof that God will not punish the wicked, but as a demonstration that he is now forbearing, and is willing that he should have an ample opportunity to obtain eternal life. No man should infer that God will not execute his threatenings, unless he can look into the most distant parts of a coming eternity, and demonstrate that there is no suffering appointed for the sinner there; any man who sins, and who is spared even for a moment, should regard the respite as a proof that God is merciful and forbearing now.

Not willing that any should perish. That is, he does not *desire* it or wish it. His nature is benevolent, and he sincerely desires the eternal happiness of all, and his patience towards sinners *proves* that he is willing that they should be saved. If he were not willing, it would be easy for him to cut them off, and exclude them from hope at once. This passage, however, should not be adduced to prove

(1.) that sinners never will in fact perish; for

(a.) the passage does not refer to what God will do as the final Judge of mankind, but to what are his feelings and desires now towards men.

(b.) One may have a sincere desire that others should not perish, and yet it may be that, in entire consistency with that, they will perish. A parent has a sincere *wish* that his children should not be punished, and yet he himself may be under a moral necessity to punish them. A lawgiver may have a sincere wish that no one should ever break the laws, or be punished, and yet he himself may build a prison, and construct a gallows, and cause the law to be executed in a most rigorous manner. A judge on the bench may have a sincere desire that no man should be executed, and that every one arraigned before him should be found to be innocent, and yet even he, in entire accordance with that wish, and with a most benevolent heart, even with tears in his eyes, may pronounce the sentence of the law.

(c.) It cannot be inferred that all that the heart of infinite benevolence would desire will be accomplished by his mere *will*. It is evidently as much in accordance with the benevolence of God that no man should be miserable in this world, as it is that no one should suffer in the next, since the difficulty is not in the question *where* one shall suffer, but in the fact itself that any should suffer; and it is just as much in accordance with his nature that all should he happy *here*, as that they should be happy hereafter. And yet no man can maintain that the fact that God is benevolent proves that no one will suffer here. As little will that fact prove that none will suffer in the world to come.

(2.) The passage should not be adduced to prove that God has no *purpose*, and has formed no plan, in regard to the destruction of the wicked; for

(a.) the word here used has reference rather to his disposition, or to his nature, than to any act or plan.

(b.) There is a sense, as is admitted by all, in which he does will the destruction of the wicked—to wit, if they do not repent—that is, if they deserve it.

(c.) Such an act is as inconsistent with his general benevolence as an eternal purpose in the matter, since his eternal purpose can only have been to *do* what he actually does; and if it be consistent with a sincere desire that sinners should be saved to *do* this, then it is consistent to *determine* beforehand to do it—for to determine before hand to do what is in fact right, cannot but be a lovely trait in the character of any one.

(3.) The passage then proves

(a.) that God has a sincere desire that men should be saved;

(b.) that any purpose in regard to the destruction of sinners is not founded on mere will, or is not arbitrary;

(c.) that it would be agreeable to the nature of God, and to his arrangements in the plan of salvation, if all men should come to repentance, and accept the offers of mercy;

(d.) that if any come to him truly penitent, and desirous to be saved, they will not be cast off;

(e.) that, since it is in accordance with him nature that he should desire that all men may be saved, it may be presumed that he has made an arrangement by which it is possible that they should be; and

(f.) that, since this is his desire, it is proper for the ministers of religion to *offer* salvation to every human being. Comp. Eze 33:11.

{+} "slack" "slow" {c} "slack" Heb 2:3 {++} "slackness" "slowness" {a} "long suffering" Ps 86:15 Isa 30:18 {b} "not willing" Eze 33:11 {c} "should come" 1Ti 2:4

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *But the day of the Lord*. The day of the Lord Jesus. That is, the day in which he will be manifested. It is called *his* day, because he will then be the grand and prominent object as the Judge of all. Comp. Lu 17:27.

Will come as a thief in the night. Unexpectedly; suddenly. **See Barnes "1Th 5:2"**.

In the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise. That is, what seems to us to be the heavens. It cannot mean that the holy abode where God dwells will pass away; nor need we suppose that this declaration extends to the starry worlds and systems as disclosed by the modern astronomy. The word is doubtless used in a popular sense—that is, as things appear to us; and the *fair* interpretation of the passage would demand only such a change as would occur by the destruction of this world by fire. If a conflagration should take place, embracing the earth and its surrounding atmosphere, all the phenomena would occur which are here described; and, if this would be so, then this is all that can be proved to be meant by the passage. Such a destruction of the elements could not occur without "a great noise."

And the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Gr., "the elements being burned, or burning, (*kausoumena*,) shall be dissolved." The idea is, that the cause of their being "dissolved" shall be fire; or that there will be a conflagration extending to what are here called the "elements," that shall produce the effects here described by the word "dissolved." There has been much difference of opinion in regard to the meaning of the word here rendered *elements*, (*stoiceia*.) The word occurs in the New Testament only in the following places: Ga 4:3,9; 2Pe 3:10,12, in which it is rendered *elements*; Col 2:8,20, in which it is rendered *rudiments*; and in Heb 5:12, where it is tendered principles. For the general meaning of the word, **See Barnes "Gal 4:3"**.

The word denotes the *rudiments* of anything; the minute parts or portions of which anything is composed, or which constitutes the simple portions out of which anything grows, or of which it is compounded. Here it would properly denote the component parts of the material world; or those which enter into its composition, and of which it is made up. It is not to be supposed that the apostle used the term with the same exact signification with which a chemist would use it now, but in accordance with the popular use of the term in his day. In all ages, and in all languages, some such word, with more or less of scientific accuracy, has been employed to denote the primary materials out of which others were formed, just as, in most languages, there have been characters or letters to denote the elementary sounds of which language is composed. The ancients in general supposed that the elements out of which all things were formed were four—air, earth, fire, and water. Modern science has entirely overturned this theory, and has shown that these, so far from being simple elements, are themselves compounds; but the tendency of modern science is still to show that the elements of all things are in fact few in number. The word, as here used by Peter, would refer to the elements of things as then understood in a popular sense; it would now not be an improper word to be applied to the few elements of which all things are composed, as disclosed by modern chemistry. In either case the use of the word would be correct. Whether applied to the one or the other, science has shown that all are capable of combustion. Water, in its component parts, is inflammable in a high degree; and even the diamond has been shown to be combustible. The idea contained in the word "dissolved," is, properly, only the change which *heat* produces. Heat changes the *forms* of things; dissolves them into their elements; dissipates those which were solid by driving them off into gases, and produces new compounds, but it *annihilates* nothing. It could not be demonstrated from this phrase that the world would be annihilated by fire; it could be proved only that it will undergo important changes. So far as the action of fire is concerned, the form of the earth may pass away, and its aspect be changed; but unless the direct power which created it interposes to annihilate it, the *matter* which now composes it will still be in existence.

The earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up.

That is, whether they are the works of God or man—the whole vegetable and animal creation, and all the towers, the towns, the palaces, the productions of genius, the paintings, the statuary, the books, which man has made. \-

"The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
And all that it inherits, shall disrobe,
And, like the baseless fabric of a vision,
Leave not one wreck behind." \- The word rendered "burned up," like the word just before used and rendered *fervent heat*—a word of the same origin, but here *intensive* —means that they will undergo such a change as fire will produce; not, necessarily, that the matter composing them will

be annihilated. If the matter composing the earth is ever to be destroyed entirely, it must be by the immediate power of God, for only He who created can destroy. There is not the least evidence that a particle of matter originally made has been *annihilated* since the world began; and there are no fires so intense, no chemical powers so mighty, as to cause a particle of matter to cease wholly to be. So far as the power of man is concerned, and so far as one portion of matter can prey on another, matter is as imperishable as mind, and neither can be destroyed unless *God* destroys it. Whether it is his purpose to *annihilate* any portion of the matter which he has made, does not appear from his word; but it is clear that he intends that the universe shall undergo important *changes*. As to the possibility or probability of such a destruction by fire as is here predicted, no one can have any doubt who is acquainted with the disclosures of modern science in regard to the internal structure of the earth. Even the ancient philosophers, from some cause, supposed that the earth would yet be destroyed by fire, (**See Barnes** "2Pe 3:7;) and modern science has made it probable that the interior of the earth is a melted and intensely heated mass of burning materials; that the habitable world is but a comparatively thin crust or shell over those internal fires; that earthquakes are caused by the vapours engendered by that heated mass whet, water comes in contact with it; and that volcanoes are but openings and vent-holes through which those internal flames make their way to the surface. Whether these fires will everywhere make their way to the surface, and produce an universal conflagration, perhaps could not be determined by science; but no one can doubt that the simple command of God would be all that is necessary to pour those burning floods over the earth, as he once caused the waters to roll over every mountain and through every valley. As to the question whether it is probable that such a change produced by fire, and bringing the present order of things to a close, will occur, it may be remarked farther, that there is reason to believe that such changes are in fact taking place in other worlds. "During the last two or three centuries, upwards of thirteen fixed stars have disappeared. One of them, situated in the northern hemisphere, presented a peculiar brilliancy, and was so bright as to be seen by the naked eye at mid-day. It seemed to be on fire, appearing at first of a dazzling white, then of a reddish yellow, and lastly of an ashy pale colour. La Place supposes that it was burned up, as it has never been seen since. The conflagration was visible about sixteen months." The well-known astronomer, Von Littrow, in the section of his work on "New and Missing Stars," (entitled Die Wunder der Himmels oder Gemeinfassliche Darstellung der Weltsystems, Stuttgard, 1843, & 227,) observes: "Great as may be the revolutions which take place on the surface of those fixed stars, which are subject to this alternation of light, what entirely different changes may those others have experienced, which in regions of the firmament where no star had ever been before, appeared to blaze up in clear flames, and then to disappear, perhaps for ever." He then gives a brief history of those stars which have excited the particular attention of astronomers. "In the year 1572, on the 11th of November," says he, "Tycho, on passing from his chemical laboratory to the observatory, through the court of his house, observed in the constellation Cassiopeia, at a place where before he had only seen very small stars, a new star of uncommon magnitude. It was so bright that it surpassed even Jupiter and Venus in splendour, and was visible even in the day-time. During the whole time in which it was visible, Tycho could observe no parallax or change of position. At the end of the year, however, it gradually diminished; and at length, in March 1574, sixteen months after its discovery, entirely disappeared, since which all traces of it have been lost. When it first appeared, its light was of a dazzling white colour; in January 1573, two months after its reviving, it became yellowish; in a few months it assumed a reddish hue, like Mars or Aldebaran; and in the beginning of the year 1574, two or three months before its total

disappearance, it glimmered only with a gray or lead-coloured light, similar to that of Saturn." See Bibliotheca Sacra, III, p. 181. If such things occur in other worlds, there is nothing improbable or absurd in the supposition that they may yet occur on the earth.

{d} "thief in the night" Mt 24:42,43; Re 16:15

{e} "shall pass away" Ps 102:26 Isa 51:6; Re 20:11

{+} "fervent heat" "Great"

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved*. Since this is an undoubted truth.

What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness. In holy conduct and piety. That is, this fact ought to be allowed to exert a deep and abiding influence on us, to induce us to lead holy lives. We should feel that there is nothing permanent on the earth; that this is not our abiding home; and that our great interests are in another world. We should be serious, humble, and prayerful; and should make it our great object to be prepared for the solemn scenes through which we are soon to pass. An habitual contemplation of the truth, that all that we see is soon to pass away, would produce a most salutary effect on the mind. It would make us serious. It would repress ambition. It would lead us not to desire to accumulate what must so soon be destroyed. It would prompt us to lay up our treasures in heaven. It would cause us to ask with deep earnestness whether we are prepared for these amazing scenes, should they suddenly burst upon us.

{*} "conversation" "behaviour"

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Looking for*. Not knowing when this may occur, the mind should be in that state which constitutes *expectation*; that is, a belief that it will occur, and a condition of mind in which we would not be taken by surprise should it happen at any moment. **See Barnes "Tit 2:13"**.

And hasting unto the coming. Marg., as in Greek, "*hasting the coming*." The Greek word rendered *hasting*, (*speudw*,) means to urge on, to hasten; and then to hasten after anything, to await with eager desire. This is evidently the sense here.—Wetstein and Robinson. The state of mind which is indicated by the word is that when we are anxiously desirous that anything should occur, and when we would hasten or accelerate it if we could. The true Christian does not dread the coming of that day. He looks forward to it as the period of his redemption, and would welcome, at any time, the return of his Lord and Saviour. While he is willing to wait as long as it shall please God for the advent of his Redeemer, yet to him the brightest prospect in the future is that hour when he shall come to take him to himself.

The coming of the day of God. Called "the day of God," because God will then be manifested in his power and glory.

{a} "Looking for" Tit 2:13 {1} "hasting" "hasting the coming" {b} "melt" Isa 35:4 Mic 1:4 {+} "fervent" "great"

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Nevertheless we, according to his promise*. The allusion here seems to be, beyond a doubt, to two passages in Isaiah, in which a promise of this kind is found. Isa 65:17: "For, behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." Isa 66:22: "For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord," etc. Comp. Re 21:1, where John says he had a vision of the new heaven and the new earth which was promised: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea." **See Barnes "Isa 65:17"**.

Look for new heavens and a new earth. It may not be easy to answer many of the questions which might be asked respecting the "new heavens and earth" here mentioned. One of those which are most naturally asked is is, whether the apostle meant to say that this earth, after being purified by fire, would be fitted up again for the abode of the redeemed; but this question it is impossible to answer with certainty. The following remarks may perhaps embrace all that is known, or that can be shown to be probable, on the meaning of the passage before us.

I. The "new heavens and the new earth" referred to will be such as will exist after the world shall have been destroyed by fire; that is, after the general judgment. There is not a word expressed, and not a hint given, of any "new heaven and earth" *previous* to this, in which the Saviour will reign personally over his saints, in such a renovated world, through a long millennial period. The *order* of events stated by Peter, is

(a.) that the heavens and earth which are now, are "kept in store, reserved unto fire *against the day of judgment*, and perdition of ungodly men," 2Pe 3:7;

(b.) that the day of the Lord will come suddenly and unexpectedly, 2Pe 3:10; that then the heavens and earth will pass away with a great noise, the elements will melt, and the earth with all its works be burned up, 2Pe 3:10; and

(c.) that *after* this (2Pe 3:13) we are to expect the "new heavens and new earth." Nothing is said of a personal reign of Christ; nothing of the resurrection of the saints to dwell with him on the earth; nothing of the world's being fitted up for their abode *previous* to the final judgment. If Peter had any knowledge of such events, and believed that they would occur, it is remarkable that he did not even allude to them here. The passage before us is one of the very few places in the New Testament where allusion is made to the manner in which the affairs of the world will be closed; and it cannot be explained why, if he looked for such a glorious personal reign of the Saviour, the subject should have been passed over in total silence.

II. The word "new," applied to the heavens and the earth that are to succeed the present, might express one of the following three things—that is, either of these things would correspond with all that is fairly implied in that word:

(a.) If a new world was literally created out of nothing after this world is destroyed; for that would be in the strictest sense new. That such an event is possible no one can doubt, though it is not revealed.

(b.) If an inhabitant of the earth should dwell after death on any other of the worlds now existing, it would be to him a "new" abode, and everything would appear new. Let him, for instance, be removed to the planet Saturn, with its wonderful ring, and its seven moons, and the whole aspect of the heavens, and of the world on which he would then dwell, would be new to him. The same thing would occur if he were to dwell on any other of the heavenly bodies, or if he were to pass

from world to world. See this illustrated at length in the works of Thomas Dick, LLd.—- "Celestial Scenery," etc. Comp. **See Barnes "1Pe 1:12"**

(c.) *If* the earth should be renovated, and fitted up for the abode of man *after* the universal conflagration, it would then be a new abode,

III. This world, thus renovated, may be from time to time the temporary abode of the redeemed, after the final judgment. No one can prove that this may not be, though there is no evidence that it will be their permanent and eternal abode, or that even all the redeemed will at any one time find a home on this globe, for no one can suppose that the earth is spacious enough to furnish a dwelling-place for all the unnumbered millions that are to be saved. But that the earth *may* again be revisited from time to time by the redeemed; that in a purified and renovated form it may be *one* of the "many mansions" which are to be fitted up for them, (Joh 14:2,) may not appear wholly improbable from the following suggestions:

(1.) It seems to have been a law of the earth that in its progress it should be prepared at one period for the dwelling-place of a higher order of beings at another period. Thus, according to the disclosures of geology, it existed perhaps for countless ages before it was fitted to be an abode for man; and that it was occupied by the monsters of an inferior order of existence, who have now passed away to make room for a nobler race. Who can tell but the present order of things may pass away to make place for the manifestations of a more exalted mode of being?

(2.) There is no certain evidence that any world has been annihilated, though some have disappeared from human view. Indeed, as observed above, (2Pe 3:10,) there is no proof that a single particle of matter ever has been annihilated, or ever will be. It may change its form, but it may still exist.

(3.) It seems also to accord most with probability, that, though the earth may undergo important changes by flood or fire, it will not be annihilated. It seems difficult to suppose that, as a world, it will be wholly displaced from the system of which it is now a part, or that the system itself will disappear. The earth, as one of the worlds of God, has occupied too important a position in the history of the universe to make it to be easily believed that the place where the Son of God became incarnate and died, shall be utterly swept away. It would, certainly, accord more with all the *feelings* which we can have on such a subject, to suppose that a world once so beautiful when it came from the hand of its Maker, should be restored to primitive loveliness; that a world which seems to have been *made* primarily (**See Barnes "1Pe 1:12"**) with a view to illustrate the glory of God in redemption, should be preserved in some appropriate form to be the theatre of the exhibition of the development of that plan in far distant ages to come.

(4.) To the redeemed, it would be most interesting again to visit the spot where the great work of their redemption was accomplished; where the Son of God became incarnate and made atonement for sin; and where there would be so many interesting recollections and associations, even after the purification by fire, connected with the infancy of their existence, and their preparation for eternity. Piety would at least wish that the world where Gethsemane and Calvary are should never be blotted out from the universe. But

(5.) if, after their resurrection and reception into heaven, the redeemed shall ever revisit a world so full of interesting recollections and associations, where they began their being, where their Redeemer lived and died, where they were renewed and sanctified, and where their bodies once rested in the grave, there is no reason to suppose that this will be their permanent and unchanging

abode. It may be mere speculation, but it seems to accord best with the goodness of God, and with the manner in which the universe is made, to suppose that every portion of it may be visited, and become successively the abode of the redeemed; that they may pass from world to world, and survey the wonders and the works of God as they are displayed in different worlds. The universe, so vast, seems to have been fitted up for such a purpose, and nothing else that we can conceive of will be so adapted to give employment without weariness to the minds that God has made, in the interminable duration before them.

IV. The new heavens and earth will be *holy*. They will be the abode of righteousness for ever.

(a.) This fact is clearly revealed in the verse before us: "wherein dwelleth righteousness." It is also the correct statement of the Scriptures, Re 21:27 1Co 6:9,10 Heb 12:14.

(b.) This will be in strong contrast with what has occurred on earth. The history of this world has been almost entirely a history of *sin*—of its nature, developments, results. There have been no perfectly holy beings on the earth, except the Saviour, and the angels who have occasionally visited it. There has been no perfectly holy place—city, village, hamlet; no perfectly holy community. But the future world, in strong contrast with this, will be perfectly pure, and will be a fair illustration of what religion in its perfect form will do.

(c.) It is for this that the Christian desires to dwell in that world, and waits for the coming of his Saviour. It is not primarily that he may be happy, desirable as that is, but that he may be in a world where he himself will be perfectly pure, and where all around him will be pure; where every being that he meets shall be "holy as God is holy," and every place on which his eye rests, or his foot treads, shall be uncontaminated by sin. To the eye of faith and hope, how blessed is the prospect of such a world!

{e} "new heavens" Re 21:1,27

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent*. That is, in securing your salvation. The effect of such hopes and prospects should be to lead us to an earnest inquiry whether we are prepared to dwell in a holy world, and to make us diligent in performing the duties, and patient in bearing the trials of life. He who has such hopes set before him, should seek earnestly that he may be enabled truly to avail himself of them, and should make their attainment meet the great object of his life. He who is so soon to come to an end of all weary toil, should be willing to labour diligently and faithfully while life lasts, he who is so soon to be relieved from all temptation and trial, should be willing to bear a little longer the sorrows of the present world What are all these compared with the glory that awaits us? Comp. **See Barnes "1Co 15:58"**; **See Barnes** "Ro 8:18, seq. **See Barnes** "2Co 4:16, seq.

That ye may be found of him in peace. Found by him when he returns in such a state as to secure your eternal peace.

Without spot, and blameless. **See Barnes "Eph 5:27"**.

It should be an object of earnest effort with us to have the last stain of sin and pollution removed from our souls. A deep feeling that we are soon to stand in the presence of a holy God, our final Judge, cannot but have a happy influence in making us pure.

{a} "diligent" 1Co 15:56 1Th 5:23

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation*. Regard his delay in coming to judge the world, not as an evidence that he never will come, but as a proof of his desire that we should be saved. Many had drawn a different inference from the fact that: the Saviour did not return, and had supposed that it was a proof that he would never come, and that his promises had failed. Peter says that that conclusion was not authorized, but that we should rather regard it as an evidence of his mercy, and of his desire that we should be saved. This conclusion is as proper now as it was then. Wicked men should not infer, because God does not cut them down, that therefore they never will be punished, or that God is not faithful to his threatenings. They should rather regard it as a proof that he is willing to save them; for

(1.) he might justly cut them off for their sins;

(2.) the only reason of which we have knowledge why he spares the wicked is to give them space for repentance; and

(3.) as long as life is prolonged a sinner has the opportunity to repent, and may turn to God. We may therefore, in our own case, look on all the delays of God to punish—on all his patience and forbearance towards us, notwithstanding our sins and provocations—on the numberless tokens of his kindness scattered along our way, as evidence that he is not willing that we should perish. What an accumulated argument in any case would this afford of the willingness of God to save! Let any man look on his own sins, his pride, and selfishness, and sensuality; let him contemplate the fact that he has sinned through many years, and against many mercies; let him endeavour to estimate the number and magnitude of his offences, and upon God's patience in bearing with him while these have been committed, and who can overrate the force of such an argument in proof that God is slow to anger, and is willing to save? **See Barnes "Ro 2:4"**.

Even as our beloved brother Paul also. From this reference to Paul the following things are clear:

(1.) that Peter was acquainted with his writings;

(2.) that he presumed that those to whom he wrote were also acquainted with them;

(3.) that Peter regarded Paul as a "beloved brother," notwithstanding the solemn rebuke which Paul had had occasion to administer to him, Ga 2:2, seq.;

(4.) that he regarded him as authority in inculcating the doctrines and duties of religion; and

(5.) that he regarded him as an inspired man, and his writings as a part of Divine truth. **See Barnes "2Pe 3:16"**.

That Peter has shown in his epistles that he was acquainted with the writings of Paul, has been abundantly proved by Eichhon, (Einleitung in das N. Tes. viii. 606, seq.,) and will be apparent by a comparison of the following passages: Eph 1:3, with 1Pe 3:1; Col 3:8, with 1Pe 2:1; Eph 5:22, with 1Pe 3:1; Eph 5:21, with 1Pe 5:5; 1Th 5:6, with 1Pe 5:8; 1Co 16:20 with 1Pe 5:14; Ro 8:18, with 1Pe 5:1; Ro 4:24 with 1Pe 1:21; Ro 13:1,3,4

with 1Pe 2:13,14; 1Ti 2:9, with 1Pe 3:5. The writings of the apostles were doubtless extensively circulated; and one apostle, though himself inspired, could not but feel a deep interest in the writings

of another. There would be cases also, as in the instance before us, in which one would wish to confirm his own sentiments by the acknowledged wisdom, experience, and authority of another.

According to the wisdom given unto him. Peter evidently did not mean to disparage that wisdom, or to express a doubt that Paul was endowed with wisdom; he meant undoubtedly that, in regard to Paul, the same thing was true which he would have affirmed of himself or of any other man, that whatever wisdom he had was to be traced to a higher than human origin. This would at the same time tend to secure more respect for the opinion of Paul than if he had said it was his own, and would keep up in the minds of those to whom he wrote a sense of the truth that *all* wisdom is from above. In reference to ourselves, to our friends, to our teachers, and to all men, it is proper to bear in remembrance the fact that all true wisdom is from the "Father of lights." Comp. **See Barnes** "Jas 1:6,17.

Hath written unto you. It is not necessary to suppose that Paul had written any epistles addressed specifically, and by name, to the persons to whom Peter wrote. It is rather to be supposed that the persons to whom Peter wrote (1Pe 1:1) lived in the regions to which some of Paul's epistles were addressed, and that they might be regarded as addressed to them. The epistles to the Galatians, Ephesians, and Colossians were of this description, all addressed to churches in Asia Minor, and all, therefore, having reference to the same people to whom Peter addressed his epistles.

{b} "salvation" Ro 2:4

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *As also in all his epistles*. Not only in those which he addressed to the churches in Asia Minor, but in his epistles generally. It is to be presumed that they might have had an acquaintance with some of the other epistles of Paul, as well as those sent to the churches in their immediate vicinity.

Speaking in them of these things. The things which Peter had dwelt upon in his two epistles. The great doctrines of the cross; of the depravity of man; of the Divine purposes; of the new birth; of the consummation of all things; of the return of the Saviour to judge the world, and to receive his people to himself; the duty of a serious, devout, and prayerful life, and of being prepared for the heavenly world. These things are constantly dwelt upon by Paul, and to his authority in these respects Peter might appeal with the utmost confidence.

In which. The common reading in this passage is *en oiv*, and according to this the reference is to the subjects treated of—"in which *things*" —referring to what he had just spoken of—"speaking of these *things*." This reading is found in the common editions of the New Testament, and is supported by far the greater number of Mss., and by most commentators and critics. It is found in Griesbach, Tittman, and Hahn, and has every evidence of being the genuine reading. Another reading, however, (*en aiv*,) is found in some valuable Mss., and is supported by the Syriac and Arabic versions, and adopted by Mill, (Proleg. 1484,) and by Beza. According to this, the reference is to the epistles themselves as would seem to be implied in our common version. The true construction, so far as the evidence goes, is to refer it not directly to the *epistles*, but to the *things* of which Peter says Paul wrote; that is, not to the style and language of Paul, but to the great truths and doctrines which he taught. Those doctrines were indeed contained in his epistles, but still,

according to the fair construction of the passage before us, Peter should not be understood as accusing Paul of obscurity of *style*. He refers not to the difficulty of understanding what Paul meant, but to the difficulty of comprehending the great *truths*, which he taught. This is, generally, the greatest difficulty in regard to the statements of Paul. The difficulty is not that the meaning of the writer is not plain, but it is either

(a.) that the mind is overpowered by the grandeur of the thought, and the incomprehensible nature of the theme, or

(b.) that the truth is so unpalatable, and the mind is so prejudiced against it, that we are unwilling to receive it. Many a man knows well enough what Paul means, and would receive his doctrines without hesitation if the heart was not opposed to it; and in this state of mind Paul is charged with obscurity, when the real difficulty lies only in the *heart* of him who makes the complaint. If this be the true interpretation of this passage, then it should not be adduced to prove that Paul is an obscure writer, whatever may be true on that point. There are, undoubtedly, obscure things in his writings, as there are in all other ancient compositions, but this passage should not be adduced to prove that he had not the faculty of making himself understood. An honest heart, a willingness to receive the truth, is one of the best qualifications for understanding the writings of Paul; and when this exists, no one will fall to find truth that may be comprehended, and that will be eminently adapted to sanctify and save the soul.

Are some things hard to be understood. Things pertaining to high and difficult subjects, and which are not easy to be comprehended. Peter does not call in question the truth of what Paul had written; he does not intimate that he himself would differ from him. His language is rather that which a man would use who regarded the writings to which he referred as true, and what he says here is an honourable testimony to the authority of Paul. It may be added,

(1.) that Peter does not say that *all* the doctrines of the Bible, or even *all* the doctrines of Paul, are hard to be understood, or that nothing is plain.

(2.) He says nothing about withholding the Bible, or even the writings of Paul, from the mass of Christians, on the ground of the difficulty of understanding the Scriptures; nor does he intimate that that was the design of the Author of the Bible.

(3.) It is perfectly manifest, from this very passage, that the writings of Paul were in fact in the hands of the people, else how could they wrest and pervert them?

(4.) Peter says nothing about an infallible interpreter of any kind, nor does he intimate that either he or his "successors" were authorized to interpret them for the church.

(5.) With what propriety can the *pretended* successor of Peter—the pope—undertake to expound those difficult doctrines in the writings of Paul, when even Peter himself did not undertake it, and when he did not profess to be able to comprehend them? Is the pope more skilled in the knowledge of Divine things than the apostle Peter? Is he better qualified to interpret the sacred writings than an inspired apostle was?

(6.) Those portions of the writings of Paul, for anything that appears to the contrary, are just as "hard to be understood" now, as they were before the "infallible" church undertook to explain them. The world is little indebted to any claims of infallibility in explaining the meaning of tile oracles of God. It remains yet to be seen that any portion of the Bible has been made clearer by any mere authoritative explanation. And

(7.) it should be added, that without any such exposition, the humble inquirer after truth may find enough in the Bible to guide his feet in the paths of salvation. No one ever approached the

sacred Scriptures with a teachable heart, who did not find them "*able* to make him wise unto salvation." Compare **See Barnes "2Ti 3:15".**

Which they that are unlearned. The evil here adverted to is that which arises in cases where those without competent knowledge undertake to become expounders of the word of God. It is not said that it is not proper for them to attempt to become instructed by the aid of the sacred writings; but the danger is, that without proper views of interpretation, of language, and of ancient customs, they might be in danger of perverting and abusing certain portions of the writings of Paul. Intelligence among the people is everywhere in the Bible presumed to be proper in understanding the sacred Scriptures; and ignorance may produce the same effects in interpreting the Bible which it will produce in interpreting other writings. Every good thing is liable to abuse; but the proper way to correct this evil, and to remove this danger, is not to keep the people in ignorance, or to appoint some one to be an infallible interpreter; it is to remove the ignorance itself by enlightening the people, and rendering them better qualified to understand the sacred oracles. The way to remove error is not to perpetuate ignorance; it is to enlighten the mind, so that it may be qualified to appreciate the truth.

And unstable. Who have no settled principles and views. The evil here adverted to is that which arises where those undertake to interpret the Bible who have no established principles. They regard nothing as settled. They have no landmarks set up to guide their inquiries. They have no stability in their character, and Of course nothing can be regarded as settled in their methods Of interpreting the Bible. They are under the control of feeling and emotion, and are liable to embrace one opinion to-day, and another directly opposite to-morrow. But the way to prevent *this* evil is not by attempting to give to a community an authoritative interpretation of the Bible; it is to diffuse abroad just principles, that men may obtain from the Bible an intelligent view of what it means.

Wrest. Pervert—*streblousin*. The word here used occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It is derived from a word meaning a windlass, winch, instrument of torture, (*streblh*,) and means to roll or wind on a windlass; then to wrench, or turn away, as by the force of a windlass; and then to wrest or pervert. It implies a turning out of the way by the application of force, here the meaning is, that they apply those portions of the Bible to a purpose for which they were never intended. It is doubtless true that this may occur. Men may abuse and pervert anything that is good. But the way to prevent this is not to set up a pretended infallible interpreter. With all the perversities arising from ignorance in the interpreter of the Bible; in all the crude, and weak, and fanciful expositions which could be found among those who have interpreted the Scriptures for themselves—and they are many—if they were all collected together, there would not be found so many adapted to corrupt and ruin the soul, as have come from the interpretations attempted to be palmed upon the world by the one church that claims to be the infallible expounder of the word of God.

As they do also the other scriptures. This is an unequivocal declaration of Peter that he regarded the writings of Paul as a part of the holy Scriptures, and of course that he considered him as inspired. The word "Scriptures," as used by a Jew, had a technical signification—meaning the inspired writings, and was the common word which was applied to the sacred writings of the Old Testament. As Peter uses this language, it implies that he regarded the writings of Paul as on a level with the Old Testament; and as far as the testimony of one apostle can go to confirm the claim of another to inspiration, it proves that the writings of Paul are entitled to a place in the sacred canon. It should be remarked, also, that Peter evidently speaks here of the *common estimate* in which the writings of Paul were held. He addresses those to whom he wrote, not in such a way as to declare to them

that the writings of Paul were to be regarded as a part of the inspired volume, but as if this were already known, and were an admitted point.

Unto their own destruction. By embracing false doctrines. Error destroys the soul; and it is very possible for a man so to read the Bible as only to confirm himself in error. He may find passages which, by a perverted interpretation, shall seem to sustain his own views; and, instead of embracing the truth, may live always under delusion, and perish at last. It is not to be inferred that every man who reads the Bible, or even every one who undertakes to be its public expounder, will certainly be saved.

{a} "epistles" Ro 8:19 1Co 15:24; 1Th 4; 1Th 5 2Th 1:5-10.

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Seeing that ye know these things before*. Being aware of this danger, and knowing that such results may follow. Men should read the Bible with the feeling that it is possible that they may fall into error, and be deceived at last. This apprehension will do much to make them diligent, and candid, and prayerful, in studying the word of God.

With the error of the wicked. Wicked men. Such as he had referred to in chapter 2, who became public teachers of religion.

Fall from your own stedfastness. Your firm adherence to the truth. The particular danger here referred to is not that of failing from grace, or from true religion, but from the firm and settled principles of religious truth into error.

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER - Chapter 3 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *But grow in grace*. Comp. Col 1:10. Religion in general is often represented as grace, since every part of it is the result of grace, or of unmerited favour; and to "grow in grace" is to increase in that which constitutes true religion. Religion is as susceptible of cultivation and of growth as any other virtue of the soul. It is feeble in its beginnings, like the grain of mustard seed, or like the germ or blade of the plant, and it increases as it is cultivated. There is no piety in the world which is not the result of cultivation, and which cannot be measured by the degree of care and attention bestowed upon it. No one becomes eminently pious, any more than one becomes eminently learned or rich, who does not intend to; and ordinarily men in religion are what they design to be. They have about as much religion as they wish, and possess about the character which they intend to possess. When men reach extraordinary elevations in religion, like Baxter, Payson, and Edwards, they have gained only what they meant to gain; and the gay and worldly professors of religion, who have little comfort and peace, have in fact the characters which they designed to have. If these things are so, then we may see the propriety of the injunction "to grow in grace;" and then too we may see the reason why so feeble attainments are made in piety by the great mass of those who profess religion.

And in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. **See Barnes "Joh 17:3".**

Comp. **See Barnes "Col 1:10"**.

To know the Lord Jesus Christ—to possess just views of his person, character, and work—-is the sum and essence of the Christian religion; and with this injunction, therefore, the apostle appropriately closes this epistle. He who has a saving knowledge of Christ, has in fact all that is essential to his welfare in the life that is, and in that which is to come; he who has not this knowledge, though he may be distinguished in the learning of the schools, and may be profoundly skilled in the sciences, has in reality no knowledge that will avail him in the great matters pertaining to his eternal welfare.

To him be glory, etc. Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 16:27"**; **See Barnes "2Ti 4:18"**.

With the desire that honour and glory should be rendered to the Redeemer, all the aspirations of true Christians appropriately close. There is no wish more deeply cherished in their hearts than this; there is nothing that will enter more into their worship in heaven; Compare Re 1:5,6, 5:12,13.

{a} "grow" Col 1:10 {b} "To him be" 2Ti 4:18

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 1

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 1

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN.

INTRODUCTION.

I—THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE EPISTLE.

LITTLE need be said respecting the authenticity of this epistle, or the evidence that it was written by the apostle John. There are, in general, two sources of evidence in regard to ancient writings: the external evidence, or that which may be derived from the testimony of other writers; and the evidence which may be derived from some marks of the authorship in the writing itself, which is called the internal evidence. Both of these are remarkably clear in regard to this epistle.

(1.) The external evidence.

(a.) It is quoted or referred to by the early Christian writers as the undoubted production of the apostle John. It is referred to by Polycarp in the beginning of the second century; it is quoted by Papias, and also by Irenaeus. Origen says, "John, beside the gospel and Revelation, has left us an epistle of a few lines. Grant also a second, and a third; for all do not allow these to be genuine." See Lardner, vi. 275, and Lucke, Einlei. i. Dionysius of Alexandria admitted the genuineness of John's first epistle; so also did Cyprian. All the three epistles were received by Athanasius, by Cyril of Jerusalem, and by Epiphanius. Eusebius says, "Beside his gospel, his first epistle is universally acknowledged by those of the present time, and by the ancients; but the other two are contradicted."

(b.) It is found in the old Syriac version, probably made in the first century, though the second and third epistles are not there.

(c.) The genuineness of the first epistle was never extensively called in question, and it was never reckoned among the doubtful or disputed epistles.

(d.) It was rejected or doubted only by those who rejected his gospel, and for the same reasons. Some small sects of those who were called "heretics," rejected all the writings of John, because they conflicted with their peculiar views; but this was confined to a small number of persons, and never affected the general belief of the church. See Lucke, Einlei. 9, seq.

(2.) There is strong internal evidence that the same person wrote this epistle who was the author of the gospel which bears the same name. The resemblance in the mode of expression, and in the topics referred to, are numerous, and at the same time are not such as would be made by one who was *attempting* to imitate the language of another. The allusions of this kind, moreover, are to what is *peculiar* in the gospel of John, and not to what is common to that gospel and the other three. There is nothing in the epistle which would particularly remind us of the gospel of Matthew, or Mark, or Luke; but it is impossible to read it and not be reminded constantly of the gospel by John. Among those passages and expressions the following may be referred to:

EPISTLE. GOSPEL

Chapter i. 1 compared with Chapter i. 1, 4, 14.
ii. 5..... xiv. 23.
ii. 6..... xv. 4.
ii. 8; iii. 11..... xiii. 34.
ii. 8, 10 ..... i. 5, 9; xi.10.
ii. 13, 14..... xvii. 3.
iii. 1 ..... i. 12.
iii. 2 ..... xvii. 24.
iii. 8 ..... viii. 44.
iii. 13..... xv. 20.
iv. 9..... iii. 16.
iv. 12..... i. 18.
v. 13..... xx. 31.
v. 14..... xiv. 14.
v. 20..... xvii. 2.

This language in the epistle, as will be easily seen by a comparison, is such as the real author of the gospel by John would be likely to use if he wrote an epistle. The passages referred to are in his style; they show that the mind of the author of both was turned to the same points, and those not such points as might be found in all writers, but such as indicated a peculiar mode of thinking. They are not such expressions as Matthew, or Mark, or Luke, or Paul would have used in an epistle, but just such as we should expect from the writer of tho gospel of John. It must be clear to any one that either the author of the gospel was also the author of this epistle, or that the author of the epistle *meant* to imitate the author of the gospel, and to leave the impression that the apostle John was the author. But there are several things which make it clear that this is not a forgery.

(a.) The passages where the resemblance is found are not exact quotations, and are not such as a man would make if he *designed* to imitate another. They are rather such as the same man would use if he were writing twice on the same d subject, and should express himself the second time without intending to copy what he had said the first.

(b.) If it had been an intentional fraud or forgery, there would have been some allusion to the name or authority of the author; or, in other words, the author of the epistle would have endeavoured to sustain himself by some distinct reference to the apostle, or to his authority, or to his well-known characteristics as a teller of truth. See Joh 19:35 21:24. Compare 3Jo 12. But nothing of the kind occurs in this epistle. It is written without disclosing the name of the author, or the place where he lived, or the persons to whom it was addressed, and with no allusions to the gospel, except such as show that the author thought in the same manner, and had the same things in his eye, and was intent on the same object. It is, throughout, the style and manner of one who felt that his method of expressing himself was so well understood, that he did not need even to mention his own name; as if, without anything further, it would be apparent from the very epistle itself who had written it, and what right he had to speak. But this would be a device too refined for forgery. It bears all the marks of sincerity and truth.

II.—THE TIME AND PLACE OF WRITING THE EPISTLE.

ALMOST nothing is known of the time and place of writing the epistle, and nearly all that is said on this point is mere conjecture. Some recent critics have supposed that it was in fact a part of the gospel, though in some way it afterwards became detached from it; others, that it was sent *as an epistle* at the same time with the gospel, and to the same persons. Some have supposed that it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, and some long after, when John was very aged; and these last suppose that they find evidences of the very advanced age of the author in the epistle itself, in such characteristics as commonly mark the conversation and writings of an old man. An examination of these opinions may be found in Lucke, Einlei. Kap. 2; and in Hug, Introduction, p. 456, seq., p. 732, seq.

There are *very few* marks of time in the epistle, and none that can determine the time of writing it with any degree of certainty. Nor is it of much importance that we should be able to determine it. The truths which it contains are, in the main, as applicable to one age as to another, though it cannot be denied (see & 3) that the author had some prevailing forms of error in his eye. The only marks of time in the epistle by which we can form any conjecture as to the period when it was written are the following:

(1.) It was in what the author calls *the last time, escath wra* 1Jo 2:18. From this expression it might perhaps be inferred by some that it was just before the destruction of Jerusalem, or that the writer supposed that the end of the world was near. But nothing can be certainly determined from this expression in regard to the exact period when the epistle was written. This phrase, as used in the Scriptures, denotes no more than the last dispensation or economy of things, the dispensation under which the affairs of the world would be wound up, though that period might be in fact much longer than any one that had preceded it. **See Barnes "Isa 2:2"**; **See Barnes** "Ac 2:17"; **See Barnes "Heb 1:2"**.

The object of the writer of this epistle, in the passage referred to, (1Jo 2:18,) is merely to show that the closing dispensation of the world had actually come; that is, that there were certain things which it was known would mark that dispensation, which actually existed then, and by which it could be known that they were living under the last or closing period of the world.

(2.) It is quite evident that the epistle was composed *after* the gospel by John was published. Of this no one can have any doubt who will compare the two together, or even the parallel passages referred to above, & 1. The gospel is manifestly the original; and it was evidently presumed by the writer of the epistle that the gospel was in the hands of those to whom he wrote. The statements there made are much more full; the circumstances in which many of the peculiar doctrines adverted to were first advanced are detailed; and the writer of the epistle clearly supposed that all that was necessary in order to an understanding of these doctrines was to state them in the briefest manner, and almost by mere allusion. On this point Lucke well remarks, "the more brief and condensed expression of the same sentiment by the same author, especially in regard to peculiarities of idea and language, is always the later one; the more extended statement, the unfolding of the idea, is an evidence of an earlier composition," Einlei. p. 21. Yet while this is clear, it determines little or nothing about the time when the epistle was written, for it is a matter of great uncertainty when the gospel itself was composed. Wetstein supposes that it was soon after the ascension of the Saviour; Dr. Lardner that it was about the year 68; and Mill and Le Clerc that it was about the year 97. In this uncertainty, therefore, nothing can be determined absolutely from this circumstance in regard to the time of writing the epistle.

(3.) The only other note of time on which any reliance has been placed is the supposed fact that there were indications in the epistle itself of the *great age* of the author, or evidences that he was an old man, and that consequently it was written near the close of the life of John. There *is* some evidence in the epistle that it was written when the author was an old man, though none that he was in his dotage, as Eichhorn and some others have maintained. The evidence that he was even an old man is not positive, but there is a certain air and manner in the epistle, in its repetitions, and its want of exact order, and especially in the style in which he addresses those to whom he wrote, as little children— *teknia* —(1Jo 2:1,12,28 3:7,18 4:4; 5:21) —which would seem to be appropriate only to an aged man. Comp. Lucke, Einlei. pp. 23, 25, and Stuart in Hug's Introduction, pp. 732,733.

As little is known about the *place* where the epistle was written as about the *time*. There are no local references in it; no allusions to persons or opinions which can help us to determine where it was written. As John spent the latter part of his life, however, in Ephesus and its vicinity, there is no impropriety in supposing that it was written there. Nothing, in the interpretation of the epistle, depends on our being able to ascertain the place of its composition. Hug supposes that it was written in Patmos, and was sent as a letter accompanying his gospel, to the church at Ephesus. Lucke supposes that it was a circular epistle addressed to the churches in Asia Minor, and sent from Ephesus.

To whom the epistle was written is also unknown. It bears no inscription, as many of the other epistles of the New Testament do, and as even the second and third of John do, and there is no reference to any particular class of persons by which it can be determined for whom it was designed. Nor is it known why the name of the author was not attached to it, or why the persons for whom it was designed were not designated. All that can be determined on this subject from the epistle itself is the following:

(1.) It seems to have been addressed to no particular church, but rather to have been of a circular character, designed for the churches in a region of country where certain dangerous opinions prevailed.

(2.) The author presumed that it would be known who wrote it, either by the style, or by the sentiments, or by its resemblance to his other writings, or by the messenger who bore it, so that it was unnecessary to affix his name to it.

(3.) It appears to have been so composed as to be adapted to *any* people where those errors prevailed; and hence it was thought better to give it a *general* direction, that all might feel themselves to be addressed, than to designate any particular place or church. There is, indeed, an ancient tradition that it was written to the *Parthians*. Since the time of Augustine this has been the uniform opinion in the Latin church. Venerable Bede remarks, that" many of the ecclesiastical writers, among whom is St. Athanasius, testify that the first epistle of John was written to the Parthians." Various conjectures have been made as to the origin of this opinion, and of the title which the epistle bears in many of the Latin Mss., (*ad Parthos*,) but none of them are satisfactory. No such title is found in the epistle itself, nor is there any intimation in it to whom it was directed. Those who are disposed to examine the conjectures which have been made in regard to the origin of the title may consult Lucke, Enlei. p. 28, seq. No reason can be assigned why it should have been sent to the Parthians, nor is there any sufficient evidence to suppose that it was.

III.—THE OBJECT OF THE EPISTLE.

IT is evident from the epistle itself that there were some prevailing errors among those to whom it was written, and that one design of the writer was to counteract those errors. Yet very various

opinions have been entertained in regard to the nature of the errors that were opposed, and the persons whom the writer had in his eye. Loeffler supposes that *Jews* and *Judaizers* are the persons opposed; Semler, Tittman, Knapp, and Lange suppose that they were *Judaizing Christians*, and especially Ebionites, or apostate Christians; Michaelis, Kleuker, Paulus, and others, suppose that the *Gnostics* are referred to; others, as Schmidt, Lucke, Vitringa, Bertholdt, Prof. Stuart, suppose that the *Docetae* was the sect that was principally opposed. It is impossible now to determine with accuracy to whom particularly the writer referred, nor could it be well done without a more accurate knowledge than we now have of the peculiarities of the errors which prevailed in the time of the author, and among the people to whom he wrote. All that we can learn on the subject that is certain, is to be derived from the epistle itself; and there the intimations are few, but they are so clear that we may obtain some knowledge to guide us.

(1.) The persons referred to had been professing Christians, and were now apostates from the faith. This is clear from 1Jo 2:19, "They went out from us, but they were not of us," etc. They had been members of the church, but they had now become teachers of error.

(2.) They were probably of the sect of the *Docetae*; or if that sect had not then formally sprung up, and was not organized, they held the opinions which they afterwards embraced. This sect was a branch of the great Gnostic family; and the peculiarity of the opinion which they held was that Christ was only in appearance and seemingly, but not in reality, a man; that though he seemed to converse, to eat, to suffer, and to die, yet this was merely an *appearance* assumed by the Son of God for important purposes in regard to man. He had, according to this view, *no real humanity*; but though the Son of God had actually appeared in the world, yet all this was only an assumed form for the purpose of a manifestation to men. The opinions of the the *Docetes* are thus represented by Gibbon: "They denied the truth and authenticity of the gospels, as far as they relate the conception of Mary, the birth of Christ, and the thirty years which preceded the first exercise of his ministry. He first appeared on the banks of the Jordan in the form of perfect manhood; but it was a form only, and not a substance; a human figure created by the hand of Omnipotence to imitate the faculties and actions of a man, and to impose a perpetual illusion on the senses of his friends and enemies. Articulate sounds vibrated on the ears of his disciples; but the image which was impressed on their optic nerve, eluded the more stubborn evidence of the touch, and they enjoyed the spiritual, but not the corporeal presence of the Son of God. The rage of the Jews was idly wasted against an impassive phantom, and the mystic scenes of the passion and death, the resurrection and ascension of Christ, were represented on the theatre of Jerusalem for the benefit of mankind."— Dic. L. Fall, vol. iii. p. 245, Ed. New York. 1829. Comp. vol. i. 440.

That these views began to prevail in the latter part of the first century there can be no reason to doubt; and there can be as little doubt that the author of this epistle had this doctrine in his eye, and that he deemed it to be of special Importance in this epistle, as he had done in his gospel, to show that the Son of God had actually *come in the flesh*; that he was truly and properly a man; that he lived and died in reality, and not in appearance only. Hence the allusion to these views in such passages as the following: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and *our hands have handled*, of the Word of life—that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you," 1Jo 1:1,3. "Many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know we the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is

come in the flesh is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come," 1Jo 4:1-3. Comp. 1Jo 4:9,14,15 5:1,6,10-12.

John had written his gospel to show that Jesus was the Christ, (Joh 20:31;) he had furnished ample proof that he was Divine, or was equal with the Father, (1Jo 1:1-4,) and also that he was truly a man, (Joh 15:25-27) but still it seemed proper to furnish a more unequivocal statement that he had actually appeared *in the flesh*, not in appearance only but in reality, and this purpose evidently was a leading design of this epistle.

The main scope of the epistle the author has himself stated in 1Jo 5:13: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God;" that is, that you may have just views of him, and exercise an intelligent faith.

In connexion with this general design, and keeping in view the errors to which they to whom the epistle was written were exposed, there are two leading trains of thought, though often intermingled, in the epistle.

(a.) The author treats of the doctrine that Jesus is the Christ, and

(b.) the importance of love as an evidence of being united to him, or of being true Christians. Both these things are characteristic of John; they agree with the design for which he wrote his gospel, and they were in accordance with his peculiarity of mind as "the *beloved* disciple," the disciple whose heart was full of love, and who made religion consist much in that.

The main characteristics of this epistle are these:

(1.) It is full of love. The writer dwells on it; places it in a variety of attitudes; enforces the duty of loving one another by a great variety of considerations, and shows that it is essential to the very nature of religion.

(2.) The epistle abounds with statements on the evidences of piety, or the characteristics of true religion. The author seems to have fell; that those to whom he wrote were in danger of embracing false notions of religion, and of being seduced by the abettors of error. He is therefore careful to lay down the characteristics of real piety, and to show in what it essentially consists. A large part of the epistle is occupied with this, and there is perhaps no portion of the New Testament which one could study to more advantage who is desirous of ascertaining whether he himself is a true Christian. An anxious inquirer, a man who wishes to know what true religion is, could be directed to no portion of the New Testament where he would more readily find the instruction that he needs, than to this portion of the writings of the aged and experienced disciple whom Jesus loved. A true Christian can find nowhere else a more clear statement of the nature of his religion, and of the evidences of real piety, than in this epistle.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN. CHAPTER I.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

THIS short chapter embraces the following subjects:

I. A strong affirmation that the Son of God, or the "Life," had appeared in the flesh, 1Jo 1:1-3. The evidence of this, the writer says, was that he had seen him, heard him, handled him; that is, he had had all the evidence which could be furnished by the senses. His declaration on this point he repeats, by putting the statement into a variety of forms, for he seems to regard it as essential to true religion.

II. He says that he wrote to them, in order that they might have fellowship with him in the belief of this truth, and might partake of the joy which flows from the doctrine that the Son of God has actually come in the flesh, 1Jo 1:3,4.

III. He states that the sum and substance of the whole message which he had to bring to them was, that God is light, and that if we profess to have fellowship with him we must walk in the light, 1Jo 1:5-10.

(a.) In God is no darkness, no impurity, no sin, 1Jo 1:5.

(b.) If we are in darkness, if we are ignorant and sinful, it proves that we cannot have any fellowship with him, 1Jo 1:6.

(c.) If we walk in the light as he is in the light, if we partake of his character and spirit, then we shall have fellowship one with another, and we may believe that the blood of Christ will cleanse us from all sin, 1Jo 1:7.

(d.) Yet we are to guard ourselves from one point of danger, we are not to allow ourselves to feel that we have no sin. We are to bear with us the constant recollection that we are sinners, and are to permit that fact to produce its proper impression on our minds, 1Jo 1:8,10.

(e.) Yet we are not to be desponding though we do feel this, but are to remember, that if we will truly confess our sins he will be found faithful to his promises, and just to the general arrangements of graces by which our sins may be forgiven, 1Jo 1:9.

The information for Verses 1 and 2 of 1st John is contained in the 2nd verse.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 2

Verses 1 and 2 of 1st John Chapter 1

Verse 1. That which was from the beginning. There can be no doubt that the reference here is to the Lord Jesus Christ, or the "Word" that was made flesh. **See Barnes "Joh 1:1".**

This is such language as John would use respecting him, and indeed the phrase "the beginning," as applicable to the Lord Jesus, is peculiar to John in the writings of the New Testament: and the language here may be regarded as one proof that this epistle was written by him, for it is just such an expression as *he* would use, but not such as one would be likely to adopt who should attempt to palm off his own writings as those of John. One who should have attempted that would have been likely to introduce the name John in the beginning of the epistle, or in some way to have claimed his authority. The apostle, in speaking of "*that which* was from the beginning," uses a word in the neuter gender instead of the masculine, (*o*.) It is not to be supposed, I think, that he meant to apply this term directly to the Son of God, for if he had he would have used the masculine pronoun; but though he had the Son of God in view, and meant to make a strong affirmation respecting him, yet the particular thing here referred to was *whatever* there was respecting that incarnate Saviour that furnished testimony to any of the senses, or that pertained to his character and doctrine, he had borne witness to. He was looking rather at the *evidence* that he was incarnate; the *proofs* that he was manifested; and he says that those proofs had been subjected to the trial of the senses, and he had borne witness to them, and now did it again. This is what is referred to, it seems to me, by the phrase "that which," (*o*.) The sense may be this: "Whatever there was respecting the Word of life,

or him who is the living Word, the incarnate Son of God, from the very beginning, from the time when he was first manifested in the flesh; whatever there was respecting his exalted nature, his dignity, his character, that could be subjected to the testimony of the senses, to be the object of sight, or hearing, or touch, *that* I was permitted to see, and that I declare to you respecting him." John claims to be a competent witness in reference to everything which occurred as a *manifestation* of what the Son of God was. If this be the correct interpretation, then the phrase "from the beginning" (*ap archv*) does not here refer to his eternity, or his being in the beginning of all things, as the phrase "in the beginning" (*en arch*) does in Joh 1:1; but rather means from the very commencement of his manifestation as the Son of God, the very first indications on earth of what he was as the Messiah. When the writer says (

@1Jo 1:3) that he "declares" this to them, it seems to me that he has not reference merely to what he would say in this epistle, for he does not go extensively into it here, but that he supposes that they had his gospel in their possession, and that he also means to refer to that, or presumes that they were familiar with the testimony which he had borne in that gospel respecting the evidence that the "Word became flesh." Many have indeed supposed that this epistle accompanied the gospel when it was published, and was either a part of it that became subsequently detached from it, or was a letter that accompanied it. See Hug. Intro. P. II. & 68. There is, it seems to me, no certain evidence of that; but no one can doubt that he supposed that those to whom he wrote had access to that gospel, and that he refers here to the testimony which ne had borne in that respecting the incarnate Word.

Which we have heard. John was with the Saviour through the whole of his ministry, and he has recorded more that the Saviour said than either of the other evangelists. It is on what he said of himself that he grounds much of the evidence that he was the Son of God.

Which we have seen with our eyes. That is, pertaining to his person, and to what he did. "I have seen *him*; seen what he was as a man; how he appeared on earth; and I have seen whatever there was in his works to indicate his character and origin." John professes here to have seen enough in this respect as to furnish evidence that he was the Son of God. It is not hearsay on which he relies, but he had the testimony of his own eyes in the case. **See Barnes "2Pe 1:16"**.

Which we have looked upon. The word here used seems designed to be more emphatic or intensive than the one before occurring. He had just said that he had "seen him with his eyes," but he evidently designs to include an idea in this word which would imply something more than mere beholding or seeing. The additional idea which is couched in this word seems to be that of *desire or pleasure*; that is, that he had looked on him with desire, or satisfaction, or with the pleasure with which one beholds a beloved object. Comp. Mt 11:7 Lu 7:24; Joh 1:14.

See *Rob. Lex*. There was an intense and earnest gaze, as when we behold one whom we have desired to see, or when one goes out purposely to look on an object. The evidences of the incarnation of the Son of God had been subjected to such all intense and earnest gaze.

And our hands have handled. That is, the evidence that he was a man was subjected to the sense of *touch*. It was not merely that he had been seen by the eye, for then it might be pretended that this was a mere *appearance* assumed without reality; or that what occurred might have been a mere optical illusion; but the evidence that he appeared in the flesh was subjected to more senses than one; to the fact that his voice was heard; that he was seen with the eyes; that the most intense scrutiny had been employed; and, lastly, that he had been actually *touched* and *handled*, showing that it could not have been a mere *appearance*, an assumed form, but that it was a reality. This kind

of proof that the Son of God had appeared *in the flesh*, or that he was truly and properly *a man*, is repeatedly referred to in the New Testament. Luke 24:39: "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have." Comp. Joh 20:25-27. There is evident allusion here to the opinion which early prevailed, which was held by the *Docetes*, that the Son of God did not truly and really become a man, but that there was only an *appearance* assumed, or that he *seemed* to be a man. See the Intro., & 3. It was evidently with reference to this opinion, which began early to prevail, that the apostle dwells on this point, and repeats the idea so much, and shows by a reference to all the senses which could take any cognizance in the case, that he was truly and properly a man. The amount of it is, that we have the same evidence that he was properly a man which we can have in the case of any other human being; the evidence on which we constantly act, and in which we cannot believe that our senses deceive us.

Of the Word of life. Respecting, or pertaining to, the Word of life. "That is, whatever there was pertaining to the Word of life, which was manifested from the beginning in his speech and actions, of which the senses could take cognizance, and which would furnish the evidence that he was truly incarnate, that we have declared unto you." The phrase "the Word of life," means the Word in which life resided, or which was the source and fountain of life. **See Barnes** "Joh 1:1, **See Barnes "Joh 1:3"**.

The reference is undoubtedly to the Lord Jesus Christ.

{a} "the beginning" Joh 1:1 {b} "seen" 2Pe 1:16 {c} "have handled" Lu 24:39

Verse 2. For the life was manifested. Was made manifest or visible unto us. He who was the life was made known to men by the incarnation. He appeared among men so that they could see him and hear him. Though originally with God, and dwelling with him, (Joh 1:1,2,) yet he came forth and appeared among men. **See Barnes** "Ro 1:3, **See Barnes "1Ti 3:16"**.

He is the great source of all life, and he appeared on the earth, and we had an opportunity of seeing and knowing what he was.

And we have seen it. This repetition, or turning over the thought, is designed to express the idea with emphasis, and is much in the manner of John. See Joh 1:1-3. He is particularly desirous of impressing on them the thought that he had been a personal *witness* of what the Saviour was, having had every opportunity of knowing it from long and familiar intercourse with him.

And bear witness. We testify in regard to it. John was satisfied that his own character was known to be such that credit would be given to what he said. He felt that he was known to be a man of truth, and hence he never doubts that faith would be put in all his statements. See Joh 19:35 21:24; Re 1:2 3Jo 1:12.

And shew unto you that eternal life. That is, we declare unto you what that life was—what was the nature and rank of him who was the life, and how he appeared when on earth, he here attributes *eternity* to the Son of God—implying that he had always been with the Father.

Which was with the Father. Always before the manifestation on the earth. See Joh 1:1: "The word was with God." This passage demonstrates the pre-existence of the Son of God, and proves that he was eternal. Before he was manifested on earth he had an existence to which the word *life* could be applied, and that was *eternal*. He is the Author of eternal life to us.

And was manifested unto us. In the flesh; as a man. He who was the life appeared unto men. The idea of John evidently is,

(1.) that the Being here referred to was for ever with God;

(2.) that it was proper before the incarnation that the word *life* should be given to him as descriptive of his nature;

(3.) that there was a manifestation of him who was thus called *life*, on earth; that he appeared among men; that he had a real existence here, and not a merely *assumed* appearance; and

(4.) that the true characteristics of this incarnate Being could be borne testimony to by those who had seen him, and who had been long with him. This second verse should be regarded as a parenthesis.

{a} "eternal life" Joh 17:3

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you*. We announce it, or make it known unto you—referring either to what he purposes to say in this epistle, or more probably embracing *all* that he had written respecting him, and supposing that his gospel was in their hands. He means to call their attention to all the testimony which he had borne on the subject, in order to counteract the errors which began to prevail.

That ye may have fellowship with us. With us the apostles; with us who actually saw him, and conversed with him. That is, he wished that they might have the same belief, and the same hope, and the same joy which he himself had, arising from the fact that the Son of God had become incarnate, and had appeared among men. To "have fellowship," means to have anything in common with others; to partake of it; to share it with them, **See Barnes "Ac 2:42"**; and the idea here is, that the apostle wished that they might share with him all the peace and happiness which resulted from the fact that the Son of God had appeared in human form in behalf of men. The *object* of the apostle in what he wrote was, that they might have the same views of the Saviour which he had, and partake of the same hope and joy. This is the true notion of *fellowship* in religion.

And truly our fellowship is with the Father. With God the Father. That is, there was something in common with him and God; something of which he and God partook together, or which they shared. This cannot, of course, mean that his nature was the same as that of God, or that in *all things* he shared with God, or that in *anything* he was *equal* with God; but it means that he partook, in some respects, of the feelings, the views, the aims, the joys which God has. There was a union in feeling, and affection, and desire, and plan, and this was to him a source of joy. He had an attachment to the same things, loved the same truth, desired the same objects, and was engaged in the same work; and the *consciousness* of this, and the joy which attended it, was what was meant by *fellowship*. **See Barnes "1Co 10:16"**; **See Barnes** "2Co 12:14".

The fellowship which Christians have with God relates to the following points:

(1.) Attachment to the same truths, and the same objects; love for the same principles, and the same beings.

(2.) The same *kind* of happiness, though not in the same degree. The happiness of God is found in holiness, truth, purity, justice, mercy, benevolence. The happiness of the Christian is of the same kind that God has; the same kind that angels have; the same kind that he will himself have in heaven—for the joy of heaven is only that which the Christian has now, expanded to the utmost capacity of the soul, and freed from all that now interferes with it, and prolonged to eternity.

(3.) Employment, or co-operation with God. There *is* a sphere in which God works alone, and in which we can have no co-operation, no fellowship with him. In the work of creation; in upholding all things; in the government of the universe; in the transmission of light from world to world; in the return of the seasons, the rising and setting of the sun, the storms, the tides, the flight of the comet, we can have no joint agency, no co-operation with him. There God works alone. But there is also a large sphere in which he admits us graciously to a co-operation with him, and in which, unless we work, his agency will not be put forth. This is seen when the farmer sows his grain; when the surgeon binds up a wound; when we take the medicine which God has appointed as a means of restoration to health. So in the moral world. In our efforts to save our own souls and the souls of others, God graciously works with us; and unless we work, the object is not accomplished. This co-operation is referred to in such passages as these: "We are labourers together (*sunergoi*) with God," 1Co 3:9. "The Lord working *with them*," Mr 16:20. "We then as workers together with him," 2Co 6:1. "That we might be fellow-helpers to the truth," 3Jo 1:8. In all such cases, while the *efficiency* is of God—alike in exciting us to effort, and in crowning the effort with success—it is still true that if our efforts were not put forth, the work would not be done. In this department God would not work by himself alone; he would not secure the result by miracle.

(4.) We have fellowship with God by direct communion with him, in prayer, in meditation, and in the ordinances of religion. Of this all true Christians are sensible, and this constitutes no small part of their peculiar joy. The nature of this, and the happiness resulting from it, is much of the same nature as the communion of friend with friend—of one mind with another kindred mind—that to which we owe no small part of our happiness in this world.

(5.) The Christian will have fellowship with his God and Saviour in the triumphs of the latter day, when the scenes of the judgment shall occur, and when the Redeemer shall appear, that he may be admired and adored by assembled worlds. **See Barnes** "2Th 1:10.

See also Mt 19:28; Re 3:21.

And with his Son Jesus Christ. That is, in like manner there is much which we have *in common* with the Saviour—in character, in feeling, in desire, in spirit, in plan. There is a *union* with him in these things—and the consciousness of this gives peace and joy.

{b} "fellowship" Joh 17:21

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And these things write we unto you*. These things respecting him who was manifested in the flesh, and respecting the results which' flow from that.

That your joy may be full. This is almost the same language which the Saviour used when addressing his disciples as he was about to leave them, (Joh 15:11;) and there can be little doubt that John had that declaration in remembrance when he uttered this remark. **See Barnes "Joh 15:11"**.

The sense here is, that full and clear views of the Lord Jesus, and the fellowship with him and with each other, which would follow from that, would be a source of happiness. Their joy would be complete if they had that; for their real happiness was to be found in their Saviour. The best editions of the Greek Testament now read "your joy," instead of the common reading "our joy."

{c} "that your joy" Joh 15:11

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *This then is the message which we have heard of him*. This is the substance of the announcement (*epaggelia*) which we have received of him, or which he made to us. The message here refers to what he communicated as the sum of the revelation which he made to man. The phrase "of him" (*ap autou*) does not mean *respecting him*, or *about him*, but *from him*; that is, this is what we received from his preaching; from all that he said. The peculiarity, the substance of all that he said, may be summed up in the declaration that God is light, and in the consequences which follow from this doctrine. He came as the messenger of Him who is *light*; he came to inculcate and defend the truths which flow from that central doctrine, in regard to sin, to the danger and duty of man, to the way of recovery, and to the rules by which men ought to live.

That God is light. Light, in the Scriptures, is the emblem of purity, truth, knowledge, prosperity, and happiness—as darkness is of the opposite. John here says that "God is *light*"— *fwv*—not *the* light, or *a* light, but *light* itself; that is, he is himself all light, and is the source and fountain of light in all worlds, He is perfectly pure, without any admixture of sin. He has all knowledge, with no admixture of ignorance on any subject. He is infinitely happy, with nothing to make him miserable. He is infinitely true, never stating or countenancing error; he is blessed in all his ways, never knowing the darkness of disappointment and adversity. **See Barnes "Jas 1:17"**; **See Barnes** "Joh 1:4, **See Barnes "Joh 1:5"**; **See Barnes** "1Ti 6:16".

And in him is no darkness at all. This language is much in the manner of John, not only affirming that a thing is so, but guarding it so that no mistake could possibly be made as to what he meant. Comp. Joh 1:1-3. The expression here is designed to affirm that God is absolutely perfect; that there is nothing in him which is in any way imperfect, or which would dim or mar the pure splendour of his character, not even as much as the smallest spot would on the sun. The language is probably designed to guard the mind from an error to which it is prone, that of charging God with being the Author of the sin and misery which exist on the earth; and the apostle seems to design to teach that whatever was the source of sin and misery, it was not in any sense to be charged on God. This doctrine that God is a pure light, John lays down as the substance of all that he had to teach; of all that he had learned from him who was made flesh. It is, in fact, the fountain of all just views of truth on the subject of religion, and all proper views of religion take their origin from this.

{*} "message" "declaration" {a} "light" Joh 1:4,9; 1Ti 6:16

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *If we say that we have fellowship with him*. If we reckon ourselves among his friends, or, in other words, if we profess to be like him: for a profession of religion involves the idea of having *fellowship* with God, **See Barnes** "1Jo 1:3, and he who professes that should be like him.

And walk in darkness. Live in sin and error. To "walk in darkness" now commonly denotes to be in doubt about our religious state, in contradistinction from living in the enjoyment of religion. That is not, however, probably the whole idea here. The leading thought is, that if we live in sin, it is a proof that our profession of religion is false. Desirable as it is to have the comforts of religion,

yet it is not always true that they who do not are not true Christians, nor is it true by any means that they intend to deceive the world.

We lie. We are false professors; we are deceived if we think that we can have fellowship with God, and yet live in the practice of sin. As God is pure, so must we be, if we would be his friends. This does not mean necessarily that they meant to deceive, but that there was an irreconcilable contradiction between a life of sin and fellowship with God.

And do not the truth. Do not act truly. The profession is a false one. Compare **See Barnes "Joh 3:22"**.

To *do the truth* is to act in accordance with truth; and the expression here means that such an one could not be a Christian. And yet how many there are who are living in known sin who profess to be Christians! How many whose minds are dark on the whole subject of religion, who have never known anything of the real peace and joy which it imparts, who nevertheless entertain the belief that they are the friends of God, and are going to heaven! They trust in a name, in forms, in conformity to external rites, and have never known anything of the internal peace and purity which religion imparts, and in fact have never had any true fellowship with that God who is light, and in whom there is no darkness at all. Religion is light; religion is peace, purity, joy; and though there are cases where for a time a true Christian may be left to darkness, and have no spiritual joy, and be in doubt about his salvation, yet still it is a great truth, that unless we know by personal experience what it is to walk habitually in the light, to have the comforts of religion, and to experience in our own souls the influences which make the heart pure, and which bring us into conformity to the God who is light, we can have no true religion. All else is but a name, which will not avail us on the final day.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *But if we walk in the light*. **See Barnes "1Jo 1:5"**.

Walking in the light may include the three following things:

(1.) Leading lives of holiness and purity; that is, the Christian must be characteristically a holy man, a light in the world, by his example.

(2.) Walking in the truth; that is, embracing the truth in opposition to all error of heathenism and infidelity, and having clear, spiritual views of truth, such as the unrenewed never have. See 2Co 4:6 1Co 2:9-15; Eph 1:18.

(3.) Enjoying the comforts of religion; that is, having the joy which religion is fitted to impart, and which it does impart to its true friends, Ps 94:19 Isa 57:8; 2Co 1:3 13:11.

See Barnes "Joh 12:35".

As he is in the light. In the same kind of light that he has. The measure of light which we may have is not the same in *degree*, but it is of the same kind. The true Christian in his character and feelings resembles God.

We have fellowship one with another. As we all partake of his feelings and views, we shall resemble each other. Loving the same God, embracing the same views of religion, and living for the same ends, we shall of course have much that is common to us all, and thus shall have fellowship with each other.

And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. See the sentiment here expressed fully explained **See Barnes** "Heb 9:11.

When it is said that his blood cleanses us from *all* sin, the expression must mean one of two things—either that it is through that blood that all past sin is forgiven, or that that blood will ultimately purify us from all transgression, and make us perfectly holy. The general meaning is plain, that in regard to any and every sin of which we may be conscious, there is efficacy in that blood to remove it, and to make us wholly pure. There is no stain made by sin so deep that the blood of Christ cannot take it entirely away from the soul. The *connexion* here, or the reason why this is introduced here, seems to be this: The apostle is stating the substance of the message which he had received, 1Jo 1:5. The first or leading part of it was, that God is light, and in him is no darkness, and that his religion requires that all his friends should resemble him by their walking in the light. Another, and a material part of the same message was, that provision was made in his religion for cleansing the soul from sin, and making it like God. No system of religion intended for man could be adapted to his condition which did not contain this provision, and this did contain it in the most full and ample manner. Of course, however, it is meant that that blood cleanses from all sin only on the conditions on which its efficacy can be made available to man—by repentance for the past, and by a cordial reception of the Saviour through faith.

{b} "walk" Joh 12:35 {c} "blood" Eph 1:7 Heb 9:14; 1Pe 1:19 Re 1:5

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *If we say that we have no sin*. It is not improbable that the apostle here makes allusion to some error which was then beginning to prevail in the church. Some have supposed that the allusion is to the sect of the Nicolaitanes, and to the views which they maintained, particularly that nothing was forbidden to the children of God under the gospel, and that in the freedom conferred on Christians they were at liberty to do what they pleased, Re 2:6,15. It is not certain, however, that the allusion is to them, and it is not necessary to suppose that there is reference to *any* particular sect that existed at that time. The object of the apostle is to show that it is implied in the very nature of the gospel that we are sinners, and that if, on any pretence, we denied that fact, we utterly deceived ourselves. In all ages there have been those who have attempted, on some pretence, to justify their conduct; who have felt that they did not need a Saviour; who have maintained that they had a right to do what they pleased; or who, on pretence of being perfectly sanctified, have held that they live without the commission of sin. To meet these, and all similar cases, the apostle affirms that it is a great elementary truth, which on no pretence is to be denied, that we are all sinners. We are at all times, and in all circumstances, to admit the painful and humiliating truth that we are transgressors of the law of God, and that we need, even in our best services, the cleansing of the blood of Jesus Christ. The fair interpretation of the declaration here will apply not only to those who maintain that they have not been guilty of sin in the past, but also to those who profess to have become perfectly sanctified, and to live without sin. In any and every way, if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves. Compare **See Barnes "Jas 3:2"**.

We deceive ourselves. We have wrong views about our character. This does not mean that the self-deception is willful, but that it in fact exists. No man knows himself who supposes that in all respects he is perfectly pure.

And the truth is not in us. On this subject. A man who should maintain that he had never committed sin, could have no just views of the truth in regard to himself, and would show that he was in utter error. In like manner, according to the obvious interpretation of this passage, he who maintains that he is wholly sanctified, and lives without any sin, shows that he is deceived in regard to himself, and that the truth, in this respect, is not in him. He may hold the truth on other subjects, but he does not on this. The very nature of the Christian religion supposes that we feel ourselves to be sinners, and that we should be ever ready to acknowledge it. A man who claims that he is absolutely perfect, that he is holy as God is holy, must know little of his own heart. Who, after all his reasoning on the subject, would dare to go out under the open heaven, at midnight, and lift up his hands and his eyes towards the stars, and say that he had no sin to confess—that he was as pure as the God that made those stars?

{d} "no sin" 1Ki 8:45 Job 25:4; Ec 7:20 Jas 3:2.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *If we confess our sins*. Pardon, in the Scriptures, always supposes that there is confession, and there is no promise that it will be imparted unless a full acknowledgment has been made. Compare Ps 51; Ps 52; Lu 15:18 7:41; Pr 28:13.

He is faithful. To his promises. He will do what he has assured us he will do in remitting them.

And just to forgive us our sins. The word *just* here cannot be used in a strict and proper sense, since the forgiveness of sins is never an act of justice, but is an act of *mercy*. If it were an act of *justice* it could be demanded or enforced, and that is the same as to say that it is not forgiveness, for in that case there could have been no sin to be pardoned. But the word *just* is often used in a larger sense, as denoting upright, equitable, acting properly in the circumstances of the case, etc. Comp. **See Barnes "Mt 1:19"**.

Here the word may be used in one of the following senses:

(1.) Either as referring to his general excellence of character, or his disposition to do what is proper; that is, he is one who will act in every way as becomes God; or,

(2,) that he will be just in the sense that he will be true to his promises; or that, since he has promised to pardon sinners, he will be found faithfully to adhere to those engagements; or perhaps,

(3,) that he will be just to his Son in the covenant of redemption, since, now that an atonement has been made by him, and a way has been opened through his sufferings by which God can consistently pardon, and with a view and an understanding that he might and would pardon, it would be an act of injustice to him if he did not pardon those who believe on him.

Viewed in either aspect, we may have the fullest assurance that God is ready to pardon us if we exercise true repentance and faith. No one can come to God without finding him ready to do all that is appropriate for a God to do in pardoning transgressors; no one who will not, in fact, receive forgiveness if he repents, and believes, and makes confession; no one who will not find

that God is just to his Son in the covenant of redemption, in pardoning and saving all who put their trust in the merits of his sacrifice.

And to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. By forgiving all that is past, treating us as if we were righteous, and ultimately by removing all the stains of guilt from the soul.

{a} "confess" Job 33:27,28; Ps 32:5 Pr 28:13

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *If we say that we have not sinned*. In times that are past. Some perhaps might be disposed to say this; and as the apostle is careful to guard every point, he here states that if a man should take the ground that his past life had been wholly upright, it would prove that he had no true religion. The statement here respecting the past seems to prove that when, in 1Jo 1:8, he refers to the present—"if we say we have no sin "—he meant to say that if a man should claim to be perfect, or to be wholly sanctified, it would demonstrate that he deceived himself; and the two statements go to prove that neither in reference to the past nor the present can any one lay claim to perfection.

We make Him a liar. Because he has everywhere affirmed the depravity of all the race. Compare Barnes Notes on Romans chapters 1-3. On no point have his declarations been more positive and uniform than on the fact of the universal sinfulness of man. Comp. Ge 6:11,12; Job 14:4 15:16; Ps 14:1,2,3 51:5 58:3 Ro 3:9-20 Ga 3:21.

And his word is not in us. His truth; that is, we have no true religion. The whole system of Christianity is based on the fact that man is a fallen being, and needs a Saviour; and unless a man admits that, of course he cannot be a Christian.

REMARKS.

(1.) The importance of the doctrine of the incarnation of the Son of God, 1Jo 1:1,2. On that doctrine the apostle lays great stress; begins his epistle with it; presents it in a great variety of forms; dwells upon it as if he would not have it forgotten or misunderstood. It *has* all the importance which he attached to it, for

(a.) it is the most wonderful of all the events of which we have any knowledge;

(b.) it is the most deeply connected with our welfare.

(2.) The intense interest which true piety always takes in this doctrine, 1Jo 1:1,2. The feelings of John on the subject are substantially the feelings of all true Christians. The world passes it by in unbelief, or as if it were of no importance; but no true Christian can look at the fact that the Son of God became incarnate but with the deepest emotion.

(3.) It is an object of ardent desire with true Christians that all others should share their joys, 1Jo 1:3,4. There is nothing selfish, or narrow, or exclusive in true religion; but every sincere Christian who is happy desires that all others should be happy too.

(4.) Wherever there is true fellowship with God, there is with all true Christians, 1Jo 1:3,4. There is but one church, one family of God; and as all true Christians have fellowship with God, they must have with each other.

(5.) Wherever there is true fellowship with Christians, there is with God himself, 1Jo 1:3,4. If we love his people, share their joys, labour with them in promoting his cause, and love the things which they love, we shall show that we love him. There is but one God, and one church; and if all

the members love each other, they will love their common God and Saviour. An evidence, therefore, that we love Christians, becomes an evidence that we love God.

(6.) It is a great privilege to be a Christian,

@1Jo 1:3,4.

If we are Christians, we are associated with

(a.) God the Father;

(b.) with his Son Jesus Christ;

(c.) with all his redeemed on earth and in heaven;

(d.) with all holy angels. There is one bond of fellowship that unites all together; and what a privilege it is to be united in the eternal bonds of friendship with all the holy minds in the universe!

(7.) If God is *light*, 1Jo 1:5, then all that occurs is reconcilable with the idea that he is worthy of confidence. What he does may seem to be dark to us, but we may be assured that it is all light with him. A cloud may come between us and the sun, but beyond the cloud the sun shines with undimmed splendour, and soon the cloud itself will pass away. At midnight it is dark to us, but it is not because the sun is shorn of his beams, or is extinguished. He will rise again upon our hemisphere in the fulness of his glory, and all the darkness of the cloud and of midnight is reconcilable with the idea that the sun is a bright orb, and that in him is no darkness at all. So with God. We may be under a cloud of sorrow and of trouble, but above that the glory of God shines with splendour, and soon that cloud will pass away, and reveal him in the fulness of his beauty and truth.

(8.) We should, therefore, at all times exercise a cheerful confidence in God, 1Jo 1:5. Who supposes that the sun is never again to shine when the cloud passes over it, or when the shades of midnight have settled down upon the world? We confide in that sun that it will shine again when the cloud has passed off, and when the shades of night have been driven away. So let us confide in God, for with more absolute certainty we shall yet see him to be light, and shall come to a world where there is no cloud.

(9.) We may look cheerfully onward to heaven, 1Jo 1:5. There all is light. There we shall see God as he is. Well may we then bear with our darkness a little longer, for soon we shall be ushered into a world where there is no need of the sun or the stars; where there is no darkness, no night.

(10.) Religion is elevating in its nature, 1Jo 1:6,7. It brings us from a world of darkness to a world of light. It scatters the rays of light on a thousand dark subjects, and gives promise that all that is now obscure will yet become clear as noonday. Wherever there is true religion, the mind emerges more and more into light; the scales of ignorance and error pass away.

(11.) There is no sin so great that it may not be removed by the blood of the atonement, 1Jo 1:7, *last clause*. This blood has shown its efficacy in the pardon of all the great sinners who have applied to it, and its efficacy is as great now as it was when it was applied to the first sinner that was saved. No one, therefore, however great his sins, need hesitate about applying to the blood of the cross, or fear that his sins are so great that they cannot be taken away.

(12.) The Christian will yet be made wholly pure, 1Jo 1:7, *last clause*. It is of the nature of that blood which the Redeemer shed that it ultimately cleanses the soul entirely from sin. The prospect before the true Christian that he will become perfectly holy is absolute; and whatever else may befall him, he is sure that he will yet be holy as God is holy.

(13.) There is no use in attempting to conceal our offences, 1Jo 1:8. They are known, all known, to one Being, and they will at some future period all be disclosed. We cannot hope to evade

punishment by hiding them; we cannot hope for impunity because we suppose they may be passed over *as if* unobserved. No man can escape on the presumption either that his sins are unknown, or that they are unworthy of notice.

(14.) It is manly to make confession when we have sinned, 1Jo 1:9,10. All *meanness* was in doing the wrong, not in confessing it; what we should be ashamed of is that we are guilty, not that confession is to be made. When a wrong has been done, there is no nobleness in trying to conceal it; and as there is no nobleness in such an attempt, so there could be no safety.

(15.) Peace of mind, when wrong has been done, can be found only in confession, 1Jo 1:9,10 . That is what nature prompts to when we have done wrong, if we would find peace, and that the religion of grace demands. When a man has done wrong, the least that he can do is to make confession; and when that is done and the wrong is pardoned, all is done that can be to restore peace to the soul.

(16.) The *ease* of salvation, 1Jo 1:9. What more easy terms of salvation could we desire than an acknowledgment of our sins? No painful sacrifice is demanded; no penance, pilgrimage, or voluntary scourging; all that is required is that there should be an acknowledgment of sin at the foot of the cross, and if this is done with a true heart the offender will be saved. If a man is not *willing* to do this, why should he be saved? How can he be?

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 2

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 1

FIRST JOHN CHAPTER II.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

THE *subjects* which are introduced into this chapter are the following:

I. A statement of the apostle that the great object which he had in writing to them was that they should not sin; and yet if they sinned, and were conscious that they were guilty before God, they should not despair, for they had an Advocate with the Father who had made propitiation for the sins of the world, 1Jo 2:1,2. This is properly a continuation of what he had said in the close of the previous chapter, and should not have been separated from that.

II. The evidence that we know God, or that we are his true friends, is to be found in the fact that we keep his commandments, 1Jo 2:3-6.

III. The apostle says that what he had been saying was no new commandment, but was what they had always heard concerning the nature of the gospel; but though in this respect the law of love which he meant particularly to enforce was no new commandment, none which they had not heard before, yet in another respect it was a new commandment, for it was one which in its peculiarity was originated by the Saviour, and which he meant to make the charac- teristic of his religion, 1Jo 2:7-11. A large part of the epistle is taken up in explaining and enforcing this commandment requiring love to the brethren.

IV. The apostle specifies 1Jo 2:12-14 various reasons why he had written to them—reasons derived from the peculiar character of different classes among them—little children, fathers, young men.

V. Each of these classes he solemnly commands not to love the world, or the things that are in the world, for that which constitutes the peculiarity of the "world" as such is not of the Father, and all "that there is in the world is soon to pass away," 1Jo 2:15-17.

VI. He calls their attention to the fact that the closing dispensation of the world had come, 1Jo 2:18-20. The evidence of this was, that antichrist had appeared.

VII. He calls their attention to the characteristics of the antichrist. The essential thing would be that antichrist would deny that Jesus was the Christ, involving a practical denial of both the Father and the Son. Persons of this character were abroad, and they were in great danger of being seduced by their arts from the way of truth and duty, 1Jo 2:21-26.

VIII. The apostle, in the close of the chapter, 1Jo 2:27-29, expresses the belief that they would not be seduced, but that they had an anointing from above which would keep them from the arts of those who would lead them astray, he earnestly exhorts them to abide in God the Saviour, that when he should appear they might have confidence and not be ashamed at his coming.

Verse 1. *My little children*. *teknia mou*. This is such language as an aged apostle would be likely to use when addressing a church, and its use in this epistle may be regarded as one evidence that John had reached an advanced period of life when he wrote the epistle.

These things write I unto you. To wit, the things stated in chapter one.

That ye sin not. To keep you from sin, or to induce you to lead a holy life.

And if any man sin. As all are liable, with hearts as corrupt as ours, and amidst the temptations of a world like this, to do. This, of course, does not imply that it is *proper* or *right* to sin, or that Christians should have no concern about it; but the meaning is, that all are liable to sin, and when we are conscious of sin the mind should not yield to despondency and despair. It might be supposed, perhaps, that if one sinned after baptism, or after being converted, there could be no forgiveness. The apostle designs to guard against any such supposition, and to show that the atonement made by the Redeemer had respect to all kinds of sin, and that under the deepest consciousness of guilt and of personal unworthiness, we may feel that we have an advocate on high.

We have an advocate with the Father. God only can forgive sin; and though we have no claim on him, yet there is one with him who can plead our cause, and on whom we can rely to manage our interests there. The word rendered *advocate* (*paraklhtov* or—*paraclete*) is elsewhere applied to the Holy Spirit, and is in every other place where it occurs in the New Testament rendered *comforter*, Joh 14:16,26; Joh 15:26 16:7. On the meaning of the word, **See Barnes "John 14:16"**.

As used with reference to the Holy Spirit (Joh 14:16, *et al*.) it is employed in the more general sense of helper, or aid; and the particular manner in which the Holy Spirit aids us may be seen stated in **See Barnes "Joh 14:16"**.

As usual here with reference to the Lord Jesus, it is employed in the more limited sense of the word advocate, as the word is frequently used in the Greek writers to denote an advocate in court; that is, one whom we *call to our aid*; or *to stand by us*, to defend our suit. Where it is applied to the Lord Jesus, the language is evidently figurative, since there can be no *literal* pleading for us in heaven; but it is expressive of the great truth that he has undertaken our cause with God, and that he performs for us all that we expect of an advocate and counsellor. It is not to be supposed, however, that he manages our cause in the same way, or on the same principles on which an advocate in a

human tribunal does. An advocate in court is employed to *defend* his client. He does not begin by admitting his guilt, or in any way basing his plea on the conceded fact that he is guilty; his proper business is to show that he is not guilty, or, if he be proved to be so, to see that no injustice shall be done him. The proper business of an advocate in a human court, therefore, embraces two things:

(1.) To show that his client is not guilty in the form and manner charged on him. This he may do in one of two ways, either

(a.) by showing that he did not do the act charged on him, as when he is charged with murder, and can prove an alibi, or show that he was not present at the time the murder was committed; or

(b.) by proving that he had a *right* to do the deed—as, if he is charged with murder, he may admit the fact of the killing, but may show that it was in self-defence.

(2.) In case his client is convicted, his office is to see that no injustice is done to him in the sentence; to stand by him still; to avail himself of all that the law allows in his favour, or to state any circumstance of age, or sex, or former service, or bodily health, which would in any way mitigate the sentence. The advocacy of the Lord Jesus in our behalf, however, is wholly different from this, though the same general object is pursued and sought, the good of those for whom he becomes an advocate. The nature of his advocacy may be stated in the following particulars:

(1.) He admits the guilt of those for whom he becomes the advocate, to the full extent charged on them by the law of God, and by their own consciences. He does not attempt to hide or conceal it. He makes no apology for it. He neither attempts to deny *the fact*, nor to show that they had a *right* to do as they have done. He could not do this, for it would not be true; and any plea before the throne of God which should be based on a denial of our guilt would be fatal to our cause.

(2.) As our advocate, he undertakes to be security that no wrong shall be done to the universe if we are not punished as we deserve; that is, if we are pardoned, and treated as if we had not sinned. This he does by pleading what he has done in behalf of men; that is, by the plea that his sufferings and death in behalf of sinners have done as much to honour the law, and to maintain the truth and justice of God, and to prevent the extension of apostasy, as if the offenders themselves had suffered the full penalty of the law. If sinners are punished in hell, there will be some object to be accomplished by it; and the simple account of the atonement by Christ is, that his death will secure all the good results to the universe which would be secured by the punishment of the offender himself. It has done as much to maintain the honour of the law, and to impress the universe with the truth that sin cannot be committed with impunity. If all the good results can be secured by substituted sufferings which there would be by the punishment of the offender himself, then it is clear that the guilty may be acquitted and saved. Why should they not be? The Saviour, as our advocate, undertakes to be security that this shall be.

(3.) As our advocate, he becomes a *surety* for our good behaviour; gives a pledge to justice that we will obey the laws of God, and that he will keep us in the paths of obedience and truth; that, if pardoned, we will not continue to rebel. This pledge or surety can be given in no human court of justice. No man, advocate or friend, can give security when one is pardoned who has been convicted of stealing a horse, that he will not steal a horse again; when one who has been guilty of murder is pardoned, that he will never be guilty of it again; when one who has been guilty of forgery is pardoned, that he will not be guilty of it again. If he *could* do this, the subject of pardon would be attended with much fewer difficulties than it is now. But the Lord Jesus becomes such a pledge or surety for us, (Heb 7:22,) and hence he becomes such an advocate with the Father as we need.

Jesus Christ the righteous. One who is eminently righteous himself, and who possesses the means of rendering others righteous. It is an appropriate feeling when we come before God in his name, that we come pleading the merits of one who is eminently righteous, and on account of whose righteousness we may be justified and saved.

{*} "little children" "My children" {a} "advocate" Ro 8:34 Heb 7:25

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And he is the propitiation for our sins*. The word rendered propitiation (*ilasmov*) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, except in 1Jo 4:10 of this epistle; though words of the same derivation, and having the same essential meaning, frequently, occur. The corresponding word *ilasthrion* (*hilasterion*) occurs in Ro 3:25, rendered *propitiation*—"whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood;" and in Heb 9:5, rendered *mercy-seat*—"shadowing the *mercy-seat*." The verb *ilaskomai* (*hilaskomai*) occurs also in Lu 18:3—"God *be merciful* to me a sinner;" and Heb 2:17—"*to make reconciliation* for the sins of the people." For the idea expressed by these words, **See Barnes "Ro 3:25"**.

The proper meaning of the word is that of reconciling, appeasing, turning away anger, rendering propitious or favourable. The idea is, that there is anger or wrath, or that something has been done to offend, and that it is needful to turn away that wrath, or to appease. This may be done by a sacrifice, by songs, by services rendered, or by bloody offerings. So the word is often used in Homer.—*Passow*. We have similar words in common use, as when we say of one that he has been offended, and that something must be done to appease him, or to turn away his wrath. This is commonly done with us by making restitution; or by an acknowledgment; or by yielding the point in controversy; or by an expression of regret; or by different conduct in time to come. But this idea must not be applied too literally to God; nor should it be explained away. The essential thoughts in regard to him, as implied in this word, are,

(1,) that his will has been disregarded, and his law violated, and that he has reason to be offended with us;

(2,) that in that condition he cannot, consistently with his perfections, and the good of the universe, treat us as if we had not done it;

(3,) that it is proper that, in some way, he should show his displeasure at our conduct, either by punishing us, or by something that shall answer the same purpose; and,

(4,) that the means of propitiation come in here, and accomplish this end, and make it proper that he should treat us as if we had not sinned; that is, he is reconciled, or appeased, and his anger is turned away. This is done, it is supposed, by, the death of the Lord Jesus, accomplishing, in most important respects, what would be accomplished by the punishment of the offender himself. In regard to this, in order to a proper understanding of what is accomplished, it is necessary to observe two things—what is *not* done, and what *is*.

I. There are certain things which do *not* enter into the idea of propitiation. They are such as these:

(a.) That it does not change the fact that the wrong was done. That is a fact which cannot be denied, and he who undertakes to make a propitiation for sin does not deny it.

(b.) It does not change God; it does not make him a different being from what he was before; it does not *buy him over* to a willingness to show mercy; it does not change an inexorable being to one who is compassionate and kind.

(c.) The offering that is made to secure reconciliation does not necessarily produce reconciliation in fact. It prepares the way for it on the part of God, but whether they for whom it is made will be disposed to accept it is another question. When two men are alienated from each other, you may go to B and say to him that all obstacles to reconciliation on the part of A are removed, and that he is disposed to be at peace, but whether B will be willing to be at peace is quite another matter. The mere fact that his adversary is disposed to be at peace, determines nothing in regard to his disposition in the matter. So in regard to the controversy between man and God. It may be true that all obstacles to reconciliation on the part of God are taken away, and still it may be quite a separate question whether man will be willing to lay aside his opposition, and embrace the terms of mercy. In itself considered, one does not necessarily determine the other, or throw any light on it.

II. The amount, then, in regard to the propitiation made for sin is, that it removes all obstacles to reconciliation on the part of God; it does whatever is necessary to be done to maintain the honour of his law, his justice, and his truth; it makes it consistent for him to offer pardon—that is, it removes whatever there was that made it necessary to inflict punishment, and thus, so far as the word can be applied to God, it appeases him, or turns away his anger, or renders him propitious. This it does, not in respect to producing any *change* in God, but in respect to the fact that it removes whatever there was in the nature of the case that prevented the free and full offer of pardon. The idea of the apostle in the passage before us is, that when we sin we may be assured that this has been done, and that pardon may now be freely extended to us.

And not for our's only. Not only for the sins of us who are Christians, for the apostle was writing to such. The idea which he intends to convey seems to be, that when we come before God we should take the most liberal and large views of the atonement; we should feel that the most ample provision has been made for our pardon, and that in no respect is there any limit as to the sufficiency of that work to remove all sin. It is sufficient for us; sufficient for all the world.

But also for the sins of the whole world. The phrase "*the sins of*" is not in the original, but is not improperly supplied, for the connexion demands it. This is one of the expressions occurring in the New Testament which demonstrate that the atonement was made for all men, and which cannot be reconciled with any other opinion, if he had died only for a part of the race, this language could not have been used. The phrase, "the whole world," is one which naturally embraces all men; is such as would be used if it be supposed that the apostle *meant* to teach that Christ died for all men; and is such as cannot be explained on any other supposition. If he died only for the elect, it is not true that he is the "propitiation for the sins of the whole world" in any proper sense, nor would it be possible then to assign a sense in which it could be true. This passage, interpreted in its plain and obvious meaning, teaches the following things:

(1.) That the atonement in its own nature is adapted to all men, or that it is as much fitted to one individual, or One class, as another;

(2,) that it is *sufficient in merit for all*; that is, that if any more should be saved than actually will be, there would be no need of any additional suffering in order to save them;

(3,) that it has no *special* adaptedness to one person or class more than another; that is, that in its own nature it did not render the salvation of one more easy than that of another. It so magnified the law, so honoured God, so fully expressed the Divine sense of the evil of sin in respect to all

men, that the offer of salvation might be made as freely to one as to another, and that any and all might take shelter under it and be safe. Whether, however, God might not, for wise reasons, resolve that its benefits should be applied to a part only, is another question, and one which does not affect the inquiry about the intrinsic nature of the atonement. On the evidence that the atonement was made for all, **See Barnes "**2Co 5:14, and **See Barnes "Heb 2:9"**.

{a} "propitiation" Ro 3:25

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And hereby we do know that we know him*. To wit, by that Which follows, we have evidence that we are truly acquainted with him, and with the requirements of his religion; that is, that we are truly his friends. The word *him*, in this verse, seems to refer to the Saviour. On the meaning of the word *know*, **See Barnes "Joh 17:3"**.

The apostle had stated in the previous part of this epistle some of the leading points revealed by the Christian religion, and he here enters on the consideration of the nature of the evidence required to show that we are personally interested in it, or that we are true Christians. A large part of the epistle is occupied with this subject. The first, the grand evidence—that without which all others would be vain—he says is, that we keep his commandments.

If we keep his commandments. **See Barnes "Joh 14:15"**.

Comp. Joh 14:23,24, 15:10,14.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *He that saith, I know him*, He who professes to be acquainted with the Saviour, or who professes to be a Christian.

And keepeth not his commandments. What he has appointed to be observed by his people; that is, he who does not *obey* him.

Is a liar. Makes a false profession; professes to have that which he really has not. Such a profession is a falsehood, because there can be no true religion where one does not obey the law of God.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *But whoso keepeth his word*. That is, what he has spoken or commanded, The term *word* here will include all that he has made known to us as his will in regard to our conduct.

In him verily is the love of God perfected. He professes to have the love of God in his heart, and that love receives its *completion* or *filling up* by obedience to the will of God. That obedience is the proper carrying out, or the exponent of the love which exists in the heart. Love to the Saviour would be defective without that, for it is never complete without obedience. If this be the true

interpretation, then the passage does not make any affirmation about sinless perfection, but it only affirms that if true love exists in the heart, it will be carried out in the life; or that love and obedience are parts of the same thing; that one will be manifested by the other; and that where obedience exists, it is the completion or perfecting of love. Besides, the apostle does not say that either the love or the obedience would be in themselves absolutely perfect; but he says that one cannot fully develope itself without the other.

Hereby know we that we are in him. That is, by having in fact such love as shall insure obedience. To be *in* him, is to be united to him; to be his friends. **See Barnes "Joh 6:56"**; **See Barnes** "Ro 13:14".

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *He that saith, he abideth in him*. Gr., *remains* in him; that is, abides or remains in the belief of his doctrines, and in the comfort and practice of religion. The expression is one of those which refer to the intimate union between Christ and his people. A great variety of phrase is employed to denote that. For the meaning of this word in John, **See Barnes "Joh 3:6"**.

Ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. Ought to live and act as he did. If he is *one* with him, or professes to be united to him, he ought to imitate him in all things. Comp. Joh 13:15. **See Barnes "1Jo 1:6"**.

{a} "abideth" Joh 15:4,5 {b} "walk" Joh 13:15

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you*. That is, what I am now enjoining is not new. It is the same doctrine which you have always heard. There has been much difference of opinion as to what is referred to by the word *commandment*, whether it is the injunction in the previous verse to live as Christ lived, or whether it is what he refers to in the following verses, the duty of brotherly love. Perhaps neither of these is exactly the idea of the apostle, but he may mean in this verse to put in a general disclaimer against the charge that what he enjoined was new. In respect to *all* that he taught, the views of truth which he held, the duties which he enjoined, the course of life which he would prescribe as proper for a Christian to live, he meant to say that it was not at all *new*; it was nothing which he had originated himself, but it was in fact the same system of doctrines which they had always received since they became Christians. He might have been induced to say this because he apprehended that some of those whom he had in his eye, and whose doctrines he meant to oppose, might say that this was all new; that it was not the nature of religion as it had been commonly understood, and as it was laid down by the Saviour. In a somewhat different sense, indeed, he admits 1Jo 2:8 that there was a "new" commandment which it was proper to enjoin—for he did not forget that the Saviour himself called that "*new*;" and though that commandment had also been all along inculcated under the gospel, yet there was a sense in which it was proper to call that new, for it had been so called by the Saviour. But in respect to *all* the doctrines which he maintained, and in respect to all the duties which he enjoined, he said that they

were not new in the sense that he had originated them, or that they had not been enjoined from the beginning. Perhaps, also, the apostle here may have some allusion to false teachers who were in fact scattering new doctrines among the people, things before unheard of, and attractive by their novelty; and he may mean to say that he made no pretensions to any such novelty, but was content to repeat the old and familiar truths which they had always received. Thus, if *he* was charged with breaching new opinions, he denies it fully; if *they* were advancing new opinions, and were even "making capital" out of them, he says that he attempted no such thing, but was content with the old and established opinions which they had always received.

But an old commandment. Old, in the sense that it has always been inculcated; that religion has always enjoined it.

Which ye had from the beginning. Which you have always received ever since you heard anything about the gospel. It was preached when the gospel was first preached; it has always been promulgated when that has been promulgated; it is what you first heard when you were made acquainted with the gospel. Compare **See Barnes "1Jo 1:1"**.

The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. Is the doctrine; or is what was enjoined. John is often in the habit of putting a truth in a new form or aspect in order to make it emphatic, and to prevent the possibility of misapprehension. See Joh 1:1,2. The sense here is, "All that I am saying to you is in fact an old commandment, or one which you have always had. There is nothing new in what I am enjoining on you."

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Again, a new commandment I write unto you*. "And yet, that which I write to you, and particularly enjoin on you, deserves in another sense to be called a new commandment, though it has been also inculcated from the beginning, for it was called *new* by the Saviour himself." Or the meaning may be, "In addition to the general precepts which I have referred to, I do now call your attention to the *new commandment* of the Saviour, that which he himself called new." There can be no doubt here that John refers to the commandment to "love one another," (1Jo 2:9-11,) and that it is here called *new*, not in the sense that John inculcated it as a novel doctrine, but in the sense that the Saviour called it such. For the reasons why it was so called by him, **See Barnes "Joh 13:34"**.

Which thing is true in him. In the Lord Jesus. That is, which commandment or law of love was illustrated in him, or was manifested by him in his intercourse with his disciples. That which was most prominent in him was this very love which he enjoined on all his followers.

And in you. Among you. That is, you have manifested it in your intercourse with each other. It is not new in the sense that you have never heard of it, and have never evinced it, but in the sense only that he called it new.

Because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. The ancient systems of error, under which men hated each other, have passed away, and you are brought into the light of the true religion. Once you were in darkness, like others; now the light of the pure gospel shines around you, and that requires, as its distinguishing characteristic, *love*. Religion is often represented as *light*; and Christ spoke of himself, and was spoken of, as the light of the world. **See Barnes "Joh 1:4"**; **See Barnes** "Joh 1:5".

Comp. Joh 8:12; Joh 12:35,36,46 Isa 9:2.
{c} "new commandment" Joh 13:34 {d} "darkness" Ro 13:12

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *He that saith he is in the light*. That he has true religion, or is a Christian. See 1Jo 1:7.

And hateth his brother. The word *brother* seems here to refer to those who professed the same religion. The word is indeed sometimes used in a larger sense, but the reference here appears to be to that which is properly brotherly love among Christians. Comp. Lucke, *in loc*.

Is in darkness even unto now. That is, he cannot have true religion unless he has love to the brethren. The command to love one another was one of the most solemn and earnest which Christ ever enjoined, (Joh 15:17;) he made it the peculiar badge of discipleship, or that by which his followers were to be everywhere known, (Joh 13:35;) and it is, therefore, impossible to have any true religion without love to those who are sincerely and truly his followers. If a man has not that, he is in deep darkness, whatever else he may have, on the whole subject of religion. Comp. **See Barnes "1Th 4:9"**.

{e} "darkness" 2Pe 1:9

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *He that loveth his brother abideth in the light*. Has true religion, and enjoys it.

And there is none occasion of stumbling in him. Marg., *scandal*. Greek, "and there is no stumbling" [or scandal—*skandalon*—in him.] The word here used, means anything against which one strikes or stumbles; and then a stumbling-block, an impediment, or anything which occasions a fall. Then it is used in a moral or spiritual sense, as denoting that which is the occasion of falling into sin. **See Barnes "Mt 5:29"**

and **See Barnes "Ro 14:13"**.

Here it refers to an individual in respect to his treatment of others, and means that there is nothing, so far as he is concerned, to lead him into sin.—*Rob. Lex*. If he has love to the brethren, he has true religion; and there is, so far as the influence of this shall extend, nothing that will be the occasion of his falling into sin in his conduct towards them, for "love worketh no ill to his neighbour," Ro 13:10. His course will be just, and upright, and benevolent. He will have no envy towards them in their prosperity, and will not be disposed to detract from their reputation in adversity; he will have no feelings of exultation when they fall, and will not be disposed to take advantage of their misfortunes; and, loving them as brethren, he will be in no respect under temptation to do them wrong. In the bosom of one who loves his brother, the baleful passions of envy, malice, hatred, and uncharitableness, can have no place. At the same time, this love of the brethren would have an important effect on his whole Christian life and walk, for there are few things that will have more influence on a man's character in keeping him from doing wrong, than the love of the good and the

pure. He who truly loves good men, will not be likely in any respect to go astray from the paths of virtue.

{1} "stumbling" "scandal"

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *But he that hateth his brother*. The word here used would, in this connexion, include both the mere absence of love, and positive hatred. It is designed to include the whole of that state of mind where there is not love for the brethren.

Is in darkness. 1Jo 2:9.

And walketh in darkness. He is like one who walks in the dark, and who sees no object distinctly. **See Barnes "Joh 12:35".**

And knoweth not whither he goeth. Like one in the dark. He wanders about not knowing what direction he shall take, or where the course which he is on will lead. The general meaning is, that he is ignorant of the whole nature of religion; or, in other words, love to the brethren is a central virtue in religion, and when a man has not that, his mind is entirely clouded on the whole subject, and he shows that he knows nothing of its nature. There is no virtue that is designed to be made more prominent in Christianity; and there is none that will throw its influence farther over a man's life.

{a} "walketh in darkness" Pr 4:15 Joh 12:35

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *I write unto you, little children*. There has been much difference of opinion among commentators in regard to this verse and the three following verses, on account of the apparent tautology. Even Doddridge supposes that considerable error has here crept into the text, and that a portion of these verses should be omitted in order to avoid the repetition. But there is no authority for omitting any portion of the text, and the passage is very much in accordance with the general style of the apostle John. The author of this epistle was evidently accustomed to express his thoughts in a great variety of ways, having even the appearance of tautology, that the exact idea might be before his readers, and that his meaning might not be mis- apprehended. In order to show that the truths which he was uttering in this epistle pertained to all, and to secure the interest of all in them, he addresses himself to different classes, and says that there were reasons existing in regard to each class why he wrote to them. In the expressions, "I write," and "I have written," he refers to what is found in the epistle itself, and the statements in these verses are designed to be reasons why he brought these truths before their minds. The word here rendered *little children* (*teknia*)is different from that used in 1Jo 2:13, and rendered there *little children*, (*paidia*;) but there can be little doubt that the same class of persons is intended. Some have indeed supposed that by the term little children here, as in 1Jo 2:1, the apostle means to address all believers —speaking to them as a father; but it seems more appropriate to suppose that he means in these verses to divide the body of Christians

whom he addressed into three classes—children, young men, and the aged, and to state particular reasons why he wrote to each. If the term (*teknia*) *little children* here means the same as the term (*paidia*) *little children* in 1Jo 2:13, then he addresses each of these classes *twice* in these two verses, giving each time somewhat varied reasons why he addressed them. That, by the term "little children" here, he means children literally, seems to me to be clear,

(1.) because this is the usual meaning of the word, and should be understood to be the meaning here, unless there is something in the connexion to show that it is used in a metaphorical sense;

(2.) because it seems necessary to understand the other expressions, "young men," and "fathers," in a literal sense, as denoting those more advanced in life;

(3.) because this would be quite in character for the apostle John. He had recorded, and would doubtless remember the solemn injunction of the Saviour to Peter, (Joh 21:15,) to "feed his lambs," and the aged apostle could not but feel that what was worthy of so solemn an injunction from the Lord, was worthy of his attention and care as an apostle; and

(4.) because in that case, each class, fathers, young men, and children, would be twice addressed in these two verses; whereas if we understood this of Christians in general, then fathers and young men would be twice addressed, and children but once. If this be so, it may be remarked,

(1.) that there were probably quite young children in the church in the time of the apostle John, for the word would naturally convey that idea.

(2.) The *exact* age cannot he indeed determined, but two things are clear:

(a.) one is, that they were undoubtedly under twenty years of age, since they were younger than the "*young men*"—*neaniskoi* a word usually applied to those who were in the vigour of life, from about the period of twenty up to forty years, (**See Barnes** "1Jo 2:13,) and this word would embrace all who were younger than that class; and

(b.) the other is, that the word itself would convey the idea that they were in quite early life, as the word children—a fair translation of it —does now with us. It is not possible to determine, from the use of this word, *precisely* of what age the class here referred to was, but the word would imply that they were in quite early life. No rule is laid down in the New Testament as to the age in which children may be admitted to the communion. The whole subject is left to the wise discretion of the church, and is safely left there. Cases must vary so much that no rule could be laid down; and little or no evil has arisen from leaving the point undetermined in the Scriptures. It may be doubted, however, whether tile church has not been rather in danger of erring by having it deferred too late, than by admitting children too early.

(3.) Such children, if worthy the attention of an aged apostle, should receive the particular notice of pastors now. **See Barnes "Joh 21:15"**.

There are reasons in all cases now, as there were then, why this part of a congregation should receive the special attention of a minister of religion. The hopes of a church are in them. Their minds are susceptible to impression. The character of the piety in the next age will depend on their views of religion. All that there is of value in the church and the world will soon pass into their hands. The houses, farms, factories; the pulpits, and the chairs of professors in colleges; the seats of senators and the benches of judges; the great offices of state, and all the offices in the church; the interests of learning, and of benevolence and liberty, are all soon to be under their control. Everything valuable in this world will soon depend on their conduct and character; and who, therefore, can over-estimate the importance of training them up in just views of religion. As John *wrote* to this class, should not pastors *preach* to them?

Because—oti. This particle may be rendered *for*, or *because*; and the meaning may be either that the fact that their sins were forgiven was a *reason* for writing to them, since it would be proper, on that ground, to exhort them to a holy life; or that he wrote to them because it was a privilege to address them as those who were forgiven, for he felt that, in speaking to *them*, he could address them as such. It seems to me that it is to be taken as a causal particle, and that the apostle, in the various specifications which he makes, designs to assign particular reasons why he wrote to each class, enjoining on them the duties of a holy life. Comp. 1Jo 2:21. *Your sins are forgiven you*. That is, this is a *reason* why he wrote to them, and enjoined these things on them. The meaning seems to be, that the fact that our past sins are blotted out furnishes a strong reason why we should be holy. That reason is founded on the goodness of God in doing it, and on the obligation under which we are brought by the fact that God has had mercy on us. This is a consideration which children will feel as well as others; for there is nothing which will tend more to make a child obedient hereafter, than the fact that a parent freely forgives the past.

For his name's sake. On account of the name of Christ; that is, in virtue of what he has done for us. In 1Jo 2:13, he states another reason why he wrote to this same class—"because they had known the Father."

{*} "little children" "Children" {b} "name's sake" Ps 25:11 Lu 24:47; Ac 10:43

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *I write unto you, fathers*. As there were special reasons for writing to children, so there were also for writing to those who were more mature in life. The class here addressed would embrace all those who were in advance of the *neaniskoi*, or *young men*, and would properly include those who were at the head of families.

Because ye have known him that is from the beginning. That is, the Lord Jesus Christ. **See Barnes "1Jo 1:1".**

The argument is, that they had been long acquainted with the principles of his religion, and understood well its doctrines and duties. It cannot be certainly inferred from this that they had had a personal acquaintance with the Lord Jesus; yet that this might have been is not impossible, for John had himself personally known him, and there may have been some among those to whom he wrote who had also seen and known him. If this were so, it would give additional impressiveness to the reason assigned here for writing to them, and for reminding them of the principles of that religion which they had learned froth his own lips and example. But perhaps all that is necessarily implied in this passage is, that they had had long opportunity of becoming acquainted with the religion of the Son of God, and that having understood that thoroughly, it was proper to address them as aged and established Christians, and to call on them to maintain the true doctrines of the gospel, against the specious but dangerous errors which then prevailed.

I write unto you, young men. *neaniskoi*. This word would properly embrace those who were in the rigour of life, midway between children and old men. It is uniformly rendered young men in the New Testament: Mt 19:20,22; Mr 14:61 16:6; Lu 7:14 Ac 2:17, 5:10; and in the passages before us. It does not elsewhere occur. It is commonly understood as embracing those in the prime and rigour of manhood up to the period of about forty years.—*Robinson*.

Because ye have overcome the wicked one. That is, because you have rigour, (see the next verse,)and that rigour you have shown by overcoming the assaults of the wicked one—the devil. You have triumphed over the passions which prevail in early life; you have combatted the allurements of vice, ambition, covetousness, and sensuality; and you have shown that there is a strength of character and of piety on which reliance can be placed in promoting religion. It is proper, therefore, to exhort you not to disgrace the victory which you have already gained, but to employ your vigour of character in maintaining the cause of the Saviour. The thing to which John appeals here is the energy of those at this period of life, and it is proper at all times to make this the ground of appeal in addressing a church, It is right to call on those who are in the prime of life, and who are endowed with energy of character, to employ their talents in the service of the Lord Jesus, and to stand up as the open advocates of truth. Thus the apostle calls on the three great classes into which a community or a church may be considered as divided: *youth*, be; cause their sins were already forgiven, and, though young, they had actually entered on a career of virtue and religion, a career which by all means they ought to be exhorted to pursue; *fathers*, or aged men, because they had had long experience in religion, and had a thorough acquaintance with the doctrines and duties of the gospel, and they might be expected to stand steadfastly as examples to others; and young men, those who were in the rigour and prime of life, because they had shown that they had power to resist evil, and were endowed with strength, and it was proper to call on them to exert their rigour in the sacred cause of religion.

I write unto you, little children". Many Mss. read here, *I have written—egraqa*—instead of *I write—grafw*. This reading is found in both the ancient Syriac versions, and in the Coptic; it was followed by Origen, Cyril, Photius, and OEcumenius; and it is adopted by Grotius, Mill, and Hahn; and is probably the true reading. The connexion seems to demand this. In 1Jo 2:12,13, the apostle uses the word *grafw—I write*—in relation to children, fathers, and young men; in the passage before us, and in the next verse, he again addresses children, fathers, and young men, and in relation to the two latter, he says *egraqa—I have written*. The connexion, therefore, seems to demand that the same word should be employed here also. Some persons have supposed that the whole passage is spurious, but of that there is no evidence; and, as we have elsewhere seen, it is not uncommon for John to repeat a sentiment, and to place it in a variety of lights, in order that he might make it certain that he was not misapprehended. Some have supposed, also, that the expression "I *have* written," refers to some former epistle which is now lost, or to the Gospel by the same author, which had been sent to them, (Hug.,) and that he means here to remind them that he had written to them on some former occasion, inculcating the same sentiments which he now expressed. But there is no evidence of this, and this supposition is not necessary in order to a correct understanding of the passage. In the former expression, "*I write*," the state of mind would be that of one who fixed his attention on what he was then doing, and the particular reason why he did it—and the apostle states these reasons in 1Jo 2:12,13. Yet it would not be unnatural for him immediately to throw his mind into the past, and to state the reasons why he had resolved to write to them at all, and then to look at what he had purposed to say as already done, and to state the reasons why that was done. Thus one who sat down to write a letter to a friend might appropriately state in any part of the letter the reasons which had induced him to write at all to him on the subject. If he fixed his attention on the fact that he was *actually* writing, and on the reasons why he wrote, he would express himself in the present tense— *I write*; if on the previous purpose, or the reasons which induced him to write at all, he would use the past tense—*I have written* for such and such reasons. So John seems here,

in order to make what he says emphatic, to refer to two states of his own mind: the one when he *resolved* to write, and the reasons which occurred to him then; and the other when he was *actually* writing, and the reasons which occurred to him then. The reasons are indeed substantially the same, but they are contemplated from different points of view, and that fact shows that what he did was done with deliberation, and from a deep sense of duty.

Because ye have known the Father. In 1Jo 2:12, the reason assigned for writing to this class is, that their sins were forgiven, The reason assigned here is, that in early life they had become acquainted with God as a Father. He desires that they would show themselves dutiful and faithful children in this relation which they sustained to him. Even children may learn to regard God as their Father, and may have towards him all the affectionate interest which grows out of this relation.

{a} "him" 1Jo 1:1 {*} "little children" "Children" {b} "Father" Joh 14:7,9

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *I have written unto you, fathers, because*, etc. The reason assigned here for writing to fathers is the same which is given in the previous verse. It would seem that, in respect to them, the apostle regarded this as a sufficient reason for writing to them, and only meant to enforce it by repeating it. The fact that they had through many years been acquainted with the doctrines and duties of the true religion, seemed to him a sufficient reason for writing to them, and for exhorting them to a steadfast adherence to those principles and duties.

I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, etc. The two additional circumstances which he here mentions as reasons for writing to young men are, that they are strong, and that the word of God abides in them. The first of these reasons is, that they were strong; that is, that they were qualified for active and useful service in the cause of the Redeemer. Children were yet too young and feeble to appeal to them by this motive, and the powers of the aged were exhausted; but those who were in the rigour of life might be called upon for active service in the cause of the Lord Jesus. The same appeal may be made now to the same class; and the fact that they are thus vigorous is a proper ground of exhortation, for the church needs their active services, and they are bound to devote their powers to the cause of truth. The other additional ground of appeal is, that the word of God abode in them; that is, that those of this class to whom he wrote had showed, perhaps in time of temptation, that they adhered firmly to the principles of religion. They had not flinched from an open defence of the truths of religion when assailed; they had not been seduced by the plausible arts of the advocates of error, but they had had strength to overcome the wicked one. The reason here for appealing to this class is, that in fact they had showed that they could be relied on, and it was proper to depend on them to advocate the great principles of Christianity.

{c} "strong" Eph 6:10 {d} "abideth" Joh 15:7 {e} "overcome" Re 2:7

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Love not the world*. The term *world* seems to be used in the Scriptures in three senses;

(1,) As denoting the physical universe; the world as it appears to the eye; the world considered as the work of God, as a material creation.

(2.) The world as applied to the people that reside in it—" the world of mankind."

(3.) As the dwellers on the earth are by nature without religion, and act under a set of maxims, aims, and principles that have reference only to this life, the term comes to be used with reference to that community; that is, to the objects which *they* peculiarly seek, and the principles by which they are actuated, Considered with reference to the first sense of the word, it is not improper to love the world as the work of God, and as illustrating his perfections; for we may suppose that God loves his own works, and it is not wrong that we should find pleasure in their contemplation. Considered with reference to the second sense of the word, it is not wrong to love the people of the world with a love of benevolence, and to have attachment to our kindred and friends who constitute a part of it, though they are not Christians. It is only with reference to the word as used in the third sense that the command here can be understood to be applicable, or that the love of the world is forbidden; with reference to the objects sought, the maxims that prevail, the principles that reign in that community that lives for this world as contradistinguished from the world to come. The meaning is, that we are not to fix our affections on worldly objects—on what the world can furnish—as our portion, with the spirit with which they do who live only for this world, regardless of the life to come. We are not to make this world the object of our chief affection; we are not to be influenced by the maxims and feelings which prevail among those who do. Comp. **See Barnes** "Ro 12:2, and **See Barnes "Jas 4:4"**.

See also Mt 16:26 Lu 9:25; 1Co 1:20 3:19; Ga 4:3 Col 2:8".

Neither the things that are in the world. Referred to in the next verse as "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." This explanation shows what John meant by "the things that are in the world." He does not say that we are in no sense to love *anything* that is in the material world; that we are to feel no interest in flowers, and streams, and forests, and fountains; that we are to have no admiration for what God has done as the Creator of all things; that we are to cherish no love for any of the inhabitants of the world, our friends and kindred; or that we are to pursue none of the objects of this life in making provision for our families; but that we are *not* to love the things which are sought merely to pamper the appetite, to please the eye, or to promote pride in living. These are the objects sought by the people of the world; these are not the objects to be sought by the Christian.

If any man love the world, etc. If, in this sense, a man loves the world, it shows that he has no true religion; that is, if characteristically he loves the world as his portion, and lives for that; if it is the ruling principle of his life to gain and enjoy that, it shows that his heart has never been renewed, and that he has no part with the children of God. **See Barnes "Jas 4:4"**; **See Barnes** "Mt 6:24".

{f} "Love" Ro 12:2 {g} "If any man" Mt 6:24 Ga 1:10; Jas 4:4

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *For all that is in the world*. That is, all that really constitutes the world, or that enters into the aims and purposes of those who live for this life. All that that community lives for may be comprised under the following things.

The lust of the flesh. The word *lust* is used here in the general sense of desire, or that which is the object of desire—not in the narrow sense in which it is now commonly used to denote libidinous passion. **See Barnes "Jas 1:14"**.

The phrase, "the lust of the flesh," here denotes that which pampers the appetites, or all that is connected with the indulgence of the mere animal propensities. A large part of the world lives for little more than this. This is the lowest form of worldly indulgence; those which are immediately specified being of a higher order, though still merely worldly.

And the lust of the eyes. That which is designed merely to gratify the sight. This would include, of course, costly raiment, jewels, gorgeous furniture, splendid palaces, pleasure-grounds, etc. The object is to refer to the gay vanities of this world, the thing on which the eye delights to rest where there is no higher object of life. It does not, of course, mean that the eye is never to be gratified, or that we can find as much pleasure in an ugly as in a handsome object, or that it is sinful to find pleasure in beholding objects of real beauty—for the world, as formed by its Creator, is full of such things, and he could not but have intended that pleasure should enter the soul through the eye, or that the beauties which he has shed so lavishly over his works should contribute to the happiness of his creatures; but the apostle refers to this when it is the great and leading object of life,—when it is sought without any connexion with religion or reference to the world to come.

And the pride of life. The word here used means, properly, ostentation or boasting, and then arrogance or pride.—*Robinson*. It refers to whatever there is that tends to promote pride, or that is an index of pride, such as the ostentatious display of dress, equipage, furniture, etc.

Is not of the Father. Does not proceed from God, or meet with his approbation. It is not of the nature of true religion to seek these things, nor can their pursuit be reconciled with the existence of real piety in the heart. The sincere Christian has nobler ends; and he who has not any higher ends, and whose conduct and feelings can all be accounted for by a desire for these things, cannot be a true Christian.

But is of the world. Is originated solely by the objects and purposes of this life, where religion and the life to come are excluded.

{*} "lust" "desire" {b} "flesh" 2Pe 2:10 {c} "the eyes" Ps 119:37 {d} "pride of life" Ps 83:6

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *And the world passeth away*. Everything properly constituting this world where religion is excluded. The reference here does not seem to be so much to the material world, as to the scenes of show and vanity which make up the world. These things are passing away like the shifting scenes of the stage. **See Barnes "1Co 7:31"**.

And the lust thereof. All that is here so much the object of desire. These things are like a pageant, which only amuses the eve for a moment, and then disappears for ever.

But he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. This cannot mean that he will never die; but it means that he has built his happiness on a basis which is secure, and which can never pass away. **See Barnes "Mt 7:24"**; seq.

{e} "And the world" Ps 39:6 1Co 7:31

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Little children*. See 1Jo 2:1.

It is the last time. The closing period or dispensation; that dispensation in which the affairs of the world are ultimately to be wound up. The apostle does not, however, say that the end of the world would soon occur, nor does he intimate how long this dispensation would be. That period might continue through many ages or centuries, and still be the last dispensation, or that in which the affairs of the world would be finally closed. **See Barnes "Isa 2:2"**; **See Barnes** "Ac 2:17"; **See Barnes "Heb 1:2"**.

Some have supposed that the "last time" here refers to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the end of the Jewish economy; but the more natural interpretation is to refer it to the last dispensation of the world, and to suppose that the apostle meant to say that there were clear evidences that that period had arrived.

And as ye have heard that antichrist shall come. The word *antichrist* occurs in the New Testament only in these epistles of John, 1Jo 2:18,22, 4:3 2Jo 1:7.

The proper meaning of *anti* (*anti*) in composition is,

(1.) *over against*, as *antitattein*;

(2.) *contrary to*, as *antilegein*;

(3.) *reciprocity*, as *antapodidwmi*;

(4.) *substitution*, as *antibasileuv*, in the place of the king, or *anyupatov—proconsul*. The word *antichrist*, therefore, might denote any one who either was or claimed to be in the place of Christ, or one who, for any cause, was in opposition to him. The word, further, would apply to one opposed to him, on whatever ground the opposition might be; whether it were open and avowed, or whether it were only *in fact*, as resulting from certain claims which were adverse to his, or which were inconsistent with his.

A vice-functionary, or an *opposing functionary*, would be the idea which the word would naturally suggest. If the word stood alone, and there were nothing said further to explain its meaning, we should think, when the word *antichrist* was used, either of one who claimed to be the Christ, and who thus was a rival; or of one who stood in opposition to him on some other ground. That which constituted the characteristics of antichrist, according to John, who, only has used the word, he has himself stated. 1Jo 2:22, "Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son." 1Jo 4:3, "And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist." 2Jo 1:7, "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist." From this it is clear, that John understood by the word all those that denied that Jesus is the Messiah, or that the Messiah has come in the flesh. If they held that Jesus was a deceiver, and that he was not the Christ, or if they maintained that, though Christ had come, he had not come in the flesh, that is, with a proper human nature, this showed that such persons had the spirit of antichrist. They strayed themselves against him, and held doctrines which were in fact in entire opposition to the Son of God. It would appear then that John does not use the word in the sense which it would bear as denoting one who set up a rival claim, or who came in the place of Christ, but in the sense of those who were opposed to him by denying essential doctrines in regard to his person and advent. It is not certainly known to what persons he refers, but it would

seem not improbable to Jewish adversaries, (see Suicer's Thesaurus. voc.,) or to some forms of the Gnostic belief. **See Barnes "1Jo 4:2".**

The doctrine respecting antichrist, as stated in the New Testament, may be summed up in the following particulars:

(1.) That there would be those, perhaps in considerable numbers, who would openly claim to be the Christ, or the true Messiah, Mt 24:5,24.

(2.) That there would be a spirit, which would manifest itself early in the church, that would strongly tend to some great apostasy under some one head or leader, or to a concentration on an individual, or a succession of individuals, who would have eminently the spirit of antichrist, though for a time the developement of that spirit would be hindered or restrained, **See Barnes** "2Th 2:1, seq.

(3.) That this would be ultimately concentrated on a single leader — "the man of sin"—and embodied under some great apostasy, at the head of which would be that "man of sin," 2Th 2:3,4,8,9,10.

It is to this that *Paul* particularly refers, or this is the view which *he* took of this apostasy, and it is this which he particularly describes.

(4.) That, in the mean time, and before the elements of the great apostasy should be concentrated and embodied, there might not be a few who would partake of the same general spirit, and who would be equally opposed to Christ in their doctrines and aims; that is, who would embody in themselves the essential spirit of antichrist, and by whose appearing it might be known that the last dispensation had come. It is to these that John refers, and these he found in his own age. *Paul* fixed the eye on future times, when the spirit of antichrist should be embodied under a distinct and mighty organization; *John* on his own time, and found then essentially what it had been predicted would occur in the church. He here says that they had been taught to expect that antichrist would come under the last dispensation; and it is implied that it could be ascertained that it was the last time, from the fact that the predicted opposer of Christ had come. The reference is probably to the language of the Saviour, that before the end should be, and as a sign that it was coming, many would arise claiming to be Christ, and, of course, practically denying that he was the Christ. Mt 24:5, "Many shall come m my name, saying, *I am Christ*; and shall deceive many." Verse 24, "And there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets; and they shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." This prediction it is probable the apostles had referred to wherever they had preached, so that there was a general expectation that one or more persons would appear claiming to be the Christ, or maintaining such opinions as to be inconsistent with the true doctrine that Jesus was the Messiah. Such persons, John says, had then in fact appeared, by which it could be known that they were living under the closing dispensation of the world referred to by the Saviour. **See Barnes** "2Th 2:2, seq.

Even now are there many antichrists. There are many who have the characteristics which it was predicted that antichrist would have; that is, as explained above, there are many who deny that Jesus is the Messiah, or who deny that he has come in the flesh. If they maintained that Jesus was an impostor and not the true Messiah, or if, though they admitted that the Messiah had come, they affirmed, as the Docetae did, (**See Barnes** "1Jo 4:2,) that he had come in *appearance* only, and not really come in the flesh, this was the spirit of antichrist. John says that there were many such persons in fact in his time. It would seem from this that John did not refer to a single individual, or to a succession of individuals who should come previous to the winding up of the affairs of the world, as Paul did, (2Th 2:2, seq.,) but that he understood that there might be many at the same time who

would evince the spirit of antichrist. Both he and Paul, however, refer to the expectation that before the coming of the Saviour to Judge the world there would be prominent adversaries of the Christian religion, and that the end would not come until such adversaries appeared. Paul goes more into detail, and describes the characteristics of the great apostasy more at length, (2Th 2:2, seq.; 1Ti 4:1, seq.; 2Ti 3:1, seq.;) John says, not that the appearing of these persons indicated that the end of the world was near, but that they had such characteristics as to show that they were living in the last dispensation. Paul so describes them as to show that the end of the world was not to be immediately expected, (**See Barnes** "2Th 2:1, seq.;) John, without referring to that point, says that there were enough of that character then to prove that the last dispensation had come, though he does not say how long it would continue.

Whereby we know it is the last time. They have the characteristics which it was predicted many would have before the end of the world should come. The evidence that it was "the last time," or the closing dispensation of the world, derived from the appearing of these persons, consists simply in the fact that it was predicted that such persons would appear under the Christian, or the last dispensation, Mt 24:5, Mt 24:24-27. Their appearance was to precede the coming of the Saviour, though it is not said *how long* it would precede that; but at any time the appearing of such persons would be an evidence that it was the closing dispensation of the world, for the Saviour, in his predictions respecting them, had said that they would appear before he should return to judgment. It cannot now be determined precisely to what classes of persons there is reference here, because we know too little of the religious state of the times to which the apostle refers. No one can prove, however, that there were not persons at that time who so fully corresponded to the predictions of the Saviour as to be a complete fulfilment of what he said, and to demonstrate that the last age had truly come. It would seem probable that there may have been reference to some Jewish adversaries, who denied that Jesus was the Messiah, (Rob. Lex.,) or to some persons who had already broached the doctrine of the *Docetae*, that thought Jesus was the Messiah, yet that he was a man in appearance only, and had not really come in the flesh. Classes of persons of each description abounded in the early ages of the church.

{+} "Little children" "My children" {f} "last time" Heb 1:2 {g} "ye have heard" Mt 24:24 1Ti 4:1

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *They went out from us*. From the church. That is, they had once been professors of the religion of the Saviour, though their apostasy showed that they never had any true piety. John refers to the fact that they had once been in the church, perhaps to remind those to whom he wrote that they knew them well, and could readily appreciate their character. It was a humiliating statement that those who showed themselves to be so utterly opposed to religion had once been members of the Christian church; but this is a statement which we are often compelled to make.

But they were not of us. That is, they did not really belong to us, or were not true Christians. **See Barnes "Mt 7:23"**.

This passage proves that these persons, whatever their pretensions and professions may have been, were never sincere Christians. The same remark may be made of all who apostatize from the

faith, and become teachers of error. They never were truly converted; never belonged really to the spiritual church of Christ.

For if they had been of us. If they had been sincere and true Christians.

They would no doubt *have continued with us*. The words "*no doubt*" are supplied by our translators, but the affirmation is equally strong without them: "they would have remained with us." This affirms, without any ambiguity or qualification, that if they had been true Christians they would have remained in the church;, that is, they would not have apostatized. There could not be a more positive affirmation than that which is implied here, that those who are true Christians will continue to be such; or that the saints will not fall away from grace. John affirms it of these persons, that if they had been true Christians they would never have departed from the church, he makes the declaration so general that it may be regarded as a universal truth, that if *any* are truly "of us," that is, if they are true Christians, they will continue in the-church, or will never fall away. The statement is so made also as to teach that if any *do* fall away from the church, the fact is full proof that they never had any religion, for if they had had they would have remained steadfast in the church. But they went out, *that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us*. It was suffered or permitted in the providence of God that this should occur, in order that it might be seen and known that they were not true Christians, or in order that their real character might be developed. It was desirable that this should be done,

(a.) in order that the church might be purified from their influence—comp. **See Barnes** "Joh 15:2;

(b.) in order that it might not be responsible for their conduct, or reproached on account of it;

(c.) in order that their real character might be developed, and they might themselves see that they were not true Christians;

(d.) in order that, being seen and known as apostates, their opinions and conduct might have less influence than if they were connected with the church;

(e.) in order that they might themselves understand their own true character, and no longer live under the delusive opinion that they were Christians and were safe, but that, seeing themselves in their true light, they might be brought to repentance. For there is only a most slender prospect that any who are deceived in the church will ever be brought to true repentance there; and slight as is the hope that one who apostatizes will be, such an event is much more probable than it would be if he remained in the church. Men are more likely to be converted when their character is known and understood, than they are when playing a game of deception, or are themselves deceived. What is here affirmed of these persons often occurs now; and those who have no true religion are often suffered to apostatize from their profession for the same purposes. It is better that they should cease to have any connexion with the church than that they should remain in it; and God often suffers them to fall away even from the profession of religion, in order that they may not do injury as professing Christians. This very important passage, then, teaches the following things:

(1.) That when men apostatize from the profession of religion, and embrace fatal error, or live in sin, it proves that they never had any true piety.

(2.) The fact that such persons fall away cannot be adduced to prove that Christians ever fall from grace, for it demonstrates nothing on that point, but proves only that these persons never had any real piety. They may have had much that seemed to be religion; they may have been zealous, and apparently devoted to God, and may even have had much comfort and peace in what they took to be piety; they may have been eminently "gifted" in prayer, or may have even been successful preachers of the gospel, but all this does not prove that they ever had any piety, nor does the fact

that such persons apostatize from their profession throw any light on a question quite foreign to this—whether true Christians ever fall from grace. Comp. Mt 7:22,23.

(3.) The passage before us proves that if any are true Christians they will remain in the church, or will certainly persevere and be saved. They may indeed backslide grievously; they may wander far away, and pain the hearts of their brethren, and give occasion to the enemies of religion to speak reproachfully; but the apostle says, "if they had been of us, they would have continued with us."

(4.) One of the best evidences of true piety is found in the fact of continuing with the church. I do not mean nominally and formally, but really and spiritually, having the heart with the church; loving its peace and promoting its welfare; identifying ourselves with real Christians, and showing that we are ready to co-operate with those who love the Lord Jesus and his cause.

(5.) The main reason why professing Christians are suffered to apostatize is to show that they had no true religion. It is desirable that they should see it themselves; desirable that others should see it also. It is better that it should be known that they had no true religion than that they should remain in the church to be a burden on its movements, and a reproach to the cause. By being allowed thus to separate themselves from the Church, they may be brought to remember their violated vows, and the church will be free from the reproach of having those in its bosom who are a dishonour to the Christian name. We are not to wonder, then, if persons apostatize who have been professors of true religion; and we are not to suppose that the greatest injury is done to the cause when they do it. A *greater* injury by far is done when such persons remain in the church.

{a} "for if they had been of us" 2Ti 2:19 {a1} "manifest" 2Ti 3:9

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *But ye have an unction from the Holy One*. The apostle in this verse evidently intends to say that he had no apprehension in regard to those to whom he wrote that *they* would thus apostatize, and bring dishonour on their religion. They had been so anointed by the Holy Spirit that they understood the true nature of religion, and it might be confidently expected that they would persevere, The word *unction* or *anointing* (*crisma*) means, properly, "something rubbed in or ointed;" oil for anointing, *ointment*; then it means an anointing. The allusion is to the anointing of kings and priests, or their

inauguration or coronation, (1Sa 10:1 16:13; Ex 28:41 40:15; compare **See Barnes "Mt 1:1"**;) and the idea seems to have been that the oil thus used was emblematic of the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit as qualifying them for the discharge of the duties of their office. Christians, in the New Testament, are described as "kings and priests," (Re 1:6 5:10,) and as a "royal priesthood," **See Barnes** "1Pe 2:5, **See Barnes "1Pe 2:9"**;) and hence they are represented as *anointed*, or as endowed with those graces of the Spirit, of which anointing was the emblem. The phrase "the Holy One" refers here, doubtless, to the Holy Spirit, that Spirit whose influences are imparted to the people of God, to enlighten, to sanctify, and to comfort them in their trials. The particular reference here is to the influences of that Spirit as giving them clear and just views of the nature of religion, and thus securing them from error and apostasy.

And ye know all things. That is, all things which it is essential that you should know on the subject of religion. **See Barnes "Joh 17:13"**; **See Barnes** "1Co 2:15".

The meaning cannot be that they knew all things pertaining to history, to science, to literature, and to the arts; but that, under the influences of the Holy Spirit, they had been made so thoroughly acquainted with the truths and duties of the Christian religion, that they might be regarded as safe from the danger of fatal error. The same may be said of all true Christians now, that they are so taught by the Spirit of God, that they have a practical acquaintance with what religion is, and with what it requires, and are secure from falling into fatal error. In regard to the general meaning of this verse, then, it may be observed:

I. That it does *not* mean any one of the following things:

(1.) That Christians are literally instructed by the Holy Spirit in all things, or that they literally understand all subjects. The teaching, whatever it may be, refers only to religion.

(2.) It is not meant that any new faculties of mind are conferred on them, or any increased intellectual endowments, by their religion. It is not a fact that Christians, as such, are superior in mental endowments to others; not that by their religion they have any mental traits which they had not before their conversion. Paul, Peter, and John had essentially the same mental characteristics after their conversion which they had before; and the same is true of all Christians.

(3.) It is not meant that any new truth is revealed to the mind by the Holy Spirit. All the truth that is brought before the mind of the Christian is to be found in the word of God, and *revelation*, as such, was completed when the Bible was finished.

(4.) It is not meant that anything is perceived by Christians which they had not the natural faculty for perceiving before their conversion, or which other men have not also the natural faculty for perceiving. The difficulty with men is not a defect of natural faculties, it is in the blindness of the heart.

II. The statement here made by John *does* imply, it is supposed, the following things:

(1.) That the minds of Christians are so enlightened that they have a new perception of the truth. They see it in a light in which they did not before. They see it as truth. They see its beauty, its force, its adaptedness to their condition and wants. They understand the subject of religion better than they once did, and better than others do. What was once dark appears now plain; what once had no beauty to their minds now appears beautiful; what was once repellent is now attractive.

(2.) They see this *to be* true; that is, they see it in such a light that they cannot doubt that it is true. They have such views of the doctrines of religion, that they have no doubt that they are true, and are willing on the belief of their truth to lay down their lives, and stake their eternal interests.

(3.) Their knowledge of truth is enlarged. They become acquainted with *more* truths than they would have known if they had not been under the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Their range of thought is greater; their vision more extended, as well as more clear.

III. The evidence that this is so is found in the following things:

(1.) The express statements of Scripture. See 1Co 2:14,15, and the Notes on that passage. **See Barnes "**1Co 2:14, **See Barnes "1Co 2:15, Compare** Joh 16:13,14.

(2.) It is a matter of fact that it is so.

(a.) Men by nature do not perceive any beauty in the truths of religion. They are distasteful to them, or they are repulsive and offensive. "The doctrine of the cross is to the Jew a stumbling-block, and to the Greek foolishness." They may see indeed the force of an argument, but they do not see the beauty of the way of salvation.

(b.) When they are converted they do. These things appear to them to be changed, and they see them in a new light, and perceive a beauty in them which they never did before.

(c.) There is often a surprising *developement* of religious knowledge when persons are converted. They seem to understand the way of salvation, and the whole subject of religion, in a manner and to an extent which cannot be accounted for, except on the supposition of a teaching from above.

(d.) This is manifest also in the knowledge which persons otherwise ignorant exhibit on the subject of religion. With few advantages for education, and with no remarkable talents, they show an acquaintance with the truth, a knowledge of religion, an ability to defend the doctrines of Christianity, and to instruct others in the way of salvation, which could have been derived only from some source superior to themselves. Comp. Joh 7:15 Ac 4:13.

(e.) The same thing is shown by their *adherence to truth* in the midst of persecution, and simply because they perceive that for which they die to be the truth. And is there anything incredible in this? May not the mind see what truth is? How do we judge of an axiom in mathematics, or of a proposition that is demonstrated, but by the fact that the mind perceives it to be true, and cannot doubt it? And may it not be so in regard to religious truth—especially when that truth is seen to accord with what we know of ourselves, our lost condition as sinners, and our need of a Saviour, and when we see that the truths revealed in the Scriptures are exactly adapted to our wants?

{b} "unction" 2Co 1:21 {c} "know" 1Co 2:15

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth*. You are not to regard my writing to you in this earnest manner as any evidence that I do not suppose you to be acquainted with religion and it duties. Some, perhaps, might have been disposed to put this construction on what he had said, but he assures them that that was not the reason why he had thus addressed them. The very fact that they did understand the subject of religion, he says, was rather the reason why he wrote to them.

But because ye know it. This was the ground of his hope that his appeal would be effectual. If they had never known what religion was, if they were ignorant of its nature and its claims, he would have had much less hope of being able to guard them against error, and of securing their steady walk in the path of piety. We may always make a strong and confident appeal to those who really understand what the nature of religion is, and what are the evidences of its truth.

And that no lie is of the truth. No form of error, however plausible it may appear, however ingeniously it may be defended, and however much it may seem to be favourable to human virtue and happiness, can be founded in truth. What the apostle says here has somewhat the aspect of a truism, but it contains a real truth of vital importance, and one which should have great influence in determining our minds in regard to any proposed opinion or doctrine. Error often appears plausible. It seems to be adapted to relieve the mind of many difficulties which perplex and embarass it on the subject of religion. It seems to be adapted to promote religion. It seems to make those who embrace it happy, and for a time they apparently enjoy religion. But John says that however plausible all this may be, however much it may seem to prove that the doctrines thus embraced are of God, it is a great and vital maxim that no error can have its foundation in truth, and, of course, that it must be worthless. The grand question is, what is truth; and when that is determined, we can easily settle the inquiries which come up about the various doctrines that are abroad in the world. Mere

plausible appearances, or temporary good results that may grow out of a doctrine, do not prove that it is based on truth; for whatever those results may be, it is impossible that any error, however plausible, should have its origin in the truth.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Who is a liar*. That is, who is false; who maintains an erroneous doctrine; who is an impostor, if he is not? The object of the apostle is to specify one of the prevailing forms of error, and to show that, however plausible the arguments might be by which it was defended, it was impossible that it should be true. Their own knowledge of the nature of religion must convince them at once that this opinion was false.

That denieth that Jesus is the Christ. It would seem that the apostle referred to a class who admitted that Jesus lived, but who denied that he was the true Messiah. On what grounds they did this is unknown; but to maintain this was, of course, the same as to maintain that he was an impostor. The ground taken may have been that he had not the characteristics ascribed to the Messiah in the prophets; or that he did not furnish evidence that he was sent from God; or that he was an enthusiast. Or perhaps some peculiar form of error may be referred to, like that which is said to have been held by Corinthus, who in his doctrine separated Jesus from Christ, maintaining them to be two distinct persons.—*Doddridge*.

He is antichrist. **See Barnes "1Jo 2:18"**.

He has all the characteristics and attributes of antichrist; or, a doctrine which practically involves the denial of both the Father and the Son, must be that of antichrist.

That denieth the Father and the Son. That denies the peculiar truths pertaining to God the Father, and to the Son of God. The charge here is not that they entertained incorrect views of God *as such*—as almighty, eternal, most wise, and good; but that they denied the doctrines which religion taught respecting God *as* Father and Son. Their opinions tended to a denial of what was revealed respecting God as a Father —not in the general sense of being the *Father* of the universe, but in the particular sense of his relation to the Son. It cannot be supposed that they denied the existence and perfections of God as such, nor that they denied that God is a *Father* in the relation which he sustains to the universe; but the meaning must be that what they held went to a practical denial of that which is peculiar to the true God, considered as sustaining the relation of a Father to his Son Jesus Christ. Correct views of the Father could not be held without correct views of the Son; correct views of the Son could not be held without correct views of the Father. The doctrines respecting the Father and the Son were so connected that one could not be held without holding the other, and one could not be denied without denying the other. **See Barnes "Mt 11:27"**; **See Barnes** "Joh 5:23".

No man can have just views of God the Father who has not right apprehensions of the Son. As a matter of fact in the world, men have right apprehensions of God only when they have correct views of the character of the Lord Jesus Christ.

{a} "that denieth" 1Jo 4:3

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father*. That is, has no just views of the Father, and has no evidence of his friendship. It is only by the Son of God that the Father is made known to men, (Mt 11:27 Heb 1:2,3,) and it is only through him that we can become reconciled to God, and obtain evidence of his favour, **See Barnes "Joh 5:23"**.

But he that acknowledges the Son, hath the Father also. This passage, in the common version of the New Testament, is printed in Italics, as if it were not in the original, but was supplied by the translators. It is true that it is not found in all the MSS. and versions; but it is found in a large number of Mss., and in the Vulgate, the Syriac, the AEthiopic, the Coptic, the Armenian, and the Arabic versions, and in the critical editions of Griesbach, Tittman, and Hahn. It is probable, therefore, that it should be regarded as a genuine portion of the sacred text. It is much in the style of John, and though not necessary to complete the sense, yet it well suits the connexion. As it was true that if one denied the Son of God he could have no pretensions to any proper acquaintance with the Father, so it seemed to follow that if any one had any proper knowledge of the Son of God, and made a suitable confession of him, he had evidence that he was acquainted with the Father. Compare Joh 17:3; Ro 10:9. Though, therefore, this passage was wanting in many of the Mss. consulted by the translators of the Bible, and though in printing it in the manner in which they have they showed the great caution with which they acted in admitting anything doubtful into their translation, yet the passage should be restored to the text, and be regarded as a genuine portion of the word of God. The great truth can never be too clearly stated, or too often inculcated, that it is only by a knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ that we can have any true acquaintance with God, and that all who have just views of the Saviour are in fact acquainted with the true God, and are heirs of eternal life.

{b} "Whosever" Joh 15:23

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Let that therefore abide in you*. Adhere steadfastly to it; let the truth obtain a permanent lodgement in the soul. In view of its great importance, and its influence on your happiness here and hereafter, let it never depart from you.

Which ye have heard from the beginning. That is, the same doctrines which you have always been taught respecting the Son of God and the way of salvation. **See Barnes "1Jo 2:7"**.

Ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. Truly united to the Son and to the Father; or having evidence of the favour and friendship of the Son and the Father.

{c} "Let" 2Jo 1:6 {*} "remain" "abide" {*} "continue" "abide"

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life*. This is evidently added to encourage them in adhering to the truths which they had embraced respecting the Son of

God. In maintaining these truths they had the promise of eternal life; in departing from them they had none, for the promise of heaven in our world is made only to those who embrace one class of doctrines or opinions. No one can show that any *promise* of heaven is made to the mere possessor of beauty, or wealth, or talent; to the accomplished or the gay; to those who are distinguished for science, or skill in the arts; to rank, or birth, or blood; to courage or strength, whatever expectation of heaven any one may entertain on account of any of these things, must be traced to something else than a *promise*, for there is none in the Bible to that effect. The *promise* of heaven to men is limited to those who repent of their sins, who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and who lead a holy life; and if any one will base his hope of heaven *on a promise*, it must be limited to these things. And yet what well-founded hope of heaven *can* there be, except that which is based *on a promise*? How does any one know that he can be saved, unless he has some assurance from God that it may and shall be so? Is not heaven his home? How does any one know that he may dwell there, without some assurance from him that he may? Is not the crown of life his gift? How can any one know that he will possess it, unless he has some promise from him? However men may reason, or conjecture, or hope, the only promise of eternal life is found in the Bible; and the fact that we have such a promise should surely be a sufficient inducement to us to hold fast the truth. On the promise of life in the gospel, see Joh 17:2 Ro 2:6,7 Mr 16:16; Mt 25:46.

{d} "even eternal life" Joh 17:3

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you*. Respecting their character, and in order to guard you against their arts. The word *seduce* means to lead astray; and it here refers to those who would seduce them *from the truth*, or lead them into dangerous error. The apostle does not mean that they had actually seduced them, for he states in the following verse that they were yet safe; but he refers to the fact that there was danger that they might be led into error.

{*} "seduce" "deceive"

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *But the anointing which ye have received of him*. **See Barnes "1Jo 2:20"**.

Abideth in you. The meaning is, that the influence on your heart and life, which results from the fact that you are anointed of God, permanently abides with you, and will keep you from dangerous error. The apostle evidently meant to say that he felt assured that they would not be seduced from the truth, and that his confidence in regard to this was placed in the fact that they had been truly anointed unto God as kings and priests. Thus understood, what he here says is equivalent to the expression of a firm conviction that those who are true Christians will not fall away. Comp, **See Barnes** "1Jo 2:19, **See Barnes "1Jo 2:20"**.

And ye need not that any man teach you. That is, what are the things essential to true religion. **See Barnes "1Jo 2:20".**

But as the same anointing teacheth you of all things. This cannot mean that the mere act of *anointing*, if that had been performed in their case, would *teach* them; but it refers to what John includes in what he calls the anointing—that is, in the solemn consecrating to the duties of religion under the influences of the Holy Spirit.

And is truth, and is no lie. Leads to truth, and not to error. No man was ever led into error by those influences which result from the fact that he has been consecrated to the service of God.

Ye shall abide in him. Marg., "or *it*." The Greek will bear either construction. The connexion, however, seems to demand that it should be understood as referring to *him*—that is, to the Saviour.

{a} "teacheth" Joh 16:26 {1} "him" "it"

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *And now, little children*. **See Barnes "1Jo 2:1".**

Abide in him; that, when he shall appear. In the end of the world, to receive his people to himself. **See Barnes "Joh 14:2,3".**

We may have confidence. Greek, *boldness—parrhsian*. This word is commonly used to denote openness, plainness, or boldness in speaking, Mr 8:32 Joh 7:4,13,26 Ac 2:29 4:13,29 2Co 3:12, 7:4.

Here it means the kind of boldness, or calm assurance, which arises from evidence of piety, and of preparation for heaven. It means that they would not be overwhelmed and confounded at the coming of the Saviour, by its being then found that all their hopes were fallacious.

And not be ashamed before him at his coming. By having all our hopes taken away; by being held up to the universe as guilty and condemned. We feel ashamed when our hopes are disappointed; when it is shown that we have a character different from what we professed to have; when our pretensions to goodness are stripped off, and the heart is made bare. Many will thus be ashamed in the last day, (Mt 7:21-23;) but it is one of the promises made to those who truly believe on the Saviour, that they shall never be ashamed or confounded. **See Barnes** "1Pe 2:6, Comp. Isa 45:17 Ro 5:5; 1Pe 4:16 Mr 8:38.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 2 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *If ye know that he is righteous*. This is not said as if there could be any doubt on the subject, but merely to call their attention to it as a well-known truth, and to state what followed from it. Every one who has any true acquaintance with God, must have the fullest conviction that he is a righteous Being. But, if this be so, John says, then it must follow that only those who are truly righteous can regard themselves as begotten of him.

Ye know. Marg., *know ye*. The Greek will bear either construction, and either would make good sense. Assuming that God is righteous, it would be proper to state, as in the text, that it followed

from this that they must know that only those who are righteous can be regarded as begotten of him; or, assuming this to be true, it was proper to exhort them to be righteous, as in the margin. Whichever interpretation is adopted, the great truth is taught, that only those who are truly righteous can regard themselves as the children of God.

That every one that doeth righteousness is born of him. Or rather, is begotten of him; is truly a child of God. This truth is everywhere taught in the Bible, and is worthy of being often repeated. No one who is not, in the proper sense of the term, a righteous man, can have any well-founded pretensions to being regarded as a child of God. If this be so, then it is not difficult to determine whether we are the children of God.

(1.) If we are unjust, false, dishonest, we cannot be his children.

(2.) If we are indulging in any known sin, we cannot be.

(3.) If we are not truly righteous, all visions and raptures, all zeal and ardour, though in the cause of religion, all that we may pride ourselves on in being fervent in prayer, or eloquent in preaching, is vain.

(4.) If we are righteous, in the true and proper sense, doing that which is right toward God and toward men, to ourselves, to our families, to our neighbours, to the world at large, to the Saviour who died for us, then we are true Christians; and then, no matter how soon he may appear, or how solemn and overwhelming the scenes that shall close the world, we shall not be ashamed or confounded, for we shall hail him as our Saviour, and rejoice that the time has come that we may go and dwell with him for ever.

{2} "ye know" "know ye" {b} "that every one" Jer 13:23 Mt 7:16-18

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 3

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 1

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

THIS chapter embraces the following subjects:—

I. The fact that Christians are now the sons of God, 1Jo 3:1-3.

(1.) We are the sons of God, and this will explain the reason why the world does not appreciate our character, or understand the reasons of our conduct, 1Jo 3:1.

(2.) The consequences of sustaining that relation to God, or of being regarded as his sons.

(a.) We shall be like him when he appears, 1Jo 3:2.

(b.) We shall purify ourselves under the influence of this hope, 1Jo 3:3.

II. The fact that he who is an adopted child of God does not commit sin, 1Jo 3:4-10.

(1.) All sin is the transgression of the law, 1Jo 3:4;

(2.) Christ was manifested to take away our sins, 1Jo 3:5;

(3.) He that commits sin is of the devil, 1Jo 2:8; and,

(4.) as a matter of fact, he who is of God does not commit sin, 1Jo 3:7,9,10.

III. True religion will be manifested by love to the Christian brotherhood, 1Jo 3:10-18.

(1.) As a man who is not righteous cannot be a true Christian, neither can he who does not love his brother, 1Jo 3:10.

(2.) It is the solemn command of the Saviour that his followers should love one another, 1Jo 3:11.

(3.) The importance of this is seen by the opposite conduct of Cain, 1Jo 3:12.

(4.) Love to the brethren furnishes the most certain evidence that we have passed from death unto life, 1Jo 3:14.

(5.) A man who hates another is in fact a murderer, and, of course, cannot be a true child of God, 1Jo 3:15.

(6.) We should be stimulated to the love of the brethren by the example of the Saviour, who laid down his life for us, 1Jo 3:16.

(7.) If we see a brother in want, and have the means of aiding him, and do not do it, we cannot have the love of God dwelling in us, 1Jo 3:17,18.

IV. We may have evidence that we love God by the consciousness of our feelings towards him, as well as by outward acts towards his friends, 1Jo 3:19-21.

V. If we keep his commandments our prayers will be answered, 1Jo 3:22,23.

(1.) There is an assurance that we shall receive what we need if we ask it, and keep his commandments, 1Jo 3:22.

(2.) The particular commandments on which the efficacy of prayer so much depends, are

(a.) that we believe on the name of the Saviour, and

(b.) that we love the Christian brotherhood, 1Jo 3:23.

VI. We may know that we abide in God by the spirit which he has given us, as well as by keeping his commandments, 1Jo 3:24.

This chapter, therefore, is occupied mainly with stating what are the evidences of true piety; and, in order to determine this question, there is perhaps no part of the Bible that may be studied with more profit than this portion of the writings of John.

Verse 1. *Behold, what manner of love*. What love, in *kind* and in *degree*. In *kind* the most tender and the most ennobling, in adopting us into his family, and in permitting us to address him as our Father; in *degree* the most exalted, since there is no higher love that can be shown than in adopting a poor and friendless orphan, and giving him a parent and a home. Even God could bestow upon us no more valuable token of affection than that we should be adopted into his family, and permitted to regard him as our Father. When we remember how insignificant we are as creatures, and how ungrateful, rebellious, and vile we have been as sinners, we may well be amazed at the love which would adopt us into the holy family of God, so that we may be regarded and treated as the children of the Most High. A prince could manifest no higher love for a wandering, ragged, vicious orphan boy, found in the streets, than by adopting him into his own family, and admitting him to the same privileges and honours as his own sons; and yet this would be a trifle compared with the honour which God has bestowed on us.

The Father hath bestowed upon us. God, regarded as a Father, or as at the head of the universe considered as one family. *That we should be called the sons of God*. That is, that we should *be* the sons of God —the word *called* being often used in the sense of *to be*. On the nature and privileges

of adoption, **See Barnes** "Ro 8:15, seq., and 2Co 6:18, and practical remarks on that chapter, **See Barnes** "1Co 6:19, **See Barnes "1Co 6:20"**.

Therefore the world knoweth us not. Does not understand our principles; the reasons of our conduct; the sources of our comforts and joys. The people of the world regard us as fanatics or enthusiasts; as foolish in abandoning the pleasures and pursuits which they engage in; as renouncing certain happiness for that which is uncertain; as cherishing false and delusive hopes in regard to the future, and as practising needless austerities, with nothing to compensate for the pleasures which are abandoned. There is nothing which the gay, the ambitious, and the selfish less understand than they do the elements which go into the Christian's character, and the nature and source of the Christian's joys.

Because it knew him not. Did not know the Lord Jesus Christ. That is, the world had no right views of the real character of the Lord Jesus when he was on the earth. They mistook him for an enthusiast or an impostor; and it is no wonder that, having wholly mistaken his character, they should mistake ours. On the fact that the world did not know him, **See Barnes** "1Co 2:8, **See Barnes "Ac 3:17"**.

Comp. Joh 17:25. On the fact that Christians may be expected to be regarded and treated as their Saviour was, **See Barnes** "Joh 15:18, **See Barnes "Joh 15:19"**; **See Barnes** "Joh 15:20".

Comp. Mt 10:24,25.

{a} "love" Eph 2:4,5 {b} "the sons" Joh 1:12 Re 21:7 {*} "sons" "Children"

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Beloved, now are we the sons of God*. We now in fact sustain this rank and dignity, and on that we may reflect with pleasure and gratitude. It is in itself an exalted honour, and may be contemplated as such, whatever may be true in regard to what is to come. In the dignity and the privileges which we now enjoy, we may find a grateful subject of reflection, and a cause of thankfulness, even if we should look to nothing beyond, or when we contemplate the fact by itself.

And it doth not yet appear what we shall be. It is not fully revealed what we shall be hereafter; what will be the full result of being regarded as the children of God. There are, indeed, certain things which may be inferred as following from this. There is enough to animate us with hope, and to sustain us in the trials of life. There is one thing which is clear, that we shall be like the Son of God; but what is fully involved in this is not made known. Perhaps

(1.) it could not be so revealed that we could understand it, for that state may be so unlike the present that no words would fully convey the conception to our minds. Perhaps

(2.) it may be necessary to our condition here, as on probation, that no more light should be furnished in regard to the future than to stimulate us to make efforts to reach a world where all is light. For an illustration of the sentiment expressed here by the apostle, **See Barnes "2Pe 1:4"**.

But we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him. It is revealed to us that we shall be made like Christ; that is, in the bodies with which we shall be raised up, in character, in happiness, in glory. **See Barnes "Php 3:21"**; **See Barnes** "2Co 3:18".

This is enough to satisfy the Christian in his prospects for the future world. To be like Christ is the object of his supreme aim. For that he lives, and all his aspirations in regard to the coming

world may be summed up in this—that he wishes to be like the glorified Son of God, and to share his honours and his joys. **See Barnes "Php 3:10".**

For we shall see him as he is. It is clearly implied here that there will be an influence in beholding the Saviour as he is, which will tend to make us like him, or to transform us into his likeness. See the nature of this influence explained **See Barnes "2Co 3:18".**

{d} "the sons" Ro 8:14,18 {*} "sons" "Children" {e} "like him" 1Co 15:49 Php 3:21; 2Pe 1:4 {f} "see him" Job 19:26 Ps 17:15; Mt 5:8 1Co 13:12

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And every man that hath this hope in him*. This hope of seeing the Saviour, and of being made like him; that is, every true Christian. On the nature and influence of hope, **See Barnes** "Ro 8:24, **See Barnes "Ro 8:25".**

Purifieth himself. Makes himself holy. That is, under the influence of this hope of being like the Saviour, he puts forth those efforts in struggling against sin, and in overcoming his evil propensities, which are necessary to make him pure. The apostle would not deny that for the success of these efforts we are dependent on Divine aid; but he brings into view, as is often done in the sacred writings, the agency of man himself as essentially connected with success. Comp. Php 2:12. The particular thought here is, that the hope of being like Christ, and of being permitted to dwell with him, will lead a man to earnest efforts to become holy, and will be actually followed by such a result.

Even as he is pure. The same kind of purity here, the same degree hereafter. That is, the tendency of such a hope is to make him holy now, though he may be imperfect; the effect will be to make him perfectly holy in the world to come. It cannot be shown from this passage that the apostle meant to teach that any one actually becomes as pure in the present life as the Saviour is, that is, becomes perfectly holy; for all that is fairly implied in it is, that those who have this hope in them *aim* at the same purity, and will *ultimately* obtain it. But the apostle does not say that it is attained in this world. If the passage *did* teach this, it would teach it respecting every one who has this hope, and then the doctrine would be that no one can be a Christian who does not become absolutely perfect on earth; that is, not that some Christians may become perfect here, but that all actually *do*. But none, it is presumed, will hold this to be a true doctrine. A true Christian does not, indeed, habitually and wilfully sin; but no one can pretend that all Christians attain to a state of sinless perfection on earth, or are, in fact, as pure as the Saviour was. But unless the passage proves that *every* Christian becomes absolutely perfect in the present life, it does not prove that in fact any do. It proves

(1.) that the tendency, or the fair influence of this hope, is to make the Christian pure;

(2.) that all who cherish it will, in fact, aim to become as holy as the Saviour was; and

(3.) that this object will, at some future period, be accomplished. There is a world where all who are redeemed shall be perfectly holy.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law*. The law of God given to man as a rule of life. The object of the apostle here is to excite them to holiness, and to deter them from committing sin, perhaps in view of the fact stated in 1Jo 3:3, that every one who has the hope of heaven will aim to be holy like the Saviour. To confirm this, he shows them that, as a matter of fact, those who are born of God do lead lives of obedience, (1Jo 3:5-10;) and this he introduces by showing what is the nature of sin, in the verse before us. The considerations by which he would deter them from indulging in sin are the following:

(a.) all sin is a violation of the law of God, 1Jo 3:4;

(b.) the very object of the coming of Christ was to deliver men from sin, 1Jo 3:5;

(c.) these who are true Christians do not habitually sin, 1Jo 3:6;

(d.) those who sin cannot be true Christians, but are of the devil, 1Jo 3:8; and

(e.) he who is born of God has a germ or principle of true piety in him, and cannot sin, 1Jo 3:9. It seems evident that the apostle is here combating an opinion which then existed that men might sin, and yet be true Christians, (1Jo 3:7;) and he apprehended that there was danger that this opinion would become prevalent. On what *ground* this opinion was held is unknown. Perhaps it was held that all that was necessary to constitute religion was to embrace the doctrines of Christianity, or to be orthodox in the faith; perhaps that it was not expected that men would become holy in this life, and therefore they might indulge in acts of sin; perhaps that Christ came to modify and relax the law, and that the *freedom* which he procured for them was freedom to indulge in whatever men chose; perhaps that, since Christians were heirs of all things, they had a right to enjoy all things; perhaps that the passions of men were so strong that they could not be restrained, and that therefore it was not wrong to give indulgence to the propensities with which our Creator has formed us. All these opinions have been held under various forms of Antinomianism, and it is not at all improbable that some or all of them prevailed in the time of John. The argument which he urges would be applicable to any of them. The consideration which he here states is, that all sin is a transgression of law, and that he who commits it, under whatever pretence, is to be held as a transgressor of the law. The literal rendering of this passage is, "He who doeth sin (*amartian*) doeth also transgression"—*anomian*. Sin is the generic term embracing all that would be wrong. The word transgression (*anomia*) is a specific term, showing where the wrong lay, to wit, in violating the law.

For sin is the transgression of the law. That is, all sin involves this as a consequence that it is a violation of the law. The object of the apostle is not so much to define sin, as to deter from its commission by stating what is its essential nature—though he has in fact given the best definition of it that could be given. The essential idea is, that God has given a law to men to regulate their conduct, and that whatever is a departure from that law in any way is held to be sin. The law measures our duty, and measures therefore the degree of guilt when it is not obeyed. The law determines what is right in all cases, and, of course, what is wrong when it is not complied with. The law is the expression of what is the will of God as to what we shall do; and when that is not done, there is sin. The law determines what we shall love or not love; when our passions and appetites shall be bounded and restrained, and to what extent they may be indulged; what shall be our motives and aims in living; how we shall act toward God and toward men; and whenever, in any of these respects, its requirements are not complied with, there is sin. This will include everything

in relation to which the law is given, and will embrace what we *omit* to do when the law has commanded a thing to be done, as well as a positive act of transgression where the law has forbidden a thing. This idea is properly found in the original word rendered transgression of the law—*anomia*. This word occurs in the New Testament only in the following places: Mt 7:23 13:41, 23:28 24:12; Ro 4:7 6:19; 2Th 2:7 Tit 2:14; Heb 1:9; Heb 8:12 10:17, in all which places it is rendered iniquity and iniquities; in 2Co 6:14, where it is rendered unrighteousness; and in the verse before us twice. It properly means lawlessness, in the sense that the requirements of the law are not conformed to, or complied with; that is, either by not obeying it, or by positively violating it. When a parent commands a child to do a thing, and he does not do it, he is as really guilty of violating the law as when he does a thing which is positively forbidden. This important verse, therefore, may be considered in two aspects—as a definition of the nature of sin, and as an argument against indulgence in it, or against committing it.

I. As a definition of the nature of sin. It teaches

(a.) that there is a rule of law by which the conduct of mankind is to be regulated and governed, and to which it is to be conformed.

(b.) That there is sin in all cases where that law is not complied with; and that all who do not comply with it are guilty before God.

(c.) That the particular thing which determines the guilt of sin, and which measures it, is that it is a departure from law, and consequently that there is no sin where there m no departure from law. The essential thing is, that the law has not been respected and obeyed, and sin derives its character and aggravation from that fact. No one can reasonably doubt as to the accuracy of this definition of sin. It is founded on the fact

(a.) that God has an absolute right to prescribe what we may and may not do;

(5.) that it is to be presumed that what he prescribes will be in accordance with what is right; and

(c.)that nothing else in fact constitutes sin. Sin can consist in nothing else. It does not consist of a particular height of stature, or a particular complexion; of a feeble intellect, or an intellect made feeble, as the result of any former apostasy; of any constitutional propensity, or any disposition founded in our nature as creatures. For none of these things do our consciences condemn us; and however we may lament them, we have no consciousness of wrong.

II. As an argument against the commission of sin. This argument may be considered as consisting of two things—the wrong that is done by the violation of law, and the exposure to the penalty.

(1.) The wrong itself. This wrong, as an argument to deter from sin, arises mainly from two things:

(a.) because sin is a violation of the will of God, and it is in itself wrong to disregard that will; and

(b.) because it is to be presumed that when God has given law there is a good reason why he has done it.

(2.) The fact that the law has a penalty is an argument for not violating the law. All law has a penalty; that is, there is some suffering, disadvantage, forfeit of privileges, etc., which the violation of law draws in its train, and which is to be regarded as an expression of the sense which the lawgiver entertains of the value of his law, and of the evil of disobeying it. Many of these penalties of the violation of the Divine law are seen in this life, and all will be certain to occur sooner or later, in this world or in the world to come. With such views of the law and of sin—of his obligations, and

of the evils of disobedience—a Christian should not, and will not, deliberately and habitually violate the law of God.

{a} "know" 3Jo 1:11

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And ye know that he was manifested*. The Lord Jesus, the Son of God. "You know that he became incarnate, or appeared among men, for the very purpose of putting an end to sin," Mt 1:21. Comp. **See Barnes "1Ti 3:16"**.

This is the second argument in this paragraph, (1Jo 3:4-10,) by which the apostle would deter us from sin. The argument is a clear one, and is perhaps the strongest that can be made to bear on the mind of a true Christian—that the Lord Jesus saw sin to be so great an evil, that he came into our world, and gave himself to the bitter sorrows of death on the cross, to redeem us from it.

To take away our sins. The essential argument here is, that the whole work of Christ was designed to deliver us from the dominion of sin, not to furnish us the means of indulgence in it; and that, therefore, we should be deterred from it by all that Christ has done and suffered for us. He perverts the whole design of the coming of the Saviour who supposes that his work was in any degree designed to procure for his followers the indulgences of sin, or who so interprets the methods of his grace as to suppose that it is now lawful for him to indulge his guilty passions. The argument essentially is this:

(1.) That we profess to be the followers of Christ, and should carry out his ends and views in coming into the world;

(2.) that the great and leading purpose of his coming was to set us free from the bondage of transgression;

(3.) that in doing this he gave himself up to a life of poverty, and shame, and sorrow, and to a most bitter death on the cross; and,

(4.) that we should not indulge in that from which he came to deliver us, and which cost him so much toil and such a death. How could we indulge in that which has brought heavy calamity on the head of a father, or which has pierced a sister's heart with many sorrows? Still more, how can we be so ungrateful and hardhearted as to indulge in that which crushed our Redeemer in death?

And in him is no sin. An additional consideration to show that we should be holy. As he was perfectly pure and spotless, so should all his followers aim to be; and none can truly pretend to be his who do not desire and design to become like him. On the personal holiness of the Lord Jesus, **See Barnes** "Heb 7:26, **See Barnes "1Pe 2:23"**.

{a} "know" Heb 9:26,28

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Whosoever abideth in him*. See 1Jo 2:6. The word here employed (*menwn*) properly means to remain, to continue, to abide. It is used of persons remaining or dwelling in a place, in

the sense of abiding there permanently, or lodging there, and this is the common meaning of the word, Mt 10:11 26:38; Mr 6:10 Lu 1:56, *et saepe*. In the writings of John, however, it is quite a favourite word to denote the relation which one sustains to another, in the sense of being united to him, or remaining with him in affection and love; being with him in heart and mind and will, as one makes his home in a dwelling. The sense seems to be that we have some sort of relation to him similar to that which we have to our home; that is, some fixed and permanent attachment to him. We live in him; we remain steadfast in our attachment to him, as we do to our own home. For the use of the word in John, in whose writings it so frequently occurs, see Joh 5:38 6:56, 14:10,17, 15:4-7, Joh 15:9 1Jo 2:6,10,14,17,27,28 3:6,24 4:12,13,15,16.

In the passage before us, as in his writings generally, it refers to one who lives the life of a Christian, as if he were always with Christ, and abode with him. It refers to the Christian considered as adhering steadfastly to the Saviour, and not as following him with transitory feelings, emotions, and raptures. It does not of itself necessarily mean that he will always do this; that is, it does not prove the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, but it refers to the adherence to the Saviour as a *continuous* state of mind, or as having permanency; meaning that there is a life of continued faith in him. It is of a person thus attached to the Saviour that the apostle makes the important declaration in the passage before us, that he does not sin. This is the *third* argument to show that the child of God should be pure; and the substance of the argument is, that *as a matter of fact* the child of God is not a sinner.

Sinneth not. There has been much difference of opinion in regard to this expression, and the similar declaration in 1Jo 3:9. Not a few have maintained that it teaches the "doctrine of perfection," or that Christians may live entirely without sin; and some have held that the apostle meant to teach that this is always the characteristic of the true Christian. Against the interpretation, however, which supposes that it teaches that the Christian is absolutely perfect, and lives wholly without sin, there are three insuperable objections:

(1.) If it teaches that doctrine at all, it teaches that *all* Christians are perfect; "*whosoever* abideth in him," "*whosoever* is born of God," "he *cannot* sin," 1Jo 3:9.

(2.) This is not true, and cannot be held to be true by those who have any just views of what the children of God have been and are. Who can maintain that Abraham, or Isaac, or Jacob; that Moses, David, or Job; that Peter, John, or Paul, were absolutely perfect, and were never, after their regeneration, guilty of an act of sin? Certainly they never affirmed it of themselves, nor does the sacred record attribute to them any such perfection. And who can affirm this of *all* who give evidence of true piety in the world? Who can of themselves? Are we to come to the painful conclusion that all who are not absolutely perfect in thought, word, and deed, are destitute of any religion, and are to be set down as hypocrites or self-deceivers? And yet, unless this passage proves that all who have been born again are absolutely perfect, it will not prove it of any one, for the affirmation is not made of a part, or of what any favoured individual may be, but of what every one is in fact who is born of God.

(3.) This interpretation is not necessary to a fair exposition of the passage. The language used is such as would be employed by any writer if he designed to say of one that he is not characteristically a sinner; that he is a good man; that he does not commit habitual and wilful transgression. Such language is common throughout the Bible, when it is said of one man that he is a saint, and of another that he is a sinner; of one that he is righteous, and of another that he is wicked; of one that he obeys the law of God, and of another that he does not. John expresses it

strongly, but he affirms no more in fact than is affirmed elsewhere. The passage teaches, indeed, most important truths in regard to the true Christian; and the fair and proper meaning may be summed up in the following particulars:

(a.) He who is born again does not sin *habitually*, or is not *habitually* a sinner. If he does wrong, it is when he is overtaken by temptation, and the act is against the habitual inclination and purpose of his soul. If a man sins habitually, it proves that he has never been renewed.

(b.) That he who is born again does not do wrong *deliberately* and of *design*. He means to do right. He is not wilfully and deliberately a sinner. If a man deliberately and intentionally does wrong, he shows that he is not actuated by the spirit of religion. It is true that when one does wrong, or commits sin, there is a momentary assent of the will; but it is under the influence of passion, or excitement, or temptation, or provocation, and not as the result of a deliberate plan or purpose of the soul. A man who deliberately and intentionally does a wrong thing, shows that he is not a true Christian; and if this were all that is understood by *perfection*, then there would be many who are perfect, for there are many, very many Christians, who cannot recollect an instance for many years in which they have intentionally and deliberately done a wrong thing. Yet these very Christians see much corruption in their own hearts over which to mourn, and against which they earnestly strive; in comparing themselves with the perfect law of God, and with the perfect example of the Saviour, they see much in which they come short.

(c) He who is born again will not sin *finally*, or will not fall away. "His seed remaineth in him," 1Jo 3:9. **See Barnes "1Jo 3:9"**

on that verse. There is a principle of grace by which he will ultimately be restrained and recovered. This, it seems to me, is fairly implied in the language used by John; for if a man might be a Christian, and yet wholly fall away and perish, how could it be said with any truth that such a man "sinneth not;" how that "he doth not commit sin;" how that "his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin?" Just the contrary would be true if this were so.

Whosoever sinneth. That is, as explained above, habitually, deliberately, characteristically, and finally.—*Doddridge*. "Who habitually and avowedly sinneth."

Hath not seen him, nor known him. Has had no just views of the Saviour, or of the nature of true religion. In other words, cannot be a true Christian.

{b} "whosoever sinneth" 3Jo 1:11

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Little children*. **See Barnes "1Jo 2:1"**.

Let no man deceive you. That is, in the matter under consideration; to wit, by persuading you that a man may live in sinful practices, and yet be a true child of God. From this it is clear that the apostle supposed there were some who would attempt to do this, and it was to counteract their arts that he made these positive statements in regard to the nature of true religion.

He that doeth righteousness is righteous. This is laid down as a great and undeniable principle in religion—a maxim which none could dispute, and as important as it is plain. And it is worthy of all the emphasis which the apostle lays on it. The man who does righteousness, or leads an upright life, is a righteous man, and no other one is. No matter how any one may claim that he is justified

by faith; no matter how he may conform to the external duties and rites of religion; no matter how zealous he may be for orthodoxy, or for the order of the church; no matter what visions and raptures he may have, or of what peace and joy in his soul he may boast; no matter how little he may fear death, oil hope for heaven—unless he is in fact a righteous man, in the proper sense of the term, he cannot be a child of God. Compare Mt 7:16-23. If he is, in the proper sense of the word, a man who keeps the law of God, and leads a holy life, he is righteous, for that is religion. Such a man, however, will always feel that his claim to be regarded as a righteous man is not to be traced to what he is in himself, but to what he owes to the grace of God.

Even as he is righteous. **See Barnes "1Jo 3:3"**.

Not necessarily in this world to the same degree, but with the same *kind* of righteousness. Hereafter he will become wholly free from all sin, like his God and Saviour, 1Jo 3:2.

(*) "Little Children" "My Children" {a} "that doeth righteousness" Eze 18:5-9 ro 2:13

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *He that committeth sin*. Habitually, wilfully, characteristically.

Is of the devil. This cannot mean that no one who commits any sin, or who is not absolutely perfect, can be a Christian, for this would cut off the great mass, even according to the belief of those who hold that the Christian may be perfectly holy, from all claim to the Christian character. But what the apostle here says is true in two senses:

(1.) That all who commit sin, even true believers, so far as they are imperfect, in this respect resemble Satan, and are under his influence, since sin, just so far as it exists at all, makes us resemble him.

(2.) All who habitually and characteristically sin are of the devil. This latter was evidently the principal idea in the mind of the apostle. His object here is to show that those who sinned, in the sense in which it would seem some maintained that the children of God might sin, could have no real evidence of piety, but really belonged to Satan.

For the devil sinneth from the beginning. The beginning of the world; or from the first account we have of him. It does not mean that he sinned from the beginning of his existence, for he was made holy like the other angels. **See Barnes "Jude 1:6"**.

The meaning is, that he introduced sin into the universe, and that he has continued to practise it ever since. The word *sinneth* here implies *continued* and *habitual* sin. He did not commit one act of sin and then reform; but he has continued, and still continues, his course of sin. This may confirm what has been already said about the kind of sin that John refers to. He speaks of sinning habitually, continuously, wilfully; and any one who does this shows that he is under the influence of him whose characteristic it has been and is to sin. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested. Became incarnate, and appeared among men, 1Jo 3:5. Comp. **See Barnes "1Ti 3:16"**.

That he might destroy the works of the devil. All his plans of wickedness, and his control over the hearts of men. Compare Notes on **See Barnes "Mr 1:24"**; **See Barnes** "Heb 2:14.

The *argument* here is, that as the Son of God came to destroy all the works of the devil, he cannot be his true follower who lives in sin.

{b} "He" Joh 8:44 {c} "that he" He 2:14

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin*. This passage must either mean that they who are born of God, that is, who are true Christians, do not sin habitually and characteristically, or that every one who is a true Christian is absolutely perfect, and never commits any sin. If it can be used as referring to the doctrine of absolute perfection at all, it proves, not that Christians *may* be perfect, or that *a portion* of them are, but that *all* are. But who can maintain this? Who can believe that John meant to affirm this? Nothing can be clearer than that the passage has not this meaning, and that John did not teach a doctrine so contrary to the current strain of the Scriptures, and to fact; and if he did not teach this, then in this whole passage he refers to those who are habitually and characteristically righteous. For his seed remaineth in him. There is much obscurity in this expression, though the general sense is clear, which is, that there is something abiding in the heart of the true Christian which the apostle here calls *seed*, which will prevent his sinning. The word "*his*" in this phrase, "his seed," may refer either to the individual himself—in the sense that this can now be properly called his, inasmuch as it is a part of himself, or a principle abiding in him; or it may refer to God—in the sense that what is here called "seed" is his, that is, he has implanted it, or it is a germ of Divine origin. Robinson (Lex.) understands it in the latter sense, and so also do Macknight, Doddridge, Lucke, and others, and this is probably the true interpretation. The word *seed* (*sperma*) means properly seed sown, as of grain, plants, trees; then anything that resembles it, anything which germinates, or which springs up, or is produced. It is applied in the New Testament to the word of God, or the gospel, as that which produces effects in the heart and life similar to what seed that is sown does. Comp. Mt 13:26,37,38.

Augustin, Clemens, (*Alex*.,) Grotius, Rosenmuller, Benson, and Bloomfield, suppose that this is the signification of the word here. The proper idea, according to this, is that the seed referred to is truth, which God has implanted or sown in the heart, from which it may be expected that the fruits of righteousness will grow. But that which abides in the heart of a Christian is not the naked word of God; the mere gospel, or mere truth; it is rather that word as made vital and efficacious by the influences of his Spirit; the germ of the Divine life; the principles of true piety in the soul, Comp. the words of Virgil.—Igneus est illi vigor et cosiestis origo semini. The exact idea here, as it seems to me, is not that the "seed" refers to *the word of God*, as Augustin and others suppose, or to *the Spirit of God*, but to the germ of piety which has been produced in the heart by the word and Spirit of God, and which may be regarded as having been implanted there by God himself, and which may be expected to produce holiness in the life, There is, probably, as Lucke supposes, an allusion in the word to the fact that we are *begotten* (*o gegennhmenov*) of God. The word *remaineth menei*, compare **See Barnes "1Jo 3:6"**

—is a favourite expression of John. The expression here used by John, thus explained, would seem to imply two things:

(1.) that the germ or seed of religion implanted in the soul abides there as a constant, vital principle, so that he who is born of God cannot become habitually a sinner; and,

(2.) that it will so continue to live there that he will not fall away and perish. The idea is clearly that the germ or principle of piety so permanently abides in the soul, that he who is renewed never can become again characteristically a sinner.

And he cannot sin. Not merely he will not, but he cannot; that is, in the sense referred to. This cannot mean that one who is renewed has not physical ability to do wrong, for every moral agent

has; nor can it mean that no one who is a true Christian never does, in fact, do wrong in thought, word, or deed, for no one could seriously maintain that: but it must mean that there is somehow a certainty as absolute as if it were physically impossible, that those who are born of God will not be characteristically and habitually sinners; that they will not sin in such a sense as to lose all true religion and be numbered with transgressors; that they will not fall away and perish. Unless this passage teaches that no one who is renewed ever can sin in any sense; or that every one who becomes a Christian is, and must be, absolutely and always perfect, no words could more clearly prove that true Christians will never fall from grace and perish. How can what the apostle here says be true, if a real Christian can fall away and become again a sinner?

Because he is born of God. Or begotten of God. God has given him, by the new birth, real, spiritual life, and that life can never become extinct.

{d} "Whosoever is born" 1Jo 5:18 {e} "seed" 1Pe 1:23

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *In this the children of God are manifest*, etc. That is, this furnishes a test of their true character. The test is found in doing righteousness, and in the love of the brethren. The former he had illustrated; the latter he now proceeds to illustrate. The general idea is, that if a man is not truly a righteous man, and does not love the brethren, he cannot be a child of God. Perhaps by the phrase "*in this*," using a pronoun in the singular number, he means to intimate that an important part of righteousness consists in brotherly love.

Whosoever doeth not righteousness, is not of God. In 1Jo 3:7, he had said that "he that doeth righteousness is of God." If that is true, then what he here affirms must be true also, that a man who does not righteousness is not of God. The general idea is the same, that no one can be a true Christian who is not in fact a righteous man.

Neither he that loveth not his brother. The illustration of this point continues to 1Jo 3:18. The general sense is, that brotherly love is essential to the Christian character, and that he who does not possess it cannot be a Christian. On the nature and importance of brotherly love as an evidence of piety, **See Barnes** "Joh 13:34, **See Barnes "Joh 13:35"**.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *For this is the message*. Marg., *commandment*. In the received text, this is *aggelia—a message brought*; in several Mss., and in later editions, it is *epaggelia—annunciation*, *announcement*; an order given, or a commandment, Ac 23:21. It is not very material which reading is followed. The word *command* or *rule* would express the sense with sufficient clearness. The reference is to the law given by the Savour as a permanent direction to his disciples.

That ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one anther. **See Barnes** "Joh 13:34, **See Barnes "Joh 13:35"**; **See Barnes "1Jo 2:7"**.

{1} "message" "commandment" {*} "message" "charge"

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Not as Cain*. Not manifesting the spirit which Cain did. His was a most remarkable and striking instance of a want of love to a brother, and the case was well adapted to illustrate the propriety of the duty which the apostle is enjoining. See Ge 4:4-8.

Who was of that wicked one. Of the devil; that is, he was under his influence, and acted from his instigation.

And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. He acted under the influence of envy. He was dissatisfied that his own offering was not accepted, and that his brother's was. The apostle seems desirous to guard those to whom he wrote against the indulgence of any feelings that were the opposite of love; from anything like envy toward more highly favoured brethren, by showing to what this would lead if fairly acted out, as in the case of Cain. A large part of the crimes of the earth have been caused, as in the murder of Abel, by the want of brotherly love. Nothing but love would be necessary to put an end to the crimes, and consequently to a large part of the misery, of the world.

{b} "Cain, who" Ge 4:4-8

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Marvel not*. Do not think it so unusual, or so little to be expected, as to excite astonishment.

If the world hate you. The emphasis here is to be placed on the word you. The apostle had just adverted to the fact that Cain hated Abel, his brother, without cause, and he says that they were not to deem it strange if the world hated them in like manner. The Saviour (Joh 15:17,18) introduced these subjects in the same connexion. In enjoining the duty of brotherly love on his disciples, he adverts to the fact that they must expect to be hated by the world, and tells them to remember that the world hated him before it hated them. The object of all this was to show more clearly the necessity of strong and tender mutual affection among Christians, since they could hope for none from the world. **See Barnes "Joh 15:18,19".**

{++} "Marvel" "Wonder" {c} "world" Joh 15:18,19

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *We know that we have passed from death unto life*. From spiritual death (**See Barnes "Eph 2:1"**) to spiritual life; that is, that we are true Christians. Because we love the brethren. The sentiment here is, that it is an infallible evidence of true piety if we love the followers of Christ as such. See this sentiment illustrated in the **See Barnes "Joh 13:35".**

But how easy it would seem to be to apply such a test of piety as this! Who cannot judge accurately of his own feelings, and determine whether he loves a Christian because he bears the name and image of the Saviour—loves him the more just in proportion as he bears that image?

Who cannot, if he chooses, look beyond the narrow bounds of his own sect, and determine whether he is pleased with the true Christian character wherever it may be found, and whether he would prefer to find his friends among those who bear the name and the image of the Son of God, than among the people of the world ? The Saviour meant that his followers should be known by this badge of discipleship all over the world, Joh 13:34,35. John says, in carrying out the sentiment, that Christians, by this test, may know among themselves whether they have any true religion.

He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. He remains dead in sins; that is, he has never been converted. **See Barnes "1Jo 3:6"**.

As love to the Christian brotherhood is essential to true piety, it follows that he who has not that remains unconverted, or is in a state of spiritual death. He is by nature dead in sin, and unless he has evidence that he is brought out of that state, he *remains* or *abides* in it.

{d} "He that loveth" 1Jo 2:9,11

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer*, etc. That is, he has the spirit of a murderer; he has that which, if it were acted out, would lead him to commit murder, as it did Cain. The private malice, the secret grudge, the envy which is cherished in the heart, is murderous in its tendency, and were it not for the outward restraints of human laws, and the dread of punishment, it would often lead to the act of murder. The apostle does not say that he who hates his brother, though he does not in fact commit murder, is guilty to the same degree as if he had actually done it; but he evidently means to say that the spirit which would lead to murder is there, and that God will hold him responsible for it. Nothing is wanting but the removal of outward restraints to lead to the commission of the open deed, and God judges men as he sees them to be *in their hearts*. What a fearful declaration, then, is this! How many real murderers there are on the earth besides those who are detected and punished, and besides those open violators of the laws of God and man who go at large! And who is there that should not feel humbled and penitent in view of his own heart, and grateful for that sovereign mercy which has restrained him from open acts of guilt?— for who is there who has not at some period of his life, and perhaps often, indulged in feelings of hatred, and envy, and malice towards others, which, if acted out, would have led to the commission of the awful crime of taking human life? Any man may well shudder at tile remembrance of the secret sins of his own heart, and at the thought of what he *would* have been but for the restraining grace of God. And how wonderful is that grace which, in the case of the true Christian, not only restrains and checks, but which effectually subdues all these feelings, and implants in their place the principles of love!

{a} "Whosoever hateth" Mt 5:21,22

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Hereby perceive we the love of God*. The words "*of God*" are not in the original, and should not have been introduced into the translation, though they are found in the Latin Vulgate, and in the Genevan versions, and in one manuscript. They would naturally convey the idea that God laid down his life for us; or that God himself, in his Divine nature, suffered. But this idea is not expressed in this passage as it is in the original, and of course no argument can be derived from it either to prove that Christ is God, or that the Divine nature is capable of suffering. The original is much more expressive and emphatic than it is with this addition: "By this we know love;" that is, we know what true love is; we see a most affecting and striking illustration of its nature. *Love itself*—its real nature, its power, its sacrifices, its influences—was seen in its highest form, when the Son of God gave himself to die on a cross. For an illustration of the sentiment, **See Barnes "Joh 3:16, and** Joh 15:3.

Because he laid down his life for us. There can be no doubt that the Saviour is here referred to, though his name is not mentioned particularly. There are several instances in the New Testament where he is mentioned under the general appellation "he," as one who was well known, and about whom the writers were accustomed to speak.

And we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. For the good of our fellow-Christians, if it be necessary. That is, circumstances may occur where it would be proper to do it, and we ought always to be ready to do it. The spirit which led the Saviour to sacrifice his life for the good of the church, should lead us to do the same thing for our brethren if circumstances should require it. That this is a correct principle no one can doubt; for

(1.) the Saviour did it, and we are bound to imitate his example, and to possess his spirit;

(2.) the prophets, apostles, and martyrs did it, laying down their lives in the cause of truth, and for the good of the church and the world; and

(3.) it has always been held that it is right and proper, in certain circumstances, for a man to lay down his life for the good of others. So we speak of the patriot who sacrifices his life for the good of his country; so we feel in the case of a shipwreck, that it may be the duty of a captain to sacrifice his life for the good of his passengers and crew; so in case of a pestilential disease, a physician should not regard his own life, if he may save others; and so we always hold the man up to honour who is willing to jeopard his own life on noble principles of self-denial for the good of his fellow-men. In what cases this should occur the apostle does not state; but the general principle would seem to be, that it is to be done when a greater good would result from our self-sacrifice than from carefully guarding our own lives. Thus, in the case of a patriot, his death, in the circumstances, might be of greater value to his country than his life would be; or, his exposing himself to death would be a greater service to his country, than if that should not be done. Thus the Saviour laid down his life for the good of mankind; thus the apostles exposed their lives to constant peril in extending the principles of religion; and thus the martyrs surrendered their lives in the cause of the church and of truth. In like manner we ought to be ready to hazard our lives, and even to lay them down, if in that way we may promote the cause of truth, and the salvation of sinners, or serve our Christian brethren. In what way this injunction was understood by the primitive Christians, may be perceived from what the world is reported to have said of them, "Behold, how they love one another; they are ready to die for one another."—Tertull. Apol. c. 39. So Eusebius (Eccl. His. vii. 22) says of Christians that "in a time of plague they visited one another, and not only hazarded their lives, but actually lost them in their zeal to preserve the lives of others." We are not indeed to throw away our lives; we are not to expose them in a rash, reckless, imprudent manner; but when,

in the discharge of duty, we are placed in a situation where life is exposed to danger, we are not to shrink from the duty, or to run away from it. Perhaps the following would embrace the principal instances of the duty here enjoined by the apostle:

(1.) We ought to have such love for the church that we should be *willing* to die for it, as a patriot is willing to die for his country.

(2.) We ought to have such love for Christians as to be willing to jeopard our lives to aid them—as in case of a pestilence or plague, or when they are in danger by fire, or flood, or foes.

(3.) We ought to have such love for the truth as to be willing to sacrifice our lives rather than deny it.

(4.) We ought to have such love for the cause of our Master as to be willing to cross oceans, and snows, and sands; to visit distant and barbarous regions, though at imminent risk of our lives, and though with the prospect that we shall never see our country again.

(5.) We ought to have such love for the church that we shall engage heartily and constantly in services of labour and self-sacrifice on its account, until, our work being done, exhausted nature shall sink to rest in the grave. In one word, we should regard ourselves as devoted to the service of the Redeemer, living or dying to be found engaged in his cause. If a case should actually occur where the question would arise whether a man would abandon his Christian brother or die, he ought not to hesitate; in all cases he should regard his life as consecrated to the cause of Sion and its friends. Once, in the times of primitive piety, there was much of this spirit in the world; how little, it is to be feared, does it prevail now!

{b} "Hereby" Joh 15:13 Ro 5:8 {*} "perceive" "Know"

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *But whoso hath this world's good*. Has property—called "this world's good," or a good pertaining to this world, because it is of value to us only as it meets our wants this side of the grave; and perhaps also because it is sought supremely by the men of the world. The general meaning of this verse, in connexion with the previous verse, is, that if we ought to be willing to lay down our lives for others, we ought to be willing to make those comparatively smaller sacrifices which are necessary to relieve them in their distresses; and that if we are unwilling to do this, we can have no evidence that the love of God dwells in us.

And seeth his brother have need. Need of food, of raiment, of shelter; or sick, and poor, and unable to provide for his own wants and those of his family.

And shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him. The bowels, or *upper viscera*, embracing the heart, and the region of the chest generally, are in the Scriptures represented as the seat of mercy, piety, compassion, because when the mind feels compassion it is that part which is affected. Comp. **See Barnes "Isa 16:11"**.

How dwelleth the love of God in him? How can a man love God who does not love those who bear his image? **See Barnes "1Jo 4:20"**.

On the general sentiment here, **See Barnes** "Jas 2:14,seq. The meaning is plain, that we cannot have evidence of piety unless we are ready to do good to others, especially to our Christian brethren. **See Barnes "Mt 25:45"**; **See Barnes** "Gal 6:10".

{c} "whoso" De 15:7"
{d} "how dwelleth" 1Jo 4:20

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue*. By mere profession; by merely saying that we love each other. See 1Pe 1:22.

But in deed and in truth. In such acts as shall show that our professed love is sincere and real. Let us do the deed of love, whether anything is said about it or not. **See Barnes "Mt 6:3"**.

{+} "little children" "My children" {e} "let us" Eze 33:31 Ro 12:9; Jas 2:15,16; 1Pe 1:22

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *And hereby*. Gr., *by this*; that is, by the fact that we have true love to others, and that we manifest it by a readiness to make sacrifices to do them good.

We know that we are of the truth. That we are not deceived in what we profess to be; that is that we are true Christians. To be of the truth stands opposed to cherishing false and delusive hopes.

And shall assure our hearts before him. Before God, or before the Saviour. In the margin, as in the Greek, the word rendered *shall assure*, is *persuade*. The Greek word is used as meaning *to persuade*, e.g., to the reception and belief of truth; then to persuade any one who has unkind or prejudiced feelings towards us, or to bring over to kind feelings, *to conciliate*, and thus to pacify or quiet. The meaning here seems to be, that we shall in this way allay the doubts and trouble of our minds, and produce a state of quiet and peace, to wit, by the evidence that we are of the truth. Our consciences are often restless and troubled in view of past guilt; but, in thus furnishing the evidence of true piety by love to others, we shall pacify an accusing mind, and conciliate our own hearts, and persuade or convince ourselves that we are truly the children of God. See Rob. Lex. sub voce *peiyw*, I. b. In other words, though a man's heart may condemn him as guilty, and though he knows that God sees and condemns the sins of his past life, yet the agitations and alarms of his mind may be calmed down and soothed by evidence that he is a child of God, and that he will not be finally condemned. A true Christian does not attempt to conceal the fact that there is much for which his own heart and conscience might justly accuse him; but he finds, notwithstanding all this, evidence that he is a child of God, and he is persuaded that all will be well.

{a} "hereby" Joh 13:35 {1} "shall assure" "persuade"

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *For if our heart condemn us*. We cannot hope for peace from any expectation that our own hearts will never accuse us, or that we ourselves can approve of all that we have done. The reference here is not so much to our past lives, as to our present conduct and deportment. The

object is to induce Christians so to live that their hearts will not condemn them for any secret sins, while the outward deportment may be unsullied. The general sentiment is, that if they should so live that their own hearts would condemn them for preSent insincerity and hypocrisy, they could have no hope of peace, for God knows all that is in the heart. In view of the past—when the heart accuses us of what we have done—we may find peace by such evidences of piety as shall allay the troubles of an agitated soul, (1Jo 3:9,) but we cannot have such peace if our hearts condemn us for the indulgence of secret sins, now that we profess to be Christians. If our hearts condemn us for present insincerity, and for secret sins, we can never "persuade" or soothe them by any external act of piety. In view of the consciousness of past guilt, we may find peace; we can find none if there is a present purpose to indulge in sin.

God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. We cannot hope to find peace by hiding anything from his view, or by any supposition that he is not acquainted with the sins for which our consciences trouble us. He knows all the sins of which we are conscious, and sees all their guilt and aggravation as clearly as we do. He knows more than this. He knows all the sins which we have forgotten; all those acts which we endeavour to persuade ourselves are not sinful, but which are evil in his sight; and all those aggravations attending our sins which it is impossible for us fully and distinctly to conceive, He is more disposed to condemn sin than we are; he looks on it with less allowance than we do. We cannot hope, then, for a calm mind in any supposition that God does not see our sins as clearly as we do, or in any hope that he will look on them with more favour and indulgence. Peace cannot be found in the indulgence of sin in the hope that God will not perceive or regard it, for we can sooner deceive ourselves than we can him; and while therefore, (1Jo 3:19,) in reference to the past, we can only "persuade" our hearts, or soothe their agitated feelings by evidence that we are of the truth now, and that our sins are forgiven; in reference to the present and the future, the heart can be kept calm only by such a course of life that our own hearts and our God shall approve the manner in which we live.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Beloved, if our heart condemn us not*. If we so live as to have an approving conscience—that is, if we indulge in no secret sin; if we discharge faithfully every known duty; if we submit without murmuring to all the allotments of Divine Providence.

Then have we confidence toward God. Comp. **See Barnes "1Jo 3:19"**; **See Barnes "1Jo 2:28"**; **See Barnes** "Ac 24:16".

The apostle evidently does not mean that we have confidence towards God on the ground of what we do, as if it were meritorious, or as if it constituted a claim to his favour; but that we may so live as to have evidence of personal piety, and that we may look forward with a confident hope that we shall be accepted of him in the great day. The word here rendered *confidence—parrhsian*—means properly *boldness*; usually boldness or openness in speaking our sentiments. **See Barnes "1Jo 2:28"**.

The confidence or boldness which we have towards our Maker is founded solely on the evidence that he will graciously accept us as pardoned sinners; not in the belief that we deserve his favor.

{b} "heart" Job 27:6 Ps 101:2 {c} "confidence" Heb 10:22

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him*. If we are truly his children, and ask in a proper manner. **See Barnes "Mt 7:7"**.

Comp. Mr 11:24 Lu 11:9, 18:1-10 Joh 14:13, 15:7 1Jo 5:14".

The declaration here made must be understood with these limitations:

(1.) that we ask in a proper manner, Jas 4:3; and,

(2,) that the thing asked shall be such as will be consistent for God to give; that is, such as he shall see to be best for us, 1Jo 5:14. **See Barnes "1Jo 5:14"**.

Because we keep his commandments. Not that this is the meritorious ground of our being heard, but that it furnishes evidence that we are his children, and he hears his children as such.

And do those things that are pleasing in his sight. As a parent is disposed to bestow favours on obedient, affectionate, and dutiful children, so God is on those who please him by their obedience and submission to his will. We can have no hope that he will hear us unless we do so live as to please him.

{d} "whatsoever" Ps 145:18,19; Pr 15:29 Mr 11:24

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *And this is his commandment*. His commandment, by way of eminence; the leading, principal thing which he enjoins on us; the commandment which lies at the foundation of all true obedience.

That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ. **See Barnes "Mr 16:16"**.

Comp. Joh 16:1 Ac 16:31.

And love one another, etc. This follows from the other, and hence they are mentioned as together constituting his commandment. **See Barnes "Joh 13:36"**.

{e} "this is his commandment" De 18:15-19 Joh 14:1

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 3 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *And he that keepeth his commandments*, etc. **See Barnes "Joh 14:23"**.

And hereby we know that he abideth in us. That is, this is another certain evidence that we are true Christians. The Saviour had promised (Joh 14:23) that he would come and take up his abode with his which people. John says that we have proof that he does this by the Spirit he has given us. That is, the Holy Spirit is imparted to his people to enlighten their minds; to elevate their affections; to sustain them in times of trial; to quicken them in the performance of duty; and to imbue them with the temper and spirit of the Lord Jesus. When these effects exist, we may be certain that the Spirit of God is with us; for these are the "fruits" of that Spirit, or these are the effects which he produces in the lives of men. Comp. **See Barnes** "Ga 5:22, **See Barnes "Ga 5:23"**.

On the evidence of piety here referred to, **See Barnes** "Ro 8:9, **See Barnes** "Ro 8:14, **See Barnes** "**Ro 8:16**".

No man can be a true Christian in whom that Spirit does not constantly dwell, or to whom he is not "given." And yet no one can determine that the Spirit dwells in him, except by the effects produced in his heart and life. In the following chapter, the apostle pursues the subject suggested here, and shows that we should examine ourselves closely, to see whether the "Spirit" to which we trust, as furnishing evidence of piety, is truly the Spirit of God, or is a spirit of delusion.

{f} "he that keepeth" Joh 14:23 15:10 {g} "hereby" Ro 8:9,14

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 4

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 1

ANALYSIS OF CHAPTER IV.

THERE are two principal subjects discussed in this chapter:—

I. The method by which we may determine that we have the Spirit of God, 1Jo 4:1-6. The apostle had said (1Jo 3:24) that it could be determined that God dwells in them by the Spirit which he has given them; but as it is probable that the teachers of error, the persons whom John regarded as "antichrist," (1Jo 2:18,19,) would lay claim to the same thing, it was important to know how it could be ascertained that the Spirit of God had been really given to them, or how it could be determined that the spirit that was in them was not the spirit of antichrist, the very thing against which he would guard them. In doing this, he

(1.) cautions them against trusting to every kind of spirit, or supposing that every spirit which animated even the professed friends of religion was the Spirit of God, 1Jo 4:1; and

(2.) he shows them how it might be determined that they had really the Spirit of God, or what would, be the effect of the influences of the Spirit on the mind. This evidence consisted of the following things:

(a.) they had the Spirit of God who confessed that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh, 1Jo 4:2;

(b.) they who denied that, had not the Spirit of God, and the denial of this was the real spirit of antichrist, 1Jo 4:3;

(c.) they who had the Spirit of God had not the spirit of this world, 1Jo 4:4,5; and

(d.) they who had the Spirit of God would hear those who were his apostles, or who were sent by him, 1Jo 4:6.

II. The duty, power, and influence of love, 1Jo 4:7-21. This is a favourite subject with John, and he here considers it at length, as a subject that was essential in determining the evidences of piety. The duty and value of love are enforced by the following considerations:

(1.) Love has its origin in God, and every one who has true love is born of God, 1Jo 4:7,8.

(2.) God has shown his great love to us by having given his Son to die for us; and as he has so loved us, we ought also to love one another, 1Jo 4:9-11.

(3.) If we love one another, it furnishes the best evidence that God dwells in us, 1Jo 4:12-15.

(4.) God is love, and if we have true love we dwell in him, and he dwells in us, 1Jo 4:16.

(5.) Love will furnish us great advantage in the day of judgment, by giving us confidence when we come before him, 1Jo 4:17.

(6.) Love will cast out all fear, and will make our minds calm in view of the events which are to come, 1Jo 4:18.

(7.) The very fact that he has first manifested his love to us should lead us to the exercise of love, 1Jo 4:19

(8.) A man cannot truly love God and yet hate his brother, 1Jo 4:20; and

(9.) it is the solemn command of God that he who loves God should love his brother also.

Verse 1. *Beloved, believe not every spirit*. Do not confide implicitly in every one who professes to be under the influences of the Holy Spirit. Comp. Mt 24:4,5. The true and the false teachers of religion alike claimed to be under the influence of the Spirit of God, and it was of importance that all such pretensions should be examined. It was not to be admitted because any one claimed to have been sent from God that therefore he was sent. Every such claim should be subjected to the proper proof before it was conceded. All pretensions to Divine inspiration, or to being authorized teachers of religion, were to be examined by the proper tests, because there were many false and delusive teachers who set up such claims in the world.

But try the spirits whether they are of God. There were those in the early Christian church who had the gift of "discerning Spirits," (**See Barnes** "1Co 12:10,) but it is not certain that the apostle refers here to any such supernatural power. It is more probable, as he addresses this command to Christians in general, that he refers to the ability of doing this by a comparison of the doctrines which they professed to hold with what was revealed, and by the fruits of their doctrines in their lives. If they taught what God had taught in his word, and if their lives corresponded with his requirements, and if their doctrines agreed with what had been inculcated by those who were admitted to be true apostles, (1Jo 4:6,) they were to receive them as what they professed to be. If not, they were to reject them, and hold them to be impostors. It may be remarked, that it is just as proper and as important now to examine the claims of all who profess to be teachers of religion, as it was then. In a matter so momentous as religion, and where there is so much at stake, it is important that all pretensions of this kind should be subjected to a rigid examination. No man should be received as a religious teacher without the clearest evidence that he has come in accordance with the will of God, nor unless he inculcates the very truth which God has revealed. **See Barnes** "Isa 8:20, and **See Barnes "Ac 17:11"**.

Because many false prophets are gone out into the world. The word *prophet* is often used in the New Testament to denote religious instructors or preachers. **See Barnes "Ro 12:6"**.

Compare **See Barnes "2Pe 2:1"**.

Such false teachers evidently abounded in the times here referred to. **See Barnes "1Jo 2:18"**.

The meaning is, that many had gone out into the world pretending to be true teachers of religion, but who inculcated most dangerous doctrines; and it was their duty to be on their guard against them, for they had the very spirit of antichrist, 1Jo 4:3.

{a} "Believe not" Jer 29:8 Mt 24:4 {b} "try the spirits" 1Th 5:21 Re 2:2

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Hereby*. Gr., "By this ;" that is, by the test which is immediately specified. *Know ye the Spirit of God*. You may discern who are actuated by the Spirit of God. Every spirit. Every one professing to be under the influence of the Spirit of God. The apostle uses the word spirit here with reference to the person who made the claim, on the supposition that every one professing to be a religious teacher was animated by some spirit or foreign influence, good or bad. If the Spirit of God influenced them, they would confess that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh; if some other spirit, the spirit of error and deceit, they would deny this.

That confesseth. That is, that makes a proper acknowledgment of this; that inculcates this doctrine, and that gives it a due place and prominence in his instructions. It cannot be supposed that a mere statement of this in words would show that they were of God in the sense that they were true Christians; but the sense is, that if this constituted one of the doctrines which they held and taught, it would show that they were advocates of truth, and not apostles of error. If they did not do this, (1Jo 4:3,) it would be decisive in regard to their character and claims.

That Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. Benson and some others propose to render this, "That Jesus, who came in the flesh, is the Christ." But this is liable to serious objections.

(1.) It is not the obvious interpretation.

(2.) It is unusual to say that "Jesus had come in the flesh," though the expression "the Son of God has come in the flesh," or "God was manifested in the flesh," would be in accordance with the usage of the New Testament.

(3.) This would not, probably, meet the real point in the case. The thing denied does not appear to have been that Jesus was the Messiah, for their pretending to be Christian teachers at all implied that they admitted this; but that the Son of God was *really a man*, or that he actually assumed human nature in permanent union with the Divine. The point of the remark made by the apostle is, that the acknowledgment was to be that Christ assumed human nature; that he was really a man as he appeared to be; or that there was a real incarnation, in opposition to the opinion that he came in *appearance* only, or that he merely *seemed* to be a man, and to suffer and die. That this opinion was held by many, see the Intro. & III. 2. It is quite probable that the apostle here refers to such sentiments as those which were held by the *Docetae*; and that he meant to teach that it was indispensable to proper evidence that any one came from God, that he should maintain that Jesus was truly *a man*, or that there was a real incarnation of the Son of God. John always regarded this as a very important point, and often refers to it, Joh 19:34,35, 20:25-27

1Jo 5:6. It is as important to be held now as it was then, for the fact that there was a real incarnation is essential to all just views of the atonement. If he was not truly a man, if he did not literally shed his blood on the cross, of course all that was done was in appearance only, and the whole system of redemption as revealed was merely a splendid illusion. There is little danger that this opinion will be held now, for those who depart from the doctrine laid down in the New Testament in regard to the person and work of Christ, are more disposed to embrace the opinion that he was a mere man; but still it is important that the truth that he was truly incarnate should be held up constantly before the mind, for in no other way can we obtain just views of the atonement. *Is of God*. This does not necessarily mean that every one who confessed this was personally a true Christian, for it is clear that a doctrine might be acknowledged to be true, and yet that the heart might not be changed; nor does it mean that the acknowledgment of this truth was all which it was

essential to be believed in order that one might, be recognised as a Christian; but it means that it was *essential* that this truth should be admitted by every one who truly came from God. They who taught this held a truth which he had revealed, and which was essential to be held; and they thus showed that they did not belong to those to whom the name "antichrist" could be properly given. Still, whether they held this doctrine in such a sense, and in such connexion with other doctrines, as to show that they were sincere Christians, was quite another question, for it is plain that a man may hold and teach the true doctrines of religion, and yet have no evidence that he is a child of God.

{d} "spirit" 1Co 12:3

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And every spirit that confesseth not*, etc. That is, this doctrine is *essential* to the Christian system; and he who does not hold it cannot be regarded either as a Christian, or recognised as a Christian teacher, if he was not a man, then all that occurred in his life, in Gethsemane, and on the cross, was *in appearance only*, and was assumed only to delude the senses. There were no real sufferings; there was no shedding of blood; there was no death on the cross; and, of course, there was no atonement. A mere show, an appearance assumed, a vision, could not make atonement for sin; and a denial, therefore, of the doctrine that the Son of God had come in the flesh, was in fact a denial of the doctrine of expiation for sin. The Latin Vulgate here reads *qui solvit Jesure*, "who dissolves or divides Jesus;" and Socrates (H. E. vii. 32) says that in the old copies of the New Testament it is written *o liei ton ihsoun*, "who dissolves or divides Jesus;" that is, who separates his true nature or person, or who supposes that there were two Christs, one in appearance, and one in reality. This reading was early found in some Mss., and is referred to by many of the Fathers, (see Wetstein,) but it has no real authority, and was evidently introduced, perhaps at first from a marginal note, to oppose the prevailing errors of the times. The common reading, "who confesseth not," is found in all the Gr. Mss., in the Syriac versions, in the Arabic; and, as Lucke says, the other reading is manifestly of Latin origin. The common reading in the text is that which is sustained by authority, and is entirely in accordance with the manner of John.

And this is that spirit of anti-christ. This is one of the things which characterize antichrist. John here refers not to an individual who should be known as antichrist, but to a class of persons, This does not, however, forbid the idea that there might be some one individual, or a succession of persons in the church, to whom the name might be applied by way of eminence. **See Barnes "1Jo 2:18"**.

Comp. **See Barnes** "2Th 2:3, seq.

Wherefore ye have heard that it should come. **See Barnes "1Jo 2:18"**.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Ye are of God*. You are of his family; you have embraced his truth, and imbibed his Spirit.

Little children. **See Barnes "2Jo 2:1"**.

And have overcome them. Have triumphed over their arts and temptations; their endeavours to draw you into error and sin. The word "*them*" in this place seems to refer to the False prophets or teachers who collectively constituted antichrist. The meaning is, that they had frustrated or thwarted all their attempts to turn them away from the truth. Because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. God, who dwells in your hearts, and by whose strength and grace alone you have been enabled to achieve this victory, is more mighty, than Satan, who rules in the hearts of the people of this world, and whose seductive arts are seen in the efforts of these false teachers. The apostle meant to say that it was by no power of their own that they achieved this victory, but it was to be traced solely to the fact that God dwelt among them, and had preserved them by his grace. What was true then is true now. He who dwells in the hearts of Christians by his Spirit, is infinitely, more mighty than Satan, "the ruler of the darkness of this world; and victory, therefore, over all his arts and temptations may be sure. In his conflicts with sin, temptation, and error, the Christian should never despair, for his God will insure him the victory.

(*) "children" "My children"

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *They are of the world*. This was one of the marks by which those who had the spirit of antichrist might be known. They belonged not to the church of God, but to the world. They had its spirit; they acted on its principles; they lived for it. Comp. **See Barnes "2Jo 2:15"**.

Therefore speak they of the world. Compare **See Barnes "Joh 3:21"**.

This may mean either that their conversation pertained to the things of this world, or that they were wholly influenced by the love of the world, and not by the Spirit of God, in the doctrines which they taught. The general sense is, that they had no higher ends and aims than they have who are influenced only by worldly plans and expectations. It is not difficult to distinguish, even among professed Christians and Christian teachers, those who are heavenly in their conversation from those who are influenced solely by the spirit of the world. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," and the general turn of a man's conversation will show what "spirit is within him."

And the world heareth them. The people of the world—the gay, the rich, the proud, the ambitious, the sensual—receive their instructions, and recognise them as teachers and guides, for their views accord with their own. **See Barnes "Joh 15:19"**.

A professedly religious teacher may always determine much about himself by knowing what class of people are pleased with him. A professed Christian of any station in life may determine much about his evidences of piety, by asking himself what kind of persons desire his friendship, and wish him for a companion.

{b} "world" Joh 3:31

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *We are of God*. John here, doubtless, refers to himself, and to those who taught the same doctrines which he did. He takes it for granted that those to whom he wrote would admit this, and argues from it as an indisputable truth, lie had given them such evidence of this, as to establish his character and claims beyond a doubt; and he often refers to the fact that he was what he claimed to be, as a point which was so well established that no one would call it in question. See Joh 19:35 21:24; 3Jo 1:12.

Paul, also, not unfrequently refers to the same thing respecting himself; to the fact—a fact which no one would presume to call in question, and which might be regarded as the basis of an argument—that he and his fellow-apostles were what they claimed to be. See 1Co 15:14,15; 1Th 2:1-11.

Might not, and ought not, all Christians, and all Christian ministers, so to live that the same thing might be assumed in regard to them in their intercourse with their fellow- men; that their characters for integrity and purity might be so clear that no one would be disposed to call them in question? There are such men in the church and in the ministry now; why might not all be such?

He that knoweth God, heareth us. Every one that has a true acquaintance with the character of God will receive our doctrine. John might assume this, for it was not doubted, he presumed, that he was an apostle and a good man; and if this were admitted, it would follow that those who feared and loved God would receive what he taught.

Hereby. By this; to wit, by the manner in which they receive the doctrines which we have taught.

Know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. We can distinguish those who embrace the truth from those who do not. Whatever pretensions they might set up for piety, it was clear that if they did not embrace the doctrines taught by the true apostles of God, they could not be regarded as his friends; that is, as true Christians. It may be added that the same test is applicable now. They who do not receive the plain doctrines laid down in the word of God, whatever pretensions they may make to piety, or whatever zeal they may envice in the cause which they have espoused, can have no well-founded claims to the name Christian. One of the clearest evidences of true piety is a readiness to receive all that God has taught. Comp. Mt 18:1-3 Mr 10:15 Jas 1:19-21.

{c} "Hereby" Isa 8:20

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Beloved, let us love one another*. This verse introduces a new topic, the consideration of which occupies the remainder of the chapter. See the Analysis. The subject is one on which John dwells more than on any other—that of love. His own character peculiarly inclined him to the exercise of love; and the remarkable affection which the Lord Jesus had shown for him, seems to have had the effect to give this grace a peculiar prominence in his views of what constituted true religion. Compare Joh 13:23. On the duty here enjoined, **See Barnes** "Joh 13:34, **See Barnes** "Joh 13:36, and **See Barnes** "1Jo 3:11, **See Barnes "1Jo 3:23"**.

For love is of God.

(1.) All true love has its origin in God.

(2.) Real love shows that we have his Spirit, and that we belong to him.

(3.) It assimilates us to God, or makes us more and more like him. What is here said by the apostle is based on the truth of what he elsewhere affirms, (1Jo 3:8), that God is love. Hatred, envy, wrath, malice, all have their source in something else than God. He neither originates them, commends them, nor approves them.

And every one that loveth, is born of God. Is a regenerated man. That is, every one who has true love to Christians as such, or true brotherly love, is a true Christian. This cannot mean that every one that loves his wife and children, his classmate, his partner in business, or his friend—his house, or his farms, or his horses, or his hounds, is a child of God; it must be understood as referring to the point under discussion. A man may have a great deal of natural affection towards his kindred; a great deal of benevolence in his character towards the poor and needy, and still he may have none of the love to which John refers. He may have no real love to God, to the Saviour, or to the children of God as such; and it would be absurd for such a one to argue because he loves his wife and children that therefore he loves God, or is born again.

{d} "love" 1Jo 3:11,23

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *He that loveth not, knoweth not God*. Has no true acquaintance with God; has no just views of him, and no right feelings towards him. The reason for this is implied in what is immediately stated, that "God is love," and of course if they have no love reigning in their hearts they cannot pretend to be like him.

For God is love. He is not merely benevolent, he is benevolence itself. Compare **See Barnes "2Co 13:11"**.

Never was a more important declaration made than this; never was more meaning crowded into a few words than in this short sentence—*God is love*. In the darkness of this world of sin—in all the sorrows that come now upon the race, and that will come upon the wicked hereafter—we have the assurance that a God of infinite benevolence rules over all; and though we may not be able to reconcile all that occurs with this declaration, or see how the things which he has permitted to take place are consistent with it, yet in the exercise of faith on his own declarations we may find consolation in *believing* that it is so, and may look forward to a period when all his universe shall see it to be so. In the midst of all that occurs on the earth of sadness, sin, and sorrow, there are abundant evidences that God is love. In the original structure of things before sin entered, when all was pronounced "good;" in the things designed to promote happiness, where the only thing contemplated is happiness, and where it would have been as easy to have caused pain; in the preservation of a guilty race, and in granting that race the opportunity of another trial; in the ceaseless provision which God is making in his providence for the wants of unnumbered millions of his creatures; in the arrangements made to alleviate sorrow, and to put an end to it; in the gift of a Saviour more than all, and in the offer of eternal life on terms simple and easy to be complied with—in all these things, which are the mere expressions of love, not *one* of which would have been found under the government of a malignant being, we see illustrations of the sublime and glorious sentiment before us, that "God is love." Even in this world of confusion, disorder, and

darkness, we have evidence sufficient to prove that he is benevolent, but the full glory and meaning of that truth will be seen only in heaven. Meantime let us hold on to the truth that he is love. Let us believe that he sincerely desires our good, and that what seems dark to us may be designed for our welfare; and amidst all the sorrows and disappointments of the present life, let us feel that our interests and our destiny are in the hands of the God of love.

{a} "love" 1Jo 4:16 2Co 13:11

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *In this was manifested the love of God*. That is, in an eminent manner, or this was a most signal proof of it. The apostle does not mean to say that it has been manifested in no other way, but that this was so prominent an instance of his love, that all the other manifestations of it seemed absorbed and lost in this.

Because that God sent his only begotten Son, etc. **See Barnes "Joh 3:16"**.

That we might live through him. He died that we might have eternal life through the merits of his sacrifice. The *measure* of that love, then, which was manifested in the gift of a Saviour, is to be found,

(1.) in the worth of the soul;

(2.) in its exposure to eternal death;

(3.) in the greatness of the gift;

(4.) in the greatness of his sorrows for us; and,

(5.) in the immortal blessedness and joy to which he will raise us. Who can estimate all this? All these things will magnify themselves as we draw near to eternity; and in that eternity to which we go, whether saved or lost, we shall have an ever-expanding view of the wonderful love of God.

{b} "In this" Joh 3:16 {c} "that we might" Joh 6:51

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Herein is love*. In this great gift is the highest expression of love, as if it had done all that it can do.

Not that we loved God. Not that we were in such a state that we might suppose he would make such a sacrifice for us, but just the opposite. If we had loved and obeyed him, we might have had reason to believe that he would be willing to show his love to us in a corresponding manner. But we were alienated from him. We had even no desire for his friendship and favour. In this state he showed the greatness of his love for us by giving his Son to die for his enemies. **See Barnes "**Ro 5:7, **See Barnes "Ro 5:8"**.

But that he loved us. Not that he approved our character, but that he desired our welfare. He loved us not with the love of complacency, but with the love of benevolence.

And sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. On the meaning of the word propitiation, see **See Barnes "Ro 3:25"**.

Comp. **See Barnes "1Jo 2:2".**
{d} "propitiation" 1Jo 2:2

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another*.

(1.) Because he is so much exalted above us, and if he has loved those who were so inferior and so unworthy, we ought to love those who are on a level with us;

(2.) because it is only in this way that we can show that we have his Spirit; and,

(3.) because it is the nature of love to seek the happiness of all. There are much stronger reasons why we should love one another than there were why God should love us; and unless we do this, we can have no evidence that we are his children.

{e} "if God" Mt 18:33 Joh 15:12,13

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *No man hath seen God at any time*. **See Barnes** "Joh 1:18, where the same declaration occurs. The statement seems to be made here in order to introduce a remark to show in what way we may know that we have any true knowledge of God. The idea is, "He has never indeed been seen by mortal eyes. We are not then, to expect to become acquainted with what he is in that way. But there is a method by which we may be assured that we have a true knowledge of him, and that is, by evidence that we love another, and by the presence of his Spirit in our hearts. We cannot become acquainted with him by sight, but we may by love." *If we love one another, God dwelleth in us*. Though we cannot see him, yet there is a way by which we may be assured that he is near us, and that he even dwells in us. That way is by the exercise of love. Comp. **See Barnes** "Joh 14:23, **See Barnes "Joh 14:24".**

And his love is perfected in us. Is carried out to completion. That is, our love for each other is the proper exponent of love to him reigning in our hearts. The idea here is not that we are absolutely perfect, or even that our love is perfect, whatever may be true on those points, but that this love to others is the proper carrying out of our love towards him; that is, without this our love to him would not have accomplished what it was adapted and designed to do. Unless it produced this effect, it would be defective or incomplete. Compare 1Jo 4:17. The general sense is this: "We claim to have the love of God in our hearts, or that we are influenced and controlled by love. But however high and exalted that may seem to be as exercised toward God, it would be defective; it would not exert a fair influence over us, unless it led us to love our Christian brethren. It would be like the love which we might profess to have for a father, if it did not lead us to love our brothers and sisters. True love will diffuse itself over all who come within its range, and will thus become complete and entire." This the it passage, therefore, cannot be adduced to demonstrate doctrine of sinless perfection, or to prove that Christians are ever absolutely perfect in this life. It proves only that love to God is

not complete, or fully developed, unless it leads those who profess to have to love each other. **See Barnes "Job 1:1".**

On the meaning of the Greek word here used, (*teleiow*,) **See Barnes "Php 3:12".**

See Barnes "Heb 2:10".

{f} "No man" 1Ti 6:16 {g} "perfected" 1Co 13:13

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Hereby know we that we dwell in him*. Here is another, or an additional evidence of it.

Because he hath given us of his Spirit. He has imparted the influences of that Spirit to our souls, producing "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith," etc., Ga 5:22,23. It was one of the promises which the Lord Jesus made to his disciples that he would send the Holy Spirit to be with them after he should be withdrawn from them, (Joh 14:16,17,26 Joh 15:26 16:7;) and one of the clearest evidences which we can have that we are the children of God, is derived from the influences of that Spirit on our hearts. See this sentiment illustrated in the **See Barnes "Ro 8:16".**

{h} "Hereby" Joh 14:20 1Jo 3:24

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *And we have seen*. **See Barnes "1Jo 1:1".**

And do testify. **See Barnes "1Jo 1:3".**

That is, we who are apostles bear witness to you of this great truth, that God has sent his Son to be a Saviour. Comp. **See Barnes "Joh 20:31".**

The reason why this is referred to here is not quite apparent, but the train of thought in this passage would seem to be this: The writer is discoursing of the love of God, and of its manifestation in the gift of the Saviour, and of the proper influence which it should have on us. Struck with the greatness and importance of the subject, his mind adverts to the *evidence* on which what he was saying rested—the evidence that the Father had *really* thus manifested his love. That evidence he repeats, that he had actually *seen* him who had been sent, and had the clearest demonstration that what he deemed so important had really occurred.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God*. In the true sense, and from the heart. This will always prove that a man is a Christian. But the passage cannot mean that if he merely says so in words, or if he does it insincerely, or without any proper sense of the truth, it will prove that he is a Christian. On the meaning of the sentiment here expressed, **See Barnes "1Jo 4:2".**

Comp. **See Barnes "Ro 10:10".**

{a} "Whosoever" Ro 10:9

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *And we have known and believed, etc*. We all have assurance that God has loved us, and the fullest belief in the great fact of redemption by which he has manifested his love to us. God is love. **See Barnes "1Jo 4:8"**.

It is not uncommon for John to repeat an important truth. He delights to dwell on such a truth as that which is here expressed; and who should not? What truth is there on which the mind can dwell with more pleasure; what is there that is better fitted to win the heart to holiness; what that will do more to sustain the soul in the sorrows and trials of this life? In our trials; in the darkness which is around us; in the perplexities which meet and embarrass us in regard to the Divine administration; in all that seems to us incomprehensible in this world, and in the prospect of the next, let us learn to repeat this declaration of the favoured disciple, "*God is love*." What trials may we not bear, if we feel assured of that! What dark cloud that seems to hang over our way, and to involve all things in gloom, will not be bright, if from the depths of our souls we can always say, "*God is love*!"

And he that dwelleth in love, etc. Religion is all love. God is love; he has loved us; we are to love him; we are to love one another; we are to love the whole world. Heaven is filled with love, and there is nothing else there. The earth is filled with love just as far as religion prevails, and would be entirely if it should prevail everywhere. Love would remove all the corrupt passions, the crimes, the jealousies, the wars on the earth, and would diffuse around the globe the bliss of heaven. If a man, therefore, is actuated by this, he has the spirit of the heavenly world reigning in his soul, and lives in an atmosphere of love.

{b} "God is love" 1Jo 4:8

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Herein is our love made perfect*. Marg., *love with us*. The margin accords with the Greek—*mey hmwn*. The meaning is, "the love that is within us, or in us, is made perfect." The expression is unusual; but the general idea is, that love is rendered complete or entire in the manner in which the apostle specifies. In this way love becomes what it should be, and will prepare us to appear with confidence before the judgment-seat. Comp. **See Barnes "1Jo 4:12"**.

That we may have boldness in the day of judgment. By the influence of love in delivering us from the fear of the wrath to come, 1Jo 4:18. The idea is, that he who has true love to God will have nothing to fear in the day of judgment, and may even approach the awful tribunal where he is to receive the sentence which shall determine his everlasting destiny without alarm.

Because as he is, so are we in this world. That is, we have the same traits of character which the Saviour had, and, resembling him, we need not be alarmed at the prospect of meeting him.

{1} "Herein is our love" "love with us"

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *There is no fear in love*. Love is not an affection which produces fear. In the love which ,we have for a parent, a child, a friend, there is no fear. If a man had perfect love to God, he would have no fear of anything—for what would he have to dread? He would have no fear of death, for he would have nothing to dread beyond the grave. It is guilt that makes men fear what is to come; but he whose sins are pardoned, and whose heart is filled with the love of God, has nothing to dread in this world or the world to come. The angels in heaven, who have always loved God and one another, have no fear, for they have nothing to dread in the future; the redeemed in heaven, rescued from all danger, and filled with the love of God, have nothing to dread; and as far as that same loves operates on earth, it delivers the soul now from all apprehension of what is to come.

But perfect love casteth out fear. That is, love that is complete, or that is allowed to exert its proper influence on the soul. As far as it exists, its tendency is to deliver the mind from alarms. If it should exist in any soul in an absolutely perfect state, that soul would be entirely free from all dread in regard to the future.

Because fear hath torment. It is a painful and distressing emotion. Thus men suffer from the fear of poverty, of losses, of bereavement, of sickness, of death, and of future woe. From all these distressing apprehensions, that love of God which furnishes an evidence of true piety delivers us.

He that feareth, is not made perfect in love. He about whose mind there lingers the apprehension of future wrath, shows that love in his soul has not accomplished its full work. Perhaps it never will on any soul until we reach the heavenly world, though there are many minds so full of love to God, as to be prevailingly delivered from fear.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *We love him, because he first loved us*. This passage is susceptible of two explanations; either

(1.) that the fact that he first loved us is the *ground* or *reason* why we love him, or

(2.) that as a matter of fact we have been brought to love him in consequence of the love which he has manifested towards us, though the real ground of our love may be the excellency of his own character. If the former be the meaning, and if that were the only ground of love, then it would be mere selfishness, (comp. Mt 5:46,47;) and it cannot be believed that John meant to teach that that is the *only* reason of our love to God. It is true, indeed, that that is a proper ground of love, or that we are bound to love God in proportion to the benefits which we have received from his hand; but still genuine love to God is something which cannot be explained by the mere fact that we have received favours from him. The true, the original ground of love to God, is the *excellence of his own character*, apart from the question whether we are to be benefited or not. There is that in the Divine nature which a holy being will love, apart from the benefits which he is to receive, and from any thought even of his own destiny. It seems to me, therefore, that John must have meant here, in accordance with the second interpretation suggested above, that *the fact* that we love God is to be traced to the means which he has used to bring us to himself, but without saying that this is the sole or even the main reason why we love him. It was his love manifested to us by sending his Son to

redeem us which will explain *the fact* that we now love him; but still the real ground or reason why we love him is the infinite excellence of his own character. It should be added here, that many suppose that the Greek words rendered "we love" (*hmeiv agapwmen*) are not in the indicative, but in the subjunctive; and that this is an exhortation—"let us love him, because he first loved us;" So the Syriac, the Arabic, and the Vulgate read it; and so it is understood by Benson, Grotius, and Bloomfield. The main idea would not be essentially different; and it is a proper ground of exhortation to love God because he has loved us, though the highest ground is, because his character is infinitely worthy of love.

{c} "he first loved us" Joh 15:16

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother*. His Christian brother; or, in a larger sense, any man. The sense is, that no man, whatever may be his professions and pretensions, can have any true love to God, unless he love his brethren.

He is a liar. Comp. **See Barnes "1Jo 1:6"**.

It is not necessary, in order to a proper interpretation of this passage, to suppose that he *intentionally* deceives. The sense is, that this must be a false profession. *For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen*, etc. It is more reasonable to expect that we should love one whom we have seen and known personally, than that we should love one whom we have not seen. The apostle is arguing from human nature as it is, and every one feels that we are more likely to love one with whom we are familiar than one who is a stranger. If a professed Christian, therefore, does not love one who bears the Divine image, whom he sees and knows, how can he love that God whose image he bears, whom he has not seen? Comp. **See Barnes "1Jo 3:17"**.

{d} "how can" 1Jo 3:17

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 4 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *And this commandment have we from him*. That is, the command to love a brother is as obligatory as that to love God. If one is obeyed, the other ought to be also; if a man feels that one is binding on him, he should feel that the other is also; and he can never have evidence that he is a true Christian, unless he manifests love to his brethren as well as love to God.

See Barnes "Jas 2:10".

That he who loveth God love his brother also. **See Barnes** "Joh 13:34, **See Barnes "Joh 13:35"**.

Comp. Joh 15:12,17.

{e} "That he who loveth" Joh 13:34

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 5

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 1

I John Chapter 5

ANALYSIS OF CHAPTER

THIS chapter embraces the following subjects:

I. A continuance of the discussion about love, 1Jo 5:1-3. These verses should have been attached to the previous chapter.

II. The victory which is achieved over the world by those who are born of God. The grand instrumentality by which this is done, is by the belief that Jesus is the Son of God, 1Jo 5:4,5.

III. The evidence that Jesus is the Son of God; or the means by which that truth is so believed as to secure a victory over the world, 1Jo 5:6-12. In this part of the chapter the apostle goes fully into the nature of this evidence, or the ways in which the Christian becomes so thoroughly convinced of it as to give to faith this power. He refers to these sources of evidence:

(a.) The witness of the Spirit, 1Jo 5:6.

(b.) The record borne in heaven, 1Jo 5:7—if that verse be genuine.

(c.) The evidence borne on earth, by the Spirit, the water, and the blood—all bearing witness to that one truth.

(d.) The credit which is due to the testimony of God, or which the soul pays to it, 1Jo 5:8.

(e.) The fact that he who believes on the Son of God has the witness in himself, 1Jo 5:10.

(f.) The amount of the record, that God has given to us eternal life through his Son, 1Jo 5:11,12.

IV. The reason why all this was written by the apostle, 1Jo 5:13. It was that they might know that they had eternal life, and might believe on the name of the Saviour.

V. The effect of this in leading us to the throne of grace, with the assurance that God will hear us, and will grant our requests, 1Jo 5:14,15.

VI. The power of prayer, and the duty of praying for those who have sinned. The encouragement to this is, that there are many sins which are not unto death, and that we may hope that God will be merciful to those who have not committed the unpardonable offence, 1Jo 5:16,17.

VII. A *summary* of all that the apostle had said to them, or of the points of which they were sure in the matter of salvation, 1Jo 5:18-20. They knew that those who are born of God do not sin; that the wicked one cannot permanently injure them; that they were of God, while all the world lay in wickedness; that the Son of God had come, and that they were truly united to that Saviour who is the true God, and who is eternal life.

VIII. An exhortation to keep themselves from all idolatry, 1Jo 5:21.

Verse 1. *Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ*. Is the Messiah; the anointed of God. On the meaning of the word *Christ*, **See Barnes "Mt 1:1"**.

Of course it is meant here that the proposition, that "Jesus is the Christ," should be believed or received in the true and proper sense, in order to furnish evidence that any one is born of God. Comp. **See Barnes "1Jo 4:3"**.

It cannot be supposed that a mere intellectual acknowledgment of the proposition that Jesus is the Messiah is all that is meant, for that is not the proper meaning of the word *believe* in the Scriptures. That word, in its just sense, implies that the truth which is believed should make its fair and legitimate impression on the mind, or that we should feel and act *as if* it were true. **See Barnes "Mr 16:16".**

If, in the proper sense of the phrase, a man does believe that Jesus *is the Christ*, receiving him as he is revealed as the Anointed of God, and a Saviour, it is undoubtedly true that that constitutes him a Christian, for that is what is required of a man in order that he may be saved. **See Barnes "Ac 8:37".**

Is born of God. Or rather, "is begotten of God." **See Barnes "Joh 3:3".**

And every one that loveth him that begat. That loves that God who has thus begotten those whom he has received as his children, and to whom he sustains the endearing relation of Father. *Loveth him also that is begotten of him*. That is, he will love all the true children of God; all Christians. **See Barnes "1Jo 4:20".**

The general idea is, that as all Christians are the children of the same Father; as they constitute one family; as they all bear the same image; as they share his favour alike; as they are under the same obligation of gratitude to him, and are bound to promote the same common cause, and are to dwell together in the same home for ever, they should therefore love one another. As all the children in a family love their common father, so it should be in the great family of which God is the Head.

{a} "Whosoever believeth" Joh 1:12,13

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *By this we know that we love the children of God*, etc. This is repeating the same truth in another form. "As it is universally true that if we love him who has begotten us, we shall also love his children, or our Christian brethren, so it is true also that if we love his children it will follow that we love him." In other places, the apostle says that we may know that we love God if we love those who bear his image, 1Jo 3:14. He here says, that there is another way of determining what we are. We may have undoubted evidence that we love *God*, and from that, as the basis of an argument, we may infer that we have true love to his children. Of the fact that we may have evidence that we love God, apart from that which we derive from our love to his children, there can be no doubt. We may be conscious of it; we may find pleasure in meditating on his perfections; we may feel sure that we are moved to obey him by true attachment to him, as a child may in reference to a father. But, it may be asked, how can it be inferred from this that we truly love his children? Is it not more easy to ascertain this of itself than it ia to determine whether we love God? Comp. 1Jo 4:20. To this it may be answered, that we may love Christians from many motives: we may love them as personal friends; we may love them because they belong to our church, or sect, or party; we may love them because they are naturally amiable: but the apostle says here, that when we are conscious that an attachment does exist towards Christians, we may ascertain that it is genuine, or that it does not proceed from any improper motive, by the fact that we love God. We shall then love him as his children, whatever *other* grounds of affection there may be towards them.

And keep his commandments. **See Barnes "Joh 14:16"**

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments*. This constitutes true love; this furnishes the evidence of it. And his commandments are not grievous. Greek, *heavy—bareiai*; that is, difficult to be borne as a burden. See Mt 11:30. The meaning is, that his laws are not unreasonable; the duties which he requires are not beyond our ability; his government is not oppressive. It is easy to obey God when the heart is right; and those who endeavour in sincerity to keep his commandments do not complain that they are hard. All complaints of this kind come from those who are not disposed to keep his commandments. *They*, indeed, object that his laws are unreasonable; that they impose improper restraints; that they are not easily complied with; and that the Divine government is one of severity and injustice. But no such complaints come from true Christians. They find his service easier than the service of sin, and the laws of God more mild and easy to be complied with than were those of fashion and honour, which they once endeavoured to obey. The service of God is freedom; the service of the world is bondage. No man ever yet heard a true Christian say that the laws of God, requiring him to lead a holy life, were stern and "grievous." But who has not felt this in regard to the inexorable laws of sin? What votary of the world would not say this if he spoke his real sentiments? Comp. Notes, Joh 8:32.

{b} "that we keep" Joh 14:15,21 {c} "not grievous" Ps 119:45 Mt 11:30

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world*. The world, in its maxims, and precepts, and customs, does not rule him, but he is a freeman. The idea is, that there is a conflict between religion and the world, and that in the heart of every true Christian religion secures the victory, or triumphs. In Joh 16:33, the Saviour says, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." **See Barnes "Joh 6:33".**

He obtained a complete triumph over him "who rules the darkness of the world," and laid the foundation for a victory by his people over all vice, error, and sin. John makes this affirmation of all who are born of God. "*Whatsoever*," or, as the Greek is, "Everything which is begotten of God," (*pan to gegenhmenon*;) meaning to affirm, undoubtedly, that in *every instance* where one is truly regenerated, there is this victory over the world. **See Barnes "Jas 4:4"**; **See Barnes "**1Jo 2:15, **See Barnes "1Jo 2:16".**

It is one of the settled maxims of religion, that every man who is a true Christian gains a victory over the world; and consequently a maxim as settled, that where the spirit of the world reigns supremely in the heart there is no true religion. But, if this be a true principle, how many professed Christians are there who are strangers to all claims of piety—for how many are there who are wholly governed by the spirit of this world!

And this is the victory. This is the source or means of the victory which is thus achieved. Even *our faith*. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, 1Jo 5:5. He overcame the world, Joh 16:33, and it is by that faith which makes us one with him, and that imbues us with his Spirit, that we are able to do it also.

{*} "whatsoever" "whosoever" {d} "overcometh" 1Co 15:57

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Who is he*, etc. Where is there one who can pretend to have obtained a victory over the world, except he who believes in the Saviour? All else are worldly, and are governed by worldly aims and principles. It is true that a man may gain a victory over one worldly passion; he may subdue some one evil propensity; he may abandon the gay circle, may break away from habits of profaneness, may leave the company of the unprincipled and polluted; but still, unless he has faith in the Son of God, the spirit of the world will reign supreme in his soul in some form. The appeal which John so confidently made in his time may be as confidently made now. *We* may ask, as *he* did, where is there one who shows that he has obtained a complete victory over the world, except the true Christian? Where is there one whose end and aim is not the present life? Where is there one who shows that all his purposes in regard to this world are made subordinate to the world to come? There are those now, as there were then, who break away from one form of sin, and from one circle of sinful companions; there are those who change the ardent passions of youth for the soberness of middle or advanced life; there are those who see the folly of profaneness, and of gaiety, and intemperance; there are those who are disappointed in some scheme of ambition, and who withdraw from political conflicts; there are those who are satiated with pageantry, and who, oppressed with the cares of state, as Diocletian and Charles V. were, retire from public life; and there are those whose hearts are crushed and broken by losses, and by the death, or what is worse than death, by the ingratitude of their children, and who cease to cherish the fond hope that their family will be honoured, and their name perpetuated in those whom they tenderly loved—but still there is no victory over the world. Their deep dejection, their sadness, their brokenness of spirit, their lamentations, and their want of cheerfulness, all show that the spirit of the world still reigns in their hearts. If the calamities which have come upon them could be withdrawn; if the days of prosperity could be restored, they would show as much of the spirit of the world as ever they did, and would pursue its follies and its vanities as greedily as they had done before. Not many years or months elapse before the worldly mother who has followed one daughter to the grave, will introduce another into the gay world with all the brilliancy which fashion prescribes; not long will a worldly father mourn over the death of a son before, in the whirl of business and the exciting scenes of ambition, he will show that his heart is as much wedded to the world as it ever was. If such sorrows and disappointments conduct to the Saviour, as they sometimes do; if they lead the troubled mind to seek peace in his blood, and support in the hope of heaven, then a real victory is obtained over the world; and then, when the hand of affliction is withdrawn, it is seen that there has been a work of grace in the soul that has effectually changed all its feelings, and secured a triumph that shall be eternal.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *This is he*. This Son of God referred to in the previous verse. The object of the apostle in this verse, in connexion with 1Jo 5:8, is to state the nature of the evidence that Jesus is the Son of God. He refers to three well-known things on which he probably had insisted much in his preaching—the water, and the blood, and the Spirit. These, he says, furnished evidence on the very

point which he was illustrating, by showing that that Jesus on whom they believed was the Son of God. "This," says he, "is the same one, the very person, to whom the well-known, and important testimony is borne; to him, and him alone, this undisputed things appertain, and not to any other who should claim to be the Messiah; and they all agree on the same one point," 1Jo 5:8.

That came. *o elywn*. This does not mean that when he came into the world he was accompanied in some way by water and blood; but the idea is, that the water and the blood were clearly manifest during his appearing on earth, or that they were remarkable testimonials in some way to his character and work. An ambassador might be said to *come* with credentials; a warrior might be said to *come* with the spoils of victory; a prince might be said to *come* with the insignia of royalty; a prophet *comes* with signs and wonders; and the Lord Jesus might also be said to have come with power to raise the dead, and to heal disease, and to cast out devils; but John here fixes the attention on a fact so impressive and remarkable in his view as to be worthy of special remark, that he came by water and blood.

By water. There have been many opinions in regard to the meaning of this phrase. See Pool's Synopsis. Compare also Lucke, *in loc*. A mere reference to some of these opinions may aid in ascertaining the true interpretation.

(1.) Clement of Alexandria supposes that by water regeneration and faith were denoted, and by *blood* the public acknowledgment of that.

(2.) Some, and among them Wetstein, have held that the words are used to denote the fact that the Lord Jesus was truly a man, in contradistinction from the doctrine of the *Docetae*; and that the apostle means to say that he had all the properties of a human being—a spirit or soul, blood, and the watery humours of the body.

(3.) Grotius supposes that by his coming "by water," there is reference to his pure life, as water is the emblem of purity; and he refers to Eze 36:25 Isa 1:16; Jer 4:14.

As a sign of that purity, he says that John baptized him, Joh 1:28. A sufficient objection to this view is, that as in the corresponding word *blood* there is undoubted reference to blood literally, it cannot be supposed that the word *water* in the same connexion would be used figuratively. Moreover, as Lucke (p. 287) has remarked, water, though a *symbol* of purity, is never used to *denote purity* itself, and therefore cannot here refer to the pure life of Jesus.

(4.) Many expositors suppose that the reference is to the baptism of Jesus, and that by his "coming by water and blood," as by the latter there is undoubted reference to his death, so by the former there is reference to his baptism, or to his entrance on his public work. Of this opinion were Tertullian, Ecumenius, Theophylact, among the fathers, and Capellus, lieumann, Stroth, Lange, Ziegler, A. Clarke, Bengel, Rosenmuller, Macknight, and others, among the moderns. A leading argument for this opinion, as alleged, has been that it was then that the Spirit bare witness to him, (Mt 3:16,) and that this is what John here refers to when he says, "It is the Spirit that beareth witness," etc. To this view, Lucke urges substantially the following objections:

(a.) That if it refers to baptism, the phrase would much more appropriately express the fact that Jesus came baptizing others, if that were so, than that he was baptized himself. The phrase would be strictly applicable to John the Baptist, who came baptizing, and whose ministry was distinguished for that, (Mt 3:1;) and if Jesus had baptized in the same manner, or if this had been a prominent characteristic of his ministry, it would be applicable to him. Comp. Joh 4:2. But if it means that he was *baptized*, and that he came in that way "by water," it was equally true of all the apostles who

were baptized, and of all others, and there was nothing so remarkable in the fact that he was baptized as to justify the prominence given to the phrase in this place.

(b.) If reference be had here, as is supposed in this view of the passage, to the "witness" that was borne to the Lord Jesus on the occasion of his baptism, then the reference should have been not to the "water" as the witness, but to the "voice that came from heaven," (Mt 3:17,) for it was that which was the witness in the case. Though this occurred at the time of the baptism, yet it was quite an independent thing, and was important enough to have been referred to. See Lucke, *Com. in loc*. These objections, however, are not insuperable. Though Jesus did not come baptizing others himself, (Joh 4:2,) and though the phrase would have expressed that if he had, yet, as Christian baptism began with him; as this was the first act in his entrance on public life; as it was by this that he was set apart to his work; and as he designed that this should be always the initiatory rite of his religion, there was no impropriety in saying that his "coming," or his advent in this world, was at the beginning characterized by water, and at the close by blood. Moreover, though the "witness" at his baptism was really borne by a voice from heaven, yet his baptism was the prominent thing; and if we take the baptism to denote all that in fact occurred when he was baptized, all the objections made by Lucke here vanish.

(5.) Some, by the "water" here, have understood the ordinance of baptism as it is appointed by the Saviour to be administered to his people, meaning that the ordinance was instituted by him. So Beza, Calvin, Piscator, Calovius, Wolf, Beausobre, Knapp, Lucke, and others understand it. According to this the meaning would be, that he appointed baptism by water as a symbol of the cleansing of the heart, and shed his blood to effect the ransom of man, and that thus it might be said that he "came by water and blood;" to wit, by these two things as effecting the salvation of men. But it seems improbable that the apostle should have grouped these things together in this way. For

(a.) the "blood" is that which he shed; which pertained to him personally; which he poured out for the redemption of man; and it is clear that, whatever is meant by the phrase "*he came*," his coming by "water" is to be understood in some sense similar to his coming by "blood;" and it seems incredible that the apostle should have joined a mere *ordinance* of religion in this way with the shedding of his blood, and placed them in this manner on an equality.

(b.) It cannot be supposed that John meant to attach so much importance to baptism as would be implied by this. The shedding of his blood was essential to the redemption of men; can it be supposed that the apostle meant to teach that baptism by water is equally necessary?

(c.) If this be understood of baptism, there is no natural connexion between that and the "blood" referred to; nothing by which the one would suggest the other; no reason why they should be united. If he had said that he "came" by the appointment of two ordinances for the edification of the church, "baptism and *the supper*," however singular such a statement might be in some respects, yet there would be a connexion, a reason why they should be suggested together. But why should baptism and the blood shed by the Saviour on the cross be grouped together as designating the principal things which characterized his coming into the world?

(6.) There remains, then, but one other interpretation; to wit, that he refers to the "water and the blood" which flowed from the side of the Saviour when he was pierced by the spear of the Roman soldier. John had himself laid great stress on this occurrence, and on the fact that he had himself witnessed it, **See Barnes** "Joh 19:34, (**See Barnes "Joh 19:35"**;) and as, in these epistles, he is accustomed to allude to more full statements made in his gospel, it would seem most natural to

refer the phrase to that event as furnishing a clear and undoubted proof of the death of the Saviour. This would be the obvious interpretation, and would be entirely clear, if John did not immediately speak of the "water" and the "blood" as *separate* witnesses, each as bearing witness to an important point, as separate as the "Spirit" and the "water," or the "Spirit" and the "blood ;" whereas, if he refers to the mingled water and blood flowing from his side, they both witness only the same fact, to wit, his death. There was no special significance in the water, no distinct testifying to anything different from the flowing of the blood; but together they bore witness to the one fact that he actually died. But here he seems to suppose that there is some special significance in each. "Not by water *only*, but by water *and* blood." "There are *three* that bear witness, the Spirit, *and* the water, *and* the blood, and these three agree in one." These considerations seem to me to make it probable, on the whole, that the fourth opinion, above referred to, and that which has been commonly held in the Christian church, is correct, and that by the "water" the *baptism* of the Saviour is intended; his baptism as an emblem of his own purity; as significant of the nature of his religion; as a rite which was to be observed in his church at all times. That furnished an important attestation to the fact that he was the Messiah, (comp. **See Barnes** "Mt 3:15,) for it was by that that he entered on his public work, and it was then that a remarkable testimony was borne to his being the Son of God. He himself "*came*" thus by water as an emblem of purity; and the water used in his church in all ages in baptism, together with the "blood" and the "Spirit," bears public testimony to the pure nature of his religion. It is *possible* that the mention of the "water" in his baptism suggested to John also the water which flowed from the side of the Saviour at his death, intermingled with blood; and that though the primary thought, in his mind was the fact that Jesus was baptized, and that an important attestation was then given to his Messiahship, yet he *may* have instantly adverted to the fact that *water* performed so important a part, and was so important a symbol through all his work; water at his introduction to his work as an ordinance in his church, as symbolical of the nature of his religion, and even at his death, as a public attestation, in connexion with flowing blood, to the fact that he truly died, in reality, and not, as the *Docetae* pretended, in appearance only, thus completing the work of the Messiah, and making an atonement for the sins of the world. Comp. **See Barnes** "Joh 19:34, **See Barnes "Joh 19:35"**.

And blood, referring, doubtless, to the shedding of his blood on the cross. He "*came*" by that; that is, he was manifested by that to men, or that was one of the forms in which he appeared to men, or by which his coming into the world was characterized. The apostle means to say that the blood shed at his death furnished an important evidence or "witness" of what he was. In what way this was done, **See Barnes "1Jo 5:8"**.

Not by water only, but by water and blood. John the Baptist came "by water only;" that is, he came to baptize the people, and to prepare them for the coming of the Messiah. Jesus was distinguished from him in the fact that his ministry was characterized by the shedding of blood, or the shedding of his blood constituted one of the peculiarities of his work. *And it is this Spirit*. Evidently the Holy Spirit. *That beareth witness*. That is, he is the *great* witness in the matter, confirming all others. He bears witness to the soul that Jesus came "by water and blood," for that would not be received by us without his agency. In what way he does this, **See Barnes "1Jo 5:8"**.

Because the Spirit is truth. Is so eminently *true* that he may be called *truth itself*, as God is so eminently benevolent that he may be called *love itself*. **See Barnes "1Jo 4:8"**.

{a} "came by" Joh 19:34

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *For there are three that bear record in heaven*, etc. There are three that *witness*, or that *bear witness*—the same Greek word which, in 1Jo 5:8, is rendered *bear witness —marturountev*. There is no passage of the New Testament which has given rise to so much discussion in regard to its genuineness as this. The supposed importance of the verse in its bearing on the doctrine of the Trinity has contributed to this, and has given to the discussion a degree of consequence which has pertained to the examination of the genuineness of no other passage of the New: Testament. On the one hand, the clear testimony which it seems to bear to the doctrine of the Trinity, has made that portion of the Christian church which holds the doctrine reluctant in the highest degree to abandon it; and on the other hand, the same clearness of the testimony to that doctrine, has made those who deny it not less reluctant to admit the genuineness of the passage. It is not consistent with the design of these Notes to go into a full investigation of a question of this sort. And all that can be done is to state, in a brief way, the *results* which have been reached, in an examination of the question. Those who are disposed to pursue the investigation further, can find all that is to be said in the works referred to at the bottom of the page.* The portion of the passage, in 1Jo 5:7,8, whose genuineness is disputed, is included in brackets in the following quotation, as it stands in the common editions of the New Testament: "For there are three that bear record [in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth,] the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one." If the disputed passage, therefore, be omitted as spurious, the whole passage will read, "For there are three that bear record, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one." The reasons which seem to me to prove that the passage included in brackets is spurious, and should not be regarded as a part of the inspired writings, are briefly the following:

I. It is wanting in all the earlier Greek manuscripts, for it is found in no Greek Ms. written before the sixteenth century. Indeed, it is found in only two Greek manuscripts of any age—one the Codex Montfortianus, or Britannicus, written in the beginning of the sixteenth century, and the other the Codex Ravianus, which is a mere transcript of the text, taken partly from the third edition of Stephen's New Testament, and partly from the Complutensian Polyglott. But it is incredible that a genuine passage of the New Testament should be wanting in *all* the early Greek manuscripts.

II. It is wanting in the earliest versions, and, indeed, in a large part of the versions of the New Testament which have been made in all former times. It is wanting in both the Syriac versions—one of which was made probably in the first century; in the Coptic, Armenian, Sclavonic, Ehiopic, and Arabic.

III. It is never quoted by the Greek fathers in their controversies on the doctrine of the Trinity—a passage which would be so much in point, and which could not have failed to be quoted if it were genuine; and it is not referred to by the Latin fathers until the time of Vigilius, at the end of the fifth century. If the passage were believed to be genuine—nay, if it were known at all to be in existence, and to have any probability in its favour—it is incredible that in all the controversies which occurred in regard to the Divine nature, and in all the efforts to define the doctrine of the Trinity, this passage should never have been referred to. But it never was; for it must be plain to any one who examines the subject with an unbiased mind, that the passages which are relied on to prove that it was quoted by Athanasius, Cyprian, Augustin, etc., (Wetstein, II., p. 725,) are not

taken from this place, and are not such as they would have made if they had been acquainted with this passage, and had designed to quote it.

IV. The argument against the passage from the external proof is confirmed by internal evidence, which makes it morally certain that it cannot be genuine.

(a.) The connexion does not demand it. It does not contribute to advance what the apostle is saying, but breaks the thread of his argument entirely. He is speaking of certain things which bear "witness" to the fact that Jesus is the Messiah; certain things were well known to those to whom he was writing—the Spirit, and the water, and the blood. How does it contribute to strengthen the force of this to say that *in heaven* there are "three that bear witness"—three not before referred to, and having no connexion with the matter under consideration?

(b.) The language is not such as John would use. He does, indeed, elsewhere use the term *Logos*, or *Word*, *o logov* Joh 1:1,14 1Jo 1:1, but it is never in this form, "The Father, and the Word;" that is, the terms "*Father*" and "*Word*" are never used by him, or by any of the other sacred writers, as correlative. The word *Son—o uiov*—is the term which is correlative to the *Father* in every other place as used by John, as well as by the other sacred writers. See 1Jo 1:3 2:22-24, 4:14 1Jo 3:9; and the Gospel of John, *passim*. Besides, the correlative of the term Logos, or Word, with John, is not Father, but God. See Joh 1:1. Comp. Re 19:13.

(c) Without this passage, the sense of the argument is clear and appropriate. There are three, says John, which bear witness that Jesus is the Messiah. These are referred to in 1Jo 5:6; and in immediate connexion with this, in the argument, (1Jo 5:8,) it is affirmed that their testimony goes to one point, and is harmonious. To say that there are *other* witnesses elsewhere, to say that they are one, contributes nothing to illustrate the nature of the testimony of these three—the water, and the blood, and the Spirit; and the internal sense of the passage, therefore, furnishes as little evidence of its genuineness as the external proof. It is easy to imagine how the passage found a place in the New Testament. It was at first written, perhaps, in the margin of some Latin manuscript, as expressing the belief of the writer of what was true in heaven, as well as on earth, and with no more intention to deceive than we have when we make a marginal note in a book. Some transcriber copied it into the body of the text, perhaps with a sincere belief that it was a genuine passage, omitted by accident; and then it became too important a passage in the argument for the Trinity, ever to be displaced but by the most clear critical evidence. It was rendered into Greek, and inserted in one Greek manuscript of the 16th century, while it was wanting in all the earlier manuscripts.

VI. The passage is now omitted in the best editions of the Greek Testament, and regarded as spurious by the ablest critics. See Griesbach and Hahn. On the whole, therefore, the evidence seems to me to be clear that this passage is not a genuine portion of the inspired writings, and should not be appealed to in proof of the doctrine of the Trinity. One or two remarks may be made, in addition, in regard to its use.

(1.) Even on the supposition that it *is* genuine, as Bengel believed it was, and as he believed that some Greek manuscript would yet be found which would contain it **; yet it is not wise to adduce it as a proof-text. It would be much easier to prove the doctrine of the Trinity from other texts, than to demonstrate the genuineness of this.

(2.) It is not *necessary* as a proof-text. The doctrine which it contains can be abundantly established from other parts of the New Testament, by passages about which there can be no doubt.

(3.) The removal of this text does nothing to weaken the evidence for the doctrine of the Trinity, or to modify that doctrine. As it was never used to shape the early belief of the Christian world on

the subject, so its rejection, and its removal from the New Testament, will do nothing to modify that doctrine. The doctrine was embraced, and held, and successfully defended without it, and it can and will be so still.

* Mill. New Test., pp. 379-386; Wetstein, II. 721—727; Father Simon, Crit. Hist. New Test.; Michaelis, Intro. New Test. iv. 412, seq.; Semler, Histor. und Krit. Sammlungen uber die sogenannten Beweistellen der Dogmatik. Erstes Stuck uber, 1 John v. 7; Griesbach, Diatribe in locum, I John v. 7, 8, second edit., New Test., vol. II., appendix 1; and Lucke's Commentary *in loc*.

** Et tamen etiam atque etiam sperare licet si non autographurn Joanneurn, at alios vetustissimos codices Graecos, qui hanc periocham habeant in occultis providentiae divine forulis adhuc latentes auo tempore productum iri.

{b} "the Father" Joh 8:18 {c} "the Word" Heb 4:12,13; Re 19:13

{d} "Holy Ghost" Joh 10:30

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *And there are three that bear witness in earth*. This is a part of the text, which, if the reasoning above is correct, is to be omitted. The genuine passage reads, (1Jo 5:7,) "For there are three that bear record, [or witness—*marturountev*,] the Spirit, and the water, and the blood." There is no reference to the fact that it is done "*in earth*." The phrase was introduced to correspond with what was said in the interpolated passage, that there are three that bear record "in heaven."

The Spirit. Evidently the Holy Spirit. The assertion here is, that that Spirit bears witness to the fact that Jesus is the Son of God, 1Jo 5:5. The testimony of the Holy Ghost to this fact is contained in the following things:

(1.) He did it at the baptism of Jesus. **See Barnes** "Mt 3:16, **See Barnes "Mt 3:17"**.

(2.) Christ was eminently *endowed* with the influences of the Holy Spirit; as it was predicted that the Messiah would be, and as it was appropriate he should be, Isa 11:2 61:1. Compare Lu 4:18; **See Barnes "Joh 3:34"**.

(3.) The Holy Spirit bore witness to his Messiahship, after his ascension, by descending, according to his promise, on his apostles, and by accompanying the message which they delivered with saving power to thousands in Jerusalem, Ac 2.

(4.) He still bears the same testimony on every revival of religion, and in the conversion of every individual who becomes a Christian, convincing them that Jesus is the Son of God. Comp. Joh 16:14,15.

(5.) He does it in the hearts of all true Christians, for "no man can say that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Ghost," 1Co 12:3. **See Barnes "1Co 2:3"**.

The Spirit of God has thus always borne witness to the fact that Jesus is the Christ, and he will continue to do it to the end of time, convincing yet countless millions that he was sent from God to redeem and save lost men.

And the water. **See Barnes "1Jo 5:6"**.

That is, the baptism of Jesus, and the scenes which occurred when he was baptized, furnished evidence that he was the Messiah. This was done in these ways:

(1.) It was proper that the Messiah should be baptized when he entered on his work, and perhaps it was expected; and the fact that he was baptized showed that he had *in fact* entered on his work as Redeemer. **See Barnes "Mt 3:15".**

(2.) An undoubted attestation was then furnished to the fact that he was "the Son of God," by the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, and by the voice that addressed him from heaven, Mt 3:16,17.

(3.) His baptism with water was an emblem of the purity of his own character, and of the nature of his religion.

(4.) Perhaps it may be implied here, also, that water used in baptism now bears witness to the same thing,

(a.) as it is the ordinance appointed by the Saviour;

(b.) as it keeps up his religion in the world;

(c.) as it is a public symbol of the purity of his religion;

(d.) and as, in every case where it is administered, it is connected with the public expression of a belief that Jesus is the Son of God.

And the blood. There is undoubted allusion here to the blood shed on the cross; and the meaning is, that that blood bore witness also to the fact that he was the Son of God. This it did in the following respects:

(1.) The shedding of the blood showed that he was truly dead—that his work was complete—that he died in reality, and not in appearance only. **See Barnes "**Joh 19:34, **See Barnes "Joh 19:36".**

(2.) The remarkable circumstances that attended the shedding of this blood—the darkened sun, the earthquake, the rending of the veil of the temple —showed in a manner that convinced even the Roman centurion that he was the Son of God. **See Barnes "Mt 27:54".**

(3.) The fact that an *atonement* was thus made for sin was an important "witness" for the Saviour, showing that he had done that which the Son of God only could do, by disclosing a way by which the sinner may be pardoned, and the polluted soul be made pure.

(4.) Perhaps, also, there *may* be here an allusion to the Lord's Supper, as designed to set forth the shedding of this blood; and the apostle may mean to have it implied that the representation of the shedding of the blood in this ordinance is intended to keep up the conviction that Jesus is the Son of God. If so, then the general sense is, that that blood—however set before the eyes and the hearts of men—on the cross, or by the representation of its shedding in the Lord's Supper—is a witness in the world to the truth that Jesus is the Son of God, and to the nature of his religion. **See Barnes "1Co 11:26".**

And these three agree in one; *eiv to en eisi*. They agree in one thing; they bear on one and the same point, to wit, the fact that Jesus is the Son of God. All are appointed by God as witnesses of this fact; and all harmonize in the testimony which is borne. The apostle does not say that there are no other witnesses to the same thing; nor does he even say that these are the most important or decisive which have been furnished; but he says that these are important witnesses, and are entirely harmonious in their testimony.

{a} "the Spirit" Joh 15:26 Ac 2:2-4; 2Co 1:22

{b} "water" 1Pe 3:21 {c} "Blood" Heb 13:12

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *If we receive the witness of men*. As we are accustomed to do, and as we must do in courts of justice, and in the ordinary daily transactions of life. We are constantly acting on the belief that what others say is true; that what the members of our families, and our neighbours say is true; that what is reported by travellers is true; that what we read in books, and what is sworn to in courts of justice, is true. We could not get along a single day if we did not act on this belief; nor are we accustomed to call it in question, unless we have reason to suspect that it is false. The mind is so made that it must credit the testimony borne by others; and if this should cease even for a single day, the affairs of the world would come to a pause.

The witness of God is greater. Is more worthy of belief; as God is more true, and wise, and good than men. Men may be deceived, and may undesignedly bear witness to that when is not true—God never can be; men may, for sinister and base purposes, intend to deceive—God never can; men may act from partial observation, from rumours unworthy of credence—God never can; men may desire to excite admiration by the marvellous—God never can; men have deceived—God never has; and though, from these causes, there are many instances where we are not certain that the testimony borne by men is true, yet we are always certain that that which is borne by God is not false. The only question on which the mind ever hesitates is, whether we actually *have* his testimony, or certainly *know* what he bears witness to; when that is ascertained, the human mind is so made that it cannot believe that God would deliberately deceive a world. **See Barnes "Heb 6:18"**.

Comp. Tit 1:2.

For this is the witness of God, etc. The testimony above referred to—that borne by the Spirit, and the water, and the blood. Who that saw his baptism, and heard the voice from heaven, (Mt 3:16,17,) could doubt that he was the Son of God? Who that saw his death on the cross, and that witnessed the amazing scenes which occurred there, could fail to join with the Roman centurion in saying that this was the Son of God? Who that has felt the influences of the Eternal Spirit on his heart, ever doubted that Jesus was the Son of God? Comp. **See Barnes "1Co 12:3"**.

Any one of these is sufficient to convince the soul of this; all combined bear on the same point, and confirm it from age to age.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself*. The evidence that Jesus is the Son of God. **See Barnes "Ro 8:16"**.

This cannot refer to any distinct and immediate revelation of that fact, that Jesus is the Christ, to the soul of the individual, and is not to be understood as independent of the external evidence of that truth, or as superseding the necessity of that evidence; but the "witness" here referred to is the fruit of all the evidence, external and internal, on the heart, producing this result; that is, there is the deepest conviction of the truth that Jesus is the Son of God. There is the evidence derived from the fact that the soul has found peace by believing on him; from the fact that the troubles and anxieties of the mind on account of sin have been removed by faith in Christ; from the new views of God and heaven which have resulted from faith in the Lord Jesus; from the effect of this in

disarming death of its terrors; and from the whole influence of the gospel on the intellect and the affections—on the heart and the life, These things constitute a mass of evidence for the truth of the Christian religion, whose force the believer cannot resist, and make the sincere Christian ready to sacrifice anything rather than his religion; ready to go to the stake rather than to renounce his Saviour. **See Barnes "1Pe 3:15".**

He that believeth not God hath made him a liar. **See Barnes "1Jo 1:10".**

Because he believeth not the record, etc. The idea is, that in various ways—at his baptism, at his death, by the influences of the Holy Spirit, by the miracles of Jesus, etc.— God had become a *witness* that the Lord Jesus was sent by him as a Saviour, and that to doubt or deny this partook of the same character as doubting or denying any other testimony; that is, it was practically charging him who bore the testimony with falsehood.

{a} "witness in himself" Ro 8:16

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *And this is the record*. This is the *sum*, or the *amount* of the testimony (*marturia*) which God has given respecting him.

That God hath given to us eternal life. Has provided, through the Saviour, the means of obtaining eternal life. **See Barnes "Joh 5:24"**; **See Barnes** "Joh 17:2, **See Barnes "Joh 17:3".**

And this life is in his Son. Is treasured up in him, or is to be obtained through him. **See Barnes "Joh 1:4"**; **See Barnes "Joh 1:25"**; **See Barnes** "Joh 14:6"; **See Barnes "Col 3:3".**

{*} "record" "witness" {b} "this life" Joh 1:4

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *He that hath the Son, hath life*. **See Barnes "Joh 5:24".**

John evidently designs to refer to that passage in the verse before us, and to state a principle laid down by the Saviour himself. This is the sense of all the important testimony that had ever been borne by God on the subject of salvation, that he who believes in the Lord Jesus already has the elements of eternal life in his soul, and will certainly obtain salvation. Comp. **See Barnes "Joh 17:3".**

And he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life. He that does not believe on him will not attain to eternal life. **See Barnes "Joh 3:36"**; **See Barnes "Mr 16:16".**

{c} "He that" Joh 5:24

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *These things have I written unto you*. The things in this epistle respecting the testimony borne to the Lord Jesus.

That believe on the name of the Son of God. To believe on his *name*, is to believe on himself—the word *name* often being used to denote the person. **See Barnes "Mt 28:19"**.

That ye may know that ye have eternal life. That you may see the evidence that eternal life has been provided, and that you may be able, by self-examination, to determine whether you possess it. **See Barnes "Joh 20:31"**.

And that ye may believe, etc. That you may *continue* to believe, or may *persevere* in believing. He was assured that they actually did believe on him then; but he was desirous of so setting before them the nature of religion, that they would continue to exercise faith in him. It is often one of the most important duties of ministers of the gospel, to present to real Christians such views of the nature, the claims, the evidences, and the hopes of religion, as shall be adapted to secure their perseverance in the faith. In the human heart, even when converted, there is such a proneness to unbelief; the religious affections so easily become cold; there are so many cares pertaining to the world that are fitted to distract the mind; there are so many allurements of sin to draw the affections away from the Saviour; that there is need of being constantly reminded of the nature of religion, in order that the heart may not be wholly estranged from the Saviour. No small part of preaching, therefore, must consist of the re-statement of arguments with which the mind has been before fully convinced; of motives whose force has been once felt and acknowledged; and of the grounds of hope and peace and joy which have already, on former occasions, diffused comfort through the soul. It is not less important to *keep* the soul, than it is to *convert* it; to save it from coldness, and deadness, and formality, than it was to impart to it the elements of spiritual life at first. It may be as important to trim a vine, if one would have grapes, as it is to set it out; to keep a garden from being overrun with weeds in the summer, as it was to plant it in the spring.

{d} "ye may know" Joh 20:31

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *And this is the confidence that we have in him*. Marg., *concerning*. Greek, "towards him," or in respect to him—*prov auton*. The confidence referred to here is that which relates to the answer to prayer. The apostle does not say that this is the only thing in respect to which there is to be confidence in him, but that it is one which is worthy of special consideration. The sense is, that one of the effects of believing on the Lord Jesus (1Jo 5:13) is, that we have the assurance that our prayers will be answered. On the word *confidence*, **See Barnes "1Jo 3:21"**; **See Barnes "1Jo 4:17"**.

That, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us. This is the proper and the necessary limitation in all prayer. God has not promised to grant anything that shall be contrary to his will, and it could not be right that he should do it. We ought not to wish to receive anything that should be contrary to what he judges to be best. No man could hope for good who should esteem his own wishes to be a better guide than the will of God; and it is one of the most desirable of all arrangements that the promise of any blessing to be obtained by prayer should be limited and bounded by the will of God. The limitation here, "according to his will," probably implies the following things:

(1.) In accordance with what he has *declared* that he is willing to grant. Here the range is large, for there are many things which we know to be in accordance with his will, if they are sought in a proper manner as the forgiveness of sins, the sanctification of the soul, (1Th 4:3,) comfort in trial,

the needful supply of our wants, grace that we may do our duty, wisdom to direct and guide us, (Jas 1:5,) deliverance from the evils which beset us, the influences of his Spirit to promote the cause of religion in the world, and our final salvation. Here is a range of subjects of petition that may gratify the largest wishes of prayer.

(2.) The expression, "according to his will," must limit the answer to prayer to what *he* sees to be best for us. Of that we are not always good judges. We never perceive it as clearly as our Maker does, and in many things we might be wholly mistaken. Certainly we ought not to desire to be permitted to ask anything which *God* would judge not to be for our good.

(3.) The expression must limit the petition to what it will be *consistent* for God to bestow upon us. We cannot expect that he will work a miracle in answer to our prayers; we cannot ask him to bestow blessings in violation of any of the laws which he has ordained, or in any other way than that which he has appointed. It is better that the particular blessing should be withheld from us, than that the laws which he has appointed should be disregarded. It is better that an idle man should not have a harvest, though he should pray for it, than that God should violate the laws by which he has determined to bestow such favours as a reward of industry, and work a special miracle in answer to a lazy man's prayers.

(4.) The expression, "according to his will," must limit the promise to what will be *for the good of the whole*. God presides over the universe; and though in him there is an infinite fulness, and he regards the wants of every individual throughout his immense empire, yet the interests of the whole, as well as of the individual, are to be consulted and regarded. In a family, it is conceivable that a child might ask for some favour whose bestowment would interfere materially with the rights of others, or be inconsistent with the good of the whole, and in such a case a just father would of course withhold it. With these necessary limitation the range of the promise in prayer is ample; and, with these limitations, it is true beyond a question that he does hear and answer prayer.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *And if we know that he hear us*. That is, if we are assured of this as a true doctrine, then, even though we may not see immediately that the prayer is answered, we may have the utmost confidence that it is not disregarded, and that it will be answered in the way best adapted to promote our good. The specific thing that we may not indeed be granted, (comp. Lu 22:42 2Co 12:8,9,) but the prayer with not be disregarded, and the thing which is most for our good wilt be bestowed upon us. The *argument* here is derived from the faithfulness of God; from the assurance which we that when he has promised to hear us, there will be, sooner or later a real answer to the prayer.

We know that we have the petitions. That is, evidently, we know that we *shall* have them, or that the prayer will be answered. It cannot mean that we already have the precise thing for which we prayed, or that will be a real answer to the prayer, for

(a.) the prayer may relate to something future, as protection on a journey, or a harvest, or restoration to health, or the safe return of a son from a voyage at sea, or the salvation of our souls—all of which are *future*, and which cannot be expected to be granted at once; and

(b.) the answer to prayer is sometimes delayed, though ultimately granted. There may be reasons why the answer should be deferred, and the promise is not that it shall be immediate. The *delay* may arise from such causes as these:

(1.) To try our faith, and see whether the blessing is earnestly desired.

(2.) Perhaps it could not be at once answered without a miracle.

(3.) It might not be consistent with the Divine arrangements respecting others to grant it to us at once.

(4.) Our own condition may not be such that it would be best to answer it at once. We may need further trial, further chastisement, before the affliction, for example, shall be removed; and the answer to the prayer may be delayed for months or years. Yet, in the meantime, we may have the firmest assurance that the prayer is heard, and that it *will* be answered in the way and at the period when God shall see it to-be best.

{a} "know" Pr 15:29 Jer 29:12,13

{*} "desired" "asked"

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *If a man see his brother sin a sin*, etc. From the general assurance that God hears prayer, the apostle turns to a particular case in which it may be benevolently and effectually employed, in rescuing a brother from death. There has been great diversity of opinion in, regard to the meaning of this passage, and the views of expositors of the New Testament are by no means settled as to its true sense. It does not comport with the design of these Notes to examine the opinions which have been held in detail. A bare reference, however, to some of them will show the difficulty of determining with certainty what the passage means, and the impropriety of any very great confidence in one's own judgment in the case. Among these opinions are the following. Some have supposed that the sin against the Holy Ghost is intended; some that the phrase denotes any great and enormous sin, as murder, idolatry, adultery; some that it denotes some sin that was punishable by death by the laws of Moses; some that it denotes a sin that subjected the offender to excommunication from the synagogue or the church; some that it refers to sins which brought fatal disease upon the offender, as in the case of those who abused the Lord's Supper at Corinth, (**See Barnes "1Co 11:30"**;) some that it refers to crimes committed against the laws, for which the offender was sentenced to death, meaning that when the charge alleged was false, and the condemnation unjust, they ought to pray for the one who was condemned to death, and that he would be spared; but that when the offence was one which had been really committed, and the offender deserved to die, they ought not to pray for him, or, in other words, that by "the sin unto death," offences against the civil law are referred to, which the magistrate had no power to pardon, and the punishment of which he could not commute; and by the "sin not unto death," offences are referred to which might be pardoned, and when the punishment might be commuted; some that it refers to sins *before* and *after* baptism, the former of which might be pardoned, but the latter of which might not be; and some, and perhaps this is the common opinion among the Roman Catholics, that it refers to sins that might or might not be pardoned *after* death, thus referring to the doctrine of purgatory. These various opinions may be seen stated more at length in Rosenmuller, Lucke, Pool, (Synopsis,) and

Clarke, *in loc*. To go into an examination of all these opinions would require a volume by itself, and all that can be done here is to furnish what seems to me to be the fair exposition of the passage. The word *brother* may refer either to a member of the church, whether of the particular church to which one was attached or to another, or it may be used in the larger sense which is common as denoting a fellow-man, a member of the great family of mankind. There is nothing in the word which necessarily limits it to one in the church; there is nothing in the connexion, or in the reason assigned, why what is said should be limited to such an one. The duty here enjoined would be the same whether the person referred to was in the church or not; for it is our duty to pray for those who sin, and to seek the salvation of those whom we see to be going astray, and to be in danger of ruin, wherever they are, or whoever they may be. At the same time, the correct interpretation of the passage does not depend on determining whether the word *brother* refers to one who is a professed Christian or not.

A sin which is not unto death. The great question in the interpretation of the whole passage is, what is meant by the "sin unto death." The Greek (*amartia prov yanaton*) would mean properly a in which *tends* to death; which would *terminate* in death; of which death was the penalty, or would be the result, unless it were arrested a sin which, if it had its own course, would terminate thus, am we should speak of a disease "unto death." Comp. Joh 11:4. The word *death* is used in three significations in the New Testament, and as employed here might, so far as the *word* is concerned, be applied in any one of those senses. It is used to denote

(a.) literally the death of the body;

(b.) spiritual death, or death "in trespasses and sin," Eph 2:1;

(c.) the "second death," death in the world of woe and despair. If the sin here mentioned refers to *temporal* death, it means such a sin that temporal death, *must* inevitably follow, either by the *disease* which it has produced, or by a judicial sentence where there was no hope of pardon or of a commutation of the punishment; if it refers to death in the future world, the "second death", then it means such a sin as is unpardonable. That this last *is* the reference here seems to me to be probable, if not clear, from the following considerations:

(1.) There *is* such a sin referred to in the New Testament, a sin for which there is forgiveness "neither in this life nor the life to come." **See Barnes "Mt 12:31,32".**

Comp. Mr 3:29. If there *is* such a sin, there is no impropriety in supposing that John would refer to it here.

(2.) This is the *obvious* interpretation. It is that which would occur to the mass of the readers of the New Testament, and which it is presumed they do adopt; and this in general, is one of the best means of ascertaining the sons of a passage in the Bible.

(3.) The other significations attached to the word *death*, would be quite inappropriate here.

(a.) It cannot mean "unto *spiritual death*," that is, to a continuance in sin, for how could that be known? and if such a case occurred, why would it be improper to pray for it? Besides, the phrase "a sin unto spiritual death," or "unto continuance in sin," is one that is unmeaning.

(b.) It cannot be shown to refer to a disease that should be unto death, miraculously inflicted on account of sin, because, if such cases occurred, they were very rare, and even if a disease came upon a man miraculously in consequence of sin, it could not be certainly known whether it was, or was not, unto death. All who were visited in this way did not certainly die. Comp. 1Co 5:4,5, with 2Co 2:6,7. See also 1Co 11:30.

(c.) It cannot be shown that it refers to the case of those who were condemned by the civil magistrate to death, and for whom there was no hope of reprieve or pardon, for it is not certain that there were such cases; and if there were, and the person condemned were innocent, there was every reason to pray that God would interpose and save them, even when there was no hope from man; and if they were guilty, and deserved to die, there was no reason why they should not pray that the sin might be forgiven, and that they might be prepared to die, unless it were a case where the sin was unpardonable. It seems probable, therefore, to me, that the reference here is to the sin against the Holy Ghost, and that John means here to illustrate the duty and the power of prayer, by showing that for *any sin short of that*, however aggravated, it was their duty to pray that a brother might be forgiven. Though it might not be easy to determine what *was* the unpardonable sin, and John does not say that those to whom he wrote could determine that with certainty, yet there were many sins which were manifestly *not* of that aggravated character, and for those sins it was proper to pray. There was clearly but *one* sin that was unpardonable—" there is *a* sin unto death;" there might be many which were not of this description, and in relation to them there was ample scope for the exercise of the prayer of faith. The same thing is true now. It is not easy to define the unpardonable sin, and it is impossible far us to determine in any case with absolute certainty that a man has committed it. But there are multitudes of sins which men commit, which on no proper interpretation of the passages respecting the sin which "hath never forgiveness," can come under the description of that sin, and for which it is proper, therefore, to pray that they may be pardoned. We know of cases enough where sin *may* be forgiven; and, without allowing the mind to be disturbed about the question respecting the unpardonable sin, it is our duty to bear such cases on our hearts before God, and to plead with him that our erring brethren may be saved.

He shall ask. That is, he shall pray that the offender may be brought to true repentance, and may be saved.

And he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. That is, *God* shall give life, and he shall be saved from the eternal death to which he was exposed. This, it is said, would be given to "him" who offers the prayer; that is, his prayer would be the means of saving the offending brother. What a motive is this to prayer! How faithful and constant should we be in pleading for our fellow-sinners, that we may be instrumental in saving their souls! What joy will await those in heaven who shall see there many who were rescued from ruin in answer to their prayers! Comp. **See Barnes "**Jas 5:15, **See Barnes "Jas 5:19"**.

There is a sin unto death. A sin which is of such a character that it throws the offender beyond the reach of mercy, and which is not to be pardoned. See Mr 3:28,29. The apostle does not here say what that sin is; nor how they might know what it is; nor even that in any case they could determine that it had been committed. He merely says that there *is* such a sin, and that he, does not design that his remark about the efficacy of prayer should be understood as extending to that.

I do not say that he shall pray for it. "I do not intend that my remark shall be extended to all sin, or mean to affirm that all possible forms of guilt are the proper subjects of prayer, for I am aware that there is one sin which is an exception, and my remark is not to be applied to that." He does not say that this sin was of common occurrence: or that they could know when it had been committed; or even that a case could ever occur in which they could determine that; he merely says that in respect to that sin he did not say that prayer should be offered. It is indeed implied in a most delicate way that it would not be proper to pray for the forgiveness of such a sin, but he does not say that a case would ever happen in which they would *know* certainly that the sin had been

committed. There were instances in the times of the prophets in which the sin of the people became so universal and so aggravated, that they were forbidden to pray for them. Isa 14:11, "Then said the Lord unto me, Pray not for this people for their good;" Isa 15:1, "Then said the Lord unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people; cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth." Comp. **See Barnes "Isa 1:15"**.

But these were cases in which the prophets were directly instructed by God not to pray for a people. We have no such instruction; and it may be said now with truth, that as we can never be certain respecting any one that he has committed the unpardonable sin, there is no one for whom we may not with propriety pray. There may be those who are so far gone in sin that there may seem to be little, or almost no ground of hope. They may have cast off all the restraints of religion, of morality, of decency; they may disregard all the counsels of parents and friends; they may be sceptical, sensual, profane; they may be the companions of infidels and of mockers; they may have forsaken the sanctuary, and learned to despise the sabbath; they may have been professors of religion, and now may have renounced the faith of the gospel altogether, but still, while there is life it is our duty to pray for them, "if peradventure God will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth," 2Ti 2:26. "*All things* are possible with God;" and he has reclaimed offenders more hardened, probably, than any that we have known, and has demonstrated that there is no form of depravity which he has not the power to subdue. Let us remember the cases of Manasseh, of Saul of Tarsus, of Augustine, of Bunyan, of Newton, of tens of thousands who have been reclaimed from the vilest forms of iniquity, and then let us never despair of the conversion of any, in answer to prayer, who may have gone astray, as long as they are in this world of probation and of hope. Let no parent despair who has an abandoned son; let no wife cease to pray who has a dissipated husband. How many a prodigal son has come back to fill with happiness an aged parent's heart! How many a dissipated husband has been reformed to give joy again to the wife of his youth, and to make a paradise again of his miserable home!

{a} "unto death" Mt 12:31,32 {b} "not say" Jer 7:16 {*} "it" "that"

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *All unrighteousness is sin*, etc. This seems to be thrown in to guard what he had just said, and there is *one* great and enormous sin, a sin which could not be forgiven. But he says also that there are many other forms and degrees of sin, sin for which prayer may be made. Everything, he says, which is *unrighteous —adikia—* everything which does not conform to the holy law of God, and which is not *right* in the view of that law, is to be regarded as sin; but we are not to suppose that *all* sin of that kind is of such a character that it cannot possibly be forgiven. There are many who commit sin who we may hope will be recovered, and for them it is proper to pray. Deeply affected as we may be in view of the fact that there is a sin which can never be pardoned, and much as we may pity one who has been guilty of such a sin, yet we should not hastily conclude in any case that it has been committed, and should bear constantly in mind that while there is one such sin, there are multitudes that may be pardoned, and that for them it is our duty unceasingly to pray.

{c} "unrighteousness" 1Jo 3:4

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not*. Is not habitually and characteristically a sinner; does not ultimately and finally sin and perish; cannot, therefore, commit the unpardonable sin, Though he may fall into sin, and grieve his brethren, yet we are never to cease to pray for a true Christian; we are never to feel that he has committed the sin which has never forgiveness, and that he has thrown himself beyond the reach of our prayers. This passage, in its connexion, is a full proof that a true Christian *will* never commit the unpardonable sin, and, therefore, is a proof that he will never fall from grace. Comp. **See Barnes** "Heb 6:4, seq. **See Barnes "Heb 10:26".**

On the *meaning* of the assertion here made, that "whosoever is born of God sinneth not," **See Barnes** "1Jo 3:6, seq.

Keepeth himself. It is not said that he does it by his own strength, but he will put forth his best efforts to keep himself from sin, and by Divine assistance he will be able to accomplish it. Comp. **See Barnes "1Jo 3:3"**; **See Barnes** "Jude 1:21".

And that wicked one toucheth him not. The great enemy of all good is repelled in his assaults, and he is kept from falling into his snares.

The word *toucheth* (*aptetai*) is used here in the sense of *harm* or *injure*.

{+} "begotten" "born" {d} "keepeth himself" Ro 5:20,21

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *And we know that we are of God*. We who are Christians. The apostle supposed that true Christians might have so clear evidence on that subject as to leave no doubt on their own minds that they were the children of God. Comp. 1Jo 3:14 2Ti 1:12.

And the whole world. The term *world* here evidently means not the material world, but the people that dwell on the earth, including all idolaters, and all sinners of every grade and kind.

Lieth in wickedness. "In the wicked one," or under the power of the wicked one—*en tw ponhrw*. It is true that the word *ponhrw* may be used here in the neuter gender, as our translators have rendered it, meaning "in that which is evil," or in "wickedness;" but it may be in the masculine gender, meaning "the wicked one;" and then the sense would be that the whole world is under his control or dominion. That this is the meaning of the apostle seems to be clear, because

(1.) the corresponding phrase, (1Jo 5:20,) *en tw alhyinw*, "in him that is true," is evidently to be construed in the masculine, referring to God the Saviour, and meaning "him that is true," and not that we are "in truth."

(2.) It makes better sense to say that the world lies under the control of the wicked one, than to say that it lies "in wickedness."

(3.) This accords better with the other representations in the Bible, and the usage of the word elsewhere. Comp. 1Jo 2:13, "Ye have overcome the wicked one;" 1Jo 5:14," ye have overcome the *wicked* one;" 1Jo 3:12, "who was of that *wicked* one." **See Barnes** "2Co 4:4, on the expression "the god of this world;" Joh 12:31, where he is called "the prince of world; and Eph 2:2, where he is called "the prince of the power of the air." In all these passages it is supposed that Satan has control

over the world, especially the heathen world. Comp. Eph 6:12 1Co 10:20. In regard to the *fact* that the heathen world was pervaded by wickedness, **See Barnes** "Ro 1:21, seq.

(4.) It may be added, that this interpretation is adopted by the most eminent critics and commentators. It is that of Calvin, Beza, Benson, Blacknight, Bloomfield, Piscator, Lucke, etc. The word *lieth* here (*keitai*) means, properly, to lie; to be laid; to recline; to be situated, etc. It seems here to refer to the *passive* and *torpid* state of a wicked world under the dominion of the prince of evil, as acquiescing in his reign; making no resistance; not even struggling to be free. It *lies* thus as a beast that is subdued, a body that is dead, or anything that is wholly passive, quiet, and inert. There is no energy; no effort to throw off the reign; no resistance; no struggling. The dominion is complete, and body and soul, individuals and nations, are entirely subject to his will. This striking expression will not unaptly, now describe the condition of the heathen world, or of sinners in general. There would seem to be no government under which men are so little restive, and against which they have so little disposition to rebel, as that of Satan. Comp. 2Ti 2:26.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *And we know that the Son of God is come*. We know this by the evidence that John had referred to in this epistle, 1Jo 1:1-4; 1Jo 5:6-8.

And hath given us an understanding. Not an "understanding" considered as a faculty of the mind, for religion gives us no new faculties; but he has so instructed us that we do understand the great truths referred to. **See Barnes "Lu 24:45"**.

All the *correct* knowledge which we have of God and his government, is to be traced directly or indirectly to the great Prophet whom God has sent into the world, Joh 1:4,18, 8:12; Joh 9:5 Heb 1:1-3; Mt 11:27.

That we may know him that is true. That is, the true God. **See Barnes "Joh 17:3"**.

And we are in him that is true. That is, we are united to him; we belong to him; we are his friends. This idea is often expressed in the Scriptures by being "*in* him." It denotes a most intimate union, as if we were one with him or were a *part* of him—as the branch is in the vine, Joh 15:4,6. The Greek construction is the same as that applied to "the wicked one," 1Jo 5:19, (*en tw alhyinw*.)

This is the true God.* There has been much difference of opinion in regard to this important passage; whether it refers to the Lord Jesus Christ, the immediate antecedent, or to a more remote antecedent—referring to God, as such. The question is of importance in its bearing on the doctrine of the divinity of the Saviour; for if it refers to him, it furnishes an unequivocal declaration that he is Divine. The question is, whether John *meant* that it should be referred to him? Without going into an extended examination of the passage, the following considerations seem to me to make it morally certain that by the phrase "this is the true God," etc., he did refer to the Lord Jesus Christ.

(1.) The grammatical construction favours it. Christ is the immediate antecedent of the pronoun *this—outov*. This would be regarded as the obvious and certain construction so far as the grammar is concerned, unless there were something in the thing affirmed which led us to seek some more remote and less obvious antecedent. No doubt would have been ever entertained on this point, if it had not been for the reluctance to admit that the Lord Jesus *is* the true God. If the assertion had been that "*this* is the true Messiah;" or that "*this* is the Son of God;" or that "*this* is he who was

born of the Virgin Mary," there would have been no difficulty in the construction. I admit that this argument is not absolutely decisive; for cases do occur where a pronoun refers, not to the immediate antecedent, but to one more remote; but cases of that kind depend on the ground of necessity, and can be applied only when it would be a clear violation of the sense of the author to refer it to the immediate antecedent.

(2.) This construction seems to be demanded by the adjunct which John has assigned to the phrase "the true God"—" ETERNAL LIFE." This is an expression which John would he likely to apply to the Lord Jesus, considered as *life*, and *the source of life*, and not to God as such. "How familiar is this language with John, as applied to Christ! 'In him (i.e. Christ) was Life, and the LIFE was the light of men—giving LIFE to the world—the bread of LIFE.—my words are spirit and LIFE —I am the way, and the truth, and the LIFE. This LIFE (Christ) was manifested, and we have *seen* it, and do testify to you, and declare the ETERNAL LIFE which was with the Father, and was manifested to us,' 1Jo 1:2."—Prof. Stuart's Letters to Dr. Channing, p. 83. There is no instance in the writings of John, in which the appellation *LIFE*, and *eternal Life*, is bestowed upon the Father, to designate him as the author of spiritual and eternal life; and as this occurs so frequently in John's writings as applied to Christ, the laws of exegesis require that both the phrase "the true God," and "eternal life," should be applied to him.

(3.) If it refers to God as such, or to the word "true"—*ton alhyinon* [*yeon*]—it would be mere tautology, or a mere truism. The rendering would then be, "That we may know the *true God*, and we are in the *true* God: this *is* the true God, and eternal life." Can we believe that an inspired man would affirm gravely, and with so much solemnity, and as if it were a truth of so much magnitude, that the true God *is* the true God?

(4.) This interpretation accords with what we are sure John would affirm respecting the Lord Jesus Christ. Can there be any doubt that he who said, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God;" that he who said "all things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made;" that he who recorded the declaration of the Saviour, "I and my Father are one," and the declaration of Thomas, "my Lord and my God," would apply to him the appellation the *true God*!

(5.) If John did *not* mean to affirm this, he has made use of an expression which was liable to be misunderstood, and which, as facts have shown, would be misconstrued by the great portion of those who might read what he had written; and, moreover, an expression that would lead to the *very* sin against which he endeavours to guard in the next verse—the sin of substituting a creature in the place of God, and rendering to another the honour due to him. The language which he uses is just such as, according to its natural interpretation, would lead men to worship one as the true God who is not the true God, unless the Lord Jesus be Divine. For these reasons, it seems to me that the fair interpretation of this passage demands that it should be understood as referring to the Lord Jesus Christ. If so, it is a direct assertion of his divinity, for there could be no higher proof of it than to affirm that he is the true God.

And eternal life. Having "life in himself," (Joh 5:26,) and the source and fountain of life to the soul. No more frequent appellation, perhaps, is given to the Saviour by John, than that he is life, and the source of life. Comp. Joh 1:4 5:26,40 10:10, 6:33,35,48,51,53,63; Joh 11:25 14:6, 20:31 1Jo 1:1,2 5:12.

* Many MSS. here insert the word *God*—"the true God"—*ton alhyinon yeon*, this is also found in the Vulgate, Coptic, AEthiopic, and Arabic versions, and in the Complutensian edition of the

New Testament. The reading, however, is not so well sustained as to be adopted by Griesbach, Tittman, or Hahn. That it may be a genuine reading is indeed possible, but the evidence is against it. Lucke supposes that it is genuine, and endeavours to account for the manner in which it was omitted in the MSS. —*Commentary*, p. 349.

{a} "understanding" Lu 24:45 {b} "This" Isa 9:6

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN - Chapter 5 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Little children*. This is a favourite mode of address with John, (**See Barnes** "1Jo 2:1,) and it was proper to use it in giving his parting counsel; embracing, in fact, all that he had to say—that they should keep themselves from idols, and suffer nothing to alienate their affections from the true God. His great object had been to lead them to the knowledge and love of God, and all his counsels would be practically followed, if, amidst the temptations of idolatry, and the allurements of sin, nothing were allowed to estrange their hearts from him.

Keep yourselves from idols. From worshipping them; from all that would imply communion with them or their devotees. Compare **See Barnes "1Co 10:14"**.

The word rendered *idols* here (*eidwlwn*) means, properly, an image, spectre, shade—as of the dead; then any image or figure which would represent anything, particularly anything invisible; and hence anything designed to represent God, and that was set up with a view to be acknowledged as representing him, or to bring him, or his perfections, more vividly before the mind. The word is applicable to idol-gods—heathen deities, 1Co 8:4,7, 10:19 Ro 2:22; 2Co 6:16 1Th 1:9; but it would, also, be applicable to *any* image designed to represent the true God, and through or by which the true God was to be adored. The essential things in the word seem to be,

(a.) an image or representation of the Deity, and

(b.) the making of that an object of adoration instead of the true God. Since one of these things would be likely to lead to the other, both are forbidden in the prohibitions of idolatry, Ex 20:4,5. This would forbid all attempts to represent God by paintings or statuary; all idol-worship, or worship of heathen gods; all images and pictures that would be substituted in the place of God as objects of devotion, or that might transfer the homage from God to the image; and all giving of those affections to other beings or objects which are due to God. Why the apostle closed this epistle with this injunction he has not stated, and it may not be easy to determine. It may have been for such reasons as these:

(1.) Those to whom he wrote were surrounded by idolaters, and there was danger that they might fall into the prevailing sin, or in some way so act as to be understood to lend their sanction to idolatry.

(2.) In a world full of alluring objects, there was danger then, as there is at all times, that the affections should be fixed on other objects than the supreme God, and that what is due to him should be withheld. It may be added, in the conclusion of the exposition of this epistle, that the same caution is as needfull for us as it was for those to whom John wrote. We are not in danger, indeed, of bowing down to idols, or of engaging in the grossest forms of idol-worship. But we may be in no less danger than they to whom John wrote were, of substituting other things in our affections in the place of the true God, and of devoting to them the time and the affection which are due to him.

Our children it is possible to love with such an attachment as shall effectually exclude the true God from the heart. The world —its wealth, and pleasures, and honours—we may love with a degree of attachment such as even an idolater would hardly show to his idol-gods; and all the time which he would take in performing his devotions in an idol-temple, we may devote with equal fervour to the service of the world. There is practical idolatry all over the world; in nominally Christian lands as well as among the heathen; in families that acknowledge no God but wealth and fashion; in the hearts of multitudes of individuals who would scorn the thought of worshipping at a pagan altar; and it is even to be found in the heart of many a one who professes to be acquainted with the true God, and to be an heir of heaven. God should have the supreme place in our affections. The love of everything else should be held in strict subordination to the love of him. He should reign in our hearts; be acknowledged in our closets, our families, and in the place of public worship; be submitted to at all times as having a right to command and control us; be obeyed in all the expressions of his will, by his word, by his providence, and by his Spirit; be so loved that we shall be willing to part without a murmur with the dearest object of affection when he takes it from us; and so that, with joy and triumph, we shall welcome his messenger, *the angel of death*, when he shall come to summon us into his presence. To all who may read these illustrations of the epistle of the "beloved disciple," may God grant this inestimable blessing and honour. AMEN.

{*} "Little children" "My children" {c} "idols" 1Co 10:14

SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN

SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN - Chapter 1

SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND AND THIRD EPISTLES OF JOHN,

I.—-THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE SECOND AND THIRD EPISTLES OF JOHN.

THE authenticity of these two epistles was doubted by many in the early Christian church, and it was not before a considerable time had elapsed that their canonical authority was fully admitted. The first of the three epistles was always received as the undoubted production of the apostle John; but, though not positively and absolutely rejected, there were many doubts entertained in regard to the authorship of the second and third. Their exceeding brevity, and the fact that they were addressed to individuals, and seemed not designed for general circulation, made them less frequently referred to by the early Christian writers, and renders it more difficult to establish their genuineness.

The *evidence* of their genuineness is of two kinds—external and internal. Though, from their brevity, the proof on these points must be less full and clear than it is in regard to the first epistle; yet it is such as to satisfy the mind, on the whole, that they are the production of the apostle John, and are entitled to a place in the canon of Scripture.

(1.) *External evidence*. The evidence of this kind, either for or against the authenticity of these epistles, is found in the following testimonies respecting them in the writings of the Fathers, and the following facts in regard to their admission into the canon.

(a.) In the church and school at Alexandria they were both well known, and were received as a part of the sacred writings. Clement of Alexandria, and Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, quote them, or refer to them, as the writings of the apostle John.—Lardner's works, vi. 275; Lucke, p. 329. Origen, the successor of Clement, says, "John left behind him an epistle of very few *stichoi*; perhaps also a second and third, though some do not consider these genuine. Both these together, however, contain only an hundred *stichoi*." Dionysius of Alexandria shows that he was acquainted with all of them, but calls the two last *feromenai*—writings alleged to be genuine. For the import of this word, as used by Dionysius, see Lucke's Com., pp. 330, 331.

(b.) These epistles were known and received in the western churches in the second and third centuries. Of this fact, an important witness is found in Irenaeus, who, on account of the place where he resided during his youth, and the school in which he was educated, deserves especial regard as a witness respecting the works of John.—*Hug*. He was born at Smyrna, and lived not long after the times of the apostles. He was a disciple of Polycarp, who was acquainted with the apostle John; and having passed his early years in Asia Minor, must, in the circumstances in which he was placed, have been familiar with the writings of John, and have known well what writings were attributed to him. He quotes the second epistle, (2Jo 1:11,) and with express reference to John as the author, under the name of" John, the disciple of our Lord." In another place, also, he refers to this epistle. After quoting from the first epistle, he continues, "And John, the disciple of Jesus,

in the epistle before mentioned, commanded that they (the heretics) should be shunned, saying," etc. He then quotes, word for word, the seventh and eighth verses of the epistle.

(c.) The African church, in the third century, regarded the second epistle, at least, as the production of John. At a synod in Carthage, under Cyprian, Aurelius, the bishop of Chullabi, in giving his vote on the question of baptizing heretics, quotes the tenth verse of the second epistle as authority, saying, "John, in his epistle, declares," etc.

(d.) There is some doubt in regard to the Syrian church, whether these epistles were at first received as genuine or not. The manuscripts of the Peshito, or old Syriac version, at least since the sixth century, do not contain the epistle of Jude, the second epistle of Peter, or the secand and third of John. Yet Ephrem the Syrian, in the fourth century, quotes the epistle of Jude, the second epistle of Peter, and the second of John, as genuine and canonical. As this father in the Syrian church was not acquainted with the Greek language, (*Lucke*,) it is clear that he must have read these epistles in a translation, and as would seem most probable in some Syriae version. The probability would seem to be, as these epistles are not in the oldest Syriac version, that there was some doubt about their authenticity when that version was made, but that before the time of Ephrem they had come to be regarded as genuine, and were translated by some other persons. Their use in the time of Ephrem would at least show that they were then regarded as genuine. They may have been, indeed, at some period attached to the ancient version, but at a later period, as they did not originally belong to that version, they may have been separated from it.— *Lucke, in loc*. At all events, it is clear that at an early period in the Syrian church they were regarded as genuine.

(e.) Though there were doubts among many of the Fathers respecting the genuineness of these epistles, yet they were admitted in several councils of the church to be genuine. In the eighty-fifth of the apostolic canons, (so called ;) in the sixtieth canon of the synod of Laodicea; the council at Hippo, (A.D. 393,) and the third council of Carthage, (A.D. 397,) they were reckoned as undoubtedly pertaining to the inspired canon of Scripture.

(f.) All doubts on the subject of the genuineness of these epistles were, however, subsequently removed in the view of Christian writers, and in the middle ages they were universally received as the writings of the apostle John. Some of the Reformers again had doubts of their genuineness. Erasmus quoted the sentiment of Jerome, that it was not the *apostle* John who wrote these epistles, but a *presbyter* of the same name; and Calvin seems to have entertained some doubt of their genuineness, for he has omitted them in his commentaries; but these doubts have also disappeared, and the conviction has again become general, and indeed almost universal, that they are to be ranked among the genuine writings of the apostle John.

It may be added here, that the doubts which have been entertained on the subject, and the investigations to which they have given rise, show the care which has been evinced in forming the canon of the New Testament, and demonstrate that the Christian world has not been disposed to receive books as of sacred authority without evidence of their genuineness.

(2.) There is strong *internal* evidence that they are genuine. This is found in their style, sentiment, and manner. It is true that one who was familiar with the writings of the apostle John might compose two short epistles like these, that should be mistaken for the real productions of the apostle. There are, even in these brief epistles, not a few passages which seem to be a mere repetition of what John has elsewhere said. But there are some things in regard to the internal evidence that they are the writings of the apostle John, and were not designedly forged, which deserve a more particular notice. They are such as these:—

(a.) As already said, the style, sentiment, and manner are such as are appropriate to John. There is nothing in the epistles which we might not suppose he would write; there is much that accords with what he has written; there is much in the style which would not be likely to be found in the writings of another man; and there is nothing in the sentiments which would lead us to suppose that the manner of the apostle John had been *assumed*, for the purpose of palming upon the world productions which were not his. Resemblances between these epistles will strike every reader, and it is unnecessary to specify them. The following passages, however, are so decidedly in the manner of John, that it may be presumed that they were either written by him, or by one who designed to copy from him: 2Jo 1:5-7,9; 3Jo 1:11,12.

(b.) The fact that the name of the writer is not affixed to the epistles is much in the manner of John. Paul, in every case except in the epistle to the Hebrews, affixed his name to his epistles; Peter, James, and Jude did the same thing. John, however, has never done it in any of his writings, except the Apocalypse. He seems to have supposed that there was something about his style and manner which would commend his writings as genuine; or that in some other way they would be so well understood to be his, that it was not necessary to specify it. Yet the omission of his name, or of something that would lay claim to his authority as an apostle, would not be likely to occur if these epistles were fabricated with a design of palming them upon the world as his. The artifice would be too refined, and would be too likely to defeat itself, to be adopted by one who should form such a plan.

(c.) The apparently severe and harsh remarks made in the epistle in regard to heretics, may be adverted to as an evidence that these epistles are the genuine writings of John the apostle. Thus, in the second epistle, 2Jo 1:10, he says, "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed." So in the third epistle, 3Jo 1:10: "If I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words," etc. It has been made an objection to the genuineness of these epistles, that this is not in the spirit of the mild and amiable" disciple whom Jesus loved;" that it breathes a temper of uncharitableness and severity which could not have existed in him at any time, and especially when, as an old man, he is said to have preached nothing but "love one another." But two circumstances will show that this, so far from being an objection, is rather a proof of their genuineness. One is, that in fact these expressions accord with what we *know* to have been the character of John. They are *not* inappropriate to one who was named by the Master himself, "Boanerges—a son of thunder," (Mr 3:17;) or to one who was disposed to call down fire from heaven on the Samaritan who would not receive the Lord Jesus, (Lu 9:54;) or to one who, when he saw another casting out devils in the name of Jesus, took upon himself the authority to forbid him, (Mr 9:38.) The truth is, that there was a remarkable mixture of gentleness and severity in the character of John; and though the former was the most prominent, and may be supposed to have increased as he grew old, yet the other also often manifested itself. There was that in the character of John, which, under some circumstances, and under other teaching than that of the Lord Jesus, might have been developed in the form of great exclusiveness, bigotry, and sternness—perhaps in the form of open persecution. Under the teaching of the Saviour, and through his example, his milder and better nature prevailed, and so decidedly acquired the ascendency, that we almost never think of the harsher traits of his character. The other circumstance is, that it would never have occurred to one who should have attempted to forge an epistle in the name of John, to have introduced a passage of this kind. The artifice would have been too little likely to have accomplished the end, to have occurred to the mind, or to have been adopted. The

public character of John was so amiable; he was so uniformly spoken of as the "disciple whom Jesus loved;" gentleness and kindness seemed to be such pervading traits in his nature, that no one would have thought of *introducing* sentiments which *seemed* to be at variance with these traits, even though, on a close analysis, it could be made out that they were *not* contrary to his natural character.

(d.) Perhaps, also, the appellation which the writer gives himself in these two epistles, (*o presbuterov—the elder*,) may be regarded as some evidence that they are the writings of the apostle John; that is, it is more probable that he would use this appellation than that any other writer would. It has, indeed, been made a ground of objection that the use of this term proves that they are not the productions of John. See Luicke, p. 340. But, as we have seen, John was not accustomed to prefix his own name to his writings; and if these epistles were written by him when he was at Ephesus, nothing is more probable than that he should use this term. It can hardly be regarded as an appellation pertaining to *office*, for as there were many *elders* or *presbyters* in the church, (Ac 20:17,) the use of the term "*the* elder" would not be sufficiently distinctive to designate the writer. It may be presumed, therefore, to have a particular respect to age; and, under the circumstances supposed, it would apply to no one with so much propriety as to the apostle John—one who would be well known as *the* aged and venerable disciple of the Saviour. Compare, however, Lucke (pp. 340—343) on the use of this word.

II—OF THE PERSON TO WHOM JOHN ADDRESSED HIS SECOND EPISTLE.

This epistle purports to be addressed, as it is in our translation, to "the elect lady"—*eklekth kuria*. There has been great diversity of opinion in regard to the person here referred to, and there are questions respecting it which it is impossible to determine with absolute certainty. The different opinions which have been entertained are the following:

(a.) Some have supposed that a Christian matron is referred to, a friend of John, whose name was either *eklekth* (*Eclecte*,) or *kuria*, (*Cyria*.) OEcumenius and Theophylact supposed that the proper name of the female referred to was *Eclecte*; others have adopted the other opinion, that the name was *Cyria*.

(b.) Others among the ancients, and particularly Clement, supposed that the *church* was denoted by this name, under the delicate image of an elect lady; either some particular church to whom the epistle was sent, or to the church at large. This opinion has been held by some of the modern writers also.

(c.) Others have supposed, as is implied in our common version, that it was addressed to some Christian matron, whose name is not mentioned, but who was well known to John, and perhaps to many others, for her piety, and her acts of kindness to Christians. The reason why her name was suppressed, it has been supposed, was that if it had been mentioned it might have exposed her to trouble in some way, perhaps to persecution.

(d) Recently, Knauer (Studien and Kritik., 1833, Heft 2. s. 452, ff.) has endeavoured to show that it was addressed to the Virgin Mary, who is supposed then to have resided in Galilee. The improbability of this opinion is shown by Lucke, pp. 352, 353.

These questions are not very important to be determined, even if they could be with accuracy; and at this period of time, and with the few data which we have for forming a correct judgment on the subject, it is not possible to settle them with entire certainty. The probable truth in regard to this point, and all which it seems now possible to ascertain with any degree of certainty, may be expressed in the following specifications:

(1.) The letter was addressed to an individual, and not to a church. If it had been to a particular church, it would have been specified, for this is the uniform mode in the New Testament. If it were addressed to the church at large, it is in the highest degree improbable that John should have departed from the style of address in his first epistle; improbable in every way that he should have adopted another style so mystical and unusual in a plain prose composition. It is only in poetry, in prophecy, in compositions where figurative language abounds, that the church is represented as a female at all; and it is wholly improbable that John, at the outset of a brief epistle, should have adopted this appellation. The fact that it was addressed to an individual female is further apparent from the mention of her children: 2Jo 1:1,4. "Unto the elect lady and *her children*;" "I found of *thy children*, walking in truth." This is not such language as one would use in addressing a church.

(2.) It is probable that the *name* of this lady was designed to be specified, and that it was *Cyria*, (*kuria*.) This, indeed is not absolutely certain; but the Greek will readily bear this, and it accords best with apostolic usage to suppose that the name of the person to whom the letter was addressed would be designated. This occurs in the third epistle of John, the epistles of Paul to Philemon, to Timothy, and to Titus, and, so far as appears, there is no reason why it should not have been done in the case before us. The Syriac and Arabic translators so understand it, for both have retained the name *Cyria*. It may do something to confirm this view, to remark that the name *Cyria* was not uncommon, in subsequent times, at least, among Christian females. See Corp. Inscript. Gruter, p. 1127, Num. xi. *fenippov kai h gunh autou kuria*. Comp. Lex. Hagiologic. Lips. 1719, p. 448, where two female martyrs of that name are mentioned. See also other instances referred to by Lucke, Com. p. 351. If these views are correct, then the true redering of the passage would be, "The presbyter unto the elect Cyria."

(3.) Of this pious female, however, nothing more is known than what is mentioned in this epistle. From that we learn that John was warmly attached to her, (2Jo 1:5;) that she was a mother, and that her children were pious, (2Jo 1:1,4;) and that she was of a hospitable character, and would be likely to entertain those who came professedly as religious teachers, 2Jo 1:10,11. Where or when she lived, or when she died, we have no information whatever. At the time of writing this epistle, John had strong hopes that he would be permitted to come soon and see her, but whether he ever did so; we are not informed, 2Jo 1:12.

III.—THE CANONICAL AUTHORITY OF THE SECOND AND THIRD EPISTLES OF JOHN.

The canonical authority of these epistles depends on the following things:

(1.) On the evidence that they are the writings of the apostle John. In proportion as that evidence is clear, their canonical authority is of course established.

(2.) Though brief, and though addressed to individuals, they are admitted into the canon of Scripture with the same propriety as the epistles to Timothy, to Titus, and to Philemon, for those were addressed also to individuals.

(3.) Like those epistles, also, these contain things of general interest to the church. There is nothing in either that is inconsistent with what John has elsewhere written, or that conflicts with any other part of the New Testament; there is much in them that is in the manner of John, and that breathes his spirit; there is enough in them to tell us of the way of salvation.

Of the time when these epistles were written, and the place where, nothing is known, and conjecture would be useless, as there are no marks of time or place in either, and there is no historical statement that gives the information. It has been the common opinion that they were written at

Ephesus, and when John was old. The appellation which he gives of himself, "the elder," accords with this supposition, though it does not make it absolutely certain.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN.

ANALYSIS OF THE SECOND EPISTLE.

THE points embraced in this epistle are these: A salutation to the female to whom it is addressed, and an expression of warm attach- ment to her family, 2Jo 1:1-3. An expression of joy and gratitude that he had been permitted to learn that her children had embraced the truth, and were walking in it, 2Jo 1:4. An exhortation to live in the exercise of mutual love, in obedience to the great commandment of the Saviour, 2Jo 1:5,6. The fact that many deceivers had gone out into the world, and an exhortation to be on their guard against their arts, 2Jo 1:7,8. A test by which they might be known, and their true character ascertained, 2Jo 1:9. An exhortation to show them no countenance whatever; not to treat them in any such way, even in the rites of hospitality, as to give occasion to the charge that she was friendly to their doctrines, 2Jo 1:10,11. A statement that, as he hoped to see her soon, he would not write more to her, 2Jo 1:12. And the salutation of the children of some one who is spoken of as her elect sister, 2Jo 1:13.

Verse 1. *The elder*. See the Intro., 1, (2, d.)

Unto the elect lady. The elect or chosen Cyria. See Intro., & 2. He addresses her as one chosen of God to salvation, in the use of a term often applied to Christians in the New Testament.

And her children. The word here rendered children (*tekna*) would include in itself both sons and daughters, but as the apostle immediately uses a masculine pronoun, (*ouv*,) it would seem more probable that sons only were intended. At all events, the use of such a pronoun proves that some at least of her children were sons. Of their number and character we have no information, except that **See Barnes "2Jo 1:4"**

a part of them were Christians.

Whom I love in the truth. **See Barnes "1Jo 3:18"**.

The meaning here is, that he *truly* or *sincerely* loved them. The introduction of the article *the* here, which is not in the original, (*en alhyeia*), somewhat obscures the sense, as if the meaning were that he loved them so far as they embraced the truth. The meaning however is, that he was sincerely attached to them. The word "whom" here, *ouv*, embraces both the mother and her children, though the pronoun is in the masculine gender, in accordance with the usage of the Greek language. No mention is made of her husband, and it may thence be inferred that she was a widow. Had he been living, though he might not have been a Christian, it is to be presumed that some allusion would have been made to him as well as to the children, especially as there is reason to believe that only a part of her children were pious. **See Barnes "2Jo 1:4"**.

And not I only, but also all they that have known the truth. That is, all those Christians who had had an opportunity of knowing them, were sincerely attached to them. It would seem, from a subsequent part of the epistle, (2Jo 1:10,) that this female was of a hospitable character, and was accustomed to entertain at her house the professed friends of religion, especially religious teachers, and it is probable that she was the more extensively known from this fact. The commendation of the apostle here shows that it is *possible* that a family shall be extensively known as one of order, peace, and religion, so that all who know it or hear of it shall regard it with interest, respect, and love.

{*} "elect lady" "The Lady Electa"

SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *For the truth's sake*. They love this family *because* they love the truth, and see it so cordially embraced and so happily exemplified. They who love the gospel itself will rejoice in all the effects which it produces in society, on individuals, families, neighbourhoods, and their hearts will be drawn with warm affection to the places where its influence is most fully seen.

Which dwelleth in us. In us who are Christians; that is, the truths of the gospel which we have embraced. Truth may be said to have taken up a permanent abode in the hearts of all who love religion.

And shall be with us for ever. Its abode with us is not for a night or a day; not for a month or a year; not for the few years that make up mortal life; it is not a passing stranger that finds a lodging like the weary traveller for a night, and inthe morning is gone to be seen no more; it has come to us to make our hearts its permanent home, and it is to be with us in all worlds, and while ceaseless ages shall roll away.

SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Grace be unto you*. etc, **See Barnes "Ro 1:7"**.

This salutation does not differ from those commonly employed by the sacred writers, except in the emphasis which is placed on the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ is "the Son of the Father." This is much in the style of John, in all of whose writings he dwells much on the fact that the Lord Jesus is the Son of God, and on the importance of reconising that fact in order to the possession of true religion. Comp. 1Jo 2:22,23; 1Jo 4:15; 5:1,2,10-12, 20.

In truth and love. This phrase is not to be connected with the expression "the Son of the Father." as if it meant that he was ms Son "in truth and love," but is rather to be connected with the "grace, mercy, and peace," referred to, as a prayer that they might be manifested to this family in promoting truth and love.

SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *I rejoiced greatly that I found*, etc. That I learned this fact respecting some of thy children. The apostle does not say how he had learned this. It may have been that he had become personally acquainted with them when they were away from their home, or that he had learned it from others. The word used (*eurhka*) would apply to either method. Grotius supposed that some of the sons had come on business to Ephesus, and that John had become acquainted with them

there. *Of thy children walking in truth*. That is, true Christians; living in accordance with the truth, for this constitutes the essence of religion. The expression used here, "of thy children," (*ek twn teknwn*,) means some of thy children; implying that he knew of a part of them who were true Christians. This is clear from the Greek construction, because

(a.) if he had meant to say that he had found them all to be of this description, the sentiment would have been directly expressed, "thy children;" but as it is, some word is necessary to be understood to complete the sense; and

(b.) the same thing is demanded by the fact that the participle used (walking—*peripatountav*) is in the accusative case. If he had referred to them all, the participle would have been in the genitive, agreeing with the word *children*, (*twn peripatountwn*.)—Lucke. Whether the apostle means to say that only a part of them had in fact embraced the gospel, or that he had only known that a part of them had done it, though the others might have done it without his knowledge, is not quite clear, though the former supposition appears to be the correct one, for if they had all become Christians it is to be presumed that he would have been informed of it. The probability seems to be that a part of her children only were truly pious, though there is no evidence that the others were otherwise than correct in their moral conduct. If there had been improper conduct in any of her other children, John was too courteous, and too delicate in his feelings, to allude to so disagreeable a circumstance. But "if that pious lady," to use the language of Benson, "had some wicked children, her lot was not peculiar. Her consolation was that she had some who were truly good. John commended those who were good, in order to excite them in the most agreeable manner to persevere."

As we have received a commandment from the Father. That is, as he has commanded us to live; in accordance with the truth which he has revealed. The Father, in the Scripture, is everywhere represented as the source of law.

{+} "of thy children" "found some of"

SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And now I beseech thee, lady*. Or, "And now I entreat thee, Cyria" (*kuria*.) See Intro. & 2. If this was her proper name, there is no impropriety in supposing that he would address her in this familiar style. John was probably then a very old man; the female to whom the epistle was addressed was doubtless much younger.

Not as though I wrote a new commanament unto thee. John presumed that the command to love one another was understood as far as the gospel was known; and he might well presume it, for true Christianity never prevails anywhere without prompting to the observance of this law. **See Barnes "1Th 4:9"**.

But that which we had from the beginning. From the time when the gospel was first made known to us. **See Barnes "1Jo 2:7"; See Barnes "1Jo 2:11"**.

That we love one another. That is, that there be among the disciples of Christ mutual love; or that in all circumstances and relations they should love one another, Joh 15:12,17. This general command, addressed to all the disciples of the Saviour, John doubtless means to say was as applicable to him and to the pious female to whom he wrote as to any others, and ought to be exercised by them towards all true Christians; and he exhorts her, as he did all Christians, to exercise it. It was

a command on which, in his old age, he loved to dwdl; and he had little more to say to her than this to exhort her to obey this injunction of the Saviour.

{a} "Love one another" 1Joh 3:23

SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *And this is love, that we walk after his commandments*. This is the proper expression or evidence of love to God. **See Barnes** "Joh 14:15, **See Barnes "Joh 14:21"**.

This is the commandment. That is, this is his great and peculiar commandment; the one by which his disciples are to be peculiarly characterised, and by which they are to be distinguished in the world. **See Barnes "Joh 13:34"**.

{b} "love" Joh 14:15,21 {c} "after" "according to"

SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *For*. *oti*. This word for is not here to be regarded as connected with the previous verse, and as giving a reason why there should be the exercise of mutual love, but is rather to be understood as connected with the following verse, (2Jo 1:8,) and as giving a reason for the caution there expressed: "Because it is a truth that many deceivers have appeared, or since it has occurred that many such are abroad, look to yourselves lest you be betrayed and ruined." The fact that there were many such deceivers was a good reason for being constantly on their guard, lest they should be so far drawn away as not to receive a full reward.

Many deceivers are entered into the world. Are abroad in the world, or have appeared among men. Several Mss. read here, "*have gone out* into the world," *exhlyon*, instead of "have entered into *eishlyon*. The common reading is the correct one, and the other was originated, probably, from the unusual form of the expression, "have come into the world," as if they had come from another abode. That, however, is not necessarily implied, the language being such as would be properly used to denote the idea that there were such deceivers in the world.

Who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. Who maintain that he assumed the appearance only of a man, and was not really incarnate. **See Barnes** "1Jo 1:2, **See Barnes "1Jo 1:3"**.

This is a deceiver. Every one who maintains this is to be regarded as a deceiver. And an antichrist. **See Barnes "1Jo 2:18"**; **See Barnes "1Jo 4:3"**.

{c} "many deceivers" 1Jo 4:1

SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Look to yourselves*. This seems to be addressed to the lady to whom he wrote, and to her children. The idea is, that they should be particularly on their guard, and that their first care should be to secure their own hearts, so that they should not be exposed to the dangerous attacks of error. When error abounds in the world, our first duty is not to attack it and make war upon it; it is to look to the citadel of our own souls, and see that all is well guardeed there. When an enemy invades a land, the first thing will not be to go out against him, regardless of our own strength, or of the security of our own fortresses, but it will be to see that our forts are well manned, and that we are secure *there* from his assaults. If that is so, we may then go forth with confidence to meet him on the open field. In relation to an error that is in the world, the first thing for a Christian to do is to take care of his own heart.

That we lose not those things which we have wrought. Marg., "Or, gained", Some copies read, *which ye have gained, but that ye*. The reading here referred to in the margin is found in several Mss. and also in the Vulgate, Syriac, and AEthiopic versions. It is not, however, adopted in the late critical editions of the New Testament, and the common reading is probably genuine. The sense is not materially varied, and the common reading is not unnatural. John was exhorting the family to whom this epistle was written to take good heed to themselves while so many artful errorists were around them, lest they should be drawn away from the truth, and lose a part of the full reward which they might hope to receive in heaven. In doing this, nothing was more natural than that he, as a Christian friend, should group himself with them, and speak of himself as having the same need of caution, and express the feeling that he ought to strive also to obtain the full reward, thus showing that he was not disposed to address an exhortation to them which he was not willing to regard as applicable to himself. The *truth* which is taught here is one of interest to all Christians—that it is possible for even genuine Christians, by suffering themselves to be led into error, or by failure in duty, to lose a part of the reward which they might have obtained. The crown which they will wear in heaven will be less bright than that which they might have worn, and the throne which they will occupy will be less elevated. The rewards of heaven will be in accordance with the services rendered to the Redeemer; and it would not be right that they who turn aside, or falter in their course, should have the same exalted honours which they might have received if they had devoted themselves to God with ever-increasing fidelity. It is painful to think how many there are who begin the Christian career with burning zeal, as if they would strike for the highest rewards in heaven, but who soon waver in their course, and fall into some paralysing error, until at last they receive, perhaps, not half the reward which they might have obtained.

But that we receive a full reward. Such as will be granted to a life uniformly consistent and faithful; all that God has to bestow on his people when most faithful and true. But who can estimate the "*full* reward" of heaven, the unspeakable glory of those who make it the grand business of their lives to obtain all they can of its bliss? And who is there that does not feel that he *ought* to strive for a crown in which not one gem shall be wanting that might have sparkled there for ever?

{d} "Look" Mr 13:9 {e} "we lose" Php 3:16 Re 3:11 {1} "wrought" or "gained". Some copies read, "which ye have gained, but
that ye".

SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God*. In the doctrine which Christ taught, or the true doctrine respecting him. The language is somewhat ambiguous, like the phrase "the love of Christ," which may mean either his love to us, or our love to him. Comp. **See Barnes "Joh 15:9"**.

It is difficult to determine here which is the true sense—whether it means the doctrine or precepts which he taught, or the true doctrine respecting him. Macknight understands by it the doctrine taught by Christ and his apostles. It would seem most probable that this is the sense of the passage, but then it would include, of course, all that Christ taught respecting himself, as well as his other instructions. The essential idea is, that the truth must be held respecting the precepts, the character, and the work of the Saviour. Probably the immediate allusion here is to those to whom John so frequently referred as "antichrist," who denied that Jesus had come in the flesh, 2Jo 1:7. At the same time, however, he makes the remark general, that if any one did not hold the true doctrine respecting the Saviour, he had no real knowledge of God. See Joh 1:18 5:23, 15:23 17:3

1Jo 2:23.

Hath not God. Has no true knowledge of God. The truth taught here is, that it is essential to piety to hold the true doctrine respecting Christ.

He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ. In the true doctrine respecting Christ, or in the doctrine which he taught.

He hath both the Father and the Son. There is such an intimate union between the Father and the Son, that he who has just views of the one has also of the other. Comp. **See Barnes** "Joh 14:7, **See Barnes "Joh 4:9"**; **See Barnes** "Joh 14:10, **See Barnes** "Joh 14:11, and **See Barnes "1Jo 2:23"**.

{f} "in the doctrine" Joh 15:6

SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *If there come any unto you*. Any professed teacher of religion. There can be no doubt that she to whom this epistle was written was accustomed to entertain such teachers.

And bring not this doctrine. This doctrine which Christ taught, or the true doctrine respecting him and his religion.

Receive him not into your house. This cannot mean that *no* acts of kindness, in any circumstances, were to be shown to such persons; but that there was to be nothing done which could be fairly construed as encouraging or contenancing them *as religious teachers*. The true rule would seem to be, in regard to such persons, that, so far as we have intercourse with them as neighbours, or strangers, we are to be honest, true, kind, and just, but we are to do *nothing* that will contenance them *as* religious teachers. We are not to attend on their instruction, Pr 19:27; we are not to receive them into our houses, or to entertain them as religious teachers; we are not to commend them to others, or to give them any reason to use our names or influence in propagating error. It would not be difficult to practise this rule, and yet to show to others all the kindness, and all the attention in

circumstances of want, which religion demands. A man who is truly consistent is never suspected of countenancing error, even when he is distinguished for liberality, and is ready, like the good Samaritan, to pur in oil and wine in the wounds of *any* waylaid traveller. The command not to "receive such an one into the house," in such circumstances as those referred to by John, would be probably understood literally, as he doubltless designed that it should be. To do that, to meet such persons with a friendly greeting, would be construed as countenancing their doctrine, and as commending them to others, and hence it was forbidden that they should be entertained as such. This treatment would not be demanded where no such interpretation could be put on receiving a friend or relative who held different and even erroneous views, or in showing kindness to a stranger who differed from us, but it *would* apply to the receiving and entertaining *a professed teacher of religion, as such*; and the rule is as applicable now as it was then.

Neither bid him God speed. *kai cairein autw mh legete*. "And do not say to him, *hail*, or *joy*." Do not wish him joy; do not hail, or salute him. The word used expresses the common form of salutation, as when we wish one health, success, prosperity, Mt 26:49 Ac 15:23, 23:26

Jas 1:1. It would be understood as expressing a wish for success in the enterprise in which they were embarked; and though we should love all men, and desire their welfare, and sincerely seek their happiness, yet we can properly wish no one success in a career of sin and error.

{a} "If there come" Ga 1:8,9 {*} "God speed" "neither wish him success"

SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *For he that biddeth him, God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds*. Shows that he countenances and approves of the doctrine which is taught. Comp. **See Barnes "1Ti 5:22"**.

{+} "speed" "wisheth him success" {b} "partaker" 1Ti 5:22

SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Having many things to write unto you*. That I would wish to say. This language is such as would be used by one who was hurried, or who was in feeble health, or who hoped soon to see the person written to. In such a case only the points would be selected which were of most immediate and pressing importance, and the remainder would be reserved for a more free personal interview.

I would not write with paper. The word *paper* here conveys an idea which is not strictly correct. *Paper*, as that term is now understood, was not invented until long after this period. The material designated by the word used by John (*carthv*) was the Egyptian papyrus, and the particular thing denoted was a leaf made out of that plant. The sheets were made from membranes of the plant closely pressed together. This plant was found also in Syria and Babylon, but it was produced in greater abundance in Egypt, and that was the plant which was commonly used. It was so comparatively cheap, that it in a great measure superseded the earlier materials for writing—plates

of lead, or stone, or the skins of animals. It is probable that the books of the New Testament were written on this species of paper. Comp. Hug, Intro. chap. iii., 11.

And ink. The ink which was commonly employed in writing was made of soot and water, with a mixture of some species of gum to give it consistency and durability.—*Lucke*. The instrument or *pen* was made of a reed.

But I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face. Marg., as in Greek, *mouth to mouth*. The phrase is a common one, to denote conversation with any one, especially free and confidential conversation. Comp. Nu 12:8 Jer 32:4.

That our joy may be full. Marg., *your*. The marginal reading has arisen from a variation in the Greek copies. The word *our* is best sustained, and accords best with the connexion. John would be likely to express the hope that he would find pleasure from such an interview. **See Barnes "1Jo 1:4"**.

Compare Ro 1:11,12.

{1} "speak face to face" "mouth to mouth" {2} "our" "your" {c} "joy" 1Jo 1:4

SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *The children of thy elect sister greet thee*. Of this "elect sister" nothing more is known. It would seem probable, from the fact that she is not mentioned as sending her salutations, that she was either dead, or that she was absent. John mentions her, however, as a Christian—as one of the elect or chosen of God.

REMARKS ON THIS EPISTLE.

In view of the exposition of this epistle we may make the following remarks:—

(1.) It is desirable for a family to have a character for piety so consistent and well understood that all who know it shall perceive it and love it, 2Jo 1:1. In the case of this lady and her household, it would seem that, as far as they were known, they were known as a well-ordered Christian household. Such a family John said he loved; and he said that it was loved by all who had any knowledge of them. What is more lovely to the view than such a household? What is better fitted to make an impression on the world favourable to religion?

(2.) It is a matter of great rejoicing when *any* part of a family becomes truly religious, 2Jo 1:4. We should rejoice with our friends, and should render unfeigned thanks to God, if any of their children are converted, and walk in the truth. No greater blessing can descend on a family than the early conversion of children; and as angels rejoice over one sinner that is converted, we should rejoice when the children of our friends are brought to a knowledge of the truth, and devote themselves to God in early life.

(3.) It is our duty to be on our guard against the arts of the teachers of error, 2Jo 1:7. They abound in every age. They are often learned, eloquent, and profound. They study and understand the arts of persuasion. They adapt their instructions to the capacity of those whom they would lead astray. They flatter their vanity; accommodate themselves to their peculiar views and tastes; court their society, and seek to share their friendship. They often appear to be eminently meek, and serious, and devout, and prayerful, for they know that no others can succeed who profess to inculcate the principles of religion. There are few arts more profound than that of leading men into error;

few that are studied more, or with greater success. Every Christian, therefore, should be on his guard against such arts; and while he should on all subjects be open to conviction, and be ready to yield his own opinions when convinced that they are wrong, yet he should yield to *truth*, not to *men*; to *argument*, not to the influence of the *personal character* of the professed religious teacher.

(4.) We may see that it is possible for us to lose a portion of the reward which we *might* enjoy in heaven, 2Jo 1:8. The rewards of heaven will be apportioned to our character, and to our services in the cause of religion in this life, and they who "sow sparingly shall reap also sparingly." Christians often begin their course with great zeal, and as if they were determined to reap the highest rewards of the heavenly world. If they should persevere in the course which they have commenced, they would indeed shine as the stars in the firmament. But, alas! their zeal soon dies away. They relax their efforts, and lose their watchfulness. They engage in some pursuit that absorbs their time, and interferes with their habits of devotion. They connive at error and sin; begin to love the comforts of this life; seek the honours or the riches of this world; and though they may be saved at last, yet they lose half their reward. It should be a fixed purpose with all Christians, and especially with such as are just entering on the Christian life, to wear in heaven a crown as bright and studded with as many jewels *as can possibly be obtained*.

(5.) We may learn from this epistle how to regard and treat the teachers of error, 2Jo 1:10. *We are not to do anything that can be fairly construed as countenancing their doctrines*. This simple rule would guide us to a course that is right. We are to have minds open to conviction. We are to love the truth, and be ever ready to follow it. We are not to be prejudiced against anything. We are to treat all men with kindness; to be true, and just, and faithful in our intercourse with all; to be hospitable, and ever ready to do good to *all* who are needy, whatever their name, colour, rank, or opinions. We are not to cut the ties which bind us to our friends and kindred, though they embrace opinions which we deem erroneous or dangerous; but we are in no way to become the patrons of error, or to leave the impression that we are indifferent as to what is believed. The friends of truth and piety we should receive cordially to our dwellings, and should account ourselves honoured by their presence, (Ps 101:6,7;) strangers we should not forget to entertain, for thereby we may entertain angels unawares, (Heb 13:2;) but the open advocate of what we regard as dangerous error, we are not to receive in any such sense or way as to have our treatment of him fairly construed as patronising his errors, or commending him as a teacher to the favourable regards of our fellow-men. Neither by our influence, our names, our money, our personal friendship, are we to give him increased facilities for spreading pernicious error through the world. As men, as fellow-sufferers, as citizens, as neighbours, as the friends of temperance, of the prisoner, of the widow, the orphan, and the slave, and as the patrons of learning, we may be united in promoting objects dear to our hearts, but as religious teachers we are to show them no countenance, not so much as would be implied in the common form of salutation wishing them success. In all this there is no breach of charity, and no want of true love, for we are to love the truth more than we are the persons of men. To the man himself we should be ever ready to do good. Him we should never injure in any way, in his person, property, or feelings. We should never attempt to deprive him of the right of cherishing his own opinions, and of spreading them in his own way, answerable, not to us, but to God. We should impose no pains or penalties on him for the opinions which he holds. But we should do nothing to give him increased power to propagate them, and should never place ourselves by any alliance of friendship, family, or business, in such a position that we shall not be perfectly free to maintain our own sentiments, and to oppose what we deem to be error, whoever may advocate it.

THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN

THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN - Chapter 1

THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 1

THE THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN.

ANALYSIS OF THE EPISTLE.

THIS brief epistle, written to a Christian whose name was Gaius, of whom nothing more is known, (comp. **See Barnes** "3Jo 1:1,) and in respect to which the time and place of writing it are equally unknown, embraces the following subjects:

I. The address, with an expression of tender attachment, and an earnest wish for his welfare and happiness, 3Jo 1:2.

II. A commendation of his character and doings, as the writer had learned it from some brethren who had visited him particularly;

(a) for his attachment to the truth, and

(b) for his kindness shown to the members of his own church, and to strangers who had gone forth to some work of charity, 3Jo 1:3-8.

III. The writer then adverts to the fact that he had written on this subject to the church, commending these strangers to their attention, but that Diotrephes would not acknowledge his authority, or receive those whom he introduced to them. This conduct, he said, demanded rebuke; and he says that when he himself came, he would take proper measures to assert his own authority, and show to him and to the church the duty of receiving Christian brethren commended to them from abroad, 3Jo 1:9,10.

IV. He exhorts Gaius to persevere in that which was good—in a life of love and kindness, in an imitation of the benevolent God, 3Jo 1:11.

V. Of another person Demetrius—who, it would seem, had been associated with Gaius in the honourable course which he had pursued, in opposition to what the church had done, he also speaks in terms of commendation, and says that the same honourable testimony had been borne of him which had been of Gaius, 3Jo 1:12.

VI. As in the second epistle, he says, in the close, that there were many things which he would be glad to say to him, but there were reasons why they should not be set down "with ink and pen," but he hoped soon to confer with him freely on those subjects face to face, and the epistle is closed by kind salutations, 3Jo 1:13,14.

The *occasion* on which the epistle was written is no farther known than appears from the epistle itself. From this, the following facts are all that can now be ascertained:

(1.) That Gaius was a Christian man, and evidently a member of the church, but of what church is unknown.

(2.) That there were certain persons known to the writer of the epistle, and who either lived where he did, or who had been commended to him by others, who proposed to travel to the place

where Gaius lived. Their particular object is not known, further than that it is said 3Jo 1:7, that they "went for his name's sake;" that is, in the cause of religion. It further appears that they had resolved not to be dependent on the heathen for their support, but wished the favour and friendship of the church—perhaps designing to preach to the heathen, and yet apprehending that if they desired their maintenance from them, it would be charged on them that they were mercenary in their ends.

(3.) In these circumstances, and with this view, the author of this epistle wrote to the church, commending these brethren to their kind and fraternal regards.

(4.) This recommendation, so far as appears, would have been successful, had it not been for one man, Diotrephes, who had so much influence, and who made such violent opposition, that the church refused to receive them, and they became dependent on private charity. The *ground* of the opposition of Diotrephes is not fully stated, but it seems to have arisen from two sources:

(a.) a desire to rule in the church; and

(b.) a particular opposition to the writer of this epistle, and a denial of any obligation to recognise his instructions or commendations as binding. The idea seems to have been that the church was entirely independent, and might receive or reject any whom it pleased, though they were commended to them by an apostle.

(5.) In these circumstances, Gaius, as an individual, and against the action of the church, received and hospitably entertained these strangers, and aided them in the prosecution of their work. In this office of hospitality another member of the church, Demetrius, also shared; and to commend them for this work, particularly Gaius, at whose house probably they were entertained, is the design of this epistle.

(6.) After having returned to the writer of this epistle, who had formerly commended them to the church, and having borne honourable testimony to the hospitality of Gaius, it would seem that they resolved to repeat their journey for the same purpose, and that the writer of the epistle commended them now to the renewed hospitality of Gaius. On this occasion, probably, they bore this epistle to him. **See Barnes** "3Jo 1:6, **See Barnes "3Jo 1:7"**.

Of Diotrephes nothing more is known than is here specified. Erasmus and Bede supposed that he was the author of a new sect; but of this there is no evidence, and if he had been, it is probable that John would have cautioned Gaius against his influence. Many have supposed that he was a bishop or pastor in the church where he resided; but there is no evidence of this, and as John wrote to "*the church*," commending the strangers to *them*, this would seem to be hardly probable. Comp. Re 2:1,8,12,18 3:1,7,14.

Others have supposed that he was a deacon, and had charge of the funds of the church, and that he refused to furnish to these strangers the aid out of the public treasury which they needed, and that by so doing he hindered them in the prosecution of their object. But all this is mere conjecture, and it is now impossible to ascertain what office he held, if he held any. That he was a man of influence is apparent; that he was proud, ambitious, and desirous of ruling, is equally clear; and that he prevailed on the church not to receive the strangers commended to them by the apostle is equally manifest. Of the rank and standing of Demetrius nothing more is known. Benson supposes that he was the bearer of this letter, and that he had gone with the brethren referred to to preach to the Gentiles. But it seems more probable that he was a member of the church to which Gaius belonged, and that he had concurred with him in rendering aid to the strangers who had been rejected by the influence of Diotrephes. If he had gone *with* these strangers, and had carried this letter, it would have been noticed, and it would have been in accordance with the apostolic custom, that he

should have been commended to the favourable attentions of Gaius. In regard to the authenticity and the canonical authority of this epistle, see the Introduction at the beginning of the second epistle.

Verse 1. *The elder*. **See Barnes "2Jo 1:1"**.

Unto the well-beloved Gaius. Three persons of this name are elsewhere mentioned in the New Testament—Gaius, whom Paul in Ro 16:23 calls "his host," and whom he says (1Co 1:15) he baptized, residing at Corinth, (**See Barnes "Ro 16:23"**;) Gaius of Macedonia, one of Paul's companions in travel, who was arrested by an excited mob at Ephesus, (Ac 19:29;)and Gaius of Derbe, who went with Paul and Timothy into Asia, Ac 20:4. Whether either of these persons is referred to here, cannot with certainty be determined. If it were any of them, it was probably the last-mentioned—Gaius of Derbe. There is no objection to the supposition that he was the one, unless it be from the fact that this epistle was probably written many years after the transaction mentioned in Ac 20:4, and the probability that Gaius might not have lived so long. The name was not an uncommon one, and it cannot be determined now who he was, or where he lived. Whether he had any office in the church is unknown, but he seems to have been a man of wealth and influence. The word translated "well-beloved," means simply *beloved*. It shows that he was a personal friend of the writer of this epistle.

Whom I love in the truth, Marg., "or truly." **See Barnes "2Jo 1:1"**.

{1} "in the truth" "truly" Second Epistle, ver. 1.

THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Beloved, I wish above all things*. Marg., *pray*. The word used here commonly means in the New Testament to pray; but it is also employed to express a strong and earnest desire for anything, Ac 27:29 Ro 9:3; 2Co 13:9.

This is probably all that is implied here. The phrase rendered "above all things"—*peri pantwn*—would be more correctly rendered here "concerning, or in respect to all things ;" and the idea is, that John wished earnestly *that in all respects* he might have the same kind of prosperity which his soul had. The common translation "*above* all things" would seem to mean that John valued health and outward prosperity more than he did anything else; that he wished that more than his usefulness or salvation. This cannot be the meaning, and is not demanded by the proper interpretation of the original. See this shown by Locke, *in loc*. The sense is, "In every respect, I wish that it may go as well with you as it does with your soul; that in your worldly prosperity, your comfort, and your bodily health, you may be as prosperous as you are in your religion." This is the reverse of the wish which we are commonly constrained to express for our friends; for such is usually the comparative want of prosperity and advancement in their spiritual interests, that it is an expression of benevolence to desire that they might prosper in that respect as much as they do in others.

That thou mayest prosper, *euodousyai*. This word occurs in the New Testament only in the following places: Ro 1:10, rendered *have a prosperous journey*; 1Co 16:2, rendered *hath prospered*; and in the passage before us. It means, properly, *to lead in a good way; to prosper one's journey*; and then to make prosperous; to give success to; to be prospered. It would apply here to any plan or purpose entertained. It would include success in business, happiness in domestic relations, or prosperity in any of the engagements and transactions in which a Christian might lawfully engage.

It shows that it is right to wish that our friends may have success in the works of their hands and their plans of life.

And be in health. To enjoy bodily health. It is not necessary to suppose, in order to a correct interpretation of this, that Gaius was at that time suffering from bodily indisposition, though perhaps it is most natural to suppose that, as John makes the wish for his health so prominent. But it is common, in all circumstances, to wish for the health and prosperity of our friends; and it is as proper as it is common, if we do not give that a degree of prominence above the welfare of the soul.

Even as thy soul prospereth. John had learned, it would seem, from the "brethren" who had come to him, (3Jo 1:3,) that Gaius was living as became a Christian; that he was advancing in the knowledge of the truth, and was exemplary in the duties of the Christian life; and he prays that in all other respects he might be prospered as much as he was in that. It is not *very* common that a man is more prospered in his spiritual interests than he is in his other interests, or that we can, in our wishes for the welfare of our friends, make the prosperity of the soul, and the practice and enjoyment of religion, the standard of our wishes in regard to other things. It argues a high state of piety when we can, as the expression of our highest desire for the welfare of our friends, express the hope that they may be in all respects as much prospered as they are in their spiritual concerns.

{2} "I wish" "I pray"

THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *For I rejoiced greatly when the brethren came*. Who these were is not certainly known. They may have been members of the same church with Gaius, who, for some reason, had visited the writer of this epistle; or they may have been the "brethren" who had gone from him with a letter of commendation to the church, (1Jo 1:9,) and had been rejected by the church through the influence of Diotrephes, and who, after having been hospitably entertained by Gaius, had again returned to the writer of this epistle. In that case, they would of course bear honourable testimony to the kindness which they had received from Gaius, and to his Christian character.

And testified of the truth that is in thee. That you adhere steadfastly to the truth, notwithstanding the fact that errors abound, and that there are many false teachers in the world.

Even as thou walkest in the truth. Livest in accordance with the truth. The writer had made the same remark of the children of Cyria, to whom the second epistle was directed. **See Barnes "2Jo 1:4"**.

{a} "walkest" 2Jo 1:4

THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth*. That they adhere steadfastly to the truth, and that they live in accordance with it. This is such language as would be used by an aged apostle when speaking of those who had been converted by his instrumentality, and who looked up to him as a father; and we may, therefore, infer that Gaius had been converted under the ministry of John, and that he was probably a much younger man than he was. John, the

aged apostle, says that he had no higher happiness than to learn, respecting those who regarded him as their spiritual father, that they were steadfast in their adherence to the doctrines of religion. The same thing may be said now

(a.) of all the ministers of the gospel, that their highest comfort is found in the fact that those to whom they minister, whether still under their care or removed from them, persevere in a steadfast attachment to the true doctrines of religion, and live accordingly; and

(b.) of all Christian parents respecting their own children. The highest joy that a Christian parent can have is to know that his children, whether at home or abroad, adhere to the truths of religion, and live in accordance with the requirements of the gospel of Christ. If a child wished to confer the highest possible happiness on his parents when with them, it would be by becoming a decided Christian; if, when abroad, in foreign lands or his own, he wished to convey intelligence to them that would most thrill their hearts with joy, it would be to announce to them that he had given his heart to God. There is no joy in a family like that when children are converted; there is no news that comes from abroad that diffuses so much happiness through the domestic circle as the intelligence that a child is truly converted to the Saylout. There is nothing that would give more peace to the dying pillow of the Christian parent, than to be able to leave the world with the assurance that his children would always walk in truth.

{b} "joy" Pr 23:24

THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Beloved, thou doest faithfully*. In the previous verses the writer had commended Gaius for his attachment to truth, and his general correctness in his Christian life. He now speaks more particularly of his acts of generous hospitality, and says that he had fully, in that respect, done his duty as a Christian.

Whatsoever thou doest. In all your intercourse with them, and in all your conduct towards them. The particular thing which led to this remark was his hospitality; but the testimony respecting his general conduct had been such as to justify this commendation.

To the brethren. Probably to Christians who were well known to him—perhaps referring to Christians in his own church.

And to strangers. Such as had gone to the church of which he was a member with a letter of commendation from John. **See Barnes** "Ro 12:13, and **See Barnes "Heb 13:2"**.

{c} "faithfully" 1Pe 4:10

THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church*. It would seem that they had returned to John, and borne honourab1e testimony to the love manifested to them by Gaius. Before *what* church they had borne this testimony is unknown. Perhaps it was the church in Ephesus.

Whom if thou bring forward on their journey, ouv propemqav. "Whom bringing forward, or having brought forward." The word refers to aid rendered them in their journey, in facilitating their travels, either by personally accompanying them, by furnishing them the means of prosecuting their journey, or by hospitably entertaining them. Probably Gains aided them in every way in which it was practicable. It has been made a question whether this refers to the fact that he *had* thus aided them in some visit which they had made to the church where Gaius was, or to a visit which they purposed to make. The Greek would seem to favour the latter construction, and yet it would appear from the epistle, that the "brethren and strangers" actually had been with him; that they had been rejected by the church through the influence of Diotrephes, and had been thrown upon the hospitality of Gaius, and that they had returned, and had borne honourable testimony to his hospitality. These views can be reconciled by supposing, as Loicke does, that having been once on their travels, and having shared the hospitality of Gaius, they were purposing to visit that region again, and that John, praising him for his former hospitality, commends them again to him, stating the reason (3Jo 1:9,10) why he did not, in accordance with the usual custom, recommend them to the care of the church. They had now gone out (3Jo 1:7) on the same errand on which they had formerly gone, and they had now equal claims to the hospitality of the friends of religion.

After a godly sort. Margin, as in Greek, *worthy of God*. The meaning is, As becomes those who serve God; or as becomes those who are professors of his religion.

Thou shalt do well. You will do that which religion requires in these circumstances.

{d} "forward on their journey" Ac 15:3 {3} "after a godly sort" "worthy of God"

THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Because that for his name's sake*. The word "*his*" here refers to God; and the idea is, that they had undertaken this journey not on their own account, but in the cause of religion.

They went forth. Or, *they have gone forth—exhlyon—* referring to the journey which they had then undertaken; not to the former one.

Taking nothing of the Gentiles. The term Gentile embraced all who were not Jews, and it is evident that these persons went forth particularly to labour among the heathen. When they went, they resolved, it seems, to receive no part of their support from them, but to depend on the aid of their Christian brethren, and hence they were at first commended to the church of which Gains and Diotrephes were members, and on this second excursion were commended particularly to Gains.

Why they resolved to take nothing of the Gentiles is not stated, but it was doubtless from prudential considerations, lest it should hinder their success among them, and expose them to the charge of being actuated by a mercenary spirit. There were circumstances in the early propagation of Christianity which made it proper, in order to avoid this reproach, to preach the gospel "without charge," though the doctrine is everywhere laid down in the Bible that it is the *duty* of those to whom it is preached to contribute to its maintenance, and that it is the *right* of those who preach to expect and receive a support. On this subject, **See Barnes** "1Co 9:15, **See Barnes "1Co 9:18"**.

{a} "taking nothing" 1Co 9:15,18

THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *We therefore ought to receive such*. All of us ought hospitably to entertain and aid such persons. The work in which they are engaged is one of pure benevolence. They have no selfish aims and ends in it. They do not even look for the supplies of their wants among the people to whom they go to minister; and we ought, therefore, to aid them in their work, and to contribute to their support. The apostle doubtless meant to urge this duty particularly on Gaius; but in order to show that he recognised tile obligation himself, he uses the term "*we*," and speaks of it as a duty binding on all Christians.

That we might be fellow-helpers to the truth. All Christians cannot go forth to preach the gospel, but all may contribute something to the support of those who do; and in this case they would have a joint participation in the work of spreading the truth. The same reasoning which was applicable to that case, is also applicable now in regard to the duty of supporting those who go forth to preach the gospel to the destitute.

{b} "receive such" Mt 10:40 {*} "fellow helpers to the truth" "Fellow-workers in"

THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *I wrote unto the church*. That is, on the former occasion when they went forth. At that time, John naturally commended them to the kind attentions of the church, not doubting but that aid would be rendered them in prosecuting their benevolent work among the Gentiles. The epistle which was written on that occasion is now lost, and its contents cannot now be ascertained. It was, probably, however, a letter of mere commendation, perhaps stating the object which these brethren had in view, and soliciting the aid of the church. The Latin Vulgate renders this, *scripsissem forsian ecclesia*, "*I would have written*, perhaps, to the church, but Diotrephes," etc. Macknight also renders this, "I would have written," supposing the sense to be, that John would have commended them to the whole church rather than to a private member, if he had not been aware of the influence and opposition of Diotrephes. The Syriac version also adopts the same rendering. Several manuscripts also, of later date, introduced a particle, (*en*,) by which the same rendering would be demanded in the Greek, though that reading is not sustained by good authority. Against this mode of rendering the passage, the reasons seem to me to be clear.

(1.) As already remarked, the reading in the Greek which would require it is not sustained by good authority.

(2.) The fair and obvious interpretation of the Greek word used by the apostle, (*egraqa*,) without that particle, is, *I wrote* —implying that it had been already done.

(3.) It is more probable that John had written to the church on some former occasion, and that his recommendation had been rejected by the influence of Diotrephes, than that he would be deterred by the apprehension that his recommendation would be rejected. It seems to me, therefore, that the fair interpretation of this passages is, that these brethren had gone forth on some former occasion, commended by John to the church, and had been rejected by the influence of Diotrephes, and that now he commends them to Gaius, by whom they had been formerly entertained, and asks him to renew his hospitality to them.

But Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminenee among them, reeeiveth us not. Does not admit our authority, or would not comply with any such recommendation. The idea is, that he rejected his interference in the matter, and was not disposed to acknowledge him in any way. Of Diotrephes, nothing more is known than is here specified. Compare the analysis of the epistle. Whether he were an officer in the church—a pastor, a ruling elder, a deacon, a vestryman, a warden, or a private individual—we have no means of ascertaining. The presumption, from the phrase "who *loveth* to have the pre-eminence," would rather seem to be that he was an aspiring man, arrogating rights which he had not, and assuming authority to which he was not entitled by virtue of any office. Still he might have held an office, and might have arrogated authority, as many have done, beyond what properly belonged to it. The single word rendered "who *loveth* to have the pre-eminence," (*filoprwteuwn*,) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means simply, who loves to be first—meaning that he loved to be at the head of all things, to rule, to lord it over others. It is clearly supposed here, that the church would have complied with the request of the writer if it had not been for this man. What were the *alleged* grounds for the course which he constrained the church to take, we are not informed; the real ground, the apostle says, was his desire to rule. There may have been at the bottom of it some secret dislike of John, or some private grudge; but the alleged ground may have been, that the church was independent, and that it should reject all foreign interference; or that the church was unable to support those men; or that the work in which they were engaged was one of doubtful propriety. Whatever was the *cause*, the case furnishes an illustration of the bad influence of one ambitious and arrogant man in a church. It is often in the power of one such man to bring a whole church under his control, and effectually to embarrass all its movements, and to prevent all the good which it would otherwise accomplish. When it is said, "but Diotrephes *receiveth us not*," the reference is doubtless to John, and the meaning is, either that he did not acknowledge him as an apostle, or that he did not recognise his right to interfere in the affairs of the church, or that he did not regard his recommendation of these brethren. The first of these suppositions is hardly probable; but, though he may have admitted that he was an apostle, there were perhaps some reasons operating in this particular case why he prevailed on the church to reject those who had been thus commended to their hospitality.

{c} "pre-eminence" Mt 23:4-8

THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Wherefore, if I come*. He was evidently expecting soon to make a visit to Gaius, and to the church, 3Jo 1:14.

I will remember his deeds which he doeth. That is, he would punish his arrogance and presumption; would take measures that he should be dealt with in a proper manner. There is no evidence whatever that this is said in a vindictive or revengeful spirit, or that the writer spoke of it merely as a personal matter. From anything that can be shown to the contrary, if it had been a private and personal affair merely, the matter might have been dropped, and never referred to again. But what had been done was public. It pertained to the authority of the apostle, the duty of the church, and the character of the brethren who had been commended to them. If the letter was written, as is supposed by the aged John, and his authority had been utterly rejected by the influence of this

one man, then it was proper that that authority should be asserted. If it was the duty of the church to have received these men, who had been thus recommended to them, and it had been prevented from doing what it would otherwise have done, by the influence of one man, then it was proper that the influence of that man should be restrained, and that the church should see that he was not to control it. If the feelings and the character of these brethren had been injured by being rudely thrust out of the church, and held up as unworthy of public confidence, then it was proper that their character should be vindicated, and that the author of the wrong should be dealt with in a suitable manner. No one can show that this was not all that the apostle proposed to do, or that any feelings of private vindictiveness entered into his purpose to "remember" what Diotrephes had done; and the existence of any such feelings should not be charged on the apostle without proof. There is no more reason to suppose this in his case than there was in the case of Paul, in administering discipline in the church of Corinth, (1Co 5:3-5,) or than there is in any instance of administering discipline now.

Prating against us. The word *prate*, (*fluarew*,) occurring nowhere else in the New Testament, means to" overflow with talk," (Gr. *fluw*, Lat. *fluo*, flow;) to talk much without weight, or to little purpose; to be loquacious; to trifle; or, to use an expression common among us, and which accords well with the Greek, to *run on* in talk, without connexion or sense. The word does not properly imply that there was malignity or ill-feeling in what was said, but that the talk was of an idle, foolish, and unprofitable character. As John here, however, specifies that there was a bad spirit in the manner in which Diotrephes expressed himself, the real thing which is implied in the use of the word here is, that there were *much* talk of that kind; that he was addicted to this habit of *running on* against the apostle; and that he was thus constantly undermining his influence, and injuring his character.

With malicious words. Gr., "*evil* words;" words that were fitted to do injury.

And not content therewith. Not satisfied with venting his private feelings in talk. Some persons seem to be satisfied with merely talking against others, and take no other measures to injure them; but Diotrephes was not. He himself rejected the brethren, and persuaded the church to do the same thing. Bad as evil talking is, and troublesome as a man may be who is always "prating" about matters that do not go according to his mind, yet it would be comparatively well if things always ended with that, and if the loquacious and the dissatisfied never took measures openly to wrong others.

Neither doth he himself receive the brethren. Does not himself treat them as Christian brethren, or with the hospitality which is due to them. He had not done it on the former visit, and John evidently supposed that the same thing would occur again.

And forbiddeth them that would. From this it is clear that there were those in the church who were disposed to receive them in a proper manner; and from anything that appears, the church, as such, would have been inclined to do it, if it had not been for the influence of this one man.

And casteth them out of the church. Comp. Lu 6:22. It has been made a question whether the reference here is to the members of the church who were disposed to receive these brethren, or to the brethren themselves. Locke, Macknight, and some others, suppose that it refers to those in the church who were willing to receive them, and whom Diotrephes had excommunicated on that account. Heumann, Carpzoviius, Rosenmuller, Bloomfield, and others, suppose that it refers to these strangers, and that the meaning is, that Diotrephes would not receive them into the society of Christians, and thus compelled them to go to another place. That this latter is the correct

interpretation seems to me to be evident, for it was of the treatment which they had received that the apostle was speaking.

{a} "casteth them out" Isa 66:5

THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good*. There can be no doubt that in this exhortation the writer had Diotrephes particularly in his eye, and that he means to exhort Gaius not to imitate his example. He was a man of influence in the church, and though Gaius had shown that he was disposed to act in an independent manner, yet it was not improper to exhort him not to be influenced by the example of any one who did wrong. John wished to excite him to acts of liberal and generous hospitality.

He that doeth good is of God. He shows that he resembles God, for God continually does good. See the sentiment explained **See Barnes "1Jo 3:7".**

He that doeth evil hath not seen God. **See Barnes "1Jo 1:8"**

See Barnes "3Jo 1:9".

See Barnes "3Jo 1:10"

{*} "follow" "imitate" {b} "not" Ps 37:27 {c} "He" 1Jo 3:6-9

THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Demetrius hath good report of all men*. Little is known of Demetrius. Locke supposes that he resided near the place where the author of this epistle lived, and was connected with the church there, and was probably the bearer of this epistle. It is impossible to determine with certainty on this point, but there is one circumstance which seems to make it probable that he was a member of the same church with Gaius, and had united with him in showing Christian hospitality to these strangers. It is the use of the phrase "hath good report of all," implying that some *testimony* was borne to his character beyond what the writer personally knew. It is possible, indeed, that the writer would have used this term respecting him if he lived in the same place with himself, as expressing the fact that he bore a good character, but it is a phrase which would be more appropriately used if we suppose that he was a member of the same church with Gaius, and that John means to say that an honourable testimony was borne of his character by all those brethren, and by all others as far as he knew.

And of the truth itself. Not only by men, who might possibly be deceived in the estimate of character, but by *fact*. It was not merely a reputation founded on what *appeared* in his conduct, but in truth and reality. His deportment, his life, his deeds of benevolence, all concurred with the testimony which was borne by men to the excellency of his character. There is, perhaps, particular reference here to his kind and hospitable treatment of those brethren.

Yea, and we also bear record. John himself had personally known him. He had evidently visited the place where he resided on some former occasion, and could now add his own testimony, which no one would call in question, to his excellent character.

And ye know that our record is true. This is in the manner of John, who always spoke of himself as having such a character for truth that no one who knew him would call it in question. Every Christian *should* have such a character; every man *might* if he would. Compare **See Barnes "Joh 19:35 21:24".**

{+} "all men" It is well spoken of by all" {++} "of the truth itself" "By" {&} "record" "witness"

THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *I had many things to write*, etc. This epistle closes, as the second does, with a statement that he had many things to say, but that he preferred waiting till he should see him rather than put them on paper. Perhaps there were some things which he wished to say which he would not like to have exposed to the possibility of being seen by the public eye.

But I will not with ink and pen, etc. **See Barnes "2Jo 1:12".**

THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN - Chapter 1 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *But I trust I shall shortly see thee*, etc. **See Barnes "2Jo 1:12".**

Our friends salute thee. That is, your friends and mine. This would seem rather to refer to private friends of John and Gaius than to Christians as such. They had, doubtless, their warm personal friends in both places.

Greet the friends by name. That is, each one individually. He remembered them as individuals, but did not deem it proper to specify them.

{1} "face to face" "mouth to mouth"

PRACTICAL REMARKS ON THE EPISTLE.

(1.) It is proper to desire for our friends all temporal good; to wish their happiness in every respect, 3Jo 1:2. The welfare of the soul is indeed the great object, and the first desire in regard to a friend should be that his salvation may be secured; but in connexion with that we may properly wish them health of body, and success in their lawful undertakings. It is not common that in their spiritual interests they are so much more prosperous than they are in other respects that we can make that the standard of our wishes in regard to them, but it sometimes does occur, as in the case of Gaius. In such cases we may indeed rejoice with a friend, and feel that all will be well with him. But in how few cases, even among professed Christians, can we with propriety make the prosperity of the soul the standard by which to measure the happiness which we desire for them in other respects! Doddridge says, "What a curse would this bring upon many to wish that they might prosper even as their souls prospered!" Of how much property would they at once be deprived; how

embarrassed would be their affairs; how pale, and wan, and sickly would they be, if they should be in all respects as they are in their spiritual interests!

(2.) It is an unspeakable pleasure to a Christian to learn that his friends are living and acting as becomes sincere Christians; that they love what is true, and abound in the duties of hospitality, charity, and benevolence, 3Jo 1:3-6. When a friend learns this of a distant friend; when a pastor learns this of his people from whom he may be for a time separated; when those who have been instrumental in converting others learn this of their spiritual children; when a parent learns it of a son or daughter separated from him; when a teacher learns it of those who were formerly under his care, there is no joy that goes more directly to the heart than this—nothing that fills the soul with more true thankfulness and peace.

(3.) It is the duty and the privilege of those who love the cause of religion to go and preach the gospel to those who are destitute, expecting to receive nothing from them, and doing it as a work of pure benevolence, 3Jo 1:7. The missionary spirit existed early in the Christian church, and indeed may be regarded as the *prevailing* spirit in those times. It has always been the prevailing spirit when religion has flourished in the church. At such times there have been many who were willing to leave their own quiet homes, and the religieus privileges connected with a well-organized church, and to break away from the ties which bind to country and kindred, and to go among a distant people to publish salvation. In this cause, and with this spirit, the apostles spent their lives. In this cause, the "brethren" referred to by John went forth to labour. In this cause, thousands have laboured in former times, and to the fact that they were *willing* to do it is to be traced all the happy influence of religion in the world. Our own religious privileges now we owe to the fact that in former times there were those who were willing to "go forth taking nothing of the Gentiles," devoting themselves, without hope of reward or fame, to the business of making known the name of the Saviour in what were then the dark places of the earth. The same principle is acted on now in Christian missions, and with the same propriety; and as we in Christian lands owe the blessings which we enjoy to the fact that in former times there were those who were willing thus to go forth, so it will be true that the richest blessings which are to descend on India, and Africa, and the islands of the sea, will be traced in future times to the fact that there are in *our* age those who are willing to follow the example of the apostles in going forth to do good to a dying world.

(4.) It is our duty to contribute to the support of those who thus go among the heathen, and to aid them ill every way in which we can promote the object which they have in view. So John felt it to be the duty of the church in regard to those who went forth in his time; and so, when the church, under the influence of Diotrephes, had refused to do it, he commended Gaius for performing that duty, 3Jo 1:6,8. Now, as then, from the nature of the case, missionaries to the heathen must go "taking nothing" of those among whom they labour, and expecting that, for a long time at least, they will do nothing for their support. They go as strangers. They go to those who do not believe the truth of the gospel; who are attached to their own superstitions; who contribute largely to the support of their own temples, and altars, and priesthood; who are, as yet, incapable of appreciating the value of a purer religion; who have no desire for it, and who are disposed to reject it. In many cases, the heathen to whom the missionary goes are miserably poor, and it is only this religion, which as yet they are not disposed to receive, that can elevate them to habits of industry, and furnish them with the means of supporting religious teachers from abroad. Under these circumstances, no duty is more obvious than that of contributing to the support of those who go to such places as Christian missionaries. If the churches value the gospel enough to send their brethren among the

heathen to propagate it, they should value it enough to minister to their wants when there; if they regard it as the duty of any of their number to leave their comfortable homes in a Christian land in order to preach to the heathen, they should feel that those who go make far greater sacrifices than those who contribute to their support. *They* give up all; we give only the small sum, not diminishing our own comforts, which is needful to sustain them.

(5.) For the same reason it is our duty to contribute to the support of missionaries in the destitute places of our own land, 3Jo 1:8. They often go among a people who are as destitute, and who will as little appreciate the gospel, and who are as much prejudiced against it, and who are as poor, as the heathen. They are as likely to be charged with being actuated by mercenary motives, if they ask for support, as missionaries among the heathen are. They often go among people as little able and disposed to build churches and school-houses as the heathen are. Nothing is more obvious, therefore, than that those who have the gospel, and who have learned to prize and value it in some measure as it should be, should contribute to the support of those who go to convey its blessings to others, until those to whom they go shall so learn to prize it as to be able and willing to maintain it. That, under a faithful ministry, and with the Divine blessing, will not be long; for the gospel *always*, when it secures a hold in a community, makes men feel that it confers infinitely more blessings than it takes away, and that, even in a pecuniary point of view, it contributes more by far than it takes. What community is more prospered, or is more rich in all that promotes the temporal welfare of man, than that where the gospel has the most decided influence?

(6.) We may see from this epistle that churches ought to be united in promoting the cause of religion, 3Jo 1:8,9. They should regard it as a common cause in which one has as much concern as another, and where each should feel it a privilege to co-operate with his brethren. One church, in proportion to its ability, has as much interest in the spread of Christianity as another, and should feel that it has much responsibility in doing it. Between different churches there should be that measure of confidence and love that they will deem it a privilege to aid each other in the common cause, and that one shall be ready to further the benevolent designs undertaken by another. In every Christian land, and among the people of every Christian denomination, missionaries of the gospel should find friends who will be willing to co-operate with them in advancing the common cause, and who, though they may bear a different, lame, and may speak a different language, should cheerfully lend their aid in spreading the common Christianity.

(7.) We may see, from this epistle, the evil of having one troublesome man in the church, 3Jo 1:10. Such a man, by his talents, his address, his superior learning, his wealth, or by his arrogance, pride, and self-confidence, may control a church, and effectually hinder its promoting the work of religion. The church referred to by the apostle would have done,its duty well enough, if it had not been for one ambitious and worldly man. No one can properly estimate the evil which one such man can do, nor the calamity which comes upon a church when such a man places himself at its head. As a man of wealth, of talents, and of learning, may do great good, if his heart is right, so may a man similarly endowed do proportionate evil if his heart is wicked. Yet how often has the spirit which actuated Diotrephes prevailed in the church! There is nothing that confers so much power on men as the control in religious matters; and hence, in all ages, proud and ambitious men have sought dominion over the conscience, and have sought to bring the sentiments of men on religion to subjection to their will.

(8.) There may be circumstances where it is proper—where it is a duty—to receive those who have been cast out of the church, 3Jo 1:8. The decisions of a church, under some proud and ambitious

partisan leader, are often eminently unjust and harsh. The most modest, humble, devoted, and zealous men, under a charge of heresy, or of Rome slight aberration from the formulas of doctrine, may be cast out as unworthy to be reeognised as ministers of the gospel, or even as unworthy to have a place at the table of the Lord. Some of the best men on earth have been thus disowned by the church; and it is no certain evidence against a man when he is denounced as a heretic, or disowned as a member, by those who bear the Christian name. If we are satisfied that a man is a Christian, we should receive him as such, however he may be regarded by others; nor should we hesitate to help him forward in his Christian course, or in any way to assist him to do good.

(9.) Finally, let us learn from the examples commended in this brief epistle, to do good. Let us follow the example of Gaius—the hospitable Christian; the large-hearted philanthropist; the friend of the stranger; the helper of those who were engaged in the cause of the Lord—a man who opened his heart and his house to welcome them when driven out and disowned by others. Let us imitate Demetrius, in obtaining a good report of those who know us; in so living that, if the aged apostle John were still on earth, we might be worthy of his commendation, and more than all, of the approbation of that gracious Saviour before whom these good men have long since gone, and in whose presence we also must soon appear.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE - Chapter 1

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE - Chapter 1 - Verse 1

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE.

INTRODUCTION.

I. THE AUTHOR OF THIS EPISTLE. LITTLE is known of the author of this brief epistle. He styles himself (Jude 1:1) "the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James;" but there has been some difference of opinion as to what James is meant. He does not call himself an apostle, but supposes that the terms which he uses would sufficiently identify him, and would be a sufficient reason for his addressing his brethren in the manner in which he does in this epistle. There were two of the name of James among the apostles, (Lu 6:14,15) and it has been made a question of which of them he was the brother. There were also two of the name of Judas, or Jude; but there is no difficulty in determining which of them was the author of this epistle, for the other had the surname of Iscariot, and was the traitor. In the catalogue of the apostles given by Matthew Mt 10:3, the tenth place is given to an apostle who is there called "Lebbeus, whose surname was Thaddeus;" and as this name does not occur in the list given by Luke, Lu 7:15 and as the tenth place in the catalogue is occupied by "Simon, called Zelotes," and as he afterwards mentions "Judas the brother of James," it is supposed that Lebbeus and Judas were the same persons. It was not uncommon for persons to have two or more names. Comp. Robinson's Harmony of the Gospels, 40; Bacon's Lives of Apostles, p. 447; and Michaelis, iv., 365. The title which he assumes, "brother of James," was evidently chosen because the James referred to was well-known, and because the fact that he was his brother would be a sufficient designation of himself, and of his right to address Christians in this manner. The name of the elder James, who was slain by Herod, Ac 12:2, can hardly be supposed to be referred to, as he had been dead some time when this epistle is supposed to have been written; and as that James was the brother of John, who was then living, it would have been much more natural for him to have mentioned that he was the brother of that beloved disciple. The other James— "James the Less," or "James the Just"— was still living; was a prominent man in Jerusalem; and was, besides, known as" the brother of the Lord Jesus;" and the fact of relationship to that James would sufficiently designate the writer. There can be little doubt, therefore, that this is the James here intended. In regard to his character and influence, see Intro. to the Epistle of James, 1. If the author of this epistle was the brother of that James, it was sufficient to refer to that fact, without mentioning that he was an apostle, in order to give to his epistle authority, and to settle its canonical character. Of Jude little is known. His name is found in the list of the apostles, but, besides that, it is but once mentioned in the Gospels. The only thing that is preserved of him in the Evangelists, is a question which he put to the Saviour, on the eve of his crucifixion. The Saviour had said, in his parting address to his disciples, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is

that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him." In regard to the meaning of this remark, Judas is said to have asked the following question: "Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" Joh 14:21,22. To this question the Saviour gave him a kind and satisfactory answer, and that is the last that is said of him in the Gospels. Of his subsequent life we know little. In Ac 15:22, he is mentioned as surnamed "Barsabas," and as being sent with Paul and Barnabas and Silas to Antioch. Paulinus says that he preached in Lybia, and that his body remained there. Jerome affirms, that after the ascension he was sent to Edessa, to king Abgarus; and the modern Greeks say that he preached in that city, and throughout Mesopotamia, and in Judea, Samaria, Idumea, Syria, and principally in Armenia and Persia.—Calmet's Diet. Nothing certainly can be known in reference to the field of his labours, or to the place and circumstances of his death. On the question whether the Thaddeus who first preached the gospel in Syria was the same person as Jude, see Michaelis, Introduction iv., 367—371.

II—-THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE EPISTLE.

If this epistle was written by the apostle Jude, the brother of James and of our Lord, there can be no doubt of its canonical authority, and its claim to a place in the New Testament. It is true that he does not call himself art apostle, but simply mentions himself as "a servant of Jesus Christ, and a brother of James." By this appellation, however, he has practically made it known that he was one of the apostles, for all who had a catalogue of the apostles, would know "that Judas, the brother of James," was one of them. At the same time, as the relation of James to our Lord was well understood, Ga 1:19, his authority would be recognised as soon as he was known to be the author of the epistle. It may be asked, indeed, if he was an apostle, why he did not call himself such; and why he did not seek to give authority and currency to his epistle, by adverting to the fact that he was the "Lord's brother." To the first of these questions, it may be replied, that to have called himself "Judas, the apostle," would not have designated him so certainly, as to call himself" the brother of James;" and besides, the naked title, "Judas, the apostle," was one which he might not choose to see applied to himself. After the act of the traitor, and the reproach which he had brought upon that name, it is probable that he would prefer to designate himself by some other appellation than one which had such associations connected with it. It may be added, also, that in several of his epistles Paul himself does not make use of the name apostle, Php 1:1 1Th 1:1; 2Th 1:1 Phm 1:1.

To the second question, it may be replied, that modesty may have kept him from applying to himself the title, the" Lord's brother." Even James never uses it of himself; and we only know that he sustained this relation from an incidental remark of the apostle Paul, Ga 1:19.

Great honour would be attached to that relationship, and it is possible that the reason why it was not referred to by James and Jude was an apprehension that it might produce jealousy, as if they claimed some special pre-eminence over their brethren. For the evidence of the canonical authority of this epistle, the reader is referred to Lardner, vol. vi., pp. 304—313, and to Michaelis, Intro. vol. iv., p. 374, seq. Michaelis, chiefly on the internal evidence, supposes that it is not an inspired production. There were indeed, at first, doubts about its being inspired, as there were respecting the epistle of James, and the second epistle of Peter, but those doubts were ultimately removed, and it was received as a canonical epistle. Clemens of Alexandria cites the epistle under Jude's name, as the production of a prophetic mind. Origen calls it a production full of heavenly grace. Eusebius says that his predecessors were divided in opinion respecting it, and that it was not ranked among the universally-acknowledged writings. It was not universally received among the

Syrians, and is not found in the Peschite, the oldest Syriac version of the Scriptures. In the time of Jerome, however, it came to be ranked among the other sacred Scriptures as of Divine authority.—Hug, Introduction, 180. The principal grounds of doubt in regard to the canonical authority of the epistle, arose from the supposed fact that the author has quoted two apocryphal writings, Jud 1:9,14. The consideration of this objection will be more appropriate in the Notes on those verses, for it obviously depends much on the true interpretation of these passages. I shall, therefore, reserve what I have to say on that point to the exposition of those verses. Those who are disposed to examine it at length, may consult Hug, Intro., 183; Lardner, vi. 309-314, and Michaelis, Intro., iv., 378, seq.

III. THE QUESTION WHEN THE EPISTLE WAS WRITTEN, TO WHOM AND ITS DESIGN

NOTHING can be determined with entire certainty in regard to the persons to whom this epistle was written. Witsius supposed that it was addressed to Christians everywhere; Hammond, that it was addressed to Jewish Christians alone, who were scattered abroad, and that its design was to secure them against the errors of the Gnostics; Benson, that it was directed to Jewish believers, especially to those of the western dispersion; Lardner, that it was written to all, without distinction, who had embraced the gospel. The principal argument for supposing that it was addressed to Jewish converts is, that the apostle refers mainly for proof to Hebrew writings, but this might be sufficiently accounted tbr by the fact that the writer himself was of Jewish origin. The only way of determining anything on this point is from the epistle itself. The inscription is, "To them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called," Jude 1:1. From this it would appear evident that he had no particular classes of Christians in his eye, whether of Jewish or Gentile origin, but that he designed the epistle for the general use of all who had embraced the Christian religion. The errors which he combats in the epistle were evidently wide-spread, and were of such a nature that it was proper to warn all Christians against them. They might, it is true, be more prevalent in some quarters than in others, but still they were so common that Christians everywhere should be put on their guard against them. The *design* for which Jude wrote the epistle he has himself stated, Jude 1:3. It was with reference to the "common salvation"— the doctrines pertaining to salvation which were held by *all* Christians, and to show them the reasons for "contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." That faith was assailed. There were teachers of error abroad. They were insinuating and artful men—men who had crept in unawares, and who, while they professed to hold the Christian doctrine, were really undermining its faith, and spreading corruption through the church. The *purpose*, therefore, of the epistle is to put those to whom it was written on their guard against the corrupt teachings of these men, and to encourage them to stand up manfully for the great principles of Christian truth.

Who these errorists were, it is not easy now to determine. The leading charge against them, both by Jude and Peter, (2Pe 2:1,) is, that they denied our Lord, (Jude 1:4;) and yet it is said that they were numbered among Christians, and were found in their assemblies, 2Pe 2:13; Jude 1:12. By this denial, however, we are not to suppose that they literally and professedly denied that Jesus was the Christ, but that they held doctrines which amounted to a denial of him in fact. **See Barnes "2Pe 2:1".**

For the general characteristics of these teachers, see Intro. to 2 Pet. % 4.

At this distance of time, and with our imperfect knowledge of the characteristics of the early erroneous sects in the church, it is difficult to determine precisely who they were. It has been a common opinion, that reference is had by Peter and Jude to the sect of the Nicolaitanes; and this

Opinion, Hug remarks, is "neither improbable nor incompatible with the expressions of the two apostles, so far as we have any certain knowledge concerning this sect." "The statements of the ancients, in regard to their profligacy and their detestable course of life, are so consonant with each other and with the charges of the apostles, that the two epistles may be pertinently considered as referring to them."—Introduction, % 182.

It is not possible to ascertain with certainty the time when the epistle was written. There are no marks of time in it by which that can be known, nor is there any account among the early Christian writers which determines this. Benson supposes that it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, a few weeks or months after the second epistle ofPeter; Mill, that it was written about A.D. 90; Dodwell and Cave, that it was written after the destruction of Jerusalem, in the year 71 or 72; L'Enfant and Beausobre, that it was between the year 70 and 75; Witsius and Estius, that it was in the apostle's old age; Lardner, that it was about the year 65 or 66; Michaelis, that it was before the destruction of Jerusalem; and Macknight, that it was in the latter part of the apostolic age, and not long before the death of Jude. All this, it is manifest, is mostly conjecture. There are only *two* things, it seems to me, in the epistle, which can be regarded as *any* indication of the time. One is the striking resemblance to the second epistle of Peter, referring clearly to the same kind of errors, and warning those whom he addressed against the arts of the same kind of teachers, thus showing that it was written at about the same time as that epistle; and the other is, that it seems to have been written *before* the destruction of Jerusalem, for, as Michaelis has well remarked, "As the author has mentioned (Jude 1:5-8) several well-known instances of Divine justice in punishing sinners, he would probably, if Jerusalem had been already destroyed, not have neglected to add to his other examples this most remarkable instance of Divine vengeance, especially as Christ had himself foretold it."—Intro, iv. 372. As there is reason to suppose that the second epistle of Peter was written about A.D. 64 or 65, we shall not, probably, err in supposing that this was written not far from that time.

IV.—-THE RESEMBLANCE BETWEEN THIS EPISTLE AND THE SECOND CHAPTER OF THE

SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER.

ONE of the most remarkable things respecting this epistle, is its resemblance to the second chapter of the second epistle of Peter—a similarity so striking as to make it quite certaio that one of these writers had seen the epistle of the other, and copied from it; or rather, perhaps, adopted the language of the other as expressing his own views. It is evident, that substantially the same class of teachers is referred to by both; that they held the same errors, and were guilty of the same corrupt and dangerous practices and that the two apostles describing them, made use of the same expressions, and employed the same arguments against them. They refer to the same facts in history, and to the same arguments from tradition; and if either of them quoted an apocryphal book, both have done it. On the resemblance, compare the following place:—-Jude 1:8, with 2Pe 2:10; Jud 1:10, with 2Pe 2:12; Jude 1:16, with 2Pe 2:18; Jude 1:4 with 2Pe 1:2,3; Jude 1:7 with 2Pe 2:6; Jude 1:9 with 2Pe 2:11 The similarity between the two is so striking, both in the general structure of the argument and in the particular expressions, that it cannot have been accidental. It is not such a resemblance as would be likely to occur in two authors, if they had been writing in a wholly independent manner. In regard to this resemblance, there is but one of three ways in which it can be accounted for: either that the Holy Spirit inspired both of them to say the same thing, without

the one having any knowledge of what the other said; or that they both copied from a common document, which is now lost; or that one copied from the other.

As to the first of these solutions, that the Holy Spirit inspired them both to say the same thing, it may be observed that no one can deny that this is *possible*, but is by no means probable. No other instance of the kind occurs in the Bible, and the supposition would not be in accordance with what seems to have been a law in inspiration, that the sacred writers were allowed to express themselves according to the bent of their own genius. **See Barnes "1Co 14:32".**

As to the second of these suppositions, that they both copied from a common document, which is now lost, it may be observed, that this is wholly without evidence. That such a thing was *possible*, there can be no doubt, but the supposition should not be adopted without necessity. If there had been such an original inspired document, it would probably have been preserved; or there would have been, in one or both of those who copied from it, some such allusion to it that it would have been possible to verify the supposition.

The remaining way of accounting for the resemblance, therefore, is to suppose that one of them had seen the epistle of the other, and adopted the same line of argument, and many of the same expressions. This will account for all the facts in the case, and can be supposed to be true without doing violence to any just view of their inspiration. A question still arises, however, whether Peter or Jude is the original writer from which the other has copied. This question it is impossible to determine with ccrtainty, and it is of little importaace. If the common opinion which is stated above be correct, that Peter wrote his epistle *first*, of course that determines the matter. But that is not absolutely certain, nor is there any method by which it can be determined. Hug adopts the other opinion, and supposes that Jude was the original writer. His reasons for this opinion are substantially these:

(1.) That there is little probability that Jude, in so brief an epistle as his, consisting of only twenty-five verses, would have made use of foreign aid.

(2.) That the style and phraseology of Jude is simple, unlaboured, and without ornament; while that of Peter is artificial, and wears the appearance of embellishment and amplification; that the simple language of Jude seems to have been moulded by Peter into a more elegant form, and is embellished with participles, and even with rhetorical flourishes.

(3.) That there is allusion in both epistles 2Pe 2:11 Jude 1:9 to a controversy beteen angels and fallen spirits; but that it is so alluded to by Peter, that it would not be understood without the more full statement of Jude; and that Peter evidently supposed that the letter of Jude was in the hands of those to whom he wrote, and that thus the allusion would be at once understood. It could not be supposed that every reader would be acquainted with the fact alluded to by Peter; it was not stated in the sacred books of the Jews, and it seems probable that there must have been some book to which they had access, where the information was more full. Jude, however, as the original writer, stated it more at length, and having done this, a bare allusion to it by Peter was all that was necessary. Jude states the matter definitely, and expressly mentions the dispute of Michael with the devil about the body of Moses. But the language of Peter is so general and indefinite, that we could not know what he meant unless we had Jude in our possession. See Hug's Intro., % 176. It must be admitted that these considerations have much weight, though they are not absolutely conclusive. It should be added, that whichever supposition is adopted, the fact that one has expressed substantially the same sentiments as the other, and in nearly the same language, is no reason for rejecting either, any more than the coincidence between the Gospels is a reason for concluding that only one of them

can be an inspired document. There might have been good reasons why the same warnings and counsels should have proceeded from two inspired men.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE.

ANALYSIS OF THE EPISTLE.

(1.) THE inscription and salutation, Jude 1:1,2.

(2.) A statement of the reasons why the epistle was written, Jude 1:3,4. The author felt it to be necessary to write to them, because certain plausible errorists had crept in among them, and there was danger that their faith would be subverted.

(3.) A reference to past facts, showing that men who embraced error, and who followed corrupt and licentious practices, would be punished, Jude 1:5-7. He refers particularly to the unbelieving Hebrews whom God had delivered out of Egypt; to the apostate angels; and to the corrupt inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. The object in this is to warn them from following the examples of those who would certainly lead them to destruction.

(4.) He describes particularly the characteristics of these persons, agreeing substantially in the description with the statement of Peter, Jude 1:8-16. For these characteristics, comp. Intro. to 2 Peter, & 4. In general, they were corrupt, sensual, lewd, proud, arrogant, disorganizing, covetous, murmurers, complainers, wordy, windy, spots in their feasts of love. They had been and were professors of religion; they were professed reformers; they made great pretensions to uncommon knowledge of religious things. In the course of this description, the apostle contrasts their spirit with that of the archangel Michael, Jude 1:9, and declares that it was with reference to such a class of men that Enoch long ago uttered a solemn prophecy, Jude 1:14,15.

(5.) He calls to their remembrance the fact that it had been predicted that there would be such mockers in the last periods of the world; and the faith of true Christians, therefore, was not to be shaken, but rather confirmed by the fact of their appearance, Jude 1:17-19.

(6.) In view of these facts and dangers, the apostle addresses to them two exhortations:

(a.) to adhere steadfastlit to the truths which they had embraced, Jude 1:20,21; and

(b.) to endeavour to recall and save those who were led astray —carefully guarding themselves from the same contamination while they sought to save others, Jude 1:22,23.

(7.) The epistle closes with an appropriate ascription of praise to him who was able to keep them from falling, and to present them faultless before his throne, Jude 1:24,25.

Verse 1. *Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ*. If the view taken in the Introduction to the epistle is correct Jude sustained a near relation to the Lord Jesus, being, as James was, "the Lord's brother," Ga 1:19. The reasons why he did not advert to this fact here, as an appellation which would serve to designate him, and as showing his authority to address others in the manner in which he proposed to do in this epistle, probably were,

(1.) that the right to do this did not rest on his mere *relationship* to the Lord Jesus, but on the fact that he had called certain persons to be his apostles, and had authorized them to do it; and,

(2.) that a reference to this relationship, as a ground of authority, might have created jealousies among the apostles themselves. We may *learn* from the fact that Jude merely calls himself "the servant of the Lord Jesus," that is, a Christian,

(a.) that this is a distinction more to be desired than would be a mere natural relationship to the Saviour, and consequently

(b.) that it is a higher honour than *any* distinction arising from birth or family. Comp. Mt 12:46-50.

And brother of James. See Intro., & 1.

To them that are sanctified by God the Father. To those who are holy, or who are saints. **See Barnes "Ro 1:7 Php 1:1"**.

Though this title is general, it can hardly be doubted that he had some particular saints in his view, to wit, those who were exposed to the dangers to which he refers in the epistle. See Intro., & 3. As the epistle was probably sent to Christians residing in a certain place, it was not necessary to designate them more particularly, though it was often done. The Syriac version adds here, "To the *Gentiles* who are called, beloved of God the Father," etc.

And preserved in Jesus Christ. **See Barnes "1Pe 1:5"**.

The meaning is, that they owed their preservation wholly to him; and if they were brought to everlasting life, it would be only by him. What the apostle here says of those to whom he wrote, is true of all Christians. They would all fall away and perish if it were not for the grace of God keeping them.

And called. Called to be saints. **See Barnes "Ro 1:7"**; **See Barnes "Eph 4:1"**.

{a} "Jude" Lu 6:16 {b} "are sanctified" Ac 20:32 {c} "preserved" 1Pe 1:5 {d} "called" Ro 8:30

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE - Chapter 1 - Verse 2

Verse 2. Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied. This is not quite the form of salutaion used by the other apostles, but it is one equally expressive of an earnest desire for their welfare. These things are mentioned as the choicest blessings which could be conferred on them: mercy—in the pardon of all their sins and acceptance with God; peace—with God, with their fellow-men, in their own consciences, and in the prospect of death; and love—to God, to the brethren, to all the world. What blessings are there which these do not include?

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE - Chapter 1 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Beloved*. An expression of strong affection used by the apostles when addressing their brethren, Ro 1:7 1Co 4:14, 10:14

1Co 15:58 2Co 7:1; 2Co 7:9 12:19; Php 2:12 Php 4:1; and often elsewhere.

When I gave all diligence. When I applied my mind earnestly; implying that he had reflected on the subject, and thought particularly what it would be desirable to write to them. The state of mind referred to is that of one who was purposing to write a letter, and who thought over carefully what it would be proper to say. The mental process which led to writing the epistle seems to have been this:

(a.) For some reasons—mainly from his strong affection for them—he purposed to write to them.

(b.) The general subject on which he designed to write was, of course, something pertaining to the common salvation—for he and they were Christians.

(c.) On reflecting what particular thing pertaining to this common salvation it was best for him to write on, he felt that, in view of their peculiar dangers, it ought to be an exhortation to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to them. Macknight renders this less correctly, "Making all haste to write to you," etc. But the idea is rather that he set himself diligently and earnestly to write to them of the great matter in which they had a common interest.

To write unto you of the common salvation. The *salvation* common to Jews and Gentiles, and to all who bore the Christian name. The meaning is, that he did not think of writing on any subject pertaining to a particular class or party, but on some subject in which all who were Christians had a common interest. There are great matters of religion held in common by all Christians, and it is important for religious teachers to address their fellow Christians on those common topics. After all, they are more important than the things which we may hold as peculiar to our own party or sect, and should be more frequently dwelt upon.

It was needful for me to write to you. "I reflected on the general subject, prompted by my affectionate regard to write to you of things pertaining to religion in general, and, on looking at the matter, I found there was a particular topic or aspect of the subject on which it was *necessary* to address you. I saw the danger in which you were from false teachers, and felt it not only necessary that I should write to you, but that I should make this the particular subject of my counsels."

And exhort you. "That I should make my letter in fact an exhortation on a particular topic."

That ye should earnestly contend. Comp. Ga 2:5. The word here rendered *earnestly contend—epagwnizesyai*—is one of those words used by the sacred writers which have allusion to the Grecian games. **See Barnes** "1Co 9:24, seq. This word does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It means *to contend upon*—i. e. *for* or *about* anything; and would be applicable to the earnest effort put forth in those games to obtain the prize. The reference here, of course, is only to contention by argument, by reasoning, by holding fast the principles of religion, and maintaining them against all opposers. It would not justify "contention" by arms, by violence, or by persecution; for

(a.) that is contrary to the spirit of true religion, and to the requirements of the gospel elsewhere revealed;

(b.) it is not demanded by the proper meaning of the word, all that that fairly implies being the effort to maintain truth by argument and by a steady life;

(c.) it is not the most effectual way to keep up truth in the world to attempt to do it by force and arms.

For the faith. The system of religion revealed in the gospel. It is called faith, because that is the cardinal virtue in the system, and because all depends on that. The rule here will require that we should contend in this manner for all *truth*.

Once delivered unto the saints. The word here used (*apax*) may mean either *once for all*, in the sense that it was then complete, and would not be repeated; or *formerly* to wit, by the author of the system. Doddridge, Estius, and Beza, understand it in the former way; Macknight and others in the latter; Benson improperly supposes that it means *fully* or *perfectly*. Perhaps the more usual sense of the word would be, that it was done *once* in the sense that it is not to be done again, and therefore in the sense that it was then complete, and that nothing was to be added to it. There is indeed the

idea that it was *formerly* done, but with this additional thought, that it was then complete. Compare, for this use of the Greek word rendered *once*, Heb 9:26-28 10:2; 1Pe 3:18.

The *delivering* of this faith to the saints here referred to is evidently that made by revelation, or the system of truth which God has made known in his word. Everything which He has revealed, we are to defend as true. We are to surrender no part of it whatever, for every part of that system is of value, to mankind. By a careful study of the Bible we are to ascertain what that system is, and then in all places, at all times, in all circumstances, and at every sacrifice, we are to maintain it.

{e} "common salvation" Tit 1:4 {f} "contend" Ga 2:5

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE - Chapter 1 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *For there are certain men crept in unawares*. The apostle now gives a reason for thus defending the truth, to wit, that there were artful and wicked men who had crept into the church, pretending to be religious teachers, but whose doctrines tended to sap the very foundations of truth. The apostle Peter, describing these same persons, says, "who *privily* shall bring in damnable heresies." **See Barnes "2Pe 2:1"**.

Substantially the same idea is expressed here by saying that they "had crept in *unawares*;" that is, they had come in *by stealth*; they had not come by a bold and open avowal of their real sentiments. They professed to teach the Christian religion, when in fact they denied some of its fundamental doctrines; they professed to be holy, when in fact they were living most scan- dalous lives. In all ages there have been men who were willing to do this for base purposes.

Who were before of old ordained to this condemnation. That is, to the condemnation (*krima*) which he proceeds to specify. The statements in the subsequent part of the epistle show that by the word used here he refers to the wrath that shall come upon the ungodly in the future world. See Jude 1:5-7,15. The meaning clearly is, that the punishment which befell the unbelieving Israelites, (Jude 1:5;) the rebel angels, (Jude 1:6;) the inhabitants of Sodom, (Jude 1:7;) and of which Enoch prophesied, (Jude 1:15,) awaited those persons. The phrase *of old—palai*—means *long ago*, implying that a considerable time had elapsed, though without determining how much. It is used in the New Testament only in the following places: Mt 11:21, "they would have repented long ago;" Mr 15:44, "whether he had been *any while dead*;" Lu 10:13, they had *a great while ago* repented; Heb 1:1, "spake *in time past* unto the fathers;" 2Pe 1:9, "purged from his *old* sins;" and in the passage before us. So far as this word is concerned, the reference here may have been to *any* former remote period, whether in the time of the prophets, of Enoch, or in eternity. It does not *necessarily* imply that it was *eternal*, though it "*might* apply to that, if the thing referred to was, from other sources, certainly known to have been from eternity. It may be doubted, however, whether, if the thing referred to had occurred from eternity, this would have been the word used to express it, (comp. Eph 1:4;) and it is certain that it cannot be *proved* from the use of this word (*palai*) that the "ordination to condemnation" was eternal. Whatever may be referred to by that "ordaining to condemnation," *this* word will not prove that it was an eternal ordination. All that is *fairly* implied in it will be met by the supposition that it occurred in any remote period, say in the time of the prophets. The word here rendered "*before ordained*": *progegrammenoi*, from *prografw*—occurs in the New Testament only here and in the following places: Ro 15:4, twice, "Whatsoever things *were written aforetime*,

were written for our learning;" Ga 3:1, "*Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth*;" and Eph 3:3, "As *I wrote afore* in few words." **See Barnes "Ga 3:1".**

In these places there is evidently no idea implied of *ordaining*, or *preordaining*, in the sense in which those words are now commonly understood. To that word there is usually attached the idea of designating or appointing as by an arbitrary decree; but no such meaning enters into the word here used. The Greek word properly means, *to write before*; then *to have written before*; and then, with reference to time future, *to post up beforehand in writing; to announce by posting up on a written tablet*, as of some ordinance, law, or requirement; as descriptive of what will be, or what should be. Comp. Rob. Lexicon. Burder (in Rosenmuller's Morgenland, *in loc*.) remarks that "the names of those who were to be tried were usually posted up in a public place, as was also their sentence after their condemnation, and that this was denoted by the same Greek word which the apostle uses here. Eisner," says he, "remarks that the Greek authors use the word as applicable to those who, among the Romans, were said to be *proscribed*; that is, those whose names were posted up in a public place, whereby they were appointed to death, and in reference to whom a reward was offered to any one who would kill them." The idea here clearly is that of some such designation beforehand as *would occur* if the persons had been publicly posted as appointed to death. Their *names*, indeed, were not mentioned, but there was such a description of them, or of their character, that it was clear who were meant. In regard to the question what the apostle *means* by such a designation or appointment beforehand, it is clear that he does not refer in this place to any arbitrary or eternal decree, but to such a designation as was made by the facts to which he immediately refers-that is, to the Divine prediction that there would be such persons, (Jude 1:14,15,18;) and to the consideration that in the case of the unbelieving Israelites, the rebel angels, and the inhabitants of Sodom, there was as clear a proof that such persons would be punished as if their names had been posted up. All these instances bore on just such cases as these, and in these facts they might read their sentence as clearly as if their names had been written on the face of the sky. This interpretation seems to me to embrace all that the words *fairly* imply, and all that the exigence of the case demands; and if this be correct, then two things follow:

(1.) that this passage should not be adduced to prove that God has from all eternity, by an arbitrary decree, ordained a certain portion of the race to destruction, what-ever may be true on that point; and,

(2.) that *all* abandoned sinners now may see, in the facts which have occurred in the treatment of the wicked in past times, just as certain evidence of their destruction, if they do not repent, as if their names were written in letters of light, and if it were announced to the universe that they would be damned.

Ungodly men. Men without piety or true religion, whatever may be their pretensions.

Turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness. Abusing the doctrines of grace so as to give indulgence to corrupt and carnal propensities. That is, probably, they gave this form to their teaching, as Antinomians have often done, that by the gospel they were released from the obligations of the law, and might give indulgence to their sinful passions in order that grace might abound. Antinomianism began early in the world, and has always had a wide prevalence. The liability of the doctrines of grace to be thus abused was foreseen by Paul, and against such abuse he earnestly sought to guard the Christians of his time, Ro 6:1, seq.

And denying the only Lord God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ. **See Barnes "2Pe 2:1".**

That is, the doctrines which they held were in fact a denial of the only true God, and of the Redeemer of men. It cannot be supposed that they openly and formally did this, for then they could have made no pretensions to the name Christian, or even to religion of any kind; but the meaning must be, that in fact the doctrines which they held amounted to a denial of the true God, and of the Saviour in his proper nature and work. Some have proposed to read this, "denying the only Lord God, *even* (*kai*) our Lord Jesus Christ;" but the Greek does not demand this construetion even if it would admit it, and it is most in accordance with Scripture usage to retain the common translation. It may be added, also, that the common translation expresses all that the exigence of the passage requires. Their doctrines and practice tended as really to the denial of the true God as they did to the denial of the Lord Jesus. Peter in his second epistle, (2Pe 2:1,) has adverted only to one aspect of their doetrine—that it denied the Saviour; Jude adds, if the common reading be correct, that it tended also to a denial of the true God. The word *God* (*yeon*) is wanting in many manuscripts, and in the Vulgate and Coptic versions, and Mill, Hammond, and Bengel suppose it should be omitted. It is also wanting in the editions of Tittman, Griesbach, and Rahn. The amount of *authority* seems to be against it. The word rendered *Lord*, in the phrase "Lord God," is *despothv*, *despotes*, and means here *Sovereign*, or *Ruler*, but it is a word which may be appropriately applied to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the same word which is used in the parallel passage in 2Pe 2:1. See it explained **See Barnes "2Pe 2:1".**

If the word "God" is to be omitted in this place, the passage would be wholly applicable, beyond question, to the Lord Jesus, and would mean, "denying our only Sovereign and Lord, Jesus Christ." It is perhaps impossible now to determine with certainty the true reading of the text; nor is it *very* material. Whichever of the readings is correct; whether the word (*yeon*) God is to be retained or not, the sentiment expressed would be true, that their doctrines amounted to a practical denial of the only true God; and equally so that they were a denial of the only Sovereign and Lord of the true Christian.

{a} "unawares" 2Pe 2:1 {b} "who" Ro 9:22 {c} "turning" Tit 1:15,16 {*} "Lord God" "The only Sovereign"

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE - Chapter 1 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *I will therefore put you in remembrance*. "To show you what must be the doom of such men, I will call certain facts to your recollection, with which you are familiar, respecting the Divine treatment of the wicked in times past."

Though ye once knew this. That is, you were formerly made acquainted with these things, though they may not be now fresh in your recollection. On the different significations affixed to the word *once* in this place, see Bloomfield, *Crit. Digest, in loc*. The thing which seems to have been in the mind of the apostle was an intention to call to their recollection, as bearing on the case before him, facts with which they had formerly been familiar, and about which there was no doubt. It was the thing which we often endeavour to do in argument—to remind a person of some fact which he once knew very well, and which bears directly on the case.

How that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt. **See Barnes "1Co 10:6-12".**

The bearing of this fact on the case, before the mind of Jude, seems to have been this—that, as those who had been delivered from Egypt were afterward destroyed for their unbelief, or as the mere fact of their being rescued did not prevent destruction from coming on them, so the fact that these persons *seemed* to be delivered from sin, and had become professed followers of God, would not prevent their being destroyed if they led wicked lives. It might rather be inferred from the example of the Israelites that they would be.

Afterward. *to deuteron the second*; that is, the second thing in order, or again. The expression is unusual in this sense, but the apostle seems to have fixed his mind on this event as a second great and important fact in regard to them. The *first* was that they were delivered; the *second*, that they were destroyed.

Destroyed them that believed not. That is, *on account* of their unbelief. They were not permitted to enter the promised land, but were cut off in the wilderness. **See Barnes "Heb 3:16-19"**.

{a} "Lord" 1Co 10:5-12 {b} "destroyed" Nu 14:29,37; Heb 3:16-19

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE - Chapter 1 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *And the angels which kept not their first estate*. A second case denoting that the wicked would be punished. **See Barnes "2Pe 2:4"**.

The word rendered *estate* (*archn*) is, in the margin, *principality*. The word properly means, *beginning*, *commencement*; and then that which surpasses others, which is *first*, etc., in point of rank and honour; or pre-eminence, priority, precedence, princedom. Here it refers to the rank and dignity which the angels had in heaven. That rank or pre-eminence they did not keep, but fell from it. On the word used here, comp. Eph 1:2 3:10; Col 2:10, as applied to angels; 1Co 15:24 Eph 6:12 Col 2:15, as applied to demons.

But left their own habitation. To wit, according to the common interpretation, in heaven. The word rendered *habitation* (*oikhthrion*) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means here that heaven was their native abode or dwelling-place. They left it by sin; but the expression here would seem possibly to mean that they became *dissatisfied* with their abode, and voluntarily preferred to change it for another. If they did become thus dissatisfied, the cause is wholly unknown, and conjecture is useless. Some of the later Jews supposed that they relinquished heaven out of love for the daughters of men.—*Robinson*.

He hath reserved in everlasting chains. **See Barnes "2Pe 2:4"**.

Peter says, "chains of darkness;" that is, the darkness encompasses them as chains. Jude says that those chains are "everlasting," (*desmoiv aidioiv*) Compare Ro 1:20, "his *eternal* power and Godhead." The word does not elsewhere occur. It is an appropriate word to denote that which is eternal; and no one can doubt that if a Greek *wished* to express that idea, this would be a proper word to use. The sense is, that that deep darkness always endures; there is no intermission; no light; it will exist for ever. This passage in itself does not prove that the punishment of the rebel angels will be eternal, but merely that they are kept in a dark prison in which there is no light, and which is to exist for ever, with reference to the final trial. The punishment of the rebel angels *after* the judgment is represented as an everlasting fire, which has been prepared for them and their followers, Mt 25:41.

{c} "angels" Joh 8:44 {1} "habitation" "principality" {d} "everlasting chains" 2Pe 2:4 {e} "judgment" Re 20:10

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE - Chapter 1 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Even as Sodom and Gomorrha*. **See Barnes "2Pe 2:6"**.

And the cities about them. Admah and Zeboim, Ge 14:2 De 29:23; Hos 11:8. There may have been other towns, also, that perished at the same time, but these are particularly mentioned. They seem to have partaken of the same general characteristics, as neighbouring towns and cities generally do.

In like manner. "In a manner like to these," (*ton omoion toutoiv tropon*) The Greek word *these* is in the plural number. There has been much diversity in interpreting this clause. Some refer it to the angels, as if it meant that the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah committed sin in a way similar to the angels; some suppose that it refers to the wicked teachers about whom Jude was discoursing, meaning that Sodom and Gomorrah committed the same kind of sins which they did; some that the meaning is, that "the cities round about Sodom and Gomorrah" sinned in the same way as those cities; and some that they were punished in the same manner, and were set forth like them as an example. I see no evidence that it refers to the angels; and if it did, it would not prove, as some have supposed, that their sin was of the same kind as that of Sodom, since there might have been a resemblance in *some* respects, though not in all. I see no reason to believe, as Macknight holds, that it refers to *false teachers*, since that would be to suppose that the inhabitants of Sodom copied their example long *before* the example was set. It seems to me, therefore, that the reference is to the cities round about Sodom; and that the sense is, that they committed iniquity in the same manner as the inhabitants of Sodom did, and were set forth in the same way as an example.

Going after strange flesh, Marg., *other*. The reference seems to be to the peculiar sin which, from the name Sodom, has been called *sodomy*. Comp. Ro 1:27. The meaning of the phrase going after is, that they were greatly addicted to this vice. The word *strange*, or *other*, refers to that which is contrary to nature. Doddridge, however, explains it, "going after strange and detestable gratifications of their pampered and indulged flesh."

Are set forth for an example. They furnish a warning against all such conduct, and a demonstration that punishment shall come upon the ungodly. The condemnation of any sinner, or of any class of sinners, always furnishes such a warning. **See Barnes "2Pe 2:6"**.

Suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. The word rendered *suffering* (*upecousai*) means, properly, *holding under*—as, for example, the hand; then to hold towards any one, as the ear—to give attention; then it is used as denoting to hold a discourse towards or with any one, or to hold satisfaction to any one, to make atonement; and then as *undergoing, paying*, or *suffering punishment*, when united, as it is here, with the word *dikhn*, (*punishment*, or *vengeance*.) See *Rob. Lex*. Here it expresses the idea of undergoing punishment. The word properly agrees in the construction with *cities*, (*poleiv*,) referring to Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them; but the things affirmed relate to the *inhabitants* of those cities. The word *vengeance* means punishment; that is, such vengeance as the Lord takes on the guilty; not vengeance for the gratification of private and personal feeling, but like that which a magistrate appoints for the maintenance of the laws; such as justice demands. The

phrase "eternal fire" is one that is often used to denote future punishment—as expressing the severity and intensity of the suffering. **See Barnes "Mt 25:41".**

As here used, it cannot mean that the fires which consumed Sodom and Gomorrah were literally eternal, or were kept always burning, for that was not true. The expression seems to denote, in this connexion, two things:

(1.) That the destruction of the cities of the plain, with their inhabitants, was as entire and perpetual *as if* the fires had been always burning —the consumption was absolute and enduring—the sinners were wholly cut off, and the cities for ever rendered desolate; and

(2.) that, in its nature and duration, this was a striking emblem of the destruction which will come upon the ungodly. I do not see that the apostle here means to affirm that those particular sinners who dwelt in Sodom would be punished for ever, for his expressions do not directly affirm that, and his argument does not demand it; but still the *image* in his mind, in the destruction of those cities, was clearly that of the utter desolation and ruin of which this was the emblem; of the perpetual destruction of the wicked, like that of the cities of the plain. If this had not been the case, there was no reason why he should have used the word *eternal*—meaning here *perpetual*—since, if in his mind there was no image of future punishment, all that the argument would have demanded was the simple statement that they were cut off by fire. The passage, then, cannot be used to prove that the particular dwellers in Sodom will be punished for ever—whatever may be the truth on that point; but that there is a place of eternal punishment, of which that was a striking emblem. The meaning is, that the case was one which furnished a demonstration of the fact that God will punish sin; that this was an example of the punishment which God sometimes inflicts on sinners in this world, and a type of that eternal punishment which will be inflicted in the next.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE - Chapter 1 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Likewise also*. In the same way do these persons defile the flesh, or resemble the inhabitants of Sodom; that is, they practise the same kind of vices. What the apostle says is, that their character resembled that of the inhabitants of Sodom; the example which he adduces of the punishment which was brought on those sinners, leaves it to be clearly inferred that the persons of whom he was speaking would be punished in a similar manner. These filthy dreamers. The word *filthy* has been supplied by our translators, but there is no good reason why it should have been introduced. The Greek word (*enupniazw*) means *to dream*; and is applied to these persons as holding doctrines and opinions which sustained the same relation to truth which dreams do to good sense. Their doctrines were the fruits of mere imagination, foolish vagaries and fancies. The word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, except in Ac 2:17, where it is applied to visions in dreams.

Defile the flesh. Pollute themselves; give indulgence to corrupt passions and appetites. **See Barnes "2Pe 2:10".**

Despise dominion. The same Greek word is used here which occurs in 2Pe 2:10. **See Barnes "2Pe 2:10".**

And speak evil of dignities. **See Barnes "2Pe 2:10".**

{a} "defile" 2Pe 2:10,11

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE - Chapter 1 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Yet Michael the archangel*, etc. This verse has given more perplexity to expositors than any other part of the epistle; and in fact the difficulties in regard to it have been so great that some have been led to regard the epistle as spurious. The difficulty has arisen from these two circumstances:

(1.) Ignorance of the origin of what is said here of Michael the archangel, nothing of this kind being found in the Old Testament; and

(2.) the improbability of the story itself, which looks like a mere Jewish fable. Peter in his second epistle, chap. 2Pe 2:2, made a general reference to angels as not bringing railing accusations against others before the Lord; but Jude refers to a particular case—the case of Michael when contending about the body of Moses. The methods proposed of reconciling the passage with the proper ideas of inspiration have been various, though perhaps no one of them relieves it of all difficulty. It would be inconsistent with the design of these Notes to go into an extended examination of this passage. Those who wish to see a full investigation of it may consult Michaelis' Introduction to the New Testament, vol, iv. pp. 378—393; Lardner, vol. vi. p. 312, seq.; Hug, Intro. & 183; Benson, *in loc*.; Rosenmuller's Morgenland, iii. pp. 196, 197; and Wetstein, *in loc*. The principal methods of relieving the difficulty have been the following:

I. Some have supposed that the reference is to the passage in Zechariah, Zec 3:1, seq. "And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, the Lord rebuke thee, O Satan," etc. The opinion that Jude refers to this passage was held by Lardner. But the objections to this are very obvious:

(1.) There is no similarity between the two, except the expression, "the Lord rebuke thee."

(2.) The name Michael does not occur at all in the passage in Zechariah.

(3.) There is no mention made of the "body of Moses" there, and no allusion to it whatever.

(4.) There is no intimation that there was any such contention about his body. There is a mere mention that Satan resisted the angel of the Lord, as seen in the vision, but no intimation that the controversy had any reference to Moses in any way.

(5.) The reason of the resistance which Satan offered to the angel in the vision as seen by Zechariah is stated. It was in regard to the consecration of Joshua to the office of high priest implying a return of prosperity to Jerusalem, and the restoration of the worship of God there in its purity, see Zec 3:2. To this Satan was of course opposed, and the vision represents him as resisting the angel in his purpose thus to set him apart to that office. These reasons seem to me to make it clear that Jude did not refer to the passage in Zechariah, nor is there any other place in the Old Testament to which it can be supposed he had reference.

II. Hug supposes that the reference here, as well as that in Jude 1:14, to the prophecy of Enoch, is derived from some apocryphal books existing in the time of Jude; and that though those books contained mere fables, the apostle appealed to them, not as conceding what was said to be true, but in order to refute and rebuke those against whom he wrote, out of books which they admitted to be of authority. Intro. & 183. Arguments and confutations, he says, drawn from the sacred Scriptures, would have been of no avail in reasoning with them, for these they evaded, (2Pe 3:16,) and there were no surer means of influencing them than those writings which they themselves valued as the sources of their peculiar views. According to this, the apostle did not mean to vouch for the *truth*

of the story, but merely to make use of it in argument. The objection to this is, that the apostle does in fact seem to refer to the contest between Michael and the devil as true. He speaks of it in the same way in which he would have done if he had spoken of the death of Moses, or of his smiting the rock, or of his leading the children of Israel across the Red Sea, or of any other fact in history. If he regarded it as a mere fable, though it would have been honest and consistent with all proper views of inspiration for him to have said to those against whom he argued, that on their own principles such and such things were true, yet it would not be honest to speak of it as a fact which *he* admitted to be true. Besides, it should be remembered that he is not arguing with *them*, in which case it might be admissible to reason in this way, but was making statements to others about them, and showing that they manifested a spirit entirely different from that which the angels evinced even when contending in a just cause against the prince of all evil.

III. It has been supposed that the apostle quotes an apocryphal book existing in his time, containing this account, and that he means to admit that the account is true. Origen mentions such a book, called "the Assumption of Moses," (*analhqiv tou mwsewv*,) as extant in his time, containing this very account of the contest between Michael and the devil about the body of Moses. That was a Jewish Greek book, and Origen supposed that this was the source of the account here. That book is now lost. There is still extant a book in Hebrew, called

HEBREW

—"the Death of Moses," which some have supposed to be the book referred to by Origen. *That* books contains many fabulous stories about the death of Moses, and is evidently the work of some Jew drawing wholly upon his imagination. An account of it may be seen in Michaelis, Intro. iv. p. 381, seq. There is no reason to suppose that this is the same book referred to by Origen under the name of "the Assumption of Moses;" and there is a moral certainty that an inspired writer could not have quoted it as of authority. Further, there can be no reasonable doubt that such a book as Origen refers to, under the title of" the Assumption of Moses," was extant in his time, but that does not prove by any means that it was extant in the time of Jude, or that he quoted it. There is, indeed, no positive proof that it was not extant in the time of Jude, but there is none that it was, and all the facts in the case will be met by the supposition that it was written afterwards, and that the tradition on the subject here referred to by Jude was incorporated into it.

IV. The remaining supposition is, that Jude here refers to a prevalent *tradition* among the Jews, and that he has adopted it as containing an important truth, and one which bore on the subject under discussion. In support of this, it may be observed,

(a.) that it is well known that there were many traditions of this nature among the Jews. **See Barnes "Mt 15:2".**

(b.) That though many of these traditions were puerile and false, yet there is no reason to doubt that some of them might have been founded in truth.

(c.) That an inspired writer might select those which were true, for the illustration of his subject, with as much propriety as he might select what was written; since if what was thus handed down by tradition was true, it was as proper to use it as to use a fact made known in any other way.

(d.) That in fact such traditions were adopted by the inspired writers when they would serve to illustrate a subject which they were discussing. Thus Paul refers to the tradition about Jannes and Jambres as true history. **See Barnes "2Ti 3:8".**

(e.) If, therefore, what is here said was *true*, there was no impropriety in its being referred to by Jude as an illustration of his subject. The only material question then is, whether it is *true*. And

who can prove that it is not? What evidence is there that it is not? How is it possible to demonstrate that it is not? There are many allusions in the Bible to angels; there is express mention of such an angel as Michael, (Da 12:1;) there is frequent mention of the devil; and there are numerous affirmations that both bad and good angels are employed in important transactions on the earth. Who can prove that such spirits never meet, never come in conflict, never encounter each other in executing their purposes? Good men meet bad men, and why is it any more absurd to suppose that good angels may encounter bad ones? It should be remembered, further, that there is no need of supposing that the subject of the dispute was about burying the body of Moses; or that Michael sought to bury it, and the devil endeavoured to prevent it—the one in order that it might not be worshipped by the Israelites, and the other that it might be. This indeed became incorporated into the tradition in the apocryphal books which were afterwards written; but Jude says not one word of this, and is in no way responsible for it. All that he says is, that there was a contention or dispute (*diakrinomenov dielegeto*) respecting *his body*. But when it was, or what was the occasion, or how it was conducted, he does not state, and we have no right to ascribe to him sentiments which he has not expressed. If ever such a controversy of any kind existed respecting that body, it is all that Jude affirms, and is all for which he should be held responsible. The sum of the matter, then, it seems to me is, that Jude has, as Paul did on another occasion, adopted a tradition which was prevalent in his time; that there is nothing necessarily absurd or impossible in the fact affirmed by the tradition, and that no one can possibly demonstrate that it is not true.

The archangel. The word *archangel* occurs only in one other place in the Scriptures. **See Barnes "1Th 4:16".**

It means ruling or chief angel—the chief among the hosts of heaven. It is nowhere else applied to Michael, though his name is several times mentioned, Da 10:13,21, 12:1 Re 12:7.

When contending. This word (*diakrinomenov*) refers here to a contention or strife with words—*a disputation*. Nothing farther is necessarily implied, for it is so used in this sense in the New Testament, Ac 11:2,12 (Greek.)

He disputed. *dielegeto*. *This* word also would denote merely a controversy or contention of words, Mr 9:34 Ac 17:2,17 18:4,19; Ac 24:12.

About the body of Moses. The nature of this controversy is wholly unknown, and conjecture is useless. It is *not* said, however, that there was a strife which should get the body, or a contention about burying it, or any physical contention about it whatever. That there may have been, no one indeed can disprove; but all that the apostle says would be met by a supposition that there was any debate of any kind respecting that body, in which Michael, though provoked by the opposition of the worst being in the universe, still restrained himself from any outbreaking of passion, and used only the language of mild but firm rebuke. *Durst not*. *ouk etolmhse* "*Did not dare*." It is not said that he did not dare to do it because he feared Satan; but all that the word implies is met by supposing that he did not dare to do it because he feared the Lord, or because in any circumstances it would be wrong. *A railing accusation*. The Greek word is *blasphemy*. The meaning is, he did not indulge in the language of mere reproach; and it is implied here that such language would be wrong anywhere. If it would be right to bring a railing accusation against any one, it would be against the devil.

But said, The Lord rebuke thee. The word here used (*epitimaw*) means, properly, to put honour upon; and then to adjudge or confirm. Then it came to be used in the sense of commanding or *restraining*—as, e.g., the winds and waves, Mt 8:26 Mr 4:39. Then it is used in the sense of

admonishing strongly; of enjoining upon one, *with the idea of censure*, Mt 18:18 Mr 1:25 Lu 23:35,41. This is the idea here—the expression of a wish that the Lord would take the matter of the dispute to himself, and that he would properly restrain and control Satan, with the implied idea that his conduct was wrong. The *language* is the same as that recorded in Zec 3:2, as used by "the angel" respecting Satan. But, as before observed, there is no reason to suppose that the apostle referred to that. The fact, however, that the angel is said to have used the language on that occasion may be allowed to give confirmation to what is said here, since it shows that it is the language which angelic beings naturally employ.

{a} "Michael" Da 12:1 {c} "Moses" De 34:4 {d} "durst" Ex 22:28 {e} "Lord rebuke" Zec 3:2

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE - Chapter 1 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *But these speak evil of those things which they know not*. These false and corrupt teachers employ reproachful language of those things which lie wholly beyond the reach of their vision. **See Barnes "2Pe 2:12"**.

But what they know naturally. As mere men; as animals; that is, in things pertaining to their physical nature, or in which they are on a level with the brute creation. The reference is to the natural instincts, the impulses of appetite, and passion, and sensual pleasure. The idea of the apostle seems to be, that their knowledge was confined to those things. They did not rise above them to the intelligent contemplation of those higher things, against which they used only the language of reproach. There are multitudes of such men in the world. Towards high and holy objects they use only the language of reproach. They do not understand them, but they can rail at them. Their knowledge is confined to the subjects of sensual indulgence, and all their intelligence in that respect is employed only to corrupt and destroy themselves.

As brute beasts. Animals without intelligence. **See Barnes "2Pe 2:12"**.

In those things they corrupt themselves. They live only for sensual indulgence, and sink deeper and deeper in sensual gratifications.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE - Chapter 1 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Woe unto them*! See Mt 11:21.

For they have gone in the way of Cain. Ge 4:5-12. That is, they have evinced disobedience and rebellion as he did; they have shown that they are proud, corrupt, and wicked. The apostle does not specify the points in which they had imitated the example of Cain, but it was probably in such things as these—pride, haughtiness, the hatred of religion, restlessness under the restraints of virtue, envy that others were more favoured, and a spirit of hatred of the brethren (comp. 1Jo 3:15) which would lead to murder.

And ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward. The word rendered *ran greedily—execuyhsan*, from *ekcew*—means to pour out; and then, when spoken of persons, that they are *poured out*, or that they *rush tumultuously* on an object, that is, that they give themselves

up to anything. The idea here is, that all restraint was relaxed, and that they rushed on tumultuously to any course of life that promised gain. **See Barnes "2Pe 2:15".**

And perished. They perish, or they will perish. The result is so certain that the apostle, speaks of it as if it were already done. The thought seems to have lain in his mind in this manner: he thinks of them as having the same character as Korah, and then at once thinks of them as destroyed in the same manner, or as if it were already done. They are *identified* with him in their character and doom. The word rendered *perish* (*apollumi*) is often used to denote future punishment, Mt 10:28,39, 18:14 Mr 1:24; Lu 13:3,5; Joh 3:15,16

Joh 10:28 2Th 2:10; 2Pe 3:9.

In the gainsaying of Core. Of Korah, Nu 16:1-30. The word *gainsaying* here means properly contradiction, or speaking against; then controversy, question, strife; then contumely, reproach, or rebellion. The idea here seems to be, that they were guilty of insubordination; of possessing a restless and dissatisfied spirit; of a desire to rule, etc.

{a} "Cain" Ge 4:5 {b} "Balaam" Nu 22:7,21 {c} "Core" Nu 16:1

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE - Chapter 1 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *These are spots*. **See Barnes "2Pe 2:13".**

The word used by Peter, however, is not exactly the same as that used here. Peter uses the word *spiloi—spiloi*; Jude, *spiladev—spilades*. The word used by Jude means, properly, *a rock* by or in the sea; a cliff, etc. It may either be a rock *by* the sea, against which vessels may be wrecked, or a hidden rock *in* the sea, on which they may be stranded at an unexpected moment. See Hesychius and Pollux, as quoted by Wetstein, *in loc*. The idea here seems to be, not that they were *spots* and *blemishes* in their sacred feasts, but that they were like hidden rocks to the mariner. As those rocks were the cause of shipwreck, so these false teachers caused others to make shipwreck of their faith. They were as dangerous in the church as hidden rocks are in the ocean.

In your feasts of charity. Your feasts of love. The reference is probably to the Lord's Supper, called a feast or festival of love, because

(1.) it revealed the love of Christ to the world;

(2.) because it was the means of strengthening the mutual love of the disciples: a festival which love originated, and where love reigned. It has been supposed by many, that the reference here is to festivals which were subsequently called *Agapae*, and which are now known as *love-feasts*—meaning a festival immediately preceding the celebration of the Lord's Supper. But there are strong objections to the supposition that there is reference here to such a festival.

(1.) There is no evidence, unless it be found in this passage, that such celebrations had the sanction of the apostles. They are nowhere else mentioned in the New Testament, or alluded to, unless it is in 1Co 11:17-34, an instance which is mentioned only to reprove it, and to show that such appendages to the Lord's Supper were wholly unauthorized by the original institution, and were liable to gross abuse.

(2.) The supposition that they existed, and that they are referred to here, is not necessary in order to a proper explanation of this passage. All that it fairly means will be met by the supposition that the reference is to the Lord's Supper. *That* was in every sense a festival of love or charity. The

words will appropriately apply to that, and there is no necessity of supposing anything else in order to meet their full signification.

(3.) There can be no doubt that such a custom early existed in the Christian church, and extensively prevailed; but it can readily be accounted for without supposing that it had the sanction of the apostles, or that it existed in their time.

(a.) Festivals prevailed among the Jews, and it would not be unnatural to introduce them into the Christian church.

(b.) The custom prevailed among the heathen of having a "feast upon a sacrifice," or in connexion with a sacrifice; and as the Lord's Supper commemorated the great sacrifice for sin, it was not unnatural, in imitation of the heathen, to append a feast or festival to that ordinance, either before or after its celebration.

(c.) This very passage in Jude, with perhaps some others in the New Testament, (comp. 1Co 11:26 Ac 2:46, 6:2,) might be so construed as to seem to lend countenance to the custom. For these reasons it seems clear to me that the passage before us does not refer to *love-feasts*; and, therefore, that they are not authorized in the New Testament. See, however, Coleman's Antiquities of the Christian church, chap. xvi., & 13.

When they feast with you. Showing that they were professors of religion. **See Barnes "2Pe 2:13"**.

Feeding themselves without fear. That is, without any proper reverence or respect for the ordinance; attending on the Lord's Supper as if it were an ordinary feast, and making it an occasion of riot and gluttony. See 1Co 11:20-22.

Clouds they are, etc. **See Barnes** "2Pe 2:17.

Comp. Eph 4:14.

Trees whose fruit withereth. The idea here is substantially the same as that expressed by Peter, when he says that they were "wells without water;" and by him and Jude, when they say that they are like clouds driven about by the winds, that shed down no refreshing rain upon the earth. Such wells and clouds only disappoint expectations. So a tree that should promise fruit, but whose fruit should always wither, would be useless. The word rendered *withereth* (*fyinopwrina*) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means, properly, *autumnal*; and the expression here denotes *trees of autumn*; that is, trees stripped of leaves and verdure; trees on which there is no fruit.—Robinson's Lex. The sense, in the use of this word, therefore, is not exactly that which is expressed in our translation, that the fruit has withered, but rather that they are like the trees of autumn, which are stripped and bare. So the Vulgate, *arbores autumnales*. The idea of their being without fruit is expressed in the next word. The *image* which seems to have been before the mind of Jude in this expression, is that of the naked trees of autumn as contrasted with the bloom of spring and the dense foliage of summer.

Without fruit. That is, they produce no fruit. Either they are wholly barren, like the barren fig-tree, or the fruit which was set never ripens, but falls off. They are, therefore, useless as religious instructors—as much so as a tree is which produces no fruit.

Twice dead. That is, either meaning that they are seen to be dead in two successive seasons, showing that there is no hope that they will revive and be valuable; or, using the word *twice* to denote emphasis, meaning that they are absolutely or altogether dead. Perhaps the idea is, that successive summers and winters have passed over them, and that no signs of life appear.

Plucked up by the roots. The wind blows them down, or they are removed by the husbandman as only cumbering the ground. They are not cut down—leaving a stump that might sprout again—but

they are extirpated root and branch; that is, they are wholly worthless. There is a regular ascent in this climax, first, the apostle sees a tree apparently of autumn, stripped and leafless; then he sees it to be a tree that bears no fruit; then he sees it to be a tree over which successive winters and summers pass and no signs of life appear; then as wholly extirpated. So he says it is with these men. They produce no fruits of holiness; months and years show that there is no vitality in them; they are fit only to be extirpated and cast away. Alas! how many professors of religion are there, and how many religious teachers, who answer to this description!

{a} "clouds" Pr 25:14 {b} "carried" Eph 4:14 {c} "fruit" Joh 15:4-6 {d} "twice dead" Heb 6:4-6 {e} "plucked" Mt 15:13

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE - Chapter 1 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *Raging waves of the sea*. Comp. 2Pe 2:18. They are like the wild and restless waves of the ocean. The image here seems to be, that they were noisy and bold in their professions, and were as wild and ungovernable in their passions as the billows of the sea.

Foaming out their own shame. The waves are lashed into foam, and break and dash on the shore. They seem to produce nothing *but* foam, and to proclaim their own shame, that after all their wild roaring and agitation they should effect no more. So with these noisy and vaunting teachers. What they impart is as unsubstantial and valueless as the foam of the ocean waves, and the result is in fact a proclamation of their own shame, Men with so loud professions should produce much more.

Wandering stars. The word rendered *wandering* (*planhtai*) is that from which we have derived the word *planet*. It properly means one who wanders about; a wanderer; and was given by the ancients to planets because they seemed to wander about the heavens, now forward and now backward among the other stars, without any fixed law.—Pliny, Nat. Hist. ii. 6. Cicero, however, who saw that they were governed by certain established laws, says that the name seemed to be given to them without reason.—De Nat. Deo. ii. 20. So far as the *words* used are concerned, the reference may be either to the planets, properly so called, or to comets, or to *ignes fatui*, or meteors. The proper idea is that of stars that have no regular motions, or that do not move in fixed and regular orbits. The laws of the planetary motions were not then understood, and their movements seemed to be irregular and capricious; and hence, if the reference is to them, they might be regarded as not an unapt illustration of these teachers. The sense seems to be, that the aid which we derive from the stars, as in navigation, is in the fact that they are regular in their places and movements, and thus the mariner can determine his position. If they had no regular places and movements, they would be useless to the seaman. So with false religious teachers. No dependence can be placed on them. It is not uncommon to compare a religious teacher to a star, Re 1:16 2:1. Comp. Re 22:16.

To whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever. Not to the stars, but to the teachers. The language here is the same as in 2Pe 2:17. **See Barnes "2Pe 2:17"**

{f} "waves" Isa 57:20 {g} "wandering" Re 8:10,11

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE - Chapter 1 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam*. The seventh in the direct line of descent from Adam. The line of descent is Adam, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahaleel, Jared, Enoch, see Ge 5:3, seq. On the character of Enoch, **See Barnes "Heb 11:6"**.

Prophesied of these. Uttered prophecies applicable to these men, or respecting just such men as these. It is not necessarily meant that he had these men specifically in his eye; but all that is fairly implied is, that his predictions were descriptive of them. There is no mention made in the writings of Moses of the fact that Enoch was a prophet; but no- thing is more probable in itself, and there is no absurdity in supposing that a true prophecy, though unrecorded, might be handed down by tradition. **See Barnes "2Ti 3:8"**; **See Barnes** "Jude 1:9".

The source from which Jude derived this passage respecting the prophecy of Enoch is unknown. Amidst the multitude of traditions, however, handed down by the Jews from a remote antiquity, though many of them were false, and many of a trifling character, it is reasonable to presume that some of them were true and were of importance. No man can prove that the one before us is not of that character; no one can show that an inspired writer might not be led to make the selection of a true prophecy from a mass of traditions; and as the prophecy before us is one that would be every way worthy of a prophet, and worthy to be preserved, its quotation furnishes no argument against the inspiration of Jude. There is no clear evidence that he quoted it from any *book* extant in his time. There is, indeed, now an apocryphal writing called "the Book of Enoch," containing a prediction strongly resembling this, but there is no certain proof that it existed so early as the time of Jude, nor, if it did, is it absolutely certain that he quoted from it. Both Jude and the author of that book may have quoted a common tradition of their time, for there can be no doubt that the passage referred to was handed down by tradition. The passage as found in "the Book of Enoch" is in these words: "Behold he comes with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon them, and destroy the wicked, and reprove all the carnal, for everything which the sinful and ungodly have done and committed against him," chap. ii. Bib. Repository, vol. xv. p. 86. If the Book of Enoch was written after the time of Jude, it is natural to suppose that the prophecy referred to by him, and handed down by tradition, would be inserted in it. This book was discovered in an Ethiopic version, and was published with a translation by Dr. Laurence of Oxford, in 1821, and republished in 1832. A full account of it and its contents may be seen in an article by Prof. Stuart in the Bib. Repository for January 1840, pp. 86-137.

The Lord cometh. That is, the Lord will come. **See Barnes "1Co 16:22"**.

It would seem from this to have been an early doctrine that the Lord would descend to the earth for judgment. With ten thousand of his saints. Or, *of his holy ones*. The word *saints* we now apply commonly to *redeemed* saints, or to Christians. The original word is, however, applicable to all who are *holy*, angels as well as men. The common representation in the Scriptures is, that he would come attended by the angels, (Mt 25:31,) and there is doubtless allusion here to such beings. It is a common representation in the Old Testament also that God, when he manifests himself, is accompanied by great numbers of heavenly beings. See Ps 68:17 De 33:2.

{h} "Lord" Zec 14:5

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE - Chapter 1 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *To execute judgment upon all*. That is, he shall come to judge all the dwellers upon the earth, good and bad.

And to convince all. The word *convince* we now use commonly in a somewhat limited sense, as meaning to satisfy a man's own mind either of the truth of some proposition, or of the fact that he has done wrong, as being in this latter sense synonymous with the word *convict*. This *conviction* is commonly produced by argument or truth, and is not necessarily followed by any sentence of disapprobation, or by any judicial condemnation. But this is clearly not the sense in which the word is used here. The purpose of the coming of the Lord will not be to convince men in that sense, though it is undoubtedly true that the wicked will see that their lives have been wrong; but it will be to pronounce a sentence on them as the result of the evidence of their guilt. The Greek word which is here used occurs nowhere else in the New Testament.

All that are ungodly among them. All that are not pious; all that have no religion.

Of all their ungodly deeds, etc. Of their wicked actions and words. This is the common doctrine of the Bible, that all the wicked actions and words of men will be called into judgment. In regard to this passage, thus quoted from an ancient prophecy, we may remark,

(1.) that the style bears the marks of its being a quotation, or of its being preserved by Jude in the language in which it had been handed down by tradition. It is not the style of Jude. It is not so terse, pointed, energetic.

(2.) It has every probable mark of its having been actually delivered by Enoch. The age in which he lived was corrupt. The world was ripening for the deluge. He was himself a good man, and, as would seem perhaps, almost the only good man of his generation. Nothing would be more natural than that he should be reproached by hard words and speeches, and nothing more natural than that he should have pointed the men of his own age to the future judgment.

(3.) The doctrine of the final judgment, if this was uttered by Enoch, was an early doctrine in the world. It was held even in the first generations of the race. It was one of those great truths early communicated to man to restrain him from sin, and to lead him to prepare for the great events which are to occur on the earth. The same doctrine has been transmitted from age to age, and is now one of the most important and the most affecting that refers to the final destiny of men.

{a} "judgment upon all" Re 20:13 {*} "convince" "convict" {b} "speeches" Ps 73:9

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE - Chapter 1 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *These are murmurers*. The word here used does not elsewhere occur, though the word *murmur* is frequent, Mt 20:11 Lu 5:30; Joh 6:41,43,61 8:32 1Co 10:10.

Comp. Joh 7:12 Ac 6:1; Php 2:14; 1Pe 4:9. The sense is that of repining or complaining under the allotments of Providence, or finding fault with God's plans, and purposes, and doings.

Complainers. Literally, finding fault with one's own lot (*memqimoiroi*.) The *word* does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament; the thing often occurs in this world. Nothing is more common than for men to complain of their lot; to think that it is hard; to com- pare theirs with that of others, and to blame God for not having made their circumstances different. The poor complain

that they are not rich like others; the sick that they are not well; the enslaved that they are not free; the bereaved that they are deprived of friends; the ugly that they are not beautiful; those in humble life that their lot was not east among the great and the gay. The virtue that is opposed to this is *contentment*—a virtue of inestimable value. **See Barnes "Php 4:11".**

Walking after their own lusts. Giving unlimited indulgence to their appetites and passions. **See Barnes "2Pe 3:3".**

And their mouth speaketh great swelling words. **See Barnes "2Pe 2:18".**

Having men's persons in admiration. Showing great respect to certain persons, particularly the rich and the great. The idea is, that they were not *just* in the esteem which they had for others, or that they did not appreciate them according to their real worth, but paid special attention to one class in order to promote their selfish ends.

Because of advantage. Because they hoped to derive some benefit to themselves.

{+} "advantage" "For gain's sake"

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE - Chapter 1 - Verse 17

Verses 17, 18. *But, beloved, remember ye*, etc. There is a striking similarity between these two verses and 2Pe 3:1-3. It occurs in the same connexion, following the description of the false and dangerous teachers against whom the apostle would guard them, and couched almost in the same words. See it explained in Notes on the similar passage in Peter. When Jude (Jude 1:17) entreats them to remember the words which were spoken by *the apostles*, it is not necessarily to be inferred that he was not himself an apostle, for he is speaking of what was past, and there might have been a special reason why he should refer to something that they would distinctly remember which had been spoken by the *other* apostles on this point. Or it might be that he meant also to include himself among them, and to speak of the apostles collectively, without particularly specifying himself.

Mockers. The word rendered *mockers* here is the same which in the parallel place in 2Pe 3:3 is rendered *scoffers*. Peter has stated more fully what was the particular subject on which they scoffed, and has shown that there was no occasion for it, 2Pe 3:4, seq.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE - Chapter 1 - Verse 18

Verse 18. **See Barnes on "Jude 1:17".**

{c} "told you" 1Ti 4:1

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE - Chapter 1 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *These be they who separate themselves*. That is, from their brethren, and from the work of benevolence and truth. Comp. Ro 16:17 Jud 5:16,23.

Sensual. Under the influence of gross passions and appetites.

Having not the Spirit. The Holy Spirit, or the spirit of true religion.
{d} "separate" Heb 10:25

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE - Chapter 1 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *But ye, beloved*, building up yourselves on your most holy faith. Comp. **See Barnes "Jude 1:3"**.

On the word *building*, **See Barnes** "1Co 3:9, seq. **See Barnes "Eph 2:20"**.

It is said here that they were to "build up *themselves*;" that is, they were to act as moral and responsible agents in this, or were to put forth their own proper exertions to do it. Dependent as we are, and as all persons with correct views will feel themselves to be, yet it is proper to endeavour to do the work of religion as if we had ample power of ourselves. **See Barnes "Php 2:12"**.

The phrase "most holy faith" here refers to the system of religion which was founded on faith; and the meaning is, that they should seek to establish themselves most firmly in the belief of the doctrines, and in the practice of the duties of that system of religion.

Praying in the Holy Ghost. **See Barnes "Eph 6:18"**.

{e} "building up" Col 2:7 {f} "praying" Eph 6:18 {++} "Ghost" "By the Holy Spirit"

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE - Chapter 1 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *Keep yourselves in the love of God*. Still adverting to their own agency. On the duty here enjoined, **See Barnes** "Joh 15:9, The phrase "the love of God" *may* mean either God's love to us, or our love to him. The latter appears, however, to be the sense here, because it is not a subject which could be enjoined, that we should keep up *God's love to us*. That is a point over which we can have no control, except so far as it may be the result of our obedience; but we may be commanded to love him, and to keep ourselves in that love.

Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. Particularly when he shall come to receive his people to himself. **See Barnes "Tit 2:13"**; **See Barnes "2Pe 3:12"**; **See Barnes** "2Ti 4:8".

{g} "yourselves" Joh 15:2,10

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE - Chapter 1 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *And of some have compassion*. This cannot be intended to teach that they were not to have compassion for all men, or to regard the salvation of all with solicitude, but that they were to have special and peculiar compassion for a certain class of persons, or were to approach them with feelings appropriate to their condition. The idea is, that the peculiar feeling to be manifested towards a certain class of persons in seeking their salvation was tender affection and kindness. They were to approach them in the gentlest manner, appealing to them by such words as *love* would prompt. Others were to be approached in a different manner, indicated by the phrase, "save with

fear," The class here referred to, to whom *pity* (*eleeite*) was to be shown, and in whose conversion and salvation tender compassion was to be employed, appear to have been the timid, the gentle, the unwary; those who had not yet fallen into dangerous errors, but who might be exposed to them; those, for there are such, who would be more likely to be influenced by kind words and a gentle manner than by denunciation. The direction then amounts to this, that while we are to seek to save all, we are to adapt ourselves wisely to the character and circumstances of those whom we seek to save. **See Barnes** "1Co 9:19, seq.

Making a difference. Making a distinction between them, not in regard to your *desires* for their salvation, or your efforts to save them, but to the manner in which it is done. To be able to do this is one of the highest qualifications to be sought by one who endeavours to save souls, and is indispensable for a good minister of the gospel. The young, the tender, the delicate, the refined, need a different kind of treatment from the rough, the uncultivated, the hardened. This wisdom was shown by the Saviour in all his preaching; it was eminent in the preaching of Paul.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE - Chapter 1 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *And others*. Another class; those who were of such a character, or in such circumstances, that a more bold, earnest, and determined manner would be better adapted to them.

Save with fear. That is, by appeals adapted to produce fear. The idea seems to be that the arguments on which they relied were to be drawn from the dangers of the persons referred to, or from the dread of future wrath. It is undoubtedly true, that while there is a class of persons who can be won to embrace religion by mild and gentle persuasion, there is another class who can be aroused only by the terrors of the law. Every method is to be employed, in its proper place, that we "by all means may save some."

Pulling them out of the fire. As you would snatch persons out of the fire; or as you would seize on a person that was walking into a volcano. Then, a man would not use the mild and gentle language of persuasion, but by word and gesture show that he was deeply in earnest.

Hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. The allusion here is not quite certain, though the idea which the apostle meant to convey is not difficult to be understood. By "the garment spotted by the flesh" there *may* be an allusion to a garment worn by one who had the plague, or some offensive disease which might be communicated to others by touching even the clothing which they had worn. Or there may be an allusion to the ceremonial law of Moses, by which all those who came in contact with dead bodies were regarded as unclean, Le 21:11 Nu 6:6, 9:6 19:11.

Or there may be an allusion to the case mentioned in Le 15:4,10,17; or perhaps to a case of leprosy. In all such instances, there would be the idea that the thing referred to by which the garment had been spotted was polluting, contagious, or loathsome, and that it was proper not even to touch such a garment, or to come in contact with it in any way. To something of this kind the apostle compares the sins of the persons here referred to. While the utmost effort was to be made to save them, they were in no way to partake of their sins; their conduct was to be regarded as loathsome and contagious; and those who attempted to save them were to take every precaution to preserve their own purity. There is much wisdom in this counsel. While we endeavour to save the *sinner*, we cannot too deeply loathe his sins; and in approaching some classes of sinners there is need of

as much care to avoid being defiled by them, as there would be to escape the plague if we had any transaction with one who had it.

Not a few have been deeply corrupted in their attempts to reform the polluted. There never could be, for example, too much circumspection and prayer for personal safety from pollution, in attempting to reform licentious and abandoned females.

{b} "fear" Zec 3:2-5 {c} "garment" Re 3:4,18 {*} "pulling" "snatching"

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE - Chapter 1 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling*. This ascription to one who was able to keep them from failing is made in view of the facts adverted to in the epistle—the dangers of being led away by the arts and the example of these teachers of error. Comp. Jude 1:3. On the ascription itself, comp. **See Barnes "Ro 16:26-27"**.

The phrase "to keep from falling" means here to preserve from falling into sin, from yielding to temptation, and dishonouring their religion. The word used (*aptaistouv*) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means properly, *not stumbling*, as of a horse; then *without falling into sin, blameless*. It is God only who, amidst the temptations of the world, can keep us from falling; but, blessed be his name, he can do it, and if we trust in him he will.

And to present you faultless. The word here rendered *faultless* is the same which is rendered unblamable in Col 1:22. See the sentiment here expressed explained in the Notes on that passage.

Before the presence of his glory. In his own glorious presence; before himself encompassed with glory in heaven. The saints are to be presented there as redeemed and sanctified, and as made worthy by grace to dwell there for ever.

With exceeding joy. With the abounding joy that they are redeemed; that they are rescued from sorrow, sin, and death, and that heaven is to be their eternal home. Who now can form an adequate idea of the happiness of that hour?

{d} "him" Ro 16:25-27 {e} "keep" 2Ti 4:18 {f} "present" Col 1:22

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE - Chapter 1 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *To the only wise God*. **See Barnes "Ro 16:27"**; **See Barnes "1Ti 1:17"**.

Our Saviour. The word *Saviour* may be appropriately applied to God as such, because he is the great Author of salvation, though it is commonly applied to the Lord Jesus Christ. That it *may* have been designed that it should be applied here to the Lord Jesus no one can certainly deny, nor can it be demonstrated that it was; and in these circumstances, as all that is fairly implied in the language may be applied to God as such, it is most natural to give the phrase that interpretation. Be *glory and majesty*. **See Barnes "1Ti 1:17"**; **See Barnes** "Ro 16:17".

Dominion and power, etc. See Mt 6:13. It is common in the Scriptures to ascribe power, dominion, and glory to God, expressing the feeling that all that is great and good belongs to him, and the desire of the heart that he may reign in heaven and on earth. Comp. Re 4:11; Re 19:1. With

the expression of such a desire it was not inappropriate that this epistle should be closed—and it is not inappropriate that this volume should be closed with the utterance of the same wish. In all our affections and aspirations, may God be supreme; in all the sin and woe which prevail here below, may we look forward with strong desire to the time when his dominion shall be set up over all the earth; in all our own sins and sorrows, be it ours to look onward to the time when in a purer and happier world his reign may be set up over our own souls, and when we may cast every crown at his feet and say, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.—Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God," Re 4:11 19:1.

{g} "To" 1Ti 1:17

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 1

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 1 - Verse 1

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE
Note: Due to the length of Introductory Material, please find it starting in **See Barnes "Mal 2:1"**

Also, See an Outline of the Entire Book **See Barnes "Mal 2:6"**

THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE
CHAPTER I

ANALYSIS OF CHAPTER I

THIS chapter contains a general introduction to the whole book, and comprises the following parts:—

I. The announcement that the object of the book is to record a revelation which the Lord Jesus Christ had made of important events which were shortly to occur, and which were signified by an angel to the author, John, Re 1:1-3. A blessing is pronounced on him who should read and understand the book, and special attention is directed to it because the time was st hand when the predicted events would occur.

II. Salutation to the seven churches of Asia, Re 1:4-8. To those churches, it. would seem from this, the book was originally dedicated or addressed, and two of the chapters (2 and 3) refer exclusively to them. Among them evidently the author had resided, (Re 1:9,) and the whole book was doubtless sent to them, and committed to their keeping. In this salutation, the author wishes for them grace, mercy, and peace from "him which is, and which was, and which is to come"—the original fountain of all light and truth—referring to more sublime.

Verse 1. *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*. This is evidently a title or caption of the whole book, and is designed to comprise the substance of the whole; for all that the book contains would be embraced in the general declaration that it is a Revelation of Jesus Christ. The word rendered *Revelation —apokaluptw*, whence we have derived our word *Apocalypse* —means properly *an uncovering*; that is, *nakedness* —from *apokaluptw*—to uncover. It would apply to anything which had been covered up so as to be hidden from the view—as by a veil; by darkness; in an ark or chest—and then made manifest by removing the covering. It comes then to be used in the sense of disclosing or revealing by removing the veil of darkness or ignorance. "There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed." It may be applied to the disclosing or manifesting of anything which was before obscure or unknown. This may be done:

(a) by instruction in regard to that which was before obscure—that is, by statements of what was unknown before the statements were made; as in Lu 2:32, where it is said that Christ would be "a light to lighten the Gentiles"—*fwv eiv apokaluqin eynwn*—or when it is applied to the Divine

mysteries, purposes, or doctrines, before obscure or unknown, but made clear by light revealed in the gospel, Ro 16:25 1Co 2:10, 14:6 Eph 3:5

(b) By the event itself; as the manifestation of the wrath of God at the day of judgment will disclose the true nature of his wrath. "After thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and *revelation* of the righteous judgment of God," Ro 2:5 "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the *manifestation* (Gr., *revelation*) of the sons of God," Ro 8:19; that is, till it shall be manifest by the event what they who are the children of God are to be. In this sense the word is frequently applied to the second advent or appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ, as disclosing him in his glory, or showing what he truly is: 2Th 1:7, "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed"— *en th apokaluqei* —*in the revelation* of Jesus Christ. 1Co 1:7, "Waiting for the coming" (the revelation—*thn apokaluqin*) of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1Pe 1:7, "At the *appearing*" (Gr., *revelation*) "of Jesus Christ." See also 1Pe 4:13, "When his glory shall be *revealed*."

(c) It is used in the sense of making known what is to come—whether by words, signs, or symbols—as if a veil were lifted from that which is hidden from human vision, or which is covered by the darkness of the unknown future. This is called a revelation, because the knowledge of the event is in fact made known to the world by Him who alone can see it, and in such a manner as he pleases to employ, though many of the terms or the symbols may be, from the necessity of the case, obscure; and though their full meaning may be disclosed only by the event. It is in this sense, evidently, that the word is used here; and in this sense that it is more commonly employed when we speak of a revelation. Thus the word ,(

HEBREW) (*gala*) is used in Am 3:7: "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants." So Job 33:16, "Then he openeth (marg., *revealeth* or *uncovereth*,

HEBREW

the ears of men;" that is, in a dream, he discloses to their ears his truth before concealed or unknown.) Compare Da 2:22,28-29 10:1

De 29:29; These ideas enter into the word as used in the passage before us. The idea is that of a disclosure of an extraordinary character, beyond the mere ability of man, by a special communication from heaven. This is manifest, not only from the usual meaning of this word, but by the word *prophecy*, in Re 1:3, and by all the arrangements by which these things, were made known. The ideas which would be naturally conveyed by the use of this word in this connexion are two:

(1) that there was something which was before hidden, obscure, or unknown, and

(2) that this was so disclosed by these communications as to be seen or known.

The things hidden or unknown were those which pertained to the future; the method of disclosing them was mainly by symbols. In the Greek, in this passage, the article is wanting—*apokaluqiv*—*a* Revelation, not *h*, *the* Revelation. This is omitted because it is the title of a book, and because the use of the article might imply that this was the only revelation, excluding other books claiming to be a revelation; or it might imply some previous mention of the book, or knowledge of it in the reader. The simple meaning is, that this was "*a* Revelation;" it was only a part of *the* Revelation which God has given to mankind. The phrase, "the Revelation of Jesus Christ," might, so far as the construction of the language is concerned, refer either to Christ as the *subject* or *object* . It might either mean that Christ is the *object* revealed in this book, and that its great purpose is to make him

known—and so the phrase is understood in the commentary called *Hyponoia*, (New York, 1844;) or it may mean that this is a revelation which Christ *makes* to mankind—that is, it is his in the sense that he communicates it to the world. That this latter is the meaning here is clear,

(1) because it is expressly said in this verse that it was a revelation which God gave to him;

(2) because it is said that it pertains to things which must shortly come to pass; and

(3) because, in fact, the revelation is a disclosure of *events* which were to happen, and not of the person or work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Which God gave unto him. Which God imparted or communicated to Jesus Christ. This is in accordance with the representations everywhere made in the Scriptures, that God is the original fountain of truth and knowledge, and that, whatever was the original dignity of the Son of God, there was a mediatorial dependence on the Father. See Joh 5:19-20: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for whatsoever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and *showeth him* (*deiknusin autw*) all things that himself doeth." Joh 7:16 "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me." Joh 8:28: "As my Father hath *taught me*, (*edidaxe me*) I speak these things." Joh 12:49: "For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak." See also Joh 14:10 17:7-8; Mt 11:27 Mr 13:32.

The same mediatorial dependence the apostle teaches us still subsists in heaven in his glorified state, and will continue until he has subdued all things, (1Co 15:24-28;) and hence, even in that state, he is represented as receiving the Revelation from the Father to communicate it to men.

To show unto his servants. That is, to his people; to Christians, often represented as the servants of God or of Christ, 1Pe 2:16 Re 2:20, 7:3 19:2, 22:3.

It is true that the word is sometimes applied by way of eminence to the prophets, (1Ch 6:49 Da 6:20) and to the apostles, Ro 1:1 Ga 1:10; Php 1:1

Tit 1:1 Jas 1:1 but it is also applied to the mass of Christians, and there is no reason why it should not be so understood here. The book was sent to the churches of Asia, and was clearly designed for general use; and the contents of the book were evidently intended for the churches of the Redeemer in all ages and lands. Compare Re 1:3. The word rendered *to show*—*deixai*—commonly denotes to point out; to cause to see; to present to the sight; and is a word eminently appropriate here, as what was to be revealed was, in general, to be presented to the *sight* by sensible tokens or symbols.

Things which must shortly come to pass. Not *all* the things that will occur, but such as it was deemed of importance for his people to be made acquainted with. Nor is it certainly implied that all the things that *are* communicated would shortly come to pass, or would soon occur. Some of them might perhaps lie in the distant future, and still it might be true that there were those which were revealed in connexion with them, which soon would occur. The word rendered "*things* "—*a*—is a pronoun, and might be rendered *what*: "he showed to his servants *what things* were about to occur;" not implying that he showed *all* the things that would happen, but such as he judged to be needful that his people should know. The word would naturally embrace those things which, in the circumstances, were most desirable to be known. The phrase rendered "must come to pass"—*dei genesyai*—would imply more than mere futurity. The word used (*dei*) means *it needs, there is need of*, and implies that there is some kind of *necessity* that the event should occur. That necessity may either arise from the felt *want* of anything, as where it is absent or wanting, Xen. Cyr. 4, 10, ib. 7, 5, 9; or from the nature of the case, or from a sense of duty—as Mt 16:21, "Jesus began to show

to his disciples that he *must go* (*dei apelyein*) to Jerusalem," Compare Mt 26:35 Mr 14:31 Lu 2:49 or the necessity may exist, because a thing is right and just, meaning that it *ought* to be done—as Lu 13:14, "There are six days in which men *ought* to work"—*dei ergazesyai*; Lu 13:16, "And *ought not* this woman (*ouk edei*) whom Satan hath bound, etc., be loosed from this bond;" compare Mr 13:14 Joh 4:20 Ac 5:11,29 2Ti 2:6; Mt 18:33 25:27

or the necessity may be that it is conformable to the Divine arrangement, or is made necessary by Divine appointment— as in Joh 3:14, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so *must* (*dei*) the Son of man be lifted up;" Joh 20:9, "For as yet they knew not the Scriptures, that he *must* (*dei*) rise again from the dead." Compare Ac 4:12 14:22 *et al* . In the passage before us, it is implied that there was some *necessity* that the things referred to should occur. They were not the result of chance; they were not fortuitous. It is not, however, stated what was the ground of the necessity—whether because there was a want of something to complete a great arrangement; or because it was right and proper in existing circumstances; or because such was the Divine appointment.

They were events which, on some account, *must* certainly occur, and which therefore it was important should be made known. The real ground of the necessity probably was founded in the design of God in redemption. He intended to carry out his great plans in reference to his church, and the things revealed here must necessarily occur in the completion of that design. The phrase rendered *shortly*— *en tacei* —is one whose meaning has been much controverted, and on which much has been made to depend in the interpretation of the whole book. The question has been whether the phrase necessarily implies that the events referred to were *soon* to occur, or whether it may have such an extent of meaning as to admit the supposition that the events referred to, though beginning soon, would embrace in their development far distant years, and would reach the end of all things. Those who maintain (as Professor Stuart) that the book was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, and that the portion in chapters 4-11, has special reference to Jerusalem and Judaea, and the portion in chapters 12-19, to persecuting and heathen Rome, maintain the former opinion; those who suppose that chapters 4-11, refers to the irruption of Northern barbarians in the Roman empire, and chapter 12 seq. to the rise and the persecutions of the Papal power, embrace the latter opinion. All that is proper in this place is, without reference to any theory of interpretation, to inquire into the proper meaning of the language; or to ascertain what idea it would naturally convey.

(a) The phrase properly and literally means, *with quickness, swiftness, speed*; that is, *speedily, quickly, shortly* .—Rob. Lex.; Stuart *in loc*. It is the same in meaning as *tacewv*. Compare 1Co 4:19, "But I will come to you *shortly*, if the Lord will." Lu 14:21, "Go out *quickly* into the streets." Lu 16:6, "Sit down *quickly*, and write fifty." Joh 11:31, "She rose up hastily (*tacewv*) and went out." Ga 1:6, "That ye are so *soon* removed (*tacewv*) from him that called you." 1Ti 5:22, "Lay hands *suddenly* on no man." See also Php 2:19,24; 2Th 2:2 2Ti 4:9.

The phrase used here —*en tacei*— occurs in Lu 18:8, "he will avenge them *speedily*," (literally *with speed*;) Ac 12:7, "arise up *quickly*;" Ac 22:18, "get thee *quickly* out of Jerusalem;" Ac 25:4, "would depart *shortly*;" Ro 16:20, "bruise Satan under your feet *shortly*;" and Re 1:1 22:6. The essential idea is, that the thing which is spoken of was *soon* to occur, or it was not a remote and distant event. There is the notion of rapidity, of haste, of suddenness. It is such a phrase as is used when the thing is on the point of happening, and could not be applied to an event which was in the remote future, considered as an independent event standing by itself. The same idea is expressed,

in regard to the same thing, in Re 1:3: "the time is *at hand*" —*o gar kairov egguv*; that is, it is near; it is soon to occur. Yet

(b) it is not necessary to suppose that the meaning is that *all* that there is in the book was soon to happen. It may mean that the *series* of events which were to follow on in their proper order was soon to commence, though it might be that the sequel would be remote. The first in the series of events was soon to begin, and the others would follow on in their train, though a portion of them, in the regular order, might be in a remote futurity. If we *suppose* that there was such an order; that a series of transactions was about to commence involving a long train of momentous developments, and that the beginning of this was to occur soon, the language used by John would be that which would be naturally employed to express it. Thus, in case of a revolution in a government, when a reigning prince should be driven from his kingdom, to be succeeded by a new dynasty which would long occupy the throne, and involving as the consequence of the revolution important events extending far into the future, we would naturally say that these things were shortly to occur, or that the time was near. It is customary to speak of a succession of events or periods as near, however vast or interminable the series may be, when the commencement is at hand. Thus we say, that the great events of the eternal world are near; that is, the beginning of them is soon to occur. So Christians now speak often of the millennium as near, or as about to occur, though it is the belief of many that it will be protracted for many ages.

(c) That this is the true idea here is clear, whatever general view of interpretation in regard to the book is adopted. Even Professor Stuart, who contends that the greater portion of the book refers to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the persecutions of heathen Rome, admits that "the closing part of the Revelation relates beyond all doubt to a distant period, and some of it to a future eternity," (II.p.5;) and if this be so then there is no impropriety in supposing that a part of the series of predictions preceding this may lie also in a somewhat remote futurity. The true idea seems to be that the writer contemplated a *series* of events that were to occur; and that this series was about to commence. How far into the future it was to extend is to be learned by the proper interpretation of all the parts of the series.

And he sent. Gr., "Sending by his angel, signified it to his servant John." The idea is not precisely that he sent his angel to communicate the message, but that he sent *by* him, or employed him as an agent in doing it. The thing sent was rather the message than the angel.

And signified it. *eshmanen*. He indicated it by signs and symbols. The word occurs in the New Testament only in Joh 12:33 Joh 18:32 21:19; Ac 11:28 25:27

and in the passage before us, in all which places it rendered *signify, signifying* or *signified*. It properly refers to some sign, signal, or token by which anything is made known, (compare Mt 26:28 Ro 4:11; Ge 9:12-13 17:11

Lu 2:12 2Co 12:12; 1Co 14:22) and is a word most happily chosen to denote the manner in which the events referred to were to by communicated to John—for nearly the whole book is made up of signs and symbols. If it be asked *what* was signified to John, it may be replied that either the word "*it*" may be understood, as in our translation, to refer to the Apocalypse or Revelation, or what he saw—*osa eide*— as Professor Stuart supposes; or it may be absolute, without any object following, as Professor Robinson (Lex.) supposes. The general sense is that, sending by his angel, he made to John a communication by expressive signs or symbols.

By his angel. That is, an angel was employed to cause these scenic representations to pass before the mind of the apostle. The communication was not made directly to him but was through the

medium of a heavenly messenger employed for this purpose. Thus in Re 22:6, it is said, "And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done." Compare Re 22:8-9.

There is frequent allusion in the Scriptures to the fact that *angels* have been employed as agents in making known the Divine will, or in the revelations which have been made to men. Thus in Ac 7:53, it is said, "Who have received the law by the disposition of angels." Heb 2:2, "For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast," etc. Ga 3:19, "And it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator."

Compare **See Barnes "**Ac 7:38, **See Barnes "Ac 7:53"**.

There is almost no further reference to the agency of the angel employed for this service, in the book, and there is no distinct specifications of what he did, or of his great agency in the case. John is everywhere represented as seeing the symbols himself, and it would seem that the agency of the angel was, either to cause those symbols to pass before the apostle, or to convey their meaning to his mind. How far John himself understood the meaning of these symbols we have not the means of knowing with certainty. The most probable supposition is, that the angel was employed to cause these vision or symbols to pass before his mind, rather than to interpret them. If an interpretation had been given, it is inconceivable that it should not have been recorded, and there is no more probability that their meaning should have been disclosed to John himself for his private use, than that it should have been disclosed and recorded for the use of others. It would seem probable, therefore, that John had only that view of the meaning of what he saw which any one else might obtain from the record of the visions. Compare **See Barnes "1Pe 1:10-12"**.

Unto his servant John. Nothing could be learned from this expression as to *what* John was the author of the book, whether the apostle of that name or some other. It cannot be inferred from the use of the word *servant*, rather than *apostle*, that the apostle John was *not* the author, for it was not uncommon for the apostles to designate themselves merely by the words *servants*, or *servants of God*. Compare **See Barnes "Ro 1:1"**.

{a} "blessed" Lu 11:28" {b} "time" Jas 5:8,9; 1Pe 4:7

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 1 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Who bare record of the word of God*. Who bore witness to, or testified of (*emarturhse*) the word of God. He regarded himself merely as a *witness* of what he had seen, and claimed only to make a fair and faithful *record* of it. Joh 21:24: "This is the disciple which *testifieth* (*o marturwn*) of these things, and wrote these things." Joh 19:35: "And he that saw it *bare record*"—*memarturhke*. Compare also the following places, where the apostle uses the same word of himself: 1Jo 1:2 4:14. The expression here, "*the word of God*," is one the meaning of which has been much controverted, and is important in its bearing on the question who was the author of the book of Revelation. The main inquiry is, whether the writer refers to the "testimony" which he bears in this book respecting the "word of God;" or whether he refers to some testimony on that subject in some other book with which those to whom he wrote were so familiar that they would at once recognize him as the author; or whether he refers to the fact that he had borne his testimony to the great truths of religion, and especially respecting Jesus Christ, as a preacher who was well known, and who would be

characterized by this expression. The phrase "the word of God"—*ton logon tou yeou*,—occurs frequently in the New Testament, (compare Joh 10:35 Ac 4:31, 6:2,7, 11:1 12:24) and may either mean the word or doctrine *respecting* God —that which teaches what God is—or that which he speaks or teaches. It is more commonly used in the latter sense, compare the passages referred to above, and especially refers to what God speaks or commands in the gospel. The fair meaning of this expression would be, that John had borne faithful witness to, or testimony of, the truth which God had spoken to man in the gospel of Christ. So far as the *language* here used is concerned, this might apply either to a written or an oral testimony; either to a treatise like that of his gospel, to his preaching, or to the record which he was then making. Vitringa and others suppose that the reference here is to the gospel which he had published, and which now bears his name; Lucke and others, to the revelation made to him in Patmos, the record of which he now makes in this book; Professor Stuart and others, to the fact that he was a teacher or preacher of the gospel, and that (compare Re 1:9) the allusion is to the testimony which he had borne to the gospel, and for which he was an exile in Patmos. Is it not possible that these conflicting opinions may be to some extent harmonized, by supposing that in the use of the aorist tense—*emarturhse*—the writer meant to refer to a characteristic of himself, to wit, that he was a faithful *witness* of the word of God and of Jesus Christ, whenever and however made known to him ? With an eye, perhaps, to the record which he was about to make in this book, and intending to include that, may he not also refer to what had been and was his well-known character as a *witness* of what God communicated to him? He had always borne this testimony. He always regarded himself as such a witness. He had been an eye-witness of what had occurred in the life and at the death of the Saviour, (**see Barnes "2Pe 1:17-18"**) and had, in all his writings and public administrations, borne witness to what he had seen and heard; for that, (Re 1:9)he had been banished to Patmos; and he was now about to carry out the same characteristic of himself by bearing witness to what he saw in these new revelations. This would be much in the manner of John, who often refers to this characteristic of himself, (compare Joh 19:35 21:24; 1Jo 1:2) as well as harmonize the different opinions. The meaning then of the expression "who bare record of the word of God," as I understand it, is, that it was a characteristic of the writer to bear simple but faithful testimony to the truth which God communicated to men in the gospel. If this be the correct interpretation, it may be remarked

(a) that this is such language as John the apostle would be *likely* to use, and yet

(b) that it is not such language as an author would he likely to adopt if there was an attempt to forge a book in his name.

The artifice would be too refined to occur probably to any one, for although perfectly natural for John, it would not be so natural for a forger of a book to select this circumstance and weave it thus unostentatiously into his narrative.

And of the testimony of Jesus Christ. That is, in accordance with the interpretation above, of the testimony *which Jesus Christ bore for the truth*; not of a testimony *respecting* Jesus Christ. The idea is, that Jesus Christ was himself a *witness* to the truth, and that the writer of this book was a witness merely of the testimony which Christ had borne. Whether the testimony of Jesus Christ was borne in his preaching when in the flesh, or whether made known to the writer by him at any subsequent period, it was *his* office to make a faithful record of that testimony. As he had always before done that, so he was about to do it now in the new revelation made to him in Patmos, which he regarded as a new testimony of Jesus Christ to the truth, Re 1:1. It is remarkable that, in confirmation of this view, John so often describes the Lord Jesus as a *witness*, or represents him

as having come to bear his faithful *testimony* to the truth. Thus in Re 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful and true witness." Joh 8:18: "I am one that bear witness—*o marturwn*—of myself." Joh 18:37: "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness—*ina marturhsw*—to the truth." Re 3:14: "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness"— *o martuv o pistov k.t.l.*. Of this testimony which the Lord Jesus came to bring to man respecting eternal realities, the writer of this book says that he regarded *himself* as a witness. To the office of bearing such testimony he had been dedicated; that testimony he was now to bear, as he had always done.

And of all things that he saw . osa te eide. This is the common reading in the Greek, and according to this reading it would properly mean, "*and* whatsoever he saw;" that is, it would imply that he bore witness to "the word of God," *and* to "the testimony of Jesus Christ," *and* to "whatever he saw"—meaning that the things which he saw, and to which he refers, were things additional to those to which he had referred by "the word of God," and the "testimony of Christ." From this it has been supposed that in the former part of the verse he refers to some testimony which he had formerly borne, as in his gospel or in his preaching, and that here he refers to what he "saw" in the visions of the Revelation as something *additional* to the former. But it should be remembered that the word rendered *and—te*—is wanting in a large number of manuscripts, (see Wetstein,) and that it is now omitted in the best editions of the Greek Testament—as by Griesbach, Tittmann, and Hahn. The evidence is clear that it should be omitted; and if so omitted, the reference is to whatever he had at any time borne his testimony to, and not particularly to what passed before him in the visions of this book. It is a general affirmation that he had always borne a faithful testimony to whatever he had seen respecting the word of God and the testimony of Christ. The correct rendering of the whole passage then would be, "And sending by his angel, he signifies it to his servant John, who bare record of" [*i.e.* whose character and office it was to bear his testimony to] "the word of God," [the message which God has sent to me,] "and the testimony of Jesus Christ," [the testimony which Christ bore to the truth,] "whatsoever he saw." He concealed nothing; he held nothing back; he made it known precisely as it was seen by him. Thus interpreted, the passage refers to what was a general characteristic of the writer, and is designed to embrace *all* that was made known to him, and to affirm that he was a faithful witness to it. There were doubtless special *reasons* why John was employed as the medium through which this communication was to be made to the church and the world. Among these reasons may have been the following:

(a) That he was the "beloved disciple."

(b) That he was the only surviving apostle.

(c) That his character, was such that his statements would be readily received. Compare Joh 19:35 21:24; 3Jo 1:12.

(d) It may be that his mind was better fitted to be the medium of these communications than that of any other of the apostles—even if they had been then alive. There is almost no one whose mental characteristics are less correctly understood than those of the apostle John. Among the most gentle and amiable of men—with a heart so fitted for *love* as to be known as "the beloved disciple"—he yet had mental characteristics which made it proper that he should be called "a son of thunder," (Mr 3:17) a mind fitted to preserve and record the profound thoughts in his gospel; a mind of high poetic order, fitted for the magnificent conceptions in this book.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 1 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Blessed is he that readeth*. That is, it is to be regarded as a privilege attended with many blessings, to be permitted to mark the disclosures to be made in this book; the important revelations respecting future times. Professor Stuart supposes that this refers to a public reading, and that the phrase "those who hear the words of this prophecy" refers to those who listened to the public reader, and that both the reader and hearer should regard themselves as highly favoured. It is, however, more in accordance with the usual meaning of the word rendered "read," to suppose that it refers to the act of one's reading for himself; to learn by reading. So Robinson (Lex.) understands it. The Greek word, indeed, would bear the other interpretation, (see Lu 4:16 Ac 13:27, 15:21 2Co 3:15) but as this book was sent abroad to be read by Christians, and not merely to be in the hands of the ministers of religion to be read by them to others, it is more natural to interpret the word in the usual sense.

And hear the words of this prophecy. As they shall be declared or repeated by others; or perhaps the word *hear* is used in a sense that is not uncommon, that of giving attention to; taking heed to. The general sense is, that they were to be regarded as highly favoured who became acquainted in any way with what is here communicated. The writer does not *say* that they were blessed who *understood* it, or that they who read or heard it *would* fully understand it; but it is clearly implied, that there would be so far an understanding of its meaning as to make it a felicitous condition to have been made acquainted with it. An author could not be supposed to say that one should regard his condition as a favoured one who merely heard words that he could not understand, or who had placed before him magnificent symbols that had to him no meaning. The word *prophecy* is used here in its more strict sense as denoting the disclosure of future events—a large portion of the book being of this nature. It is here synonymous with *Revelation* in Re 1:1.

And keep those things which are written therein. Keep in mind those things which relate to the future; and obey those things which are required as truth and duty. The blessing which results from having in possession the revealed truth of God is not merely in reading it, or in hearing it: it results from the fact that the truth is properly regarded, and exerts a suitable influence over our lives. Compare Ps 19:11: "And in keeping of them there is great reward."

For the time is at hand. See Re 1:1. The word here used—*egguv*— has the same signification substantially as the word "*shortly*" in Re 1:1 It would apply to any event whose beginning was soon to occur, though the end might be remote, for the series of events might stretch far into the future. It cannot be doubted, however, that the writer meant to press upon them the importance of attending to these things, from the fact that either entirely or in part these things were soon to happen. It may be inferred from this verse, that it is possible so to *understand* this book, as that it may convey useful instruction. This is the only book in the Bible of which a special blessing is pronounced on him who reads it; but assuredly a blessing would not be pronounced on the perusal of a book which is entirely unintelligible. While, therefore, there may be many obscurities in this book, it is also to be assumed that it may be so far understood as to be useful to Christians, in supporting their faith, and giving them elevated views of the final triumph of religion, and of the glory of the world to come. Anything is a blessing which enables us with well-founded hope and joy to look forward to the heavenly world.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 1 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *John to the seven churches which are in Asia*. The word *Asia* is used in quite different senses, by different writers. It is used

(1) as referring to the whole eastern continent now known by that name;

(2) Either Asia, or Asia Minor;

(3) that part of Asia which Attlus III., king of Pergamos, gave to the Romans, viz., Mysia, Phrygia, Lycaonia, Lydia, Carla, Pisidia, and the southern coast—that is, all in the western, south-western, and southern parts of Asia Minor; and

(4) in the New Testament, usually, the south-western part of Asia Minor, of which Ephesus was the capital. **See Barnes "Ac 2:9"**.

The word *Asia* is not found in the Hebrew Scriptures, but it occurs often in the books of Maccabees, and in the New Testament. In the New Testament it is not used in the large sense in which it is now as applied to the whole continent, but in its largest signification it would include only Asia Minor. It is also used, especially by Luke; as denoting the country that was called *Ionia*, or that which embraced the provinces of Carla and Lydia. Of this region Ephesus was the principal city, and it was in this region that the "seven churches" were situated. Whether there were more than seven churches in this region is not intimated by the writer of this book, and on that point we have no certain knowledge. It is evident that these seven were the principal churches, even if there were more, and that there was some reason why they should be particularly addressed. There is mention of some other churches in the neighbourhood of these. Colosse was near to Laodicea; and from Col 4:13, it would seem not improbable that there was a church also at Hierapolis. But there may have been nothing in their circumstances that demanded particular instruction or admonition, and they may have been on that account omitted. There is also some reason to suppose, that, though there had been other churches in that vicinity besides the seven mentioned by John, they had become extinct at the time when he wrote the book of Revelation. It appears from Tacitus, (Annal. xiv. 27; compare also Pliny, N.H. v. 29,) that in the time of Nero, A. D, 61, the city of Laodicea was destroyed by an earthquake, in which earthquake, according to Eusebius, the adjacent cities of Colosse and Hierapolis were involved. Laodicea was, indeed, immediately rebuilt, but there is no evidence of the re-establishment of the church there before the time when John wrote this book. The earliest mention we have of a church there, after the one referred to in the New Testament by Paul, (Col 2:1 4:13,15-16) is in the time of Trajan, when Papias was bishop there, sometime between A.D. 98 and 117. It would appear, then, to be not improbable that at the time when the Apocalypse was written, there were in fact but seven churches in the vicinity. Professor Stuart (i. 219) supposes that "seven, and only so many, may have been named, because the sevenfold divisions and groups of various objects constitute a conspicuous feature in the Apocalypse throughout." But this reason seems too artificial; and it can hardly be supposed that it would influence the mind of John, in the specification *by name* of the churches to which the book was sent. If no *names* had been mentioned, and if the statement had occurred in glowing poetic description, it is not inconceivable that the number *seven* might have been selected for some such purpose.

Grace be unto you and peace. The usual form of salutation in addressing a church. See Barnes Notes on Ro 1:7.

From him which is, and which was, and which is to come. From him who is everlasting—embracing all duration, past, present, and to come. No expression could more strikingly

denote eternity than this. He now exists; he has existed in the past; he will exist in the future. There is an evident allusion here to the name JEHOVAH, the name by which the true God is appropriately designated in the Scriptures. That name—

HEBREW

from

HEBREW

to be, to exist—seems to have been adopted because it denotes *existence*, or *being*,and as denoting simply one who *exists*; and has reference merely to the *fact* of existence. The word has no variation of form, and has no reference to time, and would embrace all time: that is, it is as true at one time as another that he exists. Such a word would not be inappropriately paraphrased by the phrase "who is, and who was, and who is to come," or who is to be; and there can be no doubt that John referred to him here as being himself the eternal and uncreated *existence*, and as the great and original fountain of all being. They who desire to find a full discussion in regard to the origin of the name JEHOVAH, may consult an article by Professor Tholuck, in the Biblical Repository, vol. iv. pp. 89—108. It is remarkable that there are some passages in heathen inscriptions and writings which bear a very strong resemblance to the language here used by John respecting God. Thus Plutarch, (De Is. et Osir. p. 354,) speaking of a temple of Isis, at Sais, in Egypt, says, "It bore this inscription 'I am all that was, and is, and shall be, and my vail no mortal can remove'"— *egw eimi pan to gegonov, kai on, kai esomenon kai ton emon peplon oudeiv tw ynhtov anekaluqen*. So Orpheus, (in Auctor. Lib. de Mundo,) "Jupiter is the head, Jupiter is the middle, and all things are made by Jupiter." So in Pausanias, (Phocic. 12,) "Jupiter was; Jupiter is; Jupiter shall be." The reference in the phrase before us is to God as such, or to God considered as the Father.

And from the seven spirits which are before his throne. After all that has been written on this very difficult expression, it is still impossible to determine with certainty its meaning. The principal opinions which have been held in regard to it are the following:

I. That it refers to God, as such. This opinion is held by Eichhorn, and is favoured by Ewald. No arguments derived from any parallel passages are urged for this opinion, nor can any such be found, where God is himself spoken of under the representation of a sevenfold Spirit. But the objections to this view are so obvious as to be insuperable.

(1.) If it refers to God as such, then it would be mere tautology, for the writer had just referred to him in the phrase "from him who was," etc.

(2.) It is difficult to perceive in what sense "seven spirits" could be ascribed to God, or how he could be described *as* a being of "Seven Spirits." At least, if he could be spoken of as such, there would be no objection to applying the phrase to the Holy Spirit.

(3.) How could it be said of God himself that he was "before the throne?" He is everywhere represented as sitting *on* the throne, not as *before* it. It is easy to conceive of angels as standing before the throne; and of the Holy Spirit it is *more* easy to conceive as being represented thus as ready to go forth and convey a heavenly influence from that throne, but it is impossible to conceive in what sense this could be applied to God as such.

II. The opinion held by Grotius and by John Henry Heinrichs that it refers to "the multiform providence of God," or to God considered as operating in seven or many different ways. In support of this, Grotius appeals to Re 5:12 7:12. But this opinion is so far-fetched, and it is so destitute of support, as to have found, it is believed, no other advocates, and to need no further notice. It cannot be supposed that John meant to personify the attributes of the Deity, and then to unite them with

God himself, and with the Lord Jesus Christ, and to represent them as real subsistences from which important blessings descend to men. It is clear that as by the phrase "who is, and who was, and who is to come," and by "Jesus Christ, the faithful and true witness," he refers to real subsistences, so he must here. Besides, if the attributes of God, or the modes of Divine operation, are denoted, why is the number *seven* chosen? And why are they represented as standing before the throne?

III. A third opinion is, that the reference is to seven attending and ministering presence-angels; angels represented as standing before the throne of God, or in his presence. This opinion was adopted among the ancients by Clemens of Alexandria; Andreas of Cesarea, and others; among the moderns by Beza, Drusius, Hammond, Wetstein, Rosenmuller, Clarke, Professor Stuart, and others. This opinion, however, has been held in somewhat different forms; some maintaining that the seven angels are referred to because it was a received opinion among the Hebrews that there were seven angels standing in the presence of God, as seven princes stood in the Persian court before the king; others, that the angels of the seven churches are particularly referred to, represented now as standing in the presence of God; others, that seven angels, represented as the principal angels employed in the government of the world, are referred to; and others, that seven archangels are particularly designated. Compare Poole, Synop. *in loc*. The arguments which are relied on by those who suppose that seven angels are here referred to are briefly these:

(1.) The nature of the expression here used. The expression, it is said, is such as would naturally denote beings who were before his throne—beings who were different from him who was on the throne— and beings more than one in number. That it could not refer to one *on* the throne, but must mean those distinct and separate from one on the throne, is argued from the use of the phrases "before the throne," and "before God,"in Re 4:5 7:9,15 8:2, 11:4,16 12:10 14:3 20:12

: in all which places the representation denotes those who were in the presence of God, and standing before him.

(2.) It is argued from other passages in the book of Revelation which, it is said, (Professor Stuart,) go directly to confirm this opinion. Thus in Re 8:2: "And I saw the seven angels which stood before God." So Re 4:5: the seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, are said to be "the seven Spirits of God." In these passages, it is alleged that the article "*the*" designates the *well-known* angels; or those which had been before specified, and that this is the first mention of any such angels after the designation in the passage before us.

(3.) It is said that this is in accordance with what was usual among the Hebrews, who were accustomed to speak of seven presence-angels, or angels standing in the presence of Jehovah. Thus in the book of Tobit, (xii. 15,) Raphael is introduced as using this language, "I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, which present the prayers of the saints, and which go in and out before the glory of the Holy One." The apocryphal book of Enoch (chapter 20) gives the names of the seven angels who *watch*; that is, of the watchers (compare Barnes Notes on Da 4:13,17)who stand in the presence of God waiting for the Divine commands, or who watch over the affairs of men. So in the Zendavesta of Zoroaster, seven amshaspends, or archangels, are mentioned. See Professor Stuart, *in loc*.

To these views, however, there are objections of great weight, if they are not in fact quite insuperable. They are such as the following:

(1.) That the same rank should be given to them as to God, as the source of blessings. According to the view which represents this expression as referring to angels, they are placed on the same level, so far as the matter before us is concerned with "him who was, and is, and is to come," and

with the Lord Jesus Christ—a doctrine which does not elsewhere occur in the Scriptures, and which we cannot suppose the writer designed to teach.

(2.) That blessings should be *invoked* from angels—as if they could impart "grace and peace." It is evident that, whoever is referred to here by the phrase "the seven spirits," he is placed on the same level with the others mentioned as the source of "grace and peace." But it cannot be supposed that an inspired writer would invoke that grace and peace from any but a Divine being.

(3.) That as two persons of the Trinity are here mentioned, it is to be presumed that the third would not be omitted; or to put this argument in a stronger form. it cannot be supposed that an inspired writer would mention two of the persons of the Trinity in this connexion, and then not only *not* mention the third, but refer to *angels*—to creatures—as bestowing that which would be appropriately sought from the Holy Spirit. The incongruity would be not merely in omitting all reference to tile Spirit—which might indeed occur, as it often does in the Scriptures—but in putting in the place which that Spirit would naturally occupy an allusion to *angels* as conferring blessings.

(4.) If this refer to angels, it is impossible to avoid the inference that angel-worship, or invocation of angels, is proper. To all intents and purposes, this is an act of worship; for it is an act of solemn invocation. It is an acknowledgment of the "seven spirits," as the source of "grace and peace." It would be impossible to resist this impression on the popular mind; it would not be possible to meet it if urged as an argument in favour of the propriety of angel-invocation, or angel-worship. And yet, if there is anything clear in the Scriptures, it is that God alone is to be worshipped. For these reasons, it seems to me that this interpretation cannot be well founded.

IV. There remains a fourth opinion, that it refers to the Holy Spirit, and in favour of that opinion it may be urged,

(1.) that it is most natural to suppose that the Holy Spirit *would* be invoked on such an occasion, in connexion with him "who was, and is, and is to come," and with "Jesus Christ." If two of the persons of the Trinity were addressed on such an occasion, it would be properly supposed that the Holy Spirit would not be omitted, as one of the persons from whom the blessing was to descend. Compare 2Co 13:14: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all."

(2.) It would be unnatural and improper, in such an invocation, to unite angels with God as imparting blessings, or as participating with God and with Christ, in communicating blessings to man. An invocation to God to *send* his angels, or to impart grace and favour *through* angelic help, would be in entire accordance with the usage in Scripture, but it is not in accordance with such usage to invoke such blessings *from* angels.

(3.) It cannot be denied that an invocation of grace from "him who is, and was, and is to come," is of the nature of worship. The address to him is *as God*, and the attitude of the mind in such an address is that of one who is engaged in an act of devotion. The effect of uniting any other being with him in such a case, would be to lead to the worship of one thus associated with him. In regard to the Lord Jesus, "the faithful and true witness," it is from such expressions as these that we are led to the belief that he is Divine, and that it is proper to worship him as such. The same effect must be produced in reference to what is here called "the seven spirits before the throne." We cannot well resist the impression that some one with Divine attributes is intended; or, if it refer to angels, we cannot easily show that it is not proper to render Divine worship to them. If they were thus invoked by an apostle, can it be improper to worship them now?

(4.) The word used here is not *angels*, but *spirits*; and though it is true that angels are spirits, and that the word spirit is applied to them, (Heb 1:7) yet it is also true that is not a word which would be understood to refer to them without designating that angels were meant. If angels had been intended here, that word would naturally have been used, as is the case elsewhere in this book.

(5.) In Re 4:5, where there is a reference to "the seven lamps before the throne," it is said of them that they "are," that is, they represent "the seven spirits of God." This passage may be understood as referring to the same thing as that before us, but it cannot be well understood of angels, for

(a.) if it did, it would have been natural to use that language for the reason above mentioned;

(b.) the angels are nowhere called "the spirits *of God*," nor would such language be proper. The phrase "Spirit of God" naturally implies divinity, and could not be applied to a creature. For these reasons, it seems to me that the interpretation which applies the phrase to the Holy Spirit is to be preferred; and though that interpretation is not free from difficulties, yet there are *fewer* difficulties in that than in either of the others proposed. Though it may not be possible wholly to remove the difficulties involved in that interpretation, yet perhaps something may be done to diminish their force.

(1.) First, as to the reason why the number *seven* should be applied to the Holy Spirit.

(a.) There would be as much propriety certainly in applying it to the Holy Spirit as to God as such. And yet Grotius, Eichhorn, Ewald, and others saw no difficulty in such an application considered as representing a sevenfold mode of operation of God, or a manifold Divine agency.

(b.) The word *seven* often denotes a full or complete number, and may be used to denote that which is full, complete, or manifold; and might thus be used in reference to an all-perfect Spirit, or to a spirit which was manifold in its operations.

(c.) The number seven is evidently a favourite number in the book of Revelation, and it might be used by the author in places, and in a sense, such as it would not be likely to be used by another writer. Thus there are seven epistles to the seven churches; there are seven seals, seven trumpets, seven vials of the wrath of God, seven last plagues; there are seven lamps, and seven Spirits of God; the Lamb has seven horns and seven eyes. In Re 1:16, seven stars are mentioned; in Re 5:12, seven attributes of God; Re 12:3, the dragon has seven heads; Re 13:1, the beast has seven heads.

(d.) The number seven, therefore, *may* have been given to the Holy Spirit with reference to the *diversity* or the *fulness* of his operations on the souls of men, and to his *manifold* agency on the affairs of the world, as further developed in this book.

(2.) As to his being represented as "*before* the throne," this may be intended to designate the fact that the Divine Spirit was, as it were, prepared to go forth, or to be *sent* forth, in accordance with a common representation in the Scriptures, to accomplish important purposes on human affairs. The posture does not necessarily imply inferiority of nature, any more than the language does respecting the Son of God, when he is represented as being *sent* into the world to execute an important commission from the Father.

{c} "seven" Re 1.11

{d} "him" Re 1:8 {e} "seven" Re 3:1 4:5

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 1 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And from Jesus Christ*, who is *the faithful witness*. **See Barnes on "Re 1:2"**.

He is faithful in the sense that he is one on whose testimony there may be entire reliance, or who is entirely worthy to be believed. From him "grace and peace" are appropriately sought, as one who bears such a testimony, and as the first-begotten from the dead, and as reigning over the kings of the earth. Thus grace and peace are invoked from the infinite God in all his relations and operations :—as the Father, the Source of all existence; as the Sacred Spirit, going forth in manifold operations upon the hearts of men; and as the Son of God, the one appointed to bear faithful testimony to the truth respecting God and future events.

And *the first-begotten of the dead*. The same Greek expression— *prwtotokov*—occurs in Col 1:18. **See Barnes on "Col 1:18"**.

Compare **Barnes on "1Co 15:20"**.

And the prince of the kings of the earth. Who has over all the kings of the earth the pre-eminence which kings have over their subjects. He is the Ruler *of* rulers; King *of* kings. In Re 17:14 19:16 the same thought is expressed by saying that he is the "King of kings." No language could more sublimely denote his exalted character, or his supremacy. Kings and princes sway a sceptre over the millions of the earth, and the exaltation of the Saviour is here expressed by supposing that all those kings and princes constitute a community over which he is the head. The exaltation of the Redeemer is elsewhere expressed in different language, but the idea is one that everywhere prevails in regard to him in the Scriptures. Compare Mt 28:18 11:27; Joh 17:2 Eph 1:20-22; Php 2:9-11 Col 1:15-18

The word *prince —o arcwn*—means properly *ruler, leader, the first in rank*. We often apply the word *prince* to an heir to a throne who is not invested with absolute sovereignty. The word here, however, denotes that he actually exercises dominion over the rulers of the earth. As this is an authority which is claimed by God, compare Isa 10:5 seq. Isa 45:1 seq. Ps 47:2 99:1, 103:19

Da 4:34 and which can only appertain to God, it is clear that in ascribing this to the Lord Jesus it is implied that he is possessed of Divine attributes. As much of the revelations of this book pertained to the assertion of power over the princes and rulers of this world, there was a propriety that, in the commencement, it should be asserted that he who was to exert that power was invested with the prerogative of a ruler of the nations, and that he had this right of control.

Unto him that loved us. This refers undoubtedly to the Lord Jesus, whose *love* for men was so strong that nothing more was necessary to characterize him than to speak of him as the one "who loved us." It is manifest that the division in the verses should have been made here, for this commences a new subject, not having any special connexion with that which precedes. In Re 1:4, and the first part of this verse, the writer had invoked grace from the Father, the Spirit, and the Saviour. In the latter clause of the verse there commences an ascription of praise to the Redeemer; an ascription to him particularly, because the whole book is regarded as a revelation from him, (Re 1:1) because he was the one who especially appeared to John in the visions of Patmos; and because he was to be the great agent in carrying into execution the purposes revealed in this book.

And washed us from our sins in his own blood. He has removed the pollution of sin from our souls by his blood; that is, his blood has been applied to cleanse us from sin. Blood can be represented as having a cleansing power *only* as it makes an expiation for sin, for considered literally its effect would be the reverse. The language is such as would be used only on the supposition that he had

made an atonement, and that it was *by* the atonement that we are cleansed; for in what sense could it be said of a martyr that he "had washed us from our sins in his blood?" How could this language be used of Paul or Polycarp; of Ridley or Cranmer? The doctrine that the blood of Christ *cleanses* us from sin, or *purifies* us, is one that is common in the Scriptures. Compare 1Jo 1:7 Heb 9:14. The specific idea of *washing*, however—representing that blood as *washing* sin away— is one which does not elsewhere occur. It is evidently used in the sense of *cleansing* or *purifying*, as we do this by *washing*, and, as the blood of Christ accomplishes in respect to our souls, what washing with water does in respect to the body.

{a} "witness" Joh 8:14 {b} "first-begotten" Col 1:18 {c} "loved" Joh 13:1 {d} "washed" Heb 9:14

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 1 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *And hath made us kings and priests unto God*. In 1Pe 2:9 the same idea is expressed by saying of Christians that they are "a *royal priesthood*." **See Barnes on "1Pe 2:9".**

The quotation in both places is from Ex 19:6: "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests." This idea is expressed here by saying that Christ had made us in fact kings *and* priests; that is, Christians are exalted to the dignity, and are invested with the office, implied in these words. The word *kings*, as applied to them, refers to the exalted rank and dignity which they will have; to the fact that they, in common with their Saviour, will reign triumphant over all enemies; and that, having gained a victory over sin and death and hell, they may be represented as reigning together. The word *priests* refers to the fact that they are engaged in the holy service of God, or that they offer to him acceptable worship. **See Barnes on "1Pe 2:5".**

And his Father. Even his Father; that is, the Saviour has redeemed them, and elevated them to this exalted rank, in order that they may thus be engaged in the service of his Father.

To him be glory. To the Redeemer; for so the construction (Re 1:5) demands. The word "glory" here means praise, or honour, implying a wish that all honour should be shown him.

And dominion. This word means literally *strength—kratov*; but it here means the strength, power, or authority which is exercised over others, and the expression is equivalent to a wish that he may *reign*.

{a} "kings" Ex 19:6 1Pe 2:5-9 {b} "be glory" Heb 13:21

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 1 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Behold, he cometh with clouds*. That is, the Lord Jesus when he returns will come accompanied with clouds. This is in accordance with the uniform representation respecting the return of the Saviour. **See Barnes on "Mt 24:30".**

Compare Mt 26:64 Mr 13:26 Mr 14:62 Ac 1:9,11.

Clouds are appropriate symbols of majesty, and God is often represented as appearing in that manner. See Ex 19:18 Ps 18:11 Isa 19:1. So, among the heathen, it was common to represent their divinities as appearing clothed with a cloud:

tandem venias, precamur,
Nube candentes humeros amictus
Augur Apollo."

The *design* of introducing this representation of the Saviour, and of the manner in which he would appear, seems to be to impress the mind with a sense of the majesty and glory of that being from whom John received his revelations. His rank, his character, his glory were such as to demand respect; all should reverence him, and all should feel that his communications about the future were important to them, for they must soon appear before him.

And every eye shall see him. He will be made visible in his glory to all that dwell upon the earth; to all the children of men. Every one, therefore, has an interest in what he says; every one has this in certain prospect, that he shall see the Son of God coming as a Judge.

And they also *which pierced him*. When he died; that is, they who pierced his hands, his feet, and his side. There is probably an allusion here to Zec 12:10: "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn." The language here is so general that it may refer to *any* act of looking upon the pierced Saviour, and might be applied to those who would see him on the cross and to their compunctions visiting then; or to their subsequent reflections, as they might look by faith on him whom they had crucified; or to the feeling of any sinners who should reflect that their sins had been the cause of the death of the Lord Jesus; or it might be applied, as it is here, more specifically to the feelings which his murderers will have when they shall see him coming in his glory. All sinners who have pierced his heart by their crimes will then behold him, and will mourn over their treatment of him; they, in a special manner, who imbrued their hands in his blood will then remember their crime, and be overwhelmed with alarm. The *design* of what is here said seems to be, to show that the coming of the Saviour will be an event of great interest to all mankind. None can be indifferent to it, for all will see him. His friends will hail his advent, (compare Re 22:20) but all who were engaged in putting him to death, and all who in any manner have pierced his heart by sin and ingratitude, unless they shall have repented, will have occasion of bitter lamentation when he shall come. There are none who have a more fearful doom to anticipate than the murderers of the Son of God, including those who actually put him to death, and those who would have engaged in such an act had they been present, and those who, by their conduct, have done all they could to pierce and wound him by their ingratitude.

And all kindreds of the earth. Gr., "All the tribes—*fulai*—of the earth." This language is the same which the Saviour uses in Mt 24:30. **See Barnes "Mt 24:30"**.

The word *tribes* is that which is commonly applied to the twelve tribes of Israel, and thus used, it would describe the inhabitants of the holy land; but it may be used to denote nations and people in general, as descended from a common ancestor, and the connexion requires that it should be understood in this sense here, since it is said that "every eve shall see him;" that is, all that dwell on the face of the earth.

Shall wail because of him. On account of him; on account of their treatment of him. The word rendered *wail—koptw*—means properly to beat, to cut; then to beat or cut one's self in the breast as an expression of sorrow; and then to lament, to cry aloud in intense grief. The coming of the Saviour will be an occasion of this,

(a) because it will be an event which will call the sins of men to remembrance, and

(b) because they will be overwhelmed with the apprehension of the wrath to come. Nothing would fill the earth with greater consternation than the coming of the Son of God in the clouds of heaven; nothing could produce so deep and universal alarm. This fact, which no one can doubt, is proof that men *feel* that they are guilty, since, if they were innocent, they would have nothing to dread by his appearing. It is also a proof that they believe in the doctrine of future punishment, since, if they do not, there is no reason why they should be alarmed at his coming. Surely men would not dread his appearing if they really believed that all will be saved. Who dreads the coming of a benefactor to bestow favours on him? Who dreads the appearing of a jailer to deliver him from prison; of a physician to raise him up from a bed of pain; of a deliverer to knock off the fetters of slavery? And how *can* it be that men should be alarmed at the coming of the Saviour unless their consciences tell them that they have much to fear in the future? The presence of the Redeemer in the clouds of heaven would destroy all the hopes of those who believe in the doctrine of universal salvation—as the approach of death now often does. Men *believe* that there is much to be dreaded in the future world, or they would not fear the coming of Him who shall wind up the affairs of the human race.

Even so, Amen—nai, amhn. "A double expression of *so be it, assuredly, certainly*, one in Greek and the other in Hebrew."—*Professor Stuart*. Compare Ro 8:16, "Abba, Father"— *abba, o pathr*. The idea which John seems to intend to convey is, that the coming of the Lord Jesus, and the consequences which he says will follow, are events which are altogether *certain*. This is not the expression of a wish that it *may* be so, as our common translation would seem to imply, but a strong affirmation that it *will* be so. In some passages, however, the word (*nai*) expresses *assent* to what is said, implying approbation of it as true, or as desirable. Mt 11:26, "*Even* so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight." Lu 10:21. So in Re 16:7, "*Even so*, (*nai*) Lord God Almighty." So in Re 22:20, "*Even so*, (*nai*) come, Lord Jesus." The word *Amen* here seems to determine the meaning of the phrase, and to make it the affirmation of a *certainty*, rather than the expression of a *wish*.

{c} "clouds" Da 7:13 Mt 26:64 {d} "they Zec 12:10 {e} "wail" Mt 24:30 {f} "even so" Re 22:20

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 1 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *I am Alpha and Omega*. These are the first and the last letters of the Greek alphabet, and denote properly the first and the last. So in Re 22:13, when the two expressions are united, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." So in Re 1:17, the speaker says of himself, "I am the first and the last." Among the Jewish Rabbins, it was common to use the first and the last letters of the Hebrew alphabet to denote the whole of anything, from beginning to end. Thus it is said, "Adam transgressed the whole law from

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"—from Aleph to Tav. "Abraham kept the whole law from

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" The language here is that which would properly denote *eternity* in the being to whom it is applied, and could be used in reference to no one but the true God. It means that he is the beginning and the end of all things; that he was at the commencement, and will be at the close; and it is thus equivalent to saying that he has always existed, and that he will always exist. Compare Isa 41:4, "I the Lord, the first, and with the last;'— Isa 44:6, "I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God;"—Isa 48:12, "I am he; I am the first, I also am the last." There can be no doubt that the language here would be naturally understood as implying divinity, and it could be properly applied to no one but the true God. The obvious interpretation here would be to apply this to the Lord Jesus; for

(a) it is he who is spoken of in the verses preceding, and

(b) there can be no doubt that the same language is applied to him in Re 1:11. As there is, however, a difference of reading in this place in the Greek text, and as it cannot be absolutely certain that the writer meant to refer to the Lord Jesus specifically here, this cannot be adduced with propriety as a proof-text to demonstrate his divinity. Many MSS., instead of "*Lord*," *kuriov*, read "*God*," *yeov*; and this reading is adopted by Griesbach, Tittman, and Hahn, and is now regarded as the correct reading. There is no real incongruity in supposing, also, that the writer here meant to refer to God as such, since the introduction of a reference to him would not be inappropriate to his manifest design. Besides, a portion of the language here used, "which is, and was, and is to come," is that which would more naturally suggest a reference to God as such, than to the Lord Jesus Christ. See Re 1:4. The *object* for which this passage referring to the "first and the last—to him who was, and is, and is to come," is introduced here evidently is, to show that as he was clothed with omnipotence, and would continue to exist through all ages to come as he had existed in all ages past, there could be no doubt about his ability to execute all which it is said he would execute.

Saith the Lord. Or, saith God, according to what is now regarded as the correct reading.

Which is, and which was, etc. **See Barnes on "Re 1:4"**.

The Almighty. An appellation often applied to God, meaning that he has all power, and used here to denote that he is able to accomplish what is disclosed in this book.

{g} "I am" Isa 12:4 {h} "Almighty" Isa 9:6

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 1 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *I John, who also am your brother.* Your Christian brother; who am a fellow-Christian with you. The reference here is doubtless to the members of the seven churches in Asia, to whom the epistles in the following chapters were addressed, and to whom the whole book seems to have been sent. In the previous verse, the writer had closed the salutation, and he here commences a description of the Circumstances under which the vision appeared to him. He was in a lonely island, to which he had been banished on account of his attachment to religion; he was in a state of high spiritual enjoyment on the day devoted to the sacred remembrance of the Redeemer; he suddenly heard a voice behind him, and turning saw the Son of man himself in glorious form in the midst of seven golden lamps, and fell at his feet as dead.

And companion in tribulation. Your partner in affliction. That is, he and they were suffering substantially the same kind of trials on account of their religion. It is evident from this, that some form of persecution was then raging in which they were also sufferers, though in their case it did not lead to banishment. The leader, the apostle, the aged and influential preacher, was banished; but there were many other forms of trial which they might be called to endure who remained at home. What they were we have not the means of knowing with certainty.

And in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. The meaning of this passage is, that he, and those whom he addressed, were not only companions in affliction, but were fellow partners in the kingdom of the Redeemer—that is, they shared the honour and the privileges pertaining to that kingdom; and that they were fellow-partners in the *patience* of Jesus Christ—that is, in enduring with patience whatever might follow from their being his friends and followers. The general idea is, that alike in privileges and sufferings they were united. They shared alike in the results of their attachment to the Saviour.

Was in the isle that is called Patmos. Patmos is one of the cluster of islands in the Aegean Sea, anciently called the *Sporades*. It lies between the island of Icaria and the promontory of Miletus. It is merely mentioned by the ancient geographers, Plin. His. Nat. 4, 23; Strabo, 10, 488. It is now called Patino, or Patmosa. It is some six or eight miles in length, and not more than a mile in breadth, being about fifteen miles in circumference. It has neither trees nor rivers; nor has it any land for cultivation, except some little nooks among the ledges of rocks. On approaching the island, the coast is high, and consists of a succession of capes, which form so many ports, some of which are excellent. The only one in use, however, is a deep bay, sheltered by high mountains on every side but one, where it is protected by a projecting cape. The town attached to this port is situated upon a high rocky mountain, rising immediately from the sea, and this with the Scala below upon the shore, consisting of some ships and houses, forms the only inhabited site of the island. Though Patmos is deficient in trees, it abounds in flowery plants and shrubs. Walnuts and other fruit trees are raised in the orchards, and the wine of Patmos is the strongest and the best favoured in the Greek islands. Maize and barley are cultivated, but not in a quantity sufficient for the use of the inhabitants, and for a supply of their own vessels, and others which often put into their good harbour for provisions. The inhabitants now do not exceed four or five thousand, many of whom are emigrants from the neighbouring continent. About half-way up the mountain, there is shown a natural grotto in a rock, where John is said to have seen his visions, and to have written this book. Near this is a small church, connected with which is a school or college, where the Greek language is taught; and on the top of the hill, and in the centre of the island, is a monastery, which from its situation has a very majestic appearance. —*Kitto's Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature*. It is commonly supposed that John was banished to this island by Domitian, about A.D. 94. No place could have been selected for banishment which would accord better with such a design than this. Lonely, desolate, barren, uninhabited, seldom visited, it had all the requisites which could be desired for a place of punishment, and banishment to that place would accomplish all that a persecutor could wish in silencing an apostle, without putting him to death. It was no uncommon thing in ancient times to banish men from their country; either sending them forth at large, or specifying some particular place to which they were to go. The whole narrative leads us to suppose that this place was designated as that to which John was to be sent. Banishment to an island was a common mode of punishment; and there was a distinction made by this act in favour of those who were thus banished. The more base, low, and vile of criminals were commonly condemned to work in the mines; the more decent and

respectable were *banished* to some lonely island. See the authorities quoted in Wetstein, *in loc*. *For the word of God*. On account of the word of God; that is, for holding and preaching the gospel. **See Barnes "Re 1:2".**

It cannot mean that he was sent there with a view to his *preaching* the word of God; for it is inconceivable that he should have been sent from Ephesus to preach in such a little, lonely, desolate place, where indeed there is no evidence that there were any inhabitants; nor can it mean that he was sent there by the Spirit of God to receive and record this revelation, for it is clear that the revelation could have been made elsewhere, and such a place afforded no peculiar advantages for this. The fair interpretation is, in accordance with all the testimony of antiquity, that he was sent there in a time of persecution as a punishment for preaching the gospel.

And for the testimony of Jesus Christ. **See Barnes on"**Re 1:2, He did not go there to bear testimony to Jesus Christ on that island, either by preaching or recording the visions in this book, but he went because he *had* preached the doctrines which testified of Christ.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 1 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *I was in the Spirit*. This cannot refer to his own spirit—for such an expression would be unintelligible. The language then must refer to some unusual state, or to some influence that had been brought to bear upon him from without, that was appropriate to such a day. The word *Spirit* may refer either to the Holy Spirit, or to some state of mind such as the Holy Spirit produces—a spirit of elevated devotion; a state of high and uncommon religious enjoyment. It is clear that John does not mean here to say that he was under the influence of the Holy Spirit in such a sense as that he was *inspired*, for the command to make a record, as well as the visions, came subsequently to the time referred to. The fair meaning of the passage is, that he was at that time favoured in a large measure with the influences of the Holy Spirit—the spirit of true devotion; that he had a high state of religious enjoyment, and was in a condition not inappropriate to the remarkable communications which were made to him on that day. The state of mind in which he was at the time here referred to, is not such as the prophets are often represented to have been in when under the prophetic inspiration, compare Eze 1:1 8:3 Eze 40:2 Jer 24:1 and which was often accompanied with an entire prostration of bodily strength, compare Nu 24:4 Eze 1:28; Da 10:8-10

1Sa 19:24 Re 1:17 but such as any Christian may experience when in a high state of religious enjoyment. He was not *yet* under the prophetic ecstacy, (compare Ac 10:10 11:5, 22:17) but was, though in a lonely and barren island, and far away from the privileges of the sanctuary, permitted to enjoy in a high degree the consolations of religion: an illustration of the great truth that God can meet his people anywhere; that, when in solitude and in circumstances of outward affliction, when persecuted and cast out, when deprived of the public means of grace and the society of religious friends, he can meet them with the abundant consolations of his grace, and pour joy and peace into their souls. This state was not inappropriate to the revelations which were about to be made to John, but this itself was not that state. It was a state which seems to have resulted from the fact, that on that desert island he devoted the day to the worship of God, and by honouring the day dedicated to the memory of the risen Saviour, found, what all will find, that it was attended with rich spiritual influences on his soul.

On the Lord's day. The word here rendered *Lord's*—*kuriakh*— occurs only in this place and in 1Co 11:20, where it is applied to the Lord's Supper. It properly means *pertaining to the Lord*; and, so far as this *word* is concerned, it might mean a day pertaining to the Lord, in any sense, or for any reason—either because he claimed it as his own and had set it apart for his own service; or because it was designed to commemorate some important event pertaining to him; or because it was observed in honour of him. It is clear

(1) that this refers to some day which was distinguished from all other days of the week, and which would be sufficiently designated by the use of this term.

(2.) That it was a day which was for some reason regarded as peculiarly a day of the Lord, or peculiarly devoted to him.

(3.) It would further appear that this was a day particularly devoted to the Lord Jesus, for

(a) that is the natural meaning of the word *Lord* as used in the New Testament, (compare **Barnes on "Ac 1:24"**) and

(b) if the Jewish Sabbath were intended to be designated, the word *Sabbath* would have been used. The term was used generally by the early Christians to denote the first day of the week. It occurs twice in the Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians, (about A.D. 101,) who calls the Lord's day "the queen and prince of all days." Chrysostom (on Psalms 119) says, "It was called the Lord's day because the Lord rose from the dead on that day." Later fathers make a marked distinction between the *Sabbath* and the *Lord's day*; meaning by the former, the Jewish Sabbath, or the seventh day of the week, and by the latter, the first day of the week kept holy by Christians. So Theodoret, (Fab. Haeret. ii. 1,) speaking of the Ebionites, says, "They keep the *Sabbath* according to the Jewish law, and sanctify the *Lord's day* in like manner as we do."—Professor Stuart. The strong probability is, that the name was given to this day in honour of the Lord Jesus, and because he rose on that day from the dead. No one can doubt that it was an appellation given to the first day of the week, and the passage therefore proves

(1) that that day was thus early distinguished in some peculiar manner, so that the mere mention of it would be sufficient to identify it in the minds of those to whom the apostle wrote;

(2) that it was in some sense regarded as devoted to the Lord Jesus, or was designed in some way to commemorate what he had done; and

(3) that if this book were written by the apostle John, the observance of that day has the apostolic sanction. He had manifestly, in accordance with a prevailing custom, set apart this day in honour of the Lord Jesus. Though alone, he was engaged on that day in acts of devotion. Though far away from the sanctuary, he enjoyed what all Christians *hope* to enjoy on such a day of rest, and what not a few *do* in fact enjoy in its observance. We may remark in view of this statement,

(a) that when away from the sanctuary, and deprived of its privileges, we should nevertheless not fail to observe the Christian Sabbath. If on a bed of sickness; if in a land of strangers; if on the deep; if in a foreign clime; if on a lonely island as John was, where we have none of the advantages of public worship, we should yet honour the Sabbath. We Should worship God alone if we have none to unite with us; we should show to those around us, if we are with strangers, by our dress and our conversation, by a serious and devout manner, by abstinence from labour, and by a resting from travel, that we devoutly regard this day as set apart for God.

(b) We may expect, in such circumstances, and with such a devout observance of the day, that God will meet with us and bless us. It was on a lonely island, far away from the sanctuary and from the society of Christian friends, that the Saviour met "the beloved disciple," and we may trust it

will be so with us. For on such a desert island; in a lonely forest; on the deep, or amid strangers in a foreign land, he can as easily meet us as in the sanctuary where we have been accustomed to worship, and when surrounded by all the privileges of a Christian land. No man—at home or abroad; among friends or strangers; enjoying the privileges of the sanctuary, or deprived of those privileges—ever kept the Christian Sabbath in a devout manner without profit to his own soul; and when deprived of the privileges of public worship, the visitations of the Saviour to the soul may be more than a compensation for all our privations. Who would not be willing to be banished to a lonely island like Patmos, if he might enjoy such a glorious vision of the Redeemer as John was favoured with there?

And heard behind me a great voice. A loud voice. This was of course sudden, and took him by surprise.

As of a trumpet. Loud as a trumpet. This is evidently the only point in the comparison. It does not mean that the tones of the voice resembled a trumpet, but only that it was clear, loud, and distinct like a trumpet. A trumpet is a well-known wind instrument distinguished for the clearness of its sounds, and was used for calling assemblies together, for marshalling hosts for battle, etc. The Hebrew word employed commonly to denote a trumpet—

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shophar—means *bright* and *clear*, and is supposed to have been given to the instrument on account of its clear and shrill sound, as we now give the name "clarion" to a certain wind instrument. The Hebrew trumpet is often referred to as employed, on account of its clearness, to summon people together, Ex 19:13 Nu 10:10; Jud 7:18 1Sa 13:3; 2Sa 15:10.

{a} "Spirit" 2Co 12:2 {b} "Lord's" Joh 20:26 Ac 20:7; 1Co 16:2

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 1 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Saying*. That is, literally, "the trumpet saying." It was, however, manifestly the voice that addressed these words to John, though they *seemed* to come through a trumpet, and hence the trumpet is represented as uttering them.

I am Alpha and Omega. **See Barnes "Re 1:8"**.

The first and the last. An explanation of the terms Alpha and Omega. **See Barnes "Re 1:8"**.

And, What thou seest. The voice, in addition to the declaration "I am Alpha and Omegas" gave this direction that he should record what he saw. The phrase "what thou seest" refers to what would pass before him in vision; what he there saw, and what he would see in the extraordinary manifestations which were to be made to him.

Write in a book. Make a fair record of it all—evidently meaning that he should describe things as they occurred, and implying that the vision would be held so long before the eye of his mind that he would be able to transfer it to the "book." The fair and obvious interpretation of this is, that he was to make the record in the island of Patmos, and then send it to the churches. Though Patmos was a lonely and barren place, and though probably there were few or no inhabitants there, yet there is no improbability in supposing that John could have found writing materials there, nor even that he may have been permitted to take such materials with him. He seems to have been banished for *preaching*, not for *writing*; and there is no evidence that the materials for writing would be

withheld from him. John Bunyan in Bedford jail found materials for writing the Pilgrim's Progress; and there is no evidence that the apostle John was denied the means of recording his thoughts when in the island of Patmos. The word *book* here—*biblion*—would more properly mean a *roll* or *scroll*, that being the form in which books were anciently made. **See Barnes on "Lu 4:17".**

And send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia. The churches which are immediately designated, not implying that there were no other churches in Asia, but that there were particular reasons for sending it to these. He was to send *all* that he should "see;" to wit, all that is recorded in this volume or book of "Revelation." Part of this (chapters 2-3) would appertain particularly to them; the remainder (chapters 4-22) would appertain to them no more than to others, but still they would have the common interest in it which all the church would have, and, in their circumstances of trial, there might be important reasons why *they* should see the assurance that the church would ultimately triumph over all its enemies. They were to derive from it themselves the consolation which it was fitted to impart in time of trial, and to transmit it to future times for the welfare of the church at large.

Unto Ephesus. Perhaps mentioned first as being the capital of that portion of Asia Minor; the most important city of the seven; the place where John had preached, and whence he had been banished. For a particular description of these seven churches, see Barnes Notes on the epistles addressed to them in chapters 2-3.

{a} "Ephesus" Re 2:1 {b} "Smyrna" Re 2:8 {c} "Pergamos" Re 2:12 {d} "Thyatira" Re 2:18
{e} "Sardis" Re 3:1 {f} "Philadelphia" Re 3:7 {g} "Laodicea" Re 3:14

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 1 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *And I turned to see the voice that spake with me*. He naturally turned round to see who it was that spake to him in this solitary and desolate place, where he thought himself to be alone. To see *the voice* here means to see *the person* who spake.

And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks. These were the *first* things that met his eye. This must have been in *vision*, of course; and the meaning is, that there *seemed* to be there seven such lamps or candelabras. The word rendered *candlesticks* —*lucnia*—means properly a light-stand; lamp-stand;—something to bear up a light. It would be applied to anything that was used for this purpose; and nothing is intimated, in the use of the word, in regard to the form or dimensions of the light-bearers. Lamps were more commonly used at that time than candles, and it is rather to be supposed that these were designed to be lamp-bearers, or lamp-sustainers, than *candlesticks*. They were seven in number; not one branching into seven, but seven standing apart, and so far from each other that he who appeared to John could stand among them. The lamp-bearers evidently sustained each a light, and these gave a peculiar brilliancy to the scene. It is not improbable that, as they were designed to represent the seven churches of Asia, they were arranged in an order resembling these churches. The scene is not laid in the temple, as many suppose, for there is nothing that resembles the arrangements in the temple except the mere fact of the *lights*. The scene as yet is in Patmos, and there is no evidence that John did not regard himself as there, or that he fancied for a moment that he was translated to the temple in Jerusalem. There can be no doubt as to the *design* of this representation, for it is expressly declared (Re 1:20) that the seven lamp-bearers were intended to

represent the seven churches. Light is often used in the Scriptures as an emblem of true religion; Christians are represented as "the light of the world," (Mt 5:14) compare (Php 2:15 Joh 8:12) and a Christian church may be represented as a light standing in the midst of surrounding darkness.

{h} "seven" Ex 25:37

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 1 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *And in the midst of the seven candlesticks*. Standing among them, so as to be encircled within them. This shows that the representation could not have been like that of the vision of Zechariah, (Zec 4:2) where the prophet sees "a candlestick all of gold with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon." In the vision as it appeared to John, there was not *one* lamp-bearer with seven lamps or branches, but there were *seven* lamp-bearers so arranged that one in the likeness of the Son of man could stand in the midst of them.

One like unto the Son of man. This was evidently the Lord Jesus Christ himself, elsewhere so often called "the Son of man." That it was the Saviour himself is apparent from Re 1:18. The expression rendered "like unto *the* Son of man," should have been "like unto *a* son of man;" that is, like a man—a human being, or in a human form. The reasons for so interpreting it are

(a) that the Greek is without the article; and

(b) that, as it is rendered in our version, it seems to make the writer say that he was *like himself*—since the expression "*the* Son of man" is in the New Testament but another name for the Lord Jesus. The phrase is often applied to him in the New Testament, and always, except in three instances, (Ac 7:56 Re 1:13, 14:14) by the Saviour himself, evidently to denote his warm interest in man, or his relationship to man; to signify that he was a man, and wished to designate himself eminently as such. **See Barnes on "Mt 8:20"**.

In the use of this phrase in the New Testament, there is probably an allusion to Da 7:13. The idea would seem to be, that he whom he saw resembled "the Son of man"—the Lord Jesus as he had seen him in the days of his flesh—though it would appear that he did not *know* that it was he until he was informed of it, Re 1:18. Indeed, the costume in which he appeared was so unlike that in which John had been accustomed to see the Lord Jesus in the days of his flesh, that it cannot be well supposed that he would at once recognise him as the same.

Clothed with a garment down to the foot. A robe reaching down to the feet, or to the ankles, yet so as to leave the feet themselves visible. The allusion here, doubtless, is to a long, loose, flowing robe, such as was worn by kings. Compare Barnes Notes on Isa 6:1.

And girt about the paps. About the breast. It was common, and is still in the East, to wear a girdle to confine the robe, as well as to form a beautiful ornament. This was commonly worn about the middle of the person, or "the loins;" but it would seem also that it was sometimes worn around the breast. **See Barnes "Mt 5:38-41"**.

With a golden girdle. Either wholly made of gold, or more probably richly ornamented with gold. This would naturally suggest the idea of one of rank—probably one of princely rank. The raiment here assumed was not that of a *priest*, but that of a *king*. It was very far from being that in which the Redeemer appeared when he dwelt upon the earth, and was rather designed to denote his royal state as he is exalted in heaven. He is not indeed represented with a crown and sceptre

here, and perhaps the leading idea is that of one of exalted rank; of unusual dignity; of one fitted to inspire awe and respect. In other circumstances, in this book, this same Redeemer is represented as wearing a crown, and going forth to conquest. See Re 19:12-16. Here the representation seems to have been designed to impress the mind with a sense of the greatness and glory of the personage who thus suddenly made his appearance.

{i} "one like" Eze 1:26-28 Da 7:9,13 10:5,6

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 1 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *His head and* his *hairs* were *white like wool, as white as snow.* Exceedingly or perfectly white—the first suggestion to the mind of the apostle being that of wool, and then the thought occurring of its *extreme* whiteness resembling snow—the purest white of which the mind conceives. The comparison with wool and snow to denote anything peculiarly *white* is not uncommon. See Isa 1:18. Professor Stuart supposes that this means, not that his hairs were literally white, as if with age, which he says would be incongruous to one just risen from the dead, clothed with immortal youth and rigour, but that it means radiant, bright, resplendent—similar to what occurred on the transfiguration of the Saviour, Mt 17:2. But to this it may be replied

(a) that this would not accord well with that with which his hair is compared—*snow* and *wool*, particularly the latter.

(b) The usual meaning of the word is more obvious here, and not at all inappropriate. The representation was fitted to signify majesty and authority; and this would be best accomplished by the image of one who was venerable in years. Thus in the vision that appeared to Daniel, (Da 7:9) it is said of him who is there called the "Ancient of Days," that his "garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool." It is not improbable that John had that representation in his eye, and that therefore he would be impressed with the conviction that this was a manifestation of a Divine person. We are not necessarily to suppose that this is the form in which the Saviour always appears now in heaven, any more than we are to suppose that God appears always in the form in which he was manifested to Isaiah, (Isa 6:1) to Daniel, (Da 7:9) or to Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu in the mount, Ex 24:10-11. The representation is, that this form was assumed for the purpose of impressing the mind of the apostle with a sense of his majesty and glory.

And his eyes were *as a flame of fire*. Bright, sharp, penetrating; as if everything was light before them, or they would penetrate into the thoughts of men. Such a representation is not uncommon. We speak of a lightning glance, a fiery look, etc. In Da 10:6, it is said of the man who appeared to the prophet on the banks of the river Hiddekel, that his eyes were "as lamps of fire." Numerous instances of this comparison from the Greek and Latin classics may be seen in Wetstein, *in loc*.

{k} "eyes" Re 2:18 19:12

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 1 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *And his feet like unto fine brass.* Compare Da 10:6, "And his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass." See also Eze 1:7, "And they" [the feet of the living creatures] "sparkled like the colour of burnished brass." The word here used—*calkolibanw*— occurs in the New Testament only here and in Re 2:18. It is not found in the Septuagint. The word properly means *white brass*, (probably compounded of *calkov*, *brass*, and *libanov*, *whiteness*, from the

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to be white.) Others regard it as from *calkov*, *brass*, and *liparon*, *clear*. The *metal* referred to was undoubtedly a species of brass distinguished for its clearness or whiteness. Brass is a compound metal, composed of copper and zinc. The colour varies much according to the different proportions of the various ingredients. The Vulgate here renders the word aurichalcum, a mixture of gold and of brass—perhaps the same as the *hlektron*—the *electrum* of the ancients, composed of gold and of silver, usually in the proportion of four parts gold and one part silver, and distinguished for its brilliancy. See Robinson, *Lex*., and Wetstein, *in loc*. The kind of metal here referred to, however, would seem to be some compound of brass—of a whitish and brilliant colour. The exact proportion of the ingredients in the metal here referred to cannot now be determined.

As if they burned in a furnace. That is, his feet were so bright that they seemed to be like a beautiful metal glowing intensely in the midst of a furnace. Any one who has looked upon the dazzling and almost insupportable brilliancy of metal in a furnace, can form an idea of the image here presented.

And his voice as the sound of many waters. As the roar of the ocean, or of a cataract. Nothing could be a more sublime description of majesty and authority than to compare the voice of a speaker with the roar of the ocean. This comparison often occurs in the Scriptures. See Eze 43:2, "And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the east: and his voice was like the sound of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory." So Re 14:2 19:6. Compare Eze 1:24 Da 10:6.

{a} "feet" Eze 1:7 {b} "voice" Eze 43:2 {c} "sharp" Isa 49:2 Heb 4:12 {d} "sun" Re 10:1 Ac 26:13

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 1 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *And he had in his right hand seven stars*. Emblematic of the angels of the seven churches. *How* he held them is not said. It may be that they seemed to rest on his open palm; or it may be that he seemed to hold them as if they were arranged in a certain order, and with some sort of attachment, so that they could be grasped. It is not improbable that, as in the case of the seven lamp-bearers, (**See Barnes "Re 1:13"**) they were so arranged as to represent the relative position of the seven churches.

And out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword. On the form of the ancient two-edged sword, **see Barnes on "Eph 6:17"**.

The two edges were designed to cut both ways; and such a sword is a striking emblem of the penetrating power of *truth*, or of words that proceed from the mouth; and this is designed undoubtedly to be the representation here-that there was some symbol which showed that his words, or his truth, had the power of cutting deep, or penetrating the soul. So in Isa 49:2 it is said of the same personage, "And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword." **See Barnes on "Isa 49:2"**.

So in Heb 4:12, "The word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword," etc. So it is said of Pericles by Aristophanes—

"His powerful speech
Pierced the hearer's soul, and left behind
Deep in his bosom its keen point infixt."

A similar figure often occurs in Arabic poetry. "As arrows his words enter into the heart." See Gesenius, Comm. zu Isaiah 49:2. The only difficulty here is in regard to the apparently incongruous representation of a sword seeming to proceed from the mouth; but it is not, perhaps, necessary to suppose that John means to say that he *saw* such an image. He heard him speak; he felt the penetrating power of his words; and they were *as if* a sharp sword proceeded from his mouth. They penetrated deep into the soul, and as he looked on him it seemed as if a sword came from his mouth. Perhaps it is not necessary to suppose that there was even *any* visible representation of this—either of a sword or of the breath proceeding from his mouth appearing to take this form, as Professor Stuart supposes. It may be wholly a figurative representation, as Henrichs and Ewald suppose. Though there were visible and impressive symbols of his majesty and glory presented to the eyes, it is not necessary to suppose that there were visible symbols of his *words*.

And his countenance. His face. There had been before particular descriptions of some parts of his face—as of his eyes—but this is a representation of his whole aspect; of the general splendour and brightness of his countenance.

Was *as the sun shineth in his strength*. In his full splendour when unobscured by clouds; where his rays are in no way intercepted. Compare Jud 5:31: "But let them that love him [the Lord] be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might." 2Sa 23:4, "And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun ariseth, even a morning without clouds." Ps 19:5, "Which [the sun] is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race." There could be no more striking description of the majesty and glory of the countenance than to compare it with the overpowering splendour of the sun.—This closes the description of the personage that appeared to John. The design was evidently to impress him with a sense of his majesty and glory, and to prepare the way for the authoritative nature of the communications which he was to make. It is obvious that this appearance must have been *assumed*. The representation is not that of the Redeemer as he rose from the dead—a middle-aged man; nor is it clear that it was the same as on the mount of transfiguration—where, for anything that appears, he retained his usual aspect and form though temporarily invested with extraordinary brilliancy; nor is it the form in which we may suppose he ascended to heaven—for there is no evidence that he was thus transformed when he ascended; nor is it that of a priest —for all the peculiar habiliments of a Jewish priest are wanting in this description. The appearance assumed is, evidently, in accordance with various representations of God as he appeared to Ezekiel, to Isaiah, and to Daniel—that which was a *suitable* manifestation of a Divine being—of one clothed in the majesty and power of God. We are not to infer from this, that this is in fact the appearance of the Redeemer now in heaven, or that this is the form in which he will appear when he comes to judge the world. Of his appearance in heaven we have no knowledge; of the aspect which he will assume when he comes to judge men we have no certain information. We are necessarily quite as ignorant of this as we are of what will be *our own* form and appearance after the resurrection from the dead.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 1 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead*. As if I were dead; deprived of sense and consciousness. He was overwhelmed with the suddenness of the vision; he saw that this was a Divine being; but he did not as yet know that it was the Saviour. It is not probable that in this vision he would immediately recognise any of the familiar features of the Lord Jesus as he had been accustomed to see him some sixty years before; and if he *did*, the effect would have been quite as overpowering as is here described. But the subsequent revelations of this Divine personage would rather seem to imply that John did not at once recognise him as the Lord Jesus. The effect here described is one that often occurred to those who had a vision of God. See Da 8:18, "Now as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep on my face toward the ground: but he touched me, and set me upright." Da 8:27, "And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business." Compare Ex 33:20 Isa 6:5; Eze 1:28 43:3; Da 10:7-9,17.

And he laid his right hand upon me. For the purpose of raising him up. Compare Da 8:18, "He touched me, and set me upright." We usually stretch out the *right* hand to raise up one who is fallen.

Saying unto me, Fear not. Compare Mt 14:27, "It is I; be not afraid." The fact that it was the Saviour, though he appeared in this form of overpowering majesty, was a reason why John should not be afraid. *Why* that was a reason, he immediately adds—that he was the first and the last; that though he had been dead he was now alive, and would continue ever to live, and that he had the keys of hell and of death. It is evident that John was overpowered with that awful emotion which the human mind must feel at the evidence of the presence of God. Thus men feel when God seems to come near them by the impressive symbols of his majesty—as in the thunder, the earthquake, and the tempest. Compare Heb 12:21 Lu 9:34. Yet, amidst the most awful manifestations of Divine power, the simple assurance that our Redeemer is near us is enough to allay our fears, and diffuse calmness through the soul.

I am the first and the last. **See Barnes on "Re 1:8"**.

This is stated to be one of the reasons why he should not fear—that he was *eternal*: "I always live—have lived through all the past, and will live through all which is to come—and therefore I can accomplish all my promises, and execute all my purposes."

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 1 - Verse 18

Verse 18. I am *he that liveth, and was dead*. I was indeed once dead, but now I live, and shall continue to live for ever. This would at once identify him who thus appeared as the Lord Jesus Christ, for to no one else could this apply. He had been put to death; but he had risen from the grave. This also is given as a reason why John should not fear; and nothing would allay his fears more than this. He now saw that he was in the presence of that Saviour whom more than half a century before he had so tenderly loved when in the flesh, and whom, though now long absent, he had faithfully served, and for whose cause he was now in this lonely island. His faith in his resurrection had not been a delusion; he saw the very Redeemer before him who had once been laid in the tomb.

Behold, I am alive for evermore. I am to live for ever. Death is no more to cut me down, and I am never again to slumber in the grave. As he was always to live, he could accomplish all his promises, and fulfil all his purposes. The Saviour is never to die again. He can, therefore, always sustain us in our troubles; he can be with us in our death. Whoever of our friends die, he will not die; when we die, he will still be on the throne.

Amen. A word here of strong affirmation—as if he had said, it is *truly*, or *certainly* so. **See Barnes on "Re 1:7"**.

This expression is one that the Saviour often used when he wished to give emphasis, or to express anything strongly. Compare Joh 3:3 5:25.

And have the keys of hell and of death. The word rendered hell— *adhv*, *hades*—refers properly to the under world; the abode of departed spirits; the region of the dead. This was represented as dull and gloomy; as enclosed with walls; as entered through gates which were fastened with bolts and bars. For a description of the views which prevailed among the ancients on this subject, **see Barnes** "Lu 16:23, **See Barnes** "Job 10:21, **See Barnes "Job 10:22"**.

To hold the *key* of this, was to hold the power over the invisible world. It was the more appropriate that the Saviour should represent himself as having this authority, as he had himself been raised from the dead by his own power, (compare Joh 10:18) thus showing that the dominion over this dark world was entrusted to him.

And of death. A personification. Death reigns in that world. But to his wide-extended realms the Saviour holds the key, and can have access to his empire when he pleases, releasing all whom he chooses, and confining there still such as he shall please. It is probably in part from such hints as these that Milton drew his sublime description of the gates of hell in the Paradise Lost. As Christ always lives; as he always retains this power over the regions of the dead, and the whole world of spirits, it may be further remarked that *we* have nothing to dread if we put our trust in him. We need not fear to enter a world which he has entered and from which he has emerged, achieving a glorious triumph; we need not fear what the dread king that reigns there can do to us, for his power extends not beyond the permission of the Saviour, and in his own time that Saviour will call us forth to life to die no more.

{a} "liveth" Ro 6:9 {b} "keys" Re 20:1,2; Ps 68:20

{c} "seven stars" Re 1:16 {d} "candlesticks" Mt 5:15,16

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 1 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *Write the things which thou hast seen*. An account of the vision which thou hast had, Re 1:10-18.

And the things which are. Give an account of those things which thou hast seen as designed to represent the condition of the seven churches. He had seen not only the Saviour, but he had seen seven lamp-stands, and seven stars in the hand of the Saviour, and he is now commanded to record the meaning of these symbols as referring to things then actually existing in the seven churches. This interpretation is demanded by Re 1:20.

And the things which shall be hereafter. The Greek phrase rendered *hereafter—meta tauta*—means "*after these things*;" that is, he was to make a correct representation of the things

which then were, and then to record what would occur "*after* these things:" to wit, of the images, symbols, and truths, which would be disclosed to him after what he had already seen. The expression refers to future times. He does not say for how long a time; but the revelations which were to be made referred to events which were to occur beyond those which were then taking place. Nothing can be argued from the use of this language in regard to the length of time embraced in the revelation—whether it extended only for a few years, or whether it embraced all coming time. The more natural interpretation, how- ever, would seem to be, that it would stretch far into future years, and that it was designed to give at least an outline of what would be the character of the future in general.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 1 - Verse 20

Verse 20. The mystery of the seven stars. On the word *mystery*, **see Barnes on "Eph 1:9"**.

The word means, properly, that which is hidden, obscure, unknown—until it is disclosed by one having the ability to do it, or by the course of events. *When* disclosed it may be as clear, and as capable of comprehension, as any other truth. The meaning here, as applied to the seven stars, is, that they were symbols, and that their meaning as symbols, without a suitable explanation, would remain hidden or unknown. They were designed to represent important truths, and John was directed to write down what they were intended in the circumstances to signify, and to send the explanation to the churches. It is evidently implied that the meaning of these symbols would be beyond the ordinary powers of the human mind to arrive at with certainty, and hence John was directed to explain the symbol. The general and obvious truths which they would serve to convey would be that the ministers of the churches, and the churches themselves, were designed to be lights in the world, and should burn clearly and steadily. Much important truth would be couched under these symbols, indeed, if nothing had been added in regard to their signification as employed here by the Saviour; but there were particular truths of great importance in reference to each of these "stars" and "lamp-bearers," which John was more fully to explain.

Which thou sawest in my right hand. Gr., "*upon* my right hand"— *epi thv dexiav mou*: giving some support to the opinion that the stars, as they were seen, appeared to be placed *on* his hand—that is, on the *palm* of his hand as he stretched it out. The expression in Re 1:16 is, that they were "*in* (*en*) his right hand;" but the language here used is not decisive as to the position of the stars. They *may* have been held in some way *by* the hand, or represented as scattered on the open hand.

The seven golden candlesticks. The truth which these emblematic representations are designed to convey.

The seven stars are. That is, they represent, or they denote— in accordance with a common usage in the Scriptures. **See Barnes "Mt 26:26"**.

The angels of the seven churches. Gr., "Angels of the seven churches:" the article being wanting. This does not refer to them as a collective or associated body, for the addresses are made to them as individuals— an epistle being directed to "the angel" of each particular church, Re 2:1,12, etc. The evident meaning, however, is, that what was recorded should be directed to them not as pertaining to them exclusively as individuals, but as presiding over, or representing the churches, for what is recorded pertains *to* the churches, and was evidently designed to be laid before them.

It was *for* the churches, but was committed to the "angel" as representing the church, and to be communicated to the church under his care. There has been much diversity of opinion in regard to the meaning of the word *angels* here. By the advocates of episcopacy, it has been argued that the use of this term proves that there was a presiding bishop over a circle or group of churches in Ephesus, in Smyrna, etc., since it is said that it cannot be supposed that there was but a single church in a city so large as Ephesus, or in the other cities mentioned. A full examination of this argument may be seen in my work on the "Apostolic Church," [pp. 191-199, London ed.] The word *angel* properly means a messenger, and is thus applied to celestial beings *as* messengers sent forth from God to convey or to do his will. This being the common meaning of the word, it may be employed to denote any one who is a messenger, and hence, with propriety, any one who is employed to communicate the will of another; to transact his business, or, more remotely, to act in his place—to be a representative. In order to ascertain the meaning of the word as used in this place, and in reference to these churches, it may be remarked,

(1.) that it cannot mean literally an *angel*, as referring to a heavenly being, for no one can suppose that such a being presided over these churches.

(2.) It cannot be shown to mean, as Lord (*in loc*.) supposes, messengers that the churches had sent *to* John, and that these letters were given to them to be returned by them to the churches, for

(a) there is no evidence that any such messengers had been sent to John;

(b) there is no probability that while he was a banished exile in Patmos such a thing would be permitted;

(c) the message was not sent *by* them, it was sent to them—"*Unto* the angel of the church in Ephesus *write*," etc.

(3.) It cannot be proved that the reference is to a prelatical bishop presiding over a group or circle of churches, called a *diocese*, for

(a) there is nothing in the word *angel*, as used in this connexion, which would be peculiarly applicable to such a personage—it belong *as* applicable to a pastor of a single church as to a bishop of many churches.

(b) There is no evidence that there *were* any such groups of churches then as constitute an episcopal diocese.

(c) The use of the word "*church*" in the singular, as applied to Ephesus, Smyrna, etc., rather implies that there was but a single church in each of those cities. Compare Re 2:1,8,12,18; see also similar language in regard to the *church* in Corinth, 1Co 1:2; in Antioch, Ac 13:1; at Laodicea, Col 4:16; and at Ephesus, Ac 20:28.

(d) There is no evidence, as Episcopalians must suppose, that a successor to John had been appointed at Ephesus, if, as they suppose, he was "bishop" of Ephesus; and there is no probability that they would *so soon* after his banishment show him such a want of respect as to regard the see as vacant, and appoint a successor.

(e) There is no improbability in supposing that there was a *single* church in each of these cities—as at Antioch, Corinth, Rome.

(f) If John was a prelatical "bishop," it is probable that he was "bishop" of the whole group of churches embracing the seven: yet here, if the word "angel" means "bishop," we have no less than seven such bishops immediately appointed to succeed him. And

(g) the supposition that this refers to prelatical bishops is so forced and unnatural that many Episcopalians are compelled to abandon it. Thus Stillingfleet, than whom an abler man, or one

whose praise is higher in episcopal churches, as an advocate of prelacy, is not to be found, says of these angels: "If many things in the epistles be directed to the angels, but yet so as to concern the whole body, then, of necessity, the angel must be taken as a *representative* of the whole body; and then why may not the angel be taken by way of representation of the body itself, either of the whole church, or, *which is far more probable*, of the *concessors*, or order of *presbyters* in this church?"

(4.) If the word does not mean literally an angel; if it does not refer to messengers sent to John in Patmos by the churches; and if it does not refer to a prelatical bishop, then it follows that it must refer to some one who presided over the church as its pastor, and through whom a message might be properly sent to the church. Thus understood, the pastor or "angel" would be regarded as the representative of the church; that is, as delegated by the church to manage its affairs, and as the authorized person to whom communications should be made in matters pertaining to it— as pastors are now. A few considerations will further confirm this interpretation, and throw additional light on the meaning of the word.

(a) The word *angel* is employed in the Old Testament to denote a *prophet*; that is, a minister of religion as sent by God to communicate his will. Thus in Haggai (Hag 1:13) it is said, "Then spoke Haggai, the Lord's *messenger*, [Heb. *angel*,

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—Septuagint *aggelov kuriou*] in the Lord's message unto the people," etc.

(b) It is applied to a *priest*, as one sent by God to execute the functions of that office, or to act in the name of the Lord. Mal 2:7, "For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, for he is the *messenger of the Lord of hosts*"—

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—that is, "*angel* of the Lord of hosts."

(c) The name *prophet* is often given in the New Testament to the ministers of religion, as being appointed by God to proclaim or communicate his will to his people, and as occupying a place resembling, in some respects, that of the prophets in the Old Testament.

(d) There was no reason why the word might not be thus employed to designate a pastor of a Christian church, as well as to designate a prophet or a priest under the Old Testament dispensation.

(e) The supposition that a pastor of a church is intended will meet all the circumstances of the case: for,

(1) it is an appropriate appellation;

(2) there is no reason to suppose that there was more than one church in each of the cities referred to;

(3) it is a term which would designate the respect in which the office was held;

(4) it would impress upon those to whom it was applied a solemn sense of their responsibility. Further, it would be more *appropriately* applied to a pastor of a single church than to a prelatical bishop; to the tender, intimate, and endearing relation sustained by a pastor to his people, to the blending of sympathy, interest, and affection, where he is with them continually, meets them frequently in the sanctuary, administers to them the bread of life, goes into their abodes when they are afflicted, and attends their kindred to the grave, than to the union subsisting between the people of an extended *diocese* and a *prelate*—the formal, unfrequent, and, in many instances, stately and pompous visitations of a diocesan bishop—to the unsympathising relation between him and a people scattered in many churches, who are visited at distant intervals by one claiming a "superiority in ministerial rights and powers," and who must be a stranger to the ten thousand ties of endearment

which bind the hearts of a pastor and people together. The conclusion, then, to which we have come is, that the "angel of the church" was the pastor, or the presiding presbyter in the church; the minister who had the pastoral charge of it, and who was therefore a proper representative of it. He was a man who, in some respects, performed the functions which the angels of God do; that is, who was appointed to execute his will, to communicate his message, and to convey important intimations of his purposes to his people. To no one could the communications in this book, intended for the churches, be more properly entrusted than to such an one; for to no one now would a communication be more properly entrusted than to a pastor.

Such is the sublime vision under which this book opens; such the solemn commission which the penman of the book received. No more appropriate introduction to what is contained in the book could be imagined; no more appropriate circumstances for making such a sublime revelation could have existed. To the most beloved of the apostles—now the only surviving one of the number; to him who had been a faithful labourer for a period not far from sixty years after the death of the Lord Jesus, who had been the bosom friend of the Saviour when in the flesh, who had seen him in the mount of transfiguration, who had seen him die, and who had seen him ascend into heaven; to him who had lived while the church was founded, and while it had spread into all lands; and to him who was now suffering persecution on account of the Saviour and his cause, it was appropriate that such communications should be made. In a lonely island; far away from the abodes of men; surrounded by the ocean, and amid barren rocks; on the day consecrated to the purposes of sacred repose and the holy duties of religion—the day observed in commemoration of the resurrection of his Lord, it was most fit that the Redeemer should appear to the "beloved disciple" in the last Revelation which he was ever to make to mankind. No more appropriate time or circumstance could be conceived for disclosing, by a series of sublime visions, what would occur in future times; for sketching out the history of the church to the consummation of all things.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 2

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 2 - Verse 1

CHAPTER II

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter comprises four of the seven epistles addressed to the seven churches: those addressed to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, and Thyatira. A particular view of the contents of the epistles will be more appropriate as they come separately to be considered, than in this place. There are some general remarks in regard to their structure, however, which may be properly made here.

(1.) They all begin with a reference to some of the attributes of the Saviour, in general some attribute that had been noted in the first chapter; and while they are all adapted to make a deep impression on the mind, perhaps each one was selected in such a way as to have a special propriety in reference to each particular church. Thus in the address to the church at Ephesus (Re 2:1) the

allusion is to the fact that he who speaks to them "holds the seven stars in his right hand, and walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks ;" in the epistle to the church at Smyrna, (Re 2:8,) it is he who "is the first and the last, who was dead and is alive ;" in the epistle to the church at Pergamos, (Re 2:12,) it is he "which hath the sharp sword with the two edges ;" in the epistle to the church at Thyatira, (Re 2:18,) it is "the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet like fine brass;" in the epistle to the church at Sardis, (Re 3:1,) it is he who "hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars;" in the epistle to the church at Philadelphia, (Re 3:7,) it is "he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth ;" in the epistle to the church at Laodicea, (Re 3:14,) it is he who is the "Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God."

(2.) These introductions are followed with the formula, "I know thy works." The peculiar characteristics then of each church are referred to, with a sentiment of approbation or disapprobation expressed in regard to their conduct. Of two of the churches, that at Smyrna, (Re 2:9,) and that at Philadelphia, (Re 3:10,) he expresses his enure approbation; to the churches of Sardis, (Re 3:3,) and Laodicea, (Re 3:15-18,) he administers a decided rebuke; to the churches of Ephesus, (Re 2:3-6,) Pergamos, (Re 2:13-16,) and Thyatira, (Re 2:19,20,24,25,) he intermingles praise and rebuke, for he saw much to commend, but at the same time not a little that was reprehensible. In all cases, however, the approbation precedes the blame: showing that he was more disposed to find that which was good than that which was evil.

(3.) After the statement of their characteristics, there follows in each case, counsel, advice, admonition, or promises, such as their circumstances demanded—encouragement in trial, and injunctions to put away their sins. The admonitions are addressed to the churches as if Christ were at hand, and would ere long come and sit in judgment on them and their deeds.

(4.) There is a solemn admonition to hear what the Spirit has to say to the churches. This is in each case expressed in the same manner, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches," Re 2:7,11,17,29 3:6,13,22.

These admonitions were designed to call the attention of the churches to these things, and at the same time they seem designed to show that they were not intended for them alone. They are addressed to any one who "has an ear," and therefore had some principles of general application to others, and to which all should attend who were disposed to learn the will of the Redeemer. What was addressed to one church, at any time, would be equally applicable to all churches in the same circumstances; what was adapted to rebuke, elevate, or comfort Christians in any one age or land, would be adapted to be useful to Christians of all ages and lands.

(5.) There then is, either following or preceding that call on all the churches to hear, some promise or assurance designed to encourage the church, and urge it forward in the discharge of duty, or in enduring trial. This is found in each one of the epistles, though not always in the same relative position.

THE EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS

The contents of the epistle to the church at Ephesus—the first addressed—are these:

(1.) The attribute of the Saviour referred to is, that he "holds the stars in his right hand, and walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks," Re 2:1.

(2.) He commends them for their patience, and for their opposition to those who are evil, and for their zeal and fidelity in carefully examining into the character of some who claimed to be

apostles, but who were in fact impostors; for their perseverance in bearing up under trial, and not fainting in his cause, and for their opposition to the Nicolaitanes, whom he says he hates, Re 2:2,3,6.

(3.) He reproves them for having left their first love to him, Re 2:4.

(4.) He admonishes them to remember whence they had fallen, to repent, and to do their first works, Re 2:5.

(5.) He threatens them that if they do not repent he will come and remove the candlestick out of its place, Re 2:5; and

(6.) he assures them and all others that whosoever overcomes, he will "give him to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God," Re 2:7.

Verse 1. *Unto the angel*. The minister; the presiding presbyter; the bishop—in the primitive sense of the word bishop—denoting one who had the spiritual charge of a congregation. **See Barnes on "Re 1:20"**.

Of the church. Not of the *churches* of Ephesus, but of the *one church* of that city. There is no evidence that the word is used in a collective sense to denote a group of churches, like a diocese; nor is there any evidence that there *was* such a group of churches in Ephesus, or that there was more than one church in that city. It is probable that all who were Christians there were regarded as members of one church—though for convenience they may have met for worship in different places. Thus there was one church in Corinth, (1Co 1:1) one church in Thessalonica, (1Th 1:1,) etc.

Of Ephesus. On the situation of Ephesus, **see Barnes** "Ac 18:19, and the Introduction to the Notes on the Epistle to the Ephesians. It was the capital of Ionia; was one of the twelve Ionian cities of Asia Minor in the Mythic times, and was said to have been founded by the Amazons. It was situated on the river Cayster, not far from the Icarian Sea, between Smyrna and Miletus. It was one of the most considerable cities of Asia Minor, and while, about the epoch when Christianity was introduced, other cities declined, Ephesus rose more and more. It owed its prosperity, in part, to the favour of its governors, for Lysimachus named the city Arsinbe, in honour of his second wife, and Attalus Philadelphus furnished it with splendid wharves and docks. Under the Romans it was the capital not only of Ionia, but of the entire province of Asia, and bore the honourable title of the *first and greatest metropolis of Asia*. John is supposed to have resided in this city, and to have preached the gospel there for many years; and on this account perhaps it was, as well as on account of the relative importance of the city, that the first epistle of the seven was addressed to that church. On the present condition of the ruins of Ephesus, **see Barnes on "Re 2:5"**.

We have no means whatever of ascertaining the size of the church when John wrote the book of Revelation. From the fact, however, that Paul, as is supposed, (see Introduction to the Epistle to the Ephesians,) laboured there for about three years; that there was a body of "elders" who presided over the church there, (Ac 20:1) and that the apostle John seems to have spent a considerable part of his life there in preaching the gospel, it may be presumed that there was a large and flourishing church in that city. The epistle before us shows also that it was characterized by distinguished piety.

These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand. **See Barnes "Re 1:16"**.

The object here seems to be to turn the attention of the church in Ephesus to some attribute of the Saviour which deserved their special regard, or which constituted a special reason for attending to what he said. To do this, the attention is directed in this case to the fact that he held the seven stars—emblematic of the ministers of the churches—in his hand, and that he walked in the midst of the lamp-bearers—representing the churches themselves, intimating that they were dependent

on him; that he had power to continue or remove the ministry, and that it was by his presence only that those lamp-bearers would continue to give light. The absolute control over the ministry, and the fact that he walked amidst the churches, and that his presence was necessary to their perpetuity and their welfare, seem to be the principal ideas implied in this representation. These truths he would impress on their minds in order that they might feel how easy it would be for him to punish any disobedience, and in order that they might do what was necessary to secure his continual presence among them. These views seem to be sanctioned by the character of the punishment threatened, (Re 2:5,) "that he would remove the candlestick representing their church out of its place." **See Barnes "Re 2:5".**

Who walketh in the midst, etc. In chapter Re 1:13, he is represented simply as *being seen* amidst the golden candlesticks, **See Barnes on "Re 1:13".**

Here there is the additional idea of his "*walking*" in the midst of them, implying perhaps constant and vigilant supervision. He went from one to another, as one who inspects and surveys what is under his care; perhaps also with the idea that he went among them as a friend to bless them.

{a} "that holdeth" Re 1:16,20

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 2 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *I know thy works*. The common formula with which all the epistles to the seven churches are introduced. It is designed to impress upon them deeply the conviction that he was intimately acquainted with all that they did, good and bad, and that therefore he was abundantly qualified to dispense rewards or administer punishments according to truth and justice. It may be observed, that as many of the things referred to in these epistles were things pertaining to the heart—the feelings, the state of the mind—it is implied that he who speaks here has an intimate acquaintance with the heart of man —a prerogative which is always attributed to the Saviour. See Joh 2:25. But no one can do this who is not Divine; and this declaration, therefore, furnishes a strong proof of the divinity of Christ. See Ps 7:9 Jer 11:20, 17:10 1Sa 16:7; 1Ki 8:39.

And thy labour. The word here used—*kopov*—means properly a *beating*, hence wailing, grief, with beating the breast; and then it means excessive labour or toil adapted to produce grief or sadness, and is commonly employed in the New Testament in the latter sense. It is used in the sense of *trouble* in Mt 26:10—"Why *trouble* ye [literally, why give ye *trouble* to] the woman?" (compare also Mr 14:6 Lu 11:7, 18:5 Ga 6:17) and in the sense of *labour*, or wearisome toil, in Joh 4:38 1Co 3:8, 15:58 2Co 6:5

2Co 10:15 2Co 11:23,27

et al. The connexion here would admit of either sense. It is commonly understood, as in our translation, in the sense of *labour*, though it would seem that the other signification— that of *trouble*—would not be inappropriate. If it means *labour*, it refers to their faithful service in his cause, and especially in opposing error. It seems to me, however, that the word *trouble* would better suit the connexion.

And thy patience. Under these trials; to wit, in relation to the efforts which had been made by the advocates of error to corrupt them, and to turn them away from the truth. They had patiently

borne the opposition made to the truth; they had manifested a spirit of firm endurance amidst many arts of those opposed to them to draw them off from simple faith in Christ.

And how thou canst not bear them which are evil. Canst not *endure* or *tolerate* them. Compare **Barnes on "2Jo 1:10,11"**.

That is, they had no sympathy with their doctrines or their practices; they were utterly opposed to them. They had lent them no countenance, but had in every way shown that they had no fellowship with them. The evil persons here referred to were doubtless those mentioned in this verse as claiming that "they were apostles," and those mentioned in Re 2:6 as the Nicolaitanes.

And thou hast tried them which say they are apostles. Thou hast thoroughly examined their claims. It is not said in what way they had done this, but it was probably by considering attentively and candidly the evidence on which they relied, whatever that may have been. Nor is it certainly known who these persons were, or on what grounds they advanced their pretensions to the apostolic office. It cannot be supposed that they claimed to have been of the number of apostles selected by the Saviour, for that would have been too absurd; and the only solution would seem to be that they claimed either

(1) that they had been called to that office after the Saviour ascended, as Paul was; or

(2) that they claimed the honour due to this name or office in virtue of some election to it; or

(3) that they claimed to be the *successors* of the apostles, and to possess and transmit their authority. If the first of these, it would seem that the only ground of claim would be that they had been called in some miraculous way to the rank of apostles, and, of course, an examination of their claims would be an examination of the alleged miraculous call, and of the evidence on which they would rely that they had such a call. If the second, then the claim must have been founded on some such plea as that the apostolic office was designed to be elective, as in the case of Matthias, (Ac 1:23-26,) and that they maintained that this arrangement was to be continued in the church; and then an examination of their claims would involve an investigation of the question whether it was contemplated that the apostolic office was designed to be perpetuated in that manner, or whether the election of Matthias was only a temporary arrangement, designed to answer a particular purpose. If the third, then the claim must have been founded on the plea that the apostolic office was designed to be perpetuated by a regular succession, and that they, by ordination, were in a line of that succession; and then the examination and refutation of the claim must have consisted in showing, from the nature of the office, and the necessary qualifications for the office of apostle, that it was designed to be temporary, and that there could be properly no successors of the apostles as such. On either of these suppositions such a line of argument would be fatal to all claims to any succession in the apostolic office now. If each of these points should fail, of course their claims to the rank of apostles would cease—just as all claims to the dignity and rank of the apostles must fail now. The passage becomes thus a strong argument against the claims of any persons to be "apostles," or to be the "successors" of the apostles in the peculiarity of their office.

And are not. There were never any *apostles* of Jesus Christ but the original twelve whom he chose; Matthias, who was chosen in the place of Judas, (Ac 1:26;) and Paul, who was specially called to the office by the Saviour after his resurrection. On this point, see my work on the "Apostolic Church," [pp. 49-57, London ed.]

And hast found them liars. Hast discovered their pretensions to be unfounded and false. In 2Co 11:13, "false apostles" are mentioned; and in an office of so much honour as this, it is probable that there would be not a few claimants to it in the world. To set up a claim to what they *knew* they were

not entitled to would be a falsehood; and as this seems to have been the character of these men, the Saviour in the passage before us does not hesitate to designate them by an appropriate term, and to call them *liars*. The point here commended in the Ephesian church is, that they had sought to have a *pure ministry*—a ministry whose claims were well founded. They had felt the importance of this; had carefully examined the claims of pretenders; and had refused to recognise those who could not show in a proper manner that they had been designated to their work by the Lord Jesus. The same zeal in the same cause would be commended by the Saviour now.

{b} "know thy works" Re 2:4,13,19 3:1,8,15 Ps 1:6

{c} "tried" 1Jo 4:1 {d} "are not" 2Co 11:13

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 2 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And hast borne*. Hast borne up under trials; or hast borne with, the evils with which you have been assailed. That is, you have not given way to murmuring or complaints in trial; you have not abandoned the principles of truth and yielded to the prevalence of error.

And hast patience. That is, in this connexion, hast shown that thou canst bear up under these things with patience. This is a repetition of what is said in Re 2:2, but in a somewhat different connexion. There it rather refers to the trouble which they had experienced on account of the pretensions of false apostles, and the patient, persevering, and enduring spirit which they had shown in that form of trial; here the expression is more general, denoting a patient spirit in regard to *all* forms of trial.

And for my name's sake hast laboured. On account of me, and in my cause. That is, the *labour* here referred to, whatever it was, was to advance the cause of the Redeemer. In the word rendered "*hast laboured*" —*ekopiasav*—there is a reference to the word used in the previous verse— "thy labour"—*kopon sou*; and the design is to show that the "labour," or trouble there referred to, was on account of him.

And hast not fainted. Hast not become exhausted, or wearied out, so as to give over. The word here used (*kamnw*) occurs in only three places in the New Testament: Heb 12:3, "Lest ye be *wearied*, and faint; Jas 5:15, "the prayer of faith shall save the *sick*;" and in the passage before us. It means properly to become weary and faint from toil, etc.; and the idea here is, that they had not become so wearied out as to give over from exhaustion. The sense of the whole passage is thus rendered by Professor Stuart: "Thou canst not bear with false teachers, but thou canst bear with troubles and perplexities on account of me; thou hast undergone wearisome toil, but thou art not wearied out thereby." The state of mind, considered as the state of mind appropriate to a Christian, here represented, is, that we should not tolerate error and sin, but that we should bear up under the trials which they may incidentally occasion us; that we should have such a repugnance to evil that we cannot endure it, as evil, but that we should have such love to the Saviour and his cause as to be willing to bear anything, even in relation to that, or springing from that, that we may be called to suffer in that cause; that while we may be weary in his work—for our bodily strength may become exhausted (compare Mt 26:41) —we should not be weary *of* it; and that though we may have many perplexities, and may meet with much opposition, yet we should not relax our zeal, but should persevere with an ardour that never faints, until our Saviour calls us to our reward.

{a} "fainted" Ga 6.9

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 2 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee*. Notwithstanding this general commendation, there are things which I cannot approve.

Because thou hast left thy first love. Thou hast *remitted— afhkav*—or let down thy early love; that is, it is less glowing and ardent than it was at first. The love here referred to is evidently love to the Saviour; and the idea is, that, as a church, they had less of this than formerly characterized them. In this respect they were in a state of declension; and though they still maintained the doctrines of his religion, and opposed the advocates of error, they showed less ardour of affection towards him directly than they had formerly done. In regard to this, we may remark,

(1.) that what is here stated of the church at Ephesus is not uncommon.

(a) Individual Christians often lose much of their first love. It is true, indeed, that there is often an *appearance* of this which does not exist in reality. Not a little of the ardour of young converts is often nothing more than the excitement of animal feeling, which will soon die away of course, though their *real* love may not be diminished, or may be constantly growing stronger. When a son returns home after a long absence, and meets his parents and brothers and sisters, there is a glow, a warmth of feeling, a joyousness of emotion, which cannot be expected to continue always, and which he may never be able to recall again, though he may be ever growing in *real* attachment to his friends and to his home.

(b) Churches remit the ardour of their first love. They are often formed under the reviving influences of the Holy Spirit when many are converted, and are warm-hearted and zealous young converts. Or they are formed from other churches that have become cold and dead, from which the new organization, embodying the life of the church, was constrained to separate. Or they are formed under the influence of some strong and mighty truth that has taken possession of the mind, and that gives a peculiar character to the church at first. Or they are formed with a distinct reference to promoting some one great object in the cause of the Redeemer. So the early Christian churches were formed. So the church in Germany, France, Switzerland, and England, came out from the Roman communion under the influence of the doctrine of justification by faith. So the Nestorians in former ages, and the Moravians in modern times, were characterized by warm zeal in the cause of missions. So the Puritans came out from the established church of England at one time, and the Methodists at another, warmed with a holier love to the cause of evangelical religion than existed in the body from which they separated. So many a church is formed now amidst the exciting scenes of a revival of religion, and in the early days of its history puts to shame the older and the slumbering churches around them. But it need scarcely be said that this early zeal may die away, and that the church, once so full of life and love, may become as cold as those that went before it, or as those from which it separated, and that there may be a necessity for the formation of new organizations that shall be fired with ardour and zeal. One has only to look at Germany, at Switzerland, at various portions of the reformed churches elsewhere; at the Nestorinns, whose zeal for missions long since departed, or even at the Moravians, among whom it has so much declined; at various portions of

the Puritan churches; and at many an individual church formed under the warm and exciting feelings of a revival of religion, to see that what occurred at Ephesus may occur elsewhere.

(2.) The same thing that occurred there may be expected to follow in all similar cases. The Saviour governs the church always on essentially the same principles; and it is no uncommon thing that when a church has lost the ardour of its first love, it is suffered more and more to decline, until "the candlestick is removed"—until either the church becomes wholly extinct, or until vital piety is wholly gone, and all that remains is the religion of forms.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 2 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen*. The eminence which you once occupied. Call to remembrance the state in which you once were. The duty here enjoined is, when religion has declined in our hearts, or in the church, to call to distinct recollection the former state—the ardour, the zeal, the warmth of love which once characterized us. The *reason* for this is, that such a recalling of the former state will be likely to produce a happy influence on the heart. Nothing is better adapted to affect a backsliding Christian, or a backsliding church, than to call to distinct recollection the former condition—the happier days of piety. The joy then experienced; the good done; the honour reflected on the cause of religion; the peace of mind of that period, will contrast strongly with the present, and nothing will be better fitted to recall an erring church or an erring individual from their wanderings than such a reminiscence of the past. The *advantages* of thus "remembering" their former condition would be many—for some of the most valuable impressions which are made on the mind, and some of the most important lessons learned, are from the recollections of a former state. Among those advantages, in this case, would be such as the following:

(a) It would show how much they might have *enjoyed* if they had continued as they began—how much more real happiness they would have had than they actually have enjoyed.

(b) How much good they might have done, if they had only persevered in the zeal with which they commenced the Christian life. How much more *good* might most Christians do than they actually accomplish, if they would barely, even without increasing it, *continue* with the degree of zeal with which they begin their course.

(c) How much greater *attainments* they might have made in the Divine life, and in the knowledge of religion, than they have made: that is, how much more elevated and enlarged might have been their views of religion, and their knowledge of the word of God. And

(d) such a recollection of their past state, as contrasted with what they now are, would exert a powerful influence in producing true repentance—for there is nothing better adapted to do this than a just view of what we might have been, as compared with what we now are. If a man has become cold towards his wife, nothing is better fitted to reclaim him than to recall to his recollection the time when he led her to the altar; the solemn vow then made; and the rapture of his heart when he pressed her to his bosom and called her his own.

And repent. The word here used means to change one's mind and purposes, and, along with that, the conduct or demeanour. The *duty* of repentance here urged would extend to all the points in which they had erred.

And do the first works. The works which Were done when the church was first established. That is, manifest the zeal and love which were formerly evinced in opposing error, and in doing good. This is the true counsel to be given to those who have backslidden, and have "left their first love," now. Often such persons, sensible that they have erred, and that they have not the enjoyment in religion which they once had, profess to be willing and desirous to return, but they know not how to do it—how to revive their ardour—how to rekindle in their bosom the flame of extinguished love. They suppose it must be by silent meditation, or by some supernatural influence, and they wait for some visitation from above to call them back, and to restore to them their former joy. The counsel of the Saviour to all such, however, is to *do their first works*. It is to engage at once in *doing* what they did in the first and best days of their piety—the days of their: espousals (Jer 2:2) to God. Let them read the Bible as they did then; let them pray as they did then; let them go forth in the duties of active benevolence as they did then; let them engage in teaching a Sabbath school as they did then; let them relieve the distressed, instruct the ignorant, raise up the fallen, as they did then; let them open their heart, their purse, and their hand to bless a dying world. As it was in this way that they manifested their love then, so this would be better fitted than all other things to rekindle the flame of love when it is almost extinguished. The weapon that is used keeps bright; that which has become rusty will become bright again if it is used.

Or else I will come unto thee quickly. On the word rendered *quickly*— *tacei*—**see Barnes on "Re 1:1"**.

The meaning is, that he would come as a Judge, at no distant period, to inflict punishment in the manner specified—by removing the candlestick out of its place. He does not say in what way it would be done—whether by some sudden judgment, by a direct act of power, or by a gradual process that would certainly lead to that result.

And will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. On the meaning of the word *candlestick*, **see Barnes "Re 1:12"**.

The meaning is, that the church gave light in Ephesus; and that what he would do in regard to that place would be like removing a lamp, and leaving a place in darkness. The expression is equivalent to saying that the church there would cease to exist. The proper idea of the passage is, that the church would be wholly extinct, and it is observable that this is a judgment more distinctly disclosed in reference to this church than to any other of the seven churches. There is not the least evidence that the church at Ephesus did repent, and the threatening has been most signally fulfilled. Long since the church has become utterly extinct, and for ages there was not a single professing Christian there. Every memorial of there having been a church there has departed, and there are nowhere, not even in Nineveh, Babylon, or Tyre, more affecting demonstrations of the fulfilment of ancient prophecy than in the present state of the ruins of Ephesus. A remark of Mr. Gibbon (*Dec. and Fall*, iv. 260) will show with what exactness the prediction in regard to this church has been accomplished. He is speaking of the conquests of the Turks. "In the loss of Ephesus, the Christians deplored the fall of the first angel, the extinction of the first candlestick of the Revelations; the desolation is complete; and the Temple of Diana, or the Church of Mercy, will equally elude the search of the curious traveller." Thus the city, with the splendid Temple of Diana, and the church that existed there in the time of John, has disappeared, and nothing remains but unsightly ruins. These ruins lie about ten days' journey from Smyrna, and consist of shattered walls, and remains of columns and temples. The soil on which a large part of the city is supposed to have stood, naturally rich, is covered with a rank, burnt up vegetation, and is everywhere deserted and solitary,

though bordered by picturesque mountains. A few corn-fields are scattered along the site of the ancient city. Towards the sea extends the ancient port, a pestilential marsh. Along the slope of the mountain, and over the plain, are scattered fragments of masonry and detached ruins, but nothing can now be fixed on as the great Temple of Diana. There are ruins of a theatre; there is a circus, or stadium, nearly entire; there are fragments of temples and palaces scattered around; but there is nothing that marks the site of a church in the time of John; there is nothing to indicate even that such a church then existed there. About a mile and a half from the principal ruins of Ephesus, there is indeed now a small village called *Asalook*—a Turkish word, which is associated with the same idea as Ephesus, meaning, The City of the Moon. A church, dedicated to John, is supposed to have stood near, if not on the site of, the present Mosque. Dr. Chandler (p. 150, 4to) gives us a striking description of Ephesus as he found it in 1764: "Its population consisted of a few Greek peasants, living in extreme wretchedness, dependence, and insensibility, the representatives of an illustrious people, and inhabiting the wreck of their greatness. Some reside in the substructure of the glorious edifices which they raised; some beneath the vaults of the stadium, and the crowded scenes of these diversions; and some in the abrupt precipice, in the sepulchres which received their ashes. Its streets are obscured and overgrown. A herd of goats was driven to it for shelter from the sun at noon, and a noisy flight of crows from the quarries seemed to insult its silence. We heard the partridge call in the area of the theatre and of the stadium ....Its fate is that of the entire country—a garden has become a desert. Busy centres of civilization, spots where the refinements and delights of the age were collected, are now a prey to silence, destruction, and death. Consecrated first of all to the purposes of idolatry, Ephesus next had Christian temples almost rivalling the Pagan in splendour, wherein the image of the great Diana lay prostrate before the cross; after the lapse of some centuries, Jesus gives way to Mohammed, and the crescent glittered on the dome of the recently Christian church. A few more scores of years, and Ephesus has neither temple, cross, crescent, nor city, but is desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness." See the article *Ephesus* in Kitto's Cyclo., and the authorities there referred to. What is affirmed here of Ephesus has often been illustrated in the history of the world, that when a church has declined in piety and love, and has been called by faithful ministers to repent, and has not done it, it has been abandoned more and more until the last appearance of truth and piety has departed, and it has been given up to error and to ruin. And the same principle is as applicable to individuals—for they have as much reason to dread the frowns of the Saviour as churches have. If they who have "left their first love" will not repent at the call of the Saviour, they have every reason to apprehend some fearful judgment—some awful visitation of his Providence that shall overwhelm them in sorrow, as a proof of his displeasure. Even though they should finally be saved, their days may be without comfort, and perhaps their last moments without a ray of conscious hope. The engraving on the previous page, representing the present situation of Ephesus, will bring before the eye a striking illustration of the fulfilment of this prophecy that the candlestick of Ephesus would be removed from its place.

{a} "first works" Jer 2:2,3 {b} "remove" Mt 21:41,43

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 2 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *But this thou hast*. This thou hast that I approve of, or that I can commend.

That thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes. Gr., *works*—-*ta erga*. The word *Nicolaitanes* occurs only in this place, and in Re 2:15. From the reference in the latter place, it is clear that the doctrines which they held prevailed at Pergamos as well as at Ephesus; but from neither place can anything now be inferred in regard to the nature of their doctrines or their practices, unless it be supposed that they held the same doctrine that was taught by Balaam. **See Barnes "Re 2:15"**.

From the two passages, compared with each other, it would seem that they were alike corrupt in doctrine and in practice, for in the passage before us their *deeds* are mentioned, and in Re 2:15 their *doctrine*. Various conjectures, however, have been formed respecting this class of people, and the reasons why the name was given to them.

I. In regard to the origin of the name, there have been three opinions:

(1.) That mentioned by Irenoeus, and by some of the other fathers, that the name was derived from Nicolas, one of the deacons ordained at Antioch, Ac 6:5. Of those who have held this opinion, some have supposed that it was given to them because he became apostate and was the founder of the sect, and others because they *assumed* his name in order to give the greater credit to their doctrine. But neither of these suppositions rests on any certain evidence, and both are destitute of probability. There is no proof whatever that Nicolas the deacon ever apostatized from the faith and became the founder of a sect; and if a name had been *assumed* in order to give credit to a sect and extend its influence, it is much more probable that the name of an apostle would have been chosen, or of some other prominent man, than the name of an obscure deacon of Antioch.

(2.) Vitringa, and most commentators since his time, have supposed that the name Nicolaitanes was intended to be symbolical, and was not designed to designate any sect of people, but to denote those who resembled Balaam, and that this word is used in the same manner as the word *Jezebel* in Re 2:20, which is supposed to be symbolical there. Vitringa supposes that the word is derived from *nikov*, *victory*, and *laov*, *people*, and that thus it corresponds with the name Balaam, as meaning either

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lord of the people, or

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he destroyed the people; and that, as the same effect was produced by their doctrines a by those of Balaam, that the people were led to commit fornication and to join in idolatrous worship, they might be called *Balaamites* or *Nicolaitanes*—that is, corrupters of the people. But to this it may be replied,

(a) that it is far-fetched, and is adopted only to remove a difficulty;

(b) that there is every reason to suppose that the word here used refers to a class of people who bore that name, and who were well known in the two churches specified;

(c) that, in Re 2:15, they are expressly distinguished from those who held the doctrine of Balaam, Re 2:14—"So hast thou *also* (*kai*) those that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes."

(3.) It has been supposed that some person now unknown, probably of the name *Nicolas*, or *Nicolaus*, was their leader, and laid the foundation of the sect. This is by far the most probable opinion, and to this there can be no objection. It is in accordance with what usually occurs in regard to sects, orthodox or heretical, that they derive their origin from some person whose name they continue to bear; and as there is no evidence that this sect prevailed extensively, or was indeed known beyond the limits of these churches, and as it soon disappeared, it is easily accounted for that the character and history of the founder were so soon forgotten.

II. In regard to the *opinions* which they held, there is as little certainty. Irenaeus (Adv. Haeres. i. 26) says that their characteristic tenets were the lawfulness of promiscuous intercourse with women, and of eating things offered to idols. Eusebius (Hist. Eccl. iii. 29) states substantially the same thing, and refers to a tradition respecting Nicolaus, that he had a beautiful wife, and was jealous of her, and being reproached with this, renounced all intercourse with her, and made use of an expression which was misunderstood, as implying that illicit pleasure was proper. Tertullian speaks of the Nicolaitanes as a branch of the Gnostic family, and as, in his time, extinct. Mosheim (De Rebus Christian. Ante Con. 69) says that "the questions about the Nicolaitanes have difficulties which cannot be solved." Neander (History of the Christian Religion, as translated by Torrey, i. pp. 452, 453) numbers them with Antinomians; though he expresses some doubt whether the actual existence of such a sect can be proved, and rather inclines to an opinion noticed above, that the name is symbolical, and that it is used in a mystical sense, according to the usual style of the book of Revelation, to denote corrupters or seducers of the people, like Balaam. He supposes that the passage relates simply to a class of persons who were in the practice of seducing Christians to participate in the sacrificial feasts of the heathens, and in the excesses which attended them—just as the Jews were led astray of old by the Moabites, Numbers 25. What was the origin of the name, however, Neander does not profess to be able to determine, but suggests that it was the custom of such sects to attach themselves to some celebrated name of antiquity, in the choice of which they were often determined by circumstances quite accidental. He supposes also that the sect may have possessed a life of Nicolas of Antioch, drawn up by themselves or others from fabulous accounts and traditions, in which what had been imputed to Nicolas was embodied. Everything, however, in regard to the origin of this sect, and the reason of the name given to it, and the opinions which they held, is involved in great obscurity, and there is no hope of throwing light on the subject. It is generally agreed, among the writers of antiquity who have mentioned them, that they were distinguished for holding opinions which countenanced gross social indulgences. This is all that is really necessary to be known in regard to the passage before us, for this will explain the strong language of aversion and condemnation used by the Saviour respecting the sect in the epistles to the churches of Ephesus and Pergamos.

Which I also hate. If the view above taken of the opinions and practices of this people is correct, the reasons why he hated them are obvious. Nothing can be more opposed to the personal character of the Saviour, or to his religion, than such doctrines and deeds.

{a} "Nicolaitines" Re 2:15

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 2 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *He that hath an ear, let him hear*, etc. This expression occurs at the close of each of the epistles addressed to the seven churches, and is substantially a mode of address often employed by the Saviour in his personal ministry, and quite characteristic of him. See Mt 11:15; Mr 4:23 7:16. It is a form of expression designed to arrest the attention, and to denote that what was said was of special importance.

What the Spirit saith unto the churches. Evidently what the Holy Spirit says—for he is regarded in the Scriptures as the Source of inspiration, and as appointed to disclose truth to man. The "Spirit"

may be regarded either as speaking through the Saviour, (compare Joh 3:34;) or as imparted to John, through whom he addressed the churches. In either case it is the same Spirit of inspiration, and in either case there would be a claim that his voice should be heard. The language here used is of a general character" He that hath an ear;" that is, what was spoken was worthy of the attention not only of the members of these churches, but of all others. The truths were of so general a character as to deserve the attention of mankind at large.

To him that overcometh. Gr., "To him that gains the victory, or is a conqueror"—*tw nikwnti*. This may refer to any victory of a moral character, and the expression used would be applicable to one who should triumph in any of these respects:—

(a) over his own easily-besetting sins;

(b) over the world and its temptations;

(c) over prevalent error;

(d) over the ills and trials of life, so as, in all these respects, to show that his Christian principles are firm and unshaken. Life, and the Christian life especially, may be regarded as a warfare. Thousands fall in the conflict with evil; but they who maintain a steady warfare, and who achieve a victory, shall be received as conquerors in the end.

Will I give to eat of the tree of life. As the reward of his victory. The meaning is, that he would admit him to heaven, represented as paradise, and permit him to enjoy its pleasures—represented by being permitted to partake of its fruits. The phrase "of the tree of life" refers undoubtedly to the language used respecting the Garden of Eden, Ge 2:9 3:22—where the "tree of life" is spoken of as that which was adapted to make the life of man perpetual. Of the nature of that tree nothing is known, though it would seem probable that, like the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, it was a mere emblem of life—or a tree that was set before man in connexion with the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and that his destiny turned on the question whether he partook of the one or the other. That God should make the question of life or death depend on that, is no more absurd or improbable than that he should make it depend on what man does now—it being a matter of fact that life and death, happiness and misery, joy and sorrow, *are* often made to depend on things quite as arbitrary apparently, and quite as unimportant, as an act of obedience or disobedience in partaking of the fruit of a designated tree. Does it not appear probable that in Eden there were two trees designated to be of an emblematic character, of life and death, and that as man partook of the one or the other he would live or die? Of all the others he might freely partake without their affecting his condition; of one of these—the tree of life—he might have partaken before the fall, and lived for ever. One was forbidden on pain of death. When the law forbidding that was violated, it was still *possible* that he might partake of the other—but, since the sentence of death had been passed upon him, that would not now be proper, and he was driven from the garden, and the way was guarded by the flaming sword of the Cherubim. The reference in the passage before us is to the celestial paradise—to heaven—spoken of under the beautiful image of a garden; meaning that the condition of man, in regard to life, will still be the same as if he had partaken of the tree of life in Eden. Compare **See Barnes "Re 22:2"**.

Which is in the midst of the paradise of God. Heaven, represented as paradise. To be permitted to eat of that tree, that is, of the fruit of that tree, is but another expression implying the promise of eternal life, and of being happy for ever. The word *paradise* is of Oriental derivation, and is found in several of the Eastern languages. In the Sanscrit the word *paradesha* and *paradisha* is used to

denote a land elevated and cultivated; in the Armenian the word *pardes* denotes a garden around the house planted with grass, herbs, trees for use and ornament; and in the Hebrew form

HEBREW, and Greek *paradeisov*, it is applied to the pleasure gardens and parks, with wild animals, around the country residences of the Persian monarchs and princes, Ne 2:8. Compare Ec 2:5 So 4:13; Xen. Cyro. i. 3, 14.—*Rob. Lex*. Here it is used to denote heaven—a world compared in beauty with a richly cultivated park or garden. Compare 2Co 12:4. The meaning of the Saviour is, that he would receive him that overcame to a world of happiness; that he would permit him to taste of the fruit that grows there imparting immortal life, and to rest in an abode fitted up in a manner that would contribute in every way to enjoyment. Man, when he fell, was not permitted to reach forth his hand and pluck of the fruit of the tree of life in the first Eden, as he might have done if he had not fallen; but he is now permitted to reach forth his hand and partake of the tree of life in the paradise above. He is thus restored to what he might have been if he had not transgressed by eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; and in the Paradise Regained, the blessings of the Paradise Lost will be more than recovered—for man may now live for ever in a far higher and more blessed state than his would have been in Eden.

{b} "he that hath" Re 2:11,17,29 Mt 11:15

{c} "tree of life" Re 22:2 Ge 2:9

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 2 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write*. On the meaning of the word *angel*, **see Barnes "Re 1:20"**.

These things saith the first and the last. **See Barnes** "Re 1:8, **See Barnes "Re 1:17"**.

Which was dead, and is alive. **See Barnes "Re 1:18"**.

The idea is, that he is a *living* Saviour; and there was a propriety in referring to that fact here from the nature of the promise which he was about to make to the church at Smyrna: "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death," Re 2:11. As he had himself triumphed over death in all its forms, and was now alive for ever, it was appropriate that he should promise to his true friends the same protection from the second death. He who was wholly beyond the reach of death could give the assurance that they who put their trust in him should come off victorious.

{a} "the first" Re 1:8,17

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 2 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *I know thy works*. The uniform method of introducing these epistles, implying a most intimate acquaintance with all that pertained to the church. **See Barnes on** "Re 2:2.

And tribulation. This word is of a general signification, and probably includes all that they suffered in any form, whether from persecution, poverty, or the blasphemy of opposers.

And poverty. It would seem that this church, at that time, was eminently poor, for this is not specified in regard to any one of the others. No reason is suggested why *they* were particularly poor. It was not, indeed, an uncommon characteristic of early Christians, (compare 1Co 1:26-28,) but there might have been some special reasons why that church was eminently so. It is, however, the only church of the seven which has survived, and perhaps in the end its poverty was no disadvantage.

But thou art rich. Not in this world's goods, but in a more important respect—in the grace and favour of God. These things are not unfrequently united. Poverty is no hindrance to the favour of God, and there are some things in it favourable to the promotion of a right spirit towards God which are not found where there is abundant wealth. The Saviour was eminently poor, and not a few of his most devoted and useful followers have had as little of this world's goods as he had. The poor should always be cheerful and happy, if they can hear their Saviour saying unto them, "I know thy poverty—but thou art rich." However keen the feeling arising from the reflection "I am a poor man," the edge of the sorrow is taken off if the mind can be turned to a brighter image—"but thou art rich."

And I know the blasphemy. The reproaches; the harsh and bitter revilings. On the word *blasphemy*, **see Barnes "Mt 9:3 26:65"**.

The word here does not seem to refer to blasphemy *against God*, but to bitter reproaches against themselves. The reason of these reproaches is not stated, but it was doubtless on account of their religion.

Of them which say they are Jews. Who profess to be Jews. The idea seems to be, that though they were of Jewish extraction, and professed to be Jews, they were not *true Jews*; they indulged in a bitterness of reproach, and a severity of language, which showed that they had not the spirit of the Jewish religion; they had nothing which became those who were under the guidance of the spirit of their own Scriptures. That would have inculcated and fostered a milder temper; and the meaning here is, that although they were of Jewish origin, they were not worthy of the name. That spirit of bitter opposition was indeed often manifested in their treatment of Christians, as it had been of the Saviour, but still it was foreign to the true nature of their religion. There were Jews in all parts of Asia Minor, and the apostles often encountered them in their journeyings, but it would seem that there was something which had particularly embittered those of Smyrna against Christianity. What this was is now unknown. It may throw some light on the passage, however, to remark, that at a somewhat later period—in the time of the martyrdom of Polycarp—the Jews of Smyrna were among the most bitter of the enemies of Christians, and among the most violent in demanding the death of Polycarp. Eusebius (Eccl. Hist. iv. 15) says, that when Polycarp was apprehended, and brought before the proconsul at Smyrna, the Jews were the most furious of all in demanding his condemnation. When the mob, after his condemnation to death, set about gathering fuel to burn him, "the Jews," says he, "being especially zealous, as was their custom—*malista proyumwv, wv eyov autoiv*—ran to procure fuel." And when, as the burning failed, the martyr was transfixed with weapons, the Jews urged and besought the magistrate that his body might not be given up to Christians. Possibly at the time when this epistle was directed to be sent to Smyrna, there were Jews there who manifested the same spirit which those of their countrymen did afterwards, who urged on the death of Polycarp.

But are the synagogue of Satan. Deserve rather to be called the synagogue of Satan. The *synagogue* was a Jewish place of worship, (compare **See Barnes** "Mt 4:23,) but the word originally

denoted the *assembly* or *congregation*. The meaning here is plain, that though they worshipped in a synagogue, and professed to be the worshippers of God, yet they were not worthy of the name, and deserved rather to be regarded as in the service of Satan. Satan is the word that is properly applied to the great evil spirit, elsewhere called the devil. **See Barnes "Lu 22:3"**; **See Barnes** "Job 1:6".

{b} "rich" 1Ti 6:18 {c} "Jews" Ro 2:28,29 {a} "synagogue" Re 3:9

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 2 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer*. He did not promise them exemption from suffering. He saw that they were about to suffer, and he specifies the manner in which their affliction would occur. But he entreats and commands them not to be afraid. They were to look to the "crown of life," and to be comforted with the assurance that if they were faithful unto death, that would be theirs. We need not dread suffering if we can hear the voice of the Redeemer encouraging us, and if he assures us that in a little while we shall have the crown of life.

Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison. Or, shall cause some of you to be cast into prison. He had just said that their persecutors were of the "synagogue of Satan." He here represents Satan, or the devil—another name of the same being—as about to throw them into prison. This would be done undoubtedly by the hands of men, but still Satan was the prime mover, or the instigator in doing it. It was common to cast those who were persecuted into prison. See Ac 12:3-4 16:23. It is not said on what pretence, or by what authority, this would be done; but, as John had been banished to Patmos from Ephesus, it is probable that this persecution was raging in the adjacent places, and there is no improbability in supposing that many might be thrown into prison.

That ye may be tried. That the reality of your faith may be subjected to a test to show whether it is genuine. The *design* in the case is that of the Saviour, though Satan is allowed to do it. It was common in the early periods of the church to suffer religion to be subjected to trial amidst persecutions, in order to show that it was of heavenly origin, and to demonstrate its value in view of the world. This is, indeed, one of the designs of trial at all times, but this seemed eminently desirable when a new system of religion was about to be given to mankind. Compare **Barnes on "1Pe 1:6-7"**.

And ye shall have tribulation ten days. A short time; a brief period; a few days. It is *possible*, indeed, that this might have meant literally ten days, but it is much more in accordance with the general character of this book, in regard to numbers, to suppose that the word ten here is used to denote a *few*. Compare Ge 24:55 1Sa 25:38; Da 1:12,14.

We are wholly ignorant how long the trial actually lasted; but the assurance was that it would not be long, and they were to allow this thought to cheer and sustain them in their sorrows. Why should not the same thought encourage us now? Affliction in this life, however severe, can be but brief; and in the hope that it will soon end, why should we not bear it without murmuring or repining?

Be thou faithful unto death. Implying, perhaps, that though, in regard to the church, the affliction would be brief, yet that it might be fatal to some of them, and they who were thus about to die should remain faithful to their Saviour until the hour of death. In relation to all, whether they were to suffer a violent death or not, the same injunction and the same promise was applicable. It is true

of every one who is a Christian, in whatever manner he is to die, that if he is faithful unto death, a crown of life awaits him. Compare **See Barnes "2Ti 4:8".**

And I will give thee a crown of life. **See Barnes "Jas 1:12".**

Compare 1Pe 5:4 1Co 9:24-27. The promise here is somewhat different from that which was made to the faithful in Ephesus, (Re 2:7,) but the same thing substantially is promised theme happiness hereafter, or an admission into heaven. In the former case it is the peaceful image of those admitted into the scenes of paradise; here it is the triumph of the crowned martyr.

{b} "faithful" Mt 10:22 {c} "crown" Jas 1:12

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 2 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *He that hath an ear*, etc. **See Barnes on "Re 2:7".**

He that overcometh. **See Barnes on "Re 2:7".**

The particular promise here is made to him that should "overcome;" that is, that would gain the victory in the persecutions which were to come upon them. The reference is to him who would show the sustaining power of religion in times of persecution; who would not yield his principles when opposed and persecuted; who would be triumphant when so many efforts were made to induce him to apostatize and abandon the cause.

Shall not be hurt of the second death. *By* a second death. That is, he will have nothing to fear in the future world. The punishment of hell is often called *death*, not in the sense that the soul will cease to exist, but

(a) because death is the most fearful thing of which we have any knowledge, and

(b) because there is a striking similarity, in many respects, between death and future punishment. Death cuts off from life—and so the second death cuts off from eternal life; death puts an end to all our hopes here, and the second death to all our hopes for ever; death is attended with terrors and alarms—the faint and feeble emblem of the terrors and alarms in the world of woe. The phrase, "the second death," is three times used elsewhere by John in this book, (Re 20:6,14, 21:8) but does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. The words *death* and *to die*, however, are not unfrequently used to denote the future punishment of the wicked.

The promise here made would be all that was necessary to sustain them in their trials. Nothing more is requisite to make the burdens of life tolerable than an assurance that, when we reach the end of our earthly journey, we have arrived at the close of suffering, and that beyond the grave there is no power that can harm us. Religion, indeed, does not promise to its friends exemption from death in one form. To none of the race has such a promise ever been made, and to but two has the favour been granted to pass to heaven without tasting death. It could have been granted to all the redeemed, but there were good reasons why it should not be; that is, why it would be better that even they who are to dwell in heaven should return to the dust, and sleep in the tomb, than that they should be removed by perpetual miracle, translating them to heaven. Religion, therefore, does not come to us with any promise that we shall not die. But it comes with the assurance that we shall be sustained in the dying hour; that the Redeemer will accompany us through the dark valley; that death to us will be a calm and quiet slumber, in the hope of awaking in the morning of the resurrection; that we shall be raised up again with bodies incorruptible and undecaying; and that

beyond the grave we shall never fear death in any form. What more is needful to enable us to bear with patience the trials of this life, and to look upon death when it does come, disarmed as it is of its sting, (1Co 15:55-57) with calmness and peace?

{d} "second death" Re 20:14

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 2 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *And to the angel of the church in Pergamos*. **See Barnes on "Re 1:20"**.

These things saith he which hath the sharp sword etc. **See Barnes on "Re 1:16"**.

Compare Heb 4:12 Ec 12:11; Isa 49:2.

Professor Stuart suggests that when the Saviour, as represented in the vision, "uttered words, as they proceeded from his mouth, the halitus which accompanied them assumed, in the view of John, the form of an igneous two-edged sword." It is more probable, however, that the words which proceeded from his mouth did not assume anything like a form or substance, but John means to represent them *as if* they were a sharp sword. His words cut and penetrate deep, and it was easy to picture him as having a sword proceeding from his mouth; that is, his words were as piercing as a sharp sword. As he was about to reprove the church at Pergamos, there was a propriety in referring to this power of the Saviour. Reproof cuts deep; and this is the idea represented here.

{a} "saith he" Re 1:16

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 2 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *I know thy works*. The uniform mode of addressing the seven churches in these epistles. **See Barnes on "Re 2:2"**.

And where thou dwellest. That is, I know all the temptations to which you are exposed; all the allurements to sin by which you are surrounded; all the apologies which might be made for what has occurred arising from those circumstances; and all that could be said in commendation of you for having been as faithful as you have been. The sense of the passage is, that it does much to enable us to judge of character to know where men live. It is much more easy to be virtuous and pious in some circumstances than in others; and in order to determine how much credit is due to a man for his virtues, it is necessary to understand how much he has been called to resist, how many temptations he has encountered, what easily-besetting sins he may have, or what allurements may have been presented to his mind to draw him from the path of virtue and religion. In like manner, in order to judge correctly of those who have embraced error, or have been led into sin, it is necessary to understand what there may have been in their circumstances that gave to error what was plausible, and to sin what was attractive; what there was in their situation in life that exposed them to these influences, and what arguments may have been employed by the learned, the talented, and the plausible advocates of error, to lead them astray. We often judge harshly where the Saviour would be far less severe in his judgments; we often commend much where in fact there has been little to commend. It is possible to conceive that in the strugglings against evil of those who have ultimately

fallen, there may be more to commend than in cases where the path of virtue has been pursued as the mere result of circumstances, and where there never has been a conflict with temptation. The adjudications of the great day will do much to reverse the judgments of mankind.

Even *where Satan's seat* is. A place of peculiar wickedness, as if Satan dwelt there. Satan is, as it were, enthroned there. The influence of Satan in producing persecution is that which is *particularly* alluded to, as is apparent from the reference which is immediately made to the case of Antipas, the "faithful martyr."

And thou holdest fast my name. They had professed the name of Christ; that is, they had professed to be his followers, and they had steadfastly adhered to him and his cause in all the opposition made to him. The name *Christian*, given in honour of Christ, and indicating that they were his disciples, they had not been ashamed of or denied. It was this name that subjected the early Christians to reproach. See 1Pe 4:14.

And hast not denied my faith. That is, hast not denied my religion. The great essential element in the Christian religion is *faith*, and this, since it is so important, is often put for the whole of religion.

Even in those days wherein Antipus was *my faithful martyr*. Of Antipas we know nothing more than is here stated. "In the Acta Sanctorum (ii. pp. 3, 4) is a martyrology of Antipas from a Greek MS.; but it is full of fable and fiction, which a later age had added to the original story."—Professor Stuart, *in loc*.

Who was slain among you. It would seem from this, that, though the persecution had raged there, but one person had been put to death, It would appear also that the persecution was of a local character, since Pergamos is described as "Satan's seat;" and the death of Antipus is mentioned in immediate connexion with that fact. All the circumstances referred to would lead us to suppose that this was a popular outbreak, and not a persecution carried on under the authority of government, and that Antipas was put to death in a popular excitement. So Stephen (Acts 7) was put to death, and so Paul at Lystra was stoned until it was supposed he was dead, Ac 14:19.

Where Satan dwelleth. The repetition of this idea—very much in the manner of John—showed how intensely the mind was fixed on the thought, and how much alive the feelings were to the malice of Satan as exhibited at Pergamos.

{b} "know thy" Re 2:9 {c} "denied" 2Ti 2:12

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 2 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *But I have a few things against thee*. As against the church at Ephesus, Re 2:4. The charge against this church, however, is somewhat different from that against the church at Ephesus. The charge there was, that they had "left their first love;" but it is spoken in commendation of them that they "hated the deeds of the Nicolaitanes," Re 2:6. Here the charge is, that they tolerated that sect among them, and that they had among them also those who held the doctrine of Balaam. Their general Course had been such that the Saviour could approve it; he did not approve, however, of their tolerating those who held to pernicious practical error—error that tended to sap the very foundation of morals.

Because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Baalam. It is not necessary to suppose that they professedly held to the same opinion as Balaam, or openly taught the same doctrines. The meaning is, that they taught substantially the same doctrine which Balaam did, and deserved to be classed with him. What that doctrine was is stated in the subsequent part of the verse.

Who taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel. The word *stumbling-block* properly means anything over which one falls or stumbles, and then anything over which any one may or fall into sin, which becomes the occasion of one's falling into sin. The meaning here is, that it was through the instructions of Balaam that Balak learned the way by which the Israelites might be led into sin, and might thus bring upon themselves the Divine malediction. The main circumstances in the case were these:

(1.)-Balak, king of Moab, when the children of Israel approached his borders, felt that he could not contend successfully against so great a host, for his people were dispirited and disheartened at their numbers, Nu 22:3-4.

(2.) In these circumstances he resolved to send for one who had a might distinguished reputation as a prophet, that he "curse" that people, or might utter a malediction over them, in order at the same time to ensure their destruction, and to inspirit his own people in making war on them: in accordance with a prevalent opinion of ancient times, that prophets had the power of blighting anything by their curse. **See Barnes "Job 3:8"**.

For this purpose, he sent messengers to Balaam to invite him to come and perform this service, Nu 22:5-6.

(3.) Balaam professed to be a prophet of the Lord, and it was obviously proper that he should inquire of the Lord whether he should comply with this request. He did so, and was positively forbidden to go, Nu 22:12.

(4.) When the answer of Balaam was reported to Balak, he supposed that he might be prevailed to come by the offer of rewards, and he sent more distinguished messengers, with an offer of ample honour if he would come, Nu 22:15-17.

(5.) Balaam was evidently strongly inclined to go, but, in accordance with his character as a prophet, he said that if Balak would give him his house full of silver and gold he could do no more, and say no more, than the Lord permitted, and he proposed again to consult the Lord, to see if he could obtain permission to go with the messengers of Balak. He obtained permission, but with the express injunction that he was only to utter what God should say; and when he came to Balak, notwithstanding his own manifest desire to comply with the wish of Balak, and notwithstanding all the offers which Balak made to him to induce him to do the contrary, he only continued to bless the Hebrew people, until, in disgust and indignation, Balak sent him away again to his own land, Numbers chapters 22-23 and Nu 24:10 seq.

(6.) Balaam returned to his own house, but evidently with a desire still to gratify Balak. Being forbidden to curse the people of Israel; having been overruled in all his purposes to do it; having been, contrary to his own desires, constrained to bless them when he was himself more than willing to curse them; and having still a desire to comply with the wishes of the king of Moab, he cast about for some way in which the object might yet be accomplished—that is, in which the curse of God might *in fact* rest upon the Hebrew people, and they might become exposed to the Divine displeasure. To do this, no way occurred so plausible, and that had such probability of success, as to lead them into idolatry, and into the sinful and corrupt practices connected with idolatry. It was, therefore, resolved to make use of the charms of the females of Moab, that through their influence

the Hebrews might be drawn into licentiousness. This was done. The abominations of idolatry spread through the camp of Israel; licentiousness everywhere prevailed, and God sent a plague upon them to punish them, Nu 25:1. That also this was planned and instigated by Balaam is apparent from Nu 31:16: "Behold these [women] caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the Lord, in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord." The *attitude* of Balaam's mind in the matter was this:

I. He had a strong desire to do that which he knew was wrong, and which was forbidden expressly by God.

II. He was restrained by internal checks and remonstrances, and prevented from doing what he wished to do.

III. He cast about for some way in which he might do it, notwithstanding these internal checks and remonstrances, and finally accomplished the same thing in fact, though in form different from that which he had first prepared. This is not an unfair description of what often occurs in the plans and purposes of a wicked man. The meaning in the passage before us is, that in the church at Pergamos there were those who taught, substantially, the same thing that Balaam did; that is, the tendency of whose teaching was to lead men into idolatry, and the ordinary accompaniment of idolatry—licentiousness.

To eat things sacrificed unto idols. Balaam taught the Hebrews to do this—perhaps in some way securing their attendance on the riotous and gluttonous feasts of idolatry celebrated among the people among whom they sojourned. Such feasts were commonly held in idol temples, and they usually led to scenes of dissipation and corruption. By plausibly teaching that there could be no harm in eating what had been offered in sacrifice—since an idol was nothing, and the flesh of animals offered in sacrifice was the same as if slaughtered for some other purpose—it would seem that these teachers at Pergamos had induced professing Christians to attend on those feasts—thus lending their countenance to idolatry, and exposing themselves to all the corruption and licentiousness that commonly attended such celebrations. See the banefulness of thus eating the meat offered in sacrifice to idols. **See Barnes on "1Co 8:1".**

And to commit fornication. Balaam taught this; and that was the tendency of the doctrines inculcated at Pergamos. On what pretence this was done is not said; but it is clear that the church had regarded this in a lenient manner. So accustomed had the heathen world been to this vice, that many who had been converted from idolatry might be disposed to look on it with less severity than we do now, and there was a necessity of incessant watchfulness lest the members of the church should fall into it. **See Barnes on "Ac 15:20".**

{a} "who taught" Nu 31:16 {b} "eat" Ac 15:29 {c} "fornication" 1Co 6:13,18

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 2 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *So hast thou also them*, etc. That is, there are those among you who hold those doctrines. The meaning here may be, either that, in addition to those who held the doctrine of Balaam, they had also another class who held the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes; or that the Nicolaitanes held the same doctrine, and taught the same thing as Balaam. If but one class is referred to, and it is meant that the Nicolaitanes held the doctrines of Balaam, then we know what constituted their

teaching; if two classes of false teachers are referred to, then we have no means of knowing what was the peculiarity of the teaching of the Nicolaitanes. The more natural and obvious construction, it seems to me, is to suppose that the speaker means to say that the Nicolaitanes taught the same things which Balaam did—to wit, that they led the people into corrupt and licentious practices. This interpretation seems to be demanded by the proper use of the word *so*"—*outwv*—meaning, *in this manner, on this wise, thus*; and usually referring to what pr cedes. If this be the correct interpretation, then we have, in fact, a description of what the Nicolaitanes held, agreeing with all the accounts given of them by the ancient fathers. **See Barnes "Re 2:6"**.

If this is so, also, then it is clear that the same kind of doctrines was held at Smyrna, at Pergamos, and at Thyatira, (Re 2:20) though mentioned in somewhat different forms. It is not quite certain, however, that this is the correct interpretation, or that the writer does not mean to say that in *addition* to those who held the doctrine of Balaam, they had also another class of errorists who held the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes.

Which thing I hate. So the common Greek text— *o misw*. But the best supported reading, and the one adapted by Griesbach, Tittmann, and Hahn, is *omoiwv—in, like manner*; that is, "as Balak retained a false prophet who misled the Hebrews, so thou retainest those who teach things like to those which Balaam taught."

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 2 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *Repent*. Re 2:5.

Or else I will come unto thee quickly. On the word *quickly*, **See Barnes on "Re 1:1"**.

The meaning here is, that he would come against them in judgment, or to punish them.

And will fight against them. Against the Nicolaitanes. He would come against the church for tolerating them, but his opposition would be principally directed against the Nicolaitanes themselves. The church would excite his displeasure by retaining them in its bosom, but it was in its power to save them from destruction. If the church would repent, or if it would separate itself from the evil, then the Saviour would not come against them. If this were *not* done, they would feel the vengeance of his sword, and be subjected to punishment. The church always suffers when it has offenders in its bosom; it has the power of saving them if it will repent of its own unfaithfulness, and will strive for their conversion.

With the sword of my mouth. **See Barnes on "Re 1:16 2:12"**.

That is, he would give the order, and they would be cut as if by a sword. Precisely in what way it would be done he does not say; but it might be by persecution, or by heavy judgments. To see the force of this, we are to remember the power which Christ has to punish the wicked by a word of his mouth. By a word in the last day he will turn all the wicked into hell.

{a} "and will fight" Isa 11:4

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 2 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *He that hath an ear*, etc. **See Barnes on "Re 2:17".**

To him that overcometh. **See Barnes on "Re 2:7".**

Will I give to eat of the hidden manna. The true spiritual food; the food that nourishes the soul. The idea is, that the souls of those who "overcame," or who gained the victory in their conflict with sin, and in the persecutions and trials of the world, would be permitted to partake of that spiritual food which is laid up for the people of God, and by which they will be nourished for ever. The Hebrews were supported by manna in the desert, (Ex 16:16-35) a pot of that manna was laid up in the most holy place to be preserved as a memorial, (Ex 16:32-34) it is called "angel's food," (Ps 78:25) and "corn of heaven," (Ps 78:24) and it would seem to have been emblematical of that spiritual food by which the people of God are to be fed from heaven, in their journey through this world. By the word "*hidden*," there would seem to be an allusion to that which was laid up in the pot before the ark of the testimony, and the blessing which is promised here is that they would be nourished *as if* they were sustained by that manna thus laid up before the ark: by food from the immediate presence of God. The language thus explained would mean that they who overcome will be nourished through this life *as if* by that "hidden manna;" that is, that they will be supplied all along through the "wilderness of this world" by that food from the immediate presence of God which their souls require. As the parallel places in the epistles to the churches, however, refer rather to the heavenly world, and to the rewards which they who are victors shall have there, it seems probable that this has immediate reference to that world also, and that the meaning is, that, as the most holy place was a type of heaven, they will be admitted into the immediate presence of God, and nourished for ever by the food of heaven—that which the angels have; that which the soul will need to sustain it there. Even in this world their souls may be nourished with this "hidden manna;" in heaven it will be their constant food for ever.

And will give him a white stone. There has been a great variety of opinion in regard to the meaning of this expression, and almost no two expositors agree. Illustrations of its meaning have been sought from Grecian, Hebrew, and Roman customs, but none of these have removed all difficulty from the expression. The general sense of the language seems plain, even though the allusion on which it is founded is obscure or even unknown. It is, that the Saviour would give him who overcame, a token of his favour which would have some word or name inscribed on it, and which would be of use to him alone, or intelligible to him only: that is, some secret token which would make him sure of the favour of his Redeemer, and which would be unknown to other men. The idea here would find a correspondence in the evidences of his favour granted to the soul of the Christian himself; in the pledge of heaven thus made to him, and which he would understand, but which no one else would understand. The *things*, then, which we are to look for in the explanation of the emblem are two—that which would thus be a token of his favour, and that which would explain the fact that it would be intelligible to no one else. The question is, whether there is any known thing pertaining to ancient customs which would convey these ideas. The word rendered *stone—qhfon*—means properly a small stone, as worn smooth by water—a gravel-stone, a pebble; then any polished stone, the stone of a gem, or ring.- *Rob. Lex*. Such a stone was used among the Greeks for various purposes, and the word came to have a signification corresponding to these uses. The following uses are enumerated by Dr. Robinson, *Lex*.: the *stones* or *counters* for reckoning; *dice, lots*, used in a kind of magic; a *vote*, spoken of the black and white stones or pebbles anciently used in voting—that is, the white for approval, and the black for condemning. In regard to the use of the word here, some have supposed that the reference is to a custom of the Roman emperors,

who, in the games and spectacles which they gave to the people in imitation of the Greeks, are said to have thrown among the populace *dice* or *tokens* inscribed with the words, "Frumentum, vestes," etc.; that is, "corn, clothing," etc.; and whosoever obtained one of these received from the emperor whatever was marked upon it. Others suppose that allusion is made to the mode of casting lots, in which sometimes dice or tokens were used with names inscribed on them, and the lot fell to him whose name first came out. The "*white stone*" was a symbol of good-fortune and prosperity; and it is a remarkable circumstance that, among the Greeks, persons of distinguished virtue were said to receive a *qhfon*— *stone* —from the gods, *i.e.* as an approving testimonial of their virtue. See Robinson's Lex., and the authorities there referred to; Wetstein, N. T., *in loc*., and Stuart, *in loc*. Professor Stuart supposes that the allusion is to the fact that Christians are said to be kings and priests to God, and that as the Jewish high priest had a mitre or turban, on the front of which was a plate of gold inscribed "Holiness to the Lord," so they who were kings and priests under the Christian dispensation would have that by which they would be known, but that, instead of a plate of gold, they would have a pellucid stone, on which the *name* of the Saviour would be engraved as a token of his favour. It is *possible*, in regard to the explanation of this phrase, that there has been too much effort to find *all* the circumstances alluded to in some ancient custom. Some well-understood fact or custom may have suggested the general thought, and then the filling up may have been applicable to this case alone. It is quite clear, I think, that none of the customs to which it has been supposed there is reference correspond fully with what is stated here, and that though there may have been a general allusion of that kind, yet something of the particularity in the circumstances maybe regarded as peculiar to this alone. In accordance with this view, perhaps the following points will embody all that need be said:

(1.) A white stone was regarded as a token of favour, prosperity, or success everywhere—whether considered as a vote, or as given to a victor, etc. As such, it would denote that the Christian to whom it is said to be given would meet with the favour of the Redeemer, and would have a token of his approval.

(2.) The name written on this stone would be designed also as a token or pledge of his favour—as a name engraved on a signet or seal would be a pledge to him who received it of friendship. It would be not merely a *white* stone—emblematic of favour and approval—but would be so *marked* as to indicate its origin, with the name of the giver on it. This would appropriately denote, when explained, that the victor Christian would receive a token of the Redeemer's favour, as if his name were engraven on a stone, and given to him as a pledge of his friendship; that is, that he would be as *certain* of his favour *as if* he had such a stone. In other words, the victor would be assured from the Redeemer, who distributes rewards, that his welfare would be secure.

(3.) This would be to him *as if* he should receive a stone so marked that its letters were invisible to all others, but apparent to him who received it. It is not needful to suppose that in the Olympic games, or in the prizes distributed by Roman emperors, or in any other custom, such a case had actually occurred, but it is conceivable that a name *might* be so engraved—with characters so small, or in letters so unknown to all others, or with marks so unintelligible to others—that no other one into whose hands it might fall would understand it. The meaning then probably is, that to the true Christian—the victor over sin—there is given some pledge of the Divine favour which has to him all the effect of assurance, and which others do not perceive or understand. This consists of favours shown directly to the soul—the evidence of pardoned sin; joy in the Holy Ghost; peace with God; clear views of the Saviour; the possession of a spirit which is properly that of Christ, and which is

the gift of God to the soul. The true Christian understands this; the world perceives it not. The Christian receives it as a pledge of the Divine favour, and as an evidence that he will be saved; to the world, that on which he relies seems to be enthusiasm, fanaticism, or delusion. The Christian bears it about with him as he would a precious stone given to him by his Redeemer, and on which the name of his Redeemer is engraved, as a pledge that he is accepted of God, and that the rewards of heaven shall be his; the world does not understand it, or attaches no value to it.

And in the stone a new name written. A name indicating a *new* relation, new hopes and triumphs. Probably the *name* here referred to is the name of the Redeemer, or the name Christian, or some such appellation. It would be some name which he would understand and appreciate, and which would be a pledge of acceptance. *Which no man knoweth*, etc. That is, no one would understand its import, as no one but the Christian estimates the value of that on which he relies as the pledge of his Redeemer's love.

{b} "he that hath" Re 2:7 3:6,13,22

{c} "hidden manna" Ps 25:14 {d} "new name" Re 3:12 19:12,13 Isa 55:4,5 65:15

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 2 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *And unto the angel of the church*. **See Barnes "Re 1:20"**.

These things saith the Son of God. This is the first time, in these epistles, that the *name* of the speaker is referred to. In each other instance, there is merely some *attribute* of the Saviour mentioned. Perhaps the severity of the rebuke contemplated here made it proper that there should be a more impressive reference to the authority of the speaker; and hence he is introduced as the "Son of God." It is not a reference to him as the "Son of man"—the common appellation which he gave to himself when on earth—for that might have suggested his humanity only, and would not have conveyed the same impression in regard to his authority; but it is to himself as sustaining the rank, and having the authority of the Son of God—one who, therefore, has a right to speak, and a right to demand that what he says shall be heard.

Who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire. **See Barnes "Re 1:14"**.

Before the glance of his eye all is light, and nothing can be concealed from his view. Nothing would be better fitted to inspire awe then, as nothing should be now, than such a reference to the Son of God as being able to penetrate the secret recesses of the heart.

And his feet are like fine brass. **See Barnes "Re 1:15"**.

Perhaps indicative of majesty and glory as he walked in the midst of the churches.

{a} "eyes" Re 1:14,15

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 2 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *I know thy works*. **See Barnes on "Re 2:2"**.

He knew all they had done, good and bad.

And charity. Love: love to God, and love to man. There is no reason for restricting this word here to the comparatively narrow sense which it now bears. **See Barnes on "1Co 13:1"**

And service. Gr., ministry—*diakonian*. The word would seem to include all the service which the church had rendered in the cause of religion; all which was the proper fruit of love, or which would be a carrying out of the principles of love to God and man.

And faith. Or, fidelity in the cause of the Redeemer. The word here would include not only trust in Christ for salvation, but that which is the proper result of such trust—fidelity in his service.

And thy patience. Patient endurance of the sorrows of life—of all that God brought upon them in any way, to test the reality of their religion.

And thy works. Thy works as the fruit of the virtues just mentioned. The word is repeated here, from the first part of the verse, perhaps, to specify more particularly that their works had been recently more numerous and praiseworthy even than they had formerly been. In the beginning of the verse, as in the commencement of each of the epistles, the word is used, in the most general sense, to denote *all* that they had done; meaning that he had so thorough an acquaintance with them in all respects, that he could judge of their character. In the latter part of the verse, the word seems to be used in a more specific sense, as referring to *good* works, and with a view to say that they had latterly abounded in these more than they had formerly.

And the last to be more than the first. Those which had been recently performed were more numerous, and more commendable, than those which had been rendered formerly. That is, they were making progress; they had been acting more and more in accordance with the nature and claims of the Christian profession. This is a most honourable commendation, and one which every Christian, and every church, should seek. Religion in the soul, and in a community, is designed to be progressive; and, while we should seek to live in such a manner always that we may have the commendation of the Saviour, we should regard it as a thing to be greatly desired that we may be approved as making *advances* in knowledge and holiness; that as we grow in years we may grow alike in the disposition to do good, and in the ability to do it; that as we gain in experience, we may also gain in a readiness to apply the results of our experience in promoting the cause of religion, lie would deserve little commendation in religion who should be merely stationary; he alone properly developes the nature of true piety, and shows that it has set up its reign in the soul, who is constantly making advances.

{b} "know" Re 2:2

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 2 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Notwithstanding, I have a few things against thee*. **See Barnes on "Re 2:4"**.

Because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel. Thou dost tolerate, or countenance her. **See Barnes on "Re 2:14"**.

Who the individual here referred to by the name *Jezebel* was, is not known. It is by no means probable that this was her real name, but seems to have been given to her as expressive of her character and influence. Jezebel was the wife of Ahab; a woman of vast influence over her husband—an influence which was uniformly exerted for evil. She was a daughter of Ethbaal, king

of Tyre and Sidon, and lived about 918 years before Christ. She was an idolater, and induced her weak husband not only to connive at her introducing the worship of her native idols, but to become an idolater himself, and to use all the means in his power to establish the worship of idols instead of the worship of the true God. She was highly gifted, persuasive, and artful; was resolute in the accomplishment of her purposes; ambitious of extending and perpetuating her power, and unscrupulous in the means which she employed to execute her designs. See 1Ki 16:31. The kind of *character*, therefore, which would be designated by the term as used here, would be that of a woman who was artful and persuasive in her manner; who was capable of exerting a wide influence over others; who had talents of a high order; who was a thorough advocate of error; who was unscrupulous in the means which she employed for accomplishing her ends, and the tendency of whose influence was to lead the people into the abominable practices of idolatry. The opinions which she held, and the practices into which she led others, appear to have been the same which are referred to in Re 2:6, and Re 2:14-15. The difference was, that the teacher in this case was a *woman*—a circumstance which by no means lessened the enormity of the offence; for, besides the fact that it was contrary to the whole genius of Christianity that a woman should be a public teacher, there was a special incongruity that she should be an advocate of such abominable opinions and practices. Every sentiment of our nature makes us feel that it is right to expect that if a woman teaches at all in a public manner, she should inculcate only that which is true and holy—she should be an advocate of a pure life. We are shocked; we feel that there is a violation of every principle of our nature, and an insult done to our common humanity, if it is otherwise. We have in a manner become accustomed to the fact that *man* should be a teacher of pollution and error, so that we do not shrink from it with horror; we never can be reconciled to the fact that a *woman* should.

Which calleth herself a prophetess. Many persons set up the claim to be prophets in the times when the gospel was first preached, and it is not improbable that many females would lay claim to such a character, after the example of Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, etc.

To teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication. Compare Re 2:14 Whether she herself practised what she taught is not expressly affirmed, but seems to be implied in Re 2:22. It is not often that persons *teach* these doctrines without practising what they teach; and the fact that they *desire* and *design* to live in this manner will commonly account for the fact that they inculcate such views.

And to eat things sacrificed unto idols. **See Barnes on "Re 2:14"**

The custom of attending on the festivals of idols led commonly to licentiousness, and they who were gross and sensual in their lives were fit subjects to be persuaded to attend on idol feasts—for nowhere else would they find more unlimited toleration for the indulgence of their passions.

{c} "Jezebel" 1Ki 16:31 {d} "eat things" Ex 34:14 1Co 10:10,28

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 2 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *And I gave her space to repent of her fornication*. Probably after some direct and solemn warning of the evil of her course. The error and sin had been of long standing, but he now resolved to bear with it no longer. It is true of almost every great sinner, that sufficient time is given for repentance, and that vengeance is delayed after crime is committed. But it cannot always be

deferred, for the period must arrive when no reason shall exist for longer delay, and when punishment must come upon the offender.

And she repented not. As she did not do it; as she showed no disposition to abandon her course; as all plea of having had no time to repent would now be taken away, it was proper that he should rise in his anger and cut her down.

{e} "space" Ro 2:14 {f} "repented not" Re 9:20

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 2 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *Behold, I will cast her into a bed*. Not into a bed of ease, but a bed of pain. There is evidently a purpose to contrast this with her former condition. The harlot's bed and a sick bed are thus brought together, as they are often, in fact, in the dispensations of Providence and the righteous judgment of God. One cannot be indulged without leading on, sooner or later, to the horrid sufferings of the other: and how soon no one knows.

And them that commit adultery with her. Those who are seduced by her doctrines into this sin; either they who commit it with her literally, or who are led into the same kind of life.

Into great tribulation. Great suffering; disease of body or tortures of the soul. How often—how almost uniformly is this the case with those who thus live! Sooner or later, sorrow always comes upon the licentious; and God has evinced by some of his severest judgments, in forms of frightful disease, his displeasure at the violation of the laws of purity. There is no sin that produces a more withering and desicating effect upon the soul than that which is here referred to; none which is more certain to be followed with sorrow.

Except they repent of their deeds. It is only by repentance that we can avoid the consequences of sin. The word *repent* here evidently includes both sorrow for the past, and abandonment of the evil course of life.

{g} "I will cast" Eze 16:37 23:29

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 2 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *And I will kill her children with death*. A strong Hebraistic mode of expression, meaning that he would certainly destroy It them. has been made a question whether the word *children* here is to be taken literally or figuratively. The word itself would admit of either interpretation; and there is nothing in the connexion by which its meaning here can be determined. If it is to be taken literally, it is in accordance with what is often threatened in the Scriptures, that children shall be visited with calamity for the sins of parents, and with what often occurs in fact that they *do* thus suffer. For, it is no uncommon thing that whole families are made desolate on account of the sin and folly of the parent. **See Barnes "Ro 5:19"**.

If it is to be taken figuratively, then it refers to those who had imbibed her doctrines, and who, of course, would suffer in the punishment which would follow from the propagation of such doctrines. The reference in the word *death* here would seem to be to some heavy judgment, by

plague, famine, or sword, by which they would be cut off. *And all the churches shall know*, etc. That is, the design of this judgment will be so apparent, that it will convince all that I know what is in the hearts of men, even the secret acts of wickedness that are concealed from human view.

I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts. This is clearly a claim to omniscience; and as it is the Lord Jesus who speaks in all these epistles, it is a full proof that he claims this for himself. There is nothing which more clearly appertains to God than the power of searching the heart, and nothing that is more constantly claimed by him as his peculiar prerogative, 1Ch 28:19 Ps 7:9, 11:4 44:21

Ps 139:2 Pr 15:3; Jer 11:20 17:10, 20:12 32:19; Heb 4:13.

The word *reins—nefrouv*—means, literally, *the kidney*, and is commonly used in the plural to denote the kidneys, or the loins. In the Scriptures, it is used to denote the inmost mind, the secrets of the soul; probably because the parts referred to by the word are as *hidden* as any other part of the frame, and would seem to be the repository of the more secret affections of the mind. It is not to be supposed that it is taught in the Scriptures that the reins are the real seat of any of the affections or passions; but there is no more impropriety in using the term in a popular signification than there is in using the word *heart*, which all continue to use, to denote the seat of love.

And I will give unto every one of you according to your works. To every one of you; not only to those who have embraced these opinions, but to all the church. This is the uniform rule laid down in the Bible by which God will judge men.

{a} "kill" Re 6:8 {b} "churches" Zep 1:11 {c} "I am" 1Ch 28:9 2Ch 6:30; Ps 7:9 Jer 17:10

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 2 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira*. The word "*and*"—*kai*—is omitted in many MSS. and versions, and in the critical editions of Griesbach, Tittmann, and Hahn, and the connexion demands that it should be omitted. As it stands in the received text, it would seem that what he here says was addressed to those who *had* received that doctrine, and to all others as well as to them; whereas the declaration here made pertains manifestly to those who had not received the doctrine. With that particle omitted, the passage will read, as rendered by Professor Stuart, "But I say unto you, the remainder in Thyatira, so many as hold not this doctrine," etc. That is, he addresses now all the members of the church who were not involved in the charges already made. He does not say how large a portion of the church had escaped the contaminating influence of those opinions, but to that portion, whether great or small, he addresses only words of exhortation and comfort.

As many as have not this doctrine. To all who have not embraced it, or been contaminated with it. It may be presumed that there was a considerable portion of the church which had not.

And which have not known the depths of Satan. The deep art and designs of Satan. Deep things are those which are hidden from view—as of things which are far under-ground; and hence the word is used to denote mysteries, or profound designs and purposes. The allusion here is not to any *trials* or *sufferings* that Satan might bring upon any one, or to any temptations of which he might be the author, but to his profound art in inculcating error and leading men astray. There *are* doctrines of error, and arguments for sin, to originate which seems to lie beyond the power of men, and which

would appear almost to have exhausted the talent of Satan himself. They evince such a profound knowledge of man; of the Divine government; of the course of events on earth; and of what our race needs; and they are defended with so much eloquence, skill, learning, and subtilty of argumentation, that they appear to lie beyond the compass of the human powers.

As they speak. This cannot mean that the defenders of these errors themselves called their doctrines "the depths of Satan," for no teachers would choose so to designate their opinions; but it must mean, either that they who were opposed to those errors characterized them as "the depths of Satan," or that they who opposed them said that *they* had not known "the depths of Satan." Professor Stuart understands it in the latter sense. A somewhat more natural interpretation, it seems to me, however, is to refer it to what the opposers of these heretics said of these errors. They called them "the depths of Satan," and they professed not to have known anything of them. The meaning perhaps would be expressed by the familiar words, "as they say," or "as they call them," in the following manner: "As many as have not known the depths of Satan, as they say," or, "to use their own language." Doddridge paraphrases it, "as they proverbially speak." Tyndale encloses it in a parenthesis.

I will put upon you none other burden. That is, no other than that which you now experience from having these persons with you, and that which must attend the effort to purify the church. He had not approved their conduct for suffering these persons to remain in the church, and he threatens to punish all those who had become contaminated with these pernicious doctrines. He evidently designed to say that there was *some* token of his displeasure proper in the case, but he was not disposed to bring upon them any *other* expression of his displeasure than that which grew naturally and necessarily out of the fact that they had been tolerated among them, and those troubles and toils which must attend the effort to deliver the church from these errors. Under any circumstances the church must suffer. It would suffer in reputation. It would suffer in respect to its internal tranquillity. Perhaps, also, there were those who were implicated in these errors, and who would be implicated in the punishment, who had friends and kindred in the church; and the judgments which were to come upon the advocates of these errors must, therefore, come in a measure upon the church. A kind Saviour says, that he would bring upon them no other, and no weightier burden, than *must* arise from his purpose to inflict appropriate vengeance on the guilty themselves. The trouble which would grow out of that would be a sufficient expression of his displeasure. This is, in fact, often now all that is necessary as a punishment on a church for harbouring the advocates of error and of sin. The church has trouble enough ultimately in getting rid of them; and the injury which such persons do to its piety, peace, and reputation, and the disorders of which they are the cause, constitute a sufficient punishment for having tolerated them in its bosom. Often the most severe punishment that God can bring upon men is to "lay upon them no other burden" than to leave them to the inevitable consequences of their own folly, or to the trouble and vexation incident to the effort to free themselves from what they had for a long time tolerated or practised.

{e} "depths" 2Th 2:9-12

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 2 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *But that which ye have*, etc. All that there is of truth and purity remaining among you, retain faithfully. See Re 3:11.

Till I come. To receive you to myself, Joh 14:3.

{f} "that which" Re 3:11

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 2 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *And he that overcometh*. **See Barnes on "Re 2:7".**

And keepeth my works unto the end. The works that I command and that I require, to the end of his life. See Joh 13:1.

To him will I give power over the nations. The evident meaning of what is said here, and in the next verse, is, that in accordance with the uniform promise made to the redeemed in the New Testament, they would partake of the final triumph and glory of the Saviour, and be associated with him. It is not said that they would have exclusive power over the nations, or that they would hold offices of trust under him during a personal reign on the earth; but the meaning is, that they would be associated with him in his future glory. **See Barnes "Ro 8:17; 1Co 6:2-3".**

{g} "overcometh" Re 2:7,11,17 3:5,12,21 21:7

{h} "works" Joh 6:29 Jas 2:20

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 2 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *And he shall rule them with a rod of iron*. There is an allusion here to Ps 2:9: "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." There is a slight change in the passage, "he shall *rule*," instead of "thou shalt *break*," in order to adapt the language to the purpose of the speaker here. The allusion in the Psalm is to the Messiah as reigning triumphant over the nations, or subduing them under him, and the idea here, as in the previous verse, is, that his redeemed people will be associated with him in this dominion. To rule with a sceptre of iron, is not to rule with a harsh and tyrannical sway, but with power that is firm and invincible. It denotes a government of strength, or one that cannot be successfully opposed; one in which the subjects are effectually subdued.

As the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers. The image here is that of the vessel of a potter—a fragile vessel of clay —struck with a rod of iron, and broken into fragments. That is, as applied to the nations, there would be no power to oppose his rule; the enemies of his government would be destroyed. Instead of remaining firm and compacted together, they would be broken like the clay vessel of a potter when struck with a rod of iron. The speaker does not intimate *when* this would be; but all that is said here would be applicable to that time when the Son of God will come to judge the world, and when his saints will be associated with him in his triumphs. As, in respect to all the others of the seven epistles to the churches, the rewards promised refer to heaven, and to the happy state of that blessed world, it would seem also that this should have a similar reference, for there is no reason why "to him that overcame" in Thyatira a temporal reward

and triumph should be promised more than in the cases of the others. If so, then this passage should not be adduced as having any reference to an imaginary personal reign of the Saviour and of the saints on the earth.

Even as I received of my Father. As he has appointed me, Ps 2:6-9.

{a} "And he shall" Ps 49:14 149:1-5 {b} "shivers" Ps 2:9

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 2 - Verse 28

Verse 28. *And I will give him the morning star*. The "morning star" is that bright planet—Venus—which at some seasons of the year appears so beautifully in the east, leading on the morning—the harbinger of the day. It is one of the most beautiful objects in nature, and is susceptible of a great variety of uses for illustration. It appears as the darkness passes away; it is an indication that the morning comes; it is intermingled with the first rays of the light of the sun; it seems to be a herald to announce the coming of that glorious luminary; it is a pledge of the faithfulness of God. In which of these senses, if any, it is referred to here, is not stated; nor is it said what is used implied by its being *given* to him that overcomes. It would seem to be here to denote a bright and brilliant ornament; something with which he who "overcame" would be adorned, resembling the bright star of the morning. It is observable that it is not said that he would *make* him *like* the morning star, as in Da 12:3; nor that he would be compared with the morning star, like the king of Babylon, Isa 14:12; nor that he would resemble a star which Balaam says he saw in the distant future, Nu 24:17. The idea seems to be, that the Saviour would give him something that would resemble that morning planet in beauty and splendour—perhaps meaning that it would be placed as a gem in his diadem, and would sparkle on his brow—bearing some such relation to him who is called "the Sun of Righteousness," as the morning star does to the glorious sun on his rising. If so, the meaning would be, that he would receive a beautiful ornament, bearing a near relation to the Redeemer himself as a bright sun—a pledge that the darkness was past—but one whose beams would melt away into the superior light of the Redeemer himself, as the beams of the morning star are lost in the superior glory of the sun.

{c} "star" Re 22:16

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 2 - Verse 29

Verse 29. *He that hath an ear*, etc. **See Barnes "Re 2:7".**

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 3

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 3 - Verse 1

CHAPTER III

THE EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH AT SARDIS

The contents of the epistle to the church at Sardis (Re 3:1-6) are:

(1.) The usual salutation to the angel of the church, Re 3:1.

(2.) The usual reference to the attributes of the Saviour—those referred to here being that he had the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars, Re 3:1.

(3.) The assurance that he knew their works, Re 3:1.

(4.) The statement of the peculiarity of the church, or what he saw in it—that it had a name to live and was dead, Re 3:1.

(5.) A solemn direction to the members of the church, arising from their character and circumstances, to be watchful, and to strengthen the things which remained, but which were ready to die; to remember what they had received, and to hold fast that Which had been communicated to them, and to repent of all their sins, Re 3:2,3.

(6.) A threat that if they did not do this, he would come suddenly upon them, at an hour which they could not anticipate, Re 3:3.

(7.) A commendation of the church as far as it could be done, for there were still a few among theta who had not defiled their garments, and a promise that they should walk before him in white, Re 3:4.

(8.) A promise, as usual, to him that should be victorious. The promise here is, that he should walk before him in white; that his name should not be blotted out Of the book of life; that he should be acknowledged before the Father, and before the angels, Re 3:5.

(9.) The usual call on all persons to hear what the Spirit said to the churches. Sardis was the capital of the ancient kingdom of Lydia, one of the provinces of Asia Minor, and was situated at the foot of mount Tmolus, in a fine plain watered by the river Pactolus, famous for its golden sands. It was the capital where the celebrated Croesus, proverbial for his wealth, reigned. It was taken by Cyrus, (B.C. 548,) when Croesus was king, and was at that time one of the most splendid and opulent cities of the East. It subsequently passed into the hands of the Romans, and under them sank rapidly in wealth and importance. In the time of Tiberius it was destroyed by an earthquake, but was rebuilt by order of the emperor. The inhabitants of Sardis bore an ill repute among the ancients for their voluptuous modes of life. Perhaps there may be an allusion to this fact, in the words which are used in the address to the church there, "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments." Successive earthquakes, and the ravages of the Saracens and the Turks, have reduced this once celebrated city to a heap of ruins, though exhibiting still many remains of former splendour. The name of the village which now occupies the place of this ancient capital is Sart. It is a miserable village, comprising only a few wretched cottages, occupied by Turks and Greeks. There are ruins of the theatre, the stadium, and of some ancient churches. The most remarkable of the ruins are two pillars supposed to have belonged to the temple of Cybele; and if so, they are among the most ancient in the world, the temple of Cybele having been built only three hundred years after that of Solomon. The Acropolis serves well to define the site of the city. Several travellers have recently visited the remains of Sardis, and its appearance will be indicated by a few extracts from their writings. Arundell, in his "Discoveries in Asia Minor," says, "If I were asked what impresses the mind most strongly in beholding Sardis, I should say its

indescribable solitude, like the darkness of Egypt, darkness that could be felt. So the deep solitude of the spot, once the 'lady of kingdoms',—produces a corresponding feeling of desolate abandonment in the mind, which can never be forgotten."

The Rev. J. Hartley, in regard to these ruins, remarks: "The ruins are, with one exception, more entirely gone to decay than those of most of the ancient cities which we have visited. No Christians reside on the spot: two Greeks only work in a mill here, and a few wretched Turkish huts are scattered among the ruins. We saw the churches of St. John and the Virgin, the theatre, and the building styled the Palace of Croesus; but the most striking object at Sardis is the temple of Cybele. I was filled with wonder and awe at beholding the two stupendous columns of this edifice, which are still remaining: they are silent but impressive witnesses of the power and splendour of antiquity."

The impression produced on the mind is vividly described in the following language, of a recent traveller, who lodged there for a night:

'Every object was as distinct as in a northern twilight; the snowy summit of the mountain [Tmolus], the long sweep of the valley, and the flashing current of the river [Pactolus]. I strolled along towards the banks of the Pactolus, and seated myself by the side of the half-exhausted stream.

"There are few individuals who cannot trace on the map of their memory some moments of overpowering emotion, and some scene, which, once dwelt upon, has become its own painter, and left behind it a memorial that time could not efface. I can readily sympathize with the feelings of him who wept at the base of the pyramids; nor were my own less powerful, on that night, when I sat beneath the sky of Asia to gaze upon the ruins of Sardis, from the banks of the golden-sanded Pactolus. Beside me were the cliffs of the Acropolis, which, centuries before, the hardy Median scaled, while leading on the conquering Persians, whose tents had covered the very spot on which I was reclining. Before me were the vestiges of what had been the palace of the gorgeous Croesus; within its walls were once congregated the wisest of mankind, Thales, Cleobulus, and Solon. It was here that the wretched father mourned alone the mangled corpse of his beloved Atys; it was here that the same humiliated monarch wept at the feet of the Persian boy who wrung from him his kingdom. Far in the distance were the gigantic tumult of the Lydian monarchs, Candaules, Halyattys, and Gyges; and around them were spread those very plains once trodden by the countless hosts of Xerxes, when hurrying on to find a sepulchre at Marathon.

"There were more varied and more vivid remembrances associated with the sight of Sardis than could possibly be attached to any other spot of earth; but all were mingled with a feeling of disgust at the littleness of human glory. All—all had passed away! There were before me the fanes of a dread religion, the tombs of forgotten monarchs, and the palm-tree that waved in the banquet-hall of kings; while the feeling of desolation was doubly heightened by the calm sweet sky above me, which, in its unfading brightness, shone as purely now as when it beamed upon the golden dreams of Croesus."— Emerson's Letters from the AEgean, p. 113, seq. The present appearance of the ruins is indicated by the following engraving.

Verse 1. *And unto the angel of the church in Sardis*. **See Barnes on "Re 1:20"**.

These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God. **See Barnes on "Re 1:4"**.

If the phrase, "the seven spirits of God," as there supposed, refers to the Holy Spirit, there is great propriety in saying of the Saviour, that he has that Spirit, inasmuch as the Holy Spirit is represented as sent forth by him into the world, Joh 15:26-27 16:7,13-14.

It was one of the highest characteristics that could be given of the Saviour to say, that the Holy Ghost was his to send forth into the world, and that that great Agent, on whose gracious influences

all were dependent for the possession of true religion, could be given or withheld by him at his pleasure.

And the seven stars. **See Barnes on "Re 1:16".**

These represented the angels of the seven churches, (**See Barnes "Re 1:20"**) and the idea which the Saviour would seem to intend to convey here is, that he had entire control over the ministers of the churches, and could keep or remove them at pleasure.

I know thy works. **See Barnes "Re 2:2".**

That thou hast a name that thou livest. Thou dost profess attachment to me and my cause. The word *life* is a word that is commonly employed, in the New Testament, to denote religion, in contradistinction from the natural state of man, which is described as *death* in sin. By the profession of religion, they expressed the purpose to live unto God, and for another world; they professed to have true, spiritual life.

And art dead. That is, spiritually. This is equivalent to saying that their profession was merely *in name*; and yet this must be understood comparatively, for there were some even in Sardis who truly lived unto God, Re 3:4. The meaning is, that, in general, the profession of religion among them was a mere name. The Saviour does not, as in the case of the churches of Ephesus and Thyatira, specify any prevailing form of error or false doctrine; but it would seem that here it was a simple *want* of religion.

{a} "seven spirits" Re 5:6

{b} "know" Re 2:2

{C} "livest" 1Ti 5:6

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 3 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *Be watchful*. Be wakeful; be attentive and earnest—in contradistinction from the drowsy condition of the church.

Strengthen the things which remain. The true piety that still lives and lingers among you. Whatever there was of religion among them, it was of importance to strengthen it, that the love of the Saviour might not become wholly extinct. An important duty in a low and languishing state of religion is, to "strengthen the things that still survive." It is to cultivate all the graces which do exist; to nourish all the love of truth which may linger in the church; and to confirm, by warm exhortation, and by a reference to the gracious promises of God's word, the few who may be endeavouring to do their duty, and who, amidst many discouragements, are aiming to be faithful to the Saviour. In the lowest state of religion in a church there may be a few, perhaps quite obscure and of humble rank, who are mourning over the desolations of Zion, and who are sighing for better times. All such it is the duty of the ministers of religion to comfort and encourage; for it is in their hearts that piety may be kept alive in the church—it is through them that it may be hoped religion may yet be revived. In the apparent hopelessness of doing much good to others, good may always be done to the cause itself by preserving and strengthening what there may be of life among those few, amidst the general desolation and death. It is much to preserve life in grain sown in a field through the long and dreary winter, when all seems to be dead—for it will burst forth, with new life and beauty, in the spring. When the body is prostrate with disease, and life just lingers, and death seems to be coming on, it

is much to preserve the little strength that remains; much to keep the healthful parts from being invaded, that there may be strength yet to recover.

That are ready to die. That seem just ready to become extinct. So sometimes, in a plant, there seems to be but the least conceivable life remaining, and it appears that it must die. So, when we are sick, there seems to be but the feeblest glimmering of life, and it is apparently just ready to go out. So, when a fire dies away, there seems but a spark remaining, and it is just ready to become extinct. And thus, in religion in the soul—religion in a church—religion in a community—it often seems as if it were just about to go out for ever.

For I have not found thy works perfect before God. I have not found them *complete* or *full*. They come short of that which is required. Of what church, of what individual Christian, is not this true? Whom might not the Saviour approach with the same language? It was true, however, in a marked and eminent sense, of the church at Sardis.

{d} "strengthen" Re 2:4 {e} Perfect" Da 5:27

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 3 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Remember therefore how thou hast received*. This may refer either to some peculiarity in the manner in which the gospel was conveyed to them—as, by the labours of the apostles, and by the remarkable effusions of the Holy Spirit; or to the ardour and love with which they embraced it; or to the greatness of the favours and privileges conferred on them; or to their own understanding of what the gospel required, when they were converted. It is not possible to determine in which sense the language is used; but the general idea is plain, that there was something marked and unusual in the way in which they had been led to embrace the gospel, and that it was highly proper in these circumstances to look back to the days when they gave themselves to Christ. It is always well for Christians to call to remembrance the "day of their espousals," and their views and feelings when they gave their hearts to the Saviour, and to compare those views with their present condition, especially if their conversion was marked by anything unusual.

And heard. How thou didst hear the gospel in former times; that is, with what earnestness and attention thou didst embrace it. This would rather seem to imply that the reference in the whole passage is to the fact that they embraced the gospel with great ardour and zeal.

And hold fast.

(1.) Hold fast the truths which thou didst then receive;

(2.) hold fast what remains of true religion among you.

And repent. Repent in regard to all that in which you have departed from your views and feelings when you embraced the gospel.

If therefore thou shalt not watch. The speaker evidently supposed that it was possible that they would not regard the warning; that they would presume that they would be safe if they refused to give heed to it, or that by mere inattention and indifference they might suffer the warning to pass by unheeded. Similar results have been so common in the world as to make such a supposition not improbable, and to make proper, in other cases as well as that, the solemn threatening that he would come suddenly upon them.

I will come on thee as a thief. In a sudden and unexpected manner. **See Barnes on "1Th 5:2"**.

And ye shall not know what hour I will come upon thee. You shall not know beforehand; you shall have no warning of my immediate approach. This is often the way in which God comes to men in his heavy judgments. Long beforehand, he admonishes us, indeed, of what must be the consequences of a course of sin, and warns us to turn from it; but when sinners refuse to attend to his warning, and still walk in the way of evil, he comes suddenly, and cuts them down. Every man who is warned of the evil of his course, and who refuses or neglects to repent, has reason to believe that God will come suddenly in his wrath, and call him to his bar, Pr 29:1. No such man call presume on impunity; no one who is warned of his guilt and danger can feel that he is for one moment safe. No one can have any basis of calculation that he will be spared; no one can flatter himself with any probable anticipation that he will have time to repent when God comes to take him away. Benevolence has done its appropriate work in warning him;—how can the Great Judge of all be to blame, if he comes then, and suddenly cuts the sinner off?

{f} "remember" Heb 2:1 {g} "repent" Re 3:19 {h} "thief" Re 16:15

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 3 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Thou hast a few names even in Sardis*. The word *names* here is equivalent to *persons*; and the idea is, that even in a place so depraved, and where religion had so much declined, there were a few persons who had kept themselves free from the general contamination. In most cases, when error and sin prevail, there may be found a few who are worthy of the Divine commendation; a few who show that true religion may exist even when the mass are evil. **See Barnes "Ro 11:4"**.

Which have not defiled their garments. **See Barnes "Jude 1:23"**.

The meaning is, that they had not defiled themselves by coming in contact with the profane and the polluted; or, in other words, they had kept themselves free from the prevailing corruption. They were like persons clothed in white walking in the midst of the defiled, yet keeping their raiment from being soiled.

And they shall walk with me in white. White is the emblem of innocence, and is hence appropriately represented as the colour of the raiment of the heavenly inhabitants. The persons here referred to had kept their garments uncontaminated on the earth, and as an appropriate reward it is said that they would appear in white raiment in heaven. Compare Re 7:9 19:8.

For they are worthy. They have shown themselves worthy to be regarded as followers of the Lamb; or, they have a character that is fitted for heaven. The declaration is not that they have any *claim* to heaven on the ground of their own merit, or that it will be in virtue of their own works that they will be received there; but that there is a *fitness* or *propriety* that they should thus appear in heaven. We are all personally unworthy to be admitted to heaven, but we may evince such a character as to show that, according to the arrangements of grace, it is *fit* and *proper* that we should be received there. We have the character to which God has promised eternal life.

{a} "white" Re 7:9 19:8

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 3 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *He that overcometh*. **See Barnes on "Re 2:7"**.

The same shall be clothed in white raiment. Whosoever he may be that shall overcome sin and the temptations of this world, shall be admitted to this glorious reward. The promise is made not only to those in Sardis who should be victorious, but to all in every age and every land. The hope that is thus held out before us, is that of appearing with the Redeemer in his kingdom, clad in robes expressive of holiness and joy.

And I will not blot out his name out of the book of life. The book which contains the names of those who are to live with him for ever. The names of his people are thus represented as enrolled in a book which he keeps—a register of those who are to live for ever. The phrase "book of life" frequently occurs in the Bible, representing this idea. **See Barnes "Php 4:3"**.

Compare Re 15:3 20:12,15 21:27

Re 22:19. The expression "I will not blot out" means, that the names would be found there on the great day of final account, and would be found there for ever. It may be remarked, that as no one can have access to that book but he who keeps it, there is the most positive assurance that it will never be done, and the salvation of the redeemed will be, therefore, secure. And let it be remembered that the period is coming when it will be felt to be a higher honour to have the name enrolled in that book than in the books of heraldry —in the most splendid catalogue of princes, poets, warriors, nobles, or statesmen, that the world has produced. *But I will confess his name*, etc. I will acknowledge him to be my follower. **See Barnes "Mt 10:32"**.

{b} "book of life" Re 17:8 {c} "confess" Lu 12:8

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 3 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *He that hath an ear*, etc. **See Barnes "Re 2:7"**.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 3 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia*. **See Barnes "Re 1:20"**.

These things saith he that is holy. This refers undoubtedly to the Lord Jesus. The appellation *holy*, or *the holy one*, is one that befits him, and is not unfrequently given to him in the New Testament Lu 1:35 Ac 2:27, 3:14.

It is not only an appellation appropriate the Saviour, but well adapted to be employed when he is addressing the churches. Our impression of what is said to us will often depend much on our idea of the character of him who addresses us, and solemnity and thoughtfulness always become us when we are addressed by a holy Redeemer. *He that is true*. Another characteristic of the Saviour well fitted to be referred to when he addresses men. It is a characteristic often ascribed to him in the New Testament, (Joh 1:9,14,17 8:40,45 14:6 18:37 1Jo 5:20) and one which is eminently adapted

to impress the mind with solemn thought in view of the fact that he is to pronounce on our character, and to determine our destiny.

He that hath the key of David. This expression is manifestly taken from Isa 22:22, "And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder." As used by Isaiah, the phrase is applied to Eliskim; and it is not to be inferred because the language here is applied to the Lord Jesus that originally it had any such reference. "The application of the same terms," says Professor Alexander on Isa 22:22, "to Peter, (Mt 16:19) and to Christ himself, (Re 3:7) does not prove that they here refer to either, or that Eliakim was a type of Christ, but merely that the same words admit of different applications." The language is that which properly denotes authority or control—as when one has the key of a house, and has unlimited access to it; and the meaning here is, that as David is represented as the king of Israel residing in a palace, so he who had the key to that palace had *regal authority*.

He that openeth, and no man shutteth, etc. He has free and unrestrained access to the house; the power of admitting any one, or of excluding any one. Applied here to the Saviour, as king in Zion, this means that in his kingdom he has the absolute control in regard to the admission or exclusion of any one. He can prescribe the terms; he can invite whom he chooses; he can exclude those whom he judges should not be admitted. A reference to this absolute control was every way proper when he was addressing a church, and is every way proper for us to reflect on when we think of the subject of our personal salvation.

{a} "holy" Ac 3:14 {b} "true" 1Jo 5:20 {c} "key" Isa 22:22 {d} "shutteth" Job 12:14

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 3 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *I know thy works*. **See Barnes on "Re 2:2"**.

Behold, I have set before thee an open door. Referring to his authority as stated in Re 3:7. The "open door" here evidently refers to the enjoyment of some privilege or honour; and, so far as the *language* is concerned, it may refer to any one of the following things: either

(1) the ability to do good—represented as the "opening of the door." Compare Ac 14:27 1Co 16:9; 2Co 2:12 Col 4:3.

(2.) The privilege of access to the heavenly palace; that is, that they had an abundant opportunity of securing their salvation, the door being never closed against them by day or by night. Compare Re 21:25 Or

(3) it may mean that they had before them an open way of egress from danger and persecution. This latter Professor Stuart supposes to be the true meaning; and argues this because it is immediately specified that those Jewish persecutors would be made to humble themselves, and that the church would but lightly experience the troubles which were coming upon the world around them. But the more natural interpretation of the phrase "an open door," is that it refers to access *to* a thing rather than egress *from* a thing; that we may come to that which we desire to approach, rather than escape from that which we dread. There is no objection, it seems to me, to the supposition that the language may be used here in the largest sense—as denoting that, in regard to the church at Philadelphia, there was no restraint. He had given them the most unlimited privileges. The temple of salvation was thrown open to them; the celestial city was accessible; the whole world was before them as a

field of usefulness, and anywhere, and everywhere, they might do good, and at all times they might have access to the kingdom of God.

And no man can shut it. No one has the power of preventing this, for he who has control over all things concedes these privileges to you.

For thou hast a little strength. This would imply that they had not *great* vigour, but still that, notwithstanding there were so many obstacles to their doing good, and so many temptations to evil, there still remained with them some degree of energy. They were not wholly dead; and, as long as that was the case, the door was still open for them to do good. The words "little strength" may refer either to the smallness of the *number*—meaning that they were few; or it may refer to the spiritual life and energy of the church—meaning that, though feeble, their vital energy was not wholly gone. The more natural interpretation seems to be to refer it to the latter; and the sense is, that although they had not the highest degree of energy, or had not all that the Saviour desired they should have, they were not *wholly* dead. The Saviour saw among them the evidences of spiritual life; and in view of that he says he had set before them an open door, and there was abundant opportunity to employ all the energy and zeal which they had. It may be remarked that the same thing is true now; that wherever there is *any* vitality in a church the Saviour will furnish ample opportunity that it may be employed in his service.

And hast not denied my name. When Christians were brought before heathen magistrates in times of persecution, they were required to renounce the name of Christ, and to disown him in a public manner. It is possible that, amidst the persecutions that raged in the early times, the members of the church at Philadelphia had been summoned to such a trial, and they had stood the trial firmly. It would seem from the following verse, that the efforts which had been made to induce them to renounce the name of Christ had been made by those who professed to be Jews, though they evinced the spirit of Satan. If so, then the attempt was probably to convince them that Jesus was not the Christ. This attempt would be made in all places where there were Jews.

{e} "open door" 1Co 16:9

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 3 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Behold, I will make*. Greek, "I give"—*didwmi*; that is, I will arrange matters so that this shall occur. The word implies that he had power to do this, and consequently proves that he has power over the heart of man, and can secure such a result as he chooses.

Them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews. Who profess to be Jews, but are really of the synagogue of Satan. **See Barnes "Re 2:9"**.

The meaning is, that, though they were of Jewish extraction, and boasted much of being Jews, yet they were really under the influence of Satan, and their assemblages deserved to be called his "synagogue."

And are not, but do lie. It is a false profession altogether. **See Barnes on "1Jo 1:6"**.

Behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet. The word rendered *worship* here, means properly *to fall prostrate*; and then to do homage, or to worship in the proper sense, as this was commonly done by failing prostrate. **See Barnes on "Mt 2:2"**.

So far as the *word* is concerned, it may refer either to spiritual homage, that is, the worship of God; or it may mean respect as shown to superiors. If it is used here in the sense of Divine worship properly so called, it means that they would be constrained to come and worship "*before* them," or in their very presence; if it is used in the more general signification, it means that they would be constrained to show them honour and respect. The latter is the probable meaning; that is, that they would be constrained to acknowledge that they were the children of God, or that God regarded them with his favour. It does not mean necessarily that they would themselves be converted to Christ, but that, as they had been accustomed to revile and oppose those who were true Christians, they would be constrained to come and render them the respect due to those who were sincerely endeavouring to serve their Maker. The *truth* taught here is, that it is in the power of the Lord Jesus so to turn the hearts of all the enemies of religion that they shall be brought to show respect to it; so to incline the minds of all people that they shall honour the church, or be at least outwardly its friends. Such homage the world shall yet be constrained to pay to it.

And to know that I have loved thee. This explains what he had just said, and shows that he means that the enemies of his church will yet be constrained to acknowledge that it enjoys the smiles of God, and that instead of being persecuted and reviled, it should be respected and loved.

{f} "say" Re 2:9 {g} "come" Isa 60:14

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 3 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Because thou hast kept the word of my patience*. My word commanding or enjoining patience; that is, thou hast manifested the patience which I require. They had shown this in the trials which they had experienced; he promises now, that in return he will keep them in the future trials that shall come upon the world. One of the highest rewards of patience in one trial is the grace that God gives us to bear another. The fact that we *have been* patient and submissive may be regarded as proof that he will give us grace that we *may be* patient and submissive in the trials that are to come. God does not leave those who have shown that they will not leave him.

I also will keep thee. That is, I will so keep you that you shall not sink under the trials which will prove a severe temptation to many. This does not mean that they would be actually kept from calamity of all kinds, but that they would be kept from the *temptation of apostasy* in calamity. He would give them grace to bear up under trials with a Christian spirit, and in such a manner that their salvation should not be endangered.

From the hour of temptation. The season; the time; the period of temptation. You shall be so kept that that which will prove to be a time of temptation to so many shall not endanger your salvation. Though others fall, you shall not; though you may be afflicted with others, yet you shall have grace to sustain you.

Which shall come upon all the world. The phrase here used—"*all the world*"—may either denote the whole world; or the whole Roman empire; or a large district of country; or the land of Judaea. **See Barnes on "Lu 2:1".**

Here, perhaps, all that is implied is, that the trial would be very *extensive* or *general*— so much so as to embrace the *world*, as the word was understood by those to whom the epistle was addressed. It need not be supposed that the whole world literally was included in it, or even all the Roman

empire, but what was the world to them—the region which they would embrace in that term. If there were some far-spreading calamity in the country where they resided, it would probably be all that would be fairly embraced in the meaning of the word. It is not known to what trial the speaker refers. It may have been some form of persecution, or it may have been some calamity by disease, earthquake, or famine that was to occur. Tacitus (see Wetstein, *in loc*.) mentions an earthquake that sank twelve cities in Asia Minor in one night, by which, among others, Philadelphia was deeply affected; and it is *possible* that there may have been reference here to that overwhelming calamity. But nothing can be determined with certainty in regard to this.

To try them that dwell upon the earth. To test their character. It would rather seem from this that the affliction was some form of persecution as adapted to test the fidelity of those who were affected by it. The persecutions in the Roman empire would furnish abundant occasions for such a trial.

{h} "I also" 2Pe 2:9

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 3 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Behold, I come quickly*. That is, in the trials referred to. **See Barnes** "Re 1:1, **See Barnes** "Rev 1:11, **See Barnes "Re 1:16"**.

Hold that fast which thou hast. That is, whatever of truth and piety you now possess. **See Barnes "Re 3:3"**.

That no man take thy crown. The crown of life appointed for all who are true believers. **See Barnes "2Ti 4:8"**.

The truth which is taught here is, that by negligence or unfaithfulness in duty we may be deprived of the glory which we might have obtained if we had been faithful to our God and Saviour. We need to be on our constant guard, that, in a world of temptation, where the enemies of truth abound, we may not be robbed of the crown that we might have worn for ever.

See Barnes "2Jo 8".

{a} "come" Zep 1:14 {b} "quickly" Re 3:3

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 3 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Him that overcometh*. **See Barnes on "Re 2:7"**.

Will I make a pillar in the temple of my God. The promised reward of faithfulness here is, that he who was victorious would be honoured as if he were a pillar or column in the temple of God. Such a pillar or column was partly for ornament, and partly for support; and the idea here is, that in that temple he would contribute to its beauty and the justness of its proportions, and would at the same time be honoured as if he were a pillar which was necessary for the support of the temple. It is not uncommon in the New Testament to represent the church as a temple, and Christians as parts of it. See 1Co 3:16-17 6:19; 2Co 6:16 1Pe 2:5.

And he shall go no more out. He shall be permanent as a part of that spiritual temple. The idea of "going out" does not properly belong to a *pillar*; but the speaker here has in his mind the *man*, though represented as a column. The description of some parts would be applicable more directly to a pillar; in others more properly to a man. Compare Joh 6:37 10:28-29; 1Jo 2:19, for an illustration of the sentiment here. The main truth here is, that if we reach heaven, our happiness will be secure for ever. We shall have the most absolute certainty that the welfare of the soul will no more be periled; that we shall never be in danger of falling into temptation; that no artful foe shall ever have power to alienate our affections from God; that we shall never die. Though we may change our place, and may roam from world to world till we shall have surveyed all the wonders of creation, yet we shall never "go out of the temple of God." **See Barnes "Joh 14:2"**.

When we reach the heavenly world, our conflicts will be over, our doubts at an end. As soon as we cross the threshold, we shall be greeted with the assurance, "he shall go no more out for ever." That is to be our eternal abode, and whatever of joy or felicity or glory that bright world can furnish, is to be ours. Happy moment, when, emerging from a world of danger and of doubt, the soul shall settle down into the calmness and peace of that state where there is the assurance of God himself that world of bliss is to be its eternal abode!

And I will write upon him the name of my God. Considered as a pillar or column in the temple. The name of God would be conspicuously recorded on it to show that he belonged to God. The allusion is to a public edifice on the columns of which the names of distinguished and honoured persons were recorded; that is, where there was a public testimonial of the respect in which one whose name was thus recorded was held. The honour thus conferred on him "who should overcome" would be as great *as if* the name of that God whom he served, and whose favour and friendship he enjoyed, were inscribed on him in some conspicuous manner. The *meaning* is, that he would be known and recognised as belonging to God; the God of the Redeemer himself— indicated by the phrase "the name of *my* God."

And the name of the city of my God. That is, indicating that he belongs to that city, or that the New Jerusalem is the city of his habitation. The idea would seem to be, that in this world, and in all worlds wherever he goes and wherever he abides, he will be recognised as belonging to that holy city; as enjoying the rights and immunities of such a citizen.

Which is *New Jerusalem*. Jerusalem was the place where the temple was reared, and where the worship of God was celebrated. It thus came to be synonymous with the church—the dwelling-place of God on earth.

Which cometh down out of heaven from my God. **See Barnes on "Re 21:2"**

Of course, this must be a figurative representation, but the idea is plain. It is,

(1.) that the church is, in accordance with settled Scripture language, represented as a city—the abode of God on earth.

(2.) That this, instead of being built here, or having an earthly origin, has its origin in heaven. It is *as if* it had been constructed there, and then sent down to earth ready formed. The type, the form, the whole structure is heavenly. It is a departure from all proper laws of interpretation to explain this *literally*, as if a city should be actually let down from heaven; and equally so to infer from this passage, and the others of similar import in this book, that a city will be literally *reared* for the residence of the saints. If the passage proves anything on either of these points, it is, that a great and splendid city, such as that described in chapter 21, will *literally come down from heaven*. But who can believe that? Such an interpretation, however, is by no means necessary. The

comparison of the church with a beautiful city, and the fact that it has its origin in heaven, is all that is fairly implied in the passage.

And I will write upon him *my new name*. **See Barnes "Re 2:17"**.

The *reward*, therefore, promised here is, that he who by persevering fidelity showed that he was a real friend of the Saviour, would be honoured with a permanent abode in the holy city of his habitation. In the church redeemed and triumphant he would have a perpetual dwelling; and wherever he should be, there would be given him sure pledges that he belonged to him, and was recognised as a citizen of the heavenly world. To no higher honour could any man aspire; and yet that is an honour to which the most humble and lowly may attain by faith in the Son of God.

{c} "New Jerusalem" Re 22:2,10

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 3 - Verse 13

Verse 13 There are no notes for Re 3:13.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 3 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write*. **See Barnes "Re 1:20"**.

These things saith the Amen. Referring, as is the case in every epistle, to some attribute of the speaker adapted to impress their minds, or to give peculiar force to what he was about to say to that particular church. Laodicea was characterized by lukewarmness, and the reference to the fact that he who was about to address them was the "Amen"—that is, was characterized by the simple earnestness and sincerity denoted by that word—was eminently fitted to make an impression on the minds of such a people. The word *Amen* means *true, certain, faithful*; and, as used here, it means that he to whom it is applied is eminently true and faithful. What he affirms is true; what he promises or threatens is certain. Himself characterized by sincerity and truth, (**See Barnes "2Co 1:20"**) he can look with approbation only on the same thing in others: and hence he looks with displeasure on the lukewarmness which, from its very nature, always approximates insincerity. This was an attribute, therefore, every way appropriate to be referred to in addressing a lukewarm church.

The faithful and true witness. This is presenting the idea implied in the word *Amen* in a more complete form, but substantially the same thing is referred to. He is a witness for God and his truth, and he can approve of nothing which the God of truth would not approve. **See Barnes "Re 1:5"**.

The beginning of the creation of God. This expression is a very important one in regard to the rank and dignity of the Saviour, and, like all similar expressions respecting him, its meaning has been much controverted. **See Barnes on "Col 1:15"**.

The phrase here used is susceptible, properly, of only one of the following significations, viz.: either

(a) that he was the beginning of the creation in the sense that he caused the universe to begin to exist—that is, that he was the author of all things; or

(b) that he was the first created being; or

(c) that he holds the primacy over all, and is at the head of the universe. It is not necessary to examine any other proposed interpretations, for the only other senses supposed to be conveyed by the words, that he is the beginning of the creation in the sense that he rose from the dead as the first-fruits of them that sleep, or that he is the head of the *spiritual* creation of God, are so foreign to the natural meaning of the words as to need no special refutation. As to the three significations suggested above, it may be observed, that the *first* one—that he is the *author* of the creation, and in that sense the *beginning*, though expressing a scriptural doctrine, (Joh 1:3 Eph 3:9; Col 1:16) —is not in accordance with the proper meaning of the word here used—*arch*. The word properly refers to the *commencement* of a thing, not its *authorship*, and denotes properly primacy in time, and primacy in rank, but not primacy in the sense of causing anything to exist. The two ideas which run through the word as it is used in the New Testament are those just suggested. For the former—primacy in regard to time—that is properly the commencement of a thing, see the following passages where the word occurs: Mt 19:4,8, 24:8,21; Mr 1:1 10:6, 13:8,19; Lu 1:2 Joh 1:1-2

Joh 2:11 6:64, 8:25,44, 15:27 16:4 Ac 11:15 1Jo 1:1, 2:7,13-14,24

1Jo 3:8,11 2Jo 5-6.

For the latter signification, primacy of rank, or authority, see the following places: Lu 12:11 20:20; Ro 8:38

1Co 15:24 Eph 1:21, 3:10 Eph 6:12; Col 1:16,18, 2:10,15; Tit 3:1.

The word is not, therefore, found in the sense of *authorship*, as denoting that one is the *beginning* of anything in the sense that he caused it to have an existence. As to the *second* of the significations suggested, that it means that he was the *first created being*, it may be observed

(a) that this is not a *necessary* signification of the phrase, since no one can show that this is the *only* proper meaning which could be given to the words, and therefore the phrase cannot be adduced to prove that he is himself a created being. If it *were* demonstrated from other sources that Christ was, in fact, a created being, and the first that God had made, it cannot be denied that this language would appropriately *express* that fact. But it cannot be made out from the mere use of the language here; and as the language is susceptible of other interpretations, it cannot be employed to prove that Christ is a created being.

(b) Such an interpretation would be at variance with all those passages which speak of him as uncreated and eternal; which ascribe Divine attributes to him; which speak of him as himself the Creator of all things. Compare Joh 1:1-3 Col 1:16; Heb 1:2,6,8,10-12.

The *third* signification, therefore, remains, that he is "the beginning of the creation of God," in the sense that he is the head or prince of the creation; that is, that he presides over it so far as the purposes of redemption are to be accomplished, and so far as is necessary for those purposes. This is

(1) in accordance with the meaning of the word, Lu 12:11 20:20, *et al, ut supra*; and

(2) in accordance with the uniform statements respecting the Redeemer, that "all power is given unto him in heaven and in earth," (Mt 28:18) that God has "given him power over all flesh," (Joh 17:2) that all things are "put under his feet," (Heb 2:8 1Co 15:27) that he is exalted over all things, Eph 1:20-22. Having this rank, it was proper that he should speak with authority to the church at Laodicea.

{1} "church" "in Laodicea" {a} "Amen" Isa 65:16

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 3 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *I know thy works*. **See Barnes on "Re 2:2"**.

That thou art neither cold nor hot. The word *cold* here would seem to denote the state where there was no pretension to religion; where everything was utterly lifeless and dead. The language is obviously figurative, but it is such as is often employed, when we speak of one as being *cold* towards another, as having a cold or icy heart, etc. The word *hot* would denote, of course, the opposite— warm and zealous in their love and service. The very words that we are constrained to use when speaking on this subject—such words as *ardent*, (i.e. *hot*, or *burning*;) *fervid*, (i.e. *very hot, burning, boiling*)—show how necessary it is to use such words, and how common it is. The state indicated here, therefore, would be that in which there was a profession of religion, but no warm-hearted piety; in which there was not, on the one hand, open and honest opposition to him, and, on the other, such warm-hearted and honest love as he had a right to look for among his professed friends; in which there was a profession of that religion which *ought* to warm the heart with love, and fill the soul with zeal in the cause of the Redeemer; but where the only result, in fact, was deadness and indifference to him and his cause. Among those who made no profession, he had reason to expect nothing but coldness; among those who made a profession, he had a right to expect the glow of a warm affection, but he found nothing but indifference.

I would thou wert cold or hot. That is, I would prefer *either* of those states to that which now exists. Anything better than this condition, where love is professed, but where it does not exist; where vows have been assumed which are not fulfilled. *Why* he would prefer that they should be "hot" is clear enough; but why would he prefer a state of utter coldness—a state where there was no profession of real love? To this question the following answers may be given:

(1.) Such a state of open and professed coldness or indifference is more *honest*. There is no disguise; no concealment; no pretence. We know where one in this state "may be found;" we know with whom we are dealing; we know what to expect. Sad as the state is, it is at least honest; and we are so made that we all prefer such a character to one where professions are made which are never to be realised—to a state of insincerity and hypocrisy.

(2.) Such a state is more *honourable*. It is a more elevated condition of mind, and marks a higher character. Of a man who is false to his engagements, who makes professions and promises never to be realized, we can make nothing. There is essential meanness in such a character, and there is nothing in it which we can respect. But in the character of the man who is openly and avowedly opposed to anything; who takes his stand, and is earnest and zealous in his course, though it be wrong, there are traits which may be, under a better direction, elements of true greatness and magnanimity. In the character of Saul of Tarsus, there were always the elements of true greatness; in that of Judas Iscariot, there were never. The one was capable of becoming one of the noblest men that has ever lived on the earth; the other, even under the personal teaching of the Redeemer for years, was nothing but a traitor—a man of essential meanness.

(3.) There is more hope of conversion and salvation in such a ease. There could always have been a ground of hope that Saul would be converted and saved, even when "breathing out threatening and slaughter;" of Judas, when numbered among the professed disciples of the Saviour, there was no hope. The most hopeless of all persons, in regard to salvation, are those who are members of the church without any true religion; who have made a profession without any evidence of personal piety; who are content with a name to live. This is so, because

(a) the essential character of any one who will allow himself to *do this* is eminently unfavourable to true religion. There is a lack of that thorough honesty and sincerity which is so necessary for true conversion to God. He who is content to profess to be what he really is not, is not a man on whom the truths of Christianity are likely to make an impression.

(b) Such a man never applies the truth to himself. Truth that is addressed to impenitent sinners he does not apply to himself, of course; for he does not rank himself in that class of persons. Truth addressed to hypocrites he *will* not apply to himself; for no one, however insincere and hollow he may be, chooses to act on the presumption that he is himself a hypocrite, or so as to leave others to suppose that he regards himself as such. The means of grace adapted to save a *sinner*, as such, he will not use; for he is in the church, and chooses to regard himself as safe. Efforts made to reclaim him he will resist; for he will regard it as proof of a meddlesome spirit, and an uncharitable judging in others, if they consider him to be anything different from what he professes to be. What right have they to go *back* of his profession, and assume that he is insincere? As a consequence, there are probably fewer persons by far converted of those who come into the church without any religion, than of any other class of persons of similar number; and the most hopeless of all conditions, in respect to conversion and salvation, is when one enters the church deceived.

(c) It may be presumed that, for these reasons, God himself will make less direct effort to convert and save such persons. As there are fewer appeals that can be brought to bear on them; as there is less in their character that is noble and that can be depended on in promoting the salvation of a soul; and as there is special guilt in hypocrisy, it may be presumed that God will more frequently leave such persons to their chosen course, than he will those who make no professions of religion. Compare Ps 109:17,18; Jer 7:16, 11:14

Isa 1:15 Ho 4:17.

{b} "would" 1Ki 18:21

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 3 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *So then because thou art lukewarm-I will spue thee out of my mouth*. Referring, perhaps, to the well-known fact that tepid water tends to produce sickness at the stomach, and an inclination to vomit. The image is intensely strong, and denotes deep disgust and loathing at the indifference which prevailed in the church at Laodicea. The idea is, that they would be utterly rejected and cast off as a church: a threatening of which there has been an abundant fulfilment in subsequent times. It may be remarked, also, that what was threatened to that church may be expected to occur to all churches, if they are in the same condition; and that all professing Christians, and Christian churches, that are lukewarm, have special reason to dread the indignation of the Saviour.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 3 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Because thou sayest, I am rich*. So far as the *language* here is concerned, this may refer either to riches literally, or to and spiritual riches; that is, to a boast of having religion enough.

Professor Stuart supposes that it refers to the former, and so do Wetstein, Vitringa, others. Doddridge, Rosenmuller, and others, understand it in the latter sense. There is no doubt that there was much wealth in Laodicea, and that, as a people, they prided themselves on their riches. See the authorities in Wetstein, on Col 2:1, and Vitringa, p. 160. It is not easy to determine *which* is the true sense; but may it not have been that there was an allusion to *both*, and that, in *every respect*, they boasted that they had enough? May it not have been so much the characteristic of that people to boast of their wealth, that they carried the spirit into everything, and manifested it even in regard to religion? Is it not true that they who have much of this world's goods, when they make a profession of religion, are very apt to suppose that they are well off in everything, and to feel self-complacent and happy? And is not the possession of much wealth by an individual Christian, or a Christian church, likely to produce just the lukewarmness which it is said existed in the church at Laodicea? If we thus understand it, there will be an accordance with the well-known fact that Laodicea was distinguished for its riches, and, at the same time, with another fact, so common as to be almost universal, that the possession of great wealth tends to make a professed Christian self-complacent and satisfied in every respect; to make him feel that, although he may not have much *religion*, yet he is on the whole well off; and to produce, in religion, a state of just such lukewarmness as the Saviour here says was loathsome and odious. *And increased with goods*. *peploukhta*—"I am enriched." This is only a more emphatic and intensive way of saying the same thing. It has no reference to the *kind* of riches referred to, but merely denotes the confident manner in which they affirmed that they were rich.

And have need of nothing. Still an emphatic and intensive way of saying that they were rich. In all respects, their wants were satisfied; they had enough of everything. They felt, therefore, no stimulus to effort; they sat down in contentment, self-complacency, and indifference. It is almost unavoidable that those who are rich in this world's goods should feel that they have need of *nothing*. There is no more common illusion among men than the feeling that if one has wealth, he has everything; that there is no want of his nature which cannot be satisfied with that; and that he may now sit down in contentment and ease. Hence the almost universal desire *to be* rich; hence the common feeling among those who *are* rich that there is no occasion for solicitude or care for anything else. Compare Lu 12:19.

And knowest not. There is no just impression in regard to the real poverty and wretchedness of your condition.

That thou art wretched. The word *wretched* we now use to denote the actual consciousness of being miserable, as applicable to one who is sunk into deep distress or affliction. The word here, however, refers rather to the condition itself than to the consciousness of that condition, for it is said that they did not *know* it. Their state was, in fact, a miserable state, and was fitted to produce actual distress if they had any just sense of it, though they thought that it was otherwise.

And miserable. This word has, with us now, a similar signification; but the term here used—*eleeinov*—rather means a *pitiable* state than one actually *felt* to be so. The meaning is, that their condition was one that was fitted to excite *pity* or *compassion*; not that they were actually miserable. **See Barnes "1Co 15:19"**.

And poor. Notwithstanding all their boast of having enough. They really had not that which was necessary to meet the actual wants of their nature, and, therefore, they were poor. Their worldly property could not meet the wants of their souls; and, with all their pretensions to piety, they had

not religion enough to meet the necessities of their nature when calamities should come, or when death should approach; and they were, therefore, in the strictest sense of the term, *poor*.

And blind. That is, in a spiritual respect. They did not see the reality of their condition; they had no just views of themselves, of the character of God, of the way of salvation. This seems to be said in connexion with the boast which they made in their own minds—that they had *everything*; that they wanted nothing. One of the great blessings of life is clearness of vision, and their boast that they had everything must have included that; but the speaker here says that they lacked that indispensable thing to completeness of character and to full enjoyment. With all their boasting, they were actually *blind*,—and how could one who was in that state say that he "had need of nothing?"

And naked. Of course, *spiritually*. Salvation is often represented as a garment, (Mt 22:11-12 Re 6:11, 7:9,13-14) and the declaration here is equivalent to saying that they had no religion. They had nothing to cover the nakedness of the soul, and in respect to the real wants of their nature they were like one who had no clothing in reference to cold, and heat, and storms, and to the shame of nakedness. How could such an one be regarded as rich? We may learn from this instructive verse,

(1.) that men may think themselves to be rich, and yet, in fact, be miserably poor. They may have the wealth of this world in abundance, and yet have nothing that really will meet their wants in disappointment, bereavement, sickness, death; the wants of the never-dying soul; their wants in eternity. What had the "rich fool," as he is commonly termed, in the parable, when he came to die? Lu 12:16, seq. What had "Dives," as he is commonly termed, to meet the wants of his nature when he went down to hell? Lu 16:19, seq.

(2.) Men may have much property, and think that they have all they want, and yet be *wretched*. In the sense that their condition is a wretched *condition*, this is always true; and in the sense that they are consciously wretched, this may be and often is true also.

(3.) Men may have great property, and yet be *miserable*. This is true in the sense that their condition is a *pitiable* one, and in the sense that they are actually *unhappy*. There is no more pitiable *condition* than that where one has great property, and is self-complacent and proud, and who has nevertheless no God, no Saviour, no hope of heaven, and who perhaps that very day may "lift up his eyes in hell, being in torments;" and, it need not be added, that there is no greater actual *misery* in this world than that which sometimes finds its way into the palaces of the rich. He greatly errs who thinks that misery is confined to the cottages of the poor.

(4.) Men may be rich, and think they have all that they want, and yet be *blind* to their condition. They really have no distinct vision of anything. They have no just views of God, of themselves, of their duty, of this world, or of the next. In most important respects, they are in a worse condition than the inmates of an asylum for the blind, for they may have clear views of God and of heaven. Mental darkness is a greater calamity than the loss of natural vision; and there is many an one who is surrounded by all that affluence can give, who never yet had one correct view of his own character, of his God, or of the reality of his condition, and whose condition might have been far better if he had actually been born blind.

(5.) There may be gorgeous robes of adorning, and yet real nakedness. With all the decorations that wealth can impart, there may be a nakedness of the soul as real as that of the body would be if, without a rag to cover it, it were exposed to cold, and storm, and shame. The soul, destitute of the robes of salvation, is in a worse condition than the body without raiment: for, how can it bear

the storms of wrath that shall beat upon it for ever, and the shame of its exposure in the last dread day?

{a} "I am rich" Hos 12:8

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 3 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire*. Pure gold; such as has been subjected to the action of heat to purify it from dross. **See Barnes on "1Pe 1:7"**.

Gold here is emblematic of religion—as being the most precious of the metals, and the most valued by men. They professed to be rich, but were not; and he counsels them to obtain from him that which would make them truly rich.

That thou mayest be rich. In the true and proper sense of the word. With true religion; with the favour and friendship of the Redeemer, they would have all that they really needed, and would never be in want.

And white raiment. The emblem of purity and salvation. **See Barnes "Re 3:4"**.

This is said in reference to the fact (Re 3:17) that they were then *naked*.

That thou mayest be clothed. With the garments of salvation. This refers, also, to true religion, meaning that that which the Redeemer furnishes will answer the same purpose in respect to the soul which clothing does in reference to the body. Of course, it cannot be understood literally, nor should the language be pressed too closely, as if there was too strict a resemblance.

And that *the shame of thy nakedness do not appear*. We clothe the body as well for decency as for protection against cold, and storm, and heat. The soul is to be clothed that the "shame" of its sinfulness may not be exhibited, and that it may not be offensive and repellent in the sight.

And anoint thine eyes with eye-salve. In allusion to the fact that they were *blind*, Re 3:17. The word *eye-salve*— *kollourion*—occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It is a diminutive from *kollura*—*collyra*—a coarse bread or cake, and means properly a small cake or cracknel. It is applied to eye-salve as resembling such a cake, and refers to a medicament prepared for sore or weak eyes. It was compounded of various substances supposed to have a healing quality. See Wetstein, *in loc*. The reference here is to a spiritual healing—meaning that, in respect to their spiritual vision, what he would furnish would produce the same effect as the collyrium or eye-salve would in diseased eyes. The idea is, that the grace of the gospel enables men who were before blind to see clearly the character of God, the beauty of the way of salvation, the loveliness of the person and work of Christ, etc. **See Barnes "Eph 1:18"**.

{a} "buy" Isa 55:1 {b} "nakedness" Re 16:15

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 3 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten*. Of course, only on the supposition that they deserve it. The meaning is, that it is a proof of love on his part, if his professed friends go astray, to recall them by admonitions and by trials. So a father calls back his children who are disobedient;

and there is no higher proof of his love than when, with great pain to himself, he administers such chastisement as shall save his child. See the sentiment here expressed fully explained. **See Barnes** "Heb 12:6, seq. The language is taken from Pr 3:12

Be zealous therefore, and repent. Be earnest, strenuous, ardent in your purpose to exercise true repentance, and to turn from the error of your ways. Lose no time; spare no labour, that you may obtain such a state of mind that it shall not be necessary to bring upon you the severe discipline which always comes on those who continue lukewarm in religion. The *truth* taught here is, that when the professed followers of Christ have become lukewarm in his service, they should lose no time in returning to him, and seeking his favour again. As sure as he has any true love for them, if this is not done, he will bring upon them some heavy calamity, alike to rebuke them for their errors, and to recover them to himself.

{c} "As many" Heb 12:5,6

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 3 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock*. Intimating that, though they had erred, the way of repentance and hope was not closed against them. He was still willing to be gracious, though their conduct had been such as to be loathsome, Re 3:16. To see the real force of this language, we must remember how disgusting and offensive their conduct had been to him. And yet he was willing, notwithstanding this, to receive them to his favour; nay more, he stood and pleaded with them that he might be received with the hospitality that would be shown to a friend or stranger. The *language* here is so plain that it scarcely needs explanation. It is taken from an act when we approach a dwelling, and, by a well-understood sign—*knocking*—announce our presence, and ask for admission. The act of *knocking* implies two things:

(a) that we desire admittance; and

(b) that we recognise the right of him who dwells in the house to open the door to us or not, as he shall please. We would not obtrude upon him; we would not force his door; and if, after we are sure that we are heard, we are not admitted, we turn quietly away. Both of these things are implied here by the language used by the Saviour when he approaches man as represented under the image of knocking at the door: that he *desires* to be admitted to our friendship; and that he recognises our *freedom* in the matter. He does not obtrude himself upon us, nor does he employ force to find admission to the heart. If admitted, he comes and dwells with us; if rejected, he turns quietly away—perhaps to return and knock again, perhaps never to come back. The language here used, also, may be understood as applicable to all persons, and to all the methods by which the Saviour seeks to come into the heart of a sinner. It would properly refer to anything which would announce his presence:—his word; his Spirit; the solemn events of his Providence; the invitations of his gospel. In these and in other methods he comes to man; and the manner in which these invitations ought to be estimated would be seen by supposing that he came to us personally and solicited our friendship, and proposed to be our Redeemer. It may be added here, that this expression proves that the attempt at reconciliation begins with the Saviour. It is not that the sinner goes out to meet him, or to seek for him; it is that the Saviour *presents himself* at the door of the heart as if he were desirous to enjoy the friendship of man. This is in accordance with the uniform language of the

New Testament, that "God so loved the world as to *give* his only-begotten Son;" that "Christ came to *seek* and to save the lost;" that the Saviour says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden," etc. Salvation, in the Scriptures, is never represented as originated by man.

If any man hear my voice. Perhaps referring to a custom then prevailing, that he who knocked spake, in order to let it be known who it was. This might be demanded in the night, (Lu 11:5) or when there was apprehension of danger, and it may have been the custom when John wrote. The language here, in accordance with the uniform usage in the Scriptures, (compare Isa 55:1 Joh 7:37; Re 22:17) is universal, and proves that the invitations of the gospel are made, and are *to be* made, not to a part only, but fully and freely to all men; for, although this originally had reference to the members of the church in Laodicea, yet the language chosen seems to have been of design so universal (*ean tiv*) as to be applicable to every human being; and any one, of any age and in any land, would be authorized to apply this to himself, and, under the protection of this invitation to come to the Saviour, and to plead this promise as one that fairly included himself. It may be observed farther, that this also recognises the freedom of man. It is submitted to him whether he will hear the voice of the Redeemer or not; and whether he will open the door and admit him or not. He speaks loud enough, and distinctly enough, to be heard, but he does not force the door if it is not voluntarily opened.

And open the door. As one would when a stranger or friend stood and knocked. The meaning here is simply, if any one will *admit* me; that is, receive me as a friend. The act of receiving him is as voluntary on our part as it is when we rise and open the door to one who knocks. It may be added,

(1.) that this is an *easy* thing. Nothing is more easy than to open the door when one knocks; and so everywhere in the Scriptures it is represented as an easy thing, if the heart is willing, to secure the salvation of the soul.

(2.) This is a *reasonable* thing. We invite him who knocks at the door to come in. We always assume, unless there is reason to suspect the contrary, that he applies for peaceful and friendly purposes. We deem it the height of rudeness to let one stand and knock long; or to let him go away with no friendly invitation to enter our dwelling. Yet how differently does the sinner treat the Saviour! How long does he suffer him to knock at the door of his heart, with no invitation to enter—no act of common civility such as that with which he would greet even a stranger! And with how much coolness and indifference does he see him turn away—perhaps to come back no more, and with no desire that he ever should return!

I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. This is an image denoting intimacy and friendship. Supper, with the ancients, was the principal social meal; and the idea here is, that between the Saviour and those who would receive him, there would be the intimacy which subsists between those who sit down to a friendly meal together. In all countries and times, to eat together, to break bread together, has been the symbol of friendship, and this the Saviour promises here. The *truths*, then, which are taught in this verse, are

(1) that the invitation of the gospel is made to all—"if *any* man hear my voice;"

(2) that the movement towards reconciliation and friendship is originated by the Saviour—"behold, I stand at the door and knock;"

(3) that there is a recognition of our own free agency in religion—"if any man will hear my voice, and open the door;"

(4) the *ease* of the terms of salvation, represented by "hearing his voice," and "opening the door;" and

(5) the blessedness of thus admitting him, arising from his friendship—"I will sup with him, and he with me." What friend can man have who would confer so many benefits on him as the Lord Jesus Christ? Who is there that he should so gladly welcome to his bosom?

{d} "knock" So 5:2 Lu 12:36

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 3 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *To him that overcometh*. **See Barnes on "Re 2:7".**

Will I grant to sit with me in my throne. That is, they will share his honours and his triumphs. **See Barnes on "Re 2:26-27"; See Barnes on "Ro 8:17".**

Even as I also overcame. As I gained a victory over the world, and over the power of the tempter. As the reward of this, he is exalted to the throne of the universe, (Php 2:6-11) and in these honours, achieved by their great and glorious Head, all the redeemed will share.

And am set down with my Father in his throne. **See Barnes "Php 2:6-11".**

That is, he has dominion over the universe. All things are put under his feet, and, in the strictest unison and with perfect harmony, he is united with the Father in administering the affairs of all worlds. The dominion of the Father is that of the Son—that of the Son is that of the Father; for they are one. **See Barnes** "Joh 5:19, **See Barnes** "Eph 1:20, seq, **See Barnes** "1Co 15:24,seq.

{b} "overcometh" Re 12:11 1Jo 5:4,5

{c} "sit" Lu 22:30 {d} "overcome" Re 2:17

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 3 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *He that hath an ear*, etc. **See Barnes "Re 2:7".**

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 4

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 4 - Verse 1

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER

THIS chapter properly commences the series of visions respecting future events, and introduces those remarkable symbolical descriptions which were designed to cheer the hearts of those to whom

the book was first sent, in their trials, and the hearts of all believers in all ages, with the assurance of the final triumph of the gospel. See the Introduction.

In regard to the nature of these visions, or the state of mind of the writer, there have been different opinions. Some have supposed that all that is described was made only to pass before the mind, with no visible representation; others, that there were visible representations so made to him that he could copy them; others, that all that is said or seen was only the production of the author's imagination. The latter is the view principally entertained by German writers on the book. All that would seem to be apparent on the face of the book—and that is all that we can judge by—is, that the following things occurred:

(1.) The writer was in a devout frame of mind—a state of holy contemplation—when the scenes were represented to him, Re 1:1-10.

(2.) The representations were supernatural; that is, they were something which was disclosed to him, in that state of mind, beyond ally natural reach of his faculties.

(3.) These things were so made to pass before him that they had the aspect of reality, and he could copy and describe them as real. It is not necessary to suppose that there was any representation to the bodily eye; but they had, to his mind, such a reality that he could describe them as pictures or symbols—and his office was limited to that. He does not attempt to explain them—nor does he intimate that he understood them; but his office pertains to an accurate record—a fair transcript—of what passed before his mind. For anything that appears, he may have been as ignorant of their signification as any of his readers, and may have subsequently studied them with the same kind of attention which We now give to them, (**See Barnes "1Pe 1:11"**) **See Barnes "1Pe 1:12"**

and may have, perhaps, remained ignorant of their signification to the day of his death. It is no more necessary to suppose that he understood all that was implied in these symbols, than it is that one who can describe a beautiful landscape understands all the laws of the plants and flowers in the landscape; or, that one who copies all the designs and devices of armorial bearings in heraldry should understand all that is meant by the symbols that are used; or, that one who should copy the cuneiform inscriptions of Persepolis, or the hieroglyphics of Thebes, should understand the meaning of the symbols. All that is demanded or expected, in such a case, is, that the copy should be accurately made; and, when made, this copy may be as much an object of study to him who made it as to any one else.

(4.) Yet there was a sense in which these symbols were real; that is, they were a real and proper delineation of future events. They were not the mere workings of the imagination. He who saw them in vision, though there may have been no representation to the eye, had before him what was a real and appropriate representation of coming events. If not, the visions are as worthless as dreams are.

The visions open (Re 4) with a Theophany, or a representation of God. John is permitted to look into heaven, and to have a view of the throne of God, and of the worship celebrated there. A door (*yura* or opening is made into heaven, so that he, as it were, looks through the concave above, and sees what is beyond, He sees the throne of God, and him who sits on the throne, and the worshippers there; he sees the lightnings play around the throne, and hears the thunder's roar; he sees the rainbow that encompasses the throne, and hears the songs of the worshippers. In reference to this vision, at the commencement of the series of symbols which he was about to describe, and the reason why this was vouchsafed to him, the following remarks may be suggested:

(1.) There is, in some respects, a striking resemblance between this and the visions of Isaiah (Isa 6 and Eze 1) As those prophets, when about to enter on their office, were solemnly inaugurated by being permitted to have a vision of the Almighty, so John was inaugurated to the office of making known future things—the last prophet of the world—by a similar vision. We shall see, indeed, that the representation made to John was not precisely the same as that which was made to Isaiah, or that which was made to Ezekiel; but the most striking symbols are retained, and that of John is as much adapted to impress the mind as either of the others. Each of them describes the throne, and the attending circumstances of sublimity and majesty; each of them speaks of one on the throne, but neither of them has attempted any description of the Almighty. There is no delineation of an image, or a figure representing God, but everything respecting him is veiled in such obscurity as to fill the mind with awe.

(2.) The representation is such as to produce deep solemnity on the mind of the writer and the reader. Nothing could have been better adapted to prepare the mind of John for the important communications which he was about to make than to be permitted to look, as it were, directly into heaven, and to see the throne of God. And nothing is better fitted to impress the mind of the reader than the view which is furnished, in the opening vision, of the majesty and glory of God. Brought, as it were, into his very presence; permitted to look upon his burning throne; seeing the reverent and profound worship of the inhabitants of heaven, we feel our minds awed, and our souls subdued, as we hear the God of heaven speak, and as we see seal after seal opened, and hear trumpet after trumpet utter its voice.

(3.) The form of the manifestation—the opening vision—is eminently fitted to show us that the communications in this book proceed from heaven. Looking into heaven, and seeing the vision of the Almighty, we are prepared to feel that what follows has a higher than any human origin; that it has come direct from the throne of God. And,

(4.) there was a propriety that the visions should open with a manifestation of the throne of God in heaven, or with a vision of heaven, because that also is the termination of the whole; it is that to which all the visions in the book tend. It begins in heaven, as seen by the exile in Patmos; it terminates in heaven, when all enemies of the church are subdued, and the redeemed reign triumphant in glory.

The substance of the introductory vision in this chapter can be stated in few words:

(a) A door is opened, and John is permitted to look into heaven, and to see what is passing there, Re 4:1,2.

(b) The first thing that strikes him is a throne, with one sitting on the throne, Re 4:2.

(c) The appearance of him who sits upon the throne is described, Re 4:3. He is "like a jasper and a sardine stone." There is no attempt to portray his form; there is no description from which an image could be formed that could become an object of idolatrous worship—for who would undertake to chisel anything so indefinite as that which is merely "like a jasper or a sardine stone?" And yet the description is distinct enough to fill the mind with emotions of awe and sublimity, and to leave the impression that he who sat on the throne was a pure and holy God.

(d) Round about the throne there was a bright rainbowen symbol of peace, Re 4:3.

(e) Around the throne are gathered the elders of the church, having on their heads crowns of gold: symbols of the ultimate triumph of the church, Re 4:4.

(f) Thunder and lightning, as at Sinai, announce the presence of God, and seven burning lamps before the throne represent the Spirit of God, in his diversified operations, as going forth through the world to enlighten, sanctify, and save, Re 4:5.

(g) Before the throne there is a pellucid pavement, as of crystal, spread out like a sea: emblem of calmness, majesty, peace, and wide dominion, Re 4:6.

(h) The throne is supported by four living creatures, full of eyes: emblems of the all-seeing power of Him that sits upon the throne, and of his ever-watchful providence, Re 4:6.

(i) To each one of these living creatures there is a peculiar symbolic face: respectively emblematic of the authority, the power, the wisdom of God, and of the rapidity with which the purposes of Providence are executed, Re 4:7. All are furnished with wings; emblematic of their readiness to do the will of God, (Re 4:8,) but each one individually with a peculiar form.

(j) All these creatures pay ceaseless homage to God, whose throne they are represented as supporting: emblematic of the fact that all the operations of the Divine government do, in fact, promote his glory, and, as it were, render him praise, Re 4:8,9.

(k) To this the eiders, the representatives of the church, respond: representing the fact that the church acquiesces in all the arrangements of Providence, and in the execution of all the Divine purposes, and finds in them all ground for adoration and thanksgiving, Re 4:10,11.

Verse 1. *After this*. Gr., "after these things;" that is, after what he had seen, and after what he had been directed to record in the preceding chapters, How long after these things this occurred, he does not say—whether on the same day, or at some subsequent time; and conjecture would be useless. The *scene*, however, is changed. Instead of seeing the Saviour standing before him, (chapter 1) the scene is transferred to heaven, and he is permitted to look in upon the throne of God, and upon the worshippers there.

I looked. Gr., *I saw—eidon*. Our word *look* would rather indicate *purpose* or *intention*, as if he had *designedly* directed his attention to heaven, to see what could be discovered there. The meaning, however, is simply that he saw a new vision, without intimating whether there was any *design* on his part, and without saying how his thoughts came to be directed to heaven.

A door was opened. That is, there was apparently an opening in the sky, like a door, so that he could look into heaven.

In heaven. Or, rather, in the expanse above—in the visible heavens as they appear to spread out over the earth. So Eze 1:1, "The heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God." The Hebrews spoke of the sky above as a solid expanse; or as a curtain stretched out; or as an extended arch above the earth—describing it as it *appears* to the eye. In that expanse, or arch, the stars are set at gems, (**See Barnes on "Isa 34:4"**) through apertures or windows in that expanse the rain comes down, Ge 7:11; and that is opened when a heavenly messenger comes down to the earth, Mt 3:16. Compare Lu 3:21 Ac 7:56, 10:11.

Of course, all this is figurative, but it is such language as all men naturally use. The simple meaning here is, that John had a vision of what is in heaven *as if* there had been such an opening made through the sky, and he had been permitted to look into the world above.

And the first voice which I heard. That is, the first sound which he heard was a command to come up and see the glories of that world. He afterwards heard other sounds—the sounds of praise; but the first notes that fell on his ear were a direction to come up there and to receive a revelation respecting future things. This does not seem to me to mean, as Professor Stuart, Lord, and others suppose, that he now recognised the voice which had *first*, or formerly spoken to him, (Re 1:10)

but that this was the *first* in contradistinction from other voices which he afterwards heard. It resembled the former "voice" in this that it was "like the sound of a trumpet," but besides that there does not seem to have been anything that would suggest to him that it came from the same source. It is certainly possible that the Greek would admit of that interpretation, but it is not the most obvious or probable.

Was as it were of a trumpet. It resembled the sound of a trumpet, Re 1:10.

Talking with me. As of a trumpet that seemed to speak directly to me.

Which said. That is, the voice said.

Come up hither. To the place whence the voice seemed to proceed—heaven.

And I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. Gr., "after these things." The reference is to future events; and the meaning is, that there would be disclosed to him events that were to occur at some future period. There is no intimation here *when* they would occur, or what would be embraced in the period referred to. All that the words would properly convey would be, that there would be a disclosure of things that were to occur in some future time.

{a} "voice" Re 1:10 {b} "come up" Re 11:12

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 4 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And immediately I was in the Spirit*. **See Barnes "Re 1:10"**.

He does not affirm that he was caught up into heaven, nor does he say what impression was on his own mind, if any, as to the place where he was; but he was at once absorbed in the contemplation of the visions before him. He was doubtless still in Patmos, and these things were made to pass before his mind as a reality; that is, they appeared as real to him as if he saw them, and they were in fact a real symbolical representation of things occurring in heaven.

And, behold, a throne was set in heaven. That is, a throne was *placed* there. The first thing that arrested his attention was a throne. This was "in heaven"—an expression which proves that the scene of the vision was not the temple in Jerusalem, as some have supposed. There is no allusion to the temple, and no imagery drawn from the temple. Isaiah had his vision (Isaiah 6) in the holy of holies of the temple; Ezekiel, (Eze 1:1)by the river Chebar; but John looked directly into heaven, and saw the throne of God, and the encircling worshippers there.

And one *sat on the throne*. It is remarkable that John gives no description of him who sat on the throne, nor does he indicate who he was by name. Neither do Isaiah or Ezekiel attempt to describe the appearance of the Deity, nor are there any intimations of that appearance given from which a picture or an image could be formed. So much do their representations accord with what is demanded by correct taste; and so sedulously have they guarded against any encouragement of idolatry.

{a} "in the spirit" Re 17:3 21:10; Eze 3:12-14

{b} "throne" Isa 6:1 Jer 17:12; Eze 1:26,28

{c} "sat" Da 7:9 Heb 8:1

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 4 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And he that sat was to look upon*. Was in appearance; or, as I looked upon him, this seemed to be his appearance. He does not describe his form, but his splendour.

Like a jasper—iaspidi. The jasper, properly, is "an opaque, impure variety of quartz, of red, yellow, and also of some dull colours, breaking with a smooth surface. It admits of a high polish, and is used for vases, seals, snuff-boxes, etc. When the colours are in stripes or bands, it is called *striped jasper*."— *Dana, in Webster's Dic*. The *colour* here is not designated, whether red or yellow. As the red was, however, the common colour worn by princes, it is probable that that was the colour that appeared, and that John means to say that he appeared like a prince in his royal robes. Compare Isa 6:1.

And a sardine stone—sardiw. This denotes a precious stone of a blood-red, or sometimes of a flesh-colour, more commonly known by the name of *carnelian.—Rob. Lex*. Thus it corresponds with the jasper, and this is only an additional circumstance to convey the exact idea in the mind of John, that the appearance of him who sat on the throne was that of a prince in his scarlet robes. This is all the description which he gives of his appearance; and this is

(a) entirely appropriate, as it suggests the idea of a prince or a monarch; and

(b) it is well adapted to impress the mind with a sense of the majesty of Him who cannot be described, and of whom no image should be attempted. Compare De 4:12: "Ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude."

And there was a rainbow round about the throne. This is a beautiful image, and was probably designed to be emblematical as well as beautiful. The previous representation is that of majesty and splendour; this is adapted to temper the majesty of the representation. The rainbow has always, from its own nature, and from its associations, been an emblem of peace. It appears on the cloud as the storm passes away. It contrasts beautifully with the tempest that has just been raging. It is seen as the rays of the sun again appear clothing all things with beauty—the more beautiful from the fact that the storm has come, and that the rain has fallen. If the rain has been gentle, nature smiles serenely, and the leaves and flowers refreshed appear clothed with new beauty; if the storm has raged violently, the appearance of the rainbow is a pledge that the war of the elements has ceased, and that God smiles again upon the earth. It reminds us, too, of the "covenant" when God did "set his bow in the cloud," and solemnly promised that the earth should no more be destroyed by a flood, Ge 9:9-16. The appearance of the rainbow, therefore, around the throne, was a beautiful emblem of the mercy of God, and of the peace that was to pervade the world as the result of the events that were to be disclosed to the vision of John. True, there were lightnings and thunderings and voices, but there the bow abode calmly above them all, assuring him that there was to be mercy and peace.

In sight like unto an emerald. The emerald is green, and this colour so predominated in the bow that it seemed to be made of this species of precious stone. The modified and mild colour of green appears to every one to predominate in the rainbow. Ezekiel (Eze 1:28) has introduced the image of the rainbow also in his description of the vision that appeared to him, though not as calmly encircling the throne, but as descriptive of the general appearance of the scene. "As is the appearance of the bow that is on the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about." Milton also has introduced it, but it is also as a part of the colouring of the throne:—

"Over their heads a crystal firmament,

Whereon a sapphire throne, inlaid with pure
Amber, and colours of the showery arch."
Paradise Lost, b. vii

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 4 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And round about the throne* were *four and twenty seats*. Or rather *thrones—yronoi*—the same word being used as that which is rendered *throne—yronov*. The word, indeed, properly denotes *a seat*, but it came to be employed to denote particularly the seat on which a monarch sat, and is properly translated thus in Re 4:2-3. So it is rendered in Mt 5:34 19:28, 23:22 25:31; Lu 1:32; and uniformly elsewhere in the New Testament, (fifty-three places in all,) except in Lu 1:52 Re 2:13, 4:4 11:16, 16:10

where it is rendered *seat* and *seats*. It should have been rendered *thrones* here, and is so translated by Professor Stuart. Coverdale and Tyndale render the word *seat* in each place in verses 2-5. It was undoubtedly the design of the writer to represent those who sat on those seats as, in some sense, *kings*— for they have on their heads crowns of gold—and that idea should have been retained in the translation of this word.

And upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting. Very various opinions have been entertained in respect to those who thus appeared sitting around the throne, and to the question why the number twenty-four is mentioned. Instead of examining those opinions at length, it will be better to present, in a summary manner, what seems to be probable in regard to the intended reference. The following points, then, would appear to embrace all that can be known on this subject:

(1.) These elders have a regal character, or are of a kingly order. This is apparent

(a) because they are represented as sitting on "thrones," and

(b) because they have on their heads "crowns of gold."

(2.) They are emblematic. They are designed to symbolize or represent some class of persons. This is clear

(a) because it cannot be supposed that so small a number would compose the whole of those who are in fact around the throne of God, and

(b) because there are *other* symbols there designed to represent something pertaining to the homage rendered to God, as the four living creatures and the angels, and this supposition is necessary in order to complete the symmetry and harmony of the representation.

(3.) They are human beings, and are designed to have some relation to the race of man, and somehow to connect the human race with the worship of heaven. The four living creatures have another design; the angels (chapter 5) have another; but these are manifestly of our race—persons from this world before the throne.

(4.) They are designed in some way to be symbolic of the church as redeemed. Thus they say, (Re 5:9) "Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood."

(5.) They are designed to represent the *whole* church in every land and every age of the world. Thus they say, (Re 5:9) "Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, *out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation*." This shows, further, that the whole representation is emblematic;

for otherwise in so small a number— twenty-four—there could not be a representation out of every nation.

(6.) They represent the church triumphant; the church victorious. Thus they have crowns on their heads; they have harps in their hands, (Re 5:8) they say that they are "kings and priests," and that they will "reign on the earth," Re 5:10.

(7.) The design, therefore, is to represent the church triumphant— redeemed—saved—as rendering praise and honour to God; as uniting with the hosts of heaven in adoring him for his perfections and for the wonders of his grace. As representatives of the church, they are admitted near to him; they encircle his throne; they appear victorious over every foe; and they come, in unison with the living creatures, and the angels, and the whole universe, (Re 5:13) to ascribe powers and dominion to God.

(8.) As to the reason why the number "twenty-four" is mentioned, perhaps nothing certain can be determined. Ezekiel, in his vision, (Eze 8:16 11:1) saw twenty-five men between the porch and the altar, with their backs toward the temple, and their faces toward the earth—supposed to be representations of the twenty-four "courses" into which the body of priests was divided, (1Ch 24:3-19) with the high priest among them, making up the number twenty-five. It is *possible* that John in this vision may have designed to refer to the church considered *as* a priesthood, (**See Barnes on "1Pe 2:9"**) and to have alluded to the fact that the priesthood under the Jewish economy was divided into twenty-four courses, each with a presiding officer, and who was a representative of that portion of the priesthood over which he presided. If so, then the ideas which enter into the representation are these:

(a.) that the whole church may be represented as a priesthood, or a community of priests—an idea which frequently occurs in the New Testament.

(b.) That the church, as such a community of priests, is employed in the praise and worship of God—an idea, also, which finds abundant countenance in the New Testament.

(c.) That, in a series of visions having a designed reference to the church, it was natural to introduce some symbol or emblem representing the church, and representing the fact that this is its office and employment. And

(d.) that this would be well expressed by an allusion derived from the ancient dispensation—the division of the priesthood into classes, over each one of which there presided an individual who might be considered as the representative of his class. It is to be observed, indeed, that in *one* respect they are represented as "kings," but still this does not forbid the supposition that there might have been intermingled also *another* idea, that they were also "priests." Thus the two ideas are blended by these same elders in Re 5:10: "And hath made us unto our God *kings* and *priests*." Thus understood, the vision is designed to denote the fact that the representatives of the church, ultimately to be triumphant, are properly engaged in ascribing praise to God. The word *elders* here seems to be used in the sense of aged and venerable men, rather than as denoting office. They were such as by their *age* were qualified to preside over the different divisions of the priesthood.

Clothed in white raiment. Emblem of purity, and appropriate therefore to the representatives of the sanctified church. Compare Re 3:4 6:11, 7:9.

And they had on their heads crowns of gold. Emblematic of the fact that they sustained a kingly office. There was blended in the representation the idea that they were both "kings and priests." Thus the idea is expressed by Peter, (1Pe 2:9) "*a royal priesthood*" —*basileion ierateuma*.

{d} "four and twenty" Re 11:16 {e} "white raiment" Re 3:4,5 {f} "crowns" Re 4:10

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 4 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices*. Expressive of the majesty and glory of Him that sat upon it. We are at once reminded by this representation of the sublime scene that occurred at Sinai, (Ex 19:6) where "there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud." Compare Eze 1:13,24. So Milton-

"Forth rushed with whirlwind sound
The chariot of Paternal Deity,
Flashing thick flames."

"And from about him fierce effusion rolled
Of smoke, and lightning flame, and sparkles dire."

Paradise Lost. b. vi

The word "*voices*" here connected with "*thunders*" perhaps means "voices even thunders "—referring to the sound made by the thunder. The meaning is, that these were echoing and re-echoing sounds, as it were a multitude of voices that seemed to speak on every side.

And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne. Seven burning lamps that constantly shone there, illuminating the whole scene. These steadily burning lamps would add much to the beauty of the vision.

Which are the seven Spirits of God. Which represent, or are emblematic of, the seven Spirits of God. On the meaning of the phrase, "the seven Spirits of God," **See Barnes "Re 1:4"**.

If these lamps are designed to be symbols of the Holy Spirit, according to the interpretation proposed in Re 1:4, it may be perhaps in the following respects:

(1.) They may represent the manifold influences of that Spirit in the world—as imparting light; giving consolation; creating the heart anew; sanctifying the soul, etc. They may denote that all the operations of that Spirit are of the nature of *light*, dissipating darkness, and vivifying and animating all things.

(2.) *Perhaps* their being placed here before the throne, in the midst of thunder and lightning, may be designed to represent the idea that amidst all the scenes of magnificence and grandeur; all the storms, agitations, and tempests on the earth; all the political changes, all the convulsions of empire under the providence of God, and all the commotions in the soul of man, produced by the thunders of the law, the Spirit of God beams calmly and serenely—shedding a steady influence over all—like lamps burning in the very midst of lightnings, and thunderings, and voices. In all the scenes of majesty and commotion that occur on the earth, the Spirit of God is present, shedding a constant light, and undisturbed in his influence by all the agitations that are abroad.

{a} "lightnings" Re 8:5 16:18 {b} "seven lamps" Ge 15:17 Ex 37:23; Zec 4:2

{c} "seven spirits" Re 1:4

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 4 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *And before the throne* there was *a sea of glass*. An expanse spread out like a sea composed of glass: that is, that was pellucid and transparent like glass. It is not uncommon to compare the sea with glass. See numerous examples in Wetstein, *in loc*. The point of the comparison here seems to be its transparent appearance. It was perfectly clear—apparently stretching out in a wide expanse, as if it were a *sea*.

Like unto crystal. The word *crystal* means properly anything congealed and pellucid—as ice; then anything resembling that, particularly a certain species of stone distinguished for its clearness-as the transparent crystals of quartz; limpid and colourless quartz; rock or mountain quartz. The word *crystal* now, in mineralogy, means an inorganic body which, by the operation of affinity, has assumed the form of a regular solid, by a certain number of plane and smooth faces. It is here used manifestly in its popular sense to denote anything that is perfectly clear like ice. The comparison, in the representation of the expanse spread around the throne, turns on these points:

(1.) It appeared like a sea—stretching afar.

(2.) It resembled, in its general appearance, glass; and this idea is strengthened by the addition of another image of the same character —that it was like an expanse of crystal, perfectly clear and pellucid. This would seem to be designed to represent the floor or pavement on which the throne stood. If *this* is intended to be emblematical, it *may* denote

(a) that the empire of God is vast—as if it were spread out like the sea; or

(b) it may be emblematic of the *calmness*, the *placidity* of the Divine administration—like an undisturbed and unruffled ocean of glass. Perhaps, however, we should not press such circumstances too far to find a symbolical meaning.

And in the midst of the throne. *en mesw tou yronou*. Not occupying the throne, but so as to appear to be intermingled with the throne, or "in the midst" of it, in the sense that it was beneath the centre of it. The meaning would seem to be, that the four living creatures referred to occupied such a position collectively that they at the same time appeared to be *under* the throne, so that it rested on them, and *around* it, so that they could be seen from any quarter. This would occur if their bodies were under the throne, and if they stood so that they faced outward. To one approaching the throne they would seem to be *around* it, though their bodies were *under*, or "in the midst" of it as a support. The form of their bodies is not specified, but it is not improbable that though their *heads* were different, their *bodies*, that were under the throne, and that sustained it, were of the same form.

And round about the throne. In the sense above explained—that, as they stood, they would be seen on every side of the throne.

Were *four beasts*. This is a very unhappy translation, as the word *beasts* by no means conveys a correct idea of the original word. The Greek word (*zwon*) means properly *a living thing*—and it is thus indeed applied to animals, or to the living creation; but the notion of their being *living things*, or *living creatures*, should be retained in the translation. Professor Stuart renders it, "living creatures." Isaiah, (chapter 6) in his vision of Jehovah, saw two Seraphim; Ezekiel, whom John more nearly resembles in his description, saw four "living creatures"—

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(Eze 1:5)—that is, living, animated, moving beings. The words "living beings" would better convey the idea than any other which could be employed. They are evidently, like those which Ezekiel saw, symbolical beings; but the nature and purpose of the symbol is not perfectly apparent, The "four and twenty elders" are evidently human beings, and are representatives, as above explained,

of the church. In Re 5:11, angels are themselves introduced as taking an important part in the worship of heaven; and these living beings, therefore, cannot be designed to represent either angels or men. In Ezekiel, they are either designed as poetic representations of the majesty of God, or of his providential government, showing what *sustains* his throne: symbols denoting intelligence, vigilance, the rapidity and directness with which the Divine commands are executed, and the energy and firmness with which the government of God is administered. The nature of the case, and the similarity to the representation in Ezekiel, would lead us to suppose that the same idea is to be found substantially in John; and there would be no difficulty in such an interpretation, were it not that these "living creatures" are apparently represented in Re 5:8-9, as uniting with the redeemed from the earth in such a manner as to imply that they were themselves redeemed. But perhaps the language in Re 5:9, "And *they* sung a new song," etc., though apparently connected with the "four beasts" in Re 4:8, is not designed to be so connected. John may intend there merely to advert to the fact that a new song was sung, without meaning to say that the "four living beings" *united* in that song. For, if he designed merely to say that the "four living beings" and the "four and twenty elders" fell down to worship, and then that a song was heard, though in fact sung only by the four and twenty elders, he might have employed the language which he actually has done. If this interpretation be admitted, then the most natural explanation to be given of the "four living beings" is to suppose that they are symbolical beings designed to furnish some representation of the government of God—to illustrate, as it were, that on which the Divine government *rests*, or which constitutes its support—to wit, power, intelligence, vigilance, energy. This is apparent

(a) because it was not unusual for the thrones of monarchs to be supported by carved animals of various forms, which were designed undoubtedly to be somehow emblematic of government—either of its stability, vigilance, boldness, or firmness. Thus Solomon had twelve lions carved on each side of his throne—no improper emblems of government—1Ki 10:19-20.

(b) These living beings are described as the *supports* of the throne of God, or as that on which it rests, and would be, therefore, no improper symbols of the great principles or truths which give support or stability to the Divine administration.

(c) They are, in themselves, well adapted to be representatives of the great principles of the Divine government, or of the Divine providential dealings, as we shall see in the more particular explanation of the symbol.

(d) Perhaps it might be added, that, so understood, there would be *completeness* in the vision. The "elders" appear there as representatives of the church redeemed; the angels in their own proper persons render praise to God. To this it was not improper to add, and the completeness of the representation seems to make it necessary to add, that all the doings of the Almighty unite in his praise; his various acts in the government of the universe harmonize with redeemed and unfallen intelligences in proclaiming his glory. The vision of the "living beings," therefore, is not, as I suppose, a representation of the *attributes* of God as such, but an emblematic representation of the Divine government—of the throne of Deity resting upon, or sustained by, those things of which these living beings are emblems—intelligence, firmness, energy, etc. This supposition seems to combine more probabilities than any other which has been proposed; for, according to this supposition, all the acts, and ways, and creatures of God unite in his praise. It is proper to add, however, that expositors are by no means agreed as to the design of this representation. Professor Stuart supposes that the attributes of God are referred to; Mr. Elliott, (i. 93,) that the "twenty-four elders and the four living creatures symbolize the church, or the collective body of the saints of

God; and that as there are two grand divisions of the church, the larger one that *of the departed in Paradise*, and the other that *militant on earth*, the former is depicted by the twenty-four elders, and the latter by the living creatures;" Mr. Lord, (pp. 53, 54,) that the living creatures and the elders are both of one race: the former perhaps denoting those like Enoch and Elijah, who were translated, and those who were raised by the Saviour after his resurrection, or those who have been raised to special eminence—the latter the mass of the redeemed; Mr. Mede, that the living creatures are symbols of the church worshipping on earth; Mr. Daubuz, that they are symbols of the ministers of the church on earth; Vitringa, that they are symbols of eminent ministers and teachers in every age; Dr. Hammond regards him who sits on the throne as the metropolitan bishop of Judaea, the representative of God, the elders as diocesan bishops of Judaea, and the living creatures as four apostles, symbols of the saints who are to attend the Almighty as assessors in judgment! See Lord on the Apocalypse, pp. 58, 59.

Full of eyes. Denoting omniscience. The ancients fabled Argus as having one hundred eyes, or as having the power of seeing in any direction. The emblem here would denote an ever-watchful and observing Providence; and in accordance with the explanation proposed above, it means that, in the administration of the Divine government, everything is distinctly contemplated; nothing escapes observation; nothing can be concealed. It is obvious that the Divine government could not be administered unless this were so; and it is the perfection of the government of God that all things are seen just as they are. In the vision seen by Ezekiel, (Eze 1:18) the "rings" of the wheels on which the living creatures moved are represented as "full of eyes round about them," emblematic of the same thing. So Milton—

"As with stars their bodies all,
And wings were set with eyes; with eyes the wheels
Of beryl, and careening fires between."

Before. In front. As one looked on their faces, from whatever quarter the throne was approached, he could see a multitude of eyes looking upon him.

And behind. On the parts of their bodies which were under the throne. The meaning is, that there is universal vigilance in the government of God. Whatever is the form of the Divine administration; whatever part is contemplated; however it is manifested—whether as activity, energy, power, or intelligence—it is based on the fact that *all things are seen from every direction*. There is nothing that is the result of blind fate or of chance.

{d} "sea" Re 15:2 {e} "four beasts" Eze 1:5 10:14

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 4 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *And the first beast* was *like a lion*. A *general* description has been given, applicable to all, denoting that in whatever form the Divine government is administered, *these things* will be found; a particular description now follows, contemplating that government under particular aspects, as symbolized by the living beings on which the throne rests. The first is that of a lion. The lion is the monarch of the woods, the king of beasts, and he becomes thus the emblem of dominion, of authority, of government in general. Compare Ge 49:9 Am 3:8; Joe 3:16 Da 7:4.

As emblematic of the Divine administration, this would signify that He who sits on the throne is the ruler over all, and that his dominion is absolute and entire. It has been made a question whether the *whole* body had the form of a lion, or whether it had the appearance of a lion only as to its face or front part. It would seem probable that the latter only is intended, for it is expressly said of the "third beast" that it had "the *face* of a man," implying that it did not resemble a man in other respects; and it is probable that, as these living creatures were the supports of the throne, they had the same form in all other particulars except the front part. The writer has not informed us what was the appearance of these living creatures in other respects, but it is most natural to suppose that it was in the form of an ox, as being adapted to sustain a burden. It is hardly necessary to say that the *thing* supposed to be symbolical here in the government of God—his absolute rule—actually exists, or that it is important that this should be fairly exhibited to men.

And the second beast was like a calf. or, more properly, a young bullock, for so the word (*moscov*) means. The term is given by Herodotus (ii. 41; iii. 28) to the Egyptian god Apis, that is, a young bullock. Such an emblem, standing under a throne as one of its supports, would symbolize firmness, endurance, strength, (compare Pr 14:4) and, as used to represent qualities pertaining to him who sat on the throne, would denote stability, firmness, perseverance: qualities that are found abundantly in the Divine administration. There was clearly, in the apprehension of the ancients, some natural fitness or propriety in such an emblem. A young bullock was worshipped in Egypt as a god. Jeroboam set up two idols in the form of a calf, the one in Dan and the other in Bethel, 1Ki 12:28-29. A similar object of worship was found in the Indian, Greek, and Scandinavian mythologies, and the image appears to have been adopted early and extensively to represent the divinity. A description of a calf-idol from the collection made by the artists of the French Institute at Cairo:

It is recumbent, with human eyes, the skin flesh-coloured, and the whole afterparts covered with a white and sky-blue drapery: the horns not on the head, but above it, and containing within them the symbolical globe surmounted by two feathers.

For some cause, the calf was regarded as an emblem of the divinity. It may illustrate this, also, to remark that among the sculptures found by Mr. Layard, in the ruins of Nineveh, were not a few winged bulls, some of them of large structure, and probably all of them emblematic. One of these was removed with great difficulty, to be deposited in the British Museum. See Mr. Layard's "Nineveh and its Remains," vol. 2 pp. 64—75. Such emblems were common in the East; and, being thus common, they would be readily understood in the time of John.

And the third beast had a face as a man. There is no intimation as to what was the form of the remaining portion of this living creature; but as the beasts were "in the midst of the throne," that is, under it as a support, it may be presumed that they had such a form as was adapted to that purpose—as supposed above, perhaps the form of an ox. To this living creature there was attached the head of a man, and *that* would be what would be particularly visible to one looking on the throne. The aspect of a *man* here would denote intelligence—for it is this which distinguishes man from the creation beneath him; and, if the explanation of the symbol above given be correct, then the meaning of this emblem is, that the operations of the government of God are conducted with intelligence and wisdom. That is, the Divine administration is not the result of blind fate or chance; it is founded on a clear knowledge of things, on what is best to be done, on what will most conduce to the common good. Of the *truth* of this there can be no doubt; and there was a propriety that in a vision designed to give to man a view of the government of the Almighty, this should be

appropriately symbolized. It may illustrate this to observe, that in ancient sculptures it was common to unite the head of a man with the figure of an animal, as *combining* symbols. Among the most remarkable figures discovered by Mr. Layard, in the ruins of Nineveh, were winged, human-headed lions. These lions are thus described by Mr. Layard:—"They were about twelve feet in height, and the same number in length. The body and limbs were admirably portrayed; the muscles and bones, although strongly developed, to display the strength of the animal, showed, at the same time, a correct knowledge of its anatomy and form. Expanded wings sprung from the shoulder and spread over the back; a knotted girdle, ending in tassels, encircled the loins. These sculptures, forming an entrance, were partly in full, and partly in relief. The head and forepart, facing the chambers, were in full; but only one side of the rest of the slab was sculptured, the back being placed against the wall of sun-dried bricks."—*Nineveh and its Remains*, vol. i. p. 75. The *head*, indicating intelligence, and the *wings* denoting rapidity. On the use of these figures, found in the ruins of Nineveh, Mr. Layard makes the following sensible remarks—remarks admirably illustrating the view which I take of the symbols before us: "I used to contemplate for hours these mysterious emblems, and muse over their intent and history. What more noble forms could have ushered the people into the temple of their gods? What more sublime images could have been borrowed from nature by men who sought, unaided by the light of revealed religion, to embody their conceptions of the wisdom, power, and ubiquity of a Supreme Being? They could find no better type of intellect and knowledge than the head of a man; of strength, than the body of the lion; of rapidity of motion, than the wings of a bird. These winged, human-headed lions were not idle creations, the offspring of mere fancy; their meaning was written upon them. They had awed and instructed races which flourished 3000 years ago. Through the portals which they guarded, kings, priests, and warriors had borne sacrifices to their altars, long before the wisdom of the East had penetrated into Greece, and had furnished its mythology with symbols long recognised by the Assyrian votaries."— *Nineveh and its Remains*, i. 75, 76.

And the fourth beast was *like a flying eagle*. All birds, indeed, fly; but the epithet *flying* is here employed to add intensity to the description. The eagle, is distinguished, among the feathered race, for the rapidity, the power, and the elevation of its flight. No other bird is supposed to fly so high; none ascends with so much power; none is so majestic and grand in his ascent towards the sun. That which would be properly symbolized by this would be the rapidity with which the commands of God are executed; or this characteristic of the Divine government, that the purposes of God are carried into prompt execution. There is, as it were, a vigorous, powerful, and rapid flight towards the accomplishment of the designs of God—as the eagle ascends unmolested towards the sun. Or, it *may* be that this symbolizes protecting care, or is an emblem of that protection which God, by his providence, extends over those who put their trust in him. Thus in Ex 19:4: "Ye have seen how I bare you on eagles' wings." Ps 17:8: "Hide me under the shadow of thy wings." Ps 63:7: "In the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice." De 32:11-12: "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him," etc. As in the case of the other living beings, so it is to be remarked of the fourth living creature also, that the form of the *body* is unknown. There is no impropriety in supposing that it is only its front aspect that John here speaks of, for that was sufficient for the symbol. The remaining portion "in the midst of the throne" may have corresponded with that of the other living beings, as being adapted to a support. In further illustration of this it may be remarked, that symbols of this description were common in the Oriental world. Figures in the human form, or in the form

of animals, with the head of an eagle or a vulture, are found in the ruins of Nineveh, and were undoubtedly designed to be symbolic. "On the earliest Assyrian monuments," says Mr. Layard, (*Nineveh and its Remains*, ii. 348, 349,) "one of the most prominent sacred types is the eagle-headed, or the vulture- headed, human figure. Not only is it found in colossal proportions on the walls, or guarding the portals of the chambers, but it is also constantly represented in the groups on the embroidered robes. When thus introduced, it is generally seen contending with other mythic animals—such as the human-headed lion or bull; and in these contests it is always the conqueror. It may hence be inferred that it was a type of the Supreme Deity, or of one of his principal attributes. A fragment of the Zoroastrian oracles, preserved by Eusebius, declares that 'God is he that has *the head of a hawk*. He is the first, indestructible, eternal, unbegotten, indivisible, dissimilar; the dispenser of all good; incorruptible; the best of the good, the wisest of the wise; he is the father of equity and justice, self-taught, physical and perfect, and wise, and the only inventor of the sacred philosophy." Sometimes the head of this bird is added to the body of a lion. Under this form of the Egyptian hieraco-sphinx it is the conqueror in combats with other symbolical figures, and is frequently represented as striking down a gazelle or wild goat. It also clearly resembles the gryphon of the Greek mythology, avowedly an eastern symbol, and connected with Apollo, or with the sun, of which the Assyrian form was probably an emblem." If these views of the meaning of these symbols are correct, then the idea which would be conveyed to the mind of John, and the idea, therefore, which should be conveyed to our minds, is, that the government of God is energetic, firm, intelligent, and that in the execution of its purposes it is *rapid* like the unobstructed flight of an eagle, or *protective* like the care of the eagle for its young. When, in the subsequent parts of the vision, these living creatures are represented as offering praise and adoration to Him that sits on the throne, (Re 4:8 5:8,14) the meaning would be, in accordance with this representation, that all the acts of Divine government do, as if they were personified, unite in the praise which the redeemed and the angels ascribe to God. All living things, and all acts of the Almighty, conspire to proclaim his glory. The church, by her representatives, the "four and twenty elders," honours God; the angels, without number, unite in the praise; all creatures in heaven, in earth, under the earth, and in the sea, (Re 5:13) join in the song; and all the acts and ways of God declare also his majesty and glory: for around his throne, and beneath his throne, are expressive symbols of the firmness, energy, intelligence, and power with which his government is administered.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 4 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *And the four beasts had each of them six wings about* him. An emblem common to them all, denoting that, in reference to each and all the things here symbolized, there was one common characteristic —that in heaven there is the utmost promptness in executing the Divine commands. Compare Isa 6:2 Ps 18:10, 104:3 Jer 48:40.

No mention is made of the manner in which these wings were arranged, and conjecture in regard to that is vain. The Seraphim, as seen by Isaiah, had each one six wings, with two of which the face was covered, to denote profound reverence; with two the feet, or lower parts— emblematic of modesty; and with two they flew—emblematic of their celerity in executing the commands of God, Isa 6:2. Perhaps without impropriety we may suppose that, in regard to these living beings seen by

John, two of the wings of each were employed, as in Isaiah, to cover the face—token of profound reverence; and that the remainder were employed in flight—denoting the rapidity with which the Divine commands are executed. Mercury, the messenger of Jupiter among the heathen, was represented with wings, and nothing is more common in the paintings and *bas-reliefs* of antiquity than such representations.

And they were *full of eyes within*. Professor Stuart more correctly renders this, "around and within are full of eyes;" connecting the word "around" ["about"], not with the *wings*, as in our version, but with the *eyes*. The meaning is, that the portions of the beasts that were visible from the outside of the throne, and the portions under or within the throne, were covered with eyes. The obvious design of this is to mark the universal vigilance of Divine Providence.

And they rest not. Marg., *have no rest*. That is, they are constantly employed; there is no intermission. The meaning, as above explained, is, that the works and ways of God are constantly bringing praise to him.

Day and night. Continually. They who are employed day and night fill up the whole time—for this is all.

Saying, Holy, holy, holy. For the meaning of this, **See Barnes "Isa 6:3"**.

Lord God Almighty. Isaiah (Isa 6:3) expresses it, "Jehovah of hosts." The reference is to the true God, and the epithet *Almighty* is one that is often given him. It is peculiarly appropriate here, as there were to be, as the sequel shows, remarkable exhibitions of *power* in executing the purposes described in this book.

Which was, and is, and is to come. Who is eternal—existing in all past time; existing now; and to continue to exist for ever. **See Barnes "Re 1:4"**.

{a} "six wings" isa 6:2 {1} "rest not" "have no rest"

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 4 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *And when those beasts give glory*, etc. As often as those living beings ascribe glory to God. They did this continually, (Re 4:8) and, if the above explanation be correct, then the idea is, that the ways and acts of God in his providential government are continually of such a nature as to honour him.

{b} "who liveth" Re 5:14

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 4 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *The four and twenty elders fall down before him*, etc. The representatives of the redeemed church in heaven (**See Barnes "Re 4:4"**) also unite in the praise. The meaning, if the explanation of the symbol be correct, is, that the church universal unites in praise to God for all that characterizes his administration. In the connexion in which this stands here, the sense would be, that as often as there is any *new* manifestation of the principles of the Divine government, the church ascribes *new* praise to God. Whatever may be thought of this explanation of the meaning

of the symbols, of the *fact* here stated there can, be no doubt. The church of God always rejoices when there is any new manifestation of the principles of the Divine administration. As all these acts, in reality, bring glory and honour to God, the church, *as often* as there is any new manifestation of the Divine character and purposes, renders praise anew. Nor can it be doubted that the view here taken is one that is every way appropriate to the general character of this book. The great design was to disclose what God was to do in future times, in the various revolutions that were to take place on the earth, until his government should be firmly established, and the principles of his administration should everywhere prevail; and there was a propriety, therefore, in describing the representatives of the church as taking part in this universal praise, and as casting every crown at the feet of Him who sits upon the throne.

And cast their crowns before the throne. They are described as "crowned," (Re 4:4) that is, as triumphant, and as kings, (compare Re 5:10) and they are here represented as casting their crowns at his feet in token that they owe their triumph to Him. To his providential dealings, to his wise and merciful government, they owe it that they are crowned at all; and there is, therefore, a propriety that they should acknowledge this in a proper manner by placing their crowns at his feet.

{c} "crowns" Re 4:4

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 4 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Thou art worthy, Lord*. In thy character, perfections, and government, there is that which makes it proper that universal praise should be rendered. The feeling of all true worshippers is, that God is *worthy* of the praise that is ascribed to him. No man worships him aright who does not feel that there is that in his nature and his doings which makes it *proper* that he should receive universal adoration.

To receive glory. To have praise or glory ascribed to thee.

And honour. To be honoured; that is, to be approached and adored as worthy of honour.

And power. To have power ascribed to thee, or to be regarded as having infinite power. Man can *confer* no power on God, but he may acknowledge that which he has, and adore him for its exertion in his behalf and in the government of the world.

For thou hast created all things. Thus laying the foundation for praise. No one can contemplate this vast and wonderful universe without seeing that He who has made it is *worthy* to "receive glory and honour and power." **See Barnes "Job 38:7".**

And for thy pleasure they are. They exist by thy will—*dia to yelhma*. The meaning is, that they owe their existence to the *will* of God, and therefore their creation lays the foundation for praise. He "spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." He said, "Let there be light; and there was light." There is no other reason why the universe exists at all than that such was the will of God; there is nothing else that is to be adduced as explaining the fact that anything has now a being. The putting forth of that will explains all; and consequently whatever wisdom, power, goodness is manifested in the universe, is to be traced to God, and is the expression of what was in him from eternity. It is proper, then, to "look up through nature to nature's God," and wherever we see greatness or goodness in the works of creation to regard them as the faint expression of what exists essentially in the Creator.

And were created. Bringing more distinctly into notice the fact that they owe their existence to his will. They are not eternal; they are not self-existent; they were formed from nothing.

{d} "worthy" Re 5:12 {e} "power" Col 1:16

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 5

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 5 - Verse 1

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER,

THIS chapter introduces the disclosure of future events. It is done in a manner eminently fitted to impress the mind with a sense of the importance of the revelations about to be made. The proper state of mind for appreciating this chapter is that when we look on the future and are sensible that important events are about to occur; when we feel that that future is wholly impenetrable to us; and when the efforts of the highest created minds fail to lift the mysterious veil which hides those events from our view. It is in accordance with our nature that the mind should be impressed with solemn awe under such circumstances; it is not a violation of the laws of our nature that one who had an earnest desire to penetrate that future, and who saw the volume before him which contained the mysterious revelation, and who yet felt that there was no one in heaven or earth who could break the seals, and disclose what was to come, should weep. Re 5:4. The design of the whole chapter is evidently to honour the Lamb of God, by showing that the power was entrusted to him which was confided to no one else in heaven or earth, of disclosing what is to come. Nothing else would better illustrate this than the fact that he alone could break the mysterious seals which barred out the knowledge of the future from all created eyes; and nothing would be better adapted to impress this on the mind than the representation in this chapter—the exhibition of a mysterious book in the hand of God; the proclamation of the angel, calling on any who could do it to open the book; the fact that no one in heaven or earth could do it; the tears shed by John when it was found that no one could do it; the assurance of one of the elders that the Lion of the tribe of Judah had power to do it; and the profound adoration of all in heaven and in earth and under the earth, in view of the power entrusted to him of breaking these mysterious seals.

The main points in the chapter are these:

(1.) Having in chapter 4 described God as sitting on a throne, John here (Re 5:1) represents himself as seeing in his right hand a mysterious volume; written all over on the inside and the outside, yet sealed with seven seals; a volume manifestly referring to the future, and containing important disclosures respecting coming events.

(2.) A mighty angel is introduced making a proclamation, and asking who is worthy to open that book, and to break those seals; evidently implying that none unless of exalted rank could do it, Re 5:2.

(3.) There is a pause: no one in heaven, or in earth, or under the earth, approaches to do it, or claims the right to do it, Re 5:3.

(4.) John, giving way to the expressions of natural emotion—indicative of the longing and intense desire in the human soul to be made acquainted with the secrets of the future—pours forth a flood of tears because no one is found who is worthy to open the seals of this mysterious book, or to read what was recorded there, Re 5:4.

(5.) In his state of suspense and of grief, one of the elders—the representatives of that church for whose benefit these revelations of the future were to be made (**See Barnes "Re 4:4"**) — approaches him and says that there is one who is able to open the book; one who has the power to loose its seals, Re 5:5. This is the Messiah—the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David—coming now to make the disclosure for which the whole book was given, Re 1:1

(6.) Immediately the attention of John is attracted by the Messiah, appearing as a Lamb in the midst of the throne; with horns, the symbols of strength, and eyes, the symbols of all-pervading intelligence. He approaches and takes the book from the hand of Him that sits on the throne; symbolical of the fact that it is the province of the Messiah to make known to the church and the world the events which are to occur, Re 5:6,7. He appears here in a different form from that in which he manifested himself in chapter 1, for the purpose is different. There he appears clothed in majesty, to impress the mind with a sense of his essential glory. Here he appears in a form that recalls the memory of his sacrifice; to denote perhaps that it is in virtue of his atonement that the future is to be disclosed; and that therefore there is a special propriety that he should appear and do what no other one in heaven or earth could do.

(7.) The approach of the Messiah to unfold the mysteries in the book, the fact that he had "prevailed" to accomplish what there was so strong a desire should be accomplished, furnishes an occasion for exalted thanksgiving and praise, Re 5:8-10. This ascription of praise in heaven is instantly responded to, and echoed back, from all parts of the universe—all joining in acknowledging the Lamb as worthy of the exalted office to which he was raised, Re 5:11-13. The angels around the throne—amounting to thousands of myriads—unite with the living creatures and the elders; and to these are joined the voices of every creature in heaven, on the earth, under the earth, and in the sea, ascribing to Him that sits upon the throne and the Lamb universal praise.

(8.) To this loud ascription of praise from far-distant worlds the living creatures respond a hearty Amen, and the elders fall down and worship him that lives for ever and ever, Re 5:14. The universe is held in wondering expectation of the disclosures which are to be made, and from all parts of the universe there is an acknowledgment that the Lamb of God alone has the right to break the mysterious seals. The importance of the developments justifies the magnificence of this representation; and it would not be possible to imagine a more sublime introduction to these great events.

Verse 1. *And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne*. Of God, Re 4:3-4. His form is not described there, nor is there any intimation of it here except the mention of his "right hand." The book or roll seems to have been so held in his hand that John could see its shape, and see distinctly how it was written and sealed.

A book, biblion. This word is properly a diminutive of the word commonly rendered book, (*biblov*) and would strictly mean a small book, or a book of diminutive size—a tablet, or a letter.—*Liddell and Scott, Lex*. It is used, however, to denote a book of any size—a roll, scroll, or volume; and is thus used

(a) to denote the Pentateuch, or the Mosaic law, Heb 9:19 10:7;

(b) the book of life, Re 17:8 20:12, 21:27;

(c) epistles, which were also rolled up, Re 1:11;

(d) documents, as a bill of divorce, Mt 19:7 Mr 10:4. When it is the express design to speak of a small book, another word is used, (*biblardion*) Re 10:2,8-10.

The book or roll referred to here was that which contained the revelation in the subsequent chapters, to the end of the description of the opening of the seventh seal—for the communication that was to be made was all included in the seven seals; and to conceive of the *size* of the book, therefore, we are only to reflect on the amount of parchment that would naturally be written over by the communications here made. The *form* of the book was undoubtedly that of a scroll or roll; for that was the usual form of books among the ancients, and such a volume could be more easily sealed with a number of seals, in the manner here described, than a volume in the form in which books are made now. On the ancient form of books, **See Barnes on "Lu 4:17".**

Written within and on the back side. Gr., 'within and behind.' It was customary to write only on one side of the paper or vellum, for the sake of convenience in reading the volume as it was unrolled. If, as sometimes was the case, the book was in the same form as books are now—of *leaves* bound together—then it was usual to write on both sides of the leaf, as both sides of a page are printed now. But in the other form it was a very uncommon thing to write on both sides of the parchment, and was never done unless there was a scarcity of writing material; or unless there was an amount of matter beyond what was anticipated; or unless something had been omitted. It is not necessary to suppose that John saw both sides of the parchment as it was held in the hand of him that sat on the throne. That it was written on the *back* side he would naturally see, and, as the book was sealed he would infer that it was written in the usual manner on the inside.

Sealed with seven seals. On the ancient manner of sealing, **See Barnes on** "Mt 27:66, **See Barnes "Job 38:14".**

The fact that there were *seven seals*—an unusual number in fastening a volume—would naturally attract the attention of John, though it might not occur to him at once that there was anything significant in the number. It is not stated in what manner the seals were attached to the volume, but it is clear that they were so attached that each seal closed one part of the volume, and that when one was broken and the portion which that was designed to fasten was unrolled, a second would be come to, which it would be necessary to break in order to read the next portion. The outer seal would indeed bind the whole; but when that was broken it would not give access to the whole volume unless each successive seal were broken. May it not have been intended by this arrangement to suggest the idea that the whole future is unknown to us, and that the disclosure of any one portion, though necessary if the whole would be known, does not disclose all, but leaves seal after seal still unbroken, and that they are all to be broken one after another if we would know all? *How* these were arranged, John does not say. All that is necessary to be supposed is, that the seven seals were put successively upon the *margin* of the volume as it was rolled up, so that each opening would extend only as far as the next seal, when the unrolling would be arrested. Any one by rolling up a sheet of paper could so fasten it with pins, or with a succession of seals, as to represent this with sufficient accuracy.

{a} "book" Eze 2:9,10 {b} "sealed" Isa 29:11

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 5 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And I saw a strong angel*. An angel endowed with great strength, as if such strength was necessary to enable him to give utterance to the loud voice of the inquiry. "Homer represents his heralds as powerful, robust men, in order consistently to attribute to them deep-toned and powerful voices."—*Professor Stuart*. The inquiry to be made was one of vast importance; it was to be made of all in heaven, all on the earth, and all under the earth, and hence an angel is introduced so mighty that his voice could be heard in all those distant worlds.

Proclaiming with a loud voice. That is, as a herald or crier. He is rather introduced here as *appointed* to this office than as *self-moved*. The *design* undoubtedly is to impress the mind with a sense of the importance of the disclosures about to be made, and at the same time with a sense of the impossibility of penetrating the future by any created power. That one of the highest angels should make such a proclamation would sufficiently show its importance; that such an one, by the mere act of making such a proclamation, should practically confess his own inability, and consequently the inability of all of similar rank, to make the disclosures, would show that the revelations of the future were beyond mere created power.

Who is worthy to open the book, etc. That is, who is "worthy" in the sense of having a rank so exalted, and attributes so comprehensive, as to authorize and enable him to do it. In other words, who has the requisite endowments of all kinds to enable him to do it? It would require moral qualities of an exalted character to justify him in approaching the seat of the holy God to take the book from his hands; it would require an ability beyond that of any created being to penetrate the future, and disclose the meaning of the symbols which were employed. The fact that the book was held in the hand of him that was on the throne, and sealed in this manner, was in itself a sufficient proof that it was not his purpose to make the disclosure directly, and the natural inquiry arose whether there was any one in the wide universe who, by rank, or character, or office, would be empowered to open the mysterious volume.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 5 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And no man in heaven*. No one—*oudeiv*. There is no limitation in the original to *man*. The idea is, that there was no one in heaven —evidently alluding to the created beings there—who could open the volume. Is it not taught here that *angels* cannot penetrate the future, and disclose what is to come? Are not their faculties limited in this respect like those of man?

Nor in earth. Among all classes of men—sages, divines, prophets, philosophers—who among those have ever been able to penetrate the future, and disclose what is to come?

Neither under the earth. These divisions compose, in common language, the universe: what is in heaven above; what is on the earth; and whatever there is under the earth—the abodes of the dead. May there not be an allusion here to the supposed science of *necromancy*, and an assertion that even the dead cannot penetrate the future, and disclose what is to come? **See Barnes "Isa 8:19"**.

In all these great realms no one advanced who was qualified to undertake the office of making a disclosure of what the mysterious scroll might contain.

Was able to open the book. Had ability—*hdunato*—to do it. It was a task beyond their power. Even if any one had been found who had a rank and a moral character which might have seemed to justify the effort, there was no one who had the power of reading what was recorded respecting coming events.

Neither to look thereon. That is, so to open the seals as to have a *view* of what was written therein. That it was not beyond their power merely to *see* the book is apparent from the fact that John himself saw it in the hand of him that sat on the throne; and it is evident also (Re 5:5) that in that sense the elders saw it. But no one could prevail to inspect the contents, or so have access to the interior of the volume as to be able to see what "was written there. It could be seen, indeed, (Re 5:1) that it was written on both sides of the parchment, but *what* the writing was no one could know.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 5 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And I wept much, because no man was found worthy*, etc. Gr., as in Re 5:3, *no one*. It would seem as if there was a pause to see if there were any response to the proclamation of the angel. There being none, John gave way to his deep emotions in a flood of tears. The tears of the apostle here may be regarded as an illustration of two things which are occurring constantly in the minds of men:

(1.) The strong desire to penetrate the future; to lift the mysterious veil which shrouds that which is to come; to find some way to pierce the dark wall which seems to stand up before us, and which shuts from our view that which is to be hereafter. There have been no more earnest efforts made by men than those which have been made to read the sealed volume which contains the record of what is yet to come. By dreams, and omens, and auguries, and astrology, and the flight of birds, and necromancy, men have sought anxiously to ascertain what is to be hereafter. Compare, for an expression of that intense desire, Foster's Life and Correspondence, vol. 1 p. 111, and vol. 2. pp. 237- 238.

(2.) The weeping of the apostle may be regarded as an instance of the deep grief which men often experience when all efforts to penetrate the future fail, and they feel that after all they are left completely in the dark. Often is the soul overpowered with grief, and often are the eyes filled with sadness at the reflection that there is an absolute limit to the human powers; that all that man can arrive at by his own efforts is uncertain conjecture, and that there is no way possible by which he can make nature speak out and disclose what is to come. Nowhere does man find himself more lettered and limited in his powers than here; nowhere does he feel that there is such an intense disproportion between his desires and his attainments. In nothing do we feel that we are more absolutely in need of Divine help than in our attempts to unveil the future; and were it not for revelation man might weep in despair.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 5 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And one of the elders saith unto me*. **See Barnes on "Re 4:4".**

No particular reason is assigned why this message was delivered by one of the *elders* rather than by an angel. If the elders were, however, (**See Barnes on "Re 4:4"**) the representatives of the church, there was a propriety that they should address John in his trouble. Though they were in heaven, they were deeply interested in all that pertained to the welfare of the church, and they had been permitted to understand what as yet was unknown to him, that the power of opening the mysterious volume which contained the revelation of the future was entrusted particularly to the Messiah. Having this knowledge, they were prepared to comfort him with the hope that what was so mysterious would be made known.

Weep not. That is, there is no occasion for tears. The object which you so much desire can be obtained. There is one who can break those seals, and who can unroll that volume and read what is recorded there.

Behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah. This undoubtedly refers to the Lord Jesus; and the points needful to be explained are, why he is called a *Lion*, and why he is spoken of as the Lion *of the tribe of Judah*.

(a) As to the first: This appellation is not elsewhere given to the Messiah, but it is not difficult to see its propriety as used in this place. The lion is the king of beasts, the monarch of the forest, and thus becomes an emblem of one of kingly authority and of power, (**See Barnes on "Re 4:7"**) and as such the appellation is used in this place. It is because Christ has *power* to open the seals—as if he ruled over the universe, and all events were under his control, as the lion rules in the forest—that the name is here given to him.

(b) As to the other point: He is called the "Lion *of the tribe of Judah*," doubtless, with reference to the prophecy in Ge 9:9 —"Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion;" and from the fact that the Messiah was of the tribe of Judah. Compare Ge 49:10. This use of the term would connect him in the apprehension of John with the prophecy, and would suggest to him the idea of his being a ruler, or having dominion. As such, therefore, it would be appropriate that the power of breaking these seals should be committed to him.

The Root of David. Not the Root of David in the sense that David sprung from him as a tree does from a root, but in the sense that *he himself* was a "root-shoot" or sprout *from* David, and had sprung from him as a shoot or sprout springs up from a decayed and fallen tree. **See Barnes on "Isa 11:1"**.

This expression would connect him directly with David, the great and glorious monarch of Israel, and as having a right to occupy his throne. As one thus ruling over the people of God, there was a propriety that to him should be entrusted the task of opening these seals.

Hath prevailed. That is, he has acquired this power as the result of a conflict or struggle. The word used here—*enikhsen*— refers to such a conflict or struggle, properly meaning to come off victor; to overcome; to conquer; to subdue: and the idea here is that his power to do this, or the reason why he does this, is the result of a conflict in which he was a victor. As the series of events to be disclosed, resulting in the final triumph of religion, was the effect of his conflicts with the powers of evil, there was a special propriety that the disclosure should be made by him. The *truths* taught in this verse are,

(l) that the power of making disclosures in regard to the future is entrusted to the Messiah; and

(2) that this, so far as he is concerned, is the result of a conflict or struggle on his part.

{a} "Lion" Ge 49:9,10; Nu 24:9 Heb 7:14

{b} "Root" Re 22:16 Isa 11:1,10

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 5 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne*. We are not to suppose that he was in the centre of the throne itself, but he was a conspicuous object when the throne and the elders and the living beings were seen. He was so placed as to seem to be in the midst of the *group* made up of the throne, the living beings, and the elders.

And of the four beasts. **See Barnes on "Re 4:6".**

Stood a Lamb. An appellation often given to the Messiah, for two reasons:

(1) because the lamb was an emblem of innocence; and

(2) because a lamb was offered commonly in sacrifice. **See Barnes "Joh 1:29".**

As it had been slain. That is, in some way having the appearance of having been slain; having some marks or indications about it that it had been slain. What those were the writer does not specify. If it were covered with blood, or there were marks of mortal wounds, it would be all that the representation demands. The great work which the Redeemer performed—that of making an atonement for sin—was thus represented to John in such a way that he at once recognised him, and saw the reason why the office of breaking the seals was entrusted to him. It should be remarked that this representation is merely *symbolic*, and we are not to suppose that the Redeemer really *assumed* this form, or that he appears in this form in heaven. We should no more suppose that the Redeemer appears literally as a lamb in heaven with numerous eyes and horns, than that there is a literal throne and a sea of glass there; that there are "seats" there, and "elders," and "crowns of gold."

Having seven horns. Emblems of authority and power—for the *horn* is a symbol of power and dominion. Compare De 33:17 1Ki 22:11; Jer 48:25 Zec 1:18; Da 7:24.

The propriety of this symbol is laid in the fact that the strength of an animal is in the horn, and that it is by this that he obtains a victory over other animals. The number *seven* here seems to be designed, as in other places, to denote *completeness*. **See Barnes "Re 1:4".**

The meaning is, that he had so large a number as to denote complete dominion.

And seven eyes. Symbols of intelligence. The number *seven* here also denotes *completeness*; and the idea is, that he is able to survey all things. John does not say anything as to the relative arrangement of the horns and eyes on the "Lamb," and it is vain to attempt to conjecture how it was. The whole representation is symbolical, and we may understand the meaning of the symbol without being able to form an exact conception of the figure as it appeared to him.

Which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. **See Barnes "Re 1:4".**

That is, which *represent* the seven Spirits of God; or the manifold operations of the one Divine Spirit. As the eye is the symbol of intelligence—outward objects being made visible to us by that—so it may well represent an all-pervading spirit that surveys and sees all things. The eye, in this view, among the Egyptians was an emblem of the Deity. By the "Seven Spirits" here the same thing is doubtless intended as in Re 1:4; and if, as there supposed, the reference is to the Holy Spirit considered with respect to his manifold operations, the meaning here is, that the operations of that Spirit are to be regarded as connected with the work of the Redeemer. Thus, all the operations of

the Spirit are connected with, and are a part of, the work of redemption. The expression "sent forth into all the earth," refers to the fact that that Spirit pervades all things. The Spirit of God is often represented as sent or poured out; and the meaning here is, that his operations are *as if* he was sent out to survey all things and to operate everywhere. Compare 1Co 12:6-11.

{a} "Lamb" Isa 53:7 Joh 1:29,36

{b} "seven eyes" Zec 4:10

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 5 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *And he came and took the book out of the right hand*, etc. As if it pertained to him by virtue of rank or office. There is a difficulty here, arising from the incongruity of what is said of a *lamb*, which it is not easy to solve. The difficulty is in conceiving how a *lamb* could take the book from the hand of Him who held it. To meet this several solutions have been proposed.

(1.) Vitringa supposes that the Messiah appeared as a lamb only in some such sense as the four living beings (Re 4:7) resembled a lion, a calf, and an eagle; that is, that they bore this resemblance only in respect to the head, while the body was that of a man. He thus supposes, that though in respect to the upper part the Saviour resembled a lamb, yet that to the front part of the body hands were attached by which he could take the book. But there are great difficulties in this supposition. Besides that nothing of this kind is intimated by John, it is contrary to every appearance of probability that the Redeemer would be represented as a monster. In his being represented as a lamb there is nothing that strikes the mind as inappropriate or unpleasant, for he is often spoken of in this manner, and the image is one that is agreeable to the mind. But all this beauty and fitness of representation is destroyed, if we think of him as having human hands proceeding from his breast or sides, or as blending the form of a man and an animal together. The representation of having an unusual number of horns and eyes does not strike us as being incongruous in the same sense; for though the *number* is increased, they are such as pertain properly to the animal to which they are attached.

(2.) Another supposition is that suggested by Professor Stuart, that the form was changed, and a human form resumed when the Saviour advanced to take the book and open it. This would relieve the whole difficulty, and the only objection to it is, that John has not given any express notice of such a change in the form; and the only question can be whether it is right to *suppose* it in order to meet the difficulty in the case. In support of this it is said that all is symbol; that the Saviour is represented in the book in various forms; that as his appearing as a *lamb* was designed to represent in a striking manner the fact that he was slain, and that all that he did was based on the atonement, so there would be no impropriety in supposing that when an action was attributed to him he assumed the form in which that act would be naturally or is usually done. And as in taking a book from the hand of another it is wholly incongruous to think of its being done by a lamb, is it not most natural to suppose that the usual form in which the Saviour is represented as appearing would be resumed, and that he would appear again as a man?—But is it absolutely certain that he appeared in the form of a lamb at all? May not all that is meant be, that John saw him near the throne, and among the elders, and was struck at once with his appearance of meekness and innocence, and with the marks of his having been slain as a sacrifice, and spoke of him in strong figurative language as a lamb? And where his "seven horns" and "seven eyes" are spoken of, is it necessary to suppose that there

was any real assumption of such horns and eyes? May not all that is meant be that John was struck with that in the appearance of the Redeemer of which these *would be* the appropriate symbols, and described him *as if* these had been visible? When John the Baptist saw the Lord Jesus on the banks of the Jordan, and said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," (Joh 1:29) is it necessary to suppose that he actually appeared in the form of a lamb? Do not all at once understand him as referring to traits in his character, and to the work which he was to accomplish, which made it proper to speak of him as a lamb? And why, therefore, may we not suppose that John in the Apocalypse designed to use language in the same way, and that he did not intend to present so incongruous a description as that of a *lamb* approaching a throne and taking a book from the hand of Him that sat on it, and a lamb too with many horns and eyes? If this supposition is correct, then all that is meant in this passage would be expressed in some such language as the following: "And I looked, and lo there was one in the midst of the space occupied by the throne, by the living creatures, and by the elders, who, in aspect, and in the emblems that represented his work on the earth, was spotless, meek, and innocent as a lamb; one with marks on his person which brought to remembrance the fact that he had been slain for the sins of the world, and yet one who had most striking symbols of power and intelligence, and who was therefore worthy to approach and take the book from the hand of Him that sat on the throne." It may do something to confirm this view to recollect that when we use the term "Lamb of God" now, as is often done in preaching and in prayer, it never suggests to the mind the idea of a *lamb*. We think of the Redeemer as resembling a lamb in his moral attributes and in his sacrifice, but never as to form. This supposition relieves the passage of all that is incongruous and unpleasant, and may be all that John meant.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 5 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *And when he had taken the book, the four beasts*, etc. The acts of adoration here described as rendered by the four living creatures and the elders are, according to the explanation given in Re 4:4-7, emblematic of the honour done to the Redeemer by the church, and by the course of providential events in the government of the world,

Fell down before the Lamb. The usual posture of profound worship. Usually in such worship there was entire prostration on the earth, **See Barnes "Mt 2:2"**; **See Barnes** "1Co 14:25".

Having every one of them harps. That is, as the construction, and the propriety of the case would seem to demand, the *elders* had each one of them harps. The whole prostrated themselves with profound reverence; the elders had harps and censers, and broke out into a song of praise for redemption, This construction is demanded, because

(a) the Greek word—*econtev*—more properly agrees with the word *elders*—*presbuteroi*—and not with the word *beasts*—*zwa*;

(b) there is an incongruity in the representation that the living creatures—in the form of a lion, a calf, an eagle, should have harps and censers; and

(c) the song of praise that is sung (Re 5:9) is one that properly applies to the elders as the representatives of the church, and not to the living creatures— "Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." The *harp* was a well known instrument used in the service of God, Josephus describes it as having ten strings, and as struck with a key. —Antiquities, vii. 12, 3. **See Barnes "Isa 5:12"**.

And golden vials. The word *vial* with us, denoting a small slender bottle with a narrow neck, evidently does not express the idea here. The article here referred to was used for offering incense, and must have been a vessel with a large open mouth. The word *bowl* or *goblet* would better express the idea, and it is so explained by Professor Robinson, *Lex*., and by Professor Stuart, *in loc*. The Greek word—*fialh*— occurs in the New Testament only in Revelation, (Re 5:8 15:7, 16:1-4,8,10,12,17 17:1 21:9) and is uniformly rendered *vial* and *vials*, though the idea is always that of a bowl or goblet.

Full of odours. Or rather, as in the margin, full of *incense—yumiamatwn*. **See Barnes "Lu 1:9"**.

Which are the prayers of saints. Which represent or denote the prayers of saints. Compare Ps 141:2, "Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense." The meaning is, that incense was a proper emblem of prayer. This seems to have been in two respects:

(a) as being acceptable to God—as incense produced an agreeable fragrance; and

(b) in its being wafted towards heaven—ascending towards the eternal throne. In Re 8:3, an angel is represented as having a golden censer: "And there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne". The representation there undoubtedly is, that the angel is *employed* in presenting the prayers of the saints which were offered on earth before the throne. **See Barnes "Re 8:3"**.

It is most natural to interpret the passage before us in the same way. The allusion is clearly to the temple service, and to the fact that incense was offered by the priest in the temple itself at the time that prayer was offered by the people in the courts of the temple. See Lu 1:9-10. The idea here is, therefore, that the representatives of the church in heaven— the elders—spoken of as "priests," (Re 5:10) are described as officiating in the temple above in behalf of the church still below, and as offering incense while the church is engaged in prayer. It is not said that *they* offer the prayers themselves, but that they offer *incense* as representing the prayers of the saints. If this be the correct interpretation, as it seems to be the obvious one, then the passage lays no foundation for the opinion expressed by Professor Stuart, as derived from this passage, (*in loc*.,) that prayer is offered by the redeemed in heaven. Whatever may be the truth on that point—on which the Bible seems to be silent-it will find no support from the passage before us. Adoration, praise, thanksgiving, are represented as the employment of the saints in heaven: the only representation respecting *prayer* as pertaining to that world is, that there are emblems there which symbolize its ascent before the throne, and which show that it is acceptable to God. It is an interesting and beautiful representation that there *are* in heaven appropriate symbols of ascending prayer, and that while in the outer courts here below *we* offer prayer, incense, emblematic of it, ascends in the holy of holies above. The *impression* which this should leave on our minds ought to be, that our prayers are wafted before the throne, and are acceptable to God.

{c} "four beasts" Re 4:4,8,10

{d} "harps" Re 15:2 {a} "prayers" Ps 141:2 {1} "odours" "incense"

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 5 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *And they sung a new song*. Compare Re 14:3. New in the sense that it is a song consequent on redemption, and distinguished therefore from the songs sung in heaven before the

work of redemption was consummated. We may suppose that songs of adoration have always been sung in heaven; we know that the praises of God were celebrated by the angelic choirs when the foundations of the earth were laid, (Job 38:7) but the song of redemption was a different song, and is one that would never have been sung there if man had not fallen, and if the Redeemer had not died. This song strikes notes which the other songs do not strike, and refers to glories of the Divine character which but for the work of redemption would not have been brought into view. In this sense the song was new; it will continue to be new in the sense that it will be sung afresh as redeemed millions continue to ascend to heaven. Compare Ps 40:3 96:1, 144:9 Isa 42:10.

Thou art worthy to take the book, etc. This was the occasion or ground of the "new song," that by his coming and death he had acquired a right to approach where no other one could approach, and to do what no other one could do.

For thou wast slain. The *language* here is such as would be appropriate to a lamb slain as a sacrifice. The idea is, that the fact that he was thus slain constituted the ground of his worthiness to open the book. It could not be meant that there was in him no *other* ground of worthiness, but that this was that which was most conspicuous. It is just the outburst of the grateful feeling resulting from redemption, that he who has died to save the soul is worthy of *all* honour, and is fitted to accomplish what no other being in the universe *can* do. However this may appear to the inhabitants of other worlds, or however it may appear to the dwellers on the earth who have no interest in the work of redemption, yet all who are redeemed will agree in the sentiment that He who has ransomed them with his blood has performed a work to do which every other being was incompetent, and that now all honour in heaven and on earth may appropriately be conferred on him.

And hast redeemed us. The word here used—*agorazw*—means properly to purchase, to buy; and is thus employed to denote redemption, because redemption was accomplished by the payment of a price. On the meaning of the word, **See Barnes "2Pe 2:1"**.

To God. That is, so that we become *his*, and are to be henceforward regarded as such; or so that he might possess us as his own. **See Barnes on "2Co 5:15"**.

This is the true nature of redemption, that by the price paid we are rescued from the servitude of Satan, and are henceforth to regard ourselves as belonging unto God.

By thy blood. **See Barnes on "Ac 20:28"**.

This is such language as they use who believe in the doctrine of the atonement, and is such as would be used by them alone. It would not be employed by those who believe that Christ was a mere martyr, or that he lived and died merely as a teacher of morality. If he was truly an stoning sacrifice, the language is full of meaning; if not, it has no significance, and could not be understood.

Out of every kindred. Literally, "of every *tribe*"—*fulhv*. The word *tribe* means properly a comparatively small division or class of people associated together.—*Professor Stuart*. It refers to a family, or race, having a common ancestor, and usually associated or banded together—as one of the tribes of Israel; a tribe of Indians; a tribe of plants; a tribe of animals, etc. This is such language as a Jew would use, denoting one of the smaller divisions that made up a nation of people; and the meaning would seem to be, that it will be found ultimately to be true that the redeemed will have been taken from all such minor divisions of the human family—not only from the different *nations*, but from the smaller *divisions* of those nations. This can only be true from the fact that the knowledge of the true religion will yet be diffused among all those smaller portions of the human race; that is, that its diffusion will be universal.

And tongue. People speaking all languages. The word here used would seem to denote a division of the human family larger than a tribe but smaller than a nation. It was formerly a fact that a nation might be made up of those who spoke many different languages—as, for example, the Assyrian, the Babylonian, or the Roman nations. Compare Da 3:29 4:1. The meaning here is, that no matter what language the component parts of the nations speak, the gospel will be conveyed to them, and in their own tongue they will learn the wonderful works of God. Compare Ac 2:8-11.

And people. The word here used—*laov*—properly denotes a people considered as *a mass*, made up of smaller divisions—as an association of smaller bodies—or as a multitude of such bodies united together. It is distinguished from another word commonly applied to a people—*dhmov*—for that is applied to a community of free citizens, considered as on a level, or without reference to any minor divisions or distinctions. The words here used would apply to an army, considered as made up of regiments, battalions, or tribes; to a mass-meeting, made up of societies of different trades or professions; to a nation, made up of different associated communities, etc. It denotes a *larger* body of people than the previous words; and the idea is, that no matter of what *people* or *nation*, considered as made up of such separate portions, one may be, he will not be excluded from the blessings of redemption. The sense would be well expressed by saying, for instance, that there will be found there those of the Gaelic race, the Celtic, the Anglo-Saxon, the Mongolian, the African, etc.

And nation. *eynouv*. A word of still larger signification; the people in a still wider sense; a people or nation considered as distinct from all others. The word would embrace all who come under one sovereignty or rule: as, for example, the British nation, however many minor *tribes* there may be; however many different *languages* may be spoken; and however many separate *people* there may be—as the Anglo-Saxon, the Scottish, the Irish, the people of Hindustan, of Labrador, of New South Wales, etc. The words here used by John would together denote nations of every kind, great and small; and the sense is, that the blessings of redemption will be extended to all parts of the earth.

{b} "new song" Re 13:3 {c} "blood" Ac 20:28 Eph 1:7; Heb 9:12 1Pe 1:18,19

{d} "kindred" Re 7:9

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 5 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *And hast made us unto our God kings and priests*. **See Barnes on "Re 1:6"**.

And we shall reign on the earth. The redeemed, of whom we are the representatives. The idea clearly is, in accordance with what is so frequently said in the Scriptures, that the dominion on the earth will be given to the saints; that is, that there will be such a prevalence of true religion, and the redeemed will be so much in the ascendency, that the affairs of the nations will be in their hands. Righteous men will hold the offices; will fill places of trust and responsibility; will have a controlling voice in all that pertains to human affairs. **See Barnes on "Da 7:27"**; **See Barnes** "Re 20:1, seq. To such a prevalence of religion all things are tending; and to is this, in all the disorder and sin which now exist, are we permitted to look forward. It not said that this will be a reign under the Saviour in a literal kingdom on the earth; nor is it said that the saints will descend from heaven, and occupy thrones of power under Christ as a visible king. The simple affirmation is, that they will *reign* on

the earth; and as this seems to be spoken in the name of the redeemed, all that is necessary to be understood is, that there will be such a prevalence of true religion on the earth that it will become a vast kingdom of holiness, and that, instead of being in the minority, the saints will everywhere have the ascendency.

{e} "kings" re 1:6 {f} "reign" Re 22:5

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 5 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *And I beheld*. And I looked again.

And I heard the voice of many angels. The inhabitants of heaven uniting with the representatives of the redeemed church, in ascribing honour to the Lamb of God. The design is to show that there is universal sympathy and harmony in heaven, and that all worlds will unite in ascribing honour to the Lamb of God.

Round about the throne and the beasts and the elders. In a circle or area *beyond* that which was occupied by the throne, the living creatures, and the elders. They occupied the centre as it appeared to John, and this innumerable company of angels surrounded them. The angels are represented here, as they are everywhere in the Scriptures, as taking a deep interest in all that pertains to the redemption of men, and it is not surprising that they are here described as uniting with the representatives of the church in rendering honour to the Lamb of God. **See Barnes "1Pe 1:12".**

And the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand. One hundred millions—a general term to denote either a countless number, or an exceedingly great number. We are not to suppose that it is to be taken literally.

And thousands of thousands. Implying that the number before specified was not large enough to comprehend all. Besides the "ten thousand times ten thousand," there was a vast, uncounted host which one could not attempt to enumerate. The language here would seem to be taken from Da 7:10: "Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him." Compare Ps 68:17: "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels." See also De 33:2 1Ki 22:19.

{a} "number" Da 7:10 Heb 12:22

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 5 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain*. **See Barnes on** "Re 5:2, **See Barnes "Re 2:9".**

The idea here is, that the fact that he was slain, or was made a sacrifice for sin, was the ground or reason for what is here ascribed to him. **See Barnes "Re 5:5"**

To receive power. Power or authority to rule over all things. **See Barnes on "Mt 28:18".**

The meaning here is, that he was worthy treat these things should be ascribed to him, or to be addressed and acknowledged as possessing them. A part of these things were his in virtue of his

very nature—as wisdom, glory, riches; a part were conferred on him as the result of his work—as the mediatorial dominion over the universe, the honour resulting from his work, etc. In view of all that he was, and of all that he has done, he is here spoken of as "*worthy*" of all these things.

And riches. Abundance. That is, he is worthy that whatever contributes to honour, and glory, and happiness, should be conferred on him in *abundance*. Himself the original proprietor of all things, it is fit that he should be recognised as such; and having performed the work which he has, it is proper that whatever may be made to contribute to his honour should be regarded as his.

And wisdom. That he should be esteemed as eminently wise; that is, that as the result of the work which he has accomplished, he should be regarded as having ability to choose the best ends, and the best means to accomplish them. The feeling here referred to is that which arises from the contemplation of the work of salvation by the Redeemer, as a work eminently characterized by *wisdom*—wisdom manifested in meeting the evils of the fall; in honouring the law; in showing that mercy is consistent with justice; and in adapting the whole plan to the character and wants of man. If wisdom was anywhere demanded, it was in reconciling a lost world to God; if it has been anywhere displayed, it has been in the arrangements for that work, and in its execution by the Redeemer. **See Barnes on "1Co 1:24"; compare Mt 13:54** Lu 2:40,52

1Co 1:20-21,30; Eph 1:8 3:10.

And strength. Ability to accomplish his purposes. That is, it is meet that he should be regarded as having such ability. This *strength* or *power* was manifested in overcoming the great enemy of man; in his control of winds, and storms, and diseases, and devils; in triumphing over death; in saving his people.

And honour. He should be esteemed and treated with honour for what he has done.

And glory. This word refers to a *higher* ascription of praise than the word *honour*. Perhaps that might refer to the honour which we feel in our hearts; this to the expression of that by the language of praise.

And blessing. Everything which would express the desire that he might be happy, honoured, adored. To bless one is to desire that he may have happiness and prosperity; that he may be successful, respected, and honoured. To bless God, or to ascribe blessing to him, is that state where the heart is full of love and gratitude, and where it desires that he may be everywhere honoured, loved, and obeyed as he should be. The words here express the wish that the universe would ascribe to the Redeemer all honour, and that he might be everywhere loved and adored.

{b} "worthy" Re 4:11

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 5 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *And every creature which is in heaven*. The meaning of this verse is, that all created things seemed to unite in rendering honour to Him who sat on the throne and to the Lamb. In the previous verse, a certain number—a vast host—of angels are designated as rendering praise as they stood round the area occupied by the throne, the elders, and the living creatures; here it is added that *all* who were in heaven united in this ascription of praise.

And on the earth. All the universe was heard by John ascribing praise to God. A voice was heard from the heavens, from all parts of the earth, from under the earth, and from the depths of

the sea, *as if* the entire universe joined in the adoration. It is not necessary to press the language literally, and still less is it necessary to understand by it, as Professor Stuart does, that *the angels* who presided over the earth, over the under-world, and over the sea, are intended. It is evidently *popular* language; and the sense is, that John heard a universal ascription of praise. All worlds seemed to join in it; all the dwellers on the earth and under the earth and in the sea partook of the spirit of heaven in rendering honour to the Redeemer.

Under the earth. Supposed to be inhabited by the shades of the dead. **See Barnes on "Job 10:21"**; **See Barnes "Job 10-22"; See Barnes "Isa 14:9".**

And such as are in the sea. All that dwell in the ocean. In Ps 148:7-10, "dragons, and all deeps;—beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl," are called on to praise the Lord; and there is no more incongruity or impropriety in one description than in the other. In the Psalm, the universe is called on to render praise; in the passage before us it is described as actually doing it. The hills, the streams, the floods; the fowls of the air, the dwellers in the deep, and the beasts that roam over the earth; the songsters in the grove, and the insects that play in the sunbeam, in fact declare the glory of their Creator; and it requires no very strong effort of the fancy to imagine the universe as sending up a constant voice of thanksgiving.

Blessing, and honour, etc. There is a slight change here from Re 5:12, but it is the same thing substantially. It is an ascription of all glory to God and to the Lamb.

{c} "creature" Php 2:10 {d} "Blessing" 1Ch 29:11 1Ti 6:16; 1Pe 4:11

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 5 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *And the four beasts said, Amen*. The voice of universal praise came to them from abroad, and they accorded with it, and ascribed honour to God.

And the four and *twenty elders fell down*, etc. The living creatures and the elders *began* the work of praise, (Re 5:8) and it was proper that it should conclude with them; that is, they give the last and final response.—*Professor Stuart*. The whole universe, therefore, is sublimely represented as in a state of profound adoration, waiting for the developments to follow on the opening of the mysterious volume. All feel an interest in it; all feel that the secret is with God; all feel that there is but One who *can* open this volume; and all gather around, in the most reverential posture, awaiting the disclosure of the great mystery.

{e} "four beasts" Re 19:4

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 6

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 6 - Verse 1

CHAPTER VI

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER

THIS chapter contains an account of the opening of six of the seven seals. It need hardly be said to any one who is at all familiar with the numerous—not to say numberless—expositions of the Apocalypse, that it is at this point that interpreters begin to differ, and that here commences the divergence towards those various, discordant, and many of them wild and fantastic theories, which have been proposed in the exposition of this wonderful book. Up to this point, though there may be unimportant diversities in the exposition of words and phrases, there is no material difference of opinion as to the general meaning of the writer. In the epistles to the seven churches, and in the introductory scenes to the main visions, there can be no doubt, in the main, as to what the writer had in view, and what he meant to describe. He addressed churches then existing, (chaps. i.—iii.,) and set before them their sins and their duties; and he described scenes passing before his eyes as then present, (chaps. iv., v.,) which were merely designed to impress his own mind with the importance of what was to be disclosed, and to bring the great actors on the stage, and in reference to which there could be little ground for diversity in the interpretation. Here, however, the scene opens into the future, comprehending all the unknown period until there shah be a final triumph of Christianity, and all its foes shall be prostrate. The actors are the Son of God, angels, men, Satan, storms, tempests, earthquakes, the pestilence and fire; the scene is heaven, earth, hell. There is no certain designation of places; there is no mention of names—as there is in Isaiah (Isa 45:1) of Cyrus, or as there is in Daniel (Da 8:21 10:20, 11:2) of the "king of Grecia ;" there is no designation of time that is necessarily unambiguous; and there are no characteristics of the symbols used that make it antecedently certain that they could be applied only to one class of events. In the boundless future that was to succeed the times of John there would be, of necessity, many events to which these symbols might be applied, and the result has shown that it has required but a moderate share of pious ingenuity to apply them, by different expositors, to events differing widely from each other in their character, and in the times when they would occur. It would be too long to glance even at the various theories which have been proposed and maintained in regard to the interpretation of the subsequent portions of the Apocalypse, and wholly impossible to attempt to examine those theories. Time, in its developments, has already exploded many of them; and time, in its future developments, will doubtless explode many more, and each one must stand or fall as in the disclosures of the future it shall be found to be true or false. It would be folly to add another to those numerous theories, even if I had any such theory, (see the Preface,) and perhaps equal folly to pronounce with certainty on any one of those which have been advanced. Yet this seems to be an appropriate place to state, in few words, what principles it is designed to pursue in the interpretation of the remainder of the book.

(1.) It may be assumed that large portions of the book relate to the future; that is, to that which was future when John wrote. In this all expositors are agreed, and this is manifest indeed on the very face of the representation. It would be impossible to attempt an interpretation on any other supposition, and somewhere in that vast future the events are to be found to which the symbols here used had reference. This is assumed, indeed, on the supposition that the book is inspired: a fact which is assumed all along in this exposition, and which should be allowed to control our interpretation. But assuming that the book relates to the future, though that supposition will do something to determine the true method of interpretation, yet it leaves many questions still unsolved. Whether it refers to the destruction of Jerusalem, on the supposition that the work was written before that event, or to the history of the church subsequent to that; whether it is designed to describe

events minutely, or only in the most general manner; whether it is intended to furnish a syllables of civil and ecclesiastical history, or only a very general outline of future events; whether the times are so designated that we can fix them with entire certainty; or whether it was intended to furnish any certain indication of the periods of the world when these things should occur;—all these are still open questions, and it need not be said that on these the opinions of expositors have been greatly divided.

(2.) It may be assumed that there is meaning in these symbols, and that they were not used without an intention to convey some important ideas to the mind of John and to the minds of his readers— to the church then, and to the church in future times. Comp. **See Barnes "Re 1:3"**.

The book is indeed surpassingly sublime. It abounds with the highest flights of poetic language. It is Oriental in its character, and exhibits everywhere the proofs of a most glowing imagination in the writer. But it is also to be borne in mind that it is an inspired book, and this fact is to determine the character of the exposition. If inspired, it is to be assumed that there is a meaning in these symbols; an idea in each one of them, and in all combined, of importance to the church and the world. Whether we can ascertain the meaning is another question; but it is never to be doubted by an expositor of the Bible that there is a meaning in the words and images employed, and that to find out that meaning is worthy of earnest study and prayer.

(3.) Predictions respecting the future are often necessarily obscure to man. It cannot be doubted, indeed, that God could have foretold future events in the most clear and unambiguous language, he who knows all that is to come as intimately as he does all the past, could have caused a record to have been made, disclosing names, and dates, and places, so that the most minute statements of what is to occur might have been in the possession of man as clearly as the records of the past now are. But there were obvious reasons why this should not occur, and in the prophecies it is rare that there is any such specification. To have done this might have been to defeat the very end in view; for it would have given to man, a free agent, the power of embarrassing or frustrating the Divine plans. But if this course is not adopted, then prophecy must, from the nature of the case, be obscure. The knowledge of any one particular fact in the future is so connected with many other facts, and often implies so much knowledge of other things, that without that other knowledge it could not be understood. Suppose that it had been predicted, in the time of John, that at some future period some contrivance should be found out by which what was doing in one part of the world could be instantaneously known in another remote part of the world, and spread abroad by thousands of copies in an hour to be read by a nation. Suppose, for instance, that there had been some symbol, or emblem representing what actually occurs now, when in a morning newspaper we read what occurred last evening at St. Louis, Dubuque, Galena, Chicago, Cincinnati, Charleston, New Orleans. It is clear that at a time when the magnetic telegraph and the printing-press were unknown, any symbol or language describing it that could be employed must be obscure, and the impression must have been that this could be accomplished only by miracle—and it would not be difficult for one who was disposed to scepticism to make out an argument to prove that this could not occur. It would be impossible to explain any symbol that could be employed to represent this until these wonderful descriptions should become reality, and in the mean time the book in which the symbols were found might be regarded as made up of mere riddles and enigmas; but when these inventions should be actually found out, however much ridicule or contempt had been poured on the book before, it might be perfectly evident that the symbol was the most appropriate that could be used, and no one could doubt that it was a Divine communication of what was to be in the future.

Something of the same kind may have occurred in the symbols used by the writer of the book before us.

(4.) It is not necessary to suppose that a prophecy will be understood in all its details until the prediction is accomplished. In the case just referred to, though the fact of the rapid spread of intelligence might be clear, yet nothing would convey any idea of the mode or of the actual meaning of the symbols used, unless the inventions were themselves anticipated by a direct revelation. The trial of faith in the ease would be the belief that the fact would occur, but would not relate the mode in which it was to be accomplished, or the language employed to describe it. There might be great obscurity in regard to the symbols and language, and yet the knowledge of the fact be perfectly plain. When, however, the fact should occur as predicted, all would be clear. So it is in respect to prophecy. Many recorded predictions that are now clear as noon-day, were once as ambiguous and uncertain in respect to their meaning as in the supposed case of the press and the telegraph. Time has made them plain; for the event to which they referred has so entirely corresponded with the symbol as to leave no doubt in regard to the meaning. Thus many of the prophecies relating to the Messiah were obscure at the time when they were uttered; were apparently so contradictory that they could not be reconciled; were so unlike anything that then existed, that the fulfilment seemed to be impossible; and were so enigmatical in the symbols employed, that it seemed in vain to attempt to disclose their meaning. The advent of the long-promised Messiah, however, removed the obscurity, and now they are read with no uncertainty as to their meaning, and with no doubt that those predictions, once so obscure, had a Divine origin.

The view just suggested may lead us to some just conceptions of what is necessary to be done in attempting to explain the prophecies. Suppose then, first, that there had been, say in the dark ages, some predictions that claimed to be of Divine origin, of the invention of the art of printing and of the magnetic telegraph. The proper business of an interpreter, if he regarded this as a Divine communication, would have consisted in four things:

(a) to explain, as well as he could, the fair meaning of the symbols employed, and the language used;

(b) to admit the fact referred to, and implied in the fair interpretation of the language employed, of the rapid spread of intelligence in that future period, though he could not explain how it was to be done;

(c) in the meantime it would be a perfectly legitimate object for him to inquire whether there were any events occurring in the world, or whether there had been any, to which these symbols were applicable, or which would meet all the circumstances involved in them;

(d) if there were, then his duty would be ended; if there were not, then the symbols, with such explanation as could be furnished of their meaning, should be handed on to future times to be applied when the predicted events should actually occur. Suppose then, secondly, the case of the predictions respecting the Messiah, scattered along through many books, and given in various forms, and by various symbols. The proper business of an interpreter would have been, as in the other case,

(a) to explain the fair meaning, of the language used, and to bring together all the circumstances m one connected whole, that a distinct conception of the predicted Messiah might be before the mind;

(b) to admit the facts referred to, and thus predicted, however incomprehensible and apparently contradictory they might appear to be;

(c) to inquire whether any one had appeared who combined within himself all the characteristics of the description; and

(d) if no one had thus appeared, to send on the prophecies, with such explanations of words and symbols as could be ascertained to be correct, to future times, to have their full meaning developed when the object of all the predictions should be accomplished, and the Messiah should appear. Then the meaning of all would be plain; and then the argument from prophecy would be complete. This is obviously now the proper state of the mind in regard to the predictions in the Bible, and these are the principles which should be applied in examining the book of Revelation.

(5.) It may be assumed that new light *will* be thrown upon the prophecies by time, and by the progress of events. It cannot be supposed that the investigations of the meaning of the prophetic symbols will all be in vain. Difficulties, it is reasonable to hope, may be cleared up; errors may be detected in regard to the application of the prophecies to particular events; and juster views on the prophecies, as on all other subjects, will prevail as the world grows older. We become wiser by seeing the errors of those who have gone before us, and an examination of the causes which led them astray may enable us to avoid such errors in the future. :Especially may it be supposed that light will be thrown on the prophecies as they shall be in part or wholly fulfilled. The prophecies respecting the destruction of Babylon, of Petra, of Tyre, of Jerusalem, are now fully understood; the prophecies respecting the advent of the Messiah, and his character and work, once so obscure, are now perfectly clear. So, we have reason to suppose, it will be with all prophecy in the progress of events, and sooner or later the world will settle down into some uniform belief in regard to the design and meaning of these portions of the sacred writings. Whether the time has yet come for this, or whether numerous other failures are to be added to the melancholy catalogue of past failures on this subject, is another question; but ultimately all the now unfulfilled prophecies will be as clear as to their meaning as are those which have been already fulfilled.

(6.) The plan, therefore, which I propose in the examination of the remaining portion of the Apocalypse is the following:

(a) To explain the meaning of the symbols; that is, to show, as clearly as possible, what those symbols properly express, independently of any attempt to apply them. This opens, of itself, an interesting field of investigation, and one where essential service may be done, even if nothing further is intended. Without any reference to the application of those symbols, this, of itself, is an important work of criticism, and, if successfully done, would be rendering a valuable service to the readers of the sacred volume.

(b) To state, as briefly as possible, what others who have written on this book, and who have brought eminent learning and talent to bear on its interpretation, have supposed to be the true interpretation of the symbols employed by John, and in regard to the times in which the events referred to would occur. It is in this way only that we can be made acquainted with the real progress made in interpreting this book, and it will be useful at least to know how the subject has struck other minds, and how and why they have failed to perceive the truth. I propose therefore to state, as I go along, some of the theories which have been held as to the meaning of the Apocalypse, and as to the events which have been supposed by others to be referred to. My limits require, however, that this should be briefly done, and forbid my attempting to examine those opinions at length.

(c) To state, in as brief and clear a manner as possible, the view which I have been led to entertain as to the proper application of the symbols employed in the book, with such historical references as shall seem to me to confirm the interpretation proposed.

(d) Where I cannot form an opinion as to the meaning, to confess my ignorance. He does no service in a professed interpretation of the Bible who passes over a difficulty without attempting to remove it, or who, to save his own reputation, conceals the fact that there is a real difficulty; and he does as little service who is unwilling to confess his ignorance on many points, or who attempts an explanation where he has no clear and settled views. As his opinion can be of no value to any one else unless it is based on reasons in his own mind that will bear examination, so it can usually be of little value unless those reasons are stated. It is as important for his readers to have those reasons before their own minds as it is for him; and unless he has it in his power to state reasons for what he advances, his opinions can be worth nothing to the world. He who lays down this rule of interpretation may expect to have ample opportunity in interpreting such a book as the Apocalypse to confess his ignorance; but he who interprets a book which he believes to be inspired may console himself with the thought that what is now obscure will be clear hereafter, and that he performs the best service which he can if he endeavours to explain the book up to the time in which he lives. There will be developments hereafter which win make that clear which is now obscure; developments which will make this book, in all past ages apparently so enigmatical, as clear as any other portion of the inspired volume, as it is now, even with the imperfect view which we may have of its meaning, beyond all question one of the most sublime books that has ever been written.

This chapter describes the opening of the first six seals.

(1.) The first discloses a white horse with a rider armed with a bow. A crown is given to him, symbolical of triumph and prosperity, and he goes forth to conquer, Re 6:1,2.

(2.) The second discloses a red-coloured horse with a rider. The emblem is that of blood—of sanguinary war. Power is given him to take peace from the earth, and a sword is given him—emblem of war, but not of certain victory. Triumph and prosperity are denoted by the former symbol; war, discord, bloodshed by this, Re 6:3,4.

(3.) The third discloses a black horse with a rider. He has a pair of balances in his hand, as if there were scarcity in the earth, and he announces the price of grain in the times of this calamity, and a command is given not to hurt the oil and the wine, Re 6:5,6. The emblem is that of scarcity—as if there were oppression, or as a consequence of war or discord, while at the same time there is care bestowed to preserve certain portions of the produce of the earth from injury.

(4.) The fourth discloses a pale horse with a rider. The name of this rider is Death, and Hell, or Hades, follows him—as if the hosts of the dead came again on the earth. Power is given to the rider over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and with wild beasts. This emblem would seem to denote war, wide-wasting pestilence, famine, and desolation —as if wild beasts were suffered to roam over lands that had been inhabited: something of which paleness would be an emblem. Here ends the array of horses; and it is evidently intended by these four symbols to refer to a series of events that have a general resemblance —something that could be made to stand by themselves, and that could be grouped together.

(5.) The fifth seal opens a new scene. The horse and the rider no longer appear. It is not a scene of war, and of the consequences of war, but a scene of persecution. The souls of those who were slain for the word of God and the testimony which they held are seen under the altar, praying to God that he would avenge their blood. White robes are given them—tokens of the Divine favour, and emblems of their ultimate triumph; and they are commanded to "rest for a little season, till their fellow-servants and their brethren that should be killed as they were should be fulfilled:" that is, that they should be patient until the number of the martyrs was filled up. In other words, there was

(a) the assurance of the Divine favour towards them;

(b) vengeance, or the punishment of those who had persecuted them, would not be immediate; but

(c) there was the implied assurance that just punishment would be inflicted on their persecutors, and that the cause for which they had suffered would ultimately triumph, Re 6:9-11.

(6.) The opening of the sixth seal, Re 6:12-17. There was an earthquake, and the sun became dark, and the moon was turned to blood, and the stars fell, and all kings and people were filled with consternation. This symbol properly denotes a time of public commotion, of revolution, of calamity; and it was evidently to be fulfilled by some great changes on the earth, or by the overturning of the seats of power, and by such sudden revolutions as would fill the nations with alarm.

Verse 1. *And I saw*. Or, I looked. He fixed his eye attentively on what was passing, as promising important disclosures. No one had been found in the universe who could open the seals but the Lamb of God, (Re 5:2-4) and it was natural for John, therefore, to look upon the transaction with profound interest.

When the Lamb opened one of the seals. **See Barnes** "Re 5:1, seq. This was the first or outermost of the seals, and its being broken would permit a certain portion of the volume to be unrolled and read. **See Barnes "Re 5:1"**.

The representation in this place is, therefore, that of a volume with a small portion unrolled, and written on both sides of the parchment.

And I heard, as it were the noise of thunder. One of the four living creatures speaking as with a voice of thunder, or with a loud voice.

One of the four beasts. **See Barnes on** "Re 4:6, **See Barnes "Re 4:7"**.

The particular one is not mentioned, though what is said in the subsequent verses leaves no doubt that it was the first in order as seen by John-the one like a lion, Re 4:7. In the opening of the three following seals, it is expressly said that it was the second, the third, and the fourth of the living creatures that drew near, and hence the conclusion is certain that the one here referred to was the first.

If the four living creatures be understood to be emblematic of the Divine providential administration, then there was a propriety that they should be represented as summoning John to witness what was to be disclosed. These events pertained to the developments of the Divine purposes, and these emblematic beings would therefore be interested in what was occurring.

Come and see. Addressed evidently to John. He was requested to approach and *see* with his own eyes what was disclosed in the portion of the volume now unrolled. He had wept much (Re 5:4) that no one was found who was worthy to open that book, but he was now called on to approach and see for himself. Some have supposed (Lord, *in loc*.) that the address here was not to John, but to the horse and his rider, and that the command to them was not to "come and see," but to *come forth*, and appear on the stage, and that the act of the Redeemer in breaking the seal, and unrolling the scroll, was nothing more than an emblem signifying that it was by his act that the Divine purposes were to be unfolded. But, in order to this interpretation, it would be necessary to omit from the received text the words *kai blepe*—"*and see*." This is done indeed by Hahn and Tittman, and this reading is followed by Professor Stuart, though he says that the received text has "probability" in its favour, and is followed by some of the critical editions. The most natural interpretation, however, is that the words were addressed to John. John saw the Lamb open the seal; he heard the loud voice; he looked and beheld a white horse—that is, evidently, he looked on the unfolding volume, and

saw the representation of a horse and his rider. That the voice was addressed to John is the common interpretation, is the most natural, and is liable to no real objection.

{a} "seals" Re 5:5

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 6 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And I saw, and behold*. A question has arisen as to the mode of representation here: whether what John saw in these visions was a series of *pictures*, drawn on successive portions of the volume as one seal was broken after another; or whether the description of the horses and of the events was *written* on the volume, so that John read it himself or heard it read by another; or whether the opening of the seal was merely the *occasion* of a scenic representation, in which a succession of horses was introduced, with a written statement of the events which are referred to. Nothing is indeed said by which this can be determined with certainty; but the most probable supposition would seem to be that there was some pictorial representation in form and appearance, such as he describes in the opening of the six seals. In favour of this it may be observed

(1) that, according to the interpretation of Re 6:1, it was something *in* or *on* the volume—since he was invited to draw nearer, in order that he might contemplate it.

(2.) Each one of the things under the first five seals where John uses the word "saw," is capable of being represented by a picture or painting.

(3.) The language used is not such as would have been employed if he had merely *read* the description, or had *heard* it read.

(4.) The supposition that the pictorial representation was not *in* the volume, but that the opening of the seal was the occasion merely of causing a scenic representation to pass before his mind, is unnatural and forced. What would be the use of a sealed *volume* in that case? What the use of the *writing* within and without? On this supposition the representation would be that, as the successive seals were broken, nothing was disclosed in the volume but a succession of blank portions, and that the mystery or the difficulty was not in anything in the volume, but in the want of ability to summon forth these successive scenic representations. The most obvious interpretation is, undoubtedly, that what John proceeds to describe was in some way represented in the volume; and the idea of a succession of pictures or drawings better accords with the whole representation than the idea that it was a mere written description. In fact, these successive scenes could be well represented now in a pictorial form on a scroll.

And behold a white horse. In order to any definite understanding of what was denoted by these symbols, it is proper to form in our minds, in the first place, a clear conception of what the symbol properly represents, or an idea of what it would naturally convey. It may be assumed that the symbol was significant, and that there was some reason why that was used rather than another; why, for instance, a *horse* was employed rather than an eagle or a lion; why a *white* horse was employed in one case, and a red one, a black one, a pale one in the others; why in this case a bow was in the hand of the rider, and a crown was placed on his head. Each one of these particulars enters into the constitution of the symbol; and we must find something in the event which *fairly* corresponds with each—for the symbol is made up of all these things grouped together. It may be farther observed, that where the general symbol is the same—as in the opening of the first four seals—it may be

assumed that the same object or class of objects is referred to; and the *particular* things denoted, or the diversity in the general application, is to be found in the *variety* in the representation—the colour, etc., of the horse, and the arms, apparel, etc., of the rider. The specifications under the first seal are four:

(1) the general symbol of the horse—common to the first four seals;

(2) the colour of the horse;

(3) the fact that he that sat on him had a bow; and

(4) that a crown was given him by some one as indicative of victory. The question now is, what these symbols would naturally denote.

{b} "white horse" Zec 6:3 {c} "conquering" Ps 14:3-5

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 6 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And when he had opened the second seal*. So as to disclose another portion of the volume. **See Barnes "Re 5:1"**.

I heard the second beast say. The second beast was like a calf or an ox. **See Barnes "Re 4:7"**.

It cannot be supposed that there is any special significancy in the fact that the *second* beast addressed the seer on the opening of the *second* seal, or that, so far as the symbol was concerned, there was any reason why this living creature should approach on the opening of this seal rather than on either of the others. All that seems to be designed is, that as the living creatures are intended to be emblems of the providential government of God, it was proper to represent that government as concerned in the opening of each of these four seals indicating important events among the nations.

Come and see. **See Barnes "Re 6:1"**.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 6 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And there went out another horse*. In this symbol there were, as in the others, several particulars which it is proper to explain in order that we may be able to understand its application. The particular things in the symbol are the following:

(a) The horse. **See Barnes "Re 6:2"**.

(b) The colour of the horse: *another horse* that was *red*. This symbol cannot be mistaken. As the white horse denoted prosperity, triumph, and happiness, so this would denote carnage, discord, bloodshed. This is clear, not only from the nature of the emblem, but from the explanation immediately added: "And power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another," On the *colour*, compare Bochart, Hieroz. P. i. lib. ii. c. vii. p. 104. See also Zec 1:8. There is no possibility of mistaking this, that a time of *slaughter* is denoted by this emblem.

(c) The power given to him that sat on the horse: *and* power *was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another*. This would seem to indicate

that the condition immediately preceding this was a condition of tranquillity, and that this was now disturbed by some cause producing discord and bloodshed. This idea is confirmed by the original words—*thn eirhnhn* —"*the* peace;" that is, the previously existing peace. When peace in general is referred to, the word is used without the article: Mt 10:34, "Think not that I came to send peace—*balein eirhnhn* the earth." Compare Lu 1:79 2:14, 19:38 Mr 5:34; Joh 14:27 16:33

Ac 7:26 9:31, *et al*. in the Greek. In these cases, the word peace is without the article. The characteristics of the period referred to by this, are

(a) that peace and tranquillity existed before;

(b) that such peace and tranquillity were now taken away, and were succeeded by confusion and bloodshed; and

(c) that the particular form of that confusion was civil discord, producing mutual slaughter: "that they should kill one another."

(d) The presentation of a sword: *and there was given unto him a great sword*. As an emblem of what he was to do, or of the period that was referred to by the opening of the seal. The sword is an emblem of war, of slaughter, of authority, (Ro 13:4) and is here used as signifying that that period would be characterized by carnage. Compare Isa 34:5 Re 19:17-18 Le 26:25; Ge 27:40 Mt 10:34, 26:52.

It is not said *by whom* the sword was presented, but *the fact* is merely referred to, that the rider *was* presented with a sword as a symbol of what would occur.

In inquiring now into the period referred to by this symbol, we naturally look to that which immediately succeeded the one which was represented by the opening of the first seal; that is, the period which followed the accession of Commodus, A.D. 180. We shall find, in the events which succeeded his accession to the empire, a state of things which remarkably accords with the account given by John in this emblem—so much so, that if it were supposed that the book was written *after* these events had occurred, and that John had *designed* to represent them by this symbol, he could not have selected a more appropriate emblem. The only authority which it is necessary to refer to here is Mr. Gibbon; who, as before remarked, seems to have been raised up by a special Providence to make a record of those events which were referred to by some of the most remarkable prophecies in the Bible. As he had the highest qualifications for an historian, his statements may be relied on as accurate; and as he had no belief in the inspiration of the prophetic records, his testimony will not be charged with partiality in their favour. The following particulars, therefore, will furnish a full illustration of the opening of the second seal:

(a) The previous state of peace. This is implied in the expression, "and power was given to him to *take peace* from the earth." Of this we have had a full confirmation in the peaceful reign of Hadrian and the Antonines. Mr. Gibbon, speaking of the accession of Commodus to the imperial throne, says that he "had nothing to wish, and everything to enjoy. The beloved son of Marcus [Commodus] succeeded his father amidst the acclamations of the senate and armies; and when he ascended the throne, the happy youth saw around him neither competitor to remove, nor enemies to punish. In this calm elevated station, it was surely natural that he should prefer the love of mankind to their detestation; the mild glories of his five predecessors to the ignominious fate of Nero and Domitian," i. 51. So again, on the same page, he says of Commodus, "His graceful person, popular address, and undisputed virtues, attracted the public favour; the honourable peace which he had recently granted to the barbarians diffused an universal joy." No one can doubt that the accession of Commodus was preceded by a remarkable prevalence of peace and prosperity.

(b) Civil war and bloodshed: *to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another*. Of the applicability of this to the time supposed to be represented by this seal, we have the fullest confirmation in the series of civil wars commencing with the assassination of the emperor Commodus, A.D. 193, and continued with scarcely any intervals of intermission for eighty or ninety years. So Sismondi, on the fall of the Roman empire, (i. 36,) says, "With Commodus' death commenced the third and most calamitous period. It lasted ninety-two years, from 193 to 284. During that time, thirty-two emperors, and twenty-seven pretenders to the empire, alternately hurried each other from the throne, by incessant civil warfare. Ninety-two years of almost incessant civil warfare taught the world *on what a frail foundation the virtue of the Antonines had reared the felicity of the empire*." The full history of this period may be seen in Gibbon, i. pp. 50—197. Of course, it is impossible in these Notes to present anything like a complete account of the characteristics of those times. Yet the briefest summary may well show the general condition of the Roman empire then, and the propriety of representing it by the symbol of a red horse, as a period when peace would be taken from the earth, and when men would kill one another. Commodus himself is represented by Mr. Gibbon in the following words: "Commodus was not, as he has been represented, a tiger borne with an insatiate thirst of human blood, and capable, from his infancy, of the most inhuman actions. Nature had formed him of a weak rather than a wicked disposition. His simplicity and timidity rendered him the slave of his attendants, who gradually corrupted his mind. His cruelty, which at first obeyed the dictates of others, degenerated into habit, and at length became the ruling passion of his soul," i. 51. During the first three years of his reign, "his hands were yet unstained with blood," (*ibid*.,) but he soon degenerated into a most severe and bloody tyrant, and "when Commodus had once tasted human blood, he was incapable of pity or remorse," i. 52. "The tyrant's rage," says Mr. Gibbon, (i. 62,) "after having shed the noblest blood of the senate, at length recoiled on the principal instrument of his cruelty. While Commodus *was immersed in blood and luxury* he devolved the detail of public business on Perennis, a servile and ambitious minister, who had obtained his post by the murder of his predecessors," etc. "Every sentiment of virtue and humanity was extinct in the mind of Commodus," i. 55. After detailing the history of his crimes, his follies, and his cruelties, Mr. Gibbon remarks of him: "His cruelty proved at last fatal to himself. He had shed with impunity the best blood of Rome: he perished as soon as he was dreaded by his own domestics. Marcia, his favourite concubine, Eclectus, his chamberlain, and Laetus, his pretorian prefect, alarmed by the fate of their companions and predecessors, resolved to prevent the destruction which every hour hung over their heads, either from the mad caprice of the tyrant, or the sudden indignation of the people. Marcia seized the occasion of presenting a draught of wine to her lover, after he had fatigued himself with hunting some wild beasts. Commodus retired to sleep; but while he was labouring with the effects of poison and drunkenness, a robust youth, by profession a wrestler, entered his chamber, and strangled him without resistance," i. 57. The immediate consequence of the assassination of Commodus was the elevation of Pertinax to the throne, and his murder eighty-six days after.—*Decline and Fall*, i. 60. Then followed the public setting-up of the empire to sale by the pretorian guards, and its purchase by a wealthy Roman senator, Didius Julianus, or Julian, who, "on the throne of the world, found himself without a friend and without an adherent," i. 63. "The streets and public places in Rome resounded with clamours and imprecations." "The public discontent was soon diffused from the centre to the frontiers of the empire," i. 63. In the midst of this universal indignation, Septimius Severus, who then commanded the army in the neighbourhood of the Danube, resolved to avenge the death of Pertinax, and to

seize upon the imperial crown. He marched to Rome, overcame the feeble Julian, and placed himself on the throne. Julian, after having reigned sixty-six days, was beheaded in a private apartment of the baths of the palace, i. 67. "In less than four years, Severus subdued the riches of the East, and the valour of the West. He vanquished two competitors of reputation and ability, and defeated numerous armies provided with weapons and discipline equal to his own," i. 68. Mr. Gibbon then enters into a detail of "the two *civil wars* against Niger and Albinus"—rival competitors for the empire, (i. 68-70,) both of whom were vanquished, and both of whom were put to death "in their flight from the field of battle." Yet he says, "Although the wounds of civil war were apparently healed, its mortal poison still lurked in the vitals of the constitution," i. 71. After the death of Severus, then follows an account of the contentions between his sons, Geta and Caracalla, and of the death of the former by the instigation of the latter, (i. 77;) then of the remorse of Caracalla, in which it is said that "his disordered fancy often beheld the angry forms of his father and his brother rising into life to threaten and upbraid him," (i. 77;) then of the cruelties which Caracalla inflicted on the friends of Geta, in which "it was computed that, under the vague appellation of the friends of Get, above twenty thousand persons of both sexes suffered death," (i. 78;) then of the departure of Caracalla from the capital, and his cruelties in other parts of the empire, concerning which Mr. Gibbon remarks, (i. 78, 79;) that "Caracalla was the common enemy of mankind. Every province was by turns the scene of his rapine and cruelty. In the midst of peace and repose, upon the slightest provocation, he issued his commands at Alexandria in Egypt for a general massacre. From a secure post in the temple of Serapis, he viewed and directed the slaughter of many thousand citizens, as well as strangers, without distinguishing either the number or the crime of the sufferers," etc. Then follows the account of the assassination of Caracalla, (i. 80;) then, and in consequence of that, of the civil war which crushed Macrinus, and raised Elagabalus to the throne, (i. 83;) then of the life and follies of that wretched voluptuary, and of his massacre by the pretorian guards, (i. 86;) then, after an interval of thirteen years, of the murder of his successor, the second Severus, on the Rhine; then of the civil wars excited against his murderer and successor, Maximin, in which the two emperors of a day—the Gordians, father and son—perished in Africa, and Maximin himself, and his son, in the siege of Aquileia; then of the murder at Rome of the two joint emperors, Maximus and Balbinus; and quickly after that an account of the murder of their successor in the empire, the third and youngest Gordian, on the banks of the river Aboras; then of the slaughter of the next emperor Philip, together with his son and associate in the empire, in the battle near Verona:—and this state of things may be said to have continued until the accession of Diocletian to the empire, A. D. 284. See *Decline and Fall*, i. 110-197. Does any portion of the history of the world present a similar period of connected history that would be so striking a fulfilment of the symbols used here of "peace being taken from the earth," and "men killing one another?" In regard to this whole period it is sufficient, after reading Mr. Gibbon's account, to ask two questions:

(1.) If it were supposed that John lived *after* this period, and designed to represent this by an expressive symbol, could he have found one that would have characterized it better than this does?

(2.) And if it should be supposed that Mr. Gibbon *designed* to write a commentary on this "seal," and to show the exact fulfilment of the symbol, could he have selected a better portion of history to do it, or could he have better described facts that would be a complete fulfilment? It is only necessary to observe further,

(c) that this is a *marked* and *definite* period. It has such a beginning, and such a continuance and ending, as to show that this symbol was applicable to this *as* a period of the world. For it was

not only preceded by a state of peace, as is supposed in the symbol, but no one can deny that the condition of things in the empire, from Commodus onward through many years, was such as to be appropriately designated by the symbol here used.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 6 - Verse 5

Verses 5, 6. *And when he had opened the third seal*. Unfolding another portion of the volume. **See Barnes "Re 5:1"**.

I heard the third beast say, Come and see. **See Barnes on "Re 4:7"**.

It is not apparent why the *third* beast is represented as taking a particular interest in the opening of *this* seal, (**See Barnes on "Re 6:3"**) nor is it necessary to show why it was so. The general design seems to have been, to represent each one of the four living creatures as interested in the opening of the seals, but the *order* in which they did this does not seem to be a matter of importance.

And I beheld, and lo, a black horse. The specifications of the symbol here are the following:

(a) As before, the horse.

(b) The *colour* of the horse: *lo, a black horse*. This would properly denote distress and calamity—for *black* has been regarded always as such a symbol. So Virgil speaks of *fear* as black: "atrumque timorem."—AEn, ix. 619. So again, Georg. iv. 468:

"Caligantem nigra formidine Iucum."

So, as applied to the dying Acca, AEn. xii. 823:

"Tenebris nigrescunt omnia circum."

Black, in the Scriptures, is the image of fear, of famine, of death. La 5:10: "Our skin was black like an oven, because of the terrible famine." Jer 14:2: "Because of the drought Judah mourneth, and tile gates thereof languish; they are in deep mourning [literally, *black*] for the land." Joel 2:6: "All faces shall gather blackness." Na 2:10: "The knees smite together, and there is great pain in all loins, and the faces of them all gather blackness." Compare Re 6:12 Eze 32:7. See also Bochart, Hieroz. P. i. lib. ii. c. vii. pp. 106, 107. From the *colour* of the horse here introduced, we should naturally look for some dire calamity, though the *nature* of the calamity would not be designated by the mere use of the word *black*. What the calamity was to be, must be determined by what follows in the symbol. Famine, pestilence, oppression, heavy taxation, tyranny, invasion—any of these might be denoted by the colour of the horse.

(c) The balances: *and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand*. The original word, here rendered *a pair of balances*, is *zugon*. This word properly means *a yoke*, serving to couple anything together, as a yoke for cattle. Hence it is used to denote the *beam* of a balance, or of a pair of scales—and is evidently so used here. The idea is, that something was to be *weighed*, in order to ascertain either its *quantity* or its *value*. Scales or balances are the emblems of justice or equity, (compare Job 31:6 Ps 62:9; Pr 11:1 16:11) and when joined with symbols that denote the sale of corn and fruit by weight, become the symbol of scarcity. Thus "bread by weight" (Le 26:26) denotes scarcity. So in Eze 4:16, "And they shall eat bread by weight." The use of balances here as a symbol would signify that something was to be accurately and carefully weighed out. The connexion leads us to suppose that this would appertain to the necessaries of life, and that it would occur either in consequence of scarcity, or because there would be an accurate or severe exaction, as in collecting

a revenue on these articles. The balance was commonly the symbol of equity and justice; but it was also, sometimes, the symbol of exaction and oppression, as in Ho 12:7: "The balance of deceit is in his hands: he loveth to oppress." If the balances stood alone, and there were no proclamation as to what was to occur, we should look, under this seal, to a time of the exact administration of justice, as scales or balances are now used as emblems of the rigid application of the laws and of the principles of justice in courts, or in public affairs. If *this* representation stood alone, or if the black horse and the scales constituted the whole of the symbol, we should look for some severe administration, or perhaps some heavy calamity under a rigorous administration of laws. The reference, however, to the "wheat and barley," and to the price for which they were to be weighed out, serves still further to limit and define the meaning of the symbol as having reference to the necessaries of life—to the productions of the land—to the actual capital of the country. Whether this refers to scarcity, or to taxation, or both, must be determined by the other parts of the symbol.

(d) The proclamation: *And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say*. That is, from the throne, Re 4:6. The voice was not that of one of the four beasts, but it seemed to come from among them. As the rider went forth, this was the proclamation that was made in regard to him; or this is that which is symbolized in his going forth, to wit, that there would be such a state of things that a measure of wheat would be sold for a penny, etc. The proclamation consists essentially of two things—that which refers to the price or value of wheat and barley, and that which requires that care shall be taken not to injure the oil and the wine. Each of these demands explanation.

A measure of wheat for a penny. See Re 9:4. The word rendered *measure—coinix*, *choenix*—denotes an Attic measure for grain and things dry, equal to the forty-eighth part of the Attic medimnus, or the eighth part of the Roman modius, and consequently was nearly equivalent to one quart English.—*Rob. Lex*. The word rendered *penny*, *dhnarion*—Lat. *denarius*—was of the same value as the Greek *dracmh*, *drachme*, and was equivalent to about fourteen cents of our money. This was the usual price of a day's labour, Mt 20:2,9. The choenix, or measure of grain here referred to, was the ordinary daily allowance for one man.—*Odyss*. xix. 27, 28. See Stuart, *in loc*. The common price of the Attic medimnus of wheat was five or six denarii; but here, as that contained forty-eight choenixes, or quarts, the price would be augmented to forty-eight denarii—or it would be about eight times as dear as ordinary; that is, there would be a scarcity or famine. The price of a *bushel* of wheat at this rate would be about four dollars and a half of our money—a price which would indicate great scarcity, and which would give rise to much distress.

And three measures of barley for a penny. It would seem from this that barley usually bore about one-third the price of wheat. It was a less valuable grain, and perhaps was produced in greater abundance. This is not far from the proportion which the price of this grain usually bears to that of wheat, and here, as in the case of the wheat, the thing which would be indicated would be scarcity. This proclamation of "a measure of wheat for a penny" was heard either as addressed *to* the horseman, as a rule of action for him, or as addressed *by* the horseman as he went forth. If the former is the meaning, it would be an appropriate address to one who was going forth to collect tribute— with reference to the *exact* manner in which this tribute was to be collected, implying some sort of severity of exaction; or to one who should distribute wheat and barley out of the public granaries at an advanced price, indicating scarcity. Thus it would mean that a severe and heavy tax—represented by the scales and the scarcity—or a tax so severe as to *make* grain dear, was referred to. If the latter is the meaning, then the idea is that there would be a scarcity, and that grain would be dealt out by the government at a high and oppressive price. The latter idea would be as

consonant with the symbol of the scales and the price mentioned as the other, if it were not for the *additional* injunction not to "hurt the oil and the wine"—which cannot be well applied to the idea of dealing out grain at a high price. It can, however, be connected, by a fair interpretation of that passage, with such a severity of taxation that there would be a propriety in such a command— for, as we shall see, under the explanation of that phrase, such a law was actually promulgated as resulting from severity of taxation. The idea, then, in the passage before us would seem to be,

(a) that there would be a rigid administration of the law in regard to the matter under consideration—that pertaining to the productions of the earth—represented by the balances; and

(b) that that would be connected with general scarcity, or such an exercise of this power as to determine the price of grain, so that the price would be some three times greater than ordinary.

And see that thou hurt not the oil and the wine. There has been a great variety of interpretations proposed of this passage, and it is by no means easy to determine the true sense. The first inquiry in regard to it is, to whom is it addressed? Perhaps the most common impression on reading it would be, that it is addressed to the horseman with the balances, commanding *him* not to injure the oliveyards and the vineyards. But this is not probably the correct view. It does not appear that the horseman goes forth to destroy anything, or that the effect of his going forth is directly to injure anything. This, therefore, should not be understood as addressed to the horseman, but should be regarded as a general command to any and all *not* to injure the oliveyards and vineyards; that is, an order that nothing should be done essentially to injure them. If thus regarded as addressed to others, a fair and congruous meaning would be furnished by either of the following interpretations:—either

(a) considered as addressed to those who were disposed to be prodigal in their manner of living, or careless as to the destruction of the crop of the oil and wine, as they would now be needed; or

(b) as addressed to those who raised such productions, on the supposition that they would be *taxed* heavily, or that large quantities of these productions would be extorted for revenue, that they should not mutilate their fruit-trees in order to evade the taxes imposed by the government. In regard to the things specified here—oil and wine—it may be remarked, that they were hardly considered as articles of luxury in ancient times. They were almost as *necessary* articles as wheat and barley. They constituted a considerable part of the food and drink of the people, as well as furnished a large portion of the revenue, and it would seem to be with reference to that fact that the command here is given that they should not be injured; that is, that nothing should be done to diminish the quantity of oil and wine, or to impair the productive power of oliveyards and vineyards. The state of things thus described by this seal, as thus interpreted, would be,

(a) a rigid administration of the laws of the empire, particularly in reference to taxation, producing a scarcity among the necessary articles of living;

(b) a strong tendency, *from* the severity of the taxation, to mutilate such kinds of property, with a view either of concealing the real amount of property, or of diminishing the amount of taxes; and

(c) a solemn command from some authoritative quarter *not* to do this. A command from the ruling power *not* to do this would meet all that would be fairly demanded in the *interpretation* of the passage; and what is necessary in its application, is to find such a state of things as would correspond with these predictions; that is, such as a writer *would have* described *by* such symbols on the supposition that they were referred to.

Now, it so happens that there *were* important events which occurred in the Roman empire, and connected with its decline and fall, of sufficient importance to be noticed in a series of calamitous events, which corresponded with the symbol here, as above explained. They were such as these:

(a) The *general* severity of taxation, or the oppressive burdens laid on the people by the emperors. In the account which Mr. Gibbon gives of the operation of the *Indictions*, and *Superindictions*, though the specific laws on this subject pertained to a subsequent period, the general nature of the taxation of the empire and its oppressive character may be seem—*Decline and Fall*, i. 357-359. A general estimate of the amount of revenue to be exacted was made out, and the collecting of this was committed to the Pretorian prefects, and to a great number of subordinate officers. "The lands were measured by surveyors who were sent into the provinces; their nature, whether arable, or pasture, or woods, was distinctly reported; and an estimate made of their common value, from the average produce of five years. The number of slaves and of cattle constituted an essential part of the report; an oath was administered to the proprietors which bound them to disclose the true state of their affairs; and their attempts to prevaricate or elude the intention of the legislature were severely watched, and punished as a capital crime, which included the double guilt of treason and of sacrilege. According to the different nature of lands, their real produce in the various articles of *wine or oil*, corn or barley, wood or iron, was transported by the labour or at the expense of the provincials to the imperial magazines, from whence they were occasionally distributed for the use of the court or of tile army, and of the two capitals, Rome and Constantinople," i.p. 358. Comp. Lactant. de Mort. Persecut. c. 23.

(b) The particular order, under this oppressive system of taxation, respecting the preservation of vineyards and oliveyards, may be referred to, also, as corresponding to the command sent forth under this rider, not to "hurt the oil and the wine." That order was in the following words: "If any one shall sacrilegiously cut a vine, or stint the fruit of prolific boughs, and craftily feign poverty in order to avoid a fair assessment, he shall immediately on detection suffer death, and his property be confiscated."—Cod. Theod. 1. xiii. lib. xi. seq.; Gibbon, i. 358, note. Mr. Gibbon remarks, "Although this law is not without its studied obscurity, it is, however, clear enough to prove the minuteness of the inquisition and the disproportion of the penalty."

(c) Under this general subject of the severity of taxation—as a fact far-spreading and oppressive, and as so important as to hasten the downfall of the empire, may be noticed a distinct edict of Caracalla as occurring more directly in the period in which the rider with the balances may be supposed to have gone forth. This is stated by Mr. Gibbon, (i. 91,) as one of the important causes which contributed to the downfall of the empire. "The personal characters of the emperors, their victories, laws, and fortunes," says he, "can interest us no farther than they are connected with the general history of the decline and fall of the monarchy. Our constant attention to that object will not suffer us to overlook a most important edict of Antoninus Caracalla, which communicated to all the free inhabitants of the empire the name and privileges of Roman citizens. His unbounded liberality flowed not, however, from the sentiments of a generous mind: it was the sordid result of avarice," etc. He then proceeds, at length, to state the nature and operations of that law, by which a heavy tax, under the pretence of liberality, was in fact imposed on all the citizens of the empire—a fact which, in its ultimate results, the historian of the Decline and Fall regards as so closely connected with the termination of the empire. See Gibbon, i. pp. 91-95. After noticing the laws of Augustus, Nero, and the Antonines, and the real privileges conferred by them on those who became entitled to the rank of Roman citizens—privileges which were a compensation in the honour, dignity, and

offices of that rank for the measure of taxation which it involved, he proceeds to notice the fact that the *title* of "Roman citizen" was conferred by Caracalla on all the free citizens of the empire, involving the subjection to all the heavy taxes usually imposed on those who sustained the rank expressed by the title, but with nothing of the compensation connected with the title when it was confined to the inhabitants of Italy. "But the favour," says he, "which implied a distinction, was lost in the prodigality of Caracalla, and the reluctant provincials were compelled to assume *the vain title*, and the real *obligations*, of Roman citizens. Nor was the rapacious son of Severus [Caracalla] contented with such a measure of taxation as had appeared sufficient to his moderate predecessors. Instead of a twentieth, he exacted a tenth of all legacies and inheritances; and during his reign he crushed alike every part of the empire under the weight of his iron sceptre," i. 95. So again, (*ibid*.,) speaking of the taxes which had been lightened somewhat by Alexander, Mr. Gibbon remarks, "It is impossible to conjecture the motive that engaged him to spare so trifling a remnant of the soil; but the noxious weed, which find not been totally eradicated, again sprung up with the most luxuriant growth, and in the succeeding age darkened the Roman world with its deadly shade. In the course of this history, we shall be too often summoned to explain the land-tax, the capitation, and the heavy contributions of *corn, wine, oil*, and meat, which were exacted of the province for the use of the court, the army, and the capital." In reference to this whole matter of *taxation* as being one of the things which contributed to the downfall of the empire, and which spread woe through the falling empire—a woe worthy to be illustrated by one of the seals—a confirmation may be derived from the reign of Galerius, who, as Caesar, acted under the authority of Diocletian; who excited Diocletian to the work of persecution, (*Decline and Fall*, i. 317, 318;) and who, on the abdication of Diocletian, assumed the title of Augustus.- *Decline and Fall*, i. 222. Of his administration in general, Mr. Gibbon (i. 226) remarks: "About that time, the avarice of Galerius, or perhaps the exigencies of the state, had induced him to make a very strict and rigorous inquisition into the property of his subjects for the purpose of a general taxation, both on their lands and on their persons. A very minute survey appears to have been taken of their real estates; and wherever there was the slightest concealment, torture was very freely employed to obtain a sincere declaration of their real wealth." Of the nature of this exaction under Galerius; of the cruelty with which the measure was prosecuted—particularly in its bearing on Christians, towards whom Galerius cherished a mortal enmity, (*Decline and Fall*, i. 317;) and of the extent and severity of the suffering among Christians and others, caused by it, the following account of Lactantius (De Mort. Persecut. c. 23) will furnish a painful but most appropriate illustration:—"Swarms of exactors sent into the provinces and cities filled them with agitation and terror, as though a conquering enemy were leading them into captivity. The fields were separately measured, the trees and vines, the flocks and herds numbered, and an examination made of the men. In the cities, the cultivated and rude were united as of the same rank. The streets were crowded with groups of families, and every one required to appear with his children and slaves. Tortures and lashes resounded on every side. Sons were gibbeted in the presence of their parents, and the most confidential servants harassed that they might make disclosures against their masters, and wives that they might testify unfavourably of their husbands. If there were a total destitution of property, they were still tortured to make acknowledgments against themselves, and, when overcome by pain, inscribed for what they did not possess. Neither age nor ill-health was admitted as an excuse for not appearing. The sick and weak were borne to the place of inscription, a reckoning made of the age of each, and years added to the young and deducted from the old, in order to subject them to a higher taxation than the law imposed. The

whole scene was filled with wailing and sadness. In the mean time individuals died, and the herds and the flocks diminished, yet tribute was none the less required to be paid for the dead, so that it was no longer allowed either to live or die without a tax. Mendicants alone escaped, where nothing could be wrenched, and whom misfortune and misery had made incapable of farther oppression. These the impious wretch affecting to pity, that they might not suffer want, ordered to be assembled, borne off in vessels, and plunged into the sea." See Lord on the Apoc. pp. 128, 129. These facts in regard to the severity of taxation, and the rigid nature of the law enforcing it; to the sources of the revenue exacted in the provinces, and to the care that none of those sources should be diminished; and to the actual and undoubted bearing of all this on the decline and fall of the empire, are so strikingly applicable to the symbol here employed, that if it be supposed that it was *intended* to refer to them, no more natural or expressive symbol could have been used; if it were supposed that the historian *meant* to make a record of the fulfilment, he could not well have made a search which would more strikingly accord with the symbol. Were we *now* to represent these things by a symbol, we could scarcely find one that would be more expressive than that of a rider on a black horse with a pair of scales, sent forth under a proclamation which indicated that there would be a most rigid and exact administration of severe and oppressive laws, and with a special command, addressed to the people, not for the purposes of concealment, or from opposition to the government, to injure the sources of revenue.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 6 - Verse 6

Verse 6. **See Barnes "Re 6:5"**

{1} "measure" "The word *chaeniv* signifieth a measure containing
one wine quart, and the twelfth part of a quart.
{a} "hurt not" Re 9:4

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 6 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *And when he had opened the fourth seal*. **See Barnes "Re 5:1"**.

I heard the voice of the fourth beast say. The flying eagle. **See Barnes "Re 4:7"**.

As in the other cases, there does not appear to have been any particular reason why the *fourth* of the living creatures should have made this proclamation rather than either of the others. It was poetic and appropriate to represent each one in his turn as making proclamation.

Come and see. **See Barnes on "Re 6:1"**.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 6 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *And I looked, and behold a pale horse—-ippov clwrov*. On the *horse*, as an emblem, **See Barnes on "Re 6:2".**

The *peculiarity* of this emblem consists in the *colour* of the horse, the rider, and the power that was given unto him. In these there is entire harmony, and there can be comparatively little difficulty in the explanation and application. The *colour* of the horse was *pale—clwrov*. This word properly means *pale-green, yellowish-green*, like the colour of the first shoots of grass and herbage; then *green, verdant*, like young herbage, Mr 6:39 Re 8:7 Re 9:4; and then *pale, yellowish.—Rob. Lex*. The colour here would be an appropriate one to denote the reign of Death—as one of the most striking effects of death is *paleness*—and, of course, of death produced by any cause, famine, pestilence, or the sword. From this portion of the symbol, if it stood with nothing to limit and define it, we should naturally look for some condition of things in which death would prevail in a remarkable manner, or in which multitudes of human beings would be swept away. And yet, perhaps, from the very nature of *this* part of the symbol, we should look for the prevalence of death in some such peaceful manner as by famine or disease. The *red* colour would more naturally denote the ravages of death in war; the black, the ravages of death by sudden calamity; the pale would more obviously suggest famine or wasting disease.

And his name that sat on him was Death. No description is given of his aspect; nor does he appear with any emblem—as sword, or spear, or bow. There is evident scope for the fancy to picture to itself the form of the Destroyer; and there is just that kind of obscurity about it which contributes to sublimity. Accordingly, there has been ample room for the exercise of the imagination in the attempts to paint "Death on the pale horse," and the opening of this seal has furnished occasion for some of the greatest triumphs of the pencil. The simple *idea* in this portion of the symbol is, that Death would reign or prevail under the opening of this seal—whether by sword, by famine, or by pestilence, is to be determined by other descriptions in the symbol.

And Hell followed with him. Attended him as he went forth. On the meaning of the word here rendered *hell—adhv—hades*, **See Barnes "Lu 16:23"**; **See Barnes** "Job 10:21"; **See Barnes "Isa 14:9"**.

It is here used to denote the abode of the dead, considered as a place where they dwell, and not in the more restricted sense in which the word is now commonly used as a place of punishment. The idea is, that the dead would be so numerous at the going forth of this horseman, that it would seem as if the pale nations of the dead had come again upon the earth. A vast retinue of the dead would accompany him; that is, it would be a time when death would prevail on the earth, or when multitudes would die.

And power was given unto them. Marg., *to him*. The common Greek text is *autoiv—to them*. There are many MSS., however, which read *autw—to him*. So Professor Stuart reads it. The authority, however, is in favour of *them* as the reading; and, according to this, death and his train are regarded as grouped together, and the power is considered as given to them collectively. The sense is not materially varied.

Over the fourth part of the earth. That is, of the Roman world. It is not absolutely necessary to understand this as extending over *precisely* a fourth part of the world. Compare Re 8:7-10,12, 9:15, *et al*. Undoubtedly we are to look in the fulfilment of this to some far-spread calamity; to some severe visitations which would sweep off great multitudes of men. The *nature* of that visitation is designated in the following specifications.

To kill with sword. In war and discord—and we are, therefore, to look to a period of war.

And with hunger. With famine—one of the accompaniments of war—where armies ravage a nation, trampling down the crops of grain; consuming the provisions laid up; employing in war, or cutting off the men who would be occupied in cultivating the ground; making it necessary that they should take the field at a time when the grain should be sown or the harvest collected; and shutting up the people in besieged cities to perish by hunger. Famine has been not an unfrequent accompaniment of war; and we are to look for the fulfilment of this in its extensive prevalence.

And with death. Each of the other forms—"with the sword and with hunger"—imply that *death* would reign; for it is said that "power was given to *kill* with sword and with hunger." This word, then, must refer to death in some other form—to death that seemed to reign without any such *visible* cause as the "sword" and "hunger." This would well denote the pestilence—not an unfrequent accompaniment of war. For nothing is better fitted to produce this than the unburied bodies of the slain; the filth of a camp; the want of food; and the crowding together of multitudes in a besieged city: and, accordingly, the pestilence, especially in Oriental countries, has been often closely connected with war. That the *pestilence* is referred to here, is rendered more certain by the fact that the Hebrew word

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pestilence, which occurs about fifty times in the Old Testament, is rendered *yanatov*, *death*, more than thirty times in the Septuagint.

And with the beasts of the earth. With wild beasts. This, too, would be one of the consequences of war, famine, and pestilence. Lands would be depopulated, and wild beasts would be multiplied. Nothing more is necessary to make them formidable than a prevalence of these things; and nothing, in the early stages of society, or in countries ravaged by war, famine, and the pestilence, is more formidable. Homer, at the very beginning of his Iliad, presents us with a representation similar to this. Compare Eze 14:21: "I send my sore four judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the pestilence,"

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—Sept., as here, *yanaton*. See also 2Ki 17:26.

In regard to the fulfilment of this there can be little difficulty, if the principles adopted in the interpretation of the first three seals are correct. We may turn to Gibbon, and, as in the other cases, we shall find that he has been an unconscious witness of the fidelity of the representation in this seal. Two *general* remarks may be made before there is an attempt to illustrate the particular things in the symbol.

(a) The first relates to *the place* in the order of time, or in history, which this seal occupies. If the three former seals have been located with any degree of accuracy, we should expect that this would follow, not very remotely, the severe laws pertaining to taxation, which, according to Mr. Gibbon, contributed so essentially to the downfall of the empire. And if it be admitted to be probable that the fifth seal refers to a time of persecution, it would be most natural to fix this period between those times and the times of Diocletian, when the persecution ceased. I may be permitted to say, that I was led to fix on this period without having any definite view beforehand of what occurred *in* it, and was surprised to find in Mr. Gibbon what *seems* to be so accurate a correspondence with the symbol.

(b) The second remark is, that the *general* characteristics of this period, as stated by Mr. Gibbon, agree remarkably with what we should expect of the period from the symbol. Thus speaking of this whole period, (A.D. 243-268,) embracing the reigns of Decius, Gallus, AEmilianus, Valerian, and

Gallienus, he says, "From the great secular games celebrated by Philip to the death of the emperor Gallienus, there elapsed twenty years of shame and misfortune. During this calamitous period, every instant of time was marked, every province of the Roman world was afflicted by barbarous invaders and military tyrants, and the wearied empire seemed to approach the last and fatal moment of its dissolution," i. 135.

In regard to the *particular* things referred to in the symbol, the following specifications may furnish a sufficient confirmation and illustration:

(a) The killing with the sword. A fulfilment of this, so far as the *words* are concerned, might be found indeed in many portions of Roman history, but no one can doubt that it was eminently true of this period. It was the period of the *first* Gothic invasion of the Roman empire; the period when those vast hordes, having gradually come down from the regions of Scandinavia, and having moved along the Danube towards the Ukraine and the countries bordering on the Borysthenes, invaded the Roman territories from the East, passed over Greece, and made their appearance almost, as Mr. Gibbon says, within sight of Rome. Of this invasion, Mr. Gibbon says, "This is the first considerable occasion [the fact that the emperor Decius was summoned to the banks of the Danube, A.D. 250, by the invasion of the Goths] in which history mentions that great people, who afterwards broke the Roman power, sacked the capital, and reigned in Gaul, Spain, and Italy. So memorable was the part which they acted in the subversion of the Western empire, that the name of GOTHS is frequently, but improperly, used as a general appellation of rude and warlike barbarism," i. p. 136. As one of the illustrations that the "sword" would be used by "Death" in this period, we may refer to the siege and capture of Philippolis. "A hundred thousand persons are reported to have been massacred in the sack of that great city."— *Decline and Fall*, i. 140. "The whole period," says Mr. Gibbon, speaking of the reigns of Valerian and Gallienus, "was one uninterrupted series of confusion and calamity. The Roman empire was, at the same time, and on every side, attacked by the blind fury of foreign invaders, and the wild ambition of domestic usurpers," i. 144. "Such were the barbarians," says Mr. Gibbon, in the close of his description of the Goths at this period, and of the tyrants that reigned, "and such the tyrants, who, under the reigns of Valerian and Gallienus, dismembered the provinces, and reduced the empire to the lowest pitch of disgrace and ruin, from whence it seemed impossible that it should ever emerge," i. 158.

(b) Famine: "Shall kill with hunger." This would naturally be the consequence of long-continued wars, and of such invasions as those of the Goths. Mr. Gibbon says of this period, "Our habits of thinking so fondly connect the order of the universe with the fate of man, that this gloomy period of history has been decorated with inundations, earthquakes, uncommon meteors, preternatural darkness, and a crowd of prodigies, fictitious or exaggerated. But *a long and general famine* was a calamity of a more serious kind. It was the inevitable consequence of rapine and oppression, which extirpated the produce of the present, and the hope of future harvests," i. p. 159. Prodigies, and preternatural darkness, and earthquakes, were *not* seen in the vision of the opening of the *seal*—but *war* and *famine* were; and the facts stated by Mr. Gibbon are such as would be now appropriately symbolized by Death on the pale horse.

(c) Pestilence: "And shall kill with death." Of the pestilence which raged in this period, Mr. Gibbon makes the following remarkable statement, in immediate connexion with what he says of the famine: "Famine is almost always followed by epidemical diseases, the effect of scanty and unwholesome food. Other causes must, however have contributed to the furious plague, which, from the year 250 to the year 265, *raged without interruption in every province, every city, and*

almost every family in the Roman empire. During some time, five thousand persons died daily at Rome; and many towns that had escaped the hands of the barbarians were entirely depopulated," i. 169.

(d) Wild beasts: "And shall kill with the beasts of the earth." As already remarked, these are formidable enemies in the early stages of society, and when a country becomes from any cause depopulated. They are not mentioned by Mr. Gibbon as contributing to the decline and fall of the empire, or as connected with the calamities that came upon the world at that period. But no one can doubt that in such circumstances they would be likely to abound, especially if the estimate of Mr. Gibbon be correct, (i. 169,) when, speaking of these times, and making an estimate of the proportion of the inhabitants of Alexandria that had perished—which he says was more than one-half—he adds, "Could one venture to extend the analogy to the other provinces, we might suspect that *war, pestilence*, and *famine* had consumed in a few years the moiety of the human species." Yet, though not adverted to by Mr. Gibbon, there *is* a record pertaining to this very period, which shows that this was one of the calamities with which the world was then afflicted. It occurs in Arnobius, Adv. Gentes, lib. i. p. 6. Within a few years after the death of Gallienus, (about A.D. 300,) he speaks of wild beasts in such a manner as to show that they were regarded as a sore calamity. The public peril and suffering on this account were so great, that, in common with other evils, this was charged on Christians as one of the judgments of heaven which they brought upon the world. In defending Christians against the general charge that these judgments were sent from heaven on their account, he adverts to the prevalence of wild beasts, and shows that they could not have been sent as a judgment on account of the existence of Christianity, by the fact that they had prevailed also in the times of heathenism, long before Christianity was introduced into the empire. "Quando cum feris bella, et proelia cum leonibus gesta sunt? Non ante nos? Quando pernicies populis venenatis ab anguibus data est? Non ante nos?" "When were wars waged with wild beasts, and contests with lions? Was it not before our times? When did a plague come upon men poisoned by serpents? Was it not before our times?" In regard to the *extent* of the destruction which these causes would bring upon the world, there is a remarkable confirmation in Gibbon. To say, as is said in the account of the seal, that "a *fourth* part of the earth" would be subjected to the reign of death by the sword, by famine, by pestilence, and by wild beasts, may seem to many to be an improbable statement—a statement for the fulfilment of which we should look in vain to any historical records. Yet Mr. Gibbon, without expressly mentioning the plague of wild beasts, but referring to the three others —"war, pestilence, and famine"—goes into a calculation, in a passage already referred to, by which he shows that it is probable that from these causes *half* the human race was destroyed. The following is his estimate: "We have the knowledge of a very curious circumstance, of some use perhaps in the melancholy calculation of human calamities. An exact register was kept at Alexandria of all the citizens entitled to receive the distribution of corn. It was found that the ancient number of those comprised between the ages of forty and seventy had been equal to the whole sum of the claimants, from fourteen to fourscore years of age, who remained alive after the death of Gallienus. Applying this authentic fact to the most correct tables of mortality, it evidently proves that above half of the people of Alexandria had perished; and could we venture to extend the analogy to other provinces, *we might suspect that war, pestilence, and famine had consumed in a few years the moiety of the human species*," i. 159. The historian says that it might be "*suspected*" from these data that one-half of the human race had been cut off in a few years, from these causes; in the Apocalyptic vision it is said that power was given over one "*fourth*" of the earth. We may remark

(a) that the description in the symbol is as *likely* to be correct as the "suspicion" of the historian; and

(b) that his statement that in this period "a moiety of the race," or one-half of the race, perished, takes away all improbability from the prediction, and gives a most graphic confirmation of the symbol of *Death on the pale horse*. If such a desolation in fact occurred, there is no improbability in the supposition that it might have been prefigured by the opening of a prophetic seal. Such a wide-spread desolation would be *likely* to be referred to in a series of symbols that were designed to represent the downfall of the Roman power, and the great changes in human affairs that would affect the welfare of the church.

{1} "unto them" "unto him" {a} "kill" Eze 14:21

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 6 - Verse 9

Verses 9-11. *And when he had opened the fifth seal*. **See Barnes "Re 5:1"**; **See Barnes** "Re 6:1".

I saw under the altar. The four living creatures are no longer heard as in the opening of the first four seals. No reason is given for the change in the manner of the representation; and none can be assigned, unless it be, that having represented each one of the four living creatures in their turn as calling attention to the remarkable events about to occur, there seemed to be no necessity or propriety in introducing them again. In itself considered, it cannot be supposed that they would be any less interested in the events about to be disclosed than they were in those which preceded. This seal pertains to *martyrs*—as the former successively did to a time of prosperity and triumph; to discord and bloodshed; to oppressive taxation; to war, famine, and pestilence. In the series of woes, it was natural and proper that there should be a vision of martyrs, if it was intended that the successive seals should refer to coming and important periods of the world; and accordingly we have here a striking representation of the martyrs crying to God to interpose in their behalf and to avenge their blood. The points which require elucidation are

(a) their position-under the altar;

(b) their invocation—or their prayer that they might be avenged;

(c) the clothing of them with robes; and

(d) the command to wait patiently a little time.

(1.) The position of the martyrs: *under the altar*. There were in the temple at Jerusalem two altars—the altar of burnt sacrifices, and the altar of incense. The altar here referred to was probably the former. This stood in front of the temple, and it was on this that the daily sacrifice was made. **See Barnes** "Mt 5:23, seq. We are to remember, however, that the temple and the altar were both destroyed before the time when this book was written, and this should, therefore, be regarded merely as a vision. John saw these souls *as if* they were collected under the altar at the place where the sacrifice for sin was made—offering their supplications. *Why* they are represented as being there is not so apparent; but probably two suggestions will explain this:

(a) The altar was the place where sin was expiated, and it was natural to represent these redeemed martyrs as seeking refuge there; and

(b) it was usual to offer prayers and supplications *at* the altar, in connexion with the sacrifice made for sin, and on the ground of that sacrifice. The idea is, that they who were suffering

persecution would naturally seek a refuge in the place where expiation was made for sin, and where prayer was appropriately offered. The *language* here is such as a Hebrew would naturally use; the *idea* is appropriate to any one who believes in the atonement, and who supposes that that is the appropriate refuge for those who are in trouble. But while the language here is such as a Hebrew would use, and while the reference in the language is to the altar of burnt sacrifice, the scene should be regarded as undoubtedly laid in heaven—the temple where God resides. The whole representation is that of fleeing to the atonement, and pleading with God in connexion with the sacrifice for sin.

The souls of them that were slain. That had been put to death by persecution. This is one of the incidental proofs in the Bible that the soul does not cease to exist at death, and also that it does not cease to be conscious, or does not sleep till the resurrection. These souls of the martyrs are represented as still in existence; as remembering what had occurred on the earth; as interested in what was now taking place; as engaged in prayer; and as manifesting earnest desires for the Divine interposition to avenge the wrongs which they had suffered.

For the word of God. On account of the word or truth of God. **See Barnes on "Re 1:9"**.

And for the testimony which they held. On account of their testimony to the truth, or being faithful witnesses of the truth of Jesus Christ. **See Barnes on "Re 1:9"**.

(2.) The invocation of the martyrs, Re 6:10: *And they cried with a loud voice*. That is, they pleaded that their blood might be avenged.

Saying, How long, Lord, holy and true. They did not doubt that God would avenge them, but they inquire *how long* the vengeance would be delayed. It seemed to them that God was slow to interpose, and to check the persecuting power. They appeal therefore to him as a God of holiness and truth; that is, as one who could not look with approval on sin, and in whose sight the wrongs inflicted by the persecuting power must be infinitely offensive; as one who was true to his promises, and faithful to his people. On the ground of his own hatred of wrong, and of his plighted faithfulness to his church, they pleaded that he would interpose.

Dost thou not judge and avenge our blood. That is, dost thou *forbear* to judge and avenge us; or dost thou delay to punish those who have persecuted and slain us. They do not speak as if they had any doubt that it would be done, nor as if they were actuated by a spirit of *revenge*; but as if it would be *proper* that there should be an expression of the Divine sense of the wrongs that had been done them. It is not right to desire vengeance or revenge; it is to desire that justice should be done, and that the government of God should be vindicated. The word "*judge*" here may either mean "judge *us*," in the sense of "vindicate *us*," or it may refer to their persecutors, meaning "judge *them*." The more probable sense is the latter: "How long dost thou forbear to execute judgment on our account on those that dwell on the earth?" The word *avenge* —*ekdikew*—means to do justice; to execute punishment.

On them that dwell on the earth. Those who are still on the earth. This shows that the scene here is laid in heaven, and that the souls of the martyrs are represented as there. We are not to suppose that this *literally* occurred, and that John actually saw the souls of the martyrs beneath the altars—for the whole representation is symbolical; nor are we to suppose that the injured and the wronged in heaven actually pray for vengeance on those who wronged them, or that the redeemed in heaven will continue to pray with reference to things on the earth; but it may be fairly inferred from this that there will be *as real* a remembrance of the wrongs of the persecuted, the injured, and the oppressed, *as if* such prayer were offered there; and that the oppressor has as much to dread from the Divine vengeance as if those whom he has injured should cry in heaven to the God who

hears prayer, and who takes vengeance. The wrongs done to the children of God; to the orphan, the widow, the down-trodden; to the slave and the outcast, will be as certainly remembered in heaven as if they who are wronged should plead for vengeance there, for every act of injustice and oppression goes to heaven and pleads for vengeance. Every persecutor should dread the death of the persecuted *as if* he went to heaven to plead against him; every cruel master should dread the death of his slave that is crushed by wrongs; every seducer should dread the death and the cries of his victim; every one who does wrong in any way should remember that the sufferings of the injured cry to heaven with a martyr's pleadings, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood?"

(3.) The robes that were given to the martyrs: *And white robes were given unto every one of them*. Emblems of purity or innocence. **See Barnes "Re 3:5"**.

Here the robes would be an emblem of their innocence as martyrs; of the Divine approval of their testimony and lives, and a pledge of their future blessedness.

(4.) The command to wait: *And it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season*. That is, that they must wait for a little season before they could be avenged as they desired, Re 6:10. They had pleaded that their cause might be at once vindicated, and had asked how long it would be before it should be done. The reply is, that the desired vindication would not at once occur, but that they must wait until other events were accomplished. Nothing definite is determined by the phrase "a little season," or a short time. It is simply an intimation that this would not *immediately* occur, or was not soon to take place. Whether it refers to an existing persecution, and to the fact that they were to wait for the Divine interposition until that was over, and those who were then suffering persecution should be put to death and join them; or whether to a series of persecutions stretching along in the history of the world, in such a sense that the promised vengeance would take place only when all those persecutions were passed, and the number of the martyrs completed, cannot be determined from the meaning of their words. Either of these suppositions would accord well with what the language naturally expresses.

Until their fellow-servants also. Those who were then suffering persecution, or those who should afterwards suffer persecution, grouping all together.

And their brethren. Their brethren as Christians, and their brethren in trial: those then living, or those who would live afterwards and pass through similar scenes.

Should be fulfilled. That is, till these persecutions were passed through, and the number of the martyrs was complete. The state of things represented here would seem to be, that there was then a persecution raging on the earth. Many had been put to death, and their souls had fled to heaven, where they pleaded that their cause might be vindicated, and that their oppressors and persecutors might be punished. To this the answer was, that *they* were now safe and happy—that God approved their course, and that in token of his approbation, they should be clothed in white raiment; but that the invoked vindication could not at once occur. There were others who would yet be called to suffer as they had done, and they must wait until all that number was completed. *Then*, it is implied, God would interpose, and vindicate his name. The scene, therefore, is laid in a time of persecution, when many had already died, and when there were many more that were exposed to death; and a sufficient fulfilment of the passage, so far as the *words* are concerned, would be found in *any* persecution, where many might be represented as having already gone to heaven, and where there was a certainty that many more would follow. We naturally, however, look for the fulfilment of it in some period succeeding those designated by the preceding symbols. There would be no difficulty,

in the early history of the church, in finding events that would correspond with all that is represented by the symbol; but it is natural to look for it in a period succeeding that represented, under the fourth seal, by death on the pale horse. If the previous seals have been correctly interpreted, we shall not be much in danger of erring in supposing that this refers to the persecution under Diocletian; and perhaps we may find in one who never intended to write a word that could be construed as furnishing a proof of the fulfilment of the prophecies of the New Testament, what should be regarded as a complete verification of all that is represented here. The following particulars may justify this application:

(a) The *place* of that persecution in history: or the time when it occurred. As already remarked, if the previous seals have been rightly explained, and the fourth seal denotes the wars, the famine, and the pestilence, under the invasion of the Goths, and in the time of Valerian and Gallienus, then the last great persecution of the church under Diocletian would well accord with the period in history referred to. Valerian died in A.D. 260, being flayed alive by Sapor, king of Persia; Gallienus died in A.D. 268, being killed at Milan. Diocletian ascended the throne A.D. 284, and resigned the purple A.D. 304. It was during this period, and chiefly at the instigation of Galerius, that the tenth persecution of the Christians occurred—the last under the Roman power; for, in A. D. 306, Constantine ascended the throne, and ultimately became the protector of the church.

(b) The *magnitude* of this persecution under Diocletian is as consonant to the representation here as its place in history. So important was it, that, in a general chapter on the persecutions of the Christians, Mr. Gibbon has seen fit, in his remarks on the nature, causes, extent, and character of the persecutions, to give a prominence to this which he has not assigned to any others, and to attach an importance to it which he has not to any other. See vol. i. pp. 317-322. The *design* of this persecution, as Mr. Gibbon expresses it, (i. 318,) was "to set bounds to the progress of Christianity;" or, as he elsewhere expresses it, (on the same page,) "the destruction of Christianity." Diocletian, himself naturally averse from persecution, was excited to this by Galerius, who urged upon the emperor every argument by which he could persuade him to engage in it. Mr. Gibbon says in regard to this, "Galerius at length extorted from him [Diocletian] the permission of summoning a council, composed of a few persons, the most distinguished in the civil and military department of the state. It may be presumed that they insisted on every topic which might interest the pride, the piety, the fears of their sovereign *in the destruction of Christianity*," i. 318. The *purpose*, evidently, in the persecution, was, to make a last and desperate effort through the whole Roman empire for the destruction of the Christian religion; for Mr. Gibbon (i. 320) says, that "the edict against the Christians was designed for a general law *of the whole empire*." Other efforts had failed. The religion still spread, notwithstanding the rage and fury of nine previous persecutions. It was resolved to make one more effort. This was *designed* by the persecutors to be the last, in the hope that then the Christian name would cease to be: in the Providence of God it *was* the last—for then even these opposing powers became convinced that the religion could not be destroyed in this manner—and as this persecution was to establish this fact, it was an event of sufficient magnitude to be symbolized by the opening of one of the seals.

(c) The *severity* of this persecution accorded with the description here, and was such as to deserve a place in the series of important events which were to occur in the world. We have seen above, from the statement of Mr. Gibbon, that it was designed for the "whole empire," and it in fact raged with fury throughout the empire. After detailing some of the events of local persecutions under Diocletian, Mr. Gibbon says, "The resentment or the fears of Diocletian at length transported

him beyond the bounds of moderation, which he had hitherto preserved, and he declared, in a series of edicts, his intention of abolishing the Christian name. By the first of these edicts, the governors of the provinces were directed to apprehend all persons of the ecclesiastical order; and the prisons destined for the vilest criminals were soon filled with a multitude of bishops, presbyters, deacons, and exorcists. By a second edict, the magistrates were commanded to employ every method of severity which might reclaim them from their odious superstition, and oblige them to return to the established worship of the gods. This rigorous order was extended, by a subsequent edict, to the whole body of Christians, who were exposed to a violent and general persecution. Instead of those solitary restraints, which had required the direct and solemn testimony of an accuser, it became the duty as well as the interest of the imperial officers to discover, to pursue, and to torment the most obnoxious among the faithful. Heavy penalties were denounced against all who should presume to save a proscribed sectary from the just indignation of the gods, and of the emperors," i. 322. The first decree against the Christians, at the instigation of Galerius, will show the general nature of this fiery trial of the church. That decree was to the following effect: "All assembling of the Christians for the purposes of religious worship was forbidden; the Christian churches were to be demolished to their foundations; all manuscripts of the Bible should be burned; those who held places of honour or rank must either renounce their faith or be degraded; in judicial proceedings the torture might be used against all Christians, of whatever rank; those belonging to the lower walks of private life were to be divested of their rights as citizens and as freemen; Christian slaves were to be incapable of receiving their freedom, so long as they remained Christians."—Neander, Hist. of the Church, Torrey's Trans. i. 148. This persecution was the last against the Christians by the Roman emperors; the last that was waged by that mighty Pagan power. Diocletian soon resigned the purple, and after the persecution had continued to rage, with more or less severity, under his successors, for ten years, the peace of the church was established. "Diocletian," says Mr. Gibbon, (i. 322,) "had no sooner published his edicts against the Christians, than, as if he had been committing to other hands his work of persecution, he divested himself of the imperial purple. The character and situation of his colleagues and successors sometimes urged them to enforce, and sometimes to suspend, the execution of these rigorous laws; nor can we acquire a just and distinct idea of this important period of ecclesiastical history, unless we separately consider the state of Christianity in the different parts of the empire, during the space of ten years which elapsed between the first edicts of Diocletian and *the final peace of the church*."

For this detail, consult Gibbon, i. 322-329, and the authorities there referred to; and Neander, Hist. of the Church, i. 147-156. Respecting the details of the persecution, Mr. Gibbon remarks, (i. 326,) "It would have been an easy task, from the history of Eusebius, from the declaration of Lactantius, and from the most ancient acts, to collect a long series of horrid and disgustful pictures, and to fill many pages with racks and scourges, with iron-hooks, and red-hot beds, and with the variety of tortures which fire and steel, savage beasts, and more savage executioners, could inflict on the human body." It is true that Mr. Gibbon professes to doubt the truth of these records, and attempts to show that the account of the number of the martyrs has been greatly exaggerated; yet no one, in reading his own account of this persecution, can doubt that it was the result of a determined effort to blot out the Christian religion, and that the whole of the imperial power was exerted to accomplish this end. At length, the last of the imperial persecutions ceased, and the great truth was demonstrated that Christianity could not be extinguished by power, and that "the gates of hell could not prevail against it." "In the year 311," says Neander, (i. 156,) "the remarkable edict appeared

which put an end to the last sanguinary conflict of the Christian church and the Roman empire." This decree was issued by the author and instigator of the persecution, Galerius, who, "softened by a severe and painful disease, the consequence of his excesses, had been led to think that the God of the Christians might, after all, be a powerful being, whose anger punished him, and whose favour he must endeavour to conciliate." This man suspended the persecution, and gave the Christians permission "once more to hold their assemblies, provided they did nothing contrary to the good order of the Roman state." "Ita ut ne quid contra disciplinam agant."— Neander, *ibid*.

{a} "altar" Re 8:3 {b} "souls" Re 20:4

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 6 - Verse 10

Verse 10. **See Barnes "Re 6:9"**

{d} "how long" Zec 1:12 {e} "avenge" Re 11:18 De 32:41-43

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 6 - Verse 11

Verse 11. **See Barnes "Re 6:9"**

{a} "white robes" Re 7:9,14 {b} "rest" Re 14:13 {c} "until" Heb 11:40

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 6 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal*.

See Barnes "Re 5:1; Re 6:1 ".

And, lo, there was a great earthquake. Before endeavouring to ascertain to what the sixth seal was designed to refer, it is proper, as in the previous cases, to furnish a particular explanation of the meaning of the symbols. **See Barnes** "Re 6:13, seq. All the symbols represented in the opening of this seal denote consternation, commotion, changes; but still they are all significant, and we are to suppose that something would occur corresponding with each one of them. It cannot be supposed that the things here described were represented on the part of the roll or volume that was now unfolded in any other way than that they were pictures, or that the whole was a species of panoramic representation made to pass before the eyes. Thus understood, it would not be difficult to represent each one of these things in a painting: as the heaving ground—the agitated forests—the trembling hills—the falling cities and houses—the sun blackened, and the moon turned to blood.

(a) The earthquake: *There was a great earthquake*. Re 6:12. The word here used denotes a shaking or agitation of the earth. The effect, when violent, is to produce important changes—opening chasms in the earth; throwing down houses and temples; sinking hills, and elevating plains; causing ponds and lakes to dry up, or forming them where none existed; elevating the ocean from its bed,

rending rocks, etc. As all that occurs in the opening of the other seals is symbolical, it is to be presumed that this is also, and that for the fulfilment of this we are not to look for a literal earthquake, but for such agitations and changes in the world as would be properly symbolized by this. The earthquake, as a symbol, would merely denote great agitations or overturnings on the earth. The particular character of those changes must be determined by other circumstances in the symbol that would limit and explain it. There are, it is said, but three literal earthquakes referred to in the Scripture: that mentioned in 1Ki 19:11; that in Uzziah's time, Am 1:1 Zec 14:5. and that which took place at the Saviour's death. All the rest are emblematical or symbolical—referring mostly to civil commotions and changes. Then in Hag 2:6-7: "Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land, and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come; and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts." That is, there would be great agitations in the world before he came. **See Barnes on "Heb 12:26-28"**.

So also great changes and commotions are referred to in Isa 24:19-20: "The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage." An *earthquake*, if there were no other circumstances limiting and explaining the symbol, would merely denote great agitation and commotion—*as if* states and empires were tumbling to ruin. As this is here a mere *symbol*, it is not necessary to look for a literal fulfilment, or to expect to find in history actual earthquakes to which this had reference, any more than when it is said that "the heavens departed as a scroll" we are to expect that they will be literally rolled up; but if, in the course of history, earthquakes preceded remarkable political convulsions and revolutions, it would be proper to represent such events in this way.

The darkening of the sun: *And the sun became black as sackcloth of hair*. Sackcloth was a coarse black cloth, commonly, though not always, made of hair. It was used for sacks, for strainers, and for mourning garments; and as thus worn it was not an improper emblem of sadness and distress. The idea here is, that the sun put on a dark, dingy, doleful appearance, *as if* it were in mourning. The general image, then, in this emblem, is that of calamity—*as if* the very sun should put on the robes of mourning. We are by no means to suppose that this was *literally* to occur, but that *some* great calamity would happen of which this would be an appropriate emblem. **See Barnes** "Isa 13:10, **See Barnes "Mt 24:29"**.

Compare Isa 24:23 34:4. Isa 50:3 60:19-20; Eze 32:7-8 Joe 2:10, 3:15-16

Am 8:9. What is the particular nature of the calamity is to be learned from other parts of the symbol.

The discolouration of the moon: *And the moon became as blood*. Red like blood—either from the smoke and vapour that usually precedes an earthquake, or as a mere emblem. This also would betoken calamity, and *perhaps* the symbol may be so far limited and modified by this as to denote *war*, for that would be most naturally suggested by the colour—*red*. **See Barnes on "Re 6:4"**.

But *any* great calamity would be appropriately represented by this—as the change of the moon to such a colour would be a natural emblem of distress.

See also:

See Barnes "Re 6:13, seq.

{a} "earthquake" Re 16:18 {b} "sun" Joe 2:10,31, 3:15 Mt 24:29

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 6 - Verse 13

Verse 13. The falling of the stars: *And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth*. This *language* is derived from the poetic idea that the sky seems to be a solid concave in which the stars are *set*, and that, when any convulsion takes place, that concave will be shaken, and the stars will be loosened and fall from their places. See this language explained in **Barnes "Isa 34:4"**.

Sometimes the expanse above us is spoken of as a curtain that is spread out and that may be rolled up; sometimes as a solid crystalline expanse in which the stars are fixed. According to either representation, the stars are described as falling to the earth. If the expanse is *rolled up*, the stars, having nothing to support them, fall; if violent tempests or concussions shake the heavens, the stars, loosened from their fixtures, fall to the earth. Stars, in the Scriptures, are symbols of princes and rulers, (see Da 8:10 Re 8:10-11, 9:1) and the natural meaning of this symbol is, that there would be commotions which would unsettle princes, and bring them down from their thrones—like stars falling from the sky.

Even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs. Marg., *green*; Gr., *olunyouv*. This word properly denotes *winter-figs*, or such as grow under the leaves, and do not ripen at the proper season, but hang upon the trees during the winter.— *Rob. Lex*. This fruit seldom matures, and easily falls off in the spring of the year. —Stuart, *in loc*. A violent wind shaking a plantation of fig-trees would of course cast many such figs to the ground. The point of the comparison is, the ease with which the stars would seem to be shaken from their places, and hence the ease with which, in these commotions, princes would be dethroned.

See also:

Barnes "Re 6:14, seq.

{c} "stars" Re 8:10 {1} "untimely" "green"

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 6 - Verse 14

Verse 14. The departing of the heavens: *And the heaven departed as a scroll*. That is, as a book or volume—*biblion*—rolled up. The heavens are here described as spread out, and their passing away is represented by the idea that they might be rolled up, and thus disappear. See **Barnes "Isa 34:4"**.

This too is a symbol, and we are not to suppose that it will literally occur. Indeed, it never *can* literally occur; and we are not, therefore, to look for the fulfilment of this in any physical fact that would correspond with what is here said. The plain meaning is, that there would be changes *as if* such an event would happen; that is, that revolutions would occur in the high places of the earth, and among those in power, *as if* the stars should fall, and the very heavens were swept away. This is the natural meaning of the symbol, and this accords with the usage of the language elsewhere.

The removal of mountains and islands: *And every mountain and island were moved out of their places*. This would denote convulsions in the political or moral world, as great as would occur in the physical world if the very mountains were removed, and the islands should change their places. We are not to suppose that this would literally occur, but we should be authorized from this to expect that, in regard to those things which seemed to be permanent and fixed on an immovable

basis, like mountains and islands, there would be violent and important changes. If thrones and dynasties long established were overthrown; if institutions that seemed to be fixed and permanent were abolished; if a new order of things should rise in the political world, the meaning of the symbol, so far as the language is concerned, would be fulfilled.

{a} "heaven" Ps 102:26 Isa 34:4 {b} "mountain" Re 16:20 Jer 4:23,24 Hab 3:6,10

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 6 - Verse 15

Verse 15. The universal consternation: *And the kings of the earth*, etc. The design of this and the following verses, (Re 6:15-17) in the varied language used, is evidently to denote universal consternation and alarm —*as if* the earth should be convulsed, and the stars should fall, and the heavens should pass away. This consternation would extend to all classes of men, and fill the world with alarm, *as if* the end of all things were coming.

The kings of the earth. Rulers—all who occupied thrones.

The great men. High officers of state.

And the rich men. Their wealth would not secure them from destruction, and they would be alarmed like others.

And the chief captains. The commanders of armies, who tremble like other men when God appears in judgment.

And the mighty men. Men of great prowess in battle, but who feel now that they have no power to withstand God.

And every bondman. Servant—*doulov*. This word does not necessarily denote a *slave*, compare **Barnes "Eph 6:5"; See Barnes "1Ti 6:1"; See Barnes** "1Ti 1:16"

but here the connexion seems to demand it, for it stands in contrast with *freeman*. There were, in fact, slaves in the Roman empire, and there is no objection in supposing that they are here referred to. There is no reason why they should not be filled with consternation as well as others; and as this does not refer to the end of the world, or the day of judgment, the word here determines nothing as to the question whether slavery is to continue on the earth.

And every freeman. Whether the master of slaves or not. The idea is, that all classes of men, high and low, would be filled with alarm.

Hid themselves in the dens. Among the caves or caverns in the mountains. See **Barnes on "Isa 2:19"**.

These places were resorted to for safety in times of danger. Compare 1Sa 13:6 1Sa 24 Jud 6:2 Jer 41:9

and Jos. Ant. book xiv chapter xv, Jewish Wars, book i chapter 16.

And in the rocks of the mountains. Among the crags or the fastnesses of the mountains —also natural places of refuge in times of hostile invasion or danger. **See Barnes on "Isa 2:21"**.

See also:

See Barnes "Re 6:16, seq.

{d} "said" Re 9:6 Hos 10:8; Lu 23:30

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 6 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us*, etc.. This language is found substantially in Hos 10:8: "And they shall say to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us." It is also used by the Saviour as denoting the consternation which would occur at his coming: "Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us," Lu 23:30. It is language denoting consternation, and an awful fear of impending wrath. The state of mind is that where there is an apprehension that God himself is coming forth with the direct instruments of his vengeance, and where there is a desire rather to be crushed by falling rocks and hills than by the vengeance of his uplifted arm.

From the face of him that sitteth on the throne. The face of God— for he seems to be coming forth with the displays of his vengeance. It is not said that God would actually come forth in a visible form, but their consternation would be as great as if he were to do this; the state of mind indicated by this was an apprehension that it would be so.

And from the wrath of the Lamb. The Lamb of God; the Lord Jesus. **See Barnes on "Re 5:6"**.

There seems to be an incongruity between the words *wrath* and *Lamb*; but the word *Lamb* here is so far a proper name as to be used only to designate the Redeemer. He comes forth to execute wrath, not as a Lamb, but as the Son of God, who bore that name. It would seem from this that they who thus dreaded the impending terrors were aware of their source, or had knowledge enough to understand by whom they were to be inflicted. They would see that these were *Divine* judgments, and would apprehend that the end of the world drew near.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 6 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *For the great day of his wrath is come*. The threatening judgments would be so severe and awful that they would suppose that the end of the world was coming.

And who shall be able to stand? To stand before him, or to withstand his judgments.

{e} "the great day" Re 16:14 Isa 13:6; Zep 1:14

{f} "who shall" Ps 76:7

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 7

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 7 - Verse 1

CHAPTER VII

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER

THE state of things represented in this chapter is, that where there had been awful consternation and alarm, as if the end of the world were coming, and where the signs of the approaching consummation of all things are, as it were, held back until there should be an opportunity of sealing the number that was to be saved. This is symbolized by four angels standing in the four quarters of the earth, and holding the winds and the storms that they should not blow on the earth, until the servants of God should be sealed in their foreheads. The idea is that of sudden destruction about to burst on the world, which, if unrestrained, would apparently bring on the consummation of all things, but which is held back until the purposes of God in regard to his people shall be accomplished—that is, until those who are the true servants of God shall be designated by some appropriate mark. This furnishes an opportunity of disclosing a glorious vision of those who will be saved, alike among the Jews and the Gentiles. The fact, as seen in the symbol, is, that the end of the world does not come at the opening of the sixth seal, as it seemed as if it would, and as it was anticipated in the time of the consternation. The number of the chosen was not complete, and the impending wrath was therefore suspended. God interposes in favour of his people, and discloses in vision a vast number from all lands who will yet be saved, and the winds and storms are held back as if by angels.

The points, then, that are apparent in this chapter, without any reference now to the question of the application, are the following:

(1.) The impending ruin that seemed about to spread over the earth, apparently bringing on the consummation of all things, restrained or suspended, Re 7:1. This impending ruin is symbolized by the four winds of heaven that seemed about to sweep over the world; the interposition of God is represented by the four angels who have power over those winds to hold them back, as if it depended on their will to let them loose and to spread ruin over the earth or not.

(2.) A suspension of these desolating influences and agents until another important purpose could be accomplished—that is, until the servants of God could be sealed in their foreheads, Re 7:2,3. Another angel, acting independently of the four first seen, and having power to command, appears in the east, having the seal of the living God; and he directs the four angels, having the four winds, not to let them loose upon the earth until the servants of God should be sealed in their foreheads. This obviously denotes some suspension of the impending wrath, and for a specific purpose, that something might be done by which the true servants of God would be so marked as to be publicly known—as if they had a mark or brand to that effect imprinted on their foreheads. Whatever would serve to designate them, to determine who they were, to ascertain their number, would be a fulfilment of this act of the sealing angel. The length of time during which it would be done is not designated; the essential thing is, that there would be a suspension of impending judgments in order that it might be done. Whether this was to occupy a longer or a shorter period is not determined by the symbol; nor is it determined when the winds thus held back would be suffered to blow.

(3.) The number of the sealed, Re 7:4-8. The seer does not represent himself as actually beholding the process of sealing, but he says that he heard the number of those who were sealed. That number was an hundred and forty-four thousand, and they were selected from the twelve tribes of the children of Israel—Levi being reckoned, who was not usually numbered with the tribes, and the tribe of Dan being omitted. The number from each tribe, large or small, was the same; the entire portion selected being but a very small part of the whole. The general idea here, whatever may be the particular application, is, that there would be a selection, and that the whole number of the tribe

would not be embraced; that the selection would be made from each tribe, and that all would have the same mark and be saved by the same means. It would not be in accordance with the nature of symbolic representation to suppose that the saved would be the precise number here referred to; but some great truth is designed to be represented by this fact. We should look, in the fulfilment, to some process by which the true servants of God would be designated; we should expect that a portion of them would be found in each one of the classes here denoted by a tribe; we should suppose that the true servants of God thus referred to would be as safe in the times of peril as if they were designated by a visible mark.

(4.) After this, another vision presents itself to the seer. It is that of a countless multitude before the throne, redeemed out of all nations, with palms in their hands, Re 7:9-17. The scene is transferred to heaven, and there is a vision of all the redeemed—not only of the hundred and forty-four thousand, but of all who would be rescued and saved from a lost world. The design is doubtless to cheer the hearts of the true friends of God in times of gloom and despondency, by a view of the great numbers that will be saved, and the glorious triumph that awaits the redeemed in heaven. This portion of the vision embraces the following particulars:

(a) A vast multitude, which no man can number, is seen before the throne in heaven. They are clad in white robes— emblems of purity; they have palms in their hands—emblems of victory, Rev 7:9.

(b) They are engaged in ascribing praise to God, Re 7:10.

(c) The angels, the elders, and the four living creatures, fall down before the throne, and unite with the redeemed in ascriptions of praise, Re 7:11,12.

(d) A particular inquiry is made of the seer—evidently to call his attention to it—respecting those who appear there in white robes, Re 7:13.

(e) To this inquiry it is answered that they were those who had come up out of great tribulation, and who had washed their robes, and had made them pure in the blood of the Lamb, Re 7:14.

(f) Then follows a description of their condition and employment in heaven, Re 7:15-17. They are constantly before the throne; they serve God continually; they neither hunger nor thirst; they are not subjected to the burning heat of the sun; they are provided for by the Lamb in the midst of the throne; and all tears are for ever wiped away from their eyes.—This must be regarded, I think, as an episode, having no immediate connexion with what precedes or with what follows. It seems to be thrown in here—while the impending judgments of the sixth seal are suspended, and before the seventh is opened—to furnish a relief in the contemplation of so many scenes of woe, and to cheer the soul with inspiring hopes from the view of the great number that would ultimately be saved. While these judgments, therefore, are suspended, the mind is directed on to the world of triumph, as a view fitted to sustain and comfort those who would be partakers in the scenes of woe. At the same time it is one of the most touching and beautiful of all the representations of heaven ever penned, and is eminently adapted to comfort those, in all ages, who are in a vale of tears.

In the exposition, it will be proper (Re 7:1-8) to inquire into the fair meaning of the language employed in the symbols; and then to inquire whether there are any known facts to which the description is applicable. The first inquiry may and should be pursued independently of the other; and, it may be added, that the explanation offered on this may be correct, even if the other should be erroneous. The same remark, also, is applicable to the remainder of the chapter, (Re 7:9-17,) and indeed is of general applicability in the exposition of this book.

Verse 1. *And after these things*. After the vision of the things referred to in the opening of the sixth seal. The natural interpretation would be, that what is here said of the angels and the winds occurred *after* those things which are described in the previous chapter. The exact chronology may not be always observed in these symbolical representations, but doubtless there is a general order which is observed.

I saw four angels. He does not describe their forms, but merely mentions their agency. This is, of course, a symbolical representation. We are not to suppose that it would be *literally* fulfilled, or that, at the time referred to by the vision, four celestial beings would be stationed in the four quarters of the world, for the purpose of checking and restraining the winds that blow from the four points of the compass. The meaning is, that events would occur which would be properly *represented* by four angels standing in the four quarters of the world, and having power over the winds.

Standing on the four corners of the earth. This language is, of course, accommodated to the prevailing mode of speaking of the earth among the Hebrews. It was a common method among them to describe it as a vast plain, having four corners, those corners being the prominent points—north, south, east, and west. So we speak now of the four winds, the four quarters of the world, etc. The Hebrews spoke of the earth, as we do of the rising and setting of the sun, and of the motions of the heavenly bodies, according to appearances, and without aiming at philosophical exactness. Compare **Barnes on "Job 26:7"**.

With this view they spoke of the earth as an extended plain, and as having boundaries or corners, as a plain or field naturally has. Perhaps also they used this language with some allusion to an edifice, as having four corners; for they speak also of the earth as having *foundations*. The language which the Hebrews used was in accordance with the prevailing ideas and language of the ancients on the subject.

Holding the four winds of the earth. The winds blow in fact from every quarter, but it is convenient to speak of them as coming from the four principal points of the compass, and this method is adopted, probably, in every language. So among the Greeks and Latins, the winds were arranged under four classes—Zephyrus, Boreas, Notus, and Eurus—considered as under the control of a king, AEolus. See Esehenburg, Man. Class. Lit. % 78, comp. % 108. The angels here are represented as "*holding*" the winds—*kratountav*. That is, they held them back when about to sweep over the earth, and to produce far- spread desolation. This is an allusion to a popular belief among the Hebrews, that the agency of the angels was employed everywhere. It is not suggested that the angels had *raised* the tempest here, but only that they now restrained and controlled it. The essential idea is, that they had *power* over those winds, and that they were now exercising that power by keeping them back when they were about to spread desolation over the earth.

That the wind should not blow on the earth. That there should be a calm, *as if* the winds were held back.

Nor on the sea. Nowhere—neither on sea nor land. The sea and the land constitute the surface of the globe, and the language here, therefore, denotes that there would be a universal calm. *Nor on any tree*. To injure it. The *language* here used is such as would denote a state of profound quiet; as when we say that it is so still that not a leaf of the trees moves.

In regard to the literal meaning of the symbol here employed there can be no great difficulty; as to its application there may be more. The winds are the proper symbols of wars and commotions. Compare Da 8:2. In Jer 49:36-37, the symbol is both used and explained: "And upon Elam will I bring the four winds from the four quarters of heaven, and will scatter them toward all those winds;

and there shall be no nation whither the outcasts of Elam shall not come. For I will cause Elam to be dismayed before their enemies, and before them that seek their life." So in Jer 51:1-2, a destroying wind is an emblem of destructive war: "I will raise up against Babylon a destroying wind, and will send unto Babylon farmers, that shall fan her, and shall empty her land." Compare Horace, Odes, b, i. 14. The essential ideas, therefore, in this portion of the symbol, cannot be mistaken. They are two:

(1) that at the period of time here referred to—after the opening of the sixth seal and before the opening of the seventh—there would be a state of things which would be well represented by rising tempests and storms, which if unrestrained would spread desolation afar; and

(2) that this impending ruin was held back as if by angels having control of those winds; that is, those tempests were not suffered to go forth to spread desolation over the world. A suspended tempest; calamity held in check; armies hovering on the borders of a kingdom, but not allowed to proceed for a time; hordes of invaders detained, or stayed in their march, as if by some restraining power not their own, and from causes not within themselves—any of these things would be an obvious fulfilling of the meaning of the symbol.

{a} "four winds" Da 7:2

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 7 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And I saw another angel*. Evidently having no connexion with the four, and employed for another purpose. *This* angel, also, must have been symbolic; and all that is implied is, that something would be done *as if* an angel had done it.

Ascending from the east. He appeared in the east, and seemed to rise like the sun. It is not easy to determine what is the special significancy, if any, of the *east* here, or why this quarter of the heavens is designated rather than the north, the south, or the west. It may be that as light begins in the east, this would be properly symbolic of something that could be compared with the light of the morning; or that some influence in "sealing" the servants of God would in fact go out from the east; or perhaps no special significance is to be attached to the quarter from which the angel is seen to come. It is not necessary to suppose that every minute thing in a symbol is to receive a complete fulfilment, or that there will be some particular thing to correspond with it. Perhaps all that is meant here is, that as the sun comes forth with splendour from the east, so the angel came with magnificence to perform a task—that of sealing the servants of God —cheerful and joyous like that which the sun performs. It is certain that from no other quarter of the heavens would it be so appropriate to represent an angel as coming forth to perform a purpose of light and mercy and salvation. It does not seem to me, therefore, that we are to look, in the fulfilment of this, for any special influence setting in *from the east* as that which is symbolized here.

Having the seal of the living God. Bearing it in his hands. In regard to this seal the following remarks may be made:

(a) The phrase "seal *of the living God*" doubtless means that which God had appointed, or which he would use; that is, if God himself came forth in this manner, he would use this seal for these purposes. Men often have a seal of their own, with some name, symbol, or device, which designates it as theirs, and which no other one has a right to use. A seal is sometimes used by the person

himself; sometimes entrusted to a high officer of state; sometimes to the secretary of a corporation; and sometimes, as a mark of special favour, to a friend. In this case it was entrusted to an angel who was authorized to use it, and whose use of it would be sanctioned, of course, wherever he applied it, by the living God, as if he had employed it himself.

(b) As to the *form* of the seal, we have no information. It would be most natural to suppose that the *name* "of the living God" would be engraven on it, so that that name would appear on any one to whom it might be affixed. Compare **Barnes on "2Ti 2:19"**.

It was customary in the East to brand the name of the master on the forehead of a slave, (Grotius, *in loc*.;) and such an idea would meet all that is implied in the *language* here, though there is no certain evidence that there is an allusion to that custom. In subsequent times, in the church, it was common for Christians to impress the sign of the cross on their foreheads. —Tertullian de Corona; Cyrill. lib. vi. See Grotius. As nothing is said here, however, about any mark or device on the seal, conjecture is useless as to what it was.

(c) As to what was to be designated by the seal, the main idea is clear, that it was to place some such mark upon his friends that they would be known to be his, and that they would be safe in the impending calamities. There is perhaps allusion here to Eze 9:4-6, where the following direction to the prophet occurs: "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh, and that cry, for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite; let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women; but come not near any man upon whom is the mark." The essential ideas in the *sealing*, in the passage before us, would therefore seem to be,

(1.) that there would be some mark, sign, or token, by which they who were the people of God would be known; that is, there would be *something* which would answer, in this respect, the same purpose *as if* a seal had been impressed upon their foreheads. Whether this was an outward badge, or a religious rite, or the doctrines which they would hold and by which they would be known, or something in their spirit and manner which would characterize his true disciples, may be a fair subject of inquiry. It is not specifically designated by the use of the word.

(2.) It would be something that would be conspicuous or prominent, *as if* it were impressed on the forehead. It would not be merely some *internal* sealing, or some designation by which they would be known to themselves and to God, but it would be something *apparent*, as if engraved on the forehead. What this would be, whether a profession, or a form of religion, or the holding of some doctrine, or the manifestation of a particular spirit, is not here designated.

(3.) This would be something appointed by God himself. It would not be of human origin, but would be *as if* an angel sent from heaven should impress it on the forehead. If it refers to the doctrines which they would hold, they could not be doctrines of human origin; if to the spirit which they would manifest, it would be a spirit of heavenly origin; if to some outward protection, it would be manifest that it was from God.

(4.) This would be a pledge of safety. The design of sealing the persons referred to seems to have been to secure their safety in the impending calamities. Thus the winds were held back until those who were to be sealed could be designated, and then they were to be allowed to sweep over the earth. These things, therefore, we are to look for in the fulfilment of the symbol.

And he cried with a loud voice. As if he had authority to command, and as if the four winds were about to be let forth upon the world.

To whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea. Who had power committed to them to do this by means of the four winds.

{a} "seal" 2Ti 2:19

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 7 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea*, etc. Let the winds be restrained until what is here designated shall be done. These destroying angels were commanded to suspend the work of destruction Until the servants of God could be rendered secure. The division here, as in Re 7:1, of the "earth, the sea, and the trees," seems to include everything—water, land, and the productions of the earth. Nothing was to be injured until the angel should designate the true servants of God.

Till we have sealed the servants of our God. The use of the plural "*we*" seems to denote that he did not expect to do it alone. Who were to be associated With him, whether angels or men, he does not intimate; but the work was evidently such that it demanded the agency of more than one.

In their foreheads. **See Barnes on "Re 7:2"**; compare Eze 9:4-5. A mark thus placed on the forehead would be conspicuous, and would be something which could at once be recognised if destruction should spread over the world. The fulfilment of this is to be found in two things:

(a) in something which would be conspicuous or prominent—so that it could be seen; and

(b) in the mark being of such a nature or character that it would be a proper designation of the fact that they were the true servants of God.

{a} "Hurt not" Re 6:6

{b} "sealed" Eze 9:4

{c} "foreheads" Re 22:4

{d} "four thousand" Re 14:1

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 7 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And I heard the number of them which were sealed*. He does not say *where* he heard that, or *by whom* it was communicated to him, or *when* it was done. The material point is, that he *heard* it; he did not *see* it done. Either by the angel, or by some direct communication from God, he was *told* of the number that would be sealed, and of the distribution of the whole number into twelve equal parts, represented by the tribes of the children of Israel.

And there were *sealed an hundred* and *forty* and *four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel*. In regard to this number, the first and the main question is, whether it is meant that this was to be the *literal* number, or whether it was *symbolical*; and, if the latter, of what it is a symbol.

I. As to the first of these inquiries, there does not appear to be any good reason for doubt. The fair interpretation seems to require that it should be understood as symbolical, or as designed not to be literally taken; for

(a) the whole scene is symbolical—the winds, the angels, the sealing.

(b) It cannot be supposed that this number will include *all* who will be sealed and saved. In whatever way this is interpreted, and whatever we may suppose it to refer to, we cannot but suppose that more than this number will be saved.

(c) The number is too exact and artificial to suppose that it is literal. It is inconceivable that exactly the same number—precisely twelve thousand—should be selected from each tribe of the children of Israel.

(d) If literal, it is necessary to suppose that this refers to the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. But on every supposition this is absurd. Ten of their tribes had been long before carried away, and the distinction of the tribes was lost, no more to be recovered, and the Hebrew people never have been, since the time of John, in circumstances to which the description here could be applicable. These considerations make it clear that the description here is symbolical. But,

II. Of *what* is it symbolical? Is it of a large number, or of a small number? Is it of those who would be saved from among the Jews, or of all who would be saved in the Christian church—represented as the "tribes of the children of Israel?" To these inquiries we may answer,

(1.) that the representation seems to be rather that of a comparatively *small* number than a *large* one, for these reasons:

(a) The number of *itself* is not large.

(b) The number is not large as *compared* with those who must have constituted the tribes here referred to—the number twelve thousand, for example, as compared with the whole number of the tribe of Judah, of the tribe of Reuben, etc.

(c) It would seem from the language that there would be some *selection* from a much *greater* number. Thus, not *all* in the tribes were sealed, but those who were sealed were "of all the tribes"—*ek pashv fulhv*; that is, *out of* these tribes. So in the specification in each tribe —*ek fulhv iouda, roubhn*, etc. Some *out of* the tribe, to wit, twelve thousand, were sealed. It is not said of the twelve thousand of the tribes of Judah, Reuben, etc., that they *constituted* the tribe, but that they were sealed *out of* the tribe, as a part of it preserved and saved. "When the preposition *ek*, or *out of*, stands after any such verb as *sealed*, between a definite numeral and a noun of multitude in the genitive, sound criticism requires, doubtless, that the numeral should be thus construed, as signifying, not the whole, but a part taken out."—Elliott, i. 237. Compare Ex 32:28 Nu 1:21; 1Sa 4:10.

The phrase, then, would properly denote those taken *out of* some other and greater number—as a portion of a tribe, and not the whole tribe. If the reference here is to the church, it would seem to denote that a portion only of that church would be sealed.

(d) For the same reason the idea would seem to be, that comparatively a *small* portion is referred to—as twelve thousand would be comparatively a small part of one of the tribes of Israel; and if this refers to the church, we should expect to find its fulfilment in a state of things in which the largest proportion would *not* be sealed: that is, in a corrupt state of the church in which there would be many professors of religion, but comparatively few who had real piety.

(2.) To the other inquiry—whether this refers to those who would be sealed and saved among the Jews, or to those in the Christian church— we may answer,

(a) that there are strong reasons for supposing the latter to be the correct opinion. Long before the time of John all these distinctions of tribe were abolished. The ten tribes had been carried away and scattered in distant lands, never more to be restored; and it cannot be supposed that there was any such *literal* selection from the twelve tribes as is here spoken of, or any such designation of twelve thousand from each. There was no occasion—either when Jerusalem was destroyed, or at

any other time—on which there were such transactions as are here referred to occurring in reference to the children of Israel.

(b) The language is such as a Christian, who had been by birth and education a Hebrew, would naturally use if he wished to designate the church. Compare **Barnes on "Jas 1:1"**.

1. Accustomed to speak of the people of God as "the twelve tribes of Israel," nothing was more natural than to transfer this language to the church of the Redeemer, and to speak of it in that figurative manner. Accordingly, from the necessity of the case, the language is universally understood to have reference to the Christian church. Even Professor Stuart, who supposes that the reference is to the siege and destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, interprets it of the preservation of Christians, and their flight to Pella, beyond Jordan. Thus interpreted, moreover, it accords with the entire symbolical character of the representation.

(c) The reference to the particular *tribes* may be a designed allusion to the Christian church as it would be divided into denominations, or known by different names; and the fact that a certain portion would be sealed from every tribe would not be an unfit representation of the fact that a portion of all the various churches or denominations would be sealed and saved. That is, salvation would be confined to no one church or denomination, but among them all there would be found true servants of God. It would be improper to suppose that the division into tribes among the children of Israel was designed to be a *type* of the sects and denominations in the Christian church, and yet the fact of such a division may not improperly be employed as an *illustration* of that; for the whole church is made up not of any one denomination alone, but of all who hold the truth combined, as the people of God in ancient times consisted not solely of any one tribe, however large and powerful, but of all combined. Thus understood, the symbol would point to a time when there would be various denominations in the church, and yet with the idea that true friends of God would be found among them all.

(d) Perhaps nothing can be argued from the fact that exactly twelve thousand were selected from each of the tribes. In language so figurative and symbolical as this, it could not be maintained that this proves that the same definite number would be taken from each denomination of Christians. Perhaps all that *can be* fairly inferred is, that there would be no partiality or preference for one more than another; that there would be no favouritism on account of the tribe or denomination to which any one belonged; but that the seal would be impressed on all, of any denomination, who had the true spirit of religion. No one would receive the token of the Divine favour *because* he was of the tribe of Judah or Reuben; no one *because* he belonged to any particular denomination of Christians. Large numbers from every branch of the church would be sealed; none would be sealed because he belonged to one form of external organization rather than to another; none would be excluded because he belonged to any one tribe, if he had the spirit and held the sentiments which made it proper to recognise him as a servant of God. These views seem to me to express the true sense of this passage. No one can seriously maintain that the writer meant to refer literally to the Jewish people; and if he referred to the Christian church, it seems to be to some selection that would be made out of the whole church, in which there would be no favouritism or partiality, and to the fact that, in regard to them, there would be something which, in the midst of abounding corruption or impending danger, would designate them as the chosen people of God, and would furnish evidence that they would be safe.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 7 - Verse 5

Verses 5-8. *Of the tribe of Juda* were *sealed twelve thousand*. That is, a selection was made, or a number sealed, *as if* it had been made from one of the tribes of the children of Israel—the tribe of Judah. If the remarks above made are correct, this refers to the Christian church, and means, in connexion with what follows, that each portion of the church would furnish a definite part of the whole number sealed and saved. We are not required to understand this of the exact number of twelve thousand, but that the designation would be made from all parts and branches of the church *as if* a selection of the true servants of God were made from the whole number of the tribes of Israel. There seems to be no particular reason why the tribe of Judah was mentioned first. Judah was not the oldest of the sons of Jacob, and there was no settled order in which the tribes were usually mentioned. The order of their birth, as mentioned in Ge 29:1 30:1, is as follows: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, Benjamin. In the blessing of Jacob, Ge 49:1, this order is changed, and is as follows: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Joseph, Benjamin. In the blessing of Moses, De 33:1, a different order still is observed: Reuben, Judah, Levi, Benjamin, Joseph, Zebulun, Issachar, Gad, Dan, Naphtali, Asher; and in this last, moreover, Simeon is omitted. So again in Eze 48:1, there are two enumerations of the twelve tribes, differing from each other, and both differing from the arrangements above referred to: viz., in Eze 48:31-34, where Levi is reckoned as one, and Joseph as only one; and in Eze 48:1-27, referring to the division of the country, where Levi, who had no heritage in land, is omitted, and Ephraim and Manasseh are counted as two tribes.—Professor Stuart, ii. 172, 173. From facts like these, it is clear that there was no certain and settled order in which the tribes were mentioned by the sacred writers. The same thing seems to have occurred in the enumeration of the tribes which would occur, for example, in the enumeration of the several States of the American Union. There is indeed an order which is usually observed, beginning with Maine, etc., but almost no two writers would observe throughout the same order; nor should we deem it strange if the order should be materially varied by even the same writer in enumerating them at different times, thus, at one time, it might be convenient to enumerate them according to their geographical position; at another, in the order of their settlement; at another, in the order of their admission into the Union; at another, in the order of their size and importance; at another, in the order in which they are arranged in reference to political parties, etc. Something of the same kind may have occurred in the order in which the tribes were mentioned among the Jews. *Perhaps* this may have occurred also of design, in order that no one tribe might claim the precedence or the pre-eminence by being always placed at the head of the list. If, as is supposed above, the allusion in this enumeration of the tribes was to the various portions of the Christian church, then perhaps the idea intended to be conveyed is, that no one division of that church is to have any preference on account of its locality, or its occupying any particular country, or because it has more wealth, learning, or numbers than others; but that all are to be regarded, where there is the true spirit of religion, as on a level.

There are, however, three peculiarities in this enumeration of the tribes which demand a more particular explanation. The number indeed is twelve, but that number is made up in a peculiar manner.

(1.) *Joseph* is mentioned, and also *Manasseh*. The matter of fact was, that Joseph had two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, (Ge 48:1) and that these two sons gave name to two of the tribes, the tribes

of Ephraim and Manasseh. There was, properly speaking, no tribe of the name *Joseph*. In Nu 13:1 the name Levi is omitted, as it usually is, because that tribe had no inheritance in the division of the land; and in order that the number twelve might be complete, Ephraim *and* Joseph are mentioned as two tribes, Re 7:8,11. In verse 11, the writer states expressly that by the tribe Joseph he meant Manasseh—"Of the tribe of Joseph, *namely*, of the tribe of Manasseh," etc. From this it would seem that, as Manasseh was the oldest, (Ge 48:14) the name *Joseph* was sometimes given to that tribe. As Ephraim, however, became the largest tribe, and as Jacob in blessing the two sons of Joseph (Ge 48:14) laid his right hand on Ephraim, and pronounced a special blessing on him, (Ge 48:19-20) it would seem not improbable that, when not particularly designated, the name *Joseph* was given to that tribe, as it is evidently in this place. Possibly the name *Joseph* may have been a general name which was occasionally applied to *either* of these tribes. In the long account of the original division of Canaan, in Joshua 13-19, Levi is omitted, because he had no heritage, and Ephraim and Manasseh are mentioned as two tribes. The name Joseph in the passage before us (Re 7:8) is doubtless designed, as remarked above, to refer to Ephraim.

(2.) In this list (Re 7:7) the name of *Levi* is inserted among the tribes. As already remarked, this name is not commonly inserted among the tribes of the children of Israel, because that tribe, being devoted to the sacerdotal office, had no inheritance in the division of the country, but was scattered among the other tribes. See Jos 14:3-4 18:7. It may have been inserted here, if this refers to the Christian church, to denote that the ministers of the gospel, as well as other members of the church, would share in the protection implied by the sealing; that is, to denote that no class in the church would be excluded from the blessings of salvation.

(3.) The name of one of the tribes—*Dan*—is omitted; so that by this omission, and the insertion of the tribe of Levi, the original number of twelve is preserved. There have been numerous conjectures as to the reason why the tribe of *Dan* is omitted here, but none of the solutions proposed are without difficulty. All that can be known, or regarded as probable, on the subject, seems to be this:—

(a) As the tribe of Levi was usually omitted in an enumeration of the tribes, because that tribe had no part in the inheritance of the Hebrew people in the division of the land of Canaan, so there appear to have been instances in which the names of some of the other tribes were omitted, the reason for which is not given. Thus, in Deuteronomy 33, in the blessing pronounced by Moses on the tribes just before his death, the name Simeon is omitted. In 1 Chronicles 4-8, the names of Zebulun and Dan are both omitted. It would seem, therefore, that the name of a tribe might be sometimes omitted without any particular reason being specified.

(b) It has been supposed by some that the name *Dan* was omitted because that tribe was early devoted to idolatry, and continued idolatrous to the time of the captivity. Of that *fact* there can be no doubt, for it is expressly affirmed in Jud 18:30; and that fact seems to be a sufficient reason for the omission of the name. As being thus idolatrous, it was in a measure separated from the people of God, and deserved not to be reckoned among them; and in enumerating those who were the servants of God, there seemed to be a propriety that a tribe devoted to idolatry should not be reckoned among the number. This will account for the omission without resorting to the supposition of Grotius, that the tribe of Dan was extinct at the time when the Apocalypse was written—a fact which also existed in regard to all the ten tribes; or to the supposition of Andreas and others, that Dan is omitted because Antichrist was to spring from that tribe—a supposition which is alike without proof and without probability. The fact that Dan was omitted cannot be supposed to have

any special significancy in the case before us. Such an omission is what, as we have seen, might have occurred at any time in the enumeration of the tribes.

In reference to the application of this portion of the book, (Re 7:1-8) or of what is designed to be here represented, there has been, as might be expected, a great variety of opinions. From the exposition of the words and phrases which has been given, it is manifest that we are to look for a series of events like the following:

(1.) Some impending danger, or something that threatened to sweep everything away—like winds that were ready to blow on the earth.

(2.) That tempest restrained or held back, as if the winds were held in check by an angel, and were not suffered to sweep over the world.

(3.) Some new influence or power, represented by an angel coming from the east—the great source of light—that should designate the true church of God—the servants of the Most High.

(4.) Some mark or note by which the true people of God could be designated, or by which they could be known—*as if* some name were impressed on their foreheads.

(5.) A selection or election of the number from a much greater number who were the professed, but were not the true servants of God.

(6.) A definite, though comparatively a small number thus designated out of the whole mass.

(7.) This number taken from all the divisions of the professed people of God, in such numbers, and in such a manner, that it would be apparent that there would be no partiality or favouritism; that is, that wherever the true servants of God were found, they would be sealed and saved. These are things which lie on the face of the passage, if the interpretation above given is correct, and in its application it is necessary to find some facts that will properly correspond with these things.

If the interpretation of the sixth seal proposed above is correct, then we are to look for the fulfilment of this in events that soon succeeded those which are there referred to, or at least which had their commencement at about that time; and the inquiry now is, whether there *were* any events that would accord properly with the interpretation here proposed: that is, any impending and spreading danger; any restraining of that danger; any process of designating the servants of God so as to preserve them; anything like a designation or selection of them from among the masses of the professed people of God? Now, in respect to this, the following facts accord so well with what is demanded in the interpretation, that it may be regarded as morally certain that they were the things which were thus made to pass in vision before the mind of John. They have at least this degree of probability, that if it were admitted that he intended to describe them, the symbols which are actually employed are those which it would have been proper to select to represent them.

I. The impending danger, like winds restrained, that threatened to sweep everything away, and to hasten on the end of the world. In reference to this, there may have been two classes of impending danger—that from the invasion of the Northern hordes, referred to in the sixth seal, (chapter 6) and that from the influx of error, that threatened the ruin of the church.

(a) As to the former, the language used by John will accurately express the state of things as it existed at the period supposed at the time of the sixth seal—the series of events introduced, now suspended, like the opening of the seventh seal. The idea is that of nations pressing on to conquest; heaving like tempests on the borders of the empire; overturning everything in their way; spreading desolation by fire and sword, *as if* the world were about to come to an end. The language used by Mr. Gibbon in describing the times here referred to is so applicable, that it would seem almost as if he had the symbols used by John in his eye. Speaking of the time of Constantine, he says, "The

threatening tempest of barbarians, which so soon subverted the foundations of Roman greatness, was still repelled, *or suspended on the frontiers*," i. 362. This language accurately expresses the condition of the Roman world at the period succeeding the opening of the sixth seal; the period of suspended judgments in order that the servants of God might be sealed. **See Barnes on "Re 6:12-17".**

The nations which ultimately spread desolation through the empire hovered around its borders, making occasional incursions into its territory; even carrying their arms, as we have seen in some in stances, as far as Rome itself, but still restrained from accomplishing the final purpose of overthrowing the city and the empire. The church and the state alike were threatened with destruction, and the impending wrath seemed only to beheld back *as if* to give time to accomplish some other purpose.

(b) At the same time, there was another class of evils which threatened to sweep like a tempest over the church—the evils of error in doctrine that sprang up on the establishment of Christianity by Constantine. That fact was followed with a great increase of professors of religion, who, for various purposes, crowded into a church patronized by the state—a condition of things which tended to do more to destroy the church than all that had been done by persecution had accomplished. This effect was natural; and the church became filled with those who had yielded themselves to the Christian faith from motives of policy, and who, having no true spiritual piety, were ready to embrace the most lax views of religion, and to yield themselves to any form of error. Of this period, and of the effect of the conversion of Constantine in this respect, Mr. Gibbon makes the following remarks, strikingly illustrative of the view now taken of the meaning of this passage: "The hopes of wealth and honour, the example of an emperor, his exhortations, his irresistible smiles, diffused conviction among the venal and obsequious crowds which usually fill the departments of a palace. The cities which signalized a forward zeal, by the voluntary destruction of their temples, were distinguished by municipal privileges, and rewarded with popular donatives; and the new capital of the East gloried in the singular advantage, that Constantinople was never profaned by the worship of idols. As the lower ranks of society are governed by imitation, the conversion of those who possessed any eminence of birth, of power, or of riches, was soon followed by dependent multitudes. The salvation of the common people was purchased at an easy rate, if it be true that, in one year, twelve thousand men were baptized at Rome, besides a proportionable number of women and children, and that a white garment, with twenty pieces of gold, had been promised by the emperor to every convert," i. 425. At a time, therefore, when it might have been supposed that, under the patronage of a Christian emperor, the truth would have spread around the world, the church was exposed to one of its greatest dangers—that arising from the fact that it had become united with the state. About the same time, also, there sprang up many of those forms of error which have spread farthest over the Christian world, and which then threatened to become the universal form of belief in the church. Of this class of doctrine were the views of Arius, and the views of Pelagius—forms of opinion which there were strong reasons to fear might become the prevailing belief of the church, and essentially change its character. About this time, also, the church was passing into the state in which the Papacy would arise—that dark and gloomy period in which error would spread over the Christian world, and the true servants of God would retire for a long period into obscurity. "We are now but a little way off from the commencement of that noted period—obscurely hinted at by Daniel, plainly announced by John—the twelve hundred and sixty prophetic days or years, for which preparations of a very unusual kind, but requisite, doubtless, are made. This period was to form the gloomiest, without exception, in the annals of the world—the

period of Satan's highest success, and of the church's greatest depression; and lest she should become during it utterly extinct, her members, never so few as then, were all specially sealed. The long night passes on, darkening as it advances; but the sealed company are not visible; they disappear from the Apocalyptic stage, just as they then disappeared from the observation of the world; for they fled away to escape the fire and the dungeons of their persecutors, to hide in the hoary caves of the earth, or to inhabit the untrodden regions of the wilderness, or to dwell beneath the shadow of the Alps, or to enjoy fellowship with God, emancipated and unknown, in the deep seclusion and gloom of some convent." —*The Seventh Vial*, London, 1848, pp. 27, 28. These facts seem to me to show, with a considerable degree of probability, what was designated by the *suspense* which occurred after the opening of the sixth seal—when the affairs of the world *seemed* to be hastening on to the great catastrophe. At that period, the prophetic eye sees the tendency of things suddenly arrested; the winds held back, the church preserved, and a series of events introduced, intended to designate and to save from the great mass of those who professedly consutured the "tribes of Israel," a definite number who should be in fact the true church of God.

This note purposely split at this point. Continued at next verse. **see Barnes "Re 7:6"**

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 7 - Verse 6

Verse 6. **See Barnes on "Re 7:5"**

Continuation of Note from Revelation 7:5

II. The facts, then, to which there is reference in checking the tendency of things, and sealing the servants of God, may have been the following:

(a) The preservation of the church from extinction during those calamitous periods when ruin seemed about to sweep over the Roman world. Not only as a matter of fact was there a suspension of those impending judgments that seemed to threaten the very extinction of the empire by the invasion of the Northern hordes, (**see Barnes on "Re 4:1"**

and following) but there were *special*

acts in favour of the church, by which these fierce barbarians appeared not only to be restrained from destroying the church, but to be influenced by tenderness and sympathy for it, as if they were raised up to preserve it when Rome had done all it could to destroy it. It would seem *as if* God restrained the rage of these hordes for the sake of preserving his church; *as if* he had touched their hearts that they might give to Christians an opportunity to escape in the impending storm. We may refer here particularly to the conduct of Alaric, king of the Goths, in the attack on Rome already referred to; and, as usual, we may quote from Mr. Gibbon, who will not be suspected of a design to contribute anything to the illustration of the Apocalypse. "At the hour of midnight," says he, (vol. ii. pp. 260, 261,) "the Salarian gate was silently opened, and the inhabitants were awakened by the tremendous sound of the Gothic trumpet. Eleven hundred and sixty-three years after the foundation of Rome, the imperial city, which had subdued and civilized so considerable a part of mankind, was delivered to the licentious fury of the tribes of Germany and Scythia. The proclamation of Alaric, when he forced his entrance into the vanquished city, discovered, however, some regard

for the laws of humanity and religion. He encouraged his troops boldly to seize the rewards of valour, and to enrich themselves with the spoils of a wealthy and effeminate people; but he exhorted them at the same time to spare the lives of the unresisting citizens, *and to respect the churches of the apostles St. Peter and St. Paul as holy and inviolable sanctuaries*. While the barbarians roamed through the city in quest of prey, the humble dwelling of an aged virgin, who had devoted her life to the service of the altar, was forced open by one of the powerful Goths. He immediately demanded, though in civil language, all the gold and silver in her possession; and was astonished at the readiness with which she conducted him to a splendid hoard of massy plate, of the richest materials and the most curious workmanship. The barbarian viewed with wonder and delight this valuable acquisition, till he was interrupted by a serious admonition, addressed to him in the following words: 'These,' said she, 'are the consecrated vessels belonging to St. Peter; if you presume to touch them, the sacrilegious deed will remain on your consciences: for my part, I dare not keep what I am unable to defend.' The Gothic captain, struck with reverential awe, despatched a messenger to inform the king of the treasure which he had discovered; and received a peremptory order from Alaric, that all the consecrated plate and ornaments should be transported, without damage or delay, to the church of the apostle. From the extremity, perhaps, of the Quirinal hill, to the distant quarter of the Vatican, a numerous detachment of the Goths, marching in order of battle through the principal streets, protected, with glittering arms, the long train of their devout companions, who bore aloft on their heads the sacred vessels of gold and silver; and the martial shouts of the barbarians were mingled with the sound of religious psalmody. From all the adjacent houses, a crowd of Christians hastened to join this edifying procession; and a multitude of fugitives, without distinction of age or rank, or even of sect, had the good fortune to escape to the secure and hospitable sanctuary of the vatican." In a note, Mr. Gibbon adds: "According to Isidore, Alaric himself was heard to say, that he waged war with the Romans, and not with the apostles." He adds also, (p. 261), "The learned work concerning the *City of God* was professedly composed by St. Augustine to justify the ways of Providence in the destruction of the Roman greatness. He celebrates with peculiar satisfaction this memorable triumph of Christ; and insults his adversaries by challenging them to produce some similar example of a town taken by storm, in which the fabulous gods of antiquity had been able to protect either themselves or their deluded rotaries." We may refer here, also, to that work of Augustine as illustrating the passage before us. In book i., chapter, 2, he defends this position, that "there never was war in which the conquerors would spare them whom they conquered for the gods they worshipped"—referring particularly to the sacking of Troy; in chapter 3, he appeals to the example of Troy; in chapter 4, he appeals to the sanctuary of Juno, in Troy; in chapter 6, he shows that the Romans never spared the temples of those cities which they destroyed; and in chapter 6, he maintains that the fact that mercy was shown by the barbarians in the sacking of Rome was "through the power of the name of Jesus Christ." In illustration of this, he says, "Therefore, all the spoil, murder, violence, and affliction, that in this fresh calamity came upon Rome, were nothing but the ordinary effects following the custom of war. But that which was so unaccustomed, that the savage nature of the barbarians should put on a new shape, and appear so merciful, that it would make choice of great and spacious churches, to fill with such as it meant to show pity on, from which none should be haled to slaughter or slavery, in which none should be hurt, to which many by their courteous foes should be conducted, and out of which none should be led into bondage; this is due to the name of Christ, this is due to the Christian profession; he that seeth not is blind; he that seeth and praiseth it not is unthankful; he that hinders him that praiseth it is mad."—*City of*

God, p. 11, London, 1620. Such a preservation of Christians; such a suspension of judgments, when all things seemed to be on the verge of ruin, would not be *inappropriately* represented by winds that threatened to sweep over the world; by the staying of those winds by some remarkable power, as by an angel; and by the special interposition which spared the church in the tumults and terrors of a siege, and of the sacking of a city.

(b) There *may* have been a reference to another class of Divine interpositions at about the same time, to designate the true servants of God. It has been already remarked, that from the time when Constantine took the church under his patronage, and it became connected with the state, there was a large accession of nominal professors in the church, producing a great corruption in regard to spiritual religion, and an extended prevalence of error. Now, the delay here referred to, between the opening of the sixth and seventh seals, *may* have referred to the fact that, during this period, the true doctrines of Christianity would be vindicated and established in such away that the servants of God would be "sealed" and designated in contradistinction from the great mass of the professed followers of Christ, and from the numerous advocates of error. *From* that mass, a certain and definite number was to be sealed —implying, as we have seen, that there would be a *selection*, or that there would be something which would *discriminate* them from the multitudes as the true servants of God. This is represented by an angel coming from the east: the angel representing the new heavenly influence coming upon the church; and the coming from the east—as the east is the quarter where the sun rises—denoting that it came from the source and fountain of light—that is, God. The "sealing" would denote anything in this new influence or manifestation which would mark the true children of God, and would be appropriately employed to designate any doctrines which would keep up true religion in the world; which would preserve correct views about God, the way of salvation, and the nature of true religion, and which would thus determine where the church of God really was. If there should be a tendency in the church to degenerate into formality; if the rules of discipline should be relaxed; if error should prevail as to what constitutes spiritual religion; and if there should be a new influence at that time which would distinguish those who were the children of God from those who were not, *this* would be appropriately represented by the angel from the east, and by the sealing of the servants of God. Now it requires but a slight knowledge of the history of the Roman empire, and of the church, at the period supposed here to be referred to, to perceive that all this occurred. There was a large influx of professed converts. There was a vast increase of worldliness. There was a wide diffusion of error. Religion was fast becoming mere formalism. The true church was apparently fast verging to ruin. At this period God raised up distinguished men—as if they had been angels ascending from the east—who came as with the "seal of the living God"—the doctrines of grace, and just views of spiritual religion-to designate who were, and who were not, the "true servants of God" among the multitudes who professed to be his followers. Such were the doctrines of Athanasius and Augustine—those great doctrines on which the very existence of the true church has in all ages depended. The doctrines thus illustrated and defended were fitted to make a broad line of distinction between the true church and the world, and this would be well represented by the symbol employed here—for it is by these doctrines that the true people of God are sealed and confirmed. On this subject, comp. Elliott, i. 279-292. The general sense here intended to be expressed is, that there was at the period referred to, after the conversion of Constantine, a decided tendency to a worldly, formal, lax kind of religion in the church; a very prevalent denial of the doctrine of the Trinity and of the doctrines of grace; a lax mode of admitting members to the church, with little or no evidence of true conversion; a disposition to attribute saving grace to the

ordinances of religion, and especially to baptism; a disposition to rely on the outward ceremonies of religion, with little acquaintance with its spiritual power; and a general breaking down of the barriers between the church and the world, as there is usually in a time of outward prosperity, and especially when the church is connected with the state. At this time there arose another set of influences well represented by the angel coming from the east, and sealing the true servants of God, in illustration and confirmation of the true doctrines of Christianity—doctrines on which the spirituality of the church has always depended: the doctrines of the Trinity, the atonement, the depravity of man, regeneration by the agency of the Holy Spirit, justification by faith, the sovereignty of God, and kindred doctrines. Such doctrines have in all ages served to determine where the true church is, and to designate and "seal" the servants of the Most High.

(c) This process of "sealing" may be regarded as continued during the long night of Papal darkness that was coming upon the church, when error would abound, and the religion of forms would be triumphant. Even then, in places obscure and unknown, the work of sealing the true servants of God might be going forward—for even in those times of gloomy night there *were* those, though comparatively few in number, who loved the truth, and who were the real servants of God. The number of the elect were filling up, for even in the darkest times there were those who loved the cause of spiritual religion, and who bore upon them the impress of the "seal of the living God." Such appears to have been the intent of this sealing vision: a staying of the desolation that, in various forms, was sweeping over the world, in order that the true church might be safe, and that a large number, from all parts of the church, might be sealed and designated as the true servants of God. The winds, that blowed from all quarters, were stayed as if by mighty angels. A new influence, from the great source of light, came in to designate those who were the true servants of the Most High, as if an angel had come from the rising sun with the seal of the living God, to impress it on their foreheads. A selection was made out of a church filling up with formalists, and in which the true doctrines of spiritual religion were fast fading away, of those who could be designated as the true servants of God. By their creed, and their lives, and their spirit, and their profession, they could be designated as the true servants of God, as if a visible mark were impressed on their foreheads. This selection was confined to no place, no class, no tribe, no denomination. It was taken from the whole of Israel, in such numbers that it could be seen that none of the tribes were excluded from the honour, but that, wherever the true spirit of religion was, God was acknowledging these tribes—or churches—as his, and there he was gathering a people to himself. This would be long continued, until new scenes would open, and the eye would rest on other developments in the series of symbols, revealing the glorious host of the redeemed emerging from darkness, and in countless numbers triumphing before the throne.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 7 - Verse 7

Verse 7. **See Barnes "Re 7:5"**

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 7 - Verse 8

Verse 8. **See Barnes "Re 7:5"**

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 7 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *After this*. Gr., "After these things"—*meta tauta*: that is, after I saw these things thus represented, I had another vision. This would undoubtedly imply, not only that he *saw* these things after he had seen the sealing of the hundred and forty-four thousand, but that they would *occur* subsequently to that. But he does not state whether they would immediately occur, or whether other things might not intervene. As a matter of fact, the vision seems to be transferred from earth to heaven—for the multitudes which he saw appeared "before the throne," (Re 7:9) that is, before the throne of God in heaven. The design seems to be to carry the mind forward quite beyond the storms and tempests of earth—the scenes of woe and sorrow—the days of error, darkness, declension, and persecution into that period when the church should be triumphant in heaven. Instead, therefore, of leaving the impression that the hundred and forty-four thousand would be *all* that would be saved, the eye is directed to an innumerable host, gathered from all ages, all climes, and all people, triumphant in glory. The multitude that John thus saw was not, therefore, I apprehend, the same as the hundred and forty- four thousand, but a far greater number—the whole assembled host of the redeemed in heaven, gathered there as *victors*, with palm-branches, the symbols of triumph, in their hands. The *object* of the vision is to cheer those who are desponding in times of religious declension and in seasons of persecution, and when the number of true Christians seems to be small, with the assurance that an immense host shall be redeemed from our world, and be gathered triumphant before the throne.

I beheld. That is, he saw them before the throne. The vision is transferred from earth to heaven; from the contemplation of the scene when desolation seemed to impend over the world, and when comparatively few in number were "sealed" as the servants of God, to the time when the redeemed would be triumphant, and when a host which no man can number would stand before God.

And, lo. Indicating surprise. A vast host burst upon the view. Instead of the comparatively few who were sealed, an innumerable company were presented to his vision, and surprise was the natural effect.

A great multitude. Instead of the comparatively small number on which the attention had been fixed.

Which no man could number. The number was so great that no one could count them, and John, therefore, did not attempt to do it. This is such a statement as one would make who should have a view of all the redeemed in heaven. It would appear to be a number beyond all power of computation. This representation is in strong contrast with a very common opinion that only a few will be saved. The representation in the Bible is, that immense hosts of the human race will be saved; and though vast numbers will be lost, and though at any particular period of the world hitherto it may seem that few have been in the path to life, yet we have every reason to believe that, taking the race at large, and estimating it as a whole, a vast majority of the whole will be brought to heaven. For the true religion is yet to spread all over the world, and perhaps for many, many thousands of years,

piety is to be as prevalent as sin has been; and in that long and happy time of the world's history we may hope that the numbers of the saved may surpass all who have been lost in past periods, beyond any power of computation. **See Barnes "Re 20:3"**

and through verse 6.

Of all nations. Not only of Jews; not only of the nations which in the time of the sealing vision had embraced the gospel, but of all the nations of the earth. This implies two things:

(a) that the gospel would be preached among all nations; and

(b) that even when it was thus preached to them they would keep up their national characteristics. There can be no hope of blending all the nations of the earth under one visible sovereignty. They may all be subjected to the spiritual reign of the Redeemer, but still there is no reason to suppose that they will not have their distinct organizations and laws.

And kindreds—fulwn This word properly refers to those who are descended from a common ancestry, and hence denotes a race, lineage, kindred. It was applied to the tribes of Israel, as derived from the same ancestor, and for the same reason might be applied to a *clan*, and thence to any division in a nation, or to a nation itself—properly retaining the notion that it was descended from a common ancestor. Here it would seem to refer to a smaller class than a nation—the different clans of which a nation might be composed.

And people—lawn. This word refers properly to a people or community as *a mass*, without reference to its origin or any of its divisions. The former word would be used by one who should look upon a nation as made up of portions of distinct languages, clans, or families; this word would be used by one who should look on such an assembled people as a mere mass of human beings, with no reference to their difference of clanship, origin, or language.

And tongues. Languages. This word would refer also to the inhabitants of the earth, considered with respect to the fact that they speak different languages. The use of particular languages does not designate the precise boundaries of nations—for often many people speaking different languages are united as one nation, and often those who speak the same language constitute distinct nations. The view, therefore, with which one would look upon the dwellers on the earth, in the use of the word *tongues or languages*, would be, not as divided into nations; not with reference to their lineage or clanship; and not as a mere mass without reference to any distinction, but as divided by *speech*. The meaning of the whole is, that persons from all parts of the earth, as contemplated in these points of view, would be among the redeemed. Compare **See Barnes "Da 3:4"**; **See Barnes "Da 4:1"**.

Stood before the throne. The throne of God.

See Barnes on "Re 4:2".

The throne is there represented as set up in heaven, and the vision here is a vision of what will occur in heaven. It is designed to carry the thoughts beyond *all* the scenes of conflict, strife, and persecution on earth, to the time when the church shall be triumphant in glory—when all storms shall have passed by; when all persecutions shall have ceased; when all revolutions shall have occurred; when all the elect—not only the hundred and forty-four thousand of the sealed, but of all nations and times—shall have been gathered in. There was a beautiful propriety in this vision. John saw the tempests stayed, as by the might of angels. He saw a new influence and power that would seal the true servants of God. But those tempests were stayed only for a time, and there were more awful visions in reserve than any which had been exhibited revisions of woe and sorrow, of persecution and of death. It was appropriate, therefore, just at this moment of calm suspense—of delayed judgments—to suffer the mind to rest on the triumphant close of the whole in heaven, when

a countless host would be gathered there with palms in their hands, uniting with angels in the worship of God. The mind, by the contemplation of this beautiful vision, would be refreshed and strengthened for the disclosure of the awful scenes which were to occur on the sounding of the trumpets under the seventh seal. The simple idea is, that, amidst the storms and tempests of life—scenes of existing or impending trouble and wrath—it is well to let the eye rest on the scene of the final triumph, when innumerable hosts of the redeemed shall stand before God, and when sorrow shall be known no more.

And before the Lamb. In the midst of the throne—in heaven. **See Barnes on "Re 5:6"**

Clothed with white robes. The emblems of innocence or righteousness, uniformly represented as the raiment of the inhabitants of heaven. **See Barnes on "Re 3:4"**; **See Barnes** "Re 6:11".

And palms in their hands. Emblems of victory. Branches of the palm-tree were carried by the victors in the athletic contests of Greece and Rome, and in triumphal processions. **See Barnes on "Mt 21:8"**.

The palm-tree—straight, elevated, majestic—was an appropriate emblem of triumph. The portion of it which was borne in victory was the long *leaf* which shoots out from the top Of the tree. See Eschenberg, Manual of Class. Lit. p. 243, and Le 23:40: "And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm-trees," etc. So in the Saviour's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, (Joh 12:12-13) "On the next day much people—took branches of palm-trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna."

{a} "nations" Re 5:9 Ro 11:25

{b} "clothed" Re 6:11

{c} "palms" Le 23:40

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 7 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *And cried with a loud voice*. Compare Zec 4:7. This is expressive of the greatness of their joy; the ardour and earnestness of their praise.

Salvation to our God. The word rendered *salvation—swthria* —means properly safety, deliverance, preservation; then welfare or prosperity; then victory; then, in a Christian sense, deliverance from punishment and admission to eternal life. Here the idea seems to be, that their deliverance from sin, danger, persecution, and death, was to be ascribed solely to God. It cannot be meant, as the words would seem to imply, that they desired that God might have salvation; but the sense is, that *their* salvation was to be attributed entirely to him. This will undoubtedly be the song of the released for ever, and all who reach the heavenly world will feel that they owe their deliverance from eternal death, and their admission to glory, wholly to him. Professor Robinson (*Lex*.) renders the word here *victory*. The fair meaning is, that *whatever* is included in the word *salvation* will be due to God alone—the deliverance from sin, danger, and death; the triumph over every foe; the resurrection from the grave; the rescue from eternal burnings; the admission to a holy heaven—*victory* in all that that word implies will be due to God.

Which sitteth upon the throne. **See Barnes "Re 4:2"**.

And unto the Lamb. **See Barnes "Re 5:6"**.

God the Father, and He who is the Lamb of God, alike claim the honour of salvation. It is observable here, that the redeemed ascribe their salvation to the Lamb as well as to Him who is on the throne. Could they do this if he who is referred to as the "Lamb" were a mere man? Could they if he were an Could angel? they if he were not equal with the Father? Do those who are in heaven worship a creature? Will they unite a created being with the Anointed One in acts of solemn adoration and praise?

{d} "cried" Zec 4:7

{e} "Salvation" Re 19:1 Isa 43:11

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 7 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *And all the angels stood round about the throne*. **See Barnes "Re 5:11"**.

And about the elders. **See Barnes "Re 4:4"**

And the four beasts. **See Barnes "Re 4:6"**.

The meaning is, that the angels stood in the *outer* circle, or *outside* of the elders and the four living creatures. The redeemed, it is manifest, occupied the inner circle, and were near the throne, though their precise location is not mentioned. The angels sympathize with the church redeemed and triumphant, as they did with the church in its conflicts and trials, and they now appropriately unite with that church in adoring and praising God. They see, in that redemption, new displays of the character of God, and they rejoice that that church is rescued from its troubles, and is now brought triumphant to heaven.

And fell before the throne on their faces. The usual position of profound adoration, Re 4:10 5:8.

And worshipped God. **See Barnes "Re 5:11"; See Barnes "Re 5:12"**.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 7 - Verse 12

Verse 12 *Saying, Amen*. **See Barnes "Re 1:7"**.

The word Amen here is a word strongly affirming the truth of what is said, or expressing hearty assent to it. It may be uttered, as expressing this, either in the beginning or end of a sentence. Thus *wills* are commonly commenced, "In the name of God, *Amen*."

Blessings and glory, etc. Substantially the same ascription of praise occurs in Re 5:12. **See Barnes "Re 5:12"**.

The general idea is, that the highest kind of praise is to be ascribed to God; everything excellent in character is to be attributed to him; every blessing which is received is to be traced to him. The *order* of the words indeed is changed, but the sense is substantially the same. In the former case (Re 5:12) the ascription of praise is to the Lamb— the Son of God; here it is to God. In both instances the worship is described as rendered in heaven; and the use of the language shows that God and

the Lamb are regarded in heaven as entitled to equal praise. The only words found here which do not occur in Re 5:12 are *thanksgiving* and *might*—words which require no particular explanation.

{a} "saying" Re 5:13,14

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 7 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *And one of the elders*. **See Barnes on "Re 4:4"**.

That is, as there understood, one of the representatives of the church before the throne.

Answered. The word *answer*, with us, means to reply to something which has been said. In the Bible, however, the word is not unfrequently used in the *beginning* of a speech, where nothing has been said—as if it were a reply to something that *might* be said on the subject; or to something that is passing through the mind of another; or to something in the case under consideration which suggests an inquiry. Compare Isa 65:24 Da 2:26; Ac 5:8.

Thus it is used here. John was looking on the host, and reflecting on the state of things; and to the train of thought passing through his mind the angel *answered* by an inquiry as to a part of that host. Professor Stuart renders it *accosted me*.

What are these which are arrayed in white robes? *Who* are these? The object evidently is to bring the case of these persons more particularly into view. The vast host with branches of palm had attracted the attention of John, but it was the object of the speaker to turn his thoughts to a particular part of the host—the martyrs who stood among them. He would seem, therefore, to have turned to a particular portion of the immense multitude of the redeemed, and by an emphasis on the word *these*—"Who are *these*?"—to have fixed the eye upon them. *All* those who are before the throne are represented as clothed in white robes, (Re 7:9) but the eye might be directed to a particular part of them as grouped together, and as having something peculiar in their position or appearance. There was a *propriety* in thus directing the mind of John to the martyrs as triumphing in heaven, in a time when the churches were suffering persecution, and in view of the vision which he had had of times of darkness and calamity coming upon the world at the opening of the sixth seal. Beyond all the scenes of sorrow and grief, he was permitted to see the martyrs triumphing in heaven.

Arrayed in white robes. **See Barnes "Re 7:9"**.

And whence came they? The object is to fix the attention more distinctly on what is said of them, that they came up out of great tribulation.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 7 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest*. The word *sir* in this place—*kurie*, *lord*—is a form of respectful address, such as would be used when speaking to a superior, Ge 43:20 Mt 13:27 Mt 21:30 27:63; Joh 4:11,15,19,49 5:7 12:21 20:15.

The simple meaning of the phrase "thou knowest" is, that he who had asked the question must be better informed than he to whom he had proposed it. It is, on the part of John, a modest confession

that he did not know, or could not be presumed to know, and at the same time the respectful utterance of an opinion that he who addressed this question to him must be in possession of this knowledge.

And he said unto me. Not offended with the reply, and ready, as he had evidently intended to do, to give him the information which he needed.

These are they which came out of great tribulation. The word rendered *tribulation—yliqiv*—is a word of general character, meaning *affliction*, though perhaps there is here an allusion to persecution. The sense, however, would be better expressed by the phrase *great trials*. The object seems to have been to set before the mind of the apostle a view of those who had suffered much, and who by their sufferings had been sanctified and prepared for heaven, in order to encourage those who might be yet called to suffer.

And have washed their robes. To wit, in the blood of the Lamb.

And made them white in the blood of the Lamb. There is some incongruity in saying that they had made them *white* in the *blood* of the Lamb; and the meaning therefore must be, that they had *cleansed* or *purified* them in that blood. Under the ancient ritual, various things about the sanctuary were *cleansed* from ceremonial defilement by the sprinkling of blood on them—the blood of sacrifice. In accordance with that usage the blood of the Lamb—of the Lord Jesus—is said to cleanse and purify. John sees a great company with white robes. The means by which it is said they became white or pure is the blood of the Lamb. It is not said that they were made white as the result of their sufferings or their afflictions, but by the blood of the Lamb. The course of thought here is such that it would be natural to suppose that, if at any time the great deeds or the sufferings of the saints could contribute to the fact that they will wear white robes in heaven, this is an occasion on which there might be such a reference. But there is no allusion to that. It is not by their own sufferings and trials, their persecutions and sorrows, that they are made holy, but by the blood of the Lamb that had been shed for sinners. This reference to the blood of the Lamb is one of the incidental proofs that occur so frequently in the Scriptures of the reality of the atonement. It could be only in allusion to that, and with an implied belief in that, that the blood of the Lamb could be referred to as cleansing the robes of the saints in heaven. If he shed his blood merely as other men have done; if he died only as a martyr, what propriety would there have been in referring to his blood more than to the blood of any other martyr? And what influence could the blood of *any* martyr have in cleansing the robes of the saints heaven? The fact is, that if that were all, such language would be unmeaning. It is never used except in connexion with the blood of Christ; and the language of the Bible everywhere is such as would be employed on the supposition that he shed his blood to make expiation for sin, and on no other supposition. On the general meaning of the language used here, and the sentiment expressed, **see Barnes on "Heb 9:14"; See Barnes** "1Jo 1:7".

{b} "tribulation" Re 6:9 Joh 16:33

{c} "washed" 1Co 6:11 Heb 9:14

{d} "blood" Re 1:5 1Jo 1:7

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 7 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Therefore are they before the throne of God*. The reason why they are there is to be traced to the fact that the Lamb shed his blood to make expiation for sin. No other reason can be

given why any one of the human race is in heaven; and that is reason enough why any of that race are there.

And serve him day and night in his temple. That is, continually or constantly. Day and night constitute the whole of time, and this expression, therefore, denotes constant and uninterrupted service. On earth, toil is suspended by the return of night, and the service of God is intermitted by the necessity of rest; in heaven, as there will be no weariness, there will be no need of intermission, and the service of God, varied doubtless to meet the state of the mind, will be continued for ever. The phrase "to serve him in his temple" refers undoubtedly to heaven, regarded as the temple or holy dwelling-place of God. **See Barnes on "Re 1:6".**

And he that sitteth on the throne. God. **See Barnes on "Re 4:2".**

Shall dwell among them—skhnwsei. This word properly means, *to tent, to pitch a tent*; and, in the New Testament, to dwell as in tents. The meaning here is, that God would dwell among them as in a tent, or would have his abode with them. Perhaps the allusion is to the tabernacle in the wilderness. That was regarded as the peculiar dwelling-place of God, and that always occupied a central place among the tribes of Israel. So in heaven—there will be the consciousness always that God dwells there among his people, and that the redeemed are gathered around him in his own house. Professor Stuart renders this, it seems to me with less beauty and propriety, "will spread his tent over them," as meaning that he would receive them into intimate connexion and union with him, and offer them his protection: Compare Re 21:3.

{e} "dwell" Re 1:5 1Jo 1:7

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 7 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *They shall hunger no more*. A considerable portion of the redeemed who will be there, were, when on the earth, subjected to the evils of famine; many who perished with hunger. In heaven, they will be subjected to that evil no more, for there will be no want that will not be supplied. The bodies which the redeemed will have —spiritual bodies (1Co 15:44)—will doubtless be such as will be nourished in some other way than by food, if they require any nourishment; and whatever that nourishment may be, it will be fully supplied. The passage here is taken from Isa 49:10: "They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them." **See Barnes "Isa 49:10".**

Neither thirst any more. As multitudes of the redeemed have been subjected to the evils of hunger, so have multitudes also been subjected to the pains of thirst. In prison; in pathless deserts; in times of drought, when wells and fountains were dried up, they have suffered from this cause—a cause producing as intense suffering perhaps as any that man endures. Compare Ex 17:3 Ps 63:1; La 4:4 2Co 11:27.

It is easy to conceive of persons suffering so intensely from thirst that the highest vision of felicity would be such a promise as that in the words before us—"neither thirst any more."

Neither shall the sun light on them. It is hardly necessary, perhaps, to say that the word *light* here does not mean to enlighten, to give light to, to shine on. The Greek is *pesh—fall on*—and the reference, probably, is to the intense and burning heat of the sun, commonly called a *sun-stroke*. Excessive heat of the sun, causing great pain or sudden death, is not a very uncommon thing among

us, and must have been more common in the warm climates and burning sands of the countries in the vicinity of Palestine. The meaning here is, that in heaven they would be free from this calamity.

Nor any heat. In Isa 49:10, from which place this is quoted, the expression is:

HEBREW

sharab, properly denoting heat or burning, and particularly the *mirage*, the excessive heat of a sandy desert producing a vapour which has a striking resemblance to water, and which often misleads the unwary traveller by its deceptive appearance. **See Barnes on "Isa 35:7".**

The expression here is equivalent to intense heat; and the meaning is, that in heaven the redeemed will not be subjected to any such suffering as the traveller often experiences in the burning sands of the desert. The language would convey a most grateful idea to those who had been subjected to these sufferings, and is one form of saying that, in heaven, the redeemed will be delivered from the ills which they suffer in this life. Perhaps the whole image here is that of travellers who have been on a long journey, exposed to hunger and thirst, wandering in the burning sands of the desert, and exposed to the fiery rays of the sun, at length reaching their quiet and peaceful home, where they would find safety and abundance. The believer's journey from earth to heaven is such a *pilgrimage*.

{a} "hunger" Isa 49:10

{b} "heat" Ps 121:6

{c} "feed" Ps 23:1,2,5 36:8 Isa 40:11

{d} "wipe" Isa 25:8

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 7 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne*. **See Barnes "Re 5:6".**

He is still the great agent in promoting the happiness of the redeemed in heaven.

Shall feed them. Rather, shall exercise over them the office of a shepherd—*pomanei*. This includes much more than mere *feeding*. It embraces all the care which a shepherd takes of his flock—watching them, providing for them, guarding them from danger. Compare Ps 23:1-2,6, 36:8.

See Barnes "Isa 40:11"

And shall lead them unto living fountains of waters. *Living* fountains refer to running streams, as contrasted with standing water and stagnant pools. **See Barnes on "Joh 4:10".**

The allusion is undoubtedly to the happiness of heaven, represented as fresh and ever-flowing, like streams in the desert. No image of happiness, perhaps, is more vivid, or would be more striking to an Oriental, than that of such fountains flowing in sandy and burning wastes. The word *living* here must refer to the fact that that happiness will be perennial. These fountains will always bubble; these streams will never dry up. The thirst for salvation will always be gratified; the soul will always be made happy.

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. This is a new image of happiness taken from another place in Isaiah, (Isa 25:8) "The Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces." The expression is one of exquisite tenderness and beauty. The poet Burns said that he could never read this without being affected to weeping. Of all the *negative* descriptions of heaven, there is no one

perhaps that would be better adapted to produce consolation than this. This is a world of weeping —a vale of tears. Philosophers have sought a brief definition of man, and have sought in vain. Would there be any better description of him, as representing the reality of his condition here, than to say that he is *one who weeps*? Who is there of the human family that has not shed a tear? Who that has not wept over the grave of a friend; over his own losses and cares; over his disappointments; over the treatment he has received from others; over his sins; over the follies, vices, and woes of his fellow-men? And what a change would it make in our world if it could be said that hence forward not another tear would be shed; not a head would ever be bowed again in grief! Yet this is to be the condition of heaven. In that world there is to be no pain, no disappointment, no bereavement. No friend is to lie in dreadful agony on a sick bed; no grave is to be opened to receive a parent, a wife, a child; no gloomy prospect of death is to draw tears of sorrow from the eyes. To that blessed world, when our eyes run down with tears, are we permitted to look forward; and the prospect of such a world should contribute to wipe away our tears here—for all our sorrows will soon be over. As already remarked, there was a beautiful propriety, at a time when such calamities impended over the church and the world—when there was such a certainty of persecution and sorrow—in permitting the mind to rest on the contemplation of these happy scenes in heaven, where all the redeemed, in white robes, and with palms of victory in their hands, would be gathered before the throne. To us also now, amidst the trials of the present life—when friends leave us; when sickness comes; when our hopes are blasted; when calumnies and reproaches come upon us; when, standing on the verge of the grave, and looking down into the cold tomb, the eyes pour forth floods of tears—it is a blessed privilege to be permitted to look forward to that brighter scene in heaven, where not a pang shall ever be felt, and not a tear shall ever be shed.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 8

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 8 - Verse 1

CHAPTER VIII

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER

ONE seal of the mysterious roll Re 5:1 remains to be broken —six having already disclosed the contents of the volume relating to the future. It was natural that the opening of the seventh, and the last, should be attended with circumstances of peculiar solemnity, as being all that remained in this volume to be unfolded, and as the events thus far had been evidently preparatory to some great catastrophe. It would have been natural to expect that, like the six former, this seal would have been opened at once, and would have disclosed all that was to happen at one view. But, instead of that, the opening of this seal is followed by a series of events, seven also in number, which succeed each other, represented by new symbols—the blowing of as many successive trumpets. These circumstances retard the course of the action, and fix the mind on a new order of events— events which could be appropriately grouped together, and which, for some reason, might be thus more

appropriately represented than they could be in so many successive seals. What was the reason of this arrangement will be more readily seen on an examination of the particular events referred to in the successive trumpet-blasts.

The points in the chapter are the following:

(1.) The opening of the seventh seal, Re 8:1. This is attended, not with an immediate exhibition of the events which are to occur, as in the case of the former seals, but with a solemn silence in heaven for the space of half an hour. The reason of this silence, apparently, is found in the solemn nature of the events which are anticipated. At the opening of the sixth seal (Re 6:12, seq.) the grand catastrophe of the world's history seemed about to occur. This had been suspended for a time as if by the power of angels holding the winds and the storm, (

Re 7) and now it was natural to expect that there would be a series of overwhelming calamities. In view of these apprehended terrors, the inhabitants of heaven are represented as standing in awful silence, as if anticipating and apprehending what was to occur. This circumstance adds much to the interest of the scene, and is a forcible illustration of the position which the mind naturally assumes in the anticipation of dreaded events. Silence—solemn and awful silence —is the natural state of the mind under such circumstances. In accordance with this expectation of what was to come, a series of new representations is introduced, adapted to prepare the mind for the fearful disclosures which are yet to be made.

(2.) Seven angels appear, on the opening of the seal, to whom are given seven trumpets, as if they were appointed to perform an important part in introducing the series of events which was to follow, Re 8:2.

(3.) As a still farther preparation, another angel is introduced, standing at the altar with a golden censer, Re 8:3-5. He is represented as engaged in a solemn act of worship, offering incense and the prayers of the saints before the throne. This unusual representation seems to be designed to denote that some extraordinary events were to occur, making it proper that incense should ascend, and prayer be offered to deprecate the wrath of God. After the offering of the incense, and the prayers, the angel takes the censer and casts it to the earth; and the effect is that there are voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. All these would seem to be symbolical of the fearful events which are to follow. The silence; the incense-offering; the prayers; the fearful agitations produced by the casting of the censer upon the earth, as if the prayer was not heard, and as if the offering of the incense did not avail to turn away the impending wrath,—all are appropriate symbols to introduce the series of fearful calamities which were coming upon the world on the sounding of the trumpets.

(4.) The first angel sounds, Re 8:7. Hail and fire follow, mingled with blood. The third part of the trees and of the green grass—that is, of the vegetable world—is consumed.

(5.) The second angel sounds, Re 8:8,9. A great burning mountain is cast into the sea, and the third part of the sea becomes blood, and a third part of all that is in the sea—fishes and ships—is destroyed.

(6.) The third angel sounds, Re 8:10,11. A great star, burning like a lamp, falls from heaven upon a third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters, and the waters become bitter, and multitudes of people die from drinking the waters.

(7.) The fourth angel sounds, Re 8:12. The calamity falls on the sources of light—the sun, the moon, and the stars—and the third part of the light is extinguished, and for the third part of the day there is no light, and for the third part of the night also there is no light.

(8.) At this stage of things, after the sounding of the four trumpets, there is a pause, and an angel flies through the midst of heaven, thrice crying woe, by reason of the remaining trumpets which are to sound, Re 8:13. Here would seem to be some natural interval, or something which would separate the events which had occurred from those which were to follow. These four, from some cause, are grouped together, and are distinguished from those which are to follow—as if the latter appertained to a new class of events, though under the same general group introduced by the opening of the seventh seal.

A few general remarks are naturally suggested by the analysis of the chapter, which may aid us in its exposition and application.

(a) These events, in their order, undoubtedly succeed those which are referred to under the opening of the first six seals. They are a continuation of the series which is to occur in the history of the world. It has been supposed by some that the events here symbolized are substantially the same as those already referred to under the first six seals, or that, at the opening of the sixth seal, there is a catastrophe; and, one series being there concluded, the writer, by a new set of symbols, goes back to the same point of time, and passes over the same period by a new and parallel set of symbols. But this is manifestly contrary to the whole design. At the first, (Re 5:1,) a volume was exhibited sealed with seven seals, the unrolling of which would manifestly develope successive events, and the whole of which would embrace all the events which were to be disclosed. When all these seven seals were broken, and the contents of that volume were disclosed, there might indeed be another set of symbols going over the same ground with another design, or giving a representation of future events in some other point of view; but Clearly the series should not be broken until the whole seven seals are opened, nor should it be supposed that there is, in the opening of the same volume, an arresting of the course of events, in order to go back again to the same beginning. The representation in this series of symbols is like drawing out a telescope. A telescope might be divided into seven parts, as well as into the usual number, and the drawing out of the seventh part, for example, might be regarded as a representation of the opening of the seventh seal. But the seventh part, instead of being one unbroken piece like the other six, might be so constructed as to be subdivided into seven minor parts, each representing a smaller portion of the seventh part. In such a case, the drawing out of the seventh division would succeed that of the others, and would be designed to represent a subsequent order of events.

(b) There was some reason, manifestly, why these seven last events, or the series represented by the seven trumpets, should be grouped together as coming under the same general classification. They were sufficiently distinct to make it proper to represent them by different symbols, and yet they had so much of the same general character as to make it proper to group them together. If this had not been so, it would have been proper to represent them by a succession of seals extending to thirteen in number, instead of representing six seals in succession, and then, under the seventh, a new series extending also to the number seven, In the fulfilment, it will be proper to look for some events which have some such natural connexion and bearing that, for some reason, they can be classed together, and yet so distinct that, under the same general symbol of the seal, they can be represented under the particular symbol of the trumpets.

(c) For some reason, there was a further distinction between the events represented by the first four trumpets, and those which were to follow. There was some reason why they should be more particularly grouped together, and placed in close connexion, and why there should be an interval (Re 8:13) before the other trumpet should sound. In the fulfilment of this, we should naturally look

for such an order of events as would be designated by four successive symbols, and then for such a change, in some respects, as to make an interval proper, and a proclamation of woe, before the sounding of the other three, Re 8:13. Then it would be natural to look for such events as could properly be grouped under the three remaining symbols—the three succeeding trumpets.

(d) It is natural, as already intimated, to suppose that the entire group would extend, in some general manner at least, to the consummation of all things; or that there would be, under the last One, a reference to the consummation of all things—the end of the world. The reason for this has already been given, that the apostle saw a volume Re 5:1 which contained a sealed account of the future, and it is natural to suppose that there would be a reference to the great leading events which were to occur in the history of the church and of the world. This natural anticipation is confirmed by the events disclosed under the sounding of the seventh trumpet, Re 11:15, seq. "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are becoming the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken thy great power, and hast reigned," etc. At all events, this would lead us on to the final triumph of Christianity—-to the introduction of the millennium of glory—to the period when the Son of God should reign on the earth, After that, (Re 11:19, seq.,) a new series of visions commences, disclosing, through the same periods of history, a new view of the church to the time also of its final triumph:—the church internally; the rise of Antichrist, and the effect of the rise of this formidable power, See the Analysis of the Book, part fifth.

Verse 1. *And when he had opened the seventh seal*. **See Barnes "Re 5:1"**.

There was silence in heaven. The whole scene of the vision is laid in heaven, (chapter 4) and John represents things as they seem to be passing there. The meaning here is, that on the opening of this seal, instead of voices, thunderings, tempests, as perhaps was expected from the character of the sixth seal, (Re 6:12, seq.,) and which seemed only to have been suspended for a time, (chapter 7) there was an awful stillness, as if all heaven was reverently waiting for the development. Of course, this is a symbolical representation, and is designed not to represent a pause in the events themselves, but only the impressive and fearful nature of the events which are now to be disclosed.

About the space of half an hour. He did not profess to designate the time exactly. It was a brief period—yet a period which in such circumstances would appear to be long—*about* half an hour. The word here used—*hmiwrion*—does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It is correctly rendered *half an hour*; and as the day was divided into twelve parts from the rising to the setting of the sun, the time designated would not vary much from half an hour with us. Of course, therefore, this denotes a brief period. In a state, however, of anxious suspense, the moments would seem to move slowly; and to see the exact force of this, we are to reflect on the scenes represented—the successive opening of seals disclosing most important events—increasing in interest as each new one was opened; the course of events which seemed to be leading to the consummation of all things, arrested after the opening of the sixth seal; and now the last in the series to be opened, disclosing what the affairs of the world would be at the consummation of all things. John looks on this; and in this state of suspense, the half hour may have seemed an age—We are not, of course, to suppose that the silence in heaven is produced by the *character* of the events which are now to follow for they are as yet unknown. It is caused by what, from the nature of the previous disclosures, was naturally apprehended, and by the fact that this is the last of the series—the finishing of the

mysterious volume. This seems to me to be the obvious interpretation of this passage, though there has been here, as in other parts of the book of Revelation, a great variety of opinion as to the meaning. Those who suppose that the whole book consists of a *triple series* of visions designed to prefigure future events, parallel with each other, and each leading to the consummation of all things—the series embracing the seals, the trumpets, and the vials, each seven in number—regard this as the proper ending of the first of this series, and suppose that we have on the opening of the seventh seal the beginning of a new symbolical representation, going, over the same ground, under the representations of the trumpets in a new aspect or point of view. Eichhorn and Rosenmuller suppose that the silence introduced by the apostle is merely for effect, and that, therefore, it is without any special signification. Grotius applies the whole representation to the destruction of Jerusalem, and supposes that the silence in heaven refers to the restraining of the winds referred to in Re 7:1—the wrath in respect to the city, which was now suspended for a short time. Professor Stuart also refers it to the destruction of Jerusalem, and supposes that the seven trumpets refer to seven gradations in the series of judgments that were coming upon the persecutors of the church. Mr. Daubuz regards the silence here referred to as a symbol of the liberty granted to the church in the time of Constantine; Vitringa interprets it of the peace of the millennium which is to succeed the overthrow of the beast and the false prophet; Dean Woodhouse and Mr. Cunninghame regard it as the termination of the series of events which the former seals denote, and the commencement of a new train of revelations; Mr. Elliott, as the suspension of the winds during the sealing of the servants of God; Mr. Lord, as the period of repose which intervened between the close of the persecution by Diocletian and Galerius, in 311, and the commencement, near the close of that year, of the civil wars by which Constantine the Great was elevated to the imperial throne. It will be seen at once how arbitrary and unsatisfactory most of those interpretations are, and how far from harmony expositors have been as to the meaning of this symbol. The most simple and obvious interpretation is likely to be the true one; and that is, as above suggested, that it refers to silence in heaven as expressive of the fearful anticipation felt on opening the last seal that was to close the series, and to wind up the affairs of the church and the world. Nothing would be more natural than such a state of solemn awe on such an occasion; nothing would introduce the opening of the seal in a more impressive manner; nothing would more naturally express the anxiety of the church, the probable feelings of the pious on the opening of these successive seals, than the representation that incense, accompanied with their prayers, was continually offered in heaven.

{a} "seal" re 5:1

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 8 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And I saw the seven angels which stood before God*. Professor Stuart supposes that by these angels are meant the "presence-angels" which he understands to be referred to, in Re 1:4, by the "seven spirits which are before the throne." If, however, the interpretation of that passage above proposed, that it refers to the Holy Spirit, with reference to his multiplied agency and operations, be correct, then we must seek for another application of the phrase here. The only difficulty in applying it arises from the use of the article—"*the* seven angels"—*touv*—as if they were angels already referred to; and as there has been no previous mention of "*seven* angels," unless it be in the

phrase "the seven spirits which are before the throne," in Re 1:4, it is argued that this must have been such a reference. But this interpretation is not absolutely necessary. John might use this language either because the angels had been spoken of before; or because it would be sufficiently understood, from the common use of language, who would be referred to—as we now might speak of "*the seven* members of the cabinet of the United States?" or "*the* thirty-one governors of the states of the Union," though they had not been particularly mentioned; or he might speak of them as just then disclosed to his view, and because his meaning would be sufficiently definite by the circumstances which were to follow—their agency in blowing the trumpets. It would be entirely in accordance with the usage of the article for one to say that he saw an army, and *the* commander-in-chief, and *the* four staff-officers, and *the* five bands of music, and *the* six companies of sappers and miners, etc. It is not absolutely necessary, therefore, to suppose that these angels had been before referred to. There is, indeed, in the use of the phrase "which stood before God," the idea that they are to be regarded as permanently standing there, or that that is their proper place—as if they were angels who were particularly designated to this high service, Compare Lu 1:19: "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God." If this idea is involved in the phrase, then there is a sufficient reason why the article is used, though they had not before been mentioned.

And to them were given seven trumpets. One to each. By whom the trumpets were given is not said. It may be supposed to have been done by Him who sat on the throne. Trumpets were used then, as now, for various purposes; to summon an assembly; to muster the hosts of battle; to inspirit and animate troops in conflict. Here they are given to announce a series of important events producing great changes in the world—as if God summoned and led on his hosts to accomplish his designs.

{a} "stood" Lu 1:19

{b} "trumpets" 2Ch 29:25-28

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 8 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And another angel came*. Who this angel was is not mentioned, nor have we any means of determining. Of course, a great variety of opinion has been entertained on the subject (see Poole's Synopsis)— some referring it to angels in general; others to the ministry of the church; others to Constantine; others to Michael; and many others to the Lord Jesus. All that we know is, that it was an *angel* who thus appeared, and there is nothing inconsistent in the supposition that any one of the angels in heaven may have been appointed to perform what is here represented. The design seems to be, to represent the prayers of the saints as ascending in the anticipation of the approaching series of wonders in the world—and there would be a beautiful propriety in representing them as offered by an angel, feeling a deep interest in the church, and ministering in behalf of the saints.

And stood at the altar. In heaven—represented as a temple, with an altar, and with the usual array of things employed in the worship of God. The altar was the appropriate place for him to stand when about to offer the prayers of the saints—for that is the place where the worshipper stood under the ancient dispensation. Compare **See Barnes "Mt 5:23-24"**; **See Barnes** "Lu 1:11".

In the latter place, an angel is represented as appearing to Zacharias "on the right side of the altar of incense."

Having a golden censer. The *fire-pan*, made for the purpose of carrying fire, on which to burn incense in time of worship. See it described and illustrated in **Barnes on "Heb 9:4"**.

There seems reason to suppose that the incense that was offered in the ancient worship was designed to be emblematic of the prayers of saints, for it was the custom for worshippers to be engaged in prayer at the time the incense was offered by the priest. See Lu 1:10.

And there was given unto him much incense. **See Barnes "Lu 1:9"**.

A large quantity was here given to him, because the occasion was one on which many prayers might be expected to be offered.

That he should offer it *with the prayers*. Marg., "*add* it to." Gr., "that he should *give* it with"—*dwsh*. The idea is plain, that, when the prayers of the saints ascended, he would also burn the incense, that it might go up at the same moment, and be emblematic of them. Compare **See Barnes "Re 5:8"**.

Of all saints. Of all who are holy; of all who are the children of God. The idea seems to be, that, at this time, all the saints would unite in calling on God, and in deprecating his wrath. As the events which were about to occur were a matter of common interest to the people of God, it was to be supposed that they would unite in common supplication.

Upon the golden altar. The altar of incense. This in the tabernacle and in the temple was overlaid with gold.

Which was before the throne. This is represented as a temple-service, and the altar of incense is, with propriety, placed before his seat or throne, as it was in the tabernacle and temple. In the temple, God is represented as occupying the mercy-seat in the holy of holies, and the altar of incense is in the holy place before that. See the description of the temple in **See Barnes "Mt 21:12"**.

{1} "offer" "add it to" {c} "prayers" Re 5:8 {d} "golden altar" Re 6:9

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 8 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And the smoke of the incense*, etc. The smoke caused by the burning incense. John, as he saw this, naturally interpreted it of the prayers of the saints. The meaning of the whole symbol, thus explained, is that, at the time referred to, the anxiety of the church in regard to the events which were about to occur would naturally lead to much prayer. It is not necessary to attempt to verify this by any distinct historical facts, for no one can doubt that, in a time of such impending calamities, the church would be earnestly engaged in devotion. Such has always been the case in times of danger; and it may always be assumed to be true, that when danger threatens, whether it be to the church at large or to an individual Christian, there will be a resort to the throne of grace.

{e} "incense" Ex 30:1

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 8 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And the angel took the censer*. Re 8:3, This is a new symbol, designed to furnish a new representation of future events. By the former it had been shown that there would be much

prayer offered; by this it is designed to show that, notwithstanding the prayer that would be offered, great and fearful calamities would come upon the earth. This is symbolized by casting the censer upon the earth, *as if* the prayers were not heard any longer, or as if prayer were now in vain.

And filled it with fire of the altar. An image similar to this occurs in Eze 10:2, where the man clothed in linen is commanded to go between the wheels under the cherub, and fill his hands with coals of fire from between the cherubims, and to scatter them over the city as a symbol of its destruction. Here the coals are taken, evidently, from the altar of sacrifice. **See Barnes "Isa 61:1".**

On these coals no incense was placed, but they were thrown at once to the earth. The new emblem, therefore, is the taking of coals, and scattering them abroad as a symbol of the destruction that was about to ensue.

And cast it into the earth. Marg., *upon*. The margin expresses undoubtedly the meaning. The symbol, therefore, properly denoted that fearful calamities were about to come upon the earth. Even the prayers of saints did not prevail to turn them away, and now the symbol of the scattered coals indicated that terrible judgments were about to come upon the world.

And there were voices. Sounds, noises. **See Barnes "Re 4:5".**

The *order* is not the same here as there, but lightnings, thunderings, and voices are mentioned in both.

And an earthquake. Re 6:12. This is a symbol of commotion. It is not necessary to look for a literal fulfilment of it, any more than it is for literal "voices," "lightnings," or "thunderings."

{1} "it" "upon" {a} "voices" Re 16:18 {b} "earthquake" 2Sa 22:8

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 8 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound*. See also Re 8:7. Evidently in succession, perhaps by arranging themselves in the order in which they were to sound. The way is now prepared for the sounding of the trumpets, and for the fearful commotions and changes which would be indicated by that. The last seal is opened; heaven stands in suspense to know what is to be disclosed; the saints, filled with solicitude, have offered their prayers; the censer of coals has been cast to the earth, as if these judgments could be no longer stayed by prayer; and the angels prepare to sound the trumpets indicative of what is to occur.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 8 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *The first angel sounded*. The first in order, and indicating the first in the series of events that were to follow.

And there followed hail. Hail is usually a symbol of the Divine vengeance, as it has often been employed to accomplish the Divine purposes of punishment. Thus in Ex 9:23, "And the Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along the ground; and the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt." So in Ps 105:32, referring to the plagues upon Egypt, it is said, "He gave them hail for rain, and flaming fire in their land." So again, Ps 78:48, "He gave up their cattle also to the hail, and their

flocks to hot thunderbolts." As early as the time of Job, hail was understood to be an emblem of the Divine displeasure, and an instrument in inflicting punishment:

"Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow,
Or hast thou seen the treasure of the hail?
Which I have reserved against *the time of trouble*,
Against *the days of battle and war*?—Job 38:22-23

So also the same image is used in Ps 18:13:

"The Lord also thundered in the heaven,
And the Most High gave forth his voice,
Hailstones and coals of fire."

Compare Hag 2:17. The destruction of the Assyrian army, it is said, would be accomplished in the same way, Isa 30:30. Compare Eze 13:11 38:22.

And fire. Lightning. This also is an instrument and an emblem of destruction.

Mingled with blood. By *blood*, "we must naturally understand," says Professor Stuart, "in this case, a shower of coloured rain; that is, rain of a rubidinous aspect, an occurrence which is known sometimes to take place, and which, like falling stars, eclipses, etc., was viewed with terror by the ancients, because it was supposed to be indicative of blood that was to be shed." The appearance, doubtless, was that of a red shower, apparently of *hail* or snow—for *rain* is not mentioned. It is not a *rain* storm, it is a *hail* storm that is the image here; and the image is that of a driving hail storm, where the lightnings flashed, and where there was the intermingling of a reddish substance that resembled blood, and that was an undoubted symbol of blood that was to be shed. I do not know that there is red *rain*, or red *hail*, but red *snow* is not very uncommon; and the image here would be complete if we suppose that there was an intermingling of red snow in the driving tempest. This species of snow was found by Captain Ross at Baffin's Bay on the 17th of August, 1819. The mountains that were dyed with the snow were about eight miles long, and six hundred feet high. The red colour reached to the ground in many places ten or twelve feet deep, and continued for a great length of time. Although red snow had not until this attracted much notice, yet it had been long before observed in Alpine countries. Saussure discovered it on mount St. Bernard in 1778. Ramond found it on the Pyrenees; and Summerfield discovered it in Norway. "In 1818, red snow fell on the Italian Alps and Apennines. In March, 1808, the whole country about Cadore, Belluno, and Peltri, was covered with a red-coloured snow, to the depth of six and a half feet; but a white snow had fallen both before and after it, the red formed a stratum in the middle of the white. At the same time a similar fall took place in the mountains of the Valteline, Brescia, Carinthia, and Tyrol."— Edin. Encyclo. Art. *Snow*. These facts show that what is referred to here in the symbol might possibly occur. Such a symbol would be properly expressive of blood and carnage.

And they were cast upon the earth. The hail, the fire, and the blood—denoting that the fulfilment of this was to be *on the earth*.

And the third part of trees was burnt up. By the fire that came down with the hail and the blood.

And all green grass was burnt up. Wherever this lighted on the earth. The meaning would seem to be, that, wherever this tempest beat, the effect was to destroy a third part—that is, a large portion of the *trees*, and to consume *all* the grass. A portion of the tree—strong and mighty—would stand against it; but that which was so tender, as grass is, would be consumed. The sense does not seem to be that the tempest would be confined to a third part of the world, and destroy *all* the trees and the grass *there*; but that it would be a sweeping and general tempest, and that wherever it spread it

would prostrate a third part of the trees and consume all the grass. Thus understood, it would seem to mean that, in reference to those things in the world which were firm and established like *trees*, it would not sweep them *wholly* away, though it would make great desolation; but in reference to those which were delicate and feeble—like grass—it would sweep them wholly away.— This would not be an inapt description of the ordinary effects of invasion in time of war. A few of those things which seem most firm and established in society—like trees in a forest—weather out the storm; while the gentle virtues, the domestic enjoyments, the arts of peace, like tender grass, are wholly destroyed. The fulfilment of this we are undoubtedly to expect to find in the terrors of invasion; the evils of war; the effusion of blood; the march of armies. So far as the language is concerned, the symbol would apply to *any* hostile invasion; but, in pursuing the exposition on the principles on which we have thus far conducted it, we are to look for the fulfilment in one or more of those invasions of the Northern hordes that preceded the downfall of the Roman empire and that contributed to it.—In the "Analysis" of the chapter, some reasons were given why these four trumpet signals were placed together, as pertaining to a series of events of the same general character, and as distinguished from those which were to follow. The natural place which they occupy, or the events which we should suppose, from the views taken above of the first six seals, would be represented, would be the successive invasions of the Northern hordes which ultimately accomplished the overthrow of the Roman empire. There are *four* of these "trumpets," and it would be a matter of inquiry whether there were *four* events of sufficient distinctness that would mark these invasions, or that would constitute *periods* or *epochs* in the destruction of the Roman power.

At this point in writing, I looked on a chart of history, composed with no reference to this prophecy, and found a singular and unexpected prominence given to *four* such events extending from the first invasion of the Goths and Vandals at the beginning of the fifth century, to the fall of the Western empire, A.D. 476. The first was the invasion of Alaric, king of the Goths, A.D. 410; the second was the invasion of Attila, king of the Huns, "scourge of God," A. D. 447; a third was the sack of Rome by Genseric, king of the Vandals, A. D. 455; and the fourth, resulting in the final conquest of Rome, was that of Odoacer, king of the Heruli, who assumed the title of King of Italy, A.D. 476. We shall see, however, on a closer examination, that although two of these—Attila and Genseric—were, during a part of their career, contemporary, yet the most prominent place is due to Genseric in the events that attended the downfall of the empire, and that the second trumpet probably related to him; the third to Attila. These were, beyond doubt, four great periods or events attending the fall of the Roman empire, which synchronize with the period before us. If, therefore, we regard the opening of the sixth seal as denoting the threatening aspect of these invading powers —the gathering of the dark cloud that hovered over the borders of the empire, and the consternation produced by that approaching storm; and if we regard the transactions in the seventh chapter—the holding of the winds in check, and the sealing of the chosen of God— as denoting the *suspension* of the impending judgments in order that a work might be done to save the church, and as referring to the Divine interposition in behalf of the church; then the appropriate place of these four trumpets, under the seventh seal, will be when that delayed and restrained storm burst in successive blasts upon different parts of the empire—the successive invasions which were so prominent in the overthrow of that vast power. History marks four of these events— four heavy blows—four sweepings of the tempest and the storm—under Alaric, Genseric, Attila, and Odoacer, whose movements could not be better symbolized than by these successive blasts of the trumpet.

The first of these is the invasion of Alaric; and the inquiry now is, whether his invasion is such as would be properly symbolized by the first trumpet. In illustrating this, it will be proper to notice some of the movements of Alaric, and the alarm consequent on his invasion of the empire; and then to inquire how far this corresponds with the images employed in the description of the first trumpet. For these illustrations, I shall be indebted mainly to Mr. Gibbon. Alaric, the Goth, was at first employed in the service of the emperor Theodosius, in his attempt to oppose the usurper Arbogastes, after the murder of Valentinian, emperor of the West. Theodosius, in order to oppose the usurper, employed, among others, numerous barbarians—Iberians, Arabs, and Goths. One of them was Alaric, who, to use the language of Mr. Gibbon, (ii. 179,) "acquired in the school of Theodosius the knowledge of the art of war, which he afterwards so fatally exerted in the destruction of Rome," A.D. 392-394. After the death of Theodosius, (A. D. 395,) the Goths revolted from the Roman power, and Alaric, who had been disappointed in his expectations of being raised to the command of the Roman armies, became their leader.— *Dec. and Fall*, ii. 213. "That renowned leader was descended from the noble race of the Balti; which yielded only to the royal dignity of the Omali; he had solicited the command of the Roman armies; and the imperial court provoked him to demonstrate the folly of their refusal, and the importance of their loss. In the midst of a divided court and a discontented people, the emperor Arcadius was terrified by the aspect of the Gothic arms," etc. Alaric then invaded and conquered Greece, laying it waste in his progress, until he reached Athens, ii. 214, 215. "The fertile fields of Phocis and Boeotia were instantly covered by a deluge of barbarians, who massacred the males of age to bear arms, and drove away the beautiful females, with the spoil and cattle of the flaming villages." Alaric then concluded a treaty with Theodosius, the emperor of the East, (ii. 216;) was made master-general of Eastern Illyricum, and created a magistrate, (ii. 217;) soon united under his command the barbarous nations that had made the invasion, and was solemnly declared to be the king of the Visigoths, ii. 217. "Armed with this double power, seated on the verge of two empires, he alternately sold his deceitful promises to the courts of Arcadius and Honorius, till he declared and executed his purpose of invading the dominion of the West. The provinces of Europe which belonged to the Eastern empire were already exhausted; those of Asia were inaccessible; and the strength of Constantinople had resisted his attack. But he was tempted by the beauty, the wealth, and the fame of Italy, which he had twice visited; and he secretly aspired to plant the Gothic standard on the walls of Rome, and to enrich his army with the accumulated spoils of three hundred triumphs," ii. 217-218. In describing his march to the Danube, and his progress towards Italy, having increased his army with a large number of barbarians, Mr. Gibbon uses the remarkable language expressive of the general consternation, already quoted, in the description of the sixth seal. Alaric approached rapidly towards the imperial city, resolved to "conquer or die before the gates of Rome." But he was checked by Stilicho, and compelled to make peace, and retired, (*Dec. and Fall*, ii. 222,) and the threatening storm was for a time suspended. **See Barnes** "Re 7:1, seq. So great was the consternation, however, that the Roman court, which then had its seat at Milan, thought it necessary to remove to a safer place, and became fixed at Ravenna, ii. 224. This calm, secured by the retreat of Alaric, was, however, of short continuance. In A.D. 408, he again invaded Italy, in a more successful manner, attacked the capital, and more than once pillaged Rome. The following facts, for which I am indebted to Mr. Gibbon, will illustrate the progress of the events, and the effects of this blast of the "first trumpet" in the series that announced the destruction of the Western empire.

(a) The effect, on the destiny of the empire, of removing the Roman court to Ravenna from the dread of the Goths. As early as A. D. 303, the court of the emperor of the West was, for the most part, established at Milan. For some time before, the "sovereignty of the capital was gradually annihilated by the extent of conquest," and the emperors were required to be long absent from Rome on the frontiers, until, in the time of Diocletian and Maximin, the seat of government was fixed at Milan, "whose situation on the foot of the Alps appeared far more convenient than that of Rome, for the important purpose of watching the motions of the barbarians of Germany."—Gibbon, i. 213. "The life of Diocletian and Maximin was a life of action, and a considerable portion of it was spent in camps, or in those long and frequent marches; but whenever the public business allowed them any relaxation, they seem to have retired with pleasure to their favourite residences of Nicomedia and Milan. Till Diocletian, in the twentieth year of his reign, celebrated his Roman triumph, it is extremely doubtful whether he ever visited the ancient capital of the empire."—Gibbon, i. 214. From this place the court was driven away, by the dread of the Northern barbarians, to Ravenna, a safer place, which thenceforward became the seat of government; while Italy was ravaged by the Northern hordes, and while Rome was besieged and pillaged. Mr. Gibbon, under date of A.D. 404, says, "The recent danger to which the person of the emperor had been exposed in the defenceless palace of Milan [from Alaric and the Goths] urged him to seek a retreat in some inaccessible fortress in Italy, where he might securely remain, while the open country was covered by a deluge of barbarians."— Vol, ii. p. 224. He then proceeds to describe the situation of Ravenna, and the removal of the court thither, and then adds, (p. 225,) "The fears of Honorius were not without foundation, nor were his precautions without effect. While Italy rejoiced in her deliverance from the Goths, a furious tempest was excited among the nations of Germany, who yielded to the irresistible impulse that appears to have been generally communicated from the eastern extremity of the continent of Asia." That mighty movement of the Huns is then described, as the storm was preparing to burst upon the Roman empire, ii. 225. The agitation, and the removal of the Roman government, were events not inappropriate to be described by symbols relating to the fall of that mighty power.

(b) The particulars of that invasion, the consternation, the siege of Rome, and the capture and pillage of the imperial city, would confirm the propriety of this application to the symbol of the first trumpet. It would be too long to copy the account—for it extends through many pages of the History of the Decline and Fall of the Empire; but a few selected sentences may show the general character of the events, and the propriety of the symbols, on the supposition that they referred to these things. Thus Mr. Gibbon (ii. 226, 227) says, "The correspondence of the nations was, in that age, so imperfect and precarious, that the revolutions of the North might escape the knowledge of the court of Ravenna; till the dark cloud which was collected along the coast of the Baltic burst in thunder upon the banks of the Upper Danube. The king of the confederate Germans passed, without resistance, the Alps, the Po, and the Apennine; leaving on the one hand the inaccessible palace of Honorius securely buried among the marshes of Ravenna; and on the other the camp of Stilicho, who had fixed his head quarters at Ticinium, or Pavia, but who seems to have avoided a decisive battle till he had assembled his distant forces. Many cities of Italy were pillaged, or destroyed. The senate and people trembled at their approach within a hundred and eighty miles of Rome; and anxiously compared the danger which they had escaped, with the new perils to which they were exposed," etc. Rome was besieged for the first time by the Goths, A. D. 408. Of this siege, Mr. Gibbon (ii. 252-254) has given a graphic description. Among other things he says, "That unfortunate

city gradually experienced the distress of scarcity, and at length the horrid calamity of famine." "A dark suspicion was entertained, that some desperate wretches fed on the bodies of their fellow-creatures whom they had secretly murdered; and even mothers—such were the horrid conflicts of the two most powerful instincts implanted by nature in the human breast— even mothers are said to have tasted the flesh of their slaughtered infants. Many thousands of the inhabitants of Rome expired in their houses, or in the streets, for want of sustenance; and, as the public sepulchres without the walls were in the power of the enemy, the stench, which arose from so many putrid and unburied carcases, infected the air; and the miseries of famine were succeeded and aggravated by a pestilential disease." The first siege was raised by the payment of an enormous ransom.—Gibbon, ii. 254. The second siege of Rome by the Goths occurred A.D. 409. This siege was carried on by preventing the supply of provisions, Alaric having seized upon *Ostia*, the Roman port, where the provisions for the capital were deposited. The Romans finally consented to receive a new emperor at the hand of Alaric, and Attalus was appointed in the place of the feeble Honorius, who was then at Ravenna, and who had abandoned the capital. Attalus, an inefficient prince, was soon publicly stripped of the robes of office, and Alaric, enraged at the conduct of the court at Ravenna towards him, turned his wrath a third time on Rome, and laid siege to the city. This occurred A. D, 410. "The king of the Goths, who no longer dissembled his appetite for plunder and revenge, appeared in arms under the walls of the capital; and the trembling senate, without any hope of relief, prepared, by a desperate effort, to delay the ruin of their country. But they were unable to guard against the conspiracy of their slaves and domestics; who, either from birth or interest, were attached to the cause of the enemy. At the hour of midnight, the Salarian gate was silently opened, and the inhabitants were awakened by the tremendous sound of the Gothic trumpet. Eleven hundred and sixty-three years after the foundation of Rome, the imperial city, which had subdued and civilized so considerable a part of mankind, was delivered to the licentious fury of the tribes of Germany and Scythia."—Gibbon, ii. 26O.

(e) It is, perhaps, only necessary to add that the invasion of Alaric was in fact but *one* of the great events that led to the fall of the empire, and that, in announcing that fall, where a succession of events was to occur, it would properly be represented by the blast of one of the trumpets. The expressions employed in the symbol are, indeed, such as might be applied to *any* invasion of hostile armies, but they are such as *would* be used if the design were admitted to be to describe the invasion of the Gothic conqueror. For

(1) that invasion, as we have seen, would be well represented by the storm of hail and lightning that was seen in vision;

(2) by the *red* colour mingled in that storm—indicative of blood;

(3) by the fact that it consumed the trees and the grass. This, as we saw in the exposition, would properly denote the desolation produced by war— applicable, indeed, to *all* war, but *as* applicable to the invasion of Alaric as *any* war that has occurred, and it is such an emblem as would be used if it were admitted that it was the design to represent his invasion. The sweeping storm, prostrating the trees of the forest, is an apt emblem of the evils of war, and, as was remarked in the exposition, no more striking illustration of the consequences of a hostile invasion could be employed than the destruction of the "green grass." What is here represented in the symbol cannot, perhaps, be better expressed than in the language of Mr. Gibbon, when describing the invasion of the Roman empire under Alaric. Speaking of that invasion, he says: "While the peace of Germany was secured by the attachment of the Franks and the neutrality of the Alemanni, the subjects of Rome unconscious of

their approaching calamities, enjoyed the state of quiet and prosperity which had seldom blessed the frontiers of Gaul. Their flocks and herds were permitted to graze in the pastures of the barbarians; their huntsmen penetrated, without fear or danger, into the darkest recesses of the Hyrcanian wood. The banks of the Rhine were crowned, like those of the Tiber, with houses and well-cultivated farms; and if a poet descended the river, he might express his doubt on which side was situated the territory of the Romans. This scene of peace and plenty was suddenly changed into a desert; and the prospect of the smoking ruins could alone distinguish the solitude of nature from the desolation of man. The flourishing city of Mentz was surprised and destroyed; and many thousand Christians were inhumanly massacred in the church. Worms perished after a long and obstinate siege; Strasburg, Spires, Rheims, Tournay, Arras, Amiens, experienced the cruel oppression of the German yoke; and the consuming flames of war spread from the banks of the Rhine over the greatest part of the seventeen provinces of Gaul. That rich and extensive country, as far as the ocean, the Alps, and the Pyrenees, was delivered to the barbarians, who drove before them, in a Promiscuous crowd, the bishop, the senator, and the virgin, laden with the spoils of their houses and altars," ii. 230. In reference, also, to the invasion of Alaric, and the particular nature of the desolation depicted under the first trumpet, a remarkable passage which Mr. Gibbon has quoted from Claudian, as describing the effects of the invasion of Alaric, may be here introduced. "The *old* man" says he, speaking of Claudian," who had passed his simple and innocent life in the neighbourhood of Verona, was a stranger to the quarrels both of kings and of bishops; *his* pleasures, his desires, his knowledge, were confined within the circle of his paternal farm; and a staff supported his aged steps on the same ground where he had sported in infancy. Yet even this humble and rustic felicity (which Claudinn describes with so much truth and feeling) was still exposed to the undistinguishing rage of war. His trees, his old *contemporary** trees, must blaze in the conflagration of the whole country; a detachment of Gothic cavalry must sweep away his cottage and his family; and the power of Alaric could destroy this happiness which he was not able either to taste or to bestow. 'Fame,' says the poet, 'encircling with terror or gloomy wings, proclaimed the march of the barbarian army, and filled Italy with consternation,'" ii. 218. And

(4) as to the *extent* of the calamity, there is also a striking propriety in the language of the symbol as applicable to the invasion of Alaric. I do not suppose, indeed, that it is necessary, in order to find a proper fulfilment of the symbol, to be able to show that exactly one third part of the empire was made desolate in this way, but it is a sufficient fulfilment of desolation spread over a considerable portion of the Roman world—*as* if a third part had been destroyed. No one who reads the account of the invasion of Alaric can doubt that it would be an apt description of the ravages of his arms to say that a third part was laid waste. That the desolations produced by Alaric were such as would be *properly* represented by this symbol, may be fully seen by consulting the whole account of that invasion in Gibbon, ii. 213-266.

Ingentem meminit parvo qui germine quercum
AEquaevumque videt consenuisse nemus.

A neighbouring wood born with himself he sees,
And loves his old contemporary trees.—*Cowley*

{c} "there followed" Eze 38:22 {d} "trees" Isa 2:13

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 8 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *And the second angel sounded*. Compare **See Barnes "Re 8:2,7"**.

This, according to the interpretation proposed above, refers to the second of the four great events which contributed to the downfall of the Roman empire. It will be proper in this case, as in the former, to inquire into the literal meaning of the symbol, and then whether there was any event that corresponded with it.

And as it were a great mountain. A *mountain* is a natural symbol of strength, and hence becomes a symbol of a strong and powerful kingdom; for mountains are not only places of strength in themselves, but they anciently answered the purposes of fortified places, and were the seats of power. Hence they are properly symbols of strong nations. "The stone that smote the image became *a great mountain*, and filled the whole earth," Da 2:35. Compare Zec 4:7 Jer 51:25. We naturally, then, apply this part of the symbol to some strong and mighty nation—not a nation, necessarily, that issued *from* a mountainous region, but a nation that in strength *resembled* a mountain.

Burning with fire. A mountain in a blaze; that is, with all its woods on fire, or, more probably, a *volcanic* mountain. There would perhaps be no more sublime image than such a mountain, lifted suddenly from its base and thrown into the sea. One of the sublimest parts of the Paradise Lost is that where the poet represents the angels in the great battle in heaven as lifting the mountains—tearing them from their base— and hurling them on the foe:—

"From their foundations heaving to and fro,
They plucked the seated hills, with all their load,
Rocks, waters, woods, and by the shaggy tops
Uplifting, bore them in their hands," etc.—Book vi

The poet, however, has not, as John has, represented a volcano borne along and east into the sea. The symbol employed here would denote some fiery, impetuous, destructive power. If used to denote a nation, it would be a nation that was, as it were, burning with the desire of conquest—impetuous and fierce and fiery in its assaults—and consuming all in its way.

Cast into the sea. The image is very sublime; the scene, should such an event occur, would be awfully grand. As to the fulfilment of this, or the thing that was intended to be represented by it, there cannot be any material doubt. It is not to be understood literally, of course; and the natural application is to some *nation*, or *army*, that has a resemblance in some respects to such a blazing mountain, and the effect of whose march would be like casting such a mountain into the ocean. We naturally look for agitation and commotion, and particularly in reference to the sea, or to some maritime coasts. It is undoubtedly required in the application of this, that we should find its fulfilment in some country lying beyond the sea, or in some sea-coast or maritime country, or in reference to commerce.

And the third part of the sea became blood. Resembled blood; became as *red as blood*. The figure here is, that as such a blazing mountain cast into the sea would, by its reflection on the waters, seem to tinge them with red, so there would be something corresponding with this in what was referred to by the symbol. It would be fulfilled if there was a fierce maritime warfare, and if in some desperate naval engagement the sea should be tinged with blood.

{a} "burning" Jer 51:25 {b} "sea" Am 7:4 {c} "blood" Re 16:3 Ex 7:19-21

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 8 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died*. The effect was *as if* one third of all the fish in the sea were cut off. Of course, this is not to be taken literally. It is designed to describe an effect, pertaining to the maritime portion of the world, *as if* a third portion of all that was in the sea should perish. The *natural* interpretation would be to apply it to some invasion or calamity pertaining to the sea—to the islands, to the maritime regions, or to commerce. If the whole description pertains to the Roman empire, then this might be supposed to have particular reference to something that would have a bearing on the maritime parts of that empire.

And the third part of the ships were destroyed. This also pertains to the same general calamity, affecting the *commerce* of the empire. The destruction of the "ships" was produced, in some way, by casting the mountain into the sea—either by their being consumed by the contact with the burning mass, or by being sunk by the agitation of the waters. The essential idea is, that the calamity would be of such a nature as would produce the destruction of vessels at sea—either naval armaments, or ships of commerce. In looking now for the application or fulfilment of this, it is necessary

(a) to find some event or events which would have a particular bearing on the maritime or commercial part of the world; and

(b) some such event or events that, on the supposition that they were the things referred to, would be properly symbolized by the image here employed.

(1.) If the first trumpet had reference to the invasion of Alaric and the Goths, then in this we naturally look for the next succeeding act of invasion which shook the Roman empire, and contributed to its fall.

(2.) The next invasion was that under Genseric at the head of the Vandals.—Gibbon, ii. 306, seq. This occurred A.D. 428-468.

(3.) The symbol of a blazing or burning mountain, torn from its foundation, and precipitated into the ocean, would well represent this mighty nation moved from its ancient seat, and borne along towards the maritime parts of the empire, and its desolations there— as will be shown in the following remarks.

(4.) The acts of the Vandals, under Genseric, corresponded with the ideas expressed by the symbol. In illustrating this, I shall be indebted, as heretofore, principally to Mr. Gibbon.

(a) His general account of the Vandals is this: they are supposed (i. 138) to have been originally the same people with the Goths, the Goths and Vandals constituting one great nation living on the shores of the Baltic. They passed in connexion with them over the Baltic; emigrated to Prussia and the Ukraine; invaded the Roman provinces; received tribute from the Romans; subdued the countries about the Bosphorus; plundered the cities of Bithynia; ravaged Greece and Illyrium, and were at last settled in Thrace under the emperor Theodosius.—Gibbon, i. 136-166; ii. 110-150. They were then driven forward by the Huns, and having passed through France and Spain into Africa, conquered the Carthaginian territory, established an independent government, and thence through a long period harassed the neighbouring islands, and the coasts of the Mediterranean by their predatory incursions, destroying the ships and the commerce of the Romans, and were distinguished in the downfall of the empire by their ravages on the islands and the sea. Thus they were moved along from place to place until the scene of their desolations became more distinctly the maritime parts of the empire;

and the effect of their devastations might be well compared with a burning mountain moved from its ancient base and then thrown into the sea.

(b) This will be apparent from the statements of Mr. Gibbon in regard to their ravages under their leader Genseric. "Seville and Carthagena became the reward, or rather the prey of the ferocious conquerors," [after they had defeated the Roman Castinus,] "and the vessels which they found in the harbour of Carthagena might easily transport them to the isles of Majorca and Minorca, where the Spanish fugitives, as in a secure recess, had vainly concealed their families and fortunes. The experience of navigation, and perhaps the prospect of Africa, encouraged the Vandals to accept the invitation which they received from Count Boniface," [to aid him in his apprehended difficulties with Rome, and to enter into an alliance with him by settling permanently in Africa.—Gibbon, ii. 305, 306;] "and the death of Genseric" [the Vandal king] "served only to forward and animate the bold enterprise. In the room of a prince, not conspicuous for any superior powers of the mind or body, they acquired his bastard brother, the terrible Genseric—*a name which, in the destruction of the Roman empire, has deserved an equal rank with the names of Alaric and Attila*. "The ambition of Genseric was almost, without bounds, and without scruples; and the warrior would dexterously employ the dark engines of policy to solicit the allies who might be useful to his success, or to scatter among his enemies the seeds of enmity and contention. Almost in the moment of his departure, he was informed that Hermantic, king of the Suevi, had presumed to ravage the Spanish territories, which he was resolved to abandon. Impatient of the insult, Genseric pursued the hasty retreat of the Suevi as far as Merida; precipitated the king and his army into the river Anas, and calmly returned to the sea-shore to embark his troops. The vessels which transported the Vandals over the modern straits of Gibraltar, a channel only twelve miles in breadth, were furnished by the Spaniards, who anxiously wished for their departure; and by the African general who had implored their formidable assistance."— Gibbon, ii. 306. Genseric, in the accomplishment of *his* purposes, soon took possession of the northern coast of Africa, defeating the armies of Boniface, and "Carthage, Cirta, and Hippo Regius were the only cities that appeared to rise above the general inundation."—Gibbon, ii. 308. "On a sudden," says Mr. Gibbon, (ii. 309,) "the seven fruitful provinces, from Tangier to Tripoli, were overwhelmed by the invasion of the Vandals; whose destructive rage has perhaps been exaggerated by popular animosity, religious zeal, and extravagant declamation. War, in its fairest form, implies a perpetual violation of humanity and justice; and the hostilities of barbarians are inflamed by the fierce and lawless spirit which perpetually disturbs their peaceful and domestic society. The Vandals, where they found resistance, seldom gave quarter; and the deaths of their valiant countrymen were expiated by the ruin of the cities under whose walls they had fallen," etc. The result of the invasion was the conquest of all Northern Africa; the reduction of Hippo and Carthage, and the establishment of a government under Genseric in Africa that waged a long war with Rome.—Gibbon, ii. 310, 311. The symbol before us has particular reference to *maritime* or *naval* operations and desolations, and the following extracts from Mr. Gibbon will show with what propriety, if this symbol was designed to refer to him, these images were employed. "The discovery and conquest of the Black nations, [in Africa,] that might dwell beneath the torrid zone, could not tempt the rational ambition of Genseric; but he cast his eyes *towards the sea*; he resolved to create a naval power, and his bold resolution was executed with steady and active perseverance. The woods of Mount Atlas afforded an inexhaustible supply of timber; his new subjects were skilled in the arts of navigation and shipbuilding; he animated his daring Vandals to embrace a mode of warfare which would render any maritime country accessible to their arms; the

Moors and Africans were allured by the hope of plunder; and after an interval of six centuries, the fleets that issued from the port of Carthage again claimed the empire of the Mediterranean. The success of the Vandals, the conquest of Sicily, the sack of Palermo, and the frequent descents on the coasts of Lucania, awakened and alarmed the mother of Valentinian, and the sister of Theodosius. Alliances were formed; and armaments, expensive and ineffectual, were prepared for the destruction of the common enemy, who reserved his courage to encounter those dangers which his policy could not prevent or elude. The revolutions of the palace, which left the Western empire without a defender, and without a lawful prince, dispelled the apprehension, and stimulated the avarice of Genseric. He immediately equipped a numerous fleet of Vandals and Moors, and cast anchor at the mouth of the Tiber," etc.—Gibbon, ii. 352. "On the third day after the tumult [A. D. 455, on the death of Maximus] Genseric boldly advanced from the port of Ostia to the gates of the defenceless city. Instead of a sally of the Roman youth, there issued from the gates an unarmed and venerable procession of the bishop at the head of the clergy. But Rome and its inhabitants were delivered to the licentiousness of the Vandals and the Moors, whose blind passions revenged the injuries of Carthage. The pillage lasted fourteen days and nights; and all that yet remained of public or private wealth, of sacred or profane treasure, was diligently transported to the vessels of Genseric," etc. See the account of this pillage in Gibbon, ii. 355-366. The emperor Majorian (A.D. 457) endeavoured to "restore the happiness of the Romans," but he encountered the arms of Genseric, from his character and situation, their most formidable enemy. A fleet of Vandals and Moors landed at the mouth of the Liris, or Garigliano; but the imperial troops surprised and attacked the disorderly barbarians, who were encumbered with the spoils of Campania; they were chased with slaughter to their ships; and their leader, the king's brother-in-law, was found in the number of the slain. Such vigilance might announce the character of the new reign; but the strictest vigilance, and the most numerous forces, were insufficient to protect the long-extended coast of Italy from the depredations of a naval war."—Gibbon, ii. 363. "The emperor had foreseen that it was impossible, without a maritime power, to achieve the conquest of Africa. In the first Punic war, the republic had exerted such incredible diligence, that within sixty days after the first stroke of the axe had been given in the forest, a fleet of one hundred and sixty galleys proudly rode at anchor in the sea. Under circumstances much less favourable, Majorian equalled the spirit and perseverance of the ancient Romans. The woods of the Apennines were felled; the arsenals and manufactures of Ravenna and Misenium were restored; Italy and Gaul vied with each other in liberal contributions to the public service; and the imperial navy of three hundred large galleys, with an adequate proportion of transports and smaller vessels, was collected in the secure and capacious harbour of Carthagena in Spain."—Gibbon, ii. 363, 364. The fate of this large navy is thus described by Mr. Gibbon: "Genseric was saved from impending and inevitable ruin by the treachery of some powerful subjects, envious or apprehensive of their master's success. Guided by their secret intelligence, he surprised the unguarded fleet in the bay of Carthagena; many of the ships were sunk, or taken, or burnt; and the preparations of three years were destroyed in a single day," ii. 364. The farther naval operations and maritime depredations of the Vandals, under Genseric, are thus stated by Mr. Gibbon: "The kingdom of Italy, a name to which the Western empire was gradually reduced, was afflicted, under the reign of Ricimer, by the incessant depredations of Vandal pirates. In the spring of each year, they equipped a formidable navy in the port of Carthage; and Genseric himself, though in very advanced age, still commanded in person the most important expeditions. His designs were concealed with impenetrable secrecy, till the moment that he hoisted sail. When he was asked by the pilot what course he should

steer—'Leave the determination to the winds,' replied the barbarian, with pious arrogance; '*they* will transport us to the guilty coast whose inhabitants have provoked the Divine justice: but Genseric himself deigned to issue more precise orders; he judged the most wealthy to be the most criminal. The Vandals repeatedly visited the coasts of Spain, Liguria, Tuscany, Campanic, Lucania, Bruttium, Apulia, Calabria, Venetia, Dalmatia, Epirus, Greece, and Sicily; they were tempted to subdue the island of Sardinia, so advantageously placed in the centre of the Mediterranean; and their arms spread desolation, or terror, from the columns of Hercules to the mouth of the Nile. As they were more ambitious of spoil than of glory, they seldom attacked any fortified cities or engaged any regular troops in the open field. But the celerity of their motions enabled them, almost at the same time, to threaten and to attack the most distant objects which attracted their desires; and as they always embarked a sufficient number of horses, they had no sooner landed than they swept the dismayed country with a body of light cavalry," ii. 366. How far this description agrees with the symbol in the passage before us—"a great mountain burning with fire cast into the sea;" "the third part of the ships were destroyed"—must be left to the reader to judge. It may be asked, however, with at least some show of reason, whether, if it be admitted that it was the *design* of the author of the book of Revelation to refer to the movements of the Vandals under Genseric as one of the important and immediate causes of the ruin of the Roman empire, he could have found a more expressive symbol than this? Indeed, is there now any symbol that would be more striking and appropriate? If one should now undertake to represent this as one of the causes of the downfall of, the empire *by a symbol*, could he easily find one that would be more expressive? It is a matter that is in itself perhaps of no importance, but it may serve to show that the interpretation respecting the second trumpet was not *forced*, to remark that I had gone through with the interpretation of the *language* of the symbol, before I looked into Mr. Gibbon with any reference to the application.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 8 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *And the third angel sounded*. Indicating, according to the interpretation above proposed, some important event in the downfall of the Roman empire.

And there fell a great star from heaven. A *star* is a natural emblem of a prince, of a ruler, of one distinguished by rank or by talent. Compare **See Barnes "Re 2:28"**.

See Nu 24:17. **See Barnes on "Isa 14:12"**.

A star failing from heaven would be a natural symbol of one who had left a higher station, or of one whose character and course would be like a meteor shooting through the sky.

Burning as it were a lamp. Or, as a torch. The language here is such as would describe a meteor blazing through the air; and the reference in the symbol is to something that would have a *resemblance* to such a meteor. It is not a *lurid* meteor (livid, pale, ghastly) that is here referred to, but a bright, intense, blazing star—emblem of fiery energy; of rapidity of movement and execution; of splendour of appearance—such as a chieftain of high endowments, of impetuousness of character, and of richness of apparel, would be. In all languages, probably, a star has been an emblem of a prince whose virtuese shone brightly, and who has exerted a beneficial influence on mankind. In all languages also, probably, a meteor flaming through the sky has been an emblem of some splendid genius causing or threatening desolation and ruin; of a warrior who has moved along in a brilliant

but destructive path over the world; and who has been regarded as sent to execute the vengeance of heaven. This usage occurs because a meteor is so bright; because it appears so suddenly; because its course cannot be determined by any known laws; and because, in the apprehensions of men, it is either sent as a proof of the Divine displeasure, or is adapted to excite consternation and alarm. In the application of this part of the symbol, therefore, we naturally look for some prince or warrior of brilliant talents, who appears suddenly and sweeps rapidly over the world; who excites consternation and alarm; whose path is marked by desolation, and who is regarded as sent from heaven to execute the Divine purposes —who comes not to bless the world by brilliant talents well directed, but to execute vengeance on mankind.

And it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters. On the phrase, "the third part," **see Barnes "Re 8:7"**.

This reference to the "rivers" and to the "fountains of waters" seems, in part, to be for the purpose of saying that *everything* would be affected by this series of judgments. In the previous visions, the trees and the green grass, the sea and the ships, had been referred to. The rivers and the fountains of waters are not less important than the trees, the grass, and the commerce of the world, and hence this judgment is mentioned as particularly bearing on them. At the same time, as in the case of the other trumpets, there is a propriety in supposing that there would be something in the event referred to by the symbol which would make it more appropriate to use this symbol in this case than in the others. It is natural, therefore, to look for some desolations that would particularly affect the portions of the world where rivers abound, or where they take their rise; or, if it be understood as having a more metaphorical sense, to regard it as affecting those things which *resemble* rivers and fountains—the sources of influence; the morals, the religion of a people, the institutions of a country, which are often so appropriately compared with running fountains or flowing streams.

{a} "fell" Re 4:1 Isa 14:12

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 8 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *And the name of the star is called Wormwood*. Is *appropriately* so called. The writer does not say that it would be *actually* so called, but that this name would be properly descriptive of its qualities. Such expressions are common in allegorical writings. The Greek word—*aqinyov*—denotes *wormwood*, a well-known bitter herb. That word becomes the proper emblem of bitterness. Compare Jer 9:15 23:15; La 3:15,19.

And the third part of the waters became wormwood. Became bitter as wormwood. This is doubtless an emblem of the calamity which would occur if the waters should be thus made bitter. Of course, they would become useless for the purposes to which they are mostly applied, and the destruction of life would be inevitable. To conceive of the extent of such a calamity, we have only to imagine a large portion of the wells, and rivers, and fountains of a country made bitter as wormwood. Compare Ex 15:23-24.

And many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter. This effect would naturally follow if any considerable portion of the fountains and streams of a land were changed by an infusion of wormwood. It is not necessary to suppose that this is intended to be *literally* true; for as, by the use of a symbol, it is not to be supposed that literally a part of the waters would be turned into

wormwood by the baleful influence of a failing meteor, so it is not necessary to suppose that there is intended to be represented a literal destruction of human life by the use of waters. Great destruction and devastation are undoubtedly intended to be denoted by this—destruction that would be well represented in a land by the natural effects if a considerable part of the waters were, by their bitterness, made unfit to drink.

In the interpretation and application, therefore, of this passage, we may adopt the following principles and rules:

(a) It may be assumed, in *this* exposition, that the previous symbols, under the first and second trumpet-blasts, referred respectively to Alaric and his Goths, and to Genseric and his Vandals.

(b) That the next great and decisive event in the downfall of the empire is the one that is here referred to,

(c) That there would be some chieftain or warrior who might be compared with a blazing meteor; whose course would be singularly brilliant; who would appear suddenly *like* a blazing star, and then disappear like a star whose light was quenched in the waters.

(d) That the desolating course of that meteor would be mainly on those portions of the world that abounded with springs of water and running streams.

(e) That an effect would be produced *as if* those streams and fountains were made bitter; that is, that many persons would perish, and that wide desolations would be caused in the vicinity of those rivers and streams, *as if* a bitter and baleful star should fall into the waters, and death should spread over the lands adjacent to them, and watered by them. Whether any events occurred of which this would be the proper emblem is now the question. Among expositors there has been a considerable degree of unanimity in supposing that Attila, the king of the Huns, is referred to, and if the preceding expositions are correct, there can be no doubt on the subject. After Alaric and Genseric, Attila occupies the next place as an important agent in the overthrow of the Roman empire, and the only question is, whether *he* would be properly symbolized by this baleful star. The following remarks may be made to show the propriety of the symbol:

(1.) As already remarked, the *place* which he occupies in history, as immediately succeeding Alaric and Genseric in the downfall of the empire. This will appear in any chronological table, or in the table of contents of any of the histories of those times. A full detail of the career of Attila may be found in Gibbon, vol. ii. pp. 314-351. His career extended from A.D. 433, to A.D. 453. It is true that he was contemporary with Genseric, king of the Vandals, and that a portion of the operations of Genseric in Africa were subsequent to the death of Attila, (A.D. 455-A.D. 467;) but it is *also* true that Genseric *preceded* Attila in the career of conquest, and was properly the first in order, being pressed forward in the Roman warfare by the Huns, A.D. 428. See Gibbon, ii. 306, seq.

(2.) In the manner of his appearance, he strongly resembled a brilliant meteor flashing in the sky. He came from the east, gathering his Huns, and poured them down, as we shall see, with the rapidity of a flashing meteor, suddenly on the empire. He regarded himself also as devoted to Mars, the god of war, and was accustomed to array himself in a peculiarly brilliant manner, so that his appearance, in the language of his flatterers, was such as to dazzle the eyes of beholders. One of his followers perceived that a heifer that was grazing had wounded her foot, and curiously followed the track of blood, till he found in the long grass the point of an ancient sword, which he dug out of the ground and presented to Attila. "That magnanimous, or rather that artful prince," says Mr. Gibbon, "accepted with pious gratitude this celestial favour; and, as the rightful possessor of *the*

sword of Mars, asserted his divine and indefeasible claim to the dominion of the earth. The favourite of Mars soon acquired a sacred character, which rendered his conquests more easy and more permanent; and the Barbarian princes confessed, in the language of devotion or flattery, that they could not presume to gaze, with a steady eye, on the divine majesty of the king of the Huns," ii. 317. How appropriate would it be to represent such a prince by the symbol of a bright and blazing star—or a meteor flashing through the sky!

(3.) There may be propriety, as applicable to him, in the expression— "a great star *from heaven* falling upon the earth." Attila was regarded as an instrument in the Divine hand in inflicting punishment. The common appellation by which he has been known is "the scourge of God." This title is supposed by the modern Hungarians to have been first given to Attila by a hermit of Gaul, but it was "inserted by Attila among the titles of his royal dignity."—Gibbon, ii, 321, footnote. To no one could the title be more applicable than to him.

(4.) His career as a conqueror, and the effect of his conquests on the downfall of the empire, were such as to be properly symbolized in this manner.

(a) The *general* effect of the invasion was worthy of an important place in describing the series of events which resulted in the overthrow of the empire. This is thus stated by Mr. Gibbon: "The western world was oppressed by the Goths and Vandals, who fled before the Huns; but the achievements of the Huns themselves were not adequate to their power and prosperity. Their victorious hordes had spread from the Volga to the Danube, but the public force was exhausted by the discord of independent chieftains; their valour was idly consumed in obscure and predatory excursions; and they often degraded their national dignity by condescending, for the hopes of spoil, to enlist under the banners of their fugitive enemies. In the reign of Attila, the Huns again became the terror of the world; and I shall now describe the character and actions of that formidable barbarian who alternately invaded and insulted the East and the West, *and urged the rapid downfall of the Roman empire*," vol. ii. pp. 314, 316.

(b) The parts of the earth affected by the invasion of the Huns were those which would be properly symbolized by the things specified at the blowing of this trumpet. It is said particularly, that the effect would be on "the rivers," and on "the fountains of waters." If this has a literal application, or if, as was supposed in the case of the second trumpet, the language used was such as had reference to the portion of the empire that would be particularly affected by the hostile invasion, then we may suppose that this refers to those portions of the empire that abounded in rivers and streams, and more particularly those in which the rivers and streams had their origin—for the effect was permanently in the "*fountains* of waters." As a matter of fact, the principal operations of Attila were in the regions of the Alps and on the portions of the empire whence the rivers flow down into Italy. The invasion of Attila is described by Mr. Gibbon in this general language: "The whole breadth of Europe, as it extends above five hundred miles from the Euxine to the Adriatic, was at once invaded, and occupied, and desolated, by the myriads of barbarians whom Attila led into the field," ii. 319, 320. After describing the progress and the effects of this invasion, (pp. 320-331,) he proceeds more particularly to detail the events in the invasion of Gaul and Italy, pp. 331-347. After the terrible battle of Chalons, in which, according to one account, one hundred and sixty-two thousand, and, according to other accounts, three hundred thousand persons were slain, and in which Attila was defeated, he recovered his vigour, collected his forces, and made a descent on Italy. Under pretence of claiming Honoria, the daughter of the empress of Rome, as his bride, "the indignant lover took the field, passed the Alps, invaded Italy, and besieged Aquileia with an

innumerable host of barbarians." After endeavouring in vain for three months to subdue the city, and when about to abandon the siege, Attila took advantage of the appearance of a stork as a favourable omen to arouse his men to a renewed effort, "a large breach was made in the part of the wall where the stork had taken her flight; the Huns marched to the assault with irresistible fury; and the succeeding generation could scarcely discover the ruins of Aquileia. After this dreadful chastisement, Attila pursued his march; and as he passed, the cities of Altinum, Concordia, and Padua, were reduced into heaps of stones and ashes. The inland towns, Vicenza, Verona, and Bergarno, were exposed to the rapacious cruelty of the Huns. Milan and Pavia submitted, without resistance, to the loss of their wealth, and applauded the unusual clemency which preserved from the flames the public as well as the private buildings, and spared the lives of the captive multitude. The popular traditions of Comum, Turin, or Modena, may be justly suspected, yet they concur with more authentic evidence to prove that Attila spread his ravages over the rich plains of modern Lombardy, which are divided by the Po, and bounded by the Alps and the Apennines," ii. pp. 343, 344. "It is a saying worthy of the ferocious pride of Attila, that the grass never grew on the spot where his horse had trod."—Ibid, p. 345. Any one has only to look on a map, and to trace the progress of those desolations and the chief seats of his military operations, to see with what propriety this symbol would be employed. In these regions the great rivers that water Europe have their origin, and are swelled by numberless streams that flow down from the Alps; and about the fountains whence these streams flow were the principal military operations of the invader.

(c) With equal propriety is he represented in the symbol, as affecting "*a third*" part of these rivers and fountains. At least a third part of the empire was invaded and desolated by him in his savage march, and the *effects* of his invasion were as disastrous on the empire as if a bitter star had fallen into a third part of those rivers and fountains and had converted them into wormwood.

(d) There is one other point which shows the propriety of this symbol. It is, that the meteor, or star, seemed to be *absorbed* in the waters. It fell into the waters; embittered them; and was seen no more. Such would be the case with a meteor that should thus fall upon the earth—flashing along the sky, and then disappearing for ever. Now, it was remarkable in regard to the Huns, that their power was concentrated under Attila; that he alone appeared as the leader of this formidable host; and that when he died all the concentrated power of the Huns was dissipated, or became absorbed and lost. "The revolution," says Mr. Gibbon, (ii. 348,) "which subverted the empire of the Huns, established the fame of Attila, *whose genius alone had sustained the huge and disjointed fabric*. After his death, the boldest chieftains aspired to the rank of kings; the most powerful kings refused to acknowledge a superior; and the numerous sons, whom so many various mothers bore to the deceased monarch, divided and disputed, like a private inheritance, the sovereign command of the nations of Germany and Scythia." Soon, however, in the conflicts which succeeded, the empire passed away, and the empire of the *Huns* ceased. The people that composed it were absorbed in the surrounding nations, and Mr. Gibbon makes this remark, after giving a summary account of these conflicts, which continued but for a few years: "The Igours of the north, issuing from the cold Siberian regions, which produced the most valuable furs, spread themselves over the desert, as far as the Boristhenes and the Caspian gates, and *finally extinguished the empire of the Huns*." These facts may, perhaps, show with what propriety Attila would be compared with a bright but beautiful meteor; and that, if the design was to symbolize him as acting an important part in the downfall of the Roman empire, there is a fitness in the symbol here employed.

{b} "wormwood" De 24:18 Am 5:7; Heb 12:15

{c} "waters" Ex 15:23 Jer 9:15, 23:15

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 8 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *And the fourth angel sounded*. **See Barnes** "Re 8:6, **See Barnes "Re 8:7"**.

And the third part of the sea was smitten. On the phrase the *third part*, **see Barnes on "Re 8:7"**.

The darkening of the heavenly luminaries is every, where an emblem of any great calamity—*as if* the light of the sun, moon, and stars should be put out. **See Barnes** "Re 6:12, **See Barnes "Re 6:13"**.

There is no certain evidence that this refers to *rulers*, as many have supposed, or to anything that would particularly affect the *government* as such. The meaning is, that calamity would come *as if* darkness should spread over the sun, the moon, and the stars, leaving the world in gloom. What is the precise *nature* of the calamity is not indicated by the language, but anything that would diffuse gloom and disaster would accord with the fair meaning of the symbol. There are a few circumstances, however, in regard to this symbol, which may aid us in determining its application.

(1.) It would follow in the *series* of calamities that were to occur.

(2.) It would be *separated* in some important sense—of time, place, or degree—from those which were to follow, for there is a *pause* here, (Re 8:13) and the angel proclaims that more terrible woes are to succeed this series.

(3.) Like the preceding, it is to affect "one third part" of the world; that is, it is to be a calamity *as if* a third part of the sun, the moon, and the stars were suddenly smitten and darkened.

(4.) It is not to be *total*. It is not as if the sun, the moon, and the stars were entirely blotted out, for there was still some remaining light: that is, there was a continuance of the existing state of things—as if these heavenly bodies should still give an obscure and partial light.

(5.) Perhaps it is also intended by the symbol, that there would be light again. The world was not to go into a state of total and permanent night. For a third part of the day, and a third part of the night, this darkness reigned: but does not this imply that there would be light again—that the obscurity would pass away, and that the sun, and moon, and stars would shine again? That is, is it not implied that there would still be prosperity ill some future period?

Now, in regard to the application of this, if the explanation of the preceding symbols is correct, there can be little difficulty. If the previous symbols referred to Alaric, to Genseric, and to Attila, there can be no difficulty in applying this to Odoacer, and to his reign—a reign in which, in fact, the Roman dominion in the West came to an end, and passed into the hands of this barbarian. Any one has only to open the "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" to see that this is the next event that *should* be symbolized if the design were to represent the downfall of the empire. These four great barbarian leaders succeed each other in order, and under the last, Odoacer, the barbarian dominion was established; for it is here that the existence of the Roman power, as such, ended. The Western empire terminated, according to Mr. Gibbon, (ii. p. 380,) about A.D. 476 or 479. Odoacer was "King of Italy" from A.D. 476 to A.D. 490.—Gibbon, ii. 379. The Eastern empire still lingered; but calamity, like blotting out the sun, and moon, and stars, had come over that part of the world which for so many centuries had constituted the seat of power and dominion.—Odoacer was the son of Edecon, a barbarian, who was in the service of Attila, and who left two sons—Onulf and

Odoacer. The former directed his steps to Constantinople; Odoacer "led a wandering life among the barbarians of Noricum, with a mind and fortune suited to the most desperate adventures; and when he had fixed his choice, he privily visited the cell of Severinus, the popular saint of the country, to solicit his approbation and blessing. The lowness of the door would not admit the lofty stature of Odoacer; he was obliged to stoop: but in that humble attitude the saint could discern the symptoms of his future greatness; and addressing him in a prophetic tone, 'Pursue,' said he, 'your design; proceed to Italy; you will cast away the coarse garment of skins; and your wealth will be adequate to the liberality of your mind.' The barbarian, whose daring spirit accepted and ratified this prediction, was admitted into the service of the Western empire, and soon obtained an honourable rank in the guards. His manners were gradually polished, his military skill improved, and the confederates of Italy would not have elected him for their general unless the exploits of Odoacer had established a high opinion of his courage and capacity. Their military acclamations saluted him with the title of king; but he abstained during his whole reign from the use of the purple and the diadem, lest he should offend those princes, whose subjects, by their accidental mixture, had formed the victorious army which time and policy might insensibly unite into a great nation."—Gibbon, ii. 379, 380. In another place Mr. Gibbon says, "Odoacer was the first barbarian who reigned in Italy, over a people who had once asserted their superiority above the rest of mankind. The disgrace of the Romans still excites our respectful compassion, and we fondly sympathize with the imaginary grief and indignation of their degenerate posterity. But the calamities of Italy had gradually subdued the proud consciousness of freedom and glory. In the age of Roman virtue, the provinces were subject to the arms, and the citizens to the laws, of the republic; till those laws were subverted by civil discord, and both the city and the provinces became the property of a servile tyrant. The forms of the constitution which alleviated or disguised their abject slavery were abolished by time and violence; the Italians alternately lamented the presence or the absence of the sovereigns whom they detested or despised; and the succession of five centuries inflicted the various evils of military license, capricious despotism, and elaborate oppression. During the same period the barbarians had emerged from obscurity and contempt, and the warriors of Germany and Scythia were introduced into the provinces, as the servants, the allies, and at length the masters of the Romans, whom they insulted or protected," ii. 381, 382. Of the effect of the reign of Odoacer, Mr. Gibbon remarks: "In the division and decline of the empire, the tributary harvests of Egypt and Africa were withdrawn; the numbers of the inhabitants continually decreased with the means of subsistence; and the country was exhausted by the irretrievable losses of war, famine, and pestilence. St. Ambrose has deplored the ruin of a populous district, which had been once adorned with the flourishing cities of Bologna, Modena, Regium, and Placentia. Pope Gelasius was a subject of Odoacer; and he affirms, with strong exaggeration, that in AEmilia, Tuscany, and the adjacent provinces, the human species was almost extirpated. *One third* of those ample estates, to which the ruin of Italy is originally imputed, was extorted for the use of the conquerors," ii. 383. Yet the light was not *wholly* extinct. It was "a third part" of it which was put out; and it was still true that some of the forms of the ancient constitution were observed—that the light still lingered before it wholly passed away. In the language of another, "The authority of the Roman name had not yet entirely ceased. The senate of Rome continued to assemble as usual. The consuls were appointed yearly, one by the Eastern emperor, one by Italy and Rome. Odoacer himself governed Italy under a title—that of *Patrician*—conferred on him by the Eastern emperor. There was still a certain, though often faint, recognition of the supreme imperial authority. The moon and the stars might seem still to shine in the West, with a

dim, reflected light. In the course of the events, however, which rapidly followed in the next half century, these too were extinguished. After above a century and a half of calamities unexampled almost, as Dr. Robertson most truly represents it,* in the history of nations, the statement of Jerome—a statement couched under the very Apocalyptic figure of the text, but prematurely pronounced on the first taking of Rome by Alaric—might be considered at length accomplished: 'Clarissimum terrarum *lumen* extinctum est'—'The world's glorious *sun* has been extinguished;' or, as the modern poet Byron (Childe Harold, canto iv.) has expressed it, still under the Apocalyptic imagery-

"She saw her glories star by star expire,"
till not even one star remained to glimmer in
the vacant and dark night."—Elliott, i. 360, 361.

I have thus endeavoured to explain the meaning of the four first trumpets under the opening of the seventh seal, embracing the successive severe blows struck on the empire by Alaric, Genseric, Attila, and Odoacer, until the empire fell to rise no more. I cannot better conclude this part of the exposition than in the words of Mr. Gibbon, in his reflections on the fall of the empire. "I have now accomplished," says he, "the laborious narrative of the decline and fall of the Roman empire, from the fortunate age of Trajan and the Antonines to its latest extinction in the West, about five centuries after the Christian era. At that unhappy period, the Saxons fiercely struggled with the natives for the possession of Britain; Gaul and Spain were divided between the powerful monarchies of the Franks and the Visigoths, and the dependent kingdoms of the Suevi and the Burgundians; Africa was exposed to the cruel persecution of the Vandals, and the savage insults of the Moors; Rome and Italy, as far as the banks of the Danube, were afflicted by an army of barbarian mercenaries, whose lawless tyranny was succeeded by the reign of Theodosia, the Ostrogoth. All the subjects of the empire, who, by the use of the Latin language, more particularly deserved the name and privileges of Romans, were oppressed by the disgrace and calamities of foreign conquest; and the victorious nations of Germany established a new system of manners and government in the western countries of Europe. The majesty of Rome was faintly represented by the princes of Constantinople, the feeble and imaginary successors of Augustus."—Vol. ii. pp. 440, 441. "The splendid days of Augustus and Trajan *were eclipsed by a cloud of ignorance*, [a fine illustration of the language 'the third part of the sun was smitten, and the day shone not, and the night likewise;'] and the barbarians subverted the laws and palaces of Rome."—Ibid, p. 446.

Thus ended the history of the Gothic period, and, as I suppose, the immediate symbolic representation of the affairs of the Western empire. An interval now occurs (Re 8:13) in the sounding of the trumpets, and the scene is transferred, in the three remaining trumpets, to the Eastern parts of the empire. After that, the attention is directed again to the West, to contemplate Rome under a new form, and exerting a new influence in the nations, under the Papacy, but destined ultimately to pass away in its spiritual power, as its temporal power had yielded to the elements of internal decay in its bosom, and to the invasions of the Northern hordes.

* "If we were called on to fix a period most calamitous, it would be that from the death of Theodosius to the establishment of the Lombards." —*Charles V.*, pp. 11, 12.

{a} "sun" Isa 13:10 Jer 4:21; Eze 32:7,8; Joe 2:10 Am 8:9

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 8 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *And I beheld*. My attention was attracted by a new vision.

And heard an angel flying, etc. I heard the voice of an angel making this proclamation.

Woe, woe, woe. That is, there will be *great* woe. The repetition of the word is intensive, and the idea is, that the sounding of the three remaining trumpets would indicate great and fearful calamities. These three are grouped together, as if they pertained to a similar series of events, as the first four had been. The two classes are separated from each other by this interval and by this proclamation—implying that the first series had been completed, and that there would be some interval, either of space or time, before the other series would come upon the world. All that is fairly implied here would be fulfilled by the supposition that the former referred to the *West*, and that the latter pertained to the *East*, and were to follow when those should have been completed.

{a} "flying" Re 14:6

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 9

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 9 - Verse 1

CHAPTER IX

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER

THE three remaining trumpets (chap. 9-11.) are usually called the woe-trumpets, in reference to the proclamation of woes, Re 8:13. —Prof. Stuart. The three extend, as I suppose, to the end of time, or, as it is supposed by the writer himself, (Re 11:15,) to the period when "the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdoms of Christ," embracing a succinct view of the most material events that were to occur, particularly in a secular point of view. See the Analysis prefixed to the book. In Re 11:19, as I understand it, a new view is commenced, referring to the church internally; the rise of Antichrist, and the effect of the rise of that formidable power on the internal history of the church, to the time of its overthrow, and the triumphant establishment of the kingdom of God. This, of course, synchronizes in its beginning and its close with the portion already passed over, but with a different view. See the Analysis prefixed to Re 11:19, seq.

This chapter contains properly three parts. First, a description of the first of those trumpets, or the fifth in the order of the whole, Re 9:1-12. This woe is represented under the figure of calamities brought upon the earth by an immense army of locusts. A star is seen to fall from heaven—representing some mighty chieftain, and to him is given the key of the bottomless pit. He opens the pit, and then comes forth an innumerable swarm of locusts that darken the heavens, and they go forth upon the earth. They have a command given them to do a certain work. They are not to hurt the earth, or any green thing, but they are sent against those men which have not the seal of God on their foreheads. Their main business, however, was not to kill them, but to torment them for a limited time—for five months. A description of the appearance of the locusts then follows. Though they are called locusts, because in their general appearance, and in the ravages they commit,

they resemble them, yet, in the main, they are imaginary beings, and combine in themselves qualities which are never found united in reality. They had a strong resemblance to horses prepared for battle; they wore on their heads crowns of gold; they had the faces of men, but the hair of women, and the teeth of lions. They had breastplates of iron, and tails like scorpions, with stings in their tails. They had a mighty king at their head, with a name significant of the destruction which he would bring upon the world. These mysterious beings had their origin in the bottomless pit, and they are summoned forth to spread desolation upon the earth. Second, a description of the second of these trumpets, the sixth in order, Re 9:13-19. When this is sounded, a voice is heard from the four horns of the altar which is before God. The angel is commanded to loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. These angels are loosed—angels which had been prepared for a definite period—a day, and a month, and a year, to slay the third part of men. The number of the army that would appear—composed of cavalry—is stated to amount to two hundred thousand, and the peculiarities of these horsemen are then stated. They are remarkable for having breastplates of fire, and jacinth, and brimstone; the heads of the horses resemble lions; and they breathe forth fire and brimstone. A third part of men fall before them, by the fire, and the smoke, and the brimstone. Their power is in their mouth and in their tails, for their tails are like serpents. Third, a statement of the effect of the judgments brought upon the world under these trumpets, Re 19:20,21. The effect, so far as the reasonable result could have been anticipated, is lost. The nations are not turned from idolatry. Wickedness still abounds, and there is no disposition to repent of the abominations which had been so long practised on the earth.

Verse 1. *And the fifth angel sounded*. **See Barnes on "Re 8:6-7"**.

And I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth. This denotes, as was shown in the **See Barnes** "Re 8:10, a leader, a military chieftain, a warrior. In the fulfilment of this, as in the former case, we look for the appearance of some mighty prince and warrior, to whom is given power, as it were, to open the bottomless pit, and to summon forth its legions. That some such agent is denoted by the *star* is farther apparent from the fact that it is immediately added, that "to *him* [the star] was given the key of the bottomless pit." It could not be meant that a key would be given to a literal *star*, and we naturally suppose, therefore, that some intelligent being of exalted rank, and of baleful influence, is here referred to. Angels, good and bad, are often called stars; but the reference here, as in Re 8:10, seems to me not to be to angels, but to some mighty leader of armies, who was to collect his hosts, and to go through the world in the work of destruction.

And to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. Of the under-world, considered particularly of the abode of the wicked. This is represented often as a dark prison-house, enclosed with walls, and accessible by gates or doors. These gates or doors are fastened, so that none of the inmates can come out, and the key is in the hand of the keeper or guardian. In Re 1:18, it is said that the keys of that world are in the hand of the Saviour, (compare **See Barnes "Re 1:18"**) here it is said that for a time, and for a temporary purpose, they are committed to another. The word *pit—frear*—denotes properly a well, or a pit for water dug in the earth; and then any pit, cave, abyss. The reference here is doubtless to the nether world, considered as the abode of the wicked dead, the prison-house of the guilty. The word *bottomless*, *abussov*— whence our word *abyss*—means properly *without any bottom*, (from *a*, pr., and *buyov*, *depth*, *bottom*.) It would be applied properly to the ocean, or to any deep and dark dell, or to any obscure place whose depth was, unknown. Here it refers to Hades—the region of the dead—the abode of wicked spirits—as a deep, dark place whose bottom was unknown. Having the *key* to this, is to have the power to confine those who are there, or to

permit them to go at large. The meaning here is, that this master-spirit would have power to evoke the dead from these dark regions; and it would be fulfilled if some mighty genius, that could be compared with a fallen star, or a lurid meteor, should summon forth followers which would *appear* like the dwellers in the nether world called forth to spread desolation over the earth.

{a} "star" Re 8:10 Lu 10:18 {b} "pit" Re 17:8 20:1

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 9 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And he opened the bottomless pit*. It is represented before as wholly confined, so that not even the smoke or vapour could escape.

And there arose a smoke out of the pit. Compare Re 14:11. The meaning here is, that the pit, as a place of punishment, or as the abode of the wicked, was filled with burning sulphur, and consequently that it emitted smoke and vapour as soon as opened. The common image of the place of punishment, in the Scriptures, is that of a "lake that burns with fire and brimstone." Compare Re 14:10; Re 19:20 20:10, 21:8.

See also Ps 11:6 Isa 30:33; Eze 38:22.

It is not improbable that this image was taken from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Ge 19:24. Such burning sulphur would produce, of course, a dense smoke or vapour; and the idea here is, that the pit had been closed, and that as soon as the door was opened, a dense column escaped that darkened the heavens. The purpose of this is, probably, to indicate the *origin* of the plague that was about to come upon the world. It would be of such a character that it would appear as if it had been emitted from hell; as if the inmates of that dark world had broke loose upon the earth. Compare **Barnes on "Re 6:8"**.

As the smoke of a great furnace. So in Ge 19:28, whence probably this image is taken: "And he looked towards Sodom and Gomorrah, and all the land of the plain, and beheld, and lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace."

And the sun and the air were darkened, etc. As will be the case when a smoke ascends from a furnace. The meaning here is, that an effect would be produced *as if* a dense and dark vapour should ascend from the under-world. We are not, of course, to understand this literally.

{c} "darkened" Joe 2:2 {d} "locusts" Ex 10:4

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 9 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth*. That is, they escaped from the pit with the smoke. At first they were mingled with the smoke so that they were not distinctly seen, but when the smoke cleared away, they appeared in great numbers. The idea seems to be, that the bottomless pit was filled with vapour and with those creatures, and that as soon as the gate was opened the whole contents expanded and burst forth upon the earth. The sun was immediately darkened and the air was full, but the smoke soon cleared away, so that the locusts became distinctly visible. The *appearance* of these locusts is described in another part of the chapter, Re 9:7, seq.

The locust is a voracious insect belonging to the grasshopper or grylli genus, and is a great scourge in Oriental countries. A full description of the locust may be seen in Robinson's Calmet, and in Kitto's Encyclo. vol. ii. pp. 258, seq. There are ten Hebrew words to denote the locust, and there are numerous references to the destructive habits of the insect in the Scriptures. In fact, from their numbers, and their destructive habits, there was scarcely any other plague that was so much dreaded in the East. Considered as a *symbol*, or *emblem*, the following remarks may be made in explanation:

(1.) The symbol is *Oriental*, and would most naturally refer to something that was to occur in the East. As locusts have appeared chiefly in the East, and as they are in a great measure an *Oriental* plague, the mention of this symbol would most naturally turn the thoughts to that portion of the earth. The symbols of the first four trumpets had no especial locality, and would suggest no particular part of the world; but, on the mention of this, the mind would be naturally turned to the East, and we should expect to find that the scene of this woe would be located in the regions where the ravages of locusts most abounded. Compare, on this point, Elliott, Horae. Apoc. i. 394-406. He has made it probable that the prophets, when they used symbolical language to denote any events, commonly, at least, employed those which had a local or geographical reference. Thus, in the symbols derived from the vegetable kingdom, when Judah is to be symbolized, the olive, the vine, and the fig-tree are selected; when Egypt is referred to, the reed is chosen; when Babylon, the willow. And so, in the animal kingdom, the lion is the symbol of Judah; the wild ass, of the Arabs; the crocodile, of Egypt, etc. Whether this theory could be wholly carried out or not, no one can doubt that the symbol of locusts would most naturally suggest the Oriental world, and that the natural interpretation of the passage would lead us to expect its fulfilment there.

(2.) Locusts were remarkable for their *numbers*—so great often as to appear like clouds, and to darken the sky. In this respect, they would naturally be symbolical of numerous armies or hosts of men. This natural symbol of numerous armies is often employed by the prophets. Thus, in Jer 6:23:

"Cut down her forest, [i.e. her people, or cities,] saith Jehovah, That it may not be found on searching; Although they surpass the locusts in multitude, And they are without number."

So in Na 3:15: "There shall the fire devour thee; The sword shall cut thee off; it shall devour thee as the locust, Increase thyself as the numerous locust."

So also in Na 3:17: "Thy crowned princes are as the numerous locust, And thy captains as the grasshoppers; Which encamp in the fences in the cold day, But when the sun ariseth they depart, And their place is not known where they were."

See also De 28:38,42; Ps 78:46 Am 7:1.

Compare Jud 6:3-6 7:12 and Joel 1-2.

(3.) Locusts are an emblem of desolation or destruction. No symbol of desolation could be more appropriate or striking than this, for one of the most remarkable properties of locusts is, that they devour every green thing, and leave a land perfectly waste. They do this even when what they destroy is not necessary for their own sustenance. "Locusts seem to devour not so much from a ravenous appetite as from a rage for destroying. Destruction, therefore, and not food, is the chief impulse of their devastations, and in this consists their utility; they are, in fact, omnivorous. The most poisonous plants are indifferent to them; they will prey even upon the crowfoot, whose causticity burns even the hides of beasts. They simply consume *everything*, without predilection—vegetable matter, linens, woollens, silk, leather, etc.; and Pliny does not exaggerate them when he says, fores quoque tectorum—'even the doors of houses'—for they have been known

to consume the very varnish of furniture. They reduce everything indiscriminately to shreds, which become manure."—Kitto's Enclyco. fl. 263. Locusts become, therefore, 'a most striking symbol of an all-devouring army, and as such are often referred to in Scripture. So also in Josephus, de Bello Jud. book v. chap. vii.: "As after locusts we see the woods stripped of their leaves, so, in the rear of Simon's army, nothing but devastation remained." The *natural* application of this symbol, then, is to a numerous and destructive army, or to a great multitude of people committing ravages, and sweeping off everything in their march.

And unto them was given power. This was something that was *imparted* to them beyond their ordinary nature. The locust in itself is not strong, and is not a symbol of strength. Though destructive in the extreme, yet neither as individuals, nor as combined, are they distinguished for strength. Hence it is mentioned as a remarkable circumstance that they had such power conferred on them.

As the scorpions of the earth have power. The phrase "the earth" seems to have been introduced here because these creatures are said to have come up from "the bottomless pit," and it was natural to compare them with some well-known objects found on the earth. The scorpion is an animal with eight feet, eight eyes, and a long, jointed tail, ending in a pointed weapon or sting. It is the largest and the most malignant of all the insect tribes. It somewhat resembles the lobster in its general appearance, but is much more hideous. **See Barnes "Lu 10:19"**.

Those found in Europe seldom exceed four inches in length, but in tropical climates, where they abound, they are often found twelve inches long. There are few animals more formidable, and none more irascible, than the scorpion. Goldsmith states that Maupertius put about a hundred of them together in the same glass, and that as soon as they came into contact they began to exert all their rage in mutual destruction, so that in a few days there remained but fourteen, which had killed and devoured all the rest. The sting of the scorpion, Dr. Shaw states, is not always fatal; the malignity of their venom being in proportion to their size and complexion. The torment of a scorpion, when he strikes a man, is thus described by Dioscorides, lib. vii. cap. 7, as cited by Mr. Taylor: "When the scorpion has stung, the place becomes inflamed and hardened; it reddens by tension, and is painful by intervals, being now chilly, now burning. The pain soon rises high, and rages, sometimes more, sometimes less. A sweating succeeds, attended by a shivering and trembling; the extremities of the body become cold, the groin swells, the hair stands on end, the members become pale, and the skin feels throughout the sensation of a perpetual pricking, as if by needles."—Fragments to Calmet's Dic. vol. iv. 376, 377. "The tail of the scorpion is long, and formed after the manner of a string of beads, the last larger than the others, and longer; at the end of which are, sometimes, two stings which are hollow, and filled with a cold poison, which it ejects into the part which it stings."—Calm. Dic. The sting of the scorpion, therefore, becomes the emblem of that which causes acute and dangerous suffering. On this comparison with scorpions, see the remark of Niebuhr, quoted in **See Barnes "Re 9:7"**.

{e} "scorpions" Re 9:10

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 9 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And it was commanded them*. The writer does not say *by whom* this command was given, but it is clearly by some one who had the direction of them. As they were evoked from the

"bottomless pit" by one who had the key to that dark abode, and as they are represented in Re 9:11 as under the command of one who is there called Abaddon, or Apollyon—the Destroyer—it would seem most probable that the command referred to is one that is given by him; that is, that this expresses one of the principles on which he would act in his devastations. At all events, this denotes what would be one of the characteristics of these destroyers. Their purpose would be to vex and trouble men; not to spread desolation over vineyards, oliveyards, and fields of grain.

That they should not hurt the grass of the earth, etc. **See Barnes "Re 8:7".**

The meaning here is plain. There would be some sense in which these invaders would be characterized in a manner that was not common among invaders, to wit, that they would show particular care not to carry their devastations into the vegetable world. Their warfare would be with men, and not with orchards and green fields.

But only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. **See Barnes on "Re 7:2-3".**

They commenced war against that part of the human race only. The language here properly denotes those who were not the friends of God. It may here refer, however, either to those who *in reality* were not such, or to those who were regarded by him who gave this command as not being such. In the former case, the commission would have respect to real infidels in the sight of God—that is, to those who rejected the true religion; in the latter, it would express the sentiment of the leader of this host, as referring to those who in *his* apprehension were infidels or enemies of God. The true interpretation must depend on the sense in which we understand the phrase "it was commanded;" whether as referring to God, or to the leader of the host himself. The language, therefore, is ambiguous, and the meaning must be determined by the other parts of the passage. Either method of understanding the passage would be in accordance with its fair interpretation.

{a} "them" Re 6:6 {b} "seal" Re 7:3 Ex 7:23; Job 2:6 Eze 9:4

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 9 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And to them it was given*. There is here the same indefiniteness as in the former verse, the impersonal verb being here also used. The writer does not say by whom this power was given, whether by God, or by the leader of the host. It may be admitted, however, that the most natural interpretation is to suppose that it was given them by God, and that this was the execution of *his* purpose in this case. Still it is remarkable that this is not directly affirmed, and that the language is so general as to admit of the other application. The *fact* that they did not kill them, but tormented them—if such a fact should be found to exist—would be in every sense a fulfilment of what is here said.

That they should not kill them. This is in accordance with the nature of the symbol. The locusts do not themselves destroy any living creature; and the sting of the scorpion, though exceedingly painful, is not usually fatal. The proper fulfilment of this would be found in that which would not be generally fatal, but which would diffuse misery and wretchedness. Compare Re 9:6. *Perhaps* all that would be necessarily meant by this would be, not that individual *men* would not be killed, but that they would be sent to inflict plagues and torments rather than to take life, and that the characteristic effects of their appearing would be distress and suffering rather than death. There may be included in the fair interpretation of the words, general distress and sorrow; acts of

oppression, cruelty, and violence; such a condition of public suffering that men would regard death as a relief if they could find it.

But that they should be tormented. That is, that they should be subjected to ills and troubles which might be properly compared with the sting of a scorpion.

Five months. So far as the *words* here are concerned, this might be taken literally, denoting five months or one hundred and fifty days; or as a prophetic reckoning, where a day stands for a year. Compare **Barnes on** "Da 9:24, seq. The latter is undoubtedly the correct interpretation here, for it is the character of the book thus to reckon time. **See Barnes on "Re 9:15"**.

If this be the true method of reckoning here, then it will be necessary to find some events which will embrace about the period of one hundred and fifty years, during which this distress and sorrow would continue. The proper laws of interpretation demand that one or the other of these periods should be found—either that of five months literally, or that of a hundred and fifty years. It may be true, as Professor Stuart suggests, (*in loc*.,) that "the usual time of locusts is from May to September inclusive—five months." It may be true, also, that this symbol was chosen partly *because* that was the fact, and they would, from that fact, be well adapted to symbolize a period that could be spoken of as "five months;" but still the meaning must be more than simply it was "*a short period*," as he supposes. The phrase *a few months* might designate such a period; but if that had been the writer's intention, he would not have selected the definite number *five*.

And their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, etc. **See Barnes "Re 9:3"**.

That is, it would be painful, severe, dangerous.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 9 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *And in those days shall men seek death*, etc. **See Barnes on "Re 9:5"**.

It is very easy to conceive of such a state of things as is here described, and, indeed, this has not been very uncommon in the world. It is a state where the distress is so great that men would consider death a relief, and where they anxiously look to the time when they may be released from their sufferings by death. In the case before us, it is not intimated that they would lay violent hands on themselves, or that they would take any positive measures to end their sufferings; and this, perhaps, *may be* a circumstance of some show the importance to that the persons referred to were servants of God. When it is said that "they would *seek* death," it can only be meant that they would look out for it—or desire it—as the end of their sorrows. This is descriptive, as we shall see, of a particular period of the world; but *language* is beautifully applicable to what occurs in all ages, and in all lands. There is always a great number of sufferers who are looking forward to death as a relief. In cells and dungeons; on beds of pain and languishing; in scenes of poverty and want; in blighted hopes and disappointed affections, how many are there who would be glad to die, and who have no hope of an end of suffering but in the grave! A few, by the pistol, by the halter, by poison, or by drowning, seek thus to end their woes. A large part look forward to death as a release, when, if the reality were known, death would furnish no such relief, for there are deeper and longer woes beyond the grave than there are this side of it. Compare **See Barnes** "Job 3:20, seq. But to a portion death *will* be a relief. It will be an end of sufferings. They will find peace in the grave, and are assured they shall suffer no more. Such bear their trials with patience, for the end of *all* sorrow to

them is near, and death will come to release their spirits from the suffering clay, and to bear them in triumph to a world where a pang shall never be felt, and a tear never shed.

{a} "men seek death" Job 3:21 Jer 8:3

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 9 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared for battle*. The resemblance between the locust and the horse, dissimilar as they are in most respects, has been often remarked. Dr. Robinson (Bib. Research. i. 59) says, "We found to-day upon the shrubs an insect, either a species of black locust, or much resembling them, which our Bedouin called *Faras el Jundy*, 'soldiers' horses.' They said these insects were common on Mount Sinai, of a green colour, and were found on dead trees, but did them no injury." The editor of the Pictorial Bible makes the following remarks: "The first time we saw locusts browsing with their wings closed, the idea of comparing them to horses arose spontaneously to our minds—as we had not previously met with such a comparison, and did not at that time advert to the present text, [Joe 2:4.] The resemblance in the head first struck our attention, and this notion, having once arisen, other analogies were found or imagined in its general appearance and action in feeding. We have since found the observation very common. The Italians, indeed, from this resemblance, call the locust *cavaletta*, or *little horse*. Sir W. Ouseley reports, 'Zakaria Cazvini divides the locusts into two classes, like horsemen and footmen—mounted and pedestrian.' Niebuhr says that he heard from a Bedouin, near Bussorah, a particular comparison of the locust to other animals; but as this passage of Scripture did not occur to him at the time, he thought it a mere fancy of the Arab's, till he heard it repeated at Bagdad. He compared the head of the locust to that of the horse; the feet to those of the camel; the belly with that of a serpent; the tail with that of a scorpion; and the feelers (if Niebuhr remembered rightly) to the hair of a virgin."—Pict. Bib. on Joel 2:4. The resemblance to horses would naturally suggest the idea of *cavalry*, as being referred to by the symbol.

And on their heads were as it were crowns like gold. The writer does not say either that these were literally *crowns*, or that they were actually made of *gold*. They were "*as it were*" (*wv*) *crowns*, and they were *like* (*omoioi*) *gold*. That is, as seen by him, they had a resemblance to crowns or diadems, and they also resembled gold in their colour and brilliancy. The word *crown*—*stefanov*—means properly a circlet, chaplet, encircling the head,

(a) as an emblem of royal dignity, and as worn by kings;

(b) as conferred on victors in the public games—a chaplet, a wreath;

(c) as an ornament, honour, or glory, Php 4:1. No particular *shape* is designated by the word *stefanov*—*stephanos*—and perhaps the word *crown* does not quite express the meaning. The word *diadem* would come nearer to it. The true notion in the word is that of something that is passed around the head, and that encircles it, and as such it would well describe the appearance of a *turban* as seen at a distance. On the supposition that the symbolic beings here referred to had turbans on their heads, and on the supposition that something was referred to which was not much worn in the time of John, and, therefore, that had no name, the word *stephanos, or diadem*, would be likely to be used in describing it. This, too, would accord with the use of the phrase "*as it were*"—*wv*. The writer saw such head-ornaments as he was unaccustomed to see. They were not *exactly* crowns or

diadems, but they had a resemblance to them, and he therefore uses this language: "and on their heads were *as it were* crowns." Suppose that these were *turbans*, and that they were not in common use in the time of John, and that they had, therefore, no name, would not this be the exact language which he would use in describing them? The same remarks may be made respecting the other expression.

Like gold. They were not pure gold; but they had a resemblance to it. Would not a yellow turban correspond with all that is said in this description?

And their faces were as the faces of men. They had a human countenance. This would indicate that, after all, they were human beings that the symbol described, though they had come up from the bottomless pit. Horsemen, in strange apparel, with a strange head-dress, would be all that would be properly denoted by this.

{b} "shapes" Joe 2:4

{c} "crowns" Na 3:17 {d} "faces" Da 7:4,8

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 9 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *And they had hair as the hair of women*. Long hair; not such as men commonly wear, but such as women wear. **See Barnes "1Co 11:14"**.

This struck John as a peculiarity, that, though warriors, they should have the appearance of effeminacy indicated by allowing their hair to grow long. It is clear from this, that John regarded their appearance as unusual and remarkable. Though manifestly designed to represent an army, yet it was not the usual appearance of men who went forth to battle. Among the Greeks of ancient times, indeed, long hair was not uncommon, **See Barnes "1Co 11:14"**

but this was by no means the usual custom among the ancients; and the fact that these warriors had long hair like women was a circumstance that would distinguish them particularly from others. On this comparison of the appearance of the locusts with the hair of women, see the remarks of Niebuhr, in **See Barnes "Re 9:7"**.

And their teeth were as the teeth of lions. Strong; fitted to devour. The teeth of the locust are by no means prominent, though they are strong, for they readily cut down and eat up all vegetable substances that come in their way. But it is evident that John means to say that there was much that was unusual and remarkable in the teeth of these locusts. They would be ravenous and fierce, and would spread terror and desolation like the lions of the desert.

{e} "teeth" Ps 57:4 Joe 1:6

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 9 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron*. Hard, horny, impenetrable, *as if* they were made of iron. The locust *has* a firm and hard cuticle on the forepart of the breast, which serves for a shield or defence while it moves in the thorny and furzy vegetation. On those which John saw, this was peculiarly hard and horny, and would thus be well adapted to be an

emblem of the breastplates of iron commonly worn by ancient warriors. The meaning is, that the warriors referred to would be well clad with defensive armour.

And the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses, running to battle. The noise made by locusts is often spoken of by travellers, and the comparison of that noise with that of chariots rushing to battle, is not only appropriate, but also indicates clearly what was symbolized. It was an army that was symbolized, and everything about them served to represent hosts of men, well armed, rushing to conflict. The same thing here referred to is noticed by Joe 2:4-5,7:—

> "The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses;
> and as horsemen so shall they run. Like the noise of
> chariots on the tops of mountains, shall they leap
> Like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble;
> As a strong people set in battle array.
> They shall run like mighty men;
> They shall climb the wall like men of war;
> And they shall march every one his ways, and shall not
> break their ranks," etc.

It is remarkable that Volney, who had no intention of illustrating the truth of Scripture, has given a description of locusts, *as if* he meant to confirm the truth of what is here said. "Syria," says he, "as well as Egypt, Persia, and almost all the south of Asia, is subject to another calamity no less dreadful [than earthquakes]; I mean those *clouds* of locusts so often mentioned by travellers. The quantity of these insects is incredible to all who have not themselves witnessed their astounding numbers; the whole earth is covered with them for the space of several leagues. The *noise* they make in browsing on the trees and herbage may be heard to a great distance, and resembles that of an army foraging in secret."—Travels in Egypt and Syria, vol. i., pp. 283, 284.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 9 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *And they had tails like unto scorpions*. The fancy of an Arab now often discerns a resemblance between the tail of the locust and the scorpion. See the remark of Niebuhr, quoted in **See Barnes "Re 9:7".**

And there were stings in their tails. Like the stings of scorpions. **See Barnes on "Re 9:3".**

This made the locusts which appeared to John the more remarkable, for, though the fancy may imagine a resemblance between the tail of a locust and a scorpion, yet the locusts have properly no sting. The only thing which they have resembling a sting is a hard bony substance, like a needle, with which the female punctures the bark and wood of trees in order to deposit her eggs. It has, however, no adaptation, like a sting, for conveying poison into a wound. These, however, appeared to be armed with stings properly so called.

And their power was to hurt men. Not primarily to *kill* men, but to inflict on them various kinds of tortures. **See Barnes "Re 9:5".**

The word here used—*adikhsai*, rendered *to hurt*—is different from the word in Re 9:5—*basanisywsi*, rendered *should be tormented*. This word properly means *to do wrong, to do unjustly, to injure, to hurt*; and the two words would seem to convey the idea that they would produce distress by *doing wrong* to others, or by dealing unjustly with them. It does not appear that the wrong would be by inflicting bodily torments, but would be characterized by that injustice towards others which produces distress and anguish.

Five months. **See Barnes "Re 9:5".**

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 9 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *And they had a king over them*. A ruler who marshalled their hosts. Locusts often, and indeed generally, move in bands, though they do not appear to be under the direction of any one as a particular ruler or guide. In this case, it struck John as a remarkable peculiarity that they *had* a king—a king who, it would seem, had the absolute control, and to whom was to be traced all the destruction which would ensue from their emerging from the bottomless pit.

Which is the angel of the bottomless pit. **See Barnes "Re 9:1".**

The word *angel* here would seem to refer to the chief of the evil angels, who presided over the dark and gloomy regions from whence the locusts seemed to emerge. This may either mean that this evil angel seemed to command them personally, or that his spirit was infused into the leader of these hosts.

Whose name in the Hebrew tongue is *Abaddon*. The name Abaddon means literally *destruction*, and is the same as Apollyon.

But in the Greek tongue hath his *name Apollyon*. From *apollumi, — to destroy*. The word properly denotes a destroyer, and the name is given to this king of the hosts, represented by the locusts, because this would be his principal characteristic.

After this minute explanation of the literal meaning of the symbol, it may be useful, before attempting to apply it, and to ascertain the *events* designed to be represented, to have a distinct impression of the principal image—the locust. It is evident that this is, in many respects, a creature of the imagination, and that we are not to expect the exact representation to be found in any forms of actual existence in the animal creation.

The question now is, whether any events occurred in history, subsequent to, and succeeding those supposed to be referred to in the fourth seal, to which this symbol would be applicable. Reasons have already been suggested for supposing that there was a transfer of the seat of the operations to another part of the world. The first four trumpets referred to a continual series of events of the same general character, and having a proper close. These have been explained as referring to the successive shocks which terminated in the downfall of the Western empire. At the close of that series there is a pause in the representation, (Re 8:13) and a solemn proclamation that other scenes were to open distinguished for woe. These were to be symbolized in the sounding of the remaining three trumpets, embracing the whole period till the consummation of all things—or sketching great and momentous events in the future, until the volume sealed with the seven seals (Re 5:1) should have been wholly unrolled and its contents disclosed. The whole scene now is changed. Rome has fallen. It has passed into the hands of strangers. The power that had spread

itself over the world has, in that form, come to an end, and is to exist no more—though, as we shall see, (Revelation 11 seq.) *another* power, quite as formidable, existing there, is to be described by a new set of symbols. But here (Revelation 9) a new power appears. The scenery is all Oriental, and clearly has reference to events that were to spring up in the East. With surprising unanimity, commentators have agreed in regarding this as referring to the empire of the Saracens, or to the rise and progress of the religion, and the empire set up by Mohammed. The inquiry now is, whether the circumstances introduced into the symbol find a proper fulfilment in the rise of the Saracenic power, and in the conquests of the Prophet of Mecca.

(1.) *The country where the scene is laid*. As already remarked, the scene is Oriental—for the mention of locusts naturally suggests the East—that being the part of the world where they abound, and they being in fact peculiarly an Oriental plague. It may now be added, that, in a more strict and proper sense, Arabia may be intended; that is, if it be admitted that the design was to symbolize events pertaining to Arabia, or the gathering of the hosts of Arabia for conquest, the symbol of *locusts* would have been employed, for the locust, the groundwork of the symbol, is peculiarly Arabic. It was the east wind which brought the locusts on Egypt, (Ex 10:13) and they must therefore have come from some portion of Arabia—for Arabia is the land that lies over against Egypt in the east. Such, too, is the testimony of Volhey, "the most judicious," as Mr. Gibbon calls him, "of modern travellers." "The inhabitants of Syria," says he, "have remarked that locusts come constantly from the desert of Arabia," chapter 20 section 5. All that is necessary to say further on this point is, that on the supposition that it was the design of the Spirit of inspiration in the passage before us to refer to the followers of Mohammed, the image of the locusts was that which would be naturally selected. There was no other one so appropriate and so striking; no one that would so naturally designate the country of Arabia. As some confirmation of this, or as showing how *natural* the symbol would be, a remark may be introduced from Mr. Forster. In his Mohammedanism Unveiled, (i. 217,) he says, "In the Bedoween romance of Antar, the *locust* is introduced as the national emblem of the Ishmaelites. And it is a remarkable coincidence that Mohammedan tradition speaks of locusts having dropped into the hands of Mohammed, bearing on their wings thin inscription—'We are the army of the Great God.'" These circumstances will show the propriety of the symbol on the supposition that it refers to Arabia and the Saracens.

(2.) *The people*. The question is, whether there was anything in the symbol, as described by John, which would properly designate the followers of Mohammed, on the supposition that it was designed to have such a reference.

(a) As to *numbers*. Jud 6:5: "They (the Midiunite Arabs) came as locusts for multitude." **See Barnes "Re 9:3"**.

Nothing would better represent the *numbers* of the Saracenic hordes that came out of Arabia, and that spread over the east, over Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Spain, and that threatened to spread over Europe, than such an army of locusts. "One hundred years after his flight [Mohammed] from Mecca," says Mr. Gibbon, "the arms and reigns of his successors extended from India to the Atlantic Ocean, over the various and distant provinces which may be comprised under the names of Persia, Syria, Egypt, Africa, and Spain," iii. 410. "At the end of the first century of the Hegira, the caliphs were the most potent and absolute monarchs on the globe. Under the last of the Ommiades, the Arabian empire extended two hundred days' journey from east to west, from the confines of Tartary and India to the shores of the Atlantic Ocean."—Ibid, p. 460. In regard to the immense *hosts* employed in these conquests, an idea may be formed by a perusal of the whole fifty-first chapter

in Gibbon, (vol. iii. pp. 408-461.) Those hosts issued primarily from Arabia, and in their numbers would be well compared with the swarms of locusts that issued from the same country, so numerous as to darken the sky.

(b) The *description* of the people.

Their faces were as the faces of men. This would seem to be in contrast with other people, or to denote something that was peculiar in the appearance of the persons represented. In other words, the meaning would seem to be, that there was something manly and warlike in their appearance, so far as their *faces* were concerned. It is remarkable that the appearance of the Goths (represented, as I suppose, under the previous trumpets) is described by Jerome (compare on Isaiah 8) as quite the reverse. They are described as having faces shaven and smooth; faces, in contrast with the bearded Romans, *like women's faces*. (Fromincas incisas facies praeferentes, virorum et bene barbatorum fugieata terga confodiunt.) Is it fancy to suppose that the reference here is to the beard and moustache of the Arabic hosts? We know with what care they regarded the beard; and *if* a representation was made of them, especially in contrast with nations that shaved their faces, and who thus resembled women, it would be natural to speak of those represented in the symbol as "having faces as the faces of men."

They had hair as the hair of women. A strange mingling of the appearance of effeminacy with the indication of manliness and courage. **See Barnes on "Re 9:8".**

And yet this strictly accords with the appearance of the Arabs or Saracens. Pliny, the contemporary of John, speaks of the Arabs then as having the hair long and uncut, with the moustache on the upper lip, or the beard: Arabes mitrati sunt, cut *intonso crine*. Barba abraditur, *praeterquam in superiore labro*. Aliis et *haec intonsa*.—Nat. Hist. vi. 28. So Solinus describes them in the third century (Plurimis crinis intonsus, mitrata capita, pars rasa in cutem barba, c. 53;) so Ammianus Marcellinus, in the fourth century, (*Crinitus* quidam a Saracencrum cuneo, 31. 16;) and so Claudian, Theodore of Mopsuesta, and Jerome, in the fifth. Jerome lived about two centuries before the great Saracen invasion; and as he lived at Bethlehem, on the borders of Arabia, he must have been familiar with the appearance of the Arabs. Still later, in that most characteristic of Arab poems, *Antar*, a poem written in the time of Mohammed's childhood, we find the moustache, and the beard, and the long flowing hair on the shoulder, and the turban, all specified as characteristic of the Arabians: "He adjusted himself properly, twisted his whiskers, *and folded up his hair under his turban*, drawing it from off his shoulders," i. 340. "His hair flowed down on his shoulders," i. 169. "Antar cut off Maudi's hair in revenge and insult," iii. 117. "We will hang him up by his hair," iv. 325. See Elliott, i. 411, 412. Compare Newton on the Prophecies, p. 485.

And on their heads were as it were crowns of gold. **See Barnes "Re 9:7".**

That is, diadems, or something that appeared like crowns, or chaplets. This will agree well with the *turban* worn by the Arabs or Saracens, and which was quite characteristic of them in the early periods when they became known. So in the passage already quoted, Pliny speaks of them as Arabes *mitrati*; so Solinus, *mitrata capita*; so in the poem of Antar, "he folded up his hair *under his turban*." It is remarkable also that Ezekiel (Eze 23:42) describes the turbans of the Subcan or Keturite Arabs under the very appellation here used by John: "Subcans from the wilderness, which put beautiful *crowns* upon their heads." So in the Preface to Antar, it is said, "It was a usual saying among them, that God had bestowed four peculiar things on the Arabs; that their *turbans* should be unto them instead of *diadems*, their tents instead of walls and houses, their swords instead of intrenchments, and their poems instead of written laws." Mr. Forster, in his Mohammedanism Unveiled, quotes

as a precept of Mohammed, "Make a point of wearing *turbans*, because it is the way of angels." Turbans might then with propriety be represented as crowns, and no doubt these were often so gilded and ornamented that they might be spoken of as "crowns of *gold*."

They had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron. **See Barnes on "Re 9:9"**.

As a *symbol*, this would be properly descriptive of the Arabians or Saracens. In the poem Antar, the steel and iron cuirasses of the Arab warriors are frequently noticed: "A warrior immersed in *steel armour*," ii. 203. "Fifteen thousand men armed with cuirasses, and well accoutred for war," ii. 42. "They were clothed in iron armour, and brilliant cuirasses," i. 23. "Out of the dust appeared horsemen clad in iron," iii. 274. The same thing occurs in the Koran: "God hath given you coats of mail to defend you in your wars," ii. 104. In the history of Mohammed, we read expressly of the cuirasses of himself and of his Arab troops. Seven cuirasses are noted in the list of Mohammed's private armoury.—Gagnier, iii. 328—334. In his second battle with the Koreish, seven hundred of his little army are spoken of by Mr. Gibbon as armed with cuirasses. See Elliott, i. 413. These illustrations will show with what propriety the locusts in the symbol were represented as having breastplates like breastplates of iron. On the supposition that this referred to the Arabs and the Saracens, this would have been the very symbol which would have been used. Indeed, all the features in the symbol are precisely such as *would* properly be employed on the supposition that the reference was to them. It is true that, beforehand, it might not have been practicable to describe exactly what people were referred to, but

(a) it would be easy to see that some fearful calamity was to be anticipated from the ravages of hosts of fearful invaders; and

(b) when the events occurred, there would be no difficulty in determining to whom this application should be made.

(3.) *The time when this would occur*. As to this, there can be no difficulty in the application to the Saracens. On the supposition that the four first trumpets refer to the downfall of the Western empire, then the proper time supposed to be represented by this symbol is subsequent to that; and yet the manner in which the last three trumpets are introduced (Re 8:13) shows that there would be an *interval* between the sounding of the last of the four trumpets and the sounding of the fifth. The events referred to, as I have supposed, as represented by the fourth trumpet, occurred in the close of the fifth century, (A. D. 476-490.) The principal events in the seventh century were connected with the invasions and conquests of the Saracens. The interval of a century is not more than the fair interpretation of the proclamation in Re 8:13 would justify.

(4.) *The commission given to the symbolical locusts*. This embraces the following things:

(a) They were not to hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing;

(b) they were especially to go against those who had not the seal of God in their foreheads;

(c) they were not to *kill* them, but were to *torment* them.

They were not to hurt the grass of the earth, etc. **Barnes on "Re 9:4"**.

This agrees remarkably with an express command in the Koran. The often quoted order of the Caliph Aboubekir, the father-in-law and successor of Mohammed, issued to the Saracen hordes on heir invasion of Syria, shows what was understood to be the spirit of their religion: "Remember that you are always in the presence of God, on the verge of death, in the assurance of judgment, and the hope of paradise. Avoid injustice and oppression; consult with your brethren, and study to procure the love and confidence of your troops. When you fight the battle of the Lord, acquit yourselves like men, without turning your backs; *but let not the victory be stained with the blood*

of women or children. Destroy no palm-trees, nor burn any fields of corn. Cut down no fruit-trees, nor do any mischief to cattle, only such as you kill to eat. When you make any covenant or article, stand to it, and be as good as your word. As you go on you will find some religious persons who have retired in monasteries, and propose to themselves to serve God in that way; let them alone, and *neither kill them* [and to them it was given that they should not kill them,' Re 9:5], nor destroy their monasteries," etc.— Gibbon iii. 417-418. So Mr. Gibbon notices this precept of the Koran: "In the siege of Tayaf," says he, "sixty miles from Mecca, Mohammed violated *his own laws* by the extirpation of the fruit-trees," ii. 392. The same order existed among the Hebrews, and it is not improbable that Mohammed derived his precept from the command of Moses, (De 20:19) though what was *mercy* among the Hebrews was probably mere *policy* with him. This precept is the more remarkable because it has been the usual custom in war, and particularly among barbarians and semi-barbarians, to destroy grain and fruit, and especially to cut down fruit-trees, in order to do greater injury to an enemy. Thus we have seen, (**See Barnes "Re 8:7"**) that in the invasion of the Goths their course was marked by desolations of this kind. Thus, in more modern times, it has been common to carry the desolations of war into gardens, orchards, and vineyards. In the single province of Upper Messenia, the troops of Mohammed Ali, in the war with Greece, cut down half a million of olive-trees, and thus stripped the country of its means of wealth. So Scio was a beautiful spot, the seat of delightful villas, and gardens, and orchards; and in one day all this beauty was destroyed. On the supposition, therefore, that this prediction had reference to the Saracens, nothing could be more appropriate. Indeed, in all the history of barbarous and savage warfare, it would be difficult to find another distinct command that no injury should be done to gardens and orchards.

This note is continued in next verse. **See Barnes "Re 9:12"**

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 9 - Verse 12

Continuation of Barnes Notes on Revelation 9:11

(d) Their commission was expressly against "those men who had not the seal of God in their foreheads." **See Barnes on "Re 9:4"**.

That is, they were to go either against those who were not *really* the friends of God, or those who *in their estimation* were not. Perhaps, if there were nothing in the connexion to demand a different interpretation, the former would be the most natural explanation of the passage; but the language *may be* understood as referring to the purpose which they considered themselves as called upon to execute: that is, that they were to go against those whom they regarded as being strangers to the true God, to wit, idolators. Now, it is well known that Mohammed considered himself called upon, principally, to make war with idolaters, and that he went forth, professedly, to bring them into subjection to the service of the true God. "The means of persuasion," says Mr. Gibbon, "had been tried, the season of forbearance was elapsed, and he was now commanded to propagate his religion by the sword, to destroy the monuments of idolatry, and, without regarding the sanctity of days or months, to pursue the unbelieving nations of the earth," iii. 387. "The fair option of friendship, or submission, or battle, was proposed to the enemies of Mohammed."—Ibid. "The sword," says Mohammed, "is the key of heaven and hell; a drop of blood shed in the cause of God, a night spent in arms, is of more avail than two months of fasting and prayer: whosoever falls in

battle, his sins are forgiven; at the day of judgment his wounds shall be resplendent as vermilion, and odoriferous as musk; and the loss of his limbs shall be supplied by the wings of angels and cherubim."—Gibbon, iii. 387. The first conflicts waged by Mohammed were against the *idolaters* of his own country—those who can, on no supposition, be regarded as "having the seal of God in their foreheads;" his subsequent wars were against *infidels* of all classes, that is, against those whom he regarded as not having the "seal of God in their foreheads," or as being the enemies of God.

(e) The other part of the commission was "not to kill, but to torment them." **Barnes on "Re 9:5".**

Compare the quotation from the command of Aboubekir, as quoted above: "Let not the victory be stained with the blood of women and children." "Let them alone, and neither kill them nor destroy their monasteries." The meaning of this, if understood as applied to their commission against Christendom, would seem to be, that they were not to go forth to "kill," but to "torment" them; to wit, by the calamities which they would bring upon Christian nations for a definite period. Indeed, as we have seen above, it was an express command of Aboubekir that they should not put those to death who were found leading quiet and peaceable lives in monasteries, though against another class he *did* give an express command to "cleave their skulls." See Gibbon, iii. 418. As applicable to the conflicts of the Saracens with Christians, the meaning here would seem to be, that the power conceded to those who are represented by the locusts was not to cut off and to destroy the church, but it was to bring upon it various calamities to continue for a definite period. Accordingly, some of the severest afflictions which have come upon the church have undoubtedly proceeded from the followers of the Prophet of Mecca. There were times in the early history of that religion when, to all human appearance, it would universally prevail, and wholly supplant the Christian church. But the church still survived, and no power was at any time given to the Saracenic hosts to destroy it altogether. In respect to this, some remarkable facts have occurred in history. The followers of the false prophet contemplated the subjugation of Europe, and the destruction of Christianity, from two quarters—the East and the West—expecting to make a junction of the two armies in the north of Italy, and to march down to Rome. Twice did they attack the *vital* part of Christendom by besieging Constantinople: first, in the seven years' siege, which lasted from A. D. 668 to A. D. 675; and, secondly, in the years 716-718, when Leo the Isaurian was on the imperial throne. But on both occasions they were obliged to retire defeated and disgraced. —Gibbon, iii. 461, seq. Again, they renewed their attack on the West. Having conquered Northern Africa, they passed over into Spain, subdued that country and Portugal, and extended their conquests as far as the Loire. At that time they designed to subdue France, and having united with the forces which they expected from the East, they intended to make a descent on Italy, and complete the conquest of Europe. This purpose was defeated by the valour of Charles Martel, and Europe and the Christian world were saved from subjugation.—Gibbon, iii. 467, seq. "A victorious line of march," says Mr. Gibbon, "had been prolonged above a thousand miles, from the rock of Gibraltar to the mouth of the Loire; the repetition of an equal space would have carried the Saracens to the confines of Poland and the highlands of Scotland. The Rhine is not more impassable than the Nile or the Euphrates, and the Arabian fleet might have sailed without a naval combat into the mouth of the Thames. Perhaps the interpretation of the Koran would now be taught in the schools of Oxford, and her pulpits might demonstrate to a circumcised people the sanctity and truth of the revelations of Mohammed." The arrest of the Saracen hosts before Europe was subdued, was what there was no reason to anticipate, and it even yet perplexes historians to be able to account for it. "The calm historian," says Mr. Gibbon, "who strives to follow the rapid course of the Saracens, must study to explain by what means the church

and state were saved from this impending, and, as it should seem, inevitable danger." "These conquests," says Mr. Hallam, "which astonish the careless and superficial, are less perplexing to a calm inquirer than their cessations—the loss of half the Roman empire than the preservation of the rest."— *Middle Ages*, ii. 3, 169. These illustrations may serve to explain the meaning of the symbol—that their grand commission was not to annihilate or root out, but to annoy and afflict. Indeed, they did not go forth with a primary design to *destroy*. The announcement of the Mussulman always was "the Koran, the tribute, or the sword," and when there was submission, either by embracing his religion or by tribute, life was always spared. "The fair option of friendship, or submission, or battle," says Mr. Gibbon, (iii. 387,) "was proposed to the enemies of Mohammed." Compare also vol. iii. 453, 456. The *torment* mentioned here, I suppose, refers to the calamities brought upon the Christian world—on Egypt, and Northern Africa, and Spain, and Gaul, and the East, by the hordes which came out of Arabia, and which swept over all those countries, like a troublesome and destructive host of locusts. Indeed, would *any* image better represent the effects of the Saracenic invasions than such a countless host of locusts? Even now, can we find an image that would better represent this ?

(5.) *The leader of this host*.

(a) He was like a star that fell from heaven, (Re 9:1) a bright and illustrious prince, *as if* heaven-endowed, but fallen. Would anything better characterize the genius, the power, and the splendid but perverted talent of Mohammed? Mohammed was, moreover, by birth, of the princely house of the Koreish, governors of Mecca,.and to no one could the term be more appropriate than to one of that family.

(b) He was a king. That is, there was to be one monarch—one ruling spirit to which all these hosts were subject. And never was anything more appropriate than this title as applied to the leader of the Arabic hosts. All those hosts were subject to one mind—to the command of the single leader that originated the scheme.

(c) The name, *Abaddon*, or *Apollyon—Destroyer*, Re 9:11. This name would be appropriate to one who spread his conquests so far over the world; who wasted so many cities and towns; who overthrew so many kingdoms; and who laid the foundation of ultimate conquests by which so many human beings were sent to the grave.

(d) The description of the leader "as the angel of the bottomless pit," Re 9:11. If this be regarded as meaning that "the angel of the bottomless pit"—the spirit of darkness himself—originated the scheme, and animated these hosts, what term would better characterize the leader? And if it be a poetic description of Mohammed as sent out by that presiding spirit of evil, how could a better representative of the spirit of the nether world have been sent out upon the earth than he was—one more talented, more sagacious, more powerful, more warlike, more wicked, more fitted to subdue the nations of the earth to the dominion of the Prince of darkness, and to hold them for ages under his yoke?

(6.) *The duration of the torment*. It is said (Re 9:5) that this would be five months; that is, prophetically, a hundred and fifty years. **See Barnes on "Re 9:5".**

The Hegira, or flight of Mohammed, occurred A.D. 622; the Saracens first issued from the desert into Syria, and began their series of wars on Christendom, A.D. 629. Reckoning from these periods respectively, the five months, or the hundred and fifty years, would extend to A.D. 772 or 779. It is not necessary to understand this period of a hundred and fifty years of the actual continued existence of the bodies symbolized by the locusts, but only of the period in which they would inflict

their "torment"—" that they should be tormented five months." That is, this would be the period of the *intensity* of the woe inflicted by them; there would be at that time some marked intermission of the torment. The question then is, whether, in the history of the Saracens, there was any period after their career of conquest had been continued for about a hundred and fifty years, which would mark the intermission or cessation of these "torments." If so, then this is all that is necessary to determine the applicability of the symbol to the Arabian hordes. Now, in reply to this question, we have only to refer to Mr. Gibbon. The table of contents prefixed to chapters forty-one and forty-two of his work would supply all the information desired. I looked at that table, after making the estimate as to what period the "five months," or hundred and fifty years, would conduct us to, to see whether anything occurred at about that time in the Mohammedan power and influence, which could be regarded as marking the time of the intermission or cessation of the calamities inflicted by the Arabic hordes on the Christian world. After Mr. Gibbon had recorded in detail (vol. iii. 360-460) the character and conquests of the Arabian hordes under Mohammed and his successors, I find the statement of the decline of their power at just about the period to which the hundred and fifty years would lead us, for at that very time an important change came over the followers of the prophet of Mecca, turning them from the love of conquest to the pursuits of literature and science. From that period, they ceased to be formidable to the church; their limits were gradually contracted; their power diminished; and the Christian world, in regard to them, was substantially at peace. This change in the character and purposes of the Saracens is thus described by Mr. Gibbon, at the close of the reign of the caliph Abdalrahman, whose reign commenced A. D. 755, and under whom the *peaceful* sway of the Ommiades of Spain began, which continued for a period of two hundred and fifty years. "The luxury of the caliphs, so useless to their private happiness, relaxed the nerves, and terminated the progress, of the Arabian empire. Temporal and spiritual conquest had been the sole occupation of the successors of Mohammed; and after supplying themselves with the necessaries of life, the whole revenue was scrupulously devoted to the salutary work. The Abassides were impoverished by the multitude of their wants, and their contempt of economy. Instead of pursuing the great object of ambition, their leisure, their affections, and the powers of their minds, were diverted by pomp and pleasure: the rewards of valour were embezzled by women and eunuchs, and the royal camp was encumbered by the luxury of the palace. A similar temper was diffused among the subjects of the caliph. Their stern enthusiasm was softened by time and prosperity: they sought riches in the occupations of industry, fame in the pursuits of literature, and happiness in the tranquillity of domestic life. War was no longer the passion of the Saracens; and the increase of pay, the repetition of donative, were insufficient to allure the posterity of these voluntary champions who had crowded to the standard of Abubeker and Omar for the hopes of the spoil of paradise," iii. 477, 478. Of the Ommiades, or princes who succeeded Abdalrahman, Mr. Gibbon remarks in general—"Their mutual designs or declarations of war evaporated without effect; but instead of opening a door to the conquest of Europe, Spain was dissevered from the trunk of the monarchy, engaged in perpetual hostility with the East, *and inclined to peace and friendship with the Christian sovereigns of Constantinople and France*," iii. p. 472. How much does this look like some change occurring by which they would cease to be a source of "torment" to the nations with whom they now dwelt! From this period, they gave themselves to the arts of peace; cultivated literature and science; lost entirely their spirit of conquest, and their ambition for universal dominion, until they gradually withdrew, or were driven, from those parts of the Christian world where they had inspired most terror, and which in the days of their power and ambition they had invaded. By turning merely

to the "table of contents" of Mr. Gibbon's history, the following periods, occurring at about the time that would be embraced in the "five months," or hundred and fifty years, are distinctly marked:—

"A. D. 668-675. First siege of Constantinople by the Arabs.
,, 677. Peace and tribute.
,, 716-718. Second siege of Constantinople.
,, ,, Failure and retreat of the Saracens.
,, ,, Invention and use of the Greek fire.
,, 721. Invasion of France by the Arabs.
,, 732. Defeat of the Saracens by Charles Martel.
,, They retreat before the Franks.
,, 746-750. The elevation of the Abassides.
,, 750. Fall of the Ommiades.
,, 755. Revolt of Spain.
,, ,, Triple division of the caliphate.
,, 750-960. Magnificence of the caliphs.
,, ,, Its consequence on private and public happiness.
,, 734, etc. Introduction of learning among the Arabians.
,, ,, Their real progress in the sciences."

It will be seen from this that the decline of their military and civil power; their defeats in their attempts to subjugate Europe; their turning their attention to the peaceful pursuits of literature and science, synchronize remarkably with the period that would be indicated by the five months, or the hundred and fifty years. It should be added, also, that in the year 762, Almanzor, the caliph, built Bagdad, and made it the capital of the Saracen empire. Henceforward that became the seat of Arabic learning, luxury, and power, and the wealth and talent of the Saracen empire were gradually drawn to that capital, and they ceased to vex and annoy the Christian world. The building of Bagdad occurred within just ten years of the time indicated by the "five months"—reckoning that from the Hegira, or flight of Mohammed; or reckoning from the time when Mohammed began to preach, (A.D. 609—Gibbon, iii. 383,) it wanted but three years of coinciding exactly with the period.

These considerations show with what propriety the fifth trumpet— the symbol of the locusts—is referred to the Arabian hordes under the guidance of Mohammed and his successors. On the supposition that it was the design of John to symbolize these events, the symbol has been chosen which of all others was best adapted to the end. If, now that these events are passed, we should endeavour to find some symbol which would appropriately represent them, we could not find one that would be more striking or appropriate than that which is here employed by John.

Verse 12. *One woe is past*. The *woe* referred to in Re 9:1-11. In Re 8:13, three woes are mentioned which were to occur successively, and which were to embrace the whole of the period comprised in the seven seals and the seven trumpets. Under the last of the seals, we have considered four successive periods, referring to events connected with the downfall of the Western empire; and then we have found one important event, worthy of a place in noticing the things which would permanently affect the destiny of the world—the rise, the character, and the conquests of the Saracens. This was referred to by the first *woe-trumpet*. We enter now on the consideration of the second. This occupies the remainder of the chapter, and in illustrating it the same method will be

pursued as heretofore: first, to explain the literal meaning of the words, phrases, and symbols; and then to inquire what events in history, if any, succeeding the former, occurred, which would correspond with the language used.

And, behold, there come two woes more hereafter. Two momentous and important events that will be attended with sorrow to mankind. It cannot be intended that there would be no *other* evils that would visit mankind; but the eye, in glancing along the future, rested on these as having a special preeminence in affecting the destiny of the church and the world.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 9 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *And the sixth angel sounded*. **See Barnes** "Re 8:2-7, seq.

And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God. In the *language* here used there is an allusion to the temple, but the scene is evidently laid in heaven. The temple in its arrangements was designed, undoubtedly, to be in important respects a symbol of heaven, and this idea constantly occurs in the Scriptures. Compare the Epistle to the Hebrews *passim*. The golden altar stood in the holy place, between the table of shew-bread and the golden candlestick. **See Barnes on "Heb 9:1-2"**.

This altar, made of shittim or acacia wood, was ornamented at the four corners, and overlaid throughout with laminee of gold. Hence it was called "the golden altar," in contradistinction from the altar for sacrifice, which was made of stone. Compare **See Barnes** "Mt 21:12, seq. On its four corners it had projections which are called *horns*, (Ex 30:2-3,) which seem to have been intended mainly for ornaments. See Jahn, Arch. % 332; Josephus Ant. iii. 6, 8. When it is said that this was "before God," the meaning is, that it was directly before or in front of the symbol of the Divine presence in the most holy place. This image, in the vision of John, is transformed to heaven. The voice seemed to come from the very presence of the Deity; from the place where offerings are made to God.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 9 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Saying to the sixth angel, which had the trumpet*. **See Barnes "Re 8:2"**.

Loose, etc. This power, it would seem, was given to the sixth angel in addition to his office of blowing the trumpet. All this, of course, was in vision, and cannot be literally interpreted. The meaning is, that the effect of his blowing the trumpet would be the same *as if* angels that had been bound should be suddenly loosed and suffered to go forth over the earth: that is, some event would occur which would be properly symbolized by such an act.

The four angels. Compare **See Barnes "Re 8:2"**.

It was customary to represent important events as occurring under the ministry of angels. The general meaning here is, that, in the vicinity of the river Euphrates, there were mighty powers which had been bound or held in check, which were now to be let loose upon the world. What we are to look for in the fulfilment is evidently this—some power that seemed to be kept back by an invisible

influence as if by angels, now suddenly let loose and suffered to accomplish the purpose of desolation mentioned in the subsequent verses. It is not necessary to suppose that angels were actually employed in these restraints, though no one can demonstrate that their agency was *not* concerned in the transactions here referred to. Compare **See Barnes "Da 10:12-13"**.

It has been made a question why the number *four* is specified, and whether the forces were in any sense made up of four divisions, nations, or people. While nothing certain can be determined in regard to that, and while the number four *may* be used merely to denote a great and strong force, yet it must be admitted that the most obvious interpretation would be to refer it to some combination of forces, or to some union of powers, that was to accomplish what is here said. If it had been a single nation, it would have been more in accordance with the usual method in prophecy to have represented them as restrained by an angel, or by angels in general, without specifying any number.

Which are bound. That is, they *seemed* to be bound. There was something which held them, and the forces under them, in check, until they were thus commanded to go forth. In the fulfilment of this, it will be necessary to look for something of the nature of a check or restraint on these forces, until they were commissioned to go forth to accomplish the work of destruction.

In the great river Euphrates. The well-known river of that name, commonly called, in the Scriptures, "the great river," and, by way of eminence, "*the* river," Ex 23:31 Isa 8:7. This river was on the east of Palestine; and the language here used naturally denotes that the power referred to under the sixth trumpet would spring up in the East, and that it would have its origin in the vicinity of that river. Those interpreters, therefore, who apply this to the invasion of Judaea by the Romans have great difficulty in explaining this—as the forces employed in the destruction of Jerusalem came from the West, and not from the East. The fair interpretation is, that there were forces in the vicinity of the Euphrates which were, up to this period, bound or restrained, but which were now suffered to spread woe and sorrow over a considerable portion of the world.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 9 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *And the four angels were loosed*. Who had this mighty host under restraint. The loosening of the angels was, in fact, also a letting loose of all these hosts, that they might accomplish the work which they were commissioned to do.

Which were prepared. See Re 9:7. The word here used properly refers to that which is made ready, fitted up, arranged for anything: as persons prepared for a journey, horses for battle, a road for travellers, food for the hungry, a house to live in, etc. See Rob. Lex., s. voce *etoimazw*. As used here, the word means that whatever was necessary to *prepare* these angels—the leaders of this host—for the work which they were commissioned to perform, was now done, and that they stood in a state of readiness to execute the design. In the fulfilment of this it will be necessary to look for some arrangements existing in the vicinity of the Euphrates, by which these restrained hosts were *in a state of readiness* to be summoned forth to the execution of this work, or in such a condition that they *would* go forth spontaneously if the restraints existing were removed.

For an hour, etc. Marg., *at*. The Greek—*eiv*—means properly unto, with reference to; and the sense is, that, *with reference to* that hour, they had all the requisite preparation. Professor Stuart explains it as meaning that they were "prepared for the particular year, month, day, and hour,

destined by God for the great catastrophe which is to follow." The meaning, however, rather seems to be that they were prepared, not for the *commencement* of such a period, but they were prepared for *the whole period* indicated by the hour, the day, the month, and the year; that is, that the continuance of this "woe" would extend along through the whole period. For

(a) this is the natural interpretation of the word "for"—*eiv*;

(b) it makes the whole sentence intelligible for though it might be proper to say of anything that it was "prepared for an hour," indicating the commencement of what was to be done, it is not usual to say of anything that it is "prepared for an hour, a month, a day, a year," when the design is merely to indicate the *beginning* of it; and

(c) it is in accordance with the prediction respecting the first "woe," (Re 9:5,) where the time is specified in language similar to this, to wit, "five months." It seems to me, therefore, that we are to regard the time here mentioned as a prophetic indication of the period during which this woe would continue.

An hour, and a day, and a month, and a year. If this were to be taken literally, it would, of course, be but little more than a year. If it be taken, however, in the common prophetic style, where a day is put for a year, (**Barnes on** "Da 9:24, seq.,) then the amount of time (360 + 30 + 1 + an hour) would be three hundred and ninety-one years, and the portion of the year indicated by an hour—a twelfth or twenty-fourth part, according as the day was supposed to be divided into twelve or twenty-four hours. That this is the true view seems to be clear, because this accords with the usual style in this book; because it can hardly be supposed that the "preparation" here referred to would have been for so brief a period as the time would be if literally interpreted; and because the mention of so small a portion of time as an "hour," if literally taken, would be improbable in so great transactions. The fair interpretation, therefore, will require us to find some events that will fill up the period of about three hundred and ninety-one years.

For to slay the third part of men. Compare Re 8:7,9,12.

The meaning here is, that the immense host which was restrained on the Euphrates would, when loosed, spread desolation over about a third part of the world. We are not to suppose that this is to be understood in exactly a literal sense; but the meaning is, that the desolation would be so widespread that it would seem to embrace a third of the world. No such event as the cutting off of a few thousands of Jews in the siege of Jerusalem would correspond with the language here employed, and we must look for events more general and more disastrous to mankind at large.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 9 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *And the number of the army of the horsemen*. It is to be observed here that the strength of the army seemed to be cavalry. In the former plagues there is no distinct mention of horsemen; but here that which struck the beholder was the immense and unparalleled number of horsemen.

Were two hundred thousand thousand. A thousand thousand are a million, and consequently the number here referred to would be two hundred millions. This would be a larger army than was ever assembled, and it cannot be supposed that it is to be taken literally. That it would be a very large host—so large that it would not readily be numbered—is clear. The expression in the original, while it naturally conveys the idea of an immense number, would seem also to refer to some

peculiarity in the manner of reckoning them. The language is, *two myriads of myriads—duo muriadev muriadwn*. The myriad was ten thousand. The idea would seem to be this. John saw an immense host of cavalry. They appeared to be divided into large bodies that were in some degree separate, and that might be reckoned by ten thousands. Of these different squadrons there were many, and to express their great and unusual number he said that there seemed to be *myriads* of them— two myriads of myriads, or twice ten thousand myriads. The army thus would seem to be immense; an army, as we should say, to be reckoned *by tens of thousands*.

And I heard the number of them. They were so numerous that he did not pretend to be able to estimate the number himself, for it was beyond his power of computation; but he heard it stated in these round numbers, that there were "two myriads of myriads" of them.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 9 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *And thus I saw the horses in the vision*. That is, he saw them as he proceeds to describe them, for the word *thus—outwv*—refers to what follows. Compare Rob. Lex. on the word, (b,) and see Mt 1:18 2:5; Joh 21:1 Heb 4:4.

Professor Stuart, however, refers it to what precedes. The meaning, as it seems to me, is, that he fixed his attention on the appearance of the immense army—the horses and their riders, and proceeded to describe them as they struck him.

And them that sat on them. He fixed the attention on horse and rider. Their appearance was unusual, and deserved a particular description.

Having breastplates of fire. That is, those who sat on them had such breastplates. The word here rendered breastplate denoted properly a coat of mail that covered the body from the neck to the thighs. **See Barnes on "Eph 6:14"**.

This would be a prominent object in looking at a horseman. This was said to be composed of "fire, and jacinth, and brimstone;" that is, the part of the body usually encased in the coat of mail had these three colours. The word "fire" here simply denotes *red*. It was burnished and bright, and seemed to be a blaze of fire. The word "jacinth"—*uakinyinouv*— means hyacinthine. The colour denoted is that of the hyacinth—a flower of a deep purple or reddish blue. Then it refers to a gem of the same colour, nearly related to the *zircon* of the mineralogists, and the colour here mentioned is deep purple or reddish blue. The word rendered "brimstone"—*yeiwdhv*—means properly sulphurous, that is, made of sulphur, and means here simply *yellow*. The meaning of the whole then is, that these horsemen appeared to be clad in a peculiar kind of armour—armour that shone like fire, mingled with blue and yellow. It will be necessary to look for the fulfilment of this in cavalry that was so caparisoned.

And the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions. Resembled, in some respects, the heads of lions. He does not say that they *were* the heads of lions, or that the riders were on monsters, but only that they, in some respects, *resembled* the heads of lions. It would be easy to give this general appearance by the way in which the head-dress of the horses was arrayed.

And out of their mouths issued. That is, *appeared* to issue. It is not necessary to understand this as affirming that it actually came from their mouths, but only that, to one looking on such an approaching army, it would have this *appearance*. The heathen poets often speak of horses breathing

out fire and smoke, (Virg. Geor. ii. 140; iii. 85; Ovid, Met. vii. 104,) meaning that their breath seemed to be mingled smoke and fire. There is an image superadded here not found in any of the classic descriptions, that this was mingled with *brimstone*. All this *seemed* to issue from their mouths; that is, it was breathed forth in front of the host, as if the horses emitted it from their mouths.

Fire and smoke and brimstone. The exact idea, whether that was intended or not, would be conveyed by the discharge of musketry or artillery. The fire, the smoke, and the sulphurous smell of such a discharge, would correspond precisely with this language, and if it be supposed that the writer meant to describe such a discharge, this would be the very language that would be used. Moreover, in describing a battle, nothing would be more proper than to say that this appeared to issue from the horses' mouths. If, therefore, it should be found that there were any events where fire-arms were used, in contradistinction from the ancient mode of warfare, this *language* would be appropriate to describe that; and if it were ascertained that the writer meant to refer to some such fact, then the language here used would be that which he would adopt. One thing is certain, that this is not language which would be employed to describe the onset of ancient cavalry in the mode of warfare which prevailed then. No one describing a charge of cavalry among the Persians, the Greeks, or the Romans, when the only armour was the sword and the spear, would think of saying that there seemed to be emitted from the horses' mouths fire, and smoke, and brimstone.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 9 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *By these three*. Three things—explained immediately as referring to the fire, the smoke, and the brimstone.

Was the third part of men killed. **See Barnes on** "Re 8:7-12, on each of which verses we have notices of calamities that came upon the third part of the race, of the sea, of rivers, etc. We are not to suppose that this is to be taken literally, but the description is given as it *appeared* to John. Those immense numbers of horsemen would sweep over the world, and a full third part of the race of men would seem to fall before them.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 9 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *For their power is in their mouth*. That is, as described, in the fire, smoke, and brimstone that proceeded out of their mouths. What struck the seer as remarkable on looking on the symbol was, that this immense destruction seemed to proceed out of their mouths. It was not that they trampled down their enemies; nor that they destroyed them with the sword, the bow, or the spear: it was some new and remarkable power in warfare—in which the destruction seemed to proceed from fire and smoke and sulphur issuing from the mouths of the horses themselves.

And in their tails. The tails of the horses. This, of course, was something unusual and remarkable in horses, for naturally they have no power there. The power of a fish, or a scorpion, or a wasp, may be said to be in their tails, for their strength or their means of defence or of injury are there, but we never think of speaking in this way of horses: It is not necessary, in the interpretation of

this, to suppose that the reference is literally to the tails of the horses, any more than it is to suppose that the smoke and fire and brimstone literally proceeded from their mouths. John describes things as they *appeared* to him in looking at them from a considerable distance. From their mouths the horses belched forth fire, and smoke, and sulphur, and even their tails seemed to be armed for the work of death.

For their tails were like unto serpents. Not like the tails of serpents, but like serpents themselves.

And had heads. That is, there was something remarkable in the position and appearance of their *heads*. All serpents, of course, have heads; but John saw something unusual in this—or something so peculiar in their heads as to attract special attention. It would seem most probable that the heads of these serpents appeared to extend in every direction —as if the hairs of the horses' tails had been converted into snakes, presenting a most fearful and destructive image. Perhaps it may illustrate this to suppose that there is reference to the Amphisbsena, or two-headed snake. It is said of this reptile that its tail resembles a head, and that with this it throws out its poison.—Lucan, ix. 179; Pliny's Hist. Nat. viii. 35. It really has but one head, but its tail has the appearance of a head, and it has the power of moving in either direction to a limited degree. If we suppose these snakes fastened to the tail of a horse, the appearance of *heads* would be very prominent and remarkable. The image is that of the power of destruction. They seemed like ugly and poisonous serpents instead of tails.

And with them they do hurt. Not the main injury, but they have the power of inflicting *some* injury by them.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 9 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues*, etc. One third part is represented as swept off, and it might have been expected that a salutary effect would have been produced on the remainder, in reforming them, and restraining them from error and sin. The writer proceeds to state, however, that these judgments did *not* have the effect which might reasonably have been anticipated. No reformation followed; there was no abandonment of the prevailing forms of iniquity; there was no change in their idolatry and superstition. In regard to the exact meaning of what is here stated, (Re 9:20-21,) it will be a more convenient arrangement to consider it *after* we have ascertained the proper application of the passage relating to the sixth trumpet. What is here stated (Re 9:20-21) pertains to the state of the world *after* the desolations which would occur under this woe-trumpet; and the explanation of the words may be reserved therefore, with propriety, until the inquiry shall have been instituted as to the general design of the whole.

With respect to the fulfilment of this symbol—the sixth trumpet— it will be necessary to inquire whether there has been any event, or class of events, occurring at such a time, and in such a manner, as would be properly denoted by such a symbol. The examination of this question will make it necessary to go over the leading points in the symbol, and to endeavour to apply them. In doing this, I shall simply state, with such illustrations as may occur, what seems to me to have been the design of the symbol. It would be an endless task to examine all the explanations which have been proposed, and it would be useless to do so.

The reference, then, seems to me to be to the Turkish power, extending from the time of the first appearance of the Turks in the neighbourhood of the Euphrates, to the final conquest of Constantinople in 1453. The general reasons for this opinion are such as the following:

(a) If the previous trumpet referred to the Saracens, or to the rise of the Mohammedan power among the Arabs, then the Turkish dominion, being the next in succession, would be that which would most naturally be symbolized.

(b) The Turkish power rose on the decline of the Arabic, and was the next important power in affecting the destinies of the world.

(c) This power, like the former, had its seat in the East, and would be properly classified under the events occurring there as affecting the destiny of the world.

(d) The introduction of this power was *necessary*, in order to complete the survey of the downfall of the Roman empire—the great object kept in view all along in these symbols. In the first four of these trumpets, under the seventh seal, we found the decline and fall of the Western empire; in the first of the remaining three—the fifth in order—we found the rise of the Saracens, materially affecting the condition of the *Eastern* portion of the Roman world; and the notice of the Turks, under whom the empire at last fell to rise no more, seemed to be demanded in order to the completion of the picture. As a leading design of the whole vision was to describe the ultimate destiny of that formidable power—the Roman—which, in the time when the Revelation was given to John, ruled over the whole world; under which the church was then oppressed; and which, either as a civil or ecclesiastical power, was to exert so important an influence on the destiny of the church, it was proper that its history should be sketched until it ceased—that is, until the conquest of the capital of the Eastern empire by the Turks. Here the termination of the empire, as traced by Mr. Gibbon, closes; and these events it was important to incorporate in this series of visions.

The rise and character of the Turkish people may be seen stated in full in Gibbon, Dec. and Fall, iii. 101—103, 105, 486; iv. 41, 42, 87, 90, 91, 93, 100, 127, 143, 151,258, 260, 289, 350. The leading facts in regard to the history of the Turks, so far as they are necessary to be known before we proceed to apply the symbols, are the following:

(1.) The Turks, or Turkroans, had their origin in the vicinity of the Caspian Sea, and were divided into two branches, one on the east, and the other on the west. The latter colony, in the tenth century, could muster forty thousand soldiers; the other numbered a hundred thousand families.—Gibbon, iv. 90. By the latter of these, Persia was invaded and subdued, and soon Baghdad also came into their possession, and the seat of the caliph was occupied by a Turkish prince. The various details respecting this, and respecting their conversion to the faith of the Koran, may be seen in Gibbon, iv. 90-93. A mighty Turkish and Moslem power was thus concentrated under Togrul, who had subdued the caliph, in the vicinity of the Tigris and the Euphrates, extending east over Persia and the countries adjacent to the Caspian Sea, but it had not yet crossed the Euphrates to carry its conquests to the west. The conquest of Bagdad by Togrul, the first prince of the Seljuk race, was an important event, not only in itself, but as it was by this event that the Turk was constituted temporal lieutenant of the prophet's vicar, and so the head of the temporal power of the religion of Islam. "The conqueror of the East kissed the ground, stood some time in a modest posture, and was led toward the throne by the vizier and an interpreter. After Togrul had seated himself on another throne, his commission was publicly read, which declared him the temporal lieutenant of the prophet. He was successively invested with seven robes of honour, and presented with seven slaves the natives of the seven climates of the Arabian empire, etc. Their alliance [of

the sultan and the caliph] was cemented by the marriage of Togrul's sister with the successor of the prophet," etc.—Gibbon, iv. 93. The conquest of Persia, the subjugation of Bagdad, the union of the Turkish power with that of the caliph, the successor of Mohammed, and the foundation of this powerful kingdom in the neighbourhood of the Euphrates, is all that is necessary to explain the sense of the phrase "which were *prepared* for an hour," etc., Re 9:15. The arrangements were then made for the important series of events which were to occur when that formidable power should be summoned from the East, to spread the predicted desolation over so large a part of the world. A mighty dominion had been forming in the East, that had subdued Persia, and that, by union with the Caliphs, by the subjugation of Bagdad, and by embracing the Mohammedan faith, had become "*prepared*" to play its subsequent important part in the affairs of the world.

(2.) The next important event in their history was the crossing of the Euphrates, and the invasion of Asia Minor. The account of this invasion can be best given in the words of Mr. Gibbon: "Twenty-five years after the death of Basil, [the Greek emperor,] his successors were suddenly assaulted by an unknown race of barbarians, who united the Scythian valour with the fanaticism of new proselytes, and the art and riches of a powerful monarchy. The myriads of Turkish horse overspread a frontier of six hundred miles from Taurus to Arzeroum, and the blood of one hundred and thirty thousand Christians was a grateful sacrifice to the Arabian prophet. Yet the arms of Togrul did not make any deep or lasting impression on the Greek empire. The torrent rolled away from the open country; the Sultan retired without glory or success from the siege of an Armenian city; the obscure hostilities were continued or suspended with a vicissitude of events; and the bravery of the Macedonian legions renewed the fame of the conqueror of Asia. The name of Alp Arslan, the valiant lion, is expressive of the popular idea of the perfection of man; and the successor of Togrul displayed the fierceness and generosity of the royal animal. ['The heads of the horses were as the heads of lions.'] He passed the Euphrates at the head of the Turkish cavalry, and entered Ceasarea, the metropolis of Cappadocia, to which he had been attracted by the fame and the wealth of the temple of St. Basil."—Vol. iv. 93, 94: compare also p. 95.

(3.) The next important event was the establishing of the kingdom of *Roum* in Asia Minor. After a succession of victories and defeats; after being driven once and again from Asia Minor, and compelled to retire beyond its limits; and after subjecting the East to their arms (Gibbon, iv. 95—100) in the various contests for the crown of the Eastern empire, the aid of the Turks was invoked by one party or the other, until they secured for themselves a firm foothold in Asia Minor, and established themselves there in a permanent kingdom—evidently with the purpose of seizing upon Constantinople itself when an opportunity should be presented. —Gibbon, iv. 100, 101. Of this kingdom of *Roum*, Mr. Gibbon (iv. 101) gives the following description, and speaks thus of the effect of its establishment on the destiny of the Eastern empire: "Since the first conquests of the Caliphs, the establishment of the Turks in Anatolia, or Asia Minor, was the most deplorable loss which the church and empire had sustained. By the propagation of the Moslem faith, Soliman deserved the name of Gazi, a holy champion; and his new kingdom of the Romans, or of *Roum*, was added to the table of Oriental geography. It is described as extending *from the Euphrates to Constantinople*, from the Black Sea to the confines of Syria; pregnant with mines of silver and iron, of alum and copper, fruitful in corn and wine, and productive of cattle and excellent horses. The wealth of Lydia, the arts of the Greeks, the splendour of the Augustine age existed only in books and ruins, which were equally obscure in the eyes of the Scythian conquerors. By the choice of the Sultan, Nice, the metropolis of Bithynia, was preferred for his palace and fortress, the seat

of the Seljukian dynasty of Roum was planted one hundred miles from Constantinople; and the divinity of Christ was denied and derided in the same temple in which it had been pronounced in the first general synod of the Catholics. The unity of God, and the mission of Mohammed, were preached in the mosques; the Arabian learning was taught in the schools; the Cadis judged according to the law of the Koran; the Turkish manners and language prevailed in the cities; and Turkman camps were scattered over the plains and mountains of Anatolia," etc.

(4.) The next material event in the history of the Turkish power was the conquest of Jerusalem. See this described in Gibbon, iv. 102-106. By this, the attention of the Turks was turned for a time from the conquest of Constantinople—an event at which the Turkish power all along aimed, and in which they doubtless expected to be ultimately successful. Had they not been diverted from it, by the wars connected with the Crusades, Constantinople would have fallen long before it did fall, for it was too feeble to defend itself if it had been attacked.

(5.) The conquest of Jerusalem by the Turks, and the oppressions which Christians experienced there, gave rise to the Crusades, by which the destiny of Constantinople was still longer delayed. The war of the Crusades was made on the Turks, and as the crusaders mostly passed through Constantinople and Anatolia, all the power of the Turks in Asia Minor was requisite to defend themselves, and they were incapable of making an attack on Constantinople, until after the final defeat of the crusaders, and restoration of peace. See Gibbon, iv. 106-210.

(6.) The next material event in the history of the Turks was the conquest of Constantinople in A. D. 1453—an event which established the Turkish power in Europe, and which completed the downfall of the Roman empire.—Gibbon, iv. 333-359.

After this brief reference to the general history of the Turkish power, we are prepared to inquire more particularly whether the symbol in the passage before us is applicable to this series of events. This may be considered in several particulars.

(1.) *The time*. If the first woe-trumpet referred to the Saracens, then it would be natural that the rise and progress of the Turkish power should be symbolized as the next great fact in history, and as that under which the empire fell. As we have seen, the Turkish power rose immediately after the power of the Saracens had reached its height, and identified itself with the Mohammedan religion, and was, in fact, the next great power that affected the Roman empire, the welfare of the church, and the history of the world. There can be no doubt, therefore, that the time is such as is demanded in the proper interpretation of the symbol.

(2.) *The place*. We have seen (**Barnes on "Re 9:14"**) that this was on or near the river Euphrates, and that this power was long forming and consolidating itself on the east of that river before it crossed it in the invasion of Asia Minor. It had spread over Persia, and had even invaded the region of the East as far as the Indies; it had secured, under Togrul, the conquest of Bagdad, and had united itself with the Caliphate, and was, in fact, a mighty power "*prepared*" for conquest before it moved to the West. Thus Mr. Gibbon (iv. 92) says, "The more rustic, perhaps the wisest, portion of the Turkroans continued to dwell in the tents of their ancestors; and from the Oxus to the *Euphrates* these military colonies were protected and propagated by their native princes.'- So again, speaking of Alp Arslan, the son and successor of Togrul, he says, (iv. 94,) "He passed the *Euphrates* at the head of the Turkish cavalry, and entered Caesarea, the metropolis of Cappadocia, to which he was attracted by the fame and the wealth of the temple of St. Basil." If it be admitted that it was *intended* by John to refer to the Turkish power, it could not have been better represented than as a power that had been forming in the vicinity of that great river, and that was prepared to precipitate itself

on the Eastern empire. To one contemplating it in the time of Togrul or Alp Arslan, it would have *appeared* as a mighty power growing up in the neighbourhood of the Euphrates.

(3.) *The four angels*: "Loose the four angels which are bound." That is, loose the powers which are in the vicinity of the Euphrates, as if they were under the control of four angels. The most natural construction of this would be, that under the mighty power that was to sweep over the world, there were four subordinate powers, or that there were such subdivisions that it might be supposed they were ranged under *four* angelic powers or leaders. The question is, whether there was any such division or arrangement of the Turkish power, that, to one looking on it at a distance, there would *seem* to be such a division. In the History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, (iv. 100;) we find the following statement: "The greatness and unity of the Persian empire expired in the person of Malek Shah. The Vacant throne was disputed by his brother and his four sons; and, after a series of civil wars, the treaty which reconciled the surviving candidates confirmed a lasting separation in the Persian dynasty, the oldest and principal branch of the house of Seljuk. The three younger dynasties were those of *Kerman*, of *Syria*, and of *Roum*; the first of these commanded an extensive, though obscure, dominion on the shores of the Indian Ocean; the second expelled the Arabian princes of Aleppo and Damascus; and the third [our peculiar case] invaded the Roman provinces of Asia Minor. The generous policy of Malek contributed to their elevation: he allowed the princes of his blood, even those whom he had vanquished in the field, to seek new kingdoms worthy of their ambition; nor was he displeased that they should draw away the more ardent spirits who might have disturbed the tranquillity of his reign. As the supreme head of his family and nation, the great Sultan of Persia commanded the obedience and tribute of his royal brethren: the thrones of Kerrnan and Nice, of Aleppo and Damascus; the Atabeks and emirs of Syria and Mesopotamia erected their standards under the shadow of his sceptre, and the hordes of Turkroans overspread the plains of Western Asia. After the death of Malek, the bands of union and subordination were gradually relaxed and dissolved; the indulgence of the house of Seljuk invested their slaves with the inheritance of kingdoms; and, in the Oriental style, a crowd of princes arose from the dust of their feet." Here it is observable, that, at the period when the Turkman hordes were about to precipitate themselves on Europe, and to advance to the destruction of the Eastern empire, we have distinct mention of *four* great departments of the Turkish power: the original power that had established itself in Persia, under Malek Shah, and the three subordinate powers that sprung out of that of Kerman, Syria, and Roum, It is observable

(a) that this occurs at the period when that power would appear in the East as advancing in its conquests to the West;

(b) that it was in the vicinity of the great river Euphrates;

(c) that it had never before occurred—the Turkish power having been before united as one; and

(d) that it never afterwards occurred—for, in the words of Mr. Gibbon, "after the death of Malek, the bands of union and subordination were relaxed and finally dissolved." It would not be improper, then, to look upon this one mighty power as under the control of four spirits that were held in check in the East, and that were "prepared" to pour their energies on the Roman empire.

(4.) *The preparation*: "Prepared for an hour," etc. That is, arranged; made ready—as if by previous discipline—for some mighty enterprise. Applied to the Turkmans, this would mean that the preparation for the ultimate work which they executed had been making as that power increased and became consolidated under Togrul, Alp Arslan, and Malek Shah. In its successful strides, Persia and the East had been subdued; the Caliph at Bagdad had been brought under the control of the

Sultan; a union had been formed between the Turks and the Saracens; and the Sultanies of Kerman, Syria, and Roum had been established—embracing together all the countries of the East, and constituting this by far the most mighty nation on the globe. All this would seem to be a work of *preparation* to do what was afterwards done as seen in the visions of John.

(5.) *The fact that they were bound*: "Which are bound in the great river Euphrates." That is, they were, as it were, *restrained* and *kept back* for a long time in that vicinity. It would have been natural to suppose that that vast power would at once move on toward the West to the conquest of the capital of the Eastern empire. Such had been the case with the Huns, the Goths, and the Vandals. But these Turkish hordes had been long restrained in the East. They had subdued Persia. They had then achieved the conquest of India. They had conquered Bagdad, and the entire East was under their control. Yet for a long time they had now been inactive, and it would seem as if they had been *bound* or *restrained* by some mighty power from moving in their conquests to the West.

——— Part 2 of this 4 Part note **See Barnes "Re 9:21"**

Part 3 of this 4 Part note **See Barnes "Re 10:5"**

Part 4 of this 4 Part note **See Barnes** "Re 10:10

{c} "yet repented" Jer 5:3 8:6 {d} "devils" Le 17:7 1Co 10:20 {e} "idols" Ps 135:15 Isa 40:19,20

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 9 - Verse 21

This is part 2 of 4 Parts of the Note for Revelation 9:20-21.

(7.) *Their numbers*: "And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand." That is, it was *vast*, or it was such as to be reckoned by *myriads*, or by tens of thousands—*duo muriadev muriadwn two myriads of myriads*. Thus Mr. Gibbon (iv. 94) says, "The *myriads* of Turkish horse overspread," etc. It has been suggested by Daubuz that in this there may be probably an allusion to the Turkman custom of numbering by *tomans, or myriads*. This custom, it is true, has existed elsewhere, but there is probably none with whom it has been so familiar as with the Tartars and Turks. In the Seljukian age, the population of Samarcand was rated at seven *tomans, (myriads,)* because it could send out 70,000 warriors. The dignity and rank of Tamerlane's father and grandfather was thus described, that "they were the hereditary chiefs of a *toman*, or 10,000 horse"—a *myriad*, (Gibbon, iv. 270;) so that it is not without his usual propriety of language that Mr. Gibbon speaks of the *myriads* of the Turkish horse, or of the cavalry of the earlier Turks of Mount Altai, "being, both men and horses, proudly computed by *myriads*." One thing is clear, that to no other invading hosts could the language here used be so well applied, and, if it were supposed that John was writing *after* the event, this would be the language which he would be likely to employ—for this is nearly the identical language employed by the historian Gibbon.

(8.) *Their personal appearance*: "Them that sat on them having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone"—as explained above, in a "uniform" of red, and blue, and yellow. This might, undoubtedly, be applicable to other armies besides the Turkish hordes; but the proper question here is, whether it *would be* applicable to them. The fact of the application of the symbol to the Turks in general must be determined from other points in the symbol which designate them clearly;

the only natural inquiry here is, whether this description would apply to the Turkish hosts, for if it would not, that would be fatal to the whole interpretation. On the application of this passage to the Turks, Mr. Daubuz justly remarks, that "from their first appearance the Ottomans have affected to wear warlike apparel of scarlet, blue, and yellow: a descriptive trait the more marked from its contrast to the military appearance of the Greeks, Franks, or Saracens contemporarily." Mr. Elliott adds, "It only needs to have seen the Turkish cavalry, (as they *were* before the late innovations,) whether in war itself, or in the djerrid war's mimicry, to leave an impression of the absolute necessity of some such notice of their rich and varied colourings, in order to give in description at all a just impression of their appearance," i. 481.

(9.) *The remarkable appearance of the cavalry*: "Having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone." It was remarked in the exposition of this passage, that this is just such a description as would be given of an army to which the use of gunpowder was known, and which made use of it in these wars. Looking now upon a body of cavalry in the heat of an engagement, it would seem, if the cause were not known, that the horses belched forth smoke and sulphurous flame. The only question now is, whether in the warfare of the Turks there was anything which would peculiarly or remarkably justify this description. And here it is impossible not to advert to the historical fact that they were among the first to make use of gunpowder in their wars, and that to the use of this destructive element they owed much of their success, and their ultimate triumphs. The historical truth of this it is necessary now to advert to, and this will be done by a reference to Mr. Gibbon, and to the account which he has given of the final conquest of Constantinople by the Turks. It will be seen how he puts this new instrumentality of war into the foreground in his account; how prominent this seemed to *him* to be in describing the victories of the Turks; and how probable, therefore, it is that John, in describing an invasion by them, would refer to the "fire and smoke and brimstone," that seemed to be emitted from the mouths of their horses. As preparatory to the account of the siege and conquest of Constantinople by the Turks, Mr. Gibbon gives a description of the invention and use of gunpowder. "The chemists of China or Europe had found, by casual or elaborate experiments, that a mixture of saltpetre, sulphur, and charcoal produces, with a spark of fire, a tremendous explosion. It was soon observed that if the expansive force were compressed in a strong tube, a ball of stone or iron might be expelled with irresistible and destructive velocity. The precise era of the invention and application of gunpowder is involved in doubtful traditions and equivocal language; yet we may clearly discern that it was known before the middle of the fourteenth century; and that before the end of the same, the use of artillery in battles and sieges, by sea and land, was familiar to the states of Germany, Italy, Spain, France, and England. The priority of nations is of small account; none would derive any exclusive benefit from their previous or superior knowledge; and on the common improvement they stand on the same level of relative power and military science. Nor was it possible to circumscribe the secret within the pale of the church; it was disclosed *to the Turks* by the treachery of apostates and the selfish policy of rivals; and the sultans had sense to adopt, and wealth to reward, the talents of a Christian engineer. By the Venetians, the use of gunpowder was communicated without reproach to the sultans of Egypt and Persia, their allies against the Ottoman power; the secret was soon propagated to the extremities of Asia; and the advantage of the European was confined to his easy victories over the savages of the new world," iv. 291. In the description of the conquest of Constantinople, Mr. Gibbon makes frequent mention of their artillery, and of the use of gunpowder,

and of its important agency in securing their final conquests, and in the overthrow of the Eastern empire. "Among the implements of destruction, he [the Turkish sultan] studied with peculiar care the recent and tremendous discovery of the Latins; and his artillery surpassed whatever had yet appeared in the world. A founder of cannon, a Dane or Hungarian, who had almost starved in the Greek service, deserted to the Moslems, and was liberally entertained by the Turkish sultan. Mohammed was satisfied with the answer to his first question, which he eagerly pressed on the artist: 'Am I able to cast a cannon capable of throwing a ball or stone of sufficient size to batter the walls of Constantinople? I am not ignorant of their strength, but were they more solid than those of Babylon, I could oppose an engine of superior power; the position and management of that engine must be left to your engineers.' On this assurance a foundry was established at Adrianople; the metal was prepared; and at the end of three months Urban produced a piece of brass ordnance of stupendous and almost incredible magnitude: a measure of twelve palms is assigned to the bore; and the stone bullet weighed above six hundred pounds. A vacant place before the new palace was chosen for the first experiment: but to prevent the sudden and mischievous effects of astonishment and fear, a proclamation was issued that the cannon would be discharged the ensuing day. The explosion was felt or heard in a circuit of a hundred furlongs; the ball, by force of gunpowder, was driven about a mile; and on the spot where it fell, it buried itself a fathom deep in the ground," iv. 339. So in speaking of the siege of Constantinople by the Turks, Mr. Gibbon says of the defence by the Christians, (iv. 343,) "The incessant volleys of lances and arrows were accompanied with the smoke, the sound, and the fire of their musketry and cannon." "The same destructive secret," he adds, "had been revealed to the Moslems, by whom it was employed with the superior energy of zeal, riches, and despotism. The great cannon of Mohammed has been separately noticed—an important and visible object in the history of the times: but that enormous engine was flanked by two fellows almost of equal magnitude; the long order of the Turkish artillery was pointed against the walls; fourteen batteries thundered at once on the most accessible places; and of one of these it was ambiguously expressed that it was mounted with one hundred and thirty guns, and that it discharged one hundred and thirty bullets," iv. 343, 344. Again: "The first random shots were productive of more sound than effect; and it was by the advice of a Christian that the engineers were taught to level their aim against the two opposite sides of the salient angles of a bastion. However imperfect, the weight and repetition of the fire made some impression on the walls," iv. 344. And again: "A circumstance that distinguishes the siege of Constantinople is the re-union of the ancient and modern artillery. The cannon were intermingled with the mechanical engines for casting stones and darts; the bullet and the battering-ram were directed against the same walls; nor had the discovery of gunpowder superseded the use of the liquid and inextinguishable fire," iv. 344. So again, ill the description of the final conflict when Constantinople was taken, Mr. Gibbon says, "From the lines, the galleys, and the bridge, the Ottoman artillery thundered on all sides; and the camp and city, the Greeks and the Turks, were involved in a cloud of smoke which could only be dispelled by the final deliverance or destruction of the Roman empire," iv. 350. Assuredly, if such was *the fact* in the conquests of the Turks, it was not unnatural in one who was looking on these warriors in vision to describe them as if they seemed to belch out "fire and smoke and brimstone." If Mr. Gibbon had *designed* to describe the conquest of the Turks as a fulfilment of the prediction, could he have done it in a style more clear and graphic than that which he has employed? If this had occurred in a *Christian* writer, would it not have been charged on him that he had shaped his facts to meet his notions of the meaning of the prophecy?

(10.) The statement that "their power was in their mouth, and in their tails," Re 9:19. The former part of this has been illustrated. The inquiry now is, what is the meaning of the declaration that "their power was in their tails." In Re 9:19, their tails are described as resembling "serpents, having heads," and it is said that "with them they do hurt." **See Barnes on "Re 9:19"**

that verse. The allusion to the "serpents" would seem to imply that there was something in the horses' tails, as compared with them, or in some *use* that was made of them, which would make this language proper; that is, that their appearance would so suggest the idea of death and destruction, that the mind would easily imagine they were a bundle of serpents. The following remarks may show how applicable this was to the Turks:

(a) In the Turkish hordes there was *something*, whatever it was, that naturally suggested *some* resemblance to serpents. Of the Turkmans when they began to spread their conquests over Asia, in the eleventh century, and an effort was made to rouse the people against them, Mr. Gibbon makes the following remark: "Massoud, the son and successor of Mahmoud, had too long neglected the advice of his wisest Omrahs. 'Your enemies,' [the Turkmans,] they repeatedly urged, 'were in their origin a swarm of ants; they are now little snakes; and unless they be instantly crushed, they will acquire the venom and magnitude of serpents," iv. 91.

(b) It is a remarkable fact that the horse's tail is a well-known Turkish standard—a symbol of office and authority. "The pashas are distinguished, after a Tartar custom, by three horsetails on the side of their tents, and receive by courtesy the title of *beyler beg*, or prince of princes. The next in rank are the pashas of two tails, the beys who are honoured with one tail." —Edin. Ency. Art. *Turkey*. In the times of their early warlike career, the principal standard was once lost in battle, and the Turkman commander, in default, cut off his horse's tail, lifted it on a pole, made it the rallying ensign, and so gained the victory. So Tournefort in his Travels states. The following is Ferrario's account of the origin of this ensign: "An author acquainted with their customs says, that a general of theirs, not knowing how to rally his troops that had lost their standards, cut off a horse's tail, and fixed it to the end of a spear; and the soldiers rallying at that signal, gained the victory." He adds farther, that whereas "on his appointment a pasha of the three tails *used* to receive a drum and a standard, now for the *drum* there have been substituted three horses' tails, tied at the end of a spear, round a gilded haft. One of the first officers of the palace presents him these three tails as a standard." Elliott, i. 485, 486. This remarkable standard or ensign is found only among the Turks, and, if there was an intended reference to them, the symbol here would be the proper one to be adopted. The *meaning* of the passage where it is said that "their *power* is in their tails" would seem to be, that their tails were the symbol or emblem of their authority—as in fact the horse's tail is in the appointment of a pasha. The *image* before the mind of John would seem to have been, that he saw the horses belching out fire and smoke, and, what was equally strange, he saw that their power of spreading desolation was connected with the tails of horses. Any one looking on a body of cavalry with such banners or ensigns would be struck with this unusual and remarkable appearance, and would speak of their banners as concentrating and directing their power.

(11.) The number slain, Re 9:18. That is said to have been "the third part of men." No one in reading the accounts of the wars of the Turks, and of the ravages which they have committed, would be likely to feel that this is an exaggeration. It is not necessary to suppose that it is *literally* accurate, but it is such a representation as would strike one in looking over the world, and contemplating the effect of their invasions. If the other specifications in the symbol are correct, there would be no hesitation in admitting the propriety of this.

(12.) The time of the continuance of this power. This is a material, and a more difficult point. It is said (Re 9:15) to be "an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year;" that is, as explained, three hundred and ninety-one years, and the portion of a year indicated by the expression "an hour:" to wit, an additional twelfth or twenty-fourth part of a year. The question now is, whether, supposing the time to which this reaches to be the capture of Constantinople, and the consequent downfall of the Roman empire—the object in view in this series of visions— in reckoning *back* from that period for 391 years, we should reach an epoch that would properly denote the moving forward of this power towards its final conquest; that is, whether there was any such marked epoch that, if the 391 years were added to it, it would reach the year of the conquest of Constantinople, A.D. 1453. The period that would be indicated by taking the number 391 from 1453 would be 1062—and that is the time in which we are to look for the event referred to. This is on the supposition that the year consisted of 360 days, or twelve months of thirty days each. If, however, instead of this, we reckon 365 days and six hours, then the length of time would be found to amount to 396 years and 106 days.*

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* "As the Julian year equalled 365 days 6 hours, the Apocalyptic period would, on the year day principle, be in amount as follows :—

A year = 365 1/4 days = 365 years + 1/4 of a year.
A month = 30 days = 30 years,
A day = = 1 year.
——-
Years 396

1/4 of a prophetic day or year (left out above) = 91 1/4 days.

An hour = 1/24 of a prophetic day or year = 15 1/6 days.

Total = years 396 + 106 days." *Elliott*, i. p. 493
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This would make the time of the "loosening of the angels," or the moving forward of this power, to be A.D. 1057. In the uncertainty on this point, and in the unsettled state of ancient chronology, it would, perhaps, be vain to hope for minute accuracy, and it is not reasonable to demand it of an interpreter. On any fair principle of interpretation, it would be sufficient if at *about* one of these periods—A. D. 1062, or A.D. 1057—there was found such a definite or strongly marked event as would indicate a movement of the hitherto restrained power toward the West. This is the real point, then, to be determined. Now, in a common work on chronology, I find this record: "A. D. 1055, Turks reduce Bagdad, and overturn the empire of the Caliphs." In a work still more important to our purpose, (Gibbon, iv. 92, 93,) under the date of A. D. 1055, I find a series of statements which will show the propriety of referring to that event as the one by which this power, so long restrained, was "let loose;" that is, was placed in such a state that its final conquest of the Eastern empire certainly followed. The event was the union of the Turkish power with the Caliphate in such a way

that the sultan was regarded as "the temporal lieutenant of the vicar of the prophet." Of this event Mr. Gibbon gives the following account. After mentioning the conversion of the Turks to the Moslem faith, and especially the zeal with which the son of Seljuk had embraced that faith, he proceeds to state the manner in which the Turkish sultan Togrul came in possession of Bagdad, and was invested with the high office of the "temporal lieutenant of the vicar of the prophet." There were two caliphs, those of Bagdad and Egypt, and "the sublime character of the successor of the prophet" was "disputed" by them, iv. 93. Each of them became "solicitous to prove his title in the judgment of the strong though illiterate barbarians." Mr. Gibbon then says, "Mahmoud the Gaznevide had declared himself in favour of the line of Abbas; and had treated with indignity the robe of honour which was presented by the Fatimite ambassador. Yet the ungrateful Hashemite had changed with the change of fortune; he applauded the victory of Zendecan, and named the Seljukian sultan his temporal vicegerent over the Moslem world.—As Togrul executed and enlarged this important trust, he was called to the deliverance of the caliph Cayem, and obeyed the holy summons, which gave a new kingdom to his arms. In the palace of Bagdad, the commander of the faithful still slumbered, a venerable phantom His servant or master, the prince of the Bowides, could no longer protect him from the insolence of meaner tyrants; and the Euphrates and the Tigris were oppressed by the revolt of the Turkish and Arabian armies. The presence of a conqueror was implored as a blessing; and the transient mischiefs of fire and sword were excused as the sharp but salutary remedies which alone could restore the health of the Republic. At the head of an irresistible force, the sultan of Persia marched from Hamadan; the proud were crushed, the prostrate were spared; the prince of the Bowides disappeared; the heads of the most obstinate rebels were at the feet of Togrul; and he inflicted a lesson of obedience on the people of Mosul and Bagdad. After the chastisement of the guilty, and the restoration of peace, the royal shepherd accepted the reward of his labours; and a solemn amnesty represented the triumph of religious prejudice over barbarian power. The Turkish sultan embarked on the Tigris, landed at the gate of Racca, and made his public entry on horseback. At the palace gate he respectfully dismounted, and walked, on foot, preceded by his emirs without arms. The caliph was seated behind his black veil; the black garment of the Abbassides was cast over his shoulders, and he held in his hand the staff of the Apostle of God. The conqueror of the East kissed the ground, stood some time in a modest posture, and was led toward the throne by the vizier and an interpreter. After Togrul had seated himself on another throne, his commission was publicly read, which declared him the *temporal lieutenant of the vicar of the prophet*. He was successively invested with seven robes of honour, and presented with seven slaves, the natives of the seven climates of the Arabian empire. His mystic veil was perfumed with musk; two crowns were placed on his head; two scimetars were girded to his side, as the symbols of a double reign over the East and West. Their alliance was cemented by the marriage of Togfurs sister with the successor of the prophet," iv. 93, 94. This event, so described, was of sufficient importance, as constituting a *union* of the Turkish power with the Moslem faith, as making it practicable to move in their conquests toward the West, and as connected in its ultimate results with the downfall of the Eastern empire, to make it an *epoch* in the history of nations. In fact, it was *the* point which one would have particularly looked at, after describing the movements of the Saracens, (Re 9:1-11,) as the next event that was to change the condition of the world.

———————————————————————————————————————- Part 1 of this 4 Part Note **See Barnes "Re 9:20"**

Part 3 of this 4 Part Note **See Barnes "Re 10:5"**

Part 4 of this 4 Part Note **See Barnes** "Re 10:10

{f} "sorceries" Re 22:15

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 10

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 10 - Verse 1

CHAPTER X

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER

THIS chapter contains the record of a sublime vision of an angel which, at this juncture, John saw descending from heaven, disclosing new scenes in what was yet to occur. The vision is interposed between the sounding of the sixth, or second woe-trumpet, and the sounding of the seventh, or third woe-trumpet, under which is to be the final consummation, Re 11:15, seq. It occupies an important interval between the events which were to occur under the sixth trumpet, and the last scene—the final overthrow of the formidable power which had opposed the reign of God on the earth, and the reign of righteousness, when the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdom of God, Re 11:15. It is, in many respects, an unhappy circumstance that this chapter has been separated from the following. They constitute one continued vision, at least to Re 11:15, where the sounding of the seventh and last trumpet occurs.

The tenth chapter contains the following things:

(1.) An angel descends from heaven, and the attention of the seer is for a time turned from the contemplation of what was passing in heaven to this new vision that appeared on the earth. This angel is clothed with a cloud; he is encircled by a rainbow; his face is as the sun, am/his feet like pillars of fire:—all indicating his exalted rank, and all such accompaniments as became a heavenly messenger.

(2.) The angel appears with a small volume in his hand, Re 10:2. This book is not closed and sealed, like the one in chapter 5, but was "open"—so that it could be read. Such a book would indicate some new message or revelation from heaven; and the book would be, properly, a symbol of something that was to be accomplished by such an open volume.

(3.) The angel sets his feet upon the sea and the land, Re 10:2: indicating by this, apparently, that what he was to communicate upperrained alike to the ocean and the land—to all the world.

(4.) The angel makes a proclamation—the nature of which is not here stated—with a loud voice, like the roaring of a lion, as if the nations were called to hear, Re 10:3.

(5.) This cry or roar is responded to by heavy thunders, Re 10:3. What those thunders uttered is not stated, but it was evidently so distinct that John heard it, for he says (Re 10:4) that he was about to make a record of what was said.

(6.) John, about to make this record, is forbidden to do so by a voice from heaven, Re 10:4. For some reason, not here stated, he was commanded not to disclose what was said, but so to seal it up that it should not be known, The reason for this silence is nowhere intimated in the chapter.

(7.) The angel lifts his hand to heaven in a most solemn manner, and swears by the Great Creator of all things that the time should not be yet—in our common version, "that there should be time no longer," Re 10:5-7. It would seem that just at this period there would be an expectation that the reign of God was to begin upon the earth; but the angel, in the most solemn manner, declares that this was not yet to be, but that it would occur when the seventh angel should begin to sound. Then the great "mystery" would be complete, as it had been declared to the prophets.

(8.) John is then commanded, by the same voice which he heard from heaven, to go to the angel and take the little book from him which he held in his hand, and eat it—with the assurance that it would be found to be sweet to the taste, but would be bitter afterwards, Re 10:8-10.

(9.) The chapter concludes with a declaration that he must yet prophecy before many people and nations, (Re 10:11,) and then follows (Rev 11.) the commission to measure the temple; the command to separate the pure from the profane; the account of the prophesying, the death, and the resurrection to life of the two witnesses—all preliminary to the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and the introduction of the universal reign of righteousness.

The question to what doer the chapter refer, is one which it is proper to notice before we proceed to the exposition. It is unnecessary to say, that on this question very various opinions have been entertained, and that very different expositions have been given of the chapter. Without going into an examination of these different opinions—which would be a task alike unprofitable and endless—it will be better to state what seems to be the fair interpretation and application of the symbol, in its connexion with what precedes. A few remarks here, preliminary to the exposition and application of the chapter, may help us in determining the place which the vision is designed to occupy.

(a) In the previous Apocalyptic revelations, if the interpretation proposed is correct, the history had been brought down, in the regular course of events, to the capture of Constantinople by the Turks, and the complete overthrow of the Roman empire by that event, A.D. 1453, Re 9:13-19. This was an important era in the history of the world; and if the exposition which has been proposed is correct, then the sketches of history pertaining to the Roman empire in the book of Revelation have been made with surprising accuracy.

(b) A statement had been made, (Re 9:20,21,) to the effect that the same state of things continued subsequent to the plagues brought on by those invasions, which had existed before, or that the effect had not been to produce any general repentance and reformation. God had scourged the nations; he had cut off multitudes of men; he had overthrown the mighty empire that had so long ruled over the world; but the same sins of superstition, idolatry, sorcery, murder, fornication, and theft prevailed afterwards that had prevailed before. Instead of working a change in the minds of men, the world seemed to be confirmed in these abominations more and more. In the exposition of that passage (Re 9:20,21) it was shown that those things prevailed in the Roman church—which then embraced the whole Christian world—before the invasion of the Eastern empire by the Turks, and that they continued to prevail afterwards: that, in fact, the moral character of the world was not affected by those "plagues."

(c) The next event, in the order of time, was the Reformation, and the circumstances in the case are such as to lead us to suppose that this chapter refers to that. For

(1) the order of time demands this. This was the next important event in the history of the church and the world after the conquest of Constantinople producing the entire downfall of the Roman empire; and if, as is supposed in the previous exposition, it was the design of the Spirit of inspiration to touch on the great and material events in the history of the church and the world, then it would be natural to suppose that the Reformation would come next into view, for no previous event had more deeply or permanently affected the condition of mankind.

(2.) The state of the world, as described in Re 9:20,21, was such as to demand a reformation, or something that should be more effectual in purifying the church than the calamities described in the previous verse had been. The representation is, that God had brought great judgments upon the world, but that they had been ineffectual in reforming mankind. The same kind of superstition, idolatry, and corruption remained after those judgments which had existed before, and they were of such a nature as to make it every way desirable that a new influence should be brought to bear upon the world to purify it from these abominations. Some such work as the Reformation is, therefore, what we should naturally look for as the next in order; or, at least, such a work is one that well fits in with the description of the previous state of things.

(d) It will be found, I apprehend, in the exposition of the chapter, that the symbols are such as accord well with the great leading events of the Protestant Reformation; or, in other words, that they are such that, on the supposition that it was intended to refer to the Reformation, these are the symbols which would have been appropriately employed. Of course, it is not necessary to suppose that John understood distinctly all that was meant by these symbols, nor is it necessary to suppose that those who lived before the Reformation would be able to comprehend them perfectly, and to apply them with accuracy. All that is necessary to be supposed in the interpretation is

(1) that the symbol was designed to be of such a character as to give some general idea of what was to occur; and

(2) that we should be able, now that the event has occurred, to show that it is fairly applicable to the event; that is, that on the supposition that this was designed to be referred to, the symbols are such as would properly be employed. This, however, will be seen more clearly after the exposition shall have been gone through.

With this general view of what we should naturally anticipate in this chapter, from the course of exposition in the preceding chapters, we are prepared for a more particular exposition and application of the symbols in this new vision. It will be the most convenient course, keeping in mind the general views presented here, to explain the symbols, and to consider their application as we go along.

Verse 1. *And I saw*. I had a vision of. The meaning is, that he saw this subsequently to the vision in the previous chapter. The attention is now arrested by a new vision—as if some new dispensation or economy was about to occur in the world.

Another mighty angel. He had before seen the seven angels who were to blow the seven trumpets, (Re 8:2) he had seen six of them successively blow the trumpet; he now sees *another* angel, different from them, and apparently having no connexion with them, coming from heaven to accomplish some important purpose before the seventh angel should give the final blast. The angel is here characterized as a "*mighty*" angel—*iscuron*—one of strength and power; implying that the work to be accomplished by his mission demanded the interposition of one of the higher orders of the heavenly inhabitants. The coming of an angel at all was indicative of some Divine interposition in human affairs; the fact that he was one of exalted rank, or endowed with vast power, indicated the

nature of the work to be done—that it was a work to the execution of which great obstacles existed, and where great power would be needed.

Clothed with a cloud. Encompassed with a cloud, or enveloped in a cloud. This was a symbol of majesty and glory, and is often represented as accompanying the Divine presence, Ex 16:9-10 24:16, 34:5 Nu 11:25; 1Ki 8:10 Ps 97:2.

The Saviour also ascended in a cloud, Ac 1:9; and he will again descend in clouds to judge the world, Mt 24:30 26:64; Mr 13:26 Re 1:7.

Nothing can be argued here as to the *purpose* for which the angel appeared, from his being encompassed with a cloud; nor can anything be argued from it in respect to the question *who* this angel was. The fair interpretation is, that this was one of the angels now represented as sent forth on an errand of mercy to man, and coming with appropriate majesty, as the messenger of God.

And a rainbow was upon his head. In Re 4:3, the throne in heaven is represented as encircled by a rainbow. See **Barnes on "Re 4:3"**.

The rainbow is properly an emblem of peace. *Here* the symbol would mean that the angel came not for wrath, but for purposes of peace; that he looked with a benign aspect on men, and that the effect of his coming would be like that of sunshine after a storm.

And his face was as it were the sun. Bright like the sun, (**Barnes on "Re 1:16"**) that is, he looked upon men with

(a) an *intelligent* aspect—as the sun is the source of light; and

(b) with *benignity*—not covered with clouds, or darkened by wrath. The *brightness* is probably the main idea, but the appearance of the angel would as here represented, naturally suggest the ideas just referred to. As an *emblem* or *symbol*, we should regard his appearing as that which was to be followed by knowledge and by prosperity.

And his feet as pillars of fire. **See Barnes on "Re 1:15"**.

In this symbol, then, we have the following things:

(a) An angel—as the messenger of God, indicating that some new communication was to be brought to mankind, or that there would be some interposition in human affairs which might be well represented by the coming of an angel;

(b) the fact that he was "mighty"—indicating that the work to be done required power beyond human strength;

(c) the fact that he came in a cloud— an embassage so grand and magnificent as to make this symbol of majesty proper;

(d) the fact that he was encircled by a rainbow—that the visitation was to be one of peace to mankind; and

(e) the fact that his coming was like the sun—or would diffuse light and peace.

Now, in regard to the *application* of this, without adverting to any other theory, no one can fail to see that, on the supposition that it was designed to refer to the Reformation, this would be the most striking and appropriate symbol that could have been chosen. For,

(a) as we have seen above, this is the *place* which the vision naturally occupies in the series of historical representations.

(b) It was at a period of the world, and the world was in such a state, that an intervention of this kind would be properly represented by the coming of an angel from heaven. God had visited the nations with terrible judgments, but the effect had not been to produce reformation, for the same forms of wickedness continued to prevail which had existed before. **Barnes on "Re 9:20"**.

In this state of things, any new interposition of God for reforming the world would be properly represented by the coming of an angel from heaven as a messenger of light and peace.

(c) The great and leading events of the Reformation were well represented by the *power* of this angel. It was not, indeed, physical power; but the work to be done in the Reformation was a *great work*, and was such as would be well symbolized by the intervention of a mighty angel from heaven. The task of reforming the church, and of correcting the abuses which had prevailed, was wholly beyond any ability which *man* possessed, and was well represented, therefore, by the descent of this messenger from the skies.

(d) The same thing may be said of the rainbow that was upon his head. Nothing would better symbolize the general aspect of the Reformation, as fitted to produce peace, tranquillity, and joy upon the earth. And

(e) the same thing was indicated by the splendour—the light and glory— that attended the angel. The symbol would denote that the new order of things would be attended with light; with knowledge; with that which would be benign in its influence on human affairs. And it need not be said, to any one acquainted with the history of those times, that the Reformation was preceded and accompanied with a great increase of light; that at just about that period of the world the study of the Greek language began to be common in Europe; that the sciences had made remarkable progress; that schools and colleges had begun to flourish; and that, to a degree which had not existed for ages before, the public mind had become awakened to the importance of truth and knowledge. For a full illustration of this, from the close of the eleventh century and onward, see Hallam's Middle Ages, vol. ii. pp. 265-292, chap. ix. part ii. To go into any satisfactory detail on this point would be wholly beyond the proper limits of these Notes, and the reader must be referred to the histories of those times, and especially to Hallam, who has recorded all that is necessary to be known on the subject. Suffice it to say that, on the supposition that it was the intention to symbolize those times, no more appropriate emblem could have been found than that of an angel whose face shone like the sun, and who was covered with light and splendour. These remarks will show that, if it be supposed it was intended to symbolize the Reformation, no more appropriate emblem could have been selected than that of such an angel coming down from heaven. If, after the events have occurred, we should desire to represent the same things by a striking and expressive symbol, we could find none that would better represent those times.

{a} "rainbow" Eze 1:28 {b} "face" Re 1:15,16; Mt 17:2

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 10 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And he had in his hand a little book open*. This is the first thing that indicated the purpose of his appearing, or that would give any distinct indication of the design of his coming from heaven. The general aspect of the angel, indeed, as represented in the former verse, was that of benignity, and his purpose, as there indicated, was light and peace. But still, there was nothing which would denote the *particular* design for which he came, or which would designate the particular means which he would employ, here we have, however, an *emblem* which will furnish an indication of what was to occur as the result of his appearing. To be able to apply this, it will be necessary, as in all similar cases, to explain the natural significancy of the emblem.

(1.) *The little book*. The word used here—*biblaridion*—occurs nowhere else in the New Testament except in Re 10:8-10. The word *biblion*—*book*—occurs frequently: Mt 19:7 Mr 10:4—applied to a bill of divorcement; Lu 4:17,20; Joh 20:30 21:25; Ga 3:10

2Ti 4:13 Heb 9:19, 10:7.

In the Apocalypse this word is of common occurrence: Re 1:11 5:1-5,7-9 6:14, rendered *scroll*; Re 17:8 20:12, 21:27 22:7,9-10,18-19.

The word was evidently chosen here to denote something that was peculiar in the size or form of the book, or to distinguish it from that which would be designated by the ordinary word employed to denote a book. The word properly denotes a small roll or volume; a little scroll.—*Rob. Lex*, Pollux. Onomast. 7, 210. It is evident that something was intended by the diminutive *size* of the book, or that it was designed to make a distinction between this and that which is indicated by the use of the word *book* in the other parts of the Apocalypse. It was, at least, indicated by this that it was something different from what was seen in the hand of him that sat on the throne in Re 5:1. That was clearly a large volume; this was so small that it could be taken in the hand, and could be represented as eaten, Re 10:9-10. But, of what is a book an emblem? To this question there can be little difficulty in furnishing an answer. A book seen in a dream, according to Artemidorus, signifies the life, or the acts of him that sees it.—*Wemyss*. According to the Indian interpreters, a book is the symbol of power and dignity. The Jewish kings, when they were crowned, had the book of the law of God put into their hands, (2Ki 11:12 2Ch 23:11) denoting that they were to observe the law, and that their administration was to be one of intelligence and uprightness. The gift of a Bible now to a monarch when he is crowned, or to the officer of a corporation or society, denotes the same thing. A book, as such, thus borne in the hand of an angel coming down to the world, would be an indication that something of importance was to be communicated to men, or that something was to be accomplished by the agency of *a book*. It was not, as in Re 6:2, *a bow*—emblem of conquest; Re 10:4, *a sword*—emblem of battle; or Re 10:5, *a pair of scales*— emblem of the exactness with which things were to be determined: but it was a *book*—a speechless, silent thing, yet mighty; not designed to carry desolation through the earth, but to diffuse light and truth. The natural interpretation then would be, that something was to be accomplished by the agency of a book, or that a book was to be the prominent characteristic of the times—as the bow, the sword, and the balances had been of the previous periods. As to the *size* of the book, perhaps all that can be inferred is, that this was to be brought about, not by extended tomes, but by a comparatively small volume—so that it could be taken in the hand; so that it could, without impropriety, be represented as eaten by an individual.

(2.) *The fact that it was open*: "a little book *open*"— *anewgmenon*. The word here used means, properly, to open or unclose in respect to that which was before fastened or sealed, as that which is covered by a door, Mt 2:11; tombs, which were closed by large stones, Mt 27:60, 66; a gate, Ac 5:23 12:10; the abyss, Re 9:2—"since in the East pits or wells are closed with large stones, compare Ge 29:2."—*Rob. Lex*. The meaning of this word, as applied to a book, would be, that it was now opened so that its contents could be read. The word would not *necessarily* imply that it had been sealed or closed, though that would be the most natural impression from the use of the word. Compare for the use of the word rendered open, Re 3:8,20, 4:1 5:2-5,9 6:1,3,5,7,9,12 8:1 9:2 10:8

Re 11:19 20:12. This would find a fulfilment if some such facts as the following should occur:

(a) if there had been any custom or arrangement by which *knowledge* was kept from men, or access was forbidden to books or to some one book in particular; and

(b) if something should occur by which that which had before been kept hidden or concealed, or that to which access had been denied, should be made accessible. In other words, this is the proper symbol of a diffusion of knowledge, or of *the influence of* A BOOK *on mankind*.

(3.) The fact that it was in the *hand* of the angel. All that seems to be implied in this is, that it was now *offered*, or was ready to be put in possession of John—or of the church—or of mankind. It was open, and was held out, as it were, for perusal.

In regard to the *application* of this, it is plain that, if it be admitted that it was the design of the author of the vision to refer to the Reformation, no more appropriate emblem could have been chosen. If *we* were now to endeavour to devise an emblem of the Reformation that would be striking and expressive, we could not well select one which would better represent the great work than that which is here presented. This will appear plain from a few considerations:

(1.) The great agent in the Reformation, the moving cause of it, its suggestor and supporter, was a *book*—the Bible. Wycliffe had translated the New Testament into the English language, and though this was suppressed, yet it had done much to prepare the people for the Reformation; and all that Luther did can be traced to the discovery of the Bible, and to the use which was made of it. Luther had grown up into manhood; had passed from the schools to the university of Erfurt, and there, having during the usual four years' course of study displayed intellectual powers and an extent of learning that excited the admiration of the university, and that seemed to open to his attainment both the honour and emolument of the world, he appeared to have been prepared to play an important part on the great drama of human affairs. Suddenly, however, to the astonishment and dismay of his friends, he betook himself to the solitude and gloom of an Augustinian monastery. He had found a *Bible*—a copy of the Vulgate—hid in the shelves of the university library. Till then he had supposed that there existed no other Gospels or Epistles than what were given in the Breviary, or quoted by the Preachers. (For the proof of this, see Elliott, ii. 92.) To the study of that book he now gave himself with untiring diligence and steady prayer; and the effect was to show to *him* the way of salvation by faith, and ultimately to produce the Reformation. No one acquainted with the history of the Reformation can doubt that it is to be traced to the influence of *the Bible*; that the moving cause, the spring of all that occurred in the Reformation, was the impulse given to the mind of Luther and his fellow-labourers by the study of that one book. It is this well-known fact that gives so much truth to the celebrated declaration of Chillingworth, that "the Bible is the religion of Protestants." If a symbol of this had been designed before it occurred, or if one should be sought for now that would designate the actual nature and influence of the Reformation, nothing *better* could be selected than that of an angel descending from heaven, with benignant aspect, with a rainbow around his head, and with light beaming all around him, holding forth to mankind *a book*.

(2.) This book had before been hidden, or closed; that is, it could not till then be regarded as an *open* volume.

(a) It was in fact known by few even of the clergy, and it was not in the hands of the mass of the people at all. There is every reason to believe that the great body of the Romish clergy, in the time that preceded the Reformation, were even more ignorant of the Bible than Luther himself was. Many of them were unable to read; few had access to the Bible; and those who had, drew their doctrines rather from the Fathers of the church than from the word of God. Hallam (*Middle Ages*, ii. 241) says, "Of this prevailing ignorance [in the tenth century, and onward] it is easy to produce abundant testimony. In almost every council the ignorance of the clergy forms a subject for reproach. It is asserted by one held in 992, that scarcely a single person could be found in Rome itself who

knew the first elements of letters. Not one priest of a thousand in Spain, about the age of Charlemagne, could address a letter of common salutation to another. In England, Alfred declares that he could not recollect a single priest south of the Thames, (the best part of England,) at the time of his accession, who understood the ordinary prayers, or who could translate the Latin into the mother tongue."

There were few books of any kind in circulation, and, even if there had been an ability to read, the *cost* of books was so great as to exclude the great mass of the people from all access to the sacred Scriptures. "Many of the clergy," says Dr. Robertson, (*Hist. of Charles V.*, p. 14. Harper's Ed.,) "did not understand the Breviary which they were obliged daily to recite; some of them could scarcely read it." "Persons of the highest rank, and in the most eminent stations, could neither read nor write." One of the questions appointed by the canons to be put to persons who were candidates for orders was this, "Whether they could read the Gospels and Epistles, and explain the sense of them at least literally?" For the causes of this ignorance, see Robertsoh's *Hist. of Charles V.*, p. 515. One of those causes was the *cost* of books. "Private persons seldom possessed any books whatever. Even monasteries of considerable note had only one Missal. The price of books became so high that persons of a moderate fortune could not afford to purchase them. The Countess of Anjou paid for a copy of the Homilies of Haimon, bishop of Alberstadt, two hundred sheep, five quarters of wheat, and the same quantity of rye and millet," etc. Such was the cost of books that few persons could afford to own a copy of the sacred Scriptures; and the consequence was, there were almost none in the hands of the people. The few copies that were in existence were mostly in the libraries of monasteries and universities, or in the hands of some of the higher clergy.

(b) But there was another reason that was still more efficacious, perhaps, in keeping the people at large from the knowledge of the Scriptures. It was found in the prevailing views in the Roman Catholic communion respecting the private use and interpretation of the sacred volume. Whatever theory may now be advocated in the Roman Catholic communion on this point, as a matter of fact, the influence of that denomination has been to withhold the Bible from a free circulation among the common people. No one can deny that, in the times just preceding the Reformation, the whole influence of the Papal denomination was opposed to a free circulation of the Bible, and that one of the great and characteristic features of the Reformation was the fact that the doctrine was promulgated that the Bible was to be freely distributed, and that the people everywhere were to have access to it, and were to form their own opinions of the doctrines which it reveals.

(3.) The Bible became, at the Reformation, in fact an "open" book. It was made accessible. It became *the* popular book of the world; the book that did more than all other things to change the aspect of affairs, and to give character to subsequent times. This occurred because

(a) the art of printing was discovered, just before the Reformation, as if, in the providence of God, it was *designed* then to give this precious volume to the world; and the Bible was, in fact, the first book printed, and has been since printed more frequently than any other book whatever, and will continue to be to the end of the world. It would be difficult to imagine now a more striking symbol of the art of printing, or to suggest a better device for it, than to represent an angel giving an open volume to mankind.

(b) The leading doctrine of the Reformers was, that the Bible is the source of all authority in matters of religion, and, consequently, is to be accessible to all the people. And

(c) the Bible was the authority appealed to by the Reformers. It became the subject of profound study; was diffused abroad; and gave form to all the doctrines that sprang out of the times of the

Reformation. These remarks, which might be greatly expanded, will show with what propriety, on the supposition that the chapter here refers to the Reformation, the symbol of *a book* was selected. Obviously, no other symbol would have been so appropriate; nothing else would have given so just a view of the leading characteristics of that period of the world.

And he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot upon the earth. This is the third characteristic in the symbol. As a mere description this is eminently sublime. I was once (at Cape May, 1849) impressively reminded of this passage. My window was in such a position that it commanded a fine view at the same time of the ocean and the land. A storm arose such as I had never witnessed— the clouds from the different points of the compass seeming to come together over the place, and producing incessant lightning and thunder. As the storm cleared away, the most magnificent rainbow that I ever saw appeared, arching the heavens, one foot of it far off in the sea, and the other on the land—an emblem of peace to both—and most strikingly suggesting to me the angel in the Apocalypse. The natural meaning of such a symbol as that represented here would be, that something was to occur which would pertain to the whole world, as the earth is made up of land and water. It is hardly necessary to say, that, on the supposition that this refers to the Reformation, there is no difficulty in finding an ample fulfilment of the symbol. That great work was designed manifestly by Providence to affect all the world—the sea and the land—the dwellers in the islands and in the continents—those who "go down to the sea in ships, and do business in the great waters," and those who have a permanent dwelling on shore. It may be admitted indeed, that, in itself, this one thing—the angel standing on the sea and the land, if it occurred alone, could not suggest the Reformation; and, if there were nothing else, such an application might seem fanciful and unnatural; but taken in connexion with the other things in the symbol, and assuming that the whole vision was designed to symbolize the Reformation, it will not be regarded as unnatural that there *should* be some symbol which would intimate that the blessings of a reformed religion—a pure gospel—would be ultimately spread over land and ocean—over the continents and islands of the globe; in all the fixed habitations of men, and in their floating habitations on the deep. The symbol of a rainbow, bending over the sea and land, would have expressed this: the same thing would be expressed by an angel whose head was encircled by a rainbow, and whose face beamed with light, with one foot on the ocean and the other on the land.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 10 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth*. The lion is the monarch of the woods, and his roar is an image of terror. The point of the comparison here seems to be the *loudness* with which the angel cried, and the *power* of what he said to awe the world—as the roar of the lion keeps the dwellers in the forest in awe. *What* he said is not stated; nor did John attempt to record it. Professor Stuart supposes that it was "a loud note of woe, some interjection uttered which would serve to call attention, and at the same time be indicative of the judgments which were to follow." But it is not necessary to suppose that this particular thing was intended. *Any* loud utterance—any solemn command—any prediction of judgment—any declaration of truth that would arrest the attention of mankind, would be in accordance with all that is said here. As there is no *application* of what is said, and no *explanation* made by John, it is impossible to determine with any certainty

what is referred to. But, supposing that the whole refers to the Reformation, would not the loud and commanding voice of the angel properly represent the proclamation of the gospel as it began to be preached in such a manner as to command the attention of the world, and the reproof of the prevailing sins in such a manner as to keep the World in awe? The voice that sounded forth at the Reformation among the nations of Europe, breaking the slumbers of the Christian world, awaking the church to the evil of the existing corruptions and abominations, and summoning princes to the defence of the truth, might well be symbolized by the voice of an angel that was heard afar. In regard to the effect of the "theses" of Luther, in which he attacked the main doctrines of the Papacy, a contemporary writer says, "In the space of a fortnight they spread over Germany, and within a month they had run through all Christendom, *as if angels themselves had been the bearers of them to all men*." To John it might not be known beforehand—as it probably would not be—what this symbolized; but could we now find a more appropriate symbol to denote the Reformation than the appearance of such an angel; or better describe the *impression* made by the first announcement of the great doctrines of the Reformation, than by the loud voice of such an angel?

And when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. Professor Stuart renders this, "*the* seven thunders uttered their voices," and insists that the article should be retained, which it has not been in our common version. So Elliott, Bishop Middleton, and others. Bishop Middleton says, "Why the article is inserted here I am unable to discover. It is somewhat remarkable that a few manuscripts and editions omit it in both places, [Re 10:3-4] Were the seven thunders anything well known and pre-eminent? If not, the omission must be right in the former instance, but wrong in the latter: if they were pre-eminent, then is it wrong in both. Bengel omits the article in Re 10:3, but has it in Re 10:4." He regards the insertion of the article as the true reading in both places, and supposes that there may have been a reference to some Jewish opinion, but says that he had not been able to find a vestige of it in Lightfoot, Schoettgen, or Meusehen. Storr supposes that we are not to seek here for any Jewish notion, and that nothing is to be inferred from the article.—Middleton, on the Gr. Article, p. 358. The best editions of the New Testament retain the article in both places, and indeed there is no authority for omitting it. The use of the article here naturally implies either that these seven thunders were something which had been before referred to, either expressly or impliedly; or that there was something about them which was so well known that it would be at once understood what was referred to; or that there was something in the connexion which would determine the meaning. Compare **Barnes on "Re 8:2"**.

It is plain, however, that there had been no mention of "seven thunders" before, nor had anything been referred to which would at once suggest them. The reason for the insertion of the article here must, therefore, be found in some pre-eminence which these seven thunders had; in some well-known facts about them; in something which would at once suggest them when they were mentioned—as when we mention *the* sun, *the* moon, *the* stars, though they might not have been distinctly referred to before. The number "seven" is used here either

(a) as a general or perfect number, as it is frequently in this book, where we have it so often repeated—seven spirits; seven angels; seven seals; seven trumpets; or

(b) with some specific reference to the matter in hand—the case actually in view of the writer. It cannot be doubted that it *might* be used in the former sense here, and that no law of language would be violated if it were so understood, as denoting *many* thunders; but still it is equally true that it *may* be used in a specific sense as denoting something that would be well understood by applying the number *seven* to it. Now let it be *supposed*, in regard to the application of this symbol,

that the reference is to Rome, the seven-hilled city, and to the thunders of excommunication, anathema, and wrath that were uttered from that city against the Reformers; and would there not be *all* that is fairly implied in this language, and is not this such a symbol *as would be* appropriately used on such a supposition? The following circumstances may be referred to as worthy of notice on this point:

(a) the place which this occupies in the series of symbols—being just *after* the angel had uttered his voice as symbolical of the proclamation of the great truths of the gospel in the Reformation, if the interpretation above given is correct. The *next* event, in the order of nature and of fact, was the voice of excommunication uttered at Rome.

(b) The word *thunder* would appropriately denote the bulls of excommunication uttered at Rome, for the name most frequently given to the decrees of the Papacy, when condemnatory, was that of Papal thunders. So Le Bas, in his life of Wycliffe, p. 198, says, "The *thunders* which shook the world when they issued *from the seven hills* sent forth an uncertain sound, comparatively faint and powerless, when launched from a region of less devoted sanctity."

(c) The number *seven* would, on such a supposition, be used here with equal propriety. Rome was built on seven hills; was known as the "seven-hilled" city, and the thunders from that city would seem to echo and re-echo from those hills. Compare Re 17:9.

(d) This supposition, also, will accord with the use of the article here, *as if* those thunders were something well known "*the* seven thunders;" that is, the thunders which the nations were accustomed to hear.

(e) This will also accord with the passage before us, inasmuch as the thunders would seem to have been of the nature of a response to what the angel said, or to have been sent forth *because* he had uttered his loud cry. In like manner, the anathemas were hurled from Rome because the nations had been aroused by the loud cry for Reformation, as if an angel had uttered that cry. For these reasons, there is a propriety in applying this language to the thunders which issued from Rome condemning the doctrines of the Reformation, and in defence of the ancient faith, and excommunicating those who embraced the doctrines of the Reformers. If we were *now* to attempt to devise a symbol which would be appropriate to express what actually occurred in the Reformation, we could not think of one which would be better fitted to that purpose than to speak of seven thunders bellowing forth from the seven-hilled city.

{a} "thunders" Re 8:5 14:2

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 10 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices.* After he had listened to those thunders; or when they had passed by.

I was about to write. That is, he was about to record what was uttered, supposing that that was the design for which he had been made to hear them. From this it would seem that it was not mere thunder— brutum fulmen—but that the utterance had a distinct and intelligible enunciation, or that *words* were employed that could be recorded. It may be observed, by the way, as Professor Stuart has remarked, that this proves that John wrote down what he saw and heard as soon as practicable, and in the place where he was; and that the supposition of many modern critics, that the Apocalyptic

visions were written at Ephesus a considerable time after the visions took place, has no good foundation.

And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me. Evidently the voice of God: at all events it came with the clear force of command.

Seal up those things. On the word *seal*, **See Barnes on "Re 5:1"**.

The meaning here is, that he was not to record those things, but what he heard he was to keep to himself *as if* it was placed under a seal which was not to be broken.

And write them not. Make no record of them. No reason is mentioned *why* this was not to be done, and none can now be given that can be proved to be the true reason. Vitringa, who regards the seven thunders as referring to the Crusades, supposes the reason to have been that a more full statement would have diverted the mind from the course of the prophetic narrative, and from more important events which pertained to the church, and that nothing occurred in the Crusades which was worthy to be recorded at length: Nec dignae erant quae prolixius exponerentur— "for," he adds, "these expeditions were undertaken with a foolish purpose, and resulted in real detriment to the church," pp. 431, 432. Professor Stuart, vol. ii. pp. 204-206, supposes that these "thunders" refer to the destruction of the city and temple of God, and that they were a sublime introduction to the last catastrophe, and that the meaning is not that he should keep "*entire* silence," but only that he should state the circumstances in a general manner without going into detail. Mede supposes that John was commanded to keep silence because it was designed that the meaning should not then be known, but should be disclosed in future times; Forerius, because it was the design that the wise should be able to understand them, but that they were not to be disclosed to the wicked and profane. Without attempting to examine these and other solutions which have been proposed, the question which, from the course of the exposition, is properly before us is, whether, on the supposition that the voice of the seven thunders referred to the Papal anathemas, a rational and satisfactory solution of the reasons of this silence can be given. Without pretending to *know* the reasons which existed, the following may be referred to as not improbable, and as those which would meet the case:

(1.) In these Papal anathemas there was nothing that was *worthy* of record; there was nothing that was important as history; there was nothing that communicated truth; there was nothing that really indicated *progress* in human affairs. In themselves there was nothing more that deserved *record* than the acts and doings of wicked men at any time; nothing that fell in with the main design of this book.

(2.) Such a record would have retarded the progress of the main statements of what was to occur, and would have turned off the attention from these to less important matters.

(3.) All that was necessary in the case was simply to state that such thunders were *heard*: that is, on the supposition that this refers to the Reformation, that that great change in human affairs would not be permitted to occur without opposition and noise—*as if* the thunders of wrath should follow those who were engaged in it.

(4.) John evidently *mistook* this for a real revelation, or for something that was to be recorded as connected with the Divine will in reference to the progress of human affairs. He was naturally about to record this as he did what was uttered by the other voices which he heard; and if he had made the record, it would have been with this mistaken view. There was nothing in the voices, or in what was uttered, that would *manifestly* mark it as distinct from what had been uttered as coming from God, and he was about to record it under this impression. If this was a mistake, and if the

record would do anything, as it clearly would, to perpetuate the error, it is easy to see a sufficient reason why the record should not be made.

(5.) It is remarkable that there was an entire correspondence with this in what occurred in the Reformation; in the fact that Luther and his fellow-labourers were, at first, and for a long time—such was the force of education, and of the habits of reverence for the Papal authority in which they had been reared—disposed to receive the announcements of the Papacy as the oracles of God, and to show to them the deference which was due to Divine communications. The language of Luther himself, if the general view here taken is correct, will be the best commentary on the expressions here used. "When I began the affairs of the Indulgences," says he, "I was a monk, and a most mad Papist. So intoxicated was I, and drenched in Papal dogmas, that I would have been most ready to murder, or assist others in murdering, any person who should have uttered a syllable against the duty of obedience to the Pope." And again: "Certainly at that time I adored him in earnest." He adds, "How distressed my heart was in that year 1517-how submissive to the hierarchy, not feignedly but really—those little know who at this day insult the majesty or the Pope with so much pride and arrogance. I was ignorant of many things which now, by the grace of God, I understand. I disputed; I was open to conviction; not finding satisfaction in the works of theologians, I wished to consult the living members of the church itself. There were some godly souls that entirely approved my propositions. But I did not consider their authority of weight with me in spiritual concerns. The popes, bishops, cardinals, monks, priests, were the objects of my confidence. After being enabled to answer every objection that could be brought against me from sacred Scripture, one difficulty alone remained, that *the Church ought to be obeyed*. If I had then braved the Pope as I now do, I should have expected every hour that the earth would have opened to swallow me up alive, like Korah and Abiram." It was in this frame of mind that, in the summer of 1518, a few months after the affair with Tetzel, he wrote that memorable letter to the Pope, the tenor of which can be judged of by the following sentences: and what could more admirably illustrate the passage before us, on the interpretation suggested, than this language? "Most blessed Father! Prostrate at the feet of thy blessedness I offer, myself to thee, with all that I am, and that I have. Kill me, or make me live; call, or recall; approve, or reprove, as shall please thee. I will acknowledge *thy voice as the voice of Christ* presiding and speaking in thee." See the authorities for these quotations in Elliott, ii. pp. 116, 117.

(6.) The command *not* to record what the seven thunders uttered was of the nature of a *caution* not to regard what was said in this manner; that is, not to be deceived by these utterances as if they were the voice of God. Thus understood, if this is the proper explanation and application of the passage, it should be regarded as an injunction *not* to regard the decrees and decisions of the Papacy as containing any intimation of the Divine will, or as of authority in the church. That this is to be so regarded is the opinion of all Protestants; and if this is so, it is not a forced supposition that this might have been intimated by such a symbol as that before us.

{a} "Seal" Da 8:26 12:4,9

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 10 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And the angel which I saw stand*, etc. Re 10:2. That is, John saw him standing in this posture when he made the oath which he proceeds to record.

Lifted up his hand to heaven. The usual attitude in taking an oath, as if one called heaven to witness. See Ge 14:22 De 32:40 Eze 20:5-6. Compare **Barnes on "Da 12:7"**.

{ b } " e a r t h " E x 6 : 8 D e 3 2 : 4 0

———- This is part 3 of 4 parts of Notes for Revelation 9.20

Part 1 **See Barnes "Re 9:20"**

Part 2 **See Barnes "Re 9:21"**

Part 4 **See Barnes "Re 10:10"**

Happily we have also the means of fixing the exact date of this event, so as to make it accord with singular accuracy with the period supposed to be referred to. The *general* time specified by Mr. Gibbon is A.D. 1055. This, according to the two methods referred to of determining the period embraced in the "hour, and day, and month, and year," would reach, if the period were 391 years, to A. D. 1446; if the other method were referred to, making it 396 years and 106 days to A.D. 1451, with 106 days added, within less than two years of the actual taking of Constantinople. But there is a more accurate calculation as to the time than the *general* one thus made. In vol. iv. 93, Mr. Gibbon makes this remark: "Twenty-five years after the death of Basil, his successors were suddenly attacked by an unknown race of barbarians, who united the Scythian valour with the fanaticism of new proselytes, and the art and riches of a powerful monarchy." He then proceeds (p. 94, seq.) with an account of the invasions of the Turks. In vol. iii. 307, we have an account of the death of Basil. "In the sixty-eighth year of his age, his martial spirit urged him to embark in person for a holy war against the Saracens of Sicily; he was prevented by death, and Basil, surnamed the slayer of the Bulgarians, was dismissed from the world, with the blessings of the clergy and the curses of the people." This occurred A.D. 1025. "Twenty-five years" after this would make A.D. 1050. To this add the period here referred to, and we have respectively, as above, the years A.D. 1446, or A.D. 1451, and 106 days. Both periods are near the time of the taking of Constantinople and the downfall of the Eastern empire, (A.D. 1453,) and the latter strikingly so; and, considering the general nature of the statement of Mr. Gibbon, and the great indefiniteness of the dates in chronology, may be considered as remarkable.—But we have the means of a still more accurate calculation. It is by determining the exact period of the investiture of Togrul with the authority of caliph, or as the "temporal lieutenant of the vicar of the prophet." The time of this investiture, or coronation, is mentioned by Abulfeda as occurring on the 25th of Dzoulcad, in the year of the Hegira 449; and the date of Elmakin's narrative, who has given an account of this, perfectly agrees with this. Of this transaction, Elmakin makes the following remark: "There was now none left in Irak or Chorasmia who could stand before him." The *importance* of this investiture will be seen from the charge which the caliph is reported by Abulfeda to have given to Togrul on this occasion: "The caliph commits to your care all that part of the world which God has committed to his care and dominion; and entrusts to thee, under the name of vicegerent, the guardianship of the pious, faithful, and God-serving citizens." (Mandat Chalifa tuae curae omne id terraium quod Deus ejns curae et imperio commisit; tibique civium piorum, fidelium, Deum colentium, tutelam sublocatorio nomine demandat.) The exact *time* of this investiture is stated by Abulfeda, as above, to be the 25th of Dzoulcad, A. H. 449. Now, reckoning this as the time, and we have the following result: The 25th of Dzoulcad,

A. H. 449, would answer to February 2, A. D. 1058. From this to May 29, 1453, the time when Constantinople was taken, would be 395 years and 116 days. The *prophetic* period, as above, is 396 years and 106 days—making a difference only of 1 year and 10 days—a result that cannot but be considered as remarkable, considering the difficulty of fixing ancient dates. Or if, with Mr. Elliott, (i. 495-499,) we suppose that the time is to be reckoned from the period when the Turkman power went forth from Bagdad on a career of conquest, the reckoning should be from the year of the Hegira, 448, the year before the *formal* investiture, then this would make a difference of only 24 days. The date of that event was the tenth of Dzoulcad, A. H. 448. That was the day on which Togrul with his Turkroans, now the representative and head of the power of Islamism, quitted Bagdad to enter on a long career of war and conquest. "The part allotted to Togrul himself in the fearful drama soon to open against the Greeks was to extend and establish the Turkman dominion over the frontier countries of Irak and Mesopotamia, that so the requisite strength might be attained for the attack ordained of. God's counsels against the Greek empire. The first step to this was the siege and capture of Moussul; his next of Singara. Nisibis, too, was visited by him; that frontier fortress that had in other days been so long a bulwark to the Greeks. Everywhere victory attended his banner—a presage of what was to follow." Reckoning from that time, the coincidence between the period that elapsed from that, and the conquest of Constantinople, would be 396 years and 130 days—a period that corresponds, with only a difference of 24 days, with that specified in the prophecy according to the explanation given above. It could not be expected that a coincidence more accurate than this could be made out on the supposition that the prophecy was designed to refer to these events; and if it *did* refer to them, the coincidence could have occurred only as a prediction by Him who sees with perfect accuracy all the future.

(13.) The effect. This is stated, in Re 9:20-21, to be that those who survived these plagues did *not* repent of their wickedness, but that the abominations which existed before still remained. In endeavouring to determine the meaning of this, it will be proper, first, to ascertain the exact sense of the words used, and then to inquire whether a state of things existed subsequent to the invasions of the Turks which corresponded with the description here.

(a) The explanation of the language used in Re 9:20-21.

The rest of the men. That portion of the world on which these plagues did not come. One third of the race, it is said, would fall under these calamities, and the writer now proceeds to state what would be the effect on the remainder. The language used—"*the rest of the men*"— is not such as to designate with certainty any particular portion of the world, but it is implied that the things mentioned were of the general prevalence.

Which were not killed by these plagues. The two thirds of the race which were spared. The language here is such as would be used on the supposition that the crimes here referred to abounded in all those regions which came within the range of the vision of the apostle.

Yet repented not of the works of their hands. To wit, of those things which are immediately specified.

That they should not worship devils. Implying that they practised this before. The word used here—*daimonion*—means properly *a god, deity*; spoken of the heathen gods, Ac 17:18; then a genius, or tutelary demon, *e.g*. that of Socrates; and, in the New Testament, a demon in the sense of an evil spirit. See the word fully explained in **See Barnes on "1Co 10:20"**.

The meaning of the passage here, as in 1Co 10:20, "they sacrifice to devils," is not that they literally worshipped *devils* in the usual sense of that term, though it is true that such worship does

exist in the world, as among the Yezidis, (see Layard, Nineveh and its Remains, vol. i. pp. 225-254, and Rosenmuller, Morgenland, iii. 212-216;) but that they worshipped beings *which were inferior to the Supreme God*; created spirits of a rank superior to men, or the spirits of men that had been enrolled among the gods. This last was a common form of worship among the heathen, for a large portion of the gods whom they adored were heroes and benefactors who had been enrolled among the gods—as Hercules, Bacchus, etc. All that is necessarily implied in this word is, that there prevailed in the time referred to the worship of spirits inferior to God, or the worship of the spirits of departed men. This idea would be more naturally suggested to the mind of a Greek by the use of the word than the worship of evil spirits as such—if indeed it would have conveyed that idea at all; and this word would be properly employed in the representation if there was *any* homage rendered to departed human spirits which came in the place of the worship of the true God. Compare a dissertation on the meaning of the word used here, in Elliott on the Apocalypse, Appendix I. vol. ii.

And idols of gold, and silver, etc. Idols were formerly, as they are now in heathen lands, made of all these materials. The most costly would, of course, denote a higher degree of veneration for the god, or greater wealth in the worshipper, and all would be employed as symbols or representatives of the gods whom they adored. The *meaning* of this passage is, that there would prevail, at that time, what would be properly called *idolatry*, and that this would be represented by the worship paid to these images or idols. It is not necessary to the proper understanding of this, to suppose that the images or idols worshipped were acknowledged *heathen idols*, or were erected in honour of *heathen gods*, as such. All that is implied is, that there would be such images—*eidwla*—and that a degree of homage would be paid to them which would be in fact idolatry. The word here used—*eidwlon, eidwla*—properly means an image, spectre, shade; then an idol-image, or that which was a representative of a heathen god; and then the idol-god itself—a heathen deity. So far as the *word* is concerned, it may be applied to any kind of image worship.

Which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk. The common representation of idol-worship in the Scriptures, to denote its folly and stupidity. See Ps 115 compare Isa 44:9-19.

Neither repented they of their murders. This implies that, at the time referred to, murders would abound; or that the times would be characterized by that which deserved to be *called* murder.

Nor of their sorceries. The word rendered *sorceries—farmakeia* —whence our word *pharmacy*, means properly *the preparing and giving of medicine*, Eng. *pharmacy*.—*Rob. Lex*. Then, as the art of medicine was supposed to have magical power, or as the persons who practised medicine, in order to give themselves and their art greater importance, practised various arts of incantation, the word came to be connected with the idea of magic, sorcery, or enchantment. See Schleusner, *Lex*. In the New Testament the word is *never* used in a good sense, as denoting the preparation of medicine, but always in this secondary sense, as denoting sorcery, magic, etc. Thus in Ga 5:20, "the works of the flesh— idolatry, *witchcraft*, etc." Re 9:21, "Of their *sorceries*." Re 18:23, "For by thy *sorceries* were all nations deceived." Re 21:8, "Whoremongers, and *sorcerers*." The word does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament; and the *meaning* of the word would be fulfilled in anything that purposed to accomplish an object by sorcery, by magical arts, by trick, by cunning, by sleight of hand, or by *deceiving the senses in any way*. Thus it would be applicable to all jugglery, and to all pretended miracles.

Nor of their fornication. Implying that this would be a prevalent sin in the times referred to, and that the dreadful plagues which are here predicted would make no essential change in reference to its prevalence.

And of their thefts. Implying that *this*, too, would be a common form of iniquity. The word used here—*klemma*—is the common word to denote *theft*. The true idea in the word is that of privately, unlawfully, and feloniously taking the goods or movables of another person. In a larger and in the popular sense, however, this word might embrace all acts of taking the property of another by dishonest arts, or on false pretence, or without an equivalent.

(b) The next point then is, the inquiry whether there was any such state of things as is specified here existing in the time of the rise of the Turkish power, and in the time of the calamities which that formidable power brought upon the world. There are two things implied in the statement here:

(1) that these things had an existence before the invasion and destruction of the Eastern empire by the Turkish power; and

(2) that they continued to exist after that, or were not removed by these fearful calamities. The supposition all along in this interpretation is, that the eye of the prophet was on the Roman world, and that the design was to mark the various events which would characterize its future history. We look, then, in the application of this, to the state of things existing in connexion with the Roman power, or that portion of the world which was then pervaded by the Roman religion. This will make it necessary to institute an inquiry whether the things here specified prevailed in that part of the world before the invasions of the Turks, and the-conquest of Constantinople, and whether the judgments inflicted by that formidable Turkish invasion made any essential change in this respect.

(1.) The statement that they worshipped devils; that is, as explained, demons, or the deified souls of men. Homage rendered to the spirits of departed men, and substituted in the place of the worship of the true God, would meet all that is properly implied here. We may refer, then, to the worship of *saints* in the Romish communion as a complete fulfilment of what is here implied in the language used by John. The fact cannot be disputed that the invocation of saints took the place, in the Roman Catholic communion, of the worship of sages and heroes in heathen Rome, and that the canonization of saints took the place of the ancient deification of heroes and public benefactors. The same kind of homage was rendered to them; their aid was invoked in a similar manner, and on similar occasions; the effect on the popular mind was substantially the same; and the one interfered as really as the other with the worship of the true God. The decrees of the seventh general council, known as the second council of Nice, A.D. 787, authorized and established the worshipping (*proskunew*)—same word used here—(*proskunhswsi ta daimonia*) of the saints and their images. This occurred *after* the exciting scenes, the debates, and the disorders produced by the Iconoclasts, or image-breakers, and after the most careful deliberation on the subject. In that celebrated council, it was decreed, according to Mr. Gibbon, (iii. 341,) "unanimously," "that the worship of images is agreeable to Scripture and reason, to the fathers and councils of the church; but they hesitate whether that worship be relative or direct; whether the Godhead and the figure of Christ be entitled to the same mode of adoration." This worship of the "saints," or prayer to the saints, asking for their intercession, it is well known has from that time everywhere prevailed in the Papal communion. Indeed, a large part of the actual *prayers* offered in their services is addressed to the Virgin Mary. Mr. Maitland, "the able and learned advocate of the Dark Ages," says, "The superstition of the age supposed the glorified saint to know what was going on in the world; and to feel a deep interest, and to possess a considerable power, in the church militant on earth. I believe that they who thought

so are altogether mistaken; and I lament, abhor, and am amazed at the superstition, *blasphemies*, and *idolatries*, which have grown out of that opinion."—Elliott, ii. p. 10. As to the question whether this *continued* after the judgments brought upon the world by the hordes "loosed on the Euphrates," or whether they repented and reformed on account of the judgments, we have only to look into the Roman Catholic religion everywhere. Not only did the old practice of "daemonolatry," or the worship of departed saints, continue, but new "saints" have been added to the number, and the list of those who are to receive this homage has been continually increasing. Thus in the year 1460, Catharine of Sienna was canonized by Pope Plus II.; in 1482, Bonaventura, the blasphemer, (In the Hereford Discussion, between the Rev. J. Venn and Rev. James Waterworth, it was admitted by the latter, all able and learned Romish priest, that Bonaventura's Psalter to the Virgin Mary, turning the addresses to God into addresses to the Virgin, was *blasphemy*.—Elliott, ii. 25.) by Sixtus IV.; in 1494, Anselm by Alexander VI. Alexander's bull, in language more heathen than Christian, avows it to be the Pope's *duty* thus to choose out, and to hold up the illustrious dead, as their merits claim, for *adoration* and *worship*. (Romanas Pontifex viros claros, et qui sanctimonia floruerunt, et eorum exigentibus clarissimis meritis aliorum sanctorum numero aggregari merentur-inter sanctos praedictos debit collocare, et ut sanctos ab omnibus Christi fidelibus *coli*, *venerari*, et ADORARI mandare.)

(2.) The statement that *idolatry* was practised, and continued to be practised, after this invasion: "Repented not that they should not worship idols of gold, silver, and brass." On this point, perhaps it would be sufficient to refer to what has been already noticed in regard to the homage paid to the souls of the departed; but it may be farther and more clearly illustrated by a reference to the worship of *images* in the Romish communion. Any one familiar with church history will recollect the long conflicts which prevailed respecting the worship of images; the establishment of images in the churches; the destruction of images by the "Iconoclasts;" and the debates on the subject by the council at Hiera; and the final decision in the second council of Nice, in which the propriety of image-worship was affirmed and established. See, on this subject, Bowers' History of the Popes, ii. 98, seq., 144, seq.; Gibbon, vol. iii. pp. 322-341. The importance of the question respecting *image-worship* may be seen from the remarks of Mr. Gibbon, iii. 322. He speaks of it as "a question of popular superstition which produced the revolt of Italy, the *temporal power of the Popes*, and the restoration of the Roman empire in the West." A few extracts from Mr. Gibbon—who may be regarded as an impartial witness on this subject—will show what was the popular belief, and will confirm what is said in the passage before us in reference to the prevalence of *idolatry*. "The first introduction of a symbolic worship was in the veneration of the cross, and of relics. The saints and martyrs, when intercession was implored, were seated on the right hand of God; but the gracious, and often supernatural favours, which, in the popular belief, were showered round their tombs, conveyed an unquestionable sanction of the devout pilgrims who visited, and touched, and kissed these lifeless remains, the memorials of their merits and suffering. But a memorial, more interesting than the skull or the sandals of a departed worthy, is a faithful copy of his person and features delineated by the arts of painting or sculpture. In every age, such copies, so congenial to human feelings, have been cherished by the zeal of private friendship or public esteem; the images of the Roman emperors were adorned with civil and almost religious honours; a reverence, less ostentatious, but more sincere, was applied to the statues of sages and patriots; and these profane virtues, these splendid sins, disappeared in the presence of the holy men, who had died for their celestial and everlasting country. At first the experiment was made with caution and scruple, and the venerable

pictures were discreetly allowed to instruct the ignorant, to awaken the cold, and to gratify the prejudices of the heathen proselytes. By a slow, though inevitable progression, the honours of the original were transferred to the copy; the devout Christian prayed before the image of a saint; and the Pagan rites of genuflexion, luminaries, and incense, again stole into the Catholic church. The scruples of reason or piety were silenced by the strong evidence of visions and miracles; and the pictures which speak, and move, and bleed, must be endowed with a Divine energy, and may be considered as the proper objects of religious adoration. The most audacious pencil might tremble in the rash attempt of defining, by forms and colours, the infinite Spirit, the devout Father, who pervades and sustains the universe. But the superstitious mind was more easily reconciled to paint and worship the angels, and above all, the Son of God, under the human shape, which on earth they have condescended to assume. The Second Person of the Trinity had been clothed with a real and mortal body; but that body had ascended into heaven; and had not some similitude been presented to the eyes of his disciples, the spiritual worship of Christ might have been obliterated by the visible relics and representatives of the saints. A similar indulgence was requisite, and propitious, for the Virgin Mary; the place of her burial was unknown; and the assumption of her soul and body into heaven was adopted by the credulity of the Greeks and Latins. *The use, and even the worship of images was firmly established before the end of the sixth century*; they were fondly cherished by the warm imagination of the Greeks and Asiatics; *the Pantheon and the Vatican were adorned with the emblems of a new superstition*; but this semblance of idolatry was more coldly entertained by the rude barbarians and the Arian clergy of the West," vol. iii. p. 323. Again: "Before the end of the sixth century, these images, *made without hands*, (in Greek it is a single word—*aceiropoihtov*) were propagated in the camps and cities of the Eastern empire; *they were the objects of worship*, and the instruments of miracles; and in the hour of danger or tumult their venerable presence could revive the hope, rekindle the courage, or repress the fury of the Roman legions," vol. iii. pp. 324, 325. So again, (vol. iii. p. 340, seq.:) "While the Popes established in Italy their freedom and dominion, the images, the first cause of their revolt, were restored in the Eastern empire. Under the reign of Constantine the Fifth, the union of civil and ecclesiastical power had overthrown the tree, without extirpating the root, of superstition. The *idols*, for such they were now held, were secretly cherished by the order and the sect most prone to devotion; and the fond alliance of the monks and females obtained a final victory over the name and the authority of man." Under Irene a council was convened—the second council of Nice, or the seventh general council, in which, according to Mr. Gibbon, (iii. 341,) it was "unanimously pronounced that the worship of images is agreeable to Scripture and reason, to the fathers and councils of the church." The *arguments* which were urged in favour of the worship of images, in the council above referred to, may be seen in Bowers' Lives of the Popes, vol. ii. pp. 152-158, Dr. Cox's edition. The answer of the bishops in the council to the question of the empress Irene, whether they agreed to the decision which had been adopted in the council, was in these words: "We all agree to it; we have all freely signed it; this is the faith of the apostles, of the fathers, and of the Catholic church; we all salute, honour, worship, and adore the holy and venerable images; be they accursed who do not honour, worship, and adore the adorable images."—Bowers' Lives of the Popes, ii. 159. As a matter of fact, therefore, no one can doubt that these images were *worshipped* with the honour that was due to God alone— or that the sin of *idolatry* prevailed; and no one can doubt that that has been continued, and is still, in the Papal communion.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 10 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever*. By the everliving God: a form of an oath in extensive use now. The essential idea in such an oath is an appeal to God; a solemn reference to Him as a witness; an utterance in the presence of Him who is acquainted with the truth or falsehood of what is said, and who will punish him who appeals to Him falsely. It is usual, in such an oath, in order to give to it greater solemnity, to refer to some *attribute* of God, or something in the Divine character on which the mind would rest at the time, as tending to make it more impressive. Thus, in the passage before us, the reference is to God as "ever-living;" that is, he is now a witness, and he ever will be; he has now the power to detect and punish, and he ever will have the same power.

Who created heaven, and the things that therein are, etc. Who is the Maker of all things in heaven, on the earth, and in the sea; that is, throughout the universe. The design of referring to these things here is that which is just specified—to give increased solemnity to the oath by a particular reference to some one of the attributes of God. With this view nothing could be more appropriate than to refer to him as the Creator of the universe—denoting his infinite power, his right to rule and control all things.

That there should be time no longer. This is a very important expression, as it is the substance of what the angel affirmed in so solemn a manner; and as the interpretation of the whole passage depends on it. It seems now to be generally agreed among critics that our translation does not give the true sense, inasmuch

(a) as that was not the close of human affairs, and

(b) as he proceeds to state what *would* occur *after* that. Accordingly, different versions of the passage have been proposed. Professor Stuart renders it, "that delay shall be no longer." Mr. Elliott, "that the time shall not yet be; but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, whensoever he may be about to sound, then the mystery of God shall be finished." Mr. Lord, "that the time shall not be yet, but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel," etc. Andrew Fuller, (Works, vol. vi. 113,) "there should be no delay." So Dr. Gill. Mr. Daubuz, "the time shall not be yet." Vitringa, (p. 432,) tempus non fore amplius, "time shall be no more." He explains it (p. 433) as meaning, "not that this is to be taken *absolutely*, as if at the sounding of the seventh trumpet all things were then to terminate, and the glorious epiphany—*epifaneia* (or manifestation of Jesus Christ)—was then to occur who would put an end to all the afflictions of his church; but in a limited sense—*restricte*—as meaning that there would be no *delay* between the sounding of the seventh trumpet and tile fulfilment of the prophecies." The sense of this passage is to be determined by the meaning of the words and the connexion.

(a) The word *time—cronov*—is the common Greek word to denote *time*, and may be applied to time in general, or to any specified time or period. See Robinson, *Lex*. s. voce (a, b.) In the word itself there is nothing to determine its particular signification here. It might refer either to time in general, or to the time under consideration; and which was the subject of the prophecy. Which of these is the true idea is to be ascertained by the other circumstances referred to. It should be added, however, that the *word* does not of itself denote *delay*, and is never used to denote that directly. It can only denote that because *delay* occupies or consumes *time*, but this sense of the noun is not found in the New Testament. It is found, however, in the verb *cronizw*, to linger, to delay, to be long in coming, Mt 25:5 Lu 1:21.

(b) The absence of the article "*time*," not "*the* time"— would naturally give it a general signification, unless there was something in the connexion to limit it to some well-known period under consideration. **See Barnes on** "Re 8:2; Re 10:3 ".

In this latter view, if the time referred to would be sufficiently definite *without* the article, the article need not be inserted. This is such a case, and comes under the rule for the omission of the article as laid down by Bishop Middleton, part i. chap. iii. The principle is, that when the copula, or verb connecting the subject and predicate, is the verb substantive, then the article is omitted. "To affirm the existence," says he, "of that of which the existence is already assumed, would be superfluous; to deny it, would be contradictory and absurd." As applicable to the case before us, the meaning of this rule would be, that the nature of the time here referred to is implied in the use of the substantive verb, (*estai*) and that consequently it is not necessary to specify it. All that needs to be said on this point is, that, on the supposition that John, referred to a specified time, instead of time in general, it would not be necessary, under this rule, to insert the article. The reference would be understood without it, and the insertion would be unnecessary. This is, substantially, the reasoning of Mr. Elliott, (ii. 123,) and it is submitted for what it is worth. My own knowledge of the usages of the Greek article is too limited to justify me in pronouncing an opinion on the subject, but the authorities are such as to authorize the assertion that, on the supposition that a particular well-known period were here referred to, the insertion of the article would not be necessary.

(c) The particle rendered "longer"—*eti*—"time shall be no *longer*" —means properly, according to Robinson, (*Lex*.,) *yet, still*; implying

(1) *duration*—as spoken of the present time; of the present in allusion to the past, and, with a negative, *no more, no longer*,

(2) implying accession, addition, *yet, more, farther, besides*. According to Buttmann, Gram. % 149, i. p. 430, it means, when alone, "yet still, yet farther; and with a negative, no more, no farther." The particle occurs often in the New Testament, as may be seen in the Concordance. It is more frequently rendered "*yet*" than by any other word, (compare Mt 12:46 17:5, 19:20 26:47 27:63 Mr 5:35 8:17, 12:6) Mr 14:43—and so in the other Gospels, the Acts, and the Epistles; in all, fifty times. In the book of Revelation it is only once rendered "*yet*," Re 6:11, but is rendered "*more*" in Re 3:12 7:16 Re 9:12 12:8, 18:21-22, (three times,) Re 18:23, (twice;) Re 20:3 21:1,4, (twice;) "*longer*" in Re 10:6; "*still*" in Re 22:11, (four times.) The usage, therefore, will justify the rendering of the word by "*yet*," and in connexion with the negative, "not yet"—meaning that the thing referred to would not occur immediately, but would be hereafter. In regard to the general meaning, then, of this passage in its connexion, we may remark

(a) that it cannot mean, literally, that there would be *time* no longer, or that the world would then come to an end absolutely, for the speaker proceeds to disclose events that would occur after that, extending far into the future, (Re 10:11) and the detail that follows (Revelation 11) before the sounding of the seventh trumpet is such as to occupy a considerable period, and the seventh trumpet is also yet to sound. No fair construction of the language, therefore, would require us to understand this as meaning that the affairs of the world were then to terminate.

(b) The connexion, then, apart from the question of grammatical usage, will require some such construction as that above suggested—"that the time," to wit, some certain, known, or designated time, "would not be *yet*," but would be in some future period; that is, as specified Re 10:7, "in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound."

Then "the mystery of God would be finished," and the affairs of the world would be put on their permanent footing.

(c) This would imply that, at the time when the angel appeared, or in the time to which he refers, there would be some expectation or general belief that the "mystery was *then* to be finished, and that the affairs of the world were to come to an end. The proper interpretation would lead us to suppose that there would be so general an expectation of this, as to make the solemn affirmation of the angel proper to correct a prevailing opinion, and to show that the right interpretation was not put on what seemed to be the tendency of things.

(d) As a matter of fact, we find that this expectation did actually exist at the time of the Reformation; that such an interpretation was put on the prophecies, and on the events that occurred; and that the impression that the Messiah was about to come, and the reign of saints about to commence, was so strong as to justify some interference, like the solemn oath of the angel, to correct the misapprehension. It is true that this impression had existed in former times, and even in the early ages of the church; but, as a matter of fact, it was true, and eminently true, in the time of the Reformation, and there was, on many accounts, a strong tendency to that form of belief. The Reformers, in interpreting the prophecies, learned to connect the downfall of the Papacy with the coming of Christ, and with his universal reign upon the earth; and as they saw the evidences of the approach of the former, they naturally anticipated the latter as about to occur. Compare Da 12:11 2Th 2:3 Da 2:34; 2Th 2:8.

The anticipation that the Lord Jesus was about to come; that the affairs of the world, in the present form, were to be wound up; that the reign of the saints would soon commence; and that the permanent kingdom of righteousness would be established, became almost the current belief of the Reformers, and was frequently expressed in their writings. Thus Luther, in the year 1520, in his answer to the Pope's bull of excommunication, expresses his anticipations: "Our Lord Jesus Christ yet liveth and reigneth; who, I firmly trust, will shortly come, and slay with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming, that Man of sin."—Merle D'Aubig. ii. 166. After being summoned before the Diet at Worms, and after condemnation had been pronounced on him by the Emperor, he fell back for comfort on the same joyous expectation. "For this once," he said, "the Jews, as on the crucifixion-day, may sing their Paean; but Easter will come for us, and then we shall sing Hallelujah."—D'Aubig. ii. 276. The next year, writing to Staupitz, he made a solemn appeal against his abandoning the Reformation, by reference to the sure and advancing fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy. "My father," said he, "the abominations of the pope, with his whole kingdom, must be destroyed; and the Lord does this without hand, by the *word* alone. The subject exceeds all human comprehension. I cherish the best hopes."— Milner, p. 692. In 1523 he thus, in a similar strain, expresses his hopes: "The kingdom of Antichrist, according to the prophet Daniel, must be broken *without hands*; that is, the Scriptures will be understood by and by; and every one will preach against Papal tyranny, from the word of God, until the Man of sin is deserted of all, and dies of himself."—Milner, p. 796. The same sentiments respecting the approach of the end of the world were entertained by melancthon. In commenting on the passage in Daniel relating to the "little horn," he thus refers to an argument which has been prevalent: "The words of the prophet Elias should be marked by every one, and inscribed upon our walls, and on the entrances of our houses. Six thousand years shall the world stand, and after that be destroyed; two thousand years without the law; two thousand years under the law of Moses; two thousand years under the Messiah; and if any of these years are not fulfilled, they will be shortened, (a shortening intimated by Christ

also, on account of our sins.") The following manuscript addition to this argument has been found in melancthon's hand, in Luther's own copy of the German Bible:—"Written A.D. 1557, and from the creation of the world, 5519; from which number we may see that this aged world is not far front its end." So also the British Reformers believed. Thus Bishop Latimer: "Let us cry to God day and night—Most merciful Father, let thy kingdom come! St. Paul saith, The Lord will not come till the swerving from the faith cometh, (2Th 2:3) which thing is already done and past. Antichrist is already known throughout all the world. Wherefore the day is not far off." Then, reverting to the consideration of the age of the world, as Melancthon had done, he says, "The world was ordained to endure, as all learned ones affirm, 6000 years. Now of that number there be past 6552 years, so that there is no more left but 448 years. Furthermore, those days shall be shortened for the elect's sage. Therefore, all those excellent and learned men, whom without doubt God hath sent into the world in these last days to give the world warning, do gather out of sacred Scripture that the last day cannot be far off." So again, in a sermon on the nearness of the Second Advent, he says, "So that peradventure it may come in my days, old as I am, or in my children's days." Indeed, it is well known that this was a prevalent opinion among the Reformers; and this fact will show with what propriety, if the passage before us was *designed* to refer to the Reformation, this Solemn declaration of the angel was made, that the "time would *not be yet*"—that those anticipations which would spring up from the nature of the case, and from the interpretations which would be put on what *seemed* to be the obvious sense of the prophecies, were unfounded, and that a considerable time must yet intervene before the events would be consummated.

(e) The proper sense of this passage, then, according to the above interpretation, would be—"And the angel lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever and ever. That the time should not yet be; but, in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished." Appearances, indeed, would then indicate that the affairs of the world were to be wound up, and that the prophecies respecting the end of the world were about to be fulfilled; but the angel solemnly swears "by Him who lives for ever and ever," and whose reign therefore extends through all the changes on the earth; "by Him who is the Creator of all things," and whose purpose alone can determine when the end shall be, that the time would not be *yet*. Those cherished expectations would not yet be realized, but there was a series of important events to intervene before the end would come. Then—at the time when the seventh angel should sound—would be the consummation of all things.

{c} "him" Re 14:7 Ne 9:6 {d} "therein" Da 12:7

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 10 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel*. The days in the period of time embraced by the sounding of the seventh trumpet. That is, the affairs of this world would not be consummated in that period embraced in the sounding of the sixth trumpet, but in that embraced in the sounding of the seventh and last of the trumpets. Compare Re 11:15-19.

When he shall begin to sound. That is, the events referred to will *commence* at the period when the angel shall *begin* to sound. It will not be merely *during* or in that period, but the sounding of the trumpet, and the beginning of those events, will be contemporaneous. In other words, then

would commence the reign of righteousness—the kingdom of the Messiah—the dominion of the saints on the earth.

The mystery of God should be finished. On the meaning of the word *mystery*, **see Barnes "Eph 1:9"**.

It means here, as elsewhere in the New Testament, the purpose or truth of God which had been concealed, and which had not before been communicated to man. Here the particular reference is to the Divine purpose which had been long concealed respecting the destiny of the world, or respecting the setting up of his kingdom, but which had been progressively unfolded by the prophets. That purpose would be "finished," or consummated, in the time when the seventh angel should begin to sound. Then all the "mystery" would be revealed; the plan would be unfolded; the Divine purpose, so long concealed, would be manifested, and the kingdom of the Messiah and of the saints would be set up on the earth. Under that period, the affairs of the world would be ultimately wound up, and the whole work of redemption completed. *As he hath declared to his servants the prophets*. As he has from time to time disclosed his purposes to mankind through the prophets. The reference here is, doubtless, to the prophets of the Old Testament, though *the language* would include all who at any time had uttered any predictions respecting the final condition of the world. These prophecies had been scattered along through many ages; but the angel says that at that time all that had been said respecting the setting up of the kingdom of God, the reign of the saints, and the dominion of the Redeemer on the earth, would be accomplished. **See Barnes "Re 11:15"**.

From the passage thus explained, if the interpretation is correct, it will follow that the sounding of the seventh trumpet (Re 11:15-18) is properly the conclusion of this series of visions, and denotes a "*catastrophe*" in the action, and that what follows is the commencement of a new series of visions. This is clear, because

(a) the whole seven seals, comprising the seven trumpets of the seventh seal, must embrace *one* view of all coming events—since this embraced all that there was in the volume seen in the hand of him that sat on the throne;

(b) this is properly implied in the word here rendered "should be finished"—*telesyh*—the fair meaning of which is, that the "mystery" here referred to—the hitherto unrevealed purpose or plan of God—would, under that trumpet, be consummated or complete, (see the conclusive reasoning of Professor Stuart on the meaning of the word, vol. ii. p. 210, foot-note;) and

(c) it will be found in the course of the exposition that, at Re 11:19, there commences a new series of visions, embracing a view of the world in its *religious* aspect, or *ecclesiastical* characteristics, reaching down to the same consummation, and stating at the close of that (Revelation 20) more fully what is here (Re 1:15-18) designated in a more summary way—the final triumph of religion, and the establishment of the kingdom of the saints. The present series of visions (Re 5:1-11:18) relates rather to the outward or secular changes which would occur on the earth, which were to affect the welfare of the church, to the final consummation; the next series (Re 11:19 and chapters 12-20) relates to the church internally, the rise of Antichrist, and the effect of the rise of that formidable power on the internal history of the church, to the time of the overthrow of that power, and the triumphant establishment of the kingdom of God. In other words, this series of visions, terminating at Re 11:18, refers, as the leading thing, to what would occur in relation to the Roman empire considered as a secular power, in which the church would be interested; that which follows Re 11:19 12:1-10. to the Roman power considered as a great apostasy, and setting up a mighty and most oppressive domination over the true church, manifested in deep corruption and

bloody persecutions, running on in its disastrous influence on the world, until that power should be destroyed—Babylon fall—and the reign of the saints be introduced.

{a} "seventh" Re 11:15 {b} "mystery" Ro 11:25 Eph 3:5-9

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 10 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *And the voice which I heard from heaven*. Re 10:4. This is not the voice of the angel, but a direct Divine command.

Said, Go and *take the little book that is open*, etc. That is, take it out of his hand, and do with it as you shall be commanded. There is a very strong resemblance between this passage and the account contained in Eze 2:9-10 3:1-3. Ezekiel was directed to go to the house of Israel and deliver a Divine message, whether they would hear or forbear; and in order that he might understand what message to deliver, there was shown to him a roll of a book, written within and without. That roll he was commanded to eat, and he found it to be "in his mouth as honey for sweetness." John has added to this the circumstance that, though "sweet in the mouth," it made "the belly bitter." The additional command, (Re 10:11) that he must yet "prophesy before many people," leads us to suppose that he had the narrative in Ezekiel in his eye, for, as the result of *his* eating the roll, he was commanded to go and prophesy to the people of Israel. The passage here (Re 10:8) introduces a new symbol, that of "eating the book," and evidently refers to something that was to occur *before* the "mystery should be finished ;" that is, before the seventh trumpet should sound.

Which is open in the hand, etc. On the symbolical meaning of the word "open," as applied to the book, **see Barnes "Re 10:2"**.

{c} "voice" Re 10:4

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 10 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *And I went unto the angel*. This is symbolic action, and is not to be understood literally. As it is not necessary to suppose that an angel *literally* descended, and stood upon the sea and the land, so it is not necessary to suppose that there was a literal act of going to him, and taking the book from his hand, and eating it.

Give me the little book. In accordance with the command in Re 10:8. We may suppose, in regard to this,

(a) that the symbol was designed to represent that the book was to be used in the purpose here referred to, or was to be an important agent or instrumentality in accomplishing the purpose. The book is held forth in the hand of the angel as a striking emblem. There is a command to go and take it from his hand for some purpose not yet disclosed. All this seems to imply that the book—or that which is represented by it—would be an important instrument in accomplishing the purpose here referred to.

(b) The application *for* the book might intimate that, on the part of him who made it, there would be some strong *desire* to possess it. He goes, indeed, in obedience to the command; but, at

the same time, there would naturally be a *desire* to be in possession of the volume, or to know the contents, (compare Re 5:4) and his approach to the angel for the book would be most naturally interpreted as expressive of such a wish.

And he said unto me, take it. As if he had expected this application; or had come down to furnish him with this little volume, and had anticipated that the request would be made. There was no reluctance in giving it up; there was no attempt to withhold it; there was no prohibition of its use. The angel had no commission, and no desire to retain it for himself, and no hesitation in placing it in the hands of the seer on the first application. Would not the readiness with which God gives his Bible into the hands of men, in contradistinction from all human efforts to restrain its use and to prevent its free circulation, be well symbolized by this act?

And eat it up. There is a similar command in Eze 3:1. Of course, this is to be understood figuratively, for no one would interpret literally a command to eat a manuscript or volume. We have in common use a somewhat similar phrase, when we speak of *devouring a book*, which may illustrate this, and which is not liable to be misunderstood. In Jer 15:16, we have similar language: "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Thus in Latin, the words propinare, imbibere, devorare, deglutire, etc., are used to denote the greediness with which knowledge is acquired. Compare in the Apocrypha, 2 Esdras xiv. 88-40. The meaning here, then, is plain. He was to possess himself of the contents of the book; to receive it into his mind; to apply it, as we do food, for spiritual nourishment—truth having, in this respect, the same relation to the mind which food has to the body. If the little book was a symbol of the Bible, it would refer to the fact that the truths of that book became the nourisher and supporter of the public mind.

And it shall make thy belly bitter. This is a circumstance which does not occur in the corresponding place in Eze 3:1-3. The expression here must refer to something that would occur after the symbolical action of "eating" the little book, or to some consequence of eating it—for the act of eating it is represented as pleasant: "in thy mouth sweet as honey." The meaning here is, that the effect which followed from eating the book was painful or disagreeable—as food would be that was pleasant to the taste, but that produced bitter pain when eaten. The fulfilment of this would be found in one of two things.

(a) It might mean that the message to be delivered in consequence of devouring the book, or the message which it contained, would be of a painful or distressing character: that with whatever pleasure the book might be received and devoured, it would be found to contain a communication that would be indicative of woe or sorrow. This was the case with the little book that Ezekiel was commanded to eat up. Thus, in speaking of this book, it is said, "And it was written within and without: and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe," Eze 2:10. Compare Re 3:4-9, where the contents of the book, and the effect of proclaiming the message which it contained, are more fully stated. So here the meaning may be, that, however gladly John may have taken the book, and with whatever pleasure he may have devoured its contents, yet that it would be found to be charged with the threatening of wrath, and with denunciations of a judgment to come, the delivery of which would be well represented by the "bitterness" which is said to have followed from "eating" the volume. Or

(b) it may mean, that the consequence of devouring the book, that is, of embracing its doctrines, would be persecutions and trouble—well represented by the "bitterness" that followed the "eating" of the volume. Either of these ideas would be a fulfilment of the proper meaning of the symbol;

for, on the supposition that either of these occurred in fact, it would properly be symbolized by the eating of a volume that was sweet to the taste, but that made the belly bitter.

But it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. So in Eze 3:3. The proper fulfilment of this it is not difficult to understand. It would well represent the pleasure derived from Divine truth—the sweetness of the word of God—the relish with which it is embraced by those that love it. On the supposition that the "little book" here refers to the Bible, and to the use which would be made of it in the times referred to, it would properly denote the relish which would exist for the sacred volume, and the happiness which would be found in its perusal: for this very image is frequently employed to denote this. Thus in Ps 19:10: "More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb." Ps 119:103: "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth." We are then to look for the fulfilment of this in some prevailing delight or satisfaction, in the times referred to, in the word of the Lord, or in the truths of revelation.

{a} "it" Eze 3:1-3,14

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 10 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *And as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter*. The effect immediately followed: that is, as soon as he was made acquainted with the contents of the book, either, as above explained, requiring him to deliver some message of woe and wrath which it would be painful to deliver; or, that the consequence of receiving it was to bring on bitter persecutions and trials.

This is part 4 of 4 parts of the Note for Revelation 9:20

Part 1 **See Barnes "Re 9:20"**

Part 2 **See Barnes "Re 9:21"**

Part 3 **See Barnes "Re 10:5"**

(3.) The next point specified is *murders*, (Re 9:21) "Neither repented they of their murders." It can hardly be necessary to dwell on this to show that this was strictly applicable to the Roman power, and extensively prevailed, both before and after the Turkish invasion, and that that invasion had no tendency to produce repentance. Indeed, in nothing has the Papacy been more remarkably characterized than in the number of murders perpetrated on the innocent in persecution. In reference to the fulfilment of this, we may refer to the following things:

(a) Persecution. This has been particularly the characteristic of the Roman communion, it need not be said, in all ages. The persecutions of the Waldenses, if there were nothing else, show that the spirit here referred to prevailed in the Roman communion, or that the times preceding the Turkish conquest were characterized by what is here specified. In the third Lateran council, A.D. 1179, an anathema was declared against certain dissentients and heretics, and then against the Waldenses themselves in Papal bulls of the years 1183, 1207, 1208. Again, in a decree of the fourth Lateran council, A. D. 1215, a *crusade*, as it was called, was proclaimed against them, and "plenary absolution promised to such as should perish in the holy war, from the day of their birth to the day of their death." "And never," says Sismondi, "had the cross been taken up with more unanimous consent." It is supposed that in this crusade against the Waldenses a million of men perished.

(b) That this continued to be the characteristic of the Papacy *after* the judgments brought upon the Roman world by the Turkish invasion, or that those judgments had no tendency to produce repentance and reformation, is well known, and is manifest from the following things:

(1.) The continuance of the spirit of persecution.

(2.) The establishment of the Inquisition. One hundred and fifty thousand persons perished by the Inquisition in thirty years; and from the beginning of the order of the Jesuits in 1540 to 1580, it is supposed that nine hundred thousand persons were destroyed by persecution.

(3.) The same spirit was manifested in the attempts to suppress the true religion in England, in Bohemia, and in the Low Countries. Fifty thousand persons were hanged, burned, beheaded, or buried alive, for the crime of heresy, in the Low Countries, chiefly under the duke of Alva, from the edict of Charles V. against the Protestants, to the peace of Chateau Cambrisis in 1559. Compare **Barnes on "Da 7:24-28".**

To these are to be added all that fell in France on the revocation of the edict of Nantz; all that perished by persecution in England in the days of Mary; and all that have fallen in the bloody wars that have been waged in the propagation of the Papal religion. The number is, of course, unknown to mortals, though efforts have been made by historians to form some estimate of the amount. It is supposed that fifty millions of Christians have perished in these persecutions of the Waldenses, Albigenses, Bohemian Brethren, Wycliffites, and Protestants; that some fifteen millions of Indians perished in Cuba, Mexico, and South America, in the wars of the Spaniards, professedly to propagate the Catholic faith; that three millions and a half of Moors and Jews perished, by Catholic persecution and arms, in Spain; and that thus, probably, no less than sixty-eight millions and five hundred thousand human beings have been put to death by this one persecuting power. See Dr. Berg's Lectures on Romanism, pp. 6, 7. Assuredly, if this be true, it would be proper to characterize the times here referred to, both before and after the Turkish invasion, as a time when *murders* would prevail.

(4.) The fourth point specified is *sorceries*. It can hardly be necessary to go into detail to prove that *this* also abounded, and that delusive appeals to the senses; false and pretended miracles; arts adapted to deceive through the imagination; the supposed virtue and efficacy of relics; and frauds calculated to impose on mankind, have characterized those portions of the world where the Roman religion has prevailed, and been one of the principal means of its advancement. No Protestant surely would deny this, no intelligent Catholic can doubt it himself. All that is necessary to be said in regard to this is, that in this, as in other respects, the Turkish invasion, and the judgments that came upon the world, made no change. The very recent imposture of the "holy coat of Treves" is a full proof that the *disposition* to practise such arts still exists, and that the *power* to impose on a large portion of the world in that denomination has not died away.

(5.) The fifth thing specified is *fornication*. This has abounded everywhere in the world; but the use of the term in this connexion implies that there would be something *peculiar* here, and perhaps that it would be associated with the other things referred to. It is as unnecessary as it would be improper to go into any detail on this point. Any one who is acquainted with the history of the Middle Ages—the period here supposed to be referred to—must be aware of the widespread licentiousness which then prevailed, especially among the clergy. Historians and poets, ballads and acts of councils, alike testify to this fact. ("If you wish to see the horrors of these ages," (the Middle Ages,) says Chateaubriand. Diet. Hist. tom. iii. 420, "read the *Councils*.") It is to be remarked also, as illustrating the subject, that the dissoluteness of the Middle Ages was closely, and almost

necessarily, connected with the worship of the images and the saints above referred to. The character of many of those who were worshipped as saints, like the character of many of the gods of the Pagan Romans, was just such as to be an incentive to every species of licentiousness and impurity. On this point, Mr. Hallam makes the following remarks: "That the exclusive worship of saints, under the guidance of an artful though illiterate priesthood, degraded the understanding, and begat a stupid credulity and fanaticism, is sufficiently evident. But it was also so managed as to loosen the bonds of religion, and pervert the standard of morality."—Middle Ages, vol. ii. pp. 249, 260; Edit. Phil. 1824. He then, in a note, refers to the legends of the saints as abundantly confirming his statements. See particularly the stories in the "Golden Legend." So, in speaking of the monastic orders, Mr. Hallam (Middle Ages, vol. ii. 253) says, "In vain new rules of discipline were devised, or the old corrected by reforms. Many of their worst vices grew so naturally out of their mode of life that a stricter discipline would have no tendency to extirpate them. Their extreme licentiousness was sometimes hardly concealed by the cowl of sanctity." In illustration of this we may, introduce here a remark of Mr. Gibbon, made in immediate connexion with his statement about the decrees respecting the worship of images. "I shall only notice," says he, "the judgment of the bishops on the comparative merit of image-worship and morality. A monk had concluded a truce with the demon of fornication, on condition of interrupting her daily prayers to a picture that hung in his cell. His scruples prompted him to consult the abbot. 'Rather than abstain from adoring Christ and his mother in their holy images, it would be better for you,' replied the casuist, 'to enter any brothel, and visit every prostitute in the city,'" iii. 341. So again, Mr. Gibbon, speaking of the pope, John XII., says, "His open simony might be the consequence of distress; and his blasphemous invocation of Jupiter and Venus, if it be true, could not possibly be serious. But we read with some surprise that the worthy grandson of Marozia lived in public adultery with the matrons of Rome; that the Lateran palace was turned into a place of prostitution, and that his rapes of virgins and of widows had deterred the female pilgrims from visiting the tomb of St. Peter, lest, in the devout act, they should be violated by his successor," iii. 353. Again, the system of *indulgences* led directly to licentiousness. In the pontificate of John XXII., about A. D. 1320, there was invented the celebrated Tax of Indulgences, of which more than forty editions are extant. According to this, incest was to cost, if not detected, *five groschen*; if known and flagrant, *six*. A certain price was affixed in a similar way to adultery, infanticide, etc. See Merle D'Aubigne's Reformation, vol. i. p. 41. And farther, the very *pilgrimages* to the shrines of the saints, which were enjoined as a penance for sin, and which were regarded as a ground of merit, were occasions of the grossest licentiousness. So Hallam, Middle Ages, says, "This licensed vagrancy was naturally productive of dissoluteness, especially among the women. Our English ladies, in their zeal to obtain the spiritual treasuries of Rome, are said to have relaxed the necessary caution about one that was in their own custody," vol. ii. 256. The celibacy of the clergy, also, tended to licentiousness, and is known to have been everywhere productive of the very sin which is here mentioned. The state of the nunneries in the middle ages is well known. In the 15th century, Gerson, the French orator so celebrated at the council of Constance, called them Prostibula meretricum. Clemangis, a French theologian, also contemporary, and a man of great eminence, thus speaks of them: Quid aliud sunt hoc tempore puellarum monasteria, nisi quaedam non dico Dei sanctuaria, sed veneris execranda prostibula; ut idem sit hodie puellam velare, quod et publici ad scortandum exponere.—Hallam, Middle Ages, ii. 253. To this we may add the fact that it was a habit, not unfrequent, to license the clergy to live in concubinage, (see the proof in Elliott, i, 447, note,) and that the practice of auricular confession

necessarily made "the tainting of the female mind an integral part of Roman priestcraft, and gave consecration to the communings of impurity." It hardly needs any proof that these practices continued *after* the invasions of the Turkish hordes, or that those invasions made no changes in the condition of the world in this respect. In proof of this, we need refer only to Pope Innocent VIII., elected in 1484 to the Papacy; (His character is told in the well-known epigram—Octo *nocens* pueros genuit, totidemque puellas: Hunc merito potuit dicere Roma *patrem*.) to Alexander VI., his successor, who at the close of the fifteenth century stood before the world a monster, notorious to all, of impurity and vice; and to the general well-known character of the Romish clergy. "Most of the ecclesiastics," says the historian Infessura, "had their mistresses; and all the convents of the capital were houses of ill-fame."

(6.) The sixth thing specified, (Re 9:21,) is *thefts*; that is, as explained, the taking of the property of others by dishonest arts, on false pretences, or without any proper equivalent. In the inquiry as to the applicability of this to the times supposed to be here referred to, we may notice the following things, as instances in which money was extorted from the people:

(a) The value fraudulently assigned to *relics*. Mosheim, in his historical sketch of the twelfth century, observes, "The abbots and monks carried about the country the carcases and relics of saints, in solemn procession; and permitted the multitude to behold, touch, and embrace the sacred remains, at *fixed prices*."

(b) The exaltation of the miracle-working merit of particular saints, and the consecration of *new* saints, and dedication of *new* images, when the popularity of the former died away. Thus Mr. Hallam says, "Every cathedral or monastery had its tutelar saint, and every saint his legend; fabricated in order to enrich the churches under his protection; by exaggerating his virtues and his miracles, and consequently his power of serving those who paid liberally for his patronage."

(c) The invention and sale of *indulgences*—well known to have been a vast source of revenue to the church. Wycliffe declared that indulgences were mere forgeries whereby the priesthood "*rob men of their money*; a subtle merchandize of Antitichrist's clerks, whereby they magnify their own fictitious power, and instead of causing men to dread sin, encourage men to wallow therein as hogs."

(d) The prescription of *pilgrimages* as penances was another prolific source of gain to the church that deserves to be classed under the name of *thefts*. Those who made such pilgrimage were expected and required to make an offering at the shrine of the saint; and as multitudes went on such pilgrimages, especially on the Jubilee at Rome, the income from this source was enormous. An instance of what was offered at the shrine of Thomas a Becket will illustrate this. Through his reputation, Canterbury became the Rome of England. A Jubilee was celebrated every fiftieth year to his honour, with plenary indulgence to all such as visited his tomb; of whom one hundred thousand were registered at one time. Two large volumes were filled with accounts of the miracles wrought at his tomb. The following list of the value of offerings made in two successive years to his shrine, the Virgin Mary's, and Christ's, in the cathedral at Canterbury, will illustrate at the same time the gain from these sources, and the *relative* respect shown to Becket, Mary, and the Saviour :—

First Year. L s d *Next Year*. L s d

Christ's Altar..... 3 2 6 Christ's Altar.....
Virgin Mary.....63 5 6 Virgin Mary..... 4 1 8

Becket's .....832 12 9 Becket's 954 6 3

Of the Jubilee of A.D. 1300, Muratori relates the result as follows: "Papa innumerabilem pecuniam ab iisdem recepit; quia die et nocte duo clerici stabant ad altare Sancti Pauli, tenentes in eorum manibus rastellos, rastellantes pecuniam infinitam." "The Pope received from them a countless amount of money; for two clerks stood at the altar of St. Paul night and day, holding in their hands little rakes, collecting an infinite amount of money."—Hallam,

(e) Another source of gain of this kind was the numerous testamentary bequests with which the church was enriched—obtained by the arts and influence of the clergy. In Wycliffe's time there were in England 53,215 foeda militum, of which the religious had 28,000—more than one half. Blackstone says that, but for the intervention of the legislature, and the statute of mortmain, the church would have appropriated in this manner the whole of the land of England, vol. iv. p. 107.

(f) The money left by the dying to pay for *masses*, and that paid by survivors for masses to release the souls of their friends from purgatory— all of which deserve to be classed under the word *thefts* as above explained—-was another source of vast wealth to the church; and the practice was systematized on a large scale, and, with the other things mentioned, deserves to be noticed as a characteristic of the times. It is scarcely necessary to add, that the judgments which were brought upon the world by the Turkish invasions made no essential change, and wrought no repentance or reformation, and hence that the *language* here is strictly applicable to these things: "Neither *repented they* of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts."

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 10 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *And he said unto me*. The angel then said.

Thou must prophesy. The word "*prophesy*" here is evidently used in the large sense of making known Divine truth in general; not in the comparatively narrow and limited sense in which it is commonly used, as referring merely to the foretelling of future events. See the word explained in **See Barnes "Ro 12:6; 1Co 14:1"**.

The meaning is, that, as a consequence of becoming possessed of the little volume and its contents, he would be called to proclaim Divine truth, or to make the message of God known to mankind. The direct address is to John himself; but it is evidently not to be understood of him personally. *He* is represented as seeing the angel; as hearkening to his voice; as listening to the solemn oath which he took; as receiving and eating the volume; and then as prophesying to many people: but the reference is undoubtedly to the far-distant future. If the allusion is to the times of the Reformation, the meaning is, that the end of the world was not, as would be expected, about to occur, but that there was to be an interval long enough to permit the gospel to be proclaimed before "nations, and tongues, and kings;" that in consequence of coming into possession of the "little book," the word of God, the truth was yet to be proclaimed far and wide on the earth.

Again—*palin*. This had been done before. That is, supposing this to refer to the time of the Reformation, it could be said

(a) that this had been done *before*—that the gospel had been in former times proclaimed in its purity before "many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings," and

(b) that it would be done "again:" that is, though the word of God had been hidden, and a mass of corrupt traditions had taken its place, yet the time would come when those pure truths would be made known again to all lands. This will explain the word "*again*" in this place— not meaning that John would do this personally, but that this would be in fact the result of the restoration of the Bible to the church.

Before many peoples. This word denotes people considered as *masses*, or as grouped together in masses, without reference to the manner in which it is done. It is used when we look on a *mass* of men, without taking into account the question whether they are of the same nation, or language, or rank. **See Barnes "Re 8:9"**.

The plural is used here—"*peoples*"—perhaps to denote that those to whom the truth would be made known would be very numerous. They would not only be numerous in regard to the *individuals* to whom it would be communicated, but numerous considered as communities or nations.

And nations. The word *nations* here denotes people considered as separated by national boundaries, constitutions, laws, customs. **See Barnes on "Re 7:9"**.

And tongues. People considered as divided by languages: a division not always, or necessarily, the same as that denoted by the word "people" or "nations" as used in this passage.

And kings. Rulers of the people. The meaning is, that the gospel would not only be borne before the masses of mankind, but in a special manner before kings and rulers. The effect of thus possessing the "little volume"—or of the "open book" of revealed truth would ultimately be that the message of life would be carried with power before princes and rulers, and would influence them as well as the common people.

In inquiring now for the proper application of this symbol as thus explained, we naturally turn to the Reformation, and ask whether there was anything in that of which this would be the proper emblem. The following things, then, are found in fact as occurring at that time, of which the symbol before us may be regarded as the proper representation:—

(1.) The reception of the Bible as from the hand of an angel—or its recovery from obscurity and forgetfulness, *as if* it were now restored to the church by a heavenly interposition. The influence of the Bible on the Reformation; the fact that it was now recovered from its obscurity, and that it was made the grand instrument in the Reformation, has already been illustrated. **See Barnes "Re 10:2"**.

The symbolical action of taking it from the hand of an angel was not an improper representation of its reception again by the church, and of its restoration to its true place *in* the church. It became, as it is proper that it should always be, the grand means of the defence of the faith, and of the propagation of truth in the world.

(2.) The statement that the little book when eaten was "in the mouth sweet as honey," is a striking and proper representation of the relish felt for the sacred Scriptures by those who love the truth, (compare **See Barnes "Re 10:9"**) and is especially appropriate to describe the interest which was felt in the volume of revealed truth in the time of the Reformation. For the Bible was to the reformers emphatically a new book. It had been driven from common use to make way for the legends of the saints and the traditions of the church. It had, therefore, when translated into the vernacular tongue, and when circulated and read, the freshness of novelty—the interest which a volume of revealed truth would have if just given from heaven. Accordingly it is well known with what avidity and relish the sacred volume was studied by Luther and his fellow-labourers in the Reformation; how they devoured its doctrines; how they looked to it for comfort in their times of

trial; how sweet and sustaining were its promises in the troubles that came upon them, and in the labours which they were called to perform.

(3.) The representation that, after it was eaten, it was "bitter," would not improperly describe the effect, in some respects, of thus receiving the Bible, and making it the groundwork of faith. It brought the Reformers at once into conflict with all the power of the Papacy and the priesthood; exposed them to persecution; aroused against them a host of enemies among the princes and rulers of the earth; and was the cause for which many of them were put to death. Such effects followed substantially when Wycliffe translated the Bible; when John Huss and Jerome of Prague published the pure doctrines of the New Testament; and when Luther gave to the people the word of God in their own language. To a great extent this is always so—that, however sweet and precious the truths of the Bible may be to the preacher himself, one of the *effects* of his attempting to preach those truths may be such opposition on the part of men, such cold indifference, or such fierce persecution, that it would be well illustrated by what is said here, "it shall make thy belly bitter."

(4.) The representation that, as a consequence of receiving that book, he would prophesy again before many people, is a fit representation of the effect of the reception of the Bible again by the church, and of allowing it its proper place there. For

(a) it led to *preaching*, or, in the language of this passage, "prophesying" a thing comparatively little known before for many ages. The grand business in the Papal communion was not, and is not, *preaching*, but the performance of rites and ceremonies. Genuflexions, crossings, burning of incense, processions, music, constitute the characteristic features of all Papal churches; the grand thing that distinguishes the Protestant churches all over the world, just in proportion as they are Protestant, is *preaching*. The Protestant religion—the pure form of religion as it is revealed in the New Testament—has few ceremonies; its rites are simple; it depends for success on the promulgation and defence of the *truth*, with the attending influence of the Holy Ghost; and for this view of the nature and degree of religion the world is indebted to the fact that the Bible was again restored to its true place in the church.

(b) The Bible is the basis of all genuine *preaching*. Preaching will not be kept up in its purity, except in the places where the Bible is freely circulated, and where it is studied; and where it is studied, there will be, in the proper sense of the term, *preachers*. Just in proportion as the Bible is studied in the world, we may expect that preaching will be better understood, and that the number of preachers will be increased.

(c) The study of the Bible is the foundation of all the efforts to spread the knowledge of the truth to "peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings," in our own times. All these efforts have been originated by the restoration of the Bible to its proper place in the church, and to its more profound and accurate study in this age; for these efforts are but carrying out the injunction of the Saviour as recorded in this book—to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

(d) The same thing will be true to the end of the world: or, in the language of the portion of the book of Revelation before us, til the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever," Re 11:15. The fact of the restoration of the Bible to its proper place in the church will, therefore, ultimately be the means of the conversion of the whole world to God; and this fact, so momentous in its nature and its consequences, was worthy to be symbolized by the appearance of the "angel descending from heaven clothed with a cloud;" was properly represented by the manner in which he appeared—"his face radiant as the sun, and his feet pillars of fire;" was worthy to be expressed by the position which he assumed, as "standing

on the sea and the earth" —as if all the world were interested in the purpose of his mission; and was worthy of the loud proclamation which he made—as if a new order of things were to commence. Beautiful and sublime, then, as this chapter is and always has been esteemed as a composition, it becomes still more beautiful and sublime if it be regarded as a symbol of the Reformation—an event the most glorious, and the most important in its issues, of any that has occurred since the Saviour appeared on the earth.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 11

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 11 - Verse 1

CHAPTER XI

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER

THIS chapter, which is very improperly separated from the preceding, and improperly ended—for it should have been closed at ver. 18— consists (excluding the last verse, which properly belongs to the succeeding chapter) essentially of three parts:—

I. The measuring of the temple, Re 11:1,2. A reed, or measuring- stick, is given to John, and he is directed to arise and measure the temple. This direction embraces two parts:

(a) he was to measure, that is, to take an exact estimate of the temple, of the altar, and of the true worshippers;

(b) he was carefully to separate this, in his estimate, from the outward court, which was to be left out and to be given to the Gentiles, to be trodden under foot forty-two months; that is, three years and a half, or twelve hundred and sixty days—a period celebrated in the book of Daniel as well as in this book.

II. The two witnesses, Re 11:3-13. This is, in some respects, the most difficult portion of the book of Revelation, and its meaning can be stated only after a careful examination of the signification of the words and phrases used. The general statement in regard to these witnesses is, that they should have power, and should prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days; that if any one should attempt to injure them, they had power, by fire that proceeded out of their mouths, to devour and kill their enemies; that they had power to shut heaven so that it should not rain, and power to turn the waters of the earth into blood, and power to smite the earth with plagues as often as they chose; that when they had completed their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit would make war with them, and overcome them, and kill them; that their dead bodies would lie unburied in that great city where the Lord was crucified three days and a half; that they that dwelt upon the earth would exult in their death, and send gifts to one another in token of their joy; that after the three days and a half the spirit of life from God would enter into them again, and they would stand up on their feet; that they would then be taken up into heaven, in the sight of their enemies; and that, at the time of their ascension, there would be a great earthquake, and a tenth part of the city would fall, and many (seven thousand) would be killed, and that the remainder would be affrighted, and would give glory to the God of heaven.

III. The sounding of the seventh trumpet, Re 11:14-18. This is the grand consummation of the whole; the end of this series of visions; the end of the world. A rapid glance only is given of it here, for under another series of visions a more detailed account of the state of the world is given under the final triumph of truth. Here, as a proper close of the first series of visions, the result is merely glanced at or adverted to—that then the period would have arrived when the kingdoms of the world were to become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ, and when he should commence that reign which was to continue for ever. Then universal peace and happiness would reign, and the long-promised and expected kingdom of God on the earth would be established. The "nations" had been "angry," but the time had now come when a judgment was to be pronounced on the dead, and when the due reward was to be given to the servants of God—the prophets, and the saints, and those who feared his name, small and great, in the establishment of a permanent kingdom, and the complete triumph of the true religion in the world.

I regard this chapter, therefore, to Re 11:18, as extending down to the consummation of all things, and as disclosing the last of the visions seen in the scroll or volume "sealed with the seven seals," Re 5:1. For a reason above suggested, and which will appear more fully hereafter, the detail is here much less minute than in the earlier portions of the historic visions, but still it embraces the whole period, and states in few words what will be the condition of things in the end. This was all that was necessary; this was, in fact, the leading design of the whole book. The end towards which all tended —that which John needed most to know—and which the church needed most to know, was, that religion would ultimately triumph, and that the period would arrive when it could be announced that the kingdoms of this world had become the kingdoms of God, and of his Christ. That is here announced; and that is properly the close of one of the divisions of the whole book.

Verse 1. *And there was given me*. He does not say by whom, but the connexion would seem to imply that it was by the angel. All this is of course to be regarded as symbolical. The representation undoubtedly pertains to a future age, but the language is such as would be properly addressed to one who had been a Jew, and the imagery employed is such as he would be more likely to understand than any other. The language and the imagery are, therefore, taken from the temple, but there is no reason to suppose that it had any *literal* reference to the temple, or even that John would so understand it. Nor does the language here used prove that the temple was standing at the time when the book was written; for as it is symbolical, it is what would be employed whether the temple were standing or not, and would be as likely to be used in the one case as in the other. It is such language as John, educated as a Jew, and familiar with the temple worship, would be likely to employ if he designed to make a representation pertaining to the church.

A reed—kalamov. This word properly denotes a plant with a jointed hollow stalk, growing in wet grounds. Then it refers to the stalk as cut for use, as a measuring-stick, as in this place; or a mock sceptre, Mt 27:29-30; or a pen for writing, 3Jo 1:13. Here it means merely a stick that could be used for measuring.

Like unto a rod. This word—*rabdov*—means properly a rod, wand, staff, used either for scourging, 1Co 4:21; or for leaning upon in walking, Mt 10:10; or for a sceptre, Heb 1:8. Here the meaning is, that the reed that was put into his hands was like such a rod or staff in respect to size, and was therefore convenient for handling. The word *rod* also is used to denote a measuring-pole, Ps 74:2 Jer 10:16, 51:19.

And the angel stood, saying. The phrase, "the angel stood," is wanting in many MSS. and editions of the New Testament, and is rejected by Professor Stuart as spurious. It is also rejected

in the critical editions of Griesbach and Hahn, and marked as doubtful by Tittmann. The best critical authority is against it, and it appears to have been introduced from Zec 3:5. The connexion does not demand it, and we may, therefore, regard the meaning to be, that the one who gave him the reed, whoever he was, at the same time addressed him, and commanded him to take a measure of the temple and the altar.

Rise, and measure the temple of God. That is, ascertain its true dimensions with the reed in your hand. Of course, this could not be understood of the *literal* temple—whether standing or not—for the exact measure of that was sufficiently well known. The word, then, must be used of something which the temple would denote or represent, and this would properly be the church, considered as the abode of God on the earth. Under the old dispensation, the temple at Jerusalem was that abode; under the new, that peculiar residence was transferred to the church, and God is represented as dwelling in it. **See Barnes "1Co 3:16"**.

Thus the word is undoubtedly used here, and the simple meaning is, that he who is thus addressed is directed to take an accurate estimate of the true church of God; *as* accurate as if he were to apply a measuring-reed to ascertain the dimensions of the temple at Jerusalem. In doing that, if the direction had been literally to measure the temple at Jerusalem, he would ascertain its length, and breadth, and height; he would measure its rooms, its doorways, its porticoes; he would take such a measurement of it that, in a description or drawing, it could be distinguished from other edifices, or that one could be constructed like it, or that a just idea could be obtained of it if it should be destroyed. If the direction be understood figuratively, as applicable to the Christian church, the work to be done would be to obtain an exact estimate or measurement of what the true church was—as distinguished from all other bodies of men, and as constituted and appointed by the direction of God; such a measurement that its characteristics could be made known; that a church could be organized according to this, and that the accurate description could be transmitted to future times. John has not, indeed, preserved the measurement; for the main idea here is not that he was to preserve such a model, but that, in the circumstances, and at the time referred to, the proper business would be to engage in such a measurement of the church that its true dimensions or character might be known. There would be, therefore, a fulfilment of this, if at the time here referred to there should be occasion, from any cause, to inquire what constituted the true church; if it was necessary to separate and distinguish it from all other bodies; and if there should be any such prevailing uncertainty as to make an accurate investigation necessary.

And the altar. On the form, situation, and uses of the altar, **see Barnes** "Mt 5:23-24; Mt 21:12 ".

The altar here referred to was, undoubtedly, the altar situated in front of the temple, where the daily sacrifice was offered. To measure that literally, would be to take its dimensions of length, breadth, and height; but it is plain that that cannot be intended here, for there was no such altar where John was, and, if the reference were to the altar at Jerusalem, its dimensions were sufficiently known. This language, then, like the former, must be understood metaphorically, and then it must mean—as the altar was the place of *sacrifice*—to take an estimate of the church considered with reference to its notions of sacrifice, or of the prevailing views respecting the sacrifice to be made for sin, and the method of reconciliation with God. It is by sacrifice that a method is provided for reconciliation with God; by sacrifice that sin is pardoned; by sacrifice that man is justified; and the direction here is equivalent, therefore, to a command to make an investigation on these subjects, and all that is implied would be fulfilled if a state of things should exist where it would be necessary

to institute an examination into the prevailing views in the church on the subject of the atonement, and the true method of justification before God.

And them that worship therein. In the temple; or, as the temple is the representation here of the church, of those who are in the church as professed worshippers of God. There is some apparent incongruity in directing him to "*measure*" those who were engaged in worship; but the obvious meaning is, that he was to take a correct estimate of their character; of what they professed; of the reality of their piety; of their lives, and of the general state of the church considered as professedly worshipping God. This would receive its fulfilment, if a state of things should arise in the church which would make it necessary to go into a close and searching examination on all these points, in order to ascertain what was the true church, and what was necessary to constitute true membership in it. There were, therefore, three things, as indicated by this verse, which John was directed to do, so far as the use of the measuring-rod was concerned:

(a) to take a just estimate of what constitutes the true church, as distinguished from all other associations of men;

(b) to institute a careful examination into the opinions in the church on the subject of sacrifice or atonement—involving the whole question about the method of justification before God; and

(c) to take a correct estimate of what constitutes true membership in the church; or to investigate with care the prevailing opinions about the qualifications for membership.

{a} "reed" Re 21:15 Zec 2:1 {b} "measure" Eze 40:1-48:35

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 11 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *But the court which is without the temple*. Which is outside of the temple proper, and, therefore, which does not strictly appertain to it. There is undoubtedly reference here to the "court of the Gentiles," as it was called among the Jews—the outer court of the temple to which the Gentiles had access, and within which they were not permitted to go. For a description of this, **see Barnes "Mt 21:12"**.

To an observer, this would *seem* to be a part of the temple, and the persons there assembled a portion of the true worshippers of God; but it was necessarily neither the one nor the other. In forming an estimate of those who, according to the Hebrew notions, were true worshippers of God, only those would be regarded as such who had the privilege of access to the inner court, and to the altar. In making such an estimate, therefore, those who had no nearer access than that court, would be omitted; that is, they would not be reckoned as necessarily any part of those who were regarded as the people of God. *Leave out and measure it not*. Marg., *cast out*. So the Greek. The meaning is, that he was not to reckon it as appertaining to the true temple of worshippers. There is, indeed, a degree of force in the words rendered "*leave out*," or, in the margin, "*cast out*"— *ekballe exw*—which implies more than a mere *passing by*, or *omission*. The word (*ekballw*) usually has the idea of *force* or *impulse*, (Mt 8:12 15:17, 25:30 Mr 16:9; Ac 27:38, et al.;) and the word here would denote some decisive or positive act by which it would be indicated that this was *not* any part of the true temple, but was to be regarded as appertaining to something else. He was not merely *not* to mention it, or *not* to include it in the measurement, but he was to do this by some act which would indicate that it was the result of design in the case, and not by accidentally passing it by.

For it is given unto the Gentiles. It properly appertains to them as their own. Though near the temple, and included in the general range of building, yet it does not pertain to those who worship there, but to those who are regarded as heathen and strangers. It is not said that it was *then* given to the Gentiles; nor is it said that it was given to them to be overrun and trodden down by them, but that it *appertained to them*, and was to be regarded as belonging to them. They occupied it, not as the people of God, but as those who were *without* the true church, and who did not appertain to its real communion. This would find a fulfilment if there should arise a state of things in the church in which it would be necessary to draw a line between those who properly constituted the church and those who did not; if there should be such a condition of things that any considerable portion of those who professedly appertained to the church ought to be *divided* off as not belonging to it, or would have such characteristic marks that it could be seen that they were strangers and aliens. The interpretation would demand that they should sustain *some* relation to the church, or that they would *seem* to belong to it—as the court did to the temple; but still that this was in appearance only, and that in estimating the true church it was necessary to leave them out altogether. Of course this would not imply that there might not be some sincere worshippers among them as individuals—as there would be found usually, in the court of the Gentiles in the literal temple, some who were proselytes and devout worshippers, but what is here said relates to them as a mass or body—that they did not belong to the true church but to the Gentiles.

And the holy city. The *whole* holy city—not merely the outer court of the Gentiles which it is said was given to them, nor the temple as such, but the *entire* holy city. There is no doubt that the words "the holy city" *literally* refer to Jerusalem—a city so called because it was the peculiar place of the worship of God. **See Barnes "Mt 4:5"; compare Ne 11:1,18; Isa 52:1** Da 9:24

Mt 27:53. But it is not necessary to suppose that this is its meaning here. The "holy city" Jerusalem was regarded as sacred to God; as his dwelling-place on earth, and as the abode of his people, and nothing was more natural than to use the term as representing the church. Compare **See Barnes "Ga 4:26"**

and **See Barnes "Heb 12:22"**.

In this sense it is undoubtedly used here, as the whole representation is emblematical. John, if he were about to speak of anything that was to occur to the church, would, as a native Jew, be likely to employ such language as this to denote it.

Shall they tread underfoot. That is, the Gentiles above referred to; or those who, in the measurement of the city, were set off as Gentiles, and regarded as not belonging to the people of God. This is not spoken of the Gentiles in general, but only of that portion of the multitudes that seemed to constitute the worshippers of God, who, in measuring the temple, were set off or separated as not properly belonging to the true church. The phrase "should tread under foot" is derived from warriors and conquerors who tread down their enemies, or trample on the fields of grain. It is rendered in this passage by Dr. Robinson, (*Lex*.,) "to profane and lay waste." As applied literally to a city, this would be the true idea; as applied to the church, it would mean that they would have it under their control or in subjection for the specified time, and that the practical effect of that would be to corrupt and prostrate it.

Forty and two months. Literally this would be three years and a half; but if the time here is prophetic time—a day for a year—then the period would be twelve hundred and sixty years—reckoning the year at 360 days. For a full illustration of this usage, and for the reasons for supposing that this is prophetic time, **see Barnes "Da 7:25"**.

In addition to what is there said, it may be remarked in reference to this passage, that it is impossible to show, with any degree of probability, that the city of Jerusalem was "trampled under foot" by the Romans for the exact space of three years and a half. Professor Stuart, who adopts the opinion that it refers to the conquest of Jerusalem by the Romans, says, indeed, "It is certain that the invasion of the Romans lasted just about the length of the period named, until Jerusalem was taken. And although the city itself was not besieged so long, yet the metropolis in this case, as in innumerable others in both Testaments, appears to stand for the country of Judaea." But, it is to be remembered that the affirmation here is that "*the holy city*" was thus to be trodden under foot; and even taking the former supposition, in what sense is it true that the "whole country" was "trodden under foot" by the Romans only three years and a half? Even the wars of the Romans were not of that exact duration, and, besides, the fact was that Judaea was held in subjection, and trodden down by the Romans, for centuries, and never, in fact, regained its independence. If this is to be literally applied to Jerusalem, it has been "trodden down by the Gentiles," with brief intervals, since the conquest by the Romans, to the present time. There has been no precise period of three years and a half, in respect to which the language here used would be applicable to the literal city of Jerusalem.

In regard, then, to the proper *application* of the language which has thus been explained, (Re 11:1-2) it may be remarked, in general, that, for the reasons just stated, it is not to be taken *literally*. John could not have been directed literally to measure the temple at Jerusalem, and the altar, and the worshippers; nor could he have been requested literally to leave out, or "cast out" the court that was without; nor could it be meant that the holy city literally was to be trodden under foot for three years and a half. The language clearly is symbolical, and the reference must have been to something pertaining to the church. And, if the preceding exposition of the tenth chapter is correct, then it may be presumed that this would refer to something that was to occur at about the period there referred to. Regarding it, then, as applicable to the time of the Reformation, and as being a continuation of the vision in chapter 10, we shall find, in the events of that period, what would be properly symbolized by the language here used. This will appear by reviewing the particulars which have been explained in these verses :—

(1.) The command to "measure the temple of God," Re 11:1. This, we have seen, was a direction to take an estimate of what constituted the true church; the very work which it was necessary to do in the Reformation, for this was the first point which was to be settled, whether the Papacy was the true church or was the Antichrist. This involved, of course, the whole inquiry as to what constitutes the church, alike in reference to its organization, its ministry, its sacraments, and its membership. It was long before the Reformers made up their minds that the Papacy was *not* the true church; for the veneration which they had been taught to cherish for that lingered long in their bosoms, And even when they were constrained to admit that that corrupt communion was the predicted form of the great apostasy—*Antichrist*—and had acquired boldness enough to break away from it for ever, it was long before they settled down in a uniform belief as to what was essential to the true church. Indeed, the differences of opinion which prevailed; the warm discussions which ensued, and the diversities of sect which sprang up in the Protestant world, showed with what intense interest the mind was fixed on this question, and how important it was to take an exact *measurement* of the real church of God.

(2.) The direction to "measure the altar." This, as we have seen, would relate to the prevailing opinions on the subject of sacrifice and atonement; on the true method of a sinner's acceptance with God; and, consequently, on the whole subject of justification. As a matter of fact, it need not be

said that this was one of the first questions which came before the Reformers, and was one which it was indispensable to settle, in order to a just notion of the church and of the way of salvation. The Papacy had exalted the Lord's Supper into a real sacrifice; had made it a grand and essential point that the bread and wine were changed into the real body and blood of the Lord, and that a real offering of that sacrifice was made every time that ordinance was celebrated; had changed the office of the ministers of the New Testament from *preachers* to that of *priests*; had become familiar with the terms *altar*, and *sacrifice*, and *priesthood*, as founded on the notion that a real sacrifice was made in the "mass;" and had fundamentally changed the whole doctrine respecting the justification of a sinner before God. The altar in the Romish communion had almost displaced the pulpit; and the doctrine of justification by the merits of the great sacrifice made by the death of our Lord, had been superseded by the doctrine of justification by good works, and by the merits of the saints. It became necessary, therefore, to restore the true doctrine respecting sacrifice for sin, and the Way of justification before God; and this would be appropriately represented by a direction to "measure *the altar*."

(3.) The direction to take an estimate of those "who worshipped in the temple. This, as we have seen, would properly mean that there was to be a true estimate taken of what constituted membership in the church, or of the qualifications of those who should be regarded as true worshippers of God. This, also, was one of the first works necessary to be done in the Reformation. Before that, for ages, the doctrine of baptismal regeneration had been the established doctrine of the church; the opinion that all that was necessary to membership was baptism and confirmation, was the common opinion; the necessity of regeneration by the influences of the Holy Spirit, as a condition of church membership, was little understood, if not almost wholly unknown; and the grand requisition *in* membership was not holy living, but the observance of the rites and ceremonies of the church. One of the first things necessary in the Reformation was to restore to its true place the doctrine laid down by the Saviour, that a change of heart—that regeneration by the Holy Ghost—was necessary to membership in the church, and that the true church was composed of those who had been thus renewed in the spirit of their mind. This great work would be appropriately symbolized by a direction to take an estimate of those who "worshipped in the temple of God;" that is, to settle the question who should be regarded as true worshippers of God, and what should be required of those who professed to be such worshippers. No more important point was settled in the Reformation than this.

(4.) The direction to leave out, or to "cast out" the court without the temple. This, as we have seen, would properly mean that a separation was to be made between that which was the true church, and that which was not, though it might seem to belong to it. The one was to be measured or estimated; the other was to be left out, as not appertaining to that, or as belonging to the Gentiles, or to heathenism. The idea would be, that though it professedly appertained to the true church, and to the worship of God, yet that it deserved to be characterized *as* heathenism. Now this will apply with great propriety, according to all Protestant notions, to the manner in which the Papacy was regarded by the Reformers, and should be regarded at all times. It claimed to be the true church, and to the eye of an observer would *seem* to belong to it, as much as the outer court seemed to pertain to the temple. But it had the essential characteristics of *heathenism*, and was, therefore, properly to be left out, or cast out, as not pertaining to the true church. Can any one doubt the truth of this representation as applicable to the Papacy? Almost everything that was peculiar in the ancient heathen systems of religion had been introduced into the Roman communion; and a stranger at

Rome would see more that would lead him to feel that he was in a heathen land, than he would that he was in a land where the pure doctrines of Christianity prevailed, and where the worship was celebrated which the Redeemer had designed to set up on the earth. This was true not only in the pomp and splendour of worship, and in the processions and imposing ceremonials; but in the worship of images, in the homage rendered to the dead, in the number of festival-days, in the fact that the statues reared in heathen Rome to the honour of the gods had been re-consecrated in the service of Christian devotion to the apostles, saints, and martyrs; and in the robes of the Christian priesthood, derived from those in use in the ancient heathen worship. The direction was, that, in estimating the true church, this was to be "left out" or "cast out;" and, if this interpretation is correct, the meaning is, that the Roman Catholic communion, as an organized body, is to be regarded as no part of the true church: a conclusion which is inevitable, if the passages of Scripture which are commonly supposed by Protestants to apply to it are correctly applied. To determine this, and to separate the true church from it, was no small part of the work of the Reformation.

(5.) The statement that the holy city was to be trodden under foot, Re 11:2. This, as we have seen, must mean that the true church would thus be trodden down by those who are described as "Gentiles." So far as pure religion was concerned; so far as appertained to the real condition of the church and the pure worship of God, it would be *as if* the whole holy city where God was worshipped were given into the hands of the Gentiles, and they should tread it down, and desecrate all that was sacred for the time here referred to. Everything in Rome at the time of the Reformation would sustain this description. "It is incredible," says Luther, on his visit to Rome, "what sins and atrocities are committed in Rome; they must be seen and heard to be believed. So that it is usual to say, 'If there be a hell, Rome is built above it; it is an abyss from which all sins proceed.'" So again he says: "It is commonly observed that he who goes to Rome for the first time, goes to seek a knave there; the second time he finds him; and the third time he brings him away with him under his cloak. But now, people are become so clever, that they make the three journeys in one." So Machiavelli, one of the most profound geniuses in Italy, and himself a Roman Catholic, said, "The greatest symptom of the approaching ruin of Christianity is, that the nearer we approach the capital of Christendom, the less do we find of the Christian spirit of the people. The scandalous example and crimes of the court of Rome have caused Italy to lode every principle of piety and every religious sentiment. We Italians are principally indebted to the church and to the priests for having become impious and profane." See D'Aubigne's *History of the Reformation*, p. 54, Ed. Phila. 1843. In full illustration of the sentiment that the church seemed to be trodden down and polluted by heathenism, or by abominations and practices that came out of heathenism, we may refer to the general history of the Romish communion from the rise of the Papacy to the Reformation. For a sufficient illustration to justify the application of the passage before us which I am now making, the reader may be referred to **See Barnes "Re 9:20"**; **See Barnes** "Re 9:21".

Nothing would better describe the condition of Rome previous to, and at the time of the Reformation—and the remark may be applied to subsequent periods also—than to say that it was a city which once seemed to be a Christian city, and was not improperly regarded as the centre of the Christian world and the seat of the church, and that it had been, as it were, overrun and trodden down by heathen rites, and customs, and ceremonies, so that, to a stranger looking on it, it would seem to be in the possession of the "Gentiles" or the heathens.

(6.) The *time* during which this was to continue—"forty-two months;" that is, according to the explanation above given, twelve hundred and sixty years. This would embrace the whole period

of the ascendency and prevalence of the Papacy; or the whole time of the continuance of that corrupt domination in which Christendom was to be trodden down and corrupted by it. The prophet of Patmos saw it in vision thus extending its dreary and corrupting reign, and during that time the proper influence of Christianity was trampled down, and the domination of practical heathenism was set up where the church should have reigned in its purity. Thus regarded, this would properly express the time of the ascendency of the Papal power, and the end of the "forty-two months," or twelve hundred and sixty years, would denote the time when the influence of that power would cease. If, therefore, the time of the *rise* of the Papacy can be determined, it will not be difficult to determine the time when it will come to an end. But, for a full consideration of these points, the reader is referred to the extended discussion on Da 7:25. As the point is there fully examined, it is unnecessary to go in to an investigation of it here.

The general remark, therefore, in regard to this passage, (Re 11:1-2,) is, that it refers to what would be necessary to be done at the Reformation in order to determine what is the true church, and what are the doctrines on which it is based; and to the fact that the Romish communion to which the church had been given over for a definite time, was to be set aside as not being the true church of Christ.

{a} "court" Eze 40.17-20

{b} "it" Lu 21:24 {1} "leave out" "cast out" {c} "tread under foot" Da 7:25

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 11 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And I will give power unto my two witnesses*. In respect to this important passage, (Re 11:3-13,) I propose to pursue the same method which I have pursued all along in this exposition: first, to examine the meaning of the words and phrases in the symbol with a purpose to ascertain the full signification of the symbols; and, secondly, to inquire into the application—that is, to inquire whether any events have occurred which, in respect to their character and to the time of their occurrence, can be shown to be a *fair* fulfilment of the language.

And I will give power. The word "power" is not in the original. The Greek is simply, "I will give;" that is, I will grant to my two witnesses the right, or the power, of prophesying, during the time specified—correctly expressed in the margin, "give unto my two witnesses that they may prophesy." The meaning is not that he would send two witnesses to prophesy, but rather that these were *in fact* such "witnesses," and that he would during that time permit them to exercise their prophetic gifts, or give them the privilege and the strength to enunciate the truth which they were commissioned to communicate as his "witnesses" to mankind. Some word, then, like *power, privilege, opportunity, or boldness*, it is necessary to supply in order to complete the sense.

Unto my two witnesses. The word "*two*" evidently denotes that the number would be small; and yet it is not necessary to confine it literally to two persons, or to two societies or communities. Perhaps the meaning is, that as, under the law, two witnesses were required, and were enough, to establish any fact, (**Barnes on "Joh 8:17"**) such a number would, during those times, be preserved from apostasy, as would be sufficient to keep up the evidence of truth; to testify against the prevailing abominations, errors, and corruptions; to show what was the real church, and to bear a faithful witness against the wickedness of the world. The law of Moses required that there should be *two*

witnesses on a trial, and this, under that law, was deemed a *competent* number. See Nu 35:30 De 17:6; De 19:15 Mt 18:16; Joh 5:30-33.

The essential meaning of this passage then is, that there would be a *competent number* of witnesses in the case; that is, as many as would be regarded as *sufficient* to establish the points concerning which they would testify, with perhaps the additional idea that the number would be *small*. There is no reason for limiting it strictly to two persons, or for supposing that they would appear in pairs, two and two; nor is it necessary to suppose that it refers particularly to two people or nations. The word rendered *witnesses*—*martuv* that from which we have derived the word *martyr*. It means properly one who bears testimony, either in a judicial sense, (Mt 18:16 26:65) or one who can in any way testify to the truth of what he has seen and known, Lu 24:48 Ro 1:9; Php 1:8 1Th 2:10; 1Ti 6:12.

Then it came to be employed in the sense in which the word *martyr* is now—to denote one who, amidst great sufferings, or by his death, bears witness to the truth; that is, one who is so confident of the truth, and so upright, that he will rather lay down his life than deny the truth of what he has seen and known, Ac 22:20 Re 2:13. In a similar sense it comes to denote one who is so thoroughly convinced on a subject that is not susceptible of being seen and heard, or who is so attached to one, that he is willing to lay down his life as the evidence of his conviction and attachment. The word, as used here, refers to those who, during this period of "forty and two months," would thus be *witnesses* for Christ in the world: that is, who would bear their *testimony* to the truth of his religion; to the doctrines which he had revealed; and to what was required of man—who would do this amidst surrounding error and corruption, and when exposed to persecutions and trials on account of their belief. It is not uncommon in the Scriptures to represent the righteous as witnesses for God. **See Barnes on** "Isa 43:10, **See Barnes "Isa 43:12"**; **See Barnes** "Isa 44:8".

And they shall prophesy. The word *prophesy* does not necessarily mean that they would predict future events; but the sense is, that they would give utterance to the truth as God had revealed it. **See Barnes "Re 10:11".**

The sense here is, that they would in some public manner hold up or maintain the truth before the world.

A thousand two hundred and three score days. The same period as the forty and two months, (Re 11:2,) though expressed in a different form. Reckoning a day for a year, this period would be twelve hundred and sixty years, or the same as the "time and times and the dividing of time" in Da 7:25. **See Barnes on "Da 7:25".**

The meaning of this would be, therefore, that during that long period in which it is said that "the holy city would be trodden under foot," there would be those who might be properly called "witnesses" for God, and who would be engaged in holding up his truth before the world; that is, there would be no part of that period in which there would not be found some to whom this appellation could with propriety be given. Though the "holy city"—the church—would *seem* to be wholly trodden down, yet there would be a few at least who would assert the great doctrines of true godliness.

Clothed in sackcloth. Sackcloth—*sakkouv*—was properly a coarse black cloth commonly made of hair, used for sacks, for straining, and for mourning garments. **See Barnes "Re 6:12; Isa 3:24; Mt 11:21".**

Here it is an emblem of mourning; and the idea is, that they would prophesy in the midst of grief. This would indicate that the time would be one of calamity, or that, in doing this, there would

be occasion for their appearing in the emblems of grief, rather than in robes expressive of joy. The most natural interpretation of this is, that there would be but few who could be regarded as true witnesses for God in the world, and that they would be exposed to persecution.

{1} "give power" "give unto my two witnesses that they may prophecy" {a} "my two witnesses" Mt 18:16 {b} "witnesses" Re 20:4 {c} "sackcloth" Isa 22:12

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 11 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *These are the two olive-trees*. These are represented by the two olive-trees, or these are what are symbolized by the two olive-trees. There can be little doubt that there is an allusion here to Zec 4:3,11,14, though the imagery is in some respects changed. The prophet (Zec 4:2-3) saw in vision "a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which were upon the top thereof; and two olive- trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof." These two "olive branches" were subsequently declared (Zec 4:14) to be "the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth." The olive-trees, or olive branches, (Zec 4:12,) appear in the vision of the prophet to have been connected With the ever-burning lamp, by golden pipes; and as the olive-tree produced the oil used by the ancients in their lamps, these trees are represented as furnishing a constant supply of oil through the golden pipes to the candlestick, and thus they become emblematic of the supply of grace to the church. John uses this emblem, not in the sense exactly in which it was employed by the prophet, but to denote that these two "witnesses," which might be compared with the two olive-trees, would be the means of supplying grace to the church. As the olive- tree furnished oil for the lamps, the two trees here would seem properly to denote ministers of religion; and as there can be no doubt that the candlesticks, or lamp-bearers, denote churches, the sense would appear to be that it was through the pastors of the churches that the oil of grace which maintained the brightness of those mystic candlesticks, or the churches, was conveyed. The image is a beautiful one, and expresses a truth of great importance to the world; for God has designed that the lamp of piety shall be kept burning in the churches by truth supplied through ministers and pastors.

And the two candlesticks. The prophet Zechariah saw but *one* such candlestick or lamp-bearer; John here saw two—as there are two "witnesses" referred to. In the vision described in Re 1:12, he saw seven—representing the seven churches of Asia. For an explanation of the meaning of the symbol, **see Barnes "Re 1:12"**.

Standing before the God of the earth. So Zec 4:14, "These be the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth." The meaning is, that they stood, as it were, in the very presence of God—as in the tabernacle and temple, the golden candlestick stood "before" the ark on which was the symbol of the Divine presence, though separated from it by a veil. Compare **See Barnes "Re 9:13"**.

This representation that the ministers of religion "stand before the Lord" is one that is not uncommon in the Bible. Thus it is said of the priests and Levites,(De 10:8) "The Lord separated the tribe of Levi, to *stand before the Lord*, to minister unto him, and to bless his name," Compare De 18:7. The same thing is said of the prophets, as in the cases of Elijah and Elisha: "As the Lord

liveth, *before whom I stand*," 1Ki 17:1 18:15; 2Ki 3:14 5:16; compare Jer 15:19. The representation is, that they ministered, as it were, constantly in his presence, and under his eye.

{a} "two olive trees" Jer 11:16 Zec 4:3,11,14

{b} "candlesticks" Re 1:20

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 11 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And if any man will hurt them*. This implies that there would be those who would be disposed to injure or wrong them; that is, that they would be liable to persecution. The word "*will*" is here more than the mere sign of the future; it denotes *intention, purpose, design—yelei*—"if any man *wills* or *purposes* to injure them." See a similar use of the word in 1Ti 6:9. The word *hurt* here means to do *injury or injustice—adikhsai*—and may refer to wrong in any form —whether in respect to their character, opinions, persons, or property. The general sense is, that there would be those who would be disposed to do them harm, and we should naturally look for the fulfilment of this in some form of persecution.

Fire proceedeth out of their mouth. It is, of course, not necessary that this should be taken literally. The meaning is, that they would have the power of destroying their enemies *as if* fire should proceed out of their mouth; that is, their words would be like burning coals or flames. There may possibly be an allusion here to 2Ki 1:10-14, where it is said that Elijah commanded the fire to descend from heaven to consume those who were sent to take him, (compare Lu 9:54) but in that case Elijah commanded the fire to come "from heaven;" here it proceeded "out of the mouth." The allusion here, therefore, is to the denunciations which they would utter, or the doctrines which they would preach, and which would have the same effect on their enemies as if they breathed forth fire and flame. So Jer 5:14, "Because ye speak this word, Behold, I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them."

And devoureth their enemies. The word *devour* is often used with reference to fire, which seems to *eat up or consume* what is in its way, or *to feed* on that which it destroys. This is the sense of the word here—*katesyiei*—"to eat down, to swallow down, to devour." Compare Re 20:9; Septuagint Isa 29:6 Joe 2:6; Le 10:2.

As there is no reason to believe that there would be literal *fire*, so it is not necessary to suppose that their enemies would be literally devoured or consumed. The meaning is fulfilled if their words should in any way produce an effect on their enemies *similar* to what is produced by fire: that is, if it should destroy their influence; if it should overcome and subdue them; if it should annihilate their domination in the world.

And if any man will hurt them. This is repeated in order to make the declaration more intensive, and also to add another thought about the effect of persecuting and injuring them.

He must in this manner be killed; That is, in the manner specified— by fire. It does not mean that he would be killed in the same manner in which the "witnesses" were killed, but in the method specified before— by the fire that should proceed out of their mouth. The meaning is, undoubtedly, that they would have power to bring down on them Divine vengeance or punishment, so that there would be a just retaliation for the wrongs done them.

{c} "fire" Ps 18:8 {d} "killed" Nu 16:35 Hos 6:5

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 11 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *These have power to shut heaven*. That is, so far as rain is concerned-for this is immediately specified. There is probably a reference here to an ancient opinion that the rain was kept in the clouds of heaven as in reservoirs or bottles, and that when they were opened it rained; when they were closed it ceased to rain. So Job 26:8, "He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds, and the cloud is not rent under them." Job 36:28, "Which the clouds do drop and distil upon man abundantly." Job 38:37, "Who can number the clouds in wisdom? or who can stay the bottles of heaven?" Compare Ge 1:7-12 Ge 8:2 2Ki 7:2.

To *shut or close up the heavens*, therefore, is to restrain the rain from descending, or to produce a drought. Compare **See Barnes "Jas 5:17"**.

That it rain not in the days of their prophecy. In the time when they prophesy. Probably the allusion here is to what is said of Elijah, 1Ki 17:1. This would properly refer to some miraculous power; but still it *may* be used to denote merely that they would be clothed with the power of causing blessings to be withheld from men, *as if* rain were withheld; that is, that in consequence of the calamities that would be brought upon them, and the persecutions which they would endure, God would bring judgments upon men as if *they* were clothed with this power. The language, therefore, it seems to me, does not necessarily imply that they would have the power of working miracles.

And have power over waters to turn them to blood. The allusion here is doubtless to what occurred in Egypt, Ex 7:17. Compare **Barnes on "Re 8:8"**.

This, too, would literally denote the power of working a miracle; but still it is not absolutely necessary to suppose that this is intended. Anything that would be *represented* by turning waters into blood, would correspond with all that is necessarily implied in the language. If any great calamity should occur in consequence of what was done to them that would be properly represented by turning the waters into blood so that they could not be used, and that was so connected with the treatment which they received as to appear to be a judgment of heaven on that account, or that would appear to have come upon the world in consequence of their imprecations, it would be all that is necessarily implied in this language.

And to smite the earth with all plagues. All kinds of plague or calamity; disease, pestilence, famine, flood, etc. The word *plague*— *plhgh*—which means, properly, *stroke, stripe, blow*, would include any or all of these. The meaning here is, that great calamities would follow the manner in which they were treated, *as if* the power were lodged in their hands.

As often as they will. So that it would seem that they could exercise this power as they pleased.

{e} "These have power" 1Ki 17:1 {f} "waters" Ex 7:19

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 11 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *And when they shall have finished their testimony*. Professor Stuart renders this, "And whenever they shall have finished their testimony." The reference is undoubtedly to a period when they should have faithfully borne the testimony which they were appointed to bear. The word here rendered "shall have finished"— *teleswsi*, from *telew*—means properly to end, to finish, to complete, to accomplish. It is used, in this respect, in two senses— either in regard to *time*, or in regard to the

end or *object* in view, in the sense of *perfecting it*, or *accomplishing it*. In the former sense it is employed in such passages as the following: Re 20:3, "Till the thousand years should be *fulfilled*;" Mt 10:23 "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel [Gr., ye shall not have *finished* the cities of Israel] till the Son of man be come"—that is, ye shall not have finished passing through them; Mt 11:1, "When Jesus had made an end [Gr.,*finished*] of commanding his twelve disciples;" 2Ti 4:7, "I have *finished* my course." In these passages it clearly refers to *time*. In the other sense it is used in such places as the following: Ro 2:27, "And shall not the uncircumcision which is by nature, if it *fulfil* the law;" that is, if it accomplish, or come up to the demands of the law; Jas 2:8, "If ye *fulfil* the royal law according to the Scriptures." The word, then, may here refer not to *time*, meaning that these events would occur at the *end* of the "thousand two hundred and threescore days," but to the fact that what is here stated would occur when they had completed their testimony in the sense of having testified all that they were *appointed* to testify; that is, when they had borne full witness for God, and fully uttered his truth. Thus understood, the meaning here may be that the event here referred to would take place, not at the *end* of the 1260 years, but at that period *during* the 1260 years when it could be said with propriety that they had accomplished their testimony in the world, or that they had borne full and ample witness on the points entrusted to them.

The beast. This is the first time in the book of Revelation in which what is here called "the beast" is mentioned, and which has so important an agency in the events which it is said would occur. It is repeatedly mentioned in the course of the book, and always with similar characteristics, and as referring to the same object. Here it is mentioned as "ascending out of the bottomless pit;" in Re 13:1, as "rising up out of the sea;" in Re 13:11, as "coming up out of the earth." It is also mentioned with characteristics appropriate to such an origin, in Re 13:2-4, (twice,) Re 13:11-12, (twice,) Re 13:14, (twice,) Re 13:15, (twice,) Re 13:17-18 14:9,11

Re 15:2 16:2,10,13 17:3,7-8, (twice,) Re 17:11-13,16-17

Re 19:19-20, (twice;) Re 20:4,10. The word here used—*yhrion*—means properly *a beast, a wild beast*, Mr 1:13 Ac 10:12, 11:6 28:4-5; Heb 12:20 Jas 3:7; Re 6:8.

It is once used topically of brutal or savage men, Tit 1:12. Elsewhere, in the passages above referred to in the Apocalypse, it is used symbolically. As employed in the book of Revelation, the characteristics of the "beast" are strongly marked.

(a) It has its *origin* from beneath—in the bottomless pit; the sea; the earth, Re 11:7 13:1,11.

(b) It has great *power*, Re 13:4,12, 17:12-13.

(c) It claims and receives worship, Re 13:3,12,14-15 14:9,11.

(d) It has a certain "seat" or throne from whence its power proceeds, Re 16:10.

(e) It is of scarlet colour, Re 17:3.

(f) It receives power conferred upon it by the kings of the earth, Re 17:13.

(g) It has a mark by which it is known, Re 13:17 19:20.

(h) It has a certain "*number*;" that is, there are certain mystical letters or figures which so express its name that it may be known, Re 13:17-18. These things serve to characterize the "beast" as distinguished from all other things, and they are so numerous and definite, that it would seem to have been intended to make it easy to understand what was meant when the power referred to should appear. In regard to the *origin* of the imagery here, there can be no reasonable doubt that it is to be traced to Daniel, and that the writer here means to describe the same "beast" which Daniel refers to in Da 7:7. The evidence of this must be clear to any one who will compare the description in Daniel, (chapter 8) with the minute details in the book of Revelation. No one, I think, can doubt

that John means to carry forward the description in Daniel, and to apply it to new manifestations of the same great and terrific power—the power of the fourth monarchy—on the earth. For full evidence that the representation in Daniel refers to the Roman power prolonged and perpetuated in the Papal dominion, I must refer the reader to **Barnes on "Da 7:25"**.

It may be assumed here that the opinion there defended is correct, and consequently it may be assumed that the "beast" of this book refers to the Papal power.

That ascendeth out of the bottomless pit. **See Barnes "Re 9:1"**.

This would properly mean that its origin is the nether world; or that it will have characteristics which will show that it was from beneath. The meaning clearly is, that what was symbolized by the beast would have such characteristics as to show that it was not of Divine origin, but had its source in the world of darkness, sin, and death. This, of course, could not represent the true church, or any civil government that is founded on principles which God approves. But if it represent a community pretending to be a church, it is an apostate church; if a civil community, it is a community the characteristics of which are that it is controlled by the Spirit that rules over the world beneath. For reasons which we shall see in abundance in applying the descriptions which occur of the "beast," I regard this as referring to that great apostate power which occupies so much of the prophetic descriptions—the Papacy.

Shall make war against them. Will endeavour to exterminate them by force. This clearly is not intended to be a general statement that they would be *persecuted*, but to refer to the particular manner in which the opposition would be conducted. It would be in the form of "*war*;" that is, there would be an effort to destroy them by arms.

And shall overcome them. Shall gain the victory over them; conquer them—*nikhsei autouv*. That is, there will be some signal victory in which those represented by the two witnesses will be subdued.

And kill them. That is, an effect would be produced *as if* they were put to death. They would be overcome; would be silenced; would be apparently dead. Any event that would cause them to cease to bear testimony, as if they were dead, would, be properly represented by this. It would not be necessary to suppose that there would be literally *death* in the case, but that there would be some event which would be well represented *by* death—such as an entire suspension of their prophesying in consequence of force.

{a} "beast" Re 17:8 {b} "make war" Da 7:21 Zec 14:2

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 11 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *And their dead bodies* shall lie *in the street*. Professor Stuart, "Shall be in the street." The words "shall lie" are supplied by the translators, but not improperly. The literal rendering would be, "and their corpses upon the street of the great city;" and the meaning is, that there would be a state of things in regard to them which would be well represented by supposing them to lie unburied. To leave a body unburied is to treat it with contempt, and among the ancients nothing was regarded as more dishonourable than such treatment. See the Ajax of Sophocles. Among the Jews also it was regarded as a special indignity to leave the dead unburied, and hence they are always represented

as deeply solicitous to secure the interment of their dead. See Ge 23:4. Compare 2Sa 21:9-13 Ec 6:3 Isa 14:18-20 22:16, 53:9.

The meaning here is, that, for the time specified, those who are here referred to would be treated with indignity and contempt. In the fulfilment of this, we are not, of course, to look for any *literal* accomplishment of what is here said, but for some treatment of the "witnesses" which would be well represented by this; that is, which would show that they were treated, after they were silenced, like unburied corpses putrefying in the sun.

Of the great city. Where these transactions would occur. As a great city would be the agent in putting them to death, so the result would be *as if* they were publicly exposed in its streets. The word "*great*" here supposes that the city referred to would be distinguished for its size—a circumstance of some importance in determining the place referred to.

Which spiritually is called—pneumatikwv. This word occurs only in one other place in the New Testament, 1Co 2:14—"because they are *spiritually* discerned"—where it means, "in accordance with the Holy Spirit," or "through the aid of the Holy Spirit." Here it seems to be used in the sense of *metaphorically*, or *allegorically*, in contradistinction from the literal and real name. There may possibly be an intimation here that the city is so called by the Holy Spirit to designate its real character; but still the essential meaning is, that that was not its literal name. For some reason, the real name is not given to it; but such descriptions are applied as are designed to leave no doubt as to what is intended.

Sodom. Sodom was distinguished for its wickedness, and especially for that vice to which its abominations have given name. For the character of Sodom, see Genesis 18-19. Compare 2Pe 2:6. In inquiring what "city" is here referred to, it would be necessary to find in it such abominations as characterized Sodom, or so much wickedness that it would be proper to call it Sodom. If it shall be found that this was designed to refer to Papal Rome, no one can doubt that the abominations which prevailed there would justify such an appellation. Compare **See Barnes "Re 9:20"**.

See Barnes "Re 9:21".

And Egypt. That is, it would have such a character that the *name* Egypt might be properly given to it. Egypt is known, in the Scriptures, as the land of oppression—the land where the Israelites, the people of God, were held in cruel bondage. Compare Exodus 1-15. See also Eze 23:8. The particular idea, then, which seems to be conveyed here is, that the "city" referred to would be characterized by acts of oppression and wrong towards the people of God. So far as the *language* is concerned, it might apply either to Jerusalem or to Rome—for both were eminently characterized by such acts of oppression toward the true children of God as to make it proper to compare their cruelties with those which were inflicted on the Israelites by the Egyptians. Of whichever of these places the course of the exposition may require us to understand this, it will be seen at once that the language is such as is strictly applicable to either; though, as the reference is rather to Christians than to the ancient people of God, it must be admitted that it would be most natural to refer it to Rome. More acts authorizing persecution, and designed to crush the true people of God, have gone forth from Rome than from any other city on the face of the earth; and taking the history of the church together, there is no place that would be so properly designated by the term here employed.

Where also our Lord was crucified. If this refers to Jerusalem, it is to be taken literally; if to another, city, it is to be understood as meaning that he was *practically* crucified there: that is, that the treatment of his friends—his church—was such that it might be said that he was "crucified afresh" there; for what is done to his church may be said to be done to him. Either of these

interpretations would be justified by the use of the language. Thus in Heb 6:6, it is said of apostates from the true faith, (compare **Barnes on "Heb 6:6"**) that "they crucify to themselves the Son of God *afresh*." If the passage before us is to be taken figuratively, the meaning is, that acts would be performed which might properly be represented as crucifying the Son of God; that, as he lives in his church, the acts of perverting his doctrines, and persecuting his people, would be, in fact, an act of crucifying the Lord again. Thus understood, the language is strictly applicable to Rome; that is, if it is admitted that John *meant* to characterize that city, he has employed such language as a Jewish Christian would naturally use. While, therefore, it must be admitted that the language is such as could be *literally* applied only to Jerusalem, it is still true that it is such language as might be figuratively applied to any other city strongly resembling that, and that in this sense it would characterize Rome above all other cities of the world. The common reading of the text here is "*our* Lord"—*hmwn*; the text now regarded as correct, however, (Griesbach, Tittmann, Hahn,) is "*their* Lord"— *autwn*. This makes no essential difference in the sense, except that it directs the attention more particularly to the fact that they were treated like their own Master.

{c} "street" Heb 13:12 {d} "Sodom" Isa 1:10 {e} "Egypt" Ex 20:2

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 11 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *And they of the people*. Some of the people; a part of the people —*ek twn lawn*. The language is such as would be employed to describe a scene where a considerable portion of a company of people should be referred to, without intending to include all. The essential idea is, that there would be an assemblage of different classes of people to whom their carcases would be exposed, and that they would come and look upon them. We should expect to find the fulfilment of this in some place where, from any cause, a variety of people should be assembled—as in some capital, or some commercial city, to which they would be naturally attracted.

Shall see their dead bodies. That is, a state of things will occur *as if* these witnesses were put to death, and their carcases were publicly exposed.

Three days and an half. This might be either literally three days and a half, or, more in accordance with the usual style of this book, these would be prophetic days; that is, three years and a half. Compare **Barnes on** "Re 9:5,15,

And shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. That is, there would be a course of conduct in regard to these witnesses such as would be shown to the dead if they were not suffered to be decently interred. The language used here—"*shall not suffer*"— seems to imply that there would be those who might be disposed to show them the respect evinced by interring the dead, but that this would not be permitted. This would find a fulfilment, if, in a time of persecution, those who had borne faithful testimony were silenced and treated with dishonour, and if there should be those who were disposed to show them respect, but who would be prevented by positive acts on the part of their persecutors. This has often been the case in persecution, and there could be no difficulty in finding numerous instances in the history of the church, to which this language would be applicable.

{a} "graves" Ps 79:3

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 11 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them*. Those dwelling in the land would rejoice over their fall and ruin. This cannot, of course, mean *all* who inhabit the globe; but, according to the usage in Scripture, those who dwell in the country where this would occur. Compare **See Barnes "Lu 2:1"**.

We now affix to the word "earth" an idea which was not necessarily implied in the Hebrew word (Heb?) *eretz*, (compare Ex 3:8 13:5; De 19:2,10; De 28:12 Ne 9:22; Ps 37:9,11,22,29 66:4 Pr 2:21 10:30; Joe 1:2) or the Greek word *gh—ge*, (compare Mt 2:6,20-21 14:15

Ac 7:7,11, 7:36,40, 13:17) Our word *land*, as now commonly understood, would better express the idea intended to be conveyed here; and thus understood, the meaning is, that the dwellers in the country where these things would happen would thus rejoice. The meaning is, that while alive they would, by their faithful testimony against existing errors, excite so much hatred against themselves, and would be so great an annoyance to the governing powers, that there would be general exultation when the voice of their testimony should be silenced. This, too, has been so common in the world that there would be no difficulty in applying the language here used, or in finding events which it would appropriately describe.

And make merry. Be glad. **See Barnes on** "Lu 12:19; Lu 15:23 ".

The Greek word does not necessarily denote the light-hearted mirth expressed by our word *merriment*, but rather joy or happiness in general. The meaning is, that they would be filled with joy at such an event.

And shall send gifts one to another. As expressive of their joy. To send presents is a natural expression of our own happiness, and our desire for the happiness of others—as is indicated now by "Christmas" and "New Year's gifts." Compare also Ne 8:10-12: "Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength," etc. See also Es 9:19-22.

Because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth. They "tormented" them, or were a source of annoyance to them, by bearing testimony to the truth; by opposing the prevailing errors; and by rebuking the vices of the age: perhaps by demanding reformation, and by denouncing the judgment of heaven on the guilty. There is no intimation that they tormented them in any other way than by the truths which they held forth. See the word explained in **See Barnes "2Pe 2:8"**.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 11 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *And after three days and an half*. **See Barnes "Re 11:9"**.

The Spirit of life from God. The living, or life-giving Spirit that proceeds from God entered into them. Compare **See Barnes on "Job 3:4"**.

There is evidently allusion here to Ge 2:7, where God is spoken of as the Author of life. The meaning is, that they would seem to come to life again, or that effects would follow *as if* the dead were restored to life. If, when they had been-compelled to cease from prophesying, they should, after the interval here denoted by three days and a half, again prophesy, or their testimony should

be again borne to the truth as it had been before, this would evidently be all that would be implied in the language here employed.

Entered into them. Seemed to animate them again.

And they stood upon their feet. As if they had come to life again.

And great fear fell upon them which saw them. This would be true if those who were dead should be literally restored to life; and this would be the effect if those who had given great annoyance by their doctrines, and who had been silenced, and who *seemed* to be dead, should again, as if animated anew by a Divine power, begin to prophesy, or to proclaim their doctrines to the world. The statement in the symbol is, that those who had put them to death had been greatly troubled by these "witnesses;" that they had sought to silence them, and in order to this had put them to death; that they then greatly rejoiced, as if they would no more be annoyed by them. The fact that they seemed to come to life again would, therefore, fill them with consternation, for they would anticipate a renewal of their troubles, and they would see in this fact evidence of the Divine favour towards those whom they persecuted, and reason to apprehend Divine vengeance on themselves.

{b} "Spirit" Eze 37:5-14

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 11 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *And they heard a great voice from heaven*. Some manuscripts read, "I heard"—*hkousa* but the more approved reading is that of the common text. John says that a voice was addressed to *them* calling them to ascend to heaven.

Come up hither. To heaven.

And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud. So the Saviour ascended, Ac 1:9, and so probably Elijah, 2Ki 2:11.

And their enemies beheld them. That is, it was done openly, so that their enemies, who had put them to death, saw that they were approved of God, *as if* they had been publicly taken up to heaven. It is not necessary to suppose that this would literally occur. All this is, manifestly, mere symbol. The meaning is, that they would triumph *as if* they should ascend to heaven, and be received into the presence of God. The sense of the whole is, that these witnesses, after bearing a faithful testimony against prevailing errors and sins, would be persecuted and silenced; that for a considerable period their voice of faithful testimony would be hushed as if they were dead; that during that period they would be treated with contempt and scorn, as if their unburied bodies should be exposed to the public gaze; that there would be general exultation and joy that they were thus silenced; that they would again revive, as if the dead were restored to life, and bear a faithful testimony to the truth again, and that they would have the Divine attestation in their favour, *as if* they were raised up visibly and publicly to heaven.

{a} "cloud" 1Th 4:17 {b} "enemies" Mal 3:18

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 11 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *And the same hour*. In immediate connexion with their triumph.

Was there a great earthquake. An earthquake is a symbol of commotion, agitation, change; of great political revolutions, etc. **See Barnes "Re 6:12"**.

The meaning here is, that the triumph of the witnesses, represented by their ascending to heaven, would be followed by such revolutions as would be properly symbolized by an earthquake.

And the tenth part of the city fell. That is, the tenth part of that which is represented by the "city"—the persecuting power. A city would be the seat and centre of the power, and the acts of persecution would seem to proceed from it; but the destruction, we may suppose, would extend to all that was represented by the persecuting power. The word "tenth" is probably used in a general sense to denote that a considerable portion of the persecuting power would be thus involved in ruin; that is, that in respect to that power there would be such a revolution, such a convulsion or commotion, such a loss, that it would be proper to represent it by an earthquake.

And in the earthquake. In the convulsions consequent on what would occur to the witnesses.

Were slain of men seven thousand. Marg., as in the Greek, "names of men"—the name being used to denote the men themselves. The number here mentioned—seven thousand—seems to have been suggested because it would bear some proportion to the tenth part of the city which fell. It is not necessary to suppose, in seeking for the fulfilment of this, that just seven thousand would be killed; but the idea clearly is, that there would be such a diminution of numbers as would be well represented by a calamity that would overwhelm a tenth part of the city, such as the apostle had in his eye, and a proportional number of the inhabitants. The number that would be slain, therefore, in the convulsions and changes consequent on the treatment of the witnesses, might be numerically much larger than seven thousand, and might be as great as if a tenth part of all that were represented by the "city" should be swept away.

And the remnant were affrighted. Fear and alarm came on them in consequence of these calamities. The "remnant" here refers to those who still remained in the "city;" that is, to those who belonged to the community or people designed to be represented here by the city.

And gave glory to the God of heaven. Compare Lu 5:26: "And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to-day." All that seems to be meant by this is, that they stood in awe at what God was doing, and acknowledged his power in the changes that occurred. It does not mean, necessarily, that they would repent and become truly his friends, but that there would be a prevailing impression that these changes were produced by his power, and that his hand was in these things. This would be fulfilled if there should be a general willingness among mankind to acknowledge God, or to recognise his hand in the events referred to; if there should be a disposition extensively prevailing to regard the "witnesses" as on the side of God, and to favour their cause as one of truth and righteousness; and if these convulsions should so far change public sentiment as to produce an impression that theirs was the cause of God.

{c} "city" Re 16:19 {1} "slain of men" "names of men" {d} "gave glory" Re 14:7 Isa 26:15,16

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 11 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *The second woe is past*. That is, the second of the three that were announced as yet to come, Re 8:13; compare Re 9:12.

And, behold, the third woe cometh quickly. The last of the series. The meaning is, that that which was signified by the third "woe" would be the next, and final event, in order. On the meaning of the word "quickly," **see Barnes "Re 1:1"; compare** Re 2:5,16, 3:11; Re 22:7,12,20.

In reference now to the important question about the application of this portion of the book of Revelation, it need hardly be said that the greatest variety of opinion has prevailed among expositors. It would be equally unprofitable, humiliating, and discouraging, to attempt to enumerate all the opinions which have been held; and I must refer the reader who has any desire to become acquainted with them, to Poole's *Synopsis, in loc*., and to the copious statement of Professor Stuart, *Com*., vol. it. pp. 219—227. Professor Stuart himself supposes that the meaning is, that "a competent number of divinely-commissioned and faithful Christian witnesses, endowed with miraculous powers, should bear testimony against the corrupt Jews, during the last days of their commonwealth, respecting their sins; that they should proclaim the truths of the gospel; and that the Jews, by destroying them, would bring upon themselves an aggravated and an awful doom," ii. 226. Instead of attempting to examine in detail the opinions which have been held, I shall rather state what seems to me to be the fair application of the language used, in accordance with the principles pursued thus far in the exposition. The inquiry is, whether there have been any events to which this language is applicable, or in reference to which, if it be admitted that it was the design of the Spirit of inspiration to describe them, it may be supposed that such language would be employed as we find here.

In this inquiry, it may be assumed that the preceding exposition is correct, and the application now to be made must accord with that; that is, it must be found that events occurred in such times and circumstances as would be consistent with the supposition that that exposition is correct. It is to be assumed, therefore, that Re 9:20-21 refers to the state of the ecclesiastical world after the conquest of Constantinople by the Turks, and previous to the Reformation; that chapter 10 refers to the Reformation itself; that Re 11:1-2 refers to the necessity, at the time of the Reformation, of ascertaining what was the true church, of reviving the Scripture doctrine respecting the atonement and justification, and of drawing correct lines as to membership in the church. All this has reference, according to this interpretation, to the state of the church while the Papacy would have the ascendency, or during the twelve hundred and sixty years in which it would trample down the church *as if* the holy city were in the hands of the Gentiles. Assuming this to be the correct exposition, then what is here said (Re 11:3-13) must relate to that period, for it is with reference to that same time—the period of "a thousand two hundred and threescore days," or twelve hundred and sixty years—that it is said (Re 11:3) the witnesses would "prophesy," "clothed in sackcloth." If this be so, then what is here stated (Re 11:3-13) must be supposed to occur during the ascendency of the Papacy, and must mean, in general, that during that long period of apostasy, darkness, corruption, and sin, there would be faithful witnesses for the truth, who, though they were few in number, would be sufficient to keep up the knowledge of the truth on the earth, and to bear testimony against the prevailing errors and abominations. The *object* of this portion of the book, therefore, is to describe the character of the faithful witnesses for the truth during this long period of darkness; to state their influence; to record their trials; and to show what would be the ultimate result in regard to them, when their "testimony" should become triumphant. This general view will be seen to accord with the exposition of the previous portion of the book, and will be sustained, I trust, by the

more particular inquiry into the application of the passage to which I now proceed. The essential points in the passage (Re 11:3-13) respecting the "witnesses" are six:

(1) who are meant by the witnesses;
(2) the war made on them;
(3) their death;
(4) their resurrection;
(5) their reception into heaven; and
(6) the consequences of their triumph in the calamity that came upon the city.

{e} "second woe" Re 8:13

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 11 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *And the seventh angel sounded*. **See Barnes** "Re 8:2,"; **See Barnes** "Re 8:6, **See Barnes "Re 8:7".**

This is the last of the trumpets, implying, of course, that under this the series of visions was to end, and that this was to introduce the state of things under which the affairs of the world were to be wound up. The place which this occupies in the order of time, is when the events pertaining to the colossal Roman power—the fourth kingdom of Daniel (Daniel chapters 2-7)—should have been completed, and when the reign of the saints (Da 7:9-14,27-28) should have been introduced. This, both in Daniel and in John, is to occur when the mighty power of the Papacy shall have been overthrown, at the termination of the twelve hundred and sixty years of its duration. **See Barnes on "Da 7:25".**

In both Daniel and John the termination of that persecuting power is the commencement of the reign of the saints; the downfall of the Papacy, the introduction of the kingdom of God, and its establishment on the earth.

And there were great voices in heaven. As of exultation and praise. The grand consummation had come, the period so long anticipated and desired when God should reign on the earth had arrived, and this lays the foundation for joy and thanksgiving in heaven.

The kingdoms of this world. The modern editions of the New Testament (see Tittmann and Hahn) read this in the singular number—"The kingdom of this world has become," etc. According to this reading, the meaning would be, either that the sole *reign* over this world had become that of the Lord Jesus; or, more probably, that the dominion over the earth had been regarded as one in the sense that Satan had reigned over it, but had now become the kingdom of God; that is, that "the kingdoms of this world are many, considered in themselves; but in reference to the sway of Satan, there is only *one* kingdom ruled over by the 'god of this world.' "—*Professor Stuart*. The sense is not materially different whichever reading is adopted; though the authority is in favour of the latter.—*Wetstein*. According to the common reading, the sense is, that all the kingdoms of the earth, being many in themselves, had been now brought under the one sceptre of Christ; according to the other, the whole world was regarded as in fact one kingdom—that of Satan—and the sceptre had now passed from his hands into those of the Saviour.

The kingdoms *of our Lord*. Or, the kingdom of our Lord, according to the reading adopted in the previous part of the verse. The word *Lord* here evidently has reference to God as such

—represented as the original source of authority, and as giving the kingdom to his Son. **See Barnes "Da 7:13-14"; compare** Ps 2:8. The word *Lord—kuriov*—implies the notion of possessor, owner, sovereign, supreme ruler—and is thus properly given to God. See Mt 1:22 5:33; Mr 5:19 Lu 1:6,28 Ac 7:33; Heb 8:2,10

Jas 4:15, *al saep*.

And of his Christ. Of his anointed; of him who is set apart as the Messiah, and consecrated to this high office. **See Barnes on "Mt 1:1".**

He is called "*his* Christ," because he is set apart by him, or appointed by him to perform the work appropriate to that office on earth. Such language as that which occurs here is often employed, in which God *and* Christ are spoken of as, in some respects, distinct—as sustaining different offices, and performing different works. The essential meaning here is, that the kingdom of this world had now become the kingdom of God *under* Christ; that is, that that kingdom is administered by the Son of God.

And he shall reign for ever and ever. A kingdom is commenced which shall never terminate. It is not said that this would be on the earth; but the essential idea is, that the sceptre of the world had now, after so long a time, come into his hands never more to pass away. The fuller characteristics of this reign are stated in a subsequent part of this book, (chapters 20-22) What is here stated is in accordance with all the predictions in the Bible. A time is to come when, in the proper sense of the term, God is to *reign* on the earth; when his kingdom is to be universal; when his laws shall be everywhere recognised as binding; when all idolatry shall come to an end; and when the understandings and the hearts of men everywhere shall bow to his authority. Compare Ps 2:8 Isa 9:7, 11:9 45:22

Psalms 60 Da 2:35,44,45 7:13-14,27-28 Zec 14:9 Mal 1:11; Lu 1:33.

On. this whole subject, see the very ample illustrations and proofs in **Barnes on** "Da 2:44-45; Da 7:13-14,27,28 "

and Barnes on chapters 20-22.

{a} "seventh angel" Re 10:7 {b} "kingdoms" Re 12:10 {c} "he shall" Da 2:44 7:14,18,27

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 11 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *And the four and twenty elders, which sat*, etc. **See Barnes "Re 4:4".**

Fell upon their faces, and worshipped God. Prostrated themselves before him—the usual form of profound adoration. **See Barnes** "Re 5:8, seq.

{a} "four and twenty elders" Re 4:4

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 11 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *Saying, We give thee thanks*. We, as the representatives of the church, and as identified in our feelings with it, (**see Barnes "Re 4:4"**) acknowledge thy goodness in thus delivering the church from all its troubles, and, having conducted it through the times of fiery persecution, thus establishing

it upon the earth. The language here used is an expression of their deep interest in the church, and of the fact that they felt themselves identified with it. They, as representatives of the church, would of course rejoice in its prosperity and final triumph.

O Lord God Almighty. Referring to God as all-powerful, because it was by his omnipotent arm alone that this great work had been accomplished. Nothing else could have defended the church in its many trials; nothing else could have established it upon the earth.

Which art, and wast, and art to come. The eternal One, always the same. **See Barnes on "Re 1:8"**.

The reference here is to the fact that God, who had thus established his church on the earth, is unchanging. In all the revolutions which occur on the earth, he always remains the same. What he was in past times he is now; what he is now he always will be. The particular idea suggested here seems to be, that he had now shown this by having caused his church to triumph; that is, he had shown that he was the same God who had early *promised* that it should ultimately triumph; he had carried forward his glorious purposes without modifying or abandoning them amidst all the changes that had occurred in the world; and he had thus given the assurance that he would now remain the same, and that all his purposes in regard to his church would be accomplished. The fact that God remains always unchangeably the same is the sole reason why his church is safe, or why any individual member of it is kept and saved. Compare Mal 3:6.

Because thou hast taken to thee thy great power. To wit, by setting up thy kingdom over all the earth. Before that, it *seemed* as if he had relaxed that power, or had given the power to others. Satan had reigned on the earth. Disorder, anarchy, sin, rebellion, had prevailed. It seemed as if God had let the reins of government fall from his hand. Now, he came forth as if to resume the dominion over the world, and to take the sceptre into his own hand, and to exert his great power in keeping the nations in subjection. The setting up of his kingdom all over the world, and causing his laws everywhere to be obeyed, will be among the highest demonstrations of Divine power. Nothing can accomplish this but the power of God; when that power is exerted nothing can prevent its accomplishment.

And hast reigned. Professor Stuart, "and shown thyself as king;" that is, "hast become king, or acted as a king." The idea is, that he had now vindicated his regal power, (*Rob. Lex*.;) that is, he had now set up his kingdom on the earth, and had truly begun to reign. One of the characteristics of the millennium—and indeed the main characteristic—will be, that God will be everywhere obeyed; for when that occurs, all will be consummated that properly enters into the idea of the millennial kingdom.

{b} "which art" Re 16:5 {c} "hast reigned" Re 19:6

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 11 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *And the nations were angry*. Were enraged against thee. This they had shown by their opposition to his laws; by persecuting his people; by slaying his witnesses; by all the attempts which they had made to destroy his authority on the earth. The reference here seems to be to the whole series of events preceding the final establishment of his kingdom on the earth; to all the efforts which had been made to throw off his government and to crush his church. At this period

of glorious triumph it was natural to look back to those dark times when the "nations raged," (compare Ps 2:1-3,) and when the very existence of the church was in jeopardy.

And thy wrath is come. That is, the time when thou wilt punish them for all that they have done in opposition to thee, and when the wicked shall be cut off. There will be, in the setting up of the kingdom of God, some manifestation of his wrath against the powers that opposed it; or something that will show his purpose to destroy his enemies, and to judge the wicked. The representations in this book lead us to suppose that the final establishment of the kingdom of God on the earth will be introduced or accompanied by commotions and wars which will end in the overthrow of the great powers that have opposed his reign, and by such awful calamities in those portions of the world as shall show that God has arisen in his strength to cut off his enemies, and to appear as the vindicator of his people. Compare **See Barnes** "Re 16:12, seq. **See Barnes** "Re 19:11, seq.

And the time of the dead, that they should be judged. According to the view which the course of the exposition thus far pursued leads us to entertain of this book, there is reference here, in few words, to the same thing which is more fully stated in chapter 20, and the meaning of the sacred writer will, therefore, come up for a more distinct and full examination when we consider that chapter. **See Barnes** "Re 20:4, seq. **See Barnes** "Re 20:12, seq. The purpose of the writer does not require that a *detailed* statement of the order of the events referred to should be made here, for it would be better made, when, after another line of illustration and of symbol, (Re 11:19 and chapters 12-19) he should have reached the same catastrophe, and when, in view of both, the mind would be prepared for the fuller description with which the book closes, Revelation 20-22. All that occurs here, therefore, is a very *general* statement of the final consummation of all things.

And that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants. The righteous. Compare Mt 25:34-40 and Re 21-22. That is, in the final winding up of human affairs, God will bestow the long-promised reward on those who have been his true friends. The wicked that annoyed and persecuted them, will annoy and persecute them no more; and the righteous will be publicly acknowledged as the friends of God. For the *manner* in which this will be done, see the details in Revelation 20-22.

The prophets. All who, in every age, have faithfully proclaimed the truth. On the meaning of the word, **see Barnes "Re 10:11"**.

And to the saints. To all who are holy—under whatever dispensation, and in whatever land, and at whatever time, they may have lived. Then will be the time when, in a public manner, they will be recognised as belonging to the kingdom of God, and as being his true friends.

And them that fear thy name. Another way of designating his people, since religion consists in a profound veneration for God, Mal 3:16 Job 1:1; Ps 15:4 22:23, 115:11 Pr 1:7, 3:13 9:10

Isa 11:2 Ac 10:22,35.

Small and great. Young and old; low and high; poor and rich. The language is designed to comprehend *all*, of every class, who have a claim to be numbered among the friends of God, and it furnishes a plain intimation that men of all classes will be found at last among his true people. One of the glories of the true religion is, that, in bestowing its layouts, it disregards all the artificial distinctions of society, and addresses man as man, welcoming all who are human beings to the blessings of life and salvation. This will be illustriously shown in the last period of the world's history, when the distinctions of wealth, and rank, and blood shall lose the importance which has been attributed to them, and when the honour of being a child of God shall have its true place. Compare Ga 3:28.

And shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth. That is, all who have, in their conquests, spread desolation over the earth; and who have persecuted the righteous, and all who have done injustice and wrong to any class of men. Compare **See Barnes** "Re 20:13, seq.

Here ends, as I suppose, the first series of visions referred to in the volume sealed with the seven seals, Re 5:1. At this point, where the division of the chapter should have been made, and which is properly marked in our common Bibles by the sign of the paragraph, (¶,) there commences a new series of visions, intended also, but in a different line, to extend down to the consummation of all things. The former series traces the history down mainly through the series of *civil* changes in the world, or the *outward* affairs which affect the destiny of the church; the latter—the portion still before us—embraces the same period with a more direct reference to the rise of Antichrist, and the influence of *that* power in affecting the destiny of the church. When that is completed, (Re 11:19 and Revelation 12-19) the way is prepared (Revelation 20-22) for the more full statement of the final triumph of the gospel, and the universal prevalence of religion, with which the book so appropriately closes. That portion of the book, therefore, refers to the same period as the one which has just been considered under the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and the description of the final state of things would have immediately succeeded if it had not been necessary, by another series of visions, to trace more particularly the history of Antichrist on the destiny of the church, and the way in which that great and fearful power would be finally overcome. The way is then prepared for the description of the state of things which will exist when all the enemies of the church shall be subdued; when Christianity shall triumph; and when the predicted reign of God shall be set up on the earth, Revelation 20-22.

{d} "angry" Re 11:9 {e} "time" Heb 9:27 {f} "reward" Re 22:12 {g} "small" re 19:5 {1} "destroy" "corrupt"

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 11 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *And the temple of God was opened in heaven*. The temple of God at Jerusalem was a pattern of the heavenly one, or of heaven, Heb 8:1-5. In that temple God was supposed to reside by the visible symbol of his presence—the Shekinah—in the holy of holies. **See Barnes on "Heb 9:7"**.

Thus God dwells in heaven, as in a holy temple, of which that on earth was the emblem. When it is said that that was "opened in heaven," the meaning is, that John was permitted, as it were, to look *into* heaven, the abode of God, and to see him in his glory.

And there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament. **See Barnes on "Heb 9:4"**.

That is, the very interior of heaven was laid open, and John was permitted to witness what was transacted in its obscurest recesses, and what were its most hidden mysteries. It will be remembered, as an illustration of the correctness of this view of the meaning of the verse, and of its proper place in the divisions of the book—assigning it as the opening verse of a new series of visions—that in the *first* series of visions we have a statement remarkably similar to this, Re 4:1: "After this I looked, and, behold, *a door was opened in heaven*;" that is, there was, as it were, an *opening* made into heaven, so that John was permitted *to look in* and see what was occurring there. The same idea is expressed substantially here, by saying that the very interior of the sacred temple where God resides was "opened in heaven," so that John was permitted to look in and see what was transacted in his

very presence. This may confirm the idea that this portion of the Apocalypse refers rather to the *internal* affairs of the church, or the church itself—for of this the *temple* was the proper emblem. Then appropriately follows the series of visions describing, as in the former case, what was to occur in future times: this series referring to the internal affairs of the church, as the former did mainly to what would outwardly affect its form and condition. *And there were lightnings*, etc. Symbolic of the awful presence of God, and of his majesty and glory, as in the commencement of the first series-of visions. **See Barnes "Re 4:5"**.

The *similarity* of the symbols of the Divine Majesty in the two cases may also serve to confirm the supposition that this is the beginning of a new series of visions.

And an earthquake. Also a symbol of the Divine Majesty, and perhaps of the great convulsions that were to occur under this series of visions. Compare **See Barnes on "Re 6:12"**.

Thus, in the sublime description of God in Ps 18:7, "Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth." So in Ex 19:18, "And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke—and the whole mount quaked greatly." Compare Am 8:8-9; Joe 2:10.

And great hail. Also an emblem of the presence and majesty of God, perhaps with the accompanying idea that he would overwhelm and punish his enemies. So in Ps 18:13, "The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice: hailstones and coals of fire." So also Job 38:22-23:—

"Hast thou entered into the treasures of snow?
Or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail?
Which I have reserved against *the time of trouble*.
Against the day of *battle and war*?"
So in Ps 105:32:
"He gave them hail for rain.
And flaming fire in their land."
Compare Ps 78:48 Isa 30:30; Eze 38:22.
{a} "temple" Re 15:5,8 {b} "lightnings" Re 8:5 {c} "earthquake" Re 16:18,21

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 12

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 12 - Verse 1

CHAPTER XII
ANALYSIS OF CHAPTER

THIS portion of the book commences, according to the view presented in the closing remarks on the last chapter, a new series of visions, designed more particularly to represent the internal condition of the church; the rise of Antichrist, and the effect of the rise of that formidable power on the internal history of the church to the time of the overthrow of that power, and the triumphant

establishment of the kingdom of God. See the Analysis of the Book, part fifth. The portion before us embraces the following particulars:—

(1.) A new vision of the temple of God as opened in heaven, disclosing the ark of the testimony, and attended with lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail, Re 11:19. The view of the "temple," and the "ark," would naturally suggest a reference to the church, and would be an appropriate representation on the supposition that this vision related to the church. The attending circumstances of the lightnings, etc., were well fitted to impress the mind with awe, and to leave the conviction that great and momentous events were about to be disclosed. I regard this verse, therefore, which should have been separated from the eleventh chapter and attached to the twelfth, as the introduction to a new series of visions, similar to what we have in the introduction of the previous series, Re 4:1. The vision was of the temple—the symbol of the church—and it was "opened" so that John could see into its inmost part—even within the veil where the ark was—and could have a view of what most intimately pertained to it.

(2.) A representation of the church, under the image of a woman about to give birth to a child, Re 12:1,2. A woman is seen, clothed, as it were, with the sun—emblem of majesty, truth, intelligence, and glory; she has the moon under her feet, as if she walked the heavens; she has on her head a glittering diadem of stars; she is about to become a mother. This seems to have been designed to represent the church as about to be increased, and as in that condition watched by a dragon—a mighty foe—ready to destroy its offspring, and thus compelled to flee into the wilderness for safety. Thus understood, the point of time referred to would be when the church was in a prosperous condition, and when it would be encountered by Antichrist, represented here by the dragon, and compelled to flee into the wilderness; that is, the church for a time would be driven into obscurity, and be almost unknown. It is no uncommon thing, in the Scriptures, to compare the church with a beautiful woman. **See Barnes "Isa 1:8"**.

The following remarks of Prof. Stuart, (vol. ii. 252,) though he applies the subject in a manner very different from what I shall, seem to me accurately to express the general design of the symbol: "The daughter of Zion is a common personification of the church in the Old Testament; and in the writings of Paul, the same image is exhibited by the phrase, Jerusalem which is the mother of us all; i. e. of all Christians, Ga 4:26. The main point before us is the illustration of that church, ancient or later, under the image of a woman. If the Canticles are to have a spiritual sense given to them, it is plain enough, of course, how familiar such an idea was to the Jews. Whether the woman thus exhibited as a symbol be represented as bride or mother depends of course on the nature of the case, and the relations and exigencies of any particular passage."

(3.) The dragon that stood ready to devour the child, Re 12:3,4. This represents some formidable enemy of the church, that was ready to persecute and destroy it. The real enemy here referred to is, undoubtedly, Satan, the great enemy of God and the church, but here it is Satan in the form of some fearful opponent of the church that would arise at a period when the church was prosperous, and when it was about to be enlarged. We are to look, therefore, for some fearful manifestation of this formidable power, having the characteristics here referred to, or some opposition to the church such as we may suppose Satan would originate, and by which the existence of the church might seem to be endangered.

(4.) The fact that the child which the woman brought forth was caught up to heaven—symbolical of its real safety, and of its having the favour of God—a pledge that the ultimate prosperity of the church was certain, and that it was safe from real danger, Re 12:5.

(5.) The fleeing of the woman into the wilderness, for the space of a thousand two hundred and threescore days, or 1260 years, Re 12:6. This act denotes the persecuted and obscure condition of the church during that time, and the period which would elapse before it would be delivered from this persecution, and restored to the place in the earth which it was designed to have.

(6.) The war in heaven; a struggle between the mighty powers of heaven and the dragon, Re 12:7-9. Michael and his angels contend against the dragon, in behalf of the church, and finally prevail. The dragon is overcome, and is cast out, and all his angels with him; in other words, the great enemy of God and his church is overcome and subdued. This is evidently designed to be symbolical, and the meaning is, that a state of things would exist in regard to the church, which would be well represented by supposing that such a scene should occur in heaven; that is, as if a war should exist there between the great enemy of God and the angels of light, and as if, being there vanquished, Satan should be cast down to the earth, and should there exert his malignant power in a warfare against the church. The general idea is, that his warfare would be primarily against heaven, as if he fought with the angels in the very presence of God, but that the form in which he would seem to prevail would be against the church, as if, being unsuccessful in his direct warfare against the angels of God, he was permitted, for a time, to enjoy the appearance of triumph in contending with the church.

(7.) The shout of victory in view of the conquest over the dragon, Re 12:10-12. A loud voice is heard in heaven, saying that now the kingdom of God is come, and that the reign of God would be set up, for the dragon is cast down and overcome. The grand instrumentality in overcoming this foe was "the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony;" that is, the great doctrines of truth pertaining to the work of the Redeemer would be employed for this purpose, and it is proclaimed that the heavens and all that dwell therein had occasion to rejoice at the certainty that a victory would be ultimately obtained over this great enemy of God. Still, however, his influence was not wholly at an end, for he would yet rage for a brief period on the earth.

(8.) The persecution of the woman, Re 12:13-15. She is constrained to fly, as on wings given her for that purpose, into the wilderness, where she is nourished for the time that the dragon is to exert his power—a "time, times, and half a time"—or for 1260 years. The dragon in rage pours out a flood of water, that he may cause her to be swept away by the flood: referring to the persecutions that would exist while the church was in the wilderness, and the efforts that would be made to destroy it entirely.

(9.) The earth helps the woman, Re 12:16. That is, a state of things would exist as if, in such a case, the earth should open and swallow up the flood. The meaning is, that the church would not be swept away, but that there would be an interposition in its behalf, as if the earth should, in the case supposed, open its bosom, and swallow up the swelling waters.

(10.) The dragon, still enraged, makes war with all that pertains to the woman, Re 12:17. Here we are told literally who are referred to by the "seed" of the woman. They are those who "keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ," (Re 12:11;) that is, the true church. The chapter, therefore, may be regarded as a general vision of the persecutions that would rage against the church. It seemed to be about to increase and to spread over the world. Satan, always opposed to it, strives to prevent its extension. The conflict is represented as if in heaven, where war is waged between the celestial beings and Satan, and where, being overcome, Satan is cast down to the earth, and permitted to wage the war there. The church is persecuted; becomes obscure and almost unknown, but still is mysteriously sustained; and when most in danger of being wholly

swallowed up, is kept as if a miracle were wrought in its defence. The detail—the particular form in which the war would be waged—is drawn out in the following chapters.

Re 11:19. And the temple of God was opened in heaven. The temple of God at Jerusalem was a pattern of the heavenly one, or of heaven, Heb 8:1-6. In that temple God was supposed to reside by the visible symbol of his presence—the Shekinah—in the holy of holies. **See Barnes "Heb 9:7".**

Thus God dwells in heaven, as in a holy temple, of which that on earth was the emblem. When it is said that that was "opened in heaven," the meaning is, that John was permitted, as it were, to look into heaven, the abode of God, and to see him in his glory.

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And there were lightnings, etc. Symbolic of the awful presence of God, and of his majesty and glory, as in the commencement of the first series-of visions. **See Barnes "Re 4:6".**

The similarity of the symbols of the Divine Majesty in the two cases may also serve to confirm the supposition that this is the beginning of a new series of visions.

And an earthquake. Also a symbol of the Divine Majesty, and perhaps of the great convulsions that were to occur under this series of visions. **See Barnes "Re 6:12".**

Thus, in the sublime description of God in Ps 18:7, "Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth." So in Ex 19:18, "And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke—and the whole mount quaked greatly." Comp. Am 8:8,9; Joe 2:10.

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"Hast thou entered into the treasures of snow?
Or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail?
Which I have reserved against *the time of trouble*.
Against the day of battle and war?"

So in Ps 105:32:

"He gave them hail for rain.
And flaming fire in their land."

Comp. Ps 78:48 Isa 30:30; Eze 38:22.

Verse 1. *And there appeared a great wonder in heaven*. In that heavenly world thus disclosed, in the very presence of God, he saw the impressive and remarkable symbol which he proceeds to describe. The word *wonder—shmeion*—properly means something extraordinary, or miraculous, and is commonly rendered *sign*. See Mt 12:38-39 Mt 16:1,3-4 24:3,24,30 26:48 Mr 8:11-12 13:4,22 16:17,20; —in all which, and in numerous other places in the New Testament, it is rendered *sign*, and mostly in the sense of *miracle*. When used in the sense of a miracle, it refers to the fact that the miracle is a *sign* or *token* by which the Divine power or purpose is made known. Sometimes the word is used to denote *a sign of future things*—a portent or presage of coming events; that is, some remarkable appearances which foreshadow the future. Thus in Mt 16:3: "*signs of the times*;" that is, the miraculous events which foreshadow the coming of the Messiah in his kingdom. So also in Mt 24:3,30; Mr 13:4 Lu 21:7,11.

This seems to be the meaning here, that the woman who appeared in this remarkable manner was a portent or token of what was to occur.

A woman clothed with the sun. Bright, splendid, glorious, *as if* the sunbeams were her raiment. Compare Re 1:16 10:1; see also So 6:10—a passage which, very possibly, was in the mind of the writer when he penned this description: "Who is she that looked forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?"

And the moon under her feet. The moon *seemed* to be under her feet. She seemed as if she stood on the moon, its pale light contrasted with the burning splendour of the sun, heightening the beauty of the whole picture. The woman, beyond all question, represents the church. **See Barnes on "Re 12:2"**.

Is the splendour of the sun-light designed to denote the brightness of the gospel? Is the moon designed to represent the comparatively feeble light of the Jewish dispensation? Is the fact that she stood upon the moon, or that it was under her feet, designed to denote the superiority of the gospel to the Jewish dispensation? Such a supposition gives much beauty to the symbol, and is not foreign to the nature of symbolic language.

And upon her head a crown of twelve stars. A diadem in which there were placed twelve stars. That is, there were twelve sparkling gems in the crown which she wore. This would, of course, greatly increase the beauty of the vision; and there can be no doubt that the number *twelve* here is significant. If the woman here is designed to symbolize the church, then the number twelve has, in all probability, some allusion either to the twelve tribes of Israel—as being a number which one who was born and educated as a Jew would be likely to use, (compare Jas 1:1) or, to the twelve apostles—an allusion which it may be supposed an apostle would be more likely to make. Compare Mt 19:28 Re 21:14.

{1} "great wonder" "sign" {d} "clothed" Isa 54:6 {e} "sun" Ps 84:11 Mal 4:2

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 12 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And she being with child cried, travailing in birth*, etc. That is, there would be something which would be properly represented by a woman in such circumstances.

The question now is, what is referred to by this woman? And here it need hardly be said that there has been, as in regard to almost every other part of the book of Revelation, a great variety of interpretations. It would be endless to undertake to examine them, and would not be profitable if it could be done; and it is better, therefore, and more in accordance with the design of these Notes, to state briefly what seems to me to be the true interpretation.

(1.) The woman is evidently designed to symbolize the church; and in this there is a pretty general agreement among interpreters. The image, which is a beautiful one, was very familiar to the Jewish prophets. Compare Eze 16. **See Barnes on** "Isa 1:8; Isa 47:1 ".

Compare Ezekiel 16.

(2.) But still the question arises, *to what time* this representation refers: whether to the church before the birth of the Saviour, or after? According to the former of these opinions, it is supposed to refer to the church as giving birth to the Saviour, and the "man- child" that is born (Re 12:5) is supposed to refer to Christ, who "sprang from the church"—*kata sarka*—according to the flesh.—Professor Stuart, ii. 252. The church, according to this view, is not simply regarded as *Jewish*, but, in a more general and theocratic sense, as *the people of God*. "From the Christian church, considered as Christian, he could not spring; for this took its rise only after the time of his public ministry. But from the bosom of the *people of God* the Saviour came. This church, *Judaical* indeed (at the time of his birth) in respect to rites and forms, but to become a *Christian* after he had exercised his ministry in the midst of it, might well be represented here by the woman which is described in chapter 12."—Professor Stuart. But to this view there are some, as it seems to me, unanswerable objections. For

(a) there seems to be a harshness and incongruity in representing the Saviour as *the Son of the church*, or, representing the church as giving birth to him. Such imagery is not found elsewhere in the Bible, and is not in accordance with the language which *is* employed, where Christ is rather represented as the *Husband* of the church than the *Son*. See Re 21:2, "Prepared as a bride adorned for her husband;" verse 9, "I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." Compare Isa 54:5 61:10, 62:5.

(b) If this interpretation be adopted, then this must refer to the *Jewish* church, and thus the woman will personify the Jewish community before the birth of Christ. But this seems contrary to the whole design of the Apocalypse, which has reference to the *Christian* church, and not to the ancient dispensation.

(c) If this interpretation be adopted, then the statement about the dwelling in the wilderness for a period of 1260 days or years (Re 12:14) must be assigned to the Jewish community—a supposition every way improbable and untenable. In what sense could this be true? When did anything happen to the Jewish people that could, with any show of probability, be regarded as the fulfilment of this.

(d) It may be added, that the statement about the "man-child" (Re 12:5) is one that can with difficulty be reconciled to this supposition. In what sense was this true that the "man-*child*" was "caught up unto God, and to his throne?" The Saviour, indeed, ascended to heaven, but it was not, as here represented, that he might be *protected* from the danger of being destroyed; and when he

did ascend, it was not as a helpless and unprotected babe, but as a man in the full maturity of his powers.

The other opinion is, that the woman here refers to the Christian church, and that the object is to represent that church as about to be enlarged— represented by the condition of the woman, Re 12:2. A beautiful woman appears, clothed with light—emblematic of the brightness and purity of the church; with the moon under her feet—the ancient and comparatively obscure dispensation now made subordinate and humble; with a glittering diadem of twelve stars on her head—the stars representing the usual well-known division of the people of God into twelve parts—as the stars in the American flag denote the original states of the Union; and in a condition (Re 12:2) which showed that the church was to be increased. The time there referred to is at the early period of the history of the church, when, as it were, it first appears on the theatre of things, and going forth in its beauty and majesty over the earth. John sees this church as it was about to spread in the world, exposed to a mighty and formidable enemy—a hateful dragon—stationing itself to prevent its increase, and to accomplish its destruction. From that impending danger it is protected in a manner that would be well represented by the saving of the child of the woman, and bearing it up to heaven, to a place of safety—an act implying that, notwithstanding all dangers, the progress and enlargement of the church was ultimately certain. In the mean time, the woman herself flees into the wilderness—an act representing the obscure and humble and persecuted state of the church—till the great controversy is determined which is to have the ascendency—God or the Dragon. In favour of this interpretation, the following considerations may be suggested:

(a) It is the natural and obvious interpretation.

(b) If it be admitted that John *meant* to describe what occurred in the world at the time when the true church seemed to be about to extend itself over the earth, and when that prosperity was checked by the rise of the Papal power, the symbol employed would be strikingly expressive and appropriate.

(c) It accords with the language elsewhere used in the Scriptures when referring to the *increase* of the church. Isa 66:7-8: "Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man-child. Who hath heard such a thing?—As soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." Isa 54:1: "Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord." Isa 49:20: "The children which thou shalt have, after thou shalt have lost the other, shall say again in thy ears, The place is too strait for me; give place to me that I may dwell." The comparison of the church to a woman as the mother of children, is one that is very common in the Scriptures.

(d) The future destiny of the child and of the woman agrees with this supposition. The child is caught up to heaven, Re 12:5—emblematic of the fact that God will protect the church, and not suffer its increase to be cut off and destroyed; and the woman is driven for 1260 years into the wilderness and nourished there, Re 12:14—emblematic of the long period of obscurity and persecution in the true church, and yet of the fact that it would be protected and nourished. The *design* of the whole, therefore, I apprehend, is to represent the peril of the church at the time when it was about to be greatly enlarged, or in a season of prosperity, from the rise of a formidable enemy that would stand ready to destroy it. I regard this, therefore, as referring to the time of the rise of the Papacy, when, *but* for that formidable, corrupting, and destructive power, it might have been hoped that the church would have spread all over the world. In regard to the *rise* of that power, see all that I have to say, or can say, in **See Barnes on** "Da 7:24, seq.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 12 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And there appeared another wonder in heaven*. Represented as in heaven. **Barnes on "Re 12:1"**.

That is, he saw this as occurring *at the time* when the church was thus about to increase.

And behold a great red dragon. The word rendered *dragon* —*drakwn*— occurs, in the New Testament, only in the book of Revelation, where it is uniformly rendered as here—*dragon*: Re 12:3-4,7,9,13,16-17 13:2,4,11 Re 16:13 20:2.

In all these places there is reference to the same thing. The word properly means a large serpent; and the allusion in the word commonly is to some serpent, perhaps such as the anaconda, that resides in a desert or wilderness. See a full account of the ideas that prevailed in ancient times respecting the dragon, in Bochart, *Hieroz*. lib. iii. cap. xiv., vol. ii. pp. 428-440. There was much that was fabulous respecting this monster, and many notions were attached to the dragon which did not exist in reality, and which were ascribed to it by the imagination at a time when natural history was little understood. The characteristics ascribed to the dragon, according to Bochart, are, that it was distinguished

(a) for its vast size;

(b) that it had something like a beard or dew-lap;

(c) that it had three rows of teeth;

(d) that its colour was black, red, yellow, or ashy;

(e) that it had a wide mouth;

(f) that in its breathing it not only drew in the air, but also birds that were flying over it; and

(g) that its hiss was terrible. Occasionally, also, feet and wings were attributed to the dragon, and sometimes a lofty crest. The dragon, according to Bochart, was supposed to inhabit waste places and solitudes, (compare **Barnes on "Isa 13:22"**) and it became, therefore, an object of great terror. It is probable that the original of this was a huge serpent, and that all the other circumstances were added by the imagination. The prevailing ideas in regard to it, however, should be borne in mind, in order to see the force and propriety of the use of the word by John. Two special characteristics are stated by John in the general description of the dragon: one is, its *red colour*; the other, that it was *great*. In regard to the former, as above mentioned, the dragon was supposed to be black, red, yellow, or ashy. See the authorities referred to in Bochart, *ut sup*., pp. 435, 436. There was doubtless a reason why the one seen by John should be represented as *red*. As to the other characteristic—*great*—the idea is, that it was a huge monster, and this would properly refer to some mighty, terrible power which would be properly symbolized by such a monster.

Having seven heads. It was not unusual to attribute many heads to monsters, especially to fabulous monsters, and these greatly increased the terror of the animal. "Thus Cerberus usually has three heads assigned to him; but Hesiod (Theog. 312) assigns him fifty, and Horace (Ode II. 13, 34) one hundred. So the Hydra of the Lake Lerna, killed by Hercules, had fifty heads, (Virg. AEn. vi 576;) and in Kiddushim, fol. 29, 2, Rabbi Achse is said to have seen a demon like a dragon with seven heads."—Professor Stuart, *in loc*, The seven heads would somehow denote *power*, or seats of power. Such a number of heads increase the terribleness, and, as it were, the *vitality* of the monster. What is here represented would be *as* terrible and formidable as such a monster; or such a monster would appropriately represent what was designed to be symbolized here. The number seven *may* be used here "as a perfect number," or merely to heighten the terror of the image; but it

is more natural to suppose that there would be something in what is here represented which would lay the foundation for the use of this number. There would be something either in the *origin* of the power; or in the union of various powers now combined in the one represented by the dragon; or in the *seat* of the power, which this would properly symbolize, Compare **Barnes on "Da 7:6"**.

And ten horns. Emblems of power, denoting that, in some respects, there were *ten* powers combined in this one. **See Barnes "Da 7:7"**; **See Barnes** "Da 7:8"

See Barnes "Da 7:20, **See Barnes "Da 7:24"**.

There can be little doubt that John had those passages of Daniel (Da 7:7-8,20,24) in his eye, and perhaps as little that the reference is to the same thing. The meaning is, that, in some respects, there would be a tenfold origin or division of the power represented by the dragon.

And seven crowns upon his heads. Gr., *diadems*. **See Barnes on "Re 9:7"**.

There is a reference here to some *kingly* power, and doubtless John had some kingdom or sovereignty in his eye that would be properly symbolized in this manner. The method in which these heads and horns were arranged on the dragon is not stated, and is not material. All that is necessary in the explanation is, that there was *something* in the power referred to that would be properly represented by the seven heads, and *something* by the ten horns.

In the application of this, it will be necessary to inquire what was properly symbolized by these representations, and to refer again to these particulars with this view.

(a) *The dragon*. This is explained in **Barnes on "Re 12:9"**

: "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world." So again, Re 20:2, "And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil." Compare Bochart, *Hieroz*. ii. pp. 439, 440. There can be no doubt, therefore, that the reference here is to Satan, considered as the enemy of God, and the enemy of the peace of man, and especially as giving origin and form to some mighty power that would threaten the existence of the church.

(b) *Great*. This will well describe the power of Satan as originating the organizations that were engaged for so long a time in persecuting the church, and endeavouring to destroy it. It was a work of vast power, controlling kings and princes and nations for ages, and could have been accomplished only by one to whom the appellation here used could be given.

(c) *Red*. This, too, is an appellation properly applied here to the the dragon, or Satan, considered as the enemy of the church, and as originating this persecuting power, either

(1) because it well represents the bloody persecutions that would ensue, or

(2) because this would be the favourite *colour* by which this power would be manifest. Compare Re 17:3-4 18:12,16.

(d) *The seven heads*. There was, doubtless, as above remarked, something significant in these heads, as referring to the power designed to be represented. On the supposition that this refers to Rome, or to the power of Satan as *manifested* by Roman persecution, there can be no difficulty in the application; and, indeed, it is such an image as the writer would naturally use on the supposition that it had such a designed reference. Rome was built, as is well known, on seven hills, (compare **Barnes on** "Re 10:3,) and was called the seven-hilled city, (*Septicolis*,) from having been originally built on seven hills, though subsequently three hills were added, making the whole number ten. See Eschenburg, *Manual of Classical Literature*, p. 1, % 53. Thus Ovid: \-

"Sed quae de septem totum circumspicit orbem

Montibus, imperii RomAE Deumque locus." \- Horace:

"Dis quibus septem placuere colles."

Propertius:

"Septem urbs alta jugis, toti quae praesidet orbi."

Tertullian: "I appeal to the citizens of Rome, the populace that dwell on the seven hills."—Apol. 35. And again, Jerome to Marcella, when urging her to quit Rome for Bethlehem: "Read what is said in the Apocalypse of the seven hills," etc. The situation of the city, if that was designed to be represented by the dragon, would naturally suggest the idea of the seven-headed monster. Compare **Barnes on "Re 18:1"**

and to end of chapter. The explanation which is here given of the meaning of the "seven heads" is, in fact, one that is given in the book of Revelation itself, and there can be no danger of error in this part of the interpretation. See Re 17:9: "The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth." Compare Re 12:8.

(e) *The ten horns*. These were emblems of power, denoting that in reference to that power there were, in some respects, *ten* sources. The same thing is referred to here which is in Da 7:7-8,20,24.

See Barnes on "Da 7:24".

The creature that John saw was indeed a *monster*, and we are not to expect entire congruity in the details. It is sufficient that the main idea is preserved, and that would be, if the reference was to Rome considered as the place where the energy of Satan, as opposed to God and the church, was centered.

(f) *The seven crowns*. This would merely denote that kingly or royal authority was claimed.

The *general* interpretation which refers this vision to Rome may receive confirmation from the fact that the *dragon* was at one time the Roman standard, as is represented by the following engraving from Montfaucon. Ammianus Marcellius (xvi. 10) thus describes this standard: "The dragon was covered with purple cloth, and fastened to the end of a pike gilt and adorned with precious stones. It opened its wide throat, and the wind blew through it; and it hissed as if in a rage, with its tail floating in several folds through the air." He elsewhere often gives it the epithet of *purpureus*—purple-red: purpureum signum draconis, etc. With this the description of Claudian well agrees also:— \-

"Hi volueres tollent aquilas; hi picta draconum

Colla levant: multumque tumet per nubila serpens,

Iratus stimulante noto, vivitque receptis

Flatibus, et vario mentitur sibila fiatu." + The dragon was first used as an ensign near the close of the second century of the Christian era, and it was not until the third century that its use had become common; and the reference here, according to this fact, would be to that period of the Roman power when this had become a common standard, and when the applicability of this image would be readily understood. It is simply *Rome* that is referred to—Rome, the great agent of accomplishing the purposes of Satan towards the church The *eagle* was the common Roman ensign in the time of the Republic and in the earlier periods of the empire, but in later periods the dragon became also a standard as common and as well known as the *eagle*. "In the third century it had become almost as notorious among Roman ensigns as the eagle itself; and is in the fourth century noted by Prudentius, Vegetius, Chrysostom, Ammianus, etc.; in the fifth, by Claudian and others."—.Elliott, ii. 14,

{1} "wonder" "sign" {a} "dragon" Re 12:9

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 12 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven*. The word rendered *drew—surw*—means to *draw, drag, haul*. Professor Stuart renders it "drew along;" and explains it as meaning that "the danger is represented as being in the upper region of the air, so that his tail may be supposed to interfere with and sweep down the stars, which, as viewed by the ancients, were all set in the visible expanse or welkin." So Daniel, (Da 8:10) speaking of the little horn, says that "it waxed great, even to the host of heaven, and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground." **See Barnes "Da 8:10"**.

The main idea here undoubtedly is that of *power*, and the object of John is to show that the power of the dragon was *as if* it extended to the stars, and *as if* it dragged down a third part of them to the earth, or swept them away with its tail, leaving two-thirds unaffected. A power that would sweep them *all* away would be universal; a power that would sweep away one-third only would represent a dominion of that extent only. The dragon is represented as floating in the air—a monster extended along the sky—and one- third of the whole expanse was subject to his control. Suppose, then, that the dragon here was designed to represent the Roman Pagan power; suppose that it referred to that power about to engage in the work of persecution, and at a time when the church was about to be greatly enlarged, and to fill the world; suppose that it referred to a time when but one-third part of the Roman world was subject to Pagan influence, and the remaining two-thirds were, for some cause, safe from this influence,—all the conditions here referred to would be fulfilled. Now it so happens that at a time when the "dragon" had become a common standard in the Roman armies, and had in some measure superseded the eagle, a state of things *did* exist which well corresponds with this representation. There were times under the emperors when, in a considerable part of the empire, after the establishment of Christianity, the church enjoyed protection, and the Christian religion was tolerated, while in other parts Paganism still prevailed, and waged a bitter warfare with the church. "Twice, at least, before the Roman empire became divided permanently into the two parts, the Eastern and the Western, there was a *tripartite* division of the empire. The first occurred A.D. 311, when it was divided between Constantine, Licinius, and Maximin; the other A.D. 337, on the death of Constantine, when it was divided between his three sons, Constantine, Constans, and Constantius. "In two- thirds of the empire, embracing its whole European and African territory, Christians enjoyed toleration; in the other, or Asiatic portion, they were still, after a brief and uncertain respite, exposed to persecution, in all its bitterness and cruelty as before."—Elliott, ii. 17. I do not deem it absolutely essential, however, in order to a *fair* exposition of this passage, that we should be able to refer to minute historical facts with names and dates. A sufficient fulfilment is found if there was a period when the church, bright, glorious, and prosperous, was apparently about to become greatly enlarged, but when the monstrous Pagan power still held its sway over a considerable part of the world, exposing the church to persecution. Even after the establishment of the church in the empire, and the favour shown to it by the Roman government, it was long before the Pagan power ceased to rage, and before the church could be regarded as safe.

And the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child. To prevent the increase and spread of the church in the world.

{a} "tail" Isa 9:15

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 12 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And she brought forth a man child*. Representing, according to the view above taken, the church in its increase and prosperity—*as if* a child were born that was to rule over all nations. **See Barnes on "Re 12:2".**

Who was to rule all nations. That is, according to this view, the church thus represented was destined to reign in all the earth, or all the earth was to become subject to its laws. Compare **Barnes on "Da 7:13-14".**

With a rod of iron. The language here used is derived from Ps 2:9: "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron." The form of the expression here used "who was to *rule*"—*ov mellei poimainein* is derived from the Septuagint translation of the Psalm—*poimaineiv*— "thou shalt *rule* them;" to wit, as a shepherd does his flock. The reference is to such control as a shepherd employs in relation to his flock—protecting, guarding, and defending them, with the idea that the flock is under his care; and, on the supposition that this refers to the church, it means that it would yet have the ascendency or the dominion over the earth. The meaning in the phrase, "with a rod of iron," is, that the dominion would be strong or irresistible—as an iron sceptre is one that cannot be broken or resisted. The thoughts here expressed, therefore, are

(a) that the church would become universal—or that the principles of truth and righteousness would prevail everywhere on the earth;

(b) that the ascendency of religion over the understandings and consciences of men would be irresistible—as firm as a government administered under a sceptre of iron; yet

(c) that it would be rather of a character of protection than of force or violence, like the sway which a shepherd wields over his flock. I understand the "man child" here, therefore, to refer to the church in its increase under the Messiah, and the idea to be, that church was, at the time referred to, about to be enlarged, and that, though its increase was opposed, yet it was destined ultimately to assert a mild sway over all the world. The *time* here referred to would seem to be some period in the early history of the church when religion was likely to be rapidly propagated, and when it was opposed and retarded by violent persecution—perhaps the last of the persecutions under the Pagan Roman empire.

And her child was caught up unto God. This is evidently a symbolical representation. Some event was to occur, or some Divine interposition was to take place, *as if* the child thus born were caught up from the earth to save it from death, and was rendered secure by being in the presence of God, and near his throne. It cannot be supposed that anything like this would *literally* occur. Any Divine interposition to protect the church in its increase, or to save it from being destroyed by the dragon—the fierce Pagan power—would be properly represented by this. Why may we not suppose the reference to be to the time of Constantine, when the church came under his protection; when it was effectually and finally saved from Pagan persecution; when it was rendered safe from the enemy that waited to destroy it? On the supposition that this refers to an increasing but endangered church, in whose defence a civil power was raised up, exalting Christianity to the throne, and protecting it from danger, this would be well represented by the child caught up to heaven. This view may derive confirmation from some well-known facts in history. The old Pagan power was concentrated in Maximin, who was emperor from the Nile to the Bosphorus, and who raged against the gospel and the church "with Satanic enmity." "Infuriate at the now imminent prospect of the Christian body attaining establishment in the empire, Maximin renewed the

persecution against Christians within the limits of his own dominion; prohibiting their assemblies, and degrading and even killing their bishops." Compare Gibbon, i. 325, 326. The last struggle of Pagan Rome to destroy the church by persecution, before the triumph of Constantine, and the public establishment of the Christian religion, might be well represented by the attempt of the dragon to destroy the child; and the safety of the church, and its complete deliverance from Pagan persecution, by the symbol of a child caught up to heaven, and placed near the throne of God. The persecution under Maximin was the last struggle of Paganism to retain the supremacy, and to crash Christianity in the empire. "Before the decisive battle," says Milner, "Maximin vowed to Jupiter that, if victorious, he would abolish the Christian name. The contest between Jehovah and Jupiter was now at its height, and drawing to a crisis:" The result was the defeat and death of Maximin, and the termination of the efforts of Paganism to destroy Christianity by force. Respecting this event, Mr. Gibbon remarks, "The defeat and death of Maximin soon delivered the church from the last and most implacable of her enemies," i. 326. Christianity was, after that, rendered safe from Pagan persecution. Mr. Gibbon says, "The gratitude of the church has exalted the virtues of the generous patron *who seated Christianity on the throne of the Roman world*." If, however, it should be regarded as a forced and fanciful interpretation to suppose that the passage before us refers to this *specific* event, yet the *general* circumstances of the times would furnish a fulfilment of what is here said.

(a) The church would be well represented by the beautiful woman.

(b) The prospect of its increase and universal dominion would be well represented by the birth of the child.

(c) The furious opposing Pagan power would be well represented by the dragon in its attempts to destroy the child.

(d) The safety of the church would be well represented by the symbol of the child caught up to God, and placed near his throne.

{a} "she" Isa 7:14 {b} "who" Ps 2:9

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 12 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *And the woman*. The woman representing the church. **See Barnes on "Re 12:1"**.

Fled. That is, she fled in the manner, and at the time, stated in Re 12:14. John here evidently anticipates, by a summary statement, what he relates more in detail in Re 12:14-17. He had referred (Re 12:2-5) to what occurred to the child in its persecutions, and he here alludes, in general, to what befell the true church as compelled to flee into obscurity and safety. Having briefly referred to this, the writer (Re 12:7-13) gives an account of the efforts of Satan consequent on the removal of the child to heaven.

Into the wilderness. On the meaning of the word *wilderness* in the New Testament, **see Barnes "Mt 3:1"**.

It means a desert place, a place where there are few or no inhabitants; a place, therefore, where one might be concealed and unknown—remote from the habitations and the observation of men. This would well represent the fact that the true church became for a time obscure and unknown—*as if* it had fled away from the habitations of men, and had retired to the solitude and loneliness of a

desert. Yet even there (Re 12:14,16) it would be mysteriously nourished, though seemingly driven out into wastes and solitudes, and having its abode among the rocks and sands of a desert.

Where she hath a place prepared of God. A place where she might be safe, and might be kept alive. The meaning is, that during that time, the true church, though obscure and almost unknown, would be the object of the Divine protection and care—a beautiful representation of the church during the corruptions of the Papacy and the darkness of the middle ages.

That they should feed her. That they should *nourish* or *sustain* her—*trefwsin*—to wit, as specified in Re 12:14,16. Those who were to do this, represented by the word "*they*," are not particularly mentioned, and the simple idea is that she *would be* nourished during that time. That is, stripped of the figure, the church during that time would find true friends, and would be kept alive. It is hardly necessary to say that this has, in fact, occurred in the darkest periods of the history of the church.

A thousand two hundred and *threescore days*. That is, regarding these as prophetic days, in which a day denotes a year, twelve hundred and sixty years. The same period evidently is referred to in Re 12:14, in the words "for a time, and times, and half a time." And the same period is undoubtedly referred to in Da 7:25: "And they shall be given into his hand until a time, and times, and the dividing of time." For a full consideration of the meaning of this language, and its application to the Papacy, **see Barnes "Da 7:25"**.

The full investigation there made of the meaning and application of the language renders its consideration here unnecessary. I regard it here, as I do there, as referring to the proper continuance of the Papal power, during which the true church would remain in comparative obscurity, as if driven into a desert. Compare **Barnes on "Re 11:2"**.

The meaning here is, that during that period the true church would not become wholly extinct. It would have an existence upon the earth, but its final triumph would be reserved for the time when this great enemy should be finally overthrown. Compare **Barnes on "Re 12:14-17"**.

{c} "feed her there" Re 11:3

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 12 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *And there was war in heaven*. There was a state of things existing in regard to the woman and the child—the church in the condition in which it would then be—which would be well represented by a war in heaven; that is, by a conflict between the powers of good and evil, of light and darkness. Of course, it is not necessary to under stand this *literally*, any more than the other symbolical representations in the book. All that is meant is, that a vision passed before the mind of John *as if* there was a conflict, in regard to the church, between the angels in heaven and Satan. There is a vision of the persecuted church—of the woman fleeing into the desert— and the course of the narrative is here interrupted by going back (Re 12:7-13) to describe the conflict which led to this result, and the fact that Satan, as it were cast out of heaven, and unable to achieve a victory there, was suffered to vent his malice against the church on earth. The seat of this warfare is said to be heaven. This language sometimes refers to heaven as it appears to us—the sky—the upper regions of the atmosphere, and some have supposed that was the place of the contest. But the language in Re 11:19 12:1, **see Barnes "Re 11:19"**; **See Barnes** "Re 12:1, would rather lead us to

refer it to heaven considered as lying beyond the sky. This accords, too, with other representations in the Bible, where Satan is described as appearing before God, and among the sons of God. Of course, this is not to be understood as a *real* transaction, but as a symbolical representation of the contest between good and evil—*as if* there was a war waged in heaven between Satan and the leader of the heavenly hosts.

Michael. There have been very various opinions as to who Michael is. Many Protestant interpreters have supposed that Christ is meant. The reasons usually alleged for this opinion, many of which are very fanciful, may be seen in Hengstenberg, (*Die Offenbarung des heiliges Johannes*,) i. 611-622. The reference to *Michael* here is probably derived from Da 10:13 12:1. In those places he is represented as the guardian angel of the people of God, and it is in this sense, I apprehend, that the passage is to be understood here. There is no evidence in the name itself, or in the circumstances referred to, that Christ is intended; and if he had been, it is inconceivable why he was not referred to by his own name, of by some of the usual appellations which John gives him. Michael, the archangel, is here represented as the guardian of the church, and as contending against Satan for its protection. Compare **See Barnes "Da 10:13"**.

This representation accords with the usual statements in the Bible respecting the interposition of the angels in behalf of the church, (**see Barnes "Heb 1:14"**) and is one which cannot be proved to be unfounded. All the analogies which throw any light on the subject, as well as the uniform statements of the Bible, lead us to suppose that good beings of other worlds feel an interest in the welfare of the redeemed church below.

And his angels. The angels under him. Michael is represented as the archangel, and all the statements in the Bible suppose that the heavenly hosts are distributed into different ranks and orders. See **Barnes on "Jude 1:9; Eph 1:21"**.

If Satan is permitted to make war against the church, there is no improbability in supposing that, in those higher regions where the war is carried on, and in those aspects of it which lie beyond the power and the knowledge of man, good angels should be employed to defeat his plans.

Fought. **See Barnes "Jude 1:9"**.

Against the dragon. Against Satan. **See Barnes "Re 12:3"**.

And the dragon fought and his angels. That is, the master-spirit— Satan, and those under him. **See Barnes on "Mt 4:1"**.

Of the nature of this warfare, nothing is definitely stated. Its whole sphere lies beyond mortal vision, and is carried on in a manner of which we can have little conception. What weapons Satan may use to destroy the church, and in what way his efforts may be counteracted by holy angels, are points on which we can have little knowledge. It is sufficient to know that the fact of such a struggle is not improbable, and that Satan is successfully resisted by the leader of the heavenly host.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 12 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *And prevailed not*. Satan and his angels failed in their purpose.

Neither was their place found any more in heaven. They were cast out, and were seen there no more. The idea is, that they were defeated and driven away, though for a time they were suffered to carry on the warfare elsewhere.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 12 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *And the great dragon was cast out*. **See Barnes on "Re 12:3"**.

That there may be an allusion in the language here to what actually occurred in some far-distant period of the past, when Satan was ejected from heaven, there can be no reason to doubt. Our Saviour seems to refer to such an event in the language which he uses when he says, (Lu 10:18,) "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven;" and Jude, perhaps, (Jude 6) may refer to the same event. All that we know on the subject leads us to suppose that at some time there was a revolt among the angels, and that the rebellious part were cast out of heaven, for an allusion to this is not unfrequent in the Scriptures. Still the event here referred to is a symbolical representation of what would occur at a later period, when the church would be about to spread and be triumphant, and when Satan would wage a deadly war against it. That opposition would be as if he made war on Michael the archangel, and the heavenly hosts, and his failure would be as great as if he were vanquished and cast out of heaven.

That old serpent. This doubtless refers to the serpent that deceived Eve, (Ge 3:1-11 Re 20:2; compare **Barnes on "2Co 11:3"**) and this passage may be adduced as a proof that the real tempter of Eve was the devil, who assumed the form of a serpent. The word *old* here refers to the fact that his appearance on earth was at an early stage of the world's history, and that he had long been employed in the work which is here attributed to him—that of opposing the church.

Called the Devil. To whom the name *Devil* is given. That is, this is the same being that is elsewhere and commonly known by that name. See **Barnes on "Mt 4:1"**.

And Satan. Another name given to the same being; a name, like the other, designed to refer to something in his character. See it explained in **Barnes on "Job 1:6"**.

Which deceiveth the whole world. Whose character is that of a deceiver; whose agency extends over all the earth. See **Barnes on "Joh 8:44; 1Jo 5:19"**.

He was east out into the earth. That is, he was not suffered to pursue his designs in heaven, but was cast down to the earth, where he is permitted for a time to carry on his warfare against the church. According to the interpretation proposed above, this refers to the period when there were indications that God was about to set up his kingdom on the earth. The *language*, however, is such as would be used on the supposition that there had been, at some period, a rebellion in heaven, and that Satan and his followers had been cast out to return there no more. It is difficult to explain this language except on that supposition; and such a supposition is, in itself, no more improbable than the apostasy and rebellion of man.

And his angels were cast out with him. They shared the lot of their leader. As applicable to the state of things to which this refers, the meaning is, that all were overthrown; that no enemy of the church would remain unsubdued; that the victory would be final and complete. As applicable to the event from which the language is supposed to have been derived—the revolt in heaven—the meaning is, that the followers in the revolt shared the lot of the leader, and that all who rebelled

were ejected from heaven. The first and the only revolt in heaven was quelled; and the result furnished to the universe an impressive proof that none who rebelled there would be forgiven—that apostasy so near the throne could not be pardoned.

{a} "serpent" Ge 3:1,4 {b} "Devil" Joh 8:44 {c} "Satan" Zec 3:1

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 12 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven*. The great enemy was expelled; the cause of God and truth was triumphant; and the conquering hosts united in celebrating the victor. This representation of a song, consequent on victory, is in accordance with the visual representations in the Bible. See the song of Moses at the Red Sea, Ex 15:1; the song of Deborah, Jud 5:1; the song of David when the Lord had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, 2Sa 22:1; and Isaiah 12-25. On no occasion could such a song be more appropriate than on the complete routing and discomfiture of Satan and his rebellious hosts. Viewed in reference to the *time* here symbolized, this would relate to the certain triumph of the church and of truth on the earth; in reference to the *language*, there is an allusion to the joy and triumph of the heavenly hosts when Satan and his apostate legions were expelled.

Now is come salvation. That is, complete deliverance from the power of Satan.

And strength. That is, now is the mighty power of God manifested in casting down and subduing the great enemy of the church.

And the kingdom of our God. The reign of our God. **See Barnes "Mt 3:2"**.

That is now established among men, and God will henceforward rule. This refers to the certain ultimate triumph of his cause in the world.

And the power of his Christ. His anointed; that is, the kingdom of Christ as the Messiah, or as anointed and set apart to rule over the world. **See Barnes "Mt 1:1"**.

For the accuser of our brethren is cast down. The phrase "*our* brethren" shows by whom this song is celebrated. It is sung in heaven; but it is by those who belonged to the redeemed church, and whose brethren were still suffering persecution and trial on the earth. It shows the tenderness of the tie which unites all the redeemed as brethren, whether on earth or in heaven; and it shows the interest which they "who have passed the flood" have in the trials, the sorrows, and the triumphs of those who are still upon the earth. We have here another appellation given to the great enemy —"accuser of the brethren." The word here used—*kathgorov*, in later editions of the New Testament *kathgwr*—means properly *an accuser*; one who blames another, or charges another with crime. The word occurs in Joh 8:10 Ac 23:30,35

Ac 24:8 25:16,18 Re 12:10, in all which places it is rendered *accuser or accusers*, though only in the latter place applied to Satan. The verb frequently occurs, Mt 12:10 27:12; Mr 3:2 15:3, *et al*. The description of Satan as an *accuser* accords with the opinion of the ancient Hebrews in regard to his character. Thus he is represented in Job 1:9-11 2:4-5; Zec 3:1-2 1Ch 21:1.

The phrase "of the brethren" refers to Christians, or to the people of God; and the meaning here is, that one of the characteristics of Satan—a characteristic so well-known as to make it proper to designate him by it—is that he is an *accuser* of the righteous; that he is employed in bringing against them charges affecting their character and destroying their influence. The propriety of this appellation

cannot be doubted. It is, as it has always been, one of the characteristics of Satan—one of the means by which he keeps up his influence in the world—to bring accusations against the people of God. Thus, under his suggestions, and by his agents, they are charged with hypocrisy; with insincerity; with being influenced by bad motives; with pursuing sinister designs under the cloak of religion; with secret vices and crimes. Thus it was that the martyrs were accused; thus it is that unfounded accusations are often brought against ministers of the gospel, palsying their power and diminishing their influence, or that when a professed Christian falls the church is made to suffer by an effort to cast suspicion on all who bear the Christian name. Perhaps the most skilful thing that Satan does, and the thing by which he most contributes to diminish the influence of the church, is in thus causing "accusations" to be brought against the people of God.

Is cast down. The period here referred to was, doubtless, the time when the church was about to be established and to flourish in the world, and when accusations would be brought against Christians by various classes of calumniators and informers. It is well known that in the early ages of Christianity crimes of the most horrid nature were charged on Christians, and that it was by these slanders that the effort was made to prevent the extension of the Christian church.

Which accused them before our God. **See Barnes "Job 1:9-10"**.

The meaning is, that he accused them, as it were, in the very presence of God. *Day and night*. He never ceased bringing these accusations, and sought by the perseverance and constancy with which they were urged, to convince the world that there was no sincerity in the church, and no reality in religion.

{d} "Now" Re 11:15

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 12 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *And they overcame him*. That is, he was foiled in his attempt thus to destroy the church. The reference here, undoubtedly, is primarily to the martyr age, and to the martyr spirit; and the meaning is, that religion had not become extinct by these accusations, as Satan hoped it would be, but lived and triumphed. By their holy lives; by their faithful testimony; by their patient sufferings, they showed that all these accusations were false, and that the religion which they professed was from God, and thus in fact gained a victory over their accuser. Instead of being themselves subdued, Satan himself was vanquished, and the world was constrained to acknowledge that the persecuted religion had a heavenly origin. No design was ever more ineffectual than that of crushing the church by persecution; no victory was ever more signal than that which was gained when it could be said that "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church."

By the blood of the Lamb. The Lord Jesus—the Lamb of God. **See Barnes "Re 5:6"**; compare **See Barnes** "Joh 1:29".

The blood of Christ was that by which they were redeemed, and it was in virtue of the efficacy of the atonement that they were enabled to achieve the victory. Compare **See Barnes "Php 4:13"**.

Christ himself achieved a victory over Satan by his death, (**See Barnes "Col 2:15"**; **See Barnes** "Heb 2:15,) and it is in virtue of the victory which he thus achieved that we are now able to triumph over our great foe.

"I ask them whence their victory came;

They, with united breath,
Ascribe their conquest to the Lamb,
Their triumph to his death."

And by the word of their testimony. The faithful testimony which they bore to the truth. That is, they adhered to the truth in their sufferings; they declared their belief in it, even in the pains of martyrdom, and it was by this that they overcame the great enemy; that is, by this that the belief in the gospel was established and maintained in the world. The reference here is to the effects of persecution, and to the efforts of Satan to drive religion from the world by persecution. John says that the result, as he saw it in vision, was that the persecuted church bore a faithfull testimony to the truth, and that the great enemy was overcome.

And they loved not their lives unto the death. They did not so love their lives that they were unwilling to die as martyrs. They did not shrink back when threatened with death, but remained firm in their attachment to their Saviour, and left their dying testimony to the truth and power of religion. It was by these means that Christianity was established in the world, and John, in the scene before us, saw it thus triumphant, and saw the angels and the redeemed in heaven celebrating the triumph. The result of the attempts to destroy the Christian religion by persecution demonstrated that it was to triumph. No more mighty power could be employed to crush it than was employed by the Roman emperors; and when it was seen that Christianity could survive those efforts to crush it, it was certain that it was destined to live for ever.

{a} "overcame him" Ro 8:33,37 {b} "lives" Lu 14:26

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 12 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Therefore rejoice, ye heavens*. It is not unusual in the Scriptures to call on the heavens and the earth to sympathize with the events that occur. Compare **See Barnes "Isa 1:2"**.

Here the heavens are called on to rejoice because of the signal victory which it was seen would be achieved over the great enemy. Heaven itself was secure from any further rebellion or invasion, and the foundation was laid for a final victory over Satan everywhere.

And ye that dwell in them. The angels and the redeemed. This is an instance of the sympathy of the heavenly inhabitants—the unfallen and holy beings before the throne—with the church on earth, and with all that may affect its welfare. Compare **See Barnes "1Pe 1:12"**.

Woe to the inhabiters of the earth. This is not an imprecation, or a wish that woe might come upon them, but a prediction that it *would*. The meaning is this: Satan would ultimately be entirely overcome—a fact that was symbolized by his being cast out of heaven; but there would be still temporary war upon the earth, as if he were permitted to roam over the world for a time, and to spread woe and sorrow there.

And of the sea. Those who inhabit the islands of the sea, and those who are engaged in commerce. The meaning is, that the world as such would have occasion to mourn—the dwellers both on the land and on the sea.

For the devil is come down unto you. As if cast out of heaven.

Having great wrath. Wrath shown by the symbolical war with Michael and his angels, (Re 12:7;) wrath increased and inflamed because he has been discomfited; wrath the more concentrated because he knows that his time is limited.

Because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. That is, he knows that the time is limited in which he will be permitted to wage war with the saints on the earth. There is allusion elsewhere to the fact that the time of Satan is limited, and that he is apprised of that. Thus in Mt 8:29, "Art thou come hither to torment us *before the time?*" **See Barnes on "Mt 8:29"**.

Within that limited space, Satan knows that he must do all that he ever can do to destroy souls, and to spread woe through the earth, and hence it is not unnatural that he should be represented as excited to deeper wrath, and as rousing all his energy to destroy the church.

{c} "Therefore rejoice" Ps 96:11 Isa 49:13 {d} "Woe" Re 8:13 {e} "because he knoweth" Re 10:6

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 12 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth*. That is, when Satan saw that he was doomed to discomfiture and overthrow, *as if* he had been cast out of heaven; when he saw that his efforts must be confined to the earth, and that only for a limited time, he "persecuted the woman," and was more violently enraged against the church on earth.

He persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. **See Barnes on "Re 12:5"**.

The child is represented as safe; that is, the ultimate progress and extension of the church was certain, But Satan was permitted still to wage a warfare against the church— represented here by his wrath against the woman, and by her being constrained to flee into the wilderness. It is unnecessary to say that, after the *Pagan* persecutions ceased, and Christianity was firmly established in the empire; after Satan saw that all hope of destroying the church in that manner was at an end, his enmity was vented in another form—in the rise of the Papacy, and in the persecutions under that—in opposition to spiritual religion no less determined and deadly than that which had been waged by Paganism.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 12 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle*. The most powerful of birds, and among the most rapid in flight. **See Barnes on "Re 4:7"**.

The meaning here is, that the woman is represented as prepared for a rapid flight; so prepared as to be able to outstrip her pursuer, and to reach a place of safety. Divested of the figure, the sense is, that the church, when exposed to this form of persecution, would be protected *as if* miraculously supplied with wings.

That she might fly into the wilderness. There is here a more full description of what is briefly stated in Re 12:6. A wilderness or desert is often represented as a place of safety from pursuers. Thus David (1Sa 23:14-15) is represented as fleeing into the wilderness from the persecutions of

Saul. So Elijah (1Ki 19:4) fled into the wilderness from the persecutions of Jezebel. The simple idea here is, that the church, in the opposition which would come upon it, would find a refuge.

Into her place. A place appointed for her; that is, a place where she could be safe.

Where she is nourished. The word here rendered *nourished* is the same—*trefw*—which occurs in Re 12:6, and which is there rendered *feed*. It means to feed, nurse, or nourish, as the young of animals, (Mt 6:26 25:37; Lu 12:24 Ac 12:20;) that is, to sustain by proper food. The meaning here is, that the church would be kept alive. It is not indeed mentioned by whom this would be done, but it is evidently implied that it would be by God. During this long period in which the church would be in obscurity, it would not be suffered to become extinct. Compare 1Ki 17:3-6.

For a time, and times, and half a time. A year, two years, and half a year; that is, forty-two months, (**See Barnes on "Re 11:2"**;) or, reckoning the month at thirty days, twelve hundred and sixty days; and regarding these as prophetic days, in which a day stands for a year, twelve hundred and sixty years. For a full discussion of the meaning of this language, **see Barnes "Da 7:25"**.

It is manifest that there is an allusion here to the passage in Da 7:25 that the twelve hundred and sixty days refer to the same thing; and that the true explanation must be made in the same way. The meaning of the passage before us is, that during all the time of the continuance of that formidable, persecuting power, (the papacy) the true church would not in fact become extinct. It would be obscure and comparatively unknown, but it would still live. The fulfilment of this is found in the fact that during all the time here referred to, there has been a true church on the earth. Pure, spiritual religion—the religion of the New Testament—has never been wholly extinct. In the history of the Waldenses, and Albigenses, the Bohemian brethren, and kindred people; in deserts and places of obscurity; among individuals and among small and persecuted sects; here and there in the cases of individuals in monasteries, (All affecting instance of this kind—perhaps one of many cases that existed—is mentioned by D'Aubigne.) (B. 1. p. 79, Eng. Trans.,) which came to light on the pulling down, in the year 1776, of an old building that had formed a part of the Carthusian convent at Basle. A poor Carthusian brother, by the name of Martin, had written the following confession, which he had placed in a wooden box, and enclosed in a hole which he had made in the wall of his cell, where it was found:—"O most merciful God, I know that I can only be saved, and satisfy thy righteousness by the merit, the innocent suffering and death of thy well-beloved Son. Holy Jesus! my salvation is in thy hands. Thou canst not withdraw the hands of thy love from me: for they have created and redeemed me. Thou hast inscribed my name with a pen of iron in rich mercy, and so as nothing can efface it, on thy side, thy hands, and thy feet," etc. the true religion has been kept up in the world, as in the days of Elijah God reserved seven thousand men who had not bowed the knee to Baal: and it is possible now for us, with a good degree of certainty, to show, even during the darkest ages, and when Rome seemed to have entirely the ascendency, where the true church was. To find out this, was the great design of the Ecclesiastical History of Milner; it has been done, also, with great learning and skill, by Neander. *From the face of the serpent*. The dragon—or Satan represented by the dragon. **See Barnes on "Re 12:3"**.

The reference here is to the opposition which Satan makes to the true church under the persecutions and corruptions of the Papacy.

{f} "two wings" Isa 40:31

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 12 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood*. This is peculiar and uncommon imagery, and it is not necessary to suppose that anything like this literally occurs in nature. Some serpents are indeed said to eject from their mouths poisonous bile when they are enraged, in order to annoy their pursuers; and some sea-monsters, it is known, spout forth large quantities of water; but the representation here does not seem to be taken from either of those cases. It is the mere product of the imagination, but the sense is clear. The woman is represented as having wings, and as being able thus to escape from the serpent. But, as an expression of his wrath, and as if with the hope of destroying her in her flight by a deluge of water, he is represented as pouring a flood from his mouth, that he might, if possible, sweep her away. The figure here would well represent the continued malice of the Papal body against the true church, in those dark ages when it was sunk in obscurity, and, as it were, driven out into the desert. That malice never slumbered, but was continually manifesting itself in some new form, as if it were the purpose of Papal Rome to sweep it entirely away.

That he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. Might cause the church wholly to be destroyed. The truth taught is, that Satan leaves no effort untried to destroy the church.

{a} "flood" Isa 59:19

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 12 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *And the earth helped the woman*. The earth seemed to sympathize with the woman in her persecutions, and to interpose to save her. The meaning is, that a state of things would exist in regard to the church thus driven into obscurity, which would be well represented by what is here said to occur. It was cut off from human aid. It was still in danger; still persecuted. In this state, it was nourished from some unseen source. It was enabled to avoid the direct attacks of the enemy, and when he attacked it in a new form, a new mode of intervention in its behalf was granted, *as if* the earth should open and swallow up a flood of water. We are not, therefore, to look for any *literal* fulfilment of this, *as if* the earth interposed in some marvellous way to aid the church. The sense is, that, in that state of obscurity and solitude, the Divine interposition was manifested, in an unexpected manner, as if when an impetuous stream was rolling along that threatened to sweep everything away, a chasm should suddenly open in the earth and absorb it. During the dark ages, many such interventions occurred, saving the church from utter destruction. Over-flowing waters are often in the Scriptures an emblem of mighty enemies. Ps 124:2-5, "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us; then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us: then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul: then the proud waters had gone over our soul." Ps 18:16, "He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters." Jer 47:2, "Behold, waters rise up out of the north, and shall be an overflowing flood, and shall overflow the land," etc. Compare Jer 46:7-8. **See Barnes on "Isa 8:7-8".**

And the earth opened her mouth. A chasm was made sufficient to absorb the waters. That is, John saw that the church was safe from this attack, and that, in order to preserve it, there was an

interposition as marked and wonderful as if the earth should suddenly open and swallow up a mighty flood.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 12 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *And the dragon was wroth with the woman*. This wrath had been vented by his persecuting her, (Re 12:13;) by his pursuing her; and by his pouring out the flood of water to sweep her away, (Re 12:15,) and the same wrath was now vented against her children. As he could not reach and destroy the woman herself, he turned his indignation against all who were allied to her. Stripped of the imagery, the meaning is, that as he could not destroy the church as such, he vented his malice against all who were the friends of the church, and endeavoured to destroy them. "The church, as such, he could not destroy; therefore he turned his wrath against individual Christians, to bring as many of them as possible to death."-*De Wette*. *And went to make war with the remnant of her seed*. No mention is made before of his persecuting the children of the woman except his opposition to the "man child," which she bore, Re 12:1-4. The "woman" represents the church, and the phrase "the remnant of her seed" must refer to her scattered children, that is, to the scattered members of the church, wherever they could be found. The reference here is to persecutions against individuals, rather than a general persecution against the church itself, and all that is here said would find an ample fulfilment in the vexations and troubles of individuals in the Roman communion in the dark ages, when they evinced the spirit of pure, evangelical piety; in the cruelties practised in the Inquisition on individual Christians under the plea that they were heretics; and in the persecutions of such men as Wycliffe, John Huss, and Jerome of Prague. This warfare against individual Christians was continued long in the Papal church, and tens of thousands of true friends of the Saviour suffered every form of cruelty and wrong as the result.

Which keep the commandments of God. Who were true Christians. This phrase characterizes correctly those who, in the dark ages, were the friends of God, in the midst of abounding corruption.

And have the testimony of Jesus Christ. That is, they bore a faithful testimony to his truth, or were real *martyrs*. See Re 2:13.

The scene, then, in this chapter is this: John saw a most beautiful woman, suitably adorned, representing the church as about to be enlarged, and to become triumphant in the earth. Then he saw a great red monster, representing Satan, about to destroy the church: the Pagan power, infuriated, and putting forth its utmost energy for its destruction. He then saw the child caught up into heaven, denoting that the church would be ultimately safe, and would reign over all the world. Another vision appears. It is that of a contest between Michael, the protecting angel of the people of God, and the great foe, in which victory declares in favour of the former, and Satan suffers a discomfiture, *as if* he were cast from heaven to earth. Still, however, he is permitted for a time to carry on a warfare against the church, though certain that he would be ultimately defeated. He puts forth his power, and manifests his hostility, in another form— that of the Papacy—and commences a new opposition against the spiritual church of Christ. The church is, however, safe from that attempt to destroy it, for the woman is represented as fleeing to the wilderness beyond the power of the enemy, and is there kept alive. Still filled with rage, though incapable of destroying the true church itself,

he turns his wrath, under the form of Papal persecutions against individual Christians, and endeavours to cut them off in detail.

This is the *general* representation in this chapter, and on the supposition that it was designed to represent the various forms of opposition which Satan would make to the church of Christ, under Paganism and the Papacy, it must be admitted, I think, that no more expressive or appropriate symbols could have been chosen. This fact should be allowed to have due influence in confirming the interpretation suggested above; and if it be admitted to be a correct interpretation, it is conclusive evidence of the inspiration of the book. Further details of this opposition of Satan to the church under the Papal form of persecution are made in the subsequent chapters.

{b} "woman" Ge 3:15

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 13

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 13 - Verse 1

CHAPTER XIII

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter is closely connected with chap. xii., which is properly introductory to this and to the subsequent portions of the book to chap. xx. See the Analysis of the book. The vision in this chapter is of two distinct "beasts," each with peculiar characteristics, yet closely related, deriving their power from a common source; aiding each other in the accomplishment of the same object, and manifestly relating to the same power under different forms. To see the design of the chapter, it will be necessary to exhibit the peculiar characteristics of the two "beasts," and the points in which they resemble each other, and sustain each other.

I. The characteristics of the beasts.

A. *The characteristics of the first beast*, Re 13:1-10.

(a) It comes up out of the sea, (Re 13:1)—out of the commotion, the agitation of nations—a new power that springs up from those disturbed elements.

(b) It has seven heads, and ten horns, and upon its horns ten crowns or diadems, Re 13:1.

(c) In its general form, it resembles a leopard; its feet are like those of a bear; its mouth like that of a lion. Its connexion with the great "dragon"—with Satan—is indicated by, the statement that it derives its "power, and its seat, and its authority from him, (Re 13:2;) a striking representation of the fact that the civil or secular Roman power which supported the church of Rome through all its corrupt and bloody progress was the putting forth of the power of Satan on the earth.

(d) One of the heads of this beast is "wounded to death;" that is, with a wound that is in itself mortal. This wound is, however, in some way as yet unexplained, so healed that the vitality yet remains, and all the world pays homage to the beast, Re 13:3. A blow is aimed at this authority which seems to be fatal; and there is some healing or restorative process by which its power is recovered, and by which the universality of its dominion and influence is again restored.

(e) The effect of this is, that the world renders homage really to the "dragon," the source of this power, though in the form of adoration of the "beast," re 13:4. That is, while the outward homage is rendered to the "beast," the real worship is that of the "dragon," or Satan. This beast is regarded as

(1) incomparable—"Who is like unto the "beast?" and

(2) invincible—"Who is able to war with him?"

(f) In this form the beast is endowed with a mouth that "speaks great things and blasphemies," Re 13:5; that is, the power here referred to is arrogant, and reviles the God of heaven.

(g) The time during which he is to continue is "forty and two months;" that is, twelve hundred and sixty days, or twelve hundred and sixty years. **See Barnes "Re 11:2"**.

(h) The characteristics of this beast, and of his dominion, are these:

(1.) He opens his mouth in blasphemy against God, and his church, and all holy beings, Re 13:6.

(2.) He makes war with the saints and overcomes them, Re 13:7.

(3.) He asserts his power over all nations, Re 13:7.

(4.) He is worshipped by all that dwell on the earth, whose names are not in the book of life, Re 13:8.

(i) All are called on to hear—as if the announcement were important for the church, Re 13:9.

(j) The result or issue of the power represented by this monster, Re 13:10. It had led others into captivity, it would itself be made captive; it had been distinguished for slaying others, it would itself feel the power of the sword. Until this is accomplished, the patience and faith of the saints must be sorely tried, Re 13:10.

B. *The characteristics of the second beast*, Re 13:11-18.

(a) It comes out of the earth, (Re 13:11)—having a different origin from the former; not springing from troubled elements, as of nations at strife, but from that which is firm and established—like the solid earth.

(b) It has two horns like a lamb, but it speaks as a dragon, Re 13:11. It is apparently mild, gentle, lamb-like, and inoffensive; but it is, in fact, arrogant, haughty, and imperative.

(c) Its dominion is co-extensive with that of the first beast, and the effect of its influence is to induce the world to do homage to the first beast, Re 13:12.

(d) It has the power of performing great wonders, and particularly of deceiving the world by the "miracles" which it performs. This power is particularly manifested in restoring what might be regarded as an "image" of the beast which was wounded, though not put to death, and by giving life to that image, and causing those to be put to death who will not worship it, Re 13:13-15.

(e) This beast causes a certain mark to be affixed to all, small and great, and attempts a jurisdiction over all persons, so that none may buy or sell, or engage in any business, who have not the mark affixed to them; that is, the power represented attempts to set up a control over the commerce of the world, Re 13:16,17.

(f) The way by which the power here referred to may be known is by some proper application of the number 666. This is stated in an enigmatical form, and yet with such clearness that it is supposed that it would be sufficient to indicate the power here referred to.

II. Points in which the two beasts resemble or sustain each other. It is manifest on the slightest inspection of the characteristics of the "beasts" referred to in this chapter, that they have a close relation to each other; that, in important respects, the one is designed to sustain the other, and that

both are manifestations or embodiments of that one and the same power represented by the "dragon," Re 13:4. He is the great original source of power to both, and both are engaged in accomplishing his purposes, and are combined to keep up his dominion over the earth. The points of resemblance which it is very important to notice are the following:—

(1.) They have the same origin; that is, they both owe their power to the "dragon," and are designed to keep up his ascendency in human affairs, Re 12:3 13:2,4,12.

(2.) They have the same extent of power and dominion. \-

FIRST BEAST SECOND BEAST The world wonders after the He exercises all the power of beast, Re 13:3. They worship the first beast, Re 3:12. He the dragon and the beast causes the earth and them which dwell Re 13:4, and all that dwell therein to worship the first beast. upon the earth shall worship him Re 13:12. He has power to give Re 13:8 life unto the image of the beast

Re 13:15. He sets up jurisdiction

over the commerce of the world

Re 13:16,17

(3.) They do the same things.

First Beast Second Beast The dragon gives power to the He exercises all the power of beast, ver. 4. There is given unto the first beast, ver. 12. He does him a mouth speaking great things great wonders, ver. 13. He makes and blasphemies, ver. 5. He opens fire come down from heaven in his mouth in blasphemy against the sight of men, ver. 13. He God, ver. 6. It is given him to performs miracles, ver. 14. He make war with the saints, and to causes that as many as would not overcome them, ver. 7. worship the first beast should be

killed, ver. 15. He claims dominion

over all, vers. 16, 17.

(4.) The one is the means of healing the wounded head of the other, and of restoring its authority.

FIRST BEAST SECOND BEAST One of his heads is, as it were, Has power to heal the wound wounded to death: a wound that of the first beast, ver. 12; for it would be mortal if it were not is manifest that the *healing* healed ver. 3. comes from some influence of the

second beast.

(5.) The one restores life to the other when dying.

FIRST BEAST SECOND BEAST Is wounded, ver. 3, and his Causes an "image" of the first power manifestly becomes ex- beast- something that should hausted. resemble that, or be the same

power revived, to be made, and

to be worshipped, ver. 15.

(6.) They have the same general characteristics.

FIRST BEAST SECOND BEAST Has a mouth given him to speak Speaks like a dragon, ver. 11; great things and blasphemies, ver. deceives those that dwell upon 5; opens his mouth in blasphemy, the earth, ver. 14; is a persecut- ver. 6; blasphemes the name of ing power—causing

those who God, and his tabernacle, and his would not worship the image of people, ver. 6; makes war with the the first beast to be killed, ver. saints and overcomes them, ver. 7. 15.

From this comparison of the two beasts, the following things are plain:

(1.) That the same general power is referred to, or that they are both modifications of one general dominion on the earth: having the same origin, having the same locality, and aiming at the same result.

(2.) It is the same general domination *prolonged*; that is, the one is, in another form, but the continuation of the other.

(3.) The one becomes weak, or is in some way likely to lose its authority and power, and is revived by the other; that is, the other restores its waning authority, and sets up substantially the same dominion again over the earth, and causes the same great power to be acknowledged on the earth.

(4.) The one *runs into* the other; that is, one naturally produces, or is followed by the other.

(5.) One sustains the other.

(6.) They, therefore, have a very close relation to each other: having the same object; possessing the same general characteristics; and accomplishing substantially the same thing on the earth. What this was, will be better seen after the exposition of the chapter shall have been made. It may be sufficient here to remark, that, on the very face of this statement, it is impossible not to have the Roman power suggested to the mind, as a mighty persecuting power, in the two forms of the civil and ecclesiastical authority, both having the same origin; aiming at the same object; the one sustaining the other; and both combined to keep up the dominion of the great enemy of God and man upon the earth. It is impossible, also, not to be struck with the resemblance, in many particulars, between this vision and that of Daniel, Da 7 and to be impressed with the conviction that they are intended to refer to the same kingdom in general, and to the same events. But this will be made more manifest in the exposition of the chapter.

Verse 1. *And I stood upon the sand of the sea*. The sand upon the shore of the sea. That is, he seemed to stand there, and then had a vision of a beast rising out of the waters. The *reason* of this representation may, perhaps, have been that among the ancients the sea was regarded as the appropriate place for the origin of huge and terrible monsters. —Prof. Stuart, *in loc*. This vision strongly resembles that in Da 7:2, seq., where the prophet saw four beasts coming up in succession from the sea. **See Barnes on "Da 7:2"**.

In Daniel, the four winds of heaven are described as striving upon the great sea, (Da 7:2,) and the agitated ocean represents the nations in commotion, or in a state of disorder and anarchy, and the four beasts represent four successive kingdoms that would spring up. **See Barnes on "Da 7:2"**.

In the passage before us, John indeed describes no storm or tempest, but the sea itself, as compared with the land (**See Barnes "Re 13:11"**) represents an agitated or unsettled state of things, and we should naturally look for that in the rise of the power here referred to. If the reference be to the civil or secular Roman power that has always appeared in connexion with the Papacy, and that has always followed its designs, then it is true that it rose amidst the agitations of the world, and from a state of commotion that might well be represented by the restless ocean. The sea in either case naturally describes a nation or people, for this image is frequently so employed in the Scriptures. Compare as above, Da 7:2 Ps 65:7; Isa 60:5 Re 10:2.

The natural idea, therefore, in this passage, would be that the power that was represented by the "beast" would spring up among the nations, when restless or unsettled, like the waves of the ocean.

And saw a beast. Daniel saw four in succession, (Da 7:3-7,) all different, yet succeeding each other; John saw two in succession, yet strongly resembling each other, Re 13:1,11. On the general meaning of the word *beast—yhrion*— **See Barnes "Re 11:7"**.

The beast here is evidently a symbol of some power or kingdom that would arise in future times. **See Barnes on "Da 7:3"**.

Having seven heads. So also the dragon is represented in Re 12:3.

See Barnes on "Re 12:3".

The representation there is of Satan, as the source of all the power lodged in the two beasts that John subsequently saw. In Re 17:9, referring substantially to the same vision, it is said that "the seven heads are seven mountains;" and that there can be no difficulty, therefore, in referring this to the seven hills on which the city of Rome was built, (compare **Barnes on** "Re 12:3,) and consequently this must be regarded as designed, in some way, to be a representation of Rome.

And ten horns. See this also explained in **Barnes on "Re 12:3"**.

Compare also the more extended illustration in **Barnes on "Da 7:25"**

seq. The reference here is to Rome, or the one Roman power, contemplated as made up of ten subordinate kingdoms, and therefore subsequently to the invasion of the Northern hordes, and to the time when the Papacy was about to rise. Compare Re 17:12: "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, [marg. *kingdoms*,] which have received no kingdom as yet, but receive power as kings with the beast." For a full illustration of this, see Barnes on the close of Daniel 7.

And upon his horns ten crowns. Greek, *ten diadems*. **See Barnes on "Re 12:3"**.

These indicated dominion or authority. In Re 12:3, the "dragon is represented as having *seven* diadems on his head; here, the beast is represented as having *ten*. The dragon there represents the Roman domination *as such*, the *seven-hilled*, or *seven-headed* power, and, therefore, properly described as having *seven* diadems; the beast here represents the Roman power, as now broken up into the ten dominations which sprung up (see notes on Daniel as above) from the one original Roman power, and that became henceforward the supporters of the Papacy, and, therefore, properly represented here as having *ten* diadems. *And upon his heads the name of blasphemy*. That is, the whole power was blasphemous in its claims and pretensions. The word *blasphemy* here seems to be used in the sense that titles and attributes were claimed by it which belonged only to God. On the meaning of the word blasphemy, **See Barnes "Mt 9:3"; See Barnes "Mt 26:65"**.

The meaning here is, that each one of these heads appeared to have a frontlet, with an inscription that was blasphemous, or that ascribed some attribute to this power that properly belonged to God; and that the whole power thus assumed was in derogation of the attributes and claims of God. In regard to the propriety of this description considered as applicable to the Papacy,

See Barnes "2Th" 2:4".

{a} "beast" Da 7:2 {b} "seven heads" Re 12:3 17:3,9,12

{1} "name" "names"

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 13 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard*. For a description of the leopard, **see Barnes on "Da 7:6"**.

It is distinguished for bloodthirstiness and cruelty, and thus becomes all emblem of a fierce, tyrannical power. In its general character it resembles a lion, and the lion and the leopard are often referred to together. In this description, it is observable that John has combined in *one* animal or monster, all those which Daniel brought *successively* on the scene of action as representing different empires. Thus in Daniel (Da 7:2-7) the *lion* is introduced as the symbol of the Babylonian power; the bear, as the symbol of the Medo-Persian; the leopard, as the symbol of the Macedonian; and a nondescript animal, fierce, cruel, and mighty, with two horns, as the symbol of the Roman. **See Barnes "Da 7:2-7"**.

In John there is one animal representing the Roman power, as if it were made up of all these: a *leopard* with the feet of a *bear*, and the mouth of a *lion*, with two horns, and with the general description of a fierce monster. There was an obvious propriety in this, in speaking of the Roman power, for it was, in fact, made up of the empires represented by the other symbols in Daniel, and "combined in itself all the elements of the terrible and the oppressive, which had existed in the aggregate in the other great empires that preceded it." At the same time, there was an obvious propriety in the symbol itself; for the bloodthirstiness and cruelty of the leopard would well represent the ferocity and cruelty of the Roman power, *especially* as John saw it here as the great antagonistic power of the true church, sustaining the Papal claim, and thirsting for blood.

And his feet were as the feet of a bear. **See Barnes on "Da 7:5"**.

The idea here seems to be that of *strength*, as the strength of the bear resides much in its feet and claws. At the same time, there is the idea of a combination of fierce qualities—*as if* the bloodthirstiness, the cruelty, and the agility of the leopard were united with the strength of the bear.

And his mouth as the mouth of a lion. **See Barnes on "Da 7:4"**.

The mouth of the lion is made to seize and hold its prey, and is indicative of the character of the animal as a beast of prey. John has thus brought together the qualities of activity, bloodthirstiness, strength, ferocity, all as symbolical of the power that was intended to be represented. It is hardly necessary to say that this description is one that would apply well, in all respects, to Rome; nor is it necessary to say, that if it be supposed that he *meant* to refer to Rome, this is such a description as he would have adopted.

And the dragon. **See Barnes on "Re 12:3"**.

Gave him his power. Satan claimed, in the time of the Saviour, all power over the kingdoms of the world, and asserted that he could give them to whomsoever he pleased. **See Barnes on "Mt 4:8-9"**.

How far the power of Satan in this respect may extend, it may not be possible to determine; but it cannot be doubted that the Roman power *seemed* to have such an origin, and that in the main it was such as, on that supposition, it would be. In its arrogance and haughtiness—in its thirst for dominion—in its persecutions—it had such characteristics as we may suppose Satan would originate. If, therefore, as the whole connexion leads us to suppose this refers to the Roman secular power, considered as the support of the Papacy, there is the most evident propriety in the representation.

And the seat. *yronon*. Hence our word *throne*. The word properly means a seat; then a high seat; then a *throne*, as that on which a king sits. Here it refers to this power as exercising dominion on the earth.

And great authority. The authority *was* great. It extended over a large part of the earth, and alike in its extent and character, it was such as we may suppose Satan would set up in the world.

{c} "was like unto" Da 7:4-7 {d} "dragon" Re 12:9 {e} "seat" Re 16:10

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 13 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And I saw one of his heads, as it were wounded to death*. The phrase "wounded to death" means properly that it received a mortal wound; that is, that the wound would have been mortal if it had not been healed. A blow was struck that would be naturally fatal, but there was something that prevented the fatal result. John does not say, however, by whom the wound was inflicted, nor does he describe farther the nature of the wound. He says that "*one* of the heads" —that is, one of the seven heads—was thus wounded. In Re 17:9, he says that "the seven heads are seven mountains in which the woman sitteth." In Re 17:10, he says, "there are seven kings." And this would lead us to suppose that there were "seven" administrations, or forms of dominion, or dynasties, that were presented to the eye of John; and that while the number "seven," as applied to to the "heads," so far identified the power as to fix its location on the seven "hills," (Re 17:9) in another respect also the number "seven" suggested forms of administration or dynasties, Re 17:10. What is meant by saying that one of these heads was wounded to death has been among the most perplexing of all the inquiries pertaining to the book of Revelation. The use of the word *seven*, and the explanation in Re 17:9, make it morally certain that *Rome*, in some form of its administration, is referred to. Of this there can be no doubt, and in this all are agreed. It is not, however, the *Papal* power as such that is here referred to; for

(a) the Papal power is designated under the image of the second beast;

(b) the descriptions pertaining to the first beast are all applicable to a secular power; and

(c) there was no form of the Papal spiritual dominion which would properly correspond with what is said in Re 17:10. The reference in this place is, therefore, to Rome considered as a civil or secular power, yet Rome regarded as giving support to the second beast—the Papal power. The *general* idea here is, that a state of things would exist in regard to that power, at the time referred to, *as if* one of the seven heads of the monster should receive a wound which would be fatal, if it were not healed in some way. That is, its power would be weakened; its dominion would be curtailed, and that portion of its power would have come to an end, if there had not been something which would, as it were, restore it, and save it from the wrath that was impending, The great point of difficulty relates to the *particular* application of this; to the facts in history that would correspond with the symbol. On this there have been almost as many opinions as there have been interpreters of the Apocalypse, and there is no impropriety in saying that none of the solutions are wholly free from objection. The *main* difficulty, so far as the interpretation proposed above is concerned, is, in the fact that "*one*" of the seven heads is referred to as wounded unto death; as if one-seventh part of the power was endangered. I confess I am not able wholly to solve this difficulty; but, after all, is it certain that the meaning is that just *one-seventh part* of the power was in peril; that the blow affected just such a portion that it might be described as the one-seventh part? Is not the number *seven* so used in the Scriptures as to denote a considerable portion—a portion quite material and important? And may not all that is intended here be that John saw a wound inflicted on that

mighty power which would have been fatal if it had not been marvellously healed? And was it not true that the Roman civil and secular power was *so* waning and decaying that it might properly be represented *as if* one of the seven heads of the monster had received a fatal wound, until its power was restored by the influence of the spiritual domination of the church of Rome? If this be the correct exposition, then what is implied here may be thus stated:

(a) The general subject of the representation is the Roman power, as seen at first in its rigour and strength;

(b) then that power is said to be greatly weakened, as if one of its heads were smitten with a deadly wound;

(c) then the wound was healed—this power was restored—by being brought into alliance with the Papacy; that is, the whole Roman power over the world would have died away, if it had not been restored and perpetuated by means of this new and mighty influence, Re 13:12. Under this new form, Rome had all the power which it had ever had, and was guilty of all the atrocities of which it had ever been guilty: *it was Rome still*. Every wound that was inflicted on that power by the incursion of barbarians, and by the dividing off of parts of the empire, was healed by the Papacy, and under this form its dominion became as wide and as formidable as under its ancient mode of administration. If a more *particular* application of this is sought for, I see no reason to doubt that it may be found in the quite common interpretation of the passage given by Protestants, that the reference is to the *forms* of administration under which this power appeared in the world. The number of distinct forms of government which the Roman power assumed from first to last was the following: kings, consuls, dictators, deceivers, military tribunes, emperors. These *seven* forms of administration were, at least, sufficiently prominent and marked to be represented by this symbol, or to attract the attention of one contemplating this formidable power—for it was under these forms that its conquests had been achieved, and its dominion set up over the earth. In the time of John, and the time contemplated in this vision, all these had passed away but the *imperial*. That, too, was soon to be smitten with a deadly wound by the invasion of the Northern hordes; and that would have wholly and for ever ceased if it had not been restored— the deadly wound being healed—by the influence of the Papal power, giving Rome its former ascendency. **See Barnes on "Re 13:15".**

And his deadly wound was healed. That is, as explained above, the waning Roman secular power was restored by its connexion with the spiritual power—the Papacy. This was

(a) a simple matter of fact, that the waning secular power of Rome was thus restored by connecting itself with the spiritual or ecclesiastical power, thus prolonging what might properly be called the *Roman* domination far beyond what it would otherwise have been; and

(b) this would be *properly* represented by just the symbol employed here—the fatal wound inflicted on the head, and the healing of that wound, or preventing what would naturally be the effects. On the fulfilment of this, **see Barnes** "Re 13:15, at the close.

And all the world wondered after the beast. The word here used— *yaumazw*—means, properly, to be astonished; to be amazed; then to wonder at; then to admire and follow.—*Rob. Lex*. In Re 13:4, it is said that the world "*worshipped*" the beast; and the general idea is, that the beast received such a universal reverence, or inspired such universal awe, as to be properly called worship or adoration. There can be no doubt of the propriety of this, considered as applicable to that secular Roman power which sustained the Papacy. The homage was as wide as the limits of the Roman empire had ever been, and might be said to embrace "all the world."

{1} "wounded" "slain" {a} "wondered" Re 17:8

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 13 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast*. **See Barnes "Re 12:3"**; **See Barnes** "Re 13:2".

That is, they *in fact* worshipped him. The word *worship—troskunew*—is not always, however, used in a *religious* sense. It means, properly, *to kiss*; to kiss towards any one; that is, to kiss his own hand and to extend it towards a person, in token of respect and homage.— *Rob. Lex*. Compare Job 31:27. Then it means to show respect to one who is our superior; to kings and princes; to parents; and pre-eminently to God. **See Barnes "Mt 2:2"**.

The word may be used here to mean that homage or reverence, as to a higher power, was rendered to the "dragon;" not strictly that he was openly *worshipped* in a religious sense as God. Can any one doubt that this was the case under Papal Rome; that the power which was set up under that entire domination, civil and ecclesiastical, was such as Satan approved, and such as he sought to have established on the earth? And can any one doubt that the homage thus rendered, so contrary to the law of God, and so much in derogation of his claims, was in fact homage rendered to this presiding spirit of evil?

And they worshipped the beast. That is, they did it, as is immediately specified, by saying that he was *incomparable* and *invincible*; in other words, that he was superior to all others, and that he was almighty. For the fulfilment of this, **See Barnes on "2Th 2:4"**.

Who is like unto the beast? That is, he is to be regarded as unequalled and as supreme. This was, in fact, ascribing honours to him which belonged only to God; and this was the manner in which that civil and secular power was regarded in the period here supposed to be referred to. It was the policy of rulers and princes in those times to augment in every way possible the respect in which they were held; to maintain that they were the vicegerents of heaven; to claim for themselves sacredness of character and of person; and to secure from the people a degree of reverence which was in fact idolatrous. Never was this more marked than in the times when the Papacy had the ascendency, for it was its policy to promote reverence for the power that sustained itself, and to secure for itself the idolatrous veneration of the people.

Who is able to make war with him? That is, he is invincible. They thus attributed to him omnipotence—an attribute belonging only to God. This found a fulfilment in the honour shown to the civil authority which sustained the Papacy; for the policy was to impress the public mind with the belief that that power was invincible. In fact, it was so regarded. Nothing was able to resist that absolute despotism; and the authority of princes and rulers that were allied with the Papal rule was of the most absolute kind, and the subjugation of the world was complete. There was no civil, as there was no-religious liberty; and the whole arrangement was so ordered as to subdue the world to an absolute and uncontrollable power.

{b} "who is able" Re 17:14

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 13 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things*. John does not say *by whom* this was given; but we may suppose that it was by the "dragon," who is said (Re 13:2) to

have given him his power, and seat, and authority. The fulfilment of this is found in the claims set up by the princes and rulers here referred to—that mighty secular power that sustained the Papacy, and that was, in some sort, a part of the Papacy itself. These arrogant claims consisted in the assertion of a Divine right; in the power assumed over the liberty, the property, and the consciences of the people; in the arbitrary commands that were issued; and in the right asserted of giving absolute law. The language here used is the same as that which is found in Daniel (Da 7:8) when speaking of the little horn: "In this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things." For and illustration of the meaning of this, **see Barnes "Da 7:8"**.

Compare **See Barnes "Da 7:25"**.

And blasphemies. That is, the whole power represented by the "beast" will be blasphemous. **See Barnes "Re 13:1"**.

Compare **See Barnes "Da 7:25"**.

And power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. Three years and a half, reckoned as months; or twelve hundred and sixty days, reckoning thirty days for a month; or twelve hundred and sixty years, regarding the days as prophetic days. For the evidence that this is to be so regarded, **see Barnes on "Da 7:25"**.

This is the same period that we meet with in Re 11:2, and in Re 12:6. **See Barnes on** "Re 11:2; Re 12:6 ".

This fact proves that the same power is referred to in these places and in Daniel; and this fact may be regarded as a confirmation of the views here taken that the power here referred to is designed to have a connexion in some form with the Papacy. The duration of the existence of this power is the same as that which is everywhere ascribed to the Papacy, in the passages which refer to it; and all the circumstances, as before remarked, show that the same *general* power is referred to by the two "beasts" which are described in this chapter. If so, the continuance or duration may be supposed to be the same; and this is indicated in the passage before us, where it is said that it would be twelve hundred and sixty years. In regard to the application of this to the Papal power, and the manner in which the calculation is to be made of the duration of that power, **see Barnes "Da 7:25"**

and the remarks at the end of that chapter. The meaning in the passage before us I take to be, that the Papal power, considered as a civil or secular institution, will have, from the time when that properly commenced, a duration of twelve hundred and sixty years. In the Scriptures there is nothing more definite in regard to any future event than this.

{a} "mouth" Da 7:8,11.25 11:36

{1} "power" "make war" {b} "forty and two months" Re 11:2,3, 12:6

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 13 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name*. By his own arrogant claims; by his assumed authority in matters of conscience; by setting aside the Divine authority; and by impious declarations in derogation of the Divine claims. **See Barnes "Re 13:1"**.

And his tabernacle. Literally, "his *tent*"—*skhnhn*. This is the word which is commonly applied to the sacred tent or tabernacle among the Hebrews, in which the ark was kept, and which was the seat of the Jewish worship before the building of the temple. It is thus used to denote a place of

worship, considered as the dwelling-place of God, and is in this sense applied to heaven, Heb 8:2 9:11; Re 15:5.

It seems to be used here in a general sense to denote the place where God was worshipped; and the meaning is, that there would be a course of conduct in regard to the true church—the dwelling-place of God on the earth—which could properly be regarded as blasphemy. Let any one remember the anathemas and excommunications uttered against the Waldenses and Albigenses, and those of kindred spirit that appeared in the long period of the Papal rule, and he will find no difficulty in perceiving a complete fulfilment of all that is here said.

And them that dwell in heaven. The true worshippers; the members of the true church, represented as dwelling in this holy tabernacle. No one acquainted with the reproaches cast on the devoted and sincere followers of the Saviour, during the dark periods of the Papal rule, can fail to see that there was, in that, a complete fulfilment of all that is here predicted.

{c} "tabernacle" Col 2:9 Heb 9:11,24

{d} "that dwell" Heb 12:22,23

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 13 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *And it was given unto him*. By the same power that taught him to blaspheme God and his church. **See Barnes "Re 12:2,5"**.

To make war with the saints. See this fully illustrated in **See Barnes** "Da 7:21, and at the end of that chapter.

And to overcome them. In those wars. This was abundantly fulfilled in the wars with the Waldenses, the Albigenses, and the other sincere followers of the Saviour in the time of the Papal persecutions. The language here used is the same as that which is found in Da 7:21: "The same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them."

And power was given him. **See Barnes on "Re 13:2"**.

Over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. For the meaning of these words, **see Barnes on "Re 7:9"**.

The meaning here is, that this dominion was set up over the world. Compare Da 7:25. The fact that so large a portion of the kingdoms of the earth was under the influence of the Papacy, and sustained it; and the claim which it set up to universal dominion, and to the right of deposing kings, and giving away kingdoms, corresponds entirely with the language here used.

{e} "make war" Re 11:7 12:17; Da 7:21

{f} "power" Lu 4:6

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 13 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him*. That is, as immediately stated, all whose names are not in the book of life. On the word *worship*, **see Barnes on "Re 13:4"**.

Whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb. That is, of the Lord Jesus—the Lamb of God. **See Barnes on "Php 4:3"**.

Compare **Barnes on "Joh 1:29"**.

The representation here is, that the Lord Jesus keeps a book or register, in which are recorded the names of all who shall obtain everlasting life.

Slain from the foundation of the world. **See Barnes "Re 5:6"**.

Compare **See Barnes "Re 3:5"**.

The meaning here is, not that he was actually put to death "from the foundation of the world," but that the intention to give him for a sacrifice was formed then, and that it was so *certain* that it might be spoken of as actually then occurring. See Ro 4:17. The purpose was so certain; it was so constantly represented by bloody sacrifices from the earliest ages, all typifying the future Saviour, that it might be said that he was "slain from the foundation of the world." Prof. Stuart, however, (Com. *in loc*.,) supposes that this phrase should be connected with the former member of the sentence—" whose names are not written, from the foundation of the world, in the life-book of the Lamb which was slain." Either construction makes good sense; but it seems to me that that which is found in our common version is the most simple and natural.

{g} "book of life" Re 21:27 Da 12:1 {h} "slain from the foundation" Re 17:8

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 13 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *If any man have an ear, let him hear*. **See Barnes on "Re 2:7"**.

The idea here is, that what was here said respecting the "beast" was worthy of special attention, as it pertained to most important events in the history of the church.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 13 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *He that leadeth into captivity*. This is clearly intended to refer to the power or government which is denoted by the beast. The form of the expression here in the Greek is peculiar—"if any one leadeth into captivity," etc.—*Ei tiv aicmalwsian sunagei*. The statement is *general*, and it is intended to make use of a general or prevalent truth with reference to this particular case. The general truth is, that men will, in the course of things, be dealt with according to their character and their treatment of others; that nations characterized by war and conquest will be subject to the evils of war and conquest—or that they may expect to share the same lot which they have brought on others. This general statement accords with what the Saviour says in Mt 26:52: "All they that take the sword, shall perish with the sword." This has been abundantly illustrated in the world; and it is a very important admonition to nations not to indulge in the purposes of conquest, and to individuals not to engage in strife and litigation. The particular idea here is, that it would be a characteristic of the power here referred to, that it would "lead others into captivity." This would be fulfilled if it was the characteristic of this power to invade other countries, and to make their inhabitants prisoners of war; if it made slaves of other people; if it set up an unjust dominion over

other people; or if it was distinguished for persecuting and imprisoning the innocent, or for depriving the nations of liberty. It is unnecessary to say that this is strikingly descriptive of Rome— considered in any and every point of view—whether under the republic or the empire; whether secular or ecclesiastical; whether Pagan or Papal. In the following forms there has been a complete fulfilment under that mighty power of what is here said:

(a) In the desire of conquest, or of extending its dominion, and, of course, leading others captive as prisoners of war, or subjecting them to slavery.

(b) In its persecutions of true Christians—alike pursued under the Pagan and the Papal form of the administration.

(c) Especially in the imprisonments practised under the Inquisition— where tens of thousands have been reduced to the worst kind of captivity. In every way this description is applicable to Rome, as seeking to lead the world *captive*, or to subject it to its own absolute sway.

Shall go into captivity. As a just recompense for subjecting others to bondage, and as an illustration of a general principle of the Divine administration. This is yet, in a great measure, to be fulfilled; and, as I understand it, it discloses the manner in which the Papal secular power will come to an end. It will be by being subdued, so that it might *seem* to be made captive, and led off by some victorious host. Rome now is practically held in subjection by foreign arms, and has no true independence; perhaps this will be more and more so as its ultimate fall approaches.

He that killeth with the sword. **See Barnes on "Mt 26:52"**.

There can be no doubt that this is applicable to Rome in all the forms of its administration considered as a Pagan power, or considered as a nominally Christian power; either with reference to its secular or its spiritual dominion. Compute the numbers of human beings that have been put to death by that Roman power; and no better language could have been chosen to characterize it than that which is here used—"killeth with the sword." Compare **See Barnes** "Da 7:24, seq.

Must be killed with the sword. This domination must be brought to an end by war and slaughter. Nothing is more probable than this in itself; nothing could be more in accordance with the principles of the Divine dealings in the world. Such a power as that of Rome will not be likely to be overcome but by the force of arms; and the probability is, that it will ultimately be overthrown in a bloody revolution, or by foreign conquest. Indeed, there are not a few intimations now that this result is hastening on. Italy is becoming impatient of the secular power swayed in connexion with the Papacy, and sighs for freedom; and it is every way probable that that land would have been free, and that the secular power of the Papacy, if not every form of the Papacy itself, would have come to an end, in the late convulsion (1848) if it had not been for the intervention of France and Austria. The period designated by prophecy for the final overthrow of that power had not arrived; but nothing can secure its continuance for any very considerable period longer.

Here is the patience and the faith of the saints. That is, the trial of their patience and of their faith. Nowhere on earth have the patience and the faith of the saints been put to a severer test than under the Roman persecutions. The same idea occurs in Re 14:12.

{a} "that leadeth" Isa 33:1 {b} "he that killeth" Ge 9:6 {c} "patience" Heb 6:12

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 13 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *And I beheld another beast*. Compare **See Barnes "Re 13:1"**.

This was so distinct from the first that its characteristics could be described, though, there was, in many points, a strong resemblance between them. The relations between the two will be more fully indicated in the Notes.

Coming up out of the earth. Prof. Stuart renders this, "ascending from the land." The former was represented as rising up out of the sea, (Re 13:1;) indicating that the power was to rise from a perturbed or unsettled state of affairs—like the ocean. This, from that which was more settled and stable—as the land is more firm than the waters. It may not be necessary to carry out this image; but the *natural* idea as applied to the two forms of the Roman power supposed to be here referred to, would be that the former—the secular power that sustained the Papacy—rose out of the agitated state of the nations in the invasions of the Northern hordes, and the convulsions and revolutions of the falling empire of Rome; and that the latter, the spiritual power itself —represented by the beast coming up from the land—grew up under the more settled and stable order of things. It was comparatively calm in its origin, and had less the appearance of a frightful monster rising up from the agitated ocean. Compare **See Barnes "Re 13:1"**.

And he had two horns like a lamb. In some respects he resembled a lamb; that is, he seemed to be a mild, gentle, inoffensive animal. It is hardly necessary to say that this is a most striking representation of the actual manner in which the power of the Papacy has always been put forth—putting on the apparent gentleness of the lamb; or laying claim to great meekness and humility, even when deposing kings, and giving away crowns, and driving thousands to the stake, or throwing them into the dungeons of the Inquisition.

And he spake as a dragon. **See Barnes on "Re 12:3"**.

The meaning here is, that he spake in a harsh, haughty, proud, arrogant tone—as we should suppose a dragon would if he had the power of utterance. The general sense is, that while this "beast" had, in one respect—in its resemblance to a lamb—the appearance of great gentleness, meekness, and kindness, it had, in another respect, a haughty, imperious, and arrogant spirit. How appropriate this is, as a symbol, to represent the Papacy, considered as a spiritual power, it is unnecessary to say. It will be admitted, whatever may be thought of the design of this symbol, that if it was in fact *intended* to refer to the Papacy, a more appropriate one could not have been chosen.

{d} "another beast" Re 11:7

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 13 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him*. The same amount of power; the same kind of power. This shows a remarkable *relationship* between these two beasts; and proves that it was intended to refer to the same power substantially, though manifested in a different form. In the fulfilment of this, we should naturally look for some government whose authority extended far, and which was absolute and arrogant in its character, for this is the power attributed to the first beast. **See Barnes** "Re 13:2, seq. This description had a remarkable fulfilment in the Papacy, considered as a spiritual dominion. The relation to the secular power is the same as would be indicated by these two beasts; the dominion was as wide-spread; the authority was as absolute and arrogant. In fact, on these points they have been identical. The one has sustained the

other; either one would long since have fallen if it had not been upheld by the other. The Papacy, considered as a spiritual domination, was in fact a new power starting up in the same place as the old Roman dominion, to give life to that as it was tending to decay, and to continue its ascendency over the world. These two things, the secular and the spiritual power, constituting *the Papacy* in the proper sense of the term, are in fact but the continuance or the prolongation of the old Roman dominion—the fourth kingdom of Daniel—united so as to constitute in reality but one kingdom, and yet so distinct in their origin, and in their manifestations, as to be capable of separate contemplation and description, and thus properly represented by the two "beasts" that were shown in vision to John.

And causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast. That is, to respect, to reverence, to honour. The word *worship* here refers to *civil* respect, and not to *religious* adoration. **See Barnes on "Re 13:4"**.

The meaning here, according to the interpretation proposed all along in this chapter, is, that the Papacy, considered in its religious influence, or as a spiritual power—represented by the second beast—secured for the civil or secular power—represented by the first beast—the homage of the world. It was the means of keeping up that dominion, and of giving it its ascendency among the nations of the earth. The truth of this, as an historical fact, is well known. The Roman civil power would have long ago lost all its influence and been unknown, if it had not been for the Papacy; and, in fact, all the influence which it has had since the irruption of the Northern barbarians, and the changes which their invasion produced, can be traced to that new power which arose in the form of the Papacy—represented in Daniel (Da 7:8) by the "little horn." That new power gave life and energy to the declining influence of Rome, and brought the world again to respect and honour its authority.

Whose deadly wound was healed. **See Barnes on "Re 13:3"**.

That is, was healed by the influence of this new power represented by the second beast. A state of things occurred, on the rise of that new power, *as if* a wound in the head, otherwise fatal, was healed. The striking applicability of this to the decaying Roman power—smitten as with a deadly wound by the blows inflicted by the Northern hordes, and by internal dissensions—will occur to every one. It was as if a healing process had been imparted by some life-giving power, and, as a consequence, the Roman dominion—the prolongation of Daniel's fourth kingdom—has continued to the present time. Other kingdoms passed away—the Assyrian, the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Macedonian; Rome alone, of all the ancient empires, has prolonged its power over men. In all changes elsewhere, an influence has gone forth from the seven-hilled city as wide and as fearful as it was in the brightest days of the republic, the triumvirate, or the empire, and a large part of the world still listens reverently to the mandates which issue from the seat which so long gave law to mankind. The fact that it is so is to be traced solely to the influence of that power represented here by the second beast that appeared in vision to John—the Papacy.

{e} "wound was healed" Re 13:3

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 13 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *And he doeth great wonders*. *Signs—shmeia*—the word commonly employed to denote *miracles*, **See Barnes on "Ac 2:19"**; and the representation here is, that the power referred to by the second beast would found its claim on pretended miracles, and would accomplish an effect on the world *as if* it actually did work miracles. The applicability of this to Papal Rome no one can doubt. **See Barnes on "2Th 2:9"**.

Compare Re 13:14.

That he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. That is, he pretends to do this; he accomplishes an effect *as if* he did it. It is not necessary to suppose that he actually did this, any more than it is to suppose that he actually performed the other pretended miracles referred to in other places. John describes him as he saw him in the vision; and he saw him laying claim to this power, and actually producing an effect *as if* by a miracle he actually made fire descend from heaven upon the earth. This is to be understood as included in what the apostle Paul (2Th 2:9) calls "signs and lying wonders," as among the things by which the "man of sin and the son of perdition" would be characterized, and by which he would be sustained. **See Barnes on "2Th 2:9"**.

Why this particular pretended miracle is specified here is not certain. It may be because this would be among the most striking and impressive of the pretended miracles wrought—as if lying beyond all human power—as Elijah made fire come down from heaven to consume the sacrifice, (1Ki 18:37-38,) and as the apostles proposed to do on the Samaritans, (Lu 9:54,) *as if* fire were called down on them from heaven. The phrase "in the sight of men" implies that this would be done publicly, and is such language as would be used of pretended miracles designed for purposes of ostentation. Amidst the multitudes of pretended miracles of the Papacy, it would probably not be difficult to find instances in which the very thing here described was attempted, in which various devices of pyrotechnics were shown off as miracles. For an illustration of the wonders produced in the dark ages in reference to fire, having all the appearance of miracles, and regarded as miracles by the masses of men, the reader is referred to Dr. Brewster's *Letters on Natural Magic*, particularly Letter xii.

{a} "great wonders" Mt 24:24 2Th 2:9,10

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 13 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles*. Nothing could possibly be more descriptive of the Papacy than this. It has been kept up by deception and delusion, and its pretended miracles have been, and are to this day, the means by which this is done. Any one in the slightest degree acquainted with the pretended miracles practised at Rome, will see the propriety of this description as applied to the Papacy. The main fact here stated, that the Papacy would endeavour to sustain itself by pretended miracles, is confirmed by an incidental remark of Mr. Gibbon, when, speaking of the pontificate of Gregory the Great, he says, "The credulity, or the prudence of Gregory, was always disposed to confirm the truths of religion by the evidence of ghosts, *miracles*, and resurrections."—*Dec. and Fall.* iii. 210. Even within a month of the time that I am writing, (October 5, 1850,) intelligence has been received in this country of extraordinary privileges conferred on some city in Italy, because the eyes of a picture of the Virgin in that city have miraculously moved—greatly to the "confirmation of the faithful." Such things are constantly

occurring; and it is by these that the supremacy of the Papacy has been and is sustained. The "Breviary" teems with examples of miracles wrought by the saints, For instance: St. Francis Xavier turned a sufficient quantity of salt water into fresh to save the lives of five hundred travellers who were dying of thirst, enough being left to allow a large exportation to different parts of the world, where it wrought astonishing cures. St. Raymond de Pennaloft laid his cloak on the sea, and sailed from Majorca to Barcelona, a distance of a hundred and sixty miles, in six hours. St. Juliana lay on her death-bed; her stomach rejected all solid food, and in consequence she was prevented from receiving the Eucharist. In compliance with her earnest solicitations, the consecrated wafer was laid on her breast; the priest prayed; the wafer vanished, and Juliana expired. Many pages might be filled with accounts of modern miracles, of the most ridiculous description, yet believed by Roman Catholics—the undoubted means by which Papal Rome "deceives the world," and keeps up its ascendency in this age. See Forsyth's *Italy*, ii. pp. 154-157; *Rome in the Nineteenth Century*, i. p. 40, 86, ii. p. 356, iii. pp. 193-201; Lady Morgan's *Italy*, ii. p. 306, iii. p. 189; Graham's *Three Months' Residence*, etc., p. 241.

Saying to them that dwell on the earth. That is, as far as its influence would extend. This implies that there would be *authority*, and that this authority would be exercised to secure this object.

That they should make an image to the beast. That is, something that would *represent* the beast, and that might be an object of worship. The word rendered *image—eikwn*—means properly

(a) an image, effigy, figure, as an *idol* image or figure;

(b) a likeness, resemblance, similitude. Here the meaning would seem to be, that, in order to secure the acknowledgment of the beast, and the homage to be rendered to him, there was something like a statue made, or that John saw in vision such a representation; that is, that a state of things existed *as if* such a statue were made, and men were constrained to acknowledge this. All that is stated here would be fulfilled if the old Roman civil power should become to a large extent dead, or cease to exert its influence over men, and if then the Papal spiritual power should cause a form of domination to exist, *strongly resembling* the former in its general character and extent, and if it should secure this result—that the world would acknowledge its sway, or render it homage as it did to the old Roman government. This would receive its fulfilment if it be supposed that the first "beast" represented the ancient Roman civil power as such; that this died away—as if the head had received a fatal wound; that it was again revived under the influence of the Papacy; and that, under that influence, a civil government *strongly resembling* the old Roman dominion was caused to exist, depending for its vital energy on the Papacy, and, in its turn, lending its aid to support the Papacy. All this *in fact* occurred in the decline of the Roman power after the time of Constantine, and its final apparent extinction, as if "wounded to death," in the exile of the last of the emperors, the son of Orestes, who assumed the names of Romulus and Augustus, names which were corrupted, the former by the Greeks into *Momyllus*, and the latter by the Latins "into the contemptible diminutive *Augustulus*." See Gibbon, ii, 381. Under him the empire ceased, until it was revived in the days of Charlemagne. In the empire which then sprung up, and which owed much of its influence to the sustaining aid of the Papacy, and which seems to have been made to sustain the Papacy, we discern the "image" of the former Roman power; the prolongation of the Roman ascendency over the world. On the exile of the feeble son of Orestes, (A.D. 476,) the government passed into the hands of Odoacer, "the first Barbarian who reigned in Italy," (*Gibbon*;) and then the authority was divided among the sovereignties which sprang up after the conquests of the Barbarians, until the "empire" was again restored in the time and the person of Charlemagne. See Gibbon, iii. 344, seq.

Which had the wound by a sword, and did live. Which had a wound that was naturally fatal, but whose fatal consequences were prevented by the intervention of another power. **See Barnes "Re 13:3".**

That is, according to the explanation given above, the Roman imperial power was "wounded with a fatal wound" by the invasions of the Northern hordes—the sword of the conquerors. Its power, however, was restored by the Papacy, giving life to that which *resembled* essentially the Roman civil jurisdiction—the "image" of the former beast; and that power, thus restored, asserted its dominion again, as the prolonged Roman dominion—the fourth kingdom of Daniel—over the world. **See Barnes "Da 7:19"**

seq.

{b} "wound" Re 13:3,12

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 13 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast*. That is, that image of the beast would be naturally powerless, or would have no life in itself. The second beast, however, had power to impart life to it, so that it would be invested with authority, and would exercise that authority in the manner specified. If this refers, as is supposed, to the Roman civil power—the power of the empire restored —it would find a fulfilment in some act of the Papacy by which the empire that resembled in the extent of its jurisdiction, and in its general character, the former Roman empire, received some vivifying impulse, or was invested with new power. That is, it would have power conferred on it through the Papacy which it would not have in itself, and which would confirm its jurisdiction. How far events actually occurred corresponding with this, will be considered in the Notes at the close of this verse.

That the image of the beast should both speak. Should give signs of life; should issue authoritative commands. The *speaking* here referred to pertains to that which is immediately specified, in issuing a command that they who "would not worship the image of the beast should be killed."

And cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast. Would not honour it, or acknowledge its authority. The "worship" here referred to is *civil*, not *religious* homage, **See Barnes "Re 13:4".**

The meaning is, that what is here called the "image of the beast" had power given it, by its connexion with the second "beast," to set up its jurisdiction over men, and to secure their allegiance on pain of death. The power by which this was done was derived from the second beast; the obedience and homage demanded was of the most entire and submissive character; the nature of the government was in a high degree arbitrary; and the penalty enforced for refusing this homage was death. The *facts* that we are to look for in the fulfilment of this are,

(1.) that the Roman imperial power was about to expire—as if wounded to death by the sword;

(2.) that this was revived in the form of what is here called the "image of the beast"—that is, in a form closely resembling the former power;

(3.) that this was done by the agency of the Papal power, represented by the second beast;

(4.) that the effect of this was to set up over men a wide-extended secular jurisdiction, of a most arbitrary and absolute kind, where the penalty of disobedience to its laws was death, and where the

infliction of this was, in fact, to be traced to the influence of the second beast— that is, the Papal spiritual power. The question now is, whether *facts* occurred that corresponded with this emblematic representation. Now, as to the leading fact, the decline of the Roman imperial power —the fatal wound inflicted on that by the "sword" there can be no doubt. In the time of "Augustulus," as above stated, it had become practically extinct—"wounded as it were to death," and *so* wounded that it would never have been revived again had it not been for some foreign influence. It is true also, that, when the Papacy arose, the necessity was felt of allying itself with some wide-extended civil or secular dominion, that might be under its own control, and that would maintain its spiritual authority. It is true, also, that the empire was revived—the very "image" or copy, so far as it could be, of the former Roman power, in the time of Charlemagne, and that the power which was wielded in what was called the "empire," was that which was, in a great measure, derived from the Papacy, and was designed to sustain the Papacy, and was actually employed for that purpose. These are the main facts, I suppose, which are here referred to, and a few extracts from Mr. Gibbon will show with what propriety and accuracy the symbols here employed were used, on the supposition that this was the designed reference.

(a) The rise, or restoration of this imperial power in the time and the person of Charlemagne. Mr. Gibbon says, (iii. 362,) "It was after the Nicene synod, and under the reign of the pious Irene, that the Popes consummated the separation of Rome and Italy [from the Eastern empire] *by the translation of the empire* to the less orthodox Charlemagne. They were compelled to choose between the rival nations; religion was not the sole motive of their choice; and while they dissembled the failings of their friends, they beheld with reluctance and suspicion the Catholic virtues of their foes. The difference of language and manners had perpetuated the enmity of the two capitals, [Rome and Constantinople;] and they were alienated from each other by the hostile opposition of seventy years. In that schism, the Romans had tasted of freedom, and the Popes of sovereignty: their submission would have exposed them to the revenge of a jealous tyrant, and the revolution of Italy had betrayed the importance as well as the tyranny of the Byzantine court." Mr. Gibbon then proceeds to state reasons why *Charlemagne* was selected as the one who was to be placed at the head of the revived imperial power, and then adds, (p. 343,) "The title of patrician was below the merit and greatness of Charlemagne; and it was only by reviving the Western empire that they could pay their obligations, or secure their establishment. By this decisive measure they would finally eradicate the claims of the Greeks; from the debasement of a provincial town the majesty of Rome would be restored; the Latin Christians would be united under a supreme head in their ancient metropolis; *and the conquerors of the West would receive their crown from the successors of St. Peter. The Roman church would acquire a zealous and respectable advocate*; and, under the shadow of the Carlovingian power, the bishop might exercise, with honour and safety, the government of the city." All this seems as if it were a *designed* commentary on such expressions as these: "And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast, and causeth the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed," "saying to them that dwell on the earth that they should make an image to the beast which had the wound by a sword, and did live; and he had power to give life unto the image of the beast," etc.

(b) Its extent. It is said, (Re 13:12,) "And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed." Compare Re 13:14-15. That is, the *extent* of the jurisdiction of the revived power, or the restored empire, would be as great as it was before the wound was inflicted. Of the extent of the

restored empire under Charlemagne, Mr. Gibbon has given a full account, iii. pp. 546-549. The passage is too long to be copied here in full, and a summary of it only can be given. He says, "The empire was not unworthy of its title; and some of the fairest kingdoms of Europe were the patrimony or the conquest of a prince who reigned at the same time in France, Spain, Italy, Germany, and Hungary.

I. The Roman province of Gaul had been transformed into the name and monarchy of FRANCE, etc.

II. The Saracens had been expelled from France by the grandfather and father of Charlemagne, but they still possessed the greatest part of Spain, from the rock of Gibraltar to the Pyrenees. Amidst their civil divisions, an Arabian emir of Saragossa implored his protection in the diet of Paderborn. Charlemagne undertook the expedition, restored the emir, and, without distinction of faith, impartially crushed the resistance of the Christians, and rewarded the obedience and service of the Mohammedans. In his absence he instituted the *Spanish March*, which extended from the Pyrenees to the river Ebro: Barcelona was the residence of the French governor; he possessed the counties of *Rousillon* and *Catalonia*; and the infant kingdoms of *Navarre* and *Arragon* were subject to his jurisdiction.

III. As king of the Lombards, and patrician of Rome, he reigned over the greatest part of ITALY, a tract of a thousand miles from the Alps to the borders of Calabria, etc.

IV. Charlemagne was the first who united GERMANY under the same sceptre, etc.

V. He retaliated on the Avars, or Huns of Pannonia, the same calamities which they had inflicted on the nations: the royal residence of the Chagan was left desolate and unknown; and the treasures, the rapine of two hundred and fifty years, enriched the victorious troops, or decorated the churches of Italy and Gaul. "If we retrace the outlines of the geographical picture," continues Mr. Gibbon, "it will be seen that the empire of the Franks extended, between the east and the west, from the Ebro to the Elbe, or Vistula; between the north and the south, from the duchy of Beneventum to the river Eyder, the perpetual boundary of Germany and Denmark. Two-thirds of the Western empire were subject to Charlemagne, and the deficiency was amply supplied by his command of the inaccessible or invincible nations of Germany."

(c) The dependence of this civil or revived secular power on the Papacy. "His deadly wound was healed." "And causeth the earth to worship the first beast." "Saying to them that dwell on the earth that they should make an image to the beast." "He had power to give life unto the image of the beast." Thus Mr. Gibbon (iii. 343) says, "From the debasement of a provincial town, the majesty of Rome would be restored; the Latin Christiana would be united under a supreme head, in their ancient metropolis; *and the conquerors of the West would receive their crown from the successors of St. Peter*." And again (iii. 344) he says, "On the festival of Christmas, the last year of the eighth century, Charlemagne appeared in the church of St. Peter; and to gratify the vanity of Rome, he exchanged the simple dress of his country for the habit of a patrician. After the celebration of the holy mysteries, Leo *suddenly placed a precious crown on his head*, and the dome resounded with the acclamations of the people, 'Long life and victory to Charles, the most pious Augustus, *crowned by God the great and pacific emperor of the Romans*!' The head and body of Charlemagne were consecrated by the royal unction; his coronation oath represents a promise to maintain the faith and privileges of the church; and the first-fruits are paid in rich offerings to the shrine of the apostle. In his familiar conversation the emperor protested his ignorance of the intentions of Leo, which he would have disappointed by his absence on that memorable day. But the preparations of the ceremony

must have disclosed the secret; and the journey of Charlemagne reveals his knowledge and expectation; he had acknowledged that the imperial title was the object of his ambition, and a Roman senate had pronounced that it was the only adequate reward of his merit and services." So again Mr. Gibbon, (iii. 360,) speaking of the conquests of Otho, (A.D. 962,) and of his victorious march over the Alps, and his subjugation of Italy, says, "From that memorable era, two maxims of public jurisprudence were introduced by force, and ratified by time.

I. That the prince who was elected by the German diet, acquired from that instant the subject kingdoms of Italy and Rome.

II. But that he might not legally assume the titles of emperor and Augustus, *till he had received the crown from the hands of the Roman pontiff*." In connexion with these quotations from Mr. Gibbon, we may add, from Sigonius, the oath which the emperor took on the occasion of his coronation: "I, the Emperor, do engage and promise, in the name of Christ, before God and the blessed apostle Peter, that I will be a protector and defender of this holy Church of Rome, in all things wherein I can be useful to it, so far as Divine assistance shall enable me, and so far as my knowledge and power can reach." Quoted by Prof. Bush, Hieroph. Nov. 1842, p. 141. We learn, also, from the biographers of Charlemagne that a commemorative coin was struck at Rome under his reign, bearing this inscription, "Renovatio Imperil Romani."— "*Revival of the Roman Empire*," ibid. These quotations, whose authority will not be questioned, and whose authors will not be suspected of having had any design to illustrate these passages in the Apocalypse, will serve to confirm what is said in the Notes of the decline and restoration of the Roman secular power; of its dependence on the Papacy to give it life and rigour; and of the fact that it was designed to sustain the Papacy, and to perpetuate the power of Rome. It needs only to be added, that down to the time of Charles the Fifth— the period of the Reformation—nothing was more remarkable in history than the readiness of this restored secular power to sustain the Papacy and to carry out its designs; or than the readiness of the Papacy to sustain an absolute civil despotism, and to make the world subject to it by suppressing all attempts in favour of civil liberty.

{1} "life" "breath" {a} "worship the beast" Re 16:2

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 13 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *And he caused all*. He claims jurisdiction, in the matters here referred to, over all classes of persons, and compels them to do his will. This is the second beast, and, according to the interpretation given above, it relates to the Papal power, and to its claim of universal jurisdiction.

Both small and great. All these expressions are designed to denote *universality*—referring to various divisions into which the human family may be regarded as divided. One of those divisions is into "small and great;" that is, into young and old; those small in stature and those large in stature; those of humble, and those of elevated rank.

Rich and poor. Another way of dividing the human race, and denoting here, as in the former case, *all*—for it is a common method, in speaking of mankind, to describe them as "the rich and poor."

Free and bond. Another method still of dividing the human race embracing *all*—for all the dwellers upon the earth are either free or bond. These various forms of expression, therefore, are

designed merely to denote, in an emphatic manner, *universality*. The idea is, that, in the matter referred to, none were exempt, either on account of their exalted rank, or on account of their humble condition; either because they were so mighty as to be beyond control, or so mean and humble as to be beneath notice. And if this refers to the Papacy, every one will see the propriety of the description. The jurisdiction set up by that power has been as absolute over kings as over the feeble and the poor; over masters and their slaves; alike over those in the humblest and in the most elevated walks of life.

To receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads. The word here rendered *mark—caragma*—occurs only in one place in the New Testament except in the book of Revelation, (Ac 17:29,) where it is rendered *graven*. In all the other places where it is found, (Re 13:16-17 14:9,11 15:2, 16:2 19:20 20:4) it is rendered *mark*, and is applied to the same thing—the "mark of the beast." The word properly means something graven or sculptured; hence

(a) a graving, sculpture, sculptured work, as images or idols;

(b) a mark cut in or stamped—as the stamp on coin. Applied to men, it was used to denote some stamp or mark on the hand or elsewhere—as in the case of a servant on whose hand or arm the name of the master was impressed; or of a soldier on whom some mark was impressed denoting the company or phalanx to which he belonged. It was no uncommon thing to mark slaves or soldiers in this way; and the design was either to denote their ownership or rank, or to prevent their escaping so as not to be detected. (Among the Romans, slaves were stigmatized with the master's name or mark on their foreheads. So Valerius Maximus speaks of the custom for slaves "literatum notis inuri;" and Plautus calls the slave "literatus." Ambrose (De Obit. Valentin.) says, Charactere Domini inscribuntur servuli. Petronius mentions the forehead as the place of the mark: Servitia ecce in frontibus cernitis. In many cases, soldiers bore the emperor's name or mark imprinted on the hand. Actius says, Stigmata vocant quae in facie, vel in alia parte corporis, inscribuntur; qualia sunt militum in manibus. So Ambrose says, Nomine imperatoris signantur milites. Compare **See Barnes "Ga 6:17".**

) Most of us have seen such marks made on the hands or arms of sailors, in which, by a voluntary *tattooing*, their names, or the names of their vessels, were written, or the figure of an anchor, or some other device, was indelibly made by punctures in the skin, and by inserting some kind of colouring matter. The thing which it is here said was engraven on the hand or the forehead was the "name" of the beast, or the "number" of his name, Re 13:17. That is, the "name" or the "number" was so indelibly inscribed either on the hand or the forehead, as to show that he who bare it appertained to the "beast," and was subject to his authority—as a slave is to his master, or a soldier to his commander. Applied to the Papacy, the meaning is, that there would be some mark of distinction; some indelible sign; something which would designate, with entire certainty, those persons who belonged to it, and who were subject to it. It is hardly necessary to say that, in point of fact, this has eminently characterized the Papacy. All possible care has been taken to designate with accuracy those who belong to that communion, and all over the world it is easy to distinguish those who render allegiance to the Papal power. Compare **See Barnes on "Re 7:3".**

{1} "receive a mark" "give them"

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 13 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *And that no man might buy or sell*. That is, this mighty power would claim jurisdiction over the traffic of the world, and endeavour to make it tributary to its own purposes. Compare Re 18:11-13,17-19.

This is represented by saying that no one might" buy or sell" except by its permission; and it is clear that where this power exists of determining who may "buy and sell," there is absolute control over the wealth of the world.

Save he that had the mark. To keep it all among its own friends; among those who showed allegiance to this power.

Or the name of the beast. That is, the "mark" referred to was *either* the name of the beast, *or* the number of his name. The meaning is, that he had something branded on him that showed that he belonged to the beast—as a slave had the name of his master; in other words, there was something that certainly showed that he was subject to its authority.

Or the number of his name. In regard to what is denoted by the *number* of the beast, **See Barnes on "Re 13:18"**.

The idea here is, that that "number;" whatever it was, was so marked on him as to show to whom he belonged. According to the interpretation here proposed, the meaning of this passage is, that the Papacy would claim jurisdiction over traffic and commerce; or would endeavour to bring it under its control, and make it subservient to its own ends. Traffic or commerce is one of the principal means by which property is acquired, and he who has the control of this has, to a great degree, the control of the wealth of a nation; and the question now is, whether any such jurisdiction has been set up, or whether any such control has in fact been exercised, so that the wealth of the world has been subject to Papal Rome. For a more full illustration of this I may refer to **See Barnes** "Re 18:11, seq.; but at present it may be sufficient to remark that the manifest aim of the Papacy in all its history has been to control the world, and to get dominion over its wealth, in order that it might accomplish its own purposes. But, besides this, there have been numerous specified acts more particularly designed to control the business of "buying and selling." It has been common in Rome to prohibit, by express law, all traffic with heretics. Thus a canon of the Lateran council, under Pope Alexander III., commanded that no man should entertain or cherish them in his house or land, or *traffic* with them.—Hard, vi. it. 1684. The synod of Tours, under the same Pope Alexander, passed the law that no man should presume to receive or assist the heretics, no, not so much as to exercise commerce with them in *selling* or *buying*. And so, too, the Constance council, as expressed in Pope Martin's bull.—Elliott, iii. 220, 221.

{a} "number of his name" Re 15:2

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 13 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *Here is wisdom*. That is, in what is stated respecting the name and the number of the name of the beast. The idea is, either that there would be need of peculiar sagacity in determining what the "number" of the "beast" or of his "name" was, or that peculiar "wisdom" was shown by the fact that the number could be thus expressed. The language used in the verse would lead the

reader to suppose that the attempt to make out the "number" was not absolutely *hopeless*, but that the number was so far enigmatical as to require much skill in determining its meaning. It may also be implied that, for some reason, there was true "wisdom" in designating the name by this number, either because a more direct and explicit statement might expose him who made it to persecution, and it showed practical wisdom thus to guard against this danger; or because there was "wisdom" or skill shown in the fact that a number could be found which would thus correspond with the name. On either of these suppositions, peculiar wisdom would be required in deciphering its meaning.

Let him that hath understanding. Implying

(a) that it was *practicable* to "count the number of the name;" and

(b) that it would require uncommon skill to do it. It could not be successfully attempted by all; but still there were those who might do it. This is such language as would be used respecting some difficult matter, but where there was hope that, by diligent application of the mind, and by the exercise of a sound understanding, there would be a prospect of success.

Count the number of the beast. In Re 13:16, it is "the number of his name." The word here rendered "count"— *qhfisatw*—means, properly, to count or reckon with pebbles, or counters; then to reckon, to estimate. The word here means *compute*; that is, ascertain the exact import of the number, so as to identify the beast. The "number" is that which is immediately specified, "six hundred threescore and six"—666. The phrase "the number of the beast" means, that somehow this number was so connected with the beast, or would so represent its name or character, that the "beast" would be identified by its proper application. The mention in Re 13:17 of "the name of the beast," and "the *number* of his name," shows that this "number" was somehow connected with his proper designation, so that by this he would be identified. The plain meaning is, that the number 666 would be so connected with his *name*, or with that which would properly designate him, that it could be determined who was meant by finding that number in his name or in his proper designation. This is the exercise of the skill or wisdom to which the writer here refers: substantially that which is required in the solution of a riddle or a conundrum. If it should be said here that this is undignified and unworthy of an inspired book, it may be replied

(a) that there might be some important reason why the name or designation should not be more plainly made;

(b) that it was important, nevertheless, that it should be so made that it would be possible to ascertain who was referred to;

(c) that this should be done only in some way which would involve the principle of the enigma—"where a known thing was concealed under obscure language"—*Webster's Dic*.;

(d) that the use of symbols, emblems, hieroglyphics, and riddles was common in the early periods of the world; and

(e) that it was no uncommon thing in ancient times, as it is in modern, to test the capacity and skill of men by their ability to unfold the meaning of proverbs, riddles, and dark sayings. Compare the riddle of Samson, Jud 14:12, seq. See also Ps 49:4 78:2; Eze 17:2-8

Pr 1:2-6 Da 8:23 It would be a *sufficient* vindication of the method adopted here if it was certain or probable that a direct and explicit statement of what was meant would have been attended with immediate danger, and if the object could be secured by an enigmatical form.

For it is the number of a man. Various interpretations of this have been proposed. Clericus renders it, "The number is small, or not such as cannot be estimated by a man." Rosenmuller, "The number indicates *a man*, or a certain race of men." Prof. Stuart, "The number is to be computed

more humano, not *more angelico*;" "it is a man's number." De Wette, "It is such a number as is commonly reckoned or designated by men." Other interpretations may be seen in Poole's *Synopsis*. That which is proposed by Rosenmuller, however, meets all the circumstances of the case. The idea is, evidently, that the number indicates or refers to a certain man, or order of men. It does not pertain to a brute, or to angelic beings. Thus it would be understood by one merely interpreting the language, and thus the connexion demands.

And his number is six hundred threescore and six. The number of his name, Re 13:17. This cannot be supposed to mean that his name would be composed of six hundred and sixty-six letters; and it must, therefore, mean that somehow the number 666 would be expressed by his name in some well-understood method of computation. The *number* here—six hundred and sixty-six—is, in Walton's *Polyglott*, written out in full: *Exakosioi exakonta ex*. In Wetstein, Griesbach, Hahn, Tittmann, and the common Greek text, it is expressed by the characters *cxv*=666. There can be no doubt that this is the correct number, though, in the time of Ireneaus, there was in some copies another reading—*civ*=616. This reading was adopted by the expositor Tychonius; but against this, Ireneaus inveighs.—Lib, v. c. 30. There can be no doubt that the number 666 is the correct reading, though it would seem that this was sometimes expressed in letters, and sometimes written in full. Wetstein supposes that *both* methods were used by John; that in the first copy of his book he used the letters, and in a subsequent copy wrote it in full. This inquiry is not of material consequence.

It need not be said that much has been written on this mysterious "number," and that very different theories have been adopted in regard to its application. For the views which have been entertained on the subject, the reader may consult, with advantage, the article in Calmet's *Dic*., under the word *Antichrist*. It was natural for Calmet, being a Roman Catholic, to endeavour to show that the interpretations have been so various, that there could be no certainty in the application, and especially in the common application to the Papacy. In endeavouring to ascertain the meaning of the passage, the following *general* remarks may be made, as containing the result of the investigation thus far:

(a) There was some *mystery* in the matter—some designed concealment—some reason why a more explicit statement was not adopted. The reason of this is not stated; but it may not be improper to suppose that it arose from something in the circumstances of the writer, and that the adoption of this enigmatical expression was designed to avoid some peril to which he or others might be exposed if there were a more explicit statement.

(b) It is implied, nevertheless, that it *could be* understood; that is, that the meaning was not so obscure that, by proper study, the designed reference could not be ascertained without material danger of error.

(c) It required *skill* to do this; either natural sagacity, or particular skill in interpreting hieroglyphics and symbols, or uncommon spiritual discernment.

(d) Some man, or order of men, is referred to that could properly be designated in this manner.

(e) The method of designating persons obscurely by a reference to the numerical signification of the letters in their names was not very uncommon, and was one that was not unlikely, in the circumstances of the case, to have been resorted to by John. "Thus, among the Pagans, the Egyptian mystics spoke of Mercury, or Thouth, under the name 1218, because the Greek letters composing the word Thouth, when estimated by their numerical value, together made up that number. By others, Jupiter was invoked under the mystical number 717; because the letters of 'H APXH—*Beginning*, or *First Origin*, which was a characteristic of the supreme deity worshipped

as Jupiter, made up that number. And Apollo under the number 608, as being that of *huv* or *uhv*, words expressing certain solar attributes. Again, the pseudo-Christian or semi-Pagan Gnostics, from St. John's time and downwards, affixed to their gems and amulets, of which multitudes remain to the present day, the mystic word *abrasax* [*abrasax*] or *abraxav* [*abraxas*] under the idea of some magic virtue attaching to its number 365, as being that of the days of the annual solar circle," etc. See other instances referred to in Elliott, iii. 205. These facts show that John would not be unlikely to adopt some such method of expressing a sentiment which it was designed should be obscure in form, but possible to be understood. It should be added here, that this was more common among the Jews than among any other people.

(f) It seems clear that some *Greek* word is here referred to, and that the mystic number is to be found in some word of that language. The *reasons* for this opinion are these:

(1) John was writing in Greek, and it is most natural to suppose that this would be the reference;

(2) he expected that his book would be read by those who understood the Greek language, and it would have been unnatural to have increased the perplexity in understanding what he referred to by introducing a word of a foreign language;

(3) the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, and not those of the Hebrew, are expressly selected by the Saviour, to denote his eternity—

"I am Alpha and Omega," Re 1:8,11; and

(4) the numerals by which the enigma is expressed—*cxv*— are Greek. It has indeed been supposed by many that the solution is to be found in the Hebrew language, but these reasons seem to me to show conclusively that we are to look for the solution in some *Greek* word.

The question now is, whether there is any word which corresponds with these conditions, and which would naturally be referred to by John in this manner. The exposition thus far has led us to suppose that the Papacy in some form is referred to; and the inquiry now is, whether there is any word which is so certain and determinate as to make it probable that John meant to designate that. The word *Lateinov—Lateinos, the Latin* [Man]—actually has all the conditions supposed in the interpretation of this passage. From this word the number specified—666—is made out as follows:—

D	A	T	E	I	N	O	S
30	1	300	5	10	50	70	200=666.

In support of the opinion that this is the word intended to be referred to, the following suggestions may be made:

(a) It is a Greek word.

(b) It expresses the exact number, and corresponds in this respect with the language used by John.

(c) It was early suggested as the probable meaning, and by those who lived near the time of John; who were intimately acquainted with the Greek language; and who may be supposed to have been familiar with this mode of writing. Thus it was suggested by Irenaeus, who says, "It seems to me very probable; for this is a name of the last of Daniel's four kingdoms; they being *Latins* that now reign." It is true that he also mentions two other words as those which *may* be meant—*euanyav*, a word which had been suggested by others, but concerning which he makes no remarks and which, of course, must have been destitute of any probability in his view; and *teitan*; which he thinks has

the clearest claims for admission— though he speaks of the word *Lateinos* as having a claim of probability.

(d) This word would properly denote the Roman power, or the then *Latin* power, and would refer to that dominion as a Latin dominion—as it properly was; and if it be supposed that it was intended to refer to that, and, at the same time, that there should be some degree of obscurity about it, this would be more likely to be selected than the word *Roman*, which was better known; and

(e) there was a *special* propriety in this on the supposition that it was intended to refer to the *Papal* Latin power. The most *appropriate* appellation, if it was designed to refer to Rome as a *civil* power, would undoubtedly have been the word *Roman*; but if it was intended to refer to the *ecclesiastical* power, or to the Papacy, this is the *very* word to express the idea. In earlier times the more common appellation was *Roman*. This continued until the separation of the Eastern and Western empires, when the Eastern was called the *Greek*, and the Western the *Latin*; or when the Eastern empire assumed the name of *Roman*, and affixed to the Western kingdoms one and all that were connected with Rome the appellation of *Latin*. This appellation, originally applied to the *language* only, was adopted by the Western kingdoms, and came to be that by which they were best designated. It was the Latin world, the Latin kingdom, the Latin church, the Latin patriarch, the Latin clergy, the Latin councils. To use Dr. Mores words, "They *Latinize* everything: mass, prayers, hymns, litanies, canons, decretals, bulls, are conceived in Latin. The Papal councils speak in Latin, women themselves pray in Latin. The Scriptures are read in no other language under the Papacy than Latin. In short, all things are Latin." With what propriety, then, might John, under the influence of inspiration, speak, in this enigmatical manner, of the new power that was symbolized by the beast as *Latin*.

The only objection to this solution that has been suggested is that the orthography of the Greek word is *latinov*—*Latinos*—and not *lateinov*—*Lateinos*—giving the number 616, and not 666; and Bellarmine asserts that this is the uniform method of spelling in Greek authors. All that is necessary in reply to this, is to copy the following remark from Prof. Stuart, vol. it. p. 456: "As to the form of the Greek word *lateinov* [*Lateinos*,] viz., that *ei*** is employed for the Latin long *i* it is a sufficient vindication of it to cite *sabeinov, fausteinov, pauleinov, lntwneinov, lteiliov, meteiliov, papeeriov, oueibiov*, etc. Or we may refer to the custom of the more ancient Latin, as in Plautus, of writing *i* by *ei*; e.g., solitei, Diveis, captivei, preimus, Lateina, etc." See this point examined further, in Elliott, iii. 210-213.

As a matter of historical interest, it may be observed that the solution of the difficulty has been sought in numerous other words, and the friends of the Papacy, and the enemies of the Bible, have endeavoured to show that such terms are so numerous that there can be no certainty in the application. Thus Calmet, (*Dic*., art. *Antichrist*,) after enumerating many of these terms, says, "The number 666 is found in names the most sacred, the most opposite to Antichrist. The wisest and best way is to be silent."

We have seen that, besides the name *Lateinos*, two other words had been referred to in the time of Irenaeus. Some of the words in which the mysterious number has been since supposed to be found are the following:—

HEBREW

Neron Caesar = 50+200+6+50, and 100+60+200 = ... 666

Diocles Augustus (Dioclesian) = ... DCLXVI.

C. F. Julianus Ceasar Atheus (the Apostate) = ... DCLXVI.
Luther —
HEB
? = 200+400+30+6+30 = ... 666
Lampetis, *lampetiv* = 30+1+40+80+5+300+10+200 = ... 666
h latinh basileia = 8+30+1+300+10+50+8+2+1+200+10+30+5+10+1 = 666
italika ekklhsia = 10+300+1+30+10+20+1+5+20+20+30+8+200+10+1= 666
lpostathv (the Apostate) = 1+80+70+6+1+300+8+200 = ... 666

HEB
(Roman, sc. *Sedes*) = 200+6+40+10+10+400 = ... 666

HEB
(Romanus, sc. *Man*) = 200+40+70+50+6+300 = ... 666

It will be admitted that many of these, and others that might be named, are fanciful, and perhaps had their origin in a determination, on the one hand, to find *Rome* referred to somehow, or in a determination, on the other hand, equally strong, *not* to find this; but still it is remarkable how many of the most obvious solutions refer to Rome and the Papacy. But the mind need not be distracted, nor need doubt be thrown over the subject, by the *number* of the solutions proposed. They show the restless character of the human mind, and the ingenuity of men; but this should not be allowed to bring into doubt a solution that is simple and natural, and that meets all the circumstances of the case. Such a solution, I believe, is found in the word *lateinov—Lateinos*, as illustrated above; and as that, if correct, settles the case, it is unnecessary to pursue the matter further. Those who are disposed to do so, however, may find ample illustration in Calmer, *Dict*., Art. *Antichrist*; Elliott, *Horoe Apoca*. iii. 207-221; Prof. Stuart, *Com*. vol. ii., *Excursus*, iv.; *Bibiotheca Sacra*, i. 84-86; Robert Fleming on the *Rise and Fall of the Papacy*, 28, seq.; De Wette, *Exegetisches Handbuch*, 37. T., iii. 140-142; Vitringa, *Com*. 625-637, *Excursus*, iv.; *Nov. Tes. Edi. Koppianoe*, vol. x. b, pp. 235-265; and the Commentaries generally.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 14

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 14 - Verse 1

CHAPTER XIV
ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER

IN the previous chapters (12,13) there is a description of the woes and sorrows which, for a long period, would come upon the church, and which would threaten to destroy it. It was proper that this gloomy picture should be relieved, and accordingly this chapter, having much of the aspect of an episode, is thrown in to comfort the hearts of those who should see those troublous times. There were bright scenes beyond, and it was important to direct the eye to them, that the hearts of

the sad might be consoled. This chapter, therefore, contains a succession of symbolical representations designed to show the ultimate result of all these things—"to hold out the symbols of ultimate and certain victory."—Prof. Stuart. Those symbols are the following:—

(1.) The vision of the hundred and forty-four thousand on Mount Zion, as emblematic of the final triumph of the redeemed, Re 14:1-5. They have the Father's name in their foreheads, Re 14:1; they sing a song of victory, Re 14:2,3; they are found without fault before God's representatives, in this respect, of all that will be saved, Re 14:4,5.

(2.) The vision of the final triumph of the gospel, Re 14:6,7. An angel is seen flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to all that dwell upon the earth, and announcing that the end is near: a representation designed to show that the gospel will be thus preached among all nations; and when that is done, the time will draw on when the affairs of the world will be wound up.

(3.) The fall of Babylon, the mighty Antichristian power, Re 14:8. An angel is seen going forth announcing the glad tidings that this mighty power is overthrown, and that, therefore, its oppressions are come to an end. This, to the church in trouble and persecution, is one of the most comforting of all the assurances that God makes in regard to the future.

(4.) The certain and final destruction of all the upholders of that Antichristian power, Re 14:9-12. Another angel is seen making proclamation that all the supporters and abettors of this formidable power would drink of the wine of the wrath of God; that they would be tormented with fire and brimstone; and that the smoke of their torment would ascend up for ever and ever.

(5.) The blessedness of all those who die in the Lord; who, amidst the persecutions and trials that were to come upon the church, would be found faithful unto death, Re 14:13. They would rest from their labours; the works of mercy which they had done on the earth would follow them to the future world, securing rich and eternal blessings there.

(6.) The final overthrow of all the enemies of the church, Re 14:14-20. This is the grand completion; to this all things are tending; this will be certainly accomplished in due time. This is represented under various emblems:

(a) The Son of man appears seated on a cloud, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle—emblem of gathering in the great harvest of the earth, and of his own glorious reign in heaven, Re 14:14.

(b) An angel is seen coming out of the temple, announcing that the time had come, and calling on the great Reaper to thrust in his sickle, for the harvest of the world was ripe, Re 14:15.

(c) He that has the sickle thrusts in his sickle to reap the great harvest, Re 14:16.

(d) Another angel is seen representing the final judgment of God on the wicked, Re 16:17-20. He also has a sharp sickle; he is commanded by an angel that has power over fire to thrust in his sickle into the earth; he goes forth and gathers the clusters of the vine of the earth, and casts them into the great wine-press of the wrath of God.

This whole chapter, therefore, is designed to relieve the gloom of the former representations. The *action* of the grand moving panorama is stayed that the mind may not be overwhelmed with gloomy thoughts, but that it may be cheered with the assurance of the final triumph of truth and righteousness. The chapter, viewed in this light, is introduced with great artistic skill, as well as great beauty of poetic illustration; and, in its place, it is adapted to set forth this great truth, that, to the righteous, and to the church at large, in the darkest times, and with the most threatening prospect

of calamity and sorrow, there is the certainty of final victory, and that this should be allowed to cheer and sustain the soul.

Verse 1 *And I looked*. My attention was drawn to a new vision. The eye was turned away from the beast and his image to the heavenly world—the Mount Zion above.

And, lo, a Lamb. **See Barnes on "Re 5:6"**.

Stood on the mount Sion. That is, in heaven. **See Barnes "Heb 12:22"**.

Zion, literally the southern hill in the city of Jerusalem, was a name also given to the whole city; and, as that was the seat of the Divine worship on earth, it became an emblem of heaven—the dwelling-place of God. The scene of the vision here is laid in heaven, for it is a vision of the ultimate triumph of the redeemed, designed to sustain the church in view of the trials that had already come upon it, and of those which were yet to come.

And with him an hundred forty and four thousand. These are evidently the same persons that were seen in the vision recorded in Re 7:3-8, and the representation is made for the same purpose—to sustain the church in trial, with the certainty of its future glory. **See Barnes "Re 7:4"**.

Having his Father's name written in their foreheads. Showing that they were his. **See Barnes "Re 7:3"**; **See Barnes "Re 13:16"**.

In Re 7:3, it is merely said that they were "sealed in their foreheads" The passage here shows *how* they were sealed. They had the name of God so stamped or marked on their foreheads as to show that they belonged to him. Compare **Barnes on** "Re 7:3, seq.

{a} "a Lamb" Re 5:12 {b} "one hundred and forty-four thousand" Re 7:4 {c} "Father's name" Re 3:12

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 14 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And I heard a voice from heaven*. Showing that the scene is laid in heaven, but that John in the vision was on the earth.

As the voice of many waters. As the sound of the ocean, or of a mighty cataract. That is, it was so loud that it could be heard from heaven to earth. No comparison could express this more sublimely than to say that it was like the roar of the ocean.

As the voice of a great thunder. As the loud sound of thunder.

And I heard the voice of harpers. In heaven: the song of redemption accompanied with strains of sweet instrumental music. For a description of the *harp*. **See Barnes "Isa 5:12"**.

Harping with their harps. Playing on their harps. This image gives new beauty to the description. Though the sound was loud and swelling, so loud that it could be heard on the earth, yet it was not mere shouting, or merely a tumultuous cry. "It was like the sweetness of symphonious harps." The music of heaven, though elevated and joyous, is sweet and harmonious; and perhaps one of the best representations of heaven on earth is the effect produced on the soul by strains of sweet and solemn music.

{d} "voice" Re 19:6 {e} "harping" Re 5:8,9

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 14 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And they sung as it were a new song*. **See Barnes on "Re 5:9"**.

It was proper to call this "*new*," because it was on a new occasion, or pertained to a new object. The song here was in celebration of the complete redemption of the church, and was the song to be sung in view of its final triumph over all its foes. Compare **Barnes on "Re 7:9"**; **See Barnes** "Re 7:10".

Before the throne. The throne of God in heaven. **See Barnes "Re 4:2"**.

And before the four beasts. **See Barnes on "Re 4:6-8"**.

And the elders. **See Barnes on "Re 4:4"**.

And no man could learn that song, etc. None could understand it but the redeemed. That is, none who had not been redeemed could enter fully into the feelings and sympathies of those who were. A great truth is taught here. To appreciate fully the songs of Zion; to understand the language of praise; to enter into the spirit of the truths which pertain to redemption; one must himself have been redeemed by the blood of Christ. He must have known what it is to be a sinner under the condemnation of a holy law; he must have known what it is to be in danger of eternal death; he must have experienced the joys of pardon, or he can never understand, in its true import, the language used by the redeemed. And this is only saying what we are familiar with in other things. He who is saved from peril; he who is rescued from long captivity; he who is pardoned at the foot of the scaffold; he who is recovered from dangerous illness; he who presses to his bosom a beloved child just rescued from a watery grave, will have an appreciation of the language of joy and triumph which he can never understand who has not been placed in such circumstances: but of all the joy ever experienced in the universe, so far as we can see, that must be the most sublime and transporting which will be experienced when the redeemed shall stand on Mount Zion above, and shall realize that they are *saved*.

{f} "new song" Re 15:3 {g} "one hundred and forty-four thousand" Re 14:1

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 14 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *These are they*. In this verse, and in the following verse, the writer states the leading characteristics of those who are saved. The *general* idea is, that they are chaste; that they are the followers of the Lamb; that they are redeemed from among men; and that they are without guile.

Which were not defiled with women. Who were chaste. The word *defiled* here determines the meaning of the passage, as denoting that they were not guilty of illicit intercourse with women. It is unnecessary to show that this is a virtue everywhere required in the Bible, and everywhere stated as among the characteristics of the redeemed. On no point are there more frequent exhortations in the Scriptures than on this; on no point is there more solicitude manifested that the professed friends of the Saviour should be without blame. Compare **Barnes on "Ac 15:20; Ro 1:24-32; 1Co 6:18; Heb 13:4"**.

See also 1Co 5:1 6:13; Ga 5:19 Eph 5:3; Col 3:5 1Th 4:3, This passage cannot be adduced in favour of celibacy, whether among the clergy or laity, or in favour of monastic principles in any form; for the thing that is specified is that they were not "*defiled* with women," and a lawful connexion of the sexes, such as marriage, is *not* defilement. **See Barnes on "Heb 13:4"**.

The word here rendered *defiled—emolunyhsan*, from *molunw*—is a word that cannot be applied to the marriage relation. It means properly *to soil, to stain, to defile*. 1Co 8:7: "Their conscience being weak, is *defiled*." Re 3:4: "Which have not *defiled* their garments." The word does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament, except in the passage before us, and it will be seen at once that it cannot be applied to that which is lawful and proper, and consequently that it cannot be construed as an expression against marriage and in favour of celibacy. It is a word that is properly expressive of illicit intercourse—of impurity and unchastity of life—and the statement is, that they who are saved are not impure and unchaste.

For they are virgins. *paryenoi*. This is the masculine form, but this form is found in the later Greek and in the Christian fathers. See Suidas and Suicer, *Thes*. The meaning of the word, when found in the feminine form, is well understood. It denotes a virgin, a maiden, and thence it is used to denote that which is chaste and pure: virgin modesty; virgin gold; virgin soil; virgin blush; virgin shame. The word in the masculine form must have a similar meaning as applied to men, and may denote

(a) those who are unmarried;

(b) those who are chaste and pure in general. The word is applied by Suidas to Abel and Melchizedek. "The sense," says De Wette, *in loc*., "cannot be that all these 144,000 had lived an unmarried life; for how could the apostle Peter, and others who were married, have been excluded? But the reference must be to those who held themselves from all impurity— *unkeuschheit und hurerei*—which, in the view of the apostles, was closely connected with idolatry." Compare Bleek, Beitr. i. 185. Prof. Stuart supposes that the main reference here is to those who had kept themselves from idolatry, and who were thus pure. It seems to me, however, that the most obvious meaning is the correct one, that it refers to the redeemed as chaste, and thus brings into view one of the prominent things in which Christians are distinguished from the devotees of nearly every other form of religion, and, indeed, exclusively from the world at large. This passage, also, cannot be adduced in favour of the monastic system, because

(a) whatever may be said anywhere of the purity of virgins, there is no *such* commendation of it as to imply that the married life is impure;

(b) it cannot be supposed that God meant in any way to reflect on the married life as in itself impure or dishonourable;

(c) the language does not demand such an interpretation; and

(d) the *facts* in regard to the monastic life have shown that it has had very little pretensions to a claim of virgin purity.

These are they which follow the Lamb. This is another characteristic of those who are redeemed—that they are followers of the Lamb of God. That is, they are his disciples; they imitate his example; they obey his instructions; they yield to his laws; they receive him as their counsellor and their guide. **See Barnes on "**Joh 10:3, **See Barnes "Joh 3:27"**.

Whithersoever he goeth. As sheep follow the shepherd. Compare Ps 23:1-2. It is one characteristic of true Christians that they follow the Saviour *wherever* he leads them. Be it into trouble, into danger, into difficult duty; be it in Christian or heathen lands; be it in pleasant paths, or in roads rough and difficult, they commit themselves wholly to his guidance, and submit themselves wholly to his will.

These were redeemed from among men. This is another characteristic of those who are seen on Mount Zion. They are there *because* they are redeemed, and they have the character of the redeemed.

They are not there in virtue of rank or blood, (Joh 1:13;) not on the ground of their own works, (Tit 3:5;) but because they are redeemed unto God by the blood of his Son. **See Barnes on "Re 5:9"**; **See Barnes** "Re 5:10".

None will be there of whom it cannot be said that they are "redeemed;" none will be absent who have been truly redeemed from sin.

Being the first-fruits unto God. On the meaning of the word *first-fruits*, **see Barnes on "1Co 15:20"**.

The meaning here would seem to be, that the hundred and forty-four thousand were not to be regarded as the *whole* of the number that was saved, but that they were *representatives* of the redeemed. They had the same characteristics which all the redeemed must have; they were a pledge that all the redeemed would be there. Prof. Stuart supposes that the sense is, that they were, as it were, "an offering peculiarly acceptable to God." The former explanation, however, meets all the circumstances of the case, and is more in accordance with the usual meaning of the word.

And to the Lamb. They stood there as redeemed by him, thus honouring him as their Redeemer, and showing forth his glory.

{h} "virgins" So 1:3 6:8; 2Co 11:2

{a} "follow the lamb" Joh 10:27 {1} "redeemed" "bought" 1Co 6:20 {b} "first fruits" Jas 1:18

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 14 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And in their mouth was found no guile*. No deceit, fraud, hypocrisy. They were sincerely and truly what they professed to be—the children of God. This is the last characteristic which is given of them as redeemed, and it is not necessary to say that this is always represented as one of the characteristics of the true children of God. **See Barnes "Joh 1:47"**.

For they are without fault before the throne of God. The word here rendered *without fault—amwmoi*—means, properly, *spotless*, *without blemish*, 1Pe 1:19. **See Barnes on "Col 1:22"**.

This cannot be construed as meaning that they were by nature pure and holy, but only that they were pure as they stood before the throne of God in heaven—"having washed their robes, and made them pure in the blood of the Lamb." **See Barnes on "Re 7:14"**.

It will be certainly true that all who stand there will be, in fact, pure, for nothing impure or unholy shall enter there, Re 21:27.

The *design* of this portion of the chapter was evidently to comfort those to whom the book, was addressed, and, in the same way, to comfort all the children of God in times of persecution and trial. Those living in the time of John were suffering persecution, and, in the previous chapters, he had described more fearful trials yet to come on the church. In these trials, therefore, present and prospective, there was a propriety in fixing the thoughts on the final triumph of the redeemed—that glorious state in heaven where all persecution shall cease, and where all the ransomed of the Lord shall stand before his throne. What could be better fitted than this view to sustain the souls of the persecuted and the sorrowful? And how often since in the history of the church—in the dark times of religious declension and of persecution—has there been occasion to seek consolation in this bright view of heaven! How often in the life of each believer, when sorrows come upon him like a flood, and earthly consolation is gone, is there occasion to look to that blessed world where all the redeemed shall stand before God; where all tears shall be wiped away from every face; and

where there shall be the assurance that the last pang has been endured, and that the soul is to be happy for ever!

{c} "no guile" Ps 32:2 {d} "without fault" Eph 5:27 Jude 1:24

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 14 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *And I saw another angel*. This must, of course, mean a different one from some one mentioned before; but no such angel is referred to in the previous chapters, unless we go back to Re 12:7. It is not necessary, however, to suppose that John refers to a particular angel immediately preceding this. In the course of these visions he had seen many angels; and now, accustomed to these visions, he says that he saw "another" one employed in a remarkable embassy, whose message was fitted to cheer the hearts of the desponding, and to support the souls of the persecuted and the sad—for his appearing was the pledge that the gospel would be ultimately preached to all that dwell upon the earth. The *design* of this vision is, therefore, substantially the same as the former—to cheer the heart, and to sustain the courage and the faith of the church, in the persecutions and trials which were yet to come, by the assurance that the gospel would be ultimately triumphant.

Fly in the midst of heaven. In the air; so as to appear to be moving along the face of the sky. The scene cannot be *in* heaven, as the gospel is not to be preached there; but the word must denote heaven as it appears to us— the sky. Prof. Stuart renders it correctly, "mid-air." He is represented as *flying*, to denote the rapidity with which the gospel would spread through the world in that future period referred to. Compare **See Barnes "Isa 6:2"**.

Having the everlasting gospel. The gospel is here called everlasting or eternal,

(a) because its great truths have always existed, or it is conformed to eternal truth;

(b) because it will for ever remain unchanged—not being liable to fluctuation like the opinions held by men;

(c) because its effects will be everlasting—in the redemption of the soul and the joys of heaven. In all the glorious eternity before the redeemed, they will be but developing the effects of that gospel on their own hearts, and enjoying the results of it in the presence of God.

To preach unto them that dwell on the earth. To all men—as is immediately specified. Compare Mt 28:19 Mr 16:15.

And to every nation, and kindred, etc. To all classes and conditions of men; to all men, without any distinction or exception. **See Barnes "Re 7:9"**.

The truth here taught is, that the gospel is to be preached to all men as on an equality, without any reference to their rank, their character, or their complexion; and it is implied also, that at the time referred to this will be done. *When* that time will be the writer does not intimate farther than that it would be *after* the beast and his adherents had attempted to stay its progress; and for the fulfilment of this, therefore, we are to look to a period subsequent to the rise and fall of that great Antichristian power symbolized by the beast and his image. This is in entire accordance with the prediction in Daniel. **See Barnes on** "Da 7:19, seq.

{e} "everlasting gospel" 2Sa 23:5 Isa 40:8 {f} "to every nation" Eph 3:9

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 14 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Saying with a loud voice*. As if all the nations were summoned to hear.

Fear God. That is, reverence, honour, obey God. Render homage not to the beast, to his image, or to *any* idol, but to the only true God. This is the *substance* of the gospel—its end and design—to turn men from all forms of idol worship and superstition, to the worship of the only true God.

And give glory to him. To give glory to him is to acknowledge him as the only true God; to set up his pure worship in the heart; and to praise him as the great Ruler of heaven and earth.

For the hour of his judgment is come. His judgment on the beast and on those who worship him. The imagery here is substantially the same as in Da 7:9-10,14,26-27, and there can be no doubt that there is reference to the same subject. **See Barnes on** "Da 7:9, seq. The main idea is, that when God shall be about to cause his gospel to spread through the world, there will be, as it were, a solemn judgment on that Antichristian power which had so long resisted his truth and persecuted his saints, and that on the fall of that power his own kingdom will be set up on the earth; that is, in the language of Daniel, "the kingdom, and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High."

And worship him that made heaven, and earth, etc. The true God, the Creator of all things. As already remarked, this is the ultimate design of the gospel, and, when this is accomplished, the great end for which it was revealed will be reached.

The design of this portion of the chapter, (Re 14:6-7,) also, was to comfort those to whom the book was addressed, and in the same way to comfort the church in all the persecution and opposition Which the truth would encounter. The ground of consolation then was, that a time was predicted when the "everlasting gospel" would be made to fly speedily through the earth, and when it would be announced that a final judgment had come upon the Antichristian power which had prevented its being before diffused over the face of the world. The same ground of encouragement and consolation exists now, and the more so as we see the day approaching; and in all times of despondency we should allow our hearts to be cheered as we see that great Antichristian power waning, and as we see evidence that the way is thus preparing for the rapid and universal diffusion of the pure gospel of Christ.

{g} "the hour" Re 15:4

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 14 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *And there followed another angel*. That is, in the vision. It is not necessary to suppose that this would, in the fulfilment, succeed the other *in time*. The chapter is made up of a number of representations, all designed to illustrate the same general thing, and to produce the same general effect on the mind—that the gospel would be finally triumphant, and that, therefore, the hearts of the troubled and the afflicted should be comforted. The representation in this verse, bearing on this point, is, that Babylon, the great enemy, would fall to rise no more.

Babylon. This is the first time that the word *Babylon* occurs in this book, though it is repeatedly mentioned afterwards, Re 16:19 17:5, 18:2,10,21.

In reference to the literal Babylon, the word is used, in the New Testament, in, Mt 1:11-13 Ac 7:43; 1Pe 5:13.

Babylon was a well-known city on the Euphrates, and was, in the days of its pride and glory, the head of the heathen world. In reference to the meaning of the word in this place, it may be remarked.

(1) that the general characteristics of Babylon were, that it was proud, haughty, insolent, oppressive. It was chiefly known and remembered by the Hebrew people as a power that had invaded the Holy Land; that had reduced its capital and temple to ruins; that had destroyed the independence of their country, subjecting it to the condition of a province, and that had carried away the inhabitants into a long and painful captivity. It became, therefore, the emblem of all that was haughty and oppressive, and especially of all that persecuted the church of God.

(2.) The word must be used here to denote some power that resembled the ancient and literal Babylon in these characteristics. The literal Babylon was no more; but the name might be properly used to denote a similar power. We are to seek, therefore, in the application of this, for some power that had the same general characteristics which the literal Babylon had.

(3.) In inquiring, then, what is referred to here by the word Babylon, we may remark

(a) that it could not be the *literal* Babylon on the Euphrates, for the whole representation here is of something *future*, and the literal Babylon had long since disappeared, never, according to the prophecies, to be rebuilt. **See Barnes** "Isa 13:20, seq.

(b) All the circumstances require us to understand this of Rome—at some period of its history: for Rome, like Babylon, was the seat of empire, and the head of the heathen world; Rome was characterized by many of the same attributes as Babylon, being arrogant, proud, oppressive; Rome, like Babylon, was distinguished for its conquests, and for the fact that it made all other nations subject to its control; Rome had been, like Babylon, a desolating power, having destroyed the capital of the Holy Land, and burnt its beautiful temple, and reduced the country to a province. Rome, like Babylon of old, was the most formidable power with which the church had to contend. Yet

(c) it is not, I suppose, Rome considered as *Pagan* that is here meant; but Rome considered as the prolongation of the ancient power in the *Papal* form. Alike in this book and in Daniel, Rome, Pagan and Papal, is regarded as *one* power, standing in direct opposition to the gospel of Christ; resisting its progress in the world; and preventing its final prevalence. See Barnes on Daniel 7. When that falls, the last enemy of the church will be destroyed, and the final triumph of the true religion will be speedy and complete. See Da 7:26-27.

(d) So it was understood among the early Christians. Mr. Gibbon, speaking of the expectations of the early Christians about the end of the world, and the glory of the literal reign of the Messiah, says, "While the happiness and glory of a temporal reign were promised to the disciples of Christ, the most dreadful calamities were denounced against an unbelieving world. The edification of the New Jerusalem was to advance by equal steps with the destruction of the mystic Babylon; and as long as the emperors who reigned before Constantine persisted in the profession of idolatry, the epithet of Babylon was applied to the city and to the empire of Rome," i. p. 263.

Is fallen. That is, an event appeared in vision, *as if* a mighty city fell to rise no more.

Is fallen. This is repeated to give emphasis to the declaration, and to express the joyousness of that event.

That great city. Babylon in its glory was the largest city of the world; Rome, in its turn, also became the largest; and the expression used here denotes that the power here referred to would be properly represented by cities of their magnitude.

Because she made all nation, drink of the wine. This language is probably taken from Jer 51:7: "Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord's hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunk of the wine, therefore the nations are mad." Babylon here, in accordance with the usual custom of the sacred writers when speaking of cities, (**see Barnes on "Isa 1:8"**) is represented as a female-here a female of abandoned character, holding in her hand a cup of wine to attract her lovers; that is, she allures and intoxicates them. This a beautiful image to denote the influence of a great and corrupt city, and especially a city corrupt in its religion, and devoted to idolatry and superstition—and may well be applied either to Babylon or Rome, literal or mystical.

Of the wrath. There seems an incongruity in the use of this word here, and Prof. Stuart proposes to render it "the inflammatory wine of her fornication;" that is, inebriating wine; wine that excited the passions and that led to uncleanness. He supposes that the word here used— *yumov*—means *heat, inflammation*, corresponding to the Hebrew, ?. There are no instances, however, in the New Testament, in which the word is used in this sense. The common and proper meaning is *mind, soul*; then mind agitated with passion, or under the influence of desire—a violent commotion of mind, as wrath, anger, indignation.—- *Rob. Lex*. The *ground* of the representation here seems to be, that Jehovah is often described as giving to the nations in his wrath an intoxicating cup, so that they should reel and stagger to their destruction. Compare Jer 25:15 51:7. The meaning here is, that the nations had drunk of that cup, which *brought on the wrath of God* on account of her "fornication." Babylon is represented as a harlot, with a cup of wine in her hand, and the *effect* of drinking that cup was to expose them to the wrath of God, hence called "the wine of the wrath of her fornication:" the alluring cup that was followed by wrath on account of her fornication.

Of her fornication. Due to her fornication. The word "fornication" here is used to denote *spiritual* uncleanness; that is, heathen and superstitious rites and observances. The term is often used in the Scriptures as applicable to idolatry and superstition. The general meaning here is, that Rome—Papal Rome—would employ all forms of voluptuous allurements to bring the nations to the worship of the beast and his image, and that the "wrath" of God would be poured out on account of these abominations. The *design* of this verse, also, is to impart consolation by the assurance that this great enemy—this mighty, formidable, persecuting power—would be entirely overthrown. This is everywhere held up as the brightest hope of the church; for with this will fall its last great enemy, and the grand obstruction to the final triumph of the gospel on earth will be removed.

{a} "Babylon" Re 18:2,3; Isa 21:9 Jer 51:7,8

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 14 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *And the third angel followed them*. This was a new vision designed to represent the removal of all the obstructions to the final prevalence of the gospel. We are not necessarily to suppose that this event would succeed those mentioned before, in the order of time, though this would be the natural construction. The *design* of this is to show that the worshippers of the beast and his image would be certainly and finally destroyed.

Saying with a loud voice. Making a loud proclamation. Re 14:7.

If any man worship the beast and his image. **See Barnes on** "Re 13:4, seq. This declaration is universal, affirming of *all* who thus render idolatrous reverence to the power represented by the beast and his image, that they should drink of the wine of the wrath of God. The general meaning is, that they were guilty of idolatry of a gross form; and wherever this existed, they who were guilty of it would come under the denunciations in the Scriptures against idolaters. And why should not such denunciations fall on idolaters under the Papacy as well as on others? Is it not true that there is as real idolatry there as in the heathen world? Is not the idolatry as gross and debasing? Is it not attended with as real corruption in the heart and the life? Is it not encompassed with as many things to inflame the passions, corrupt the morals, and alienate the soul from God? And is it not all the worse for being a perversion of Christianity, and practised under the forms of the religion of the Saviour? On what principle should idolatry be denounced and condemned anywhere, if it is not in Papal Rome? Compare **See Barnes "2Th 2:4"**.

And receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand. **See Barnes "Re 13:16"**.

The word "*receive*" here implies that there was, on their part, some degree of voluntariness: it was not a mark impressed *by force*, but a mark *received*. This is true in respect to all idolatry; and this lays the ground for condemnation. Whatever art is used to induce men to worship the beast and his image, it is still true that the worshippers are *voluntary*, and that, being voluntary, it is right that they should be treated as such. It is on this ground only that any idolaters, or any sinners of any kind, can be, in the proper sense of that term, *punished*.

{b} "any man" Re 13:14-16

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 14 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God*. **See Barnes "Re 14:8"**.

The "wine of the wrath of God" is the cup in the hand of the Lord, which when drunk makes them reel and fall. The image would seem to have been taken from the act of holding out a cup of poison to a condemned man that he might drink and die. See the sentiment here expressed illustrated in **See Barnes "Isa 51:17"**.

Which is poured out without mixture. Without being diluted with water; that is, in its full strength. In other words, there would be no mitigation of the punishment.

Into the cup of his indignation. The cup held in his hand and given them to drink. This is expressive of his indignation, as it causes them to reel and fall. The sentiment here is substantially the same, though in another form, as that which is expressed in 2Th 2:12. **See Barnes "2Th 2:12"**.

And he shall be tormented. Shall be punished in a manner that would be well represented by being burned with fire and brimstone. On the meaning of this word, **see Barnes on** "Re 9:5, **See Barnes "Re 11:10"**.

Compare also Re 18:7,10,15 20:10 Mt 8:29

Mr 5:7 Lu 8:28. The word commonly denotes severe torture.

With fire and brimstone. *As if* with burning sulphur. **See Barnes on "Lu 17:28, seq. Compare Ps 11:6** Job 18:15 Isa 30:33 Eze 38:22. The imagery is taken from the destruction of Sodom and

Gomorrah, Ge 19:24. The common representation of the punishment of the wicked is, that it will be in the manner here represented, Mt 5:22 13:42, 18:9 25:41; Mr 9:44-48 2Pe 3:7; Jude 1:7

Re 20:14. Compare **See Barnes "Mt 5:22"**; **See Barnes "Mr 9:44"**.

In the presence of the holy angels. This may mean either

(a) that the angels will be present at their condemnation, (Mt 25:31,) or

(b) that the *punishment* will be actually witnessed by the angels— as it is most probable it will be. Compare Isa 66:24 Lu 16:23-26.

And in the presence of the Lamb. The Lamb of God—the final Judge. This also may mean either that the condemnation will occur in his presence, or that the punishment will be under his eye. Both of these things will be true in regard to him; and it will be no small aggravation of the punishment of the wicked that it will occur in the very presence of their slighted and rejected Saviour.

{a} "drink of the wine" Ps 75:8

{b} "fire and brimstone" Re 19:20

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 14 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *And the smoke of their torment*. The smoke proceeding from their place of torment. This *language* is probably derived from the account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Ge 19:28: "And he [Abraham] looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace." The destruction of these cities is regarded as an emblem of the destruction of the wicked, and the smoke that ascended from them as a representation of that which ascends from the place where the wicked suffer for ever. **See Barnes "Jude 1:7"**.

Ascendeth up. Continually rises from that world of woe.

For ever and ever. **See Barnes "Jude 1:7"**.

This does not indeed affirm that their individual sufferings would be eternal—since it is only a declaration that "the smoke of their torment ascends;" but it is such language as would be used on the supposition that they would suffer for ever, and as can be explained only on that supposition. It implies that their torments continued, and were the cause of that ascending smoke; that is, that they were tormented *while* it ascended, and as this is declared to be "for ever and ever," it implies that the sufferings of the wicked will be eternal: and this is such language as *would* not and *could* not have been used in a revelation from God, unless the punishment of the wicked is eternal. Compare **See Barnes "Mt 25:46"**.

And they have no rest day nor night. "Day and night" include all time; and hence the phrase is used to denote perpetuity—*always*. The meaning here is, that they *never* have any rest—any interval of pain. This is stated as a circumstance strongly expressive of the severity of their torment, Here, rest comes to the sufferer. The prisoner in his cell lies down on his bed, though hard, and sleeps; the over-worked slave has also intervals of sleep; the eyes of the mourner are locked in repose, and for moments, if not hours, he forgets his sorrows; no pain that we endure on earth can be so certain and prolonged that nature will not, sooner or later, find the luxury of sleep, or will find rest in the grave. But it will be one of the bitterest ingredients in the cup of woe, in the world of despair, that this luxury will be denied for ever, and that they who enter that gloomy prison sleep no more; never

know the respite of a moment— never even lose the consciousness of their heavy doom. Oh, how different from the condition of sufferers here! And oh, how sad and strange that any of our race will persevere in sin, and go down to those unmitigated and unending sorrows!

Who worship the beast and his image. **See Barnes on "Re 13:4,15"**.

And whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. **See Barnes on "Re 13:17"**.

The meaning here is, that such worshippers will receive the punishment which other idolaters and sinners do. No exception will be made in favour of an idolater, though he worships idols under the forms of an abused Christianity; none will be made in favour of a sinner because he practised iniquity under the garb of religion.

{c} "smoke" Isa 34:10 {d} "no rest" Isa 57:20,21

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 14 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *Here is the patience of the saints*. **See Barnes on "Re 13:10"**.

Here are they that keep the commandments of God. That is, in exercising such patience. Those who exercise that "patience" in these long-continued persecutions and trials, will show that they belong to those who keep the commandments of God, and are his true children. Or perhaps the meaning may be, "Here is a disclosure respecting the final destiny of these persecutors, which is adapted to comfort and sustain the saints in the trials which they will endure; an encouragement to constancy in obeying the commands of God, and in evincing the meek faith of the gospel."

And the faith of Jesus. To encourage persevering faith in the Saviour. In these times of trial it will be shown who are the friends of the Saviour; and in the prospect of the certain overthrow of all the enemies of God and his cause, there is a ground of encouragement for continued attachment to him.

The *design* of this portion of the chapter (Re 14:9-12) is to encourage Christians in their trials by the assurance that this formidable Antichristian power would be overthrown, and that all the enemies of God would receive their just doom in the world of despair. Fearful as that doctrine is, and terrible as is the idea of the everlasting suffering of any of the creatures of God, yet the final overthrow of the wicked is necessary to the triumph of truth and holiness, and there is consolation in the belief that religion will ultimately triumph. The desire for its triumph necessarily supposes that the wicked will be overthrown and punished; and indeed it is the aim of all governments, and of all administrations of law, that the wicked shall be overthrown, and that truth and justice shall prevail. What would be more consolatory in a human government than the idea that all the wicked would be arrested and punished as they deserve? For what else is government instituted? For what else do magistrates and police-officers discharge the functions of their office?

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 14 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *And I heard a voice from heaven*. A voice that seemed to speak from heaven.

Saying unto me, Write. Make a record of this truth. We may suppose that John was engaged in making a record of what he saw in vision; he was now instructed to make a record of what he heard. This passage may be referred to as a proof that he wrote this book while in Patmos, or as the heavenly disclosures were made to him, and not afterwards from memory.

Blessed are the dead. That is, the condition of those who die in the manner which is immediately specified is to be regarded as a blessed or happy one. It is much to be able to say of the dead that they are "blessed." There is much in death that is sad; we so much dread it by nature; it cut us off from so much that is dear to us; it blasts so many hopes; and the grave is so cold and cheerless a resting-place, that we owe much to a system of religion which will enable us to say and to feel that it is a blessed thing to die. Assuredly we should be grateful for any system of religion which will enable us thus to speak of those who are dead; which will enable us, with corresponding feeling, to look forward to our own departure from this world.

Which die in the Lord. Not all the dead; for God never pronounces the condition of the wicked who die, blessed or happy. Religion guards this point, and confines the declaration to those who furnish evidence that they are prepared for heaven. The phrase "to die in the Lord" implies the following things:

(1.) That they who thus die are the friends of the Lord Jesus. The language "to be in the Lord" is often used to denote true attachment to him, or close union with him. Compare Joh 15:4-7 Ro 16:13,22; 1Co 4:17 7:39; Php 1:14 Col 4:7.

The assurance, then, is limited to those who are sincere Christians; for this the language properly implies, and we are authorized to apply it only as there is evidence of true religion.

(2.) To "die in the Lord" would seem also to imply that there should be, at the time, the evidence of his favour and friendship. This would apply

(a) to those who die as martyrs, giving their lives as a testimony to the truth of religion, and as an evidence of their love for it; and

(b) to those who have the comforting evidence of his presence and favour on the bed of death.

From henceforth. *aparti*. This word has given no little perplexity to expositors, and it has been variously rendered. Some have connected it with the word *blessed*—"blessed henceforth are the dead who die in the Lord;" that is, they will be ever-onward blessed: some with the word *die*, referring to the time when the apostle was writing—"blessed are they who *after this time* die in the Lord;" designing to comfort those who were exposed to death, and who would die as martyrs: some as referring to the times contemplated in these visions—"blessed will they be who shall die in those future times." Witsius understands this as meaning that from the time of their death they would be blessed, as if it had been said, *immediately* after their dissolution they would be blessed. Doddridge renders it, "henceforth blessed are the dead." The language is evidently not to be construed as implying that they who *had* died in the faith before were not happy, but that in the times of trial and persecution that were to come, they were to be regarded as peculiarly blessed who should escape from these sorrows by a Christian death. Scenes of woe were indeed to occur, in which many believers would die. But their condition was not to be regarded as one of misfortune, but of blessedness and joy, for

(a) they would die in an honourable cause;

(b) they would emerge from a world of sorrow; and

(c) they would rise to eternal life and peace. The *design*, therefore, of the verse is to impart consolation and support to those who would be exposed to a martyr's death, and to those who, in

times of persecution, would see their friends exposed to such a death. It may be added that the declaration here made is true still, and ever will be. It is a blessed thing to die in the Lord.

Yea, saith the Spirit. The Holy Spirit; "the Spirit by whose inspiration and command I record this."—*Doddridge*.

That they may rest from their labours. The word here rendered *labour* —*kopov*—means properly *wailing, grief*, from *koptw*, *to beat*, and hence a beating of the breast as in grief. Then the word denotes toil, labour, effort, Joh 4:38 1Co 3:8, 15:58

2Co 6:5 10:15; 2Co 11:23,27.

It is here used in the sense of wearisome toil in doing good, in promoting religion, in saving souls, in defending the truth. From such toils the redeemed in heaven will be released; for although there will be employment there, it will be without the sense of fatigue or weariness. And in view of such eternal rest from toil, we may well endure the labours and toils incident to the short period of the present life, for, however arduous or difficult, it will soon be ended.

And their works do follow them. That is, the *rewards* or the *consequences* of their works will follow them to the eternal world, the word *works* here being used for the *rewards* or *results* of their works. In regard to this, considered as an encouragement to labour, and as a support in the trials of life, it may be remarked,

(a) that *all* that the righteous do and suffer here will be appropriately recompensed there.

(b) This is *all* that can follow a man to eternity. He can take with him none of his gold, his lands, his raiment; none of the honours of this life; none of the means of sensual gratification. All that will go with him will be his character, and the results of his conduct here, and, in this respect, eternity will be but a prolongation of the present life.

(c) It is one of the highest honours of our nature that we can make the present affect the future for good; that by our conduct on the earth we can lay the foundation for happiness millions of ages hence. In no other respect does man appear so dignified as in this; nowhere do we so clearly see the grandeur of the soul as in the fact that what we do today may determine our happiness in that future period, when all the affairs of this world shall have been wound up, and when ages which cannot now be numbered shall have rolled by. It is then a glorious thing to live, and will be a glorious thing to die. Compare **Barnes on "1Co 15:58"**.

{c} "die" 1Th 4:14,16 {1} "the Lord from henceforth" "from henceforth saith the Spirit, Yea"

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 14 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *And I looked*. **See Barnes on "Re 14:1"**.

His attention is arrested by a new vision. The Son of man himself comes forth to close the scene, and to wind up the affairs of the world. This, too, is of the nature of an episode, and the *design* is the same as the previous visions—to support the mind in the prospect of the trials that the church was to experience, by the assurance that it would be finally triumphant, and that every enemy would be destroyed.

And behold a white cloud. Bright, splendid, dazzling—appropriate to be the seat of the Son of God. Compare **See Barnes "Mt 17:5"; See Barnes "Re 1:7"**.

See also Mt 24:30 26:64; Lu 20:27 Ac 1:9

1Th 4:17 Re 10:1.

And upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man. Compare **See Barnes "Re 1:13; Da 7:13"**.

It is probable that there is here a designed reference to the passage in Daniel (Da 7:13). The meaning is, that one appeared on the cloud in a human form, whom John at once recognised as he to whom the appellation of "the Son of man" peculiarly belonged—the Lord Jesus. The meaning of that term had not been fixed in the time of Daniel, (Da 7:13;) subsequently it was appropriated by the Saviour, and was the favourite term by which he chose to speak of himself, Mt 8:20 9:6, 10:23 11:19 12:8,32,40, *et al*.

Having on his head a golden crown. Appropriate to him as king. It was mainly in virtue of his kingly power and office that the work was to be done which John is now about to describe.

And in his hand a sharp sickle. The word *sickle* here—*drepanon*— means a crooked knife or scythe for gathering the harvest, or vintage, by cutting off the clusters of grapes. See Re 14:17. The image of a harvest is often employed in the New Testament to describe moral subjects, Mt 9:37-38 13:30,39 Mr 4:29

Lu 10:2 Joh 4:35. Here the reference is to the consummation of all things, when the great harvest of the world will be reaped, and when all the enemies of the church will be cut off—for that is the grand idea which is kept before the mind in this chapter. In various forms, and by various images, that idea had already been presented to the mind, but here it is introduced in a grand closing image, as if the grain of the harvest-field were gathered in— illustrating the reception of the righteous into the kingdom—and the fruit of the vineyard were thrown into the wine-press, representing the manner in which the wicked would be crushed, Re 14:19-20.

{a} "like unto the Son" Eze 1:26 Da 7:13

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 14 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *And another angel*. The fourth in order, Re 14:6,8-9.

Came out of the temple. **See Barnes on "Re 11:19"**.

Came, as it were, from the immediate presence of God; for the temple was regarded as his peculiar dwelling-place.

Crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud. To the Messiah, Re 14:14. That is, the command was borne directly from God by the angel to the Messiah, to go forth and reap the great harvest of the world. It is not a command *of the angel*, but a command from God the Father to the Son. This is in accordance with all the representations in the New Testament, that the Son as Messiah or Redeemer is subordinate to the Father, and performs the work which has been given him to do. See Joh 3:16-17 5:19, 10:18 Joh 12:49, 14:31.

Compare **See Barnes "Re 1:1"**.

Thrust in thy sickle, and reap. Into the great harvest of the world.

For the time is come for thee to reap. That is, "the harvest which *thou* art to reap is ripe; the seed which *thou* hast sown has grown up; the earth which *thou* hast cultivated has produced this golden grain, and it is fit that *thou* shouldst now gather it in." This language is appropriately addressed to the Son of God, for all the fruits of righteousness on the earth may be regarded as the result of *his* culture.

For the harvest of the earth is ripe. The "harvest" in reference to the righteous—the fruit of the good seed sown by the Saviour and his apostles and ministers. The *time* alluded to here is the end of the world, when the affairs of earth shall be about to be wound up. The design is to state that the Redeemer will then gather in a great and glorious harvest, and by this assurance to sustain the hearts of his people in times of trial and persecution.

{b} "Thrust in" Joe 3:13 {c} "harvest" Jer 51:33 Mt 13:39 {1} "ripe" "dried"

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 14 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *And he that sat on the cloud*. The Saviour, Re 14:14.

Thrust in his sickle on the earth. To cut down the harvest; that is, to gather his people to himself.

And the earth was reaped. So far as the righteous were concerned. The end had come; the church was redeemed; the work contemplated was accomplished; and the results of the work of the Saviour were like a glorious harvest.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 14 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *And another angel*. The fifth in order. This angel came for a different purpose—with reference to the cutting off of the enemies of God, represented by the gathering of a vintage. Compare Mt 13:41 24:31.

Came out of the temple which is in heaven. Sent or commissioned by God. **See Barnes "Re 14:15"**.

He also having a sharp sickle. On the word *sickle*, **see Barnes "Re 14:14"**.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 14 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *And another angel*. The sixth in order. He came, like the angel in Re 14:15, with a command to him who had the sickle to go forth and execute his commission.

Came out from the altar. This stood in the front of the temple, (**see Barnes "Mt 21:12"**; compare **See Barnes** "Mt 5:23-24,) and was the place where burnt-sacrifices were made. As the work now to be done was a work of destruction, this was an appropriate place in the representation.

Which had power over fire. *As if* he kept the fire on the altar. Fire is the usual emblem of *destruction*; and as the work now to be done was such, it was proper to represent this angel as engaged in it.

And cried with a loud cry, etc. See Re 14:15. That is, he came forth as with a command from God, to call on him who was appointed to do the work of destruction, now to engage in performing it. The time had fully come.

Thrust in thy sharp sickle. Re 14:15.

And gather the clusters of the vine of the earth. That portion of the earth which might be represented by a vineyard in which the grapes were to be gathered and crushed. The image here

employed occurs elsewhere to denote the destruction of the wicked. See the very beautiful description in Isa 63:1-6, respecting the destruction of Edom and **Barnes on "Isa 63:1-6"**.

For her grapes are fully ripe. That is, the time has come for the ingathering; or, to apply the image, for the winding up of human affairs by the destruction of the wicked. The *time* here, as in the previous representation, is the end of the world; and the design is to comfort the church in its trials and persecutions, by the assurance that all its enemies will be cut off.

{a} "saying" Re 14:15

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 14 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth*. That is, into that part of the earth which might be represented by a vineyard; or the earth considered as having been the abode of wicked men.

And cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God. See Isa 63:1-6. That is, the wine-press where the grapes are crushed, and where the juice, resembling blood, flows out, may be used as a symbol to denote the destruction of the wicked in the last day; and as the numbers will be immensely great, it is called the "*great* wine-press of Divine wrath." The symbol appears to be used here alike with reference to the *colour* of the wine resembling blood, and the *pressure* necessary to force it out; and thus employed it is one of the most striking emblems conceivable to denote the final destruction of the wicked.

{b} "winepress" Re 19:15

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 14 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *And the wine-press was trodden without the city*. The representation was made *as if* it were outside of the city; that is, the city of Jerusalem, for that is represented as the abode of the holy. The word *trodden* refers to the manner in which wine was usually prepared, by being trodden by the feet of men. **See Barnes "Isa 63:2"**.

The wine-press was usually in the vineyard—not in a city—and this is the representation here. As appearing to the eye of John, it was not within the walls of any city, but standing without. *And blood came out of the wine-press*. The representation is, that there would be a great destruction which would be well represented by the juice flowing from a wine-press.

Even unto the horse-bridles. Deep—as blood would be in a field of slaughter where it would come up to the very bridles of the horses. The idea is, that there would be a *great* slaughter.

By the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs. That is, two hundred miles; covering a space of two hundred miles square—a lake of blood. This is designed to represent a *great* slaughter; but why the space here employed to describe it was chosen is unknown. Some have supposed it was in allusion to the length of Palestine. Prof. Stuart supposes that it refers to the *breadth of Italy*, and that the allusion is to the attack made on the city of the beast. But it is impossible to determine *why* this space was chosen, and it is unnecessary. The idea is, that there would be a slaughter so

great, as it were, as to produce a lake or sea of blood; that the enemies of the church would be completely and finally overthrown, and that the church, therefore, delivered from all its enemies, would be triumphant.

The *design* of this, as of the previous representations in this chapter, is to show that *all* the enemies of God will be destroyed, and that, therefore, the hearts of the friends of religion should be cheered and consoled in the trials and persecutions which were to come upon it. What could be better fitted to sustain the church in the time of trial, than the assurance that every foe will be ultimately cut off? What is better fitted to sustain the heart of the individual believer than the assurance that all *his* foes will be quelled, and that he will be ere long safe in heaven?

{c} "trodden" Isa 63:3 {d} "without" Heb 13:11,12 {e} "blood" Isa 34:7 {f} "even unto" Re 19:14

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 15

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 15 - Verse 1

CHAPTER XV

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER

THIS chapter has a close connexion in design with the previous chapter. In that, pledges and assurances had been given that all the enemies of religion would be cut off, and that the church would be ultimately triumphant, and particularly that that formidable Antichristian power represented by the "beast" would be destroyed. This chapter commences the statement in regard to the manner in which these pledges would be accomplished, and the statement is pursued through the subsequent chapters, giving in detail what is here promised in a general manner. The vision in this chapter may be thus described:—

I. The writer sees a new sign or wonder in heaven. Seven angels appear, having the seven last plagues that fill up or complete the wrath of God; representing the wrath that is to come upon the beast, or the complete overthrow of this formidable Antichristian power, yet. 1.

II. Those who in former times had "gotten the victory over the beast," now appear standing on a sea of glass, rejoicing and rendering thanks for the assurance that this great enemy of the church was now to be destroyed, and that now all nations were to come and worship before God, Re 15:2-4.

III. The writer sees the interior of the temple opened in heaven, and the seven angels, having the seven plagues, issuing forth to execute their commission. They come clothed in pure and white linen, and girded with golden girdles. One of the four beasts before the throne forthwith gives them the seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, to empty them upon the earth—that is, to bring upon the beast the predicted destruction. The temple is immediately filled with smoke, so that no one might enterS; that is, no one could now approach to make intercession, and the destruction of this great enemy's power is now certain, Re 15:5-8.

This chapter, therefore, is merely introductory to what follows, and its interpretation is attended with no particular difficulty. It is a beautiful scenic representation preparatory to the infliction of predicted judgments, and designed to introduce the account of those judgments with suitable circumstances of solemnity.

Verse 1. *And I saw another sign in heaven*. Another wonder or extraordinary symbol. The word *sign* here—*shmeion*—is the same which in Re 12:1,3, 13:13, is rendered *wonder* and *wonders*, and in Re 13:14 16:14, 19:20, *miracles*. The word is not elsewhere found in the book of Revelation, though it is of frequent occurrence in other parts of the New Testament. See it explained in **Barnes on "Re 12:1"**.

Here it is used to denote something wonderful or marvellous. This is represented as appearing in heaven, for the judgments that were to fall upon the world were to come thence. Compare Re 11:19 Re 12:1, 14:1,6,13-14,17.

Great and marvellous. Great and wonderful, or fitted to excite admiration—*yaumaston*. The subsequent statements fully justify this, and show that the vision was one of portentous character, and that was fitted to hold the mind in astonishment.

Seven angels. Compare **Barnes on "Re 1:4"**.

Having the seven last plagues. The article here, "*the* seven last plagues," would seem to imply that the plagues referred to had been before specified, or that it would be at once understood what is referred to. These plagues, however, have not been mentioned before, and the reason why the article is used here seems to be this: the destruction of this great Antichristian power *had been* distinctly mentioned, Revelation 14. That might be spoken of as a thing now well known, and the mention of it would demand the article; and as that was well known, and would demand the article, so any allusion to it, or description of it, might be spoken of in the same manner, as a thing that was definite and fixed, and hence the mention of the plagues by which it was to be accomplished would be referred to in the same manner. The word *plagues*—*plhgav*, from *plhgh*—means properly a wound caused by a stripe or blow, and is frequently rendered *stripe* and *stripes*, Lu 12:48 Ac 16:23,33 2Co 6:5, 11:23.

It does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament except in the book of Revelation. In this book it is rendered *wound* in Re 13:3,12,14; and *plagues* in Re 9:20 11:6, 15:1,6,8 16:9,21 18:4,8 21:9 22:18.

It does not occur elsewhere. The secondary meaning of the word, and the meaning in the passage before us, is *a stripe or blow inflicted by God*; calamity or punishment. The word "last" means those under which the order of things here referred to would terminate; the winding up of the affairs respecting the beast and his image—not necessarily the closing of the affairs of the world. Important events were to occur subsequent to the destruction of this Antichristian power, (Chapters 19-22) but *these* were the plagues which would come finally upon the beast and his image, and which would terminate the existence of this formidable enemy.

For in them is filled up the wrath of God. That is, in regard to the beast and his image. All the expressions of the Divine indignation towards that oppressive and persecuting power will be completed or exhausted by the pouring out of the contents of these vials. Compare **Barnes on** "Re 10:7, where the word rendered *filled up*— *etelesyh*—is rendered *finished*.

{g} "wrath" Re 14:10

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 15 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And I saw as it were a sea of glass*. In Re 4:6, a similar vision is recorded—"And before the throne there was a sea of glass, like unto a crystal." **See Barnes on "Re 4:6"**.

The sea of *glass* here means a sea, clear, pellucid, like glass: an expanse that seemed to be made of glass. There it was entirely clear; here it is mingled with fire.

Mingled with fire. That is, a portion of the sea was red like fire. It was not all clear and pellucid, as in Re 4:6, but it was, as it were, a tesselated expanse, composed in part of what seemed to be glass, and in part of a material of a red or fiery colour. In the former case, (Re 4:6,) the emblem was designed to represent the pure worship of heaven without reference to any other symbolic design, and hence the sea is wholly clear and pellucid; here, in connexion with the purpose of furnishing an appropriate symbol of the Divine Majesty, there is united the idea of punishment on the foes of God, represented by the fiery or red colour. If it is proper, from conjecture, to suggest the meaning of this as an emblem, it would be that the foundation—the main element—of all the Divine dealings is justice or holiness—represented by the portion of the sea that seemed to be glass; and that there was, in this case, intermingled with that, the image of wrath or anger—represented by the portion that was fiery or red. The very sight of the pavement, therefore, on which they stood when worshipping God, would keep before their minds impressive views of his character and dealings. *And them that had gotten the victory over the beast*. Re 13:11. That is, they who had gained a victory in times of persecution and temptation; or they whom the "beast" had not been able, by arts or arms, to subdue. The persons referred to here, I suppose, are those who in the long dominion of the Papal power, and amidst all its arts and corruptions—its threats and persecutions—had remained stedfast in the truth, and who might thus be said to have gained *a victory*—for such victories of piety, virtue, and truth, amidst the corrupting influences of sin and error, and the intimidations of power, are the most important that are gained in this world.

And over his image. **See Barnes "Re 13:14-15"**; The meaning is, that they had not been led to apostatize by the dread of the power represented here by the "image of the beast." In all the attempts of that power to subdue them—to intimidate them—to induce them to give up their attachment to the truth as it is in Jesus—they had remained stedfast in the faith, and had triumphed.

And over his mark. **See Barnes "Re 13:16"**.

Over all the attempts of the beast to fix his mark upon them, or to designate them as his own.

And over the number of his name. **See Barnes on** "Re 13:17, **See Barnes "Re 13:18"**.

Over all the attempts to fix upon them that mysterious number which expressed his name. The general sense is, that in times of general error and corruption; when the true friends of Christ were exposed to persecution; when every effort was made to induce them to become the followers of the "beast," and to yield to the corrupt system represented by the "beast," they remained unmoved, and adhered firmly to the truth. The number of such in the aggregate was not small; and with great beauty and propriety they are here represented as rejoicing and giving thanks to God on the overthrow of that corrupt and formidable power.

Stand on the sea of glass. That is, before God. They are now seen in heaven, redeemed and triumphant.

Having the harps of God. Harps that pertained to the worship of God; harps to be employed in his praise. **See Barnes on "Re 14:2"**.

{a} "sea" Re 4:6 {b} "fire" Isa 4:4,5 {c} "the beast" Re 13:15-17 {d} "harps" Re 14:2

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 15 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God*. A song of thanksgiving and praise, such as Moses taught the Hebrew people to sing after their deliverance from Egyptian bondage See Exodus 15. The meaning here is not that they would sing that identical song, but that as Moses taught the people to celebrate their deliverance with an appropriate hymn of praise, the redeemed would celebrate their delivery and redemption in a similar manner. There is an obvious propriety here in referring to the "song of Moses," because the circumstances are very similar; the occasion of the redemption from that formidable Antichristian power here referred to had a strong resemblance to the rescue from Egyptian bondage.

And the song of the Lamb. The hymn which is sung in honour of the Lamb, as their great deliverer. Compare **Barnes on** "Re 5:9, seq.

Saying, Great and marvellous are thy works. **See Barnes on "Re 15:1"**.

The meaning is, that great *power* was evinced in redeeming them; and that the interposition of the Divine goodness in doing it was *marvellous*, or was such as to excite wonder and admiration.

Lord God Almighty. This would seem to mean the same thing as the expression so common in the Old Testament, "Jehovah, God of hosts." The union of these appellations gives solemnity and impressiveness to the ascription of praise, for it brings into view the fact that he whose praise is celebrated is *Lord*—the JEHOVAH—the uncreated and eternal One; that he is *God*—the creator, upholder, and sovereign of all things; and that he is *Almighty*—having all power in all worlds. All these names and attributes are suggested when we think of redemption; for all the perfections of a glorious God are suggested in the redemption of the soul from death. It is the *Lord*—the Ruler of all worlds; it is *God*— the Maker of the race, and the Father of the race, who performs the work of redemption; and it is a work which could be accomplished only by one who is *Almighty*. *Just and true*. The attributes of *justice* and *truth* are brought prominently into view also in the redemption of man. The fact that God is just, and that in all this work he has been careful to maintain his justice, (Ro 3:26;) and the fact that he is true to himself, true to the creation, true to the fulfilment of all his promises, are prominent in this work, and it is proper that these attributes should be celebrated in the songs of praise in heaven.

Are thy ways. Thy ways or *dealings* with us, and with the enemies of the church. That is, all the acts or "ways" of God in the redemption of his people had been characterized by justice and truth.

Thou King of saints. King of those who are holy; of all who are redeemed and sanctified. The more approved reading here, however, is *King of nations—o basileuv twn eynwn*—instead of *King of saints—twn agiwn*. So it is read in the critical editions of Griesbach, Tittmann, and Hahn. The sense is not materially affected by the difference in the reading.

{e} "Moses" Ex 16:1-19 De 32:1-43 {f} "Lamb" Re 14:3 {g} "Thy ways" Re 14:3 {1} "saints" "nations" or "ages"

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 15 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *Who shall not fear thee, Lord*. Reverence and adore thee; for the word *fear*, in the Scriptures, is commonly used in this sense when applied to God. The sense here is, that the judgments about to be inflicted on the beast and his image should and would teach men to reverence and adore God. There is, perhaps, included here also the idea of awe, inasmuch as this would be the effect of punishment.

And glorify thy name. Honour thee—the *name* being put for the person who bare it. The sense is, that, as a consequence of these judgments, men would be brought to honour God, and to acknowledge him as the Ruler of the earth.

For thou only art holy. That is, in these judgments he would show himself to be a holy God; a God hating sin, and loving righteousness and truth. When it is said that he "*only*" is holy, the expression is used, of course, in a comparative sense. He is so pure that it may be said that, in comparison with him, no one else is holy. Compare **Barnes on** "Job 4:18; Job 15:15 ".

For all nations shall come and worship before thee. That is, as the result of these punishments inflicted on this dread Antichristian power, they shall come and worship thee. Everywhere in the New Testament the destruction of that power is connected with the promise of the speedy conversion of the world.

For thy judgments are made manifest. To wit, on the beast. That formidable power is overthrown, and the grand hindrance to the universal spread of the true religion is now taken away! Compare **See Barnes "Isa 26:9".**

{h} "who" Jer 10:7 {i} "thou only art holy" 1Sa 2:2 {k} "all nations" Isa 14:23 {a} "temple" Re 11:19

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 15 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And after that I looked*. After I had seen in vision the redeemed thus referred to, celebrating the praises of God, I saw the preparation made for the execution of these purposes of judgment.

And, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony. Not the *whole* temple, but only that part to which this name was given, The word *tabernacle—skhnh*—means properly a booth, hut, tent, and was the name commonly given to the *tent or tabernacle* that was erected in the wilderness for the service of God. **See Barnes on "Ac 7:44".**

The same word came naturally to be applied to the temple that was reared for the same purpose in Jerusalem. It is called the "tabernacle of testimony," because it was a *testimony or witness* of the presence of God among the people—that is, it served to keep up the remembrance of him. **See Barnes on** "Ac 7:44, where the same Greek phrase is used as here-rendered there "tabernacle of *witness*." The word *temple* here—*naov*—does not refer to the *whole* of the building called the "temple," but to the holy of holies. **See Barnes on "Heb 9:3".**

This was regarded as the peculiar dwelling-place of God; and it was this sacred place, usually closed from all access, that now seemed to be opened, implying that the command to execute these purposes came directly from God himself.

In heaven. That is, that part of heaven which corresponds to the most holy place in the temple was opened; to wit, that which is the peculiar residence of God himself.

Was opened. Was thrown open to the view of John, so that he was permitted to look, as it were, upon the very dwelling-place of God. From his holy presence now came forth the angels to execute his purposes of judgment on that Antichristian power which had so long corrupted religion and oppressed the world.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 15 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *And the seven angels*. **See Barnes on "Re 15:1"**.

Came out of the temple. Were seen to come from the temple; that is, from the immediate presence of God.

Having the seven plagues. **See Barnes on "Re 15:1"**.

Each one entrusted with a single "plague" to be executed upon the earth. The meaning here is, that they were designated or appointed to execute those plagues in judgments. The *symbols* of their office—the golden vials—were given to them afterwards, Re 15:7.

Clothed in pure and white linen. The emblem of holiness—the common representation in regard to the heavenly inhabitants. **See Barnes on** "Re 3:4; Re 7:13 ".

Compare Mt 17:2 Lu 9:29; Mr 16:5.

And having their breasts girded with golden girdles. **See Barnes on "Re 1:13"**.

The meaning is, that they were attired in a manner befitting their rank and condition.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 15 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *And one of the four beasts*. **See Barnes on "Re 4:6-7"**.

Which one of the four is not mentioned. From the explanation given of the design of the representation of the "four beasts," or *living creatures*, in **Barnes on** "Re 4:6-7, it would seem that the meaning here is, that the great principles of that Divine government would be illustrated in the events which are now to occur. In events that were so closely connected with the honour of God and the triumph of his cause on the earth, there was a propriety in the representation that these living creatures, symbolizing the great principles of Divine administration, would be particularly interested.

Gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials. The word here used—*fialh*—means, properly, "a bowl or goblet, having more breadth than depth."—*Rob. Lex*. Our word vial, though derived from this, means rather a thin, long bottle of glass, used particularly by apothecaries and druggists. The word would be better rendered by *bowl or goblet*, and probably the representation here was of such were bowls as used in the temple service. **See Barnes on "Re 5:8"**.

They are called, in Re 16:1, "vials of the wrath of God;" and here they are said to be "full of the wrath of God." The allusion seems to be to a drinking cup or goblet filled with poison, and given to persons to drink— an allusion drawn from one of the methods of punishment in ancient times. **See Barnes on "Re 14:10"**.

These vials or goblets thus became emblems of Divine wrath to be inflicted on the beast and his image. *Full of the wrath of God*. Filled with that which represented his wrath; that is, they seemed to be filled with a poisonous mixture, which being poured upon the earth, the sea, the rivers, the sun, the seat of the beast, the river Euphrates, and into the air, was followed by severe Divine judgments on this great Antichristian power. See Re 16:2-4,8,10,12,17.

Who liveth for ever and ever. The eternal God. The particular object in referring to this attribute here appears to be, that though there may seem to be delay in the execution of his purposes, yet they will be certainly accomplished, as he is the ever-living and unchangeable God. He is not under a necessity of abandoning his purposes, like men, if they are not soon accomplished.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 15 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *And the temple was filled with smoke*. The usual symbol of the Divine presence in the temple. **See Barnes on** "Isa 4:6; Isa 6:4 ".

From the glory of God. From the manifestation of the Divine Majesty. That is, the smoke was the proper accompaniment of the Divine Being when appearing in majesty. So on Mount Sinai he is represented as appearing in this manner: "And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended on it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly," Ex 19:18. The purpose *here* seems to have been partly to represent the smoke as the proper symbol of the Divine presence, and partly to represent it as so filling the temple that no one could enter it until the seven plagues were fulfilled.

And from his power. Produced by his power; and the symbol of his power.

And no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled. Till those vials had been poured out, and all that was indicated by them was accomplished. The meaning here seems to be, that no one would be permitted to enter to make intercession-to turn away his wrath—to divert him from his purpose. That is, the purpose of punishment had been formed, and would certainly be executed. The agents or instrumentalities in this fearful work had been now sent forth, and they would by no means be recalled. The mercy-seat, in this respect, was inaccessible; the time of judgment on the great foe had come, and the destruction of the grand enemy of the church was certain. The point, therefore, at which this vision leaves us, is that where all the preparations are made for the infliction of the threatened punishment on the grand Antichristian power which had so long stood up against the truth; where the agents had prepared to go forth; and where no intercession will ever avail to turn away the infliction of the Divine wrath. The details follow in the next chapter.

{b} "filled" Isa 6:4 {c} "glory of God" Ps 29:9

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 16

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 16 - Verse 1

CHAPTER XVI

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER

THE previous chapter had described the preparation for the last plagues that were to come upon that mighty Antichristian power to which this series of prophetic visions refers. All is now ready; and this chapter contains the description of those seven last "plagues" under which this power would reel and fall. These" plagues" are described *as if* they were a succession of physical calamities that would come upon this Antichristian power, and bring it to an end; though, perhaps, it is not necessary to look for a literal infliction of such calamities. The course of the exposition thus far will lead us to regard this chapter as a description of *the successive blows by which the Papacy will fall.* A part of this is still undoubtedly future, though perhaps not far distant; and, in reference to this, and to some portions of the remainder of the book, there may be more difficulty in satisfying the mind than in the portions Which pertain to past events. The chapter comprises statements on the following points:—

A command is issued from the temple to the seven angels, to go and execute the commission with which they were entrusted, Re 16:1.

The first angel pours out his vial upon the earth—followed by a plague upon those who had worshipped the beast and his image, Re 16:2.

The second angel pours out his vial upon the sea followed by the death of all that were in the sea, Re 16:3.

The third angel pours out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters, and they become blood. This is followed by an ascription of praise from the angel of the waters, because God had given to those who had shed the blood of the saints blood to drink, with a response from the altar that this was just, Re 16:4-7.

The fourth angel pours out his vial upon the sun, and an intenser heat is given to it to scorch men. The consequence is, that they blaspheme the name of God, but repent not of their sins, Re 16:8,9.

The fifth angel pours out his vial upon the very seat of the beast, and his kingdom is full of darkness. Men still blaspheme the name of God, and repent not of their sins, Re 16:10,11.

The sixth angel pours out his vial upon the great river Euphrates. The consequence is, that the waters of the river are dried up, so that the way of the kings of the East might be prepared. The writer sees also, in this connexion, three unclean spirits, like frogs, come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, that go forth into all the earth to gather all nations to the great day of the battle of God Almighty, Re 16:12-16.

The seventh angel pours out his vial into the air, and a voice is heard answering that "it is done:" the time of the consummation has come—the formidable Antichristian power is to come to an end. The great city is divided into three parts; the cities of the nations fall; great Babylon thus comes up in remembrance before God to receive the punishment which is her due. This terrific scene is accompanied with voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake, and with great hail—a tempest of wrath beating upon that formidable power that had so long stood up against God, Re 16:17-21. The *detail* of the actual destruction of this power is carried forward in the subsequent chapters.

Verse 1. *And I heard a great voice out of the temple*. A loud voice out of the temple as seen in heaven, (**Barnes on** "Re 11:19,) and that came, therefore, from the very presence of God.

Saying to the seven angels. That had the seven vials of wrath. **Barnes on "Re 15:1,7"**.

Go your ways. Your respective ways, to the fulfilment of the task assigned to each.

And pour out the vials of the wrath of God. Empty those vials; cause to come upon the earth the plagues indicated by their contents. The *order* in which this was to be done is not intimated. It seems to be supposed that that would be understood by each.

Upon the earth. The particular part of the earth is not here specified, but it should not be inferred that it was to be upon the earth in general, or that there were any calamities in consequence of this pouring out of the vials of wrath, to spread over the whole world. The subsequent statements show what parts of the earth were particularly to be affected.

{a} "angels" Re 15:1,7

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 16 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And the first went*. Went forth from heaven, where the seat of the vision was laid.

And poured out his vial upon the earth. That is, upon the *land*, in contradistinction from the sea, the rivers, the air, the seat of the beast, the sun, as represented in the other vials. In Re 16:1, the word *earth* is used in the general sense to denote this world as distinguished from heaven; in this verse it is used in the specific sense, to denote *land* as distinguished from other things. Compare Mr 4:1 6:47; Joh 6:21 Ac 27:29,43-44.

In many respects there is a strong resemblance between the pouring out of these seven vials, and the sounding of the seven trumpets, in chapters 8 and 9, though they refer to different events. In the sounding of the first trumpet, (Re 8:7,) it was the *earth* that was particularly affected, in contradistinction from the sea, the fountains, and the sun: "The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were east *upon the earth*." Compare Re 8:8,10,12.

In regard to the symbolical meaning of the term *earth*, considered with reference to Divine judgments, **see Barnes "Re 8:7"**.

And there fell a noisome and grievous sore. The judgment here is specifically different from that inflicted under the first trumpet, Re 8:7. There it is said to have been that "the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up." Here it is that there fell upon *men* a noisome and grievous sore." The two, therefore, are designed to refer to different events, and to different forms of punishment. The word rendered *sore* properly denotes a *wound*, (Hom. *Il*. xi. 812,) and then, in later writers, an *ulcer or sore*. It is used in the New Testament only in the following places: Lu 16:21, "the dogs came and licked his *sores*;" and in Re 16:2, 11, where it is rendered *sore, and sores*. It is used in the Septuagint, in reference to the *boils* that were brought upon the Egyptians, in Ex 9:9-12, and probably De 28:27; in reference to the leprosy, Le 13:18-20,23; in reference to the boil, ulcer, or elephantiasis brought upon Job, Job 2:7; and in reference to any sore or ulcer, in De 28:35. In all these places it is the translation of the word ? *Shehhin*—rendered in our English version *boil*, Ex 9:9-11 Le 13:18-20,23 2Ki 20:7; Job 2:7

Isa 38:21; and *botch*, De 28:27,35. The proper meaning, therefore, is that of a sore, ulcer, or boil of a severe and painful character; and the most obvious reference in the passage, to one who

was accustomed to the language of Scripture, would be to some fearful plague like that which was sent upon the Egyptians. In the case of Hezekiah, (2Ki 20:7 Isa 38:21,) it was probably used to denote a *plague-boil*, or the black leprosy. **See Barnes on "Isa 38:21".**

The word "noisome" —*kakon, evil, bad*—is used here to characterize the plague referred to as being peculiarly painful and dangerous. The word *grievous—ponhron, bad, malignant, hurtful*—is further used to increase the intensity of the expression, and to characterize the plague as particularly severe. There is no reason to suppose that it is meant that this would be *literally* inflicted, any more than it is in the next plague, where it is said that the "rivers and fountains became *blood*." What is obviously meant is, that there would be some calamity which would be well represented or symbolized by such a fearful plague. *Upon the men*. Though the plague was poured upon "*the earth*," yet its effects were seen upon "*men*." Some grievous calamity would befall them, *as if* they were suddenly visited with the plague.

Which had the mark of the beast. **Barnes on "Re 13:16-17".**

This determines the portion of the earth that was to be afflicted. It was not the whole world; it was only that part of it where the "beast" was honoured. According to the interpretation proposed in chapter 13, this refers to those who are under the dominion of the Papacy.

And upon them which worshipped his image. **See Barnes on "Re 13:14,15".**

According to the interpretation in chapter 13, those are meant who sustained the civil or secular power to which the Papacy gave life and strength, and from which it, in turn, received countenance and protection.

In regard to the application or fulfilment of this symbol, it is unnecessary to say that there have been very different opinions in the world, and that very different opinions still prevail. The great mass of Protestant commentators suppose that it refers to the Papacy; and of those who entertain this opinion, the greater portion suppose that the calamity referred to by the pouring out of this vial is already past, though it is supposed by many that the things foreshadowed by a part of these" vials" are yet to be accomplished. As to the true meaning of the symbol before us, I would make the following remarks:—

(1.) It refers to the Papal power. This application is demanded by the results which were reached in the examination of chapter 13. See the remarks on the "beast" in **Barnes on** "Re 13:1-2,11, and on the "image of the beast" in **Barnes on "Re 13:14-15".**

This one mighty power existed in two forms closely united, and mutually sustaining each other—the civil or secular, and the ecclesiastical or spiritual. It is this combined and consolidated power— the Papacy as such—that is referred to here, for this has been the grand Antichristian power in the world.

(2.) It refers to some grievous and fearful calamity which would come upon that power, and which would be *like* a plague-spot on the human body—something which would be of the nature of a Divine judgment resembling that which came upon the Egyptians for their treatment of the people of God.

(3.) The course of this exposition leads us to suppose that this would be the beginning in the series of judgments which would terminate in the complete overthrow of that formidable power. It is the *first* of the vials of wrath, and the whole description evidently contemplates a *series* of disasters which would be properly represented by these successive vials. In the application of this, therefore, we should naturally look for the first of a series of such judgments, and should expect

to find some facts in history which would be properly represented by the vial "poured upon the earth."

(4.) In accordance with this representation, we should expect to find such a series of calamities gradually weakening, and finally terminating the Papal power in the world, as would be properly represented by the number *seven*.

(5.) In regard now to the *application* of this series of symbolical representations, it may be remarked that most recent expositors—as Elliott, Cunninghame, Keith, Faber, Lord, and others, refer them to the events of the French revolution, as important events in the over- throw of the Papal power; and this, I confess, although the application is attended with some considerable difficulties, has more plausibility than any other explanation proposed. In support of this application, the following considerations may be suggested:—

(a) France, in the time of Charlemagne, was the kingdom to which the Papacy owed its civil organization and its strength—a kingdom to which could be traced all the civil or secular power of the Papacy, and which was, in fact, a restoration or re-construction of the old Roman power—the fourth kingdom of Daniel. **See Barnes on "Da 7:24-28"**

and compare **Barnes on** "Re 13:3,12-14".

The restoration of the old Roman dominion under Charlemagne, and the aid which he rendered to the Papacy in its establishment as to a temporal power, would make it probable that this kingdom *would be* referred to in the series of judgments that were to accomplish the overthrow of the Papal dominion.

(b) In an important sense, France has always been the head of the Papal power. The king of France has been usually styled, by the popes themselves, "the eldest son of the church." In reference to the whole Papal dominion in former times, one of the principal reliances has been on France, and, to a very large extent, the state of Europe has been determined by the condition of France. "A revolution in France," said Napoleon, "is sooner or later followed by a revolution in Europe."—*Alison*. Its central position; its power; its direct relation to all the purposes and aims of the Papacy, would seem to make it probable that, in the account of the final destruction of that power, this kingdom would not be overlooked.

(c) The scenes which occurred in the times of the French revolution were such as would be properly symbolized by the pouring out of the first, the second, the third, and the fourth vials. In the passage before us—the pouring out of the first vial—the symbol employed is that of "a noisome and grievous sore"—boil, ulcer, plague-spot- "on the men which had the mark of the beast, and on them which worshipped his image." This representation was undoubtedly derived from the account of the sixth plague on Egypt, (Ex 9:9-11;) and the sense here is, not that this would be literally inflicted on the power here referred to, but that a calamity would come upon it which would be *well represented* by that, or of which that would be an appropriate emblem. This interpretation is further confirmed by Re 11:8, where Rome is referred to under the name of *Egypt*, and where it is clear that we are to look for a course of Divine dealing in regard to the one resembling that which occurred to the other. **See Barnes on "Re 11:8"**.

Now this "noisome and grievous sore" would well represent the moral corruption, the pollution, the infidelity, the atheism, the general dissolution of society that preceded and accompanied the French revolution; for that was a universal breaking out of loathsome internal disease—of corruption at the centre—and in its general features might be represented as a universal plague-spot on society, extending over the countries where the beast and his image were principally worshipped. The

symbol would properly denote that "tremendous outbreak of social and moral evil, of democratic fury, atheism, and vice, which was specially seen to characterize the French revolution: that of which the ultimate source was in the long and deep-seated corruption and irreligion of the nation; the outward vent, expression, and organ of its Jacobin clubs, and seditious and atheistic publications; the result, the dissolution of all society, all morals, and all religion; with acts of atrocity and horror accompanying, scarce paralleled in the history of men; and suffering and anguish of correspondent intensity throbbing throughout the social mass and corroding it; that which, from France as a centre, spread like a plague throughout its affiliated societies to the other countries of Papal Christendom, and was, wherever its poison was imbibed, as much the punishment as the symptoms of the corruption within." Of this sad chapter in the history of man, it is unnecessary to give any description here. For scenes of horror, pollution, and blood, its parallel has *never* been found in the history of our race, and as an event in *history* it was worthy of a notice in the symbols which portrayed the future. The full details of these amazing scenes must be sought in the histories which describe them, and to such works as Alison's *History of Europe*, and Burke's *Letters on a Regicide Peace*, the reader must be referred. A few expressions copied from those letters of Mr. Burke, penned with no design of illustrating this passage in the Apocalypse, and no expectation that they would be ever so applied, will show with what propriety the spirit of inspiration suggested the phrase, "a noisome and grievous sore" or plague-spot, on the supposition that the design was to refer to these scenes. In speaking of the revolutionary spirit in France, Mr. Burke calls it "the fever of aggravated Jacobinism," "the epidemic of atheistical fanaticism," "an evil lying deep in the corruptions of human nature," "the malignant French distemper," "a plague, with its fanatical spirit of proselytism, that needed the strictest quarantine to guard against it," whereof though the mischief might be "skimmed over" for a time, yet the result, into whatever country it entered, was "the corruption of all morals," "the decomposition of all society," etc. But it is unnecessary to describe those scenes farther. The "world has them by heart," and they can never be obliterated from the memory of man. In the whole history of the race, there has never been an outbreak of evil that showed so deep pollution and corruption within.

(d) The result of this was to affect the Papacy—a blow, in fact, aimed at that power. Of course, all the infidelity and atheism of the French nation, before so strongly Papal, went just so far in weakening the power of the Papacy; and in the ultimate result it will perhaps yet be found that the horrid outbreaks in the French revolution were the first in the series of providential events that will result in the entire overthrow of that Antichristian power. At all events, it will be admitted, I think, that on the supposition that it was *intended* that this should be descriptive of the scenes that occurred in Europe at the close of the last century, no more expressive symbol could have been chosen than has been employed in the pouring out of this first vial of wrath.

{b} "Earth" Re 8:7 {c} "sore" Ex 9:8-11 {d} "mark" Re 13:15-17

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 16 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea*. So the second trumpet, (Re 8:8,) "And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast

into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood." For the meaning of this as a symbol, **see Barnes on "Re 8:8"**.

And it became as the blood of a dead man. "Either very bloody, like a mangled corpse, or else coloured, as it were, with the dark and almost black blood of a dead man."—Prof. Stuart, *in loc*. The latter would seem to be, most probably, the meaning; implying that the ocean would become discoloured, and indicating that this was the effect of blood shed in great quantities on its waters. In Re 8:8 it is, "the sea became blood;" here the allusion to the blood of a dead man would more naturally suggest the idea of naval conflicts, and of the blood of the slain poured in great quantities into the deep.

And every living soul died in the sea. In Re 8:9, it is said that "the third part of the creatures that were in the sea died, and the third part of the ships were destroyed." Here the destruction is more general; the calamity is more severe and awful. It is as if *every living thing—pasa quch zwsa*—had died. No emphasis should be put on the word *soul* here, for the word means merely a creature, a living thing, an animal, Ac 2:43 3:23; Ro 13:1 1Co 15:45.

See *Rob. Lex*. sub voce, *c*. The sense here is, that there would be some dreadful calamity, *as if* the sea were to be changed into dark blood, and as if every living thing in it were to die. In inquiring into the proper application of this, it is natural to look for something pertaining to the sea, or the ocean, (**see Barnes** "Re 8:8-9,) and we should expect to find the fulfilment in some calamity that would fall on the marine force, or the commerce of the power that is here referred to—that is, according to the interpretation all along adopted, of the Papal power; and the proper application, according to this interpretation, would be the complete destruction or annihilation of the naval force that contributed to sustain the Papacy. This we should look for in respect to the naval power of France, Spain, and Portugal, for these are the only Papal nations that have had a navy. We should expect, in the fulfilment of this, to find a series of naval disasters, reddening the sea with blood, which would tend to weaken the power of the Papacy, and which might be regarded as *one* in the series of events that would ultimately result in its entire overthrow. Accordingly, in pursuance of the plan adopted in explaining the pouring out of the first vial, it is to be observed that immediately succeeding, and connected with, the events thus referred to, there was a series of naval disasters that swept away the fleets of France, and that completely demolished the most formidable naval power that had ever been prepared by any nation under the Papal dominion. This series of disasters is thus noticed by Mr. Elliott, iii. 329, 330: "Meanwhile the great *naval* war between France and England was in progress; which, from its commencement in February, 1793, lasted for above twenty years, with no intermission but that of the short and delusive peace of Amiens; in which war the maritime power of Great Britain was strengthened by the Almighty Providence that protected her to destroy everywhere the French ships, commerce, and smaller colonies; including those of the fast and long-continued allies of the French, Holland and Spain. In the year 1793, the greater part of the French fleet at Toulon was destroyed by Lord Hood; in June, 1794, followed Lord Howe's great victory over the French off Ushant; then the taking of Corsica, and nearly all the smaller Spanish and French West India islands; then, in 1795, Lord Bridport's naval victory, and the capture of the Cape of Good Hope; as also soon after of a French and Dutch fleet, sent to retake it; then, in 1797, the victory over the Spanish fleet off Cape St. Vincent, and that of Camperdown over the Dutch; then, in succession, Lord Nelson's three mighty victories—of the Nile in 1798, of Copenhagen in 1801, and, in 1805, of Trafalgar. Altogether in this naval war, from its beginning in 1793, to its end in 1815, it appears that there were destroyed near 200 ships of the line, between 300 and 400

frigates, and an almost incalculable number of smaller vessels of war and ships of commerce. The whole history of the world does not present such a period of naval war, destruction, and bloodshed." This brief summary may show, if this was referred to, the propriety of the expression, "The sea became as the blood of a dead man;" and may show also that, on the supposition that it was intended that these events should be referred to, an appropriate symbol has been employed. No language could more strikingly set forth these bloody scenes.

{a} "sea" Re 8:8 {b} "blood" Ex 7:17-20

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 16 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters*. This coincides also with the account of the sounding of the third trumpet, (Re 8:10-11:) "And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven burning as a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters." As to the meaning of the phrase, "rivers and fountains of waters," **see Barnes on "Re 8:10-11"**.

We found, it was supposed, in the application of that passage, that the invasion of the Roman empire by Attila, king of the Huns, was referred to, affecting mainly those parts of the empire where the rivers and streams had their origin. The *analogy* would lead us, in the fulfilment of the passage before us, to look for some similar desolations on those portions of Europe. **See Barnes on "Re 16:7"**.

And they became blood. This would properly mean that they became as blood, or became red with blood; and it would be fulfilled if bloody battles were fought near them so that they seemed to run blood.

{a} "waters" Re 8:10

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 16 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And I heard the angel of the waters say*. The angel who presides over the element of water; in allusion to the common opinion among the Hebrews that the angels presided over elements, and that each element was committed to the jurisdiction of a particular angel. Compare **Barnes on "Re 7:1"**.

Thou art righteous, O Lord. In view of the judgments that reddened these streams and fountains with the blood of men, the angel ascribes righteousness to God. These judgments seemed terrible—the numbers slain were so vast—the bloody stream indicated so great slaughter, and such severity of the Divine judgment; yet the angel sees in all this only the act of a righteous God bringing just retribution on the guilty.

Which art, and wast, and shalt be. That is, who art *eternal*— existing now; who hast existed in all past time; and who will exist ever onward. **See Barnes on "Re 1:8"**.

The *reason* why this attribute of God is here referred to, seems to be that the mind of the angel adverts to it in the *changes* and *desolations* that were occurring-around him. In such overturnings

among men—such revolutions of kingdoms—such desolations of War—the mind naturally turns to one who is unchanging; to one whose throne is from everlasting to everlasting.

Because thou hast judged thus. Hast suffered these wars to occur that have changed rivers and fountains to blood.

{b} "righteous" Re 16:4

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 16 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *For they have shed the blood of saints*. The nations here referred to. They have been engaged in scenes of bloody persecution, and this is a just recompense.

And prophets. Teachers of religion; ministers of truth. It is not necessary to understand the word *prophets* here in its technical sense as denoting those who are raised up by God and sent forth as inspired men, but it may be understood in its more common signification in the New Testament as denoting teachers of religion in general. **See Barnes on "Ro 12:6; 1Co 14:1".**

And thou hast given them blood to drink. To wit, by turning the streams and fountains into blood, Re 16:4. Blood had been poured out in such abundance that it seemed to mingle with the very water that they drank. This was a recompense for their having, in those very regions, poured out so much blood in persecuting the saints and prophets— the pious private members of the church, and the public teachers of religion.

For they are worthy. That is, they deserve this; or, this is a just recompense for their sins. It is not intended that those who would thus suffer had been individually guilty of this, or that this was properly a punishment on *them*; but it is meant that in those countries there had been bloody persecutions, and that this was a fit recompense for what had there occurred.

{c} "thou hast" De 32:42,43; Isa 49:26

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 16 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *And I heard another*. Evidently another *angel*, though this is not specified.

Out of the altar. Either the angel *of* the altar—that is, who presided over the altar, (*Prof. Stuart*;) or an angel whose voice seemed to come from the altar. The sense is essentially the same. The writer seemed to hear a voice coming from the altar responding to what had just been said in regard to the judgment of God, or to his righteousness in bringing the judgment upon men, Re 16:5. This was evidently the voice of some one who was interested in what was occurring, or to whom these things particularly appertained; that is, one who was particularly connected with the *martyrs* referred to, whose blood was now, as it were, to be avenged. We are naturally reminded by this of the martyr-scene in Re 6:9-11, in the opening of the fifth seal, though it cannot be supposed that the same events are referred to. There "the souls of those that had been slain for the word of God" are represented as being "under the altar," and as crying to God to "avenge their blood on them who dwelt on the earth." Here a voice is heard with reference to martyrs, as of one interested *in* them, ascribing praise to God for *having* brought a righteous judgment on those who had shed the blood

of the saints. They are both, for similar reasons, connected with the "altar," and the voice is heard proceeding from the same source. In regard to the meaning of the word *altar* here, and the reason why the martyrs are represented in connexion with it, **see Barnes "Re 6:9"**.

True and righteous are thy judgments. Responding to what is said in Re 16:5. That is, God is "true" or faithful to his promises made to his people, and "righteous" in the judgments which he has now inflicted. These judgments had come upon those who had shed the blood of the martyrs, and they were just.

In regard to the application of this, there are several things to be said. The following points are clear:

(a) That this judgment would *succeed* the first mentioned, and apparently at a period not remote.

(b) It would occur in a region where there had been much persecution.

(c) It would be in a Country of streams, and rivers, and fountains.

(d) It would be a just retribution for the bloody persecutions which had occurred there. The question now is, where we shall find the fulfilment of this, assuming that the explanation of the pouring out of the first vial is correct. And here, I think; there can be no mistake in applying it to the events bearing on the Papacy, and the Papal powers, which followed the French revolution. The next material event, after that revolution, was the invasion of Italy, where Napoleon began his career of victories, and where he first acquired his fame. At this stage of my examination of this passage, I looked into Alison's *History of Europe*, to see what events, in fact, the followed the scenes of confusion, crime, blood, atheism, and pollution in French revolution, and I found that the next chapters in these eventful scenes were such as would be well represented by the vial poured upon the rivers and fountains, and by their being turned into blood. The detail would be too long for my limits, and I can state merely a summary of a few of the chapters in that History. Chapter 19 contains the "History of the French Republic from the fall of Robespierre to the establishment of the Directory"— comprising properly the closing scenes of "the Reign of Terror," Chapter 20 contains an account of the campaign in Italy in 1796, embracing, as stated in the summing up of contents in this chapter, the "Battles of Montenotte, Millesimo, Dego; the passage of the bridge of Lodi, and fall of Milan; the siege of Mantua, and the battle of Castiglione; the battles of Caldero and Arcola; and the battles of Rivoli and Mantua." This is followed (chapter 23) With an account of the campaign of 1797, which closed with the fall of Venice; and this is followed (chapter 26) with an account of the Invasion of Switzerland etc. It is unnecessary to dwell on the details of the wars which followed the French revolution, on the Rhine, the Po, and the Alpine streams of Piedmont and Lornhardy. The slightest acquaintance with that history will show the propriety of the following remarks:

(a) These wars occurred in regions under the influence of the Papacy, for these were all Papal states and territories.

(b) These scenes followed closely on the French revolution, and grew out of it as a natural consequence, and would be properly represented as a second "vial" poured out immediately after the first.

(c) The country is such as here supposed—"of rivers and fountains"— for, being mostly a mountainous region, it abounds with springs, and fountains, and streams. Indeed, on the supposition that this is the land referred to, a more appropriate description could not have been given of it than is found in this passage. One has only to look upon a map of Northern Italy to see that there is no other portion of the world which would more naturally be *suggested* when speaking of a country

abounding in "rivers and fountains of water." The annexed admirable Map of this region, for which I am indebted to the work of Dr. Alexander Keitk, on the *Signs of the Time*, will clearly illustrate this passage, and the corresponding passage in Re 8:10-11. Let any one look at the Po and its tributaries on the Map, and then read with attention the twentieth chapter of Alison's *History of Europe*, (vol. i, pp. 391-424,) and he will be struck with the appropriateness of the description on the supposition that this portion of the book of Revelation was designed to refer to these scenes; for he cannot but see that the battles there described were fought in a country in every way corresponding with the statement here,

(d) This country corresponds with the description here given in another respect. In Re 16:5-6, there is a tribute of praise rendered to God, in view of these judgments, because he was righteous in bringing them upon a land where the blood of saints and prophets had been shed—a land of martyrs. Now this is applicable to the circumstances supposed, not of only in the sense that Italy in general had been the land where the blood martyrs had been shed—the land of Roman persecution, alike under Paganism and the Papacy—but true in a more definite sense from the fact that this was the very region where the persecutions against the Waldenses and the Albigenses had been carried on—*the valleys of Piedmont*. In the times of Papal persecution these valleys had been made to flow with the blood of the saints; and it *seemed*, at least, to be a righteous retribution that these desolations of war, these conflagrations, and these scenes of carnage, should occur in that very land, and that the very fountains and streams which had before been turned into blood by the slaughter of the friends of the Saviour, should now be reddened with the blood of men slain in battle. This is, perhaps, what John saw in vision: a land where persecution had raged, and the blood of the holy had flowed freely, and then the same land brought under the awful judgments of God, and the fountains and streams reddened with the blood of the slain. There was a propriety, therefore, that a voice should be heard ascribing righteousness to God for avenging the blood of the saints, (Re 16:5-6,) and that another voice should be heard from the "altar" of the martyrs (Re 16:7) responding and saying, "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments."

(e) It may be added, to show the propriety of this, that this was one of the series of events which will be found in the end to have contributed to the overthrow of the Papal power: for a blow was struck in the French invasion of Italy from which Rome has never recovered, and sentiments were diffused as the result in favour of liberty which it has been difficult ever since to suppress, and which are destined yet to burst out in favour of freedom, and to be one of the means of the final destruction of the power. Compare Alison's *History of Europe*, vol. i. p. 403.

{d} "Lord God Almighty" Re 15:3 19:2

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 16 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun*. Toward the sun, or so as to reach the sun. The effect was *as if* it had been poured *upon* the sun, giving it an intense heat, and thus inflicting a severe judgment upon men. This corresponds also with the fourth trumpet, (Re 8:12,) where it is said that the "third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars." For the general meaning of this symbol, **see Barnes on "Re 8:2"**

that place. The idea is, that a scene of calamity and woe would occur *as if* the sun should be made to pour forth such intense heat that men would be "scorched." It cannot be supposed that the sun would be *literally* made hotter, or that the exact nature of these calamities would be that men would be consumed by its rays.

And power was given unto him. To the sun. The meaning is, that a calamity would follow *as if* such an increased power should be given to its rays.

To scorch men with fire. Literally, "And it was given him to scorch men with fire;" that is, with heat so great that it *seemed* to be fire. The Greek word—*kaumatisai*—meaning *to burn, to scorch*—is used in the New Testament only in Mt 13:6 Mr 4:6; Re 16:8-9, in all which places it is rendered *scorch and scorched*. Compare, however, the use of the word *kauma*, in Re 7:16 16:9; *kausiv*, in Heb 6:8; *kausow*, in 1Pe 3:10,12; and *kauswn*, in Mt 20:12 Lu 12:55; Jas 1:11.

The notion of intense or consuming heat is implied in all the forms of the word; and the reference here is to some calamity that would be well represented by such an increased heat of the sun.

{a} "sun" Re 8:12 {b} "fire" Re 9:17

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 16 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *And men were scorched with great heat*. That is, as above expressed, calamity came upon them which would be well represented by such heat. It is said that this calamity would come upon *men*, and we are to suppose that it would be such that human life would be particularly affected; and as that heat of the sun must be exceedingly intense which would cut down men, we are to suppose that the judgment here referred to would be intensely severe.

And blasphemed the name of God. The effect would be to cause them to blaspheme God, or to reproach him as the author of these calamities; and in the fulfilment of this we are to look for a state of things when there would be augmented wickedness and irreligion, and when men would become worse and worse, notwithstanding the woes that had come upon them.

Which hath power over these plagues. Who had brought these plagues upon them, and who had power to remove them.

And they repented not. The effect was not to produce repentance, though it was manifest that these judgments had come upon them on account of their sins. Compare **See Barnes "Re 9:21"**.

To give him glory. To turn from sin; to honour him by lives of obedience. Compare **See Barnes "Joh 9:24"**.

In regard to the *application* of this, the following things may be remarked:

(a) That the calamity here referred to was one of the series of events which would precede the overthrow of the "beast," and to contribute that—for to this all these judgments tend.

(b) In the order in which it stands, it is to follow, and apparently to follow *soon*, the third judgments the pouring of the vial upon the fountains and streams.

(c) It would be a calamity such *as if* the sun, the source of light and comfort to mankind, were smitten, and became a source of torment.

(d) This would be attended by a great destruction of *men*, and we should naturally look in such an application for calamities in which multitudes of *men* would be, as it were, consumed.

(e) This would *not* be followed, as it might be hoped it would, by repentance, but would be attended with reproaches of God, with profaneness, with a great increase of wickedness.

Now, on the supposition that the explanation of the previous passages is correct, there can be no great difficulty in supposing that this refers to the wars of Europe following the French Revolution; the wars that preceded the direct attack on the Papacy, and the overthrow of the Papal government. For these events had all the characteristics here referred to.

(a) They were one of a series in weakening the Papal power in Europe—heavy blows that will yet be seen to have been among the means preliminary to its final overthrow.

(b) They followed in their order the invasion of Northern Italy—for one of the purposes of that invasion was to attack the *Austrian* power there, and ultimately through the Tyrol to attack Austria itself Napoleon, after his victories in Northern Italy, above referred to, (compare chapter twenty of Alison's *History of Europe*,) thus writes to the French Directory: "Coni, Ceva, and Alexandria are in the hands of our army; if you do not ratify the convention, I will keep their fortresses and march upon Turin. Meanwhile, I shall march to-morrow against Beaulieu, and drive him across the Po; I shall follow close at i. his heels, overawe Lombardy, and in a month be in the Tyrol, join the army of the Rhine, and carry our united forces into Bavaria. *The design is worthy of you, of the army, and of the destinies of France*."—Alison, 401.

(c) The campaign in Germany in 1796 followed immediately this campaign in Italy. Thus, in chapter twenty of Alison's History, we have an account of the campaign in Italy; in chapter twenty-one we have the account of the campaign in Germany; and the other wars in Europe that continued so long, and that were so fierce and bloody, followed in quick succession—all tending, in their ultimate results, to weaken the Papal power, and to secure its final overthrow.

(d) It is hardly necessary to say here that these wars had all the characteristics here supposed. It was *as if* the sun were smitten in the heavens, and power were given to scorch men with fire. Europe seemed to be on fire with musketry and artillery, and presented almost the appearance of the broad blaze of a battle-field. The number that perished was immense. These wars were attended with the usual form. And consequences— blasphemy, profaneness, and reproaches of God in every yet there was another effect wholly in accordance with the statement here, that none of these judgments brought men to "repentance, that they might give God the glory." Perhaps these remarks, which might be extended to great length, will show that, on the supposition that it was *intended* to refer to those scenes by the outpouring of this vial, the symbol was well-chosen and appropriate.

{1} "scorched" "burned" {c} "blasphemed" Re 16:11,21 {d} "they repented not" Re 9:20

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 16 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast*. The previous judgments had been preparatory to this. They all had a bearing on this, and were all preliminary to it; but the "seat"— the home; the centre of the power of the beasts had not yet been reached. Here, however, there was a direct blow aimed at that power, still not such yet as to secure its *final* overthrow, for that is reserved for the pouring out of the last vial, Re 16:17-21. All that is represented here is a heavy judgment which was merely *preliminary* to that final overthrow, but which affected *the very seat of the beast*. The phrase "the seat of the beast"— *ton yronon tou yhriou*—means the

seat or throne which the representative of that power occupied; the central point of the Antichristian dominion. Compare **Barnes on "Re 13:2"**

See also Re 2:13. I understand this as referring to the very seat of the Papal powers Rome—the Vatican.

And his kingdom was full of darkness. Confusion—disorder—distress; for darkness is often the emblem of calamity, Isa 59:9-10 Jer 13:16 Eze 30:18 32:7-8, 34:12 Joe 2:2.

And they gnawed their tongues for pain. This is a "most significant expression of the writhings of anguish." The word rendered *gnawed* does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament, nor is the expression elsewhere used in the Bible; but its meaning is plain—it indicates deep anguish.

{e} "seat of the beast" Re 13:2-4 {f} "darkness" Re 9:2

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 16 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *And blasphemed the God of heaven*. The same effect which it was said would be produced by the pouring out of the fourth vial, Re 16:9.

Because of their pains and their sores. Of the calamities that had come upon them.

And repented not of their deeds. **See Barnes on "Re 16:9"**.

Compare Re 9:21.

In regard to the fulfilment and application of this, the following general remarks may be made here:

(a) It would succeed, at no great interval probably, what is referred to under the previous "vials," and would be one in the series tending to the same result.

(b) It would fall directly on the seat of the authority of the "beast" —on the central power of the Papacy, according to the interpretation of the other symbols; and we should look, therefore, for some calamity that would come upon Rome itself, and still more specifically upon the Pope himself, and those immediately around him.

(c) This would be attended with deep distress and darkness in the Papal dominions.

(d) There would be an increase of what is here called "blasphemy;" that is, of impiety and reproaches of the Divine Being.

(e) There would be no repentance produced. There would be no reformation. The system would be as corrupt as it was before, and men would be as much under its influence. And

(f) we should not expect that this would be the *final* overthrow of in the system. *That* is reserved for the outpouring of the seventh and last vial the series, (Re 16:17-21,) and under that the system would be overthrown, and would come to an end. This is distinctly stated in the account of that "vial" and therefore we are not to expect to find, in the application of the fifth "vial," that the calamity brought upon "the seat of the beast" would be such that it would not recover for a time, and maintain apparently, in some good degree, its former power and influence. With this view of what we are to expect, and in connexion with the explanations of the previous symbols, it seems to me that there can be no hesitation in applying this to the direct attacks on the Papal power and on the pope himself, as one of the consequences of the French Revolution, and to the calamities that were thus brought upon the Papal states. In order to show the appropriateness of this application, I will state a few facts which will show that, on the supposition that it was the *intention* in this

symbol to refer to the Papal power at that time, the symbol has been well chosen, and has been fulfilled. And, in doing this, I will merely copy from Alison's *History of Europe* (vol. i. pp. 542-546) a few statements, which, like many that have been quoted from Mr. Gibbon in the former part of these Notes, would seem almost to have been penned in view of this prophecy, and with a view to record its fulfilment. The statement is as follows:—

"The Ecclesiastical States were the next objects of attack. It had long been an avowed object of ambition with the Republican government to revolutionize the Roman people, and plant the tricolour flag in the city of Brutus, and fortune at length presented them with a favourable opportunity to accomplish the design.

"The situation of the pope had become, since the French conquests in Italy, in the highest degree precarious. Cut off by the Cisalpine republic from any support from Austria; left by the treaty of Campo Formio entirely at the mercy of the French republic; threatened by the heavings of the democratic spirit within his own dominions; and exposed to all the contagion arising from the complete establishment and close vicinity of republican governments in the north of Italy the was almost destitute of the means of resisting so many seen and unseen enemies. The pontifical treasury was exhausted by the immense payments stipulated by the treaty of Tolentino; while the activity and zeal of the revolutionary clubs in all the principal towns of the Ecclesiastical States was daily increasing with the prospect of success. To enable the government to meet the enormous demands of the French army, the principal Roman families, like the pope, had sold their gold, their silver, their jewels, their horses, their carriages— in a word, all their valuable effects; but the exactions of the republican agents were still unabated. In despair, they had recourse to the fatal expedient of issuing a paper circulation; but that, in a country destitute of credit, soon fell to an inconsiderable value, and augmented rather than relieved the public distress. Joseph Bonaparte, brother to Napoleon, had been appointed ambassador at the court of Rome; but as his character was deemed too honourable for political intrigue, Generals Duphot and Sherlock were sent along with him, the former of whom had been so successful in effecting the overthrow of Genoese aristocracy. The French embassy, under their direction, soon became the centre of the revolutionary action; and those numerous ardent characters with which the Italian cities abound, flocked there as to a common focus, from whence the next great explosion of democratic power was to be expected. In this extremity, Pins VI., who was above eighty years of age, and sinking into the grave, called to his counsels the Austrian general Provera, already distinguished in the Italian campaigns; but the Directory soon compelled the humiliated pontiff to dismiss that intrepid counsellor. As his recovery then seemed hopeless, the instructions of government to their ambassador were to delay the proclamation of a republic till his death, when the vacant chair of St. Peter might be overturned with little difficulty; but such was the activity of the revolutionary agents, that the train was ready to take fire before that event took place, and the ears of the Romans were assailed by incessant abuse of the ecclesiastical government, and vehement declamations in favour of republican freedom.

"The resolution to overturn the Papal government, like all the other ambitious projects of the Directory, received a very great impulse from the reascendent of Jacobin influence at Paris, by the results of the revolution of 18th Fructidor. One of the first measures of the new government was to despatch an order to Joseph Bonaparte at Rome, to promote, by all the means in his power, the approaching revolution in the Papal states; and, above all things, to take care that at the pope's death no successor should be elected to the chair of St. Peter. Napoleon's language to the Roman pontiff became daily more menacing. Immediately before setting out for Rastadt, he ordered his brother

Joseph to intimate to the pope that three thousand additional troops had been forwarded to Ancona; that if Provera was not dismissed within twenty-four hours, war would be declared; that if any of the revolutionists who had been arrested were executed, reprisals forthwith would be exercised on the cardinals; and that, if the Cisalpine republic was not instantly recognised, it would be the signal for immediate hostilities. At the same time ten thousand troops of the Cisalpine republic advanced to St. Leon, in the Papal duchy of Urbino, and made themselves masters of that fortress; while at Ancona, which was still garrisoned by French troops, notwithstanding its stipulated restoration by the treaty of Tolentino to the Holy See, the democratic party openly proclaimed 'the Anconite Republic.' Similar revolutionary movements took place at Corneto, Civita Vecchia, Pesaro, and Senigaglia; while at Rome itself, Joseph Bonaparte, by compelling the Papal government to liberate all persons confined for political offences, suddenly vomited forth upon the capital several hundreds of the most heated republicans in Italy. After this great addition, measures were no longer kept with the government. Seditious meetings were constantly held in every part of the city; immense collections of tricolour cockades were made to distinguish the insurgents, and deputations of the citizens openly waited on the French ambassador to invite him to support the insurrection, to which he replied, in ambiguous terms—'The fate of nations, as of individuals, being buried in the womb of futurity, it is not given to me to penetrate its mysteries.'

"In this temper of men's minds, a spark was sufficient to occasion an explosion. On the 27th of December, 1798, an immense crowd assembled, with seditious cries, and moved to the palace of the French ambassador, where they exclaimed, 'Vive la Republique Romaine!' and loudly invoked the aid of the French to enable them to plant the tricolour flag on the Capitol. The insurgents displayed the tricolour cockade, and evinced the most menacing disposition; the danger was extreme; from similar beginnings the overthrow of the governments of Venice and Genoa had rapidly followed. The Papal ministers sent a regiment of dragoons to prevent any sortie of the revolutionists from the palace of the French ambassador; and they repeatedly warned the insurgents that their orders were to allow no one to leave the precincts. Duphot, however, indignant at being restrained by the pontifical troops, drew his sword, rushed down the staircase, and put himself at the head of one hundred and fifty armed Roman democrats, who were now contending with the dragoons in the courtyard of the palace. He was immediately killed by a discharge ordered by the sergeant commanding the patrol of the Papal troops; and the ambassador himself, who had followed to appease the tumult, narrowly escaped the same fate. A violent scuffle ensued; several persons were killed and wounded on both sides; and, after remaining several hours in the greatest alarm, Joseph Bonaparte, with his suite, retired to Florence.

"This catastrophe, however, obviously occasioned by the revolutionary schemes which were in agitation at the residence of the French ambassador, having taken place within the precincts of his palace, was, unhappily, a violation of the law of nations, and gave the Directory too fair a ground to demand satisfaction. But they instantly resolved to make it the pretext for the immediate occupation of Rome and overthrow of the Papal government. The march of troops out of Italy was countermanded, and Berthier, the commander-in-chief, received orders to advance rapidly into the Ecclesiastical States. Meanwhile, the democratic spirit burst forth more violently than ever at Ancona and the neighbouring towns, and the Papal authority was soon lost in all the provinces on the eastern slope of the Appenines. To these accumulated disasters the pontiff could only oppose the fasts and prayers of an aged conclave—weapons of spiritual warfare little calculated to arrest the conquerors of Arcola and Lodi.

"Berthlet, without an instant's delay, carried into execution the orders of the Directory. Six thousand Poles were stationed at Rimini to cover the Cisalpine Republic; a reserve was established at Tolentino; while the commander-in-chief, at the head of eighteen thousand veteran troops, entered Ancona. Having completed the work of revolution in that turbulent district, and secured the fortress, he crossed the Appenines; and, advancing by Foligno and Nami, appeared on the 10th of February before the Eternal City. The pope, in the utmost consternation, shut himself up in the Vatican, and spent night and day at the foot of the altar in imploring the Divine protection.

"Rome, almost defenceless, would have offered no obstacle to the entrance of the French troops; but it was part of the policy of the Directory to make it appear that their aid was invoked by the spontaneous efforts of the inhabitants. Contenting himself, therefore, with occupying the castle of St. Angelo, from which the feeble guards of the pope were soon expelled, Berthier kept his troops for five days encamped without the walls. At length, the revolutionists having completed their preparations, a noisy crowd assembled in the Campo Vaccino, the ancient Forum; the old foundations of the Capitol were made again to resound with the cries, if not the spirit, of freedom, and the venerable ensigns, S. P. Q. R., after the lapse of fourteen hundred years, again floated in the winds. The multitude tumultuously demanded the overthrow of the Papal authority; the French troops were invited to enter; the conquerors of Italy, with a haughty air, passed the gates of Aurelian, defiled through the Piazza del Popolo, gazed on the indestructible monuments of Roman grandeur, and, amid the shouts of the inhabitants, the tricolour flag was displayed from the summit of the Capitol.

"But while part of the Roman populace were surrendering themselves to a pardonable intoxication upon the faneled recovery of their liberties, the agents of the Directory were preparing for them the sad realities of slavery. The pope, who had been guarded by five hundred soldiers ever since the entry of the Republicans, was directed to retire into Tuscany; his Swiss guard relieved by a French one, and he himself ordered to dispossess himself of all his temporal authority. He replied, with the firmness of a martyr, 'I am prepared for every species of disgrace. As supreme pontiff, I am resolved to die in the exercise of all my powers. You may employ force—you have the power to do so; but know that, though you may be masters of my body, you are not so of my soul. Free in the region where it is placed, it fears neither the events nor the sufferings of this life. I stand on the threshold of another world; there I shall be sheltered alike from the violence and impiety of this.' Force was soon employed to dispossess him of his authority; he was dragged from the altar in his palace, his repositories all ransacked and plundered, the rings even torn from his fingers, the whole effects in the Vatican and Quirinal inventoried and seized, and the aged pontiff conducted, with only a few domestics, amid the brutal jests and sacrilegious songs of the French dragoons, into Tuscany, where the generous hospitality of the grand duke strove to soften the hardships of his exile. But, though a captive in the hands of his enemies, the venerable old man still retained the supreme authority in the Church. From his retreat in the convent of Chartreuse, he yet guided the counsels of the faithful; multitudes fell on their knees wherever he passed, and sought that benediction from a captive which they would, perhaps, have disregarded from a triumphant pontiff.

"The subsequent treatment of this venerable man was as disgraceful to the republican government as it was honourable to his piety and constancy as the head of the Church. Fearful that from his virtues and sufferings he might have had too much influence on the continent of Italy, he was removed by their orders to Leghorn, in Hatch, 1799, with the design of transferring him to Cagliari in Sardinia; and the English cruisers in the Mediterranean redoubled their vigilance, in the generous hope of rescuing the father of an opposite church from the persecution of his enemies. Apprehensive

of losing their prisoner, the French altered his destination; and forcing him to traverse, often during the night, the Appenines and the Alps in a rigorous season, he at length reached Valence, where, after an illness of ten days, he expired, in the eighty-second year of his age, and the twenty-fourth of his pontificate. The cruelty of the Directory increased as he approached their dominions, all his old attendants were compelled to leave him, and the father of the faithful was allowed to expire, attended only by his confessor. Yet even in this disconsolate state he derived the highest satisfaction from the devotion and reverence of the people in the provinces of France through which he passed. Multitudes from Gap, Vizelle, and Grenoble, flocked to the road to receive his benediction; and he frequently repeated, with tears in his eyes, the words of Scripture, 'Verily, I say unto you, I have not seen such faith, no, not in Israel.'

"But long before the pope had sunk under the persecution of his oppressors, Rome had experienced the bitter fruits of republican fraternization. Immediately after the entry of the French troops commenced the regular and systematic pillage of the city. Not only the churches and the convents, but the palaces of the cardinals and of the nobility were laid waste. The agents of the Directory, insatiable in the pursuit of plunder, and merciless in the means of exacting it, ransacked every quarter within its walls, seized the most valuable works of art, and stripped the Eternal City of those treasures which had survived the Gothic fire and the rapacious hands of the Spanish soldiers. The bloodshed was much less, but the spoil collected incomparably greater, than at the disastrous sack which followed the death of the constable Bourbon. Almost all the great works of art which have since that time been collected throughout Europe, were then scattered abroad. The spoliation exceeded all that the Goths or Vandals had effected. Not only the palaces of the Vatican, and the Monte Cavallo, and the chief nobility of Rome, but those of Castel Gandolfo, on the margin of the Alban Lake, of Terraelna, the Villa Albani, and others in the environs of Rome, were plundered of every article of value which they possessed. The whole sacerdotal habits of the pope and cardinals were burned, in order to collect from the flames the gold with which they were adorned. The Vatican was stripped to its naked walls; the immortal frescoes of Raphael and Michael Angelo remained in solitary beauty amid the general desolation. A contribution of four millions in money, two millions in provisions, and three thousand horses, was imposed on a city already exhausted by the enormous exactions it had previously undergone. Under the direction of the infamous commissary Hailer, the domestic library, museum, furniture, jewels, and even the private clothes of the pope were sold. Nor did the palaces of the Roman nobility escape devastation. The noble galleries of the cardinal Braschi, and the cardinal York, the last relic of the Stuart line, underwent the same fate. Others, as those of the Chigi, Borghese, and Doria palaces, were rescued from destruction only by enormous ransoms. Everything of value that the Tolentino had left in Rome became the prey of republican cupidity, and the very name of freedom soon became odious, from the sordid and infamous crimes which were committed in its name.

"Nor were the exactions of the French confined to the plunder of palaces and churches. Eight cardinals were arrested and sent to Civita Casteliana, while enormous contributions were levied on the Papal territory, and brought home the bitterness of conquest to every poor man's door. At the same time, the ample territorial possessions of the church and the monasteries were confiscated, and declared national property; a measure which, by drying up at once the whole resources of the affluent classes, precipitated into the extreme of misery the numerous poor who were maintained by their expenditure, or fed by their bounty. All the respectable citizens and clergy were in fetters; and a base and despicable faction alone, among whom, to their disgrace be it told, were found

fourteen cardinals, followed in the train of the oppressors; and, at a public festival, returned thanks to God for the miseries they had brought upon their country." (In this connexion, I may insert here the remarkable calculation of Robert Fleming, in his work entitled *Apocalyptical Key or the pouring out of the Vials*, first published m 1701. It is in the following words: "The fifth vial, (Re 16:10-11,) which is to be poured out *on the seat of the beast, or the dominions which more immediately belong to and depend on the Roman see; that, I say, this judgment will probably begin about the year 1794, and expire about A.D. 1848*; *or that the duration of it upon this supposition will be the space of fifty-four years*. For I do suppose that seeing the Pope received the title of Supreme Bishop no sooner than A.D. 606, he cannot be supposed to have any vial poured upon his seat immediately (so as to ruin his authority so signally as this judgment must be supposed to do) *until the year @1848, which is the date of the twelve hundred and sixty years in prophetical account when they are reckoned from A.D. 606*. But yet we are not to imagine that this will totally destroy the Papacy, (though it will exceedingly weaken it,) for we find that still in being and alive when the next vial is poured out," [pp. 124, 125, Cobbin's edition.] It is a circumstance remarkably in accordance with this calculation, that in the year 1848 the Pope was actually driven away to Gaeta, and that at the present time (1851) he is restored, though evidently with diminished power.)

{a} "sores" Re 16:8

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 16 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates*. On the situation of that river, and the symbolical meaning of this language, **see Barnes on "Re 9:14-21"**.

The reference there was supposed to be to the Turkish power, and the analogy of interpretation would seem to require that it should be so understood here. There is every reason, therefore, to suppose that this passage has reference to something in the future history of the Turkish dominions, and to some bearing of the events which are to occur in that history on the ultimate downfall of the Antichristian power referred to by the "beast."

And the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. That is, as the effect of pouring out the vial. There is an allusion here, undoubtedly, to the dividing of the waters of the Red Sea, so that the children of Israel might pass. See Ex 14:21-22. Compare **Barnes on "Isa 11:15"**.

In this description, the Euphrates is represented as *a barrier* to prevent the passage of "the kings of the East" on their way to the West for some purpose not yet specified; that is, applying the symbol of the Euphrates as being the seat of the Turkish power, the meaning is, that that power is such a hindrance, and that in some way that hindrance is to be removed *as if* the waters of an unbridged and unfordable river were dried up so as to afford a safe and easy passage through. Still there are several inquiries as to the application of this which is not easy, and as it refers to what is still future, it may be impossible to answer. The *language* requires us to put upon it the following interpretation:

(a) The persons here referred to as "kings of the East" were ready to make a movement towards the West, over the Euphrates, and would do this if this obstruction were not in their way. *Who* these "kings of the East" are is not said, and perhaps cannot be conjectured. The natural interpretation is, that they are the kings that reign in the East, or that preside over the countries of the eastern

hemisphere. *Why* there was a proposed movement to the West is not said. It might have been for conquest, or it might have been that they were to bring their tribute to the spiritual Jerusalem, in accordance with what is so often said in the prophets, that under the gospel kings and princes would consecrate themselves and their wealth to God. See Ps 72:10-11, "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall clown before him." So also Isa 60:4-6,9,11, "Thy sons shall come from far.—The forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.—All they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense.—The isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them.—Thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought." All that is *fairly* implied in the language used here is, that the kings of the east would be converted to the true religion, or that they were at the time referred to in a state of readiness to be converted if there were no hindrance or obstruction.

(b) There was some hindrance or obstruction to their conversion; that is, as explained, from the Turkish power: in other words, they would be converted to the true faith if it were not for the influence of that power.

(c) The destruction of that power, represented by the drying up of the Euphrates, would remove that obstruction, and the way would thus be "prepared" for their conversion to the true religion. We should most naturally, therefore, look in the fulfilment of this for some such decay of the Turkish power as would be followed by the conversion of the rulers of the East to the gospel.

{a} "Euphrates" Re 9:14 {b} "dried up" Isa 42:15 Jer 50:38, 51:36

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 16 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *And I saw three unclean spirits*. They assumed a visible form which would well represent their odiousness—that of frogs—but still they are spoken of as "spirits." They were evil powers, or evil influences, (Re 16:14, "spirits of devils,") and the language here is undoubtedly designed to represent some such power or influence, which would, at that period, proceed from the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet,

Like frogs. *batracoiv*. This word does not occur in the New Testament, except in the passage before us. It is properly translated *frogs*. The *frog* is here employed clearly as a *symbol*, and it is designed that certain qualities of the "spirits" here referred to should be designated by the symbol. For a full illustration of the meaning of the symbol, the reader may consult Bochart, *Hieroz*. P. II. lib. v. cap. Iv. According to Bochart, the frog is characterized, as a symbol,

(1) for its rough, harsh, coarse voice;

(2) on this account as a symbol of complaining or reproaching;

(3) as a symbol of empty loquacity;

(4) as a symbol of heretics and philosophers-as understood by Augustine;

(5) because the frog has its origin in mud, and lives in mud, as a symbol of those who are born in sin, and live in pollution;

(6) because the frog endures all changes of the season—cold and heat, summer, winter, rain, frost—as a symbol of *monks* who practise self-denial;

(7) because the frog, though abstemious of food, yet lives in water and drinks often, as a symbol of drunkards;

(8) as a symbol of impudence;

(9) because the frog swells his size, and distends his cheeks, as a symbol of pride. See the authorities for these uses of the word in Bothart. How many or few of these ideas enter into the symbol here, it is not easy to decide. We may suppose, however, that the spirits referred to would be characterized by pride arrogance, impudence, assumption of authority; perhaps impurity and vileness, for all these ideas enter into the meaning of the symbol. They are not here probably symbols of *persons*, but of *influences or opinions* which would be spread abroad, and which would characterize the age referred to. The reference is to what the "dragon," the "beast," and the "false prophet" would do at that time in opposing the truth, and in preparing the world for the great and final conflict.

Out of the mouth of the dragon. One of which seemed to issue from the mouth of the dragon. On the symbolic meaning of the "dragon," **see Barnes "Re 12:3"**.

It, in general, represents Satan, the great enemy of the church; perhaps here Satan under the form of Heathenism or Paganism, as in Re 12:3-4. The idea then is, that, at the time referred to, there would be some manifestation of the power of Satan in the heathen nations, which would be bold, arrogant, proud, loquacious, hostile to truth, and which would be well represented by the hoarse murmur of the frog.

And out of the mouth of the beast. The Papacy as above explained, chapter thirteen. That is, there would be some putting forth of arrogant pretensions; some loud denunciation or complaining; some manifestation of pride and self-consequence, which would be well represented by the croaking of the frog. We have seen above, **Barnes on "Re 6:5"**

See Barnes "Re 6:6, that although the fifth vial was poured upon "the seat of the beast," the effect was not to crush and overthrow that power entirely. The Papacy would still survive, and would be finally destroyed under the outpouring of the seventh vial, Re 16:17-21. In the passage before us we have a representation of it as still living; as having apparently recovered its strength; and as being as hostile as ever to the truth, and able to enter into a combination, secret or avowed, with the "dragon" and the "false prophet," to oppose the reign of truth upon the earth.

And out of the mouth of the false prophet. The word rendered *false prophet—qeudoprofhtou*—does not before occur in the book of Revelation, though the use of the article would seem to imply that some well-known power or influence was referred to by this. Compare **Barnes on "Re 10:3"**.

The word occurs in other places in the New Testament, Mt 7:15 24:11,24 Mr 13:22; Lu 6:26 Ac 13:6; 2Pe 2:1 1Jo 4:1; and twice elsewhere in the book of Revelation, with the same reference as here, Re 19:20 20:10. In both these latter places it is connected with the "beast." "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet." "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are." It would seem then to refer to some power that was similar to that of the beast, and that was to share the same fate in the overthrow of the enemies of the gospel. As to the application of this, there is no opinion so probable as that it alludes to the Mohammedan power—not strictly the *Turkish* power, for that was to be "dried up" or to diminish; but to the Mohammedan power as such, that was still to continue for awhile in its rigour, and that was yet to exert a formidable influence against the gospel, and probably

in some combination, in fact, if not in form, with Paganism and the Papacy. The *reasons* for this opinion are,

(a) that this was referred to in the former part of the book is one of the formidable powers that would arise, and that would materially affect the destiny of the world—and it may be presumed that it would be again referred to in the account of the final consummation- see Re 9:1-11;

(b) the name "*false prophet*" would better than any other describe has that power, and would naturally suggest it in future times—for to no one that ever appeared in our world could the name be so properly applied as to Mohammed; and

(c) what is said will be found to agree with the facts in regard to that power, as, in connexion with the Papacy and with Paganism, constituting the sum of the obstruction to the spread of the gospel around the world.

{a} "dragon" Re 12:3,9 {b} "beast" Re 13:2 {c} "false prophet" Re 19:20

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 16 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *For they are the spirits of devils*. On the meaning of the word used here, **see Barnes on "Re 9:20"**.

It is used here, as it is in Re 9:20, in a bad sense as denoting evil spirits. Compare **Barnes on "Mt 4:1-2,24"**.

Working miracles. Working what seemed to be miracles; that is, such wonders as to deceive the world with the belief that they were miracles. **See Barnes on** "Re 13:13-14, where the same power is ascribed to the "beast."

Which go forth unto the kings of the earth. Which particularly affect and influence kings and rulers. No class of men have been more under the influence of Pagan superstition, Mohammedan delusion, or the Papacy, than kings and princes. We are taught by this passage that this will continue to be so in the circumstances referred to.

And of the whole world. That is, so far that it might be represented as affecting the whole world—to wit, the Heathen, the Mohammedan, and the Papal portions of the earth. These still embrace so large a portion of the globe, that it might be said that what would affect those powers now would influence the whole world.

To gather them. Not literally to assemble them all in one place, but so to unite and combine them that it might be represented as an assembling of the hosts for battle.

To the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Not the day of judgment, but the day which would determine the ascendency of true religion in the world—the final conflict with those powers which had so long opposed the gospel. It is not necessary to suppose that there would be a literal "*battle*," in which God would be seen to contend with his foes; but there would be that which might be properly *represented* as a battle. That is, there would be a combined struggle against the truth, and in that God would appear by his Providence and Spirit on the side of the church, and would give it the victory. It accords with all that has occurred in the past, to suppose that there will be such a combined struggle before the church shall finally triumph in the world.

{d} "devils" 1Ti 4:1 {e} "miracles" 2Th 2:9 {f} "whole world" 1Jo 5:19 {g} "battle" Re 19:19

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 16 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *Behold, I come as a thief*. That is, suddenly and unexpectedly. **See Barnes on "Mt 24:43; 1Th 5:2"**.

This is designed evidently to admonish men to watch, or to be in readiness for his coming—since, whenever it would occur, it would be at a time when men were not expecting him.

Blessed is he that watcheth. Compare Mt 24:42-44. The meaning here is, that he who watches for these events, who marks the indications of their approach, and who is conscious of a preparation for them, is in a better and happier state of mind than he on whom they come suddenly and unexpectedly.

And keepeth his garments. The allusion here seems to be to one who, regardless of danger, or of the approach of an enemy, should lay aside his garments and lie down to sleep. Then the thief might come and take away his garments, leaving him naked. The essential idea, therefore, here, is the duty of vigilance. We are to be awake to duty and to danger; we are not to be found sleeping on our post; we are to be ready for death—ready for the coming of the Son of man.

Lest he walk naked. His raiment being carried away while he is asleep.

And they see his shame. Compare **Barnes on "Re 3:18"**.

The meaning here is, that, as Christians are clothed with the garments of righteousness; they should not lay them aside, so that their spiritual nakedness should be seen. They are to be always clothed with the robes of salvation; always ready for any event, however soon or suddenly it may come upon them.

{a} "thief" 2Pe 3:16 {b} "naked" Re 3:4,18

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 16 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *And he gathered them together*. *Who* gathered them? Prof. Stuart renders it, "*they* gathered them together," supposing that it refers to the "spirits"—*pneumata*—in Re 16:13, and that this is the construction of the neuter plural with a singular verb. So De Wette understands it. Hengstenberg supposes that it means that *God* gathered them together; others suppose that it was the sixth angel; others that it was Satan; others that it was the beast; and others that it was Christ. See Poole's Synopsis *in loc*. The authority of De Wette and Prof. Stuart is sufficient to show that the construction which they adopt is authorized by the Greek, as indeed no one can doubt, and perhaps this accords better with the context than any other construction proposed. Thus, in Re 16:14, the spirits are represented as going forth into the whole world for *the purpose* of gathering the nations together to the great battle, and it is natural to suppose that the reference is to them here as having accomplished what they went forth to do. But who are to be gathered together? Evidently those who in Re 16:14 are described by the word "*them*"—the "king of the earth, and the whole world;" that is, there will be a state of things which would be well described by a universal gathering of forces in a central battle-field. It is by no means necessary to suppose that what is here represented will *literally* occur. There will be a mustering of spiritual forces; there will be a combination and a unity of opposition against the truth; there will be a rallying of the declining powers of Heathenism,

Mohammedanism, and Romanism, as if the forces of the earth, marshalled by kings and rulers, were assembled in some great battle-field where the destiny of the world was to be decided.

Into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. The word *Armageddon—armageddwn*—occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, and is not found in the Septuagint. It seems to be formed from the Hebrew ? *Har Megiddo—Mountain of Megiddo*. Compare 2Ch 35:22, where it is said that Josiah "came to fight *in the valley of Megiddo*." Megiddo was a town belonging to Manasseh, although within the limits of Issachar, Jos 17:11. It had been originally one of the royal cities of the Canaanites, (Jos 12:21,) and was one of those of which the Israelites were unable for a long time to take possession. It was rebuilt and fortified by Solomon, (1Ki 9:15,) and thither Ahaziah king of Judah fled when wounded by Jehu, and died there, 2Ki 9:27. It was here that Deborah and Barak destroyed Sisera and his host, (Jud 5:19;) and it was in a battle near this that Josiah was slain by Pharaoh-nechoh, 2Ki 23:29-30 2Ch 35:20-25. From the great mourning held for his loss, it became proverbial to speak of any grievous mourning as being "like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon," Zec 12:11. It has not been found easy to identify the place, but recent searches have made it probable that the vale or plain of Megiddo comprehended, if it was not wholly composed of, the prolongation of the plain of Esdra-elon towards Mount Carmel; that the city of Megiddo was situated there; and that the waters of Megiddo, mentioned in Jud 5:19, are identical with the stream Kishon in that part of its course. See Biblical Repository, i. 602, 603. It is supposed that the modern town called *Lejjun* occupies the site of the ancient Megiddo.—Robinson's *Biblical Researches*, iii. 177-180. Megiddo was distinguished for being the place of the decisive conflict between Deborah and Sisera, and of the battle in which Josiah was slain by the Egyptian invaders, and hence it became emblematic of *any* decisive battle-field—just as Marathon, Leuctra, Arbela, or Waterloo is. The word "mountain" in the term Armageddon—" Mountain of Megiddo"— seems to have been used because Megiddo was in a mountainous region, though the battles were fought in a *valley* adjacent. The meaning here is, that there would be, as it were, a decisive battle which would determine the question of the prevalence of true religion on the earth What we are to expect as the fulfilment of this would seem to be, that there will be some mustering of strength —some rallying of forces—some opposition made to the kingdom of God in the gospel by the powers here referred to which would be *decisive* in its character, and which would be well represented by the battles between the people of God and their foes in the conflicts in the valley of Megiddo. As this constitutes, according to the course of the exposition by which we have been conducted, an important division in the book of Revelation, it may be proper to pause here, and make a few remarks. The previous parts of the book, according to the interpretation proposed, relate to the past, and thus far we have found such a correspondence between the predictions and facts which have occurred as to lead us to suppose that these predictions have been fulfilled. At this point, I suppose, we enter on that part which remains yet to be fulfilled, and the investigation must carry us into the dark and unknown future. The remaining portion comprises a very general sketch of things down to the end of time, as the previous portion has touched on the great events pertaining to the church and its progress for a period of more than one thousand eight hundred years. A few general remarks, therefore, seem not inappropriate at this point.

(a) In the previous interpretations we have had the facts of history by which to test the accuracy of the interpretation. The plan pursued has been, first, to investigate the meaning of the words and symbols, entirely independent of any supposed application, and then to inquire whether there have been any facts that may be regarded as corresponding with the meaning of the words and symbols

as explained. Of this method of testing the accuracy of the exposition we must now take our leave. Our sole reliance must be in the exposition itself, and our work must be limited to that.

(b) It is always difficult to interpret a prophecy. The language of prophecy is often apparently enigmatical; the symbols are sometimes obscure; and prophecies relating to the same subject are often in detached fragments, uttered by different persons at different times, and it is necessary to collect and arrange them, in order to have a full view of the one subject. Thus the prophecies respecting the Messiah were many of them obscure, and indeed apparently contradictory, before he came; they were uttered at distant intervals, and by different prophets; at one time one trait of his character was dwelt upon, and at another another; and it was difficult to combine these so as to have an accurate view of what he would be, until he came. The result has shown what the meaning of the prophecies was; and at the same time has demonstrated that there was entire consistency in the various predictions, and that to one who could have comprehended all, it would have been *possible* to combine them so as to have had a *correct* view of the Messiah, and of his work, even before he came. The same remark is still more applicable to the predictions in the book of Revelation, or to the similar predictions in the book of Daniel, and to many portions of Isaiah. It is easy to see how *difficult* it would have been, or rather how *impossible* by any human powers, to have applied these prophecies in detail before the events occurred; and yet, now that they have occurred, it may be seen that the symbols were the happiest that could have been chosen, and the only ones that could with propriety have been selected to describe the remarkable events which were to take place in future times.

(c) The same thing we may presume to be the case in regard to events which are to occur. We may expect to find

(1) language and symbols that are, in themselves, capable of clear interpretation, as to their proper meaning;

(2) the events of the future so sketched out by that language and by those symbols, that we may obtain a *general* view that will be accurate; and yet

(3) an entire impossibility of filling up beforehand the minute details.

In regard, then, to the application of the particular portion now before us, Re 16:12-16, the following remarks may be made:—

(1) The Turkish power, especially since its conquest of Constantinople under Mohammed II. in 1453, and its establishment in Europe, has been a grand hindrance to the spread of the gospel. It has occupied a central position; it has possessed some of the richest parts of the world; it has, in general, excluded all efforts to spread the pure gospel within its limits; and its whole influence has been opposed to the spread of pure Christianity. Compare **Barnes on "Re 9:14-21"**.

"By its laws, it was death to a Mussulman to apostatize from his faith, and become a Christian; and examples, not a few, have occurred in recent times to illustrate it." It is not until quite recently, and that under the influence of missionaries in Constantinople, that evangelical Christianity has been tolerated in the Turkish dominions.

(2.) The prophecy before us implies that there would be a *decline* of that formidable power—represented by the "drying up of the great river Euphrates." **See Barnes on "Re 16:12"**.

And no one can be insensible to the fact that events are occurring which would be properly represented by such a symbol; or that there is, in fact, now such a decline of that Turkish power, and that the beginning of that decline closely followed, in regard to *time*, if not in regard to the *cause*, the events which it is supposed were designed by the previous vials— those connected with

the successive blows on the Papacy and the seat of the beast. In reference, then, to the decline of that power, we may refer to the following things:

(a) The first great cause was *internal revolt and insurrection*. In 1820, Ali Pasha asserted his independence, and by his revolt precipitated the Greek insurrection which had been a long time secretly preparing—an insurrection so disastrous to the Turkish power.

(b) The Greek insurrection followed. This soon spread to the AEgean isles, and to the districts of Northern Greece, Epirus, and Thessaly; while at the same time the standard of revolt was raised in Wallachia and Moldavia. The progress and issue of that insurrection are well known. A Turkman army of 30,000 that entered the Morea to reconquer it was destroyed in 1823 in detail, and the freedom of the peninsula was nearly completed by the insurgents. By sea the Greeks emulated their ancestors of Salamis and Mycale; and, attended with almost uniform success, encountered and vanquished the superior Turkish and Egyptian fleets. Meanwhile the sympathies of Western Christendom were awakened in behalf of their brother Christians struggling for independence; and just when the tide of success began to turn, and the Morea was again nearly subjected by Ibrahim Pasha, the united fleets of England, France, and Russia (in contravention of all their usual principles of policy) interposed in their favour; attacked and destroyed the Turco-Egyptian fleets in the battle of Novatiao, (September, 1827,) and thus secured the independence of Greece. Nothing had ever occurred that tended so much to weaken the power of the Turkish empire.

(c) The rebellion of the great Egyptian Pasha, Mehemet Ali, soon followed. The French invasion of Egypt had prepared him for it, by having taught him the superiority of European discipline, and thus this event was one of the proper results of those described under the first four vials. Mehemet Ali, through Ibrahim, attacked and conquered Syria; defeated the Sultan's armies sent against him in the great battles of Hems, of Nezib, and of Iconium; and, but for the intervention of the European powers of England, Russia, Prussia, and Austria, by which he was driven out of Syria, and forced back to his proper Pashalie Egypt, he would probably have advanced to Constantinople and subdued it.

(d) There has been for centuries a gradual weakening of the Turkish power. It has done nothing to extend its empire by arms. It has been resting in inglorious ease, and, in the meantime, its wealth and its strength have been gradually decreasing. It has lost Moldavia, Wallachia, Greece, Algiers, and, practically, Egypt; and is doing nothing to recruit its wasted and exhausted strength. Russia only waits for a favourable opportunity to strike the last blow on that enfeebled power, and to put an end to it for ever.

(e) The general condition of the Turkish empire is thus described by the Rev. Mr. Walsh, chaplain to the British Ambassador to Constantinople: "The circumstances most striking to a traveller passing through Turkey is its *depopulation*. Ruins where villages had been built, and fallows where land had been cultivated, are frequently seen with no living thing near them. This effect is not so visible in larger towns, though the cause is known to operate there in a still greater degree. Within the last twenty years, Constantinople has lost more than half its population. Two conflagrations happened while I was in Constantinople, and destroyed fifteen thousand houses. The Russian and Greek wars were a constant drain on the janisaries of the capital; the silent operation of the plague is continually active, though not always alarming; it will be no exaggeration to say that, within the period mentioned, from three to four hundred thousand persons have been swept away in one city in Europe by causes which were not operating in any others—*conflagration, pestilence, and civil commotion*. The Turks, though naturally of a robust and vigorous constitution, addict themselves

to such habits as are very unfavourable to population— the births do little more than exceed the ordinary deaths, and cannot supply the waste of casualties. The surrounding country is, therefore, continually drained to supply this waste in the capital, which, nevertheless, exhibits districts *nearly depopulated*. We see every day life going out in the fairest portion of Europe; and *the human race threatened with extinction* in a soil and climate capable of supporting the most abundant population."—*Walsh's Narrative*, pp. 22—26, as quoted in *Bush on the Millennium*, 243, 244. The probability now is, that this gradual decay will be continued; that the Turkish power will more and more diminish; that one portion after another will set up for independence; and that, by a gradual process of decline, this power will become practically extinct, and what is here symbolized by the "drying up of the great river Euphrates" will have been accomplished.

(3.) This obstacle removed, we may look for a general turning of the princes, and rulers, and people of the Eastern world to Christianity, represented (Re 16:12) by its being said that "the way of the kings of the East might be prepared." **See Barnes on "Re 16:12".**

It is clear that nothing would be more *likely* to contribute to this, or to prepare the way for it, than the removal of that Turcoman dominion which for more than four hundred years has been an effectual barrier to the diffusion of the gospel in the lands where it has prevailed. How rapidly, we may suppose, the gospel would spread in the East, if all the obstacles thrown in its way by the Turkish power were at once removed!

(4.) In accordance with the interpretation suggested on Re 16:13-14, we may look for something that would be well represented by a combined effort on the part of Heathenism, Mohammedanism, and Romanism, to stay the progress and prevent the spread of evangelical religion. That is, according to the fair interpretation of the passage, we should look for same simultaneous movement *as if* their influence was to be about to cease, and as if it were necessary to arouse all their energies for a last and desperate struggle. It may be added that, in itself, nothing would be more *probable* than this; but when it will occur, and what form the aroused enemy will assume, it would be vain to conjecture.

(5.) And in accordance with the interpretation suggested on Re 16:15, we are to suppose that something will occur which would be well represented by the decisive conflicts in the valley of Megiddo; that is, something that will determine the ascendency of true religion in the world, *as if* these great powers of Heathenism, Mohammedanism, and Romanism should stake all their interests on the issue of a single battle. It is not necessary to suppose that this will *literally* occur, and there are no certain intimations as to the time when what is represented will happen; but all that is meant may be that events will take place which would be well represented by such a conflict. Still, nothing in the prophecy prevents the supposition that these combined powers *may be* overthrown in some fierce conflict with Christian powers.

{a} "It is done" Re 21:6

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 16 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air*. This introduces the final catastrophe in regard to the "beast"—his complete and utter overthrow, accompanied with tremendous judgments. Why the vial was poured into *the air* is not stated. The most probable supposition as to the idea intended to be represented is, that, as storms and tempests seem to be engendered in the

air, so this destruction would come from some supernatural cause, as if the whole atmosphere should be filled with wind and storm; and a furious and desolating whirlwind should be aroused by some invisible power.

And there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven. The voice of God. **See Barnes "Re 11:19"**.

From the throne. **See Barnes "Re 4:2"**.

This shows that it was the voice of God, and not the voice of an angel.

Saying, It is done. The series of judgments is about to be completed; the dominion of the beast is about to come to an end for ever. The meaning here is, that that destruction was so certain, that it might be spoken of as now actually accomplished.

{a} "earthquake" Re 11:13

{b} "such as was not" Da 12:1

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 16 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings*. Accompanying the voice that was heard from the throne. **See Barnes** "Re 4:5; Re 11:19 ".

And there was a great earthquake, etc. **See Barnes "Re 6:12"**; **See Barnes** "Re 11:19".

The meaning is, that a judgment followed *as if* the world were shaken by an earthquake, or which would be properly represented by that.

So mighty an earthquake, and so great. All this is intensive, and is designed to represent the severity of the judgment that would follow.

{c} "city" Re 14:8 {d} "cup" Isa 51:17,23; Jer 25:15,16

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 16 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *And the great city was divided into three parts*. The city of Babylon; or the mighty power that was represented by Babylon. **See Barnes on "Re 14:8"**.

The division here mentioned into three parts was manifestly with reference to its destruction—either that one part was smitten and the others remained for a time, or that one form of destruction came on one part, and another on the others. In Re 11:13, it is said, speaking of "the great city spiritually called Sodom and Egypt"—representing Rome, that "the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand," (**see Barnes "Re 11:13"**;) here it is said that the *whole* city, in the calamities that came upon it, was divided into three portions, though it is evidently implied that, in these calamities, the whole city was sooner or later destroyed. Prof. Stuart (*in loc*.) supposes that the number *three* is used here, as it is throughout the book, "in a symbolical way," and that the meaning is, that "the city was severed and broken in pieces, so that the whole was reduced to a ruinous state." He supposes that it refers to Pagan Rome, or to the Pagan Roman persecuting power. Others refer it to Jerusalem, and suppose that the allusion is to the divisions of the city, in the time of the siege, into Jewish, Samaritan, and Christian parties; others

suppose that it refers to a division of the Roman empire under Honorins, Attalus, and Constantine; others to the fact, that when Jerusalem was besieged by Titus, it was divided into three factions; and others that the number three is used to denote *perfection*, or the total ruin of the city. All that, it seems to me, can be said now on the point is,

(a) that it refers to Papal Rome, or the Papal power;

(b) that it relates to something yet future, and that it may not be possible to determine with precise accuracy what will occur;

(c) that it probably means that, in the time of the final ruin of that power, there will be a threefold judgment—either a different judgment in regard to some threefold manifestation of that power, or a succession of judgments, *as if* one part were smitten at a time. The certain and entire ruin of the power is predicted by this, but still it is not improbable that it will be by such divisions, or such successions of judgments, that it is proper to represent the city as divided into three portions.

And the cities of the nations fell. In alliance with it, or under the control of the central power. As the capital fell, the dependent cities fell also. Considered as relating to Papal Rome, the meaning here is, that what may be properly called "the cities *of the nations*" that were allied with it would share the same fate. The cities of numerous nations" are now, and have been for ages, under the control of the Papal power, or the spiritual Babylon; and the calamity that will smite the central power *as such*—that is, as a spiritual power—will reach and affect them all. Let the central power at Rome be destroyed; the Papacy cease; the superstition with which Rome is regarded come to an end; the power of the priesthood in Italy be destroyed, and however widely the Roman dominion is spread now, it cannot be kept up. If it falls *in* Rome, there is not influence enough *out of* Rome to continue it in being—and in all its extended ramifications it will die, as the body dies when the head is severed; as the power of provinces ceases when ruin comes upon the capital. This the prophecy leads us to suppose will be the final destiny of the Papal power.

And great Babylon. **See Barnes on "Re 14:8"**.

Came in remembrance before God. That is, for purposes of punishment. It had been, as it were, overlooked. It had been permitted to carry on its purposes, and to practise its abominations, unchecked, as if God did not see it Now the time had come when all that it had done was to be remembered, and when the long-suspended judgment was to fall upon it.

To give unto her the cup of the wine, etc. To punish; to destroy her. **See Barnes "Re 14:10"**.

{e} "Every island fled" Re 6:14

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 16 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *And every island fled away*. Expressive of great and terrible judgments, as if the very earth were convulsed, and everything were moved out of its place. **See Barnes "Re 6:14"**.

And the mountains were not found. The same image occurs in Re 6:14. **See Barnes "Re 6:14"**.

{f} "great hail" Re 11:19

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 16 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven*. Perhaps this is an allusion to one of the plagues of Egypt, Ex 9:22-26. Compare **Barnes on "Re 11:19"**.

For a graphic description of the effects of a hail storm, **see Barnes on "Isa 30:30"**

second edition. Compare **Barnes on "Job 38:22"**.

Every stone about the weight of a talent. The Attic talent was equal to about 55 lbs. or 56 lbs. Troy weight; the Jewish talent to about 113 lbs. Troy. Whichever weight is adopted, it is easy to conceive what must be the horror of such a storm, and what destruction it must cause. We are not, of course, to suppose, necessarily, that this would literally occur; it is a frightful image to denote the terrible and certain destruction that would come upon Babylon; that is, upon the Papal power.

And men blasphemed God. **See Barnes on "Re 16:9"**.

Because of the plague of the hail. Using the word *plague* in allusion to the plagues of Egypt.

For the plague thereof was exceeding great. The calamity was great and terrible. The design of the whole is to show that the destruction would be complete and awful.

This finishes the summary statement of the final destruction of this formidable Antichristian power. The details and the consequences of that overthrow are more fully stated in the subsequent chapters. The *fulfilment* of what is here stated will be found, according to the method of interpretation proposed, in the ultimate overthrow of the Papacy. The process described in this chapter is that of successive calamities that would weaken it and prepare it for its fall; then a rallying of its dying strength; and then some tremendous judgment that is compared with a storm of hail, accompanied with lightning, and thunder, and an earthquake, that would completely overthrow all that was connected with it. We are not, indeed, to suppose that this will *literally* occur; but the fair interpretation of prophecy leads us to suppose that that formidable power will, at no very distant period, be overthrown in a manner that would be well represented by such a fearful storm.

{a} "great whore" Re 19:2 Na 3:4 {b} "many waters" Jer 51:13

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 17

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 17 - Verse 1

CHAPTER XVII

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER

THIS chapter properly commences a more detailed description of the judgment inflicted on the formidable Antichristian power referred to in the last chapter, though under a new image. It contains an account of the sequel of the pouring out of the last vial, and the description, in various forms, continues to the close of chap. xix. The whole of this description (chap. xvii.-xix.) constitutes the last great catastrophe represented under the seventh vial, Re 16:17-21, at the close of which the great enemy of God and the church will be destroyed, and the church will be triumphant, Re 19:17-21. The image in this chapter is that of a harlot, or abandoned woman, on whom severe

judgment is brought for her sins. The action is here delayed, and this chapter has much the appearance of an explanatory episode, designed to give a more clear and definite idea of the character of that formidable Antichristian power on which the judgment was to descend. The chapter, without any formal division, embraces the following points:—

(1.) Introduction, Re 17:1-3. One of the seven angels entrusted with the seven vials comes to John, saying that he would describe to him the judgment that was to come upon the great harlot with whom the kings of the earth had committed fornication, and who had made the dwellers upon the earth drunk by the wine of her fornication; that is, of that Antichristian power so often referred to in this book, which by its influence had deluded the nations, and brought their rulers under its control.

(2.) A particular description of this Antichristian powers represented as an abandoned and attractive female, in the usual attire of an harlot, Re 17:3-6. She is seated on a scarlet-coloured beast, covered over with blasphemous names—a beast with seven heads and ten horns. She is arrayed in the usual gorgeous and alluring attire of an harlot, clothed in purple, decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls, with a golden cup in her hand full of abomination and filthiness. She has on her forehead a name expressive of her character. She is represented as drunken with the blood of the saints, and is such as to attract attention

(3.) An explanation of what is meant by this scarlet-clothed woman, and of the design of the representation, Re 17:7-18. This comprises several parts:

(a) A promise of the angel that he would explain this, Re 17:7.

(b) An enigmatical or symbolical representation of the design of the vision, Re 17:8-14. This description consists of an account of the beast on which the woman sat, Re 17:8; of the seven heads of the beast, as representing seven mountains, Re 17:9; of the succession of kings or dynasties represented, Re 17:9-11; of the ten horns as representing ten kings or kingdoms giving their power and strength to the beast, Re 17:12-13; and of the conflict or warfare of all these confederated or consolidated powers with the Lamb, and their discomfiture by him, Re 7:14.

(c) A more literal statement of what is meant by this, Re 17:15-18. The waters on which the harlot sat represent a multitude of people subject to her control, Re 17:15. The ten horns, or the ten kingdoms, on the beast, would ultimately hate the harlot, and destroy her, as if they should eat her flesh, and consume her with fire, Re 17:16. This would be done because God would put it into their hearts to fulfil his purposes, alike in giving their kingdom to the beast, and then turning against it to destroy it, Re 17:17. The woman referred to is at last declared to be the great city which reigned over the kings of the earth, Re 17:18. For particularity and definiteness, this is one of the most remarkable chapters in the book, and there can be no doubt that it was the design in it to give such an explanation of what was referred to in these visions, that there could be no mistake in applying the description. "All that remains between this and the twentieth chapter," says Andrew Fuller, "would in modern publications be called notes of illustration. No new subject is introduced, but mere enlargement on what has already been announced."— Works, vi. 205.

Verse 1. *And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials*. **See Barnes on** "Re 15:1, 7".

Reference is again made to these angels in the same manner in Re 21:9, where one of them says that he would show to John "the bride, the Lamb's wife." No particular one is specified. The general idea seems to be, that to those seven angels was entrusted the execution of the last things, or the winding up of affairs introductory to the reign of God, and that the communications respecting

those last events were properly made through them. It is clearly quite immaterial by which of these it is done. The expression "which had the seven vials" would seem to imply that though they had emptied the vials in the manner stated in the previous chapter, they still retained them in their hands.

And talked with me. Spake to me. The word *talk* would imply a more protracted conversation than occurred here.

Come hither. Gr., *deuro*—"here, hither." This is a word merely calling the attention, as we should say now "*here*." It does not imply that John was to leave the place where he was.

I will show thee. Partly by symbols, and partly by express statements: for this is the way in which, in fact, he showed him.

The judgment. The condemnation and calamity that will come upon her.

Of the great whore. It is not uncommon in the Scriptures to represent a city under the image of a woman—a pure and holy city under the image of a virgin or chaste female; a corrupt, idolatrous, and wicked city under the image of an abandoned or lewd woman. **See Barnes on "Isa 1:21"**

"How is the faithful city become an harlot." Compare **Barnes on "Isa 1:8"**.

In Re 16:18 it is expressly said that "this woman is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth"—that is, as I suppose, Papal Rome; and the design here is to represent it as resembling an abandoned female— fit representative of an apostate, corrupt, unfaithful church. Compare **Barnes on "Re 9:21"**.

That sitteth upon many waters. An image drawn either from Babylon, situated on the Euphrates, and encompassed by the many artificial rivers which had been made to irrigate the country, or Rome, situated on the Tiber. In Re 16:15, these waters are said to represent the peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues over which the government symbolized by the woman ruled. **See Barnes on "Re 16:15"**.

Waters are often used to symbolize nations.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 17 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication*. Spiritual adultery. The meaning is, that Papal Rome, unfaithful to God, and idolatrous and corrupt, had seduced the rulers of the earth, and led them into the same kind of unfaithfulness, idolatry, and corruption. Compare Jer 3:8-9 5:7, 13:27 23:14; Eze 16:32 23:37; Ho 2:2

Ho 4:2. How true this is in history need not be stated. All the princes and kings of Europe in the dark ages and for many centuries were, and not a few of them are now, entirely under the influence of Papal Rome.

And the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. The alluring cup which as an harlot she had to said extended them. See this image explained in **Barnes on "Re 14:8"**.

There it is that Babylon—referring to the same thing—had "made them drink of the wine *of the wrath* of her fornication;" that is, of the cup that led to wrath or punishment. Here it is said that the harlot had made them "*drunk* with the wine of her fornication;" that is, they had been, as it were, intoxicated by the alluring cup held out to them. What could better describe the influence of Rome

on the people of the world, in making them, under these delusions, incapable of sober judgment, and in completely fascinating and controlling all their powers?

{c} "whom the kings of the earth" Re 18:3 {a} "scarlet-coloured beast" Re 12:3 {b} "having seven heads" Re 13:1

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 17 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *So he carried me away in the spirit*. In vision. He *seemed* to himself to be thus carried away; or the scene which he is about to describe was made to pass before him *as if* he were present.

Into the wilderness. Into a desert. Compare **Barnes on "Re 12:6"**.

Why this scene is laid in a wilderness or desert is not mentioned. Prof. Stuart supposes that it is because it is "appropriate to symbolize the future condition of the beast." So De Wette and Rosenmuller. The imagery is changed somewhat from the first appearance of the harlot in Re 17:1. There she is represented as "sitting upon many waters." Now she is represented as "riding on a beast," and, of course, the imagery is adapted to that. Possibly there may have been no intentional significancy in this; but on the supposition, as the interpretation has led us to believe all along, that this refers to Papal Rome, may not the propriety of this be seen in the condition of Rome and the adjacent country, at the rise of the Papal power? That had its rise (**see Barnes on "Da 7:25"**

seq.) after the decline of the Roman civil power, and properly in the time of Clovis, Pepin, or Charlemagne. Perhaps its first *visible* appearance as a power that was to influence the destiny of the world, was in the time of Gregory the Great, A. D. 590-605. On the supposition that the passage before us refers to the period when the Papal power became thus marked and defined, the state of Rome at this time, as described by Mr. Gibbon, would show with what propriety the term *wilderness or desert* might be then applied to it. The following extract from this author, in describing the state of Rome at the accession of Gregory the Great, has almost the appearance of being a designed *commentary* on this passage, or is, at any rate, such as a partial interpreter of this book would *desire* and *expect* to find. Speaking of that period, he says, (*Decline and Fall*, iii. 207-211:) "Rome had reached, about the close of the sixth century, the lowest period of her depression. By the removal of the seat of empire, and the successive loss of the province, the sources of private and public opulence were exhausted; the lofty tree under whose shade the nations of the earth had reposed was deprived of its leaves and branches, and the sapless trunk left to wither on the ground. The ministers of command and the messengers of victory no longer met on the Appian or Flaminian way; and the hostile approach of the Lombards was often felt and continually feared. The inhabitants of a potent and peaceful capital, who visit without an anxious thought the garden of the adjacent country, will faintly picture in their fancy the distress of the Romans; they shut or opened their gates with a trembling hand, beheld from the walls the flames of their houses, and heard the lamentations of their brethren who were coupled together like dogs, and dragged away into distant slavery beyond the sea and the mountains. Such incessant alarms must annihilate the pleasures, and interrupt the labours of rural life; *and the Campagna of Rome was speedily reduced to the state of a dreary WILDERNESS, in which the land is barren, the waters are impure, and the air infectious*. Curiosity and ambition no longer attracted the nations to the capital of the world; but if chance or

necessity directed the steps of a wandering stranger, he contemplated with horror *the vacancy and solitude of the city; and might be tempted to ask, where is the Senate, and where are the people*?

In a season of excessive rains, the Tiber swelled above its banks, and rushed with irresistible violence into the valleys of the seven hills. A pestilential disease arose from the stagnation of the deluge, and so rapid was the contagion that fourscore persons expired in an hour in the midst of a solemn procession which implored the mercy of heaven. A society in which marriage is encouraged, and industry prevails, soon repairs the accidental losses of pestilence and war; but as the far greater part of the Romans was condemned to hopeless indigence and celibacy, *the depopulation was constant and visible, and the gloomy enthusiasts might expect the approaching failure of the human race*. Yet the number of citizens still exceeded the measure of subsistence; their precarious food was supplied from the harvests of Sicily and Egypt; and the frequent repetition of famine betrays the inattention of the emperor to a distant province.

The edifices of Rome were exposed to the same ruin and decay; the mouldering fabrics were easily overthrown by inundations, tempests, and earthquakes; and the monks who had occupied the most advantageous stations exulted in their base triumph over the ruins of antiquity.

"Like Thebes, or Babylon, or Carthage, the name of Rome might have been erased from the earth, if the city had not been animated by a vital principle which again restored her to honour and dominion. The power as well as the virtue of the apostles revived with living energy in the breasts of their successors; and the chair of St. Peter under the reign of Maurice, was occupied by the first and greatest of the name of Gregory. The sword of the enemy was suspended over Rome; it was averted by the mud eloquence and seasonable gifts of the Pontiff, who commanded the respect of heretics and barbarians." Compare Re 13:3,12-15.

On the supposition now that the inspired author of the Apocalypse had Rome in that state when the civil power, declined and the Papacy arose in his eye, what more expressive imagery could he have used to denote it than he has employed" On the supposition—if such a supposition could be made—that Mr. Gibbon *meant* to furnish a commentary on this passage, what more appropriate language could *he* have used? Does not this language look as if the author of the Apocalypse and the author of the "Decline and Fall" *meant* to play into each other's hands?

And in further confirmation of this, I may refer to the testimony of two Roman Catholic writers, giving the same view of Rome, and showing that, in their apprehension also, it was only by the reviving influence of the Papacy that Rome was saved from becoming a total waste. They are both of the middle ages. The first is Augustine Steuchus, who thus writes: "The empire having been overthrown, unless God had raised up the *Pontificate*, Rome, resuscitated and restored by none, would have become uninhabitable, and been a most foul habitation thenceforward of cattle. But in the Pontificate it revived as with a *second birth*; its empire in magnitude, not indeed equal to the old empire, but its form not very dissimilar: because all nations, from East and from West, venerate the Pope, not otherwise than they before obeyed the Emperors." The other is Flavio Blondas: "The princes of the world now adore and worship as *Perpetual Dictator* the successor not of Caesar but of the Fisherman Peter; that is, the *Supreme Pontiff*, the substitute of the aforesaid Emperor." See the original in Elliott, iii. 113.

And I saw a woman. Evidently the same which is referred to in Re 17:1.

Sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast. That is, either the beast was itself naturally of this colour, or it was covered with trappings of this colour. The word *scarlet* properly denotes a bright red colour—brighter than crimson, which is a red colour tinged with blue. **See Barnes on "Isa 1:18"**.

The word here used—*kokkinon*—occurs in the New Testament only in the following places: Mt 27:28 Heb 9:19 Re 17:3-4 18:12,16, in all which places it is rendered *scarlet*. **See Barnes on "Mt 27:28"**; **See Barnes** "Heb 9:19".

The colour was obtained from a small insect which was found adhering to the, shoots of a species of oak in Spain and Western Asia. This was the usual colour in the robes of princes, military cloaks, etc. It is applicable in the description of Papal Rome, because this is a favourite colour there. Thus it is used in Re 12:3, where the same power is represented under the image of a "red dragon." **See Barnes "Re 12:3"**.

It is remarkable that nothing would better represent the favourite colour at Rome than this, or the actual appearance of the pope, the cardinals, and the priests in their robes, on some great festival occasion. Those who are familiar with the descriptions given of Papal Rome by travellers, and those who have passed much time in Rome, will see at once the propriety of this description, on the supposition that it was intended to refer to the Papacy. I caused this inquiry to be made of an intelligent gentleman who had passed much time in Rome—without his knowing my design—what would strike a stranger on visiting Rome, or what would be likely particularly to arrest his attention as remarkable there; and he unhesitatingly replied, "the scarlet colour." This is the colour of the dress of the cardinals—their hats, and cloaks, and stockings being always of this colour. It is the colour of the carriages of the cardinals, the entire body of the carriage being scarlet, and the trappings of the horses the same. On occasion of public festivals and processions, scarlet is suspended from the windows of the houses along which processions pass. The inner colour of the cloak of the pope is scarlet; his carriage is scarlet; the carpet on which he treads is scarlet. A large part of the dress of the body-guard of the pope is scarlet; and no one can take up a picture of Rome without seeing that this colour is predominant. I looked through a volume of engravings representing the principal officers and public persons of Rome. There were few in which the scarlet colour was not found as constituting some part of their apparel; in not a few the scarlet colour prevailed almost entirely. And in illustration of the same thought, I introduce here an extract from a foreign newspaper, copied into an American newspaper of Feb. 22, 1851, as an illustration of the fact that the scarlet colour is characteristic of Rome, and of the readiness with which it is referred to in that respect: "*Curious Costumes*.—The three new cardinals, the archbishops of Thoulouse, Rheims, and Besancon, were presented to the President of the French Republic by the Pope's Nuncio. They wore red caps, red stockings, black Roman coats lined and bound with red, and small cloaks." I conclude, therefore, that if it be admitted that it was *intended* to represent Papal Rome in the vision, the precise description would have been adopted which is found here.

Full of names of blasphemy. All covered over with blasphemous titles and names. What could more accurately describe Papal Rome than this? Compare for some of these names and titles, **Barnes on "2Th 2:4"**; **See Barnes** "1Ti 4:1, seq. **See Barnes** "Re 13:1, **See Barnes "Re 13:5"**.

Having seven heads and ten horns. **See Barnes on "Re 13:1"**.

{1} "decked" "golded" {c} "fornication" Jer 51:7

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 17 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour*. On the nature of the scarlet colour, **see Barnes on "Re 17:3"**.

The *purple* colour—*porfura*—was obtained from a species of shell-fish found on the coasts of the Mediterranean, which yielded a reddish-purple dye, much prized by the ancients. Robes dyed in that colour were commonly worn by persons of rank and wealth, Mr 15:17,20; Lu 16:19.

The purple colour contains more blue than the crimson, though the limits are not very accurately defined, and the words are sometimes interchanged. Thus the mock robe put on the Saviour is called in Mr 15:17,20, *porfuran—purple*, and in Mt 27:28, *kokkinhn—crimson*. On the applicability of this to the Papacy, **see Barnes on "Re 17:3"**.

And decked with gold. After the manner of an harlot, with rich jewelry.

And precious stones. Sparkling diamonds, etc.

And pearls. Also a much-valued female ornament. Compare **Barnes on** "Mt 7:6; Mt 13:46 ".

Having a golden cup in her hand. As if to entice lovers. **See Barnes on "Re 14:8"**.

Full of abominations. Of abominable things; of things fitted to excite abhorrence and disgust; things unlawful and forbidden. The word, in the Scriptures, is commonly used to denote the impurities and abominations of idolatry. **See Barnes on "Da 9:27"**.

The meaning here is, that it seemed to be a cup filled with wine, but it was in fact a cup full of all abominable drugs, leading to all kinds of corruption. How much in accordance this is with the fascinations of the Papacy, it is not necessary now to say, after the ample illustrations of the same thing already furnished in these Notes.

And filthiness of her fornication, The image here is that of Papal Rome, represented as an abandoned woman in gorgeous attire, alluring by her arts the nations of the earth, and seducing them into all kinds of pollution and abomination. It is a most remarkable fact that the Papacy, as if *designing* to furnish a fulfilment of this prophecy, has chosen to represent itself almost precisely in this manner—as a female extending an alluring cup to passers by. Apostate churches, and guilty nations, often furnish the very proofs necessary to confirm the truth of the Scriptures.

{a} "Mystery Babylon" 2Th 2:7 {1} "HARLOTS" "fornications"

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 17 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And upon her forehead*. In a circlet around her forehead. That is, it was made prominent and public, *as if* written on the forehead in blazing capitals. In Re 13:1, it is said that "the name of blasphemy" was written on the "heads" of the beast. The meaning in both places is substantially the same, that it was prominent and unmistakable. **See Barnes on "Re 13:1"**

Compare **Barnes on "Re 14:1"**.

Was a name written. A title, or something that would properly indicate her character.

Mystery. It is proper to remark that there is nothing in the original as written by John, so far as now known, that corresponded with what is implied in placing this inscription in capital letters; and the same remark may be made of the "title" or inscription that was placed over the head of the Saviour on the cross, Mt 27:37 Mr 15:26# Lu 23:38 Joh 19:19. Our translators have adopted this form, apparently, for the sole purpose of denoting that it was an inscription or title. On the meaning of the word *mystery*, **see Barnes on** "1Co 2:7, Compare **Barnes on "1Ti 3:16"**.

Here it seems to be used to denote that there was something hidden, obscure, or enigmatical under the title adopted; that is, the word *Babylon*, and the word *mother*, were symbolical. Our translators have printed and pointed the word *mystery* as if it were part of the inscription. It would probably be better to regard it as referring to the inscription thus: "a name was written—a *mysterious* name, to wit, Babylon," etc. Or, "a name was written mysteriously." According to this it would mean, not that there was any wonderful "*mystery*" about the thing itself, whatever might be true on that point, but that the *name* was enigmatical or symbolical; or that there was something *hidden or concealed* under the name. It was not to be literally understood. *Babylon the great*. Papal Rome, the nominal head of the Christian world, as Babylon had been of the heathen world. **See Barnes on "Re 14:8"**.

The mother of harlots.

(a) Of that spiritual apostasy from God which in the language of the prophets might be called adultery, **see Barnes on "Re 14:8"**;

(b) the promoter of lewdness by her institutions. **See Barnes on "Re 9:21"**.

In both these senses, there never was a more expressive or appropriate title than the one here employed.

And abominations of the earth. Abominable things that prevail on the earth, Re 17:4. Compare **Barnes on "Re 9:20-21"**.

{b} "drunken" Re 16:16

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 17 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints*. A reeling, intoxicated harlot—for that is the image which is kept up all along. In regard to the phrase "drunken with blood," compare Jer 46:10. "The phraseology is derived from the barbarous custom (still extant among many Pagan nations) of drinking the blood of the enemies slain in the way of revenge. The effect of drinking blood is said to be to exasperate, and to intoxicate with passion and a desire of revenge."—Prof. Stuart, *in loc*. The meaning here is, that the persecuting power referred to had shed the blood of the saints; and that, in its fury, it had, as it were, drunk the blood of the slain, and had become, by drinking that blood, intoxicated and infuriated. No one need say how applicable this has been to the Papacy. Compare, however, **Barnes on "Da 7:21,25;** Re 12:13-14; Re 13:15 ".

And with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. *Especially* with their blood. The meaning is, that the warfare in which so much blood was shed was directed against the *saints as such*, and that in fact it terminated particularly on those who, amidst cruel sufferings, were faithful *witnesses* for the Lord Jesus, and deserved to be called, by way of eminence, *martyrs*. Compare **See Barnes on "Re 2:13"**; **See Barnes** "Re 6:9"; **See Barnes** "Re 11:5, **See Barnes "Re 11:7"**.

How applicable this is to the Papacy, let the blood shed in the valleys of Piedmont; the blood shed in the Low Countries by the Duke of Alva; the blood shed on St. Bartholomew's day; and the blood shed in the Inquisition, testify.

And when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. I was astonished at her appearance; at her apparel, and at the things which were so significantly symbolized by her.

{b} "drunken" Re 16:16

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 17 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel?* He was doubtless struck with the appearance of John as he stood fixed in astonishment. The question asked him *why* he wondered, was designed to show him that the cause of his surprise would be removed or lessened, for that he would proceed so to explain this that he might have a correct view of its design.

I will tell thee the mystery of the woman. On the word *mystery*, **see Barnes on "Re 17:5"**.

The sense is, "I will explain what is meant by the symbol—the hidden meaning that is couched under it." That is, he would so far explain it that a just view might be obtained of its signification. The explanation follows, Re 17:8-18.

And of the beast that carrieth her, etc. Re 17:3.

{c} "woman" Re 17:1 {d} "beast" Re 17:3

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 17 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *The beast that thou sawest was, and is not*. In the close of the verse it is added, "and yet is"—"the beast that was, and is not, and yet is." There are three things affirmed here: first, that there is a sense in which it might be said of the power here referred to that it "was," or that *before* this it had an existence; second, that there was a sense in which it might be said that it is "not"—that is, that it had become practically extinct; and, third, that there is a sense in which that power would be so *revived* that it might be said that it "still is." The "beast" here referred to is the same that is mentioned in Re 17:3 13:1,3,11-16.

That is, there was one great formidable power, having essentially the same origin, though manifested under somewhat different modifications, to one and all of which might, in their different manifestations, be given the same name, "*the beast*."

And shall ascend out of the bottomless pit. *ek thv abussou*. On the meaning of the word here used, **see Barnes on "Re 9:1"**.

The meaning here is, that this power would *seem* to come up from the nether world. It would appear at one time to be extinct, but would revive again *as if* coming from the world over which Satan presides, and would in its revived character be such as might be expected from such an origin.

And go into perdition. That is, its end will be destruction. It will not be permanent, but will be overthrown and destroyed. The word *perdition* here is properly rendered by Prof. Stuart *destruction*, but nothing is indicated by the word of the *nature* of the destruction that would come upon it.

And they that dwell on the earth. The inhabitants of the earth generally; that is, the matter referred to will be so remarkable as to attract general attention.

Shall wonder. It will be so contrary to the regular course of events; so difficult of explanation; so remarkable in itself, as to excite attention and surprise.

Whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world. **See Barnes on "Re 13:8"**.

The idea seems to be, that those whose names *are* written in the book of life, or who are truly the friends of God, would not be drawn off in admiration of the beast, or in rendering homage to it.

When they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. That is, the power that once was mighty; that had declined to such a state that it became, as it were, extinct; and that was revived again with so much of its original strength that it might be said that it still exists. The fact of its being revived in this manner, as well as the nature of the power itself, seemed fitted to excite this admiration.

{e} "ascend out" Re 11:7 {f} "perdition" Re 17:11 {g} "wonder" Re 13:3,8

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 17 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *And here is the mind which hath wisdom*. Here is that which requires wisdom to interpret it; or, here is a case in which the mind that shows itself able to explain it will evince true sagacity. So in Re 13:18. **See Barnes on "Re 13:18"**.

Prof. Stuart renders this, "Here is a meaning which compriseth wisdom." It is undoubtedly implied that the symbol *might* be understood—whether in the time of John, or afterwards, he does not say; but it was a matter which could not be determined by ordinary minds, or without an earnest application of the understanding.

The seven heads are seven mountains. Referring undoubtedly to Rome— the seven-hilled city—Septicollis Roma. **See Barnes on** "Re 12:3,

On which the woman sitteth. The city represented as a woman, in accordance with a common usage in the Scriptures. **See Barnes on "Isa 1:8"**.

{h} "seven heads" Re 13:1

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 17 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *And there are seven kings*. That is, seven in all, as they are enumerated in this verse and the next. An *eighth* is mentioned in Re 17:11, but it is at the same time said that this one so pertains to the seven, or is so properly in one sense of the number seven, though in another sense to be regarded as an eighth, that it may be properly reckoned as the seventh. The word *kings* here—*basileiv*—may be understood, so far as the meaning of the word is concerned,

(a) literally as denoting a king, or one who exercises royal authority;

(b) in a more general sense as denoting one of distinguished honour —a viceroy, prince, leader, chief, Mt 2:1,3,9 Lu 1:5 Ac 12:1

(c) in a still larger sense as denoting a dynasty, a form of government, a mode of administration—as that which in fact *rules*. **See Barnes on** "Da 7:24, where the word *king* undoubtedly denotes a dynasty, or form of rule. The notion of *ruling*, or of authority, is undoubtedly in the word—for the verb *bwsileuw* means to *rule*, but the word may be applied to anything in which sovereignty resides. Thus it is applied to a king's son; to a military commander; to the gods; to a Greek archon, etc. See Pussow. It would be contrary to the whole spirit of this passage, and to what

is demanded by the proper meaning of the word, to insist that the word should denote literally *kings*, and that it could not be applied to emperors, or to dictators, or to dynasties.

Five are fallen. Have passed away as if fallen; that is, they have disappeared. The language would be applicable to rulers who have died, or who had been dethroned; or to dynasties or forms of government that had ceased to be. In the fulfilment of this, it would be necessary to find *five* such successive kings or rulers who had died, and who appertained to one sovereignty or nation; or five such dynasties or forms of administrations that had successively existed, but which had ceased.

And one is. That is, there is one—a sixth—that now reigns. The proper interpretation of this would be, that this existed in the time of the writer; that is, according to the view taken of the time of the writing of the Apocalypse, at the close of the first century.

And the other is not yet come. The sixth one is to be succeeded by another in the same line, or occupying the same dominion.

And when he cometh. When that form of dominion is set up. No intimation is yet given as to the *time* when this would occur.

He must continue a short space. *oligon*. A short time; his dominion will be of short duration. It is observable that this characteristic is stated as applicable *only* to this one of the seven; and the fair meaning would seem to be, that the time would be short as *compared* with the six that preceded, and as compared with the one that followed—the *eighth*—into which it was to be merged, Re 17:11.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 17 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *And the beast that was, and is not*. That is, the one power that was formerly mighty; that died away so that it might be said to be extinct; and yet (Re 17:8) that "still is," or has a prolonged existence. It is evident that by the "beast" here there is some one power, dominion, empire, or rule, whose essential identity is preserved through all these changes, and to which it is proper to give the same name. It finds its termination—or *its last form*—in what is here called the "eighth;" a power which, it is observed, sustains such a peculiar relation to the seven that it may be said to be "of the seven," or to be a mere prolongation of the same sovereignty.

Even he is the eighth. The eighth in the succession. This form of sovereignty, though a mere prolongation of the former government—so much so as to be in fact but keeping up the same empire in the world, appears in such a novelty of form that in one sense it deserves to be called the *eighth* in order, and yet is so essentially a mere concentration and continuance of the one power, that in the general reckoning (Re 17:10) it might be regarded as pertaining to the former. There was a sense in which it was proper to speak of it as the *eighth* power; and yet, viewed in its relation to the whole, it so essentially combined and concentrated all that there was in the seven, that, in a general view, it scarcely metired a separate mention. We should look for the fulfilment of this in some such concentration and embodiment of all that it was in the previous forms of sovereignty referred to, that it perhaps would deserve mention as an eighth power, but that it was nevertheless such a mere prolongation of the previous forms of the one power, that it might be said to be "*of* the seven;" so that, *in this view*, it would not claim a separate consideration. This seems to be the fair meaning; though there is much that is enigmatical in the form of the expression.

And goeth into perdition. **See Barnes on "Re 17:8".**

In inquiring now into the application of this very difficult passage, it may be proper to suggest some of the principal opinions which have been held, and then to endeavour to ascertain the true meaning.

I. The principal opinions which have been held may be reduced to the following:—

(1.) That the seven kings here refer to the succession of Roman emperors, yet with some variation as to the manner of reckoning. Prof. Stuart begins with Julius Caesar, and reckons them in this manner: the "five that are fallen" are Julius Caesar, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius. Nero, who, as he supposes, was the reigning prince at the time when the book was written, he regards as the sixth; Galba, who succeeded him, as the seventh. Others, who adopt this literal method of explaining it, suppose that the time begins with Augustus, and then Galba would be the sixth, and Otho, who reigned but three months, would be the seventh. The expression, "the beast that was, and is not, who is the eighth," Prof. Stuart regards as referring to a general impression among the heathen and among Christians, in the time of the persecution under Nero, that he would again appear after it was reported that he was dead, or that he would rise from the dead and carry on his persecution again. See Prof. Stuart, *Com*. vol. ii. Excur. iii. The *beast*, according to this view, denotes the Roman emperors, specifically Nero, and the reference in Re 17:8 is to "the well-known hariolation respecting Nero, that he would be assassinated, and would disappear for awhile, and then make his appearance again to the confusion of all his enemies." "What the angel," says he, "says, seems to be equivalent to this: The *beast* means the Roman emperors, specifically Nero, of whom the report spread throughout the empire that he will revive, after being apparently slain, and will come, as it were, from the abyss or Hades, but he will perish, and that speedily,'" vol ii. p. 323.

(2.) That the word "kings" is not to be taken literally, but that it refers to forms of government, dynasties, or modes of administration. The general opinion among those who hold this view is, that the first six refer to the forms of the Roman government:

(1) kings;

(2) consuls;

(3) dictators;

(4) decemvirs;

(5) military tribunes;

(6) the imperial form, beginning with Augustus. This has been the common Protestant interpretation, and in reference to these *six* forms of government, there has been a general agreement. But, while the mass of Protestant interpreters have supposed that the "six" heads refer to these forms of administration, there has been much diversity of opinion as to the seventh; and here, on this plan of interpretation, the main, if not the sole difficulty lies. Among the opinions held are the following:—

(a) That of Mr. Mede. He makes the seventh head what he calls the "Demi-Caesar," or the "Western emperor who reigned after the division of the empire into East and West, and which continued, after the last division under Honorins and Arcadius, about sixty years—a short space."—*Works*, book iii. chap. 8; book v. chap. 12.

(b) That of Bishop Newton, who regards the sixth or imperial "head" as continuing uninterruptedly through the line of Christian as well as Pagan emperors, until Augustulus and the Heruli; and the seventh to be the *Dukedom* of Rome established soon after under the exarchate of Ravenna.—*Prophecies*, pp. 575, 576.

(c) That of Dr. More and Mr. Cunninghame, who suppose the Christian emperors, from Constantine to Augustulus, to constitute the seventh head, and that this had its termination by the sword of the Hernil.

(d) That of Mr. Elliott, who supposes the seventh head or power to refer to a new form of administration introduced by Diocletian, changing the administration from the *original imperial character* to that of *an absolute Asiatic sovereignty*. For the important changes introduced by Diocletian that justify this remark, see the "*Decline and Fall*," vol i. pp. 212-217.

Numerous other solutions may be found in Poole's *Synopsis*, but these embrace the principal, and the most plausible that have been proposed.

II. I proceed, then, to state what seems to me to be the true explanation. This must be found in some *facts* that will accord with the explanation given of the meaning of the passage.

(1.) There can be no doubt that this refers to Rome—either Pagan, Christian, or Papal. All the circumstances combine in this; all respectable interpreters agree in this. This would be naturally understood by the symbols used by John, and by the explanations furnished by the angel. See Re 17:18: "And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth." Every circumstance combines here in leading to the conclusion that Rome is intended. There was no other power or empire on the earth to which this could be properly applied; there was everything in the circumstances of the writer to lead us to suppose that this was referred to; there is an utter impossibility now in applying the description to anything else.

(2.) It was to be a *revived* power; not a power in its original form and strength. This is manifest, because it is said (Re 17:8) that the power represented by the beast "was, and is not, and yet is:" that is, it was once a mighty power; it then declined so that it could be said that "it is *not*;" and yet there was so much remaining vitality in it, or so much revived power, that it could be said that it "still is"— *kaiper estin*. Now, this is strictly applicable to Rome when the Papal power arose. The old Roman might had departed; the glory and strength evinced in the days of the consuls, the dictators, and the emperors, had disappeared; and yet there was a lingering vitality, and a reviving of power under the Papacy, which made it proper to say that it still continued, or that that mighty power was prolonged. The civil power connected with the Papacy was a revived Roman power—the Roman power prolonged under another form—for it is susceptible of clear demonstration that if it had not been for the rise of the Papal power, the sovereignty of Rome as such would have been wholly extinct. For the proof of this, see the passages quoted in **Barnes on "Re 17:3"**.

Compare **Barnes on** "Re 13:3,12,15".

(3.) It was to be a power emanating from the "abyss," or that would seem to ascend from the dark world beneath. See Re 17:8. This was true in regard to the Papacy, either

(a) as apparently ascending from the lowest state and the most depressed condition, as if it came up from below, (**see Barnes on** "Re 17:3, compare Re 13:11;) or

(b) as, in fact, having its origin in the world of darkness, and being under the control of the prince of that world—which, according to all the representations of that formidable Antichristian power in the Scriptures, is true, and which the whole history of the Papacy, and of its influence on religion, confirms.

(4.) One of the powers referred to *sustained* the other. "The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman *sitteth*," Re 17:9. That is, the power represented by the harlot was *sustained or supported* by the power represented by the seven heads or the seven mountains. Literally applied, this would mean that the Papacy, as an ecclesiastical institution, was sustained by the civil power

with which it was so closely connected. For the illustration and support of this, see **Barnes on** "Re 13:2-3,12,15".

In the Notes on those passages, it is shown that the support was *mutual*; that while the Papacy in fact *revived* the almost extinct Roman civil power, and gave it new vitality, the price of that was that *it* should be in its turn sustained by that revived Roman civil power. All history shows that that has been the fact; that in all its aggressions, assumptions, and persecutions, it has *in fact*, and *professedly*, leaned on the arm of the civil power.

(5.) A more important inquiry, and a more serious difficulty, remains in respect to the statements respecting the "seven kings," Re 17:10-11. The statements on this point are, that the whole number properly was seven; that of this number five had fallen or passed away; that one was in existence at the time when the author wrote; that another one was yet to appear who would continue for a little time; and that the general power represented by all these would be embodied in the "beast that was, and is not," and that might, in some respects, be regarded as an "eighth." These points may be taken up in their order.

(a) The first inquiry relates to the five that were fallen and the one that was then in existence—the first six. These may be taken together, for they are manifestly of the same class, and have the same characteristics, at least so far as to be distinguished from the "seventh," and the "eighth." The meaning of the word "*kings*" here has been already explained, Re 17:10. It denotes ruling power, or forms of power; and, so far as the signification of the word is concerned, it might be applicable to royalty, or to any other form of administration. It is not necessary, then, to find an exact succession of *princes or kings* that would correspond with this—five of whom were dead, and one of whom was then on the throne, and all soon to be succeeded by one more who would soon die.

The true explanation of this seems to be that which refers this to the forms of the Roman government or administration. These six "heads" or forms of administration were, in their order, *Kings, Cansuls, Dictators, Decemvirs, Military Tribunes, and Emperors*. Of these, five had passed away in the time when John wrote the Apocalypse; the sixth, the Imperial, was then in power, and had been from the time of Augustus Caesar. The only questions that can be raised are, whether these forms of administration were so *distinct and prominent*, and whether in the tunes previous to John they so embraced the whole Roman power, as to justify this interpretation; that is, whether these forms of administration were so marked in this respect that it may be supposed that John would use the language here employed in describing them. As showing the probability that he would use this language, I refer to the following arguments, viz.:

(1.) The authority of Livy, lib. vi. cap. 1. Speaking of the previous parts of his history, and of what he had done in writing it, he says, "Quae ab condita urbe Roma ad captam eandem urbem Romani sub *regibus* primurn, *consulibus* deinde ac *dictatoribus*, *decemviris* ac *tribunis consularibus* gossere, foris bella, domi seditiones, quinque libris exposui." That is, "In five books I have related what was done at Rome, pertaining both to foreign wars and domestic strifes, from the foundation of the city to the time when it was taken, as it was governed by *kings*, by *consuls*, by *dictators*, by the *decemvirs*, and by *consular tribunes*." Here he mentions *five* forms of administration under which Rome had been governed in the earlier periods of its history. The imperial power had a later origin, and did not exist until near the time of Livy himself.

(2.) The same distribution of power, or forms of government, among the Romans, is made by Tacitus, Annal., lib. i. cap. 1: "Urbem Romam a principio *Reges* habuere. Libertatem et *Consulatum* L. Brutus instituit. *Dictaturae* ad tempus sumebantur. Neque *Decemviralis potestas* ultra, biennium,

neque *tribunorum militum consulare jus* diu vasuit. Non Cinnae, non Syllae longa dominatio: et Pompeii Crassique potentia cito in Caesarem, Lepidi atque Antonii arma in Augustum cessere; qui cuncta, discordiis civilibus fessa, nomine *Principis* sub *imperium* accepit." That is, "In the beginning, Rome was governed by *Kings*. Then L. Brutus gave to her liberty and the *Consulship*. A temporary power was conferred on the *Dictators*. The authority of the *Decemvirs* did not continue beyond the space of two years; neither was the consular power of the *Military Tribunes* of long duration. The rule of Cinna and Sylla was brief, and the power of Pompey and Crassus passed into the hands of Caesar, and the arms of Lepidus and Antony were surrendered to Augustus, who united all things, broken by civil discord, under the name of Prince in the *imperial* government." Here Tacitus distinctly mentions the *six forms of administration* that had prevailed in Rome, the last of which was the imperial. It is true, also, that he mentions the brief rule of certain *men*—as Cinna, Sylla, Antony, and Lepidus; but these are not forms of *administration*, and their temporary authority did not indicate any change in the *government*—for some of these men were *dictators*, and none of them, except Brutus and Augustus, established any permanent form of administration.

(3.) The same thing is apparent in the usual statements of history, and the books that describe the forms of government at Rome. In so common a book as *Adams' Roman Antiquities*, a description may be found of the forms of Roman administration that corresponds almost precisely with this. The forms of *supreme* power in Rome, as enumerated there, are what are called *ordinary and extraordinary* magistrates. Under the former are enumerated kings, consuls, praetors, censors, quaestors, and tribunes of the people. But of these, in fact, the *supreme* power was vested in two, for there were, under this, but *two* forms of administration— that of kings and consuls—the offices of praetor, censor, quaestor, and tribune of the people being merely subordinate to that of the consuls, and no more a new form of administration than the offices of Secretary of the State, of War, of the Navy, of the Interior, are now. Under the latter—that of *extraordinary* magistrates—are enumerated *Dictators, Decemvirs, Military Tribunes, and the Interrex*. But the *Interrex* did not constitute a *form* of administration, or a change of government, any more than when the President or Vice-president of the United States should die, the performance of the duties of the office of President by the Speaker of the Senate would indicate a change, or than the Regency of the Prince of Wales in the time of George III. constituted a new form of government. So that, in fact, we have enumerated, as constituting *the supreme power* at Rome, kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs, and military tribunes—five in number. The imperial power was the sixth.

(4.) In confirmation of the same thing, I may refer to the authority of Bellarmine, a distinguished Roman Catholic writer. In his work *De Pontiff*., cap. 2, he thus enumerates the changes which the Roman government had experienced, or the forms of administration that had existed there:

1. Kings;
2. Consuls;
3. Decemvirs;
4. Dictators;
5. Military Tribunes with consular power;
6. Emperors. See *Poole's Synop., in loc*. And

(5) it may be added, that this would be *understood* by the contemporaries of John in this sense. These forms of government were so marked that, in connexion with the mention of the "seven mountains," designating the city, there could be no doubt as to what was intended. Reference would

at once be made to the Imperial power as then existing, and the mind would readily and easily turn back to the five main forms of the supreme administration which had existed before:

(b) The next inquiry is, what is denoted by *the seventh*. If the word "*kings*" here refers, as is supposed, (**Barnes on** "Re 17:10,) to a form of government or administration; if the "five" refer to the forms previous to the imperial, and the "sixth" to the imperial; and if John wrote *during* the imperial government, then it follows that this must refer to some form of administration that was to succeed the imperial. If the Papacy was "the eighth, and of the seven," then it is clear that this must refer to some form of civil administration lying between the decline of the *Imperial* and the rise of the *Papal* power: that "short space"—for it *was* a short space that intervened. Now, there can be no difficulty, I think, in referring this to that form of administration over Rome—that "dukedom" under the exarchate of Ravenna, which succeeded the decline of the Imperial power, and which preceded the rise of the Papal power;—between the year 566 or 568, when Rome was reduced to a dukedom, under the exarchate of Ravenna, and the time when the city revolted from this authority and became subject to that of the Pope, about the year 727. This period continued, according to Mr. Gibbon, about two hundred years. He says, "During a period of two hundred years, Italy was unequally divided between the kingdom of the Lombards and the exarchate of Ravenna. The offices and professions, which the jealousy of Constantine had separated, were united by the indulgence of Justinian; and eighteen successive exarchs were invested, *in the decline of the empire, with the full remains of civil, of military and even of ecclesiastical power*. Their immediate jurisdiction, *which was afterwards consecrated as the patrimony of St. Peter*, extended over the modern Remagna, the marshes or valleys of Ferrara and Commachio, five maritime cities from Rimini to Ancona, and a second inland Pentapolis, between the Adriatic coast and the hills of the Appenine. The duchy of Rome appears to have included the Tuscan, Sabine, and Latian conquests, *of the first four hundred years of the city*, and the limits may be distinctly traced along the coast, from Civita Vecchia to Terracina, and with the course of the Tiber from Areerin and Narni to the port of Ostia."—*Dec. and Fall*, iii. 202. How accurate is this if it be regarded as a statement of a *new* power or form of administration that succeeded the imperial—a power that was in fact a prolongation of the old Roman authority, and that was designed to constitute and embody it all! Could Mr. Gibbon have furnished a *better* commentary on the passage if he had adopted the interpretation of this portion of the Apocalypse above proposed, and if he had *designed* to describe this as the seventh power in the successive forms of the Roman administration? It is worthy of remark, also, that of this account in Mr. Gibbon's history immediately *precedes* the account the rise of the Papacy; the record respecting the exarchate, and that concerning Gregory the Great, described by Mr. Gibbon as "the Saviour of Rome," occurring in the same chapter.—Vol, iii. 202-211.

(c) This was to "continue for a short space"—for a little time. If this refers to the power to which in the remarks above it is supposed to refer, it is easy to see the propriety of this statement. Compared with the previous form of administration—the imperial—it was of short duration; absolutely considered, it was brief. Mr. Gibbon (iii. 202) has marked it as extending through "a period of two hundred years;" and if this is compared with the form of administration which preceded it, extending to more than five hundred years, and more especially with that which followed—the Papal form—which has extended now some twelve hundred years, it will be seen with what propriety this is spoken of as continuing for "a short space."

(d) "The beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven," Re 17:11. If the explanations above given are correct, there can be no difficulty in the application of this to the Papal power; for

(1) all this power was concentrated in the Papacy, all that revived or prolonged Roman power had now passed into the Papacy, constituting that mighty dominion which was to be set up for so many centuries over what had been the Roman world. See the statements of Mr. Gibbon, (iii. 207-211,) as quoted in **Barnes on "Re 17:3"**.

Compare also, particularly, the remarks of Augustine Steuchus, a Roman Catholic writer, as quoted in **Barnes on "Re 17:3"**

: "The empire having been overthrown, unless God had raised up the *Pontificate*. Rome, resuscitated and restored by none, would have become uninhabitable, and been thenceforward a most foul habitation of cattle. But in the Pontificate it revived as with a *second birth*; in empire or magnitude not indeed equal to the old empire, but its form not very dissimilar: because all nations, from East and from West, venerate the Pope, not otherwise than they before obeyed the emperor."

(2.) This was an *eighth* power or form of administration-for it was different, in many respects, from that of the kings, the consuls, the dictators, the decemvirs, the military tribunes, the emperors, and the dukedom—though it comprised substantially the power of all. Indeed, it could not have been spoken of as identical with either of the previous forms of administration, though it concentrated the power which had been wielded by them all.

(3.) It was "*of* the seven;" that is, it pertained to them; it was a prolongation of the same power. It had the same central seat—Rome; it extended over the same territory, and it embraced sooner or later the same nations. There is not one of those forms of administration which did not find a prolongation in the Papacy; for it aspired after, and succeeded in obtaining, all the authority of kings, dictators, consuls, emperors. It was in fact still the *Roman* sceptre swayed over the of world; and with the strictest propriety it could be said that it was "*of* the seven," as having sprung out of the seven, and as this, see perpetuating the sway of this mighty domination. For full illustration **See Barnes on "Da 7:1"**

and Revelation 13.

(4.) It would "go into perdition;" that is, it would be under this form that this mighty domination that had for so many ages ruled over the earth would die away, or this would be the *last* in the series, The *Roman* dominion, as such, would not be extended to a ninth, or tenth, or eleventh form, but would finally expire under the eighth. Every indication shows that this is to be so, and that with the decline of the Papal power the *whole Roman domination*, that has swayed a sceptre for two thousand five hundred years, will have come for ever to an end. If this is so, then we have found an ample and exact application of this passage even in its most minute specifications.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 17 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *And the ten horns which thou sawest*. On the scarlet-coloured beast, Re 17:3.

Are ten kings. Represent or denote ten kings; that is, kingdoms or powers. **See Barnes on "Da 7:24"**.

Which have received no kingdom as yet. That is, they were not in existence when John wrote. It is implied, that during the period under review they *would* arise, and would become connected, in an important sense, with the power here represented by the "beast." For a full illustration respecting the ten "kings," or kingdoms here referred to, see Barnes on Daniel 7, at the close of the chapter, II., (2.).

But receive power. It is not said from what *source* this power is received, but it is simply implied that it would in fact be conferred on them.

As kings. That is, the power would be that which is usually exercised by kings.

One hour. It cannot be supposed that this is to be taken *literally*. The meaning clearly is, that this would be brief and temporary; that is, it was a form of administration which would be succeeded by one more fixed and permanent. Any one can see that, in fact, this is strictly applicable to the governments which sprang up after the incursion of the Northern barbarians, and which were finally succeeded by the permanent forms of government in Europe. Most of them were very brief in their duration, and they were soon remodelled in the forms of permanent administration. Thus, to take the arrangement proposed by Sir Isaac Newton,

(1) the kingdom of the Vandals and/klans in Spain and Africa;

(2) the kingdom of the Suevians in Spain;

(3) the kingdom of the Visigoths;

(4) the kingdom of the Alans in Gallia;

(5) the kingdom of the Burgundians;

(6) the kingdom of the Franks;

(7) the kingdom of the Britons;

(8) the kingdom of the Huns;

(9) the kingdom of the Lombards;

(10) the kingdom of Ravenna—how *temporary* were most of these; how soon they passed into the more permanent forms of administration which succeeded them in Europe!

With the beast. With that rising Papal power. They would exercise their authority in connexion with that, and under its influence.

{a} "ten horns" Da 7:20 Zec 1:18-21

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 17 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *These have one mind*. That is, they are united in the promotion of the same object. Though in some respects wholly independent of each other, yet they may be regarded as, in fact, so far united that they tend to promote the same ultimate end. As a fact in history, all these kingdoms, though of different origin, and though not unfrequently engaged in war with each other, became Roman Catholics, and were united in the support of the Papacy. It was with propriety, therefore, that they should be regarded as so closely connected with that power that they could be represented as "ten horns" on the seven-headed monster.

And shall give their power and strength unto the beast. Shall lend their influence to the support of the Papacy, and become the upholders of that power. The meaning, according to the interpretation above proposed, is, that they would all become Papal kingdoms, and supporters of the Papal power.

It is unnecessary to pause to show how true this has been in history. At first, most of the people out of whom these kingdoms sprang were Pagans; then many of them embraced Christianity under the prevailing form of Arianism, and this fact was for a time a bar to their perfect adhesion to the Roman See; but they were all ultimately brought wholly under its influence, and became its supporters. In A.D. 496, Clovis, the king of the Franks, on occasion of his victory over the Allemanni, embraced the Catholic faith, and so received the title transmitted downward through nearly thirteen hundred years to the French kings as his successors, of "*the eldest son of the church*;" in the course of the sixth century, the kings of Burgundy, Bavaria, Spain, Portugal, England, embraced the same religion, and became the defenders of the Papacy. It is well known that each one of the powers above enumerated as constituting these ten kingdoms, became subject to the Papacy, and continued so during their separate existence, or when merged into some other power, until the Reformation in the sixteenth century, *All* "their power and strength was given unto the beast;" all was made subservient to the purposes of Papal Rome.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 17 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *These shall make war with the Lamb*. The Lamb of God—the Lord Jesus, (**Barnes on "Re 5:6"**;) that is, they would combine with the Papacy in opposing evangelical religion. It is not meant that they would *openly* and *avowedly* proclaim *war* against the Son of God, but that they would *practically* do this in sustaining a persecuting power. It is unnecessary to show how true this has been in history; how entirely they sustained the Papacy in all its measures of persecution.

And the Lamb shall overcome them. Shall ultimately gain the victory over them. The meaning is, that they would not be able to extinguish the true religion. In spite of all opposition and persecution, that would still live in the world, until it would be said that a complete triumph was gained.

For he is Lord of lords, and King of kings. He has supreme power over all the earth, and all kings and princes are subject to his control. Compare Re 19:16.

And they that are with him. The reference is to the persecuted saints who have adhered to him as his faithful followers in all these protracted conflicts.

Are called. That is, called by him to be his followers; as if he had selected them out of the world to maintain his cause. **See Barnes on "Ro 1:7"**.

And chosen. **See Barnes on "Joh 15:16; 1Pe 1:2"**.

In their stedfast adherence to the truth, they had shown that they were truly *chosen* by the Saviour, and could be relied on in the warfare against the powers of evil.

And faithful. They had shown themselves faithful to him in times of persecution, and in the hour of darkness.

{b} "make war with the Lamb" Re 19:19 {a} "shall overcome" Jer 50:44 {b} "Lord of Lords" Re 19:16 De 10:17; 1Ti 6:15

{c} "they" Mic 5:8,9 {d} "called" Ro 8:30,37 {e} "chosen" Joh 15:16 {f} "faithful" Re 2:10

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 17 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *And he saith unto me*. The angel, Re 17:7. This commences the more literal statement of what is meant by these symbols.

The waters which thou sawest. **See Barnes on "Re 17:1"**.

Are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. For an explanation of these terms, **see Barnes on "Re 7:9"**.

The meaning here is,

(a) that these waters *represent* a multitude of people. This is a common and an obvious symbol—for outspread seas or raging floods would naturally represent such a multitude. See Isa 8:7-8 17:12-13; Jer 47:2.

Compare Iliad, v. 394. The sense here is, that vast numbers of people would be subject to the power here represented by the woman.

(b) They would be composed of different nations, and would be of different languages. It is unnecessary to show that this, in both respects, is applicable to the Papacy. Nations have been, and are, subject to its control, and nations speaking a large part of the languages of the world. Perhaps under no one government-not even the Babylonian, the Macedonian, or the ancient Roman—was there so great a diversity of people, speaking so many different languages, and having so different an origin.

{g} "waters" Re 17:1 Isa 8:7 {h} "peoples" Re 13:7

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 17 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast*. Re 17:3. The ten powers or kingdoms represented by those horns. **See Barnes on "Re 17:12"**.

These shall hate the whore. There *seems* to be some incongruity between this statement and that which was previously made. In the former, (Re 17:12-14,) these ten governments are represented as in alliance with the beast; as "giving all their power and strength" unto it; and as uniting with it in making war with the Lamb. What is here said must, therefore, refer to some subsequent period, indicating some great change in their feelings and policy. We have seen the evidence of the fulfilment of the former statements. This statement will be accomplished if these same powers represented by the ten horns, that were formerly in alliance with the Papacy, shall become its enemy, and contribute to its final overthrow. That is, it will be accomplished if the nations of Europe, embraced within the limits of those ten kingdoms, shall become hostile to the Papacy, and shall combine for its overthrow. Is anything more probable than this? France (**see Barnes on "Re 16:1"**) has already struck more than one heavy blow on that power; England has been detached from it; many of the states of Italy are weary of it, and are ready to rise up against it; and nothing is more probable than that Spain, Portugal, France, Lombardy, and the Papal States themselves will yet throw off the yoke for ever, and put an end to a power that has so long ruled over men. It was with the utmost difficulty in 1848 that the Papal power was sustained, and this was done only by foreign swords; the Papacy could not probably be protected in another such outbreak. And this passage leads us to anticipate that the period will come— and that probably not far in the future—when those powers that have

for so many ages sustained the Papacy will become its determined foes, and will rise in their might and bring it for ever to an end,

And shall make her desolate and naked. Strip her of all her power and all her attractiveness. That is, applied to Papal Rome, all that is so gorgeous and alluring—her wealth, and pomp, and splendour— shall be taken away, and she will be seen as she is, without anything to dazzle the eye or to blind the mind.

And shall eat her flesh. Shall completely destroy her—*as if* her flesh were consumed. Perhaps the image is taken from the practices of cannibals eating the flesh of their enemies slain in battle. If so, nothing could give a more impressive idea of the utter destruction of this formidable power, or of the feelings of those by whom its end would be brought about.

And burn her with fire. Another image of total destruction. Perhaps the meaning may be, that after her *flesh* was eaten, such parts of her as remained would be thrown into the fire and consumed. If this be the meaning, the image is a very impressive one to denote absolute and total destruction. Compare **See Barnes "Re 18:8"**.

{i} "these" Jer 50:41,42 {k} "naked" Eze 16:37-44 {l} "burn" Re 18:8,18

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 17 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will*. That is, in regard to the destruction of this mighty power. They would be employed as his agents in bringing about his designs. Kings and princes are under the control of God, and, whatever may be their own designs, they are in fact employed to accomplish his purposes, and are instruments in *his* hands. **See Barnes "Isa 10:7"**.

And to agree. See Re 17:13. That is, they act harmoniously in their support of this power, and so they will in its final destruction.

And give their kingdom unto the beast. **Barnes on "Re 17:13"**.

Until the words of God shall be fulfilled. Not for ever; not as a permanent arrangement. God has fixed a limit to the existence of this power. When his purposes are accomplished, these kingdoms will withdraw their support, and this mighty power will fall to rise no more.

{m} "For God hath" Ac 4:27,28 {n} "fulfilled" Re 10:7

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 17 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *And the woman which thou sawest*. Re 17:3.

Is that great city. Represents that great city.

Which reigneth over the kings of the earth. Rome would of course be understood by this language in the time of John, and all the circumstances, as we have seen, combine to show that Rome, in some form of its dominion, is intended. Even the name could hardly have designated it more clearly, and all expositors agree in supposing that Rome, either as Pagan or as Christian, is referred to. The chapter shows that its power is limited; and that although, for purposes which he saw to be wise, God allows it to have a wide influence over the nations of the earth, yet in his own appointed time

the very powers that have sustained it will become its foes, and combine for its overthrow. Europe needs but little farther provocation, and the fires of liberty, which have been so long pent up, will break forth, and that storm of indignation which has expelled the Jesuits from all the courts of Europe; which has abolished the Inquisition; which has more than once led hostile armies to the very gates of Papal Rome, will again be aroused in a manner which cannot be allayed, and that mighty power which has controlled so large a part of the nations of Europe for more than a thousand years of the world's history, will come to an end.

{o} "that great city" Re 16:19

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 18

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 18 - Verse 1

CHAPTER XVIII

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER

THIS chapter may be regarded as a still further explanatory episode, (comp. Anal. to chap. xvii.,) designed to show the effect of pouring out the seventh vial (Re 16:17-21) on the formidable Antichristian power so often referred to. The description in this chapter is that of a rich merchant-city reduced to desolation, and is but carrying out the general idea under a different form. The chapter comprises the following points:—

(1.) Another angel is seen descending from heaven, having great power, and making proclamation that Babylon the great is fallen, and is become utterly desolate, Re 18:1-3.

(2.) A warning voice is heard from heaven, calling on the people of God to come out of her, and to be partakers neither of her sins nor her plagues. Her torment and sorrow would be proportionate to her pride and luxury; and her plagues would come upon her suddenly— death, and mourning, and famine, and consumption by fire, Re 18:4-8.

(3.) Lamentation over her fall—by those especially who had been connected with her; who had been corrupted by her; who had been profited by her, Re 18:9-19.

(a) By kings, Re 18:9,10. They had lived deliciously with her, and they would lament her.

(b) by merchants, Re 18:11-17. They had trafficked with her, but now that traffic was to cease, and no man would buy of her. Their business so far as she was concerned, was at an end. All that she had accumulated was now to be destroyed; all her gathered riches were to be consumed; all the traffic in those things by which she had been enriched was to be ended; and the city that was more than all others enriched by these things, as if clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls, was to be destroyed for ever.

(c) By ship-masters and seamen, Re 18:17-19.

They had been made rich by this traffic, but now all was ended; the smoke of her burning is seen to ascend, and they stand afar off and weep.

(4.) Rejoicing over her fall, Re 18:20. Heaven is called upon to rejoice, and the holy apostles and prophets, for their blood is avenged, and persecution ceases in the earth.

(5.) The final destruction of the city, Re 18:21-24. A mighty angel takes up a stone and casts it into the sea as an emblem of the destruction that is to come upon it. The voice of harpers, and musicians, and pipers would be heard no more in it; and no craftsmen would be there, and the sound of the millstone would be heard no more, and the light of a candle would shine no more there, and the voice of the bridegroom and the bride would be heard no more.

Verse 1. *And after these things*. After the vision referred to in the previous chapter.

I saw another angel come down from heaven. Different from the one that had last appeared, and therefore coming to make a new communication to him. It is not unusual in this book that different communications should be entrusted to different angels. Compare Re 14:6,8-9,15,17-18.

Having great power. That is, he was one of the higher rank or order of angels.

And the earth was lightened with his glory. The usual representation respecting the heavenly beings. Compare Ex 24:16 Mt 17:2; Lu 2:9

Ac 9:3. This would, of course, add greatly to the magnificence of the scene.

{a} "glory" Eze 43:2

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 18 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And he cried mightily*. Literally, "he cried with a strong great voice." See Re 10:3.

Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen. **See Barnes on "Re 14:8"**.

The proclamation here is substantially the same as in that place, and no doubt the same thing is referred to.

And is become the habitation of devils. Of demons—in allusion to the common opinion that the demons inhabited abandoned cities, old ruins, and deserts. **See Barnes on "Mt 12:43-45"**.

The language here is taken from the description of Babylon in Isa 13:20-22; and for a full illustration of the meaning, **see Barnes** "Isa 13:20, seq.

And the hold of every foul spirit—fulakh. A watch-post, station, haunt of such spirits. That is, they, as it were, *kept guard* there; were stationed there; haunted the place.

And a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. That is, they would resort there, and abide there as in a cage. The word translated "*cage*" is the same which is rendered "hold"—*fulakh*. In Isa 13:21, it is said, "and owls shall dwell there;" and in Isa 14:23, it is said that it would be a "possession for the bittern." The idea is that of utter desolation; and the meaning here is, that spiritual Babylon—Papal Rome (Re 14:8) will be reduced to a state of utter desolation resembling that of the real Babylon. It is not necessary to suppose this of the city of Rome itself—for that is not the object of the representation. It is the *Papacy*, represented under the image of the city, and having its seat there. *That* is to be destroyed as utterly as was Babylon of old; that will become as odious, and loathsome, and detestable as the literal Babylon, the abode of monsters is.

{b} "Babylon the Great" Re 14:8 Isa 13:19, 21:9 Jer 51:8

{c} "the habitation of devils" Re 17:2 Isa 34:11,14 Jer 50:39, 51:37

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 18 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication*. **See Barnes on "Re 14:8".**

This is given as a reason why this utter ruin had come upon her. She had beguiled and corrupted the nations of the earth, leading them into estrangement from God, and into pollution and sin. **See Barnes on "Re 9:20-21".**

And the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her. Spiritual adultery; that is, she has been the means of seducing them from God and leading them into sinful practices.

And the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. The word tendered "*abundance*" here, means commonly *power*. It might here denote *influence*, though it may also mean *number, vanity, wealth*. Compare Re 3:8, where the same word is used. The word rendered *delicacies—strhnouv*—occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It properly means *rudeness, insolence, pride*; and hence *revel, riot, luxury*. It may be rendered here properly luxury, or proud voluptuousness; and the reference is to such luxuries as are found commonly in a great, a gay, and a splendid city. These, of course, give rise to much traffic, and furnish employment to many merchants and sailors, who thus procure a livelihood, or become wealthy as the result of such traffic. Babylon—or Papal Rome—is here represented under the image of such a luxurious city; and of course, when she fails, they who have thus been dependent on her, and who have been enriched by her, have occasion for mourning and lamentation. It is not necessary to expect to find a *literal* fulfilment of this, for it is emblematic and symbolical. The image of a great, rich, splendid, proud, and luxurious city having been employed to denote that Antichristian power, all that is said in this chapter follows, of course, on its fall. The general idea is, that she was doomed to utter desolation, and that all who were connected with her, far and near, would be involved in her ruin.

{d} "drunk of the wine" Isa 47:15 {e} "merchants" Re 18:11,15 {1} "abundance" "power"

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 18 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And I heard another voice from heaven*. He does not say whether this was the voice of an angel, but the idea seems rather to be that it is the voice of God.

Come out of her, my people. The reasons for this, as immediately stated, are two:

(a) that they might not participate in her sins; and

(b) that they might not be involved in the ruin that would come upon her. The *language* seems to be derived from such passages in the Old Testament as the following: Isa 48:20, "Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans, with a voice of singing." Jer 51:6, "Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul; be not cut off in her iniquity." Jer 51:45, "My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the Lord." Compare Jer 1:8.

That ye be not partakers of her sins. For the meaning of this expression, **see Barnes on "1Ti 5:22".**

It is implied here that by remaining in Babylon they would lend their sanction to its sins by their presence, and would, in all probability, become contaminated by the influence around them.

This is an universal truth in regard to iniquity, and hence it is the duty of those who would be pure to come out from the world, and to separate themselves from all the associations of evil.

And that ye receive not of her plagues. Of the punishment that was to come upon her—as they must certainly do if they remained in her. The judgment of God that was to come upon the guilty city would make no discrimination among those who were found there; and if they would escape these woes, they must make their escape from her. As applicable to Papal Rome, in view of her impending ruin, this means

(a) that there might be found in her some who were the true people of God;

(b) that it was their duty to separate wholly from her—a command that will not only justify the Reformation, but which would have made a longer continuance in communion with the Papacy, when her wickedness was fully seen, an act of guilt before God;

(c) that they who remain in such a communion cannot but be regarded as partaking of her sin; and

(d) that if they remain, they must expect to be involved in the calamities that will come upon her. There never was any duty plainer than that of withdrawing from Papal Rome; there never has been any act attended with more happy consequences than that by which the Protestant world separated itself for ever from the sins and the plagues of the Papacy.

{f} "Come out of her" Isa 48:20 52:11; Jer 50:8 51:6,45 2Co 6:17

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 18 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *For her sins have reached unto heaven*. So in Jer 51:9, speaking of Babylon, it is said, "For her judgment reacheth unto heaven, and is lifted up even to the skies." The meaning is not that the sins of this mystical Babylon were like a mass or pile so high as to reach to heaven, but that it had become so prominent as to attract the attention of God. Compare Ge 4:10, "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." See also Ge 18:20.

And God hath remembered, her iniquities. He had *seemed* to forget them, or not to notice them, but now he acted as if they had come to his recollection. **See Barnes on "Re 16:19"**.

{g} "reached unto heaven" {h} "remembered" Re 16:19

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 18 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Reward her even as she rewarded you*. It is not said to whom this command is addressed, but it would seem to be to those who had been persecuted and wronged. Applied to mystical Babylon—Papal Rome —it would seem to be a call on the nations that had been so long under her sway, and among whom, from time to time, so much blood had been shed by her, to arise now in their might, and to inflict deserved vengeance. **See Barnes on "Re 17:16-17"**.

And double unto her double according to her works. That is, bring upon her double the amount of calamity which she has brought upon others; take ample vengeance upon her. Compare, for

similar language, Isa 40:2, "She hath received of the Lord's hand *double* for all her sins." Isa 61:7, "For your shame ye shall have double."

In the cup which she hath filled. To bring wrath on others. **Barnes on "Re 14:8"**.

Fill to her double. Let her drink abundantly of the wine of the wrath of God—double that which she has dealt out to others. That is, either let the *quantity* administered to her be doubled, or let the ingredients in the cup be doubled in intensity.

{i} "Reward her" Ps 137:8 Jer 50:15,29

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 18 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *How much she hath glorified herself*. Been proud, boastful, arrogant. This was true of ancient Babylon that she was proud and haughty; and it has been no less true of mystical Babylon—Papal Rome.

And lived deliciously. By as much as she has lived in luxury and dissoluteness, so let her suffer now. The word used here and rendered *lived deliciously—estrhniase* is derived from the noun—*strhnov*—which is used in Re 18:3, and rendered *delicacies*. **See Barnes on "Re 18:3"**.

It means "to live strenuously, rudely," as in English, "to live *hard*;" and then to revel, to live in luxury, riot, dissoluteness. No one can doubt the propriety of this as descriptive of ancient Babylon, and as little can its propriety be doubted as applied to Papal Rome.

So much torment and sorrow give her. Let her punishment correspond with her sins. This is expressing substantially the same idea which occurs in the previous verse.

For she saith in her heart. This is the estimate which she forms of herself.

I sit a queen. Indicative of pride, and of an asserted claim to rule.

And am no widow. Am not in the condition of a widow—a state of depression, sorrow, and mourning. All this indicates security and self-confidence, a description in every way applicable to Papal Rome.

And shall see no sorrow. This is indicative of a state where there was nothing feared, notwithstanding all the indications which existed of approaching calamity. In this state we may expect to find Papal Rome, even when its last judgments are about to come upon it; in this state it has usually been; in this state it is now, notwithstanding all the indications that are abroad in the world that its power is waning, and that the period of its fall approaches.

{a} "sit a queen" Isa 47:7-11 Zep 2:15

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 18 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *Therefore*. In consequence of her pride, arrogance, and luxury, and of the calamities that she has brought upon others.

Shall her plagues come in one day. They shall come in a time when she is living in ease and security; and they shall come at the same time— so that all these terrible judgments shall seem to be poured upon her at once.

Death. This expression and those which follow are designed to denote the same thing under different images. The general meaning is, that there would be utter and final destruction. It would be *as if* death should come and cut off the inhabitants,

And mourning. As there would be where many were cut off by death.

And famine. As if famine raged within the walls of a besieged city, or spread over a land.

And she shall be utterly burned with fire. As completely destroyed *as if* she were entirely burned up. The certain and complete destruction of that formidable Antichristian power is predicted under a great variety of emphatic images. See Re 14:10-11 16:17-21, 17:9,16.

Perhaps in this so frequent reference to a final destruction of that formidable Antichristian power by *fire*, there may be more intended than merely a figurative representation of its final ruin. There is some degree of probability, at least, that Rome itself will be literally destroyed in this manner, and that it is in this way that God intends to put an end to the Papal power, by destroying that which has been so long the seat and the centre of this authority. The extended prevalence of this belief, and the grounds for it, may be seen from the following remarks:

(1.) It was an early opinion among the Jewish Rabbis that Rome would be thus destroyed. Vitringa, on the Apocalypse, cites some opinions of this kind; the Jewish expectation being founded, as he says, on the passage in Isa 34:9, as freedom was supposed to mean Rome. "This chapter," says Kimchi, "points out the future destruction of Rome, here called Bozra, for Bozra was a great city of the Edomites." This is, indeed, *worthless* as a proof or an interpretation of Scripture, for it is a wholly unfounded interpretation; it is of value only as showing that somehow the Jews entertained this opinion.

(2.) The same expectation was entertained among the early Christians. Thus Mr. Gibbon, (vol. i.p. 263, chap. xv.,) referring to the expectations of the glorious reign of the Messiah on the earth, (compare **Barnes on** "Re 14:8,) says, speaking of Rome as the mystic Babylon, and of its anticipated destruction: "A regular series was prepared [in the minds of Christians] of all the moral and physical evils which can afflict a flourishing nation; intestine discord, and the invasion of the fiercest barbarians from the unknown regions of the North; pestilence and famine, comets and eclipses, earthquakes and inundations. All these were only so many preparatory and alarming signs of the great catastrophe of Rome, when the company of the Scipios and Caesars should be consumed by a flame from heaven, and the city of the seven hills, with her palaces, her temples, and her triumphal arches, should be burned in a vast lake of fire and brimstone." So even Gregory the Great, one of the most illustrious of the Roman pontiffs, himself says, acknowledging his belief in the truth of the tradition— Roma a Gentilibus non exterminabitur; sed tempestatibus, coruscis turbinibus, ac terrae motu, in se marcescet.—Dial, ii. 16.

(3.) Whatever may be thought of these opinions and expectations, there is some foundation for the opinion in the nature of the case.

(a) The region is adapted to this. "It is not AEtna, the Lipari volcanic islands, Vesuvius, that alone offer visible indications of the physical adaptedness of Italy for such a catastrophe. The great Appenine mountain-chain is mainly volcanic in its character, and the country of Rome more especially is as strikingly so almost as that of Sodom itself." Thus the mineralogist Ferber, in his *Tour in Italy*, says, "The road from Rome to Ostia is all volcanic ashes till within two miles of Ostia." "From Rome to Tivoli! went on fields and hills of volcanic ashes or *tufa*." "A volcanic hill in an amphitheatrical form includes a part of the plain over Albano, and a flat country of volcanic

ashes and hills to Rome. The ground about Rome is generally of that nature," pp. 189, 191, 200, 234.

(b) Mr. Gibbon, with his usual accuracy, *as if* commenting on the Apocalypse, has referred to the physical adaptedness of the soil of Rome for such an overthrow. Speaking of the anticipation of the end of the world among the early Christians, he says, "In the opinion of a general conflagration, the faith of the Christian very happily coincided with the tradition of the East, the philosophy of the Stoics, and the analogy of nature; *and even the country, which, from religious motives, had been chosen for the origin and principal scene of this conflagration, was the best adapted for that purpose by natural and physical causes*; *by its deep caverns, beds of sulphur, and numerous volcanoes, of which those of AEtna, of Vesuvius, and of Lipari, exhibit a very imperfect representation."* vol. i. p. 263, chap. xv. As to the general state of Italy, in reference to volcanoes, the reader may consult, with advantage, Lyell's *Geology*, book ii. chap. ix.—xii. See also Murray's *Encyolopaedia of Geography*, book ii. chap. ii. Of the country around Rome it is said, in that work, among other things, "The country around Rome, and also the hills on which it is built, is composed of tertiary marls, clays, and sandstones, and intermixed with a preponderating quantity of granular and lithoidal volcanic tufas. The many lakes around Rome are formed by craters of ancient volcanoes." "On the road to Rome is the lake of Vico, formerly the lacus Cimini, which has all the appearance of a crater."

The following extract from a recent traveller will still further confirm this representation: "I behold everywhere—in Rome, near Rome, and through the whole region from Rome to Naples—the most astounding proofs, not merely of the possibility, but the probability, that the whole region of central Italy will one day be destroyed by such a catastrophe, [by earthquakes or volcanoes.] The soil of Rome is *tufa*, with a volcanic subterranean action going on. At Naples, the boiling sulphur is to be seen bubbling near the surface of the earth. When I drew a stick along the ground, the sulphurous smoke followed the indentation; and it would never surprise me to hear of the utter destruction of the southern peninsula of Italy. The entire country and district is volcanic. It is saturated with beds of sulphur and the substrata of destruction. It seems as certainly prepared for the flames, as the wood and coal on the hearth are prepared for the taper which shall kindle the fire to consume them. The Divine hand alone seems to me to hold the element of fire in check by a miracle as great as that which protected the cities of the plain, till the righteous Lot had made his escape to the mountains." —*Townsend's Tour in Italy* in 1850.

For strong is the Lord God who judgeth her. That is, God has ample power to bring all these calamities upon her.

{b} "utterly burned" Re 17:16 {c} "strong" Ps 62:11 Jer 50:34

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 18 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *And the kings of the earth*. This verse commences the description of the *lamentation* over the fall of the mystical Babylon.

Who have committed fornication. That is, who have been seduced by her from the true God, and have been led into practical idolatry. **See Barnes "Re 14:8"**.

The *kings* of the earth seem to be represented as among the chief mourners, because they had derived important aid from the power which was now to be reduced to ruin. As a matter of fact, the kings of Europe have owed much of their influence and power to the support which has been derived from the Papacy, and when *that* power shall fall, there will fall much that has contributed to sustain oppressive and arbitrary governments, and that has prevented the extension of popular liberty. In fact, Europe might have been long since free, if it had not been for the support which despotic governments have derived from the Papacy.

And lived deliciously with her. In the same kind of luxury and dissoluteness of manners. See Re 18:3,7. The courts of Europe, under the Papacy, have had the same general character for dissoluteness and licentiousness as Rome itself. The same views of religion produce the same effects everywhere.

Shall bewail her, and lament for her. Because their ally is destroyed, and the source of their power is taken away. The fall of the Papacy will be the signal for a general overturning of the thrones of Europe.

When they shall see the smoke of her burning. When they shall see her on fire, and her smoke ascending towards heaven. **See Barnes on "Re 14:11"**.

{a} "kings of the earth" Eze 26:16,17

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 18 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *Standing afar off for the fear of her torment*. Not daring to approach, to attempt to rescue and save her. They who had so long contributed to the support of the Papal power, and who had in turn been upheld by that, would not now even attempt to rescue her, but would stand by and see her destroyed—unable to render relief.

Alas, alas, that great city Babylon. The language of lamentation that so great and so mighty a city should fall.

For in one hour is thy judgment come. **Barnes on "Re 18:8"**.

The general sentiment here is, that in the final ruin of Papal Rome, the kings and governments that had sustained her, and had been sustained by her, would see the source of their power taken away, but that they would not, or could not, attempt her rescue. There have been not a few indications already that this will ultimately occur, and that the Papal power will be left to fall, without any attempt on the part of those governments which have been so long in alliance with it to sustain or restore it.

{b} "one hour" Re 18:17,19

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 18 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *And the merchants of the earth*. Who have been accustomed to traffic with her, and who have been enriched by the traffic. The image is that of a rich and splendid city. Of course, such a city depends much on its merchandise; and when it declines and falls, many who had been

accustomed to deal with it as merchants or traffickers are affected by it, and have occasion to lament its fall.

Shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more. The merchandise which they were accustomed to take to the city, and by the sale of which they lived. The enumeration of the articles of merchandise which follows, seems to have been inserted for the purpose of filling out the representation of what is usually found in such a city, and to show the desolation which would occur when this traffic was suspended.

{c} "merchants" Eze 27:27-36

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 18 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *The merchandise of gold, and silver*. Of course, these constitute an important article of commerce in a great city.

And precious stones. Diamonds, emeralds, rubies, etc. These have always been important articles of traffic in the world, and, of course, most of the traffic in them would find its way to great commercial cities.

And pearls. **See Barnes on** "Mt 7:6; Mt 13:46 ".

These, too, have been always, and were particularly in early times, valuable articles of commerce. Mr. Gibbon mentions them as among the articles that contributed to the luxury of Rome in the age of the Antenines: "Precious stones, among which the pearl claimed the first rank after the diamond," vol. i.p. 34.

And fine linen. This was also a valuable article of commerce. It was obtained chiefly from Egypt. **See Barnes on "Isa 19:9"**.

Linen among the ancients was an article of luxury, for it was worn chiefly by the rich, Ex 28:42 Le 6:10; Lu 16:19.

The original word here is *bussuv*, *byssus*, and it is found in the New Testament only in this place, and in Lu 16:19. It was a "species of fine cotton, highly prized by the ancients." Various kinds are mentioned—as that of Egypt, the cloth which is still found wrapped around mummies; that of Syria, and that of India, which grew on a tree similar to the poplar; and that of Achaia, which grew in the vicinity of Elis. See *Rob. Lex*.

And purple. **See Barnes on "Lu 16:19"**.

Cloth of this colour was a valuable article of commerce, as it was worn by rich men and princes.

And silk. Silk was a very valuable article of commerce, as it was costly, and could he worn only by the rich. It is mentioned by Mr. Gibbon as such an article in Rome in the age of the Antenines: "Silk, a pound of which was esteemed not inferior in value to a pound of gold," i. 34. On the cultivation and manufacture of silk by the ancients, see the work entitled, *The History of Silk, Cotton, Linen, and Wool*, etc., published by Harper Brothers, New York, 1846, pp. 1-21.

And scarlet. **See Barnes "Re 17:3"**.

And all thyine wood. The word here used—*yuinon*—occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It denotes an evergreen African tree, from which statues and costly vessels were made. It is not agreed, however, whether it was a species of cedar, savin, or lignum-vitae, which latter constitutes the modern genus *thuja*, or *thyia*. See *Rees' Cyclo*., art. *Thuja*.

And all manner vessels of ivory. Everything that is made of ivory. Ivory, or the tusk of the elephant, has always been among the precious articles of commerce.

And all manner vessels of most precious wood. Furniture of costly weed—cedar, the citron tree, lignum-vitse, etc.

And of brass, and iron, and marble. Brass or copper would, of course, be a valuable article of commerce. The same would be the case with iron; and so marble for building, for statuary, etc., would likewise be.

{d} "gold" Re 17:4 {1} "thyine" "sweet"

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 18 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *And cinnamon*. Cinnamon is the aromatic bark of the *Laurus Cinnamomam*, which grows in Arabia, India, and especially in the island of Ceylon. It was formerly, as it is now, a valuable article in the Oriental trade.

And odours. Aromatics employed in religious worship, and for making perfumes. Mr. Gibbon (i. 34) mentions, among the articles of commerce and luxury in the age of the Antenines, "a variety of aromatics that were consumed in religious worship and the pomp of funerals." It is unnecessary to say that the use of such odours has been always common at Rome.

And ointments. Unguents—as spikenard, etc. These were in common use among the ancients. **See Barnes on "Mt 14:7; Mr 14:3"**.

And frankincenes. **See Barnes on "Mt 2:11"**.

It is unnecessary to say that incense has been always much used in public worship in Rome, and that it has been, therefore, a valuable article of commerce there.

And wine. An article of commerce and luxury in all ages.

And oil. That is, olive oil. This, in ancient times, and in Oriental countries particularly, was an important article of commerce.

And fine flour. The word here means the best and finest kind of flour.

And beasts, and sheep, and horses. Also important articles of merchandise.

And chariots. The word here used—*redwn*—means, properly, a carriage with four wheels; or a carriage drawn by mules, (Prof. Stuart.) It was properly a travelling carriage. The word is of Gallic origin.—Quinctil, i. 9; Cic. Mil. 10; Att. v. 17, vi. 1. See *Adams's Rom. Ant*. p. 525. It was an article of luxury.

And slaves. The Greek here is *swmatwn*—"*of bodies*." Prof. Stuart renders it *grooms*, and supposes that it refers to a particular kind of slaves who were employed in taking care of horses and carriages. The word properly denotes *body—an animal body*—whether of the human body, living or dead, or the body of a beast; and then the external man —the person, the individual. In later usage, it comes to denote a slave, (see *Rob. Lex*.,) and in this sense it is used here. The traffic in slaves was common in ancient times, as it is now. We know that this traffic was carried on to a large extent in ancient Rome—the city which John probably had in his eye in this description. See Gibbon, *Dec. and Fall*, i. pp. 25, 26. Athenseus, as quoted by Mr. Gibbon, (p. 26,) says that "he knew very many Romans who possessed, not for use, but for ostentation, ten and even twenty thousand slaves." It should be said here, however, that although this refers evidently to traffic in

slaves, it is not necessary to suppose that it would be literally characteristic of Papal Rome. All this is symbolical, designed to exhibit the Papacy under the image of a great city, with what was customary in such a city, or with what most naturally presented itself to the imagination of John as found in such a city; and it is no more necessary to suppose that the Papacy would be engaged in the traffic of slaves, than in the traffic of cinnamon, or fine flour, or sheep and horses.

And souls of men. The word used, and rendered *souls—qucav—* though commonly denoting the soul, (properly the breath, or vital principle,) is also employed to denote the living thing—the animal— in which the soul or vital principle resides; and hence may denote a person or a man. Under this form it is used to denote a *servant*, or *slave*. (See *Rob. Lex*.) Prof. Robinson supposes that the word here means *female slaves*, in distinction from those designated by the previous word. Prof. Stuart (*in loc*.) supposes that the previous word denotes a particular kind of slaves—those who had the care of horses— and that the word here is used in a generic sense, denoting slaves in general. This kind of traffic in the "persons" or *souls* of men is mentioned as characterizing ancient Tyre, in Eze 27:13: "Jayan, Tubal, and Meshech, they were thy merchants; they traded in the persons of men." It is not quite clear why, in the passage before us, this traffic is mentioned in two forms—as that of the *bodies* and the *souls* of men; but it would seem most probable that the writer meant to designate all that would properly come under this traffic—whether male or female slaves were bought and sold; whether they were for servitude, or for the gladiatorial sports, (see Wetstein, *in loc*.;) whatever might be the *kind* of servitude that they might be employed in, and whatever might be their condition in life. The use of the *two* words would include all that is implied in the traffic—for, in most important senses, it extends to the body and the soul. In slavery, both are purchased; both are supposed, so far as he can avail himself of them, to become the property of the master.

{2} "slaves" "bodies" {e} "souls" Eze 27:13

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 18 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *And the fruits that thy soul lusted after*. Literally, "The fruits of the desire of thy soul." The word rendered *fruits— opwra*—properly means, *late summer; dog-days*—the time when Sirius, or the dog-star, is predominant. In the East, this is the season when the fruits ripen, and hence the word comes to denote *fruit*. The reference is to any kind of fruit that would be brought for traffic into a great city, and that would be regarded as an article of luxury.

Are departed from thee. That is, they are no more brought for sale into the city.

And all things which were dainty and goodly. These words "characterize all kinds of furniture and clothing which were gilt, or plated, or embroidered, and therefore were bright or splendid."—*Prof. Stuart*.

And thou shalt find them no more at all. The address here is decidedly to the city itself. The meaning is, that they would no more be found there.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 18 - Verse 15

Verse 15. The merchants of these things. Who trafficked in these things, and who supplied the city with them, Re 18:11.

Which were made rich by her. By traffic with her.

Shall stand afar off. Re 18:10.

For fear of her torment. Struck with terror by her torment, so that they did not dare to approach her, Re 18:10.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 18 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *And saying, Alas, alas*, etc. **See Barnes "Re 18:10"**.

That was clothed in fine linen. In the previous description, (Re 18:12-13,) these are mentioned as articles of traffic; here the city, under the image of a female is represented as clothed in the most rich and gay of these articles.

And purple, and scarlet. **See Barnes "Re 17:3-4"**.

Compare 18:12.

And decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls. **See Barnes "Re 17:4"**.

{a} "clothed in fine linen" Lu 16:19

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 18 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *For in one hour*. In a very brief period—so short that it seemed to them to be but one hour. In the prediction (Re 18:8) it is said that it would be "in one day," (**see Barnes on "Re 18:8"**) here it is said, that to the lookers-on it *seemed* to be but an hour. There is no inconsistency, therefore, between the two statements.

So great riches is come to nought. All the accumulated wealth of so great and rich a city. This should have been united with Re 18:16, as it is a part of the lamentation of the merchants, and as the lamentation of the mariners commences in the other part of the verse. It is so divided in the Greek Testaments.

And every ship-master. This introduces the lamentation of the mariners, who would, of course, be deeply interested in the destruction of a city with which they had been accustomed to trade, and by carrying merchandise to which they had been enriched. The word *ship-master*—*kubernhthv*—means, properly, a *governor*; then a governor of a ship—the *steersman, or pilot*, Ac 27:11.

And all the company in ships. Prof. Stuart renders this *coasters*. There is here, however, an important difference in the reading in the text. The commonly received text is, *pav epi twn ploiwn o omilov* —"the whole company in ships," as in our common version; the reading which is now commonly adopted, and which is found in Griesbach, Hahn, and Tittman, is *o eti topon plewn* "he who sails to a place;" that is, he who sails from one place to another along the coast, or who does

not venture out far to sea; and thus the phrase would denote a secondary class of sea-captains or officers—those less venturesome, or experienced, or bold than others. There can be little doubt that this is the correct reading, (comp. Wetstein, *in loc*.,) and hence the class of seamen here referred to is *coasters*. Such seamen would naturally be employed where there was a great and luxurious maritime city, and would have a deep interest in its fall.

And sailors. Common seamen.

And as many as trade by sea. In any kind of craft, whether employed in a near or a remote trade.

Stood afar off. **Barnes on "Re 18:10"**.

{b} "ships" Isa 23:14

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 18 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *And cried*, etc. That is, as they had a deep interest in it, they would, on their own account, as well as hers, lift up the voice of lamentation.

What city is like unto this great city? In her destruction. What calamity has ever come upon a city like this?

{c} "What city" Jer 51:37

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 18 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *And they east dust on their heads*. A common sign of lamentation and mourning among the Orientals. **See Barnes on "Job 2:12"**.

By reason of her costliness. The word rendered *costliness*— *timiothv*—means, properly, *preciousness, costliness*; then magnificence, costly merchandise. The luxury of a great city enriches many individuals, however much it may impoverish itself.

For in one hour is she made desolate. So it seemed to them. **See Barnes on "Re 18:17"**.

{d} "cast dust" Jos 7:6 Job 2:12; Eze 27:30

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 18 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *Rejoice over her*. Over her ruin. There is a strong contrast between this language and that which precedes. Kings, merchants, and seamen, who had been countenanced and sustained by her in the indulgence of corrupt passions, or who had been enriched by traffic with her, would have occasion to mourn. But not so they who had been persecuted by her. Not so the church of the redeemed. Not so heaven itself. The great oppressor of the church, and the corrupter of the world, was now destroyed; the grand hindrance to the spread of the gospel was now removed, and all the holy in heaven and on earth would have occasion to rejoice. This is not the language of vengeance, but it is the language of exultation and rejoicing in view of the fact that the cause of truth might now spread without hindrance through the earth.

Thou heaven. The inhabitants of heaven. Compare **See Barnes "Isa 1:2"**.

The meaning here is, that the dwellers in heaven—the holy angels and the redeemed—had occasion to rejoice over the downfall of the great enemy of the church.

And ye holy apostles. Professor Stuart renders this, "Ye saints, and apostles, and prophets." In the common Greek text it is, as in our version, "holy apostles and prophets." In the text of Griesbach, Hahn, and Tittman, the word *kai* (*and*) is interposed between the world "*holy*" and "*apostle*." This is, doubtless, the true reading. The meaning then is, that the saints in heaven are called on to rejoice over the fall of the mystical Babylon.

Apostles. The twelve who were chosen by the Saviour to be his *witnesses* on earth. **See Barnes on "1Co 9:1"**.

The word is commonly limited to the twelve, but in a larger sense it is applied to other distinguished teachers and preachers of the gospel. **See Barnes "Ac 14:14"**.

There is no impropriety, however, in supposing that the apostles are referred to here *as* such, since they would have occasion to rejoice that the great obstacle to the reign of the Redeemer was now taken away, and that that cause in which they had suffered and died was now to be triumphant.

And prophets. Prophets of the Old Testament, and distinguished teachers of the New. **See Barnes on "Ro 12:6"**.

All these would have occasion to rejoice in the prospect of the final triumph of the true religion.

For God hath avenged you on her. Has taken vengeance on her for her treatment of you. That is, as she had persecuted the church *as such*, they all might be regarded as interested in it, and affected by it. All the redeemed, therefore, in earth and in heaven, are interested in whatever tends to retard or to promote the cause of truth. All have occasion to mourn when the enemies of the truth triumph; to rejoice when they fall.

{e} "Rejoice" Jer 51:48 {f} "avenged" Re 19:2 De 32:48; Lu 18:7,8

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 18 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *And a mighty angel*. **Barnes on "Re 18:1"**

This seems, however, to have been a different angel from the one mentioned in Re 18:1, though, like that, he is described as having great power.

Took up a stone like a great millstone. On the structure of mills among the ancients, **see Barnes on "Mt 24:41"**.

And cast it into the sea. As an emblem of the utter ruin of the city; an indication that the city would be as completely destroyed as that stone was covered by the waters.

Saying, Thus with violence. With force—as the stone was thrown into the sea. The idea is, that it would not be by a gentle and natural decline, but by the application of foreign power. This accords with all the representations in this book, that violence will be employed to overthrow the Papal power. See Re 17:16-17. The origin of this image is probably Jer 51:63-64: "And it shall be, when thou hast made an end of reading this book, that thou shalt bind a stone to it, and east it into the midst of Euphrates; and thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring on her."

{a} "Thus with violence" Jer 51:64

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 18 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *And the voice of harpers*. Those who play on the harp. This was usually accompanied with singing. The idea in this verse and the following is substantially the same as in the previous parts of the chapter, that the mystical Babylon—Papal Rome—would be brought to utter desolation. This thought is here exhibited under another form—that all which constituted festivity, joy, and amusement, and all that indicated thrift and prosperity, would disappear. Of course, in a great and gay city there would be all kinds of music; and when it is said that this would be heard there no more, it is a most striking image of utter desolation.

And musicians. Musicians in general; but perhaps here *singers*, as distinguished from those who played on instruments.

And of pipers. Those who played on pipes or flutes. **See Barnes "1Co 14:7"**; **See Barnes** "Mt 11:17".

And trumpeters. Trumpets were common instruments of music, employed on festival occasions, in war, and in worship. Only the principal instruments of music are mentioned here, as representatives of the rest. The general idea is, that the sound of music, as an indication of festivity and joy, would cease.

Shall be heard no more at all in thee. It would become utterly and permanently desolate.

And no craftsman, of whatsoever craft. That is, artificers of all kinds would cease to ply their trades there. The word here used—*tecnithv* —would include all artizans or mechanics; all who were engaged in any kind of trade or craft. The meaning here is, that all these would disappear; an image, of course, of utter decay.

And the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more. Taylor (*Frag. to Cal. Dic*. vol. iv. p. 346) supposes that this may refer, not so much to the rattle of the mill, as to the voice of singing which usually accompanied grinding. The sound of a mill is cheerful, and indicates prosperity; its ceasing is an image of decline.

{b} "millstone" Jer 25:10

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 18 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee*. Another image of desolation, as if every light were put out, and where were total darkness;

And the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee. The merry and cheerful voice of the marriage procession in the streets, (**See Barnes** "Mt 25:1-7, seq.,) or the cheerful, glad voice of the newly-married couple in their own dwelling, (**See Barnes "Joh 3:29"**.
)

For thy merchants were the great men of the earth. Those who dealt with thee were the rich, and among them were even nobles and princes; and now that they trade with thee no more, there is occasion for lamentation and sorrow. The contrast is great between the time when distinguished foreigners crowded thy marts, and now, when none of any kind come to traffic with thee. The origin of this representation is probably the description of Tyre in Eze 27:1.

For by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. This is stated as a reason for the ruin that had come upon her. It is a common representation of Papal Rome that she has *deceived or deluded* the

nations Of the earth, (**see Barnes "Re 13:14"**) and no representation ever made accords more with facts as they have occurred. The word *sorceries* here refers to the various arts—the tricks, impostures, and false pretences, by which this has been done. **See Barnes on "Re 9:21"**.

{c} "bridegroom" Jer 7:34 16:9, 33:11

{d} "merchants" Isa 23:8 {e} "sorceries" 2Ki 9:22 Na 3:4

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 18 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *And in her*. When she came to be destroyed, and her real character was seen.

Was found the blood of prophets. Of the public teachers of the true religion. On the word *prophets*, **see Barnes on "Re 18:20"**.

And of saints. Of the holy. **See Barnes on** "Re 18:20.

And of all that were slain upon the earth. So numerous have been the slain; so constant and bloody have been the persecutions there, that it may be said that all the blood ever shed has been poured out there. Compare **Barnes on "Mt 23:35"**.

No one can doubt the propriety of this representation with respect to Pagan and Papal Rome.

In regard to the general meaning and application of this chapter, the following remarks may be made:—

(1.) It refers to Papal Rome, and is designed to describe the final overthrow of that formidable Antichristian power. The whole course of the interpretation of the previous chapters demands such an application, and the chapter itself naturally suggests it.

(2.) If it be asked why so much of this imagery is derived from the condition of a *maritime* power, or pertains to *commerce*, since both Babylon and Rome were at some distance from the Sea, and neither could with propriety be regarded as sea-port towns, it may be replied,

(a) that the main idea in the mind of John was that of a rich and magnificent city;

(b) that all the things enumerated were doubtless found, in fact, in both Babylon and Rome;

(c) that though not properly sea-port towns, they were situated on rivers that opened into seas, and were therefore not unfavourably situated for commerce; and

(d) that in fact they traded with all parts of the earth. The leading idea is that of a great and luxurious city, and this is filled up and decorated with images of what is commonly found in large commercial towns. We are not, therefore, to look for a *literal* application of this, and it is not necessary to attempt to find *all* these things, in fact, in the city referred to. Much of the description may be for the mere sake of *keeping*, or ornament.

(3.) If this refers to Rome, as is supposed, then, in accordance with the previous representations; it shows that the destruction of the Papal power is to be complete and final. The image which John had in his eye as illustrating that was undoubtedly ancient Babylon as prophetically described in Isa 13:1 14:1, and the destruction of the power here referred to is to be as complete as was the destruction described there. It would not be absolutely necessary in the fulfilment of this to suppose that Rome itself is to become a heap of ruins like Babylon, whatever may be true on that point, but that the Papal power as such is to be so utterly destroyed that the ruins of desolate Babylon would properly represent it.

(4.) If this interpretation is correct, then the Reformation was in entire accordance with what God would have his people do, and was demanded by solemn duty to him. Thus, in Re 18:4, his people are expressly commanded to "come out of her, that they might not be partakers of her sins, nor of her plagues." If it had been the design of the Reformers to perform a work that should be in all respects a fulfilling of the command of God, they could have done nothing that would have more literally met the Divine requirement. Indeed, the church has never performed a duty more manifestly in accordance with the Divine will, and more indispensable for its own purity, prosperity, and safety, than the act of separating entirely and for ever from Papal Rome.

(5) The Reformation was a great movement in human affairs. It was the index of great progress already reached, and the pledge of still greater. The affairs of the world were at that period placed on a new footing, and from the period of the Reformation, and just in proportion as the principles of the Reformation are acted on, the destiny of mankind is *onward*.

(6.) The fall of Papal Rome, as described in this chapter, will remove one of the last obstructions to the final triumph of the gospel. In **Barnes on** "Re 16:10,seq. we saw that *one* great hindrance to the spread of the true religion would be taken away by the decline and fall of the Turkish power. A still more formidable hindrance will be taken away by the decline and fall of the Papal power; for that power holds more millions of the race under its subjection, and with a more consummate art, and a more powerful spell. The Papal influence has been felt, and still is felt, in a considerable part of the world. It has churches and schools and colleges in almost all lands. It exercises a vast influence over governments. It has powerful societies organized for the purpose of propagating its opinions; and it so panders to some of the most powerful passions of our nature, and so converts to its own purposes all the resources of superstition, as still to retain a mighty, though a waning hold on the human mind. When this power shall finally cease, any one can see that perhaps *the* most mighty obstruction which has ever been on the earth for a thousand years to the spread of the gospel will have been removed, and the way will be prepared for the introduction of the long hoped-for millennium.

{f} "slain" Jer 51:49

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 19

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 19 - Verse 1

CHAPTER XIX

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER

THIS chapter, as well as the last, is an episode, delaying the final catastrophe, and describing more fully the effect of the destruction of the mystical Babylon. The chapter consists of the following parts:—

I. A hymn of the heavenly hosts in view of the destruction of the mystical Babylon, Re 19:1-7.

(a) A voice is heard in heaven shouting Hallelujah, in view of the fact that God had judged the great harlot that had corrupted the earth, Re 19:1,2.

(b) The sound is echoed and repeated as the smoke of her torment ascends, Re 19:3.

(c) The four and twenty elders, and the four living creatures, as interested in all that pertains to the church, unite in that shout of Hallelujah, Re 19:4.

(d) A voice is heard from the throne commanding them to praise God, Re 19:5; and

(e) the mighty shout of Hallelujah is echoed and repeated from unnumbered hosts, Re 19:6,7.

II. The marriage of the Lamb, Re 19:8,9. The Lamb of God is united to his bride—the church—never more to be separated; and after all the persecutions, conflicts, and embarrassments which had existed, this long-desired union is consummated, and the glorious triumph of the church is described under the image of a joyous wedding ceremony.

III. John is so overcome with this representation, that in his transports of feeling he prostrates himself before the angel, who shows him all this, ready to worship one who discloses such bright and glorious scenes, Re 19:10. He is gently rebuked for allowing himself to be so overcome that he would render Divine homage to any creature, and is told that he who communicates this to him is but a fellow-servant, and that God only is to be worshipped.

IV. The final conquest over the beast and the false prophet, and the subjugation of all the foes of the church, Re 9:11-21.

(a) A description of the conqueror—the Son of God, Re 9:11-16. He appears on a white horse—emblem of victory. He has on his head many crowns; wears a vesture dipped in blood; is followed by the armies of heaven on white horses; from his mouth goes a sharp sword; and his name is prominently written on his vesture and his thigh—all emblematic of certain victory.

(b) An angel is seen standing in the sun, calling on all the fowls of heaven to come to the great feast prepared for them in the destruction of the enemies of God—as if there were a great slaughter sufficient to supply all the fowls that feed on flesh, Re 19:17,18.

(c) The final war, Re 19:19,21. The beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies are gathered together for battle; the beast and the false prophet are taken, and are cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone; and all that remain of the enemies of God are slain, and the fowls are satisfied with their flesh. The last obstacle that prevented the dawn of the millennial morning is taken away, and the church is triumphant.

Verse 1. *And after these things*. The things particularly that were exhibited in the previous chapter. **See Barnes on "Re 18:1"**.

I heard a voice of much people in heaven. The voice of the worshippers before the throne.

Saying, Alleluia. The Greek method of writing *Hallelujah*. This word—*allhlouia*—occurs in the New Testament only in this chapter, Re 18:1,3,4,6.

The Hebrew phrase— ? *Hallelujah*—occurs often in the Old Testament. It means properly *Praise Jehovah*, or *Praise the Lord*. The *occasion* on which it is introduced here is very appropriate. It is uttered by the inhabitants of heaven, in the immediate presence of God himself, and in view of the final overthrow of the enemies of the church and the triumph of the gospel. In such circumstances it was fit that heaven should render praise, and that a song of thanksgiving should be uttered in which all holy beings could unite.

Salvation. That is, the salvation is to be ascribed to God. **See Barnes "Re 7:10"**.

And glory, and honour. **Barnes on "Re 5:12"**.

And power. **See Barnes "Re 5:13"**.

Unto the Lord our God. That is, all that there is of honour, glory, power, in the redemption of the world belongs to God, and should be ascribed to him. This is expressive of the true feelings of piety always; this will constitute the song of heaven.

{a} "great voice" Re 11:15 {b} "Alleluia" Re 19:3,4,6

{c} "Salvation" Re 7:10,12

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 19 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *For true and righteous are his judgments*. That is, the calamities that come upon the power here referred to are deserved.

For he hath judged the great whore. The power represented by the harlot, **See Barnes "Re 17:1"**.

Which did corrupt the earth with her fornication. **See Barnes on "Re 14:8"**; **See Barnes** "Re 17:2"

See Barnes "Re 17:4"

See Barnes "Re 17:5"; **See Barnes "Re 18:3"**.

Compare **See Barnes "Re 9:21"**.

And hath avenged the blood of his servants. **See Barnes on** "Re 18:20, **See Barnes "Re 18:24"**.

At her hand. Shed by her hand.

{d} "true and righteous" Re 16:7 {e} "avenged" Re 18:20

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 19 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And again they said, Alleluia*. **See Barnes "Re 19:1"**.

The event was so glorious and so important; the final destruction of the great enemy of the church was of so much moment in its bearing on the welfare of the world, as to call forth repeated expressions of praise.

And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. **See Barnes "Re 14:11"**.

This is an image of final ruin; the image being derived probably from the description in Genesis of the smoke that ascended from the cities of the plain, Ge 19:28. On the joy expressed here in her destruction, compare **See Barnes "Re 18:20"**.

{f} "smoke" Re 18:9,18; Isa 34:10

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 19 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts*. **See Barnes on** "Re 4:4, **See Barnes** "Re 4:6, **See Barnes "Re 4:7"**.

As representatives of the church, and as interested in its welfare, they are now introduced as rejoicing in its final triumph, and in the destruction of its last foe.

Fell down. Prostrated themselves—the usual posture of worship.

And worshipped God that sat on the throne. Re 4:2-3,10. That is, they now adored him for what he had done in delivering the church from all its persecutions, and causing it to triumph in the world.

Saying, Amen. **See Barnes "Mt 6:13".**

The word here is expressive of approbation of what God had done; or of their solemn assent to all that had occurred in the destruction of the great enemy of the church.

Alleluia. **See Barnes "Re 19:1".**

The repetition of this word so many times shows the intenseness of the joy of heaven in view of the final triumph of the church.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 19 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And a voice came out of the throne*. A voice seemed to come from the very midst of the throne. It is not said by whom this voice was uttered. It cannot be supposed, however, that it was uttered by God himself, for the command which it gave was this: "Praise *our* God," etc. For the same reason it seems hardly probable that it was the voice of the Messiah, unless it be supposed that he here identifies himself with the redeemed church, and speaks of God as *his* God and *hers*. It would seem rather that it was a responsive voice that came from those nearest the throne, calling on all to unite in praising God in view of what was done. The meaning then will be, that all heaven was interested in the triumph of the church, and that one portion of the dwellers there called on the others to unite in offering thanksgiving.

Praise our God. The God that we worship.

All ye his servants. All in heaven and earth; all have occasion for thankfulness.

And ye that fear him. That reverence and obey him. The fear of the Lord is a common expression in the Scriptures to denote true piety. Both small and great. All of every class and condition-poor and rich—young and old; those of humble, and those of exalted rank. Compare Ps 148:7-13.

{g} "Praise our God" Ps 135:1

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 19 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude*. In Re 19:1, he says that he "heard a great voice of much people;" here he says he "heard *as it were* a voice of great multitude." That is, in the former case he heard a shout that he at once recognised as the voice of a great multitude of persons; here he says that he heard a sound not distinctly recognised at first as such, but which *resembled* such a shout of a multitude. In the former case it was *distinct*; here it was confused—bearing a resemblance to the sound of roaring waters, or to muttering thunder, but less distinct than the former. This phrase would imply

(a) a *louder* sound; and

(b) that the sound was more remote, and therefore less clear and distinct.

And as the voice of many waters. The comparison of the voices of a host of people with the roar of mighty waters is not uncommon in the Scriptures. **See Barnes on "Isa 17:12"**

See Barnes "Isa 17:13".

So in Homer—

"The monarch spoke, and straight a murmur rose,
Loud as the surges when the tempest blows;
That dash'd on broken rocks tumultuous roar,
And foam and thunder on the stony shore."

And as the voice of mighty thunderings. The loud, deep, heavy voice of thunder. The distant shouts of a multitude may properly be represented by the sound of heavy thunder.

Saying, Alleluia. **See Barnes "Re 19:1".**

This is the *fourth* time in which this is uttered as expressive of the joy of the heavenly hosts in view of the overthrow of the enemies of the church. The occasion will be worthy of this emphatic expression of joy.

For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Jehovah—God Almighty—the true God. The meaning is, that as the last enemy of the church is destroyed, he now truly reigns. This is the result of his *power*, and therefore it is proper that he should be praised as the *omnipotent* or *Almighty God*—for he has shown that he can overcome all his enemies, and bring the world to his feet.

{a} "for the Lord" Ps 97:1,12

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 19 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Let us be glad and rejoice*. Let all in heaven rejoice—for all have an interest in the triumph of truth; all should be glad that the government of God is set up over an apostate world.

And give honour to him. Because the work is glorious; and because it is by his power alone that it has been accomplished. **See Barnes "Re 5:12".**

For the marriage of the Lamb is come. Of the Lamb of God—the Redeemer of the world. **Barnes on "Re 5:6".**

The relation of God, and especially of the Messiah, to the church, is often in the Scriptures represented under the image of marriage. **See Barnes** "Isa 54:4, seq. **See Barnes** "Isa 62:4,

See Barnes "Isa 63.5"; See Barnes "2Co 11:2, See Barnes on "Eph 5:23,seq. Compare Jer 3:14 31:32; Ho 2:19-20.

The idea is also said to be common in Arabic and Persian poetry. It is to be remembered also, that Papal Rome has just been represented as a gay and meretricious woman; and there is a propriety, therefore, in representing the true church as a pure bride, the Lamb's wife, and the final triumph of that church as a joyous marriage. The meaning is, that the church was now to triumph and rejoice as if in permanent union with her glorious head and Lord.

And his wife hath made herself ready. By putting on her beautiful apparel and ornaments. All the preparations had been made for a permanent and uninterrupted union with its Redeemer, and the church was henceforward to be recognised as his beautiful bride, and was no more to appear as a decorated harlot—as it had during the Papal supremacy. Between the church under the Papacy, and the church in its true form, there is all the difference which there is between an abandoned

woman gaily decked with gold and jewels, and a pure virgin chastely and modestly adorned, about to be led to be united in bonds of love to a virtuous husband.

{b} "marriage" Mt 25:10 {c} "ready" Isa 52:1

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 19 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *And to her was granted*. It is not said here *by whom* this was granted, but it is perhaps implied that this was conferred by the Saviour himself on his bride.

That she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white. **See Barnes on "Re 3:4"**; **See Barnes** "Re 3:5, **See Barnes** "Re 3:18; **See Barnes "Re 7:13"**.

White has, perhaps, in all countries been the usual colour of the bridal dress—as an emblem of innocence.

For the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. Represents the righteousness of the saints; or is an emblem of it. It should be remarked, however, that it is implied here, as it is everywhere in the Scriptures, that this is not their *own* righteousness, for it is said that this was "*given*" to the bride—to the saints. It is the gracious bestowment of their Lord; and the reference here must be to that righteousness which they obtain by faith—the righteousness which results from justification through the merits of the Redeemer. Of this Paul speaks, when he says, (Php 3:9,) "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Compare **See Barnes "Ro 3:25"**

See Barnes "Ro 3:26".

{d} "arrayed" Re 3:4 Isa 61:10 {1} "white" "bright" {e} "righteousness" Ps 132:9

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 19 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *And he saith unto me*. The angel who made these representations to him. See Re 19:10.

Write, blessed are they. **See Barnes on "Re 14:13"**.

Which are called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb. The idea of a festival, or a marriage-supper, was a familiar one to the Jews to represent the happiness of heaven, and is frequently found in the New Testament. Compare **See Barnes on "Lu 14:15"**; **See Barnes "Lu 14:16"**; **See Barnes** "Lu 16:22"; **See Barnes "Lu 22:16"**; **See Barnes** "Mt 22:2".

The image in the passage before us is that of many *guests* invited to a great festival.

And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. Confirming all by a solemn declaration. The importance of what is here said; the desirableness of having it fixed in the mind amidst the trials of life and the scenes of persecution through which the church was to pass, makes this solemn declaration proper. The idea is, that in all times of persecution; in every dark hour of despondency, the church, as such, and every individual member of the church, should receive it as a solemn truth never to be doubted, that the religion of Christ would finally prevail, and that all persecution and sorrow here would be followed by joy and triumph in heaven.

{f} "Blessed" Lu 14:15 {g} "supper" Re 3:20 {h} "These" Re 22:6

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 19 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *And I fell at his feet to worship him*. At the feet of the angel. **Barnes on "Re 19:9"**.

This is a common posture of adoration in the East. See Rosenmuller's *Morgenland, in loc*. **See Barnes "1Co 14:25"**.

John was entirely overcome with the majesty of the heavenly messenger, and with the amazing truths that he had disclosed to him, and in the overflowing of his feelings he fell upon the earth in the posture of adoration. Or it may be that he mistook the rank of him who addressed him, and supposed that he was the Messiah whom he had been accustomed to worship, and who had first (chapter 1) appeared to him. If so, his error was soon corrected. He was told by the angel himself who made these communications that he had no claims to such homage, and that the praise which he offered *him* should be rendered to God alone. It should be observed that there is not the slightest intimation that this *was* the Messiah himself, and consequently this does not contain any evidence that it would be improper to worship him. The only fair conclusion from the passage is, that it is wrong to offer religious homage to an angel.

And he said unto me, See thou do it not. That is, in rendering the homage which you propose to me, you would in fact render it to a worship; creature. This may be regarded as an admonition to be *careful* in our not to allow our feelings to overcome us; and not to render that homage to a creature which is due to God alone. Of course, this would prohibit the worship of the Virgin Mary, and of any of the saints, and all that homage rendered to a created being which is due to God only. Nothing is more carefully guarded in the Bible than the purity and simplicity of worship; nothing is more sternly rebuked than idolatry; nothing is more contrary to the Divine law than rendering in any way that homage to a creature which belongs of right to the Creator. It was necessary to guard even John, the beloved disciple, on that subject; how much more needful, therefore, is it to guard the church at large from the dangers to which it is liable. *I am thy fellow servant*. Evidently this was an angel, and yet he here speaks of himself as a "fellow-servant" of John. That is, he was engaged in the service of the same God; he was endeavouring to advance the same cause, and to honour the same Redeemer. The sentiment is, that in promoting religion in the world, we are associated with angels. It is no condescension in them to be engaged in the service of the Redeemer, though it seems to be condescension for them to be associated with us in anything; it constitutes, no ground of merit in us to be engaged in the service of the Redeemer, (compare Lu 17:10,) though we may regard it as an honour to be associated with the angels, and it may raise us in conscious dignity to feel that we are united with them.

And of thy brethren. Of other Christians; for all are engaged in the same work.

That have the testimony of Jesus. Who are witnesses for the Saviour. It is possible that there may be here a particular reference to those who were engaged in preaching the gospel, though the language will apply to all who give their testimony to the value of the gospel by consistent lives.

Worship God. He is the only proper object of worship; he alone is to be adored.

For the testimony of Jesus. The meaning here seems to be, that this angel, and John, and their fellow-servants, were all engaged in the same work—that of bearing their testimony to Jesus. Thus, in this respect, they were on a level, and one of them should not worship another, but all should unite in the common worship of God. No one in this work, though an angel, could have such a pre-eminence that it would be proper to render the homage to him which was due to God alone.

There *could be* but one being whom it was proper to worship, and they who were engaged in simply bearing *testimony* to the work of the Saviour should not worship one another.

Is the spirit of prophecy. The design of prophecy is to bear testimony to Jesus. The language does not mean, of course, that this is the *only* design of prophecy, but that this is its great and ultimate end. The word *prophecy* here seems to be used in the large sense in which it is often employed in the New Testament—meaning to make known the Divine will, (**see Barnes** "Ro 12:6,) and the *primary* reference here would seem to be to the preachers and teachers of the New Testament. The sense is, that their grand business is to bear testimony to the Saviour. They are all—whether angels, apostles, or ordinary teachers—appointed for this, and therefore should regard themselves as "fellow-servants." The *design* of the angel in this seems to have been, to state to John what was his own specific business in the communications which *he* made, and then to state a universal truth applicable to *all* ministers of the gospel, that they were engaged in the same work, and that no one of them should claim adoration from others. Thus understood, this passage has no direct reference to the prophecies of the Old Testament, and teaches nothing in regard to their design, though it is *in fact* undoubtedly true that their grand and leading object was to bear testimony to the future Messiah. But this passage will not justify the attempt so often made to "find Christ" everywhere in the prophecies of the Old Testament, or justify the many forced and unnatural interpretations by which the prophecies are often applied to him.

{i} "I fell" Re 22:8,9 {k} "Jesus" Ac 10:43 1Pe 1:10,11

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 19 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *And I saw heaven opened*. He saw a new vision, *as if* an opening were made through the sky, and he was permitted to look *into* heaven. **See Barnes on "Re 4:1"**.

And behold, a white horse. On the white horse as a symbol, **see Barnes on "Re 6:2"**.

He is here the symbol of the final victory that is to be obtained over the beast and the false prophet, (Re 19:20,) and of the final triumph of the church.

And he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True. He is not designated here by his usual and real name, but by his attributes. There can be no doubt that the Messiah is intended, as he goes forth to the subjugation of the world to himself. The attributes here referred to—*faithful* and *true*—are peculiarly appropriate, for they are not only strongly marked attributes of his character, but they would be particularly manifested in the events that are described. He would thus show that he was *faithful*—or worthy of the confidence of his church in delivering it from all its enemies; and *true* to all the promises that he has made to it.

And in righteousness he doth judge. All his acts of judgment in determining the destiny of men are righteous. **See Barnes "Isa 11:3-5"**.

And make war. That is, the war which he wages is not a war of ambition; it is not for the mere purpose of conquest; it is to save the righteous, and to punish the wicked.

{a} "white horse" Re 6:2 {b} "faithful and true" Re 3:14 {c} "righteousness" Ps 45:3,4; Isa 11:4

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 19 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *His eyes were as a flame of fire*. **See Barnes on "Re 1:14"**.

And on his head were many crowns. Many diadems, indicative of his universal reign. It is not said *how* these were worn or arranged on his head—perhaps the various diadems worn by kings were in some way *wreathed* into one.

And he had a name written. That is, probably on the frontlet of this compound diadem. Compare **See Barnes on "Re 13:1"**; **See Barnes "Re 14:1"**.

That no man knew but he himself. **See Barnes on "Re 2:17"**.

This cannot here mean that no one could *read* the name, but the idea is, that no one but himself could fully understand its import. It involved a depth of meaning, and a degree of sacredness, and a relation to the Father, which he alone could apprehend in its true import. This is true of the name here designated—"the word of God"—the *Logos—logov*; and it is true of *all* the names which he bears. See Mt 11:27. Compare a quotation from Dr. Buchanan in the *Asiatic Researches*, vol. i., vi. p. 264, as quoted by Rosenmuller, *Morgenland, in loc*.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 19 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood*. Red, *as if* dipped in blood—emblem of slaughter. The original of this image is probably Isa 63:2-3. **See Barnes on "Isa 63:2-3"**.

And his name is called The Word of God. The name which in Re 19:12 it is said that no one knew but he himself. This name is *o logov ton yeou*, or "the Logos of God." That is, this is his peculiar name; a name which belongs only to him, and which distinguishes him from all other beings. The name *Logos*, as applicable to the Son of God, and expressive of his nature, is found in the New Testament only in the writings of John, and is used by him to denote the higher or Divine nature of the Saviour. In regard to its meaning, and the reason why it is applied to him, **see Barnes on "Joh 1:1"**.

The reader also may consult with great advantage an article by Professor Stuart in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. vii., pp. 16-31. The following *may be* some of the reasons why it is said (Re 19:12) that no one understands this but he himself:

(1.) No one but he can understand its *full import*, as it implies so high a knowledge of the nature of the Deity;

(2.) no one but he can understand the *relation* which it supposes in regard to God, or the relation of the Son to the Father;

(3.) no one but he can understand what is implied in it, regarded as the method in which God reveals himself to his creatures on earth;

(4.) no one but he can understand what is implied in it in respect to the manner in which God makes himself known to other worlds. It may be added as a further illustration of this, that none of the attempts made to explain it have left the matter so that there are no questions unsolved which one would be glad to ask.

{g} "Word of God" Joh 1:1

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 19 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *And the armies which were in heaven followed him*. The heavenly hosts; particularly, it would seem, the redeemed, as there would be some incongruity in representing the angels as riding in this manner. Doubtless the original of this picture is Isa 63:3: "I have trodden the wine-press *alone*, and of the people there was none with me." These hosts of the redeemed on white horses accompany him to be witnesses of his victory, and to participate in the joy of the triumph, not to engage in the work of blood.

Upon white horses. Emblems of triumph or victory. **Barnes on "Re 6:2"**.

Clothed in fine linen, white and clean. The usual raiment of those who are in heaven, as everywhere represented in this book. See Re 3:4-5 4:4, 7:9,13, 15:6.

{h} "clothed in fine linen" Mt 28:3

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 19 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword*. **See Barnes on "Re 1:16"**.

In that place the sword seems to be an emblem of his *words or doctrines*, as penetrating the hearts of men; here it is the emblem of a work of destruction wrought on his foes.

That with it he should smite the nations. The nations that were opposed to him; to wit, those especially who were represented by the beast and the false prophet, Re 19:18-20.

And he shall rule them with a rod of iron. **See Barnes on "Re 2:27"**; **See Barnes** "Re 12:5".

And he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. This language is probably derived from Isa 63:1-4. See it explained in **Barnes on** "Isa 63:1, seq., and **Barnes on** "Re 14:19, **See Barnes "Re 14:20"**.

It means here that his enemies would be certainly crushed before him—as grapes are crushed under the feet of him that treads in the wine-vat.

{i} "mouth" Re 1:16 {k} "rod of iron" Ps 2:9

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 19 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *And he hath on his vesture*. That is, this name was conspicuously written on his garment—probably his military robe.

And on his thigh. The robe or military cloak may be conceived of as open and flowing, so as to expose the limbs of the rider; and the idea is, that the name was conspicuously written not only on the flowing robe, but on the other parts of his dress, so that it *must* be conspicuous whether his military cloak were wrapped closely around him, or whether it was open to the breeze. Grotius supposes that this name was on the edge or hilt of the sword which depended from his thigh.

A name written. Or a title descriptive of his character.

King of kings, and Lord of lords. As in Re 17:5, so here, there is nothing in the original to denote that this should be distinguished as it is by capital letters. As a conspicuous title, however, it is not

improper. It means that he is, in fact, the sovereign over the kings of the earth, and that all nobles and princes are under his control—a rank that properly belongs to the Son of God. Compare **Barnes on "Eph 1:20-22".**

See also Re 19:12 of this chapter. The custom here alluded to of inscribing the name or rank of distinguished individuals on their garments, so that they might be readily recognised, was not uncommon in ancient times. For full proof of this, see Rosenmuller, *Morgenland*, iii. 232-236. The authorities quoted there are, Thevenot's *Travels*, i. 149; Gruter, p. 989; Dempster's *Etruria Regalis*, T. ii. tab. 93; Montfaucon, *Antiq. Expliq*. T. iii. tab. 39. Thus Herodotus, (ii. 106,) speaking of the figures of Sesostris in Ionia, says that, "Across his breast, from shoulder to shoulder, there is this inscription in the sacred characters of Egypt, 'I conquered this country by the force of my arms.'" Comp. Cic. Verr. iv. 23; Le Moyne ad Jer. xxiii. 6; Munter, *Diss. ad Apoc*. xvii. 5, as referred to by Prof. Stuart, *in loc*.

{l} "KING OF KINGS" Re 17:14

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 19 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *And I saw an angel standing in the sun*. A different angel evidently from the one which had before appeared to him. The *number* of angels that appeared to John, as referred to in this book, was very great, and each one came on a new errand, or with a new message. Every one must be struck with the image here. The description is as simple as it can be; and yet as sublime. The fewest words possible are used; and yet the image is distinct and clear. A heavenly being stands in the blaze of the brightest of the orbs that God permits us here to see—yet not consumed, and himself so bright that he can be distinctly seen amidst the dazzling splendours of that luminary. It is difficult to conceive of an image more sublime than this. *Why* he has his place in the sun is not stated, for there does not *appear* to be anything more intended by this than to give grandeur and impressiveness to the scene.

And he cried with a loud voice. So that all the fowls of heaven could hear.

Saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven. That is, to all the birds of prey—all that feed on flesh—such as hover over a battle-field. Compare **Barnes on** "Isa 18:6; Isa 56:9 ".

See also Jer 7:33 12:9; Eze 39:4-20.

Come and gather yourselves together. All this imagery is taken from the idea that there would be a great slaughter, and that the bodies of the dead would be left unburied to the birds of prey.

Unto the supper of the great God. As if the great God were about to give you a feast: to wit, the carcases of those slain. It is called "*his* supper" because he gives it; and the image is merely that there would be a great slaughter of his foes, as is specified in the following verse.

{b} "Come" Eze 39:17-20

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 19 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *That ye may eat the flesh of kings*. Of the kings under the control of the beast and the false prophet, Re 16:14 17:12-14.

And the flesh of captains. Of those subordinate to kings in command. The Greek word is *ciliarcwn*—*-chiliarchs*—denoting captains of a thousand, or, as we should say, commanders of a regiment. The word *colonel* would better convey the idea with us; as he is the commander of a regiment, and a regiment is usually composed of about a thousand men.

And the flesh of mighty men. The word here means *strong*, and the reference is to the robust soldiery—rank and file in the army.

And the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them. Cavalry —for most armies are composed in part of horsemen.

And the flesh of all men, both free and bond. Freemen and slaves. It is not uncommon that freemen and slaves are mingled in the same army. This was the case in the American Revolution, and is common in the East.

Both small and great. Young and old; of small size and of great size; of those of humble, and those of exalted rank. The later armies of Napoleon were composed in great part of conscripts, many of whom were only about eighteen years of age, and to this circumstance many of his later defeats are to be traced. In the army that was raised after the invasion of Russia, no less than one hundred and fifty thousand of the conscripts were between eighteen and nineteen years of age.—Alison's *History of Europe*, iv. 27. Indeed, it is common in most armies that a considerable portion of the enlistments are from those in early life; and besides this, it is usual to employ mere boys on various services about a camp.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 19 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *And I saw the beast*. **See Barnes on** "Re 13:1, **See Barnes "Re 13:11"**.

Compare Re 17:13.

And the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together. There is allusion here to the same assembling of hostile forces which is described in Re 16:13-14, for the great decisive battle that is to determine the destiny of the world—the question whether the Messiah or Antichrist shall reign. There can be no doubt that the writer in these passages designed to refer to the same events—the still future scenes that are to occur when the Roman, the Pagan, and the Mohammedan powers shall be aroused to make common cause against the true religion, and shall stake all on the issue of the great conflict. **See Barnes on** "Re 16:13, **See Barnes "Re 16:14"**.

Against him that sat on the horse. The Messiah—the Son of God. **See Barnes on "Re 19:11"**.

And against his army. The hosts that are associated with him—his redeemed people. **See Barnes on "Re 19:14"**.

{c} "make war" Re 16:14,16

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 19 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *And the beast was taken*. That is, was taken alive, to be thrown into the lake of fire. The hosts were slain, (Re 19:21,) but the leaders were made prisoners of war. The *general* idea is, that these armies were overcome, and that the Messiah was victorious; but there is a propriety in the representation here that the leaders—the authors of the war—should be taken captive, and reserved for severer punishment than death on the battle-field would be—for they had stirred up their hosts, and summoned these armies to make rebellion against the Messiah. The *beast* here, as all along, refers to the Papal power; and the idea is that of its complete and utter overthrow, *as if* the leader of an army were taken captive and tormented in burning flames, and all his followers were cut down on the field of battle.

And with him the false prophet. As they had been *practically* associated together, there was a propriety that they should share the same fate. In regard to the false prophet, and the nature of this alliance, **see Barnes on "Re 16:13"**.

That wrought miracles before him. That is, the false prophet had been united with the beast in deceiving the nations of the earth. **See Barnes on "Re 16:14"**.

With which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast. **See Barnes on "Re 13:16-18"**.

By these arts they had been deceived; that is, they had been led into the alliance, and had been sustained in their opposition to the truth. The whole representation is that of an alliance to prevent the spread of the true religion, *as if* the Papacy and Mohammedanism were combined, and the one was sustained by the pretended miracles of the other. There would be a practical array against the reign of the Son of God, *as if* these great powers should act in concert, and *as if* the peculiar claims which each set up in behalf of its own Divine origin became a claim which went to support the whole combined organization.

These both were east alive into a lake of fire. The beast and the false prophet. That is, the overthrow will be as signal, and the destruction as complete, *as if* the leaders of the combined hosts should be taken alive, and thrown into a pit or lake that burns with an intense heat. There is no necessity for supposing that this is to be *literally* inflicted—for the whole scene is symbolical—meaning that the destruction of these powers would be as complete *as if* they were thrown into such a burning lake. Compare **Barnes on "Re 14:10-11"**.

Burning with brimstone. Sulphur—the usual expression to denote intense heat, and especially as referring to the punishment of the wicked. **See Barnes on "Re 14:10"**.

{d} "beast" Re 16:13,14 {e} "lake of fire" Re 20:10 Da 7:11

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 19 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *And the remnant*. The remainder of the assembled hosts—the army at large, in contradistinction from the leaders.

Were slain with the sword. Cut down with the sword; not rescued for protracted torment. A proper distinction is thus made between the deceived multitudes and the leaders who had deceived them.

Of him that sat upon the horse. The Messiah, Re 19:11.

Which sword proceeded out of his mouth. **Barnes on "Re 19:15"**.

That is, they were cut down by a *word*. They fell before him as he spake, *as if* they were slain by the sword. Perhaps this indicates that the effect that is to be produced when these great powers shall be destroyed is a *moral* effect; that is, that they will be subdued by the word of the Son of God.

And all the fowls were filled with their flesh. **See Barnes on "Re 19:17"**.

An effect was produced *as if* the fowls of heaven should feed upon the carcases of the slain.

The general idea here is, that these great Antichristian powers which had so long resisted the gospel, and prevented its being spread over the earth; which had shed so much blood in persecution, and had so long corrupted and deceived mankind, would be subdued. The true religion would be as triumphant as if the Son of God should go forth as a warrior in his own might, and secure their leaders for punishment, and give up their hosts to the birds of prey. This destruction of these great enemies—which the whole course of the interpretation leads us to suppose is still future—prepares the way for the millennial reign of the Son of God—as stated in the following chapter. The "beast" and the "false prophet" are disposed of, and there remains only the subjugation of the great dragon—the source of all this evil—to prepare the way for the long-anticipated triumph of the gospel. This subjugation of the great original source of all those evil influences is stated in Re 20:1-3; and then follows the account of the thousand years' rest of the saints, the resurrection of the dead, and the final judgment.

{f} "sword" Re 19:15 1:16 {g} "fowls" Re 19:17,18

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 20

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 20 - Verse 1

CHAPTER XX

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER

THIS chapter, like chapters 16:12-21, xvii., xviii., xix., pertains to the future, and discloses things which are yet to occur. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, for the reason stated in the Notes on chap. **See Barnes** "Re 16:16, that much obscurity should hang over it, nor that it is difficult to explain it so as to remove all obscurity. The statement in this chapter, however, is distinct and clear in its general characteristics, and time will make all its particular statements free from ambiguity.

In the previous chapter, an account is given of the final destruction of two of the most formidable enemies of the church, and consequently the removal of two of the hindrances to the universal spread of the gospel—the beast and the false prophet—the Papal and the Mohammedan powers. But one obstacle remains to be removed—the power of Satan as concentrated and manifested in the form of Pagan power. These three powers it was said Re 16:13,14 would concentrate their forces as the time of the final triumph of Christianity drew on; and with these the last great battle was to be fought. Two of these have been subdued; the conquest over the other remains, and Satan is to

be arrested and bound for a thousand years. He is then to be released for a time, and afterwards finally destroyed, and at that period the end will come.

The chapter comprises the following parts:—

I. The binding of Satan, Re 20:1-3. An angel comes down from heaven, with the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand, and seizes upon the dragon, and casts him into the pit, that for a thousand years he should deceive the nations no more. The great enemy of God and his cause is thus made a prisoner, and is restrained from making war in any form against the church. The way is thus prepared for the peace and triumph which follow.

II. The millennium, Re 20:4-6. John sees thrones, and persons sitting on them; he sees the souls of those who were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God—those who had not worshipped the beast nor his image—living and reigning with Christ during the thousand years: the spirits of the martyrs revived, and becoming again the reigning spirit on earth. This he calls the first resurrection; and on all such he says the second death has no power. Temporal death they might experience—for such the martyrs had experienced—but over them the second death has no dominion, for they live and reign with the Saviour. This is properly the millennium —the long period when the principles of true religion will have the ascendency on the earth, as if the martyrs and confessors—the most devoted and eminent Christians of other times—should appear again upon the earth, and as if their spirit should become the reigning and pervading spirit of all who professed the Christian name.

III. The release of Satan, Re 20:7,8. After the thousand years of peace and triumph shall have expired, Satan will be released from his prison, and will be permitted to go out and deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, and gather them together to battle; that is, a state of things will exist as if Satan were then released. There will be again an outbreak of sin on the earth, and a conflict with the principles of religion, as if an innumerable multitude of opposers should be marshalled for the conflict by the great author of all evil.

IV. The final subjugation of Satan, and destruction of his power on the earth, Re 20:9,10. After the temporary and partial outbreak of evil (Re 20:7,8,) Satan and his hosts will be entirely destroyed. The destruction will be as if fire should come down from heaven to devour the assembled hosts, (Re 20:9,) and as if Satan, the great leader of evil, should be cast into the same lake where the beast and false prophet are, to be tormented for ever. Then the church will be delivered from all its enemies, and religion henceforward will be triumphant. How long the interval will be between this state and that next disclosed, (Re 20:11-15)—the final judgment—is not stated. The eye of the seer glances from one to the other, but there is nothing to forbid the supposition, that, according to the laws of prophetic vision, there may be a long interval in which righteousness shall reign upon the earth. Comp. Intro. to Isaiah, &§ 7, III. (3.)—(5.)

V. The final judgment, Re 20:11-15. This closes the earthly scene. Henceforward (chap. xxi., xxii.) the scene is transferred to heaven— the abode of the redeemed. The last judgment is the winding up of the earthly affairs. The enemies of the church are all long since destroyed; the world has experienced, perhaps for a long series of ages, the full influence of the gospel; countless millions have been, we may suppose, brought under its power; and then at last, in the winding up of human affairs, comes the judgment of the great day, when the dead, small and great, shall stand before God; when the sea shall give up its dead; when death and hell shall give up the dead that are in them; when the records of human actions shall be opened, and all shall be judged according to their works, and when all who are not found written in the book of life shall be cast into the lake of fire.

This is the earthly consummation; henceforward the saints shall reign in glory—the New Jerusalem above, chap. xxi., xxii.

In order to prepare the way for a proper understanding of this chapter, the following additional remarks may be here made:—

(a) The design of this book did not demand a minute detail of the events which would occur in the consummation of human affairs. The main purpose was to trace the history of the church to the scene of the final triumph when all its enemies would be overthrown, and when religion would be permanently established upon the earth. Hence, though in the previous chapters we have a detailed account of the persecutions that would be endured; of the enemies that would rise up against the church, and of their complete ultimate overthrow— leaving religion triumphant on the earth—yet we have no minute statement of what will occur in the millennium. A rapid view is taken of the closing scenes of the earth's history, and the general results only are stated. It would not be strange, therefore, if there should be much in this that would seem to be enigmatical and obscure—especially as it is now all in the future.

(b) There may be long intervening periods between the events thus thrown together into the final grouping. We are not to suppose necessarily that these events will succeed each other immediately, or that they will be of short duration. Between these events thus hastily sketched there may be long intervals that are not described, and whose general character is scarcely even glanced at. This results from the very nature of the prophetic vision, as described in the Intro. to Isaiah, 7, III. (3.)—(5.) This may be illustrated by the view which we have in looking at a landscape. When one is placed in a favourable situation, he can mark distinctly the order of the objects in it—the succession-the grouping. He can tell what objects appear to him to lie near to each other, and are apparently in juxtaposition. But there are objects which, in such a vision, the eye cannot take in, and which would not be exhibited by any description which might be given of the view taken. Hills in the distant view may seem to lie near each other; one may seem to rise just back of another, and to the eye they may seem to constitute parts of the same mountain, and yet between them there may be deep and fertile vales, smiling villages, running streams, beautiful gardens and waterfalls, which the eye cannot take in, and the extent of which it may be wholly impossible to conjecture; and a description of the whole scene, as it appears to the observer, would convey no idea of the actual extent of the intervals. So it is in the prophecies. Between the events which are to occur hereafter, as seen in vision, there may be long intervals, but the length of these intervals the prophet may have left us no means of determining. See these thoughts more fully illustrated in the Introduction to Isaiah as above referred to.

What is here stated may have occurred in the vision which John had of the future as described in this chapter. Time is marked in the prophetic description, until the fall of the great enemy of the church; beyond that it does not seem to have been regarded as necessary to determine the actual duration of the events referred to. Comp. Prof. Stuart, Com. ii. 353, 354.

(e) These views are sustained by the most cursory glance of the chapter before us. There is none of the *detail* which we have found in the previous portions of the book—for such detail was not necessary to the accomplishment of the design of the book. The grand purpose was to show that Christianity would *finally triumph*, and hence the detailed description is carried on until that occurs, and beyond that we have only the most general statements. Thus, in this chapter, the great events that are to occur are merely hinted at. The events of a thousand years; the invasion by Gog and Magog; the ultimate confinement and punishment of Satan; the general judgment,—are all crowded

into the space of twelve verses. This shows that the distant future is only glanced at by the writer; and we should not wonder, therefore, if it should be found to be obscure, nor should we regard it as strange that much is left to be made clear by the events themselves when they shall occur.

(d) The end is triumphant and glorious. We are assured that every enemy of the church will be slain, and that there will be a long period of happiness, prosperity, and peace. "The eye of hope," says Prof. Stuart beautifully, "is directed forward, and sees the thousand years of uninterrupted prosperity; then the sudden destruction of a new and fatal enemy; and all the rest is left to joyful anticipation. When all clouds are swept from the face of the sky, why should not the sun shine forth in all his glory? I cannot, therefore, doubt that the setting sun of the church on earth is to be as a heaven of unclouded splendour. Peaceful and triumphant will be her latest age. The number of the redeemed will be augmented beyond all computation; and the promise made from the beginning, that "the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head," will be fulfilled in all its extent, and with a Divine plenitude of meaning. The understanding and pious reader closes the book with admiration, with wonder, with delight, with lofty anticipation of the future, and with undaunted resolution to follow on in the steps of those who through faith and patience have inherited the promises and entered into everlasting rest."—Vol, ii. pp. 354, 355.

Verse 1. *And I saw an angel come down from heaven*. Compare **Barnes on "Re 10:1"**.

He does not say whether *this* angel had appeared to him before, but the impression is rather that it was a different one. The whole character of the composition of the book leads us to suppose that different angels were employed to make these communications to John, and that in fact, in the progress of things disclosed in the book, he had intercourse with a considerable number of the heavenly inhabitants. The scene that is recorded here occurred *after* the destruction of the beast and the false prophet, (Re 19:18-21,) and therefore, according to the principles expressed in the explanation of the previous chapters, what is intended to be described here will take place *after* the final destruction of the Papal and Mohammedan powers.

Having the key of the bottomless pit. **See Barnes on "Re 1:18"**; **See Barnes "Re 9:1"**.

The fact that he has the key of that under-world is designed to denote here that he can fasten it on Satan so that it shall become his prison.

And a great chain in his hand. With which to bind the dragon, Re 20:2. It is called *great* because of the strength of him that was to be bound. The chain only appears to have been in his hand. Perhaps the key was suspended to his side.

{a} "key" Re 1:18 9:1

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 20 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And he laid hold on*. Seized him by violence—*ekrathse*. The word denotes the employment of strength or force, and it implies that he had power superior to that of the dragon. Compare Mt 14:3; Mt 18:28 21:46, 22:6 26:4.

We can at once see the propriety of the use of this word in this connexion. The great enemy to be bound has himself mighty power, and can be overcome only by a superior. This may teach us that it is only a power from heaven that can destroy the empire of Satan in the world; and *perhaps*

it may teach us that the interposition of angels will be employed in bringing in the glorious state of the millennium. Why should it not be?

The dragon. **See Barnes on "Re 12:2".**

Compare Re 12:4,7,13,16-17 Re 13:2,4,11 16:13.

There can be no doubt as to the meaning of the word here; for it is expressly said to mean the devil, and Satan. It would seem, however, that it refers to some manifestation of the power of Satan that would exist *after* the beast and false prophet— that is, the Papacy and Mohammedanism—should be destroyed, and probably the *main* reference is to the still existing power of Paganism. Compare **Barnes on** "Re 16:13, **See Barnes "Re 16:14".**

It *may* include, however, all the forms of wickedness which Satan shall have kept up on the earth, and all the modes of evil by which he will endeavour to perpetuate his reign.

That old serpent. This is undoubtedly an allusion to the serpent that deceived our first parents, (Ge 3:1, seq.,) and therefore a proof that it was Satan that, under the form of a serpent, deceived them. Compare **See Barnes "Re 12:3".**

Which is the Devil. On the meaning of this word, **see Barnes "Mt 4:1".**

And Satan. On the meaning of this word, **see Barnes on "Job 1:6".**

In regard to the *repetition* of the names of that great enemy of God and the church here, Mr. Taylor, in the *Fragments to Calmets Dictionary*, No. 152, says that this "almost resembles a modern Old Bally indictment, in which special care is taken to identify the culprit by a sufficient number of *aliases*. An angel from heaven, having the key of the prison of the abyss, and a great chain to secure the prisoner, apprehended the dragon, *alias* the old serpent, *alias* the devil, *alias* the Satan, *alias* the seducer of the world, who was sentenced to a thousand years' imprisonment. The *object* here, however, seems to be not so much to *identify* the culprit by these *aliases*, as to show that, under whatever forms and by whatever names he had appeared, it was always the same being, and that now the author of the whole evil would be arrested. Thus the one great enemy sometimes has appeared in a form that would be best represented by a fierce and fiery dragon; at another, in a form that would be best represented by a cunning and subtle serpent; now in a form to which the word devil, or accuser, would be most appropriate; and now in a form in which the word Satan—an adversary—would be most expressive of what he does. In these various forms, and under these various names, he has ruled the fallen world; and when this one great enemy shall be seized and imprisoned, all these forms of evil will, of course, come to an end.

A thousand years. This is the period usually designated as the MILLENNIUM—for the word millennium means *a thousand years*. It is on this passage that the whole doctrine of the millennium *as such* has been founded. It is true that there are elsewhere in the Scriptures abundant promises that the gospel will ultimately spread over the world; but the notion of a *millennium as such* is found in this passage alone. It is, however, enough to establish the doctrine, if its meaning be correctly ascertained, for it is a just rule in interpreting the Bible that the clearly-ascertained sense of a single passage of Scripture is sufficient to establish the truth of a doctrine. The fact, however, that this passage stands alone in this respect, makes it the more important to endeavour accurately to determine its meaning. There are but three ways in which the phrase "a thousand years" can be understood here: either

(a) literally; or

(b) in the prophetic use of the term, where a day would stand for a year, thus making a period of three hundred and sixty thousand years; or

(c) figuratively, supposing that it refers to a long, but indefinite period of time. It may be impossible to determine *which* of these periods is intended, though the first has been generally supposed to be the true one, and hence the common notion of the millennium. There is nothing, however, in the use of the language here, as there would be nothing contrary to the common use of symbols in this book in regard to time, in the supposition that this was designed to describe the longest period here suggested, or that it is meant that the world shall enjoy a reign of peace and righteousness during the long period of three hundred and sixty thousand years. Indeed, there are some things in the arrangements of nature which look as if it were contemplated that the earth would continue under a reign of righteousness through a vastly long period in the future.

{b} "dragon" Re 12:9 {c} "bound him" 2Pe 2:4 Jude 1:6

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 20 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And east him into the bottomless pit*. **See Barnes on "Re 9:1".**

A state of peace and prosperity would exist *as if* Satan, the great disturber, were confined in the nether world as a prisoner.

And shut him up. Closed the massive doors of the dark prison-house upon him. Compare **See Barnes on "Job 10:21"; See Barnes "Job 10:22".**

And set a seal upon him. Or, rather, "upon it"—*etanw autou*. The seal was placed upon the *door or gate* of the prison, not because this would fasten the gate or door of itself and make it secure, for this was secured by the key, but because it prevented intrusion, or any secret opening of it without its being known. **See Barnes on "Da 6:17"; See Barnes "Mt 27:66".**

The idea here is, that every precaution was taken for absolute security.

That he should deceive the nations no more. That is, during the thousand years. Compare **Barnes on "Re 12:9".**

Till the thousand years should be filled. That is, during that period there will be a state of things upon the earth *as if* Satan should be withdrawn from the world, and confined in the great prison where he is ultimately to dwell for ever.

And after that he must be loosed a little season. See Re 20:7-8. That is, a state of things will then exist, for a brief period, *as if* he were again released from his prison-house, and suffered to go abroad upon the earth. The phrase "a little season"—*mikron cronon*, *little time*—denotes properly that this would be brief as compared with the thousand years. No intimation is given as to the exact time, and it is impossible to conjecture how long it will be. All the circumstances stated, however, here and in Re 20:7-10, would lead us to suppose that what is referred to will be like the sudden outbreak of a rebellion in a time of general peace, but which will soon be quelled.

(a).—*Condition of the world in the period referred to in* Re 20:1-3.

It may be proper, in order to a correct understanding of this chapter, to present a brief summary under the different parts of what, according to the interpretation proposed, may be expected to be the condition of things in the time referred to.

On the portion now before us, (Re 20:1-3,) according to the interpretation proposed, the following suggestions may be made:—

(1.) This will be subsequent to the downfall of the Papacy and the termination of the Mohammedan power in the world. Of course, then, this lies in the future—how far in the future it is impossible to determine. The interpretation of the various portions of this book and the book of Daniel have, however, led to the conclusion that the termination of those powers cannot now be remote. If so, we are on the eve of important events in the world's history. The affairs of the world look as if things were tending to a fulfilment of the prophecies so understood.

(2.) It will be a condition of the world *as if* Satan were bound; that is, where his influences will be suspended, and the principles of virtue and religion will prevail. According to the interpretation of the previous chapters, it will be a state in which all that has existed, and that now exists in the Papacy to corrupt mankind, to maintain error, and to prevent the prevalence of free and liberal principles, will cease; in which all that there now is in the Mohammedan system to fetter and enslave mankind—now controlling more than one hundred and twenty millions of the race—shall have come to an end; and in which, in a great measure, all that occurs under the direct influence of Satan in causing or perpetuating slavery, war, intemperance, lust, avarice, disorder, scepticism, atheism, will be checked and stayed. It is proper to say, however, that this passage does not require us to suppose that there will be a *total cessation* of Satanic influence in the earth during that period. Satan will, indeed, be bound and restrained as to his former influence and power. But there will be no change in the character of man as he comes into the world. There will still be corrupt passions in the human heart. Though greatly restrained, and though there will be a general prevalence of righteousness on the earth, yet we are to remember that the race is fallen, and that even then, if restraint should be taken away, man would act out his fallen nature. This fact, if remembered, will make it appear less strange that, after this period of prevalent righteousness, Satan should be represented as loosed again, and as able once more for a time to deceive the nations.

(3.) It will be a period of long duration. On the supposition that it is to be literally a period of one thousand years, this is in itself long, and will give, especially under the circumstances, opportunity for a vast progress in human affairs. To form some idea of the length of the period, we need only place ourselves in imagination *back* for a thousand years—say in the middle of the ninth century—and look at the condition of the world then, and think of the vast changes in human affairs that have occurred during that period. It is to be remembered also, that if the millennial period were soon to commence, it would find the world in a far different state in reference to future progress from what it was in the ninth century, and that it would *start off*, so to speak, with all the advantages in the arts and sciences which have been accumulated in all the past periods of the world. Even if there were no special Divine interposition, it might be presumed that the race, in such circumstances, would make great and surprising advances in the long period of a thousand years. And here a very striking remark of Mr. Hugh Miller may be introduced as illustrating the subject. "It has been remarked by some students of the Apocalypse," says he,"that the course of predicted events at first moves slowly, as, one after one, six of seven seals are opened; that, on the opening of the seventh seal, the progress is so considerably quickened that the seventh period proves as fertile in events—represented by the sounding of the seven trumpets—as the foregoing six taken together; and that on the seventh trumpet, so great is the further acceleration, that there is an amount of incident condensed in this seventh part of the seventh period equal, as in the former case, to that of all the previous six parts in one. There are three cycles, it has been said, in the scheme—cycle within cycle—the second comprised within a seventh portion of the first, and the third within a seventh portion of the second. Be this as it may, we may, at least, see something that exceedingly resembles

it in that actual economy of change and revolution manifested in English history for the last two centuries. It would seem as if events, in their downward course, had come under the influence of that law of gravitation through which falling bodies increase in speed, as they descend, according to the squares of the distance."—*First Impressions of England and its People*, pp. vii., viii. If to this we add the supposition which we have seen (**See Barnes on "Re 20:2"**) to be by no means improbable, that it is intended in the description of the millennium in this chapter, that the world will continue under a reign of peace and righteousness for the long period of three hundred and sixty thousand years, it is impossible to anticipate what progress will be made during that period, or to enumerate the numbers that will be saved. On this subject, see some very interesting remarks in the "*Old Red Sandstone*," by Hugh Miller, pp. 248-250, 258, 259. Compare Prof. Hitchcock's *Religion and Geology*, pp. 370—409.

(4.) What, then, will be the state of things during that long period of a thousand years?

(a) There will be a great increase in the population of the globe. Let wars cease, and intemperance cease, and slavery cease, and the numberless passions that now shorten life be stayed, and it is easy to see that there must be a vast augmentation in the number of the human species.

(b) There will be a general diffusion of intelligence on the earth. Every circumstance would be favourable to it, and the world would be in a condition to make rapid advances in knowledge, Da 12:4.

(c) That period will be characterized by the universal diffusion of revealed truth, Isa 11:9 25:7.

(d) It will be marked by unlimited subjection to the sceptre of Christ, Ps 2:7 22:27-29; Isa 2:2-3 66:23; Zec 9:10 14:9

Mt 13:31-32 Re 11:15.

(e) There will be great progress in all that tends to promote the welfare of man. We are not to suppose that the resources of nature are exhausted. Nature gives no signs of exhaustion or decay. In the future, there is no reason to doubt that there will yet be discoveries and inventions more surprising and wonderful than the art of printing, or the use of steam, or the magnetic telegraph. There are profounder secrets of nature that may be delivered up than any of these, and the world is tending to their development.

(f) It will be a period of the universal reign of peace. The attention of mankind will be turned to the things which tend to promote the welfare of the race, and advance the best interests of society. The single fact that wars will cease will make an inconceivable difference in the aspect of the world; for if universal peace shall prevail through the long period of the millennium, and the wealth, the talent, and the science now employed in human butchery shall be devoted to the interests of agriculture, the mechanic arts, learning, and religion, it is impossible now to estimate the progress which the race will make, and the changes which will be produced on the earth. For Scripture *proofs* that it will be a time of universal peace, see Isa 2:4 11:6-9; Mic 4:3.

(g) There will be a *general* prevalence of evangelical religion. This is apparent in the entire description in this passage, for the two most formidable opposing powers that religion has ever known—the beast and the false prophet—will be destroyed, and Satan will be bound. In this long period, therefore, we are to suppose that the gospel will exert its fair influence on governments, on families, on individuals; in the intercourse of neighbours, and in the intercourse of nations. God will be worshipped in spirit and in truth, and not in the mere *forms* of devotion; and temperance, truth, liberty, social order, honesty, and love, will prevail over the world.

(h) It will be a time when the Hebrew people—the Jews—will be brought to the knowledge of the truth, and will embrace the Messiah whom their fathers crucified, Zec 12:10 13:1; Ro 11:26-29.

(i) Yet we are not necessarily to suppose that *all* the world will be absolutely and entirely brought under the power of the gospel. There will be still on the earth the remains of wickedness in the corrupted human heart, and there will be so much *tendency* to sin in the human soul, that Satan, when released for a time, (Re 20:7-8,) will be able once more to deceive mankind, and to array a formidable force, represented by Gog and Magog, against the cause of truth and righteousness. We are not to suppose that the nature of mankind as fallen will be essentially changed, or that there may not be sin enough in the human heart to make it capable of the same opposition to the gospel of God which has thus far been evinced in all ages. From causes which are not fully stated, (Re 20:8-9,) Satan will be enabled once more to rouse up their enmity, and to make one more desperate effort to destroy the kingdom of the Redeemer by rallying his forces for a conflict. See these views illustrated in the work entitled *Christ's Second Coming*, by Rev. David Brown, of St. James's Free Church, Glasgow, pp. 398-442; New York, 1851.

{d} "seal" Da 6:17

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 20 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And I saw thrones—yronouv*. See Re 1:4 3:21, 4:3-4.

John here simply says, that he saw in vision *thrones*, with persons sitting on them, but without intimating who they were that sat on them. It is not the throne of God that is now revealed, for the word is in the plural number, though the writer does not hint how *many* thrones there were. It is intimated, however, that these thrones were placed with some reference to pronouncing a judgment, or determining the destiny of some portion of mankind, for it is immediately added, "and judgment was given unto them." There is considerable resemblance, in many respects, between this and the statement in Daniel, (Da 7:9) "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit;" or, as it should be rendered, "I beheld"—that is, I continued to look—"until the thrones were *placed or set*," to wit, for the purposes of judgment. **See Barnes on "Da 7:9"**

So John here sees, as the termination of human affairs approaches, thrones placed with reference to a determination of the destiny of some portion of the race, *as if* they were now to have a trial, and to receive a sentence of acquittal or condemnation. The *persons* on whom this judgment is to pass are specified, in the course of the verse, as those who were "beheaded for the witness of Jesus, who had the word of God, who had not worshipped the beast," etc. The *time* when this was to occur manifestly was at the beginning of the thousand years.

And they sat upon them. Who sat on them is not mentioned. The natural construction is, that *judges* sat on them, or that persons sat on them to whom judgment was entrusted. The language is such as would be used on the supposition either that he had mentioned the subject before, so that he would be readily understood, or that, from some other cause, it was so well understood that there was no necessity for mentioning who they were. John seems to have assumed that it would be understood who were meant. And yet to us it is not entirely clear; for John has not before this given us any such intimation that we can determine with certainty what is intended. The probable construction is, that those are referred to to whom it appropriately belonged to occupy such seats

of judgment, and who they are is to be determined from other parts of the Scriptures. In Mt 19:28, the Saviour says to his apostles, "When the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." In 1Co 6:2, Paul asks the question, "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" The meaning as thus explained is, that Christians will, in some way, be employed in judging the world; that is, that they will be exalted to the right hand of the Judge, and be elevated to a station of honour, *as if* they were associated with the Son of God in the judgment. Something of that kind is, doubtless, referred to here; and John probably means to say that he saw the thrones placed on which those will sit who will be employed in judging the world. If the apostles are specially referred to, it was natural that John, eminent for modesty, should not particularly mention them, as he was one of them, and as the true allusion would be readily understood. *And judgment was given unto them*. The power of pronouncing sentence in the case referred to was conferred on them, and they proceeded to exercise that power. This was not in relation to the whole race of mankind, but to the martyrs, and to those who, amidst many temptations and trials, had kept themselves pure. The sentence which is to be passed would seem to be that in consequence of which they are to be permitted to "live and reign with Christ a thousand years." The *form* of this expressed approval is that of a resurrection and judgment; whether this be the *literal* mode is another inquiry, and will properly be considered when the exposition of the passage shall have been given.

And I saw the souls of them. This is a very important expression in regard to the meaning of the whole passage. John says he saw *the souls*— not *the bodies*. If the obvious meaning of this be the correct meaning; if he saw the *souls* of the martyrs, not the *bodies*, this would seem to exclude the notion of a *literal* resurrection, and consequently overturn many of the theories of a literal resurrection, and of a literal reign of the saints with Christ during the thousand years of the millennium. The doctrine of the last resurrection, as everywhere stated in the Scripture, is, that the *body* will be raised up, and not merely that the *soul will live*, (see 1Co 15:1 and **See Barnes "1Co 15:1"**) and consequently John must mean to refer in this place to something different from that resurrection, or to *any* proper resurrection of the dead as the expression is commonly understood. The doctrine which has been held, and is held, by those who maintain that there will be a *literal resurrection* of the saints to reign with Christ during a thousand years, can receive no support from this passage, for there is no ambiguity respecting the word *souls*—*qucav*—as used here. By no possible construction can it mean the *bodies* of the saints. If John had intended to state that the saints, as such, would be raised as they will be at the last day, it is clear that he would not have used this language, but would have employed the common language of the New Testament to denote it. The language here does not express the doctrine of the resurrection of the body; and if no other language but this had been used in the New Testament, the doctrine of the resurrection, as now taught and received, could not be established. These considerations make it clear to my mind that John did not mean to teach that there would be a *literal* resurrection of the saints, that they might live and reign with Christ personally during the period of a thousand years. There was undoubtedly something that might be *compared* with the resurrection, and that might, in some proper sense, be *called* a resurrection, (Re 20:5-6,) but there is not the slightest intimation that it would be a resurrection of the *body*, or that it would be identical with the *final* resurrection. John undoubtedly intends to describe some honour conferred on the *spirits or souls* of the saints and martyrs during this long period, *as if* they were raised from the dead, or which might be represented by a resurrection from the dead. What that honour is to be, is expressed by their "*living and reigning*

with Christ." The meaning of this will be explained in the exposition of these words; but the word used here is fatal to the notion of a literal resurrection and a personal reign with Christ on the earth.

That were beheaded. The word here used—*pelekizw*—occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It properly means, *to axe*, that is, to hew or cut with an axe—from *pelekuv*, *axe*. Hence it means to behead with an axe. This was a common mode of execution among the Romans, and doubtless many of the Christian martyrs suffered in this manner; but "it cannot be supposed to have been the intention of the writer to confine the rewards of martyrs to those who suffered in this particular way; for this specific and ignominious method of punishment is designated merely as the symbol of any and every kind of martyrdom."— *Professor Stuart*.

For the witness of Jesus. As witnesses of Jesus; or bearing in this way their testimony to the truth of his religion. **See Barnes on "Re 1:9"; compare** Re 6:9.

And for the word of God. **See Barnes on "Re 1:9"**.

Which had not worshipped the beast. Who had remained faithful to the principles of the true religion, and had resisted all the attempts made to seduce them from the faith, even the temptations and allurements in the times of the Papacy. See this language explained in **Barnes on "Re 13:4"**.

Neither his image. **Barnes on "Re 13:14-15"**.

Neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands. **See Barnes "Re 13:16"**.

And they lived. *ezhsan*, from *zaw—to live*. Very much, in the whole passage, depends on this word. The meanings given to the word by Professor Robinson (*Lex*.) are the following:

(a) to live, to have life, spoken of physical life and existence;

(b) to live, that is, to sustain life, to live *on* or *by* anything;

(c) to live in any way, to pass one's life in any manner;

(d) to live and prosper; to be blessed. It *may* be applied to those who were before dead, (Mt 9:18 Mr 16:11; Lu 24:23 Joh 5:25; Ac 1:3) Ac 9:41, but it does not necessarily imply this, nor does the mere use of the word *suggest* it. It is the proper notion of living, or having life *now*, whatever was the former state—whether non-existence, death, sickness, or health. The mind, in the use of this word, is fixed on the *present as a state of living*. It is not necessarily in contrast with a former state *as dead*, but it is on the fact that they are now *alive*. As, however, there is reference, in the passage before us, to the fact that a portion of those mentioned had been "beheaded for the witness of Jesus," it is to be admitted that the word here refers, in some sense, to that fact. They were put to death in the body, but their "*souls*" were now seen *to be* alive. They had not ceased to be, but they lived and reigned with Christ *as if* they had been raised up from the dead. And when this is said of the "*souls*" of those who were beheaded, and who were seen to reign with Christ, it cannot mean

(a) that their *souls* came to life again—for there is no intimation that they had for a moment ceased to exist; nor

(b) that they then became *immortal*—for that was always true of them; nor

(c) that there was any literal *resurrection of the body*, as Professor Stuart (ii. 360, 475, 476) supposes, and as is supposed by those who hold to a literal reign of Christ on the earth, for there is no intimation of the resurrection of the *body*. The meaning, then, so far as the language is concerned, must be, that there would exist, at the time of the thousand years, a state of things *as if* the martyrs were raised up from the dead—an honouring of the martyrs *as if* they should live and reign with Christ. Their names would be vindicated; their principles would be revived; they would be exalted in public estimation above other men; they would be raised to the low rank in which they were held

by the world in times of persecution, to a state which might well be represented by their sitting with Christ on the throne of government, and by their being made visible attendants on his glorious kingdom. This would not occur in respect to the rest of the dead—even the pious dead, (Re 20:5)—for *their* honours and rewards would be reserved for the great day when *all* the dead should be judged according to their deeds. In this view of the meaning of this passage, there is nothing that forbids us to suppose that the martyrs will be *conscious* of the honour thus done to their names, their memory, and their principles on earth, or that this consciousness will increase their joy even in heaven. This sense of the passage is thus expressed, substantially, by Archbishop Whateley, (*Essays on the Future State*:) "It may signify not the literal raising of dead men, but the raising up of an increased Christian zeal and holiness: the revival in the Christian church, or in some considerable portion of it, of the *spirit and energy* of the noble martyrs of old, (even as John the Baptist came in the spirit and power of Elias;) so that Christian principles shall be displayed in action throughout the world in an infinitely greater degree than ever before." This view of the signification of the word *lived* is sustained by its use elsewhere in the Scriptures, and by its common use among men. Thus in this very book, Re 11:11: "And after three days and an half, the Spirit of *life* from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet." So in Ezekiel, in speaking of the restoration of the Jews: "Thus saith the Lord God, O my people, *I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves*, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my Spirit in you, and ye shall *live*," Eze 27:12-14. So in Ho 6:2: "After two days he will *revive* us, [cause us to live again;] in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall *live* in his sight." So in the parable of the prodigal son: "This thy brother was *dead*, and is *alive again*," Lu 15:32. So in Isa 26:19: "Thy dead men shall *live*, together with my dead body shall they arise." The following extract from D'Aubigne's *History of the Reformation* will show how natural it is to use the *very* language employed here when the idea is intended to be conveyed of reviving former principles *as if* the men who held them should be raised to life again. It is the language of the martyr John Huss, who, in speaking of himself in view of a remarkable dream that he had, said, "I am no dreamer, but I maintain this for certain, that the image of Christ will never be effaced. They [his enemies] have wished to destroy it, but it shall be painted afresh in all hearts by much better preachers than myself. The nation that loves Christ will rejoice at this. *And I, awaking from among the dead, and rising, so to speak, from my grave, shall leap with great joy*." So a Brief addressed by Pope Adrian to the Diet at Nuremberg, contains these words: "The heretics Huss and Jerome *are now alive* again in the person of Martin Luther." For a further illustration of the passage, see the remarks which follow

(b) on the state of things which may be expected to exist in the time referred to in Re 20:4-6.

And reigned with Christ. Were exalted in their principles, and in their personal happiness in heaven, *as if* they occupied the throne with him, and personally shared his honours and his triumphs. Who can tell, also, whether they may not be employed in special services of mercy, in administering the affairs of his government during that bright and happy period?

A thousand years. During the period when Satan will be bound, and when the true religion will have the ascendency in the earth. **Barnes on "Re 20:2".**

{a} "thrones" Da 7:9 Lu 22:30 {b} "judgment" 1Co 6:2,3 {c} "souls" Re 6:9 {a} "reigned" Re 5:10

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 20 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *But the rest of the dead*. In contradistinction from the beheaded martyrs, and from those who had kept themselves pure in the times of great temptation. The phrase "rest of the dead" here would most naturally refer to the *same general class* which was before mentioned-the pious dead. The meaning is, that the martyrs would be honoured as if they were raised up and the others not; that is, that special respect would be shown to their principles, their memory, and their character. In other words, *special* honour would be shown *to a spirit of eminent piety* during that period, above the *common* and *ordinary* piety which has been manifested in the church. The "rest of the dead"—the pious dead—would indeed be raised up and rewarded, but they would occupy comparatively humble places, *as if* they did not partake in the exalted triumphs when the world should be subdued to the Saviour. Their places in honour, in rank, and in reward, would be *beneath* that of those who in fiery times had maintained unshaken fidelity to the cause of truth.

Lived not. On the word *lived*, **see Barnes on "Re 20:4"**.

That is, they lived not during that period in the peculiar sense in which it is said (Re 20:4) that the eminent saints and martyrs lived. They did not come into remembrance; their principles were not what then characterized the church; they did not see, as the martyrs did, *their* principles and mode of life in the ascendency, and consequently they had not the augmented happiness and honour which the more eminent saints and martyrs had.

Until the thousand years were finished. Then all who were truly the children of God, though some might be less eminent than others had been, would come into remembrance, and would have their proper place in the rewards of heaven. The *language* here is not necessarily to be interpreted as meaning that they *would* be raised up then, or would live then, whatever may be true on that point. It is merely an emphatic mode of affirming that *up to that period they would not live* in the sense in which it is affirmed that the others would. But it is not affirmed that they would even then "live" immediately. A long interval *might* elapse before that would occur in the general resurrection of the dead.

This is the first resurrection. The resurrection of the saints and martyrs, as specified in Re 20:4. It is called the *first* resurrection in contradistinction from the second and last—the general resurrection—when all the dead will be *literally* raised up from their graves, and assembled for the judgment, Re 20:12. It is not necessary to suppose that what is called here the "first resurrection" will resemble the real and literal resurrection in every respect. All that is meant is, that there will be such a resemblance as to make it proper to call it a resurrection—a coming to life again. This will be, as explained in **Barnes on** "Re 20:4, in the honour done to the martyrs; in the restoration of their principles as the great actuating principles of the church; and perhaps in the increased happiness conferred on them in heaven, and in their being employed in promoting the cause of truth in the world.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 20 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *Blessed*. That is, his condition is to be regarded as a happy or a favoured one. This is designed apparently to support and encourage those who in the time of John suffered persecution, or who might suffer persecution afterwards.

And holy. That is, no one will be thus honoured who has not an established character for holiness. Holy principles will then reign, and none will be exalted to that honour who have not a character for eminent sanctity.

That hath part in the first resurrection. That participated in it; that is, who is associated with those who are thus raised up.

On such the second death hath no power. The "second death" is properly the death which the wicked will experience in the world of woe. See Re 20:14. The meaning here is, that all who are here referred to as having part in the first resurrection will be secure against that. It will be one of the blessed privileges of heaven that there will be absolute security against DEATH in any and every form; and when we think of what death is here, and still more when we think of "the bitter pains of the second death," we may well call that state "blessed" in which there will be eternal exemption from either.

But they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him. **See Barnes** "Re 1:6; Re 5:10 ".

(b)—Condition of the world in the period referred to in Re 20:4-6.

I. It is well known that this passage is the principal one which is relied on by those who advocate the doctrine of the literal reign of Christ on the earth for a thousand years, or who hold what are called the doctrines of the "second advent." The points which are maintained by those who advocate these views are substantially,

(a) that at that period Christ will descend from heaven to reign personally upon the earth;

(b) that he will have a central place of power and authority, probably Jerusalem;

(c) that the righteous dead will then be raised, in such bodies as are to be immortal;

(d) that they will be his attendants, and will participate with him in the government of the world;

(e) that this will continue during the period of a thousand years;

(f) that the world will be subdued and converted during this period, not by moral means, but by "a new dispensation"—by the power of the Son of God; and

(g) that at the close of this period all the remaining dead will be raised, the judgment will take place, and the affairs of the earth will be consummated.

The opinion here adverted to was held substantially by Papins, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and others among the Christian Fathers, and, it need not be said, is held by many modern expositors of the Bible, and by large numbers of Christian ministers of high standing, and other Christians. See the *Literalist, passim*. The opinion of the Christian Fathers, with which the modern "literalists," as they are called, substantially coincide, is thus stated by Mr. Elliott: "This resurrection is to be literally that of departed saints and martyrs, then at length resuscitated in the body from death and the grave; its *time* to synchronize with, or follow instantly after, the destruction of the beast Antichrist, on Christ's personal second advent; the *binding* of Satan to be an absolute restriction of the power of hell from tempting, deceiving, or injuring mankind, throughout a literal period of a thousand years, thence calculated; the *government of the earth* during its continuance to be administered by Christ and the risen saints—the latter being now *isaggeloi*—in nature like angels; and under it, all false religion having been put down, the Jews and saved remnant of the Gentiles been converted to Christ, the earth renovated by the fire of Antichrist's destruction, and Jerusalem

made the universal capital, there will be a realization on earth of the blessedness depicted in the Old Testament prophecies, as well as perhaps of that too which is associated with the New Jerusalem in the visions of the Apocalypse—until at length this millennium having ended, and Satan gone forth to deceive the nations, the final consummation will follow; the new-raised enemies of the saints, Gog and Magog, be destroyed by fire from heaven: and then the general resurrection and judgment take place, the devil and his servants be cast into the lake of fire, and the millennial reign of the saints extend itself into one of eternal duration."—Elliott on the Apocalypse, iv. 177, 178.

Mr. Elliott's own opinion, representing, it is supposed, that of the great body of the "*literalists*," is thus expressed: "It would seem, therefore, that in this state of things and of feeling in professing Christendom [a feeling of carnal security], all suddenly, and unexpectedly, and conspicuous over the world as the lightning that shineth from the east even unto the west, the second advent and appearing of Christ will take place; that at the accompanying voice of the archangel and trump of God, the departed saints of either dispensation will rise from their graves to meet him—alike patriarchs, and prophets, and apostles, and martyrs, and confessors all at once and in the twinkling of an eye; and then instantly the saints living at the time will be also caught up to meet him in the air; these latter being separated out of the ungodly nations, as when a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats, and all, both dead and living saints, changed at the moment from corruption to incorruption, from dishonour to glory, though with very different degrees of glory; and so in a new angelic nature, to take part in the judging and ruling in this world. Meanwhile, with a tremendous earthquake accompanying, of violence unknown since the revolutions of primeval chaos, an earthquake under which the Roman world at least is to rock to and fro like a drunken man, the solid crust of this earth shall be broken, and fountains burst forth from its inner deep, not as once of water, but of liquid fire; and that the flames shall consume the Antichrist and his confederate kings, while the sword also does its work of slaughter; the risen saints being perhaps the attendants of the Lord's glory in this destruction of Antichrist, and assessors in his judgment on a guilty world. And then immediately the renovation of this our earth is to take place, its soil being purified by the very action of the fire, and the Spirit poured out from on high, in a yet better sense, the moral face of nature; the Shekinah, or personal glory of Christ amidst his saints being manifested chiefly in the Holy Land and at Jerusalem, but the whole earth partaking of the blessedness; and thus the regeneration of all things, and the world's redemption from the curse, having their accomplishment, according to the promise, at the manifestation of the sons of God," iv. 224-231. (I have slightly abridged this passage, but have retained the sense.)

To this account of the prevailing opinion of the "literalists" in interpreting the passage before us, there should be added that of Professor Stuart, who, in general, is as far as possible from "*they sympathizing with this class of writers. He says in his explanation of expression lived*" in Re 20:4, "There would seem to remain, therefore, only one meaning which can be consistently given to *ezhsan*, [*they lived*,] viz.: that they (the martyrs who renounced the beast) are now *restored to life*, viz., such life as implies the vivification of the body. Not to a union of the soul with a gross material body indeed, but with such an one as the saints in general will have at the final resurrection—a spiritual body, 1Co 15:44. In no other way can this resurrection be ranked as *correlate* with the second resurrection named in the sequel," ii. 360. So again, *Excursus* vi., (vol. ii. p. 476,) he says, "I do not see how we can, on the ground of exegesis, fairly avoid the conclusion that John has taught in the passage before us, that *there will be a resurrection of the martyr-saints, at the commencement of the period after Satan shall have been shut up in the dungeon of the great abyss*."

This opinion he defends at length, pp. 476-490. Professor Stuart, indeed, maintains that the martyrs thus raised up will be taken to heaven and reign with Christ *there*, and opposes the whole doctrine of the literal reign on the earth, ii. 480. The risen saints and martyrs are to be "*enthroned* with Christ; that is, they are to be where he dwells, and where he will continue to dwell, until he shall make his descent at the final judgment-day."

II. In regard to these views as expressive of the meaning of the passage under consideration, I would make the following remarks:—

(1.) There is strong *presumptive* evidence against this interpretation, and especially against the main point in the doctrine—that there will be a *literal resurrection* of the bodies of the saints at the beginning of that millennial period to live and reign with Christ on earth—from the following circumstances:

(a) It is admitted on all hands that this doctrine, if contained in the Scriptures at all, is found in this one passage only. It is not pretended that there is in any other place a direct affirmation that this will literally occur, nor would the advocates for that opinion undertake to show that it is fairly implied in any other part of the Bible. But it is strange, not to say improbable, that the doctrine of the literal resurrection of the righteous a thousand years before the wicked should be announced in one passage only. If it were so announced in plain and unambiguous language, I admit that the believer in the Divine origin of the Scriptures would be bound to receive it; but this is so contrary to the usual method of the Scriptures on all great and important doctrines, that this circumstance should lead us at least to doubt whether the passage is correctly interpreted. The resurrection of the dead is a subject on which the Saviour often dwelt in his instructions; it is a subject which the apostles discussed very frequently and at great length in their preaching, and in their writings; it is presented by them in a great variety of forms, for the consolation of Christians in time of trouble, and with reference to the condition of the world at the winding up of human affairs; and it is strange that in respect to so important a doctrine as this, if it be true, there is not elsewhere in the New Testament a hint, an intimation, an allusion, that would lead us to suppose that the righteous are to be raised in this manner.

(b) If this is a true doctrine, it would be reasonable to expect that a clear and unambiguous statement of it would be made. Certainly, if there is but *one* statement on the subject, that might be expected to be a perfectly clear one. It would be a statement about which there could be no diversity of opinion, concerning which those who embraced it might be expected to hold the same views. But it cannot be pretended that this is so in regard to this passage. It occurs in the book which of all the books in the Bible is most distinguished for figures and symbols; it cannot be maintained that it is *directly* and *clearly* affirmed; and it is *not* so taught that there is any uniformity of view among those who profess to hold it. In nothing has there been greater diversity among men than in the opinions of those who profess to hold the "*literal*" views respecting the personal reign of Christ on the earth. But this fact assuredly affords *presumptive* evidence that the doctrine of the literal resurrection of the saints a thousand years before the rest of the dead is not intended to be taught.

(c) It is presumptive proof against this, that nothing is said of the employment of those who are raised up; of the reason why they are raised; of the new circumstances of their being; and of their condition when the thousand years shall have ended. In so important a matter as this, we can hardly suppose that the whole subject would be left to a single hint in a symbolical representation—depending on the doubtful meaning of a single word, and with nothing to enable us to determine with absolute certainty that this must be the meaning.

(d) If it be meant that this is a description of the resurrection of the *righteous* as such—embracing *all* the righteous— then it is wholly unlike all the other descriptions of the resurrection of the righteous that we have in the Bible. Here the account is confined to "those that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus," and to "those who had not worshipped the beast." If the righteous as such are here referred to, why are these particular classes specified Why are not the usual *general* terms employed? Why is the account of the resurrection confined to these? Elsewhere in the Scriptures the account of the resurrection is given in the most general terms, (compare Mt 25:41 Joh 4:54, 5:28-29 Rom 2:7; 1Co 15:23 Php 3:20-21) (2Th 1:10 Heb 9:28; 1Jo 2:28-29 3:2;) and if this had been the designed reference here, it is inconceivable why the statement should be limited to the martyrs, and to those who have evinced great fidelity in the midst of temptations and allurements to apostasy. These circumstances furnish strong *presumptive* proofs, at least, against the doctrine that there is to be a literal resurrection of *all* the saints at the beginning of the millennial period. Compare "*Christ's Second Coming*," by Rev. David Brown, p. 219, seq.

(2.) In reference to many of the views necessarily implied in the doctrine of the "Second Advent," and avowed by those who hold that doctrine, it cannot be pretended that they receive any countenance or support from this passage. In the language of Professor Stuart, (*Com*. ii. 479,) there is "not a word of Christ's descent to the earth at the beginning of the millennium. Nothing of the literal assembling of the Jews in Palestine; nothing of the Messiah's temporal reign on *earth*; nothing of the overflowing abundance of worldly peace and plenty." Indeed, in all this passage, there is not the remotest hint of the grandeur and magnificence of the reign of Christ as a literal king upon the earth; nothing of his having a splendid capital at Jerusalem or anywhere else; nothing of a new dispensation of a miraculous kind; nothing of the renovation of the earth to fit it for the abode of the risen saints. All this is the mere work of fancy, and no man can pretend that it is to be found in this passage.

(3.) Nor is there anything here of a literal resurrection of the *bodies* of the dead, as Professor Stuart himself supposes. It is not a little remarkable that a scholar so accurate as Professor Stuart is, and one too who has so little sympathy with the doctrines connected with a literal reign of Christ on the earth, should have lent the sanction of his name to perhaps the most objectionable of all the dogmas connected with that view—the opinion that the *bodies* of the saints will be raised up at the beginning of the millennial period. Of this there is not one word, one intimation, one hint, in the passage before us. John says expressly, and *as if to guard the point from all possible danger of this construction*, that he "saw the SOULS of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus;" he saw them "*living*" and "reigning" with Christ—raised to exalted honour during that period, as if they had been raised from the dead; but he nowhere mentions or intimates that they were raised up from their graves; that they were clothed with bodies; that they had their residence now literally on the earth; or that they were in any way otherwise than disembodied spirits. There is not even one word of their having "*a spiritual body*."

(4.) There are *positive* arguments, which are perfectly decisive, against the interpretation which supposes that the bodies of the saints will be raised up at the beginning of the millennial period to reign with Christ on the earth for a thousand years. Among these are the following :—

(a) If the "first resurrection" means rising from the grave in immortal and glorified bodies, we do not need the assurance (Re 20:6) that "on such the second death hath no power;" that is, that they would not perish for ever. That would be a matter of course, and there was no necessity for such a statement. But if it be supposed that the main idea is that the *principles* of the martyrs and

of the most eminent saints would be revived and would live—*as if* the dead were raised up—and would be manifested by those who were in *mortal* bodies—men living on the earth—then there would be a propriety in saying that all such were exempt from the danger of the *second* death. Once indeed they would die; but the second death could not reach them. Compare Re 2:10-11.

(b) In the whole passage there are but two classes of men referred to. There are those "who have part in the first resurrection;" that is, according to the supposition, *all* the saints; and there are those over whom "the second death" *has* power. Into which of these classes are we to put the myriads of men having flesh and blood who are to people the world during the millennium? They have no part in "the first resurrection" if it be a bodily one. Are they then given over to the power of the "second death?" But if the "first resurrection" be regarded as figurative and spiritual, then the statement that those who are actuated by the spirit of the martyrs and of the eminent saints shall not experience the "second death," is seen to have meaning and pertinency.

(c) The mention of the *time* during which they are to reign, if it be literally understood, is contrary to the whole statement of the Bible in other places. They are to "live and reign with Christ" *a thousand years*. What then? Are they to live no longer? Are they to reign no longer with him? This supposition is entirely contrary to the current statement in the Scriptures, which is, that they are to live and reign with him *for ever*: 1Th 4:17, "*And so shall we ever be with the Lord*." According to the views of the "literalists," the declaration that they "should live and reign with Christ," considered as the characteristic features of the millennial state, is to terminate with the thousand years—for this is the promise, according to that view, that they should thus live and reign. But it need not be said that this is wholly contrary to the current doctrine of the Bible, that they are to live and reign with him for ever.

(d) A farther objection to this view is, that the wicked part of the world—"the rest of the dead who lived not again *until* the thousand years were finished"—must of course be expected to "live again" in the same bodily sense *when* those thousand years were finished. But, so far from this, there is no mention of their living then. When the thousand years are finished, Satan is loosed for a season; then the nations are roused to opposition against God; then there is a conflict, and the hostile forces are overthrown; and then comes the final judgment. During all this time we read of no resurrection at all. The period after this is to be filled up with something besides the resurrection of "the rest of the dead." There is no intimation, as the *literal* construction as it is claimed would demand, that immediately after the "thousand years are finished" the "rest of the dead"—the wicked dead—would be raised up; nor is there any intimation of such a resurrection until *all* the dead are raised up for the final trial, Re 20:12. But every consideration demands, if the interpretation of the "literalists" be correct, that the "rest of the dead"—the unconverted dead—should be raised up immediately after the close of the millennial period, and be raised up as a distinct and separate class.

(e) There is no intimation in the passage itself that the *righteous* will be raised up *as such* in this period, and the proper interpretation of the passage is contrary to that supposition. There are but two classes mentioned as having part in the first resurrection. They are those who were "beheaded for the witness of Jesus," and those who "had not worshipped the beast;" that is, the martyrs, and those who had been eminent for their fidelity to the Saviour in times of great temptation and trial. There is no mention of the resurrection of the righteous *as such*—of the resurrection of the great body of the redeemed; and if it could be shown that this refers to a *literal* resurrection, it would be impossible to apply it, according to any just rules of interpretation, to any more than the two classes

that are specified. By what rules of interpretation is it made to teach that *all* the righteous will be raised up on that occasion, and will live on the earth during that long period? In this view of the matter, the passage *does not* express the doctrine that the whole church of God will be raised bodily from the grave. And supposing it had been the design of the Spirit of God to teach this, is it credible, when there are so many clear expressions in regard to the resurrection of the dead, that so important a doctrine should have been reserved for one single passage so obscure, and where the great mass of the readers of the Bible in all ages have failed to perceive it? That is not the way in which, in the Scriptures, great and momentous doctrines are communicated to mankind.

(f) The fair statement in Re 20:11-15 is, that *all* the dead will then be raised up, and be judged. This is implied in the general expressions there used "the dead, small and great;" the "book of life was opened"—as if *not* opened before; "the dead"—*all* the dead —"were judged out of those things which were written in the books;" "the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hell (hades) delivered up the dead which were in them." This is entirely inconsistent with the supposition that a large part of the race —to wit, all the righteous—had been before raised up; had passed the solemn judgment; had been clothed with their immortal bodies, and had been admitted to a joint reign with the Saviour on his throne. In the last judgment, what place are *they* to occupy? In what sense are *they* to be raised up and judged? *Would* such a representation have been made as is found in Re 20:11-15, if it had been designed to teach that a large part of the race had been already raised up, and had received the approval of their judge?

(g) This representation is wholly inconsistent, not only with Re 20:11-15, but with the uniform language of the Scriptures *that all the righteous and the wicked will be judged together, and both at the coming of Christ*. On no point are the statements of the Bible more uniform and explicit than on this, and it would seem that the declarations had been of design so made that there should be no possibility of mistake. I refer for full proof on this point to the following passages of the New Testament: Mt 10:32-33, compared with Mt 7:21-23 13:30,38-43 16:24-27 25:10,31-46 Mr 8:38 Joh 5:28-29

Ac 17:31 Ro 2:5-16, 14:10,12; 1Co 3:12-15 4:5; 2Co 5:9-11 2Th 1:6-10

1Ti 5:24-25 2Pe 3:7,10,12; 1Jo 2:28; 1Jo 4:17; Re 3:5; Re 20:11-15; Re 22:12-15. It is utterly *impossible* to explain these passages on any other supposition than that they are intended to teach that the righteous and the wicked will be judged together, and both at the coming of Christ. And, if this is so, it is of course impossible to explain them consistently with the view that all the righteous will have been already raised up at the beginning of the millennium in their immortal and glorified bodies, and that they have been solemnly approved by the Saviour, and admitted to a participation in his glory. Nothing could be more irreconcilable than these two views, and it seems to me, therefore, that the objections to the literal resurrection of the saints at the beginning of the millennial period are insuperable.

III. The following points, then, according to the interpretation proposed, are implied in this statement respecting the "first resurrection," and these will clearly comprise *all* that is stated on the subject.

(1.) There will be a reviving, and a prevalence of the spirit which actuated the saints in the best days, and a restoration of their principles as the grand principles which will control and govern the church, *as if* the most eminent saints were raised again from the dead, and lived and acted upon the earth.

(2.) Their memory will then be sacredly cherished, and they will be honoured on the earth with the honour which is due to their names, and which they should have received when in the land of the living. They will be no longer cast out and reproached; no longer held up to obloquy and scorn; no longer despised and forgotten, but there will be a reviving of sacred regard for their principles, *as if* they lived on the earth, and had the honour which was due to them.

(3.) There will be a state of things upon the earth as if they thus lived and were thus honoured. Religion will no longer be trampled under foot, but will triumph. In all parts of the earth it will have the ascendency, as if the most eminent saints of past ages lived and reigned with the Son of God in his kingdom. A spiritual kingdom will be set up with the Son of God at the head of it, which will be a kingdom of eminent holiness, as if the saints of the best days of the church should come back to the earth and dwell upon it. The ruling influence in the world will be the religion of the Son of God, and the principles which have governed the most holy of his people.

(4.) It may be implied that the saints and martyrs of other times will be employed by the Saviour in embassies of mercy; in visitations of grace to our world to carry forward the great work of salvation on earth. Nothing forbids the idea that the saints in heaven may be thus employed, and in this long period of a thousand years, it may be that they will be occupied in such messages and agencies of mercy to our world as they have never been before—*as if* they were raised from the dead, and were employed by the Redeemer to carry forward his purposes of mercy to mankind.

(5.) In connexion with these things, and in consequence of these things, they may be, during that period, exalted to higher happiness and honour in heaven. The restoration of their principles to the earth; the Christian remembrance of their virtues; the prevalence of those truths to establish which they laid down their lives, would in itself exalt them, and would increase their joy in heaven. All this would be well represented, in vision, by a resurrection of the dead; and admitting that this was all that was intended, the representation of John here would be in the highest degree appropriate. What could better symbolize it—and we must remember that this is a symbol—than to say that at the commencement of this period there was, as it were, a solemn preparation for a judgment, and that the departed dead seemed to stand there, and that a sentence was pronounced in their favour, and that they became associated with the Son of God in the honours of his kingdom, and that their principles were now to reign and triumph in the earth, and that the kingdom which they laboured to establish would be set up for a thousand years, and that in high purposes of mercy and benevolence during at period they would be employed in maintaining and extending the principles of religion in the world? Admitting that the Holy Spirit intended to represent these things, and these only, no more appropriate symbolical language could have been used; none that would more accord with the general style of the book of Revelation.

{a} "second death" Re 2:11 21:8 {b} "priests" Re 1:6 Isa 60:6

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 20 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *And when the thousand years are expired*. See Re 20:2.

Satan shall be loosed out of his prison. See Re 20:3. That is, a state of things will then occur as if Satan should be for a time let loose again, and should be permitted to go as formerly over the world no intimation is given *why* or *how* he would be thus released from his prison. We are not,

however, to infer that it would be a mere arbitrary act on the part of God. All that is necessary to be supposed is, that there would be, in certain parts of the world, a temporary outbreak of wickedness, *as if* Satan were for a time released from his chains.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 20 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *And shall go out to deceive the nations*. **See Barnes "Re 12:9"**.

The meaning here is, that he would again, for a time, act in his true character, and in some way delude the nations once more. In what way this would be done is not stated. It would be, however, clearly an appeal to the wicked passions of mankind, exciting a hope that they might yet overthrow the kingdom of God on the earth.

Which are in the four quarters of the earth. Literally, *corners* of the earth, as if the earth were one extended square plain. The earth is usually spoken of as divided into four parts or quarters—the eastern, the western, the northern, and the southern. It is implied here that the deception or apostasy referred to would not be confined to one spot or portion of the world, but would extend afar. The idea seems to be, that during that period, though there would be a *general* prevalence of the gospel, and a *general* diffusion of its blessings, yet that the earth would not be entirely under its influence, and especially that the native character of the human heart would not be changed. Man, under powerful temptations, would be liable to be deluded by the great master spirit that has so often corrupted the race. Once more he would be permitted to make the trial, and then his power would for ever come to an end.

Gog and Magog. The name *Gog* occurs as the name of a prince, in Eze 38:2-3,16,18 39:1,11.

"He is an invader of the land of Israel, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal," Eze 38:2. *Magog* is also mentioned in Eze 38:2, "the land of Magog;" and in Eze 39:6, "I will send a fire on Magog." As the terms are used in the Old Testament, the representation would seem to be that *Gog* was the king of a people called *Magog*. The signification of the names is unknown, and consequently nothing can be determined about the meaning of this passage from that source. Nor is there much known about the people who are referred to by Ezekiel. His representation would seem to be, that a great and powerful people, dwelling in the extreme recesses of the north, (Eze 38:15 39:2,) would invade the Holy Land after the return from the exile, Eze 38:8-12. it is commonly supposed that they were *Scythians*, residing between the Caspian and Euxine Seas, or in the region of Mount Caucasus. Thus Josephus (*Ant*. i. 6, 3) has dropped the Hebrew word *Magog*, and rendered it by *skuyai—Scythians*; and so does Jerome. Suidas renders it *persai—Persians*; but this does not materially vary the view, since the word *Scythians* among the ancient writers is a collective word to denote all the north-eastern, unknown, barbarous tribes. Among the Hebrews, the name *Magog* also would seem to denote all the unknown barbarous tribes about the Caucasian mountains. The fact that the names Gog and Magog are in Ezekiel associated with Meshech and Tubal seems to determine the locality of these people, for those two countries lie between the Euxine and Caspian Seas, or at the southeast extremity of the Euxine Sea.—Rosenmuller, *Bib. Geog*. i., p. 240. The people of that region were, it seems, a terror to Middle Asia, in the same manner as the Scythians were to the Greeks and Romans. Intercourse with such distant and savage nations was scarcely possible in ancient times; and hence, from their numbers and strength, they were regarded with

great terror, just as the Scythians were regarded by the ancient Greeks and Romans, and as the Tartars were in the Middle Ages. In this manner they became an appropriate symbol of rude and savage people; of enemies fierce and warlike; of foes to be dreaded; and as such they were referred to by both Ezekiel and John. It has been made a question whether Ezekiel and John do not refer to the same period, but it is not necessary to consider that question here. All that is needful to be understood is, that John means to say that at the time referred to there would be formidable enemies of the church who might be compared with the dreaded dwellers in the land of Magog; or, that after this long period of millennial tranquillity and peace there would be a state of things which might be properly compared with the invasion of the Holy Land by the dreaded barbarians of Magog or Scythia. It is not necessary to suppose that any particular *country* is referred to, or that there would be any one portion of the earth which the gospel would not reach, and which would be still barbarous, heathen, and savage; all that is necessary to be supposed is, that though religion would generally prevail, human nature would remain essentially corrupt and unchanged; and that, therefore, from causes which are not stated, there might yet be a fearful apostasy, and a somewhat general prevalence of iniquity. This would be nothing more than *has* occurred after the most favoured times in the church, and nothing more than human nature would exhibit at any time, if all restraints were withdrawn, and men were suffered to act out their native feelings. *Why* this will be permitted; what causes will bring it about; what subordinate agencies will be employed, is not said, and conjecture would be vain. The reader who wishes more information in regard to Gog and Magog may consult Professor Stuart on this book, vol. ii. pp. 364-368, and the authorities there referred to. Compare especially Rosenmuller on Eze 38:2. See also Sale's *Koran, Pre. Dis*. % 4, and the *Koran* itself, Sura xviii. 94, and xxi. 95.

To gather them together to battle. *As if* to assemble them for war; that is, a state of things would exist in regard to the kingdom of God, and the prevalence of the true religion, *as if* distant and barbarous nations should be aroused to make war on the church of God. The meaning is, that there would be an awakened hostility against the kingdom of Christ in the earth. **See Barnes on "Re 16:14"**.

The number of whom is as the sand of the sea. A common comparison in the Scriptures to denote a great multitude, Ge 22:17 32:12, 41:49

1Sa 13:5 1Ki 4:20, *et al*.

(c.)—Condition of things in the period referred to in Re 20:7-8.

(1.) This will occur *at the close* of the millennial period—the period of the thousand years. It is not said, indeed, that it would be *immediately* after that; but the statement is explicit that it will be after that, or "when the thousand years are expired." There may be an interval before it shall be accomplished of an indefinite time; the alienation and corruption may be gradual; a considerable period may elapse before the apostasy shall assume an organized form, or, in the language of John, before the hosts shall "be gathered to battle," but it is to be the *next* marked and prominent event in the history of the world, and is to precede the final consummation of all things.

(2.) This will be a *brief period*. Compared with the long period of prosperity that preceded it, and *perhaps* compared with the long period that shall follow it before the final judgment, it will be short. Thus, in Re 20:3, it is said that Satan "must be loosed a *little season*." **See Barnes on "Re 20:3"**.

There is no way of determining the time with exactness; but we are assured that it will not be long.

(3.) What will be the exact state of things then can be only a matter of conjecture. We may say, however, that it will *not* be

(a) necessarily *war*. The language is figurative and symbolical, and it is not necessary to suppose that an actual and bloody warfare will be literally waged against the church. Nor

(b) will there be a literal invasion of the land of Palestine as the residence of the saints, and the capital of the Redeemer's visible empire; for there is not a hint of this—not a word to justify such an interpretation. Nor

(c) is it necessary to suppose that there will be literally such nations as will be then called "*Gog* and *Magog*"—for this language is figurative, and designed to characterize the foes of the church—as being in some respects formidable and terrible, as were those ancient nations.

We may thus suppose that at that time, from causes which are unexplained, there will be

(a) a revived opposition to the truths of religion;

(b) the prevalence, to a greater or less extent, of infidelity;

(c) a great spiritual declension;

(d) a combination of interests opposed to the gospel;

(e) possibly some new form of error and delusion that shall extensively prevail. Satan may set up some new form of religion, or he may breathe into those that may already exist a spirit of worldliness and vanity— some new manifestation of the religion of forms—that shall for a limited period produce a general decline and apostasy. As there is, however, no distinct specification of what will characterize the world at that time, it is impossible to determine what is referred to any more than in this general manner.

(4.) A few remarks may, however, be made on the *probability* of what is here affirmed—for it seems contrary to what we should suppose would be the characteristics of the dosing period of the world. The following remarks, then, may show that this anticipated state of things is not improbable:

(a) We are to remember that human nature will then be essentially the same as now. There is no intimation that man, as born into the world, will be then different from what he is now; or that any of the natural corrupt tendencies of the human heart will be changed. Men will be *liable* to the same outbreaks of passion; to be influenced by the same forms of temptation; to fall into the same degeneracy and corruption; to feel the same unhappy influences of success and prosperity as now—for all this appertains to a fallen nature, except as it is checked and controlled by grace. We often mistake much in regard to the millennial state by supposing that all the evils of the apostasy will be arrested, and that the *nature* of man will be as wholly changed as it will be in the heavenly world.

(b) The whole history of the church has shown that there is a liability to *declension* even in the best state, and in the condition of the the most striking manifestation of the Divine mercies; the early Christian church, and how soon it declined; the seven churches of Asia Minor, and how soon their spirituality departed; the various revivals of religion that have occurred from time to time, and how soon they have been succeeded by coldness, worldliness, and error; the fact that great religious denominations, which have begun their career with zeal and love, have so soon degenerated in spirit, and fallen into the same formality and worldliness which they have evinced who have gone before them; and the case of the individual Christian, who, from the most exalted state of love and joy, so soon often declines into a state of conformity to the world. These are sad views of human nature, even under the influence of true religion; but the past history of man has given but too much occasion for such reflections, and too much reason to apprehend that the same things may occur, for a time, even under the best forms in which religion may manifest itself in a fallen world. Man's nature will be better in heaven, and religion there in its purest and best form will be permanent;

here we are not to be surprised at *any* outbreak of sin, or any form of declension in religion. What has often occurred in the world on a small scale, we may suppose may then occur on a larger scale. "Just as on a small scale, in some little community like that of Northampton, as described by President Edwards, after the remarkable sense of God's presence over the whole town had begun to wax feeble, the still unconverted persons of its though subdued and seemingly won over to Christ, would by little and little recover themselves, and at length venture forth in their true character; so it will be, in all probability, on a vast scale, at the close of the latter day. The unconverted portion of the world—long constrained by the religious influences everywhere surrounding them to fall in with the spirit of the day, catching apparently its holy impulses, but never coming savingly under its power—this portion of mankind, which we have reason to fear will not be small, will now be freed from these irksome restraints, no longer obliged to breathe an atmosphere uncongenial to their nature." —*Brown on the Second Coming of Christ*, p. 442. "No oppression is so grievous to an unsanctified heart as that which arises from the purity of Christianity. A desire to shake off this yoke is the true cause of the opposition which Christianity has met with in the world in every period, and will, it is most likely, be the chief motive to influence the followers of Gog in his time."—-*Fraser's Key*, p. 455.

(c.) The representations of the New Testament elsewhere confirm this now in regard to the latter state of the world—the state when the Lord Jesus shall come to judgment. Lu 18:8: "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" 2Pe 3:3-4: "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming?" 1Th 5:2-3: "The day of the Lord so cometh as the thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape." See especially Lu 17:26-30: "As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. *Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed*."

{a} "Gog" Eze 38:2 {b} "gather" Re 16:14

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 20 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *And they went up on the breadth of the earth*. They spread over the earth in extended columns. The image is that of an invading army that seems, in its march, to spread all over a land. The reference here is to the hosts assembled from the regions of Gog and Magog; that is, to the formidable enemies of the gospel that would be roused up at the close of the period properly called the *millennial* period—the period of the thousand years. It is not necessary to suppose that there would be *literally* armies of enemies of God summoned from lands that would be called lands of" Gog and Magog;" but all that is necessarily implied is, that there will be a state of hostility to the church of Christ which would be well illustrated by such a comparison with an invading host of barbarians. The expression "the breadth of the land" occurs in Hab 1:6, in a description of the

invasion of the Chaldeans, and means there *the whole extent of it*; that is, they would spread over the whole country.

And compassed the camp of the saints about. Besieged the camp of the saints considered as engaged in war, or as attacked by an enemy. The "camp of the saints" here seems to be supposed to be *without* the walls of the city; that is, the army was drawn out for defence. The fact that the foes were able to "compass this camp about," and to encircle the city at the same time, shows the greatness of the numbers of the invaders.

And the beloved city. Jerusalem—a city represented as beloved by God and by his people. The whole imagery here is derived from a supposed invasion of the land of Palestine—imagery than which nothing could be more natural to John in describing the hostility that would be aroused against the church in the latter day. But no just principle of interpretation requires us to understand this *literally*. Compare Heb 12:22. Indeed, it would be absolutely *impossible* to give this chapter throughout a *literal* interpretation. What would be the *literal* interpretation of the very first verses? "I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the *key* of the bottomless pit, and *a great chain* in his hand; and he laid hold on the *dragon*, and *bound* him." Can any one believe that there is to be a literal *key*, and a *chain*, and an act of seizing a *serpent*, and *binding* him? As little as it demanded that the passage before us should be taken *literally*; for if it is maintained that this should be, we may insist that the same principle of interpretation should be applied to every part of the chapter, and every part of the book.

And fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. Consumed them—fire being represented as *devouring* or *eating*. **See Barnes on "Re 17:16"**.

The meaning is, that they would be destroyed *as if* fire should come down from heaven, as on Sodom and Gomorrah. But it is not necessary to understand *this* literally, any more than it is the portions of the chapter just referred to. What is obviously meant is, that their destruction would be sudden, certain, and entire, and that thus the last enemy of God and the church would be swept away. Nothing can be determined from this about the *means* by which this destruction will be effected; and that must be left for time to disclose. It is sufficient to know that the destruction of these last foes of God and the church will be certain and entire. This *language*, as denoting the final destruction of the enemies of God, is often employed in the Scriptures. See Ps 11:6 Isa 29:6; Eze 38:22 39:6.

{a} "they went" Isa 8:8 Eze 38:9,16

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 20 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *And the devil that deceived them*. **See Barnes on "Re 20:3,8"**.

Was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. In Re 19:20, it is said of the beast and the false prophet that they were "cast alive into a lake of fire, burning with brimstone." Satan, on the other hand, instead of being doomed at once to that final ruin, was confined for a season in a dark abyss, Re 20:1-3. As the final punishment, however, he is appropriately represented as consigned to the same doom as the beast mad the false prophet, that those great enemies of God that had been associated and combined in deceiving the nations, might share the same appropriate punishment in the end. Compare Re 16:13-14.

Where the beast and the false prophet are. **Barnes on "Re 19:20"**.

And shall be tormented day and night for ever. Compare **Barnes on "Re 14:11"**.

All the great enemies of the church are destroyed, and henceforward there is to be no array of hostile forces; no combination of malignant powers against the kingdom of God. The gospel triumphs; the way is prepared for the final consummation.

(d.)—Condition of things in the period referred to in Re 20:9-10.

(1.) There will be, after the release of Satan, and of course at the close of the millennial period properly so called, a state of things which may be well represented by the invasion of a country by hostile, formidable forces. This, as shown in the exposition, need not be supposed to be literal; but it is implied that there will be decided hostility against the true religion. It may be an organization and consolidation, so to speak, of infidel principles, or a decided worldly spirit, or some prevalent form of error, or some new form of depravity that shall be developed by the circumstances of that age. What it will be it is impossible now to determine; but, as shown above, (b, 4,) it is by no means improbable that this will occur even at the close of the millennium.

(2.) There will be a decided defeat of these forces thus combined, *as if* fire should come down from heaven to destroy an invading army. The *mode* in which this will be done is not indeed stated, for there is no necessity of understanding the statement in Re 20:9 *literally*, any more than the other parts of the chapter. The fair inference, however, is that it will be by a manifest Divine agency; that it will be sudden, and that the destruction will be entire. We have no reason, therefore, to suppose that the outbreak will be of long continuance, or that it will *very* materially disturb the settled order of human affairs on the earth—any more than a formidable invasion of a country does, when the invading army is suddenly cut off by some terrible judgment from heaven.

(3.) *This* overthrow of the enemies of God and of the church will be *final*. Satan will be "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, to be tormented day and night for ever." The beast and the false prophet are already there, (Re 19:20;) that is, they will have ceased long since, even before the beginning of the millennial period, (Re 19:20, compared with 20:1-3,) to have opposed the progress of truth in the world, and their power will have been brought to an end. Satan now, the last enemy, win be doomed to the same hopeless woe; and *all* the enemies that have ever opposed the church —in all forms of Paganism, Mohammedanism, Popery, and delusion-will be destroyed for ever. The world then will have peace; the church will have rest; the great triumph will have been achieved.

(4.) It is possible that there will be a long period of continued prosperity and peace between the events stated in Re 20:9-10, and the final judgment, as described in Re 20:11-15. If so, however, the purpose of the book did not require that that should be described at length, and it must be admitted that the most *obvious* interpretation of the New Testament would not be favourable to such a supposition. Compare Lu 17:26-30 1Th 5:2-3; 2Pe 3:3-4 Lu 18:8.

The great glory of the world will be the millennial period; when religion shall have the ascendency, and the race shall have reached its highest point of progress on earth, and the blessings of liberty, intelligence, peace, and piety, shall have during that period been spread over the globe. In that long duration, who can estimate the numbers that shall be redeemed and saved? That period passed, the great purpose contemplated by the creation of the earth—the glory of God in the redemption of a fallen race, and in setting up a kingdom of righteousness in a world of apostasy, will have been accomplished, and there will be no reason why the final judgment should not then occur. "The work of redemption will now be finished. The end for which the means of grace have been instituted shall be obtained. All the effect which was intended to be accomplished by them

shall now be accomplished. All the great wheels of Providence have gone round —all things are ripe for Christ's coming to judgment."—President Edwards, *History of Redemption*.

{b} "lake of fire" Re 19:20

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 20 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *And I saw a great white throne*. This verse commences the description of the final judgment, which embraces the remainder of the chapter. The first thing seen in the vision is the burning throne of the Judge. The things that are specified in regard to it are that it was *great*, and that it was *white*. The former expression means that it was high or elevated. Compare Isa 6:1. The latter expression—*white*—means that it was *splendid* or *shining*. Compare 1Ki 10:18-20. The throne here is the same which is referred to in Mt 25:31, and called there "the throne of *his glory*."

And him that sat on it. The reference here, undoubtedly, is to the Lord Jesus Christ, the final Judge of mankind, (compare Mt 25:31,) and the scene described is that which will occur at his Second Advent.

From whose face. Or, from whose presence; though the word *may* be used here to denote more strictly his *face*—as illuminated, and shining like the sun. See Re 1:16, "And his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength."

The earth and the heaven fled away. That is, as the stars, at the rising of the sun, seem to flee to more remote regions, and vanish from human view, so when the Son of God shall descend in his glory to judge the world, the earth and all other worlds shall seem to vanish. Every one must admire the sublimity of this image; no one can contemplate it without being awed by the majesty and glory of the final Judge of mankind. Similar expressions, where the natural creation shrinks back with awe at the presence of God, frequently occur in the Bible. Compare Ps 18:7-15 77:16-19, 114:3-5 Hab 3:6,10-11.

And there was found no place for them. They seemed to flee *entirely* away, as if there was *no* place where they could find a safe retreat, or which would receive and shelter them in their flight. The image expresses in the most emphatic manner the idea that they entirely disappeared, and no language could more sublimely represent the majesty of the Judge.

{a} "earth" 2Pe 3:10,12

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 20 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *And I saw the dead, small and great*. *All* the dead—for this language would express that—the whole race being composed of the "small and great." Thus, in other language, the same idea might be expressed by saying the young and old; the rich and poor; the bond and free; the sick and well; the happy and the unhappy; the righteous and the wicked; for all the human family might, in these respects, be considered as thus divided. The fair meaning in this place therefore is, that *all* the dead would be there, and of course this would preclude the idea of a *previous* resurrection of any part of the dead, as of the saints, at the beginning of the millennium. There is no intimation

here that it is the *wicked* dead that are referred to in this description of the final judgment. It is the judgment of *all* the dead.

Stand before God. That is, they appear thus to be judged. The word "God" here must naturally refer to the final Judge on the throne, and there can be no doubt (see Mt 25:31)that this is the Lord Jesus. Compare 2Co 5:10. None can judge the secrets of the heart; none can pronounce on the moral character of all mankind of all countries and ages, and determine their everlasting allotment, but he who is Divine.

And the books were opened. That is, the books containing the record of human deeds. The representation is, that all that men have done is recorded, and that it will be exhibited on the final trial, and win constitute the basis of the last judgment. The imagery seems to be derived from the accusations made against such as are arraigned before human courts of justice.

And another book was opened, which is the book of life. The book containing the record of the names of all who shall enter into life, or into heaven. **See Barnes on "Re 3:5"**.

The meaning here is, that John saw not only the general books opened containing the records of the deeds of men, but that he had a distinct view of the list or roll of those who were the followers of the Lamb. It would seem that in regard to the multitudes of the impenitent and the wicked, the judgment will proceed *on their deeds* in general; in regard to the righteous, it will turn on the fact that their names had been enrolled in the book of life. That will be sufficient to determine the nature of the sentence that is to be be passed on them. He will be safe whose name is found in the book of life; no one will be safe who is to have his eternal destiny determined by his own deeds. This passage proves *particularly* that the righteous dead are referred to here as being present at the final judgment; and is thus an additional argument against the supposition of a resurrection of the righteous, and a judgment on them, at the beginning of the millennium.

And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books. The records which had been made of their deeds. The final judgment will proceed on the record that has been made. It will not be arbitrary, and will not be determined by rank, condition, or profession, but it will be according to the record.

According to their works. **See Barnes on "2Co 5:10"**.

The fact that the name of any one was found in the book of life would seem, as above remarked, to determine the *certainty* of salvation; but the amount of reward would be in proportion to the service rendered to the Redeemer, and the attainments made in piety.

{b} "books were opened" Da 7:10 {c} "another book" Re 21:27 Da 12:1 {d} "according to their works" Jer 32:19 Mt 16:27

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 20 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *And the sea gave up the dead which were in it*. All that had been buried in the depths of oceans. This number in the aggregate will be great. If we include all who were swept off by the flood, and all who have perished by shipwreck, and all who have been killed in naval battles and buried in the sea, and all who have been swept away by inundations of the ocean, and all who have peacefully died at sea, as sailors, or in the pursuits of commerce or benevolence, the number in the

aggregate will be immense—a number so vast that it was proper to notice them particularly in the account of the general resurrection and the last judgment.

And death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them. That is, all the dead came, from all regions where they were scattered—on the land and in the ocean—in this world and in the invisible world. "Death and hell" are here personified, and are represented as having dominion over the dead, and as now *delivering* up, or *surrendering* those who were held under them. On the meaning of the words here used, **see Barnes on "Re 1:18"**; **See Barnes** "Re 6:8".

Compare **See Barnes "Mt 10:23"**; **See Barnes** "Job 10:21"; **See Barnes "Job 10:22"**; **See Barnes** "Isa 14:9".

This whole representation is entirely inconsistent with the supposition that a large part of the dead had been already raised up at the beginning of the millennial period, and had been permitted, in their glorified bodies, to reign with Christ.

And they were judged, etc. All these were judged—the righteous and the wicked; those buried at sea, and those buried on the land; the small and the great; the dead, in whatever world they may have been.

{1} "hell" "the grave"

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 20 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *And death and hell were east into the lake of fire*. Death and Hades (*hell*) are here personified, as they are in the previous verse. The declaration is equivalent to the statement in 1Co 15:26, "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is *death*." **See Barnes "1Co 15:26"**.

The idea is, that death, considered as the separation of soul and body, with all the attendant woes, will exist no more. The righteous will live for ever, and the wicked will linger on in a state never to be terminated by death. The reign of Death and Hades, as such, would come to an end, and a new order of things would commence where *this* would be unknown. There might be that which would be properly called death, but it would not be death in this form; the soul would live for ever, but it would not be in that condition represented by the word *adhv—hades*. There would be *death* still, but a "second death differs from the first, in the fact that it is not a separation of the soul and body, but a state of *continual agony* like that which the first death inflicts—like that in intensity, but not in kind."—*Professor Stuart*.

This is the second death. That is, this whole process here described —the condemnation, and the final death and ruin of those whose names are "not found written in the book of life"—properly constitutes the second death. This proves that when it is said that "death and hell were cast into a lake of fire," it cannot be meant that all punishment will cease for ever, and that all will be saved, for the writer goes on to describe what he calls "the second death" as still existing. See Re 20:15. John describes this as the second death, not because it in all respects resembles the first death, but because it has so many points of resemblance that it may be properly called *death*. Death, in any form, is the penalty of law; it is attended with pain; it cuts off from hope, from friends, from enjoyment; it subjects him who dies to a much-dreaded condition, and in all these respects it was proper to call the final condition of the wicked death—though it would still be true that the soul would live. There is no evidence that John meant to affirm that the second death would imply an

extinction of *existence*. Death never does that; the word does not naturally and properly convey that idea.

{a} "death and hell" Hos 13:14 1Co 15:26,54

{b} "lake of fire" Mt 25:41

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 20 - Verse 15

Verse 15 *And whosoever*. All persons, of all ranks, ages, and conditions. No word could be more comprehensive than this. The single condition here stated, as being that which would save any from being cast into the lake of fire, is, that they are "found written in the book of life." All besides these—princes, kings, nobles, philosophers, statesmen, conquerors; rich men and poor men; the bond and the free; the young and the aged; the gay, the vain, the proud, and the sober; the modest and the humble—will be doomed to the lake of fire. Unlike in all other things, they will be alike in the only thing on which their eternal destiny will depend—that they have not *so* lived that their names have become recorded in the book of life. As they will also be destitute of true religion, there will be a propriety that they shall share the same doom in the future world.

Written in the book of life. **See Barnes on "Re 3:5"**.

Was cast into the lake of fire. **See Barnes on "Mt 25:41"**.

That is, they will be doomed to a punishment which will be well represented by their lingering in a sea of fire for ever. This is the termination of the judgment; the winding up of the affairs of men. The vision of John here rests for a moment on the doom of the wicked, and then turns to a more full contemplation of the happy lot of the righteous as detailed in the two closing chapters of the book.

(d.)—Condition of things referred to in Re 20:11-15.

(1.) There will be a general resurrection of the dead—of the righteous and the wicked. This is implied by the statement that the "dead, small and great," were seen to stand before God; that "the sea gave up the dead which were in it;" that "Death and Hades gave up their dead." All were there whose names were or were not written in the book of life.

(2.) There will be a solemn and impartial judgment. How long a time this will occupy is not said, and is not necessary to be known— for time is of no consequence where there is an eternity of devotion; but it *is* said that they will all be judged "according to their works"—that is, strictly according to their character. They will receive no arbitrary doom; they will have no sentence which will not be just. See Mt 25:31-46.

(3.) This will be the *final* judgment. After this, the affairs of the race will be put on a different footing. This will be the end of the present arrangements; the end of the present dispensations; the end of human probation. The great question to be determined in regard to our, world will have been settled; what the plan of redemption was intended; to accomplish on the earth will have been accomplished; the agency of the Divine Spirit in converting sinners will have come to an end; and the means of grace, as such, will be employed no more. There is not here or elsewhere an intimation that beyond this period any of these things will exist, or that the work of redemption, as such, will extend into the world beyond the judgment. As there is no intimation that the condition of the righteous will be changed, so there is none that the condition of the wicked will be; as there is no

hint that the righteous will ever be exposed to temptation, or to the danger of falling into sin, so there is none that the offers of salvation will ever again be made to the wicked. On the contrary, the whole representation is, that all beyond this will be fixed and unchangeable for ever. **See Barnes on "Re 22:11".**

(4.) The wicked will be destroyed, in what may be properly called the *second* death. As remarked in the Notes, this does not mean that this death will in all respects resemble the first death, but there will be so many points of resemblance that it will be proper to call it *death*. It does not mean that they will be *annihilated*, for *death* never implies that. The meaning is, that this will be a cutting off from what is properly called *life*, from hope, from happiness, and from peace, and a subjection to pain and agony, which it will be proper to call *death*—death in the most fearful form; death that will continue for ever. No statements in the Bible are more clear than those which are made on this point; no affirmation of the eternal punishment of the wicked *could be* more explicit than those which occur in the sacred Scriptures. **See Barnes on "Mt 25:46"; See Barnes "2Th 1:9".**

(5.) This will be the end of the woes and calamities produced in the kingdom of God by sin. The reign of Satan and of Death, so far as the Redeemer's kingdom is concerned, will be at an end, and henceforward the church will be safe from all the arts and efforts of its foes, Religion will be triumphant, and the affairs of the universe be reduced to permanent order.

(6.) The preparation is thus made for the final triumph of the righteous—the state to which all things tend. The writer of this book has conducted the prospective history through all the times of persecution which awaited the church, and stated the principal forms of error which would prevail, and foretold the conflicts through which the church would pass, and described its eventful history to the millennial period, and to the final triumph of truth and righteousness; and now nothing remains to complete the plan of the work but to give a rapid sketch of the final condition of the redeemed. This is done in the two following chapters, and with this the work is ended.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 21

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 21 - Verse 1

CHAPTER 21.

ANALYSIS OF CHAPTER 21., 22 1-5

THE whole of chapter 21, and the first five verses of chapter 22, relate to scenes beyond the judgment, and are descriptive of the happy and triumphant state of the redeemed church, when all its conflicts shall have ceased, and all its enemies shall have been destroyed. That happy state is depicted under the image of a beautiful city, of which Jerusalem was the emblem, and it was disclosed to John by a vision of that city—the New Jerusalem—descending from heaven. Jerusalem was regarded as the peculiar dwelling-place of God, and to the Hebrews it became thus the natural emblem or symbol of the heavenly world. The conception having occurred of describing the future condition of the righteous under the image of a beautiful city, all that follows is in keeping with

that, and is merely a carrying out of the image. It is a city with beautiful walls and gates; a city that has no temple—for it is all a temple; a city that needs no light—for God is its light; a city into which nothing impure ever enters; a city filled with trees, and streams, and fountains, and fruits—the Paradise Regained. The description of that blessed state comprises the following parts:—

I. A vision of a new heaven and a new earth, as the final abode of the blessed, Re 21:1. The first heaven and the first earth passed away at the judgment, Re 21:11-15 to be succeeded by a new heaven and earth fitted to be the abode of the blessed.

II. A vision of the holy city—the New Jerusalem—descending from heaven, as the abode of the redeemed, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband—representing the fact that God would truly abide with men, Re 21:2-4. Now all the effects of the apostasy will cease; all tears will be wiped away, and in that blessed state there will be no more death, or sorrow, or pain. This contains the general statement of what will be the condition of the redeemed in the future world. God will be there; and all sorrow will cease.

III. A command to make a record of these things, Re 21:5.

IV. A general description of those who should dwell in that future world of blessedness, Re 21:6-8. It is for all who are athirst; for all who desire it, and long for it; for all who "overcome" their spiritual enemies, who maintain a steady conflict with sin, and gain a victory over it. But all who are fearful and unbelieving—all the abominable, and murderers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and liars—shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. That is, that world will be pure and holy.

V. A- minute description of the city, representing the happy abode of the redeemed, Re 21:9-26. This description embraces many particulars:—

(1.) Its general appearance, Re 21:11,18,21.

It is bright and splendid—like a precious jasper-stone, clear as crystal, and composed of pure gold.

(2.) Its walls, Re 21:12,18. The walls are represented as "great and high," and as composed of 'jasper.'

(3.) Its gates, Re 21:12,13,21.

The gates are twelve in number, three on each side; and are each composed of a single pearl.

(4.) Its foundations, Re 21:14,18-20.

There are twelve foundations, corresponding to the number of the apostles of the Lamb. They are all composed of precious stones—jasper, sapphire, chalcedony, emerald sardonyx, sardius, chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprasus, jacinth, and amethyst.

(5.) Its size, Re 21:15-17. It is square—the length being as great as the breadth, and its height the same. The extent of each dimension is twelve thousand furlongs—a length on each side and in height of three hundred and seventy-five miles. It would seem, however, that though the city was of that height, the wall was only an hundred and forty-four cubits, or about two hundred and sixteen feet high. The idea seems to be that the city—the dwellings within it—towered high above the wall that was thrown around it for protection. This is not uncommon in cities that are surrounded by walls.

(6.) Its light, Re 21:23,24, 22:5.

It has no need of the sun, or of the moon, or of a lamp, Re 22:5, to enlighten it; and yet there is no night there, Re 22:5, for the glory of God gives light to it.

(7.) It is a city without a temple, Re 21:22. There is no one place in it that is peculiarly sacred, or where the worship of God will be exclusively celebrated. It will be all a temple, and the worship of God will be celebrated in all parts of it.

(8.) It is always open, Re 21:25. There will be no need of closing it as walled cities on earth are closed to keep enemies out, and it will not be shut to prevent those who dwell there from going out and coming in when they please. The inhabitants will not be prisoners, nor will they be in danger, or be alarmed by the prospect of an attack from an enemy.

(9.) Its inhabitants will all be pure and holy, Re 21:27. There will in no wise enter there anything that defiles, or that works abomination, or that is false. They only shall dwell there whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

(10.) Its enclosures and environs, Re 22:1,2. A stream of water, pure as crystal, proceeds from the throne of God and the Lamb. That stream flows through the city, and on its banks is the tree of life constantly bearing fruit—fruit to be partaken of freely. It is Paradise Regained—a holy and beautiful abode, of which the garden of Eden was only an imperfect emblem, where there is no prohibition, as there was there, of anything that grows, and where there is no danger of falling into sin.

(11.) It is a place free, consequently, from the curse that was pronounced on man when he forfeited the blessings of the first Eden, and when he was driven out from the happy abodes where God had placed him.

(12.) It is a place where the righteous shall reign for ever, Re 22:5. Death shall never enter there, and the presence and glory of God shall fill all with peace and joy.

Such is an outline of the figurative and glowing description of the future blessedness of the redeemed; the eternal abode of those who shall be saved. It is poetic and emblematical; but it is elevating, and constitutes a beautiful and appropriate close, not only of this single book, but of the whole sacred volume—for to this the saints are everywhere directed to look forward; this is the glorious termination of all the struggles and conflicts of the church; this is the result of the work of redemption in repairing the evils of the fall, and in bringing man to more than the bliss which he lost in Eden. The mind rests with delight on this glorious prospect; the Bible closes, as a revelation from heaven should, in a manner that calms down every anxious feeling; that fills the soul with peace, and that leads the child of God to look forward with bright anticipations, and to say, as John did, "Come, Lord Jesus," Re 22:20.

Verse 1. *And I saw a new heaven and a new earth*. Such a heaven and earth that they might properly be called *new*; such transformations, and such changes in their appearance, that they seemed to be just created, He does not say that they *were* created now, or anew; that the old heavens and earth were annihilated;—but all that he says is that there were such changes that they *seemed* to be new. If the earth is to be renovated by fire, such a renovation will give an appearance to the globe as if it were created anew, and might be attended with such an apparent change in the heavens that they might be said to be *new*. The description here (Re 21:1) relates to scenes *after* the general resurrection and the judgment—for those events are detailed in the close of the previous chapter. In regard to the meaning of the language here, **see Barnes on "2Pe 3:13"**.

Compare, also, "*The Religion of Geology and its Connected Sciences*," by Edward Hitchcock, D.D., LL.D., pp. 370-408.

For the first heaven and the first earth were passed away. They had passed away by being changed, and a renovated universe had taken their place. **See Barnes on "2Pe 3:10"**.

And there was no more sea. This change struck John more forcibly, it would appear, than anything else. Now, the seas and oceans occupy about three-fourths of the surface of the globe, and of course to that extent prevent the world from being occupied by men—except by the comparatively small number that are mariners. There, the idea of John seems to be, the whole world will be inhabitable, and no part will be given up to the wastes of oceans. In the present state of things, these vast oceans are necessary to render the world a fit abode for human beings, as well as to give life and happiness to the numberless tribes of animals that find their homes in the waters. In the future state, it would seem, the present arrangement will be unnecessary; and if man dwells upon the earth at all, or if he visits it as a temporary abode, (**see Barnes on** "2Pe 3:13,) these vast wastes of water will be needless. It should be remembered that the earth, in its changes, according to the teachings of geology, has undergone many revolutions quite as remarkable as it would be if all the lakes, and seas, and oceans of the earth should disappear. Still, it is not certain that it was intended that this language should be understood literally as applied to the material globe. The object is to describe the future blessedness of the righteous; and the idea is, that that will be a world where there will be no such wastes as those produced by oceans.

{a} "new heaven" Isa 65:17-19 66:22; 2Pe 3:13

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 21 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven*. On the phrase "new Jerusalem," **see Barnes "Ga 4:26"**; **See Barnes** "Heb 12:22".

Here it refers to the residence of the redeemed, the heavenly world, of which Jerusalem was the type and symbol. It is here represented as "coming down from God out of heaven." This, of course, does not mean that this great city was *literally* to descend upon the *earth*, and to occupy any one part of the renovated world; but it is a symbolical or figurative representation, designed to show that the abode of the righteous will be splendid and glorious. The idea of a city literally descending from heaven, and being set upon the earth with such proportions—three hundred and seventy miles high, (Re 21:16,) made of gold, and with single pearls for gates, and single gems for the foundations—is absurd. No man can suppose that this is literally true, and hence this must be regarded as a figurative or emblematic description. It is a representation of the heavenly state under the image of a beautiful city, of which Jerusalem was, in many respects, a natural and striking emblem.

Prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. **See Barnes on** "Isa 49:18; Isa 61:10 ".

The purpose here is, to represent it as exceedingly beautiful. The comparison of the church with a bride, or a wife, is common in the Scriptures. **See Barnes on "Re 19:7-8; Isa 1:21"**.

It is also common in the Scriptures to compare a city with a beautiful woman, and these images here seem to be combined. It is a beautiful city that seems to descend, and this city is itself compared with a richly attired bride prepared for her husband.

{b} "holy city" Isa 52:1 Heb 11:10,12,22

{a} "bride" Isa 54:5 {b} "adorned" Ps 45:9-14

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 21 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And I heard a great voice out of heaven*. As if uttered by God himself, or the voice of angels.

Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men. The *tabernacle*, as that word is commonly used in the Scriptures, referring to the sacred *tent* erected in the wilderness, was regarded as the peculiar dwelling-place of God among his people—as the temple was afterwards, which was also called a *tabernacle*. **See Barnes on "Heb 9:2".**

The meaning here is, that God would now dwell with the redeemed, *as if* in a tabernacle, or in a house specially prepared for his residence among them. It is not said that this would be *on the earth*, although that may be; for it is possible that the earth, as well as other worlds, may yet become the abode of the redeemed. **See Barnes on "2Pe 3:13".**

And he will dwell with them. As in a tent, or tabernacle—*skhnwsei*. This a common idea in the Scriptures.

And they shall be his people. He will acknowledge them in this public way as his own, and will dwell with them as such.

And God himself shall be with them. Shall be permanently with them; shall never leave them.

And be their God. Shall manifest himself as such, in such a manner that there shall be no doubt.

{c} "tabernacle of God" 2Co 6:16 {d} "his people" Zec 8:8

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 21 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes*. This will be one of the characteristics of that blessed state, that not a tear shall ever be shed there. How different will that be from the condition here—for who is there here who has not learned to weep? **See Barnes "Re 7:17".**

Compare **See Barnes "Isa 25:8".**

And there shall be no more death. In all that future world of glory, not one shall ever die; not a grave shall ever be dug! What a view do we begin to get of heaven, when we are told there shall be no *death* there! How different from earth, where death is so common; where it spares no one; where our best friends die; where the wise, the good, the useful, the lovely, die; where fathers, mothers, wives, husbands, sons, daughters, all die; where we habitually feel that we must die. Assuredly we have here a view of heaven most glorious and animating to those who dwell in a world like this, and to whom nothing is more common than death. In all their endless and glorious career, the redeemed will never see death again; they will never themselves die. They will never follow a friend to the tomb, nor fear that an absent friend is dead. The slow funeral procession will never be witnessed there; nor will the soil ever open its bosom to furnish a grave. **See Barnes on "1Co 15:55".**

Neither sorrow. The word *sorrow* here—*penyov*—denotes sorrow or *grief* of any kind; sorrow for the loss of property or friends; sorrow for disappointment, persecution, or care; sorrow over our sins, or sorrow that we love God so little, and serve him so unfaithfully; sorrow that we are sick, or that we must die. How innumerable are the sources of sorrow here; how constant is it on the earth! Since the fall of man there has not been a day, an hour, a moment, in which this has not

been a sorrowful world; there has not been a nation, a tribe—a city or a village—nay, not a family where there has not been grief. There has been no individual who has been always perfectly happy. No one rises in the morning with any certainty that he may not end the day in grief; no one lies down at night with any assurance that it may not be a night of sorrow. How different would this world be if it were announced that hence forward there would be no sorrow! How different, therefore, will heaven be when we shall have the assurance that henceforward grief shall be at an end!

Nor crying.—kraugh. This word properly denotes a cry, an outcry, as in giving a public notice; a cry in a tumult—a clamour, Ac 23:9; and then a cry of sorrow, or wailing. This is evidently its meaning here, and it refers to all the outbursts of grief arising from affliction, from oppression, from violence. The sense is, that as none of these *causes* of wailing will be known in the future state, all such wailing will cease. This, too, will make the future state vastly different from our condition here; for what a change would it produce on the earth if the cry of grief were never to be heard again!

Neither shall there be any more pain. There will be no sickness, and no calamity; and there will be no mental sorrow arising from remorse, from disappointment, or from the evil conduct of friends. And what a change would this produce—for how full of *pain* is the world now! How many lie on beds of languishing; how many are suffering under incurable diseases; how many are undergoing severe surgical operations; how many are pained by the loss of property or friends, or subjected to acuter anguish by the misconduct of those who are loved! How different would this world be, if all *pain* were to cease for ever; how different, therefore, must the future state of the blessed be from the present!

For the former things are passed away. The world as it was before the judgment.

{e} "all tears" Re 7:17 Isa 25:8 {f} "death" 1Co 15:26,54 {g} "sorrow" Isa 35:10

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 21 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And he that sat upon the throne said*. Probably the Messiah, the dispenser of the rewards of heaven. **See Barnes on "Re 20:11"**.

Behold, I make all things new. A new heaven and new earth, (Re 21:1,) and an order of things to correspond with that new creation. The former state of things when sin and death reigned will be changed, and the change consequent on this must extend to everything.

And he said unto me, Write. Make a *record* of these things, for they are founded in truth, and they are adapted to bless a suffering world. Compare **Barnes on "Re 14:13"**.

See also Re 1:19.

For these words are true and faithful. They are founded in truth, and they are worthy to be believed. **See Barnes on "Re 19:9"**.

Compare also **Barnes on "Da 12:4"**.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 21 - Verse 6

Verse 6. *And he said unto me*. That is, he that sat on the throne—the Messiah.

It is done. It is finished, complete; or, still more expressively, *it is—gegone*. An expression remarkably similar to this occurs. in Joh 19:30, when the Saviour on the cross said, "It is finished." The meaning in the passage before us evidently is, "the great work is accomplished; the arrangement of human affairs is complete. The redeemed are gathered in; the wicked are cut off; truth is triumphant, and all is now complete—prepared for the eternal state of things.

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. This language makes it morally certain that the speaker here is the Lord Jesus, for it is the very language which he uses of himself in Re 1:11. See its meaning explained in **Barnes on "Re 1:8"**.

If it *is* applied to him here, it proves that he is Divine, for in the following verse (Re 21:7) the speaker says that he would be a *God* to him who should "overcome." The meaning of the language as here used, regarded as spoken by the Redeemer at the consummation of all things, and as his people are about entering into the abodes of blessedness, is, "I am now *indeed* the Alpha and the Omega—the first and the last. The attributes implied in this language which I claimed for myself are now verified in me, and it is seen that these properly belong to me. The scheme for setting up a kingdom in the lost world began in me, and it ends in me—the glorious and triumphant king."

I will give unto him that is athirst. **See Barnes on "Mt 5:6"**; **See Barnes** "Joh 4:14"; **See Barnes "Joh 7:37"**.

Of the fountain of the water of life. An image often used in the Scriptures to represent salvation. It is compared with a fountain that flows in abundance where all may freely slake their thirst.

Freely. Without money and without price, (**Barnes on "Isa 55:1;** Joh 7:27;) the common representation in the Scriptures. The meaning here is not that he would do this *in the future*, but that he had shown that this was his character, as he had claimed, in the same way as he had shown that he was the Alpha and the Omega. The freeness and the fulness of salvation will be one of the most striking things made manifest when the immense hosts of the redeemed shall be welcomed to their eternal abodes.

{h} "It is done" Re 16:17 {i} "I am Alpha and Omega" Re 1:8 22:13 {k} "athirst" Re 22:17 Isa 55:1; Joh 4:10,14, 7:37

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 21 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *He that overcometh*. **See Barnes on "Re 2:7"**.

Shall inherit all things. Be an heir of God in all things. **See Barnes on "Ro 8:17"**.

Compare Re 2:7,11,17,26 3:5,12,21.

And I will be his God. That is, *for ever*. He would be to them all that is properly implied in the name of *God*; he would bestow upon them all the blessings which it was appropriate for God to bestow. **See Barnes on "2Co 6:18; Heb 8:10"**.

And he shall be my son. He shall sustain to me the relation of a son, and shall be treated as such. He would ever onward sustain this relation, and be honoured as a child of God.

{1} "all" "these"

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 21 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *But the fearful*. Having stated, in general terms, who they were who would be admitted into that blessed world, he now states explicitly who would *not*. The *fearful* denote those who had not firmness boldly to maintain their professed principles, or who were afraid to avow themselves as the friends of God in a wicked world. They stand in contrast with those who "*overcome*," Re 21:7.

And unbelieving. Those who have not true faith; avowed infidels; infidels at heart; and all who have not the sincere faith of the gospel. **See Barnes on "Mr 16:16"**.

And the abominable. The verb from which this word is derived means, to excite disgust; to feel disgust at; to abominate or abhor; and hence the participle—"the abominable"-refers to all who are detestable, to wit, on account of their sins; all whose conduct is offensive to God. Thus it would include those who live in open sin; who practise detestable vices; whose conduct is fitted to excite disgust and abhorrence. These must all, of course, be excluded from a pure and holy world; and this description, alas! would embrace a lamentably large portion of the world as it has hitherto been. **See Barnes on** "Ro 1:26, seq.

And murderers. **See Barnes on "Ro 1:29; Ga 5:21"**.

And whoremongers. **See Barnes on "Ga 5:19"**.

And sorcerers. See the word here used—*farmakeusi*—explained in **Barnes on** "Ga 5:19, under the word *witchcraft*.

And idolaters. 1Co 6:9 Ga 5:19.

And all liars. All who are false in their statements, their promises, their contracts. The word would embrace all who are false towards God, (Ac 5:1-3,) and false toward men. See Ro 1:31.

Shall have their part in the lake which burneth, etc. **Barnes on "Re 20:14"**.

That is, they will be excluded from heaven, and punished for ever. **See Barnes on "1Co 6:9-10; Ga 5:19-21"**.

{a} "fearful" Lu 12:4-9 {b} "unbelieving" 1Jo 5:4,10 {c} "abominable" 1Co 6:9,10 {d} "murderers" 1Jo 3:15 {e} "whoremongers" Heb 13:4 {f} "sorcerers" Mal 3:5 {g} "idolators" 1Co 10:20,21 {h} "all liars" Re 22:15 Pr 19:5,9

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 21 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *And there came unto me one of the seven angels*, etc. **See Barnes on "Re 16:6-7"**.

Why one of these angels was employed to make this communication is not stated. It may be that as they had been engaged in bringing destruction on the enemies of the church, and securing its final triumph, there was a propriety that that triumph should be announced by one of their number.

And talked with me. That is, in regard to what he was about to show me.

I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. I will show you what represents the redeemed church now to be received into permanent union with its Lord—as a bride about to be united to her husband. **See Barnes on "Re 21:2"**.

Compare Re 19:7-8.

{i} "seven angels" Re 15:1-6,7

{k} "Lamb's wife" Re 19:7

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 21 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *And he carried me away in the spirit*. Gave him a vision of the city; seemed to place him where he could have a clear view of it as it came down from heaven. **See Barnes on "Re 1:10"**.

In a great and high mountain. The elevation, and the unobstructed range of view, gave him an opportunity to behold it in its glory.

And showed me that great city, etc. As it descended from heaven. **Barnes on "Re 21:2"**.

{l} "great city" Eze 40; Eze 48

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 21 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *Having the glory of God*. A glory or splendour such as became the dwelling-place of God. The nature of that splendour is described in the following verses.

And her light. In Re 21:23 it is said that "the glory of God did lighten it." That is, it was made light by the visible symbol of the Deity—the Shekinah. **See Barnes on "Lu 2:9"**; **See Barnes "Ac 9:3"**.

The word here rendered *light—fwsthr*—occurs nowhere else in the New Testament except in Php 2:15. It means, properly, a light, a light-giver, and, in profane writers, means commonly a *window*. It is used here to denote the brightness or shining of the Divine glory, as supplying the place of the sun, or of a window.

Like unto a stone most precious. A stone of the richest or most costly nature.

Even like a jasper stone. On the *jasper*, **see Barnes on "Re 4:3"**.

It is used there for the same purpose as here, to illustrate the majesty and glory of God.

Clear as crystal. Pellucid or resplendent like crystal. There are various kinds of jasper—as red, yellow, and brown, brownish yellow, etc. The stone is essentially a quartz, and the word *crystal* here is used to show that the form of it referred to by John was clear and bright.

{m} "glory of God" Isa 60:1,2

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 21 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *And had a wall great and high*. Ancient cities were always surrounded with walls for protection, and John represents this as enclosed in the usual manner. The word *great* means that it was thick and strong. Its height also is particularly noticed, for it was unusual. See Re 21:16.

And had twelve gates. Three on each side. The number of the gates correspond to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, and to the number of the apostles. The idea seems to be that there would be ample opportunity of access and egress.

And at the gates twelve angels. Stationed there as guards to the New Jerusalem. Their business seems to have been to watch the gates that nothing improper should enter; that the great enemy should not make an insidious approach to this city as he did to the earthly Paradise.

And names written thereon. On the gates.

Which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. So in the city which Ezekiel saw in vision, which John seems also to have had in his eye. See Eze 48:31. The inscription in Ezekiel denoted that that was the residence of the people of God; and the same idea is denoted here. The New Jerusalem is the eternal residence of the children of God, and this is indicated at every gate. None can enter who do not belong to that people; all who are within are understood to be of their number.

{n} "twelve gates" Eze 48:31-34

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 21 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *On the east three gates*, etc. The city was square, (Re 21:16,) and the same number of gates is assigned to each quarter. There does not appear to be any special significancy in this fact, unless it be to denote that there is access to this city from all quarters of the world, and that they who dwell there will have come from each of the great divisions of the earth; that is, from every land.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 21 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *And the wall of the city had twelve foundations*. It is not said whether these foundations were twelve rows of stones placed one above another under the city, and extending round it, or whether they were twelve stones placed at intervals. The former would seem to be the most probable, as the latter would indicate comparative feebleness and liability to fall. Compare **Barnes on** "Re 21:19.

And in them. In the foundation of stones. That is, the names of the apostles were cut or carved in them so as to be conspicuous.

The names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. Of the Lamb of God; the Messiah. For an illustration of this passage, **see Barnes on "Eph 2:20"**.

{o} "and in them" Eph 2:20

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 21 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *And he that talked with me*. The angel, Re 21:9.

Had a golden reed to measure the city. **See Barnes on "Re 11:1"**.

The reed, or measuring rod, here, is of gold, because all about the city is of the most rich and costly materials. The rod is thus suited to the personage who uses it, and to the occasion. Compare

a similar description in Eze 40:3-5 43:16. The object of this measuring is to show that the city has proper architectural proportions.

And the gates thereof, etc. To measure every part of the city, and to ascertain its exact dimensions.

{p} "golden reed" Re 21:1 Eze 40:3; Zec 2:1

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 21 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *And the city lieth four-square*. It was an exact square. That is, there was nothing irregular about it; there were no crooked walls; there was no jutting out, and no indentation in the walls, as if the city had been built at different times without a plan, and had been accommodated to circumstances. Most cities have been determined in their outline by the character of the ground—by hills, streams, or ravines; or have grown up by accretions, where one part has been joined to another, so that there is no regularity, and so that the original plan, if there was any, has been lost sight of. The New Jerusalem, on the contrary, had been built according to a plan of the utmost regularity, which had not been modified by the circumstances, or varied as the city grew. The idea here may be that the church, as it will appear in its state of glory, will be in accordance with an eternal plan, and that the great original design will have been fully carried out.

And the length is as large as the breadth. The height also of the city was the same—so that it was an exact square.

And he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. As eight furlongs make a mile, the extent of the walls, therefore, must have been three hundred and seventy-five miles. Of course, this must preclude all idea of there being such a city literally in Palestine. This is clearly a figurative or symbolical representation; and the idea is, that the city was on the most magnificent scale, and with the largest proportions, and the description here is adopted merely to indicate this vastness, without any idea that it would be understood *literally*.

The length, and the breadth, and the height of it are equal. According to this representation, the height of the *city*, not of the *walls*, (compare Re 21:17,) would be three hundred and seventy-five miles. Of course, this cannot be understood literally; and the very idea of a literal fulfilment of this shows the absurdity of that method of interpretation. The idea intended to be conveyed by this immense height would seem to be that it would contain countless numbers of inhabitants. It is true that such a structure has not existed, and that a city of such a height may seem to be out of all proportion; but we are to remember

(a) that this is a *symbol*; and

(b) that, considered as one mass or pile of buildings, it may not seem to be out of proportion. It is no uncommon thing that a house should be as high as it is long or broad. The idea of *vastness* and of *capacity* is the main idea designed to be represented. The image before the mind is, that the numbers of the redeemed will be immense.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 21 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *And he measured the wall thereof*. In respect to its *height*. Of course, its *length* corresponded with the extent of the city.

An hundred and *forty* and *four cubits*. This would be, reckoning the cubit at eighteen inches, two hundred and sixteen feet. This is less than the height of the walls of Babylon, which Herodotus says were three hundred and fifty feet high. See Introduction to Isa 13:1. As the walls of a city are designed to protect it from external foes, the height mentioned here gives all proper ideas of security; and we are to conceive of the city itself as towering immensely above the walls. Its glory, therefore, would not be obscured by the wall that was thrown around it for defence.

According to the *measure of a man*. The measure usually employed by men. This seems to be added in order to prevent any mistake as to the size of the city. It is an *angel* who makes the measurement, and without this explanation it might perhaps be supposed that he used some measure not in common use among men, so that, after all, it would be impossible to form any definite idea of the size of the city.

That is, of the angel. That is, "which is the measure employed by the angel." It was, indeed, an angel who measured the city, but the measure which he employed was that in common use among men.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 21 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *And the building of the wall of it*. The material of which the wall was composed. This means the wall *above* the foundation, for that was composed of twelve rows of precious stones, Re 21:14 19-20.

The height of the foundation is not stated, but the entire wall above was composed of jasper.

Was of jasper. **See Barnes on "Re 4:3"**.

Of course, this cannot be taken *literally*; and an attempt to explain all this literally would show that that method of interpreting the Apocalypse is impracticable.

And the city was pure gold. The material of which the edifices were composed.

Like unto clear glass. The word rendered *glass* in this place— *ualov*—occurs in the New Testament only here and in Re 21:21. It means, properly, "anything transparent like water;" as, for example, any transparent stone or gem, or as rock-salt, crystal, glass.—*Rob. Lex*. Here the meaning is, that the golden city would be so bright and burnished that it would seem to be glass reflecting the sunbeams. Would the appearance of a city as the sun is setting, when the reflection of its beams from thousands of panes of glass gives it the appearance of burnished gold, represent the idea here? If we were to suppose a city made entirely of glass, and the setting sunbeams falling on it, it might convey the idea represented here. It is certain that, as nothing could be more magnificent, so nothing could more beautifully combine the two ideas referred to here—that of *gold* and *glass*. Perhaps the reflection of the sunbeams from the "Crystal Palace," erected for the late "industrial exhibition" in London, would convey a better idea of what is intended to be represented here than anything which our world has furnished. The following description from one who was an eye-witness, drawn up by him at the time, and without any reference to this passage, and furnished at my request, will supply a better illustration of the passage before us than any description which I could give: "Seen as the morning vapours rolled around its base—its far-stretching roofs, rising one above another,

and its great transept, majestically arched, soaring out of the envelope of clouds—its pillars, window-bars, and pinnacles, looked literally like a castle in the air; like some palace, such as one reads of in idle tales of Arabian enchantment, having about it all the ethereal softness of a dream. Looked at from a distance at noon, when the sunbeams came pouring upon the terraced and vaulted roof, it resembles a regal palace of silver, built for some Eastern prince; *when the sun at eventide sheds on its sides his parting rays, the edifice is transformed into a temple of gold and rubies*; and in the calm hours of night, when the moon walketh in her brightness, the immense surface of glass which the building presents looks like a sea, or like throwing back in flickering smile the radiant glances of the queen of heaven."

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 21 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *And the foundations of the wall of the city*. **See Barnes on "Re 21:14"**.

Were *garnished*. Were adorned, or decorated. That is, the foundations were *composed* of precious stones, giving them this highly ornamented and brilliant appearance.

The first foundation. The first *row, layer*, or *course*. **Barnes on "Re 21:14"**.

Was jasper. **See Barnes on "Re 4:3"**.

The second, sapphire. This stone is not elsewhere mentioned in the New Testament. It is a precious stone next in hardness to the diamond, usually of an azure or sky-blue colour, but of various shades.

The third, a chalcedony. This word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. The stone referred to is an uncrystallized translucent variety of quartz, having a whitish colour, and of a lustre nearly like wax. It is found covering the sides of cavities, and is a deposit from filtrated silicious waters. When it is arranged in *stripes*, it constitutes *agate*; and if the stripes are horizontal, it is the *onyx*. The modern *carnelian* is a variety of this. The carnelian is of a deep flesh red, or reddish-white colour. The name chalcedony is from *Chalcedon*, a town in Asia Minor, opposite to Byzantium, or Constantinople, where this stone was probably first known.— *Webster's Dic*.

The fourth, an emerald. **See Barnes on "Re 4:3"**.

The emerald is green.

{a} "foundations of the wall" Isa 54:11

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 21 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *The fifth, sardonyx*. This word does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. The *name* is derived from Sardis, a city in Asia Minor, (**Barnes on** "Re 3:1,) and *onux—a nail*—so named, according to Pliny, from the resemblance of its colour to the flesh and the nail. It is a silicious stone or gem, nearly allied to the onyx. The colour is a reddish yellow, nearly orange.—*Webster's Dic*.

The sixth, sardius. This word does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It is also derived from *Sardis*, and the name was probably given to the gem because it was found there. It is a stone

of a blood-red or flesh colour, and is commonly known as a *carnelian*. It is the same as the *sardine* stone mentioned in Re 4:3. **See Barnes on "Re 4:3"**

The seventh, chrysolite. This word does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It is derived from *crusov, gold*, and *liyov, stone*, and means *golden stone*, and was applied by the ancients to all gems of a golden or yellow colour, probably designating particularly the topaz of the moderns.—*Rob. Lex*. But in *Webster's Dic*. it is said that its prevalent colour is green. It is sometimes transparent. This is the *modern* chrysolite. The ancients undoubtedly understood by the name a *yellow* gem.

The eighth, beryl. This word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. The beryl is a mineral of great hardness, and is of a green or bluish-green colour. It is identical with the emerald, except in the colour, the emerald having a purer and richer green colour, proceeding from a trace of oxide of chrome. Prisms of beryl are sometimes found nearly two feet in diameter in the state of New Hampshire.—*Webster*.

The ninth, a topaz. This word does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. The topaz is a well-known mineral, said to be so called from *Topazos*, a small island in the Arabian Gulf. It is generally of a yellowish colour, and pellucid, but it is also found of greenish, bluish, or brownish shades.

The tenth, a chrysoprasus. This word does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It is derived from *crusov, gold*, and *prason, a leek*, and denotes a precious stone of greenish golden colour, like a leek; that is, "apple-green passing into a grass-green."—*Rob. Lex*. "It is a variety of quartz. It is commonly apple-green, and often extremely beautiful. It is translucent, or sometimes semi-transparent; its hardness little inferior to flint."—*Webster's Dic*.

The eleventh, a jacinth. The word does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It is the same word as *hyacinth—uakinyov*—and denotes properly the well-known flower of that name, usually of a deep purple or reddish blue. Here it denotes a gem of this colour. It is a red variety of *zircon*. See *Webster's Dic*., under the word *hyacinth*.

The twelfth, an amethyst. This word, also, is found only in this place in the New Testament. It denotes a gem of a deep purple or violet colour. The *word* is derived from *a, priv.*, and *meyuw*, to be intoxicated, because this gem was supposed to be an antidote against drunkenness. It is a species of quartz, and is used in jewelry.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 21 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *And the twelve gates*. Re 21:12.

Were twelve pearls. **See Barnes on "Re 17:4; Mt 13:46".**

Every several gate was of one pearl. Each gate. Of course, this is not to be understood literally. The idea is that of ornament and beauty, and nothing could give a more striking view of the magnificence of the future abode of the saints.

And the street of the city was pure gold. Was paved with gold; that is, all the vacant space that was not occupied with buildings was of pure gold. **See Barnes on "Re 21:18".**

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 21 - Verse 22

Verse 22. *And I saw no temple therein*. No structure reared expressly for the worship of God; no particular place where he was adored. It was *all* temple—nothing but a temple. It was not like Jerusalem, where there was but one house reared expressly for Divine worship, and to which the inhabitants repaired to praise God; it was all one great temple reared in honour of his name, and where worship ascended from every part of it. With this explanation, this passage harmonizes with what is said in Re 2:12 7:15.

For the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. They are present in all parts of it in their glory; they fill it with light; and the splendour of their presence may be said *to be* the temple. The idea here is, that it would be a holy world—*all* holy. No particular portion would be set apart for purposes of public worship, but in all places God would be adored, and every portion of it devoted to the purposes of religion.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 21 - Verse 23

Verse 23. *And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it*. This imagery seems to be derived from Isa 60:19-20. **See Barnes on "Isa 60:19"**

See Barnes "Isa 60:20".

No language could give a more striking or beautiful representation of the heavenly state than that which is here employed.

For the glory of God did lighten it. By the visible splendour of his glory. **See Barnes on "Re 21:11".**

That supplied the place of the sun and the moon.

And the Lamb is the light thereof. The Son of God; the Messiah. **See Barnes on "Re 5:6; Isa 60:19".**

{a} "sun" Re 22:5 Isa 60:19,20

{b} "the light" Joh 1:4

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 21 - Verse 24

Verse 24. *And the nations of them which are saved*. All the nations that are saved; or all the saved considered as nations. This imagery is doubtless derived from that in Isaiah, particularly Isa 60:3-9. **See Barnes on** "Isa 60:3, seq.

Shall walk in the light of it. Shall enjoy its splendour, and be continually in its light.

And the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. All that they consider as constituting their glory, treasures, crowns, sceptres, robes. The idea is, that all these will be devoted to God in the future days of the church in its glory, and will be, as it were, brought and laid down at the feet of the Saviour in heaven. The language is derived, doubtless, from the description in Isa 60:3-14. Compare Isa 49:23.

{c} "nations" Isa 60:3-11 66:10-12 {d} "kings" Ps 72:11

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 21 - Verse 25

Verse 25. *And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day*. It shall be constantly open, allowing free ingress and egress to all who reside there. The language is derived from Isa 60:11. **See Barnes on "Isa 60:11"**.

Applied to the future state of the blessed, it would seem to mean, that while this will be their permanent abode, yet that the dwellers there will not be *prisoners*. The universe will be open to them. They will be permitted to go forth and visit every world, and survey the works of God in all parts of his dominions.

For there shall be no night there. It shall be all day; all unclouded splendour. When, therefore, it is said that the gates should not be "shut *by day*," it means that they would *never* be shut. When it is said that there would be no *night* there, it is, undoubtedly, to be taken as meaning that there would be no *literal* darkness, and nothing of which night is the emblem: no calamity, no sorrow, no bereavement, no darkened windows on account of the loss of friends and kindred. Compare **Barnes on "Re 21:4"**.

{e} "for there shall be no night" Zec 14:7

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 21 - Verse 26

Verse 26. *And they shall bring*, etc. **See Barnes on "Re 21:24"**.

That blessed world shall be made up of all that was truly valuable and pure on the earth.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 21 - Verse 27

Verse 27. *And there shall in no wise*. On no account; by no means. This strong language denotes the absolute exclusion of all that is specified in the verse.

Anything that defileth. Literally, "anything *common*." **See Barnes on "Ac 10:14"**.

It means here that nothing will be found in that blessed abode which is unholy or sinful. It will be a pure world, 2Pe 3:13.

Neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie. **See Barnes on "Re 21:8"**.

But they which are written in the Lamb's book of life. Whose names are there recorded. **See Barnes on "Re 3:5"**.

Compare **See Barnes "Re 21:8"**.

{f} "there shall" Isa 35:8 52:1, 60:21 Joe 3:17; Mt 13:41 1Co 6:9,10

Ga 5:19-21 Eph 5:5; Heb 12:14

{g} "Lamb's book of life" Re 13:8

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 22

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 22 - Verse 1

Verse 1. *And he showed me a pure river of water of life*. In the New Jerusalem; the happy abode of the redeemed. The phrase "water of life," means living or running water, like a spring or fountain, as contrasted with a stagnant pool. **See Barnes on "Joh 4:14"**.

The allusion here is doubtless to the first Eden, where a river watered the garden, (Ge 2:10, seq.,) and as this is a description of Eden recovered, or Paradise regained, it was natural to introduce a river of water also, yet in such a way as to accord with the general description of that future abode of the redeemed. It does not spring up, therefore, from the ground, but flows from the throne of God and the Lamb. Perhaps, also, the writer had in his eye the description in Eze 47:1-12, where a stream issues from under the temple, and is parted in different directions.

Clear as crystal. **See Barnes on "Re 4:6"**.

Proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. Flowing from the foot of the throne. Compare Re 4:6. This idea is strictly in accordance with Oriental imagery. In the East, fountains and running streams constituted an essential part of the image of enjoyment and prosperity, (**see Barnes on** "Isa 35:6,) and such fountains were common in the courts of Oriental houses. Here, the river is an emblem of peace, happiness, plenty; and the essential thought in its flowing from the throne is, that all the happiness of heaven proceeds from God.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 22 - Verse 2

Verse 2. *In the midst of the street of it*. Professor Stuart renders this, "between the street thereof and the river;" and says that "the writer conceives of the river as running through the whole city; then of streets parallel to it on either side; and then, on the banks of the river, between the water and the street, the whole stream is lined on either side with two rows of the tree of life." The more common interpretation, however, is doubtless admissible, and would give a more beautiful image; that in the street, or streets of the city, as well as on the banks of the river, the tree of life was planted. It abounded everywhere. The city had not only a river passing through it, but it was pervaded by streets, and all those streets were lined and shaded with this tree. The idea in the mind of the writer is that of *Eden* or *Paradise*; but it is not the Eden of the book of Genesis, or the Oriental or Persian Paradise: it is a picture where all is combined that in the view of the writer would constitute beauty, or contribute to happiness.

And on either side of the river. As well as in all the streets. The writer undoubtedly conceives of a single river running through the city—probably as meandering along—and that river lined on both sides with the tree of life. This gives great beauty to the imagery.

Was there the *tree of life*. Not a single tree, but it abounded everywhere—on the banks of the river, and in all the streets. It was the *common* tree in this blessed Paradise—of which all might partake, and which was everywhere the emblem of immortality. In this respect, this new Paradise stands in strong contrast with that in which Adam was placed at his creation, where there seems to

have been a single tree that was designated as the tree of life, Ge 3:22-23. In the future state of the blessed, that tree will abound, and all may freely partake of it; the emblem—the pledge of immortal life—will be constantly before the eyes, whatever part of the future abode may be traversed, and the inhabitants of that blessed world may constantly partake of it.

Which bare twelve manner of fruits. "Producing twelve fruit-harvests; not (as our version) twelve manner of fruits."—*Professor Stuart*. The idea is not that there are twelve kinds of fruit on the same tree, for that is not implied in the language used by John. The literal rendering is, "producing twelve fruits"—*poioun karpouv dwdeka*. The word "*manner*" has been introduced by the translators without authority. The idea is, that the tree bore every month in the year, so that there were twelve fruit-harvests. It was not like a tree that bears but once a year, or in one season only, but it *constantly* bore fruit—it bore every month. The idea is that of *abundance*, not *variety*. The supply never fails; the tree is never barren. As there is but a single class of trees referred to, it might have been supposed, perhaps, that, according to the common method in which fruit is produced, there would be sometimes plenty and sometimes want; but the writer says that, though there is but one kind, yet the supply is ample. The tree is everywhere; it is constantly producing fruit.

And yielded her fruit every month. The word "*and*" is also supplied by the translators, and introduces an idea which is not in the original, as if there was not only a *sucession* of harvests, which is in the text, but that each one differed from the former, which is *not* in the text. The proper translation is, "producing twelve fruits, yielding or rendering its fruit in each month." Thus there is indeed a succession of fruit-crops, but it is the same kind of fruit. We are not to infer, however, that there will not be *variety* in the occupations and the joys of the heavenly state, for there can be no doubt that there will be ample diversity in the employments, and in the sources of happiness, in heaven; but the single thought expressed here is, that the means of life *will be abundant*: the trees of life will be everywhere, and they will be constantly yielding fruit.

And the leaves of the tree. Not only the *fruit* will contribute to give life, but even the *leaves* will be salutary. Everything about it will contribute to sustain life.

Were for the healing. That is, they contribute to impart life and health to those who had been diseased. We are not to suppose that there will be sickness, and a healing process in heaven, for that idea is expressly excluded in Re 21:4; but the meaning is, that the life and health of that blessed world will have been imparted by partaking of that tree, and the writer says that, in fact, it was owing to it that they who dwell there had been healed of their spiritual maladies, and had been made to live for ever.

Of the nations. Of all the nations assembled there, Re 21:24. There is a close resemblance between the language here used by John and that used by Ezekiel, (Eze 47:12,) and it is not improbable that both these writers refer to the same thing. Compare also, in the Apocrypha, 2 Esdras ii. 12; viii. 52-54.

{a} "In the midst" Eze 47:1,12 {b} "street" Re 21:21 {c} "tree of life" Re 2:7

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 22 - Verse 3

Verse 3. *And there shall be no more curse*. This is doubtless designed to be in strong contrast with our present abode; and it is affirmed that what now properly comes under the name of a *curse*,

or whatever is part of the curse pronounced on man by the fall, will be there unknown. The earth will be no more cursed, and will produce no more thorns and thistles; man will be no more compelled to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow; woman will be no more doomed to bear the sufferings which she does now; and the abodes of the blessed will be no more cursed by sickness, sorrow, tears, and death.

But the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it. God will reign there for ever; the principles of purity and love which the Lamb of God came to establish will pervade that blessed abode to all eternity.

And his servants shall serve him. All his servants that are there; that is, all the inhabitants of that blessed world. For the meaning of this passage, **see Barnes on "Re 7:15"**.

{d} "no more curse" Zec 14:11 {e} "throne of God" Eze 48:35 {f} "servants" Re 7:15

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 22 - Verse 4

Verse 4. *And they shall see his face*. **See Barnes on "Mt 18:10"**.

They would be constantly in his presence, and be permitted continually to behold his glory.

And his name shall be in their foreheads. They shall be designated as his. **See Barnes on "Re 3:12"**; **See Barnes "Re 7:3"**; **See Barnes** "Re 13:16".

{g} "And they shall" Mt 5:8 Joh 12:26, 17:24 1Co 13:12; 1Jo 3:2

{h} "his name" Re 3:12

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 22 - Verse 5

Verse 5. *And there shall be no night there*. **See Barnes "Re 21:25"**.

And they need no candle. No lamp; no artificial light, as in a world where there is night and darkness.

Neither light of the sun; for the Lord God, etc. **See Barnes on "Re 21:23"**.

And they shall reign for ever and ever. That is, with God; they shall be as kings. **See Barnes on "Re 5:10"**; **See Barnes** "Re 20:6".

Compare **See Barnes "Ro 8:16"**; **See Barnes** "2Ti 1:11"

See Barnes "2Ti 1:12".

{i} "there shall be no night" Re 21:23,25 {k} "light" Ps 36:9 {l} "reign" Ro 5:17

REMARKS ON CHAP. XXI., XXII. 1—5

This portion of the Apocalypse contains the most full and complete continuous description of the state of the righteous in the world of blessedness that is to be found in the Bible. It seems to be proper, therefore, to pause on it for a moment, and to state in a summary manner what will be the principal features of that blessedness. All can see that, as a description, it occupies an appropriate place, not only in regard to this book, but to the volume of revealed truth. In reference to this

particular book, it is the appropriate close of the account of the conflicts, the trials, and the persecutions of the church; in reference to the whole volume of revealed truth, it is appropriate because it occurs in the last of the inspired books that was written. It was proper that a volume of revealed truth given to mankind, and designed to describe a great work of redeeming mercy, *should* close with a description of the state of the righteous after death. The principal features in the description are the following:—

(1.) There will be a new heaven and a new earth: a new order of things, and a world adapted to the condition of the righteous. There will be such changes produced in the earth, and such abodes fitted up for the redeemed, that it will be proper to say that they are new, Re 21:1.

(2.) The locality of that abode is not determined. No particular *place* is revealed as constituting heaven; nor is it intimated that there would be such a *place*. For anything that appears, the universe at large will be heaven—the earth and all worlds; and we are left free to suppose that the redeemed will yet occupy any position of the universe, and be permitted to behold the peculiar glories of the Divine character that are manifested in each of the worlds that he has made. Comp. **See Barnes "1Pe 1:12".**

That there may be some one place in the universe that will be their permanent home, and that will be more properly called heaven, where the glory of their God and Saviour will be peculiarly manifested, is not improbable; but still there is nothing to prevent the hope and the belief that in the infinite duration that awaits them they will be permitted to visit all the worlds that God has made, and to learn in each, and from each, all that he has peculiarly manifested of his own character and glory there.

(3.) That future state will be entirely and for ever free from all the consequences of the apostasy as now seen on the earth. There will be neither tears, nor sorrow, nor death, nor crying, nor pain, nor curse, Re 21:4 22:3. It will, therefore, be a perfectly happy abode.

(4.) It will be pure and holy. Nothing will ever enter there that shall contaminate and defile, Re 21:8,27. On this account, also, it will be a happy world, for

(a) all real happiness has its foundation in holiness; and

(b) the source of all the misery that the universe has experienced is sin. Let that be removed, and the earth would be happy; let it be extinguished from any world, and its happiness will be secure.

(5.) It will be a world of perfect light, Re 21:22-25 22:6. There will be

(a) literally no night there;

(b) spiritually and morally there will be no darkness—no error, no sin. Light will be cast on a thousand subjects now obscure; and on numerous points pertaining to the Divine government and dealings which now perplex the mind there will be poured the splendour of perfect day. All the darkness that exists here will be dissipated there; all that is now obscure will be made light. And in view of this fact, we may well submit for a little time to the mysteries which hang over the Divine dealings here. The Christian is destined to live for ever and ever. He is capable of an eternal progression in knowledge. He is soon to be ushered into the splendours of that eternal abode where there is no need of the light of the sun or the moon, and where there is no night. In a little time—a few weeks or days—by removal to that higher state of being, he will have made a degree of progress in true knowledge compared with which all that can be learned here is a nameless trifle. In that future abode he will be permitted to know all that is to be known in those worlds that shine upon his path by day or by night; all that is to be known in the character of their Maker, and the principles

of his government; all that is to be known of the glorious plan of redemption; all that is to be known of the reasons why sin and woe were permitted to enter this beautiful world. There, too, he will be permitted to enjoy all that there is to be enjoyed in a world without a cloud and without a tear; all that is beatific in the friendship of God the Father, of the Ascended Redeemer, of the Sacred Spirit; all that is blessed in the goodly fellowship of the angels, of the apostles, of the prophets; all that is rapturous in reunion with those that were loved on the earth. Well, then, may he bear with the darkness and endure the trials of this state a little longer.

(6.) It will be a world of surpassing splendour. This is manifest by the description of it in chap. xx., as a gorgeous city, with ample dimensions, with most brilliant colours, set with gems, and composed of pure gold. The writer, in the description of that abode, has accumulated all that is gorgeous and magnificent, and doubtless felt that even *this* was a very imperfect representation of that glorious world.

(7.) That future world will be all abode of the highest conceivable happiness. This is manifest, not only from the fact stated that there will be no pain or sorrow here, but from the positive description in Re 22:1,2. It was, undoubtedly, the design of the writer, under the image of a Paradise, to describe the future abode of the redeemed. as one of the highest happiness—where there would be an ample and a constant supply of every want, and where the highest ideas of enjoyment would be realized. And,

(8.) All this will be eternal. The universe, so vast and so wonderful, seems to have been made to be fitted to the eternal contemplation of created minds, and in this universe there is an adaptation for the employment of mind for ever and ever.

If it be asked now why John, in the account which he has given of the heavenly state, adopted this figurative and emblematic mode of representation, and why it did not please God to reveal any more respecting the nature of the employments and enjoyments of the heavenly world, it may be replied,

(a) that this method is eminently in accordance with the general character of the book, as a book of symbols and emblems.

(b) He has stated enough to give us a general and a most attractive view of that blessed state.

(c) It is not certain that we would have appreciated it, or could have comprehended it, if a more minute and literal description had been given. That state may be so unlike this that it is doubtful whether we could have comprehended any literal description that could have been given. How little of the future and the unseen can ever be known by a mere description; how faint and imperfect a view can we ever obtain of anything by the mere use of words, and especially of objects which have no resemblance to anything which we have seen! Whoever obtained any adequate idea of Niagara by a mere description? To what Greek or Roman mind, however cultivated, could there have been conveyed the idea of a printing-press, of a locomotive engine, of the magnetic telegraph, by mere description? Who can convey to one born blind an idea of the prismatic colours; or to the deaf an idea of sounds? If we may imagine the world of insect tribes to be endowed with the power of language and thought, how could the gay and gilded butterfly that to-day plays in the sun. beam impart to its companions of yesterday—low and grovelling worms many adequate idea of that new condition of being into which it had emerged? And how do we know that we could comprehend any description of that world where the righteous dwell, or of employments and enjoyments so unlike our own?

I cannot more appropriately close this brief notice of the revelations of the heavenly state than by introducing an ancient poem, which seems to be founded on this portion of the Apocalypse, and which is the original of one of the most touching and beautiful hymns now used in Protestant places of worship—the well-known hymn which begins, "Jerusalem! my happy home." This hymn is deservedly a great favourite, and is an eminently beautiful composition. It is, however, of Roman Catholic origin. It is found in a small volume of miscellaneous poetry, sold at Mr. Bright's sale of manuscripts in 1844, which has been placed in the British Museum, and now forms the additional MS. 15,225. It is referred, by the lettering on the book, to the age of Elizabeth, but it is supposed to belong to the subsequent reign. The volume seems tb have been formed by or for some Roman Catholic, and contains many devotional songs or hymns, interspersed with others of a more general character. See Littell's *Living Age*, vol. xxviii, pp. 333—336. The hymn is as follows :— \-

A SONG MADE BY F. B. P.

To the tune of" Diana."

Jerusalem! my happy home !
When shall I come to thee?
When shall my sorrows have an end—
Thy joys when shall I see?

O happy harbour of the saints-
O sweet and pleasant soil!
In thee no sorrow may be found,
No grief, no care, no toil.

In thee no sickness may be seen,
No hurt, no ache, no sore;
There is no death, no ugly deil*, [*devil]
There's life for evermore.

No dampish mist is seen in thee,
No cold nor darksome night;
There every soul shines as the sun,
There God himself gives light.

There lust and lucre cannot dwell,
There envy bears no sway;
There is no hunger, heat, nor cold,
But pleasure every way.

Jerusalem ! Jerusalem!
God grant I once may see
The endless joys, and of the same
Partaker aye to be.

The walls are made of precious stones,
Thy bulwarks diamonds square:
Thy gates are of right orient pearl,
Exceeding rich and rare.

Thy turrets and thy pinnacles
With carbuncles do shine;
Thy very streets are paved with gold,
Surpassing clear and fine.

Thy houses are of ivory.
Thy windows crystal clear-
Thy tiles are made of, beaten gold—
O God, that I were there!

Within thy gates no thing doth come
That is not passing clean;
No spider's web, no dirt, no dust,
No filth may there be seen.

Ah, my sweet home, Jerusalem!
Would God I were in thee;
Would God, my woes were at an end.
Thy joys that I might see!

Thy saints are crown'd with glory great,
They see God face to face;
They triumph still, they still rejoice—
Most happy is their case.

We that are here in banishment
Continually do moan;
We sigh and sob, we weep and wail,
Perpetually we groan.

Our sweet is mixed with bitter gall,
Our pleasure is but pain;
Our joys scarce last the looking on,
Our sorrows still remain.

But there they live in such delight,
Such pleasure, and such play.
that to them a thousand years

Doth seem as yesterday.

Thy vineyards and thy orchards are
Most beautiful and fair;
Full furnished with trees and fruits,
Most wonderful and rare.

Thy gardens and thy gallant walks
Continually are green;
There grow such sweet and pleasant flowers
As nowhere else are seen.

There's pectar and ambrosia made,
There's musk and civet sweet;
There many a fair and dainty drug
Are trodden under feet.

There cinnamon, there sugar grows.
There nard and balm abound;
What tongue can tell, or heart conceive.
The joys that there are found?

Quite through the streets, with silver sound,
The flood of life doth flow;
Upon whose banks, on every side,
The wood of life doth grow.

There trees for evermore bear fruit,
And evermore do spring'
There evermore the angels Sit,
And evermore do sing.

There David stands with harp in hand,
As master of the quire;
Ten thousand times that man were blest
That might this music hear.

Our Lady sings Magnificat,
With tune surpassing sweet;
And all the virgins bear their parts.
Sitting above her feet.

The Deum doth Saint Ambrose sing,
Saint Austin doth the like:

Old Simeon and Zachary
Have not their song to seek.

There Magdalene hath left her moan,
And cheerfully doth sing
With blessed saints, whose harmony
In every street doth ring.

Jerusalem, my happy home!
Would God I were in thee;
Would God my woes were at an end,
Thy joys that I might see!

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 22 - Verse 6

ANALYSIS OF CHAPTER XXII. 6—20

THIS portion of the book of Revelation is properly the epilogue, or conclusion. The main purposes of the vision are accomplished; the enemies of the church are quelled; the church is triumphant; the affairs of the world are wound up; the redeemed are received to their blissful, eternal abode; the wicked are cut off; the earth is purified, and the affairs of the universe are fixed on their permanent foundation. A few miscellaneous matters, therefore, dose the book.

(1.) A solemn affirmation on the part of him who had made these revelations, that they are true, and that they will be speedily accomplished, and that he will be blessed or happy who shall keep the sayings of the book, Re 22:6,7.

(2.) The effect of all these things on John himself, leading him, as in a former case, Re 19:10 to a disposition to worship him who had been the medium in making to him such extraordinary communications, Re 22:8,9.

(3.) A command not to seal up what had been revealed, since the time was near. These things would soon have their fulfilment, and it was proper that the prophecies should be unsealed, or open, both that the events might be compared with the predictions, and that a persecuted church might be able to see what would be the result of all these things, and to find consolation in the assurance of the final triumph of the Son of God, Re 22:10.

(4.) The fixed and unchangeable state of the righteous and the wicked, Re 22:11-13.

(5.) The blessedness of those who keep the commandments of God, and who enter into the New Jerusalem, Re 22:14,15.

(6.) Jesus, the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star, proclaims himself to be the Author of all these revelations by the instrumentality of an angel, Re 22:16.

(7.) The universal invitation of the gospel—the language of Jesus himself—giving utterance to his strong desire for the salvation of men, Re 22:17.

(8.) A solemn command not to change anything that had been revealed in this book, either by adding to it or by taking from it, Re 22:18,19.

(9.) The assurance that he who had made these revelations would come quickly, and the joyous assent of John to this, and prayer that his advent might soon occur, Re 22:20.

(10.) The benediction, Re 22:21.

Verse 6. *And he said unto me*. The angel-interpreter, who had showed John the vision of the New Jerusalem, Re 21:9-10. As these visions axe now at an end, the angel comes to John directly, and assures him that all these things are true—that there has been no deception of the senses in these visions, but that they were really Divine disclosures of what would soon and certainly occur.

These sayings are faithful and true. These communications; all that has been disclosed to you by symbols, or in direct language. **See Barnes on "Re 21:5"**.

And the Lord God of the holy prophets. The same God who inspired the ancient prophets.

Sent his angel. **See Barnes on "Re 1:1"**.

To show unto his servants. To all his servants, that is, to all his people, by the instrumentality of John. The revelation was made to him, and he was to record it for the good of the whole church.

The things which must shortly be done. The beginning of which must soon occur—though the series of events extended into distant ages, and even into eternity. **See Barnes on "Re 1:1-3"**.

{a} "sent his angel" Re 1:1

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 22 - Verse 7

Verse 7. *Behold, I come quickly*. **See Barnes on "Re 1:3"**.

The words here used are undoubtedly the words of the Redeemer, although they are apparently repeated by the angel. The meaning is, that they were used by the angel as the words of the Redeemer. See Re 22:12 20.

Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. That receives them as a Divine communication; that makes use of them to comfort himself in the days of darkness, persecution, and trial; and that is obedient to the precepts here enjoined. **See Barnes on "Re 1:3"**.

{b} "quickly" Re 22:10,12,20

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 22 - Verse 8

Verse 8. *And I John saw these things, and heard them*. That is, I *saw* the parts that were disclosed by pictures, visions and symbols; I *heard* the parts that were communicated by direct revelation.

And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel, etc. As he had done on a former occasion. **See Barnes on "Re 19:10"**.

John appears to have been entirely overcome by the extraordinary nature of the revelations made to him, and not improbably entertained some suspicion that it was the Redeemer himself who had manifested himself to him in this remarkable manner.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 22 - Verse 9

Verse 9. *Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not*. **See Barnes on** "Re 19:10.

For I am thy fellow-servant. **Barnes on "Re 19:10"**.

And of thy brethren the prophets. In Re 19:10, it is, "of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus." Here the angel says that, in the capacity in which he appeared to John, he belonged to the general rank of the prophets, and was no more entitled to worship than any of the prophets had been. Like them, he had merely been employed to disclose important truths in regard to the future; but as the prophets, even the most eminent of them, were not regarded as entitled to worship on account of the communications which they had made, no more was he.

And of them which keep the sayings of this book. "I am a mere creature of God. I, like men, am under law, and am bound to observe the law of God." The "sayings of this book" which he says he kept, must be understood to mean those great principles of religion which it enjoined, and which are of equal obligation on men and angels.

Worship God. Worship God only. **Barnes on "Re 19:10"**.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 22 - Verse 10

Verse 10. *And he saith unto me*. The angel.

Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book. That is, seal not the book itself, for it may be regarded altogether as a prophetic book. On the sealing of a book, **see Barnes on "Re 5:1"**.

Isaiah (Isa 8:16 30:8) and Daniel (Da 8:26 12:4,9) were commanded to seal up their prophecies. Their prophecies related to far-distant times, and the idea in their being commanded to seal them was, that they should make the record sure and unchangeable; that they should finish it, and lay it up for future ages; so that, in far-distant times, the events an might be compared with the prophecy, and it might be seen that there was exact correspondence between the prophecy and the fulfilment. Their prophecies would not be immediately demanded for the use of persecuted saints, but would pertain to future ages. On the other hand, the events which John had predicted, though in their ultimate development they were to extend to the end of the world, and even into eternity, were about to *begin* to be fulfilled, and were to be of immediate use in consoling a persecuted Church. John, therefore, was directed *not* to seal up his predictions; not to lay them away to be opened, as it were, in distant ages; but to leave them *open*, so that a persecuted church might have access to them, and might in times of persecution and trial have the assurance that the principles of their religion would finally triumph. **See Barnes on "Re 10:2"**.

For the time is at hand. That is, they are soon to *commence*. It is not implied that they would be soon *completed*. The idea is, that as the scenes of persecution were soon to open upon the church, it was important that the church should have access to these prophecies of the final triumph of religion, to sustain it in its trials. Compare **Barnes on "Re 1:1,3"**.

{c} "Seal not" Da 8:26

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 22 - Verse 11

Verse 11. *He that is unjust, let him be unjust still*. This must refer to the scenes beyond the judgment, and must be intended to affirm an important truth in regard to the condition of men in the future state. It cannot refer to the condition of men this side the grave, for there is no fixed and unchangeable condition in this world. At the close of this book, and at the close of the whole volume of revealed truth, it was proper to declare, in the most solemn manner, that when these events were consummated everything would be fixed and unchanging; that all who were then found to be righteous would remain so for ever; and that none who were impenitent, impure, and wicked, would ever change their character or condition. That this is the meaning here seems to me to be plain; and this sentiment accords with all that is said in the Bible of the final condition of the righteous and the wicked. See Mt 25:46 Ro 2:6-9; 1Th 1:7-10 Da 12:2; Ec 11:3.

Every assurance is held out in the Bible that the righteous will be secure in holiness and happiness, and that there will be no danger—no possibility—that they will fall into sin, and sink to woe; and by the same kind of arguments by which it is proved that their condition will be unchanging, is it demonstrated that the condition of the wicked will be unchanging also. The argument for the eternal punishment of the wicked is as strong as that for the eternal happiness of the righteous; and if the one is open to doubt, there is no security for the permanence of the other. The word *unjust* here is a general term for an unrighteous or wicked man. The meaning is, that he to whom that character properly belongs, or of whom it is properly descriptive, will remain so for ever. The *design* of this seems to be, to let the ungodly and the wicked know that there is no change beyond the grave, and by this solemn consideration to warn them now to flee from the wrath to come. And assuredly no more solemn consideration can ever be presented to the human mind than this.

And he which is filthy, let him be filthy still. The word *filthy* here is, of course, used with reference to *moral* defilement or pollution. It refers to the sensual, the corrupt, the profane; and the meaning is, that their condition will be fixed, and that they will remain in this state of pollution for ever. There is nothing more awful than the idea that a polluted soul will be always polluted; that a heart corrupt will be always corrupt; that the defiled will be put for ever beyond the possibility of being cleansed from sin.

And he that is righteous, let him be righteous still. The just, the upright man—in contradistinction from the unjust mentioned in the first part of the verse.

And he that is holy, let him be holy still. He that is pure, in contradistinction from the *filthy* mentioned in the former part of the verse. The righteous and the holy will be confirmed in their character and condition, as well as the wicked. The affirmation that their condition will be fixed is as strong as that that of the wicked will be be—and no stronger; the entire representation is, that all beyond the judgment will unchanging for ever. Could any more solemn thought be brought before the mind of man?

{a} "he that is unjust" Pr 1:24-33 Ec 11:3; Mt 25:10 2Ti 3:13

{b} "righteous" Pr 4:18 Mt 5:6

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 22 - Verse 12

Verse 12. *And behold, I come quickly*. **See Barnes on "Re 1:1,3"**.

These are undoubtedly the words of the Redeemer; and the meaning is, that the period when the unchanging sentence would be passed on each individual—on the unjust, the filthy, the righteous, and the holy—would not be remote. The *design* of this seems to be to impress on the mind the solemnity of the truth that the condition hereafter will soon be fixed, and to lead men to prepare for it. In reference to each individual, the period is near when it is to be determined whether he will be holy or sinful to all eternity. What thought could there be more adapted to impress on the mind the importance of giving immediate attention to the concerns of the soul?

And my reward is with me. I bring it with me to give to every man: either life or death; heaven or hell; the crown or the curse. He will be prepared immediately to execute the sentence. Compare Mt 25:31-46.

To give every man according as his work shall be. **See Barnes on "Mt 16:27"**; **See Barnes** "Ro 2:6"; **See Barnes "2Co 5:10"**.

{c} "come quickly" Zep 1:14 {d} "according" Re 20:12

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 22 - Verse 13

Verse 13. *I am Alpha and Omega*, etc. **See Barnes on "Re 1:8,11"**.

The idea here is, that he will thus show that he is the first and the and last —the beginning and the end. He originated the whole plan of salvation, he will determine its close; he formed the world, and he will wind up its affairs. In the beginning, the continuance, and the end, he will be recognised as the same being presiding over and controlling all.

{e} "Alpha and Omega" Isa 44:6

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 22 - Verse 14

Verse 14. *Blessed are they that do his commandments*. **See Barnes on "Re 1:3"**; **See Barnes** "Re 22:7".

That they may have right. That they may be entitled to approach the tree of life; that this privilege may be granted to them. It is not a *right* in the sense that they have *merited* it, but in the sense that the privilege is conferred on them as one of the rewards of God, and that, in virtue of the Divine arrangements, they will be entitled to this honour. So the word here used—*exousia*—means in Joh 1:12, rendered *power*. The *reason* why this right or privilege is conferred is not implied in the use of the word. In this case it is by *grace*, and all the *right* which they have to the tree of life is founded on the fact that God has been pleased graciously to confer it on them.

To the tree of life. **See Barnes on "Re 22:2"**.

They would not be forbidden to approach that tree as Adam was, but would be permitted always to partake of it, and would live for ever.

And may enter in through the gates into the city. The New Jerusalem, Re 21:2. They would have free access there; they would be permitted to abide there for ever.

{f} "Blessed" Lu 12:37

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 22 - Verse 15

Verse 15. *For without are dogs*. The wicked, the depraved, the vile: for of such characters the dogs, an unclean animal among the Jews, was regarded as a symbol, De 23:18. On the meaning of the expression, **see Barnes on "Php 3:2"**.

The word "without" means that they would not be admitted into the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem, Re 21:8, 27.

And sorcerers, etc. All these characters are specified in Re 21:8, as excluded from heaven. **See Barnes on "Re 21:8"**.

The only change is, that those who "love and make a lie" are added to the list; that is, who delight in lies, or that which is false.

{g} "without" Re 21:8,27 {h} "dogs" Php 3:2 {i} "the root" Re 5:5

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 22 - Verse 16

Verse 16. *I Jesus*. Here the Saviour appears expressly as the speaker— ratifying and confirming all that had been communicated by the instrumentality of the angel.

Have sent mine angel. **Barnes on "Re 1:1"**.

To testify unto you. That is, to be a witness for me in communicating these things to you.

In the churches. Directly and immediately to the seven churches in Asia Minor, (chapters 2 and 3) remotely and ultimately to all churches to the end of time. Compare **Barnes on "Re 1:11"**.

I am the root. Not the root in the sense that David sprang from him, as a tree does from a root, but in the sense that he was the "*root-shoot*" of David, or that he himself sprang from him, as a sprout starts up from a decayed and fallen tree—as of the oak, the willow, the chesnut, etc. **See Barnes on "Isa 11:1"**.

The meaning then is, not that he was the *ancestor* of David, or that David sprang from him, but that he was the offspring of David, according to the promise in the Scripture, that the Messiah should be descended from him. No argument then, can be derived from this passage in proof of the pre-existence, or the divinity of Christ.

And the offspring. The descendant; the progeny of David: "the seed of David according to the flesh." **See Barnes on "Ro 1:3"**.

It is not unusual to employ two words in close connexion to express the same idea with some slight shade of difference.

And the bright and morning star. **See Barnes on "Re 2:28"**.

It is not uncommon to compare a prince, a leader, a teacher, with that bright and beautiful star which at some seasons of the year precedes the rising of the sun, and leads on the day. Compare **Barnes on "Isa 14:12"**.

The reference here is to that star as the harbinger of day; and the meaning of the Saviour is, that he sustains a relation to a dark world similar to this beautiful star. At one time he is indeed compared with the sun itself in giving light to the world; here he is compared with that morning star rather with reference to its *beauty* than its *light*. May it not also have been one object in this comparison to lead us, when we look on that star, to think of the Saviour? It is perhaps the most beautiful object in nature; it succeeds the darkness of the night; it brings on the day—and as it mingles with the first rays of the morning, it seems to be so joyous, cheerful, exulting, bright, that nothing can be better adapted to remind us of Him who came to lead on eternal day. Its *place*—the first thing that arrests the eye in the morning—might serve to remind us that the Saviour should be the first object that should draw the eye and the heart on the return of each day. In each trial—each scene of sorrow—let us think of the bright star of the morning as it rises on the darkness of the night—emblem of the Saviour rising on our sorrow and our gloom.

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 22 - Verse 17

Verse 17. *And the Spirit and the bride say, Come*. That is, come to the Saviour; come and partake of the blessings of the gospel; come and be saved. The construction demands this interpretation, as the latter part of the verse shows. The design of this whole verse is, evidently, to show the freeness of the offers of the gospel; to condense in a summary manner all the invitations of mercy to mankind; and to leave on the mind at the close of the book a deep impression of the ample provision which has been made for the salvation of a fallen race. Nothing, it is clear, could be more appropriate at the close of this book, and at the close of the whole volume of revealed truth, than to announce, in the most clear and attracting form, that salvation is free to all, and that whosoever will may be saved.

The Spirit. The Holy Spirit. He intreats all to come. This he does

(a) in all the recorded invitations in the Bible—for it is by the inspiration of that Spirit that these invitations are recorded;

(b) by all his influences on the understandings, the consciences, and the hearts of men;

(c) by all the proclamations of mercy made by the preaching of the gospel, and by the appeal which friend makes to friend, and neighbour to neighbour, and stranger to stranger—for all these are methods in which the Spirit invites men to come to the Saviour.

And the bride. The church. **See Barnes on** "Re 21:2, **See Barnes "Re 21:9"**.

That is, the church invites all to come and be saved. This it does

(a) by its ministers, whose main business it is to extend this invitation to mankind;

(b) by its ordinances—constantly setting forth the freeness of the gospel;

(c) by the lives of its consistent members—showing the excellency and the desirableness of true religion;

(d) by all its efforts to do good in the world;

(e) by the example of those who are brought into the church—showing that all, whatever may have been their former character, may be saved; and

(f) by the direct appeals of its individual members. Thus a Christian parent invites his children; a brother invites a sister, and a sister invites a brother; a neighbour invites his neighbour, and a stranger a stranger; the master invites his servant, and the servant his master. The church on earth and the church in heaven unite in the invitation, saying, Come. The living father, pastor, friend, invites—and the voice of the departed father, pastor, friend, now in heaven, is heard re-echoing the invitation. The once-loved mother that has gone to the skies still invites her children to come; and the sweet-smiling babe that has been taken up to the Saviour stretches out its arms from heaven, and says to its mother—*Come*.

Say, Come. That is, come to the Saviour; come into the church; come to heaven.

And let him that heareth say, Come. Whoever hears the gospel, let him go and invite others to come, Nothing could more strikingly set forth the freeness of the invitation of the gospel than this. The authority to make the invitation is not limited to the ministers of religion; it is not even confined to those who accept it themselves. All persons, even though *they* should not accept of it, are authorized to tell others that they may be saved. One impenitent sinner may go and tell another impenitent sinner that if he will he may find mercy and enter heaven. How *could* the offer of salvation be made more freely to mankind?

And let him that is athirst come. Whoever desires salvation, as the weary pilgrim desires a cooling fountain to allay his thirst, let him come as freely to the gospel as that thirsty man would stoop down at the fountain and drink. **See Barnes on "Isa 55:1"**.

Compare **Barnes on "Mt 5:6"**; **See Barnes** "Joh 7:37"; **See Barnes "Re 21:6"**.

And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. Re 21:6. Every one that is disposed to come, that has any sincere wish to be saved, is assured that he may live. No matter how unworthy he is; no matter what his past life has been; no matter how old or how young, how rich or how poor; no matter whether sick or well, a freeman or a slave; no matter whether educated or ignorant; no matter whether clothed in purple or in rags—riding in state or laid at the gate of a rich man full of sores, the invitation is freely made to all to come and be saved. With what more appropriate truth *could* a revelation from heaven be closed?

{a} "bride" Re 21:2,9 {b} "Come" Isa 2:5 {c} "And let him" Re 21:6

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 22 - Verse 18

Verse 18. *For I testify*. The writer does not specify who is meant by the word "I" in this place. The most natural construction is to refer it to the writer himself, and not to the angel, or the Saviour. The meaning is, "I bear this solemn witness, or make this solemn affirmation, in conclusion." The object is to guard his book against being corrupted by any interpolation or change. It would seem not improbable, from this, that as early as the time of John books were liable to be corrupted by additions or omissions, or that at least there was felt to be great danger that mistakes might be made by the carelessness of transcribers. Against this danger, John would guard this book in the most solemn manner. Perhaps he felt, too, that as this book would be necessarily regarded as obscure

from the fact that symbols were so much used, there was great danger that changes would be made by well-meaning persons with a view to make it appear more plain.

Unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book. The word "heareth" seems here to be used in a very general sense. Perhaps in most cases persons would be made acquainted with the contents of the book by hearing it read in the churches; but still the spirit of the declaration must include all methods of becoming acquainted with it.

If any man shall add unto these things. With a view to furnish a more full and complete revelation; or with a profession that new truth had been communicated by inspiration. The reference here is to the book of Revelation only—for at that time the books that now constitute what we call *the Bible* were not collected into a single volume. This passage, therefore, should not be adduced as referring to the whole of the sacred Scriptures. Still, the *principle* is one that is thus applicable; for it is obvious that no one has a right to change any part of a revelation which God makes to man; to presume to add to it, or to take from it, or in any way to modify it. Compare **Barnes on "2Ti 3:16"**.

God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. Th se "plagues" refer to the numerous methods described in this book as those in which God would bring severe judgment upon the persecutors of the church, and the corrupters of religion. The meaning is, that such a person would be regarded as an enemy of his religion, and would share the fearful doom of all such enemies.

{d} "add" Pr 30:6

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 22 - Verse 19

Verse 19. *And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy*. If he shall reject the book altogether; if he shall, in transcribing it, designedly strike any part of it out. It is conceivable that, from the remarkable nature of the communications made in this book, and the fact that they seemed to be unintelligible, John supposed there might be those who would be inclined to omit some portions as improbable, or that he apprehended that when the portions which describe Antichrist were fulfilled in distant ages, those to whom those portions applied would be disposed to strike them from the sacred volume, or to corrupt them. He thought proper to guard against this by this solemn declaration of the consequence which would follow such an act. The whole book was to be received—with all its fearful truths—as a revelation from God; and however obscure it might seem, in due time it would be made plain; however faithfully it might depict a fearful apostasy, it was important, both to show the truth of Divine inspiration and to save the church, that these disclosures should be in their native purity in the possession of the people of God.

God shall take away his part out of the book of life. Perhaps there is here an intimation that this would be most likely to be done by those who professed to be Christians, and who supposed that their names were in the book of life. In fact, most of the corruptions of the sacred Scriptures have been attempted by those who have professed some form of Christianity. Infidels have but little interest in attempting such changes, and but little influence to make them received by the church. It is most convenient for them, as it is most agreeable to their feelings, to reject the Bible altogether. When it said here that "God would take away his part out of the book of life," the meaning is not that his name *had been written* in that book, but that he would take away the part which he might have had, or which he *professed* to have in that book. Such corruption of the Divine oracles would

show that they had no true religion, and would be excluded from heaven. On the phrase "book of life," **see Barnes on "Re 3:5"**.

And out of the holy city. Described in chapter 21. He would not be permitted to enter that city; he would have no part among the redeemed.

And from the things which are written in this book. The promises that are made; the glories that are described.

{e} "take away" Re 3:5 {1} "out of the book" "from the tree"

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 22 - Verse 20

Verse 20. *He which testifieth these things*. The Lord Jesus; for he it was that had, through the instrumentality of the angel, borne this solemn witness to the truth of these things, and this book was to be regarded as his revelation to mankind. **See Barnes on** "Re 1:1; Re 22:16 ".

He here speaks of himself, and vouches for the truth and reality of these things by saying that he "*testifies*" of them, or bears witness to them. Compare Joh 18:37. The fact that Jesus himself vouches for the truth of what is here revealed, shows the propriety of what John had said in the previous verses about adding to it, or taking from it.

Saith, Surely I come quickly. That is, the development of these events will soon *begin*—though their consummation may extend into far-distant ages, or into eternity. **See Barnes on "Re 1:1,3"**; **See Barnes** "Re 22:7, **See Barnes "Re 22:10"**.

Amen. A word of solemn affirmation or assent. **See Barnes on "Mt 10:13"**.

Here it is to be regarded as the expression of John, signifying his solemn and cheerful assent to what the Saviour had said, that he would come quickly. It is the utterance of a strong desire that it might be so. He longed for his appearing.

Even so. These, too, are the words of John, and are a response to what the Saviour had just said. In the original, it is a response in the same language which the Saviour had used, and the beauty of the passage is marred by the translation "*Even so*." The original is, "He which testifieth to these things saith, *Yea—nai*—I come quickly. Amen. *Yea—nai*—come, Lord Jesus." It is the utterance of desire in the precise language which the Saviour had used—heart responding to heart.

Come, Lord Jesus. That is, as here intended, "Come in the manner and for the objects referred to in this book." The *language*, however, is expressive of the feeling of piety in a more extended sense, and may be used to denote a desire that the Lord Jesus would come in any and every manner; that he would come to impart to us the tokens of his presence; that he would come to bless his truth and to revive his work in the churches; that he would come to convert sinners, and to build up his people in holiness; that he would come to sustain us in affliction, and to defend us in temptation; that he would come to put a period to idolatry, superstition, and error, and to extend the knowledge of his truth in the world; that he would come to set up his kingdom on the earth, and to rule in the hearts of men; that he would come to receive us to his presence, and to gather his redeemed people into his everlasting kingdom. It was appropriate to the aged John, suffering exile in a lonely island, to pray that the Lord Jesus would speed fly come to take him to himself; and there could have been no more suitable close of this marvellous book than the utterance of such a desire. And it is appropriate for us as we finish its contemplation, disclosing so much of the glories of the heavenly

world, and the blessedness of the redeemed in their final state, when we think of the earth, with its sorrows, trials, and cares, to respond to the prayer, and to say, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." For that glorious coming of the Son of God, when he shall gather his redeemed people to himself, may all who read these Notes be finally prepared. Amen.

{a} "Surely" Re 22:7,12 {b} "Even so" Heb 9:28 Isa 25:9

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - Chapter 22 - Verse 21

Verse 21. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen*. The usual benediction of the sacred writers. **See Barnes on "Ro 16:20"**.

{c} "grace" 2Th 3:18

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2 Peter

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1 John

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Revelation

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2 Corinthians

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